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J.-B. d’Anville as Armchair Mapmaker: The Impact of Production Contexts on His Work

LUCILE HAGUET

The Palace of Versailles has a painting of an eighteenth-century French geographer. The scholar is sitting on an upholstered chair at his desk engrossed in his reading. A globe and a few bound books seem to be the sole ornaments of his study. It is a mainly allegorical portrait, a typical representation of the armchair geographer (géographe de cabinet) at work surrounded by anonymous objects: the pages before him are covered with illegible marks, the surface of the globe is uniformly bland, the titles of the works on the bookshelves cannot be deciphered. The geographer’s activity is intellectual; he does not hold a pencil or any tool. The process of map making is made to look abstract, as if the drawing were being transferred magically from the mind to the page.

Mapping, however, also involves physical activity, even if the geographer never leaves his office. The historian Nelson-Martin Dawson, in L’Atelier Delisle, was one of the first to remind us of the almost artisanal gestures that an eighteenth-century armchair geographer made as he jotted down his notes, outlined his drafts, copied and pasted papers, erased lines and re-inked the lines on his sheet. Yet these gestures should not be considered invariable, regardless of context. The way a scientist takes notes and draws his maps differs according to the circumstances at the start of each mapping project. The walls of an office do not preserve him from external pressures, and a geographer will not work in the same way with and without constraints. The influence of external constraints on the process of map making, commonly remarked on for land surveying, has rarely been in connection with the armchair geographer. However, just as land surveyors have had to adapt their way of measuring to accommodate the work force available, the particularities of the landscape and the attitude of local people, so too has the geographer had to adjust his way of working to fit the circumstances.

Three initiating contexts can be identified according to the way each map-making project came into being. One was ‘personal’, when the main instigator was the geographer himself. The second was ‘editorial’, when he was commissioned by an author or a publisher to produce a map. The third was ‘official’ or ‘political’; in this case, the map order came from the government, a regional or local administration, or an authority responsible for trade and commerce. My aim here is to focus on the way each context affected the preparation of the map in question, from information-gathering to printing.

Jean-Baptiste d’Anville (1697–1782) was just such an armchair geographer. The maps he made...
all relied on secondary sources or information supplied to him by travellers. A single working method cannot be deduced from his notes, draughts and manuscripts without misrepresenting the materials. The hypothesis of a diversity of production contexts and their different influences on the geographer’s work allows us to understand why d’Anville did not work in the same way for all his maps.

Three collections of d’Anville material at the Bibliothèque nationale de France help us to explore this hypothesis. The first collection comprises d’Anville’s library of source materials, which includes some 10,500 sheets kept at the shelf mark Ge DD 2987 in the Department of Map and Plans. The second collection, also in Maps and Plans but this time at the shelf mark series Ge D 10329–Ge D 10890 and Ge C 6122–6149, contains 110 of the printed maps and 380 of the manuscript maps d’Anville produced. The third collection, comprising the major part of his geographical notes, is in the Manuscript Department with the shelf marks NAF 6502–6503 and NAF 17381. So far, none of these collections has been systematically exploited with a view to studying d’Anville, his life and his working methods. 

Jean-Baptiste d’Anville, undoubtedly a leading figure in French geography in the Age of Enlightenment, was born in 1697 in Paris under the name of Charles Bourguignon (Fig. 1). Why or how he got his new name is unknown. His father was a tailor ambitious for the advancement of his children. He sent his son to the Collège des Quatre-Nations, one of the largest free secondary schools in Paris, which had an excellent reputation for teaching. At the Collège, the mathematics lessons included map making, which seems to have inspired the young student’s interest in mapping. Sometime between the ages of twelve and fifteen he constructed a map of ancient Greece.

The exact circumstances of d’Anville’s entry into the scholarly world are unclear. We know only that

Fig. 1. Anonymous portrait of an eighteenth-century geographer, possibly Jean-Baptiste d’Anville. Oil on canvas. 80 x 60 cm. Versailles, châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, MV4414. (Reproduced with permission from RMN (Château de Versailles), France.)
he was introduced into the abbé de Longuerue’s circle a few years after finishing his education. Louis Du Four de Longuerue (1652–1733), a specialist in the classics and oriental languages, was also interested in geography. Du Four de Longuerue probably did much to sharpen the young d’Anville’s mind and to encourage him to benefit from his large library.

Around 1718, Du Four de Longuerue asked him to make some maps, and thus d’Anville’s career began. The year after, he was appointed geography tutor to King Louis XV (1710–1774) and given the title ‘géographe du roi’. He was still only twenty-two. The duc d’Orléans, the Regent, also noticed the gifted young scholar and in 1719 asked him to publish a map (the Carte du Royaume d’Arragon, eventually engraved by P. Starckman). A few years later, d’Anville was accorded a pension by Louis d’Orléans, the son of the Regent, which ensured the geographer’s security and productivity; by the time he died, d’Anville had drawn more than 200 maps and gathered the huge map collection that is now in the Bibliothèque nationale de France. He was elected a member of Académie royale des inscriptions et belles-lettres in 1754, but his election to the Académie royale des sciences and recognition as ‘Premier géographe du roi’ did not come until 1773. Despite the belatedness of these honours, d’Anville was already famous in France and throughout Europe.4

**Map Projects and Their Contexts**

From 1719 to 1750, most of d’Anville’s map production originated in editorial contracts. Then, from 1750 to 1780, he drew maps mainly for himself. He was able to do this because, from the 1750’s onwards, the pensions he received through the duc d’Orléans’s patronage and his membership in the Académie royale des inscriptions et belles-lettres made him less dependent on the map trade. From time to time during his career, he was asked to create a map for some political reason, but these commissions were infrequent, accounting for only ten maps or so out of the two hundred he produced. The maps he made to political order served various purposes, including royal historiography, territorial disputes and the demands of trade.5

When d’Anville was working for himself, he had full control over his choice of subject. Moreover, his personal projects were not ruled by deadlines, and he could take his time over his own work. Time was a precious commodity for all mapmakers.

D’Anville’s contemporary, Jacques-Nicolas Bellin (1703–1772), pointed out that it took ‘an immense amount of time to prepare and gather all the required knowledge’.6 When not under pressure, d’Anville could spend up to thirty-seven years on a single map, as he did for Aegyptus antiqua (1765). In the Mémoire linked to the map, he made it clear that it arose from a personal project rather than a royal command: ‘The King’s singular favour [Louis XV had lent him a map of Egypt] put me under an obligation to work specially on Egypt’.7

D’Anville was meticulous in the extreme. He was highly self-critical; neither some twenty draughts nor the fair copy of Aegyptus antiqua bear evidence of any correction in a hand other than his own.8 When Louis d’Orléans expressed an opinion on the map, he did so as a scholar, not as d’Anville’s patron. He avoided direct interference with the geographer’s work and discussed it only in his own writings.9

Freedom always has a downside, however, and in d’Anville’s case it was the constant struggle to find money for his personal projects. Map making was a costly process, all the more because d’Anville wanted the best paper and for his maps to be printed with care.10 He had to be prepared to give up his fee, as he observed in a letter to the Controller-General of Finances in 1775 when he was wondering how to finance the printing of his Antiquité géographique du l’inde.11 Such sacrifices were often the best way to ensure a positive answer from a publisher in the days when an author was liable for at least part, if not the entirety, of his expenditure on the work, as remained the case well into modern times.12 Recompense for the mapmaker’s purchase of paper and ink could be made in kind; according to an agreement made on 15 April 1728 d’Anville was to receive a hundred copies of each of his maps of China to cover the costs of paper and printing.13 It needed a Maecenas to pay for the expensive copper needed for engraving and printing.14

In short, geographical work resulted in more expense than profit. For d’Anville, the gain from selling his own maps was marginal, although his works were well received: they were imitated all over the Europe.

In contrast to the freedom of personal work, an editorial contract imposed conditions on the mapmaker. To start with, the subject of the map was already selected. D’Anville was often asked to illustrate a travel account or history book, which meant that the map had to fit the printed text. An editorial contract also implied a time limit, as shown by the maps of France drawn in 1719 for Louis du Four de Longuerue, d’Anville’s first patron. An inscription on the fair copy of the map certifies the day when
he gave it to the engraver: ‘j’ay livré cet original au Sr Delahaye le quatrième de may 1719 [I delivered this original to Sir Delahaye on 4th May 1719].’ In the editorial context of production, the amount of time that could be spent on map making and engraving was thus controlled by the publisher. The point is underlined in the third contract drawn up between d’Anville and Jean-Baptiste Du Halde (1674–1743), publisher of d’Anville’s Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique, et physique de l’empire de la Chine. D’Anville was to deliver his maps on the date agreed with the publisher. ‘I promise to give the drawing of the General map, which has yet to be done, around the 15th of next April’. However, the deadline was not strict, and a delay of fifteen days would be tolerated.

More happily, an editorial contract implied payment. In d’Anville’s case, he was to be paid in three ways: in cash, with prints of his map, and through publicity promised by the publisher:

Aujourd’hui quinzième d’Avril, mil sept cent vingt huit, Nous soussignés Pere du Halde de la Compagnie de Jesus, et Sr. d’Anville, Geographe ord*, du Roi, sommes convenus de ce qui suit, savoir: Que moi d’Anville m’engage de reduire et dessiner les Cartes particulières des provinces de la Chine et de la Tartarie Chinoise, faites par les RR. PP. Jésuites, item d’en faire les trois Cartes générales, et tous autres morceaux de Geographie qui doivent entrer dans l’ouvrage que le R. P. Du Halde compose sur la Chine et la Tartarie. Et moi P. Du Halde m’engage de recompenser ledit Sr. de la somme de six cent livres, dont la moitié sera payable en argent, et l’autre moitié par le nombre de trente exemplaires du recueil complet de toutes les Cartes faites pour ledit ouvrage. Item, de permettre audit (sic) Sieur d’avoir, en faisant les frais du papier et de l’impression, cent exemplaires de chaque Carte générale.

[On this day 15 April 1728, we the undersigned Father du Halde of the Society of Jesus, and Sir d’Anville, King’s Geographer ordinary, are agreed on that which follows, to wit: That I d’Anville undertake to reduce and draw the regional Maps of China and Chinese Tartary, made by the Jesuit Reverend Fathers, item to make from them the three general Maps, and all other bits of geography that are to go into the work that the Reverend Father Du Halde is composing on China and Tartary. And I Father Du Halde undertake to pay the said Sir with 600 livres, of which one half will be paid in money and the other half by thirty copies of the complete collection of all the Maps made for the said work. Item, to permit the said Sir to have one hundred copies of each general map for the cost of paper and printing.]  

Finally, the author (who is also here the publisher) controlled the finished product. Before final printing, the proof of each map had to be inspected by the author, who either asked for corrections to be made or approved the proof, signing it off as ‘good’ (bon) or ‘approved’ (apprové) (Plate 10).

An order for an official map involved similar constraints, as Neil Safier has shown in his study of d’Anville’s Carta de la Provincia de Quito (Ecuador), published in 1750. As with an editorial contract, d’Anville had no choice over the subject. In this case, the Spanish authorities had requested a map of the province that had been compiled by a joint French-Spanish mission sent to Peru (as it was then known) by the French Académie royale des sciences to study the curvature of the Earth at the equator. The scholar Charles-Marie de la Condamine and the Spanish-American creole Pedro Vicente Maldonado were in charge of the map making. The cost of the drawing and printing was borne by the Spanish crown, as acknowledged in the Spanish edition of the map, on which a note reads ‘Sacada à luz por orden, y à expensas de su Majestad’ [Published by order, and at the expense of his Majesty].

D’Anville’s political masters could exert their right of inspection to the extent of insisting on a map giving false information. On the map of Quito, all indications of the region’s mineral resources were supposed to have been have been erased. For instance, when Maldonado, who knew the area of the so-called mine well, was correcting the proofs of the map, he asked d’Anville in no uncertain terms to suppress the reference to a particular gold mine, which had already appeared on maps in recent travel literature. D’Anville did not, however, remove it. He may have been under pressure from the Spanish authorities, for, according to Safier, the disappearance of that potential source of income would have embarrassed the Spanish government, which had financial problems.

The final inconvenience of undertaking an official commission was that the mapmaker was often obliged to work at speed and in secrecy to avoid information leaking out. D’Anville would have had to rush to assemble as much source material as he could, making sketches from existing maps and notes from written works. Once the draught map was ready, it had to be engraved and printed as quickly as possible. D’Anville described to Charles de la Condamine how the map had to be prepared for printing in less than a fortnight: ‘I have made it my personal obligation to see that the plates are sent in twelve days’.

Collecting Source Material

The three different contexts in which d’Anville’s maps were produced meant he had to adjust his preferred way of working for each. He could not assemble his source material for an official map in
the same way as he did for one of his own projects. When working on a personal project, no restrictions were placed on how widely he could range or how much time he could spend in obtaining the necessary information, as we learn from his Mémoires sur l’Egypte ancienne et moderne and from his manuscript notes and draughts. As already noted, he had been collecting material for Aegyptus antiqua for decades. In contrast, the entire production of the four general maps of China ordered by the publisher Du Halde took four years, and the map of Quito had to be created immediately from whatever resources d’Anville happened to have to hand.

D’Anville’s method of compilation did not differ much from that of his contemporaries. It was not unlike that of Guillaume Delisle (1675–1726), for example, one of Jean-Dominique Cassini pupil’s and a member of the French Académie royale des sciences, who also stressed the importance of accuracy. The first step was what they all referred to as a ‘survey’ (levé), meaning (in present day terminology) the bringing together of an exhaustive database for the geography of the region in question. Assembling material was the basis of d’Anville’s method, as is borne out by the more than ten thousand maps in his collection and by the quantity of notes he made as he read which has survived. It is also apparent in his own writing about his collection:

If the wish to have only a Geography imprinted in some way by the locality [le local] can be no more than a chimera, is it not proper to attempt to procure as much as can be supplied for it to some degree of perfection? A quite special devotion, sixty years of application to this study, has given me the advantage of taking a few steps towards this perfection. In assembling nine to ten thousand Map sheets, of which more than five hundred are manuscripts, this amount of material was fully appropriate to give Geographical works, whether written or worked into Maps, greater precision, and to lavish a greater richness, if I may put it thus, than has hitherto been known on the subjects with which I have been occupied [emphasis added].

The point was reiterated in the Mémoires that he published to explain his maps:

Et parce qu’il est de nécessité absolue, que les notions actuelles du local accompagnent l’étude de l’ancienne Géographie, qui privée de ce secours demeure indéterminée, sans lumière, & sans appui, j’ai recherché depuis long-temps des matériaux, dont on peut construire avec quelque solidité, & quelque richesse dans le détail, une carte de l’Égypte en son état actuel.

And because it is absolutely essential, that present-day ideas about place apply to the study of ancient Geography, which without this aid remains ill-determined, unilluminated, and undocumented, I have long researched material, from which a map of Egypt in its present form could be constructed with a degree of assurance and richness in detail (emphasis added).

D’Anville usually listed at the end of the relevant mémoire the authors he had used for the map. These show clearly that d’Anville did indeed search systematically for ancient and medieval texts (literary accounts, geographical descriptions, road books), travel books (manuscript and printed) and French translations of works in foreign languages. In addition to French and Latin, d’Anville also read ancient Greek, which he had been taught at the Collège des Quatre-Nations and which he used in some of his geographical note taking. At the same time, he frequently used Latin versions of Greek texts. He must have been able to read English too, for in 1766 he referred to A Description of the East as one of his sources, long before it was translated into French in 1772–1773, and the Scottish geographer Alexander Dalrymple wrote to him in English. D’Anville also used a few words in Spanish in a letter, but that does not prove he could read it.

D’Anville often took the trouble to learn the basics of the language he needed for his maps. Beside the Greek, his geographical notes include some Arabic words, although he used French and Latin translations to read the Arabic literature. When he recalled interviews with foreigners (English, Italian, even a Turk) in his mémoires and geographical notes, he did not mention the language used. We may assume, though, that the conversation was in French, often used by European scholars at the time; d’Anville corresponded in French with the Italian cardinal Domenico Silvio Passioni. Even if d’Anville was not a linguist, he had sufficient command of Latin, French, English and Greek to allow him to accumulate an extensive documentation from his reading in these languages. After all, most travel books and geographical texts were written in Latin or French irrespective of the author’s nationality. For example, the first edition of the Voyage d’Égypte et de Nubie by the Danish officer Frederik Ludvig Norden was published,
posthumously, in French, by the Royal Society of Sciences of Copenhagen in 1755.

Unlike d’Anville’s well-known map library, which contained every map he had acquired and which remained intact after his death, his book collection had to be recreated through references to titles cited in his own publications or in the notes he made. From these sources, we know he used classical texts, works by the Church Fathers, modern editions of medieval treatises and histories, and translations from Arabic. Besides the resources of his own library, though, we should not overlook the importance to d’Anville of oral sources. The geographer frequently interviewed travellers and ambassadors, sometimes asking them to correct his maps.34

The notes d’Anville took from the books in his library have left us a physical guide to his method of compilation. These notes formed his database (as we would call it). Before drawing any map, d’Anville would make notes of all potentially useful information on pieces of paper, which he classified by geographical area. In this way, he amassed in one place all the information he needed for a particular project. A note might consist of an excerpt from a Greek or Latin text relating to a specific place, a few facts from a recent travel account or an interview with a traveller. Occasionally, d’Anville devoted a sheet of paper to a single point (a place hard to identify, for instance). His database also contained rough tracings he made from published maps and maps he sketched out as he read.

In physical terms, as preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, d’Anville’s database was comprised of a large number of mainly separate sheets of paper (Fig. 2). This allowed him to add new sheets when necessary. Some sheets, however, were bound together to form little pamphlets. This was particularly the case when d’Anville had copied a lengthy extract from one book. The sizes of his sheets of paper vary; the largest measure roughly 30 by 20 centimetres, the smallest less than 10 by 10 centimetres. The layout of d’Anville’s notes on the page also varies. Sometimes his handwriting fills the page, at other times he has kept a wide margin on the left, which was used not only for additions but also—whenever he came across a toponym in his reading and made note of it in the margin—as an index.

Whatever d’Anville’s method of compilation was in theory, it could not be followed to the letter for every map he made. When working for a publisher or on an official contract, he could hardly wait for the return of the latest traveller or explorer from the region to question him. Yet, at first glance, d’Anville’s final draughts of maps made to order do not look different from those of the maps he made for his personal projects.35 The main difference is in the quantity of content rather than in the quality of draughtsmanship. However hastily a contracted map had to be produced, d’Anville could not let matters rest even after he had passed it on to the person who had commissioned it. He continued to upgrade the map for each new edition in an attempt to reduce any qualitative gap between his contract maps and the maps he made for himself.

D’Anville’s Carte de l’Amérique méridionale was engraved in 1737 specifically for his pupil Louis-Philippe, duc de Chartres, son of his patron Louis, duc d’Orléans (and grandson of the Régent, Philippe d’Orléans).36 Louis-Philippe’s father, the duc d’Orléans, noticed that the map copied by his son differed slightly from the ones commonly used. He therefore encouraged d’Anville to publish it and offered to pay for the printing.37 It was eleven years, though, before d’Anville eventually published the map with a subtitle acknowledging his patron, Amérique méridionale publiée sous les auspices de Mgr le Duc d’Orléans (1748), as a separate-sheet map. But even that delay was insufficient for such a perfectionist; d’Anville reprinted the map four times up to 1779 as new data reached him.38 In fact, d’Anville was always reluctant to publish his maps, always hoping to exhaust his sources first. His writings about his maps of Italy hint at his inability to print his works without the pressure of a patron.39

Making the Map

Once amassed into a pile of notes and sketches, the geographical details had to be arranged into a map. An analysis of d’Anville’s manuscripts suggests that the first step in this process was the same irrespective of the context. He used large sheets of thick white paper that, although initially costly, had been selected for its durability and ability to withstand erasing and scraping. The thickness of the paper also meant that it was less likely to be damaged by the repeated use of dividers as he measured, plotted and copied. He used sheets of all sizes, acquired from, to judge by the diversity of watermarks, a variety of suppliers. Rarely was a piece of paper used simply as it came. D’Anville would cut it up, use it over and over again, and sketch out a new map on the verso.

The first lines of a map were drawn with a lead pencil so that mistakes could be easily erased. In fact, the sequence of lines and adjustments to the image
on one of these first draughts is telling. A number of repentimenti may be discerned where d’Anville changed his mind and superimposed a new layout on the initial pencil lines. We also see how d’Anville varied the strength of the line to reflect his certainty or uncertainty. Blank patches and variability in the density of markings also indicate problem areas. Sometimes empty spaces were used for calculations. Often d’Anville tried out a number of arrangements according to different assumptions (Fig. 3). Even at this early stage, all his map work was on a consistent scale so that he could easily compare his diverse

Fig. 2. A page of Jean-Baptiste d’Anville’s manuscript notes for the map of Aegyptus antiqua (1765). Here d’Anville has copied out extracts about the rivers in Ethiopia and cataracts in southern Egypt from Benoît de Maillet’s Description de l’Égypte (Paris, 1735), 40–42. BnF, Manuscripts, NAF 6502, fol. 495. (Reproduced with permission from Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.)
sketches and combine them to create a new map. Moreover, the scale of these preliminary draughts was usually larger than the scale of the finished map, so he could more easily work on the most minute details.

The second step in the creation of the draught map, however, had to be varied according to the production context. This stage consisted in confirming that what he had drawn was correct. The way d’Anville chose to present his data depended on...
circumstances. When working for himself, he transferred what he wanted from the first draught onto a new sheet of paper. When he was pressed for time, as in the case of a map made to order, he used the ‘cut and paste’ method. This action makes it clear why d’Anville’s preliminary drawings were always to a consistent scale; he would simply lift parts of the first draught to use on a later draught. Thus one draught of *Ecclesia africana*, originally made in 1732 for Michel Le Quien’s *Oriens christianus*, includes an added reference to the *Carte de la Barbarie et de la Nigritie* (1738). To speed things up even more, d’Anville would attach a sticker with a correction. Often he would return to the draughts or the fair copy after publication to update them with a note.

This constant reworking of earlier draughts was d’Anville’s way of compensating for being obliged to complete projects too quickly for his own satisfaction.

Finally, whatever the context, d’Anville reduced the various draughts and associated sketches to a smaller scale to compile a fair copy ready for engraving and printing. When a map had to be engraved on more than one copper plate, d’Anville made a fair copy for each plate. Thus, the *Carta de la Provincia de Quito* (1750), which is made up of four sheets, required four fair copies.

### Engraving the Map

Whether working for himself or on editorial contract (political contracts tended to be less exacting), d’Anville’s neat copies were always highly detailed and accurate. Even the lettering and hill signs, usually more or less left to the engraver, were precisely executed. D’Anville gave his engravers no licence for any stylistic variation.

Delahaye, one of the engravers who often worked for d’Anville, described his normal approach:

> Lorsqu’on me donne un Dessin Topographique pour graver, je prends un papier huilé bien transparent que je pose sur le dessin, bien tenu, pour qu’il ne varie point, je tire le cadre interieur, dessine à l’Encre de Chine le plan des Montagnes, Roches, Bois et Rivieres, puis j’écris tous les mots, donnant à tous la disposition la plus agréable, rectifians les mots mal placés, afin qu’il n’y ait aucune lettre coupée par des Rivieres ou cachée par des Bois.

[When I am given a Topographical Drawing to engrave, I take a very transparent sheet of oiled paper that I place over the drawing, holding it firmly, so it does not move, I trace the inner frame, draw in Indian Ink the outline of the Mountains, Rocks, Woods and Rivers, then I write all the words, positioning them all in the most agreeable way, rectifying badly placed words, so that not one letter is cut by Rivers or hidden by Woods.]  

Delahaye was rarely allowed such freedom when working for d’Anville, however.

Some of d’Anville’s printed proofs are marked with corrections. Because of the urgency with which a government contract had to be met, no time was available to correct the fair copy before printing and most of the changes had to be made at proof stage. Haste was the enemy of good map production. D’Anville found numerous inaccuracies on the proofs of the map of Quito, which he marked up intending the engraver to correct the copper plates. Nonetheless, d’Anville’s copy of the first printing has numerous annotations in the margin of the map. By the second printing, the copper plates had been corrected, and this state of the map is of much greater accuracy. The implication is that not only had the engraving been executed in haste, but so too—uncharacteristically—had d’Anville’s fair copy. Not only was this less free from errors than usual, but also his corrections were unclear, so that when a mountain was to be indicated, we see from the final printing that the engraver had styled it in his way (Fig. 4).

It may be argued, however, that the Quito map presented an exceptional case. The mass of corrections on the Quito map presumably reflects the remarkably short time in which it was made; probably no other of his maps had been produced in only a few weeks. Political pressure meant that the map had not been completely finished when engraving started. In contrast, when producing a map for an editorial contract, where deadlines tended to be more flexible, d’Anville would have made a completely new fair copy rather than attempt to correct the proofs and expect the engraver to correct the plates satisfactorily, although he was still prepared to mark corrections on the proofs where necessary.

Irrespective of the production context, d’Anville always made sure he checked every proof himself, a practice that was by no means widespread at the time. In this respect he treated all his work identically, no matter for whom it was made. The contract signed by d’Anville and the publisher Du Halde sometime in the 1730s was unusual in making clear where the responsibility lay for the accuracy of engraving and correction of the proofs.

Promets en outre moi P. Du Halde audit Sr. un exemplaire complet de mon ouvrage dès qu’il sera imprimé, et me feral un plaisir d’obliger ledit sieur en faisant mention de son travail, dans le plan que je dois donner au public de mon ouvrage, et dans l’ouvrage même, s’engageant ledit Sieur a avoir une attention particulière à ce que les Cartes soient correctement et proprement gravées, et à corriger les épreuves.
Furthermore I, Father Du Halde, promise the said Sir a complete exemplar of my work as soon as it is printed, and I will make it my pleasure to compliment the said Sir by referring to his work, in the notice that I have to give to the public of my work, and within the work itself, [thus] inducing the said Sir to pay particular attention that the Maps be correctly and properly engraved, and to correct the proofs (emphasis added).

Justifying the Map

D’Anville seems to have felt it necessary to justify each map he produced. In the case of maps for his own projects, such an explanation usually took the form of a long essay or dissertation (mémoire) in which he identified his sources and explained his general approach as well as his method of analysis. Thus in 1766 his map of Aegyptus antiqua was accompanied by Mémoires sur l’égypte ancienne et moderne. But mémoires cost money to print, and d’Anville did not always have the necessary financial resources. Fortunately, the Académie royale des inscriptions et belles-lettres, of which he had been a member since 1754, was sometimes prepared to publish an essay by d’Anville. The Academy, however, allowed only short texts of a dozen pages or so. Even for his own projects, then, d’Anville had to accept some constraints.

When working for others, the limitations were much tighter. Writing a mémoire took time. It was expensive to print, and many of d’Anville’s funders refused to commit themselves to the doubling of their expenditure on the map. Moreover, most of the maps d’Anville produced for an editorial contract were commissioned as book illustrations, to be inserted and bound into a travel or history book where there was no room for an erudite account of the map itself. D’Anville found alternative ways, however, of producing his justifications. For instance, in 1742, he decided to keep in the final proof of the map of La Numidie, produced for a
volume in the series *Histoire romaine*, some of the map’s underlying framework. This framework included all the Numidian roads and cities listed in the Roman *Antonine Itinerary*, which d’Anville knew from a recent edition by Pieter Wesseling (1735). Normally such structural aids would be omitted from the fair copy, but here d’Anville included them in the printed version as if to authenticate his research by declaring one of his sources so prominently (Fig. 5).

D’Anville sometimes asked a scholarly publisher to print a justification. His *Carte de l’Amérique méridionale*, first published in 1745 for Charles de la Condamine’s *Relation abrégée du Voyage fait dans l’Intérieur de l’Amérique Méridionale*, was thus inserted in the *Journal de Sçavans* in 1750. The original text, probably considered too long to be included in a single issue, was published in two parts, each of 13 pages, both entitled ‘Lettre à MM. du Journal des Sçavans, sur une carte de l’Amérique méridionale’.

When one of d’Anville’s maps was to be reprinted, he did not hesitate to take the opportunity to add a justification. In 1749, he had created a map for Jean-Baptiste Crevier’s multi-volumed *Histoire des Empereurs romains, depuis Auguste jusqu’à Constantin* (Paris, 1750–1756). Ten years later, the map was reprinted alone, allowing d’Anville to publish an essay (without the map) entitled ‘Mémoires sur les Peuples qui habitent encore la Dace de Trajan’, in the *Mémoires de l’Académie royale des inscriptions et belles-lettres*.

A government contract, in contrast, rarely gave d’Anville the opportunity to publish a mémoire. No justification accompanied the map of Quito, for instance. The exception was the *Carte de l’Inde* (1752). This map had been created at the request of the French government, which wanted a map of the Indian subcontinent for military purposes. D’Anville was hired to create the map, and he included a justification in the printed version to explain the sources and methods used.

Fig. 5. Detail from Jean-Baptiste d’Anville, *La Numidie*, 1742. Copperplate. Whole map 19 × 44.5 cm. In compiling this map d’Anville had used the route network described in the early third-century Antonine Itinerary to help him work out the relative locations of places and structure the map (as in Fig. 3). Normally, this sort of working aid would not be shown on the fair copy, but in this case d’Anville included the Roman route network even on the printed map as if to advertise his sources. The map was one of fifteen illustrations prepared for the volume on Egypt published in 1742 by J.-B. Crevier as a continuation of Charles Rollin’s *Histoire romaine*. BnF, Cartes et Plans, Ge DD 2987 (10199). (Reproduced with permission from the Bibliothèque nationale de France.)
of the Compagnie des Indes, probably to help plan trading strategies. Since the contract is missing, we do not know what the company’s motives were.

D’Anville said nothing about them nor gave any relevant details in the *Éclaircissements géographiques sur la carte de l’Inde* that he published about the map.

Je n’ai dressé la Carte, dont l’analyse est l’objet de cet ouvrage, que parce que Messieurs Les Commissaires Du Roi à la Compagnie des Indes, m’ont fait l’honneur de m’envoyer la demande.

[I compiled the Map, the analysis of which is the subject of this book, only because Messieurs Les Commissaires Du Roi à la Compagnie des Indes accorded me the honour of asking me for it.] 74

The Commissaires du roi referred to were the representatives of the Contrôleur général des finances, the minister in charge of finances in France, under whose wing the Compagnie des Indes was placed. The explanatory essay was published a year later by the Imprimerie royale. Of course, the essay was not financed by the Compagnie, which prompted d’Anville to comment on the commission:

Pour qu’un ouvrage de ce genre puisse avoir lieu, ce n’est pas assez de supposer que l’Auteur soit parfaitement libre de s’y livrer sans réserve: il faut qu’il puisse compter sur un assez grand nombre de lecteurs, pour risquer les frais de la publication; & la prévention la plus favorable sur le mérite intrinsèque des choses, ne doit point l’abuser.

[In order to achieve a work of this nature, it is not enough to assume that the Author would be perfectly free to devote himself unreservedly to it: it is essential that he may count on a sufficiently large number of readers, to risk the cost of publication; and advantage should not in any way be taken of the most favourable anticipation of the intrinsic merit of things.] 75

Once again, d’Anville himself had to lay out money for the publication of a text documenting his cartographic work.

In the second place, his scope for action was constrained by financial considerations. It should be borne in mind that d’Anville was the son of a tailor. Although his parents were not poor, there was no family fortune to allow him independence from the map trade or freedom from the exigencies of a patron. In the early part of his career, he had to deal with the demands of book publishers and adapt his ideal way of map making to their needs. In the second part of his career, he achieved some financial independence thanks to income from his academic positions and to the generosity of the duc d’Orléans, although there were still occasions when d’Anville received no direct payment for all his toil.

One compensation of his situation was that d’Anville was free to map what he wished. He still needed money to publish his work, though, and engraving and printing were costly. I hope I have shown in this article that the life and work of an eighteenth-century scholar was not something conducted in the abstract. The working methods of an armchair mapmaker, as Jean-Baptiste d’Anville shows us, should not be assumed to be established or consistent but recognized as a protean *modus operandi* that evolved in response to different contexts of production. Only then can his maps be better understood.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES


2. I have been working on Jean-Baptiste d’Anville’s archives since 2008 as an associate researcher at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Cartes et Plans) (hereafter BnF) and as a post-doctoral student at the école pratique des hautes études. My work is now linked to a research programme initiated by the BnF with a view to publishing a monograph around 2013.

3. The nine maps of France published in 1722 by Louis Du Four de Longueue’s *Description historique et géographique de la France ancienne et moderne* are signed ‘J. B. Bourguignon d’Anville’. A change of name was not unusual at the 18th century, as we see with Voltaire (born François-Marie Arouet).

5. In 1732, d’Anville drew a map of France for the *Description géographique et historique de la France*, by Jean-Aimar Pignan de la Force, the royal historiographer. In 1739, he was commissioned to create a map, *Carte pour servir au jugement du procès d’entre le Duc d’Orléans, le Prince de Conti au sujet d’un canal*, to solve a territorial dispute. In 1752, d’Anville produced a map of India for the Compagnie des Indes, entitled *Carte de l’Inde dressée pour la Compagnie des Indes*, 1752.


8. Louis d’Orléans commented on d’Anville’s work in his ‘Commentaires sur quelques points de la Genèse’ (unpublished), BnF, Manuscripts, Français 6297.

10. See, for instance, d’Anville’s comment, expressed in the third person and addressed to the publishers Jean Desaing, Charles Saillant and Laurent Durand in connection with his projected *Notice de l’ancienne Gaule*, around 1760: ‘Au reste ce qui le touche particulièrement, c’est que le Public soit bien servi dans l’impression. Beau papier, caractère neuf’ [As for what especially concerns me, it is that the Public should be well served by the printing. Quality paper, new font], BnF, Manuscripts, Français 22147.


13. The contract between Father Du Halde of the Society of Jesus and d’Anville is quoted more fully later in the text. It has been published in Henri Cordier, ‘Du Halde et d’Anville (cartes de Chine)’, *Recueil de mémoires orientaux: textes et traductions publiées par les professeurs de l’école spéciale des langues orientales vivantes à l’occasion du XVIe congrès international des orientalistes réunis à Alger* (Paris, Leroux, 1905), 393–94.

14. Maecenas, a favourite of the emperor Augustus, was considered by the Romans to be the greatest of the patrons of letters. D’Anville acknowledged his debt to the person who had supported him in his work morally and financially: ‘je n’aurais enore osé mettre la main à un pareil ouvrage, si les bontés & la magnificence vraiment royale d’un grand Prince ne me faisoient une loi de cette entreprise, & n’en facillitoient l’exécution’ [I would never yet have dared to set hand to such a project, had not the goodness and truly royal generosity of a great Prince not obliged me to undertake this enterprise, & had facilitated its execution]. Jean-Baptiste d’Anville, *Analyse géographique de l’Italie* (Paris, Veuve Estienne et fils, 1744), VIII–IX.

15. The note is on the fair copy of d’Anville’s, *Lorraine, Alsace* (1719), BnF, Maps, Ge D 10495.


17. ‘Je promets de donner le dessein de la Carte générale, qui reste à faire, autour du quinzième d’Avril prochain’. Quoted in Cordier, ‘Du Halde et d’Anville’ (see note 13), 395.

18. Ibid., 393–94.


20. See Safier *Measuring the New World* (see note 19), 133, fig. 21, for a reproduction of Maldonado’s corrections regarding the gold mine.

21. Ibid., 132–33.

22. ‘Je me suis engagé personnellement (sí) à faire en sorte que les planches soient remises en douze jours’. Letter from Jean-Baptiste d’Anville to La Condaminne, 14 April 1750, now in a private collection in Paris; quoted in English by Safier, *Measuring the New World* (see note 19), 126.


28. Greek was taught in the final years of the course of studies at the Collège des Quatre-Nations: Louis Sebastien Mercier, *L’an deux mille quatre cent quarante, rêve s’il en fut jamais* (n.p., 1771), 64. The book was published in English as Astreae’s Return; or, the Halcyon days of France in the year 2440: a dream (London 1797). D’Anville’s notes in Greek are BnF, Manuscripts, NAF 6502, fols. 346, and 118.

29. For instance, d’Anville seems to have preferred the Latin translation of Strabo’s Geography by Gregorius Tilernas and Guarnio Verone, rather than the original Greek. For a mention of the translation, see BnF, Manuscripts, NAF 6502, fols. 361.

5 October, 1781, is in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, as HM 20114.
31. ‘Dans le Journal des Savans d’un des premiers mois de cette année, une analyse sommaire de la carte dont je viens de parler, m’a fourni l’occasion de publier le secours que j’ai reçu de M. le Marquis de Saulsni (que Dios guarde muchos años) sur le cours de la Vistule’ [The summary description of the map I have just been talking about in the Journal des Savants from one of the first months of this year, provides me with an opportunity to acknowledged the help I have had from M. the Marquis de Saulsni (whom God preserve for many years)] on the course of the Vistula.] Jean-Baptiste d’Anville to Pierre Michel Heron, Paris, 7 April 1762. A facsimile of the letter is at BnF, Tolbiac, DOSS, FOL-LN1-232, fol. 600.

35. For example, his fair copy of Carte de la Grande Grèce, 1738 (BnF, Maps, Ge D 10375), made for Charles Rollin’s Histoire ancienne des Égyptiens, des Carthaginois, des Assyriens, des Babyloniens, des Médes, et des Perses, des Macedoniens, des Grecs (Paris, 1730–1740), is not aesthetically different from the fair copy of a map for one of his personal projects, such as the Égyptus antiqua, 1765 (BnF, Maps, Ge D 10362).


38. D’Anville repeatedly reworked his maps: the BnF has five versions of his Carte de l’Amérique méridionale, first published in 1748. Each later edition contains new material. For instance, in 1754, d’Anville added details to the mountains near Lima, and in 1760, he amended the course of the Orinoco River and the coast of Venezuela. See De Manne, Notice des ouvrages de M. d’Anville (note 4), 98, who has detailed each change.

39. See note 14 above for d’Anville’s comments on the time it took before a map left his hands and his acknowledgement of how much he owed his patron for insisting on its completion.

40. Michel Le Quen’s Orients christianiun was not published until 1740, when it was posthumous. Le Quen was a Dominican scholar. His book deals with the Christian aspects of the Orient, especially patriarchies and dioceses. D’Anville’s Eclesia africana was never republished with the new information that is on this draught, which is at BnF, Maps, Ge D 10367.

41. The four undated and untitled fair copies of the map of Quito survive, catalogued as Jean-Baptiste d’Anville, [Carte générale de l’audience de Quito], BnF, Maps, Ge D 10660 (1–4).

42. For an example of a case where the mapmaker (Achilles Gasser, in 1634) left it entirely to the engraver to translate his marks into proper town and other sign, see Werner Siegrist, ‘A map of Alligau’, Imago Mundi 6 (1949): 27–30.


44. BnF, Maps, Ge D 10878 (1–4). D’Anville and his co-authors, Maldonado and La Condamine, were asking for about two hundred corrections.

45. Salier, Measuring the New World (see note 19), 139–41.

46. Such a situation explains the presence of two fair copies of Eclesia africana in the d’Anville archive (BnF, Maps, Ge D 10374 (first fair copy) and Ge DD 2987 (10479); the second fair copy, as eventually printed.

47. Mary Sponberg Pedley, Bel et Utile: The Work of the Robert de Vaugondy Family of Mapmakers (Ting, Map Collector Publications, 1992), 54–60, describes a lawsuit between the engraving firm of Delahaye, Antoine Boudet, publisher, and the geographers Robert de Vaugondy, father and son. The geographers, the publisher and the engravers were arguing over who was responsible for overseeing the engraving of the plates. The implication is that responsibilities had not yet been clearly allocated. The case was brought before the Consul-Judges of Paris in 1754, with Jean-Baptiste d’Anville as one of the three arbitrators of the suit.

48. Quoted in Cordier, ‘Du Halde et d’Anville’ (see note 13), 394.

49. D’Anville, Mémoires sur l’Égypte ancienne et moderne (see note 7).


51. La Numidie was one of 15 maps of the ancient world produced by d’Anville for Charles Rollin’s seven-volumed Histoire romaine depuis la fondation de Rome jusque à la bataille d’Actium (1738–1741), to which Jean-Baptiste Crevier added two further volumes from Rollin’s manuscripts; vol. 8, on Numidia, was published in 1742. In d’Anville’s previous maps of Africa, such as Eclesia Africana (1732), for which d’Anville also used Roman itineraries (see Fig. 3), the framework was not shown on the final printed version.

52. D’Anville cited Pieter Wesseling’s edition of Vetera romanorum itinera (Amsterdam, J. Weitenium and G. Smith, 1735) at the end of his Mémoires sur l’Égypte ancienne et moderne (see note 7), VI.
