Rather than a natural frontier between natural enemies, this book approaches the English Channel as a shared space, which mediated the multiple relations between France and England in the long eighteenth century, in both a metaphorical and a material sense. Arguing against the view that Britain’s insularity kept it spatially and intellectually segregated from the Continent, Renaud Morieux focuses on the Channel as a zone of contact. The ‘narrow sea’ was a shifting frontier between states and a space of exchange between populations. This richly textured history shows how the maritime border was imagined by cartographers and legal theorists, delimited by state administrators and transgressed by migrants. It also approaches French and English fishermen, smugglers and merchants as transnational actors, whose everyday practices were entangled. The variation of scales of analysis enriches theoretical and empirical understandings of Anglo-French relations, and reassesses the question of Britain’s deep historical connections with Europe.

RENAUD MORIEUX is a lecturer in British History at the University of Cambridge.
Cambridge Social and Cultural Histories

Series editors
Margot C. Finn, University College London
Colin Jones, Queen Mary, University of London
Robert G. Moeller, University of California, Irvine

Cambridge Social and Cultural Histories publishes works of original scholarship that lie at the interface between cultural and social history. Titles in the series both articulate a clear methodological and theoretical orientation and demonstrate clearly the significance of that orientation for interpreting relevant historical sources. The series seeks to address historical questions, issues or phenomena which – although they may be located in a specific nation, state or polity – are framed so as to be relevant and methodologically innovative to specialists of other fields of historical analysis.

A list of titles in the series can be found at:
www.cambridge.org/socialculturalhistories
The Channel

England, France and the Construction of a Maritime Border in the Eighteenth Century

Renaud Morieux

Faculty of History, University of Cambridge and Fellow of Jesus College
Contents

List of figures i
List of tables iii
Acknowledgements iv
List of abbreviations vii

Introduction 1

Part I The border invented 29
1 The impossibility of an island: before the Channel was a sea 31
2 When the sea had no name 60

Part II The border imposed 107
3 Defending the military frontier 109
4 Who owns the Channel? The overlap of legal rights 150
5 The fight for natural resources 184

Part III Transgressing the border 209
6 The fisherman: ‘friend of all nations’? 211
7 The game of identities: fraud and smuggling 248
8 Crossing the Channel 283

Conclusion 325

Bibliography 343
Index 396
Figures


1.2 Britannia reprimanding a naughty boy (3 May 1803). Source: Bodleian Library (University of Oxford), John Johnson Collection: French Wars and Revolutions, folder 5 (D b7). 58

2.1 Guillaume Postel, La vraie et entière description du royaume de France et ses confins ... (1570). Source: Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Paris), Cartes et Plans, Res. Ge D 7668. 68

2.2 John Speed, ‘Gallia’, A Prospect of the Most Famous Parts of the World. Source: (London: William Humble, 1646), University Library (Cambridge), Map Department, Atlas.7.64.3. 69


2.4a and 2.4b H. Jaillot, Le royaume de France (1690). Source: Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Paris), Cartes et Plans, Ge DD 2987 (699) B. 74

2.5 Robert Morden, A New Map of England Containing the Adjacent Parts of Scotland, Ireland, France, Flanders and Holland (1673). Source: University Library (Cambridge), Map Department, Atlas.3.68.4 (plate 2). 75
List of figures


2.8 Plan of the triangles whereby the distance between the royal observatories of Greenwich and Paris has been determined. Source: William Roy and Isaac Darby, ‘An account of the trigonometrical operation, whereby the distance between the meridians of the royal observatories of Greenwich and Paris has been determined. By major-general William Roy’, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, LXXX (1790), pl. IX.

2.9 *Le Petit Flambeau de la Mer, ou le véritable guide des pilotes côtiers*. Source: (Havre de Grâce: G. Gruchet, 1731), p. 47, University Library (Cambridge), Map Department, Atlas 7.78.4.

2.10 A chart of the chops of the Channel. Source: *The Channel Pilot, Comprehending the Harbours, Bays, and Roads in the British Channel: With the English and French Coasts* (London: Robert Laurie and James Whittle, 1795), University Library (Cambridge), Atlas.2.79.19.

7.1 Roger Book’em, *Custom House Dover*. Source: *Paris and Dover; or, to and fro; a Picturesque Excursion being a Bird’s-eye Notion for a few ‘Men and Things’* (London: Published by H. Fores, 1821), n.p.

8.1 Haut-relief at Mary Minet District Nurses’ Home, 10 Halsmere Road, London. Source: Photograph by Jon Newman.

Source: Photograph by Jon Newman.
List of figures

Graphs

2.1 Typology of place names in French maps depicting the Channel. 64
8.1 Traveller flows during the Peace of Amiens. 313

Chart

6.1 Cross-Channel negotiation during the War of American Independence. 224
Tables

2.1 Maps depicting the Channel (1540–1599) page 66
2.2 Place names on English maps 1600–1750 78
4.1 Prizes in Anglo-French treaties 160
4.2 Variations in customs boundaries in English law 168
4.3 French smugglers seized by British customs in 1713 Source: TNA T1/164, Treasury Papers, September 1713. 171
4.4 French smugglers seized by British Customs in 1729 Source: Musée de la Douane (Bordeaux), Leducq Collection, D 29, LED322. XIIIB114 [7 July 1729–28 January 1730]. 173
5.1 Locations of fishing incidents according to the French 197
5.2 Locations of fishing incidents according to the English 200
6.1 The fishermen’s reversible arguments 242
8.1 Distribution of passengers by state of origin 315
8.2 Passenger professions by state of origin 316
ix
Acknowledgements

This book is a markedly revised version of a book first published in French in 2008 (Une mer pour deux royaumes: La Manche, frontière franco-anglaise XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2008). I have tried to hold the comparison more systematically, and to engage equally with French and British historiographical debates.

Ian Barnett provided invaluable service by providing an English translation of Chapters 1–5, 7 and 8, which forms the basis of my text. I want to thank Colin Jones, the editor, with Margot Finn and Robert G. Moeller, of the ‘Social and Cultural History’ series at Cambridge University Press, who has ceaselessly supported this project. I am also grateful to Elizabeth Friend-Smith and Rebecca Taylor, my editors at Cambridge University Press.

Research is a collective activity. The list of friends and colleagues to whom I am indebted has grown over the years, and I don’t have space here to thank them all. First of all, I owe a lot to Jean-Pierre Jessenne, who supervised the doctoral thesis from which this book originates. He always encouraged me, with enthusiasm and rigour, to take a large view rather than to be limited by narrow horizons. This research also reflects a personal and professional journey which has straddled the Channel from the outset, starting in Paris, through Rouen, London and Lille, to Cambridge. I was lucky to have many encounters that have deeply influenced my approach. Julian Hoppit supervised the first year of my doctoral research at UCL, and my weekly exchanges with him gave me a taste for British history. Alain Cabantous has constantly shared with me, with generosity, his knowledge and passion for the social history of maritime communities. I would also like to thank the examiners of the French thesis, Alain Cabantous, the late Gérard Gayot, Joanna Innes, Daniel Nordman and François-Joseph Ruggiu, for their many suggestions and support.

Several people have agreed to read the English manuscript, and their critical remarks have certainly improved my text – even though, according to the usual expression, it remains my sole responsibility. Gareth Atkins, Colin Jones and Peter Garnsey have read the whole manuscript, and I am...
Acknowledgements

I am immensely grateful to them; thank you also to Alison Bashford, Duncan Bell, James Davey, Catherine Delano-Smith, Quentin Deluermoz, Francis Herbert, Sam James, Julian Hoppi, Lawrence Klein, Sujit Sivasundaram and Jean-Paul Zúñiga, who have given their feedback on substantial parts of the text. I also want to thank those, and the list is far from exhaustive, with whom I have engaged into a friendly and stimulating conversation over the years, on both parts of the Channel and across the Atlantic: Hélène Blais, David Bell, Stephen Conway, Catherine Denys, Aaron Freundschaft, Grégoire Holtz, Isabelle Laboulais, Michael Ledger-Lomas, Valentine Leys, Antoine Lilti, Peter Mandler, Guillaume Mazeau, Philippe Minard, Isaac Nakhimovsky, Mark Philp, Denis Retaille, Nick Rogers, Emma Rothschild, Peter Sahlins, Jason Scott-Warren, David Todd and Stéphane Van Damme. At Jesus College, I am fortunate enough to work in a congenial and exciting intellectual environment, and I would like to thank my colleagues Christopher Burlinson, James Clackson, Michael Edwards, Rebecca Flemming, Duncan Kelly, Mary Laven, Véronique Mottier, the late Michael O’Brien, and Frances Willmoth for many stimulating discussions. I would also like to thank my research assistant, Sara Caputo, and the staff of the Map Room of the Cambridge University Library, who have been immensely helpful.

Several institutions have supported this research: the British Council, which awarded me a Chevening Scholarship; the Centre for History and Economics (Cambridge and Harvard); the CNRS; the Faculty of History (Cambridge); the GRHIS (University of Rouen); the Institut de Recherches Historiques du Septentrion (University of Lille); and the National Maritime Museum (Greenwich).

Chapter 6 is a revised version of an article first published in Past & Present (‘Diplomacy from below and belonging: Fishermen and cross-Channel relations in the eighteenth century’, 202 (2009), pp. 83–125), and I am grateful to the editors of this journal for authorising me to reproduce it. Parts of Chapter 8 have previously appeared in Mark Philp (ed.), Resisting Napoleon: The British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797–1815 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006) (“An inundation from our shores”: Travelling across the Channel around the Peace of Amiens’, pp. 217–40).

I would like to thank my family for giving meaning to everything I do, and for constantly reminding me that there is much more to life than books. Thank you to Philippine and Oscar who brighten my existence. This book is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Jean-Pierre and Katia.
Abbreviations

Archives and libraries

ADC  Archives départementales du Calvados, Caen
ADIV  Archives départementales d’Ille-et-Vilaine, Rennes
ADN  Archives départementales du Nord, Lille
ADPDC  Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, Arras
ADS  Archives départementales de la Somme, Amiens
ADSM  Archives départementales de la Seine-Maritime, Rouen
AMAE  Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Paris
AN  Archives Nationales, Paris
BNF  Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Tolbiac
BNFCP  Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Cartes & Plans
BNFR  Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Richelieu
BOP  Bibliothèque de l’Observatoire, Paris
BL  British Library, London
NLS  National Library of Scotland, Edinburg
SHD  Service Historique de la Défense, Vincennes
TNA  The National Archives, Kew

Printed sources

AP  Archives Parlementaires de 1787 à 1860, recueil complet des débats législatifs et politiques des Chambres françaises, imprimé par ordre du Corps législatif sous la direction de MM. J. Mavidal et E. Laurent, première série (1789–1800)
GN  Gazette nationale ou le Moniteur Universel
HCJ  Journals of the House of Commons (1803 reed.)
LDRF  Lois et règlements [sic] des douanes françaises, Paris, Pélicier, 1818
MARS  Mémoires de l’Académie royale des Sciences

xii
List of abbreviations

PT Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London (1683–1775)

Periodicals

AAAG Annals of the Association of American Geographers
ABPO Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l’Ouest
ADH Annales de démographie historique
AES Archives Européennes de Sociologie
AESC Annales. Économie, sociétés, civilisations
AHR American Historical Review
AHS Annales Histoire Sociétés
AHSS Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales
AJIL American Journal of International Law
AN Annales de Normandie
ARSS Actes de la Recherche en Sciences sociales
BCFC Bulletin du Comité français de cartographie
BHR Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance
BIHR Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research
BJHS The British Journal for the History of Science
BuHR Business History Review
CHR Canadian Historical Review
CLD Cahiers Léopold Delisle
DH Diplomatic History
EcHR Economic History Review
EG Espace géographique (L’)
EHQ European History Quarterly
EHR English Historical Review
EJS European Journal of Sociology
ESJ Earth Science Journal
FH French History
GJ Geographical Journal
GR Geographical Review
HEI History of European Ideas
HJ Historical Journal
HPE History of Political Economy
HR Historical Research
HS History of Science
H&T History and Technology
xv List of abbreviations

HWJ History Workshop Journal
IJMH International Journal of Maritime History
IM Imago Mundi
IH Information Historique (L’)
IHR International History Review
IMR International Migration Review
JAH The Journal of American History
JBS Journal of British Studies
JGH Journal of Global History
JHI Journal of the History of Ideas
JHS Journal of Historical Sociology
JICH Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History
JIH Journal of Interdisciplinary History
JLH Journal of Legal History
JMH Journal of Modern History
JSAHR Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research
JWH Journal of World History
MH Maritime History
MHR Mediterranean Historical Review
MIH Modern Intellectual History
N&N Nations and Nationalism
P&P Past and Present
RDM Revue du département de la Manche
RH Revue Historique
RHD Revue d’histoire diplomatique
RHDFE Revue Historique de Droit Français et Etranger
RHM Revue d’Histoire Moderne
RHMC Revue d’Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine
RN Revue du Nord
RS Revue de Synthèse
SH Social History
SoH Southern History
TH Textile History
TRHS Transactions of the Royal Historical Society
WMQ William & Mary Quarterly

Measures

1 land lieue (of Paris) (1674–1793) = 2,422 land miles.
1 nautical league = 3 nautical miles.