

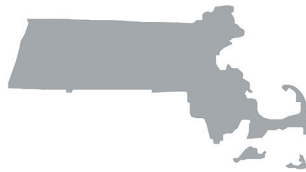


**Cotton Mather (1663 - 1728)**  
**Mezzotint engraving by Peter Pelham, 1727**

Born in England, Pelham became the earliest known New England artist and the first engraver. The popular clergyman Cotton Mather was the first subject he painted after his emigration to Boston. He then used it as a model to engrave the earliest mezzotint produced in the American colonies. Mezzotint, a relatively new method of engraving, involved scraping and burnishing areas of a copper or steel plate. This created half-tones that resulted in subtle effects of light and shadow. In 1748, after the deaths of his first two wives, Pelham married Mary (Singleton) Copley, the mother of famed American painter John Singleton Copley (1738-1815). See Copley's portrait of Paul Revere on p. 85.

# Defending the “New England Way”: Cotton Mather’s “Exact Mapp of New England and New York”

JEFFERSON DILLMAN



**Abstract:** *In 1702 Cotton Mather published his two volume Magnalia Christi Americana: The Ecclesiastical History of New-England from its First Planting in the Year 1620 unto . . . 1698. Mather argued that England would come to dominate North America due to God’s will that New England become the “New Jerusalem” after the second coming of Christ. Mather detailed the religious development of Massachusetts and the New England colonies. Among many topics, he described the Salem Witch Trials and criticized some of the court’s methods in an attempt to distance himself from the event. He also argued that Puritan slaveholders should do more to convert their slaves to Christianity.*

*While the Magnalia is well known, this article examines Mather’s intriguing “Exact Mapp of New England” and demonstrates how it illuminates and reinforces the major themes of Mather’s narrative. Though the Magnalia has long been regarded as a powerful piece of polemic, the map has received little attention. Mather’s employment of a map with a particular rhetorical purpose is placed within the larger context of contemporary New England authors and cartography, particularly William Hubbard.*

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Just over three centuries ago, eminent New England intellectual and theologian Cotton Mather rejoiced at the publication of what has become his most famous work, the *Magnalia Christi Americana*. Subtitled the “Ecclesiastical History of New-England,” it was a blend of history, biography, ecclesiology, and theology. The *Magnalia* has secured a place as a classic example of early American literature and as an important source document for New England history and American Puritanism, in particular. Less well known, perhaps, and certainly less studied, is the map, “An Exact Mapp of New England and New York,” that accompanies Mather’s massive text.

The “Exact Mapp” appears, at first glance, plain and simplistic, and even, in certain aspects, hurriedly drawn. Certainly when considered alongside the grandiose, extravagant text to which it is attached, it seems incongruous. The map, viewed on its surface, seems merely a representation of physical space intended to provide geographic reference points for the *Magnalia*’s readers. Yet if this is the map’s only intended purpose, why did Mather not simply include, unaltered, one of the many available high-quality maps of New England? John Thornton, Philip Lea, John Speed, and Cornelius Visscher, among others, had produced detailed maps of the region that were seemingly more than adequate for the simple purpose of depicting a geographic location. The answer lies within the pages of the *Magnalia* itself. The “Exact Mapp” is more than a map — it is a rhetorical device designed and included to amplify the issues that Mather addresses in the text: the history and legacy of a godly community; an attempt to reverse, or at least forestall, the decline of piety in the colony; and a demonstration of the fidelity of Massachusetts to the English crown. Further, the map may also reflect something of Mather the man, highlighting the spiritual and psychological tensions that existed within him.

Cotton Mather was born in Boston in 1663, the son of a famous New England minister, Increase Mather, and the grandson of two equally famous ancestors, John Cotton and Richard Mather. Drawing on a rich spiritual and intellectual heritage, the young Mather excelled in the standard curriculum of Puritan classical learning: Greek, Hebrew, Latin, church history, mathematics, logic, and rhetoric. His education also fostered within him a lifelong interest in the sciences, leading him to explore and even publish papers in the fields of astronomy, geology, geography, and meteorology. In 1678, at the age of fifteen, Mather graduated from Harvard University and began to prepare for a life in the ministry. Two years later, in 1680, he received his M.A. from Harvard and preached his first public sermon. By

1685, Mather was installed as the pastor at the Second Church of Boston, a position he remained in until his death in 1728.<sup>1</sup>

In 1693, already established as a leading minister and author, Cotton Mather began work on the *Magnalia Christi Americana*, a work he considered most important for recording and preserving the history of the Massachusetts Bay colony and its neighbors. Subtitled an "Ecclesiastical History of New-England from its First Planting in the Year 1620 unto the Year of our Lord 1698," the work stretched to seven volumes with 800 folio pages of double-column type. Noted Presbyterian publisher Thomas Parkhurst issued the *Magnalia* in London in 1702. The opening half of the work follows a rough chronological pattern, and each of the first three volumes consists largely of biographical sketches of the governors, magistrates, and leading theologians in New England's history. Book Four contains an account of Harvard University, also heavily laced with biography, while Book Five discusses the theology and doctrine of New England Congregationalism. Book Six is a record of signs and wonders, containing "many illustrious Discoveries and Demonstrations of the Divine Providence, in Remarkable Mercies and Judgments among many particular persons."<sup>2</sup> Book Seven, the final volume, gives the history of various dissenting groups, church schisms, and heresies that plagued New England Congregational unity throughout the seventeenth century.

Far more than a mere historical narrative, the *Magnalia* has several aims that are enumerated in the preface. Aside from rather mundane and typical appeals to posterity and the intention to create a monument to the work of the Lord, Mather also wishes, as John Higginson writes in the Attestation testimony opening the work, to preserve "the True Original and Design" of the colony, provoke a spiritually dormant younger generation and "cause them to Return again to the Lord," and emphasize New England's commitment and loyalty to the mother country. Perhaps most significantly, Mather wishes to confound English critics of the "New England Way" by "the Manifestation of the *Truth of things*" that prevent and remove the "*Misrepresentations* of New-England."<sup>3</sup> While the *Magnalia* can be

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Murdock, "Introduction" in Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*. Vols. 1 & 2, eds. Kenneth Murdock and Elizabeth Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 1-3; See also Kenneth Silverman, *The Life and Times of Cotton Mather* (New York: Welcome Rain Publishers, 1984), 22-23.

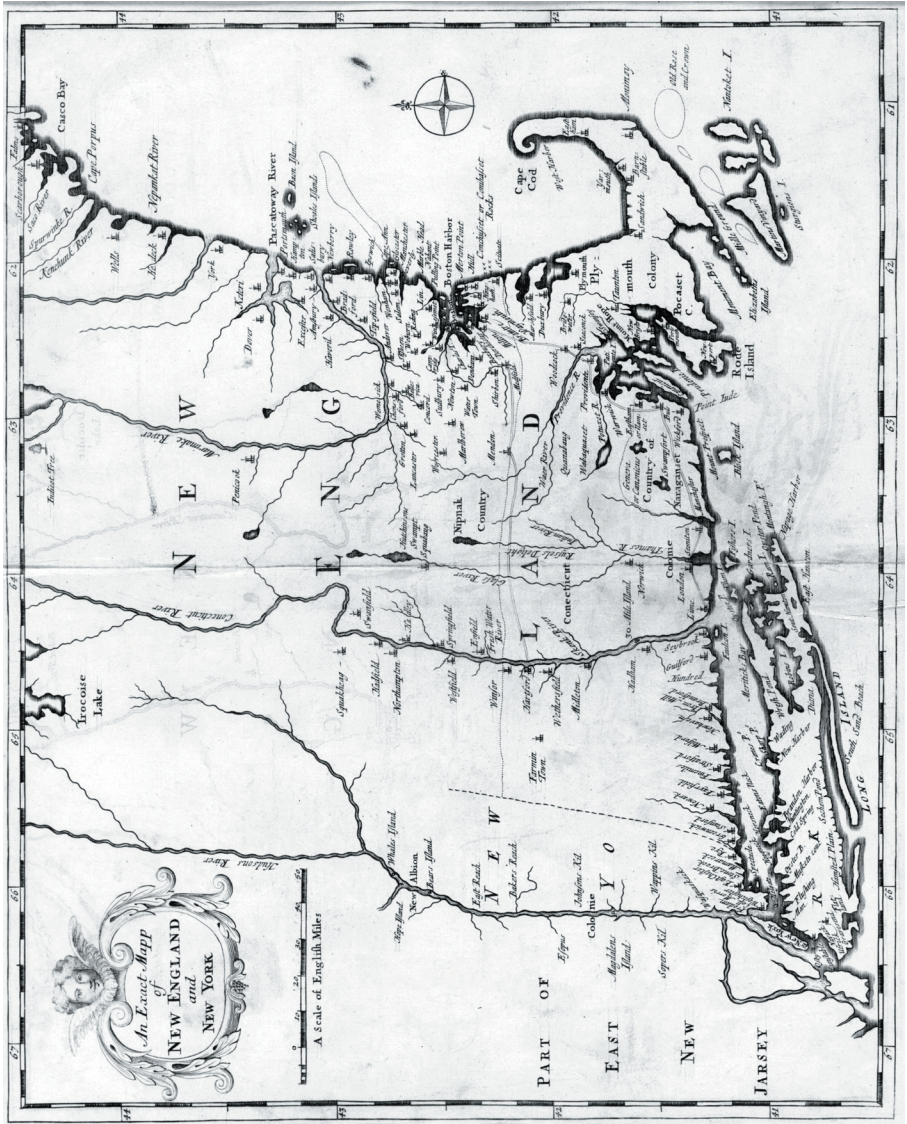
<sup>2</sup> Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana: Or, the Ecclesiastical History of New-England, from Its First Planting in the Year 1620. Unto the Year of our Lord, 1698*. (London, 1702). *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://continuum.uta.edu:2088/servlet/ECCO>, 583.

<sup>3</sup> Mather, 68; the term "New England Way" originated with the New England colonists themselves as a means of describing their unique blend of representative government and theocracy.

Thornton, Morden, and Lea's "New Map" (Virginia–New England, 1685)



Cotton Mather's "Exact Mapp of New England and New York" (1702)



interpreted in several different ways, and scholars have discovered myriad subtexts and ulterior motives within its pages, it is the three aforementioned points that bear exploring in terms of the map.<sup>4</sup>

The map accompanying the *Magnalia Christi Americana* was printed as a fold-out insert next to the opening page of Book I. It is titled “An Exact Mapp of New England and New York” (see p. 115). No cartographic house is credited, nor is there any reference to an engraver or publisher. There are no topographic features depicted beyond rivers and lakes. The map consists chiefly of town names and locations, along with the boundary lines of the New England colonies. The coastline is well delineated, with islands, large bays, and notable geographic formations named. Of interest, too, are three areas labeled “Nipnak Country,” “Pocaset C.,” and “Country of Naragansett,” which refer to Native American polities. Unlike other contemporary English maps of the same region, the “Exact Mapp” is plain and largely free of artistic embellishment.

The provenance of the *Magnalia* map is found in John Thornton, Robert Morden, and Philip Lea’s “A New Map of New England, New York, New Jarsey, Pensilvania, Maryland, and Virginia” (c. 1685, hereafter referred to as TML). Though the map itself makes no specific reference regarding its origins, and the *Magnalia* text likewise provides no information, William P. Cumming, one of the twentieth century’s leading authorities on cartographic history, states that the “Exact Mapp” follows in detail the TML map. He notes the precise correlation of the coastlines between the two maps as strong evidence that the “Exact Mapp” is based on the TML. This assertion is confirmed by Barbara McCorkle, former curator of the map collection at Yale University, in a recent bibliography of New England maps.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, a close comparison of the two shows that the creator of the “Exact Mapp” faithfully preserved the coastline, rivers, and towns

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<sup>4</sup> Sacvan Bercovitch, “New England Epic,” *English Literary History* 33 no. 3 (Sep., 1966): 337-338; Stephen Foster, *The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Shaping of New England Culture, 1570-1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 286-287. For further approaches to the *Magnalia* and its themes, see Karen Haltunen, “Cotton Mather and the Meaning of Suffering in the ‘Magnalia Christi Americana,’” *Journal of American Studies* 12 no. 3 (Dec., 1978): 311-329, Constance Post, “Old World Order in the New: John Eliot and ‘Praying Indians’ in Cotton Mather’s *Magnalia Christi Americana*,” *The New England Quarterly* 66 no. 3 (Sep., 1993):416-433, and Parker H. Johnson, “Humiliation Followed by Deliverance: Metaphor and Plot in Cotton Mather’s ‘Magnalia,’” *Early American Literature* 15 no. 3 (Winter 1980/81): 237-246.

<sup>5</sup> William P. Cumming, *British Maps of Colonial America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 31; Barbara B. McCorkle, *New England in Early Printed Maps 1513-1800: An Illustrated Cartobibliography* (Providence: John Carter Brown Library, 2001), 44 and 71. Both authors suggest variant maps produced by one or more of the TML authors, but these maps would have been heavily based on the original 1685 map in any case.

of the TML map, as well as the names of local Amerindian tribes (the aforementioned Nipnak, et al.), clearly demonstrating the relationship.

The "Exact Mapp," however, also contains significant differences from its TML progenitor. Artistic flourishes, such as the inclusion of stylized flora and fauna are gone; drawings of hills are removed; the cartouche is greatly simplified; the ocean contains no images of sea creatures or sailing vessels. The author has also added the names and locations of over one hundred New England towns, denoting them with church symbols.<sup>6</sup>

Based on the extensive revisions of the "Exact Mapp" from its possible source in one of the TML maps, it is reasonable to assume that the changes were made purposefully to conform to the rhetorical purposes of the accompanying text. Mather, then, must be considered as the map's author, or at least the generator of the changes. The first consideration in assigning authorship of the map to Mather is a logical one. As already noted, a number of geographically and topographically sufficient maps existed for use in the *Magnalia* without alteration. Indeed, this is what Thomas Quick, already in possession of the manuscript, proposed to London booksellers: that the map be prefixed to the text of the *Magnalia*. And this is what he suggested to Mather in a letter dated March 19, 1702. These suggestions, however, did not come to pass. The *Magnalia* was published the same week the letter was written, which indicates that Parkhurst already had the "Exact Mapp."

In his original proposal for a map, Quick suggested the use of "The best chart of New Engl. The best topographically Delineation of Boston, & your effigies," which, clearly, the "Exact Mapp" is not. The letter also states that Mather had forwarded to Quick "additional prints" some time after sending the main manuscript, which had been given to Parkhurst for insertion "in their proper place." The "Exact Mapp" may have been part of this collection of prints, though it cannot be stated with certainty.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The use of church icons to represent towns is not unique to the "Exact Mapp." It may be found in many contemporary Spanish maps, as well as some English maps. See the early to mid-seventeenth century maps of John Speed and William Smith or slightly earlier maps from John Norden. By Mather's time, such use was falling out of fashion in English cartography. Examples of this are the TML maps upon which the "Exact Mapp" is based, as well as eighteenth century maps by Joel Gascoyne, John Rocque, Peter Burdett, Thomas Jefferys, et al.

<sup>7</sup> Quick to Mather, 19 Mar. 1701/2 transcribed in Chester Noyes Greenough, *Collected Studies* (New York; Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 138-142. What these "additional prints" were is unknown, but from the context of the letter, it is clear that they represented corrections, changes, and additions that Mather wished to make to the original manuscript. The map may well have been part of these. It may have been originally included (thus Quick's reference to a "best" map and perhaps not the one he already had), or Mather may have sent it at a different time. It is also worth noting that a minority opinion among scholars holds that Mather was not the author/originator of the "Exact Mapp" based



Furthermore, Mather was no stranger to the art of cartography. Map and globe-making formed part of his Harvard curriculum, and he had previously drawn a map of New England for his uncle in Ireland to illustrate the events of King Philip's War.<sup>8</sup> Finally, there is the weight of scholarly opinion, which, beginning with William Douglass, assigns authorship of the map to Cotton Mather. Douglass, writing in 1755, refers to "Dr. Mather's Map of New England," and in the same note, references John Oldmixon's 1708 *British Empire in North America* as using "Mather's silly map," providing an important contemporary indication of the map's authorship.<sup>9</sup>

Taken at the most superficial level, the "Exact Mapp" is merely a visual aid for readers of the *Magnalia* to locate the scenes of the action. The fact that the map is presented in a work with an obvious polemical purpose is certainly not, in and of itself, grounds to view it as anything more than depiction of geographical space. A brief look at another New England map, however, and the purpose to which it was used, will show that Mather was working very much within a context (if not a full-fledged tradition in the young colony) that had been previously employed. The first such map was John Foster's 1677 "Map of New England," which was produced to accompany William Hubbard's history of King Philip's War (see p. 119). Matthew Edney and Susan Cimburek, specialists in the cartographic history of New England, firmly locate Foster's map in Hubbard's ongoing theological dispute with Cotton Mather's father, Increase. Regarding King Philip's War, both men published accounts of the fighting with very different objectives. Increase Mather saw the war as God's judgment on a people who were abandoning their first principles of faith while Hubbard viewed the war as God's means of "promoting and preserving the true faith" by delivering the settlers from an unchristian foe.<sup>10</sup>

On a less visually apparent level, Hubbard's map constructs what Edney and Cimburek call a "parallel between the processes of geographical discovery and providential interpretation." They insert the map into the larger process of increasing European knowledge of North America, in which God, in his Providence, was slowly revealing the continent. In

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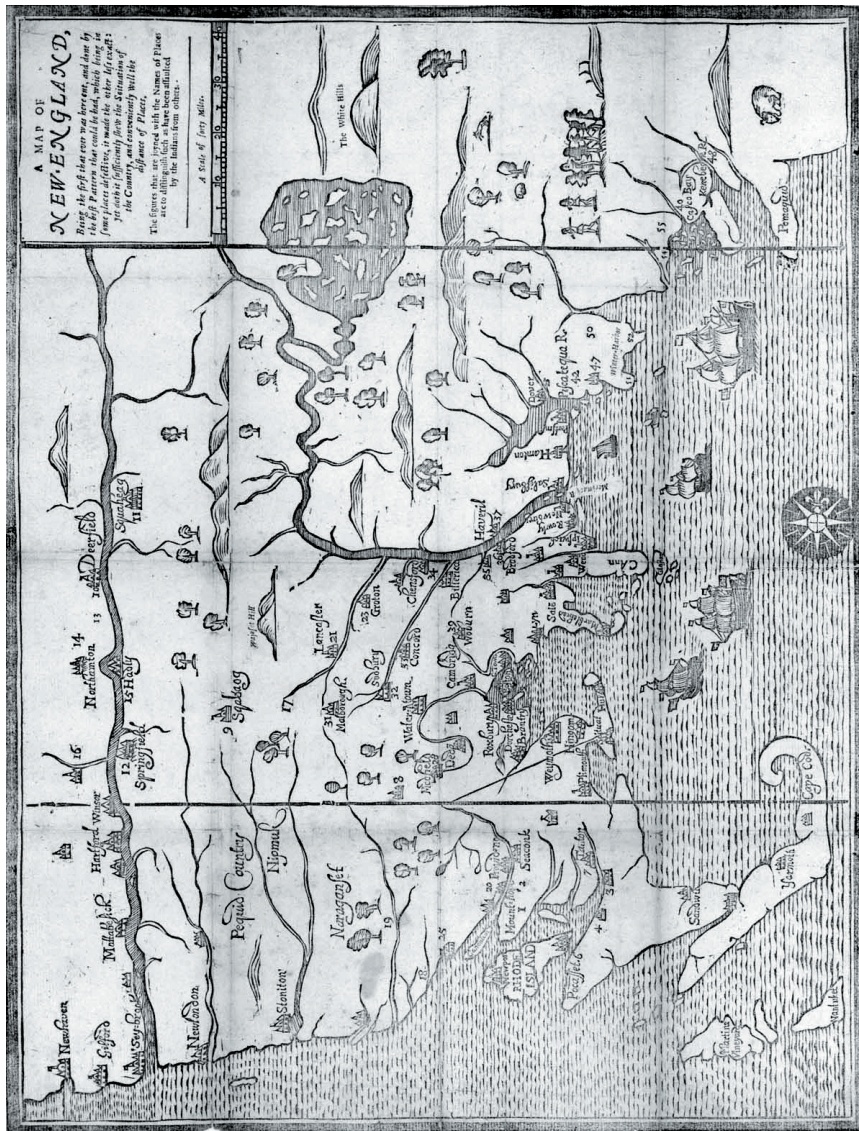
principally on an alternate reading of the above referenced letter, but the argument they present against the weight of existing evidence favoring Mather is unpersuasive.

<sup>8</sup> Silverman, 21.

<sup>9</sup> William Douglas, *A Summary, Historical and Political, of the First Planting, Progressive Improvements, and Present State of the British Settlements in ...* Vol. 1. (London: R. Baldwin, 1755): 326n.

<sup>10</sup> Matthew Edney and Susan Cimburek, "Telling the Traumatic Truth: William Hubbard's 'Narrative' of King Philip's War and His Map of New England," *William and Mary Quarterly* 61 (April 2004): 326-29.

John Foster's "Map of New England," in William Hubbard's Narrative, 1677



Note the unusual, latitudinal perspective and the four ships sailing into Boston Harbor.

the same way, Hubbard's *A Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians*, in addition to establishing the guilt of the Wampanoag Confederation for starting King Philip's War, fits easily into his scheme of a gradual revelation of Providence concerning the New England settlements. The war was merely one more step in the unveiling of the majestic design the Lord had for the Puritan colonies. Though full of setbacks for the colonists, to be sure, King Philip's War was, in Hubbard's final analysis, a deliverance, of which many had already occurred, and many more were still to come.<sup>11</sup>

While Hubbard's map and its relationship to his accompanying narrative may be seen, by its very existence, as a forerunner to Mather's *Magnalia* map, it is worth observing that Hubbard and the Mathers had a long and contentious history. As noted above, Increase Mather, Cotton's father, wrote a competing history of King Philip's War, the roots of which lay in years of disagreement over the nature and course of the "New England Way." Without going too deeply into this dispute, it is enough to say that Increase Mather and William Hubbard were rivals for political and ministerial power in the young colony. King Philip's War provided both men with a platform from which to promulgate their respective views.<sup>12</sup> The young Cotton Mather, by this time a teaching elder in Boston's North Church, was no doubt privy to this wrangling. He was able to observe the impact Hubbard's narrative and Foster's map had on shaping perceptions of a crucial aspect of New England history.

While it is not clear how contemporaries assessed and compared each history of the war (though the government of New England seems to have preferred Hubbard), Hubbard's map certainly lent an authority to his account and aided him in unveiling, through the "events of time" and through "knowledge of this western world," the activities of Providence.<sup>13</sup> It is also important to point out concerning Hubbard's influence on Cotton Mather's future writing that Mather thought highly enough of Hubbard's work to reprint a substantial portion of it in Book Seven of the *Magnalia* as part of the chronicle of New England's "Troubles."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 338-39. Hubbard's map appeared at the front of his work in the London edition only, and, by its numbering scheme, served to reinforce a very specific rhetorical purpose. The "Exact Mapp" is thus not a direct philosophical descendant, but the relationship between the two remains easily visible.

<sup>12</sup> Anne Kusener Nelsen, "King Philip's War and the Hubbard Mather Rivalry," *William and Mary Quarterly* 27 (October 1970): 625-628. Edney and Cimburek also discuss this, as does Perry Miller in *The New England Mind: the Seventeenth Century*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954).

<sup>13</sup> John Foster and William Hubbard, *A Narrative of the Troubles with Indians in New England* (Boston, 1677; reprint, Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, n.d.), 9 (page citations are to the reprint edition). The government of Massachusetts supported the first print edition, as can be seen in the dedication.

<sup>14</sup> Mather, 711-726.

One final note regarding the influence of Hubbard's map upon Mather's "Exact Mapp." Edney and Cimburek point out that Hubbard's inclusion of a map with his *Narrative* seems strange given that the book was published in New England for a small audience that would have been intimately familiar with the region's geography, unless he had some other object in view.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, the *Magnalia*, though intended for audiences in both New England and England, contains a great deal of rhetoric aimed directly at residents of Massachusetts Bay and its environs.<sup>16</sup> For such an audience, a map as a source of geographical delineations would, as in the case of Hubbard, be extraneous. For an English audience, to whom Mather was concerned only with defending the colony against what he considered slander, detailed geography concerning the precise locations of towns and villages would have been just as superfluous.

Just as William Hubbard's map seems little more than a depiction of geographical space when considered in isolation from the narrative it accompanies, Mather's "Exact Mapp" must be viewed in the context of the *Magnalia Christi Americana*. In connection with the map, three main themes in the *Magnalia*, as outlined above, are significant.

First is Mather's idea of promoting and preserving the original design of the colony as a "city on a hill," through what the esteemed scholar of Puritan literature, Sacvan Bercovitch, calls "the metaphor of the Garden of God"; that is, a new Eden carved out of the dark wilderness.<sup>17</sup> In setting forth the example of the first generation of Puritan migrants, Mather notes the great hardships they endured in order "that they should settle the *Worship* and *Order* of the Gospel, and the *Kingdom* of our Lord Jesus Christ in these Regions," and by obedience to the Savior turned the wilderness into the "*Garden* of New England."<sup>18</sup> Bercovitch finds further use of the garden metaphor in Mather's history of Harvard in its capacity as a training ground for New England's ministry, acting as the storehouse of the harvest that earlier generations cultivated.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Mather employs the metaphor directly when he writes that the Harvard's purpose was to serve as a nursery for men of learned faith, without whom "darkness must have soon covered the land, and gross darkness, the people," and

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<sup>15</sup> Edney and Cimburek, 17-18.

<sup>16</sup> The theme of Declension which I develop further on in the paper reinforces this idea, and it may be clearly seen throughout the pages of the *Magnalia* (e.g., in the Attestation and ecclesiastical biographies in Part II).

<sup>17</sup> Bercovitch, 344.

<sup>18</sup> Mather, 130.

<sup>19</sup> Bercovitch, 344-345.

whose lives, as “plants of renown growing in that nursery,” are examined biographically in Book Four.<sup>20</sup>

A closer look at the “Exact Mapp” reveals this preoccupation of Mather’s. In contrast to Hubbard’s map, the TML map (which served as Mather’s template), John Smith’s 1614 sketch of New England, or William Wood’s 1635 rendering, the “Exact Mapp” is completely devoid of flora and fauna. Instead, the representations of the interior convey a clean, settled look. While there are many empty spaces, the absence of challenging topographic features or other visible dangers indicates a land ready for further settlement. The region from the Massachusetts coastline to the Connecticut River is filled with towns, and the major waterways are named. The impression is one of orderliness, a monument to the industry of the first settlers who transformed a forbidden, alien landscape into one resembling their English homeland. As literary scholar William Boelhower notes, “Mather intends the viewer to behold how thoroughly a land of unlikeness has been converted in one great Christian similitude.”<sup>21</sup> The Christian similitude reflected in the “Exact Mapp” reinforces chapter Seven in Book One, what Mather calls a *Hecatompolis* (hundred cities), an “*Ecclesiastical Map* of the country.” Here, he provides a list of “The Numbers and Places of the Christian Congregations, now Worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ, in the several Colonies of New England” along with the ministers leading those congregations. At the close of the ecclesiastical map, Mather notes with pride the general recovery and persistence of the towns of New England in the face of King Philip’s War and various epidemics, noting that “Gospel has evidently been the *making* of our towns.”<sup>22</sup>

Gone, too, are most references to Native Americans. Hubbard’s map shows Amerindian locations, and they permeate his map in a less overt way through the numbering system that catalogs their attacks. Mather’s only concession to the presence of Native Americans in New England is to leave three names of Native polities intact from the TML construction. Because conflicts with Indians figure in Mather’s account, perhaps he left these references in for the reader, but it is significant that he omits the Pequots, with whom New Englanders had a vicious struggle in 1637-38, and fails to locate any of the various tribes in present-day New Hampshire and Maine against whom the colonists, even at the time of the writing

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<sup>20</sup> Mather, 383-384.

<sup>21</sup> William Boelhower, “Stories of Foundation, Scenes of Origin,” *American Literary History* 5 (Autumn 1993): 391.

<sup>22</sup> Mather, 27-29.

of the *Magnalia*, were fighting. Instead, the absence of references to Amerindians further reinforces the notion of a claimed, "civilized" land, accomplished through the workings of Providence and godly diligence, a visual representation of the "Great Chain of Being" idea that a superior civilization had overcome and mastered a lesser. One point of interest on the map is the obscure notation "Wabaquaset." This possibly refers to an English area of settlement, but it is more likely a reference to a "praying town" established for local natives by John Eliot, which had, as late as 1674, a population of some 150 Christian Indians.<sup>23</sup> There also remains the possibility that Mather identified the Native Americans he did as part of a larger design to continue evangelizing missions among them, which he strongly favored.<sup>24</sup>

The second theme, a caution about the consequences of a waning faith is woven throughout the *Magnalia*, and again, recourse may be had to the map in order to reinforce and even magnify the concept. New England ministers had, for some time, been fighting against a perceived decline in piety among the laity, or Declension, as scholars in the field have called it. As early as the 1650s, well-known Puritan minister Thomas Shepard had occasion to warn the younger members of his congregation against spiritual deadness. An apparent falling away of faith so alarmed the clergy that by 1662 they had initiated the Halfway Covenant, a scheme whereby the children and grandchildren of church members could join the church without giving a conversion account, which had been mandatory, in an attempt to increase church attendance and promote godliness.<sup>25</sup> By Cotton Mather's time, Declension rhetoric amongst many of the ministers had reached an almost fevered pitch. Their writings and sermons are collectively known as Jeremiads, after the biblical prophet who called Israel to repent or face judgment.<sup>26</sup> Increase Mather published several examples of this genre, including the aforementioned history of King Philip's War. Cotton, following, as he often did, the lead of his father, wrote in *Magnalia*:

<sup>23</sup> Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 37. See also Rae Gould, *In Search of the Wabbaquasset Praying Village*, <http://gradschool.unc.edu/natam/panels/gould.html>, n.d.

<sup>24</sup> See in particular Cotton Mather, *India Christiana . . .* (Boston: B. Green, 1721), in which Mather argues forcefully for the continuation of John Eliot's earlier work among the Natives of Massachusetts. Mather also eulogizes Eliot at the end of his Hecatompolis and in a biography in Book 3.

<sup>25</sup> David D. Hall, *World of Wonder; Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (Cambridge, MA: University of Harvard Press, 1989), 135-139. The Halfway Covenant provided for churchgoers who were not full members, and thus not admitted to the sacraments, to have their children baptized.

<sup>26</sup> Foster, 205-207, 211-221.

I saw a fearful Degeneracy, creeping, I cannot say, but rushing in upon these Churches; I saw to multiply continually our Dangers, of our losing no small Points in our first Faith, as well as our first Love, and of our giving up the Essentials of that Church Order, which was the very End of these Colonies; I saw a visible shrink in all Orders of Men among us, from that Greatness, and that Goodness, which was in the first Grain, that our God brought from Three sifted Kingdoms, into this Land, when it was a Land not sown.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, he included about fifty biographies of New England's leading Puritans in the *Magnalia* to serve as examples of faith and piety to the younger generation, and, perhaps, to inspire and provoke them to more godly attainment: "But let him consider these *Lives*, as tendered unto the Publick, upon an Account no less than that of keeping *Alive*, as far as this poor *Essay* may contribute thereunto, the Interests of *Dying Religion* in our Churches."<sup>28</sup> "I please myself with hopes," Mather adds in the introduction to Book Two of the *Magnalia*, "that there will yet be found among the sons of New-England, those Young Gentlemen by whom the Copies given in this History will be written after."<sup>29</sup>

The "Exact Mapp" supports this idea that permeates the *Magnalia*, just as it does Mather's Garden of Eden metaphor. Of particular interest are the town icons, easily recognizable as churches. With a hundred or so of these little churches dotting the landscape, the impression is one of a distinctly religious society, a community unified by its faith. Just as it is easy to see an ordered, settled land in what was formerly wilderness, so it is easy to see a strong religious edifice erected by the strength and virtue of the generation that Mather extols in the *Magnalia*. The images of the religious buildings show a unity of purpose. Clustered thickly around Boston Harbor, the churches fan out in a westward arc, symbolizing the spread of the true faith, and emphasizing just how much the New England fathers that Mather idealized had accomplished in so short of time. Here he is visually shaming the spiritually lax and degenerate by showing, just as he does with the biographies, the attainments of a more pious generation. It also shows just how much is at stake should the zeal of the faithful continue to wane. One can almost envision the church icons being gradually replaced by the standard town icons of late sixteenth-early seventeenth century

<sup>27</sup> Mather, 157.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

Detail of Mather's "Exact Mapp." 1702







Sabbath laws: "I fear, I fear there are many among us, to whom it may be said, *Ye bring wrath upon Boston by prophaning the Sabbath.*"<sup>32</sup>

Improving New England's image in the eyes of crown and parliament constitutes a third major theme of the *Magnalia*, and one which the "Exact Mapp" amplifies. Since their inception in the early seventeenth century, the New England colonies carried a reputation for disorder and rebellion.<sup>33</sup> Following the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Increase Mather traveled to England to renegotiate Massachusetts' charter. Though he was reasonably successful in obtaining satisfaction from William and Mary, he, along with most of the colony's political leadership, recognized their precarious position with the crown. Fresh in their memories were the disastrous governments (by Puritan standards) instituted by Charles II and James II between the years 1660 and 1688. Thus Cotton Mather, who played a leading role in Massachusetts political life, sought to allay the fears of the monarchy that the colony was unmanageable or required stricter royal supervision. Addressing the Massachusetts Assembly in 1700 as a matter of public record, Mather is reported to have said, "It is no little blessing of God, that we are part of the *English Nation*. Our dependence on, and Relation to, that brave *Nation*, that man deserves not the name of *English man* who despises it."<sup>34</sup>

Mather repeatedly stresses this theme throughout the pages of the *Magnalia*, as in the "General Introduction" where he places the New England churches solidly within the Church of England and blames a small group of "angry brethren" who "abus[ed] the Name of their Mother" (the Church of England) and drove the original migrants to the shores of New England.<sup>35</sup> In recounting the lives of the saints in New England, Mather consistently emphasizes their longing for England, and the love they bear for their mother country in their unwillingness to separate from the Anglican Communion or separate from England itself.<sup>36</sup> It is in the

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<sup>32</sup> Mather, 35-36.

<sup>33</sup> Philip Gura, *A Glimpse of Ston's Glory: Puritan Radicalism in New England 1620-1660* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1984): 218-220. Gura emphasizes the distaste in England for New England's persecution of religious dissenters. Silverman, 139-141, focuses on political events following the Restoration in which New Englanders were suspected of disloyalty, while Foster demonstrates New England's precarious standing with the English government in *The Long Argument*, see especially chapter 6.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Silverman, 140.

<sup>35</sup> Mather, 57.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, the life of Francis Higginson, *Magnalia*, Book III, 74, and the life of Thomas Hooker, *Magnalia*, Book III, p. 61. Also, Peter H. Smith, "Politics and Sainthood: Biography by Cotton Mather," *William and Mary Quarterly* 70 (April 1963): 186-206.

spirit of this hope that Mather writes: “Well may NEW-ENGLAND lay claim to the *Name* it wears, and to a *Room* in the tenderest affections of its Mother, the *Happy Island!*”<sup>37</sup>

The “Exact Mapp” also reflects Mather’s concern for Massachusetts’ image in England. Rather than a rowdy wilderness filled with dissenters, rebels, and non-conformists, as some in England would have it, the New England of the “Exact Mapp” is pictured as an organized, lawful region. The absence of cartographic flourishes and topographical features enhances this vision and gives the viewer a top-down, omniscient prospect of the spread of English civilization in North America. Noted cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove applies the construct of the “Apollonian Eye” to the Western cartographic imagination in general. This signifies the viewing of large amounts of territorial space in a single, sweeping glance, and thus places it in a larger concept of geographic and humanistic unity, observing that “seeing the globe seems also to induce desires of ordering and controlling the object of vision.”<sup>38</sup> In this fashion then, King William III, members of the Board of Trade and Plantation, which had immediate jurisdiction over the Massachusetts colony, or other well-placed members of English society, could take in the extent of England’s dominions in northeast North America and observe, at a single glance, how the colonists had settled and increased the crown’s territory.<sup>39</sup>

The chief feature of the map, the towns, as mentioned above, are meticulously located and named. In contrast to the predecessors of the “Exact Mapp,” which contain only the largest settlements, or even to Hubbard’s map, which replaces many town names with numbers, the “Exact Mapp” presents a view, at least in the settled regions along the coasts and rivers, not unlike that of England, filled with cities, towns, and villages, each with a church belonging to the larger Anglican body, and thus similar to the land across the Atlantic. As Mather notes in this regard, “there are few of our towns but what have their *Name-Sakes* in *England*; so the Reason why most of our towns are called what they are, is because the Chief of the First Inhabitants would thus bear up the *Names* of the particular places from whence they came.”<sup>40</sup> Any English official responsible for the

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<sup>37</sup> Mather, 29.

<sup>38</sup> Denis Cosgrove, *Apollo’s Eye: A Cartographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Imagination* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 5.

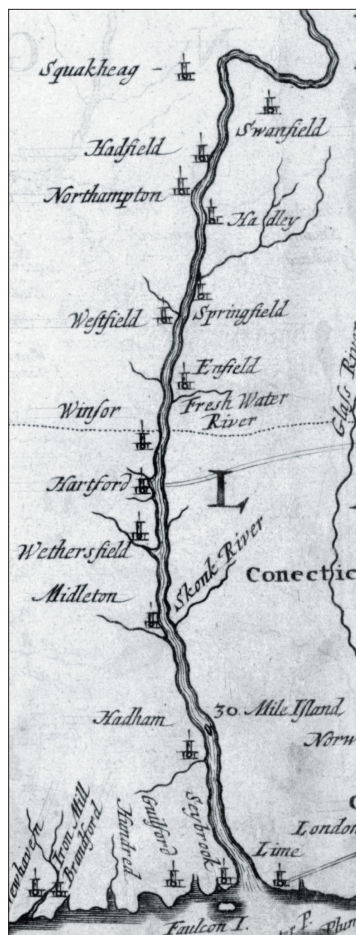
<sup>39</sup> As it was intended for a general print audience, the *Magnalia* would not have been specifically directed at any governmental body or member, but it seems evident upon reading that Mather hoped the discourse would be brought to the attention of those whose opinions concerned New England’s future.

<sup>40</sup> Mather, 29.

administration of New England could, by looking at the "Exact Mapp," see a well-ordered colonial venture consistent with the crown vision, and not, as New England's detractors would point out, a disorderly land of rebels. While Mather could intersperse throughout his text protestations of the stability and loyalty of New England, the map makes this point immediately apparent and adds a visual impact to the force of his narrative claims.

One further point must be made about the "Exact Mapp" and its relation to the *Magnalia Christi Americana*, and indeed, to the remainder of Mather's body of written work. For decades the Puritan literary tradition, embodied in both sermons and books, emphasized what leading Puritan scholar Perry Miller has termed a "plain style." In essence, these styles eschewed the metaphysical, or overly elaborate rhetorical schemes in favor of a simple, understandable message. Increase Mather wrote and preached in this fashion, and noted that he was always "very careful to be understood, and concealed every other Art, that he might Pursue and Practice that one Art of being intelligible."<sup>41</sup>

Cotton, on the other hand, tended to extravagance, and observers often "found his florid style not entertaining but affected."<sup>42</sup> The *Magnalia* is, if nothing else, florid and extravagant. His allusions to classical antiquity are profuse, and he consciously emulates the pattern and style of Virgil's *Aeneid*.<sup>43</sup> Yet the "Exact Mapp," likewise a product of Mather's pen, or at least his imagination, is anything but elaborate.



**Connecticut River Valley,  
from "Exact Mapp"**

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Miller, p. 358. Miller also devotes an entire chapter to the "plain style," notes several specific examples, and dissects the ideas behind it.

<sup>42</sup> Silverman, 48.

<sup>43</sup> Bercovitch, 340.

The early modern cartographic tradition often imbues maps with scrollwork or other embellishments on the edges, highly detailed and descriptive cartouches, stylized representations of flora, fauna, sailing vessels, mythical figures, other artistic touches, and intricate compass roses.<sup>44</sup> The “Exact Mapp” contains none of these. In addition, the cartouche is rather simple, with some basic scrollwork outlining it, a plain cherubic figure on the top and only the map title within. The compass rose looks hurriedly drawn, as though added as an afterthought — the circle is misshapen, and there are no cardinal notations. Empty space remains just that, with no speculative additions or stock images filling it. In short, the “Exact Mapp” is a cartographic equivalent of the “plain style” preferred by Mather’s forerunners and contemporaries. Mather was often conflicted by his desire to conform to Puritan standards of preaching and writing and his love for literature and the clever, learned turn of phrase.<sup>45</sup> Perhaps the unadorned “Exact Mapp,” attached to the *Magnalia* with all its lofty language and verbal excess, reflects this conflict and represents Mather’s attempt to balance his sinful pride in his educational attainments as expressed in prose, and his desire to act suitably humbly and piously as befitted a man of his calling.

Cotton Mather’s “Exact Mapp of New England and New York,” an important element in the *Magnalia Christi Americana*, functions as, in the words of geographer and cartographic historian J.B. Harley, “a construction of reality . . . laden with intentions and consequences.” Like thematic maps that “are part of a persuasive discourse” intended to argue the case at hand, the “Exact Mapp” reinforces the rhetorical power of Mather’s narrative.<sup>46</sup> It shows New England as a new Garden of Eden and a Christian Israel, a settled, pious landscape covered over with churches where once stood only dark forbidding wilderness with all that that connotes. It demonstrates, too, the work of the colony’s founders and early settlers in creating this “Garden of God,” and in so doing acts as a reproach to a lukewarm and sinful generation. Finally, it represents the New England landscape as orderly and fitting well into England’s colonial empire. The clean, populated image of the “Exact Mapp” provides a picture of New England that is more England than new, and thus works to reassure the English authorities of the loyalty

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<sup>44</sup> See Norman J.W. Thrower, *Maps and Civilization: Cartography in Culture and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) for examples of this tradition, particularly chapters five and six.

<sup>45</sup> Silverman, 34-37; Robert Middlekauff, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals 1596-1728* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 191-192, 198-200.

<sup>46</sup> J.B. Harley, *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 36-37.

and worth of the colony as it is constituted. Mather's map may also serve as a point of insight into the author himself, reflecting, in contrast to the narrative it supports, inner conflict and a nature sensitive to such turmoil.

The *Magnalia* may certainly be read and understood without the help of the "Exact Mapp," but the "Exact Mapp" cannot be fully comprehended or appreciated apart from the *Magnalia*. Alone it is merely an unimaginative and uninspired derivation inferior in scope and most detail to its progenitors. Understood in conjunction with the *Magnalia*, however, it takes on meaning and nuances that illustrate and even elevate the themes of the narrative. Cartographer J.B. Harley admonishes that "to read the map properly the historian must always excavate beneath the terrain of its surface geography." Likewise, to read the "Exact Mapp" properly, and to appreciate its significance, not so much as an example of the cartographer's art, but as a rhetorical device, it cannot be separated from *Magnalia Christi Americana*.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, Cotton Mather's "Exact Mapp of New England and New York" must be considered a crucial part of the *Magnalia*, as much text as the historical narrative it accompanies.



### Map Credits

**Thornton, Mordon, and Lea's 1685 Map (Virginia – New England):**

Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library

**Cotton Mather's "Exact Mapp of New England and New York":** Courtesy of the Boston Public Library

**John Foster's "Map of New England," in William Hubbard's *A Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians, 1677*:** Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society

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<sup>47</sup> Harley, 48.