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14 Emergent Nationalism in European Maps of the Eighteenth Century¹

Michael Wintle

There is no single definition of nationalism, but many of them hold it to be an ideology or even doctrine which makes the nation paramount and which implies a national identity based on cultural, linguistic and ethnic lines. The nation is seen to be the most natural and valid collectivity of humans beyond the family, and it should therefore be incorporated when possible in a sovereign political unit, the nation-state.² The nation-state supported by cultural nationalism is a phenomenon associated primarily with the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (although of course there were precursors aplenty). The question which will be addressed here is what form nationalism took in the Enlightenment, from about 1650 to 1800, and how it interacted with developments in cartography. Benedict Anderson remarked that modern nationalism grew up only when the old certainties like revealed religion and royal divine right dissolved, towards the end of the eighteenth century.³ In general, then, in the Enlightenment we are looking not so much at modern populist nationalism, but the popularised, later phases of state formation. The state was being imposed, and the support of the people of the nation was being sought, rather than simply the endorsement of the monarch. And from the seventeenth century onwards, the state frequently employed cartography as a material assistance to state formation.⁴ That, in turn, gave considerable opportunity for airing the subject of the *nation* in cartographic form.

Nationalism in and on Maps

Maps have often been harnessed for nationalist ends at various stages in history. Cartography has been particularly associated with the assertion of national unity at the expense of diversity within, with the declaration of a state's territorial ambitions vis-à-vis another's, and with the claims of empire. In the words of G.H. Herb, 'Surveying is an act of national hegemony', and 'only maps are able to communicate a precise image of a nation and foster a territorial consensus'.⁵ Ricardo Padrón expressed it as follows: the ideological force of cartography 'ground[s] the authority,

even the identity, of nations and empires alike in maps of their territories or their territorial ambitions'.⁶ In examining the impact of English atlases of the eighteenth century, Brian Harley remarked on the power of maps to reinforce and structure existing and aspiring power relationships,⁷ while Mark Monmonier noted how generally important maps are to political propaganda for nationhood.⁸ Christian Jacob called the map on the wall 'the visual glue of a sense of national identity', and asserted that the mastery of space through maps 'probably constitutes an essential stage in the process of acculturation of the individual in the formation of ... a national identity'.⁹ Maps have been employed to focus early forms of national loyalty since the sixteenth century at least, and not only by the state: the Jacobite movement in the early eighteenth century regularly used maps of Great Britain in its campaign for Stuart reinstatement.¹⁰ Cartography can perform a 'nationalisation function' by standardising locations in the map, and in charting both physical and human geography at the same time the map can unite a population with its natural surroundings (such as German forests, or maritime England) to express the nation. Maps, therefore, can 'have the power to transform discourses of national identity'.¹¹

An obvious early example of this nationalism by means of cartography would be the famous *Leo Belgicus*, or lion in the shape of the Low Countries (the Seventeen Provinces), in their struggle against the tyrant Spain. It was in print in various forms from 1579 well into the eighteenth century, and represented 'an image of a nation'.¹² Despite the fact that the lion could be facing either left or right, and that its vague and changing boundaries demanded a considerable suspension of disbelief, there is no arguing with the power of the image to draw together scattered feelings of territorial nationhood, and indeed to stimulate further ones. Such feelings of unity in the Seventeen Provinces of the Southern and Northern Netherlands were indeed necessary in the early stages of the Dutch Revolt against Spain, and then in the Eighty Years' War which finally delivered a modern Dutch state of just seven northern provinces and their dependencies in 1648. The community was indisputably imagined rather than actual, but the *Leo Belgicus* maps were indubitably of assistance to the required imagination.

A seminal study on the functions of cartography in the consolidation and indeed generation of early feelings of national identity was Richard Helgerson's *Forms of Nationhood*,¹³ in which he traced the spatial visualisation of England in various narratives, including maps and atlases of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, principally those by Saxton, Drayton and Camden. He was able to demonstrate a moving away in cartographic treatments from a state envisaged in terms of the monarch, as

emblematic of the nation, towards a conception in which the personification of Britannia, as representative of the nation, stood for a loyalty to the land and landscape of the country and people, as opposed to a fealty towards a dynasty. This was aptly illustrated in the contrast between two images symbolising Britain. One was the renowned painting of Queen Elizabeth I by Marcus Gheerarts the Younger, known as the Ditchley portrait, c. 1592, to commemorate a royal visit to Sir Henry Lee at his country house, Ditchley Park, near Oxford. She is shown actually standing on a map of England, with her feet in Oxfordshire, linking her inseparably with the territory of her kingdom.¹⁴ This can be contrasted with the frontispiece a few years later of the 1607 and many subsequent editions of William Camden's *Britannia*;¹⁵ there one sees a central map of the British Isles, flanked on the left by the figure of Neptune and on the right by the personification of Britannia, with not a monarch in sight. Here the association is between the nation and the territory, rather than the monarch and the territory. Helgerson's work was influential in persuading scholars of national identity and indeed of literature to pay attention to the discursive role of the visual and especially the cartographic media in 'writing the nation'. He was careful to point out that, in the seventeenth century at least, neither France nor the Low Countries shared this particular trend. The Dutch were feeding a nascent bourgeois republicanism, while French maps continued to be an ode to the emblem of the state in the form of the monarch.¹⁶ A fine map of Paris dating from 1652 by Jacques Gomboust is an example of this reverence for royalty as the embodiment of the country and its capital: the dedication, the marginal illustration and the representation in general all play to the glory of Louis XIV as the embodiment of France.¹⁷ Were these different forms of cartographic nation-building still current in the long eighteenth century? Certainly later on, in the nineteenth century, maps were used to help imagine or even create the nations: historical maps were employed to show their evolution, and the map of the nation could be a powerful visual agent in nationalist propaganda.¹⁸ But what happened in the Enlightenment?

In applying deconstructionist principles to the cartography of the eighteenth century, Brian Harley asserted that maps of the European states 'served still as a symbolic shorthand for nationalist ideas'.¹⁹ There were new conditions pertaining in Europe in the late seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth century. States were taking on new forms: bureaucrats, enclosing landlords, soldiers and colonisers all wanted maps for their various purposes. The business of making and selling maps was, more than ever, governed by factors of supply and especially demand in the cartographic marketplace; that demand generally increased, particularly from the

political, the military, the landowning and the fiscal authorities.²⁰ In the eighteenth century there was a general tendency towards order, uniform classification systems and the application of science, and that held true for mapping as well.²¹ How did the relationship between cartography and emergent nationalism, modern or otherwise, fare under these changing conditions?

State-Sponsored Cartographic Surveys

The major change was the continuing emergence of stronger, more centralised states that wanted more recorded information about both their internal and external affairs. There was a rising demand for clarity with regard to geographical borders, especially after wars or other international disputes. The Treaty of Rijswijk of 1697 traced the agreed borders on appended maps, and the Peace of Paris of 1783 between the United States and Great Britain included a map of the agreed border between the US and Canada.²² A 1784 map of the United States provided what was needed: 'a nation with a map'.²³ Probably the most obvious new form of cartography during the Enlightenment that affected the nation and national feeling was the new, national triangulation survey. Colbert had made active use of maps in his administration since the 1660s, and it was the highly centralised French state that led the way, with the labours of three generations of the Italo-French Cassini family, beginning with the patriarch, Jean Dominique Cassini (1625-1712); they were more or less fully sponsored by the state. Between 1740 and 1783 they completed a virtual 'reformation of cartography in France', based on systematic triangulation and accurate longitude. But there was also a political impact: the maps provided an image of the country which was 'more integrated and centralised than was the reality'. 'The eighteenth century was fascinated with accuracy', and the increased visual precision of French perceptions of the territory of the state – the hexagon – in the Cassini series of cartographic surveys tended to diminish regional differences in the interests of national unity, and thus assisted from the centre the 'diffusion of power': this was cartography helping to 'build' the state and the nation.²⁴

Not surprisingly the 'military and civil value of the maps on the Cassini pattern was soon recognised by other European rulers'.²⁵ These great surveys created an unprecedentedly accurate image of the state, in which the nation could imagine its territoriality. In the wake of the French, the Austrians followed suit in Bohemia and the Southern Netherlands, while Tsar Peter the Great took on the Delisle brothers in Russia to produce a

great *Atlas Russicus* in 1745 of nineteen regional maps. In Britain a number of grand-scale, accurate surveys were undertaken in the eighteenth century, including military ones, which foreshadowed the establishment of the Ordnance Survey in 1791. Sweden, Denmark and Norway were fully surveyed in the course of the century, and Switzerland had its own *Atlas Suisse* published in 1796-1802. The German territories and the United Provinces were also included in this Europe-wide development in cartography.²⁶

The Napoleonic state embraced the ideology of the information-packed national survey, which resulted in the introduction of the *Cadastré*, or topographical land registry for the purposes of taxation, in most of the satellite states: highly detailed surveys were launched, laboriously carried out, and then completed in the early part of the nineteenth century, for example in the Netherlands by 1832. These surveys were undoubtedly in the first place functions of state-building, responding to the needs of new-style, highly centralised governments which needed to visualise and assess everything within, alongside and over their boundaries for the purposes of taxation, civil and military security, the law and governance. At the same time the resulting publications, unique in their completeness, detail, accuracy and comparability across regions, allowed a visualisation of the state in which the nation could project itself with unparalleled clarity.

A number of examples serve to make the point. In Scotland, a series of surveys in the eighteenth century and right up to 1830, made in the first place for military purposes, allowed the visualisation of the Scottish nation in a context of 'geography, Enlightenment, and the public sphere'; it was further developed in the familiar direction of cultural nationalism in the early nineteenth century.²⁷ In Russia, Peter the Great was a great patron and utiliser of cartography; his capture of the fortress of Azov in 1696 and potential access to the Black Sea was commemorated in a new map of those parts just five years later. In a campaign to 'civilise' Russia he turned Muscovy towards Europe rather than Asia, establishing for the first time the Ural Mountains as the border between the continents, and thus including his Western Muscovy, with its new capital in St. Petersburg on the Baltic, at the heart of Russia but nonetheless firmly and irretrievably within Europe. In a 1695 edition of a world map by Nicolas Sanson, Muscovy had occupied a kind of no man's land between Europe and Asia, while Tartary (the eastern reaches of the empire) was definitely placed in Asia.

That changing geopolitics of Russia can be seen on a map of Europe by one of the Delisle brothers, Guillaume (1675-1726), published in Paris



Figure 14.1 Guillaume Delisle, Map of Europe (Paris, 1700).²⁸

in 1700 (Figure 1); it also illustrates some national thinking at the time. Italy and Germany are shown with distinct boundaries as single entities, or nations; Ireland is given its own identity, aided by separate colouring, and there is a most interesting, apparently British, enclave in northern France. As far as Russia is concerned, Delisle split Muscovy into a western and eastern part, while a map of 1712 by Adam Zürner relabelled Tartary as Siberia, which became the general usage.²⁹ The use of these new Enlightenment maps of Russia, fostered by Tsar Peter the Great, rearranged the spatial manifestation of Russia from an extra-European identity to a Europe-facing, 'civilised' country with European culture and orientation. The nation of Russia had abandoned Tartary, prevaricated over Muscovy and embraced Europe, switching its gaze from East to West in a few short decades, not least as the effect of managed trends in cartographic practice.

The German lands were also an interesting case. In the nineteenth century, of course, unification of a large part of the German-speaking principalities (expressly excluding Austria) under the leadership of Bismarck would be achieved, ably assisted by maps composed to that agenda. In the period of the Enlightenment, however, the myriad states were nominally independent, many of them linked into the Habsburg-dominated Holy



Figure 14.2 'Germaniae. L'Empire d'Allemagne' (Amsterdam, J. Covens and C. Mortier, c. 1715).³⁰

Roman Empire. A map of 'Germany', published by Covens and Mortier of Amsterdam in about 1715, is shown in Figure 2. According to the cartouche at the bottom left it clearly wants to show the 'German Empire', though it also includes large parts of the Low Countries, France, Poland, the Czech lands, and much else. The title indicates the problem, and reads as follows: 'Germaniae. L'Empire d'Allemagne distingué suivant l'étendüe tous les estats, principautés et souverainetés qui passent ou qui ont passé jusque a present sous le nom d'Allemagne'. Every political unit which passes or has passed under the sign of Germany: there was no country, but there was at least potentially a nation. Although the cartouche and title evidently refer to the totality of the German nation, the borders between the various statelets and principalities were still clearly shown: nationalism may have been the aspiration in the cartouche, but was not yet manifested on the map. Maps well up to the end of the eighteenth century continued to show the many German states, but more and more maps of Europe tended to demonstrate a new Europe of the emergent nation-states, headed by France and England, but with Germany and the Austrian empire increasingly being shown as single units.³¹

Empire

European nations also sought to assert their national pride and qualities in maps of other parts of the world where they had influence and therefore an opportunity to express their cultural nationalism. Increased accuracy and improved surveying methods meant that scientific authority could be expressed through maps in support of national claims abroad, especially in the North American colonies from the 1680s onwards.³² Colonial maps of North America showed the territory as empty, and therefore ripe for the taking by the nations of Europe.³³ The process of Othering, or defining one's own (national) identity by making observations about alterity, or the Other, was widespread in the mapping of the colonial areas of the world. In the Indian subcontinent, Britain's cartographic activities in the eighteenth century were not only extensive, bolstering imperial administration and control, but they also asserted the national identity by imposing order and science on the unruly Indian landscape, replete with symbols of British national identity.

Figure 3 shows James Rennell's Map of Hindustan, of 1782. This is imperial cartography asserting the nation as personified by the female Britannia figure, shown dispensing law and establishing hierarchies in India. She is offered a scroll of Hindu sacred law by local elites, but soldiers indicate the great battles named on the stonework in commemoration of her triumphs by force of arms. Military prowess, the British lion dominating the globe, excellence in the arts and technology, merchant shipping, global trade including the opium business (poppies in the wreath at the top), and much more is represented in the imagery here: it is the nation asserting itself in its burgeoning empire before our eyes.³⁴

An equally cogent example was General Bonaparte's expedition of 1798-99 to Egypt. It was a strategic, anti-British operation in the first place, designed to challenge Britain's colonial pre-eminence, but he was also careful to take with him a great company of specialists in various non-military fields, such as natural science, political economy, public administration, map-making, and so on. The operation was not simply a military one: it was a civilisation offensive (to purloin a term generally used of later, Victorian bourgeois initiatives), designed to impose French rational, scientific order on Oriental chaos, much as the British had been doing in India. The perceived national values of good governance, prosperity, law, science and the arts were being exported in a form of cultural imperialism which would characterise many of the later imperialist regimes. French national virtues were being celebrated, set against the rich but chaotic, external, Egyptian, Oriental Other.³⁵



Figure 14.3 James Rennell, Map of Hindoostan, 1782, detail of the cartouche, illustrated at Goss, *The Mapmaker's Art* (see note 26), plate 7.16 opposite p. 251.

Finally, there were also changes in maps induced by variations in fashions, trends and taste, and some of those alterations had effects on the way in which national feelings were or could be portrayed. For example, it began to be popular in the eighteenth century to use colours to link countries together in a thematic way: all the territories owing allegiance

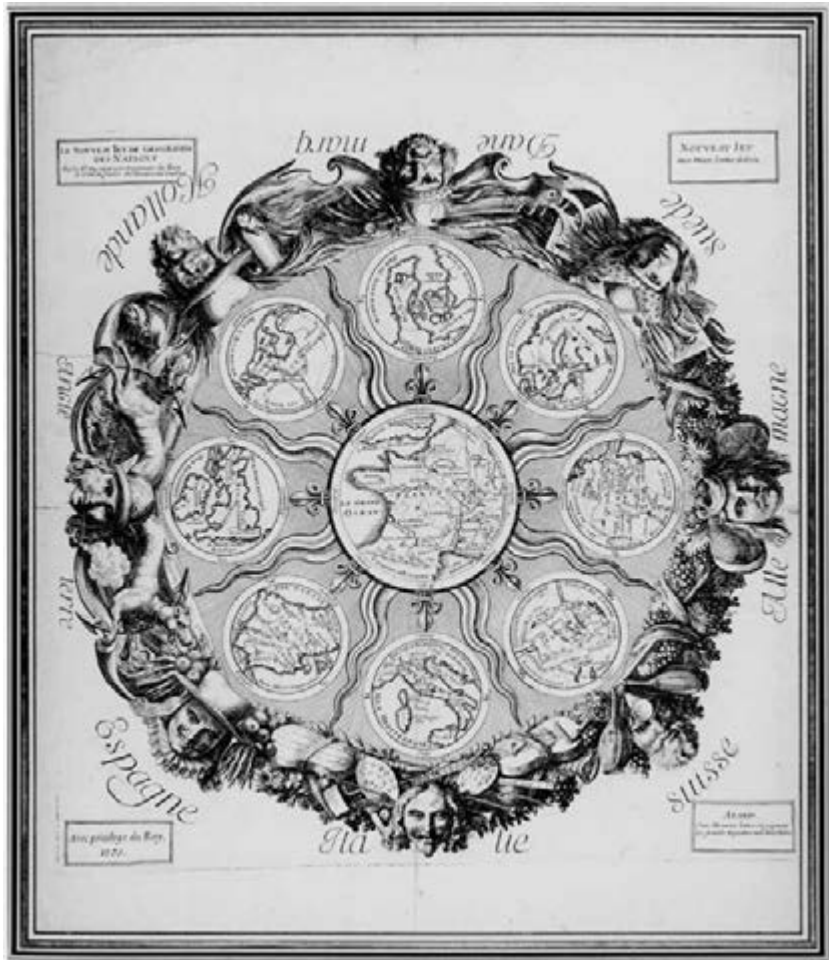


Figure 14.4 'Le nouveau jeu de geographie des nations', designed by Charles-Francois-Henry Desmartins, engraved by Pierre Brissart, published by A.H. Jaillot, 1675.³⁷

to one monarch might be coloured the same.³⁶ Fads in the education of children could also be important: using maps to teach geography as a kind of game was well-known in seventeenth-century France, and it caught on in England on a major scale in the second half of the eighteenth century.

A fine example, shown in Figure 4, of these geographical board games from France in 1675 was titled 'Le nouveau jeu de geographie des nations', and published by the renowned cartographer Alexis-Hubert Jaillot (c. 1632-1712). The map-game is circular, and probably was played with a dice; it had eight segments showing maps and ornate personifications of the

major 'nations' of Europe, with the first nation, France (self-evidently) in the central bullseye. There is clearly a national theme. Italy has no internal borders and is characterised by artistic accoutrements; England is portrayed by a country gentleman or yeoman with some vicious-looking hunting dogs and a naval anchor; Holland is seen as a bucolic type surrounded by a jug and glasses, a rabbit and a monkey; Denmark is distinctly martial; Switzerland is a soldier in a vineyard; Sweden is all fur and fish; while Germany is represented as a single national unit by oaks, apples and grapes. Centrally placed France is simply a clear map of the hexagon. Countries and their characteristics are featured here: national thought is evidently under way.

Many of the early board games which followed the craze in England in the second half of the eighteenth century were made in the form of printed maps of the British Isles, like John Wallis's 1794 'Tour through England and Wales: a New Geographical Pastime', which allowed children (of all ages) to follow a route around the territorialised nation, visualising the national geography from a young age.³⁸ The map would be laid out on a table, the players each had a marker and some counters, and there was some kind of dice or spinner. More than a hundred spaces could be 'landed on' (as in Monopoly or other more recent forms), with advantages or penalties for the various locations, designed to increase geographical knowledge – and geopolitical awareness – of England and Wales (shipwreck on the Isle of Man, prosperity in the industrial towns). Wallis was an energetic entrepreneur at his premises in Ludgate Street in London, and produced many such games, including similar ones based on the whole world or parts of it, and one of Europe (in 1802), which allowed players to travel with their counters around the countries of Europe, picking up some geographical knowledge in the form of a notion of territorially bounded states or nations.³⁹

Another producer of map-games of this kind was the English cartographer John Spilsbury (1739–69), who may well actually have been the inventor of the jigsaw puzzle. Figure 5 shows his jigsaw map of Europe (there were equivalents for three other continents), which was designed as a geography teaching aid.⁴⁰ The jigsaw versions of these maps are particularly illuminating, because they seem to indicate which the most natural units were seen to be; one piece for each nation, for example, despite the fact that several of the 'nations' were not yet politically formed, in this case in 1766–7. Minimum size needs to be borne in mind of course; it was simply not practical to make a separate piece for a city-state. But the jigsaw is revealing about incipient national thought. 'Europe Divided into its Kingdoms' permitted the pupil to



Figure 14.5 John Spilsbury, map of 'Europe Divided into its Kingdoms' as a jigsaw, 1766-7. British Library, Maps 188.v.12.⁴¹

detach each kingdom as a single piece. Interestingly from the point of view of nationalism on this map of 1766, Italy would not become a single political entity until 1861 at least, and only in 1815 would the Northern and Southern Netherlands be joined or rejoined as a single state, whereas both are here pasted onto a single jigsaw piece. For Scotland, however, there was a piece separate from England and Wales, as there was for Ireland. The consistency of the geography is not the point: it is the suggestion that certain nations form states or kingdoms that was the invitation and encouragement to think in national and even nationalist terms.

Not only in jigsaws was this geography lesson in nationalism perpetrated: embroidery samplers were also marshalled into the service of educating the (female) youth of the day. These samplers could be designed around a single nation, or a continent, like Europe. The outlines were printed, usually on silk or satin, and sold to be embroidered as practice pieces or samplers. For example, one from England at the end of eighteenth century, probably the



Figure 14.6 Oval map embroidery sampler, English, late 18th century, showing map of Europe.
© Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. T.142-1938.

1780s, is shown in Figure 6; it is an oval template showing a map of Europe. Germany, Italy, Hungary and Poland were shown as separate, undivided territories, which in the late eighteenth century would not have accorded with the views of the crowned heads and their ministers; the British Isles, however, were divided into Scotland, England and Ireland.⁴² (In passing we might also notice that Europe itself is sharply defined, splitting countries like Turkey and Russia right down the middle.) Not all such samplers were the same, and some reflected more complex, non-national situations, but a discourse was taking place in these cartographic forms created by new markets at government, landlord and consumer level, which enabled and indeed encouraged the consideration of nationalist feelings of loyalty, and their visual territorialisation.

Visualising the Nation

There is little doubt that cartography was in the service of the *state* during the Enlightenment period: it had been at least since the sixteenth century. The systematic way in which such service was commissioned and provided in much of the eighteenth century led to a major increase in accuracy and reliability, and an emphasis on objectified territory rather than simply an allegiance to a dynasty or a religious figurehead. This could add to the weakness of a dynastic state like the Holy Roman Empire, which would indeed be finally abolished in 1806 at the hands of Napoleon. Many of the developments were products of and a support for the evolving state within Europe, but they also allowed the subject of the nation to be aired, discussed and contested.⁴³ Truly modern, Romantic, cultural nationalism might have to wait for the nineteenth century, but its early forms were active in Europe throughout the modern period, and especially in the age of Enlightenment, leaving room for the visualisation of the nation as a people in a territory, in the cartographic forms of the long eighteenth century.

Notes

1. This article is based on a shorter piece, 'Nationalism and Cartography', commissioned for M.H. Edney & M. Pedley (eds.), *Cartography in the European Enlightenment*, vol. IV of *The History of Cartography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, in preparation). I am most grateful to the editors and publisher for permission to reproduce that material here. I am also grateful for the constructive comments made by colleagues when I presented parts of it at two conferences at Radboud University in Nijmegen, 'Europe and its Worlds' in Oct. 2013, and 'The Roots of Nationalism' in Jan. 2015.
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36. Black, *Visions of the World*, 89.
37. 'Le nouveau jeu de géographie des nations', designed by Charles-François-Henry Desmartins, engraved by Pierre Brissart, published by A.H. Jaillot, 1675, etching and engraving; 662 x 591 mm; Waddesdon The Rothschild Collection (The National Trust; acc. no. 2669.1.7). Photo: Mike Fear © The National Trust Waddesdon Manor, near Aylesbury, UK. By kind permission. See R. Jacobs, 'Playing, Learning, Flirting: Printed Board Games from 18th-Century France', handlist for exhibition Mar.-Oct. 2012 at Waddesdon Manor, near Aylesbury (UK), available at www.waddesdon.org.uk/assets/PDFs/Exhibition%20pages/Board%20Games_b.pdf (consulted 9 Sept. 2013), 13-4. An extraordinary collection of these early board games is part of the Rothschild collections at Waddesdon Manor (UK).
38. B. Stone, 'Playing Games with Maps: John Wallis, *Tour Through England and Wales: A New Geographical Pastime* (London, 1794)', located in the Newberry Library, call number Map 4F G5751 A9 1794 W3; available at www.newberry.org/smith/exhibits/maps_nations/exhibit1998.html, consulted 10 Oct. 2006. There is also a copy of the 1794 England and Wales map in the Victoria and Albert Museum (London); for more detail see the website, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O26289/tour-through-england-and-wales-board-game-wallis-john/>, consulted 24 April 2015.
39. John Wallis, 'Wallis's Tour of Europe. A New Geographical Pastime' (London, 1802). The case which holds the map has a delightful coloured engraving.

ing of a personification of Europe on it, picking up on centuries of depicting the continents in a strict hierarchy, which began in the late sixteenth century. On this occasion, the empress of the world (Europe) has a crown and sceptre, rich robes, weapons for power, the true Christian church, books for wisdom, trade goods for commerce, scientific instruments for learning and musical ones for the arts. This and others are illustrated at http://alteagallery.com/stock_detail.php?ref=12350; much more detail of these map-games is to be found at <http://bibliodyssey.blogspot.nl/2009/08/puzzle-and-game-maps.html>, consulted 24 April 2015.

40. See Linda Hannas, *The English Jigsaw Puzzle, 1760-1890* (London: Wayland, 1972).
41. Available at https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/89/Spilsburg_jigsaw_-_John_Spilsbury%2C_1776_-_BL.jpg, consulted 14 Nov. 2015.
42. On these samplers, see C. Humphrey, *Samplers* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1997), esp. p. 105. See also Wintle, *The Image of Europe*, 46.
43. M. Biggs, 'Putting the State on the Map: Cartography, Territory and European State Formation', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41/2 (1999), 374-405.