

PROJECTIONS OF DESIRE AND DESIGN IN EARLY MODERN CARIBBEAN MAPS*

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ABSTRACT. *Iconic early European maps of the Caribbean depict neatly parcelled plantations, sugar mills, towns, and fortifications juxtaposed against untamed interiors sketched with runaway slaves and Indigenous toponyms. These extra-geographical symbols of racial and spatial meaning projected desire and design to powerful audiences. Abstractions about material life influenced colonial perceptions and actions upon a space, often to deleterious effects for the Indigenous and African people who were abused in tandem with the region's flora and fauna. The scientific revolution curbed these proscriptive and descriptive 'thick-mapped' features that offer historians an underexplored record of early colonial Caribbean life beyond the geographically descriptive. Before this shift from mystery to mastery, the early correlation of colonization and cartography in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries provides a fascinating glimpse into the process of creating the Americas. This article offers ideas for deconstructing old maps as new sources for historians of the early Atlantic World. As digital readers may explore through the roughly fifty maps linked via the footnotes, their informative spectacle naturalized colonialism upon lived and imagined race and space, created an exoticized, commodified Caribbean, and facilitated wealth extraction projects of competing empires made profitable by African labour on Indigenous land.*

I

One iconic and infamous early modern Caribbean map depicts 285 neatly named and parcelled plantations, most with coastal cultivation facing warm

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* We want to extend a warm 'thank you' to our colleague Isaac Badenya Thomas, who collaborated in our framing conversations and map consultations at the outset of this article. We are indebted to the John Carter Brown Library for the funding and facilities to work together in their collections as part of the Collaborative Cluster Fellowship in May 2018. Thank you to the staff and fellows, who were incredibly generous with ideas and sources for this project. This article owes an intellectual debt to Bertie Mandelblatt, whose expertise on the topic helped to shape our questions. We appreciated the opportunity to present an early version of the article together at the 2019 Mellon Partners in Humanities Workshop at the Vanderbilt University Digital Humanities Center, and we thank the attendees for their insightful comments. Finally, we are indebted to the editors at the *Historical Journal* and two anonymous peer reviewers for their constructive suggestions.

waters, and interiors interspersed with churches and fortifications. This 1657 portrayal of Barbados by Richard Ligon is replete with more subtle meanings. Spaces on the ocean-battered Atlantic coast and the less-developed interior, however, are portrayed in pictorial abstractions. Roads leading inland fade into sketches of rougher terrain that contains runaway slaves fleeing a mounted and armed white pursuer and an Indigenous figure with a bow and crown, among other visual synopses of colonial life as described by British colonists. This last figure is one Salymingoe, who is illustrated on land with text identifying ‘his Canoue 35 foot longe’, presumably in the area where he once lived. Elsewhere, white and black handlers work with camels, a failed novelty of local plantations, while wild pigs roam unnamed hills and sea monsters frolic in the untamed sea.¹ Subsequent reprints of this map erased much of this rich extra-geographical information: Salymingoe and his canoe disappeared; gone also are African representations, though the spatial claim of 10,000 acres for ‘the merchants of London’ remained.² Visualizations of mystery pivoted to projections of mastery.

Early modern mapmaking grew in sophistication alongside the European age of exploration. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Europeans accumulated more knowledge about the new places they knew best: coasts. Other immediate features – shores, inlets, and towns – were less essentialized than inhospitable interiors with at times unknown features, sometimes intentionally left ‘empty’, as if these lands were unoccupied and open to European claims.³ Map features were malleable projections of social constructs. Especially earlier on, lived experience influenced spatial information at least as much as surveying, and thus ignited imaginations that guided future endeavours. This became cyclical: abstractions about material life influenced imperial perceptions and actions upon a space, often to deleterious effects for its flora and fauna, and for the racialized Indigenous and African bodies that were abused to change these landscapes.⁴ The scientific revolution and the Enlightenment

¹ Richard Ligon, ‘A topographical description and admeasurement of the yland of Barbados in the West Indyas’, map, in *A true & exact history of the island of Barbados* (London, 1657), JCB map collection 03547. Susan Scott Parrish, ‘Richard Ligon and the Atlantic science of commonwealths’, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 67 (2010), pp. 209–48. Salymingoe appeared in some later translations. (For readers of the digital version of this article, links to the maps can be accessed by selecting the map collection numbers. The online collection itself can be accessed from <https://jcb.lunaimaging.com/luna/servlet/JCBMAPS~1~1>.)

² ‘Description topographique et mesure de l’isle des Barbades aux Indes Occidentales avec les noms de ceux a qui appartient les habitations’, map, in *Recueil de divers voyages faits en Afrique et en l’Amerique, qui n’ont point esté encore publiez; contenant l’origine, les moeurs, les coutumes & le commerce des habitans de ces deux parties du monde* (Paris, 1674), JCB map collection 01903.

³ This phenomenon can be seen even in the later maps of interiors that Europeans had explored, which were left blank rather than depict spaces in which Indigenous or maroon communities operated.

⁴ Surekha Davies, *Renaissance ethnography and the invention of the human* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 3, 44.

gradually shifted maps from the Renaissance rediscoveries of Ptolemaic principles towards cartographic approaches that were more suited to categorization and systematization which characterized the imperial mindsets.⁵ As eighteenth-century European officials became more interested in geographic accuracy, extra-geographical information thick-mapped onto the Americas faded in representation. And as topography and geography advanced in measurable and verifiable rigour, maps became more of a scientific tool, sterilized of stylized sentiment.⁶

This transformative era in both colonization and cartography – the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – provides a fascinating glimpse into the process of creating the Atlantic, a space of change and continuity west of the Atlas mountains, bounded by physical perimeters of what Europeans saw as old and new worlds. Claiming and coveting the Americas often shaped the informative spectacle of these maps. Though their explicit intentions ranged drastically, maps regularly served to summarize, hypothesize, and modify people and places, ultimately facilitating projects of ethnocide engineered by competing empires.⁷ Maps naturalized colonialist subjugation in space. The Caribbean was the region of earliest European claims, colonialist consumption, and interaction among Indigenous and African peoples whose own ‘mental maps’ imagined spaces of survival or paths to autonomy that defied European classificatory prerogatives.⁸ Developments in mapping practices were essential to creating the Caribbean as an idea – an exoticized space for desirable commodities and differences of race. It was at the forefront of information-making for paralleled imperial and evangelical imperatives that defined the Americas.⁹

For example, the first European map of the Caribbean (Figure 1) came from Juan de la Cosa, the cartographer for Christopher Columbus. His world map

⁵ Patrick Gautier Dalché, ‘The reception of Ptolemy’s geography (end of the fourteenth to beginning of the sixteenth century)’, in David Woodward, ed., *The history of cartography, volume three: cartography in the European Renaissance, part 1* (Chicago, IL, 2007), pp. 285–358.

⁶ P. J. Marshall and Glyndwr Williams, *The great map of mankind: perceptions of new worlds in the age of enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA, 1982), pp. 1–63.

⁷ Lauren Benton, *A search for sovereignty: law and geography in European empires, 1400–1900* (Cambridge, 2009); Martin Lewis and Kären Wigen, *The myth of continents: a critique of meta-geography* (Berkeley, CA, 1997); Matthew H. Edney, ‘Knowledge and cartography in the early Atlantic’, in Nicholas Canny and Philip Morgan, eds., *The Oxford handbook of the Atlantic world, 1450–1850* (New York, NY, 2011), pp. 87–112; Neil Safier, ‘The confines of the colony: boundaries, ethnographic landscapes, and imperial cartography in Iberoamerica’, in James R. Akerman, ed., *The imperial map: cartography and the mastery of empire* (Chicago, IL, 2009), pp. 133–83; J. B. Harley, ‘Silences and secrecy: the hidden agenda of cartography in early modern Europe’, *Imago Mundi*, 40 (1988), pp. 57–76.

⁸ Ernesto Bassi, *An aqueous territory: sailor geographies and New Granada’s transimperial greater Caribbean world* (Durham, NC, 2016), pp. 11–15, 208–12; Fernando Coronil, ‘Beyond occidentalism: toward nonimperial geohistorical categories’, *Cultural Anthropology*, 11 (1996), pp. 51–87.

⁹ Sidney W. Mintz, ‘Enduring substances, trying theories: the Caribbean region as ecumene’, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 2 (1996), pp. 289–311.



Fig. 1. Juan de la Cosa, *Mappa Mundi* (1500)

Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1500_map_by_Juan_de_la_Cosa.jpg.

includes rich images that relate Iberia and its connection to historical events and all other parts of the world. Used at the time for its geographical information, this map also conveys the Iberian worldview and priorities, in particular with regard to peoples outside Europe. The map presents images of the African rulers with whom Spain and Portugal traded for gold, and the image of the gold mine in El Mina (present-day Ghana), which includes a painting of three enslaved African workers carrying loads on their heads. Spain guarded this map and many that followed as state secrets.

As other European states vied for colonial profits in the Americas, each produced similar heavily guarded cartographic schools.¹⁰ Each early modern tradition continued conventions of extra-geographical information via embellished images of various peoples, plants, and places.¹¹ Columbus, a Genoese captain known as Cristoforo Colombo in Italian, was one of several early explorers

¹⁰ In 1619, the Dutch States General prohibited publication of geographical information about the Dutch East India Company's overseas holdings without explicit permission. Similarly, England restricted the printing and sales of atlases on national security grounds. See Kees Zandvliet, 'Mapping the Dutch world overseas in the seventeenth century', in David Woodward, ed., *The history of cartography, volume three: cartography in the European Renaissance, part 2* (Chicago, IL, 2007), pp. 1433–62; Peter Barber, 'Mapmaking in England, ca. 1470–1650', in *ibid.*, pp. 1589–1669.

¹¹ The Dutch Golden Age and early modern German interest in literary maps both spurred cartographic booms that included famous maps by Mercator (1569) and Ortelius (1570), both influenced by the rediscovery of Ptolemaic mapping. Seventeenth-century British and French mapmakers were also influenced by these developments and often included extra-geographical icons. Frank Lestringant and Monique Pelletier, 'Maps and descriptions of the world in sixteenth-century France', in Woodward, ed., *Cartography in the European Renaissance, part 2*,

born on that peninsula and not Iberia. They included the Florentine cartographer Amerigo Vespucci, who sailed for Spain and Portugal, and later disproved Columbus's assertions of landing in Asia, and after whom the German Martin Waldseemüller named the new hemisphere in the feminized, Latinized form – America. Others were Giovanni Verrazzano and Giovanni Caboto, who famously worked for the French and English, respectively.¹² Their occupational abilities produced knowledge first for Spanish consumption, and later, as this article will show, for wider audiences of rivals or academics.¹³

Constructing maps with extra-geographical historic information has recently regained popularity among digital humanists. This practice, called 'thick-mapping' (inspired by Clifford Geertz's 'thick description' of culture), adds interactive media layers to augment representations of space as understood by the various groups of people who relate or have related to it.¹⁴ It investigates and pushes the limits of conveying detailed meaning via maps, and, in doing so, draws attention to the ways in which all maps – both with and without thick description – can reflect and/or shape worldviews. Creating these types of maps allows spatial historians to revisit core analytical categories such as race, gender, class, and state power in relation to, and as sources to study, physical environs and dynamics of the past.¹⁵ A rich and illustrative example of this type of work in the early modern Atlantic world is Vincent Brown's visualization and exploration of Jamaica's slave revolts.¹⁶

While these scholarly approaches are relatively new, early modern mapmakers also expressed layered information to conceptualize a particular spatial world and shape others' worldviews. In essence, the mapmakers created sources which reflected a 'new world' as envisioned by those introduced to it for the first time, while also protecting the desires of these would-be

pp. 1463–79; Genevieve Carlton, *Worldly consumers: the demand for maps in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, IL, 2015), pp. 129–40.

¹² Iliaria Caraci Luzzana, *Navegantes italianos* (Madrid, 1992), pp. 69–84, 160–261; Toby Lester, 'The Waldseemüller map: charting the New World', *Smithsonian Magazine*, December 2009, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-waldseemuller-map-charting-the-new-world-148815355/>.

¹³ María Luisa Martín Merás, *Cartografía marítima hispana. La imagen de América* (Madrid, 1993).

¹⁴ Todd Samuel Presner, David Shepard, and Yoh Kawano, *Hypercities: thick mapping in the digital humanities* (Cambridge, MA, 2014).

¹⁵ Paul Stock, 'History and the uses of space', in Paul Stock, ed., *The uses of space in early modern history* (Basingstoke, 2015), pp. 1–18; Richard White, 'What is spatial history?', Stanford University Spatial History Lab working paper, February 2010, pp. 1–6; J. B. Harley, 'Silences and secrecy', pp. 57–76; Michael Biggs, 'Putting the state on the map: cartography, territory, and European state formation', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 41 (1999), pp. 374–405.

¹⁶ Vincent Brown, 'Mapping a slave revolt: visualizing spatial history through the archives of slavery', *Social Text*, 33 (2015), pp. 134–41; Vincent Brown, 'Narrative interface for new media history: slave revolt in Jamaica, 1760–1761', *American Historical Review*, 121 (2016), pp. 176–86.

conquerors onto the space. Rather than reflecting the space as it was understood by those who already lived there, mapmakers attempted to layer European understandings of self, space, belonging, ownership, race, and desire onto it. This makes these older maps ideal sources for historians of the early modern Caribbean to deconstruct.¹⁷

Analysis of colonialist commission and omission in early modern maps may be critically read against their grains of intent of ‘plantocratic fantasy of space’ or ‘legal fictions’ and for profundity in their silences.¹⁸ This consideration prompts several serious questions. How did maps of the Caribbean normalize colonialist outlooks for audiences? What can the maps tell us of European desires? Consequently, what do they say about European design? By investigating these main questions of European intent, another more critical spatial issue comes to the fore: how can the interrogation of European spatial semiotics in visualizations uncover evidence of autonomous Indigenous or African spaces?

II

The background and methods of this project to interrogate European maps as Caribbean sources require explanation. Drawn towards the history of cartography to answer these research questions derived from our proximate scholarly backgrounds, we the authors worked together as fellows at the John Carter Brown Library (JCB) at Brown University, immersed in their rich primary and secondary collections. Our selected scope of two centuries allowed us to trace developments in the interplay of race, desire, and space across European representations of the Caribbean colonial spaces such as plantations, mountains, and waters during an era of extreme competition and conflict. In these years, some 500,000 Africans were imported to the region and at least as many Indigenous inhabitants perished.¹⁹ Depictions of the plantations they built, and the shrinking autonomous spaces beyond them, emphasizes how these maps reflected, reproduced, and rationalized myriad instances of imperial violence. Mindful of the performative, fictive, and speculative scopes of geographic representation that allow maps rhetoric or persuasion beyond utility, we began this project as a thought experiment with some basic hypotheses.²⁰ We anticipated that, as

¹⁷ J. B. Harley, ‘Deconstructing the map’, *Cartographica*, 26 (1989), pp. 1–20; Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the past: power and the production of history* (Boston, MA, 1995).

¹⁸ Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, ‘By design: remapping the colonial archive’, *Social Text*, 33 (2015), pp. 142–7; Claudio Saunt, ‘Mapping space, power, and social life’, *Social Text*, 33 (2015), pp. 148–51.

¹⁹ Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, <http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyages/55ARCSNC>; Massimo Livi-Bacci, ‘Return to Hispaniola: reassessing a demographic catastrophe’, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 83 (2003), pp. 3–52.

²⁰ Rob Sullivan, *Geography speaks: performative aspects of geography* (New York, NY, 2011), pp. 84–8; David Woodward, ‘Introduction’, in David Woodward, ed., *Art and cartography: six historical essays* (Chicago, IL, 1987), pp. 1–9, at pp. 6–7; Geoffrey LaPage, *Art and the scientist* (Bristol, 1961).

African and Indigenous demographics shifted in correspondence with expanding plantation landscapes, portrayals of their space would also shift, revealing tacit meanings behind cartographic intentions. We also expected that extra-geographical motifs would change with Enlightenment influences that made the field more scientifically precise.

The omissions and silences of non-European spatial meaning in these maps also speak loudly, and offer openings to interrogate deliberate absences. At the same time, the icons, decorations, toponyms, flora, fauna, and many other demarcations of space offer more obvious intentionality and significance to Europeans.²¹ Both the implicit and explicit, tacit and overt references to autonomous space provide opportunities to push the maps beyond their original use towards more representative readings of how Indigenous and African peoples navigated colonial space without cartographic privileges. We therefore analyse European maps as sources for the marginalized early modern Caribbean.

Cartographers marked maps with meaning from the European imperial and cultural contexts that enveloped them, which influenced representation of abundance or dearth for commodity possibilities, navigation routes for wealth extraction, and limitations of territory to avoid (or incite) military conflict over these resources. In this era, maps were often status symbols of acquisitive or academic abilities or gifts to influence policy or investment choices.²² These inherently synthesized and generalized renderings of space blended utility and desire, and circulated an advertisement bolstered by ostensibly accurate information. Historians are in general agreement: Dutch maps during the golden age were intrinsically agents of empire.²³

This article deliberately diverges from specificities of cartographic technique to view them in the aggregate and against their intended visualizations and voids. For example, the vast majority of early Dutch Caribbean maps were created by mapmakers hired by the Westindische Compagnie. Company directors proudly displayed them to show both achievements and aspirations to investors.²⁴ Arent Roggeveen's 1676 map of Curaçao depicts an island that had been central to the Dutch slave trade for more than five years and its main port, Willemstad, which had just opened to free trade, a mercantile experiment

²¹ J. S. Keates, *Understanding maps* (London, 1982), part 3.

²² Surekha Davies, 'Depictions of Brazilians on French maps, 1542–1555', *Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), pp. 317–48.

²³ Elizabeth A. Sutton, *Capitalism and cartography in the Dutch golden age* (Chicago, IL, 2015); Benjamin Schmidt, *Inventing exoticism: geography, globalism, and Europe's early modern world* (Philadelphia, PA, 2015), pp. 83–6; Denis Cosgrove, 'Mapping the world', in James R. Akerman and Robert W. Karrow Jr, eds., *Maps: finding our place in the world* (Chicago, IL, 2007), pp. 112–13; Vera Keller, 'Pennetrek: Sir Balthazar Gerbier (1592–1663) and the calligraphic aesthetics of commercial empire', in Inger Leemans and Anne Goldgar, eds., *Early modern knowledge societies as affective economies* (New York, NY, forthcoming).

²⁴ Kees Zandvliet, *Mapping for money: maps, plans, and topographic paintings and their role in Dutch overseas expansion during the 16th and 17th centuries* (Amsterdam, 1998).

that made the company a considerable profit. Consequently, the interior of the island appears largely blank on the map, with only port towns and salt pans, the two largest sources of income, marked. Two detailed insets testify to the company's industriousness. In one, cherubs with cutting-edge scientific equipment survey a fortress protecting several Dutch flagships with its canons. The other inset enlarges Fort Amsterdam's schematics in St Anne's Bay. It emphasizes trade and industry, showing warehouses, an *ingenio* (sugar mill)-type building, and a depiction of what appear to be enslaved Africans manually manoeuvring a merchant's ship into port with ropes.²⁵ The imagery focuses on European conceptions of profitability over functionality or ways in which the space must have been conceived of by the enslaved. These maps diminished markers of risk, such as rebellious slaves who increasingly co-ordinated resistance with nearby Coro in Venezuela via watercraft unlike those that appear.²⁶

While many colonial maps shared this purpose, others highlight features for certain audiences. For example, estate maps like John Hapcott's 1646 schema of Fort Plantation in Barbados shows private property lines to support legal claims and boundary disputes in English tradition.²⁷ Decorative maps helped garner investment capital, or compel royal efforts at consolidating the realm, as in the 1696 map showing 'principal islands in America belonging to the English empire'.²⁸ Some maps charted navigation channels and currents, while others that were heavy on iconography of natural resources or planting focused on extraction plans for the Caribbean.²⁹ Still others were created to inform the public and shape their emerging views of this region. Each type offers new chances to interrogate and aggregate indicators of anti-colonial space.

To set manageable parameters for our project we elected to review Caribbean maps from 1500 to 1700 available at the JCB. These totalled nearly one hundred maps covering the Caribbean or individual islands, produced by a range of mapmakers and empires for diverse audiences. At least half of these appear in the library's Luna database, and all our citations link directly to

²⁵ Arent Roggeveen, 't eylandt Curacao ende de afbeeldinghe van t Fort Amsterdam groot besteck', map, in *Le premier tome de la tourbe ardente* (French edition of *Het brandende veen*) (Amsterdam, 1676), JCB map collection 03849.

²⁶ Linda Rupert, *Creolization and contraband: Curaçao in the early modern Atlantic world* (Athens, GA).

²⁷ John Hapcott, 'This plott representeth the forme of three hundred acres of Land part of a Plantation called the Fort Plantation of which 300 acres Cap. Thos. Middleton of London hath purchased...', map, 1646, JCB map collection C-8210.

²⁸ Philip Lea, 'The principall islands in America belonging to the English empire', map, c. 1696, JCB map collection 10959; Lestringant and Pelletier, 'Maps and descriptions of the world in sixteenth-century France'.

²⁹ Richard Ford, 'A new map of the island of Barbadoes wherein every parish, plantation, watermill, windmill & cattlemill... is described...' map, 1675-6, JCB map collection 8189, reproduced in J. D. Black, ed., *The Blathwayt atlas* (2 vols., Providence, RI, 1970-5); Anon., 'A new map of the island of Barbadoes...', map, 1676, JCB map collection 10796, reproduced in Black, ed., *Blathwayt atlas*.

these maps online for readers' further exploration.³⁰ This sampling facilitated fascinating comparisons and connections that, on the whole, suggest analytical starting points for further inquiry. Readers can thus interact with the primary materials themselves and, more importantly, ponder how similar maps could serve as new sources in their own work. As a complement to the article, ample descriptions of these maps are provided in a spreadsheet of our observations and features that recurred in our analysis. Embracing the 'Data-first manifesto', our findings are open to all who want to use them.³¹ In order to develop a typology and a chronology of these representations, we pooled our respective linguistic and historiographical knowledge in the JCB map room. By collectively discussing findings of presence or absence, and representations and toponyms in colonized and autonomous spaces, this thought experiment revealed important suggestions about these maps as primary sources of African and Indigenous populations.³²

Many of our sources are thick-mapped with historical information, such as de Bry's 1594 'Occidentalis Americae partis', which shows the four voyages of Columbus, or Coronelli's 1688 'Archipelague du Mexique', which depicts the history of how and when each island changed imperial hands.³³ On the other hand, many lacked these extra-geographical representations. Whether the intention of the mapmaker was to omit or include spaces of Indigenous and African peoples and their descendants, interrogating the maps allows us to get at not just the intended purposes of their creation, but ways in which various groups would have read these same spaces. For example, in the Barbadian maps mentioned above, the entire island is covered in symbols for different types of mills for crushing sugar cane.³⁴ The various types of mills seemed to be more important to map than any other feature. To the European investor, this represented wealth and progress. To the Taínos or

³⁰ Several undigitized Caribbean maps listed on Brown University's *Josiah* catalogue are not linked.

³¹ Categories logged in the spreadsheet (see <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/151DhUyMrsuowPhaDVRFrAToSEyWuwAOu6DXtNAgUEgU/edit#gid=0>) are, as follows: call number, map title, primary location, source author/creator, publisher/place, date, sea animals, fantastic animals, land animals, ships/transport, people: Native American/Caribbean, people: African origin, people: European origin, people: other/unclear, harbours, flora, buildings, and notes/questions. The 'Data-first manifesto' can be found at <http://data-manifesto.info>.

³² This is evident in toponyms and mapping of other empires: Bronwen Douglas and Elena Govor, 'Eponymy, encounters, and local knowledge in Russian place naming in the Pacific islands, 1804–1830', *Historical Journal*, 62 (2019), pp. 709–40.

³³ Theodor de Bry, 'Occidentalis Americae partis...', map, in *Americae pars quarta. Sive, insignis & admiranda historia de reperia primum occidentali India à Christophoro Columbo anno M. CCCXCII* (Frankfurt, 1594), JCB map collection 09887; Vincenzo Coronelli, 'Archipelague du Mexique, ou sont les isles de Cuba, Espagnole, Jamaïque, etc. avec les isles Lacayes, et les isles Caribes, connües sous le nom d'Antilles', map (Paris, 1688), JCB map collection C-6905.

³⁴ Ford, 'New map of the island of Barbadoes', JCB map collection 8189.

Caribs, each symbol represented artificial boundaries, spoiled landscapes, and homes and lifeways lost. To the enslaved, each symbol marked thousands of bodies broken in the sugar industry. Their ideas of space, antithetical to imposed property and spatial relations, did not adhere to this historic record.

Deconstructing maps in these ways allows us to explore early modern European conceptions of space based on their particular desires, and, more importantly, how those desires were bound up in the under-mapped lives of the non-Europeans who tried to survive them. Biased though they are, these maps can also enhance our understanding of the ways in which Indigenous and African people might appear on contested terrains despite being occluded by the mapmakers. The article follows absences and presences in Caribbean maps, and what they might mean in the aggregate.

III

Silences sometimes say more than words. In many early modern Caribbean maps, there is an obvious omission of references to Africans and Indigenous people who inhabited those places depicted on the maps. Information about their presence in those spaces, and European relationships to it, can be read in many of the landscapes, symbols, decorative elements, flora, fauna, and even sea monsters that dotted the Caribbean seas. Many of the maps' special features that are related to the ways in which Indigenous people and the enslaved occupied and made use of the land have been implied rather than made explicit in the mapping.

These detailed European property and spatial ideas normalized practice of legal claims by individuals and imperial rule on terrain that was, only a century before, shown with sparse buildings and vastly untamed and unnamed interiors. Earlier maps by Benedetto Bordone published in Venice in 1528 show Caribbean islands with sparse settlement marked mostly with churches, seemingly connoting safer spaces for Europeans (Hispaniola) as opposed to the severely mountainous, cavernous, and forested Jamaica, Guadeloupe, and Martinique. They are depicted as empty spaces, although they were Indigenous strongholds at the time, and the focus of a concerted effort by the Spanish to capture and enslave these populations.³⁵ The same mapmaker's portrayals of Jamaica fail to note Spanish presence in the island's open spaces (such as St Vincent) that were in actuality anything but empty.

In a 1534 map also published in Venice, the island of Hispaniola is shown in much greater detail, including regional place names of both Indigenous and

³⁵ Benedetto Bordone, 'Spagnola', 'Jamaiqua', and 'Guadalupe', maps, in *Libro di Benedetto Bordone nel qual si ragiona de tutte l'isole del mondo con li lor nomi antichi & moderni, historie, fauole, & modi del loro uiuere, & in qual parte del mare stanno, & in qual parallelo & clima giacciono, con il breve di Papa Leone* (Venice, 1528), JCB map collection 03361.

Spanish provenance, interior settlements, and locally specific detail of mountains, rivers, lakes, and forests.³⁶ Both of these maps, along with a 1594 depiction of the Caribbean issued in Frankfurt, insisted on disproportionately representing Isabela, a town founded on Hispaniola's northern coast by Colón in 1494, hit twice by hurricanes, and then abandoned in 1496. These three examples might suggest over-reliance on European projections of significance drawn from travel accounts about early Spanish claims, particularly since the settlement of Isabela was a failure. This 1594 map also shows large red forts deep in the interior of Spanish colonial claims, enveloping pockets of woods or hills, beside a cartouche with docile Indigenous faces, inviting fruits, and attractive birds.³⁷ It is of interest to note that often when Indigenous faces/bodies did appear on the geographical portions of the maps they were pictured in the decorative elements and cartouches, thus removed from their land and safely away from the European settlements upon it.

The cultivation of cash crops also speaks to Indigenous access to land, or lack thereof. The 1688 Coronelli map shows signs of the cultivation of crops such as pineapple, ginger, passionfruit, and indigo.³⁸ A hardly recognizable map of Cuba from 1564 by Paolo di Forlani entices readers with a description of sugar, gold, cotton, and grains that the island offered.³⁹ Another di Forlani map, this time of Hispaniola, shows a diminished (but not abandoned) Isabela. This map has greater detail of Indigenous place names and individual Spanish settlements, and perhaps most interestingly shows clearly bounded plots of land, with some that seem to be rowed with crops, including what appears to be sugar cane near Santo Domingo.⁴⁰ These cultivars are indicative of inherently conflict-ridden European encroachment upon the interiors, upon which Indigenous populations relied as refuge from European settlements.

The presence of plants in the maps often indicated how land was, or was not, utilized. Density of trees could denote light European presence, difficult terrain, or sparse cultivation. The Fort Plantation of Barbados shows surveyed, Anglocentric property relations in 1646, barely two decades after English colonization. Cleared space includes pasturage for cattle and a 'potato peece'; 'fallen land' appears with stumped trees. Structures of varying size appear on a tree-dotted landscape that adjoins the coast, though there is no reference to the slaves who likely built and toiled in the mill or saltpetre buildings portrayed. This map was in part drawn to settle an apparent property issue with a Mr

³⁶ Giovanni Battista Ramusio, 'Isola Spagnuola', map, in *Summario de la generale historia de l'Indie occidentali cauato da libri scritti dal Signor Don Pietro Martyre ... et da molte altre particolari relationi* (Venice, 1534), JCB map collection 0244.

³⁷ De Bry, 'Occidentalis Americae partis', JCB map collection 09887.

³⁸ Coronelli, 'Archipelague du Mexique', JCB map collection C-6905.

³⁹ Paolo di Forlani, 'L'isola Cuba', map (Venice, 1564), JCB map collection 31967. This was enhanced from a 1548 ptolemaic map by Jacopo Gastaldi.

⁴⁰ Paulo di Forlani, 'L'isola Spagnola', map (Venice, 1564), JCB map collection C-8602. Again, this was enhanced from a 1548 ptolemaic map by Jacopo Gastaldi.

Wright, who, according to the notes, had encroached on the estate.⁴¹ A 1674 map of Barbados does show a Wright tract set back from the coast marked ‘Balises B’ in roughly the north-west section of the island near Holetown.⁴²

Belying the impenetrable features or demographic fluctuations on some maps, an official Spanish map published in 1601 in Madrid showed no flora, mountains, or contested space, instead opting for a uniform presentation of Spanish place names across the islands that they claimed. Not only are Indigenous names broadly subdued, but the sea itself is not called Caribe.⁴³ These were visual projections of fictive Spanish governmentality and domination, including an orderly key, actively ignoring the major imperial competition that would ravage the future of this space.⁴⁴ Similarly, a Dutch map of Puerto Rico from 1644 not only showed extreme detail of coasts compared to earlier maps, but omitted native ‘Borichen’ references.⁴⁵ With greater accuracy in coastal mapping and physical topography, embellishments of flora and buildings diminished significantly alongside long-used Indigenous names.⁴⁶

However, Spanish representations of Hispaniola printed in the Americas in the mid-seventeenth century depended heavily on distorted size and thick-mapped detail to express two major anxieties facing their empire in the Caribbean. English ships of great size swarm the island, emanating as imminent threats from a featureless and empty Jamaica, taken only three years before by England amid their ‘Western Design’. The map, printed four decades before French colonization of Saint-Domingue, also magnifies the size of the small island of Tortuga in particular, owing to its disproportionate significance for early French presence on Hispaniola. Tortuga is shown with armed troops, a fort, and giant cannon, and features a large sketch of a working *ingenio* (sugar mill). Other small French settlements dot the western coast of the island, with large trees depicting the separation of the Spanish east from new encroachments by the *enemigo frances* (‘French enemy’).⁴⁷ This map visualizes these watershed moments of Caribbean history through the lens of Spanish worries.

⁴¹ Hapcott, ‘Plantation called the Fort Plantation’, JCB map collection C-8210.

⁴² ‘Description topographique et mesure de l’isle des Barbades’, JCB map collection 01903.

⁴³ Antonio Herrera y Tordesillas, ‘Descripcion del dstricto del audiencia de la Española’, map (Madrid, 1601), JCB map collection 01808.

⁴⁴ Ricardo Cerezo Martínez, *La cartografía náutica española en los siglos XIV, XV y XVI* (Madrid, 1994), pp. 257–60.

⁴⁵ Joannes Laet, ‘Grondt-teeckening vande stadt en kasteel Porto Rico ende gelegenheyt vande haven’, in *Historie ofte iaerlijck verhael van de verrichtinghen der geotroyeerde West-Indische Compagnie, zedert haer begin, tot het eynde van ’t jaer seshien-hondert ses-en-dertich* (Leiden, 1644), JCB map collection 03502.

⁴⁶ Jean Somer, ‘Les isles Antilles &c. Entre lesquelles sont les Lvcayes, et les Caribes par N. Sanson d’Abbeville geogr. ordre. du Roy’, map (Paris, 1656), JCB map collection C-0160.

⁴⁷ Juan Francisco de Montemayor y Córdova de Cuenca, ‘Plata forma q[ue] fabricó D. Ju[an] Fran[cis]co Montem[ay]or de Cuenca...’, map, in *Discurso político historico juridico del derecho y repartimiento de presas y despojos apprehendidos en justa guerra* (Mexico, 1658), JCB map collection 5163; Frank Peña Pérez, *Antonio Osorio. Monopolio, contrabando y despoblación* (Santiago, 1980).

Such exaggerated emphasis typifies the malleability of mapping to show meaning, in this case the paranoia of Spanish officials over imperial competition, which also often came at a cost to the Indigenous populations.⁴⁸

Divided islands elsewhere, such as Saint Christophe/St Kitts, were depicted with great detail of French settlements (by a French cartographer), with English lands portrayed as far more mountainous and empty. Intriguingly, one of the major features marked by the French was their control of significant salt ponds in the east, a job that required intensive raking by the enslaved, whose presence is not indicated.⁴⁹ A striking 1673 British map depicting profile views of all the coastlines of Montserrat from the sea shows parcelled and cultivated plots stretching up hills, with towns and ports marked by detailed buildings (such as windmills). In extraordinary detail, the map shows trees, mountains, and ravines, with a sizeable key of additional details. Perhaps to exoticize the place, the island is surrounded by mythological creatures, such as a fawn playing a pan flute, mermaids holding the flags of England, Ireland, and Wales, a monkey-like creature with perhaps a telescope, and two naked figures carrying a load of sticks who could have reflected the mapmaker's attempts at depicting Indigenous people.⁵⁰

As with the symbology of landscape and flora, representations of fauna – both fictional and accurate – in these Caribbean maps alluded to larger ideas that underpinned empire: those of exoticized space, and the transformations of that space from being dotted haphazardly with wild animal populations, towards parcels of land filled with domesticated European animals. The way in which animal symbolism and imagery are used in the maps is indicative of knowledge (or lack thereof), and communication of that knowledge for both sea and land.⁵¹

This knowledge starts off as coastal, and moves into the interior as more space was colonized and domesticated. Sixteenth-century representations and depictions of animals tended to be decorative or symbolic. In the seventeenth-century maps, they become more representative of actual commodities and evolving practices around animal husbandry in the Caribbean. Like native plants and people, animals in these maps are often divorced from time and space; they are symbolic more than descriptive. This indicates a historicization of these spaces with European ideas of Indigenous pasts after most of such Indigenous groups and the animals upon which they depended had been erased from the islands. The most startling example of this is in the 1676 map of the West

⁴⁸ Mariano Cuesta Domingo, *Descubrimientos y cartografía en la época de Felipe II* (Valladolid, 1999), pp. 317–36.

⁴⁹ Abraham Peyrouin, 'Carte de l'isle de Saint Christophe située a 17 Degrez 30 minutes de lat. septentrionale', map (Paris, 1667), JCB map collection 8189.

⁵⁰ 'Mountserrat island 1673', map, JCB map collection 8189, reproduced in Black, ed., *Blathwayt atlas*. Many place names, such as 'Cove Castel' and 'Bottomless Ghaut', correspond to contemporary locations.

⁵¹ Joseph Nigg, *Sea monsters: a voyage around the world's most beguiling map* (Chicago, IL, 2013).

Indies by Arent Roggeveen. The cartouche shows people and animals native to continental North America rather than to the Caribbean, among them a horned stag and a turkey.⁵²

Another common theme is the depiction of domestication over time. Jamaica offers rich examples of this phenomenon. In a 1672 map of the island, the precinct (or parish) of St James is portrayed with an icon of a man shooting a rifle at a wild horned bull rearing up on its hind legs.⁵³ Read together with Jamaican history, it suggests a buccaneer figure wrangling the wild cattle on which they subsisted on this island. A mere five years later, this same map was republished with some superficial changes, the most noteworthy being that the icon of the wild bull has been replaced with one of a placid sheep. A bull is drawn in the nearby precinct of St Georges, but it is calm and on all fours, next to the icon for pineapple cultivation, suggesting domesticity and order of a land that was, until very recently, more wild.⁵⁴ In this case, these changes are most likely indicative of the 1670 treaty of Madrid between the Spanish and English, which gave the English on Jamaica the stability to stop looking outward for Spanish threat, and start looking inward. The change in how animals of the island are portrayed in the icons alludes to the greater meaning of domesticating cattle that had been allowed to roam free, and all the ecological changes that accompanied such a shift as more land was claimed, catalogued, and made unavailable to those seeking autonomous spaces.

Sea animals, in particular the fantastic ones, also feature heavily in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Caribbean maps of the JCB, and they too are indicative of, and also shaped, European attitudes towards this region. Chet Van Duzer claims that these monsters were attempts by cartographers to depict what could actually exist in the ocean's depths. They worked with limited understandings of existence, and with the underlying assumption that what exists on land must have an underwater equivalent.⁵⁵ This explains the large number of sea-chimera found in the maps: a badger with bear claws and a serpentine tail, water dragons, and a unicorn fish, for example.⁵⁶ Christopher Columbus, heavily influenced by the fantastical descriptions of Sir John Mandeville, wrote about these types of fantastic creatures alongside his notes on his voyages to the Americas.⁵⁷ Mapmakers later drew from his accounts.

⁵² Arent Roggeveen, 'Generaele kaert van West Indien vande linie aequinoctiael tot benoerde Terra Neuf', map, in *Le premier tome de la tourbe ardente*, JCB map collection 03849.

⁵³ John Seller, 'Novissima et accuratissima insulae Jamaicae descriptio per Johannem Sellerum' (London, 1672), JCB map collection 9772.

⁵⁴ James Moxon, 'A new mapp of Jamaica. According to the last survey', map, 1677, JCB map collection 8189, reproduced in Black, ed., *Blathwayt atlas*.

⁵⁵ Chet Van Duzer, *Sea monsters on medieval and Renaissance maps* (London, 2014). Thanks to this author for thoughtful conversation during our overlapping residencies at the JCB.

⁵⁶ These are in de Bry, 'Occidentalis Americae partis', JCB map collection 09887; Anon., 'A new map of the island of Barbadoes', JCB map collection 10796.

⁵⁷ Ian M. Higgins, *The book of John Mandeville with related texts* (Indianapolis, IN, 2011).

The fantastic sea beasts became the basis for natural history drawings on maps, another attempt to catalogue and systematize the empire. Whales often appear in prominent or significant locations. In medieval manuscripts, whales were portrayed in association with the devil, because their large forms in the deep blue were sometimes mistaken for land, luring sailors astray. They were said to jump up into the water and crash down upon ships, or drag sailors to their deaths.⁵⁸ This, of course, spoke to the very real fear of how precarious a profession sailing was. Europeans went into these ventures expecting to be terrified, and so they *were* terrified by the new animals, and, by extension, by the new people they imagined encountering. This was despite the long history of Indigenous Caribbean people using canoes to safely navigate these same seas.

In several instances, fictional land-based animals from medieval fantasy and lore appear on the Caribbean maps, including manticores, griffons, fawns, various chimera, and a winged dragon. One animal, described as a Su, or Succurath, in the map's description, is part of a broader trend in mapping and artwork of the Americas, particularly towards the south. This animal, similar to a ground sloth or type of panther, is drawn as a chimera, with a bearded, humanoid face and a giant broad tail the length of its body. It appears on a map of Trinidad, an island which has had neither sloths nor panthers for as long as humans have roamed the earth.⁵⁹ Victoria Dickenson claims that the proliferation of the Succurath and other such fantastic American beasts replicated the idea that the Americas were 'part of a lesser creation, unfit for civilized habitation'.⁶⁰ The animal is associated with a European judgement of the native human population, and, alongside it, the implicit fears that Europeans would similarly degenerate in this climate.

IV

While there were many conspicuous omissions and silences in the maps when it came to Indigenous and African presence, there was also a wealth of overt evidence of the ways in which these groups navigated the Caribbean in spite of the encroachment of exploitative European land-use patterns. Whereas the silences in the maps have to be carefully parsed and read against the grain, the references and allusions are better off interrogated. These allusions take the form of symbols such as native dwellings with thatched roofs or figures in Indigenous dress, decorative elements like cartouches or in the margins, place names, and script within the islands of the maps themselves.

⁵⁸ Damien Kempf and Maria L. Gilbert, *Medieval monsters* (London, 2015), p. 34.

⁵⁹ André Thevet, 'Isle de la Trinité', map, in *La cosmographie vniuerselle d'André Theuet cosmographe du roy. Illustree de diverses figures des choses plus remarquables veuës par l'auteur, & incongneuës de nos anciens & modernes. Tome premier* (Paris, 1575), JCB map collection 07598.

⁶⁰ Victoria Dickenson, *Drawn from life: science and art in the portrayal of the New World* (Toronto, 1998), p. 42.

Christopher Columbus, among other early explorers working for Castile, described an Indigenous people (Kalinago) that influenced the ‘Caribbean’ toponym (and even ‘cannibal’ nomenclature for anthropophagy).⁶¹ This ethnonym ‘Carib’ became the name for the Caribbean region, and therefore also became the word used to describe many of the Indigenous groups that persisted alongside European expansion in the area. The toponym was thus an identifier imposed from outside.⁶² But many Taíno words remained on specific islands in maps over the following two centuries (such as the aforementioned ‘Borichen’ for Puerto Rico). Similarly, the Spanish island of Hispaniola, home to the colony of Santo Domingo, was labelled occasionally as ‘Hayti’, a name used by the Taíno. In this map, the eastern region is labelled ‘Caribana’, with smaller islands called Cibucheira and Cubacheira, which are difficult to link with current nomenclature.⁶³ Much of early modern ‘Caribbean’ space was inscribed with Indigenous place names,⁶⁴ toponyms that, like ‘America’, originated in editorial licence or interpretation errors.⁶⁵

Other cartographers partitioned these spaces within the Caribbean through further toponyms. For example, a 1598 map attributed to Metellus from the Wytfliet atlas accompanied a German translation of the monumental work of José de Acosta, and drew information from his and others’ qualitative work. In it, words linked to ‘Carib’ appeared in labels in southern Guyana, with the interior of the coast (devoid of formally labelled settlements) identified as ‘Caribana’, and south-east of Cubagua, where there is a symbol for a town named ‘Aldea de Caribes’ (‘Carib village’). South of Margarita island is another settlement simply labelled ‘Caribes’.⁶⁶ Similarly, the 1648 map of Guadeloupe included in an atlas published in Paris notes two Carib sites:

⁶¹ Philip Boucher, *Cannibal encounters: Europeans and island Caribs, 1492–1763* (Baltimore, MD, 2010); Hilary McD. Beckles, ‘Kalinago (Carib) resistance to European colonisation of the Caribbean’, *Caribbean Quarterly*, 38 (1992), pp. 1–124; Basil A. Reid, *Myths and realities of Caribbean history* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 2009), pp. 88–99.

⁶² Davies, *Renaissance ethnography*, pp. 68–9.

⁶³ De Bry, ‘Occidentalism Americae partis’, JCB map collection 09887. ‘Aity’ appeared as the name as late as 1598: see Abraham Ortelius, ‘Culiacanae, Americae regionis descriptio, Hispaniolae, Cubaee, aliarumque insularum circumiacientium, delineatio’, map, in *Theatre de l’univers, contenant les cartes de tout le monde* (Antwerp, 1598), JCB map collection 6009. The island was also described as ‘Quisqueja, Aytí, and Cipanga’ in a 1688 map: see Coronelli, ‘Archipelague du Mexique’, JCB map collection C-6905.

⁶⁴ Thierry L’Etang, ‘Toponymie indigène des Antilles’, in Cécile Celma, ed., *Les civilisations amérindiennes des Petites Antilles* (Fort-de-France, Martinique, 2008), pp. 32–56.

⁶⁵ Seymour Schwartz, *The mismapping of America* (Rochester, NY, 2003), p. 21.

⁶⁶ Johannes Matalius Metellus, ‘Residuum continentis cum adiacentibus insulis’, map, in José de Acosta, *Geographische und historische Beschreibung der uberauss grosser Landtschafft America: welche auch West India, vnd jhrer grösse Halben die New Welt genennet wirt* (Cologne, 1598), JCB map collection 01644; José de Acosta, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (Seville, 1590), esp. pp. 61, 180–332.

Pointe du Petit Carbet and Grand Carbet.⁶⁷ A 1597 map from Louvain shows several Spanish towns at places with Indigenous names.⁶⁸ Finally, Coronelli's 1688 map of the 'Mexican archipelago' includes several references to Carib occupation: St Vincent is labelled 'aux Caribes' ('To the Caribs'). The island of Bequia is described as 'est aux Caribes', and there is an island off the coast of what appears to be Venezuela (New Andalucia) called 'Isle de Caribes'. Of interest to note is the map's key in the upper right, which describes how ownership of islands is indicated on the map: A for English islands, E for Spanish, F for French, and H for Dutch. The key does not include an indication for Indigenous occupation, which Coronelli wrote directly onto the islands themselves, making a choice to represent their presence differently on the map from European occupation.⁶⁹ It is indicative of the attitude that Indigenous existence might be marked, but their ownership over the land unacknowledged as being on a par with European claims. It was common for maps from the same location and era to both include and omit these types of markers of Indigenous presence, suggesting intentionality on behalf of the map-makers or those who commissioned them.

French claims in the eastern Caribbean were still contested by Indigenous populations, unlike the Greater Antilles. A 1667 map of Martinique shows far more detailed topography in the west, with diminutive physical structures of French style. In the east, small buildings denote Carib *carbets*, in the area called 'Demeure des sauvages' ('Dwelling of savages'), a terrain that appears otherwise devoid of detail.⁷⁰ This void could signify any number of things: places where Europeans could not or did not go and therefore had limited knowledge about; places that Europeans did not find useful to map; and/or settlements that Europeans did not recognize as civilized and thus worthy of including on the map alongside their own settlements. As an additional example, a map of Guadeloupe from the same year labels the east of the island as 'little inhabited by the French'.⁷¹

These ideas also came into play regarding the spaces inhabited and used by enslaved Africans and their descendants. Compared to Indigenous figures, there were relatively few maps with distinctly African bodies on them, even in the cartouches, which usually contained ahistorical personifications of the

⁶⁷ J. Boisseau, 'Description de l'isle de Gadeloupe [sic] habitée des Francois depuis l an 1634 par le Sieur de l'Olive, en ayant chassé entierement les sauvages nommez Caraibes...', map (Paris, 1648), JCB map collection C-8209.

⁶⁸ Corneille Wytfliet, 'Hispaniola insula', map, in *Descriptionis Ptolemaicae augmentum., siue occidentis notitia: breui commentario illustrata studio et opera Cornely Wytfleit Louaniensis* (Louvain, 1597), JCB map collection 03405.

⁶⁹ Coronelli, 'Archipelague du Mexique', JCB map collection C-6905.

⁷⁰ Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, 'L'isle de la Martinique', map, in *Histoire generale des Antilles habitées par les François..., tome II* (Paris, 1667), JCB map collection 01897.

⁷¹ Abraham Peyrounin, 'Isle de la Guadeloupe scituée a 16 degrez de lat. septentrional', map (Paris, 1667), JCB map collection 8189.

geography that pointed to previous majorities, as opposed to the present.⁷² Richard Ligon's 1657 map of Barbados depicts two runaway slaves being chased by a slavecatcher in the less inhabited north-western part of the island. Also pictured is an enslaved African minding a camel, one of many Eurasian domesticated animals brought to the Caribbean on an experimental basis.⁷³ There is another map in which dark-skinned bodies are engaging in work: the 1676 Roggeveen map of Curaçao depicts what appear to be slaves pulling a ship into port in the inset of St Anne's Bay, and at the bottom there are three further people engaged in some netting or trawling from the bank into the water.⁷⁴ In the 1677 James Moxon map of Jamaica, there is a decorative element at the border of the map, of a dark-skinned male wearing very little, holding a bundle of sugar cane. In his other hand, he holds the scale of the map.⁷⁵ But these examples are outliers, not the norm. It is more common to omit mention of the enslaved, or to couch it in terms of cultivation of labour-intensive crops, such as sugar, or resource extraction like salt pans, silver mines, or logwood clearing.⁷⁶

On occasion, symbols were more descriptive. The action-packed Thevet map of Trinidad shows an interior that is not cultivated, and seems more the terrain of thatched Indigenous homes like *carbets* or *bohios* within the trees, contrasting with clearings containing dwellings built in European style. The same map also contains canoes rather than the European-style sailing ships, and all of the people on the map engaged in activities like fishing or preparing food over a *boucan* appear to be Indigenous as well. There is a battle depicted on the land between two groups of Indigenous warriors wielding spears, an approaching military from the sea via large canoe, attacking a defending force on land.⁷⁷

A 1672 map of Jamaica by John Seller contains an inset of a couple of figures who were meant to be Indigenous (signified with a bow). The woman carries a shallow basket filled with what appear to be custard apples (or sweetsop), a native fruit that the Spanish had prized enough to take from the island and cultivate in their holdings in Asia.⁷⁸ The aforementioned 1688 map of the whole Caribbean by Coronelli is illustrated with fruits of the terrain, the margins featuring ornate sketches of ginger, indigo, passionfruit, and pineapples, with sketches of Indigenous people apparently picking them.⁷⁹ These maps could be a reference to European knowledge of Indigenous crop cultivation, or

⁷² Elizabeth Sutton, 'Mapping meaning: ethnography and allegory in Netherlandish cartography, 1570–1655', *Itinerario*, 33, no. 3 (2009), pp. 12–42.

⁷³ Ligon, 'A topographical description ... of Barbados', JCB map collection 03547. Camels died from an apparently improper diet: Harry Alverson Franck, *Roaming through the West Indies* (New York, NY, 1920), p. 376.

⁷⁴ Roggeveen, 't eÿlandt Curacao', JCB map collection 03849.

⁷⁵ Moxon, 'New mapp of Jamaica', JCB map collection 8189.

⁷⁶ Thomas D. Rogers, *The deepest wounds: a labor and environmental history of sugar in northeast Brazil* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2010), pp. 1–18.

⁷⁷ Thevet, 'Isle de la Trinité', JCB map collection 07598.

⁷⁸ Seller, 'Novissima et accuratissima insulae Jamaicae', JCB map collection 9772.

⁷⁹ Coronelli, 'Archipelague du Mexique', JCB map collection C-6905.

might indicate that Indigenous people were forced by European planters to use their knowledge of the land for European profit, in the same ways that these planters exploited enslaved Africans' knowledge of speciality crops.⁸⁰ Even after colonial actors removed the Indigenous population from an island, evidence of their former presence persisted in unexpected places. For example, in a 1667 map of Marie Galant, many coastal places are marked 'passage pour canots', or canoes, accessible only via traditional transport. In a northern coastal region of this map, two warring parties appear near two place names titled 'massacre', indicating violence.⁸¹

African presence is far more clearly indicated in the toponyms of these sixteenth- and seventeenth-century maps. In the 1625 Joannes de Laet map of the Caribbean, Coro, a maroon settlement on what is now mainland Venezuela, is indicated on the map with a symbol for a village.⁸² The settlement's proximity to Curaçao made it particularly noteworthy for the Dutch, who showed interest in the island during the Eighty Years War, and would transform the island into the centre of the Dutch slave trade by the 1660s. Coro would become the maroon community of refuge for the enslaved who could reach it.⁸³

Jamaica, too, was home to widespread maroon activity at this time, and the map collections reflect this. In 1655, the British wrested Jamaica from the Spanish, and, after a short resistance, the Spanish colonists left the island for other Spanish territories, while those formerly enslaved by them fled into the mountainous central regions and to the north, joining existing maroon communities. In L. van Anse and Nicolaes Visscher's 1680 map of Jamaica, there is a 'Runaway Bay' on the north coast.⁸⁴ This bay is also noted in Vincenzo Coronelli's 1692 map.⁸⁵ It still exists now, a nod to the escape route that run-aways used after control of the island transitioned to the English. Several maps of Jamaica signal the presence of autonomous African communities, noted in the 'Tabula Iamaicae insulae' (1678) and 'An exact mapp of

⁸⁰ Among other Atlantic world examples is the rice-growing culture of South Carolina and Georgia, derived from the knowledge brought by west Africans trafficked from the 'rice coast', an area comprising modern-day Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. See Daniel C. Littlefield, *Rice and slaves: ethnicity and the slave trade in colonial South Carolina* (Urbana, IL, 1991).

⁸¹ F. Lapointe, 'L'isle de Mariegalande scituée a 15 degrez 40 min. au nord de la ligne equinoctiale gouvernée par Mr. de Temericourt', map, in du Tertre, *Histoire generale des Antilles*, JCB map collection 09908.

⁸² Joannes de Laet, 'De groote ende kleyne eylanden van West-Indien', map, in *Nieuwve wereldt ofte beschrijvinghe van West-Indien; wt veelderhande schriften ende aen-teekeninghen van verscheyden natien by een versamelt / door Ioannes de Laet, ende met noodighe kaerten ende tafels voorsien* (Leiden, 1625), JCB map collection 02303.

⁸³ Rupert, *Creolization and contraband*.

⁸⁴ L. van Anse and Nicolaes Visscher, 'Jamaica, Americae septentrionalis ampla insula. Christophoro Columbo detecta', map (Amsterdam, 1680), JCB map collection 10956.

⁸⁵ Vincenzo Coronelli, 'Isola de Iames, ò Giamaica', map (Venice, c. 1692), JCB map collection C-7614.

Jamaicae' (1683) as 'The Banditi'.⁸⁶ In 1660, the British recognized these runaway communities with a series of treaties designed to allow British settlers peace while they cultivated the island.

As the British developed Jamaica's sugar industry, their land use and increasing population of enslaved prompted an increase in maroon activity as well. Between 1673 and 1690, the island saw a series of slave insurrections and armed rebellions. Many of them were at least partially successful, resulting in hundreds of liberated formerly enslaved Africans and their descendants. This coincided with a new mapping trend of the island. English maps from this period contain many features which could be considered thick-mapping, most likely indicative of English aims to acquire and disseminate geographic knowledge of a formerly Spanish territory which had not been mapped in as much detail. This demonstrated their ambitions of colonial authority in the island, and is reflective of the centrality of Jamaica in British colonial design.

In 1686, the British Jamaican governors ordered a series of raids on the Windward Maroons in the Blue Mountains. Philip Lea's map from this time points out these fortified maroon strongholds ('Negro Palink' and 'Old Palink', from the Spanish word *palenque*, for the fortified hideouts of maroon groups). It also contains geographical features named 'Negro Valley' and multiple 'Negro Rivers', alluding to land and waterways used by maroons on the move.⁸⁷ After the 1690 slave rebellion on Sutton Plantation in Clarendon parish, more than 200 self-emancipated former slaves joined this *palenque*, which would later grow into Cudjoe's Town (later renamed Trelawny Town).⁸⁸

Edward Slaney's 1678 map of Jamaica contains labels for both a 'Negro River' and a 'Negro Savanna' in the east, near where Nanny Town, a maroon village which operated at the same time as Cudjoe's Town, would later take shape.⁸⁹ Both Nanny Town and Cudjoe's Town would become key players in the Maroon Wars, a series of conflicts between the maroon communities of Jamaica and the island's British colonial officials from 1728 to 1740.⁹⁰ By 1696, territories of both Windward and Leeward Maroons made it onto a map of the island through names of rivers, valleys, and savannahs.⁹¹ In many cases like the 'Palinks' and 'Banditi' of Jamaica, a certain breadth and depth of knowledge of each language and region is required to recognize the

⁸⁶ Edward Slaney, 'Tabula Iamaicae insulae' (London, 1678), JCB map collection 8189; Anon., 'An exact mapp of Iamaicae', map, in *The laws of Jamaica, passed by the Assembly ... Feb. 23. 1683* (London, 1683), JCB map collection 9290. Philip Lea, 'A new map of the island of Jamaica...', map, 1685, JCB map collection 10958, reproduced in Black, ed., *Blathwayt atlas*.

⁸⁷ Philip Lea, 'New map of the island of Jamaica', JCB map collection 10958.

⁸⁸ Cudjoe, leader of the maroons in Cudjoe's Town claimed to be the son of Naquan, the man who had organized the Sutton Plantation rebellion in Clarendon parish and led the group of runaways to the *palenque*.

⁸⁹ Slaney, 'Tabula Iamaicae insulae', JCB map collection 8189.

⁹⁰ Richard Price, ed., *Maroon societies: rebel slave communities in the Americas* (Baltimore, MD, 1996); Sylviane A. Diouf, *Slavery's exiles: the story of the American maroons* (New York, NY, 2016).

⁹¹ Lea, 'Principall islands in America', JCB map collection 10959.

significance of the terms, allowing them to hide in plain view to the average European reader. This is comparable to the *carbets*, headquarters of the Indigenous Kalinago, quietly noted along the coast of French Guadeloupe in multiple maps.⁹² Other maps, such as Peyrounin's 1667 'L'isle de la Guadeloupe', indicate entire territories under Indigenous control.⁹³

Overall, when it comes to the presence of Africans and their descendant populations in this Caribbean map sample, there are far more explicit references to self-emancipated Africans than to the enslaved in the iconography, and especially in the toponyms. As these groups of self-emancipated formerly enslaved and their descendants were more immediately problematic and posed more of a threat than the enslaved for the colonizing populations, this hardly comes as a surprise. References to the enslaved tended to be couched in terms of land use and resources. Many maps used different ways to identify plantation spaces, from dotted lines around plots, to marking out the various types of mills used in sugar production, to segmenting islands by ownership, yet the absence of slave quarters or other visual representation of the enslaved is conspicuous when compared to the number of maps which allude to runaway slaves, or maroons and their autonomous spaces.

It seems that the vast majority of references to Africans and their descendants in the maps was in the structures they were forced to build while enslaved, or in the nuisance they represented to slaveholders when they self-emancipated and joined runaway communities. The reasons for this vary, depending on who created the maps, for which audiences the maps were intended, and for what purposes. Some maps actively minimized all appearance of risk on behalf of investors, while other maps made these threats posed to planters by runaways explicit so that they could justify asking for armed assistance and royal intervention, such as would happen with the Maroon Wars in Jamaica in the eighteenth century.

V

Early modern Caribbean maps show ample evidence of enslaved people – the very colonial built environs demarcated by European property claims – and thus also erasures of earlier Indigenous inhabitants, though their place names often remained. Plantation landscapes, mills, salt ponds, and harbours all appear as unattributed evidence of slaves' exterior lives and labour. These representations say less about their internal lives, though their terrains of resistance appear as wilful transgressions of imperial bounds. Maroons were often heavily mapped, except for instances in which mapmakers deliberately avoided them in order to communicate projections of European dominance.

⁹² Boisseau, 'Description de l'Isle de Gadeloupe', JCB map collection C-8209.

⁹³ Peyrounin, 'Isle de la Guadeloupe', JCB map collection 8189.

Before the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment thoroughly rationalized maps into more uniform units, early modern Caribbean mapmakers garishly adorned them with flora, fauna, Indigenous and African figures, and place names that projected fugitive landscapes, consumption, and desires. Thick-mapped portrayals conveyed new knowledge alongside embellished scale, space, and notions of control, encapsulating tensions between the mystery and mastery of the colonial Caribbean. Extra-textual information drawn from lived experiences also related values and expectations that influenced future European endeavours in the physical world of the Americas. The result was informative spectacle that summarized, theorized, and modified real people and places, enabling ethnocides and concomitant environmental transformation by competing empires.

Developments in mapping practices were essential to a spatial history that created a Caribbean known as an exoticized space for coveted commodities that were obtained in vast quantities through suppression and domination of Indigenous and African peoples. They were more often proscriptive and prescriptive rather than neutrally descriptive. As such, maps offer another source which can be read against the grain of European silences or under-representations to find evidence of lives of oppressed populations under duress who left little documentary record. Many documentary records share these complications, while maps differ enough from written archives to add valuable depth to our evidentiary corpora. Beyond visualizations, early modern Caribbean maps offer insights into the lived spatial experiences of European projections of desire and design.