



UiT Norges arktiske universitet

# The land of pygmies and monsters

– glimpses from the Arctic map collection at UiT –

(presented during Pint of Science, Tromsø 15 May 2024)

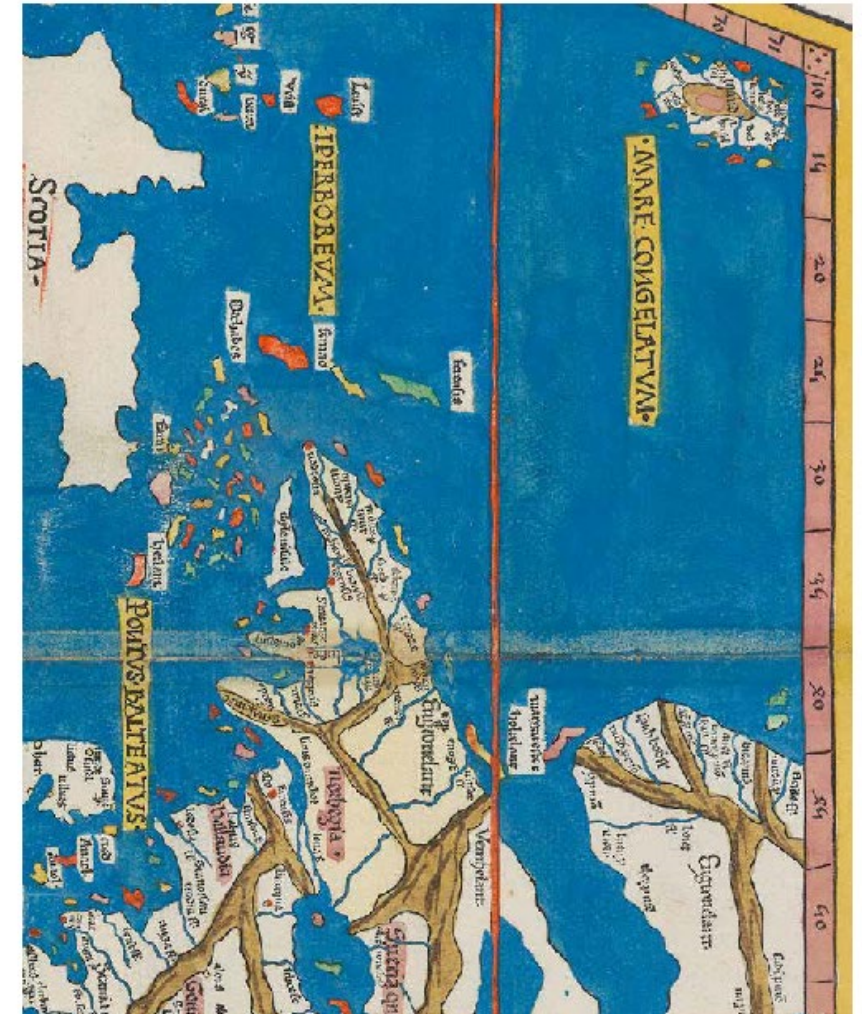
Per Pippin Aspaas

PhD, Senior Academic Librarian  
University Library, UiT

# Ottar

Gamledagers forestillingsverden  
om det nordlige:  
Nordområdekart fra  
perioden 1480–1750

1–2 · 2024 · Nr. 347–348 · Årgang 70



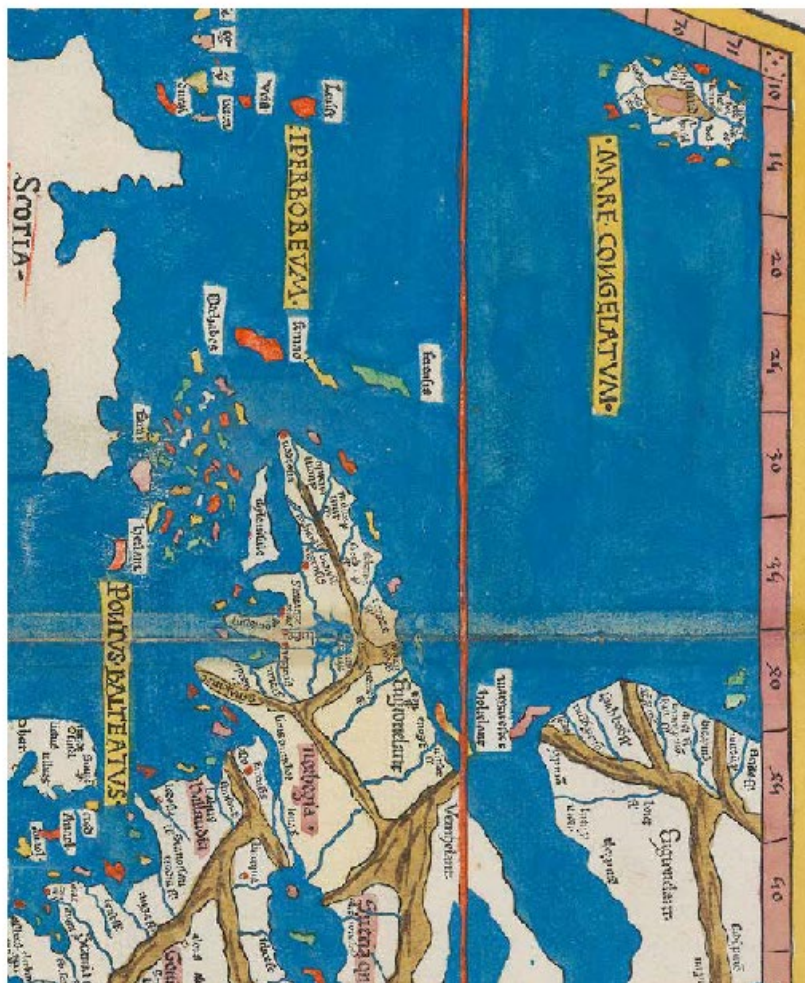
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UiT has acquired a near-complete collection of maps of the European North

--- as printed from 1482 to 1601 ---

UiT has many map samples from later periods as well

The National Library boasts an even larger map collection



## What to do with these historical documents?

*... and are they really that interesting?*

# Early modern maps = an outsiders' view of our world

The long story of «urban myths»

The even longer story of ancient Greek myths

The ever-lasting wisdom: never trust a local expert !

How heroes (and zeroes) are made

Tall tales of pygmies and monsters



Letter from Copenhagen,  
30 June 1768:

«... I am on my way to  
Vardøhus,  
the metropolis of  
Finnmark ...»

# Maximilian Hell's Arctic Expedition 1768/69

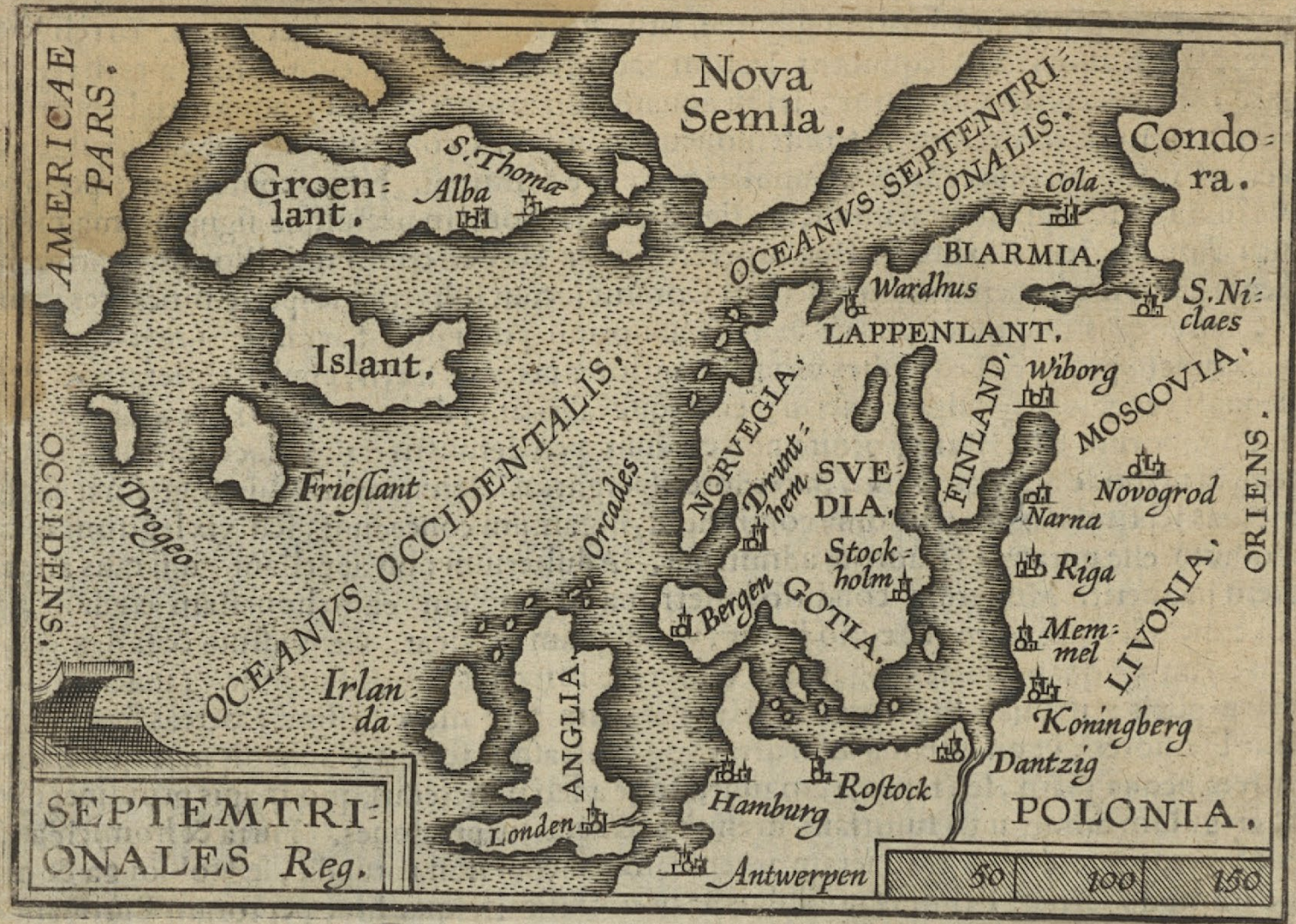
Astronomo ac celeberrimo J. D. Wargentin  
Regio longe clarissimo etc.

Maximilianus Hell S. J. S. P. J.

Invitatione, et Sumptibus Clementissimi Regis Daniae professor  
in Finmarchia metropolim Vardöhusium Transillum Veneris  
anno sequente observaturus; iter hoc meum ita ordinatum est, ut  
circa finem Mensis Augusti, aut principium Septembris in hac statione  
ad finem hyemem ibidem exsistaturus. Cum itaque ipsis his 9 aut 10  
mensibus tempus navigaret quamplurimas tum Astronomicas, tum phycas  
instituenti observationes, rogatum se volui, ut hoc meum propositum  
cum Colegis et Correspondentibus suis commune facias, quo observatio-  
es suas astronomicas cum primis ad longitudinem geographicam pertinentes  
bellitum et Schipsum. O. S. J., occultationum fixarum a V, aut transituum  
per meridianum comparatorum cum fixis instituire, et mecum com-  
unicare dignentur.

Physicas observationes meas locum praecipuum obtinebunt observa-  
s barometrica e quibus nova aequa...





Mini-atlas  
1598

(Ortelius  
& Galle)

”Vardøhus och Finnmark på tidigmoderna kartor”

Ottar Vol 70, Nr 1–2 (2024)

# Henning Hansen





# SCHONLANDIA XIII NOVA TABVLA



DANIA habet nomen illud à rege quodam Dano uocato, complectiturq; Cimbricam Chersonesum siue Iutiam, quam uulgo Dietmarfen uocant, Eyonem, Selandiam, quã aij Sialandiam appellant, & multas alias insulas. Anno Christi 1398. subegit rex Daniae imperio suo regnũ Suecorum, & regnum Norduegie. Ciuitates insigniores Cimbricæ sunt Slesuic, ubi aliquando fuit ducatus, Ripen, sedes episcopalis, Vibergia, Harnisia, uulgo Oors, & Horsnesch. In Eione, Oitonia uulgo Oithons, Melphort, Nuenborg, Schwinborg. Habet autem hæc insula situm inter Cimbricam & Selandiam.

Selandia urbes præcipuæ.  
Rofchilt, episcopalis: Schlawoff, Hafnia, quæ uulgo Koppenhagen & Kopmanhafen, id est, mercatori portus uocatur. Ibi est regia sedes & studium uniuersale. In Norduegia, Niadrofia, uulgo Drunheim, & est metropolis omnium ecclesiarum Norduegie, Islandie & Gronlandie. Habet & hæc ciuitates episcopales Bergin, Staffanger, Asloiam & Hamariam. In Suecia, Stockholm regia, Upsalia episcopalis, & studio uniuersali decorata. Nicopia, uulgo Nicopinck, Vafte num, uulgo watzstein & wafteen &c. In Gothia, wardburg, Malmogia, portus & emporium, Calmaria urbs magna, Suedercopia emporium & portus &c.

Sebastian  
Münster, 1540



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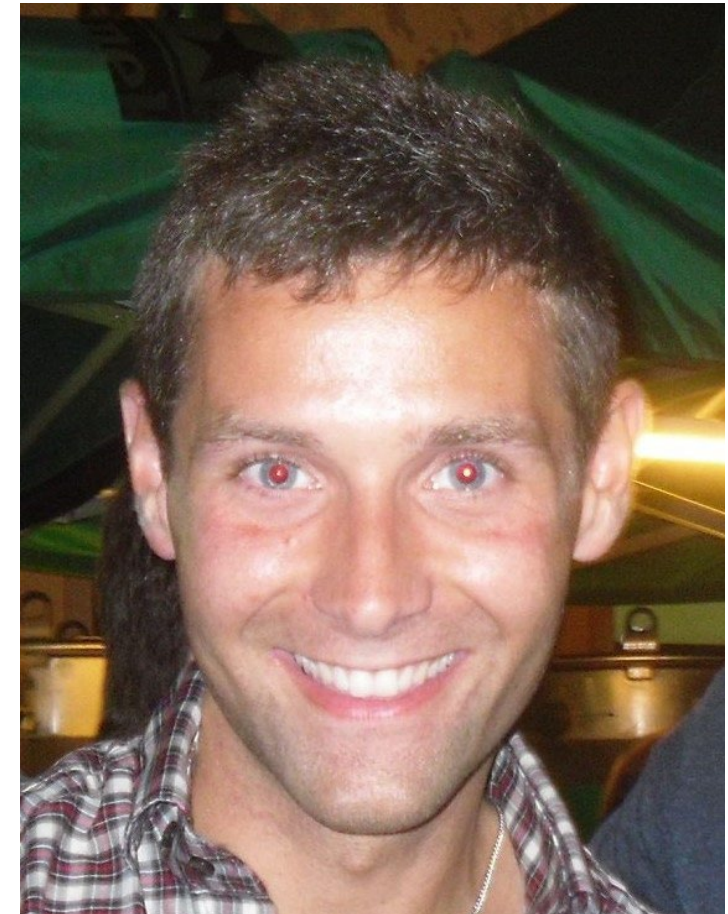
Tall tales of pygmies and monsters



«Emellomm Grønlandt oc Rytzlandt»: Grønlands forhold til omverden på gamle kart

# Ian Peter Grohse

Ottar Vol 70, Nr 1–2 (2024)





Ziegler,  
c. 1530

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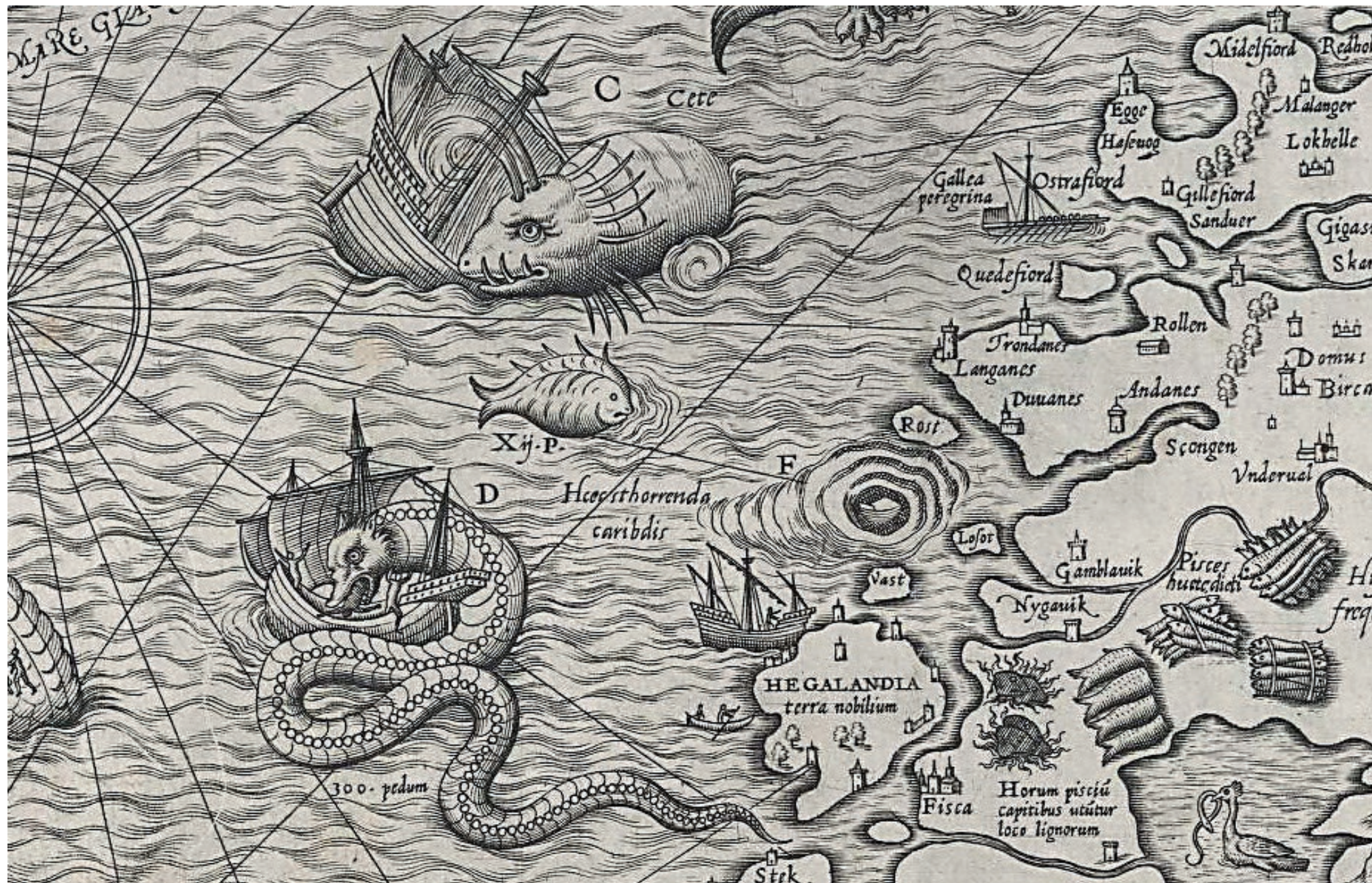
Kharybdis i Norskehavet: Avbildninger av Moskstraumen på kart fra 1500-talet

Ottar Vol 7, Nr 1–2 (2024)



# Simon Franzen





Lafreri,  
1572  
(revised  
version  
of Olaus  
Magnus,  
1539)

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Willem Barentsz' polarekspedisjoner og kunsten å sette seg selv på kartet

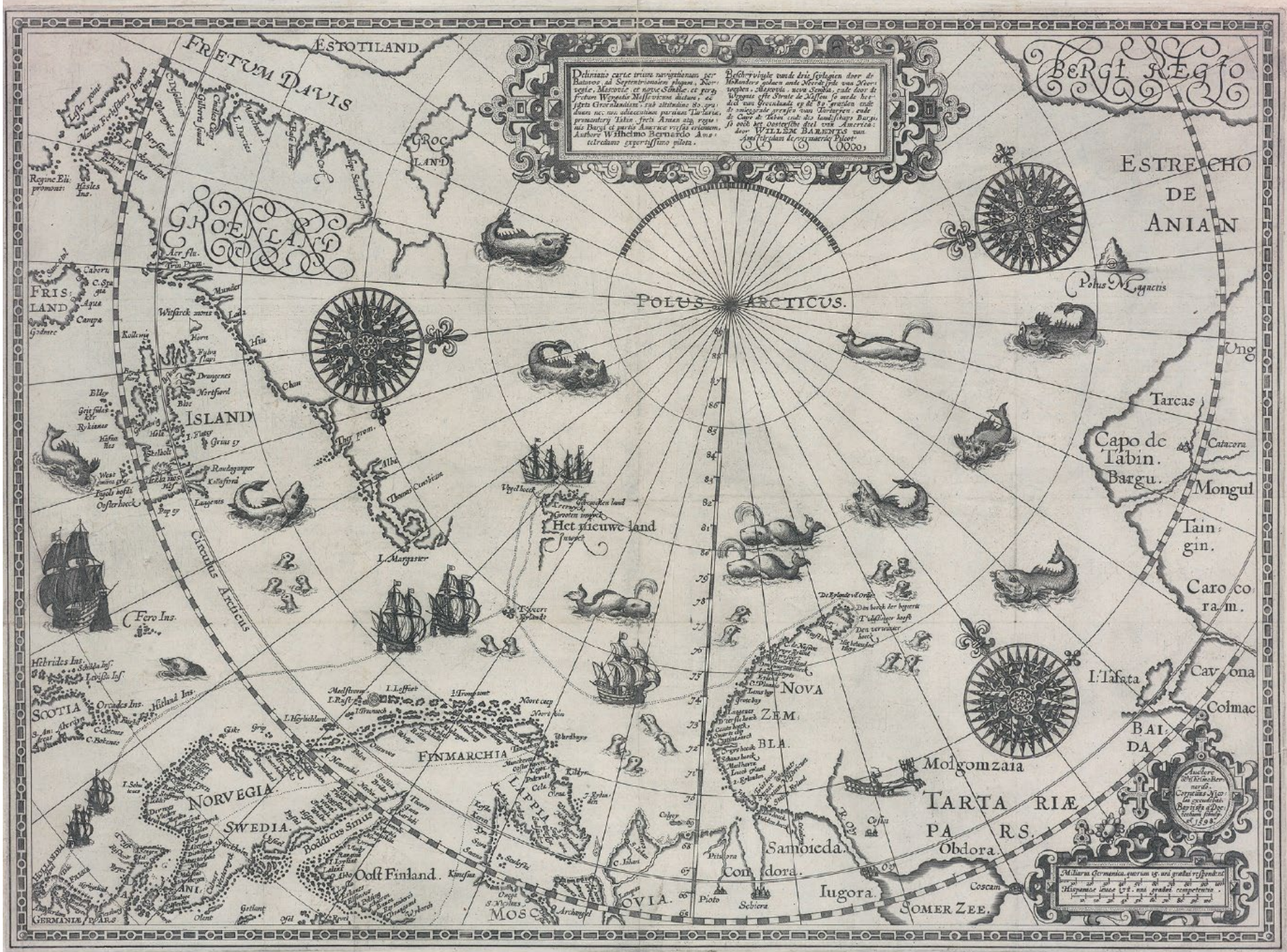
Ottar Vol 70, Nr 1–2 (2024)



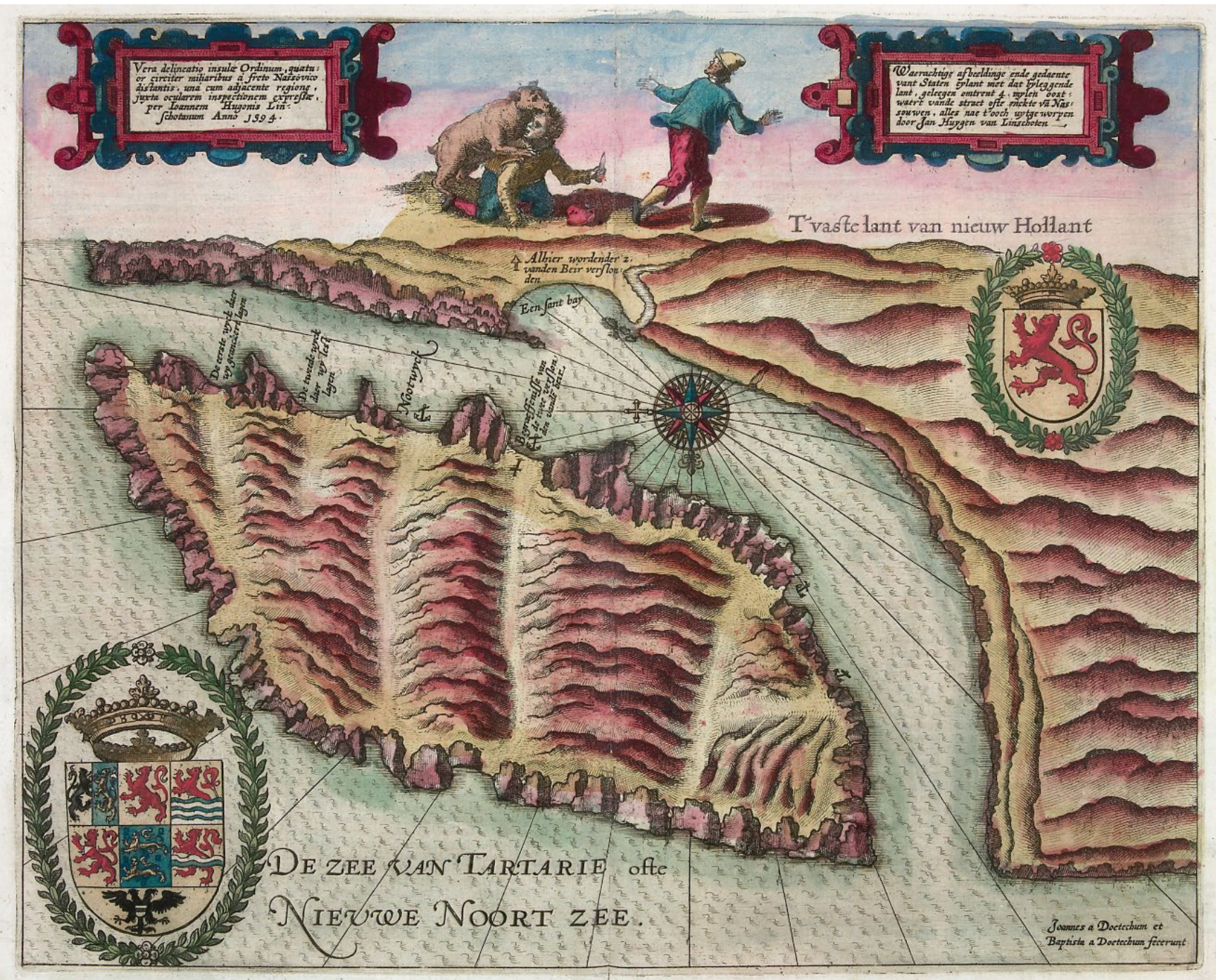
# Andreas Klein







Willem  
Barentsz,  
1598



Jan Huygen  
van Linschoten,  
1601

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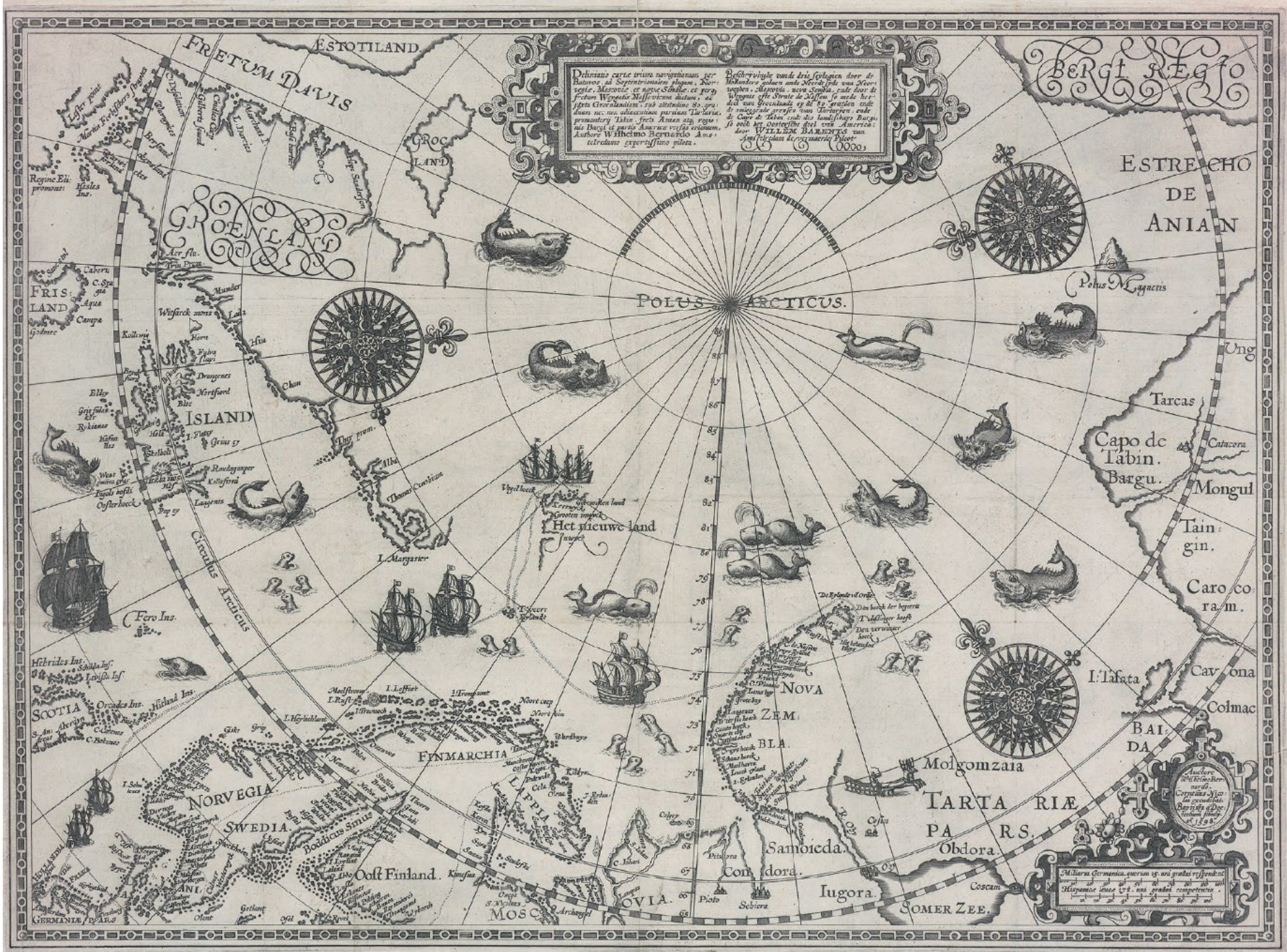




Olaus Magnus  
1555 (excerpt)



Olaus Magnus  
1539 (excerpt)



Willem Barentsz, 1598



«Here live pygmies, with a maximum height of about 4 feet ...»

Gerard Mercator, 1613

*Ottar* Vol. 70  
Nr 1–2 (2024)  
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