

Title: *Caveri [Canerio] world map*

Date: 1502-05

Author: Nicolo Caveri [Canerio]

Description: The *Caverio* planisphere is a large, sumptuously decorated nautical chart of the world on ten joined sheets of parchment. It is signed by the Genoese cartographer Nicolò Caveri (Nicolay de Caverio, Nicolaus de Canerio). The *Caverio* planisphere was copied directly or indirectly from the Portuguese *Padrão Real* in Lisbon, the regularly updated master planisphere from which charts used onboard ships were made. As such, the *Caverio* planisphere is probably a younger “sister” chart to the famous *Cantino* planisphere of 1502 (#306), which is also derived from the *Padrão Real*. The nautical origin of the cartography is revealed in the network of rhumb lines and compass roses. Unlike the *Cantino* planisphere, however, which has its four edges trimmed, the *Caverio* planisphere is intact and contains a complete world image. The western edge of the *Caverio* planisphere, for instance, fills in the cropped image on the *Cantino* planisphere of the “mainland” of Cuba explored by Columbus in 1492 and 1495. The coastline and toponymy of Brazil on the *Caverio* planisphere records the Portuguese expedition of 1501-02 led by Gonçalo Coelho that included Amerigo Vespucci. Vespucci’s two descriptions of the New World, printed in 1503 and 1505, appear to have prompted René II, Duke of Lorraine, to sponsor the formation of the Gymnasium Vosagense, a group of humanists dedicated to writing, translating, publishing, and propagating scientific works in the fields of music, geometry, grammar, and, most especially, geography, cartography, and cosmography. Martin Waldseemüller was a member of this group, and used the *Caverio* planisphere as a primary source for his maps, including his famous large woodcut world maps of 1507 and 1516 (#310, #320). Because his maps were so influential on subsequent cartographic projects, we can trace the effects of the *Padrão Real*, embodied and disseminated through the *Caverio* planisphere, for the remainder of the 16th century and into the next. The sea-faring city of Genoa, Columbus’ birthplace, returns to center stage with this major cartographic contribution. The Genoese mapmaker, Nicolo Caveri, also referred to earlier by historians as “Nicolay Canerio” until recently when his signature on this map was re-interpreted, has a place in history with this production. The Portuguese toponymy employed throughout shows that Caveri had access to what the historian Henry Harrisse referred to as *Lusitano-Germanic* prototype maps. Its strong likeness to the *Cantino* planisphere (#306) indicates that Caveri either used the *Cantino* chart or the two maps had very similar sources.

This important map, discovered in the 19th century in the *Archives du Service hydrographique de la Marine* in Paris, represents the entire world as known in 1502-1504, and measures 46 x 90 inches (115 x 225 cm).

This great planisphere bridges the medieval and Renaissance worlds, as dramatized by the circular *mappamundi* [world map] at its center (near the Equator on the continent of Africa). The geographic configurations and nomenclature are similar to the *Cantino* map, but a new feature is the inclusion of a scale of latitude. Radiating out from the nucleus are rhumb lines that connect with a circle of compass roses. Rhumb lines are also projected from these, forming a network covering the



chart. Outside this circle six further points of intersection with compass roses inscribe yet another, though incomplete, concentric circle. This mesh of loxodromic lines has its origin in the late 13th century with the oldest of surviving *portolan* [nautical] charts (#250.1).

If the *mappamundi* in the middle is a reference to the past, the latitude scale in the left margin is an innovation of great significance for future mapmaking. Since voyages across the seas had become a possibility, determining latitude accurately became essential to record compass directions. With this information navigators could return directly to home port and then revisit newly discovered lands. Dead reckoning and a few latitude readings may have brought Columbus to America initially, but for regular travel more scientific methods were required.

The fact that this is a Portuguese map is undisputed, however, it is undated, but signed as follows: *Opus Nicolay de Caveri Januensis*: [The work of Nicolas de Caveri, Genoese]. That is, the Caveri chart was constructed (or only copied) by a Genoese cartographer, most probably in Portugal; as if he had executed his work in Italy, there would have been no reason for inscribing the legends in the Portuguese language, and he would have translated them into Italian. The following is the precise text of the two leading legends:

Over the West Indies

The Antillies of the King of Castile, discovered by Collonbo, a Genoese [this word is not in Cantino, #306] Admiral, which islands were discovered by command of the very high and very powerful prince the King Dom Fernando, King of Castile.

On the Brazilian Coast

The True Cross, so called, which was discovered by Pedro Alvarez Cabral, gentleman of the household of the King of Portugal; and he discovered it in navigating as chief captain of fourteen ships which the said King was sending to Calicut, and, in following his route, he found that land, which is believed to be a continent, where are many men endowed with reason, and men and women who go naked, as brought into the world. They are rather white than dark, with smooth hair. The said land was discovered in the year [one thousand] five hundred.

The configurations and nomenclature, everywhere in this chart, are those of the *Cantino* map (#306), but they do not proceed from the latter, as the profiles exhibit differences, and there are additional names indicating another prototype of a later date.

The *Caveri* and the *Cantino* maps show similar contours for most parts of the world, although Caveri's mapping of the Red Sea is less accurate. In South America, particularly on the Brazilian coast, Caveri includes new place-names reported by two Portuguese expeditions. The first, in 1501-02, included Amerigo Vespucci; the second, commanded by Fernando de Noronha in 1503-04, attempted to establish a trading post in Rio de Janeiro Bay. Since Caveri had information from these voyages, the map probably dates from 1505. In North America he presents a new delineation of the Gulf of Mexico, with the peninsulas representing Yucatan and Florida. Although the relationships of Cuba, Yucatan and Florida are only partly correct, Caveri's concept of the Gulf region was widely used for the next twenty years.

While the great Spanish planisphere by Juan de la Cosa (#305) fell into virtual oblivion until its modern rediscovery, Caveri's chart was responsible for a continuous series of derivatives over the next twenty-five years, principally the 1507 twelve-sheet printed world map of Martin Waldseemüller (#310). These maps served to present the

image of the New World to Europeans until news of further explorations of Ayllon, Verrazzano, and Gomez corrected and helped to complete the cartography of North America.



As mentioned, a very important feature in the *Caveri* map is a regular scale of latitudes. According to that scale, the continental region in the northwest, first delineated in the *Cantino* map, extends here from 50° N to 20° N latitude; showing a prolongation of that region southward of eighteen degrees, less, however, than in Schöner's first globes (#328), and with new profiles. As on this prolongation the Nuremberg geographer has inscribed the word *Parias*, and as his prototype was certainly very much like Caveri's, we are inclined to believe that the prolongation was originally intended to represent the countries discovered by Columbus during his third voyage; the first mention of which appeared in print on the 10th of April, 1504, in the *Libretto de tutta la Nauigatione de Re de Spagna*, but was known in Italy as early as the autumn of 1501, when Angelo Trivigiano sent his account to Domenico Malipiero.

In the nomenclature on the northwestern continent, we see for the first time the name *Lago del ladro*, which appears in the *Ruysch* map (#313) as *Lago del oro*, and in Waldseemüller as *larro dellodro*; but was probably inscribed on the prototype, *Lago del ladro*, for *Lago del ladron* [The Lake of the Thief], and not *Lago del oro* [The Lake of Gold].

Two other names are spelled differently, but not more intelligibly. Where the *Cantino* chart displays: *G: do lurcar*, and *C. do mortinbo*, Caveri inscribes: *Gorffo de lineor*, and *Cauo de mertineo*. Finally, the preposition "of," which in the *Cantino* map is written "do," as in Portuguese, appears in the *Caveri* map as "de," in the Spanish form, while that northwestern continent exhibits in the latter, at both ends, the standard of Castile and Leon; which indicates in the opinion of the cartographer, Spanish possessions, and perhaps also Spanish discoveries or explorations.

The southern continent extends from 12° S to 35° S latitude, which is about ten degrees more than in the *Cantino* planisphere. The nomenclature for the north coast or Brazil is as in the latter; but on the eastern seaboard, the list comprises, in addition to the names in the *Cantino* map, those of the *Kunstmann II* (#309) and *III* (#309.1) maps, with the addition of *Porto de Sto Sebastiano*, and *Alapago (pagus) de Sam Paulo*, both of which make here their first appearance. According to the scale inscribed by Caveri, thirty-five

degrees (from 20° N to 55° N latitude) of that continental region were then known; and, what is more remarkable, he places at both extremities the standard of Castile and Leon. It is believed that the map incorporates the land discovered by Columbus during his third voyage.

Do those flags indicate Spanish discoveries, or only Spanish possessions? They may mean both, as we know from the dispatch sent by Pedro de Ayala to Ferdinand and Isabella, giving an account of Cabot's discoveries in 1497, that the Spanish Ambassador to the Court of Henry VII actually stated that the lands found by Cabot formed part of the transatlantic dominions of the Crown of Castile. The envoy of the Republic of Venice, when relating the discoveries just accomplished by Gaspar Corte-Real (1501), also expressed the opinion that the country discovered by the latter was connected with the Spanish possessions in the New World. If to those surmises, which must have been current then, we add the clauses of the *Treaty of Tordesillas*, which Portugal was the first to invoke, so as to maintain her rights to Newfoundland and Brazil, the appearance of Spanish flags on a western continent appears quite natural, even in a Portuguese map.

Newfoundland presents the configuration already seen in the *Cantino* map, and is placed in the same erroneous longitude, but bears no inscriptions whatever. Nor is the *Line of Demarcation* depicted.

The Portuguese legends concerning the discoveries of the *Land of the True Cross* and of the *Antillies* are as in the *Cantino* map, but Caveri takes care to recall the action of his countrymen by adding to the map: *descoberta por collonbo ienoeize*; and the cross of St. George to the Canarian island of Lansarotto. The latter, however, is a peculiarity already existing, not only in the celebrated *Catalan Atlas* of 1375 (#235), but also in the Majorcan *mappamundi*, which bears the inscription: *Hoc opus fecit angelino Dulcert ano M°cCc°XXXVIIIJ de mense augusti in ciuitate maioricarum* [This work has Angelino Dulcert ano 1000 CCCXXXVIII in the month of August in the city Maioricus].

The *Caveri* map constitutes the earliest specimen known of Harrisse's *Fourth Type* (see #306 *Cantino*, or Harrisse's *Discovery of North America* for a discussion of the five types of the *Lusitano-Germanic* group). The calligraphy is representative of the beginning of the 16th century; and the prototype map or the model copied by Caveri was certainly Lusitanian, as is shown by the identical resemblance of the configurations and nomenclature in his map with those in the *Cantino* chart, which was made at Lisbon in 1502; by the leading legends, which are in the Portuguese language; and by the fact that we read on the Brazilian coast: *The Bay of All Saints*, instead of *The Abbey of All Saints*.

In Lawrence Wroth's discussion of the northern discoveries as an element of the Verrazzano story, he states that the *Cantino* and *Caveri* maps take a place of great significance for many reasons, good and bad. One of their common features is their location of Newfoundland as an island "*cast far away into the sea*" to the east or northeast of the "American" landmass that they both portray for the first time. It is now generally agreed that the maker of the *Cantino* map did not intend to represent the Newfoundland-Labrador landmass as an island, but as the known eastern extension of a supposed continental land not definitely located. Not all of the contemporaries of the *Cantino* planisphere interpreted his meaning in this way. The Newfoundland-Labrador land is shown unmistakably as an island in the *Lusitano-Germanic* group, including the *Caveri* map. A significant point to be kept in mind in the discussion of the *Cantino* and *Caveri* maps, and their chief derivative, the *Waldseemüller* world map of 1507 (#310), is that, whether or not they regarded Newfoundland as an island, they showed Verrazzano and his contemporaries no connection of solid land between Newfoundland

and the Florida landmass portrayed on them. This wide expanse of ocean offered unimpeded passage to an explorer seeking a route to China.



Detail of the Western Hemisphere on the Caveri Chart

Also on these two similar maps, it is to be observed that the two mapmakers intended to convey a belief that the two continents of North and South America formed a grand division of the earth, separated as they were from both Europe and Asia. This belief is graphically portrayed in the *Caveri* map where open water borders the western shore of the North American continent. While not shown on the *Cantino* chart, this concept is inferred by the fact that the chart only displays 257° of the earth's 360° and that the eastern coast of Asia is bordered by open water, leaving the remaining 103 degrees to speculation.

Of all the types of the *Lusitano-Germanic* cartography, that which has exercised the greatest influence in Central Europe is the one that was derived from the prototype copied by Caveri. A map resembling the latter in most respects, found its way into Germany at an early date; for we find its chief configurations in globes that were constructed during the first ten years of the 16th century. The oldest of these is represented by the *Hauslab Gores* (a set of 12 globe gores engraved on wood, #311).

Like the *Cantino* planisphere, the *Caveri* map also displays castellated cities in Europe and Africa. In addition, there is a large drawing of a castellated city in the Middle East [Jerusalem, the Holy Land] along with a tower and castle in Saudi Arabia. There are colorful parrots shown in South America and a giraffe and elephant placed in Africa.

This nautical map of the world was produced by the Genoese cartographer Nicolo di Caverio based on Portuguese documents. The map can be dated to 1506, as it contains no reference to any discovery made after this year. The map has three scales of lengths at the top. On the left border is a scale of latitudes from 55° south to 70° north. A system of *rhumbs* of 90 centimeters (cm) in diameter is centered on Africa, with 16 secondary centers, supplemented by another concentric system of 180 cm in diameter, of which only three centers appear on each side. The map shows 18 wind roses with 16 branches bearing a cross pointing east. The two centers of *rhumbs* of the complementary system located on the far right and the far left have a sun in the east instead of the wind rose, and a crescent moon in the west. Coasts are ringed in green, islands with flat tints usually in gold, occasionally in red or blue. The Red Sea is streaked in red. There is schematic representation of some rivers in blue. In Africa, marking the center of the system of rhumbs is a small circular globe surrounded by the seven heavens, which is reminiscent of the one on the map attributed to Christopher Columbus, whose sketching of the coasts is more archaic than that on this planisphere. The map is carefully decorated, showing ten miniatures of cities; three tents including one with the label *Magnus Tartarus*; 53 flags, including 21 Portuguese flags, 20 flags with the lunar crescent of the Ottoman Empire, and eight Spanish flags; animals (giraffes, lions, and elephant in Africa, birds in America); and figures of people, forests, and sketches of landscapes. Scales are inside rectangular cartridges with geometrical patterns. The frame is formed with a ribbon coiled around a stick and appears on three sides only (on the left, it is replaced with the scale of latitudes). The signature appears on a streamer in the lower left corner. The Latin names of the seas and countries are in capital letters, also on streamers. The nomenclature is essentially in Portuguese, but there are also numerous captions in Spanish, including two on streamers.

Location: Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris (Cartes et Plans, S.H. Archives no. 1)

Size: 46 x 90 inches (1150 x 2250 mm)

References:

- Crone, G.R., *Maps and their Makers*, p. 88.
*Ferrar, Michael, "ChCAV/1; Nicolas de Caverio, 1505AD Planisphere", *Article #210*
*Harrisse, H., *The Discovery of North America*, pp. 77, 305-306, 428-430.
*Nebenzahl, K., *Atlas of Columbus and the Great Discoveries*, p. 40.
*Wroth, L. C., *The Voyages of Giovanni da Verrazzano*, pp. 45-46, no. 3.
*illustrated





Newfoundland, a part of South America, Europe, the Middle East and Africa





Detail of the Caribbean on the Caveri Chart







