Oronce Finé
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Oronce Finé (or Fine;[1] Latin: Oronzium Finnaeus or Finaeus; Italian: Oronzo Fineo; 20 December 1494 – 8 August 1555) was a French mathematician and cartographer.

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Life

Born in Briançon, the son and grandson of physicians, he was educated in Paris (Collège de Navarre) and obtained a degree in medicine in 1522.

He was imprisoned in 1524, probably for practicing judicial astrology.

In 1531, he was appointed to the chair of mathematics at the Collège Royal (the present Collège de France), founded by King Francis I, where he taught until his death.[2][3]

Mathematics

Although primarily a populariser, Finé was one of the most prolific authors of mathematical books of his age. He worked in a wide range of mathematical fields, including practical geometry, arithmetic, optics, gnomonics, astronomy and instrumentalism.[4]

He gave the value of pi (≈ 3.14159) to be \( \frac{223}{72} \approx 3.1746 \) in 1544. Later, he gave \( \frac{47}{15} \approx 3.1333 \) and, in De rebus mathematicis (1556), he gave \( \frac{311}{100} \approx 3.1410 \).

Astronomy and geography

In 1542 Finé published De mundi sphaera, a popular astronomy textbook whose woodcut illustrations were much appreciated.[5] His writing on astronomy included guides to the use of astronomical equipment and methods (e.g. the ancient practice of determining longitude through the coordinated observation of lunar eclipses from two fixed points with enough distance between them to make the phenomena appear at different times of the night). He also described more recent innovations, such as an instrument he called a méthéoroscope (an astrolabe modified by adding a compass).

Explanatory work was complemented by direct contributions. His woodcut map of France (1525) is one of the first of its kind. He constructed an ivory sundial in 1524, which still exists.[6]

Finé's heart-shaped (cordiform) map projection may be his most famous illustration, and was frequently employed by other notable cartographers, including Peter Apian and Gerardus Mercator.[7]

Finé attempted to reconcile discoveries in the New World with old medieval legends and information (derived from Ptolemy) regarding the Orient. Thus, on one of his two world maps, Nova Universi Orbis Descriptio (1531), the legend marked Asia covers both North America and Asia, which were represented as one landmass. He used the toponym "America" for South America, and thus Marco Polo's Mangi, Tangu and Catay appear on the shores of the present-day Gulf of Mexico. On the same map, Finé drew Terra Australis to the south, including the legend "recently discovered but not yet completely explored", by which he meant the discovery of Tierra del Fuego by Ferdinand Magellan.[8]

Finé's cosmography was derived from the German mathematician and cosmographer Johannes Schöner.[9] In his study of Schöner's globes, Franz von Wieser, found that the derivation of Finé's mappemonde from them was "unmistakeable (unverkennbar)"; he said "Orontius Finaeus took from Schöner not only the 'Brasilie Regio', but the whole Austral Continent, the Strait of Magellan, and above all the whole arrangement of lands; in a word, the entire construction of Oronce Finé is a copy of Schöner's."[10] Lucien Gallois was forced to argue that Finé, who said he had been working on his mappemonde since 1521, had had direct or indirect personal communication with Schöner or had drawn upon his 1515 Luculentissima descriptio. Wieder's identification of Schöner's map gores of 1523 strengthens Gallois' case for Finé's reliance upon Schöner.[11]

Death and legacy

Finé died in Paris at age 60.

Jean Clouet is said to have painted a portrait of Finé in 1530, when Finé was 36. With the original painting lost, the rendering is now known only through prints derived from the original image.

Honours

The lunar crater Orontius and Finaeus Cove in Antarctica are named after Oronce Finé, using his Latinized name. In 2014, a square named after Oronce Fine was inaugurated in Paris, France.
See also

- Charles Hapgood

References

1. For the debate over the French spelling of Finé’s name see Alexander Marr, ‘Introduction’, in The Worlds of Oronce Fine: Mathematics, Instruments and Print in Renaissance France (Shaun Tyas, 2009), pp. 1–12. Finé’s name is often found spelt with an acute accent, but the Dictionnaire de Biographie française (ed. Roman D’Amat, Paris, 1975, p.1370) gives a very definite direction that his name should be spelt without an accent. “Fine, et non Finé”.


3. [1](http://apprendre-math.info/history/photos/Fine.jpeg)


Further reading


External links

- Mathematicians: Fine (http://www-groups.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/~history/Mathematicians/Fine.html)


- THE MYSTERIES OF THE PIRI REIS MAP: THE CART OF ORONTIUS FINAEUS (Oronce Fine) (http://www.diegocuoghi.it/Piri_Reis/PiriReis_eng.htm)


Categories: 1494 births | 1555 deaths | People from Briançon | University of Paris alumni | Collège de France faculty | French astronomers | French cartographers | 16th-century astronomers | 16th-century French mathematicians | 16th-century cartographers | 16th-century French people | French mathematicians

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