

British Honduras: The invention of a colonial territory. Mapping and spatial knowledge in the 19th century

Odile Hoffmann

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The invention of a colonial territory

Mapping and spatial knowledge in the 19th century

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Contents

Acknowledgements 7
Foreword 9
Introduction 11
1. Different versions of the national narrative 13
2. Maps and their context 17
3. Territorial disputes between colonial and imperial powers 21
4. The beginnings of a geographic rationale: Colonel Arthur 33
5. Mapping and property: The emergence of a sense of ownership 35
6. Maps and territorial development: The domestication of official space 47
7. Maps and war 54
8. First steps towards scientific and technical mapping 64
Conclusion: A final look at a cartographic journey 70
List of Tables and Figures 75
Bibliography 77

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Foreword

This is an important and thought-provoking book. The author's purpose is "to recount the invention of a colonial territory", chiefly through the interpretation of maps. She aims to show the role played by cartography in the different time-spaces experienced by the land that is now Belize and the people who inhabited it, by showing the different ways in which a space can be created or used for administrative, political or other purposes.

Many if not most of us–myself included–can find maps daunting, even intimidating: hard to decipher, difficult to read or understand. We are, as Gilbert Ryle wrote in his *The Concept of Mind* (1949), "like people who know their way about their parish, but cannot construct or read a map of it, much less a map of the region or continent in which their parish lies". And so we need someone like Odile Hoffmann, who guides us through the maze of dusty old maps and helps us to give them meaning.

She organizes her study within four themes: territorial disputes between colonial powers, the establishment of property, administrative control and the expression of scientific or commercial interests. She treats the maps not "as isolated products, but as constructions providing information in both their content and their form and workmanship".

Maps speak louder than words–they give the impression that they are authoritative, that the illustration you see represents the real in a certain time–but they can be just as deceptive, as Hoffmann adeptly shows. Maps were often made at the request of settlers or colonial authorities precisely to reflect not necessarily what is, but what they would like it to be. Thus she comments on Du Verney's map of 1814 (Figure 9a): "The map is performative, and its very existence *proves* the de facto possession of the territory by British subjects beyond the limits granted" (emphasis added). Perhaps more pointedly, she reminds us that "maps recount and accompany phenomena of domination and resistance, which they sometimes also guide".

Most of the maps reproduced here are to be found in the compilation by Breton and Antochiw (Cartographic Catalogue of Belize, Mexico 1992) which published 76 maps dating from 1511 to 1882, and which was done as a contribution to the very ambitious and worthy project to create a magnificent Museum of Belize, which unfortunately never came to fruition. That publication, however, is not readily available to Belizeans, and the particular value of the present work is not only that it reproduces the maps in full colour (and often the colours are important to one's understanding of the maps), but more especially, that the author puts the maps in context and explains them within a framework of interpretation which allows us to reach a clearer understanding of what the maps mean; no mean feat, given what I have said about how difficult it is for many of us to "translate" maps into meaningful concepts.

One such map, for example Figure 8, is full of written texts and colours and is carefully described and explained by the author, including comments on an insert on the Mosquito Shore, leading her to conclude that "this document is a kind of 'mapped history' . . . designed as a text to support a detailed explanation which provides arguments" for an "extension of settlers' rights".

Every section of this book is valuable and interesting, but each reader will have her or his favourite; mine is the section "maps and war", wherein she unearths a map of 1886 (Figure 17a and transcription 17b) of *British Honduras ... showing areas in the Yucatan occupied by different native American nations*, which to my knowledge has never been published before. She provides a detailed description of it, enriched by historical citations and interpretations, and concludes that although the map clearly provides an Anglo-centric vision with clear military and strategic objectives, it is also "truly a vision of an 'Indian space' or at least an 'Indian question', which exceeds national divisions and was of concern to the English colonial power".

In her conclusion, Odile Hoffmann makes the very interesting and original observation that "the territory was imperial before becoming colonial", and that "this evolution accompanied changes in the ways spaces were represented as well as the techniques used to render it". She also throws down the gauntlet to other scholars to do further research with some rather provoking questions, such as whether 20th century developments in cartography resulted or not in "democratization of access to land and to its representations", or whether we will be able to speak of "the 'decolonization' of cartography in the 21st century."

After reading this excellent monograph I felt tempted to immediately take myself to Belizean, Spanish, British, Mexican and Guatemalan archives in search of more maps to decode and help explain our history and that of the region. Alas, I must leave that exciting work to younger Belizeans who will hopefully be enticed after reading this book to do just that. We must all be grateful to Odile and her publishers for making this delightful book so attractive and available to us.

Assad Shoman
Havana, April 2014

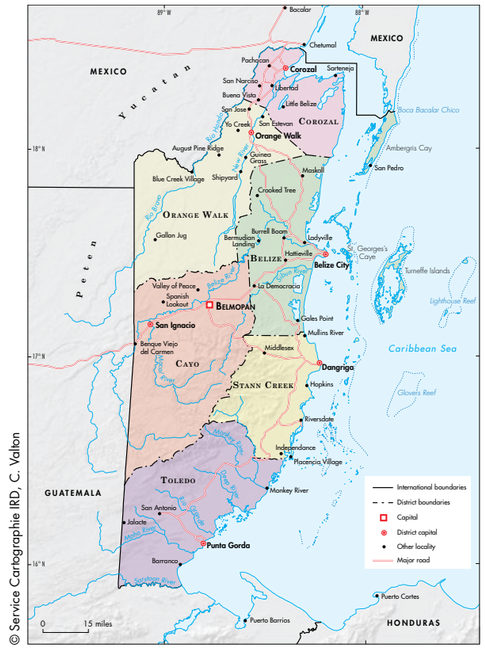
Introduction

The purpose of this book is not to retrace the genesis of a nation, but more modestly, to recount the invention of a colonial territory. No territory exists on its own; only social, political, symbolic and emotional construction grants it substance and reality. Two fundamental elements concur in the construction of a territory: one, its cognitive construction–bringing it into existence through descriptions, narratives and representations; the other, its instrumental construction–making it functional through norms of access, use and control. This work addresses the cognitive construction through analysis of spatial representations based on maps produced over a period of approximately 120 years (1783-1902) in and about the territory of what is today Belize.

Figure 1: Belize in its regional context.



Benedict Anderson (1991) brilliantly exposed the mechanisms shaping national construction, emphasising the circulation of printed symbols that forge the collective imaginaries and configure the "communities" that identify themselves as a part of the nation. These images include maps, which obviously have a preponderant place in that they provide material support for such constructions which are equally social, cultural and political (Dym & Offen, 2011). The analysis of the maps reveals the articulation between the imaginaries, the subjectivities and spatial practices. Maps inform us of the differential spatialities that together form the nation's "geographic knowledge." Here, we take up the concept of spatiality proposed by historians and geographers, in that it "covers all the practices and



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Figure 2: Political divisions of Belize.

representations mobilised by the social players when interacting in this space" (moving about, settling, organising and creating hierarchies in the territory in order to govern it; organising relationships between neighbours, tracing boundaries and frontiers, etc.) (Blais, Deprest, & Singaravelou, 2011, p. 8).

This notion allows us to link space and policy. Indeed, the importance of spatial practices should not be underestimated in promoting, or conversely disqualifying or marginalising, a group whether, for example, by forbidding access to certain areas (segregation), or on the contrary, by confining them to specific places (ghettos). But specific spatial practices can also enable a collective to assert its differences on the basis of origin (autochthony) or other sources of legitimacy (religious or ritual, for example), and on this basis claim specific rights (Maya reservations, or sacred lands). Spatial practices can also take the form of strategies of avoidance or dispersion, or even withdrawal, for example to resist occupation. Understanding the history of spatiality opens new prospects for dealing with processes of national and cultural construction. In the case of Belize, we will approach this history through the cartographic documents drawn up in the first centuries of its colonial history. We will begin with the "canonical narratives" in its national history to locate and contextualise maps before analysing them in more detail.

The construction of a colonial territory remains yet to be described for Belize. Situated on the Caribbean coast, south/southeast of Mexico, east of Guatemala, and directly west of Jamaica (Figure 1), it is a sparsely populated country with 312,000 inhabitants, according to the 2010 census, in an area of 23,000 km^2. It has a healthy forest cover especially in the south and west, a road system that remains limited, and a coastline bordered with coral reefs (Figure 2), which make it an increasingly attractive international tourist destination. The country belongs historically and geographically to both the English-speaking Caribbean and its Spanish-speaking Central American surroundings.

1. Different versions of the national narrative

Although Belize is a young nation, independent since 1981, with a system of self-government since 1964, its history is already the subject of much study. We will not examine this here in detail,[1] but rather in synthesis, pointing out the particularities that introduce and explain the representations made of it. The historical–and geopolitical–processes will then be studied in further detail in the texts and analyses of the maps.

The country was long described as a land of pirates and buccaneers, "free men" of the 17th century who ploughed the waves and found refuge on this "empty" virgin land at the confines of the then Spanish Empire, before settling more permanently, exploiting the forests and inventing their own rules of coexistence. Ceaseless confrontations with the Spaniards forced them at one time to call on the British authorities who, from then on, strove to build a "territory" (Settlement), and eventually a British colony (in 1862).

In the colonial narrative of the early days, episodes of war with Spain punctuate the original political interpretation, promoted by the Baymen, most of them British (English and Scottish), that an alliance existed between the black slaves, with whom they worked in the forest, and themselves. This "alliance" was the precursor of the subsequent hegemony of Creoles, of English and African descent. Because of geopolitical issues, the Battle of Saint George's Caye (1798) put an end to Spanish pressure on the seas in the Gulf of Honduras. This famous battle emerged as the founding act par excellence as it was a military victory obtained by the joint efforts of masters and slaves, united until death in the defence of "their" territory, "shoulder-to-shoulder" according to a motto that remains alive today in the consciousness of many Belizeans.

This narrative with its epic tone had the advantage of laying the groundwork for British legitimacy in the face of the Spaniards' right of conquest, euphemising the matter of slavery taken for granted as almost natural and consubstantial with the land and its forests. All that remained was the noble adventure–tackling threatening nature–of the construction of an original society beginning with its forebears (Baymen), the founders (Settlers), the modern builders (landowners, merchants and financiers of the 19th century) and the contemporary inhabitants (Creoles). Around this foundational nucleus, the later arrivals, the "others" (Yucatec Maya and Mestizo, Garifuna, East Indian, etc.), are organised.

[1] The historiography of Belize, long relatively limited to a few scholars in the 1970s (Ashcraft 1973, Dobson 1973, Grant 1976, has been considerably revitalised since Independence with Bolland 1988, Bulmer-Thomas 2012, Iyo 2005, Jones, Macpherson 2003, Moberg 1992 and 1996, Sutherland 1998, Toussaint 1993) and Wilk 2006, as well as Belizean institutions (St. John College's *Belizean Studies*, and SPEAR) and scholars including Awe, Barnett 1991, Cal 1984 and 1991, Encalada, Humphreys, Hunter-Krohn, Palacio 2005 and 2011, Shoman 1994, 1995, 2009a, 2009b, and Tzalam.

Alongside this written history inspired by the positions of dominant players in each period, and transmitted by generations of chroniclers and by local, British and foreign historians, discordant voices underscored other possible interpretations. They questioned the veracity of the "natural" solidarity between masters and slaves, and the undisputed hegemony of certain sectors of the population (White and Creole) over the rest of society. In the first third of the 20th century, an important social mobilisation shook a country plunged into poverty. These demonstrations, associated with claims for independence, marked the first steps towards self-government, obtained in 1964, and Independence, declared two decades later in 1981.

With Independence, a new national narrative emerged. It placed less emphasis on the epic episodes of the first colonists, rather highlighting the many actors, social groups and individuals of extremely diverse origins who shaped the nation as it is today. The best expression of this is the widely read book *A History of Belize, Nation in the Making*. Published in 1982, it was the first effort by a team of Belizean historians, social scientists and educators to write a history of Belize from a Belizean perspective. Largely inspired by the work of historian Nigel Bolland, it questions the absolute predominance of the "English" while affirming, conversely, the ancient history of a territory inhabited by Maya groups long before any European colonisation. Thus, what was often seen as a minor territory peripheral to the British Empire came to be interpreted as having been at the heart of a vast Maya Empire.

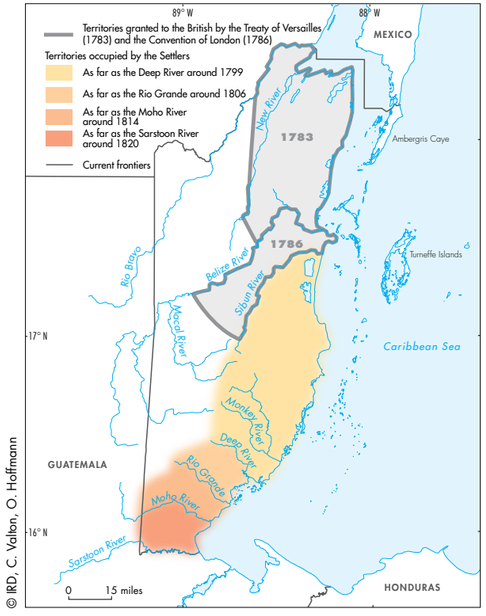


Figure 3: British Honduras, progression of the Settlers' colonisation.

Source: *A History of Belize, Nation in the Making*, Cubola, 2004, p. 51.

Slavery, also, is broadly referred to in the context of Belize's national history, there again, with a reversal of perspectives. The edges of the Empire were in fact yet another link in a vast globalised system, where the enslaved and their descendants were key players in the construction of territories, not just merchandise bought and exploited. More recently, other research programmes and publications are developing similar interpretations, placing the history of Belize within that of the world-system, while highlighting the role of so-called dominated or subordinate groups–enslaved or ex-colonised peoples–in social and political dynamics.

This reshaping of the history of Belize is exemplified by the African and Maya Civilizations Project, which created a national school curriculum and textbooks to disseminate knowledge of African and Maya cultures that emphasises their cultural and historical contributions. In these new narratives, diversity replaces the colonial schema, built on the master-slave binomial. But it was coerced diversity, the fruit of more or less forced migrations over the centuries, in a movement that continues today, mainly according to the needs of the economy. As Assad Shoman (2009b) recalls, "In Belize, the different ethnic groups were inserted at different times into the colonial polity, responding to the need for labour or external stimuli, and there was a marked tendency for them to be separated from each other through occupation and residence" (p. 139). Therefore, the territory was founded on colonialism and slavery; this imperialistic process fostered both domination and resistance, and social and political creativity on the

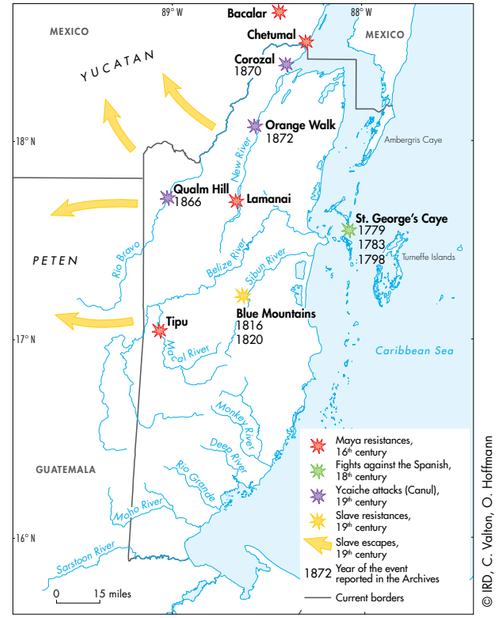


Figure 4: Maya and slave resistances to Spanish and British colonisation.

Source: *A History of Belize, Nation in the Making*, Cubola, 2004.

part of highly diverse groups, rich with their different origins, local history and customs, but poorly known and appreciated.

The two previous maps offer schematic representations of the events highlighted in the book *A History of Belize, Nation in the Making*. They will make it easier to find your way in the following pages. Figure 3 shows the gradual arrival of Settlers moving West and South following the exploitation and depletion of forestry resources; this movement was then validated by the signature of a succession of international treaties at the end of the 18th century, finally offering the possibility of exploiting, then settling, as we will see below.

This settlement occurred in an already populated area, and throughout history it met with resistance from the Maya population. The sparse evidence that remains, relates more specifically to the 16th and 19th centuries (Figure 4), as attested by Maya attacks against woodcutters on the New River in 1788 and the march by the Maya led by Marcos Canul all the way to towns and villages: Qualm Hill in 1866, Corozal in 1870, and finally Orange Walk in 1872, where Canul is killed. Resistance also came from slaves, often fleeing to the Peten or Yucatan, and the mention in 1816 and 1820 of two "slave towns" in the Blue Mountains.

These episodes are documented, but using a cartographic approach helps to locate conflicts, and hence resistance, recognise the diversity of the population and visualise settlements in a more complex way than the prevalent discourse that focuses only on narratives centered around the locally dominant Settlers.

As a result, we find antagonistic visions expressed, even if they may solicit similar arguments (periphery, centre) and make reference to the same times, places and even events. Other variants insist on Belize as a land of hospitality, usually but not always following forced migrations: starting in the 17th century with the Baymen; soon "accompanied" in the late 18th century by large numbers of slaves as well as refugees from the Mosquito Coast (British and their slaves, Creoles and Miskitos); in the 19th century Yucatecan (Maya and Mestizo) fleeing the Caste War; Garifuna following their exile from Saint Vincent; Lebanese, Palestinians, Jordanians as well as Chinese, Indian and Caribbean workers; and in the late 20th century, Salvadorans, Hondurans and Guatemalans fleeing war in their countries. Ironically, those missing from these narratives were the original Maya (Chol, Q'eqchi, Mopan), whose "disappearance" was said to have been due to decimation or historical displacement, mainly to Guatemala (Peten). It is this history of modern settlement that we propose to follow through a particularly effective instrument for conceptualisation: spatial representation.

2. Maps and their context

Without going back to the traditional military and political purposes of cartography and geography, we can highlight the extraordinary relevance of such issues. Today, when indigenous people are demanding more autonomy over their land on the basis of their autochthony, anteriority or other specificities, they do so through recourse to two privileged negotiating instruments: the law and maps (Wainwright & Bryan, 2009). Since the signing of Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation that specifically recognizes their rights,[2] indigenous and tribal peoples in Latin America have been actively resorting to the law. This coincides in time with the waves of democratic transition and constitutional change in the period from 1980 to 2000, which introduced and sometimes enforced multicultural measures in many Latin American countries. These imply the identification of "target populations" and their living spaces for multicultural policies, and this is where mapping intervenes.

[2] Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, 1989; Convention 169 (1991).

Maps are never simple instruments, they are "textual practices that weave together power and social relations" (Wainwright & Bryan, 2009, p. 170). Maps reveal the rationales and constraints of actors participating in different capacities in their preparation, creation and use. What is true today–the strategic use of maps to claim autochthonous territories, for example–was also true in the past in other contexts, such as in legitimising the presence of British Settlers on "Spanish" land. Maps recount and accompany phenomena of domination and resistance which they sometimes also guide.

It is in this sense that, since the colonial period, we analyse cartographic representations, like a common denominator useful in tracking the rationales for building spatial knowledge, and consequently the associated powers at play, because geographic knowledge is obviously "located" knowledge, in this case located within the realm of those who devise and draw maps. For a long time, this was a vision built by and for colonial metropolises and must be analysed and interpreted as such. Omissions are as important as what is mentioned, and they all concur in building spatial knowledge that augments the interests of the dominant players. In their recent book Blais, Deprest & Singaravelou (2011) recall the very close ties between spatial knowledge and colonial expansion. One of the most widespread and immediate practices among European colonisers in the Americas was the renaming of places, which tended to make the territory familiar to some (colonists, newcomers), while distancing it for others (natives or competitors).

So, for example, a general map of the Gulf of Honduras[3] made in 1775 for the British Crown, by Thomas Jefferys, "the official exponent of British cartography" according to Antochiw and Breton (1992, p. 55), draws the coastline, capes and islands with great precision, but he is much less precise for the interior of today's Belize and simply identifies it in large type with the title "The Logwood Cutters" (Figure 5).

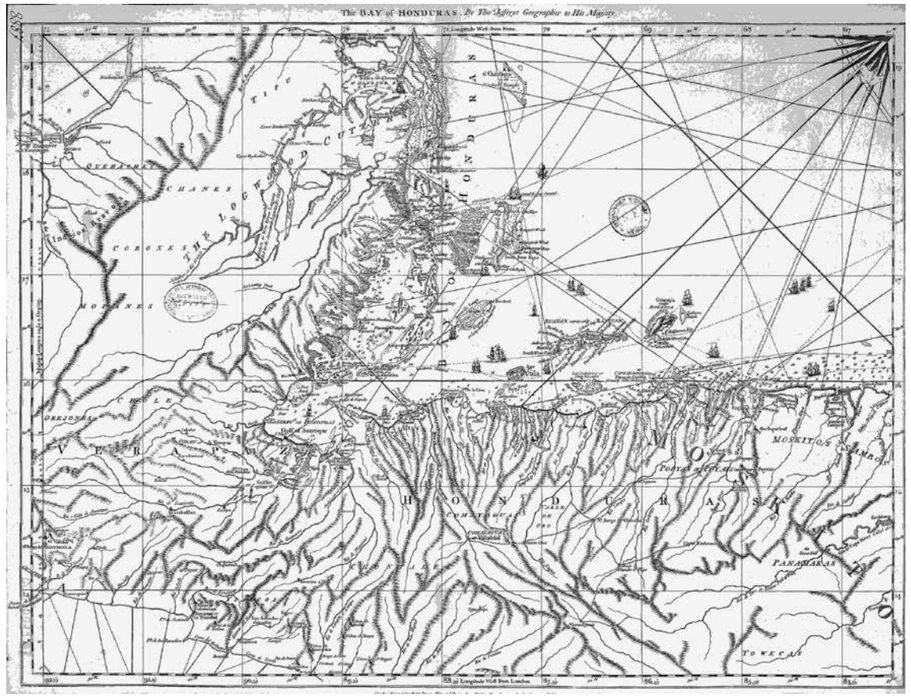
Maps often have a preponderant place in rationales of conquest and colonisation, both as a result and a means of asserting authority. "The map is a political object that both shapes and reflects a reality that it is supposed to represent transparently (...) Maps are testimonials woven with signs and symbols which, in their assemblage, create a specific vision of the world, that is to say, a geographic policy"[4] (Offen, 2006, pp. 38-39).

The maps analysed below come from a corpus of documents consulted at the Belize Archives and Record Department, The National Archives of Great Britain in London (Kew), the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and maps reproduced in Antochiw and Breton's very useful work (1992), which lists most of the old maps concerning today's Belize. Whenever possible, I consulted the documents associated with these maps.

[3] *The Bay of Honduras*, by Tho(mas) Jefferys, Geographer to His Majesty. London. Printed for Rob(ert) Sayer, Map and Printselle. N° 53 in Fleet Street, as the Act directs, 20 Feby 1775.

[4] "Un mapa es un objeto político porque da forma y a la vez refleja la realidad misma que se supone representa de manera transparente. (…) Los mapas son testimonios tejidos a punta de signos y símbolos que, en conjunto, constituyen una visión del mundo específica, es decir, una política geográfica."

Figure 5: The Bay of Honduras, by Tho(mas) Jefferys, Geographer to His Majesty. London, 1775.



Source: BNF

The cartographic documentation pertaining to today's Belize is quite numerous, but often similar and repetitive. For example, representations which include the coast since the 16th century build cartographic knowledge of the region (Offen, 2011a, described it exhaustively for the Mosquito Coast), but refer mainly to maritime and coastal areas and approach the interior only marginally. The "Bay of Honduras" is usually no more than a coastline on maps of America, New Spain or the Captaincy of Guatemala, the unnamed portion of an empire under construction, but very much coveted nonetheless. This inaccuracy extends to the legal status of the area in question since, as Shoman (2009a) said, "it was never confirmed if the territory that is now Belize formed part of the Captaincy General of Yucatan or Guatemala"[5] (p. 149).

The work by Antochiw and Breton (1992) lists more than sixty cartographic documents over three centuries. In his analysis of the cartographic production of Belize, Antochiw distinguishes five periods. The first three refer mainly to the Yucatan and Gulf of Mexico region. They include maps made in England, France, Spain and Germany, reflecting the European flow of writings and maps at the time.

Another impressive set of maps concerns border conflicts between the Settlement, later the Colony of British Honduras, and the Spanish Empire, later the Republics of Mexico and Guatemala. The early representations are also intended mainly to support negotiations over borders and provide very little information on the interior. I will nonetheless show a few examples from the late 18th century.

To the extent possible, I always attempted to identify the authors, the people commissioning them[6] and the context in which the maps were made, which means not treating them as isolated products, but as constructions providing information in both their content, form and workmanship. To quote Karl Offen (2011b) on cartography in the history of Central America: "Maps have a material and ideological texture, (...) they mix scientific authority with symbolic politics, and (...) they have the power both to conceive and to reflect the spaces they represent as well as the cartographer's worlds" (p. 1).

[5] "Nunca ha estado claro si el territorio que hoy es Belice formó parte de la Capitanía General de Yucatán o de Guatemala" (Shoman, 2009a, p. 149).

[6] From 1786 the British authorities were locally represented by a colonial government through the superintendents of British Honduras. In 1862, the territory became a Crown Colony, administered by a lieutenant governor of British Honduras under the orders of the governor of Jamaica. In 1884, the Colony was emancipated from Jamaica and administered by governors of British Honduras until 1973 when its name was changed to become Belize, administered until Independence in 1981 by a governor.

Table 1: Focus and contents of historical maps, 16th to 19th centuries.

Period	Number of maps with their ordinal numbers	Main themes
First period, until the end of the 17th century	7 (1-7)	Discovery
Second period, until 1763 (Treaty of Paris)	12 (8-19)	The coast (navigation, contraband, piracy), beginning of English presence
Third period, 1763-1782	12 (20-31)	Hostilities and imperial negotiations
Fourth period, 1783-1798	17 (32-48)	British consolidation
Fifth period, 1798-1880	27 (49-76)	Territorial extension

Source: *The cartographic catalogue of Belize,* Antochiw & Breton, 1992

The chronological interval considered, approximately from 1775 to 1900, covers several periods differentiated by their cartographic language, corresponding itself to different usages and purposes in cartographic production. To assist, I distinguish the phase of territorial disputes between colonial powers, that of the establishment of property and the introduction of a sense of ownership, that of an administration seeking to control and manage and eventually defend it, and, finally, that in which scientific or commercial interests are expressed. The presentation adopted is then more thematic than strictly chronological.

The analysis of the documents in this study covers up to the first years of the 20th century, when mapmaking became more technically sophisticated. It could of course be pursued to the present, through the analysis of later maps and the use of new approaches or innovative technology in spatial representation.

3. Territorial disputes between colonial and imperial powers

From the standpoint of the Europeans who occupied it in the 17th and 18th centuries, the Gulf of Honduras was a land of refuge for pirates and buccaneers, an area of extractive exploitation of logwood[7] and later mahogany, that was never clearly defined. The use of language itself attests to this: the coastlines of the territory were long occupied by the "Baymen"–with never any mention of women–from the British Empire: pirates, buccaneers and smugglers. Despite regular naval incursions in an attempt to expel them by the Spaniards who demanded sovereignty over the lands bordering on Yucatan and Guatemala, the Baymen always returned to find refuge and exploit logwood, a genuine gift of the forest at the time.

In 1670, the Treaty of Madrid between Spain and England ended piracy and forced pirates to seek out other activities which led them to the exploitation of logwood, which was used to manufacture a dye highly prized in Europe, without however admitting their rights to the occupied areas. This was the start of the "Settlement" (*Asentamiento* in Spanish), the name used from this date to qualify the territory and its occupants, "Settlers", often simply called "Cutters" (*Cortadores* in Spanish). The absence of any "colonisation" project largely explains the lack of more specific denominations, both ethnonymic or toponymic. English and Spanish names were used side by side on these first maps.

Nearly a century later, the Treaties of Paris in 1763[8], and then of Versailles in 1783, confirmed these provisions–in terms of land ownership–in all their ambivalence. Settlers once again had their right recognised to exploit logwood in a given territory (between the Hondo and Belize Rivers), but the treaties expressly reserved Spanish sovereignty over the territory. The Settlers were not allowed to settle in the long term; diversify their activities, with the ban on farming, in particular; become organised politically; or secure their possessions. But the Spanish sought to avoid military confrontation with British subjects, while maintaining rights on what they considered to be part of their American possessions. In any case, the treaties expressly reserved Spanish sovereignty over the territory.

At the same time, the Settlers became more structured locally and intensified forest extraction, importing slaves (with 1724 being the earliest reference). Some years later, there were few Settlers (approximately 500 in 1779, including 200 capable of bearing arms to defend the territory), but

[7] Logwood (*Haematoxylum campechianum*) is a small tropical tree reaching a height of 15 metres. Also known as Brazilwood or Campeche wood for the Mexican port of Campeche from where dyewood was shipped for export in the 17th century. The species is common in Central America and the Caribbean.

[8] The Treaty of Paris (1763) was signed at the end of United States' War of Independence. In the same year France, Great Britain and Spain signed the Treaty of Versailles which allocates among them territories in continental America and the Caribbean, Europe, Africa and India. Among other dispositions, Spain demands the retreat of all British from the coasts of South and Central America, therefore the Mosquitia. Despite strong resistance from the Settlers, the Convention of London, signed three years later in 1786 between the United Kingdom and Spain, confirms these dispositions and demands the evacuation of the Mosquitia. As a counterpart, Spain maintains the rights of the English to the exploitation of wood in the Bay of Honduras.

they exploited the forest with the labour of 3,000 slaves, of all ages and both sexes (Bolland, 2004, p. 30). In this context, in 1765 the Settlement's first "Regulations" were drafted: Burnaby's Code was named for the British Admiral sent from Jamaica to put some order in a territory riddled with chaos. Burnaby's Code was signed by 85 inhabitants, two of whom have female given names: Mary Allen and Mary Wil (or Wild?).

A closer look at the text, which never actually played a major role in the political life of the territory, clearly illustrates the problems of the time. It has twelve articles which mention sanctions for the theft of all types of property, including slaves[9] (two articles), but also guarantees labour for employers, and the imposition of sanctions for eventual lay off of labourers or sailors (three articles). The sanctions were calculated in tons of logwood delivered to St. George's Caye, which illustrates the preponderant place of logwood that served as currency and expresses well the state of mind at the time: that of regulating and protecting woodcutting, rather than laying down the foundation of a future colony.

From then on (late 18th century), decisions were made at Public Meetings, which were made up only of free men able to prove their revenue. These meetings were intended to validate collective and individual practices, starting with those regulating the possession of the areas of exploitation (named "works") and the boundaries between them. It must be said that woodcutting, which was the only activity for Settlers in the Settlement, was then undergoing a basic transformation that would direct the development of the territory for nearly two centuries: the decline of the trade in logwood and the discovery of "reserves" of mahogany, whose exploitation requires a larger investment in time, equipment, labour and land, than does logwood. Mahogany trees are much larger with far less geographic density than logwood; they grow farther apart, and therefore their exploitation requires more time and labour, with the installation of temporary camps and a certain degree of specialisation of labour (locating, cutting, transporting, etc.). In these conditions, it became necessary in the Settlers' eyes to share the logging territory "among themselves," in order to avoid conflicts and regulate expansion which promised to bring about conflict.

The Spanish took a dim view of this economic, social, political and finally territorial consolidation of an area for which they had not granted property rights. Spain tried once again to retrieve control and oust the Settlers. The last naval battle at St. George's Caye in 1798 was won by the Settlers with the help of their slaves and three companies of a West Indian Regiment (*A History of Belize*, *Nation in the Making*, 2004, p. 19). A century later the battle would be transformed into an icon and symbol of the unity and identity of Belize and today it continues to nourish the debate around national identity (Cunin, 2010; Stone, 1994).

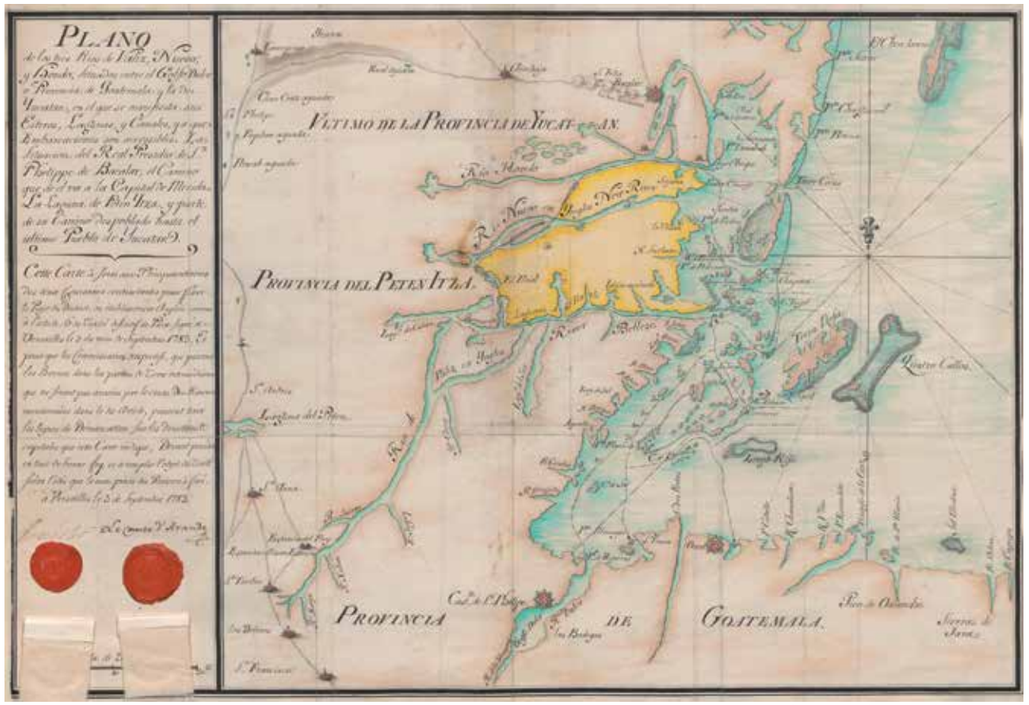
[9] Article 12: … any Property, be it either Crafts, Slaves, Logwood, Mahogany or any Effects.

Interest in strategic resources of difficult access undoubtedly explains why spatial representation of the interior began taking shape after the signature of the Treaty of Versailles in 1783, and especially after the Convention of London in 1786, which for the first time recognised the right of the Settlers to extract mahogany from certain very clearly delimited mapped portions, thereby giving some stability to the British Settlement of the Bay of Honduras.

The original map[10] of 1783 (Figure 6) shows the zone allotted to Settlers, in yellow, between the provinces of Yucatan (north), Peten Itza (west) and Guatemala (south). The text is in Spanish and French and bears the title: *Map of the three rivers, Valiz, Nuevo and Hondo, located between Golfo Dulce or Province of Goatemala and that of Yucatan, in which are noted the lagoons and canals accessible to boats. The location of Sn Phelippe de Bacalar's Royal Presidium, the trail to the Capital Merida. The lagoon of Peten Itza, and part of the depopulated trail to the last village in Yucatan*.[11]

The title of this map is immediately followed by a note in French:

Figure 6: Plan of the three rivers, Valiz, Nuevo and Hondo, located between Golfo Dulce or Province of Goatemala and that of Yucatan, 1783.



Source: The National Archives, Kew

[10] MPK 1/155, 2 items extracted from FO 93/99/2. Plano de los tres Rios de Valiz, Nuevo y Hondo, Situados entre el Golfo Dulce o Provincia de Goatemala y la de Yucatán (...) Map of areas now in Guatemala, Belize and Mexico, also showing the agreed boundary of the English settlement; marshes, lagoons and channels, and extent of navigability; towns, roads, forts, 1783.

[11] In Spanish: Plano de los tres Rios de Valiz, Nuevo y Hondo, Situados entre el Golfo Dulce o Provincia de Goatemala y la de Yucatán, en el que se manifiesta sus Esteros, Lagunas y Canales, y a que Embarcaciones son accesibles. La situación del Real Presidio de Sn Phelippe de Bacalar, el Camino que de el va a la Capital de Merida. La Laguna de Petén Itza, y parte de su Camino despoblado hasta el último Pueblo de Yucatán.

This map served for the Plenipotentiaries of both contracting Crowns to set out the District Project, or the English establishment agreed to in Article 6 of the Final Peace Treaty signed in Versailles on the 3rd of the month of September 1783. And so the respective Commissioners who will place Boundary stones in the intermediate pieces of Land, which will not be watered by the Rivers mentioned in this Article, can draw the Demarcation lines on the Directions and capitals indicated on this Map, It being required to proceed in all good faith, and fulfil the purpose of the Treaty according to the idea as set out by the exact name of the Rivers.[12]

[12] *Cette carte a servi aux Plénipotentiaires des deux Couronnes contractantes pour fixer le Projet de District, ou établissement Anglais convenu à l'article 6 du Traité définitif de Paix signé à Versailles le 3 du mois de septembre 1783. Et pour que les Commissaires respectifs, qui poseront les Bornes dans les parties de Terre intermédiaires qui ne seront pas arrosées par le cours des Rivières mentionnées dans le dis Article, puissent tirer les lignes de Démarcation sur les Directions et capitales que cette Carte indique ; Devant procéder en tout de bonne foy, et à remplir l'objet du Traité selon l'idée que le nom précis des Rivières a fixé.*

The document kept at The National Archives in Kew was signed by the Count of Aranda, also signatory of the Treaty of Paris. It is therefore a mapping instrument which not only illustrates a given situation, but also provides the tools necessary for taking measurements in the field. The map traces the paths skirting the coastal area inland which, aside from the Fort of Bacalar (Real Presidio) to the north, leads to "the Capital of Merida, the lagoon of Peten Itza and part of the trail, 'depopulated', to the last village in Yucatan", and San Francisco, in today's Guatemala. No trails are shown further east and towards the coast, although this area is crisscrossed with rivers and lagoons named in either English or Spanish, something we will address below. It is clear that those who made the map took the trouble of mentioning the presence of settlements with Spanish names (Sn Andrés, Sa Anna, Estancia del Rey, Sn Toribio) as well as the "depopulation" of the area adjoining the Maya trail, a detail of special interest since we now know that the region was far from empty (Bolland, 1988; Cal, 1991; Grant, 1976).

With the portion conceded to British Settlers situated between the Forts of Bacalar (north), and San Felipe and Omoa (south), the mapped area seems well marked out and under military surveillance by Spanish soldiers, who nonetheless soon lost control of it. The map also shows the navigation channels along the Gulf. The islets are featured in great detail, following the cartographic tradition of earlier periods. Conversely, the course of the rivers in the interior remains very imprecise. Place names are scarce, some with words of Maya origin (Yspamsenk, Sajama, Sactham, Chinchaja), most in Spanish (Lagunas del Norte) or bilingual, as in the case of the southern border of the Settlement, which mentions "Rio de Valiz en Yngles River Bellese; the northern border follows Rio Nuevo en Yngles New River," then the Rio Hondo to its mouth. On the map, we don't find any place names inside the area conceded to the Settlement except one in Spanish, *Iglesia arruinada* (north of River Bellese and near the coast), which denotes a prior presence, by then long gone.

Barely three years later in 1786, the Convention of London extended the zone authorised for the "English" southward with the same restrictions on colonisation. In the late 18th century there was a strong increase in demand for mahogany, stimulating the search for and extraction of trees located farther and farther away from the coast and rivers. The signing of

the Convention of London in 1786 ushered in a new period with new needs in terms of territorial regulations, both international (boundaries) and local (land rights) and explains the increase in the number of maps from this date on.

One of them, dated 1790, is written in French and kept at the National Library in Paris (BNF)[13] (Figure 7). It is titled: *Map of the part of Yucatan conceded to the English by the Spaniards for the cutting of wood, according to the Treaties of 1783 and 1786.*

[13] *Carte de la partie de l'Yucatán concédée aux Anglois par les Espagnols pour la coupe des bois, suivant les Traités de 1783 et 1786.* Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris), Cartes et Plans- Service hydrographique: 143-2-3 (1) (GE SH 18 PF 143 DIV 2 P 3-1).

A note specifies:

> By the Treaty of 1783, Spain had conceded to the English the part of the coast between the Wallis or Belleze River and the Río Hondo, and bounded inland, approximately as shown here, by part of the course of the Wallis, a lake or oxbow lake advancing towards the Río Nuevo, part of the Lake and Course of the Río Nuevo, a Stream flowing into the Río Hondo, and the Río Hondo all the way to the Sea. By the Treaty of 1786, Spain also concedes the part between the Wallis River and the Sibun or Jabon River, the small St George's Island, or Cosina, and the small Port formed by the Islands known as the Southern Triangles.[14]

The two zones conceded to the English can be recognised, bounded by rivers, with no mention of trails, villages or settlements, only a few names of rivers and Chetumal Bay to the north (Bahia de Ascension). It does not aim to describe the space; this is done in the note listing the boundaries, but only to show its approximate location and status. The map is therefore mostly the projection of the political discourse and it indicates the construction of a "spoken space" indispensable for diplomats in their negotiations.

[14] *Carte de la partie de l'Yucatán concédée aux Anglois par les Espagnols pour la coupe des bois, suivant les Traités de 1783 et 1786. Par le Traité de 1783, l'Espagne avait concédé aux Anglois la partie de côtes comprise entre la rivière Wallis ou Belleze et Río Hondo, et bornée dans l'intérieur, à peu près comme on le voit ici, par une partie du cours de la Wallis, un lac ou bras mort qui s'avance vers Río Nuevo, une partie du Lac et du Cours de Río Nuevo, un Ruisseau qui se jette dans Río Hondo, et Río Hondo jusqu'à la Mer. Par le Traité of 1786, l'Espagne cède encore la partie comprise entre la Rivière Wallis and la Riv(ièr)e Sibun ou Jabon, la petite Ile de St George, or Cosina, et le petit Port formé par les Iles nommées le Triangle Méridional.*

A map with a similar purpose made a few years earlier (Figure 8), is far more accurate and better documented, and very different in its structure. It was created by the British and printed for geographer William Faden[15] (*Geographer to the King, Feb. 1st. 1787*). It is exceptional in several ways. It is officially signed *By a Bay-Man*, which makes it the first map drawn, although signed by someone else, claiming to be local. It is a complex document with the map as the central feature surrounded by other elements.

A vertical strip on the left side of the document includes extensive excerpts from the Treaty of 1783 and the Convention of 1786, explaining the primary aim of the map: to legitimate the existence of the territory by official texts and, as a result, that of the Settlers and their activities. A colour code reinforces the impact: red for the "Limits for Cutting Logwood according to the Treaty of 1783; yellow for The New Grants by the Convention of 1786 and orange for the British Settlement prior to the late Treaty."

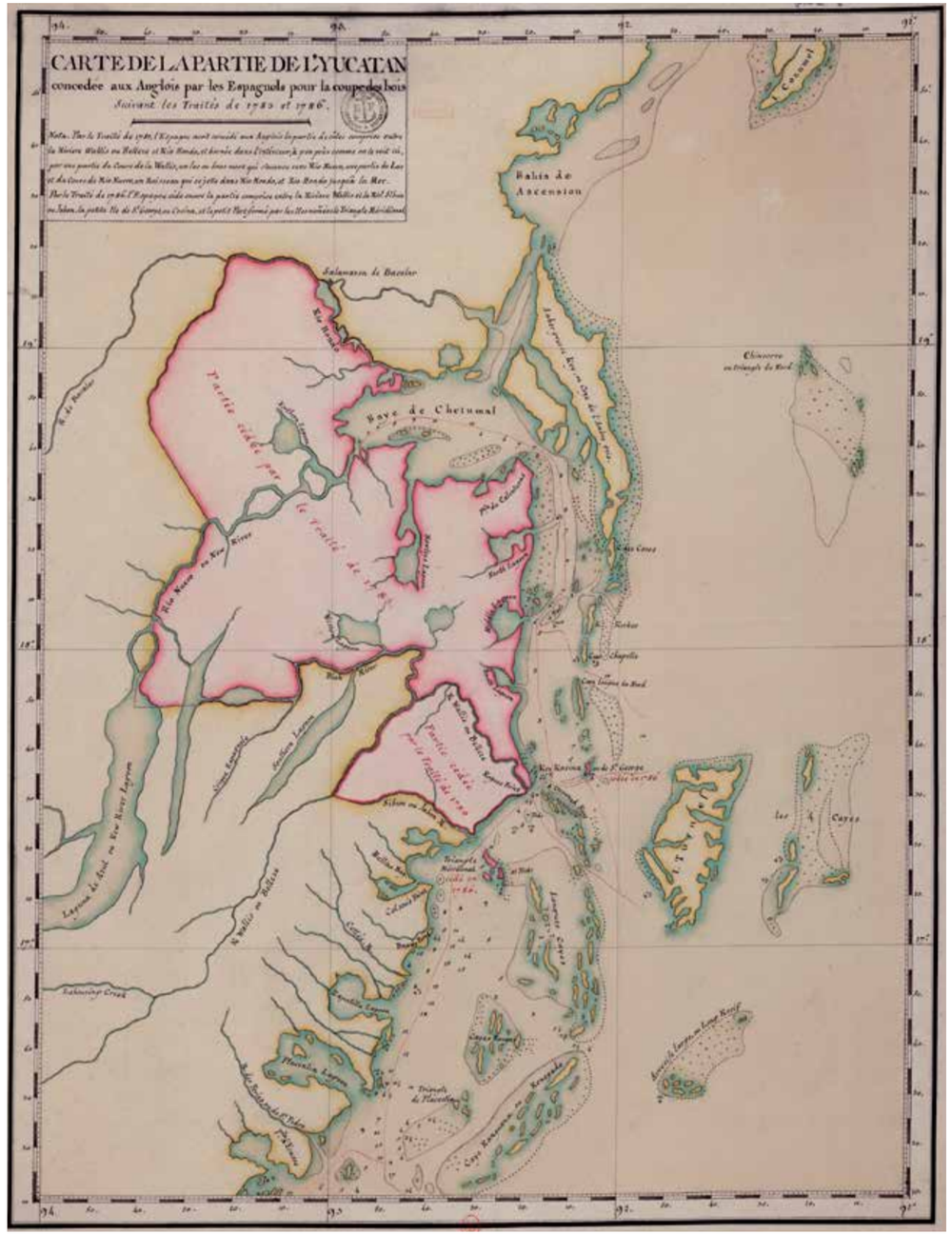
[15] *Map of part of Yucatan (...) allotted to Great Britain for the cutting of Logwood, 1787, by Faden, William (1749-1836).* Cote BNF: IFN-5970792.

At the top right, an insert of the Mosquitia highlights the close ties between these two areas. Beyond geographic proximity, the fate of both territories was linked by the Convention of London of 1786 which, while recognising British Settlers' right to the territories in the Gulf of Honduras, imposes the withdrawal of the English from the Mosquito Coast, consequently leading to the expulsion of many of its residents who then resettled in British Honduras. Their arrival was not welcomed in the territory, especially not by the Settlers who saw it as greater competition for wood and a threat to their political system controlled by a handful of white men. As Anderson (2013) notes, "the Magistrates vehemently opposed the influx of Mosquito shore refugees which included many less affluent, racially mixed people, complaining that the newcomers would be unwelcome competition for the already limited mahogany works" (p. 13). Their presence exacerbated the tension among the whites, free blacks and coloured people, most of whom had come from the Mosquito shore. When, in 1787, a violent confrontation arose, Superintendent Despard supported the Mosquito refugees against the Baymen: in Despard's view, "all the free men evacuated from the Mosquito Shore were English subjects, regardless of skin color, and were entitled to compensation for the sacrifices they had made for the larger British imperial good" (p. 13).

The map is interesting for its complexity and deserves closer examination. Titled *Mosquitia. Or the Mosquito Shore with the eastern part of Yucatan as far as the 20th Degree of North Latitude, by William Faden, Geographer to the King*, it combines scientific aspects–a scale in nautical miles and great precision in the toponymy–with other less codified features. For example, there are no borders or references to two of the three neighbouring countries (Mexico and Guatemala), although regions are mentioned (Yucatan, Verapaz). There are also complementary mentions of place names, such as the presence of "Indios Bravos" inland, some, though not all, in "friendship with the Baymen." In this same insert, in addition to the two zones conceded to the English by the Treaties, coloured in red and yellow, which stop at Rio Sibun, there is an area coloured in orange, towards the south, whose colour fades, with no clear southern boundary. This same colour reappears, in the same indefinite way, on the Mosquito Coast. This suggests, without naming it, the "natural" resettlement of refugees from the Mosquito Coast in outposts of the colonisation of British Honduras, south of the Sibun River, mentioned a few months earlier in the Convention of London. In this same zone of the map, along the River Ballez, one can read: "English Logwood Cutters 30 years... (illegible)". The "woodcutters" were already there, beyond the boundaries just recognised by international treaties. It is likely that the map intended to highlight the increased pressure on resources and justify the request for an extension of settlers' rights.

A third element completes the interpretation of the central map. It is an explanation of the areas that marked the history of settlement and opposed the representatives of the two empires:

Figure 7: Map of the part of Yucatan granted by the Spanish to the English for the cutting of wood, according to the Treaties of 1783 and 1786.



Source: BNF

- a.a... where the Spaniards to the amount of 1500 Men, mostly Regulars, came down in the mouth of April 1754, from Petent (sic) Castle to cooperate with the Sea forces, and expell the Baymen.

- b.b... where Eight Men Maintain'd a post against the above troops for two days when 210 White and Black Men arrived and routed the whole Detachment.

- cc.cc... The Road by which the Baymen Travelled, by Land and Water, in Six hours being 40 Miles from the New River Lagoon to the Main River Balleze where they joigned the Old River People.

- d.d... The Road by which the Spaniards came down to Labouring Creek.

- e.e… Very Low Swampy Lands wherein the Branches of Labouring Creek are Lost, But in the Rainy Season where the Balleze, or Old River is Swelled, it fills Labouring Creek and overflows its Banks, by which means the New River Lagoon, Irish Creek, Spanish Creek, and all the Low Swampy Lands as well as the Lagoons marked f.f.f. are filled with water.

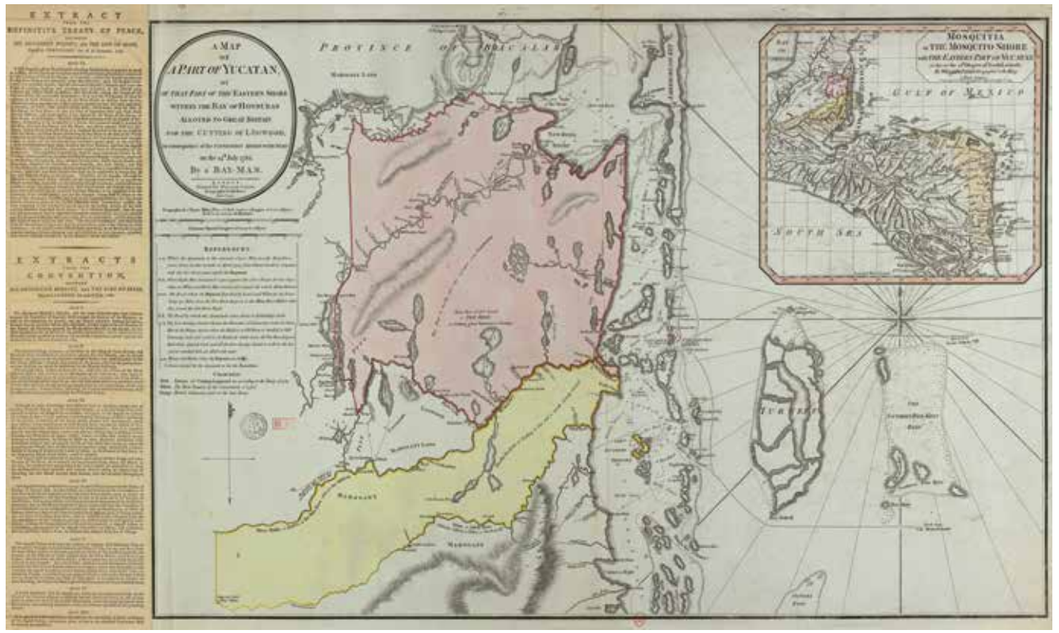
- (houses): Houses and Banks where the Baymen are settled.

- (a cross): Crosses erected by the Spaniards to fix the Boundaries.

This document is a kind of "mapped history." The map is designed as a text to support a detailed explanation which provides arguments, founded on battle sites, roads, geographic specificities (seasonal floods which preclude or facilitate communication) or signs of occupation (houses, crosses). It is also interesting in that it "paints" (in yellow) the new portion conceded to the British for woodcutting, ranging from the coast inland all the way to the hypothetical source of the Sibun River, covering a far more extensive area than on previously mentioned maps. This map is more technically accurate than other contemporary maps, and it can be considered to be the first map conceived "locally" to represent the Baymen's interests.

This map (Figure 8) is also fundamental in that it specifies the resources located in the area, underscoring the exclusive woodcutting interest of the British. It also distinguishes areas according to available resources ("This Part is mostly cut out except some Logwood; This part has nothing or little to cut; Mahogany Land; Most part of this land is Pine ridge"). The toponymy is precise and combines people's names with references to the vegetation (Mangrove Creek) and to events that we can imagine were not all pacific (Rebellions Creek, Man of War Key) and useful indications regarding transport ("Shoals in dry weather; Deep Water up here"). As a consequence, this map is both a historical account and an instrument for inventorying resources, a fundamental element in the on-going negotiations to access new areas and more forestland.

Figure 8: Map of part of Yucatan (...) allotted to Great Britain for the cutting of Logwood, by William Faden, 1787.



Source: BNF

A manuscript version of this map, dated a year before (1786) was analysed by Jennifer Anderson (2013) who confirmed that: "By highlighting the fault lines among the Baymen over control of space, interpretation of boundaries, and access to valuable forest resources, this map not only documents the region's physical geography but the economic, political, and ecological landscapes at that time as well" (p. 4).

This version is more detailed as to the presence of the Baymen–there are houses symbolising mahogany works along the rivers with mention of names and annotations which have disappeared in the official map of 1787. These elements provide evidence that "ownership of these sites was already limited to a small number of names, a few of which appear repeatedly–Potts, Hoare, Bartlett, McCauley, O'Brien, and Tucker. This handful were all elite Baymen who claimed multiple mahogany works" (p. 12). The same names appear in the 1814 map that we will analyse later (Figures 9a and 9b).

A copy of the same map, kept in Kew,[16] includes handwritten notes by Edward Cobert, apparently written for the report he provided on the state of the territory, its inhabitants and resources in 1802.[17] He specifies in particular:

[16] Public Record Office, CO 700 —BH 12 (1).

[17] *Abstract of the number of Inhabitants of all descriptions residing in the British Settlement of the Bay of Honduras, and A General Account of Mahogany and Dye Wood exported from the British Settlements in the Bay of Honduras* (1 January 1797 to 30 June 1802) (Antochiw & Breton, 1992, p. 92).

Table 2: Evolution of the population of British Honduras.

Date	Whites	Free Coloured and free Blacks	Slaves	Total	Source
From the 1620s			*Logwood*		
1742	400		Mentioned but not given		ABH vol. 1 p. 70
1745	50		120		ABH vol. 1 p. 73
1760s			*Decline of logwood extraction, beginning of mahogany*		
1765				1,500	ABH vol. 1 p. 93
1779	approx. 500, including 200 capable of bearing arms		3,000 slaves —of all ages and both sexes		Gov. Dalling, 3 Sept. 1779, CO 137/76 (Bolland, 2004, p. 30)
1779	101	40	250	391	ABH vol. 1 p. 129 (excluding those upriver in mahogany camps)
1780s			*Mahogany becomes major export*		
1787			*British evacuate Mosquito Shore, arrival of 2,214 Shoremen and their slaves*		
1790	260	377	2,024	2,661	CO 123-9
1802			*150 Garifuna settle in Belize*		
1806	222	877	2,527	3,626	CO 123-17
1818			*Arrival of about 700 disbanded soldiers from West Indies Regiment*		
1823	217	1,422	1,468	4,107	CO 123-35
1824			*500 inhabitants in Punta Gorda*		
1829	250	2,266	2,127	4,643	CO 128-10
1831	265	1,591 excludes free coloured	2,027	3,883	CO 128-12
1834			*Slave population decreases from 3,000 to 2,000, or from 75% to 50% of population*		
1834-1844			*Mahogany prices decreases*		
1841	235	8,000 Including former slaves		8,235	PP 1844 XLVI (591)
1845				10,809	Blue Book for 1845
1848 and then			*Arrival of refugees from the Caste War in Yucatan*		
1850-60			*Arrival of indentured labourers in sugar estates*		
1860s			*Agriculture begins to develop*		
1861				25,635	ABH vol. 3 p. 238
1870s			*Arrival of Lebanese, Palestinians and Jordanians; chicle exploitation develops*		
By 1870			*Strong decrease in mahogany exports, lowest yearly figure since the 1700s*		
1875			*The Belize Estate and Produce Co., owners of over a million acres, one-fifth of the country*		
1881				27,542	ABH vol. 3 p. 238
1901				37,479	Report of BG & BH Settlement Commission 7433
1911				40,458	*Id.*

Sources: ABH: Archives of British Honduras; CO: Colonial Office; PP: Parliamentary Papers; Dobson, 1973, p. 338 (population figures) and *A History of Belize, Nation in the Making*, 1995 (for information on the main economic and historical events that influenced demographics)..

> The space of country occupied by the British Settlers in Honduras is capable of producing sugar, coffee, cotton, indigo, ginger, and every other article cultivated in any of the West India Islands, also rice in abundance and pine lumber and many other articles common to the Northern States of America. Since the Court of Spain has permitted plantations (but to a limited extent) under the denomination of Garden Grounds, the inhabitants cultivate corn, plantain, yams and other ground provisions all of which grow in great perfection and abundance .... (quoted in Antochiw & Breton, 1992, p. 92)….

Bolland and Shoman (1977, pp. 22-25) refer to numerous testimonies that confirm agricultural activity and note how much this strategic activity was the object of conflict between the Settlers and the Spanish commissioners in charge of ensuring the Treaties were enforced.

The information in the above paragraphs denotes an "oversight" that would weigh heavily on the country's history, as we will see. Indeed, it reveals the inhabitants' will and capacity to farm whenever they could, produce the foodstuffs necessary for their consumption "in great perfection and abundance," as well as a high potential for commercial farming (sugar, coffee, etc.), which was banned by the Treaties over the entire territory. In 1789, the annual verification of the Convention was made by Juan Bautista Gual, *Teniente del Batallón de Infantería de Castilla* in Campeche. Gual reports that the Settlers numbered 3,200, 45 per cent more than in Grimarest's census two years earlier. One-fifth were English, "three-fifths (…) blacks, and the rest mulatos, mestizos and other castes (…) Except for very few free men, the blacks are all slaves. (…) he stated that the city of Belize already had a population of 2,000" (quoted in Antochiw & Breton, 1992, p. 59).

It is therefore evident that maps were instruments with many functions; they were highly strategic–describing space as well as explaining the history of its inhabitants and users. In the 18th century, they were made by the colonial authorities–Spanish, French and British–intervening in the negotiations regulating the "settlement without colonization" by the British, who were reduced to being nothing more than "woodcutters." These maps were not those of explorers or even those of a colony of settlers seeking to know more about areas and resources to exploit, which explains their relative lack of information on the interior.

Another indication reinforces this interpretation: the scarcity and paucity of information from archives concerning the populations present on the land. A few figures appear in reports; historian Dobson (1973) stated when trying to compile existing data, "These figures are far from reliable since they were mere estimates. The census of 1861 was the first attempt to obtain an accurate result" (p. 338). But there are huge discrepancies; for example, for that same year 1779, the figures from different sources vary from 250 to 3,000 slaves, and 100 to 500 "Whites" present in the territory (Bolland, 2004, p. 30).[18]

[18] In many cases, the inconsistencies may be due to the way "free coloured" are categorized in the census.

Table 2 presents a combination by the author of existing information, from the introduction of the first slaves until 1911, thereby covering the period analysed here. From a demographic standpoint, a few thresholds are easily identifiable around three dates: 1790, after the arrival of refugees from the Mosquito Coast; the 1840s, when the population doubled in ten years without it being clear whether this was due to demographic dynamics (but probably to the arrival of the Garifuna) or new census-taking methods; and the 1850s and 1860s, with the arrival of refugees from Yucatan that led again to the doubling of the population within a decade.

4. The beginnings of a geographic rationale: Colonel Arthur

Neither the signing of the Treaties of 1783 and 1786 authorising the presence of the British in the Gulf of Honduras, nor the victory in 1798 at St. George's Caye over the Spanish totally appeased the Settlers. On the contrary, chaos seemed to reign over the territory, as stated by Superintendent Major George Arthur[19] in a private letter sent to London in 1814:

> The settlers are in a most deplorable state from their violent altercations and dissensions, which have been carried to such lengths that we must look to the interposition of Government for permanent relief; it being impossible for the Superintendent with the limited authority which he possesses to make any effectual arrangement for the restitution of harmony and tranquillity. (Major Arthur CO 123/23, 9th December 1814).

[19] In 1815, Major George Arthur was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur.

In the face of this alarming situation, Major Arthur recommended certain measures which did not please the local elites. Indeed, with relatively similar diagnoses–the crisis and the need for regulation–the proposals defended by the different sides were radically opposed on some points. Among other things, the Superintendent proposed opening up to trade and newcomers, while, on the contrary, the Settlers sought to protect the status quo. Beyond such opposition, there emerged a geographic discourse among administrators, brilliantly recounted in the same letter by Superintendent Arthur dated 9 December 1814. He presents his convictions, mainly on four points which are still today at the heart of "geographic thinking" in terms of territorial development: the issue of borders, land tenure, population, and trade.

On the border issue, he maintained that, contrary to what is often said, there were no real problems between the Settlers and the Spaniards, as if both sides were quite satisfied with the new status: "Much as they disagree among themselves, there is not the slightest misunderstanding between the Settlers and Spaniards" (Major Arthur CO 123/23, 9th December 1814).

He found land tenure insecurity to be a priority issue, especially for newcomers from the Mosquito Coast who were anxious about their possessions: "The People still hold in remembrance their being driven from the Mosquito Shore; and from the precarious tenure which, they think they hold, do not make that laudable exertion for cultivating Land which would be so eminently useful" (Major Arthur CO 123/23, 9th December 1814). We can recall that the absence of farming was a nagging problem for the territory which depended largely on the Spaniards for supplies.

According to Major Arthur, more people should be encouraged to settle to restore balance between Whites and Coloureds: "The population of the people of Colour has so much increased as to be far too great a disproportion to the white inhabitants" (Major Arthur CO 123/23, 9th December 1814).

Finally, on the matter of commercial dependence, he requested permission to trade with the Spanish neighbours:

> A more free intercourse with the neighbouring Spanish Ports; so thus, in return for the Cattle, Corn, Poultry, Logwood and various other articles with which the Spaniards supply us, and which are actually indispensable towards the maintenance of this settlement, the Settlers may be permitted to export, in payment, such articles of British manufacture as the Spaniards require and are (eager) to procure from us. (Major Arthur CO 123/23, 9th December 1814).

This position is opposed to the view expressed by a few eminent Settlers in this same period. In a letter dated 16 November 1814, Messrs Hyde and Young (Hyde was one of the founders of the future British Honduras Company) complained of the conflicts which arose locally because of the presence of British soldiers, whether between Whites or during altercations between slaves and Black troops.

They seized this opportunity to complain mostly of the fact that, in their view, there were too many "foreigners" in British Honduras and presented a series of arguments against them. Some foreigners would continue trading in and importing slaves–banned since 1807–and the officers stationed in Honduras would engage in trade, despite the regulations banning this activity, thereby competing with the Settlers. We should note that, in these situations, the term "foreigners" refers to non-settlers in British Honduras, not to their nationality. In their letter, the two eminent representatives of the inhabitants continue by requesting the Crown that the local authorities be granted more power to punish and exercise sanctions for offences and that the Superintendent proclaim a ban on the admission of foreigners and the expulsion within the year of those residing there. They also asked that the ban on the slave trade be respected and that commercial regulations be the same as in the West Indies: "…not to permit any slaves to be brought into the settlement for sale; nor any article to be imported into or exported from hence, but such as allowed in the British West India Islands" (CO 123/23, 16 November 1814, letter to Bathurst).

The positions of the Superintendents and of the Settlers concur in requesting reinforcement of local power, still according to them overly concentrated in London. They diverge radically, however, when it comes to the measures necessary to ensure the territory's commercial and economic development. Here we see a parallel with the debate on economic liberalism raging in Europe at the time, with a demand for protectionism on one side and opening up markets on the other.

5. Mapping and property: The emergence of a sense of ownership

In the context of conflict over boundaries between Empires, 18th century maps logically highlighted disputed areas and coastal zones. They were elaborated by and for negotiators and diplomats. In the early 19th century, the techniques used for the manufacturing of maps changed, focussing on the modes of occupying the space, in particular the allotment of logging rights. The terminology expresses this priority by referring to "works" (Mahogany works, Logwood works) instead of lots or estates, as would occur later. This was a time for allocating resources, logging in this case. Later, there would be attempts to regulate the conditions for acquiring land. This shift from wood-resource to land-resource which appears in these maps, contributes to the development of specific knowledge on land resources rooted on the territory's geographic characteristics.

The annotations made in 1802 on the 1787 map mention the mode of appropriation consensually accepted in the "country," on the ground and by the local authorities, while implying that the system deserved improvements:

> The mode of taking possession of a tract of land is as follows: the individual pitches upon a spot unoccupied, upon which he erects a hut and a grind stone, this is considered as a qualification of possession and having recorded the same in the Clerk of the Magistrates Court he is entitled to occupy a space of nine miles of the River course upon the banks of which this hut and grind stone has been erected (…). (as cited by Antochiw & Breton, 1992, p. 93).[20]

A series of three maps illustrates the process of gradual construction of land tenure knowledge. The first, from 1814, (Figures 9a and 9b) mentions Settlers' names; the second, from 1819, (Figures 10a and 10b) shows a few lots or polygons; while the third, from 1859 (Figures 11a and 11b) presents almost a complete coverage of the territory. Analysed together, these maps reveal a fundamental paradigm shift in the history of land tenure from a personalised approach to a geographic rationale. In the country's history of land ownership, this alternative–qualifying property by its owner or its location–would remain unresolved for many decades and partly explains the administrative and institutional complexity still evident today in this domain.

The map of 1814[21] also features a crest already bearing the motto *Sub Umbra Floreo* (on the national flag today) and a red flag with an insert of an English flag in a corner above a tree (probably mahogany), a forerunner

[20] Although the principles of land appropriation were maintained throughout the first decades of the Settlement, they could differ in their application as we see in Bolland and Shoman (1977, pp. 9-10).

[21] *Map of territory (now in Belize and Guatemala) north of Rio Dulce, showing rivers, lagoons, creeks, British territory allotted by treaty (in red), and the names and locations of settlers. Scale: 1 inch to 6 geographical miles*. 1814 (MFQ 1/1008, National Archives, Kew, extracted from CO 123/23 (folio 8).

of the one figuring on the Belize flag today. Logging was indeed the territory's raison d'être.

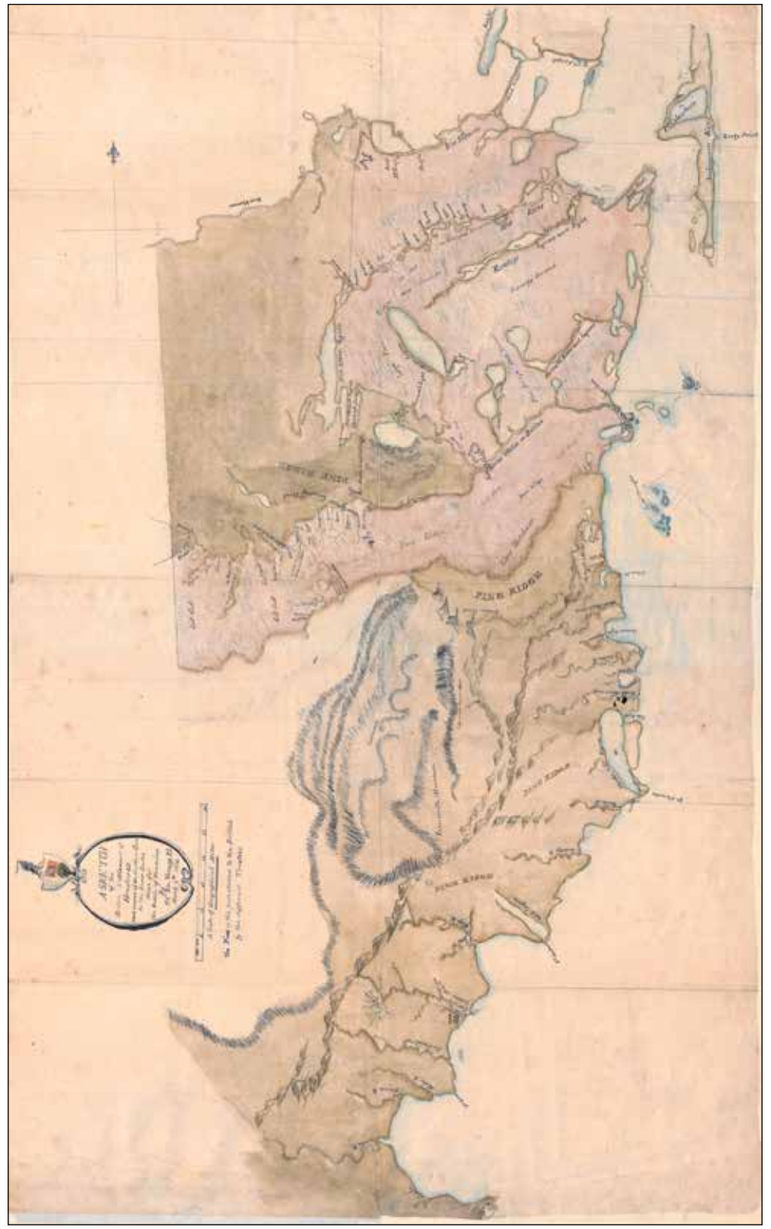
With the title *A sketch of the British Settlement of Honduras and course of the Southern Coast to the river Dulce done for the Public of Honduras By HC Du Vernay. P.S, March 9th 1814*, the document shows British territory and the places occupied by the Settlers in pink. This map was sent to London at the request of these Settlers who wanted to demonstrate the relative saturation of the exploitable territory thereby supporting their demand to extend further South the part allocated to Britain by the Treaties. It accompanied a *Memorial from the Wood Cutters of this Settlement* signed by Marshall Bennett, "Chairman, in the name of the Settlers assembled in Public Meeting the 5th day of March 1814," presented by Superintendent Colonel John Nugent Smyt the Principal Secretary of State. It is therefore a document commissioned and elaborated in British Honduras at the request of loggers who, in so doing, asked for government intervention to regulate access to resources in a territory which was not yet a British colony. In other words, they wanted recognition for their logging rights sanctioned by an "international" agreement between Spain and Britain, in a territory with a contested legal status. The map is performative, and its very existence "proves" de facto possession of the territory by British subjects beyond the limits granted.

The map covers the area attributed to the English by the Treaties, even though it extends to the Sarstun River, beyond the territory officially allocated, and currently the country's southern boundary with Guatemala. It is as if the cartographer, who also made other, far more detailed maps, or those who commissioned the map wished to remain cautious, respecting the Treaties while suggesting a situation that reflected a different reality. The map is more detailed near the New River and Rio Wallis (Belize River) which appears as the heart of logging activity at the time as well as the access from the coast to the interior.

There are few place names (Narrows, Rio Hondo, New River, Rowley's, Rocky Point, Shipstern) and they refer essentially to rivers and lagoons, that is, the only communication routes available for reaching logging resources and extracting the huge logs by flotation. The only indications of dwellings or settlements correspond to Belize City and St. George's Caye. In this context, British Settlers viewed the territory at the time as no more than an immense trading post for wood.

The map details the Settlers' possessions and logging sites with their names; this is the map's main purpose–to document the "saturation" and need to open up new lands for logging. The other major related argument concerns the supposed exhaustion of logging resources; the map is covered with such references: "Cut Out; No Mahogany found here, Swampy Ground, Ridges and Swamps, Inaccessible Mountains (in the south); Large Pine."

Figure 9a: Map of territory north of the Rio Dulce, showing rivers, lagoons, creeks, British territory allotted by treaty (in red), and the names and locations of Settlers, 1814.



Source: The National Archives, Kew

A close-up of the northern part of the territory (Figure 9b) helps us to understand the rationale for the Settlers' presence along rivers. What is important is not so much the delimitation of lots, but the location of logging plots: on the one hand, contiguity with the river–the only mode of transport–and, on the other, with neighbours, the only common reference in the absence of topographic information. Of the twelve names of people mentioned on the Hondo and New Rivers, three at least are "old" settlers, since their names (Armstrong, Douglas, Potts) already appear among the signatories of Burnaby's Code in 1765.

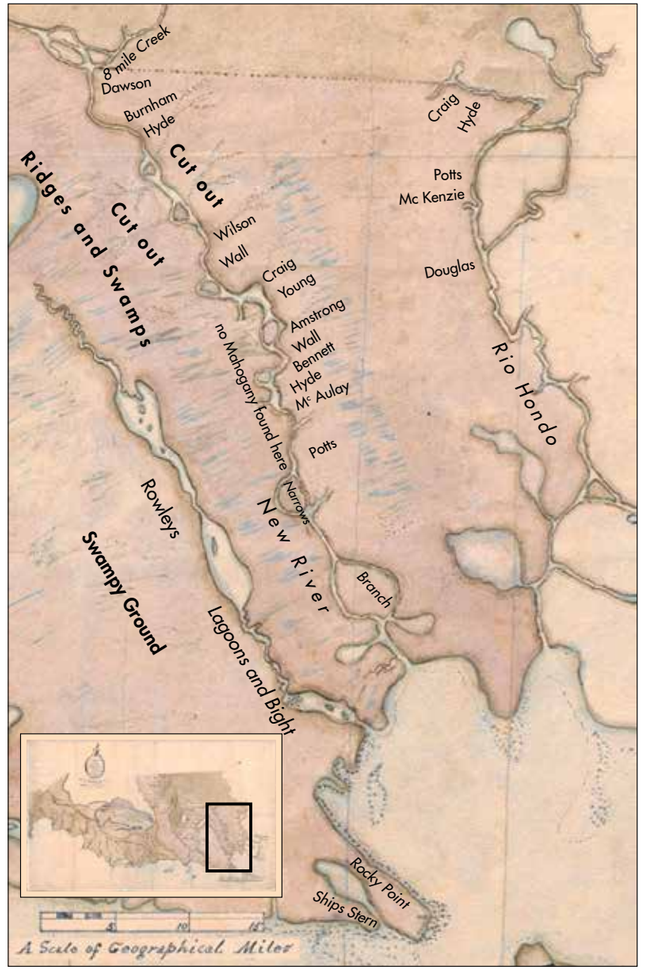
This map of 1814 demonstrates very limited geographic imagination or emotional investment in its making. The representation is very functional in answer to a single need. The same cannot be said of the map (Figure 10a) prepared by the same author (Du Vernay, Surveyor) in the same period–between 1808 and 1816–but to other ends.[22] In this case the map records the technical and administrative endeavour of registering Settlers' lots following surveys made between 1808 and 1816. The draughtsmanship is far more sophisticated and the elements mapped are very different. This map is of special value to us, since it is the first to reveal the beginnings of the system of land division still in use today. The morphology of the parcel plan is surprisingly geometric, apparently not affected by topographic features other than the rivers running along the lots (cf. transcription in Figure 10b). Plot sizes are all roughly the same, although somewhat larger in the north (the first to have been registered) than in the south (more sought after with the population increase in the late 18th century). The toponomy is no richer, but it features trails in the central part of the territory from Belize City towards Southern Lagoon and New River Lagoon. The relief is indicated with a few schematic outlines of mountains marking the boundaries for the plots. In other words, the parcels were beginning to be placed in the context of their immediate geographic environment–neighbours, trails, hills–rather than being identified only by the names of their presumed owners.

The polygons were distributed along the New River, on the southern coast of Shipstern Lagoon, along the Northern and Belize rivers which formed the territory's productive axis at the time. Strangely enough, no parcels are delimited along the Rio Hondo, the country's northern border, perhaps because there was little mahogany, which reduced its interest for the Settlers. Further south, the parcel plan becomes less precise, unfinished, reflecting expansion still underway. The lots were numbered from south to north, but some numbers on the map do not correspond to polygons, and some polygons are not numbered. Although we have found no list corresponding to this possible "registration" process, this document may be seen as a first attempt at what we might call a land registry system.

The regulation of property law became increasingly necessary for the "landowners" and possessors in these post-slavery years of transition, between the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and of slavery in 1833, to the actual liberation of slaves in 1838. Indeed, whereas formerly slaves made

[22] *Map of British Settlement in Honduras; From the actual Surveys of N. (sic) C. Du Vernay, Surveyor, made in and between 1808 and 1816. Published for W(illiam), Gentle of Belize, by Laurie and Whittle, Fleet Street, London, 1st March, 1819*, Public Record (Kew). CO 700 British Honduras n° 12(4). Also in Antochiw & Breton, 1992, Num. 84, p. 101.

Figure 9b: A partial transcription of Map of territory north of the Rio Dulce, 1814.

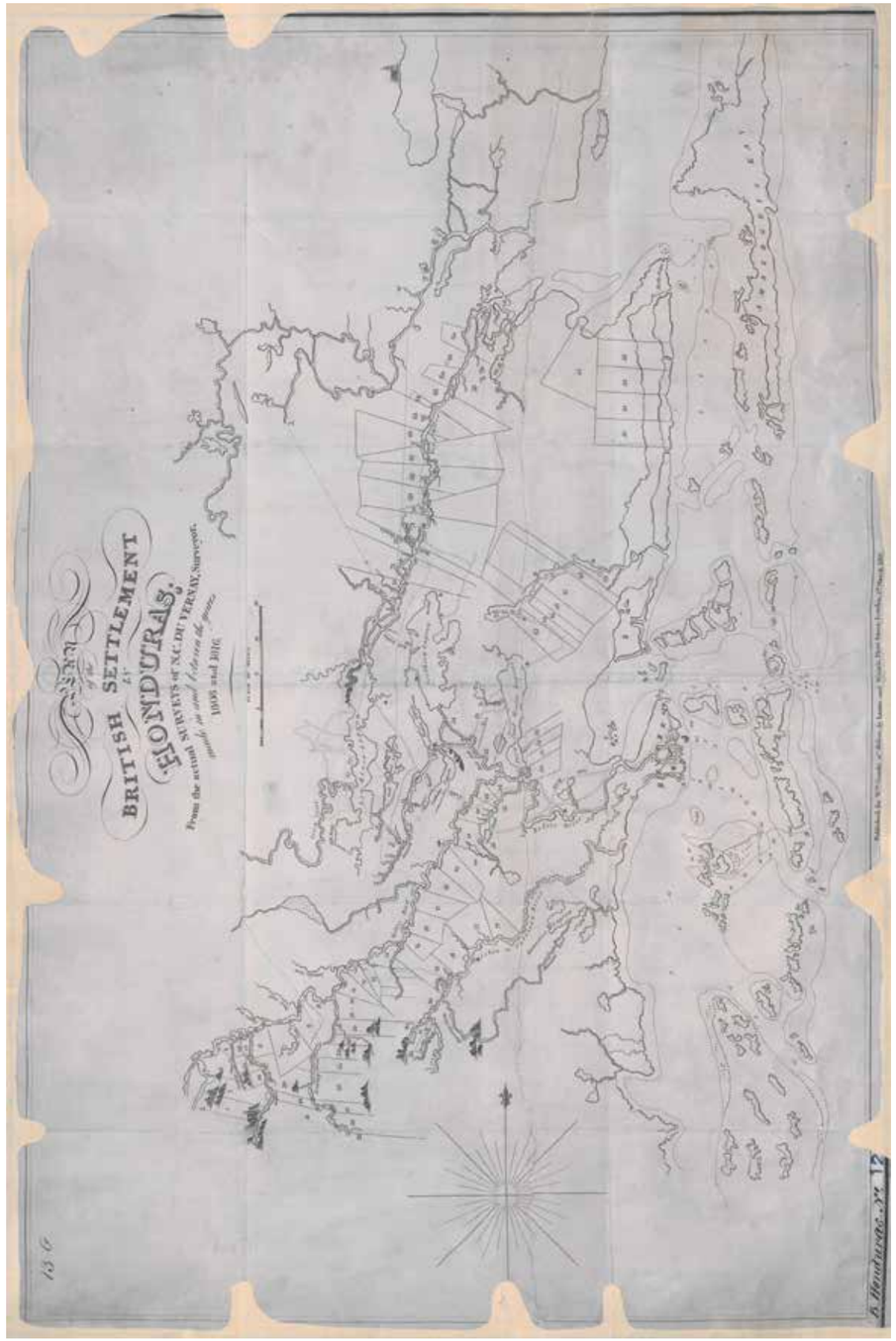


Source: The National Archives, Kew

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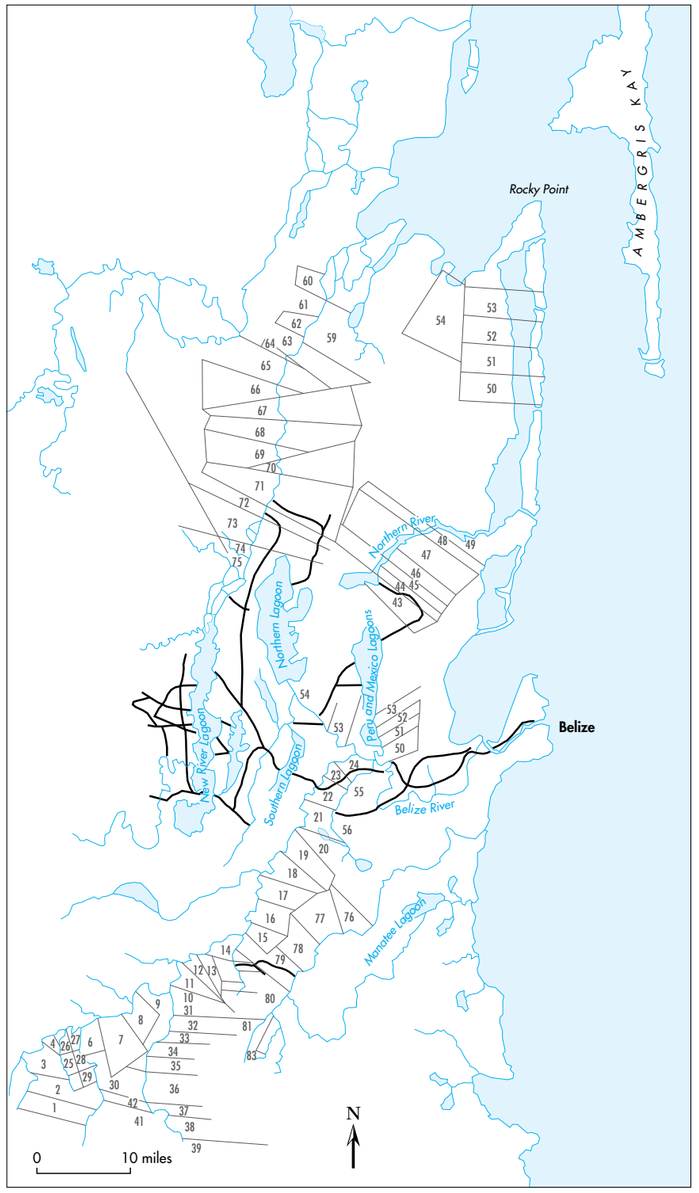
up the bulk of private property, during this period real estate became the main source of individual wealth. Furthermore, the programmed liberation of the slaves would theoretically expand access to land grants for the newly freed population. The competition for space had begun. Particularly as British Honduran society was more diversified than the representatives of the settler elite suggested. The census of 1832 mentions 57 slave owners, 26 whites and 31 free mulattos of which 17 were women (Shoman, 2009a, p. 42). In reality, free coloured individuals had gained a new economic standing and intended to extend it to the political sphere. Accordingly,

Figure 10a: Map of British Settlement in Honduras from the actual Surveys of N. (sic), C. Du Vernay, 1819.



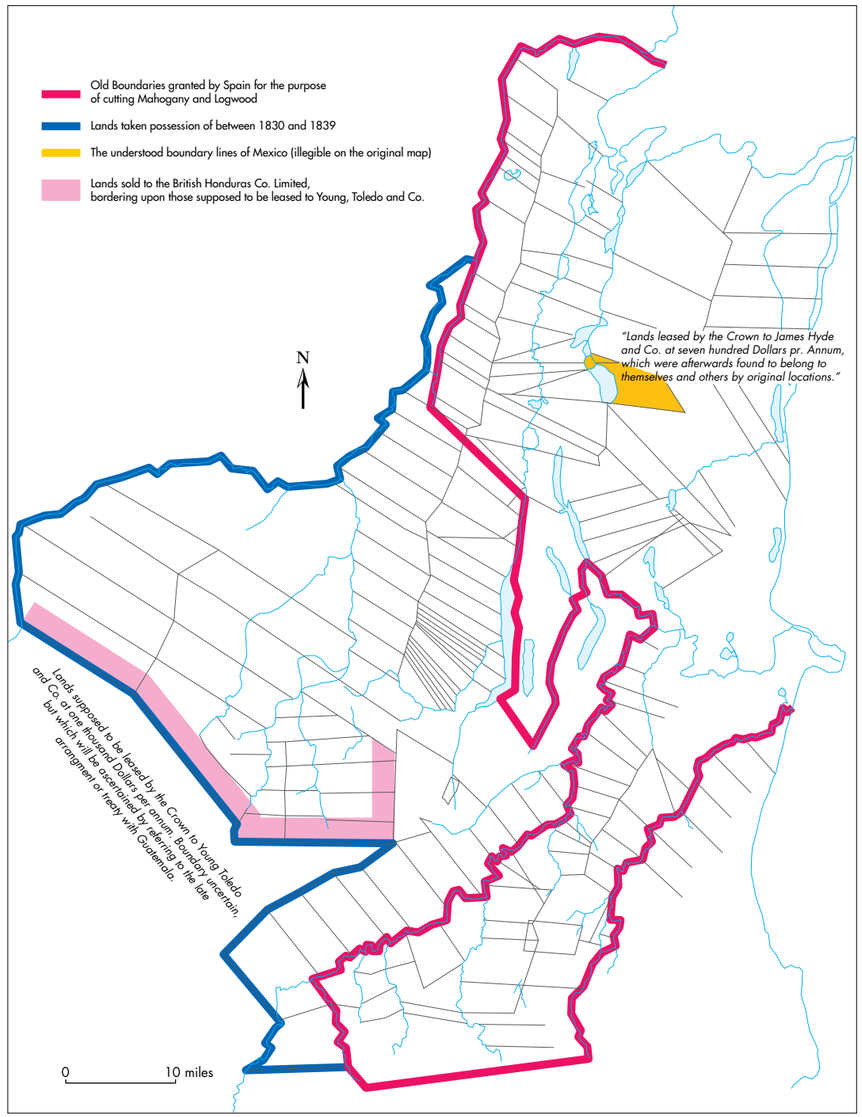
Source: The National Archives, Kew

Figure 10b: Transcription of limits and roads on Map of British Settlement in Honduras from the actual Surveys of N. (sic), C. Du Vernay, 1819.



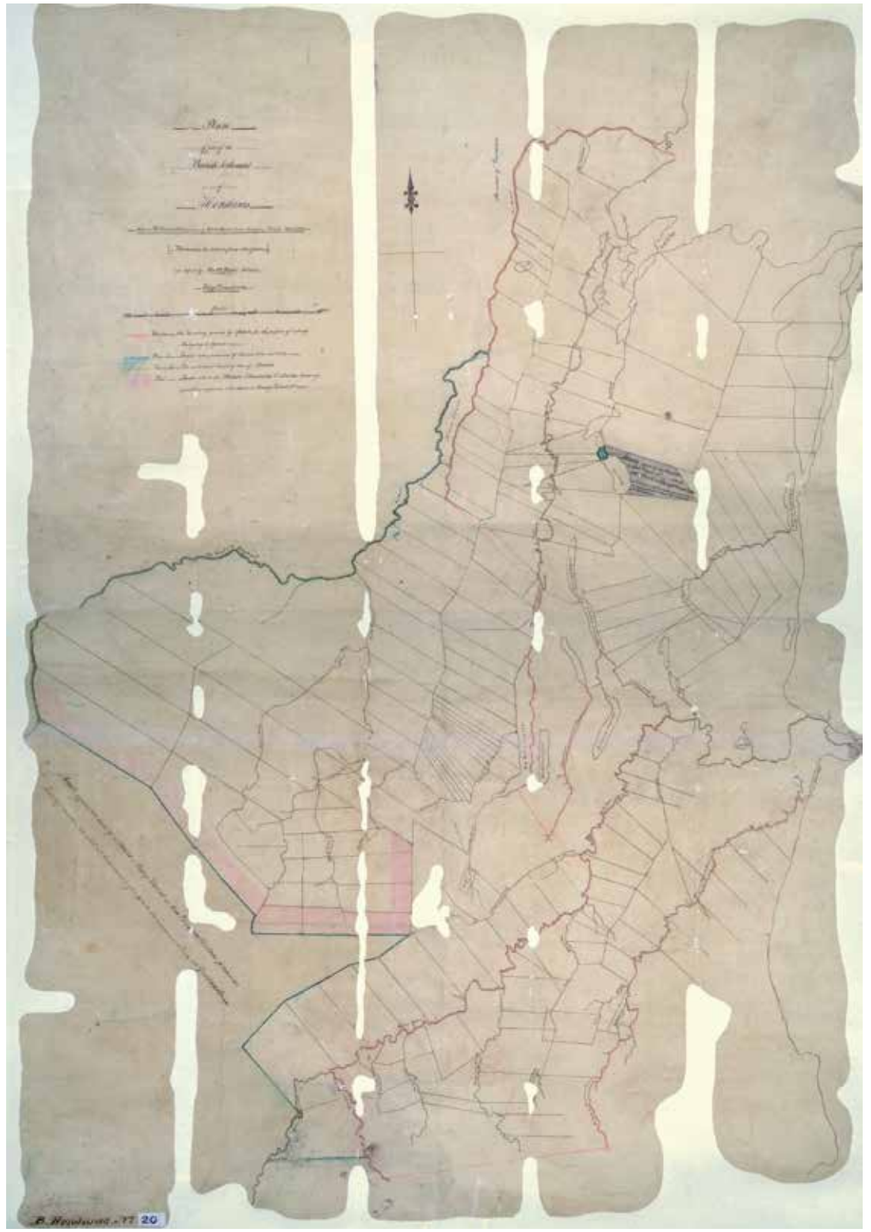
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Figure 11b: Transcription of Plan of Part of the British Settlement of Honduras between Rio Hondo and Sibun, drawn by Robert Hume, 1858.



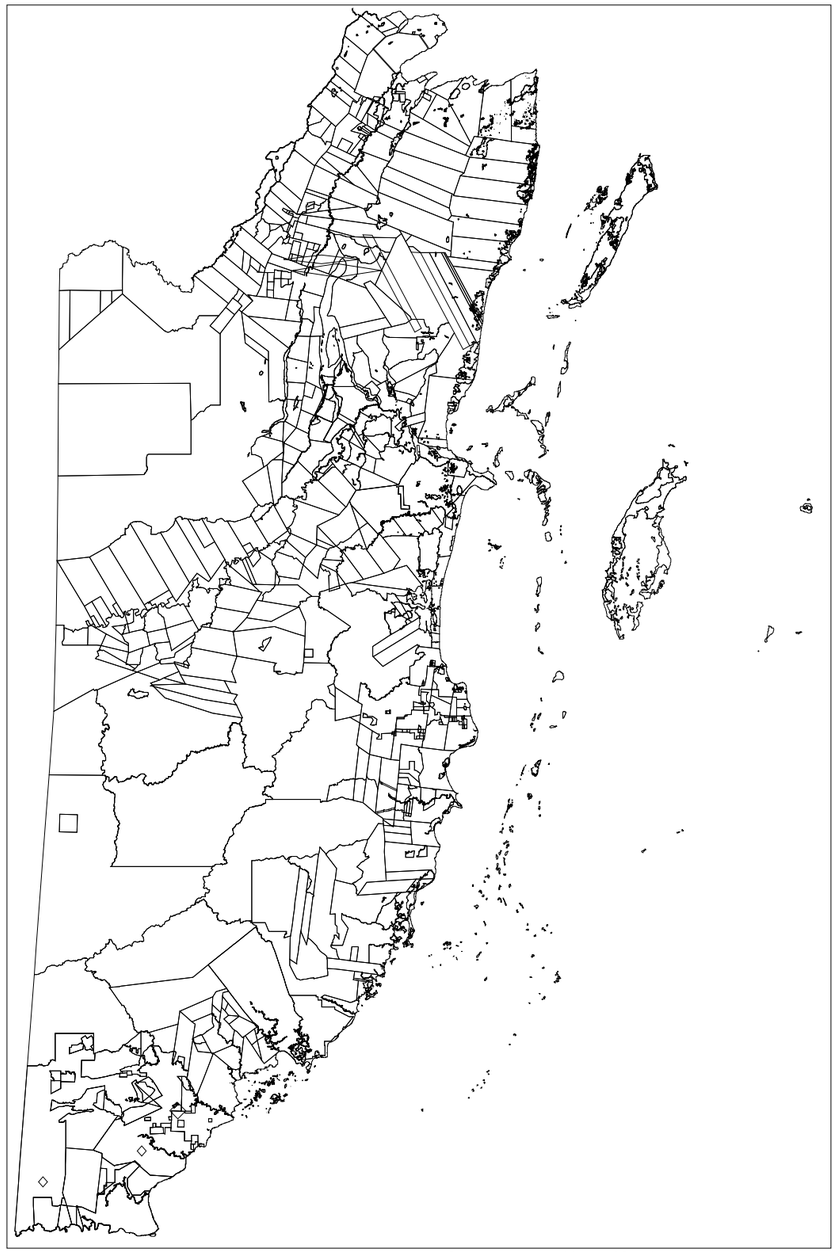
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Figure 11a: Plan of Part of the British Settlement of Honduras between Rio Hondo and Sibun drawn by Robert Hume, 1858, copied by Edward P Usher, 1859.



Source: The National Archives, Kew

Figure 12: Property Map of Belize, 1935.



Source: Property Map, 1935, Archive of Belize, Belmopan

Georges Hyde, a wealthy free mulatto and slave owner, demanded equality with whites in 1827 on the basis of the relative wealth of mulattos, wealth that, at the time, determined political participation and access to land. Hyde pointed out that "nearly two-thirds of the whole property at Honduras in Land slaves, slave owners and personalty belongs to the free coloured class, exclusive of the free blacks." (Shoman, 2009a, p. 54). From this time on, the scope of the interests at stake is apparent.

The land registry approach is confirmed half-century later in an 1858 document. The map (Figure 11a) was made in the northern portion of the territory (British Settlement),[23] entrusted to the sworn surveyor Robert Hume (and copied in 1859 by Edward P. Usher, also a sworn surveyor, cf. Antochiw & Breton, 1992, p. 63). It shows a parcel plan that now covered nearly all the northern part of the territory. As successor to the first parcel plan of 1808-1816, it sets out the structure still in use today for the surveying and allocation of land. The typical parcel plan of the areas colonised along rivers is clearly recognisable, with boundaries marked at equal distance from the rivers (at least on the map) with little mention of trails or localities while rivers and lagoons are carefully identified. Inequalities in parcel size begin to appear. Zones with narrow strips of land west of the New River Lagoon contrast with vast portions prefiguring the formation of the country's largest estate, the British Honduras Company, founded in 1859 and transformed in 1875 into the Belize Estate and Produce Company. But, unlike its predecessors, this map shows no numbers identifying the portions drawn or any place names. Its purpose seems to be completely different: to intervene and weigh on territorial disputes between certain very large landowners and the government of British Honduras (see transcription, Figure 11b).

Hence, the first set of remarks in the margin of the document recalls, in reference to coloured lines drawn on the map, the history of these mapped areas and their origin. The red line represents "Old Boundaries granted by Spain for the purpose of cutting Mahogany and Logwood, the blue line delimits Lands taken possession of between 1830 and 1839, while the yellow line indicates the understood boundary lines of Mexico." Finally, the line edged in pink shows "Lands sold to the British Honduras C° Limited, bordering upon those supposed to be leased to Young, Toledo and C°." This colour coding identifies the historical and legal context of the appropriation of the areas shown and refers to very different orders of legitimacy: treaties, de facto possession, presumed national boundaries, and commercial transactions. The use of colour, overlapping in places, clearly shows these orders of legitimacy.

Another set of remarks on the map itself emphasises the uncertainty around the legal status of these lands. On the parcel located at the centre of the map, coloured in grey, is written: "Lands leased by the Crown to Hyde and C° at seven hundred Dollars per annum. Which were afterwards found to belong to themselves and others by original location." On the boundary

[23] 1858-59 *Plan of Part of the British Settlement of Honduras between Rio Hondo and Sibun drawn by Robert Hume, sworn surveyor, Belize, April 1858 (Boundaries are coloured from other plans) copied by Edward P. Usher, sworn surveyor, Belize, December 1859*. Public Record Office, Kew, CO 700 British Honduras n° 20. Also in Antochiw & Breton, 1992, Num. 96, p. 184.

of the land at the bottom left of the map is the mention: "Lands supposed to be leased by the crown to Young Toledo and C° at one thousand Dollars p'annum. Boundary uncertain, but which will be ascertained by referring to the late arrangement or Treaty with Guatemala." We here note the insistence on the uncertainty ("found to, uncertain, supposed") around the private estates of Hyde, Young and Toledo as well as on the national borders with Mexico and Guatemala. This uncertainty became intolerable at the very moment the British Honduras Company is formed in 1859, through the association of the Settlers James Hyde, James Bartlett and the English merchant John Hodge. Liberalism requires clear consensual property rights.

Finally, without developing this further, we note that this same parcel plan appears in the Property Map of 1935 (Figure 12). Unfortunately, at the Belize Archives and Records Service in Belmopan, where I was able to consult it, it is isolated and out of context as the list which should accompany it has disappeared. Bolland and Shoman (1977) and Barnett (1991) had seen it and provide its content. Some of the polygons on the 1935 map are still discernible in the "Registry sections" of today's Department of Lands and Surveys. The inertia of mapmaking helps retrace the genealogy of the parcelled land, so we note how boundaries initially drawn to define parcels (1819, 1858) evolve into cadastral references (1935), then jurisdictional divisions.

6. Maps and territorial development: The domestication of official space

Governments need general representations of space which do not claim to provide information as precise as for example the maps used for diplomatic negotiations on borders or in conflicts over land tenure. These maps aim to show consensual space, as "neutral" and "objective" as possible. This is the case for the map made by the Crown Surveyor Faber[24] in 1858 (Figure 13) for the northern part of the territory. The coast and the cayes are very detailed (names, shapes), far more than the interior. A few localities are sparsely mentioned on the northern border along the Rio Hondo: Consejo, Corosal, Santa Elena, Douglas, Cocos, Putch and Rocky Point, and of course Belize City, the only locality to be featured in detail. No roads or trails are drawn on the map. The area represented covers only up to Stann Creek, to the south. The stylised image of the mountains further south (between Manatee River and Stann Creek) suggests that, beyond a strip of some twenty miles inland, this area was still unexplored. Similarly, to the northwest, towards Blue Creek, the vague mention of "Territory of the English" recalls that, at the time (1858), these regions still had no status. This situation changed four years later with the institution of British Honduras as a British colony dependent on Jamaica (1862).

[24] *Part of British Honduras, showing the positions of Belize, Corosal, and Cocos, by J. H. Faber, Crown Surveyor, Belize, May 10th, 1858. About 8 miles to 1 inch*. CO 700/ BRITISH HONDURAS 19-1858.

The map of 1867[25] (Figure 14a) is, to our knowledge, the first made by local authorities (Crown Surveyor) showing the new Colony in its entirety. Antochiw and Breton (1992, p. 64) qualify it as "the definitive map of the English colony of British Honduras." This official map was made in 1860, though not published until 1867, and in its title refers to the demarcation line of the border with Guatemala and Mexico traced by Lieutenant Abbs in 1867 at the north-west confines of British Honduras. The map is sober, and the lines of the rivers and lagoons are drawn with precision. For the first time, it lists in detail the string of inhabited sites along the rivers, some accompanied by information on the number of inhabitants.

[25] *Map of British Honduras Compiled from Surveys by J. H. Faber, Esqr., Crown Surveyor, E.L. Rhys, Esqr. and Others and including the Positions on and near the North Western Frontier, ascertained by Lieut[t] Abbs, R.N. in 1867 (...) Shows surveyed and unsurveyed rivers; constructed roads; tracks used as roads; limits of the port of Belize*. 1867 (original in 1860), Public Record Office, Kew, MPK 1/111/1.

The colony's northern portion is extremely detailed in its representation (partial reproduction in Figure 14b), especially along the New River, the oldest and most densely occupied area. It makes mention of San Estevan (1,300 inhabitants) and Orange Walk (600 inhabitants), Laurie New Town to the north (which did not prosper), as well as drawings of clusters of houses on Albion Island (San Antonio, San Roman), the villages of Consejo Point to the north and Corosal stretching along the Bay. It features sugar cane plantations concentrated along the New River, near

Pembroke Hall (Santa Cruz Sugar Work and Caledonia Sugar Work). This northern part appears as an area which is occupied and exploited. We also know that it was in fact following the massive arrival of refugees from Yucatan during the Caste War, most of them peasants and farmers, that sugar cane was introduced and contributed to the development of farming in this region.

Although it is located on the coast, Belize City appears in its institutional and economic centrality, with trails going north towards Mexico and west towards the Guatemalan border.

The toponymy seems stabilised (much of which is still the same today), built in large part on the names of the first inhabitants: Hobson's Choice, Garbutt's Fall, Richmond Hill, Miller's Bight, Booth's River, Douglas Bank, etc. Other terms make reference to use or vegetation (Guinea Grass for pasture, Pine Ridge) or a Maya or Spanish presence (Indian Hill, Indian Church). Typically Hispanic place names are widespread in the north (San Antonio, San Roman, Corosalito), alongside those denoting the presence of Yucatec Maya (Xaibe, Patchakan). In any case, they are rooted in historical references, dating scarcely a few decades earlier. Prior knowledge of the territory, Maya in this case, seems to have been swept away.

This new map long remained as a reference, but its highly generalist nature prevents it from compensating gaps in knowledge of the territory. As the local administration required accurate geographic information to govern, in 1871 it demanded support from London to develop a Land Survey. The argument was based on the appalling lack of geographical information on the country, in spite of Faber's map of 1867 which Longden (Lieutenant Governor from 1867 to 1870) deemed to be good.[26]

In 1871 (CO 123/146, Landboard), the government of British Honduras (Murdoch, possibly a colonial official) wrote a letter on behalf of the Government of British Honduras requesting an assistant for the Crown Surveyor, specifying that this person could be Creole, European or a well-acclimated American. This meant it was not necessary to send someone from England, but to try to hire someone who could withstand the difficult working conditions, since surveying forest land in a tropical climate could be daunting. Since it was about the establishment of a land registry, the absence of any allusion to a national preference denotes the preoccupation by the government for an approach eminently pragmatic, based on efficiency.

In the same spirit of improving this strategic activity for the Colony's development, Murdoch asked that the registries remain the property of the Crown: "records should be retained as the property of the Crown–not of the Surveyor" (CO 123/146, Landboard), which suggests that such had not been the case. Until then (1871), it seems the Surveyor dealt with information generated by his staff–surveying, measuring, drawing up the parcel plan, identifying registries of concessions–in a very personal way, which gave him extraordinary power. This situation helps explain the absence of

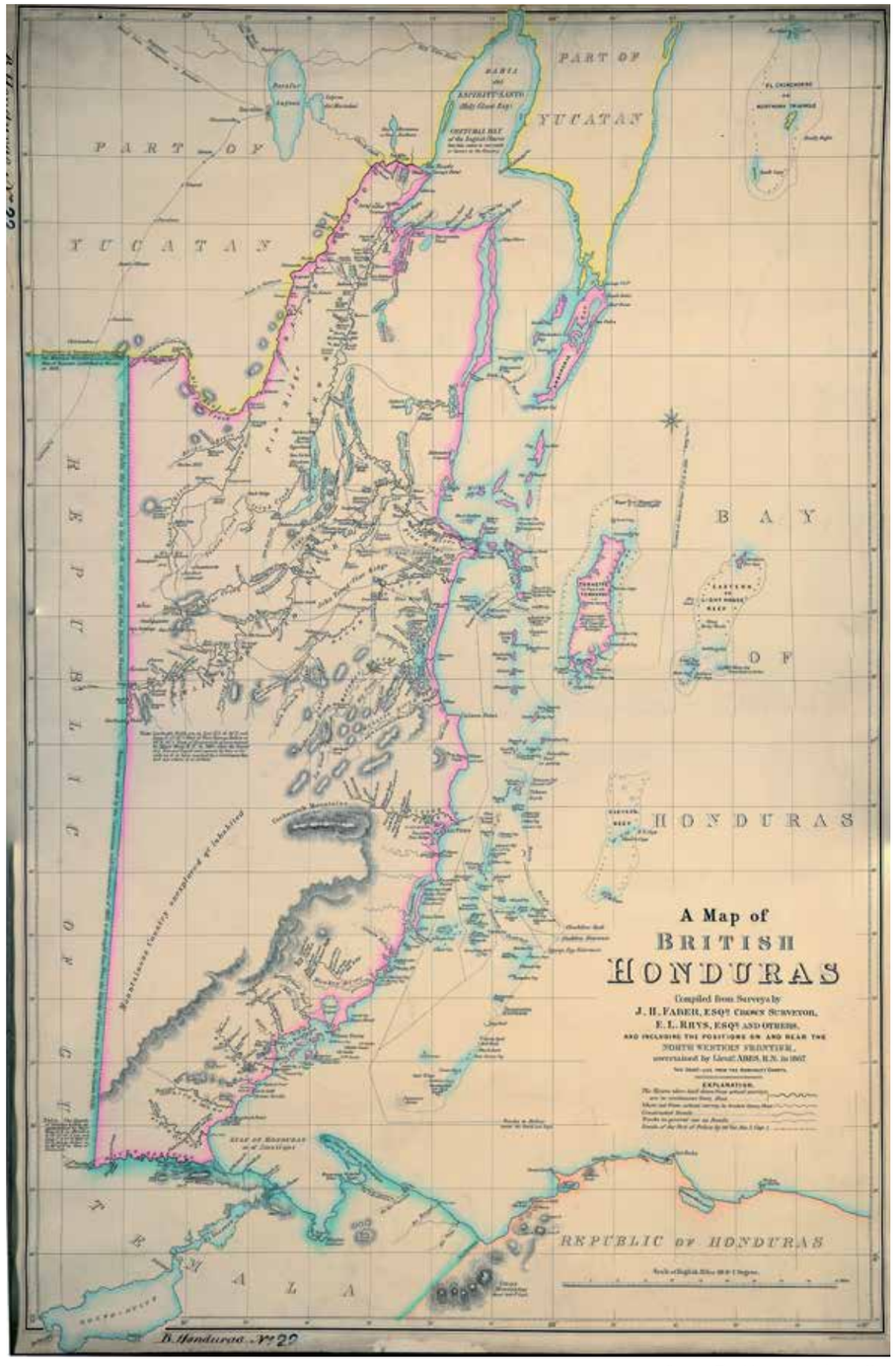
[26] The same complaint was issued 30 years later, this time from the Ministry of War in London, which "suggests that government of British Honduras be invited to make definite proposals for a reconnaissance survey, as there is no reliable map in existence" (CO 123/263, Despatch War Office, 1909).

Figure 13: Map of Part of British Honduras, showing the positions of Belize, Corosal, and Cocos, by J. H. Faber, 1858.



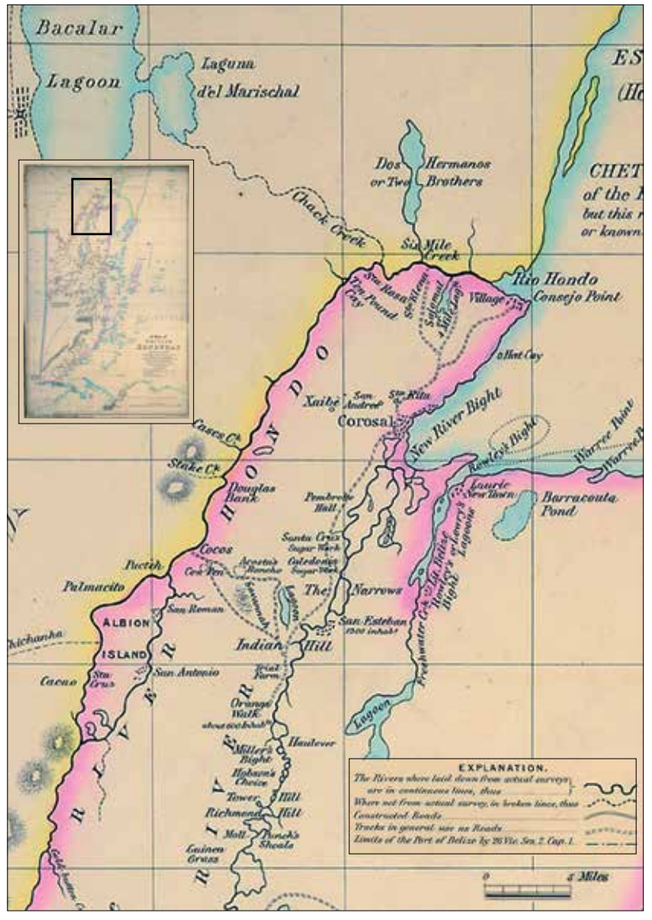
Source: The National Archives, Kew

Figure 14a: Map of British Honduras Compiled from Surveys by J. H. Faber, 1867.



Source: The National Archives, Kew

Figure 14b: Detail of Map of British Honduras Compiled from Surveys by J. H. Faber, 1867.



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data in the Archives since he alone held evidence proving the legitimacy of land tenure. By sending this claim, Murdoch was also settling accounts with the Crown Surveyor, in this case Faber himself, whom he accuses of abusing his authority in a letter dated 30 March 1871 specifying "The Lieutenant governor reports that Mr Faber, the Crown Surveyor, who is paid by fees for services on behalf of the Crown, acts also as Surveyor for private parties" (CO 123/146, Emigration Board, 30th March 1871). Accordingly, the technical and administrative survey system was hard to organise. Murdoch, in his letter of 30 May 1871, wrote that the time had come to improve regulations to access land and suggested adopting the "American system" or "trigono-

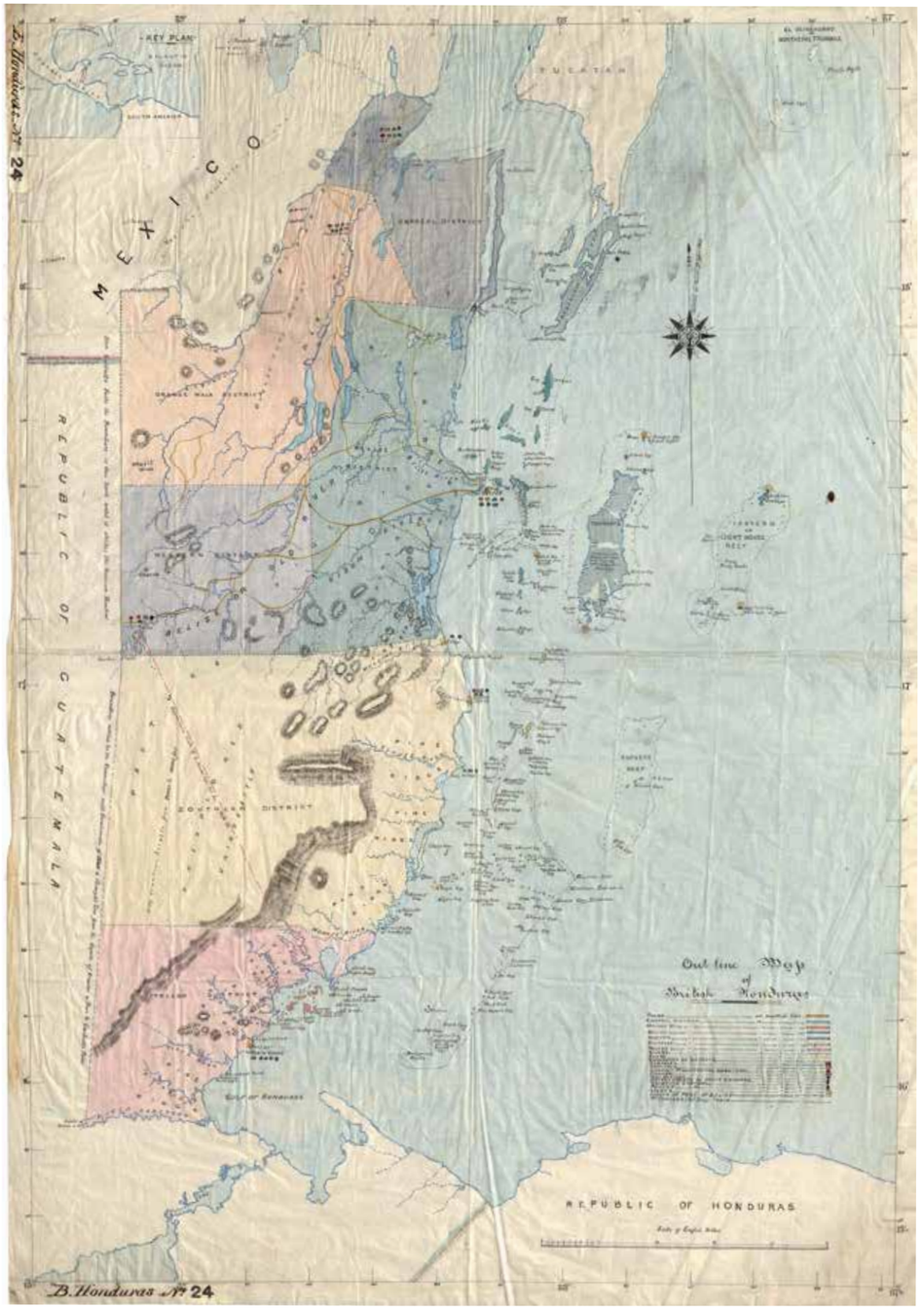
metric system" for land survey. This meant undertaking an exhaustive, highly technical survey of the entire territory, associated with systematic registration of parcels (cadastre) allowing for subsequent secure monitoring of transactions. London refused to comply, specifying that this system was not appropriate for British Honduras because of its exorbitant cost and had been abandoned even in Australia, and that it was preferable to undertake surveys as needed when appropriations were made (from the minutes of exchanges with Governor Cairn, CO 123/146, Emigration Board, 1 June 1871).

Another map of 1886[27] drawn by the colonial administration provides a record of the colony's administrative and institutional structure (Figure 15). It covers the entire colony, differentiating districts by colour (pastel): Corozal (mauve), Orange Walk (orange), Belize (green), Western (purple), Southern (yellow), Toledo (pink). The map mentions few localities or place names, and focusses on the functions associated with certain localities, district seats in particular. In addition to the boundaries of districts and roads, the legend has ten symbols corresponding to main infrastructure: barracks, hospitals, district magistrates' quarters, prisons, post offices, police, lighthouses, etc.

Regardless of the reality on the ground, the map shows the government's priorities of the time (roads, hospitals, justice, police, lighthouses, ports) and a vision of an ideally organised and institutionalised space. Except for this information, data are rather lacking overall. For the country's northern region, the map simply confirms that the seats of the two northern districts (Corozal and Orange Walk) housed all the services listed (except lighthouses and a hospital in Orange Walk) and that a road linked Orange Walk to Corosal and the Mexican border to the north with another going towards the Rio Hondo at Cocos. In other words, in this northern zone the main communication structure and hierarchies between localities were already in place in 1886.

[27] *Outline Map of British Honduras, showing Roads, Districts, Post Offices, Police Stations, &c. [Tracing.] 6 miles to 1 inch. Author, Publisher, &c.: [Official, Belize] 1886,* The National Archives, Kew, CO 700/BRITISH HONDURAS24.

Figure 15: Outline Map of British Honduras, showing Roads, Districts, Post Offices, Police Stations, 1886.



Source: The National Archives, Kew

7. Maps and war

Alongside institutional concerns, the other major issue concerning territorial development and control was that of the non-definition of borders. They remained a subject of diplomatic dispute as attested by a map[28] of 1866 which is particularly instructive in its form and context.

It shows the territory of British Honduras in its author's time, with essentially the same borders as today, on which are superimposed the boundaries of the areas initially conceded by the Spanish Crown to the English in 1783 and 1786, in the northern and central parts of the country as it is today. In other words, the "smaller" territory conceded by 18th-century treaties is shown inside the "greater" territory administered by the English nearly a century later. The argument is simple and graphically compelling: the English "stole" the area between the "small" and "large" territories. The map (see Antochiw & Breton, 1992, p. 190) was produced by a Mexican subject who vehemently expressed regret for what he deemed to be the loss to the English of national (Mexican) territory. He explains the document he produced in these terms:

> This is a copy of the map sent to Prince Maximilian's Government by the Envoy Extraordinary of England to Mexico, Mr Campbell Scarlett (...) The English Government aimed to legalise (...) the illegal possession it had taken of our territory (...) We drew on the map the carmine line indicating the boundaries which completely respect the Treaty of 1783 and the Convention of 86 to show the territory usurped by the English from the Nation. (Peniche, 1869, p. 403, as quoted in Antochiw & Breton, 1992, p. 107).[29]

This is a hybrid representation where a background of English origin and an "update" by a Mexican author are superimposed. The process of graphic simplification (a broad red line) expresses the author's anger and reinforces the scope of his stance.

Twenty years later, in the context of the Caste War in Yucatan and its possible expansion to British Honduras, the matter of the border with Mexico was still unresolved. Security and defence of the territory are the substance of the letter sent in 1886 by Governor Goldsworthy of British Honduras[30] to Edward Stanhope, Secretary of State for the Colonies. The Governor developed his defence policy, proposing the creation of a local police force (Constabulary Force), possibly bringing in soldiers from Barbados. He planned to set up a maritime communication service between Belize and the northern districts (Corozal, Orange Walk and the Rio Hondo) with the acquisition of two boats. He proposed building "blockhouses" and police stations along the northern border and reopening trails in that same region. The documents were accompanied by enclosures specifying the necessary budgets and a map.[31] The Governor was attempting to set up a true "contention programme" in the north of the colony, founded on building infrastructures and the presence of repressive forces, even if this meant restructuring the administrative space of the northern part of the territory.

The map (Figure 16a) specifies the proposed location of the district seats along the border, such as Sta Elena, San Rosa, Douglas, San Antonio and Corosalito (green dots), with "blockhouses," almost all of them located in the same locations (red dots). It also identifies localities with Police Stations (black lozenge), fewer and located further inland (see partial transcription in Figure 16b).

The map also mentions the plan to reopen a trail along the Rio Hondo. Drawn in yellow, barely visible, the "Old track pass grown over by bush to be reopened" would have started from Consejo in the extreme north before following the Rio Hondo south to Corosalito. In other words, it would have controlled the territory's northern border. Other roads and trails are indicated by red dotted lines, with no hierarchy or explanation. The map also shows, on the Mexican side, the historic route from Bacalar to the Peten, that appears already in the 1783 map.

This territorial defence project was duly supported by the Governor who justified its high cost: "there can be no 'more pressing demands upon the revenue' of this colony than the defence of its frontier" (emphasis in the original) (CO 123/180, Despatch 160 of 28th Sept. 1886, Goldsworthy to Edward Stanhope). But London refused him any further support to finance the project, sometimes disdainfully. In response to his request for funding the purchase of two boats to link Belize and Corozal, deemed a strategic priority for the security of the territory, London answered that they would not pay since "six months after the Steam launches had been in the colony they would in all probability become useless and have to be sold for old iron and concluded that there would be no steam launches and no imperial aid, (...) all arrangements must be based on colonial ways and means."[32] The Governor ended up exploding, "There is not, I believe, another colony similarly situated, nor am I aware of any colony without representative Government which is called upon to undertake its defence at its own expense."[33]

I have found no information of any follow-up to this project, but a few months later, the same government of British Honduras (in the person of the Administrator Henry Fowler who had replaced Goldsworthy who left for London in November 1886) transmitted to London a very complete file on the matter of borders (CO 123/180, 1st December 1886).

This second file on the colony's borders and insecurity is quite different from the earlier. It looks into the relations built up between the local government of British Honduras and "Indian groups" involved in one way or another in the Caste War which dragged on across the border in Yucatan.

[28] *Carta del territorio de Belize, Litografia de Salazar, 1866 approx.*, mentioned in Peniche, 1869 and reproduced in Antochiw and Breton, 1992, but I was unable to find the original in Kew or the BNF.

[29] The original in Spanish *Es una copia del mapa que dirigió al gobierno del príncipe Maximiliano el enviado extraordinario de Inglaterra in México, Mr. Campbell Scarlet (...) El gobierno inglés pretendía legalizar, aunque tratando con el usurpador, la posesión ilegal que ha tomado de nuestro territorio (...) Nosotros hemos trazado entre el plano la línea de carmín que señala los límites, con entera sujeción al Tratado de 1783 y Convención de 86 para poner de manifiesto el territorio que han usurpado los ingleses a la nación.*

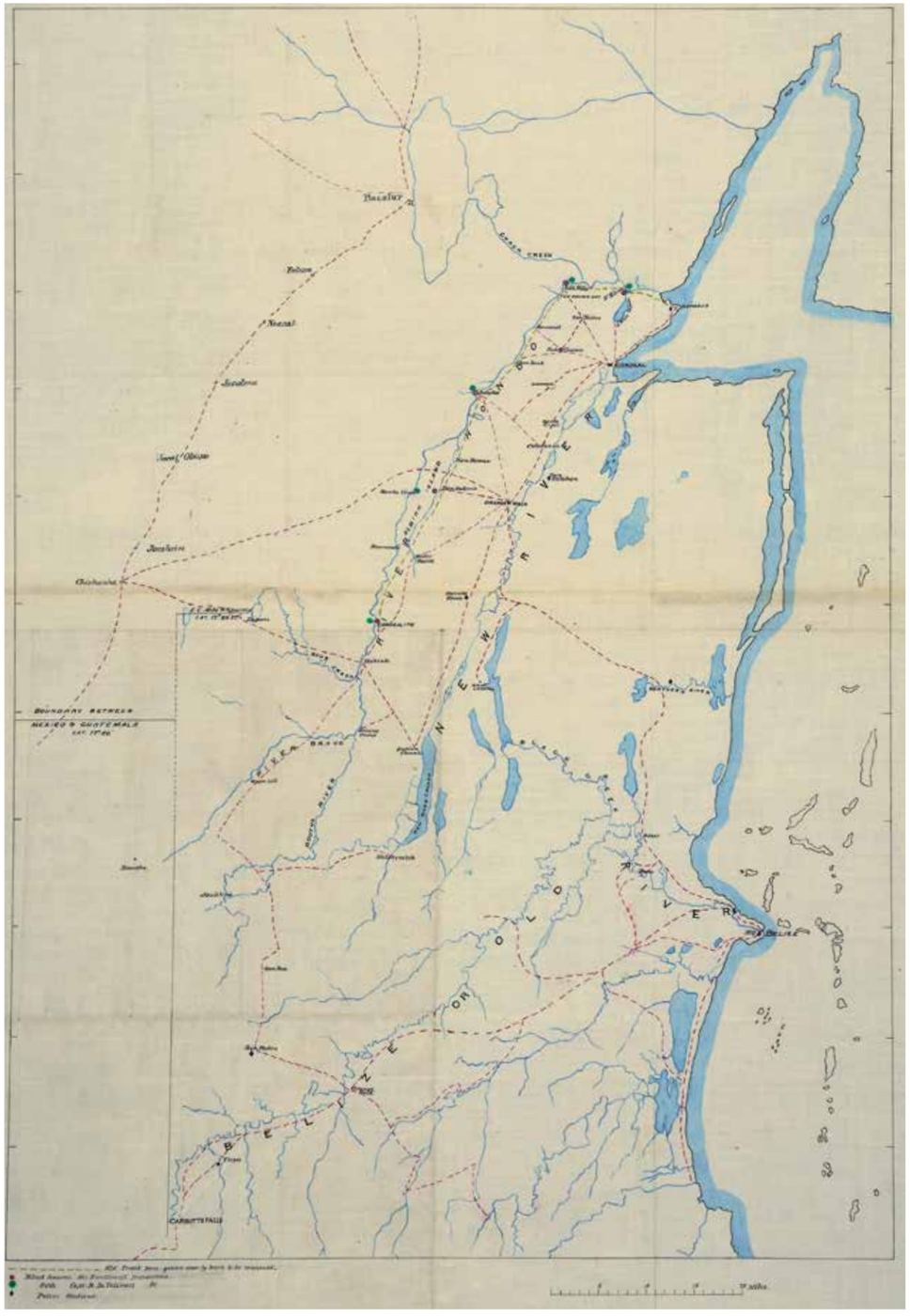
[30] In October 1884, Goldsworthy was promoted from Lieutenant Governor to Governor and Commander-in-Chief of British Honduras, as British Honduras was elevated from Colony, still dependent on Jamaica, to Crown Colony, directly dependent on London. From 1884 to 1891 he represented the Colonial Authority of British Honduras and was recalled from British Honduras in disgrace and stoned by boys and women as he left.

[31] *Map of the area between 17° and 19°N and 88° and 89°30'W, showing police stations, blockhouses as proposed by Governor [Goldsworthy] and by Captain R de Villamil, Royal Engineers. Originally enclosed in Goldsworthy's Despatch, 28 September 1886.* All the maps of 1886 correspond to Public Record Office CO 123/180 correspondence file.

[32] CO 123/180, *Despatch 160 of 28th Sept.1886, Goldsworthy to Edward Stanhope.*

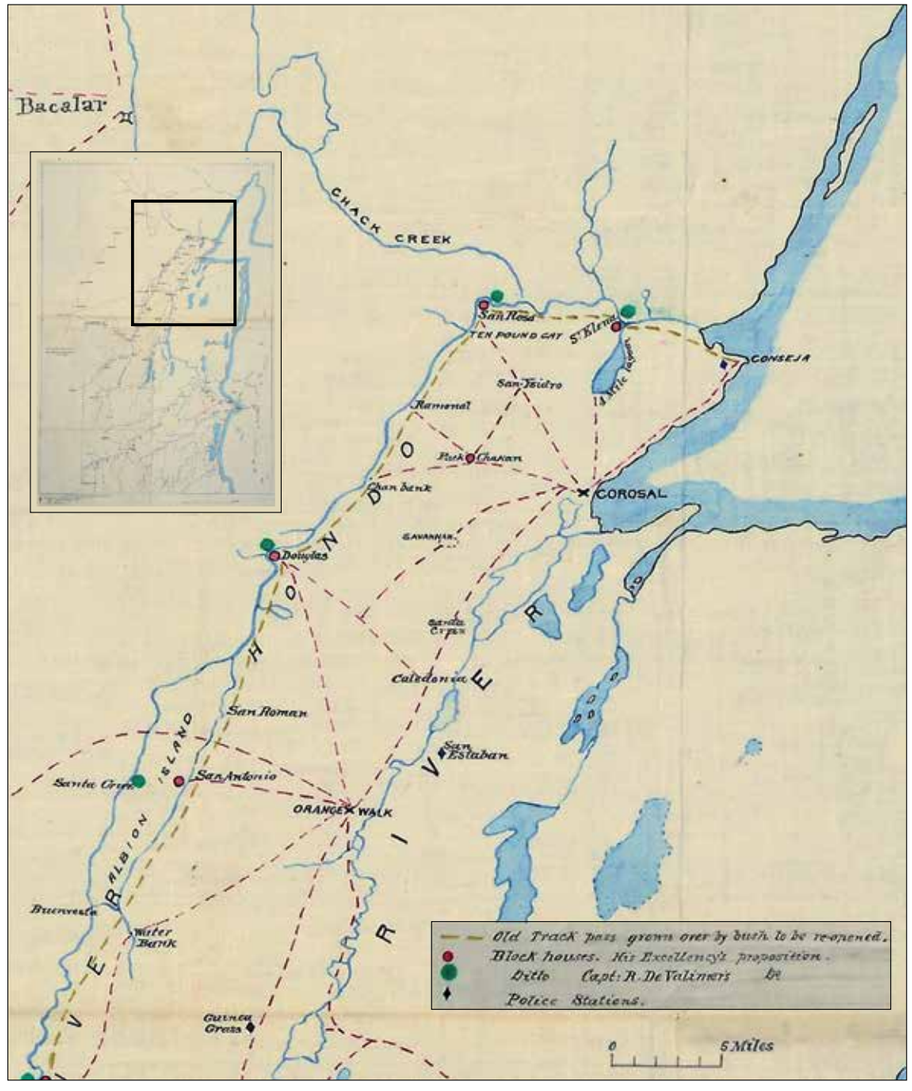
[33] CO 123/180, *Despatch 160 of 28th Sept.1886, Goldsworthy to Edward Stanhope.*

Figure 16a: British Honduras (now Belize) (…) showing places on or near the boundary referred to in Governor Goldsworthy's Despatch, N° 89 of 6 May 1886.



Source: The National Archives, Kew

Figure 16b: Detail of British Honduras (now Belize) (…) showing places on or near the boundary referred to in Governor Goldsworthy's Despatch, N° 89 of 6 May 1886.



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Source: The National Archives, Kew

The map,[34] which plays a central role in this file, was made by Surveyor General Gordon Allen. Its purpose is specified in the title, which declares that it shows *areas in the Yucatan occupied by different native American nations* (Figure 17a and transcription 17b). A copy of this same map, registered with the War Office Intelligence Branch, accompanies a long letter from the Governor. A handwritten note indicates that this map was "compiled from Perez' map of Yucatan[35] with the frontier marked, and showing the Territories occupied by the different tribes of Indians". The nuance between "Tribes" (in the note) and "Nations" (in the title) is not explained; it does, however, underscore the possibly high, even if not established, status of certain native groups present in the region, in the eyes of the British.[36]

The balance of power between different Maya groups, the Mexican government, the British authority and merchants of all kinds was extremely complex and changed over the fifty years of this war. As we know, throughout the second half of the 19th century the Caste War pitted the Maya against the Mexican government, for several decades the Maya maintaining control over much of the southern part of the peninsula (today's Quintana Roo). The British authorities were most often accused of supporting Maya rebel groups, supplying them with weapons while also keeping them on the other side of the border. Loggers negotiated on a case by case basis with the Maya for access to logging resources in the territories they controlled, while merchants grew rich thanks to the very lucrative trade in weapons and contraband between Mexico and British Honduras, trade in which all the actors participated.

The situation was no simpler for the Maya. The Cruzo'ob living around their ritual and political centre of Santa Cruz, which explains why they were often called "Santa Cruz Indians" or "Chan Santa Cruz", were on good trading terms with the British, to the point of asking in 1887 for the Crown's protection and even annexation to the British colony. The proposal did not prosper, but rather accelerated border negotiations between Mexico and Britain. Further east, the Ixcanha Maya, also known as "los Pacíficos del Sur," in open conflict with the Cruzo'ob, negotiated an agreement with the Mexicans quite early (1853), which granted them relative autonomy until 1894. Towards the south, the Chichanha Maya were also sworn enemies of the Cruzo'ob, as well as of the Mexicans and British. Defeated in 1863 by the Cruzo'ob, they had to abandon their village to move to Icaiche, the name by which they are best known.[37] In reaction in particular to violent incursions by British woodcutters, Icaiche Maya led bloody raids against localities in the north of the territory. Their leader Marcos Canul was killed in 1872 in an act of war at Orange Walk. After his death, the Icaiche signed a "friendship" agreement with the English, then with the Mexicans. On the Mexican side, the Caste War was losing strength, ending with the fall of Santa Cruz in 1901. We will not delve further here into the causes and consequences of this particularly long conflict (for more information, see in particular Bracamonte, 1994; Higuera Bonfil, 1995; Macías, 2002; Reed, 1971; Villalobos, 2006), but

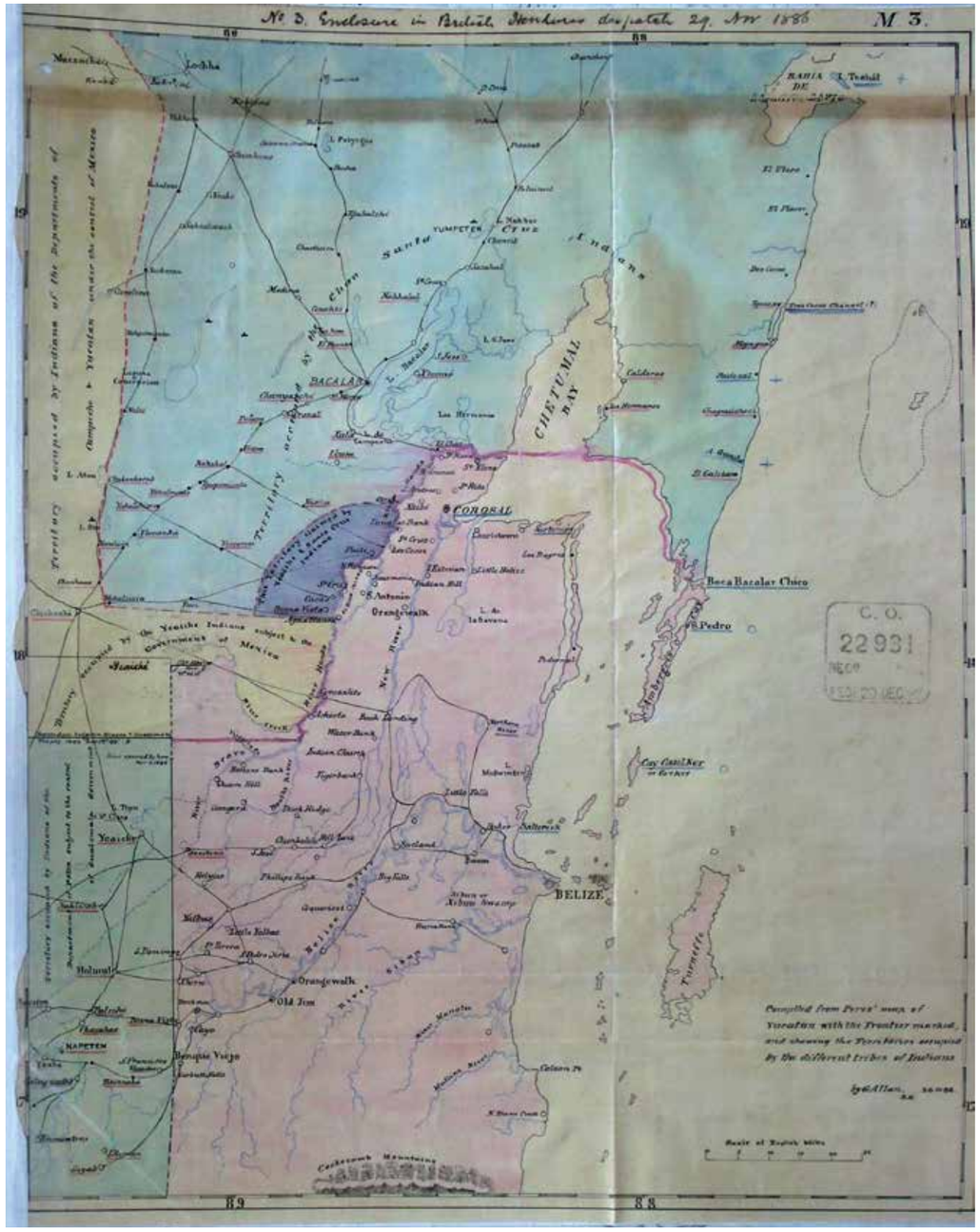
[34] *British Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico. Map of the area between 16°50' and 19°25'N and between 87°20' and 89°30'W, showing areas in the Yucatan occupied by different native American nations. Scale: 1 inch to about 13 miles. Compiled, on the basis of an earlier map, by G[ordon] Allen, Surveyor General, 30 November [18]86.* Originally enclosure number 3 in Governor R. T. Goldsworthy's Despatch, 29 November 1886. Kew, 1886, MFQ 1/196/3.

[35] *Mapa de la peninsula de Yucatán, de 1878, compilado por Joaquim Hubbe y Andrés Aznar Pérez, revisado y aumentado con datos importantes por C. Hermann Berendt en 1878. Engraved and printed by Régnier, 105 rue de Rennes, Paris* (note the mixture of languages, sic), with a copy in German in 1879 (Antochiw & Breton, 1992, p. 108 and 191).

[36] A letter from Governor Goldsworthy to General Lamay, *Chief of the Ycaiche Indians*, refers to the good relations he wishes to maintain between "the governments we respectively represent" (CO 123/180, 8th Sept. 1886, from the Governor to Gal Lamay).

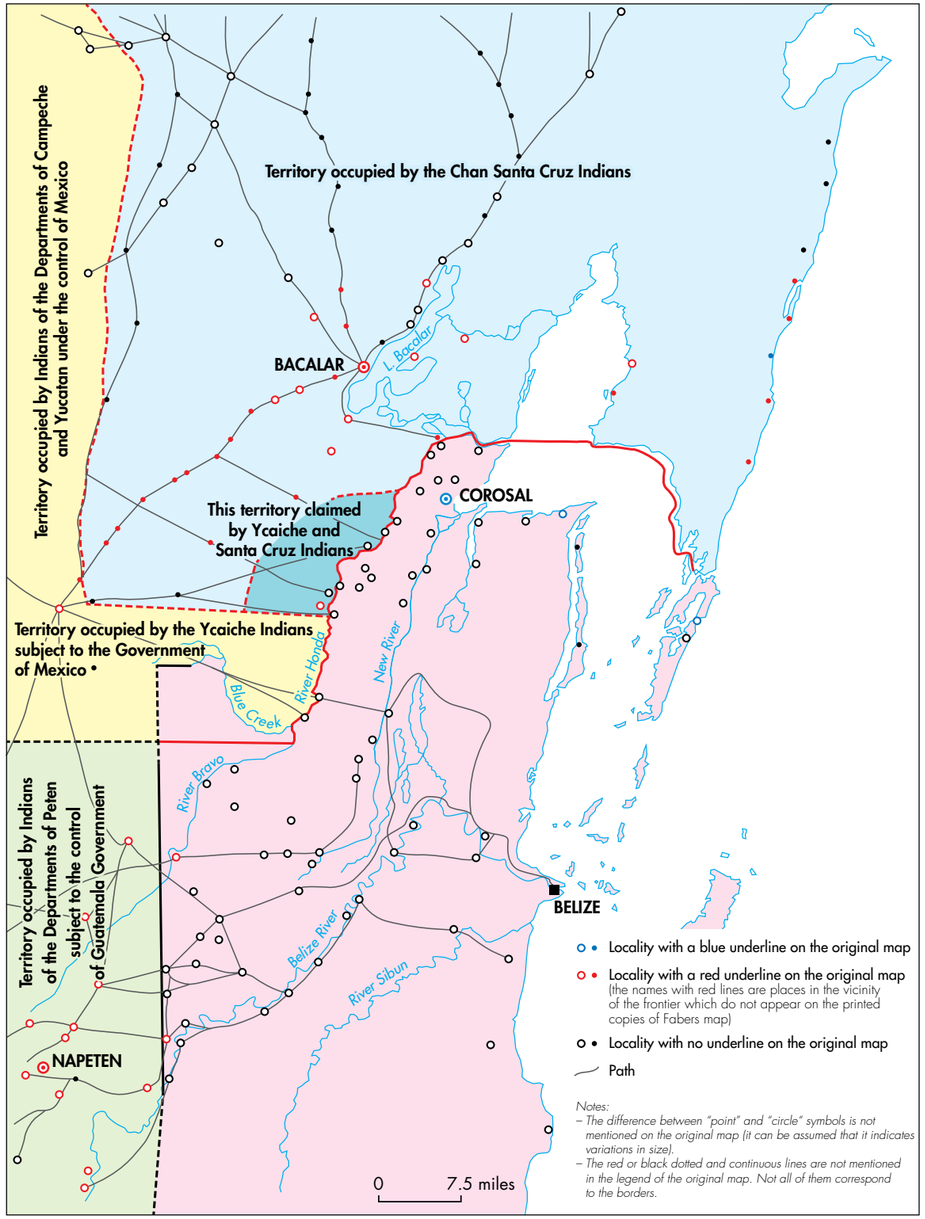
[37] For more information, see Lean Sweeney, 2006.

Figure 17a: British Honduras (…) showing areas in the Yucatan occupied by different native American nations, 1886.



Source: The National Archives, Kew

Figure 17b: Transcription of the map British Honduras (…) showing areas in the Yucatan occupied by different native American nations, 1886.



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it is important to remember the regional complexity before going back to analysing the map produced by the local British administration included in the documents sent by the Administrator of British Honduras to the War Office in London in 1886.

The territory of the colony (Figures 17a and 17b) is shown in pink. To the north, in the Mexican part, "the territory 'occupied' by the Chan Santa Cruz Indians;" is in blue. Also in Mexico, "the territory occupied by the Maya of the Departments of Campeche and Yucatan under the control of Mexico and the territory occupied by Ycaiche Indians subjects of the government of Mexico," in other words the pacified areas, are in yellow. In purple is "the territory claimed by the Ycaiche and Santa Cruz Indians" on the border between the two previous zones and the British territory. Finally, in green to the southwest, "the territory occupied by the Indians of the Department of Petén under control of the government of Guatemala." All these nuances in language ("claimed", "occupied", "nations", "tribes", etc.) are important as they clearly demonstrate the mastery the English had over this eminently fragile conflictual reality. Administrator Fowler specified in the documents accompanying the map that "the Indian territories have been defined by myself from information I have personally obtained from Indian chiefs at various times" (CO 123/180, Confidential 29th Nov. 1886, from Gvt. House to the Sec. State for the Colonies).

The territories belonging to the different groups do not superimpose, except in the case of territories marked as being claimed by both the Ycaiche and Santa Cruz Indians, a geographic expression of their rivalry which actually extended far beyond this confined space.

The Rio Hondo was at the heart of these more or less open or latent conflicts between Maya groups (Chan Santa Cruz, Ycaiche, other "Indians in the Departments of Campeche, Yucatan and Peten") and the authorities on several sides (English, Mexican, Guatemalan).

The layout of trails is also very important: the very dense Maya road network can be recognised in Yucatan on the one hand, and in the southern Peten on the other. On the map, the north of the British territory is not associated with these networks, probably a reflection of more recent settlements with transportation made exclusively by boat towards the coast. Conversely, the centre of the colony, starting from Belize City, is linked to Guatemala by many roads and trails, not to mention the rivers (Belize River, New River). The map is extremely precise and mentions many localities in British Honduras, Mexico and Guatemala. This makes it truly a vision of an "Indian space", or at least an "Indian question", which exceeds national divisions and was of concern to the English colonial power. It also reveals the intent to become familiar with the population in this area with a view to a promising future in commercial exploitation, following the projects of entrepreneurs supported by British territorial authorities, including the previously-mentioned Belize Estate and Produce Company.

The part corresponding to "Camino de Bacalar" was shown in a specific copy of the map appended to the same confidential letter addressed to the War Office in November 1886. The legend highlights the authorities' interest in the border area and the localisation "of ranchos, inhabited places, ruins and paths"[38], likely markers to facilitate possible future incursions and exploration. The map distinguishes the villages according to their relation to the border, underscoring them in blue and red. Administrator Fowler specifies: "the names with red lines are places in the vicinity of the frontier which do not appear on the printed copies of Faber's map" (probably that of 1867) (CO 123/180, Confidential 29th Nov. 1886, from Gvt. House to the Sec. State for the Colonies). Therefore, the markings on the map seek to make up for the gaps in the "official" map in the border area which is likely to provide support or suffer invasions by some of the armed actors.

[38] *Enclosure N°. 4--Confidential Despatch of the 29, Nov. 1886. Copy Lith. at the Intelligence Branch, War Office, Feb. 1887. Intell. Br. N°. 621* (Intelligence Branch, War Office). CO 700/ BRITISH HONDURAS 25A--1886, M4.

The matter of delimiting the border with Guatemala was also fundamental at the time. The survey was technically difficult to implement, in the forest, without access and in rugged relief, it takes time and requires specific funding (Fowler's confidential memorandum, CO 123/180, 1st December 1886). It was also diplomatically difficult because it was necessary to possess the skills to negotiate with the Guatemalan authorities and with the Maya living in these forests, especially the Ycaiche. Following heightened tension reported in September 1886 by the Magistrate of the western Cayo District, the government of British Honduras feared attacks on the teams of surveyors, which forced the Governor to intervene by sending a letter directly to "General Lamay, chief of the Ycaiche." He wrote to him in very respectful terms, asking him to appease the situation, concluding: "I trust that our mutual relations may continue in a spirit of friendship and with a desire to secure a friendly communication" (CO 123/180, Goldsworthy to Gal Lamay, 8th September 1886). We should note that the agreements between the British and the Ycaiche had only recently been signed.

The situation was all the more difficult as this was a fools' bargain, which fooled no one, where all players were constrained by configurations of power beyond their control. Although the Maya still retained some power at the time, they were isolated from the major power centres and dependent on the English for many of their supplies (Bolland, 2004/1988, pp. 101-127). Governor Goldsworthy perfectly understood the fragile nature of alliances as long as border agreements were not approved by the highest authorities. He himself told Ignacio Mariscal, then Mexican Secretary of Foreign Affairs in charge of negotiating the 1893 border treaty which bears his name:[39] "I pointed out to Mr. Mariscal, and subsequently to His Excellency the President (of Mexico) that until the boundaries are authoritatively settled by a Convention between the two countries, the Indians will never comprehend the subject" (CO 123/190, Despatch Confidential from Goldsworthy to Lord Knutsford, 4th Sept. 1888). Nonetheless, the colonial government itself was not ready to recognise any rights to the Maya. Answering a question from London, the government of British Honduras confirmed that Indians had no property rights in the Colony, while suggesting that this could later pose a problem: "But when the boundary to the North has been delimitated, there is no doubt that the views expressed by Governor Goldsworthy (...) will be realised and that many Indians will be dispossessed of land 'which heretofore they have considered as belonging to them'" (CO 123/190, Despatch 129, 28 Sept 1888, from the Acting Governor Hubert E. N. Jerningham to Lord Knutsford).

[39] Spencer-Mariscal Treaty of 8 July 1893, describing the border and referring to the map of 1867 by Faber, Rhys, et al.

In the official discourse, the issue of the territory and its borders is closely linked to that of the "Indian rebels" from Mexico, but the Maya from the British territories are not taken into account and absent from official negotiations. If, according to the maps, the Indian zone seemed to stop at the borders of the colony, we know full well that this was not the case. Canul's last armed incursion occurred only in 1872 and the inhabitants of the towns in the north long lived in fear of new Maya attacks. The map of 1886 with clearly strategic and military objectives provides an Anglo-centric vision, in which armed actors are always "outside," but very close and potentially dangerous for the territory.

8. First steps towards scientific and technical mapping

Most of the documents presented so far were produced by the colonial administration or its representatives, the main actors and guarantors of the integrity and development of the territory. At the end of the 19th century, the colonial area opened up to other actors who produced their own representations and instruments of knowledge and control of the territory, such as private enterprises and scientists.

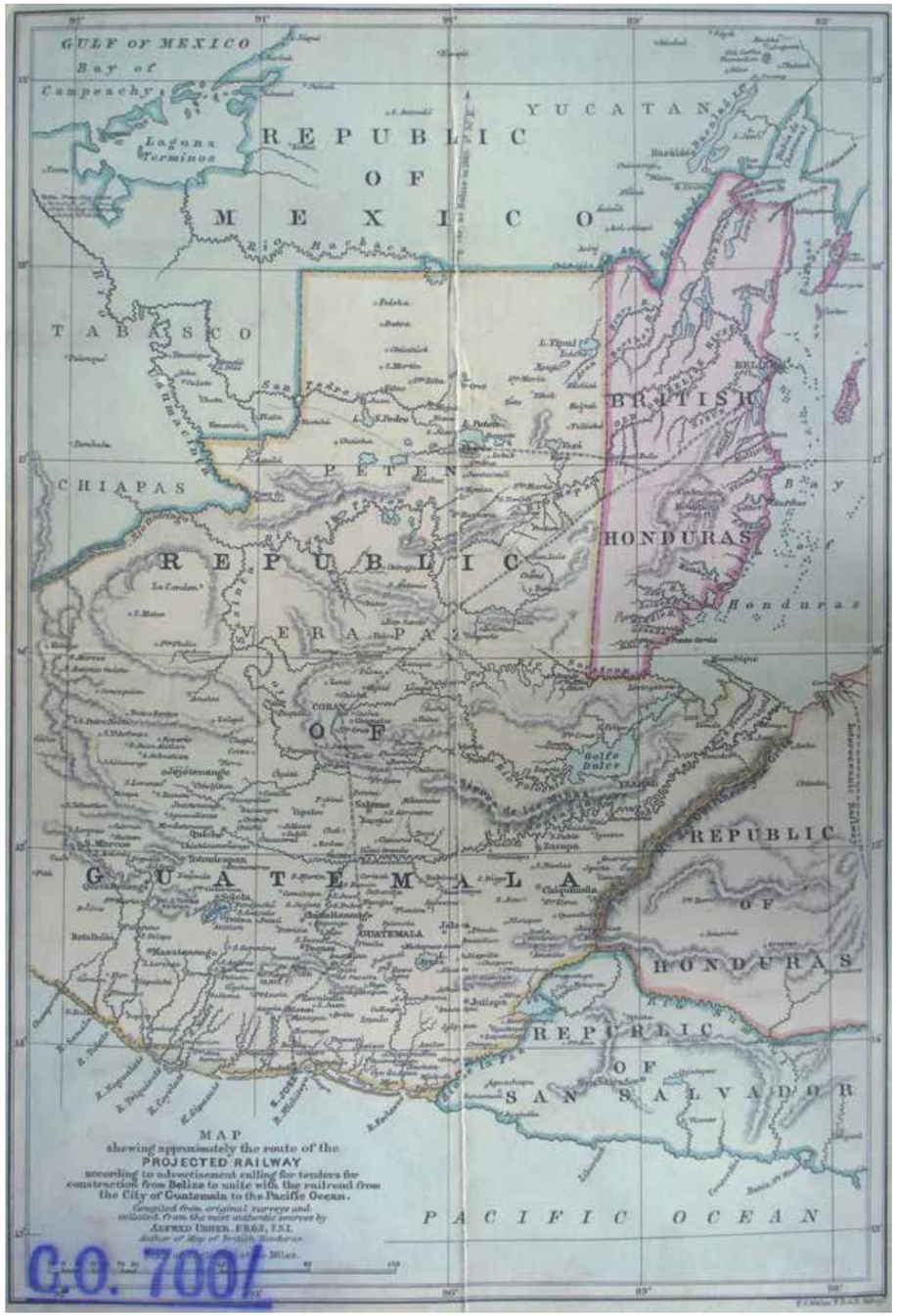
The late 19th century archives are packed with documents relating to railway construction projects. Some were actually built later but over short distances and for exclusively commercial purposes to transport wood or produce from plantations (bananas, oranges) owned by transnational companies. Sir Alfred Moloney, governor 1891-1897, shared the desire to stimulate agricultural development and recognised the potential of sugar cultivation in the north. He urged the construction of transport and Moloney supported various railroad schemes, including several private ones. He thought that without a railway there was "no hope for the future of the colony of British Honduras" (as cited by Judd, 1998). "In 1883 a US investor, Walter Regan, proposed to undertake a survey for a railroad from Belize City to Guatemala. (…) The Regan route went south, largely through Crown land. An alternative went west, to Peten in Guatemala" (Judd, 1998). None was built. But here, we are more interested in the projects than in their realisation and in what they tell us about the perception and knowledge of space of their promoters.

One of these, in 1890, was particularly ambitious, aiming to connect Belize City to Guatemala and the Pacific Ocean via a sort of dry canal like the one being considered at the same time in Mexico on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec (Velázquez, Léonard, Hoffmann, & Prévôt-Schapira, 2009). The signature *Compiled from original surveys and collated from the most authentic sources by Alfred Usher, Author of map of British Honduras* emphasises the accuracy of the information on the map[40] (Figure 18). Yet the rivers are very stylised, all drawn in the same way, with no claim to the correctness of the layout. Very few localities are mentioned in British Honduras,[41] while there is much more information for Guatemala. This proposal was of interest mostly to Guatemala, since the railway was to cross the Peten to reach Coban. In British Honduras, the railway was to pass south of the Sibun River in the direction of Coban, with a deviation towards Flores, thereby opening up forest land rich in mahogany but difficult to reach and exploit.

[40] *Map showing approximately the route of the projected railway... from Belize to unite... with the railroad from the City of Guatemala to the Pacific Ocean. Compiled from original Surveys by Alfred Usher, London. 37½ miles to 1 inch.* CO 700/ BRITISH HONDURAS 28.

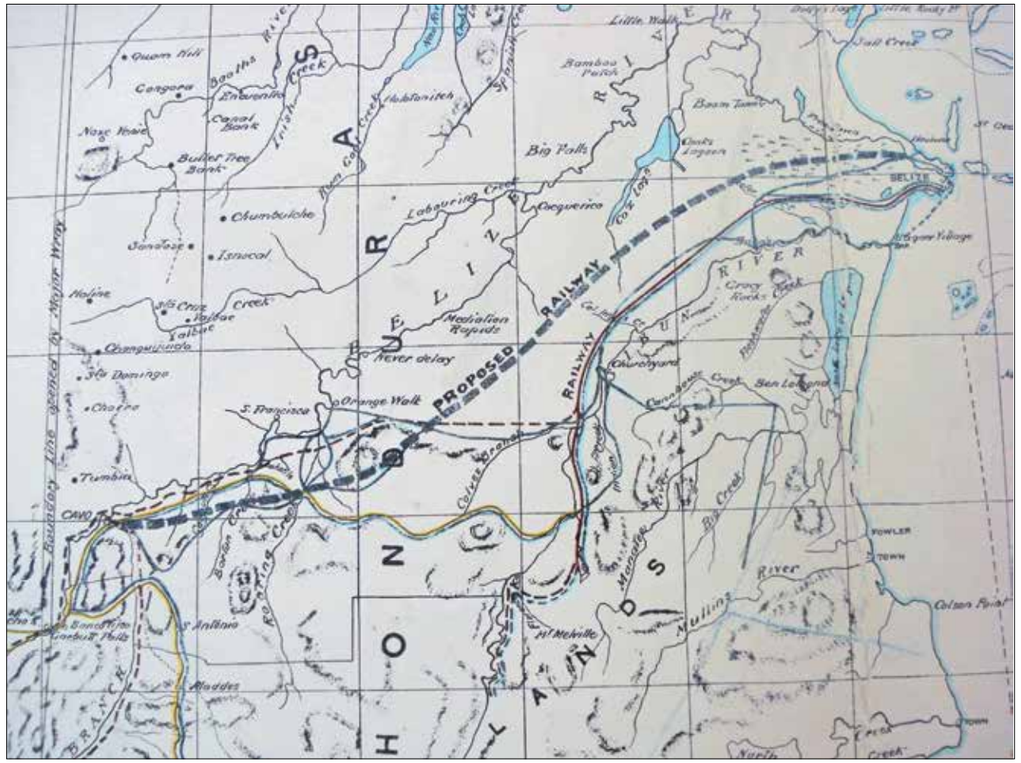
[41] From North to South: Consejo, Corosal, Belize, "town" at the mouth of the Mullins River, "town" at the mouth of the Stann Creek River, All Pines at the mouth of the Sittee River, Punta Gorda (none in the interior).

Figure 18: Map showing approximately the route of the projected railway (…) from Belize to unite (…) with the railroad from the City of Guatemala to the Pacific Ocean, 1890.



Source: The National Archives, Kew

Figure 19: Map showing proposed route of Belize Railways, by Richard W. Starkey, 1902.



Source: The National Archives, Kew

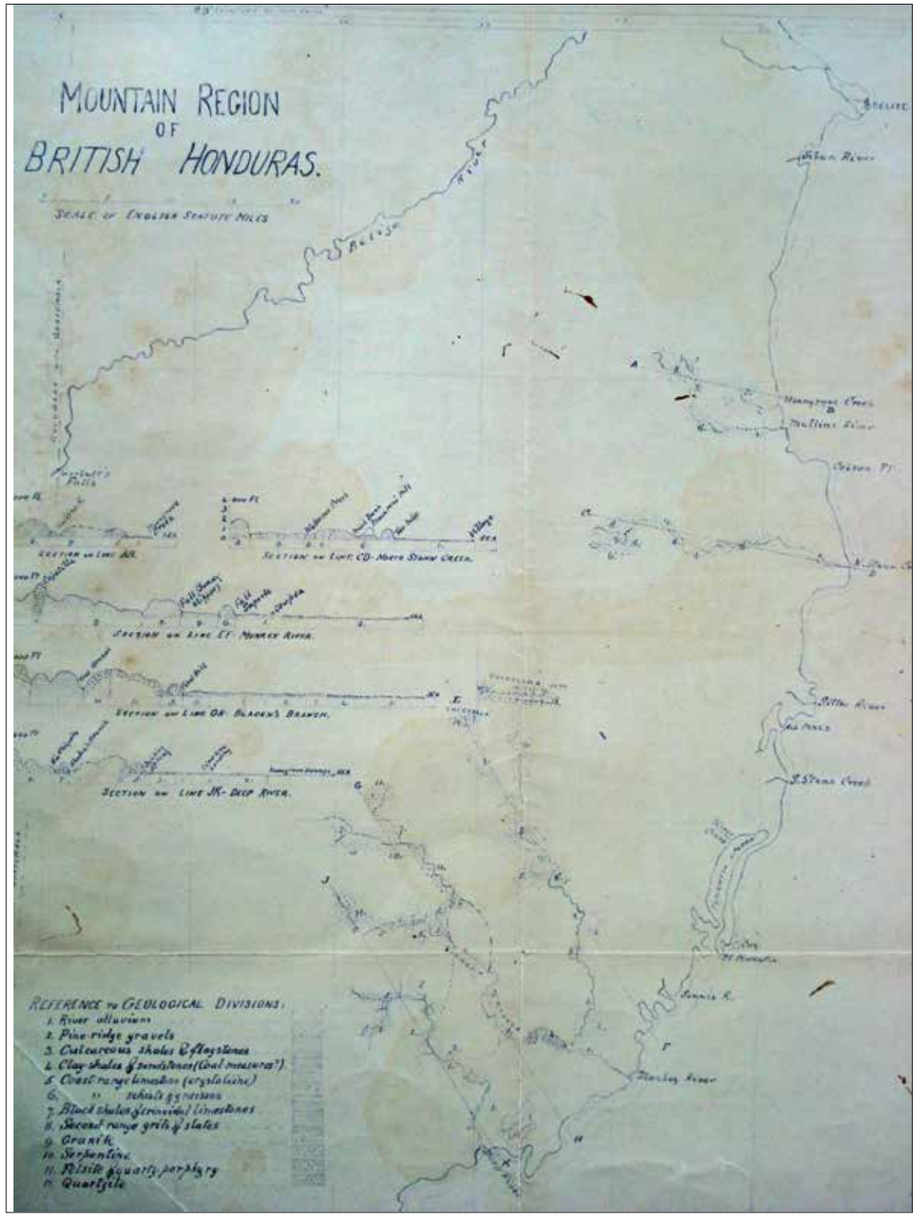
[42] *Map showing proposed route of Belize Railways. By Richard W. Starkey, London 1902. 6 miles to 1 inch.* CO 700/ BRITISH HONDURAS 40.

[43] In 1919, the 33rd report from the Admiralty's local Department of Contracts mentions some ten names of mahogany merchants qualified as "capable cutters of mahogany" to whom the Admiralty advanced the funds for the annual campaign, including Starkey and Sons (CO 123/294, folio 305).

[44] On the concept of empty region, see *El vacío imaginario*, which concerns this region, in the same period, but a little further north in Mexican territory, (Macías, 2004).

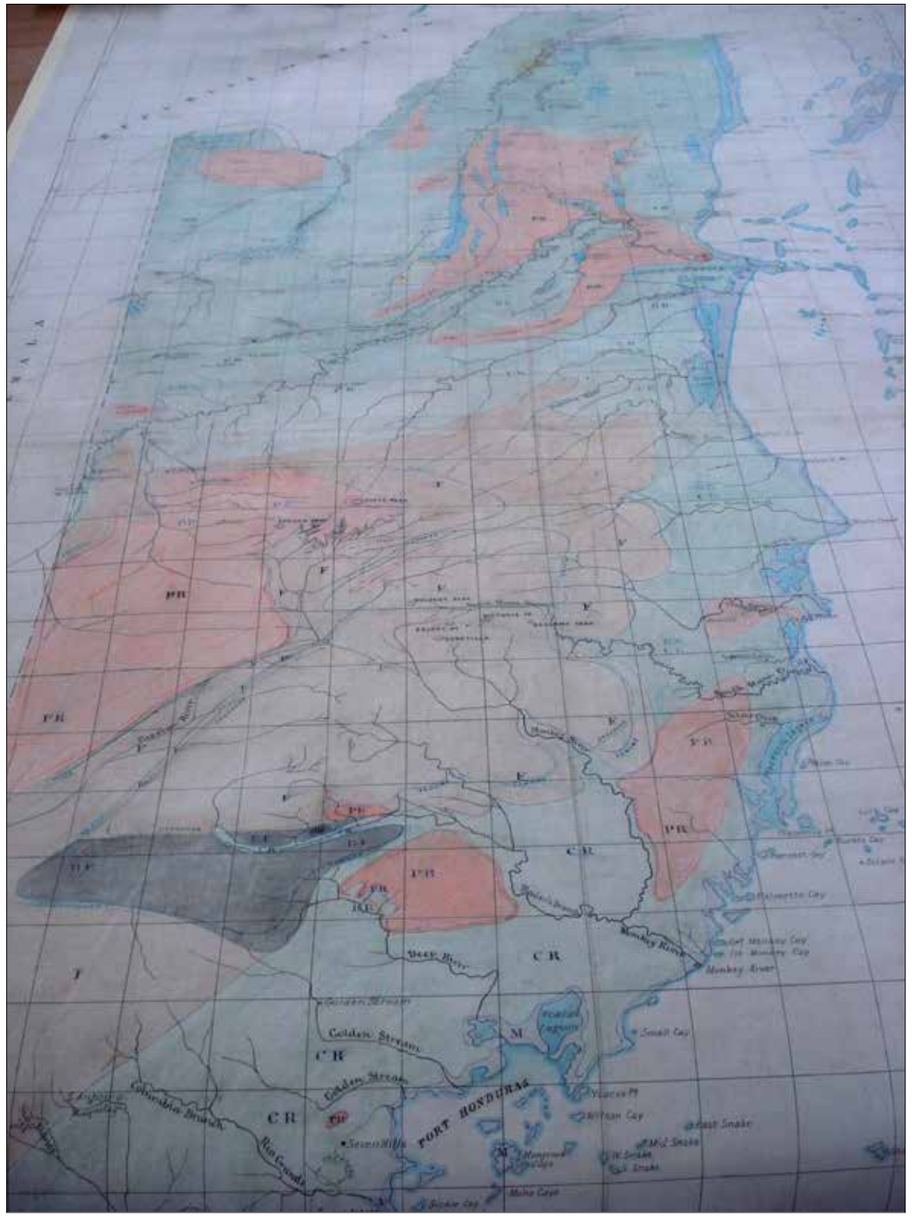
Another map[42] of 1902 (Figure 19) also concerns the railway, but this one shows the interior of British Honduras. It was apparently prepared for Mr. Starkey in London and proposed to link Belize to Cayo, crossing the country from east to west. One can find mention of Starkey and Sons in 1918[43] as a rather large logging company. The map legend specifies the project's predecessors: the lines already in a previous project or under construction (dotted line), the layout of the proposed railway (double dotted line), the route surveyed by Mr. Fowler, Administrator of British Honduras in red, and the routes followed by Mr. Starkey (in black) and Mr. Nowel (in yellow). It is clear that the project was part of a vast regional economic movement. The challenge at the time was to "open up" territories thought to be rich in wood and natural resources in the west and south of the territory and considered to be virgin or empty land.[44]

Figure 20: Mountain Region of British Honduras, 1886.



Source: The National Archives, Kew

Figure 21: Karl Sapper's botanical map, 1896.



Source: The National Archives, Kew

Inventories of forest, and more generally, natural resources accompanied these undertakings. As early as 1886, the colonial government of British Honduras under Administrator Fowler, commissioned and financed a scientific report[45] on mineral resources in the mountains of the south which were very poorly known at the time (Figure 20). The document at the Archives is in poor condition, but it has extremely precise hand-drawn sections of several places in the south of the country. This was the first time the southern region of the country aroused such interest on the part of the Administration, to the point of undergoing so detailed an analysis.

Interest in this kind of work was not limited simply to immediate economic objectives but was part of the surging interest at the time of scientific discoveries in the New World. More strictly scientific goals inspired a set of maps[46] made in 1896. It includes three maps–botanical, topographic and geological–made by German scientist Karl Sapper.[47] These large maps (1:250,000, approximately 2x1 metres) were coloured by hand and highlighted the structuring elements of the territory. The botanical map reproduced here (Figure 21) is accompanied by two diagrams (precipitation and temperature) and the legend distinguishes six major vegetation types (M-Mangroves; S-Savannah; PR-Pine Ridge; DF-Dry Forest; F-Forest of the Highland; CR/BR-Cahoon Ridge and Broken Ridge). The zones with the highest density of certain species considered for potential commercial interest are surrounded by coloured lines: "COHUNE, extension of the Cahoon Palm (*Attalea cohune*); PALMETTO, extension of the Pimentothatch (*Sabal palmetto* sp.); OREODOXA, extension of the Cabbage Palm (*Oreodoxa oberacea*); PINES: extension of the Pines (*Pinus cubensis*)." It is a fine example of articulation of scientific thinking and economic interests, both in the hands of Europeans, dominant at the time in the world market of knowledge and natural resources. This vision of science at the service of the economy is at the heart of the colonial rationale. It is with this in mind that the government supported the creation of a Botanical Station back in 1888 (CO 123/190, Despatch 128), a creation finally brought to fruition in 1892 and which played a major role at least until 1933 (Bulmer-Thomas & Bulmer-Thomas, 2012).

[45] *Mountain Region of British Honduras* (for geological exploration of minerals) CO 700/BRITISH HONDURAS 25. Originally in the CO 123/180 correspondence. The author is Mr. Wilson.

[46] Karl Sapper, botanical map (as well as a topographic and a geological map). CO 700/ BRITISH HONDURAS 31.

[47] Karl Theodor Sapper (1866-1945) was a learned explorer, geologist, linguist and naturalist. He recorded the languages and folklore of Central America, and described the ancient Maya sites he discovered in the Peten and Yucatan. His maps and reports remain the principal source of geological information for the region between Tehuantepec and Panama (McBirney & Lorenz, 2003). His "*Notes on the Topographical, Geological and Botanical Maps of British Honduras*" was published by The Angelus Press, in British Honduras in1898.

Conclusion: A final look at a cartographic journey

Until the 17th century, the area currently occupied by Belize appeared on cartographic representations as a part of the New World with no distinguishing characteristics other than being a coastal area where some Europeans stopped, but without making any social or political investment. Later, in the 18th century, maps show a region with uncertain borders, an attempt to demarcate the territories that needed to be negotiated between empires, before being seen as a colonial territory to be controlled and administrated in the 19th century. All over Central America maps began to appear.[48] Here it can be hypothesized that the territory was imperial before becoming colonial. It was important as part of a much greater whole–the Spanish Empire, the British Empire–which existed outside the Settlers' local reality. In the case of British Honduras, the choice of institutional colonization came late, in 1862, at a time when the uncertainty of political and economic sovereignty began to hamper the lives of the inhabitants and those in power.

[48] "Publishing houses and cartographers flourished through the centuries as maps were the most effective means to satisfy imperial strategic needs and the intellectual's avid curiosity for knowledge about this world" (Bornholt, 2007, p. 114).

For a long time, the territory was but a tiny corner of the Empire with no colonial importance. Its economic advantages–mainly the abundance of logwood and mahogany–justified a certain de facto autonomy, before the situation turned around, and with mahogany's decline, British Honduras lost its autonomy and its economic weight within the Empire. The local elites were the first to call for full integration as a colony into the Kingdom of Great Britain.

This evolution accompanied changes in the ways space was represented as well as the techniques used to render it. In the 18th century, cartographers and draftsmen sought above all else to plot lines which would show the borders and the areas of influence of imperial powers. The purpose of a map was to show such divisions. At the beginning of the 19th century, the places themselves became important. Toponymy improved and details appeared, with drawings symbolizing plots of land, houses and churches. Maps began to characterize areas and recognize the properties thereon. Then came the characterization of the land itself, with respect for the proportions and respective positions of cartographic elements (locations, rivers, districts) in the entire geographic area being considered. Maps began to affirm exactness and truth and to fill, if needed, the role of arbitration. In one century, the techniques of cartography evolved, and the semantic uses of the three fundamental elements of every cartographic representation–the line, the point and the polygon–took shape.

Maps also became more complex in that they began to mystify the military officers and diplomats who first designed and used them. Yves Lacoste (1976) analysed this process well in a book published in 1976 whose title constituted a provocation at the time: *The primary purpose of geography is to make war*. To paraphrase Weber and his definition of political power, one could speak of a "legitimate monopoly on the representation of space" by governmental authorities, which long presided over the exercise of cartography.

But geographical arguments could also be claimed by other actors, and this monopoly could be fractured to the benefit of other elites: landlords, politicians, scientists, private investors, etc. For example, as we saw previously, at the beginning of the 19th century the residents of the territory were impelled to send an official request to London. The purpose was to persuade the King to negotiate an expansion of their rights to use the inland areas of the territory and the request was accompanied by a map that they had commissioned.

Local administrators in British Honduras also used maps as key instruments in discussions with authorities in London when they requested subsidies or temporary grants, or more specifically to manage spaces for which they were responsible and to communicate about development projects (maps of 1886). Scientists and private entrepreneurs, for their part, designed maps that were the reflection of their work, maps that described the world and its resources as they were understood through their visions of progress. Cartographic representations, which were as pragmatic as they were ideological, offered territorialised arguments that could not be expressed as convincingly in writing. In these circumstances, the geographical qualities of localization, extension and contiguity were used to consolidate the legitimacy of the political requests of various individual and collective actors. Technical knowledge and the exercise of power were never far apart.

The use of cartography in British Honduras illustrates the political divisions present at different moments of history. Maps belonged primarily to the ruling class, and for this reason subordinate groups were rarely mentioned. Apart from the map of 1886 that addresses the "Indian" threat in the northern part of the territory, there is no representation that offers information about society in all of its diversity, in particular its residents. Administrative maps are silent on the subject of everyday territorial actors. Only the Settlers appear, through their claims for "their part" of the territory. But nothing about the slaves who were present from the beginning of the European presence is visible, nothing about the migrants who arrived throughout the 19th century, nothing about the Maya who had always occupied these lands. When they are mentioned, the Maya are either the "Indios bravos" from Mexico, who threaten the northern and western lim-

its of the settlement, or refugees from the Yucatan and migrants from the south in the 19th century. Admittedly, records from 1888 of correspondence between London and the government of British Honduras (Indian Reserves, British Honduras, 1888, CO 123/190) mention local propositions about the establishment of "Indian reservations" in the western and northern parts of the country, but these propositions did not lead to the creation of a specific "Indian" policy (Toledo Maya Cultural Council, 1994).

In colonial discourse, the Maya, the slaves, and their descendents appeared as foreigners who were in British Honduras as a result of historical accidents, populations whose origins were "foreign" to the territory which remained the principal concern of the Settlers, and of a certain Creole elite. Their absence on maps corresponds to the exclusion of non-whites from the emerging political community, which was also the precursor of the modern-day nation. In this case, their exclusion was the reflection of an ethnic and racial barrier that determined relationships of domination and subjugation. What is at issue here is a space that could be qualified as "ethnicised" or "racialised" from its very origins as a colony. Bolland and Shoman (1977) give a useful description of its organising principles when they analyse the land distribution dynamics of the 19th century, after the abolition of slavery. They explain how the landowners developed various mechanisms to exclude former slaves and blacks from owning land, thereby preventing them from investing in the colony and from exercising their recently granted citizenship. These political practices were founded on, but also contributed to, reproducing the geographic segregation of populations according to their origins. On this theme, Melissa Johnson (2003) speaks of "racial-ecological categories" (p. 598) to highlight the political linkages constructed around race and the environment. A century later, the unequal distribution of populations and of resources persists, but is becoming more complex. As Barnett (1991) remarks "the strict ethnogeographical distribution of land is no longer obvious. It is likely that the size distribution of land by ethnic group is skewed. (...) Class and ethnic formations are seen as moving from being reflections of each other towards a complex of class hierarchy and ethnic segmentation" (pp. 39-40). Today, space is more ethnically "muddled" than before.

The "racialisation" of political life after the abolition of slavery is very clearly engraved in space and in territories; it is a phenomenon that is recognized elsewhere in America, in particular in Central America. After analysing the greater concentration of the black population on the Atlantic coast in relation to the rest of Nicaragua, Juliet Hooker (2011) interprets this situation as also being the result of policies aiming to maintain the de facto segregation, to the benefit of the white population, which is politically dominant and occupies the western part of the country. She concludes, "The close relationship between race and space thus has profound consequences on the practice of citizenship in Nicaragua" (p. 322).[49] Nancy Appelbaum, Ann Macpherson and Karin Rosemblatt (2003), in a comparative work on *Race and Nation in Latin America*, show that in the majority of countries in this region this racialisation of space mirrored that of nations and the rights of citizens of subordinated groups. Space transforms the political sphere even as it is shaped by it, and cartographic expressions are the reflection of these interactions.

[49] "Las cercanas conexiones entre raza y espacio han tenido, por lo tanto, profundas consecuencias sobre la práctica de la ciudadanía en Nicaragua" (Hooker, 2011, p. 322).

To conclude, several lines of inquiry could be pursued concerning the possible extrapolation of the present analysis to British Honduras in the 19th century. Possible ruptures or innovations in cartographic representations during the following decades could be identified. These could then be interpreted as new instruments for the construction of the national territory, in particular after Independence. Did the establishment of technical standards that came about with the production of maps in the 20th century pave the way for the democratization of access to land and to its representations? With the retreat of British administration and their technicians in the post-Independence era, can we speak of the "nationalization" of cartography in Belize in the 20th century? With what consequences and what tangible expressions? Today, a new revolution is underway in the field of cartography, as the technology can now be accessed by social groups that were once excluded, in the context of new political and technical alliances. For example, in the district of Toledo, occupied by Maya populations, some of which are struggling for the recognition of their territorial autonomy, an original experiment led to the fabrication of an atlas now online–whose homepage boasts: "The Maya Atlas is a Community-based cartography, made in collaboration with the Society for the Study of Native Arts and Sciences and the UC Berkeley GeoMap Group. It covers 42 Maya communities in the South of Belize" (Toledo Maya Cultural Council, 1997). At the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, could "indigenous cartography" usher in a new era of construction of knowledge and legitimacy, in which yesterday's colonised groups are given a voice? Will we soon be able to speak of the "decolonisation" of cartography in the 21st century? These questions, though as yet unanswered, will nonetheless shape the world of tomorrow.

List of Tables

Table 1: Focus and contents of historical maps, 16th to 19th centuries. 19

Table 2: Evolution of the population of British Honduras. 30

List of Figures

Figure 1: Belize in its regional context. 11

Figure 2: Political divisions of Belize. 12

Figure 3: British Honduras, progression of the Settlers' colonisation. 14

Figure 4: Maya resistances to Spanish and British colonisation. 15

Figure 5: The Bay of Honduras, by Tho(mas) Jefferys, Geographer to His Majesty. London, 1775. 18

Figure 6: Plan of the three rivers, Valiz, Nuevo and Hondo, located between Golfo Dulce or Province of Goatemala and that of Yucatan, 1783. 23

Figure 7: Map of the part of Yucatan granted by the Spanish to the English for the cutting of wood, according to the Treaties of 1783 and 1786 27

Figure 8: Map of part of Yucatan (...) allotted to Great Britain for the cutting of Logwood, by William Faden, 1787. 29

Figure 9a: Map of territory north of the Rio Dulce, showing rivers, lagoons, creeks, British territory allotted by treaty (in red), and the names and locations of Settlers, 1814. 37

Figure 9b: A partial transcription of Map of territory north of the Rio Dulce, 1814. 39

Figure 10a: Map of British Settlement in Honduras from the actual Surveys of N. (sic), C. Du Vernay, 1819. 40

Figure 10b: Transcription of limits and roads on Map of British Settlement in Honduras from the actual Surveys of N. (sic), C. Du Vernay, 1819. 41

Figure 11a: Plan of Part of the British Settlement of Honduras and Sibun, drawn by Robert Hume, 1858, copied by Edward P. Usher, 1859. 43

Figure 11b: Transcription of Plan of Part of the British Settlement of Honduras between Rio Hondo and Sibun drawn by Robert Hume, 1858, copied by Edward P. Usher, 1859. 42

Figure 12: Property Map of Belize, 1935. 44

Figure 13: Map of Part British Honduras, showing the positions of Belize, Corosal, and Cocos, by J. H. Faber, 1858. 49

Figure 14a: Map of British Honduras Compiled from Surveys by J. H. Faber, 1867. 50

Figure 14b: Detail of Map of British Honduras Compiled from Surveys by J. H. Faber, 1867. 51

Figure 15: Outline Map of British Honduras, showing Roads, Districts, Post Offices, Police Stations, 1886. 53

Figure 16a: British Honduras (now Belize) (…) showing places on or near the boundary referred to in Governor Goldsworthy's Despatch, N° 89 of 6 May 1886. 56

Figure 16b: Detail of British Honduras (now Belize) (…) showing places on or near the boundary referred to in Governor Goldsworthy's Despatch, N° 89 of 6 May 1886. 57

Figure 17a: British Honduras (…) showing areas in the Yucatan occupied by different native American nations, 1886. 59

Figure 17b: Transcription of the map British Honduras (…) showing areas in the Yucatan occupied by different native American nations, 1886. 60

Figure 18: Map showing approximately the route of the projected railway (...) from Belize to unite (...) with the railroad from the City of Guatemala. to the Pacific Ocean, 1890. 65

Figure 19: Map showing proposed route of Belize Railways by Richard W. Starkey, 1902. 66

Figure 20: Mountain Region of British Honduras, 1886. 67

Figure 21: Karl Sapper's botanical map, 1896. 68

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