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## **Looting and commissioning indigenous maps: James G. Scott in Burma**

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## **Looting and commissioning indigenous maps: James G. Scott in Burma**

### **Abstract**

Based on indigenous maps collected in British Burma by James George Scott (1851–1935) and kept at the Cambridge University Library, this paper offers an alternative history of the first years of British colonisation in Upper Burma in the 1880s and 1890s. The entangled scripts – Chinese characters, Shan, Burmese and English – as well as the materiality and the visual codes of these documents bring into view forms of contact that did not last long. Contextualising these maps with other kinds of sources – including Scott's diaries and administrative reports – allows us to reconstruct their production as part of processes of intelligence gathering and frontier settlement. By tracing the more or less willing role of Burmese clerks, notables, guides and interpreters in the cartographic processes implemented by the English on the ground, we can reintroduce these actors into a history of cartography that has long been Eurocentric. Doing so reveals how the British had to rely on indigenous knowledge to control a territory quite unknown to them during the early years of colonisation.

### **Key words**

History of cartography; Upper Burma; Shan States; Indigenous mapping; Colonial encounter

## **Looting and commissioning indigenous maps: James G. Scott in Burma**

The richness and eclecticism of the Scott map collection at the Cambridge University Library makes it something of an Aladdin's cave. The collection was progressively built up between 1886 and 1901, during the British conquest of Upper Burma, from parcels regularly sent by James George Scott (1851–1935) to his brother, Robert Forsyth Scott,

the Master of St John's College.<sup>1</sup> The collection not only comprises indigenous cloth and paper maps but also manuscripts written in a wide range of languages – Pali, Sanskrit, Burmese, Shan, Lao, English – as well as European printed maps, administrative reports, correspondence, photographs and tickets, as James brought football to British Burma during his twenty-five years as a colonial official there (1886–1910).<sup>2</sup> In the collection, rare materials are kept side by side with printed archives revealing day-to-day administrative work. Using this collection requires an interrogation of what is currently a sensitive area: the provenance of these rare materials, which, according to Scott himself, were not so rare on the ground.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, their current rarity results from lack of conservation. As a consequence, historians have to deal with asymmetrical sources. On the one hand, Asian maps and manuscripts without any explanatory documentation and, on the other hand, European colonial sources. When Scott's brother's wife eventually gave everything to the Cambridge University Library in 1935, it came with a list of items and, wherever possible, their origin. However, this information is partial at best and forces us to cross-contextualise different kinds of sources to be able to analyse the fifty indigenous maps which are the focus here.<sup>4</sup>

Drawn on paper or cloth, with a pencil or in colour, as hastily scribbled sketches or elaborated maps, the items in the Scott collection show a great variety of forms and formats. Imagine yourself leaning forward over a table that will never be large enough to contain the biggest map (258 centimetres by 176 centimetres), and it will give you an idea of the dimensions of these colourfully painted pieces of cloth. Then imagine

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<sup>1</sup> Scott's diary [hereafter Diary], 11 April to 12 December 1888, British Library, India Office Records [hereafter IOR], MSS Eur. F278/3, 201, 220, 224, 231.

<sup>2</sup> A. Marshall, *The Trouser People: A Story of Burma in the Shadow of the Empire*, New York, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> B. Gaudenzi, A. Swenson and M.A. Middelkoop, The restitution of looted art in the twentieth century – transnational and global perspectives, *Journal of Contemporary History* 52 (2017) 491–518.

<sup>4</sup> On cross-contextualisation, see S. Sivasundaram, Sciences and the global: on methods, questions, and theory, *Isis* 101 (2010) 146–158.

yourself bent over the same table trying decipher the pale pencilled writings on a small piece of paper (21 centimetres by 33 centimetres) that had been folded in the pocket of a British officer. This is what the roughest sketches are like. From a visual point of view, and if we use Western categories to describe these Eastern maps, we can say that they range from the simplest sketch to the most aesthetically lavish spatial representations. Some of them may have predated the conquest, whereas others were certainly commissioned by British officers.

This paper aims to take these cartographic documents seriously as historical sources and to reintroduce them into the history of mapping from which they have been excluded until now. Indeed, there is much to be done on Southeast Asian maps, as the history of cartography has overwhelmingly focused on European traditions. The *Chicago History of Cartography*, an on-going enterprise launched by Brian Harley and David Woodward to study all cartographic traditions from prehistoric times to the present, makes a major contribution by provincializing Europe.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, it focuses on significant cartographic actors and institutions and particularly emphasises maps as political tools, just as Matthew Edney did in his study of British India.<sup>6</sup> In this paper, the challenge is to give space to other actors and bring insight into the conditions of production of maps. Building on Kapil Raj's idea of the coproduction of knowledge and of the map as a cross-cultural product, I aim to situate the maps in the Scott collection in complex contexts of contact and coproduction.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> J. Schwartzberg, Southeast Asian geographical maps, in: J.B. Harley and D. Woodward (Eds), *History of Cartography*, volume 2, book 2, Chicago, 1992, 741–827, mentions the Scott collection and describes some maps, but calls for further work on these artefacts.

<sup>6</sup> M.H. Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765–1843*, Chicago, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> K. Raj, *Relocating Modern Science: Circulation and the Constitution of Knowledge in South Asia and Europe, 1650–1900*, Basingstoke, 2007.

As with Raj's work on India, other scholars of Asian cartography have demonstrated its coproduction. Early modern cartography has been well studied, especially the Kangxi atlas based upon joint surveys by French Jesuits and Chinese agents, which calls into question deep-rooted dichotomies: Western vs Chinese, scientific vs traditional.<sup>8</sup> It is also this idea of a cartographic encounter between East and West that has led to major works on practices of mapping in India under British rule.<sup>9</sup> Southeast Asia is the poor cousin of this historiography, despite the existence of studies of Burmese maps, Thai maps and Vietnamese official geography.<sup>10</sup> Maps drawn by native painters in New Spain or made by indigenous people in North America can help us understand Southeast Asian maps.<sup>11</sup> Such an approach invites us to analyse the particular spatial discourses that produced them and to understand them in terms of their authors: European and Asian. Historical anthropology has focused on the drawing of maps by local actors in the context of European explorations.<sup>12</sup> Instead of working

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<sup>8</sup> L. Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China*, Chicago, 2001; L. Hostetler, Contending cartographic claims? The Qing Empire in Manchu, Chinese, and European maps, in: J. Akerman (Ed), *The Imperial Map: Cartography and the Mastery of Empire*, Chicago, 2009, 93–132; M. Cams, *Companions in Geography: East-West Collaboration in the Mapping of Qing China (c.1685–1735)*, Leiden, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> P. Hopkirk, *Trespassers on the Roof of the World: The Race for Lhasa*, London, 1982; D.J. Waller, *The Pundits. British Exploration of Tibet and Central Asia*, Lexington, 1990.

<sup>10</sup> T.O. Morris and Maung Maung Tin, Mindon Min's development plan for the Mandalay area, *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 49 (1966) 29–33; J. Schwartzberg, A nineteenth century Burmese map relating to French colonial expansion in Southeast Asia, *Imago Mundi* 46 (1994) 117–127; S. Phasuk and P. Stott, *Royal Siamese Maps: War and Trade in Nineteenth Century Thailand*, Bangkok, 2004; Ngô Đức Thọ, P. Papin and Nguyễn Văn Nguyễn (Eds), *Đồng Khánh địa dư chí*, Hanoi, 2003.

<sup>11</sup> B.E. Mundy, *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas*, Chicago, 1996; A. Di Piazza and E. Pearthree, A new reading of Tupaia's chart, *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 116 (2007) 321–340; M.E. Miller, B.E. Mundy and D. Carr (Eds), *Painting a Map of Sixteenth-Century Mexico City: Land, Writing and Native Rule*, New Haven, 2012; H. Parsons, British–Tahitian collaborative drawing strategies on Cook's Endeavour voyage, in: S. Konishi, M. Nugent and T. Shellam (Eds), *Indigenous Intermediaries: New Perspectives on Exploration Archives*, Singapore, 2015, 147–168; T.J. Bassett, Indigenous mapmaking in intertropical Africa, in: D. Woodward and G.M. Lewis (Eds), *History of Cartography*, volume 2, book 3, Chicago, 1998, 24–48.

<sup>12</sup> For an example, see M.T. Bravo, The accuracy of ethno-science: a study of Inuit cartography and cross-cultural commensurability, *Manchester Papers in Social Anthropology* 2 (1996); E.

with a division between traditional mapping and scientific cartography, or essentializing all mapping as a science, the purpose of these recent works is to examine the process of encounter between protagonists with contrasting world views and the dialogue between them to achieve commensurability between different kinds of knowledge. Such studies show the dependence of Europeans on indigenous people during the colonial era and put an emphasis on the role of indigenous intermediaries.<sup>13</sup> They offer methodological and conceptual tools to consider different degrees of commensurability and to analyse indigenous maps.

An indigenous map can be defined as a graphic or pictorial representation of an area of land made by an indigenous actor. In this article, indigenous refers to Burmese and Shan actors. However, this category of indigeneity is heterogeneous and needs to be deconstructed.<sup>14</sup> Burmese clerks employed by the British drew maps of the central plains but might have been almost as foreign as the Europeans in eastern areas such as the Shan States. Different kinds of people participated in drawing maps: educated or barely literate; sedentary or long-distance travellers. Scott used information from members of relatively long-established communities in Upper Burma but also from Asians who travelled in those areas. While focusing mainly on Burmese maps, I will draw attention to the variety of actors involved. Most of the maps have no visible

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Mueggler, *The Paper Road: Archive and Experience in the Botanical Exploration of West China and Tibet*, Berkeley, 2011; A. Craciun, Oceanic voyages, maritime books, and eccentric inscriptions, *Atlantic Studies* 10 (2013) 170–196; For the French scholarship, see H. Blais, *Mirages de la carte. L'invention de l'Algérie coloniale*, Paris, 2014; C. Lefebvre, *Frontières de sable, frontières de papier. Histoire de territoires et de frontières, du jihad de Sokoto à la colonisation française du Niger, XIX<sup>e</sup>–XX<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Paris, 2015; I. Surun, *Dévoiler l'Afrique ? Lieux et pratiques de l'exploration, Afrique occidentale, 1780–1880*, Paris, 2018.

<sup>13</sup> F. Driver and L. Jones, *Hidden Histories of Exploration: Researching the RGS-IBG Collections*, London, 2009; S. Konishi, M. Nugent and T. Shellam (Eds), *Indigenous Intermediaries: New Perspectives on Exploration Archives*, Singapore, 2015.

<sup>14</sup> As F. Driver, Hidden histories made visible? Reflections on a geographical exhibition, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 38 (2013) 427, puts it, 'the knowledge of many of the identifiable guides, interpreters and field assistants encountered in the RGS-IBG collections in many different contexts, from the Arctic to Amazonia, could hardly be characterised as "local" or "indigenous" in any straightforward sense'.

authorship, date, scale or key, and thus do not fit into a modern European understanding of what a map is. As a result, the focus is on understanding the materiality of the map, the techniques used to draw it and the visual codes as well as the kinds of writing that appear on it. This approach considers each map in terms of the language used, its conditions of production (hastily made or with a high aesthetic value) and even its use, examining, for example, translations or comments in other languages. Contrasting these maps with earlier ones from Burma or with other cartographic traditions in the region is a way of tracing continuities – what is typical of Burmese cartography – and ruptures – what is new and proves British influence.<sup>15</sup> In this respect, cross-contextualisation is done by comparing sources of the same nature: maps understood as pictorial or graphic representations of an area of land.

Nevertheless, complementary historical sources are needed to confirm the internal analyses and to go further in reconstituting the overall context of production and reception as well as the identity of the probable mapmakers and the skills they were likely to have had. Faced with the absence of explicit mention of these maps in written correspondence, we can still offer some hypotheses by considering Scott's papers and the context of the British annexation of Upper Burma in the 1880s and 1890s.

The son of a Scottish Presbyterian pastor, Scott gained extensive knowledge of Southeast Asia as a journalist.<sup>16</sup> In 1875, he was sent to Perak for the *Evening Standard* after the British annexation of Malaya. He then covered events in Burma for the *Daily News* until 1882, while being headmaster of an Anglican mission school. Back in England, he published his first book – *The Burman: His Life and Notions* under the Burmese

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<sup>15</sup> For an overview of the Burmese maps known so far, see T.N. Win, Unpublished notes on Burmese royal cloth-maps of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

<sup>16</sup> Apart from Marshall, *The Trouser People*, see G.E. Mitton, *Scott of the Shan Hills: Orders and Impressions*, London, 1936.



pseudonym of Shway Yoe.<sup>17</sup> He then returned to Southeast Asia when the *Evening Standard* sent him to cover the French campaign in Tonkin (now northern Vietnam) in 1884.<sup>18</sup> On his return to Upper Burma in 1886, he joined the new civil administration, first as deputy commissioner in Mandalay, then in Hlaingdet and Meiktila (Fig. 1). On becoming superintendent of the Shan States, he travelled extensively throughout the region, also surveying potential railway lines and delineating boundaries. The British wanted to put an end to overlapping sovereignties among these states, small principalities situated in the most easterly part of Upper Burma and led by chiefs – *Sawbwas* or *Myosas* – paying tribute to different rulers in Burma, China or Siam.<sup>19</sup> Nineteen indigenous maps in the collection bear the date when they were received in Cambridge, most probably noted on them by Scott's brother. Eighteen of them arrived between November 1887 and November 1892.

Scott also participated in three boundary commissions: the Anglo-Siamese from 1892 to 1893, the Anglo-French from 1894 to 1895, in the company of his (third) wife, Geraldine Edith Mitton, and the Anglo-Chinese from 1897 to 1899. Before retiring, Scott was asked to write a summary of the events he had witnessed and notes on the general administration of the colony. This gave birth to the *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States* which he published in 1901.<sup>20</sup> Along with Scott's reports, the *Gazetteer* is a wealth of information on the first steps of colonial administration and its main actors, providing some insights into how the commissioning of these indigenous maps may have occurred.

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<sup>17</sup> Shway Yoe, *The Burman: His Life and Notions*, London, 1882.

<sup>18</sup> J.G. Scott, *France and Tongking: A Narrative of the Campaign of 1884 and the Occupation of Further India*, London, 1885.

<sup>19</sup> There were three ranks for local chiefs: Swabwa, a Burmese word meaning king or chief; Myoza or Myosa; and Ngwegunhmu. See Scott, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*, Rangoon, 1900–1901.

<sup>20</sup> Scott, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*.

Overall, I argue that cross-contextualising Burmese maps looted or commissioned by the British leads to a better understanding of commensurability and the coproduction of knowledge by examining mapping process on the ground. Indeed, it reveals how the British had to deal with Asian actors and how the latter were part of the process – willingly or not. This offers a social history of mapping and, in doing so, contributes to the debate over indigenous cartography. Focusing on Burmese mapping uninflected by Western practices and on maps commissioned by the British, this analysis aims to complicate our perception of indigenous mapping through a reflection on commensurability.

#### LOOTING PRECOLONIAL ADMINISTRATIVE MAPS

A first category of maps includes those made by Burmese cartographers to fulfil the administrative purposes of the precolonial state. These may have been useful to the British, even though attempts at achieving commensurability were almost non-existent, since European and Burmese cartographies could align despite fundamental differences in their spatial discourses. In Burma as elsewhere, maps ordered by the monarch may have had two main roles. First, they had a symbolic function and served to establish a strong image of the ruler. For example, maps of royal cities were made for this purpose.<sup>21</sup> Second, they were made for the administration and seen as tools of political power: to delineate the boundaries of the different centres of power, to allocate lands or make cadastral surveys for taxation purposes.

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<sup>21</sup> F. Tainturier, *The foundation of Mandalay by King Mindon*, unpublished PhD thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2010.

Three maps representing parts of the Meiktila district, in central Burma, can be used to explore these representational strategies (Figs 2, 3 and 4). All of them are colourful painted cloth maps, as large as bed sheets. Pieces of fabric are sewn together for the biggest maps but lengths and widths differ each time. In other words, it was not one roll of cotton that was distributed among Burmese officials to map the country. Neither date nor cartographer are mentioned, and orientation is provided through the four cardinal points written in Burmese on the four edges of the map. These maps show a bird's eye view with very figurative trees, mountains and pagodas, according to visual codes that create a unity within each map. Place names in Burmese are sometimes enclosed within circles or rectangles, single or double, according to their hierarchy.

The map showing the 'Yindaw sub-division' (Fig. 2) makes it possible to count the number of villages in the territory and gives the distances from the main city (Yindaw) in the Burmese unit, *ta*, which corresponds to approximately three metres. The map could be read as one whose information comes from cadastral records as well as *Sit-tans* – administrative records made by provincial officials for the king – which provided answers to enquiries from the central administration on administrative boundaries, the number of villages, revenue, and so on.<sup>22</sup> During the Konbaung dynasty, such enquiries occurred in 1783 and 1802 at the countrywide scale and may have served as a basis for these maps, probably drawn later.<sup>23</sup> While this information was part of the Burmese administrative system and predated the British occupation, it may have been most useful to the newcomers by providing the dimensions of the territory and the distances between major places. Benefitting from such information did not prevent the British from making their own surveys but certainly helped them on their arrival in the

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<sup>22</sup> F. Trager and W. Koenig, *Burmese Sit-tans 1764–1826: Records of Rural Life and Administration*, Tucson, 1979.

<sup>23</sup> F. Tainturier, Unpublished notes on the maps in the Scott collection, Cambridge University Library.

region.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, since Scott began his service in the civil administration in central Burma – in Mandalay, Meiktila and Hlaingdet – he may have acquired these precolonial maps at that time. It is likely that some of them were part of Burmese manuscripts taken by soldiers as trophies: they were certainly beautiful enough to arouse their admiration.<sup>25</sup> Scott may also have ordered maps in order to get a better knowledge of the country under his administration, which was then quite unknown to the British. However, there is no sign of adaptation for British purposes on the map showing the ‘Yindaw sub-division’ and it may be a precolonial map rather than one compiled for Scott himself.

Both maps showing the ‘Townships of Pindalè Nyaungok and Taungtha’ (Fig. 3) and ‘Meiktila and the country south’ (Fig. 4) were clearly made for land allocation purposes. They refer to the period before the British annexation, when the Burmese king had given lands to the horsemen serving the crown, either at the court or in the military, for their families and descendants.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, they mention, in Burmese, the ‘land given to the crown horsemen of the great golden country’ and ‘land given to the crown units used as clerks in Meiktila’ (Fig. 3) as well as the ‘golden land, land of horses’, delineated in yellow (Fig. 4). This wording is found on other maps from the period, especially the ‘Map of the Royal Lands’ showing land allocations in a territory south of Mandalay. The ‘royal lands’ (*a-ya-daw mye*) surround ancient villages and were given by the king to groups of men serving him.<sup>27</sup> But the reference to precolonial land allocation does not automatically imply that these maps were made by the Burmese for the Burmese, as up-

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<sup>24</sup> For an example of an early survey see *The Burma Route Book*, 1903, IOR L/PS/20/D141/1.

<sup>25</sup> *Diary*, IOR MSS Eur. F278/3, 47–48.

<sup>26</sup> Tainturier, Unpublished notes on the maps in the Scott collection.

<sup>27</sup> *Map of the Royal Lands*, Cambridge University Library, Ms. Plans. R. c. 3, <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-MAPS-MS-PLANS-R-C-00003/1> last accessed 3 December 2019; Tainturier, Unpublished notes on the maps in the Scott collection; *Mapping the Maps* – a guest post from Natasha Pairaudeau, 18 April 2017, <https://specialcollections-blog.lib.cam.ac.uk/?p=14308> last accessed 3 December 2019.

to-date administrative tools for the king to enable him to face the British. They might also have been commissioned by the newly-arrived British officials wanting to know about the allocated lands to plan their occupation of the territory, the areas still available being identified by encircled names.

The map showing the 'Townships of Pindalè Nyaungok and Taungtha' (Fig. 4) provides a scale in Burmese ('1 inch = 2 English miles of Myanmar province') and the names of the main cities are given in Burmese in the bottom centre of the map, almost as a title ('city of Pindale', 'city of Nyaungok', 'city of Taungtha'). Providing a scale with British miles and such a title is rare enough to conclude that the British were responsible for the map. However, this map cannot be said to be a hybrid one, demonstrating Burmese and English interactions, as it presents all the characteristics of a Burmese administrative map. Major elements, natural features and also those with political and religious importance, are visually highlighted. For instance, the figurative depiction of Mount Popa, an extinct volcano west of Meiktila and a popular pilgrimage site, shows that the point of mapping was not to provide a representation to scale – even if the scale was provided to please the British – but to put emphasis on the most important places according to the cartographer's spatial conceptions. Such representations reinforce the decorative dimension of the map but do not fit the modern European way of mapping. It gives the impression that the pilgrimage site is more meaningful for the Burmese map maker and map user than the administrative hierarchy and the roads that are shown. In other words, there is an attempt at commensurability by providing a scale, but continuity with older Burmese traditions demonstrated by using a bird's eye view shows the limits of that commensurability.

Either looted or commissioned, these maps were made by Burmese map makers and reflect a Burmese habitus in depicting these places. It is important to ask who was

able to draw such maps at the time and who could have been the interlocutors. In precolonial Burma, map makers were royal officials, court painters, architects or land surveyors.<sup>28</sup> They would travel the country to render maps of different cities, even if town officials may also have been able to draw maps. These different actors would produce different kinds of maps. The biggest and most beautiful were most probably drawn by painters and may have had a decorative purpose. On some maps the writing is oriented in many different directions, showing that the map was produced on a table with its author moving around this large document. They are certainly based on a compilation of different administrative reports and may also derive from preexisting maps or combinations of sketches and itineraries. Indeed, the copying and use of older maps was a common practice among map makers.<sup>29</sup> Overall, the aesthetic quality of the three maps indicates that their drawing took place in an adequate location, probably an official residence, and required care and attention. If the use of a scale on one of them shows a desire to fit British expectations, the maps clearly belong to Burmese state cartography. In this, they differ from the more sketchy maps in the collection which were made under different conditions, where commensurability may have been more important.

#### COMMISSIONING INDIGENOUS MAPS IN A CONTEXT OF IMPERIAL EXPANSION

Examining more hastily produced Burmese and Shan maps through their contexts of production aims to complicate the categories of indigenous intermediaries or informants and to explore how far these maps were made commensurable with British

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<sup>28</sup> Win, Unpublished notes on Burmese royal cloth-maps.

<sup>29</sup> Win, Unpublished notes on Burmese royal cloth-maps.

modes of mapmaking. Both Nicholas Dirks and Christopher Bayly, despite their fundamental conceptual differences, suggest that the establishment of imperial authority caused a shift from the coproduction of knowledge to imperial knowledge.<sup>30</sup> I argue that indigenous maps were commissioned and used by the British before they could rely solely on their own cartographic knowledge and that this period of time overlapped the establishment of imperial authority. The territorial annexation of Burma introduced a shift, signalled by the arrival of new practices and actors, such as the Survey of India, which eventually mapped the country. Yet, in border areas coproduction of knowledge continued to be important for much longer.

Scott's activities created many opportunities for indigenous mapping. As a member of the civil administration in central Burma, then assistant superintendent and superintendent in the Shan States from 1886, he had to deal with different issues that provided impulses to construct maps: conquest and pacification of newly annexed territories; boundary delineations; the construction of roads, and so on. We can also assume that Scott did not gather all the maps. He was responsible for sending small parties to often unexplored regions and they could very well have commissioned maps too. It is not possible to reconstruct the whole process of the enquiries and encounters these investigations involved between British officials or surveyors and the people who answered their questions. Nevertheless, it is possible to speculate about the kind of interlocutors involved and offer some insights into the identity of the informants, whether Shan traders or local chiefs. This enables us to understand who the authors of these maps might have been, the circumstances in which the maps were made and how commensurable they were with British forms of cartographic knowledge.

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<sup>30</sup> N.B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain*, Cambridge, 2006; N.B. Dirks, Imperial sovereignty, in: A.L. Stoler, C. McGranahan and P.C. Perdue (Eds), *Imperial Formations*, Santa Fe, 2007, 311–340; C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870*, Cambridge, 1999.

### Achieving commensurability: indigenous maps and intelligence gathering

Place names and roads were at the centre of intelligence gathering for military and strategic purposes. Asking the inhabitants for geographical information led to the production and collection of indigenous knowledge, as Bayly has shown for India.<sup>31</sup> This also happened during the conquest of Tonkin by the French in 1883–1885 and Scott, who covered this campaign for the *Evening Standard*, returned with evidence of intelligence gathering practices. This was a booklet written in Hà Nội on 27 January 1884 by Lieutenant Bobin who had participated in the war.<sup>32</sup> He had even signed a copy for Scott. The booklet includes how to search for a mayor, *lý trưởng*, or village elites; questions on place names, roads and distances; and inquiries into the presence and number of dacoits – Vietnamese and Chinese bands fighting the French – among other things. All this information was gathered by the French as part of a large-scale enterprise within which almost all provinces and districts in Tonkin were mapped by the Vietnamese for the new rulers. As a result, there are more than two hundred Vietnamese maps in the Vietnamese National Archives which were drawn during the first fifteen years of colonisation (1883–1897). These maps prove how much the French officers and administrators depended upon the knowledge of Vietnamese administrators and village elites.

In Upper Burma, similar forms of the coproduction of knowledge happened through the military and the Survey of India.<sup>33</sup> After annexing the region in November 1885, the British aimed at controlling resource extraction, taxation and trade routes

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<sup>31</sup> Bayly, *Empire and Information*.

<sup>32</sup> A. Bobin, *Vocabulaire de l'officier*, Hanoi, 1884. Copy in Scott collection, LL4 10.1–2.

<sup>33</sup> Although the Survey of India has been presented as an imperial institution, see Edney, *Mapping an Empire*.



towards China. They first had to control the newly conquered country and put an end to resistance. The military columns in charge of the pacification conducted surveys. Indeed, the first operations of the Survey of India, the institution officially in charge of surveying and mapping Upper Burma as part of the Raj, occurred hand in hand with the military when Major Hobday led surveys as part of three expeditions between 1885 and 1886.<sup>34</sup> Because surveyors could not go everywhere on their own – lacking time, money and men, and insecurity being widespread – they also depended heavily on indigenous knowledge. In order to draw his topographical maps, Hobday completed his sketches and reports with ‘the information obtained from maps of the country prepared by Burmese draftsmen’.<sup>35</sup> These draftsmen probably knew how to draw maps according to Burmese practices and it is likely that the Burmese employed by the British could have been the first providers of this indigenous knowledge.

It therefore it becomes possible to talk about the coproduction of knowledge, as these maps would have been the result of mixed cartographic practices. One map from ‘Ko-ga-yine Circle’, sent from Hlaingdet on 10 January 1887, and received in Cambridge on 16 November, reveals an attempt at commensurability in the context of military activity against dacoits (Fig. 5). Drawn on paper, without any scale or legend, it represents a circle, which is an administrative entity within a district, using a Burmese way of depicting the hills and a pagoda, with the place names for circles, rivers and villages as well as some distances in Burmese. A first way in which it was made commensurable with British cartographic practice lies in the simplification of the drawing in comparison with more crafted maps. The pagoda and the hills are depicted in a sketchy way reinforced by the use of pencil. Moreover, no trees are depicted. Instead,

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<sup>34</sup> Report on the operations of the Survey of India Department during 1885–1886, IOR V/24/3984, 65.

<sup>35</sup> Report on the operations of the Survey of India Department during 1886–1887, IOR V/24/3985, 67.

the word 'jungle' is written in Burmese and in English on the blank spaces of the map. This form of labelling is very common on European military sketches but runs contrary to Burmese cartographic practice. It may indicate that the Burmese author knew English practice and produced a mixed representation as a result. A second aspect of commensurability appears in the translation of terms on the map. Interestingly, given that most maps in the collection were not translated at all, or at least not in a systematic way, most of the names on this map were translated into English and the distances in Burmese units converted into English miles. This was exactly the sort of information that interested the British, and it is significant that some distances in miles – '2 ½ miles', '4 ½ miles', '3 miles Mandalay to Haingdet road' – are not translated from Burmese but were probably added by British surveyors. Also added were military comments – 'probable line of retreat of dacoits', 'cavalry here?' – as well as a hierarchy of roads: 'road', 'cart road', 'royal road'. These additions prove that the information originally available on the map was insufficient for British military needs. The additions may have come from further information given by the map maker and added in English. Or the British may have used this sketch map drawn by a Burmese and annotated it themselves for military purposes. Whatever their provenance, the additions reveal how far the British built on a Burmese map and made it fit their military needs. In this particular case of coproduced knowledge commensurability was achieved through simplification of visual codes, translation of terms and conversion of measures, and the addition of text in Burmese and English. In the first years of British Upper Burma, the military and the Survey of India needed such Burmese maps, even while they used their own men and methods to survey the country.

Coproduction of knowledge in the context of intelligence gathering also took the form of compilation by the British of oral or written information provided by Shan or

Burmese people. In January 1887, a military column led by Colonel Edward Stedman and accompanied by Arthur Hedding Hildebrand, the superintendent, marched through the Shan States to establish treaties (*sanad*) with local chiefs which would define the relationship between them and the government.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, the British wanted to let the chiefs continue to reign over their kingdoms at the borders of the territory while coming under British rule. A 'Map showing results of native information collected with the Northern Shan column 1887-88, Mandalay, 23/3/1888' resulted from this march (Fig. 6). On cloth, it shows place names, a few roads in red and some blue lines for the border ('New boundary'). It looks like any reconnaissance sketch, but the mention of 'native information' in the title indicates that there was coproduction of knowledge, as the information, presumably provided orally as part of a dialogue with some Asian actors, was eventually inscribed on a map by the British.

Other maps were based on different forms of information, some being copied from indigenous maps, as with the French practice in Tonkin.<sup>37</sup> For example, the 'Map of Yemethin and Ningyan districts' is identified as having been 'compiled from Burmese maps and other sources by Jenkins, Major'.<sup>38</sup> It resembles the map in Figure 6, providing place names, roads and rivers. Although the original Burmese maps have not been found or identified, these later maps represent the main elements necessary for military operations. Such maps demonstrate that transforming oral indigenous information into a map or compiling several indigenous maps could be another way of achieving commensurability.

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<sup>36</sup> Scott, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*, volume 1, 1, 295.

<sup>37</sup> For instance, Scott collected the 'Copy of a Vietnamese map' by Lieutenant Goldschoen, Scott collection, LL4.24.

<sup>38</sup> Scott collection, LR13.19, sheet 1-3; LR13.20.1-6, sheet 4-9.

The construction of new roads, for the military and for the integration of the newly conquered territories, was another important context for Burmese mapping.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, the British used their Burmese employees to obtain specific knowledge, mostly place names. For example, a Burmese map representing the road from Hlaingdet to Nyaungshwe, a town bordering Inle Lake, mentions an author on the back, calling it 'Our staff map on the way up' (Fig. 7). The map depicts a very important axis linking the plain of Mandalay with the Shan States, and Scott supervised the construction of this new road. As he wrote in 1889, 'I came up it [the new road from Hlaingdet to Kalaw] in the beginning of March and great progress had been made. When completed, it will be a great boon to the inhabitants of the Myelat [western part of the Shan States], for by building a few small bridges every State may easily put itself in cart communication with Burma'.<sup>40</sup> The map may have been drawn on this journey – on the way up – by a Burmese employee of Scott. His diaries regularly evoked clerks but he rarely gave names. The map represents the main rivers and mountains as well as Inle Lake. Most importantly for the British, it provides a list of place names along the different roads that would prove useful for drawing further maps. The reliance on Burmese employees is confirmed by another itinerary map showing three parallel axes leading from Wundwin to Mandalay and the mountains east (Fig. 8). From 25 November to 19 December, Scott was at Wundwin, a town south of Mandalay, and on Tuesday 21 December, at Hlaingdet, he wrote in his diary 'Tun Yé making map'.<sup>41</sup> Tun Yé may have been a Burmese clerk serving Scott, which would explain why he is named. He may have drawn this map at

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<sup>39</sup> C. Haines, Colonial routes: reorienting the northern frontier of British India, *Ethnohistory* 51 (2004) 535–565; C. Haines, *Nation, Territory, and Globalization in Pakistan: Traversing the Margins*, London, 2012.

<sup>40</sup> J.G. Scott, Report on the administration of the Shan States for the year 1888–1889, Fort Stedman, 28 June 1889, IOR MSS Eur. F 278/67, x.

<sup>41</sup> Diary, 20 October 1884 to 10 April 1888, IOR MSS Eur. F278/1, 121.

Hlaingdet, with all the time and material needed – the map is a very crafted one, with a lot of colours. Although the evidence is thin, the dates and places correspond.

Showing different degrees of commensurability, these Burmese maps reveal that establishing imperial authority relied initially on indigenous knowledge – place names most of all, but also routes – and that Burmese employed by the British were certainly key actors in this coproduction of knowledge. However, in the Shan States where the British gradually established colonial rule, other informants and indigenous map makers had to be found, with whom achieving commensurability was a challenge.

#### The limits of commensurability: frontier issues

I now turn to how Scott proceeded in the border areas, what kind of informants he encountered and to what extent he attempted to achieve commensurability with the information gathered. The Shan States, although small independent kingdoms, were subject to overlapping sovereignties according to the Mandala-state conception prevailing in the region.<sup>42</sup> Based on this approach, centres of power exerted rule over less important centres, guaranteeing authority more than strictly delineated territories. However, since the British wanted to delineate borders, officials accompanied by soldiers would go and get geographical and political information, meet the local chiefs and settle the frontiers. Most maps of the period resulted from this attempt at knowing the country through its place names, communication lines and the historical boundaries between the small principalities. In 1889–1890, in order to deal with Siamese pressure on the Trans-Salween States, Scott went to Kengtung to settle the frontier and the

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<sup>42</sup> T. Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*, Honolulu, 1994, 97–108.

disputed areas.<sup>43</sup> In his report to the chief commissioner of Burma, he set out the difficulties he encountered, especially the discrepancy between his questions and the answers he received:

In a country where there is no measure of distance, where a march down a hill is called a short one and the same march the other way is called twice the length, where a finger pointed vaguely at the sky supplies the place of milestones, and the statement that it is so many 'nights' to a given place is the only available dead reckoning, it is not easy to estimate the area of territory.<sup>44</sup>

Converting measures of travelling time, given in days and nights, into miles was a commonly encountered difficulty in other settings.<sup>45</sup> Scott eventually produced an estimation of Mōng Pu territory based on ten to twenty miles for a march, indicating that he attempted to convert oral information into a recognisable metric, taking into account the hilly nature of the country and the variations it implied.

In such circumstances the possibility of commensurability also depended on the kind of interlocutors that Scott could find. The data on which he based his calculations of distances clearly show that traders and merchants were major informants and he himself wrote that they 'are the only Shans who know anything about the country'.<sup>46</sup> He nevertheless distinguished between the 'Panthe and Chinese merchants, none of whom are permanently resident in Keing Tung', and the traders living in Kengtung who were not very numerous, which made it quite challenging to get information. In other words, there was no unified category of 'traders', making it impossible to define them all as

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<sup>43</sup> Report sent by J.G. Scott to the Chief Commissioner, Burma, from Camp Pang Sarang, 19 May 1890, IOR MSS Eur. F 278/70; J.G. Scott, Report on the administration of the Shan States for the year 1889–1890, Fort Stedman, 1 July 1890, IOR MSS Eur. F 278/71.

<sup>44</sup> Report sent by J.G. Scott, 26.

<sup>45</sup> Illustrated notebook kept by Sir George of his journey in Burma in 1887, Royal Geographical Society, Younghusband Collection, ar GB402 GFY/2/1, last page; Report on the Keng Tung Keng Cheng mission for 1893–1894, IOR L/PS/20/1, 47–48.

<sup>46</sup> Report sent by J.G. Scott, 35.

'local informants' or 'indigenous traders'. Controlling long-distance trade between China and the northern Indochinese peninsula since the early modern period, the 'Panthe' traders belonging to the Hui ethnic group played an important role in these border areas.<sup>47</sup> Between November and April, caravans would leave Dali and Yunnanfu [Kunming] in China to supply the northern Indochinese towns in exchange for cotton.<sup>48</sup> Most of these traders were Muslims, though it is difficult to know how far religion shaped the way the British saw them. Gaining geographical knowledge of long-distance itineraries seems to have been more important to the British than the religion of their informants. Though they worshipped other divinities, dressed differently and spoke another language, Panthe traders were quite well known in the border areas and participated in the local ethno-political systems.<sup>49</sup> While several British sources mentioned them as good informants, especially for routes between Burma and China that interested the British for trade and railway projects, Scott was looking for another kind of information. He noted that, 'It was not without considerable difficulty that I got even a list of the "32 cities of the Khön [the Kengtung Shans]". The following seems to be accurate'.<sup>50</sup> In other words, he was not looking for itineraries but for a picture of the spatial and political organisation of the Kengtung state through a list of place names, according to an old and widespread geographic method for describing a territory. He thus needed knowledge from local informants. The list of the thirty-two cities he got

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<sup>47</sup> D.G. Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate. Islam, Ethnicity, and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China, 1856–1873*, Stanford, 2005; A.D.W. Forbes and D.E.F. Henley, *The Haw. Traders of the Golden Triangle*, Chiang Mai, 1997; J. Wang, *Concord and Conflict. The Hui Communities of Yunnan Society*, Stockholm, 1996.

<sup>48</sup> C.P. Giersch, Cotton, copper and caravans: trade and the transformation of southwest China, in: E. Tagliacozzo and Wen-Chin Chang (Eds), *Chinese Circulations: Capital, Commodities, and Networks in Southeast Asia*, Durham, NC, 2011; A. Hill, *Merchants and Migrants: Ethnicity and Trade among Yunnanese Chinese in Southeast Asia*, New Haven, 1998, 8; Wen-Chin Chang, *Beyond Borders: Stories of Yunnanese Chinese Migrants of Burma*, Ithaca, 2014.

<sup>49</sup> E. Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma, A Study of Kachin Social Structure*, London, 1954.

<sup>50</sup> Report sent by J.G. Scott, 35.

may have been gathered from two merchants while Scott was at Möng Nai from 18 to 23 March 1889, before getting to Kengtung. Indeed, he mentioned in his diary 'two Keng Tung men' producing for him a 'list of place names' and that they 'started Le Noi & [the Mäng?] on the job to make a map', which Scott described as 'Rather wild'.<sup>51</sup> This seems to indicate that Scott relied more on the list of place names than on the map made by the two Keng Tung men. Gaining access to an accurate list of places was more important for Scott than an inaccurate and incommensurable map.<sup>52</sup>

By qualifying the map as 'Rather wild', Scott deprecated indigenous knowledge.<sup>53</sup> This happened in other cases too, even in the case of maps provided to him by local authorities. In 1892 Scott recorded that 'Hsipaw sent maps of his borders, not very comprehensible though'.<sup>54</sup> The lack of commensurability appears clearly here, as the intelligibility of the map was at stake. Another example is the 'Map of Trans-Salween country' which was described on the back as 'well intentioned but distinctly wild' (Fig. 9). Drawn on paper with a pencil, it shows that the Europeans who commissioned the map also provided the tools to draw it, as pencils were not in use in the Shan States at that time. It was hastily scribbled, as vegetation and hills were depicted quite roughly, not in the figurative way so common in Burmese cartography. The boundary was represented with a few flags, following a Burmese habit that would not fit British expectations and may partly explain Scott's critical comments on a map that still provided information that would allow the British to draw their own maps of the country.

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<sup>51</sup> Diary, 11 February to 21 December 1889, IOR MSS Eur. F278/4, 13–14.

<sup>52</sup> M.N. Bourguet, C. Licoppe and H.O. Sibum (Eds), *Instruments, Travel and Science: Itineraries of Precision from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century*, London, 2002.

<sup>53</sup> Caustic comments on indigenous maps can be found in several British administrative reports. In particular, in G.E. Litton, Report on a joint survey of the Burma-Yunnan boundary, March to May 1905, IOR L/PS/20/D239, 3–4.

<sup>54</sup> Diary, 26 April 1892 to 22 January 1893, IOR MSS Eur. F278/9, 65.



Scott's critical distance was also evident in relation to the maps provided him by the local chiefs during the settlement of the frontier itself. At the end of December 1891 he made a tour of North Hsenwi to attempt to settle the Chinese Shan States bordering Burma. On 2 February 1892, he noted in his diary: 'Sawbwa round with a rough – exceedingly rough map of the border from the Salween to [Nantam?]. He claims Ta Tö Kai'.<sup>55</sup> Here the local chief had drawn a map of the area he was ruling along the Salween river and took the opportunity to claim a portion of territory that was contested. The British then had to settle the issue.

Though criticised for their lack of precision, such maps gained strategic importance when made in the context of joint boundary commissions. Scott took part in three commissions to settle the Burmese borders with Siam in 1892–1893, French Indochina in 1894–1895 and China in 1897–1899. In the diplomatic game that the British played with China, Siam and France, the local chiefs could have an important role. Borders were by no means artificial, exogenous and merely imposed by the colonizers.<sup>56</sup> Within these commissions, according to a widespread practice within colonial empires, the local chiefs were asked about the limits of their territory to legitimize the new fixed boundaries on historical grounds. What they said could make a difference.<sup>57</sup> Drawing a map showing the historical limits of their territory and putting forward territorial claims was a way for the local chiefs to have their voice heard. Therefore, some of them would

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<sup>55</sup> Diary, 15 August 1891 to 25 April 1892, IOR MSS Eur. F278/8, 63.

<sup>56</sup> This has been shown for Africa, see M. Foucher, *Fronts et frontières. Un tour du monde géopolitique*, Paris, 1988; M. Foucher, *Frontières d'Afrique. Pour en finir avec un mythe*, Paris, 2014; P. Nugent and A.I. Asiwaju, *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*, London, 1996; P. Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier: The Life of the Borderlands since 1914*, Athens, GA, 2002; Lefebvre, *Frontières de sable, frontières de papier*.

<sup>57</sup> For instance, Report of the Intelligence Officer with the Southern Party, Burma–China Boundary Commission, 1898–1899, IOR L/PS/20/D105, map 5. While settling the Burma–China boundary in 1899, the British accepted a modification of the historical boundary to keep a village and its rice fields on the same side of the border.

become map makers for the British. Ultimately, it shows that sketching the territory was a shared practice among the local chiefs and that they were the main producers of maps. However, it is difficult to know to what extent these chiefs were aware of the new paradigm underlying these colonial borders as opposed to the more flexible margins that preceded them.<sup>58</sup> In many cases they did not understand British expectations, which hindered commensurability.

However, some of the chiefs certainly understood that they could benefit from the diplomatic game between China and British Burma and produced maps that became strategic knowledge for the British. One such example is a map of the Chinese Shan State of Mōng Lem, written in Chinese with Burmese transliterations (Fig. 10). A very simple map, it represents the rivers, roads and some hills. It probably emerged from careful negotiations and manoeuvrings. Indeed, during the Anglo-Chinese boundary commission in 1897, the Mōng Lem officials (*amat*) aimed to prove that Mōng Hsaw was part of their territory and 'produced a map of Mg Lem with Chinese and Lao Shan'.<sup>59</sup> They promised Scott a copy of the map but the Chinese officials on the commission prevented them doing so. Yet, two weeks later the *Sawbwa's* second brother (called the *amat chōk*) brought Scott a copy, 'with great secrecy'.<sup>60</sup> By saying that the Chinese would be very upset if they knew he had passed it over, the *amat chōk* confirmed that he was playing a dangerous game and the map quickly took on a strategic value. Indeed, by giving the map to the British, he had changed the diplomatic game in significant ways. It was a refusal to be a simple instrument in the hands of the Chinese. It also prevented them claiming that they did not know the place names, which they would often do when settling borders with the French and the British. 'Shaking all over', the *amat chōk* begged

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<sup>58</sup> Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*.

<sup>59</sup> Diary, 11 February to 11 April 1897, IOR MSS Eur. F278/15, 15.

<sup>60</sup> Diary, IOR MSS Eur. F278/15, 33.

Scott not to ask Ma to copy the Chinese names. Ma was a Chinese interpreter working for the British but who might have been passing information to the Chinese too. Scott therefore 'spent the rest of the evening and some part of the night at it' while Min Din, probably a Burmese clerk working for the British, 'made a tracing of the Mōng Lem map' which Scott returned to the *amat chōk*.<sup>61</sup> Overall, then, in a context where place names were crucial, strategic games were being played with geographical information by the Chinese, the British and the Shan chiefs, whom both the Chinese and the British would always try to keep on side. The role of interpreters and clerks employed in the boundary commissions was also important in making that information commensurable. However, it appears that the maps themselves were valued for the place names they provided rather than for the skill with which they were drawn.

By analysing different contexts of intelligence gathering and frontier settlement through the lens of mapping, I have highlighted moments of colonial encounter that gave birth to indigenous maps. It appears that commensurability was more easily achieved with Burmese maps drawn in the context of intelligence gathering than Shan maps hastily made in the context of frontier settlement. In the former case, commensurability was made visible through simplification of the drawing, translation of some terms, or conversions of Burmese measures into miles. Coproduction of knowledge appeared when the British added comments on a Burmese map or when they used oral or written indigenous information to compile their own map. In the latter case, whereas Shan traders, inhabitants and Burmese clerks were key in transmitting geographical knowledge, local chiefs and Chinese interpreters also played a role during boundary settlements. On such occasions, indigenous maps could gain strategic importance, particularly through place names. Gathering these names seems to have justified all

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<sup>61</sup> Diary, IOR MSS Eur. F278/15, 33, 39.

these joint efforts and colonial encounters. They were the only evidence of this indigenous cartography that remained on later British maps.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of these Burmese and Shan maps drawn before or in the early years of colonisation in Upper Burma shows how enriching it can be for imperial history as well as history of science to take account of indigenous mapping. Doing so contributes to a social history of colonisation as it tells of the colonial encounter and the way these maps may have been commissioned and used by the British. In terms of the history of cartography, it allows space to be given to indigenous actors. As most works on indigenous mapping focus on exploration, this paper chooses instead to pay attention to the early stages of colonisation, although the conclusions are nevertheless quite similar. In this context, even if the British did map the territory themselves, they still had to solicit additional help and ask for local contributions to be able to fill in the blanks on their own maps. Dealing with these indigenous maps goes beyond an understanding of cartographic artefacts and Burmese mapping practices. It fills a gap in the scientific process which ran from the surveys on the ground to the printing of the final maps, and gives another perspective on these early colonial years. Against the idea of domination through cartography, these maps reveal contacts and the coproduction of knowledge, albeit in an unequal context. Coproduction of knowledge did not end with the establishment of colonial rule, and imperial actors and authorities commissioned, translated and used indigenous knowledge despite their critical judgement on it.

These maps also show how Burmese and Shan actors adapted when facing the rupture of colonisation, simplifying their cartographic practice to fit British demands.

The interpretations of this process presented here enrich current reflections on how experienced or imagined space is represented on a map, and through which techniques and scientific practices. Indeed, this paper has demonstrated, for even this limited range of maps, produced in a specific time and place, the diversity in conceptions of space, in the media and materials used, and in the cartographic apparatus more generally. By doing so, it shows how European and Asian cartographies resonated with each other. In both cases, there was a common interest and commensurable cartographic practices for depicting itineraries and administrative entities, based on measures of distance and territory. In that regard, commensurability was achieved in some cases – those in which the use of the map by the British is clear. However, the different practices in mapping territory – choice of projection, scale, importance of text over image, decoration vs practicality – reveal fundamentally different spatial representations and logics. Only with a lot of work could the British make use of the indigenous maps that they commissioned on the ground. Indeed, except for place names, it is hard to know how the colonisers really used these maps.

This lack of commensurability ran two ways of course. While producing a map for the British, local chiefs could not anticipate the transformation of a porous local margin into a colonial border. Ultimately, the limit of commensurability appears in the gradual disappearance of the Burmese maps commissioned by the British once they got the geographical information they needed and did not have to rely on indigenous knowledge any more. As cross-cultural products of knowledge, these maps are above all an intermediary step and did not survive the increasing number of British topographical maps for which they provided most place names. This is why these early decades of colonisation deserve our attention, as a framework for very specific contacts whose analysis can contribute to current debates about commensurability.

Figure 1. British Burma in 1885

Figure 2. Painted cloth map of Yindaw subdivision, Meiktila district. Source: Scott collection LR13.33

Figure 3. Painted cloth map showing the townships of Pindalè, Nyaungok and Taungtha, Meiktila district. Source: Scott collection LR13.27

Figure 4. Painted cloth map showing Meiktila and the country south. Source: Scott collection LR13.25

Figure 5. Map on paper, with pencil, depicting Ko-ga-yine Circle. Sent from Haingdet on 10 January 1887, received in Cambridge on 16 November 1887. Source: Scott collection LL9.87

Figure 6. 'Map showing results of native information collected with the Northern Shan Column. 1887-88. Scale 8 Miles to an Inch. Mandalay, 27/3/88'. Source: Scott collection LR13.21

Figure 7. Painted cloth map showing the road from Hlaingdet to Nyaungshwe. Source: Scott collection L13.28

Figure 8. Painted cloth map showing the road from Wundwin to Mandalay (detail). Source: Scott collection LR13.26

Figure 9. Map on paper showing the Trans-Salween country (detail). Source: Scott collection LL9.84

Figure 10. Map on paper depicting Mōng Lem, Chinese characters. Source: Scott collection LL9.76

Figure 1

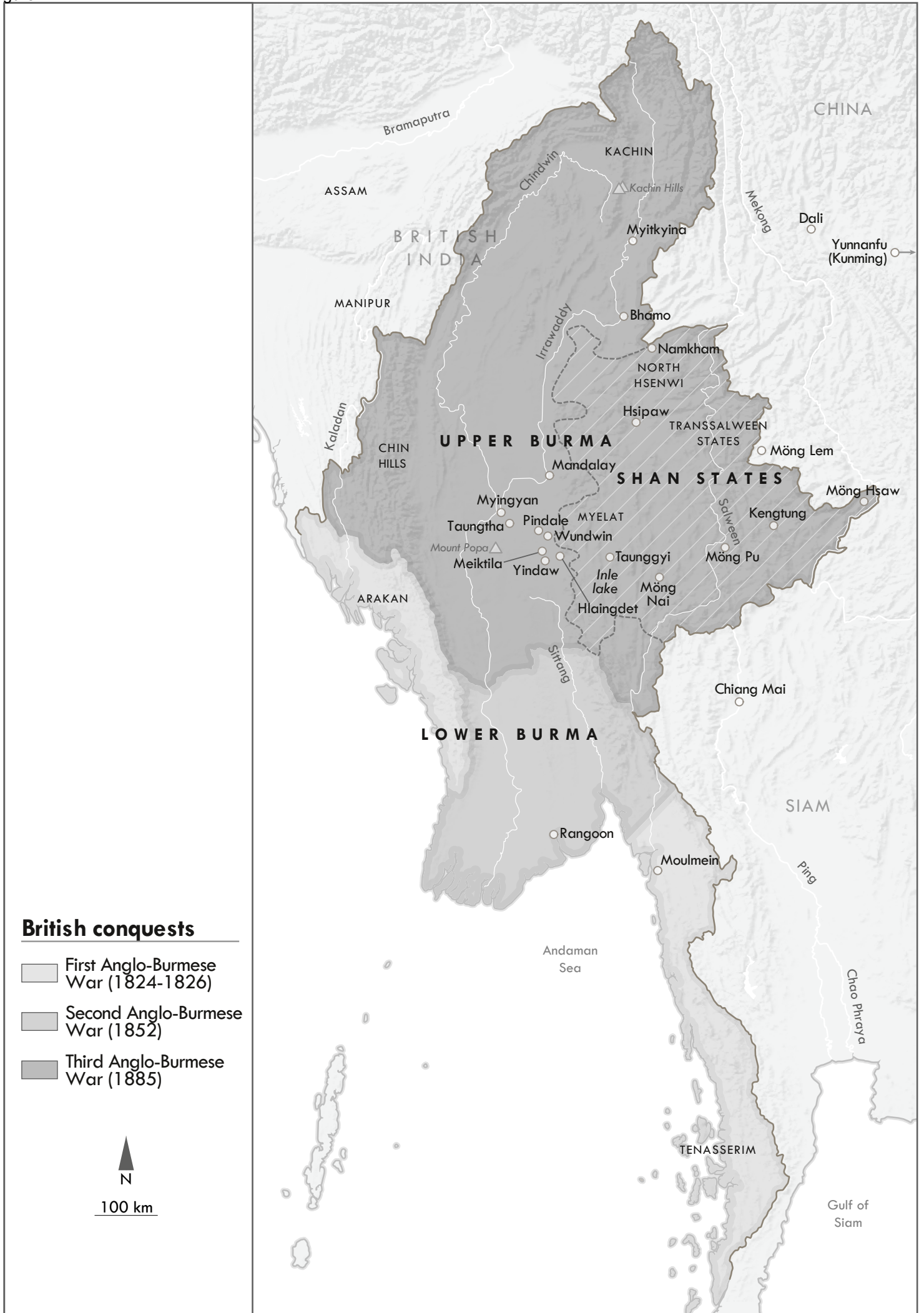


Figure 2





Figure 3

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Figure 4

[Click here to access/download;Figure;P1150821.JPG](#)



Figure 5

[Click here to access/download;Figure;20180612\\_163740.jpg](#)

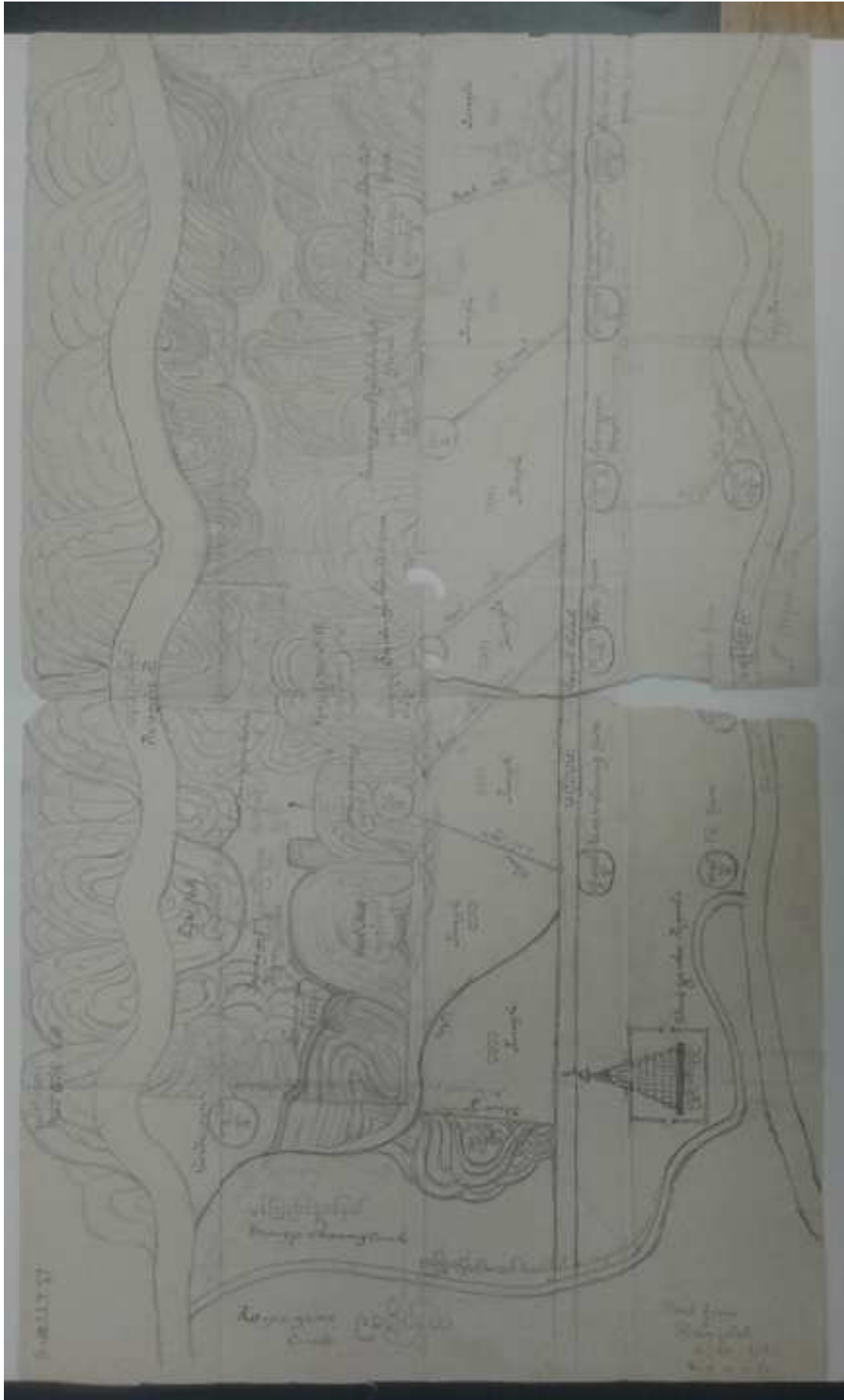
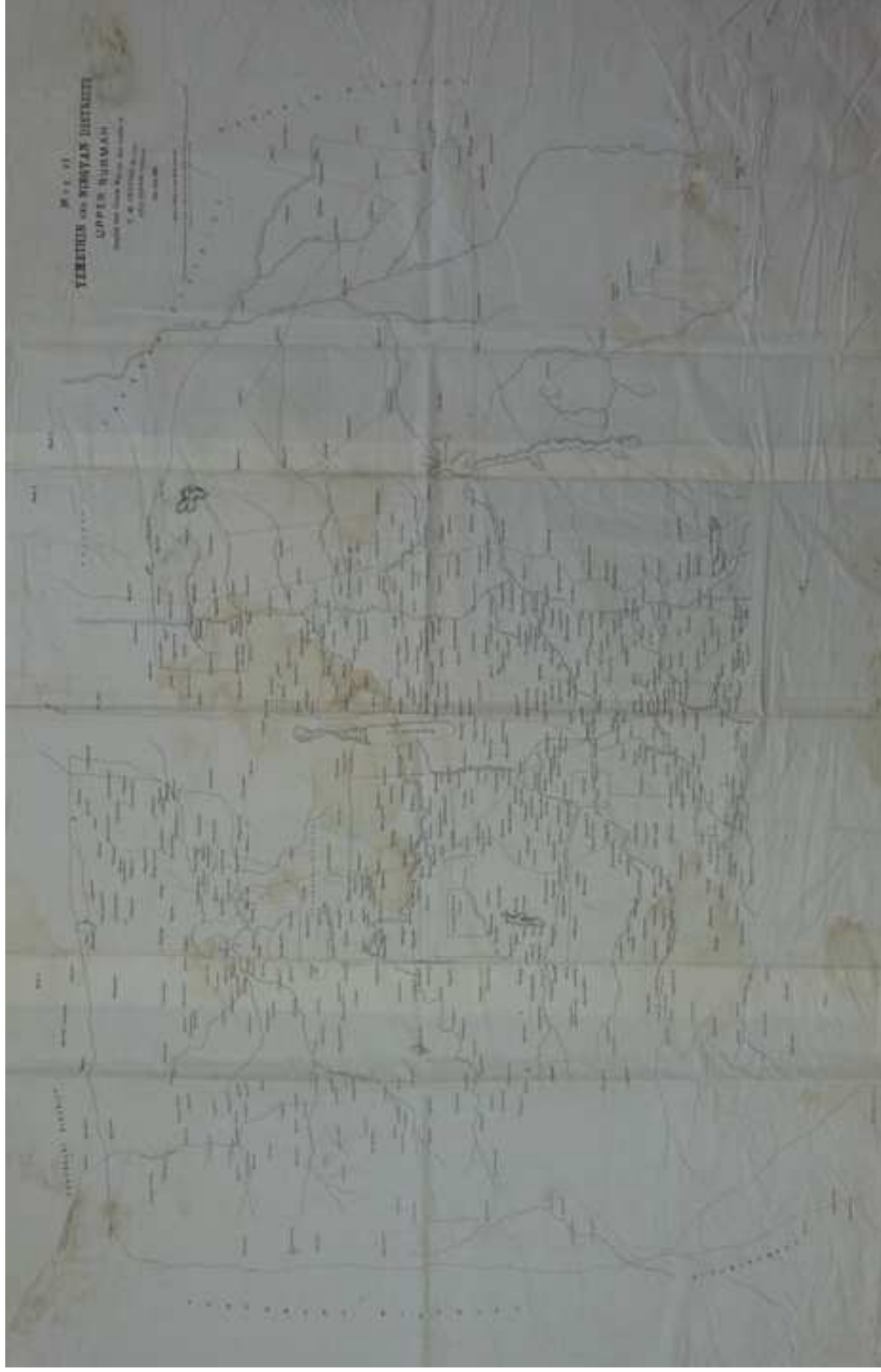


Figure 6

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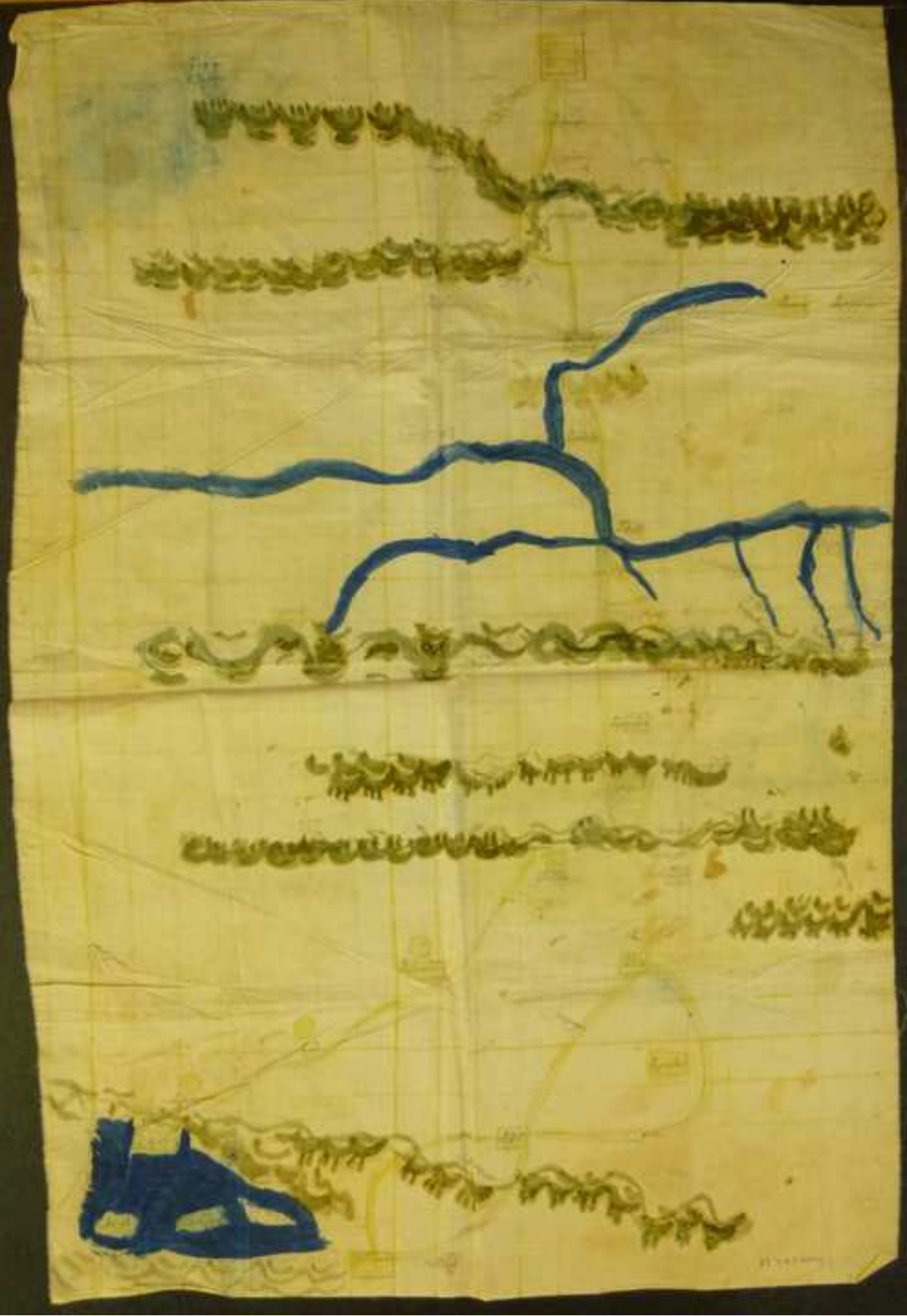


Figure 7

Figure 8

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Figure 10

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