



Chart of the Gulf of Mexico

The Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, and Northern South America, 1536-40  
Colored drawing on parchment in an undated and unsigned atlas, Dieppe, ca. 1536-40  
Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague Ms. 129.A.24, fols 23v and 24r.

**DESCRIPTION:** The beautifully illustrated atlas in which this chart occurs is unsigned and undated. Like two large world maps executed in or near Dieppe (# 344, *The Harleian Map*), it bears the arms (*fo6r*) of Henry, Dauphin of France, for whom it may have been intended, and it must therefore be dated between 1536 and 1547. Since the cartographer, Jean Rotz, displays no knowledge of Cartier's first and second voyages (in 1534 and 1535) the atlas can hardly have been prepared later than 1540, for by 1541 Dieppe mapmakers were already depicting the results of these voyages.

The geographical work in the atlas, namely the windroses and coastlines, is Portuguese in character and workmanship; the placenames likewise are Portuguese in form, with an admixture of names rather hesitantly turned into French. Thus the cartographer is inferred to be a Portuguese not long resident in France and may possibly represent the 'missing link' by which the Dieppe mapmakers obtained the Portuguese models copied in their work. The decorative features of this atlas, namely the borders, ships, and pictorial drawings covering the land areas, are in the style of the Dieppe school and must have been added by a local painter or illuminator. For the east coast of North America the outlines and nomenclature follow the Spanish *padron general*, as revised by Alonso de Chaves in 1536.

The masterful and varied decoration and fine coloring in this *portolan*-style atlas belongs to the "first Dieppe school," which produced maps and charts in northern French ports from 1535 on. They were based mainly on existing Portuguese maps. This

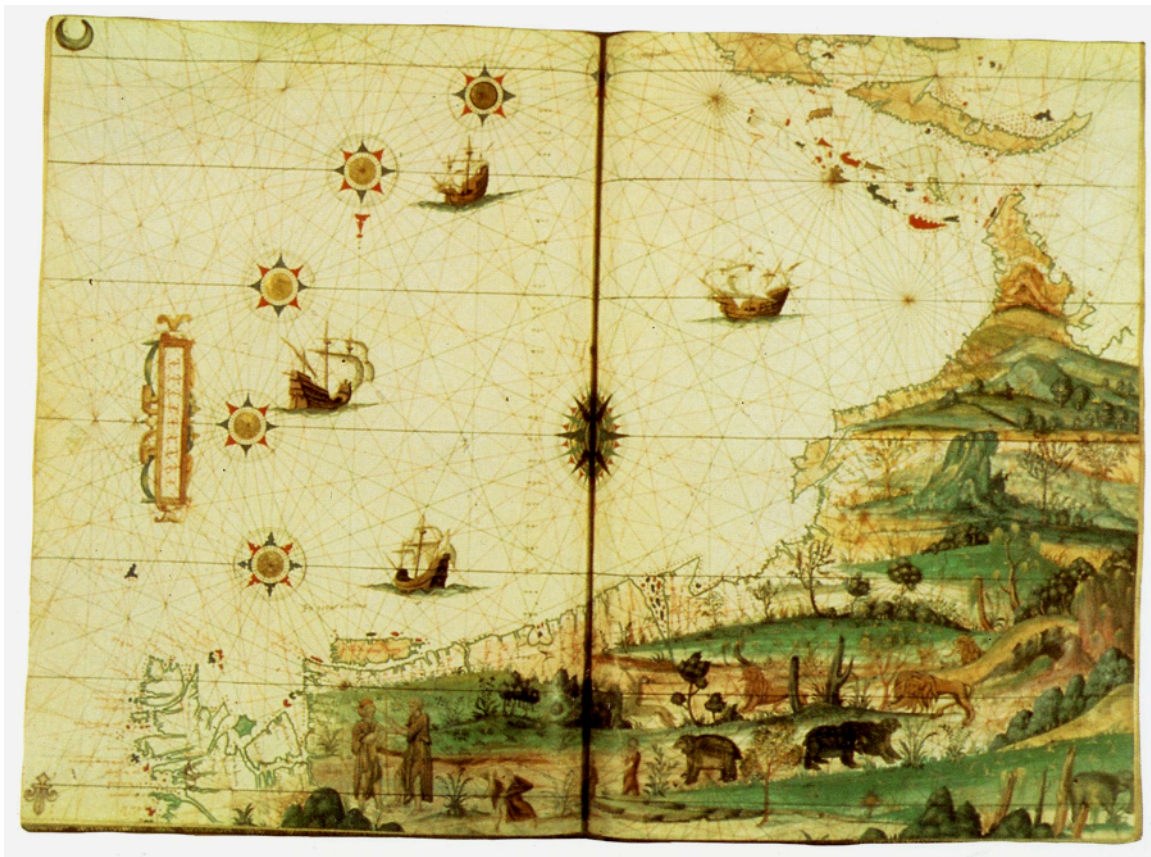
fine, artistic example can be dated to between 1536 and 1540 on the basis of the coat-of-arms of the Dauphin Henry, later King Henry II of France, for whom the atlas may have been made, and the absence of geographical details stemming from the discoveries made on Jacques Cartier's expeditions between 1534 and 1536; this new information appeared in maps of the Dieppe school from 1541 on.

On the east coast of North America, the outline and nomenclature follow those of the Spanish *Padron general*, as revised by Alonso de Chaves in 1536. The northern part of South America is filled with gold-digging scenes and is considered to be the earliest example in European art of the illustration of Indians engaged in forced labor. "The humiliating position of the forced laborers excites the observer's sympathy and reflects the French court's negative view of Spain's colonial policy". Another fine example of the illustration in this atlas is the depiction of North America with an imaginative landscape and Canadian Indians shown below.

### References:

\*Cumming, W.P., R.A. Skelton, D.B. Quinn, *The Discovery of North America*, p.61, fig. 54.

\*Wolff, H., *America, Early Maps of the New World*, pp. 54-55, 175, #70







Rotz map of North America and West Indies

**DESCRIPTION:** The first picture of an Indian wigwam appears on this map (*oriented with South at the top*), which is found in a richly illustrated atlas made for Henry VIII by Jean Rotz [John Roze], a Frenchman of Scots descent. The atlas was completed in 1542 but the information on this map was compiled earlier; it shows the discoveries of Cartier in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in 1534, but not those of his 1535 voyage up that river. Newfoundland itself is made up of numerous islands, not a Cartier concept; the entire coastline and names along it are based on some previous Spanish maps. Off the coast, below Newfoundland, is the interesting note: *The new fonde lone quhar men goeth a fisching*; for over 30 years vessels from European ports had been visiting the Great Banks regularly.