



Watershed of Sorrows: The Epic of Impossibility and New Theorizations of Tropicalia in *El epítome de las conquistas del Nuevo Reino de Granada*

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The *Epítome de las conquistas del Nuevo Reino de Granada* (1538) was found among the three hundred and thirty-eight maps, chronicles, geographic descriptions, and other astrological and cosmographical treatises in the “*arca encorada vieja*” (old leather-bound trunk) that Alonso de Santa Cruz left behind at his death. This most influential cosmographer, cartographer, chronicler, and astronomer to Charles V and Philip II dedicated his life to describing and comprehending the discoveries generated by transatlantic and transpacific exploration and to crafting a coherent notion of the *orbis terrarum*. The earliest description of the new kingdom of present-day Colombia, the *Epítome* has puzzled scholars with its apparently incomplete, fragmentary nature and the myriad of topics that it covers.¹ Above all, the text opens with the most dramatic extant description of the Río Grande de la Magdalena, a gesture that has added to its peculiarity within its genre: in defying the parameters of description in classic rhetoric, in which flowing waters were to be described according to “utility and pleasure” so as to convey their abundance and accidental sources (Menander 119), and by deviating from what Beatriz Pastor identified as an insistence on creating universal harmony through utopian New World landscapes, Santa Cruz portrays the river as an indomitable body of fury and impossibility. The characterization of the indigenous Moxca and Panche peoples in the text also fails to fulfill the expectations of readers eager to learn about the alterity of inhabitants of the Equinox. The brief, imbricated cosmographic discussions found throughout seem, at first glance, to give the narrative a fragmented quality.² Indeed, the lack of topical focus has relegated the manuscript to consideration as but a preparatory summary of

notes, auxiliary to Santa Cruz's planned Atlas project (Millán de Benavides 39–40). Reduced to a mere reference source of scientific and ethnographic information, the work has been consigned to literary oblivion.

The texts and maps in Santa Cruz's "arca encorada vieja" were, in fact, part of a larger sixteenth-century debate of paramount importance, one in which intellectuals attempted to reconcile old cosmographies and cosmologies with new worlds and peoples.³ Nicolás Wey Gómez has signaled the importance of this dispute in recasting the ancient Antipodes as the early-modern Tropics, and in highlighting the influence that the politics of empire exercised in defining the terms that shaped these discussions. The *Epítome* and the only mappa mundi that survives from the cosmographer's leather trunk, the "Map of the World" (1542), are part of a conversation where local and global projections of the world intersect to fashion a coherent *orbis terrarum*. Within this debate, the *Epítome* is a constitutive text in the dialogic process of what Edmundo O'Gorman understood as the invention of America.

This study proposes that Alonso de Santa Cruz's dramatic description emplaces the river as a perceptual grid, opening up a discursive space in which to tackle the weightiest question in the dispute over the nature of the Tropics: the ethics of imperial expansion.⁴ His depiction reconfigures the waters of the Magdalena within a new geography—one that emplaces the political and historical onto the local landscape—and forges a dialogic relation with the mytho-poetics of Augustan epic and ancient historiography. Making use of shifting projections for the topography, the cosmographer portrays the region and its peoples through itinerary and abstract representations of the space that transform New Granada into a global place. From a network of allusions to Homer's *Iliad* and Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War* spring allusive panoramas that yield unexpected connections to the contemplation of the sorrows of imperial expansion. Within this new geography, he articulates a new theorization of the Amerindian from a local perspective. This novel intersection between geographical observation and its literary interpretation illuminates the production of new knowledge brought about by the assimilation of the Indies into European cosmography. Santa Cruz's philosophical and cosmographic project connects distinct local spaces into a unified global place while also advancing unforeseen perspectives of global expansion that lay bare the political and moral consequences of the colonial enterprise and, indeed, re-envision the very notion of global worlds.

Charting an Itinerary of Impossibility

The watershed of the Magdalena, like many of its counterparts in the Western world, had and still has rough currents throughout its course. Nevertheless, authors describing the river after Santa Cruz transformed problematic topographic accidents and hurdles into manageable landscapes. Informed by this rhetorical tradition, the *Cuestionario para la descripción de las Indias* (Survey for the Description of the Indies) advises conquistadores in the Indies to describe rivers in a radically different manner.⁵ The fourth item specifically directs local informants to relate the abundance or scarcity of water resources. The *Epítome*'s depiction also differs from later writers who described the Magdalena based on the information in that text. In his *Geografía* (1574) Juan López de Velasco, cosmographer and chronicler to Philip II, inheritor of Santa Cruz's chest containing the *Epítome* and, indeed, heir to the cosmographer's overall legacy, praises the river as a route for commerce and communication, with passing mention of the difficulties that its ravines and swamps pose to travel (179–80). The description of the region in Antonio de Herrera's *Historia General* (1601) is also informed by the *Epítome*, yet the chronicler only arrives at a brief depiction of the Magdalena after addressing other aspects of the region (its extension, foundation, fertility, and main cities) to highlight its benefits for commerce. Though mentioning a few difficult points of the topography, these eulogies to the river's mercantile potential mostly elide the landscape's hardships.

Informed by the humanist revival in descriptive geography and its contribution to the rediscovery of Ptolemaic cartography, Santa Cruz turns to the genre of epitomes to articulate an exceptional cosmographic rendering of the region. Where the genre as a whole, though, introduced readers to the chronology of great events and a roster of heroes and prodigious historical deeds, the *Epítome*'s opening surprises readers with the most dramatic depiction imaginable of the Magdalena itself. Through a foregrounding and unconventional treatment of waters as well as a later shift to more abstract modes of representation, Santa Cruz imposes his description of the river as a guiding perceptual framework. He thus transforms the topography of the Magdalena into an embodied experience, beginning with this account of how the Magdalena is commonly known as the *Río Grande* “porque en la verdad lo es harto tanto que con el ynpetu y furia que trae a la boca rompe por la mar y se coge agua dulce una legua adentro por aquel paraje” (104) (for in truth it is exceedingly so for the force and fury it brings to its mouth and drives into the sea and carries freshwater a full league into that place). Santa Cruz then narrates the difficulty of advancing upriver:

aunque siempre tenyan esperança por las lenguas de los yndios que muy adelante en rrio arriba avia grandes riquezas y grandes provinçias y

señores de ellas dejavan de passar adelante las veces que alli llegaron . . . otras vezes por ynpedimentos de grandes lluvias (sic) que ençenegaban toda la tierra y costa del dicho rrio por donde avian de subir. Las cuales aguas son muy ynoportunas y ordinarias casi siempre por aquel rrio arriba. Y en la verdad bien pudieran ellos vencer estos ynpedimentos sino que los de Sancta Marta se contentaron con La ramada . . . hasta que la acabaron y destruyeron no teniendo respeto a otro bien público ni privado sino a sus interesses. (104–5; my emphasis)⁶

(though they always had hopes from the words of the Indians that farther up the river there were great riches and lords, they failed to proceed on those occasions when *they reached there, on other occasions due to the impediments of heavy rains that turned into swampland all of the earth and banks of said river which they intended to traverse. These waters are very inopportune and frequent upriver.* And in truth, they could have overcome these obstacles, but those at Sancta Marta were contented with the town of La ramada . . . until they ultimately ruined and destroyed it, having respect for no other public nor private good but their own interests.)

Through an ontological metaphor, the description emplaces the river as a natural agent that divides lands and imposes order in the natural realm by arranging its waters into geopolitical entities. In lieu of a detailed topographic description, the author provides a list of obstacles set in space—force and fury of waters, unexpected currents, overwhelming floods—that are offered as surrogate for a surveyor’s report. The list elides the array of aquatic topographies along the Magdalena’s course (a combination of shallow, deep, slow, or rough currents in flat or mountainous terrain throughout its length). Instead, the verbal list of obstacles in the *Epítome* shapes fragments of the trajectory into discrete spaces, and through the narrator’s point of view transforms them into places. The relations implied among these spatial sequences render the river a landscape of hopelessness and impossibility.

Santa Cruz’s selective point of view focuses on floods that cause profound transformations of the fluvial landscape and frustrate the mission of discovery led by the founder of Santafé de Bogotá, the conqueror Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada. The surfeit of waters acquires new agency, this time by swallowing the coastline that surveyors were meant to plot in their topographic report (106). Direct observation replaces the embodiment of the river, transforming the depiction from a kinetic to a static experience, and imposing a new viewpoint from which readers can imagine the riverscape as a massive, quasi-maritime space where “todo lo Mas era agua que se veia” (106) (As to the rest, all that could be seen was water). In the absence of

saline waters in the Magdalena, Santa Cruz offers glimpses of the salt trade through the soldier reports that recur throughout the description, almost as a poetic motif. The new maritime frame of reference allows the author to infuse his description with an omniscient perspective through which he connects the suffering of his itinerary with its source. With providential overtones, the source of the relentless battering of the river and constant flooding is revealed: “entrava en el rrio grande y paresçia venir de unas sierras y montañas grandes questaban a mano yzquierda las cuales montañas segund supimos después de descubiertas se llamaban las sierras de oppon” (106) (it entered the great river and seemed to come from some ranges and high mountains to the left, mountains, we learned after their discovery, that were called the Sierras de Oppon). This particular sequence of rivers, transformed into maritime spaces connected to mountains, as I will show later, is evocative of landscapes far away from New Granada and the New World.

This projection of a series of selected elements, emplaced along the coastline, follows the mode of representation of spaces typical of itineraries. Common in medieval maps such as the Peutinger Tabula, and in Early Modern nautical charts, the perspective offered by these types of maps requires a mapmaker’s decision on what to include or exclude and entails a projection of the material chosen (Harvey 1980). Santa Cruz adopts the model of a classical itinerary to describe the islands in his *Islario* (1530–1540) following Pomponio Mela’s *Cosmographia* (1498).⁷ In both works, the portrayal of the coastline determines the text’s narrative sequence. This mode privileges a linear imagining of space through a sequential plotting of places visited and experienced by travelers. Like itineraries and nautical charts, the description of the Magdalena introducing the *Epítome* disregards fixed scales, weaving a sequence of spaces that dramatizes the territory in a particular manner. Santa Cruz’s itinerary narrative privileges a space where torrents of water, vast aquatic expanses, and salt blur into a virtual seascape. Enveloping the sailors on their journey, the Magdalena, with all its ordeals, imbues with an abiding disquiet those who experience it.

Santa Cruz’s unusual depiction of the Magdalena as a maritime itinerary of torrential force and destruction disregards the praxis of chorographic description (the description of particular places), appealing, rather, to literary and mytho-poetic evocations of Augustan landscapes through a “kaleidoscope of imitation,” to borrow a phrase from Nicolopulos’s work on Ercilla.⁸ These suggestive references establish a synecdoche with rivers of classical epic, in particular those in the *Iliad*. Amid episodes of warfare, Homer pauses to reflect on impiety and foolishness in human action in the city of Troy and, in these moments, emplace the power of rivers at the center of the judgment and restoration of balance brought by the gods: “Then it was that Poseidon and Apollo take counsel to sweep away the wall, bringing against it the might of all the rivers that flow forth from the mountains of Ida

to the sea” (*Iliad* 12.13–30). Poseidon’s wrath re-directs mountain rivers and transforms their once idyllic courses into torrential forces of destruction that execute an ethical cleansing of the city. In the formulaic patterns, rivers seemingly mark a juxtaposition of good and evil, buttressing the strict symmetry of the epic (Herendeen 47). The allusive transformation of the Magdalena into a quasi-maritime landscape fed by violent torrents descending from the mountains echoes the representation of waters in epic, calling forth the well-established classical motif.⁹ Its imitation emplaces an analogic association between the river of New Granada and imperial landscapes of past and present, thus projecting the region onto larger narratives of universal expansion. Those waters from epic were eventually traversed by the valiant Trojans after they were cast out onto the maritime journey that led them to found Rome—the future seat of the greatest of all empires in Western history. Through an analogy to the torrential waters of the *Iliad*, Santa Cruz transcends space and time, emplacing the region within wider contexts—indeed, within the framework of the Spanish imperial enterprise writ large.

Abstract Projections and Augustan Landscapes in the Tropics

The transformation of the Magdalena into a literary space is followed by the most cited passage in the *Epítome*, particularly by early modern chroniclers: a novel depiction of the Moxca and Panche peoples.¹⁰ It also marks a shift in the way Santa Cruz projects the local landscape. Abandoning the earlier itinerary perspective, he shifts to a synoptic, omniscient view of the space that is achieved through an unusual amalgamation of three elements: the description of local inhabitants and a cosmographic projection of the region, buttressed by further Augustan allusions.¹¹ He tells readers that the mountains that surround Bogota and Tunja were inhabited by two very different types of peoples: the Panches who practiced cannibalism and the Moxcas who did not, a difference he ascribes to the fact that “la de los panches es tierra caliente y el nuevo reino es tierra fría a lo menos templada” (107–8) (the land of the Panches is torrid and the New Kingdom is a cold, or at least temperate, land). The description ties the customs of the locals directly to the nature of the climate. Furthermore, a first reference to the range of latitude in the region frames the ethnographic report in terms of cartography, detailing the New Kingdom’s extension and configuration. Instead of the former itinerary projection, our cosmographer now engages notions of planar representation, insisting on extension and on orientation with respect to the reference point of “la línea” (latitude): “esta la mayor parte del en cinco grados desta parte de la Línea y parte del en quatro y alguna parte en tres” (108) (The greater part of it lies at five degrees to this

side of the Line, another part at four degrees, and some part of it at three). This projection advances an abstract emplacement of the region in multiple ways. Mapping the area entailed plotting distant localities on a grid of abstract space. A measurement of latitude reflects the concerns of cosmographers like Santa Cruz who had to situate the region within a cartographic grid.¹² As Denis Cosgrove reminds us, “Territorially, empire is in key respects a cartographic enterprise” (19). The planar projection thus embraced conveys space from a Euclidean perspective, inviting readers to imagine blank spaces that can be traversed and to establish relationships between locations not previously linked. This projection adopts a quasi-Apollonian perspective that removes the point of view from the coastline and elevates it over the surface. The stasis orders and controls the object of vision from a remote vantage point of abstraction above the globe.

This shift in projection also marks Santa Cruz’s engagement with a key philosophical and cosmographic debate on the nature of places and their ostensible influence on the nature of peoples—specifically, in the Indies, on Amerindians. This debate was part of a broad shift in geographical thought by which the ancient Antipodes were transformed into the modern Torrid Zone. In Ptolemaic tradition, latitude determined the constitution of all matter in the cosmos. Consequently, the nature of a people could be determined by its location within a tripartite division of the world into one torrid belt in the Equinox region surrounded by two temperate regions that extended to the poles. The position of the line within this cosmographic model separated uninhabitable hot climes from milder fringes where *polis* and civility were possible. Nicolás Wey Gomez has shown that Columbus’s strategy of southing challenged theories of insularity and the tripartite geopolitical model of the Ptolemaic inheritance. Moreover, the admiral’s venture onto the newly discovered lands confirmed an open geography that conceived of further territories and the possibility of human habitation of the Torrid Zone. This ideological innovation led to a complex, gradual process by which the former torrid, desert, unpopulated Antipodes were transformed into the early modern hot-temperate, lush, inhabited Tropics. Yet, while advancing the geographic possibilities for new territories in the tropics, followers of this model did not extend to the Amerindians the new ontological status of civility and policy implicit in the cosmographic breakthrough. Within this paradox, retention of the old categorization of peoples according to zones continued to furnish critical legitimization of territorial expansion. On this view, their place in the world (confirmed by their ostensible nature—dark and without the ability to control their passions) made the indigenous peoples of the Indies natural slaves.¹³

The new Apollonian perspective in which Santa Cruz projects New Granada both opens up a space of discursive abstraction that runs alongside the dialogic process to determine the true nature of the tropics and also puts first-hand observation of the region in the service of rehearsing an answer to

the paradox, thereby offering a new theorization of the Amerindian. The re-imagining of the Amerindian entails further re-emplacement of the Moxca within planar projections that challenge old correlation between lands and peoples. According to the pre-modern cosmographic model, latitude positioned New Granada within the Torrid Zone, given its short distance from the equinoctial line. Yet Santa Cruz confirms the existence of temperate climates even at such latitudes and locates the Moxca within such a climatic belt. In his *Islario*, he had already asserted that visual evidence acquired through exploration demanded a reconsideration of old views of the Torrid Zone, yet he limited the implications of those findings solely to the climate (Cuesta 41–42).¹⁴ Cosmographic and geographic knowledge do not seem to suffice for an ontological reconsideration of the relationship between peoples and climatic belts. Indeed, Santa Cruz's rendering of the region's Amerindians remains notably asymmetrical and inconsistent. While the *Epítome* breaks with spatial determinism in regards to the Moxca, it extends no such consideration to the Panche, whose latitude was farther from the Equinox. A partial application of the cosmographic findings toward a new ontology for the Panche survives until the end of the century, in fact, in the *Carta Corographica* of the Kingdom of New Granada (c. 1570), whose cartographer depicts the Panche engulfed in fire, a representation that continues to emplace the character of these people with the nature of the space they inhabited [Fig. 1].

Santa Cruz's interest in reconciling ancient and modern cosmological models is also confirmed in his 1542 "Map of the World," the only known *mappa mundi* from the "arca encorada" in which the *Epítome* was found [Fig. 2]. Dedicated to the Emperor Charles V, the introduction announces the map's objective of furnishing the newest and "correct dimensions of the longitudes, latitudes, degrees, parallels, and climates" for the entire world (*Map of the World* 14). The globe is separated into northern and southern hemispheres and divided into segments that configure a spherical object. Closer inspection reveals that the projection is a theoretical exercise that combats a static vision of the world, for the joining of these segments does not in fact yield the promised spherical figure. A distinctive element introduced by Santa Cruz in this project is the demarcation of climates and parallel zones that follow both ancient and modern cosmographic models. The first example of this operation is marked at the first meridian of the southern hemisphere under the note "paralellos y climas segun los antiguos—los dias maiores que ay en Alturas hasta 63 grados" (plate I, repeated in V) [Fig. 3] (parallels and climatic zones according to the Ancients—the longest day for latitudes up to sixty-three degrees). This follows Ptolemy's model of seven climates and twenty-one parallel zones. The second model is noted at 160° W longitude on the northern hemisphere, under the note "climas I paralelos segun los mas modernos" (plate I, repeated in III) [Fig. 4] (Climatic zones and parallels according to the most

modern). This cartographic representation of both notions of the divisions of the world echoes the shift in latitude that Santa Cruz effects in his discussion of the “línea” (latitude) in the *Epítome*. Both artifacts attempt to rearrange the New World landscape so as to claim elemental order on the globe’s surface—the map through fantasies of visual abstraction in the demarcation of models, the text through the scientific illusion of factual observation. Unlike the first map to use the name “America”, that of Martin Waldseemüller (1507), Santa Cruz’s cartographic projection conveys the shift in cosmographic paradigms that was brought about by the geographical innovation of including the New World in maps.¹⁵ Furthermore, it capitalizes on the sublime form of the sphere in an effort to connect the macrocosm of the planetary globe to the microcosm of debates on the nature of humans, their place in the world, and their destiny in the larger historical plan.

While in the cartographic realm Santa Cruz remains merely suggestive, in the literary realm he directly addresses the ontological shortcomings of the reinterpretation of the new territories.¹⁶ A second cosmo-mythographic projection in the *Epítome* buttresses further emplacements of Augustan landscapes in the region and offers a response to the paradox at play within the new cosmographic model. In his insistence on discussing “la línea” (latitude), Santa Cruz reiterates the emplacement of the land of the Moxca within the former torrid belt and asserts its cold-temperate character, despite its proximity to the Equinox (112). This time, the author infuses the region with powerful epic resonance, transforming New Granada into a Mediterranean landscape, as the *cacique*’s dwellings are “a manera de alcaçares con muchas çercas al rrededor de la manera que aca suelen pintar el Labirintho de troya” (112) (like fortresses surrounded by many walls, in the fashion in which the Labyrinth of Troy is painted here). While scientific knowledge is built on experimentation and exploration, the text’s analogy between Trojan and New Granadan landscapes reminds us that interpretation hinges on the literary. Beyond mapping new lands, Santa Cruz combines the ethnographic and literary to translate New Granada from unknown to known imaginations. The spatial displacement effected through the simile between Trojan and Moxca cityscapes transcends space and time, emplacing the region among the most famous landscapes of epic expansion in all of history: that of the Roman civil war. Embedding the political and historical in the landscape for a second time, Santa Cruz establishes a metonymic relationship between campaigns of imperial expansion in the Mediterranean and in the New World, appealing to Hapsburg ideological and propagandistic appropriation of the Roman legacy.¹⁷

From Urbis to Orbis: Globalizing New Granada and the Ethics of Discontent

The itinerary of the river and subsequent planar projection of the terrain offer readers an Apollonian perspective of New Granada charged with Augustan undertones through which Santa Cruz connects distinct world spaces with a universal place. This perspective inscribes the Moxca *urbi* onto the larger *orbi*. The simile between Troy and New Granada opens the possibility of equating the ancient heroes of Mediterranean expansion to New World Amerindians, elevating the ontological capacity of the latter and contributing to a new theorization of the Amerindian. According to the Early Modern European belief in stages of world civilization, the degree of civility and polity of each culture or people determined its stage and non-Christian peoples held the potential to achieve full humanity by progressing from idolatry and barbarism to Christianity, the highest stage. From this perspective, European domination might bring Christianity and civilization to indigenous nations, imposing them by force on those who resisted. Yet in the *Epítome*, the author appeals neither to the arguments of anthropologic asymmetry upheld by Ginés de Sepúlveda to differentiate between civilized and barbarous peoples nor to the explicative power of Christian universalism upheld by José de Acosta and Bartolomé de Las Casas in their vindication of the cultural and spiritual value of natives. It is the very local characteristics of the Moxca that complete the moral and political life presumably consistent with civilized habitation in the temperate zone. Their preoccupation with modesty, reverence for authority, and extraordinary devotion to their own religion (114), serve as proof of morality. Customary punishment of nefarious sins, murder, and robbery, among others, confirm the second, showing the praxis of polity common to civilized communities. Possession of “*mediana razón*” (halfway rationality) rounds out the picture of a people with an inclination toward prudence, temperance, intelligence, humanity, and religion (113). Though cautiously incomplete, this ascription of reason to local peoples was remarkable in that it no longer restricted the capacity to Christians.¹⁸ Instead of posing an inverse relationship between polity and religion (as Acosta would later establish), Santa Cruz sees Moxca local customs and culture as validating the same adherence to natural law that is seen in civilized peoples.¹⁹ This localization of the moral and political nature of the Moxca poses a challenge within the new cosmographic model to the old ontological paradox.

Santa Cruz’s characterization of the Moxca refashions the notion of *ius gentium* that Francisco de Vitoria upheld in the context of the polemic over possession of the Indies.²⁰ The debate placed in question the validity of the Roman model as legitimate precedent for territorial expansion in the New World.²¹ The cosmographer refashioned the theologian’s arguments,

transcending the latter's limited geographic reach in order to advance his own project of a global *oikoumene*. Moreover, he engaged Vitoria's proposition to problematize the morality of Hapsburg global expansion. Understanding the maneuver requires a brief glance at the context of the debate. In his 1535 lecture, *Relectio de dominio*, Domingo de Soto, Vitoria's pupil at Salamanca, had already challenged the Roman model invoked by imperial propagandists to support their New World claims. Anchoring his argument in historical ground, he dismissed claims of seizure by remarking that ancient Romans did not even know the "islanders" of the Indies existed, much less conquer them (qtd. in Luper 67). He further disputed the morality of conquest by denying that Augustus's tyrannical rule furnished any legitimate precedent for a "right" to the new territories. Anticipating all possible objections, Soto demonstrated that neither divine nor natural law lent legitimate support to Spanish claims of global dominion embracing the Indies (Luper 61–68). Four years later, Vitoria reaffirmed the legitimacy of the Roman model, upholding Soto's challenge to divine legitimacy but downplaying arguments of geographic limitation and the exercise of good rule. Grounding legitimacy in human justice, he affirmed the virtues of the ancient imperial model, which by divine providence stood as a precursor of Hapsburg expansion.

Adopting the notion of *ius gentium* in his *Relectio de Indis* (1539) furthered Vitoria's positive application of the Roman imperial model to Spanish dominion in the Indies. Originating in Aquinas's assertion of natural law as the sole fount of legitimacy for all political and human systems, and traceable to a body of practices in Roman law, the concept served to identify a body of customs shared by all societies (Luper 75). These common traditions fostered a powerful sense of solidarity conducive to human harmony and even to an alignment of interests between Europe and New World (Vitoria 347).²² All manifestations of common characteristics across distant parts of the world, such as the familiar Mediterranean and the New World—places that both theologians imagined as composed of islands—confirmed this principle. Following this logic, Spaniards could enter the new territories not only to spread the gospel but also to lend solidarity to those oppressed by their neighbors. Thus, Santa Cruz's analogy between Europeans and Moxca, and the narrative framework counterposing Moxca civility with the barbarism of their aggressive neighbors, delineate a plot that lends legitimacy to European intervention in putative defense of subjugated groups.

Santa Cruz's projection abandons the charting of insular empires spearheaded by Francisco Lopez de Gómara and Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, insisting instead on a depiction of New Granada that capitalizes his interconnected global cosmography through his appropriation of *ius gentium*.²³ One last analogy engages the same kaleidoscopic dynamic deployed in the transformation of the local landscape and peoples and also

subverts positive considerations of Roman imperialism as an ethical model for Spanish dominion in the Indies: in a final appeal to the principle of *ius gentium* in elaborations of a global New Granada, Santa Cruz concedes Amerindians with the will to territorial expansion and lordship over subjects and things. The soldier who dies in battle, or the woman in childbirth, though depraved in their earlier conduct, deserve honor “por solo aquella Voluntad que an tenido de *ensanchar y acrecentar la rrepublica*” (117; my emphasis) (for the simple fact of their resolve to *extend and enlarge the republic*).

Echoing Pericles’s funeral oration, that most renowned praise of imperial ethics as it appears in Thucydides, Santa Cruz transfers the notion of imperial aspiration from Mediterranean to New World landscapes, establishing this as a universal custom that emplaces the identity of both the Moxca and Athenian *weltanschauungs*. In this praise of Athenian democratic ideals before the crushing campaign in the Peloponnese, Pericles reminds the audience that the good that ancestors brought to the Republic outweighs their faults. Their highest virtues were prudence, industry, and an appreciation for the arts and manner by which Empire and dominion were established and enlarged (83). Inspired by their legacy, fallen soldiers and present citizens “le hemos *ensanchado y aumentado*” (83; my emphasis) (have *extended and enlarged* it). While the passage focuses on the intrinsic good of the regime, the intertextual allusion cannot escape the powerful context in which Thucydides imbricates Pericles’s eulogy—an anti-imperial critique of Athenian expansion. The passages that follow swiftly after the funeral oration in *History* detail the ravages wrought on Attica by the Peloponnesian campaign and the plague that leaves the region abject.²³ As in Homer’s Troy, an allusion that Santa Cruz already emplaced in his descriptions of the Magdalena, a purifying force of judgment and destruction follows unethical human excesses. Through a meta-historical allusion, the kaleidoscopic, abstracted projection that Santa Cruz engages to connect discrete spaces into a unified global place creates a vantage point from which to contemplate the domestic discontent that the imperial enterprise can bring—a juxtaposition that, for Thucydides, originated in restless innovation and ended in blind hunger for dominion. Santa Cruz’s renewal of the principle of *ius gentium* as a notion that ostensibly establishes identity among peoples and fosters a projection of territorial globalism also points to the corresponding impossibility of reconciling the project of global expansion with the good of local *imperium*.

By invoking a human universality that transcends space and time, Santa Cruz engages conceptual discussions of the possibility of imperial control beyond borders and nature. The description of the region projects a universal, timeless territorial empire. Nevertheless, the very notion of human interconnectedness upon which the concepts of universality and globality rest serves Santa Cruz in his emplacement of an anti-imperial discourse

within projections of a global world. For the cosmographer, prophecy is encoded in a geographic, rather than a historical, projection; space, not time, is what conceals the unethical consequences of global expansion.

Conclusion

In Santa Cruz's mytho-poetic transformation of river and region, the dialectic of description serves as argumentation that produces new knowledge about the inner determinants of Hapsburg imperialism. Through the literary transformation of the Magdalena, Santa Cruz problematizes the dialectic process by which imperialist ideology acquires coherence, explicative power, and authority—that process of “inventing America” explored (and named) by O’Gorman. Santa Cruz was a participant of the debate in Valladolid which attempted to make sense of the paradoxical exclusion of the Amerindian from the new cosmology. In his interpretation of the new cosmographic model, theology plays no part. It is via epic and meta-historical commentary, instead, that Santa Cruz demonstrates the impossibility of resolving the paradox, which, like the impossible itinerary of the Magdalena, led European expansion down unethical paths. The leveling power that notions of universality and sphericity convey also serves Santa Cruz's subversion of the ethical basis of the cosmographic model. Narrating the epics of imperial expansion from local perspectives and localized experiences subverts the very dialectics of imperial ideology. The theorization that Santa Cruz employs through literary means to address the paradox of the nature of the Amerindian overcomes the limitations inherent to the cosmographic model, reminding readers of the dangers in such frameworks. It also makes clear that crafting global worlds is dependent on the imaginative experience of local inscription (Cosgrove 16).

In the end, Santa Cruz's proposed response to the paradox did not prevail, yielding before the Aristotelian anthropological asymmetries of Sepúlveda, and Las Casas's Christian universalism. Nevertheless, the critique he emplaces in fluvial discourses from local perspectives transcends the juggling of explicative paradigms. Santa Cruz lays bare the oscillating nature of interpretation through geographic abstraction. In epitomizing the Magdalena, he ventures far beyond the synthesizing of geographic and human realities. Out of the waters of that prodigious river, and with a force undiminished across half a millennium, Alonso de Santa Cruz fashions nothing less than a new ethics of globality.

Notes

1. For a discussion of the *Epítome*'s reception see Carmen Millán de Benavides. Recently, she attributed the work to Santa Cruz and traced the use that chroniclers and cosmographers made of the document. I would like to thank Pablo J. Davis for his help with translations.
2. The river in Juan López de Velasco in *Geografía y Descripción Universal de las Indias* (1574), Antonio de Herrera's *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos* (1601), and other cosmographies informed by Santa Cruz's early description do not follow the same sensibility.
3. For the inventory see Cuesta's introduction of Santa Cruz's works (1: 73–78).
4. Here I adopt Soja's notion of emplacement: the process by which the social is actively located, or emplaced, in space and time (11).
5. For the rhetorical origins of the *Cuestionarios* see Victoria Pineda. Juan de Ovando y Godoy drafted them following Santa Cruz's early recommendations. See Portuondo, Cuesta, and Millán de Benavides.
6. All citations of the *Epítome* follow Millán de Benavides's edition.
7. Santa Cruz was familiar with this type of projection, given his practical experience as ship Captain during Sebastian Cabot's expedition to the Moluccas (1526) (Cuesta 46). Moreover, his *Libro de las Longitudes*, his "Instructions for discoverers" to the Marquis of Mondéjar, and his overall cartographic production evidence his scholarly concerns with navigation.
8. Peter Apian, geographer to Charles V, addressed the significance of chorography as a praxis following Ptolemy: "The aim of chorography is to paint a particular place, as if a painter were to paint an ear, or an eye, and other parts of a man's head" (El fin de la corografía es pintar un lugar particular, como si un pintor pintase una oreja, o un ojo, y otras partes de la cabeza de un hombre). See Kagan. Nicolopoulos coins this phrase to describe Ercilla's integration of remote and central spheres of the imperial enterprise through a tapestry of variegated imitation (65–117).
9. For further examples of torrential force see book 16.365–393 and 21.256–365; for floods see book 5. 84–93, 21.233–242, and 21.256–265. For rivers in classical literature see Herendeen.
10. The section served as source for descriptions of the region's economic potential and ethnographic information in the writings of Juan de Castellanos, Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo, and Antonio de Herrera among others. See Millán de Benavides 23–27.
11. Portuondo notes that, "In Santa Cruz, the sometimes contentious art of navigation and cosmography found a single voice" (68). Critics have not addressed this unusual intersection of topics in the *Epítome*. Millán de Benavides considers the text an example of the early steps in the process of systematic acquisition of knowledge in the colonial world and an illustration of how scientific discourse took formal shape (68–69). She also points to the text's relationship with the *Cuestionarios de Indias*. For further discussion of the *Cuestionarios* see Mundy.
12. Interest both in science and navigation are evidenced in Santa Cruz's oeuvre. His *Libro de las longitudes* focuses on determining these measurements, evaluates methods of calculating longitude at sea, and assesses the effectiveness of Peter Apian's instruments in his *Cosmographia*. As early as 1536, Santa Cruz presented his own inventions to the Junta de Sevilla. See Juan de Ledesma's inventory in Cuesta (6).
13. Bartolomé de Las Casas is first to articulate a full challenge to the spatial principles sustaining the geopolitical model of expansion, in particular in his *Historia de las Indias* and the accompanying *Apologética*.
14. Waldseemüller points to the new lands (see Hessler 17), but makes no express mention of the dispute between cosmographic models.

15. Santa Cruz had concerns about the privatization of the conquest and believed that the interest of the Monarchy and the treatment of the indigenous could be best served if it were by a public enterprise. See Cuesta 67.
16. Pagden studies the ideologies behind Hapsburg imperial aspirations. Lupher traces the adoption of this model of imperialism in the debates on New World conquest.
17. Saint Augustine, among others, appropriated reason as an exclusive capacity of Christians. For Ginés de Sepulveda, prudence, temperance, intelligence, humanity, and religion, among other phenomena, were manifest in peoples who possessed reason and followed natural law. For Sepulveda's use of Augustine to deny the Indians' humanity see Demócrates Segundo.
18. Acosta denied that the civilized and morally acceptable customs necessary to become part of Christianity were part of the fabric of Amerindian society. See MacCormack. While considering Moxca religion false, Santa Cruz does not envision its praxis as a detriment to civilization.
19. His role as unofficial cosmographical adviser to the Council of the Indies, and the overall debate on the topic at the Castilian Court, exposed Santa Cruz to the theologian's writings. See Portuondo (108) and Adorno (74).
20. For a more extensive discussion of dominion and the impact of Vitoria's lectures on the Indies debate see Adorno 109–113.
21. This argument made the theologian famous as a pioneer of international law in modern scholarship. More recent readings problematize his position within the debate. For an extensive discussion and bibliography see Lupher.
22. Padrón expands on the historians' elaboration of imperial projects from an insular perspective (137–73).
23. In book V, Thucydides undertakes a more direct challenge to imperial ethics in the "Melian Dialogue." No specific allusion is found in the *Eπίτομη*.

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Fig. 1. Detail, (c.1570) *Atlas de mapas antiguos de Colombia siglos XVI a XIX* (1971), plate XII. Carta Corographica de lo contenido en los tres brazos que cerca de la equinocial hace la cordillera de las sierras que se continua desde el estrecho de Magallanes (Chorographic map of what is contained in the three branches formed near the Equinoctial line by the mountain range which extends from the Strait of Magellan).

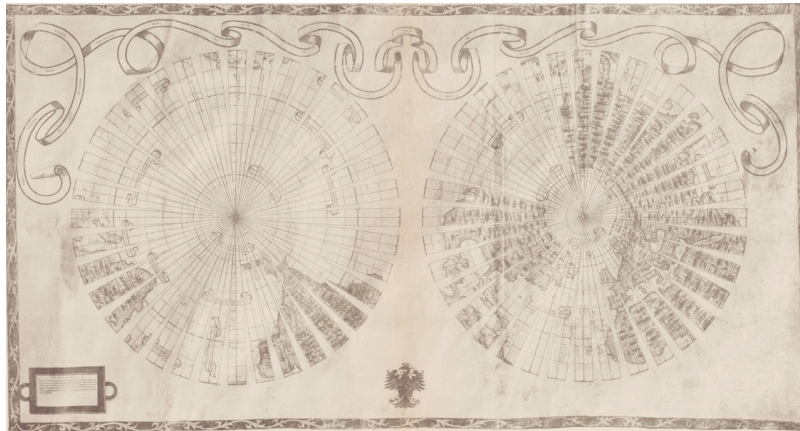


Fig. 2. 1542 *Map of the World*, plate 1.
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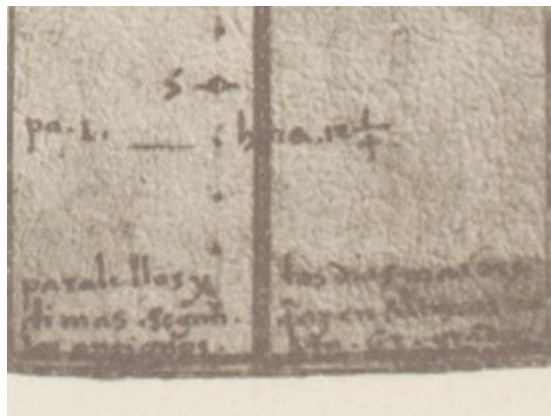


Fig. 3. Detail, 1542 *Map of the World*, plate 5, “paralelos y climas según los antiguos”
(Parallels and climatic zones according to the Ancients).
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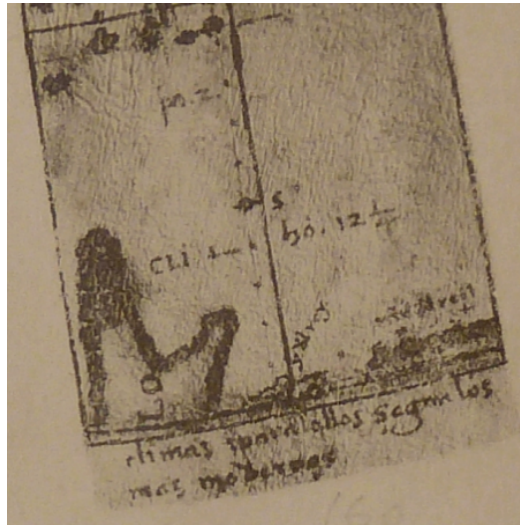


Fig. 4. Detail, 1542 *Map of the World*, plate 1, “climas I paralelos segun los mas modernos,” (Climactic zones and parallels according to the most modern)
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