

**The Santa Maria de la Victoria, Loaysa's flagship. At daybreak on 24 July 1525, she led the way out of the port of La Coruña, bound for the Moluccas.**

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**Document 1525A**

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**Letter from Peter Martyr to Pope  
Clement VII, dated Toledo, 13  
September (?) 1525**

*Source: See sources for Doc. 1521G, e.g. Martyr's De orbe novo, Paris, 1907, pp. 717-721, 734-738.*

**To His Holiness Clement VII, the eight decade of  
Peter Martyr d'Anghiera of Milan, protonotary,  
member of the Imperial Council**

**EIGHT DECADE****Chapter I**

Most Holy Father, I have received the diploma on parchment which Your Holiness has conferred upon me, sealed according to custom with the fisherman's ring. It contains two parts: the first is a congratulation for my history of the New World that I had addressed to your predecessors; the second is an imperative order entreating me not to let the follow-up events disappear into oblivion...

**Chapter IX**

...

In one of my Decades, which the Bachelor Antonio Tamarano, my representative, has delivered to Your Holiness, the one which begins by the word *Priusquam*, I have

spoken at length about the fleet sent to the Moluccas<sup>1</sup>, where the spices grow and which are situated under the equinoctial line, or at least very close to it. I have also spoken about the negotiation undertaken with the King of Portugal in the town of Pacensis<sup>2</sup>, commonly known as Badajoz. The Portuguese received a contrary verdict there, but they did not accept the sentence.

### **[The Loaysa Expedition]**

The fleet, whose outfitting had been interrupted, was sent to Bilbao in Vizcaya after the breakdown of the negotiations, then to Ferrol, a port in Galicia, the safest of all the ports, and one that could accomodate all the ships that travel the seas.<sup>3</sup> It was at about the calends of June of this year of 1525.

It has been provided with everything necessary for a long navigation and also to engage in battle if it were forced to accept one. It waited at anchor for a few days for favorable winds. It is composed of seven ships; four of them have a capacity of 220 tons. There are also, to use common words, two caravels. The seventh one is what is called in Spanish a patache. Finally, the pieces for an eighth vessel are being carried; it will be assembled as soon as the port of destination has been reached, at the island of Tidore, one of the Moluccas. It is at this island, as we have narrated it in the book on the voyage around the world, addressed to Pope Adrian, that one of the two ships that had survived, stayed for a while, with 50 crewmen. As soon as they get there, the idea is for the two small-draught vessels to explore the archipelago and examine carefully all the lands situated under the equinoctial line, either beyond or within the said line.

As long as that fleet stayed in its home port, the King of Portugal, brother-in-law and cousin of the Emperor, did not cease to beg and solicit that such a great loss be not imposed upon him, but, as the Emperor did not wish to alienate Spain which is like the heart of the Empire and of all his kingdoms, he did not agree to consent to his request. It was therefore against the opinion and against the desires of the Portuguese that the fleet set sail, pushed by favorable winds, on the feast day of St. James, patron saint of Spain.<sup>4</sup> When the anchors were weighed, the trumpets were heard, the drums

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- 1 Ed. note: Martyr was then 70 years old, and as he said himself in his book, his memory had started failing him. The Decade whose first word was *Priusquam* was the 6th Decade (Doc. 1524C). He spoke in general terms of the Moluccas in his 7th Decade.
  - 2 Ed. note: Pacensis, the genetive form of Pax, which stands for Pax Augusta, as is mentioned in Doc. 1524C.
  - 3 Ed. note: That is, in the bay between Ferrol and La Coruña.
  - 4 Ed. note: The departure actually occurred on 24 July 1525, on the eve of St. James Day.



**The seven ships of the Loaysa Expedition leaving Spain.**

were beaten, and the guns were discharged as a sign of joy, so much so that the sky seemed ready to fall and the mountains trembled.

On the eve preceding the departure, the captain of the fleet, Fray García Loaysa<sup>1</sup>, knight of San Juan, the man who four years earlier had been sent as an ambassador of the Emperor to the Great Turk, swore an oath in the hands of Count Fernando de Andrade, Governor of Galicia, the man who had before beaten the French General Aubigny in Calabria<sup>2</sup>, and those of the Viceroy of Galicia. The other captains swore their oath in the hands of the admiral, the soldiers and servants in those of the captains. Loaysa then received from the hands of Andrade and the Viceroy, with great ceremony and with the applauses of all those present, the royal standard that had just been blessed. He left them ashore and took the opportunity of favorable winds to depart.

The Spanish have promised, in conformity with the orders of the Emperor, to write to our Council, of which they are dependent, when they will have reached the Canary Islands and are heading south.

García Loaysa is himself in charge of the flagship. The captain of the second ship is Sebastian El Cano [sic], he who brought the **Victoria** back to Spain loaded with cloves and had to leave behind his other ship damaged by storms. The captains of the third and fourth ships are Pedro de Vera, and Rodrigo de Acuña, the latter being of noble birth; both of these have already been captains in charge of fleets many times, and they have distinguished themselves by their exploits and have a great reputation. The fifth ship is under the command of Jorge Manrique, the brother of the Duke of Najera; he is younger and less experienced than his colleagues, but of higher birth. He has nevertheless accepted to hold a lower position, because he has recognized, not without reasons, that he had to yield before other more experienced captains. The captain of the sixth ship is a nobleman<sup>3</sup> from Córdoba named Hozes.<sup>4</sup> It is also a gentleman who is in charge of the small patache...<sup>5</sup>

The route to be followed by the fleet will be the same as that followed by Ferdinand Magellan when he went around the world, crossing what philosophers call the torrid zone, and pushing forward into the antarctic hemisphere beyond the Tropic of Capricorn.

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1 Ed. note: This is García Jofre de Loaysa, whose Fray title indicates that he was a commander of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. He should not be confused with his relative, the celebrated Dominican, also named Fray García de Loaysa.

2 Ed. note: Stewart d'Aubigny, Marhall of France, died in 1544. He had crossed the Alps with Charles VIII, and been in all the Italian wars with Louis XII and François I. He won the Battle of Seminara, in Calabria, but was weakened by it and soon retreated (1495). It is to that alleged victory that Martyr, an Italian, refers.

3 Ed. note: This word, from the Latin, was probably used to translate the Spanish word *hidalgo*, or gentleman.

4 Ed. note: His full name was Francisco de Hoces.

5 Ed. note: He was Santiago de Guevara, Elcano's brother-in-law.

Also headed in that direction is another fleet under the command of Sebastian Cabot, an Italian. I have spoken of him and of Magellan in the book about the voyage around the world dedicated to Pope Adrian, and in the preceding Decade addressed to Duke Sforza. Two more fleets are being prepared in the Guadalquivir. They will go first to Hispaniola and other islands, San Juan<sup>1</sup>, Cuba otherwise known as Fernandina, and Jamaica, from where I get some income, and to which has been given the new name of Santiago. From there, they will split and go to the new continent and to New Spain that Cortés has conquered. I have to write about the greatness and the resources of the latter possession one day. Therefore, for now, there will be as many fleets ploughing the ocean waves, as many ships going and coming to the New World as there are merchantmen coming from Italy to the Lyon Fair, or from France and Germany to the fairs of Antwerp in Belgium.

I would like very much, Most Holy Father, to be able to introduce myself inside your apartments, and, through some slit, watch the joy that will come from your heart and appear upon your face, when you learn for the first time about these discoveries, when you are given such curious details about countries hitherto unknown, when you learn that they have been given spiritually, as a wedding gift, to the Church, the spouse of Christ, and that Nature is inexhaustible in its bounty, thanks to God's mercy. So, if there are any more secrets left to be discovered, you and the Emperor are better be prepared to learn about them. Your Holiness will have to be satisfied with what is being offered to him now, as if the feast had barely begun.

I wish you a happy life.

From the Imperial city of Toledo in Carpetania and at the Imperial Court, on the 13th of the calends<sup>2</sup> of the year 1525.

## Chapter X

...

Let us go back to Esteban Gomez, about whom I have spoken at the end of my book starting with the word *Priusquam*. I had said that he had been sent with one caravel to seek a strait that must exist between Florida and the Land of the Cod-fish. Gomez did not find any strait nor Cathay, as he had promised to do, and he has returned 10 months after his departure. I had always thought that the suppositions of this brave man were without any foundation, and I had said so openly; he did not lack supporters. He has, however, discovered some interesting and useful countries, which correspond exactly with our parallels and our polar degrees. Licentiate Ayllon, one of the members of the Hispaniola Council, has explored the same countries with two ships and accompanied with his friends and servants. They are countries situated north of Hispaniola, Cuba

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1 Ed. note: Puerto Rico.

2 Ed. note: The month is not mentioned, but it has to have been August, or September.

and the Lucayan [i.e. Bahamian] Islands. They are not far from the Land of the Codfish [i.e. Newfoundland], from Chicora [sic] and from Duraba [sic], about which I have spoken extensively before.<sup>1</sup> After having described the way of life and customs of those nations, after having enumerated the excellent ports and huge rivers, the Spanish say that they have met with flat lands full of yews, oaks, olive trees, some wild grapes which climb around the trees in the forest, and all the species which grow in Europe. It is not in a mere summary, but in a huge pile of letters that they have given detailed accounts. However, what need do we have of something that can easily be found in Europe? It is southward, not toward the frozen north that all of those who are in quest of fortune should go, because below the equator everything is rich.

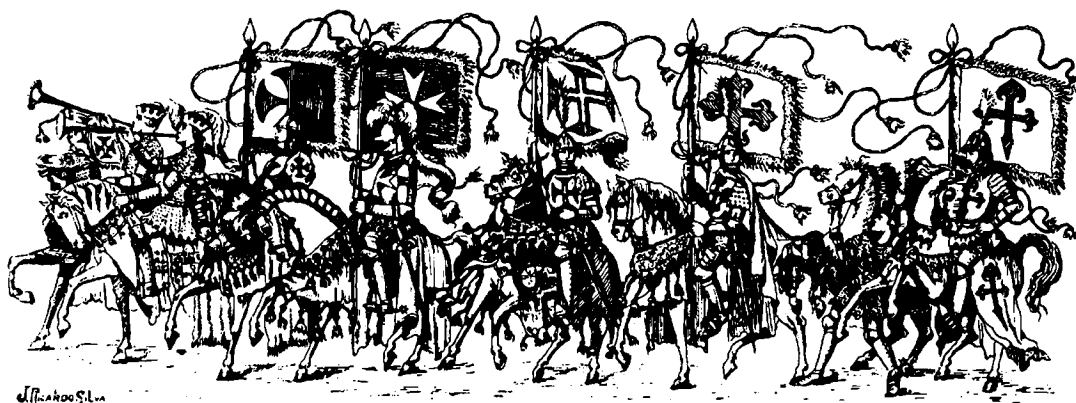
Your Holiness will learn something funny about this voyage, and a remarkable rumor which soon disappeared.

Esteban Gomez had in fact discovered nothing that he had been seeking. In order not to come back empty-handed, and contrary to our instructions which forbid any violence against the natives, he filled his ship with natives of both sexes, all innocents and half-naked, who are content with living in huts. He had no sooner arrived back at his port of departure that an individual, hearing about the arrival of the ship, and the ship being full of slaves, mounted his horse without more ample news and galloped toward us, and [upon arrival] blurted out: "*Esteban Gomez has come back with a ship full of cloves and precious stones.*" He hoped to get some kind of reward from us. Without paying any attention to the idiocy of this man, all of those who had voted in favor of Gomez went off throughout the Court shouting happily; they were proclaiming loudly that Gomez had brought back not slaves (*esclavos*) but cloves (*clavos*); they were thus removing the beginning of the word. In Spanish, servants are indeed called *esclavos* and cloves *clavos*. However, when it was learned later that *esclavos* had been transformed to *clavos*, everyone would laugh at Gomez' supporters and at their happy antics. If they had remembered that the heavenly radiations that are communicated to earthly substances ready to receive them cannot create aromatic odors, except in the countries situated close to the equator, they would have also remembered that Gomez, during the 10 months that he was away, could not have met any clove trees.

I was busy writing this appendix when the wheel of fortune turned in its usual manner and confirmed the saying that it never brings an ounce of honey without also throwing a bit of gall into one's plate at the same time, and sometimes even more than that. The streets of the illustrious city of Toledo were resounding to the sound of trumpets, the beating of drums, and the concert of flutes in honor of the betrothal and the renewal of the alliance with the King of Portugal, already the brother-in-law and cousin of

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1 Ed. note: The Licentiate Lucas Vasquez Ayllon had discovered in North America the lands called Chicorana and Duhara. Some neighboring countries were called Xapida, Hitha, Tihe, etc. They were probably all located where the coasts of the Carolinas and Virginia are today.



*In August 1525, the streets of Toledo were resounding with trumpets, the beating of drums, and the concert of flutes in honor of the betrothal of the Emperor Charles V with the sister of the King of Portugal.*

the Emperor, as a result of his consent to becoming the husband of his nubile sister, and of the dispatch of the young English princess—something all Spaniards insisted upon—when a serious and deplorable news was learned, which filled the heart of the Emperor and all the Spaniards with disgust.<sup>1</sup>

### [The Trinidad Affair]

In my book about the voyage around the world, dedicated to Pope Adrian, I had said that the ship that was in company with the **Victoria**, whose name was the **Trinidad**, had become damaged and had been left at Tidore, one of the Moluccas that produce the spices. Seventy men were aboard this ship.<sup>2</sup>

Without mentioning the officers, I know all their names because of the account book which we have at our disposal. The **Trinidad** had been repaired. She had been loaded with cloves and precious stones, and was on her way back to Europe [sic] when she met with a Portuguese fleet. The captain of this fleet, a certain Jorge [sic] de Brito<sup>3</sup>, sur-

- 1 Ed. note: One can almost be sure that the letter the Emperor had just received was the one written to him by Captain Espinosa from Cochin on 12 January 1525, and hand-carried to Toledo by his friend Taimo (See Doc. 1522A).
- 2 Ed. note: This is a confirmation of the final number of people aboard the ship, at the departure from Sanlúcar. However, only 54 men were left behind to man the factory and the **Trinidad**, at the departure of the **Victoria** from Tidore (See Doc. 1519F, section VII). Martyr himself, at the beginning of this document, says that 50 men had been left behind.
- 3 Ed. note: As Espinosa does not mention Brito by name in his letter, we can only surmise that Martyr heard it, wrongly as it turned out (his first name was Antonio) from Taimo.



prised her, and took her to Malacca, which is believed to correspond to Golden Chersonesia.<sup>1</sup> He made sure he despoiled her of everything on board. The saddest part of the story is the fate met by the ship's sailors. The sea's fury was unleashed against them so much that, shaken by continual storms, most of them perished of hunger and weariness.

As for Jorge de Brito, it is said that after the capture of the **Trinidad**, he went off to take possession of our Moluccas, which are seven in number, and to build a fortress in one of them. He apparently got hold of everything that had been left in those islands for trading purposes. The value of those two acts of plunder amounts to over 200,000 ducats.<sup>2</sup> This value is according to the report made by the sailors and the officers who have survived and returned in the **Victoria**.

Christopher de Haro was, in his capacity as factor, the director general of this enterprise for the purchase of the spices. He is a man in which our Council had great trust. He has given me the names of the five ships that were in the same fleet as the **Victoria**, as well as those of all the crewmen and the lowest of servants aboard them. He has made a presentation before our Council assembled to hear him, to show how he had arrived at this figure for our losses. Indeed, he has shown in detail how many spices there were aboard the **Trinidad**, and how many merchandises had been left to purchase them either at Machian, belonging to King Zabazutta, and one of the seven that produce spices, or at Tidore that belong to a neighboring king, and in the care of his son, his stewards and the main lords of the two monarchs. It was Juan de Campos [Nº 128] who had been entrusted with those merchandises. As far as the merchandises<sup>3</sup> are concerned, Haro enumerated the quantity of steel and copper sheets, of coarse fabric and fine linen of all kinds, pitch<sup>4</sup>, quicksilver, mineral oil, *solimain*<sup>5</sup>, gold paint for paintings, coral, red umbrellas, hats, mirrors, glass beads, bells, spoons, arm-chairs fit for a king, without mentioning the weapons with their necessary munitions, left in the archipelago for trading purposes with the royal officials, the steward and the treasurer, charged with purchasing the spices to load the ships with, when they will go back.

We do not know yet what decision the Emperor will take. I think he will not let it be known for a few days, because of the renewal of the alliance with Portugal. Even though twins have been born, it does not mean that such an insult should go unpunished. I believe that the affair will be treated peacefully at first, but I also hear a news that will not please the King of Portugal. The Emperor, despite his goodwill, will not be able to hide his unhappiness, when the owners of the freight will address themselves to him for some redress. To refuse justice to an enemy would be an act of dishonesty. How can one not

1 Ed. note: Shown on the Ptolemy map (of Rome 1490, see earlier) as "*Aurea Chersonesus*", i.e. Malaysia today.

2 Ed. note: At 375 maravedis each, this value is over 75 million maravedis, about as many dollars today.

3 Ed. note: To be compared with the detailed list, part of Doc. 1519E. They differ somewhat.

4 Ed. note: The French word used by Gaffarel is *poix*, which could also mean lead, if used for caulking.

5 Ed. note: A French word whose meaning is not known. Perhaps this is cinnabar.

refuse to do the same to one's subjects? It is said that some Portuguese veterans fear that their kingdom may be destroyed as a result of those bold attacks. They are also far too arrogant with the Spaniards! Without the products they get from Spain, would they not die of hunger? Was not that kingdom at the beginning only a small county of Castile? That is why the Spaniards are highly impatient. They would like the Emperor to make efforts to have Portugal come under the domination of Spain. King Philip, the Emperor's father, once thought of doing so, and he did not hide his feeling on the matter. Only time will tell what the sentence will be.<sup>1</sup>

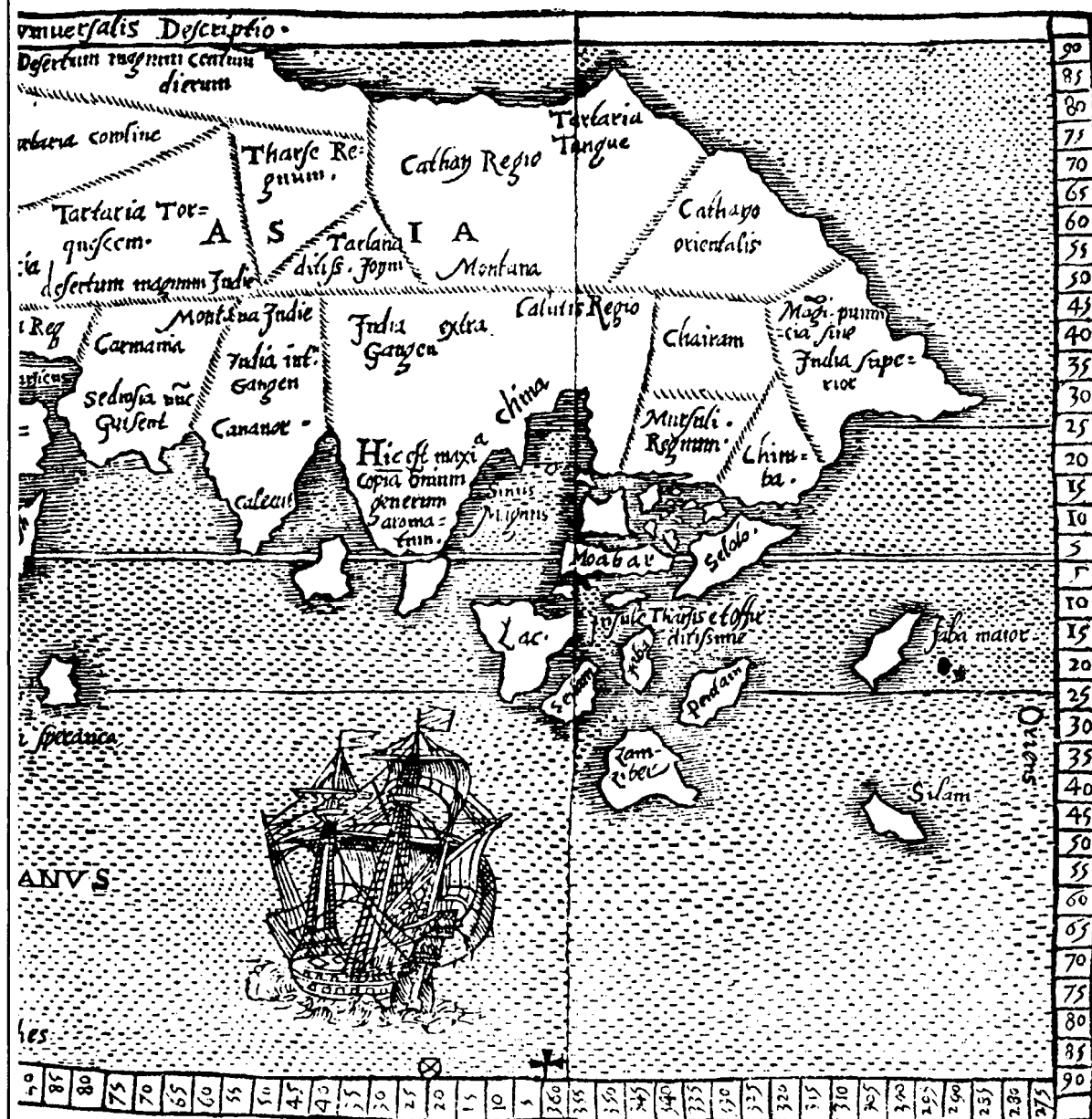
In the meantime, I bid good health to Your Holiness, whose feet I humbly kiss.<sup>2</sup>

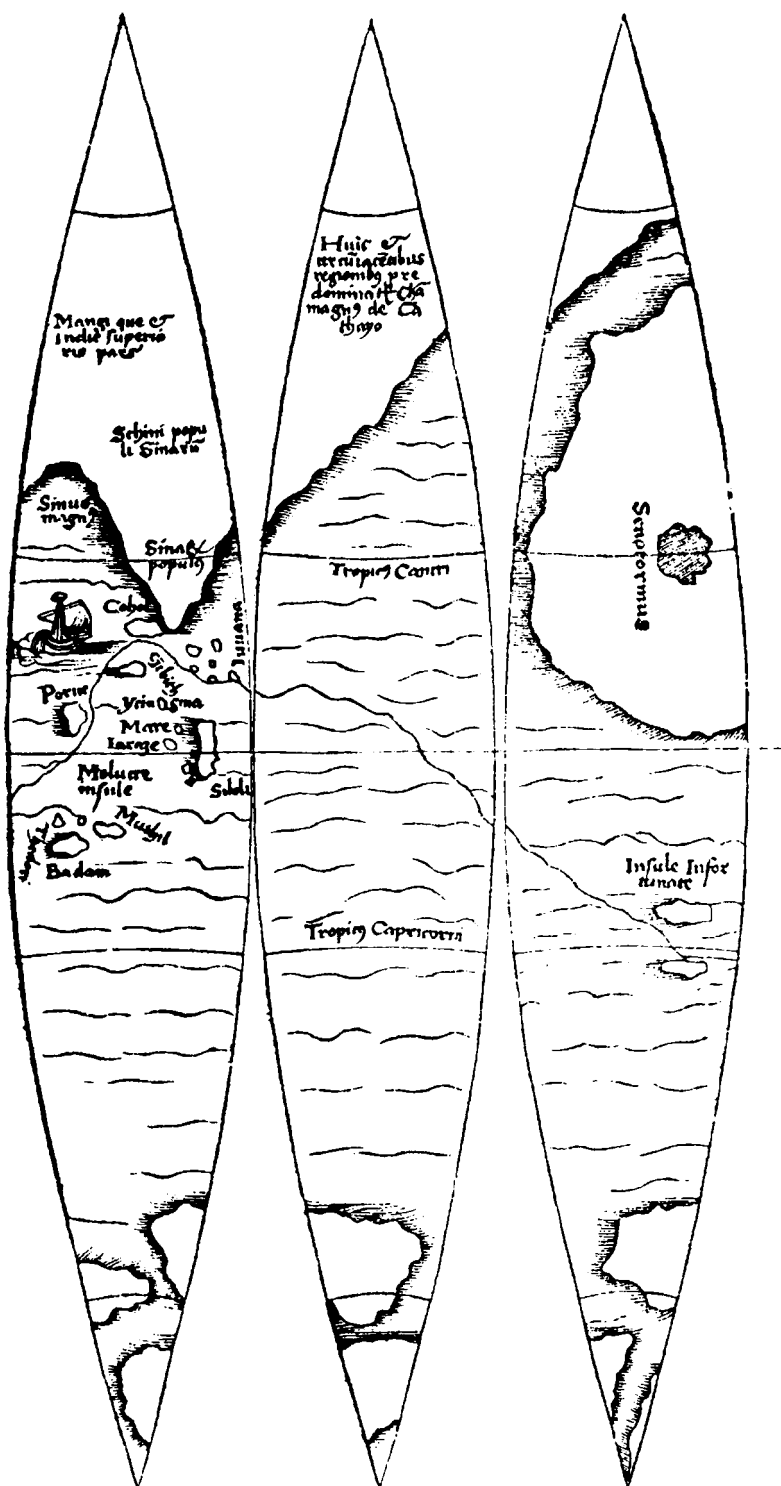
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1 Ed. note: The Spanish got their wish in 1580, when the two countries were united, but the union lasted only 60 years.

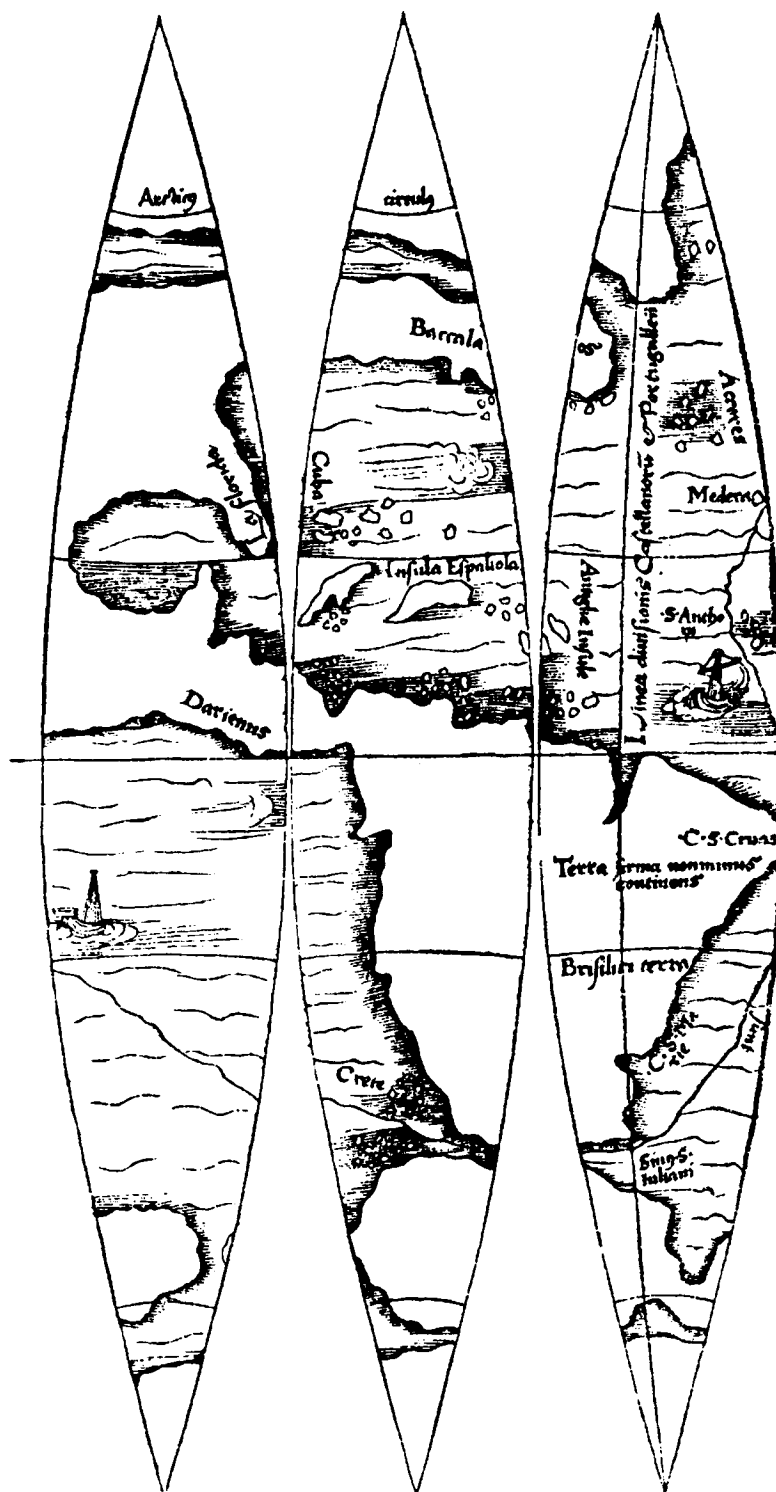
2 Ed. note: This is how Martyr's Decades end. He died a few months later, but his patrons saw to it that his final decades were also published.







**Part of a globe of the world made in Nuremberg, circa 1540. Obviously, only the published narratives of Transylvanus and Martyr seem to have been used by its author, because the track of the Magellan Expedition through the Pacific shows the Unfortunate Islands of San Pablo and Tiburones, but omits the Ladrones. In some respects it is similar to Schöner's globe of 1523.**



**Another part of a globe of the world, Nuremberg, circa 1540. It mentions Ivuana [Guiuan], Yriasina [Limasawa], Gibith [Cebu], and Cohol [Bohol] in the Philippines, as well as Porne [Borneo]. Among the Moluccas, there are mentioned: Mare, Iaraze [Ternate], Muthil, Thedori [Tidore], and Badam [Bachian], next to Siboli [Gilolo]. Such transcription errors were common. Note the Line of Demarcation.**



Map of the New World in the 1540 Basel edition of Ptolemy. Notice the Unfortunate and Thieves' Islands in the Pacific Ocean.