

Maps and Map-Making in Local History

Jacinta Prunty

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This book aims to introduce the local history practitioner to the world of maps - the special character (and appeal) of maps as an historical source, why they are invaluable in local history research, and questions that must be asked of them. The historical background to map creation in Ireland is outlined, with details on the major classes of cartographic and associated material and the repositories wherein they may be found.

The Plantation series, travel and county maps, maps as part of published reports and journals, military mapping, estate and property mapping, and maritime maps, historic Ordnance Survey and Valuation Office maps, and more recent OS mapping, including the 1:50,000 Discovery series, are discussed.

A section on essential map-reading skills, including matters of scale, representation and accuracy, helps the researcher to explore this coded world. Step-by-step guidance for starting out to locate maps relevant to one's study area is provided. Case studies of working with maps in local history are offered as practical examples of what can be done, and guidelines for map-making are also included.

Jacinta Prunty lectures in NUI Maynooth. She is the author of the award-winning Dublin slums, 1800-1925: a study in urban geography (Irish Academic, 1998) and Margaret Alyward, 1810-1889: lady of charity, sister of faith (FCP, 1999).

Research

Research and teaching interest encompass all aspects of local history, with particular interest in town form and fabric and the intersection between town and countryside. Her specialist area, the nineteenth century city, ranges from environmental history to social geography, focusing on slum problems (health, housing, relief of the poor).

Coming from a background in historical geography Jacinta Prunty has a special regard for maps in history, and the place of field research, while continuing to mine the invaluable source materials produced by church charities and religious orders.

'This book is another example of the excellent work originating in NUI Maynooth'
Books Ireland.

'Jacinta Prunty has written an indispensable guide to "maps and mapmaking in local history". This book "does what it says on the tin" and provides in four chapters just about everything the local historian needs to know about Irish cartography: the history of Irish maps; how to read maps and how they read us; where they can be found; and how local historians can go about making their own maps.'

Matthew Stout, Studia Hibernica.

'... a work of refreshing appeal that is distinguished by its originality and by some very considerable strengths. Local historians in particular are likely to appreciate the wide-ranging approach and the clear writing ... a helpful introduction to Irish maps in general.'
Arnold Horner, Irish Historical Studies.

'A 41-page explanation, practical and full of sensible advice, explains how local historians can use maps, not in the sense of reading and interpreting, but in the sense of drawing them,

making them, and putting them in their published and unpublished work. I have never seen anything like this elsewhere, and it is a brilliant idea ... Irish local historians are truly blessed to have a book such as this as a guide.'

Alan Crosby, Local Historian.

'... cartography is alive and well in the Republic of Ireland. Maps and map-making is a product of that excellent tradition ... Maps and map-making tells the story of man's attempts to exercise power over nature and over other men. With over seventy maps, a succinct bibliography of four dozen items and countless detailed references in footnotes, this is a remarkable work of scholarship of enormous value to those fascinated by Ireland. At 25 euros it is well priced; both the author and the publisher deserve to be proud.'

Hugh Clout, Annals De Geographie, no 649.

"Maps and Map-Making in Local History is both a history of Irish maps and an invaluable resource in how to go about finding, reading and writing about these documents of history and culture. Jacinta Prunty has produced that rare thing, an expertly written but immensely readable volume, which without doubt belongs to every Irish historian's bookshelf and is of huge value to the local historian at large".

Nessa Cronin, Cartographic Journal Vol. 42, No. 2.

'This book also provides two useful services not to be found in the British manuals mentioned above (map books by J.B. Harley, David Smith and Paul Hindle). First, its advice on the actual tracking-down of Irish maps and cartographic study-aids is commendably specific and down-to-earth: does one need an appointment, is there a fee to be paid, where are the catalogues kept, what is on open access – no practical detail escapes the author's vigilance. Secondly, and with equal thoroughness, she gives valuable lessons in cartographic design and execution to local historians who wish to map their own results. How to find maps, how to read maps, how to draw maps: put these themes together and we have a book that every serious student of Irish history must keep within easy reach'

Professor J.H. Andrews.