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### Tabula Imperii Europae: A Cartographic Approach to the Current Debate on the European Union as Empire

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# ***Tabula Imperii Europae:*<sup>1</sup> A Cartographic Approach to the Current Debate on the European Union as Empire**

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*Maps are much more than geographic tools. They are powerful visual icons of statehood and identity. Created by agents tainted by their own historical subjectivity, maps are saturated with multiple levels of meaning, while their perceived status as accurate scientific tools lends them an authority which the map-reader is not meant to question. This paper examines maps from a Gadamerian hermeneutic perspective to investigate the layers of meaning embedded into these unquestioned, hypnotic emblems, and proposes that the maps produced and displayed by the European Union on its websites and in its continental currency are texts imbued with powerful imperial imaginations which reify a sense of collective identity and apparent superiority. This imagination is entwined with the territory of Europe and ultimately defines what it is to be European through the exclusion of ‘the Other’ – those Europeans deemed unworthy of inclusion in the European imperium. Ultimately, the paper argues that maps of the Union reflect a subconscious – yet gradually emerging – imagination of Empire.*

## INTRODUCTION

*A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of empire.*

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Such paraphrasing of a classic work of political philosophy may, at first glance, appear to be inaccurate. Certainly, given the remarkable ability of political scientists and geographers to apply classic political philosophies to a wide variety of academic topics, the analogy is perhaps terse. But as this paper argues, the phrase is not an altogether inaccurate description of the complex and confused political atmosphere of today's European Union, and the ultimate manifestation of an imperial imagination in cartography. Empire has not yet fully materialised in modern Europe, but it lurks in the political background and the increasing appearance of scholarly debate on European Empire warrants academic acknowledgement.

The 'end of history' has not occurred. Rather, instead of the projected New Order of post-Cold War bipolarism and the predicted triumph of liberal democracy, an international community of young states still struggle to find their identities in the world's perpetually unpredictable geopolitical climate. Of these states, perhaps none are as unusual, and as difficult to categorise, as the European Union. This 'somewhat strange hermaphrodite'<sup>2</sup> exhibits the traits of many polities. It has features of a nation-state, indicators of a federation, and – as the work of Hartmut Behr, József Böröcz, and Jan Zielonka demonstrates – undeniable characteristics of empire.

It is the intention of this paper to examine the Union's imperial pretensions as manifest in a visible and supremely authoritative emblem<sup>3</sup> which reifies a sense of collective and territorially bound identity, paradoxically arranged into hierarchies, and defined through contrast with the undesirable 'wild zones' of non-Europe beyond the EU's frontier. This most powerful of imperial emblems is the map.

Maps, as Alan Henrikson points out, transform 'our sense of place and belonging' by transcending boundaries of space and nationality in an effort to foster a sense of common identity, an identity constructed around the twin concepts of community and its associated territory.<sup>4</sup> Put simply, 'the map [is] the creator and sustainer of images of national identity and shape'.<sup>5</sup> After all, a spatially contiguous community cannot exist without a correspondingly contiguous spatial area to inhabit. This would appear to be tautological – there cannot be a map without a corresponding 'reality' for it to represent. Thus, arguably, a map can only represent a collective community if such a social construct already exists. But just as Benedict Anderson highlighted the existence of "*Imagined Communities*" in constructing nationalism,<sup>6</sup> a similar concept of 'imaginative geography' exists,<sup>7</sup> and plays a significant role in the construction of said communities. As maps are 'no longer the domain of mainly expert users, but a readily available public asset',<sup>8</sup> they are a significant means of constructing such a collective identity inextricably linked to a territorially bound and territorially identified polity.

Combining two distinctive functions – the representation of part of the spatial realm alongside the representation of a constructed community – these maps result in reality and imagination being depicted within the same piece. This creates a praxis of space and place in which territory and polity

become fused together, allowing the emergence of a collective identity fixed to ‘a well-defined location imbued with special meaning’;<sup>9</sup> in the case of the EU, this is the fusion of Europe as continent, Europe as polity, and European as an identity.

In his work on cartographic consciousness, Jeremy Black asserts that ‘it is more difficult to make the cartographic image of a supra-national entity seem natural. This is true of obvious man-made constructs such as the European Union’.<sup>10</sup> For a polity which repeatedly asserts being ‘United in Diversity’, how is it possible for a sense of collective identity to be established?

One answer lies in map interpretation, as collective identity – an imagination of empire – is most prominent in the omnipresent maps constructed by the European Union. The Union relies heavily on images to transcend its many linguistic barriers in an effort to reify a universal identity among its citizens, and of these images it is the flag and the map which are most visible. Indeed, a quick survey of any tangible object associated with the Union will reveal that one of these two images is invariably present, either in the form of the twelve gold stars of the flag or the continental outline of the Union’s territorial landmass. Political symbols such as flags and anthems fix an imagination of state, a method far from unique to empires. But maps fix an imagination of identity. Empires, as argued below, lack those innate cultural similarities – linguistic, artistic, religious, or even geographical contiguity – common to other forms of political-territorial entities such as nation-states. In the face of such absence empire as a concept is reliant upon the overt and deliberate construction of an imperial identity, a means of connecting disparate peoples with a sense of commonality to the empire.<sup>11</sup>

As such, this paper posits the thesis that EU maps promote an imperial identity through *cartoimperialism*. This concept can be defined as the innate ability of cartographic elements and styles to engender new territorialities and political imaginations in the minds of their viewers – an “imperial imagination” promoted through maps. In this proposed genre of mapping, geographical space and cultural place become fused into a single concept defining what it means to be ‘European’. Cartoimperialism is continually reified through the use of unquestioned, authoritative maps which endow the territorially bounded geopolity of the European Union with visibility, political legitimacy, and a collective identity among its inhabitants; an imperial project *par excellence* and one reliant upon a symbiosis of empire and mapping.

## THE IMPERIAL-CARTOGRAPHIC SYMBIOSIS

### Imperial Maps

A map is, in the view of Mark Monmonier, ‘the perfect symbol of the state’.<sup>12</sup> By plotting physical features, marking the state with an impressive name, and drawing ‘a heavy, distinct boundary around as much territory as you

dare claim', the state acquires a *place* in territorial *space*. This occurs even if the state is defunct, unrecognised, or entirely imaginary; indeed, 'geography ha[s] always been a handmaiden to the state, often in quite insalubrious ways'.<sup>13</sup> Nowhere is this more evident than in the context of empire.

Empires are by their very nature ambitious in terms of territory and use cartography not in order to promote 'value-free geographic imagination', but rather 'imperial favourability geographic imaginations'.<sup>14</sup> This characteristic of territorial ambition connects strongly with what Black terms the 'cartographic pretensions' of a polity.<sup>15</sup>

As Denis Wood reminds us, maps are ultimately texts<sup>16</sup> and are, at their very simplest, a collection of abstract symbols designed to represent the world. Or, following Hans-Georg Gadamer, the particular world view unique to the text's reader.<sup>17</sup> This collection of symbols is one of multiple tropes; the methods and styles used by the map-maker to persuade the map-reader that their particular representation is right.<sup>18</sup> In the context of maps, tropes include not only the graphic symbols used to represent countries, frontiers, etc., but also such features as the location of the map, or its placement and association with other concepts. A common example concerns the frequent combination of a European map with political iconography of the EU, such as the Union's flag, gold-and-blue heraldic colours, or the "€" symbol of the polity's collective currency. In such cases, the map acquires an additional trope – the powerful suggestion that the political entity as represented by EU symbols, and the territorial entity as represented by the physical topography of Europe, are inextricably interlinked.

Alone, this particular trope is little more than an intellectual curiosity. Many countries – if not all – use this tactic of associating a particular land area with a particular political entity, and use mass maps to reinforce that association in the collective consciousness of the state's citizens. The EU, though, through its maps, does not simply associate itself with its current landmass but with its territorial ambitions. This territorial aspect, a feature of cartography far from unique to, and far older than, the European Union,<sup>19</sup> is a significant and universal feature of EU cartography. Maps of the Union inevitably associate a political entity (the EU) with a particular area of Earth's surface (the European landmass). This may seem obvious, but the association involves deeper implications upon both identity – what it means to be 'European' – and imperial structure.

The collective imagination is a realm constantly open to new mapping and new cartographic claims. Claiming land by associating it with the mother country on a map may be an extinct practice, but claiming an identity by associating it with a landmass – regardless of the reality of that land area's political situation – is a cartoimperialist trope alive and well in Europe's maps.

This political-territorial praxis, a 'human identity-hunger' as termed by Philip Pomper,<sup>20</sup> arguably remains a visible element of our species'

psychology and at first glance, it may seem unsurprising to find it manifest in EU maps. It links to what James Bryce terms ‘the earth-hunger’ inherent to nations,<sup>21</sup> particularly those of Europe. Cartoimperialism, as the synthesis of empire and mapping, addresses this dualistic need to acquire and assert an identity based on association with a territorial space. Maps define what it is to be ‘European’, and determine a nexus at which these three cartoimperial strands – the *desire* for identity, the *creation* (and reification) of a collective identity tied to a defined landmass with clear parameters, and the *definition* of that identity through the establishment of an Orientalist civilised-barbarian dichotomy – meet.

As Eric Voegelin points out,<sup>22</sup> this repeated association of polity and land area has significant implications on identity as the concept of empire entails ‘the elements of territory and people’ in equal measure, with the territory ultimately defining the people through the inclusion-exclusion dichotomy. This theme is explored in greater detail below, but a brief overview is necessary here.

The EU is repeatedly associated as the ‘civilized zone’ of the European continent, that area which is considered sufficiently developed to be integrated into the Union. This exclusive policy in itself is imperial. As Hartmut Behr points out, the EU’s requirement that all applicant states reform themselves into an image of the Union is at best paternalistic, at worst imperialist, by excluding those states deemed insufficiently ‘civilized’ to warrant inclusion.<sup>23</sup> However, it is perhaps intellectually unstable to speak of Europe as a defined ‘civilisation’. Even Samuel Huntington’s reductivist multi-civilisation thesis, claiming that Europe’s many complex and nuanced cultures and societies can be corralled into a single transatlantic “Western civilisation”,<sup>24</sup> concedes that only the Western European Union can be thought of as sharing a common European culture. Even in this thesis, the European Union exists as a Western core and an Eastern hinterland, and while the “core-periphery” concept is only one way among many of understanding *Imperium Europaicum*, the dual-civilisation thesis – one Western European and one Eastern European – must be considered. Indeed, this is demonstrably visible in EU cartography, as the Union’s maps make a point of excluding what Simon Dalby calls the ‘dangerous periphery’<sup>25</sup> from the apparently civilised core, using a variety of imperial tropes.

### Imperial Tropes

Maps communicate knowledge which can only be conveyed in a graphic format. They are deliberate constructs which possess emotional and intellectual appeal, and can potentially form a unique category of propaganda. The bias, prejudices, and aspirations of the cartographer will always be manifest in a map and thus maps are always at least partially subjective. Of course it must be borne in mind, as Mark Monmonier<sup>26</sup> and Alan MacEachren<sup>27</sup>



point out, that it is the subconscious conventions of object recognition and embedded semiotics on the part of the map-*reader*, rather than any nefarious agenda on the part of the map-*maker*, which cause this. This is not to say that map-makers are incapable of deliberately distorting their portrayals of the world – under some circumstances, cartographers have done precisely this. But even without malicious meddling, it is not possible for maps to accurately mirror our world. Each cartographer – and each map-reader – has a unique perception of reality. The map-reader is equally vulnerable, as there is no ‘external reality’ common to all viewers – as Gadamer reminds us, each reader is constrained by their own personal perspectives and ultimately incapable of extracting themselves from their ‘historically effected consciousness’.<sup>28</sup> Michael Gibbons is right to remind us of Gadamer’s assertion that “there is no God’s eye perspective”<sup>29</sup> towards texts, including maps, remains true. Embedded within their own unique consciousness, the reader cannot make an objective assessment. As Wood points out, ‘Maps are embedded in history they help construct’;<sup>30</sup> both the map, and its context, are simultaneously cause and product of the complex iterative processes which form what Gadamer identifies as our historically effected consciousness(es).

The problem of a historically effected consciousness has consequences upon both cartographic production and the interpretation of maps’ meanings. As the Roman philosopher Livy (59 BC–AD 17) pointed out, ‘An empire exists only so long as its subjects rejoice in it’.<sup>31</sup> Cartoimperialism is born of the perceptions of the map-reader rather than a deliberate agenda on the part of the cartographer, yet despite this genesis there remains the problem that map-makers, by the very nature of their products, are incapable of communicating a neutral, value-free image of the world to their audiences. Maps are not mirrors of reality – they do not *reflect* our world, they *represent* it. Those features which appear on the map – and those equally important features which are left out – are selected by a cartographer who, as Gadamer suggests in his discussion of the effective historical consciousness, may be subconsciously influenced by unrealised norms in order to fulfil a specific teleology. From simple charts to sophisticated maps, cartographies are designed to engender a desirable way of looking at the world. The facts of maps simply do not speak for themselves. Cartography is teleological;<sup>32</sup> maps are produced for a reason, and such reasons can include the promotion of an imperial imagination, or what Böröcz terms ‘an imperial-colonial teleology’.<sup>33</sup>

This has two critical implications for cartography; first, maps of empire hint at a policy of Manifest Destiny by using a hierarchy of techniques to depict the existing polity, the desirable territories whose integration has not yet been accomplished but is actively sought, and the non-imperial ‘outside’ whose integration is not desirable. Second, a clear border will be identified; a boundary between ‘civilisation’ and ‘barbarism’ marking the point at which the imperial project ends, where inclusivity within the empire and exclusivity of identity beyond become clearly separated, dividing the citizens

of *Imperium Europaeum* from the non-integrated, non-Europe beyond. This trope of the imperial frontier is quite evident in maps of the European Union, visible in the shifting emphasis on where the frontier lies. The Expansions of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have shifted the border in consciousness as well as space. It has been pushed eastwards from the Berlin Wall to the Byelorussian frontier, but in so doing has redefined who does not count as 'European' and simultaneously established a hierarchy of European-ness.

Where the final border rests is debatable but cartography can reveal one concrete fact of the EU's border: it is a border which exists not only in geopolitical space but also in the collective yet hierarchical imagination of its citizens. It is a frontier of perception, and one which helps define Europe as an empire.

### MODELLING *IMPERIUM EUROPAEUM*

#### Empire and the Modern World

In order to assess the EU's imperial structure as manifest in cartography, it is first necessary to understand what *form* of empire the EU is claimed to be. This is more than mere intellectual nitpicking. Empire is a clumsy concept with limited (if any) consensus amongst the academic community as to what exactly constitutes an empire. József Böröcz argues that a model of *Imperium Europaeum* must begin with a minimalist concept of empire, and while Anthony Pagden is correct to stress the limited utility of simple definitions for so broad a concept as empire,<sup>34</sup> a foundation is nevertheless required.

Speaking in 1910, at a time when political geography had only recently emerged as distinct from the "aloof . . . too-rigid devotion to the facts" ethos dominating 'pure geography', George Robertson offered his Presidential Address to the Geographical Section of the British Association on the subject of geography and empire. The address offered an early vision of empire not as a discriminatory polity forced upon unwilling subjects but rather as a collective community in which the distinction between coloniser and colonised disappears under the progressive march of 'common interests, an identical civilization . . . generous democratic expansiveness and social assimilation'.<sup>35</sup> An empire of discrimination and violence would be transformed into what Anthony Pagden terms 'an empire as tutelage'; the existence of a core projecting its own version of social normativity onto those under its authority while simultaneously promoting a strong sense of inclusivity.<sup>36</sup>

It is arguable that such an 'empire of tutelage' exists in its current manifestation as the European Union, an 'empire by example'<sup>37</sup> which not only has a territorial agenda but which pursues an imperial project whereby prospective applicants must be moulded into Europe's own image – must

become 'civilised' in the EU's own self-congratulatory manner<sup>38</sup> – before they can be admitted into a Union seeking to reify a collective continental consciousness among its citizens.

Framing the European Union as an empire has obvious implications because, as Michael Cox reminds us, in today's world 'empire' is a dirty word, invoking those repressive political anachronisms which ought to remain buried in 'the marble and sepia pasts'.<sup>39</sup> However, two conceptual issues must first be addressed. First, 'empire' is an inconveniently vague term encompassing a bewildering array of political systems; the concept must be distilled into an appropriate formula applicable to the EU, before the concept of *Imperium Europaeum* can be tackled. Second, the two concepts of 'imperial' and 'empire' are not mutually inclusive.<sup>40</sup> It is possible for an ethnically heterogeneous 'empire' to reject an 'imperial' policy of violence and forcible incorporation of lesser groups. Simultaneously, it is equally possible for a 'non-empire' to pursue a foreign policy few would hesitate to dub 'imperial'. This is far from mere semantic obscurantism. The *policy* of imperialism arguably does not apply to the *polity* of the European Union. However, in the absence of a more suitable term, this paper henceforth uses the term *imperial* purely as an adjective form of *empire*, referring to the polity and not to the policy.

Empire, and models thereof, have received increasing attention in scholarship in recent years. Certainly, the quantity of literature on modern post-Cold War empire suggests that the imperial phenomenon is far from dead. However, scholars are visibly divided in their perceptions of empire, and not all currently projected models of empire are applicable to the European Union. In order to critically engage with maps in search of a cartoimperialist agenda, it is necessary first to examine those models of empire applicable to the Union, and reject those which have little or no relation to today's *Imperium Europaeum*.

Empire in the 'classical' sense is not an appropriate model for the current EU. The Union demonstrably does not share the characteristics of classical empires, defined by Richard Drayton as entities enjoying and exercising a monopoly on force, wherein one politico-ethnic group has the ability to inflict harm on its component subjects without risking reciprocal violence.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, Michael Ignatieff's '*Empire Lite*' must be rejected as it too is grounded in conflict.<sup>42</sup> This characteristic of violence is perhaps applicable to proposed models of the hypothesised 'American Empire', a hegemonic entity reliant on its unparalleled military apparatus to wage a perpetual war on 'barbaric threats to civilization';<sup>43</sup> but not to the EU.

Non-territorial models of empire, principally the structure hypothesised by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, are similarly inappropriate approaches. Their '*Empire*' exists outside the bounds of limited geographical space; this 'concept of Empire is characterized fundamentally by a lack of boundaries. . . a regime that effectively encompasses the spatial totality'.<sup>44</sup> Neither is the EU

the mere manifestation, as Noel Parker suggests, of ‘another geopolitical order, such as the historic spread of modernisation’, a global trend towards modernist progressivism and capitalist political economy.<sup>45</sup> The European Union is far from non-territorial, and it is this connection which forms the core of a cartoimperialist analysis of EU maps as European territory and European identity are presented as inextricably and symbiotically linked, through maps. For Parker, the EU may be ‘the *passive conduit* of some overarching process independent of it’<sup>46</sup> and for Hardt and Negri, ‘*Empire*’ may be distinctly non-territorial. But the EU is not a mere vehicle for an outmoded vision of modernity, and while ‘*Empire*’ exists beyond the spatial realm, *Imperium Europaeum* most certainly does not. Rejecting recent models of empire, though, begs the question of what form of empire the EU is. Akira Iriye astutely predicts that ‘a new empire for the new millennium would not be an empire in any traditional sense’, but rather ‘would have to embody principles of human rights and justice for all . . . an empire of freedom’.<sup>47</sup> This is critical for mapping the hypothesised European empire, as legitimate models of *Imperium Europaeum* retain a distinctly territorial, non-violent foundation. It is therefore to the manifestation of this model that we now turn.

### Empire and the European Union

The European Union is a political entity existing within territorial space, but it is unlike its contemporary political systems. This ‘puzzling . . . governance structure’<sup>48</sup> exhibits characteristics of a nation-state, a federation or confederacy, and a NATO-esque alliance, and yet is not entirely one nor the other. Even so, this as-yet uncategorised polity continually promotes a policy of collective identity among a population which – ethnically, culturally, and most notably – is undoubtedly more diverse than any nation-state in the contemporary world. A new model is required; one which justifies the label of *Imperium Europaeum*, and warrants a critical examination of cartography to seek out the tropes of *Tabula Imperium Europaeum*.

Philip Pomper is correct in asserting that ‘States fulfilling the formal definitions of empire are not to be found’.<sup>49</sup> Labelling the Union using one of these preceding models is both intellectually dishonest and methodologically unsound, as no serious map of the Union will attempt to portray the EU as such an antiquated hegemon. Instead of pursuing an aggressive imperial agenda, the Union shuts itself off from the chaotic outside by constructing an empire without imperialism, identifying desirable territories and assimilating them into a self-identified zone of civilisation protected from the barbarism beyond by the thick, impenetrable imperial frontier.

This characteristic of an isolated empire is critical. Indeed, integration and association with a collective identity – and not coerced subordination to a dominant populace – are among the fundamental tenets of EU

membership. The Union is not an empire of conquest; it is an empire of exclusion.<sup>50</sup> Acknowledging the strange nature of the Union, Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande term the EU a ‘Cosmopolitan Empire’, one with some links to historical understandings of imperial control yet possessing an unclear and rapidly evolving nature.<sup>51</sup> Beck and Grande’s effort to identify European Empire is admirable, yet the slippery conceptual nature of the idea and even the very word ‘empire’, prohibits a clear understanding.

Jan Zielonka offers a perceptive insight when, following from Jacques Delors,<sup>52</sup> he describes the Union as ‘an unidentified political object’;<sup>53</sup> a description which still holds true after three recent expansions and the current drive to absorb more states. It does not require too great a stretch of the imagination to model the EU as ‘an unidentified imperial object’, an entity which, through its opaque and frequently paradoxical characteristics (‘United in Diversity’), appears to defy classification. Yet despite the Union being visibly distinct from earlier models of empire or recent interpretations of the concept, a number of political analysts do detect empire in EU discourse, and it is to these models of *Imperium Europaeum*, and ultimately their manifestation in public cartography, that we now turn.

Empire is clearly a difficult concept, and it is therefore advantageous to examine the origins of so elusive a model and the very word used to describe it. As such, the writings of the Roman orator Cicero (106–43 BC) offer a much-needed critical insight into the nature of empire. The very word ‘empire’ is an etymological evolution of the Latin term *imperium*, a sophisticated word with no exact equivalent in English (or indeed, any modern language) but roughly translatable as ‘rule’, ‘sovereignty’, ‘power’, ‘government’, ‘command’, ‘mandate’, or ‘dignity’. This is obviously a complex term, and at first glance, this variation only intensifies the word’s vagueness. It is one problem to use a word whose meaning is contested, but it is quite a different problem to rely upon a millennia-old loan word from a dead language, the subtle complexities of which have not survived twenty centuries of linguistic evolution. Instead, these nuances have been condensed into an awkward word which is both overly narrow and overly vague – ‘empire’ – a word which woefully fails to capture the many meanings of *imperium*. Chiefly, Cicero’s distinction between *imperium* and *patrocinium* is necessary to our understanding; both are concepts of political control, but the former is a polity which pursues aggressive and expansionist ‘imperialism’ while the latter is an empire more concerned with maintaining internal cohesion through a paternalistic hierarchy of member-states, than with external expansion. It is this latter model of *patrocinium* – stressing citizenship and collective absorption into a hierarchical ecumene of ‘civilised’ states<sup>54</sup> – rather than the violent construction of a subordinate periphery slaved to a core, which shares the closest similarities to the current European Union.

Making a clear distinction between *patrocinium* and *imperium*, Cicero is justified in his assertion that ‘government [by *patrocinium*] could more

accurately be called a protectorate of the world rather than an empire';<sup>55</sup> a fair assessment of not only the Roman state but also its modern pan-European descendant. It is the concept of the 'soft-power' *patrocinium* against the 'hard-power' *imperium* which underlies this particular interpretation of empire, and which ultimately provides insight into the imperial nature of the Union's cartography.

The concept of the Union as a *patrocinium* rather than an *imperium* is far from mere abstract theorising. Not only are the two concepts mutually distinguishable, but both have distinct and separate implications for cartography. The EU repeatedly asserts its peaceful efforts in providing development and constructive assistance across its territorial realm, a modern *mission civilisatrice* spearheading the assimilation of those states willing to undergo enough internal reform to become indistinguishable – and inseparable – from the EU norm. This is an unequivocally 'imperial' strategy, one indicative of a spreading *patrocinium*, which is what Zaki Laïdi terms, albeit metaphorically, a normative empire.<sup>56</sup>

Conceptualising a European *patrocinium* is invaluable in beginning to understand the curious nature of the EU's enlargement process. As Merje Kuus identifies, the Union expands not simply due to the desires of the established (or Western) "core", but rather relies equally upon the willingness of candidate states to join.<sup>57</sup> At first glance, this poses problems for a concept of European Empire – it requires quite a stretch of the imagination to conceive that states would willingly prostrate themselves to an empire. This would be the case, were we to conceive of the EU as Cicero's *imperium*, a state reliant on the core's hard power to force a normative order upon its neighbours. This is what Ronnie Lipschutz discusses in his assessment of America's contemporary *Imperium*.<sup>58</sup> But in a system of *patrocinium*, actively seeking membership is entirely plausible. As an entity defined by a self-anointed status of "superiority", the *patrocinium* of Europe attracts prospective populations or governments desirous of attaining the respected status of an EU member state.<sup>59</sup> It is this paradox which ultimately makes the EU a *patrocinium* – it is an empire which appeals to a common identity, a shared perception of members of one culture, one continent, to be unified under one collective polity: yet at the same time, it is an empire whose exclusion of 'non-European Europe' encourages states to remake themselves in Europe's own image, in order to attain a 'fully' European status. This paradox is visible in a related organisation.<sup>60</sup>

A critical component in this rejection of overt *imperium* in favour of *patrocinium*, and the very labelling of Europe as empire, is the EU's awareness of its own as-yet unreached frontiers, which it gradually approaches by constructing a polity deemed desirable by as-yet unintegrated states. In his classic "*Decline and Fall*", Edward Gibbon (1737–1794) asserted that a critical factor in the collapse of Roman civilisation was that the Imperium 'confound[ed] the Roman monarchy with the globe of the earth',



overstretching the empire to the point of terminal instability.<sup>61</sup> The EU, though, appears to have heeded this lesson. The Union does not, unlike its Roman ancestor, entertain the ambition to become *Imperium Terrarum*. The Union has identified its ultimate, contiguous boundaries and expresses these in maps. Notwithstanding the cartographic Gordian Knot of establishing ‘the perpetually contested frontier between Europe and Asia’,<sup>62</sup> Europe, through a Manifest Destiny to unite the continent and occasional geopolitical opportunism, is consuming its way towards a future frontier which is fixed in space and expressible in maps.

A critical side effect of this spatial fixing is that those living beyond the border, and therefore not part of the desired collective ‘European’ identity, are excluded until and unless they refashion themselves in the Union’s own image. The map identifies ‘non-Europe’ and makes it clear to the map-reader that the savages beyond the border will never be incorporated as they are incapable of being ‘civilised’ in the EU’s own image; the defining trait separating the *Imperium* from the ‘barbaric’ zone surrounding it.

The Union is demonstrably not a single polity pursuing a single policy of violent expansion in the same way as its Victorian or *anciën regime* predecessors. But Pomper is right to stress the link between the EU and nineteenth-century empires.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, as Hartmut Behr argues, an understanding of *Imperium Europaeum* rests with nineteenth-century imperialism and the establishment of a Mackinderian core-periphery relationship both within and beyond the Union. This dichotomy, wherein a wealthy heartland subordinates an inferior periphery being constantly remoulded in the heartland’s image, is arguably applicable to the Union. It is difficult to deny, as William Walters stresses, that the newer ‘peripheral’ member-states of the Union are required to operate along visibly different guidelines than are the established and older members of the imperial ‘core’; an unequal relationship.<sup>64</sup> Critically, Behr’s model of an East-West imbalance – a conclusion shared by Böröcz – has features which are highly visible in cartography.<sup>65</sup>

Taking Zielonka’s medievalist model, Behr’s core-periphery formula and Böröcz’s concept of internal colonialism, it is possible to synthesise a model of the Union as a nascent empire as-yet devoid of a full sense of collective identity, a loose *patrocinium* in which local identities co-exist with a collective identity defined by inclusion within the most exclusive of geopolitical clubs. It is this very paradox which lies at the heart of empire; the existence not of a single national identity, but of dual identities of local and supra-national, in a clear hierarchy.

As such, the essential model of the European Empire is that proposed by Zielonka; a medievalist entity formed from multiple members; but a polity subject to the West’s ‘standards of civilisation’ as identified by Behr; and subsequently characterised by the ‘internal colonialism’ highlighted by Böröcz. The inevitable cartographic conclusion of this is the emergence of *Tabula*

*Imperium Europaeum*. We have seen how there is almost nothing to connect competing theories or examples of empire, barring the fact that we refer to diverse polities by applying this label. But by considering the works of Cicero, we see that there is one common thread which unites *imperii* – that regardless of their nomenclature, ambitions, aspirations of benevolence or oppression, or historical and geopolitical circumstances, the governments and inhabitants of *imperii* see themselves as superior to their apparently backward neighbours, who are in need of *patrocinial* guidance or *imperial* exploitation. How this imperial imagination is manifest in European cartography is the focus to which the study now turns.

### MAPPING *IMPERIUM EUROPAEUM*

Empires rely heavily on spectacle, and a cursory glance at historical maps of empire reflects the sort of pomp and pageantry on which empires rely, manifest in cartography. Long gone are those imperial maps decorated with patriotic symbols, national personifications, and excessive monarchical decoration continually associating territory, empire, and legitimacy in the mind of the reader.<sup>66</sup> But as the following analyses demonstrate, this blending of cartography and political symbolism remains visible in European maps even without the gaudy reifications typical of earlier imperial maps. Indeed, the Union's maps are so free of what Monmonier terms 'dysfunctional clutter',<sup>67</sup> that countries and borders take clear precedence. As such it is those maps which emphasise the Union's member states, the individualist category, which shall be examined first.

#### *In Varietate Concordia* – The Individualist Map and the Neo-Medieval Empire

The Union's famous motto is the paradoxical slogan 'United in Diversity', an expression of cohesion implying a collective identity which, while far from homogeneous, is bound by a shared contrast to the identity of those 'non-Europeans' living beyond the imperial frontier.<sup>68</sup> This issue of diversity within the European Union highlights a significant aspect of imperial mapping; that of depicting a homogeneous interior. As Monica Smith points out, 'States are not homogenous entities, and can be subdivided along . . . different planes'.<sup>69</sup> This is perhaps even truer in the context of empires, which by definition are more culturally heterogeneous than nation-states. But if this is so, how can this oxymoron of 'United in Diversity' be mapped?

The answer lies in what I shall term the *individualistic* style; a category of imperial map which simultaneously depicts internal components (e.g., provinces or member states) but balances this lack of internal cohesion by contrasting the empire against an exterior which, as the following maps



suggest, is largely undifferentiated. This is best illustrated by maps of a polity which Zielonka claims bears the closest similarity to the Union – the Holy Roman Empire (HRE).

One of the most visible aspects of the medieval imperial map is that of the loose frontier. In his medievalist model, Zielonka asserts that ‘sharp, impenetrable border lines’ are not manifest, and instead the empire is separated on two levels.<sup>70</sup> The core is separated from the peripheries, and the empire as a whole separated from the barbaric beyond, by the concept of the *limes* or *march*: those broad, vague regions where the empire’s influence gradually weakens, rather than coming to an abrupt (and unrealistic) halt at a neat line on the map. A second noticeable feature is that of mapping the empire’s component polities as being grouped together in common allegiance to a collective authority, even if said authority is admittedly weak outside of the central core. These twin aspects of the frontier and component mapping are visible in Figures 1 and 2, which support Zielonka’s model by demonstrating a cartographic connection between *Imperium Romanum Sacrum* and *Imperium Europaeum*.

The similarities between the two may not be particularly striking at first glance, but nevertheless they exist. Both maps juxtapose an imperial polity formed from multiple member states whose *individuality* is emphasised



**FIGURE 1** *Imperium Romanum Sacrum*, c. 1760. Retrieved from <http://www.almanachdeholyromanempire.org/>, accessed 23 April 2012 (color figure available online).



**FIGURE 2** *United in Diversity* – the individualistic style. Retrieved from [http://europa.eu/abc/maps/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/maps/index_en.htm), accessed 23 April 2012 (color figure available online).

through local place-names (rendered in the Latin alphabet) and different saturations of colour for the component provinces, while *unity* is expressed through contrast against the cartographically featureless, uninviting ‘bland-mass’ surrounding the empire. In this way, both the Holy Roman Empire and *Imperium Europaeum* are prominently displayed in a way that acknowledges the individuality of members but still categorises them as components of a larger supra-polity; maps which fully display polities which are united in their own diversity.

It is of course arguable that any political map has to follow this format, and that the link between a simple map and an insidious cartoimperialist project, is a stretch of the imagination. After all, a map of a nation-state must give less emphasis to areas beyond the state so that readers can identify the limits of the main polity in question; few would argue that a map showing the individual cantons of Switzerland, for example, is evidence of a Swiss Empire. But a crucial difference separates ‘neutral’ maps of nation-states<sup>71</sup> from maps of empire. Maps of empire – as illustrated by the above maps of

the Holy Roman Empire and the European Union – share a crucial similarity not simply in what they are mapping, but what the maps are intended to convey. Namely, territory and the associated identities linked to those territories, artificially linked together and defined by exclusion, projecting an imagination of a collective supra-identity in the face of cultural dissimilarity. The aforementioned map of the Swiss cantons would admittedly bear aesthetic similarities to the above imperial maps, but ultimately it would only be mapping the Swiss nation, a single identity. The above maps of *Imperium Europaeum* and *Imperium Romanum Sacrum* depict a dual identity on two levels. On the micro-level, the maps portray multiple separate ethnic identities co-existing within the empire; while on the meta-level, they demonstrate a collective imperial identity defined by contrast to the non-imperials outside.

It is noticeable how the cartoimperial effort to convey this imagined collective identity stops in what Zielonka astutely predicted – medieval *marches*. The Union's 'core', composed of an aesthetically stark hypsometric tint scheme of yellows and browns designed to invoke 'feelings of pleasure, happiness and comfort',<sup>72</sup> is contrasted against the stark, bland, uninviting 'non-Europe' beyond. But these are not the only two zones identifiable, and Zielonka's *limes* are visible on the frontiers of what vaguely counts, in the image projected by the EU map, as 'Europe'. Turkey, Macedonia and Croatia appear in a drab grey which simultaneously separates these countries from the imperial core but grudgingly acknowledges them as being hierarchically higher than the drab *Terrae Incognitae* surrounding the Union. They are the medieval *marches* identified by Zielonka – not quite the empire, not quite the barbarians, but a curious in-between category who are making sufficient progress on the road to attaining Europe's own vision of 'civilisation' to warrant depiction in some sort of colour, and thus presented to the map-reader as areas gradually 'civilising', moving from the barbarian realm towards membership in the Empire.

A curious potential interpretation of these maps is the possible revival of an idea seemingly long-since discarded in Western philosophy – the ideal of Europe as *Respublica Christiana*, or Europe as Christendom defined against the non-Christian 'barbarians' beyond.<sup>73</sup> At first glance this may perhaps appear true. Heffernan reminds us of the cartographic turning-point of the High Middle Ages in which the first maps of Europe alone were produced, sometimes insinuating (particularly on post-1453 maps) a Europe threatened by the encroaching Ottoman Turks and conveying a cartographic message that Europe must unite against this apparent threat to the *Respublica*.<sup>74</sup> A search for such themes of threat in today's EU maps, though, would be in vain. There is a strong resemblance between maps of the HRE and the EU in that both attempt to map a single identity formed from many, but little or no resemblance in the theme of uniting against a common threat.

But the unusual depiction of Turkey in the EU's maps begs a question. Is there a visible legacy continuing from maps of the HRE into maps of the

EU; a legacy of excluding the non-Christian East? This seems an attractive thesis, but the answer, quite simply, is no. The Holy Roman Empire defined itself rather paradoxically, not through the exclusion of non-imperial peoples but rather through opposition against an apparently unified, equally potent force – Ottomans, Protestants, or non-Germans. The EU, though, defines itself not through opposition but through exclusion of those deemed unworthy of accession into the Union. This is reflected in the maps – while Figure 1 portrays an HRE surrounded by perhaps equally powerful states, Figure 2 portrays a modern empire with no opponents to its expansion. Further, unlike the EU, the Holy Roman Empire did not entertain consistent aspirations of European universality.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, the very name reveals much – not *Holy European Empire*, but rather *Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation*.<sup>76</sup> It is arguable that EU maps portray, to paraphrase the imperial precedent, an *Empire of the European Nation*. There is, cartographically speaking, no HRE legacy in the EU's maps; both use cartoimperialism to advance identity construction, but the identities being constructed are polar opposites of universality and particularity.

Turkey, in the EU's maps, represents not a threat but at best a potential member of the *imperium* whose accession is cartographically begrudged by Europe, and at worst as a candidate whose apparent unworthiness and 'un-Europeaness' is heavily emphasised through hypnotic tropes of cartographic exclusion. This issue of portraying prospective members as existing in a cartographic limbo between the Empire and the Barbaric Beyond is not confined to individualistic cartography. As the next section demonstrates, the trope continues in the most potent category of European map – the universalistic.

### *E Pluribus Unum* – Collective Cartographies

Conveying an imagination of collective identity is one of the core tenets of cartoimperialism, and the pursuit of a 'European' identity can be powerfully conveyed by simple cartographic tropes. As Figure 3 demonstrates, the previously seen tropes of colour and excluding non-members continues in what I term the *universalistic* category. Rather than acknowledging the EU's diverse unity, this genre of cartography emphasises homogeneity in the style of what Thomas Macaulay termed 'assimilationist imperialism' – the absorption of new territories, cultures and identities into a single imagination of belonging to the single, historically rooted monoculture of the empire.<sup>77</sup>

More so than in their Individualist counterparts, maps of the Universalist category assert ethnic identities and territorial claims through their depiction of a homogeneous Union, with a clear distinction between the implied collective identity of 'European' and the separate identity beyond, a frontier emphasised again by colour and cartographic exclusion. As with the individualistic category, the recurring theme of prospective members portrayed in a





**FIGURE 3** *Europa Universalis* – the universalistic style. Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/sip/projects/centres/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/projects/centres/index_en.htm), accessed 23 April 2012 (color figure available online).

different colour continues. Here though, prospective members do not form a *march*. The imperial frontier is very clearly marked in colour; a bright, psychologically stimulating colour for the Union and a drab, unappealing hue for a non-Europe apparently too uninteresting and unworthy of mention to even warrant those place names visible in the individualistic map. Internal individuality is minimised, prospective members are again given a mere acknowledgement, and those areas which are neither part of the Union nor desired by it are pushed further into the cartographic background. The emphasis of this category of map is overwhelmingly a focus on territory, and the implied power of the polity governing it.

Smith highlights this common feature in imperial mapping of implying territorial control – the use of clear lines and careful colouring to ‘convey the impression of comprehensive political entities having firm boundaries and uniform territorial control’<sup>78</sup> – when in reality, imperial authorities are unable to assert their power evenly across the polity. This is undeniably true for

the European Union. In the absence of a strong central government administering the Union, a collective identity is promoted to encourage internal cohesion. Figure 3 is itself an example of what Smith terms the ‘absolutist variety’,<sup>79</sup> a category of map wherein such simple tropes as colour and lines present an incorrect display of political control over a territory. A conceptual comparison can be easily drawn between these style of EU maps and maps of now-defunct empires; claiming a territory on paper by simply drawing a line around it and shading it in one colour does not mean that the polity has any actual power in that area.

In her study of ancient imperial cartography, Smith raises the point that such universalistic or ‘absolutist’ mapping fails to portray the multiple stages of the empire’s growth, expansion, and consolidation of acquired territories. Indeed, as she argues, the use of such Universalist cartography implies that from its early stages, the empire was methodically pursuing ‘a kind of long-term manifest destiny’ to reach a pre-determined frontier.<sup>80</sup> As has been argued, empires must be aware of their geographical limitations, and thus the conscious demarcation of a final frontier arguably does occur in imperial mapping, but not consistently.

The Universalist category highlights two significant areas of European imperial mapping. First is that the category represents a transitional form whereby the geographic tool evolves into a political symbol. Second is the reinforced connection between polity and territory in the case of empires; polities continually seeking to absorb more territory and assimilate its newly acquired subjects into the collective imperial identity. It is to this genre of cartography, the ‘expansionistic’ category depicting a perpetually expanding empire, that we now turn.

### Manifest Destiny - Eastwards Expansion and Internal Colonialism

Niall Ferguson argues that ‘empires are not all bad’ and that certain territories may actively seek absorption into a neighbouring imperial polity.<sup>81</sup> In the context of the European Union this is arguably applicable, particularly to Eastern Europe. Following the short period between breaking free from *Imperium Sovieticum* and their subsequent assimilation into *Imperium Europaeum*, the states of Eastern Europe are a treasure-trove for the Union’s cartoimperial expansion.

Neither territorial space nor its subsequent ‘frontierization’, as Black asserts,<sup>82</sup> is fixed; they are capable of being – and are arguably required to be – fluid, particularly in the context of empires and even more so in the context of empires pursuing a conscious process of Manifest Destiny; a policy unmistakably visible in the Union’s drive to ‘Unite a Continent’: albeit reliant on the integrationist desires of eastern states. Empires, as Pomper argues,<sup>83</sup> evolve opportunistically, and chronological maps of Europe’s eastwards drive arguably reflect this. Unlike overstretched, disunited maritime hegemonies, the

European Empire has advanced its contiguous borders methodically, a deliberate policy of Manifest Destiny which Böröcz interprets as the indication of a European drive to incorporate Eastern Europe, but only as a distinct imperial periphery subordinate to the Western core.<sup>84</sup>

Despite this potential cartographic hazard resulting from the Union's sometimes-opportunistic expansion, it is arguably possible to detect in EU maps an expression of Manifest Destiny as the Union absorbs its eastern and southern neighbours on terms dictated, as Behr reminds us, by the Western core.<sup>85</sup>

But it is not only the models proposed by Behr and Böröcz which are visible in the expansionistic category. The structure posited by Zielonka can be seen, most notably the marches which Zielonka insists exist – partially integrated zones which overlap the Core and the 'imperializable peripheries' on the edge of *Imperium Europaeum*. As has previously been stressed, the three models of European empire investigated here are not mutually exclusive. As this issue of the core-periphery relationship and the medieval march demonstrate, a fusion of models can become visible in maps.

This category also reflects a common theme of imperial cartography, that of 'anticipating empire instead of simply reflecting the physical and geopolitical realities on the ground'.<sup>86</sup> Of course, a map cannot be a mirror of reality under the most ideal circumstances, but the expansionistic genre exacerbates this problem by representing a desired reality, a normative reflection rather than an attempt at a genuine depiction of the world. This is undeniably imperial. Where the nation-state maps itself as a static, homogeneous and clearly defined entity, an empire maps itself in a process of continual enlargement, laying claim to more territory than it actually controls. This is a cartographic pretension which is of course not unique to the European Union in a historical sense, but which nevertheless highlights the Union's imperial imagination when contrasted against its nation-state contemporaries.

In his eighteenth-century work on the Roman Imperium, Edward Gibbon declared that an empire can only survive as long as its borders are not over-extended. The issue of EU expansion is not only relevant to an understanding of the Union as empire, but also is visible in European cartography. Manifest Destiny is, arguably, a policy which the European Union actively pursues in its drive to 'Unite a Continent'<sup>87</sup> – or at least those parts of the landmass deemed desirable by the Union. This conscious policy of Manifest Destiny is visible in the Union's cartography as maps display areas which are not members of the polity but whose incorporation is actively sought. Maps of the Union produced prior to the various enlargements of 2004 and 2007 clearly displayed an expansionist drive, as Figure 4 demonstrates. This is, as Behr asserts, an imperial indication, a sign of a core continually pushing into the peripheries with no attempt to conceal its geopolitical imperial ambitions.<sup>88</sup> Not only does the EU follow a conscious scheme of cartographic Manifest Destiny: it plots on its maps those

areas which have not chosen to join the Union, but whose membership of the Union is desirable to both the EU and the applicant states. This is less of an ‘empire by invitation’ and more of an empire in the classic sense – not so much a *Patrocinium Europae* but more of an *Imperium Europaeum* consuming its way to the edges of the European landmass. This process of cartographic expansion is more clearly seen in maps which seek to portray chronological change in the limited frame of a single image. Figure 4 provides an example.

Here, a single hue is used not only to clearly define a collective Union against a drab, undifferentiated ‘Other’ beyond the frontier, but is also used to depict imperial expansion. In older member-states of the Union, a heavy saturation of colour is used to denote founding states while different hues are used to depict newcomers. It is curious to note that Turkey, which remains a non-member, is depicted in the same colour as states which have now



**FIGURE 4** Mapping Manifest Destiny – the expansionistic style. Retrieved from <http://www.delmkd.ec.europa.eu/en/europe-a-to-z/eu-symbols.htm>, accessed 23 April 2012 (color figure available online).



acceded to the Union; again, it is evident how desired states are identified and marked as such on the map as areas ripe for expansion, and remain so even if their accession to the *Imperium* is not as swift as anticipated. This closely reflects Behr's model of *Imperium*, in which a dominant core pushes outwards in its absorption of a surrounding and 'inferior' periphery, a fulfilment of Marx and Engel's interpretation of empires continually expanding in pursuit of 'an advance of the frontiers of civilisation'.<sup>89</sup> Of course, a core can be identified in other charts of the Union which map chronological expansion through different colours. Figure 5 demonstrates this, and also implies hegemony, by using a relief-map to depict the core as 'higher', more pronounced, than newcomers and non-Europeans:

In addition to the two significant tropes of hue and saturation depicting a homogeneous (yet hierarchical) polity contrasted against a monotone



**FIGURE 5** Mapping hierarchies. Retrieved from [http://www.ezilon.com/map\\_of\\_europe.htm](http://www.ezilon.com/map_of_europe.htm), accessed 23 April 2012 (color figure available online).

'outside', a third related trope can be identified in expansionistic maps. Prospective members are clearly identified on the map, and through the use of graded hues and varied saturations to depict chronological expansion, Manifest Destiny, is mapped. Here, only two types of states are coloured and thus contrasted against the non-EU landmass. First is the imperial entity itself, displaying a dominant core; second are newcomers, those recent members who in the Behr and Böröcz models are subject to a form of imperial patronisation by the core as they are made sufficiently 'civilised' to join their elders; third to be depicted are prospective members, those states whose absorption into the Union is actively sought, and thus are deemed sufficiently 'civilised' to warrant their own eye-catching colour, but which have not yet been judged by the EU to be sufficiently similar to the Union to be depicted in a similar colour. It is arguable that in this style of map, the Union is making a clear statement of the territories whose absorption into the nascent super-state is desirable, but reminds the viewer that these territories are somehow 'not like' the Union; at least not yet. While the Union may proclaim that it is united in diversity, such unity is only conferred on newcomers once they have been sufficiently 'EU-ropeanised' to fit the standards of those established Western members of the Union who form the aristocracy of *Imperium Europaeum*.

The individualistic, universalistic and expansionistic styles reveal imperial imaginations in the European Union's maps. Like the models of empire previously discussed, the map categories of *Imperium Europaeum* overlap, sharing similarities and expressing empire in a variety of ways. The most significant feature connecting all categories is that the EU's maps serve less as geographical tools and more as political icons, objects largely devoid of scientific cartographic elements and instead emphasising territorial reach and collectivity. Of course, it must be borne in mind that the EU is a multifarious agency. However, EU maps (with the exception of those on currency) fall under the aegis of a single authority: the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. As such, the Union's maps share a number of similarities and spread a similar proselytising cartoimperial message.

Ultimately, these separate categories of map merge, through what Pomper terms 'convergent evolution'.<sup>90</sup> The three strands of expansionistic, individualistic, and universalistic combine; and this is not without precedent in cartography. Lennox highlights how the British Empire's maps of Halifax evolved in stages, from reconnaissance maps of new and unexplored territories, into settler maps emphasizing the empire's ownership of the territory, and finally mass maps which 'rallied imperial support . . . and influenced the British vision of space'.<sup>91</sup> This progressive evolution is equally discernible in EU maps which have made an evolutionary leap from the nominally neutral, positivistic charts of the Early Modern Period<sup>92</sup> to the more overtly political maps of the Digital Age, becoming graphic icons in the process. It is to this final aspect that the paper turns.

## IMPERIAL ICONS

Clearly, the maps produced by the EU are not simple direction-finders. Instead, the maps which dominate the Union's cartography are closer to pictures and artistic representations than scientific charts. This phenomenon of maps as political icons is not new: John Pickles highlights the problem that while cartography and cartographic theory remain focused on approaching maps as images mirroring nature and reality, and the technical aspects of creating maps, relatively little attention is given to maps as icons of thought.<sup>93</sup>

Empires rely heavily on visual symbols, and the European Union is no exception. Indeed, the EU's own webpage offers a convenient guide to the symbols of the Union – its flag, anthem, and 'Europe Day' – heralding these three elements of political discourse as its primary symbols.<sup>94</sup> The map is not included as a symbol. However, as the above discussions of the identity-polity-territory praxis demonstrate: the EU map is more a political symbol – part of 'the governmentalisation of culture'<sup>95</sup> – than a geographic tool.

The existence of maps on such everyday items as currency and postage stamps are prime examples of cartography used to convey a sense of "bland nationalism"; 'the mundane promotion of national iconography and identity in the everyday landscape of ordinary citizens'.<sup>96</sup> This is most visibly manifest in two realms: philatelic cartography and monetary cartography. Maps feature prominently on the coins and banknotes manufactured by the European Central Bank. Just as maps on postage stamps can be used 'as a subtle form of propaganda'<sup>97</sup> by emphasising territorial claims, the maps featured on European money perform a similar role and since the inception of the Euro (€) in 1999, cartography has been a visibly dominant feature of the Union's coins and banknotes.

Pauliina Raento et al. highlight two significant justifications for the study of political iconography on currency. Crucially, money is one of the most suitable tools for conveying 'bland nationalism'; it is a medium in which the location of a map becomes as important as its content. By appearing on an everyday item, the map as political icon is visible to a potentially unlimited number of people for a potentially unlimited period of time. Second, currency is much more of a 'concrete link to the EU' because unlike the flag, anthem, passports, or the various other paraphernalia through which the Union manifests itself, currency is by far the most visible.<sup>98</sup>

The map of Europe featured on Euro coins is immediately recognisable and requires no esoteric knowledge on the part of the reader to understand what the image is. It is as universal an image of Europe as can be conceived. Prior to 1 May 2004, three categories of map appeared on the obverse faces of Euro coins. The ECB's website describes these categories as '[1] the European Union before its enlargement on 1 May 2004, [2] a geographical image of Europe, [3] Europe in relation to Africa and Asia'.<sup>99</sup> Figures 6, 7 and 8 demonstrate these three styles of map:



**FIGURE 6** Contrasting images: pre-2004 (left) and post-2007 (right) Euros; common face (€2 and €1 coins) (color figure available online).



**FIGURE 7** Pre-2004 (left) and post-2007 (right) Euros; common face (50c, 20c, and 10c coins) (color figure available online).



**FIGURE 8** Common face of 5c, 2c and 1c coins, post-2000. Figures 7, 8, and 9 retrieved from <http://www.ecb.int/euro/coins/common/html/index.en.html>, accessed 23 April 2012 (color figure available online).

Significantly, each of these styles corresponds closely to the three categories of imperial map. The €2 coin at the left of Figure 6 displays a clear universalistic style of map, a cartographic portrayal of a homogenous Europe defined by exclusion of the outside. Figure 7 displays an individualistic map, portraying a disjointed Union formed of multiple individual states. The third cartographic portrayal, Figure 8, is the only one which can be justifiably

termed a 'map' in the sense of a geographic tool rather than a political emblem. Yet even here, imperial overtones are present.

The universalistic and individualistic depictions seen here are political icons, displaying a Europe out of context to geographical location and with none of the technical characteristics of a map. The third style, though, incorporates such features as a graticule, an oblique azimuthal projection, and, crucially shows Europe as a physical landmass in relation to its continental neighbours Africa and Asia. Europe is of course at the centre of the projection, thus minimising the inherent distortion of cartographic projections<sup>100</sup> upon the European landmass. It is noteworthy, however, that the appearance of something resembling a geographic tool is confined to the lowest value coin, at a scale so small as to be barely recognisable.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Figures 6 and 7 is the abandonment of Individualist maps in favour of Universalist – and Absolutist – replacements. The maps portray not only a single, homogeneous Union but fuses space and place into one image. Three tropes stand out most visibly. First is the inclusion of the EU states Denmark and the United Kingdom – which do not use the Euro currency – alongside the members of the Eurozone, bypassing awkward questions from the map-reader as to why the Union as portrayed on the coins is not the same as the Union as portrayed in other media. Second is the inclusion of areas of Europe which are not part of the Union; Norway, the Balkans, and Eastern Europe up to the Moscow Meridian (again, Iceland and Turkey are curiously absent). Third is the absence of North Africa and the Near East, and fourth is the implied synergy between space (landmass) and place (the polity) through the depiction of the EU's twelve stars intersecting the continent. This change is even clearer in the 50c coins; the depiction of the Union's disjointed component states has been discarded in favour of a map of the European landmass as being *the* Europe – united in its own diversity.

Euro banknotes, as Figure 9 demonstrates, also share this feature. Juxtaposing the same absolutist map of Europe alongside the twelve gold stars of the EU flag and a variety of fictional bridges and gates intended to express 'the European spirit of openness and cooperation',<sup>101</sup> the maps on Euro banknotes similarly fuse territory and polity on an object which not only symbolises the Union and regularly passes through the hands of the majority of European citizens, but which reinforces even in the minds of non-EU recipients the notion that Europe as a space and Europe as a place are inextricably linked.

The maps on Euro currency are arguably the pinnacle of cartoimperialist evolution. They have long ceased to be simple geographical tools, and instead the common map depicting all of Europe regardless of countries' status in the Eurozone or the Union, has become the defining marker of what 'Europe' is and what it means to be 'European'. The 'European Identity' is inclusion within the collective populace of a polity pursuing Manifest Destiny





**FIGURE 9** Reverse face of Euro banknote (all notes). Retrieved from <http://www.ecb.int/euro/banknotes/html/index.en.html>, accessed 23 April 2012 (color figure available online).

as it seeks to expand into all areas of the European landmass – and expresses this desire through cartography. In these maps, the polity of Europe and the landmass of Europe become inextricably linked, reinforcing in the viewer's mind that the EU is Europe and that Europe is the EU. Ultimately, maps of the Union depict not the physical toposphere of Earth nor even the anthroposphere; the realm of human activities overlapping the planetary crust. Instead they map the noösphere – the realm of the human mind as conveyed in territorial terms.<sup>102</sup> The link between territory and polity could not be more explicitly expressed than here, through the EU's own cartographic icons.

## CONCLUSIONS

In his discussion of the British Empire's selective mapping of Halifax, Canada, in the eighteenth century, Jeffers Lennox reminds us of the reasons for being wary of maps. Maps are endowed by their readers with a sense of authority; they purport to reflect the 'real world' through falsifiable, scientific means, and thus they are elevated to the status of entirely accurate tools whose authority is not to be questioned.<sup>103</sup> But it is precisely this authority which renders maps so vulnerable to manipulation by political entities seeking, for their own ends, to promote a sense of collectivity amongst their diverse populations; a map can be transformed from a geographic tool to a political symbol with remarkable ease, and be used to promote a specific agenda while retaining, in the reader's mind, its unquestionable authority. Maps tell us what the world beyond our own limited field of vision is supposed to look like, but as has been demonstrated, maps represent rather than reflect the world.

Today, in the EU's cartographic bombardment of its citizens, subtle cartographic tropes remind viewers that they are members of an exclusionary *Patrocinium* – one where broad local diversities comfortably co-exist with a continent-spanning unity, all contained within and defined by the final frontier of *Imperium Europaeum*. By depicting 'non-Europe' as a drab, homogeneous *Terra Incognita* bereft of features, place names, or even existence, a clear distinction is made between those belonging to the zone of 'civilisation' and those languishing in the surrounding barbarian realm deemed unattractive to the self-congratulatory, self-styled 'civilisation' that is *Imperium Europaeum*.

With EU maps, the goal is not only to map how the world should be, but to map it in a cartoimperialist manner – the reinforcement of collective, territorially bound identity as manifest in the universalistic style: 'The peripheries disappear, the formally marginalized become active participants in the system, and even peoples that actively resisted imperial domination evolved toward . . . the imperial powers'.<sup>104</sup> To reach this goal, *Imperium Europaeum* utilises a framework of different mapping styles. Maps of the expansionistic Union identify desirable territories, the individualistic Union imbues newcomers with an 'imperial probation' as associates of the established core, and finally the universalistic Union incorporates matured members into a collective *patrocinium*. What is remarkable is that these stages occur simultaneously. By identifying desirable states which are not members of the Union, the *Imperium* immediately endows them with a sense of belonging, a cartographic prestige of being future members of a self-proclaimed civilised polity conducting a conscious drive to incorporate Europe – but only the 'Europe' as defined by the EU – into a single polity in which collective and local identities coexist. The end result is essentially indistinguishable from earlier imperial mapping in that they 'anticipate expansion by creating an empire on paper that inspired an empire on the ground'.<sup>105</sup>

What we are currently witnessing in the EU's continuing pursuit of expansion and consolidation is the construction of European Empire via a collective continental consciousness of 'civilised' and 'Other'; an imperial identity defining what it is to be European, constantly reified through a media bombardment of unchallenged maps. Ultimately, the cartoimperial constructs used by the EU's institutions are not maps of the European Union. They are *Tabula Imperii Europae*, and their existence and continued evolution is a field of study vital to our understanding of what the European Union is and what it aspires to become.

## NOTES

1. "Mapping the European Empire", or alternatively "Maps of the European Empire".
2. V. Bornschier, 'European Processes and the State of the European Union', paper presented at *European Processes, Boundaries and Institutions*, Third European Sociological Association

*Conference on Twentieth Century Europe: Inclusions/Exclusions*, University of Essex, 1997, p. 1.

3. A. Henrikson, 'The Power and Politics of Maps', in G. Demko and W. Wood, *Reordering the World: Geopolitical Perspectives on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1994) p. 50.

4. Ibid.

5. J. Black, *Maps and History: Constructing Images of the Past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1997) p. 146.

6. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso 1991).

7. D. Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq* (Malden, MA: Blackwell 2004) p. 52.

8. M. Peterson, *Maps and the Internet* (Oxford: Elsevier 2005) p. 35.

9. J. Matthews and D. Herbert, *Geography: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008) p. 13.

10. Black (note 5) p. 144.

11. E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: Volume the First* (London: Penguin 1994) pp. 30–31.

12. M. Monmonier, 'How to Lie with Maps' (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1996) p. 88.

13. N. Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2003) pp. xx–xxi.

14. J. Lennox, 'An Empire on Paper: The Founding of Halifax and Conceptions of Imperial Space, 1744–55', *The Canadian Historical Review* 88/3 (2007) pp. 373–412.

15. Black (note 5) p. 19.

16. D. Wood, *The Power of Maps* (London: Routledge 1993) pp. 17–22.

17. R. Dostal, *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002).

18. T. Barnes and J. Duncan, *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape* (London and New York: Routledge 1992) p. 5.

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20. P. Pomper, 'The History and Theory of Empires', *History and Theory* 44/1 (2005) pp. 1–27.

21. A. Pagden, 'Imperialism, Liberalism and the Quest for Perpetual Peace', *Daedalus* 134/2 (2005) pp. 46–58.

22. E. Voegelin, 'World-Empire and the Unity of Mankind', *International Affairs* 38/2 (1962) pp. 170–188.

23. H. Behr, 'The European Union in the Legacies of Imperial Rule? EU Accession Politics viewed from a Historical Comparative Perspective', *European Journal of International Relations* 13/2 (2007) pp. 239–262.

24. S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York and London: Free Press 1996) pp. 130–131.

25. S. Dalby, 'Regions, Strategies and Empire in the Global War on Terror', *Geopolitics* 12/3 (2007) pp. 586–606.

26. M. Monmonier, *Drawing the Line: Tales of Maps and Cartocontroversy* (New York: Henry Holt 1995).

27. A. MacEachren, *How Maps Work: Representation, Visualisation, and Design* (New York: Guilford 1995) pp. 212–214.

28. Dostal (note 17) pp. 80–81.

29. M. Gibbons, 'Hermeneutics, Political Inquiry, and Practical Reason: An Evolving Challenge to Political Science', *American Political Science Review* 100/4 (2006) pp. 563–571.

30. Wood (note 16) p. 28.

31. Pagden (note 21) p. 2.

32. J. Harley, *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press 2001) pp. 33–41, 110–115.



33. J. Böröcz, 'Empire and Coloniality in the "Eastern Enlargement" of the European Union', in J. Böröcz and M. Kovács (eds.), *Empire's New Clothes: Unveiling EU Enlargement* (Shropshire, UK: Central Europe Review 2001) pp. 1–305, available at <<http://aei.pitt.edu/144/01/Empire.pdf>>.
34. Pagden (note 21).
35. G. Robertson, 'Political Geography and the Empire', *The Geographical Journal* 16/4 (1910) pp. 447–457.
36. Pagden (note 21) p. 5.
37. J. Zielonka, *Europe as Empire: The Nature of the Enlarged European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006) p. 471.
38. Behr (note 23) p. 240.
39. M. Cox, 'The Empire's Back in Town: Or America's Imperial Temptation – Again', *Millennium* 32/1 (2003) pp. 1–28.
40. T. Barkawi and M. Laffey, 'Retrieving the Imperial: Empire and International Relations', *Millennium* 31/1 (2002) pp. 109–128.
41. R. Drayton, *Why Do Empires Rise?* In H. Swain (ed.), *Big Questions in History* (London: Vintage 2005) pp. 59–60.
42. M. Ignatieff, *Empire Lite: Nation-Building in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan* (London: Vintage 2003) pp. 110–113.
43. S. Dalby, 'Warrior Geopolitics: Gladiator, Black Hawk Down and The Kingdom of Heaven', *Political Geography* 27/4 (2008) pp. 439–455.
44. M. Hardt and A. Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press 2001) p. xiv.
45. N. Parker, 'Empire as a Geopolitical Figure', *Geopolitics* 15/1 (2005) pp. 109–132.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
47. A. Iriye, 'Beyond Imperialism: The New Internationalism', *Daedalus* 134/2 (2005) pp. 108–116.
48. Bornschiefer (note 2) p. 1.
49. Pomper (note 20) p. 6.
50. Iohannis Stivhachtis draws attention to exclusion from the Union itself but, as exemplified by the case of Turkey, exclusion on the part of applicant or semi-applicant states who refuse to modify all existing structures to match those demanded by the Union. The conditionality of membership is itself a tool of exclusion – as not all states on the European continent wish to subordinate themselves to the European polity. I. Stivhachtis, *The European Union's Mediterranean Enlargement* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang 2002).
51. U. Beck and E. Grande, *Cosmopolitan Europe* (London: Polity 2007) p. 50.
52. H. Drake, *Jacques Delors: A Political Biography* (New York: Routledge 2000).
53. Zielonka (note 37) p. 4.
54. Voegelin (note 22) p. 183.
55. C. E. W. Steel, *Cicero, Rhetoric and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2001) p. 193.
56. Z. Laïdi, *EU Foreign Policy in a Globalized World: Normative Power and Social Preferences* (London: Routledge 2008) pp. 106–107.
57. M. Kuus, *Geopolitics Reframed: Security and Identity in Europe's Eastern Enlargement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2007).
58. R. Lipschutz, *The Constitution of Imperium* (New York: Paradigm 2008).
59. Kuus (note 57) pp. 1–7.
60. When discussing *imperium* and *patrocinium* in the context of the EU, it is necessary to consider the role of NATO: the Union's distantly-related military cousin. Michael Williams's discussion of the chronologically close expansion of NATO following EU expansion sheds light on this. It is true that NATO co-exists alongside the EU, even overlapping in most areas, and that the expansion of one inevitably leads to the expansion of the other. But the form of their relationship, while still arguably imperial in the symbiotic presence of NATO's *imperium* alongside the EU's *patrocinium*, is unique. M. Williams, *Culture and Security: Symbolic Power and the Politics of International Security* (London and New York: Routledge 2007).
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62. Black (note 5) pp. 131–132.
63. Pomper (note 20) p. 15.
64. W. Walters, 'Mapping Schengenland: Denaturalizing the Border', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 20/4 (2002) pp. 561–580.
65. Behr (note 23).

66. A. Goldlewska, and N. Smith, *Geography and Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell 1994); D. Buisseret, *Monarchs, Ministers and Maps: The Emergence of Cartography as a Tool of Government in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); C. Jacob, *The Sovereign Map: Theoretical Approaches in Cartography through History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2006).

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68. W. Walters, 'Mapping Schengenland: Denaturalizing the Border', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 20/4 (2002) pp. 561–580.

69. M. Smith, 'Networks, Territories, and the Cartography of Ancient States', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95/4 (2005) pp. 832–849.

70. Zielonka (note 37) p. 18.

71. On the point of neutrality, Rob Kitchin and Martin Dodge underline how 'maps have long been seen as objective, neutral products of science'. As national cartographies emerged in the heyday of apparently "neutral" mappings in the Modern period, "neutral" maps of nation-states are here contrasted against explicitly biased maps of empires. R. Kitchin and M. Dodge, 'Rethinking Maps', *Progress in Human Geography* 31/3 (2007) pp. 331–344.

72. M. Monmonier and G. Schnell, *Map Appreciation* (London: Prentice-Hall 1988) p. 529.

73. M. Heffernan, *The Meaning of Europe: Geography and Geopolitics* (London: Arnold 1998) pp. 9–12.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

75. The relationship between the Holy Roman Empire and universal monarchy was never consistent, instead varying by the political, economic, diplomatic, and dynastic contexts and concerns of individual Emperors. By the time of the Thirty Years' War, these vague and inconsistent ambitions of European universality had been largely abandoned. P. Wilson *The Holy Roman Empire 1495–1806* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press 1999); P. Wilson *Europe's Tragedy: A New History of the Thirty Years' War* (London: Penguin 2010).

76. From 1512 onwards the official title of the HRE was rendered in both the singular (*Heiliges Römisches Reich deutscher Nation*) and plural (*Heiliges Römisches Reich deutscher Nationen*). To avoid confusion here, the name is rendered in English or Latin (*Imperium Romanum Sacrum* being the official title of the HRE from 1157 onwards. Wilson (1999, note 75).

77. K. Pomeranz, 'Empire and 'Civilizing' Missions, Past and Present', *Daedalus* 134/2 (2005) pp. 34–46.

78. M. Smith (note 69) p. 832.

79. *Ibid.*

80. *Ibid.*

81. N. Ferguson, 'The Unconscious Colossus: Limits of (& Alternatives to) American Empire', *Daedalus* 134/2 (2005) pp. 1–14.

82. Black (note 5) p. 122.

83. Pomper (note 20) p. 2.

84. Böröcz (note 33) pp. 27–35.

85. Behr (note 23) pp. 251–253.

86. Lennox (note 14) p. 412.

87. <[http://europa.eu/abc/12lessons/lesson\\_3/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/12lessons/lesson_3/index_en.htm)>, accessed 23 April 2012.

88. Behr (note 23) p. 253.

89. T. Bottomore, *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell 1991) p. 147.

90. Pomper (note 20) p. 13.

91. M. Smith (note 69) p. 412.

92. Black (note 5) pp. 6–9.

93. Barnes and Duncan (note 18) p. 193.

94. <[http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/index_en.htm)>, accessed 23 April 2012.

95. C. Barnett, 'Culture, Policy and Subsidiarity in the European Union: From Symbolic Identity to the Governmentalisation of Culture', *Political Geography* 20/4 (2001) pp. 405–426.

96. P. Raento, A. Hämäläinen, H. Ikonen, and N. Mikkonen, 'Striking Stories: A Political Geography of Euro Coinage', *Political Geography* 23/6 (2004) pp. 929–956.

97. B. Davis, 'Maps on Postage Stamps as Propaganda', *The Cartographic Journal* 22/1 (1985) pp. 125–130.

98. Raento (note 96) p. 932.

99. <<http://www.ecb.int/euro/coins/common/html/index.en.html>>, accessed 23 April 2012.
100. Monmonier, 'How to Lie' (note 12) pp. 8–18.
101. <<http://www.ecb.eu/euro/banknotes/html/index.en.html>>, accessed 23 April 2012 [section entitled 'Design Elements'].
102. "Here are dragons".
103. Matthews and Herbert (note 9) p. 25.
104. Lennox (note 14) p. 375.
105. Pomper (note 20) p. 13.
106. M. Smith (note 69) p. 412.