

EARLY DISCOVERERS

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WARMUND YGL'S MAP OF TIROL AND OTHER EARLY MAPS OF GLACIERS

THE *Österreichische Alpenverein* celebrated its hundredth anniversary in 1962 and in commemoration of this event a new edition of Ygl's map of Tirol was published (Ygl, 1962).

Warmund Ygl's family were of Tirolese descent, and had estates at Volderturn near Hall, but later he moved to Prague where the original map was made in 1604–05. The date of Ygl's birth is not known; he died in 1611.

The map consists of nine sheets, on a scale of 1:247,000, each sheet measuring about 38.5 × 28.5 cm. In addition there are three large sheets giving a detailed list of the geographical features of Tirol; there is in addition a long dedication of the map to his "Invincible and Almighty Roman Kaiser Rudolf II".

Professor Hans Kinzl of the Geographisches Institut, Leopold-Franzens-Universität Innsbruck, has written a studied and detailed article of 47 pages to accompany the map, describing its origin, its features, the sources from which it stemmed and the results accruing from its publication.

The outlines of the map appear to be based upon the network of the Tirolese rivers which in those days offered better thoroughfare than the then impenetrable mountains. These latter appear only in the form of tiny mounds which Professor Kinzl describes as looking like mole-hills. Other than rivers the main features of the map are the settlements, most of which are still today known by their original names. With more than 2,000 of these, the map forms a useful basis for some knowledge of the history of Tirol.

The original map, so far as is known, is only in the possession of three institutions, the *Österreichische Nationalbibliothek* in Vienna (from which the new edition has been printed), the *Museum Ferdinandeum* at Innsbruck, and the *Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek* at Göttingen. But it has been known in some quarters for a long time, particularly owing to its original geographical presentation of the Tirolese alpine glacier system.

In the district of the *Ötztal* and *Stubai* Alps Ygl drew an enormous mass of ice interspersed by what appear to be large crevasses. This ice mass is entitled "*Der Grosz Verner*" and "*Glacies continua et perpetua*". This is shown in Figure 1 which is here reproduced from the original map in an article by Dr. J. M. Thorington (1930).

The village of *Sölden* is marked on the north-western margin of the ice. An interesting point is the reference to the "*Etsch fl. Ursprung*" (source of the River Etsch) shown to the south-west of the *Grosz Verner*. This stream flows under the ice and later becomes the Italian River Adige. Another is the reference on the eastern margin of Figure 1 to "*Auf dem Prenner*", which is the site of the present Brenner Pass, but which, as Dr. Thorington has pointed out in his extremely interesting article on the *Ötztal* glaciers, shows no actual road at the time of Ygl's map (in fact there are no roads in the map at all).

This map has been regarded for a long time as the oldest geographical presentation of a glacier. In truth, however, as Professor Kinzl points out, this is only the case for the Alps, since there are older maps. Already in the year 1539 Olaus Magnus drew several high mountains in Iceland in his *Carta marina*, in which the word "*nix*" (snow) is shown. A few decades later, in about 1590, in the map of Iceland made by Bishop Gudbrandur Thorláksson and published by Abraham Ortelius and Gerhard Mercator glaciers were shown in the form of high cakes of ice. In these also is the description "*nix*" or "*nix perpetua*". These maps were perhaps the pattern which Ygl used for his map.

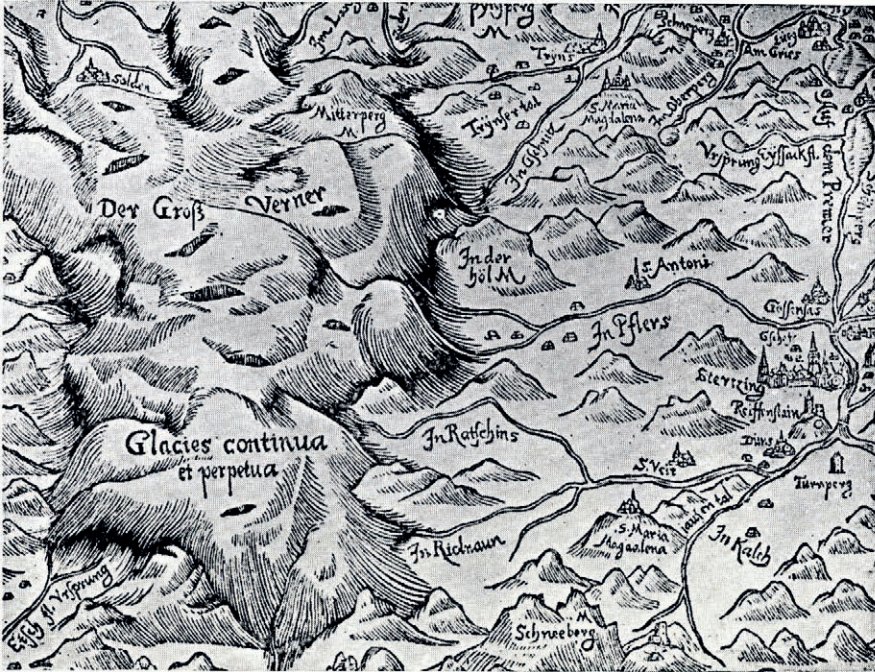


Fig. 1. Part of one of the sheets of Warmund Ygl's map of Tyrol, 1604



Fig. 2. Part of the map "Le Tirol" by Sanson, 1654

Both maps reproduced from Dr. Thorington's article by courtesy of the author and the Royal Geographical Society.

It is surprising that the oldest description of a glacier comes from the tropics in the map of the great Ptolemaeus, published in Rome in 1490. The Mountains of the Moon are drawn in, and there the plural word "nives" is used.

Another early map of Switzerland, by Aegidius Tschudi in 1538 shows the word "Gletscher" for glaciers.

In 1635 W. J. Blaeu used the term "*Ferner et lacus glaciatus*" (glacier and frozen lake) to describe Ygl's *Grosz Verner*. Early French cartographers also used this designation, but it sometimes led to difficulties. In Sanson's map, "Le Tirol" of 1654, he used the terms "*Der Gross Verner*" and "*Le grand Brenner Montagne*" (Fig. 2) close together, as though they meant the same thing, which may be the cause of this confusion.

This is a very brief account of early maps showing glaciers, taken from Professor Kinzl's text accompanying the Ygl map, and from Dr. Thorington's article cited above.

REFERENCES

- Thorington, J. M. 1930. The Oetzthal glaciers in history and cartography before 1800. *Geographical Journal*, Vol. 75, No. 3, p. 233-41.
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