Introduction

Sky full of ships, bay full of town,
A port of waters jellied brown:
Such is the world no tide may stir,
Sealed by the great cartographer.
O, could he but clap up like this
My decomposed metropolis,
Those other countries of the mind,
So tousled, dark and undefined!

Kenneth Slessor, *The Atlas*[1]

Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say, 'When I grow up I will go there.' … Other places were scattered about the Equator, and in every sort of latitude all over the two hemispheres. I have been in some of them, and … well, we won't talk about that. But there was one yet – the biggest, the most blank, so to speak – that I had a hankering after. True, by this time it was not a blank space any more. It had got filled since my boyhood with rivers and lakes and names. It had ceased to be a blank

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1. K. Slessor, 'The Atlas', in A.J. Haft, 'Imagining Space and Time in Kenneth Slessor's "Dutch Seacoast" and Joan Blaeu's Town Atlas of The Netherlands: Maps and Mapping in Kenneth Slessor's Poetic Sequence *The Atlas*, Part Three', *Cartographic Perspectives* 74 (2013), pp. 41-42.

> space of delightful mystery – a white patch for a boy to dream
> gloriously over. It had become a place of darkness.
>
> Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*[2]

For nearly 130 years after 1642, when Abel Tasman became the first Euro-pean to sight and record New Zealand, maps containing fragments of information about New Zealand ricocheted around the world. Roughly sketched coastlines, pen-and-ink topographical silhouettes, a stockpile of names (the first accomplice of colonisation) attached to locations, and a mass of coordinates, measurements, calibrations and estimations were all copied, refined, translated and augmented as they spread among Europe's imperial powers and the continent's growing reading classes.

These two-dimensional representations were fleshed out by the copious commentaries that supplemented them and, as the number of maps multiplied, their form evolved. Monochromatic engravings began to blush with colour, quilled cartography gave way to printed text and images, and what were once solitary maps – buried deep in trading companies' archives – now appeared in mass-produced publications, in several languages, and fed the imaginations of new generations of explorers.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, intelligence about impe-rial discoveries ran through various arteries. From the heavily clotted official channels to the fast-flowing informal routes, cartographical information continued to circulate, despite occasional efforts to restrict its movement. Between the gossipy exchanges in colonial outposts, the map merchants in Europe churning out countless copies of distant ter-ritories, the agents of trading companies, and scholars keen to decipher the world's uncharted extremities, there was little prospect of maps in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries ever being kept secret for long. The forces in favour of the democratisation of knowledge about the earth's territorial arrangements were simply too strong.

The specific focus on maps as part of the history of exploration, dis-covery and colonisation is a relatively recent field of enquiry. Roughly speaking, up until the mid-twentieth century, maps tended to be the preserve of specialist librarians and antiquarian collectors, for whom the aesthetic or suggestive qualities of these items was of prime importance. In the post-war period, though, there was a sea change in attitudes towards

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2. J. Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 108.

cartography, with the study of maps drawing on a range of academic disciplines and contributing substantially to understanding the ways in which Europe penetrated and perceived the world beyond its borders.[3] Previously, maps were generally seen simply as documents that displayed places and the spaces between them, and not much more than that. Their historical value tended to be confined to exercises in comparison as a means of documenting progress in cartographical technique and accuracy over time. In recent decades, however, such views of maps have fallen sharply out of favour. Instead of being works innocently depicting distances between territories, cartography has come to be portrayed as the advance guard to imperial assertions of cultural, political and geographic dominance,[4] exercising a form of centrifugal force on the way that the world outside Europe was portrayed and regarded. Both views – the naïve and the nefarious – represent opposing poles in the perception of maps. At different times, and in different hands, maps have served a range of overlapping functions and were never either wholly independent of or fully complicit with the much greater political, economic and cultural forces from which they emerged.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, maps were also an integral part of the flow of intelligence between European nations. The nature of states' involvement in the international arena was shaped in part on the intelligence they had at their disposal. However, paradoxically, in order to have access to this intelligence in the first place, they needed to be actively involved in the international realm.[5] During Europe's Age of Discovery (from roughly the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries),[6] this balance tilted strongly in favour of intelligence gathering as the

3. M.H. Edney, 'Putting "Cartography" into the History of Cartography: Arthur H. Robinson, David Woodward, and the Creation of a Discipline', *Cartographic Perspectives* 51 (2005), pp. 14-15.

4. P.M. Smith, 'Mapping Australasia', *History Compass* 7, no. 4 (2009), p. 1099.

5. See, for example, M. Thomas, 'Colonial States as Intelligence States: Security Policing and the Limits of Colonial Rule in France's Muslim Territories, 1920-40', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 28, no. 6 (2005), 1033-60; K. Raj, 'Colonial Encounters and the Forging of New Knowledge and National Identities: Great Britain and India, 1760-1850', *Osiris* 15 (2000), 119-34; D. Killingray, 'The Maintenance of Law and Order in British Colonial Africa', *African Affairs* 85, no. 340 (1986), 411-37; P. Murphy, 'Creating a Commonwealth Intelligence Culture: The View from Central Africa 1945-1965', *Intelligence and National Security* 17, no. 3 (2002), 131-62.

6. J.H. Parry, *The Age of Reconnaissance: Discovery, Exploration and Settlement, 1450-1650* (London: Phoenix Press, 1962), p. i.

precursor for any decisions being made on foreign policy. This resulted in those nations which possessed the financial and technological means undertaking expeditions to seek out territories that were either unknown, unmapped or 'unclaimed'[7] by other European powers.[8] Yet, as the experience of New Zealand's emergence in maps reveals, the process was almost autonomous of any direct state control. Yes, plans were devised, capital was raised and orders issued for exploratory expeditions. However, once the intelligence had been gathered, it tended to take on a life of its own and proved beyond the ability of any single state in this period to control it fully. There were too many informal networks, too many places in the intelligence border where breaches could occur, too many entrepreneurs concerned with personal profit rather than state policy, and too many instances of institutional inertia and incompetence to maintain the type of restraint over intelligence that would be exercised with more success in later centuries.

How the shape of New Zealand came to appear in map form encompasses these trends and relationships. There is a risk, though, that the whole process comes to be seen as little more than the workings of anonymous bureaucracies, functioning in some great Europe-wide institutional ecosystem of clerks and cartographers. What this work shows, in contrast, is that the means by which the country came to be mapped was dependent on a range of individuals – many of whom were extraordinarily able in their respective fields – and often occurred in spite of state involvement, rather than because of it. It can be almost instinctive to attribute European mapmaking in this era to government directives and policies, but this would be to overestimate their influence. Ultimately, the image of New Zealand came into view on maps as a result of 'the tremendous shaping, form-creating force working from within' the minds of particular individuals.[9] Of course, no cartographer or explorer was an island, separate from the nations in which they lived and worked. However, while politicians and policy-makers endeavoured

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7. See, for example, A. Fitzmaurice, 'The Genealogy of Terra Nullius', *Australian Historical Studies* 38, no. 129 (2007), 1-15.

8. C. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 2-3. Bayly's concept of 'information order' is derived from M. Castells, *The Informational City: Information, Technology, Economic Restructuring, and the Urban-Regional Process* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

9. F. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 344.

to put in place schemes for their countries' overseas mapmaking expeditions, those involved in executing them were summoned as much by their own will and often uncompromising brilliance, and it was precisely from this volatile dynamic that the outline of New Zealand eventually came into view.

Note on Terminology

The terms 'chart' and 'map' generally have a distinct meaning. The former is normally used by sailors to navigate routes on bodies of water and may display features such as tides, currents and coasts, while the latter tend to focus on the layout of terrestrial features. However, in the centuries that this book surveys, the terms have been used in such a variety of ways – and often interchangeably – that the precise distinction is not depended on here. Instead, both terms are used to describe the representation of aspects of a location on paper (or a globe).