



A CRITICAL COMPANION TO ENGLISH MAPPÆ MUNDI OF THE TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES

Edited by Dan Terkla and Nick Millea

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DAN TERKLA FROM Illinois Wesleyan University and Nick Millea of the Bodleian Library have brought us *A Critical Companion to English Mappae Mundi of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, a compendium of essays on mappae mundi from this prolific period of Anglo-French cartography. The term *mappa mundi* (plural, *mappae mundi*) refers broadly to any medieval European world map, and in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries these maps were at their peak of production and design. Over the course of thirteen chapters, this collection's ten contributors strive to provide new contexts for, and examinations of, this most significant genre of medieval map. While this volume "cannot claim to be a comprehensive revamp" (2) of Harley and Woodward's work in Volume 1 of *The History of Cartography* (1987), it does seek to provide a forward-looking study highlighting nine significant, but little studied, Anglo-French world maps. The essays build on the scholarly conversation begun by Harley and Woodward—a conversation that has expanded over the past three decades in light of the sometimes startling results afforded by new technologies.

The Preface and Introduction ("Where to fix Cadiz?") set up one of the editors' objectives: to approach their study as spectators into the late medieval mindset. The Introduction begins with a discussion of the source books and maps held, copied, and circulated in monastic houses, and then goes on to describe the materials, tools, and skills used by the medieval cartographers, revealing their shared history with medieval book making. The Introduction also

focuses on the uses for these maps, which were as varied as the maps' commissioners, ranging from religious teaching—with the maps' imagery as a means for the transmission of knowledge—to non-clerical displays of status or power. All the maps nonetheless shared the same basic formatting and conventions; conventions that were largely grounded in the theological writings of Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141), particularly *Descriptio Mappa Mundi* (c. 1128).

In Chapter One, "Making Manuscripts and *Mappae Mundi*," contributor Michelle P. Brown describes these maps in their broad chronological and socio-historical contexts and discusses the formal, stylistic, art-historical, and paleographical features upon which the genre would build over time. For example, world maps had tended toward circularity since the Babylonians, and by Greek and Roman times, depiction of the tripartite division of the world into Asia, Africa, and Europe had settled into a schema resembling a capital T—the familiar "T in O" map. Brown firmly locates these world maps in the complex histories of book production and publishing, art, and cartography, even if, on occasion, they sometimes strayed into other media such as murals.

In the second chapter, "Books and Maps: Anglo-Saxon Glastonbury and Geospatial Awareness," Dan Terkla takes Brown's views, as presented in Chapter One, and applies them to pre- and post-Conquest (1066) English religious houses that both owned mappae mundi and had significant manuscript collections. Terkla describes



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Glastonbury Abbey (now a ruin) as the first such major monastic house in England, and suggests ways in which its particular books and maps might have been used together to develop a visual understanding of the world—a coupling that would indicate the first case of English geospatial awareness. The earliest catalog of Glastonbury’s collection (1247–1248) inventories a now-missing map that Terkla tentatively identifies as the Anglo-Saxon Map contained within the *Cotton Tiberius B.v.* codex (c. 1050), a manuscript that is now in the British Library’s collection, and of which a number of copies appear in the Glastonbury catalog.

Following a similar path, in Chapter Three, “Books and Maps: Anglo-Norman Durham and Geospatial Awareness,” Terkla demonstrates how library holdings and clerical education flourished in religious houses across Anglo-Norman England in the twelfth century. This leads him to expand and deepen the story he outlined in Chapter Two regarding the burgeoning geospatial awareness and curiosity of English clerics.

Chapters Four through Ten, written by various scholars, are each devoted to an individual map. Contributor Nathalie Bouloux penned Chapter Four, “The Munich Map (c. 1130): Description, Meanings and Uses,” detailing a map that appears in an early twelfth-century manuscript written in the north of France and consisting primarily of works by Isidore of Seville (d. 636); the map appears at the opening of Isidore’s *Etymologies*. Bouloux argues that the Munich Map is the map that Hugh of St. Victor describes in his *De Mappa Mundi*, pointing out that the then-ubiquitous religious elements missing from the map—like the Earthly Paradise, or the placement of the City of Jerusalem at its center—shows its connection to Hugh’s belief in the value of objective knowledge of the inhabited world.

In Chapter Five, Alfred Hiatt discusses the history and content of the Sawley Map (c. 1190). After a review of the evidence suggesting that this map is related to a mappa mundi left to Durham Cathedral by the Bishop of Durham, Hugh de Puiset, Hiatt sets the map in the context of the manuscript to which it is the frontispiece—a copy of the *Imago Mundi* of Honorius Augustodunensis (c. 1080–1157). His detailed analysis shows the map to be a synthesis of classical sources—presented with a decidedly Christian slant—and various references to Old Testament history and the Biblical account of the Apocalypse. Hiatt

also explores the connection of the Sawley Map to the Hereford Map (c. 1300), as well as its similarities to, and differences from, earlier maps. Altogether, this chapter allows us to glimpse many of the complexities of the transmission and development of medieval mappae mundi.

Asa Simon Mittman unveils some new information about the Vercelli Map (c. 1217) in Chapter Six. This map has not hitherto received the level of attention paid to other maps of this period—largely due to its poor state of preservation. However, multispectral images captured by the Lazarus Project (lazarusprojectimaging.com) team have produced new visual information for further examination. Mittman assesses the previous scholarship on the Vercelli Map, and performs a close visual analysis of the map and its layout to set it in context with other major works in the same period, and to reveal important differences in its presentation of Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Up until the thirteenth century, mappae mundi typically employed a tripartite scheme—epitomized by the “T-O” configuration of Europe, Africa, and Asia. However, as Daniel Connolly points out, in his chapter “In the Company of Matthew Paris: Mapping the World at St Albans Abbey,” the mappa mundi in Paris’s *Chronica Majora* (1240–1253) looks almost nothing like this. Connolly argues that it is, in fact, more like the pilgrimage itinerary maps for which Paris is also known, and that this unusual style actually suits the *Chronica Majora*—Paris’s history of the world from creation to the year 1253—better than would a tripartite map.

In Chapter Eight, “The Psalter Map (c. 1262),” Chet Van Duzer discusses the Psalter Map. This piece is unique, both for having been bound into a psalter—a volume containing the Book of Psalms and other devotional material—and for featuring two maps—one on either side of its sheet. On the recto (front) is a familiar mappa, and on the verso (back) is what is sometimes called a “list map.” This list map has an overall form, design, and marginal decoration similar to the recto, but is made up of text descriptions of the important provinces and cities, which appear on the verso. Although other mappae are found bound into books—a circumstance that is a contributing factor in their survival—no others are in psalters, and after his examination of this unique context and the relationship between the two maps, Van Duzer notes the strong visual emphasis on the central element of Jerusalem. There is a popular theory that the Psalter Map was based on the roughly

contemporary mural *mappa mundi* at Westminster Abbey (now lost), but Van Duzer argues that the description of the latter left by Matthew Paris shows them to have been very different. His findings further show that the map's visual emphasis on France suggests that the model for this map was more likely French than English.

In the following chapter, Dan Terkla takes up the first deep study of "The Duchy of Cornwall Map Fragment (c. 1286)" with a full transcription and translation of the fragment's inscriptions. He compares the fragment to its nearest surviving analog, the Hereford Map (c. 1300), to reveal similarities in design and theology—similarities which in turn generate new insights into the fragment's original appearance, placement, and use. Terkla shows how the map's patron must have been Edmund of Cornwall (d. 1300), who would have commissioned it as a display of authority and spectacle.

Marcia Kupfer writes in Chapter Ten, "The Hereford Map (c. 1300)," that the earliest records of the Hereford Map document its installation in a carved wooden case with painted shutters of near life-sized figures enacting the Annunciation. However, she notes, previous scholars have yet to discover the purpose of the map's purported triptych housing. She, herself, focuses on the physical and iconographical aspects the map itself—a large piece of vellum stretched on a wooden frame and decorated with depictions of both geographic and pietistic natures. Kupfer shows a correspondence between, for example, the physical embodiment of the artwork as a skin stretched and nailed to wooden cross-arms and the image of the Crucifixion painted at its center, and she further shows how this identified the fabric of creation with the Virgin's role in God's plan for human redemption.

The final chapter, "Digital Mapping, Spectral Imaging and Medieval *Mappae Mundi*," brings our medieval pilgrimage through this *Companion* to a fascinating close. As Helen Davies and Gregory Heyworth write so eloquently, "Today, with the advent of imaging technologies that can return damaged or overwritten manuscripts to legibility, maps are themselves the undiscovered country at the bourne of innovation" (253). The authors examine the ways in which digital technologies assist different types of projects related to medieval maps, using several of the maps discussed in previous chapters as examples. They open with an examination of current digital approaches to mapping medieval cartographic information, describing digital

mapping projects such as The Pelagios Project (pelagios.org), Mappa Mundi: Hereford Cathedral (themappamundi.co.uk), The Digital Atlas of Roman and Medieval Civilizations (darmc.harvard.edu), and Digital Mappa (digitalmappa.org; formerly Digital Mappaemundi). Each of these exciting projects is focused on compiling and annotating maps in a scholarly medium, and in a format that allows for closer inspection of text and iconography, as well as an analysis of the materials used to create them.

Part of this process is the translation of analog *mappae mundi* into the digital realm, using multi- and hyper-spectral imaging, which may also be used as a method of digital recovery or preservation. The chapter includes an overview of the differences between, and particular uses of, each type of spectral imagery and continues with a discussion of deep mapping as a digital humanities paradigm. Deep mapping seeks to capture and incorporate the full range of discursive, material, and imaginative geographies that inform the conception of a location's topography and sense of place for the variety of social groups and individuals that encounter the landscape. The authors conclude with a discussion of significant new directions and lines of inquiry opened up by both of these methods and paradigms.

Nick Millea's fully annotated bibliography of resources from the past thirty years, including *The History of Cartography*, completes the volume. He draws resources from key publications and presents the reader with a multilingual collection ranging from general studies of the period to more focused works on specific maps, and includes resources on the new scientific methodologies that seem set to further upcoming research on medieval *mappae mundi*.

Together, the essays in the *Critical Companion to English Mappae Mundi* make a strong case for a fresh look at medieval mapmaking—filling a void in scholarship on medieval Anglo-French cartography of the period and expanding what we know about this style of mapmaking. They argue the need to go beyond the traditional classification of these works solely as a stage or cul-du-sac in the history of mapping, by conceptualizing them instead as deep mapping artifacts: integral products of medieval book production, manifestations of catechismal instruction, practical instruments of geographic awareness, displays of wealth, influence, and power, and a unifying framework for a holistic theology, among others. The essays call for

a classification predicated not upon conventional similarities—which are, in truth, widespread—but upon significant differences. These differences point to unique humanistic elements that can, upon examination, provide insights into the humanistic concerns that underlay the intentions of the mappae mundi makers.

The delight and enthusiasm the contributors and editors have for their subject comes through on every page of *Critical Companion to English Mappae Mundi*—starting right from the Preface, and continuing throughout. The writing style of every contributor is highly approachable, making it easy to delve into the intriguing, if somewhat Latin-heavy, subject without a dictionary. All Latin phrases are translated, either inline or in footnotes. The organization of the essays and presentation of the color map

plates and black and white images are clear and very readable throughout this *Companion*, with one small caveat: I would have liked to have the color plates of the map associated with each chapter displayed at the chapter's head instead of collected in a single group in chapter three. This is, however, likely a limitation imposed by the economics of the book's binding process rather than a fault with the volume itself.

REFERENCE

Harley, J. Brian, and David Woodward, eds. 1987. *The History of Cartography, Volume 1*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

