

## Exhibition

# Population Censuses in Spain

September / November 2011



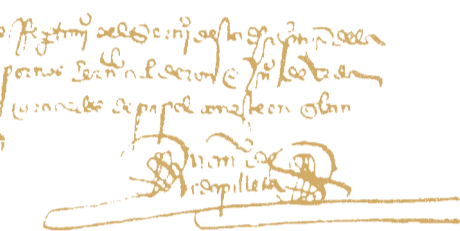
The Count of Floridablanca



Censos de Población y Viviendas 2011



Chartae Populationis, Brañosera 824



On the occasion of the preparation of the Population and Housing Censuses 2011, the Spanish National Statistics Institute has selected a sample of bibliographic documentation and material which traces the history of the main counting operations and population registration since the 9th century.

There is a long tradition of population censuses in Spain and these have given rise to a huge and valuable amount of documentation which has been the source of several studies on society over different periods; the timeless value of the statistical operations is therefore highlighted.

The exhibition begins by presenting some of the first *cartas-puebla* (*chartae populationis*) which granted privileges for the repopulation of land of economic or strategic interest during the Reconquest. Although they cannot be reconciled with the concept of census —as a

general count— which we have in place today, these documents constituted, at times, an initial registry of the population which settled in these places.

We would have to go back to the time of the Catholic Kings to find the first works recognisable as census-related, performed for military purposes by **Alonso de Quintanilla** in 1482.

During the 16th and 17th centuries the purpose of the counts, known as *Vecindarios* (Neighbourhoods), was to obtain the lists of citizens made to pay commoners taxes. Charles V ordered a count to be performed by sending two commissioners to visit villages and verify their wealth. The *Censo de Pecheros* (Commoners Census) was thus formed which covered the amounts paid between 1527 and 1528, and excluded the clergy, nobility and poor people who could not contribute to the payment. Its rules of calculation varied and at times included widows and minors as half commoner resident.

In 1587, a census known as the *Censo de los Obispos* (Bishops Census) was performed capitalising on the ecclesiastical organisation. This accounted for the “parishioners residents” —that is, heads of family—from each parish. This also included widows as heads of family.



Censo de Pecheros, 1528  
Charles V, Tiziano

During the kingdom of Ferdinand VI, between 1749 and 1756, the so-called *Catastro del Marqués de la Ensenada* (Marqués de la Ensenada Land Registry) was carried out, as a step to a significant tax reform. To carry this out, they started with a set of 40 questions. This led to the *General Responses of the Marqués de la Ensenada land registry* which, in addition to a population census, offered an exhaustive wide ranging view of the villages of the Crown of Castille halfway through the 18th century.

However, the true history of Spanish population censuses began in 1768 under the kingdom of Charles III, when the **Count of Aranda** gave instructions to the bishops —which they conveyed by means of their parishes— to begin work aimed at ascertaining the actual Spanish population according to sex and ages with the purpose of promoting ideas useful to

the state. Concepts which are still applicable today appeared for the first time in this census both for the preparation and the dissemination of these operations.

In 1787, the **Count of Floridablanca** ordered the preparatory work for the implementation of a new “*Censo Español*”. Before its commencement, an inventory of all Spanish villages was prepared —known as the *Floridablanca nomenclature*— which was to serve as a guide and control for the compilation of census data. The collection of information was assigned to civil authorities, assisted by the clergy. This census provided information on the structure of the population by sex, age and marital status. In addition, it classified the population in accordance with a *table of occupations* split into 23 classes.



Censo de Floridablanca 1787

Tomás González:  
Censo de la Corona de Castilla en el siglo XVI 1829



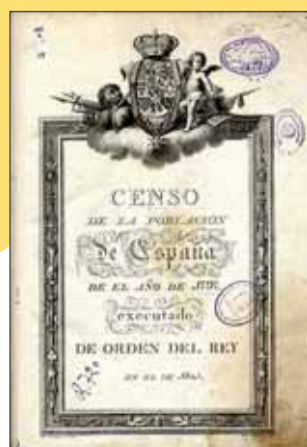
The next population census was to be implemented in 1797 in the times of Carlos IV on the orders of **Manuel Godoy**.

This followed guidelines similar to the two previous ones: it maintained the administrative division and considered the same age groups

(except the “over 50s” which was subdivided into six intervals).

In addition, the *classifications of occupations* improved (up to 96 categories and 212 classes), the entire population was considered regardless of the type of housing in which they live and it provided the number of *charity centres and hospitals* (indicating in the latter both employees and those accommodated).

During the first half of the 19th century, Spain was conditioned by the Napoleonic wars and the consequent political instability. Censuses were virtually non-existent but of note are the compilations published by **Tomás González Hernández** in 1829; the *Censo de los Millones* and the *Censo de los Obispos* (Millions and Bishops census). Both works are still held by the Simancas General Archive.



Censo de Godoy 1797

There was a resurgence in statistical activity with the political stability. In 1856 the *Kingdom's General Statistics Commission* was created which in 1857 changed its name and became the *Board of Statistics*. This initiated the periodic series of institutional censuses. The **1857 Census** established a reference date for the first time, used the Spanish provincial division, measured the established and temporary population and with the purpose of having comparable figures, they maintained the age groups set up previously. In addition, as of the date of this census, a **nomenclature** of Spanish villages was set up.

In **1858** it was determined that the censuses be carried out every five years, from 1860 onwards. However, in 1863, under international

recommendations, the interval between censuses was extended to *ten years*.

In **1860** the census was repeated leading to fuller and more reliable data and the legal or resident Spanish population was measured.

Finally, the *international conferences* on demography from the period began to set up instructions and guidelines to prepare the censuses.

Real Decreto e Instrucción  
Censo 1857



From this final stage of the 19th century the exhibition shows, apart from the publication of census data, some maps which include the results of these statistical operations.



Geographical and statistical map of Huelva 1892

The political instability meant that the next census was postponed until the Bourbon Restoration. In **1877**, during the conservative government of Cánovas de Castillo, this task was assigned to the **Geographical and Statistical Institute**.

The next census took place in **1887** under the reign of Alphonse XII. The list of censuses carried out during the 19th century ended with the one carried out in **1897**.



Map of population densities according to the 1860 census  
Source: National Geographic Institute



To put these initial Spanish censuses into the context of official international statistics, the sample also considers contemporary works by some other countries.

The works of the **Canada census**, prepared in **1870-1871**, show a bilingual publication which contains a large variety of classifications. At the same time, it compares the data published with those of a prior census and they offer different population maps.



Census of Canada 1870-1871

The **German census of 1880** also offers comparative data and similar classifications to those published at this time in Spain.



Die Volkszählung im Deutschen Reich. 1880

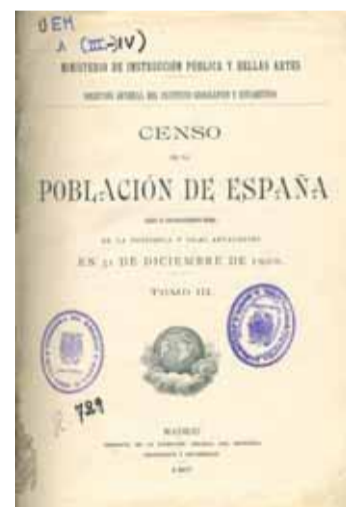
For the **20th century censuses**, some changes were introduced as to definitions, classifications used, etc. There was a gradual improvement in collection and methods to process and tabulate the data. Works prior to collection of information were also systematised, and details on the dissemination of results were also increased. The publication of results of the **1930** census included the *Nomenclature* and population data on Spanish possessions in Africa.

The sample shows some products arising from the operation of census works such as the **Chorographic Dictionary** generated from the nomenclature prepared for the **1940** census.

In addition to the population census, the **buildings and housing census** has also been carried out since **1950**.

As of **1960** the application of sampling techniques for the operation and gradual incorporation of technological measures enabled providing preview figures and better quality and quicker publication of results.

Censo de la Población de España 1900



The INE wishes to acknowledge the research, compilation and dissemination work for the historical censuses carried out by the statistician, **Eduardo García España**, over the course of his extensive career.

**Exhibition:**  
Spanish National Statistics Institute  
Paseo de la Castellana, 183  
Rooms 119-120 (1st floor)  
Library department

**Dates:**  
September/November 2011

**Working hours:**  
Monday to Friday, from 10h to 13h

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