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# From Everyday Map-Things to Oblivion? The Social Lives of Finnish Missionary World Maps

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### *From Everyday Map-Things to Oblivion? The Social Lives of Finnish Missionary World Maps*

In 1909, the Finnish Missionary Society (FMS, known in Finnish as Suomen Lähetysseura) celebrated its fiftieth anniversary.<sup>i</sup> For the festivities, the current mission director of the society, Jooseppi Mustakallio, authored articles in which he outlined the impact that the FMS had generated since its establishment in 1859. As an example of its broad societal significance, Mustakallio mentioned the missionary map of the world that the society had published from 1859 until the 1890s, which had consequently “spread even to the humblest of houses” across Finland, at the time of the Russian Empire (Mustakallio 1909). The map visualized the global missionary field by depicting the extent of different religions with white (Christians), grey (Muslims), and black (“heathens”), in addition to sharing geographical information. According to Mustakallio, who had also worked as a teacher, the “humble” world map had been “an important vehicle of civilization among our people,” as it had, he maintained, together with the periodicals, effectively communicated geographical knowledge about different lands and their inhabitants. As Mustakallio phrased it, upon publication the world map had entered a largely unploughed terrain:

It must be remembered that around that time when the missionary society was established, the elementary school did not yet

exist. People’s geographical knowledge was limited; it barely existed. This world map was one of the first to spread among ordinary people. It opened a completely new view and expanded people’s ideas about the world and religions and the level of civilization because the map was accompanied by a short and factual explanation. This map has therefore taught the first things about geographical and such knowledge to countless households and individuals. (1909)<sup>ii</sup>



**Figure 1**

**A copy of the Finnish edition of the Finnish Missionary Society’s missionary world map. This is likely an exemplar of the second issue of the map, published in 1860. The hemispheric**

map shows the world from the viewpoint of the Western missionary enterprise. The illustrations on the sides depict scenes of idolatry and “heathen” practices from Asia. *Mailman Kartta Lähetys-Toimesta*, c. 1860, Map collection of the National Library of Finland.

Missionary maps of the world, like the one published by the FMS (figure 1), were a transnational phenomenon that most Western missionary societies utilized to promote their work and to gather financial support for the missionary cause (Kark 1993; “Missionskartographie” 2019). They were published and sold alongside periodicals, books, pamphlets, and images, all of which popularized racialized ideas concerning the different peoples of the world, their “savagery” and uncivilized cultures and religious practices, while simultaneously seeking to evoke compassion towards the “distant other.” This was a well-versed strategy within the transnational field of missionary societies (Vallgård 2016). Through such materials, missionary societies materialized to their audiences their ideas of the expanding “Christian empire” (Nielsen, Okkenhaug, and Hestad Skeie 2011). Like their counterparts, the Finnish maps were meant for home audiences: they were marketed in Finland for Finnish consumers to gather financial and spiritual support for Finnish missionary work.

Scholars writing the history of the FMS have often referred to the arguments concerning the significance of the Finnish map and detailed their status as one of the bestsellers of the FMS’s publications (Paunu 1909, 14; Väkeväinen 1988; Remes 1993, 33, 35, 252; Löytty 2006, 42; Merivirta, Koivunen, and Särkkä 2021,

10; Skurnik 2021). However, the social relationships that the maps entered into remain unexplored. Thus, we lack an understanding of what Mustakallio’s words meant in practice: How were the maps read, by whom, and where? What type of knowledge did these people infer from the maps? What did the maps mean for their makers and their users? How did these meanings change as the decades passed? In this article, I examine these questions by investigating the social lives of the affordable mass-produced missionary world maps, which were published in 1859–1894 both in Finnish and Swedish. I analyze the worldly experiences that the maps generated for their different users by reconstructing their *lifecycles* in Finnish society: their social—and often affective—lives and the work that the maps did for both their makers and users. I argue that the Finnish case exemplifies how these “humble” maps, which were part of the everyday material culture of the transnational missionary project, forged specific cognitive relationships with people that reveal the development of spatial thinking. Exploring their lifecycles makes it possible to contemplate the maps’ position in the process of shaping Finns’ global consciousness during a period when this type of knowledge was not accessible to many.

In what follows, I approach the social lives of these maps from three critical perspectives. First, I examine how the FMS produced the maps to gather support for missionary work and to popularize the idea of the global missionary field and its geography. I do this by analyzing how, as the publisher, the FMS purported that people use them. Second, I examine what we can know of people’s engagements with the maps—that is, how they

used the maps. When seeking to understand what the missionary world maps meant in the context of Finnish society, where access to global knowledge was limited and organizations like the FMS were primary channels for its distribution, especially in the 1860s, it is crucial to understand just what the maps meant to those who studied them. Third, I examine the meanings of the maps in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, during a period when they were no longer produced, yet during which time they still had a place in public discourse and later became a part of public archives. In pulling these three phases together—the produced, the mobilized, the archived—this article questions how maps changed from everyday map-things with 78,000 copies in circulation over a nearly forty-year period to things of the past in the twentieth century. In addition to examining the maps in question, my analysis relies on archival material and accounts in periodicals, newspapers, and books that contain information about how the FMS intended the map to be used and describe people’s encounters with the maps. Taken together, these materials make it possible to contemplate the meanings that the map had in the hands of its publisher and those it generated once mobilized.

By investigating the meanings of the maps in the hands of their makers and users, this article contributes to the scholarly debates that are at the core of the thematic issue of the *Material Culture Review* that focuses on the social lives of maps. Scholars of material culture have long noted the biographical aspect of objects and things: the need to consider the different events that objects are a part of from their production until they are either destroyed or placed in collections.

They have thus been interested in an object’s lifecycles and its social lives (e.g., Appadurai 1986, 3–4; Vesterinen 2001, 26–29, 33–35). This interest in objects as ontologically insecure and in a constant state of “becoming” is similarly the focus of processual and post-representational approaches to maps and cartography (Kitchin, Gleeson, and Dodge 2013; Caquard 2015). Attention to the shifting meanings of maps in the hands of their makers, publishers, and users—the study of mapping as a process—is burgeoning in the field of map history (Edney 2011, 2014; Prior 2012; Brückner 2017; Koot 2018; Lobo-Guerro, Lo Presti, and dos Reis 2021). At the core of such tasks, where the agency of maps is best highlighted, is the need to consider their coming into being as people use them and thus engage in different parts of their lifecycles. Examining this phenomenon means restoring the social relatedness of maps: to acknowledge the diverse ways that people have lived with what may be called map “stuff” (in the terminology of Miller 2010).

As Arjun Appadurai puts it, following the “things-in motion” illuminates “their human and social context” (1986, 5). People engage with maps in versatile ways—they engage with what Matthew Edney calls “mappy acts” as they make maps and mobilize, use, and discard them (2019, 48). As noted by historian of science Kapil Raj in the context of mapping colonial South Asia, following the trajectories of practices and artefacts reveals how historical actors attempted “to make a place for themselves in their world by reconfiguring it, changing its ingredients, introducing new objects and engendering a re-composition of the relationship between them and the social fabric” (2007, 92–93). The lifecycles of the FMS’s missionary

map make it possible to identify its changing meanings and the agency it had in changing how people understood and viewed the world and their own position in it.

### **“Dear Reader, Please Take the Missionary Map in Your Hand”**

The double roles of the missionary world maps in Finland as promotional material for missionary work as well as educational tools, provides a unique perspective for assessing how a map could “change the ingredients” of the world (in the terminology of Raj 2007, 92–93). This refers to the epistemological and ontological effects that material maps can have on people and cultures and the worldviews that they help shape—that is, to the map’s agency. James Corner (2011 [1999]) has suggested that thinking about the agency of mapping should focus on an understanding that “mappings do not represent geographies or ideas; rather they effect their actualization” (89). Indeed, as the FMS map entered into Finnish society, it extended a transnationally shared visual economy of the world to Finland. Thus, it contributed to a process whereby certain areas on the world map were represented and marketed as “heathen” and in need of transformation. In doing so, it tapped into local (here meaning Finnish) spatial knowledge about the wider world, which in the 1850s and 1860s was quite limited amongst ordinary Finns.

At the time the first edition of the FMS world map was published, commercially sold Finnish-language world maps were a rarity. The first Finnish-language map of the world had been published in 1845 in a series of readers called *Lukemisia Kansan hyödyksi* ([Itäinen maan puolisko] 1845),

edited by journalist Paavo Tikkanen. This map included a double-hemisphere world map with a smaller map of Europe tucked below the two hemispheres. The world map shows the names of countries on other continents, whereas the map of Europe details its political divisions. The map was accompanied by a description of global geography that served as an introductory text to general geographical knowledge about the world and the universe (“Johdatus yleiseen maa-tietoon” 1845, 59–97). Another printer, Johan Karsten from Kuopio in eastern Finland, published a similar world map the same year in a periodical called *Maamiehen ystävä* together with a short descriptive article explaining the map (“Tämän Lehden Mukana” 1845, 1–2). However, the precise layout of the map is currently unknown as I have not been able to locate a single copy of it in the archives. To the best of my knowledge, no other Finnish-language world maps entered circulation prior to the publication of the FMS map in the spring of 1859. Later in the same year, bookseller Johan Wilhelm Lillja, based in south-west Finland, published another Finnish world map. The map had been produced in Wolfenbüttel, Germany, by L. Halle. It was intended for schools, and only 500 copies were printed (Autero 1993, 197). This is in stark contrast to the 15,000 copies that the FMS printed in the first edition of its map. Additionally, the price of the map published by Johan Lillja was also 20 times higher than that of the FMS map, making it an unlikely purchase for people in the lower classes. Indeed, Lillja’s map was primarily meant to be used in schools, not private homes (“Maailmankarttaa lähetystoimesta” 1859, 16; “Maamme kirjapainoissa” 1859, 166–167).

From the 1860s onwards, the market for Finnish-language maps started to grow, largely due to the demands of the expanding network of primary schools as well as the rise of popular education.<sup>iii</sup> Consequently, the availability of different types of maps, geographical texts, and other prints in Finnish grew steadily as the century advanced: many were translated, copied, or adapted from foreign originals (Strang 2020, 214–17). In this context, the wide circulation of the missionary world map already in the 1860s likely generated encounters between the maps and people who had possibly never studied a world map closely or familiarized themselves with global geographical nomenclature.

The FMS maps were, however, never intended to be studied alone: rather, they were designed to be read together with the missionary periodicals and accompanying pamphlets. The pamphlets published to accompany the map consisted of *Selitys Lähetys-toimen kartalle* [Explanation to the map of missionary work] (1859), with fourteen editions being published between 1859 and 1895, and *Evan- kelinen lähetys, huntuva ääni kristikunnalle* [Evangelical mission, the voice of Christianity] (1861), which was a translation of a German publication. All these texts included detailed instructions that helped readers locate the places and the peoples discussed via different methods. The texts explained how and in what ways different peoples in different parts of the world lived in ignorance of Christianity. At times, the texts included images of the areas and the peoples being discussed. In this section, I examine the different instructions for reading the map and argue that they reveal how the FMS presented the role of the map as mimetic and dis- embodied. The reading instructions given

in the FMS's periodicals and pamphlets were designed to condition people's engagement with the maps, and thus, shape their spatial thinking. Before analyzing the FMS's instructions to readers, I will briefly detail the publication history of the missionary world map in the Grand Duchy of Finland.

The missionary world map began circulating within Finnish society almost immediately after the FMS was established, in the beginning of 1859. The secretary of the society, K. J. G. Sirelius, suggested at a board meeting in March 1859 that the world map should be printed and published based on a map already published by the Basel Missionary Society in the 1840s. The board deemed the map essential to "make the missionary cause better known across the country" ("Johtokunnan kokouksen pöytäkirja" 1859, 13). In April 1859, Fredrik Polén (also at times spelled Rietrikki Polén), at that time in charge of the Helsinki printing house of the Finnish Literary Society, made an offer to the FMS to produce the map based on the German-language original (Polén 1859). The map was designed to be larger than the German version, and it incorporated vignettes depicting religious and cultural practices in Asia—showing, for instance, Chinese men burying a child alive as well as an African man kneeling and asking for salvation ("Maailman kartta lähetys-toimesta" 1860; Skurnik 2021).

The Basel Missionary Society's map, utilized as the model for the Finnish map, would have easily been available to members of the FMS because of their connections to the central European missionary societies and because it had been published as an addendum to *Missions-Tidning*, a Stockholm-based periodical published

by the Swedish Missionary Society (Svenska Missions Sällskapet) in 1846. The map was published with a four-page, Swedish-language description of the map. It offered readers a guided tour of the world depicted on the map (“Beskrifning öfver den bifogade missions-werlds-char-tan” 1846). Many in Finland also subscribed to the Swedish periodical, and it was one of the numerous sources of information about the missionary cause prior to the establishment of the FMS. The availability of the Basel Mission’s map via the Swedish periodical signifies that the general design of a missionary world map would have been familiar to at least some Finnish audiences prior to the publication of the FMS maps. Indeed, individuals supportive of the missionary cause utilized this type of map to raise awareness about missionary work already in the 1840s (“Suomen Pakana-lähetystoimi” 1909; “Lähetys-har-rastuksen ensiajalta Tampereella II” 1909; Väkeväinen 1988, 2–20).

For the FMS, the map was a tool by which to visualize the global missionary field for Finnish- and Swedish-speaking audiences. Its strategy relied on arguments of mimesis (that the map showed what the world was like) as well as advancing the idea of a disembodied global gaze (that the map and the texts offered the same view to all users when read as instructed). The accompanying pamphlets, which were sold separately but in close association with the maps, focused on explaining the map and teaching its users how to read it. The *Selitys* pamphlet instructed readers to first identify the two hemispheres, “the two sides of the globe,” and then explained what could be seen on each side: for example, “the right-hand side,” “where we find more land ... is the mostly white, complex

continent of Europe” (*Selitys lähetys-toimen kartalle* 1878, 4). It focused on shipping routes, marked with a thin black line, and directed readers to follow them to the different continents and islands and to notice the color of each: black, white, or grey. The overview was followed by a detailed “journey around the globe, that with its countries and continents is spread before us” (*Selitys lähetys-toimen kartalle* 1878, 6). The *Evankelinen lähetys* pamphlet approached the map similarly to traveling around the world, instructing readers on how to “walk across the lands of the earth,” with explanations of how people lived and their beliefs in different parts of the world (1861, 14). The “walk” ended with the question, “what should be done?” Essentially, then, the pamphlet sought to direct readers to an understanding that the goal was to transform the black areas into white areas (*Evankelinen lähetys* 1861).

The articles published in the FMS periodicals during the 1860s and 1870s, both in the Swedish (*Missions-Tidning i Finland*) and Finnish (*Suomen Lähetys-sanomia*) editions, echoed the approach taken in the pamphlets. It is noteworthy that throughout the 1860s, many of the articles were translated and adapted from publications in foreign periodicals, especially from the German missionary periodicals, yet the exact sources cannot always be identified (Remes 1993, 27–28). This means that some references to the maps may derive from the original articles, even though their inclusion was ultimately decided by the editors of the periodicals, K. J. G Sirelius and Gustaf Dahlberg. The instructions usually guided readers to a visual and tactile encounter with the map. For example, an article on Africa published in 1861 in *Suomen Lähetys-sanomia* began with a detailed instruction to readers on how

to position oneself in relation to the map:

If the reader now places the missionary map in front of them on the table and finds in the Eastern Hemisphere the great continent that is called **Africa**, and then starts to sail from its southern tip towards its western edge, that is the coast on the left, and stops where the coastline curves towards them, so they, above the equator or below the folding, can read the word Niger. This is where the Niger River, of which I talk about, flows to the sea. (“Ensimmäinen koulu Nigerjoella” 1861, 61, boldface text in the original)

Here, the reader is directed to place the map on a table and use their hands to locate the outlet of the river. The description details the bodily aspects that reading the map invites: placing the map in front of the reader, stretching out one’s hand, visually scanning the map, and combining the text with the map. Following these instructions would allow readers to locate the first school established by a missionary on the Niger River.

Other ways of directing readers included pointing out easily identifiable lettering, specific lines, or the images of ships on the map. For example, one article noted that near the North Pole, readers could find the peninsula “Gröönlanti” [Greenland], with its name written askew, while another article noted that readers could find the Fiji Islands by locating a line drawn across the Pacific, or more precisely by locating the name “Australia,” and then by looking slightly below the large letters of “s” and “t” (“Kristillisyyden levittämisestä Gröönlannissa” 1860,

81; “Fegee luodot” 1860, 118). Jamaica could be found by identifying a ship located between North and South America (“Herätys Jamaikassa” 1861, 66). These instructions were thus based on easily identifiable elements, thereby ensuring that the map could easily be read even by children.

The articles often made use of Finland’s location on the map to help readers comprehend the relative sizes of the islands being discussed or to find their location on the map “by leaving from Finland” and taking this or that route (e.g., “Nestorianeista” 1873, 53). For instance, an article noted that the island of Borneo was four times the size of Finland (“Borneo” 1860, 10). The inclusion of such direct references served as a primary means of engaging readers with places of interest through their own, more immediate spheres of life by educating them on how to relate Finland to more distant regions. By 1873, many articles no longer took it for granted that readers would not know the locations of the places being discussed. This can be seen, for example, in an article dealing with the Fiji Islands:

The Fiji Islands are, as the reader might know, in the Western Hemisphere, in the Wide or Still Sea. They are part of the Australian archipelago, and the reader can find them on the world map in the far south-west of the Western Hemisphere, east of the New Hebrides (“Kuningas Thakomban ja lähetys Fissin saarilla” 1873, 24).

Consequently, what emerges here, via the pamphlets and the periodicals, are the concerted efforts of the FMS to translate specific geo-spatial knowledges into their



appropriate operational context and associate them with recognizable geographical features and other symbols. Moreover, once the FMS had sent out missionaries of its own or established its own workstations, the world map was then updated to include the new locations, thereby allowing readers to locate the sites of activity. This occurred when the FMS sponsored a German missionary, Herman Onasch, associated with the Berlin-based Gossner Missionary Society, to undertake work in India. Sometime during the 1860s, the name “Suomi” (Finland) was imprinted in central Asia to mark the location of the missionary station where Onasch worked.<sup>iv</sup> Similarly, the world map was updated once the FMS’s own missionaries had established their workstations in present-day northern Namibia, in southwest Africa, in the 1870s (“Maailman kartta lähetystoimesta” 1871). The publication of large-scale maps and practice of referring to them in the periodicals further enabled readers to learn about these distant places (“Selitys kartalle” 1862, 56–57; *Missionsskarta öfver Afrika och Owambolandet jemte besrifning* 1879).

Linking the texts to the map was an efficient way to enhance the FMS’s “pedagogy of space” (in the terminology of Paasi 1998). Describing the otherness of the inhabitants of the regions colored black on the map was a prevailing feature of the articles: in effect, the FMS was teaching its audiences how to conceptualize global human difference. This approach became further highlighted when the map was linked to images depicting human individuals of the regions in question. One example is an illustration of a man from New Guinea, which was published both in *Missions-Tidning för Finland*

and *Suomen Lähetysseuranta* in 1862. Interestingly, the editors of the two periodicals, K. J. G. Sirelius for the Swedish periodical and Gustaf Dahlberg for the Finnish issue, utilized the illustration to make differing arguments. Dahlberg’s description captured “the ultimate other,” as he proceeded to instruct readers on where to locate the island and how to understand its relative position on the globe: “New Guinea (read: ginea) is in the Eastern Hemisphere north of New Holland. It is closest to Borneo and the largest island on earth” (“Uusi Guinea (selitys kuvalle)” 1862, 125). He then continued by describing the man in the image as follows: he was a specimen of the “gloomy, cruel, and wild people who also eat humans and hate Europeans. They don’t cultivate the lands. ... The bow is their weapon, as they know nothing of guns” (“Uusi Guinea (selitys kuvalle)” 1862, 125). Sirelius was more sympathetic in his description, even though *Missions-Tidning* also presented the illustration as an image of “a wild man from the big island of New Guinea,” which readers can find on the missionary map. However, he did not claim that the people were cannibals and simply noted that only a few of them had become Christians (“Här se [sic] vi” 1862, 92).

These examples illustrate how the reading of the map was designed to be a multi-sensory event: the conceptualization of the world was designed to unfold as a visual and tactile process as readers gazed at the map and followed its symbols with their hands. It was also a multi-modal event where the moments of consumption were intended to include engaging with the symbolics of the map, the different texts, and the various images, all of which worked towards the same goal: popularizing ideas about the “heathens”

and their whereabouts in the world. The reading of the map together with the texts showed how the map's symbolics corresponded with the world out there. Next, I examine the types of encounters that people had with the map and their inferred meanings.

### Encountering the Maps

As David N. Livingstone has summarized regarding the reading of scientific texts, there is always a sited engagement with the reader and the text. As the “where” affects the “how” of reading, the meanings and knowledge inferred while reading a text are not fixed. Rather, it is possible to decipher processes of domestication as people engage with texts (Livingstone 2005, 391, 399). The same can be observed from people's engagement with the missionary world maps. Indeed, as Kitchin, Perkins, and Dodge argue, “[m]aps do not then emerge in the same way for all individuals” (2011, 21). Consequently, maps and the world have a co-constitutive relationship wherein the “inscription, individual and world” emerge and remake each other “through mutually constituted practices that unite map and space” (Kitchin, Perkins, & Dodge 2011, 21–22). Moreover, the spatial work done by maps should not be taken for granted or uncritically linked with their intended uses. Laura Lo Presti stresses this point by talking about maps that “fail.” Lo Presti notes that through empirical examination, it becomes possible to identify “moments when maps are useless, do not do their job, are impotent, or work differently than expected” (2021, 196). These moments of encounter demonstrate the potential agency of maps in shaping people's understanding of the world. In this section, I examine how the reception of

the maps differed according to the context of their readers, their preconceptions, and relationship with the knowledges that the map communicated.

The likely places where adults encountered the maps for the first time were missionary events: during sermons or at other gatherings organized by the FMS's agents across the country, where the map would have been studied as a “collaborative artefact.” This means that the mapping would have unfolded in collaboration with the other information available in its context of use (in the terminology of Kitchin, Gleeson, and Dodge 2013, 483). The FMS used the post office, its network of agents, and traveling salespeople to distribute its publications effectively throughout Finland (Remes 1993, 29–32). As well, the FMS sold and displayed the map at its events, such as public sermons. Vicars involved with mission work also provided copies of the map to peoples in different parts of the country (“Kotomaalta” 1871, 117; Halpanen sanankuulija 1876). The society's voluntary agents distributed the maps in rural locations like Tammela, a small village in southern Finland, and Munsala, on the western coast of Finland in the region of Ostrobothnia, where a factory worker and a teacher, respectively, sold the maps (“Tilinteko Suomen Lähetyksseuralle tulleista rahoista” 1860, 26; “Myydystä lähetykskirjasista ja sanomista” 1871, 80). Due to the effective work of the agents, the FMS reported glowingly already in its second annual report that the maps were being consumed across the country, even in the distant north at the borders of Lapland (“Suomen Lähetyksseuran toinen vuosi-kertomus” 1860, 125). Copies were also made available to the common people via loaning libraries (*Luettelo Rauman*

*Lainakirjaston kirjoista, alkukirjainten johdolla* 1873, 17).

Considering the size of the printings, several thousand copies at a time, which, for example, totaled 78,000 by 1894, as well as the different channels of distribution, the FMS was able to put its map in the hands of a diverse audience. It thus transformed the map into a recognizable and popular commodity. Unfortunately, though, the FMS archive contains no detailed information on just who purchased the maps. The printing sizes for the Swedish issue were always smaller than those for the Finnish issue, which reflects the relative sizes of the two groups in the population. It is likely that many people consulted the map when reading the FMS's periodicals as they often read—and purchased copies of earlier volumes—for a long time after their initial publication (Remes 1993, 29). In addition, the map was most likely utilized at the Helsinki-based missionary school, where the FMS started to train missionaries in 1862: since the curricula included some geography lessons (called “maanoppi” [knowledge of the Earth] in 1864), the map likely featured as an educational tool alongside the imported maps (“Lähetyskoulumme” 1864, 188–90; Remes 1993, 115).

All these various mobilities of the maps—published in two languages and encountered by people from different social contexts—generated new lifecycles for them as they intersected with different people's lives. It is noteworthy that as they arrived in different locations, their social lives may have changed accordingly. Indeed, their material form allowed them to cross the distances of what Bruno Latour (1987) calls “immutable mobiles,” yet simultaneously they could

become mutable mobiles since the meanings inferred from them could differ (dos Reis 2021, 111; Law and Mol 2001, 619–20). In addition to generating different meanings, users may have annotated their contents, as is known to have occurred with some of the missionary world maps produced by the Basel mission (e.g., “Weltkarte der Mission” 1845). Thus far, I have not come across any FMS maps annotated by one or more users. However, through the different accounts circulating in the public sphere, we can access some of the meanings generated by the maps at the time.

For some of those aspiring to become missionaries, the maps were affective materials. One such person was Tobias Reijonen, who served as one of the FMS's first missionaries in Africa. An account of Reijonen's life, published in 1905, notes that the map impacted him while growing up in northern Karelia, in the eastern part of the Grand Duchy: “When Tobias was young, the missionary map was published, where the heathen lands were colored black and the Christian lands [shown] in white. ...When Tobias gazed upon the map, he wept and hoped that he could do something for the beloved Savior. Thus, he gained the desire to work as a missionary” (Rahikainen 1905, 3). In Tobias's case, he encountered the map at home, where his parents, although leading a humble life, may have acquired it to advance the Christian education of their nine children. Although Rahikainen's biography provides a retrospective description of Reijonen's engagement with the map, it is illustrative of how the map may have been an affective object of indirect agency for those aspiring to become missionaries. The visual symbolics of the map demanded action and pushed people to enter the missionary field.

In addition to stimulating missionary action in the world, the maps provided their users with a means of self-reflection and raised awareness about the missionary geography of the world. An illustrative example is the work done by the vicar and agent of the FMS, Nils Gabriel Arppe. As an agent of the FMS from the time of its establishment, Arppe dealt with the missionary maps regularly, as he, for instance, ordered them from Helsinki to distribute locally in Juuka, a municipality in northern Karelia, where Arppe worked during the early days of his ministerial career (Arppe 1860). Additionally, an article published in one of the FMS periodicals in 1871 documents Arppe's account of the effects that missionary work and the maps had on the congregations he had worked with in eastern Finland. Without detailing the exact place of occurrence, Arppe described how he had given a man a copy of the map to take home with him. After a while, the man had returned and confessed that the map had revealed to him that in his heart he was a "heathen" ("Hemlandet" 1871, 108–9; "Kotomaalta" 1871, 117). The anonymous man was not alone in describing how the FMS map had led people to question their devotion to God. Indeed, in 1876 an author using the penname "Halpanen sanankuulija" [humble listener of the Word] contemplated the effects that the maps should have for their readers. The comment appeared in *Karjalatar*, a newspaper published in North Karelia. The author wrote of a local sermon and how people had afterwards enthusiastically purchased copies of the map, stressing that in addition to making it easier to comprehend human variety across the world, people should also consider the "color" of their own hearts:

These maps show the extent of the heathen lands and those enlightened by the Gospel: they also show the different religions and the sites of missionary work, etc. But dear friends, those who gaze upon the maps, you should also look at your own heart: is it white or black? Have you ever thanked the Lord for the abundance of the light of the Word that the Lord has allowed to shine in our Finland like the Sun? Have you made use of this abundant gift? (Halpanen sanankuulija 1876, 2)

Both instances showcase how, for people identifying with the lower classes, the reading of the map and reflecting on its symbolic meanings could evoke pity for oneself: revelations that not all those inhabiting the white-colored Finland were "white" at heart.

In contrast, a letter sent to the FMS council and subsequently published in condensed form in *Suomen Lähetyssanomia* emphasized that the map primarily impacted people's geographical knowledge of the world. In the letter, a teacher named Porttila describes how his father, "who did not have the chance of going to school, got his first information of foreign lands from *Suomen Lähetyssanomat* and by examining the missionary map of the world" ("Mitä ystävämme kirjoittavat" 1922). Testimonials such as this are revealing in that they point to the enlightening effect that the map had more broadly: in addition to being used for religious purposes, the map and periodicals were used to learn about the world. The educating aspect of the map was, in fact, an argument that the FMS itself had made early on when advertising the map after its first publication ("Lähetyk-kirjallisuutta")

1860). As mentioned in the beginning of this article, this was also the argument that the FMS president made about the impact of the map in 1909, fifty years after its first edition had been published.

The importance of the map as a means of understanding world geography was also mentioned in fiction writing as one of the objects of everyday life readily available in people's homes. For instance, in a short story published in 1914 in the newspaper *Kokkola*, the missionary world map was noted to be "at home on the wall of the guest room" and highlighted as a means for a relative in Finland to comprehend the journey undertaken by a settler migrating from Finland to the United States ("Amerikan kirjeitä" 1914).

These examples, although mediated through the FMS periodical and newspapers and at times mentioned in fiction writing, can be read as indicative of the diversity of uses and responses that the maps and their accompanying texts generated. They show how, for some, the maps were a source of geographical knowledge, a means of positioning oneself in relation to others in the world. Simultaneously, they reveal that people also questioned how the map corresponded with the rest of the world, as viewing the white-colored Finland on the map led people to reflect on their own convictions. When peering beyond the Finnish peninsula and across the seas, map users would have been able to connect the map with the narratives and images of "distant others" and ideas of civility given in the missionary periodicals as well as the information they gathered via discussions and at missionary gatherings. Certainly, these notions highlight how the map's "pedagogy of space" impacted individuals differently.

## The Archived Map

The symbolics of darkness and the association of black with uncivil spaces outlasted the publication cycle of the map. After the turn of the twentieth century, references to the missionary map become more sporadic, although the idea communicated by the map concerning the extent of the heathen lands was often still mentioned in public discourse. I consider this to be an indication of the influence that the FMS maps and its missionary worldviews as well as other print products, such as the missionary periodicals, atlases, and other maps, had in Finland over the years. They showcase how the process of mapping, which the circulation of the material map had begun, could continue in this mental form. For instance, in 1901 "a missionary map" was referenced in a column related to the county elections in Kotka, a city on the Gulf of Finland. Here, a person with the penname *Kaukomieli* noted that people's levels of interest in the elections resembled the reactions caused by the missionary maps:

The county elections, well, they are coming closer. But they seem to affect our esteemed inhabitants as much as if one was to unfold some missionary map depicting one of the sinful heathen places on the continent of the blacks – "it's so dark! But it does not get lighter just by looking at it" – they would think. (1901, 2)

Similarly, another author in 1911, supportive of the Christian temperance movement, referred to the symbolics of the missionary map when discussing the declining level of civilization caused by the consumption of alcohol in the Grand Duchy: "We must be living in a heathen

society? We must be one of the ‘black lands’ on the missionary map? Maybe missionaries from Owamboland will come here to preach the Gospel” (Tähystelijä 1911, 38). Certainly, the missionary map was very much in the minds of different people and its symbolics had become a shared language, even though fresh copies of it no longer entered circulation. Indeed, in the 1920s the FMS contemplated publishing a new, large missionary map for subscribers to complement the foreign maps available (“Tiedonantoja” 1921, 16). However, it appears that these plans did not transpire, and the map was not revived.

These references to the symbolics of the map even at a time when the material map was disappearing from everyday use are indicative of the symbolic and concrete processes of “archivization” that had begun. The FMS retained some copies of the maps in its archive. Many privately owned copies were thrown away as their users no longer attached value to them, while others were stored in private collections and may have been passed down to descendants after their owners passed away.

As objects are archived and placed in collections, such events alter their identities and allow them to enter another phase in their lifecycles: in this sense, archives are dynamic places that constantly produce meanings for objects and things, be they artefacts, texts, or maps. As researchers become interested in different objects, they exert a power that can affect the future lives of objects (Lehto-Vahtera 2018, 13). Presently, I am aware of eleven surviving copies of the world map in Finnish public archives. Ten copies are part of the map collection of the FMS, housed at the National Library of Finland, where the

FMS donated them in 2006. Six of them are Finnish and four Swedish issues of the map. They are in relatively good condition; some are torn, however, showing that they have been repeatedly folded and unfolded. Some contain physical markings that show they had been hung on a wall at some point.

One copy, printed in 1877, is in the collection of the Satakunta Museum, in Pori, western Finland. It is on display at an open-air museum in the nearby town of Lavia that exhibits the local way of life in different centuries. Unfortunately, the museum does not have much information about the provenance of the map, simply that it was donated to the museum by a local man, Mauno Venesmäki, son of a farmer, who passed away in 1977. Consequently, we have limited access to information concerning the map’s lifecycle or its shifting social meanings as it passed between different actors and places during the twentieth century.

Nevertheless, some clues as to its lifecycle can be inferred from the material map. Notably, it had been framed. This hints at the fact that the map had been valued by its owners, likely hung on a wall or otherwise displayed. It had been mounted on a piece of paper containing the statute by the Russian Tsar concerning the rural fire insurance company, Suomen Maalaisten Paloapuyhtiö, established in 1857 (“Maailman-kartta lähetys toimesta” 1877). The use of this decades-old paper to support the map hints at the valued status of paper in its owner’s household. The household in question may well have been the home of Venesmäki’s grandparents, but no source exists that would prove that Venesmäki inherited the map from his family.

The dearth of the missionary maps in the archive hints at the lifecycles of the other copies. Indeed, I consider their scarcity in the public archive an indication that most of the maps consumed by ordinary Finns may have been thrown away as objects no longer useful in everyday life. They became trash, thus entering an additional lifecycle as their materiality decomposed in various ways. Consequently, their popularity in the nineteenth century contrasts with their marginal position in the present-day archive, where only limited contextual information is available. However, by writing about the prevailing copies—by noticing them (Lehto-Vahtera 2018, 14)—researchers, the author included, are again able to alter the directions of their lifecycles.

### Conclusion

The FMS's missionary maps of the world were immersive and affective map-things that materialized the world to its makers and users. By reconstructing their lifecycles in Finland, I have identified practices of mobilizing global geographical knowledge via the maps and texts and analyzed the encounters that some individuals had with these material carriers. I have also contemplated their status in the public archive. Upon publication, the map entered a clear void in the availability of world maps for wider audiences. The FMS map was a mass-produced product that remained in circulation for decades. Its relatively low price made it available for many. For its makers, the map was a means to communicate ideas about human difference and the global transformation that missionary work, including the work done by Finnish missionaries, could affect in the world as part of a larger effort to turn the black areas on the map white. For the FMS, the map was

also a vehicle to advance Finnish people's geographical literacy: this is visible in the way that the articles in the periodicals helped people read the map and understand the relative positions of different places in the world. People's encounters with the map show that when mobilized, the copies of the map became versatile artefacts that could prompt concern for distant others as well as reflection on one's own convictions. Moreover, the map was a tool of geographical enlightenment. Considering the evidence that I have been able to locate, it is credible to argue that during the decades that it was in active circulation, the map had a particularly powerful social life that contributed to the shaping of ordinary Finns' understanding of the world.

My analysis of the maps' lifecycles leads to three main conclusions. The first is methodological and highlights the challenges of identifying the meanings of maps in people's lives. Indeed, it is much easier to analyze how the maps were designed to be used than it is to examine people's encounters with them. Placing the maps in their historical contexts has allowed for an analysis of specific moments of their consumption and the meanings that they were given. As designed by its publisher, the map was a vehicle for promoting the importance of missionary work in converting, civilizing, and thus saving the distant "heathen" souls. Their conceptualization of the global missionary field inherently emphasized the otherness and uncivility of non-Christian populations. The references in published materials warrant arguing that the maps could have indirect agency in initiating people's engagement with the world as well as influencing their self-understandings.

Furthermore, the symbolics of the map developed into a rhetorical tool, thus informing the second conclusion: that the acts of reading the map familiarized many people with the idea of expanding the Christian empire and that the iconography of the map, with the world divided into white, grey, and black areas, was internalized by many and helped shape everyday parlance, thus influencing how people conceptualized and knew the world. However, and coming back to the methodological conclusion, undoubtedly this was not all the spatial work that the maps did. Indeed, there were most likely moments when the map “failed.”

Third—and despite the methodological challenges noted above—my analysis of the FMS’s maps demonstrates that analyzing the maps’ social lives by reconstructing their lifecycles offers an effective methodology for understanding what different types of maps have been able to accomplish in past societies. By re-establishing the social relatedness of map-things in the past, researchers can think with maps to reveal the multifaceted spatial work done by maps. In doing so—and by publishing such research—they contribute to making and keeping the archived maps in different collections visible in the present, thus preventing them from falling into oblivion.

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<sup>ii</sup> All translations from Finnish and Swedish are by the author.

<sup>iii</sup> In 1866, the senate passed the bill obliging towns in the Grand Duchy of Finland to organize primary education for all children.

<sup>iv</sup> Identifying the exact year is challenging due to the lack of copies of each issue of the map.