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 illusive\(^1\). The hyperspectral imaging accomplished last year at the Library of Congress\(^2\) 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 where 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 where 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.
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 Nuremberg mathematician and astronomer, Johannes Schöner (1474-1547). This
particular sheet was also not bound into the Schöner Sammelband in the same way as the other sheets of the 1507 and 1516 maps and displays a different watermark from the others.

Figure 3: Sheet 6 of the Carta Marina

Figure 4: Red lines drawn by Johannes Schöner

The errata list imaged using hyperspectral techniques contains two errors, “seu brachi” and “Teopardi”, that remain uncorrected on sheet 6 while all the other corrections listed in the errata shield have been made to the map. The fact that
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
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 fluuo 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 inadem Januensis p tanuesis. In Arabia deserta legat' q
charoana mercatorus inuadut Braua isula pro
brana ppe Bismagar legat rege mortuo 9burent p 9buretur
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 pecori9 apta p alen<
dis pedorib9 : in tabula Cathay puicie legat’ veteris ac noui te<
stanti seipturas p seipturrara : in eade legat’ : s3 dispositioe
faciei p dispositioi in tabula sub ciuitate Chaa legat’ Ipera<
toris p impatorus et in eade habitatois dni Chaa p babitatoi
et I eade legat’ sunt I 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.