
Document 1519D

Magellan's last memorandum to the King

Sources: Memorandum from Magellan to the King, dated Seville, September 1519. Original in AGI Seville: Patronato, Legajo 34, doc. 13, ramo 2. Published in Navarrete's Colección de los viages, iv, pp. 188-189; in Medina, i, p. 112; in Garrigós, ii, pp. 330-331; and in Texeira da Mota, pp. 177-178.

Memorandum left for the King by Fernando de Magallanes when he sailed, stating the latitudes and positions of the Spice Islands, and of the main coasts and capes included within the demarcation of the Crown of Castile

Almighty Sir:

Given that the King of Portugal may one day say that the Moluccan Islands are within his demarcation, and may order the alteration of the route maps, moving coastlines and shortening ocean spaces, without anyone recognizing it the way I would, as I know how this could be done, I wish, for the service of Y.H., to leave a record of the positions of the main lands and capes, not only their latitudes but also their longitudes. In this way, should this happen and should I be deceased, Y.H. will know the truth.

Item: The island of San Antonio, which is one of the Cape Verde Islands along the coast of Guinea [i.e. West Africa], from which the line of partition between these Kingdoms with that of Portugal was drawn, is at 22 degrees east of the line of demarcation.

Item: It is useful to know that the westernmost point of the said island is at 17 degrees of latitude.

(Facing page) **Division of the world according to the Treaty of Tordesillas, as interpreted by Magellan.** (From Texeira da Mota's "A viagem", 1976, f.p. 148)

Item: The Cape of San Agustin, which is in the land of Brazil within the demarcation of Portugal, is at 8 degrees of latitude, and at 20 degrees of longitude from the line of demarcation.

Item: Cape Santa María, which is in the same land of Brazil [owned] by Portugal, is at 35 degrees of latitude, and 6-1/4 degrees from the said island.

Item: The Cape of Good Hope is on the same east-west parallel as Cape Santa María; the said Cape of Good Hope is at 35 degrees of latitude [south] and 75 degrees of longitude east of the line.¹

Item: The said Cape of Good Hope is located along an ENE—WSW line with Malacca, and there is a distance of 1,600 leagues from the said Cape of Good Hope to the port of Malacca.

Item: The said port of Malacca is at 1 degree of latitude north, and from it to the other line of demarcation [i.e. the anti-meridian] which is to the east of it, there are 17-1/2 degrees.

Item: The Moluccan Islands are five in number; it is useful to know that the three of them that are nearest to the second line of demarcation, are lined up N-S at 2-1/2 degrees in longitude [east of it], and the middle island is below the equator.

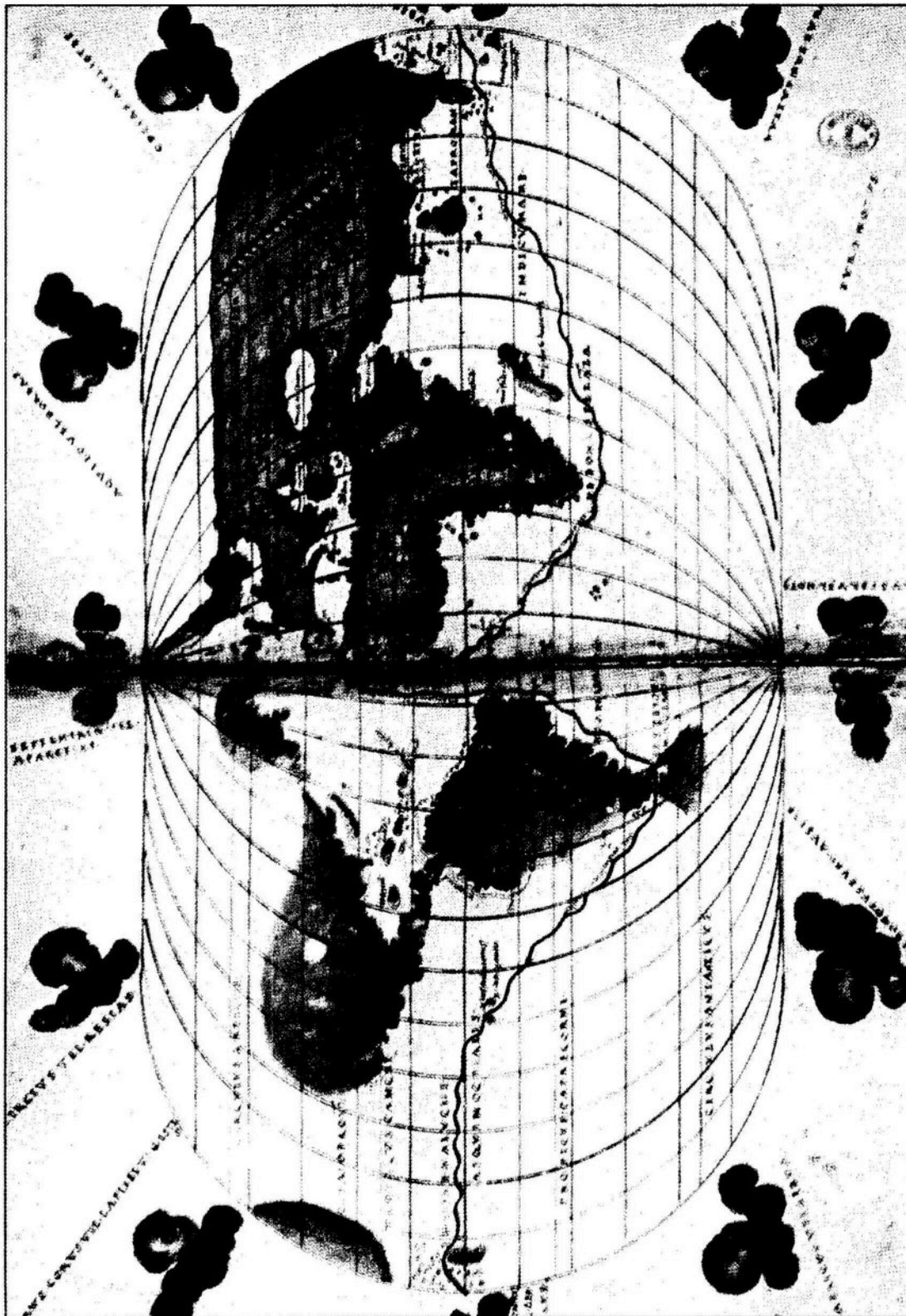
Item: The other two [Moluccan] islands are also laid out N-S like the first two [sic], and at 4 degrees east of the second line [of demarcation]; it is useful to know that two were placed north of the equator, and two south of the equator, by the Portuguese pilots who discovered them.²

And this memorandum which I am sending to Y.H. should be well preserved, as there may come a time when it will be necessary, and please excuse the differences; this I declare in all good conscience, having no other aim than to tell the truth.³

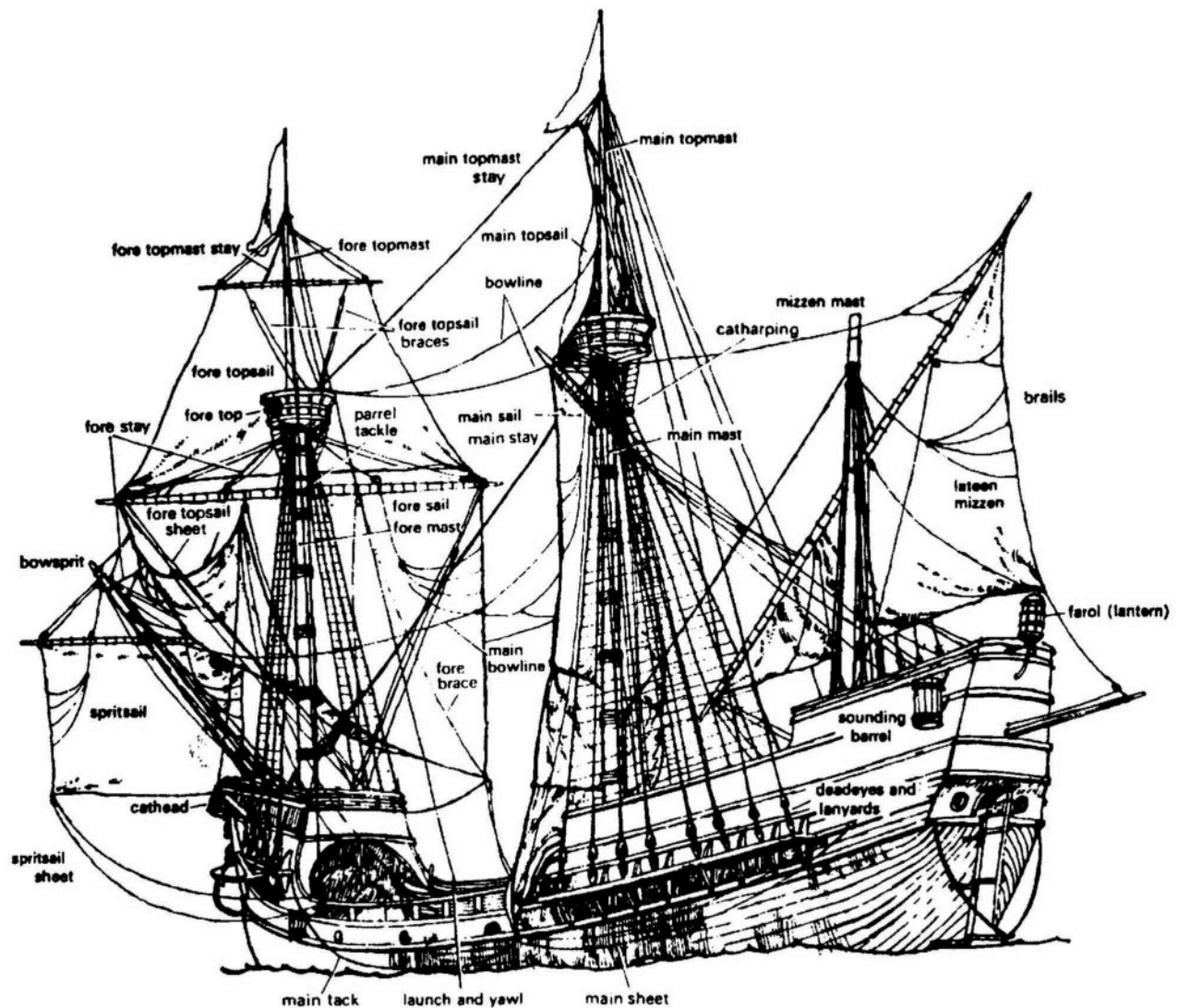
1 Ed. note: Navarrete made a mistake in transcribing “sesenta y cinco” (65), instead of “setenta y cinco” (75).

2 Ed. note: The secret contention was that the Portuguese did not own them, because they lied on the east or Spanish side of the anti-meridian. Furthermore, Magellan knew, from correspondence with his friend Fernão Serrão, and from Reinel’s maps (See Doc. 1519G), that the Portuguese had not taken possession of them yet, and he hoped to beat them to it.

3 Ed. note: Although this memorandum may have been used by the Spanish side at Badajoz in 1524, there was no direct mention made of it.



The track of the first voyage around the world as it appeared in Battista Agnese's nautical atlas of 1543. The historian Oviedo has declared: "Nothing more notable in navigation has ever been heard of since the voyage of the patriarch Noah."



Magellan's flagship *Trinidad* may have looked like this. *According to the best estimate, her dimensions were 25 meters in length, 7 meters in breadth, and 3 meters in depth of hold.* (From W. D. Brownlee's *First ships Around the World*, Minneapolis, 1977)