A Tale of Two *Mappae Mundi*:
The Map Psalter and its Mixed-Media Maps

by

Melissa La Porte

A Thesis
Presented to
The University of Guelph

In partial fulfilment of requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts
in
Art and Visual Culture

Guelph, Ontario, Canada

© Melissa La Porte, April, 2012
ABSTRACT

A Tale of Two Mappae Mundi: The Map Psalter and its Mixed-Media

Melissa La Porte
University of Guelph, 2012
Advisor: Professor D. Marner

This thesis investigates small-scale mappae mundi, world maps, created in the thirteenth-century, which record the historical, mythical, social, and religious reality of the world for wealthy English patrons. My research focuses on two maps found in a Psalm book (British Library Add. MS 28681, f. 9 and f. 9v) on either side of a single page. One depicts the world in typical mappae mundi fashion, with Jerusalem at the centre of a network of cities, topographic features and monstrous creatures while the other lists place names and geographic descriptions. The maps depict the world in very different manners, one textually and the other visually, but their placement on the same leaf emphasizes their connection. This work explores the iconography, socio-historic context and literary precedence of mappae mundi in order to comprehend the distinct need for mixed-media to represent and understand a complex worldly existence in thirteenth-century England.
Acknowledgments

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Sally Hickson for her continued support and helpful advice, Dr. Andrew Sherwood for his thorough editing and classical expertise and Dr. Dominic Marner for his invaluable guidance on this project as it has evolved. My whole thesis committee, but Dr. Marner in particular, has been excellent in keeping me on track, suggesting fruitful detours, and allowing me to steer the project in ways I thought would be productive.

I must also thank my friends and family for their love and encouragement, especially Alison Innes who has been and will always be my sister-in-arms. A special thanks to my parents, Monique and Robert Ritchie, who have tirelessly listened to every ambitious idea with unfailing support. And finally, thank you to my husband, James La Porte, for being my constant love and friend.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... ii

Acknowledgments ............................................................................................................................ iii

Table of Contents .............................................................................................................................. iv

Introduction ........................................................................................................................................ 1

Chapter One: Literature Review ....................................................................................................... 4

Chapter Two: Geographic Description and Illustration in the Medieval Period

  Forms of geographic organization ................................................................................................. 14

  T-O maps ....................................................................................................................................... 16

  Zonal, *itineria* and portolan maps ............................................................................................ 18

Chapter Three: *Mappae Mundi*

  *Mappae mundi* and the ancient world ....................................................................................... 20

  *Mappae mundi* as visual encyclopedia ...................................................................................... 28

Chapter Four: The Maps of the Map Psalter

  Creation of a thirteenth-century psalm book .................................................................................. 40

  The image map and the text map ................................................................................................. 46

Chapter Five: Britannia, the Antipodes and Other Creatures at the Edge

  The beginning of the Antipodes ..................................................................................................... 53

  The medieval Antipodes ................................................................................................................. 57

  Britannia on the edge ..................................................................................................................... 64

Chapter Six: Maps, Monsters and the Marvellous

  *Marvels* and monsters .................................................................................................................. 72
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monsters in the ancient world</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The image map and the monstrous races</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cultural importance of medieval monsters</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figures</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

*Mappa mundi*, an imaginative type of world map created in the Middle Ages, attempted to form a visual encyclopedia of world knowledge based on varied and sometimes conflicting sources. Mapmakers used information from the Bible, Greek and Roman historians and geographers, and myth to create these hybrid objects, which employed text and images to transmit knowledge. This process of hybridization does not ensure complete harmony between the disparate elements but does produce a fertile document for an exploration of culture. The two world maps found in the Map Psalter were created to help medieval readers understand the world in which they lived, travelled, and worshipped. The fact that they required two very different forms of representation, one based in images with some text and the other text with some images, to provide a comprehensive view of that world speaks to the complexity of existence in the Middle Ages and the rich possibilities of meaning that the interplay between text and image involves.

The Map Psalter (MS 28681), now in the British Library, is a psalm book measuring 170 x 125 mm from c. 1262 and includes the smallest of the highly detailed *mappae mundi.*

The Map Psalter consists of illuminated text, full-page illustrations of the life of Christ and two full-page world maps. The text is comprised of the Book of Psalms, a Litany and hymns or Canticles which were meant to be read daily in a prescribed cycle. These texts were used for personal worship and, in addition, the psalms were used to teach Latin in the Middle Ages. A calendar is also included, indicating feasts days to be celebrated in honour of local saints. This particular calendar connects the psalter with the London diocese although

feasts particular to that location were later erased and replaced by feasts celebrated in Salisbury.

Apart from the full-page illustrations are historiated initials and in the latter part of the book, decorated line endings are also inserted into the text. The historiated initials feature scenes such as a walking pilgrim (Psalm 38), Christ giving a blessing with angels (Psalm 80) and a Benedictine monk praying (Psalm 101).\(^2\) In contrast to the religious vignettes, the line endings feature dragons, grotesques and fish. Some of the initials also have extensions that feature birds or dragons. These dragons or wyverns are repeated again on the map pages, as they appear beneath both representations of the earth.

Preceding the text are images from the life of Christ which were added at the end of the thirteenth-century when the psalter was rebound. The added scenes depict the Adoration of the Magi, the Nativity scene, Christ stepping out of the tomb, Crucifixion, Annunciation, and Christ in Majesty. These images were bound out of order, however, with scenes like the resurrection preceding the crucifixion of Christ. This is possibly the result of the artist misjudging the order of the leaves when painting the illuminations because they were created on larger vellum sheets, which were then folded to create two pages, each with a recto and verso once bound. If there is a greater significance to this unusual ordering, it is not readily apparent.

The original manuscript begins with a detailed map (fig. 1), hereafter called the image map for simplicity, the first of two world maps in the book. It is a small, circular representation of the world comprised of place names, bodies of water painted blue,

\(^2\) Morgan, 83.
landmasses in the natural colour of the vellum and special figures framed and set apart by different background colours. Framing the map is the figure of Christ raising his right hand in benediction and holding a small red orb in his left hand. Flanking Christ are two angels holding metal censers, called thuribles, on chains. Red and blue are the predominant colours although black is used for outlining the images and a burnt sienna colour is employed in the triangles used to indicate towns. The second map, the text map, on the reverse of the leaf is similar in layout with the round map being framed by Christ, God or Adam flanked by angels. This image, however, has four angels who fly around the figure, gesturing towards him as if presenting him to the reader while he cradles the earth in his arms. This image is also painted in red, blue and burnt sienna with black reserved for the text and outlines. The text map (fig. 2) relies heavily on textual description as it depicts the world schematically in three sections, Europe, Asia and Africa following the T-O tradition. The details of each region are given in the accompanying description or list of places written inside each section. These two maps may have been created by different artists, but no clear visual evidence exists to support this claim, and it seems likely that they were produced at the same time.\(^3\) Since provenance is not the aim of this investigation it will not be further examined.

Chapter One: Literature Review

In order to produce a comprehensive analysis of the image and text maps from the Map Psalter, it is necessary to understand other forms of maps from the classical to medieval period. There are not many sources of information specifically for the Map Psalter, other than the British Library's online exhibition and its catalogue description and Nigel Morgan provides a short summary of the Map Psalter manuscript including brief descriptions of the liturgical divisions and analysis of the stylistic elements. A bibliography for the Map Psalter is also included, comprised mainly of general cartographic histories like J. B. Harley and David Woodward's *Cartography in Prehistoric Ancient and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean, History of Cartography I* and a few texts on specific aspects of the map such as John Block Friedman’s *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*. Even less has been written about the text map which follows the image map. The British Library does provide a brief catalogue description for it but even this is done in the service of understanding the image map rather than exploring the text map for its own sake. The text map is mentioned in passing by Evelyn Edson in *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed Their World* but is omitted in all other major studies.

While the image and text maps will be the main object of this study, it also takes into consideration other *mappae mundi* produced in the same period, as well as the precursors in the fields of mapping and geography leading up to these unique world maps. To this end, the history of Western mapmaking has been reviewed, with an emphasis on Greek and Roman geographical writings since they provide direct sources of information for medieval scholars.
The History of Cartography series explores mapmaking from the Prehistoric period to the twentieth-century on every continent. The series continues to be cited in nearly all texts on the subject, which is a testimony to the quality of their scholarship. A comprehensive background of *mappae mundi* supported by primary sources, both material and textual, is presented in Part 3 of Volume 1. The development of maps in the Middle Ages, beginning with the simplified T-O diagrams found in Isidore of Seville’s texts, is traced thoroughly, followed by a description of the different types of maps that developed through the period with an explanation of the socio-cultural context for their creation, dissemination and reception.

Woodward’s discussion of *mappae mundi* was ground-breaking in that it dispelled three major academic myths around medieval maps by considering this socio-cultural context. First, *mappae mundi* were not created with the intent to accurately depict geography but rather to form more symbolic, culturally centred images. These symbolic images, particularly the fantastic creatures, are central to the present examination of the maps. The images were created for reasons beyond depicting geographic reality, and by examining the artistic and social factors involved in their creation a comprehensive study of their construction and use can be formed.

Another key myth laid bare is the claim that Jerusalem is consistently placed in the centre on *mappae mundi*. If true, this assertion would imply that medieval mapmaking was inspired by mainly Christian sources or at least that medieval mapmakers felt strongly enough to change the centre of the world on maps copied from Greek and Roman sources.

---

However, this is not the case as many maps were centred on Delphi, the traditional Greek centre of the world, or Rome, an important centre for both Christians and Romans.

Finally Woodward dispels the belief, with the use of many primary sources, that a flat disk theory of the world was commonly accepted in the Middle Ages. While in some ways this assertion is unconnected to this research, it should be noted that the Antipodes could not be considered antipodal if this were the case. On a flat disk the Antipodes would have to occupy the other side of the disk to be ‘opposite footed’ but this area was considered uninhabitable by medieval scholars. Rather, a spherical view of the world allows for their existence on the other side of the world from Europe. Woodward’s work provides a solid basis for the more “detailed studies of individual maps and groups of maps in their cultural context”, which he suggests is necessary for the enrichment of *mappae mundi* studies and is the aim of this investigation.\(^5\)

Evelyn Edson’s work on medieval mapmaking is the second most widely-recognized and she presents a comprehensive overview of maps from the Middle Ages.\(^6\) This work provides historical sources concerned with the maps and the contexts from which they come, providing a socio-cultural basis for changes in mapmaking in a similar manner to Woodward. It is also contended that *mappae mundi* are a combination of geographical maps, historical narratives and cultural records. These conclusions emphasize the need to examine maps with their different functions kept in mind so as not to treat them one-dimensionally. Exploring the varied uses of the maps, as both political tools and educational devices, it is possible to form more complete analyses of the maps.

\(^5\) Woodward, 342.
Similarly, Daniel Birkholz argues that medieval cartographical studies have too often focused on *mappae mundi* as a religious tool to transmit and consolidate Christian beliefs, suggesting that research exploring the political importance of maps and the secular aspect of their creation and use is more beneficial. The tradition of *mappae mundi*, originating in Church institutions, was appropriated “and its visual language adapted for use in some of the most important, and disputed, political projects of the day.” It is suggested that a sub-genre of *mappae mundi* needs to be formed for maps that are directly related to the wall mural that King Henry III (1216-1272) commissioned for his bed-and-audience-chamber at Westminster Palace. This sub-genre would include the image map as well as the Hereford map (c. 1300), emphasizing their shared use of pictorial strategies like the encircling of the earth by the ocean with islands, the double-banding of Jerusalem placed at the centre of the map and the inclusion of the monstrous races in Africa which are not found on all *mappae mundi*. One problem with the inclusion of King Henry III’s chamber map in this category is that there are no surviving copies of it which makes it impossible to know exactly what it would have looked like.

Birkholz points to the classical origin of many formal qualities of these *mappae mundi* in support of the secular and political importance of the maps. However, many visual motifs were used by both pagan and Christian mapmakers which hinders any conclusive point other than to highlight the already known Greco-Roman source of many Christian

---

8 Birkholz, xx.
9 Earlier Edson suggested that the image map was a copy of a larger wall map but she does not directly cite the Westminster map.
practices. By the Middle Ages, the Church had appropriated and integrated many classical traditions into their own: the image of Christ as the good shepherd, the use of grape vines to represent renewal of life, and the dove as a symbol of peace. In support of this secular reading is the placement of Jerusalem at the centre of the world, which suggests inspiration from the Roman practice of centring maps on Rome. In fact, this practice does not conclusively point to a classical or secular interest. This claim begs the question why the mapmaker would place Jerusalem at the centre instead of another city more closely connected to England if the decision was based on the King’s interests. London, in particular, seems appropriate for its connection to the King since this was where the Painted Chamber map was made and viewed. This claim also overlooks the direct statement in the Bible, one of few geographical comments, that places Jerusalem at the centre of the earth which creates a Christian tradition for this placement.

That maps, which were not necessarily intended for religious public settings, namely those not intended as church decorations, must have had a meaning outside of the religious context is an unnecessary distinction in some ways, as even church architecture and decoration are not limited to solely religious meaning, nor did religious interests end at the threshold of the church. Rather, power and politics are always at play and no artwork should be perceived to have only one symbolic function. Although some of his argument is heavily weighted in his interest in the politics of mapmaking, Birkholz states that cartographical investigations should be “beyond but necessarily inclusive of the theological, not dispensing with but building upon meanings that have been developed by scholars

10 Birkholz, xxii.
11 Ezekiel 5:5 “Thus says the Lord God, ‘This is Jerusalem; I have set her at the center of the nations, with lands around her.”
already,” which is the goal of this investigation.¹²

Tracing one of the symbolic functions of *mappae mundi* as it was used in Late Antiquity, Natalia Lozovsky explores the consolidation of power through mapping space in the Roman Empire and particularly the importance of maps for the Roman emperors.¹³ Maps were used to visually lay out the expanse of the emperor’s power. The map then becomes a codifying tool to solidify and define the limits of the empire, which can be extended to mapping in the Middle Ages as a way to define and consolidate the extent of the Christian Empire. If maps are a way to exercise and confirm power, then *mappae mundi* demonstrate the exertion of power over not only geography, but history and myth as well. The mapping of the physical and metaphorical Christian empire in the thirteenth century involved a definition of self and other and it is pertinent that mapmakers included fantastic ‘others’ in their universe.

Exploring the idea of the Antipodes and its relationship to the medieval viewer aids in the examination of these fantastic ‘others’ by establishing the different types of othering in use at the time. Matthew Boyd Goldie applies post-colonial theories to Greek, Roman and Anglo-Saxon cultures to analyze the power relations inherent in the idea of the Antipodes.¹⁴ There is an attempt to show that the concept of the Antipodes was a form of colonization but the findings appear to gloss over many historical discrepancies. While the treatment of the Antipodes through time shares similarities with nineteenth-century imperialist views of colonies, mainly the projection of Western desires and fears on an unfamiliar people, the

---

¹² Birkholz, xxv.
comparison becomes problematic when analyzing Greece and Rome. Greek and Roman colonial systems worked very differently than those in the twentieth-century. It must also be remembered that the Antipodes were a completely fictional space formed through philosophical speculation rather than physical occupation. More successfully, Said’s Orientalism, using the term ‘tropicalism’, is applied to explain the Antipodes as a projection of Greek and Roman and later Anglo-Saxon imagination. While this application appears to be more appropriate, it needs to be further explored which is in part what this examination of the Antipodes will do. Tropicalism is mentioned briefly in The Idea of the Antipodes but it does not fully explain what implications this concept might have or why it is more appropriate for use in examinations of the Antipodes than other post-colonial theories.

Goldie’s text provides an overview of the history of the Antipodes and the difficult and conflicting theories surrounding its existence. The text traces antipodal roots in Greek philosophy and provides solid ancient sources for its history. The historical account is often interwoven with modern theories, and although some are not fully explained, the framework of the “besides” rather than Other is particularly interesting. It expands on Eve Sedgwick’s theory in Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity, to describe the relationship of the Antipodes as “beside” Europe rather than in opposition to it. This theory and much of the introduction in the book provides an interesting approach to the Antipodes and the monstrous races found on the mappae mundi. Sedgwick suggests that “besides is an interesting preposition also because there’s nothing very dualistic about it; a number of elements may lie alongside one another, though not an infinity of them.”15 While Goldie initiates such an analysis, this work will extend Sedgwick’s framework of ‘besides’ to

mappae mundi in an attempt to break out of dualistic discussions of self and Other and to explore the different specific ways that monsters were manifested on these maps and what their adjacent location may have meant for a medieval audience.

Finally, my research examines where the Britons placed fantastic creatures in their world view, both beside and surrounding their own position, extensively using the theories of the edge, pioneered by Michael Camille, who successfully applies them to the study of medieval manuscripts.¹⁶ These theories explore the connection between the physical placement of elements on two-dimensional artworks and cultural identity formation. Although Camille’s work is not often cited in cartography studies, his treatment of manuscript pages in terms of physical and mental space suits my work particularly well. The overlap in the physical production of manuscripts and mappae mundi, as they were created by the same people with the same tools, also supports parallels between the two media.

While there has been research on mappae mundi, the Antipodes and theories concerning the edge before, none of these sources offer a consideration of all three fields together or apply them to the images of the monstrous races on mappae mundi, which my study aims to do. Asa Simon Mittman has provided an important beginning to this study in his text Maps and Monsters in Medieval England.¹⁷ His summary of the history of monsters on medieval maps will be used for the larger task of recognizing the interplay between text and images particular to mapmaking and how this medium shapes its message and how its message influences its form. The interdependence of text and images to make meaning in cartography sets it apart from other modes of representation such as literature and

---

painting. The selection of a map over other didactic options such as a diagram or text
description is significant for the creator and the audience because it influences how
information is relayed and received. The early fourteenth-century Minorite friar and world
historian Paolino of Venice describes the importance of maps as a medium:

there is needed moreover a twofold map, [composed] of painting and writing. Nor wilt thou deem one sufficient without the other, because painting without writing indicates regions or nations unclearly, [and] writing without the aid of painting truly does not mark the boundaries of the provinces of a region in their various parts sufficiently [clearly] for them to be described almost at a glance.\textsuperscript{18}

Although separated by almost a century and a great distance, Paolino could almost be speaking about the Psalter maps directly. The combination of a \textit{mappae mundi} with a text map fulfills Paolino’s ideal exactly. This model has an earlier precedence in the work of Hugh of St. Victor (1096-1141) who wrote the \textit{Didascalicon}, listing what subjects are necessary for a scholar to study in order to have a real understanding of the world and why. Hugh writes that man can restore himself from the fall of Adam by acquiring knowledge about God and his creations, a view drawn from Augustine of Hippo’s work.\textsuperscript{19} Hugh speaks of the importance of images in memory formation by describing various mental images that can be used to help retain information. One example he gives is the mental number line, used to remember things according to a numerical sequence. Hugh suggests that by visualizing the information along a mental number line during the memorization process, one can later retrieve the information by picturing the place on the line and accessing it.

One of the most important mnemonic devices that Hugh endorses is the careful observation

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
of the physical object from which one reads:

it is a great value for fixing a memory-image that when we read books, we strive to impress on our memory through the power of forming our mental images not only the number and order of verses or ideas, but at the same time the color, shape, position, and placement of letters, where we have seen this or that written, in what part, in what location (at the top, the middle, or the bottom) we saw it positioned, in what color we observed the trace of the letter or the ornamented surface of the parchment.\(^{20}\)

In this way, meditating on the images and visual properties of the text is almost as crucial as understanding the information provided by them. With this in mind, the following investigation will examine the pictorial surface and the information presented through it.

---

Chapter Two: Geographic Description and Illustration in the Medieval Period

Forms of Geographic Organization in the Middle Ages

Harley and Woodward in their History of Cartography write that “maps are graphic representations that facilitate a spatial understanding of things, concepts, conditions, processes or events in the human world”, including celestial and imagined cosmographies.\(^{21}\) Maps are about the organization of space in the world, whether that organization is guided by geographical reality or not. There was no medieval word for map in the modern sense. Instead terms like *mappa* (cloth), *carta* (document) and *descriptio* (map or textual description of an area) or *pictura* (drawing) and *figura* (figure) were used.\(^{22}\) The term *mappae mundi* translates into English as cloths or napkins of the world and most likely refers to the textile nature of many large scale maps.\(^{23}\) This etymological review brings to light the difference between current culture and scholarly thought and the Middle Ages. By drawing attention to the intentions and concerns of mapmakers both then and now it is clear that any map does not provide evidence for an exclusive belief in a particular theory but rather that each is created in order to illustrate a particular point. In other words, different maps are used for different effects and none should be taken as proof of an exclusive line of thought.

Maps often do not accompany geographic descriptions in medieval texts and it is possible that these texts were paired with oversized maps or that the text was thought sufficient on its own or perhaps even superior to a visual representation. Several known

---

\(^{21}\) History of Cartography, I, xvi.
\(^{22}\) Edson, Mapping, 2.
cases of lectures being given in front of maps including those by Eumenes of Autun (298), Hugh of St. Victor (1130) and St. Bernadino of Siena (1429). Travel was in the Middle Ages often accomplished with the use of guides or learned through apprenticeships, such as sailors undertook in order to learn routes, this is due to low literacy levels and the fact that many medieval maps were inaccurate or lacked sufficient detail to be useful travel aids. In turn, mapmakers used travel literature for information as well as their own personal travel experiences, which were often limited, and utilized established geographical sources such as the works of Isidore and Orosius. Travel literature which often included factual information gathered from personal travel and geographical texts along with fictional encounters with the supernatural was widely popular. Over two hundred manuscripts of The Travels of Sir John Mandeville (c. 1356) have survived with editions in Czech, Danish, English, French, German, Italian, Irish, Latin and Spanish. This text, and the others like it, allowed people who could not travel to do so vicariously. Although mapmaking continued during the Crusades, this extended campaign of travel did not change the geography presented on the maps as much as theology and literature did. An analysis of the shifts in map design presents three basic types: T-O maps, zonal maps, and mappae mundi, although classifications differ slightly among scholars.

24 Edson, Mapping, 12.
26 Edson, Mapping, 10.
**T-O maps**

Herodotus discusses a type of map that sounds remarkably like a T-O map, which he considers a display of the ridiculous theory that the world is a perfect circle with the ocean surrounding the earth in a river.\(^9\) Herodotus notes that no one knows the full extent of Europe and whether or not it is surrounded by water and so no one can form any conclusive decision about the truthfulness of this statement.\(^\text{30}\) He also attempts to describe necessary corrections to typical T-O maps but the passage is particularly confusing and does little to form a clear picture of the world in the mind of the reader. If medieval scholars had access to *The Histories*, they must have blatantly disregarded the abuse of T-O maps by Herodotus since he mentions several times that they are wrong.

T-O maps show the world divided into three land masses separated by the T-shaped bodies of water (fig. 3). Asia appears at the top of the map, separated by the Tanais and the Nile from Europe and Africa. Europe and Africa, in turn, are divided by the Mediterranean Sea. These three land masses appear in accordance with the Old Testament account of the world being divided for the three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth, as related in *Genesis 10*.\(^\text{31}\) On these maps the Great Ocean encircles the earth. This geographical tradition can be traced as far back as the eighth-century BCE as Hesiod writes in his *Theogony* that the ocean flows around the whole world which is shaped like a disk.\(^\text{32}\)

Although the world was understood to be a sphere in the twelfth and thirteenth-centuries following the Greek tradition, there has been some confusion amongst modern

---

\(^\text{30}\) Herodotus, 4.36.
scholars who misread the circular image as indicative of a disk-shaped world view. The circular shape was not only an artistic strategy used to render a three-dimensional object on a two-dimensional surface but also a conceptual framework used to organize and contain knowledge. This circular format was particularly useful because it helped to bridge the distance between the ancient theories of Aristotle (fourth c. BCE) and Plato (fifth to fourth c. BCE) and Christian beliefs as the circular shape held symbolic meaning in both traditions.

Possibly these T-O maps are one example of the rotae or wheel diagrams revived by Isidore of Seville in his books inspired by classical texts. Rotae were used to explain natural cycles such as the months and seasons amongst others and were favoured because of their effectiveness in memory training, a fundamental element of medieval learning. Rotae were so effective that their use was expanded outside monastic and clerical texts into vernacular literature. One diagram used to explain the movement of the sun, earth and moon during lunar eclipses is found in the thirteenth-century Le Romaunce del ymage du monde (Bodley MS. Selden Supra 74 fol. 90v) a secular book by Gautier de Metz.

Although not strictly a T-O map, the text map found in the Map Psalter fits more closely into this category. Here the map is divided into the T-O format but each section is filled with text rather than images. While early T-O maps did employ text exclusively, as visible in the Isidore T-O map (fig. 3), the text map goes beyond labelling continents and provides commentary more similar to that found in literary geographical descriptions.

33 Kline, 10.
34 Kline, 13.
35 Kline, 25.
Each territory is comprised mainly of a list of towns, as visible in the Europe portion of the map but in the Africa section there appears to be a description of what can be found in the relatively unknown space. Rather than listing place names using interpuncts to separate the words, this space is filled with sentences. The opening of the paragraph reads “Termini affrice” or “Africa ends”, a note which is also found on the Hereford map. The following four sentences are too difficult to make out because of wear on the parchment. Next is a series of sentences with a repetitive structure: they begin with a large “I” painted with blue and red. Each statement begins with “in” and then lists a place name followed by a colon and a word or two. Due to the condition of the map and the quality of the images made available by the British Library, it is difficult to read what follows the place names, or even to identify the places themselves with the exceptions of Ethiopia, which is clearly written in three places, and Lybia and Numidia. It is tempting to hypothesize that these place names are followed by a list of the fantastic people who live there, but it is impossible to be certain without examining the map in person.

**Zonal, itineria and portolan maps**

The zone map is another type of geographical *rota*. Examples such as those found illustrating Macrobius’ *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* divide the world into five weather zones: two frigid, two temperate and one tropical (fig. 4). They were used mainly to explain different meteorological zones found on earth and loosely correspond to modern geographical zones and illustrated theories introduced by Aristotle.

---

37 Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, MS NKS 218 4°, fol. 34r.
Itineria maps, such as the twelfth-century Peutinger Table (fig. 5), have the routes of the Roman Empire marked out and would have been useful for messengers. In some ways this is the most useful of the maps for travelling in this study because it provides information on roads and different places of interest such as inns along the way. Like the others, however, itineria maps are not to scale and the distances between locations are not always accurate. The European section of the text map may follow the itineria tradition, listing cities found as one travels through the continent. The small size of the section would not allow all the major European cities to be listed and a method of selection must have been employed. The list of cities moves roughly from the south-east to the south-west, beginning with places like Athens appearing at the start and Dublin near the end. While the European portion of the map may follow the itineria tradition, it is clear that the text map draws from many geographic systems as the other two continents do not follow this standard.

Lastly, portolan maps were employed in sea travel and required the use of a compass. The earliest surviving portolan map is the Carta Pisana (c. 1275) (fig. 6). These maps were used by captains to set a course from one location to another and may have had a grid along the edges of the map but this grid does not appear to be standardized. It seems it was not that mapmakers could not or even did not want to make a map useful for travel but rather that this was not the point of every geographical document.

38 Short, 19.
Chapter Three: *Mappae Mundi*

*Mappae mundi* and the ancient world

Accidents of survival play a large part in the availability of classical sources and their popularity in the Middle Ages. Geographical information that survived the fall of the Roman Empire in the West and was useful to medieval scholars was often contained in Latin texts, as Greek was not commonly part of the monastic education. Such texts were commonly a type of digest that combined the writing of several ancient authors, the most popular being Pomponius Mela, Seneca, Pliny the Elder, and Plato.\(^{39}\) Some Roman maps existed as well, but it is difficult to know what they looked like or how influential they were. The two major maps were the Peutinger Table, which has no visible connection to *mappae mundi* and survives only through later copies, and Ptolemy's map, which was unknown to scholars in the thirteenth-century and now only survives through literary description.\(^{40}\)

A necessary task for the survival of these materials was the physical recopying of text and images which provided opportunities for omission and addition to the original. Arabs occupied the Mediterranean coast in the seventh-century and preserved through translation many ancient traditions and texts. Although works such as Aristotle and Ptolemy survived in the Arabic world, they were not widely available to Western scholars from the second to the early fifteenth-century because of religious, political and language barriers.\(^{41}\) In the early fifteenth-century, the first Latin translation of Ptolemy's (c. 100-c.

---

Geography re-emerged making a profound impact on mapmaking and scholarship. \(^{42}\) Later editions of the text often paired Ptolemy's findings with contemporary maps. \(^{43}\) This integration of an ancient source with contemporary material was commonly done as a way to update ancient sources and give authority to new ideas. In this tradition, Ptolemy's text was adopted, annotated, changed but not discarded. It was not a matter of copying directly from ancient sources but shaping and filtering them through contemporary thought. As Mittman writes “the hand of the mapmaker is guided by a mind located in a certain time and place and showing inevitably the prejudices of his or her surroundings”; the copying of ancient texts were also marked by these prejudices. \(^{44}\)

* Mappae mundi are linked with the ancient world through the listing of explored and conquered places serving to glorify the ruler who can have them commissioned, a tradition that goes back to Greek and Roman rhetoric. \(^{45}\) In this way, maps operate as ancient triumphs did by displaying the spoils of war and conquered peoples. \(^{46}\) The power to map an empire was tied to the power to rule it, as seen with the emperors Augustus and Theodosius who both ordered surveys of imperial lands while they ruled. \(^{47}\) This glorification of empire through cartography was gradually transformed into the glorification of Christianity and the empire of God. The emperor Charlemagne relied on Roman traditions to show his strength and legitimacy to rule the Christian empire. He even affected the Roman dress of a long tunic, cloak and sandals while in Rome. \(^{48}\) Charlemagne

\[^{42}\text{Short, 13.}\]
\[^{43}\text{Short, 13.}\]
\[^{44}\text{Mittman, 28.}\]
\[^{45}\text{Lozovsky, 171.}\]
\[^{46}\text{Lozovsky, 171.}\]
\[^{47}\text{Lozovsky, 172-3.}\]
went beyond imitation and claimed that Christianity had surpassed the achievements of the ancient pagans.\textsuperscript{49} By connecting \textit{mappae mundi} to Roman geography, it is possible to understand that medieval rulers were using the maps as “a symbol and promise of imperial domination that extended from the past into the future.”\textsuperscript{50} Of course maps were not the only geographical tool used to show power. In the reigns of Aurelian and Constantine, the emperor was often shown with a globe in his hand or receiving one from the sun god Sol in order to represent his right to world domination.\textsuperscript{51}

One ancient convention that does not appear on \textit{mappae mundi} is the longitude and latitude grid system, the popularity of which is credited to Ptolemy.\textsuperscript{52} The use of grids became popular once again in the late fifteenth-century when Ptolemy’s work was translated into Latin from the Arabic copies made in the Middle East. Some of the first Western maps to include the grid system were made by Nicolaus Germanus as additions to \textit{Geography} in 1467.\textsuperscript{53} Although Ptolemy’s text was lost to Western scholars until the fifteenth-century, there was evidence of the Greek and Roman use of grids through the structure of military camps and towns which were available to medieval scholars. Greek towns, such as fifth-century Priene, were built using a grid plan attributed to Hippodamus of Miletos.\textsuperscript{54} Roman army camps were also commonly organized along two axes but were now also oriented with the cardinal points, with the \textit{cardo maximus} running North to South and the \textit{decumanus maximus} running from East to West. When possible army camps were

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Lozovsky175} Lozovsky, 175.
\bibitem{Lozovsky187} Lozovsky, 187.
\bibitem{Short4} Short, 4.
\bibitem{PtolemyGeography216} The copy held at the Boston Public Library of Ptolemy’s \textit{Geography}, (Ulm: Lienhart Holle, 1482) 216 for a particularly well preserved example of the use of a grid on a world map.
\end{thebibliography}
arranged the same way, with the administrative stations such as the quarters of the commander placed in the same spot each time so that incoming soldiers and messengers would be able to locate essential services and people quickly. New Roman towns built in the provinces also used this plan in order to bring familiarity and organization to new places. If a man-made space such as a town can be organized this way, then why not the rest of the world? Certainly the empire, with Rome at the centre, could be understood as a large settlement, although perhaps not as regularly laid out as an army camp.

While Eratosthenes (c. 275-194 BCE) had already developed the idea of latitude and longitude as well as degrees and minutes based on a system of sixty divisions from Babylonian traditions, it was not until the work of Ptolemy was translated into Latin in the fifteenth-century that the use of the grid in geographic representation became popular. The use of a grid makes the known world easier to comprehend by placing it within a geometrically regular system. A sense of consistency is also created by making locations plottable and fixed no matter what one’s relative position. The grid system adds regularity as well as flexibility in that it can be expanded or twisted along the rules of the grid in order to explicate many different circumstances. This flexibility allowed for additions and omissions to be made as new information was gained through exploration. Although linear systems similar to latitude and longitude were used in other maps such as portolan maps, *mappae mundi* were organized quite differently, adapting the geometric T-O schema into more organic formats.

Other ancient sources for geographic information included Sallust’s (86-35 BCE) *Bellum Jugurthinum*, which describes the rebellion of Jugurtha against Rome in the province

---

55 Short, 14.
of Numidia. This book was often used for Latin grammar lessons in the Middle Ages and was most likely known to cartographers who typically had a monastic education. In the twelfth and thirteenth-centuries Sallust’s work could be found in at least twenty libraries in France, Germany and England. The *Bellum Jugurthinum* provides information on Numidia in northern Africa but this is secondary to the historical account of the political events. Sallust’s book was sometimes accompanied by world maps added by scribes or readers to supplement the text. These maps became their own tradition and started to appear in texts by ancient authors other than Sallust. Maps accompanying texts, such as the *Pharsalia* by Lucan, included the winds around the perimeter of the earth but were still largely schematic with little detail.

Focused more directly on geographic information, Virgil’s *Georgics* (Bk I, 231-43) describes the five zones of the heavens which directly relates to zonal models of the world with three of the five zones being extreme in temperature. In his *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, Macrobius also explains the spherical nature of the earth and its relation to the rest of the cosmos, but his theories appear to be based on Virgil's Book 1 of *The Georgics*. Virgil’s work remained popular in the Middle Ages because of its usefulness in relation to practical human activities such as farming, animal husbandry and astronomy. Where the pagan author mentioned gods such as Ceres and Jupiter, the medieval Christian could simply substitute an omnipotent God.

---

58 Osmond and Ulery, 193.  
Near the end of the Roman Empire there was a similar willingness to adopt certain aspects of Christianity. In 312 Constantine commanded his troops to mark their shield with the Chi Rho, the first two letters of Christ in Greek, in order to gain favour with the Christian god. The growing popularity and organization of Christianity led to the legalization of the religion in the following year. As Christianity rose in popularity, paganism began to decline but some pagan traditions were continued. This association strengthened the legacy and right to power of Christianity by connecting it to a much older dominion and was continued by subsequent Christian emperors, but once the Roman Empire began to decline there were mixed feelings from rulers and the Church about the connection. One response to this concern is found in Paulus Orosius’ *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, in which he outlines how the pagans angered God through decadence and heresy and their destruction was punishment for their sins. In Book Two, Orosius states that the two sacks of Rome were done through God’s will. He even goes so far as to say that when the Goths gave up plundering and destroying the city, God sent lightning to finish the job.

Book One includes a geographical survey of the world and explicitly states that the world has a “threelfold division.” It goes on to describe the areas and bodies of water found in each different region. Orosius had travelled from Spain to Africa and Palestine but his descriptions far outstripped his travel experience. In his text he often used older names of provinces and cities which suggests that he took his information from ancient sources such as Pomponius Mela’s *Chorographia* (c. first-century) rather than contemporary

60 Ralph Martin Novak, *Christianity and the Roman Empire: Background Texts*, (New York: Continuum National Publishing Group, 2001) 143.
62 Orosius, 37.
sources. Although the passage concerning geography is quite short, it had a definite impact on *mappa mundi* in the thirteenth-century. The Hereford map even names Orosius directly in an inscription found in the bottom right corner which reads: “Orosius’s account of the *Ornesta* of the world, as shown within.” Here *Ornesta* most likely refers toOrmista, the acronym used for *Orosii mundi istoria* the common Latin name for Orosius’ *Seven Books of History*.

While Orosius distrusts many pagan writers, some such as Virgil continued to be popular in the Christian era because he was considered prophetic and even proto-Christian. There was a strong desire by Church scholars to “Christianize the classical inheritance” of knowledge. Classical scientific knowledge did not conflict much with Christian doctrine because so little was said in the Bible about the way the world worked. Rather than change pre-established findings, Christian meaning was often assigned to pagan facts. In this vein of scholarship, Isidore of Seville wrote in the seventh-century that Christianity was meant to build upon pagan understanding. Isidore found support for this theory through Solomon who says that “…it is he who gave me unerring knowledge of what exists…” implying that it is through God that understanding is found and that the quest for knowledge is endorsed by God. Isidore includes ancient knowledge and new theories in his work. He refers to Virgil, Homer and Greeks myths as still relevant sources, stating that the Hircanian forest has many tigers and recounting the story of Jason and Medea. When ancient facts clash with

---

66 Wisdom 7: 17-22
Biblical information, such as the naming of the Medes after Jason as according to myth or Madai as Genesis states, Isidore does not clearly indicate which source is more reliable.\textsuperscript{67}

In his books, Isidore describes the world and what is to be found in it. In the subsequent editions of his first text \textit{De Natura Rerum}, a geographic written account of the earth, schematic maps are often included. His next text, \textit{Etymologies}, relates information about the whole world, expanding upon that found in \textit{De Natura Rerum} while focusing on the meaning and derivation of names. It remained unfinished, however, at Isidore’s death and was posthumously completed and distributed by a friend.\textsuperscript{68} Most maps included in manuscripts of \textit{Etymologies} are very simple T-O maps, but the later the manuscript the more detailed the map. These maps do not seem to be based on Isidore’s own model but are rather additions by later copyists.\textsuperscript{69} Edson notes that the more Isidore discusses geography in the text, the fewer the illustrations that accompany it.\textsuperscript{70} It appears that maps were used as a form of further clarification, meant to work in tandem with the text in order to explain concepts rather than to be considered separately. Although there is not an abundance of maps included in Isidore’s work, he manages to provide much geographic information which informed later maps.

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{67} Isidore of Seville, \textit{The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville}, Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach, and Oliver Berghoff, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003) IX.ii.46.
\item \textsuperscript{68} Barney et al., 10.
\item \textsuperscript{226}.
\item \textsuperscript{70} Edson, \textit{Mapping}, 48.
\end{itemize}
Mappae mundi as visual encyclopedia

Mappae mundi developed in the thirteenth-century incorporate history, geography, botany, zoology, ethnology and theology into one document. Maps, such as the image map (B.L., Add. MS 28681, fol. 9), Isidore’s Vatican map (B. A. V., Lat. 6018, fol. 64–65r), the Cotton map (BL, Cotton MS Tiberius B.v, fol. 56), the Sawley map (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 66, Part 1), the Ebstorf map (now destroyed), and the Hereford map (Hereford Cathedral, UK), used cartography to present the entire history and philosophy of Western Europe. Mappae mundi are not as symmetrically organized as rotae but appear to combine several common rotae diagrams into one, including, but not limited to, charts of the winds, the cardinal points, T-O maps and zone maps. Apart from the circular shape, a visual hierarchy is employed which would have been familiar to a well-educated medieval viewer. The hierarchy employed includes ascending/descending order, radiating lines and other signifiers of importance including colour, size and style.

Medieval mapmakers worked to form “a cosmological picture which harmonized with Christian theology, authoritative texts inherited from antiquity and practical observation,” by which medieval scientists, scholars and mapmakers attempted to create an inclusive model of the world as best they could. Mappae mundi represent one example of this effort which combines history, geography, and religion through text and images into one document.

Such maps are not meant to indicate the actual distance between places but are instead “concerned with the abstract, mystical meaning of symbolism.” They manage to

71 Kline, 4.
72 Edson, Mapping, 52-53.
73 Woodward, 334.
connect spiritual elements, from Christ to hell, with earthly elements such as the winds and rivers. *Mappae mundi* present information about the world filtered through the Christian tradition emphasizing geographical features of religious importance through their size and location on the map. Places, such as Eden, found on these maps were not always physically accessible, which makes clear that even the geographical information presented had a symbolic aspect. The conflation of the known world with Biblical tradition shows the desire to reconcile knowledge, especially from ancient sources, with Christian world views.

*Mappae mundi* are particularly interesting because they combine science and geography with religion and history in one document. They are “cosmologies that reflected a deeply religious view of the world” and because of this world view there is no separation between religion and science.74 One of the ways this is done is by the inclusion of stories from the Bible and mythology that are represented through the use of icons such as the circular portrait of Adam and Eve at the top-centre of the image map. Although the portrait itself does not depict the events leading up to and following their exile from Eden, their faces are used as a prompt for the viewer who would already be familiar with the story. The importance of narrative in a society that was moving from orality to literacy is described by Walter Ong: “knowledge and discourse come out of human experience and that the elemental way to process human experience verbally is to give an account of it more or less as it really comes into being and exists, embedded in the flow of time. Developing a story line is a way of dealing with this flow.”75 Narrative, then, is the way humans deal with unorganized thoughts and facts. Societies that are primarily oral cannot use abstract

74 Short, 17.
categories to organize knowledge so instead they use chronology as a frame to process, consolidate and retell information.\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Mappae mundi} are products of this narrative-way of thinking as evident in the overlaying of historical events on top of the geographical visual information to create an ordered image of the world.

It is difficult to gauge the level and extensiveness of literacy in the Middle Ages because reading and writing were taught separately; one might able to read without being proficient in writing.\textsuperscript{77} The ability to write leaves physical evidence, while the ability to read is much harder to confirm historically. In the period between the tenth and thirteenth-centuries, population growth, thriving agriculture, and reductions in private warfare due to changes in government, as well as administrative and judicial changes in the church, made education more accessible and less of a luxury.\textsuperscript{78} Educational institutions were expanding and more people had the opportunity to receive some form of education, but orality remained central to society and culture.\textsuperscript{79} The levels of literacy for viewers of the \textit{mappae mundi} could have varied greatly, but it does seem likely that most viewers held a higher social ranking which makes them the most likely to be educated.

Maps, such as the Hereford map and the Ebstorf map, would have been more widely available than others because they were displayed in public buildings like churches. The Hereford map, for example, was designed to be the central panel of a triptych altarpiece at Hereford Cathedral. Its location on the altar, a sacred space in the church, limited the number of people who had close access to it. The detailed image requires close viewing,

\textsuperscript{76} Ong, 140.
\textsuperscript{77} Harvey J. Graff, \textit{The Legacies of Literacy: Continuities and Contradictions in Western Culture and Society}, (Indiana: Indiana UP, 1987) 34.
\textsuperscript{78} Graff, 54.
\textsuperscript{79} Graff, 54.
even with its large scale, but the majority of parishioners would not be able to do so because this privilege was reserved for the clergy and most prominent parishioners. These viewers would be literate to some degree, as clergy were required to learn Latin in order to perform rites and the liturgy and noblemen needed to read legal, economic, and religious texts.

The Hereford map was held in a wooden frame flanked by panels of the Virgin Mary and the angel Gabriel to form an altarpiece depicting the Annunciation. The map’s large scale allowed for a great amount of information and the additional panels in the triptych added another level of religious meaning. *Mappae mundi* were created to situate the earth within the Christian framework of Creation, Judgement and Redemption. The Hereford map exemplifies this through the additional panels and the Christian authority figures that surround the circular map. Christ stands at the top with a group of monks at the bottom left and a holy knight at the bottom right. These figures maintain the borders of the map, keeping the world controlled within a Christian hierarchy. The world is centred on Jerusalem, important in Christianity as the site of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. The rest of the earth is filled with significant Christian sites, including Mount Ararat, Eden and the Red Sea. The world becomes situated metaphorically and physically in the midst of the Christian universe.

*Mappae mundi* were also used to demonstrate the symbolic expanse of the Christian empire and to locate oneself within it. The no longer extant world map mural from the Painted Chamber at Westminster Palace was created when King Henry III needed to

---

80 Kline, 48.
consolidate his power against the uprising of barons.\textsuperscript{81} It served as bedroom and meeting room for the king and was carefully decorated through two different painting programs to reflect its importance. The \textit{mappa mundi} was painted during the first program in conjunction with a calendar, a bestiary and a \textit{magna historia} (great history) on the wall behind where the king sat, but was destroyed or seriously damaged during a fire c. 1263. Matthew Paris, a noted thirteenth-century mapmaker, had created a copy of the map which no longer survives but it is possible that the maps in the Map Psalter were based on this copy due to the fact they were created in London just before or after the mural map was painted over.\textsuperscript{82} If the maps were based on Matthew Paris’ copy then his work played an important role in the process of scaling down the wall mural to a small manuscript format.

Of the approximate 1100 \textit{mappae mundi} that survive, 900 or so were designed to be included in manuscripts.\textsuperscript{83} Most of these manuscript maps, including the image map, Isidore’s Vatican map, and the Cotton map, would have been consumed privately although there were also reference maps such as the Vercelli map which was mounted on a roll and kept in a library, to be consulted while reading texts concerned with geography.\textsuperscript{84} Other maps in private collections could have been used as reference guides and to help situate the Biblical stories and historical accounts they accompanied, but the limited access to these large-scale maps may account for some of the manuscript \textit{mappae mundi}. It would be much more economic and convenient to have a small-scale version of a map created in a text which could be examined at one’s leisure than to commission a mural map.

\textsuperscript{81} Birkholz, 3.
\textsuperscript{82} Birkholz, 4.
\textsuperscript{83} Harley, 286.
\textsuperscript{84} Edson, \textit{Mapping}, 135.
More of these smaller maps survive probably as a result of lower cost and higher production numbers. Their portability and the protection provided by the book cover would have aided in their survival, in contrast to large-scale maps hung on walls. Their large size made them hard to transport and store, and they were often destroyed when fires, flooding, plundering, renovation and war damaged the buildings housing them.  

Others were over-cleaned or discarded. In combination with these circumstances, the vellum of mappae mundi was reused in other projects and some fresco maps were painted over during renovation projects. It is clear why more maps do not survive. The Hereford map is the only large-scale mappa mundi to survive completely in relatively good condition, which may be due to its portability as an altarpiece rather than being attached to a wall.

The surviving maps, both large and small, have similar features, including text labels, created for literate viewers and meant to be transmitted orally to others. Primacy of orality in medieval culture makes translation of text to speech a significant process. The Church relied on literate priests and others to orally spread the word of God which was presented as a narrative in the Bible. Ong explores how the shift from orality to literacy has affected culture and religion and writes that reading a text aloud, as medieval priests would have done, creates a communal experience and that the act of speaking words gives power to the speaker and significance to the words. The act of speaking was considered more significant than reading and orally performing Church texts would have emphasized their importance.

---

87 Woodward, 286.
88 Ong, 46.
Both reading the Bible and the world map would have involved some form of narrative. Any story that was gleaned from the *mappae mundi* would have changed with each reader but would always end with the Last Judgement, a prominent theme in the period and signified by the seated figure of Christ at the very top of the map.\(^8^9\) Different narratives were possible because they depended on the reader's knowledge of events depicted and because the map does not present a linear narrative as a text would. The viewer was free to read the map from left to right, right to left, bottom to top, top to bottom, working in a spiral out from the center or vice versa. The pictorial nature of the map allows for these variations while providing a suggested method of reading at the same time through the devices of emphasis, colour and style. Such freedom allowed the viewer of the map to consider different historical and biblical stories from the same map. One can trace the story of Moses, including the parting of the Red Sea, as well as the story of Noah’s Ark and the division of the earth between his three sons, and many other stories by following the visual cues given in assorted icons on the image map.

One of the organizing principles of *mappae mundi* is the use of space and especially the placement of elements relative to the centre where Jerusalem was placed. Camille explores the visual rejection of subject matter by placing it outside the main area of the page.\(^9^0\) By extending this theory to maps it is possible to postulate that the mapmaker marginalized unacceptable components such as monsters by placing them at the edges of both the page and the world. However, the space of the map functions differently than the space of the page because the map’s function is to represent space while the page operates as a stage for the text. Perhaps medieval mapmakers placed these creatures outside the

---

\(^8^9\) Kline, 4.  
\(^9^0\) This theme is thoroughly explored in Camille’s *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art.*
known world in order to establish a relation to the centre that was not based on a
d judgement of value but rather a known/unknown continuum.

One of the maps found in Lambert of St. Omer’s Liber Floridus c. 1120 (fig. 7)
supports such an interpretation as the known world is placed on the left-hand side of a
two-page spread and all the unknown world is on the right. The known world is separated
by a body of water and also the gutter of the book itself. Here the separation does not imply
a value judgement, since both continents are equal in size, and the left/right placement
does not seem to indicate hierarchy. On the other hand, both of the Psalter maps separate
the world into three parts with almost two-thirds of the world containing mostly unknown
territory. As with the Liber Floridus, there is description in the unexplored places on the text
map, and the continents are separated by thick lines. On the image map all the spaces are
filled in similar ways, with text labels and pictorial icons, except for Africa where the
monstrous races are found separated from the rest of the world by a thick blue line. While
this division does not necessarily indicate a clear value judgement between the spaces,
control is exercised in separating the known and the unknown. This placement is used both
to separate the unknown from the known and to pull the unknown into the known world
while keeping their connection visible.91

Monsters relegated to the edges of mappae mundi serve two purposes which concur
with Camille’s theory of progressive annotation in marginal decoration. First, they serve to
fill empty spaces left on the maps because of unknown areas.92 These monsters are similar
to those found on the margins of earlier manuscripts in that they were often related to the
larger document but were not necessarily created to provide further information. Second,

92 Edson, Mapping, 16.
monsters represent the diversity and power of God’s creativity.\textsuperscript{93} From marginal illustration on both maps and manuscripts, they began to be used to provide more information related to the main object. The monsters on the edge were meant to augment the elements on the interior of the map, just as the marginal illuminations annotate the text of manuscripts.

Theories of marginality explore how the space of the page is itself an organizing principle in the creation of texts and images and their meaning. A very different type of organizing principle is the grid which allows for exact, stable locations and meanings for elements on the page. \textit{Mappae mundi} operate differently than grid based maps because they organize space according to different goals; they do not only organize space but also history, religion and earth sciences. \textit{Mappae mundi} are ultimately more complex because of the variety in the applied organizing principles such as size, relation to the centre, colour, and shape. Although proximity to the centre will be dealt with in detail later, size, colour and shape were used in the following general ways.

The size of elements on the map was typically proportionate to the size available on the medium. For the most part the continents are divided more or less equally and filled with city and regional names. While places are sometimes represented in a geographically proportionate size, many were not. On the image map the Red Sea runs through half the diameter of the world and is wider than any other body of water including the Mediterranean Sea. The size of the Red Sea emphasizes the immensity of Moses’ feat in parting it during the Exodus from Egypt.

The colour of elements on maps were often part of a schema, but because this schema was not standardized between different maps they required further explanation.

\textsuperscript{93} Edson, \textit{Mapping}, 16.
For example, the later Walsperger map (c. 1448) includes text explaining that the earth is white, the rivers blue, the mountains variegated, Christian cities red and the "cities of infidels", as it calls the Muslim-dominated settlements, are black.\textsuperscript{94} It appears that the colours used could be meaningful but that meaning was not consistent within the \textit{mappae mundi} tradition except for the depiction of water which was always blue or green and the Red Sea which, as the name would imply, was painted red. Examples, like the Bayeux Tapestry (c. 1070), exist in medieval graphic artworks, however, where colour does not seem to have been employed systematically.\textsuperscript{95}

Shapes were treated in a similar manner with no established iconography for different features on the maps. The symbols used to denote cities often appeared as silhouettes of buildings but the "realism varied depending on the mapmaker's familiarity with the place."\textsuperscript{96} The fact that these shapes showed varying levels of realism implies that the mapmaker's ruling concern was not to create a systematic sign for towns in general but to indicate something particular about a place, perhaps a historical or geographical fact, like the type of building present in a town or features of the local terrain. Obviously these organizing principles operate very differently than the grid which is useful only for plotting locations in space but tells nothing of events which occur in space through time.

The conflation of time allows these maps to depict a miniature history of the world by representing different biblical episodes and locations simultaneously. Alternatively, other maps describe an area in one moment of time, usually the present. For these maps a specific moment in time is most significant while \textit{mappae mundi} are concerned with lapsed

\textsuperscript{94} Woodward, 325.
\textsuperscript{96} Woodward, 326.
time. They present knowledge gathered over time in a way that emphasizes the chronological period through which events take place. In this way the medieval “Christian concept of the world as a temporal phenomenon, derived from the simultaneous creation of time and space as described in Genesis, inspired a mapping which would show both dimensions.”

The conflation of time and place is also evident in classical travel descriptions, a few examples being the journeys of Dionysos, Herakles, Odysseus and Aeneas. Such texts serve to map the geographical space of the world as well as place events, real or imagined, in the realm of human experience and understanding. The collapsing or expanding of time lines, the inclusion of real places in largely imaginative accounts and the placement of fantastical locations into known landscapes are all strategies used in ancient travel literature. One clear difference between this earlier tradition and medieval mapmaking practices is that the Greeks and Romans used literature rather than visual means to do so; although it is possible that they also created maps similar to *mappae mundi* that do not survive. When this conflation is done in literature, contradictions are often less noticeable than when they are presented visually. Examples are clear from the *Iliad* in which at least one soldier is reported dead twice. Just like *mappae mundi*, perhaps these works do not aim to be ‘correct’ in that way but have different objectives.

Maps and images are better suited to describing space because the visual mode relates to how humans navigate through space employing eyesight and depth perception, while text is more useful for conveying narrative because it can describe events through time in a short space. *Mappae mundi* present events simultaneously and cannot provide as much detail as text or present a clear chronology. A map relies on images in order to

---

create an index or legend to impart information. This is clear in the use of wavy lines to represent water, castles to indicate cities and so on but it also depends on text to provide specific details about features such as their names. Whereas images can function equally well without text and vice versa, maps require a mixture of both. If space is best described by images and time is best represented by text then it follows that *mappae mundi* must combine the two. In his advocacy of cartography as art, Arthur Robinson describes each *mappa mundi* as a “graphic essay” and emphasizes that the creation of every map requires “[t]he selection of scale, of tones and colours, the manipulation of the data, the allocation of emphasis, the development of figure-ground relationships.”99 These graphic essays were strongly connected to text, through the labelling of cities and geographical elements as well as their frequent placement in manuscripts.

As noted earlier, nearly four times as many manuscript *mappae mundi* of varying levels of detail survive as non-manuscript maps. Two of the most highly detailed and interesting world maps from manuscripts are found in the Map Psalter on the recto and verso of a single page, corresponding to each other through elements of design and content. The context and form of these maps require an overview of illuminated Psalter production in the thirteenth-century in order to fully understand them.

---

Chapter Four: The Maps of the Map Psalter

Creation of a thirteenth-century psalm book

The thirteenth-century was a period of change in the production of manuscripts. As the activity of monastic scriptoria declined, production increased in secular workshops centred upon university towns like Cambridge, Oxford and London. Franciscan and Dominican friars, who had come to England from Italy in the 1220s, were at the height of their power and influence in universities and at court during the reigns of King Henry III and King Edward I. These friars held prominent posts at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, two of the most important institutions for manuscript production. The illustrated initial at the beginning of Psalm 101 often depicts the patron of the book and in the Map Psalter a Benedictine monk is shown kneeling in prayer while Christ watches from above (B.L., Add. MS 28681 f. 118v). The litany found in the text is also Benedictine indicating that this psalter may have been made for the illustrated monk.

There may have also been a Court School connected with Westminster Abbey as suggested by comparisons in the style and execution of manuscripts from thirteenth-century London, although no archival evidence has been found to support this claim. Presumably it would have been in this Court School, or another London-based workshop connected with Westminster, that the Map Psalter was produced. The inclusion of a London calendar, indicating special Church celebrations specific to London, and the stylistic

100 Morgan, 12.
101 Morgan, 9.
103 Morgan, 23.
connections between the *mappa mundi* and other work by London artists helps to locate the map’s origin. The calendar also mentions St. Erkenwald, a seventh-century bishop from London. It is possible that the image map was copied from the large murals painted on the walls of Westminster Palace and Winchester Great Hall. The issue of material loss becomes especially relevant in this case, as it is impossible now to compare the smaller map with the lost wall paintings. While the image map appears extraordinary in its design and execution, there is no way to know if it is truly unique or was part of a larger tradition of similar *mappae mundi* as there remains only archival information describing the wall murals in a summary way without stating what they depicted.

The creation of a manuscript was a time-consuming and expensive endeavour. Once parchment was bought and/or prepared, manuscript pages were carefully planned. The scribe plotted the borders for blocks of illustration and ruled the guide lines for text. The text was added first and then the illustrations. Although the text was completed before illustration, prolific illuminators sometimes made recopying the text necessary when sections of text were covered by the image. On the image map, the angel on Christ’s right occupies the very edge of the frame and his right wing disappears behind it with his head and nimbus covering most of his left wing. The other angel moves forward, away from the frame which his wings overlap, and towards Christ. This dynamic placement must have been decided after the frame was plotted as two vertical and two horizontal lines are visible through his wings which are left uncoloured. The arrangement of Christ and the angels creates three levels of depth with the angel on Christ’s right in the far background, the other

104 Morgan, 23.
105 Whitfield, 18.
angel in the middle background, and Christ in the near background.

The world itself is a circle that pushes out from the frame, overlapping on the right and left hand sides and occupying the space in front of Christ. Whatever the initial plan of the illustrator, the whole design is shifted closer to the left than the right, making all of the elements on the left side overlap the frame more than on the right. Perhaps the angel on Christ’s right was meant to have his wings outside the frame as well but the shift on the page made this difficult because of the space needed for binding.

Illuminations in manuscripts were usually drawn in hard point using a stylus or graphite to create the design and later inked over. After the image was sketched, the gold leaf was applied before the other colours as the process was messy and often required excess gold to be cut off of the parchment. Next the design was filled with colour washes, and finally dark ink was used to outline the forms and to denote folds in fabric. This outline was also used around gilding to provide a smooth edge.108 This process was time-consuming and often the work was divided up between multiple artists.

Pattern books or other exemplars could be employed at the request of a patron, to save time, to continue a literary tradition or to hide one’s lack of artistic ability. Designs could be transferred from pattern books by pricking the desired image and using pounce to create an outline on the new page.109 Tracing paper, made of extra thin parchment or a membrane of glue, was also used in the Late Middle Ages. Both of these techniques would produce a same-sized copy, so the artist would still need to scale down the image considerably if the original was a wall mural and the copy was meant for a manuscript.

108 Alexander, 42.
109 Alexander, 50.
wide range of influential sources were used for illumination, apart from previous manuscripts, artists turned to wall painting, stained glass, metal work and sculpture.\textsuperscript{110}

Psalters were the most widely illuminated texts in in the Early Gothic period (1250-1285). Over time, the illustrations moved progressively to the borders of pages, the initials of new paragraphs and line endings rather than occupying separate miniature vignettes preceding the text.\textsuperscript{111} The earliest illustrated psalters had very little decoration which was mainly contained in separate vignettes. When these vignettes were included, other types of decoration, such as historiated initials, were often omitted and vice versa. Historiated initials are oversized single letters that contain illustrations of a person or scene and are often a different colour than the rest of the text. The Map Psalter contains both full-page illustrations and historiated initials which was uncommon except in the richest psalters. The abundance of illumination in the Map Psalter indicates the wealth of its owner and the skill of its maker. Many factors determined the final outcome of an illuminated psalter: the individual tastes of patrons, their wealth and status, the ability and training of the artist and the availability of materials such as semi-precious stones for pigments and access to source materials, whether Biblical or pagan precedents. As psalters were often created for individuals, their personal taste must have been taken into account. The amount that the patron could afford to spend on the commission of the book also determined the type of materials used and the level of skill of the scribe and illustrator hired to create it. Finally, the location and connections of the workshop and artist largely determined the access to sources for reference during the psalter’s creation.

Psalter books contained a Church Calendar, Psalms, Canticles, Litany and often the

\textsuperscript{110} Morgan, 20.  
\textsuperscript{111} Morgan, 13.
Psalter of the Virgin and the Office of the Dead with extra material added at the request of the patron. The image map is preceded by several images of the life of Christ, a calendar that lists Saint Days, and two full-page images: one of Christ enthroned with the symbols of the four evangelists and another of the Virgin and Child. While the calendar is considered original along with the world maps, the images of Christ were probably added later in the thirteenth-century.\textsuperscript{112}

The psalter was the most popular book for private devotion until the fifteenth-century when the Book of Hours surpassed it.\textsuperscript{113} It consisted of one hundred and fifty psalms which were to be recited throughout the week, and over time antiphons, Collects, Lessons, Litany of the Saints, a Calendar, hymns and other responses were added. The psalms were divided in the text by historiated initials and in some places blank pages. The order of the division varied over time, beginning with three sections of fifty psalms in early Irish and German psalters and the later Roman method of dividing the psalms into eight sections, each a reading to be done at matins every day of the week and the last section containing the weekly reading to be done at vespers each day.\textsuperscript{114} English psalters, such as the Map Psalter, combined the two methods into a ten-parted division. In addition to the historiated initials, cycles of illustration from the life of Christ or King David were common and can be seen in the earlier Cotton Psalter (B.L., MS Cotton Tiberias C. vi). Although the Psalms were taken from the Old Testament and attributed to King David, Christ was believed to be his descendant and the new king as set out in the New Testament.\textsuperscript{115}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{112} Edson, \textit{Mapping}, 137.
\bibitem{114} Calkins, 208.
\bibitem{115} Calkins, 212.
\end{thebibliography}
Psalters were most likely created for private use by individuals rather than shared as Bibles were in monasteries. These psalters were intended for monastic or clerical patrons and noble laymen who were more powerful and wealthy than the general Church population. The use of Anglo-Norman French in the Winchester Psalter (B.L. Cotton Nero C.iv), in particular, indicates that the reader was most likely more comfortable with this language rather than Latin, the official language of the Church and academia. The folios were divided into two columns with the French version of the psalm in one and the Latin in the other. Having both texts side by side would be particularly useful for learning to read Latin, the other main use for psalter books.

When attempting to determine the patronage of psalters, or at least the possible class of the patron, considering the material used to supplement the Psalm texts can be useful because these selections vary depending on the social class of the patron.\textsuperscript{116} Information about who created and who commissioned these manuscripts has also been preserved in text documents such as monastic chronicles, tax rolls, and legal records, although none of these sources mention the image map.\textsuperscript{117} The types of images illuminated, particularly the inclusion of full-page world maps and certainly the historiated initial with a monk, presumably indicate the interests of the patron. The inclusion of the full-page image and text maps in such a small book point to their importance to the patron and it is possible to hypothesize at least two uses for the book as a result of their addition.

First, the text could have been used as an educational resource, with the world maps used to teach geography, history and mythology and to reinforce Christian theology. It would follow, then, that the book was given to a younger individual who was still engaged in

\textsuperscript{116} Morgan, 11.
\textsuperscript{117} Alexander, 4.
studies and could be aided by such a tool or an advanced scholar who might continue to reference them as he studied. In the scholarly tradition of Hugh of St. Victor, these maps could have functioned as mnemonic devices, used to stimulate memory. The second possibility is that the patron of the book was connected to the court, had seen Henry III’s *mappa mundi* mural and wished to have his own version of it. The replication, if that is what it is, could have been motivated by a desire to show support for the king in mirroring his tastes, but the maps themselves are certainly interesting enough objects that they may have been recreated or created for their own sake.

**The image map and the text map**

The image map is significant for several reasons. It was one of the earliest maps to place Jerusalem at the centre of the world, to illustrate Biblical events and the monstrous races in Africa. The image map depicts two River Niles, or rather the extension of the River Nile into the west, a convention also seen on the Ebstorf and Hereford maps. Odd though it may seem, this elongation of the waterway was due to the report of a great river in Africa that ran across the whole of the continent, and Pliny as well as other authors assumed that the Nile was one portion of this river. Interestingly, the Thames and the Severn Rivers are also shown and London is marked with a gold circle. These inclusions on such a small map with so large a geographic scope points to a London-based workshop and it has been suggested by the staff at the British Library that this manuscript was created at Westminster. 

118 Whitfield, 18.
119 The British Library’s online exhibition entry for the Map Psalter
The image map is placed on the opposite side of a text map which may be in part a reference guide listing cities in Europe.120 Some of the names included in the list are not located on the mappae mundi which is not uncommon in these reference guides.121 Names added to the list but not found on the image map include: Wasconia (Gascony), Pictavia, Neustria, Francia, Allemannia, Saxonia, Gotia, Wadelia, and Bulgaria. Some of the settlements that appear in both lists demonstrate alternative spelling: Jazarom appears on the map form and Thazarom in the text version. Notably, England and its surrounds are still featured even in the limited list, with Canterbury, Dublin and St. Andrew’s included. The place names may be ordered to correspond with their spot on the map but they could also be arranged according to a travel route beginning in the south-east and ending in the north-west. They appear to be organized by landmarks rather than latitude and longitude, with the places listed in order to prepare travellers for the cities they would encounter in each region as they follow popular routes.122 While these itinerary-based maps were not one of the more common types, their persistence indicates that this mode of cartographic presentation remained meaningful for viewers even after other, more seemingly logical maps were created.123 The European section of the text map may have been influenced by pilgrimage routes and itineria but the cities listed do not form a clear travel route nor do they seem to match any known pilgrimage route. Perhaps this list highlights some of the more historically and religiously significant cities found on the continent. Each city could serve to prompt the viewer to recall important information connected to that location.

121 Bevan and Phillott, xliv.  
123 Edson, Mapping, 137.
On the other side of the page, the image map "transformed the schematic circular disk into the visual encyclopedia...it developed the theological dimension of the image of the world, clearly visible in the figure of Christ both dominating the world and symbolically holding in his hand a small T-O globe."124 Although the image of Christ Pantokrator, ruler of the whole world, was popular in Byzantine art it was mainly connected to Last Judgement scenes in the West. Here Christ Pantokrator brings judgement to the entire world but there is no direct reference to the end of days. Christ stands behind the earth leaning over towards the viewer. His arms are raised and he holds in his left hand a small red orb with the T-O schema painted in white. In this way the T-O motif is repeated at least twice, once on the globe by the usual demarcation of the rivers and again in the small globe. It could also be argued that Christ’s cruciform nimbus, although inverted, forms a third instance of the T-O design.

With his right hand, Christ folds his second and fourth finger; keeping the first and third straight to form the sign of blessing. The gesture can be traced to the Roman orator’s gesture for speaking or the right to speak. He wears a blue robe with a white banded collar and a red mantle with a white hem. This is the reverse of the more common arrangement of red robe and blue mantle in manuscript representations of Christ, like the illuminated initial from a Psalter from Peterborough (Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 12, fol. 12v) and the Melisende Psalter (BL, Egerton 1139, f. 5v). His red mantle may be explained by the setting in the night time sky; if Christ was dressed in a traditional blue robe then he would have blended in with the background. The sky is a deep blue with a pattern of three small dots arranged in an inverted triangle to simulate stars. This blue is possibly lapis lazuli, the most

124 Whitfield, 18.
expensive pigment available and reserved for the wealthiest clients.¹²⁵

Christ’s raised hands point to the two thuribles being enthusiastically swung by two angels flanking him. The thuribles themselves are outlined with a dark brown and remaining pigment on the left vessel indicates that they may have been painted or gilded original. They are carefully drawn and show a concern for realism through the accurate representation of a footed bottom, an overall rosette design and the clear separation between the two halves showing that they are hinged in order to allow the addition of incense. The censers hang on three red cords and are swung with both hands by the angels. Another full page illumination in the same psalter depicts the Madonna and child (fig. 8) with similar angels enthusiastically swinging thuribles above their heads. The thuribles connect the image to the liturgy and worship, as they are gently swung to allow air to circulate the fumes of burning incense as the incense bearers lead the procession at the beginning and end of mass.¹²⁶ The burning of incense was done to cleanse the sacred space. Perhaps in this image the incense is meant to help cleanse the world as Christ blesses it.

On the text map, however, are four angels who do not hold anything. Instead they gesture towards the figure as if presenting him to the world. Although the figure has a nimbus there is no cruciform in it, instead it is decorated with a band of blue close to his head surrounded by a band of the natural parchment colour edged with small circles, implying a milgrain detail. There are a few possible interpretations of this figure. It seems unlikely that the figure is Christ as he appears without the cruciform nimbus which he

¹²⁵ Alexander, 40.
wears on the image map, but the possibility cannot be ruled out as there are other examples of Christ appearing with a plain nimbus. Another possible reading is that the figure is God or the Trinity represented in a single body. The figure has a beard indicating that he is older and his nimbus has three separate levels of decoration, perhaps a subtle nod to his identity. A final interpretation is that the figure represents Adam, the first man. This identification is based on a more total reading of the page, as there is no particular attribute of the figure that connects to Adam directly. Adam, however, would be a suitable figure to preside over the text map because he was the one to name all the animals of the world (Genesis 2:20) and the map is essentially a list of names. His name is also an acrostic for the four directions of the earth in Greek (Anatole, Dysis, Arctos, and Mesembria) and out of this association came the idea that the world literally grew out of Adam’s body. On the text map it appears that the figure is cradling the world, but perhaps his arms are simply lying along his sides which have become the earth. This interpretation does not explain the presence of the four angels flying around him, but there does not seem to be a clear explanation for their presence in any of the possible readings of the figure. Adam does seem to be the most likely reading of the figure, possibly giving a chronological aspect to the two maps, as Christ is often called the new Adam, making the image map a representation of the world after Christ and the text map the world before his coming. The ambiguity of the evidence, along with the brevity of this study, however, do not allow for a conclusive reading of the figure.

On both versions of the map, two-legged dragons, wyverns, are depicted at the bottom of the page below the earth. On the text map, the figure steps on the heads of the wyverns, crushing them in a literal depiction of Genesis 3:13 where Christ is said to crush the serpent of Satan. His embrace of the world is reminiscent of the Christ on the Ebstorf map with both presenting similar but different connections between the figure and the earth. The Ebstorf Christ forms a true cross as his arms and legs piercing the earth indicating that his body has become joined with the world. The figure from the text map, however, appears to remain separate from the earth, instead assuming a protective position as he encircles it in his arms. The combination of the crushed serpents and the similar arrangement on the Ebstorf map may implicate the figure as Christ, but the attributes remain unclear and it is impossible to claim any certain identity for the figure.

On the text page there are four angels, two flanking the man on each side. Two of the angels float near the top of the page with no lower bodies visible and their wings filling the corner of the design. It seems that the illuminator placed the design closer to the right than the left of the set box and the angel on the upper right fills his corner while the upper left angel’s wings do not touch the border’s edge. The angels below these two are slightly smaller and full length. The lower angel on the left appears to be hunched over and his feet touch the figure’s right hand. The lower right-hand angel is more upright and does not touch him. The robes and feet of these lower angels fill the space between the round earth and square frame. These angels do not carry any identifying attributes but gesture towards the central figure. They could represent messengers of God or Christ, presenting the saviour to the world, if the figure is Christ. Alternatively, they could be aiding Christ in the final judgement as he divides the world into the redeemed and the damned. A final
possibility is that they are included to denote the divine nature of the figure, whether he is Adam, Christ or God.

On the image map, the angels fly just behind the world and their robes fill the empty space and then disappear behind the sphere. The robes and feet of both sets of angels are designed to fill the awkward spandrel-shape formed between the round world and the rectangular frame on the top half of the illustration while the rope and floral tails of the wyverns fulfill this function for the bottom half. In both cases, supernatural animals are used to fill the outer edges of the visual cosmography; filling the marginal spaces with imaginative beings much as classical and medieval scholars filled the corners of the earth with fantastic creatures.
Chapter Five: Britannia, the Antipodes and Other Creatures at the Edge

The beginning of the Antipodes

The word “antipodes” refers to a plottable place, a relative location and a group of people. The myth of the Antipodes began in classical times as a fictional space which represented the unknown parts of the world. The first recorded use of the term Antipodes is found in Plato's dialogue *Timaeus* which explores different aspects of the universe including its physical nature.\(^{129}\) Plato explains the nature of light and heavy through the idea of above and below in a relational world, in this metaphor he explains that the world is a sphere and so the idea of opposite or antipode is always relational. Plato attempts to work outside binaries by explaining the relativity of things like “up” and “down” in a spherical world which does not work simply in opposition but rather through a network of connections. Cleomedes, an astronomer (first c. BCE) writes in accordance with Plato that “the footprints of all who walk the earth must face directly toward the center of the Earth” and so it follows that the earth's spherical form creates a particular kind of relationship along its circumference between things on the surface.\(^{130}\)

Different ancient authors, however, provided different views of the Antipodes. For example, Strabo (first c. BCE) stated that the Antipodes exist only as a relative relationship rather than particular location.\(^{131}\) While none of his original works survive, Crates of Mallos (second c. BCE) is referenced by another astronomer, Geminus (first c. BCE), writing that there were four land masses on the earth: Perioikoi, Antipodes, Oikoumene and Antioikoi.

\(^{129}\) Goldie, 12.
These land masses were divided by two oceans forming a cross and all of them were thought to be inhabited.\textsuperscript{132} Obviously the Antipodes were not a relational concept to Crates but a plottable location. The fact that he saw the world divided into quarters is interesting since it makes the landmasses geometrically related to one another.

Goldie postulates that Greeks and Romans thought the Antipodes were opposite to themselves but were also very similar in terrain and people.\textsuperscript{133} In this way, it was similar to examining one’s reflection in a mirror; a reverse image is presented but rather than everything being completely different the reflection was more of a counterpart: “the structural device, in addition to correspondence therefore, is continuity - a transference from one idea to another to create a plane of connection.”\textsuperscript{134} The Antipodes were always opposite but near, a part of rather than divided from the Greeks and Romans or the Britons. A plane of connection is also found in the physical reality of the two maps, as they share a single page and the same subject is presented, although in different ways, on each map.

The Greeks and Romans were concerned with questions such as whether or not the Antipodes had means of communication and if so why had they not been in contact. The prevailing factor in the confusion about the Antipodes was the lack of knowledge of the world beyond the \textit{oikoumene} which Aristotle defined as extending from the “Pillars of Hercules to the Far East of India” and was surrounded by water. He also believed that it was possible that other regions were inhabited but there was no way to confirm this belief.\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{133} Goldie, 16.
\textsuperscript{134} Goldie, 16.
Posidonius (second c. BCE), a Stoic from the School of Rhodes, stated that all the “earth is inhabited because Nature loves life and abhors a vacuum” supporting a theory that life existed in all parts of the earth.\textsuperscript{136} Alternatively, zonal models separate the earth into five zones with two frigid poles and a torrid equator where life cannot be supported there. If the Antipodes are inhabited in the zonal model they must exist in the temperate bands between the poles and the equator. Parmenides (fifth c. BCE), Eratosthenes (third c. BCE) and Aristotle all supported this latter model. Polybius (second c. BCE), stated that he was not sure whether the continent of Europe continued or was surrounded by the sea, but any account given without further exploration should not be trusted, as it would be a mere projection due to the lack of proper knowledge.\textsuperscript{137}

In the first-century BCE, Cicero used the idea of the Antipodes in his rhetoric to show the limit of Roman power. At a time when rulers presented themselves as holders of the \textit{orbis terrarum}, a symbol of their rule over the entire world, Cicero used the Antipodes as an example of an entire continent untouched by Roman power.\textsuperscript{138} In a similar effort, Pliny the Elder (23-79), in his \textit{Natural History}, meant to show people how inconsequential their place in the world was by making clear how small the area of inhabitable land was in contrast to the size of the earth. And in turn, the earth takes up only a fraction of the vast universe.\textsuperscript{139} In later Christian scholarship, such as the \textit{Topographia Christiana} by Cosmas Indicopleustes, an Egyptian priest (early sixth c.), attempted to quiet questions about man’s place in the universe and God’s creations. Cosmas writes that through God’s will man has

\textsuperscript{136} Goldie, 27.
been exalted above all other beings.\textsuperscript{140} Pliny’s text, on the other hand, implied to later Christians that man was not the greatest of God’s creations. Hiatt writes that “antipodal spaces mark the boundaries of political power and in so doing consolidate it.”\textsuperscript{141} By existing outside of accepted knowledge and possibly remaining unknowable, the Antipodes distinguish the limit of human understanding and political power.

Pliny wrote that the ocean was large and uncharted which is why contact with the Antipodes was impeded. To add to this problem, the torrid zone was also thought to be impassable so there was no way to navigate the world in its entirety.\textsuperscript{142} Cleomedes agreed that there were physical barriers between the known world and the Antipodes but he also presented a new type of impediment – namely sea monsters in the ocean between the two.\textsuperscript{143} Sea monsters were not commonly presented as the main barrier of communication between the main land and the Antipodes but they were depicted on a variety of \textit{mappae mundi}.

Classical views of the Antipodes stated that they were the most remote location in relation to one’s own position. In this way, the Antipodes are by definition the furthest spot away from ‘here’: “it is as though the very logic at the basis of their speculations about the Antipodes, combined with that wholly imaginary space, breeds multiplicities: places, humans, and voices, the latter nevertheless failing to speak back to their Greek and Roman projections and plosives.”\textsuperscript{144} While the reference is to the Greek and Roman tradition here, a

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{140} Cosmas Indicopleustes, \textit{Topographia Christiana}, trans. John Watson MacCrindle (London: Hakluyt Society, 1897), Book 10, 348.
\item \textsuperscript{141} Alfred Hiatt, \textit{Terra Incognita: Mapping the Antipodes Before 1600}, (Chicago: Chicago UP, 2008) 8.
\item \textsuperscript{142} HN 2.68.
\item \textsuperscript{143} Cleomedes, 37.
\item \textsuperscript{144} Goldie, 8.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
similar statement can be made about later European scholars as evident through the multiplicity of views on the Antipodes in the medieval period.

**The medieval Antipodes**

Comparison and relation to oneself has always been central in examination of the Antipodes and scholars in the Middle Ages were no exception.\(^{145}\) Goldie attempts to apply Sedgwick’s theory of ‘besides’ rather than ‘opposite’ to the relationship between the Antipodes and Europeans in the Middle Ages in order to avoid oppositional understandings.\(^{146}\) Rather than forming a binary pair of Europe and the Antipodes, he suggests that their relationship was one of alternate similarity. The premise of “besides” is that two parts need not be opposite completely, just divergent enough to be able to help define each other. The Antipodes are particularly appropriate for this model because of the ambiguity of the position and character of the Antipodes.\(^{147}\) Before moving on from the notion of “besides”, it seems necessary to call attention to the unique nature of the Psalter and text maps. They physically manifest the concept of “besides” because they occupy two sides of the same folio and are very similar in their frames and their subject matter, diverging only in the form that their content takes which in turn distinctively shapes what information is presented. Seen together, these two maps make clear the differences and similarities between image-reliant mapmaking and text-based geographic description, two of the main forms of geography in the Middle Ages.

\(^{145}\) Goldie, 4.  
\(^{146}\) Goldie, 5.  
\(^{147}\) Goldie, 5.
The continued ambiguity of the Antipodes was, in fact, one of their defining features. Whether a people or a place, they changed to suit the needs of the non-Antipodal group. It is clear that “the antipodes embody a mobile potential and therefore extend and alter their metageographical preconceptions in ways that set the world into disorienting motion.”\textsuperscript{148} The Antipodes were Antipodal precisely because they were unknown. Hiatt writes that the “...inhabitable spaces beyond the known world were characterized by their unknowability, by their essential alterity, their “there”-ness.”\textsuperscript{149} Not only were the Antipodes disorienting but they were constantly unknowable and so no sense of them, categorically, could be made.

Medieval scholars of the Antipodes, such as Lambert of St. Omer and Roger Bacon, worked from ancient sources with the added and sometimes contradictory input of the Bible. Travel continued to take place which brought back fresh information as well. The crusades provided the opportunity for thousands of people to travel, first to Jerusalem and the eastern Mediterranean and later to other sites, such as Constantinople and Egypt, rather than undiscovered territories.\textsuperscript{150} Christian missionaries also worked in countries such as Lithuania, Russia, and Hungary in the thirteenth-century. There remained a general confusion about the locations and relationship of the Antipodes to European peoples. This can be read through the exclusion or seemingly last-minute inclusion of the Antipodes on medieval maps. Often, the Antipodes are excluded as a people on maps because their existence was still widely debated. The same can be said about the land mass called the Antipodes which was often thought to be non-existent, difficult to locate or uninhabitable, which explains why the Antipodes are not found on the image map. In the instances when

\textsuperscript{148} Goldie, 9.
\textsuperscript{149} Hiatt, 10.
\textsuperscript{150} Phillips, 36-43.
an area labelled the Antipodes was included, its location is inconsistent. The Antipodes created disorientation about their location, one’s own location, what the relation was between the two, and whether or not communication and interaction was possible.\(^{151}\)

Isidore writes in his *Etymologies* that beyond the three known regions of the world “there exists a fourth part, beyond the Ocean, further in land toward the south, which is unknown to us because of the burning heat of the sun; within its borders are said to live the legendary Antipodes.”\(^ {152}\) Isidore presents conflicting ideas about the Antipodes in his work, first that their existence is “no account to be believed in, because neither the solidity nor the central space of the earth allows this.”\(^ {153}\) Later he writes that the “legendary Antipodes” exist and are inhabited “beyond the Ocean, further inland” without the West having direct knowledge of them because of the scorching heat.\(^ {154}\) Finally he speaks of Antipodes in Libya who are people whose feet grow backwards as a take on the meaning of ‘opposite feet’, the direct translation of antipode.\(^ {155}\)

Lambert of St. Omer in *The Liber Floridus* (ca. 1120) relates that another continent named Auster does exist, which has opposite seasons from Europe; a description often reserved for the Antipodes. He writes that other people claim it is inhabited but he does not take responsibility for the idea. On a map in *The Liber Floridus*, Lambert an island is labelled the Antipodes and includes this inscription “Here the Antipodes of us live, but they endure a different night and contrary days and summer as well.”\(^ {156}\) This statement indicates their

\(^{151}\) Goldie, 38.
\(^{152}\) Isidore, XIV.v.17.
\(^{153}\) Isidore, IX.ii.133.
\(^{154}\) Isidore, XIV.v.17.
\(^{155}\) Isidore, XI.iii.24.
\(^{156}\) Lambert of St. Omer, *Liber Floridus*, Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Ms. Cod. Guelf. 1 Gud. Lat., fols. 69v-70r.
necessary relationship to the Europeans as contrary but they do still experience night and
day as well as seasons which implies their connection to the Europeans. While they
experience alternate cycles, they are basically the same. This account agrees with the use of
“besides” rather than opposite to describe the relationship between the Antipodes and the
Europeans.

Lambert's *mappa mundi* (fig. 7) places the Antipodes in an outer band of water also
occupied by Eden and the island of Thule, from English mythology. They are separated from
the known world and so seem to encircle, rather than have a meaningful relation to the
continents inside the sea.  

Goldie points out that its location on the map near Auster, thought to be Australia, in the southwest agrees with the comments about the seasons and
day/night cycles. The island of Thule, which is supposed to be the northernmost island, is
also in this cluster of land. Here the geography becomes confusing, either the mythic
location of Thule is incorrect or the placement of islands on the outer edge is unconnected
to the land masses inside the Great Ocean. Thus, the relation between the islands on the
outside edge is also called into question. If these lands fall outside of the central map and
do not follow the same organizing principles, in this case geographic location, then it is
tempting to apply ideas of marginality to these features. Michael Camille theorizes that the
margins of medieval texts were spaces of exploration outside of the main text while still
maintaining a connection to it. 

Images in the margin are often used to emphasize a
certain aspect of the main image. Perhaps in this case, attention is brought to the accessible
locations shown on the main area of the map compared to the remote places on the outer
rim. Alternatively, the outside lands may have been used as pictorial prompts for myths that

157 Goldie, 48.
158 Camille, 21.
were difficult to locate in the known world. These myths of Adam and Eve, the English Thule and the ancient Antipodes would be difficult at best to plot reliably on a map of the known world. Including them as a border around the *oikoumene* retains their importance to the Britons without committing to their physical location in the world. This placement also provides a visual connection between the hard to plot places and other places at the edge such as Britain. John Block Friedman thought that illuminators were interested in the creative freedom that the unknown presented and the margin provided, which is why it was filled in the way it was and perhaps it was this freedom that allowed for the representation of unknown locations.\textsuperscript{159}

Some medieval scholars did not believe that the Antipodes existed at all, while there was still a group of “theologians, philosophers, illuminators, and others” who thought that they did.\textsuperscript{160} One of the reasons why the two groups were so divided was because belief in the Antipodes was thought to go against Church-sanctioned beliefs. Medieval church dogma ruled that the southern lands were uninhabited and those that presented otherwise were going against, or at least outside, Church-sanctioned beliefs. For Christians the “denial of the Antipodes consolidated the space and the history of Christianity by showing where the faith had not gone, and could not go.”\textsuperscript{161} The Christian church, however, never formally condemned the existence of the Antipodes.\textsuperscript{162}

There were in fact three different views of the Southern hemisphere, assuming this is indeed where the Antipodes were located. The first theory can be traced to the Greek philosophers Parmenides, Eratosthenes, and Aristotle and the Roman scholar Martianus

\begin{flushright}
160 Goldie, 49.
161 Hiatt, 8.
162 Phillips, 12.
\end{flushright}
(fifth c.), who contended that the Antipodes were inhabited but could not be reached because the Equatorial Zone was unreachable. This theory contradicts the Bible because this would mean that Adam and Noah’s descendants could not have reached these places in the South nor could Christ’s word have been there. Paul in Romans 10:17-18 states that “their sounds hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world”\cite{163}. The second theory was that no landmass existed in the South, but rather it was completely covered with water. The final view argued for a landmass that was probably uninhabited because of extreme weather, either hot or cold, due to the position of the sun\cite{164}. These last two theories were deemed acceptable by the Church because they did not contradict the Biblical account of the spread of Christianity.

Robertus Anglicus (thirteenth c.) found a way to work around the Church’s objections in his commentary on Sacrobosco, writing that there are people living in India and other places at the equator and, therefore, the torrid zone could not block all travel or habitation\cite{165}. If the equator was no longer thought to be too hot and dry for travel or life then Adam’s offspring and Christ’s word could have made it to the Southern temperate zone and so Christian doctrine could allow for its inhabitance.

The Bible and ancient sources were the main authorities for geographical information and discrepancies between the two required compromise and careful consideration. The result that “emerged was not a single uniform response to the idea of the Antipodes but ambiguous ones: instead of denial alone, uncertainty, compromise – and

\begin{footnotes}
163 Goldie, 50.
164 Goldie, 49.
\end{footnotes}
fictionalization.” Instead of rejecting the idea of the Antipodes, as a people or as a place, medieval scholars formed new hybrid projections of what and who lived beyond the known world. In this dynamic:

The relationship of medieval visual and literary culture to unknown space was not one of closure, apprehension, or uniform rejection: it was fundamentally dialogic. And that relationship was transformed but not erased by processes of political, cultural, and intellectual change that took place from the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.

This exploration of the Antipodes has made it clear that, whether or not they existed as a people or a land, they took up the position of “beside” the Europeans rather than opposite them. The Antipodes do not appear to be monstrous, but are humans living in a different area of the world which operates within the same universe, experiencing day and night and the four seasons just at different times than the Europeans. So if the Antipodes are not monsters, why is their examination included in an analysis of monsters on mappae mundi and in a larger consideration of the uses of these maps? It is because the monsters on maps, such as the image map, are treated similarly to the Antipodes. While the monsters are not humans, just as the Antipodes are not Europeans there is an essential connection, a similarity in form, habitat and experience that ties the two groups together and were used to aid identity formation.

---

166 Hiatt, 65. Also quoted in Goldie, 50.
167 Hiatt, 9.
Britannia on the edge

Anglo-Saxons analyzed their relationship to the Antipodes as one way of attempting to situate themselves in the world. Many writers attempted to make sense of Britain's position in the world and in the Christian church. Gildas, a sixth-century priest and contemporary British historian, wrote that Britain is located “on almost the utmost border of the earth, towards the south and west, and poised in the Divine balance.”\(^{168}\) Gildas implied that while it was far from the centre, Jerusalem and Rome, it was still in an advantageous position. For many, the English Channel divided Britain from the rest of Europe and the Christian empire both physically and metaphorically. The island was considered to be in the distant North. In fact it was “located at the edge of civilization, a last, lonely outpost before the ‘uncrossable’ sea.”\(^{169}\) Civilization here should be understood as synonymous with the Christian Empire. It was also described as “an island of the ocean divided from the orbe of the world by the sea flowing between them.”\(^{170}\) The term “orbe of the world” refers to the \textit{oikoumene} as a physical location but could also refer to the orb held by Christ to show his rule in sculpture and painting, a pagan tradition begun in the classical period.

On a twelfth-century map from St. John's College of Oxford (17, fol. 6r, fig. 9), Britannia is placed in the band dividing the rest of the world from other more mythical places. While both Hibernia and Thule are outside the band, Britannia is placed on the defining circle. It seems that an important distinction has been made and perhaps the importance of Britannia as the only land mass in the shape-defining space needs to be

\(^{169}\) Mittman, 23.
\(^{170}\) Isidore, 9.2.102.
considered. God was thought of as an architect with Jerusalem at the centre of his creation. The geographer follows the Holy example, measuring carefully and (re)constructing the earth with its cities and people.\textsuperscript{171} In this case, Britannia is also involved in this process as its position visually helps to define the earth.

Some historians are eager to make connections between England and other areas on the edge. Mittman makes tenuous connections between England and another location removed from the Christian empire, namely Africa. Citing Geoffrey Monmouth’s \textit{British History} (c. 1136) and the story of the creation of a monument which included giants carrying huge stones from Africa to be set up in Ireland, he tries to prove that the Britons felt an affinity with Africa. Perhaps this points to the idea that giants could exist in both lands, but it does not make a solid connection between the two cultures. More likely “the conceptual connection between England and Africa was clearer in the minds of medieval artists and writers than it has been to modern audiences” as he writes but perhaps the modern audience reads too much into the connection.\textsuperscript{172} While Britons may have shared feelings of being outside the centre with Africans of the time, it seems unlikely that they felt a strong affinity with them. They may have felt that they were on the edge of the Christian empire, but that does not mean that Britons felt others were in the same position.

The location of the Britons within the Christian empire was of great importance to their sense of identity and it has been suggested that they harboured “a discomfort with their own location, geographically and spiritually.”\textsuperscript{173} Apart from their distance from the main centres of their religion, their own history seemed to create a divide between them.

\textsuperscript{171} Mittman, 35.\textsuperscript{172} Mittman, 43.\textsuperscript{173} Mittman, 46.
and Christian perfection. In the seventh-century, the Synod of Whitby went so far as to suggest that the English and Irish could not reach “full Christian unity and harmony” because of unique practices found in these places related to their pagan past.\textsuperscript{174} Germanic religion and superstitions survived in the converted Anglo-Saxon groups, as demonstrated through the continued creation and use of rune sticks to ward off evil creatures such as elves, trolls and ogres.\textsuperscript{175} One eleventh-century copy of Bede’s \textit{Ecclesiastical History} (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 41) contains magical charms used for practical purposes, such as improving personal health or safety. This progressive mixing of pagan and Christian beliefs was common in Anglo-Saxon England when Christian rituals had a similar desired outcome to an already existing pagan ritual.\textsuperscript{176}

England itself appears to be half thrust into and half cultivating the liminal position of the edge. There is no denying that the Britons were located at the edge of the Christian empire, whether they chose to be or not, but it also seems to be a place they took up themselves. It is interesting that English mapmakers would place themselves at the edge of their own maps. It becomes clear that Jerusalem is the centre of the Christian world and it follows that Britain is found at some distance from this geographically. But the map could have been reoriented to shift Britain’s position from the edge to somewhere more central. Aside from geographical correctness, it seems possible that locating oneself on the periphery is, in fact, a form of humility on the part of the mapmaker.

Beyond making the most of it, they make the edge an advantageous place to be. The edge is a dangerous place certainly, but it also pushes the Anglo-Saxons to the forefront of

\textsuperscript{174} Mittman, 46.
\textsuperscript{175} Mittman, 66.
discovery and expansion. Religion, even with the heavy influence of Christianity, was somewhat fluid at the edge of the empire, mixing with the pagan indigenous religion. This fluidity, while freeing, also leads to a hyper attention to borders in order to maintain some definition of self. So what about monsters found near Britannia on maps and in local accounts? Both are part of the fluid nature of the edge, the acceptance of non-Biblical creatures living amongst or near Christian settlements points to flexibility in their system of belief. But the monsters also perform a restricting function, limiting and defining what it is that ties the Britons to other Christian Europeans and sets them apart from the rest of God’s creations.

**Marginality and Symbolic Location**

On the Hereford map, Adam and Eve enter the world on a margin, signalling their fall from grace. The margin appears to be the beginning of the imperfect world but it should be noticed that Eden is also found in the margin. These two extremes then, the miraculous and the monstrous, are located in the liminal zone, forming a boundary for the world.\footnote{Mittman, 48.} Eden, just like England, is separated from the known world by a band of water. Another interpretation of the exile from Eden scene on this map refers to the metaphoric narrative that Adam and Eve, and with them all humans, have become monsters since their fall from grace and so enter the area where monsters exist.\footnote{Mittman, 50.} The margin continues to be a liminal space, with a fire-breathing creature just above Eden and below Christ sitting in Judgement at the top of the map. Here Christ is flanked by four angels within his immediate space, marked by borders in red and blue. These angels are depicted similarly to those on the text.
map, with only their head and torsos shown as they gesture towards Christ. They may be Thrones, angels who support the throne of God and are in the service of Christ, as mentioned in Colossians 1:14-20. These angels differ from those on the text map, however, through their connection to the throne as the red and blue borders which Christ sits on flow from the point where their torsos meet the border of the image.

In an attempt to explain the concern with margins and borders that appear in mappae mundi and manuscript illumination Eviatar Zerubavel writes that “a particular obsession with boundaries usually characterizes groups that perceive themselves as minorities in constant danger of extinction.”\textsuperscript{179} The Anglo-Saxons had many real threats to their continued existence as a cultural group including the encroaching Celts and Picts as well as in the form of giants and cannibals which were thought to exist locally.\textsuperscript{180} Evidence for giants in the Bible exists in the form of Goliath. Giants were also a part of Anglo-Saxon mythology used to explain the existence of large scale pre-historic and Roman buildings considered too large for human construction.\textsuperscript{181} Monsters, then, existed on the edges of the settlements, threatening to come inside Anglo-Saxon territory, which was reflected on mappae mundi by including fantastic creatures on the inside and outside of the map.

Relation to the edge was not the only form of spatial organization employed on mappae mundi. From the ninth-century onwards “the idea of the T as a crucifix superimposed on the spherical earth, symbolizing its salvation by Christ’s sacrifice” was well-known.\textsuperscript{182} On the Hereford map, Christ raises his hands to display his stigmata wounds.

\textsuperscript{180} Mitman, 58.
\textsuperscript{181} Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, \textit{Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages}, (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1999) 5.
\textsuperscript{182} Edson, \textit{Mapping}, 5.
On his right are the souls of the saved and on his left the souls of the damned.\textsuperscript{183} It is no surprise to find the monstrous races of Africa on the left hand side as their grotesque bodies and cultures do not seem likely candidates for redemption.\textsuperscript{184} On the Ebstorf map (fig. 10), Christ’s hand “bursts out of the midst of Southern Africa, teeming with monstrous, possibly soulless races of men.”\textsuperscript{185} The Ebstorf map depicts Britain on the viewer’s left, Christ’s right, and is “thrust almost under Christ’s feet, far from the North Pole.”\textsuperscript{186} This placement is at odds with the many descriptions and maps of Britain that indicate its placement in the far north. It has been suggested that Isidore’s map places Britain, this time on the viewer’s right and Christ’s left, on the side of Hell.\textsuperscript{187} There are two problems with this theory however. Firstly, if Britain is on the side of Hell, all of Europe would be as well. This seems unlikely as that would include places like Rome which were considered corner stones of the Church. Secondly, and most importantly, Christ is not shown on this map and it does not seem to follow the Judgement type plans of the others. Edson makes it clear in her study that Isidore is working from pagan models which would be completely unconcerned with the crucifixion connection of later T-O maps.

Similar to the T-shape, the O-form also brought added meaning to the \textit{mappae mundi}. The image map, along with many other \textit{mappae mundi}, places Jerusalem at the center and roughly works outward in a bull’s eye pattern with the newer Christian settlements further away from Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{188} It appears that the viewer could read time and the progress of Christianity this way, with Britain being the newest and furthest Christian space on the map.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Mitman, 21.
\item Mitman, 23.
\item Mitman, 23.
\item Mitman, 23.
\item Mitman, 23.
\item Mitman, 23.
\item Mitman, 23.
\item Mitman, 39.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
If this is correct then further exploration and colonization could be explained as a natural continuation of the spread of Christianity.

In support of this theory, Jerusalem was considered at the centre of knowledge production via the Bible in the Middle Ages. The next most influential sites were Greece and Rome, represented through ancient sources. Finally, Britain housed contemporary scholars who processed established knowledge and had to contend with new information pouring in from the outside. Their unique position, according to *mappae mundi* between the known and the unknown geographically and chronologically, lends them privilege rather than disadvantage as they are now the discoverers of the world.

One concern for Christian scholars, such as Cosmas Indicopleustes, was a theory of progression that worked chronologically from East to West. This theory charted the rise and fall of four empires moving from East to West, Cosmas writes that man was created in the East and told to progress towards the West.¹⁸⁹ This theory implied that Rome, the furthest empire West, was to be the last of the successful the empires and that the end of the world may be imminent.¹⁹⁰ The theory is also found in the Bible in the metaphor of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream as described in Daniel 2. In this passage, Nebuchadnezzar dreams of a large figure with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, middle and thighs of bronze, legs and part of the feet in iron and the rest of the feet in clay. This figure embodies the East to West theory by linking progressing eras with materials of increasing worth. In this case the materials are linked with the empires of Babylon, the Medes, the Persians, the Greeks (Philip and Alexander specifically) and the Romans. Again the Romans are the last empire

¹⁸⁹ Cosmas Indicopleustes, Book 5, 151.
mentioned as the head of gold. An addendum, however, comes in the claim that the next kingdom, not described in the figure, is to be established by God and will be indestructible.
Chapter Six: Maps, Monsters and the Marvellous

Marvels and monsters

Anxiety about the place and importance of Anglo-Saxon clergy in relation to Rome and Jerusalem may account for the popularity of world maps. Viewers would use these maps to situate themselves geographically and metaphorically in God’s plan. One can imagine a spectrum in the medieval mind with the perfection of God at one end and the epitome of evil and monstrosity at the other. On this scale the human viewer rests somewhere in the middle. Thus, both God and monsters are necessary for human self-identification, and humans and divine beings are needed to distinguish monsters. Mittman writes that “once proper people, plants, animals, divine and demonic beings have been accounted for, what remains are the oddities of creation...the monsters.” Real “Others” were available in the form of Picts, Celts, Vikings and Danes, but the urge to go one step further remained in the differentiating game of self-identification. It seems that their “self-perceived exile from Anglo-Saxon Continental Europe...compelled [them] to surround themselves with images of even more disparate Others, monsters that, through their extreme outlandishness, cast their creators as paragons of normality.” The Anglo-Saxons saved themselves from being the farthest creatures from the centre of the religious and cultural world by creating monstrous Others who existed beyond them on the very edge. The monsters’ disparate natures emphasized the Anglo-Saxons’ affinity with the centre rather than the edge.

191 Mittman, 4.
192 Mittman, 5.
193 Mittman, 6.
Anglo-Saxon origin mythology chronicles the exile of their people to England. One example of this exile history is found in *The Historia Brittonum* by Nennius (c. 800) which relates that the Anglo-Saxons had to leave Germany and settled in Britain. These myths indicate a heritage of hybridity because of the mixing of the Saxons, the Angles and the Jutes along with the Romans to form the Britons of Nennius’ age. Old English with its mixture of Latin characters and German runes is one example of this hybridity. Notably there is a theme of wild beasts in the origin stories. Gildas in *De excidio Britonum* (c. 550) wrote that the Anglo-Saxons were “wild beasts” and their enemies are “wild barbarian beasts”. It is clear that he does not find much difference between the two and elsewhere he compares them to worms. Nennius also writes that Gog and Magog were the founders of the nation who fought the giants out of Briton. Gog and Magog appear to be supernatural beings themselves, and were possibly even giants. Eventually Gog, Magog and their descendants died out and the noble Hengest (stallion) and Horsa (horse) founded Anglo-Saxon Briton. Both founders have animal names leading some scholars to go so far as to suggest they were actually centaurs or fauni, the latter of which are not really horses at all, by citing the centaur and fauni found on the Hereford map as proof of this connection. However, it seems more likely that the centaur and fauni are representations of classical myths, since they are located among other classically inspired features, such as the Golden Fleece found in the northern part of Asia.

---

195 Nennius, 5.
196 Mittman, 14.
197 Mittman, 14.
199 Mittman, 15.
There exists a tendency to give the Other, like giants, a grotesque body, or a grotesque culture, as with cannibals. When one assumption proves wrong, then the other can be an acceptable substitute to maintain the Other’s disgusting nature. One example is Christopher Columbus who, in his explorations, found the Caribbean people to be similar and, most importantly, as beautiful as his own people, an unforeseen circumstance. Soon, however, reports of cannibalism in the Caribbean began to spread. Geography was often thought to indicate something more about the person than just where they can be found. Roger Bacon quoted the Neo-Platonist Porphyry: “place is the beginning of our origin, just as a father.” Just as a father determines certain traits in his offspring, so does geographic location.

This does not mean that all monsters were thought to exist only in distant, exotic places however. There were dangers both real and imagined in the nature surrounding the settlements and Anglo-Saxons believed the woods were inhabited by monsters. An example of a more local monster is the Maestapa, or border walker, found in Beowulf. He walks and swims and is said to live in the home of sea-monsters at the beginning of the tale. Later, however, he is said to live on “the moors, the fen, and the stronghold,” all locations near and familiar to English settlements. Fens and bogs, often home to monsters in mythology, were considered hybrid because they contain both water and earth. This inherent dual nature made them the natural birthplace for hybrid creatures. The process

---

200 Mittman, 16.
204 Beowulf, l. 103.
205 Mittman, 148.
of interchanging and hybridizing forms can be seen in illuminated letters from manuscripts which combine plants and animals and are part of a wider movement in medieval thought. The hybrid creations often blur the boundaries between their respective characteristics with leafy skin and tails made of vines, like the wyverns found on the text map in the Map Psalter. The wyvern on the left side has a tail that curls up towards the angel, and as his tail lengthens it tapers and resembling a rope. The wyvern on the right side has a tale that sprouts out into floral decorations which fills the space left between the rectangular frame and the circular globe. This wyvern also has wings with fluffy feathers that resemble an eagle’s, while the rope wyvern has lighter wings, resembling those of the angels nearby. The wyverns on the map page are similar to the eagle-winged wyvern and have tails that flow into floral patterns. This type of hybrid wyvern is also common in other manuscripts such as a Book of Hours (Walters Art Gallery Baltimore, MS 82 fol. 193v) and the early twelfth-century edition of Josephus’ Antiquities (St. John’s College, Cambridge, MS A.8 fol. 1r). Hybrid natures were not confined to plants and wildlife. Medieval men could be transformed into hybrid monsters like the warg and werewolf if they unknowingly ate poisonous food or were cursed by someone powerful. In his Topography of Ireland Giraldus Cambrensis, commonly known as Gerald of Wales, writes of a werewolf couple from Ossory who had been cursed by a saint and abbot to take on the form of a wolf every seven years. This account is written as a historic rather than mythic episode, indicating a belief in the possibility of supernatural transformation.

206 Mittman, 147.
Local monsters represent real threats in everyday life for viewers of *mappae mundi*, as even the upper class were often familiar only with the area near their homes. Travel was much more difficult in the Middle Ages than it is now and many people never ventured far from their homes. Monks took a vow not to travel called *stabilitas loci*, especially the Benedictines. Instead they practiced a different kind of travel, the *perigrinatio in stabilitate*, meaning pilgrimage without movement.\(^{208}\) Maps were used by these individuals as objects for devotion and to aid in their *perigrinatio in stabilitate*. By following a route on the map and recalling the tales of different locations on it the viewer could experience travel through their imagination. The inclusion of the monstrous races on this map could represent the belief that these monsters did exist in the world, possibly as evidence of God’s imagination as suggested by Augustine.\(^{209}\) The *mappae mundi* may not have been useful for actual travel as they did not include many natural features other than water and few roadways, but they did provide pilgrimage sites, the locations of Biblical events, other points of interest and monsters for the contemplation of the viewer. Since they contained no signs of other religions, such as mosques or temples, these maps clearly were tailored for Christian viewers.\(^{210}\)

Apart from meditative travel, maps were used to help make sense of the world, to locate oneself spatially, socially, and religiously. They were an illustration of mythology that was not limited to one story, such as creation, but that could be used to tell all stories. They were a tool to jog the memory and guide the reader through their own mythologies, both Christian and pagan, scientific, religious and social by the inclusion of significant places and

\(^{208}\) Mittman, 31.  
\(^{210}\) Mittman, 51.
figures: “the construction of a map involves not merely the representation of the world but its definition.” In this process of world definition there was also a process of self-definition. Britain’s position in this projection was uncertain because of its distance from the centre of the Christian empire and lack of Christian history, comparatively speaking.

Interest in monsters, close to home and otherwise, was popular in the Middle Ages. Augustine relates the term monster to the Latin monstro which he translates as to demonstrate and uses this as proof that God demonstrates his power on the bodies of his creations. This agrees with the medieval idea that monstrosity was a demonstration of inner deformity such as sin and guilt. Physical deformity was thought to be a bodily sign of or punishment for sin and was a marker of guilt in the Middle Ages. Guilt of a crime was shown through missing body parts, taken as both punishment and a form of permanent branding. Isidore, on the other hand, relates monster to the Latin moneo, meaning “to warn”. While it might be said that physical deformity warns of inner deformity there is a clear difference between the two. Something that requires a warning has a distinctly negative tone while stating that something is a demonstration is more neutral.

Roger Bacon wrote in “Geographica”, a section of his Opus majus (c.1268), “in accordance with the diversity of places is the diversity of things and not only is this true in the things of nature, but in those of morals and of the sciences, as we see in the case of men that they have different manners according to the diversity of regions and busy themselves

211 Mittman, 32, 53.
213 Mittman, 90.
214 Mittman, 91.
215 Isidore, 244.
in different arts and sciences.” Bacon explains that geography affects all other aspects of life on earth including culture and physiognomy. On the Hereford map the majority of monsters are found around the edge of the land masses with a few located inland; on the image map, however, all the monsters are contained to the edge. The Hereford monsters are not restricted to Africa, thereby indicating that the unknown was not restricted to just this region but were found throughout the world. This encroachment of monsters in human territory does not allow for an ‘us vs. them’ dichotomy and the situation is further complicated by the presence of human limbs on monstrous bodies. Again the “besides” rather than “opposite” framework seems more appropriate to describe the monster-human relationship. The connections between monsters and humans are emphasized by their hybrid bodies and shared domains. Hybrid monsters include minotaurs, mermaids, fauni and sphinxes, all of which incorporate animal or monstrous forms with human appendages. This hybridity problematizes the “us vs. them” dichotomy because these creatures are simultaneously us and them. Just like the Maestapa, these creatures are found in many various locales that are not exclusively inhabited by monsters which make them difficult to define geographically. These liminal monsters fuel the impulse to define all the more because they resist definition.

Monsters in the ancient world

Monsters in the Middle Ages were used as a way to explore unknown and possibly

216 Bacon, 300-301.
217 Mittman, 39.
218 Mittman, 45.
219 Mittman, 46.
220 Mittman, 54.
unknowable people, places and things similar to the way the Antipodes functioned. Just as the Antipodes have a classical origin, so do many of the monsters that appear on the outer edges of the image map. In ancient Greece, monsters were often used as a form of warning or sign. Many Greek myths, including those of Medusa and Arachne, serve as cautionary tales against hubristic and unnatural behaviour. Medusa and Arachne were transformed into monstrous beings due to their unacceptable behaviour towards the gods; Medusa refused her uncle Poseidon’s sexual advances and Arachne boasted of her superior spinning skills to Athena, the goddess of the craft. Both of these women were swiftly punished with deformed bodies: Medusa’s mane of snakes and Arachne's spider body. Their punishments were personal but also visible to others. These defiant women made monstrous are examples of the definition of the word monster taken from the Latin root *moneo*, meaning to warn, as well as *monstrum*, referring to an evil omen or sign and *monstro*, meaning to show or instruct.221 Their deformities function as visible markers of their evil ways and warn others of the consequences for disobedience.

Christian traditions maintained this view as evident in the Vienna Genesis, an eleventh-century German poem that retells the Genesis story, not to be confused with the manuscript of the same name from the sixth-century. In the text, Adam’s offspring refused to listen to his warning against eating certain herbs and gave birth to monstrous children who had “heads like those of dogs; some had mouths on their breasts...Some had such large ears that they covered themselves with them. One had a single foot, very large; with it he

---

ran quickly as the animals in the forest.”

This description is taken almost verbatim from several of Pliny’s descriptions of the monstrous races in his *Natural History*. The author of the Vienna Genesis goes on, however, to identify the source of their extraordinary appearance. He writes that “the descendants displayed on their bodies what the forebears had earned by their misdeeds. As the fathers had been inwardly, so the children were outwardly.” So the children of Adam’s wayward descendants paid physically for their parents’ crimes of disrespect and willfulness in eating the herbs, not dissimilar from Adam and Eve’s own act of defiance, eating forbidden fruit, which led to their exile from Eden.

Pliny’s *Natural History* is a principal source on the monstrous that was employed in the Middle Ages. The seventh book describes where and what sorts of monsters can be found on earth, borrowing from Homer’s *Odyssey* and Ctesias’ *Indika*, which survived through Photius of Constantinople’s writings. Pliny added a lot of information that is not found in either of these sources, however, adding his own opinions and stories from contemporary sources.

Book Seven of *Natural History* conducts a geographical survey of places not often visited by the average Roman including India and Africa. Although Pliny attempts to situate these miraculous beings by naming their settlements and relative locations, much confusion arises from his geographical descriptions, largely the result of Pliny’s conflation of Ethiopia with India: “India, and the region of Æthiopia more especially, abounds in

---

223 These descriptions are found throughout *HN* Book 7.
225 Friedman, 5.
wonders." Again Pliny builds on traditions begun with Homer and Ctesias who had intermixed the two locations and peoples in their narratives. Perhaps, like the Antipodes, the physical location was less important than the idea that these creatures were to be found elsewhere, outside the oikoumene.

The wonders Pliny discusses, most often called the monstrous races, range from mainly human bodies with slightly altered appendages or size differences to animal-human hybrids to entirely fantastic creatures. On the shallow end of the marvellous scale are the humans who exhibit slightly irregular bodies or abilities. These include the tribes of the Cyrni who live to four hundred years, the Gymnetae who also live extraordinarily long, and the Pandores who live for two hundred years and are born with white hair which grows darker as they age. The Pandore women, however, have extra short life spans; they become fertile at seven and old at forty, having children only once during their lives. Similarly, the Calingae tribe of India also consists of women who conceive at five years of age and die in their eighth year.

Another interesting, but not particularly monstrous, feature in itself is that of the above or below average size of giants and pygmies who serve as the two poles of the abnormal size-scale. Pygmies, according to Pliny, live in the highest mountains and are only twenty-seven inches tall. Quoting Homer, he writes that they fight with cranes and destroy their eggs and baby birds every spring in order to protect their habitat and food sources. The pygmies are so small that they build nest-like houses out of mud, feathers and eggshell.

---

226 HN 7.2.
227 The Cyrni, Gymnetae, Pandores, Calingae are described in HN 7.2.
or possibly live in caves as Aristotle writes.\textsuperscript{228} Jordanus, in his thirteenth-century version of\textit{The Wonders of the East}, describes pygmies as short men the size of four year olds with
shaggy hair all over their bodies who live in the woods of Java.\textsuperscript{229} He writes that on the same
island there are persons, it is unclear whether he still refers to the pygmies or other people,
who eat “white and fat men when they can get them.”\textsuperscript{230} This seems a far cry from their
battles with birds but the pygmies were generally acknowledged to be fierce despite their
size and were adept with clubs or bows.

At the other end of the spectrum are various types of giants found in both Pliny and
Christian texts. These include the infamous Gog and Magog, previously discussed, Goliath
and a race of cyclopes featured in Homer’s\textit{Odyssey} and confirmed in Pliny’s\textit{Natural History},
the Arimaspi. Giants are described as being large, having only one eye and man-eating. Gog
and Magog as well as the Arimaspi represent everything civilized Christians and Romans
were not. They are often described as cannibalistic, incestuous, and lawless, and this
characterization allowed for both Christians and Romans to confirm their own identity as
properly natural, sexually respectful and law abiding. Less innocuous than the beings with
prolonged life or enlarged or missing appendages, the pygmies and, even more so, the
giants are deemed dangerous. That their physical deformity appears to have little to do
with their villainy is interesting. Rather their habits, especially cannibalism, mark them as
monstrous and while it is not awful to be too large or too small, their physical size is
perhaps the visible mark of their awful habits.

\textsuperscript{228} HN 7.2.
\textsuperscript{230} Jordanus, 31.
Some beings described as men had nearly regular appearances except for alterations in particular limbs. Pliny wrote that Baeton, a surveyor for Alexander the Great in the fourth-century BCE, described men with their feet on backwards, although it is worth noting that he does not call them Antipodes. Reportedly, Baeton could not bring any of these men back for Alexander to see because they could only survive in their own climate in a valley called Abarimon at the foot of Mount Imaus.\textsuperscript{231} Another race with backwards feet live on Mount Nulo, but these people have eight toes on each foot adding to their irregularity.\textsuperscript{232} Both of these Antipodal groups are not greatly criticized by Pliny, who only remarks that the Abarimons mix too freely with animals. These two examples of Antipodal people, with their varying homelands and the fact that they are omitted from the image map, indicate a discomfort with identifying a specific location for them, with depicting them visually or with both, maintaining the all-important ambiguity of the Antipodes. While Antipodal people are depicted in bestiaries, they are not pictured on world maps in the thirteenth-century.\textsuperscript{233}

\textit{Wonders of the East} and \textit{Natural History} both feature man-like creatures and hybrid animal-humans, but interestingly the creatures on the image map appear more human than animal. Jordanus writes of an island found between India Tertia and India the Greater where the men have the heads of dogs, \textit{cynocephali}, and the women are very beautiful.\textsuperscript{234} Pliny tells of a similar tribe with dog heads and claws, who wear animal skins, bark rather than speak, and hunt birds for food. The Menismini, a nomad tribe who live near the river

\textsuperscript{231} HN 7.2.
\textsuperscript{232} HN 7.2.
\textsuperscript{233} Bestiary, Cambridge, University Library MS Kk.4.25, fol. 52r for one example.
\textsuperscript{234} Jordanus, 44.
Astragus in the north, live on the milk of the *cynocephali*. This tribe raises the hybrids like cattle and kills the males not used for breeding, keeping the women for milking.

Although the *cynocephali* and other hybrid creatures such as satyrs, mermaids and minotaurs, do appear with animal-human hybrid bodies in these source texts and on both the Hereford map and the Ebstorf map, they are not depicted this way on the image map. This variation in representation could be due to size as the image map measures only nine centimetres across while the Hereford map and the Ebstorf map each measure over a metre wide. The large scale of these maps allows for the inclusion of many other fantastic creatures, more figures from the classical and Christian past and even a note on the Hereford map from the mapmaker stating who made it and what it should be used for.235 The image map could not possibly contain all of this information, but it does still include a band of monstrous races on the outer edge of the map below the Nile.

**The image map and the monstrous races**

The inclusion of the monstrous races on a map where space was so limited indicates their importance and interest for the mapmaker and audience. Each figure is framed in a thin black box with alternating red and blue backgrounds in order to make their pale skin stand out. The figures themselves are outlined with a thin black line and kept simple with no clothes and spare details on their bodies. There are fourteen creatures depicted, arranged roughly in pairs either by a repetition of the monstrous type or by the position of

---

235 The inscription on the Hereford map names Richard of Holdingham or Sleaford as the creator and asks that the viewer prays for him. P.D.A. Harvey’s *Mappa Mundi: The Hereford Map* includes an in-depth analysis of the map and its creator.
their bodies.

The first pair of figures is the Anthropophagi (man-eaters) who are shown eating human legs. Pliny describes the Scythian Anthropophagi as men who eat men and drink out of human skulls and live a “ten days’ journey beyond the Borysthenes on the north shore of the Black Sea. Herodotus mentions the Issedones whose funeral rites include slaughtering herd animals and mixing them with the flesh of the deceased they form the funeral feast.236 Herodotus also writes of the man-eaters who dress like Scythians but are lawless nomads who eat only human meat and speak their own language.237 There is an apparent distinction drawn here between men who sometimes eat other men, particularly in the context of funerary rites where the intention is to honour the dead, and men who eat human flesh as a dietary staple. The latter men are considered lawless, perhaps because their monstrous dining does not follow any ritual or rules.

It is unclear on the image map whether the men are the Issedones or the more savage man-eaters due to the scant details. Perhaps the distinction mattered little to medieval audiences, although the consumption of the body for ritualistic purposes brings to mind the rite of the Eucharist in Christian services.238 In the sacrament of the Eucharist the congregation receives bread and wine believed to be either the symbolic or actual body and blood of Christ through the process of transubstantiation. At the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, it was recorded in Canon 1 that Christ was “truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine; the bread being changed by divine power into the

237 Herodotus, 4.106.
body, and the wine into the blood.” Consuming the bread and wine could then be considered a form of cannibalism, although it seems unlikely that thirteenth-century Christians associated themselves with the Issedones or Anthropophagi. What sets the acceptable rites of cannibalism apart from the unacceptable appears to be the instatement of rules and the intervention of the divine. The bread and wine can only be changed by a priest who had been ordained properly through the Church and the receiver of the Eucharist must have true faith. The intervention of Christ is necessary for transubstantiation to take place and the priest performs special prayers over the bread and wine to invoke his presence. On the other hand, the Issedones and the Anthropophagi are known to eat people, sometimes even mixing them with animals, equating the two kinds of flesh, without invoking a divine figure. The Issedones appear slightly more acceptable as they consume human flesh during funeral rites, indicating they follow some rules of cannibalistic behaviour, but they still forgo Christianity which precludes them from any substantial identification with the Britons.

The next two figures are difficult to identify because they bear few distinctive features. The first walks hunched over with long curved fingers and a hooked nose. Perhaps his hands are meant to signify claws and he is one of the dog-headed creatures that Pliny mentions. His head appears rather humanistic for this reading, however, and it is difficult to ascertain any definite deformity in him. His hunched-over position may indicate that he is in fact an Artibatirae, a group of humans that walk on all fours like animals. Next to him is another creature riding an antelope. This figure also does not present any obvious

---

irregularity other than a heavy brow ridge and a bald head, but as he rides an animal it is unlikely that he is also an Artibatirae.

The fifth and sixth figures from the bottom are much easier to define due to their distinctive bodies. They are both Blemmyae, men whose faces grow on their chest since they have no necks. Their deformity is commonly linked with a lack of reason as they want a head and hypothetically a mind with which to reason. Pliny writes that west of the Troglodytae is a tribe of men with their eyes in their shoulders, although he makes no further comment on their intelligence.240

Beside the Blemmyae is an Amyctyra, recognizable by his large protruding lower lip which curves upwards and ends in a sharp point. Apparently in conversation with the Amyctyra is a Sciapod or Monocolo who has only one leg and one foot, although it does not appear oversized here as it does in a bestiary from Cambridge (University Library, MS Kk.4.25, fol. 53r). Ctesias mentions that the Moncoli people have only one foot and can hop very quickly on it and lie on their backs and shade themselves with their foot in extreme heat.241 Although Pliny does not directly state that this foot is larger than normal, it can be understood that it is larger by the fact that they can shade themselves with it. These two creatures raise their hands while facing each other and maintain eye contact indicating their interaction.

Preparing to draw a bow is a maritime Ethiopian, a being more human than monster, who had especially keen eyesight and is often shown with two pairs of eyes to indicate this

240 HN 7.2.  
241 HN 7.2.
ability. Pliny writes that they had only one pair of eyes in reality, but the practice of depicting physical deformity continued in the visual tradition hence their inclusion in the monstrous races on *mappae mundi.* Next is a large man who kneels with a club in his hand and looks upwards with his mouth open. It is difficult to identify this creature, but he may be a giant due to his large size as he is the same height as the others although he is shown kneeling. He may also be a Trogloodyte, who were thought to live in caves and were extremely quick hunters. They are often shown with a club or blade and but are otherwise human.

The next figure is difficult to identify. He stands upright, gazing at one of his lobster claw-like hands. He has a cap and human features apart from his hands. Perhaps this creature is related to the Himantopodes (strap-feet) who have long feet “resembling thongs, upon which they move along by nature with a serpentine, crawling kind of gait” according to Pliny. Next to this figure is a Straw-drinker, who sits down drinking from a vessel with a straw. These creatures had no noses or mouths but a single orifice with which they breath and drink. Although their faces are flat, the image map and Pliny indicate that they have a human form in all other aspects.

The final two creatures are difficult to identify from their lack of distinguishing deformity. One sits cross legged with his hands and face raised upwards. His face is similar to the Straw-drinker, with no visible nose and a slit for a mouth. Possibly he is another Straw-drinker or an Atlante, who Pliny describes as having “lost all characteristics of

---

242 HN 6.35.
243 HN 5.8.
humanity; for there is no mode of distinguishing each other among them by names.”244 The artist may have made them indistinguishable by omitting defining facial features such as noses and hair. Pliny writes that they “look upon the rising and the setting sun, they give utterance to direful imprecations against it, as being deadly to themselves and their lands” which may explain why he raises his hands and face upwards.245

The final figure is shown only with a head, shoulders and a single arm as he turns to look at the other monstrous races. Again, he is hard to identify from the scant details included but the arm drawn across his chest appears to terminate in a cloven hoof. Perhaps he is related to the Hippopodes who have hooves like horses rather than feet. Once more the deformed feet are exchanged for hands, possibly because it was easier to show in such a small space.

Many of these creatures are simply human-animal hybrids and do not actually appear monstrous at first glance. The nature of their monstrosity and their location within the sphere of the earth create connections between the monsters and humans rather than divide them. The hybridity of human and animal bodies complicates the understanding of how the two groups relate to each other because a simple dichotomy is no longer appropriate to describe the situation. Their monstrosity, however, is made clear through their separation from the main land by a thin black line and their encapsulation in boxes with alternating red and blue backgrounds. These figures are kept at the very edge of world as if “at the farthest reaches of the world often occur new marvels and wonders, as though Nature plays with greater freedom secretly at the edges of the world than she does openly.

244 HN 5.8.
245 HN 5.8.
and nearer us in the middle of it.”

The cultural importance of medieval monsters

In the *Wonders of the East*, Jordanus relates that while there are Christians in distant lands, even those occupied by monstrous races, they hardly compare to those in Western Europe. Try as they might, because of their distance from the centre and their likely mingling with the monstrous races if they were not in fact a part of them, converts were prevented from true Christendom. Again physical location is a determining factor in one’s holiness and potential for redemption. The monstrous races at the very edge of the world, separated by a black line and occupying a space with blue and red backgrounds instead of the natural colour with which the rest of the world is depicted, are as far out of the world of Christianity as they can be without actually leaving the world. Other figures on the map are presented on a background of the natural colour of the parchment. Monsters, especially in the local monstrous tradition of the Britons, were “paradoxical personifications of otherness within sameness...They represent the outside that has gotten inside...” One response to these monsters who threaten to invade the community is to reject them after defining them as enemies of God and a threat to Christian society. This way the group proves that they are on the side of God and reinscribes their position as good Christians together, upholding their shared identities as a community and as Christians. The stories of Michael, the archangel, driving the dragon from heaven and St. George slaying the dragon in return for a

247 *Wonders*, 54.
king baptizing all of his subjects are two prime examples of the monster as threat to well-ordered Christian society, whether that is the ultimate Christian city of heaven or an earthly kingdom.

The mapmaker, by placing the monsters at the edge of the world, reminds the audience that the threat continues to exist and this representation both pushes the monsters to the edge of the world while pulling them into it. The idea of terror and awe, repulsion and attraction occurring simultaneously, accounts for the continued popularity of monsters and why they might appear within a book of Psalms which, in its religious function, generates similar feelings within its reader. These creatures continued in popularity because they presented opportunities for "fantasy, escapism, delight in the exercise of the imagination, and very important-fear of the unknown." In this way mappae mundi functioned similarly to modern horror films, scaring the audience while giving pleasure simultaneously. Bernard of Clairvaux, a twelfth-century Cistercian monk, wrote in his Apologia that the decoration of carved capitals in churches, especially those which showed fantastic subject matter, served only to distract the monk from God's law, which was to be understood through reading the Bible. Although these monsters appear in a Psalter book, they could also be thought to distract from the main text, as Bernard suggests, because their variety and marvelousness invites lengthy contemplation which would take focus away from the Psalms. The continued popularity of carved capitals in churches and monstrous illustrations in religious texts demonstrates, however, that not everyone agreed with Bernard.

249 Friedman, 24.
While monsters, such as the Leviathan and Behemoth, are described in the Bible, these creatures do not exist in the same power network as humans; rather they operate on the cosmic level which makes them too different to be useful in identity forming comparisons. In short, these monsters were too bound in Christian tradition with God, who is at once the ultimate creator and the ultimate destroyer of them, for them to function as foils for the Christians. Instead, less powerful monsters appear on the *mappae mundi* and in literature reflecting the desires and fears of the aristocratic audiences they were created for. These are monsters with a high-class pedigree, first mentioned in Pliny's *Natural History* and continuing to evolve from the first-century onwards. New races and variations of the originals were formed through misunderstandings in the translations of Latin and also the dividing of attributes of a singular creature into several. This process explains how creatures like the Hippopodes could be treated so fluently, leading to, for example, the exchange of hooved feet for hands on the image map.\(^{250}\)

The existence of the monstrous races was considered plausible partially through the direct knowledge of monstrous births. Children born with birth defects, such as too many or too few limbs or the presence of both male and female reproductive organs, were considered monstrous as they deviated from standard human anatomy. The importance of this standard can be found in the belief that Adam was the father of all men and was in turn made in the image of God as written in Genesis 1:27, therefore forms that deviate from the standard deviate from God. Monstrous births were understood in varying ways, from omens of evil to mistakes of nature. Augustine wrote to deny that God was capable of such a mistake and argued instead that God had intended to create such individuals, and by that

\(^{250}\) Friedman, 23.
God had also intended to create the monstrous races. Augustine uses the microcosm/macrocosm model of logic which operates on the idea that what occurs on a small scale has a direct relation to the larger universe. In *The City of God* he writes “it ought not seem absurd to us, that as in individual races there are monstrous births, so in the whole race there are monstrous races.” Augustine preferred the notion that monstrous beings were expressions of God’s imagination, which was beyond the realm of human comprehension. In this instance he seems to agree with Pliny who referred to the monstrous beings as marvellous and products of Nature’s imagination: “Nature, in her ingenuity, has created all these marvels in the human race, with others of a similar nature, as so many amusements to herself, though they appear miraculous to us.” Augustine also assigns superior intellect to the divine being stating “for God, the Creator of all, knows where and when each thing ought to be, or to have been created, because He sees the similarities and diversities which can contribute to the beauty of the whole.”

If the existence of monsters is assigned to the divine imagination and purpose then there is no need to question it any further. However, if these monsters do exist then a new problem arises in how to determine where they fit into the hierarchy of God, man, and beast. St. Augustine writes that “whoever is anywhere born a man, that is, a rational mortal animal, no matter what unusual appearance he presents in colour, movement, sound, nor how peculiar he is in some power, part, or quality of his nature, no Christian can doubt that

---

251 *De civ. D.* 16.8.
252 *De civ. D.* 16.8.
253 *HN* 7.2.
he springs from that one protoplast.” The hereditary line beginning with Adam was the privilege and curse of all humans. Augustine defines humans as rational beings who produce thought which is evident only through speech. Creatures that may appear human in other ways can still be classified as non or sub-human by their lack of language, or of a recognizable language, as in the case of the Greeks who labelled foreigners as *barbaros*, a word used to mimic the sound of their unintelligible language and lack of civility. The distinction between man and animal was central to concerns of identity, particularly for those living at the edges of the Christian empire who might feel themselves less cultivated because they were far away from cultural institutions such as the Church and the intellectual centers of the Mediterranean. Monsters were used as an Other, much as exotic animals and people were, in order to reinscribe the identities of literate Britons as Christian Europeans. The exotic and the monstrous were also considered mysterious and tantalizing in their difference, creating repulsion and attraction in the Britons.

Another issue at stake in this categorization was whether or not the monstrous races had souls, as souls were prerequisites for salvation and entry into heaven. As mentioned earlier, authors like Jordanus felt that as one moved farther from the centres of Christianity, the less likely they were to be able to become full Christians. Monsters found on the extreme edge were the least likely to achieve full salvation. However, if the monsters did possess souls and rational minds then they had a chance, however faint, to gain redemption. Finally, if the monsters were considered human than the Christians had to treat them according to the tenets laid out in the Bible. This included attempting to save their souls through preaching the Gospel as Christ proclaimed in Mark 16:15.

---

These questions surrounding the status of monsters identify issues which were relevant to the status of the Christians as well; whether their location in relation to Rome and Jerusalem affected the capacity of one’s faith, if the quality of the soul mattered in degrees of salvation and finally how they should treat strangers and unknown people from distant lands. Their exploration of the monstrous races was in many ways an alternative avenue for an exploration of their own existence as Christians at the edge of the empire, just as the concept of the Antipodes did. The Antipodes, with their position beside rather than opposite the Britons, were similar to the monstrous races that appear mostly human on the image map. These slight deviations allowed for exploration of specific elements of identity including eating habits, language, reproduction, and geographic location.
Conclusion

In true encyclopedic tradition, the image and text maps touch on areas of history, religion, identity and, of course, geography. The richness of these maps is increased by the dynamic relationship between the text and images that make up their form; it is this use of mixed-media which allows for so much information to be presented in such a small space.

Flexibility is another result of the image-text relationship, which allows the maps to have multiple uses, from mnemonic devices to reference guides for religious and secular texts to markers of the extent of political power. The text and images operate in such a way that they manage to convey information while remaining ambiguous enough to allow for multiple interpretations. Managing to combine so many different fields of study in such small objects, the *mappae mundi* in the Map Psalter undoubtedly compete for the attention of the reader, inviting them to return to the maps again and again to contemplate the diversity and magnitude of the world.

The two maps present difference through webs of connection rather than dichotomies of opposition. In a metaphorical and very physical way, these maps depict difference as never wholly different because of the shared experience that existence on earth creates. This communal experience allowed for thirteenth-century Britons to share space with their mirror-image neighbours the Antipodes, hybrid monsters in the South and to continue to look to ancient pagan authors as sources of information. It also tied the Britons to centres of culture and the Church in mainland Europe, particularly Rome and Jerusalem; a relationship which helped to shape the identity of the Christians on the edge. The maps plotted the locations of real and fantastic Others, the pillars of Western Christian
culture and the creators of the maps themselves. While they may not have been very useful as travel documents, they did much to chart the medieval cultural landscape.

So the question remains as to why one world map, never mind two, would be included at the beginning of a psalm book. Was the inclusion due to fashion set by the king? Perhaps the maps were part of a larger educational agenda? Hugh of St. Victor’s writing supports the use of text and images as seen on the maps in order to present information in a memorable way. One question leads to another, however, and the inclusion of an image-based map as well as a text-based map seems peculiar. Why were both considered necessary? Perhaps the answer lies in the information they present. The image map depicts events, geographic features and representations of monsters. A form of short-hand signs are used to mark occurrences, Adam and Eve’s fall from grace is summed up in their circular portrait and the parting of the Red Sea is noted by a small division of the sea in the south. The images become icons, representing larger ideas that would be impossible to fully describe, through text or images, on the page. The icons call to mind the familiar stories for the viewer who can then fill in the detail related to each event, feature or monster. Geographic features and fantastic creatures are more easily shown than described, so the use of icons is both about efficiency and effectiveness in conveying meaning.

Alternatively, the text map presents lists of city names in two of the three sections with no images. The lists of names function similarly to the icons on the image map, as they present significant places and leave it up to the reader to recall why each is important. The small-scale of the page necessitates that a selection of cities be made, and the cities chosen all have religious, historic, or cultural value. The third section of the map describes the relatively unexplored parts of the world following Pliny’s example; a loaded practice in
itself, which points to the long tradition of history writing. The maps were created both to plot significant people, places and things and to function as educational tools, aiding in memory and providing prompts for information on a variety of subjects which could never be fully discussed in such small spaces as these.
Bibliography


Figure 1
Image map c. 1265
British Library, Add. MS 28681, fol. 9
Figure 2
Text map, c. 1265
British Library, Add. MS 28681, fol. 9v.
Figure 3
T-O map from Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*, twelfth-century.
The British Library, Royal 12 F. IV, fol. 135v

Figure 4
Zonal map from *Macrobius’ Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, c. 1150.
Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, MS NKS 218 4°, fol. 34r
Figure 5
Peutinger Table, twelfth-century, detail, from Conradi Milleri’s copy, 1887-1888
Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna

Figure 6
Carta Pisana, c. 1275
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
Figure 7
_Mappa mundi_ in Lambert of St. Omer, _Liber Floridus_, Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Ms. Cod. Guelf. 1 Gud. Lat., fols. 69v-70r.
Figure 8
Madonna and Child, c. 1265
British Library, Add. MS 28681
Figure 9
T-O map from St. John's College MS 17, twelfth-century, MS 17, fol. 6R, St. John's College, Oxford
Figure 10
Ebstonf map, c. 1234, possibly by Gervase of Tilbury, modern reproduction
Original destroyed during World War II