

“yawning Fares” trace their routes. Finally, after offering reasons for Slessor’s choice of “Guildford” out of all the place-names along the roads through England and Wales, and proposing literary inspirations for “Post-roads,” the paper returns to Slessor’s hero/artist.

KEYWORDS: Kenneth Slessor (1901–1971); *Cuckooz Contrey* (1932); *The Atlas* sequence (ca. 1930); “Post-roads”; poetry—twentieth-century; poetry—Australian; poetry and maps; cartography—seventeenth-century; John Ogilby (1600–1676)

INTRODUCTION

This is the third article in *Cartographic Perspectives* to focus on *The Atlas* (ca. 1930). In *CP* 70, my “Introduction to Maps and Mapping in Kenneth Slessor’s Poetic Sequence *The Atlas*” presented the background for this first extended analysis, in several parts, of that five-poem sequence (Haft 2011). Beginning with a brief biography of Slessor as poet, journalist, and man about Sydney, it surveyed his third solo collection, *Cuckooz Contrey* (1932), before turning to *The Atlas*, which both opened and debuted in that collection. Examining the notebook in which he drafted all five poems (NLA MS 3020/19/11) revealed the enormous effort that Slessor—then at the height of his artistry and productivity—lavished on *The Atlas* and on mastering the period in which it is set. Not only does the sequence encompass nearly half of the 282 pages in that “National Treasure” (Elizabeth Caplice, e-mail to author: May 28, 2010), but, as the notebook makes clear, Slessor considered naming his entire collection *The Atlas* (September 13, -s242²), before eventually choosing the catchier title *Cuckooz Contrey*. A review of his corpus, furthermore, showed that the sequence uniquely combines interests and strategies apparent in Slessor’s earlier and later poems, including his fascination with the cartography of exotic places and bygone eras, as well as his emphasis on the arts and the use of illustrations to heighten his poetry’s allure. And I tracked down *Old Maps of the World* (Francis Edwards 1929), the rare and hitherto elusive catalogue to which Slessor refers in his notes on *The Atlas*. What that first article and the remaining parts of my study attempt to prove is that the relationship between that ephemeral catalogue and *The Atlas* is far more profound and far-reaching than anyone might have anticipated.

Next came Part I, “Who’s ‘The King of Cuckooz?’” Published in *CP* 71 (Haft 2012), it dealt with three related documents—each replete with narratives of power, wealth, and desire: “The King of Cuckooz,” the first poem of *The Atlas*; Robert Norton’s 1620 *Platt of Argier*, whose title Slessor used to begin his poem; and *Old Maps of the World*, which advertised and described Norton’s manuscript map (Francis Edwards 1929, 105–106). By weaving together some curious strands of literature, cartography, geography, and history, “Who’s ‘The King of Cuckooz?’” offered new insights into Slessor’s use of cartographic sources in constructing the poem.

“Post-roads,” the second poem of *The Atlas* sequence and of *Cuckooz Contrey* generally, is the subject of this present essay. As was the case in “The King of

The notebook in which he drafted all five poems revealed the enormous effort that Slessor—then at the height of his artistry and productivity—lavished on The Atlas and on mastering the period in which it is set.

Cuckooz,” Slessor found his poem’s title and epigraph while perusing *Old Maps of the World*, and once again the epigraph he chose is also the title of a work by a seventeenth-century British surveyor/cartographer featured in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. But the similarities end there. Robert Norton (d. 1635) was a gunner and artillery expert; his plan of Algiers, a one-of-a-kind surveillance map produced during a military operation. John Ogilby (1600–1676), a “renaissance” man and acclaimed cartographer, was also a prolific publisher of classical translations, maps, and atlases. Norton’s manuscript map is a priceless treasure housed in the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, England, whereas Ogilby’s posthumous *Traveller’s Guide* (1699, 1712), chosen by Slessor as the epigraph for “Post-roads,” was an inexpensive pocket-guidebook based on his most famous atlas, *Britannia* (1675). The *Platt of Argier* is set on the Barbary Coast amidst pirates and mysterious kings in 1620; *The Traveller’s Guide* directs passengers in coaches and on horseback along the roads of England and Wales at the end of that century. In “The King of Cuckooz,” the narrator addresses his beloved by poem or letter during the British expedition to Algiers, or else face-to-face shortly thereafter. In “Post-roads,” Slessor alternates not only between his own era and Ogilby’s, but also between the living and the dead. What makes “Post-roads” so fascinating is that it picks up on the nineteenth-century trope that mortals have no chart of heaven—think of Emily Dickinson’s “I never saw a moor,” Walt Whitman’s “Darest Thou Now O Soul,” or Edmund Clarence Stedman’s “The Discoverer.” Slessor presents his “tireless ghost of *Ogilby*” as possessing both the energy and the skill to make one.

KENNETH SLESSOR’S “POST-ROADS”

Let’s begin with the poem itself:³

The Atlas, 2: “Post-roads” (ca. 1930)

“The Traveller’s Guide, or a Most Exact Description of the Roads of England; being Mr. Ogilby’s Actual Survey and Mensuration by the Wheel, &c.”

Post-roads that clapped with tympan heels
Of tilburies and whiskys rapidly spanking,
Where’s now the tireless ghost of *Ogilby*?
Post-roads
That buoyed the rich and plunging springs
Of coaches vaster than Escurials,
Where now does *Ogilby* propel that Wheel,
What milestones does he pause to reprimand,
In what unmapped savanna of dumb shades?

Ye know not—ye are silent—brutish ducts
Numbed by the bastinadoes of iron boots,
Three hundred years asnore. Do you forget
The phaetons and fiacres, flys and breaks,

The world of dead men staring out of glass
That drummed upon your bones? Do you forget
Those nostrils oozing smoke, those floating tails,
Those criniers whipped with air?

And kidnapped lights,
Floats of rubbed yellow towed from window-panes,
Rushing their lozenges through headlong stones;
And smells of hackneys, mohair sour with damp,
Leather and slopped madeira, partridge-pies
Long-buried under floors; and yawning Fares
With bumping flap-dark spatulas of cards—
“Knaves take the ten ... oh, God, I wish that it,
I wish that it was Guildford”...

Ogilby
Did not forget, could not escape such ecstasies,
Even in the monasteries of mensuration,
Could not forget the roads that he had gone
In fog and shining air. Each line was joy,
Each computation a beatitude,
A diagram of Ogilby's eye and ear
With soundings for the nose. Wherefore I think,

Wherefore I think some English gentleman,
Some learned doctor of the steak-houses,
Ending late dinner, having strolled outside
To quell the frivolous hawthorn, may behold
There in the moonshine, rolling up an hill,
Steered by no fleshly hand, with spokes of light,
The *Wheel*—*John Ogilby's Wheel*—the *WHEEL* hiss by,
Measuring mileposts of eternity.

The seventeenth-century word “Post-roads” refers to the roads or postal routes on which travelers and mail used to be conveyed by horse and coach from one station or inn to another prior to the coming of the railroad. Addressing the post-roads directly, Slessor's I-narrator attempts to bring them to life after “three hundred years asnore” so that they too can reminisce about an age when traveling by carriage was as familiar as taking a train or driving a car today, though burdened with more discomfort. Unlike the short, bouncy stanzas of “The King of Cuckooz,” “Post-roads” emulates its subject with its five dense stanzas of eight or nine long enjambed lines; of consonant sounds and staccato rhythms, relieved by the dactylic gallop of horses and Ogilby's long-short-short name. Winding his way through past and present is the “tireless ghost” of British surveyor/cartographer/publisher John Ogilby, whose seductive strip maps not only popularized travel along the roads of England and Wales but also inspired other cartographers to depict roads on large-scale maps (Tooley et al. 1999–2004, 3:345–346). As if Ogilby were not prominent enough, Slessor has turned him into the ecstatic antithesis of Sisyphus and Ixion, two of the most notorious sinners in classical mythology. Sisyphus's talent at outwitting

death ultimately condemned him to Tartarus/Hell and to “rolling” an enormous boulder “up a hill” only to watch it roll back down again (*Odyssey* 11.593), whereas Ogilby’s “Mensuration by the Wheel” is “a beatitude,” a state of eternal bliss. For repeatedly violating the sanctity of guest-friendship, Ixion was bound forever to a fiery wheel (Pindar’s *Pythian Odes* 2.21–48), while Slessor’s Ogilby uses his wheel “with spokes of light” to survey the “unmapped savanna of dumb shades.” If the poem dwells on punishment at all, it’s the “brutish” post-roads whose bones have been “numbed” by heavy boots and “drummed upon” by carriages, or the “frivolous hawthorn” “quelled” by a gentleman relieving himself after dinner.⁴

Slessor completed “Post-roads” immediately after “The King of Cuckooz” (March 6, -s65, to April 5, -s90). Yet “Post-roads” did not begin as the second poem of *The Atlas*. According to the entry dated “March 18” in his poetry journal, Slessor originally intended it to be fourth (-s76; see March 30, -s84):

- (1) ✓ The King of Cuckooz Contrey
- (2) ✓ Dutch Map (Blaeu)
- (3) Lost Lands Mermaids
- (4) ✓ Post Roads of Europe
- (5) ... Seafight

As the checks beside the “March 18” and “April 3” (-s88) entries make clear, Slessor’s difficulty with the third poem—which he alternately called “Lost Lands” or “Mermaids” until nearly half-way through his manuscript drafts⁵—resulted in “Mermaids” coming fourth. That “Post-roads” became second, in the end, had less to do with its completion date than with Slessor’s belated decision to turn “Dutch Seacoast” into the central poem of *The Atlas*.

Slessor composed “Post-roads” almost as quickly as his “rapidly spanking” vehicles convey their “Fares”—the paying passengers on hired coaches. The drafts of the poem commence on “April 5” (-s90), proceed sequentially through “April 21” (-s100, with the misplaced insertion MS 3020/19/4, -s128 and -s129, belonging to the April 15–17 entries, -s97 to -s98), and then skip ahead to a typed insertion between “May 2” and “May 3” (-s107). On that typed page, all of the third stanza and most of the fifth, except for the final line, appear in their published form; and in the fifth stanza, Slessor proves his bonafides as a poet and life-long drinker by repeating himself (“Wherefore I think,/ Wherefore I think . . .”), then penciling in “moonshine” for “moonlight” and “quell” for “smell” in the felicitous phrase “quell the frivolous hawthorn.” The first stanza gave Slessor the most difficulty: nine of fourteen journal entries on “Post-roads” are attempts to map out the poem by means of this initial stanza (-s90 to -s96, -s128 to -s129). Slessor discarded several experiments, including the nearly illegible opening lines of his “April 5” entry (-s90) and his attempts to find rhymes for “past” (April 9, -s93). References to “footmen” or “grooms” (April 7, -s92) disappeared as being too reminiscent of his earlier poem “Next Turn,” in which a carriage—along with its footmen, coachman, and post-boys—are

poised ominously to convey us from life's theater to our final destination (Slessor and Lindsay 1926, 33; Slessor, Haskell, and Dutton 1994, 61–62, 354–355; see Jaffa 1971, 60). Originally, Slessor imagined “post-roads like [a] jolly skeleton dancing over green country” (April 5, -s90, and April 7, -s92). However, by the time he decided to address the post-roads as “brutish ducts” (April 15, -s97), another late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century word meaning “passages leading in any direction” (*OED* [1933] 1971, 1:702, 3),⁶ that concrete image had replaced the more abstract addressee “World of lost movement that a map reveals,” “World of lost carriages . . . and wheels,” and “Lost ages when the post-roads clapped with heels” (April 11, -s95).

“TILBURIES AND WHISKEYS RAPIDLY SPANKING”

From the start, Slessor concentrated on the colorful names of the horse-drawn coaches that were still traversing the roads during his youth, not only in Australia (Foster 2011) but also in England, where he lived from 1908 to 1910 with his parents (Slessor 1970, 253). At the bottom of his “April 5” entry (-s90), he listed no fewer than eighteen of these names:

<u>carriages</u>	
berlin	phaeton
break	postchaise
britzka	random
cabriolet	fly
calash	sociable
chaise	stage
clarence	tilbury
fiacre	whiskies
mail-phaeton	whiskey

From the start, Slessor concentrated on the colorful names of the horse-drawn coaches that were still traversing the roads during his youth.

After repeated attempts to use more, including “barouches” (April 5, -s90) and “Peterloo’s carriage” (*ibid.*, and April 7, -s92), Slessor settled on six:

break: “a large wagonette” (*OED*, s.v., “break,” *sb.*² 2); i.e., a large “four-wheeled carriage, made open or with a removable cover and furnished with a seat or bench on each side facing inwards and with one or two seats arranged crosswise in front” (*OED*, s.v., “wagonette”)

fiacre: “a small four-wheel hackney coach for hire, a hackney coach, a French cab” (*OED*, s.v., “fiacre”)

phaeton: “a species of four-wheeled open carriage, of light construction; usually drawn by a pair of horses, and with one or (now generally) two seats facing forward” (*OED*, s.v. “phaeton,” 2)

fly: “a quick-travelling carriage” (*OED*, s.v., “fly,” *sb.*² II.3)

tilbury: “a light open two-wheeled carriage, fashionable in the first half of the 19th century” (*OED*, s.v. “tilbury,” 1)

whiskies [see below]

whiskey: “a kind of light two-wheeled one-horse carriage, used in England and America in the late 18th and early 19th c.” (*OED*, s.v., “whisky, whiskey,” sb.²)

Slessor enjoyed collecting names like these for his poetry. Among his papers at the National Library of Australia are small address books in which he’d

catalogued the names of women and men, birds, cigarettes, whiskies, flowers, and perfumes—all listed under subject titles (NLA MS 3020 2/1). Slessor doesn’t acknowledge his sources, but Sir Walter Gilbey’s *Early Carriages and Roads* (1903), listed as item 825 in the Francis Edwards catalogue *Old Maps of the World* (Francis Edwards 1929, 139), supplies most of these names. G.A. Thrupp’s 1877 *History of Coaches* is so thorough that it underlies the entry “carriages” in the 11th edition of *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1910–1911, 5:401–406). And the 1875 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* contains a list similar to Slessor’s: its table includes not only most of the names he mentions but also alternative names as well as the “countries of origin” for the so-called “modern” carriages (9th edition, 5:136, s.v., “carriages”). If Slessor didn’t know these names from memory, he may have begun by collecting them from a general reference work, then explored more detailed studies like Thrupp’s or Gilbey’s (see also Gilbey 1905). Not



HACKNEY COACHES IN LONDON, 1637.

Figure 1. “Hackney Coaches in London, 1637.” From Sir Walter Gilbey’s *Early Carriages and Roads* (London: Vinton & Co. 1903, page 29).

According to Gilbey, the hackney coach—a public carriage for hire—came into being in 1605, though the first stand wasn’t established until 1634 (27).

on his list are two well-known terms that also appear in his poem: “hackneys” (“carriage[s] kept for hire” or “horse[s] kept for hire”: *OED*, s.v. “hackney,” I.5 and I.2, respectively) (Figure 1), and “coaches” (“large [en]close[d] carriage[s] with four wheels, with seats inside, and several outside, used for public conveyance of passengers; see “stage-coach”: *OED*, s.v., “coach,” 1a). Since the earliest definition of “coach” in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is “a large kind of carriage: in the 16th and 17th centuries, usually a state carriage of royalty or people of quality” (*ibid.*), Slessor whimsically compared such coaches with the Escorial (i.e., Escorial), the chief palace of the Spanish monarchs near Madrid (*OED*, s.v., “escorialize”). “Tilburys” and “whiskys,” both of which are featured on the list and in “Post-roads,” turn out to be anachronistic in a poem focusing

on the seventeenth century. However attentive Slessor was to the period in which he set his poem, historical accuracy often took back seat to considerations of rhythm, rhyme, sound, or association.

Despite their importance to “Post-roads,” however, Slessor was looking for something more than old-fashioned coaches and carriages. Horses clearly didn’t do the trick, since he only alludes to them in “smells of hackneys” and in his gorgeous lines “Do you forget/ Those nostrils oozing smoke, those floating tails,/ Those criniers whipped with air?”⁷ He also avoids referring directly to carriage wheels, although “tympan” in “tympan heels” brings to mind “drum-shaped wheels” as much as the “drum-like” sounds of horses on the post-roads (*OED*, s.v., “tympan,” 6 and 1, respectively). After pages of crossed-out attempts, including the evocative “this geography of wheels” (April 10, -s94), Slessor wrote, “Where’s now the ghost of Ogilby?” (April 13, -s96), thus introducing the character who ties his poem and my study together.

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OLD MAPS OF THE WORLD

Slessor couldn’t get to Ogilby, however, until he solved the problem of the poem’s epigraph. Slessor found it, as usual, in the 1929 Francis Edwards catalogue *Old Maps of the World*, this time in item 836, “OGILBY (JOHN), *Traveller’s Guide*” (p. 140). But unlike Robert Norton, whom he uncovered before beginning “The King of Cuckooz” (Haft 2012, 11–15), Ogilby came to Slessor’s attention only after he’d begun “Post-roads.”

Three entries—items 140, 146, and 836—are crucial to reconstructing Slessor’s discovery of his epigraph. The title “Post-roads,” it turns out, doesn’t derive from the Ogilby entry at all but from item 140, a half-page entry devoted to the maps in the *Atlas Universel* (1757) by Gilles and Didier Robert de Vaugondy (Francis Edwards 1929, 60). The Francis Edwards description of item 140 concludes with the words: “five maps at the end showing the *post-roads in Europe*” (*ibid.*: emphasis mine). Slessor shows his awareness of item 140 when he opens his journal entry of “March 30” (-s84) with the phrases “The Atlas” and “(4) Post-Roads of Europe,” then refers to the catalogue item by the authors, title, and item number of the *Atlas Universel*. Slessor also identifies Gilles and Didier Robert de Vaugondy as “Robert and Vaugondy,” a mistake found in the catalogue’s item 140. On the same page of his journal (March 30, -s84), Slessor underlines the words:

(146)—“The Shires of England and Wales described by Christopher Saxton being the Best and Original Mapps with many Additions and Corrections viz. ye Hundds, Roads, &c., by Philip Lea” . . . London, 1690.

A glance at item 146 in the catalogue reveals the Saxton atlas and all the details that Slessor lists in his journal (Francis Edwards 1929, 63). But the surprise is not that Slessor faithfully copied items 140 and 146 from the Francis Edwards catalogue: it’s the fact that the phrases “post-roads of Europe” and “Mappes, with ye Hundds, Roades, etc” [*sic*] also appear as early as the fourth page of his

PART III
ROAD BOOKS

CARY (J.)	
819	Survey of the High Roads from London to Hampton Court, Windsor, Tring, Hertford, Rochester, Dorking, &c., &c. (scale 1 in. to a mile). Number of Inns on each Separate Route, also the different Turnpike Gates, &c., <i>80 very nicely coloured maps of the roads</i> , sq. 8vo, <i>hf. calf</i> , 1790. £1 10s
820	Actual Survey of the Country Fifteen Miles round London, scale 1 in. to a mile, <i>51 coloured maps</i> , sm. 8vo, <i>calf</i> , 1811. 7s
821	New Itinerary; or an Accurate Delineation of the Great Roads . . . throughout England and Wales, with many of the principal Roads in Scotland, &c., Second Ed., with improvements, <i>2 maps</i> , 8vo, <i>half calf</i> , 1802. 8s
822	Seventh Edition, with Improvements, 8vo, <i>morocco</i> , 1817. 12s
823	Tenth Edition, 8vo, <i>calf (joint broken)</i> , 1826. 5s
824	Traveller's Companion, or, a Delineation of the Turnpike Roads of England and Wales, <i>42 coloured maps, bound with Cary's New Itinerary</i> , 11th Ed., <i>6 col. maps</i> , 8vo, <i>calf</i> , 1828. 14s
825	GILBEY (SIR W.) Early Carriages and Roads, <i>illustrs. (extra matter inserted)</i> , 8vo, <i>cl.</i> , 1903. 14s
826	KEARSLEYS' Stranger's Guide, or Companion through London and Westminster, and the Country Round (within 14 Miles), <i>2 maps</i> , sm. 8vo, <i>boards, uncut</i> [c. 1795]. 8s
827	KITCHEN (T.) Traveller's Guide through England and Wales, <i>map</i> , sm. 4to, <i>orig. half binding</i> , 1783. 12s
828	LUCKOMBE (P.) England's Gazetteer, <i>map</i> , 3 vols. in 1, <i>thk.</i> 12mo, <i>hf. calf</i> , 1790. 6s
OGILBY (JOHN)	
829	Britannia . . . or an Illustration of the Kingdom of England and Dominion of Wales; By a Geographical and Historical Description of the Principal Roads thereof, . . . <i>102 copperplate maps and elaborate frontispiece</i> , folio, <i>calf</i> , <i>Printed by the Author</i> , 1675. £9
An exceptionally fine and tall copy of the second edition, on large and thick paper, in a contemporary binding in excellent state.	

139

Figure 2. The first of the three pages comprising Part III, "Road Books," in the 1929 Francis Edwards catalogue *Old Maps of the World, or Ancient Geography; a Catalogue of Atlases & Maps of All Parts of the World from XV Century to Present Day* (London: F. Edwards Ltd., page 139). The final entry on the page describes "an exceptionally fine and tall copy" of John Ogilby's celebrated 1675 *Britannia* (item 829), and is the first of eight items devoted to Ogilby's road maps and guides. The third of four catalogues in the short-lived "new series" produced in 1929, *Old Maps of the World* and its companion booklets were larger and far better illustrated than the more than 500 Francis Edwards catalogues preceding it. Courtesy of the New York Public Library and of Francis Edwards Ltd.

Atlas drafts ("Atlas 4": February 28, -s61). On that occasion Slessor identified neither the catalogue nor its item numbers. Yet the phrases prove that he'd come across the title of his second poem even before that of his first poem ("Atlas 5": March 2, -s62). All that remained was for him to shorten to "Post-roads" (April 3, -s88) his preliminary title "Post-roads of Europe" (February 28, -s61; March 18, -s76; March 30, -s84). In the end, however, Slessor used neither item 140 nor item 146 as the epigraph of "Post-roads." "Atlas Universel" was too brief and abstract, while the suitably quaint and garrulous title of Philip Lea's edition of Saxton's maps makes no reference to "post-roads."

So how *did* Slessor find Ogilby? The catalogue's description of item 146 informs the reader that "the roads of Ogilby and Seller were added" to the 1690 edition of Philip Lea's maps (Francis Edwards 1929, 63). When Slessor went looking for these road maps, he found none by Seller in the "Road Books" part of the catalogue, but he did find more than a page devoted to John Ogilby (Part III, 139–140) (Figure 2). Since "Road Books" occupies only three pages, Slessor read on. At the beginning of the catalogue, the list of important dates in the history of cartography ("Data," 6–7) told him that Saxton's 1597 *Atlas* was "the first atlas of English *county* maps," while Ogilby's [*sic*] 1675 "Book of English *Roads* [was] the first of *its kind*" (7: emphasis mine). Investigating further, he might have discovered that Ogilby's 1675 "Book of English Roads"—more famously known as *Britannia*—contained a three-page section titled "Of the Post-Roads of England" (Ogilby 1675, after "Preface": see Chubb, Skells, and Beharrell [1927] 1966, 85). And that this section of *Britannia* catalogues the major roads out of London and several secondary roads, along with their miles and stages.

Yet here again, Slessor did not choose an edition of Ogilby's *Britannia* as the epigraph for "Post-roads," even though the catalogue advertises three copies of that monumental and hugely successful atlas (items 829–831: Francis Edwards 1929, 139–140). Instead, he selected one of the "portable" editions listed in *Old Maps of the World* (items 832–836)—specifically, Ogilby's "*Traveller's Guide, or a most Exact Description of the Roads of England*" (Figure 3). As soon as Slessor laid eyes on item 836, he interrupted his composition of "Post-roads" to write "MAP" in capital letters in his journal. Below that, he copied "No.836," the entire title, and the (circled) date "1712" supplied by the catalogue (April 7, -s92: bottom left). In the subtitle of *Traveller's Guide*, "*being Mr. Ogilby's Actual Survey and Mensuration by the Wheel*," Slessor had found the concrete image that begins and ends his poem—"Ogilby's *Wheel*."

In the little that has been written about “Post-roads,” John Ogilby takes center stage. Slessor’s friend and fellow poet/editor Douglas Stewart reprinted the first four poems of *The Atlas* in his important anthology *Modern Australian Verse* (Stewart 1964, 3–9), but he misidentified Ogilby as “an eccentric scientist” who “measured England in the *eighteenth* century ‘by the wheel’” (Stewart 1969, 158; Stewart 1977, 74: emphasis mine). The anonymous writer who reviewed *Cuckooz Contrey* for the *Sydney Morning Herald* didn’t have much more to add: before quoting the poem’s first stanza, he identified Ogilby only as “a pioneer in the methods of measuring distance by wheel, elaborated in the modern cyclometer and speedometer” (November 12, 1932, p. 8: NLA MS 3020/8/20). After defining the unusual words in “Post-roads,” Haskell and Dutton supplemented their annotated edition of Slessor’s *Collected Poetry* with a brief biographical reference to Ogilby, though their contribution fails to mention *Britannia*, the title by which his 1675 atlas is best known (Slessor, Haskell, and Dutton 1994, 359):

‘Mr. Ogilby’ is John Ogilby (1600–76). English author and printer who published many geographical works, including ‘An Illustration of the Kingdom of England and Dominion of Wales, by a Geographical and Historical Description of the principal Roads thereof’ (1675).

Slessor himself provided no “Author’s Notes” for “Post-roads” at the end of *Cuckooz Contrey*, despite the fact that he appended notes to *The Atlas* as a whole and to every other poem of the sequence (Slessor 1932, 75). Yet however absent, abbreviated, or misleading these identifications may be, I shall argue that “Post-roads” itself demonstrates that Slessor knew enough about the surveyor/cartographer of the poem’s epigraph not only to name *and* describe Ogilby in the body of the poem, but also to feature him as the poem’s dominant character. Compare “Post-roads” to “Dutch Seacoast,” for instance, or to “The King of Cuckooz.” The third poem of the sequence describes the Joan Blaeu of its epigraph only as “the great cartographer” (see Haft, forthcoming); while the narrator of “The King of Cuckooz” assumes Norton’s (highly fictionalized) persona without ever naming him(self) (Haft 2012, 8–9, 26–28). As for the two remaining poems of *The Atlas*, both “Mermaids” and “The Seafight” focus on the map image, but ignore the cartographer entirely.

FRANCIS EDWARDS LIMITED · Road Books	
830	Another Copy, <i>wanting frontispiece, but with all the maps</i> , folio, old calf (rebacked), 1675. £5
831	The Fourth Edition, <i>maps</i> , Reissue of the original plates, with 48 pages of text, folio, old calf, 1698. £5
832	Owen and Bowen. <i>Britannia Depicta or Ogilby Improved</i> , being a correct Copy of Mr. Ogilby's Actual Survey . . . of Roads in England and Wales, 273 pp. of maps, 8vo, orig. calf (repaired) Tho. Bowles . . . and Em. Bowen near ye King of Spain in S. Katherine, 1720. £10
First Issue of the First 8vo Edition of Ogilby's Roads. Only two other copies known according to Chubb, viz. Sir George Fordham's and Dr. Penfold's. It is stamped on the upper cover of the binding with the name of a previous owner, Edward Walsh. An extremely popular work, four editions were issued in as many years and it continued to be printed up to 1764.	
833	Fourth Edition, 273 pp. of maps, 8vo, old calf, rebacked, Printed and Sold by T. Bowles, 1736. £1 10s
This is the 5th issue of the Fourth Edition, the maps the same as in previous editions, but extra wording added to a few titles and preliminary matter increased.	
834	Roads through England, or Ogilby's Survey, revised, improved, and reduced to a portable size by John Senex, oblong 8vo, original sheep wrapper, Paris, Le Rouge, 1759. £1
Title in French and English (rubbed), French text and alphabetical list of towns, and 101 plates.	
835	Another [English] Edition, 101 copperplate maps, London, J. Bowles, oblong 8vo, leather wrapper, Title browned but maps clean, 1762. £1 5s
836	Traveller's Guide, or a most Exact Description of the Roads of England: being Mr. Ogilby's Actual Survey and Mensuration by the Wheel, &c., folding map, 8vo, calf, [1712]. £1 5s
837	OGILBY (DAVID) A General Itinerary of England and Wales, with part of Scotland, containing all the Direct, and Principal Cross Roads, . . . folding map, 8vo., hf. calf, 1804. 6s
838	OWEN'S New Book of Roads, or a Description of the Roads of Great Britain, map, 3rd Ed., Corrected, sm. 8vo, original sheep, 1782. 7s
PATERSON (D.)	
839	Travelling Dictionary . . . distance of all the Principal cities . . . from each other, 8vo, boards, 1797. 6s
840	New and Accurate description of all the Direct and Principal Cross Roads, map, 8vo, hf. mor., 1799. 8s
841	Thirteenth Edition, map, 8vo, contemporary straight grain red morocco, gilt extra, 1803. 15s
842	Another Copy, half calf. 6s
843	Eighteenth (and Best) Edition, 9 new maps or plans, by Edw. Mogg, 8vo, hf. vellum [N.D.]. 15s

Figure 3. The second of the three pages comprising Part III, “Road Books,” in the 1929 Francis Edwards catalogue *Old Maps of the World* (London: F. Edwards Ltd., page 140). Items 830–836 are devoted to John Ogilby’s road maps and guides. Item 831 advertises the 1698 edition of the *Britannia*; while item 836 features the “Traveller’s Guide . . .,” whose title Slessor chose as the epigraph for “Post-roads.” Courtesy of the New York Public Library and of Francis Edwards Ltd.

Slessor would have read about Ogilby in the famous 1660–1669 memoirs of Samuel Pepys (1633–1703: see Pepys, Latham, and Matthews 1970).⁸ A contemporary of Ogilby, Pepys described not only the art of coach-building in some detail (*Encyclopedia Britannica* 1911, 5:403, s.v., “carriages”), but also his embarrassment at being seen in hackneys (Pepys’s April 18, 1664 entry; see Thrupp [1877] 1969, 48, 103, 105; Gilbey 1903, 43–54). Slessor took from Pepys details for two other *Cuckooz Contrey* poems, both of which bracket *The Atlas* in composition: namely, the name and brief characterization of the eponymous hero of “Captain Dobbin” (April 1929: Slessor, Haskell, and Dutton 1994, 77–82, 362–364; see Pepys’s July 11, 1665 entry, and Haft 2011, 9, 23–24, 31, 33–34) as well as the epigraph and certain lines of “The Country Ride” (November 1930: Slessor, Haskell, and Dutton 1994, 95–96, 378–379; see Pepys’s April 11, 1661 entry).

To supplement Pepys’s references, Slessor could rely upon the *Dictionary of National Biography* for its detailed life of Ogilby (Goodwin 1921, 14:908–911). Whether or not Slessor saw Ogilby’s original works, he may have had access to facsimile editions and comprehensive carto-bibliographies (see Harley 1970, xxv–xxvi) like T. Fairman Ordish’s *Roads out of London; being photographic reprints extracted from Ogilby’s “Britannia,” 1675, with so much of his text as relates to them* (Ogilby and Ordish 1911); or Sir Herbert George Fordham’s *John Ogilby (1600–1676), his Britannia, and the British Itineraries of the Eighteenth Century* (Fordham 1925); or Thomas Chubb’s *Printed Maps in the Atlases of Great Britain and Ireland: a Bibliography, 1579–1870* (Chubb, Skells, and Beharrell [1927] 1966). In fact, the Francis Edwards catalogue cites “Chubb’s *Atlases of Great Britain* . . . and Sir George Fordham’s Works” as being among the “few excellent books” published on the history of cartography (1929, 5). And Chubb himself, in his extensive “Biographical Notes” (417–457), recommends that the reader searching for more information on Ogilby consult the *Dictionary of National Biography* and the original printing of Fordham’s monograph on Ogilby (444; Fordham 1925). Moreover, the catalogue entry on Ogilby’s *Britannia* clearly derives from Chubb’s reference to the work’s “102 copper plates” and “elaborate frontispiece” (Francis Edwards 1929, 139; Chubb, Skells, and Beharrell [1927] 1966, 85), just as the catalogue’s omission of Fordham’s first name “Herbert” reflects its absence in Chubb’s bibliographical note on the “most varied career” of John Ogilby (444). Finally, Chubb’s description of *Britannia*’s layout is so clear that Slessor would know the order and content of each of its maps even without Ogilby’s atlas in hand (85–87).

Whatever Slessor read about Ogilby must have appealed to him, for the two men bore an uncanny resemblance to one another.

Whatever Slessor read about Ogilby must have appealed to him, for the two men bore an uncanny resemblance to one another. Like Slessor, Ogilby was born with the century and “gave way to fate” during his seventies (Anthony à Woods, quoted in Van Eerde 1976, 130). Both had Scottish ancestry: although little is known of his parents (Withers 2004, 41:566), Ogilby was born in Scotland and his portraits display its heraldic lion (see Aubrey and Clark 1898, 2:99; Van Eerde 1976, 13, 122, 179), while Slessor inherited his Scottish blood from his mother, Margaret McInnes (Dutton 1991, 4). Intensely visual and disciplined “in preparing and publicizing their work” (Van Eerde 1976, 103, 94), both men concentrated on poetry for decades: Ogilby’s beautifully illustrated translation of Homer’s *Iliad* won the admiration of Pope (Van Eerde 1976, 13; cf. Goodwin 1921, 14:911); while Slessor’s poetry reveals his penchant for painterly images

and works of art (Haft 2011, 15–22). But then “shutting up the Fountain of the Muses,” as Ogilby put it in the preface of his 1670 atlas *Africa*, both poets “left Clambering steep Pernassus [*sic*], and fell into the beaten way, and more frequented Paths of Prose” (Ogilby 1670, quoted in Harley 1970, vii). After 1948, Slessor didn’t publish a single new poem, though he edited books and periodicals, published a short story and miscellaneous works on Australian cities and wine, and continued to put out articles, leaders for newspapers, and reviews of books (Thomson 1986, 204–206). Despite being married, each spent much of his time with other professional men in London coffee houses or Sydney pubs (Van Eerde 1976, 126; Dutton 1991, 129–131; Caesar 1995, 61). Ogilby and Slessor not only loved maps but created enduring works of cartographic literature in the form of atlases or map-obsessed poems (see Haft 2011, 22–27). And both were wildly successful in more than one career: Slessor was a celebrated journalist as well as poet (1920–1971: *ibid.*, 8; see Dutton 1991); while Ogilby embarked on a startling number of occupations, culminating in the surveying and cartographic projects he undertook in his late-sixties. In fact, the enthusiasm, focus, and break-neck productivity exhibited by Slessor’s “tireless ghost of Ogilby” pales before the qualities Ogilby exhibited in his own improbable life, not the least of which was the “untiring energy” that his contemporaries repeatedly extolled (Goodwin 1921, 14:909; Aubrey and Clark 1898, 2:103–104).

Though “from a gentleman’s family” (Aubrey and Clark 1898, 2:99), Ogilby became a dancer after paying his father’s debts. When a misstep lamed him, he taught dancing, built and managed a theater, and turned to soldiering (ca. 1620–1641: Withers 1921, 41:566). After the execution of his patron, the most senior minister of Charles I, Ogilby took up Latin at Cambridge (ca. 1645), then Greek (ca. 1654), and began translating and publishing the classics—Virgil’s poetry (1649), Aesop’s *Fables* (1651) and *Aesopics* (1668), Homer’s *Iliads* (1660) and *Odysseys* (1665) [*sic*]; as well as a two-volume Bible, which he produced and illustrated “with chorographical sculps” (1659/1660). Then came the Great Fire of September 2–5, 1666, memorialized in Pepys’s diary. After that fire destroyed the greater part of Ogilby’s plates and property, Brian Harley says that Ogilby was appointed “sworn viewer” to help reestablish property boundaries in the burned-out parts of London (1970, vii), while Margret Schuchard argues that Ogilby was never a sworn viewer but nevertheless received “permission to make an exact survey of the capital” as part of his management of “an ever increasing surveying business for the completion of his *Britannia* project” (Schuchard 1975, 18 and 17, respectively). Whatever the reason, Ogilby learned surveying from the professionals with whom he worked, and during his final decade threw himself into publishing geographical and cartographical works. He did so well that he became the “Cosmographer” of Charles II (1671: Van Eerde 1976, 130), who, as his king and new patron, was “genuinely excited by map and chart” (Barber 1997, 105). Though Ogilby’s great map of London was not published until shortly after his death (1676–1677: Fordham 1925, 159; Harley 1970, vii), he put out atlases on various parts of the world between 1669 and 1673 as part of his *English Atlas* (Skelton and Chubb 1970, 185): *Africa* (1670), *Atlas Japannensis* (1670), *America* (1670), *Atlas Chinensis* (1671), and *Asia* (1673).⁹

But his masterpiece and “the only original work of Ogilby’s geographical books” was *Britannia* (Ogilby 1675: Schuchard 1975, 82). Drawing on Ogilby’s surveys

Both men were wildly successful in more than one career: Slessor was a celebrated journalist as well as poet; while Ogilby embarked on a startling number of occupations, culminating in the surveying and cartographic projects he undertook in his late-sixties.

that were sponsored by Charles II in the early 1670s (Ogilby 1699 and Ogilby 1712 Preface, B1r; Fordham 1925, 157), it was the most accurate and detailed road atlas of its time. Here is how Catherine Delano-Smith and Roger Kain summarize his achievement (1999, 171):

Ogilby's choice of scale, one inch to one (statute) mile, proved so suitable for general use that it came to be adopted by later county map-makers, including, in due course, the Ordnance Survey. Approximately 7,500 miles (12,000 km) of road, surveyed consistently at 1,760 yards per [statute] mile, and 73 mail roads in England and Wales, are represented on 100 maps and described in 200 pages of written text.

Accolades abound. Alan MacEachren says, "John Ogilby must be credited, in large part, with popularization of strip maps for highway travel" (1986, 15–16). Ashley Baynton-Williams describes *Britannia* as "the first national road-atlas of any country in Western Europe" and "one of the two greatest English atlases published before the nineteenth century" (Baynton-Williams 2006; cf. Millea 2007). Katherine van Eerde exclaims that "in its comprehensiveness, its incorporation of new devices of computation and delineation, and its opulence of paper, design and decoration, [*Britannia*] immediately set a new standard for map-making in England" (1976, 137). Brian Harley adds: "it remains unchallenged as the greatest advance in the mapping of England between the sixteenth-century surveys of Christopher Saxton and the county surveys of the second half of the eighteenth century" (1970, xix). Pirated as soon as it came out, *Britannia* profoundly influenced road maps for well over a century and established Ogilby's lasting fame in cartographic history. *Britannia* became so popular and was reproduced so often that the Francis Edwards catalogue offers it at no more than £9 (item 829; item 830 at £5), a very appealing price for such a treasure. Especially as its advertised price to subscribers in 1672 was a whopping £4 to £5 (Schuchard 1975, 26; see 125).

BRITANNIA

*For the map-lover,
Britannia is a revelation.*

For the map-lover, *Britannia* is a revelation. Opening the atlas, the reader discovers an elaborate frontispiece (Figure 4) with two men, strip map in hand, emerging on horseback from a London city gate (Schuchard 1975, 81) over which flies the Royal Standard. As they head along a road into the countryside, everything around them bustles with activity. A horse-drawn carriage has already crossed a bridge ahead and is beginning the trek uphill. To their right, the master surveyor on horseback instructs two men on foot who are pushing a perambulator or measuring wheel—Ogilby's "Wheel Dimensurator" (Preface to *Britannia*, in Harley 1970, xv)—to ascertain the length of a crossroad. In the foreground, four men consult a map titled "The Continuation of the Road" (left). Nearby, four surveyors and cartographers converse around a table cluttered with the tools of their trade, including a terrestrial globe turned to Africa (right)—a subtle allusion, perhaps, to Ogilby's earlier atlas. Above is a banner announcing the title of the atlas and its promise to be the first volume

of a series. At the very top flutter three putti, each holding one of Ogilby's maps: a road map (London to Barwick, left); a city map (London, middle); and a county map (Yorkshire, right).

Inside *Britannia*, the reader is greeted with over one hundred double-leaf maps. Each contains six or seven vertically aligned and ribbon-like strips, each of which is two-and-a-half inches wide (Chubb, Skells, and Beharrell [1927] 1966, 85) and covers approximately seventy miles (Baynton-Williams 2006). These strips could be cut out of *Britannia* or published separately, like those carried by the man on horseback or by the angel in the upper-left of the frontispiece (Harley 1970, xviii; Van Eerde 1976, 137). However presented, each map is read from bottom-left to top-right: the road named in its title cartouche (top-center) unwinds county-by-county past landmarks—at measured intervals and with direction changes indicated by compass roses—towards its final destination. So clear is Ogilby's presentation that “the reader can follow the road on paper as if physically riding along it” (Delano-Smith and Kain 1999, 170).

Besides the frontispiece, the most discussed and reproduced of Ogilby's attractive maps tend to be those with title cartouches illustrating the tools that made the national survey and Ogilby's maps possible (see Ogilby 1675 and Ogilby [1675] 1970, plates 1, 21, 80, 100; Hyde 1980, 3): namely, the theodolite or “surveyor's compass” used for determining the angles when roads change direction (Harley 1970, xv); and the wheel, complete with its dial showing the distances measured in ten-mile revolutions (Ogilby 1675, Preface, C1r; reproduced in Bricker and Tooley 1968, 36; Ogilby 1675 and Ogilby [1675] 1970; Baynton-Williams 2006). There is also the headpiece on Ogilby's dedication to Charles II, which shows two putti flanking the British coat-of-arms: one cherub carries both a theodolite and a map of England and Wales; the other rolls the wheel and displays a road map (reproduced in Ogilby [1675] 1970; Schuchard 1973, 76; Schuchard 1975, 81; Baynton-Williams 2006).

In “Post-roads” Slessor has transformed graphic representations into poetic images. Most



Figure 4. Frontispiece of John Ogilby's *Britannia* (London, 1675). Amidst the bustle of this English scene, a master surveyor (on horseback) instructs two others (on foot) as they push the perambulator or measuring wheel—Ogilby's “Wheel Dimensurator”—to ascertain the length of a crossroad (lower right). Above all, three putti with banners advertise the atlas and its maps. Although Ogilby's name is nowhere to be found, two names do appear on the bottom: Francis Barlow, who drew the frontispiece (“Fran. Barlow inv.”); and Wenceslaus Hollar (1607–1677), one of London's leading engravers, who engraved it (“W. Hollar fecit 1675”).

Measuring 35.5 x 20.3 centimeters (14 x 8 5/6 inches), the frontispiece is widely reproduced (e.g., Chubb, Skells, and Beharrell [1927] 1966, opposite p. 84; Schuchard 1973, 83; Hyde 1980, 3; Taylor 1998, 58; Baynton-Williams 2006), and a zoomable image is available online from the Map Collection of Hampshire County Council Museums Service, from which this illustration derives (Norgate and Norgate 1996–2006a). Courtesy of Jean and Martin Norgate.



Figure 5. Portrait of Ogilby (“Johannes Ogilvius”) engraved by the elder William Faithorne (“Guil. Faithorne sculp.”: 1616–1691) after a painting by Sir Peter Lely (“P. Lilly pinxit”). Though not in *Britannia*, this portrait graced the 1654 *Works of Publius Virgilius Maro*, translated, adorned with Sculptures, and illustrated with Annotations by John Ogilby (London, Printed by Thomas Warren for the author, and are to be had at his House in King’s-Head Court in Shoe-lane). Like other portraits of the future cartographer, Faithorne’s reveals Ogilby’s prominent nose. Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London.

obvious is how the poem echoes *Britannia*’s frontispiece with its depiction of a journey, by horseback and carriage, along a well-traveled road into the countryside. Just as “T.B. Macaulay in his famous *History of England* [1849–1861] . . . used Ogilby’s maps to help visualize the countryside” of 1685 (Harley 1970, xx), Slessor has animated Ogilby’s frontispiece by investing the visual scene with other sensual images, most of them rooted in seventeenth-century vocabulary. What began in his poetry journal as explicit and general—“a diagram of senses, hearing, sound and . . .” (April 19, –s99)—became in “Post-roads” both concrete and specific. There are the sounds of “tympan heels,” passengers’ voices, and the punishing blows or “bastinadoes of iron boots.”¹⁰ There is the visual world of “dead men staring out of glass” and a gentleman poised to “behold there in the moonshine, . . . John Ogilby’s Wheel.” There is the taste of “madeira” and “partridge-pies,” the “smells” of “hackneys” and “mohair sour with damp,” the touch of the wheel “steered by no earthly hand.” Slessor even emulates the frontispiece’s juxtaposition of mortal activity and immortal art. Most tellingly, Slessor’s Ogilby—with his wheel and maps—has replaced *Britannia*’s putti as the symbol of the transcendence of both art and science.

“A diagram of Ogilby’s eye and ear/ with soundings for the nose” suggests that Slessor saw at least one of the portraits of Ogilby that accompanied his translations of classical texts (Goodwin 1921, 911; Schuchard 1973, 13, 32, 81; Van Eerde 1976, 178–179; Hyde 1980, 3; Withers 2004, 41:567). The most famous likeness was engraved by the elder William Faithorne after a painting by Sir Peter Lely (Figure 5). Although that much-reproduced portrait did not grace the pages of *Britannia*,

it did appear in Ogilby’s 1654 *Works of Publius Virgilius Maro* (Virgil et al. 1654) and was reproduced by Fordham in his monograph on Ogilby (1925, opposite title page; see also Harley 1970, viii; Schuchard 1973, 4; Withers 2004, 41:566; Baynton-Williams 2006). In particular, the phrase “soundings for the nose” not only alludes to the senses but also highlights the cartographer’s attractive, but very prominent nose.¹¹

For his epigraph, however, Slessor rejected the pretentious and imperialistic title “*Britannia*,” choosing instead the title of the inexpensive and highly portable *Traveller's Guide*. To better understand Slessor's choice, a chronology of Ogilby pocket guides will place *The Traveller's Guide* within its historical context and also clarify several items that the poet found in the “Road Books” section of the Francis Edwards catalogue.

Despite the achievement of his *Britannia*, Ogilby knew that an atlas exceeding 600 pages and seven kilograms could only reside on the tables of wealthy arm-chair geographers (Delano-Smith and Kain 1999, 168–169 and 277 n.109). Not only was *Britannia* out of reach for most travelers and their budgets, but its folio size made it cumbersome to peruse either on horseback or in a coach (Taylor 1998). As an alternative, therefore, Ogilby published *Mr. Ogilby's Tables of his Measur'd Roads* (Ogilby 1676: Fordham 1925, 168; Schuchard 1975, 97, no.33), whose thirty-four octavo—or pocket-size—pages were filled with *tables* rather than maps and descriptive text to indicate distances from one town or landmark to the next (Fordham 1925, 160, 168–170). By the third edition, it had morphed into *Mr. Ogilby's Pocket Book of Roads* (Ogilby and Morgan 1679: Fordham 1925, 169; Schuchard 1975, 90, no.36); and by the fourth edition, it had become *Mr. Ogilby's and William Morgan's Pocket Book of the Roads* (Ogilby and Morgan 1689: Fordham 1925, 169–171; Schuchard 1975, 106, no.43). That title, now featuring the name of Ogilby's step-grandson and partner/heir, William Morgan (d. 1690: Tooley et al. 1999–2004, 3:280), would still be used in one form or another as late as 1794, the date of its twenty-fourth and final edition of 266 pages (Ogilby and Morgan 1794: Fordham 1925, 169–172).

Pocket editions of Ogilby's beautiful *strip maps*, by contrast, did not appear until forty years after his death (Delano-Smith and Kain 1999, 172). Between 1719 and 1720, no fewer than three competing editions hit the market (Delano-Smith 1999, 172; Baynton-Williams 2006): Thomas Gardner's *A Pocket-Guide to the English Traveller . . .* (Ogilby et al. 1719: see Fordham 1925, 173; Chubb, Skells, and Beharrell [1927] 1966, 110–111); John Senex's *An Actual Survey of all the Principal Roads of England and Wales* (Ogilby and Senex 1719: see Fordham 1925, 174; Chubb, Skells, and Beharrell [1927] 1966, 112–116; Francis Edwards 1929, items 834–835, for later editions); and the popular *Britannia Depicta* or *Ogilby Improved* by John Owen and Emanuel Bowen (Ogilby, Owen, and Bowen 1720: see Fordham 1925, 175–176; Chubb, Skells, and Beharrell [1927] 1966, 117–125; Hodson and Skelton 1984–1997, 1:94–95; Francis Edwards 1929, items 832–833). By the 1770s, these direct offspring of Ogilby's work were being replaced by Daniel Paterson's *A New and Accurate Description of all the Direct and Principal Cross Roads* (Paterson 1771: see Francis Edwards 1929, items 840–843) and *Owen's New Book of Roads* (Owen 1779: see Francis Edwards 1929, item 838, for the 1782 edition), whose own numerous editions carried Ogilby's ideas into the nineteenth century (Fordham 1921, 16; Harley 1970, xxix). Not until John Cary's national survey at the end of the eighteenth century and the publication of his *New Itinerary* in 1798 was Ogilby “definitely displaced in the country as a whole by the new measurements in

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complete road-book form” (Fordham 1925, 177, 157; see Francis Edwards 1929, items 821–823). As Slessor discovered, the Francis Edwards catalogue offers editions of all these works except Gardner’s.

Initially priced at 3 shillings, sixpence (3s.6d.), *The Traveller’s Guide* was another pocket-edition designed for a modest budget. What makes it unique is how cleverly it straddles the line between *Britannia* and the other portable guides of Ogilby’s work. Both Ogilby and Morgan had died before *The Traveller’s Guide* appeared in 1699, and then was reprinted, with only cosmetic changes, in 1712 (Schuchard 1975, 100–102; cf. Fordham 1925, 166). Although the latter edition is the one advertised in *Old Maps of the World*, “1712” does not appear anywhere in Slessor’s epigraph. To his mind, such a date would have conflicted not only with what he knew about Ogilby’s lifespan but also with the other seventeenth-century maps (he thought) he’d chosen for the rest of

The Atlas epigraphs.¹² Nor did *The Traveller’s Guide* derive from the acclaimed 1675 edition of *Britannia*. Instead, it was based on the 1698 edition of *Britannia*. Published by Abel Swall (fl. 1665–1699: Tooley 1999–2004, 4: 235, s.v. “Swale”) and Robert Morden (d. 1703: *ibid.*, 3:278), to whom Morgan had given Ogilby’s plates (Harley 1970, xviii–xix; Skelton and Chubb 1970, 247; Schuchard 1975, 9), the 1698 *Britannia* was touted as “more concise and intelligible” than the original (Ogilby 1698, “To the Reader,” quoted in Harley 1970, xxviii; see Fordham 1925, 165–166, Schuchard 1975, 98–100, and Francis Edwards 1929, item 831). Not only did the editors remove the frontispiece and dedication that accompanied the 1675 edition, but they entirely reset its text, shrinking 200 pages of text down to only 47 pages. Entitled *Itinirarium Angliae* [sic], or *A Book of the Roads of England and Wales, &c.* and situated at the front of the volume, the abridged text was followed by a two-page alphabetical table. This table, in turn, contained the plate and page number of each city/town and corresponding road featured on the strip maps that comprised the remainder of the atlas (Ogilby 1698, 1–47, and 47–48, respectively; Harley 1970, xxvii–xxviii). But though the 1698 *Britannia* fills only 350 pages, it is still a folio edition, whereas *The Traveller’s Guide* is an octavo edition, measuring a mere 20.5 x 13.5 x 3 centimeters (8 x 5 1/4 x 1 1/4 inches) and containing only 265 diminutive pages (Fordham 1925, 167). Its remaining editor Abel Swall could therefore boast that “...the Traveller is here furnished at small Expense, with a Guide that will conduct him through all the Principal Roads of *England*” (Ogilby 1712, Preface, A2V). As important to Slessor, the full title of *The Traveller’s Guide* indicates that it is a pocket reference combining *description* and tables in a novel way compared to the tables-only guide dating from 1676 on (Ogilby 1712, in Schuchard 1975, 101–102). The emphasis on description must have appealed to the poet as much as the title’s reference to Ogilby, the Wheel, mensuration, and travelers in general. Though it is quite long, Slessor used only the introductory lines of the title as his epigraph for “Post-roads”: “*The Traveller’s Guide, OR, A Most Exact Description OF THE ROADS OF ENGLAND. BEING Mr. OGILBY’S ACTUAL SURVEY, and Mensuration by the WHEEL*” (Figure 6).

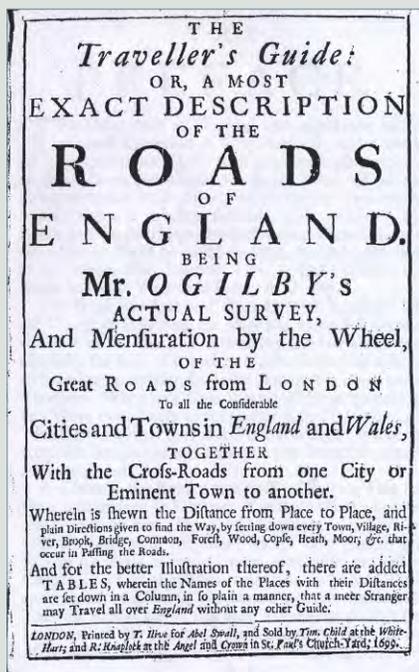


Figure 6. The (first) Title Page of The Traveller’s Guide (Ogilby 1699). Although Fordham refers to the 1712 edition as the “second and unaltered impression” of the 1699 edition (1925, 166), Schuchard notes that there are minor differences, including the replacement of “1699” with “1712” on the second title page (O1r, Tables) (1975, 102). Image from Early English Books Online: Text Creation Partnership (EEBO-TCP) and accessed at the NYPL-Research Library, January 14, 2013.

Most surprising of all, however, is the *total absence of strip maps* in *The Traveller's Guide*. In every edition of *Britannia*, Guildford—the town that Slessor's tired travelers long to reach—had appeared on the strip map entitled *The road from London to Portsmouth* (Figure 7). But that map, like the 100 other strip maps in *Britannia*, has been replaced in *The Traveller's Guide* with tables “wherein the names of all places in the maps of [Ogilby's] *Britannia* are set down, with the distances from town to town; and all other remarks necessary for the instruction of travellers” (Ogilby 1699 and 1712, 2nd title page: Tables, O1r). A person traveling from London to Guildford would find in *The Traveller's Guide* only a single map. Measuring 24 x 19 cm (9 ½ x 7 ½ inches: Schuchard 1975, 101), that small “folding map” is advertised in item 836 of the Francis Edwards catalogue (1929, 140). With the promising title “New Mapp of the Roads of ENGLAND Shewing the Reputed distances from one town to another” (Ogilby 1699 and 1712, after “The Contents,” A3r–A4v), the unsigned diagrammatic map shows “an integrated network of roads” offering a “multiplicity of itineraries mapped out on a single sheet of paper” (Delano-Smith and Kain 1999, 167 and 168). Unfortunately, it is so small, so overrun with names and distances, as to be practically illegible—unless, of course, one knows to look for Guildford along the road running southwest from London toward the Isle of Wight (bottom, center-right).

The traveler gets more help from the tables and descriptions, once he has familiarized himself with the guide's abbreviations, competing sets of measurements, and dual parts—each with its own title page (A1r, O1r). In “The Contents,” he is told to look up “Guilford”—which is how the *The Traveller's Guide* usually spells the town's name—in the “Alphabetical Table” following page 187. That “TABLE of the *Cities, Principal Corporation and Market-Towns . . . with the Roads to which they belong*” (Ogilby 1699 and 1712, N6v–N8v [188–192]) lists two items to the right of Guildford's name: “Portsmouth,” the road along which Guildford is located, and “58,” the page describing Guildford itself (N7r [189]). Upon turning to page 58 in the first part of the guide (B1r – N6r [1–187]), the traveler discovers that pages 57 to 59 contain all the practical details of his trip there and back (cf. Ogilby 1675 and Ogilby [1675] 1970, 59–60). Directly under the heading “The Road from LONDON to PORTSMOUTH . . .,” a table lists ten towns, followed by the counties (57) and rivers through which the road runs, the road's condition (“affording generally a good Sandy Way, well frequented and accommodated,” 58), “turnings to be avoided,” and descriptions of landmarks (58–59). The table on page 57 immediately alerts the traveler that Guildford lies between Cobham and Godalmin. Along the nearly seventy-four miles of road to Portsmouth, Guildford is thirty miles southwest of London by “The Dimensuration,” but only twenty-five miles by “The Vulgar *Computation*.” Because the old British mile of 2,428 yards was longer—“though not in any precise fashion” (Van Eerde 1976, 136)—than Ogilby's dimensurated statute mile of 1,760 yards (Fordham 1925, 157; Chubb, Skells, and Beharrell [1927] 1966, xiv, 444; see Ogilby 1712, A2v), Slessor could play on the confusion that Ogilby's mensuration must have caused. For the poem's “yawning Fares” would have found their journey suddenly “increased” by five miles!

Although Slessor does not describe Guildford, only his passengers' impatience to be there, *The Traveller's Guide* offers on page 58, as promised, descriptions of

Most surprising of all is the total absence of strip maps in The Traveller's Guide.

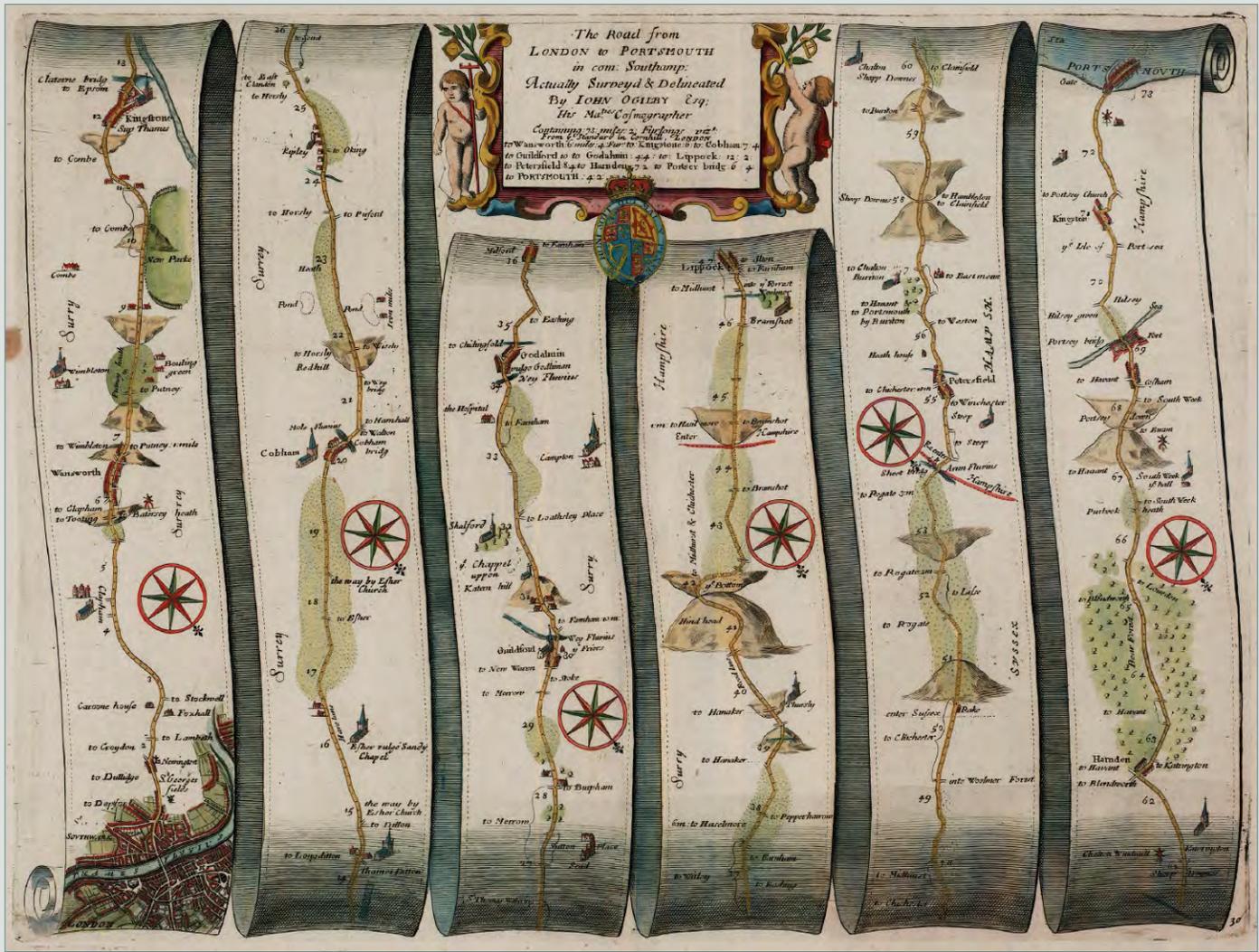


Figure 7. Strip Map entitled *The Road from London to Portsmouth, “actually surveyd [sic] and delineated...by John Ogilby Esq[ire]: His Ma.ties Cosmographer.”* (1675). Plate 30 in John Ogilby’s *Britannia* (London, 1675) measures 43 x 56 centimeters (17 x 22 inches). Linking England’s capital to its naval port, this “great road” is the thirteenth “Direct Independant” [sic] listed in Ogilby’s atlas (Ogilby 1675 and Ogilby [1675] 1970, “A Catalogue of the Several Roads”). *Britannia* was also “an attempt at a scientific study not only of the roads but also of the terrain and habitations on either side of the roads” (Van Eerde 1976, 137). Guildford—the town that Slessor’s tired travelers long to reach—appears on the third (from the left) of the six strips, just above the compass rose pointing southwest; because it lay midway between London and Portsmouth, Guildford’s inns were popular overnight spots for travelers. Ogilby’s strip maps with their “linear view” are precursors to the AAA TripTik maps that the American Automobile Association used to customize for member motorists (MacEachren 1986, 7, 17–18). A zoomable image is available online from the Map Collection of Hampshire County Council Museums Service, from which this illustration derives (Norgate and Norgate 1996–2006b). Courtesy of Jean and Martin Norgate.

the road from Cobham to Guildford and of Guildford itself. To make reading easier, the guide informs the traveler that all distances are in miles and furlongs, with eight furlongs to the mile (Ogilby 1712, “The Preface,” A2v). In other words, “21’4” (below) indicates that the southern end of Cobham is twenty-one miles and four furlongs, or 21 1/2 miles, from London; while “29’7” means that the northern end of Guildford is almost thirty miles, or 29 7/8 miles, from the capital. A narrative of sorts begins to appear once we spell out (in brackets, as per the key on the A2v of “The Preface”) the abbreviations that helped reduce

the size of *The Traveller's Guide* (58: original emphasis; see Ogilby 1698, 15; cf. Ogilby 1675 and Ogilby [1675] 1970, 60):

... at the end of [*Cobham*], cross *Mole flu*[vius, or “river”] ...

At 21'4 descend[ing] 3 F[urlongs] to a Heath between 2 Ponds and by some Iron-Mills on the Right, come to *Ripley-V[illage]*, on the Left at 24'4. Whence over a Brook call'd *St. Thomas Watering* at 26'4 leave *Send-Ch[urch]* and *Sutton-Place* on the Right, and enter *Guilford* at 29'7 on *Wey flu*[vius, or “river”] rising about *Aulton* in *Hampsh[ire]* and made Navigable by Sluces: 'Tis a large Town Corp[oration] containing 3 Parish-Ch[urches]. Govern'd by a Mayor, &c. and sends Burgesses to Parl[iament]. The Assizes for the County, are sometimes kept here; and a good M[arke]t on *Saturd[ay]* with several good Inns, as the *Red Lyon*, *White Hart*, &c.

Thence over *Wey* at the End of the Town, leave ...

This is as close as Ogilby gets to the narratives found in modern travel guides. On the other hand, if the traveler requires only a simple *outline* of the directions, he can go to the tables in the second part of the guide (O2r – X4v [193–254]: see Fordham 1925, 167). *These* tables aren't in any edition of *Britannia* for the simple reason that they were created to replace the atlas's informative strip maps. But the Preface of *The Traveller's Guide* does offer its readers this assurance: “Nor are the maps totally wanting, for the Tables at the latter end contain (A2r) also all the words ... that are set down in the Maps, which ranged in columns, and the distances marked, render these Tables as useful as the Maps” (A2v). To find and decipher these tables, however, he must first consult “Directions to the Reader” (O1v [opp. 193]) and “The Contents.” Below “The Road from London to Portsmouth, passing thro' Guildford [*sic*]” (A3r), he sees two page numbers: the first, “57,” indicates the “page in the book” (i.e., Part I, *Itinirarium Angliae*); and the second, “204,” “the page in the tables” (i.e., Part II). Turning to page 204, he discovers these directions partway down the columns of figures under “The Road from LONDON to PORTSMOUTH” (Figure 8):

Figure 8. “The Road from London to Portsmouth,” page 204 of *The Traveller's Guide* (Ogilby 1699; and Ogilby 1712). This itinerary and those surrounding it have replaced the strip maps—like the one shown in Figure 7—that made *Britannia* so memorable and expensive. Nevertheless, *The Traveller's Guide* promised its budget-minded readers that the tables contain “the names of all places in the maps of [Ogilby's] *Britannia*..., with the distances from town to town; and all other remarks necessary for the instruction of travellers” (Ogilby 1699 and 1712, 2nd title page: Tables, O1r). Image from Early English Books Online: Text Creation Partnership (EEBO-TCP) and accessed at the NYPL-Research Library, January 14, 2013.

From LONDON thro'	Miles F[urlongs]
<i>Cobham</i>	4'0
[4'0 is the distance from the previous town]	
<i>Cobham-Br[idge]</i> over <i>Mole flu</i> [vius]	0'3
A Descent of 3 Furl[ongs]	1'1

Enter a Heath	
Between 2 Ponds and the Iron-Mills, Right	0'7
Cross a Rivulet	1'5
<i>Ripley</i>	0'4
Roads divide; bear Right	1'1
St. <i>Thomas Watering</i> Brook	0'7
By <i>Send-Chap[el]</i> and <i>Sutton-Place</i> ; Right	0'7
29'7] Guilford on <i>Wey</i> flu[vius]	2'4
At the Town's End Roads divide; bear Left...	

Our traveler might as well be inputting Cobham and Guildford into MapQuest, Google Maps, or the AAA TripTik® Travel Planner, so little have our methods of giving directions changed over time.

Despite their appeal to a wordsmith like Slessor, the verbal itineraries on which The Traveller's Guide relies for the sake of economy certainly represent a step backwards in the history of cartography.

Yet despite their appeal to a wordsmith like Slessor, the verbal itineraries on which *The Traveller's Guide* relies for the sake of economy certainly represent a step backwards in the history of cartography. However much the strip maps that Ogilby had developed for *Britannia* may be “associated with process types of description,” they are nevertheless “an outgrowth of verbal or pictorial itineraries that were commonly used prior to development of navigational charts and road maps” (MacEachren 1986, 14; Wood 1992, 43). Furthermore, “by eliminating other details and focusing attention on features of a route, the strip map is ideally suited to route following, but at the same time is ill suited to route planning” (MacEachren 1986, 14). Today, of course, route planning and route following are seamlessly interwoven; the Web and portable GPS devices offer us free or inexpensive verbal directions accompanied by a strip map superimposed over a zoomable map or satellite image of the region through which we are traveling. All that is missing is the artistry, the signature of the human touch.

If Slessor perused Fordham's monograph on John Ogilby, he saw one of the tables reproduced from the 1699 *Traveller's Guide* and showing the distances between towns in the “ancient British and modern Statute Miles” (Fordham 1925, opp. 166; see also Ogilby 1699 and 1712, A2v; Chubb, Skells, and Beharrell [1927] 1966, xiv and 444). That wasn't the only detail Slessor played with in “Post-roads.” He also mimicked literary practices common in Ogilby's era, such as the use of long, descriptive titles and the habit of italicizing some words and capitalizing others in order to call attention to “*Ogilby*” and “*The Wheel—John Ogilby's Wheel—the WHEEL*” (see Chubb, Skells, and Beharrell [1927] 1966, opposite 88). Nevertheless, it is unlikely that Slessor laid hands on *The Traveller's Guide* itself, unless he found it in a private library or antiquarian's shop. As we've seen, *Britannia* went through five editions over twenty-three years (Harley 1970, xxvii–xxviii), whereas *The Traveller's Guide* saw just two printings. After 1712 “there was no further impression of the text” of Ogilby's *Britannia*; despite the fact that “his road-maps were reproduced in a long series from 1719 onwards” (Fordham 1925, 167) and that Ogilby's tables continued to be reproduced until 1794. Both types of pocket guides were so much more abundant than *The Traveller's Guide* that Slessor might have been familiar with some of them. If not, he could have found, in Chubb's work, a title page of Owen's 1720 *Britannia Depicta* ([1927] 1966, opp. 188, “by courtesy of Mr. Francis Edwards”); and, in Fordham's work, not only a facsimile of Ogilby's strip map from the 1719 *Pocket Guide to the English Traveller* (1925, 164), but also a

1676 table from *Mr. Ogilby's Tables of his Measur'd Roads* (between pages 168 and 169). The National Library of Australia happens to own a leather-bound copy of the 1712 *Traveller's Guide*, but it was not accessioned until 1972—a year after Slessor died (NLA RA SF20).

"OH, GOD, I WISH THAT IT, I WISH THAT IT WAS GUILDFORD"

Slessor's "yawning Fares" can be forgiven for wishing "that it was Guildford." The poem's "plunging springs" and "numbed" post-roads remind us that prior to the mid-nineteenth century, coaches had poor suspension and no rubber tires to cushion their wheels (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1911, 5:405, s.v., "carriages"). During Ogilby's last years, steel springs were just beginning to replace leather straps (Thrupp [1877] 1969, 2, 42, 48), and roads were variable at best. Adding to the jostling and noise was the discomfort of cramped quarters and extended journeys. Stage coaches, introduced earlier in the seventeenth century, carried six to eight passengers inside (ibid., 102; Gilbey 1903, 55–58). Guildford lies only thirty miles from London, but because ordinary coaches averaged only four to four-and-a-half miles an hour (Gilbey 1903, 55), the trip took at least seven hours from London (Figure 9). Even in 1703, a quarter century after Ogilby's death, coaches took fourteen hours to reach Portsmouth, *if* the roads and weather co-operated (Thrupp [1877] 1969, 106). Since Guildford is midway between London and England's naval port, most passengers spent the night there. Furthermore, during Ogilby's final years, glass windows began replacing leather curtains (Thrupp [1877] 1969, 102; Gilbey 1903, 45–47; *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1911, 5:403, s.v., "carriages") to protect passengers from the elements and offer views of the passing landscape—as in Slessor's "world of dead men staring out of glass." But their presence in "Post-roads" suggests that at some point darkness has fallen, for passing lights and the glow of coach lamps are reflected in the windows: "kidnapped lights,/ floats of rubbed yellow, towed from windowpanes." On the brink of pulling in for the night, in other words, Slessor's coach remains forever shy of its destination.

To while away time, Slessor's Fares eat, drink, talk, and play cards. "Playing cards in Coach" was one of Slessor's initial ideas for "Post-roads" (April 5, -s90, April 7, -s92), and the pack of cards advertised on the page opposite Ogilby's *Traveller's Guide* may have been the inspiration (Francis Edwards 1929, 141):¹³

850. . . . A reissue of Morden's maps of 1680.



Figure 9. "The Machine," A.D. 1640–1750." From Sir Walter Gilbey's *Early Carriages and Roads* (London: Vinton & Co., 1903, page 56). According to Gilbey, the stage coach began to be used around 1640 (56). Like the one in this image, those coaches traveling between London and the principal towns of the country resembled hackney coaches, but were larger (55). Although Slessor uses only the word "men," women and children were also passengers.

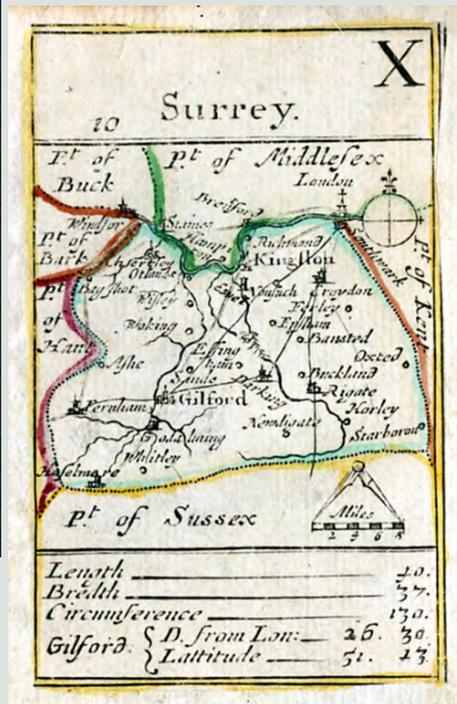
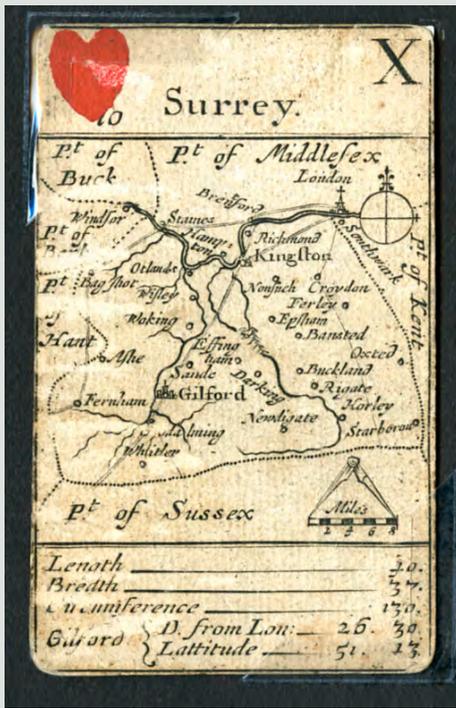


Figure 10. Robert Morden Playing Cards Featuring the English County of Surrey as the Ten of Hearts. The card on the left comes from the second edition of Morden's playing cards (Morden 1676b), since it includes the names of neighboring counties, a feature omitted in the first edition published earlier that year (Morden 1676a: see Skelton and Chubb 1970, 153, "Morden 95"). The card on the right is a reprint of Morden's third edition (Morden 1680: Shirley 1988, 95, "Morden 3"), this time by Homan Turpin, a second-hand bookseller active in the latter half of the eighteenth century (Morden and Ogilby [ca. 1773–1785]: Skelton and Chubb 1970, 157, "Morden 103"; Hodson and Skelton 1984–1997, 3:120–121, "273: Robert Morden...circa 1785?"). The Turpin reprint is untrimmed and lacks the suit-mark, but appears in the original outline color. Otherwise, the cards are identical: both measure about 9 x 5.5 centimeters (3 3/4 x 2 1/4 inches) and have three horizontal panels on the front (the back is blank). The upper panel displays the card's number (on the left, in small Arabic numerals; on the right, in large Roman numerals), suit (if stenciled), and name of the county representing the suit. The middle panel is the Surrey map, complete with a scale of miles and compass indicator, and featuring the county's major towns, rivers, and roads. The lower panel lists the county's length, "breadth" [sic], circumference, and both the latitude and distance from London to Guildford [sic], Surrey's primary city. What makes Morden's playing cards special is that he inserted Ogilby's roads onto his own small county maps and copied, onto the bottom panels of the cards, Ogilby's distances from London to various towns. In fact, Morden's geographical playing cards were "the earliest complete set of county maps to show the roads" of England and Wales (Skelton and Humphreys 1952, 70 n.4).

They are in the form of a pack of cards; the four suits are the 4 parts of England, and each map is numbered, or else bears a portrait representing either King, Queen, or Jack.¹⁴

Although Slessor's poetry notebook doesn't mention item 850, this delightful entry describes a pack of playing cards not only roughly contemporaneous with Ogilby (1680: Tooley et al. 1999–2004, 3:278), but also designed as maps of the 52 counties of England and Wales (Mann and Kingsley 1972, Plate XVIII, "d"). Moreover, their cartographer is none other than Robert Morden, the very mapseller who acquired Ogilby's plates after the death of William Morgan and later published the 1698 edition of Ogilby's *Britannia*, upon which *The Traveller's Guide* is based. Better still, Morden initially printed his cards in 1676, the year that Ogilby died (Skelton and Chubb 1970, 151–152, "Morden 94"). On the "Explanation" card accompanying the original edition (151), Morden explained that he'd inserted Ogilby's roads onto his own small county maps and also copied Ogilby's distances from London to various towns onto the bottom panels of the cards (152). After Morden decided that the eastern counties would represent the suit of hearts, he made Surrey—the county in which Guildford is located—his ten of hearts (152) (Figure 10). How delicious if the "knave" in "Post-roads" is taking the "ten" of Guildford/Surrey!¹⁵

Although drafts of “Post-roads” reveal that Slessor experimented with “Bristol” (April 9, -s93) and even “England” (April 11, -s95), he ultimately chose *Guildford* rather than some other town along Ogilby’s roads as the longed-for destination of his “yawning Fares.” Known for its beauty, the town is situated on the river Wey, “its old streets contain[ing] a number of picturesque gabled houses, with quaint lattices and curious doorways” (*Encyclopedia Britannica* 1875, 11:262, s.v., “Guildford”). William Cobbett (1763–1835), the Surrey-born journalist and radical reformer, had this to say in one of his popular *Rural Rides* (October 23, 1825: Great Britain Historical GIS Project 2004):

I, who have seen so many, many towns, think [Guildford and its surroundings] the prettiest, and, taken all together, the most agreeable and most happy-looking that I ever saw in my life. Here are hill and dell in endless variety. Here are the chalk and the sand, vieing [*sic*] with each other in making beautiful scenes. Here is a navigable river and fine meadows. Here are woods and downs. Here is something of everything...

For an Australian poet like Slessor, Guildford carried additional resonances, lying as it does on the road to Portsmouth, from whose harbor the first convicts and others set sail for Australia in 1787, eventually reaching Sydney Cove on 26 January 1788, the “date . . . still celebrated as Australia Day, marking the beginnings of European settlement” (State Library of New South Wales 2011). Nostalgic settlers to Australia transported the English toponym “Guildford” to Australia, where it became the name of a Sydney suburb, twenty-five kilometers (15.5 miles) west of Slessor’s home.

In literary terms, on the other hand, Slessor’s “Knave takes the ten” alludes to *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, particularly the trial scene in which the Knave of Hearts is accused of taking the Queen’s tarts (1865, Chapters 11–12). Its author, the Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson—a.k.a., Lewis Carroll (1832–1898)—moved his family to Guildford in 1868, and currently resides at The Mount Cemetery there (Cohen 1995, 240–241, 527; Cohen 1998, 1195; Rose 2001, 87–89). Lewis Carroll’s much anticipated centenary occurred in 1932, the year that “Post-roads” was published in *Cuckooz. Contrey*.

Slessor’s poetry notebook introduces *another* famous nineteenth-century English writer: Charles Dickens (1812–1870). At first, the words “Dickens [rides?] in coaches” (April 5, -s90) and “Dickens scene” (April 7, -s92) appear to be early experiments going nowhere. Closer investigation, however, reveals that he owned several books by/about Dickens (Slessor Collection, University of Sydney’s Fisher Library 2002–2012) and that Dickens evoked a number of images in Slessor’s mind. After all, Dickens began as a journalist involved at the very heart of the profession during the early years of “modern journalism” (Douglas-Fairhurst 2011, 70). Like Slessor nearly a century later, he began reporting when he was nineteen; and his letters from 1831–1836 reveal not only how often he traveled by coach throughout the country, but also how much that experience fed his literary imagination (*Encyclopedia Britannica* 1911, 8:178–183, s.v., “Dickens, Charles John Huffam”). Furthermore, his friend and biographer John Forster attests that Dickens “saw the last of the old coaching days, and of the old inns that were a part of them; but it will be long before the readers of his living

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Slessor’s poetry notebook introduces another famous nineteenth-century English writer: Charles Dickens.

page see the last of the life of either” (Forster and Hoppé [1872] 1966, 1:51). Born in Portsmouth, Dickens mentions Guildford in *Nicholas Nickleby* as “the place from which Mr. Vincent Crummles and his company had proceeded to Portsmouth,” and *David Copperfield*’s hero spent a blissful day with Dora in the area around Guildford (Dexter 1925, 22–23). Travel guides claim that Dickens spent nights in the town, whose historic attraction derives from its superb location on the main road from London to the great ports of the central south coast—Portsmouth, Southampton, and Winchester (The Angel Hotel 2011; see plate 39, “London to Chichester,” in Ogilby 1675 and Ogilby [1675] 1970). As Friends International in Guildford explain in their online tour of Guildford and its surroundings (2012):

All roads converge on the Guildford gap to pass through the Downs, and so much of the traffic from London to the central south coast passed through the town. Travellers needed rest and by the 17th century Guildford had earned a good reputation for its inns—the Angel, the White Lion, the Red Lion, the White Hart and the Crown.

The inns flourished as road-travel increased, particularly when Portsmouth developed as a major naval base from Restoration times. . . The early 1800s saw a boom in the coaching trade. 28 services passed through Guildford, with an average of 10 coaches a day travelling in each direction, with perhaps 200 passengers.

However this all came to an end in the 1840s as the railways proved a quicker, cheaper and more comfortable way to travel. The last coach ran through Guildford in 1849, the year the railway reached Portsmouth from London.

If the Red Lion and the White Hart ring a bell, it’s because Ogilby’s *Traveller’s Guide* recommends “several good Inns, as the *Red Lyon, White Hart, &c.*” His contemporary John Aubrey goes further, raving that Guildford “has been always most famous for its Inns and excellent Accommodation for Passengers, the best perhaps in *England*” (Morris 1914, 87).

Finally, a short-story by Dickens may have been the literary inspiration for “Post-roads.” Although it contains no reference to Guildford, “The Story of the Bagman’s Uncle,” originally published in September 1837 as chapter 49 of *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (Dickens 1983), also interweaves present and past, the living and the dead, as its ghostly coach and passengers speed through the night. In Dickens’ tale, a traveling salesman regales the “gentlemen” (48) in the inn where Mr. Pickwick is staying (Project Gutenberg, Ebook 580) with a “true” story told him by his dearly departed uncle. One night, after drinking too much at a friend’s house, the bagman’s uncle was walking back to his lodgings when he stumbled upon an enclosure littered with “old worn-out mail coaches” (Dickens 1983, 52):

My uncle . . . thought of the busy bustling people who had rattled about, years before, in the old coaches, and were now as silent and changed; he thought of the numbers of people . . . whom one of those crazy mouldering vehicles had borne, night after night, for many years, and through all weathers . . . Where were they all now!

Whether he fell asleep or not, the coaches suddenly came alive and he was transported to the past, where he gallantly rescued a fellow passenger from her kidnappers. Then, just as suddenly, he was back in the present, shivering with cold. He'd learned one thing, though: "the ghosts of mail coaches and horses, guards, coachmen, and passengers, were in the habit of making journeys regularly every night" (63).

"THE TIRELESS GHOST OF OGILBY"

In "Post-roads" Ogilby's wheel, however dated it may be to Slessor, symbolizes human progress and ecstatic obsession. As Ogilby himself attested, during his own lifetime the wheel had become the surveyor's high-tech tool, supplanting the chain for ease and accuracy in measuring distances (Ogilby 1675 and Ogilby [1675] 1970, Preface, C1r). With the wheel and his cadre of surveyors, engravers, cartographers, and influential advisers (Harley 1970, vii, xv–xviii), Ogilby seized upon the late seventeenth century's "economic optimism" to produce road maps of an ever expanding network of highways and services (ibid., v). Because the historical Ogilby, unlike Slessor's single-minded character, had better things to do than to push the wheel around; he managed in a handful of years to impose order on the roads of England and Wales, leaving maps, tables, and guides for future travelers to navigate upon them. Moreover, given how "slight" were "the documentary and cartographical materials available" to him, he overcame extraordinary obstacles (Fordham 1925, 177–178):

Ogilby had to organize a perambulation of the roads, with the collection and recording of the notes necessary for the construction of his maps, and the drawing and engraving of the plates upon which they are represented, with the collection also of the descriptive details relative to the towns and other places lying on or near the roads themselves. He was in every sense on new ground, and his success is evidence of the energy, determination, and organizing and artistic talent which characterized his life in all its varied phases.

Ogilby was wildly successful . . . until death took him. Of the five volumes he'd proposed for his world atlas, known as his "*English Atlas*" (1669: Schuchard 1975, 124), "Europe" never was published and other volumes remained incomplete (ibid., 82, 129). The final volume—*Britannia*—was to have three parts, yet only the road atlas saw the light of day (Skelton and Chubb 1970, 185–186; Harley 1970, ix–x, xiv). Neither Ogilby nor Morgan succeeded in raising the funds to publish his atlas of twenty-five town-plans or his county atlas with descriptive text (Fordham 1925, 162–163; Chubb, Skells, and Beharrell [1927] 1966, 85); and Surrey was not one of the three county maps that Ogilby managed to publish separately (Skelton and Humphreys 1952, 70). Even the astounding 12,000 kilometers (7,500 miles) of England and Wales that were mapped in *Britannia* amount to less than a third of those he'd hoped to survey and immortalize on paper (Delano-Smith and Kain 1999, 171). And neither Ireland nor his native Scotland appears in any of his work (Van Eerde 1976, 122).

In "Post-roads" Ogilby's wheel, however dated it may be to Slessor, symbolizes human progress and ecstatic obsession.

No wonder Slessor’s “ghost of *Ogilby*” is so “tireless.” Brought up short by death, he is once again in every sense on new ground. Freed from mortal restraints, he can’t stop measuring the “mileposts of eternity.” Before him lies an unprecedented opportunity to survey and map the “unmapped savanna of dumb shades.” Between his death and “Post-roads” lay the Industrial Revolution, which triggered an explosive increase in human population. Although it took until 1800 for a billion people to walk upon earth at the same time, the twentieth century would begin with 1.6 billion people and end with 6.1 billion (Population Reference Bureau 2012). Furthermore, Slessor composed his poem between two brutal World Wars: the first claimed 8.5 million lives (Community Television of Southern California 1996–2004), while the second—currently regarded as “the deadliest military conflict in history”—would take seven times that number, or 2.5% of the world’s population (*Wikipedia* 2012, s.v., “World War II Casualties”). Slessor’s *Ogilby* simply has no time to lose. Never before have so many people passed, or been poised on the brink of passing, from life to death. To the tipsy gentleman emerging from dinner in Slessor’s final stanza, the “hiss” of *Ogilby*’s wheel is a stark reminder “to eat, drink, and be merry” (Ecclesiastes 8:15).

*“Post-roads” presents the afterlife as very personal indeed. For *Ogilby*’s mensuration has transformed him—like Homer’s prophetic Tiresias or Virgil’s Anchises—into a heroic figure who transcends death.*

Graham Burns once compared “Post-roads” to Slessor’s “The Night-Ride” (1924: Slessor, Haskell, and Dutton 1994, 67, 356–357), in which a train ride into darkness becomes a metaphor for life’s “rapid journey towards oblivion” (Burns 1975, 6). Burns could have strengthened his argument by mentioning Slessor’s reference to “dumb shades,” which alludes to the stagnant life-in-death of the disembodied souls crowding Homer’s underworld in *Odyssey* 11 and much of Virgil’s underworld in *Aeneid* 6. But Slessor’s allusion also quietly acknowledges the enduring nature of poetry, an art he shares with *Ogilby* as translator of these ancient epics.¹⁶ While Burns finds the final stanza “sinister” because it supposedly “mov[es] out past the human into the impersonal processes engulfing it” (1975, 7), I suggest that “Post-roads” presents the afterlife as very personal indeed. For *Ogilby*’s mensuration has transformed him—like Homer’s prophetic Tiresias or Virgil’s Anchises—into a heroic figure who transcends death. *Ogilby*’s very obsession with his art gives him an immortality that Slessor hoped to achieve by crafting poems like “Post-roads,” sequences like *The Atlas*, collections like *Cuckooz Contrey*. In fact, what Andrew Taylor says about Slessor’s Captain Cook applies to Slessor’s *Ogilby*, whom the poet created shortly after composing “Five Visions of Captain Cook” (May 1929: Slessor, Haskell, and Dutton 1994, 87–94, 366–376; Taylor 1987, 64):

His daemonic power to defy chaos, to engage with “mystery,” to choose “a passage into the dark” and to charm order across the face of disorder—all is linked causally with poetry in such a way that it insists on being read as metaphoric of it.

As Slessor said about writing poetry, it is “a pleasure out of hell” (Slessor and Haskell 1991, 162).

* * *

Slessor's Ogilby soon had a worthy successor in "The Cartographer" by poet Rosemary Dobson (1920–2012). A celebrated Australian poet mentored by Slessor (Dutton 1991, 265, 312), Dobson published "The Cartographer" as the seventh part of her verse play *The Devil and the Angel* (1945–1946: Dobson 1948, 11–12). In it, a dying cartographer, who has spent his life listening to sailors' "tales of strife and wonder," is tempted by the two messengers of death with the promise of exploring the "'Terra Incognita,' 'The Unknown Land'" of his dreams. No sooner is he informed that neither heaven nor hell has been mapped than he cries "Both, both! . . . and gather[s] up his compass" to accompany the astonished angel and devil to the afterlife (1948, 12).

Their response? "We spread our hands and sighed at one another."¹⁷

NOTES

1. "NLA" refers to the National Library of Australia, which holds the Papers of Kenneth Adolf Slessor (1901–1971) under the designation MS 3020.
2. For brevity, subsequent references to items in the poetry notebook that contains Slessor's drafts of *The Atlas*—MS 3020/19/1—will be abbreviated "–s#". For example, "–s242" represents both "NLA MS 3020/19/1/242" (for the paper version) and <http://nla.gov.au/nla.ms-ms3020-19-1-s242-v> (for the online scan). As explained in my Introduction, Slessor drafted *The Atlas* (ca. 1930) in a 1927 desk calendar: neither 1927 nor the date accompanying each entry has anything to do with the actual year, month, or day in which the poet created the various parts of his sequence. Nevertheless, I've included the notebook's "month" and "day" ("September 13") along with its "page" number (e.g., –s242) to aid identification.
3. "Post-roads" is reprinted from the Haskell and Dutton edition *Kenneth Slessor: Collected Poems* (Slessor, Haskell, and Dutton 1994, 72–73), whose version removes the parenthesis printed (in error) at the end of the epigraph in the original version in *Cuckooz Contrey* (Slessor 1932, 11–12), but is otherwise identical to it. Like Haskell and Dutton, I quote the poem in its entirety. Rather than annotating some of Slessor's highly allusive and self-consciously baroque vocabulary in notes on the poem (ibid., 359–360), however, I explain the poet's word/phrase choices as they become germane to my article's larger arguments.
4. "Post-roads" so impressed Tasmanian poet and journalist S. Clive Turnbull that he penned this glowing tribute to Slessor on August 22, 1949 (NLA MS 3020 1/2/113):

What an astonishing fellow you were to turn out so much that was good in an age when the output of most of us is a hair-shirt for later years . . . In *Cuckooz Contrey* we are really in the groove. "Post-roads" is one of my favorites—a superb piece of work I think.

5. Slessor kept trying to connect the increasingly divergent poems, a struggle most obvious in his May 25 (-s132) through June 2 entries (-s138). See my forthcoming article on “Mermaids.”
6. Unless otherwise noted, definitions come from the *Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (1971), a micrographic reproduction of the thirteen-volume 1933 edition subsequently abbreviated as *OED*.
7. Anglicized from the French in the 16th and 17th centuries, “crinier” is “the part of the...protective covering of a war-horse which covered the ridge or back of the neck and the mane” (*OED*, s.v. “crinière”). Although the rest of “Post-roads” has nothing to do with war, the first poem of *The Atlas* (“The King of Cuckooz”) and the last poem (“The Seafight”) certainly do.
8. Pepys refers on several occasions to Ogilby’s literary works, which he purchased or won by lottery: there are three references to Ogilby’s *Aesop’s Fables* (January 5 and 18, 1661) and/or *Aesopicks* (February 19, 1666), one reference to his *Coronation* (February 19, 1666; see Harley 1970, vii), and another to his Bible (May 27, 1667). Slessor owned a three-volume edition of Pepys’s *Diary* (829: Slessor Collection, University of Sydney’s Fisher Library 2002–2012). And in a poem written after Slessor’s death, Douglas Stewart refers to his friend’s fondness for Pepys (“For Kenneth Slessor”: Stewart 2012, stanzas 6–7):

I think of how we sat there light and lucky
While the soft candlelight flowed round the room
And heard you talk of Pepys and William Hickey,
Tennyson’s verse and drunken pranks of Lamb;

Or venturing forth, where oystery rocks were waiting
At Bobbin Head and you were Captain Slessor,
Staunch on your launch I see you navigating
Like Captain Dobbin, your great predecessor...

9. Dates of publication for all of Ogilby’s work derive from Schuchard (1975, 30–31), although different dates are offered, for instance, by Harley (Harley 1970, xxv). *Old Maps of the World* advertises a number of maps from his geographical volumes: e.g., item 439 (*Aethiopia Superior*, p. 102), items 462–465 and 467 (various African islands, p. 104), item 473 (*Barbaria*, p. 104), item 481 (*Fezzae et Marocchi*, p. 105), item 514 (*Regno Congo*, p. 108), item 656 (*Nova Hispania*, p. 125), item 678 (*Barbados Descriptis*, p. 127), item 757 (Brazil, p. 133), item 766 (Columbia, p. 133), item 778 (Guiana, p. 134), and item 783 (Venezuela, p. 135).
10. “Bastinado” is a Spanish word for “an Eastern method of corporal punishment, by beating with a stick the soles of the culprit’s feet” (*OED*, s.v., “bastinado,” *sb.* 3). It generally means “a blow with a stick or cudgel...; esp. one upon the soles of the feet” (*ibid.*, 1).

11. “Soundings for the nose” also plays on the “soundings” mentioned on pilots and sea charts in *Old Maps of the World* (e.g., Francis Edwards 1929, items 151, 646, 654; see Slessor’s draft titled “Atlas 4,” February 28, -s61).
12. See my upcoming article on the final poem of *The Atlas*, “The Seafight,” for details.
13. Before the quote are the words “TURPIN (H.) A Brief Description of England and Wales, containing a particular Account of Each County, title, 126 pp. text and 52 maps, 12 mo, cont. sheep [1750]” (Francis Edwards 1929, 141; see Morden and Ogilby [ca. 1773–1785]). Homan Turpin was a second-hand bookseller who reissued Morden’s 1680 edition of playing cards in atlas form, perhaps in 1750 (Chubb 1927, 90–91, item CIX; Francis Edwards 1929, 141), or in 1770 (Mann and Kingsley 1972, 27); or, according to Hodson and Skelton, around 1785 (1984–1997, 3:120–122, item 273), since no record of the cards has been found in Turpin’s surviving catalogues of 1767–1783. Each card in the Turpin reissue was printed on “contemporary sheepskin,” otherwise known as vellum.
14. Robert Morden was not the first English publisher of map playing cards. A century earlier, in 1590, William Bowes used the general map of England and Wales in Christopher Saxton’s atlas as the basis for his county maps; however, roads are not included on either the 1590 playing cards or on the ca. 1605 reprint (Skelton and Chubb 1970, 16–18 and Plates 4–5; Mann and Kingsley 1972, 26, 29 and Plates I–X). W. Redmayne’s playing cards came out the same year as Morden’s, but are smaller, inferior in design, and lack roads on the county maps (1676, 1677, 1711–1712: Skelton and Chubb 1970, 153–154 and Plate 34b; Mann and Kingsley 1972, 27, 29 and Plate XII, esp. “d”). Finally, John Lenthall published playing cards “closely copying those by Morden” (ca. 1711–1712: Shirley 1988, 95, “Morden 3”; Mann and Kingsley 1972, 27, 29 and Plates XIII–XVII, esp. XIV “c”). Slessor’s “flap-dark spatulas of cards” may refer to the elongated oval shape of playing cards featured, for instance, in the ca. 1470–1480 pack from the South Netherlands (Cloisters Collection 1983). Each card is 7 x 13.7 centimeters (2 ¾ x 5 3/8 inches), substantially longer than its more common, rectangular cousins.
15. As Gillian Hill notes, “In [Turpin’s] atlas the cards are pasted opposite a descriptive text, which gives the history of the various counties . . . In this form the playing-card has become useless to the gambler, and finds a place in the schoolroom or library” (1978, 17).
16. Slessor’s personal library, 918 items of which are housed at the University of Sydney, contains a copy of Homer’s *Iliad* (603) and *Odyssey* (560), books on ancient Greek poetry (550, 781) as well as Latin poetry (261, 610), and many works on classical culture and history (229, 230, 259, 609, 611, 619, 635, 700, 772–774, 780–781, 783, 809, 815). See the Slessor Collection in the University of Sydney’s Fisher Library (2002–2012).

17. Stay tuned for Part III of my study. In “Dutch Seacoast,” the third poem of Slessor’s sequence *The Atlas*, the poet’s admiration for one of the “painted towns” by Joan Blaeu (1598–1673) makes him wish that “the great cartographer/ . . . could . . . but clap up like this/ My decomposed metropolis,/ Those other countries of the mind,/ So tousled, dark and undefined!”

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