



The Padrón Real of the Casa de la Contratación in Seville, 1508–1606

This paper discusses the *Padrón Real* [Royal Pattern Chart or master sea chart], an official class of maps of the world instituted by the Spanish monarchy and produced by Seville's *Casa de la Contratación* [House of Trade, the Spanish colonial administrative office] from 1508 onwards, in a political context dominated by the dispute between the two largest expansionist empires in Europe – Portugal and Castile – which was heightened following the signing of the *Treaty of Tordesillas* in 1494. The *Padrón Real* became a model for European cartographers and its history sheds light on the development of map-making practices at the Casa in the Crown's attempt to regulate cosmography for its own political ends.

The large hand-drawn map of the world (38x24 inches) is by Sancho Gutiérrez (1516-1580) is a copy of a formerly top secret and constantly updated document from the *Casa de la Contratación*. It was designed in the style of late medieval *portolan* [nautical] charts, although the interior of the continents and isles are full of numerous toponyms and geographical details such as towns, rivers and mountains. The map also shows botanical, zoological and anthropological depictions as well as fantastic creatures. Textual inserts contain detailed information and source references such as reports of explorations and older geographical literature.

The sections on display below show the most interesting areas of the map: Asia, Africa and parts of North and South America. Traditional knowledge from the *Casa de la Contratación* overlaps equal to more up to date information: the course of the Amazon and the South American west coast are drawn in two versions. This map of the world was drawn for the Emperor Charles V and well illustrates the comprehensive importance and role of old maps: firstly, the collection and reproduction in text and pictures of geographical facts and traditions, including mythological conceptions. Secondly, the map as a valuable document with which to demonstrate the claim for power and dominion.

The *Padrón Real* was unprecedented for its time and, together with the question of how to determine longitude, reflected what were the most important cartographic challenges facing the early modern world: how to represent a three-dimensional body – the globe – on a flat surface and how to provide reliable geographic maps when they were subject to constant revision.



*Esta Carta General en Plano Hizo Sancho Gutierrez Cosmographo de Su. S.C.C. Magt Del
 Iperador Y Rei Nuestro Señor [dō Carlos] Quinto Deste Nōbre. En la Qual Esta Todo Lo Hasta
 Oy Descubrierto. Imitando Alto Tomeo en Parte Y Alos Modernos Cosmographos Y
 Descubridores. En Seuila en El Año Del Señor de 1551.*

*An early photographic facsimile of the Western Hemisphere of the famed 1551 Sancho Gutierrez
 planisphere. By Edward Luther Stevenson, ca. 1890*

Sancho Gutiérrez is the author, in 1551, of this world map addressed to Carlos Quinto and based on the *Padrón Real*. If it is modeled on Sebastian Cabot's planisphere of 1544, it includes unpublished elements, the result of the recent expeditions by Pedro de Valdivia to Chile and Ruy López de Villalobos to the Moluccas. The map is currently kept at the ÖNB Kartensammlung und Globenmuseum, Vienna.

Sancho Gutierrez was the son of Diego Gutiérrez and Isabel Hernández, he was probably born in Seville in 1516. He learned cosmography with his father until in 1539 when Sebastián Cabot and the cosmographers of the *Casa de la Contratación* approved his ability to make maps and instruments for navigation. However, he did not receive any official position before 1553. Then on May 18, 1553, he was appointed cosmographer of the *Casa de la Contratación*. In 1566, he participated in a meeting of cosmographers in Madrid on the question of the demarcation of the *Treaty of Zaragoza* (1529) and the rights of Castile over the Philippines. In May 1569 he was appointed to the chair of cosmography at the *Casa de la Contratación*.

This facsimile was owned by the famed early map scholar Edward Luther Stevenson who probably owned this and other related maps as part of his study of Sebastian Cabot. Edward Luther Stevenson was among the most important scholars of early cartography active at the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th. He was responsible for numerous cartobibliographic books, including the first translation of Ptolemy to English, as well as a series of impressive facsimile maps produced while he was at the Hispanic Society of New York. Dr. Stevenson viewed facsimiles as integral to

the study of early cartography, and he committed himself to building an unparalleled collection of photographs of early maps and globes. Much of his collection was donated to Yale University after his death, but the present item comes from a large collection of photos, manuscripts, and related material that were part of Stevenson's library, but were not donated to Yale. It is truly an impressive collection and many of the items, though reproductions, have serious antiquarian merit. As Alexander O. Vietor said about Stevenson collection that went to Yale "this is the stuff of which great libraries are made."



Detail: South America



Detail: North America



Detail; Africa



Detail: North Central EurAsia – the Caspian Sea with a cynocephalus [dog-headed person] and a skiapod



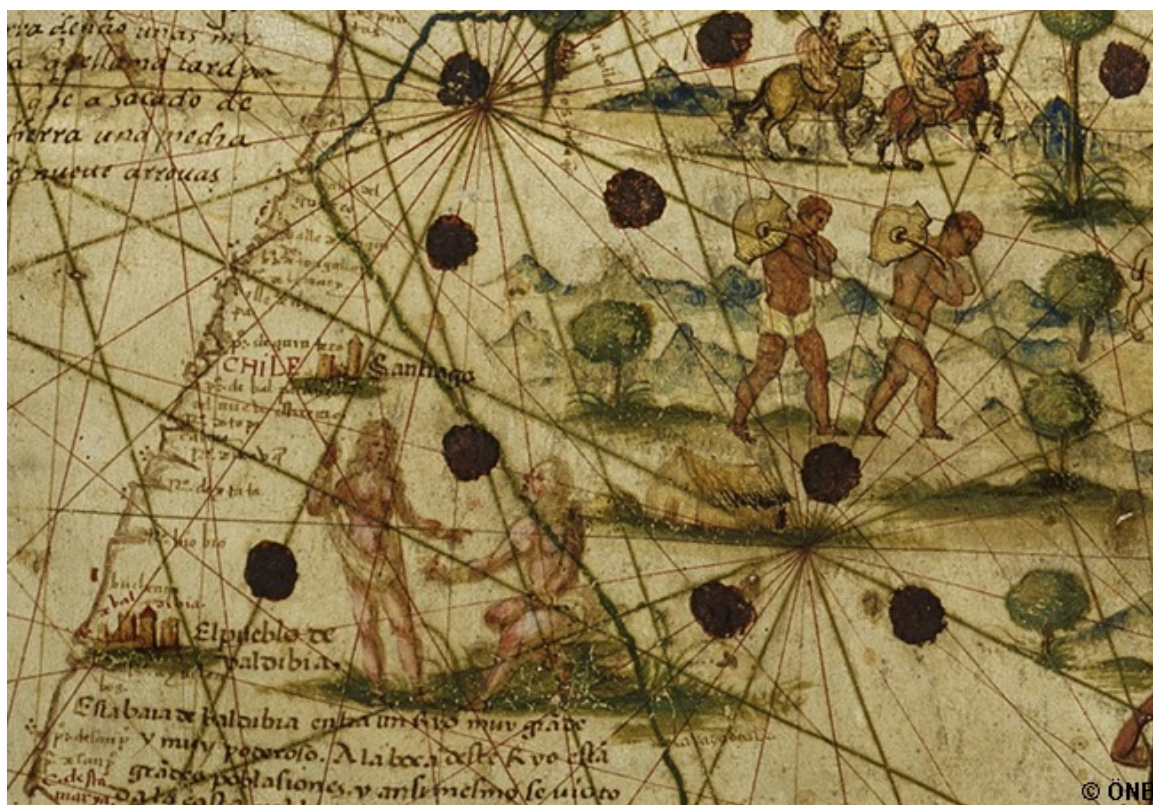
Detail: Asia with a headless blemmyae or epiphagus, a Tartar Emperor, pygmies fighting cranes and a 'six-handed man'



Tartar emperor in Asia



The Amazon River in South America drawn twice



Indigenous people in South America



Indigenous people in West Africa chasing a griffin



Indigenous people in West Africa with an elephant



The mythical sciapod illustrated in Northern Eurasia



Indigenous people in North America