

Correcting Waldseemüller: Analysis of Hyperspectral Images of the Pastedown Shield on the 1516 Carta Marina

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“A man of genius makes no mistakes.
His errors are volitional and portals of
discovery.”

--James Joyce

On sheet number 9 of the 1516 *Carta Marina* by Martin Waldseemüller there are two ornamental shields, one of which is covered by a cutout piece of paper of the same shape (figure 1).



Figure 1: Detail of sheet 9 of the Carta Marina

It has been thought that beneath the shield occurs a series of printed errata that pertain to corrections that may have been made to the map. The full transcription and analysis of these errata have until now however proved illusive¹. The hyperspectral imaging accomplished last year at the Library of Congress² has provided the means with which to finally transcribe these errata and analyze their relationship to the 1516 Carta Marina map.

Transmitted hyperspectral images of the map sheets were taken at a variety of wavelengths in the near infrared and have allowed the viewing of the printed text through the pastedown paper overlay (figure 2).

¹ E. Harris, "The Waldseemüller World Map: A Typographic Appraisal", *Imago Mundi* 37 (1985), 30-53. In Harris's article she reproduces the first videocon image of the errata shield using transmitted IR taken by Dianne van der Reyden at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Van der Reyden is currently the Director of the Preservation Division at the Library of Congress. Although Harris and van der Reyden were able to determine that the text was composed of errata, no transcription was possible at the time.

² Imaging Team for the Waldseemüller maps at the Library of Congress consisted of Michael Toth, R.B. Toth Associates; Dr. Keith Knox, Boeing Corp; Dr. Roger Easton, Rochester Institute of Technology; Dr. William Christen-Barry, Equipoise Imaging; Doug Emery, Emery IT; Dr. Fenella France, Library of Congress; Heather Wanser, Library of Congress; Kenneth Boydston, Megavision Imaging.



Figure 2: Transmitted Hyperspectral Image of Pastedown Shield at 910 nm

The inscription shown in the figure consists of a series of changes that needed to be made to the map and has provided evidence that one of the sheets (number 6) is an earlier proof copy. The changes consist mostly of misspelled and misplaced city and region names.

Sheet 6 (figure 3) of the Carta Marina shows the coast of West Africa and does not contain the red lines (figure 4) drawn on the rest of the map by its owner, the Nuremburg mathematician and astronomer, Johannes Schöner (1474-1547). This

sheet 6 remains uncorrected in relation to the errata list has led us to conclude that it was most probably a proof sheet. This conclusion of course contrasts with the previously accepted view that sheet 6 was printed later.

Schöner reproduced sheet 6 as a manuscript on vellum (figure 5) and had it bound into the *Sammelband* in the same way as the 1507 and other sheets of the 1516 map. His drawing shows the changes that are suggested in the errata list suggesting that he either had access to the list or to a later non-proof copy of the map.

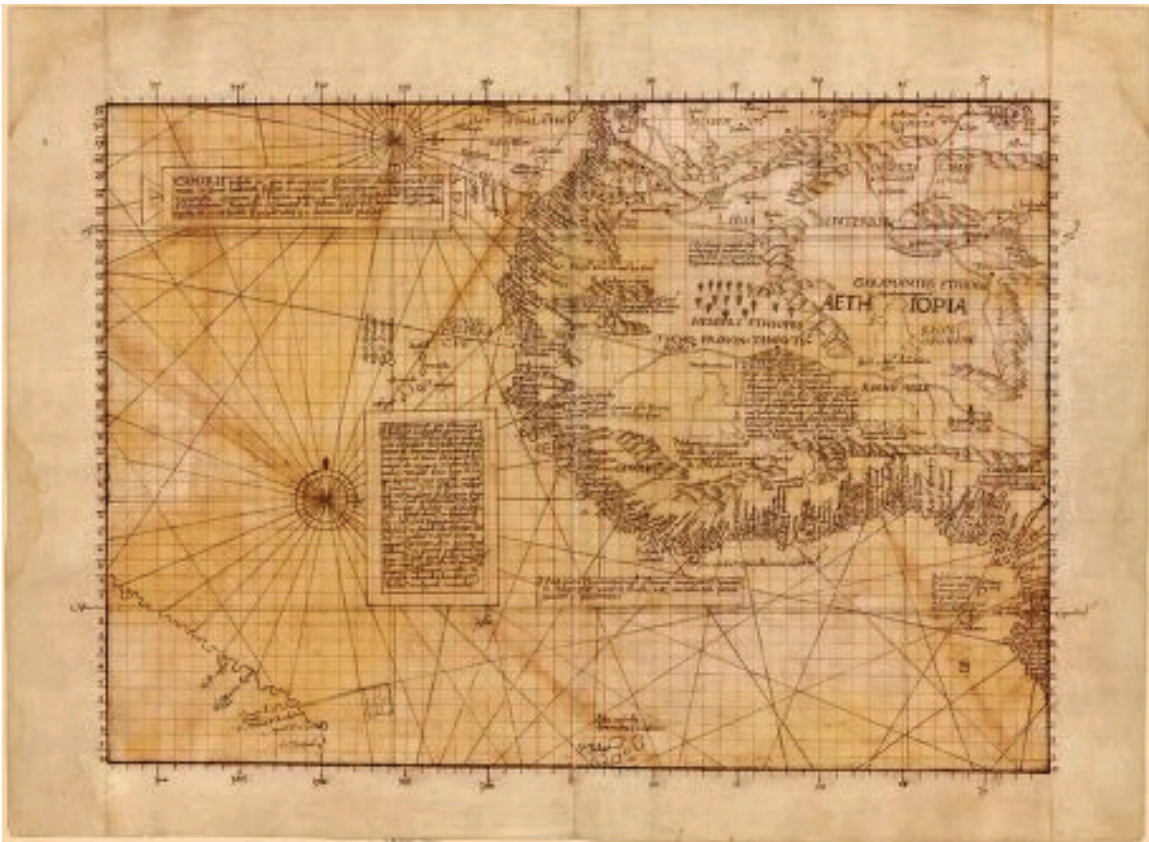


Figure 5: Schöner's rendition of sheet 6 of the 1516 *Carta Marina*

The full errata shield transcription is as follows (line content and ligatures maintained in transcription):

Errata emendentur

In porta Norbogie parties ppe oceanu deponat nome gro<
neland : In oceano Germaniico deponat nome insule Islanda
⁹unenit ei alteri insule magis septetrioali, Sub fluuio se Sene<
ga legat seu brachi p seu brachi. Prope oceanu hespericu le<
gat leopdi p Peopardi. Prope baldac legat soluit tribute im<
pertaori Cahaa : in tabul⁹a magna ppe prasilia legat portogalen
ses p portogalesis : et in eadem Januensis p tanuesis. In Arabia deserta legat' q
charoana mercatorus inuadut Braua isula pro
brana ppe Bismagar legat rege mortuo ḡburent p ḡburetur
in tabula zaylo legat' diusa in .4. p diuisa₃ fluui<
um legat' corat rege Narinsinge p cotra rege Penes linea ambitum
in tablua Tartarie Mogal legat' aledis pecorid⁹ apta p alen<
dis pedorib⁹ : in tabula Cathay puicie legat' veteris ac noui te<
stameti sceipturas p scripturrara : in eade legat' : s₃ dispositioe
faciei p dispositioi in tabula sub ciuitate Chaa legat' lpera<
toris p impatorus et in eade habitatois dni Chaa p babitatoi
et l eade legat' sunt l eo . 4 . columne de auro. Penes impa<
tore Noy legat' impator up. 600000 . armatorus . In tabu<
la Mangi legat' dictur puincia Mangi pro prouin<
ciam magui : vbicuq₃ ponitur prisilicum legatur
brasilicu : cetera lectoris Discreitioi comitant.