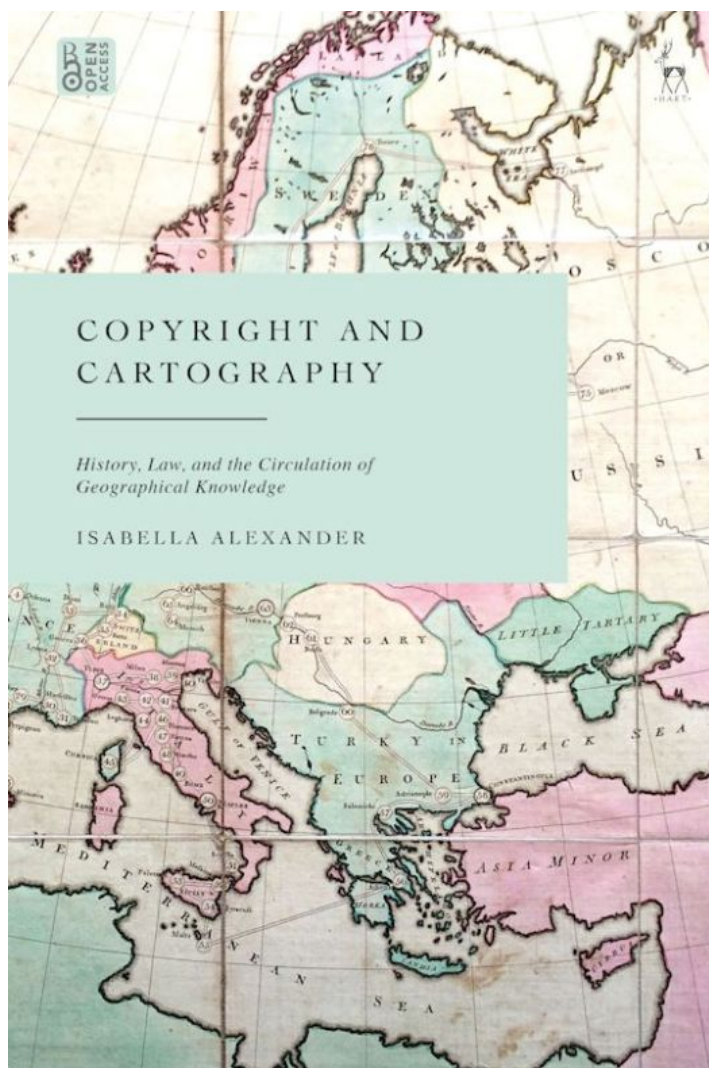




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Book review: *Copyright and Cartography: History, Law, and the Circulation of Geographical Knowledge*

reviewed by Jenny Marie Johnson





Alexander, Isabella. *Copyright and Cartography: History, Law, and the Circulation of Geographical Knowledge*. Oxford: Hart, 2023. xviii, 307 p. \$115.00 hb/\$58.95 pb. ISBN: 978-1-50995-833-7

In *Copyright and Cartography*, Isabella Alexander, a legal historian and intellectual property scholar currently on the faculty of the University of Technology Sydney, weaves an account of publication history and practice from the histories of cartography and of copyright and intellectual property law. Alexander's work focuses solely on British map and atlas publishing and the development of British intellectual property law from before the start of the 18th century to the beginning of the First World War. Using descriptions and analysis of historical cases, she illustrates how the development of copyright law impacted mapmakers, their practices and their products, and how the application of copyright law to cartographic works affected how the law was shaped and interpreted. Alexander intends the book to serve two groups of readers, those interested in the history of cartography and those interested in the history of copyright law.

The book is comprised of eight topical/historical chapters plus introductory and conclusionary chapters. The first chapter, "Introduction," serves as a broadly sweeping review of the historiography of the history of cartography, defining what a map is, and the historiography of the history of copyright and intellectual property law. Chapter 2, "Early encounters: protecting maps and atlases 1400-1700," describes the use of royal patent, license and privilege, guild registration and membership to protect against competition, all methods of protection not applied in the United States, and how these methods led to monopolistic control over potential publications by the individuals granted the patent/license. If a royal patent or license had been granted or if the projected publication had been registered at Stationers' Hall, no one else could create a similar product.

Chapters 3 and 4, "Enlightenment mapmaking and lawmaking part one: the legislation" and "Enlightenment mapmaking and lawmaking part two: the litigation," are obviously paired. There were so many developments during the 18th century in intellectual property protections that a single chapter would have been insufficient. Chapter 3 discusses 4 pieces of legislation, the 1710 Statute of Anne, which granted exclusive right to print books to the authors of the works, set a period of protection (14 years which could be renewed), and broke the monopoly of the Stationers' Hall on publication although works still needed to be registered at Stationers' Hall, and the Engravings Acts of 1735, 1767, and 1777, each of which added specific language protecting graphic materials (maps and other illustrative



works) that might not have been part of a book protected under the 1710 statute. In Chapter 4, the application of the 1710 statute and the 3 engravings laws that followed is explored by examining 4 different cases brought to the Court of Chancery or to the Court of the King's Bench between 1770 and 1797.

Chapter 5, "Legal highways and byways: road books in court," focuses on a specific publication type, road books which were predecessor of road atlases. Early versions of road books were written itineraries but by the 18th century maps were included. The chapter includes a description of the historical development of road books and of legal cases specific to road books

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 tie together because each one discusses a 19th century facet of map and atlas production in Great Britain. Chapter 6 focuses on the Ordnance Survey, Chapter 7 on the Hydrographic Office, and Chapter 8 on private (non-governmental) mapmaking and publishing. Chapters 6 and 7 serve as good summaries of agency history, describing the development of programs and establishment of agencies as geographical information authorities and illustrating the problems of agencies being expected to meet differing demands for products and losing control of data when private individuals republished government maps, often at reduced scale.

Chapter 8, "'A painted assemblage of facts,'" continues the story of private map creation and printing begun in earlier chapters. Often overlooked, because of the creation of the two major British mapping agencies, private printing flourished in an era of increased data availability and broadening consumer demand for works describing local, national, and international situations. At the heart of cartographic copyright cases during this era was an evolving understanding of how scientific or objective works could be protected under copyright law.

Chapter 9, "The twentieth century: for crown and country," brings the work of the Ordnance Survey and the Hydrographic Office into the 20th century with a discussion of the creation of Crown copyright in 1911, the needs of the Ordnance Survey for the bill, how the bill asserted sovereignty over state-generated geographic information, and continued Ordnance Survey disputes with private printers. The concluding chapter uses one final case, between James Laurie and John Bartholomew & Son, to tie together ideas brought forth throughout *Copyright and Cartography* about how efforts needed to create cartographic works are organized, the contexts in which maps are created, and the difficulty of applying copyright law to works that represent facts.



Copyright and Cartography is extensively footnoted. Its bibliography is divided into two sections: “Maps and Atlases” and “Other Printed Materials” (both primary and secondary sources). The volume is not extensively illustrated, containing 29 black-and-white illustrations, most of which were greatly reduced to fit the book’s approximately 9 x 6-inch page format.

This work belongs in collections supporting work in the history of cartography. While it specifically discusses intellectual protection of cartographic works in Great Britain, *Copyright and Cartography* could serve as an exemplar for similar studies elsewhere. Readers should have prior grounding in the history of cartography; additionally, an understanding of pre-20th century printing technologies and printing industry would be helpful to take full advantage of the information presented.

While the start of her study period pre-dates government participation in map production/publication, Alexander’s *Copyright and Cartography* largely presents important information about ties between cartography and copyright during the period of British history when London became the “global leader in mapmaking, as well as the Imperial centre, and the law which developed in Britain was exported to its colonies with ongoing influence in the present day.” This was a period of growing interest in scientific knowledge and an interest in finding ways to use practical knowledge to broaden the economy and create more wealth. Additionally, during this period the British state intervened in economic processes through taxation, welfare, and regulating labor as well as increasing private, corporate, and governmental interest in gathering information about the nation and the world.

Copyright and Cartography was awarded the 2023 Law and Society Association of Australia and New Zealand (LSAANZ) award for a published scholarly book/monograph.

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