
H-France Review Vol. 16 (November 2016), No. 256

Christine Marie Petto, *Mapping and Charting in Early Modern England and France: Power, Patronage, and Production*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2015. vii + 225 pp. Figures and bibliography. \$90.00 U.S. (hb). ISBN 978-0-7391-7536-1.

Review by Michael Wolfe, Queens College-CUNY.

Since the spatial turn of the 1970s, historians have found maps to be very rich sources for understanding European expansion, state-building, and political culture as they developed from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century.[1] Christine Petto's new book contributes to this trend and builds on her 2007 study of early modern French mapmaking by juxtaposing those developments with contemporary ones across the Channel in England.[2] In doing so, she reaffirms the longstanding historiography on the competing models of modernity that contrast the statist solutions of Bourbon France with the commercially-driven approaches that arose in Stuart and then Hanoverian England. Hers is ultimately a deeply ironic story, for as much as France's clearly more advanced cartography may have signaled great ambitions, it did not guarantee the kinds of results on land and sea eventually achieved by the nation of shopkeepers across the Channel.

Petto sees mapmaking as a "tool of power" (p. xii) that shaped how their viewers saw the world. She investigates the relationships that existed between powerful institutions, social elites, and the producers and publishers of atlases, maps, and charts from the 1580s to the 1780s. Connected to the role of patronage was the impact of burgeoning commercial trade on the forms and uses of maps and the emergence of new scientific and technical methods of surveying land and sea. Petto focuses on the two cartographic centers of production, Paris and London, to address the role of government and commercial groups in map and chart making. In France, the leadership of the monarchy was decisive in establishing institutions, such as the Académie and Paris Observatory, that took up cartographic projects that advanced the crown's interests at home and abroad.[3] By contrast, England lacked any centralized guiding force in map production, with both Parliament and monarchs after Elizabeth I taking, at best, sporadic interest in the subject. As a result, map and chart making there lagged, relying on the vagaries of commercial investment and publishing success. Through the course of the book, it becomes clear that Petto's binary comparison is actually a tripartite relationship that included the Dutch, especially when it concerned developments in the seventeenth century.[4]

In chapter one, Petto delves into the decorative embellishments found on English and French maps and atlas frontispieces prior to 1650 to establish the symbols of dominion each conveyed. Textual and iconographic sources informed the political messages that maps communicated. Interestingly, the association of royal sovereignty with mapmaking was initially more precocious in Elizabethan England than France, though that changed in the early seventeenth century. Fractious relations between the Stuarts and Parliament led to a growing emphasis in the borders and cartouches on the commercial prowess of London and the prosperity of the kingdom. In France, by contrast, these map features reflected the Bourbons' growing hold over the state through the celebration of the monarch's

magnificence. These ideological shifts, in turn, began to share the page with the new forms of scientific cartography and encyclopedism that developed in the Enlightenment.

This contrast between the state-driven, increasingly scientific geography found in France and the market-oriented, commercial cartography in England can be seen in the development of county and regional mapping after 1650, as Petto argues in chapter two. Improvements in instrumentation combined with calls for direct observation and measurement made it possible to make much more accurate maps to scale using triangulation, all the while retaining earlier rhetorical elements. However, such undertakings required considerable commitment and investment, and here the differences in France and England yielded very different results. The atlas of English county maps planned by John Ogilby and his collaborators in the 1670s lacked government support and thus proved financially untenable to sustain beyond a few initial maps. Later efforts to pursue such projects through private subscription by highlighting commerce and socially prominent families, as in Joel Gascoyne's and Henry Beighton's county maps, yielded some noteworthy results but eventually petered out. Only in the 1790s, with the launch of the Ordinance Survey did the scientific mapping of the British Isles get underway. In France, by contrast, patronage from the monarchy sustained cadres of professional geographers, underwrote comprehensive surveys, and led to the creation of institutions like the Académie and Paris Observatory. This enabled men like Guillaume Delisle to pursue, during the reign of Louis XIV, much grander mapping projects of the kingdom's dioceses and provinces, as well as overseas territories. This trend culminated in the efforts to realize a national survey in the eighteenth century, led by several generations of geographers from the Cassini family. But even these ambitious undertakings eventually outstripped the monarchy's ability to sustain them as financial difficulties mounted after Great Britain's triumph in the Seven Years' War (1756-1763).

In chapter three, Petto moves from the counties of England and provinces of France to their coastlines to explore navigational works and chart making from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. Portolan charts created by individual pilots, especially from Iberia, circulated along with calendars and tide tables in manuscript form into the sixteenth century when printed navigational guides began to appear. Over the 1500s, both monarchies patronized engineers, geographers, and mathematicians to support further work and refinement of coastal maps to challenge Spanish and Portuguese maritime predominance. Here again Elizabethan England exhibited more interest and activity than the French, though that certainly changed in the seventeenth century. However, it was Dutch sea atlases that came by the 1580s to set the maritime standard that persisted for the next century. In France, first Richelieu and then Colbert worked to remedy this maritime cartographic deficit through establishing hydrographic schools and sponsoring coastal surveying expeditions. These state-directed efforts culminated in the publication of the magnificent *Le Neptune François* in 1693. England had to await the Restoration and the leadership of Samuel Pepys, secretary of the navy under Charles II, for like efforts to get underway, producing Greenville Collins's *Coasting Pilot*, also in 1693, and Edmond Halley's breakthrough charts that noted magnetic variation of the early 1700s. Petto follows the ensuing "mapping" race between France and England as each competed with the other to establish naval and merchant shipping domination in European waterways and around the globe. Competition became particularly heated during the Seven Years' War, especially in charting the Channel to launch or parry possible invasions. Appeals to scientific authority coupled with improvements in navigational instrumentation shaped the contest between France and England to become world maritime powers. Emulating the example of the Dutch model from the 1620s, maritime charting became a joint collaboration between chartered commercial companies and state bureaucracies like the Dépôt, the French navy's hydrographic office established in 1720, and the Hydrographic Office of the Admiralty in England formed in 1795. Commercial sponsorship alone proved inadequate to ensure the highest quality science and field measurement made possible.

Chapter four takes up the role that mapmaking played in the competition between France and England for colonial possessions in America. This rivalry sharpened following the Nine Years' War (1688-1697)

as each side sought to roll back the “paper encroachments” (p. 126) found on maps lest they become land grabs on the ground. Petto traces the evolution of these colonial mapping projects in terms of the tension, as she argues, between their representational features denoting rivers, settlements and so on, and the rhetorical displays of power found on these maps and their accompanying promotional reports. For colonial maps played an important role in establishing claims of legitimacy. She offers several case studies, beginning with the genesis of Guillaume Delisle’s map of Louisiana, published in 1718, which generated a boundary dispute with England that lasted for nearly fifty years. English mapmakers responded in kind with their own partisan expressions of their territorial possessions and borders in North America. Another cartographic dispute arose over competing claims to Arcadie/Nova Scotia. As Petto shows, direct negotiations to resolve these differences devolved into insoluble disagreements over maps. Especially interesting were the ways in which each side used the other’s maps as “evidence” in memorials written to buttress their own assertions with the public. Advocates invoked the higher scientific quality of the surveys they conducted to argue their maps were truer representations. Just as powerful was where place names were situated on one side’s maps and differently located or even absent on the other’s maps. England’s triumph in the Seven Years’ War brought these “paper wars” (p. 152) to an end with the expulsion of France from North America. British surveyors and cartographers, and then their American counterparts, thereafter controlled the mapping of North America. [5]

Chapter five bring Petto’s study to a close and shifts attention to the East Indies to study how nautical maps shaped the efforts of the English and French East Indies Companies, and their respective governments, to supplant the commercial and political dominance first exercised by the Portuguese and then the Dutch. Petto reminds us that trade with Asia was far more lucrative than exchange with the Americas as she traces the formation and early actions of the trading companies in the 1600s and the charts they helped to produce into the eighteenth century. The halting rise of first the English and then French East Indies Companies set limits to their ambitions, however, until the late 1600s when their government-backed monopolies became secured. The voyages launched by the companies provided their pilots an opportunity to gather hydrographic information and develop navigational charts of increased accuracy by 1700. Interestingly, the lack of commercial incentives in England to continue to refine these charts meant that the state-backed French efforts under the *Dépôt* eventually set the gold standard by 1750. This gave the French a strategic advantage, at least for a while, in the race over the eighteenth century to expand the scope of European commerce across greater Asia and the Pacific, as seen in the voyages of Louise-Antoine de Bougainville in the late 1760s. The charts of Jean-Baptiste-Nicolas-Denis *Après de Manneville*, in particular, brought greater hydrographic clarity to these regions because of their more rigorous, field-tested empirical nature overseen by a man who combined piloting skills with training in geography and mathematics. Especially noteworthy was *Après de Manneville*’s candor in admitting on his charts what was not yet known. The English kept pace with the French primarily by translating and adapting their works for use by their navigators. Here commercial map publishers in London and periodical journals, not the government or the EIC, took the lead. Even so, English navigators castigated the inadequacies they found in the French and Dutch charts, and in the 1770s some took steps to remedy them. Prominent was the work of Alexander Dalrymple, an experienced seaman knowledgeable in surveying and hydrography who spent his career in service to the EIC until his appointment as the Admiralty’s Hydrographic Office’s first director in 1795. He convinced his employer and then the Parliament to invest in new charts and further research to produce more that literally helped to guide British merchant and war ships to dominate the high seas by the late eighteenth century. The French tried to keep pace, but mounting financial problems and political paralysis under Louis XVI rendered them in vain. The advantages that state patronage of cartography had given France waned as the Bourbon regime faltered, whereas the British government’s decisive commitment to partner with commercial interests rendered map and chart making in the United Kingdom the gold standard in the nineteenth century.

Well researched and solidly argued, Petto’s study adds an important new chapter to the well-known story of the competition between France and England for hegemony in Europe and across the globe

after 1650. Apart from chapter one, there is a paucity of illustrations for a book of this kind. And while this reviewer thinks the Dutch should figure more prominently in this comparative conversation, scholars and students should find *Mapping and Charting in Early Modern England and France* quite useful and enlightening when charting their own understanding of this period.

NOTES

[1] Gaston Bachelard's *La poétique de l'espace* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1958), followed by Henri Lefebvre's *La production de l'espace* (Paris: Anthropos, 1974), form the two key texts behind this later shift in historical and cultural studies.

[2] Christine Marie Petto, *When France was King of Cartography: The Patronage and Production of Maps in Early Modern France* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2007).

[3] Here Petto explicitly draws on the work of James E. McClellan III and François Regourd, *The Colonial Machine: French Science and Overseas Expansion in the Old Regime* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).

[4] For an overview, see Kees Zandvliet, "Mapping the Dutch World Overseas in the Seventeenth Century," (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 1433-1462 and Elizabeth A. Sutton's new study, *Capitalism and Cartography in the Dutch Golden Age* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

[5] The mapping of the "imperial other" in the narrative and visual imagination forms the subject of Palmira Brummett's *Mapping the Ottomans: Sovereignty, Territory, and Identity in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Michael Wolfe
Queens College-CUNY
Michael.Wolfe@qc.cuny.edu

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ISSN 1553-9172