Brazil, from the Nautical Atlas
(oriented with South at the top)

Description: In the south of Brazil, in the center of the picture, two opponent Tupi-tribes are fighting against each other. Further southward a Native American lumberjack is felling a tree for a European merchant. In the north, tree trunks are transported and a second group of natives is moving westward, accompanied by two Europeans. The Europeans are probably Frenchmen, although Brazil had been held by the Portuguese since 1500. As neither gold nor silver was found, Portuguese interest rapidly decreased, and for many years only French privateers came there after Brazilian wood.

This chart, displaying part of the Atlantic coast of South America, with Uruguay and the mouth of the Rio de la Plata at the top as the most southern point, and the area around Pernambuco as the most northern region, is one of the charts in the Atlas that was made in Dieppe about 1538. The Dieppe cartographers were known for their reliable cartographic material, which they also presented in a very artistic way. They had excellent contacts with Portuguese cartographers, the experts of maritime

cartography at the time. No wonder that the basic material for this atlas also came from the Portuguese: the geographical representation, the windroses indicating the points of the compass, the spelling of the plotted place-names, all point to this origin. The workmanship of the charts with their colorful and imaginative representation of the landscape, the flora and fauna, and the population of the mainland, was carried out in Dieppe. The atlas is dedicated to the Dauphin, the future French King Henry II (1547-1559), and was part of his library, consequently bearing his coat of arms. The gestures of the natives in the foreground, pointing to the soil and the French are sometimes explained as an invitation to the French for peaceful colonization of the land.

Size: 144 x 3.2 cm (39 leaves)
Location: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Amsterdam, Nautical Atlas, France 129 A 24, fol. 16r