



Salviati Planisphere

Cartographer: Nuno Garcia de Toreno [?]

Date: 1525/26

Size: 205 x 93 cm/80.7 x 36.6 inches

DESCRIPTION: This large colored drawing manuscript planisphere on parchment was produced in Seville, Spain around 1525-1526. It is drawn in the style of the sea-charts known as *portolanos*, with at least twenty-two compass roses with radiating navigational lines, and only coastal settlements identified. The name of this decorative map is derived from its first owner, Cardinal Salviati, the papal nuncio to Spain from 1525-30. Geographically it displays the known world in a typical western European perspective, showing only the eastern coasts of North and South America. No attempt is made to indicate the western expanse of either landmass, nor is there any real speculation of the proximity of the new discoveries to the Asian continent. In fact the depiction of Asia east of India is very undeveloped, with no eastern coastline shown and no indication of the islands of Japan. North and South America are shown to be connected from Labrador in the north to the Straits of Magellan in the south. The currency of this map is illustrated by the place-names proposed by the discoveries from the voyage by Estavão Gomes in 1525 along current-day North Carolina and Maryland's Chesapeake Bay that are also included.

Based upon the style and decoration employed on this map, it is thought by some scholars to be the work of Nuno Garcia de Toreno, once the head of the *Casa de la Contratacion*, the ministry in Seville that was responsible for all of the commercial and scientific matters relating to the new discoveries. It will be noticed that there are considerable similarities between this map and a planisphere in the Archivio Marchesi

Castiglioni in Mantua produced in 1525 by the Portuguese cartographer Diogo Ribero (#346), de Toreno's successor in the *Casa de la Contratacion*. The map is very colorful with the Red Sea shown in that color, and the major old world bodies of water shown in blue (the Persian Gulf, the Baltic, Black and Caspian Seas). There are also drawings of trees, mountains, animals (only in the new discoveries), castellated towns (in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa) and even colorful tents to represent settlements in Africa.

Although this beautifully executed world map could not have been made earlier than September, 1525, it presents a conception of the east coast of North America shown on this detail different from and earlier than the *Castiglioni* (1525), *Vespucci* (1526, #335), and *Ribero* (1529, #346) maps. The names given to the New England coastal features by Gomes, who returned to Coruña in August 1525, begin with the bays of *S. Christjoul'* and *S. antonjo'* north of the conspicuous promontory of Cape Cod on the later Spanish maps. Here, however, they are written by the island-studded bay which represents the North Carolina Sounds/Chesapeake Bay region, which for fifty years the Spanish called '*baya de Santa Maria*'. It was discovered by the expedition sent out by Ayllón in 1521. The seven animals roaming among the trees along the coast are not easily identifiable. The map was made for or presented to some member of the powerful Florentine family of Salviati, whose arms are emblazoned on the chart.

Location: Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence, Italy

References:

*Barber, P., *The Map Book*, pp. 92-95.

*Cumming, W.P., R.A. Skelton, D.B. Quinn, *The Discovery of North America*, p. 73.

*Wolff, Hans (ed.), *America, Early Maps of the New World*, pp. 48-49, #67





