The Geography of World War I Cartoons: Gallipoli

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Abstract

We have traditionally used maps to provide information about space. We have fashioned a design, development, fabrication and consumption process (and associated procedures) that have enabled essential artifacts to be made available and for them to be used effectively and efficiently. However, with the use of non-traditional representational artefacts, whereby for example users can disassociate the source of information from the actual display of that information, the consideration that these artefacts may be required to provide information not just about ‘SPACE’, but also information about ‘PLACE’. This paper reports on from the initial stages of research that is investigating at cartoons from the First World War, and particularly those cartoons that relate to the Gallipoli campaign of April 1915 – January 1916. Cartoons from this period are being investigated to ascertain their potential value as alternative, more personal, sources of information about the perceptions of the geography of the Gallipoli Peninsula of soldiers in the field, their commanders, politicians and the media.

Keywords: geography, cartoons, World War I, Gallipoli

1. Introduction

Events in history, each having their own relative importance and impact on the world of today, are recorded objectively as fact as far as being possible (notwithstanding the adage that history is written by the victor). However, for many of these events, particularly the most significant ones, there are artistic reactions to what is being played out. The cartoon, which could be regarded as an extension of fine art (the term used to be reserved for full scale preparatory sketches for paintings), is a medium that can render a complex and subtle historical event in easily understandable terms (in fact it is this accessibility that has contributed to its lowbrow status – McCready, 1993) as well as hitting home with a sharp perspective on the situation being depicted.

As a collated group, these artworks can reveal further information about the event and times they originated from through thematic and other patterns elicited from the collective. Furthermore, all of these historical events took place at a location and so geography is a dominant theme to be elicited either explicitly or implicitly from art.

Here, our research is being directed to ascertain the geography depicted in War cartoons related to the Gallipoli campaign of April 1915 – January 1916. Many reports of this campaign deliver their content through words,
photographs, and maps. These provide, generally, succinct, but impersonal narratives about what happened during the campaign in the Dardenelles. If one wants to better understand personal impressions of the campaign these formal reports will not provide insight into what it was really like to be there and the personal impact of the war on those directly involved and those indirectly affected by the conflict and those that support soldiers on the front line – in the theatre of war, at home and in political and social mechanisms that decide the fate of soldiers from afar. Therefore, by investigating the cartoons produced during the Gallipoli campaign we seek to ascertain how representations of geography (in their various forms) in these cartoons were used to support particular messages and how understanding the geography that were adjuncts to these messages provides insight into the personal, national and international perspectives about that campaign.

We are concerned with underlying geographies explicitly and implicitly contained within war cartoons associated with the World War I battle of Gallipoli. We seek to ascertain the differences between perspectives and the differences between contexts.

2. Gallipoli 1915

The Gallipoli campaign of 1915-16 came about because of the deadlock on the Western Front, which turned British eyes towards other possible theatres, plus appeals for assistance from Russia early in January 1915 (Travers, 2001, Velsley, 1997). A plan preferred by Winston Churchill, then the First Lord of the Admiralty was to be a naval operation (Heffernan 1996). The original plan was for a combined Anglo-Franco naval fleet, using mainly outdated battleships; to force the Narrows, sail into the Sea of Marmara and then on to Istanbul. Once this was done, three Divisions of the Greek Army would advance on Istanbul.

The entrance to the Dardanelles and the Narrows is shown in the map in figure 1.

![Figure 1: Map of the Gallipoli Peninsula. Source: http://farm8.staticflickr.com/7187/7090070097_7b12e5be1_b.jpg](http://farm8.staticflickr.com/7187/7090070097_7b12e5be1_b.jpg)

However, this was later amended to be a naval engagement, after Russian opposition to the use of Greek troops. The revised naval plan was to force the Narrows, penetrate the Sea of Marmara and bombard Istanbul, compelling Turkey to surrender (Sea Power Centre, 2005). The opening attack began on February 18, 1915m (Corbett, 1921). The map in figure 2 shows the bombardment plan.
Forcing of The Narrows was attempted on March 18, 1915, when seventeen allied warships, supported by an assortment of other craft, like mine sweepers (Millett, 2002). Mine fields and hidden guns prevented the success of this plan. Six battleships were sunk or severely damaged (Millett 2002). Some military analysts considered that this plan could not have eventually worked anyway. “I am still of the opinion however, that the Royal Navy could not have “rushed” the Narrows and go through in sufficient numbers to tackle the hostile fleet it would have met in the Sea of Marmara” (Aiguillette, 1962, p. 63).

Then Britain prepared another plan, for a larger military operation that would capture the Gallipoli Peninsula, allow the waters to be cleared of mines and opening it for the fleet to sail to Istanbul (Sea Power Centre, 2005). To support the military operation, France provided a Division (the First Division of the Corps Expédition d’Orient made up of North African (Arab and European), Foreign Legion and Senegalese troops (Hughes 2005), Britain its 29th Division, and Australian and New Zealand troops were moved from Egypt (Travers, 2001). The stage was set for the invasion and subsequent landings on the beaches of the Turkish Gallipoli (Chanakale) Peninsula by British, ANZAC and Indian troops and at Kum Kale (on the Asiatic shore) by French troops (who acted as a diversionary force by capturing a Turkish fort on the Eastern shores of the Dardanelles (Millett 2002)) (who were moved to Cape Helles on 26 April, where they held the eastern part of the Allied line) (Hughes, 2005) on April 25, and the Allied attacks of 28 April at Helles,1915 (Travers, 2001b).

The Australasian landings took place at “Beach Z” and the Anglo French landings were at Cape Hellas, to the south. The Allied forces fought ashore, but were unable to seize the strategic heights that dominate the lower third of the Peninsula (Millett 2002). The campaign extended over a 10-month period (Millett 2002), until the final evacuation in January 1916 (Mason 1936; Millett 2002).

3. Gaining information about personal geography through alternative representations

The geographies depicted in cartoons should be considered to be ‘naive’ geographies, where a simplistic interpretation (and subsequent representation) of geography is offered. Naive geography was defined by Egenhofer and Mark (1995) as “the body of knowledge that people have about the surrounding geographic world” – the primary theories of space, entities and processes (Mark and Egenhofer, 1996). This was also described as being “…
captures and reflects the way humans think and reason about geographic space and time. Naive stands for instinctive or spontaneous” (Egenhofer and Mark, 1995, p. 4). Representations of naïve geographies offer the prospect for better learning about, and therefore understanding different geographies. In the context of this research we seek to ascertain how the geography of the Gallipoli campaign (physical, political and personal) might be better understood through the interpretation of cartoons from that period.

In this context, we take ‘cartoon’ to encompass all drawn graphics that represent situations in a simplified style. The characteristics of this style are relatively sparse lines (compared with a drawing that aims to represent something with realism), strong outlines and a simple palette of colours (if used), applied straightforwardly. Most will be drawn to depict a humorous situation, the humour derived from a real event, and if so, is probably satirical or ironic in nature (this represents the definition of cartoons, as described by Kleeman, 2006). However, we argue that also permissible are some of the graphics drawn in this style that are used for propaganda or straight diary-like purposes by the individual. Most cartoons will not be drawn directly from observation, but will have differing amounts of “true” features present. There is license to exaggerate and use caricature in cartoons. Some cartoons are effective with just graphics but most will have some text that either is used in tandem with the graphic to form the message of the cartoon, or even convey most of the message, with the graphic effectively just a supporting sketch (McCloud, 1993).

4. Classification of relevant cartoons

As a foundation for classifying cartoons related to the war, and Gallipoli in particular, a survey was undertaken to uncover the extent and the type of cartoons drawn that were related to this topic. In selecting cartoons useful to this research, cartoons were only selected if they had a ‘geographic’ element. As well, we sought to find differences between the European view of the campaign and the colonial (here, the Australasian) viewpoint. All of the cartoon examples described in this section come from the Allied (UK / Australia / New Zealand) point-of-view. With one notable exception, they do not explicitly reflect on the colonialism context. Further exploratory research will endeavor to unearth cartoons that can be used to study the representations produced (in cartoons) of both views of the campaign.

The cartoons found have been initially classified as:

- Propaganda Cartoon
  - with Geography contained in text;
  - with Literal Geography depicted in Graphics;
  - with Geography derived from Symbolic Graphic Element;
  - with Map or Map-Related Object.

- Satirical Cartoon
  - with Geography contained in text;
  - with Literal Geography depicted in Graphics;
  - with Geography derived from Symbolic Graphic Element;
  - with Map or Map-Related Object;
  - with Geography contained in text; and
  - with Literal Geography depicted in Graphics.

- Personal Cartoon
  - with Geography derived from Symbolic Graphic Element;
  - with Geography derived from Visual Metaphor;
  - with Map or Map-Related Object.

The following sections of the paper provide some examples of some of these classifications and, where appropriate, provide examples – photograph or map - of the geography represented in the cartoon. This was done to provide some ‘ground truthing’ (Cartwright et al., 2001), to our collection of cartoons.

The first example (figure 3a) is a Propaganda Cartoon with Geography contained in the text. The example does not graphically depict a ‘mappable place, though it implicitly signifies any place that the Kaiser and the Sultan ever
met, specifically just after Gallipoli. It is possible that such information was recorded. However, the cartoon’s placement in this category derives from a second geographical clue in the caption, the Sultan’s assertion that the Turkish Army has driven the English Army (and by extension the Anzacs) “into the sea”. This can be implicitly linked to the known (and geographically explicit) embarkation point of the retreating army, at Anzac Cove. Its inclusion in the propaganda perspective derives from it perversely trying to find a bright side of what was a disastrous campaign for the Allies, even from a satirical publication such as *Punch*. The picture in figure 4b ground truths the cartoon into the Place of Gallipoli, showing the reality of the evacuation. (The Allied forces were evacuated from the Gallipoli Peninsula by January 1916.)

Figure 3a: Propaganda Cartoon with Geography contained in text From Punch magazine. Bernard Partridge, January 1916. Source: http://img69.imageshack.us/img69/2162/cctlwwkkgrhqfiee0eubdhb.jpg

Figure 3b: W Beach (Lancashire Landing) at Cape Helles, Gallipoli, 7 January 1916, just prior to the final evacuation of British forces. Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/92/W_Beach_Helles_Gallipoli.jpg

There may be an implicit signifier of the relationship with colonial armies, in that the Anzacs are not mentioned. Then again, in the vast majority of the Australia and New Zealand drawn cartoons, the English are not mentioned either. This may be for the sake of brevity, enhancing the impact of the cartoon by not getting enmeshed with the details of all contributing armies.

The cartoon in figure 4a moves us to the actual geography of the campaign. We classify this as a “Propaganda Cartoon with Literal Geography depicted in Graphics”. It is notable for graphical clues of geography, depicting a part of the battleground. Though the painted drawing of a hill with the sea behind is probably generic, an abstracted geography of the peninsula with some implicit truth is depicted. It is not just “a” hill but “the Hill”, with this geographic content in the text emphasising the graphical content through repetition. The “Hill” ties the cartoon to a specific location.

Figure 6a also works graphically on a similar abstracted level. There is a depiction of a generic trench battle between an Anzac soldier and two Turkish soldiers – this is enough to geographically fix this scene in the trench network of the Gallipoli campaign. However, we get extra information as to the identity of the soldier through the symbolic depiction of his Maori ancestor. This not only singles him out as a New Zealander, a geographical refinement, but also states an implicit linkage with the battles that the Maori took part in on New Zealand soil. [There is an irony in this as the Maori were defending their homeland in those 19th Century wars, much like the Turkish are in this cartoon.]
The use of drawing to convey the geography in Figure 6a has much the same function as the propaganda equivalent in Figure 4a. We have a scene on the coast conveying the Anzacs’ retreat from Gallipoli, affording the definition of a specific location for this cartoon. There is an expression of colonialism in the restraint of the Anzac soldier by the British Army officer, and the implicit geographies that suggests

Figure 4a: Propaganda Cartoon with Literal Geography depicted in Graphics Source: http://img69.imageshack.us/img69/2162/cctlwwkkgrhqfi ee0eubdhb.jpg


Figure 5a: Propaganda Cartoon with Geography derived from Symbolic Graphic Element. Source: http://img69.imageshack.us/img69/2162/cctlwwkkgrhqfift ee0eubdhb.jpg

Figure 5b: Maori soldiers at Gallipoli. Source: http://ww100.govt.nz/sites/default/files/images/005%20Maoris-crop.jpg
Next is a propaganda “cartoon” that explicitly features maps or map-related objects. While there are a large number of recruitment posters that depict the Dardanelles as a map that we could have chosen from for this example, in this case we have an early film animation, a frame of which is shown in Figure 7a. The animation starts with a map of Australia and New Zealand, the island objects of which are moved to create the anthropomorphic representation in the frame capture. On its side, Australia itself serves as the head and neck of the ‘person’, with Cape York making an effective nose. The North Island of New Zealand moves to suggest a hat, with the South Island and Tasmania placed to represent hair (in fact, all three smaller islands are placed to imply a larger hat, which can be perceived with closure). The ‘To Turkey’ sign is reminiscent of the many signs erected at Gallipoli – officially or self-made by the troops. The sign illustrated in figure 7b is a typical example.

The cartoon in figure 8a is an example of a Satirical Cartoon with Geography derived from Symbolic Graphic Element. It uses a symbolic burrow complete with rabbit to depict the harsh conditions of trench life in the battle. As such, the geography on the ground represented is that of the trenches, whose location and geography are known. When comparing the cartoon to the photograph in figure 9b, showing soldiers from the 14th Battalion ‘dug-in’ in the hillside at Gallipoli, it can be seen that the cartoon accurately depicts life for the infantry soldier during the campaign.
The final satirical cartoon (figure 9a) uses a map rendering of Gallipoli (complete with labelling) as a backdrop to a war of words between Turkey and New Zealand. A turkey and a kiwi represent the countries metaphorically and there is metaphor in the kiwi’s use of the word “yard” to represent country, evoking a sense of place. There is an implicit criticism of New Zealand being aggressors, though the cartoon could also be interpreted as defiant propaganda. Here the geography of the Peninsula in the cartoon does faithfully include many geographical features from the Peninsula and shows ‘The Narrows’, in the photograph populated by Allied warships.


Figure 8b: Members of the 14th Battalion at Gallipoli, 1915. Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/31/A03803_14th_Battalion_AIF_Gallipoli.jpg
Cartoons also sometimes included representations of maps. The cartoon in figure 10a includes a map showing Cape Hellas and the extent of British advances at the end of the campaign. When compared to the map in figure 10b, it is obvious that maps were used as a reference by the cartoonist. The extent of the British advances at Cape Hellas, shown on the map in figure 10b by the dashed line at the southwestern corner of the Peninsular is shown on the cartoon by drawings of Turkish emplacements and a camp. Regarding the actual evacuation itself, when
comparing the geography in the cartoon to the photograph in figure 4b of the evacuation from W Beach, it can be seen that the actual curve of the bay at Cape Hellas is faithfully depicted in the cartoon.

5. Developing a structure for extracting geography from cartoons

In order to structure the methodology for extracting the geography from cartoons a conceptual structure was developed by the authors. Figure 11 shows the conceptual structure that will guide the deconstruction of the cartoons collated. There are three axes to the structure (i.e. it is 3D); each will be dealt with in turn.

Firstly we have a categorisation of geographic content, which can be divided into elements of intrasignification and extrasignification. Starting with the latter, extrasignification covers the non-graphical cartoon elements that contribute to the main group of graphical elements, mainly text such as captions and titles. Intrasignification is achieved through the drawn element of the cartoon and that graphical component is here divided into four subcategories, drawing in part (along with the text category) from Kleeman’s (2009) structure for extracting the geographic content of cartoons.

Moving from the least abstracted to the most abstracted, there is the literal depiction of natural and manmade geographic features in cartoons. These features may be unique (a hill of distinguishing topography and morphology; a striking building), enabling a more precise geography to be extracted, or generic, which leads to the production of a more uncertain geography (e.g. a non-descript building or unremarkable hill would be enough to link the cartoon to built-up areas or hilly topography, but there is no further refinement to specific regions or locations than this).

The next graphical content category is visually identical to the first, but is reserved for features in the cartoon that are symbolic of some larger entity or issue as well as being literal representations of geography. In applying this visual symbolism, features may be modified in some way, for example, exaggeration to make a feature larger than it normally is, or the use of caricature (if, for example, a soldier of a particular army is used to represent that entire army in the cartoon, caricaturing may be applied, perhaps pandering to commonly-held stereotypical appearances of the time).

This notion of a visual element representing another element (or a group) is abstracted further with the use of visual metaphor. Metaphors are used to facilitate the communication of difficult or complex concepts or ideas in a way that is easy to understand. War cartoons may use visual metaphor to great effect as shorthand for ideas, ideologies that are otherwise invisible and intangible.

The final content category is for cartoons with explicit map content present to differing degrees. Maps represent visual elements subject to the greatest amount of abstraction and are the richest in geographic content, having the
potential to pinpoint a location of cartoon focus with accuracy. They may be present as explicit maps or ‘cartoonised’ map forms that constitute a backdrop to cartoon protagonists.

6. Further research

In the deconstruction of cartoons it is anticipated that there will be explicit (e.g. the content of maps, explicitly named locations in text) and implicit (e.g. distinctive uniforms link soldiers to a specific army from a specific country) signifiers of geography, a consideration made by other efforts to extract the geographic component of art and literature (e.g. the Literary Atlas of Europe, Reuschel et al, 2009). This will require further explorations into cartoon collections and publications (currently underway) and further refining the research model. As well, automated routines will be developed to uncover and deconstruct cartoons related to this campaign.

7. Conclusion

This paper has provided an overview of the research currently being undertaken by the authors. It gave an overview of the Gallipoli campaign of April 1915 – January 1916 and how the initial sea warfare strategy was changed into a combined sea/land operation. It was found that the cartoons sourced thus far could be classified into three general categories, viz:

- Propaganda Cartoons;
- Satirical Cartoon; and
- Personal Cartoon.

This general classification was then further subdivided into sub-classifications, namely:

- with Geography contained in text;
- with Literal Geography depicted in Graphics;
- with Geography derived from Symbolic Graphic Element;
- with Map or Map-Related Object;
- with Geography contained in text;
- with Literal Geography depicted in Graphics; and
- with Geography derived from Visual Metaphor.

It then provided information about some of the cartoons sourced as part of this initial stage of research. It also elaborated on how we view the cartoons samples selected, as illustrations of this category of cartoon.

The research has also looked at the depiction of geography in the sample cartoons included in this paper. When comparing the geography included in the cartoons with the actual geography of Gallipoli (here shown in archival photographs) it was seen that the cartoonists when developing their drawings considered the actual geography.

As well, navigational artefacts like signposts, placed throughout the Peninsula in trenches and on pathways – official or hand-made by troops – were used in some cartoons to give a sense of Place to what was illustrated.

This classification of cartoons will be used as a foundation structure for extracting geography from cartoons in a formal manner, as described in the penultimate section of the paper.

8. References

Aiguillette. (1962) “Now. If We Had Air Drops: “Aiguillette” Applies Hindsight”, Marine Corps Gazette (pre-1994); May 1962; 46, 5, p. 63; ProQuest Military Collection


