



# Historical Mapping vs. Archaeology: Rethinking Fort Sancti Spiritus (1527–1529)

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**Abstract** The first cartographic representations of the Paraná delta have been used to characterize the elements that comprised the archaeological site of Fort Sancti Spiritus, an iconic place in the beginnings of the colonization process initiated by the crown of Castile in the southern sector of the Plata drainage basin. The maps of Sebastian Cabot, Sancho Gutiérrez, and Ruy Díaz de Guzmán are compared with written documentation, other maps from the same time, and the information obtained in the latest archaeological studies. This comparative analysis demonstrates the potential of historical cartography as a primary source to enlarge on or nuance knowledge of the initial stages of the conquest and colonization of this region.

**Resumen** Las primeras representaciones cartográficas del delta del Paraná han servido para caracterizar los elementos que componían el sitio arqueológico del Fuerte Sancti Spíritus, lugar icónico en los inicios del proceso de colonización iniciado por la corona de Castilla en el sector sur de la cuenca del Plata. Se comparan los mapas de Sebastián Cabot, Sancho Gutiérrez y Ruy Díaz de Guzmán con documentación escrita, otros mapas de la misma época y la información obtenida en los últimos estudios arqueológicos. Este análisis comparativo demuestra el potencial de la cartografía

histórica como fuente primaria para ampliar o matizar el conocimiento de las etapas iniciales de la conquista y colonización de esta región.

**Résumé** Les premières représentations cartographiques du delta de Paraná ont été utilisées pour caractériser les éléments composant le site archéologique du Fort Sancti Spiritus, un lieu emblématique aux prémices du processus de colonisation initié par la couronne de Castille dans la région sud du bassin versant de la Plata. Les cartes de Sebastian Cabot, de Sancho Gutiérrez et de Ruy Díaz de Guzmán sont comparées à une documentation écrite, à d'autres cartes de la même époque et aux informations obtenues dans les toutes dernières études archéologiques. Cette analyse comparative démontre le potentiel de la cartographie historique en tant que source primordiale pour accroître ou nuancer les connaissances des étapes initiales de la conquête et de la colonisation de cette région.

**Keywords** fort · cartography · rammed-earth walls · wheat · house

## Introduction

Cartographic representations of South America in the 16th century underwent changes parallel to the process of the discovery of the continent. This began with the maritime and commercial expansion of the colonial empires of the kingdoms on the Iberian Peninsula, in what Gruzinski (2004) termed the “first Iberian

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globalization,”<sup>1</sup> which consisted of a new interconnection among “*les quatre parties du monde*” (the four parts of the world) under the dominion of the two monarchies. The discovery should therefore be understood from the viewpoint of the expansion of Castile and Portugal, where the role those powers played in the drafting of the Padrón Real and the Padreo Real<sup>2</sup> (Turnbull 1996, 2005; Sandman 2007; Núñez de las Cuevas 2012; Nieto 2013) was marked by the deliberate concealment of the many discoveries by the omission, mutilation, or even falsification of data on contemporary maps (Cortésão 1924, 1935; Melón 1950; Wagner 1951; Diffie 1969; Martín-Merás 1993; Harley 1996, 2005; Dalton 2016; Sánchez Martínez 2016). This means that the available information is often altered. This process should be attributed to the jealousy of the two powers regarding the control over the territory, especially after the Treaty of Tordesillas divided America between them (7 June 1494), as the line separating the possessions of each was not made clear. Many of the first expeditions to the continent were secret, with no written record being kept of them, although knowledge of them spread indirectly, leading to the development of an espionage network linked to those voyages and the information associated with them (Medina 1898; de Gandía 1935; Melón 1950; Cerezo Martínez 1992; Varela Marcos 2001). It should be noted that, in that initial stage, the priority was knowledge of the routes leading to the newly discovered territories and only later was special attention paid to the different resources that could be obtained from them (Cuesta Domingo 2007). In this social, cultural, and political context, the cosmographers played a key role, as they were influenced by the events that conditioned their work.

Therefore, as indicated by Harley (2005), the maps from that time should be understood as social and cultural documents that, in addition to representing a topographic reality, interpret it and deliberately introduce landmarks in the territory. Many of these landmarks, as stated above, would be hidden in the representations. This, however, is not the case with the short-lived settlement of Sancti Spiritus (May 1527–September 1529), which, after its destruction and abandonment, continued to form part of the imagery of different cosmographers and even of some of the magistrates in Charcas and the

population in Asunción, who saw the lost site of Sancti Spiritus as a strategic place (Cervera 1908; Berberían 1987). This shows it was not a single isolated event in the history of the discovery of America, but became fixed in the imagination as a symbolic and strategic site, at least through the 16th century.<sup>3</sup> It is also one of the best examples of the initial stages of colonialism in America, as it displayed many of the elements that would characterize the recapitulations of expeditions from the last third of the 16th century and which would remain constant within the lines of Spanish policies seen in the laws: discover, pacify, and populate (del Vas Mingo 1986).

The settlement of Sancti Spiritus was the result of the private initiative of Sebastian Cabot, who was actively supported by a series of people who formed his expedition and with some of whom he had signed a prior contract in 1524 (de Castellanos 1524). It is not known whether he was also supported secretly by the king himself. From the moment he left Sanlúcar de Barrameda on 3 April 1526, he opted to disobey the clauses of the contract he had signed to make discoveries and trade in the Molucca Islands, which were then known as the Spice Islands (Archivo General de Indias 1525–1532). Instead, his voyage saw a series of events that marked a ruinous expedition that, in the end, did not make any profit (Azkarate, Sánchez-Pinto, Escribano-Ruiz, and Benedet 2014).

As one of the main epistemological concerns of historical archaeology is to analyze the relationship between what supposedly happened and is reflected in documents and what really took place, as indicated by the material remains (Landa and Ciarlo 2016; Orser 2017; González-Ruibal and Ayán Vila 2018), the study of Sancti Spiritus can provide new data through the examination of historical cartography.

The identification of sites by historical archaeologists is usually achieved through the use of three main primary sources: historical maps, written documentation, and aerial photographs. Depending on the means and time available, these can be supplemented by surveying the terrain (both by the classical method and with the latest technology). The use of historical maps is therefore not unusual in the search for archaeological sites,

<sup>1</sup> Translations in the body of the article are by the author.

<sup>2</sup> The Padrón Real and the Padreo Real were the master charts of the Casa de Mina and the Casa de Contratación, respectively.

<sup>3</sup> At the time of the writing of this manuscript, the geomorphology of the Paraná River in the area of Fort Sancti Spiritus is being studied. The results that have been obtained enable an even better understanding of why it was first built, which will be discussed elsewhere.

although most of the data that can be obtained are not easily interpreted on modern cartography<sup>4</sup> and identifiable in the modern landscape. The use of maps does not always provide satisfactory results, and they cannot all be used to find a particular site or do not provide the exact information that is needed. Many of the first colonial maps (Orser 2017) mark the presence of forts, missions, towns, or villages as simple dots or squares, without much precision in their location. Although a map may show the presence of a settlement of any type, it does not allow the exact position of that place to be determined. It is here that archaeology, through surveys or excavations, can provide information about the elements drawn on the map by the cartographer (Fig. 1).

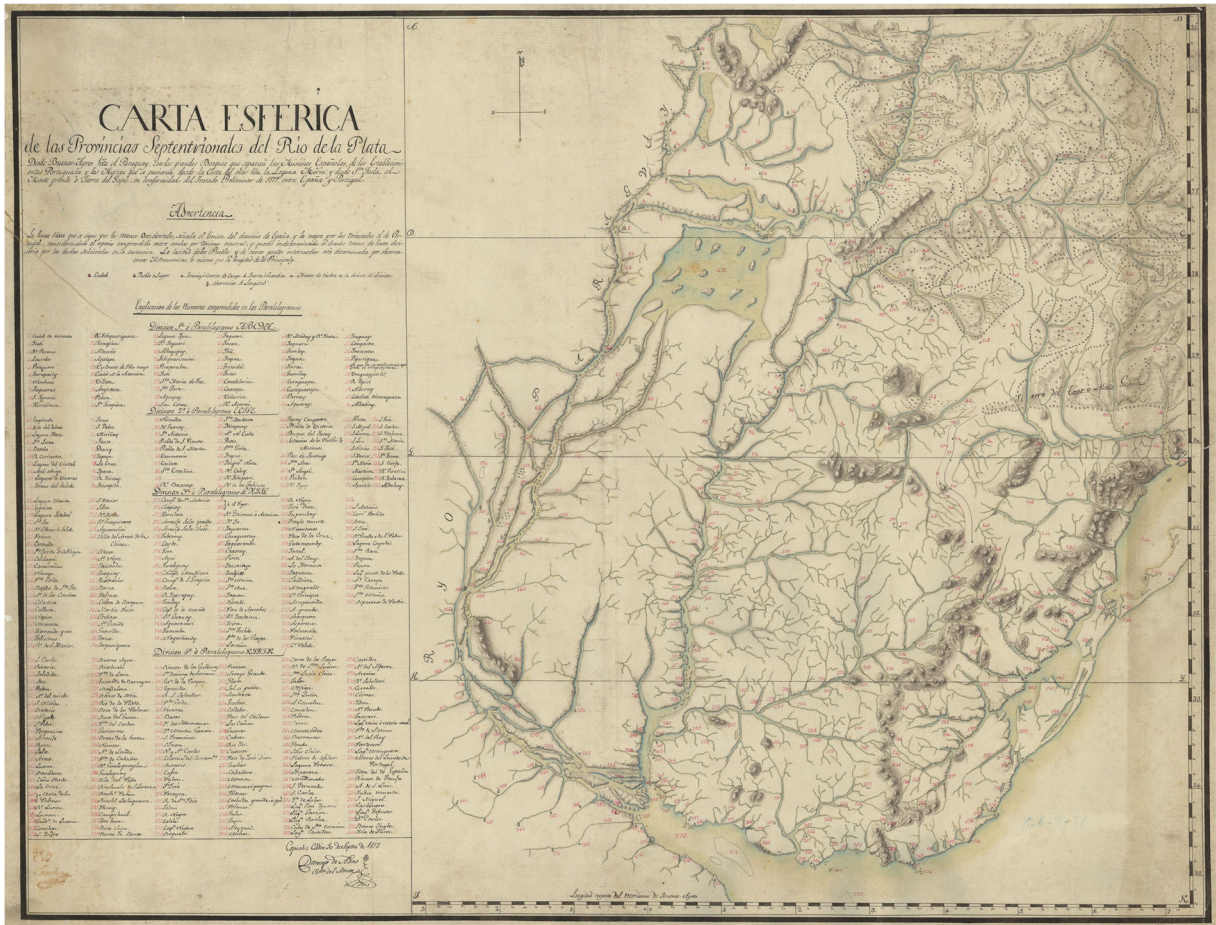
The use of maps by historical archaeologists is one of the main methods in the search for sites that have disappeared from the landscape without a trace. They are also used to obtain data connected with other types of evidence, however. Historical archaeology in South America has developed significantly through urban archaeology (Schávelzon 2000; Orser 2008), the archaeology of conflict (study of battlefields and the fortifications between them) (Landa and Hernández de Lara 2020), and frontier archaeology (study of military settlements) (Rochietti et al. 2013; Landa and Ciarlo 2016; Ciarlo et al. 2018). Other important studies are devoted to additional fields of knowledge, such as factories, rural sites, or, to give a few examples, Jesuit reductions and the analysis of communication networks (Schávelzon 2000; Senatore 2007; Gómez Romero 2008; Beck et al. 2016; Bednarz and Sacchi 2018; Landa et al. 2018; Panizza et al. 2018; Solomita Banfi et al. 2018; Pasquali et al. 2019; Roca 2019), as well as other fields of research that have experienced varied development (Escribano-Ruiz and Azkarate 2015). Good examples of these can be found in the proceedings of the last Congreso Nacional de Arqueología Histórica Argentina (National Congress of Argentinian Historical Archaeology), held in Rosario (November 2018), in which the use of historical maps as a primary source was apparent in many of the presentations (Rocchietti 2018).

Historical maps can be used to establish how a landscape has altered in order to carry out surveying or to propose the position of a site. In this regard, Deagan

(2008), in the study of the Bay of St. Augustine (Florida), carried out a review of old maps that allowed an assessment of the changes that had occurred in the landscape and the way these may have affected the different settlements. Additionally, with those maps, their georeferencing, and scaling, the author proposed the location of some of the sites, the forms of the different farms, and the position of the roads. This same exercise had been undertaken previously in the work at La Isabela (Deagan and Cruxent 2002). In urban archaeology, maps are also valuable, as they provide information about the original urban layout and its present preservation. Using 18th-century maps of Buenos Aires and their superimposition on the modern layout, Schávelzon (2000) shows how the use of urbanism is another means of control and transformation of the territory, as the new spaces were turned into “copies” of European territories. Similar studies are being carried out in other urban centers in South and Central America, such as Santa Fe la Vieja, Mendoza, Piura, Panamá Viejo, and El Salvador (Rovira and Martín 2008; Chiavazza 2010; Fowler 2011; Linero Baroni 2014; Vela Cossío 2014; Calvo and Cocco 2016; Linero Baroni and Marín Valdez 2016; Vargas Pacheco 2016; Escalante Arce and Herodier 2017). More recently, with the introduction of the study of battlefields and war zones, maps are being used profusely, together with other sources, to locate different places to be investigated (Landa and Hernández de Lara 2014; Leoni and Martínez 2017; Ciarlo et al. 2018). The use of old maps to study the activity of Basque fishing boats in Canada (Escribano-Ruiz and Azkarate 2015) has made it possible to visualize what the authors call “cultural interaction” and “middle-ground colonialism.” Many similar examples can be found in the literature. However, the aim of the present article is not to analyze the maps in depth, as that would require a study of its own, but to demonstrate their use and potential.

The study of the incorrectly named Fort Sancti Spiritus, as it was a settlement and not only a fort, has been approached from different perspectives since the late 18th century, from descriptive (Soler 1981, 1984, 1987), archaeological (Cocco and Letieri 2009; Frittegotto et al. 2013; Azkarate, Sánchez-Pinto, Escribano-Ruiz, García Iñáñez et al. 2016; Cocco, Letieri, Frittegotto et al. 2016; Azkarate, Escribano-Ruiz et al. 2018), historical (Medina 1908a; Astiz and Tomé 1987; Azkarate, Sánchez-Pinto, Escribano-Ruiz, and Benedet 2014), social (Benzi 2013), and nutritional

<sup>4</sup> Internet resources are available to georeference old maps using contemporary cartography, but the results obtained are not always satisfactory; see, e.g., <<https://www.davidrumsey.com>> and <<https://collections.leventhalmap.org>>.



**Fig. 1** Copy of an 18th-century map of the River Plate Northern Provinces by Aldao Rodríguez del Monte, 1817. The different points on the map are distributed in a vague way and are

represented by symbols based on their administrative functions (i.e., cities, towns, ranches, forts) (Rodríguez del Monte 1817).

points of view (Báez 1944; Capparelli et al. 2005; Colobig, Zucol, Brea et al. 2017; Colobig, Zucol, Passeggi et al. 2019), and even as a non-anecdotal episode of colonialism (Azkarate and Escribano-Ruiz 2015). But it has never been studied from the viewpoint of cartographic production, except in the synthesis carried out by Ricardo N. González (2014) and in the study by Felix F. Outes (1902) on the geography of places near the settlement of Sancti Spiritus. In contrast, a quite considerable cartographic production has pointed to realities that, to date, have not been studied in depth. They include magnificent studies on Sebastian Cabot’s world map (Medina 1908a; Kelsey 1987), on the work of Alonso de Santa Cruz (Dahlgren 1892; Cuesta Domingo 1983), on Sancho Gutiérrez’s universal chart (Wagner 1951; Kelsey 1987), and even on the map by Ruy Díaz de Guzmán (García Acevedo 1905; Groussac

1914; Fúrlong Cárdiff 1936a, 1936b; Quevedo 1981; El Jaber 2011), as well as other authors and maps (Cortésão 1935; Martín Merás 1993; Cerezo Martínez 1994).

The present article does not aim to explore those aspects mentioned above, as they have been studied appropriately and the topic is too large. It will therefore focus on three aspects that have not been investigated sufficiently and for which some of the 16th-century cartographic representations contribute new data: the choice of the position of Sancti Spiritus, the construction of the fort, and the introduction of exogenous crops. To do this, in addition to the data known from studies that have been carried out and that largely derive from the research project about the settlement,<sup>5</sup> this study will be

<sup>5</sup> Currently, over 36 papers and book chapters, with the main results of the work carried out, have been published.

based on Sebastian Cabot's world map (Cabot 1544), Sancho Gutiérrez's universal chart (S. Gutiérrez 1551), and the ca. 1612 map attributed to Ruy Díaz de Guzmán (1980). Each of these, because of its specific features, provides new data that until now have been studied insufficiently.

The choice of maps is not accidental. These three maps display the main cartographic advances of their time and reflect, firsthand, the geographic knowledge that was available when each one was created. Other maps of the same period only reproduce and copy what appears on these maps.

## Materials and Methods

### The Settlement of Sancti Spiritus

The ambitious research project, "Location of the First Spanish Settlement on the Plata River," began in 2006. It aimed to record material evidence of Fort Sancti Spiritus at the confluence of the Carcarañá and Coronda rivers, and, more exactly, in the terrain of the modern town of Puerto Gaboto at the coordinates latitude 32°26' 31.79" S, longitude 60°48'25.32" W. Although the settlement of Sancti Spiritus had been studied since the 19th century and attempts were made to locate and delimit the site (de Azara 1847; Lassaga 1895; Outes 1902; Torres 1907), the location of the settlement was not effectively located until 2010 (Azkarate, Escribano-Ruiz et al. 2012b; Frittegotto et al. 2013). Since then, numerous studies on the settlement and the implications of its construction for the territory have been carried out, and great progress has been made in its materiality and the relationship established with local populations. It is now known that, in the surroundings of Sancti Spiritus, a stable and very dynamic population was formed by groups that sources from the first half of the 16th century identified as the Timbúes and Carcaraés (Sánchez-Pinto 2019). The settlement was built with local materials and native building techniques, together with other methods brought from Europe, such as rammed earth construction (Azkarate, Escribano-Ruiz et al. 2012a; Sánchez-Pinto and Cocco 2019). New crops were introduced, and existing crops were improved (Colobig, Zucol, Brea et al. 2017; Colobig, Zucol, Passeggi et al. 2019). The different studies carried out so far seem to indicate that Sancti Spiritus was planned to last, while its destruction was the result of poor management by the local

communities and the expeditionaries themselves. The new studies being performed will examine this aspect in greater depth.

Thus, while Sancti Spiritus has been studied from many points of view, an examination of the cartography is still lacking. Changes to the name of the settlement have recently been studied, based on the abundant cartography produced from the first half of the 16th century, and it has been shown that its name was gradually altered from "Sancti Spiritus" to the modern "Puerto Gaboto" (Azkarate, Escribano-Ruiz et al. 2012a). The present town appeared as such in 1891, over the ruins of a previous settlement, through a decree of the provincial executive power of Santa Fe, promoted by Lisandro Paganini, curiously, one of the large landowners in the area. It was called "Pueblo Gaboto" (Soler 1984), which is still its official name.

### Methodological Framework: Charts and Maps

Sancti Spiritus has appeared on different charts and maps since 1529, when it was marked on Diego Ribero's planisphere after he obtained information from expedition members who had returned to Spain to request the assistance that will be described briefly below.

It has been noted above that archaeologists, especially today with the digital resources currently available, often use maps, the older the better, since they contain the oldest place names, to try to find new sites to be studied or to locate missing sites. A map, in addition to being a way to reflect geographic realities (coasts, hills, rivers, etc.) in their correct positions, is a social construct of the world and a way to describe it in terms of power relations and practices (Jacob 1992; Harley 2005; García Rojas 2008; Bienes 2019). In this sense, the maps have been analyzed here on three levels for their study and later utilization.

First, the authorship of the maps must be considered. They are a graphic expression, simplified in many cases, but displaying a reality that includes the different events that have taken place. Therefore, they are a changing representation, especially in the past, which alters with the sequence of events. All maps, particularly in the present with the different conventionalisms that are adopted, are governed by the same "language," which is developed like a formal communication system (Harley 2005). This communication system possesses a marked significance of representation, as it is used to represent the known world, but in an institutional

manner, as it reflects the power from which it emanates. It is therefore essential to know the context of the cartographer who drew the map, the intentions and the circumstances that led to its production. Every map, apart from representing contours and landforms, may correspond to the need to know strategic aspects of the terrain and how the territory may be crossed in the most practical way. These strategic points also symbolize the most accessible parts of the territory, which, in the initial stages of the conquest of America, was of the utmost importance. A clear example in this regard is the famous letter left by Irala in Buenos Aires at the time of its depopulation (El Jaber 2014) that indicated the route to be followed along the Paraná River, the places where it was good to stop and those where it was not, the people with whom trade could be carried out, etc. In that letter, *Santi Spiritus* still appeared as a key location, as it was the place where the Timbués' land began and where the true journey to reach the city of Asunción in Paraguay commenced.

Second, it is important to know the context of the maps. Their study requires a comparison with others, both of the same period and of earlier or later times. In this way, as pointed out by Harley (2015), a detailed analysis of the common elements in different maps provides significant data to give them more, or less, credibility. This part of the analysis is constructed with a map as the main axis around which the chosen group pivots. Different elements can be used for the comparison: the representation of the outlines; the place names, their presence, absence, or changes; and the ways of communication. With early maps this study must be carried out carefully, as there is a risk that they were copied or translated wrongly, or, even in many cases, they are names that were transmitted orally and which were understood in different ways. A good example of this is Sebastian Cabot's world map and the maps drawn by Alonso de Santa Cruz. They were both members of the same expedition, and the maps they drew share the same design, but differ in the number of place names on the map and, in some cases, in their distribution. Another level of analysis is called "cartobibliography" by Harley (2005), following Verner (1965). This consists of the study of the cartography of an area and the changes that have taken place, which allows the researcher to see how material from different periods or intellectual discoveries has been added (Skelton 1965). Together with these analyses, it is also important to study the iconography associated with them (García

Rojas 2008). In the charts of the 16th century and still in many of the 17th century, the importance of the stories of the explorers returning from America is very clear, as they display both known elements and those they invented and that formed part of a fantasy.

Finally, the moment in time when they were produced is important. Maps are the result of a bidirectional relationship between the people who draw them, the cartographers, and the society in which they live. The historical circumstances and conditions generate a map that is a social and cultural document (Harley 2005). On the first maps of the discovery, the ornamental elements, such as the titles and descriptions that accompany them, demonstrate the power relations between the Indigenous societies and the conquistadors. This image was also perpetuated through the names transplanted from the Old to the New World and is observed as the Indigenous evidence disappears over time (Jacob 1992; Varela Marcos 2008). These names also reflect colonialism, as they rob the newly discovered territory of its original significance and make it an object of discourse, since the new names conserve their symbolic and political significance even if they are not in their original locations. In the words of Jacob (1992), the dividing ocean acted as an axis of symmetry that favored the reflection of the Old World over the New World. These actions are evident on 16th-century maps, on which Indigenous place names are rarely seen and most of the names are celebrations on the Christian calendar. In the first half of the 16th century, this reality is perceived in the need of both the Castilian and Portuguese thrones to defend their possessions in America, which was manifested by placing flags and dividing lines to the detriment of the Indigenous populations.

In the present case, the sample that has been chosen is initially the outcome of a society dominating the new-found lands from their home countries, while later they display the need of creole societies to impose themselves on the territory over the home country and make known aspects of their exploration of the territory, either by conquest of new lands, the foundation of towns, or the ascription of Indigenous areas to certain parts of the territory. Therefore, two very different realities are envisioned: one that is represented directly by royal power, through the representations of the *Padrón Real*, and one that reflects local elites who, to a certain extent, needed to reinforce their power. The analysis of the selected maps will focus on the state of geographic knowledge and the representation of different elements

associated with the settlement of Sancti Spiritus as an iconic place and symbolic point of reference, although they offer many more possibilities.

Three charts and maps will be analyzed, as they include the vast majority of the information that existed in each period. The scale or other types of problems that affect the sample will not be considered, as it is not the intention to study that aspect, which has been widely analyzed by other authors (Dahlgren 1892; Harrise 1896; García Acevedo 1905; Medina 1908a; Groussac 1914; Fúrlong Cárdiff 1936a, 1936b; Wagner 1951; Kelsey 1987; Martín-Merás 1993; Cerezo Martínez 1994; Sandman 2007; El Jaber 2011). In contrast, the focus will be on aspects that refer to the settlement of Sancti Spiritus and the place chosen to build it. The ephemeral colonial example of Sancti Spiritus provides a picture of what would later be the general colonization process on the new continent, as it displays many of the characteristics of later Spanish colonialism. It therefore deserves to form part of the array of examples of such a complex process (Azkarate and Escribano-Ruiz 2015; Cocco, Letieri, Frittegotto et al. 2016). Moreover, it is a case that was perpetuated in historical cartography over time, unlike other settlements in the same period, such as San Salvador 1527–1529, 1574 (Uruguay), Nuestra Señora Santa María del Buen Ayre 1536–1541 (first Buenos Aires), Nuestra Señora de la Buena Esperanza (1536–1539), and Corpus Christi (1536–1539) (Schávelzon 1999, 2001, 2012; López Mazz et al. 2014; Balducci et al. 2017; Sánchez-Pinto 2019). These appeared on the first cartographic sketches, but little beyond the first half of the 16th century, if that. Thus, for example, the location of the first Buenos Aires is still not known today.

### *Sebastian Cabot's World Map (1544)*

Magnificent biographies have been written about Sebastian Cabot (Harrise 1896; Medina 1908a), which allows concentration on only those aspects that are relevant to the present study: the results of his cartographic production and, above all, two aspects of the world map that he drew in 1544. Cabot entered the service of the Spanish crown in 1514 as a sea captain, and in 1518 he was named pilot major in the Casa de la Contratación (house of trade), and therefore was in charge of the Padrón Real (Pulido Rubio 1950). Between 1526 and 1529 he captained an expedition that was supposed to sail to the Molucca Islands, but he

never reached them because he decided to ignore the agreements he had signed with the king. Instead, when he reached America, he sailed up the Plata River and then up the Paraná River in quest of riches that he never found. Back in Spain, after a series of lawsuits, he was reinstated in his post, which he held until 1548, when he went to England and remained there until his death in 1557 (Fig. 2).

Both his position in the Casa de la Contratación and his active participation in the expedition to America, when he sailed up the Plata River and then up the Paraná for over 200 leagues (Cuesta Domingo 1983), enabled him to remain informed about the main discoveries and the different navigation routes. Above all, he enjoyed permanent access to the Padrón General (general register) in the Casa de la Contratación, where all these discoveries were recorded. This knowledge enabled him to draw a world map whose full potential lay in the descriptions that accompanied it (Medina 1908a; Kelsey 1987), as the map was the embodiment of what he knew through the Padrón General and the information he obtained on his own voyage. The place names accompanying the map are, nonetheless, very striking, especially in aspects connected with the Plata and Paraná rivers. The representation of the Paraná is illustrative of the evidence that was known at that time and in which Cabot had played an active part. However, the truly significant parts are the notes that accompany the map around its edges.

“Section VI” is especially interesting because it describes very concisely some of the events of his expedition in the Plata drainage basin and because of the location of some of the elements represented on the map. Two aspects should be noted. First, the map makes very clear that “S. Spiritus” is on the left bank of the Carcarañá River, and it shows the river reaching the Sierras de Córdoba. However, the truly important part is the description of the area and the written information about the region in “Section VII,” which notes the construction of settlements “near said river of the people that he took from Spain” and the planting of “wheat ... and other seeds.” The data on this map therefore leave no doubts about the position of the settlement of Sancti Spiritus and provide information about the first crops of wheat and barley in this sector of the Plata basin. This information can also be compared with the written documentation deriving from the litigation involving Sebastian Cabot on his return to Spain (Medina 1908a); with the information supplied by Diego García



**Fig. 2** Sebastian Cabot's "World Map," 1544 (Cabot 1544).

de Moguer (Medina 1908b), who additionally coincided with Cabot on the Paraná; by Alonso de Santa Cruz (Dahlgren 1892; Cuesta Domingo 1983), an active member of the expedition; and by Roger Barlow (Taylor 1932), also a member of the expedition, who returned to Spain before Cabot, and the information he gave to the king and members of the Casa de la Contratación was depicted on Diego de Ribero's map dated 1529.

#### *Sancho Gutiérrez's "Universal Chart" (1551)*

Sancho Gutiérrez, the son of Diego Gutiérrez, trained as a cosmographer together with his father, who was on good terms with Sebastian Cabot. Although he was accepted to draw charts and manufacture instruments from 1539 onward, he was unable to work in the Casa de la Contratación until 1553 (Kelsey 1987; Martín Merás 1993), when he was named cosmographer, a post he held until 1575 (Pulido Rubio 1950; Wagner 1951; True 1956). From 1553 to 1573 he replaced Jerónimo de Chaves in the professorship of cosmography (Martín Merás 1993). Unlike Cabot, who brought new data through his voyage to America, Sancho Gutiérrez based his work on the Padrón General and probably on

information supplied previously by Sebastian Cabot, but also included precise information from more recent expeditions (Wagner 1951; Kelsey 1987; Martín Merás 1993; Cerezo Martínez 1994). Kelsey (1987) notes that Sancho Gutiérrez's "Universal Chart" updates, with precision, the state of thought of the best geographers in Seville in the mid-16th century (Fig. 3).

The importance of Sancho Gutiérrez's chart lies in the position that he and his family held as they controlled the production of navigation charts during many of the central years of the 16th century (1534–1581) (Sandman 2007). It is very similar to Sebastian Cabot's map, but without its errors. Sancho Gutiérrez's map, in the area of study, is much more complete than Cabot's, although some inaccuracies are hard to explain. In the first place, the courses of the rivers are better situated, but some of them are erroneously associated with the ethnic groups and populations in the territory. A significant length of time had gone by between Cabot and Sancho Gutiérrez's maps, expeditions had continued exploring America, and, after the abandonment of Buenos Aires, the route up the Paraná River had used the strategic location of the old settlement of Sancti Spiritus as a place to take on supplies and rest during the tough voyage up the Paraná to the city of Asunción.





**Fig. 3** Sancho Gutiérrez’s “Universal Chart,” 1551 (S. Gutiérrez 1551).

In this regard, Gutiérrez adds a new variable by situating “Cabot’s house” and the town of “Sancti Spiritus,” together with its port, next to the Carcarañá River. However, unlike Cabot’s world map, the Carcarañá seems to be duplicated. The Carcarañá and the Carcaranes rivers are situated between the rivers of the Querandís and the Chanás, and Cabot’s house and the settlement of Sancti Spiritus is placed between them. Looking closely at Cabot’s map, there is an unnamed river above the Carcarañá and below the river of the Chanás. Perhaps it is one of the streams that currently exist in the area. This is the one called the Carcaranes by Sancho Gutiérrez, possibly because it lacked a name and was situated in the territory of the Carcaraes. In this case, it is known that that group was next to the Timbúes, but a little before them in the territory (Sánchez-Pinto 2019). Furthermore, the “Timbúes” are shown next to them, between the Carcarañá River and the “River of the Chanaes.” In the description accompanying the map, in “Section III,” it states that during the expedition it was decided to “make a settlement of people he took from Spain near the river,” recalling Cabot’s account on his world map. The information given by Sancho Gutiérrez can be verified, like Cabot’s, thanks to later cartography.

Owing to the maps illustrating the book by Alonso de Santa Cruz (Dahlgren 1892; Cuesta Domingo 1983), which are more complete than Cabot’s map, it is known that at least those rivers existed, although they are given different names. Thus, on the general map of South America, Santa Cruz only gives the name of the Carcarañá, shown in red ink. However, other rivers are drawn flowing into the Paraná. The detailed map of the Plata River provides more names of the rivers. Thus, after the Querandís River, it shows another two; the first

one is the “Carca[...],” on which is located “S. Spi[...],” and the second is the “R. de Caca[...],” (Cuesta Domingo 1983[2]:20–21,384). Alonso de Chaves, a cosmographer in the Casa de la Contratación, wrote an important book, called *Espejo de Navegantes*, between 1520 and 1538. It describes the image of America with surprising precision and lists the main geographic sites, their names, and the navigation routes, so that a quarter of the book is a “chart in prose” (Barreiro 1958). He states that the Carcarañá River is the second from the south that flows into the Paraná, and the Carcaraes is the third. He also says that “on the Carcarañá is Sancti Spiritus, the fortress where the Captain Caboto with his army lived from the year of 27 to the year of 30” (Castañeda et al. 1983). Juan López de Velasco’s book, *Geografía y descripción universal de las Indias*, was published in 1574 and supported the above information by stating that the Carcarañá River was the place where Cabot lived and built the fortress of Sancti Spiritus, and that 7 leagues upriver there is a lagoon that is called Quiloazas and “others call the River Timbúes or Janaes or Chanaes” (Zaragoza 1894). He does not mention the Carcaraes River, which is thought to have been between the Carcarañá and the Timbúes or Chanaes rivers, based on the information above.

#### *Ruy Díaz de Guzmán’s Map*

Ruy Díaz de Guzmán was born in Asunción in about 1560, the son of doña Ursula and grandson of Domingo Martínez de Irala, who was governor general of Asunción and of the Plata River and Paraguay, alternately, between 1539 and 1556. From a very young age, Ruy Díaz de Guzmán was connected with different martial activities that took up much of his life, and he

was present at several of the founding events of the first towns built in the southern sector of the Plata River basin (Groussac 1914). It was not until he settled in the city of La Plata in the first decade of the 17th century that he wrote a major book, titled *Argentina: Historia del descubrimiento, conquista y población del río de la Plata*, and illustrated it with a beautiful map of the Paraná, which is missing from the surviving published manuscript. As pointed out by Groussac (1914), although the book refers to the existence of a map, it was not found until 1894, when E. S. Zeballos located it in the Archivo General de Indias and published it in part. Later, Félix F. Outes (1903) and García Acevedo (1905) also published it in part or complete. After a meticulous analysis, Groussac (1914) concludes that the map must have been drawn between 1606 and 1608, and it is almost certainly the map that the author alludes to in chapter 4 of *Argentina* (Fig. 4). García Acevedo (1905) does not doubt that the map is the one that is referred to in the book, especially because Ruy Díaz states that “it does not include the graduations and parts that it should do, because my intention was only to make a demonstration of what those provinces contain, seacoast and rivers” (Tieffemberg 2012). Other authors who have examined the map do not question its

authenticity (Fúrlong Cárdiff 1936a, 1936b; Quevedo 1981; El Jaber 2011), although they qualify the time when it was drawn, which must have been between 1605 and 1608, and believe it is a copy of the original.

It differs from the previous maps not only in the technical quality, but in displaying greater realism, as it aims to reflect a conquered space and act as a vehicle for its discourse and justification (El Jaber 2011). However, the course of the Paraná River lacks the representation of the islands that appear in earlier maps. The “Caracarañá” River is clearly represented, and on its left bank, directly at the confluence with the Paraná, below the name “Cabot’s Fort,” is the only known graphic depiction of the fort of Sancti Spiritus. The fort is drawn between the Caracarañá and what seems to be a lagoon to the south of the city of Santa Fe. Owing to its location, this is undoubtedly the Coronda Lagoon in the place of the same name. The fort is depicted as a rectangular construction, with perimeter walls and two towers located in opposite corners facing each other. According to El Jaber (2011), the different images used to represent the different places were not chosen at random, but would form part of the discourse and the need to demonstrate the events that had taken place (battles, conquests, etc.). “Santi Spiritu” is marked on the right bank

**Fig. 4** Ruy Díaz de Guzmán’s “Map of South America from the Equator to the Strait of Magellan,” ca. 1650 (Consejo de Indias [1650]).



of the Carcarañá River. Therefore the fort and the settlement of Sancti Spiritus are clearly located on the Carcarañá, and the map provides the first depiction of the fort, which is accompanied by a description of what it may have looked like, as he says that Sebastian Cabot “reached the Carcarañal River ... took harbor and called it Santi Espiritu. ... Founded there a wooden fort with its earth bank and two well-covered bastions” (Tieffemberg 2012). For Molina (1956), the elements described by Ruy Díaz de Guzmán, while they differ substantially in their design from previous maps, indicate that the author possessed personal knowledge of the course of the Paraná River because he had sailed on it and gave precise indications of sandbanks and other geographic features. In this sense, it is striking that he does not indicate the islands that are known to have been located in front of Sancti Spiritus, as mentioned in written documentation (Medina 1908a), and reduces them to two small islands opposite the confluence of the Carcarañá with the Paraná.

## Discussion

Apart from the graphic quality or scale of the representations on the different sources that have been selected, their value lies in the information they provide about the settlement of Sancti Spiritus and which had not been taken into account before now. It has been seen how the information on them can be compared with coetaneous and later maps, and how, to a great extent, two of the main stages in cartographic production at that time are represented. The first are a faithful reflection of the Padrón Real and the contents developed in it; indeed, both Sebastian Cabot and Sancho Gutiérrez were cosmographers in the Casa de la Contratación, and through the maps they basically transmit their knowledge of America. The Ruy Díaz de Guzmán map, like the previous ones, corresponded to the events of that time, but, rather than as an accumulation of knowledge, as a vehicle to represent the conquests made, in this case by the Spanish, and the benefits derived from them for the Crown. Between this one and the others, there is a great difference, as the first two are the result of the characteristic conventionalisms of the European erudites who reflected them, and the latter the outcome of knowledge acquired on the terrain. It should be remembered that Ruy Díaz de Guzmán was of mixed race, and with his book he aimed to create an instrument to legitimize

the conquest as the communicator of an imperial message underpinning the direct execution of territorial power (Harley 2005; El Jaber 2011). However, both one and the other used the maps as a vehicle of geographic and territorial power in order to demonstrate the dominion of the Crown over the territory. The different maps put names to those elements of their interest or which were important in the territory or unknown, as they are elements that would enable the advance of the conquest. In this regard, as pointed out by Gregory (1994), in addition to the elements that are represented, the maps introduce the language of voyage, as they represent the named objects and name the different places, both the conquered and the explorable ones. This simple act described and transformed the newfound lands into an object of knowledge, conquest, and claims. In sum, it was a way of appropriating the territory by turning it into a further object within the colonial discourse; Sancti Spiritus is a faithful example of this situation.

The chosen sample, its comparison with historical documentation and maps, both coetaneous and later ones, as well as the evidence obtained in the archaeological fieldwork at the site of Sancti Spiritus, will expand the knowledge of the settlement and the role its representation in later cartography might have played. First of all, it is unmistakably situated on the left bank of the Carcarañá River, in a quite small radius from its confluence with the Paraná. It is curious that none of the three maps shows the modern Coronda River. It is interesting to note that, when the National Commission of Museums, Monuments and Historic Sites designated Fort Sancti Spiritus an historic site in 1942, it did not mark its location, and it was only after several decisions and judgments that its position was definitively located on the side of the Carcarañá River in Puerto Gaboto (*Boletín Oficial de la República Argentina* 1942; Soler 1984). In the second place, they provide very important information about its form, which was not identified until the final seasons of excavation (Azkarate, Sánchez-Pinto, Escribano-Ruiz, and Benedet 2019; Sánchez-Pinto and Cocco 2019). Thirdly, they add information about the introduction of foreign crops, which was supported by written documentation and has recently been confirmed by the archaeometric analysis of samples obtained during the excavation of the site (Colobig, Zucol, Brea et al. 2017; Azkarate, Sánchez-Pinto, Escribano-Ruiz, and Benedet 2019; Colobig, Zucol, Passeggi et al. 2019). Finally,

they situate some of the local groups in the territory, which is significant, as it is not clear today, in either the cartography or the documentation, how those groups were distributed in the area.

### The Position of Sancti Spiritus

One way to objectivize the territory, legitimize the conquest, and generate strategic points from which to continue exploration and control over the lands, as explained above, was by putting names to the places as they were won. In this initial process, many of those places were strategic points from which the penetration of territory could be continued. One way to define those points was by representing them on maps. A detailed study of the first maps in the process of the conquest of America allows an appreciation of how, as the continent was explored toward the south, the coastline was gradually enlarged and the different places were given names as a point of reference both for voyages along the coast and to appropriate the territory.

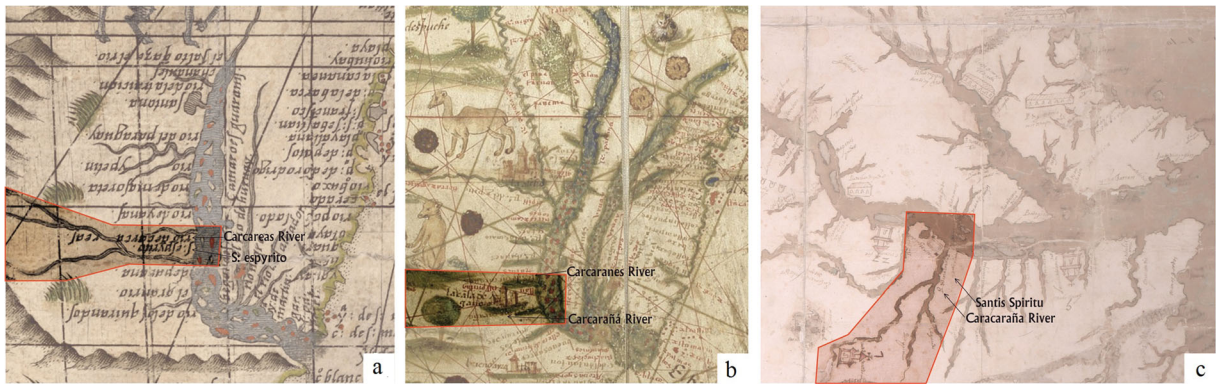
Sancti Spiritus appears on the different maps of the Plata and Paraná rivers from the precise time of its construction and the occupation of the territory by the expedition, an action that implied the legitimation of taking possession of the area for the Crown. It is known that Sebastian Cabot reached the confluence of the Carcarañá and Paraná during the month of May 1527, and the first known representation of its position dates from 1529, when it appears on Diego de Ribero's map, which was referred to above. Its appearance on the world map is in accordance with the policy of conquest, as a position was appropriated by giving a name to it. The cartography studied here is quite clear about the place where the settlement of Sancti Spiritus was built, as it is marked on the left bank of the modern Carcarañá River<sup>6</sup> near its confluence with the Paraná, a large river according to documentation at that time, in clear allusion to its meaning of "large river that looks like the sea" in Guaraní (Cervera 1908; Medina 1908a). Some of the most important maps of the first half of the 16th century also clearly locate it in that position (Ribero 1529; Ortelius 1570; Teixeira [1586]; Cuesta Domingo 1983;

<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that "Carcarañá" (third river) is in the Guaraní language. The third river was called "Caracará-aná" after a local chieftain. "Cara-cará" was also name of a bird of prey (southern crested caracara). The suffix "-aná" seems to be equivalent to "*anama*," which is "kin" in Guaraní. Thus the whole name would mean "kin of the Caracaraes" (Domínguez Compañy 1977).

Martín Merás 1993). One of the first navigation charts for the Paraná River, mapped in 1685 by Captain Juan Andrés Esmaili (1685), which shows the depths of the river and the main hazards for navigation, continues to show that the "place of Cabot's tower or Sancti Spiritus" is on the "Río de Carcaranal." This persistence in the cartography continued over time, although the place name gradually changed from "Sancti Spiritus"/"Cabot's Tower," to "Gaboto," and finally in the 19th century to "Gaboto's Corner" or "Coronda's Corner" (Azkarate, Escribano-Ruiz et al. 2012a).

The two names, "S: Spyrito" and "Río de Carcareas," are shown together on Sebastian Cabot's map (Fig. 5a), both on a large river that, as mentioned above, reaches the Sierras de Córdoba. Neither are there any doubts on Sancho Gutiérrez's map (Fig. 5b) as, on the "Río de Carcarañá," he situates "Cabot's house," "Sancti Spiritus," and the term "Nau," which would indicate the existence of a port. However, over this, he situates the "Río de Carcaranes," very similar to the one Cabot calls "Río de Carcareas." Ruy Díaz de Guzmán (Fig. 5c) clearly marks the "R. del Caracaraña"; on its left bank he draws a fortification that he calls "Cabot's Fort," and below the name of the river he gives the name of "Santis Spiritu." It has gone unnoticed until now that the two names opposite each other at the confluence of the Carcarañá are over two small islands in the middle of the Paraná River, which seem to be called "Yshi[...]" or "Xthi[...]" and "B. Sper[...]." García Acevedo (1905) transcribes them as "Ysla de silao," but I do not think that the first word can be "Ysla," and the second, which is even less clear, cannot be interpreted as "Silao." Therefore, although it is not the purpose of the present study, I think that the author of the map is marking in this position the settlement of Corpus Christi/Buena Esperanza de Ayolas/Mendoza, which he refers to several times in his text. A similar idea was recently proposed based on the written and archaeological record, although the present source was not considered (Sánchez-Pinto 2019).

It can therefore be seen that the settlement of Sancti Spiritus was located on the left bank of the Carcarañá, although this is given different names that, in any case, link it with the Caracaraes Amerindians who occupied the area of the settlement together with the Timbúes (Sánchez-Pinto 2019). Indeed, it is known that they occupied the area immediately before the Timbúes, whose territories began directly after Sancti Spiritus (Sánchez-Pinto 2019). It also interesting to note that,



**Fig. 5** Close ups of the three maps discussed in the text; the area of study is indicated by an outline: (a) Sebastian Cabot's "World Map" (Cabot 1544). The place names of "S:Spirito" and "Río de Carcareas" have been highlighted. One rule of cartography is that the place names do not cover the element they are naming, and, in this case, Cabot perfectly separates the name "Carcareas" from the

river; (b) Sancho Gutiérrez's universal chart (Gutiérrez 1551). "Cabot's House," "Xti Spiritus," and the name "Nau" are situated between the Carcaraña and Carcaranes rivers; (c) Ruy Díaz de Guzmán's map (Consejo de Indias [1650]). Cabot's fort is represented over the Caracaraña and below what must be the Coronda Lagoon.

in the 1545 "Merits and Services" of Gonzalo de Mendoza (Consejo de Indias 1545), it clearly explains that when one of the expeditions left in search of Juan de Ayolas in Buena Esperanza, it left a quartermaster (Guaraní) and took one from Buena Esperanza. This seems strange, but makes sense if the cartography and documentation of the time is studied in detail. In Gonzalo de Mendoza's "Merits and Services," Juan de Salazar, John de Rute, and Nicolás Colma state that they took a quartermaster from Buena Esperanza because they did not understand the language of the Timbúes, Carcaraes, or Querandís, with whom they had to trade (Consejo de Indias 1545). It is curious that there were interpreters among the Carcaraes and Timbúes who were in Buena Esperanza that were not Guaraní. One might wonder from where those interpreters came. The explanation is probably very simple: they were people who remained after the previous expedition by Sebastian Cabot, the first one that reached that area. They would be the ones who began to give names to the different places, which, in many cases, are Guaraní (Sánchez-Pinto 2019). Therefore, as mentioned above, the meaning of "Carcaraña" in Guaraní would be "kin of the Carcaraes," possibly alluding to the Carcarás in Peru, as proposed by Reyes (1937). Indeed, the Carcaraña River rises in the Sierras de Córdoba, the route used by Peruvians to reach the Paraná.

Be that as it may, the accounts of both Cabot's expedition and descriptions accompanying Ruy Díaz de Guzmán's map state that when they sailed up the Paraná they encountered another river called

"Carcaraña," where they established their base (Medina 1908a; Cuesta Domingo 1983; Tieffemberg 2012). As explained above, Alonso de Santa Cruz, a member of Cabot's expedition, cosmographer in the Casa de la Contratación, teacher of astronomy and cosmography in the house of Emperor Charles V, and author of *Islario de todas las islas del mundo*, which included a world map together with more detailed maps (Dahlgren 1892; Cuesta Domingo 1983; Martín Merás 1993), draws the settlement of Sancti Spiritus on the Carcaraña (Cuesta Domingo 1983). This is equally true of the main chroniclers and cartographers of America in the 16th century. Alonso de Chaves, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, and Antonio Herrera y Tordesillas do not hesitate to place it on the Carcaraña River (Fernández de Oviedo 1959; Castañeda et al. 1983; Cuesta Domingo 2016). Other important 16th-century maps, such as those of Diego Ribero (1529), Abraham Ortelius (1570), and Luis Teixeira (ca. 1586), also locate it on the left bank of the Carcaraña.

It was not until the late 19th century that the main Argentinian researchers, who had always borne in mind the foundation of Sancti Spiritus, as it was an important landmark, attempted to locate the exact position of the settlement. One pioneer was Ramón J. Lassaga (1895), who traveled to Gaboto in 1885 together with Estanislao S. Zeballos, and, after walking along the left bank of the river, the two thought that they had documented the ruins of Cabot's fort at the mouth of the Carcaraña and even drew a picture of them. Similarly, some years later, Felix F. Outes (1902) thought that he had seen the ruins

of the fort on the left bank of the Carcarañá, next to the confluence. Different initiatives continued the search, although none of them succeeded (Frittegotto et al. 2013). It was only in the early 21st century that a team of Argentinian archaeologists commenced a project that aimed to locate the Fort Sancti Spiritus (Cocco and Letieri 2009). Finally, after a series of systematic excavations, with a change in methodology and expansion of the archaeometric analyses, the exact place of the ruins of the fort of Sancti Spiritus was located on the confluence of the Carcarañá with the Coronda (Cocco, Letieri, and Frittegotto 2011; Azkarate, Escribano-Ruiz et al. 2012b, 2012a; Cocco, Letieri, Frittegotto et al. 2016), precisely in the place indicated by historical cartography. It is worth noting that the information in the cartography and written documentation has been verified by archaeological fieldwork.

The fact that Sancti Spiritus continued to be represented on maps of the Paraná River over time can be interpreted in evident terms of colonialism. First, because by naming the place it should be recalled that an important communication site since pre-Hispanic times was effectively appropriated, especially considering the problems that existed between the crowns of Castile and Portugal regarding the division of America; second, because it ensured the occupation of a place that was regarded as vital for navigation and communication. One only needs to remember Irala's description in the letter he left in Buenos Aires and the different later attempts to reconstruct the settlement, as shall be seen below; and third, because the presence of a large number of ethnic groups in the area, described by members of Sebastian Cabot's expedition as Querandís, Caracaraes, Chanás, Beguas, Chanaes-Timbús, Timbús, Guaranís, and Chandris (Taylor 1932; Maura 2007), as well as by such later travelers as Diego García de Moguer and U. Schmidl (Medina 1908c; Quevedo 1981; El Jaber 2014), reflect that this must have been an important place to obtain supplies and for exchange. The presence of fisher-/hunter-gatherer groups (the Chaná and Querandí) together with groups with different levels of horticultural development (like the Timbú, Guaraní, and Carcarais) would support that. In an important document dated in 1529, which has remained unpublished until now, the king asks the ship operators sponsoring Cabot's expedition (Consejo de Indias 1529) to contribute to the support expedition that he was going to send them, as they "entered inland where they dug the earth for some days and learned about it and because to go

ahead they needed more people than they had and other things, *to occupy and fortify that land* [emphasis added]." According to this text, which has gone unnoticed until now, it can be seen that the king himself accepted the change in the mission entrusted to Cabot, a mercantile expedition, and that its new aim was to provide supplies and people to continue the expedition "because his Majesty was determined to send assistance to that land and the people who were there." The ship operators' reply to the king's request was explicit, as they state that the only person who would benefit from the expedition, in the way it had been replanned, was the king himself, since its new mission was "to discover and conquer and rule over lands." In contrast, they had contributed to the expedition to make money, which was their profession, and not to conquer lands.

Position, connectivity, stability, visibility, control over the territory, and access to resources were therefore the criteria that determined the occupation of the site by the European expedition (Sánchez-Pinto and Cocco 2019). Sebastian Cabot did not choose the position of Sancti Spiritus at random, as it had been occupied by Indigenous populations for at least 100 years before he arrived (Cocco, Letieri, Frittegotto et al. 2016; Azkarate, Escribano-Ruiz et al. 2018), and it was one of the strategic points for river transport on the Paraná and Carcarañá and overland toward the interior of the territory. This strategy of taking over places that had been occupied previously has been observed in other foundings in America at stable towns with preeminent positions in the landscape, good visual and strategic control over the territory, and near the main communication routes (Lafuente Machain 1936; Torre Revello 1943; Morresi 1983; Beck et al. 2016; Curzio et al. 2004; Deagan 2008; Chiavazza 2010; Igareta 2010; Lopez Mazz et al. 2014; Cocco 2018). The most significant aspect of the archaeological research being carried out at the site of Sancti Spiritus is the determination of the original stable settlement, which had gone unnoticed until now, as it was not mentioned in written documentation or on maps (Azkarate, Sánchez-Pinto, Escribano-Ruiz, and Benedet 2019).

### The Materiality of the Settlement

As has been seen, the cartography and its comparison with other maps and written documentation left no doubts about the position of the site of Sancti Spiritus. However, they provide less information about the actual

form of the settlement. Sebastian Cabot's world map is a magnificent geographic map with very important data about the latest discoveries that had been made, but it supplies no information about the form of Sancti Spiritus. The maps of Sancho Gutiérrez (Fig. 6b) and, above all, of Ruy Díaz de Guzmán (Fig. 6a) contribute complementary information about the settlement, while the other maps mark the position with some kind of symbol: a circle, a square, etc. At most, as recently pointed out (Sánchez-Pinto 2019), they say that it is a "site of destroyed Spanish populations or forts" (Fúrlong Cárdiff 1936b:map XXXII). As Woodward (2007) correctly notes, the different symbols on 16th-century maps lack a key, although they are monosemous and unambiguous signs (Bertin 1967). However, it is significant that Sebastian Cabot's map does not provide more information about the settlement either in the drawing on the map or in the complementary information that accompanies it. Nonetheless, the documentation derived from the expedition and the main chroniclers of the Indies do indicate several aspects of the settlement. Fernández de Oviedo states that houses were built with wooden posts covered by straw, and the fortification with rammed-earth walls (Fernández de Oviedo 1959). Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas only says that a *fuerza* (force) called "Cabot's Fortress" was built (Cuesta Domingo 2016).

Sancho Gutiérrez's universal chart, in addition to remarking that Cabot's expedition built "towns" on the river banks,<sup>7</sup> states that "Cabot's house" was in the settlement of "Sancti Spiritus" and adds the term "Nau" next to the settlement, evidently referring to the settlement's quay, and which, according to written documentation, was on the left bank of the Carcarañá (Medina 1908a; Sánchez-Pinto and Cocco 2019). It is significant that Cabot's house is mentioned in Sancti Spiritus, clearly referring to the fortification, but the term for "tower" or "fort," as it was called in later cartography and documentation, does not appear (Medina 1908a, 1908c; Astiz and Tomé 1987; Azkarate, Escribano-Ruiz et al. 2012a; Azkarate, Sánchez-Pinto, Escribano-Ruiz, and Benedet 2014). The symbol used by Sancho Gutiérrez to represent the settlement differs in size and shape from the others on the Paraná and Plata

ivers. Of the three sites identified with a symbol, the one for Sancti Spiritus is larger than the one for Buenos Aires, but smaller than the one for Asunción. This is curious because Sancti Spiritus was smaller than Buenos Aires and also survived for a shorter time. Both the documentation of the time and later documents use a wide array of terms to refer to the settlement of Sancti Spiritus. The terms for "fort" and "house" appear profusely, whereas "stronghouse" and "tower" are less frequent (Ribero 1529; Medina 1908a; Fernández de Oviedo 1959; Castañeda et al. 1983; Astiz and Tomé 1987; Maura 2007; Azkarate, Escribano-Ruiz et al. 2012a; Cuesta Domingo 2016). Another term used is "royal," which is a little ambiguous, as it acquires a double meaning since it is used to refer to the fort, but also to the whole settlement (Medina 1908a; Azkarate, Escribano-Ruiz et al. 2012a). The use of the word "house" to refer to the fortification was not recorded in the documentation at that time. Diego García de Moguer, an expeditionary who was with Sebastian Cabot in the Plata River basin, says that the fort was really a straw hut that Cabot called the "fortress of Sancti Spiritus" (Medina 1908b). Sebastian Cabot himself, in the information given for the Casa de la Contratación on his return in 1530, says that he made a house with rammed-earth walls covered with wood and straw (Medina 1908a). It is feasible to imagine that, when Sancho Gutiérrez drew his chart, he possessed all this information, and, additionally, he was Cabot's colleague at the Casa de la Contratación.

The most important information about the materiality of the settlement comes from Ruy Díaz de Guzmán, with the representation of the fort and the description in his book. It has been explained that he conceived his map as a way of seeing and being seen, but also as a vehicle for the exhibition and reflection of the conquest, which he justifies, in which the different symbols reflect the strategies of the occupation of the territory (El Jaber 2011). In this regard, it should be understood that his representation of the settlement of Sancti Spiritus, with the drawing of the fort, is perfectly in accordance with the initial process of the conquest in which the first settlements possessed a fort as well as the dwellings, and those were the central buildings in the new European towns on the other side of Atlantic, the architectonic structures with which they attempted to organize the occupation (Sánchez-Pinto and Cocco 2019). The fort represented by Ruy Díaz de Guzmán is rectangular with two towers in opposite corners. Moreover, a description

<sup>7</sup> As does Sebastian Cabot's world map, which shows that towns were built on the riverbanks for the people who came from Europe. I think that in both cases they are referring to the settlement of Sancti Spiritus and also to San Lorenzo (Plata River) and San Salvador (San Salvador River) (Medina 1908b; Azkarate et al. 2014).



**Fig. 6** Close ups of two maps; the area of study is indicated by an outline: (a) Ruy Díaz de Guzmán's map (Consejo de Indias [1650]). The representation of Cabot's fort is quite clear, as its shape is indicated as well as the position of the two towers mentioned in the written documentation; (b) Sancho Gutiérrez's

"Universal Chart" (S. Gutiérrez 1551). The symbol used by Sancho Gutiérrez to mark the settlement does not differ very much from the others on the chart. The most important data are the names he uses to indicate the settlement and the elements assigned to it.

in the text states that it was a fort "of wood with its earth bank and two well-covered bastions" (Tieffemberg 2012). Thanks to Medina (1908a), there are descriptions made by the expeditionaries that say the fort was made with rammed-earth walls, with two towers or bastions, and it was covered by a roof of wood and straw, which was the main cause of its destruction. Inside was the "captain's chamber," where the expedition's most valuable objects were kept, and one of the bastions was used as a storehouse (Medina 1908a; Astiz and Tomé 1987). However, more precise descriptions to determine its layout, the position of the different spaces, both inside and outside, and its surface area are lacking. The drawing on Ruy Díaz de Guzmán's map is the best that has been found so far. Sixteenth-century accounts indicate that the ruins of one tower were still visible, and therefore they mention "Cabot's Tower" (Berberían 1987). This element, together with the memory of its destruction, made the visible ruins a symbolic object in the territory and one of the main landmarks on the voyage from the Plata River to the city of Asunción. In fact,

numerous attempts were made to revitalize the site during the 16th century, owing to the need to provide the journey between Buenos Aires and Asunción with an intermediate stop on the way; one of the last attempts was entrusted to Jaime Rasquín in 1558 (Ardit 1987).

Maps of the Plata River continued to show the position of Sancti Spiritu throughout the 16th century, even moreso than other settlements that endured longer in time, although the maps did not show the form of the site (D. Gutiérrez 1562; Ortelius 1570; de Jode 1578; de Bry 1596). It has been noted above how the cartographers of the Casa de la Contratación, Alonso de Chaves and Alonso de Santa Cruz, refer to the settlement of Sancti Spiritu, but say nothing about its layout. On the maps of the Plata River included in Alonso de Santa Cruz's book and also Sancho Gutiérrez's book, the symbol used to indicate Sancti Spiritu is similar to the one for Buenos Aires, the city of Asunción, and other places on the coast of Brazil (Cuesta Domingo 1983). During the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries the settlement still appeared on maps of the area, rather than other sites



that had existed for a longer time (Hulsius 1606; Mercator 1628; Blaeu 1659; Moll 1711; Bellin 1745; Cano y Olmedilla 1799; Arrowsmith 1834; Dufour 1848; Castro and Elena 1893; de Chapeaurouge 1901). In the compilations of Jesuit cartography of the Plata River carried out by Guillermo Fúrlong Cárdiff (1936b), the situation was similar, but the keys that accompanied some of the maps added more precise information; for example, that Gaboto was a populated place, a destroyed Spanish fort (Fúrlong Cárdiff 1936b:map XXXII), or an area where there was a cross on a hill (Fúrlong Cárdiff 1936b:map XI).

Martín del Barco Centenera, in his book *La Argentina*, first published in 1602, states that Cabot “built a fortress whose rammed-earth walls are still standing” (De Angelis 1836). Later works also mention the ruins of the fort, but it does not seem that they visited it, and they described it by hearsay (Lozano 1875; Tuella 1897). In the first half of the 19th century, Felix de Azara (1850) described the fort: “[B]ased on its remains, it was square and surrounded by a moat and a palisade with the raised angles with banking.” It may be supposed that Azara never saw the ruins of Cabot’s fort and took the description from Ruy Díaz de Guzmán, as Groussac (1916) would do later when he referred to the foundation of the fort. Lassaga (1895) and Outes (1902) visited the place, and the former detected the two towers and a moat, and the latter a moat. However, the plans they drew do not match the reality.

In the 1990s the fort of Sancti Spiritus was partially reconstructed based on a project by the architect Óscar Monsfeld that was dated 1977 and was, in the words of Soler (1984), the one that best represented the historical characteristics of the fort (Fig. 7). The proposed reconstruction consisted of an elliptical structure 90 × 66 m in

size, surrounded by a moat and wooden palisade, flanked by the two towers, and inside which three barracks were built as well as Cabot’s chamber. While the project was sanctioned and approved by law in the provincial legislature (SAIJ 1992), it was only partially carried out by digging the moat, raising the palisade, and placing a series of flag poles inside it (Soler 1984; González 2014). The error in Monsfeld’s project was to conceive the fort as the place where the expeditionaries lived, when really their houses were located around it, as can be understood from the written documentation and which the archaeological excavation appears to have confirmed (Cocco, Letieri, Frittegotto et al. 2016).

It was in the later years of the excavation performed in the framework of the research project “Location of the first Spanish settlement on the Plata River,” which had been in progress since 2006, that the surface plan of the rammed-earth fort was determined. Archaeological surveys and excavations succeeded in finding the exact place where the settlement of Sancti Spiritus was located and documented remains of the fort, as well as evidence of a previous Indigenous village. Through this work it has been possible to determine the size and shape of the fort interior and characterize the rammed-earth wall (Cocco, Letieri, Frittegotto et al. 2016; Azkarate, Escribano-Ruiz et al. 2018). The excavation has shown that the fort was rectangular, as in Ruy Díaz Guzmán’s drawing, and was at least 10 m wide and 35 m long (Cocco, Letieri, Frittegotto et al. 2016; Azkarate, Escribano-Ruiz et al. 2018). So far, no evidence of the towers indicated in Ruy Díaz de Guzmán’s documentation and plan has been found, nor of the internal compartmentation. Later fieldwork should provide the data that are still not available. However, it can be confirmed that Guzmán’s drawing resembles the remains found by

**Fig. 7** Building work to reconstruct the fort during 1992 based on Monsfeld’s project. The work could not be finished due to lack of financial resources. (Photo by Ricardo N. González, 1992.)



the excavation, as straight, 1.20 m wide, rammed-earth walls have been identified, (Cocco, Letieri, Frittegotto et al. 2016; Azkarate, Escribano-Ruiz et al. 2018).

Of all the evidence from the maps, the most important refers to the form of the fort, its surface area, and the survival of the place name in the cartography with its successive transformations. As noted above, marking a place and drawing it on a map means that it is being appropriated, even if one had never been in the area, and its unbroken persistence over time is also significant. This is especially true when the conquest of the Santa Fe area took place gradually, and it was not until the late 18th century and during the 19th century that it began to be occupied effectively within the construction of the nation state (Djenderedjian 2008; Macor 2011; Dosztal 2013; Hernán Zapata 2014). In this context of expansion, the continuing presence of the place name of “Sancti Spiritus,” with its various changes, is logical within the process of appropriation of the territory.

Once more, it can be seen that the information from historical maps and the archaeological excavations seems to agree. Therefore, using Ruy Díaz de Guzmán’s drawing as a point of reference, when the shape of the fort has been recorded definitively, new excavation areas can be proposed in order to locate its towers.

### The Crops

The introduction of new crops, or simply the presence of crops in the southern sector of the Plata drainage basin, has not been studied in sufficient depth. If giving names to the territory was a way of appropriating it, it is no less true that the transfer of crops from Europe to America was another major step in the colonization and conquest process. This also involved a transformation of the landscape, as the terrain began to be divided into fields for crops. After Sebastian Cabot’s expedition established its settlement, the land was divided into fields, where, according to contemporary documentation, such European crops as wheat and barley were grown, but also native species such as maize (*abati*) (Medina 1908a). When Cabot drew his world map and accompanied it with complementary texts, he made it clear that crops grew at Sancti Spiritus because they grew wheat in addition to other crops, and the yield of the seed that had been sown was very high (Fig. 8). Yet neither Sancho Gutiérrez nor Ruy Díaz de Guzmán mention such important information, nor do any other of the maps that have been studied.

One of the first uncertainties is whether the expedition members really took wheat and barley with them on the voyage. Unfortunately, the contracts for the purchase of provisions for Cabot’s expedition are not extant. It is known, however, that the previous expedition by Solís did not take wheat onboard, apart from the amount required to make biscuit for the voyage, but rather fava beans and legumes (Medina 1908b). In one of the reports submitted by Christopher Columbus and Antonio de Torres in connection with the cargo on the Santa María, Fernández Duró (1876) states that it says that they had enough biscuit and wheat for longer, but it was not until the second expedition that they took seeds to cultivate (Iglesias Gómez 2007). It is known that the expeditions took flour as well as biscuit, so it may be supposed that they carried wheat with which to make the flour and thus conserve it better. In the accounts book of Magellan’s expedition, which had the same objectives as Cabot’s, it is striking that there is no mention of either wheat or barley (Consejo de Indias 1519).

That the land was cultivated at Sancti Spiritus is made clear, not only on Sebastian Cabot’s world map, but in all the documentation from the inquiry into Cabot on his return to Spain, as it states that the land was divided into fields and wheat and barley were grown as well as maize (Medina 1908a; Báez 1944; Capparelli et al. 2005). The expedition members who stayed in the settlement had their houses and farmsteads where they worked the land. One of the reasons given for the destruction of the settlement is the lack of care in the nightwatches, as they often ended early so that the people could go to their fields (Medina 1908a). The stories are conclusive because they say that at the time of the attack most people were at home; some of them were asleep and others were getting ready to go to their fields. Some of them were even toasting *abati* (maize) to go to work at the time of the attack (Medina 1908a).

Apart from the references mentioned above on Cabot’s world map and the information from the inquiry that started on his return, there is no evidence of wheat or barley in the expedition’s provisions. This would be similar to previous expeditions, whose purpose was not to settle but to explore. Nonetheless, it is very likely that one of the ways that the expeditions to America preserved their flour was to take wheat grain, even though it was also difficult to preserve wheat and barley on the voyage to America because of the humidity and inclemency of the journey (Iglesias Gómez 2007). Another possibility that should not be ignored is that they

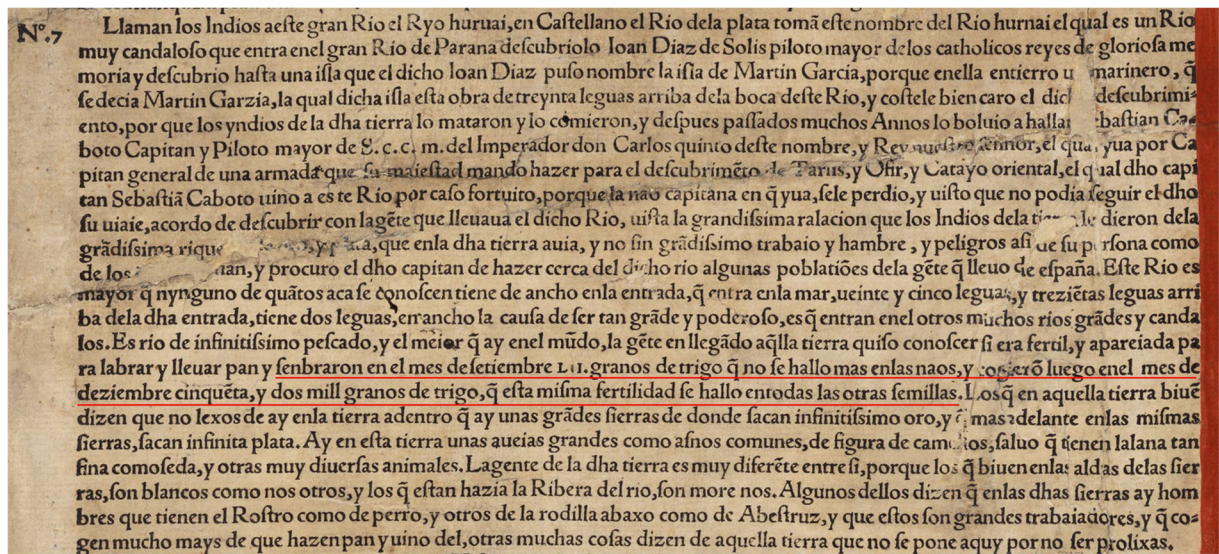


Fig. 8 Enlargement of the complementary information accompanying Cabot's map (Cabot 1544).

acquired it at one of enclaves on the coast of Brazil where they stopped; indeed it is known that they purchased some fencing, sows, and a boar pig at Pernambuco. The animals were acquired to breed them, as Gregorio Caro stated in one of his declarations (Medina 1908a).

This raises an issue, since, while some of the documentation leaves no doubts that the land was tilled, no information is available to prove that the expedition took the grain. Archaeometric analysis is able to shed some light on this aspect in the framework of the research project being carried out, however. Samples collected from the archaeological record, both from the time the expedition was in Sancti Spiritus and from an earlier period, have been analyzed to characterize the flora around the settlement and determine the crops that were grown.

The different studies performed have shown that crops were grown in both periods. The different plants have been determined by studying the phytoliths found in the excavation sediment (Colobig, Zucol, Brea et al. 2017). Thus, corresponding to the time before the arrival of the Europeans, cross-shaped phytoliths attributed to *Zea mays* and elongated phytoliths with projections attributed to *Oryzoideae* have been identified (Colobig, Zucol, Passeggi et al. 2019). From the time of the Europeans, in addition to the crops grown previously, festooned and elongated phytoliths have been documented; assimilable to *Triticeae*, they may be indicative of the presence of wheat or barley (Colobig, Zucol, Brea

et al. 2017; Colobig, Zucol, Passeggi et al. 2019). It has therefore been shown that, based on the archaeometric analysis and the excavation itself, the information appearing on Cabot's map and in the written documentation is supported by reality, and the crops they cite existed. Still, the size of the fields or the yield they may have achieved cannot be specified.

If Sancti Spiritus was not a "foundation" (*fundación*), sensu stricto, as it lacked a foundation charter, as far as is known, possession was taken of the territory. This was the step that preceded a foundation, but did not imply a later foundation. In a short space of time, no more than four months, the land was apportioned to grow the crops, build the expeditionaries' dwellings and the fortification in which to keep their most valuable possessions, and part of the Carcarañá River was developed to be used as a quay for their boats (Medina 1908a; Soler 1981; Azkarate and Escribano-Ruiz 2015; Cocco, Letieri, Frittegott et al. 2016; Sánchez-Pinto and Cocco 2019). However, I do not think it likely that this division of the land and taking possession of the territory itself was officialized in a document, and, in any case, most of the expedition's documentation was burnt during the attack on the fortress.

As explained when discussing the allocation of a place name, the construction of a settlement and taking possession of it, transforming the land, and growing crops are actions that imply the effective appropriation of the territory.

## Conclusions

The historical archaeological research that is being carried out at Fort Sancti Spiritus has revealed detailed and novel information about the initial stages of the exploration, conquest, and colonization by Castile of the southern sector of the Plata River basin, as well as stressing its peculiarity as an exceptional case within that process (Azkarate, Escribano-Ruiz et al. 2012a, 2012b; Frittegotto et al. 2013; Sánchez-Pinto et al. 2013; Azkarate and Escribano-Ruiz 2015; Letieri, Cocco, Frittegotto et al. 2015; Cocco, Letieri, Frittegotto et al. 2016; Letieri, Cocco, Azkarate et al. 2017; Sánchez-Pinto and Cocco 2019).

Apart from the graphic quality or scale of the representations on the different maps that have been selected, their value lies in the information they provide about the settlement of Sancti Spiritus that had not been taken into account before now. It has been explained how the consulted cartography marks the position of Sancti Spiritus on a part of the left bank of the Carcarañá near its confluence with the Paraná; it gives very important information about the fort and the settlement, as it is clear that the fort was a rectangular building with towers at opposite corners and a series of dwellings built around it; it describes the first cultivation of seeds brought from Europe in the southern sector of the Plata drainage basin; and, although little has been said here about this matter, it locates some of the local groups in the territory and provides more details about some of the aspects studied previously by Outes (1902, 1917), Lothrop (1932), and Antonio Serrano (1950).

The information obtained from the selected cartography and the case of the settlement of Sancti Spiritus has put the project on the track of one of the first examples of colonialism in the Southern Hemisphere of the American continent. Colonialism here was expressed in the sense of relationships of domination and power between Europeans and the Indigenous population from the very moment that the former reached the area, as demonstrated by the way they took possession of the place and built a settlement (with a fortification, houses, and fields). These power relations are also seen in the cartography, since the place is named “Sancti Spiritus” to refer to the settlement as the central element in the territory, even though many other geographic features are still given their Indigenous names. This way of appropriating the territory is also seen in the naming of Buenos Aires and Asunción to replace the original populations that are

known to have existed in the area (the Querandís and Carios, respectively). Asunción is an even clearer example, as it was founded on the site of the Guaraní village of Lambaré (Quevedo 1981; El Jaber 2014).

In addition to giving names, the cartography is a clear case of representation by placing symbols. These are added to the place names and amplify the previous observations. If the names, as Jacob (1992) so rightly said, are the transfer of realities from the Old World to the New, symbols are the representation of that reality. The use of a dot, a town, or a fort is marking that part of the map and, once more, it indicates a power relation between the new arrivals and the original population. The same might be said of the references to the first crops in the area, although that aspect is less explicit. The appropriation of the territory by the European expeditions and its transformation in order to be worked were another form of appropriation and imposition on the Indigenous groups.

It is known that written documentation does not always match the material evidence, as many of the actions carried out are concealed or exaggerated (Sánchez-Pinto 2016), but it is equally true that in the examples studied here the agreement of the data provided by the maps and written documentation with the archaeological evidence is very strong. Therefore, careful planning might have reduced the previous fieldwork and the research process itself, as it would have been possible to concentrate on the aspects indicated by the maps. In the framework of the research project aiming to locate the settlement of Sancti Spiritus, the study of historical cartography would have provided relevant information for archaeological surveying, to propose places for excavation, and about the form of the settlement. As explained above, the information provided by the cartography is perfectly comparable with data obtained from written documentation and the material remains that have been found.

The importance of historical cartography in the study of the initial stages of the exploration and subsequent conquest of America has been shown, since it makes visible, even moreso, if possible, one of the first examples of colonialism carried out by the Spanish Crown in South America, especially considering that the original information is not very abundant. Although the data offered by cartography are relative in some aspects, their utility to locate or, at least, propose the location of the first settlements and to envision their importance has been shown. Owing to the complexity of the matter,

because of the lack of written documentation and difficult archaeological determination, the data provided by historical mapping can sometimes supplement this deficiency by locating lost settlements, and also show how the first contact with the newly found territory took place and its appropriation by the newcomers. An exhaustive and comparative review of the cartography produced during the 16th century can help to find evidence of other early sites for which little evidence is available, such as the cases of Corpus Christi/Buena Esperanza, which have also been considered, but not studied in depth (Sánchez-Pinto 2019). Similarly, the maps provide significant data about the forms of the different settlements. References to buildings or the constituent parts of the settlements allow conjecture regarding the ways those sites were organized, and that information can later be assessed by an archaeological study of the terrain. Finally, many other aspects have not yet been studied appropriately, such as the courses of the rivers and their relationship with the first phases of the conquest of the southern sector of the Plata basin, and even the characterization of places that, because of their significance in that initial process, remained within the collective memory. In addition to being the first European settlement in the southern sector of the Plata drainage basin, Sancti Spiritus is a symbolic place of confrontation and resistance between the Europeans and original societies.

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#### Declarations

**Conflict of interest** The author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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