

## ***HISTORICAL NOTES***

### ***GIOVANNI DA VERRAZZANO***

Giovanni was born in 1485 from Pierandrea and from Fiammetta Baron, both Florentine noble, in the Castle of Verrazzano. Since his first years, the pleasure of adventure was taught him, until he wanted to visit part of the eastern world with the purpose of learning and drawing new experiences. His programs were anticipated because of an intolerance of the family towards the government of Piero dei Medici.

His first destinations were Egypt and Syria, places that during that period were considered almost unattainable and coiled from a halo of mystery.

Between 1507 and 1508 he was in France, warmly welcomed by the Christian King Francesco I, whose court was goal and place of meditation for eminent Florentine people, like Leonardo da Vinci, Tiziano, Andrea del Sarto, Benvenuto Cellini, the poet Luigi Alamanni, the architect Giovanni Giocondo and others, all compelled to seek distant calm from Florence bloodied from the factions and from a bad period of government of the Medici.

Giovanni stopped in Dieppe, in got in touch with the greater representatives of the navy and with the most courageous sailors.

He was maybe 22 years old when he began to embark itself on ships, taking part in shipping of considerable importance. Together with his brother Girolamo he built a Globe that was now known to the intellectuals.

His fame was appreciated in cultural, nautical and scientific places, and even was praised from persons near the King. The same Sovereign took him into consideration, waiting for the timely moment to be able meet him.

This occasion did not delay and after the first contact, more assiduous meetings followed, and his presence to court was appreciated.

The stories of the journeys and of the richness brought from overseas from Colombo and Vespucci arrived to he Court of France. Giovanni, in an official meeting between 1522 and 1523 in the town of Rouen with its Majesty Francesco I, made the King aware of the necessity and the urgency of undertaking journeys to reach the rich markets of Asia sailing towards West. The resolutions of the Verrazzano were fully accepted. Immediately was prepared, under the personal direction of Giovanni, a fleet of four ships. The most important ship, with a crew of 150 men, carried the name of "Delfina" in honour of the first son of the King, the other three ships were called Normanda, Santa Maria and Vittoria.

Finally, around the 1523 the ships sailed from France but, because of a storm, two ships, the Santa Maria and the Vittoria, sank quite soon. The third one was seriously damaged and,

unavailable to continue, was sent again back. Only the ship leader, larger and stronger was able to face the ocean. The Delfina hidden itself between the reefs of Madera and waited for the timely moment to evade the naval block of the Spanish and Portuguese enemies, taking the sea during the night of January 17, 1524.

Giovanni thought to be able to find, sailing long northern costs New World, a free passage, secure and shorter to the Pacific Ocean to the Catai (the China). The crossing lasted fifty days, more than expected because of a ruinous storm of February 24, surpassed, as Giovanni da Verrazzano says "alone with the help of God".

The Delfina sighted land on seven or eight March in a locality that was recognized as Cape Fear, south of Wilmington. Giovanni went towards south in search of a landing, arriving to the northern point of Florida, then inverted the route directed towards north.

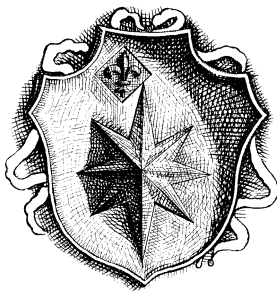
Always continuing in view of the costs, on which during the night he distinguished a lot of fires, the navigator saw expanses of forests with wild lives along the inhabited beach from clear people of colour, beach that for its pleasantry was christened "Arcadia". Today it is difficult to say what was the place he called Arcadia, secure is the identification of the region he reached more beyond. Verrazzano describes it like "a large coast inside, very deep, where every ship could go through. He also adds that "the coast is penetrated inside the land, forming an attractive lake. The immense mirror of water swarmed of native boats". It was 17 April 1524, and the Navigator entered the Bay of New York. Verrazzano was penetrated through what today is called "The Narrow" in the upper bay that he named Santa Margherita, from the name of the sister of Francesco I. It landed at the point of Manhattan, and perhaps at the extreme costs of Long Island. The stop of Giovanni in the magnificent lake was interrupted by a storm that pushed him to north, to Martha's Vineyard and found him shelter in the present Newport.

Here the shipping took rest for two weeks, from 24 April to May 6, entering in contact with the native populations. The large enterprise was done. All the land from Florida to Cape Breton Island, was discovered, and was named Francesca. In the first days of the July of 1524 the shipping returned to Dieppe.

Giovanni da Verrazzano reached large fame and prestige in scientific and political field with his enterprise. Many governments tried to ensure itself his collaboration, but he remained faithful to France government, and kept the lily of France on his coat of arms.

Between May 1526 and September 1527 Verrazzano made a shipping that carried the French ships through Indian Ocean. Returning, they touched the costs of Brazil, restoring in large homeland treasures.

After this great success, a new shipping was organized. Also Girolamo, now well-known cartographer, participated. The shipping reached Florida and two close islands: Cabaco and Babama (nowadays Abaco and Gran Bahama). He then sailed towards the Darien costs, across the Caribbean sea. Giovanni sighted an island covered by thriving vegetation and apparently uninhabited. He disembarked with six men. But unexpected, from the thick wood a group of natives attacked them with unheard ferocity, killed them, made them into pieces, threw them on the burning carbons, and then devoured them, while Girolamo was seeing this scene from the ship. It was year 1528.



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