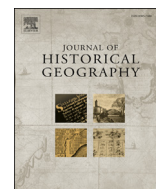




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## Representing Freetown: Photographs, maps and postcards in the urban cartography of colonial Sierra Leone

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## ABSTRACT

This article traces the development of the colonial cartography of Freetown, Sierra Leone across the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The historiography of colonial cartography has centred the surveyor and the map in the capture and control of land. This article, instead, describes colonial cartography in the accretion of a variety of forms of spatial representation created by diverse intermediaries in the colonial project. The chronology begins with the cartographic anxiety of two Colonial Office circulars in 1869 and 1871. Following this emergence of a nascent cartographic governmentality, three mappings of Freetown over a forty-year period, by an itinerant West African photographer, John Parkes Decker, a Wesleyan missionary, John Thomas Frederick Halligey, and a Freetonian photographer-entrepreneur, Alphonso Lisk-Carew, are examined. Visual analysis of the photographs, maps and postcards that were the products of these respective mapping projects shows the ideologies and ambivalences that undergirded these representations of the city. At once, following the processes through which this visual material did work for the colonial state, this article shows how the cartographic governance of a segregating colonial Freetown was produced in the entanglements of geographic knowledges.

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In January 1889 the governor of Sierra Leone submitted a draft ordinance to the Colonial Office that would ban all unlicensed sketching, painting, or photography of any part of the colony.<sup>1</sup> In its final form the ordinance was less severe, applying only to military fortifications, as both the governor and the Colonial Office agreed that the comprehensive ban would be impractical. Yet, this initial impulse to monopolise representation of the colony shows a keen awareness within the colonial state of the power of both the depiction of place and the limitations of state mappings. The ban was a result of an acute cartographic anxiety, or the nervous need to command territory through geographic knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

In 1889 Freetown was a busy coastal port city of at least 35,000 people and the centre of British colonial administration in the Sierra Leone colony. This heterogenous settlement had grown from its foundation in the 1790s as an experiment in commercial abolitionism and colonial occupation in West Africa. Waves of settlers made and remade Freetown: black loyalists from the

American war of independence; Jamaican Maroons; indigenous Temne; and after the 1807 abolition of the Slave Trade, ex-enslaved people across the Atlantic coast of Africa. Freetown was a patchwork city of overlapping and ever more entangled peoples. This variegated urban landscape was shaped around affiliations of religion, class and ethnicity as well as emergent local identities defined loosely by historian of Sierra Leone, Joseph Bangura, with the label 'Freetonian'.<sup>3</sup> In the late nineteenth century, the developments of an increasingly complex Freetown led to heightened government intervention in the city, particularly in areas of public health and urban planning.<sup>4</sup> This expansion of governance was underpinned by a proliferating bureaucracy of statistics, tables, and of interest here, visual representations of the city.

This article describes the emergence of cartographic anxiety within the British colonial state and the subsequent development of the colonial cartography of Freetown, Sierra Leone. This was not the systematic capture of space by the colonial surveying of land as

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<sup>1</sup> Draft ordinance to prevent unauthorised sketching, 26 January 1889, The National Archives of the United Kingdom [hereafter TNA], CO 267/375.

<sup>2</sup> S. Krishna, Cartographic Anxiety: Mapping the Body Politic in India, *Alternatives* 19 (1994) 507–521; D. Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations*, Cambridge, 1994, 70–205.

<sup>3</sup> Identity remains much contested in Sierra Leonean historiography. Whilst many have argued that a cohesive Krio identity had formed out of the various migrant groups in Freetown by the late nineteenth century, I opt for the much looser term Freetonian. See J. Bangura, *The Temne of Sierra Leone: African Agency in the Making of a British Colony*. Cambridge, 2017, 30–62.

<sup>4</sup> K. Lynch, E. Nel and T. Binns, "Transforming Freetown": Dilemmas of Planning and Development in a West African City, *Cities* 101 (2020).

evoked in Edward Said's famous description of imperialism as 'geographic violence by which virtually every place on earth is measured, mapped, exploited and then finally brought under control'.<sup>5</sup> Rather, this article argues that, emerging with imperial circulars either side of 1870, the colonial cartography of Freetown developed through the entanglement of geographic knowledges and mapping practices of colonial intermediaries and Public Works Department officials. Tracking the incorporation of spatial representations, created by a missionary and two photographer-entrepreneurs, into the production of the 'immutable mobiles' of colonial geographic knowledge will reveal the ambivalences and anxieties that underpinned sedimented processes of urban mapping.<sup>6</sup> In the process of absorbing, subjugating, and appropriating an assortment of representational forms, colonial cartography was shaped by the spatial knowledges that comprised it. By following the development of cartographic governmentality in Sierra Leone and showing the entanglements of different forms and agents of mapping, this article makes two important contributions across histories of mapping, photography, and colonial urbanism.

Firstly, this article folds photographic history into the history of mapping to show the ways in which these two forms of representation, most often approached as distinct, were often entwined in the production of geographic knowledge. Histories of photography and empire have described how after the invention of the Daguerreotype in 1839, photography quickly became a tool for European travellers, scientists, and anthropologists across empire.<sup>7</sup> Research into the early photography of West Africa has shown how African photographers in the nineteenth century played important roles in producing a spatial imaginary of place.<sup>8</sup> In this way photographs did similar work to maps. As described by James Ryan, both 'reduced the world to two dimensions' making the vast spaces of empire legible and knowable.<sup>9</sup> Julie MacArthur has made this connection explicit through the concept of 'photography-as-cartography'.<sup>10</sup> Photography has not only been like mapmaking, rather it has often been one of its integral practices. This article builds on the photographic history of West Africa to historicise the undeveloped nexus of photograph, cartography and coloniality. Attentive to the many mediums of image circulation, this article also builds on the deep research of Christraud Geary into the place of postcards in the construction of colonial knowledges.<sup>11</sup> Here, in a direct extension of MacArthur's lens of photograph-as-cartography, postcards-as-cartography makes explicit the link between the tropes of this defining representational object of high colonialism in Africa and the production of official geographic knowledge.

<sup>5</sup> E. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, London, 1993, 274. Also see M. Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India*, Chicago, 1997; R. Craib, *Cartographic Mexico: A History of State Fixations and Fugitive Landscapes*, Durham, 2004; J. Akerman (Ed), *The Imperial Map: Cartography and the Mastery of Empire*, Chicago, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> B. Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society*, Cambridge, 1987.

<sup>7</sup> J. Schwartz, The Geography Lesson: Photographs and the Construction of Imaginative Geographies, *Journal of Historical Geography* 22 (1996) 16–45; J. Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire*, London, 1997.

<sup>8</sup> E. Haney, *Photography and Africa*, London, 2010; J. Schneider, The Topography of the Early History of African Photography, *History of Photography* 34 (2010) 134–146; J. Schneider, Demand and Supply: Francis W. Joaque, an Early African Photographer in an Emerging Market, *Visual Anthropology* 27 (2014) 316–338.

<sup>9</sup> Ryan, *Picturing Empire*, 21.

<sup>10</sup> J. MacArthur, Imagining Imperial Frontiers: Photography-as-cartography in the Mapping of Eastern Africa, *Journal of Historical Geography* 76 (2022) 68–82.

<sup>11</sup> C. Geary, Different Visions? Postcards from Africa by European and African Photographers and Sponsors in: C. Geary and V. Webb (Eds), *Delivering Views: Distant Cultures in Early Postcards*, Washington, 1998, 147–178; C. Geary, *Postcards from Africa: Photographers of the Colonial Era*, Boston, 2018.

Secondly, this article contributes to the history of colonial urban mapmaking, particularly on the West African littoral. Whilst unfolding in different ways in different urban contexts, histories of colonial urbanism have focused on the entwined processes of public health intervention and the racial segregation of the built environment as circumscribed by the map in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>12</sup> Ademide Adelusi-Adeluyi has recently worked on developing these long held understandings of planning and mapping in colonial West Africa. By using digital software Adelusi-Adeluyi has shown how maps of Lagos do not only need to be read as expressions of colonial power to divide but can also be used to unpick indigenous spatialities and colonial anxieties.<sup>13</sup> This article adds a different dimension to this emergent historiography by dwelling in between the colonial–indigenous binary to trace the entangled knowledges on which cartographies of colonial public health and urban planning were developed.

The photographs, maps and postcards that are the subjects of this article are examined with both visual and processual methods. Since pathbreaking postmodern readings of the map as text by Brian Harley, cartography has been acknowledged as a vital process of power.<sup>14</sup> Cartography is not only a technical science or a form of spatial representation. Rather, it is an integral facet of modernity that contributes to the reproduction of notions of European rationality, control, and superiority. The products of cartography must therefore be read for the ways in which they buttress, question, and oppose power.<sup>15</sup> Matthew Edney has recently tried to expand this sociocultural critique beyond its narrow focus on the normative map as an expression of power.<sup>16</sup> Edney insists historians pay close attention to the messiness of the processes of mapping rather than only the map itself. Taking influence from both historians of maps and photographs, here geographic representations are approached as objects with their own 'social biographies'.<sup>17</sup> Focusing on the disjointed processes of representing space reveals the accretions that make up colonial cartography, and shows that cartography is more than the contested imposition of hegemonic spatial understanding.

Structured chronologically, the article begins with two Colonial Office circulars in 1869 and 1871 that requested photographs and

<sup>12</sup> On racial segregation globally see C. Nightingale, *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities*, Chicago, 2012; across empire see R. Home, *Of Planting and Planning: The Making of British Colonial Cities*, London, 1997; across colonial Africa see A. Njoh, *Planning Power: Town Planning and Social Control in Colonial Africa*, London, 2007; and across colonial West Africa see L. Bigon, *A History of Urban Planning in Two West African Colonial Capitals: Residential Segregation in British Lagos and French Dakar*, Lewiston, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> A. Adelusi-Adeluyi, Historical Tours of "New" Lagos: Performance, Place Making, and Cartography in the 1880s, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 38 (2018) 443–454; A. Adelusi-Adeluyi, "Africa for the Africans?" Mapmaking, Lagos, and the Colonial Archive, *History in Africa* 47 (2020) 275–296.

<sup>14</sup> Brian Harley kickstarted the postmodern critique of the map as an expression of power rather than as an objective representation of space. B. Harley, Deconstructing the Map, *Cartographica: The International Journal for Geographic Information and Geovisualization* 26 (1989) 1–20; B. Harley, Silences and Secrecy: The Hidden Agenda of Cartography in Early Modern Europe, *Imago Mundi* (1988) 57–76; B. Harley, *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography*, Baltimore, 2002. Harley's argument that maps are always social constructions has since branched into maps as propositions, arguments and inscriptions that must be understood as process: J. Pickles, *A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping, and the Geo-Coded World*, New York, 2004; M. Dodge, R. Kitchin, and C. Perkins, *Rethinking Maps*, New York, 2009.

<sup>15</sup> On the sociocultural critique of the normative map see M. Monmonier, *How to Lie with Maps*, Chicago, 1991; D. Wood and J. Fels, *The Power of Maps*, New York, 1992.

<sup>16</sup> M. Edney, *Cartography: The Ideal and its History*, Chicago, 2019.

<sup>17</sup> Edney, *Cartography*; J. Schwartz, Photography, Travel, Archives, in: C. Withers, M. Domosh and M. Heffernan, *The Sage Handbook of Historical Geography*, London, 2020, 959.

maps of the colony respectively. Two mappings of Freetown by an itinerant West African photographer and a European missionary are analysed as responses to the cartographic anxiety emanating from London. The second section goes on to trace how the missionary map was absorbed into the language of the Public Works Department to support arguments for public health and segregationist planning interventions. The third section shows how at the turn of the twentieth century images of the city captured by Alphonso Lisk-Carew, a Freetonian photographer-entrepreneur, were integrated into colonial mapmaking by using postcards-as-cartography. In tracing a chronology of representations of Freetown this article argues that the development of urban colonial cartography relied on the consumption of an array of practices and products of mapping.

### Cartographic anxiety: A photographer and a missionary map the city

On 29 November 1869, the Colonial Office sent out a circular to its governors across the British Empire requesting 'photographs of the principal buildings and most interesting localities'.<sup>18</sup> A day later a second circular, organised by the Darwinian biologist Thomas Henry Huxley, was sent requesting 'ethnological' photos of people. Whilst these circulars marked a beginning of the integration of photographs into colonial governance, Elizabeth Edwards has argued that the requests, and the quantities of images produced in response, had an 'uncertain' role to play in imperial knowledge and were not the effective disciplinary power tools popular in Foucauldian scholarship.<sup>19</sup> In June 1871, the governor of Sierra Leone, Arthur Kennedy, replied to both circulars with a collection of images of 'various races' and 'public buildings'.<sup>20</sup> The images of buildings had been shot between 1869 and 1871 by John Parkes Decker, a West African photographer from the Gambia and one of the first itinerant photographers working along the coast from at least 1869 to about 1890.<sup>21</sup> Held in duplicate albums in the colony itself and in the Colonial Office library in London, the prints were to serve as geographical reference points for future communications and as a visual guide for any official travelling for a new job.

Also in June 1871 the Colonial Office sent out a circular requesting information from all its colonies on how to procure the 'best maps, or collection of maps, containing the most recent information'.<sup>22</sup> There was concern that the Colonial Office library had a 'deficient' map collection. Over a year and a half later in early 1873, and after a second circular prompting a response, the governor of Sierra Leone replied with a letter from Surveyor John Jenkins explaining that 'there are no maps of the colony towns or city that any dependence can be placed in, or any true information given'.<sup>23</sup> Of the three maps of Freetown at the surveyor's office all were out of date, and out of scale. Two were so old that they were falling apart, and one was newer but wildly inaccurate.<sup>24</sup> Less than a year later, however, a newly lithographed map of Freetown crossed the surveyor's desk. This 'Plan of Free Town, Sierra Leone, West Africa' by the Wesleyan missionary John Halligey, did not

mollify the cartographic absence in Sierra Leone. The surveyor described this representation of the city dismissively as 'a very nice picture but quite useless for reference as the additions for the last 40 years are not shown on it'.<sup>25</sup>

The two circulars of 1869 and 1871 transported the emerging cartographic anxiety of the Colonial Office to the colonial government of Sierra Leone. Close analysis of the two different mappings of Freetown, by Decker and Halligey, that followed these requests for photographs and maps of the city will show the hesitant beginnings of the colonial cartography of Sierra Leone. An itinerant photographer and a missionary responded, from their intermediary roles in the colonial project, to the absence of transferable geographic knowledge.<sup>26</sup> Both the photographs and the maps they produced buttressed colonial spatial understandings but also contained alternative geographies of the city.

Decker's photos arrived in London when the imperial government was concerned about there being no good maps of Sierra Leone, let alone Freetown. The photographs were supposed to do work as evidence of the colonial presence in Sierra Leone. Forty-one albumen prints survive in an album now held at the National Archives of the United Kingdom.<sup>27</sup> The album has been rebound, likely when some of the images were digitised. The album now includes Decker's images of Freetown alongside prints of buildings and views from the Gambia produced in response to the Colonial Office request. It contains an original index to the Freetown prints and details the subjects of the images, including the prison, courthouse, police station, cathedral, wharf, market, and barracks. Interspersed among the shots of colonial edifices are views of Freetown as more than just a site of state building. The photos were annotated by a colonial official in Sierra Leone to provide context for anyone viewing the images in London. Most often this was a label for the building pictured and a direction from which the photo was taken to orientate the viewer. Other than these short descriptions the governor of Sierra Leone did not add any further contextualisation, only briefly mentioning the attached photographs in his reply to the Colonial Office circular.<sup>28</sup>

Even without extensive paratext the collection of prints made clear arguments for the success of the colonial presence in Freetown. Primarily this was through simple emphasis as the series of images dwelt on the monumental buildings of colonial control. Out of forty-one images five were of Government House. No other building or site was depicted as many times. The lighthouse, a towering structure crucial to navigation and colonial trade, was the second most featured building, with three photographs in the series. Other buildings that recur were the cathedral, the colonial hospital, the vegetable market, the colonial secretary's offices, and Fourah Bay College. These buildings had in common a shared architecture and materiality that spoke to the durability of colonial civilisation.

Many of the photos were taken from lower ground, producing low angled shots that emphasised the grandiosity of the buildings. The colonial secretary and treasurer's office looming over George Street (Fig. 1) is an effective symbol of the solidity of coloniality. The foreground of the print, and of several others in the album, is taken

<sup>18</sup> Colonial Office circular, 29 November 1869, TNA, CO 854/10.

<sup>19</sup> E. Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums*, Oxford, 2001, 131–155; E. Edwards, *Photographic Uncertainties: Between Evidence and Reassurance*, *History and Anthropology* 25 (2014) 171–88.

<sup>20</sup> Governor Kennedy to the secretary of state for the colonies, 13 June 1871, TNA, CO 267/311.

<sup>21</sup> Schneider, *The Topography*, 136–37. Other than these scraps of information Decker's life and career remain largely unknown.

<sup>22</sup> Colonial Office circular, 6 June 1971, TNA, CO 854/12.

<sup>23</sup> Jenkins to the colonial secretary, 28 February 1873, TNA, CO 267/321.

<sup>24</sup> Jenkins to the colonial secretary, 28 February 1873, TNA, CO 267/321.

<sup>25</sup> Jenkins to the acting colonial secretary, 7 January 1874, TNA, CO 267/326.

<sup>26</sup> E. Elbourne, *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions, and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799–1853*, Montréal, 2002; B. Lawrance, E. Osborn and R. Roberts (Eds), *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa*, Wisconsin, 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Photographs of Freetown by J.P. Decker, c.1870, TNA, CO 1069/88; Vera Viditz-Ward encountered the twin album at the Sierra Leone National Museum in the 1980s but when I enquired in 2019 there was no sign of it, V. Viditz-Ward, *Photography in Sierra Leone, 1850–1918*, *Africa* 57 513.

<sup>28</sup> Kennedy to the secretary of state, 13 June 1871, TNA, CO 267/311.



**Fig. 1.** 'Colonial Secretary & Treasurer's offices from a North Eastern angle. George Street', by J.P. Decker, albumen print, c.1870, TNA, CO 1069/88/33. Courtesy of the National archives of the UK.

up by young trees protected by wooden frames. The trees were planted on the order of Governor Kennedy along the sides of the main thoroughfares of Freetown's gridded city centre and were intended to be both healthy and ornamental. These photographs gave the governor an opportunity to show the Colonial Office how his governance had materially changed the colony. A common way to denote the hierarchy of roads in Europe the planting of trees at regular intervals imported the organisational logic of European urbanism to the colony. What the photographs failed to show is that many Freetonians believed that the trees harboured mosquitoes and snakes. By the end of the century, in a bottom up and incremental reshaping of the city, almost all of Kennedy's trees were cut down.<sup>29</sup>

Views and street scenes of Freetown presented an image of the city as more than a taxonomy of colonial construction. The final image (Fig. 2) of the series was a depiction of the city in its entirety, rather than as a collection of isolated subjects. This is a picturesque image which pushed at the boundaries of the Colonial Office brief. The photograph was taken from atop Tower Hill, the location of the barracks and Government House, and the concentrated site of colonial power. From the position of authority on high the ordered image of hillside, town, and sea is consistent with the categorisations of coloniality. The view almost serves as a map, straining to reach for the top down planimetric viewpoint of modern cartography. Whilst this print disrupts the audit of buildings, and is distinguished by its rounded corners and larger size, the photograph does do work to contextualise the prior images of buildings within a wide shot of a well planned port city.

People did intervene in Decker's mapping of localities and buildings. Freetonian men, women, and children stand between the camera and Vegetable Market (Fig. 3). Some posed stock still for the camera, whilst others moved through the streets, creating blurs in the final image. Paul Landau argues that African people had agency as subjects of colonial photographs; the power relations of the photographic moment were unequal but not completely one sided.<sup>30</sup> The wet collodion process that Decker used required long



**Fig. 2.** View of Freetown from the Tower Hill barracks, by J.P. Decker, albumen print, c.1870, TNA, CO 1069/88/42. Courtesy of the National archives of the UK.

exposures that precluded capturing movement. Throughout the entire series of images there are ghostly figures, blurred on their movements through the city streets.<sup>31</sup> These suggestions of motion in the album of Decker's prints are disruptions of the clarity of the static mapping of architectures of colonial governance. That some of these fugitive subjects of the photo decided to pose for Decker shows a willingness to engage in the novel technology of photography. It is evident, however, that the market (Fig. 3) could not be depicted without its people, both moving by and standing to attention. The presence of Africans was a reminder to any viewer of the prints that the city was made not just of stone and wood, but of its people.



**Fig. 3.** 'Vegetable Market from the South Eastern Angle', by J.P. Decker c.1870, albumen print, TNA, CO 1069/88/26. Courtesy of the National archives of the UK.

<sup>29</sup> C. Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, London, 1962, 362.

<sup>30</sup> P. Landau, *Empire of the Visual: Photography and Colonial Administration in Africa*, in: P. Landau and D. Kaspin (Eds), *Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*, Berkely, 2002, 159.

<sup>31</sup> M. Sparke, 'Mapped Bodies and Disembodied Maps: (Dis)Placing Cartographic Struggle in Colonial Canada', in: H. Nast and S. Pile (Eds), *Places through the Body*, London, 1998, 305–31.

Whilst the series is largely coherent in its communication of an established colonial civilisation the captions rather than disciplining the meaning of each image more often add moments of confusion and diversion. These orientations, mixtures of street names and compass directions, located the image in the space of the city. This 'burden' was not convincingly applied to Decker's photographs, creating muddled and partial cartography wedded to captions added after the photographic moment that were at times inconsistent, and more often absent altogether.<sup>32</sup> Some of the photos were given a title but not orientated, adrift from the anchor of a cardinal direction. Four photos of two different unidentified buildings, surrounded by vegetation, give nothing away as to how the buildings are situated within the city. They are isolated both in the image itself and within the series of images. Decontextualised, short and inconsistently applied captions curated a fragmented territorialisation of place. The floating images could not function as effective evidence and were never integrated into the praxis of Colonial Office governance.

The mapmaker of the 'Plan of Free Town' (Fig. 4), John Thomas Frederick Halligey, worked as a missionary for the Wesleyan Missionary Society in Sierra Leone between February 1870 and May 1873.<sup>33</sup> Like Decker's prints of architecture and views of Freetown,

this plan was created by an intermediary in the colonial project. Sierra Leone was Halligey's first posting outside of England and marked the beginning of a long career in West Africa.<sup>34</sup> Halligey had a keen interest in the discipline of geography: he kept detailed meteorological notes during his time in Sierra Leone, his 'Plan of Free Town' shows an attention to the details of cartographic technique, and he later became a member of the Royal Geographic Society. His map was lithographed in London, less than 10 min from the Wesleyan mission headquarters on City Road and was likely sold there to Londoners hungry for images of empire.

A close analysis of this map shows that Halligey, in a similar way to the album of Decker's images, argued for a form of colonial civilisation. The emphases express the context of power bound up in the map's creation and consumption. Road names are labelled almost comprehensively as empire was imprinted on the landscape through the mimicry of London's toponomy mixed with the valorisation of colonial figures relevant to the conquering and administration of the locality.<sup>35</sup> Central to the image of ordered, gridded streets is Tower Hill, the seat of British power, on top of which sit the only two labelled buildings, Fort Thornton and the barracks. Using centrality and detail Halligey argued that British control over Freetown was comprehensive. Three cemeteries are



Fig. 4. 'Plan of free town, Sierra Leone, West Africa', by J.T.F. Halligey, 1872, TNA, CO 267/334. Courtesy of the National archives of the UK.

<sup>32</sup> R. Barthes, *Image Music Text*, London, 1977, 26.

<sup>33</sup> The map bears the name 'J.F.T. Halligey', a misspelling of J.T.F. Halligey. Halligey would later go on to work in the Gambia, the Gold Coast and Nigeria.

<sup>34</sup> J.T.F. Halligey, *Methodism in West Africa: A Story of Heroism*, London, 1907.

<sup>35</sup> See L. Bigon (Ed), *Place Names in Africa: Colonial Urban Legacies, Entangled Histories*, New York, 2016.

the only other places labelled on the map: 'Old burial ground', 'Cemetery', and 'Mahomedan cemetery'. The otherness of Islam was shown by the use of an adjective to describe the cemetery, and its small size and peripherality argued for the ascendancy of Christianity in the battle for the soul of the city. Here was a mission logic which framed coloniality as the dual establishment of Christianity and governance.

The map's absences are equally expressive. The edge of the city is vague, roads disappear into nothing, some are drawn in hesitant dotted lines, and always without names. Blank space surrounds the map but also collects within it, around 'Alligator River' and 'Nicol Brook', without any gesture as to what may occupy the space. Whilst Halligey was comfortable depicting the gridded centre of Freetown, at the periphery, where lower class Freetonians dwelt and made the city, his cartographic language failed. Even where pink shading was used to represent the built environment, its composition was left to the reader's imagination. Three rivers run from the south to the north of the map hinting at the topography of Freetown, but the dramatic hills and mountains that give the city its definition are not represented. Nature is largely eschewed, and the land is made flat by manmade urbanity. In this smoothing over of the heterogeneity of Freetown and in the assertion of the dominance of a Christian colonial civilisation, the city he depicted was a manifestation of Halligey's beliefs about the successes of the mission and the colonial project.

That the colonial surveyor, Jenkins, dismissed the map as no more than a 'nice picture' was likely a reflection not of any perceived inaccuracy but because it threatened his monopoly over cartographic production in the colony.<sup>36</sup> Jenkins' successors did not agree with him. Over the next 40 years Halligey's map was used as the foundations on which the cartography of the city was built. Decker's images, on the other hand, were not appropriated in the same way. Colonial governments across empire remained unsure of how to harness photographic technology within the praxis of governance until at least the 1890s. The intended purpose of the photo mapping as a reference point for communication between Freetown and London does not feature in subsequent decades of archived imperial correspondence, and the good condition of the prints made 150 years ago suggests the album in the Colonial Office library was very rarely consulted.<sup>37</sup>

### Cartographic governance: mapmaking and knowledge production in the Public Works Department

It was not uncommon for missionaries to be engaged in early colonial cartography.<sup>38</sup> Their positions on the frontier of empire provided access to spaces beyond the edge of state cartographies. As a result, their spatial knowledges were often appropriated as foundations for more expansive cartographic work by surveyors.<sup>39</sup> Halligey's map would serve this same purpose, but for the city rather than the frontier. The map reappears in the archive altered

<sup>36</sup> Jenkins to the acting colonial secretary, 7 January 1874, TNA, CO 267/326. Jenkins had a habit of discrediting other mapmakers. He claimed his Freetonian assistant William Lawson's map of Sierra Leone was a fraudulent copy of an inaccurate map. Lawson went on to have a long career as a surveyor in British West Africa and one of his maps of Lagos would be chosen for display at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London. On Lawson see Adelus-Adeluyi, *Historical Tours*, 448–449; A. Jones and P. Sebald (Eds), *An African Family Archive: The Lawsons of Little Popo/Aneho (Togo) 1841–1938*, Oxford, 2005.

<sup>37</sup> Schwartz, *Travel, Photography, Archives*, 959–987.

<sup>38</sup> R. Kark, *The Contribution of Nineteenth Century Protestant Missionary Societies to Historical Cartography*, *Imago Mundi* 45 (1993) 112–119.

<sup>39</sup> L. Braun, *Missionary Cartography in Colonial Africa: Cases from South Africa*, in: E. Liebenberg and I. Demhardt (Eds), *History of Cartography: International Symposium of the ICA Commission*, 2010, Berlin, 2012, 249–72.

and appropriated for different purposes: a copy from 1884 accompanies an ordinance to regulate construction; an engineering plan also from 1884 added an imagined future of standpipes and reservoirs; and an 1899 copy located mosquito breeding pools across the city. Colonial Officials working in the Public Works Department in Sierra Leone relied upon Halligey's mapping as a base cartography on which to construct spatial arguments for how the modern colonial city should be organised. The integration of cartography into colonial governance over the final three decades of the nineteenth century shows the importance of the absorption of spatial representations from beyond the structures of the colonial state. A missionary map could become central to modernising schemes, taking place in similar forms across empire, of public health and racial segregation.<sup>40</sup>

In August 1884 an edited version of Halligey's map (Fig. 5) provided a spatial referent for a draft ordinance 'to provide for the better regulation and supervision of the construction of buildings in Freetown, to promote the safety of the inhabitants and to diminish the risk from the spread of fire'.<sup>41</sup> On the night of the 28<sup>th</sup> March 1884, a few months before the ordinance was drawn up, a fire raged in the area of Kissy Street, to the east of the city centre. Governor Havelock lamented that 'a considerable portion of one of the most crowded business quarters of Freetown was burnt down'.<sup>42</sup> Surveyor Robert Pownall reported that 161 buildings had been destroyed and estimated the cost of the damages at £30,000 before callously advising that there was no need to spend government funds on relief for those affected.

The ordinance was presented as a response to the chaos caused by the fire. From January 1885 'all new roofs are to be covered with slates, corrugated iron or some other hard and incombustible material'. Thatched roofs, under which the majority of Freetonians lived, were banned and any wall not built of expensive stone could not be built within fifteen feet of another dwelling.<sup>43</sup> Thatched roofs and wooden walls, the traditional building materials of Freetonians, were being pushed out of the centre of the city as circumscribed by the map.

The map itself was a copy of Halligey's original — it still bears his name in the bottom lefthand corner — with added layers of information. A key in the top left of the map lists public buildings and gives them each a letter which corresponds to a polygon drawn on the map in red pen. The buildings all fall within the boundary of the ordinance as marked by a red outline with large capital letters 'A B C D E F G' at its vertices. Such a concentration of detail frames the map as practical, only concerned with the specific issue of this ordinance, and a visual continuation of the language of colonial law. Paratext described that the area enclosed by the red line 'contains those streets and places in which the public offices, the stores and warehouses of the principal mercantile firms, and the most valuable private property, are situated'.<sup>44</sup> The map and the text worked together to show that the ordinance was enacted to primarily protect the private property of both the colonial government and the local elite, and not as stated to 'promote the safety of inhabitants'. Pownall's report, dismissed the same inhabitants whose houses were destroyed by the fire, as a 'mob' and blamed their

<sup>40</sup> A. King, *Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power and Environment*, London, 1976; Home, *Of Planting*, 42; W. Beinart and L. Hughes, *Environment and Empire*, Oxford, 2007, 148–166.

<sup>41</sup> Ordinance to regulate the construction of buildings in Freetown, 18 August 1884, TNA, CO 267/356.

<sup>42</sup> Governor Havelock to the secretary of state for the colonies, 8 April 1884, TNA, CO 267/355.

<sup>43</sup> Ordinance, 18 August 1884, TNA, CO 267/356.

<sup>44</sup> Ordinance, 18 August 1884, TNA, CO 267/356.

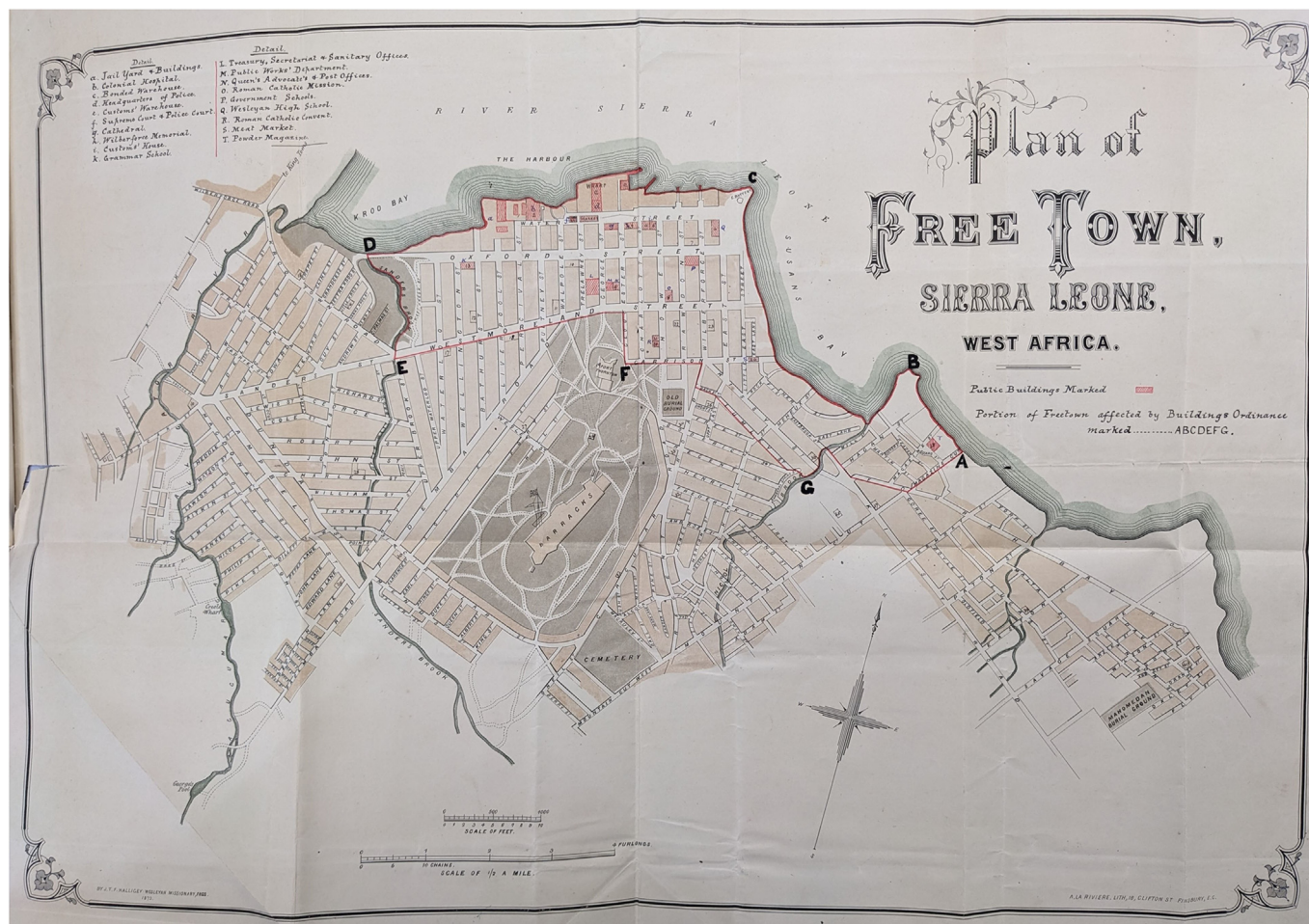


Fig. 5. 'Plan of free town, Sierra Leone, West Africa.' by R. Pownall, 1884, TNA, CO 267/356. Courtesy of the National archives of the UK.

'careless use' of kerosene lamps for starting the fire.<sup>45</sup> To further complicate the motivation of the ordinance, Pownall went on to argue that 'the existence of little thatched shanties alongside a good house is as great a source of damage from fire to the latter, as it is derogatory to the appearance of the town as a whole'.<sup>46</sup> This points to the larger relevance of the ordinance as part of a nascent project of urban segregation. The argument of the map that the ordinance had a singular practical and benevolent purpose functioned to obscure other motivating factors behind the new restrictive building codes. It did, however, prove to be close to impossible to enforce the building regulations and in 1899 a new ordinance greatly reduced the area subject to the regulations.<sup>47</sup> The red line on the map was not translated into a tangible boundary.

1884 had been a bad year for Freetown. As well as the Kissy Street fire it had also seen a yellow fever epidemic sweep through the European population, killing twenty people out of a total of less than two hundred. The governor blamed the 'special unhealthiness' of the 'central and best quarter of Freetown' for the spread of the fever. A report was commissioned that found the insanitary

condition of central Freetown was a result of the 'unwholesome arrangements for the disposal of human excreta'.<sup>48</sup> In an attempt to solve both the problem of fire and the problem of disease Governor Havelock asked Pownall to draw up a plan and estimate for an improved and extended water supply to the city.<sup>49</sup> The first pipes had been constructed in the city in 1872 providing water to several government owned buildings, a public hydrant in George Street, and a few choice houses in central Freetown.<sup>50</sup> Pownall planned to extend this basic supply, largely serving state buildings, to stand-pipes across the city by extracting water from Gloucester stream, via a settling pond, filter bed, and reservoir. The Colonial Office, however, rejected the plan, unwilling to let the colony take on more debt.

To accompany the description of the works Pownall again adapted Halligey's map (Fig. 6), this time to imagine an urban future of increased access to water for the population of Freetown. Pownall traced the original map in its entirety, even the title — the words 'suggested water works for' printed in a smaller font between 'Plan of, and 'Free Town, Sierra Leone, West Africa'. Blue lines snake through the streets, all the way to the western and eastern extremes of the city at Kroo Town and Fourah Bay

<sup>45</sup> Robert Pownall to the private secretary, 1 August 1884, TNA, CO 267/355.

<sup>46</sup> Pownall to private secretary, 1 August 1884, TNA, CO 267/355.

<sup>47</sup> O. Goerg, From Hill Station (Freetown) to Downtown Conakry (First Ward): Comparing French and British Approaches to Segregation in Colonial Cities at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century, *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 32 (1998) 1–31.

<sup>48</sup> Governor Havelock to the secretary of state for the colonies, July 1884, TNA, CO 267/356.

<sup>49</sup> Havelock to secretary of state, July 1884, TNA, CO 267/356.

<sup>50</sup> Fyfe, *A History*, 390.



Fig. 6. 'Plan of suggested water works for free town, Sierra Leone', by R. Pownall, July 1884, TNA, CO 700/SierraLeone20. Courtesy of the National archives of the UK.

respectively. 'New standpipes' were marked by blue points dotted at intersections — the adjective 'new' evoking a reality rather than a proposal. The Colonial Office liked the image of the city as defined by European, infrastructural modernity, but the expense involved to provide for Freetonians was a stumbling block, unlike for the extensive defence improvements taking place in Freetown concurrently.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, through inaction the financial burden for

water provision would pass out of the hands of the colonial government, as the Colonial Office was in the process of establishing a Freetown municipality that would be responsible for the city's sanitary needs. Due to a deep seated mistrust of the Freetonian led municipal government, it was the colonial government that would eventually finish constructing a water supply for Freetown in 1905. Even though Freetown would eventually get its extended water-works Pownall's map shows the discrepancy between cartographic bureaucracy and state led responses to problems produced by colonial urbanity.

<sup>51</sup> Fyfe, A History, 439.



At the very end of the century Halligey's map was still in use in the Public Works Department. A reprint from September 1899 (Fig. 7), with colour, border flourishes, and authorship removed, depicted the location of mosquito breeding pools in Freetown. Surveyor Thomas Laing annotated the document with red pen, adding points across the street layout of the city. A short key written hastily in pencil provided a simple translation of the cartographic language: 'red marks show principal *Anopheles* pools'. The brevity and impermanence of this key to the map is indicative of its limited circulation amongst the officials of the 'the malaria expedition' of 1899. Headed by Ronald Ross, of the newly founded Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, the expedition was organised to gather information about the recent discovery of the *Anopheles* mosquito as the vector of malaria transmission, and to provide recommendations as to how to reduce the prevalence of the disease among Europeans.<sup>52</sup> From his research during the rains of 1899 Ross recommended that to reduce the spread of malaria 'the most permanent and satisfactory measure is the obliteration of the breeding pools of *Anopheles* by drainage'.<sup>53</sup>

Laing's map was a spatial representation of Ross's programme to eradicate malaria in Freetown. The map showed only one hundred breeding pools in the entire city. Drainage would be a manageable and limited amount of work as the pools had been located and mapped. The Colonial Office acceded to Ross' advice and funded two groups of 'scavengers' to clean up garbage, fill puddles with earth, remove containers that could collect water, and to cover stagnant water with oil. Progress was, however, difficult as the rains constantly created new puddles and the groups tasked with draining them did not have the resources for more permanent solutions.<sup>54</sup> Laing's map failed to represent the dynamic nature of mosquito breeding. Breeding pools changed location year on year, and the *Anopheles gambiae* and *Anopheles funestus* mosquitoes prevalent in Freetown could even breed in a footprint where a little water could collect.<sup>55</sup> Whilst Laing's map frames a form of prophylaxis for the entire population of Freetown, not just Europeans or the upper classes of Freetonian society, there are suggestions of the heavily racialised assumptions of early tropical medicine. Red marks on the map coalesce in Kroo



Fig. 7. Plan of free town, Sierra Leone, West Africa'. By T.E. Laing, September 1899, TNA, CO 700/Sierraleone36a. Courtesy of the National archives of the UK.

<sup>52</sup> R. Packard, *The Making of a Tropical Disease: A Short History of Malaria*, Baltimore, 2011.

<sup>53</sup> S. Frenkel and J. Western, Pretext or Prophylaxis? Racial Segregation and Malarial Mosquitos in a British Tropical Colony: Sierra Leone, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 78 (1998) 211–228.

<sup>54</sup> First progress report of the campaign against mosquitoes in Sierra Leone, 15 October 1901, TNA, CO 267/461.

<sup>55</sup> P. Curtin, Medical Knowledge and Urban Planning in Tropical Africa, *The American Historical Review* 90 (1985) 600.

Town, Grassfields and Foulah Town, neighbourhoods of lower class Freetonians and recent migrants to the city. The long association of disease with people at the bottom of social hierarchies was not swept away by germ theory, it only changed its form, pointing towards the impending degradation of the optimism of the mosquito campaign in favour of the racial discrimination of urban segregation.

The Colonial Office funded a second expedition to Freetown between 1900 and 1903 organised by the Royal Society. 'The malaria commission' headed by Samuel Christophers and John Stephens disagreed with Ross' primary argument for eradicating *Anopheles* breeding pools. Rather, they followed Ross' segregationist line of thinking to claim that the presence of malaria was always entwined with the presence of Africans and 'to stamp out native malaria is at present chimerical, and every effort should be turned to the protection of the Europeans'.<sup>56</sup> The explicit racialisation of malaria prophylaxis was taken up as Colonial Office policy and speedily implemented in Sierra Leone. In 1904 the Public Works Department finished the first stage of construction of the whites-only settlement of Hill Station, nestled on a mountain ridge seven hundred and fifty feet above sea level and a four mile train ride from the city centre. In the context of this change to the urban landscape of Freetown, Laing's map serves as an image of what could have been. Red marks across the map evoked an optimistic policy that collapsed under the weight of racialised understandings of public health and Colonial Office willingness to fund segregationist urban planning.

A single base map annotated and reused by colonial officials over several decades shows the multifaceted relationship of the colonial state to Freetown. The late nineteenth century saw a cartography built upon a missionary mapping of the city become an important language of colonial bureaucracy in Sierra Leone. In 1900 Halligey's map was still the only plan of Freetown used by the city's surveyors. The director of public works offhandedly acknowledged this as a problem by pointing out the obvious irony of a request from the registrar general for a 'fresh' version of a map that was so outdated.<sup>57</sup> Whilst a new urban survey was in discussion Halligey's map continued to be reused as more visions of the colonial city were sedimented on top of its street layout. Throughout this development of cartographic governmentality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the arguments made by Halligey as he draughted his original 'Plan of Free Town' lurked in the well used base map of the city.

### Postcards-as-cartography: appropriating ambivalent representations

In 1911 the acting director of the Public Works Department laid out an ambitious scheme for a complete overhaul of two entwined infrastructural systems in Freetown, its streets and drains.<sup>58</sup> The plan described a reinvention of Freetown as a modern colonial city through the macadamisation of main thoroughfares and the construction of culverts to carry storm and wastewater to the sea. Supposedly the scheme would prevent the destruction of unmetalled streets by the annual rains, and at once encourage trade by providing for motor vehicle

traffic. Although the Freetown improvements scheme was halted by the beginning of World War One in 1914 it is interesting here for its production of a new cartography of Freetown.<sup>59</sup> In the appendices of the report are images of modelled relief maps, coloured planimetric maps, photographs of infrastructure, and postcard views of urban scenes.<sup>60</sup> This colonial cartography relied on a suite of technologies and was formed through the entanglement a myriad of representational forms. Included was a copy of Halligey's map, close to 40 years after it was first printed, reworked again to show the tiered system of street improvements for Freetown. Alongside the more conventional role of plans in the representation of the city the Public Works Department used postcards-as-cartography to depict the conditions of the streams and streets that were the subject of the proposed improvements.<sup>61</sup>

The collection of twenty-one postcard images were shot, printed, and sold by Freetonian photographer Alphonso Lisk-Carew.<sup>62</sup> Born in the city in 1883, Lisk-Carew lived there with only a few breaks until his death in 1969. At the age of twenty, having worked as a photographer's apprentice, he established his own photography studio. Starting with studio portraits for Freetonian elites and European colonial officials, Lisk-Carew went onto photograph images of the everyday. In the early twentieth century postcards portraying scenes from Freetown and the Sierra Leonean hinterland became the keystone of his business. There are echoes of the series of Decker's prints in Lisk-Carew's postcards collected to accompany the improvements scheme — architectures and infrastructures of the colonial city feature prominently in both. However unlike Decker, Lisk-Carew has left a large and wide ranging oeuvre of images, across public and private archives, from his long career spanning the entire first half of the twentieth century.<sup>63</sup> Within the academy, Vera Viditz-Ward was the first to suggest that Lisk-Carew's photos should be seen as important early examples of a West African vernacular style.<sup>64</sup> More recently, Julie Crooks has researched his work in great depth, piecing together Lisk-Carew's photographs with oral histories and archival fragments to intimately describe and contextualise his work.<sup>65</sup>

Postcards were an important new representational form in Africa. They expanded the business of photographic studios like Lisk-Carew's to a wider public whilst physically dispersing images of a colonised continent across the world.<sup>66</sup> Jürg Schneider describes the rise of the picture postcard in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as fundamental to the formation of an 'Atlantic visualscape'. It was in this 'flood' of visions of the continent that the image of Africa as a place of primitivism in desperate need of the modernity of European colonialism was cultivated and popularised.<sup>67</sup> These early postcards largely affirmed colonial

<sup>56</sup> S. Christophers and J. Stephens, Destruction of *Anopheles* in Lagos, in: *Reports of the Malaria Committee of the Royal Society*, London, 1900, 3.

<sup>57</sup> Registrar general to the colonial secretary, 18 September 1900, Sierra Leone Public Archives, CSO 1900/2883.

<sup>58</sup> Proposed scheme of road and drain construction in Freetown, 21 August 1911, TNA, CO 267/533.

<sup>59</sup> F. Cole, Sierra Leone and World War I, unpublished PhD theses, SOAS, 1994, 33.

<sup>60</sup> Proposed scheme Appendix A, 21 August 1911, TNA, CO 267/533; Proposed scheme Appendix B, November 1911, TNA, CO 1069/41/75–91.

<sup>61</sup> MacArthur, *Imagining Imperial Frontiers*.

<sup>62</sup> Alphonso Lisk-Carew postcards, c.1905, TNA, CO 1069/41/85–91.

<sup>63</sup> In 1970 Lisk-Carew's work was celebrated in a complete retrospective sponsored by the University of Sierra Leone.

<sup>64</sup> Viditz-Ward, *Photography in Sierra Leone*, 510–18; V. Viditz-Ward, Alphonso Lisk-Carew: Creole Photographer, *African Arts* 19 (1985) 46–88.

<sup>65</sup> J. Crooks, Alphonso Lisk-Carew: Early Photography in Sierra Leone, unpublished PhD theses, SOAS, 2014; J. Crooks, Alphonso Lisk-Carew: *Imaging Sierra Leone*, *African Arts* 48 (2015) 18–27.

<sup>66</sup> D. Killingray and A. Roberts, An Outline History of Photography in Africa to c.1940, *History in Africa* 16 (1989) 197–208.

<sup>67</sup> J. Schneider, African Photography in the Atlantic Visualscape: Moving Photographers — Circulating Images, in: S. Helff and S. Michels (Eds), *Global Photographies: Memory—History—Archives*, Bielefeld, 2018, 19–38.

hierarchies by expanding on racialised tropes of colonial representation established in the nineteenth century.<sup>68</sup>

Lisk-Carew matured as a professional photographer at the very beginning of this golden age (1895–1920) of postcard production and consumption.<sup>69</sup> Although young, he possessed a potent mixture of technical prowess, aesthetic appreciation, and understanding of markets that put him at the forefront of the trade in postcards on the West African coast.<sup>70</sup> Prints of picturesque landscapes, prominent buildings, colonial troops, European enterprise, street scenes, and indigenous people from the protectorate catered to the tastes of Freetonians and travellers alike. However, this was not only shrewd business. Julie Crooks argues that Lisk-Carew, rather than reproducing the colonial gaze of the camera in his postcards, was engaged in a 'detailed mapping of Sierra Leone and its inhabitants' and that this 'African flaneur', wandering the streets with his camera, developed a profound understanding of place.<sup>71</sup> It is not surprising then that this representational project, produced from an exercise in deep mapping, was appropriated for a colonial cartography.

Lisk-Carew's developing aesthetics and reading of place were deeply intertwined with his audience of international travellers and local elites desirous of images of empire. This audience would be extended to the colonial government itself as he was hired to photograph the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught to Freetown in 1911. As recounted by Crooks, after the visit Lisk-Carew gained a reputation as 'practically THE government photographer'.<sup>72</sup> From this close association with government, a clientele of elites, and Lisk-Carew's deep engagement with the city came images that were highly ambivalent, both depicting the complexities of place and shaped by the flattening effects of colonial tropes. Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley have recently emphasised this slippery quality of the photograph, particularly in Africa, where a single image or collection can simultaneously contain two opposing positions.<sup>73</sup> The acting director of public works could not circumscribe the ambivalence of the postcards as Lisk-Carew's deep mapping at once collapsed, questioned, and reinforced cartographic arguments for an urban colonial modernity. Like Halligey and Decker before him Lisk-Carew's role as an intermediary in the colonial project, entangled with government but not part of it, gave him an understanding of place that did not simply align with the representations of the city produced by officials in the Public Works Department. In offering alternative geographies the postcards puncture the singular narrative of a controlling cartographic governmentality.

People, the inhabitants of Freetown, were the primary subjects of Lisk-Carew's postcards. Crooks describes Lisk-Carew's Freetown as an 'over-inhabited' and 'lived-in city'.<sup>74</sup> Unlike Decker's photographs which featured people incidentally as posed bodies in front of equally stationary buildings or blurred suggestions of something more dynamic, Lisk-Carew was able to capture movement. Photographic technology had changed, and reduced exposure time meant it was possible to shoot images of people and things on the move. In the foreground of the image of 'Water Street' (Fig. 8) a group of children stands waiting; in the middle ground women



Fig. 8. 'Water Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone. Looking W from front St. Georges Cathedral & top of Wharf approach Road', by A. Lisk-Carew, postcard, c.1905, TNA, CO 1069/41/85.

carrying loads on their heads are walking away from the camera, while a man strides across the street holding a stick; and in the background action surrounds the vegetable market, a central hub of trade and interaction in the city. The camera absorbed the attention of the people in the photograph; one of the children in the foreground stares right down the lens, and the striding man is certainly aware he is being photographed. Technology had improved, and cameras had become more transportable, but Lisk-Carew was using an 8-by-10-inch camera on a tripod which would have been a very noticeable addition to streetscape. Although the photographic moment was mediated by the technology of the camera and the presence of the photographer, these postcard views could represent a dynamism previously lost to the creation of an image.

By picturing Freetown as produced by its people Lisk-Carew depicted a heterogeneous space. The city could be defined by its busy markets. 'Sackville Street' (Fig. 9) shows a mass of people making the street a place of interaction, commerce, and sociability. This market was an important commercial hub in the East End, frequented by Freetonians living outside of the city centre. Yet, in the foreground of the image a British colonial official in full white uniform cuts a swathe through the middle of the busy street. This ghostly figure is a telling reminder that the city was not purely an African space and that racially determined power belonged to a small minority. British colonial officials were also the main subject of the postcard 'Howe Street' in which two men, again in full



Fig. 9. 'Sackville Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone ("Market St." Nth End) Fish removed to new market', by A. Lisk-Carew, postcard, c.1905, TNA, CO 1069/41/88.

<sup>68</sup> Geary, *Different Visions?*, 173–174; R. Peabody, S. Nelson and T. Dominic (Eds), *Visualizing Empire: Africa, Europe and the Politics of Representation*, Los Angeles, 2021.

<sup>69</sup> Geary, *Different Visions?*, 147.

<sup>70</sup> Geary, *Different Visions?*, 169–170.

<sup>71</sup> Crooks, *Alphonso Lisk-Carew*, 159–171.

<sup>72</sup> Quoted in, Crooks, *Alphonso Lisk-Carew*, 83.

<sup>73</sup> P. Hayes and G. Minkley (Eds), *Ambivalent: Photography and Visibility in African History*, Athens, 2019, 1–18.

<sup>74</sup> Crooks, *Alphonso Lisk-Carew*, 166.

uniform, walked in front of the building of the European business Pickering and Berthold.<sup>75</sup> Unlike in previous mappings of the city Lisk-Carew's Freetown was explicitly produced in the spatial practices of both Europeans and Freetonians.

Whilst people on the move were a central theme of Lisk-Carew's postcards his images also frequently depicted stationary people. These posed images in the series borrow from an anthropological framing that worked to categorise and exoticise Africanness.<sup>76</sup> Whilst this form of othering was more common in his images produced on journeys into the Sierra Leone protectorate, Lisk-Carew also worked with the tropes of indigenous primitivism in his postcard views of Freetown.<sup>77</sup> In 'Berwick Street' (Fig. 10) Lisk-Carew visited the western fringe of the city, Kroo Town, a 'reservation' established in 1816 by the colonial government and inhabited by Kru mariners. The image shows two unnamed people looking directly at the camera with surroundings evocative of a protectorate village rather than the modernity of the ordered and gridded city centre. The stillness of the image provides a counter-argument against the dynamism of the African urbanity of Sackville Street market (Fig. 9). An exotic and timeless vision of Africa could be created less than a mile from Government House using the techniques and styling of anthropological photography.

Whilst Lisk-Carew's postcards of Freetown collectively depict the city as heterogenous, colonised and exoticised, the series of twenty-one postcards were curated by a Public Works Department official to convey a story about the state of the city's infrastructures. The recently constructed trainline is featured crossing a bridge at Nicol Brook (Fig. 11) on its way to the interior. This display of colonial modernity was the flip side to the anthropological photographs of primitive Kroo Town. The two forms of image worked together to reproduce the imagined geography of a backward Africa receiving the products of European ingenuity. The marketable image of colonial progress could easily be turned into arguments for success of the colonial project in Sierra Leone.

The readings of the city suggested in Lisk-Carew's framing of place and the curatorial choices of the Public Works Department exist at once, in both alignment and tension. Like in the album of Decker's images of Freetown, annotations added to the postcards attempted to circumscribe how the images were viewed by the reader, thereby producing certain understandings of place. The images of Freetown that portray the city at its most dynamic, as a



Fig. 10. 'Berwick Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone no drains', by A. Lisk-Carew, postcard, c.1905, TNA, CO 1069/41/89.

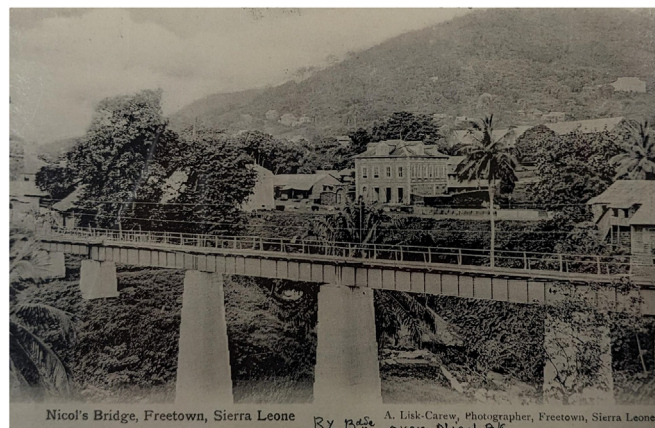


Fig. 11. 'Nicol's Bridge, Freetown, Sierra Leone Ry Bdge over Nicol Bk', by A. Lisk-Carew, postcard, c.1905, TNA, CO 1069/41/90.

place of livelihoods, were dragged into line with the colonial cartography by small additions. 'Sackville Street' (Fig. 9) was recast as 'Market Street'. The individual character of the busy road on market day was stripped away as this place was torn from its relationship with locality to become a generalised representation of a colonial economy in action. 'Berwick Street' (Fig. 10) was similarly shaped by the short annotation 'no drains'. The image was inducted into an understanding of the city through its infrastructures, or lack thereof. These two short words could further distance Kroo Town from the organised centre of the colonial city, depicted in the other postcards, where culverts lined orderly streets. Blunt textual additions to Lisk-Carew's postcards smoothed over the complexity of the images and worked to absorb them into the bureaucratic language of cartographic governmentality.

Whilst the postcards were put to use within the colonial cartography of Freetown in 1911, they had been printed and sold some years before, likely in 1905. An annotation of the postcard 'Rawdon Street' reveals this discrepancy between the static image and the dynamic city. Over a wooden board building on the left-hand side of the image was written 'Now new bank site'. The annotation serves as a reminder that the city itself was on the move and could not be captured by the camera. In the appropriation of the form of the postcard, and the placemaking work of Lisk-Carew, the colonial cartographic project in Sierra Leone reproduced ambivalent geographies of Freetown.

## Conclusion

The circulars of 1869 and 1871 show the beginnings of cartographic anxiety in the Colonial Office. That the need for representation of territory on paper would emerge in London rather than Sierra Leone is not surprising. Colonial officials in Freetown did not need maps to navigate the streets as an understanding of the city could be gained through first hand experience. It was in the metropole that the immutable mobiles of mapping coloniality were most prized and where representations of spaces of empire, like Halligey's map, had a ready market.

Decker's album of prints buttressed colonial spatialities and could act as a reassurance to officials in London of the successes of empire, but it was not used in the governance of Freetown. The discrepant geographies of blurred people and confused captions did not offer a firm footing in urban space, whilst there was also little clear thinking about the role of photography in colonial governance at the time. Following Halligey's map of Christian colonial civilisation through the archive has revealed its place as

<sup>75</sup> Crooks, Alphonso Lisk-Carew, 170.

<sup>76</sup> E. Edwards, *Anthropology and Photography, 1860–1920*, New Haven, 1992.

<sup>77</sup> Crooks, Alphonso Lisk-Carew, 175.

the cornerstone of cartographic governmentality in Sierra Leone. Throughout the final decades of the nineteenth century the colonial state responded to public health problems in a growing city with segregationist urban planning interventions. The map could be shadows of progressive schemes left abandoned or arguments to support racial segregation.

Photography was integrated into the cartographic project in Sierra Leone during the first decade of the nineteenth century. Images of the city were appropriated by colonial surveyors to support government interventions in a process typified by the use of Lisk-Carew's postcards. Yet, the colonial cartography could not completely capture Lisk-Carew's ambivalent and complex representation of Freetown. Postcards-as-cartography describes the specific process of using this medium to make an argument about place, but it is also suggestive of the broader process of mapmaking through the consumption of an array of practices and products of spatial knowledge. Thinking with diverse processes of representing place, and the diverse agents involved, complicates

the narrative of the hegemony, albeit contested, of the surveyor in the mapping of empire. In the accretions of discrepant geographies found in the photographs, maps and postcards used by the colonial government in Freetown over the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there are multiple competing and coexisting visions of the city.

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None.

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