

Overview

This detailed map by Herrera shows the *audiencia* (judicial district), which covered most of the Caribbean Sea. Herrera includes figures of latitude along the right and left margins and several figures of longitude along the Tropic of Cancer (“Tropico de Cancro”)., and offers a detailed and accurate image of the Caribbean Sea, at that time wholly occupied by the Spaniards. In the upper left corner, Florida is clearly presented – notice the St. Johns River (“R. de S. matheo”) going inland and south, Saint Augustine (“Santagustin”), and Cape Canaveral (“Pta. del Canaveral”) are all identified. This is the first printed map on which the name “Tampa” appears (“b. de tampa”).

Who is the Cartographer?

Spaniard Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas was appointed Chief Chronicler of the Castille and the Americas, and served Spanish kings Philip II and Phillip III. Best known as a cosmographer, Herrera was a master storyteller. His vivid descriptions chronicled the explorations of Spanish conquistadors in *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos en las Islas y Tierra Firme del mar Océano que llaman Indias Occidentales* ("General History of the Deeds of the Castilians on the Islands and Mainland of the Ocean Sea Known As the West Indies"), better known in Spanish as *Décadas*. Herrera included maps as a point of reference in his history.

As the crown appointee, Herrera had access to highly valued first-hand accounts that Spanish explorers delivered to their king when they returned to the homeland. These journals and charts were guarded in Council chambers as secret to keep the information from other countries. The Spanish king did not want the Kings of France and England to know the locations or details of his conquests. Information was leaked to other European powers only after pirates captured Spanish ships and looted their charts and manuscripts.

Essential Question

What impressions does a map-reader get from a map that keeps secrets?