



Pineda world map, 1520

DESCRIPTION: The earliest known map to correctly show the main outlines of the Gulf of Mexico is this manuscript sheet (43 x 22 cm) attached to a royal authorization of 1521 granting Francesco de Garay, Governor of Jamaica, the right to colonize the country between 'Florida, formerly Bimjni' and Mexico. While it bears neither title nor name of maker, it is presumably the drawing sent to the King of Spain by Garay and constructed by Alonso Pineda and his pilots, who explored the northern coast of the Gulf for Garay. Pineda's expedition demonstrated that there was no passage to the Pacific from the Gulf of Mexico (although the mysterious Darien Strait appeared on many maps of the period from Waldseemüller's map of 1507 on, see #310, 313, 319, 326, 328, 332); from Mexico southward the coast was already known.

The map is bordered on the north by Florida, on which is inscribed: *La Florida que decian Bimini que descubrio Joan Ponce* [Florida, said to be Bimini, which was discovered by Juan Ponce (de Leon)]. Thence the coast curves westward to a point where we read: *Hasta aqui descubrio Joan Ponce* [As far as this, extends the discovery of Juan Ponce - approximately present-day Apalachee Bay]; then to another bearing the inscription: *Desede aqui comenco de descubrir Francesco de Garay* [From here, Francesco de Garay commenced discovery - approximately present-day Appalachicola], and to the mouth of a wide river named *Rio del Spiritu Santo*, evidently one of the mouths of the Mississippi. From the latter the coastline assumes the shape of a semi-circle, extending to a large projecting peninsula that can only be the Yucatan peninsula, although nameless and absolutely connected with the mainland (a rather novel representation on a Spanish chart of 1519 since many cartographers preferred to misrepresent the Yucatan as an

island). The coast then continues westward as far as *El Darián* (present-day Panama). There is also a legend that must be noted, as it marks the limits of the discoveries accomplished in those regions, (in translation):

As far as this, westward, Francesco de Garay did discover, eastward, as far as the Cape de las higueras [of figs], which was discovered by the Pinzons and the privilege to settle the country was granted to them.

Location: In Archivo de Indias, Seville, Spain

Reference:

Wroth, L. C., *The Voyages of Giovanni da Verrazzano, 1524-28*, Plate 16