

## A LETTER FROM EULER

P.P. <sup>1</sup>

Since Your Excellency had the grace to assign me work in geography and in particular the task of fabricating a general map of Russia, and as my duty requires, after I have familiarized myself with the present supply of particular maps, I respectfully present to Your Excellency my opinion and recommendation as to how this work could be most justifiably carried out. From the map of the borders of the Russian empire with the countries it touches which I prepared as well as I could by the order of Your Excellency, I have sufficiently seen that not only would it be very difficult and require a very long time to produce a general map directly from the available special maps, but such work would also be entirely impossible, in part due to the large number of special maps, and in part because they do not exactly fit together, and with great diligence would they have to be compared among themselves. Here I am speaking, of course, of a perfect and accurate general map, one that agrees with the true position of the countries and streams in the most accurate manner; for if one were not concerned with the length and breadth of places, the manufacture of such a map would not only be easy, but also, in my opinion, superfluous, for such things have occasionally already been produced. In spite of this, I consider the current supply of special maps together with the astronomical observations occasionally made in the empire sufficient to produce a good and accurate general map, if this work were to be tackled in the following manner.

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<sup>1</sup>Translator's Note: *Praemissis praemittendis*.

Most of the available maps and especially those which can be most trusted no longer include the very small districts or *Uyezdi*, which are subdivisions of the provinces. Therefore, in my opinion, one would best attain the ultimate objective, if one should produce particular maps of every province out of these rather special maps; for in this way it would be easy to obtain good and accurate maps of all the provinces and be able to use them more widely and more conveniently by reducing the number of maps and by piecing together the special maps. From the particular maps of the provinces, further specific maps of every governorate could be assembled before one actually proceeds to a general map. Once there are good and accurate maps of every governorate, which come out to be about fifteen in number, the desired general maps can be achieved most perfectly with quite little effort, something that cannot possibly happen immediately from the special maps. So through this work one would with some effort likewise obtain, apart from the general map of all of Russia, special maps of every governorate, and moreover still, particular maps of all the provinces, and in the process the accuracy of all these maps can be assured, whereby the geography of the whole Russian empire would be placed in the greatest perfection. Moreover, in this way, one would be capable of frequently issuing a map from our work, which would be impossible if we were to start with the general map. Thus I must submit this recommendatation, in accordance with my duty, Your Excellency, for your careful consideration, with a humble request to make a propitious resolution upon it. With this I respectfully take my leave of Your Excellency's grace and protection and remain with the most due obedience and deepest respect

Your Excellency

the 10th of December, 1735

Your Most Obedient Servant

Leonhard Euler.