

Antonio Sánchez, *La Espada, la Cruz y el Padrón: soberanía, fe y representación cartográfica en el mundo ibérico bajo la Monarquía Hispánica, 1503-1598*. Madrid: CSIC, 2013. 333 pp. ISBN 978-84-00-09738-7

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Sometime in 1508 Ferdinand of Aragon ordered the *Casa de Contratación* of Seville to create a *padrón* real: a map of the known planetary landmasses that seemed to fall under his sovereignty. This global mappa-mundi was to be constantly updated, as the contours of the known world were rapidly changing since in the early fifteenth-century Portugal began to inch its way down the coast of West Africa. Practical and ideological reasons went into the making of the *padrón*. By determining secure, reliable knowledge of new maritime routes and coastal landmarks, the *padrón* established proprietary sea lanes within an expanding Atlantic Ocean and Mar del Sur. Rapidly changing representations that tracked the discovery of new worlds continually asserted imperial sovereignty over the most viable sea-routes. *Padrones* demanded great technical expertise in cartography and navigation, as well as well-coordinated efforts at gathering and synthesizing information. There were nevertheless two powerful opposing forces, informing the activities of those famed pilots and learned cosmographers charged with the making of a *padrón*: on the one hand, they had to strive for great accuracy and reliability, for wrong maps could easily cause shipwrecks and major commercial losses; on the other hand, pilots and cosmographers had to render *padrones* useful in the geopolitical arms race between Spain and Portugal over where to draw imaginary planetary lines (bestowed by the pope), partitioning the world between the two empires. Lines moved around at will as to make new worlds fall in and out of one's own or the rival's alleged sovereignty. Sánchez's book is a meticulous and judicious study of the origins and history of the *padrón* real in sixteenth-century Spain and of 16 surviving *mappa-mundi* modeled after the ever changing *padrón*.

Sánchez divides his book into two sections. The first explores the medieval Mediterranean cartographic traditions that informed the *padrón* and the many different mappa-mundi it yielded. Sánchez establishes that these new maps drew upon the fifteenth-century cartographic Portuguese efforts to chart the West African coast, which, in turn, drew upon the thirteenth-century Mallorcan portolan tradition of Mediterranean mapping. Unlike

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Mediterranean seafaring, however, oceanic navigation was not coastal; it relied on astronomic observations to navigate in open waters. The Portuguese may have been the first to determine latitude by measuring the sun's and stars' declensions through astrolabes and compasses. But it was the Spaniards who in the *padrón real* first introduced Ptolemaic scales of latitude and longitude together with wind-compass rose lines typical of portolans. The first section also explores the contradictory tensions built into all *padrón* maps. While cartographic and instrumental technology responded to an increasing need for accuracy, geopolitical interests (post-Tordesillas) led to deliberate cartographic manipulations.

Sánchez devotes section two to an analysis of 16 surviving *padrón* maps created over the course of the sixteenth-century. He offers reproductions of these maps currently held at repositories in the Vatican, Florence, Turin, Modena, Weimar, Wolfenbüttel, New York, Paris, Seville, and Madrid. But since these are very large maps with abundant para-text it would have taken a separate coffee-table book for readers to appreciate the level of detail contained in each. Sánchez offers instead detailed textual descriptions and even verbatim transcripts of para-texts. Section two, therefore, reads like an encyclopedia of all extant *mappa-mundi* modelled after the ever-changing *padrón real*.

Three clear arguments emerge from this encyclopaedic description. First, the *padrón* constantly changed up until the 1530s, when the contours of new lands in South East Asia and America were finally established. Second, Philip II repeatedly ordered the *padrón* to be updated; yet paradoxically very few maps from his reign are known to have been produced. Third, *padrón* maps played a role in ceremonial diplomatic exchanges, allowing the Habsburgs, in particular, to make symbolic claims over ever greater expanses of the globe.

In the second part of the book, Sánchez devotes a chapter on the mid-sixteenth-century debate over the use of multiple latitude scales between two rival camps of pilots-cosmographers. This debate dramatically brought forth the constant tension between the two objectives of the *padrón*, namely, to offer sailors accurate solutions to navigation problems while bolstering the geopolitical agendas of the crown through the manipulation of scales. Multiple scales of latitude in the same map, some cosmographers argued, distorted cosmographical reality to such a degree that longitude scales could also be questioned. Such questioning, in turn, could lead to challenging the location of the Moluccas in the bitterly negotiated post-Tordesillas inter-imperial partitions.

Sánchez spends too much time offering a painstaking description of each *padrón* map. He does not offer, however, enough evidence to sustain his arguments on the symbolic uses of

the *padrón* as a representation of imperial sovereignty. What were the specific diplomatic contexts that caused most of the surviving *mappa-mundi* to end up in cities in Germany, Italy, and France? This erudite well-written book nevertheless fails to address many of the mysteries Sánchez himself identifies. Why did the *padrón* not change under Philip II, despite the many calls of the latter to update and revise it? What was the impact (both in terms of pragmatic cartographic accuracy and geopolitical manipulation) of transferring the responsibility for updating the *padrón* from the *Casa de Contratación* to the Council of Indies under Philip II?