Lodovico Guicciardini and his *Descrittione* of the Low Countries

The Arlon-Luxembourg excursion
Anniversary Programme
The Island of Malta and the Order of St John

Original by Grigory Krayevsky (1747-1802, St Petersburg), published in St Petersburg in 1800 by the Imperial Academy of Sciences

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Krayevsky wrote the book on his trip to Malta in 1795 where he was working as a translator on the non-hazardous expedition of Count Paul Martovich-Skovronsy (1757-1793), who was then the Russian Ambassador to Naples. The first part describes in detail the history of the island of Malta, its main attractions, and the life and traditions of the locals. The second part deals with the history of the Order of Malta since 1530.

In 1799 the Russian Emperor Paul I became the Grand Master of the Order of the Knights of St John. Krayevsky seized the opportunity to publish his travelogue and history of Malta and the Order, as presented by the Emperor with the book's manuscript. The Emperor found the contents very interesting and sponsored its publication and distribution.

The first two-thirds of the book is a 'Description of the Island of Malta'. It is a kind of 18th-century 'Lonely Planet' or 'Rough Guide' which, according to Joseph Schirô's introduction, owes a lot to descriptions published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Lyon and Frankfurt. This part ends with a very rare map of the Maltese islands. Entitled (in translation) 'A Map of the Islands of Malta, Gozo and Comino in the year 1660', it is the only known contemporary Russian printed map of the islands. Three variants are known, the one reproduced here was engraved by Johann Christoph van Meij, a copper engraver born in Nuremberg who died in St Petersburg. It is printed on thick green paper and hand-coloured. Other variants are printed on thin white paper, and another on white-grey paper. The map is based on a French map published in 1752, which is oriented with the southwest at the top, whereas the Russian map is oriented north. For map-lovers there are other and 18th and 19th centuries, it is only in 2000 that a comprehensive research project on d'Anville was launched, under the aegis of the BnF, to have a fresh look at all historical evidence and to overcome stereotypes. While recently digitised maps from d'Anville's collection and related archive documents were put on-line on BnF's Gallica, Lucile Haguet maintained a blog where the first research results were made available. This allowed researchers from three continents to contribute to the project. In September 2012, the BnF organised an international colloquium with all interested parties to take stock of the research results. This book is the outcome.

The last third of the book gives 'brief information about the Order of St John of Jerusalem: its history, rules, regulations, and so on. The only map plan in this part is of Acre from Jean Foujol's 'Histoire des Chevaliers de l'Ordre de S. Jean de Hierusalem', no date given.

In short, this would be the ideal book for a map-lover exploring Malta! What a shame it was not available, the map especially, for the exhibition on Malta at Brou, Brussels last year.

Nicola Booth
nicola.booth@telinet.be

Une Carrière de géographe au siècle des Lumières

[A geographer’s career in the Enlightenment century]

Jean-Baptiste d’Anville

Edited by Lucile Haguet, Catherine Hofmann

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Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment, 2018

544 pp. (including a 6 pages English summary), 73 bw ill. and 16 colour plates, soft cover

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Jean-Baptiste d’Anville (1697-1786) is considered an ‘emblematic’ character in the development of French cartography. His production and his own map collection (over 9,000 items) constitute the core of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF)’s cartographic treasures. Although a number of biographies and bibliographies were written in the 19th and 20th centuries, it is only in 2000 that a comprehensive research project on d’Anville was launched, under the aegis of the BnF, to have a fresh look at all historical evidence and to overcome stereotypes. While recently digitised maps from d’Anville’s collection and related archive documents were put on-line on BnF’s Gallica, Lucile Haguet maintained a blog where the first research results were made available. This allowed researchers from three continents to contribute to the project. In September 2012, the BnF organised an international colloquium with all interested parties to take stock of the research results. This book is the outcome.

The book is edited by the project leaders Lucile Haguet (then researcher at the BnF) and Catherine Hofmann (Head of the BnF Maps and Plans Department), but many researchers contributed chapters on specific subjects.

The first part of the book aims at explaining the extraordinary career path of d’Anville: how the son of a modest Parisian tailor named ‘bourgeois’ managed to become, at 22, a geography tutor for the young King of France Louis XV and, later, to pursue an internationally successful career as a cartographer.

In the first chapter, Pascale Mermiche analyses the beginning of d’Anville’s brilliant scholarly life — not enough to explain his success — and uncovers the network of acquaintances, which d’Anville developed systematically and which helped him progress in society. Guillaume Debele, appointed ‘first royal geographer’ in 1738, and the Duke of Orléans, Louis XVI’s guardian, were key characters in d’Anville’s network.

Jérémie Ferreira Pinto then shows how d’Anville further enlarged his networks and diversified offers, in particular, as he worked for the Portuguese crown from 1724 until the 1730s, when he produced cartographic evidence to support the Portuguese claims against Spain in South America.

Mary Spomberg Pedley illustrates d’Anville’s business sense by analysing a proposal for producing a set comprised of sixteen two-sheet maps; this is a real ‘business plan’ detailing the anticipated costs of production (engraving, printing and colouring, although excluding the geographer’s time in composition) and...
the anticipated profit from the sale of such a collection over about eight to ten years. It shows the difficulty for a cartographer, albeit famous, to live from his sole production, without the help of sponsors.

The second part of the book investigates how d'Anville could draw the world without leaving his cabinet! He never left the Paris region, and relied on all possible information sources to make his maps; he cross-checked his sources carefully and, when he found no satisfying information, he left a blank space on the map. A proof of his scientific integrity.

Lucile Haguet first explains that his map library was his main working tool: d'Anville was not content to merely visit the well-stocked Parisian libraries, but he created his own, one of the most important private map collections of his day, by taking advantage of the intricate structure of his social network, by means of exchanges, donations and duplications.

Georges Tolus then explores the empirical working methods elaborated by d'Anville to reduce all sorts of spatial data into numerical measures and then to check them against ancient itinerary measures, modern local measurements, and recently observed geodetic calculations (e.g. on his 1742 map of Italy). The systemic processing of ancient, medieval and modern geographical sources, as elaborated by d'Anville, was described at the time as 'critical and comparative geography', and it allowed successive historical areas to elucidate and clarify each other.

The sources used by d'Anville in two specific cases are then examined in detail.

Jean-Charles Ducène studies how d'Anville took advantage of the oriental sources that became available as a result of a nascent Orientalism in France in his desire to better understand regions rarely or never traversed by Europeans. In short, the scholar had descriptive geography, mathematics and travel Itineraries at his disposal. The information he gathered, which he criticized and compared with other sources, can be found not only on his maps of Africa and the Middle East but also, and more especially in his memories on the historical and geographical questions relating to these African and Asian territories.

Regarding North America, Jean-François Palomino shows that d'Anville's cartographic depiction is based on painstaking geographical research; he assembled the accounts, logbooks and maps of others, then sorted, compared and, finally, combined them to produce a unique and original piece of work. However, the type and origin of the available sources, the paths they took to reach him, as well as the rivalries between colonial powers - all these lent a distinctive quality to the cartography of this vast land, at that time still relatively unknown.

In the third part of the book the reception of d'Anville's work in France and abroad is examined. We learn that the brilliant scientist was also aware of the need to develop and promote his reputation, in France and abroad, in order to expand his market. His maps were translated into English, German and Spanish.

Nicolas Verdier approaches d'Anville's personality through the contemporary press, in particular the journal Le Mercure, whose pages allow us to follow the geographer's career in the light of those who knew him or who observed his work. In its pages one sees d'Anville's arrival on the public stage, through the gradual establishment of his name and the acquisition of a succession of titles, each emphasised (or de-emphasised) according to the times. He asserts himself as an arbiter of the knowledge and the acquisition of a succession of titles, each emphasised (or de-emphasised) according to the times. He asserts himself as an arbiter of the knowledge and the acquisition of a succession of titles, each emphasised (or de-emphasised) according to the times.

Verdier suggests that d'Anville's personality was already in evidence as a result of his work on the map of the Americas (1748). The map was commissioned by the French government as part of a programme to map the Americas, a project that had been ongoing since the 17th century. The map was completed in 1750 and was published in 1751. It was a major achievement, as it was the first map of the Americas to include all the known countries, territories and possessions, and it was the first to be published in France. The map was also the first to be printed using a new method of printing, the copperplate process, which allowed for more precise and detailed images.

The map was well received, and it helped to establish d'Anville's reputation as a leading cartographer. It was also a significant contribution to the development of cartography, as it set a new standard for the accuracy and detail of maps of the Americas.

The fourth part of the book discusses the status of d'Anville as a 'famous man' for over a century after his death. Lucile Haguet studies d'Anville's large and long-lived reputation in France, from its highest point to its decline, both during his lifetime and after his death: in the 18th century, around forty years after his death, d'Anville was chosen from a thousand applicants to be pictured on a collection of coins dedicated to the 'great men' of France. In 1824, d'Anville was elevated to the rank of baron, and in 1837, he was made a member of the Académie des Sciences. In 1855, he was made a member of the Académie Française, and in 1861, he was made a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts. These honours helped to further establish his reputation as a leading cartographer.

As d'Anville never left the Paris region, he relied heavily on external sources to draw his maps. Here we see a Chinese source from his own cabinet library collection.

The British scholar could not help but show interest in the works of one of the only scholars who shared the problem of how to spatialise history. d'Anville's maps were sold in England before the publication of 'Decline and Fall'. However, it is thanks to Gibbon that the mapmaker enjoyed such fame across the Channel, since Gibbon quoted d'Anville as an authority and a major source of inspiration throughout his main work. Gibbon made d'Anville the ultimate mapmaker. Without the Francophile Gibbon, d'Anville, the 'prince of geographers' according to the historian, would not have had such an aura in England.

Iris Kantor shows how the map "Amérique méridionale" (1748) by Jean-Baptiste d'Anville was used at two different and defining historical moments. The first occurred after the signing of the Treaty of Madrid between Portugal and Spain in 1750, when the Portuguese diplomats rejected d'Anville's guidelines on the use of indigenous place names. The Portuguese crown had established a policy of renaming towns and indigenous villages, using only Portuguese forms to prove and support possession by the Portuguese State; yet, at the same time, this policy retained indigenous toponyms to identify the physical features and landscape. The second instance occurred between 1800 and 1900, long after Brazil had become an independent country (and more than a century after d'Anville's death). At that time, d'Anville's map "Amérique méridionale" was used again, as an authoritative document, by Brazilian diplomats to locate their borders with British Guiana in the international courts.

The book's fourth part discusses the status of d'Anville as a 'famous man' for over a century after his death. Lucile Haguet studies d'Anville's large and long-lived reputation in France, from its highest point to its decline, both during his lifetime and after his death: in the 18th century, around forty years after his death, d'Anville was chosen from a thousand applicants to be pictured on a collection of coins dedicated to the 'great men' of France. In 1824, d'Anville was elevated to the rank of baron, and in 1837, he was made a member of the Académie des Sciences. In 1855, he was made a member of the Académie Française, and in 1861, he was made a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts. These honours helped to further establish his reputation as a leading cartographer.

Nevertheless, in the nineteenth century the Royal Library granted d'Anville pride of place and celebrated him as a 'great man'. Eventually, in 1843, the maps from the Foreign Affairs were transferred to the then National Library, which became the depository of d'Anville's legacy.

In the 20th century d'Anville’s fame faded as cartographic methods evolved radically; today he remains a fascinating subject for historical research. Obviously this book will now be the reference on d'Anville. But it is a book by specialists for specialists. It would be nice, if a shorter and simpler version could be derived from it for a wider audience, and, considering d'Anville's reputation worldwide, it could be translated into English.

Jean-Louis Renante
jrenante@gmail.com