

THE HOCHSTETTER - HEAPHY CONTROVERSY

Or

WHOSE MAP WAS IT ?

In its issue for 13 February 1857 The Southern Cross, an early Auckland newspaper, under the heading "Presentations to the Mechanics' Institute" reported that at a meeting of the Institute on Monday 9 February -

...another valuable present was made by Charles Heaphy, Esq., of a map entitled "Sketches of the geological formation of the Auckland District." - prepared with much artistic skill, and containing much valuable information.

At the time, Heaphy was employed as a surveyor by the Auckland Provincial Government and it may be more than coincidence that during the few weeks prior to the presentation Heaphy had written two letters to another Auckland newspaper, The New Zealander, suggesting that the Provincial Government give consideration "to moderate rewards being offered for the best Geological Map of a District within the Province" *

Early in 1859 Heaphy, along with Haast and Purchas, accompanied Hochstetter in his examination of the Auckland volcanic field (Kermode 1992, p.4) and on the 24 June that year Heaphy chaired a meeting of the Auckland Mechanics' Institute at which Hochstetter presented a "Lecture on the Geology of the Province of Auckland". In his talk, in discussing the Auckland volcanic district, Hochstetter displayed a "large map, which Mr. Heaphy has kindly prepared for me from actual survey". He also acknowledged "some valuable information from different settlers, and especially from my friends, the Rev. A.G.Purchas and Mr. C.Heaphy" (Supplement to The New Zealander 29 June 1859).

At a public meeting on 1 July 1859 a committee was appointed to arrange a testimonial to Hochstetter and the Secretary of that committee was Charles Heaphy (The New Zealander 20 July 1859).

It is therefore obvious that during his visit Hochstetter was on very good terms with Heaphy. This relationship changed on 30 November that year when a paper by Heaphy 'On the Volcanic Country of Auckland, New Zealand' was read at a meeting of the Geological Society of London. The paper was later published in volume 16 of the Society's Quarterly Journal (Heaphy 1860). Accompanying the paper is a map of the Auckland volcanic field and in the text (p.251) this is described as -

* These letters appeared in The New Zealander on 30 December 1856 and 7 January 1857. I can find no record of the Provincial Government accepting Heaphy's suggestion.

"The central portion of a large Geological Sketch-map of Auckland and the surrounding district, constructed by Mr Heaphy from actual survey in 1857, and corrected to February 1859.

The corrections here alluded to have arisen from observations made during the progress of Dr. F. Hochstetter's geological survey of the Auckland District."

In 1862 Heaphy exhibited a 'Geological Map of the Province of Auckland' at the International Exhibition in London.

The Heaphy - Hochstetter controversy was set alight with the publication, in early August 1864, of Hochstetter and Petermann (1864). The footnote on page 50 reads as follows

A copy of my original map, to the scale of 2 miles to 1 inch, remained in Auckland for the use of the Government. A second copy was sent to Mr. J. Arrowsmith in London to be used for the construction of a large New Zealand map in six parts, which that gentleman intended to compile, with the understanding, however, that this map was to be used only as a preliminary delineation of my observations. The Geological map of the Province of Auckland, which was exhibited in the International Exhibition of London, in 1862, by Mr Charles Heaphy, was entirely a copy and combination of my maps and surveys, without any acknowledgment of my authorship. The map, also, of the Isthmus of Auckland, given in the Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society of London, by Mr Charles Heaphy, was published without my knowledge, and is a very incomplete copy of my observations and maps, which were in Mr. Heaphy's official charge. In this map that gentleman also introduced his own observations upon the geological formations of the neighbourhood of Auckland, made previous to my arrival in New Zealand, but without possessing even the most elementary knowledge necessary for making a Geological Survey. I have felt it my duty to make these remarks out of respect for truth and science.

To counter this claim of piracy levelled against him by Hochstetter, Heaphy solicited letters from various people to prove that Hochstetter himself was the plagiarist. e.g.

From J.L. Wilson, Provincial Surveyor -

I have made an examination of the original of Dr. Hochstetter's plan of the Isthmus of Auckland, and comparing it with your geological plan of the Auckland district, presented to the Mechanics, Institute in the year 1857, I have no doubt he copied your plan.

H.N. Warner, Deputy Waste Land Commissioner, referring to Heaphy's 1857 map which was at the time hanging on the wall of the Mechanics. Institute said that it-

had been borrowed by the Doctor for his information, and actually formed the nucleus for all his work, in this locality, however much he may have added to it.

These two letters, along with others, were published in the Auckland newspapers. The New Zealander (27 August) and The Daily Southern Cross (29 August). Those in The Daily Southern Cross were under cover of a letter from Heaphy himself. Both newspapers leaped to Heaphy's defence with lengthy editorials

The Daily Southern Cross editorial -

Knowing, as we do, that Dr. Hochstetter received very valuable aid from Mr. Heaphy whilst pursuing his scientific researches in this province. we should, even if the charges were true, have called this conduct on the part of Dr. Hochstetter very ungenerous, but as we have received satisfactory demonstration that not only are these charges untrue, but that the worthy doctor has himself been the plagiarist and the copier, we must say that these reflections are most unwarrantable. Mr. Heaphy has verified to us by the exhibition of maps and original documents that he really is the aggrieved party, and that Dr. Hochstetter has copied with the most infallible precision the principal groundwork of his geological map of Auckland prepared here before Dr. Hochstetter set foot upon New Zealand soil, in proof of which the marginal lines exactly correspond, and in which the Doctor could not get the colour to match when he subsequently added to the map.....

We may say, too, that we have seen some most elaborate proofs of Mr. Heaphy's skill while studying geology very many years ago, and at a time when Dr. Hochstetter was probably only imbibing the "most elementary knowledge" of the science which he now professes to be master of. Dr. Hochstetter may be a very accomplished geologist, but he has certainly not added to his fame by unwarrantably attempting to detract from the merits and attainments of a gentleman resident amongst us of acknowledged ability.

The New Zealander editorial contains similar personal criticism of Hochstetter -

Dr Ferdinand von Hochstetter may be, for aught we know, a personage of large importance; but he has taken some pains to bring himself into a paltry position. He may be an accomplished geologist, though he does not escape some

telling criticisms in England # : but we regret to find him not a little wanting in certain other accomplishments that are assuredly not less desirable.....and we know that our quondam guest from Deutschland had shown himself hasty and harsh; but until we strictly investigated the matter we could not have believed that our German acquaintance had allowed himself to fall into such a depth of falsification, for the sake of gratifying a very gratuitous spleen.....

....We have proved the painful fact of Dr. Hochstetter's ungrateful tergiversation * and deception.....

The New Zealander editorial concludes with -

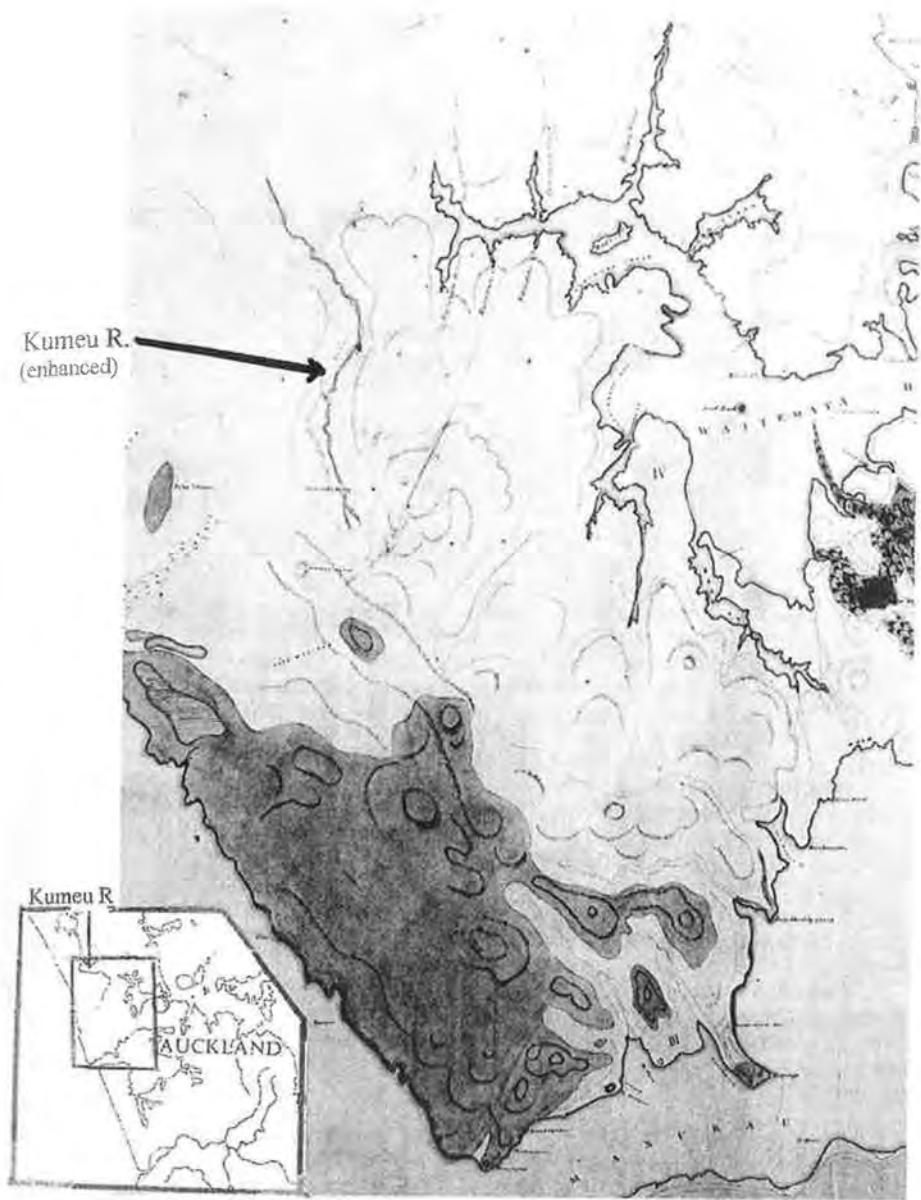
It is a melancholy thing to see the moral infirmities of men eminent for intellectual superiority; but unhappily the scientific world is but too familiar with such scandals

But, most important of all, The New Zealander editorial gives the results of its own investigations -

We have compared the original maps of Dr. Hochstetter and Major Heaphy, both of which are in Auckland, and the following is the result. The two maps are on precisely the same scale. Every name and outline on Major Heaphy's map is identically reproduced in Dr. Hochstetter's including literal errors and topographical divergences from accuracy. And there is something more than all this. Dr. Hochstetter's map takes in a little more of the country, both to the East and West, than does Major Heaphy's map. The addition to the former was made at a later date, and there is actually in Dr. Hochstetter's map, on each side, a distinct and obvious line of boundary between the part copied from Major Heaphy and the part subsequently added. This is owing to the circumstance that the color-materials employed at the two periods were not identical in character. There are other "evident indications." Here is one of a kind rather amusing. Major Heaphy's map represents a portion of a certain river, the Kumio. Dr Hochstetter traces the same river, just so far as is done in Major Heaphy's map ; and there the river absolutely stops short - whether sinking into the earth at that spot, or how disposed of otherwise, the map deponeth not. It happens, however, that the Kumio flows on, as well-behaved rivers usually do, till their waters reach the sea; but the district through which it flows further, is

Three days later, in its issue of 30 August 1864. The New Zealander reprinted an article from the Saturday Review of 11 August 1860 which was critical of some aspects of Hochstetter's lecture to the Auckland Mechanics' Institute on 24 June 1859.

* The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary gives several definitions of 'tergiversation', one of which is "turning in a dishonourable manner from straightforward action or statement".



The river that went nowhere

Detail from an uncatalogued map in the collections of the Auckland War Memorial Museum – 'Sketch of the Geological Formation of the Auckland District' by Hochstetter

exterior to Major Heaphy's map, and to Dr. Hochstetter's cognizance. We might multiply instances of the evident indications but these will suffice #.

The New Zealander editorial claims that Hochstetter's original map was sighted. In a letter published in The New Zealander on 29 August 1864 Heaphy states -

" The original, Sir, was taken by Dr. Hochstetter to Europe, and the map at present here is one that was made by Mr. Surveyor Boulton, whose services as a draughtsman were placed by the Government at Dr. Hochstetter's disposal while he stayed here, and who worked with the Doctor on the two maps almost simultaneously."

The footnote on page 50 of Hochstetter and Petermann 1864 quoted above refers to "a copy of my original map, to the scale of 2 miles to 1 inch" remaining in Auckland.

I have not been able to locate Heaphy's 1857 map but the Auckland War Memorial Museum possesses a framed map by Hochstetter approximately 1.25m x 1.25m which is entitled "Sketch of the Geological Formation of the Auckland District". This map is on the scale of 1 mile to 1 inch not 2 miles to 1 inch as mentioned in the Hochstetter and Petermann footnote. It does, nevertheless, have one important feature that suggests that it may be the map seen by the editor of The New Zealander (see second paragraph below).

In the absence of Heaphy's map I am unable to confirm the statement by the editor of The New Zealander regarding the names and outlines of the two maps. Nor did I see any sign of a colour boundary but I would not expect this to show after 140 years.

There is no Kumio River on the map but the Kumeu River, west of the headwaters of the Waitemata Harbour does exactly what the editor says ; it vanishes off the map just before the point where it turns to the west.

There is, in any case, no reason to doubt the word of the editor of The New Zealander. Scholefield (1958, p.81) describes The New

It must be noted that in its review of Hochstetter and Petermann published on 18 August The New Zealander makes no mention of Hochstetter's accusation of piracy against Heaphy. In fact, it ended its review by saying -

"We can strongly recommend this book to our readers who will find in it much interesting and useful information."

* It is significant that this is almost exactly the same title that Heaphy gave to the map which he presented to the Auckland Mechanics' Institute in 1857.

Zealander as "one of the best and most influential papers in the colony".

With regard to Hochstetter's claim (1864 p.50, above) that the map exhibited by Heaphy at the International Exhibition carried no acknowledgment of Hochstetter the newspaper reports also include the following letter to Heaphy -

In reference to your enquiries, I beg to say that I remember your acknowledgment, on your geological plan of the Province of Auckland, (exhibited in the Odd-Fellows' Hall here, and and transmitted by me to the International Exhibition of 1861) of the parts copied from Dr. Hochstetter's plan of the geology of this district

Edward King
Hon. Sec. International Exhibition 1862

All rather damning for Hochstetter and it is worthy of note that on page 21 of his New Zealand (1867) he has a similar footnote to that on page 50 of Hochstetter and Petermann (1864) quoted above but this time he makes no accusation of plagiarism against Heaphy. It is also worthy of note that nowhere in the columns of the Auckland newspapers for the following six months does he reply to the accusations made against him.

The only voice raised in his support is that of his friend G.F.Fischer, the man responsible for the English translation of Hochstetter and Petermann (1864) but even he starts off on the defensive (The Daily Southern Cross 3 September 1864 and The New Zealander 7 September 1864) -

By no means do I excuse my friend Hochstetter in having been guilty of making serious reflections upon Mr. Heaphy in his Geological Atlas of New Zealand, and for what appears ungenerous conduct. But while Dr. Hochstetter makes these charges it is not unlikely that he was labouring under a misapprehension, as his information was based more on the representations of others than on his personal knowledge, as he never visited London during the expedition so as to have been able to see Mr Heaphy's maps.....Mr. Heaphy has cleared himself from the charge of piracy by Mr. King's letter,....

The debate in the columns of the newspapers continued for several days and widened to include the lack of acknowledgment given by Hochstetter in his use of Heaphy's drawings in the original German edition of New Zealand (1863).

On the first page of this article we quoted Hochstetter's acknowledgment, in his talk to the Mechanics' Institute, of the help he had received from

"my friends, the Rev. A.G.Purchas and Mr. C.Heaphy"

In his New Zealand (1867), this tribute reads (p.17)

"my friend the Rev. Mr. A.G.Purchas and Mr. Ch.Heaphy"
(note "friend" in the singular)

Although he no longer regards Heaphy as a friend, Hochstetter does acknowledge his assistance e.g. on p.21 and on p.253 where he names the now-destroyed cone between Mt. Victoria and North Head 'Heaphy Hill'.

Hochstetter would have been careful to make these acknowledgments as the entire Hochstetter/Heaphy controversy was one of acknowledgment of each other's work.

One interesting counter claim by Heaphy is made in a letter published in The Daily Southern Cross on 29 August 1864 -

When Dr. Hochstetter went from this to Nelson, I made for him, at his own request, a general map of the geology of the Nelson country, indicating, as far as I was able to, the various formations, and intended to serve, as my map had done here as a guide to him in exploring. He wrote to me privately, saying that my map had been of much assistance to him, and was very correct; but neither in his lecture at Nelson nor in his book has he in anyway acknowledged the assistance.

In 1846-7, I made maps of exploring expeditions made in company with the Hon. Mr. Fox - now Colonial Secretary - and Mr Brunner of Nelson, to the interior lakes and the greenstone country of the West Coast. Dr. Hochstetter made use of these maps - his map of Nelson shows them even to their clerical errors - but there does not appear in the "Atlas" nor the lecture the slightest acknowledgment of their having been used.

In the course of the press publicity given to the controversy, S.J.Stratford, an Auckland doctor who was interested in scientific matters, took the opportunity of launching an unrelated attack on Hochstetter. On 1 September 1864 The Daily Southern Cross published a letter from Stratford in which he complains that Hochstetter had ignored a sample of diatomaceous earth from Cabbage Tree Swamp which he had given him -

"It would appear that the very numerous attentions paid to this gentleman while in Auckland was too much for his equilibrium. It is plain by his publication that he came to New Zealand and, as it is vulgarly said, 'sucked the brains of the lieges', and now fosters the work upon the public as original matter."

Stratford's letter brought an equally acid response from Hochstetter's friend, G.F.Fischer, in The Daily Southern Cross for 3 September -

"Dr. Stratford, in a letter to you which appears in today's issue, seems very much aggrieved that his brains have not been sucked by Dr. Hochstetter."

Within a few years those exchanges in the press of August/September 1864 were forgotten, at least by the press and the public if not by Heaphy and Hochstetter. The Daily Southern Cross for 10 October 1868 reported that Hochstetter, on the motion of Captain Hutton, had been unanimously elected the first honorary member of the Auckland Institute and that Mr. Gillies, in seconding the motion" said it was doing honour to themselves more than to the doctor. (Hear, hear)".

Today, Hochstetter is regarded as "The Father of New Zealand Geology", and justly so, although as this article shows, he did possess some personal failings. Heaphy, on the other hand, is remembered today as an artist and as New Zealand's first Victoria Cross winner. Heaphy, the geologist is almost forgotten, and unjustly so. I hope to rectify this in a future article.

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