

The Freducci Map of 1514-1515

What it Discloses of Early Florida History

by DAVID O. TRUE

AT FIRST GLANCE, the old map partially reproduced in this issue of *Tequesta*, would not excite the average reader very much. I first read of it in an article by Dr. Cisco in the Bulletin of the American Geographical Society, 1913, in his version of the Ponce de León landings and route. The fact that this map was issued at such an early date, according to Eugenio Canova, and that it was based in part on data obtained from the Ponce expedition, made me most anxious to see a copy.

Fortunately, full information is available at the Library of Congress. The original map is located in the Royal Archives at Florence, Italy, and is called the "*Carta Nautica di Conte Ottomanno Freducci d'Ancona*". In 1894 a brochure was issued by this institution, describing the map and containing a reproduction of the original at about half scale. One of these brochures is owned by the Library of Congress, and they made the photostatic copy accompanying this article. A reproduction is also contained in Konrad Kretschmer's *Die Entdeckung Amerika's in ihrer Bedeutung für die Geschichte des Weltbildes*, Berlin, 1892. Dr. Cisco states that the outlines of Florida in Kretschmer's reproduction are so conventionalized that their historical significance is destroyed. There is also a tracing in HARRISSE'S *Découverte et Evolution Cartographique de Terre Neuve*, p. 81.

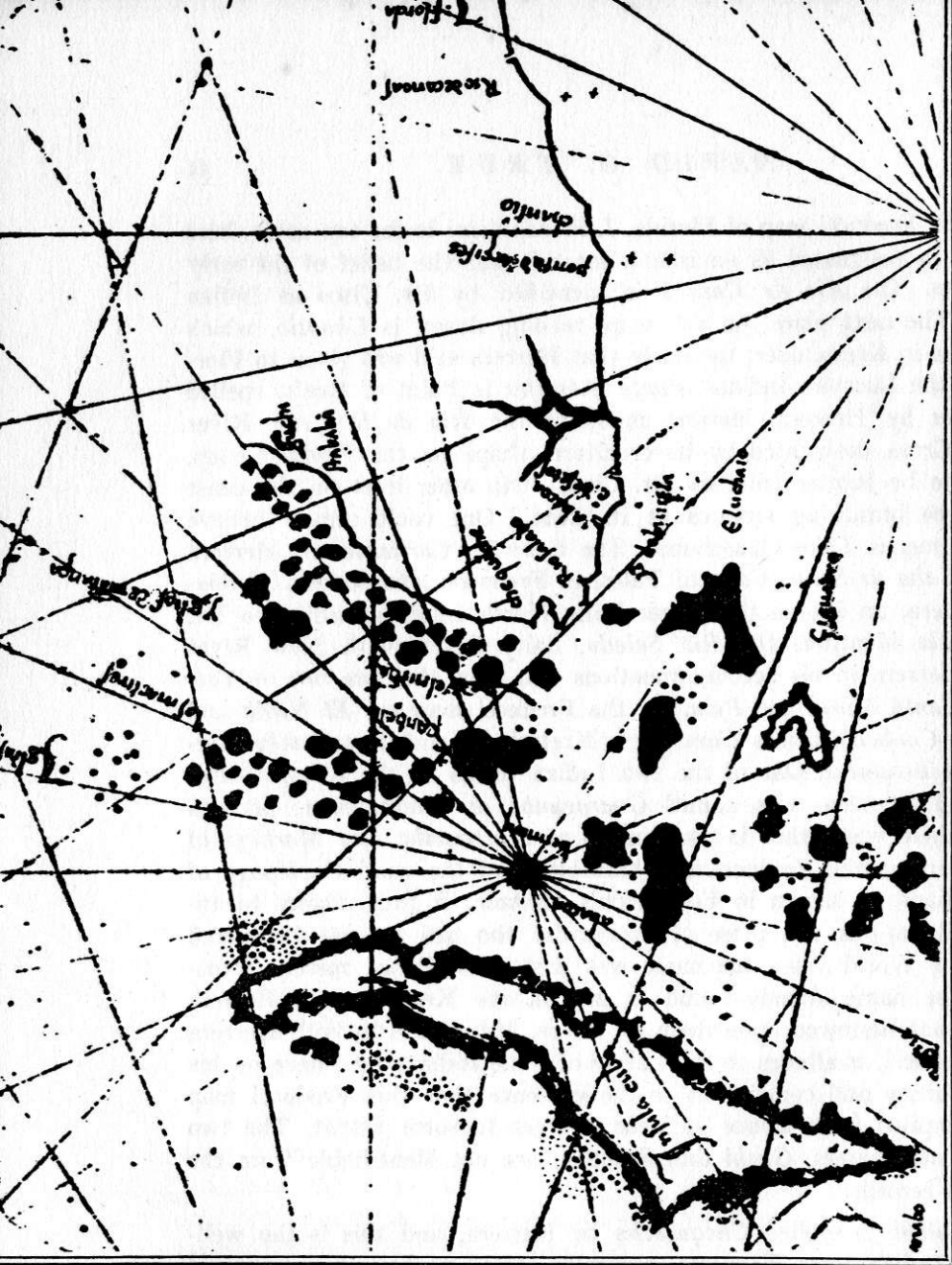
From this remarkable map, assuming that the estimated date is approximately correct, one finds four major contributions to Florida history. It is probably the first map to bear the name *Florida*. Here also is the earliest appearance of any city of North America on a map, the present city of Miami. It also shows that the Herrera designations of latitude readings in connection with landings at various places by Ponce de León were interpolated from much later sources. Furthermore, it helps to verify Sebastian Cabot's statement that he rounded the Cape of Florida.

Luelle Shaw

Erratum: The top two and one-half lines of page 51 should read as follows: "On the Freducci map of Florida *I Florida* is the top name, where Florida is designated as an island, as was done by some other cartographers also in those early days." The only explorer fully authenticated to have cruised the Florida shores before Ponce was Sebastian, and possibly John Cabot. Their evidence seemingly is of coasting some thousand miles of continuous shoreline. Relatively few map-makers portrayed Florida as an island.—D.O.T.

On the Freducci map of Florida, *I. Florda (sic)* is the top name, here Florida is designated as an island, for this was the belief of the early explorers. The *Rio de Canoas* is identified by Dr. Cisco as Indian River. The next place, on the map, reading down, is *Chantio*, which is *Cautio* in Kretschmer, the name that Herrera said was given to Florida by the Lucayan Indians. *Ponta d'Arcifes* is Point of Reefs, spelled *Arracifes* by Herrera. Herrera mentions the *Rio de la Cruz*, River of the Cross, designated by its cruciform shape on the Freducci map, stated to be Jupiter Inlet by Dr. Cisco: "No other inlet on the coast has three branching streams at its head." One could almost believe that it means Lake Okeechobee. The *Cabo de Corrientes* of Herrera is the *Cabo de Setos*, Cape of Pales, in Freducci. *Abacoa* was *Abaióá*, in Herrera, an Indian town near Lake Worth Inlet, according to Dr. Cisco. He identifies the *Rio Salado*, Salty River, with New River Inlet. Herrera in his account mentions two keys that are not on Freducci, *Santa Marta* and *Pola*. On the Freducci map are *El Nirda* and *Canbei*. *Canbei* becomes *Camboie* in Kretschmer, and is probably Herrera's *Achecambei*. One of the two Indian towns on the Keys, according to Fontaneda, was named *Guaragunbe* or *Guaragumbe*; perhaps all of these were what is now known as *Matecumbe*. *Los Martires* of both Herrera and Freducci, is a translation of the word *Cuchiyaga* of the Indians, as shown in Fontaneda's *Memoir*; it thus alludes to Indian tribulations, not those of Spaniards, who had not yet discovered the New World when the name was first used. Ponce merely translated the name already found in use on the Keys, though Herrera said it was bestowed upon them by Ponce. *Matança* is in both Herrera and Freducci, it alludes to the killing of some Indians by Ponce on his first journey and contributes to the evidence that this Freducci map was compiled from Ponce de León sources to some extent. The two West Coast names, *Guchi* and *Stababa*, are not identifiable from the Herrera records.

Chequiche is spelled *Chequescha* by Herrera, and this is the well-known Indian town *Tequesta*, generally stated to have been situated on the Miami River, where it empties into the bay. Ponce may have stopped off to visit it on his way to the West Coast, as some authors report, but Herrera definitely stated that he arrived at this place on Sunday, July 2, 1513. This is the earliest mention of Miami, by its ancient Indian name. Miami thus becomes the first city on the continent of North America to have been definitely visited by Ponce, or



45°

35°
(Strait of Gibraltar)

PORTION OF FREDUCCI'S MAP showing
 Florida, the Bahamas and Cuba. Scale
 approximately 9/10 of original map.

by any other discoverer of note, and to have been identified by a substantiating map. The name Miami came from *Mayaimi*, equally as old as the name *Tequesta*. It was the Calusa name for Lake Okeechobee, meaning "big water."

Dr. Cisco states that the Freducci map did not show "any indicated latitudes", but it can be readily seen that the line that Freducci drew, cutting through the Strait of Gibraltar, represents 35° north, while the same position on a modern map is 36°. Following this line westward, one notes that it runs about half way between Cuba and Florida. On this map the tip of Florida below *Chequiche*, is at 39° north and this is an error of more than 13 degrees! On a modern map 39° is off the coast of Delaware. Most of the other early maps and charts contain similar errors; rarely was one drawn which did not have the Tropic of Cancer south of Cuba, instead of north where it belongs. The Freducci map was based to some extent on Ponce's data, and if Ponce had a map or chart on which latitudes were as relatively exact as they are given in Herrera, it seems strange that no cartographer knew about it for many years afterward. If Ponce had decided to go ashore and dig a well at 28° 8' north, it would have been located on the very southernmost tip of the Island of Cuba, according to this contemporary map of Freducci.

To me there seems to be but one conclusion: Herrera interpolated all these locations very much later from what, in his day, were modern charts. As far as they are used by themselves to verify Ponce's landings, they are without value. They express Herrera's opinion written nearly a century later. Anyone interested in tracing Ponce's journey will find the writings of Charles B. Reynolds in accord with the opinions advanced by Dr. Cisco. The reasons for believing that a landfall was made in the vicinity of St. Augustine, are presented by Mr. T. Frederick Davis in the Ponce de León number of the *Florida Historical Quarterly* for July, 1935. Some investigators are interested in the theory that he sailed far to the north on the west coast of Florida; the Freducci map with its two additional names should interest them.

One must admit that Herrera was an indefatigable worker, for we have Muñoz' testimony that he probably took his data about the fabulous River of Youth from Fontaneda. One of his other interpolations is shown in his use of the name *Carlos* for the chief of the Calusas in the time of Ponce de León. The second chief to assume this name

was about 25 years of age in 1566; his father Senquene had been the first to take it, because he had been told that it was the name of the greatest King of the Christians (Charles V). Charles V did not come to the throne until after Ponce's first voyage, and it is unlikely that Senquene heard of him until after 1545, the date of the Fontaneda wreck, when some 200 Spaniards were taken captive by the Indians.*

This question of latitude has a bearing on the testimony of Sebastian Cabot. Peter Martyr, reporting a conversation with Cabot in 1512, wrote of it in the 3rd decade of his history:

"Thus seeing such heapes of yce before him, he was enforced to turne his sailes and follow the West, so coasting still by the shore, that he was thereby brought so farre into the South, by reason of the land bending so much Southwards, that it was there almost egyal in latitude, with the sea Fretum Herculeum, having the Northpole elevate in manner in the same degree. He sailed likewise in this tract so farre towards the West, that he had the Island of Cuba on his left hand, in manner in the same degree of longitude. As hee traveled by the coastes of this great land (which he named Baccalaos) he said that hee found the like course of the waters toward the West, but the same to runne more softly and gently than the swift waters which the Spaniards found in their navigations Southward. . . . Cabot is my friend, whom I use familiarly, and delight to have him sometimes keepe me company in mine own house."

Three compelling reasons for believing that Sebastian Cabot reported in 1512 of having rounded the Cape of Florida, either with his father on one of his two trips, or on an expedition of his own in 1508, as advanced by Williamson in his *Voyages of the Cabots*, are contained in this account by Peter Martyr. If Cabot had not known of Florida, he would not have been able to state that by following the coastline he "had the Island of Cuba on his left hand." To know of currents counter to the Gulf Stream off the South Florida shores before Ponce ever saw the country, took competent first hand information. This is a remarkable detail that too many Cabot historians overlook.

The third reason is the one to which the Freducci map makes another contribution. Cabot said that he sailed as far south as to be parallel with Fretum Herculeum (Strait of Gibraltar) and of returning from

*See Connor's translation of de Merás' *Pedro Menéndez de Avilés*.

that latitude to England. On a modern map, this would be from the coast of North Carolina. So the Cabot experts state that Cabot sailed south to Carolina and returned from there, instead of realizing that 36° at his time was, on the charts and maps, in the Straits of Florida.

Other readers will probably find more interesting facts from the Freducci map. To me it has been thoroughly exciting, even to see the East Coast line veering so far westward as it leaves Miami and swings toward Jacksonville. Freducci knew his Florida and contributed more to our knowledge than we might expect from any such single document.