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# MAPPING TIME AND SPACE

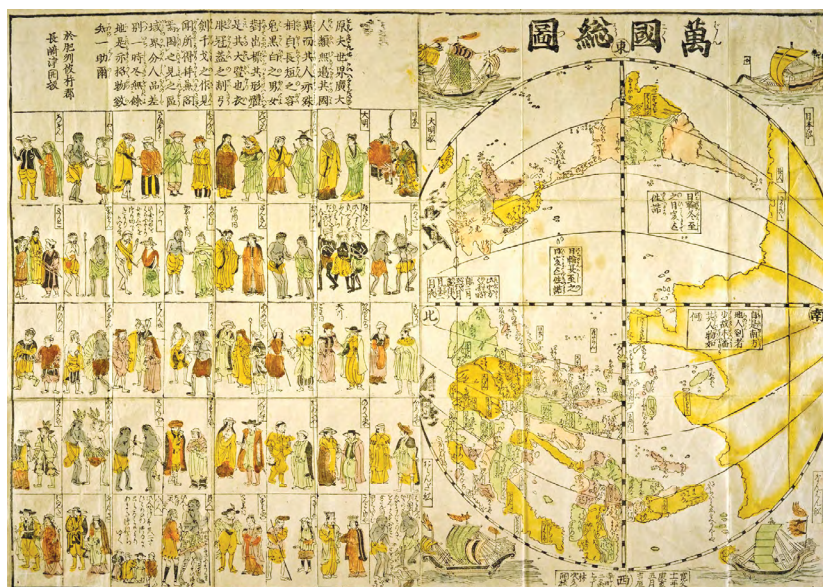
It is not drawn on any map; true places never are.<sup>1</sup>

From the end of the sixteenth century, in response to contact with European missionaries and merchants, a new fashion appeared in Japan: a fashion for lavishly decorated screens depicting maps of the world. The maps were often accompanied by pictures illustrating the landscapes of distant cities or (in sometimes fanciful style) the dress and customs of foreign peoples. A remarkable feature of these world maps is their colour. They usually depict the world as being divided into a patchwork of countries, each surrounded by a boundary line and each coloured so as to distinguish it from its neighbours. The seventeenth-century Japanese decorative painting of the lands and peoples of the world shown below (with its world map oriented towards the east) follows the same convention: Japan, coloured cream, is distinguished from the Korean Peninsula, which is green. The British Isles are coloured brown, Iberia is golden-yellow and so on. The result is a feast for the eye.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Herman Melville, *Moby Dick, or The Whale* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1851), p. 61.

2 Muroga Nobuo, 'Atarashii Sekai no Ninshiki: Nanban Sekaizu Byōbu', in *Daikōkai Jidai no Nihon 5: Nihon kara Mita Ikoku* (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1978), pp. 93–102; for further discussion of the development of Japanese map-making traditions, see Kazutaka Unno, 'Cartography in Japan', in *The History of Cartography*, ed. JB Harley and David Woodward, vol. 2, book 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 346–477; Kären Wigen, Sugimoto Fumiko and Cary Karakas, *Cartographic Japan: A History in Maps* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Oda Takeo, *Chizu no Rekishi: Sekai Hen, Nihon Hen* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2018).



**Figure 2.1. Japanese map and accompanying image of peoples of the world, 1671.**

Source: University of British Columbia Library Open Collections, Creative Commons (CC BY-SA) licence.

For the contemporary viewer, looking at these images it is easy to underestimate the revolutionary nature of their representation of space. This is, after all, the way we are accustomed to seeing the world today. Contemporary atlases still follow the same convention. But at the time when these works were produced, this was a novel image of the world, which had only recently begun to appear in Europe itself. During the sixteenth century, the work particularly of famous map-makers like Abraham Ortelius and Petrus Plancius had popularised the use of coloured 'political' maps of the world. But as Jeremy Black points out, at least until early modern times, national boundaries were hazy, and ruling dynasties claimed control over territories that were often physically scattered. All of this made it extremely difficult to depict space in terms of clearly bounded blocks of 'national territory'. 'A more spatially territorial approach to frontiers', Black notes, 'developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, although this process remained incomplete at the time of the French Revolution'.<sup>3</sup>

3 Jeremy Black, *Maps and History: Constructing Images of the Past* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 17.

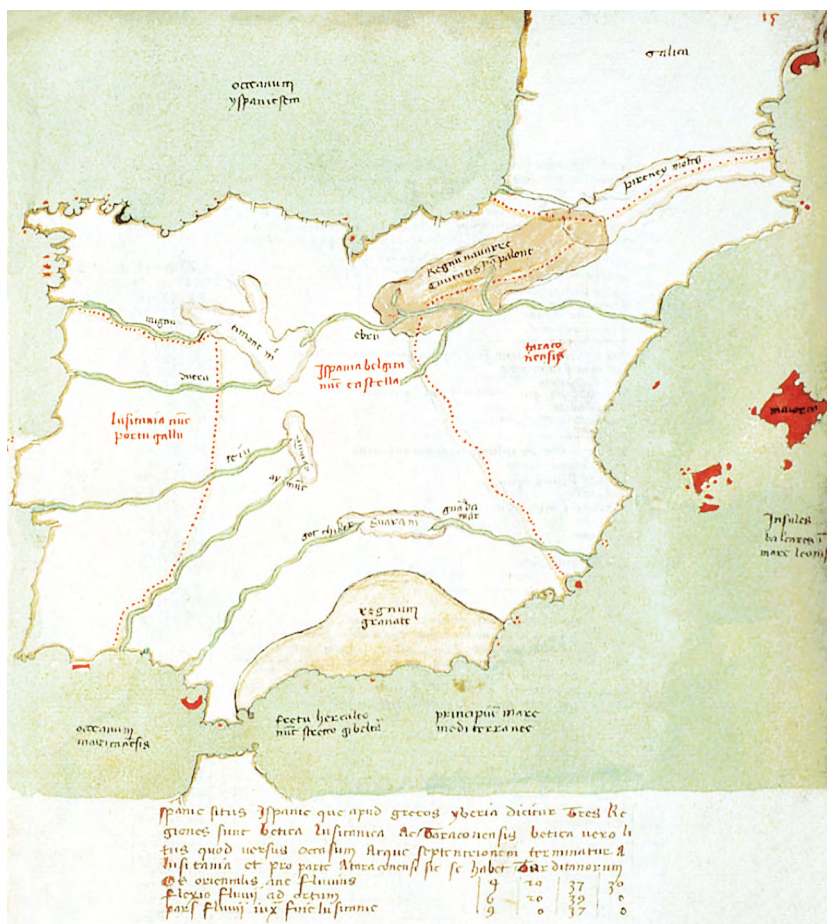
Japanese artists' early adoption of an image of the world as a patchwork of bounded political territories seems to owe more to their sense of visual aesthetics than to a premature awareness of the emerging importance of the nation-state. The multicoloured design of these political world maps made them attractive subjects for the two-dimensional decorative surfaces of the lacquered screen, and this aesthetic appeal was probably more important to the designers than the precise location of political frontiers. The national boundaries they imposed on Europe often followed the lines drawn by European map-makers, but other parts of the world left greater scope for the visual imagination. In the map shown in Figure 2.1, China is divided into several parts and the political boundaries of Africa are quite fanciful. Most interesting, perhaps, was the treatment of the Japanese nation in screens and maps that focused on Japan itself. Japanese screen painters generally used local knowledge to improve on the sketchy depictions of Japan provided in European world maps. They also, however, quite often chose to depict Japan, not as a single block of colour, but rather as attractively divided into a multicoloured diversity of territories, their boundary lines often following those of the ancient Japanese *kuni* (which in fact had no political or administrative significance at the time the maps were drawn, but which remained deeply ingrained in popular identity and imagination).<sup>4</sup>

## Reinventing the Frontier

By contrasting sixteenth- and seventeenth-century political maps of the world with the maps produced in earlier centuries, we can begin to grasp the profound impact that European nation-state formation had upon the human sense of space and time. The most immediately visible revolution is the invention of the frontier as a single, clear, definable line separating one nation-state from another. The idea of such borderlines was not entirely new. For example, the Emperor Charlemagne, dividing his territories between his sons in the ninth century, provided detailed verbal descriptions of the lines separating one heir's territory from another. However, such lines were seldom inscribed on maps, and throughout much of Europe the relationship between political control and territory was much more complex.

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<sup>4</sup> On the persistence of the notion of *kuni* in Japanese mapping, see Kären Wigen, *A Malleable Map: Geographies of Restoration in Central Japan 1600–1912* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010).



**Figure 2.2. Fifteenth-century map of the Iberian Peninsula.**

Source: British Library Harley MS 3686, public domain.

Medieval dynastic rulers often exercised control over widely dispersed, non-contiguous collections of territories. In the middle of the twelfth century, for example, the area that we now know as 'Spain' was divided into several political units, including the (sometimes united and sometimes separate) Kingdoms of Castile and Leon, Navarre, Aragon (which also incorporated the territory of Catalonia), the Muslim kingdom of Valencia and the Islamic Almohad Dominions in the south of the Iberian Peninsula. After a dynastic alliance in the early twelfth century, both Aragon and Catalonia were ruled by the same monarch, but his status in the two realms was different: in Aragon he was a feudal king; in Catalonia a

count with distinct and more circumscribed powers. The kings of Aragon also exercised various types of feudal authority in Occitania (the area that now forms the south-western region of France): Jaume I of Aragon (1208–76), for example, was also count of the city of Montpellier. In 1238 Jaume conquered the kingdom of Valencia and began to encourage the colonisation of this region by Christian settlers from elsewhere in Spain, yet the Christian population remained a minority, living alongside, but largely separate from, the remaining Muslim inhabitants.<sup>5</sup> Thus political control in no sense implied cultural integration, and diverse and widely dispersed collections of territory were often under the control of the same ruler. Even in the sixteenth century, Philip II of Spain continued to control the Netherlands, parts of Italy and Franche-Compté (in what is now France), as well as the vast Spanish empire in the Americas.

Elsewhere in medieval Europe the nature of frontiers was equally multilayered and complex. In Wales and Ireland, for example, waves of invasion from England had created small pockets of territory which were more or less under the control of an Anglo-Norman aristocracy, but were surrounded by large areas controlled by assorted native rulers. So, to travel just a few kilometres out of towns like Radnor in Wales or Dublin in Ireland ‘was to enter a different world and to cross a frontier, or rather frontiers, all the more profound for not being delineated on a map’.<sup>6</sup> As Rees Davies points out, in such regions there existed multiple superimposed borders ‘of conquest, settlement, peoples, culture and units of power’, and none of these borders precisely coincided with the others.<sup>7</sup>

The modern concept of the national frontier owed much to the processes of European overseas expansion and colonisation. It was Spanish and Portuguese expansion into the New World that prompted the first (and perhaps most famous) artificial creation of a linear territorial boundary, the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas, which drew a straight north–south line 370 leagues east of the Cape Verde Islands, separating the colonies of the kingdom of Castile from Portuguese colonies in the Americas. This division of the world between Castile and Portugal treated

5 Robert I Burns, ‘The Significance of the Frontier in the Middle Ages’, in *Mediaeval Frontier Societies*, ed. Robert Bartlett and Angus MacKay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 307–30, doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198203612.003.0013, see particularly pp. 319–29.

6 Rees Davies, ‘Frontier Arrangements in Fragmented Societies: Ireland and Wales’, in Bartlett and MacKay *Mediaeval Frontier Societies*, pp. 77–100, doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198203612.003.0004, reference from p. 78.

7 Davies, ‘Frontier Arrangements’, p. 80.



'the world' as a flat plain: a map rather than a globe. However, the early sixteenth-century voyages of Magellan and others made European rulers aware of the potentially rich resources of Southeast Asia, and encouraged them to envisage the world as a globe. This in turn prompted the Castilian and Portuguese kings to reimagine the Tordesillas border not as a flat line on a flat map, but as a line encircling a spherical world, dividing the globe in two as one might split an apple. This extension of the Tordesillas line into the eastern hemisphere was enshrined in the 1529 Treaty of Saragossa, which was remarkable for the fact that it specifically required the drawing up of a map showing the location of the frontier between 'Castilian' and 'Portuguese' spheres of influence.<sup>8</sup>

The drawing of such linear boundaries both encouraged and was made possible by the development of new surveying techniques, and these in turn were then applied by European administrators and map-makers to their home territories: producing, for example, sixteenth-century maps of the Iberian Peninsula that redefined the frontier between Castile and Portugal, no longer as a rather hazy 'border zone', but as a precisely plotted line – a line that sometimes ran right through the middle of villages, and even through the middle of family homes.<sup>9</sup> These technical developments in the surveying of frontiers of course coincided with the sixteenth-century emergence of the notions of 'national sovereignty' and of the contractual treaty between nation and nation. While overseas expansion stimulated the emergence of new images of the world as a whole, the consolidation of state power within Europe encouraged the production of highly detailed and mathematically accurate maps of frontier regions liable to invasion by neighbouring powers.

For example, sixteenth-century conflicts between England and France over control of the area around Calais (part of which remained under the control of the English crown until 1558) led to the production of whole series of precisely plotted charts of the north-western French coastline. Among them is one that (in the words of historian Peter Barber) 'must

8 Jerry Brotton, *Trading Territories: Mapping the Early Modern World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 119–50.

9 Geoffrey Parker, 'Maps and Ministers: The Spanish Hapsburgs', in *Monarchs, Ministers and Maps: The Emergence of Cartography as a Tool of Government in Early Modern Europe*, ed. David Buisseret (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), pp. 124–52; William Kavanagh, 'Symbolic Boundaries and "Real" Borders on the Portuguese-Spanish Frontier', in *Border Approaches: Anthropological Perspectives on Frontiers*, ed. Hastings Donnan and Thomas M Wilson (Lanham: University Press of America, 1994), pp. 75–87.

rate as among the earliest of the detailed “frontier” maps’, depicting an English interpretation of the border between English and French territory as a line of red dots close to the town of Boulogne.<sup>10</sup> In France, too, early modern mapping of the national territory was stimulated, first by military and defensive needs, but during the seventeenth century also by the demands of an increasingly centralised state for the geographical knowledge necessary to supervise local administration, collect taxes and carry out public works projects.<sup>11</sup>

The political theorists of the emerging modern state, such as Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529) and Thomas Elyot (c. 1490–1546), stressed the importance of accurate maps for administration of the nation. Elyot’s advice to rulers, *The Boke Named the Governour* (1531), described accurate maps of the nation as being essential to the monarch ‘as well for the safeguard of his country, as for the commodity and honour thereof’ – in other words, both for defensive and political purposes.<sup>12</sup> The gradual appearance of an order in which European nations were seen as clearly bounded territories under the control of a single sovereign state thus had profound implications for the depiction of geographical space. From the time of the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia onwards, a whole series of treaties among the emerging world powers put these ideas into effect, ultimately producing the familiar modern vision of the world as a patchwork of nations each with its own clear boundary lines.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with the processes of European expansion and the emergence of the modern global order, such notions of linear frontiers gradually spread to other parts of the world, including East Asia. In Japan during the Edo period (1603–1868), for example, the most familiar frontiers, for the majority of people, were the boundaries between domains, or the checkpoints (*sekisho*) created by the shogunate along major highways to control the movement of people in and out of key centres of power. By contrast, the boundaries surrounding the nation as a whole were, at least in the early Edo period, rather vague

10 Peter Barber, ‘England I: Pageantry, Defense and Government: Maps at Court to 1550’, in Buisseret, *Monarchs, Ministers, and Maps*, pp. 26–56, quotation from p. 37.

11 See David Buisseret, ‘Monarchs, Ministers and Maps in France Before the Accession of Louis XIV’ in *Monarchs, Ministers, and Maps: The Emergence of Cartography as a Tool of Government in Early Modern Europe*, ed. David Buisseret (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 99–123.

12 Barber, ‘England I’, p. 32.

and porous.<sup>13</sup> As Bruce Batten notes, the overriding ideological image at this time was the 'Japan-style middle kingdom order' (*Nihon-gata kai chitsujo*) – a Japanised variant of China's middle kingdom system, with Japan proper posited as a centre surrounded by outlying 'barbarians'.<sup>14</sup> Efforts were made to control the contact points between 'Japan' and the 'barbarians', and in Ezo (Hokkaido) a firm borderline was drawn between the territory directly controlled by the Japanese Matsumae family and the Ainu realms beyond (see Chapter 4). But even:

the border in Hokkaido ... was not conceived as an absolute limit to Japanese authority, for the notion of territorial sovereignty remained unknown. The border merely represented the outside limits of the sphere of directly administered territory within the larger world order defined by the 'middle kingdom ideology'.<sup>15</sup>

It was growing awareness of European expansion (and particularly of Russian expansion into Siberia, Kamchatka, Sakhalin and the Chishima Archipelago) that prompted the first Japanese efforts to define clear national frontiers. By the 1780s, mathematician and political thinker Honda Toshiaki was speaking of the need to 'establish a mutual frontier between Japan and other countries in order to create a fortress to withstand northern enemies'.<sup>16</sup> And two decades later, in 1808, growing friction with Russia to the north of Japan prompted a famous expedition by officials Mamiya Rinzō and Matsuda Denjirō to establish the northern 'limits of the territory of Great Japan' (discussed further in Chapter 6).<sup>17</sup>

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13 On early concepts of boundaries and borders in Japan, see Iida Momo, *'Nihon' no Genkei: Kikagashima kara Sotogahama made* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1994); Bruce Batten, *To the Ends of Japan: Premodern Boundaries, Frontiers and Interactions* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003); Marcia Yonemoto, *Mapping Early Modern Japan: Space, Place and Culture in the Tokugawa Period (1603–1868)* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003).

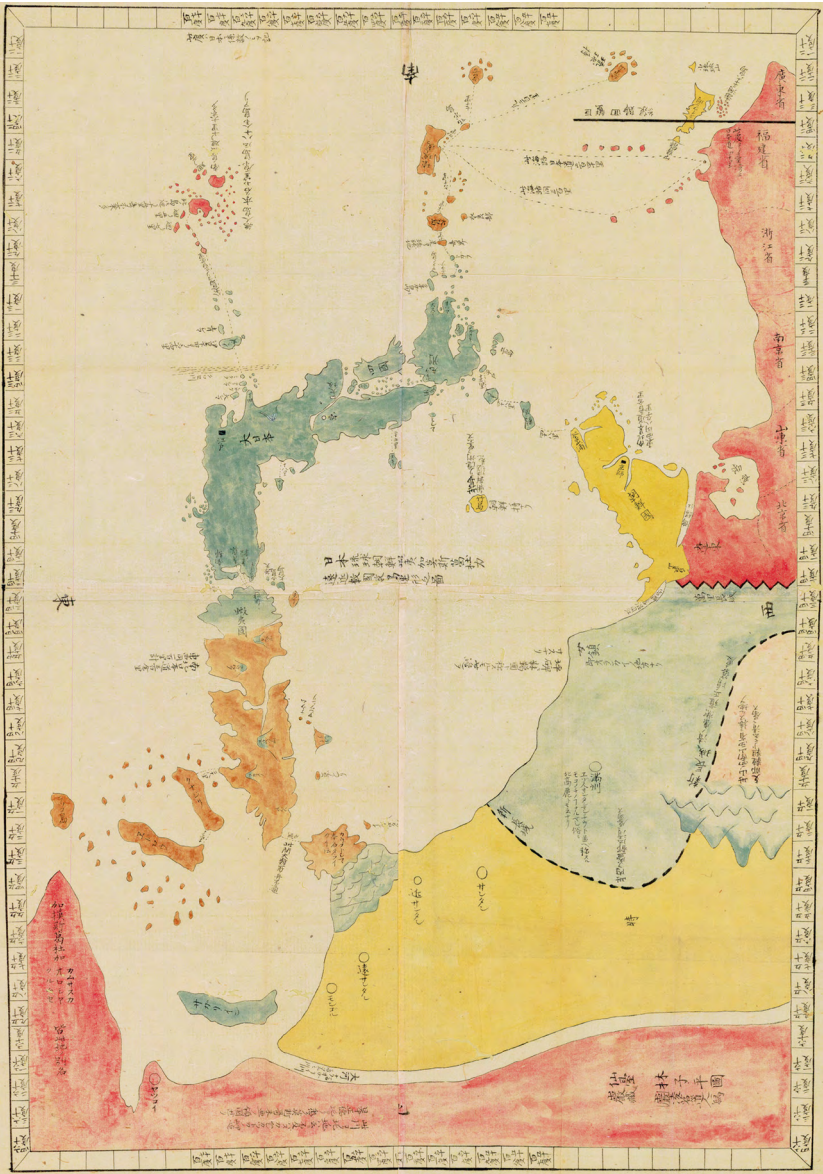
14 Batten, *To the Ends of Japan*, p. 44.

15 Batten, *To the Ends of Japan*, p. 47.

16 Kaiho Mineo, *Kinsei no Hokkaidō* (Tokyo: Kyōikusha, 1979), p. 129.

17 On Mamiya Rinzō and mapping, see Brett L Walker, 'Mamiya Rinzō and the Cartography of Empire', in Wigen, Sugimoto and Karakas, *Cartographic Japan*, pp. 140–43, doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226073194.003.0032.





**Figure 2.3. Hayashi Shihei’s *Illustrated Outline of the Three Countries* [Sankoku Tsūran Zusetsu], 1785.**

Source: Wikimedia commons, public domain.

The astronomer and geographer Hayashi Shihei's 1785 *Illustrated Outline of the Three Countries* [*Sankoku Tsūran Zusetsu*] represented an early attempt to define Japan's borders with its neighbours: Korea to the west; the Ryukyu Kingdom (now known as Okinawa) to the south; and Ezo (now known as Hokkaido) to the north. Hayashi's map of East Asia differs in several important ways from the sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century depictions of the world in Japanese screen paintings. In the screen paintings, the outer limits of Japan remain obscure. Much of the island of Ezo was still unmapped, and the region is normally either entirely omitted altogether or depicted as a small and variably shaped blob. Other islands like Hachijojima may or may not appear on the map, and are often painted in different colours from the neighbouring regions of Japan. On Hayashi's map, by contrast, Hokkaido is depicted in far more detail (though in a curiously elongated shape) and colour is now used to represent an emergent concept of national territory. The whole of 'Japan', from Matsumae Domain in the southern part of Hokkaido to Satsuma in the south of Kyushu, is uniformly coloured to distinguish it from neighbouring countries, though this colour coding also identifies both 'Ezo' and the Ryukyu Kingdom as territories distinct from 'Japan'.<sup>18</sup>

## Separating Space and Time

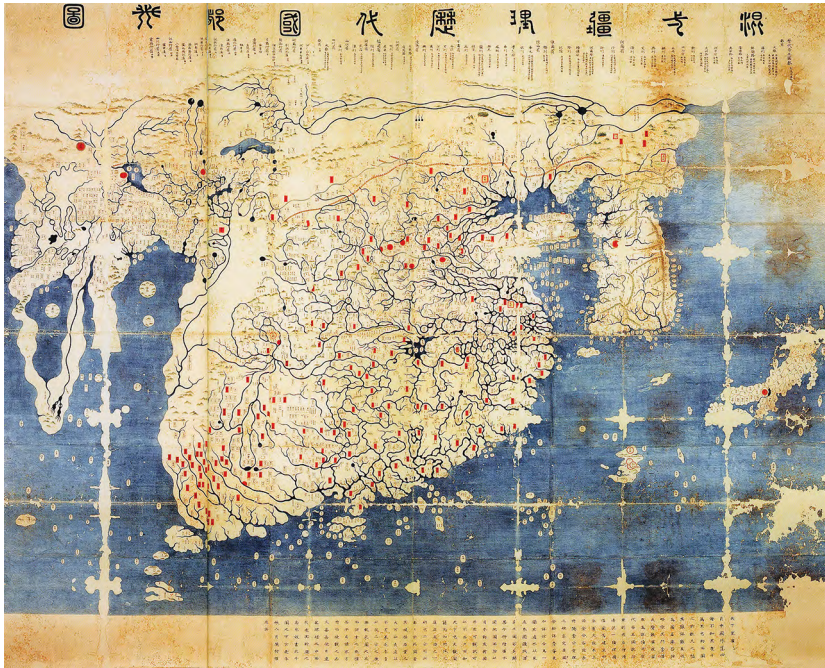
But post-Renaissance political maps of the world do not only reveal the emerging notion of the clearly bounded nation-state. They also represent another and perhaps even more profound revolution in notions of time and space, though one that is not so readily obvious to the viewer. To grasp the nature of this revolution, we might begin by looking at one of the most remarkable pre-sixteenth-century maps, the 1402 *Map of the Integrated Territory of Historical Countries and their Capitals* [*Honil gangni yeokdae gukto jido*], usually referred to as the *Kangnido*. Produced in Korea in the early Chosŏn Dynasty, the *Kangnido* has been described as having been, in its day, 'the most complete map of the world that any East Asian country had to offer'.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, it was probably one of the most complete maps on offer anywhere. The map combined information drawn from earlier Chinese sources (most notably a now lost map by the monk

18 See Terasawa Hajime et al., eds, *Hoppō Mikōkai Komonjo Shūsei 10: Ezo Kochizu* (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1975).

19 Gari Ledyard, 'The Kangnido: A Korean World Map, 1402', in *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 329–32, quotation from p. 329.

Qingjun) with local knowledge of Korean geography and information apparently obtained from Arab traders. The result is an image of the world that extends from a fairly detailed image of Japan in the east, through a very large Korea and through China and India (depicted as consolidated into the western side of the Chinese landmass), to Arabia, the Nile and the Mediterranean in the west.

The accompanying text tells us that ‘in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the Jianwen era (1402), Left Minister Kim [Sahyeong] of Sangju and Right Minister Yi [Mu] of Tanyang, during moments of rest from their governing duties, made a comparative study of [earlier] maps and ordered Yi Hoe, an orderly, to collate them carefully and then combine them into a single map ... One can indeed know the world without going out of his door! By looking at maps one can know terrestrial distances and get help in the work of government’.<sup>20</sup>



**Figure 2.4. Map of the Integrated Territory of Historical Countries and their Capitals [Honil gangni yeokdae gukto jido] (The Kangnido), 1402.**

Source: Wikimedia commons, public domain.

<sup>20</sup> Ledyard, ‘The Kangnido’, pp. 329–30.

The origins and significance of the *Kangnido* (which is now known only from three copies) have been widely debated. The date of its production, and the fact that it was drawn up just seven years after the completion of a famous and officially commissioned map of the heavens, suggests that its purpose was partly ideological – it was a visual statement affirming the legitimacy of the Chosŏn Dynasty, and asserting the Dynasty's place in space and history. One of the most interesting and obvious features of the map, however, is that it is (as the words 'historical countries' in its title suggests) a map of time as well as space. It represents not only the geography of the world but also its history. Like earlier Chinese maps (which often combined image and words to show changes in place names and administrative structures) it used both cartographic symbols and accompanying text to illustrate the changing territories and capitals of successive dynasties.

The use of maps to represent time as well as space was not confined to East Asia. Many pre-Renaissance European maps also combined text with imagery to convey ideas about the passage of historical time as well as the shape of geographical space. Evelyn Edson observes that "reading a map" in the Middle Ages could mean scanning great blocks of written matter, describing geographical, anthropological and historical features'.<sup>21</sup> A striking example of the fusion of space and time in medieval European mapping comes from the great thirteenth-century wall map preserved at Hereford Cathedral in England. Like most medieval world maps, this is oriented towards the east, with a depiction of the Garden of Eden at the top, detailed scenes from Biblical events and classical mythology below, and the outlines of contemporary Britain and its neighbours at the bottom. As Edson explains, 'historical time flowed down the map, from the expulsion from Paradise in the east, through the parade of empires, to the newest cities in the west'.<sup>22</sup>

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21 Evelyn Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed their World* (London: The British Library, 1997), p. 134.

22 Edson, *Mapping Time and Space*, p. 140; see also PDA Harvey, *Mappa Mundi: The Hereford World Map* (London: British Library, 1996).





**Figure 2.5. The Hereford wall map.**

Source: Wikimedia commons, public domain.

If pre-Renaissance maps often represented time as well as space, pre-Renaissance histories often incorporated a spatial as well as a temporal dimension. About 150 years before an unknown artist composed the Hereford wall map, Otto, Bishop of Freising, wrote one of the most famous of all medieval European histories of the world: *The Two Cities*. The 'two cities' of the title are the eternal city of God and the transient city of human life. Freising begins his story with the Biblical origins of humanity in the Garden of Eden before moving on through tales of the classical world to recent times: Viking expansion, the rule of Charlemagne,

the crusades, etc. The structure of his image of the world, in this sense, parallels the structure presented in the Hereford wall map. Here too, time and space are inseparable. Movement through historical time is also movement through geographical space, from east to west. As Otto of Freisling wrote, 'it is observed that all human power or learning had its origin in the East, but is coming to an end in the West, that thereby the transitoriness and decay of all things human may be displayed'.<sup>23</sup>

Against this background, the revolutionary nature of the vision of the world represented by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century mapping practices becomes obvious. Here, time has been separated from space. It is true that some of the great map-makers of early modern Europe (including Abraham Ortelius) were deeply interested in history, and Ortelius indeed included historical maps of the classical world in his famous 1570 atlas, the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*. But the key transformation was that the maps of Ortelius and his successors were not diachronic but synchronic: each map represented only one moment in time, whether present or past. The map had become a pure representation of space – a miniature representation of the physical shape of the world itself. As one of Ortelius' admirers wrote to him, 'you have compressed the immense structure of land and sea into a narrow space, and have made the world portable, which a great many people assert to be immovable'.<sup>24</sup>

Just as the early modern revolution in mapping produced a notion of 'homogenous, empty space', so a concurrent revolution in social thinking produced the discipline of history with its concept of 'homogeneous, empty time'.<sup>25</sup> Writing in the Western European context, John Lukacs notes that:

the modern concept of *history* (like the political concept of *Europe* and the social concept of the *bourgeois*) grew with the Renaissance. But the origins of the real development of our awareness of this kind of thinking ... [was] a relatively recent development, beginning in the seventeenth century.<sup>26</sup>

23 Otto, Bishop of Freisling, *The Two Cities: A Chronicle of Universal History to the Year 1146 AD*, trans. CC Mierow (New York: Octagon Books, 1996), p. 95.

24 Quoted in Brotton, *Trading Territories*, p. 175.

25 Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), pp. 253–64, quotation from p. 261. Original published in 1950.

26 John Lukacs, *Historical Consciousness or the Remembered Past* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 12.





**Figure 2.6. Abraham Ortelius's world map, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, 1570.**

Source: Wikimedia commons, public domain.

The word 'historian', for example, seems to have appeared in English around the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the distinction between the terms 'ancient' and 'modern' around the beginning of the seventeenth. Until the seventeenth century, the word 'progress' referred to movement through space: it was probably the political administrator and scientific thinker Francis Bacon (1561–1626) who first gave it the new meaning of 'advance through time'. During the seventeenth century, too, alongside the appearance of a new English vocabulary of scientific terms (such as 'fluid', 'gas', 'temperature' and 'pressure') came the emergence of a new vocabulary of historical time: 'century', 'decade', 'epoch', 'contemporary', 'historic' and 'primeval' are all seventeenth-century words.<sup>27</sup> Anthony Giddens links this separation of space from time to the rise of mechanical methods of measurement – particularly the use of the mechanical clock, which was associated with growing 'uniformity in the social organization of time'.<sup>28</sup> But, as David Gross suggests, the institutions of nation-states made use of these tools of modernity to challenge older religious visions of time and advance their own 'political conceptions of duration'.<sup>29</sup>

## Space, Race and Progress

This revolutionary separation of time from space, which coincided with the emergence of the modern nation-state, was to have profound consequences for social thought – consequences that continue to influence our vision of the world in the present day. On the one hand, the re-envisioning of the surface of the globe as 'homogenous, empty space' encouraged a gradual but profound reordering of geographic concepts. Classical and medieval European world-views envisioned the lands of the earth as a single contiguous block of territory, the *Orbis Terrarum*. But growing knowledge of the Americas forced a rethinking of this conceptual framework. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw the gradual emergence of the notion of 'continents' as large masses of land containing the many nations. The precise classification and division of continents, however, remained a matter of controversy. Increasing awareness of the geography of central Russia, for example, raised questions about the dividing line between 'Europe' and 'Asia'. It was not until the eighteenth

27 Lukacs, *Historical Consciousness*, pp. 12–13.

28 Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p. 18.

29 David Gross, 'Temporality and the Modern State', *Theory and Society* 14, no. 1 (1985): pp. 53–82.

century that the Swedish military officer Philip-Johann von Strahlenberg proposed the Ural Mountains as marking the ‘frontier’ between the two continents.<sup>30</sup>

These shifts in the classificatory frameworks of physical geography coincided with the emergence of new ways of classifying human beings – a new ‘human geography’ that defined the world’s population as being divided into ‘races’. Colonial expansion confronted European thinkers with the awareness not only of previously unimagined expanses of territory, but also of a previously unimagined diversity of human groups and lifestyles. To reduce this bewildering diversity to manageable order, eighteenth-century thinkers (most notably the French natural historian Georges Louis de Buffon, discussed further in the following chapter) began to extend to human beings systems of taxonomy similar to those used by scientists like Linnaeus to study non-human species. The new classificatory system of ‘race’, further developed in the nineteenth century by writers such as Georges Cuvier and James Prichard, could then be superimposed upon the new spatial classificatory system of ‘continents’, producing a neatly colour-coded vision of the world. The German naturalist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840) helped to elaborate this colour coding by dividing the human race schematically into ‘Caucasians’ (white), ‘Mongolians’ (yellow), ‘Malayans’ (brown), ‘Ethiopians’ (black) and ‘[native] Americans’ (red), and by the early nineteenth century Carl Ritter (1779–1859) – one of the most influential geographers of his day – was also defining each continent in racial terms: Europe was the realm of white people, Asia of yellow people, Africa of black people and America of red people – and each continent thus had its own ‘special function in the progress of human culture’.<sup>31</sup>

This vision of the world naturally lent itself to a new way of colouring in maps of the world: as well as using colour to highlight the boundaries between one nation and another, one could also use larger blocks of colour to depict the spatial boundaries between one race and another. Jeremy Black notes that ‘interest in ethnicity coincided with the greater use of colour’ in mapping. Edward Grover’s mid-nineteenth-century *Historic Geographical Atlas of the Middle and Modern Ages*, for example,

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30 MW Lewis and KE Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 27.

31 Quoted in Lewis and Wigen, *Myth of Continents*, p. 30.

paid special attention to 'tinting and colouring the maps, by which the tribes of particular races, as the Germanic, the Hunnish, the Sclavic, the Mongol and the Turkish are represented in different colours'.<sup>32</sup>

Now geographical space came to be seen as divisible at two levels: first into large units – 'continents' containing 'races' – and then into the smaller units of 'nations' containing 'peoples'. Each of these levels of division, moreover, was envisaged as being an inherent part of the natural order. The graphic simplicity of this image of the world, together with its power as an instrument of colonialism, gave it great appeal: an appeal that survived despite the repeated failure of the natural sciences to reach any consensus about the meaning of the term 'race'. This paradox is vividly illustrated, for example, by Blackie's *Comprehensive Atlas and Geography of the World*, published in London in 1882. The atlas divides the world, first into continents and then into nations, and gives a description of the territory, resources and human culture of each. The written text notes that:

attempts to classify the races of mankind have led to too little agreement among men of science to be able to present to the reader any general conclusions that have been arrived at, and we must therefore content ourselves ... with a comparison based on comparisons of language, on which there is at least more agreement than on any other.<sup>33</sup>

Yet despite this rejection of the notion of 'race' as a reliable scientific concept, the volume is illustrated with a series of strikingly stereotypic pictures of 'races' identified with particular nations or continents: including 'the Grecian race', 'the Caucasian race', 'the Mongol race' (represented by Japanese) and a composite picture of 'The Ethiopian race, Negroes, Kaffirs'.

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32 Black, *Maps and History*, p. 79.

33 WG Blackie, *The Comprehensive Atlas and Geography of the World* (London: Blackie and Sons, 1882), p. 124.





According to this view (as the French historian François Guizot put it) society was ‘on the march, not in order to change its place, but to change its situation’.<sup>35</sup> Although the idea of progress (as we saw) goes back at least as far as the early seventeenth century, it was particularly during the eighteenth century that it was developed into a coherent taxonomy of stages of historical development. This taxonomy, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, began to be expressed very clearly in eighteenth-century Enlightenment works written around the time of the French revolution, and was later elaborated by various nineteenth- and twentieth-century theorists of civilisation. While spatial notions of the division of the world into races and nations sustained the vision of the ‘nation-state’ as a naturally existing social and geographical unit, temporal notions of progress and civilisation provided a justification for the ranking of nations into hierarchies reflecting their ‘degrees of development’. This hierarchy in turn could be used to justify the colonial domination of more ‘civilised’ nations over those deemed insufficiently ‘civilised’ to rule themselves. The global power of this new vision of time is evident from the enthusiasm with which it was taken up in countries like Japan and China as part of the process of modern nation-building. In Japan, Fukuzawa Yukichi not only helped to introduce the spatial stream of modern European thought – the vision of the world as divided between races and nations – but also (even more famously) helped to introduce the temporal stream – the notion of a hierarchy of civilisation stages. His *Outline of a Theory of Civilization* [*Bunmeiron no gairyaku*], published in 1876, presented human history as progressing from the ‘primitive’ to the ‘semi-developed’ stage, and thence to the contemporary stage of full civilisation.<sup>36</sup>

## Rethinking Time and Space

The emergence of the modern state thus brought with it a fundamental reordering of notions of space and time. On the one hand, geographical space came to be reimagined as divided into clearly bounded blocks of national territory. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this method of subdividing space was elaborated. The smaller territorial blocks of nation-states were envisioned as subsections of larger blocks

35 François Guizot, *Histoire de la Civilisation en Europe depuis la Chute de l'Empire Romain*, 6th ed. (Paris: Victor Masson, 1951), p. 14. Original published in 1828.

36 See Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, trans. David A Dilworth and G Cameron Hurst III (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008). Original published in 1876.



– ‘continents’ that in the popular imagination came to be commonly identified with distinct ‘races’. This way of seeing space in turn gradually became naturalised – accepted as an inherent part of the natural order, rather than understood as an ideological construct. One consequence of such naturalisation was that it became common to project this division of space back in time. We now readily speak, for example, of ‘medieval Spain’, ‘Jōmon period Japan’ or ‘America before the coming of Columbus’, as though such entities really existed. Yet in fact all are anachronistic projections of a modern geographical vision into times and spaces where ‘time’ and ‘space’ themselves were experienced in quite different ways.

More fundamentally, modern nation-state building also brought with it a radical division between the dimensions of time and space. Geographical space came to be seen as a physical reality existing independently of time. It was the domain of an emerging professional group of geographers, surveyors and cartographers, who measured space in terms of longitude, latitude, miles and kilometres. The study of time, meanwhile, was entrusted to the historians, who divided it into decades, centuries and epochs, and debated the sequences of human stages of progress. Yet despite this conceptual and professional separation, time and space could in practice never be kept strictly separate. Spatialised notions of ‘racial difference’, for example, constantly merged into temporal notions of ‘stages of civilisation’. Indeed, the close interconnection these two parallel, though theoretically separate, dimensions for classifying difference was repeatedly exploited in the discourses of nationalism and colonialism. Where notions of racial difference failed to provide a justification for conquest or resistance, the spatial discourse of race could readily be transposed into the temporal discourse of ‘stages of progress’, and vice versa.

Over the course of the twentieth century, however, the images of time and space born from the revolutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were exposed to new challenges. Particularly in the latter decades of the century, critical writings on the nation-state re-envisioned the nation, not as an enduring and natural territorial unit, but rather as an imagined and historically contingent entity.<sup>37</sup> As Immanuel Wallerstein suggested, it seemed as though we were being impelled to embark on the:

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37 See, for example, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Nishikawa Nagao, *Kokkyō no koekata: Hikaku Bunkaron Josetsu* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1992); Amino Yoshihiko, *‘Nihon’ to wa nani ka* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2000).

very difficult, very interesting road of questioning one of the bedrocks of our intelligence, our certainties about time and space. At the end of the road lies not simplicity but complexity. But our geohistorical social systems are complex; indeed, they are the most complex structures of the universe.<sup>38</sup>

These bedrocks are not easily shifted. The maps of space and time that will emerge from this journey of discovery have yet to be imagined. In the chapters that follow, we will first look more closely at the way in which the European 'discovery' of East Asia shaped Enlightenment divisions of time and space, and (conversely) the way in which these divisions in turn influenced academic and popular perceptions of East Asia, before going on to point out some possible paths towards the process of questioning and reimagining time and space in the twenty-first century world.

An earlier version of this chapter appeared in Japanese in Uemura Tadao, Ōnuki Tadashi, Tsukimoto Akio, Ninomiya Hiroyuki and Sakamoto Hiroko eds, *Rekishi o Tou 3: Rekishi to Kūkan* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2001), pp. 111–30.

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38 Immanuel Wallerstein, *Unthinking Social Science* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991), p. 148.

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