Shifting boundaries in Southern Africa:
John Arrowsmith’s map of the Cape of Good Hope of 1834

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ABSTRACT

Arrowsmith’s map of the Cape of Good Hope of 1834 is considered the most authoritative map of Southern Africa published on the eve of the Great Trek when thousands of frontier farmers left the Cape Colony to settle in the interior of the country, away from British dominance. According to an annotation on the map, Arrowsmith obtained his information from “an original MS drawing in the Colonial Office”. This paper perceives this manuscript drawing to be a map compiled by L. Hebert which is housed in the British National Archives. Drawing on the history of exploration of Southern Africa, this paper brings to light the source material which was used for Hebert’s and Arrowsmith’s maps, the new information depicted by Arrowsmith and the importance of this map as documentation tool during the tumultuous years which characterized the history of the Cape Colony during the 1830s and thereafter.

INTRODUCTION

The Arrowsmiths were the leading British map publishers in the early 19th century and around 1839 John Arrowsmith (1790-1837) took charge of the family firm which was founded in 1790 by his great-uncle Aaron. As a founder member of the Royal Geographical Society and a confidant of governmental bodies such as the Colonial Office and the Hydrographic Office of the Admiralty, John Arrowsmith compiled numerous maps for Hansard and the Society’s Journal. The firm was kept active until 1874 when the property was sold at auction with much of it being bought by Edward Stanford.

The first state of Arrowsmith’s map (see Figure 1) formed part of his London Atlas of Universal Geography which was first published on 15 February 1834. Although further issues of the 1834 map appeared as late as 1875, as either a separate map or as part of the Atlas, the only updates of the map were published in 1835, 1836 and 1842. An annotation on the map mentions that it was “with permission copied from the original manuscript drawing in the Colonial Office by Mr L. Hebert, Snr.” The question who Herbert was and what his map looked like, was partially solved when I located two maps of southern Africa by a certain L. Hebert, both dated 1830, in London in 1991. However, before discussing the relationship between these two maps and Arrowsmith’s map of 1834, it is prudent to consider the availability of cartographic information on southern Africa prior to the 1830s.

DEARTH OF RELIABLE MAPS PRIOR TO 1834

When Britain assumed control at the Cape in 1795, the British authorities were ignorant of the extensive surveys and mapping of especially the coastal areas that had been undertaken under Dutch
rule since 1652. They considered the country unmapped and, with large parts of the colony already inhabited by frontier farmers, they were eager to obtain reliable topographical information. However, by the 1830s the geography of the interior of southern Africa was still scantily recorded. Most of the available maps were of a small scale and were compiled by either local explorers, hunters, and missionaries as part of their travelogues, or by professional cartographers overseas.

The most noteworthy 19th century maps other than Arrowsmith’s which by 1834 provided information on the interior of South Africa, were the map of John Barrow’s travels published in 1801, the map showing the route followed by Somerville and Truter in 1801-02, Aaron Arrowsmith’s map of 1805, Hinrich Lichtenstein’s map of 1815, John Campbell’s maps which were published in 1812 and 1822, William Burchell’s map of 1822, the 1827 map depicting George Thompson’s travels, and Sidney Hall’s map of 1828.

When Lord Macartney became Governor of the Cape in 1797, he chose John Barrow as one of his private secretaries. During the years 1797-99 Barrow undertook three journeys into the interior and produced a map which was unquestionably the best map of the country to date. The map was published in volume II of his *Account of Travels into the interior of Southern Africa*. P.J. Truter, a member of the Cape court of Justice, was Barrow’s father-in-law, and when Truter and William Somerville undertook a journey into the interior in 1801-02, Barrow also published a map depicting their route. The information in Barrow’s own map of 1801 was frequently copied by other cartographers, with one of the most well-known “copies” being the large 1805 *Chart of the Cape of Good Hope* by Aaron Arrowsmith. The German naturalist Hinrich Lichtenstein undertook several expeditions into the interior of the country and travelled as far as the present-day Botswana. John Campbell was a Scottish missionary who was sent to the Cape by the London
Missionary Society and who travelled extensively in both the Cape Colony and the present-day Botswana. His journals were both entitled *Travels in South Africa…*, and published in London; the first (covering his first journey) in 1815, and the second (covering his second journey, in 1822. Both books contain maps which do not show much detail, but which are notable for Campbell’s penetration towards the North and their accuracy of the coastline. In 1822 the traveller and naturalist William Burchell (1781-1863) compiled a large and detailed map to illustrate his journeys into the interior as far east as the Keiskamma River and as far north as the “Maadji Mountain” north of Kuruman. His map appears in volume I of his *Travels in the interior of South Africa* which was published in London in 1824. The map showing the route the merchant George Thompson followed during his travels from 1821 until 1830, was of a much poorer quality than the maps of Barrow and Burchell, and was published in 1827 in volume II of his *Travels and adventures in Southern Africa*. Sidney Hall’s map entitled *Southern Africa*, followed in 1828. Being the engraver of Burchell’s maps, it was to be expected that Hall would closely follow Burchell when he himself published a map. His depiction of the main route to the North via Lattakoo (Kuruman) is almost identical to Burchell’s, as are the multitude of tribal names scattered across his map.

In July 1819 the Governor, Lord Charles Somerset, commissioned the officer commanding the Royal Engineers at the Cape, Captain W.C. Holloway, to supervise a general trigonometrical survey of the Colony. Such a survey would not only assist the government with the registration of land grants in the interior of the Colony, but would also provide in the need for maps. Holloway’s brief was “to lay the foundation of a map…so that the limits of this colony…shall be known”. Work on this project started in the district of Graaff-Reinet in August 1819 but had to be abandoned in 1825 due to a lack of funds. The maps that were compiled were never published and only exist in manuscript form.

That the existing maps of South Africa were of little use to the Colonial Office is evident from a letter by the Colonial Secretary, Lord Bathurst, to Somerset dated 14 June 1824: “As much inconvenience is felt at times from the want of good Maps… I have to request that you will make arrangements for furnishing me with such Maps already in your possession as may obviate the inconvenience I have already pointed out…” The Cape government did not comply with this request and, on 1 January 1827, Bathurst reiterated his need for reliable topographical information when he stated that “from the want of Geographical information it has been found impossible to complete with any degree of accuracy the Maps deposited in this office of the distant Colonies which belong to this Country”. To rectify this situation, Bathurst requested the Acting Governor to be furnished with “a half-yearly report of the progress in Geographical and Topographical Knowledge which may be made in the Colony” and to accompany all his reports “with such Maps and Surveys as may be necessary to their elucidation”. In 1825 various problems necessitated the British Parliament to appoint a Commission of Enquiry into the administration and finances of the Cape Government. One of the recommendations of this Commission was that a surveyor-general should be appointed to, amongst other duties, “prepare a map of the colony”. The first Surveyor-General, Colonel Charles Cornwallis Michell, was appointed in 1828. In 1829 the lack of response by the Cape Government to deliver the required maps compelled the Colonial Office to present Michell with a skeleton map of the Cape Colony, requesting him to “mark thereupon the divisions of the several districts and the boundaries of the Colony” as “much inconvenience has been felt here from the want of a correct map…” Michell acceded to this request, but felt it his duty to report back to the Government Secretary that “I see many inaccuracies thro’-out this map, and [I have] to state my regret that … I cannot …rectify them.” On 28 February 1831 he returned the skeleton map to the Cape Government to have it forwarded to London. Whether this map influenced the compilation of the map referred to by Arrowsmith as “compiled by Mr. L. Hebert, Sr.”, will be argued later in this article. At this stage it suffices to say that as yet no such map has been found.
HEBERT’S MAP(S)

Although no official decision in this regard could be traced, it is plausible that by 1829 the lack of reliable maps of large parts of the British Empire compelled the Colonial Office to introduce some in-house cartographic activity to cater for this need. It is also plausible that the skeleton map handed to Michell in 1829 was the first step in this direction. The British cartographer employed to compile an official map of the southern part of Africa was apparently a Mr L. Hebert who, from 1827 to 1838, worked as cartographer and lithographer for the British Government as well as a number of private firms. Today evidence of such activity with regards to South Africa exists in the form of two manuscript maps, one residing in the British National Archives (BNA) and the other in the British Library (BL). The document in the BNA is a large coloured MS map measuring 118 x 186 cm of which the lower left corner bears the inscription “Drawn at the Colonial Department by L. Hebert, Senior 1830" (see Figure 2). It covers the country south of 25º S and has a town plan of Cape Town as inset. The map in the BL is much smaller (50 x 77.5 cm), is printed in black and white only, and carries the annotation “Drawn by L. Hebert. Printed at the Lithographic Establishment Quarter Master-General’s Office Horse Guards, London, November 1830".21

![Figure 3: Manuscript map by L Hebert (BNA, CO 700 Cape of Hood Hope)](image)

The BNA and BL maps are clearly by the same hand as the delineation of rivers and the occurrence and sequence of place-names in the western half of the Colony are similar. There is, however, a marked discrepancy between the western and eastern halves of the BL map with the result that the depiction of the Eastern Frontier and Natal on the latter half differs greatly from that on the BNA map. The date 1830 indicated on both maps is also questionable. For instance, the name “D’Urban” which, on the BL map, is used for the settlement at Port Natal, only took effect after 1835. Likewise the area between the Keiskamma and the Kei Rivers on the BNA map is labeled “Province of Queen Adelaide”, a name which only came into use in June 1835 when the border of the Colony was shifted eastwards as far as the Kei River.

On studying Hebert’s BL map closely, it is clear that it actually consists of two maps which are joined together at approximately 27º E. Having studied all three maps, I am of the opinion that the western part of the BL map closely resembles Hebert’s BNA map. The section east of 27º E,
although not exactly similar, shows a great resemblance to the 1836, and later, issues of Arrowsmith’s map. How the eastern section originated and why, when and by whom the two maps were joined, remains unknown.

Given the contents and provenance of the BNA and BL maps, it is fair to conclude that the map Arrowsmith refers to as the “map compiled by Mr Hebert”, is in fact the BNA map. That Arrowsmith indeed copied the BNA map, becomes obvious when comparing these two maps. Not only are most of the place names and the delineation of rivers and roads the same, but many notations and inscriptions on Hebert’s map also occur verbatim on Arrowsmith’s map (see Figures 4 and 5).

**SOURCE MATERIAL FOR HEBERT’S (AND ARROWSMITH’S) MAP**

When compiling his reference map of South Africa for the Colonial Office, Hebert almost certainly consulted the maps of Barrow, Lichtenstein, Campbell, Burchell, Thompson, and Sidney Hall, as well as the published narratives of these and other travellers. Of the maps at his disposal, Barrow’s, Lichtenstein’s and Burchell’s were by far the most superior as they were based on personal observations and had originally yielded important new topographical information. However, as much new knowledge on especially the Eastern Frontier had become available since Barrow and Lichtenstein had undertaken their expeditions, it is doubtful whether their maps and writings contributed much to Hebert’s and Arrowsmith’s knowledge. Campbell and Burchell who, during the 1820s, had, advanced far beyond Lattakoo\(^{22}\), were considered more up-to-date sources and the place names on their maps feature significantly on both Hebert’s and Arrowsmith’s maps.

Campbell’s route of 1820 from Lattakoo to the capital of the Kwena, Kurreechane\(^{23}\), in the present-day Marico district, is indicated on his map which was published in 1822. This route is also depicted on Hebert’s map, but the line indicating the route is left devoid of place names and is incorrectly dated as “Route of the Rev Mr Campbell of 1813”. Supplementing this information with the information in Campbell’s book and with the information on Sidney Hall’s map, Arrowsmith depicts Campbell’s route together with all the relevant toponyms, but makes no reference to the missionary himself.
Figure 4: The Orange River or Nu-Gariep on Hebert’s map where it forms the boundary between the Cape Colony and the Trans-Gariep or present-day Free State. In the open area to the northeast appears the annotation “Country lately taken possession by the Colonial farmers in consequence of the long protracted droughts”.

Figure 5: The same area as depicted in Figure 2 on Arrowsmith’s 1834 map. The delineation of the Orange River and its tributaries, as well as many place names and even the annotation referring to the colonial farmers, are the same as on Hebert’s map.
Burchell’s northwards journey from Worcester via Klaarwater to Lattakoo, and beyond to Lake Chue, was meticulously copied from his map by both Hebert and Arrowsmith, and the same is true of Burchell’s southwards route from Lattakoo via Klaarwater to Graaff-Reinet.

Notable maps by military and civilian land surveyors published which were presumably used by Hebert and Arrowsmith were the 1818 map of a part of the Eastern Frontier by Wiley, and J.B.C. Knobel’s Map of Albany of 1822 which depicts that part of the Eastern Frontier where the 1820 British Settlers were to be given land. The district of George, which appears in considerable detail on Hebert’s BNA map, was in all probability copied from Aegidius Petersen’s manuscript “Map of the District of George” of 1825. Although somewhat dated by 1830, another map of which the influence on Herbert’s and Arrowsmith’s maps should not be disregarded, is the detailed manuscript map compiled in 1796 by the two VOC officers J.C. Frederici and Josephus Jones of the coastal area between Cape Agulhas and Algoa Bay. This map depicts all roads and existing farms, with their owners, south of the first mountain ranges.

Hydrographic surveys and nautical charts also yielded important topographical information. In February 1822 the British Admiralty instructed Captain W.F. Owen to proceed to Cape Town to survey the south-east coast of Africa as far as Delagoa Bay. The African journals compiled by Owen and his officers include surveys and maps of the Cape Peninsula, and the coast from Cape Hangklip eastwards to the Keiskamma River and northwards to Delagoa Bay. Published in London in 1833, it is logical that both Hebert and Arrowsmith would have taken note of this information. Military engineers were also important collectors of topographical data during the 19th century and the trigonometrical survey undertaken under the supervision of Captain Holloway from 1819 until 1823, yielded unpublished results which also found its way onto Hebert’s and Arrowsmith’s maps. In 1875 the Surveyor General of the Cape, Abraham de Smidt, confirmed that the materials from which Arrowsmith (and prior to him, Hebert) constructed his map, consisted of, amongst others, the survey results of Holloway and the coast charts of Owen.

Examples of early travellers and explorers who did not produce maps, but nevertheless collected important topographical material, are James Centlivres Chase and James Collis who, in 1825, visited Klaarwater, the London Missionary Society’s station beyond the Orange River; Andrew Geddes Bain and James B. Biddulph who, in 1826, travelled via Kuruman as far as Dihabaruba at 24°25’S; 25°28’E near the present-day Molepolole in Botswana; Robert Scoon and William McLuckie who were among the first white men to reach the Magaliesberg in 1829; the travellers Alexander Cowie and Benjamin Green who in 1829 travelled all along the Natal coast to Delagoa Bay, but died of malaria on their return trip; and David Hume, who established a trading post at Kuruman in 1829 and, in his quest to reach Lake Ngami in 1832-33 together with Hugh Millen, travelled further north than any other white man before him. Extracts from Cowie and Green’s journal were published in the South African Commercial Advertiser of 12 September 1829, the South African Almanack and Directory for the year 1830 and the Asiatic Journal, London 1830, whereas Bain communicated his experiences in three instalments in the South African Commercial Advertiser of November and December 1826. Extracts from the journal of Scoon and McLuckie were read to the South African Literary and Scientific Institution in Cape Town in 1830 and published in the South African Quarterly Journal of July-September 1830. The journeys of the natural scientist Andrew Smith to the north western frontier of the Colony (1828) and later to Port Natal and Zululand (1832), also yielded valuable topographical information.

Geographical information also reached Britain via the London and the Wesleyan Missionary Societies. During the first three decades of the 19th century many English-speaking missionaries came to South Africa and settled in little known parts of the country. Many of them travelled widely and accumulated much geographical knowledge of interest to map-makers. Although those who published their memoirs and reminiscenses only did so in the second half of the 19th century, they submitted regular reports to their superiors in Britain, the details of which were often published.
THE CONTRIBUTION OF JAMES CENTLIVRES CHASE

A person who probably contributed more than anybody else to Hebert’s (and Arrowsmith’s) map, was the Cape author, politician and lay cartographer, James Centlivres Chase.36 Having been keenly interested in the exploration of Africa, and craving a position in the Cape government’s service, Chase compiled a map of Southern Africa which he, on 24 February 1831, forwarded to the Colonial Secretary in London. According to him, his map “filled up at least 100 000 square miles hitherto a perfect blank in the maps of Africa”.37 Chase was aware that the Colonial Office had made arrangements for the in-house compilation of a Map of southern Africa, because he stated in his accompanying letter that “…[If] this Sketch should be considered of the slightest value in aiding the construction of a Map of South Africa which I understand … is being formed by the Government, [author’s italics], I shall be proud to offer it for that purpose”.38

When Arrowsmith’s map of 1834, together with a map of South Africa published shortly afterwards by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (S.D.U.K.)39, came to Chase’s attention, he was utterly perturbed to notice that much of their contents was, without permission, drawn from the map he had sent to the Colonial Office in 183140. Amongst the information which he claimed had been copied from his 1830 map, was the route Cowie and Green followed in 1829 when they travelled from Grahamstown via Port Natal to Delagoa Bay; Bain and Biddulph’s route of 1826 when they ventured far north of Lake Chue and The Maadjji Mountain (the northernmost points reached by Burchell in) to Litabaruba at approx 24° 21′ S; and the routes the explorers Robert Scoon and William McLuckie, and the Wesleyan missionary Archbell, followed when they visited the kraal of the Matabele king, Mzilikazi, north of the present-day Pretoria in 1829.

On 7 November 1934 Chase sent a lengthy Memorandum to the Colonial Secretary, accusing the Colonial Office of plagiarizing his map and of transmitting the information on it to “Third Parties”. In his memorandum he mentioned that Arrowsmith had, at some stage, not only seen his 1831 map in London, but also wanted to buy it.41 The governor, Sir Benjamin D’Urban, supported Chase in his claim that he had been dealt with unjustly and, together with a letter of his own, and Chase’s Memorial, enclosed a copy of a map on which Chase, in his own hand, had demarcated with a purple line the area of which the details had been taken from his map of 183142 (see Figure 6).

In a letter to Chase dated 5 September 1836, the Colonial Office acknowledged that the map in question “was placed in the hands of the Geographer of this Office, who was employed at the time in compiling a Map of Southern Africa”43. The Colonial Secretary, however, disclaimed all responsibility for the use of the map by third parties, stressing that Chase’s map “was by him freely rendered to the Government for the express purpose of being used as a contribution towards the construction of another Map”.44 This acknowledgement clearly implies that Hebert was in a position to make ample use of Chase’s map of 1831 when he compiled his official “Map of South Africa”.

ARROWSMITH’S OWN RESEARCH

The fact that Arrowsmith copied most of his information from Herbert’s map should not be labelled unethical as he made no secret of his methods and was given permission to do so by the Colonial Office. In the Preface to his London Atlas, he thanked, amongst others, the Colonial Office, The Hydrographical Office of the Admiralty, and the Royal Geographical Society, “for the very liberal manner in which I have been allowed the use of most extensive collections of maps, M.S. surveys & charts, many of which have not hitherto been open to public inspection”45. Working in the Colonial Office, however, did not prohibit Arrowsmith from collecting information himself. As regards his own research for the London Atlas, he mentions that “I have compared and critically examined more
than ten thousand sheets of printed map, charts, plans…” and “gleaned the geographical information scattered through upwards of eight hundred volumes of voyages, travels and history…”

**Figure 6**: Map of the S.D.U.K. on which Chase indicated the area allegedly copied from his map of 1831.

### SHIFTING BOUNDARIES

By 1834 some information as regards the deep interior of the country had already been mapped by Campbell, Burchell and Sidney Hall. Arrowsmith was, however, the first to show the topographical detail along the route Bain and Biddulph followed from Lattakoo to Litabaruba (Dithabaruba) in 1826 (see Figure 7). This route is also depicted on Hebert’s map as one followed by “Missionaries and Traders”, but Hebert shows few toponyms and terminates the route at 25° 09’ South. Arrowsmith, on the other hand, mentions all the place names referred to in Bain’s Journal and allows the route to break through the border of the map in his effort to depict it all the way to Dithabaruba. According to Chase, this information was plagiarized from the map he had sent to the Colonial Office in 1830.

Arrowsmith’s map was also the first published map to depict the route the traders Scoon and McLuckie followed in 1829 northwards along the Harts River when they travelled to Kurreechane, and from there to “Malacatzie’s” (Mzilikazi’s) Kraal just north of the present-day Pretoria. The
Arrowsmith was the first cartographer to map the courses of the Harts and Vaal Rivers and to give an indication of the upper reaches of the Olifants River. He labels the latter as “Elephants R. (large)”, indicating that it might be a tributary of the Mapoota River which empties into Delagoa Bay. In the area between the Orange and Vaal Rivers appears a note which was verbatim copied from Hebert’s map and which indicates what was to become: “Country lately taken possession of by Colonial farmers in consequence of the long protracted droughts”.

The Eastern Cape and Natal coast are much better represented than on Sidney Hall’s map of 1828, and Arrowsmith also indicates the location of Dingaan’s Kraal”, “the late Chaka’s residence”, the route Cowie and Green followed to Delagao Bay in 1829, and the location of the Battle of Mbolombo (July-August 1828) near the Umtata River. These same features are also depicted on Hebert’s map, but it is interesting to note that the previous Zulu king’s kraal is here merely indicated as “Chaka’s residence”, which could mean that Herbert acquired his information prior to the murder on Shaka in 1828. Much of the interior of the country beyond the Orange River and in the interior of Natal is still left blank and, although some hills indicate its possible location, the Drakensberg (Quathlamba) is neither shown nor named (see Figure 10).

The first update of Arrowsmith’s map appeared on 1 June 1835 as a lithographic reproduction which was ordered by the British Parliament to accompany Part II of the Papers relative to the Condition and Treatment of the Native Inhabitants if Southern Africa. The lithographer was J. Basire, and the printers were James and Luke G. Hansard. This map is less crowded than the 1834...
Figure 8: Hebert’s map showing the delineation of the Harts and Vaal Rivers, and the routes of Scoon and McLuckie, and the missionary Archbell (1829).

Figure 9: Arrowsmith’s map showing almost an exact copy of the delineation of the Harts and Vaal Rivers and the routes of Scoon and McLuckie, and Archbell, as these appear on Hebert’s map.
Map as much detail and many place names have been omitted and numerous rivers along the coast left unnamed (see Figure 11). In the Eastern Cape a pronounced mountain range, the Storm Berg, forms the watershed between the Nu-Gariep (Orange) River and the Kei River, and extends north-eastwards almost as far as Port Natal. North of the Nu-Gariep the notice concerning the colonial farmers has been removed, and in the extreme north the map stops 1° of latitude short of the edge of the 1834 map at 25° S. New information concerning indigenous tribes has also been added. The area to the west of Port Natal is inhabited by the Mambookies, and the country between the Vaal and the Harts Rivers was the home of the Harteneers or Bergenaars, “an ambulant Horde of Marayders”. In the Transkei the name of the Tambookies has been added to those of the Amatembu and Amakosa.

The 1836 issue of the map was printed from the engraved plate which means that, except for some new information which had become available, it closely resembles the 1834 state. Two of the most prominent differences concern the position and delineation of the Nu-Gariep River which now passes much closer to Torenberg (Colesberg) than before, and the presence of the Quathlamba (Drakensberg) Mountains which are properly shown and named. Other additions are the many new place names in the hinterland of Port Natal between the sea and the Drakensberg, many of them due to the explorations of Captain Gardiner. Whose route of 1835 is marked (see Figure 12). The settlement at Port Natal known as Farewell Ft. appears with its new name, D’Urban. The mountainous topography northwest of Graaff-Reinet is more clearly represented than on the 1834 map, and on the Eastern Frontier appears the Province of Queen Adelaide which was proclaimed in May 1835. In the same area the delineation of some rivers has been altered and the location of King
Williams Town (founded 1835) added (see Figure 13). Although there is an extant 1842 issue which is identical to that of 1836, there also exists an issue dated 1842 on which new names have been inserted along the Gariep River: Smee Drift, Harne Kraals Drift, Gideons Drift, France Drift, etc. Many of these changes came about as a result of the Great Trek, which commenced in 1834.

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

That Arrowsmith’s map was considered the most reliable cartographic representation of southern Africa at the time, is verified by the fact that it was used by the British Parliament to illustrate Part II of the *Papers relative to the Condition and Treatment of the Native Inhabitants if Southern Africa* which was published in 1835. The map was also held in high politicians as it was used by Sir Benjamin D’Urban even after he had retired from his position as Governor of the Cape on 20 January 1838. A 1840 issue of the map held by the Royal Geographical Society has D’Urban’s signature in its margin, together with extensive annotations in his hand regarding the various government proclamations pertaining to the Province of Queen Adelaide and Natal⁴⁸ (see Figure 14). The annotations were apparently made in 1843 while D’Urban was living in retirement in Wynberg, Cape Town.

Eminent 19⁰ century scientists belonging to the astronomical, surveying and cartographic community at the Cape held Arrowsmith’s map in high esteem. When Sir John Herschel, the famous astronomer who spent four years at the Cape from 1834 to 1838, left South Africa, a stone obelisk was erected on the spot in his garden where his famous reflecting telescope had been located. Under the foundation of the obelisk, a “time capsule”, consisting of a bottle containing “various items of interest to later generations”⁴⁹, was buried. H.M. Astronomer at the Cape, Sir Thomas Maclear, insisted that Arrowsmith’s map should be one of these items, “being a better representation of the present boundary & extent of the Colony than any description…”⁵⁰ In 1857 Maclear again referred to the merits of Arrowsmith’s map, whereas the Surveyor-General, Abraham de Smidt, commended it as late as 1875.⁵¹
**Figure 12** Durban (Port Natal) and its hinterland as it appears on the 1836, and later issues of Arrowsmith’s map.

**Figure 13:** The Eastern Frontier on the 1834 issue (left) and the 1836 issue (right)
That Arrowsmith’s map was accepted as the standard map of the Colony by the mid-1830s is evident from the fact that it served as base map for Cornwallis Harris’ map in the latter’s well-known book entitled *Wild Sports of Southern Africa* which was first published in 1837. In 1871 the 1835 issue of Arrowsmith’s map was also included as a reference map in the autobiography of the influential Sir Andries Stockenström, Magistrate of Graaff-Reinet from 1815 to 1827 and later Lieutenant Governor for the Eastern Districts.

![Figure 14](image-url) Sir Benjamin D’Urban’s signature and handwriting as it appears on a 1840 issue of Arrowsmith’s map.

Looking at the historiography of the Great Trek, neither Theal nor Walker consulted contemporary maps when they researched the history of this period. Muller did study Arrowsmith’s map and mentions that it indicates considerable progress when compared to maps published prior to 1834. In his research Muller also came across Hebert’s map and Chase’s correspondence with the Colonial Office and realized that the former was a “key map” which had been gradually improved and updated by, inter alia, Chase. However, not particularly interested in cartography as such, he failed to take the matter further. Bergh and Visagie, in their cartographic guide for research on the Eastern Frontier Zone 1660 to 1980, refer to the Arrowsmith map on many occasions and it is also depicted on the cover of their book, but they refrain from mentioning Hebert’s map. In recent years Etherington has analysed some 19th century maps of southern Africa in his quest to disprove the validity of hitherto accepted beliefs regarding the population pattern of the sub-continent in the 1830s. He discusses the 1840 state of Arrowsmith’s map, but makes no mention of the official source of the latter which was Hebert’s map.

Amongst map historians, Schire refers to Arrowsmith’s map of 1834, and its later issue of 1842, as “superior to most of his contemporaries’ work in every respect”. Tooley is of the opinion that Arrowsmith’s map provides “one of the fullest geographical pictures of the expansion of the Boers into Natal, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, beginning with the Great Trek”. Largely compiled from exploratory material not based on accurate surveys, Arrowsmith’s map is of course not planimetrically accurate. The geographical coordinates of places situated on or near the coast are fairly correct, but further inland the position of places is generally plotted too far to the east. As can be expected, places in the far north such as Kurreechane, and “Malacatzie’s” Kraal, are also plotted way off to the north of their true positions. Kurreechane is depicted at approximately 25°20’S; 26°10’E instead of 27°03’S, 25°05’E, and Umzilikazi’s kraal appears at 27°10’S; 29°20’E.
instead of 25°40’S; 28° 12’E. Further south the true position of the junction of the Vaal and the Harts Rivers is 24° 20’E instead of 25° 5’E as is indicated on the 1834 map, and Phillipolis near the Orange River is depicted at 25° 50’E on the 1834 map, and 25° 40’E on the 1840 map, instead of at its true position of 25°16 E. In 1857 the Royal Astronomer at the Cape, Sir Thomas Maclear, understandably reported many gross planimetric errors on Arrowsmith’s map. Maclear, however, was of the opinion that “Mr Arrowsmith is not blameable, for he went to the fountain head…”

ENDNOTES

1 See Francis Herbert: “The ‘London Atlas of Universal Geography’ from John Arrowsmith to Edward Stanford: Origin, Development and Dissolution of a British World Atlas from the 1830s to the 1930s” in *Imago Mundi* 41, pp. 99-123. The author has followed Herbert’s example to speak of the various “states” of the map, and of “issues”, rather than “editions”. An 1873 issue of Arrowsmith’s map is held by the Bodleian Library, Oxford, shelfmark E 54:10(3).

2 John Barrow: *An auto-biographical memoir of Sir John Barrow, Bart* (John Murray, London, 1847), p. 141. According to Barrow, the then Governor of the Cape, Lord Macartney, told him in 1897 that “We are shamefully ignorant … of the geography of the country; we have no map that embraces one-tenth part of the colony …”.

3 John Barrow: *General chart of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope… Engraved by S.J. Neele…* In: Account of *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa…*, vol. 2. London: Cadell and Davies, 1801. Size 46 x 49 cm.

4 Aaron Arrowsmith: *To Captain Carmichael Smyth of the Corps of Royal Engineers, Who obligingly furnished many of the materials, This Chart of the Cape of Good Hope is inscribed by his obedient and most humble servant, A. Arrowsmith.* London, Soho Square, 1805. A. 4 sheets, each 71 x 61 cm.


9 Cape Archives Repository (hereafter CAR), CO 165, Extracts of a Despatch …”, Donkin to Bathurst, 15 June 1821.


11 CAR, GH 1/56, General Despatches: Hill to Commanding Officer, 30 June 1826, no. 801, p. 63.

12 CAR, GH 1/48, General Despatches: Bathurst to Somerset, 14 June 1824, no. 666.

13 CAR, GH 1/59, General Despatches: Bathurst to Bourke, 1 January 1827.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.


17 CAR, GH 1/72, General Despatches: Murray to Lowry Cole, 4 January 1829, no. 1060.

18 CAR, SG 1/13/1, Michell to Secretary of Government, 28 February 1831.


20 BNA, CO 700 Cape of Good Hope, 12.

21 BL, map 67235(21).
22 Present-day Kuruman, and the Thlaping village where the LMS mission station of the Rev Robert Moffatt operated. Sometimes also called New Lattakoo. In 1816 the first mission station was established at Old Lattakoo or Dithakong (27°5’S; 23°57’E). In 1817 the mission station was moved to Maruping, ten kilometers north of the final site. In 1824 the third site at Kuruman (New Lattakoo) on the Kuruman River was chosen at 27°28’S; 23°26’E.

23 Kurreechane (also rendered Currychane, Currychaine, Cuddy Chane, Kurruchain, Kurichane, etc.) was situated in the hills to the west of the Marico River at 25°20’S; 26°10’E.

24 W. Wily: *A Military Sketch of that Part of the Colony of Cape of Good Hope, Bordering on the Caffre…. Size 60 x 48 cm.* (William Faden. London, 1818).


26 CAR, M 4/164. Map of the district of George by Aegidius Petersen, Land Surveyor. Scale 31 mm = 1000 Rhinelands roods. Size: 101 x 2 14 cm.

27 See C. Koeman: “Beschrijving van een belangrijke 18e eeuwe manuscriptkaart van de Kaapkolonie”.

28 H.B. Robinson, (ed.): *Narrative of voyages to explore the shores of Africa, Arabia and Madagascar; performed in H.M. ships Leven and Barraucouta…. Size 62 x 84 cm.* (London, 1833).


37 BNA, C.O. 48/142.

38 Ibid.


42 BNA, MPG 1775.

43 CAR, G.H. 1/23, no. 1651, 21-29.

44 Ibid.

45 From the Preface of the *London Atlas* as reproduced in Francis Herbert, *op. cit.* (see footnote 2).

46 Ibid.


48 Royal Geographical Society, Africa Div. 160. The map was presented to the RGS by the Duke of Wellington on 18 January 1944.


50 Ibid., pp. 65-66.


53 C.W. Hutton (ed.). *The autobiography of the late Sir Andries Stockenström, Bart, I-II.* (Juta. Cape Town, 1887).


56 C.J. Muller: *Die oorsprong van die Groot Trek*, p. 224-245. (Kaapstad, 1974.)

57 Ibid., p. 243.

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