

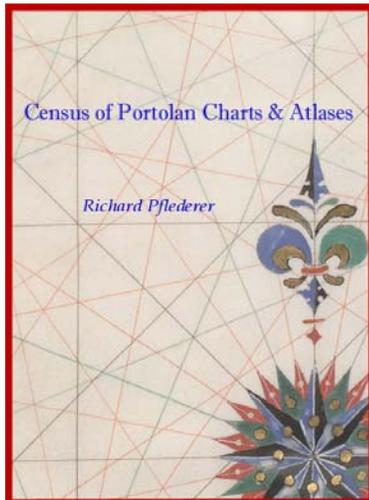
Census of Portolan Charts and Atlases

Richard Pflederer

Privately published by the author, © 2009

Hardback book - xxvi + 236 pages + CD-ROM containing database & spreadsheet

Price: US\$86.00 plus S&H; order via email -- PortChartCensus@prodigy.net



Portolan charts are manuscript sea charts, originally covering the Mediterranean Sea, and typically drawn on vellum. The oldest surviving example was produced in the last decade of the 13th century, probably in Genoa. These charts have been studied systematically

during the last 100 years, beginning with Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld's *Periplus* in 1897. Later works focused on specific authors (Henry Wagner on Battista Agnese), specific periods (Tony Campbell on pre-1500 charts), particular collections (Susan Biadene on the Biblioteca del Museo Correr) or production points (George Tolia on Greek charts).

This present work by Richard Pflederer builds on these important earlier works by expanding the scope to cover all surviving charts, wherever and whenever produced and wherever preserved. The census contains 1,842 charts and atlases comprising a total of 5,711 charts including the sheets of atlases. For each entry, the census provides details on its

production (authorship, year and place) and its present or most recently recorded place preserved. But equally importantly, it provides details on references to each chart or atlas found in dozens of previous studies.

Pflederer's definition of portolan charts is broad and stylistically based – not constrained by chronology or place – and therefore his census contains charts whose production dates range from the late 13th century into the 18th century, written in a wide variety of languages including Latin, Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, English as well as a few in Arabic and Japanese. Until the mid-fifteenth century, coverage area of these charts was generally limited to the Mediterranean Sea and nearby waters, but once the voyages of oceanic exploration began, the coverage area expanded to include the entire globe.

The information in this census is presented in three forms: a hard copy book, an EXCEL spreadsheet and an ACCESS database. These latter formats allow the researcher almost unlimited freedom for seeing and analyzing the information in a variety of views to facilitate specific research projects. For example, the database can be filtered for a single production point then sorted chronologically; or the body of work of a particular author can be viewed and organized to isolate atlases from individual charts. Of course the holdings of a particular institution can be filtered and organized in a variety of ways.

Pflederer Census of Portolan Charts – List of Data Fields

Production

Authorship
Year produced
Place of production, city & country
Chart or atlas (number of sheets)

Where kept, present or last reported place

Country
City
Institution, ms number
Date of most recent report of this chart

References in literature

Campbell
Astengo
Wagner
Rey Pastor
Pujades
Corteseo
Foncin
Pflederer
History of Cartography (volumes 1, 2 & 3)
... plus over two dozen others

Here is a sample data extract from the hard copy version:

ITALY - Siena	
Biblioteca Comunale	
Author: Dalolmo, Rocco MS number: S.V.1 Date: 1542 Production: Italy, Ancona	C References Astengo: ItSi1 Periplus: p 66 Pflederer: C-701
Author: Briatico, Cholla di MS number: S.V.2 Date: 1430 Production: Italy	A3 References Campbell: 109 Periplus: p 60 Pflederer: A-701 Pujades: A17
Author: Prunes, Mateo MS number: S.V.3 Date: 1553 Production: Spain, Palma de Majorca	C References Astengo: ItSi2 Rey Pastor: p 097 Pflederer: C-702
Author: Prunes, Mateo MS number: S.V.4 Date: 1599 Production: Spain, Palma de Majorca	C References Astengo: ItSi3 Rey Pastor: p 097 Pflederer: C-703

Early reaction to this book has been favorable:

“This work represents a notable achievement in documenting the first seagoing charts - soon become the primary reference source for any serious student of portolan charts.” ... Ralph Ehrenberg, formerly of the Library of Congress

"... a complete and accurate listing, indispensable for scholars, reference librarians and lovers of old sea charts." ... Dr Corradino Astengo, Professor of Geography, University of Genoa

“An invaluable resource.” ... Dr. John Hébert, Chief, Geography & Map Division, Library of Congress

“The best point is that you can search this specially structured database to find out where the charts were produced, who by and when and much more besides, in easily accessible on the CD.” ... Sarah Tyacke, Senior Research Fellow, London University

~~~~~

If you would like to order a set for your library, please send your purchase order to:

[PortChartCensus@prodigy.net](mailto:PortChartCensus@prodigy.net)

or by post: Portolan Chart Census  
1628 Founders Hill North  
Williamsburg, VA  
USA 23185