

A recent sensational discovery: a globe made from two halves of ostrich eggs. The continents are meticulously engraved—Europe, Asia including Japan, parts of South America. And for the very first time: North America, presented in the form of a small archipelago—in accordance with the state of knowledge of the earliest 16th century.

The New York Public Library's collection includes a globe with the identical cartographic features as the ostrich egg globe: The Hunt-Lenox globe, cast in bronze and believed to be made in 1510. It was considered unique—until the discovery of the ostrich egg globe. Amazingly, every detail of the two globes is identical: the shapes of the landmasses, their names, even depictions of small ships and waves. And, surprisingly, both globes share the same mysterious inscription around the east coast of Asia: "Hic sunt dracones"—here be dragons. Hitherto, this inscription had only been known from the Hunt-Lenox globe.

There is only one explanation for the perfect conformity of the two globes: A cast of the ostrich egg globe was used as a mould for the bronze globe. Egg shell material loses its density over time, at a rate of 10% every 100 years. Examinations of the ostrich egg have revealed that it has almost lost half of its density compared to a fresh egg shell—which allows scientists to date it to around 1500. At that time, Amerigo Vespucci explored the coast of South America, discovering

that they had indeed found a new continent. Meanwhile, back in Florence another Italian, a restless genius, was pondering over the forces and metrics of nature: Leonardo da Vinci.

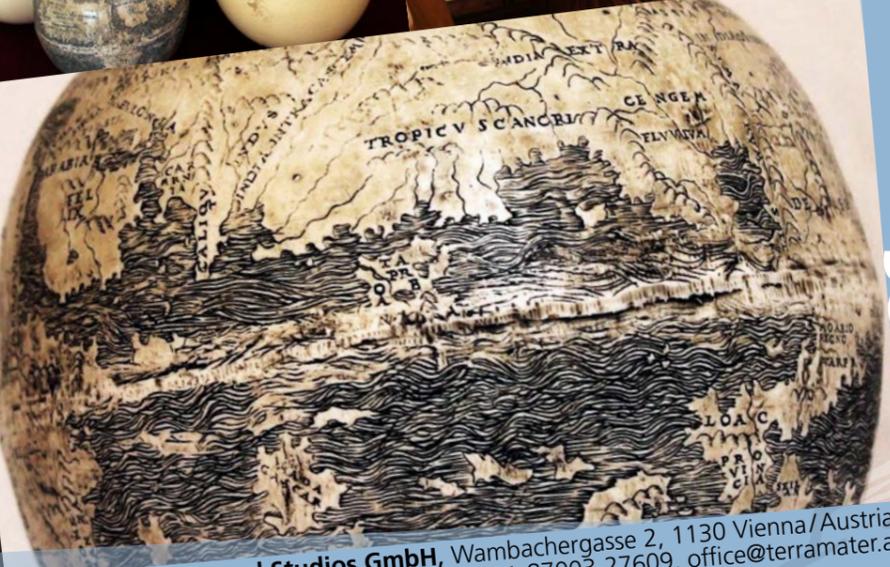
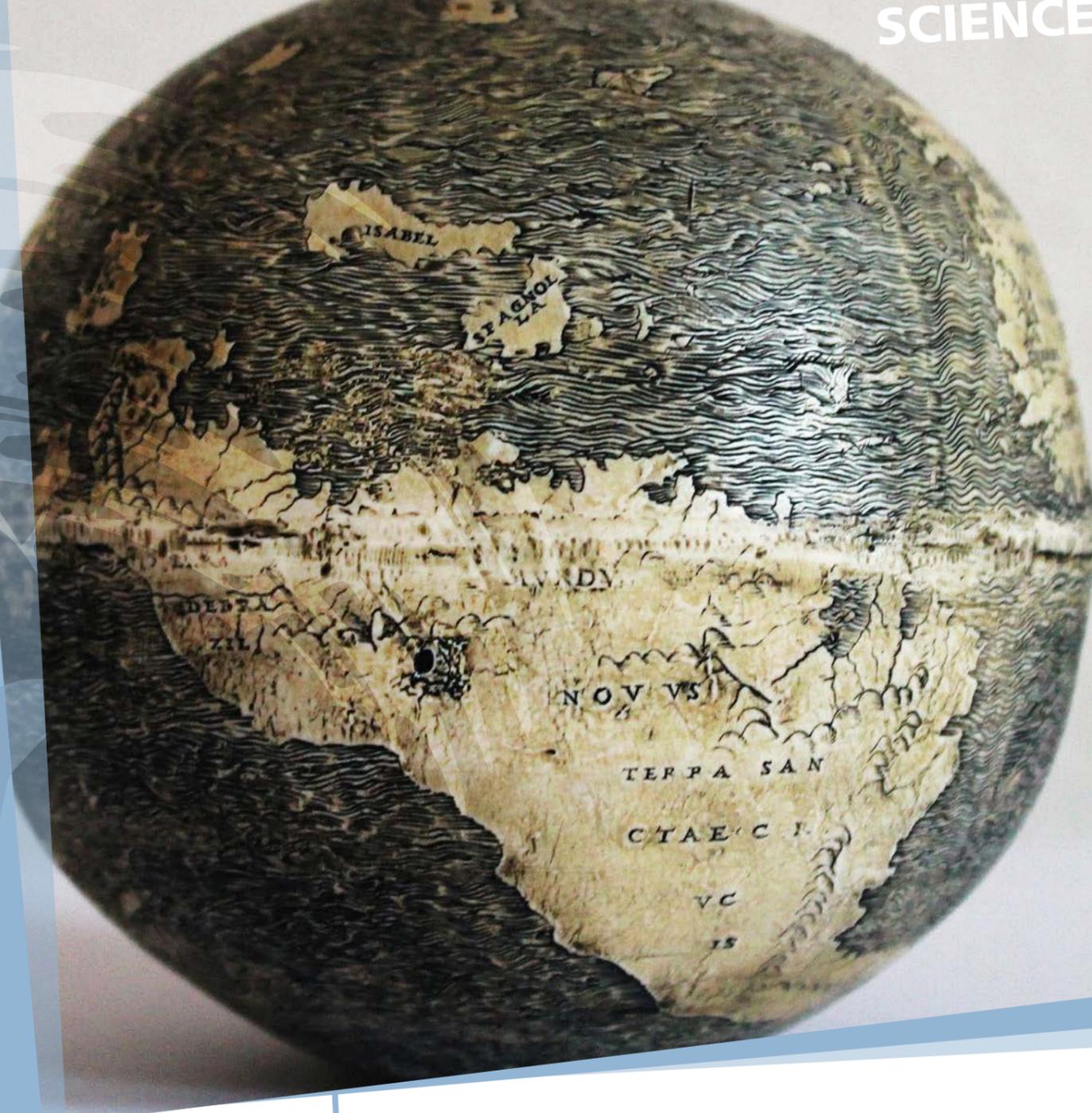
Leonardo considered himself a scientist; art to him was just another method of exploring nature. Alongside his mechanical and anatomical experiments, he was particularly interested in geography and drew a huge variety of maps himself. The Codex Leicester collects his treatises about gravitation, sun, moon and earth. At Leonardo's time, the spherical shape of the earth had already been common knowledge for centuries. For his own calculations he used the figure of 7,000 miles as its diameter.

Scientists now ponder over the question: Was the globe made by Leonardo da Vinci?

The Hunt-Lenox globe has a diameter of 11.2 centimetres at a scale of 1:80,000,000. At Leonardo's time, one nautical mile was equal to 1,280 metres. So the bronze globe represents earth with 7,000 miles in diameter—the same figure only Leonardo used.

The illustration of a tiny ship among the waves was done by a left-handed person, such as Leonardo was.

However, the ostrich egg is not signed and until now its origins are rather obscure. This documentary searches for new clues between New York and Florence and tries to solve this riddle from the age of discovery.



THE DA VINCI GLOBE

4K 1 x 53 min. Written and directed by Klaus T. Steindl
 4K, 5.1 and Stereo Executive producers: Martin Mészáros, Sabine Holzer



TERRA MATER
Factual Studios