

A New Map of the World, 1808

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In her writings, Jane mentions the Alps and the Pyrenees, Gibraltar and Sicily, Tuscany and Venice, Naples and Avignon, Lyons and Paris, and other localities and cities. Among European countries she names are: Russia, Italy, Switzerland, Spain, and France, a country for which she and most of her family had no great love. So, from her family and her reading, Jane knew about parts of Europe, Asia, and the Americas. She read Thomas Clarkson's *History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* (1805) from which she would have learned about Africa. A more general work she mentions twice in her *Letters* is John Bigland's *System of Geography and History* (1812).

In Jane Austen's childhood the study of geography, maps and globes was considered part of the education of young gentlewomen. An advertisement appearing in London at the time reads:

Geography made Easy, and the Use of all the ordinary Sorts of Charts and Maps . . . taught in a week's time. An easy Explication [is provided] of Hard Words which may discourage some People from this Necessary, Pleasant and Easy Science. It is taught to either sex, whether learned in other Sciences or not, if they are above the age of twelve. The Master Teaches either in his own Chamber, or comes to the Scholars [home].

Some objected to this instruction; a certain Charlotte Clarke wrote in her memoirs, recalling her childhood lessons:

My Tutor got leave of my Parents . . . to Instruct me in Geography; which by the Bye, tho' I know it to be a most useful and pleasing Science, I cannot think it altogether necessary for a female.

We know about specific books that Jane read from her writings, but I couldn't find references to particular maps she may have consulted. Given her family background it is quite possible that she would have seen "A New Map of The World," 1808, but let me tell you how this came to be republished, recently. A Professor at Cornell University set up a publishing company called "Historic Urban Plans" in Ithaca, New York, to reproduce in facsimile nineteenth century bird's-eye views of American cities, particularly. Fortunately he has now broadened his base and has published a small number of facsimiles of foreign maps including "A New Map of The World with Captain Cook's Tracks, His Discoveries and those of The Other Circumnavigators." This title is contained in a decorative cartouche of drapery at the top-center of the map. In another cartouche at the bottom-center is recorded the place of publication "London," the date "12 April 1808" and the publisher "Laurie and Whittle."

Laurie and Whittle were publishers and engravers in Fleet Street, London from 1795. From the late 1700s the firm produced pilot books and charts of the coasts of Africa, the East Indies, an atlas of America, and several general atlases. Jane Austen's sailor brothers would have known of the cartographic

productions of Laurie and Whittle, because of the firm's connections with the Royal Navy.

Although not stated, the map is on a double hemispheric stereographic projection with a ten degree grid of latitude, and a fifteen degree grid of longitude. The stereographic projection was invented in the second century B.C. by Hipparchus and was used only for astronomical purposes, until the sixteenth century A.D. The stereographic is projected from an antipodal point on the globe and can show only half of the earth at a time. In this case the two (equatorial) antipodal points are: just south of India for the western hemisphere, and west of Columbia in the Pacific for the eastern hemisphere. These form the centers of the two hemispheres on the map, which has a scale at the equator of about 1:100 million (not stated).

The two hemispheres, labelled "Eastern Hemisphere or Old World," and "Western Hemisphere or New World" are surrounded by an architectural motif. The eastern hemisphere's architectural design is surmounted by a palm and various Old World symbols; the architectural design in the western hemisphere is surmounted on the left by a cacao plant and various New World symbols. It is appropriate that we should notice this in 1992, a year when Old and New World cultures, flora or fauna, brought together through the Columbian Encounter, are being re-examined. A mythological figure, probably Atlas, connects the two cartouches in the middle of the map. So much for decoration and projection.

What of the map data, which would have been of greater interest to Jane Austen and most map readers, then and now. Apart from the coastlines of the continents the most prominent feature of the map, as suggested by the subtitle, are the tracks of Captain Cook's three global circumnavigations, 1768 to 1779. On the first of these voyages Cook mapped New Zealand and discovered the important east coast of Australia, labelled New South Wales on the map. The name New Holland relates to the earlier Dutch interest in the northern coast as does Van Dieman's Land on that coast and on Tasmania. On his second Pacific Voyage Cook circumnavigated the southern hemisphere and proved that there was no *Terra Australis* a great continent postulated since Antiquity, in the southern mid-latitudes. On his third circumnavigation Cook discovered Hawaii on the way to explore the Pacific Northwest of North America in an attempt to find a passage through, or around, the continent. Cook was unable to find the passage and returned to Hawaii, where he was killed 14th February 1779. His accomplishments in navigation and the tragic circumstance of his death made Cook a national hero. A number of those who accompanied Cook became famous captains themselves, including George Vancouver, William Bligh, and James Burney. Burney was the brother of Fanny Burney, the novelist whose writings, including *Camilla*, were much admired by Jane Austen and her sister Cassandra. The mutiny on the *Bounty* made Bligh a household word in Regency England, and would most probably have been discussed by the Austens. Vancouver's discoveries in the North American Northwest, as a follow-up of Captain Cook's third Pacific Voyage, are noted on the map; this year, 1992, is the bicentennial of Vancouver's voyage.

In spite of the subtitle of the map the only tracks of an explorer other than Cook shown are those of Vasco da Gama, who was not a circumnavigator. A short selection of da Gama's route, from East Africa to the Malabar coast of India in 1498, is marked and labelled. The tracks of Columbus's four voyages from Spain to Central America between 1492 and 1504 are not shown. Neither is the circumnavigation of Magellan and El Cano between 1519 and 1522. Nor, surprisingly, is that of the 1577-80 circumnavigation of Sir Francis Drake, about whom Jane in her *History* states, that he "was the first Englishman to sail around the world" and "was a great ornament to his Country and his profession."

Coasts of the continents unexplored and unmapped in 1808, included the southern coast of Australia, by this time postulated to be a large land mass. This had, in fact, been surveyed in 1803 by Matthew Flinders of the Royal Navy but he was detained by the French on the Island of Mauritius, and Flinders and his charts did not reach England until 1810. Also unmapped were large parts of the Arctic, to be explored mostly in the second half of the nineteenth century, and also Antarctica. In Antarctica is the notation "No Ice to be seen"—the great white continent was to be discovered in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries particularly.

Major river systems of South America were known and mapped from the sixteenth century, but this is not true of the drainage of Africa. On the map the Niger flows eastward to connect with the Nile across the southern Sahara, designated Nigritia, on the map. The African Association was founded in London in the late eighteenth century to improve the knowledge of Africa's rivers, particularly, but the equatorial sources of the White Nile were not discovered until the mid-nineteenth century. Many of the place names on the map are archaic such as Port Sir Francis Drake and New Albion in Northern California. But most toponyms are recognizable or easily translated.

One interesting feature of the map is marked "Antipodes of London" off the coast of New Zealand at about approximately 52° South latitude and 165° West longitude. It is not 180° East longitude because the Prime Meridian on the 1808 map runs through the Canary Islands not Greenwich, which was not universally recognized as 0° longitude until 1885.

Laurie and Whittle produced maps on fabric for embroidering. Jane Austen was an accomplished seamstress and examples of her needlework exist, but there is no evidence that she saw, or embroidered, cloth maps. But she was well aware of the little world around her by direct observation. And through conversation, correspondence, books, and maps she knew a great deal of the larger world that she didn't experience at first hand.

(This is a shorter version of the speech given by Professor Thrower.)

