

Imagining Space and Time in Kenneth Slessor's "Dutch Seacoast" and Joan Blaeu's Town Atlas of The Netherlands: Maps and Mapping in Kenneth Slessor's Poetic Sequence *The Atlas*, Part Three

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ABSTRACT

"Dutch Seacoast" by the acclaimed Australian poet Kenneth Slessor (1901–1971) is the centerpiece of The Atlas, the five-poem sequence opening his 1932 collection Cuckooz Contrey. Like the other four poems, "Dutch Seacoast" pays tribute to cartography's "Golden Age," Toonnel der Steden van de vereenighde Nederlanden being the poem's epigraph and the title that Joan Blaeu gave to one of two volumes comprising his Town Atlas of the Netherlands (1649). While focusing on Blaeu's exquisitely ordered map of Amsterdam, Slessor suggests that he is gazing at the map described by his poem and invites us to consider how poets and cartographers represent space and time.

An intensely visual poet, Slessor was also attracted to lyrical descriptions of objects: his inspiration for "Dutch Seacoast" was a particularly poetic, but sparsely illustrated, catalogue of maps and atlases. After reprinting the poem and describing its reception, my paper traces the birth of "Dutch Seacoast" (and The Atlas generally) in Slessor's poetry notebook, the evolution of the poem's placement within the sequence, and the complex relationships between the poem, the catalogue, and Blaeu's spectacular atlas. Comparing Blaeu's idealistic view of Amsterdam with that city's dominance during the Dutch "Golden Century," Slessor's darker obsessions with the poem's ending, and his "other countries of the mind" with his native Australia, we come to understand why "Dutch Seacoast" remained for the self-deprecating poet one of his eight "least unsuccessful" poems.



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KEYWORDS: Kenneth Slessor (1901–1971); *Cuckooz Contrey* (1932); *The Atlas* sequence (ca. 1930); “Dutch Seacoast”; poetry—twentieth-century; poetry—Australian; poetry and maps; Joan Blaeu (1598–1673); cartography—seventeenth-century; Amsterdam—seventeenth-century.

INTRODUCTION

Kenneth Slessor—“one of Australia’s all-time great poets and journalists” (Blaikie 1966, 49)—grew up with the twentieth century to become his country’s first modernist poet. For map lovers, Slessor is a kindred spirit. He not only collected maps, but also won acclaim for his sea-faring poems that portray the exploration and mapping of Australia (see “Captain Dobbin” and “Five Visions of Captain Cook”: Slessor 1932, 19–23, 31–40). Moreover, his five-poem sequence *The Atlas* is one of the most original interpretations of cartography described in poetry. Opening and debuting in his important collection *Cuckooz Contrey* (11–18), *The Atlas* celebrates mapmakers: every poem in this sequence begins with an epigraph—or introductory quotation—that is also the title of a map or an atlas by a cartographer prominent during Europe’s “golden age of cartography,” and then alludes to that particular work throughout the poem.

Slessor had high hopes for *The Atlas*. The notebook in which he drafted all five poems (NLA MS 3020/19/1)¹ reveals the enormous effort that the poet—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 notebook, now considered a “National Treasure” (Elizabeth Caplice, email to author: May 28, 2010), but, as the notebook makes clear, Slessor considered naming his entire collection *The Atlas* (September 13, -s242).² Yet *The Atlas* sequence has not received the attention it deserves. Its 180-line length is less problematic than how esoteric it seems to be. Some of the seventeenth-century cartographers named in its epigraphs may be luminaries in their field, but they are little known even to the editors of Slessor’s *Collected Poems* (Slessor et al. 1994). Furthermore, Slessor was an intensely visual poet, and though all his collections were illustrated prior to 1944, not one of the maps referred to in *The Atlas* appears in his often-reprinted work. Until recently, scholars hadn’t even found the maps, let alone compared them to the poems that are their analogues. Nor have Slessor’s poems and the maps been compared to the ephemeral catalogue whose unusually lyrical *descriptions* of maps provided Slessor not only with his introductory quotations but also with “much of the information concerning the subjects [of *The Atlas*]” (Slessor 1932, 75). Except for the brief notes appended to *Cuckooz Contrey*, Slessor himself never explained his collection’s remarkable opening sequence. Meanwhile,

Slessor’s five-poem sequence The Atlas is one of the most original interpretations of cartography described in poetry.

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.

The Atlas has posed a challenge to its predominantly Australian audience: for the sequence is set in a world still extricating Australia's coastlines from "Terra Australis Incognita," the mythical super-continent known as "The Unknown Southern Land."

In three papers previously published in *Cartographic Perspectives*, I have attempted to remedy these gaps. My "Introduction to Maps and Mapping in Kenneth Slessor's Poetic Sequence *The Atlas*" provides an overview of the cartographic elements within Slessor's *oeuvre* before turning to the relationship between *The Atlas* and his poetry generally (Haft 2011). "Who's 'The King of Cuckooz?'" compares the first poem of the sequence to Robert Norton's military plan of Algiers (1620) and to a couple of catalogue entries describing that map; then explains the mysterious name "Cuckooz" (Haft 2012a). "John Ogilby, Post-Roads, and the 'Unmapped Savanna of Dumb Shades'" demonstrates how Slessor's familiarity with the English cartographer/publisher John Ogilby—and, in particular, with Ogilby's *Britannia* (1675) and *Traveller's Guide* (1699, 1712)—helped the poet turn a historic figure into an ecstatic Sisyphus as well as the central character of his sequence's second poem, "Post-roads" (Haft 2012b).

This paper, the fourth to tackle *The Atlas*, will tell the story of "Dutch Seacoast" and why Slessor made this poem the centerpiece of his sequence.

KENNETH SLESSOR'S "DUTCH SEACOAST"

Let's begin with the poem itself:³

The Atlas, Poem 3: "Dutch Seacoast" (ca. 1930)

"Toonneel der Steden van de vereenighde Nederlanden met hare Beschrijvingen uytgegeven by Joan. Blaeu." ["Theater of the Towns of the United Netherlands, with their Descriptions, published by Joan Blaeu."]

No wind of Life may strike within
This little country's crystal bin,
Nor calendar compute the days
Tubed in their capsule of soft glaze.

Naked and rinsed, the bubble-clear
Canals of Amsterdam appear,
The blue-tiled turrets, china clocks
And glittering beaks of weathercocks.

3. "Dutch Seacoast" is reprinted from the Haskell and Dutton edition *Kenneth Slessor: Collected Poems* (Slessor et al. 1994, 73–74), whose version removes the parentheses around the epigraph in the original *Cuckooz Contrey* version (Slessor 1932, 15), but is otherwise identical to it. The bracketed translation is my addition, as is the "de" prior to "vereenighde Nederlanden" throughout my article, since both Slessor and his source—from which the poet carefully copied his epigraph—accidentally omitted the word. The correct title is *Toonneel der Steden van de vereenighde Nederlanden*.

A gulf of sweet and winking hoops
Whereon there ride 500 poops
With flying mouths and fleeting hair
Of saints hung up like candles there—

Fox-coloured mansions, lean and tall,
That burst in air but never fall,
Whose bolted shadows, row by row,
Float changeless on the stones below—

Sky full of ships, bay full of town,
A port of waters jellied brown:
Such is the world no tide may stir,
Sealed by the great cartographer.

O, could he but clap up like this
My decomposed metropolis,
Those other countries of the mind,
So tousled, dark and undefined!

Brief and ordered, the third poem of *The Atlas* eschews the flights of fantasy, exotic words, and strange locales that characterized both “The King of Cuckooz” (*The Atlas*, poem 1) and “Post-roads” (*The Atlas*, poem 2). By contrast, “Dutch Seacoast” is almost Vermeer-like in its intimacy and in the clarity with which it suggests seventeenth-century Amsterdam. Yet it’s not a Dutch landscape that Slessor’s poem emulates, but a Dutch map. And this “old map,” as A. D. Hope once wrote, is “presented with a sort of ecstasy of perception . . . [that has] the power of illuminating the miracle of naked existence” (Hope 1963, 38; rpt. Thomson 1968, 129–130).

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“Dutch Seacoast” anchors *The Atlas*. To the end of his life, it remained one of Slessor’s favorites; or, as he himself put it, one of his eight “least unsuccessful” (letter to Professor M. B. Yoken, 14 March 1971: NLA MS 3020 1/12/973; rpt. in Mead 1997, 212, 285n1). Douglas Stewart considered it to be the first of Slessor’s “fine and watery poems” (Stewart 1977, 46), and in 1964, he included “Dutch Seacoast” in his influential anthology *Modern Australian Verse* (Stewart 1964, 6), just as Dennis Haskell would do later in the posthumous *The Sea Poems of Kenneth Slessor* (Slessor et al. 1990, 19). In Slessor’s ironic critique “To Myself,” first published as “Sentimental Soliloquy” in *Cuckooz Contrey* (Slessor 1932, 47),⁴ the poet pokes fun at himself (“my rather tedious hero”) by singling out the canals described in “Dutch Seacoast” and the long-forgotten sources from which his poetry drew inspiration (Slessor et al. 1994, 98–99):

Have you not poured yourself, thin fluid mind,
Down the dried-up canals, the powdering creeks,
Whose waters none remember
Either to praise them or condemn,

4. According to the editors of *Kenneth Slessor’s Collected Poems*, “Sentimental Soliloquy” was completed in April 1930 (Slessor et al. 1994, 381), which means “Dutch Seacoast” had been written by then.

Whose fabulous cataracts none can find
Save one who has forgotten what he seeks?

A. D. Hope also plays with the poet's sources in "Slessor Twenty Years After: Why the Poems Survive." In that sensitive essay, Hope quotes from only one of Slessor's poems—the final three stanzas of "Dutch Seacoast"—and ends his eulogy with "countries of the mind" in the poem's penultimate line (Hope 1963, 38; rpt. Thomson 1968, 130):

If asked to say what Slessor has succeeded in best, I should say that it has been to create a genuine country of the mind for poetry out of material which seems only fit for charades and to have demonstrated that for Australia such a country is as suitable a source of creation as the native landscape.

As we shall see, the inspiration for "Dutch Seacoast" was also the inspiration for the entire sequence. In his poetry notebook, Slessor made "Blæu's painted towns" one of the opening phrases of *The Atlas* (February 22, -s58). Then he proceeded to list many of the features on the town maps, so that what he says about Blæu ends up being his longest entry prior to his work on "The King of Cuckooz" (ibid.; see March 2–3, -s62 to -s63). Even more compelling, the final stanza of "Dutch

Seacoast" reworks Slessor's very first poetic statement in *The Atlas* drafts: "If only world cd be like world of old mapmakers neatly parcelled into known and unknown" (March 5, -s64; see Caesar 1995, 59). Because his yearning for order evolved into such a dominant theme within the sequence, "Dutch Seacoast"—initially slated as second (March 18, -s76; March 28, -s83; April 3, -s88)—became the central poem of *The Atlas*.

The poem makes explicit Slessor's attempt to order chaos. While "Post-roads" focuses on human progress, ecstatic obsession and the quest for immortality, the middle poem of *The Atlas* deals with how artists represent space and time. For the first time in the sequence, Slessor has us imagine that he is actually looking at the map described by his poem: in this case, a plan view of Amsterdam with buildings in perspective by the Dutch cartographer Joan Blæu (1598–1673) (Figure 1). By critiquing Blæu's map



Figure 1: Detail of a portrait of Joan Blæu by Johan van Rossum (1660). Famous throughout Europe, Joan Blæu was called the "prince of printers" (*Typographorum princeps*; Koeman et al. 2007, 1314n126). The original oil on canvas painting measures 122×96 cm (48×38 in) and shows Blæu's left hand on the 4-volume edition of the *Atlas Novus* (1645–1654; see Van der Krogt 2005, 7). Photographed by the author at the *Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum* in Amsterdam (RB 0301).

in “Dutch Seacoast,” Slessor encourages us to compare poetry with cartography, life with art.

JOAN BLAEU AND OLD MAPS OF THE WORLD

Joan stood at the very heart of the famous Blaeu family of mapmakers and publishers, which included his father and partner, Willem Janszoon Blaeu (1571–1638), his brother Cornelis (1610–1644), as well as his sons and heirs Willem Blaeu (1635–1700), Pieter Blaeu (1637–1706), and Joan Blaeu II (1650–1712).⁵ After his father’s death in 1638, Joan expanded their cartographic business and became “manager of the largest printing house in Europe” (Koeman 1970, 20; Koeman et al. 2007, 1314–1315). Like Willem before him, Joan also secured appointment as mapmaker and supplier of charts for the Dutch East India Company (VOC), which not only gave him “access to cartographic information from around the world,” but also proved a lucrative monopoly that he maintained until his own death thirty-five years later (Zandvliet 2007, 1460; see 1439). Although he became wealthy enough to hold high public office, two events in 1672 may have precipitated his demise: the destruction of his business by fire, and his dismissal from the City Council after two decades of service (Koeman 1970, 8–11). As for his cartographic masterpieces, *Atlas Maior sive Cosmographia Blaviana* (“The Grand Atlas or Blaeu’s Cosmography,” 1662–1672)—which had grown from the two-volume set that his father and he published in 1635 to a twelve-volume atlas containing 600 maps—enjoyed an “unparalleled reception” and became “a fiercely coveted status symbol among wealthy patricians” (Koeman et al. 2007, 1330); while *Toonneel der Steden van de . . . Nederlanden*, best known in English as Town Atlas of the Netherlands (1649; see Blaeu [1652?]a), represents “the culmination of the book and map production of Joan Blaeu” (Koeman et al. 2007, 1335; see 1315).

Slessor’s engagement with Joan Blaeu was immediate. Long before he’d completed the poem, “Dutch Seacoast” began to take shape as he copied three lines of prose into his poetry notebook. On the very first page in his draft of *The Atlas*, Slessor wrote (NLA MS 3020/19/1, February 22, -s58: Slessor’s emphasis):

Blaeu’s painted towns, fortifications, soldiers, tulip-gardens, blue-tiled roofs, scarlet houses in neat rows, canals, spires, watermills turning, rivers full of boats, shipyards, soldiers on fortifications, mynheers in groves (drinking)

As usual in *The Atlas*, most of Slessor’s verbal images come from the 1929 Francis Edwards catalogue *Old Maps of the World*. This particular passage comes from the catalogue’s preface. Which means that Slessor—while perusing *Old Maps of the World*—must have found these words as soon as he opened the catalogue (Francis Edwards 1929, 4–5) (Figure 2):

5. All dates of the Blaeu family, except for Joan’s (see Koeman et al. 2007, 2071), come from Tooley et al. (1999–2004, 1:143–145; compare Van der Krogt 2000, 25–27). The editors of *Kenneth Slessor: Collected Poems* mistakenly assign Willem Janszoon Blaeu’s dates to his son Joan Blaeu (Slessor et al. 1994, 360).

PREFACE

THE collection of old maps has in the last few years assumed a position of considerable importance. There is a mystery and romance about old maps that their modern counterparts can never hope to rival. In the eighteenth century it was fashionable to condemn geographers who

... "in *Afric maps*

With savage pictures fill their gaps,

And d'er unobtainable downs

Place elephants for want of Towns." . . . SWIFT.

To-day that is the essence of their charm. Charles Lamb, the harbinger of many a romantic movement, was the first modern to discern their extraordinary attraction and to crystallise it in the phrase "*dusty maps of Mexico, dim as dreams, and soundings of the Bay of Panama.*" To hold an ancient atlas of rich and gorgeous colouring, to turn the leaves to see the quaint fantastic figures adorning their borders, ships riding the seven seas, and towns picked out in red and gold, gleaming as if the sun shone on them, is to have in one's hand the epitome of an age, art and knowledge combined in happy proportions. To see a Dutch town by Blaeu is to see how delightful the art of map-making can be made—little red houses neatly arranged in rows, with blue tiled roofs, churches and public buildings standing out above their neighbours, watermills turning merrily, not only the ocean but rivers and canals filled with shipping, shipbuilding in the yards, soldiers on the fortifications, mynheers walking down shady groves, even the very design of garden plots being shown—the whole forms an animated scene of infinite

brilliance. To wander farther afield it is impossible to see unmoved, Jamaica under Spanish rule with its ancient towns of Oristan and Sevilla, or solemn sleepy Dutch New York, to see the Victoria bursting into the Pacific, or following in the wake of the conquistadors to read the sonorous names of Spanish piety.

The utilitarian interest of the early efforts of cartography are obvious. A few excellent books have been published, Beazley's *Dawn of Modern Geography*, Nordenskiöld's *Facsimile Atlas and Periplus*, Chubb's *Atlases of Great Britain*, Heawood's *Geographical Discovery*, Sir George Fordham's *Works*, Humphrey's monograph, Phillip's *Library of Congress List*, etc. From these the bulk of the notes have been compiled, but the whole subject is still largely undeveloped. The extent of the following list offers many unexplored byways for the enthusiastic student or collector to follow, and it is hoped that its perusal will give much pleasure to its recipients, and enable and encourage many to "*wade still farther and farther into the sweet study of cosmographic.*"

Figure 2: "Preface," 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* (Francis Edwards 1929, 4–5). Courtesy of the New York Public Library and of Francis Edwards Ltd.

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Slessor was so charmed by this description that he quoted it verbatim in the "Author's Notes" appended to *Cuckooz Contrey* (July 22, -s191;

Slessor 1932, 75; rpt., Slessor et al. 1994, 360), thereby making his note on "Dutch Seacoast" the longest of those he devoted to the sequence. Even the courteous seventeenth-century Dutch expression "mynheer" ("sir," literally "my lord") survives the transcription, although he substituted more picturesque expressions for several catalogue descriptions—"tulip gardens" for "garden plots," "scarlet" for "red," "drinking" for "walking." More important, the catalogue's lyrical description inspired Slessor not only to compose the poem, which he tentatively called "Dutch Map (Blaeu)" (March 18, -s76), but to begin what would become the 130-page draft of *The Atlas*. Though he does not mention *Old Maps of the World* in his "February 22" entry (-s58, above)—in fact, he does not name the catalogue until more than 110 pages into his draft (July 22, -s191)—anyone familiar with the Francis Edwards catalogue scarcely requires his header "Atlases" (just below "February 22") to recognize that Slessor had abruptly ended one project (January 9 to February 20: -s22 to -s57: see Haft 2011, 31) and begun the opening sequence of *Cuckooz Contrey*.

BLAEU'S TOWN ATLAS OF THE NETHERLANDS

Several steps would precede his creation of the poem, however. First, Slessor had to track down the atlas to which the description refers. Turning from the catalogue's preface to its highlights of cartographic history (Francis Edwards 1929, 6–7), he discovered the importance of the Blaeus to map historians, map dealers, and collectors, for whom Willem and Joan Blaeu are "the most widely known cartographic publishers of the seventeenth century" (Van der Krogt 2000, 25). In

6. Underlines are mine and indicate verbal images in the 1929 catalogue that Slessor paraphrased in his poetry notebook.

fact, the catalogue’s highlights completely ignore Robert Norton, mention John Ogilby, John Speed, and Nicolas Sanson—from whom Slessor also borrowed his epigraphs—only once; yet shower the Blaeu family with no fewer than five tributes (Francis Edwards 1929, 7) (Figure 3):

1635 Blaeu’s Atlas. A notable advance on all previous productions, Blaeu’s Atlases form the finest examples of decorative map-making. His first map published 1606, the firm continuing until 1672.⁷

1638 Jansson, contemporary and rival of Blaeu. The first publisher to issue views and plans of towns concurrently with but separate from his maps.

1645–62 Blaeu published his atlas of English Counties.

1649 Blaeu published his atlas of Holland, the *chef d’oeuvre* of the greatest master of pictorial cartography.

1662 First issue of county maps of Scotland by Blaeu from Pont’s manuscripts.

FRANCIS EDWARDS LIMITED Data

- 1574 First map of an English County, viz. Saxton’s Bucks, Berks and Oxon.
- 1579 Saxton’s Atlas, the first atlas of English county maps.
- 1584 Wagenar published Mariners Mirror.
- 1595 First Edition of Mercator’s Atlas. The first use of the word Atlas as applied to a collection of maps possibly adapted from Lafferri, who was the first to use the symbol of Atlas supporting the world on his shoulders.
- 1607 Mercator Hondius Atlas. The first to give their respective names to N. and S. America.
- 1611 John Speed published the second English county atlas.
- 1635 Blaeu’s Atlas. A notable advance on all previous productions, Blaeu’s Atlases form the finest examples of decorative map-making. His first map published 1606, the firm continuing till 1672.
- 1638 Jansson, contemporary and rival of Blaeu. The first publisher to issue views and plans of towns concurrently with but separate from his maps.
- 1645-62 Blaeu published his atlas of English Counties.
- 1647-67 Nicholas Sanson, founder of French school of cartography, flourished.
- 1649 Blaeu published his atlas of Holland, the *chef d’oeuvre* of the greatest master of pictorial cartography.
- 1662 First issue of county maps of Scotland by Blaeu from Pont’s manuscripts.
- 1675 Ogilvy’s Book of English Roads, the first of its kind.
- 1677 London adopted as prime meridian (instead of Feyrol) by John Adams.
- 1683 Petty’s Atlas of Ireland and its divisions, the first of its kind.
- 1746 J. Rocque published the first exact large scale map of London.
- 1775-81 Faden issued his important series of American maps with plans of the military operations.
- 1776-81 Atlantic Neptune published by British Government for the use of the Royal Navy in American waters. The most ambitious and monumental map publication ever attempted.
- 1783-4 Triangulation commenced on Hounslow Heath by Gen. Roy.
- 1792 Rizzi Zannoni issued his atlas in which the most striking and delicate treatment of engraved map surface is shown.
- 1801 First production of Ordnance Survey, viz. Kent.

Figure 3: “Data,” in the 1929 Francis Edwards catalogue *Old Maps of the World* (Francis Edwards 1929, 7). This is the second of two pages enumerating important dates in European cartography from 500 BCE to 1801 (6–7). This chronology must have helped Slessor refine his search of the most celebrated seventeenth-century cartographers. Courtesy of the New York Public Library and of Francis Edwards Ltd.

7. Note how the singular—“Blaeu’s” and “his,” particularly in the “1635” tribute—makes it look as if only one individual is involved. Later, the catalogue elaborates: “John, Cornelius, and William Janszoon Blaeu [1571–1673], the Dutch Cartographers, produced in the early Part of the 17th Century a Magnificent Series of Maps, so Beautifully Drawn, Engraved, and Decorated, that their Work stands Unrivalled as the Finest Exhibition the world has seen of the Art of Map-Making” (Francis Edwards 1929, 71, entry 163). Unfortunately, “1571–1673” combines the dates of Willem’s birth and Joan’s death. Whether correctly or not, the catalogue gives Willem/William—often identified as “G. Blaeu” (the Latin version of his name was Guilelmus)—the lion’s share of credit for many of the Blaeu maps it advertises; and singles out Joan/John only in entries 18 (p. 21), 19 & 21 (p. 22), 163 (p. 71), 332 (p. 93), and 751–752 (p. 132). Finally, the catalogue’s “1635” tribute lists 1606 as the date of Willem’s first map (Francis Edwards 1929, 7), whereas scholars now agree that he began publishing maps in 1604 and producing globes as early as 1598–1599 (Koeman 1967, 68; Van der Krogt 2000, 25; Tooley et al. 1999–2004, 1:143–145; Koeman et al. 2007, 1314); moreover, the *firm* survived until 1695, when, over two decades after Joan’s death, his sons auctioned off the remaining printing department, thus marking the “end of the Blaeus as a printing house of world renown” (Koeman 1967, 69).

From there, it didn't take Slessor long to find Joan Blaeu's "atlas of Holland," listed as item 18 among the catalogue's 852 entries. Blaeu's "Holland Dedication Copy" is not only the second most expensive item in the catalogue, but is hailed as "the *chef d'oeuvre* of the greatest master of pictorial cartography" (Francis Edwards 1929, 7).

Blaeu's atlas was meant to dazzle (Francis Edwards 1929, 21) (Figure 4):

18 BLAEU (JOAN.)

Toonneel der Steden van [de] vereenighde Nederlanden met hare Beschrijvingen uytgegeven by Joan. Bleau. [*sic*]

Engraved title, 124 double page, 7 half page maps and 10 text illustrations, consisting of general maps of Holland and its provinces, views of towns, fortifications, and individual views of public buildings, &c., all in full contemporary colouring heightened with gold, including prospects of the famous towns of

Nimmigen,	Harlem,	Amsterdam,
Zutphen,	Delft,	Gouda,
Dordrecht,	Leyden,	Rotterdam, &c.

views of Curia at 's Gravenhage, exterior and interior, large plate of Landboats, &c. Folio, contemporary red morocco, richly gilt, panel sides, raised bands, linen tapes, gilt edges, Amsterdam [1649].

Special Dedication Copy from the States General to Sydi Abdalla ben Sydi Muhamed, Prince of Salé, and no doubt one of the gifts of a contemporary Dutch Embassy who favoured an alliance with that Prince against Spain. The dedication to Sydi Muhamed is printed in Dutch and Arabic, and curiously asks for God's blessing on that rapacious corsair.

It is a magnificent example in immaculate condition of the best work of one of the greatest masters of ornate map making. Its charm is indescribable, the various minutiae are so delicately rendered, and the colouring is brilliant. No modern process can give absolute fidelity to the beauty of the original, but some idea of the scale of the production may be gained by referring to the coloured plate, which is roughly one fifth reduced in size.

Slessor was hooked. In his poetry journal, he copied the title of this atlas (March 28, -s83). *Toonneel der Steden van de vereenighde Nederlanden* belongs to one of the two volumes of Blaeu's Dutch towns, first published in Latin in 1649, shortly after the Treaty of Münster concluded Holland's Eighty Year War with Spain (1568–1648: Koeman et al. 2007, 1335).⁸ If the 1648 Peace of Westphalia ended "the fictional unity of Christian Europe once and for all" (Akerman 1991, 338), Dutch cartographic historians assure us that:

8. For images of the frontispieces, see Koeman (1967, figs. 19 and 20), Van der Krogt (2010, 343), and Ekamper (2009), who also provides a map linked to the town maps in both volumes of *Toonneel der Steden*.

Of all the Blaeu atlases, the town atlases of the Low Countries are held in the highest esteem in the Netherlands. This is due not only to their very fine production, but to the fact that their composition was tied to the struggle for independence from Spain. Bound up with the most dramatic and heroic period of the shaping of the Dutch state, they depict the proud and industrious cities of the Northern Provinces in their full splendor (Koeman et al. 2007, 1335; see Koeman 1967, 295).

After two initial Latin editions in 1649, Blaeu published not only a third Latin edition sometime around 1652 but also the Dutch edition of his famous atlas (Van der Krogt 2010, 1, 300, 329, 343). Whereas the two volumes in the original Latin edition contained the same number of views, by the time the Dutch edition came out, those in the Republic of the Seven United Provinces volume (Blaeu [1652?]b) outnumbered those in the Spanish Netherlands volume (Blaeu [1652?]c) by as many as 129 to 94 (Van der Krogt 2010, 302, 329). In the patriotic title “Town of the United Netherlands,” Slessor had found his epigraph for “Dutch Seacoast.”

MAPS INTO POETRY

Blaeu’s town maps made their cartographer “one of the greatest masters of ornate map making” (Francis Edwards 1929, 21), a virtue that proved irresistible to the painterly poet. And Slessor had an extra benefit that he may not have had when composing the other poems of *The Atlas*: that of actually *seeing* a map crafted by the cartographer of the poem’s epigraph. Keyed to item

17 BELMAS (J.)

Journaux des Sieges faits ou soutenus par les Francais dans la Peninsule, 1807-14.
24 large double-page plans (one missing).
Large folio, half morocco, Paris, 1836.

Sieges dans
la Penin-
sule
£1

18 BLAEU (JOAN.)

Toonneel der Steden van vereenighde Nederlanden met hare Beschrijvingen uytgegeven by Joan. Bleau.

Engraved title, 124 double page, 7 half page maps and 10 text illustrations, consisting of general maps of Holland and its provinces, views of towns, fortifications, and individual views of public buildings, &c., all in full contemporary colouring heightened with gold, including prospects of the famous towns of

Nimmigen,	Harlem,	Amsterdam,
Zutphen,	Delft,	Gouda,
Dordrecht,	Leyden,	Rotterdam, &c.

views of Curia at 's Gravenhage, exterior and interior, large plate of Landboats, &c.
Folio, contemporary red morocco, richly gilt, panel sides, raised bands, linen tapes, gilt edges, Amsterdam [1649].

Holland
Dedica-
tion Copy

£600

Special Dedication Copy from the States General to Sydi Abdalla ben Sydi Muhamed, Prince of Salé, and no doubt one of the gifts of a contemporary Dutch Embassy who favoured an alliance with that Prince against Spain. The dedication to Sydi Muhamed is printed in Dutch and Arabic, and curiously asks for God’s blessing on that rapacious corsair.

It is a magnificent example in immaculate condition of the best work of one of the greatest masters of ornate map making. Its charm is indescribable, the various minutiae are so delicately rendered, and the colouring is brilliant. No modern process can give absolute fidelity to the beauty of the original, but some idea of the scale of the production may be gained by referring to the coloured plate, which is roughly one fifth reduced in size.

21

Figure 4: Description of Joan Blaeu’s Toonneel der Steden van [de] vereenighde Nederlanden (1649), item 18 in the 1929 Francis Edwards catalogue *Old Maps of the World* (Francis Edwards 1929, 21). This volume of Blaeu’s Town Atlas featured the northern—i.e., independent—part of the Netherlands; while the other volume, Toonneel der Steden van’s Konings Nederlanden, covered the southern part of the Netherlands, which had been reconquered by the King of Spain and, to this day, remains predominantly Catholic. That this magnificent copy of Blaeu’s “Theater of the Towns of the United Netherlands, with their Descriptions” was dedicated “from the States General to Sydi Abdalla ben Sydi Muhamed, Prince of Salé,” shows that “rapacious corsair[s]” of Northern Africa were as politically influential in the mid-seventeenth-century as they had been a generation earlier, the period in which “The King of Cuckooz” was set (1620–1621, *The Atlas*, poem 1; see Koeman 1970, 42). Courtesy of the New York Public Library and of Francis Edwards Ltd.



Figure 5: “Blaeu’s View of Flushing, 1649,” fold-out map from the 1929 Francis Edwards catalogue *Old Maps of the World* (Francis Edwards 1929, 20). On a 20×23 cm page (8½×9¾ in), the 15×20 cm map (6½×8 in) with its northern orientation is keyed to the final words of item 18 (21; see Figure 4, above): “No modern process can give absolute fidelity to the beauty of the original, but some idea of the scale of the production may be gained by referring to the coloured plate, which is roughly one fifth reduced in size.” The original map of Vlissingen, plate 51 iijE in the Dutch edition of *The United Netherlands*, measured 41.5×51 cm (16½×20 in) (Van der Krogt 2010, 1542, entry 4736). The Flushing map typifies the other maps of the *Town Atlas of the Netherlands*, whose presentation is “plain and consistent” (Koeman 1997, 92). Courtesy of the New York Public Library and of Francis Edwards Ltd.

18 is “Blaeu’s View of Flushing, 1649” (20), one of only *four* maps illustrating the catalogue, and the *only* one in color (Figure 5). In his notebook, Slessor put a question mark beside the words “2: View of Flushing/Vlissingen” (April 3, -s88). The “2” indicates that he was considering the map for “Dutch Seacoast” when the poem was slated as second in the sequence. More intriguing, Slessor’s line “a gulf of sweet and winking hoops” may allude to the map’s pattern of light and shade defining the semi-circular waves that cradle the ships in the foreground of Blaeu’s view: the poet’s “April 1” journal entry (-s86) not only repeatedly emphasizes “waves” and their “neat” arrangement, but specifies that “28 ships are on them hooped”—precisely the number of ships on the Flushing map’s sea.

That Slessor ultimately turned his focus to Amsterdam is only natural. Amsterdam was not only Blaeu’s home but also the great metropolis driving the seventeenth-century Netherlands (Schama 1987, 224). The poem’s references to “500 poops” and “the bubble-clear/canals of Amsterdam” suggest that Slessor found a copy of Blaeu’s magnificent view of Amsterdam—*Amstelodami Celeberrimi Hollandiae Emporii Delineatio*

Nova—with its innumerable vessels packing not only the Amstel River but also Amsterdam’s canals and port (Figure 6).⁹ Although the map does not appear in the catalogue, two details in Slessor’s poetry notebook lend further weight to his having seen it. One is his description of waves “counted & arranged (parcelled & combed)” (April 1, -s86), which describes the water on Blaeu’s *Ya Fluvius* (IJ River) far better than it does the sea around Flushing. Then there’s the word “hay-cocks” in the same entry. Slessor inserted this word into his journal after he’d listed certain features that could appear on any town map (ibid.):

soldiers on fortifications, blue-tiled roofs, scarlet houses, water-mills
turning, tulip-gardens, canals, spires, clocks, foundations, fishpools,

9. Slessor’s drafts show that he revised the number of ships from 5 to 28 in the same entry that introduces his line “a gulf of sweet and winking hoops” (April 1, -s86; and see April 3, -s88). The number increased to 100 (May 6, -s111, to May 13, -s118; MS 3020/19/18, -s178) and, finally, to 500 (May 12, -s117, to May 21, -s124).

boats on rivers, sloops, churches, cathedrals, monasteries, farms, piers, wharves, bridges, docks, chimneys, windmills, shipyards, mynheers in groves (drinking) neat rows/haycocks.

Written in a heavier hand than the other words, “haycocks” sticks out precisely because it does not appear in any of the Francis Edwards descriptions of Blaeu maps (1929, 4–5, 7). And also because there are no piles of hay on the Flushing map, yet they proliferate wildly on the map of Amsterdam.¹⁰

Despite differences in size, orientation, perspective, and quantity of features, the maps of Flushing and Amsterdam nevertheless resemble one another closely. Both show water and ships filling the bottom, while the town floats above. Blocks of buildings, seen from overhead, are separated by canals and surrounded by fortifications, moats, and gardens. Although Slessor claimed that “bolted shadows, row by row/float changeless on the stones below,” shadows are notably absent from the perspective plans lest they muddy the geometric precision of the streets. Yet Slessor has captured the elevation of turrets and mansions “lean and tall,” the motionless windmills, and the prominence of ships—shown on the maps either in profile (Flushing) or in bird’s-eye view (Amsterdam). With regards to colors, waters are gray-blue rather than the “brown” of “port” (Slessor’s allusion to the Dutch fondness for drink); and the tiles of “blue-tiled turrets” are more to be imagined than evident on the map. Yet roofs and steeples are “blue,” and “fox-coloured” describes the towns’ brick buildings on these hand-colored views. Furthermore, “Dutch Seacoast” alludes to the artistry of Blaeu’s landscapes by referring to painterly techniques: “tubed in their capsule of soft glaze,” “rinsed,” “jellied brown.” Although the catalogue mentions “soldiers on the fortifications, [and] mynheers walking down shady groves” (Francis Edwards 1929, 4), living beings are notably absent from Blaeu’s maps of Amsterdam and Flushing. Slessor followed

10. When Slessor finally got around to rhyming “clocks” in stanza two, he tried “docks,” then settled upon “weathercocks” (“the blue-tiled turrets, china clocks/and glittering beaks of weathercocks”), instead of “haycocks” (May 21, -s124). The titles that Slessor gave his poem provide no indication of which Blaeu map(s) he may have seen. He retained the more general “Dutch” in his poem’s title even as he changed its name from “Dutch Map (Blaeu)” (March 18, -s76) to “Dutch Landscape” (March 28, -s83), then to “Dutch Coast” (April 3, -s88) and, finally, to “Dutch Seacoast” (May 1, -s106).



Figure 6: *Amstelodami Celeberrimi Hollandiae Emporii Delineatio Nova* (“New Delineation of Amsterdam, Holland’s Most Famous Trading Port”), plate 26 in Joan Blaeu’s *Toonneel der Steden van de vereenighde Nederlanden* ([1652?]b). The original is 41 x 54 cm (16 x 21 in) (Van der Krogt 2010, 688–689, entry 110, which lists it as plate 23 iJE in vol. 1). Beside the lists of landmarks that frame the map on the upper-right and upper-left is the coat-of-arms of Amsterdam (left), and a shield with a sailing vessel (right). The compass in the lower right indicates that the map is oriented southwest—the typical orientation favored since the sixteenth century (687–693, figs. 107–111, 122–135)—with the town pictured above the IJ inlet [YA Fluvius] that gave Amsterdam access to the world. The colors of this map accord with the “red, green & guinea-yellow” description in Slessor’s poetry notebook (April 1, -s86). Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division (G1851 .B52 1652).

suit.¹¹ Yet because the catalogue praises the mapmaker's towns for "form[ing] an animated scene of infinite brilliance" (ibid.), Slessor breathed life into the inanimate, only to negate it throughout his poem: "no wind . . . may strike," no calendar may "compute," mansions "never fall," and "no tide may stir"; while "beaks" belong only to "weathercocks," and "saints" are ships' figureheads. He even emulated the order, simplicity, and human scale of the Town Atlas maps by making "Dutch Seacoast" the shortest and most regular of *The Atlas* poems with its six compact stanzas of four lines, *aabb* rhymes, and conversational iambic rhythms.

"WORLD OF OLD MAPMAKERS"

If Slessor found his subject in Blaeu's map(s) and in the catalogue's description of the Town Atlas, his reaction to *Old Maps of the World* conditioned his theme. Early in his draft of *The Atlas*, when Slessor was still jotting down phrases from the catalogue ("Atlases [1]"–"Atlas 6": -s58 to -s63), he suddenly had an inspiration (March 5, -s64):¹²

If only world c[oul]d be like
world of old mapmakers
neatly parcelled into
known and unknown
human & [? trees & ships etc.]—
instead of which it is
strange dark confusing
baffling currents
& whole [of] living
insubstantial

So sudden was this inspiration that Slessor scribbled these words diagonally across the left side of his notebook, thus breaking for the first time his routine of drafting *The Atlas* in neat horizontal lines on the right side—a rather graphic example of his dichotomy between order (the "neatly parceled . . . world of old mapmakers") and its opposite ("strange dark confusing . . . insubstantial").

In the final stanza of "Dutch Seacoast" Slessor rephrased his dichotomy as he turned from the delightful order of Blaeu's artistic representation to anxiety over his own perception of the world:

O, could he but clap up like this
My decomposed metropolis,

11. The drafts of "Dutch Seacoast," on the other hand, show that Slessor considered inserting people ("galley-captives" or "galley-chaunters": May 8, -s113, MS 3020/19/18, -s114; "seaboys": May 12, -s117), mermaids (May 8, -s113), angels (May 10, -s115), and wildlife into his own description (May 3, -s109; May 7, -s112).

12. The transcription comes from Slessor et al. (1994, 358), who leave out the illegible final two phrases after "insubstantial." I've added the bracketed phrase "trees & ships etc." and would change "& whole [of] living" to "& whole being." Dutton (1991, 144) incorrectly read "strange dark confusing" as "strange dark confusion," and "baffling currents" as "bubbling currents."

Those other countries of the mind,
So tousled, dark and undefined!

Within the previously light-hearted *Atlas* sequence, this stanza stands out as Slessor's first unambiguous acknowledgment, at least in *Cuckooz Contrey*, of the darkness that pervades many of his other poems. Intensely autobiographical, it hints at what Geoffrey Dutton calls "the blackness and the anger" behind Slessor's "mask of the bon viveur" (Dutton 1991, 336):¹³

Chaos, whether metaphysical, philosophical or of the fourth whisky... was essential for Slessor. But Slessor also longed for order, was picky and worked as few poets have on the minutest details of his poems (336–337).

If Blaeu's Amsterdam is a "world saved from the flux of tide and time," as Adrian Caesar argues, Slessor's final stanza emphasizes the essential difference between life and art (1995, 59):

The word "decomposed" is deliciously chosen here, connoting not only the city's deathliness, but also rendering emphatic the contrast between the artistically "composed" city of Amsterdam on the map, and Slessor's city, which eludes such artful ordering. And then there are those darker places still, in the recesses of the mind, that also remain untamed.

Slessor's concern with definition and order—as well as their absence—suits the physical as well as the political landscape of the Netherlands. The Dutch were almost continuously at war throughout the seventeenth century; if not with Spain, then with England or France. Moreover, since the thirteenth century, almost half of that "little country" has been painstakingly rescued from the sea. During Blaeu's lifetime, the Netherlands suffered terribly from floods in 1624 and 1626 (Schama 1987, 218–220), even as Dutch folklore kept the inundations and violent storms of the late Middle Ages firmly in the collective memory (37–50). Dutch windmills were designed to drain water as well as to draw it: their invention, in fact, hastened the reclamation of land between 1590 and 1640, and helped feed Amsterdam's "exploding population" of 150,000 (34–38), which had grown five-fold since 1570 (Heslinga et al. 1985, 36; Kistemaker and Van Gelder 1982, 62). To this day, building foundations rest on thousands of pilings sunk into the earth, a practice that gave rise to the "famous verse oxymoron of 'upside down masts of wood'" (Schama 1987, 301n22). Amsterdam's name proclaims its watery origins, for the town was settled only after the Amstel River had been dammed. Slessor's "sky full of ships, bay full of town" captures the upside-down, terraqueous world of the Netherlands with its inconstant commingling of sky, sea, land.¹⁴

Slessor's "sky full of ships, bay full of town" captures the upside-down, terraqueous world of the Netherlands with its inconstant commingling of sky, sea, land.

13. The next time Slessor verbalizes this dichotomy, it is in connection with "Seafight," the fifth and bleakest poem of the sequence: "(5) Could the world but be as safe, & neatly ornamented as a map! Seafight" (March 18, -s76). When Slessor composed "Seafight," however, he included only one direct allusion to a map. That allusion appears in his opening lines: "Here in a gulf of golden leaf/you'll find a seafight ringed in flame."

14. So do Slessor's drafts: "And birds that float in parchment air/Like flocks of trout suspended there" (May 3, -s109, and May 7, -s112), and "in abbies drowned below" (May 6, -s111). Although Slessor meant

Amsterdam “became an instance of the ‘ideal city’” during the seventeenth century at the same time that the Netherlands appeared as close to ideal as any country—a veritable “island of plenty in an ocean of want.”

Historically, towns have been mapped with relative accuracy because of their size and well-defined boundaries; moreover, town plans often give viewers the sense of gazing at a complete and unified whole (Akerman 1991, 171). But however “life-like” bird’s-eye views may appear (Woodward 2007, 16n53), they can be notorious for concealing, within an attractive layout, the squalor and vice of urban life. Certainly Blaeu’s Amsterdam, like any city, had its share of both. Yet Blaeu lived in the Dutch “Golden Century,” famous for its sparkling “economic fortunes, colonial energies, and demographic growth” (Schama 1987, 383). During this century, Amsterdam not only became the hub of northern European trade within the Dutch empire (Wolf 1979, 189), but also played a leading role in the world: “In a brief span of time, the city had grown to be one of the most important metropolises on the political, economic and cultural world stage” (Schilder 2000, 7). On Dutch ships, treasures from exotic ports flowed into Amsterdam’s warehouses and increasingly sumptuous canal houses (Schama 1987, 301–303). Dutch cartographers, after supplanting the Italians, became international leaders in their field before relinquishing supremacy to the French (Van der Krogt 2005, 31; Karrow 2007, 619).¹⁵ Wall maps by the Blaeus hung in public and private buildings alike (Schilder 1996; Koeman et al. 2007, 1341–1356). Jan Vermeer (1632–1675) and other Dutch masters revealed how popular the cartographic arts had become by reproducing in their paintings the very maps and globes that proudly adorned Dutch interiors (Welu 1978; Hedinger 1986; Schilder 2000, 40–49; Zandvliet 1998, 210–254). Visitors to Amsterdam marveled at her many virtues.¹⁶ In short, Amsterdam “became an instance of the ‘ideal city’” during the seventeenth century (Kistemaker and Van Gelder 1982, 59–67) at the same time that the Netherlands appeared as close to ideal as any country—a veritable “island of plenty in an ocean of want” (Schama 1987, 318; see 323). So much so, that few Dutch volunteered to settle overseas, resulting in the gradual unraveling of their far-flung empire with

his “decomposed metropolis” to contrast with Blaeu’s meticulously ordered map of Amsterdam, Simon Schama explains that art historians recognize a “preoccupation” in [the Dutch Golden Age] “with . . . a coming apart . . . So that the animate and inanimate world of the Dutch was seen in a state of organic flux, forever composing, decomposing and recomposing itself” (1987, 10–11). Not surprisingly, polder maps—i.e., large-scale topographic maps of reclaimed land—are not only a “specific type of Dutch multisheet map,” but were also popular publications between about 1610 and 1750 (Koeman 1997, 92). Today, over half of the Netherlands “would be under water if there were no dunes or dikes to protect it against flooding from the sea or from the large rivers” (Koeman and Van Egmond 2007, 1263). On the other hand, Max Reneman (1923–1978)—a Dutch artist and critic, argued “that the Netherlands was a work of art, the only territorial nation in the world that had been constructed by its own inhabitants . . . By draining and creating the polders, the Dutch had largely created the Netherlands” (Van Riemsdijk and Zinovich 2013, 63).

15. Two decades after the center of cartographic publishing moved from Italy to the Low Countries in the 1570s, Amsterdam suddenly became “the major map publishing center” of Europe (Karrow 2007, 619; see Koeman et al. 2007, 1305–1306). Several Amsterdam-based firms and families enabled the Dutch to maintain their cartographic supremacy in the seventeenth century. Besides the Blaeus, these included Cornelis Claesz. (1560–1609), Jodocus Hondius the Elder (1563–1612) and Henricus Hondius (1596/97–1651), Pieter van den Keere (1571–after 1646), Johannes Janssonius (1588–1664) and his family, Abraham Goos (ca. 1590–1643), Claes Jansz. Visscher (1587–1652) along with his son Nicolaes Visscher I (1618–1679) and grandson Nicolaes Visscher II (1649–1702), Cornelis Danckertsz (1603–1656) and Justus Danckertsz the Elder (1635–1701), Frederik de Wit (1629/30–1706), and Pieter Mortier (1661–1711). All dates are from Tooley et al. (1999–2004).

16. Visitors to Amsterdam were amazed at how “decently” its citizens were housed (Schama 1987, 4); at its cleanliness, which lessened susceptibility to plagues (375–378); at the abundance of fresh fish, vegetables, and rich foods (150–166) that contributed, along with the gin and beer of the “hard drinking” Dutch (189–193), to the expanding waistlines of its citizens (152, 218); at the affection that spouses demonstrated for one another and their children (422–425, 485–512); at the town’s low arrest rate (582–583); at how stable Dutch society remained in an era racked by civil strife (4, 224); at how welcoming she was to religious refugees from the south (587–600).

the loss of Brazil (1654) and New Amsterdam (1664). But that still lay ahead. Like the bird’s-eye views of nineteenth-century American towns and cities, Blaeu’s maps of Flushing and Amsterdam, created at a high point in the Dutch Golden Century, “sing the national anthem of peace and prosperity, of movement and openness, of calm and order, and of destinies to be fulfilled” (Danzer 1990, 144; see De Graaf 2001).

“THOSE OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE MIND”

Just as Slessor began “Dutch Seacoast” with the Netherlands, so in the final stanza he leaves Amsterdam for “those other countries of the mind.” No country fit that description better than Australia, the most “variously” and “erroneously” mapped of all lands (Tooley [1949] 1990, 120). “Alone among the continents of the world it was imagined long before its actual discovery” (Tooley 1979, vii), and only began emerging from the hypothetical Unknown Southern Land during the seventeenth century—thanks to the Dutch (Mutch 1942, 5; Schilder 1990, 239–258). During Blaeu’s prime, VOC ships sailed between the Netherlands and China, Japan, Ceylon, the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia), and South Africa—all the while “extending the known surface of the globe from the Arctic Sea to the antipodean isles of Tasmania and Nieuw Zeeland” (Schama 1987, 389). While commanding VOC ships in 1642–1643, the Dutch navigator Abel Tasman (ca. 1603–1659) became the first European to discover Tasmania and New Zealand with their “dark” Aboriginal peoples (Sharp 1968). And his 1644 voyage demonstrated that Australia was *not* part of some enormous polar continent extending to the equator, as depicted earlier by Joan’s own father, Willem Janszoon Blaeu (Koeman et al. 2007, 1351, 1369, 1379) (Figure 7).

Tasman’s findings made their way back to the offices of the Dutch East India Company. As official mapmaker of the VOC, Joan became the first to incorporate both of Tasman’s voyages onto a printed map: specifically, his 1645–1646 revision of Willem’s 1619 world map (Schilder 1990, 262–305, fig. 4.6; Shirley 2001, entry 300 [for Willem’s 1619 map], and entry 366

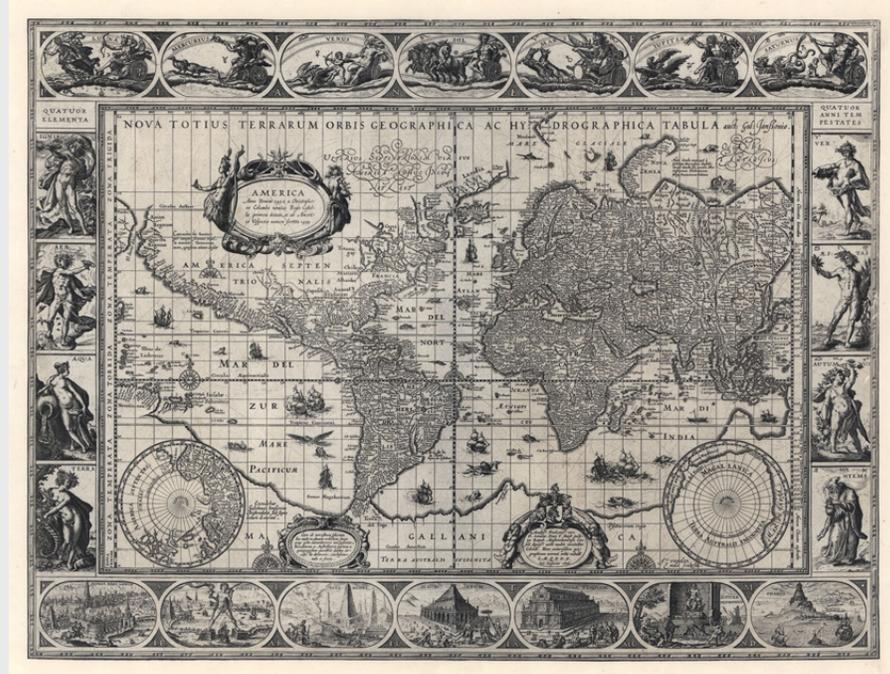


Figure 7: *Nova Totius Terrarum Orbis Geographica ac Hydrographica Tabula* [“New Geographical and Hydrographical Map of the Whole Sphere of the World”] by Willem Janszoon Blaeu [G. Ianssonius, Willem’s original patronymic] and engraved by Josua van den Ende (Amsterdam, 1606). For over fifty years, this world map on a Mercator projection (30 × 45 cm, 12 × 18 in)—described as “one of the supreme examples of the map maker’s art”—enjoyed an active circulation (Shirley 2001, entry 255). Along its borders, allegorical figures of the seven planets (top) echo vignettes depicting the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World (bottom), while the four elements (left) echo the four seasons (right). The map itself features ships and sea monsters skirting the coast of an enormous southern continent whose size nearly counter-balances that of the known world. Courtesy of the Library of Congress (G3200 1606 .B6).



Figure 8: Joan Blaeu's *Nova et Accuratissima Totius Terrarum Orbis Tabula*. This is the form that Blaeu's double-hemisphere map took in his *Atlas Maior* (1662–1672: vol. 1, pl. 1), praised by H. de la Fontaine Verwey as “the greatest and finest atlas ever published” (quoted in Van der Krogt 2005, 34). At only 40×54 cm (15½×21 in) (Shirley 2001, entry 428, pl. 315), *Nova et accuratissima totius terrarum orbis tabula* is dwarfed by Joan's 1648 map, whose twenty sheets together total 205×299 cm (nearly 7×10 ft). In fact, the *Atlas Maior* world map was “not directly taken from the large original of 1648 but [was] copied from one of his competition's reductions” (450). Nevertheless, like its more scientific-looking predecessor, this ornate and highly reproducible atlas map also refers to Australia as *Hollandia Nova* (New Holland) and its coasts similarly “suggest the real shape of the western part of that continent” from the Gulf of Carpentaria in the northeast to the Great Australian Bight in the south (Wieder 1925–1933, 3:62). The Southern Continent hypothesized by the ancient Greeks has disappeared, but so too has any hint of Antarctica. As if to symbolize its place between the old and the new, Joan framed the world between images of Copernicus and Ptolemy, and placed allegorical representations of the planets and the seasons above and below (Van der Krogt 2000, 485). Reproduced from Kyrchok (2012).

[for Joan's 1645–1646 map]]. Two years later, Joan included much the same detail from the 1645–1646 revision—along with exactly the same image of Australia (*Hollandia Nova*), Tasmania (*Van Diemens Landt*) and New Zealand (*Zeelandia Nova*)—in his own (enormous and better known) 1648 world map *Nova totius terrarum orbis tabula*, published on the occasion of the signing of the Treaty of Münster (Zandvliet 1998, 211; see Wieder 1925–1933, 3:61–65, pls. 51–71). Not only was Joan's 1648 map “lauded as the finest expression of Dutch cartography at the highest point of its development, ... [but his] world outline ... established a pattern which was followed by virtually all succeeding maps until the last decade of the century” (Shirley 2001, entry 371).

Joan's beautiful double-hemisphere map demonstrates how much more he knew of Australia than his father's generation did (Figure 8). In the 1650s, Joan's world map became the model for two inlaid marble maps of the eastern and western hemispheres covering the monumental floor of the *Burgerzaal* (“Citizens' Hall”) in Amsterdam's new Town Hall (Tasman and Meyjes 1919, xcix, 264–268; Zandvliet 1998, 211nn4–6). Blaeu may have even taken part in designing the world map and the celestial chart installed there (Goossens 1996, 28).

While the Town Hall is now the Royal

Palace, and the terrestrial hemispheres had to be replaced in 1746 (Schilder 2000, 7, fig. 1.2), a surviving 1661 floor plan nevertheless reveals “*New Holland*”—as the Dutch christened Australia—sporting Tasman's outlines (Heeres 1898, 77–78). And the floor itself is the centerpiece of Jacob van Campen's grand vision of Amsterdam: for the architect had modeled the Citizens' Hall after the universe—with Amsterdam at its heart and the world at its citizens' feet (Figure 9).¹⁷ A more

17. Tasman's voyages meant so much to Australians that, ever since 1931, the Public [State] Library of New South Wales has housed what was thought to be the original manuscript map of Tasman or his associates (State Library of New South Wales 2012). Now believed to be a late seventeenth-century Dutch copy (1695), the Bonaparte-Tasman map (as it is also called) was reproduced in 1860 by J. Swart to accompany his edition of Tasman's navigation journals. Since the Public Library opened its new building in 1942, visitors crossing the vestibule of the Mitchell Library have been greeted—*Burgerzaal*-like—by a marble mosaic map

“conspicuous cartographic display of global power” can scarcely be imagined (Zandvliet 1998, 211), particularly in a building hailed “the eighth wonder of the world” (Heeres 1898, 79).¹⁸

In his wide-ranging *Image of the World: 20 Centuries of World Maps*, Peter Whitfield suggests that “the great illustrated maps of the seventeenth century sought to restore the sense of man’s belonging in an interpreted world, the maps now taking a secularized form, in which European man was the undisputed master of his world” (1994 and 2010, 74). The cartography of the Dutch Golden Age attracted Slessor, at least in part, because he craved a world capable of being comprehended and mastered. Blaeu’s town views, in particular, epitomized for Slessor the very human need to control space and time. So much so that in “Dutch Seacoast” the cartographer’s waters are static and “bubble-clear,” as if Blaeu had only a “narrow vision” of the sea as “the site of the imagination, and of reality as it exists in full human awareness” (Haskell, quoted in Slessor et al. 1990, 7). Slessor was exaggerating, of course, and not just because the delicate lines on Blaeu’s maps suggest that water *is* flowing through canals and that waves *are* lapping against ships. “Caught up as he was in the far less artful and wholly contingent sphere of journalism,”¹⁹ Slessor’s fascination *as well as* his frustration with Blaeu’s town “portraits”—so meticulously ordered and confining—reflect his own anxieties as well as the more general fears of his generation suspended between two World Wars. Yet his love of Baroque maps would give birth to the next poem of *The Atlas* as well. And Slessor’s

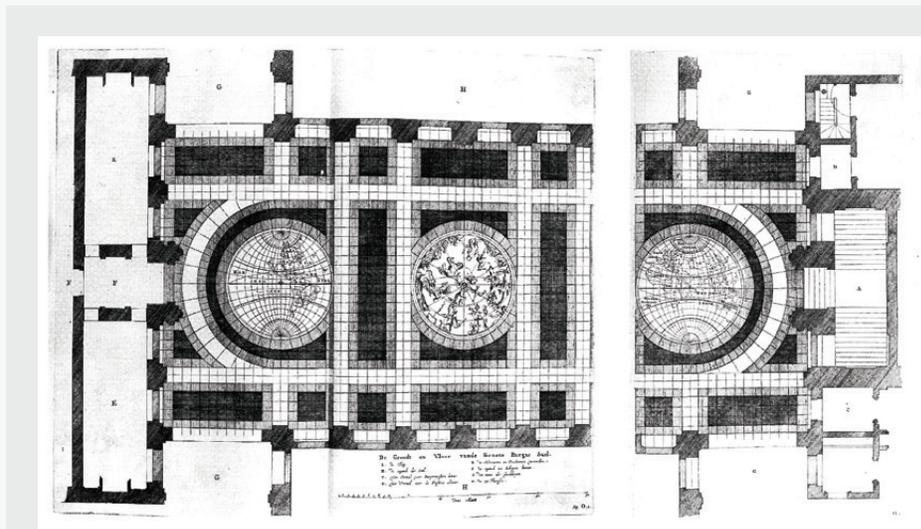


Figure 9: Jacob Vennekool’s depiction of the “Floor of the Great Civic Hall” [De Grondt en Vloer vande Groote Burger Sael]. The engraving is Figure “O” in the first edition of Jacob van Campen and Jacob Vennekool’s *Afbeelding van ’t Stadthuys van Amsterdam*. In dertigh coopere Platen geordineert door Jacob van Campen; en geteekent door Iacob Vennekool, Amsterdam: Dancker Danckerts, 1661. With each hemisphere measuring 22 feet in circumference, the world map inlaid on the marble floor of Amsterdam’s Town Hall was “one of earliest public images showing Tasman’s discoveries on the Australian continent” (NSW Government Online Shop 2013a). Nearly 300 years later, beginning in 1942, the State Library of New South Wales graced the floor of the Mitchell Library vestibule with a marble map replicating what was then believed to be Tasman’s original map of ca. 1648. Reproduced from Goossens (1996, fig. 33).

replicating that nineteenth-century reproduction (Hooker 2006; Tent 2006, 8–10). The library commissioned Slessor’s friend/cartographer James Emery, who had illustrated Slessor’s collection *Trio: A Book of Poems* with a chart of Tasman’s and Cook’s voyages (Slessor et al. 1931; Haft 2011, 16–20), to produce a facsimile of the Bonaparte-Tasman map (Emery 1946; Mitchell Library 1948, 23). Published in 1947, Emery’s facsimile is still available for \$2.95 in the Library Shop (NSW Government Online Shop 2013b).

18. Slessor’s ephrastic map-poem had seventeenth-century Dutch precedents. Around 1655, the acclaimed poet Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679) composed a lengthy poem in which he referred, in lines 977–984, to the inlaid world map in the Citizens’ Hall (Vondel and Albrecht [1655] 1982, 153, 146–147; Heeres 1898, 78n4). And in 1656, the Dutch statesman and poet Constantijn Huygens (1596–1687) celebrated the subject in a brief poem (Vondel and Albrecht [1655] 1982, 154; Heeres 1898, 79).

19. The quote is from Philip Mead, who generously read the manuscript of this article. Needless to say, any errors or oversights are my own.

“Mermaids” (*The Atlas*, poem 4) is a riotous romp through seas of fantastic creatures, and a paean to the maps that gave such creatures immortality.²⁰

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This paper is dedicated to Lou Heldens and Ludo Slagmolen, Dutch artists and dear friends.

20. Stay tuned for Part Four of my study.

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