

CARTOGRAPHY IN THE TOURIST PROMOTION OF THE CANARY ISLANDS (1880-1970)

Josefina Domínguez Mújica
University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

Tourism specialization in the Canary Islands started more than a century ago. Looking back at any time during that period, we may appreciate the important role played by the advertising inducements used for its promotion. In the first stages of the tourism development, texts, drawings, photographs and cartography supported the propagandistic message of tourist guides, brochures and posters.

I. TOURIST DEVELOPMENT IN THE CANARY ISLANDS FROM THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY TO 1970: THE HISTORY IN SHORT

1. Travellers and tourists, the nineteenth century evolution

From the second half of the 19th Century to the first decades of the 20th Century, an important flow of visitors was established among the Canary Islands and several European countries (France, Germany and, especially, the United Kingdom). Travellers, wealthy people which had free time at their disposal and a determined attitude towards discovering exotic destinations, came to the archipelago led by a certain interest on adventures. The health and scientific or research tourism were also developed during this period, while some important progress were made in trasatlantic navigation and the first hotels and spa resorts were built.

Tourist promotion in the Canary Islands was favoured by the travel literature and the publication of several guides publicizing the geographic characteristics of the archipelago. In 1888, Charles Edwardes published the work *Tours and Research in the Canary Islands*; the next year Samler Brown published the guide entitled *Madeira, the Canary Islands and Açores. A Complete Guide for the Use of Invalids and Tourists* and Olivia Stone published the travel accounts *Teneriffe and Its Satellites*.

2. A bet for tourist specialization, the first half of the twentieth century

In order to promote tourism, some local actions were carried out during the first decades of the 20th Century; in 1907 the Centro de Propaganda y Turismo de Tenerife was created and, in 1910, the Junta de Turismo de Gran Canaria. Some years later, in 1934, the Sindicato de Iniciativas y Turismo de Gran Canaria was settled up in the likeness of one that existed in Palma de Mallorca. In this period, tourism increased thanks to the first cruises, especially those organised by the british enterprise *Cunard Line*.

Pleasure tourism started then to be identified with winter tourism, and beach bathing became fashionable, leading to an increase in coast urbanization. From 1945 on, after a paralysis due to the Civil Spanish War and the Second World War, the visitors affluence and tourism business were renewed. The former compendiums that oriented tourists in the 19th Century became simpler and more attractive publications.

3. The mass tourism deployment, the 1960s

The acceleration of tourism deployment took place some years later, brought by charter flights and the augment in air traffic. The number of visitors increased considerably and companies with a higher market share and financial support were let into the market, leading to an important socioeconomic and territorial change in the Canary Islands.

From that moment, the spreading of the tourist product was generalized. Several publishing houses started to issue brochures in order to fulfil the tourists needs for orientation. At the same time, the bigger guides with complete geographic information were simplified as to please the less qualified public. Tourism promotion was diversified and popularized and images, graphics and maps were substituted by photographs.

II. THE ROL OF CARTOGRAPHY IN TOURISM PROMOTION

A map is a selective and scaled representation of a part or the whole of the Earth surface onto a plane. Therefore, a map is a source of accurate information that can help to prepare a trip. However, as a formalized representation of space, only a few people have the ability to read it and use it as a tool.

1. Elite tourism and scientific cartography (end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century)

During the first stage of tourism evolution, travellers started their trips after having widely documented them, thanks to the encyclopaedic vocation of the travel books which was showed by the usually included cartographic illustrations, statistics, announcements, etc.

The cartography employed belonged to scaled topographic maps containing the name of places, an interpretive key and the altitude by means of contour lines or colour shades and, sometimes, elevation and coordinates data. They could only be interpreted by educated and skilled people.

As the editions of these publications followed one another, the quality of cartography augmented, as can be seen in the edition of 1919 of Samler Brown's Guide, which had twenty-two coloured maps, plans, sectional diagrams and some thematic maps, like the one representing the Atlantic climate (figure 1).

2. Cartographic alterations at the service of diffusion (the 1930s)

As the Twentieth Century passed, the publication of tourist guides with maps increased. During the 1930s, for example, some of them were put on the market in Germany, having a detailed cartography and rigor in information. One of them stands out: *Madeira Canarische Inseln und Azoren*, published by the editor Grieben Reiseführer Band in 1932 in Berlin, a document enclosed by ten maps and three sober plans (figure 2).

3. Picturesqueness, rationalism and typicalness spirit: guides and brochures during the 1940s and the 1950s

After the Civil War had ended, the publication of guides was still complemented with cartography. Nevertheless, the map started to lose its scientific nature and remained subordinated to the needs of tourism inducement. The aesthetic language of picturesqueness or typicalness predominates in the publications of this period. This aesthetic orientation is typical of local editions, as can be seen in the *Guía pintoresca: Gran Canaria* (figure 3). *Gran Canaria: Continente en miniatura* is another example. It is a brochure with just two pages full of text and twenty-nine high quality images in black and white, dating back to the end of the 1940s. The map of Gran Canaria surpasses the island contour, as if it was a prism, and is decorated with numerous drawings. It is entitled *Isla de Gran Canaria: siempre en primavera* (figure 4).

These tourist products do not resemble the guides published in the European countries during the same period. In those guides, the conventional cartography is still being used, as can be appreciated in the guide edited in Finland by Holger Schukdr's Förlag in the year 1953, entitled *De lyckliga öarna*. The map drawn in the back of the cover and in the first page is limited to the island contours, accompanied with the topographical profile of four of the islands (figure 5).

In Spain, the standardization of tourism favoured the appearance of companies unconnected to tourism among the guides editors, as the Compañía Española de Penicilina, S.A., which published in 1959 a series entitled *Caminos de España*, with the aim of facilitate the incipient activity of congress tourism. In the issue devoted to *Canarias* the map of the Archipelago, simple and childish, is dominated by the anagram of a medicine that was being promoted and which was used as an indication of the geographic North (figure 6).

As the 1960s approached, the typicalness aesthetics was reinforced, as shown by the maps of *Guía de Tenerife*, published by Ediciones Goya in 1958 (figure 7) and the brochure *Tenerife. Maravilla del mundo* published by Seix Barral in 1959 (figures 8 and 9).

4. Cartography in the mass tourism promotion (the 1960s)

The illustrative meaning of the book-guides of this period can be recognized in the *Guía Turística de Gran Canaria*, written by the English traveller Elizabeth Hodgkinson in 1964. The map of the island is surrounded by eighteen photographs of the beaches, denoting the tourists interest towards these places.

However, these book-guides lose their importance as the artistic brochures of that time, with a higher number of photographs, popularized. The brochure entitled *Las Palmas de Gran Canaria*, containing two plans of the village with drawings in perspective of the emblematic buildings and parks, stands out among them (figure 11).

III. CONCLUSION: ADVERTISING LANGUAGE AND TOURISM PROMOTION IN THE CANARY ISLANDS

The stages previously described keep a close relation with the evolution of the tourist product in itself, where the graphic image has a high impact and prevails over the verbal information, due to its facility to transmit the contents in a direct way.

During a first stage, when the aim was to spread the knowledge about the Canary Islands, the characteristics and attributes that made this Archipelago attractive had to be told to tourists. The scientific cartography was capable of doing so, as it was targeted to a cult audience, an elite tourism which had the keys to interpret it.

Later on, when tourists already knew the destiny, the values that could belong to their affective memory had to be enhanced, as the aesthetics of picturesqueness, developed from the 1940s and 1950s, demonstrates.

Finally, when the guides and brochures start to use photography as an advertising inducements, the rest of the iconic elements, including cartography, are reduced. Photographs constitute a more complete tool for promotion, as they fulfil the objectives of the mass tourism, developed in the Archipelago from the 1970s.