

NOTE ON CARTOGRAPHY

Visually depicting space and power—cartography—is a political act in every sense. Maps represent things not as they are, but rather as we need or want them to be for particular purposes. The conventions of mapmaking to which we are accustomed today are rooted in the very violent histories with which I grapple in this book. It is impossible to separate a north-up map or the typical centering of the Atlantic Ocean from the relationships of power that brought millions of Africans across this ocean in chains.

Thus, the maps in this book depart from convention. They do not center the Atlantic Ocean. They do not orient north.

In each case, these maps attempt to represent the political orientation of the historical actors in whom I am interested: fugitives. They did not face the ocean nor assume that power was ever northward. Reorienting these maps is an important part of this book's intervention, a critical element of reconceiving narratives of modernity.