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Review

CHET VAN DUZER, *Henricus Martellus's World Map at Yale (c. 1491):
Multispectral Imaging, Sources, and Influence*

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CHET VAN DUZER, *Henricus Martellus's World Map at Yale (c. 1491): Multispectral Imaging, Sources, and Influence* (Cham: Springer, 2019). xx, 208 pp., colour illus., extras online. Price: €89.99, £79.99, \$109.99. ISBN: 978-3-319-76839-7.

In the second half of the fifteenth century, Italy was eager to learn about Africa and Asia, in order to forge alliances against the Ottoman threat and to have direct access to the luxury goods that came from these regions. Among others, Henricus Martellus, of German origin, authored maps which indicate the interest at that time in a more in-depth knowledge of the geography of the world. He authored maps for two of the manuscripts of the *Geography* of Ptolemy, and for an *Insularium illustratum* with maps and descriptions of certain islands, which also included a world map (found in five contemporary manuscripts), as well as a world map printed by Francesco Rosselli, and the very large world map now kept at Yale University which is the subject of this volume. Its state of preservation does not allow a definitive conclusion as to whether it was also printed—however, this is very likely. This map has attracted few studies; it bears similarities with Martin Behaim's globe made in Nuremberg (1492) and with Waldseemüller's world map (1507). Furthermore, it has been suggested that it might have influenced Christopher Columbus's geographical conceptions.

The book has benefited from the use of various recent techniques to obtain high-resolution images of the map in natural, infrared, and ultraviolet light, as well as multispectral images. This allowed the author to read many of the inscriptions in it and to identify significant facts, such as the unusual shape of Africa.

The first chapter deals with the work of Martellus, whose life remains almost unknown. Manuscripts and isolated maps are quickly described and classified chronologically. By means of internal criticism and of comparison with other maps, the map in question can be dated to the end of 1491 or the beginning of 1492. The next four chapters examine captions, in the oceans and on land, in Asia and in the western and southern parts of the world. They are provided with an English translation. Very precise comments identify their sources and compare them with Waldseemüller's world map, in order to shed light on the working method of the latter. Captions are generally carefully transcribed. There are a few mistakes on pages 14, 53, 56 (*recte* 'capiant'), 67, 70, 71, 82, 83, 85, 90 (*recte* 'perniciosa'), 93, 102, 103, 105, 113, 114. Fortunately, they are of little consequence.

The map is larger than the other Martellus world maps, indicating a particular interest in the eastern Indian Ocean. It is perhaps for this reason that the author excludes Europe and the Middle East from his investigations

(Chapter 3, entitled ‘Toponyms in Arabia, Syria, and Mesopotamia’, devotes a mere three pages to a few place names in Arabia). However, the author has convincingly identified the works that were used by the cartographer for his loans: a manuscript by Marco Polo, in the Latin translation by Francesco Pipino, similar to Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale “Vittorio Emanuele III”, Vind. Lat. 50 (3273); and the 1491 edition of the encyclopaedia entitled *Hortus sanitatis*. These detailed analyses show that Martellus makes eclectic use of his sources. For the winds, he copied Isidore of Seville. For North Africa and Europe, he uses Ptolemy, despite the fact that he had more recent and more accurate models, as shown in his other works (but in the absence of editing these parts of the map, we cannot fully judge the validity of this conclusion). For northern Asia, Marco Polo provides the bulk of the inscriptions. But it is West and South Africa, open to the Portuguese travels of exploration, that were of particular interest to him, and this makes the map an important witness to their progress, showing a series of toponyms relating to the travels of Diogo Cão (1484–1486) and Bartolomeu Dias (1487–1488), not found in any other surviving map. An important conclusion of this study is that Waldseemüller used a map similar to that of Yale, but in an eclectic way.

The most striking feature of the world map is the representation of southern most Africa with the shape of a foot, and with the heel extending south-west and the tip forming a peninsula projecting eastward. Original, non-Ptolemaic hydrography and toponymy are also apparent, with Nile continuing beyond the Mountains of the Moon. One of the major contributions of this volume is the connection established with the *tabulae modernae* entitled *Egyptus novelo* included in three manuscripts of Ptolemy’s *Geography*; these are probably copies of a map that was exhibited in 1441 during the Council of Florence, in which religious from Ethiopia participated. Martellus uses a more complete version of this map, extending further east. The author suggests that this version was of Ethiopian origin, using a caption from Fra Mauro’s world map (circa 1450), which explicitly states that Ethiopian envoys drew all these regions for him. This hypothesis is reinforced by the mention of the acquisition in 1456 by the king of Naples of a map of Ethiopia on canvas which, given its price, must have been very large. On the other hand, there is still some doubt about another hypothesis that sees a modified representation of the earthly Paradise in the extreme tip of southern Africa. It is true that Paradise is located in southern Africa on some rare fifteenth-century maps. But the surrounding mountains, the presence of a lake and three (not four) rivers, and the proximity of the *Gattiana civitas ubi moratur presbiter Johannes* do not justify this con-

clusion in any way. For what reason would Martellus have omitted an explicit reference to Paradise?

The last chapter deals with the influence of the Yale map. Like Waldseemüller a few years later, Martin Behaim also used a large map that was similar in most of its details, but with some dissimilarities, especially in the shape of South Africa. A further question in this chapter concerns the possible influence of the world map on Columbus, because it perfectly illustrates the possibility of reaching Asia by crossing the Atlantic. But there is some uncertainty here. Columbus might have consulted the world map, or another similar one made by Martellus; or, perhaps, both had independent access to an earlier map. At this point in the discussion, the famous Toscanelli map is referred to, and, in about ten bright pages, the author summarizes the debate, provides further comments, and concludes definitely that this map is a forgery, and that the forger certainly drew on Martellus.

It is regrettable that the author did not provide a complete edition of the map's legends and toponyms, which would have allowed us to address other problems. Opposing the *veteres* (Strabon and Ptolemy) and the *novi* (contemporaries), Martellus notes in a cartouche that the latter discovered realities omitted by the former because they were unknown to them. This theme runs throughout the geographical elaborations of the quattrocento and beyond, each scholar striving to resolve this contradiction in his own way by favouring one or the other side. One cannot understand humanist geography without considering this fact; far from being a commonplace, it has generated epistemological debates that are often echoed in textual and cartographic productions. Despite this limitation, and despite the few minor shortcomings mentioned above (to which the meagreness of the French-language bibliography should be added), this first overall study of Martellus's map provides new findings solidly established and focuses on the Martellus figure hitherto poorly known.

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HATEM ELLIESIE, *Völkerrechtliche Beziehungen zwischen Äthiopien und Italien im Lichte des Vertrags von Ucciali/Wuchale (1889)*, Studien zum Horn von Afrika, 5 (Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2017). xxii, 232 pp., 8 maps, illus. Price: €49.80. ISBN: 978-3-89645-685-4.

Es war der erste Sieg afrikanischer Truppen über eine europäische Nation. Am 1. März 1896 besiegten abessinische Soldaten unter Kaiser (*nəguśä*