

# Territorial Images of Yorùbáland Cartographic Styles and Symbolic Representation in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

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**Abstract** In the nineteenth century, Euro-American maps of Africa in the cultural contact of Europeans and Africans were also rhetorical devices, which articulated the politics of territorial conceptions of the geographical space. I contend that cartographic styles visually prompt alternative territorial perspectives with insights into past geographies. The paper examines three nineteenth-century maps of Yorùbáland in West-Central Africa highlighting cartographic styles, symbolic representations and territorial politics. Through a historical-stylistic analysis, I explore the cultural motivation of map production, their composition and the semiotic evaluation of their representations to stress alternative map appearances. These maps worked in territorial power relations, which highlight map styles as a persuasive element in the social construction of territorial identities and interests. Overall, the paper stresses maps are vital devices in the nineteenth century territorialisation of Yorùbáland, which exemplify the cultural interdependence of Europeans, Americans and Africans.

**Keywords** Cartographic Styles. Symbolic Representation. Territory. Map. Yorùbáland.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 Territorial Space: Cartographic Styles and Symbolic Representation. – 3 The Maps of Yorùbáland. – 4 Maps: Territorial Politics and Representational Practice. – 5 Conclusion.



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## 1 Introduction

This paper examines the cartographic styles of Euro-American maps deployed in territorial power relations of mid-nineteenth century Yorùbáland. I argue that cartographic styles of geographical maps, regardless of symbolic misrepresentations, stimulate alternative perceptions of territorial spaces. Territorial images as cultural objects prompt territorial conceptions of space but also draw insight into the territorial politics of past geographies. On one hand, good map appearances inspire confidence in geographical information (Kent 2005, 183). On the other hand, maps are not precise representations of geographical reality but might include symbolic misrepresentations (Kent 2018, 203). However, institutional map styles visually promote different viewpoints in spatial discussions. In the nineteenth century, alternative Euro-American cartographic images played important roles in altering the territorial conceptions of the Yorùbá geographic space in West-Central Africa (Usman, Falola 2019, 5).

Whereas there are map design studies of modern African maps (Stone 1995; McGowan 2013; Akinyemi, Kibora, Aborishade 2013), there is an underrepresentation of stylistic examination of nineteenth-century maps of Africa. Indeed, fewer map studies of West Africa investigate linkages of style and politics in mapping ethnic territories. However, the nineteenth-century maps of West Africa are not only genres of cartographic styles and good map aesthetics manifesting effective pictorial representation of space but also immersed in social practices of territoriality. For example, the visual images of Yorùbáland produced in mid-Nineteenth-century Euro-American geographies are immersed in the contestations and negotiations of its territorial interests. Therefore, how do mid-nineteenth-century maps of Yorùbáland reflect stylistic qualities that prompt mental images of space, which irrespective of symbolic misrepresentations, translate into territorial power relations?

The paper aims to examine nineteenth-century maps of Yorùbáland drawing attention to how institutional map styles exemplify alternative territorial realities. The next section examines the conceptual background of styles and symbolic representation; the neglect of linkage of map style and territorial politics in West African map studies; and the methodological approach in the paper. The third section separately analyses the three maps of Yorùbáland. In the fourth section, I explore how these maps translate into territorial power relations and briefly discuss their implication in representational practices. The final section presents the concluding remarks.

## 2 Territorial Space: Cartographic Styles and Symbolic Representation

Map appearance has an impact on the enduring mental picture of the geographical space, which highlights the importance of cartographic style. The concept of style refers to the differentiating appearance, which stresses an identifiable form of visual expression (Geczy, Karaminas 2012, 14). The visual expression of a mapped geographical space has a particular, identifiable appearance. Kent (2010, 20) notes that cartographic style “is introduced through the process of symbolization: the deliberate and specific ordering of graphical form to present the character of a feature in an abstract way”. Map appearance involves the elements and qualities of map design. Although map design elements such as titles, legends and place names convey territorial representations, but also with other map elements such as symbols, colour and lettering manifest formal qualities of the visual arts (Skelton 1972, 3). Punia (2008) points out three qualities that determine beauty in maps: harmony, composition and clarity. In contrast, Deluca and Bonsal (2017, 76) emphasise two key design principles “that all good maps” incorporate: visual hierarchy and balance. In broader terms, cartographic style denotes the visual identity that belongs, “to a particular region, cartographic edition and/or map producer” (Beconyte 2011). Map appearances prompt emotional responses from viewers.

The emotional attraction of a good map engenders trust or inspires confidence in the represented geographic space (Kent 2018, 203). Indeed, map effectiveness relies on the choice of symbolic representation. Symbolic representation, as used here, denotes the use of graphic marks or elements to stand for or represent cartographic ideas and geographical concepts. Symbols are essentially used on maps to indicate position on the earth’s surface and to describe “what is being represented” (Keates 1982, 73). Purpose and audience determine the symbolic representation in a map rather than depicting the exact reality of geographical space. Since the map is a miniature version of the natural space, there arise often problems of symbolic representation. Indeed, there could be misrepresentations in maps with good appearance, which could be a consequence of purposeful decision, oversight or poor judgment (Dent, Torguson, Hodler 2009, 19). For instance, there might be cognitive inaccuracies and cultural misconceptions. While cognitive errors include locational distortions of geographical features and omission of place names, cultural misconceptions include misspelling and mistranslating of place names and misunderstanding of geo-cultural features.

The key concern in this paper is alternative map appearances and how, regardless of symbolic misrepresentations, it worked in the contestations and negotiations of territorialisation. Territorialisation

involves a series of social practices, such as cartographic mapping, through which a human society organizes and operates in the natural space (Casti 2015, 20). Whereas map appearance stimulates emotional responses, symbolic representation allows the mental prompt of a territorial image through the individual's knowledge, skill, experience and cognitive reflection (Kitchin, Dodge 2007, 338-9). Since the construction and reconstruction of the territory through the map is a process (Edney 2019, 26), the emotive impacts of map discourses, as a representational practice, are integral in persuasive acts of territoriality. Dent, Torguson and Hodler (2009, 18) observe the "desire for the map to be not only informationally effective but also aesthetically pleasing". Hence, this stresses engaging the map as an artistic object and mappings as part of territorial practice.

Whereas there are map design studies of modern African maps (Stone 1995; McGowan 2013; Akinyemi, Kibora, Aborishade 2013), there is an underrepresentation of stylistic examination of earlier maps of Africa. Akinyemi, Kibora and Aborishade (2013) examined early post-independence Nigerian topographical maps, which focused on design alternatives to update the maps' appearance. Interestingly, the consistent style of national topographical maps continues to structure mentally the citizens' geographical consciousness of their respective geopolitical spaces. In contrast, there is extensive literature on African map history before the twentieth century (Relaño 1995; Glenn 2007; Liebenberg 2021) but it also had tangential treatment of map style and aesthetics. For instance, Glenn (2007, 35) briefly referred to the impact of the 1790 map style of François LeVailant on Almore Alvisè Pisani's 1793 map of Southern Africa. However, there is little engagement of the interlinkage of stylistic qualities and territoriality in historical map studies of West Africa. Although Usman and Falola (2019) stress the significant role of modern cartographic maps in the emergence of the current Yorùbá territorial identity, they did not elaborate further on these cartographic practices of territoriality. Conversely, Ogundiwin (2023) examined the stylistic evolution of missionary mapping of Yorùbáland in the 1850s, but there was no detailed investigation of alternative map appearances and territorial politics.

Although African studies of modern map design emphasize pleasant map appearances, African map history engages diverse narratives including stylistic evolution, but there is also the need to explore linkages between cartographic map appearances and ethnic territorialisation. Hence, the case of mid-nineteenth-century territorial images of Yorùbáland in this paper illustrates the linkage of cartographic style, regardless of symbolic misrepresentation, and territorial process of ethnic and sub-ethnic identities in the cultural encounter with the Euro-American world. The historical-stylistic examinations of nineteenth-century maps of West Africa are important

because these maps played important roles in the territorial politics of Yorùbáland, which had the largest number of sub-ethnicities in West Africa.

I shall employ a historical-stylistic analysis to explore these maps of Yorùbáland in West-Central Africa, sourced from travel books and an atlas, to examine the visual impressions of territorial space. The production of the three maps was in 1859, 1860 and 1861. The selection of the maps was guided by certain parameters, which include their reflection of different facets of Afro-European cultural relations such as religion, philanthropy and commerce. Again, they represent several Yorùbá sub-ethnicities, unlike maps produced before the 1850s. In addition, they were visual illustrations produced during the British annexation of Lagos in 1861; the Ijaye war (1860-65); and the eve of the American Civil War (1861-65), which influenced the Black American emigration scheme, events that all shaped Yorùbá territoriality.

A study of alternative map appearances as a rhetorical device in territorial politics requires a cartographic appreciation of the map. Cartographic appreciation refers to the “critical assessment of maps” (Brookfield, Dury 1962, 180). This map assessment, as used here, includes a form of art criticism concerned with the artistic qualities of graphic elements, the geometric accuracy of symbolic representations and the usefulness of the map. The usefulness of maps highlights the circumstances of map consumption. As Edney (2019, 44, 45) contends map studies need to “explicate the precise social, cultural and technical contexts within which people have sought to represent spatial complexity”.

The historical-stylistic analysis comprises three components: contextual, compositional and representational (Rose 2016, 56). The contextual component of each map briefly introduces the cultural motivation and historical background of the map production. The compositional examination involves; the formal analysis of graphical elements - topography, hydrography, cultural information, lettering style and marginal information; and stylistic judgment of each map in its specific aesthetic view of the terrain (Brookfield, Dury 1962, 195-6). The semiotic examination of symbolic representations focuses on the cognitive inaccuracies and cultural misconceptions evident on each map. Thereafter, I collectively explore the work of these maps in territorial power relations (Edney 2019, 86). In the nineteenth-century, several Euro-American maps depicted the Yorùbá territorial space.

### 3 The Maps of Yorùbáland

#### 3.1 The 1859 Map

In the 1850s, the preaching of the gospel by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) expanded globally, reaching West-Central Africa. The CMS, an evangelical arm of the Church of England, founded in 1799, commenced missionary work in Yorùbáland in 1846; an exploratory mission in 1843 had preceded this commencement (Ajayi 1965). However, the location of these missionary stations remained unknown to missionary enthusiasts in the Euro-American world. The CMS Atlas, introduced in 1857, provided visual knowledge of the geography of the CMS missionary work (1896). It perceptually solves the problem of geographical comprehension of CMS missionary work. The CMS commissioned the atlas production; the firm of William Collins and Company of London executed the colour printing of the maps.

The 1859 map of Yorùbáland was the second issue and the fifth map in the atlas, which illustrated the chapter on the Yorùbá and Niger Missions [fig. 1]. The map data was derived from previous maps and information collected from resident missionaries such as the Rev. Henry Townsend and Rev. Samuel Crowther at Abeokuta (Gollmer 1889, 110). The atlas aimed to educate church congregants but also ‘the general reader’ interested in the Christian missionary movement (Stock 1899, 443). In the 1859 map, the mapmakers employed graphical contrast, balance of form and harmony of colour to explore geographical reality and territorial imagination.



Figure 1 CMS, The Yorùbá Country, with the Course of the Niger and Tshadda 1859, Engraving, The Church Missionary Atlas, CM House, London

Topography is sparingly depicted using hachuring. Indeed, the focus of the terrain, the Yorùbá Country, is devoid of landform portrayal. By contrast, hydrographic evidence dominates the terrain with rivers, lagoons and the ocean. Double thick lines represent the Rivers Niger and Benue. Conversely, single lines indicate the two river systems of Yorùbáland. The fork-looking Ogun River, labelled at the mouth of the lagoon, glaringly beams the focused terrain. Equally, to the east, the Osun River, elaborately portrayed with a labelled River Oba tributary, evokes a sense of isolation. To the far east of the map is the exaggeratedly represented Old Calabar River, which also curiously echoes its imaginative rendering.

Cultural information is plentiful, highlighting ethnicities, sub-ethnicities, settlements, mission stations, travel routes and exploratory events. The typographic labelling, which indicates ethnicities, is distinguished with the label “Country”, and rouses the sense of an African terrain. The focused terrain had sub-ethnicities signified by lesser typographic font size, which envisioned spatial ordering in contrast to the ethnic labels. They are blatantly abundant in Yorùbáland but also had a pleasant and spaced concentration in the upper right-hand corner along the Benue River. Some settlements are keyed in the legend as “Church Missionary Stations are underlined, as *Abbeokuta*”.

The style of lettering ensured a balanced presentation of the territorial knowledge. There is a clear perception of the varied black typographic fonts on the yellow background of the terrain. Whereas there is no distinction between the labelling of settlements, there is a classification of ethnicities and sub-ethnicities. Marginal information on the map includes neat lines, Lines of Latitude and Longitude, and a legend box. The one-degree interval spherical coordinate, which provides a focal frame, evokes a geographical sense of the terrain. The legend box vigorously advocates the exploratory lens of missionary geography.

To the viewer, the very attractive colouring of the map, which exudes the warmth of the terrain, secures a sustaining observation and signals a pleasant composition. There are apparent defects in this map, which include crowdedness and the blurry-looking shading on the shoreline. Nevertheless, the harmony of colours evident in the sound contrast of the blue and yellow of the ocean and land respectively as well as the dual black and red lines of the settlements with missionary stations, highlight the success of the map in presenting the intended information. Its general effect is an alluring view of West-Central Africa, which gracefully highlights the Yorùbá country.

The map that resolved the geographical problem of the spatial comprehension of CMS mission work in Yorùbáland reflected some symbolic misrepresentations. Local informants, exploratory feedback and mission work influenced the representation of the river system

but the omission of geographical names during the mapmaking created cognitive inaccuracy about the hydrological feature. The unnamed river system created the challenge of identifying particular rivers by a map reader unfamiliar with the territory. However, the depicted rivers were the river Ogun to the left and its tributary river Oyan to the right. Whereas limited map space possibly caused the avoidance of the label of River Ogun to the east, there was sufficient map space to label the tributary to the left. The River Ogun was the main river highway into Western Yorùbáland. The consequence of the unlabelled rivers or omitted geographical names resulted in a wrong impression of the river Ogun in the 1861 map.

The representation of the Egba, Egbado, Oyo-Yorùbá, Ijebu and Ijesa sub-ethnicities was influenced by the CMS encounter with them among recaptured Africans in Sierra Leone but in the cartographic process of representing these Yorùbá subgroups there emerged cognitive errors concerning their territorial occupancy related to other unrepresented Yorùbá sub-ethnicities. Whereas the suggested territory of Egbado covered areas where the Ketu, Ifonyin and Ohori sub-groups lived, the suggested territory of Ijesa covered where the Ondo, Idoko, Owo and Akoko sub-groups inhabited. Indeed, Charles Gollmer (1889, 145, 159-60), during his “missionary tour in the Ketu country”, conducted in the mid-1850s, referred to “the names of ninety-four towns belonging to the Ketu province”. However, there was no depiction of Ketu as a sub-group but only the indication of the capital town on the map. This omission of Ketu might be associated with the challenges of the CMS work there during the late 1850s.

There are also cultural misconceptions evident in the map. Some place names cause geo-cultural misunderstanding. For instance, the typographic label of Yorùbá Country refers, not only to the territory of the Oyo-Yorùbá sub-group but also to the entire territory of the Yorùbá speaking peoples of West-Central Africa. James Horton in 1868 observed, the CMS: “from want of a more specific name and from the whole of the tribes being once subject to the king of Yoruba... designated it the Yoruba Country” (quoted in Oduyoye 2010, 7).

Again, there was an incorrect place name of the Efon instead of the Ekiti. Although Efon-Alaye is an Ekiti town, it was misinterpreted as the name of the Ekiti sub-ethnicity. Besides, there was the representation of Kakanda as a part of Yorùbáland. Although there were arguments amongst European explorers about the Kakanda being or not “a dialect of the Yaruba”, however, the Yorùbás does not have any sub-group known as Kakanda.



### 3.2 The 1860 Map

The Niger River Expeditions had established the knowledge of the Niger Delta in 1834, ethnicities and trading possibilities along the river and its hinterland in the 1840s, and the value of an overland route to the Atlantic Ocean across Western Yorùbáland in the mid-1850s (Ajayi 1965). However, there was still the geographical problem of overland linkage between Eastern Yorùbáland and the Niger-Benue confluence. Hence, Dr William Baikie, leader of the Niger Expedition, sent Daniel May, a Royal Navy officer, to explore this unknown route (May 1860). The 1860 map was only partly successful in depicting Eastern Yorùbáland because he was prevented to explore the east fully due to Yorùbá power politics and war [fig. 2]. The military officials of the Ibadan empire insisted he should not proceed to Akoko but return to the Niger River by Yagba territory. This 1858 exploration was part of the British Government and MacGregor Laird's partnership to explore further trade opportunities in the Niger River hinterland. The mapmaker was John Arrowsmith, who drew the map based on the sketches of Daniel May and his earlier maps. The map illustrated a Royal Geographical Society (RGS) journal article published in 1860. The mapmaker explored geographical reality through the capture of the cultural encounter and the terrain in a contrast of lines and shapes.



Figure 2 RGS, Yorùbá and Nupe Countries, 1860, Engraving, Royal Geographical Society, London. Source: Perry-Castañeda Library, University of Texas

The topographic impressions on the map include hachure, a form of spot height and another graphic symbol. For instance, there are the hachures, which at a farther distance reflect a poor topographic impression, but closer examination shows elaborately done heavy, sharp strokes indicating the slopes. Yet the hills appear curiously dissimilar from the rest of the terrain. In [fig. 2], the represented hydrography includes rivers, coastline, lagoon and the Ocean. For example, dash lines represent the rivers of Yorùbáland, which include northward and southward flowing rivers, inducing a more active look. A continuous thick line depicted the coastline, which gave the effect of a soothing riverbank and shoreline. The texture created by this darkened line contrasts the generated shape, which portrays the lagoon labelled as a lake.

Cultural representation on the map includes ethno-territories, settlements and travel routes. A typeface of different fonts labelled and distinguished ethnicities and sub-ethnicities prompting the visual sense of geographical scale. Signifying settlements by small circles modestly extol their presence on the landscape. The red colour line, keyed in the legend, depicts the travel route of the explorer and conveys activity across the terrain. This travel route, which suggests a sort of southwest-northeast parallel lines with zigzags, heightens the sense of movement and focus of the map as Eastern Yorùbáland.

The style of lettering on the map follows an orderly approach. For instance, the wide letter spacing of the Niger River label creates a pleasing look that balances the close-fitting letter spacing of the rivers in Yorùbáland. Cultural features, clearly labelled, reveal the classification of typographic fonts to distinguish the order of importance. This fine lettering instils in the viewer the visual narrative of the geographical encounter of the British explorer. Marginal information comprises the border and legend box. Interestingly, the map border did not limit the geographic representation but included parts of the Niger River and the Yorùbá coastland that added an innovative look but also an irregular disparity to the geometric frame of the terrain. The legend box includes a title, date, scale and key but gracefully dominates the viewer's attention above the depicted landscape.

This well-composed map embodies a sense of direction and movement that serves as an attraction to engage further this terrain. However, the dull background colour, the poorly shaped lagoon and the poorly executed hachures signal the main defect of this map. The noteworthy success of the map is that it beautifully registers, with a sense of more detailed proportion, central and northeast Yorùbáland as an active landscape. Despite the defects, the general effect of the map is that of an expressive representation of geographical and cultural encounters, which evokes an active terrain.

The map that resolved the geographical problems of visualising Eastern Yorùbáland included some symbolic misrepresentations

created during the mapmaking. Cognitive errors are evident in the represented physical features. By way of example, the hilly representation suggested an isolated hilly topography instead of a tableland interspaced with inselbergs. In the 1850s, Thomas Bowen, who explored this landscape, correctly explained the Yorùbá topography as “a table-land” (Ogundiwin 2023, 7). Again, there was a misleading representation of the River Ogun because the depicted upper course was not the main river but its tributary of River Oyan. Likewise, there was the placement of Lagos at the tip of the peninsula instead of indicating it as an island. In 1859, Robert Campbell observed: “Lagos is a small island about six miles in circumference... it is very low, and formed by an accumulation of sand” (1861, 17).

The geographical coverage of sub-ethnicities suggested by the topographic spacing of place names introduced sub-territorial distortions. For instance, there was the territorial extension of the Ijesa, Igbomina and Oyo-Yorùbá sub-groups into other unmentioned sub-groups. Daniel May (1860, 231) stressed, “I passed out of Ijesha into the less extensive district of Igbo[mina]”, but John Arrowsmith depicted it extending into the Ekiti and Ondo territories. In addition, there was the incorrect placement of the Ife sub-group and the town of Akure (Akue). Whereas the location of the Ife-Yorùbá was where the Owu-Yorùbá inhabited, the position of Akure was farther south of its actual location where the Ikale-Yorùbá resides.

Again, there were cultural misconceptions, such as the mislabeling of the Ekiti sub-group as Efon. Similar to the 1859 map, the uppercase label of the Yorùbá synonymously referred to the Oyo-Yorùbá sub-group as well as the entire territory of the Yorùbá-speaking people. Besides, there was the depiction of Eyeo, the ruins of Old Oyo, as if it was still a habitable settlement. Since the British explorer did not visit Old Oyo, it was a reflection of Arrowsmith’s earlier maps of Yorùbáland.

### 3.3 The 1861 Map

There was a growing interest in the 1840s of Black American emigration to the West African interior (Blackett 1977). Indeed, an American Southern Baptist (SBM) missionary, Rev. Thomas Bowen, had suggested and visualised on two maps in 1857 and 1858 respectively, potential Yorùbá settlements (Ogundiwin 2023). However, the geographical problem of suitable towns remained. This led to further exploration, which revealed newer information that was mapped, for instance, in this 1861 map. The 1861 map unveiled the towns explored during the exploratory mission and added other geographic information about Yorùbáland. The Niger Valley Exploring Party (NVEP), led by the Black American, Dr Martin Delany and the Jamaican, Robert

Campbell, were sponsored by philanthropic interest in Europe to examine the Niger River hinterland in 1859-60 (Campbell 1861; Delany 1861). The map illustrated the travel account of Robert Campbell published in 1861 [fig. 3]. The mapmaker employed the harmony of lines, shapes and typography on a monochrome to evoke the reality of the geographical space.

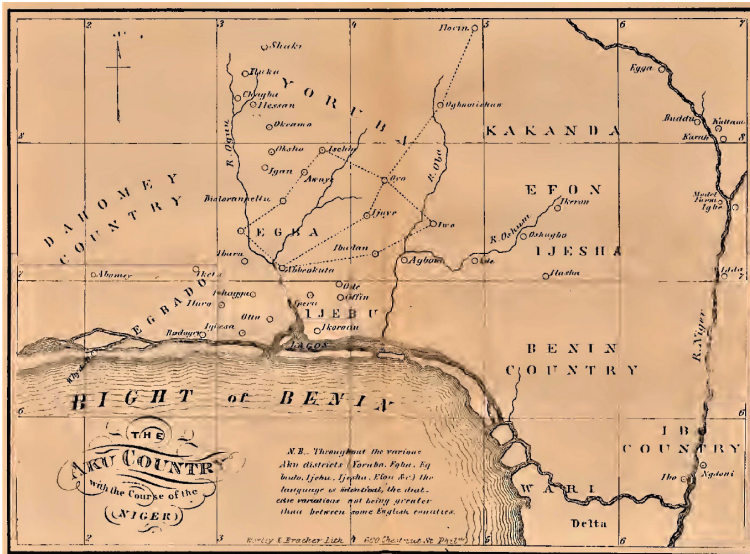


Figure 3 The Aku Country with Course of the Niger, 1861, Engraving, Thomas Hamilton, New York. Source: Internet Archive

The hydrographical representation on the map comprises the ocean, coastline, lagoon and rivers. A black italic label indicates the Bight of the Atlantic Ocean complemented by finely drawn black wavy lines along the coastline, which reinforces the oceanic look. Thin lines traced the coastline flanked by a light coastal shading that evokes a form of soberness. Double black lines depict the Niger River and its delta branch with a close-fitting look that proclaims its geographical prominence to the viewer. Conversely, carefully drawn single black line with varying line thickness signifies the rivers of Yorùbáland inducing a closer glance at the focused landscape.

Cultural information on the map includes ethno-territorial organisation, settlements and travel routes. The typographic label “Country” signifies adjoining ethnicities prompting the visual impression of territorial organisation. A similar bold and pleasant labelling indicates the Yorùbá sub-ethnicities, assertively extolling sub-territorial spaces. The sparingly depicted settlements along the Niger River

contrast the interspersed portrayal of Yorùbá settlements, which gives a pleasant viewing of the terrain. Close dash lines signify the travel routes with a sense of mechanical accuracy. These dash lines reflecting a straight formation, linked eleven towns, but also gave an alluring shape.

The style of lettering on the map is simple but effective. For instance, lowercase lettering labelled a greater part of the cultural information, but Roman lettering indicates ethnicities and sub-ethnicities. The finely executed wide letter spacing of the uppercase and lowercase admirably suggests spatial extents or territorial occupancies. The simplicity of the varied lettering types adds to the curious personality of the map. Marginal information contains the margin lines, title, north arrow and textual note. The beautifully drawn title is an artistic rendering that reinforces the attractiveness of the map. The fancy swash lines recall the decorative ornaments evident on earlier European maps. On the upper right-hand side is a north arrow defined by simple lines but also considerably draws attention to the focal point of the landscape.

This map has an attractive pull of its own regardless of the monochromatic background, which evokes a sober feeling but has sufficient curiosity to prompt repeated looks by a viewer. Deficiencies noticeable in the map include the possible confusion between the Osun and Oba rivers. Nevertheless, the combination of artistic simplicity with minimal geographic information to describe visually the landscape and narrate the unfolding event reveals the map as a remarkable success. The map is succinctly composed, and the general effect stimulates a clean and uncrowded terrain; evoking a mood of concern that seems appropriate to the issue of emigration.

The socio-spatial problem of suitable places, which the map form sought to address, contained some symbolic misrepresentations. The 1861 map primarily relied on the 1859 CMS map but also derived territorial information from SBM maps produced in the 1850s. Cognitive errors are evident in the depicted physical and cultural features. For instance, there was a mislabelling of River Ofiki as River Ogun. The Ogun River was the unnamed river to the right on the map face. Campbell observed:

I crossed the Ogun [river] in three places above Abbeokuta; the first time between Oyo and Isehin, next between Biocu [Bioku] and Beracudu [Berekodo], and finally between the last place and Abbeokuta. (1861, 25-6)

This representational error as aforementioned derived from the omission of naming the river in the CMS map, which the mapmaker copied without checking the travel account of Robert Campbell. Again, the geographical positioning of Lagos Island was inward in the lagoon

and farther away from the seacoast. Likewise, there was the incorrect placement of Egbado, Egba, Efon and Ijesa territories. Hence, there are unnamed sub-groups around the represented sub-ethnicities such as the Awori-Yorùbá between the Egbado and Ijebu.

Cultural misconceptions also exist on this map. The map title introduced the entire Yorùbá-speaking territory as Aku Country but the designation was also synonymous with the Oyo-Yorùbá territory as above-mentioned in the previous maps. Campbell wrote: “The people are of the Egba tribe of the Akus, sometimes incorrectly called Yorubas” (1861, 32).

Hence, this probably influenced the mapmaker to replace Yorùbá with Aku in the map title. Similar to the 1860 map, there was an incorrect representation of the Ekiti sub-group as the Efon. Again, there was the reappearance of Kakanda as a part of Yorùbáland. In contrast to the 1860 map, which correctly placed the Yagba-Yorùbá where the Kakanda was located, the 1861 map reproduced the cultural misunderstanding of the 1859 map. Hence, the challenge to place correctly the Kakanda ethnicity reflected a representational problem on the map depicting Yorùbáland.

#### **4 Maps: Territorial Politics and Representational Practices**

These three maps in the 1860s worked in the territorial power relations of Yorùbáland. This was evident in the religious, commercial and imperial politics, which contested and negotiated different territorial identities in the furtherance of their alternative territorial interests. Whereas the CMS accentuated the Egba territorial identity through the Abeokuta policy, the NVEP emphasized the Oyo territorial identity in its quest to settle Black American emigrants. In the late 1840s and early 1850s, the CMS policy held that Abeokuta was the advanced post of Christianity and Western civilisation, from where the gospel could expand into the rest of the Yorùbá interior.

The 1859 map worked to attest not only to the missionary success of that policy but also to the need in the 1860s to increase British political-economic support for the Egba government. However, after the annexation of Lagos in 1861, the British administration was interested in the sub-groups in the Yorùbá hinterland because of commercial and economic reasons exemplified in the 1860 map. Therefore, during the Ijaye war, between the Egba-Ijaye alliance and the Ibadans, the CMS “took the Egbas’ side”, as it argued, “the British authorities at Lagos” misjudged the Egbas (Stock 1899, 435). Stock observed: “Abeokuta being at that time the most popular of all the Society’s Missions, the Society at home found itself opposed to Glover’s policy” (435).

The colonial policy favoured the Ibadans, an Oyo-Yorùbás group. Eventually, in 1862, the CMS Committee and other friends of Africa discussed with British government officials in London aided by the 1859 map. The British Colonial Secretary was urged to remove: “the hostile policy pursued by the Governor of Lagos against Abeokuta” (437).

Conversely, the Niger Valley Exploring Party devoted more time to exploring the Oyo-Yorùbá territory but eventually secured a treaty at Abeokuta (Campbell 1861, 143). This territorial interest reflected the American Southern Baptist aspiration of propagating Christianity and Western civilisation in northern Yorùbáland, which favoured the Oyo-Yorùbá (Ogundiwin 2023, 6). For example, the 1861 map depicted eight Oyo-Yorùbá towns among the eleven potential settlements the NVEP visited for Black American emigration. Two of these eight and an additional three Oyo-Yorùbá towns appeared initially in the SBM maps published in 1857 and 1858 (Ogundiwin 2023). While considering the commercial and agricultural prospects for potential emigrants, Campbell discussed the importance of the river system, for instance, the Ogun River, its limited streamer transportation and available waterpower to run steam engines for cotton mills (Campbell 1861, 23, 136, 142-3). Nonetheless, the labelled Ogun River along some Egba and Oyo settlements on the map was a cognitive error but it continued visually to persuade the African Aid Society in London to think about Black American emigration.

The mapping of Yorùbá sub-ethnicities of the hinterland, which resulted from the 1857 Niger Expedition, highlighted their territorial advantages. The sub-territories provided an overland route across Yorùbáland to the Niger hinterland, which several British officials highlighted (Glover 1897, 78). They emphasized it had an advantage over the Niger waterway, where the Niger Delta kingdoms were opposed to British penetration into the hinterland (Ajayi 1965, 168). Besides, it highlighted the importance of Eko or Lagos, while it brought the eastern Yorùbá sub-groups of Ife, Ijesa, Igbomina, Ekiti (Efon) and Yagba into the limelight to serve British political-economic interest. Interestingly, the CMS also highlighted the value of the overland route, which the 1859 map worked as a visual illustration to discuss the Rev. Crowther’s travels on the: “‘overland route’... by way of Ilorin and Abeokuta to Lagos, in February 1859” (Stock 1899, 452).

However, the CMS missionaries argued the usefulness of the route requires friendly interaction with the Egba (Ajayi 1965, 169). It was apparent the visual persuasion of the 1860 map about the importance of the overland route reflected in the British annexation of Lagos in August 1861 (Burton 1863, 214).

By contrast, these three maps and some maps derived from them also worked in the cartographic marginalisation of other Yorùbá sub-ethnicities. Sub-territories not within the missionary sphere of influence or not along the overland route became and remained unknown.

For example, there were the Ketu and Sabe to the west, the Ondo, Idoko, Owo, Akoko and Ikale to the east. This sidelining was also evident owing to the cultural misunderstanding of sub-groups such as the Ekiti for Efon or the northeastern Okun-Yorùbá with the Kakan-da. Since the 1840s, Crowther wrote about Yorùbá sub-groups, such as the Dassa and Ife, living between the Mono and Opara rivers but there was a consistent omission of these sub-ethnicities from the rest of Yorùbáland in European maps. In 1877, a map, titled *Part of the Yoruba Country*, illustrating a missionary account stressed only the Egbas, Ijebus and Oyo-Yorùbás, while summing up the remaining sub-groups as the “others” (Hinderer 1877, 215). Consequently, the cartographic identity of a Yorùbá sub-group reflected Euro-American territorial interest, the several unrepresented or unnamed sub-ethnicities became the visually marginalised Other.

Although these maps emerged in different years, they were parallel productions with different aims, expanding the cartographic stage for territorial politics in Yorùbáland. These parallel maps stress different territorial images, whose particular appearances were persuasive acts in the Euro-American territorialisation of Yorùbáland. In the above study, the visual prompts of the good looks of the CMS map emphasize expanding Christianity; the solemn gaze of the NVEP map stresses humanitarian concern; and the lively impressions of the Niger Expedition map highlight economic potentials, privileging alternative territorial interests. These visual persuasions highlight the contending and negotiable social productions of territorial identities. They urge and encourage ‘alternative cartographic truths’ within the spatial debate of competing territorial interests. This agrees with Casti’s (2015, 107) contention about “maps as a persuasive tool in public debates”. Therefore, the cultural politics of maps in the cultural encounter of the Euro-American world and the Yorùbá of West-Central Africa introduced a visual dimension into the representational practices of ethnic and sub-ethnic territoriality.

## 5 Conclusion

The paper has examined the interlinkage of alternative map appearances and territorial politics in mid-nineteenth-century Yorùbáland. Cartographic styles stress the idea of differentiating appearance, which bestows confidence in geographical information but maps with good looks do include symbolic misrepresentations. Regardless of cognitive errors and cultural misconceptions, the emotional responses to these geographical maps are integral to territorial politics but there has been little study or no attention to the linkage of map style and territorial politics in the nineteenth-century maps of West Africa. In this paper, three maps of Yorùbáland, variously executed with



pleasing and exciting use of graphical elements, reveal symbolic misrepresentations, but still serve as visual prompts in thinking and acting out alternative territorial interests in the cultural relations between the Yorùbá sub-ethnicities and the Euro-American world. These maps are vital devices in the nineteenth century territorialisation of Yorùbáland, which exemplify the cultural interdependence of Europeans, Americans and Africans.

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