

Title: *Salviati Planisphere*

Date: 1525/26

Author: Nuno Garcia de Torenó [?]

Description: This large (205 x 93 cm/80.7 x 36.6 in) 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 Torenó, 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 Torenó'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 below is different from and earlier than the *Castiglioni* (1525), *Vespucci* (1526, #338), and *Ribero* (1529, #346) maps. The names given to the New England coastal features by Gomes, who returned to *Corufia* 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 that 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.

Besides containing geographical information collected on the Magellan/Elcano voyage, both likewise reflect the explorations of Portuguese pilot Estevão Gomes. After deserting Magellan's fleet before it reached the Pacific, Gomes led voyage along the east coast of North America between 1524 and 1525 in search of a northwest passage to the Pacific. If this expedition failed in its stated objective, it nonetheless left its mark on cartographic representations of the Americas.

Taken as a whole, the construction of the large planispheres by the Casa de la Contratación announces the rebirth of Spanish Atlantic cartography and constitutes an eloquent manifestation of the global ambition of Emperor Charles V. The *Salviati* planisphere is unsigned, but generally considered to be a work of Nuño García de Torenó, made just a year before his death. When it was produced, Torenó had already enjoyed an illustrious career at the Casa: he had assisted in the preparations for Magellan's voyage and was the first chartmaker at the institution to officially hold the title "master of making charts and instruments" (*maestro de hacer cartas y fabricar instrumentos*), an honor bestowed upon him in 1519. Together with Diogo Ribeiro, he also drew up charts for the ill-fated voyage of García Jofre de Loaisa to the Río de la Plata.

Torenó's efforts to both incorporate novel information and craft a beautiful cartographic object is immediately apparent in the *Salviati* planisphere. The image of the world is set within an ornate floral frame and embellished with gilded compass roses, delicate scenes of forests and mountains, and, in the African continent, colorful tents (a decorative element dating back a century in Catalan charts). Salviati's escutcheon, with its red bishop's hat, is painted twice, and only two ships are shown on the whole planisphere, both flying the Spanish flag. The world is neatly bisected by a golden line of demarcation crossing Brazil, labeled *linea de repartimiento entre Castilla y Portugal*.

Location: Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence, Italy

Size: 205 x 93 cm; 80.7 x 36.6 inches

References:

*Cumming, W.P., R.A. Skelton, D.B. Quinn, *The Discovery of North America*, p. 72.

*Gaspar, Joaquim Alves and Sima Krtalic, "A Cartografia de Magalhães. The cartography of Magellan", pp. 144-147; 168-180.

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









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The chart depicts the eastern Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia, with the Malay Peninsula, the islands of Sumatra and Java, the Philippine archipelago, and the Banda Sea, including the island of *Gelolo* (Halmahera) and the Moluccas. Contrary to what the absence of a border on the left margin may suggest, the chart's limited latitudinal extent to the south of the Equator rules out the possibility that it is a fragment of a planisphere. Indeed, if we imagine the representation continuing to the west, neither the Strait of Magellan nor part of South America would be shown. It is more probable (especially if we bear in mind the short time span in which it was produced) that the chart was designed with the specific purpose of demonstrating the location of the Moluccas and their geographical context.

Despite some similarities with the Indian Ocean chart of c. 1517 attributed to Pedro Reinel, Toreno's work marks an evolution in the representation of Southeast Asia, which now includes several islands in the Philippines (to the north), Borneo (to the west), and Timor (to the south). This enriched geographic content, relative to earlier Portuguese charts, was surely enabled by the information collected by the fleet of Magellan and Elcano between March 1521 and February 1522 during its passage from the Philippines to the Moluccas and Timor. Although many of the places on the chart can be identified through their geographical context and the labels Toreno much of the southern gives them, the representation of the Philippines and the Banda Sea is still rudimentary, and the scale and shape of the islands are inconsistent. However, the route followed by Magellan's fleet after arriving in the Philippines, as recorded by Antonio Pigafetta and others, is unmistakably reflected in the chart's place names, which reveal the work to be more than just a sketch based on second-hand accounts.



Excerpt of the Indian Ocean showing the yslas dos Rocos, with their namesake mythical bird, and three ships with the arms of Spain heading east.

Toreno's chart is framed with an attractive scarlet and blue border and is richly decorated in the style of the Majorcan school of the Mediterranean, with vignettes of cities, and human and animal figures. In the Indian Ocean, next to the twin *y[lh]a[s]dos rocos*, Toreno has painted two huge avians, which, given the designation of the islands, must be rocs (a legendary bird of prey from Middle Eastern mythology, mentioned by Pigafetta in his account of the circumnavigation). Another possible allusion to Magellan's voyage is the representation of a fleet of five ships, incorrectly crossing the Indian Ocean from west to east while bearing the symbols of Castile and

León. On land, the figures of local sovereigns, such as the Rei de los Guzarates, Rei de los Chines, Rei de Calicut, and Rei de Pegu, are displayed, each with distinctive raiment and dwellings. Eight compass roses, akin those of Portuguese cartography in their style and numerousness, accentuate the usual system of rhumb lines, centered on the Gulf of Bengal.