

Map engraver Christiaan Andreas Sepp, who died on 2nd August 1775, was the founder of a family business which became famous for its natural history plates. He was also the author of an innovative geographical textbook, for which he drew and engraved a uniform set of twenty-two miniature maps, about 120 x 95 mm. All the plates were beautifully engraved and although he only signed the first one, the world map, he made their authorship clear by signing it 'C.Sepp omnes fecit'.



Subsequently widely imitated by many other engravers, they were unusual in having no names of any kind. Instead, the titles were replaced by numbers I-XXII in cartouches and all the other names were represented by symbols, upper and lower case letters or arabic and roman figures. He produced a novel and entertaining method of teaching geography to children, by writing a chapter of questions and answers to go with the appropriate map. Each of these folded out in such a way as to be visible when the text was read:

I (The World); II (Europe); III (Portugal); IV (Spain); V (France); VI (Germany); VII (Switzerland); VIII (Italy); IX (Low Countries); X (Holland); XI (British Isles); XII (Denmark); XIII (Norway); XIV (Sweden); XV (Russia); XVI (Prussia); XVII (Poland); XVIII (Hungary); XIX (European Turkey); XX (Asia); XXI (Africa); XXII (America).

This duodecimo book, with the text in Dutch, was first published in 1758 by Frans Houttuyn in Amsterdam. In 1760 Houttuyn sold the plates to another Amsterdam publisher, Jan Herman Schneider, together with the right to produce an edition in French. Houttuyn was then obliged to have new plates engraved by A. van Kreveld, when he republished his own version later that year. These later maps are wrongly attributed to Sepp in the 1997 standard work on children's books published in the Netherlands during the eighteenth century: Buijnsters' *Bibliografie van Nederland*. In the next century Pieter J. Prinsen produced a new and completely revised version (see 1816).

Schneider's improved and enlarged French edition also appeared in 1760 and was entitled *Atlas des enfans*. It had an attractive frontispiece added and a supplement at the end entitled *Nouveau traité de la sphere*, which included two new plates. This work became a bestseller and six editions were published, with a new 143 mm. wide plate of XIII (Norway) added in the last issue of 1785. It was plagiarized all over Europe, which considerably upset Schneider.

The first pirated edition was not like all the later ones, though its maps were also close copies of Sepp's. It had a very different format: six volumes in nine, 210 mm. high and published in Moscow over a decade. This version by Philippe Henry Dilthey had French and Russian text on opposite pages: French on the verso and Russian on the recto.

In 1772 a blatant imitation was published in Amsterdam by Bartholomew Vlam, under the title *Nouvel atlas des enfans*. The preface falsely claimed that the maps were engraved after Guillaume Delisle, whereas in fact they were very close copies of Sepp's.





So Schneider obtained from Christiaan Sepp a written affirmation of ‘the true author & inventor of the maps and their explanations’, dated 13 August 1772. He printed this in his subsequent editions, together with his opinion of Vlam: ‘ignorant & petulant corruptor’ and ‘hypocritical in a ridiculous & impertinent preface, as if the work of another belonged to him; it is adding impudence & effrontery to the deceit’. He also described all imitators’ plates as ‘the work of clumsy apprentices’. However, Vlam’s book did well and went to five editions. A reprint of the last one and also a Dutch translation of it, were both published in Brussels in 1780 by Benoit Le Francq. He used the same plates and included a Vlam catalogue at the rear.

The next pirated edition was issued in Lyons in 1774 by Jean-Marie Bruyset. Its preface wrongly says that the maps were after Delisle and the publication date of the original Amsterdam edition was 1766. These new plates were engraved by Joseph Friedrich Rein: the world map is signed ‘Ios. Friedr. Rein omnes sculpsit.’ and ‘C.H. Stage excud. Aug.Vind.’ It was replaced with a new unsigned map from 1784 and the last edition of 1790 is by far the most common. These maps were presumably intended for the Augsburg edition which subsequently appeared in 1776 with different plates. Their world map is signed ‘I. Marianne Sculp.’ and ‘C.H. Stage excudit Aug.Vind.’.



Further editions with different plates were published in Venice (three editions), Lisbon (two editions with slightly different titles), Antwerp (French and Dutch editions) and Madrid (two editions). The translation into Spanish for the latter was by Francisco Vázquez and just six of these plates appeared again in 1799. These maps of the World, Spain, Europe, Asia, Africa and America, are to be found in the first edition only of a little children’s book by Juan C. Losada (see 1812).

Some other editions did not contain miniature maps. Benoit Le Francq later commissioned Cornelis van Baarsel to engrave some new plates. These were almost 50% larger, with the world map signed 'C. van Baarsel, omnes sculpt.' They appeared in editions six to ten of the *Nouvel atlas des enfans*: Brussels, Benoit Le Francq, 1791; Amsterdam, Bartholomew Vlam, 1793 (also 6th); Brussels, Benoit Le Francq, 1794; Amsterdam & Leiden, J. van Gulik and Abraham & Jan Honkoop, 1799; Leiden, Abraham & Jan Honkoop, 1808, 1817. A book titled *Nouvel atlas des enfans* was issued in Paris by Claude Auguste Saintin in 1811 but it was much larger at 220 x 145 mm. and had eight folding maps nothing like the Sepp ones.

*Geographische oefening.* Amsterdam, Franciscus Houttuyn, 1758, 1760; heirs of Franciscus Houttuyn, 1769, 1778, 1783.

*Atlas des enfans.* Amsterdam, Jan Herman Schneider, 1760, 1763, 1766, 1773, 1779, 1785.

*Atlas des enfans / Dietskoi atlas.* Moscow, Imperial University, 1768-78.

*Nouvel atlas des enfans.* Amsterdam, Bartholomew Vlam, 1772, 1776, 1779, 1782, 1788.

*Atlas des enfans.* Lyons, Jean-Marie Bruyset, 1774, 1778, 1783, 1784, 1790.

*Atlas für die jugend.* Augsburg, Conrad Heinrich Stage, 1776, 1780, 1791; Jenisch & Stage, 1833 (This is the fifth edition but it has not been possible to trace the fourth one).

*Nuovo atlante portatile.* Venice, Giammaria Bassaglia, 1777, 1785; Giacomo Storti, 1796.

*Nouvel atlas des enfans.* Brussels, Benoit Le Francq, 1780.

*Nieuwen atlas der jeugd.* Brussels, Benoit Le Francq, 1780, 1787.

*Novo atlas para uso da mocidade Portuguesa.* Lisbon, Typografia Rollandiana, 1782.

*Atlas des enfans.* Antwerp, Cornelius Martinus Spanoghe, 1786.

*Nieuwen atlas der jeugd.* Antwerp, Cornelius Martinus Spanoghe, 1786.

*Atlas elementar.* Madrid, Pantaleon Aznar, 1786, 1795.

*Atlas moderno para uso da mocidade.* Lisbon, Typografia Rollandiana, 1791.

*Breves tratados de esfera y geografia universal.* Madrid, widow & son of Joaquin Ibarra y Marin, 1799.

