

Cartographic Context of Aboriginal Boundary Maps of Qing Taiwan: Construction of “*Taiwan Purple-Line Aboriginal Boundary Map*”

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ABSTRACT

Aboriginal boundary maps (番界圖) were of unique form and function produced in a specific space-time context. Through analyzing the *Taiwan Purple-Line Aboriginal Boundary Map*, currently housed in the Palace Museum in Beijing, this paper explores the cartography of aboriginal boundary maps and the man-land relationship in Qing Taiwan expressed in these image documents of official discourse. In-depth reexamination of the writing and image of the *Purple-Line Map* revealed the context of the three-tier cartographic structure. Cross-reference with other aboriginal boundary maps, historical materials and cartographic data was also made for a thorough textual research on aboriginal boundary maps of Taiwan under Qing rule to shed light on the history and course of cartography as well as the relationship of the spatial image portrayed on maps with the land and the people living on it.

This study revealed that the *Purple-Line Map* not only delineated the aboriginal boundary of Qing Taiwan, but also illustrated different schemes and policies of the Qing court for dealing with the aborigines. The *Purple-Line Map* was the agglomeration of various aboriginal boundary maps. Hence, when reading historical maps, due consideration must be given to the existence of multilayer structure. While the reason behind setting up aboriginal boundaries was for maintaining order and state administration, the boundary became practically the contact/conflict zone between the Qing court and the aborigines. Hence, the mapping representation was the product of co-construction between the state and the locals, which was the unique feature of aboriginal boundary maps.

Keywords: History of Cartography, Aboriginal Boundary Maps, Layers, Contact Zone, Political Space, Co-construction, *Ai* (隘, Guarding Fort)