

Leonardo da Vinci and Verrazzano's Royal Discovery of New York (1524-2024)

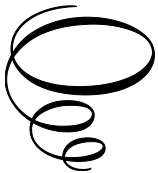
Leonardo da Vinci and Verrazzano's Royal Discovery of New York (1524-2024):

Codex Cèllere Reassessed

By

Stefaan Missinne

**Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing**



Leonardo da Vinci and Verrazzano's Royal Discovery of New York (1524-2024): Codex Cèllere Reassessed

By Stefaan Missinne

This book first published 2024

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2024 by Stefaan Missinne

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-0364-0017-4

ISBN (13): 978-1-0364-0017-0

“Mundi formam omnes fere consentiunt rotundám esse”.

Almost all agree that the world has a round shape.

1477, Aenea Silvio Piccolomini, Pope Pius II

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	ix
Introduction.....	x
Chapter 1	1
Leonardo da Vinci and Verrazzano: Common Origin and Interests	
Chapter 2	4
Magellan and Verrazzano: Maps and Courses Set Out	
Chapter 3	19
The Timing of the Departure: Why 1523?	
Chapter 4	26
The Background of Verrazzano's Pre-departure and the Character of the Financing of the Royal Expedition	
Chapter 5	33
Severe Competition to Find the Unknown Passage to the Spice Islands	
Chapter 6	36
The Report Attributed to Giovanni da Verrazzano, Dating 8 July 1524	
Chapter 7	48
Toponomastic Analysis	
7.1 Selva di lauri - Campo di cedri / Forest of Laurels - Field of Cedars.....	48
7.2 Isthmo inventor Verazanio – Francesca – Annunciata / Isthmus discoverer Verrazzano – Land of Francis – Annunciation	53
7.3 Archadia (Arcadia) per la bellezza de li arbori / Archadia (Arcadia) because of the beauty of the trees	62
7.4 Costa di Lorrenna per il Cardinale – el primo promotorio Lanzone – el secondo promotorio Bonivetto – el fiume piu grande Vandoma – uno monticello, quale manet mari, di S. Polo, per el Conte / The Coast of Lorraine for the Cardinal – the first Cape Lanzone – the second Cape Bonivetto – the biggest River Vandoma – and a little mountain which borders the Sea St. Pol, for the Count	65
7.4.1 The Coast of Lorraine for the Cardinal	65
7.4.2 Promontorio Lanzone – Cape Lanzone	70
7.4.3 Promontorio bonivetto - Cape Bonivetto.....	71
7.4.4 El fiume piu grande Vandoma – The biggest River Vandoma.....	77
7.4.5 Uno monticello, quale manet mari, di S. Polo, per el Conte – And a little mountain which borders the Sea, St. Pol for the Count.....	79
7.5 Angoleme dal principato – Santa Margarita, “dal nome di tua sorella” / Angoulême from the principality – Saint Marguerite, “after your sister”	81

7.6	Aloysia – Louise	88
7.7	Gentildona La Petra viva – refugio (porto) – Jovium promontorium – Armelline Syrti - Pallavisino promotorio / the Lady Petraviva – refuge (port) – Cape Giovio – Armelline (Sandbank) - Cape of Pallavisino	92
7.7.1	Gentildona La Petra viva – The Lady Petraviva.....	92
7.7.2	Porto Refugio – Port Refuge	96
7.7.3	Jovium promotorium – Cape Giovio	99
7.7.4	Armelline Syrti – Armelline Sandbank	103
7.7.5	Pallavisino promotorio – Cape Pallavisino	106
7.8	Le iii Figlie di nauarra – The three daughters of Navarra.....	111
7.9	Britanni (terra)	114
Chapter 8		120
Verrazzano’s Discovery Depicted on the Monachus Globe (Dating from 1527)		
Chapter 9		125
Verrazzano’s World-Dimension		
Conclusions		134
List of Figures		138
Bibliography.....		144
Index.....		152

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am very grateful to the following persons and institutions who have been in many ways instrumental in the research on Verrazzano and his contemporaries:

Jan Sammer, Dr. Johan Ickx, Expert Marisa Addomine, James Constable and MariCarmen Constable, Vice-Rector Prof. Kristin De Troyer, Prof. L. Codignola-Bo, Dr. Manfred Hollegger, Prof. Dr. Claudia Märthl, Archduke Dr. Michael S. Habsburg-Lothringen, Juan Romero-Giron, Prof. Dr. Heinz Schilling, Dr. Michele Castelnovi, Baron Prof. Dr. Herman Van der Wee, Prof. Dr. Erik Aerts, Dr. Thomas Just, Prof. Dr. Jelle Haemers, Fiona Robertson, Dr. Anne Van Oosterwijk, Prof. Francesco Guidi Bruscoli, Major Edoardo Giustiniani, Prof. Luca Salvatelli, Prof. Mario Neri, Cavaliere Luigi Giovanni Cappellini, Dr. Laura Cassi, Prof. Dr. Simone De Angelis, Prof. Luis Robles Macías, Dr. Peter Carravetta, Pascal Cotte, Dr. Silvio Leydi, Dr. Fabio Romanini, Prof. Dr. Jean-Baptiste Gastinne, Prof. Dr. Matthew James Driscoll, María Isabel Molestina, MLS, Dr. Margaret King, Mumecc Dir. Fausto Casi, Expert Gregory McIntosh, Giulio Saturini, Count Gianluigi Macchi di Cèllere, Dr. Maurits Biesbrouck, Scientific Counselor Dr. Amedeo Staiano, Italian ambassador Stefano Beltrame, Prof. Enrique Martínez Ruiz, Prof. Dr. Stefano Dall'Aglio, Prof. João Paulo Oliveira e Costa, Prof. Dra. Judith A. Gonçalves de Freitas, Michel Chandeigne, Archduke Andreas Habsburg-Lothringen, Dr. Geert Verhoeven, Max Serio, Mag. Andrea Missinne, Terri Childs, Expert Jan De Graeve, Dr. Juan Francisco Maura, Prof. Dr. Mario Negri, Prof. Dr. Nicolas Hebbinckuys, Prof. Dr. Enrique Martinez Ruiz, Fondazione Giovanni da Verrazzano, Dir. Angelo D'Ambra, Prof. Dr. Heinz Schilling, Prof. Gary Peters, James Brittain, Dr. Chiara Matteucci, Dr. Antonio Sánchez de Mora, Consul Dr. Federico Scavetta, David Missinne, MA, Dir. Jean Rochet, Expert Gregory McIntosh, Alessandra Molletti, Dr. Duane Henderson, Dr. Dietrich Lohrmann, Marquise Vittoria Gondi Citeresi, Marquis Bernardo Gondi, Prof. Domenico Savini, Dr. Anne Leader, Dr. Julia L. Hairston, Expert Étienne Pattou, María Isabel Molestina, Expert Ilaria Pastrolin, Robert J. King and numerous others.

INTRODUCTION

Giovanni da Verrazzano (from here onwards: Verrazzano) was a famous Italian navigator. Verrazzano was asked by King Francis I of France to find a seaway to China. The Italian set out to do so and, on the way, explored what is now called New York. This book is devoted to him and the places he discovered.

In 2024, on the occasion of the celebrations of the quincentennial of the discovery of New York by the famous Tuscan from Greve in Chianti, Italy, I thought it necessary to present new findings and surprising insights based on recent cartographic and toponomastic research based on his unique personal testimony.

Cartographers tend to describe topographic locations comparing them with modern placenames whilst philologists draw attention to variations in spellings.

French researchers are interested mainly in Verrazzano because his employer was King of France.

In contrast, North American researchers look for a link between the details in the 22-page handwritten report, known as the Cèllere Codex, and the geography of the coastal areas, the ethnicity of the native inhabitants and the sources for later immigration to the US East Coast and Canada.

Italian researchers have been drawn to the connection with Verrazzano's homeland of Tuscany.

In this critical investigation and commentary, I will use an interdisciplinary approach, combining a critical analysis of the nomenclature of his itinerary, a detailed study of the iconography, and finally adding a historiographical perspective.

While the North American, Italian and French research is fascinating, I will focus more on the content of and sequence in Verrazzano's choice of toponyms, their iconographic meaning, and the availability of cartographic material between 1515 and 1523.

In this study, in Chapter 1, I will first study concisely both Leonardo da Vinci and Giovanni da Verrazzano, two famous Tuscan expatriates in France. Did Leonardo's presence at the royal court or the cartographic content of his world map or his epic globe influence Verrazzano in any direct or indirect way?

Then, in Chapter 2, I will review the importance of Verrazzano's meeting with Magellan and the former's access to maps and his potential choice of course. This is followed, in Chapter 3, by an analysis of the delayed timing of Verrazzano's departure in 1523.

In Chapter 4, particular attention is paid to the background of Verrazzano's pre-departure and the financing of the royal expedition. Verrazzano was not the only one in search of a short route to the Spice Islands; in Chapter 5, I will briefly revise the severe competition to find the unknown passage to the Spice Islands.

In Chapter 6, I will introduce the manuscript attributed to Giovanni da Verrazzano dating 8 July 1524.

The core of the new research is found in Chapter 7, which offers a toponomastic analysis, in which Verrazzano's toponyms of his itinerary are reviewed, compared, and ranked. Verrazzano's discovery depicted on Monachus's Globe dating from 1527, where he puts Mexico in China, is presented in Chapter 8.



Figure 1: Portrait of Giovanni da Verrazzano. Painting. Public domain.

Then, in Chapter 9, I will analyze the rather surprising world dimension based on the calculation offered Verrazzano's narrative of exploration upon his return to France. I will offer empirical evidence of a direct and indirect influence of Leonardo da Vinci on Verrazzano and analyze the surprisingly close Florentine family ties between the Benci, the Gondi and Verrazzano's world dimension.

Finally, I will offer my conclusions.

CHAPTER 1

LEONARDO DA VINCI AND VERRAZZANO: COMMON ORIGIN AND INTERESTS

Both Verrazzano and Leonardo da Vinci shared the same patron in France. Indeed, these two famous Italians both served under King Francis I of France.

Leonardo and Verrazzano are both of Tuscan origin. Moreover, and thanks to a written confirmation by Professor Laura Cassi, the da Vinci and Verrazzano families shared the Florentine banner of the Santa Croce and even the banner of the subdivision of the quarter wheel. This heraldic banner represented their immediate Florentine neighbourhood. They lived on the same street, namely the busy Via Ghibellina. When Leonardo returned to Florence as a celebrity in 1504, Giovanni da Verrazzano was a young adult.

After the death of Leonardo's last patron, Giuliano de' Medici on 17 March 1516, the French wanted to hastily attract the Tuscan genius, and civil and military engineering expert to their country at long last. Leonardo presumably met the French king in Bologna between 11 and 15 December 1515, ten months before his trip. Leonardo was subsequently personally accompanied on his voyage to France by the diplomat Antonio Maria Pallavicini, the French ambassador to Rome (Sammer, 2020, pp. 73–87).

On 28 October 1516, Leonardo da Vinci arrived in Amboise in France.

From his patron, King Francis I, Leonardo received the title of “*premier peintre et ingénieur et architecte du Roy, meschanischien d'estat*” which means the first painter, engineer and architect of the King, mechanic of the state (Pedretti, 2009, p. 16).

Leonardo, and many other Italian immigrants, played a pivotal and lasting role in the *italianità* of France in the early years of the reign of the young King Francis I (Tauber, 2002, pp. 171–197).

Giuseppe Arcangeli emphasizes that the Italians were very well received at the court of France and thus describes:

“Certo, che re Francesco di Francia dovè prendere un gran concetto de' Fiorentini, quando vedeva alla sua corte, quasi allo stesso tempo un Verrazzano, che aggiungeva nuovi regni alla sua corona, un Leonardo da Vinci, che per lui dipingeva, architettava, e gli deliziava perfino la reggia di piacevolissimi suoni; un Luigi Alamanni, reputato dopo l'Ariosto il più gran poeta d'Italia, che gli offeriva la sua Coltivazione.” (Arcangeli, 1853, in Piquet, 1999, pp. 431-465)

In English:

“Certainly, that King Francis of France must have taken a great deal of notice of the Florentines when he saw at his court, almost at the same time, a Verrazzano, who added new kingdoms to his crown; a Leonardo da Vinci, who painted, architected and even delighted him with very pleasant sounds; and a Luigi Alamanni, reputed after Ariosto to be the greatest poet in Italy, who offered him his cultivation.”

Until recently not much was known about the life of Leonardo in France. Even less is known about that of Verrazzano. Research presented in Table 1 on page 42 and on page 43 shows they shared the acquaintance of members of the most powerful French families, such as from the House of Angoulême, Valois, Savoy, Bourbon, and Lorraine.



Figure 2: Portrait of Francis I, King of France, by Jean Clouet dating from c. 1527. Louvre INV 3256. Public domain.

Moreover, both Leonardo and Verrazzano appear to have shared the same Italian acquaintances from a large Italian expatriate community in France. Many of these were from Tuscany. These include members of the Medici, Gondi, Ridolfi, Rucellai, Pallavicino, and Giovio families. The large Tuscan expatriate community, active in the silk trade in Lyon and other French cities, was crucial in the world of banking, trade and the arts.

Many Florentines had fled the repression in their homeland. It could be that Leonardo's presence in France as a very important invited guest and Verrazzano's presence as an exile in France are related. This is a topic to which I will return later.

Only four years after the death of Leonardo da Vinci, more precisely on 2 May 1519, Verrazzano set sail under Royal French patronage. He left France with a single royal ship on a quest to find the open sea route to what he called "*Cathay*", meaning the East Indies (Castelnovi, 2017, pp. 45–77).

CHAPTER 2

MAGELLAN AND VERRAZZANO: MAPS AND COURSES SET OUT

The fate, the travels, and the discoveries of Verrazzano have not been a hot topic in the academic world. As recently as 2023 a detailed review of the literature on Verrazzano was published by Luca Codignola (Codignola, 2023).

Research started in the late 19th century with two contentious books written on Verrazzano, one in 1864 by Buckingham Smith (Smith, 1864) and another one in 1875 by Henry C. Murphy (Murphy, 1875).

These books included so-called fake maps and fabricated news about this Italian seafarer who allegedly found New York. Also, the purported excessive distance pointed out by Verrazzano in his report was a reason for his rejection (Murphy, 1875, pp. 132–133). In chapter 9, I am the first to test the hypothesis, using modern methods for calculating distances that Verrazzano used exaggerated distances in his travelogue.


A letter by Bernardo (Greene uses Fernando) Carli, sent from Dieppe to his father in Rome on 4 August 1524, accompanying Verrazzano's report, had also been written about by George Washington Greene about half a decade earlier than the above-mentioned contentious books (Greene, 1837, pp. 3–4).

But Murphy and Smith were convinced that the report by Verrazzano was a fake as Verrazzano writes about “blacks” in the New World. To Murphy and Smith this could not be possible as black people, in their opinion, were descendants from imported African slaves. Interestingly, Murphy and Smith seem to neglect that Verrazzano used skin color variations from black to dark olive.



Figure 3: Portrait of Ferdinand Magellan, c. 1550–1625. Anonymous painting. The inscription in English reads: "Ferdinand Magellan is most famous for having conquered the difficulties of the Antarctic Strait." Collection of the Mariner's Museum, Newport, VA. Public domain.

Verrazzano's descriptive phrase "*Sono di colore neri non molto da gli Ethiopi disformi*" was interpreted as an ethnic designation by the aforementioned H. C. Murphy at the time of the racial segregation in the US in 1875 as: "*they are black in colour, and not very different from the disformed Ethiopians*" meaning Africans.



di colore nero come gl'altri. Le carne molto lüste di mediocre statura,
il viso più profilato, del corpo et altri membra, assai più delicati di molta
poca forza et più presto d'ingegno, altro no' uide. Di qui partiti
seguendo semp' il Lito che tornaua alquato uerso septentrione, peruenimo i
spatio di Leghe ciquata a una terra che molto più si monstra uella et
piena di gran me' selue. surgendo aquella, andando xx huomini circa
leghe dua i fra terra, trouamo legente per paura si erano fuggiti ale selue.
cercando i tutto scontramo i una femina molto uecchia et una giouane di
anni xvij i xx le quali per timore si erano nascoste fra l'herba, hauca
la uecchia dua fanciullette quali portaua sopra ale spalle et dietro al collo
uno fanciullo tutti di eta d'anni octo simile tali ne hauea la giouane ma
tutte femine, giunti a quelle cominciorono a gridare la uecchia a farne segno.

Figure 4: Copy of page 5 of the Codex attributed to Giovanni da Verrazzano. Notice the wording "di colore nero" in the upper right corner. Source: Bacchiani, 1909, pp. 1274–1323.

Verrazzano's description is detailed. He could have used the word *moro* meaning *moor* (Anghiera, 1555, pp. 90–91), i.e., a black man, which was a common contemporary Italian Renaissance definition for people with dark skin, but because *moro* was used for Muslims and Africans, he opted for the word black, adding the remarkable detail of "not very different from Africans".

Verrazzano's description seems to imply that Verrazzano encountered black persons, descendants from slaves from Black Africa as early as 1524. Even in 1703, a German copper engraving shows a West-Indian Queen with black skin.



Figure 5: A dancing West-Indian Queen. Caspar Luyken c. 1703. Abraham a Sancta Clara. Neu-eröffnete Welt-Galleria. Color engraving. Private collection.

Apparently, the lack of the description of the type of birch bark canoes and, in particular, the lack of the mentioning of either tobacco or a tobacco pipe and its custom of smoking is a thorn in the side of some of the former and even 21st century critics (Maura, 2021, p. 111). Verrazzano does mention canoes in his report. The traditional use of tobacco among North American Indian tribes is known to vary.



Figure 6: Famous copper engraving of Giovanni da Verrazzano by G. Zocchi, engraved by F. Allegrini, dating from 1767. Public domain.

Verrazzano's report, which I carefully investigated, uniquely illustrates the earliest detailed French-Italian contact with the indigenous North Americans born on the North American East Coast (Dickason, 1984, p. 161). The report had also been misinterpreted, with regard, for instance, to the preceding B. Smith confusing the navigator from Tuscany with a certain Florin, who was a French pirate who was hanged (Murphy, 1875, p. 136). This long-lasting historiographic confusion between this Florin, misinterpreted as *Florentine*, and Verrazzano, also a Tuscan descendent, prolonged the skepticism of his discovery.

This (erroneous) research was refuted after the discovery of the valuable manuscript known as the Cèllere Codex in Rome as reported in a book by the Italian scholar and professor Alessandro Bacchiani in 1909 (Bacchiani, 1909, pp. 1274–1323; Mollat du Jourdin & Habert, 1982, pp. 4–7).

Not only was there confusion surrounding names. There was also the loss of the most important map which was needed to understand the travels of Verrazzano: a world map of 1527 by the contemporary cartographer Visconte Maggiolo (1475–c. 1549; from here onwards: Maggiolo) (Astengo, 2007, pp. 72–75). This portolan chart was housed at the Ambrosian Library in Milan and got lost during a Second World War air raid on the city in 1943 (Revelli, 1949, pp. 1–3). This complicated the research on Verrazzano. Luckily a replica had been made. Figure 25 on page 39 shows the image of this lost manuscript map by Maggiolo.

Verrazzano's identity made research difficult too. For the Italians, he was working for the French king. For the French, with a few exceptions believing Verrazzano was born in Lyon, he was of Italian origin. For the English and the German speaking world, he was mostly unknown. For the Portuguese and Spanish, he was a fierce competitor. Only at a later stage, especially in the 19th century, for the North Americans and Canadians, was he of some interest, albeit he ranked far behind Columbus and Vespucci. The naming of the suspension bridge across the Narrows in New York after Verrazzano which opened in January of 1964 made the name of Verrazzano better known to a wider public. An orthographic disagreement led to its spelling with a single z. In 2018 New York Governor Andrea Cuomo signed a bill that was passed in the state senate to rectify the misspelling.

The quincentennial of Leonardo da Vinci's death in 2019 drew academic and a lot of media attention to the arts, the history of French royalty and Emperor Charles V, the imperial Habsburg opponent. The interest in Verrazzano's epic accomplishment, in view of the quincentennial of the discovery of New York in 2024, brought his name back on the international research radar. Another fact made research on Verrazzano difficult: his informative logbook of his expedition to the US East Coast, to which he referred to in a letter (Wroth, 1970, p. 183) and which cartographers upon his return had used, has failed to surface in any library or auction. This has made it even more difficult to find out more about the exact details of his unique endeavor.

His employer, King Francis I from the House of Valois-Angoulême began his reign on 1 January 1515. Leonardo da Vinci died in France on 2 May 1519. Coincidentally, Emperor Maximilian I, the major competitor of King Francis I of France, died in the same year in which Magellan's expedition started. Magellan's expedition ended, even if without him, with a successful historic circumnavigation of the world in 1522. Not many are aware that New York's first placename was not New Amsterdam but Nouvelle Angoulême after Angoulême in Western France, a former kingdom of Aquitaine.

In the literature, Verrazzano, born in c. 1485 in Greve in Chianti, is mentioned to be in the French coastal areas of Brittany in 1521–1522. Not much is known of his presence in France prior to that. One could consult the biography of Verrazzano (Almagià, 1937, pp. 353–372), even if it remains rather incomplete during Verrazzano's early years. In 1992 Polistampa published a voluminous but excellent biographical and bibliographical repertory by the Italian historian Dr. Carlo Baldini on the family of Verrazzano. What is proven is that Verrazzano was in France in October of 1521 (Rucellai, 1983, pp. 7–41; Codignola, 2007, p. 29).



Figure 7: Castle of Giovanni da Verrazzano in Greve in Chianti in April 2023. This castle is famous for its excellent Chianti wine. Verrazzano even mentions wine grapes in the Cèllere Codex. Picture: Stefaan Missinne, 2023.

Moreover, it is not known when Verrazzano left his native Tuscany and when he first arrived in France. There is a mentioning of a certain Jean Vérassen being in Dieppe in 1506 and even to have accompanied Thomas Aubert on a two-ship fishing expedition to Newfoundland in 1508, but Verrazzano refers to neither in his codex, nor are the trips well documented (Murphy, 1875, p. 112).

A crucial contemporary source, a letter dating from 4 August 1524 by the Florentine merchant resident in Lyon, Bernardo Carli, refers to Verrazzano's presence in the Eastern Mediterranean with a longer stay in the prosperous city of Cairo (Pagani & Barozzi, 1875, p. 40) and even in Syria (Murphy, 1875, p. 118).

It is worthy of attention to point out that in 1982, Mollat du Jourdin & Habert refer on page 110 to a mentioning in 1528 of a certain "Varamzano" who was in the company of F. Magellan and travelled with him to Seville in Spain. They refer to a letter by António da Silveira de Meneses, at the time (between 1528 and 1529) the Captain of Sovala in Mozambique (Da Silva Rego, A. 1954, pp. 544–546; Wroth, 1970, p. 9).

The translation of the quotation, in English is:

"The Florentine ship owner, João de Varamsano, who accompanied Magalhães when he set sail from Portugal to Castile, equipped two ships in 'Ana Frol,' by which Honfleur is presumably meant." (Wroth, 1970, p. 229)

It appears that this rather valuable piece of information has been neglected in the research on Verrazzano. A reason may be that as Verrazzano was an Italian, he did not seem to appear among the numerous Portuguese exiles (Gil Fernández, 2009) in Seville.

The value of the information increases even more considering that F. Magellan, a defector, was an enemy of the crown of Portugal and Verrazzano was a major competitor who worked for the French crown. This underestimated phrase which has escaped the attention of so many history books, draws our attention with a mentioning of Magellan in the Italian manuscript attributed to Verrazzano and addressed to the French king.

In the Cèllere Codex, on its tenth page (verso) shown in Figure 8, there is a quite remarkable insertion of “*cioe Magalani*” meaning: that is F. Magellan.

It is part of the Italian phrase: “*verso l’Austro gradi 54 hanno navigato, dove hanno trovato terra senza fine*” which means “They sailed to the 54th degree south, where they found land without an ending.”

Not only is there a written notice of the name of Magellan, but he also knew in 1524 the exact degree of latitude where the Strait of Magellan is situated.

It is known that a disappointed F. Magellan, after a long waiting period in Lisbon starting in 1514, arrived three years later, on 20 October 1517, in Seville, and was apparently accompanied by three persons from Lisbon.

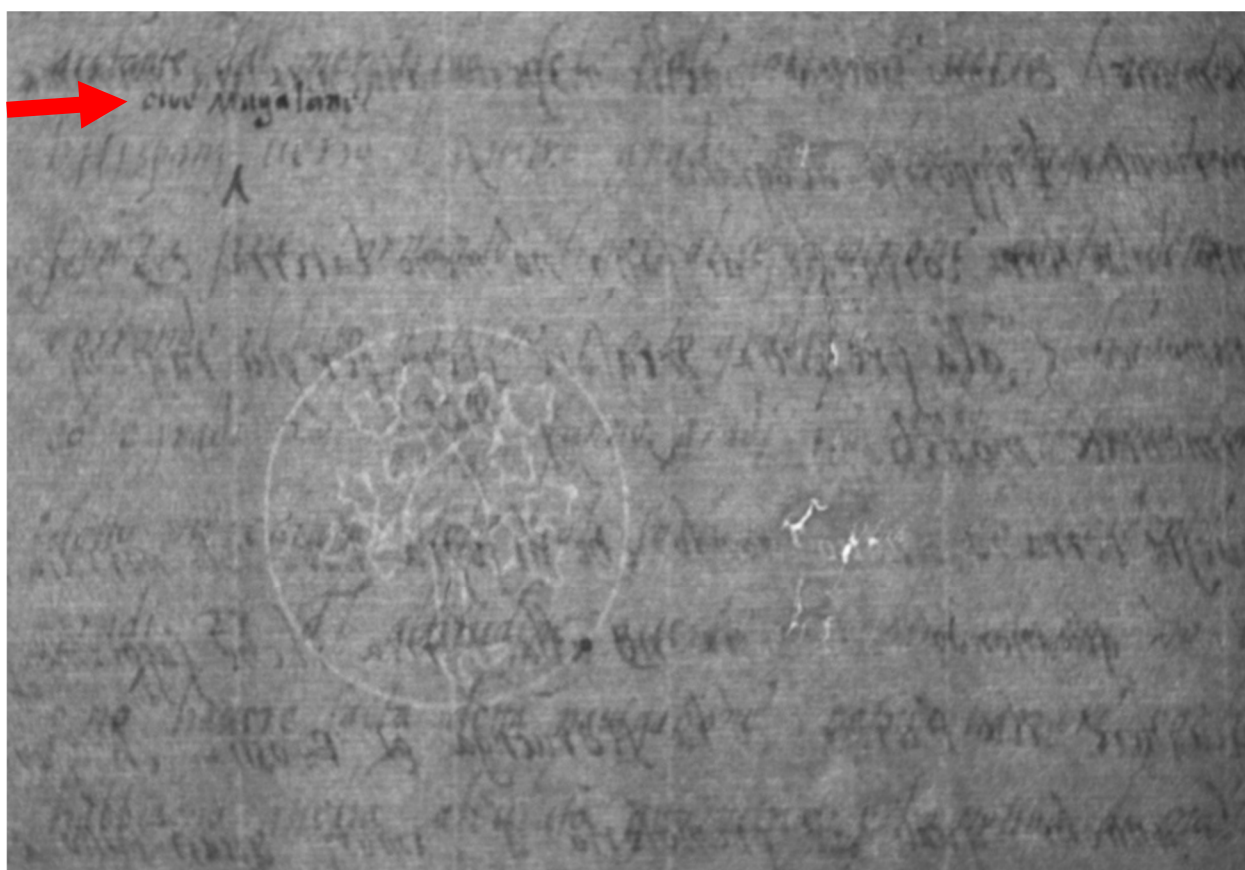


Figure 8: Detail from page 10 (verso) from the Cèllere Codex showing a leafy tree as a watermark (Briquet 773, Livorno dating from 1512). Notice the text: “*cioe Magalani*” in the upper left corner. MA 776, p. 10. Picture: Public domain.

F. Magellan’s expedition was formally approved and signed by the representatives of the Spanish kings in Valladolid on 22 March 1518. He embarked from Seville for his transatlantic expedition on 10 August 1519 (Ruiz, 2019, pp. 231–232).

Queen Isabella I of Castile and King Ferdinand II of Aragon, in short, the Spanish kings, were the monarchs of what later would become Spain.

If the valuable information about Verrazzano's travel with F. Magellan is correct, this would mean that the Tuscan explorer was in Portugal and Spain prior to October 1517. After this, he could have travelled to France to offer his services to the French king in 1518. The month of October 1517 is a striking *terminus post quem*, i.e., a date after which he could have returned to France.

The previous information is quite meaningful. First, the aforementioned letter is a consequential and underestimated contemporary source. Second, the information it provides becomes even more significant. If these two men met in Lisbon, which at the time was a world leading center with the latest updated cartography of the most recent discoveries, they might have both been looking for the latest maps. Indeed, it was in the city of Lisbon, where the continuously updated Royal Pattern, a centralized repository of geographic data from the late 15th and early 16th century, was kept. Because of reasons of secrecy, it was governmental policy not to print modern maps (Donkin, 2003, p. 32).

So, interested navigators and foreign agents alike approached these cartographic centers in Lisbon and Seville to try to find the latest valuable cartographic information.

In the likely event that Verrazzano met F. Magellan prior to the latter's departure from Seville in 1519—the naval port also used by Amerigo Vespucci (Rombai, p. 128 & p. 137)—and Verrazzano learned about Magellan's plans, this might have exerted influence on Verrazzano's choice for a specific westerly course.

In the factual context of the explorations, it is therefore not coincidental that Verrazzano, like Columbus before him, purportedly “visited” Lisbon in search of the latest cartographic information.

A contemporary source on Magellan's navigational course specifies:

“Magellan had with him a globe well painted, showing the entire earth, and he showed thereby, the route which he thought of taking; but intentionally he had left the strait blank, so that his secret might not be stolen from him.”

This globe was, according to the Spanish historian Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola (1562–1631) in the *Conquista de las Islas Molucas* which dates to 1609, painted by the famous Portuguese cartographer Pedro Reinel (Harrisse, 1892, p. 492).

A letter from Sebastian Álvares, representative of the Portuguese monarch in Seville, dated July 1519—that is, on the eve of the departure of the Magellanic expedition—confirms the involvement of Pedro Reinel and his son Jorge in the preparation of the charts used by F. Magellan (Harrisse, 1892, p. 733).

From this standard map produced by the father Pedro and son Reinel, F. Magellan commissioned two other cartographers, Diego Ribeiro, a Portuguese origin but since 1518 a Spanish national and the Spanish Nuño García de Torenó, to produce “all letters” necessary for the journey that was about to begin (Loureiro, 2019, p. 42).

An additional encounter dating from September 1522 in France, so several years later after Verrazzano's stay in Lisbon and Seville also seems to have had a persuasive role on Verrazzano's expedition.

Verrazzano's choice of the course of navigation was perhaps “cemented” based on the meeting of King Francis I's mother Louisa with the Italian surviving chronicler of the historic Magellan expedition, Antonio Pigafetta, in France in late September 1522. L. C. Wroth in his book of 1970 fails to mention this. This encounter Louisa-Pigafetta appears to have precipitated the decision process to commission a discoverer under a French royal flag to participate in this secret contest of discoveries.

Who was Pigafetta? Antonio Pigafetta (1480–1531) was a Knight of the Order of St. John of Rhodes from Vicenza in Italy. He wrote the informative chronicle of the first circumvention of the world

while accompanying F. Magellan and S. Elcano. Pigafetta returned to Seville, their port of departure. He was one of the very few to survive this historic adventure. In his report, Pigafetta refers to a nautical chart by a certain Martin known to Magellan prior to his departure (Pigafetta, 2007, p. 18) and he paints a map of the Spice Islands (Figure 18).

This purportedly refers to Martin Behaim from Nuremburg who is best known from his painted globe dating from c. 1492, which is currently kept at the German National Museum in Nuremburg. It is the oldest extant globe in the world, the cartography of which is based on the work of Henricus Martellus (Van Duzer, 2019, p. 167).



Figure 9: Antonio Pigafetta. Source: Biblioteca civica Bertoliana, Collezione Marasca, Vicenza. Public domain.

It cannot be excluded that Magellan knew of a globe or portolan chart by the German navigator Behaim who was active in Portugal, to which Pigafetta refers. It seems logical to presume that, as stated earlier, Magellan wished to have the latest updated cartographic material, surpassing the geography of the late 15th century by Behaim, prior to his departure.

Several scholars have speculated on what Verrazzano and his supporters precisely knew. In the report attributed to Verrazzano to which we come later in greater detail, he writes “*the land which the Lusitanians found*” and

“that is, Bacalaia, so called after the fish” (Wroth, 1970, p. 89).

The Fugger family, famous bankers financing the Habsburgs, were involved as of 1503 in spice trading. In the Fugger Archives in Augsburg, an underestimated source of printed information is kept. It dates from 15 October 1514.

It is a printed German newspaper known as *Neue Zeytung auss Presillg Landt* (Aymore, 2009, p. 121).

The valuable printed information sets forth that the Spice Islands are 600 miles away from Brazil. Many trusted they were located just West of Panama.

The underestimation of this distance (less than 10 degrees) appears to have determined Magellan’s choice for his course and his financiers alike (Nunn, 1931, pp. 684–686).

In addition, as part of the available information it may be relevant to mention that the Lenox Globe is among the cartographic material available (Wroth, 1970, p. 30).

As the organic da Vinci Globe dating from 1504, the prototype of the copper cast Lenox Globe, as irrefutable evidence from Raman spectroscopy shows, was not discovered until 2012 (Verhoeven & Missinne, 2017, pp. 303–310), it may be asserted that the da Vinci Globe, made from conjoined ostrich egg shells, which shows the open seaway to China, can be added to the list by L. C. Wroth.

In the Codex Atlanticus, page 331 recto, dating from 1504, Leonardo writes “El mio mappamondo che ha Giovanni Benci” which in English means: My world globe that has Giovanni Benci. This phrase contains the word “mappamondo” which, in the English literature on the subject, has been erroneously translated as “world map.”

It is repeated by Leonardo with some slight variation in “mapamondo de’ Benci” in his Codex Arundel, page 191 recto.

It is rather compelling that this iconic world globe from Leonardo is in the hands of Giovanni Benci, member of the Florentine banking family, brother of Ginevra Benci. The Benci were friends of Leonardo and advisors to the Medici. (Missinne, 2018, p. 124 and p. 221). I will elucidate this later in this book.

Lawrence C. Wroth made the effort to find out which maps and globes (or gores) dating from later than 1514, as Florida was only explored for the first time in 1513, but prior to 1523, showed both Florida and Newfoundland.

Only one singular extant map qualifies: namely the aforementioned globe gores designed by Leonardo da Vinci.



Figure 10: Unique design of the globe gores by Leonardo da Vinci, *Codex Atlanticus*, page 757 recto. (Detail). Notice the west coast of Africa on the left gore in the middle. Public domain.



Figure 11: Detail of the equidistant triangular globe gores designed by Leonardo da Vinci dating from after 1514. Notice the Island of Florida in the upper right gore and Nordegia (Norway) not linked with the unknown Northern Territories. The red arrow depicts the open sea route chosen by Verrazzano in 1524. RCIN 991393.a Royal Collection Trust / © HM Queen Elizabeth II 2018.

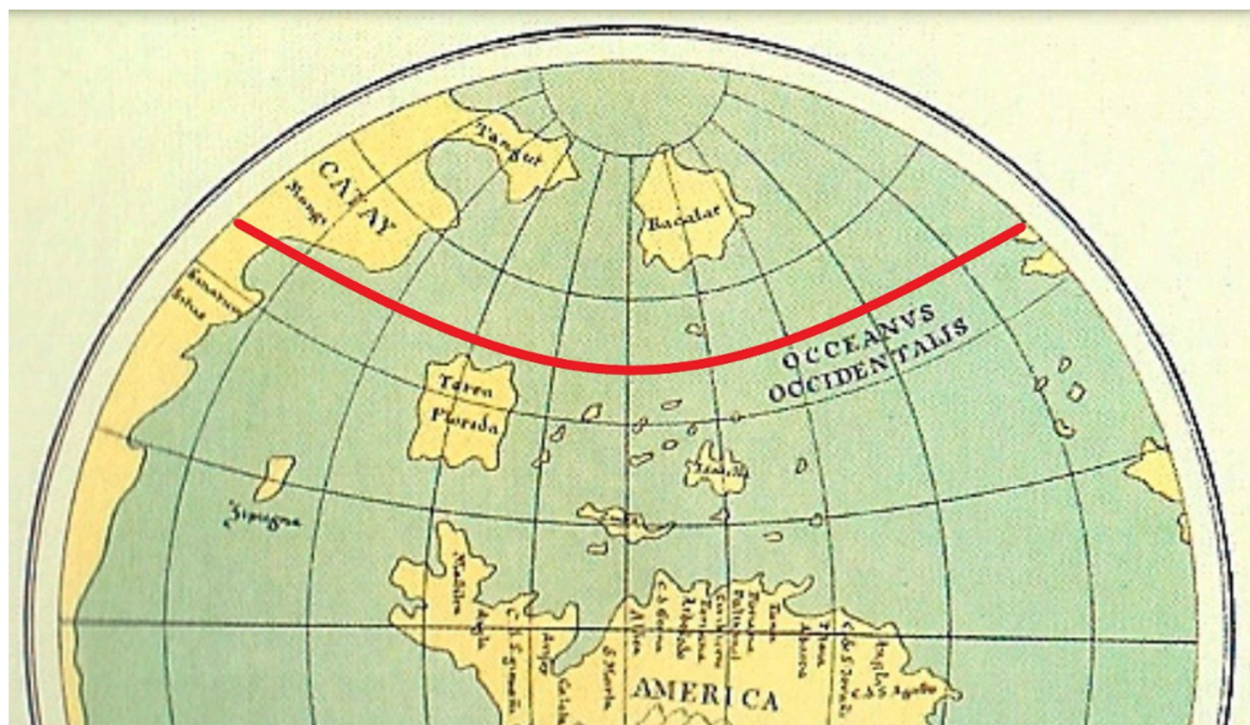


Figure 12: Globe gores by Leonardo da Vinci assembled together. Notice the red line showing the open oceanic strait to CATAY (China) between Newfoundland and the Island of Florida. Public domain.

These gores are the only extant ones based on a design by Leonardo da Vinci that exist. No other sample is known. They are cartographically relevant and date from a period c. 1515.

Leonardo's interest in the terrestrial world, maps and globes is well documented. In his *Codex Atlanticus*, a loose sheet with a world map, on an equilateral triangular globe gore (RCIN 991393.a), invented by Leonardo was found, as can be seen in the Figure 11.

This world gore map dates from c. 1515 and was first attributed to Leonardo (D'Adda, 1870; Govi 1872); recent research, however, has shown that it appears to be the work of Francesco Melzi (1491–1570) (Missinne, 2018, p. 215).

F. Melzi was Leonardo's most famous student. He used the same type of lettering and was with Leonardo during his stay in France.

These gores found among the papers in the handwriting of Leonardo seem to have been based on Spanish sources (Harrisse, 1892, p. 504). They might have been created in Rome in 1515, at the time of Leonardo's stay in the eternal city.

They are rather meaningful as they depict Florida, as an island, which was first explored in 1513, and the open western seaway between the island and Bacalar (Newfoundland), which was searched for by Verrazzano in 1524, on his way to Cathay (China). Perhaps there may even be some analogy between the importance of Toscanelli's map for Columbus (Edgerton, 1974, pp. 275–292) and the importance of the content of the globe stripes made according to a design by Leonardo for Verrazzano.

I return to Verrazzano's choice for making a south-westerly course like F. Magellan during a second expedition across the Atlantic. The second part of the previously mentioned Meneses letter about Verrazzano's 1526 Atlantic expedition explains a bit more about his choice to make a new course across the Atlantic. He departed from Honfleur on 15 June 1526:

"With these ships, one of 70 and the other of 50 tonnes, he sailed out 15 June 1526, intending to follow the route to the Spice Islands discovered by Fernão de Magalhães. As bad weather prevented him from entering Strait Magalhan, he decided to cross the Atlantic, round Cabo da Boa Esperança and reach the goal via the Indian Ocean. The crew of Varamsano's ship mutinied and forced him to turn back." (Wroth, 1970, p. 229)

As Verrazzano had not been successful in his first transatlantic expedition to find an open oceanic channel towards the Spice Islands, in this expedition, he appears to have decided to try the south-westerly course Magellan had taken. By doing so, he might perhaps have reconsidered the oceanic strait he was convinced to have located in 1524.

Perhaps Verrazzano heard in 1526 about his opponent, the Spaniard Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón (1475–1526), and his 1524 discovery of Chesapeake Bay, among others. Ayllón's voyage of discovery in late 1524 alongside the coast where Verrazzano sailed only a few months earlier would greatly influence the quality of Spanish cartography of that area, for example that of Diego Ribeiro and many other followers for decades. This exceptional story of Verrazzano's second expedition has an unexpected and tragic ending:

"The captain of the other ship insisted on sailing with him to Madagascar, to take a rich cargo of ginger and perhaps capture some ships. The ship rounded the Cape from a great distance, passed Madagascar without getting the island in sight and finally reached Sumatra. Here, part of the crew forced the captain to return to France. Thanks to an excellent Portuguese roteiro, the ship managed, via the Maldives, to reach Madagascar. Here, the sailors suffered shipwreck. The captain and nine of his men then left in a large sloop; nothing was ever heard of them. The mate and the other survivors built a sambuq, with which twelve sailors managed to reach Mozambique in July 1528. There they were promptly arrested by the Portuguese, as capitão António da Silveira de Meneses informed King João III." (Wroth, 1970, p. 229)

After this short excursion on the time preceding Magellan's expedition and potential influence on Verrazzano, I will now investigate the events which may have determined the timing of Verrazzano's departure and start of his transatlantic expedition dating from 1523–1524.



Figure 13: Leonardo da Vinci. 19th century oil painting copied after an engraving dating from 1817 by Raphael Morghen (1785–1833) signed by Carolina Lucchesi (19th century painter) based on the portrait in the Giovio Collection. Private collection.