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### Motivated Bias Within Maps

Prior to modern technology, making maps was a great task often handed to cartographers by royalty to help them keep track of their new and ever-expanding empires. Given this, many cartographers became biased in their map making, as they were sponsored by the government to make the royal empires look better. This often led to inaccurate and biased maps, created with political agendas rather than with intention to be accurate portrayals of new lands. Cartographers and writers such as Christopher Saxton, Richard Bartlett, Fynes Moryson, and John Norden were all examples of map makers who were swayed by the people patronizing them.

One of the first cartographers to become sponsored by the government was Christopher Saxton, an Englishman who became the father of English maps in the seventeenth century. Saxton was hired by Thomas Seckford, a representative of Queen Elizabeth I, and he became the first cartographer to display an atlas of maps of territories that belong to the Queen. The majority of Saxton's maps had Thomas Seckford's arms and Queen Elizabeth's royal arms placed upon them.<sup>1</sup> By placing arms upon



(figure 1) Richard Saxton, map of Cornwall, 1579

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Helgerson. "The Land Speaks: Cartography, Chorography, and Subversion in Renaissance England" in *Representations* No. 16, (1986): 50–85.

Saxton's maps, Queen Elizabeth and Seckford have officiated the maps as part of their territory, and therefore declare the land depicted as being owned by the Queen.

By being patronized by the Queen, Saxton allowed the royal coat of arms on his maps to become more important than the contents of the maps themselves. In maps such as his map of Cornwall (figure one), the majority of the page is taken up by various coats of arms, showing how important ownership of the land is to its empire. While Saxton was able to create a large amount of work, ranging from county and city surveys to maps of the entire countries of England and Wales, the connecting factor in his maps ended up being the coats of arms upon them. This showed Saxton's and Seckford's bias in creating maps, as they mainly intended to state 'This land is owned by Queen Elizabeth', with their second intention being to accurately represent the land that was portrayed.

When creating maps for his atlas, Saxton was often working under short return periods, and this led to inconsistencies within his maps. Maps such as this map of Cornwall (figure one) is a great example of Saxton's methods, as it shows the proud display of arms by the Queen and Seckford, but are lacking in consistency and accuracy with other maps in Saxton's series.<sup>2</sup>

Things such as size of map, map markers, and mile scales were factors in Saxton's maps that were inconsistent due to his fast turn around period and lack of correction. Saxton's main accomplishment of his land surveys was being the first cartographer to create a large-scale map of both England and Wales. Additionally, Saxton is father to a whole genre of maps, as he was one of the most well accomplished cartographers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Saxton is perhaps the most famous cartographer to be sponsored by the English royal family as his work was expanded upon but still credited to him for centuries to come.

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<sup>2</sup> Christopher Saxton, "Atlas of the Counties of England & Wales" (London: c. 1579.)

After Wales, the next area of land conquered by the English was Ireland, and two of the first explorers of this land were cartographer Richard Bartlett and writer Fynes Moryson. Both of these explorers were backed by the royal English family and Queen Elizabeth I, and were able to make maps and writings with bias against Irish peoples and tradition. Fynes Moryson traveled to Ireland and interacted with the ‘English-Irish’ and native Irish people, and was extremely disapproving of both groups, calling them lesser peoples.<sup>3</sup> In his survey of Ireland, Moryson writes “I omit the King's and Queen's Counties (namely, Ophaly and Leax) inhabited by the O'Connors and O'Moors, as likewise the counties of Longford, Ferns, and Wicklow, as less affording memorable things.”<sup>4</sup> This shows that he does not care to fully accurately depict the country of Ireland as it is, but instead is portraying it from the lens of an Englishman who views his country as superior.

Though his patron did not directly cause bias to Moryson's viewpoint, as his experience and description of the Irish is from first-hand experience and bias, by sponsoring Moryson the royal English family enforced the viewpoint that Irish people were lesser than Englishmen. On top of disregarding Irish ownership and nameship of land, Moryson continuously disrespected Irish culture and peoples in his writings. A quote that exemplifies this is “For nothing more brings them [the Irish] to obedience than poverty, and heretofore they never had plenty but presently they rushed into rebellion.”<sup>5</sup> Quotes such as this solidify the viewpoint that the Irish were lesser peoples than the English and therefore were rightfully taken over by the English. Moryson's view that Irish lands and people are lesser and need to be changed was backed by his sponsorship, and showed that the English empire did not care to respectfully take Irish land.

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<sup>3</sup> Fynes Moryson, “The Description of Ireland” in *CELT: Corpus of Electronic Texts*, trans. Charles Hughes. (Cork, Ireland: University College, 2014)

<sup>4</sup> Moryson, “The Description of Ireland,” 216.

<sup>5</sup> Fynes Moryson, “The Manners and Customs of Ireland” in *CELT: Corpus of Electronic Texts*, trans. Charles Hughes. (Cork, Ireland: University College, 2010) 314.

Ireland continued to be a land of interest for cartographers and the government, as it was a new territory to the English empire, and in the early 1600s Robert Cecil commissioned John Norden to compile existing maps of Ireland into one accurate map for government usage. Robert Cecil was the Lord high treasurer of England, and commissioned John Norden to make these maps for political and economic reasons<sup>6</sup> such as policy creation, and so once again a map of Ireland was created for a political agenda, rather than for the sake of complete and unbiased accuracy. Robert Cecil was the likely heir to the majority of maps of Ireland pre-1598<sup>7</sup>, and so it was within his interest as treasurer to compile these maps into one usable encyclopedia for governmental use.

Given his work as a cartographer, John Norden was chosen to create the maps, even though he had never been to Ireland and did not want to go to Ireland. John Norden was given access to Cecil's collection of maps and other governmental sources, including the works of cartographers such as Bartlett, to create his 'completed' map of Ireland. Norden's main task was to compile existing maps and sources about Ireland to create a comprehensive map for policy purposes, and so he was looking mainly for political linings like counties and townships to depict.<sup>8</sup> Given that Norden never actually went to Ireland, his maps contained mistakes that could have easily been fixed by peer review, or by first hand knowledge of the country.<sup>9</sup>

John Norden was given an extensive amount of writings, surveys, and maps of Ireland to compile, and given that he'd never been to Ireland, this became a task full of compromises. Written records often were too detailed for Norden to fully account for in his map, as it was of the whole country, so he resorted to mainly using land surveys to create his maps.<sup>10</sup> In the

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<sup>6</sup> J. H. Andrews, "John Norden's Maps of Ireland" in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature* 100C, no. 5 (Royal Irish Academy, 2000): 159–206.

<sup>7</sup> Andrews, "John Norden's Maps of Ireland" 170.

<sup>8</sup> Andrews, 170.

<sup>9</sup> Andrews, 203.

<sup>10</sup> Andrews, 199.

creation of his map Norden ended up doing things such as combining rivers and misaccurately portraying lakes<sup>11</sup>. Despite sponsoring Norden and making him work through such dense libraries of material without ever actually going to Ireland, Cecil expected Norden's quality of work to be higher than it actually ended up being.<sup>12</sup> This ignorance shows that the people sponsoring Cartographers may seldom be knowledgeable about cartography, and just want an end product that is good enough to push their agendas.

In their creations of maps and writings sponsored by Queen Elizabeth, the English Empire, and English political figures cartographers and writers Christopher Saxton, Richard Bartlett, Fynes Moryson, and John Norden were all people whose work was created with inherent political bias. Sponsorship by the English empire meant that a map or writing was being endorsed by the heads of their country, and so these cartographers and writers ended up creating work mainly used to state "this land is owned by the English empire." While these cartographer's works all suffered from inherent bias and lack of care by their sponsorship, they also gained fame and reputation for the English empire.

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<sup>11</sup> Andrews, 188.

<sup>12</sup> Andrews, 204.

## Bibliography

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