

A Crispin Jewitt, Intelligence revealed: maps, plans and views at Horse Guards and the War Office, 1800-1880, London: British Library, 2011, pp lviii, 360, illus., B5, hardback, ISBN 978-0-7123-5843-9, £65.00

This is a complementary volume to Crispin Jewitt's *Maps for empire: the first 2000 numbered War Office maps*, published by the British Library in 1992, and reviewed by me in *Sheetlines* 36.¹ I see that I described *Maps for empire* as 'thoroughly worthwhile', but decidedly pricey, and a broadly similar comment applies to the present volume, though it is better produced and the cost does not seem so steep.

Although complementary, *Intelligence revealed* does not cover the same ground as *Maps for empire*. That volume covered the first two thousand items in what is most familiar now as the 'GSGS Series', and was able to use cryptic references in elderly hand-lists to give summary information for some 300 items for which no exemplar could be found. The mapping which survived, and could be described with scale, title, authorship, printer and size, was printed both in-house by the War Office, and elsewhere, notably by the Ordnance Survey. The end-product omitted those OS series and editions that were produced mainly or exclusively for military use, but it was otherwise a comprehensive guide to military mapping activity in the United Kingdom in the quarter-century leading up to the renaming of the Intelligence Division, War Office (IDWO) as the Topographical Section, General Staff (TSGS) in 1905; TSGS in turn became GSGS (Geographical Section, General Staff) in 1908, at a time when it was headed by Major Charles F. Close.

An introduction explains the less than straightforward organisational background to the maps. In 1803 a *Depôt of Military Knowledge* was created within the Quarter Master General's Office in the Horse Guards: it reported to the Commander in Chief. In 1855, in response to the Crimean War, a separate Topographical and Statistical *Depôt* was set up, and in 1857 these two were amalgamated into one, known variously as the Topographical *Depôt* and Topographical Department of the War Office (TDWO), under common management with the Ordnance Survey, and reporting immediately to the WO. The OS had been under the Board of Ordnance up to 1855, when the Board was abolished and its functions transferred to the War Office. OS and TDWO continued under common management, otherwise Colonel Sir Henry James, to 1870, when oversight of the OS was transferred to the Office of Works. (There is a side-on illustration of a bust of James, which makes him look particularly ferocious and unlovable.) TDWO remained with the War Office: in 1874 it was reorganised as part of the Intelligence Branch of the Quarter Master General's department (IDWO). The military origins of the OS are undisputed, from 1857 it undertook some printing of mapping that was really part of TDWO's remit, and after 1870 it continued to print a wide range of work for successively the War Office and the Ministry of Defence, though TDWO and its successors rarely undertook any purely civil work to help the OS out. The printing of some plates

¹ *Sheetlines* 36 (1993), 34-5.

for the survey of Sinai in 1869 appears an exception but, like the earlier survey of Jerusalem in 1864-5, may have been justified by broader diplomatic and strategic considerations. In short, there was always a close relationship between the distinctly military TDWO and its successors, and the national, predominantly domestic and civil, OS.

This lengthy explanation is necessary in order to set into context the scope of *Intelligence revealed*: it concentrates purely on what was printed, invariably it seems lithographically, at Horse Guards and by TDWO and IDWO, up to where *Maps for empire* begins early in 1881. As with the earlier volume, we are given scale, title, authorship, printer and size, brief explanatory comment if necessary, and the location of copies. It excludes, with a few unavoidable minor exceptions, anything printed elsewhere, whether by the OS or by civil contractors; for the whole period covered by *Intelligence revealed* the latter printed most official letterpresses, for publication or otherwise, and most associated 'graphics'. The scope also excludes anything that did not progress beyond the manuscript stage, and anything which is not known to survive. Although there are no tantalising summary lists for the periods 1803-57 and 1870-80, a combined OS-TDWO annual report was issued from 1859 to 1870, and this does list TDWO output, including some items not mentioned in *Intelligence revealed*.

Unlike *Maps for empire*, then, *Intelligence revealed* is not a broad guide to the scope of military mapping activity for the period 1803-80. To give a single example: the index gives two entries for Gibraltar, a 1:9600 of military establishments of 1823, and a 1:21,120 *Hunting map of the country adjacent to Gibraltar* of 1874, but there is no mention of the 1:600 of the town printed by the OS in 1868, and very similar in style to the contemporary domestic zincographed-and-hand-coloured 1:500.² Similarly, there is no mention of 'Isle of Wight, Sectional Drawings, &c., of South Coast, Military Road (for making contracts)', presumably for what we now know as the A3055, which is nonetheless listed in the annual report for 1863.³ Most of the entries are based on holdings by the British Library and The National Archives [Public Record Office], supplemented by holdings in six other collections: this is not a union list, but there is plenty of space for notes of other copies. Material apparently not represented in BL and TNA includes some in Library and Archives Canada and the National Library of Australia, and leads one to wonder what else might survive only at a distance from Britain, but not find a place here as it was printed by the OS. The print-run information given in the reports of the 1860s suggests that most items were produced in very limited runs: but might we hope that there will be further finds in private or as yet unexplored institutional collections? There is a challenge here for searchers of lists of 'varying cataloguing standards', as the euphemism is for interpreting the runes.

² The Gibraltar map is at British Library Maps 18425(28): this set was received by TDWO on 22 November 1870, and by the British Museum on 12 April 1913.

³ *Report of the progress of the Ordnance Survey and Topographical Dépôt, to the 31st December 1863*, British Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons Series, 1864 [3278], XXV, 645, p.15. The title page is headed 'Topographical Department, War Office'.

From the point of view of the perfectionist, the limitation of production agency and repository may be a disadvantage, but the sheer size of *Intelligence revealed* shows that at least one more volume would be necessary to widen the scope to that of *Maps for empire*, and probably another for the military-oriented work of the OS, if not up to 1881, then certainly up to 1905. Better that we have a thorough exploration within clearly defined parameters that is likely to stand the test of time, than a wider and more superficial work that would cost as much to produce, yet would quickly become of limited worth as its deficiencies were shown up. As it is, although the credentials of *Intelligence revealed* for review in an OS context may seem limited, in fact, even without exploration of all those OS 'War Department Only' printings, it sheds considerable light on the OS's military-oriented activity between 1857 and 1870, which represent over half the number of items described. In the earlier part of the period an important OS preoccupation was the survey at 1:2500 or larger of a number of areas, mostly around naval stations, as part of Palmerston's defence scheme started in 1859: as Sir Henry James loudly trumpeted, these surveys were made as part of the national 'cadastral', *i.e.* civil, mapping. At the same time, and continuing throughout the 1860s, there was a programme of surveying forts, barracks and similar establishments in Britain and Ireland: the actual survey and drawing was undertaken by the OS, 'under the direction' of officers whose main responsibilities were elsewhere (for example Captain Wilkinson, who was in overall charge of OS operations in Ireland), but the printing was by TDWO, and so this extensive series finds a place here. Incidentally, an apparent oddity is that the standard scale for fort and barrack mapping was 1:500 in Britain and 1:600 in Ireland. 1:500 was the standard scale from 1855 for urban survey in Britain; I suspect that 1:600 was related to the old Board of Ordnance standard, of scales relating inches to hundreds of feet: 1:1200, 1:2400, 1:4800, 1:9600, or 1:1800, 1:3600, 1:7200, 1:14,400. 1:600 fits neatly into this. These scales illustrate both the interconnection with mainstream OS work, and – if my hypothesis is correct – residual influence of Board of Ordnance practice.

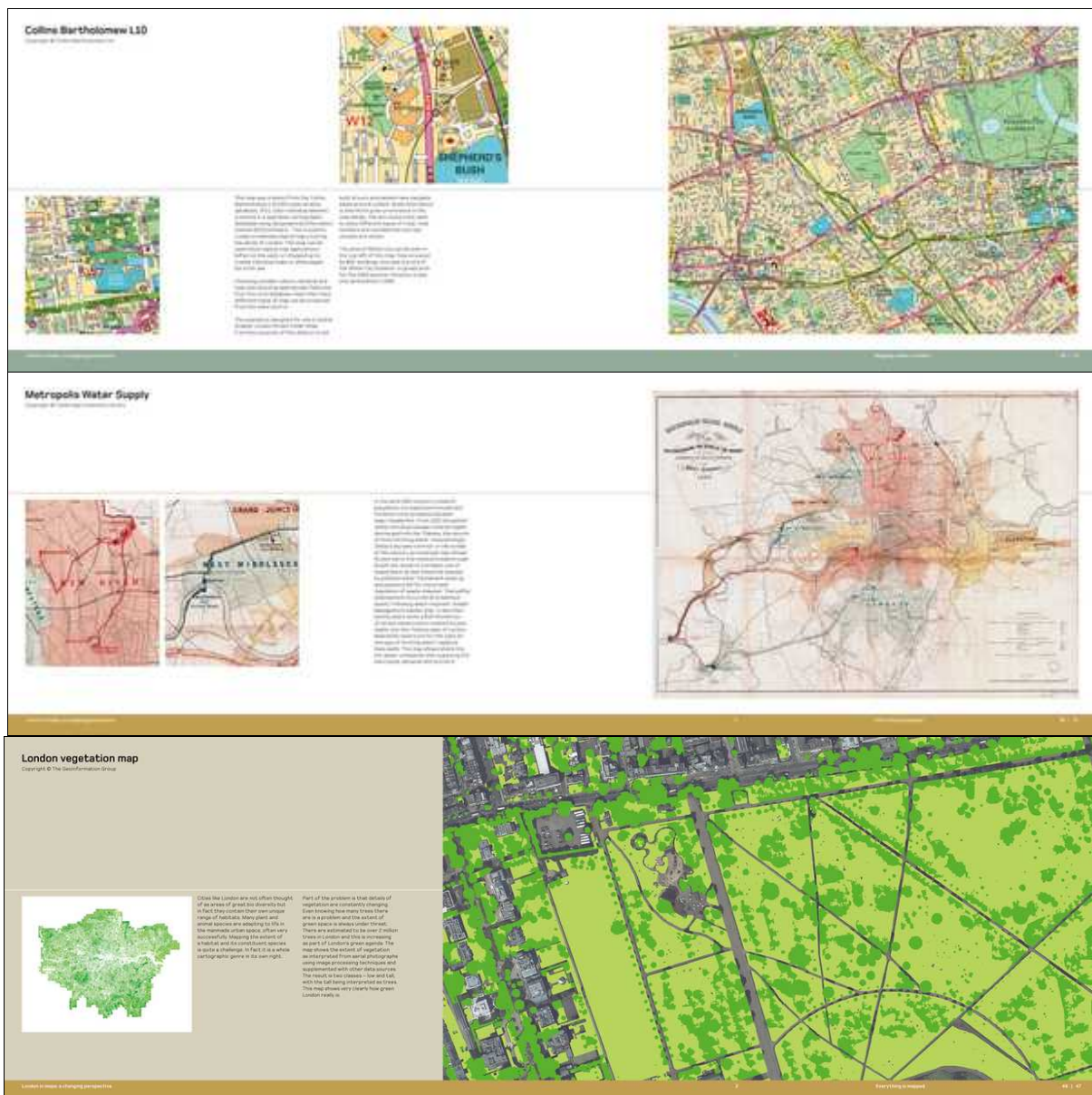
The fort and barrack series apart, one is left with the impression that TDWO tended to concentrate on confidential work and single-sheet maps, leaving more extensive multi-sheet projects to be handled by the OS at Southampton. The 'cartographic' qualification is important, as a minority of Horse Guards, TDWO and IDWO work was 'graphic', for example diagrams of military equipment or sketches of battlefields, rather than 'carto-graphic'. The majority of TDWO's work can be classed as 'reactive' rather than 'proactive', 'occasional' rather than 'institutional': a long series of plans of battles from one campaign after another, starting with Wellington in the Peninsular, and including those in Europe to which the United Kingdom was not party, for example in Italy in 1859 and the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1 as well as, inevitably, the long series of colonial 'small wars'. There was plenty of scope for fighting the previous war, or previous-but-one – or more. Symptomatic of the limited role of the proactive is item I.149, 'Index to Map of Afghanistan Scale of Map 8 Miles to an Inch' [*sic*], about 1:6 million, dated 1878, of which it is noted 'Shows the sheet lines of an abortive 16 sheet series at eight miles

to one inch printed by the Ordnance Survey’.

Only those who have embarked on cartobibliography know how demanding it is in terms of accuracy and completeness. Crispin Jewitt is to be congratulated on *Intelligence revealed*: one hopes for a companion volume of a *Southampton Confidential* sort to cover contemporary OS ‘military’ printing. The relatively high price will inevitably restrict purchase to libraries and some specialists. Production is better than for *Maps for empire*, but it is a pity that the typeface chosen is occasionally spoilt by the intrusion of Times Roman for scale ratios: page 265 is particularly bad. It is the job of a publisher to ensure that such ‘glitches’ do not reach the public. Otherwise, a thoroughly worthwhile endeavour: more, please!

Richard Oliver

Also noted:



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