CONQUEST LANDMARKS and the MEDIEVAL WORLD IMAGE

A Study in Cartography, Literature and Mythology

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Table of Contents

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CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION: The Study of Conquest Landmarks on Medieval World Maps

1 - Introduction

This study concerns the nature of medieval religious beliefs, examined though a range of symbols found on medieval world maps and in geographical texts. In an examination of medieval world maps or geographical writings, the reader will find information on such places as the pillars of Hercules, the Temple of Ammon, the Iron Gate of Alexander the Great, and the golden statues of Hercules and Dionysius. These symbols represented places that were not known from empirical evidence, as they lay outside the territory familiar to the geographers who produced them. The question raised and addressed here is: what role did these places play in the world-view presented by medieval world maps?

In order to address this question, it will be necessary to dispense with any notion of a medieval 'mind-set', or 'world-view', and avoid reducing complex systems of belief into a single and tangible concept of what was universally believed in the Middle Ages. Medieval geographical ideas could change radically over the course of fifty years or less in some cases, and differed from country to country. More importantly, they also varied according to the opinions and ideas of individual writers.

Despite these qualifications, I will be discussing what I will call a 'programme' of world-image symbolism which was a major aspect of English culture in the thirteenth century. The term 'programme' simply means a group of symbols that had meaning both singly and with reference to each other. These symbolic relationships are expressed by different writers in different ways, so the programme did not find any consistency of expression; but nonetheless it is possible to examine it as an entity, or "matter", as one would study the "matter of Britain", or the "matter of the East."

An examination of this iconographic programme on the world maps in a group that I will be defining as the 'Anglo-Norman Map Corpus' will provide the bulk of the work directly on maps in this thesis. In this chapter, I will give a definition, catalogue and description of this group of maps, and focus on questions of date, authorship and history, especially where available evidence points to links between one map and another, and thus to a widespread culture of world map production in twelfth- and thirteenth-century France and England. This will also involve looking at evidence in written sources for maps that are no longer extant, and looking at mappamundi production in other times and places so as to compare this with the production of the Anglo-Norman group. I will also review recent and important cartographic literature in this chapter.

Chapter 2 is a preliminary study of a typical landmark icon, the pillars of Hercules in the Far East. This is intended to explain and exemplify the landmark concept, and introduce the concept of 'outdoing'. 'Outdoing' is the act of going beyond the achievements of another, and was often symbolised by the creation of new landmarks, which expressed the superiority of a new achievement over its antecedents.

Chapter 3 is an examination of the general nature of depictions and descriptions of the 'ecumene' or habitable world in Classical and medieval geography, focusing on the influence of Graeco-Roman sources on the mappamundi tradition. The role of conquest landmarks in these sources will be highlighted, and much attention will be paid to the idea that the mappamundi tradition is based on the territorial monuments erected by Roman rulers in the late Republican and Augustan eras.

I will also be introducing the notion of *ekphrasis*, a Greek word which in simple terms means 'a poetic description of an artwork or other object'. *Ekphrasis* was commonly used in both Classical and medieval poetry to describe objects such as shields, tombs, palaces and painting cycles, and these descriptions often included accounts of world maps or microcosmic spaces such as temples and cities. Many of the conquest landmarks under study were used as the subject of poetic *ekphrasis* by medieval authors.

Chapter 4 continues this theme, by examining the way in which Classical and medieval writers used *ekphrasis* to depict and describe history as a symbolic monument or a richly-decorated building. I will be examining many uses of the pillar as a symbol in medieval thought, and arguing that these uses may have been related by association to the pillars of Hercules and Alexander and similar icons. I will also be focusing on the role of the pillar as a historical monument, and looking at the way in which history was used to support claims of territorial domination in both Classical and Christian texts.

These chapters are also intended to give a general overview of the nature of medieval geographical writings and their precedents in the Classical period, but I will by no means be able to introduce all of the sources used throughout the thesis here, and will introduce others as they are used throughout the text. I will focus as much as possible on literature from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries, as this is the period of the map corpus I am defining and examining.

Chapter 5 is another close study of an individual landmark, the western pillars of Hercules. Chapter 7 continues the study of individual landmarks, providing an examination of a series of icons in the northern and southern sections of medieval mappaemundi. These chapters are designed to give a full account of the development of the individual icons or motifs in question, followed by an examination of the uses of these icons in the medieval period in both literature and cartography. I will then provide a short treatment of the subsequent use or disuse of the icon after the Anglo-Norman cartographic period.[1]

Trends in the study of medieval geography and cartography

To position this work within current scholarship, it is necessary to point to a number of conceptions and attitudes that I consider problematic, and to describe a growing trend in theme-based scholarship on medieval maps, with which I will align myself.

Mappaemundi are opaque, like any medieval source. They will not reveal their secrets unless questions are asked of them based on knowledge of the information they

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[1] The content of chapters 6, 8 and 9 is described below under "landmarks and the ecumene".

contain, rather than on comparisons to our concept of a modern map. There are two forms of scholarship that I think do not perceive this appropriately.

The first form is that which sees the maps in terms of the history of scientific progress, and accordingly dismisses mappaemundi as useless. No serious student of mappaemundi has done this in some time - the last, and most often quoted, was Raymond Beazley in *The Dawn of Modern Geography* at the beginning of the century. Beazley wrote that maps such as the Hereford and Ebstorf were "futile" and "monstrous", while praising the limited medieval scholarship which worked towards the development of scientific geography, such as the work of thirteenth-century English scholar Roger Bacon.[2] Kirtland Wright challenged this view in 1925, arguing that accuracy was not the central concern of mappaemundi, although he could not resist allusions to the "preposterous inaccuracies... [that take]...us back into the atmosphere of a credulous and uncritical age."[3]

George Kimble's work of the 1930s continued the move away from Beazley's position with the observation that any man in medieval times who attempted to measure the distance from London to Jerusalem with map and ruler would have been branded a fool.[4] More recently, it has been conclusively shown that mappaemundi are essentially a closed genre, having little impact on the development of the modern map, which was a product of the integration of scientific (co-ordinate-based) and practical (observation-based) maps during the fourteenth century. The 'precursorist' viewpoint is now almost totally a thing of the past in scholarship on medieval mappaemundi, as these maps are no longer considered a major part of the history of science.

The second form of scholarship, more recent but now also in decline, is that which perceives that the map must be judged according to standards other than our own, but still persists in asking questions of the map based on modern conceptions of what a map is, rather than information contained on the maps themselves. The major objective of this scholarship is to point to perceived differences between medieval and modern geography. Thus, among the most commonly discussed topics in literature regarding mappaemundi are the questions of the sphericity of the earth, and the measurement of its circumference. Did medieval cartographers believe in a spherical earth? Did they know how far it was from Spain to India across the Atlantic?

I will be discussing these issues of shape and size briefly in chapter 3, where their relevance to the landmark theme, and the general nature of the ecumenical concept, will be explored. It should be noted, however, that such questions are based not on the content of the mappaemundi, but on the differences between a medieval map and a modern one. I am of the opinion that the initial reaction to first seeing a medieval map, which is often one of noting the differences to our own ideas of cartography, must be set aside, as we study medieval maps in reference to each other.

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[2] C. R. Beazley, *The Dawn of Modern Geography*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1897, 1901, 1906) vol. 1, 24-25, 70, 399.

[3] J. K. Wright, *The Geographical Lore of the Time of the Crusades* (New York, 1925), 43.

[4] G. Kimble, *Geography in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1938), 182.

General approaches and theme-based approaches

Maps have inherent relations to many other aspects of any given culture, and it can prove difficult for a scholar to separate specific themes from other areas of the field. This is especially true of scholarly work on the cultural interpretation of mappaemundi. Many studies of medieval geography tend to be very broad in their approach. The encyclopaedic nature of mappaemundi, coupled with their religious implications, lead the scholar of medieval maps into the field of the medieval 'world-image', which touches on many disparate areas of medieval thought. Studies such as those by Beazley, John Kirtland Wright, George Kimble and Rudolf Simek all give space to a wide variety of concerns.[5]

Similar material, also treated in a largely descriptive fashion, can be found in Bunbury and Thompson, both of whom wrote a *History of Ancient Geography*.[6] As well as being concerned with source work and history, all of these works provide information on cultural interpretation, aimed to cover a maximum number of themes - simply put, whatever is a common theme in the primary sources in question is given a mention.

Much of this kind of scholarship lets the concerns of the sources dictate those of the scholar, and such works are still useful compendiums of information. However for simple reasons of space this often means that topics that would bear treatment at length do not receive it. There is no further need for a broad compilation of the basics of medieval geography, and I align myself with the modern trend to write treatises on specific themes. I am concerned with discussing specific aspects of the medieval 'world-image', but prefer to focus on direct evidence of specific beliefs in literature rather than the totality of thought on such a large subject.

Two studies, by Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken and James Romm, are examples of theme-based treatment of pre-modern geography. Both are studies of conceptions of the boundaries of the habitable world, which is one of the themes I will be looking at in my examination of medieval belief in the unknown.[7] Another example of theme- based treatment is the mappaemundi analysis in John Friedman's *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*.[8]

Further, two volumes of articles have appeared recently at the forefront of the theme-based movement in medieval cartographic studies. These are *Discovering New Worlds* and *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages.*

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[5] R. Simek, *Heaven and Earth in the Middle Ages*, trans. A. Hall (Woodbridge, 1996).

[6] J. O. Thompson, *History of Ancient Geography* (Cambridge, 1948) and E.H. Bunbury, *A History of Ancient Geography,* 2 vols., 2nd ed. (New York, 1932).

[7] A-D. von den Brincken, *Fines Terrae: Die Ende der Erde und der Vierte Kontinent auf Mittelalterlichen Weltkarten* (Hanover, 1992); J. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought* (Princeton, 1992).

[8] J. B. Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Harvard, 1981).

These works include specific and detailed articles on Gog and Magog, the centrality of Jerusalem, chivalry in the Alexander Romances, and other concepts.[9]

Other works that should be mentioned in this context are concerned with world-image theory and the politics of the representation of space in the later Roman and medieval periods.[10] These studies are certainly more refined and narrower in their approach than those mentioned above, focusing on medieval theories of space, organisation of empire, and the religious implications of these ideas. I will be looking at this kind of work where it directly touches my own concerns - particularly the meanings of the role of the body of Christ in medieval cartography discussed by Arentzen, and the discussion of cartographic mentality and the image of the ecumene in the work of Claude Nicolet.

I will cite this kind of work in preference to more general studies. Most of the issues I am dealing with in the main chapters are too complex to allow simplification, on the grounds that it would impede understanding. Many statements made here may appear to disagree with simplified concepts put forward in basic readers.

As a result of these methodological preferences, I will be examining a selected series of map icons in considerable detail, and attempting to reveal the place of these within the history of European religious belief and the European concept of the habitable world. Given the wide range of map icons that could be subjected to a similar close examination, my choice of icons requires some explanation. To do so, I must first explain what the basic concerns of medieval geography are. I will then be arguing that the conquest landmark icons I am looking at are symbolic embodiments of these concerns.

A brief discussion of my use of the term 'icon' is in order. I do not use 'icon' in the standard sense, referring only to a religious image. I use it throughout to refer to the pictorial symbols, found on maps, that I treat as mnemonic keys to passages in literature. I have avoided using the more standard cartographic term 'symbol' to mean the same thing, as I am using the second word for a variety of other functions.

Landmarks and the T-in-O Map: Boundary, Division and Centrality

The basic medieval world map is a device known as a T-in-O map, which is essentially a circle with a central cross bar and a vertical line in the lower half, containing the names of three continents and perhaps a place-name or two. There are many hundreds of these diagrams in all kinds of manuscripts throughout Europe. The T-in-O was to become the most prevalent type of medieval world map, after its inclusion by Isidore of Seville in his influential works, *De Natura Rerum* and *Etymologies*. Surviving

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[9] S. D. Westrem, ed., *Discovering New Worlds: Essays on Medieval Exploration and Imagination* (New York, 1991), and S. Tomasch and S. Gilles, eds., *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages* (Pennsylvania, 1998).

[10] J. G. Arentzen, *Imago Mundi Cartographica: Studien zur Bildichkeit mittelalterlicher Welt- und Ökumenekarten unter besonderer Berucksichtigung des Zusammenwirkens von Text und Bild* (Munich, 1984), and C. Nicolet, *Space, Geography and Politics in the Early Roman Empire* (Michigan, 1991).

examples are found from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries, even appearing in various early printed works.

The problem with interpreting a T-in-O diagram is that it assumes a great deal of knowledge that it does not display. A well-read scholar of the thirteenth century could have used a T-in-O map to demonstrate a great number of concepts: the geographical centrality of Jerusalem and the spiritual centrality of the crucifixion; the dispersal of humanity into three groups after the great flood; the cross shape super-imposed on the world symbolising Christ's sacrifice binding and uniting the ecumenical realm; the all-encompassing ocean stream (the circle) as metaphor for the inescapable nature of death, and so on. Without the knowledge of these symbolic associations, all that will be seen is a circle with a few lines inside it.

The Hereford map, and others in the group I will be defining as the Anglo-Norman group, are based on the T-in-O structure. The area covered is the same, and it is in much the same configuration. The T-in-O structure places Asia in the East (at the top), with Europe on the left side of the down stroke, and Africa on the right - making the downstroke the Mediterranean sea, dividing these two continents. The left cross-stroke is the river Tanais, running north, and dividing Europe from Asia, and the right one the Nile, separating Africa from Asia.

The area covered is very similar to what can be seen on most detailed maps of the Anglo-Norman group. Many scholars have noted that the Hereford map and its relatives are based on the T-in-O structure. The major differences on the larger maps are that the Red Sea is included in the south-east, the Nile runs a circuit along southern Africa, and the Mediterranean swings somewhat to the right side as it runs up the middle, enlarging Europe at the expense of Africa. Apart from these differences, the general shape and content of the T-in-O is repeated in larger mappaemundi.

As well as this geographical similarity, the themes of the T-in-O map are largely the same as those of the larger maps. In simple geometric terms, it will be quickly concluded that the main concepts of the T-in-O are these: *boundary, division,* and *centrality.* I argue that these are indeed the central concerns of medieval geography, and look at the way that these concerns are embodied in T-in-O maps and related lore.

I will then look at some of the ways in which the larger maps reflect these concerns. This will involve focusing on the meaning of a particular series of icons I am calling 'conquest landmarks'. A simple definition of these features is: *structures made by humans, often with supernatural influence, that symbolise territorial boundary, division, or centrality, and mark important events in the passage of historical time.* Many of them are representative of more than one of these themes. Such icons stand evenly spaced around the perimeter of the ecumene, and at its centre, as monuments to ancient acts of inclusion, exclusion, separation and territorial claim.

While several writers have produced detailed studies of individual landmarks, these icons have never before been studied as a group.[11] Throughout the thesis I will be

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[11] Major studies of individual landmarks are Jack Lindsay, *The Clashing Gates: A Study of Early Greek Religion and Culture and the Origins of Drama* (London, 1956), and A. R. Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog, Magog and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, Mass., 1932).

highlighting evidence from maps and literature which makes clear that conquest boundary landmarks were considered in both the Classical and medieval periods to have a variety of symbolic associations with one another, forming an accepted system of world boundaries.

A list of such landmarks is provided in Appendix 1 (tables 2 to 6), where 25 maps are analysed to show the rough distribution of landmarks in the Anglo-Norman Group. I include these tables so as to be able to make generalised statements concerning the distribution of a particular landmark; I refer the reader to them as evidence, without listing examples in the text (particularly to chapters 2, 5 and 7), where I study various conquest landmarks at length.

Landmark icons are primarily of Graeco-Roman origin and were essentially one of the major ways in which pre-Christian Europe differentiated, if only on a symbolic level, between the habitable and civilised ecumene and the surrounding land of the unknown. This ecumenical system was adopted by a majority of Christian writers, as the Bible and other Christian texts provided them with little material on which to base their maps or gazetteers. The use of what is essentially a pagan system of world definition by Christian cultures created a series of tensions and paradoxes, which are my main reason for exploring these icons in detail. These issues will be introduced in the remainder of this chapter.

The term 'landmark' could be applied to a broad range of icons found on medieval mappaemundi. In this study I will be focusing almost entirely on landmarks of boundary, as my central argument concerns the definition of the boundaries of the ecumene, and also of the human condition, by a variety of kings and heroes. I will be mentioning landmarks of centrality and division only when they are directly relevant to the main theme.

Graeco-Roman landmarks on Christian world maps

In Classical times, landmarks were generally positioned at the furthest empirically-known point in any particular cardinal direction. Thus, they were a reflection of the boundaries of the Graeco-Roman world. However, in the medieval period, the Christian world was considerably smaller than the old Classical ecumene, and thus there are many references in early (pre-thirteenth-century) medieval writings to landmark icons, symbolising the boundary of the empirically known, in places where no European had been for over a thousand years.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, European travellers visited parts of Asia where two of these landmarks, the eastern pillars of Hercules and Alexander's Gate, were thought to be located. The writings of these travellers are of critical importance to the history of the landmark icons. In the case of the eastern pillars of Hercules, the landmark ceased to have relevance within the newly-emerging structure of empirical geography, and its use declines dramatically from the fourteenth century onwards. In other cases, like the treatment of Alexander's Gate in medieval texts, historical factors led to a renewed interest in the landmark and references to it in texts and maps increase during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Another source of tension surrounding these landmarks is that many of them had been erected by pagan deities or heroes, or by the rulers of empires hostile to Christendom. Mappaemundi, which for the most part show a religious and eschatological view of the world, contain many representations of the glory of pagan kings and gods. It is of great importance to recognise that the religious content of a map like the Hereford mappamundi cannot be analysed in terms of the Christian icons alone, for while these are usually larger than the Graeco-Roman icons, they are in fact far less numerous.

In chapters 3 and 4, it will be shown that the medieval concept of the ecumene, including the shape of medieval mappaemundi, is almost totally derived from Greek and Roman sources. Landmarks were a main focus of Graeco-Roman ecumenical geography, but on face value would appear to contribute little, if anything, to the Christian world view. One of the central questions addressed by this study is: What role do these icons play in the Christian world view pictured on mappaemundi?

The suggested answer to this question is that these boundary landmark icons were reminders of Christ's superiority over a previous body of 'cosmic kings': Hercules, Dionysius, and Alexander the Great. I will be examining the way in which all of these figures were thought of as the 'definers' of the habitable world. Their deeds, portrayed in art and literature, symbolised the greatest heights which the Graeco-Roman culture had reached. One of their main functions as cultural figureheads was to symbolise territorial expansion and the spread of the religious and moral values of the Greeks and Romans into uncivilised areas of the world.

The Christian synthesists who incorporated Graeco-Roman culture into the 'new ecumene' of Christendom did not do away with these hero-figures and their landmarks. Rather, they retained the memory of their deeds within a world framework that they believed had been totally conquered and defined by Christ.

Landmarks and control of the Ecumene

The word 'ecumene' requires some explanation. The Greek word *oikoumene* in archaic Greek sources means simply 'habitable world', or 'known world', and is defined by Romm in his study of its earliest archaic Greek uses as "a region made coherent by the intercommunication of its inhabitants, such that, within the radius of this region, no tribe or race is completely cut off from the peoples beyond it." (Romm, *Edges*, 37). The *oikoumene* was thus a conceptual space bound together by language and religious customs. The word continued to have this basic meaning throughout the later Greek and Roman periods.

The word was adopted by the early Christian church in the fourth and fifth centuries AD, and the title 'ecumenical council' was applied to the synods of this period. The word thus came to be associated with the geographical area in which the gospels were known, and consequently became synonymous with Christendom in later times.[12]

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[12] 'Oikoumene' in E. A. Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, 2 vols., 3rd ed. (New York, 1887), vol. 2, 797.

It is not known in English in any form until the sixteenth century, when the Ecumenical Movement flourished in England as a reaction to the divisive consequences of the Reformation. The OED, which does not mention the noun, defines the adjectival form 'ecumenical' as "belonging to or representing the whole (Christian) world" as a basic meaning for all subsequent English usage.[13] The noun is often anglicised as 'oecumene' and is also frequently italicised, but it will be used here as a normal English noun, as there is no other available word which properly describes the geographical area, or the factors which bound it together.

The dominance of Christ over the medieval ecumene is displayed graphically on mappaemundi and referred to in related texts. It is symbolised in a number of ways which I will be examining in chapter 6. This symbolic lore is based around the 'fourfold' or quadripartite layout of space and matter, which is a very common and influential concept in medieval thought, originating in Greek scientific lore and finding full expression in the Platonic scholars of the twelfth century. The appearance of the T-in-O diagram, and many related mappaemundi, is similar to a host of other scientific diagrams - *mundus annus homo* diagrams, computus charts, astro-medical charts, tidal *rotae*, and others, all of which divide and categorise their material into a quadripartite structure based around the four cardinal directions, linking them instantly to geography.

The links between these diagrams and mappaemundi have been analysed by a number of recent scholars, notably Anna Esmeijer and Evelyn Edson. Esmeijer's work, *Divina Quaternitas*, is the fullest available exposition of the various uses of the number four in medieval art and thought, including geography.[14] Edson's work, *Mapping Time and Space*, treats the subject by examinations of the manuscripts in which various maps are found, looking at the other diagrams also found in these and building up a general picture of medieval geography and the uses of the quadripartite structure.[15]

In chapter 6, I discuss this theme with reference to contemporary literature, providing examples of a large number of uses of the fourfold division of space - allegorical, theatrical, cosmological - in medieval literature, and discuss the relationship of these to mappaemundi. Throughout the thesis generally I argue that quadripartite symbolism influenced the positioning of landmarks of boundary to symbolise the cardinal points.

One of the most widespread forms of the quadripartite division of space is the use of the human body as a microcosmic metaphor for the habitable world. The four cardinal directions are equated with the four main 'directional points' of the human body, the head, the feet, and the two arms. This was originally a Classical concept, which was borrowed by Christian thinkers who connected the archetypal body with that of Christ. This has been noted in relation to medieval geography by a number of scholars, especially on discussions of various T-in-O maps that have truncated crossbars and

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[13] OED, 'Ecumenic' and 'Ecumenical'.

[14] A. Esmeijer, *Divina Quaternitas: A Preliminary Study in the Method and Application of Visual Exegesis* (Amsterdam, 1978).

[15] E. Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers viewed their World* (London, 1997).

thus look very much like a Greek Tau Cross, which was a recognised form of the cross in thirteenth-century England.

The idea of the cross superimposed on the habitable world is related to a visual motif which Esmeijer has described as *syndesmos,* a Greek word meaning 'holding together'. The *syndesmos* motif, as visible on the Ebstorf map and other figures listed in chapter 8, shows Christ holding the ecumenical structure, with his hands out to the north and south, his head visible in the east and his feet down in the west, beyond the pillars of Hercules. The motif provides a departure point for a discussion of space and directional symbolism as determined by the shape and attitude of the human body. Again, contemporary literature will be examined as much as possible to provide examples of these themes.

Throughout this work I will be suggesting that the three main themes outlined above - the Graeco-Roman landmarks, the quadripartite elemental structure borrowed from Platonism, and the Christological meanings of the *syndesmos* diagram - are blended into the structure of mappaemundi, and their meanings become part of a total programme of world-image symbolism that flourished in the Anglo-Norman period and reached its peak in the late thirteenth century. This programme is heavily involved with, and influenced by, Christian eschatology - throughout all three themes runs a consistent strand of belief in the progression of historical time, and the full story of human salvation. The role played by the system of Graeco-Roman boundary landmarks in this programme is essentially a reminder of the transient nature of human achievement. The physical accomplishments of the Classical heroes and demi-gods such as Hercules and Alexander are shown as inferior precedents of the final spiritual conquest of Christ over the ecumenical structure.

The arrangement of the chapters in this study alternates between individual landmark studies, and expositions of other themes which are related to the arrangement of boundary landmarks in a quadripartite pattern. I adopt this format rather than presenting all the landmark studies as a group so as to highlight the links between the three main themes. In Chapter 9, I conclude that landmarks are an expression of a medieval desire for a stable and symmetrical system of boundaries, and for the emergence of a unifying political and spiritual force within the ecumene.

2 - Nature of Scholarship on Medieval Geography

Definitions of 'Mappamundi' - Ecumenical and Zonal

In this section, I will be examining the general nature of medieval map scholarship, adding to my remarks in the introductory chapter concerning the place of my own work within it. I will also be looking at the questions of how mappaemundi are defined and categorised, and how they have often been interpreted in relation to our own modern cartographic ideas.

A wide variety of words were used in the Middle Ages to describe what we now call a mappamundi: *descriptio, historia, pictura, figura, rotuli.* All of these could mean a map, while the word 'mappamundi' itself could be used to mean a written description: witness the *Mappamundi* of the thirteenth-century writer Gervase of Canterbury, which is in fact no more than a list of parishes and dioceses.[1] A twentieth-century definition of precisely what is meant by 'mappamundi' (plural 'mappaemundi') is required here.

Simply, the word has come to mean a graphic representation of the world, portraying physical, spiritual, legendary and / or historical features. The difficulty with such a definition is that 'world' has more than one meaning in medieval geographical writings. Sometimes it can be used to mean the ecumene or 'habitable world', and at other times the entire world, of which the habitable world is but a quarter. Medieval world maps are roughly divided into two varieties: the T-in-O, including detailed T-in-O-based maps like the Ebstorf and Hereford, which show the ecumene; and the zone map, which shows the entire world. Both are referred to as a 'mappamundi'. The T-in-O or ecumenical variety is further subdivided, as detailed below.

Circular world maps have very early origins, possibly going back to the time of Herodotus in the fifth century BC. In terms of the tripartite form, the earliest extant versions showing these divisions are from the time of Isidore of Seville in the seventh century. The sources used by Isidore for his inclusion of the diagram are unknown, although it is very unlikely that he invented it for the *De Natura Rerum* or the *Etymologies.*[2] The T-in-O was one of a group of eight tripartite or quadripartite diagrams included by Isidore, only one of which was original, the rest having come from Pliny, Aristotle, Plato, Lucan or another unidentified source. The most simple figures in the group, the T-in-O and the Zodiac diagram, are thought to date back to ancient Egypt.

The zonal map has its origins later, in the work of Macrobius in the fifth century, who mentions the need for a set of diagrams in the *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, a cosmological favourite in the later Middle Ages.[3] One of these, the zonal map, is a

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[1] Gervase of Canterbury, "Mappamundi", *Opera Historia,* 2 vols., ed. W. Stubbs, in *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages* 21 (London, 1897), vol. 2. For the variety of words for 'map' in the medieval period, see E. Edson, *Mapping Time,* 2.

[2] W. Stevens, "The Figure of Earth in Isidore's *De Natura Rerum*", *Isis* 71 (1980), 268-277. The texts are referred to directly in chapter 5.

[3] Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio,* trans. W. H. Stahl, 2nd ed. (New York, 1992).

model of the world viewed from side on, showing five climatic zones stretching across the entire world: two frigid zones at the poles, an uncrossable fiery zone in the centre, and two separate zones in between these. The Macrobian model also presented the idea of a large central equatorial ocean. The ecumene is here shown as a quarter of the whole (and thus half the diagram, which shows one side of the world). In the lower half of zonal maps, a fourth continent, the Antipodes, is shown. This distinguishes them from most other mappaemundi which only show the ecumene.

The zonal theory, with the idea of the equatorial ocean, also contained a belief in another two continents on the other side of the sphere which were not shown by the map. This belief pre-existed in Graeco-Roman thought, having been first stated by Crates of Mallos (c. 168 BC), who stated that the world was composed of four equal landmasses separated by two oceans running in a cross formation. Two of these, the ecumene and the Antipodes, would be seen in the view provided by a zonal map. The idea of these four continents is found in some later authors, and they were named by some of them.[4]

This is a study of the concept of the boundaries of the habitable world and the strands of belief holding the concept together. It will thus focus almost exclusively on ecumenical cartography. The 25 maps under study (see Appendix 1) are nearly all ecumenical, the exceptions being the climate map by John of Wallingford and the larger of the two works by Lambert of St. Omer. These are both zonal maps, but have detailed enough ecumenical sections to be of use in a study of ecumenical symbolism. Several other maps, such as the 'Châtillon', are ecumenical but have zonal features. Other purely zonal maps will be referred to occasionally where information on them is relevant, but they will not be included in the general survey.

Sources in the History of Mappaemundi - Compilation and Classification

A great deal of the initial work in the study of mappaemundi was done in the nineteenth century by scholars who made facsimiles of a number of the more important world maps.[5] Amongst these scholars, Konrad Miller also wrote at length on the composition of mappaemundi from Roman models, and produced a series of reconstructions of the geographical beliefs of a number of late Roman and Antique authors - Pliny, Isidore, Orosius - based on his analysis of the medieval inheritance.[6]

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[4] See Edward Stevenson, *Terrestrial and Celestial Globes*, 2 vols., *Publications of the Hispanic Society of America* 86 (New Haven, 1921), vol. 1, 13 no. 6. See also "Greek Cartography in the Early Roman World", in J. B. Harley and D. Woodward, eds., *History of Cartography*, vol. 1, *Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean* (Chicago, 1987), 163-64.

[5] The most important of these early works are: Kamal (Prince Yousouf), *Monumenta Cartographica Africae et Aegypti*, 5 vols. (Cairo, 1926); J. Lelewel, *Géographie du Moyen Âge*, 5 vols. (Brussels, 1852-7); E. Jomard, *Les Monuments de la Géographie* (Paris, 1842-62); and Barros e Sousa, Manuel Francisco de, Viscount of Santarém, *Essai sur l'historie de la cosmographie et la cartographie pendant le Moyen-Age et sur les progrès de la géographie après les grandes découvertes du XVᵉ siècle*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1849-52), and *Atlas composé de mappemondes, de portulans et de cartes hydrographiques et historiques depuis le VIᵉ jusqu'au XVIIᵉ siècle* (Paris, 1849: recent facsimile reprint by R. Muller, Amsterdam, 1985).

[6] K. Miller, *Mappaemundi: die ältesten Weltkarten*, 6 vols. (Stuttgart, 1895-98). The 'Atlas' of reconstructions is vol. 6.

(His results, and other early reconstructions, have recently been criticised, and these works are consulted here only for the purpose of illustrating minor points.)

The first major influential attempt at categorisation was undertaken in 1926 by Andrews, who provided us with the general terminology of ecumenical, tripartite, and T-in-O for the Isidore-type category, and hemispherical (now called zonal) for the Macrobian category.[7] This version proved to be more influential than schemes along similar lines adopted by Uhden and Simar, due to its inclusion in the first large survey of mappaemundi, completed by Marcel Destombes at the behest of the National Geographic Union in 1964.[8] The classification system remained largely unchanged by Destombes except for the introduction of more branches of the T-in-O so as to include peculiarities such as a Y format, or elements in the border such as winds or directions. Destombes also distinguished between T-in-O maps with and without nomenclature, and between zonal maps that do and do not show a fourth continent.

David Woodward added the categories of 'quadripartite' and 'transitional' maps in his chapter on mappaemundi in Harley and Woodward's *History of Cartography*.[9] A quadripartite map is, according to Woodward, one which combines the elements of a zonal and a T-in-O, and includes a fourth continent.

'Transitional' maps are those that include newly-emerging forms of geographical knowledge with the original mappamundi concept. The transitional process begins in the fourteenth century, due to the growing influence of the portolan charts on mappaemundi, the return of oriental travellers such as Marco Polo and John de Plano Carpini and the publication of their reports, and the discovery and rapid adoption of the techniques of the geographer Ptolemy in the early fifteenth century. (Claudius Ptolemy was an Alexandrian Greek geographer of the second century, whose co-ordinate-based mapping system was at the forefront of a short-lived period of geographical advancement in the early centuries of the first millennium.) These events and processes mark out the anterior end of the tradition of mappaemundi based on the works of Orosius and Isidore, as we shall see when we come to define the boundaries of the map corpus in the third chapter.

The categories proposed recently by Edson dispense with the separation of zonal and quadripartite, and she simply notes the latter as a subcategory. Edson uses the term T-in-O rather than 'tripartite', and she adds the category of 'list' map, which is a T-in-O containing a list of place-names, with no real consideration given to their geographical placement. There are several of these on the survey. She also refines Destombes' distinction regarding nomenclature by adding a fourth category, the 'detailed map'. Destombes' thorough survey shows 103 of these, out of a total of 1106 mappaemundi in all. A large number (almost a quarter) of these are on the survey corpus in this study.

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[7] M. Andrews, "The Study and Classification of Medieval Mappaemundi", *Archaeologia* 75 (1925-26), 61-76.

[8] M. Destombes, ed., *Mappemondes, AD 1200-1500: Catalogue préparé par la Commission des Cartes Anciennes de l'Union Géographique Internationale* (Amsterdam, 1964).

[9] D. Woodward, "Medieval Mappaemundi", in J. B. Harley and D. Woodward, *History of Cartography*, vol. 3, 286-370.

I will follow Edson's definitions, because I wish to use the term 'quadripartite' to refer to the symbolic numerical division of space and matter discussed by Edson and Esmeijer. This division into four categories has many symbolic meanings in relation to the ecumene, but few that I know of for the globe. I think a T-in-O map should be considered as a quadripartite diagram, so it is useful to have another term to indicate the number of continents. As I am not discussing the zonal maps at any length, I have no need of the classification between those with and without a fourth continent. I will thus use the term 'mappamundi' to mean both zonal and T-in-O form (plain, list or detailed), but use the term 'zonal map' to refer to maps showing the entire globe, and 'ecumenical map' to mean those maps showing only the habitable world.

The work of compiling and categorising mappaemundi is far from complete. This is partially evidenced by the discovery within the last 20 years of three new English world maps or fragments thereof - the Duchy of Cornwall Fragment, the Aslake map, and the Evesham map, all of which have been deemed to be of importance to the field (see below, survey item 16, and section 1.4, items 5 and 6). I will mention in this context that one of the maps in my corpus, the FitzWilliam, is not contained in Destombes or other major catalogues and has not received treatment by many scholars. There are probably more yet to be discovered. No serious attempt has been made to catalogue and illustrate large numbers of mappaemundi since the work of Destombes, which Woodward has judged to be in need of a new edition ("Mappaemundi", 294).

A great deal of scholarship on mappaemundi concerns the organisation of maps into groups, and finding patterns of descent from one map to another. It is closely linked with the field of categorisation and compilation. The major general sources here are Harley and Woodwards' *History of Cartography*, and another work also entitled *History of Cartography*, by Leo Bagrow, which has been revised by Charles Skelton.[10]

Work like this is largely grounded in manuscript collation, comparative palaeography, and detailed reconstruction of dynasties and searches through registers and records. It is of most use to those wishing to place particular maps within precise historical periods, or ascribe them to particular authors, and to those wishing to know the place of maps and map groups in the history of science.

This kind of work will be referred to here and in chapter 3, during my exposition of the general arguments concerning the origins of the mappamundi form, and particularly its origins in the Roman empirical survey. I will also be using past research on the relations between the Hereford, Ebstorf, Sawley and other maps in order to help define the Anglo-Norman map corpus. Other than this, I will not be dealing with questions of date and authorship to any great degree. This is essentially a work of literary history, and leaves the field of cartographic history to the works cited above.

In terms of work on specific maps, there is currently a considerable amount of useful work being produced, especially that done under the aegis of the magazine *Imago Mundi*, the best journal available for the history of cartography. John Williams is

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[10] L. Bagrow, *History of Cartography*, rev. R. A. Skelton, trans. D. L. Paisey (London, 1964).

currently the leading scholar on the Beatus maps.[11] Bevan and Phillot and much more recently P. D. A. Harvey have treated the Hereford map and its relatives at some length (see survey item 20). Capello has treated the Vercelli map, Haslam the Duchy of Cornwall fragment, and the results of an interdisciplinary colloquium on the Ebstorf map prove the most useful source on the history of that document (see survey items 16-19). Danielle LeCoq has written useful articles on both the Lambert world map and the work of Hugh of St. Victor, and Peter Barber has produced articles on the Evesham and Aslake maps (see section 1.4, items 5 and 6). Most of this work has been done within the last ten years.

In summary, there is a growing movement towards studies on individual maps, coupled with a recognition of the cultural importance of these documents. A general survey of a particular group of ideas found on mappaemundi, such as my own work in this volume, will be indebted to work such as this. My aim is to examine a wide selection of material, and thus arrive at conclusions that could not be reached by an examination of a single document, and thus to provide scholars such as those mentioned above with new insights into the field.

3 - The Anglo-Norman Map Corpus

Introduction

The maps listed in Table 1 have been included according to parameters of time, area and size and paying attention to their interrelated nature. All were made between the tenth and fourteenth centuries, with the bulk in the twelfth and thirteenth. Nearly all are either of English or French origin, or have known or likely connections with English authors. With the exception of the Sallust map and the Lambert of St. Omer list map, all are what is called 'detailed', meaning roughly that they show more than 10 features and are not list-like in form. All except two are ecumenical, although some also have zonal features. As a group, they are representative of a flowering of ecumenical geographical thought in twelfth- and thirteenth-century France and England.

Throughout the thesis, I will be making frequent reference to many of these maps by their common name, rather than their survey number. A variety of map illustrations have been provided in Appendix 2. These plates will be mentioned here, but not otherwise referred to throughout the study, to avoid repetition.

The maps have been placed into groups of 5 in the tables (2-6), and will be treated here in approximate chronological order, excepting the inclusion of the Matthew Paris maps in the fourteenth century group. The Paris maps are positioned here so that the previous group (Cornwall, Ebstorf, Psalter, Vercelli, Hereford) may stand complete, as they are clearly closely related to one another.[12]

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[11] J. Williams, "Isidore, Orosius, and the Beatus Maps", *Imago Mundi* 49 (1997), 7-32.

[12] Many of these items are so well known as not to require a full bibliography here. I will list only a selection of the most relevant and recent source materials for each map described. I will also note the location of illustrations only when the map is not commonly illustrated or where a particular reproduction is of very high quality. The texts in which these maps are found are not cited until material from them is introduced in later

The Maps

1 - The Cotton Map

This is a tenth century map included in the well-known British Library MS Cotton Tiberius B.V., which also contains another map (zonal) and a variety of diagrams, included in a wealth of other geographically related materials such as the pseudo-Aristotelian *Wonders of the East*, the *Periegesis* of Priscian (a Latin poetic translation of the *Orbis Terrae Descriptio* of Dionysius), computus tables, and other material. It is rectangular, separating it in terms of form from most other mappaemundi, but still maintains the general features of eastern orientation, the central Mediterranean in the lower half, the Nile Circuit, and so on. This map is accompanied in the text by a zonal map, completing the picture of the Cotton codex as a well-rounded medieval anthology on geography, time and space.[13]

2 - The Oxford Map

This is the name generally now given to the larger of the two world maps in St. John's College MS 17, another compendium of lore related to time and geography. It is a T-in-O with a large number of place names, mostly concerning the Holy Land. The other map in the manuscript is a zonal map with a similar number of place-names. The manuscript also contains *computus* diagrams and quadripartite scientific lore and, like the Cotton manuscript, is a vital component in Edson's argument concerning the relationship between maps, computus tables, and other stylised views of the nature of time and space (Edson, *Mapping Time*, 86-95).

3 - Lambert of St. Omer Zonal Map

This is the largest of the cartographic pieces that the twelfth-century scholar Lambert of St. Omer produced for his compendium *Liber Floridus*. It is a large hemispherical map with much detail in the ecumenical section, and a description of the Antipodes in the lower half. Lambert's other figures (excepting the List map, which is survey item 4) are a variety of small T-in-O maps, astrological and elemental diagrams, none with detailed enough ecumenical regions to be worth considering at any length.[14]

4 - Lambert of St. Omer List Map

chapters. General works on mappaemundi not previously cited are P. D. A. Harvey, *Medieval Maps* (London, 1991), J. Leithhäuser, *Mappaemundi: Die geistige Eroberung der Welt* (Berlin, 1958), and A. D. von den Brincken, "Mappaemundi und Chronographia", *Deutsches Archiv für die Erforschung des Mittelalters* 24 (1968) 118-86. Von den Brincken's *Fines Terrae* also contains short (1-2 page) accounts of the boundary features of many of the maps discussed here. The bibliographic index to J. B. Harley and D. Woodward, *History of Cartography*, vol. 1, 513-558 is an excellent source for minor publications.

[13] See Edson, *Mapping Time*, 74-80. A facsimile edition of the MS has been made by P. McGurk, D. Dumville, M. R. Godden and A. Knock, *An Eleventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany: British Library Cotton Tiberius B.V.,* in *Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile* 21, ed. G. Harlow (Copenhagen, 1983).

[14] D. LeCoq, "La Mappemonde du *Liber Floridus* ou La Vision du Monde de Lambert de Saint-Omer", *Imago Mundi* 39 (1987), 9-49. The illustration here is excellent.

A figure like this is found in various *Liber Floridus* manuscripts. It is not strictly detailed, but is fairly lengthy in its listing of known tribes (Arentzen, *Imago*, pl. 26). This is one of a number of maps in the 'list' category that meet most of the other criteria for inclusion in the corpus. This map has been included to be partially representative of others of this type. List maps are also common to other places and eras and they are not specific to the Anglo-Norman group.

5 - The Munich Isidore Map

This is a far more complex form of the T-in-O normally found in manuscripts of Isidore's encyclopaedic works (plate 8). It originates in northern France and has resemblances to other larger maps in the group in terms of shape and content, and thus provides useful evidence of a transitional phase (in the twelfth century) between the T-in-O and the 'detailed' world maps. It has been proposed that this map is a version (most probably a copy) of the map produced by Hugh of St. Victor to accompany the text description found in his *Descriptio Mappe Mundi*.[15]

6- Jerome Old Testament Map

This is the first of two maps from a twelfth-century French manuscript of the *Liber Locorum* of St. Jerome. As this is an unusual source for a mappamundi, these are both of unusual composition. This maps bears little similarity to the other maps in the corpus in terms of shape, but shares some features such as the pillars of Hercules, and Gog and Magog. It shows only parts of Asia relevant to the Old Testament.[16]

7- Jerome New Testament Map

This map of Palestine (plate 9) and the Near East is even more unusual than the accompanying Old Testament map. It has no consistent orientation, and distorts much of the terrain so as to fit material onto the page. As with the previous item, it is unlike other Anglo-Norman productions, but shows several conquest landmarks and so has been included in the survey (Edson, *Mapping Time*, 26-30).

8- The Sawley Map

This is the definitive twelfth-century English mappamundi (plate 10). It was formerly called the Henry of Mainz map, but has been renamed the Sawley map by Harvey in a recent article, in which he argues that the map should be named after the place where it was created, to avoid confusion. (Henry of Mainz is not actually a clearly identified figure.) It is found in a twelfth-century manuscript of the *Imago Mundi* of Honorius of Autun, and bears a striking resemblance to the Hereford and other larger maps. It is

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[15] See Edson, *Mapping Time*, 159-63. The attribution of this map as the "realisation of the *Descriptio Mappe Mundi* of Hugh of St. Victor" is from P. Gautier Dalché, *La 'Descriptio Mappe Mundi' de Hughes de Saint-Victor* (Paris, 1988), 81-6.

[16] See Edson, *Mapping Time*, 26-30. This and the next map have received little close attention. Paul Harvey is due to publish articles on them within the next year.

thus often used by scholars to show the continuity and development of the mappamundi form throughout the Middle Ages.[17]

9- The Châtillon Map

This is one of about 30 small T-in-O-based maps made to accompany manuscripts of the *Alexandreis* of Walter de Châtillon (composed c. 1180). Most are from the thirteenth century. The maps are not very interesting, but one has been included for the sake of a broad survey. The map chosen is unlike other Châtillon maps in that it combines zonal and T-in-O qualities. The text (the *Alexandreis*) is an excellent source for many of the ideas discussed in this study, and contains a description of a mappamundi carved on a tomb. Strangely, the map described bears little resemblance to the map included in the manuscripts, which is more likely to have been derived from the work of Sallust.[18]

10- Arnstein Bible Map

This is one of two maps in a twelfth-century German Bible handbook (the other is a strict zonal map). It is a complex T-in-O and bears resemblances to both list maps and zonal maps. It has been included in the surveys of Arentzen and von den Brincken and does not need detailed analysis here. It has been included largely for the purposes of negative definition: small T-in-O-derived maps are not the type of maps on which to find the landmark icons I am studying, and their appearance on this type of map is a rarity (Arentzen, *Imago*, pl. 19).

11- Munich Handbook "Cades" Map

This is a very interesting T-in-O based map found in a twelfth-century German handbook on geography and general scientific lore (plate 11). It is included in Arentzen's survey, but has otherwise not been studied (Arentzen, *Imago*, pl. 29). The particular feature I will highlight is the inclusion of four 'cades' in the four cardinal extremes. (The word 'cades' or 'gades' is described in chapter 5.) This use of 'cades' is a rare example of the direct visual linking of the conquest landmark theme with the quadripartite division of space. I discuss this concept further in chapter 8.

12-Sallust/Lucan Maps

The works of the Roman poets Lucan (*Pharsalia*) and Sallust (*Bellum Jurgurthinum*) were both accompanied by simple T-in-O diagrams throughout the medieval period. These are very simple and often contain few place-names. However, Sallust was the standard medieval source text for discussions of the boundaries of North Africa, and he mentions several important landmarks, including the Altars of the Philaeni, which are included on most Anglo-Norman maps because of his reference to them. The map studied here is from a thirteenth-century English manuscript, which has a Sallust and a

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[17] P. D. A. Harvey, "The Sawley Map and other World Maps in Twelfth-Century England", *Imago Mundi* 49 (1997), 33-42. This map can be found under the title "The Henry of Mainz Map" in previous publications.

[18] Edson, *Mapping Time*, 102-105, and M. Destombes, "The Mappamundi of the poem *Alexandreidos* by Gautier de Châtillon", *Imago Mundi* 19 (1965), 10-12. The map illustrated by Edson is from an English MS and is a more standard T-in-O variety without zonal features.

Lucan map on the same page. This is intended to be representative of a large number of such T-in-O maps illustrating these works.[19]

13- Gautier de Metz Map

This is a T-in-O derived map with few illustrations but a large number of place-names for its size, which was designed to illustrate the *Image du Monde*, a cosmological poem by Gautier (also known as Gouissin, or Walter) de Metz (twelfth century). The map itself is not greatly interesting, but the text influenced later mappaemundi, and the map is a good example of a sketch-illustration of a geographical excursus (see Destombes, *Mappemondes*, 118-23 and pl. I). I will be discussing the *Image du Monde*, and a selection of diagrams by Gautier de Metz throughout the study.

14- John of Wallingford Climate Map

This is a zonal map, one of two on the survey. It also includes a Y-shaped division of the continents and is thus a hybrid of the ecumenical and zonal categories. It was made in England in the thirteenth century to accompany a local chronicle. The map has a large enough portrayal of the ecumenical region to include some detail relevant to us. Von den Brincken has suggested that this map may be the work of Matthew Paris (see survey items 21 and 22).[20]

15- The FitzWilliam Map

This map is found in MS 254 at the FitzWilliam Museum, a manuscript also containing a Bestiary and some sections of the *Dialogues* of Gregory, several other small mappaemundi of the regular T-in O variety, and a drawing of some of the monstrous races. The cataloguer, M. R. James, noted of the map: "It does not correspond at all closely to any of the types illustrated in K. Miller's *Mappaemundi*...and it is not included in M. Destombes, *Mappemondes, 1200-1500*...."[21]

Perhaps for these reasons it has never been closely studied, and the best available work on it is the account in James' catalogue. It is of unusual design, and includes Gades in the north, with a central crossbar as the Mediterranean, and no downstroke to complete the T-in-O shape. This means that, as far as I know, it is the only one of its kind extant.

16- The Duchy of Cornwall Fragment

The south-western quarter (West Africa) is all that now remains of a large thirteenth-century world-map, similar to the Hereford and almost certainly made in England, as is shown in a recent article by Graham Haslam. The recent discovery of this fragment is further evidence of widespread world-map production in England in the thirteenth

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[19] Edson, *Mapping Time*, 18-24 and illustrated on page 22. For other Sallust and Lucan maps, see Woodward, "Medieval Mappaemundi", 344.

[20] Woodward, "Medieval Mappaemundi", 357, and A. D. von den Brincken, "Die Klimatenkarte in der Chronik des Johann von Wallingford - ein Werk des Matthaeus Pariensis?", *Westfalen* 51 (1973), 47-57.

[21] All information on this map is from the MS, and from M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the FitzWilliam Museum* (Cambridge, 1895), MS 254, 179-80. Given the other material in this MS, a close study of its contents would probably be very fruitful.

century. The map fragment shows few of the landmark features I am examining, but includes a reference to the four surveyors (discussed in chapter 3), and also includes the theme of the ages of man along the lower border. This is relevant to the argument concerning the link between mappaemundi and scientific diagrams detailed in chapter 6.[22]

17- The Ebstorf World Map

This could be described as the ultimate piece of mappaemundi production. It was made in a convent in Germany in the mid-thirteenth century, probably by the nuns of the convent near Ebstorf, under the direction of the Englishman Gervase of Tilbury. It was over three-and-a-half metres wide and contained nearly every feature I am interested in examining, and many others (see plates 3, 4 and 5 for details). It was certainly the greatest achievement of the Anglo-Norman cartographic tradition, and it is highly fortunate that it was well photographed in the early part of this century, as the original was destroyed in a bomb raid on Hanover in 1943.[23]

18- The Psalter Map

This is another classic piece of English ecumenical cartography (plate 6). It is one of two maps found in a thirteenth-century illuminated Psalter held by the British Library and probably made in London. The other is on the verso of the same page, and is a T-in-O list map which features Christ in the *syndesmos* position. The Psalter map is one of the smallest maps in the corpus, but is still very detailed, and includes many of the conquest landmark features I am discussing.[24]

19- The Vercelli Map

This is a wall map currently in Vercelli Cathedral, Italy. In shape and content it is related to the other main members of the group, the Hereford and Ebstorf maps. There is some doubt as to its date and provenance. The main school of thought is that it was made in England in the early thirteenth century, taken to Italy by a visiting cardinal, and donated to the Vercelli Cathedral school. Von den Brincken has challenged this, and argues for a later date on the grounds of palaeographic evidence, and also suggests a French provenance. Neither identification places the map outside the parameters defining the corpus under study here.

The study of this map has been problematic for all students in the field, as it is in very poor condition and all parts are all but illegible. The transcription undertaken by Capello is the only available source for the text, and the accuracy of his work has also

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[22] G. Haslam, "The Duchy of Cornwall Map Fragment", in M. Pelletier, ed., *Géographie du monde au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance* (Paris, 1989), 33-44.

[23] See W. Rosien, *Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte* (Hanover, 1952). Articles in Kugler, H and E. Michael, eds., *Ein Weltbild vor Columbus: Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte*, Interdisciplinary Colloquium 1988 (Weinheim, 1991). See also A. Wolf, "News on the Ebstorf World Map", in M. Pelletier, ed., *Géographie*, 51-67.

[24] This map has never had an article devoted to it, but is very well known. A good illustration is in Harvey, *Medieval Maps*, 27. Von den Brincken's section in *Fines Terrae* (85-89) is one of the longest available works on this map and the map on the verso.

been challenged by von den Brincken. I use this text only with reference to the location of landmark icons.[25]

20- The Hereford Map

This is by far the best known of all the maps in the corpus, as it is the largest and most commonly illustrated member of the family still extant (plates 1 and 2). It was made by Richard de Bello (also known as Richard of Haldingham) in the late thirteenth century in Lincolnshire, and subsequently moved to Hereford Cathedral, where it still resides in a newly-constructed museum vault. The research and scholarship on this map outweighs the work on other maps by a ratio of around five to one, and as it contains nearly every icon I am discussing, there will be a slight bias towards discussion of this map compared with similar works.[26]

21- Matthew Paris Itinerary Map

A strip map showing the itinerary from London to Jerusalem is included in several manuscripts of the *Chronica Majora* of the well-known chronicler and cartographer Matthew Paris, monk of St. Albans (1195-1259). The version used here is from a manuscript at Corpus Christi College in Cambridge, but the map in the Royal MS in the British Library is very similar. The section which I will use is the representation of the Crusader kingdoms, found at the end of the itinerary, as this contains a detailed description of Alexander's Gate.[27]

22- Matthew Paris World Map

This 'mappamundi', as it is called in the *Chronica Majora*, is in fact simply a rough sketch map of the Near East and parts of Europe, and is unlike other mappaemundi based on the T-in-O. It is found only in the Corpus Christi manuscript. It is one of Matthew's least known works, and is not generally considered as being up to the standard of his more polished productions. However, it is a mappamundi, and deserves inclusion, particularly as it is known to be related to other non-extant maps (see section 4, below).

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[25] C. F. Capello, "Il Mappamondo Medioevale Di Vercelli, 1191-1218", *Memorie e Studi Geografici* 10 (1976). For a critique, see A. D. von den Brincken, "Monumental legends on medieval Manuscript Maps: Notes on designed capital letters on maps of large size (demonstrated from the problems of dating the Vercelli Map, thirteenth century)", *Imago Mundi* 42 (1990), 9-25.

[26] The classic work on the subject is W. L. Bevan and H. W. Phillott, *Medieval Geography: An Essay in Illustration of the Hereford Mappa Mundi* (London, 1873). A more recent work is P. D. A. Harvey, *Mappamundi: The Hereford World Map* (London, 1996). Naomi Klein has very recently produced a CD Rom version of this map - *A Wheel of Memory - The Hereford Mappamundi* (Ann Arbor, 2000). I have also used Scott Westrem's *The Hereford Map: A Transcription of the Legends with Translations and Notes - A Draft of a Work in Progress*. A full bibliography of smaller works on the Hereford Map takes several pages. See N. Morgan, *Early Gothic Manuscripts* II, in J. Alexander, ed. *A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles* (London, 1988) vol. 4, 195-200.

[27] This map and the next item are both illustrated in S. Lewis, *The Art of Matthew Paris in the Chronica Majora* (Berkeley, 1987). Paris is better known for his maps of Britain, and the mappamundi has received little attention.

Matthew's least known works, and is not generally considered as being up to the standard of his more polished productions. However, it is a mappamundi, and deserves inclusion, particularly as it is known to be related to other non-extant maps (see section 4, below).

23- Ralph Higden Oval Map

This is the largest and most detailed of a number of world maps designed to illustrate the *Polychronicon*, an encyclopaedic and historical work by Ralph Higden, a monk of Chester in the fourteenth century. The version studied is from a fourteenth-century manuscript in the British Library. With the exception of the oval frame, it is entirely within the tradition of mappaemundi of the thirteenth century, and shows little sign of influence from the new observation-based or theoretically-based cartographical methods emerging in the fourteenth century, which were beginning to influence other mappae on the continent in this period.[28]

24- 'Anonymous' Map

This is an anonymous fourteenth-century map listed only in Destombes (*Mappemondes*, item 50.21 and pl. P). It is of unusual design, having no main T-in-O rivers or oceans, and looks very much like a shield (plate 11). It contains three 'gades' features in the outer extreme, which are discussed in chapter 5. There are no others of this type known to me.

25- The St. Denis Map

The last map in the survey is a colourful 'ecumenical picture' from a fourteenth-century French manuscript of the *Chronicle of St. Denis* (Arentzen, *Imago*, pl. 52). It includes several of the landmark features discussed here, and shows a very old-fashioned Graeco-Roman ecumene compared with what was being produced in Italy and the Netherlands in the same period.

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[28] For Ralph Higden maps, see Destombes, *Mappemondes*, 149-160 and pls. F and P. See also Edson, *Mapping Time*, 126-131.

4 - Supplementary Introductory Material:

A - *Other Mappaemundi relevant to the Anglo-Norman group*

Extant maps

There are several important extant mappaemundi that have been excluded from the main body of this survey for a variety of reasons. These are detailed briefly in this section.

1 - The Albi Map

This is an eighth-century ecumenical map of Spanish or French provenance. It is related to the Beatus tradition (detailed in chapter 3), but the relationship is not definite, as the Albi map is not found in a Beatus manuscript, but rather in a miscellany on geography and Biblical lore, including the work of Orosius. Edson suggests the map is a rare surviving example of an 'Orosian' map. The Albi map is too early for inclusion in this survey, and also has an emphasis on Christian lore and thus shows none of the Graeco-Roman features I am interested in discussing.[1]

2- The Vatican 'Beatus'

This is another early ecumenical map, dating from the eighth or early ninth century and found in a French or Italian manuscript containing an encyclopaedia similar to Isidore's *Etymologies*, and various other texts. It has been argued that it is in fact a map of the Holy Land with other features included around the outskirts (Edson, "Oldest", 177-80). The deeds of the Apostles are the main feature of the work. It is excluded here partly because it is too early, and also because parts of it are illegible.

3 - The Ripoll Map

The most unfortunate exclusion from the corpus is a mid-eleventh-century zonal map of French origin in a manuscript in the Vatican. This contains a large and detailed ecumenical hemisphere. There was unfortunately no legible reproduction available to me as I wrote this study. Von den Brincken's analysis suggests that my research would be augmented by a closer examination of this map.[2]

4 - Various Minor Maps

Arabic works such as the map by Al-Idrisi (eleventh century) are outside the provenance of the study, and it is clear that Arabic geography had little influence on European cartography until much later than the date of these maps. Maps such as those of Guido of Pisa (1118) and Petrus Alfonsi (1110) were made outside the territorial extent of the Anglo-Norman group, and the Alfonsi map is also too small to

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[1] E. Edson, "The Oldest World Maps: Classical Sources of Three Eighth-Century Mappaemundi", *Ancient World* 24 (1993), 174-77.

[2] Edson, *Mapping Time*, 80-86, and von den Brincken, *Fines Terrae*, 156. Also in Destombes, *Mappemondes*, pl. T and section 24. I note that there is information on the map available in Alexandre Vidier, "La mappemonde de Théodulphe et la mappemonde de Rippol, IX-XI siècles", in *Bulletin de géographie historique et descriptive* 26 (1911), 285-313, and also in various other sources noted by Edson (*Mapping Time*, 178, notes 19-20) which I have not been able to access.

be of any significance. Guido's map contains the Caspian gates, and shows Meroë, but has little else of interest in the study of landmarks.[3]

There is also a group of Icelandic maps which have been studied as a group by Simek and are excluded here due to their provenance, although it is noted that they contain similar material to several list maps on the survey.[4] Maps such as those of William of Tripoli (ecumenical list map) and Gerard of Antwerp (zonal map) are also excluded for this reason. Again, analysis by von den Brincken shows that the maps contain few features that are of interest to the study of Graeco-Roman landmarks in medieval cartography. Finally, maps found in the *Philosophia Mundi* of the twelfth-century writer William of Conches have been excluded because they are mostly zonal and have no ecumenical detail.[5]

5- The Aslake Map

Several fragments of a fourteenth-century world map were discovered in 1985 and are now the property of the British Library. The map is now known as the Aslake map after Walter Aslake, the owner of the map in the early sixteenth century. The surviving sections are badly damaged and readable only with the help of ultra-violet scanning techniques. The reconstruction work done by Peter Barber and Michelle Brown is the major source on this work, and the following description derives entirely from their recent article.[6]

The Aslake map is ecumenical and bears strong resemblances to the Hereford, Ebstorf and other main maps of the corpus, and ultimately derives "in much amended form from the provincial boundaries of the Roman Empire and [is] related to those found on the thirteenth-century Psalter Map" (Barber and Brown, "Aslake", 26). The remaining fragments show Africa and a portion of Asia and eastern Europe.

The map contains many of the Graeco-Roman landmarks I am discussing in this survey. Mentioned in Barber and Brown's transcription of the text are the Barns of Joseph (the Pyramids), and many of the monstrous races. The Temple of Ammon is located in Eastern Africa, near the camp of Alexander. Of particular interest are the Nubian Gates, shown as a realistically-drawn gateway, positioned beyond the Isle of Meroë. Other landmark features we might expect to find on such a map are either out of the area shown by the remaining fragments, or illegible.

The Aslake map shows considerable modernisation, compared with what was being produced a hundred years earlier, particularly around the Mediterranean and Atlantic

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[3] For Guido, see Edson, *Mapping Time*, 117-18. For Petrus Alphonsi maps, see Woodward, "Medieval Mappaemundi", 350 and von den Brincken, *Fines Terrae*, pl. 25 and 154. For Al-Idrisi, see Kimble, *Geography*, 56-60.

[4] R. Simek, *Altnordische Kosmographie: Studien und Quellen zu Weltbild und Weltbeschreibung in Norwegen und Island vom 12. Bis zum 14. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1990).

[5] For the Icelandic maps, see Simek, *Altnordische Kosmographie*. For maps by William of Tripoli and Gerard of Antwerp, see von den Brincken, *Fines Terrae*, pls. 31 and 37, and 155. For William of Conches, see Destombes, pl. N and section 42.

[6] P. Barber and M. Brown, "The Aslake World Map", *Imago Mundi* 44 (1992), 24-44.

coasts of Africa. Portolan charts are thought to be the most likely source of this new information. However, the maker of the Aslake map paid far less attention to these new observation-based maps than other map-makers on the continent were doing at a similar period, and while the new information was integrated into the map to a certain extent, this was not at the expense of the traditional mappamundi form. This resistance to change is valuable evidence of the strength of the old ecumenical mappamundi tradition in medieval England, which survived well into the fourteenth century.

6 - *The Evesham World Map*

Another fourteenth-century world map was recently discovered in the College of Arms in London. It was made in Evesham Abbey in around 1390 and amended and re-used over the next fifty years. It was based on the Higden world maps in shape and content, but unlike most of these, appears to have been constructed for use as a wall map or roll-map, and is of similar size to the Vercelli map. The map has been analysed by Peter Barber, and it is his article (the only major work on the map so far) which is used exclusively in the following summary.[7]

There is surprisingly little Biblical content - the paradise depiction, the Tower of Babel and Bethlehem are important exceptions. There is also very little attention paid to lore generally known as the 'Marvels of the East', a general term for the monstrous races and other wondrous Asian features. Mt. Atlas and Mt. Olympus are among the few examples of Graeco-Roman landmarks.

The 'Hungri', or land of the Huns (not Hungary, which is also shown) is depicted as a tower near the land of the Amazons. The name 'Hungri' is rubricated, the only name other than Jerusalem to be highlighted in this way. Barber notes that the Huns occupy the same position as Gog and Magog on other maps.

Like the Aslake, the Evesham map shows considerable signs of modernisation in European areas, especially in England, but in other ecumenical regions it is quite traditional in design. The provinces of Europe are medieval, but those of Asia and Africa still date from the old borders of the Roman Empire.

7 - *Pierre d'Ailly's Map*

The *Imago Mundi* by the fifteenth-century French Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly contains a large zonal map and many other smaller cosmological diagrams. The large map itself has been excluded from the corpus as it is zonal and contains no conquest landmarks. However, the *Imago Mundi* itself is an excellent source for fifteenth-century geographical thought, and descriptions of landmarks in the text will be referred to throughout the study.[8]

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[7] P. Barber, "The Evesham World Map: A Late Medieval English View of God and the World", *Imago Mundi* 47 (1995), 13-33. Illustrated in P. Whitfield, *The Image of the World* (London, 1994), 24.

[8] Petrus Ailiacus, *Imago Mundi*, trans. E. Keever (Wilmington, 1948). The zonal map and 7 other figures are illustrated in this text.

8 - Albertus Magnus' Map

The *De Natura Locorum* (*On the Nature of Places*) by the thirteenth-century scholar Albertus Magnus (Albert the Great) includes a reference to a "little map of the world" which Albertus says he has attached to the work. It is commonly thought that this map is no longer extant, but J. P. Tilmann claims to have found it in an original manuscript of the *De Natura Locorum* penned by Albert himself. The diagram illustrated by Tilmann is a tiny circular device showing the cardinal directions and the meridional arc, with no other detail, but nonetheless it is a "little map of the world", and probably the map mentioned in the text. The text itself mentions a variety of landmark structures (altars of Alexander, altars of the Philaeni), using them as markers of continental boundary (see chapters 5 and 7).[9]

Lost Maps: The Continental Tradition

No wall maps of any kind survive from before the thirteenth century, and I have already mentioned all surviving detailed world maps up unto this time. There are a large number of T-in-O diagrams extant in the early Middle Ages, but very few larger manuscript or wall maps remain. There is a considerable amount of textual evidence of other maps relevant to the Anglo-Norman group which no longer survive. These are detailed as follows, with an eye to showing their connection with territorial conquest and the imagery of kingship.

Records of the tradition of detailed world map production on the continent go back to the sixth century, and widespread production has been shown to have begun in the Carolingian period. Most of this material is found in references from booklists, and literary descriptions thought to have been based on real maps and other artworks which are now lost. This material has been analysed by Marcia Kupfer.[10] I will refer to the literary descriptions of such maps in chapter 4.

In the late Antique period, world maps were used as tuition aids for the study of theology - this use of maps is attested to by Cassiodorus in the sixth century. Later, they were often commissioned by kings or prelates as signs of worldly power - witness the world maps ordered by Pope Zacharias in the eighth century, Pope Leo III in the ninth century and Pope Sylvester II in the tenth. Charlemagne also commissioned a series of three maps on silver tables, as is described by his biographer, Einhard.

The list of lost maps on the continent continues in the eleventh century and beyond. For the most part, the link with royal or papal power becomes less clear in the later medieval period on the continent. One of the largest of all known medieval world maps was painted in the church at Chalivoy-Milon in northern France. This is known from accounts written in the nineteenth century to have been over 6 metres across,

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[9] J. P. Tilmann, *An Appraisal of the Geographical Works of Albertus Magnus* (Ann Arbor, 1971), 24-5, map from Vienna Nat. Lib., Cod. Vindob. 273, f151v. Illustrated by Tillmann on page 112.

[10] Overview in M. Kupfer, "Medieval World Maps: Imbedded Images, Interpretive Frames", *Word and Image* 10 (1994), 262-288.

dwarfing even the Ebstorf map.[11] Kupfer's description of this (based on the nineteenth-century accounts, and on assumptions drawn from the content of the Hereford and Sawley maps) describes the Biblical and eschatological content of the map, and makes no mention of any Graeco-Roman material. However, I think it unlikely that conquest landmark icons would not have been present on a map of this size, considering their role on other, smaller maps of the group.

Lost Maps: England in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries

The amount of evidence of lost maps from England in this period lends further weight to the idea that thirteenth-century England was the main time and place of ecumenical mappamundi production. No less than twelve maps of major importance, now lost, are thought to have been produced in this period.

Much of the evidence for these lost maps is in the form of items in booklists. The library records of Durham Cathedral and those of the cathedral priories of Rochester and Lincoln all mention that a 'mappamundi' was owned by these establishments in the twelfth century. Even bearing in mind the varied uses of that word in the period, it is still quite likely that these were small but detailed world maps similar to the Sawley and Psalter maps from the same period.[12]

More substantial evidence is available for thirteenth-century map production. Roger Bacon mentions a map designed to accompany his discussion of the climatic bands in the *Opus Majus*.[13] No diagram fitting the description is found in any manuscript of this work, although it is clear that it probably would have been an ecumenical map with climatic bands.

An inscription on the Matthew Paris world map tells us that "this is a reduced copy of the world map of Master Robert Melkeley and Waltham [Abbey]. The King's world map, which is in his chamber at Westminster, is most accurately copied in Matthew Paris's Ordinal" (translation from Lewis, *Art*, 372). The King referred to is Henry III.

Matthew Paris' ordinal does not survive, nor does the work of Melkeley or the Waltham Abbey map. The map in the King's chamber at Westminster was destroyed by fire in 1263 and not replaced. Binski has argued that the Westminster map could be the same as the *Magna Historia* referred to on the Record rolls of the year 1237. An

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[11] M. Kupfer, "The Lost map at Chalivoy-Milon", *Speculum* 66 (1991), 540-571. For continental maps from this period, see also M. Kupfer, "The Lost Wheel Map of Ambrogio Lorenzetti", *Art Bulletin* 78 (June, 1996), 286-311, and E. Kitzinger, "World Map and Fortune's Wheel: A Medieval Mosaic Floor in Turin", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association* 117 (1973), 344-374.

[12] Harvey, "The Sawley Map", 37-39. See also Woodward, "Medieval Mappaemundi", 359-368 and L. Bagrow, "Old Inventories of Maps", *Imago Mundi* 5 (1948), 18-20.

[13] The description reads: "Since these climates and the famous cities in them cannot be understood by means of mere words, our sense must be aided by a figure. In the first place, then, I shall give a drawing of this quarter with its climates, and I shall mark the famous cities in their localities by their distance from the equinoctial circle...". Roger Bacon, *Opus Majus*, trans. R. B. Burke, 2 vols. (New York, 1962), vol. 1, 315.

inscription on the Hereford map describes it as an 'estorie' and this use of the word to refer to a mappamundi is evidence for Binski's argument.[14] Our only surviving glimpse of the lost 'history' is in the Psalter map, which is likely to be a much-reduced copy of the original wall painting.[15]

Henry III also created a world map at Winchester Palace in 1239, which is also known from a reference in the Liberate Rolls. It was accompanied by a depiction of the Wheel of Fortune. The map does not survive.[16] Later in the century, Edward I is thought to have had a mappamundi or a geographical inventory created (c.1299), but once again no trace of it survives (Woodward, "Mappaemundi", 363).

The pillars of Hercules (both east and west), Alexander's Gate and the Temple of Ammon were such common features on other maps of the period that it is difficult to imagine that they would not have been on the larger wall maps of Henry III. Alexander the Great was often compared with English monarchs in political commentaries of the period.[17] It seems likely that these rulers would have desired that images of kingship, particularly images of territorial expansion, would have been used on world maps designed to symbolise their own power. Thus, while it is not possible to know exactly what these maps would have looked like, it is highly likely that many of the landmarks and other kingship images detailed in this study would have found a place upon them.

The production of all these maps points to a conceptual link between cartography and leadership (secular or sacred), a tradition which is strongly evidenced on the continent until the twelfth century, and was continued by English rulers and prelates in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This point is made in connection with the observation that cosmic kings such as Hercules and Alexander functioned as figureheads of both territorial expansion, and the spread of religious beliefs. The landmarks symbolising their conquests formed part of this conceptual link between land and rule, and would have had added symbolic weight on the mappaemundi, which were themselves symbols of sovereign power.[18]

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[14] P. Binski, *The Painted Chamber at Westminster* (London, 1986), 43-44. See also E. W. Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1950), vol. 2, 102.

[15] P. Tudor-Craig, "The Painted Chamber at Westminster", *The Archaeology Journal* 114 (1957), 101.

[16] Tristram, *Medieval English Wall Painting*, vol. 2, 180, 610. Henry III's decorative works were extensive and featured a large variety of historical sequences, many in round form. Any attempt to reconstruct Henry's maps would have to take these other images into consideration. For the general nature of the royal image-cycles of this period, see P. Tudor-Craig, "Painting in Medieval England: The Wall-to-Wall Message", *History Today* 37 (1976), and T. Borenius, "The Cycle of Images in the Palaces and Castles of Henry III", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute* 6 (1943), 40-50.

[17] Described in B. Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1960), 9-12.

[18] The tradition continued into the early modern period. The role of mappaemundi in the royal palaces of Henry VII and Henry VIII in the sixteenth century is detailed by P. Barber in "England I:

The Transitional Period

This section describes the decline of the Anglo-Norman mappamundi tradition, marking the temporal end of the period discussed in this study at about the end of the fourteenth century. Discovering the beginnings of the movement will be left until chapter 3.

A glance over a chronological table of medieval world map production will reveal that between the eleventh and early fourteenth centuries, nearly all specimens of the category known as 'detailed mappaemundi' originate in France and England.[19] Appendix 1 (Table 1) lists 25 maps, nearly all of which are Anglo-Norman productions. To this list could be added at least twelve English and French mappaemundi described above, which are now lost, though written evidence of their existence survives. This group, which I am calling the Anglo-Norman Group, accounts for the great majority of the detailed mappaemundi produced in Europe over the course of these four centuries.[20]

A main feature of the production of mappaemundi in the Norman world in this period is that it is reasonably widespread. Wall and manuscript maps were being produced in a large number of different places - Lincoln, London, Paris, St. Omer, Westminster, Winchester - for a variety of different purposes. Those found in manuscripts were made to illustrate a number of different texts - Honorius of Autun, Lambert of St. Omer, Lucan, Sallust, Priscian, Gautier de Metz. These texts were on a variety of subjects - geography, history, cosmology and theology.

This can be seen to be relatively unusual, when compared with other types of mappamundi production in other eras. For instance, members of the other main group of mappaemundi being produced in this period are found only in one text, the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* by a Spanish monk, Beatus of Liebena; hence their group title, the Beatus maps. The prototype is known to have been drawn by this author in 776, but no extant copies survive from before the tenth century.[21]

There are 14 of these maps in all, ranging in date from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries. They are what is termed 'Mozarabic', their Spanish origin giving rise to more Islamic influence than their English and French relatives. They are usually rectangular, and many have a southern Antipodean continent. The map, befitting the text, places great importance on the deeds of the apostles, and various recensions of it show the locations of all twelve. These factors help separate the Beatus group from

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Pageantry, Defence and Government; Maps at Court to 1550", in D. Buisseret, ed., *Monarchs, Ministers and Maps: The Emergence of Cartography as a tool of Government in Early-Modern Europe* (Chicago, 1992), 26-55.

[19] The best table available is in Woodward, "Medieval Mappaemundi", 359-367. A more general table is in E. Unger, "From the Cosmos Picture to the World Map", *Imago Mundi* 2 (1937), 1-7.

[20] Woodward notes the English provenance or connections of the majority of maps in this period in "Medieval Mappaemundi", 306. See also Harvey, *Medieval Maps*, 25, and G. R. Crone, "Early Cartographic activity in Britain", *Geographical Journal* 128 (1962), 406-10.

[21] See Williams, "Orosius, Isidore and the Beatus Maps", passim.

the Anglo-Norman group to form a well-defined sub-group, with enough significant differences from the main group to warrant their exclusion from the corpus.

There is evidence of another group of mappaemundi arising from Spain in the fourteenth century. We know of these through a surviving contract for their production described by Skelton. The contract document reveals that all these mappaemundi were to be made for the same contractor, and by the same group of artists.[22] Another group of mappaemundi, also arising in the fifteenth century, were those produced by the monks of Klosterneuburg in Austria. Durand's analysis of these shows (among other things) that they were all produced from the same group of tables in a small geographical area, mostly in the same scriptorium. They were based partly on the Ptolemaic co-ordinate system while maintaining some traditional mappamundi features.[23]

From these examples it is suggested that a considerable amount of medieval mappamundi production happened in fairly specific and isolated circumstances. It is true that there was a widespread and developing culture of Ptolemaic maps in the fifteenth century, and also a developing culture of portolan charts during this time, but I distinguish between these and true religious mappaemundi. One of the features that distinguishes the Anglo-Norman group from many other mappamundi groups is that these maps were the product of a wide geographical area, and were connected with a wide range of ideas and thought processes. The world-image presented by the Anglo-Norman map group was an important and well-recognised part of Anglo-Norman culture, not a rarity, as seems to have been the case with mappamundi production in other areas during the same period.

Traditional ecumenical map-making in England and France began to decline in the fourteenth century. The Higden maps, the St. Denis map and the Aslake and Evesham maps are exceptions. Apart from these, the concept moved out of the Norman world and became the domain of the Italians, who produced a fine and elaborate series of mappaemundi throughout the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. These are described as 'transitional' mappaemundi. They are an exception to the rule stated above, as they do form a lively and widespread interrelated culture, comparable with map production in England a century earlier. I will now briefly describe the development of transitional mappaemundi.

The fourteenth century was the age of the development of the 'portolan' chart (sailor's navigation chart). There is no space to detail this development here, but what can be noted is the influence of this new kind of map on the mappamundi tradition. Among the earliest of the transitional maps are the mappaemundi of Pietro Vesconte (Venice, 1320) which show clear influence of information and ideas from portolan charts, although they retain the round shape of the mappaemundi. Vesconte was himself a

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[22] R. A. Skelton, "A contract for World Maps at Barcelona, 1399-1400", *Imago Mundi* 22 (1968), 107-13.

[23] D. B. Durand, *The Vienna-Klosterneuburg Map Corpus of the Fifteenth Century: A study in the transition from Medieval to Modern Science* (Leiden, 1952).

maker of portolan charts, which are rectangular. There is a clear difference between Vesconte's more artistic mappaemundi and these other more functional works.[24]

Later in that century, the Catalan Atlas (Spain, 1375) also combined the illustrative style of the mappaemundi with the practical uses of the portolan chart. The world was here divided into sections, and while these sections feature aspects of the old ecumenical geographical tradition (such as Gog and Magog), the very fact of this division into rectangular units meant that the totality of religious 'world-image' symbolism portrayed on the Anglo-Norman mappaemundi was no longer possible.[25]

The transitional mappaemundi can be shown to have been influenced by new information from travellers to East Asia in the thirteenth century, such as Marco Polo. These influences are first visible in the Vesconte maps, which show knowledge of the travels of John de Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck and in the Catalan Atlas, which is clearly influenced by the work of Marco Polo.

By the fifteenth century, transitional mappaemundi were highly variable in form and content. Some returned to traditional ecumenical constructions; others followed Ptolemaic co-ordinate systems, or portolan coastal outlines. Notable examples are the mappaemundi of Andrea Bianco (Italy, 1436), Giovanni Leardo (Italy, fl. 1440-1450), Fra Mauro (Italy, fl. 1440-1460), Andreas Walsberger (Germany, c.1448) and the so-called 'Borgia' map (1430).[26]

The 'Borgia map' is the most traditional of these fifteenth-century mappaemundi, showing little Ptolemaic influence and containing many features found on a map like the Hereford from a century earlier.[27] The major feature that has changed is that Jerusalem is no longer in the centre. Woodward explains that this is a common feature of fifteenth-century mappaemundi: "Since the traditional frame no longer held the new discoveries of the fifteenth century...it became a practical impossibility to center the maps on Jerusalem" (Woodward, "Mappaemundi", 317). This is one of many examples of a move away from the old world-image presented by the Anglo-Norman group towards a more modernised world view.

The Fra Mauro map is perhaps the finest example of the influence of new learning on a transitional mappamundi, in that it combines information from all three new sources into a traditional mappamundi frame (with the exception that west is at the top). It has

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[24] Vesconte's mappamundi was made to illustrate the *Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis* of Marino Sando. Illustrated in Woodward, "Medieval Mappaemundi", 355 and pl. 16.

[25] Sections of the Catalan Atlas are illustrated in Woodward, "Medieval Mappaemundi", pl. 17 and 356, discussed 315.

[26] Illustrations and discussions in Woodward, "Medieval Mappaemundi": Bianco discussed 317, 358; Leardo illustrated pl. 20; Fra Mauro illustrated pl. 18; Walsberger illustrated pl. 21; general discussion 314-18.

[27] See A. E. Nordenskiöld, *An Account of a Copy of a fifteenth-century Map of the world* (reprint Stockholm, 1891).

been described as the end of the mappamundi tradition, on the eve of the Renaissance.[28]

These transitional maps are wonderful compositions, grand and nostalgic in feel, and are a worthy object of further detailed study, but too different from the earlier Anglo-Norman group to be considered here at any length. They combine the traditional artistic features of the mappaemundi with news from an increasing number of genuine travellers to India during the Mongol period, and with new ideas derived from portolan charts. These new influences changed the ecumenical 'world-image' dramatically, and the programme of symbolism found on an Anglo-Norman mappamundi such as the Hereford will not be found on a map from two centuries later.

Gog and Magog, the western pillars of Hercules and the terrestrial paradise are commonly found on various transitional mappaemundi, but the consistent placement of Graeco-Roman conquest landmarks around the edge of the ecumene is not a common feature of these maps as is true of the Anglo-Norman group. The wide variety of structures symbolising conquest boundary is a hallmark of Anglo-Norman mappaemundi, and one of the features of the genre that did not survive into the transitional period.

In conclusion, we may judge the high point of the Anglo-Norman cartographic movement to be the mid- to late-thirteenth century, moving slowly into disuse until around 1350, and from then on rapidly into decline.

B - Alexander's Life, and the medieval Alexander Romance material

As many of the conquest monuments on Anglo-Norman mappaemundi are described in the body of literature known as the Alexander Romance cycle, I will be referring to these sources extensively. It is necessary to give an account of the way in which this romance tradition was formed. I reference works as I introduce them throughout the text rather than citing them here.

Life of Alexander

Alexander the Great was born in Macedonia in 356 BC. He became king of Macedonia at the age of twenty, after the death of his father Philip. One of his first actions was to unite Greece, a feat which involved the sack of the rebellious city of Thebes around the year 335. He crossed the Hellespont in 334, and fought the Persian king Darius for eleven years, finally defeating him and taking over as king of Persia after having sacked the royal treasury of Persepolis. During the course of the period, he made a detour to Egypt, where the oracle of the Egyptian God Ammon at the Oasis of Siwah seems to have told him that he was the son of Ammon, and a rightful inheritor of the Egyptian throne. He also founded the city of Alexandria in this period.

Once he had defeated Darius (who was killed), his ambition grew, and he began to conceive of a world-empire. The first stage in this plan was to venture further east and conquer India. The Indian campaign was fought between 327 and 325 BC. In around

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[28] Harley and Woodward, *History of Cartography*, text accompanying pl. 18.

326 BC, his route took him north through regions such as modern-day Pakistan and Afghanistan, which are known as 'the northern lands' in later accounts, and any claims that he conquered 'the north' are based on his activities in these regions (Bactria, Sogdiana and Scythia). He founded the city of Alexandria 'Eschate' ('Ultima', or 'The Furthest') in this period (see chapter 7). He is in fact said to have founded twelve cities named Alexandria, but only Alexandria Ultima and Alexandria in Egypt concern us.

He returned south and defeated the Indian King Porus in a battle on the Hydaspes (the modern Jhelum), and Porus became his vassal. He wanted to press on past the Indus (into India as we know it today), but his troops mutinied on the banks of a tributary of the Indus known as the Hyphasis (now called the Beas). At this point, he is thought to have erected altars on the banks of the river, in honour of the Twelve Gods of Greece, and to mark the furthest eastward point of his march (see chapter 2). The mutiny forced him to return west, and he eventually reached the city of Babylon in 323 BC. He died in Babylon of alcohol poisoning, which later writers decided must have been a deliberate act of poisoning by some of his officers.

After his death, his empire passed into the hands of his generals, and quickly broke up into a number of smaller kingdoms. Of these, only the dynasty founded by the general Ptolemy in Egypt concerns us. The basis of the original *Greek Alexander Romance* was almost certainly composed in Ptolemaic Alexandria, as its emphasis on the power of the Egyptian deity Serapis (who was invented by the Ptolemies) reveals. This is discussed further in chapters 3 and 7.

Classical and early medieval accounts of Alexander

Alexander's exploration of India and the Near East was unequalled until the fourteenth century AD, and the fantastic nature of perceptions of the East in the medieval period is partly due to the fact that the events being described had occurred over 1700 years before medieval accounts of them were written. Much of the source material used by medieval writers was also not written until a long while after the events occurred.

Many of the genuine historical accounts of Alexander's conquests, and the more realistic versions of his life - by Arrian, Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, and others - were unknown or unused in the Middle Ages until the middle of the fourteenth century. Another historical source, the *History of Alexander* by Quintus Curtius Rufus, was used by Walter de Châtillon, the author of the *Alexandreis*, but otherwise was generally neglected in the Middle Ages. I refer to these generally under the heading 'the historical versions'.

Nearly all the medieval Alexander material extant - and there is a copious quantity, as his tale was very popular - is derived from a work by an author now known as the Pseudo-Callisthenes (third century AD, and thus writing over 600 years after the events being described). I am referring to this as the *Greek Alexander Romance*, or the *GAR*.

This work was translated from Greek into Latin by Julius Valerius in the fourth century (under the title *Res Gestae Alexandri Magni*). An epitome of this was made

in the ninth century, now generally referred to as the 'Zacher' *Epitome* after its first editor. In the tenth century the Archbishop Leo made another translation of Pseudo-Callisthenes, called the *Historia de Preliis* (History of the Battles) and now often called simply the *Historia*. By the twelfth century this had superseded the *Epitome* as the main source for Alexander romances.

A third recension of the Pseudo-Callisthenes was written in the form of a letter from Alexander to his mentor Aristotle, and thus called the *Epistola Alexandri Magni ad Aristotelem* or simply the *Epistola*. The *Epistola* and the *Epitome* were commonly found together in collections of Alexander material and share many elements. Both were incorporated into later recensions of the *Historia*. The "letter" idea was used by other writers at various stages, including one purporting to be from Farmes to Hadrian known as the *Epistola de Mirabilus Indiae*, which is very similar to the *Epistola* in content.

Another source that had an influence on the literature under study was Orosius' *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, whose version of the life and upbringing of Alexander influences several ME works, probably through the version known as the *OE Orosius*, translated at the behest of King Alfred. The last major early source is a work called the *Iter ad Paradisium* (Voyage to Paradise) which derives originally from the Babylonian Talmud and first appeared in the fifth century. It was translated into French in the twelfth century (*Voyage au Paradis Terrestre*) and then was incorporated into the main romance cycle.

The subject of manuscript descent in Alexander Romance material is very complex. For example, there are at least three major recensions of the *Historia* upon which later works are based. However, there is no space to discuss this here. The reader should consult *The Medieval Alexander* by G. Cary and *Alexander Historiatus* for full details.[29]

Vernacular versions

The full flowering of the Alexander Romance tradition was in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when a series of creative translations and combinations were made of all of the sources mentioned above. I will be concentrating mostly on the Middle English material, referring to the Old French sources where an episode has been omitted in the English versions, and returning to the Latin originals where the meaning has been confused.

The earliest work studied here is the tenth-century Old English collection generally called *Wonders of the East*, including OE and Latin versions of sections of the *Epistola*. The *Epistola* was translated into Middle English again in the fifteenth century, witnessed by one surviving manuscript, Worcester Cathedral MS 172.

The *Roman de Toute Chevalrie* or RTC (also called the Anglo-Norman Alexander), was written by Thomas of Kent in the second half of the twelfth century, using the

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[29] G. Cary, *The Medieval Alexander* (Cambridge, 1956) and D. J. A. Ross, *Alexander Historiatus: A Guide to Medieval Illustrated Alexander Literature* (London, 1963).

Epitome, the *Epistola* and the recently translated *Iter*. This was translated into English (*Kyng Alisaunder*) in about 1330 (*KA*). I will be using this text extensively, turning occasionally to the *RTC* to look at incidents that were omitted by the author of the *KA*. Another twelfth century French work was the collection now generally known as the *Roman D'Alexandre*, made by Alexander of Paris. Earlier in the twelfth century, four separate romances had been written, each covering a different section of Alexander's life. These were the Decasyllabic Alexander (Birth and Childhood), the *Fuerre de Gadres* (Foray of Gaza, generally describing the Levantine conquests), the *Alexander en Orient* and the *Mort Alixandre*. Alexander of Paris combined and altered all of these to form a single poem, now generally called the *Roman D'Alexandre* or *R'Alix*. The branches of this, in the order I have described them, are lettered A through D. As I am mostly concerned with Alexander's extension of the ecumenical realm during his eastern campaigns, I will be looking almost entirely at the C Branch (Alexander in the Orient).

The last great French version was the *Old French Prose Alexander*, a fairly careful translation of the second recension of the *Historia*. This contains largely the same material as can be found in two fragments of a Middle English romance, now called Alexander A and B (but not to be confused with the *R'Alix* branches). These two are all that survives of what may have been a complete ME translation of the entire *Historia* (2nd recension) made in Gloucestershire in the fourteenth century.

Alexander A corresponds roughly to *R'Alix* A, and thus does not concern us. However, Alexander B goes into great detail about the Indian adventures, and thus corresponds with *R'Alix* branch C. It focuses on Alexander's long philosophical argument with the king of the saintly ascetic tribe known as the Brahmans, whose name is Dindimus. It is thus commonly called *Alexander and Dindimus*. The founding of the eastern pillar of Alexander is described at the end of the fragment.

Two Middle English translations - one prose, one verse - were made of the third recension of the Historia in the fifteenth century. These are the "Thornton" *Prose Life* of Alexander and the *Wars of Alexander* respectively. I will be using the first of these extensively.

C - A note on sources and abbreviations

This work is primarily a study in English literature, and is designed for the benefit of English language scholars wishing to understand the nature of geographical symbolism within England in the medieval period. I will be quoting from English sources where possible. The thirteenth century saw a widespread development of the use of both spoken and written English, and as a consequence, much of the material I am examining was available in English during the main period of mappamundi production, or was translated into English not long afterwards.

A great deal of work has already been done on geography in Latin chronicles and histories during this period. Latin geographical texts are highly variable in nature, but for the most part tend towards the more scientific end of the spectrum of written knowledge. Vernacular languages tended to be more often used for poetry and literature. As I am for the most part examining geographical symbolism rather than

empirical knowledge, I look at vernacular texts not commonly associated with the mappaemundi - for example, Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, Robert Grosseteste's *Castel of Love*, and the anonymous *Castle of Perseverance*. By doing so, I hope to broaden scholarly perceptions of which texts pertain to mappaemundi, as the field of study is presently grounded in texts strictly on geography.

Latin sources are taken from existing translations if available, or given in Latin with an English translation if not, as is often the case with map inscriptions. Also, given the prevalence of Norman French in England in this period, episodes from a number of sources in that language are referenced. However, the bulk of quoted material is from Middle English sources - romances, histories, travel books, and encyclopaedias. I provide Middle English passages in their original with an accompanying translation in modern English. The Middle English character 'thorn' is rendered as 'th', and 'yogh' is rendered as 'gh' or 'z', as appropriate.

The Bible text used is the New King James Version (The Gideons International in Australia, 1987 edition). Biblical citations, as well as chapter and line references from major Classical and medieval sources (Pliny's *Natural History*, Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*, etc.) are given as, for example - Pliny, *Natural History*, 3. 1. - followed in many instances by a reference to the translation used. Multiple entries are separated by semi-colons.

I consistently use the abbreviation BC, but exclude AD unless not using it might be ambiguous. Specific dates are given where necessary, but otherwise texts and authors are grouped by century. Authors and texts are generally referred to by Anglicised versions of their names. Landmarks are referred to as plain nouns rather than proper names – i.e. 'the pillars of Hercules', except in quotations, in which they are left in the original wording and thus often read as 'The Pillars of Hercules', etc.

CHAPTER TWO - COMPETITIVE CONQUEST: The Pillars of Hercules and Alexander in the Orient

Introduction

In the eastern section of the 'Jerome' map of Palestine are two sets of pillars. The first set is ascribed to Hercules, and the second set, which are slightly further to the east, to Alexander. The story of these two sets of pillars is found in many versions of the Alexander Romance literature of the Middle Ages.

A good example comes from the *Prose Life of Alexander* (a fifteenth-century Middle English version of the I² *Historia de Preliis*). The *Prose Life* tells how Alexander came to the eastern pillars of Hercules, which are two statues left to mark the furthest point of his travels in India:

> Another day, he come wit his Oste till a place wharee twa ymagez ware, the whilke Ercules gart make and sett in that place. And the tane of tham was of fyne golde, and the tother of fine silvere, and the lenthe of aythir of tham was twa cubettis. When Alexander saw thir ymagez, he gert perche tham for to witt, whether they ware holle or massy. And he fand that thay were a party holle. And he garte stoppe the hole agayne and putt in tham a thowsande nobles, and five hundreth. And fra theine he removed his Oste, and entrede intill a wildirnesse calde and myrk...[1]

> [One day, he came with his army to a place where two statues were, which Hercules had made and put there. One of them was of fine gold, and the other of fine silver, and the height of each of them was two cubits. When Alexander saw the statues, he pierced them, so as to know if they were hollow or solid. He found that they were partly hollow. And so he filled up the hole again and put in fifteen hundred gold coins. And then he went with his army into a cold and murky wilderness...]

The statues described here are a medieval remembrance of the most well known in a series of similar structures erected by travellers and warriors in the mythology and history of the Classical era. The deity Liber Pater (a Roman composite form of Jupiter and Dionysius / Bacchus) and many other heroes and conquerors were also credited with having erected such monuments. The idea of conquest monuments denoting territorial boundary can be traced back as far as the fifth century BC, and is probably even older.

As we read in the *Prose Life*, Alexander establishes a landmark of his own after passing beyond the statues of Hercules. As in many versions of the romance, he erects this landmark after he is frustrated by an encounter with the Brahmans, a race he cannot conquer as they live on the other side of an uncrossable river, usually the Ganges. Alexander, in the words of the *Prose Life* version, commands his followers to

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[1] *Prose Life of Alexander*, ed. J. Westlake (London, 1913), 74. 'Holle' here, as in other ME texts, means hollow, when contrasted with 'massy', meaning solid.

rayse up a pelare of Marble a wonder grete, and an hegh, and gart
writt thare-apon this title wit lettres of grewe, of latyne, and of the
langage of Inde. 'I Alexander, Philipp son of Macedoyne, after the
discomfytour and the dedd of Darius and Porus come on werre vn-
to this place.' (*Prose Life*, 88-9)

[raise up a pillar of marble, a great wonder, very high, and to write
on it this title in letters of Greek, Latin and in the language of India
- 'I Alexander of Macedon, son of Philip, after the discomfiture
and death of Darius and Porus, came in war unto this place.']

This chapter focuses on the meaning of the eastern pillars of Hercules and
Alexander, and the idea that these structures represented cumulative extensions of
the Graeco-Roman ecumene. The setting up of the boundary pillar is one of a
series of expressions of the power of the world-conqueror to re-define the
ecumene, and in this way 'outdo' the efforts of his predecessors. There are a great
many literary references to the placement of these pillars and statues by various
kings and heroes and I will look at these in depth.

My study of the eastern pillars of Hercules and Alexander is intended as an
introduction to the concept of the conquest landmark. It will be followed in the
next two chapters by a closer examination of the nature of medieval maps and
geographical texts, which will focus on many of the issues raised here. I will give
a historical account of the development of the motif of the pillars, and their
relevance to the theme of cosmic kingship, from the fifth century BC, followed by
an examination of medieval treatments of the theme, and then suggest reasons for
its subsequent decline in the fourteenth century and beyond.

1 - Historical Background to the Motif

One of the earliest mentions in European literature of symbolic pillars or altars
denoting the ecumenical boundary is Herodotus' description of the conquests of
Sesostris, an Egyptian warlord. Herodotus explains that Sesostris had erected a
large number of them in various parts of the ecumene. Many of Sesostris'
memorial markers were statues of himself. By the time Alexander founded his
own altars in the fourth century BC, the idea was already well-established.[2]

One of the first writers to describe Alexander's conquest of India was
Megasthenes (third century BC). Megasthenes (whose work is known only from
epitomes in later authors) reported that India had never been conquered by
anyone before Alexander

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[2] Herodotus, *The Histories* (2. 100-104), trans. A. De Selincourt, 2nd ed. (London, 1972), 166-7.
    See also W. Smith, ed., *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, 2 vols. (London, 1873),
    'Alexandri Arae', and 'Hyphasis'. This source is referred to subsequently as Smith, *Dictionary*.

except by Herakles and Dionysius *in old times*...Yet Sesostris the Egyptian and Tearkon the Ethiopian advanced as far as Europe. And Nabukodrosor [Nebuchadnezzar]...carried his arms to the Pillars, which Tearkon also reached, while Sesostris penetrated from Iberia [in Asia] even into Thrace and Pontos. Besides these there was Idanthyrsos the Skythian, who overran Asia as far as Egypt. But not one of these great conquerors approached India, and Semiramis, who meditated its conquest, died before the necessary preparations were undertaken.[3]

We should note that the notion that Dionysius and Hercules had erected landmarks was invented after Alexander's march had been completed. A major part of Alexander's political rhetoric involved claims that he was outdoing these deities, and it was only fitting that once the myth of Alexander's altars became established, his predecessors were said to have erected similar structures.

Before I do so, it is necessary to explain that both Dionysius and Hercules were in fact composites of a number of different deities, all of whom were credited with world conquest. There is generally much confusion in the early texts as to the precise birth-place and original function of both deities in Graeco-Roman lore. Diodorus Siculus (first century BC) pointed directly at these confusions, noting that the 'real' (Greek) Hercules was often confused with

two persons of an earlier period who had borne the same name, the most ancient Heracles who...set up the pillar which is in Libya, and the second, who...was the founder of the Olympic Games; but the third and last...visited a large part of the inhabited world...he also set up the pillar which is in Europe, but because he bore the same name as the other two...he inherited the exploits of the more ancient persons of that name, as if there had been...but one Heracles.[4]

Diodorus says the same is true of Dionysius, noting that there were in fact three figures by that name, all of whom were conquerors. The third of these, the Greek Dionysius, "imitating the principles of both the others he led an army all over the inhabited world and left behind him not a few pillars to mark the bounds of his campaign..." (trans. Oldfather, vol. 2, 331).

The second Dionysius mentioned by Diodorus was born in Nysa in India. In the course of his campaigns, Alexander came to a place called Nysa (which is not certainly identified), and found ivy growing there. Ivy being the special plant of Dionysius, Alexander thought he had found traces of the god's presence, and so,

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[3] J. McRindle, ed. and trans., *Ancient India described by Megasthenes and Arrian* (Calcutta, 1926), 109-10.

[4] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* (3. 74. 5), trans. C. H. Oldfather, 12 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1935), vol. 2, 331-2. Cicero's views on Hercules are revealing here. He says that there were in fact at least four gods called Hercules - Greek, Tyrian (probably the deity Melkart), Egyptian (Ra), and Indian. Further, a German Hercules is mentioned by Tacitus, discussed in chapter 5. The practice of ascribing famous deeds to the name Hercules can only have been increased by the tendency to call any similar deity found in other cultures by that name. See Cicero, *The Nature of the Gods*, trans. H. C. P. McGregor (London, 1972), 109-10.

as Cary and Warmington put it, the writers following Alexander "made the man march in the god's footsteps."[5]

On the Hereford Map, the inscription relating to Nysa reads "Nuam civitatem dionysius liber pater condidit replens eam l milibus hominum" [Dionysius / Liber Pater founded the city of Nysa and peopled it with 50, 000 people]. This is a standard account of Nysa, based on Solinus (52. 16) and Isidore's *Etymologies* (15. 1. 6). On the Jerome map of Asia, the pillars of Dionysius are found in a city called Nysa - the idea that Dionysius was born in Nysa has seemingly been conflated with the idea that this town marked the furthest extent of his conquest.

Nysa in Graeco-Roman lore is also the place where the sepulchres of Isis and Osiris were positioned (the latter deity being often identified with Dionysius by a variety of writers). Diodorus wrote that there were pillars ascribed to both of these deities in Nysa, erected on their tombs (discussed below). Diodorus was not well known in the early Middle Ages, but his work may have influenced other encyclopaedic writers such as Pliny and Solinus. A translation of parts of Diodorus' *Library of History* by the Italian humanist Poggio Bracciolini (fourteenth century) was in turn translated into English by John Skelton in the sixteenth century. Skelton's account of the inscription on the pillar of Osiris (Dionysius) is particularly revealing. The pillar / tomb is not in itself a boundary landmark, but the inscription on it does detail Osiris' travels to three of the four corners of the ecumene:

> I am the high and mighty Kyng, Osiris, that have trauaylled thurgh-
> out the world abowte vnto the inhabytable costis [coasts] of Ynde,
> vnto tho partyes that rest under the pole artyke, vnto the waters of
> Hister, otherwyse callyd the stremes of Denmarke, and to other
> parties of the world vnto the grete see Occeane.[6]

In summary, there are a variety of confusions regarding the initial origin and function of Hercules and Dionysius in Graeco-Roman history. What is clear is that at no stage before Alexander's march were either Hercules or Dionysius credited with having conquered India. It seems likely that the Greek historians accompanying Alexander invented the idea that these deities were previous conquerors of India in order to develop a comparison between the two which favoured Alexander. Over the course of time, Hercules and Dionysius were then also credited with having placed pillars in the Far East, because Alexander was known to have done so.

The extract from Megasthenes quoted above is found in the *Geography* of Strabo, a Greek author of the first century BC. Elsewhere, Megasthenes (here paraphrased by Solinus, who wrote in the third century AD) writes: "In India there is also the [river] *Hupanis*, a very noble river, which formed the limit of

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[5] G. Cary and E.H. Warmington, *The Ancient Explorers* (London, 1929), 198. For more information on Hercules and Dionysius as models for Alexander, see chapter 4.

[6] *The Bibliotheca Historica of Diodorus Siculus, translated by John Skelton*, ed. F. Slater and H. Edwards (London, 1956), 1. 27. 2, page 38. This is an excellent source for early-modern remembrances of pagan conquest monuments, and was probably the one used by Shelley in his sonnet 'Ozymandias'. For the pillars of Hercules and Dionysius see 1. 24, page 33; for the pillar of Simandius (Shelley's Ozymandias) see 1. 47, page 68; for Sesoesis (Sesostris) see 1. 55. 2, page 78.

Alexander's march, as the altars set up on its banks testify."[7] This is perhaps close to historical fact, although the river name is incorrect. Alexander's real march did end at the river Hyphasis (modern Beas, or Sutlej), and it is likely that he did set up monumental altars to the Twelve Gods at some point along its banks, although no trace of these has ever been found.[8]

The original structures on the Hyphasis probably washed away quite quickly, but the site was well remembered in later times, and in the first century AD Plutarch (*Life of Alexander*, 62) reported that Indian kings still made pilgrimages to the site, in order to honour their ancient conqueror. As time passed, and Alexander's legend grew, his landmarks in the east were often placed much further than the Hyphasis. This is especially true of the medieval romances, in which Alexander was said to have travelled much further eastward, to the Ganges, or even to the terrestrial paradise.

Various early writers on Alexander also mention the idea that Hercules was thought to be incapable of penetrating beyond a particular rock known as Aornos. This fortress was overcome by Alexander when he arrived there. After mentioning a series of similar episodes, Megasthenes writes:

> Again, when Alexander had captured at the first assault the rock called Aornos...his followers, magnifying the affair, affirmed that Herakles had thrice assaulted the same rock and been repulsed....(McRindle, *Ancient India*, 111)

Perhaps the memory of this rock fortress, and Hercules' attempt to take it, was confused with the memory of the altars founded by Alexander on the banks of the Hyphasis river, and thus the pillars of Alexander and Hercules were invented out of a conflation of the two ideas. Whatever the case, it is certain that the followers of Alexander were keen to find traces of his two main predecessors in the Indian landscape they were exploring and laying claim to.[9]

Due to their inclusion in Megasthenes, Ctesias and other early writers, the eastern altars of Hercules and Alexander became a standard feature of medieval geography and can be found in some form in Pliny (6. 11), Strabo (see chapter 5), Solinus (see above) and other early writers who formed the stock material for the later medieval romance writers and exegetes. Thus, the geography of the Alexander legend contained permanent reminders of Alexander's superiority over a series of previous divine kings and culture-heroes.

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[7] Solinus (52. 7) cited in McRindle, *Ancient India*, 63. The Hypanis or Hupanis is actually in Scythia - Solinus errs here and means the Hyphasis. The Hereford map continues Solinus' error (Westrem, *Hereford*, 24).

[8] See Arrian, *History of Alexander* (5. 29) for the mutiny on the Hyphasis and historical background to the altars and libations to deities on the banks of that river. A. P. Dascalakis notes that the idea that a boundary pillar was erected amidst these altars is first found in the work of the comparatively late author Philostratus, who noted that a bronze pillar with the words "Here Alexander Stopped" was placed by Alexander on another Indian river, the Hydaspes (modern Jhelum). *Alexander the Great and Hellenism* (Athens, 1966), 242-43. The accounts of Curtius Rufus, Arrian, Pliny, Strabo and others all simply mention altars. Only Pliny (6. 11) mentions the odd detail that they were founded on the opposite (eastern) bank of the river.

[9] On the subject of outdoing, see Dascalikis, *Alexander*, 229-244, and Arrian, *History of Alexander and Indica*, trans. P. A. Brunt, 2. vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), vol. 2, 435-442.

The major exception to this general pattern is the description of the pillars of Bacchus in the *Orbis Terrae Descriptio* of Dionysius (first century AD). Dionysius relates a fable concerning Bacchus, saying that he had conquered India, and that

> when he had thus subdued those nations, immediately he ascended
> to the Mounte *Haemodus*, on whose foote the East Ocean beateth,
> and there over their heads as it were one ende of the earth, he
> erected two pillers, following the example of his countriman
> *Hercules*, and at length wente downe like a conquerour...[10]

Medieval readers familiar with Christ's temptation on the mountain in Matthew 4. 8-10 ("the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory...Then Jesus said to him 'Away with you, Satan, for it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve" ' ") would probably have looked upon this (and other passages in which conquerors view their realms from mountain-tops) with considerable suspicion.

From Dionysius' account, it will be noted that the theme of conquest pillars was a flexible one, and that there is nothing in the nature of the material that prevented Dionysius (the author) from rearranging the normal pattern. Dionysius also differs from other accounts in that he distinguishes between Dionysius (the deity) and Bacchus, treating them as separate entities, and tells stories of eastern pillars founded by both figures. Of Dionysius' pillars, he simply says that the furthest end of India is where "the pillers of *Dionysius* whiche was borne at *Thebe*, are seene standing, and where the *Indi*, which dwell in the uttermoste parts: are reported within the hilles" (*Orbis Terrae*, 623-626, trans. Twine, 46).

The theme of pillars was known so well by the time of Lucian (second century AD) as to be a fitting subject for satire. Lucian writes in his *True History* that he set sail from Gibraltar and set out to cross the Atlantic ocean, to see what was there. After a short while he found an island, and went ashore

> and when we had gone about six hundred yards we came across a
> bronze tablet with a Greek inscription on it. The letters were
> almost worn away, but we just managed to make out the words
> 'Hercules and Dionysius got this far'. We also spotted a couple of
> footprints on a rock nearby, one about a hundred feet long, and the
> other, I should say, about ninety-nine. Presumably Hercules has
> somewhat larger feet than Dionysius.[11]

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[10] Dionysius, *Orbis Terrae Descriptio* (2. 62-66), trans. Thomas Twine as *The Surveye of the World* (London, 1572), 82. The original text (ed. Hill, 55) gives the name of the mountain as 'Emodus', which was known as a mountain in the Far East. 'Emodus' is the original name of the 'Golden Mountains' of later times, which found in the Far East on many medieval world maps. See Smith, *Dictionary*, 'Emodi Montes'. 'Haemodus' is an ancient name for the Orkneys and is clearly an error by Twine.

[11] Lucian, *True History* (1), in *A True History and Lucius or the Ass*, trans. P. Turner (London, 1958), 6.

2 - The Eastern Pillars of Hercules and Alexander in Medieval Cartography

Early Treatments

The Alexandrian cartographer Ptolemy (second century AD) mentions the pillars of Hercules in a different manner to the way in which we have so far seen - they are used as a fixed point for measuring the boundaries of Asian provinces: "Mesopotamia is terminated on the...east by that part of the Tigris river...from the confines of Armenia to the Hercules Altars, which location is in 80/ 34." [12] (These figures are map co-ordinates. The accompanying fifteenth-century 'fourth map of Asia' map in Stevenson's edition shows the altars of Hercules in Babylonia as a three-towered building.)

Ptolemy also identified the pillars mentioned in Strabo (see above) as the pillars of Alexander (*Geography*, 5. 8), and it has been argued that this identification was due to a similarity in theme with the much older idea of the pillars of Hercules in the western end of the ecumene (due to an association of the European Iberia, otherwise Spain, with the Asian province of the same name). Falconer points to this error, and notes that the pillars mentioned in Strabo were probably originally thought to have been erected by much older heroes and conquerors, such as Nebuchadnezzar, Tearkon, and other world-conquerors (see chapter 4). [13]

The eastern pillars also appear on the other main remnant of Graeco-Roman cartography, the Roman administrative map known as the Peutinger Table. [14] The Peutinger Table is a twelfth-century copy of a Roman itinerary map, and thus it is not possible to tell if the pillars were on the original Roman map, or whether they were inserted into a copy of it at some later stage. However, as the pillars of Alexander were well known to Roman geographical writers, there is no reason to suppose that they were not part of the original composition of the Peutinger Table.

Pillars and Altars

In much of the literature we have been discussing, the boundary landmarks of Hercules and Alexander have been referred to as pillars or statues. However, in cartography, they are more commonly represented as altars or *arae. Arae* are depicted as a series of small squares, sometimes with a patterned top edge, indicating a material covering to an altar table. This tradition of representing altars dates back at least to the Peutinger Table.

In a few instances, all dating from the twelfth century, the eastern pillars are represented as a series of three pillars. Gautier Dalché notes that the representation of Alexander's altars as pillars on maps is unusual, only found on the Munich Isidore and Jerome Asia maps (*Descriptio*, 167-68). To this I add that the twelfth-century 'Cades' map also represents all four 'cades' as a series of three pillars. The variable is undoubtedly of cartographic origin, the original

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[12] Claudius Ptolemy, *The Geography* (5. 17), trans. E. L. Stevenson (New York, 1991), 129.

[13] In Stevenson's edition, the pillars of Alexander are shown in the 'second map of Asia' as two columns, identical to the western pillars in Spain and Africa (see chapter 5). For Falconer's argument, see *The Geography of Strabo*, ed. W. Falconer and H. Hamilton (London, 1889) 3 vols.; vol. 3, book 15 concerns India; see page 75 for the pillars in Ptolemy.

[14] A full illustration of the Peutinger Table is in *Itineraria Picta: Contributo allo Studio Della Tabula Peutingeriana* (Rome, 1967). The pillars are on seg. 11. They are also illustrated and discussed in O. Dilke, *Greek and Roman Maps* (London, 1985) figs. 23-23.

drawing of the altars having been confounded with the representation of columns. When they appear in the Far East, either as altars or pillars, I have included them in tables 2-6 under the heading "Eastern Pillars of Hercules" as it is clear that they represent the same original story - Alexander's offering to the Twelve Gods on the banks of the Hyphasis before his unwilling return to the west.

It is my supposition that the appearance of three pillars (in both east and west) is intended to symbolise the number twelve (three squares, a total of twelve sides), as the original altars of Alexander were in honour of the Twelve Gods. The habit of depcting three pillars in other parts of the ecumene seems to have arisen in the twelfth century, and was probably based on the original idea of three altars in the Far East.

In some cases, it is likely that medieval cartographers intended that their audience recognise the presence of the eastern pillars, even though they are not depicted or named. For instance, the Sawley map shows no eastern altars, but does show the river Hyphasis in the Far East. This river had no other function in medieval geography than to mark the boundaries of Alexander's campaign, and it seems probable that the maker of the Sawley map has omitted the eastern landmarks due to lack of space, but drawn the river to represent the story of their construction.

Pillars and 'Outdoing' on Maps

The invention of the eastern pillars of Hercules, and Alexander's subsequent passage beyond them, are part of a trope that E. R. Curtius has called 'outdoing'. 'Outdoing' was a popular trope in Roman literature, especially in panegyric verse in which the standard way to praise a patron was to compare his achievements with those of his predecessors. It was widely thought to be hubristic and sinful in the Middle Ages to do this, and Curtius cites several writers who were attacked for applying this technique to their contemporaries, leading to a minor controversy over it in the twelfth century.[15]

However, in medieval Alexander literature, the trope was employed frequently, and I am suggesting that traces of the idea can be seen in mappaemundi. Alexander was a symbol of European cultural expansion and ecumenical definition, but he was also an ancient, and his deeds could be described freely without arousing the suspicion that the writer was trying to favour the moderns over the ancients. Hercules and Bacchus / Dionysius exist within the romances to be outdone, and landmarks of their deeds on the mappaemundi are also in many instances positioned so as to be superseded by those of Alexander.

The most commonly occurring form of the eastern pillars in the map group are the altars or *arae* of Alexander. The Psalter map shows the altar of Liber and the pillars of Hercules, without those of Alexander. The pillars of Bacchus appear on the "Anonymous" map (albeit in the north-west) and in Miller's reconstruction of the geography of Dionysius Periegetis, but elsewhere the Roman by-name Liber is used. The Jerome map of Asia shows the altars of Liber Pater, in Nysa, without reference to those of Alexander. Only on the Jerome map of Palestine are the pillars of Alexander shown beyond those of Hercules, which I take to be a direct reference to the idea that Alexander had gone beyond Hercules' bounds.

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[15] See E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (London, 1953), 29-30 ,163-4, 384-5.

Other than these examples, representations of the pillars of Hercules, Dionysius / Bacchus or other deities in the Far East on maps of the medieval period are uncommon. However, I suggest that given the nature of Alexander's relationship with these deities in the Romance cycle, medieval observers of the larger mappaemundi would have been aware that Alexander's march to the Far East was spurred on by a desire to outdo his rivals. The presence of these deities and their landmarks would have been suggested by the appearance of his own pillars, or of other symbolic reminders of his journeys.

3 - The Eastern Pillars in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Literature

The descriptions of pillars in this chapter are all essentially based on two sections from the *Historia de Preliis*, the main Latin version of the romance made by Archbishop Leo in the tenth century. The first episode, the pillars of Hercules, is essentially the same as in the *Prose Life* version. Alexander finds the pillars of Hercules, which are two hollow statues of gold and silver. These are filled by Alexander, who then passes on to the wilderness beyond (3. 90).[16] The second episode, the erection of the pillars of Alexander, occurs after the encounter with Dindimus, and Alexander's failure to cross the Ganges. The pillar is simply inscribed "I, Alexander, came as far as here" (3. 102, trans. Pritchard, 100).

The original source for the second episode is Palladius' *Commentary on the Brahmans*, a fifth-century treatise on Indian religion that found its way into the main body of Alexander Romance literature. According to Palladius, Alexander did not reach the Ganges, but did make it to the land of the Ceres (China), where he erected a pillar saying simply "Alexander the King of Macedon reached this place."[17]

My intention here is to detail the various treatments of these pillars in the vernacular versions, showing the way in which the idea of the pillars, and inscriptions on them, became more complex, and different ideas were used in conjunction with the pillar theme.

Alexander and Dindimus

Two fragments of a fourteenth-century English translation of the *Historia*, known as Alexander A and B, are all that remains of the first English attempt to translate the Alexander Romance into English. Alexander B details Alexander's encounter with the Brahmans on the banks of the Ganges. The text is commonly known as *Alexander and Dindimus*.

The encounter with the Brahman king is one of the most famous episodes in the romance. Dindimus harangues Alexander for his moral corruption, while Alexander replies by pointing to the underdeveloped state of the Brahman society. Dindimus emerges as the clear winner. Of particular interest is the passage in which he points to Alexander's constant struggle with external forces:

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[16] *The History of Alexander's Battles: Historia de Preliis - the J¹ version*, trans. R. J. Pritchard (Toronto, 1992), 85.

[17] See R. Stoneman, ed., *Legends of Alexander The Great* (London, 1985), 34.

> But thou fihtest with thi fon that faren the biside,
> and hem that in thi bodi ben ay berest with the.
> But if we ony enimis with-inne vs aspie,
> We nolle sclepe in no sclowthe til we hem sclain haue;
> Ther-for we al ouurcomen that arn vs with-inne,
> We ne haue fere of no fon that faren with-oute...[18]

> [But you fight with your external enemies, while those within are
> always carried with you. But if we find any enemies within us, we
> will not sleep until we have defeated them. Thus, we overcome
> those within us, and fear no external enemies....]

The pillar is founded almost as soon as the debate is over, and the translator suggests that the two themes are connected:

> Whan this makelese man that most was adouted,
> the romme riden alixandre richest of kingus,
> Hadde le[n]gged there longe and lettrus the while
> Endited to dindimus as him dere thoute,
> There his burnus he bad bulden of marbre
> A piler sadliche i-picht or he passe wolde
> & that thei wrouhten a wrytte and writen ther-aboute:
> "Hider have ich, alixandre with myn help fare."
> Whan grave was the graie ston, the grime king rydus,
> & alle meven his men from the marke evene. (*Alexander and Dindimus*, 42)

> [After the unparalleled, redoubtable, far travelled Alexander, the
> richest of Kings, had lingered there so long writing letters to
> Dindimus, as he thought good, he had his men build a pillar of
> marble, firmly positioned, before he would leave. And they wrote
> upon it 'I, Alexander, with my army, have come this far.' When
> the grey stone had been engraved, the stern king rode, and moved
> all of his men away from that landmark.]

In the Bodley MS 264 version, a large illumination shows Alexander placing the pillar in the ground, his hands resting on either side. Above the illustration is written: "How Alixandre pichte [put] a pelyr of marbyl there." There are no other illustrations in the text, and the episode obviously struck the illuminator of the Bodley manuscript as being one of the defining moments in Alexander's eastern travels.[19]

The positioning of the eastern pillar immediately after the encounter with the Brahman king is almost certainly deliberate. Lewis Spence has noted the connection between the two episodes in *Alexander and Dindimus*: "After the letter had ended, Alexander erected a pillar of marble to mark the furthest spot which he had succeeded in reaching...the two leading ideas, which are both theological,

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[18] *Alexander and Dindimus, or, the letters of Alexander and to Dindimus, king of the Brahmans: with the replies of Dindimus: being a second fragment of the alliterative romance of Alexander: translated from the Latin, about AD 1340-50*, ed. W. Skeat (London, 1878), 14.

[19] British Library, Bodley MS 264, f215v. Noted in *The Gests of King Alexander of Macedon*, ed. F. P. Magoun (Cambridge, 1929), 10.

display the contrast between the active and the contemplative life - the Asiatic and the European."[20] As well as this contrast, it is noticeable that in *Alexander and Dindimus*, Alexander is cast as a pagan, and attacked for his polytheism by the monotheistic Brahmans. The pillar in this text stands for the 'active' state, the Graeco-Roman conception of world rulership by a mortal figure, while the 'Asiatic' Brahmans are far closer to the Christian ascetic and contemplative ideal.

Hercules' Choice

A curious feature of the *Prose Life* is that there are two separate references to the pillars of Alexander. The first, quoted above, occurs immediately after his encounter with Dindimus. The second episode occurs immediately before he turns from travelling east and begins his trek back to Babylon. The second set of pillars is founded in a place called 'the meeting of two ways', where the traveller is given the choice to go right (east) or left (west):

> and than thay com till wonder heghe Mountaynes....And thir mountaynes ware....brant vp-right as thay had bene walls. So that there was na clymbyng tham. And at the last thay fande twa passagez be-twix thase Mountaynes, of whilke, the tane stretched to-warde the west, and the tother towarde the Este. Than Alexander demed that that dyuyson be-twix thase Mountaynes was made thurgh Noye flode. (*Prose Life*, 91)

> [And then they came to very high mountains...And these mountains were...bent upright as if they were walls, so there was no climbing them. And at last, they found two passages between these mountains, one to the east and one to the west. Then Alexander deemed that the division between the two mountains was made by Noah's flood].

Alexander goes east, and encounters a basilisk, a citadel which is a similar to the terrestrial paradise, and then finally the 'Trees of the Sun and Moon', where his death is predicted by the oracle there. He decides to return home. At this point the author tells us:

> And thare at the entree of tha twa forsaid ways, Alexander gart rayse vp twa pelers of Marble, and by-twixe tham he haude a table of golde, on the whilke was wretyn in the langage of grewe, hebrew, of latyne, and of Inde one this wys: 'I , Alexander, Phillpp son of Macedoyne, sett thir pelers here, after the dedd of Darius kynge of Perse and of Porus kynge of Ynde. What man so will passe forther late him tourne on the lefte hand. For wha so tournez one the righte hande he sall fynde many obstaclez and greuancez that sall perauenture lett his agayne-comynge.' (*Prose Life*, 95-96)

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[20] L. Spence, *Dictionary of Medieval Romance and Romance Writers* (London, 1913), 5.

> [And there at the aforesaid meeting of two ways, Alexander raised
> up two pillars of marble, and between them he placed a table of
> gold, on which was written in Greek Hebrew, Latin and the
> language of India 'I Alexander, son of Philip of Macedon, set these
> pillars here, after the death and discomfiture of Darius King of
> India. Whichever man will pass further, turn to the left hand side.
> For whoever turns to the right side shall find many obstacles and
> dangers, preventing his return.']

The 'left or right' choice offered by Alexander is an inversion of what is known as the 'Pythagorean Y', or 'Hercules' choice', a conventional medieval pilgrimage allegory. In the normal order of the allegory, the left path led to danger, sin, and lies, while the right fork led to penance and truth. Examples can be found in the work of Dante, Brunetto Latini and elsewhere.[21]

In the passage quoted above, Alexander has in fact taken the correct path, and discovered the truth. The 'obstacles and grievances' he encounters are symbolic of the difficulties on the road to spiritual salvation. His pillars in this passage are a permanent reminder of his spiritual folly, and would mislead any future traveller who obeyed them into taking the left path, easier in a physical sense, but leading to damnation.

Lindsay has noted that in many instances in very early European literature, the founding of two pillars symbolised the choice of two ways. The two pillars are thus not a gate or a boundary in this text, but the markers of a forked road, symbolising the choice that must be made (Lindsay, *Gates*, 114).

The Pillars as textual markers

Geography in the Alexander romances was often created largely by the requirements of the plot, generally by two mechanisms. Firstly, if the plot required that there be an extension to Alexander's march in order to add in marvellous and monstrous material, then geography was no obstacle to this, and another 'forty days' spent in wild forests and mountains could be added to the tale. This is particularly true of the 'C' branch, the Oriental expedition, where most of the marvellous (and thus most likely to be episodic) material is to be found. The 'Birth', 'Levantine Conquests', and 'Death' sequences run similarly (in terms of geography and rough chronology) in versions from the original Greek romance to the medieval romances. The C branch, however, underwent radical change, usually in the form of expansion, as episode after episode was added.

Secondly, Classical and medieval writers often wished to show that Alexander's conquests had been the most extensive ever known, that they had defined the ecumene, and that all available knowledge of the ecumene, especially the Far East, had come from them. This meant that all available information about the habitable world should be included in the story of Alexander's march. So the writer of the original *Greek Alexander Romance* credited Alexander with having gone to the Ganges, as this river was widely known about by this time. In these two ways the territorial extent of his conquests grew with each successive addition.

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[21] See for example Brunetto Latini, *The Little Treasure*, trans. J. B. Holloway (New York, 1981), 59.

For these reasons, the pillars tend to move around in both the geography and the chronology of the story. The pillars are, in all cases, intended to represent the furthest point to which Alexander travelled. However, in various sources there is still some attempt to remain true to the original idea that the pillars were erected on the banks of a river that Alexander, for one or another reason, failed to get across. The *Prose Life* gives two versions, one from the Brahmans episode where the pillar story is commonly found, and the other to continue the tradition that the pillars were founded at the furthest point of his travels. This is an example of how the individual episodes, particularly those in the C branch, shape the terrain according to their number and content.

The Pillars in the Middle English version of the Epistola

This section concentrates on the description of the pillars in the fourteenth-century *Middle English Letter of Alexander to Aristotle,* a cumbersome translation of the *Epistola.* I have chosen here to give the Middle English account to show the way in which the meaning was confused from the original Latin text. My English translations combine the wording of the Middle English with the sense of the *Epistola.* "Both goddis" here means Hercules and Liber:

> In the est, forsoth, in the last parties wern ordeigned simulacres of gold of either or both goddis; which, if thei wern holl or nat, I, coveityng to know, badde hem al to be bored and perced. And eftsones whan I saw hem holle like to metal complete and freely Hercule with cast doun sacrifices it me plesed.[22]

The relevant section of the *Epistola* (22) reads:

> He [King Porus of India, who has become Alexander's ally] led me to a place where there stood statues of gold which had been erected by Father Liber and Hercules, who are gods among the pagans. I wanted to know if they were of solid metal, so I had holes drilled in all of them. When I found that they were all solid, I had the holes refilled with gold. (trans. Stoneman in *Legends*, 11)

The meaning here is entirely different from that of the *Prose Life* version (given at the start of the chapter), which clearly states that the statues are hollow, thereby implying that the territorial claims of Hercules and Liber were unsubstantiated. Alexander's act of filling the statues with gold in the *Prose Life* version is a claim of superior wealth and a clear example of the trope of outdoing. In the *Epistola* version, he is simply filling up the holes he himself has made.

Unlike the *Prose Life* version, Alexander in the *ME Letter* claims he is making 'sacrifices' to his forebears. This is a more subtle form of competition with his patron deities. Alexander did in fact make altars of libation to these deities; the nature of the ceremonies, and the relationship between himself and these 'patron' deities, was at once worshipful and irreverent. In the subsequent *ME Letter* passage, where he erects his own pillars, there is a noticeable element of competition which reflects the ambiguity of his relationship with his forebears:

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[22] *The Middle English Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*, ed. V. Di Marco and J. Perelman (Amsterdam, 1978), 80-82. It should be noted that the Middle English is very poor.

> Ther to my legat I comaunded that and whiche precident I
> proposed and bifore sette, in name Alanen, as that he comaunde
> and bidde the Perses and the Babiloynes as .ii. holle ballis of gold
> to the height and gretnes having of .v. feete thei don to be made;
> and also he comaunded as of al thiese my deedis and doynges bien
> writen and put. And sette them in the last and uttermest Ynde
> biyonde the sones and chieldren of Hercules victory of which .c.
> sum weren in divers regions. Ther also my golden ballis biyonde
> them of .v. feete to be statute and ordeigned [new folio] I have
> comaunded; to the which myracles or mervailes in tymes to come
> wern nat a litel to be received of the same Alexander. (*ME Letter*,
> 110)

This story in the Latin *Epistola* (22) reads:

> There I instructed one of my soldiers, Alcon by name, whom I had
> made ruler of Persia, to erect two statues of me in Babylon and in
> Persis. They were to be 25 feet high, of solid gold, and to have
> inscribed on them all my deeds. Alcon was to erect a further five
> golden statues of me, ten feet high, in furthest India, where there
> were a hundred statues of Liber and Hercules.

> Now, my dear teacher, I have made a memorandum of my
> remarkable deeds, which will be an object of amazement to
> succeeding generations; and I have established a new and durable
> record for heroic feats, which will...convey my fame to future
> ages...(trans. Stoneman in *Legends,* 19)

Clearly, the translator of the *ME Letter* was confused as to some points, not least
the fact that the 'memorandum of remarkable deeds' in fact refers to the letter
itself, not the statues. As well as this, the statues on which Alexander's deeds
were inscribed were originally positioned in Persis and Babylon by the writer of
the *Epistola*, but the translator has seemingly positioned them at the edge of the
known world, in furthest India. The result is that the pillars of Alexander in this
text are described as detailed historical monuments, which the reader would
probably have conceived of as a list of conquered cities and kingdoms.

There is no parallel idea in Christian thought for Alexander's attitude towards
Hercules and Liber in these passages. He is described as though he were
honouring them and competing with them at the same time, and with the same
actions. 'Outdoing' was not a simple act of rejecting the past, but involved
claiming the heritage of the past in order to attempt the creation of a better future.

The Pillars as Statues

I turn now to discuss the issue of statues and their meaning in medieval literature.
In *Kyng Alisaunder* (or *KA*, a late Middle English translation of Thomas of Kent's
Roman de Toute Chevalrie, or *RTC*), Alexander finds the pillars of Hercules in the
following way:

> Hij comen to the on werldes ende,
> And there hij founden thing of mynde:
> Of pure golde two grete ymages

. . . .
After Ercules hij weren made
and after his fader, of gold sad.
Ercules was whilom a man
that non ne migth stonde agein. [23]

[They came to the world's end, and there they found a wondrous
thing: two great images of pure gold...Of Hercules and of his father.
Hercules was a man that no resistance could stand against.]

Hercules' 'father' in this passage is simply a misreading by Thomas of Kent of the
Solinus passage quoted above, where 'pater' is simply used as a by-name for
Liber, hence 'Father Liber'. The *KA* author continued Thomas of Kent's error. A
similar mistake seems to have been made in the *ME Letter*, where the passage
concerning Hercules and Liber quoted above translates the title as 'the sons and
children of Hercules.'

Statues, pillars and altars all refer to the same basic story we have been concerned
with in this chapter, and are essentially part of the same trope. Pillar stones were
in fact a key part of the altars of deities such as Hercules and Dionysius in the
Hellenic world, and that these pillars were thought of as representations of the
body of the god in question. Similarly, statues were frequently used in temples,
and to find them connected with altars is not at all surprising. We can rightly
imagine the "pillars" of Hercules and Alexander as being column-statues of the
sort used in temples and altars, and also used as territorial monuments. (See the
further discussion in chapter 3).

The interrelated use of pillars, altars and statues in the Alexander Romance
literature testifies to the survival of the idea, in a confused form, through medieval
use of Graeco-Roman sources. Medieval notions of statues of gods and pagan
rulers are a complex topic, and I have time here only to comment on one example.
The fourteenth-century travel writer John Mandeville discusses statues of pagan
gods in India, and says that these are of a different nature to idols:

> You must understand that those who worship simulacres honour
> them for the sake of worthy men, perhaps those who were doughty
> men in battle, like Hercules, Achilles and others like them, who
> performed many marvels in their lives. For they say they know
> well that they are not the God of nature, who made everything, but
> that they are beloved of God because of the marvels they
> performed.[24]

Mandeville here represents Hercules and Achilles as culture-heroes beloved by
God for the deeds they have performed. The worship of such figures is not part of
the Christian framework, but these statues are not to be considered as idols, as
they show real human beings rather than monstrous creations of the imagination.
The distinction is important - Hercules and other figures were not considered as

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[23] *King Alisaunder*, ed. G. V. Smithers (London, 1952), 2 vols., vol. 1, 291, and see vol. 2, 130-
131.

[24] John Mandeville, *The Travels of John Mandeville*, trans. C. W. R. Moseley (London, 1983),
121.

deities, but Mandeville at least thought of them as real heroes, whose deeds help to define the ecumene, and who may have aided the Christian cause, despite their pagan beliefs.

Representations of statues of pagan rulers are never found on maps from this period. To directly portray the body of a pagan ruler might have been considered contrary to the condemnation of idol-worship, and when small human bodies or portions of bodies do occur on the maps, they always refer to Judaeo-Christian figures - Adam and Eve, Augustine in Hippo, or Abraham in Ur. Medieval observers of mappaemundi may have known from the romances that many of the landmark icons discussed here were statues - but they were not ever portrayed as such.

More Examples of Outdoing

I conclude this section by giving several more examples of the trope of 'outdoing'. Firstly, I will return to the section of *KA* discussed above. After finding the statues of Hercules, Alexander wonders if he might proceed beyond them, and "a cherle", who somehow has knowledge of the subject, tells him of the wild beasts and powerful kings he might encounter if he does so, adding that they are too powerful to be overcome:

> Noither for Ercules ne for Liber
> Ne dursten nevere comen ther.[25]

Alexander sets off without delay. We are directly reminded of the fact that Alexander is following in the footsteps of his forebears. This idea survives in the literature of the medieval period. Contemporary encyclopaedias, such as *On the Properties of Things* by Bartholomaeus Anglicus, borrowed from Pliny the notion that Alexander's conquests had been in imitation of his predecessors:

> This londe passeth Assia, Armenia, Hibernia...This londe was lady amonge the Bactreus, Medes, and Pers, and hath in possesion alle the eest londes. This londe, norse of Inde, folowede the steppis of Liber Pater and Hercules.[26]
>
> [This land [Macedonia] is next to Asia, Armenia and Hibernia...This land was ruler of the Bactrians, Medes and Persians, and has in possession all the east lands. This land, the nourisher of India, followed in the footsteps of Hercules and Liber Pater.]

It should be noted that the idea of outdoing does not depend entirely on Alexander having erected a series of pillars beyond those of Hercules. In *King Alisaunder*, there is no mention of his own pillars, which is also true of the source (the *RTC*). However, the *KA* does state that he erects pillars outside the Caspian Gates (see chap 7 for an account of these). In the other main French source, the *Roman*

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[25] Smithers translates "both for Hercules and Liber, who did not ever dare to come thither." *King Alisaunder*, vol. 1, 293 and vol. 2, 132.

[26] *On the Properties of Things: Trevisa's translation of Bartolomaeus Anglicus De Proprietatibus Rerum* (Oxford, 1975), 3 vols., gen. ed. M. C. Seymour, vol. 2, 781. The source is Pliny, *Natural History* (5. 10).

D'Alexandre of Alexander of Paris, the pillars of Bacchus and Liber are encountered, but again there is no mention of Alexander's own.[27]

Another interesting example of 'outdoing', found originally in the *Epistola*, has been dubbed the 'Cave of the Gods' by several editors. This is not in the English versions so far used, but is found in the *R'Alix*. According to the *Epistola*, Alexander has progressed beyond the pillars of Bacchus and Hercules, ignoring the warnings, as we have seen in other versions. Thick snow falls and the men begin freezing to death. There are several other ominous portents, largely in the form of bad weather.

Then Alexander says: "My soldiers were afraid to say to me that this was the result of the anger of the gods because I, a mere mortal, had tried to go where even Hercules and Father Liber had not gone." Then they encounter a cave, where Father Liber lies sleeping. (In the *R'Alix* the cave is consecrated to both Hercules and Bacchus). There is a warning from an unidentified source that anyone who enters the cave will die within three days of a fever. Alexander says: "Some men I sent there were lost and that was how we discovered that it really was the case." Alexander at this stage prays to the gods to be allowed to continue, but realises that it is in vain and turns back (*Epistola* 15, trans. Stoneman in *Legends*, 13).

The "Cave of the Gods" is probably the cave referred to on the Hereford map, in the inscription relating to the mountain of Jove: "Mons iovis acermos dicitur in cuis specu nutritum liberum patrem yndi veteres..." ["A mountain called Jove Acerminos, in whose cave the ancients of India affirm father Liber was raised"]. This has been taken from Solinus (52. 16), and 'Iovi sacer meros' has been corrupted into 'iovis acermeros' on the Hereford map (Westrem, *Hereford*, 29).

Otherwise, the Cave of the Gods is not a major cartographic feature, and I mention it here only as an example of the concept of 'outdoing'. There are many other references to similar landmark structures, both natural and man-made, in both Graeco-Roman and medieval geographical literature, but as they did not form part of the Anglo-Norman world-image in a visual sense, they are outside the framework of the study.

4 - Developments to the Pillar motif in the medieval period

The Pillar and the Tree

'East' in Christian geography is a place of power and mystery, symbolised by the Tree of Life, the Dry Tree, and the ancient prophets awaiting the final battle. Alexander's progression beyond Hercules' bounds was to become associated with all of these ideas in later medieval English literature.

On the Hereford mappamundi, the eastern pillars of Alexander are found to the right of the central axis, very near to the 'Trees of the Sun and Moon' and the terrestrial paradise. The order in which this material is encountered in the Alexander Romances is almost certainly responsible for this placement of the

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[27] Thomas of Kent, *Anglo-Norman Alexander (Roman de Toute Chevalrie)*, ed. B. Foster (Princeton, 1976). The eastern pillars of Hercules are in stanza 320a, 168-169 and see page 104, note on line 5389. The pillars at the Caspian Gates are in stanza 408, 204. *The Medieval French Roman d'Alexandre*, vol. 2 (Text of Alexandre de Paris version) ed. C. Armstrong (Princeton, 1937), 195-99, 213-215.

icons. The 'Trees of the Sun and Moon' were known as the place where Alexander received an oracle concerning his death. They are (commonly) the last thing Alexander encounters before returning west, the point in the romances at which the pillar is often created. The founding of the pillars is essentially his final deed as a divine king before death cuts short his plans for world conquest.

The oracular trees and the eastern pillars seem to have been related to one another in some way since the late Roman period. The passage on the Peutinger Table relating to the eastern pillars of Alexander says: "Hic Alexander resposum accepit usque quo Alexander...".[28] ["Here Alexander received a response how far Alexander..."]. The sentence is unfinished, but might be read as "how far Alexander could proceed", or "how 'far' Alexander would live." Is this the response given to Alexander by his mutinous army on the Hyphasis, or by the oracular trees? The pillar and the tree seem to have been conflated into one idea.

The columns and the oracular trees are also closely linked in the *Descriptio Mappe Mundi* of Hugh of St. Victor. The section relating to them says "Sunt ibi super occeanum Indicum columpne Alexandri et oraculum eius." ["Here, above [next to] the Indian Ocean, there are Alexander's columns and his oracle."] It is interesting that they should be referred to in the same sentence in the *Descriptio*, as if Hugh had conceived of both of them as being symbolic of the eastern limit of Alexander's journey (Gautier Dalché, *Descriptio*, 141 and 167). Siebold has also noticed the relationship between the trees and the pillars, and says "perhaps the *Trees of the Sun and Moon*, as shown on the Psalter [map], correspond to the *Pillars of Alexander* and *of Hercules* on the original design."[29]

On the Ebstorf world map, Alexander is shown at what looks like a covered altar table as he receives the oracle from the two trees. The Trees of the Sun and Moon may represent both stories on the Ebstorf map, but they may also have been included in a south-eastern section of the map, which is missing. On the Vercelli map, Alexander is shown holding out his arms towards one of the oracular trees which is growing out of a solid column-base, as though it were both a tree and a pillar.

As well as the correlation between the pillars and the trees in cartography, the oracular trees of the Sun and Moon were confused in various vernacular romances with a form of the tree of the True Cross. They were positioned so near the terrestrial paradise as to make some form of confusion with the various paradise trees inevitable. The Alexander Romances describe the 'Trees of the Sun and Moon' in a false paradise setting, and they are carefully guarded, as was the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life in the real paradise, further to the east.

A further confusion occurred between the *Arbor Sol* (Tree of the Sun) and the *Arbor Sec* (Dry Tree). The *Arbor Sec* was not the same as the Tree of the True Cross, but was thought to have been grown from the same seeds brought back by

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[28] Levi, M., ed., *Itineraria Picta*, seg 11.

[29] J. Siebold, "Cartographic Images" website, http://www.iag.net/~jsiebold/223mono.html, page 3 of 3.

Seth from paradise. In accounts of this tale, such as the one in the thirteenth-century *Cursor Mundi*, the Dry Tree was found in paradise, or nearby.[30]

In the fourteenth century, the Dry Tree was 'discovered' in Hebron, or in other places in the Near East, by a variety of writers, including John Mandeville. Concerning the tree, Mandeville related the story that the Dry Tree had been in Hebron since the beginning of the world. It had been half green, half dry, up until the time of the crucifixion, at which time it had become entirely dry. It would not grow green again until the Holy Land was reconquered by Christian men, and a Christian monarch had said mass underneath the tree (Mandeville, *Travels*, trans. Moseley, 73). Due to this prophecy, the Dry Tree was much sought after by travellers during the crusader era.[31]

The location of the Dry Tree in Mandeville is contrary to the earlier belief that it grew near paradise. On the Hereford map, the Dry Tree is shown in its origional location, just outside the terrestrial paradise. The trees of Sun and Moon are not shown, and it has been suggested by Bevan and Phillot and others that the Dry Tree here symbolises not only the Tree described by Mandeville, but also the oracular trees encountered by Alexander (*Medieval Geography*, 25-27).

The confusion between the *Arbor Sec* and the *Arbor Sol* is found in romances such as the Old Scots *Buik of Alexander* and also travelogues such as the *Travels* of Marco Polo. Polo explains that Christian men call the tree the *Arbor Sec*, while local Muslims call it the *Arbor Sol*. He also adds that it was in this place that Alexander fought King Darius, perhaps suggesting a further association with the eastern pillar (Lascelles, "Alexander", 179).

In the Middle English *Parlement of the Thre Ages*, Hercules' bounds are associated with the idea that Enoch and Elias were thought to dwell in the terrestrial paradise, saving their strength for battle with the Antichrist at the end of time.

> Aftir this Sir Alysaunder alle the worlde wanne,
> Bothe the see and the sonde and the sadde erthe,
> The iles of the Oryent to Ercules boundes -
> Ther Ely and Ennoke euer hafe bene sithen,
> And to the come of Antecriste vnclosed be thay neuer;[32]

> [After this, Sir Alexander conquered all the world, both the sea and
> the sand and the whole wide earth, the Isles of the Orient to
> Hercules' Bounds, where Elias and Enoch have been for so long,
> and will not be uncovered until the coming of Antichrist.]

'The Isles of the Orient' must here refer to the eastern limits, and 'Hercules Bounds' to the western 'gades' discussed in chapter 5. Alexander's probing of the unknown extremes of the earth brings him into contact in this text with Christian

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[30] A full account is in M. Lascelles, "Alexander and the Earthly Paradise in Medieval English Writings", *Medium Aevum* 5 (1936), 31-47, 79-104, 173-188.

[31] A full account of the confusion between the Dry Tree and the Tree of Life is in E. C. Quinn, *The Quest of Seth for the Oil of Life* (Chicago, 1962).

[32] *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*, ed. M. Offord (London, 1959), 14. The main manuscript of this text also contains the Thornton *Prose Life*.

eschatological forces with which he was never originally connected in the romances.

Pillars and the Crusades

Cartographic placement of the eastern pillars of Hercules and Alexander is rare after the thirteenth century, and references to them in travellers' reports is also uncommon. I am concerned in this final section with possible reasons why the motif declined in this way.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the demarcation of political boundaries with marker stones was seen as the prerogative of kings, and was linked to the idea of the 'progression of world-rulers' I have been examining. In the twelfth century, Otto of Friesing reported (and discredited) a certain prophetic document relating to Louis VII (one of the leaders of the second crusade). The crusading spirit, the monument and the idea of 'outdoing' the ancients are all symbolically linked in this description:

> In the course of this writing [the prophetic letter]...a triumph over
> the entire Orient, after the manner of Cyrus, king of the Persians,
> or of Hercules, was promised to the aforesaid Louis, king of
> France. Hence such words as these are found therein:

> '...plant your rose-coloured standards even as far as the
> uttermost labours of Hercules, and the gates of the city of
> B[abylon] will open before you'.[33]

The prolonged failure of the crusade movement eventually silenced European calls for a reconquest of the East, and the symbolic meaning of the eastern pillars, which were connected in this text with European expansion into Asia, may have declined accordingly. Future travel to the east was not to be as part of a military campaign, but was instead a solitary voyage, and its figureheads (genuine travellers) no longer modelled themselves on figures like Alexander, the warrior, but on more benign travellers such as St. Thomas, the missionary. In the case of travel fiction, the pillar as the expression of the 'utmost east' was to become replaced by the idea of the Dry Tree.

Local Usage of Boundary Markers

The word 'landmark' itself is linguistically connected to the idea of the border - 'mark' is cognate with 'march', as in the "Welsh Marches." Michael Greenhalgh has shown that marker stones denoting regional and state boundaries within Europe were in use throughout the medieval period. Often, these were Roman antiquities, such as statues and altars, which medieval landowners relied upon as known, fixed points to mark the boundaries of their territory. This was particularly common practice in Italy, where there were a large number of such antique monuments. In France and England, menhirs and barrows were more commonly used. The earliest records of this practice are from the eighth century, but the custom undoubtedly dates back much earlier, probably being a continuation of a Roman practice.[34]

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[33] Otto of Friesing, *Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, trans. C. C. Mierow (New York, 1953), 25-26.

[34] M. Greenhalgh, *The Survival of Roman Antiquities in the Middle Ages* (London, 1989), 27-30.

In addition to the practice of using antiquities as boundary markers, medieval rulers also created new landmarks where no obvious monument was available. These boundary stones were marked, or 'dressed', with coats of arms, crosses or other symbols of power and authority. Of particular interest is an eighth-century document describing a boundary agreement between the bishops of Modena and Bologna: "they set up a large stone...and again two stones, that they should be a memorial to remain there for all time to come" (cited in Greenhalgh, *Antiquities*, 30). In the eleventh century in Italy, this practice seems to have taken over from the earlier habit of using antique remnants for the same purpose. Records are inconclusive for other regions.

We might guess that those responsible for erecting such markers were aware that such stones were a minor version of the monuments erected by Roman emperors and their mythical predecessors. What is more certain is that a medieval observer of a boundary landmark icon on a map is likely to have known of one or two such local border stones, and the idea that kings and prelates marked out boundaries with pillars and stones would not have been unfamiliar. Similarly, the notion that pagan statues and altars served as local boundaries would also have been well known.[35]

The use of such stones became very commonplace in the fifteenth century, during the period when cartographic treatments of the mythical boundary pillars became rare. It is possible that the increasing local use of boundary stones robbed them of some of their mysterious character. This would have been further enforced by the fact that during the early modern period, captains and kings lost their monopoly on monuments, and tradesmen and other members of the middle classes began to erect monuments in their own honour.

In addition to marking out local regions, border stones were also used by explorers during the age of European expansion. The fifteenth-century Portuguese explorer Cão erected a series of boundary markers on the west coast of Africa. These appear as crosses embossed with gold on various maps of the region. They were originally positioned by Cão as symbols of the extent of Portuguese knowledge and territorial domination. On maps of the period, they function as measuring points, and the distances between them were measured and noted.[36]

Cão probably erected these monuments in the knowledge that they were a Christian counterpart to earlier pagan structures. The concept of 'outdoing' had a place in Portuguese thought, witnessed by Camões' use of figures like Bacchus and Hercules in the *Lusiads*, the national epic of Portugal. One of the major plot devices used by Camões is the idea that Bacchus is afraid that Vasco de Gama will outdo him in his eastern voyages, and so sets about to sabotage his attempts by persuading Muslim forces to attack the Portuguese fleet.[37]

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[35] M. Warmke, *Political Landscape: The Art History of Nature* (London, 1994), 9-17.

[36] Cão's markers, or *pradrões*, are discussed in D. Divine, *The Opening of the World* (London, 1973),140-141. The map of the Venetian cartographer Cristofero Soglio known as the *Ginea Portogalexe* shows the marker stones embossed in gold leaf. This is illustrated by Divine on page 141.

[37] Camões, *The Lusiads*, trans. W. Atkinson (Harmondsworth, 1952), 43-44. Later in the work, de Gama reaches India and is shown a model of the cosmos (including a fine geographical excursus) by the sea-goddess Thetis, atop a high mountain. The imagery appears to have come from Alexander's similar experiences on top of the world-mountain.

Neither Cão's pillars, nor Camões' use of the outdoing trope in the *Lusiads*, should be taken as evidence for a new wave of conquest landmarks established in the name of Christian and pan-European expansion. Both Cão and Camões were intent solely on showing the glory of the Portuguese. European expansion was connected with the emergence of the nation-state to such an extent that symbolic markers of progress had no general meaning within European culture and served only to promote the territorial claims of individual kingdoms.

Absence of the Eastern Pillars from Travellers' reports

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a number of European travellers visited Asia, travelling as priests or merchants into the lands of the Mongol Khans. European geographical knowledge progressed from speculative to empirical partly as a result of the writings of these men. The discoveries of these travellers were used by other writers, like Mandeville and Johannes Witte de Hese, who adapted stories from real travellers, as well as earlier information from writers like Pliny and Isidore, into their own fictitious travelogues. The boundaries of the known world became the outer eastern limits of the Mongol empire, on the borders of China and the Sea of Japan. Paradise continued to be believed in and sought after, but the new landmarks of 'ecumenical definition' were now Cathay, Xanadu, and the Realm of Prester John.

Almost without exception, thirteenth-century travellers make no mention of the pillars of Alexander or any of his predecessors. A simple explanation for this is that the notion of boundary pillars had ceased to be in any way relevant to European exploration. In contrast, other features of Graeco-Roman geography (particularly Alexander's Gate, as we will see in chapter 7) continued to be described and explained.

In the thirteenth century, while the Alexander Romance cycle was at its most popular, travellers like William of Rubruck and John de Plano Carpini made no mention of Alexander's pillars in their travel reports. Later in the century, and during the next, travellers such as Marco Polo, Friar Odoric of Pordennone, Friar Jordanes, the anonymous author of the fourteenth-century *Knowledge of the World*, and even armchair travellers like Mandeville and Witte de Hese, continued to find relevance in other features such as the Ark of Noah, paradise, and Alexander's Gate, but again, none of these writers mention the pillars, not even to state that they had sought them and been unable to locate them. Indeed, it is almost an inviolable rule that if the traveller has truly been to India or China, the pillars of Hercules and Alexander are not to be found in his work.[38]

Christian Zacher has discussed conflicting medieval notions of travel in his work *Curiosity and Pilgrimage*, in which the two different motivations for travel expressed in the title are examined within various texts. The notion that travel simply for the sake of satisfying curiosity would lead to a lack of self-knowledge and cause spiritual instability is found in many thinkers, from Augustine to Aquinas. Pilgrimage, however, was an acceptable mode of travel, provided that it was made solely for the purpose of a greater knowledge of God.[39]

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[38] A majority of these works are cited in chapter 7, concerning Alexander's Gate.

[39] C. Zacher, *Curiosity and Pilgrimage: The Literature of Discovery in Fourteenth-Century England* (Baltimore, 1976), ch. 1 and 2.

The treatment (or lack of treatment) of the pillars of Alexander in medieval literature should be examined in the framework of Zacher's analysis. The eastern pillars are not often encountered in any other kind of literature than the Alexander Romances, where, as we have seen, they were deliberately invented to fulfil a particular function. Those who seek and find them in the literature under examinination are always of the same type as those who placed them - travellers are conquerors, kings and culture-heroes. It should be noted that, as we have seen, the act of finding the eastern pillars symbolises that the traveller is seen to be following a predetermined pattern of what might be called 'ecumenical definition'. To find the pillars was to follow in the footsteps of those who erected them. To go further was to claim both an inheritance and a superiority.

This knowledge is revealing in explaining the fact that in the writings of these later (thirteenth-century and subsequent) authors, there is no mention of the pillars. To claim to have discovered them, and particularly to have 'gone beyond', would have been to claim a sacred inheritance, almost to confer the status of demi-god upon oneself. This was far more than most medieval travellers were prepared to say of themselves and their exploits. Alexander had stood as a figurehead for European society, and thus his pillars served as a general symbol for the furthest limits reached by that society. But in an age where individual members of society were finding their way beyond Alexander's bounds, they could not respectfully claim to have done so without risking accusations of pride, vanity and unhealthy interest in worldly things, or *curiositas*. Exploration and ecumenical definition in this era were the prerogative of kings and warriors, not humble travellers, and should be done in Christ's name, not one's own.

The interlinking of the two modes of travel, curiosity and pilgrimage, is witnessed particularly in the work of Mandeville, who combined a description of a Jerusalem pilgrimage with an account of the marvels of the Far East, and was a self-confessed *curiosus* (curious traveller). Mandeville claimed to have seen a good many things in his eastern journeys - the Fountain of Youth, the Vale of Darkness, and other wonders. Yet even he stopped short of claiming to have been to the terrestrial paradise, pointing out that he felt unworthy to do so. Perhaps Mandeville did not claim to have found Alexander's pillars for similar reasons - a claim to be 'worthy' of such a feat would suggest a pride unbecoming of the Christian traveller (Zacher, *Curiosity*, ch. 6, esp. 151).

Eastern Pillars and 'Outdoing' in Romances and Travel Fiction

A late thirteenth-century manuscript tells of three 'Mesopotamian monks' who travel to the terrestrial paradise, and find the monument of Alexander on the way. The text is found in an *Imago Mundi* manuscript concerning serious geography. The journey is a pilgrimage, thus removing the stigma attached to the literature of curiosity, and the function of the pillars in this text is perhaps to 'outdo' Alexander by travelling beyond his bounds in the search for Christian truth.

Erickson suggests that the pillar of Alexander found in this text is one of a number of indications that the monks are going back in time as they travel - "the death site of the Emperor Julian, the monument of Alexander and the encounters with creatures of ancient myth marked the passage backward through historical chronology to the beginning of time in the garden of paradise."[40] The description

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[40] C. Erickson, *The Medieval Vision* (New York, 1976), 3.

of the Mesopotamian monks is a late and quite unusual example of the use of the conquest landmark in serious geographical accounts. The pillars had a limited symbolic function in pilgrimage literature, and were more commonly associated with romances.

'Outdoing' continued to play a major role in travel fiction and romances despite a decline in the use of the eastern pillars as a literary trope. The eponymous heroes of romances such as *Bevis of Hamptoun* and *Huon de Bordeaux*, as well as the chief figures in many recensions of the Alexander legend, continued to be compared with the travelling heroes of the past. For example, later English redactions of the thirteenth-century French romance *Huon de Bordeaux* compare Huon's deeds with those of Hercules. The hero, a Frankish knight, offends Charlemagne, and must perform a series of labours in order to make amends. With Hercules as the obvious role model, it is not surprising to find various references to him in the romance.

> 'Syr' quod Huon, 'to obey you there is no thyng in this mortall worlde that any humayn body may do, But that I shall undertake to do it / not lettynge for fere of any deth, though it be to go to the dry tre / ye, or to hell gattes to fyght witt the fendes there, as sum tyme dyd Hercules, yf I may therby be agreed with your grace.' (Cited in Lascelles, 184-5)

The Dry Tree has replaced the eastern pillars of Alexander and Hercules in this account. The eastern pillars had no strict meaning within Christian eschatology, and perhaps a reason for their disappearance was that Christian travellers were more concerned with features such as the Dry Tree, which did have a place in Christian history and prophecy.

The Dry Tree serves a similar function in the legend of Ogier the Dane. This curious story of a ninth century Danish (or French) warlord who conquered the Far East found its way into redactions of Mandeville and the *Letter of Prester John*, and then grew to be an epic in its own right, composed by the German Von Demeringen in the fifteenth century. The Vulgate version of the Ogier legend said that he had eaten of the fruit of the Trees of the Sun and Moon, which some say cause men to live for five hundred years. The author says:

> Duke Ogier, the Dane, came thither and ate thereof, wherefore some from their pride or levity of faith imagine that he still lives elsewhere upon the earth, but I prefer to think that one who laboured so hard for the spread of Christianity reigns with Christ in heaven.[41]

The Brussels redaction of the Latin version turns this into a direct comparison with Alexander, by pointing out that Ogier had succeeded in eating the fruit of life, while Alexander had been warned of his death, and retreated. Reaching the trees in paradise had become an act whereby one hero may 'outdo' another in this text, and in later medieval travel literature generally. That Ogier succeeds in reaching the Dry Tree because of his Christian virtue reveals that heroes such as Alexander and Hercules could be 'outdone' by Christian travellers in the medieval

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[41] Translated in the Appendix to *Mandeville's Travels - Texts and Translations*, trans. and ed. M. Letts, 3 vols., vol. 2 (London, 1953), 498.

period, provided the hero spread Christian values rather than word of his own fame.

Ogier was directly compared with Hercules and Alexander in Von Demeringen's version of the legend, which relates that in the palace of the King of Java, the story of Ogier's conquests is depicted on the walls.

> There are also depicted on the walls many mighty battles...[There are pictures] of the great princes, Hector, Alexander, Hercules, the Emperor Charles...But all this was not to be likened to Ogier's deeds, for he conquered all those who were not Christians from sunrise to sunsetting. (Cited in Letts, *Mandeville*, vol. 2, 485)

The Ogier legend overcomes the problem of curiosity by frequent reference to Ogier's devout nature. He is described as the 'Warrior of God', and his travels are "to the end that the Christian religion might always prevail upon those places of the earth."

The reports of genuine travellers (or those such as Mandeville, who claimed to be genuine) had a far greater influence on later geography than the romances like those of Ogier and Huon de Bordeaux. The influence of material relating to Alexander and Hercules on the mapping of the ecumene decreases rapidly after the thirteenth century. While the pillars continue to function as a part of the trope of 'outdoing' in the romance literature, the Christian concept of 'travel for Christ' prevented the widespread repetition and extension of the pillar theme in serious travel literature (and hence cartography).

Several exceptions to this rule will be instructive here. The claims made in Johannes Witte de Hese's work *Itinerarius* (of the late fourteenth century) mark him as a *curiosus* of an even greater order than Mandeville. He dispenses with the Jerusalem section of his text and concentrates entirely on the Eastern marvels. He claims to have seen the walls of the terrestrial paradise, as well as mentioning that, nearby paradise, stands the mountain where Alexander had been crowned as a conqueror.

> And nearby, a mile away, is the mountain where Alexander the Great, the Roman emperor, is said to have been; he made the entire world subject to himself, and wanted to exact tribute from Paradise...[42]

Following this, he claims to have circumnavigated the earth, continuing on from paradise eastward, and ending back in Jerusalem where he began (221). The discovery of Alexander's mountain here is part of a series of claims made by Witte de Hese to be a new culture-hero, and to have outdone the likes of Mandeville in the distance he had travelled and the marvels he had seen. But by his era, the pillars of Alexander were no longer a particularly important part of this claim. The brief reference to Alexander, compared with the long description of the Palace of Prester John (see chapter four) reveals that Alexander's monuments were becoming the stuff of legend, while Prester John was considered a geographical reality and information on his whereabouts was much sought after.

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[42] S. D. Westrem, *Broader Horizons: Johannes Witte de Hese's 'Itinerarius' and Medieval Travel Narratives* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2000), 220. I am very grateful to Scott Westrem for sending me an advance copy of this text.

Marignolli's Pillar

A fourteenth-century traveller, a papal legate named John de Marignolli, is another noticeable exception to the general pattern. He did not claim to have found the pillars of Alexander, but to have erected his own, while on a mission in India:

> And after I had been there some time I went beyond the glory of Alexander the Great, when he set up his column (in India). For I erected a stone as my landmark and memorial, in the corner of the world over against Paradise, and anointed it with oil! In sooth it was a marble pillar with a stone cross upon it, intended to last till the world's end. And it had the Pope's arms and my own engraved upon it...I consecrated it and blessed it in the presence of an infinite multitude of people, and I was carried on the shoulders of the chiefs in a litter or palankin like Solomon's.[43]

Although it is unusual, this is a key passage to understanding the role of the boundary landmark in medieval ecumenical geography. Marignolli is making a direct claim to have surpassed Alexander, and thus to be the most recent ecumenical definer. The passage also reveals the conceptual link between the pillar and the body of the sacred ruler. Marignolli is essentially claiming the role of cosmic centre, with both himself and the Pope featured in his new scheme. The religious nature of the ceremony is somewhat ambiguous; Marignolli appears to be granting himself equal status with the Pope. Marignolli's pillar is a religious monument established in order to honour his own achievements. The use of the phrase "infinite multitude" and the further comparison with Solomon reveal Marignolli's pretensions to culture-hero status.

Cão's landmarks, Marignolli's pillar and similar medieval recreations of the landmark theme can be seen as part of progressions in European geography from general to personal, and from speculative to empirical. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw rapid exploration of and expansion into the Far East, and the old ecumenical structure symbolised by the pillars may have ceased to have much meaning to the people of this period, unless, like Marignolli, they could take the symbolism and make it relevant to their own world-view. The pillars thus pass from being legendary geographical features found on world maps to become either purely fictional remembrances of the ancient past, or newly-created structures in honour of modern achievements.

Several very late reminiscences of the theme deserve a mention as examples of how the motif underwent change. There is a brief mention in the work of Gasparo Balbi (1580) of the idea that Alexander had taken King Porus to a cave called Elephanta, near Tana, to be buried. Balbi states that this cave had been made by Alexander to form the eastern edge of his expeditions.[44] Yule thinks this may have been a local Mohammedan belief, or possibly it is a remembrance of the 'Cave of the Gods' motif we saw earlier.

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[43] "John de Marignolli's Recollections of Eastern Travel", in *Cathay and the Way Thither*, trans. and ed. H. Yule, 4 vols. (London, 1913), vol. 3, 218.

[44] See "Travels of Friar Odoric" in *Cathay and the Way Thither*, vol. 2, 114.

Another writer of the next generation, the chaplain Baldeus, wrote in 1662: "Upon the rocks near the sea shore of Coulang stands a Stone Pillar, erected there, as the inhabitants report, by St. Thomas; I saw the Pillar in 1662." Yule, wondering if this is now Marignolli's pillar being sought, notes: "Three hundred years of tradition might easily swamp the dim memory of John [de Marignolli] the Legate." The pillar myth proved very easily corrupted by such layers of accretion. Yule then cites several other more recent writers who have mentioned the pillar, one claiming it still exists, another saying it had been "washed away a few ago." He says: "I wish someone would still look for it!"[45]

As a final word, I note that by the early nineteenth century, interpretations of the pillar motif had changed dramatically. The world, in the view of Shelley, was well defined, and needed no world-conquering kings or culture-heroes. Such hubristic concepts are made laughable by the slow passage of time. Pride and arrogance, which were questionable traits at best in the medieval Alexander romances, are treated as unmistakable folly in "Ozymandias":

> . . .Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
> Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
> Half sunk, a shattered visage lies. . . . . .
>
> . . . .
> And on the pedestal these words appear:
> 'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:
> Look on my works, you mighty, and despair!'
> Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
> Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
> The lone and level sands stretch far away.[46]

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[45] (Perhaps he should have made one of his own.) For Baldeus and other accounts see *Cathay*, vol. 3, 218-20.

[46] Shelley, "Ozymandias", in *Seven Centuries of Poetry in English*, ed. J. Leonard (Oxford, 1987), 213.

CHAPTER THREE - MAPPING THE EMPIRE: Symbolic depictions of the Ecumene in the Classical and Medieval Periods

Introduction

This chapter is designed to provide an account of the sources used in the creation of the maps described in chapter 1. The first section will examine the Graeco-Roman concepts of the 'ecumene' and the 'world-ruler', which have been introduced in the study of the eastern pillars of Hercules. The primary focus is on the development of Roman conquest monuments, and the relations of these structures to boundary landmarks, and to the development of medieval cartography.

The second section deals with problematic issues of medieval notions of the size and shape of the world. As we are dealing with a series of icons designed to mark the boundaries of the habitable world, it is important to understand the separate but related notions of 'world' and 'ecumene' in Classical and medieval thought. While medieval cartographers knew that the world was a sphere, the image underlying many Anglo-Norman world maps still owes much to the Homeric conception of the habitable world as a round disc, commonly depicted on a shield. The interplay between the sphere and the shield will be given considerable attention.

Throughout the chapter, reference is made to the development and use of the tripartite and quadripartite systems of dividing the ecumene. This material is of considerable importance to the landmark concept. Despite the fact that medieval cartographers and geographers divided the ecumene into three landmasses, the older division based around the four cardinal directions (*cardines*, or *plagae*) still had an important role to play in ecumenical symbolism. Landmarks of boundary, marking the four corners of the disc, played no role in what might be called 'global' symbolism, and function only when the scope of human history and knowledge is depicted within a circular ecumene.

1 - The Foundations of the Mappamundi Tradition in Graeco-Roman 'Experiential' Geography

The Census Monument and the Statue

It has long been recognised that the Hereford and other related maps were essentially medieval versions of a map template that had existed since the late Roman republican period, and many writers have speculated about the appearance of the original. In particular, various theories have been put forward concerning the shape, content and influence of a world map known to have been commissioned by Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa. Agrippa began the project of constructing a large map, or inscription of some kind, which was later erected in the colonnade known subsequently as the Porticus Vipsania. This is referred to by a number of contemporary authors, notably by Pliny in the *Natural History*. Discussing an apparent error in the calculation of the area of one of the provinces, Pliny writes:

Agrippa was a very painstaking man, and also a very careful
geographer; who therefore could believe that, when intending to set
before the eyes of Rome a survey of the world he made a mistake, and
with him the late lamented Augustus? for it was Augustus that
completed the portico containing a plan of the world that had been
begun by his sister in accordance with the design and memoranda of
Marcus Agrippa. (*Natural History*, 3. 1, trans. Rackham, vol. 2, 17)

Konrad Miller, the first to comment at any length on this lost map, wrote that it must
have been circular, basing this on the survival of the shape in the Hereford map. It is
now commonly agreed that it would have been rectangular, as fitting the shape of the
colonnade, and many think it also had north at the top, although there is no consensus
on this. As to whether it was a mosaic, wall painting, carving or engraving, there is no
agreement either. Broderson has recently thrown doubt on whether it was a map at
all, arguing that it may have been simply a geographical inscription.[1]

Until further evidence arises, all that can be stated is that the architectural
constructions of Roman rulers like Agrippa were probably influential on medieval
cartographic templates. The exact relationship of the Agrippa map to medieval maps
is detailed in the next section. Here, I concentrate on the idea that the Agrippa map
and similar constructions were part of a programme of symbolic geographical
representations made in the Augustan era to symbolise Roman control over the
ecumene. This point is of great interest to my study of geography and conquest
landmarks.

Agrippa was certainly not the only Roman ruler to use the map, or the 'geographical
landmark', as a display of power. Other architectural constructions with geographical
components had been made by Sulla, Caesar, Pompey and Augustus, all claiming some
kind of symbolic ecumenical dominion. Any of these monuments which may have
included maps are now lost, and our earliest surviving world map is from the eighth
century.

The most important of these survey monuments in relation to the mappamundi
tradition are those created or begun by Pompey (61 BC), Caesar (54-44 BC), and
Augustus / Agrippa (detailed in the next section). The late Republican and early
Imperial periods were marked by great territorial expansion. It was also a period of
intense competition between rival war-leaders, as the tradition that power was to be
held by a single ruler had not yet been established. Both of these factors resulted in an
increase in the use of symbolic representations of sovereign power, in order to display
the glory of Rome. During this period, the area of the ecumene under Roman control

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[1] K. Miller, *Mappaemundi*, vol. 6, 145-147. Criticised by O. A. W. Dilke, "Maps in the Service of State: Roman
Cartography to the End of the Augustan Era", in J. B. Harley and D. Woodward, eds. *History of
Cartography*, vol. 1, 201-211, see 208, n.33. For various views on the Agrippa map see Edson, *Mapping
Time*, 10; K. Broderson, *Terra Cognita: Studien zur Römischen Raumerfassung* (Hildesheim, 1995), 269-72;
and C. Nicolet, *Space, Geography and Politics*, chap. 8. A list of interpretations of the map is given by G. R.
Crone, *The World Map by Richard of Haldingham in Hereford Cathedral circa AD 1285* (London, 1954), 24.

became synonymous (in Roman texts) with the entire ecumene, and Roman rulers were often referred to in this era as 'Masters of the Ecumene' or 'First in the World'.

Pompey's monument was created to celebrate his conquests in Asia, which he claimed had extended the Roman Empire to include the area from the Caspian Sea to the Red Sea. His triumphal procession through Rome in 61 BC featured a trophy symbolising his power, and he had constructed a portico containing a representation of himself, surrounded on all sides by the fourteen nations he had conquered.

A description of a tablet inscribed by Pompey during this period, given by Diodorus Siculus, reads:

> Pompey had inscribed on a tablet, which he set up as a dedication, the records of his achievements in Asia. Here is a copy of the inscription: 'Pompey the Great, son of Gnaeus, Imperator, having liberated the seacoast of the inhabited world and all islands [on] this side [of the] Ocean...extended the frontiers of the Empire to the limits of the earth; and secured and...increased the revenues of the Roman people - he, *by confiscation of the statues and the images set up to the gods*, as well as other valuables taken from the enemy, has dedicated to the goddess [Minerva] twelve thousand and sixty pieces of gold...(*Library*, 40. 4, trans. Oldfather, vol. 12, 287. Italics mine.)

This description contains within it a long list of conquered territories, as well as the provinces Pompey brought under Roman law by treaty rather than conquest. Oldfather (vol. 12, 287) notes that it can rightly be compared with Augustus' *Res Gestae*, an autobiographical account of the conquests of that ruler completed in the early years of the first century AD.

The description of Pompey's tablet should be taken in the context of Diodorus' work as a whole. He mentions many similar inscriptions: some are those made by Roman rulers, but many are those made by deities such as Dionysius, Osiris and Hercules, as we saw in the previous chapter. For example, Diodorus also describes the pillar of the Egyptian warlord Simandius, made to describe his conquests over the Bactrians. This extract is from the early English translation by John Skelton:

> Behynde this gate is ther another spire of stone more noble than that other [Simandius' tombstone], grauyn with dyuverse sculpturis. Emong all, ther is wrought the mortal warre & bataylle that ways agayn [against] the Bactrians.. (Diodorus, 1. 47. 2, trans. Skelton, 68-9).

The pillar is described in some detail, including a scene of Simandius' thankful sacrifices to his gods after the victory is finally won. Legendary monuments such as Simandius' pillar, and historical monuments like Pompey's tablet, were not true maps, but they were geographical symbols, in the sense that they described conquered territory, and also in the sense that they implied that the area in which they were located had primacy over other areas. In short, they were territorial landmarks.

Caesar's monument project was initiated in around 54 BC in partnership with his co-ruler Crassus. Caesar was keen to outdo the deeds of Pompey, and wished to extend

the western boundaries to rival Pompey's achievements in the east. At the same time, Crassus was attempting to outdo Pompey directly by extending the eastern extremes by conquering Parthia. A letter by Cicero from 54 BC details Caesar's initial plans to build a four-sided portico to surround a public assembly area, with representations of the conquered nations on all four sides, highlighting the centrality of the Roman people (who would literally be within the building itself). This design is unlikely to have been a map in the strict sense, but it was a graphic representation of the empire, and certainly a forerunner of the 'Agrippa map' fifty years later.

The tradition of monumental conquest columns was to continue in the later Empire. For example, the Arch of Nicaea, described in Pliny, was erected in the Alps and inscribed with a dedication to Julius Caesar and listed all of the Alpine races that lay under the control of Rome (Pliny, *Natural History*, 3. 20). Trajan (106 AD), Antonius Pius (161 AD) and Marcus Aurelius (179-93? AD) all had large columns erected displaying scenes of military triumph, with statues of themselves on top. Another, much later example is the structure in Alexandria erroneously known as Pompey's Pillar, atop which once stood a statue of the emperor Diocletian, made after the capture of Egypt in 297 AD.

I have italicised the reference to statues and images in the account of Pompey's tablet, quoted above, to point to the connection between statues and the conception of both territorial sovereignty and religious superiority. The capture of such statues appears to have represented the religious supremacy of the conquering force by the capture of foreign deities, and also the extension of the ecumenical boundary by the removal of the symbolic obstacle presented by the figure of the ruler.[2]

Many Roman rulers had images of themselves created to symbolise their power - including all of the three rulers detailed here. Pompey's statue, made in around 56 BC, showed him holding the globe in one hand and a sword in the other. Caesar had a large statue of himself treading on a bronze representation of the ecumene erected on the Capitoline Hill in 46 BC. Augustus later initiated a complex building programme (the Forum of Augustus) involving the use of a variety of statues of rulers and subjugated peoples. This programme included the works of Pompey and Caesar within it.[3]

These statues were often displayed in connection with images of deities or in temples. Caesar's statue on the Capitoline Hill is described by a contemporary as "facing Jupiter", and as having an inscription on the base which described him as a "demi-god". According to the same writer (Dio) he later had this inscription removed. Augustus also made claims to divine status, although these were of a more subtle nature. The Forum of Augustus was inaugurated at the same time as the Temple of Mars Ultor (2 BC), and the two dedications have been shown to be closely linked. Also in this year, the Senate bestowed upon him the title of *pater patriae*, which suggested both the 'Father of the Gods', and the 'Father of the World'.

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[2] For another example of this, see Pliny, *Natural History* (33. 82-3). The edition of Pliny used throughout is the Latin version with accompanying translation by H. Rackham, 10 vols. (London, 1938-1963).

[3] For the rest of this section, see Nicolet, *Space, Geography, Politics*, chap. 2.

Again, the statue as an image of divine power was not new - an obvious precedent is the Colossus of Rhodes, a bronze statue of the sun god Helios made in the third century BC, which (although it was in ruins) was famous throughout the Roman world. Statues of gods and rulers were often combined with columns as a claim to divine status, as is explained by Pliny, who says: "The purport of placing statues of men on columns was to elevate them above all other mortals."[4]

The Augustan rulers were not the first to claim or suggest that they had attained the status of demi-gods - this had been a major part of Alexander's political strategy. What can be said of the early Imperial period is that in this era the conception of ecumenical dominion by a divine or divinely-inspired ruler first became widely accepted. Augustus was worshipped as a god in the countryside, and reproductions and imitations of these monumental building programmes were constructed throughout the Empire as a sign of loyalty to the centre.

Ancient Monuments on Mappaemundi - A Speculation

Many of the monuments described in the previous section were still standing in the medieval period, and some of them appear on medieval world maps. The question is difficult as to whether medieval map-makers directly linked these structures with the boundary landmarks described in the previous chapter, but there is some evidence to suggest that they did. Firstly, the icon used to depict the Colossus of Rhodes on the Hereford map is a column, identical to those used for the pillars of Hercules in the Far West. The *Descriptio Mappe Mundi* also describes the Colossus as a column. This suggests that the notion of 'pillar' and 'statue' has been combined into a single image, and that medieval cartographers were aware that the Colossus had been a column-statue, perhaps similar to the statues of Hercules and Dionysius in the East.[5]

The second piece of evidence for this connection between legendary and historical landmarks concerns the depiction of Alexandria (in Egypt) on the Hereford map. Standing in the city is a flaming column, which might be interpreted as the Pharos of Alexandria (a lighthouse), but which Crone identifies as Pompey's Pillar. Crone notes a great confusion in medieval writers between the pillar and the lighthouse in Alexandria.[6] To this I add that the representation of the flaming column on the Hereford map is very similar to that used to depict the northern altars of Alexander on the Ebstorf map (discussed in chapter 7). The Ebstorf probably represents the northern altars in this way because classical altars were known to be places of sacrifice through fire (see in particular the quotation from Virgil, below). Observers of the Hereford map may well have conceived of the representation of the Pharos lighthouse in the same way.

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[4] Pliny, *Natural History* (34. 27), trans. Rackham., vol. 9, 149. Pliny goes into great detail concerning statues in books 33-36, including information on the Colossus, the Pharos and other antiquities discussed here.

[5] Gautier Dalché, *Descriptio*, 164. The modern conception that the Colossus had straddled Mandraki harbour in Rhodes is erroneous. This idea was invented by Italian travellers to Rhodes in the fourteenth century, and previous medieval geographers would have known that the statue originally stood on top of a pillar, as most such constructions did. See Warmke, *Political Landscape*, plates 10-15.

[6] G. R. Crone, *World Map by Richard of Haldingham in Hereford Cathedral circa AD 1285* (London, 1954), 12.

These statues and images are important to my general argument concerning maps and body imagery. The images described above reveal not only a symbolic link between land and ruler, which is to be expected, but also between land and the body of the ruler. Strongly present in Roman thought, and continuing into the medieval period, is a series of symbolic relationships between the altar, the conquest monument, and the statue of the ruler. Examples of these connections will be given throughout the study.

I conclude this section with a quotation from the *Pharsalia* of Lucan, a Roman poet writing in the first century AD who was an admirer of Pompey's cause in the civil war. The passage laments the death of Pompey, and the ignominious nature of his tomb. The passage gives us great insight into the nature of the conquest monument, and suggests that Lucan at least thought that a landmark for Pompey's achievements should be based on those of his mythical predecessors. The conquest landmark takes the form of a tomb, a form we are to see again in the account of the Tomb of Darius in the next chapter. Lucan suggests that in fact the whole world, which is synonymous with the Roman Empire, should be considered as Pompey's tomb, instead of the 'pitiful heap' where his body lies buried:

> He lies where land's remotest cape intrudes on Ocean; where the name
> of Rome, where Roman Empire ends, there ends his tomb. Cast down
> this stone which denounces the justice of God! If towering Oeta is
> tomb for Hercules, and Nysa, ridge on ridge, is Bromius' [Bacchus']
> alone, can one Egyptian sod confine great Pompey?...if you think stone
> not unfit for sacred name, record there too his monumental feats...all
> tribes that roam beyond the Pale hammered, and every king of North,
> of East...There's glory more than a mansion of death could hold; but
> this is a pitiful heap, no sign of titles won, no marble page of divinities
> achieved. Once read atop high temples of the gods, on arches raised
> from spoil, on this low mound the name of Pompey lies so low, so
> close to the level sand that the traveller must stoop to read it...[7]

The Imperial Survey and the Divisions of the Ecumene

I now turn to discuss these conquest monuments and their direct relationship to medieval cartography. The 'Agrippa map' is known to be of great importance to later ecumenical maps because of an inscription on the Hereford map pertaining to its lineage and relation to the Roman template. The bottom left hand corner of the map contains a picture of the emperor Augustus, holding a seal, making a proclamation to three men, and is accompanied by the inscription of the proclamation:

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[7] Lucan, *Pharsalia* (8. 797-822), trans. D. Little (Dunedin, 1989), 293-94. Pompey's tomb actually functions as a landmark in Solinus (35). Nysa was in fact conceived of as the birth-place of Bacchus in most sources, and appears on several medieval maps marked with a conquest landmark. Oeta is a mountain in Thessaly, thought to be Hercules' place of death in Classical lore. This idea was replaced in the work of Sallust with the idea that he had died in Spain (see chapter 5).

> Go forth into the whole world, and report to the senate on all its extent.
> And in confirmation thereof I have placed my seal on this ordinance.[8]

The three surveyors are named in an inscription in a decorative border around the edge of the Hereford map:

> The world was first measured by Julius Caesar; the whole of the east
> was measured out by Nicodoxus, the north and west by Teodocus [i.e.
> Theodotus], the southern part by Polyclitus. (Cited in Wiseman,
> "Julius", 53)

Two of the four surveyors, Didymus and Theodotus, are thought to have been involved in designing Caesar's *portico* in 54 BC, and Caesar may have had Nicodoxus and Polyclitus create the other two sections in 51 BC, but this is highly speculative (Wiseman, "Julius", 56). Similar statements are found on the Duchy of Cornwall fragment, which names the surveyors, and the Ebstorf map, which only names Caesar directly, but mentions a team of commissioners. These inscriptions provide a direct link between the concept of the survey and the continuation of the idea in medieval mappaemundi thirteen hundred years later. Some confusion between Caesar and Augustus has ensued in the intervening period. While Julius Caesar is known to have commissioned a survey, the one referred to on the map near the picture of the emperor and the surveyors was in fact initiated by Marcus Agrippa, and completed during the reign of Augustus (27 BC to 14 AD).

Augustus' survey is mentioned by Luke (2. 1): "And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world [which certainly means the ecumene here] should be registered." The Greek word *apographien* in fact referred to taxation, but the survey was given a more benign interpretation by Jerome in the Vulgate version, who translated *apographien* as *describere*, thereby creating a perception in the medieval period of the survey as a graphic or textual description of the world.

Descriptions of the survey in a late recension of the *Cosmographia* of Julius Honorius (fifth century) and another work called the *Cosmographia* by the author known as Pseudo-Aethicus (eighth century) show that there were, in the early middle ages, thought to have been four surveyors, the fourth being Didymus, who surveyed the west. This is also mentioned in the *De Mensura Orbis Terrae* of the Irish monk Dicuil in the ninth century, and Dicuil's work was a major source for transmission of the survey concept.[9]

The continuation of the concept of the surveyors in later medieval cartography is problematic. Why was Didymus suppressed, and the north and west combined into one survey? One answer is that Julius Honorius' text (in which there are four

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[8] Translation and discussion in P. Wiseman, "Julius Caesar and the Hereford World Map", *History Today* 37 (1976), 53.

[9] P. Gautier Dalché and C. Nicolet, "Les Quatre Sages de Jules César et la 'Mésure du Monde' selon Julius Honorius", *Journal des Savants* (1987), 157-218. For Dicuil, see J. J. Tierney, ed., *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae*, vol. 4 (Dublin, 1967). See also Nicolet, *Space, Geography and Politics*, chap 5.

surveyors) was a late example of the use of the ancient four-part system which divided the world according to the cardinal points, and thus required four surveyors. The three-way division, which divided the ecumene by continents rather than cardinal directions, began to predominate in the Augustan era, witnessed by accounts in Sallust and Lucan detailed below. Wiseman has argued that the general use of the tripartite rather than the older quadripartite system led naturally to a choice of three surveyors.

Sallust's *Bellum Jugurthinum* (first century BC) contains a brief geographical excursus on Africa, including mention of the tripartite division of the continents, which was later to become commonplace:

> In mapping out the earth's surface most authorities recognise Africa as a third continent, though a few admit only Asia and Europe as continents, including Africa in Europe. Africa is bounded on the west by the strait which lies between our sea and the Ocean [the straits of Gibraltar]; on the east, by the broad sloping plateau which its inhabitants call Catabathmos.[10]

Manuscripts of Sallust frequently contained maps showing the tripartite division. The other main textual source for the T-in-O is the *Pharsalia* of Lucan (first century AD) who includes a similar excursus in his account of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, except that he himself appears to have held the minority view:

> Report - believe it if you will - makes Libya [Africa] a continent distinct; but if you look to wind and sky, it's part of Europe. For the shores of Nile are no more distant from the Russian Don than from Gades, boundary of the west, where Europe and Africa split; but Asia claims a greater sphere. (*Pharsalia*, 9. 412f, trans. Little, 311)

Lucan's text was also frequently accompanied by a T-in-O map in the medieval period. His special emphasis on the winds gave rise to the habit of putting these on the rim of maps, in place of or alongside the cardinal directions, and this became part of the subsequent mappamundi tradition.

It will be seen from these passages that the T-in-O map, despite all its later Christian connotations, was originally a Classical concept. The idea that the divisions represented the land populated by each of the three sons of Noah (Shem - Asia, Ham - Africa, Japheth - Europe) did not become a well-accepted part of Christian thought until Isidore's commentary on the diagram in the seventh century.

The argument put forward by Wiseman ("Julius", 55) that the tripartite arrangement of continents led to the choice of three surveyors is satisfying, but needs some qualifications. Firstly, the quadripartite model operates on an exploration of the area around a cardinal point, whereas the tripartite model creates divisions of the land into sections between two cardinal points. Thus, 'north' on a T-in-O map is not an area, but a division between two areas. The areas joined by the T-in-O division are north-

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[10] Sallust, *Jugurthine War* (3. 17), trans. S. A. Handford (Harmondsworth, 1963), 53-4. Catabathmos is a plain in Egypt. The Nile serves as the dividing point in later texts.

east and south-east, whereas the exclusion of Didymus as the fourth surveyor combines north and west as the responsibility of Theodotus.

It seems likely that the reason for the suppression of the western surveyor in the medieval period is that Europe (especially Italy, Germany and France), despite its western position on the map, was conceived as the symbolic continuation of the Roman 'ecumenical' empire and thus had a kind of symbolic territorial primacy. The areas outside the Christian sphere of influence in the thirteenth century were Africa (south), Asia (east), and a undefined region including West Asia, Siberia, China and parts of Scandinavia which took on the symbolism of the northern frontier. There was thus a need for only three surveyors. Information on the European west could be obtained from first-hand observation, and as a result, the north-west quarter on the Hereford and Ebstorf maps displays a noticeable emphasis on towns and rivers, compared with the legendary material in the other three sectors.

This is illustrated in a passage from the *De Natura Locorum* of Albertus Magnus, who describes the survey, and says he wishes to emulate it in his own work:

> in this writing I wish that the description which was made by Augustus
> Caesar, who first ordered that the whole world be described, especially
> be imitated...He sent envoys who surveyed the world and described it;
> of which a certain philosopher Nerodoxus described the eastern parts;
> another philosopher Theodorus, the north; and the sage, Polyclitus, the
> southern parts. The Romans knew the west through their itineraries,
> since their rule and roads existed especially in the west. (3. 1, trans.
> Tillmann, 109-10)

The tradition of the ecumenical surveys dates back well before the late Republican period. Alexander had employed surveyors and scientists to travel with him collecting information during his Eastern campaigns in the fourth century BC. In addition, the combined knowledge of the *Periplus* genre, outlined below, was treated as a form of world survey. However, the censuses of Caesar and Agrippa / Augustus were the first systematised attempts to survey the outer limits of the world from a central position.

Before the Roman Empire, the ruler of the ecumene had often also been its conqueror, and thereby also its surveyor. Landmarks of boundary, such as the pillars of Hercules, were placed at the end of the ecumene by the ruler or hero-figure who had reached the furthest point, and thus denoted not just the extent of conquered territory, but also the extent of empirical knowledge. But in later times, the two roles became separated. The Roman surveyors were not rulers, and left no boundary landmarks of their own, but carried their information to the heart of the land, where a new kind of territorial landmark, in honour of the emperors, was being constructed. The last of the great boundary landmark builders was Alexander the Great. The monuments constructed by Roman emperors were, for the most part, expressions of territorial centrality.

The Periplus tradition and the Whole-Earth survey

I return now to the general examination of mappamundi source material. The last two major sources are both text genres - the naval log, or *periplus*, and its descendants, the

itinerary and the 'Whole-Earth' survey. The main features of these texts that will be examined are their use of conquest landmarks, their tendency to divide the ecumene into four sectors, and the general relationship between geography, travel and fiction.

The forerunners of the Roman surveys are the *periploi*, the coastal navigation logs of the early Greek explorers. These tales were responsible for generating much of the empirical data from which Greek and Roman maps were constructed. Many of these describe the adventures of a single expedition to an unknown part of the world. For example, the genuine expeditions of Hanno and Himilcar both provided information on the west African coast and the northern ocean in the fifth century BC, in an episodic format that is similar to the Alexander Romance tradition (see Romm, *Edges*, 19-22).

Accounts of the voyages of heroes such as Odysseus and Jason were also a main feature of Greek literature in this era. There was no particular distinction between fact and fiction in these early voyage tales. While both the *Odyssey* and the *Argonautica* contain much other material besides lists of wonders, later authors who borrowed from these works produced works entirely based on wondrous lore. The voyage motif lends itself naturally to an episodic format, and as the terrain is largely featureless, the texts become simple catalogues of marvels. This genre is known as 'paradoxography'.[11]

In around the third century BC, a more organised *periplus* genre began to emerge, gradually separating itself from the voyage tales of the previous era. This development is attested to in Agatharchides' *On the Erythraean Sea* of the second century BC. Agatharchides indicates that his survey of the Red Sea and the African shore and littoral was part of a programme of surveys, which had been largely conducted in the previous century:

> The inhabited portion of the earth as a whole is circumscribed in four directions, I mean, the east, west, north and south. Lycus and Timaeus have dealt with the western region, Hecataeus and Basilus the eastern, Diophantus and Demetrius the northern, and we - an onerous task in truth - the southern.[12]

This quotation reveals that the tradition of surveying the world in four sections is much older than the Roman examples given above. It is unlikely that the eight surveyors mentioned here thought of themselves as participants in a group project, except Agatharchides, who appears to have thought of himself as finishing the survey begun by others. What can be said is that by the second century BC, the Greeks were developing a systematic collection of *perploi*, based on a quadripartite division of the ecumene.

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[11] This genre is closely connected to the histories and romances of Alexander's conquests in the fourth century BC. An outline of the development of these is given in chapter 4. For paradoxography and an overview of early Greek works, see Photius, *The Bibliotheca*, trans. N. Wilson (London, 1994) and W. Treadgold, *The Nature of the Bibliotheca of Photius* (Washington, 1980). General material on Greek periplus can be found in Thomson, *History of Ancient Geography*, ch. 2.

[12] Agatharchides of Cnidus, *On the Erythraean Sea*, trans. S. Burstein (London, 1989), 115-116.

Agatharchides work, like many early geographical texts, is known by surviving extracts in the work of Strabo and Diodorus Siculus, and particularly in the *Bibliotheca* of Photius (ninth century). These authors, particularly Photius, concentrated on the marvellous at the expense of the mundane in their selections, and so it is hard to gauge how factual works like the original *On the Erythraean Sea* were. However, what survives indicates that there was a far greater concentration on accurate geography than in earlier *periploi.*

In the second century AD, the *periploi* had developed into something closer to the survey and itinerary of later eras. The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (author unknown) is characterised by an interest in trade, and the precise location of harbours and the materials on sale there. A considerable amount of attention is paid to the monstrous races, wild animals and other features, but there is no direct narration, the format is not episodic, and the general purpose is to advise and instruct, rather than to astonish.[13] Landmarks and marvellous lore do not play a major role in this form of the genre.

Also in the second century AD, the genre of the fictitious travel report began to emerge. Good examples are Antonius Diogenes' *Wonders Beyond Thule* (a description of the northern ocean) and particularly Lucan's *True History*. These accounts were pure fiction, not posing as real history, yet still written within the *periplus* framework (see Romm, *Edges*, 203ff). These texts have more similarities to the voyages of Odysseus and the Argonauts than the later *periploi* or with the sober lists of cities and provinces found in the later Roman surveys and itineraries. The reference to the pillars of Hercules and Dionysius in the *True History* (quoted in the previous chapter) reveals that the landmark theme was so well known in that era as to be a subject of parody.

An important geographical source for medieval maps was the Greek text of the Alexandrian geographer Dionysius (first century AD), commonly known by its Latin title *Orbis Terrae Descriptio*. This was known in the medieval period through a Latin translation by Priscian (sixth century AD), known as the *Periegesis*. Another important text from this era is *De Situ Orbis* of Pomponius Mela (first century AD). *Orbis Terrae Descriptio* and *De Situ Orbis* were the product of another off-shoot from the *Periplus* tradition, the *periodos ges* (called 'Whole-Earth' literature by Romm). Similar attempts to survey the entire world in a single literary text had been in vogue in the Hellenistic period, witnessed particularly by the popularity of the *Geography* of Strabo. The *Periegesis* and the *De Situ Orbis* are relatively late examples of this tradition.[14]

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[13] *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, trans. G. Huntingford (London, 1980).

[14] See J. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth*, chap. 5. Much of this paradoxography material found favour in early-modern England and was translated into English in the sixteenth century. Dionysius, *Orbis Terrae Descriptio: The Surveye of the World*, trans. T. Twine (London, 1572). Twine's edition has no section headings and will be referenced by page number. Line numbers from the Greek / Latin edition *Dionysii Orbis Descriptio Commentario Critico and Geographico*, ed. W. Hill (London, 1697) will also be given. Mela, *De Situ Orbis: The Situation of the World*, trans. A. Golding (London, 1585). Latin titles to both works given in subsequent references.

The *Periegesis* was written as a poetic description, to aid memorisation, and was used as a school geography text for many centuries afterwards. *De Situ Orbis* was also a popular geographical treatise and remained so well into the medieval period. Unlike the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, these texts were written according to a well-established descriptive pattern, following the perimeter of the earth and the outlines of the continents, and stopping at places of historical or current importance to comment on their significance.

Much of the material in the 'Whole-Earth' literature is also found in the Latin encyclopaedic tradition, exemplified by early writers such as Pliny (first century AD) and Solinus (third century). Pliny's *Natural History*, a lengthy collection of lore, contains a large geographical section in which many references to conquest landmarks can be found. Solinus' *Collection of Marvellous Things* is essentially a tour of the wonders of the world, listing many marvels borrowed from Pliny and elsewhere, and also contains a great deal of references to the deeds of heroes and kings and their landmarks.[15] Much later, works like the eighth-century *Cosmographia* of Aethicus Ister continued the tradition - the *Cosmographia* also contains a large number of references to landmarks and other related lore.[16]

The Origin of the Landmark Concept

The emphasis in this kind of geographical literature on conceptualising space rather than accurately describing it, and on linking geography and history through the description of monuments, is what I am calling the 'landmark impulse'. Hellenistic and Roman 'Whole-Earth' geography and paradoxography are the principal source genres for references to landmarks on medieval world maps, which in fact contain only a small selection of the large number of such structures listed by writers like Strabo, Mela, Dionysius and Pliny.

A small number of examples not found on mappaemundi will suffice to illustrate the general theme. On the more historical side, Pliny mentions "three Altars of Sestius dedicated to Augustus" on a promontory near Finisterre in north-west Spain (4. 10). On the mythological side, Mela mentions the shield of Antaeus in Africa, in "a very anciente Towne" close to a cave consecrated to Hercules. "And there remaineth a Monument of the thing, namelie, a huge Shield", which they "report for a certaintie to have beene carried by Antaeus, and therefore they honour it as a Relique" (*De Situ Orbis*, 1. 5, trans. Golding, 9).

In these texts, the geography of Spain, Africa and the Far East is studded with such monumental reminders of history and legend. Indeed, the works of Mela, Dionysius and Solinus in particular contain little else concerning these regions. Strabo and Pliny are more sober in their approach to such fables, and report the views of others on monuments and other marvels in which they themselves do not believe, but discussions

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[15] Solinus, *The Excellente and Pleasant Worke: Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium*, trans. Golding (1587), ed. Kish (Gainesville, 1955). This edition referenced by chapter numbers.

[16] Aethicus, *Cosmographia*, in *Die Kosmographie des Istrier Aithikus im Lateinisch Auszuge des Hieronymous*, ed. H. Wuttke (Leipzig, 1853).

of legendary monuments and other elements of marvellous geography still form a major component of their work.

These discussions of geographical monuments form a dual tradition which I will introduce here, and discuss in the chapters on individual landmarks that follow. Firstly, reports of a particular landmark in a region about which little else was known prompted writers to centre their discussions of this region on that particular landmark. Thus, the landmarks became part of a recognised literary tradition. Secondly, the example of the eastern pillars discussed in the previous chapter prompted later figures, notably the early Roman emperors, to establish similar structures. Writers from the time of Strabo onwards were aware of this tradition and began to think of these monumental constructions as part of a related series (see especially the account of Strabo's ideas in chapter 5). Kingship landmarks were at once a literary trope and a geographical reality.

The combined lore of the encyclopaedic tradition and the Alexander romances is found in early medieval works such as the Old English *Wonders of the East* (tenth or eleventh century), the contemporaneous Latin *Letter of Fermes to Trajan*, and a variety of other 'wonder-letters'. While these are based in part on the Alexander legends, they contain no details of his conquests; wondrous lore is the only feature of these texts. The *Wonders of the East*, for example, contains no narrative at all, but simply lists the various wondrous things that a traveller to India might encounter, providing almost no detail. The eastern pillars are here described in Medea, simply listed as "The Great wonders...the works that Alexander the Great ordered built."[17] M. R. James notes that the description is so brief that it is not possible to ascribe this passage to any particular section in the romances. He describes the entire work as a "collection of absurdities which I am rescuing from a perhaps merited oblivion."[18]

The degeneration of encyclopaedias into paradoxography and romances into 'wonder-letters' is most pronounced in the period between the sixth and eleventh centuries. I have chosen in this study to concentrate on texts from the Classical era in which detailed geographical lore is found, and on texts from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, in which landmarks function within the narrative rather than simply being part of a list of marvels.

As a final word on Classical and early medieval text sources for the mappaemundi tradition, I must again mention the influence of the work of Orosius (fifth century) and Isidore of Seville (seventh century). The work of these two writers was so influential on mapaemundi that the Anglo-Norman genre is sometimes referred to as the 'Orosian - Isidorean' tradition. Orosius' *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans* 1. 2 is a description of the boundaries of continents, containing references to many of the conquest landmarks under discussion (see chapters 5 and 7). The exception is the

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[17] P. A. Gibb, *Wonders of the East: A critical edition and commentary* (Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Duke University, 1977), 100-101.

[18] M. R. James, *Wonders of the East: A Full reproduction of all the known copies* (Oxford, 1929), 9. Alexander's altars are mentioned in Item 2, 15, and n.2. The text also includes sections of the *Letter of Fermes to Trajan* later used by Gervase of Tilbury.

eastern altars, which were included on mappaemundi mostly as a result of the Alexander tradition.

Isidore's *De Natura Rerum* (48) and the *Etymologies* (14-15) do not contain references to most of these icons - the exception is the western pillars of Hercules (see chapter 5). Isidore's main emphasis was on understanding the four elements and the order of things in the natural world, while Orosius discussed geography with reference to history and the deeds of pagan rulers (see chapter 4). Thus, the 'landmark concept' on mappaemundi owes far more to Orosius than Isidore and might be said to constitute a fairly major element of the Orosian input into medieval cartography. Orosius' view of the world, as reconstructed by Miller, is reproduced as plate 14, with some additions.

A Note on Imaginative and Imaginary Geographies

A useful contrast can be made between the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* and the "Whole-Earth" texts. The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* describes actual journeys undertaken by the author, that might conceivably be accomplished by the reader. The *Periegesis*, *De Situ Orbis* and the *Wonders of the East* discuss 'round the world' journeys that would have been an impossibility to undertake, yet used the most accurate theoretical geographical knowledge available in order to describe them.

Medieval geography owes far more to the *Periegesis* and other world-tours than to the factual *periploi*. Medieval texts like the *Image du Monde* and *Mandeville's Travels* use similar techniques to the *Periegesis* - 'real' geography is used to stimulate the imagination of readers who know that the travels being described would be beyond their own capabilities, but are also aware that the places described are 'real'.

This definition solves many of the problems created by the false distinction between 'real' and 'imaginary' that is often applied to elements of medieval geography. A travel sequence in a serious pre-modern geographical text describing the pillars of Alexander in the east, or monuments to the deeds of Hercules in Spain, does not lie, nor does it invent, nor does it err. Such a text simply uses available information to provide an entertaining description. Reading such a text would have been an imaginative exercise as well as a learning process. I use the adjective 'imaginative' in an entirely different sense from the adjective 'imaginary'. 'Real' geography is used by these texts in an imaginative, literary way.

The modern distinction between 'fantasy' fiction and real knowledge stems partly from the fact that much of our most well-known fantasy literature - *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and so on - takes much of its stock material from medieval geography (in fact both Tolkein and Lewis were medieval scholars). There is thus a natural association between the use of images of unknown lands and the concept of fantasy and invention. A more appropriate analogy is to compare a medieval geographical text such as *Mandeville's Travels* with a description of the Amazon or Antarctica in a *National Geographic* magazine. The reader will know that the places described are real, but this is probably not his or her main interest in reading the magazine. In many cases, the reader will have little intention of ever visiting the places described, or have the means to do so in any case. Whether or not the places are

exactly as the writers say is of little consequence. The experience of reading such material is primarily an imaginative one.

The Itinerary in Roman and Medieval geography

To conclude this section, I return to the examination of mappaemundi source material. The itinerary, a main form of geographical expression in the later Empire, was for the most part empirical in nature, and contains little of the more imaginative material I have been discussing.

As has been noted, the only extant ecumenical map from the Roman period is the Peutinger Table, which is in fact a twelfth-century copy of an original dating from the fourth century. It shows the Roman Empire in itinerary form, stretching lengthwise from east to west, and noting important routes and the distances between major cities.[19] Many of the landmarks under discussion can be found on the Peutinger Table, in particular the eastern and northern altars of Alexander and the altars of the Philaeni, for all of which an almost identical icon is used to that used for various altars on the Hereford and Ebstorf maps (see chapter 7).

The use of itineraries as a major geographical tool in the later Roman Empire is witnessed by the *Antonine Itinerary* (third century) which is a detailed written description of various land and sea routes throughout the empire, and the *Bordeaux Itinerary* (fourth century) which was made shortly after the conversion of Constantine in 313, and shows pilgrim routes throughout the Empire, mostly leading to Jerusalem.[20]

The continuation of the itinerary tradition in post-Roman times was conducted largely in the Byzantine Empire. The major extant source is the *Ravenna Cosmography*, made in the eighth century, possibly using sources similar to the Peutinger Table. The tradition had become corrupted by this era and there is little of the accurate measurement of roads in outlying places found in the earlier itineraries, but nonetheless it may be said that through such texts, the itinerary genre survived.[21]

References to the western pillars of Hercules can be found in these itineraries. These will be mentioned in chapter 6, where they are directly relevant. Of interest here is the treatment of the pillars of Hercules as a traveller's landmark, positioned just before the island of Gades, which lies at the end of the particular journey described. In this instance, a geographical myth, which had originally been part of a narrative sequence (the labours of Hercules), would have formed part of the experience of real travellers

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[19] See O. Dilke, "Itineraries and Geographical Maps in the Early and Late Roman Empires", in Harley and Woodward, *History of Cartography*, vol. 1, 238-242. See also E. Weber, ed., *Tabula Peuteringeriana: Codex Vindobonensis* (Graz, 1976).

[20] Dilke, "Itineraries", 236-238. Edition in the *Itineraria Romana* series, 3 vols. (Bern, 1967-76), and translation of the *Bordeaux Itinerary* in *Library of the Palestine Pilgrim's Text Society* 1, trans. Aubrey Stewart (London, 1896).

[21] O. Dilke, "Cartography in the Byzantine Empire", in Harley and Woodward, *History of Cartography*, vol. 1, 258-60.

following a genuine itinerary. Hercules had given his name to the entire region, and those passing through were thought to be travelling the "Way of Hercules".

These texts had considerable influence on the mappamundi tradition. This was first appreciated by Crone, who studies the relationship between town names on the Hereford map and the *Antonine Itinerary*. While Crone notes that medieval and Roman land routes were very similar, and was thus hesitant to say that itineraries were the base source for the Hereford mappamundi, he proved clearly that providing guidance for pilgrims, particularly those travelling to Santiago, was one of the main aims of the Hereford map (Crone, *World Map*, 19-21).

Conclusions

The survey, the *periploi* and the itineraries derive geographical conceptions from experiences of travel. This is a simple, yet fundamental and profound factor of pre-modern cartography and world knowledge, as it creates a system of understanding geography based on narrative, or at least on the conception that a series of sites will be experienced in a certain order. In such a system, geography becomes a series of linear progressions to important sites, passing through an otherwise featureless terrain, and these sites become associated with the person who travels there, and the events that occurred there.

This desire to historicise and humanise the landscape, and thereby understand and symbolically control it, produced the landmark icons that I am examining. Many of them functioned as reminders of historical events that produced conditions - particularly of centrality, boundary and division - as Roman and medieval geographers knew them. As many of the people who erected them were perceived as demi-gods, these landmarks also functioned to make the landscape sacred, and many of them are sites of worship or prophecy.

This experience of geography through narrative is another important factor in the 'landmark impulse'. The belief in landmarks such as the pillars of Hercules, created initially through the conceptual link between geography and history outlined above, was perpetuated through the use of such monuments as focal points for real or fictitious travel stories in the generations that followed. As we have seen, the impetus for many of Alexander's travels was that his predecessors had gone to India and left signs of their passing. Similarly, the imagination of many readers in the medieval west was fired by Alexander's march, and when European travellers went to Asia in the thirteenth century, much of their energy was expended on looking for signs of Alexander's deeds (see in particular chapter 7).

2 - The Ball and the Shield - Classical and Medieval Notions of the Shape and Size of the World

Introduction

I have so far discussed Greek and Roman surveys and 'experiential' travel literature in relation to mappaemundi. The other main source of information for medieval cartography was the work of the Greek geographers and philosophers who first developed the round world map, and another group who introduced conceptions of

theoretical cartography and co-ordinate mapping. I want to discuss this material in relation to several ideas that have been touched on concerning the medieval conceptions of the 'world' and the 'ecumene' and the difficulties arising out of the use of these terms.

Knowledge of the Sphericity of the Earth in the Middle Ages

It is quite clear that the makers of medieval world maps, and many other scholars in the medieval period, had no doubt concerning the sphericity of the earth. This has been well proven in a number of articles, yet the idea that the earth was thought to be flat remains with us.[22] One need not look outside scholarship directly on the Hereford map to find this discussed at some length. For example, John Glenn's short article on the Hereford map is largely taken up with refuting the 'flat-earth' claim made by A. L. Moir in one of the Hereford Cathedral map booklets. Moir wrote that the map shows a round flat world, and that the church in the thirteenth century had taught that "people on the other side of a spherical earth would fall off into an abyss."[23] Glenn disproves this, by a series of quotations from Adelard of Bath, Robert Grosseteste, and Dante, which prove the reverse. He concludes that the map is "roughly an orthogonal projection onto a plane tangent to the earth at Jerusalem."[24]

That medieval scholars believed that the earth was spherical is clear from a great number of sources. For example, Bede (eighth century), Gautier de Metz (twelfth century), Honorius of Autun (thirteenth century), and Pierre d'Ailly (fifteenth century), all give descriptions of the world as spherical in their work, and their works also contain basic T-in-O diagrams or zonal maps accompanying these descriptions.[25] Bede, the earliest, describes the world as being "not circular like a shield, but rather like a ball, and it extends from its centre with perfect roundness on all sides." As we will see, the two images 'ball' and 'shield' are at the heart of medieval scientific conceptions of the earth, and also form a major component of both Classical and medieval cosmographic symbolism.

The 'flat earth' misconception partly arises from the notion of Jerusalem as the centre of the ecumene, and the '*omphalos*' or 'navel' of the world. The 'centre' of a sphere is a confusing notion and it is tempting to perceive Jerusalem instead as the centre of a 'circle of lands', as was the original Biblical definition, dating from an era when the earth probably *was* thought to be flat. But medieval map-makers would have seen

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[22] See J. B. Russell, *Inventing the Flat Earth: Columbus and Modern Historians* (Westport, 1997) and Edson, *Mapping Time*, 148 and 188, n.5. Early articles supporting a belief in sphericity are F. S. Betten, "The Knowledge of the Sphericity of the Earth during the Earlier Middle Ages", *Catholic Historical Review* n.s. 3 (1923), 74-90, and particularly C. Jones, "The Flat Earth", *Thought* 9 (1934), 296-307.

[23] A. L. Moir, *The World Map in Hereford Cathedral*, 6th ed. (Hereford, 1971), 12.

[24] J. Glenn, "Notes on the Mappaemundi in Hereford Cathedral", in W. Ormod, ed., *England in the Thirteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1984 Harlaxton Symposium* (Suffolk, 1986), 62.

[25] Bede, *Opera de Temporibus* (32), ed. C. W. Jones (Cambridge, Mass., 1943), cited in Russell, *Inventing the Flat Earth*, 87, n. 55. Honorius says "The earth's form is round, and it is called a sphere" ("Terrae forma est rounda, et orbis est dicta") - V. J. Flint, "Honorius Augustodunensis Imago Mundi", *Archives d'Historie Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 57 (Paris, 1983) book 1 cap. 5. Gautier de Metz and Pierre d'Ailly are discussed below.

Jerusalem (or Delos in some cases) as a point on one of three main lines of a sphere, the one pointing 'up and down'. Analysis by Tobler of the projection and scale distortion used on the Hereford map shows that it is a freehand orthographic projection, meaning that the centre is magnified so as to be larger than the perimeter, creating a 'God's Eye' view of the world, focused on Jerusalem, the central element in its history.[26]

The belief that medieval geographers conceived of a flat earth may also stem from a desire to streamline history, and place the discovery of the spherical earth contemporaneously with the heliocentric revolution. Perhaps also the voyage of Columbus around the globe is thought to be an immediate reaction to the discovery that such a voyage was possible. Whatever the reason, it is a persistent error.

In order to expose and correct this misconception in a useful manner, a short history of Graeco-Roman geography and spatial perception will now be given. This discussion is intended to clarify some of the questions raised in the introduction, while giving an overview of the development of cartography in the Graeco-Roman period. It will be useful to dispense totally with the word 'round', which can be misleading, and adopt Tattersal's terms 'sphere' and 'disc'.[27]

Conceptions of the Earth in the Classical Period

The first geometric shape to be associated with geography and cosmology was the circle. There is certainly no underrating the importance of circles to the way human beings conceive space and compose order. A great many cultures have circular cosmological schemes, certainly more than any other shape. The 360 degree view humans get of the horizon is a likely reason for this, as well as the automatic actions of a dial (any measurement device in which one end of a rod moves on a flat plane, while the other is fixed). Compasses, clocks, sundials, and other instruments used to measure time and space are all thus naturally circular.

In ancient Greek thought, we find the circular shape used in relation to the world, or the ecumene, largely in symbolic or poetic terms. Homer uses it to define the outer limits of the Greek 'world' (here meaning the ecumene) in the description of the Ocean stream, which was an almost universal concept in Classical and medieval geography.

Also in the *Iliad* is an ekphrasistic description of the Shield of Achilles, made by the god Hephaistos at the behest of Thetys (Achilles' mother) to aid Achilles in combat against Hector. The shield shows the River Ocean on the rim, surrounding a series of tripartite divisions of seasonal activities, revealing an early conceptual link between the circular portrayal of space and the cyclical nature of time. There are also a variety of depictions of cities in varying states of mourning, celebration, war and peace. Both the description, and diagrammatic reconstructions, of the shield bear much resemblance to later circular plans of the world, or cities like Jerusalem.

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[26] W. R. Tobler, "Medieval Distortions: The Projections of Ancient Maps", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 56 (1966), 351-60.

[27] Jill Tattersal, "Sphere or Disc? Allusions to the shape of the earth in some Twelfth-Century and Thirteenth-Century Vernacular French Works", *MLR* 76 (1981), 31-46.

That the shield is an image of Achilles' divinely-ordained right to rule is made clear in book 19, where Achilles is the only Greek who is even capable of looking at the divine armour without trembling in fear, as it is for use by him alone. This is the earliest example I know of the use of *ekphrasis* to describe a symbolic space, and also the first instance of a geographical image as a symbol of kingship.[28]

The use of the shield as a space to depict the world or images of the city is also found in the Hesiodic poem *Shield of Herakles*. The shield, also made by Hephaistos (this time at the behest of Athene) was designed for Hercules' battle against Kyknos. Like the shield in *Iliad* 18, the *Shield of Herakles* depicts stylised images of the city to symbolise various states of the human condition.[29] Specific scenes from history or mythology play a minor role in the composition of both works.

The circular, disc-shaped earth surrounded by the Ocean stream (often referred to as the 'Ionian' world map) continued as the main Greek image of the world until around the fifth century BC. The circular shape was derided as a map form by Herodotus in about 500 BC, signalling a move towards a more theoretical approach to cartography.[30] Early figures in this movement were Parmenides, Pythagoras, Democritus and Aristotle, all of whom were convinced of the sphericity of the earth. This theory began to be applied practically in the fourth century BC, and subsequently when maps and globes are known to have been constructed by Eudoxus and others.[31]

To these thinkers, we owe many of the advances we now hold commonplace, such as the sphericity of the earth, the equator, poles and tropics, and so on. Much medieval cartography of the zonal variety is based upon these ideas, as witnessed in maps accompanying the works of Macrobius, William of Conches, and others. The concept of the spherical earth was thereafter widely accepted, and continued as a permanent fixture of Roman thought.

Despite these developments, circular diagrams and cosmological ideas continued to be produced in the Greek world as an undercurrent to the more theoretical and scientific model that was developing. Aristotle, and the philosopher Geminus in the first century BC, both mention that their contemporaries were still producing maps based on the Ionian model (Dilke, "Foundations", 135).

As well as the various models of the entire world created by the Greeks and Romans, there was in this era a growing symbolic conception of the ecumene. This habitable world was defined in terms of shared language, culture, history and perception in

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[28] *The Iliad of Homer*, trans. R. Lattimore (Chicago, 1951), Book 18, lines 480-610. A graphic reconstruction has been made by M. Wilcock, *A Companion to the Iliad of Homer* (Chicago, 1976), 209-14.

[29] The text of this poem is in Hesiod, *Works and Days / Theogony/ The Shield of Herakles*, trans. R. Lattimore (Ann Arbor, 1959), 191-220.

[30] Herodotus, *The Histories*, 4. 36-42. "I cannot help laughing at the absurdity of all the map-makers - there are plenty of them - who show Ocean running...round a perfectly circular earth, with Asia and Europe of the same size...". This is one of the most frequently quoted passages in studies on ancient geography. Translation by A. de Selincourt, 2nd. ed. (London, 1972), 282.

[31] O. Dilke, "The Foundations of Theoretical Cartography in Archaic and Classical Greece", Harley and Woodward, *History of Cartography*, vol. 1, 140-147.

Greek thought. Much information on the Far East had come into Greek thought through the campaigns of Alexander, lending 'the ecumene' an association with 'an area united by military conquest'. As we have seen, it later became synonymous with the Roman Empire, furthering this idea.

The Graeco-Roman ecumene covered an area from Gades (southern Spain) to the Indus or the Ganges rivers (India), and from Thule (Iceland) to Meroë or Saba (Egypt / Africa). According to the theoretical cartographers described above, it was shaped in the form of a *chalmys*, or cloak, being wider in the centre than at the ends, to end up shaped like a lozenge. Various modern interpretations of it have been drawn, based on the writings of many early geographers - Hecataeus, Strabo, Dionysius, and others. Generally, the results are rather reminiscent of a walnut, centred on Rhodes or Delos, and with an enlarged Mediterranean region. The basics of the T-in-O are recognisable in an early form, although these maps had a northern orientation.[32]

Theoretical cartography, based on co-ordinates projected onto a sphere, continued in the Hellenistic period and eventually culminated in the work of the Alexandrian cartographer Claudius Ptolemy in the second century AD. No Ptolemaic maps survive from this original period - the earliest extant regional Ptolemaic map is from the thirteenth century, and most world maps are from the period of the Ptolemaic revival in the fifteenth century. These world maps are relatively accurate in their treatment of Europe and North Africa, but contain gross errors in other areas, particularly the joining of Africa onto Asia in the Far South, creating a land-locked Indian Ocean.[33]

Ptolemaic terrestrial cartography dispensed completely with the circle, and used a series of projection systems of increasing complexity. The first was similar to the original *chalmys* shape, the second used curved meridians and parallels to create a distorted rectangle, and the third was a full celestial globe (armillary sphere). The second kind was the most popular in the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and the re-discovery of Ptolemy's work in the late medieval period led to a rapid decline in the use of the circle as the shape for cartographic projections of the world.

Despite the work of Ptolemy, the circle continued to be used as a more poetic way of describing the ecumene, or historical space, witnessed by another shield description, the shield of Aeneas in the *Aeneid* of Virgil, where once again it is used as a cosmocratic image. This is a fine example of the function of landmarks (such as altars) as geographical and historical symbols, within an ekphrasistic depiction of space. It contains a variety of scenes, roughly sequential, from Rome's history, finishing with the victory celebrations of Augustus Caesar after the battle of Actium in 31 BC. Augustus sacrifices to his gods, and reviews the full extent of the newly-forged Empire. I quote here from Dryden's poetic translation.

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[32] The ecumene was often known as "Strabo's Cloak" in later texts as it was first popularised in his work. As well as the recontractions by Miller already mentioned, see E. Bunbury, *A History of Ancient Geography* - Strabo - vol. 2, 238; Dionysius - vol. 2, 490; Hecataeus, vol. 1, 148.

[33] For Ptolemy in his own era, see O. Dilke, "The Culmination of Greek Cartography in Ptolemy", in Harley and Woodward, *History of Cartography*, vol. 1, 177-200. For Ptolemaic maps in the later medieval period, see the table on 192.

The victor to his gods his thanks expressed,
And Rome, triumphant, with his presence blessed.
Three hundred temples in the town he placed,
With spoils and altars every temple graced.
. . . .
All altars flame: before each altar lies,
Drenched in his gore, the destined sacrifice.
Great Caesar sits sublime upon his throne,
Before Apollo's porch of Parian stone:
Accepts the presents vowed for victory,
And hangs the monumental crowns on high.
Vast crowds of vanquished nations march along,
Various in arms, in habit, and in tongue.[34]

The shield was made by Vulcan (the Roman Hephaistos) for Aeneas at the behest of Venus, and the image is clearly based on the shield of Achilles in *Iliad* 18. Unlike its antecedents, Aeneas' shield is a depiction of Roman history, in a roughly chronological sequence leading up to the creation of the Empire. The description of the shield is preceded by a catalogue of Roman heroes, also culminating in a description of the divine Augustus. Virgil claims that Augustus will conquer beyond India, and beyond the land of the Moors, outdoing the efforts of Hercules and Bacchus.

Virgil's use of the shield-image from the *Iliad* is more than a simple borrowing from an older source. It is a symbolic claim that Rome is continuing the achievements of Greece. Aeneas, who carries the shield from Greece to Rome, transfers civilisation from east to west, literally carrying on his shoulders a history of Rome that is yet to happen.

Other uses of the *Iliad* shield as a cosmocratic image use the concept of historical progression in a more straightforward manner. According to medieval tradition, the shield of Achilles was of considerable influence on the political ambitions of the young Alexander, who saw the famous artefact in the temple of Hercules at Troy, and wished to emulate the historical achievements of both figures.[35] Alexander took the shield with him on his campaign, although descriptions of it do not feature in the medieval romances. The shield trope generally is used in Alexander Romance literature, an example being the shield of the Persian king Darius in the *Alexandreis* of Walter de Châtillon. "His shield, cast in a seven-fold circle, challenged the insuperable brightness of the sun".[36] It contained images of Darius' ancestors, from the mythical Nimrod at the tower of Babel to the historical Cyrus in the recent past.

The use of the shield form in early physical cartography is attested to by the 'Dura Europos' shield-map, a badly-damaged itinerary-sketch of the Black sea region made in the third century AD, and the Pesaro Wind Rose map, which also dates from the

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[34] Cited and discussed in R. D. Williams, *Aeneas and the Roman Hero* (Houndmills, 1973), 23-26.

[35] A. R. Anderson, "Heracles and His Successors", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 39 (1928), 14.

[36] Walter de Châtillon, *Alexandreis*, trans. R. T. Pritchard (Toronto, 1986), 73-74.

start of the third century. Both of these have aspects of real, functional maps, but would probably have served a largely decorative or symbolic purpose. The concept of the spherical earth may have been well known to the Greeks and Romans, but the circular ecumene continued to serve a variety of symbolic functions (Dilke, "Itineraries", 248-9).

Loss of Knowledge at the Fall of the Empire

Much Graeco-Roman cartographic knowledge - empirical and theoretical - was lost after the fall of the Roman Empire. The measurement of the circumference of the earth was forgotten or obscured, celestial mapping and co-ordinate mapping fell into disuse, and knowledge of Africa and Asia declined. The popular modern misconception that medieval people thought that the earth was flat arose from the 'precursorist' approach of late-nineteenth-century scholars such as McRindle, and continued in the earlier part of this century with scholars like Kimble and Randall.[37] The common argument in these works is that at the fall of the Roman Empire, the geographical knowledge of the Greeks and Romans was also lost, and that Europe reverted to the idea of the flat earth.

The maps and accompanying description of the flat earth by the Egyptian monk Cosmas Indicopleustes (sixth century) have often been used as an example of this reversion. Cosmas repeatedly states throughout his text that the earth is flat, and provides a map of the world based on the Holy Tabernacle. The argument that Cosmas' views represented those of others in the medieval period over-emphasises the influence Cosmas had in later times. His flat-earth map is unique, and his ideas are not found in other texts of the period, and had little influence on later thought.

A far more influential world model was the T-in-O diagram included in the work of Isidore of Seville, already described. It shows the ecumene, but in the shape of a circle instead of a *chalmys*. In this, it has more in common with the earlier form of the astrological diagrams, or poetic descriptions of space such as the shield of Achilles from *Iliad* 18 and the other shield-poems mentioned above. Isidore's use of the T-in-O signals a move away from the strict scientific cartography of the Hellenistic period towards the age-old circular depiction of the ecumene, which dates back to the Ancient period.

However, the return to the use of the Ionian model does *not* mean that the sphericity of the earth had been forgotten. As Stevens says in his review of the figure, "the *rota terrarum*...displays a more sophisticated conception of the world than has often been acknowledged" (Stevens, "Figure", 268). Essentially, it is a *circular depiction of a quarter of a sphere*. This depiction asks the viewer to combine the knowledge of the *chalmys*- shaped ecumene with the quadripartite symbolism inherent in the circle, and forgive the resulting spatial discrepancy.

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[37] James McRindle, *The Christian Topography of Cosmas, an Egyptian Monk* (London, 1897). Flat earth theory also discussed in H. J. Randall, *Making of the Modern Mind* (Boston, 1926), 23, and George Kimble, *Geography in the Middle Ages*, 35.

The Ecumene and the Globe

There has been an interchange of perceptions between the idea of the whole earth and that of the ecumene ever since the Roman era. Nicolet has analysed a large number of Roman portrayals of the ecumene and the globe (statues, coins, and other art works) and mentions the ambiguity of the use of the globe:

> No empire, no universal monarch could in antiquity reasonably wish to dominate the entire terrestrial sphere. Three-quarters of it remained literally unattainable in ancient cosmogony, out of the reach of all human enterprise...Nevertheless, they could claim to fit in the order of the comic destiny - either they were under the protection of...the gods, or they were in some way divine. They became therefore an element, or the guarantee, of world order. This is then the visual symbol of the "elevation" of the globe. (Nicolet, *Space*, 35-6)

Many medieval scholars continued with the Classical notion that the earth was four times the size of the ecumene (see Crates of Mallos' 'four continent theory', outlined in the introduction), and that circumnavigation was impossible. A standard source for this is the *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* by Macrobius, who probably invented the zonal map in order to demonstrate this very idea. In Cicero's original text (known subsequently through Macrobius' commentary), the younger Scipio receives the following instruction from the elder, as they gaze down from the celestial sphere upon the ecumene:

> The whole portion that you inhabit is...in truth a small island encircled by the sea which you call...ocean. But you can see how small it is despite its name! Has your name or that of any Roman been able to pass beyond the Caucasus, which you see over here, or to cross the Ganges over yonder? And these are civilised lands [beyond the frontiers] in the known portion of the globe. But who will ever hear of your name in the remaining portions of the globe...?[38]

This is in keeping with the idea that the ecumene is one quarter of the world. It also suggests that measurement of the earth was a political and social issue. A prevailing perception of human weakness and fallibility would suggest a large and unconquerable globe. In the later medieval era, a growing conception of European ecumenical dominance, fostered perhaps by the crusade movement, challenged the notion of an unconquerable globe, and the idea that human beings could in fact live on the other side of the world became accepted. Most of the discussion of circumnavigation of the globe in the Middle Ages seems to dispense with the 'four continent' theory, and presumed that the next land west around the Atlantic from Gades (Spain) would be India. Columbus certainly believed this, as did Mandeville, who discussed the possibility of circumnavigation over a hundred years before it was achieved. These

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[38] Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* trans. Stahl, 75-76. (Note that Stahl's edition includes Cicero's original *Dream of Scipio*, which this extract is from).

and later discussions of circumnavigation suggest a growing ecumene, and a shrinking wider world.[39]

These ideas represent a break with Classical tradition, placing the far west of Africa and Spain (called generally Farther Spain) only a short distance from Far East India, implying a sphere which is simply the ecumene rolled into a ball. There is a great deal of evidence for the currency of this idea in the Middle Ages. A good example is found in the *Image du Monde* of Gautier de Metz. Gautier makes the sphericity of the earth, and the circular form of ecumene, abundantly clear:

> Thise iiii parties that I have declared to you [the *plagae*, or four corners
> of the earth] which ben sete in a quarter of all the erthe of the world
> ought to have a rounde forme / for Raison and nature gyve [determine]
> that all the world be rounde and therefore understande ye of this
> quarter as if it were all rounde.[40]

Gautier also tells us that the circumnavigation of the world is possible, and even provides a diagram of pilgrims walking around the earth to meet one another in the place where they began, an idea which he describes clearly in his text. According to most Classical cosmologists, including many that Gautier uses as his sources, this was an impossibility - the ocean was thought to be the limit of human habitation , and the equatorial zones uninhabitable.

Later ideas concerning circumnavigation are found in the *Imago Mundi* of the French cardinal Pierre d'Ailly (fifteenth century). Firstly, d'Ailly tells us that north, south, east and west are to be considered the "four corners of the habitable earth", in a description which makes clear that out of the entire earth, it is only the ecumene that is habitable. He then tells us that "true east and west are...the most distant habitable part of ulterior Spain on the west and the most distant part of ulterior India on the east." He also says that the earth can be navigated from the pillars of Hercules in the west to India in a short time, giving reference to Aristotle, Pliny, Seneca, Orosius, and others to support this view. Again, the ecumene is described as though it were a sphere, despite the fact that it was known in Classical cosmology to be one of four landmasses that make up the world (Pierre d'Ailly, *Imago Mundi*, books 8 and 13, trans. Keever, 14-18).

In some texts, the pillars of Hercules and Alexander function as symbols of the "true east and west" spoken of by d'Ailly, and are sometimes mentioned in connection with the idea of circumnavigation. As we saw in the previous chapter, finding Alexander's landmark, attaining the terrestrial paradise, and then circumnavigating the globe were among the feats that travellers such as Johannes Witte de Hese claimed to have accomplished in order to say that they had 'seen it all'. Witte de Hese's claims to

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[39] Mandeville's discussion of circumnavigation has recently been dubbed 'the Lamory excursus' and is analysed in detail in I. Higgins, *Writing East: The 'Travels' of Sir John Mandeville* (Chicago, 1997), ch. 5. For Columbus, see V. J. Flint, *The Imaginative Landscape of Christopher Columbus* (Princeton, 1992), 23-33.

[40] The translation of the *Image du Monde* used throughout is that by William Caxton, *The Mirrour of the World*, in *The English Experience* 960 (Amsterdam, 1979). Caxton wrongly attributed the original to 'Vincentius' (Vincent of Beauvaix, author of the *Speculum Majus*). The quotation is from cap. 1, bk. 2.

circumnavigation may have been partly based on previous treatments of the conquest landmark theme in texts such as Lambert of St. Omer's *Liber Floridus* (twelfth century). Lambert directly links the idea of 'outdoing' Hercules and Bacchus with the notion of circumnavigation:

> In Orientis autem ultimus horis aurea ultraque deorum constituta erant simulachra, que an solida. Essent ego scire cupiens perforavi. Et id ipsem cum vinderum solida, simili metallo complevi Liberumque et Herculem deiectis (?) victimis complacavi. Ultra deinde progressuri si quid memorabile cerneremus, nichil preter desertos ab Oceanum campos silvasque ac montes audivimus, in quibus elefanti et serpentes esse dicebantur. Pergebam tunc ad mare volens, si possem, orbem terram circumnavigare Oceanumque, quem tenebrosum uadosumque michi locorum incole affirmabant, quodque Herculis et Liberi memini esse temptandos prestantissimorumque deorum tanto maiorem me ipsis uelle videri, *quod pacienta mortalium sacra preterium vestiga.*[41]

> [In the furthest regions of the east, golden images of the gods had been set up. I wanted to know whether they were solid and drilled through them. And when they seemed to be solid, I filled them up with a similar metal, and placated Hercules and Liber by casting down sacrifices. Being about to advance further, in the hope of seeing something memorable, we heard of nothing except desert plains near the ocean...I was then going on to the sea, wishing, if I could, to circumnavigate the ocean...which I remembered had been attempted by Hercules and Bacchus, and I wanted myself to be seen as superior to those foremost gods (to go beyond the sacred bounds of mortals).]

'Going beyond' in these texts is equated with leaving the ecumene entirely. In d'Ailly's work, furthest India and furthest Spain, the site of the pillars of Hercules, are almost adjacent to one another, the space between them being a short distance around the far side of the world. In Lambert's description, challenging this space in between the two sets of pillars - sailing from one 'Gades' to another - has become the ultimate act of outdoing, and the most certain sign that the would-be conqueror Alexander has escaped from the boundaries applicable to mortals. The same ideas recur in descriptions of sailing past the pillars of Hercules in the west, discussed in chapter 5.

Conclusions

1 - As has been shown, there are a good many paradoxes on a simple geometric level concerning ancient and medieval conceptions of world geography. Four continents are implied, but only two referred to, and while the ecumene is officially a mere quarter of

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[41] Lambert of St. Omer, *Liber Floridus: Codex Autographus Bibliothecae Universitatis Gandavensis*, ed. A Delorez (Ghent, 1968), section CXXII, f158v (page 316). The reading of the italicised section is tentative and has been placed in brackets. This passage is largely based on a similar idea of circumnavigation in the *Epistola* (10), in Stoneman, *Legends*, 11.

the sphere, there are implications that it is in itself a self-contained sphere on both a symbolic and a physical level.

For this study of ecumenical cartography, the reader should bear in mind that in most of the material I am examining, the ecumene is known to be quarter of a sphere, but is portrayed as a circle. Medieval cartographers were fully aware of this apparent contradiction. On a symbolic level, the T-in-O and the concept of the ecumene implied a self- contained 'sphere of influence', separate from the rest of the world, and was often used in combination with sphere imagery.

Thus, while the ball had its uses in scientific cartography, the shield was used as a metaphor for the historical cosmos, and functioned as a subject for *ekphrasis* and as symbol denoting territorial power and religious authority. In medieval literature, the shield continued to function in this way. The interplay between the shield and the ball as dual conceptions of sovereign power was to continue throughout the medieval period.

2 - The quadripartite division of space maintained a fairly constant influence on the construction of the ecumene in a number of ways: the way it was surveyed, the way information regarding it was categorised, and consequently the way it was depicted and described. Despite the tripartite division of the continents based on the geography of Sallust and the story of the Sons of Noah, the four corners of the earth still retained a large variety of symbolic meanings. Although rectangular mapping may have been used to depict the ecumene during the Roman period (for which there is little direct evidence), the predominant world shape in the seventh century until the fourteenth century was circular.

3 - From the Roman republican era onwards, the concept of the ecumene was intimately connected with modes of expression of sovereign power. The ecumenical lands, depicted as both an orb and a rectangle, played a major role in the iconography of sacred kingship and divinely-authorised rule in the Roman period. A major way in which this kingship was expressed was by the creation of monuments, which in many ways were the forerunners of medieval list maps. These map-monuments were also themselves symbolic geographical landmarks. They expressed triumph, but also competition with both past and future rivals, and a desire to express permanent achievement which will not be outdone by future challengers. Finally, there is limited evidence that the construction of these monuments was done in imitation of the erection of conquest landmarks by Alexander, Hercules and Dionysius.

CHAPTER FOUR - BUILDING HISTORY: Maps, Monuments and Literature

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a background to the series of ideas introduced in the previous chapter as the 'landmark impulse', in the discussion of paradoxography and the Latin encyclopaedic tradition. This desire to reduce history into a series of crucial moments was accompanied by a similar tendency to reduce geography into a series of sites which encapsulated the history of that region into a single landscape feature.

The twelfth-century geographer Hugh of St. Victor gives us a direct insight into the 'landmark impulse' in a passage on the construction of mappaemundi and other historical diagrams:

> We must collect a brief summary of all things...which the mind may grasp and the memory retain with ease. The mind chiefly esteems events by three things: the persons by whom deeds were done, the places in which they were done, and the times when they were done.[1]

The 'landmark impulse' is thus the idea that these three things - person, time and place - should be known and expressed as the basis of history, and hence geography. I have previously discussed the idea that conquest landmarks and other kingship monuments fulfilled these requirements, and in many ways encapsulated the essence of both historical and geographical knowledge within Classical texts.

I will here examine the idea that another kind of landmark found in medieval literature, the 'historical monument', was also used to encapsulate historical information - history is literally inscribed upon it. The chapter has little to do with the concept of the 'world boundary' in the physical sense, and I will discuss the idea that 'historical boundary', the moment between two eras, can also be expressed by various kinds of map features, and by other allegorical descriptions of buildings.

The chapter discusses many related themes to give an overview of the way in which history was 'built' or constructed in mappaemundi and in other symbolic depictions. I will begin with a series of statements designed to express the interplay between the various functions of conquest landmarks in maps and historical texts.

1 - Conquest landmarks are commonly represented on medieval maps. This is shown in Appendix 1, and generally discussed throughout the thesis.

2 - Historical landmarks were representative of decisive turning points in history, and are thus often mentioned in historical texts.

3 - Historical landmarks were also themselves inscribed with historical information, and were symbolic of the transmission of knowledge into the future (see in particular the 'Pillars of Wisdom' in section 3, below).

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[1] Hugh of St. Victor, *De Tribus Maximis Circumstaniis Gestorum.* Cited in Woodward, "Medieval Mappaemundi", 290.

4 - Maps were often the subject of literary description (see in particular section 2, below).

5 - Literary descriptions of landmarks may contain descriptions of maps within them.

6 - Conquest landmarks are often the site of oracles concerning kingship, and are connected with prophecies concerning the development of new historical eras.

I will begin by examining the relationship between Classical and medieval Christian conceptions of history and geography in the first four sections. Various contrasts and comparisons are made, particularly concerning the role of Alexander the Great and other kingship figures within both Classical and Christian historical systems. I am also interested in highlighting the role of prophecy in these links between Alexander and previous 'world-ruler' figures, as well as pointing to the connection between the landmark and the oracle. Many altars, pillars, statues and other landmark structures in the romances are the site of important connections between Alexander and a variety of deities - Ammon, Apollo, and others.

The fifth section concentrates on literary descriptions of maps, and their role within the Christian tradition of historical geography. A large amount of information on medieval conceptions of geography comes from these descriptions, which must be distinguished from standard world gazetteers, because of their focus on the role of the map within the building in which it was positioned, and the relationship of the viewer to the map being described.

I will also be pointing to the connection between historical monuments and the boundary landmarks themselves. I am suggesting that landmarks such as the eastern pillars of Alexander were based on the notion of monumental records of the deeds of conquerors. In particular, the *Epistola* and *ME Letter* versions describe Alexander's eastern pillars as containing an account of all of his deeds, as we saw previously.

The connection between boundary landmarks and historical monuments is not otherwise directly stated, but is certainly suggested by the repeated use of the pillared building as a subject for *ekphrasis*, and as a vehicle for historical information. The sixth section focuses on a variety of literary descriptions of such landmarks, many of which are inscribed with maps, historical sequences, or both.

1 - Maps and History

Mappaemundi as models of Classical history

Medieval mappaemundi are essentially depictions of history. Indeed, they bear as much resemblance in their purpose to historical atlases of today as to those depicting the modern world, as most of the material on them outside Europe concerns places and people of the distant past. They were used in many cases to accompany texts on history, and a great deal of the history available to their creators was the history of

non-Christian peoples. The influence of Classical history on medieval geography is very pronounced.[2]

Consequently, the ecumene as shown on maps of the Anglo-Norman style contains an equal amount of Classical and Christian religious ideas. Paradise, Noah's Ark, Babylon, Jerusalem and Rome are fairly constant Christian features, but these are equalled or sometimes outnumbered in the corpus by icons displaying features that are directly taken from Classical sources, and that originally had no specific meaning in the Christian framework.

The spread of the Christian religion into Europe was not by a process of geographical conquest and expansion. Christianity spread throughout the Graeco-Roman ecumene, but then for the most part operated within the pre-existing boundaries of European and West Asian civilisation. This is less true in northern Europe, where the religion spread rapidly to places that had previously been outside the habitable world, such as Scandinavia and Iceland. However, in the Mediterranean region, the territory of Christendom was to a large extent determined by the boundaries of the Roman empire, where the religion had first flourished.

There is very little in the way of landscape description in the Bible. This is partly because the Judaic communities that produced it had access to fewer written descriptions of the physical world than their Greek counterparts. There are no known Jewish equivalents of the early Greek or Punic travellers (and more importantly, travel writers) such as Hanno and Himilcar, Pytheas and Scylax, all of whom contributed to Graeco-Roman knowledge of the world outside the Mediterranean basin.[3] The great journeys in the Bible are from Ur to Canaan, Egypt to Palestine and Israel to Babylon in the Old Testament, and through Ionia and Northern Greece, and to Rome in the New Testament. These voyages covered a comparatively small area compared with what was known by the Classical authors of the rest of Asia and Europe. Africa (excepting Egypt, which was thought part of Asia) and much of Europe is barely mentioned in the Bible.

Biblical writers did not normally mention landscape in their texts for the sake of geographical knowledge. Areas of symbolic or allegorical importance were described at some length, but it was not often specified precisely where these were. These were mentioned as important as they were places where the sacred contacted the mundane. In terms of cities, towns, rivers, and so on, no real description of these places is given.

This unwillingness to devote detail to geography was in part a product of a lack of interest in worldly affairs. It may also have been because, particularly in the time of the New Testament, the area being described was considered to be well enough known through other texts, and the writers of Scripture did not consider it necessary to include a geographical digression in a work devoted to the story of salvation.

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[2] On the synthesis of Classical lore into medieval accounts of the world boundary, see von den Brincken, *Fines Terrae*, esp. 44-55.

[3] This is not to say this geography was accurate, but it did give later geographers some material to work with.

By the early medieval period (from the sixth to tenth centuries) there had been very little produced in the way of strictly scriptural geography. Notable exceptions are the *Liber Locorum* of St. Jerome, and the *Christian Topography* of Cosmas, an Egyptian monk of the sixth century. Cosmas drew his own map, which is of a rectangular shape and represents a flat earth. Maps in the *Liber Locorum* of St. Jerome are also unlike other mappaemundi and Jerome's work had little influence on cartography other than the two 'Jerome' maps on the corpus.

In contrast to the Christian lack of interest in geography, Greek and Roman geographers gave detailed accounts of the places in which important events occurred. They had a long history of travel literature to work with, and a well-established idea of the ruler who helped to define the geographical boundaries, leading to an emphasis on the outskirts of the ecumene in their work. Once the Roman emperors became part of this progression of rulers, the links between history and geography in Classical thought became so strong that a classical reader in geography is almost certain to contain many references to historical events, and nearly all Classical histories have a geographical excursus of some kind.

Classical History and Christian Geography - an uneasy alliance

Christian adoption of Classical geography was by no means the only syncretised element in the new European Christian systems of thought - most other branches of learning other than theology were also similarly adopted from Classical sources. Large scale Christian compilations of knowledge such as St. Augustine's *City of God* and Isidore of Seville's *De Natura Rerum* and *Etymologies* adapted Classical lore into a Christian framework, with the intention of showing the patterns evident in both the natural world and human history, and thus the workings of God in creation.

Writers such as Augustine's pupil Orosius (fifth century), who wrote on Christian geography and history specifically to counter pagan claims that Rome had fallen from greatness due to the spread of the Christian doctrine, took much of his material from the Classical writers. In the work of Augustine, Isidore, and particularly Orosius, we see the beginnings of a tradition in which Classical historical lore was used as an example of human folly, or treated as the cause of spiritual corruption.

The result of this syncretism for the mappamundi tradition was that outside the Holy Land and the important Church centres of the Mediterranean, knowledge of geography in the Late Antique and early medieval periods came almost totally from Classical sources, or histories such as those of Alexander. Many of these texts, particularly Pliny's *Natural History* and Lucan's *Pharsalia*, glorify the deeds of pagan rulers.

Consequently, the alliance between the Christian history of salvation and the Classical historical geography of conquest was an uneasy one. Map-makers and geographers in the medieval period faced the task of trying to adapt a great deal of pagan historical material into a world-order designed to show the glory of God. The use of Classical material on Christian world maps could be seen as part of the pattern of syncretism evident in Orosius. Classical icons representative of the power of divine kings may represent the spiritual folly of human attempts to achieve divine status or make statements of permanency in a transitory world.

Both the Christian and Classical systems stressed the concept of 'ages' of history, and feature a progression of power passing through the hands of a series of important figures. The 'ages' were marked by important events performed by these figures. The major differences between the two systems are:

A) Classical 'conquest history' sets up a system where the current ruler seeks to outdo the conquests of his predecessors, and thus it has no concept of a 'final battle'. Christianity supposes a progression of divinely-appointed power from Adam to Christ, and ending at the Passion, resurrection and final return.

B) The history of Classical conquest is, by its very nature, staged throughout the entire ecumene, which was the stage upon which world-conquest was enacted. The story of salvation, although it affected the entire ecumene, was largely played out in a small geographical area in the Near East.

I will comment on these two systems - 'Conquest History' and 'Sacred History' - in the next two sub-sections. The first describes the role of Alexander the Great and other ecumenical rulers in both Classical and Christian texts. The second section describes the general nature of Christian histories, and the way these were depicted in graphic form. I conclude by contrasting the two systems and highlighting the two major differences between them.

2 - 'Conquest History' - Alexander's Role in History

Classical Views of Alexander and other heroes

Alexander the Great was considered by the Graeco-Roman world to be one of a long line of world-conquerors: Hercules, Dionysius, Tearkon, Sesostris, Serapis, Nebuchadnezzar, Semiramis and Cyrus, and others. Alexander's relationship with these figures is of great importance to any study of his role in Classical and medieval geography and history (Anderson, "Heracles", 10-14).

The idea of the 'world-ruler' seems to have been present in Near-Eastern thought long before Alexander tried to put the theory into practice. Many of the early world-conquerors did not ever go beyond their home countries, or their conquests were relatively minor. Some did not exist at all. However, the territory which they were thought to have conquered grew as their legends became more well known.

For example, Sesostris, an Egyptian warlord, was a composite of several minor figures, and credited with having conquered much of Europe and Asia Minor. This tale found its way into Greek myth, but is thought originally to have been largely Egyptian invention made to satisfy territorial pride and vanity. Serapis, an Egyptian deity, was invented by the Ptolemaic dynasty, who also seem to have perpetuated the idea that Serapis had told Alexander where to found his Egyptian city. Other figures, like Tearkon the Ethiopian and Nebuchadnezzar, were real historical figures, but never made any of the conquests they were later credited with. Both figures were said to have conquered the region from India to Gibraltar, which was a standard formula for ecumenical dominance in the very earliest of texts (Cary and Warmington, *Ancient Explorers*, 194-97).

Such figures were often deified, and generally thought to be connected with the spread of religious and cultural values to outlying parts of the world; in short, they were thought of as the apostles, as well as the conquerors, of the Graeco-Roman world. When new information was discovered, or new land gained, the travels they had undertaken were widened in order to accommodate the new discoveries.

In the case of very early figures it is not possible to trace the process by which this happened, but in the case of the Alexander legend, the evidence is clearer, and we can assume that it was much the same process at work behind the glorification of both Alexander's conquests, and those of his predecessors.

Alexander was identified as a world-conqueror as soon as his conquests had become part of common Graeco-Roman lore. His genealogy was traced to Zeus Ammon and Achilles on his mother's side, and Hercules and Perseus on his father's side, to create a lineage befitting a demi-god. Orosius shortened the genealogy so as to make Hercules Alexander's father. The idea (also found in Orosius) that Alexander was thought to have called his son Hercules was part of the same trope. Such genealogical streamlining of history heightened the notion of history as the story of a progression of world-rulers, figures who were set above other mortals by birth, or granted power by religious authority.

Alexander's political ambition for a unified ecumene was realised in the Roman Empire, and his influence on the political rhetoric of later leaders and political commentators is profound and widespread. Roman writers frequently discussed Alexander in comparison with current emperors and war-leaders. For example, Pliny, discussing the career of Pompey, says that

> it concerns the glory of the Roman Empire, and not that of one man, to
> mention in this place all the records of the victories of Pompey the
> Great and all his triumphs, which equal the brilliance of the exploits not
> only of Alexander the Great but even almost of Hercules and Father
> Liber. (Pliny, *Natural History* (7. 95-96), trans. Rackham, vol. 2, 567)

Pliny goes on to describe the various monuments and dedications made by Pompey listing his exploits. He then says "If anybody...desires to review in a similar manner the achievements of Caesar, who showed himself greater than Pompey, he must assuredly roll off the entire world..." (7. 98, trans. Rackham, vol. 2, 571). This is one of the first of many instances cited in this chapter in which the listing of the deeds of a ruler upon a monument becomes a description of the world.

Plutarch made a similar comparison between Pompey and Alexander, and also described Pompey's career as a series of 'labours'. Plutarch notes that Pompey in his early career had enjoyed the "good fortune of Alexander", an indication that Alexander's successes were considered a more important indication of his general fortune than his betrayal by his own men leading to his early death.[4] Virgil's comparison of Augustus with Alexander and Hercules is found in the pageant of

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[4] Plutarch, *Life of Pompey* (30. 6 and 46. 1). Cited in P. A. Greenhalgh, *Pompey: The Roman Alexander* (London, 1980), 101, 168.

Roman heroes in the *Aeneid*. The comparison is on three levels: firstly, in the territorial extent they covered in their campaigns; secondly, in the spread of civilisation achieved by their efforts; and thirdly, in the honour they deserve in men's minds (Williams, *Aeneas*, 23-26).

The pageant in the *Aeneid* is a typical expression of history as a series of great men. Augustus, the last of the figures to be described, is intended by Virgil to represent the culmination of Roman history. With hindsight, it can be noted that such claims to have achieved the ultimate state can only ever be transitory, in a religious system which deifies mortal men. Pantheistic 'conquest history' is essentially only limited by the scope of history in which it occurs. The real reason that Augustus was the last of the Romans to be successfully deified was not that his status was to have no future challengers, but that Christianity was to spread throughout the Empire, and the new immortals of the Roman world were not emperors, but saints.

I have only noted Alexander's role as a forerunner of other figures in this section. Classical attitudes to him were in fact highly variable - while some viewed him as a champion of Graeco-Roman values, others such as Cicero and Seneca saw him as a highly immoral figure, and certainly not one to be emulated. Early historical accounts of his campaigns such as Curtius Rufus' *History of Alexander* do not show him in a good light either (Cary, *Medieval*, 80-166). Medieval views on Alexander are equally complex, as will be shown in the next section.

Medieval Views of Alexander as the Conqueror of the Known World

Orosius, one of the first Christian writers to describe Alexander's campaigns at any length, hated Alexander, frequently pointing to his violent outbursts, and mentioning that he was born in a veritable "whirlpool of evils". In a different context, the storms and earthquakes that accompanied Alexander's birth might have been compared to the occurrences that heralded the birth of Christ, but Orosius was keen to show Alexander in the worst possible light.

Orosius mentions Alexander in connection with several later Roman 'world-rulers'. In particular, he mentions an embassy sent to Caesar in Spain, in a passage which clearly brings out the role of the world-leader in arranging affairs in all four parts of the ecumene:

> In the meantime, embassies of the Indians and Scythians, after
> traversing the whole world, at length came upon Caesar at
> Tarraco...They poured into his ears an account of the glory of
> Alexander the Great. Just as the embassy of the Spaniards and Gauls
> came to Alexander at Babylon in the center of the East to consider
> peace, so in Spain the furthest west, eastern India and northern Scythia
> besought Caesar as suppliants and brought tribute from their countries.[5]

Orosius goes on to argue that Caesar's peace was necessary for the birth of Christ and the spread of the Gospels. According to Orosius, Augustus and other war-leaders

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[5] Orosius, *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans* (7. 1), trans. I. Raymond (New York, 1936), 315.

that brought about the *Pax Romana* were not to be praised for their efforts, but might be considered the unwitting agents of God's workings to unite the ecumene under Christ's law. Many medieval theologians and moralists continued the line taken by Orosius. In various twelfth and thirteenth century texts surveyed by Cary, Alexander is accepted as a forerunner of Antichrist. His death is described as a punishment by God for his drunkenness and lechery, and many of his more romantic and adventurous deeds are played down, or dismissed (Cary, *Medieval*, 80-166).

Not all medieval views of Alexander display the same naked antipathy witnessed in Orosius' account and those of subsequent moralists. Alexander is an important figure in the work of the twelfth-century writer Lambert of St. Omer, who treats the king's physical conquests as a precursor to the spiritual conquests of Christ. His attitude bears some resemblance to that of Orosius - both writers viewed Alexander and other figures as the unwitting agents of God. But Lambert's opinion of such figures was one of limited admiration. LeCoq notes that Lambert's views on Alexander were in marked contrast to those of other theologians and moralists of his day. Alexander in Lambert's work appears as a precursor to the heroes of courtly Romance (LeCoq, "La Mappemonde du Liber Floridus", esp. 26-7).

The *Liber Floridus* also includes an illustration of Alexander, and several of Hercules. These should be understood in the context of the whole work, which also includes depictions of other cosmocratic figures including Solomon, Augustus and Christ. The *Liber Floridus* is in many ways a history of cosmocratic figures, and the importance of Alexander and Hercules is pronounced, in both the text and the accompanying maps.

Alexander, as well as being both a devil and a hero-king, was commonly used as an exemplary subject of fortune, the archetypal 'great man brought low' by the powers of time and death. Lessons such as his were used to teach the reader that Christ is the only certainty, and his is the only power that will last the test of time. The twelfth-century bishop Otto of Friesing says of him:

> How pitiful is the lot of mortals!...Is not this the Alexander who
> brought low the proud and glorious kingdom of the Persians and
> transferred their power to the Macedonians? Is he not the man before
> whom the whole world trembled...And yet so great and so fine a man is
> destroyed by draining a single cup...The City of Christ, however,
> founded upon a firm rock, is not shaken by the misfortunes and
> tempests of the world... [6]

The Classical 'pageant of heroes' was replaced in the Christian era by a list of 'the mighty who have fallen'. The Middle English *Assembly of the Gods* by John Lydgate positions Alexander and Hercules in a list of mighty figures who are subject to 'Atropos', the bringer of death, who boasts of his achievements in defeating them. The full list named by Atropos, in order, is Hector of Troy, Alexander, Julius Caesar,

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[6] Otto of Friesing, *History of the Two Cities*, trans. C. C. Mierow (New York, 1928),183-84.

David, Joseph, Arthur, Charles Martel, Judas, Godfrey of Bouillon, Nebuchadnezzar, the Pharoah, Jason and Hercules, Cyrus and Achilles.[7]

Chaucer's *The Monk's Tale* describes Alexander and Hercules in a similar fashion. The Monk describes a large number of other examples of great men on fortune's wheel, including Adam, Julius Caesar, and Nebuchadnezzar. Of Hercules he says: "Thus starf [died] this worthy, mighty Hercules / Lo, who may truste on Fortune any throw?". Of Alexander, the Monk says that no fitting comparison can be made between him and any other conqueror, as he was more powerful than all of them. He complains "O worthy, gentil Alisandre, allas / that evere sholde fallen swiche a cas [event]!", but still cannot resist allusions to Alexander's drunkenness and lechery, so often mentioned by the moralists.[8]

As the Monk's account suggests, arriving at a conclusive series of ideas on how medieval writers viewed Alexander is made difficult by the fact that a single text may contain a range of ideas concerning him. Contrasting ideas on Alexander can also be found in the *Gesta Romanorum*, a medieval collection of Classical folk-lore and moral interpretations upon it. In one tale from the *Gesta*, Alexander's death is remarked over by wise philosophers, who stand around his golden tomb in Babylon: "Yesterday, Alexander pressed the Earth; Today, it oppresses him" sums up the general tone of their edicts. Also in the *Gesta* are other passages where Alexander's bravery is given as an example for all Christians, and the application remarks "Alexander is any good Christian". In one particular tale concerning the 'forgiveness of Alexander', he is directly compared to Christ.[9]

The *Alexandreis* of Walter de Châtillon describes Alexander as a "hapless fool, unaware of what nature had in store for him." In various other passages in the text his arrogance and overconfidence are highlighted. However, he is also compared to Christ, in an interesting passage which shows Alexander's conquest as a forerunner to the harrowing of Hell. The personification of Nature has gone down to Hell to complain to Leviathan, the world-serpent, about the threat to cosmic order posed by Alexander's conquests:

> Should the fates guide his sails with favourable winds, he proposes to track down the source of the Nile, hitherto hidden from the world, and then surround and besiege Paradise...For what praise or glory will belong to you for expelling that first man, O serpent, if so venerable a garden is to fall into the hands of Alexander?

Leviathan replies:

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[7] John Lydgate, *The Assembly of the Gods*, ed. E. O. Triggs (London, 1896), 11.

[8] *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. L. Benson (Oxford, 1987), 243, 250.

[9] *Gesta Romanorum*, trans. C. Swan, 2nd ed. (London, 1984). The direct quote is from tale 31, 64-65. For other ideas on Alexander see 21-2, 67-8, 109-10, 168-69.

It is fated...a fact which I abhor...that a time will come when an unusual man will be born on earth...this man will throw down the pillars...proving stronger than us he will...ravage our halls with an all conquering wooden cross. In view of this, check this disease in its early stages and oppose the Macedonian king. (trans. Pritchard, 220-21)

'Throwing down the pillars' essentially means destroying the cosmic order based on sin and restoring the purified condition of the garden of Eden within the human soul. Walter does not state that Alexander himself will do this, but suggests that his conquests might prepare the world for such an event.

A noticeable pattern in many forms of symbolic thought is that the most simple symbols have the widest variety of applications. The variation of attitudes to Alexander within a single collection of stories like the *Gesta*, or within a single work like the *Alexandreis*, reveals that Alexander had become an archetypal figure in medieval thought, and as such was capable of serving a variety of functions. The pillar motif must be approached with similar caution, firstly because it is a very simple symbol, and secondly because figures such as Hercules and Alexander were themselves open to a variety of interpretations.

As a general rule, it can be said that the presence of icons relating to Alexander on medieval mappaemundi is based on the Romances rather than the historical accounts, or the views of the moralists. The role of the pillars in cartography can thus be assessed on the basis of the portrayal of Alexander within the romances.

The concept that Alexander was a 'subject of fortune' in the romances is more common than the admiration of him expressed by Lambert, or the hatred of him found in Orosius. The story of his life was so well known that romance writers could do little to create dramatic tension within the tale, but instead sought to create an atmosphere of romantic pathos. The reader, who would have already known the outcome of the tale, would have viewed Alexander's conquests with a mixture of admiration and cathartic pity, and the final death of the hero would have been accepted as an inevitable occurrence.

In many recensions of the legend, particularly those that interpolate the episode concerning his visit to Jerusalem, Alexander is cast as a Christian, or at least a Christian sympathiser. This is also the case with the various recensions that include the notion that Alexander had founded the gate surrounding Gog and Magog with the aid of the Christian God. In this context, his various landmarks stand for the historical conquest of the north and the east by an agent of Christendom. The works of his pagan predecessors are 'outdone', not just in their territorial extent, but in religious meaning, cultural power, and historical veracity.

Despite this, there is still an ambiguous quality in the descriptions of his achievements in many versions of the romance. His relentless quest for personal glory is attacked, and exposed as hubristic and anti-Christian, especially in the many versions of the 'C' branch in which he speaks with Dindimus, king of the Brahmans. The main English source for this is *Alexander and Dindimus*, discussed in the second chapter. Dindimus

attacks western values, and describes the lechery and corruption of the Graeco-Roman pantheon which Alexander is seeking to join. Alexander's personal control over the ecumene is often shown as transitory, and his full desires are never completely achieved.

The pillars and other landmarks thus serve a dual function in most medieval versions of the Alexander romance under study. On one hand, they are a reminder of Alexander's deeds as a conqueror, defining the ecumene and preparing the world for the coming of Christ. On the other hand, they are reminders of his spiritual folly, and of the spread of sinful pride to the outskirts of the known world.

3 - Landmarks, Prophecies and Oracles

Kingship prophecies in the Alexander Romances

A great deal of the material in the Alexander legends concerns prophecies and oracles relating to Alexander's rise to kingship, and his subsequent death. These are as important to the story as the description of the battles he waged and the wonders he encountered. I will concentrate here on those prophecies that link Alexander to the progression of world-conquerors I am defining.

Very early in the *Greek Alexander Romance* (*GAR*) and subsequent versions, the Egyptian wizard Nectanabus (Alexander's true father) prophesies that he will be killed by his own son, and Alexander does not find out the truth about his parentage until he has killed the wizard. After Alexander kills Nectanabus, he carries the body before his mother, claiming to be a 'second Aeneas' carrying his Anchises. Also in Alexander's early life, the Delphic oracle tells Philip that the first person to ride the horse Bucephalus will be the ruler of the world, and Philip anticipates that this person will be a 'second Hercules'. Alexander tames the horse shortly afterwards (*GAR*, 1. 3; 1. 14).

Some of the oracles and prophecies in the original *GAR* are absent from the medieval versions, but the concept was adaptable and new prophetic material was added by Latin writers and thus found its way into the vernacular romances. In the *Prose Life* version, Alexander visits the Temple of Apollo, and the deity addresses him as Hercules. Alexander is not pleased, as he wishes to be perceived as superior to his predecessor: " 'Now that thou callez me Hercules'', quoth he, 'I see wele that all thyn ansuers ere false." (*Prose Life*, 29).

Another oracle comes in the form of a dream of Alexander's, concerning a snake hatching out of an egg, which he strangles. This is a direct imitation of Hercules, which is made clear in the *Alexandreis*, in which Alexander "laments the powerlessness of boyhood", and asks "is it really true that Hercules once upon a time, when a boy in his cradle, crushed two snakes by seizing their throats?" (trans. Pritchard, 36). The snake episode in the case of both heroes is symbolic of their destiny as world-conquerors. Anderson traces the snake dream back to the ancient idea of beating the 'world serpent', thereby extending the bounds of the ecumene and bringing on a golden age (Anderson, "Heracles", 9-10).

The repeated use of the prophecy as a means of foreshadowing Alexander's rise to power is intimately connected with his relationship with previous figures. This is a

noticeable contrast to the function of prophecy within the Christian historical system, which links earlier historical events (from the OT) with the crucifixion, an event which was yet to happen at the time they were written. To a large extent, the system of progression in Classical conquest history relies on a series of comparisons with events in the past, while the Christian use of prophecy is concerned with pre-empting the future, and building upwards to the defining moment of Christian history.

An introduction to Landmark Oracles

Many oracles in the Alexander legends are delivered in sites we have seen associated with the landmark theme - pillars, altars, temples and statues. The function of the oracle in the creation of history provides further material for the study of the landmark as a historical monument. Many of these will be detailed in chapters on individual landmarks, but I want to introduce the general theme here.

Alexander was reported to have visited a variety of oracles in his tour of the ecumene. The most important of these was certainly the Temple of Ammon in Egypt, where he was bestowed with the 'sonship of Ammon', which had been given to Hercules and Perseus before him (see chapter 7). Prophetic encounters with the deity Serapis in the south are also detailed in that chapter.

The oracular 'Trees of the Sun and Moon' in the Far East belong to a different trope, as the oracles that inhabited them were not recognised deities or world-conquerors themselves, and nor were they thought to have been visited by any of the previous world-conqueror figures. Their message is also of a different variety to those of the earlier oracles, as they do not connect Alexander with the trope of divine kingship in any way, but inform him that he is a mortal man who cannot overcome death (see chapter 2).

Alexander's Gate was not the site of prophecy, but it was connected with important eschatological events (see chapter 5). The breaking of the gate, and the emergence of the lost tribes that lived behind it, was one of the signs of the coming of Antichrist. Alexander's Gate was a focus for apocalyptic speculation in the same way that the Dry Tree was to become a focus for crusaders seeking signs of the success of their mission. The attachment of eschatological meaning to landmark sites in general is clearly expressed by Roger Bacon in the *Opus Majus*:

> Oh, how necessary it is for the Church of God that prelates and catholic
> men should consider these regions, not only for the conversion of the
> races there, and consolation of Christian captives in the same, but
> because of the persecution of Antichrist, so that we may know whence
> he is to come and when, by studying this matter and many others.
> (Bacon, *Opus*, trans. Burke, 382)

The early Christian lack of interest in geography is absent in medieval accounts such as the work of Bacon, Mandeville and others. Places outside the Holy Land had developed their own spiritual significance, and found a place in the mixture of theology and legend that characterises thirteenth century vernacular texts. Boundary landmarks such as the pillars of Hercules, which originally had no meaning within sacred

geography, had been incorporated into Christian thought through legend and romance, and had thus become places of considerable eschatological importance.

4 - The Nature of Christian Histories

Mappaemundi as models of Christian history

Most medieval histories follow a pattern established by Eusebius and Augustine, which divided world history into six ages, the *aetates mundi*, defined by the deeds of the most important of the Christian patriarchs and prophets, from Adam to Christ. The details of the scheme vary slightly from text to text, but the basic pattern is as follows:

Age 1 - Adam to Noah

Age 2 - Noah to Abraham

Age 3 - Abraham to Moses (or David)

Age 4 - Moses (or David) to John the Baptist (or the Babylonian Captivity)

Age 5 - John the Baptist to Jesus

Age 6 - The Present - Jesus' death until the end of the world.

Isidore and Bede both followed this scheme and subsequently it became commonplace in medieval histories. It placed modern history within the final age, and thus created a generally gloomy outlook for humanity, and increased millenarian and apocalyptic expectations in the work of historians of subsequent ages.[10]

There was also a Christian tradition of expressing Classical history as a series of four great kingdoms, based on an interpretation of parts of the book of Daniel. The four kingdoms were Babylon, Medea, Persia and Macedonia. Each one had a legendary world-ruler - Nebuchadnezzar, Semiramis, Cyrus (or Darius) and Alexander. In later medieval commentaries, Rome was added at the end of the progression, and the kingdoms of the Medes and Persians were joined into one (Higgins, "Notions", 239-40).

The four kingdoms model was adopted and altered by Orosius, who describes a progression of four empires, with power passing from Babylon in the east, to Macedonia in the north, through Carthage in the south (an Orosian innovation), and ending with Rome in the west (*Seven Books*, 7. 2). Orosius and many subsequent writers noted the unification of the Roman empire with the area of Christendom, thus combining secular and sacred history into a single model.

These early medieval models, that ended in either Jerusalem or Rome, left northern Europe out of the main area of their historical and geographical framework. The continuation of history after the Roman Empire was added onto the existing models by later Christian writers, who formulated the idea of the translation of empire, or *translatio imperii*, which justified the power of the Carolingian Empire, and then the

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[10] See R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge, 1970). For later interpretations see A. Higgins, "Medieval notions of the Structure of Time", *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 19 (1989), 227-50.

Holy Roman Empire, as a continuation of the ecumenical dominance of Rome. This included the transference of both imperial and religious authority. Connected with this theme was the idea of *translatio studii*, according to which the light of scholarship and learning was thought to have passed from Greece to Rome, and finally to court centres like Aachen or Paris. In some fourteenth-century English texts, Oxford is mentioned as the new centre.[11]

These schemes create a variety of historical landmarks which are scattered across the face of the ecumene. Taken literally, the most important landmarks of the six ages scheme, as represented on the Hereford map, would be paradise, the Ark, Abraham in Ur, and Jerusalem (where the last three ages are based). Landmarks of the four kingdoms from Daniel can also be found on many Anglo-Norman world maps, and the Orosian model, which was designed to form a square shape by placing Macedonia and Carthage to the north and south, can also be seen on maps of this period. Many of the new European landmark centres created by the models of *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii* are also major features of the north-west section of these maps, particularly in the more detailed members of the group.

With the exception of paradise, most of the historical landmarks of the Christian historical systems are within what I call the 'inner ecumene' - the area of the medieval world map in which the majority of the major cities can be found, and in which the most decisive historical events took place. This left much the of outskirts of the mappamundi frame as the province of Classical landmarks of 'Conquest History'.

Consequently, the boundary landmark icons I am studying play almost no part in these Christian systems of world empires and religious ages. A rare connection was made by Orosius, who notes that the positioning of Alexander's northern altars was related to the four empires system:

> That the Macedonian Empire was in the North is obvious both from its geographical position and the altars of Alexander the Great which stand to this day near the Rhipean Mountains. (*Seven Books*, 7. 2, trans. Raymond, 321)

This passage is a hint that each of the four Empires was thought to have had a monument representative of its position - but Orosius makes no mention of the other three. (I detail the northern altars further in chapter 7.)

Another major historical and prophetic statement made by medieval mappaemundi involves the pillars of Hercules. The east- to- west axes of several medieval mappaemundi have been interpreted as models of time and universal history, focusing on the idea that the history of civilisation was thought to have progressed in a westward direction across the ecumene. Such eschatological progressions are said to begin in paradise, end with the final Judgement in the Far West, and pass through

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[11] See E. R. Curtius, *European Literature*, 29-30 , 384-5. See also Beryl Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1960), 71.

landmark sites of eschatological importance such as Babel, Jerusalem, Rome and then finally the pillars of Hercules.[12]

This progression is particularly noticeable on the Hereford map, on which these sites are placed roughly equidistant from one another, in a straight line which runs through the middle of the map from top to bottom. A. L. Moir once noted of this: "This suggests that the author considered these places had a special significance in tracing the five crucial phases in the story of mankind."[13]

A slightly different progression is noticeable on the twelfth-century Sawley map. The central east-to-west axis of this map contains paradise, Babel, Delos, Rome, and finally Gades / the pillars of Hercules. Delos might be taken to represent the beginning of the era after the flood, as it is mentioned in some texts that this island was the first place to receive the light of the sun after the waters of the Great Flood had receded. Danielle LeCoq has suggested that the historical progression on this map resulted from the influence of the historical theories of Hugh of St. Victor.[14]

Hugh of St. Victor's descriptions of the Ark of Noah as a cosmological model (see below) specify that the length of the ark is representative of historical time. He directly states that the course of events proceeds in a straight line, and also notes that "the end of the age is approaching, since the course of events has now reached the end of the world", meaning the Atlantic seaboard. Thus, he says, "no one giving the matter serious thought could fail to see here the disposition of divine providence."[15]

Otto of Friesing, who may have been influenced by Hugh of St. Victor's ideas, uses the theme of westward progression in the *History of Two Cities*. Otto clearly states in various passages that history ran an east-to-west course, and like Hugh, interprets this in a moral sense. "And let it be observed", he says, "that because all human learning began in the Orient and will end in the Occident, the mutability and disappearance of all things will be demonstrated."[16]

Both writers include the future as part of their scheme of progression, and thus read a prophecy of the final judgement into ecumenical geography. The eastern and western

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[12] I have elsewhere argued that there is only limited evidence for the currency of this idea in the Middle Ages. Many scholars have based analysis of mappaemundi on the eschatological and mystical uses of the idea in the work of Hugh of St. Victor and Otto of Friesing, taking these to be representative of a widespread theme. Both writers include the future as part of their scheme. However, most other uses of the theme of *translatio imperii* are overtly political, and end the progression at the place which they are claiming as the 'last' inheritor of civilisation and knowledge. I include reference to the theme here as an example of the way in which mappaemundi were connected to various contemporary models of history, but I stress that reading the 'east to west' progression theme into mappaemundi must be treated with some caution. Stephen McKenzie, "Westward Progression of History on Medieval Mappaemundi", paper delivered at the Hereford and other Mappaemundi conference, Hereford, June 1999.

[13] A. L. Moir, *The World Map in Hereford Cathedral*, 5th ed. (Hereford, 1970), 13.

[14] D. Lecoq, "La Mappemonde du *De Arca Noe Mystica* de Hugues de Saint-Victor", in M. Pelletier, ed., *Géographie*, 22.

[15] Hugh of St. Victor, *Selected Spiritual Writings*, ed. and intr. Aelred Squire (London, 1962), 147-48.

[16] Otto of Friesing, *The Two Cities*, 29-30, 322, 384-386, 357-359. See also R. Markus, *Saeculum* 164-5, for Otto's misreading of Augustine's intentions.

ends of the ecumene are treated as the beginning and end of time. Landmarks in these positions took on some of this significance. I have noted the function of the pillars of Alexander as a reminder of the past in chapter 2, and will discuss the pillars of Hercules in the west as the symbolic 'end of time' in chapter 9.

With the exception of these ideas, Christian history, as portrayed on mappaemundi, seems to have had no relationship to the boundary landmark theme. Despite this, the divisions in Christian histories have much to tell us about the 'landmark impulse'. Like the Classical 'conquest' histories, both of the Christian schemes so far discussed focus on the activities of famous rulers. This 'great men and important moments' school of history had three main features that are of relevance to the interpretation of mappaemundi and other diagrams. Firstly, streamlined and sequential history is easy to depict graphically; secondly, a succession of rulers lends itself to being turned into and portrayed as a genealogy; and thirdly, monuments to the glory of rulers take on a new importance if they are also representative of a defining moment in world history.

I will turn now to look at various other ways in which medieval thinkers depicted history, and point to connections between these schemes and the mappaemundi. Various themes which have already been introduced are further exemplified by the material which follows. The most important of these is that mappaemundi are themselves a symbolic construction of history, and may be compared on some levels with many of the other landmark features discussed in this chapter.

Graphic depictions of History in the medieval period

The medieval conception of history as a series of ages, and the focus on the deeds of important figures as dividing points between these ages, led to a conception of history that was readily depicted in sequential, graphic form. We have seen a variety of graphic depictions of Classical history so far throughout the study - the Shield of Aeneas being a good example. The tradition of depicting history in artistic sequences was to become far more widespread in the Middle Ages than it had been in the Classical period.

The practice of coupling a series of Old Testament scenes with parallels from the New Testament to tell the full story from creation to passion and judgement in a single sequence was widespread throughout Europe from very early in the Christian era. Wall paintings of Biblical scenes were particularly popular in the Anglo-Norman period. Maps were often displayed as part of a large series of depictions of sacred and secular history.

King Henry's wall maps at Westminster, discussed in the opening chapter, were accompanied by a series of Old Testament scenes and their New Testament antitypes, in a room described by fourteenth-century travellers as containing "all the warlike scenes of the whole Bible" (cited in Borenius, "Cycle", 42). The king also had similar sequences painted at his palaces in Winchester and Windsor. These included, as well as standard historical scenes and depictions of saints, iconographic devices such as the Jesse Tree and the Wheel of Fortune.

Some medieval depictions of history are strikingly similar to maps and cosmological diagrams. For example, Lambert of St. Omer's autograph manuscript of the *Liber Floridus* contains a round depiction of the six ages of history, reminiscent of a wheel of fortune. A similar scheme occurs in British Museum MS Yates Thompson 31, f67r, showing an angel in the centre with arms outstretched, announcing the coming of the seventh age (judgement).[17]

History was also sometimes depicted as a statue, again based on one of the visions of the prophet Daniel. Various illustrations from the twelfth-century *Silos Apocalypse* show the four kingdoms as different parts of the statue, which is shown as a whole body, and also destroyed and broken into pieces. The destruction of the statue by 'the Stone' mentioned by Daniel (taken by later writers to represent Christ), symbolised his victory over the four world monarchies (Smalley, *Historians*, 40).

Such graphic depictions of the ages were fairly rare. Biblical history was more commonly expressed through streamlined genealogies. The lengthy genealogies in Genesis and Exodus were abbreviated by medieval scholars into a variety of forms, textual and graphic, designed to show the stages in OT history leading up to the reign of Christ. The iconographic tradition known as the Jesse Tree is essentially a depiction of sacred history, expressed through genealogy. The concept for the Jesse Tree is expressed in a simple prophecy in Isaiah 11. 1-2:

> There shall come a rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow
> out of his roots. / The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him...

The earliest extant Jesse Trees, showing the tree growing from Jesse's loin, growing upward to a depiction of Mary and then to the fruit of the tree, Christ, date from the eighth century, although Isidore mentions earlier forms that are no longer extant. The idea became more complex in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, including other historical figures such as Moses, David and Solomon. An excellent example is found in the church of St. Michaels at Hildesheim. This tree leads from the temptation in the Garden of Eden through Jesse to Christ Cosmocrator. In between are figures such as David and Solomon holding T-in-O orbs to denote their status as the forerunners of Christ.[18]

A 'historical tree' is also found in Lambert of St. Omer's autograph manuscript, based on Daniel 4, and showing the six ages, with God sitting in judgement at the top of the page. The abbot Joachim de Fiore also developed a historical tree, based on a different periodisation of history with three ages based on the trinity (the eras of Father - OT, Son - NT and Holy Spirit - current age). Similar tree schemes showing the Seven Liberal Arts and the cardinal virtues were also common in the twelfth century and subsequently.[19]

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[17] Lambert of St. Omer, *Liber Floridus,* f19v. The Yates Thompson illustration is in B. Smalley, *Historians in the Middle Ages* (London, 1974), 30.

[18] See A. Watson, *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse* (London, 1934). The Hildesheim Jesse Tree is plate 29.

[19] Lambert of St. Omer, *Liber Floridus,* f232v. Joachim's tree is illustrated in Smalley, *Historians,* 177.

Various writers in the medieval period attempted to unify Christian and Classical history. A major way that this was achieved was by designing lists of world-rulers or notable 'worthies' from both secular and sacred history. For example, Gervase of Tilbury argued that only four 'rulers' had ever held the world totally in their power - Adam, Noah, Alexander and Augustus.[20] Lambert of St. Omer gives a variety of schemes for periodising history, one of which pairs the last three of the six ages with events in Classical history, pairing David with Brutus and Christ with Augustus, and describing the sixth age as that of the Roman Emperors. Another scheme in the *Liber Floridus* gives the first age to Adam, the second to Noah and his sons, and the subsequent ages to Assyria, Medea, Persia and the Roman Empire (*Liber Floridus*, f19f).

In the fifteenth century, the idea of the "Nine Worthies" became the popular expression of combined secular and sacred world history. Three heroes of Antiquity, the Bible and Christendom were chosen to form a pageant of world history that was easily rendered into a series of combat scenes. The heroes were Hector, Alexander and Caesar; David, Joshua and Judas Maccabeus; Arthur, Charlemagne and Godfrey of Bouillon. A similar list is found in the *Assembly of the Gods*, discussed above.[21]

Prophecy in Christian History

The prophetic element in many of the historical schemes described above has been noted as a link to the previous section on the link between landmarks, oracles and kingship. Much visual exegesis on Biblical subjects has an inherent prophetic element, as it uses Old Testament ideas as types foreshadowing New Testament events. It will also be noted that three of the major ways in which history was depicted graphically - the statue and the tree in Daniel, and the related Jesse Tree in Isaiah - were based on prophetic visions.

There is no time to detail the function of prophecy and foreshadowing within Christian views of history any further here. The Synoptic gospels alone contain a great many references to passages in OT prophets which the gospel writers interpreted as prophecies of the coming of Christ. Medieval audiences would have been thoroughly familiar with the idea that history was a progression of events leading to the Passion, and could be expressed in a linear, symbolic form. One example will suffice - the story of the Tree of the True Cross which runs throughout sacred history, leading up to the Passion. This kind of material can be found in a great many vernacular texts which tell the story of the wood of the True Cross and the journey of Seth to paradise, in the form of a legend or a romance.

The history of the cross is also the guiding principle behind world histories such as the thirteenth-century *Cursor Mundi*. This text makes repeated reference to the function of the cross throughout the Old Testament. Seeds from the Tree of Life are retrieved by Seth and placed in Adam's mouth as he is dying in Hebron. The wood from the

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[20] Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia* (1. 10) in *Scriptorum Rerum Brunsvicensium*, ed. Leibnitz (Hanover, 1707?), vol. 1, 891.

[21] See Higgins, "Medieval Notions", 45-6, and Smalley, *Historians*, 52.

tree growing from Adam's grave forms part of later artefacts such as Moses' wands, the Rod of Aaron, the Ark of Noah, and the pillars in the temple of Solomon and David.[22]

The final function of the tree as the wood of the True Cross is a symbolic fulfilment of the prophecy made at the start of the *Cursor* that Adam's seed (Christ) is to rule the whole world. Christ is the 'new Adam', but not in the competitive sense in which Classical writers would have viewed such a statement. Christ does not 'outdo' Adam, but redeems him.

A comparison between the cross (the main Christian landmark) and the conquest pillars can be made on the basis of their function in history. The pillars of Alexander and Hercules are essentially founded from nothing and come into existence only at a particular historical moment. The reign of Alexander as a world-ruler king is unsupported by any prophecy made before his birth, and thus the nature of his claims to kingship must focus on his own deeds, and comparisons between himself and figures in the past. Conversely, the Tree of the True Cross was known to have existed since the beginning of the world, and Christ's reign had been prophesied since the death of Adam. The growth of the tree is a continual progression; the foundation of the pillar is a solitary moment.

5 - Relationships between Maps and Literature

Descriptions of maps within symbolic spaces

One of the earliest instances of the use of *ekphrasis* on world maps is found in an account of the Palace of the Sun in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid. Ovid describes the Sun King's palace as being in the utmost east, beyond India and Ethiopia, at the place where the sun rises. It stood

> On soaring columns, bright with flashing gold
> And flaming bronze; the pediments were clothed
> With sheen of Ivory; the double doors
> Dazzled with silver - and the artistry
> Was nobler still. For Vulcan had engraved
> The world's great orb, the seas that ring the world,
> The sky that hangs above...[23]

Peoples, cities, woodlands and animals were also engraved upon the doors. Ovid has borrowed the notion of *ekphrasis* from descriptions such as the Shield of Achilles in *Iliad* 18, but described what sounds like a full ecumenical world map (positioned on a

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[22] *Cursor Mundi*, 3 vols., ed. R. Morris (London, 1874, 1893). The prophecy concerning Adam's seed is made in vol. 1, 42, and the story of Seth follows. See vol. 2, 364-370 for Moses' wands, 398-400 for Aaron's rod, and 400-476 generally for the Three Holy Rods. The use of the tree to build the four corners of the ark is mentioned in vol. 3, 1240, and more uses of the tree follow in 1241-43. The story of the Tree is also found in other early English texts such as the *Origo Mundi*, Caxton's *Golden Legend*, Mandeville's *Travels*, and Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*. See E. C. Quinn, *The Quest of Seth for the Oil of Life* (Chicago, 1962), 4-5, and passim.

[23] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (2. 1-20), trans. A. D. Melville (Oxford, 1986), 25, and see note on 1-18 on 385.

boundary landmark) instead of a symbolic city. Roman readers would almost certainly have interpreted this passage in Ovid as a reference to a real building, the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine Hill in Rome, dedicated by Augustus in 28 BC. This building contained statues of Apollo and Augustus as well as a host of other figures, as well as elaborate depictions of historical scenes.

During the ninth century, the Christian world map began to be the subject of *ekphrasis*. I distinguish here between a geographical excursus, which might be accompanied by a map (such as the work of Orosius or Isidore), and a poem or poetic section based on a map. Analysis of these literary descriptions of mappaemundi brings out many symbolic interpretations of them which a simple analysis of extant physical maps does not. In particular, it is important to note the role of the map within larger symbolic constructions of history and knowledge.

The monk Micon, and the well-known poet and prelate Theodulf of Orléans, both wrote lengthy poetical descriptions of world maps during the Carolingian period. Micon's description is in the form of a series of inscriptions based on a sequence of wall-paintings including a world map in the abbey of St. Requier. The opening of the description of the map reads: "Here is seen pictured an image of the world destined to perish". Christ's role as the saviour of the "world destined to perish" is performed through the workings of the cross imposed on the world by God. The other verses are mostly based on the symbolism of the cross, and the link between the image of the tripartite division of the continents and the image of the Cross of the Passion is clear (Kupfer, "World Maps", 265).

Theodulf of Orléans' poetry contains ekphrasistic descriptions of two tables which are inscribed with maps and cosmological figures. The first of these contains a diagrammatic representation of secular knowledge in the form of a tree, and also personifications of the cardinal virtues "mapping onto the world a four-part epistemological / ethical system" (Kupfer, "World Maps", 266).

The second table contains the mappamundi. Of particular interest to the theme of maps and kingship is the passage in which Theodulf describes the 'world-seat':

> Since everything is in motion, yet the Earth cannot move itself, there
> was fashioned for it a perennial wagon-seat. The honours of the world
> are signified by the seat also, because none will have them eternally.
> One rejoices to sit in the seat of another: this one sits, that one sat; this
> one goes, and that one returns. (Cited in Kupfer, "World Maps", 267)

The cyclical movement implied by the circle is used as the 'wheel of fortune' in this description. Theodulf characterises the movement of the wheel as "an endless cycle in which the ambitious exchange position." But none may hold the 'world throne' eternally, as the world is governed by Christ and may know no other master (Kupfer, "World Maps", 277).

In the early twelfth century, Abbot Baudri of Bourgueil described a world map on the floor of the bedroom of the Countess Adela of Blois. Unlike the work of Micon, which is known to have been based on a real series of paintings, and the work of

Theodulf, which may well have described two real tables, Baudri's description is entirely fictional.

In terms of my analysis of the map within a described space, the most interesting feature of the map in Adela's bedroom is that it is one of a number of other schemes portrayed by Baudri within the room. On the ceiling is a celestial map. Each of the four walls contains scenes from Biblical and Classical history. The world map on the floor must be seen as part of a larger symbolic construction, surrounding the princess with the world of history, power and knowledge. Kupfer's analysis concludes that

> The entire room, indeed the poem itself, is nothing less than a *mappamundi*: [the map]...on the floor only mirrors...the literary figure as a whole.

To emphasise this, she quotes Baudri's passage:

> Who is able to grasp the world in a poem? For truly in it was surveyed the form of the world. In fact the pavement was another mappa mundi. ("World Maps", 277)

This tradition of describing maps as part of the furnishing of rooms was continued in the later middle ages in works such as the *Roman d'Alixandre* and the *Roman de Thebes*, both of which contain descriptions of mappaemundi. These descriptions of maps are part of the scenery, rather than being appended as a geographical explanation of the area in which the action takes place.

The Venice version of the *R'Alix* contains a description of the mappamundi within Alexander's tent, mentioning that he enjoys looking at it - that he has such an ornament in his bedroom is certainly representative of his desire to achieve world conquest. Another mappamundi, embossed with gold and silver, is described in the palace of Babylon, and pored over by Darius for the same reason. Similarly, the *Roman de Thebes* contains an elaborate description of a zonal map positioned in the tent of the King Adraste (Tattersal, "Sphere", 41-43).

Hugh of St. Victor

Descriptions of maps did not always position them within a particular space, or locate them in relation to other structures. Various medieval writers composed descriptions of maps and cosmological diagrams as self-contained entities. Of particular importance in this connection is the work of the French monk Hugh of St. Victor. His work on cartography took two quite separate forms. Firstly, he is credited with a text known as the *Descriptio Mappe Mundi*, which is a literal account of a real map, describing in text form all the icons contained on it. The *Descriptio* may have functioned as an expanded version of the icon inscriptions on the original map. The map described, if it existed, is no longer extant, but it was probably a forerunner of the Munich Isidore map (see chapter 1).

Hugh's other major ideas on cartography are found in two treatises on the symbolism of the Ark of Noah, which use the Ark as a model of the cosmos. *De Arca Noe Mystica* contains the most complex description of the cosmological model, and *De*

Arca Noe Morali contains simplified forms of some of the same ideas. The diagram described is a fine example of the use of a symbolic structure to describe history, geography and Christian morality.

The diagram described is a circular construction surrounding the rectangular ark, which runs the length of the circle. In the east (at the top) is paradise, with the six days of creation leading westward towards the name Adam, expressed as the A-D-A-M acrostic. The progression of history on the westward axis runs from the days of creation through Adam in paradise to Judah, the Crucifixion, Peter and down to the last Judgement in the Far West. The twelve apostles are aligned along the main north-south axis (in the centre, running through the Crucifixion) and arranged along a north-south axis in the east (and thus earlier in historical time) are the twelve patriarchs.

In the central area of the diagram is a mappamundi, quadripartite in form, showing the four important kingdoms mentioned by Hugh - Babylon (north-east), Egypt (south-east), Europe / Rome (north-west), and Africa / Carthage (south-west). Hugh differs from Orosius by including Babylon instead of Macedonia as his northern kingdom.

There is some argument as to whether this diagram was ever drawn. Many authors have suggested that it was, the general force of the argument being that much of the concrete language in the *De Arca* reads as though Hugh was looking at an actual diagram as he wrote. Carruthers thinks otherwise, pointing out that none of the fifty-three extant manuscripts contain anything resembling what Hugh describes, and arguing that a medieval reader did not need to have real pictures in order to visualise the mental picture being explained.[24]

Both modern reconstructions of Hugh's map are only partial - LeCoq has made a reconstruction of the inner mappamundi itself, while Grover Zinn's earlier work covers only the mandorla-shaped border, and the quadripartite icons such as the patriarchs and apostles, without drawing the mappamundi.[25] As Carruthers points out, Hugh includes every major pictorial genre of diagram common in the twelfth century - ladders, trees, circles, columns, maps and genealogical charts. A full reconstruction would be very complex, as it would be hard to draw the mappamundi underneath the Ark in any detail. It seems likely that if Hugh had drawn anything, it would not have included all the material contained in the text.

My interest in the scheme here is simply in noting Hugh's use of *ekphrasis* on a symbolic building to describe history and knowledge. He makes clear the theory behind the use of the allegorical building as a basis for exegesis in another text, the *Didascalion*:

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[24] See M. Kupfer, "Medieval World Maps", 269, and M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1990), 231.

[25] D. LeCoq, "La Mappemonde du Arca", 14-15, and G. Zinn, "Hugh of St. Victor, Isaiah's Vision and *De Arca Noe*", *Studies in Church History* 28 (1992), 99-116. (The reconstruction is on page 100). Zinn's other article, "Mandala Symbolism and Use in the Mysticism of Hugh of St. Victor", *History of Religions* 12 (1972), 317-341 is also useful.

> The foundation and basis of holy teaching is history, from which the truth of allegory is extracted...If then, you are building, lay the foundation of history first; then by typical sense put up a mental structure as a citadel of faith and finally, like a coat of the loveliest of colours, paint the building with the elegance of morality...[26]

Other mystics and poets of this era used similar symbolic buildings as the base material for their exegesis. For example, Godfrey of St. Victor based his work *The Fountain of Philosophy* on a description of the fountain in the Heavenly Jerusalem. The four rivers of paradise flowing from the fountain are likened to the *quadrivium*, and also to the four *sensus*, or modes of interpretation of the Bible. Another example of the use of the symbolic building as a basis for exegesis is in Alain de Lille's *Anticlaudianus*, which describes the 'Palace of Nature', erected on tall columns, painted with depictions of the customs of men of all races. Other allegorical structures are common, particularly in twelfth-century poetry.[27]

The mystical tradition of analysing such structures as metaphors for the world is of primary importance in the material discussed in the next section. All of the following material exemplifies the medieval tendency to portray history or other forms of knowledge as a symbolic building. Various examples given here also contain cartographic elements - lists of conquered countries, or in the case of the *Alexandreis*, a complete map. The links between the maps and landmarks comes out most clearly in an examination of these structures.

6 - Descriptions of Landmarks in Literature

The Pillars of Wisdom - Knowledge as a symbolic building

In the *Image du Monde* of Gautier de Metz is a description of a set of pillars established by the last generation before the great flood, in order to save sacred writings and science from being destroyed. The version quoted here is from the *Mirrour of the World*, Caxton's translation of the French version (1972 fascimile version):

> Thene they [wise men] advyseth them [other prediluvians]...that after the first destruxion of the world ther shold be other peple / wherfor they dyde do make grete pylers of stone, in suche wyse that they might pourtraye, and grave in every stone atte leste one of the vii sciences entierly, in such wise that they might be knowen to other, of which some saye that one of these pylers was of stone as hard as marble. (*Mirrour of the World*, 3. 1)

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[26] Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalion* (4. 3). Cited in Squire, ed., *Selected Spiritual Writings*, 23.

[27] Godfrey of St. Victor, *The Fountain of Philosophy*, trans. E. Synan (Toronto, 1972), see esp. 47 for the microcosmos idea, and 57-58 for Jerusalem and the rivers. *The Anticlaudian of Alain de Lille*, trans. W. H. Cornog (Philadelphia, 1935), 53f. H. R. Patch, *The Other World according to descriptions in Medieval Literature* (New York, 1970), chap. 6 "Allegory" gives an account of other structures.

The myth is also found in the thirteenth-century *Cursor Mundi*, which tells us that it was Lamech's son Noah who erected two pillars, to protect the world against future ignorance. One was of marble, to withstand a flood, and the other of 'tile', to withstand fire. The original source for the two 'Pillars of Wisdom' in the *Cursor Mundi* is the description of them in the Jewish historian Josephus, writing in the first century AD. Josephus (in the *Antiquities of the Jews*) writes that there were two pillars, one of brick, the other of stone, erected by the children of Seth, and marked with the inventions of the Jews up until that time. We must presume this to mean genealogical history, and the science of astrology, which Josephus says was invented by the Jews.[28] There are also only two pillars in the account of the myth in the *Otia Imperialia* of Gervase of Tilbury (1. 20).[29]

Gautier de Metz appears to have expanded the idea so as to make the pillars include all of the seven sciences, not just astrology, thereby creating an epistemological model of God's creation and human history, in the form of a pair of a series of stone pillars. What might the section of the pillars containing the science of geography have looked like? Perhaps readers conceived of this as a mappamundi, or at least a lengthy geographical inscription laid out in a formation similar to a medieval list map.

A different expression of the same notion is found in the work of Honorius of Autun (twelfth century), who describes his book the *Elucidarius* as a symbolic construction, perhaps basing the notion on the pillars of wisdom described above. Honorius introduces the *Elucidarius* by stating that the foundation of his work is the "Rock which is Christ" (1 Corinthians 10. 4). Then he states that four columns, arising from the rock, support the platform of the work.

> The first column serves to hold up the understanding of the prophets;
> the second to support the honor of the apostles; the third to strengthen
> the wisdom of the fathers; and the fourth to uphold the wise concern of
> the teachers.[30]

Honorius thus introduces his book as a metaphorical place, a literary temple of knowledge. That a knowledge of history should be symbolised as a pillared building occurs repeatedly throughout the material I have been studying in this chapter. The 'pillar', when used as a boundary marker, must not be seen as a simple, independent image. The use of the pillar image as the marker of a boundary results in the association with other uses of the theme. A pillar may stand for the body of the ruler; it may support the roof or the sky; it may be an expression of permanency; it may be inscribed with knowledge. Continued examples of these connections are given in the following sections.

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[28] Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* (2) in *Complete Works*, trans. W. Whitson (Glasgow), 3.

[29] See also the account of the pillars of Wisdom in O. H. Prior, ed. *Caxton's Mirror of the World* (London, 1913), introduction, esp xx.

[30] Honorius of Autun, *Elucidarius* (1). Translation in *The Old Norse Elucidarius*, trans. E. Firchow (Columbia, 1992), 3. Honorius is discussed further in chapter 6.

The Throne of Alexander in Babylon

Many versions of the Alexander Romance mention that Alexander constructed a symbolic throne, or in some cases an entire palace, when he returned to Babylon. The *Prose Life* version contains a fine description of this structure, which is a throne held up by twelve statues:

> This trone was wonderfully wroghte and sett apon twelue ymagez of golde, the whilke trone the forsaid ymagez helde vp wit thaire hende. And on thase twelue ymagez ware wretyn the names of the twelue pryncez of Macedonye...In this trone also was thare sett on ilke a syde dyuerse ymagez on the whilke ware wretyn bathe in latyne and in grew versez that contened all the nammes of the rewmes & cuntrees that Alexandere had conquered and ware sugetes vn-till hym. (*Prose Life*, 108-9)

> [This throne was wonderfully made and set upon twelve images of gold. And on these twelve images were written the names of the twelve princes of Macedonia...In this throne also were set on each side diverse images on which were verses written both in Latin and in Greek which contained all the names of the realms and countries that Alexander had conquered and that were now subjected to him.]

Another description of the throne is found in a fifteenth-century romance known as the *Wars of Alexander* (a verse translation of the *Historia*). In this text, the inscription on the throne again sounds much like the contents of a medieval list map. The throne is held up by twelve gold statues of the twelve princes, 'that held with their hands all their heavy work.' It too is inscribed with the names of all the provinces and the places that he had power over. Unlike the *Prose Life* version, the *Wars* account proceeds to give a full list of these kingdoms (including many places in Europe that he in fact never reached). The list does not agree with the places Alexander conquers in the *Wars* or in its source the *Historia*. Instead, it is a description of the entire ecumene in list form. (*Wars*, 177-79).

The Palace of Prester John

The original *Letter of Prester John* was sent by an unknown author to the Court of the Emperor Manuel in c1165. The letter claimed to be from a Christian monarch in the Far East, descended from the Christians converted by St. Thomas in India. 'Prester John' claimed to hold much of the Far East under his sway, and warred successfully with both the Saracens and the folk of Gog and Magog. The letter was taken to be truthful, and the land of Prester John became an object of fascination for medieval audiences and remained a goal for travellers for several centuries afterwards. The king was identified with several of the Mongol Khans in the fourteenth century before being 'located' by the Portuguese in Abyssinia in the fifteenth century, and then fading into legend.

The letter was quickly translated into many European languages in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. I am interested in the descriptions of Prester John's palace and

the possible influence of the Alexander material described above. The first text I will use here is a translation of the Old French version of the original *Letter*. The description of the palace is as follows:

> First of all, its walls are of crystal, the ceiling above is of precious stones, and its floor is also of crystal. There are no windows or doors in this palace and inside it has twenty-four columns of gold and various precious stones.[31]

Other than the suggestion that this palace might contain a stellar map in its roof, there is no real indication here that this structure is a cartographic or historical landmark of the kind I have been discussing. The model for this structure was probably descriptions of the Heavenly Jerusalem.

Prester John's palace is undoubtedly based on Classical descriptions of tombs and monuments in the east. Eastern palaces in previous literature were those of monarchs such as Xerxes and Darius, who were hostile to Europe. These are described in the *GAR* and many subsequent versions. They do not generally contain either maps or depictions of history, but are described as places of great wealth and beauty, usually containing tombs of rulers such as Nebuchadnezzar and Xerxes. Diodorus Siculus also gives a lengthy account of similar palace and tomb structures in Egypt, many of which did include memorial pillars and historical sequences. I have no space to detail these here (some of them are described in chapter 2).

In Mandeville's *Travels*, the palace of Prester John is not described in any detail, but the palace of the Great Khan is treated at length. This was probably based on descriptions of eastern palaces described above. Mandeville does describe historical scenes in the palace of the King of Java, positioned on 'plates' which we must presume were round. Mandeville may have imagined them along the lines of the historical shield of Aeneas:

> All the steps into his hall and his chambers are alternately of gold and silver. The walls inside are covered with plates of gold and silver, and on them are engraved stories of kings and knights in battle...No man would believe the grandeur and wealth of this palace if he had not seen it. The King is so great and powerful that he has often discomfited the Great Khan, the mightiest emperor in the world, in battle. (*Travels*, trans. Moseley, 131-2)

The depiction of historical scenes in gold and silver is a statement of the King's wealth and grandeur, and also of his territorial power. The king's display of wealth is linked with a display of might and aggression.

The description of the palace of the King of Java in the legends of Ogier the Dane is even more revealing than Mandeville's abbreviation of it. Ogier's deeds are portrayed on the walls of the palace, telling how he conquered all of the East.

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[31] Citation from V. Slessarev, *Prester John, the Letter and the Legend* (Mineapolis, 1959), 78.

> There are also depicted on the walls many mighty battles...[There are
> pictures] of the great princes, Hector, Alexander, Hercules, the
> Emperor Charles...But all this was not to be likened to Ogier's deeds,
> for he conquered all those who were not Christians from sunrise to
> sunsetting. (Letts, *Mandeville's Travels,* vol. 2, 485).

Later descriptions of the Palace of Prester John, using some material borrowed from
the Alexander legends, turned the Palace into a major landmark, filled with scenes
from history and other images of kingship. The description of the palace in the
Itinerarius of Johannes Witte de Hese is by far the most detailed account of any region
visited by him, running for roughly a quarter of the entire text. I provide here a
selection of the images contained in this description:

> The central column [supporting the palace] is larger than the others,
> and at this [column] four large giants have been made out of precious
> stones and gilded; they stand with bowed heads beneath the palace as if
> they were supporting the whole palace.

> In the palace is a beautiful plaza, also standing beneath [above]
> columns on which are fashioned images of popes and Roman emperors
> who once were...

> And there nearby are Prester John's...sleeping quarters, vaulted and
> studded with stars like the heavens. Also in that place is [a model of]
> ...the planets holding their courses just as they do in the heavens...

> A mirror is there, in which three precious stones are set...Three
> extremely worthy scholars are chosen for this mirror; by gazing into the
> mirror, they can see everything going on in the world....

> Nine ranks of angels are skilfully fashioned in that place, and within
> these ranks [are]...angels, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs,
> confessors, the Three Kings...at the top - that is, on the throne - sits
> Christ in Judgement, served by the twenty-four elders and the highest
> archangels, holding scrolls in their hands... (Westrem, *Broader
> Horizons*, 210-15)

The landmark palace in the *Itinerarius* is a Christian version of Graeco-Roman
kingship monuments. Instead of the tombs of Xerxes, Nebuchadnezzar and other
monuments found in Persepolis in the *GAR*, the tombs in Prester John's palace are
those of Abraham, St. Thomas, and others. The statues are also of Christian figures,
and the ornamental pillars show both emperors and popes, suggesting that the
apostolic see of Rome was a continuation of the Empire.

Two maps are mentioned or suggested in the description. The first is the stellar map
in the roof of the King's bedroom, which is taken from the jewelled roof in the original
Letter, and also reminiscent of the roof of Adela's bedroom. The second map is the
mirror - a visual depiction of 'everything that is going on in the world', framed by a
circular mirror, is clearly an *Imago Mundi* or a 'Mirror of the World'.

The whole of the palace may also be interpreted as a cosmological world model, and a model of history. The giant statues supporting the roof are Titans, holding up the sky. Another section of the palace actually has a dome "like the heavens, and it revolves like the firmament". The base of the building is a depiction of history, leading up to the ultimate figure of Christ in Judgement, enthroned and supported by his 'princes' in a manner comparable to the Throne of Alexander. The description exactly matches the vision of Christ in majesty seen by John in Revelation 4. 10, and thus the palace of Prester John in the *Itinerarius* is a type for the Heavenly Jerusalem.

The Palace of Prester John in the *Itinerarius* exemplifies several of the themes discussed in this chapter. The building is a cosmological and historical model, and its wealth and grandeur are a display of the King's right to rule. Maps of various kinds are positioned within this symbolic space, which itself must be thought of as a kind of mappamundi in a similar way to Adela's bedroom in the description by Abbot Baudri. The related conceptions of the pillar and the statue serve to convey historical knowledge, to embody previous cosmocratic figures, and to support the ultimate ruler in his exalted position.

The Tomb of Darius in the Alexandreis of Walter de Châtillon

In the *Alexandreis* of Walter de Châtillon, there is a description of a tomb, built by Alexander's assistant Apelles for the Persian King Darius, after Darius has been betrayed and killed by men of his own army. This extract is a perfect illustration of the theme of the landmark as representative of territorial suzerainty, and the attempt to conquer time by constructing a permanent statement of world domination. It is also the most detailed *ekphrasis* on a world-map known to me.

The passage begins with a description of a white marble pyramid, supported by four equidistant pillars. The pillars are of bronze at the base, silver in the middle, and with capitals of gold at the top.[32] Then comes the description of the dome, on which the map is carved.

> Above [the pillars] was erected a concave dome...Upon it was
> beautifully traced the outline of the tripartite world. Here Asia's
> domain extended over a wide area, there the twin sisters [Europe and
> Africa] squatted with their smaller space. Here, marked by
> unmistakable signs, were places, rivers, peoples, cities, forests, regions,
> towns, mountains, and every island that is bounded by the fitful sea.

> Lybia was fruitful; Ammon, close to the Syrtes, begged for rain; the
> Nile enriched Egypt, and ivory enriched India...Africa showed forth
> mighty Carthage's citadel, Greece divine Athens of immortal fame;
> Pallas' house prided itself upon the growing Rome, Spain on Herculean
> Cadiz....

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[32] The progression of metal here suggests the idea of the ages of man, with the Bronze Age (the current one) being closest to the ground, and the primeval Golden Age being closest to the heavens.

The Glassy Ocean encircled the outer edges of this large dome, and the sea, acting as a barrier in the middle, divided Asia from the... other two continents...And because Daniel's meaning did not escape Apelles, he engraved on the gilded marble the following inscription: 'Here is placed the figurative ram, whose two horns Alexander, the whole world's hammer, crushed.' (trans. Pritchard, 220-221)

Apelles then proceeds to inscribe the history of the human race "from creation to the time of Alexander upon the dome." This is a claim that Alexander's deeds have changed the face of the ecumene to such a degree as to end the current age of history and begin a new one. The reference to Daniel concerns the prophecy in Daniel 8, which relates Daniel's dream of the goat that crushes the ram with two horns. The two horns represent Medea and Persia, and the goat represents Greece.

Alexander's use of Biblical prophecy to support his claims to kingship (rather than the more standard associations with Hercules) is laced with irony. Daniel's dream has a continuation - the kingdom founded by the goat disintegrates after the death of the first ruler, and subsequently reforms under the reign of the Antichrist. By using Christian prophecy to justify his dominion, Alexander has aligned himself with dark forces in Christian eschatology.

Walter's 'Tomb of Darius' is the most profound example of the inter-related nature of the six statements expressed at the start of the chapter, blending the ideas of the historical inscription, the conquest monument and the map into a single image. The link between this symbolic construction and cartography exists on a number of levels. Most obviously, the Tomb of Darius is itself a description of a map, and comes from a text containing a map. Darius' tomb is also found on some mappaemundi, notably the *Sepulchrum Darii* on the Ebstorf map.

Given that there is no mention of Alexander's eastern pillars in the *Alexandreis*, it seems likely that Walter de Châtillon has combined the tomb of Darius (which gets minimal treatment in other versions) with the idea of the eastern pillar, and turned Alexander's statement of victory over Darius into a tomb to house his enemy's body. Edson has noted that the use of such imagery in Darius' tomb is unusual, as perhaps it would have been more suited to Alexander's own tomb in Babylon (*Mapping Time*, 103). I must restate the words of the philosopher in the *Gesta*: "Yesterday, he pressed the world; today, the world oppresses him." Apelles' construction has made the whole world into Darius' tomb, and Alexander, both the creator and the oppressor of the world, is positioned outside it.

7 - Conclusions

1 - As I noted in the first chapter, the scholar studying the medieval world-image is drawn into examining a wide range of inter-related concepts, and this is precisely because the medieval world image is itself based on the entire range of available learning. Hugh of St. Victor's notion of a 'summary of all things' is a succinct expression of the syncretism of many branches of learning into single texts or images which became popular in the twelfth century. The notion of a 'summary of all things' found a different and more elaborate form of expression in the encyclopaedic tradition

in the thirteenth century. The tendency to gather all branches of knowledge, especially history, and simplify or streamline them so that the resulting model served some didactic, political or religious purpose, gave rise to the mappamundi tradition. Mappaemundi are, essentially, a collection of historical landmarks organised within a geographical framework.

The scholastic perception that all world-knowledge could be expressed in a single image was derived largely from the idea that the world itself was the 'book of God'. As Gellrich has noted, encyclopaedias and other 'world mirrors' manifest the "attempt to gather together all strands of learning into an enormous text...that would mirror the historical and transcendental orders of the world, just as the book of God's word [the Bible] was the *speculum* of the Book of God's work [nature]."[33]

2 - While the notion of 'competitive conquest' contains the potential for an infinite series of world-rulers, Christian history is finite. Diagrams or other symbolic constructions in literature of Classical conquest history invariably end with whichever ruler is claiming the divine status. Conversely, Christ is always at the end of the cycle, the top of the tree, and Christ or the Heavenly Jerusalem will usually be the last of any series of Biblical roundels.

A. R. Anderson makes the point that if it were not for the development of monotheism in Europe, Alexander, Caesar, Augustus and many others would have been fully deified and added to the Graeco-Roman pantheon ("Heracles", 8). Future rulers would doubtless have wished to add their name to the ranks of the world rulers, and we would speak of Charlemagne and Arthur in the same breath as Hercules and Dionysius when reciting the history of our sacred kings. But the acceptance of Christology as the most important historical doctrine ensured that 'conquest history' did not go much further than the deified Augustus. The idea of the world-ruler was effectively replaced by 'Christ Pantocrator', and no mortal ruler could ever 'outdo' Christ.

3 - The series of statements in the beginning of the chapter have now been illustrated, enabling a comparison between the eastern pillars of Hercules and the Hereford mappamundi.

The eastern pillar is usually inscribed with a statement, albeit a limited one, concerning the realms that are now under Alexander's control (those of Darius and Porus). In some cases, such as the version in the *Epistola*, the pillar / statue contains a full account of Alexander's deeds. Moreover, the pillar must be seen as part of a larger series of symbolic constructions made by Alexander and other kings to express their wealth, and power, and to detail the extent of their territorial sovereignty. *Ekphrasis* on these structures frequently includes geographical components, in some cases detailed descriptions of maps.

The founding of the eastern pillar also serves in many instances as an expression of historical progression. Alexander's 'outdoing' of Hercules and his founding of the eastern pillar is one of a number of acts by which he sought to usher in a new era of

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[33] J. M. Gellrich, *The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1985), 139.

history by securing the limits of a new world empire. The foundation of the eastern pillar should also be connected with the various other uses of the pillar symbol as a means of conveying historical knowledge. The use of history as a 'support' for domes, tombs, palaces and other structures is perhaps indicative of the way in which historical validation is often used as a means to support the power of world-rulers.

Conversely, the Hereford mappamundi is a monumental construction showing all the realms that are under God's power. The story of the human race from creation to the crucifixion is shown in the eastern section of the map, including landmarks of each of the five ages such as the tower of Babel and Noah's ark. The rule of Christ over the ecumene is ordained and supported by the history which the map displays.

Three proclamations appear on its border - made by Christ, Caesar and Richard of Haldingham, the maker of the map. These may be interpreted on a number of levels. Christ's proclamation "behold my evidence" refers to the wounds suffered in the crucifixion, but may also refer to the story of creation, passion and judgement expressed by the map. Caesar's proclamation to the three surveyors ("Go out into the world and report back to the Senate on every continent - and to conform this I have attached my seal to this document") refers to the survey made by Caesar and its completion in the form of the map. The map is a map of the Empire, and functions as a reminder that the ecumene was unified physically by the Romans, and spiritually by Christ.

The map is called a 'history', as noted in the inscription by Richard, which reads:

> May all who this faire historie,
> Shall either hear, or read, or see,
> Pray to Jesus Christ in Deity,
> Richard of Haldingham and Lafford to pity
> That to him for aye be given
> The joy and happiness of heaven. (Bevan and Phillot, *Medieval Geography*, 3-4)

The wish of Richard of Haldingham is not that his own name will last forever on earth, but that God will be merciful to him, so that he may live in the eternal grace of Heaven. This may rightly be contrasted with Alexander's statement concerning his own 'history', the *Epistola*:

> Now, my dear teacher, I have made a memorandum of my remarkable deeds, which will be an object of amazement to succeeding generations; and I have established a new and durable record for heroic feats, which will...convey my fame to future ages....(*Epistola* 22, in Stoneman, *Legends,* 19)

Many of the Classical constructions of history studied in this chapter were made in order to support the political agenda of the ruler in question. The same is true of descriptions in Christian texts of the palaces of pagan kings. Contrastingly, Christian constructions of history function mainly to support a religious agenda. The purpose of maps like the Hereford, and other images of kingship, is to express God's power, and

their function as images of royal power always assumed that that power was held in God's name.

CHAPTER FIVE - 'NON PLUS ULTRA': The Gades of Hercules and the Western End of the World

Introduction

The western pillars of Hercules are the most well known of all the landmarks treated in this study. They are mentioned in some form in nearly all Classical and medieval geographical texts, and can be found on nearly every map of the corpus, and on many others from before and after the Anglo-Norman period.[1] The purpose of this chapter is not to give details of all this material, but to explain the way in which the medieval myth of the 'Gades of Hercules' was formed, and what the myth might have meant in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Europe.

Many medieval geographical texts that comment on the pillars of Hercules say very little about the myth behind them, and on Anglo-Norman maps they are never accompanied by an explanatory inscription. The myth may have been so well known from Classical sources that it was not considered necessary by map-makers or geographers to explain it in any detail. Also, the western extreme of the ecumene had none of the associations with Alexander's march that we saw in the previous study on the Far East, as Alexander had not travelled to Spain or West Africa. In addition, it was the most well known of all the four quadrants and had been a well-known part of the Roman Empire since the second century BC.

Much of the impetus to travel in the medieval period was focused on the east - there is little mention of Spain or West Africa in the works of Polo, Mandeville, and others. The east and north-east were the real unknown frontiers in the thirteenth century, and many of the more mysterious geographical features - Alexander's Gate, the terrestrial paradise, and so on - were associated with these directions. For this reason, there will be more of a focus on Classical sources in this chapter than in the some of the other landmark studies, and the search for medieval sources on the western pillars will take us outside the Anglo-Norman milieu.

Originally, the island of Gades and the pillars of Hercules were unrelated, although geographically close to one another, and the way in which the two places became merged into one myth reveals much about the nature of boundary landmarks in Classical and medieval sources. The first section of the chapter focuses on this issue, particularly the explanation of the pillars in Strabo and Diodorus. The name 'Gades' was first applied to the pillars of Hercules, and then began to be applied to other boundary sites by a process of associative thinking. This idea of other 'Gades' is found in some Classical sources, and several medieval maps and texts, and an examination of these forms the basis of the second section of the chapter.

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[1] Nearly all of Miller's reconstructions of the geography of Classical writers (Isidore, Orosius, Pliny, Strabo, Dionysius, Mela, etc.) include the western pillars. *Mappaemundi*, vol. 6, plates 1-8.

1 - Gades and the Pillars of Hercules in Classical Sources

Pillars as a boundary motif in Archaic and Ancient sources - A Summary

The early history of this myth, and other pillars under study, is based in ancient pan-European patterns of religious thought, and the variety of antecedents for the idea make any accurate assessment of its origin impossible. Smith has noted concerning the early history of the myth that "we are here again involved in the oft-recurring difficulty as to whether the legend was founded on a certain amount of knowledge, or whether, the legend being purely imaginary at first, a positive sense was given to it as geographical discovery advanced."[2]

Jack Lindsay has identified a variety of other twin rocks and gates in the Mediterranean, and links the pillars of Hercules and the Symplegades (see below) with a number of similar sites in his discussion of the theme of the 'world pillar'. He would advocate the second of the two options offered by Smith. For instance, he notes that the pillars of Hercules were once known as the pillars of Briareos and Kronos, two Greek Cthonic figures dating from the Minoan / Mycenaean period, probably before the conception of the circular ecumene evolved (Lindsay, 113). Lindsay also refers to the 'Ambrosial Stones' sought by the deity Dionysius in the city of Tyre, and compares these to the Phoenician belief in ritual 'Twin Stones' in the same city (109-10). Similarly, there are early references to the 'pillars of Proteus' (a sea-god) in the southern part the ecumene (in Egypt) as a parallel case to the western pillars (113).

There were, moreover, eastern pillars of Hercules at Pontos, and another set of inscribed pillars of gold and silver beyond Babylon, as well as the eastern pillars examined in chapter 2. The trope was so well known that it seems almost certain that the western pillars of Hercules were identified with various natural features in the Straits of Gibraltar long after the basic idea of boundary pillars had been established.

The material concerning the myth's origins in Lindsay's work (45, 117f, 381f) may be summarised as follows:

1- The pillars of Hercules belonged to a "regular world-system", and symbolised links between earth and heaven / the otherworld. The most common form seems to have been the 'twin' or dual pillars, which were associated with cults of culture-heroes, of which Hercules and Dionysius are examples.

2 - Lindsay terms these culture-heroes "Defiers of the High-Gods". Their role was often in performing dangerous journeys (between pillars, rocks or other gateways) in order to bring back something of worth to humanity (the Apples of Hesperides, the Golden Fleece, the knowledge of fire, etc). Such adventures were often against the will of the Olympian Gods, with whom the Titans, and figures such as Hercules and Dionysius, frequently struggled.

3 - The pillar / boundary motif was used in the shamanistic mode of religious expression practised by followers of Cthonic gods in the late Bronze Age. Lindsay lists various "ritual expressions" (local representations of the world pillars) which there

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[2] Smith, *Dictionary*, 'Herculis Columnae'.

is no space to detail. The shamans of the Cthonic cults would perform ritual entries into the spirit-world through these local manifestations of the 'world-pillars'.

4 - The 'rocks of spirit-entry' were to become indistinguishable from the figure who inhabited them, and thus the body of the culture-hero or the shaman became associated with the pillar itself. Lindsay then describes a conceptual link between the bodies of Titans (Atlas, Prometheus, Kronos) and the idea of the 'world-pillar'. The statues of Hercules and Dionysius in the east, he argues, were part of this trope, and that it would have been thought that the sky rests on them in the same way that Atlas held up the sky at the other end of the ecumene.

5 - Much of the mythology of the 'Defiers' and their journeys tells the story of the struggle of the Ionian Olympian religion with the earlier Cthonic deities and new imported cults such as that of Dionysius. Passing beyond the pillars was representative of a "shamanistic defiance of the high-gods", and was considered contrary to the workings of nature as imposed by the high gods.

Very little of the Archaic material cited by Lindsay or Smith is used in medieval sources, and it is thus used here only for the purposes of comparison with medieval uses of the pillar theme. The trope of 'going beyond' is present in this early material, but of most interest is the role of the pillar symbol in the transition between one religious system and another. My discussion of the motif begins at the fifth century BC, using sources that were known in the medieval period, and digressing to refer to the Archaic antecedents discussed by Lindsay.

The Pillars of Hercules as a Boundary Motif in Classical Sources

The basic story of the founding of the pillars of Hercules is connected with the twelve labours of that hero. It was thought that Hercules had founded the pillars at the western end of his journey, in conjunction with the last two labours he performed (the Cattle of Geyron and the Apple of the Hesperides). The pillars were inscribed with the motto *non plus ultra* (or more correctly, *nec plus ultra*), essentially meaning 'do not go beyond'. The precise order in which his labours occurred, or whether he had founded the pillar before or after these events, is not consistent in early texts, but the idea that the pillars marked out the bounds of his labours as well as the boundary of the earth is common.

A major early source for the symbolic meaning of the western pillars is found in the *Odes* of Pindar (fifth century BC), where the combination of the boundary motif and the figure of the divine hero finds one of its first full expressions. Pindar uses the pillars as a paradigm of the limits of human daring, in his descriptions of athletic prowess in the third *Olympian Ode*:

> Now Theron [an athlete], approaching the outer limit in his feats of strength, touches the Pillars of Heracles. What lies beyond cannot be approached by wise men or unwise.[3]

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[3] Pindar, *Olympian Odes* (3. 43-45). Cited in Romm, *The Edges of the Earth*, 17.

The pillars came to stand for the boundaries of the human condition itself, and it was only by becoming more than human that transgression beyond them was possible. In subsequent eras, the figure of the explorer who passes beyond the pillars was endowed with a semi-divine quality simply by having done so.

Other simple geographical references to the pillars can be found in Aristotle, Socrates and Plato, in descriptions of the ecumene and its boundaries. The descriptive formula 'from the pillars of Hercules to...' is commonly used in this era as a way to measure to the ecumene, and this formula was also used by many later writers. The eastern extreme in the formula was variable - the Ganges, the Indus, or the ambiguous 'India', but the location of the western landmark remained constant.

Plato notes that the earthquake that sunk Atlantis was the same that broke apart Africa and Europe, and thus created the Straits of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean Sea. This is perhaps an early form of the myth which stated that the pillars were created by Hercules when he broke apart Spain and Africa by cleaving a large mountain in two. This form of the myth was later mentioned by Pliny and Mela, who both treat it as a fable reported by the local inhabitants.[4]

Plato also uses the pillars as the boundary separating the friendly, inner world of the Greeks from the hostile world beyond, and writes of a nine-thousand year war between those who lived inside the pillars and those who lived without. According to this lore, the Atlantean dynasty attempted to overthrow those within the pillars, and were repulsed by a Greek alliance (led by Athens), whose courage and valour "freed all others living within the Pillars of Heracles" from the slavery that would have otherwise been their lot (Plato, *Timaeus* 2, trans. Lee, 37-38).

Early Carthaginian explorers such as Hanno and Himilcar mention the western pillars in the reports of their explorations of Africa and the Atlantic. The Carthaginians, and later the Phoenicians, had control over the Straits of Gibraltar, which functioned as a major shipping route from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic coasts of Spain and West Africa from the seventh to the third centuries BC, a very formative period in Greek geographical thought. The straits were closed to all non-Punic ships during this entire period. It has been suggested that the Carthaginians deliberately spread rumours of monsters and other dangers beyond the straits in order to discourage Greek exploration, and maintain their monopoly on this major shipping lane.[5]

The Pillars as described by Strabo and Diodorus Siculus

The Greek geographer Strabo (first century BC) gives us a full account of the complexity of the sacred geography of the Straits of Gibraltar, and the connections between Gades and the pillars of Hercules. Strabo's work is the best extant Classical

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[4] Plato, *Critias* (2), in *Timaeus and Critias*, trans. D. Lee, 2nd. ed. (Harmondsworth, 1965), 131-32. Pliny and Mela are cited below.

[5] This is the legend behind the expression "the Phoenician Lie", which appears in Strabo and elsewhere. It has also been suggested that the pillars originally had a more benign meaning, and implied an open portal by which the Greeks could explore the wider world, before the Punic blockade occurred.

source for the notion that the conquest landmarks were thought of as a related series. He says:

> Concerning the foundation of Gades, the Gaditanians report that a certain oracle commanded the Tyrians [Phoenicians] to found a colony by the Pillars of Hercules. Those who were sent...imagined that the capes which form the strait were the boundaries of the habitable earth, as well as of the expedition of Hercules, and consequently they were what the oracle termed the Pillars...Here they offered sacrifices, which however not being favourable, they returned. After a time, others were sent, who advanced about 1500 stadia beyond the strait, to an island consecrated to Hercules...considering that here were the Pillars, they sacrificed to the god, but the sacrifices being again unfavourable, they returned home. In the third voyage they reached Gades, and founded the temple [to Hercules]...On this account some consider that the capes in the Strait are the Pillars, others suppose Gades, while others again believe that they lie still farther, beyond Gades. There are also some who think that the Pillars are Calpe, and the mountain of Libya which is opposite, named Abylix...(*Geography*, 3. 5. 5, trans. Hamilton and Falconer, vol. 1, 255)

That the sailors would not stay on the island if sacrifices were unfavourable indicates a possible religious origin for the idea that the straits were not to be passed. This idea finds clearer expression in a passage by the Greek explorer Pytheas (quoted below) where he states that it was considered an offence to tarry on Hercules' island too long.

Strabo then lists more possible locations for the pillars - small islands in the strait, or a temple on the Isle of Juno. Then he describes the belief that the landmark was really two pillars of brass erected in the temple of Hercules in Gades, inscribed with the cost of erecting the monument. It is known from this passage and similar accounts that there was a famous temple to the Phoenician Hercules in Gades during the Phoenician occupation. The Romans also built a temple to Hercules on Gades during their occupation of Spain, dating from the second century BC.

Strabo lists all these ideas as current beliefs, but then disagrees with all of them, arguing that "neither the little islands, nor yet the mountains, bear much resemblance to pillars", and that rather than examining geographical features, "we should seek for pillars, strictly so called [set up]...as the termination of the habitable world...*it being an ancient usage to set up such boundary marks*." (Italics mine). As examples of this ancient tradition, he speaks of such landmarks as the column at Rhegium, the altars of the Philaeni, the pillar of Corinth, and the altars of Alexander, Hercules and Bacchus in the east. He concludes: "That this custom existed, then, cannot be doubted" (*Geography*, 3. 5. 5, trans. Hamilton and Falconer, vol. 1, 256-7).

Strabo then writes that most of these monuments are no longer standing, but that they gave their names to the region in which they were placed. Thus, he says, it is likely that those who first colonised the region of Gibraltar set up "altars, towers and pillars, in the most remarkable situations", probably on the mountains or the small islands,

and that when these had decayed, their names descended to the places in which they had stood. Thus, he argues, the real pillars of Hercules no longer exist, and either the mountains or the islands could have been the possible original location. He also suggests that it was more likely to have been generals or other war-leaders that erected the pillars, and that the inscription was more likely to have been a religious inscription, or a record of the deeds of a great hero, than a list of Phoenician expenses. Once the name of the pillars had been established, "its celebrity afterwards became universal, as was the case with the Indian pillars", and the entire area became famous in this way (*Geography*, 3. 5. 6, trans. Hamilton and Falconer, vol. 1, 257-58).

It is clear from Strabo's passage that the original location of the pillars was in fact never known. The exploration of the area, and subsequent documentation of it, seems to have been conducted with the idea of finding these pillars in mind, and with the intention of founding a colony on a sacred and well-known site. Consequently they were 'found' in more than one location. (To this day, both Gibraltar and Cadiz lay claim to being the site of one of the legendary pillars, and both still use the legend to claim 'celebrity' status and enhance their reputations as tourist destinations.)

Another Greek writer of the same era, Diodorus Siculus (of Sicily) provides a similar series of explanations for the pillars in his *Bibliotheca Historica*, or *Library of History*. It is substantially repetitious of Strabo and I will note only the major differences between the two accounts. Diodorus notes that some say that Hercules had created the Straits of Gibraltar by cutting a large mountain into two, in order to allow the passage of the sea, while others argue that he had narrowed the straits, in order to prevent the passage of sea-monsters into the Mediteranean.

In both cases, the pillars were founded so that "the fame of their builder might be held in everlasting remembrance" (*Library*, 4. 18. 4-7, trans. Oldfather, vol. 2, 401-3). He then provides analogues for both views, noting that Hercules had previously performed similar deeds in Greece - he created the channels for the river Peneius in Thessaly, and also dammed a stream in Boeotia thereby and turned the region of a race known as the Minyans into a lake, in order to punish them for enslaving his people.

In another section, Diodorus gives an account of the founding of the Phoenician temple in Gades similar to the one given by Strabo. He notes that the temple is still standing, and says that "this shrine has been held an in honour beyond the ordinary, ...down even into our own lifetime" (*Library*, 5. 20. 1-3, trans. Oldfather, vol. 3, 149-51). He notes that a variety of distinguished Romans have been there, offering sacrifices to Hercules in order to ensure their success. Diodorus was probably thinking of his contemporary Julius Caesar, who, according to Seutonius (*Julius Caesar*, 7. 1) had been to the temple early in his career. It would seem from Seutonius' account that a statue of Alexander the Great was in the temple during this period, and that Caesar had lamented the fact that by the time he was Caesar's age, Alexander had conquered the whole world, while Caesar himself had done nothing.

Like Strabo, Diodorus felt it necessary to devote quite a lengthy section to the pillars, but is quite sceptical about which version of the story, if any, he should believe. He concludes his account by simply noting: "On this question, however, it will be possible

for every man to think as he may please" (*Library*, 4. 18. 7, trans. Oldfather, vol. 2, 403). In both Strabo and Diodorus, we see can see belief existing on a number of levels. The historical reality of the various statues and temples in Gades (under both Phoenician and Roman occupation) existed alongside various ideas concerning the mythical natural landscape of the Straits of Gibraltar. These two basic elements form the composite myth that existed during the Middle Ages.

The Pillars in Pliny, Dionysius and Mela

The description of the pillars in Pliny's *Natural History* repeats the earlier story in Plato, dismissing it as a local myth:

> At the narrowest part of the Straits [of Gibraltar] stand mountains on either side...these were the limits of the labours of Hercules, and consequently the inhabitants call them the Pillars of that deity, and they believe that he cut the channel through them and thereby let in the sea...so altering the face of nature. (*Natural History*, 3. 1, trans. Rackham, vol. 2, 5)

He goes on to discuss similar lore regarding Spanish geography, including the activities of Bacchus and Pan in the region. Shortly after this he says: "The stories related of Hercules, Pyrene or Saturn I regard as completely mythical."

The same story is also found in Mela's *De Situ Orbis*. Mela writes that the mountains Calpe and Abyla are called the pillars of Hercules. He says that

> Uppon the naming of them so, fame has forged a fable, that Hercules cutte asunder those two hylles...and by that meanes did let in the Occean... (*De Situ Orbis*, trans. Golding, 10)

Mela (3. 6) also reports the more believable story of the Tyrian temple of Hercules on Gades discussed by Strabo. Strabo, Pliny and Mela were all aware that the foundation of the pillars by Hercules was a myth, and that no such monument stood there in their era. All three also note that the name 'the Pillars of Hercules' had attached itself to the region in some way, and all three also use the name to mean the mountains on either side of the straits, Calpe and Abylix (Anglicised as Abyla).

Pliny also distinguished between the pillars and the island of Gades, as did Mela, and the Antonine Itinerary clearly treats them as separate places (*Itineraria Romana*, ed. Kuntz, 63). The same is true of the *Geography* of Ptolemy (second century AD), in which Abyla is called "Abila Columnae" and Calpe is "Calpe mountain and the pillars of the inner sea" (4. 1 and 2. 3, trans. Stevenson, 93, 51). The accompanying fifteenth century 'second map of Europe' and 'first map of Spain' show the two pillars in Spain and Africa.

Confusion arose in the minds of other writers, probably basing their ideas on local beliefs rather than on the encyclopaedic tradition of Strabo and Pliny. Dionysius (first century AD) wrote the ambiguous passage:

> And this is it, at the entraunce whereof [the ocean], the hugie pillers (as
> common reporte goeth) set up by *Hercules* do stande, chiefly aboute
> the toppe of Atlas, and the extreame parte of *Gades*, now **Cadiz**,
> whereof, at this day one is to be seene, made of massy [solid] brasse,
> and erected of such heigth, that it appeareth to reache above the
> cloudes and... to touch the skye. (*Orbis Terrae*, 63-68, trans. Twine, 5-
> 6)

Priscian's sixth-century translation of Dionysius' work was to become a major source for medieval geography, and it is probable that this particular passage was at least partly responsible for the confusion in medieval maps and sources between Gades and the pillars of Hercules, and also Mt. Atlas in some cases. I discuss this issue in the second section.[6]

I turn now to look at the thematic relationships between the pillars of Hercules and other Mediterranean and Atlantic boundary pillars and conquest monuments in Classical sources. I return at the end of the section to the thesis concerning the Symplegades proposed by Jack Lindsay, outlined at the beginning of the chapter.

'Dire Straits' - the 'Symplegades' in Classical Sources

This section focuses on another world-boundary, the Symplegades, which were once as important as the pillars of Hercules, and then ceased to have any function within the ecumenical framework. I address the question 'why did one world-gate lose its symbolic function, which another very similar site retained?'.

In a continuation of the passage discussed above, Strabo describes yet another common error regarding the pillars of Hercules, which was that they are in fact simply a misplacement of two other sites, the Symplegades and the Planctae.[7] The Symplegades or "clashing rocks" (also called the Cyanean Rocks) were located by Greek and Roman geographers at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, at the mouth of the Bosporus. A fine (although very out-of-date) description of the Symplegades comes from Dionysius, where he repeats an ancient fable as though it were geographical fact:

> There is...seene in the same place, another straunge wonder. For there
> be two pillers set, directly eche againste other, who so sowne as any
> daunger approacheth the people dwelling nigh, do bothe mete, with
> suche violence, as though they foughte.[8]

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[6] The relevant passage in Priscian's *Periegesis* is lines 73-5. See *Prisciani Periegesis*, in *Opera et Fragmenta Veterum Poetum Latinorum*, vol. 2 (London, 1713), 1602-1608.

[7] Strabo does not give reference to the source for the idea that these rocks were confused with the pillars of Hercules. Such a confusion could only have arisen if observers knew nothing concerning genuine physical geography, and heard rumours concerning a series of dangerous boundary markers in narrow straits, which they then concluded must all refer to the same position.

[8] Dionysius, *Orbis Terrae* 394-397, trans. Twine, 18. Descriptions of similar features at the mouth of the Bosporus are on lines 312f (trans. Twine, 11-12). Lindsay thinks that Dionysius is referring in this passage to yet another mythical gateway site, the Acroceraunian Rock (Thundering Headland), which is a promontory in

The geographical reality behind this story is a narrow area in the Bosporus strait where islands are temporarily formed by a separation from the mainland during high tide or stormy weather.

The Planctae, another pair of dangerous rocks, are also known as the Wandering Rocks. They were commonly located near the Straits of Messina, and are mentioned in the *Argonautica*. The Planctae were frequently confused with the Symplegades - in fact, the passage in Dionysius quoted above may refer to the Planctae. He would not have been the first writer to confuse them.

Jason and the Argonauts travelled through this dangerous strait in Messina in a very similar fashion to the way they also breached the Symplegades. The episode is also reminiscent of Ulysses' penetration of the mythical Scylla and Charybdis, also in the Straits of Messina.[9] In most such cases, the hero is forewarned by an ally of the approaching danger, and makes appropriate sacrifices in order to receive divine aid to pass through the strait.

According to Jack Lindsay, the Symplegades and similar sites such as the Planctae functioned in early versions of the Argonautic epic as a world boundary, and the voyage beyond them, into the Ocean Stream, was a voyage beyond the physical world, bounded by time, and into the spirit world. There was also a political element in the myth's origins, of which the story from Dionysius that the rocks protect the local inhabitants may be a remembrance. Perhaps we are dealing with a memory of another Mediterranean blockade, that imposed by Troy and other cultures of Asia minor during the Mycenaean period, blocking Greek shipping through the Bosporus and into the Black Sea.[10]

This concept takes us back to an era when the Greek ecumene would have been a tiny enclave at the eastern end of the Mediterranean. The *Iliad* tells of the lifting of the blockade, and the earlier Argonautic cycle may refer to an earlier period when the Greeks raided the Black Sea region for gold and oil (the Golden Fleece has been identified as the fleece used to strain oil to remove its impurities). 'Lifting the blockade' involved sacking Troy, a feat which Hercules and Alexander were both later credited with.

The story of how the Trojan blockade was lifted was expressed in mythological terms. Pindar is among the earliest sources for the idea that the passage of the Argo through the Clashing Rocks 'killed' them - they never moved again. Apollonius (author of the

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western Greece. This movement shows the tendency to "push the Rocks into obscure regions as knowledge grew". Lindsay, *Gates*, 33.

[9] The Planctae are breached in the *Argonautica* (4. 907-979), with the aid of Hera. Apollonius of Rhodes, *The Voyage of Argo*, trans. E. V. Rieu, 2nd. ed. (1971), 171-73. The Argo breaches the Symplegades in 2. 532-606 (trans. E. V. Rieu, 87-89). The escape of Ulysses through Scylla and Charybdis and the Planctae is found in Homer's *Odyssey*, 12. 59; 22. 327 (cited in Lindsay, *The Clashing Rocks*, 7-8). Aeneas narrowly avoids the straits in *Aeneid*, 3. 653-670. Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. W. F. J. Knight (Harmondsworth, 1956), 95-96.

[10] Lindsay, *The Clashing Rocks*, 45 and passim. The idea that the death of the Symplegades expresses the lifting of the blockade in a mythologised form is found in P. Hermann, *Conquest by Man*, trans. M. BullockLondon, 1954), 97-98.

Argonautica) does not mention this belief, but it is found in the earlier *Library of Greek Mythology* of Apollodorus:

> So they [the Argonauts] watched until the rocks drew apart and then,
> by dint of vigorous rowing and Hera's help, they made it
> through...from that time forward the Symplegades were inactive, for it
> was fated that they would stop entirely when a ship penetrated them.[11]

The 'death' of the Symplegades may express an ancient Greek memory of the penetration through the blockade imposed by Troy. By the time Apollonius wrote the most famous version of the Argo epic (The *Argonautica*, written in the third century BC), the Black Sea and regions that lay beyond it were well within the known ecumene. If the Symplegades were ever conceived of as a world boundary, this belief was superseded by a belief in boundaries in more remote places in later times.

While the Symplegades appear to be a natural feature, there were reports of a wide variety of other man-made landmarks in the Bosporus region. On the rock on the European side stood an altar to Apollo, and before it was the 'sacred opening' of Hieron, where, according to the *Argonautica*, Jason erected altars and offered sacrifices to the Twelve Gods before heading through the dangerous strait. The altars erected by Jason here were a boundary landmark in a very standard sense, but unlike Alexander's altars, which symbolised the limit of his territory, the altars of Jason were accompanied by a prayer to be allowed to continue in safety. Jason's voyage extended the ecumene by rendering a natural obstacle inert, and replacing it with a sign of Greek religious authority.[12]

Stories concerning the Symplegades and similar rocks are found in later geographers (Strabo, Pliny), but in most of these, they are a simple pair of inert rocks at the entry to the Black Sea and no particular mythical quality attaches to them. Strabo, who was concerned with rationalising Homeric geography, wrote a revealing passage on the cause of the myth:

> Always drawing on his fables from certain real facts, his [Homer's]
> Planctae are modelled on the Cyanae. He describes them as dangerous
> rocks...on which account they are called the Symplegades. He adds to
> this [the account of] Jason's navigating through the midst of them. The
> Straits of the Pillars [of Hercules] and Sicily [Messina], likewise,
> suggested to him the fable of the Planctae. (*Geography*, 2. 2. 12, trans.
> Hamilton and Falconer, vol. 1, 224)

Pliny provided a sober physical explanation, noting that the Symplegades are

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[11] Apollodorus, *Library of Greek Mythology* (1. 124-126), trans. K. Aldrich (Lawrence, 1975), 23-24.

[12] For landmark structures on the Bosporus, see Smith, *Dictionary*, 'Bosporus'. Jason's altar to the 'Blessed Twelve' is mentioned in Apollonius, *The Voyage of Argo* (2. 530f), trans. Rieu, 87.

the islands about which there is the tradition that they once clashed
together: the story is due to the fact that they are separated by so small
a gap that...when the line of sight [of the viewer] became slightly
oblique they gave the appearance of coming together. (*Natural
History*, 4. 13, trans. Rackham, vol. 2, 191)

Mela also describes two real islands at the mouth of the Bosporus, and notes that they
were once believed to have come together (2. 7). By the first century AD, very few
geographical accounts repeat the myth, and the major use for the theme was poetic,
witnessed by accounts in Virgil, Ovid, Flaccus and others (Lindsay, *Gates*, 24-31).

Dionysius' passages on the pillars of Hercules and the Symplegades give us an insight
into the survival of local, archaic viewpoints within Classical geography. His
repetition of fables which were being dismissed by other authors may have been a
product of his local Alexandrian background, as opposed to the more orthodox central
views of Strabo and Pliny. The *Periegesis* was also based on the *periplus* tradition,
and was generally more influenced by 'paradoxography' than the work of Pliny and
Strabo.

As I have stated, the Symplegades did not survive as an accepted geographical feature
into the medieval period. I turn now to look at another Classical belief which was also
unknown in later times: the survival of belief in the western pillars with reference to
these other motifs.

The Northern Pillars of Hercules

Pillars of Hercules were also positioned in the Far North by various writers. The very
early *periplus* by Pytheas (third century BC) describes the pillars, encountered on a
series of islands somewhere in the northern ocean:

There are columns on them [the islands] dedicated to Herakles,
temples, and altars. According to the natives, foreign seamen came
there, made their sacrifices, and left the island right away, since it is
considered a sacrilege to tarry there...There is also a long chain of cliffs
and sandy shore, protecting the land and waters behind it, called "the
way of Herakles."[13]

Pytheas' geography of the northern ocean is very hard to decipher, and it may be that
this in fact refers to the Straits of Gibraltar in a misplaced position in the Far North.
More concrete evidence of this belief is found in Tacitus. In a telling passage from
Germania, he mentions the belief that Hercules had placed pillars in regions other than
the Far West:

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[13] Cited in G. Kish, *A Sourcebook in Geography* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), 70-71.

> We [Roman explorers] have even ventured upon the Northern Ocean
> itself, and rumour has it that there are Pillars of Hercules in the far
> north. It may be that Hercules did go there; or perhaps it is only that
> we by common consent ascribe any remarkable achievement in any
> place to his famous name. Drusus Germanicus did not lack the courage
> of the explorer, but Ocean forbade further research into its own secrets
> or those of Hercules. Since then noone has attempted it. It has been
> judged more pious and reverent to believe in the alleged exploits of
> gods than to establish the true facts.[14]

Alby Stone points out that this passage may be a reference to "earlier examples of the
[belief in a] cosmic pillar among the Germanic tribes", and it is true that sacred pillars
play a role in both Germanic and Celtic lore (usually as the *axis mundi* or world
centre, rather than as a boundary).[15] The Roman habit of relating Germanic gods with
Roman counterparts is clear from several other passages in Tacitus regarding Hercules
and other Graeco-Roman deities worshipped in Germany:

> The Germans, like many other peoples, are said to have been visited by
> Hercules, and they sing of him as...they are about to engage in battle.

Tacitus then provides us with evidence of a belief in the altars of Ulysses in the north-
west:

> Ulysses also, in all those fabled wanderings of his, is supposed by some
> to have reached the northern sea and visited German lands...They even
> add that an altar consecrated by Ulysses and inscribed also with the
> name of his father Laertes was discovered long ago at this same place
> [Asciburgium, on the Rhine], and that certain barrows with monuments
> upon them and bearing Greek inscriptions still exist on the borders of
> Germany...I do not intend to argue either for or against these
> assertions; each man must accept or reject them as he feels inclined.
> (*Germania*, 3, trans. Mattingly, 103)

These passages are further evidence for the existence of a number of levels of belief
within Classical geographical mythology. Tacitus' scepticism is not unusual for a well-
educated Roman citizen - but his should not be seen as the only view. The Empire in
his era comprised a wide variety of cultures, and many of these outlying regions seem
to have held on to local geographical myths. Also, it would appear that piety among
the Roman elite, and perhaps also the panegyric technique of comparing Roman rulers
with culture-heroes, kept myths of Hercules and other deities alive in the main cities as
well as in the outlying regions of the empire.

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[14] Tacitus, *Germania* (34), in *The Agricola and the Germania*, trans. H. Mattingly, rev. S. Handford
(Harmondsworth, 1971), 130.

[15] A. Stone, *A Splendid Pillar: Images of the Axis Mundi in the Grail Romances* (Loughborough, 1992), 9.

Conclusions

The repeated use of the same mythological pattern - 'a culture-hero sails through a narrow strait in order to explore and conquer a new region' - may have stemmed from the shamanistic rituals discussed by Lindsay, and may once have been an expression of cultural tensions between various groups in Archaic Greek society. Yet it also seems likely that it grew out of the recognition of specific factors in the political geography of the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions. Neither of these original factors were relevant to later Classical authors, and so the role of the pillars in the Olympian - Cthonic struggle, the placement of the Symplegades in the Bosporus and the pillars of Hercules in the Far North became mythological remnants, and then fell quickly into disuse in the Christian era.

In this study, there is no value in attempting to trace a single, factual source for the pillar myth, and nor is it profitable to seek a uniform cultural 'meaning' for such a simple motif used by such a wide variety of cultures over such a long period. The use of a symbol or a series of ideas within a given era must always be explained with reference to the intellectual and historical situation of that era.

The tendency of the medieval doctrine of *auctoritas* to perpetuate earlier patterns of thought does not countermand this rule. We have seen repeated examples of the scepticism Classical authors such as Pliny and Tacitus held for stories of ancient heroes and their monuments, and reminders from Strabo that factual and historical reasons should be sought for the truth behind the founding of the western pillars and the Symplegades. The influence that such writers held in the medieval period does not seem to have prompted medieval writers and cartographers to dismiss the western pillars in a similar fashion. The survival of local viewpoints within Roman geography, witnessed by the nature of Dionysius' work, perpetuated legendary ideas concerning the western pillars, which were adapted by medieval authors in combination with the more factual accounts in Strabo and Pliny.

The city of Colchis is found on the Hereford map, as a reminder of Jason's penetration of the Black Sea region. Scylla and Charybdis, as well as a mermaid probably representing the Siren, also remained part of medieval geographical lore. The Bosporus on the Hereford Map is well and truly open, pictured almost as wide as the Black Sea itself. Other maps contain similar reminders of Argonautic and Homeric geography. The Symplegades, however, are nowhere to be found, nor are they mentioned in standard Anglo-Norman geographical sources.

The northern or north-western pillars of Hercules make no definite appearance on any map in the corpus, or any other I have seen. The maker of the twelfth-century "Anonymous" map may have positioned the pillars of Hercules in the north-west as a result of the accounts in Tacitus, wishing to position the pillars of Hercules here, but being unwilling to do this, as he had already placed them in their normal position in the west. The FitzWilliam map does include 'Gades' in the north, but this is probably due to the complex orientation of that map, rather than any influence from Tacitus.

Conversely, belief in the western pillars did not die out, and they maintained a stable place in geographical thought for fifteen hundred years after Pliny and others had

dismissed Hercules' deeds and similar stories as fables. The survival of the western pillars (contrasted with the 'death' of the Symplegades) can be explained on two levels. Firstly, the straits of Gibraltar are genuinely the end of the ecumene, and continued to form a realistic limit to westward sea travel throughout the Roman and medieval periods. Secondly, the 'Gades' of Hercules became a template for other boundary markers in other locations, and the symbolic role of the western pillars was to a large degree connected with a pattern of worldly symmetry. I address the second point in the next section.

2 - The Pillars of Hercules in the Medieval Period

Early Medieval Views

The pillars of Hercules marked the western extreme of one of the major latitude parallels of the Classical world - the 'diaphragm' line, which ran from Gades through Messina, Rhodes, Athens, the Taurus ranges and on to the Far East. The use of the pillars in the work of Ptolemy and in the Peutinger table, as well as in the Antonine Itinerary, was probably more a result of the basic use of the place-name to mean 'the end of the west' than of any real interest or belief in the legend.[16]

As mentioned earlier, the western pillars of Hercules are discussed by a number of medieval geographical sources, yet very few of these give any information on the myth behind them, simply noting their name and position. For example, all Orosius says concerning the pillars of Hercules is that "the Western Ocean forms the boundary of Europe in Spain at the very point where the Pillars of Hercules stand near the Gades Islands..." (*Seven Books*, 2. 1, trans. Raymond, 35). Similarly perfunctory treatments, based largely on Orosius, can be found in the thirteenth-century encyclopaedia *On the Properties of Things*, Albertus Magnus' *De Natura Locorum*, and other medieval tracts.

Given the general nature of Classical and medieval discussions of the western pillars, the consistent placement of this icon on medieval maps may be likened to the drawing of Greenwich and the central meridian on modern maps. Another useful analogy is to liken the name 'The Pillars of Hercules' to modern place names such as Finisterre, Land's End, Terra del Fuego or the Cape of Good Hope. Place-names which once had symbolic meaning do not necessarily disappear as soon as the initial reason for them is no longer relevant. The pillars had become a metaphor for 'the Far West', and while no real interest in the myth is evident in either maps or texts, there was a persistent use of the pillar icon, the place-name, or both.

Jordanes (sixth century) provides an interesting account of the geography of the world in his *Origins and Deeds of the Goths*, including a section on Spanish geography derived from Orosius but differing in many details. He makes no mention of the pillars, but says that the western ocean "has...certain islands known to almost everyone...And there are two not far from the Strait of Gades, one the Blessed and the

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[16] Antonine Itinerary cited above. For the western pillars on the Peutinger Table, see *Itineraria Picta*, ed. Levi, Seg. 1, although the area is damaged. The far western section of the Peutinger Table is reconstructed in Miller, *Mappaemundi*, vol. 6, Plate 7.

other the Fortunate. Although some reckon as islands of the ocean the twin promontories of Galicia [north-west Spain] and Lusitania [Portugal], where are still to be seen the Temple of Hercules on one and Scipio's monument on the other, yet...they belong rather to the continent of Europe..."[17]

It would appear from this passage (and the references to a number of other pillars and altars in Spain and Africa, cited in chapter 3) that in the early medieval period, the western pillars of Hercules were considered to be one of a number of such landmark sites in the region. Their fame outlasted all the others, no doubt due to their inclusion in Orosius and Isidore, who discuss them as continental boundary markers.

Isidore of Seville (seventh century) mentions the pillar in his *Etymologies*, noting that Hercules' pillars could be seen on the island of Gades, and the Phoenician origin of the name, which he gives as meaning 'sorrounded by sea'. The inclusion of this idea in Isidore's work could only have furthered the initial confusion caused by the report of the same error given by Dionysius.[18]

In another passage, concerning Calpe, Isidore notes that the mountain Calpe stands at the end of the earth, and conflates this mountain with Atlas. He then quotes from Lucan's *Pharsalia* (1. 555), in order to support this view. This is followed by a description of the way in which Mt. Atlas was named after the first king of Africa, and brother of Prometheus. The king is said to have invented the science of astrology (14. 8. 17). The same story is found in later texts such as the *Imago Mundi* of Pierre d'Ailly, who notes that the mountain was thus called a 'pillar of the sky' (*Imago Mundi*, 38).

Isidore's confusion between Calpe and Atlas is not genuinely supported by anything in Lucan. The Lucan passage in question regards an enormous tidal wave, which washed against "Hesperiam Calpen summumque inpleuit Atlanta" i.e. "Hesperian Calpe, and drenched the heights of Mount Atlas", thus keeping the two places quite separate. Isidore's conflation of the two ideas is probably responsible for the inclusion of the name Atlas in the position where Calpe would normally be on some medieval world maps (see below).

Arabic Views

After a brief interlude during which the Visigoths controlled Spain and North Africa, the region was controlled by the Moors from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries, once again rendering European (Christian) access to the straits difficult. Travel from Rome and the Near East through to England and Scandinavia was largely conducted by land, and the straits themselves remained to a large degree a 'world barrier' throughout the medieval period.

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[17] Jordanes, *Origins and Deeds of the Goths* (1. 7), trans. C. C. Mierow, 2nd. ed. (Princeton, 1915), 52-3.

[18] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum Libri XX* (14. 6. 7), in *Patrologia Cursus Completus*, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1844-1864), vol. 82, 74-727, esp. book 14. See also *De Natura Rerum* 48. 2, and also 44. 2, in which Isidore discusses Gades as a similar kind of location to Messina. The edition consulted is that edited and translated by J. Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville: Traité de la Nature* (Bordeaux, 1960).

The Straits of Gibraltar had an important role to play in medieval Arabic cosmology. Karen Pinto presented a large number of early medieval Arabic maps at the International History of Cartography Conference in 1999. On many of these, a large triangular island called *Jabal al-Qilaal* or 'the Mountain of Qilaal' is shown at the mouth of the Mediterranean, acting as a blockade to westward expansion.[19] The precise location intended by this island is difficult to establish - Gibraltar (*Jebel Tariq*) appears on medieval Arabic maps on the Spanish coastline, represented by a separate icon from *Jabal al-Qilaal*. Cadiz, or *asnaam Hirkil* (the pillars of Hercules) was also treated separately in Arabic geogrphy from the mythical island. Pinto concludes that the island was "a conflation of a number of different ideas, related to but not exclusively relying upon that of the pillars of Hercules".

It is reported in the work of the twelfth-century geographer al-Zuhri that there was a tower in Cadiz during the Arabic occupation, which was confused with the pillars of Hercules that were also thought to stand in this location. Atop the tower stood a statue of a man, with his arm extended outwards, pointing to the Straits of Gibraltar. The tower was destroyed in 1145 in a failed attempt to excavate the foundations in order to get the treasure that was reported to lie beneath it.

It is easy to see how local observers might have confused this with the image of Hercules, pointing to the site of his mythical passage. As we will see (below), Arabic geographers appear to have believed that the western pillars were statues, much like their eastern counterparts.

General Patterns of Representation of the Pillars of Hercules in Medieval Cartography

As revealed by the landmark tables (figs. 2-6), the placement of this landmark icon is both constant in terms of position and highly variable in terms of treatment. The pillars of Hercules are always positioned somewhere in the straits of Gibraltar, but the actual representation of them varies from map to map.

The mountain that Strabo called 'Calpe' is the rock of Gibraltar (from the Arabic *Jebel Tariq*), and 'Abylix' or Abyla is the mountain *Jebel Musa* in Morocco. Both of these are found on Anglo-Norman maps in connection with the pillars of Hercules. Gades is of course modern-day Cadiz, and is not an island these days, but a peninsula. The old Classical confusion between Gades and the pillars is present in the depictions of the pillars in the map corpus - in many cases, the two are treated as though they were the same thing.

The Cotton map shows two unnamed islands, which are shaped like pillars, from which we must presume a conflation of Gades and the two mountains. The Sawley shows these islands as triangles, connected to the shore - as though they were both

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[19] K. Pinto, " 'Surat Bahr al-Rum': The Mediterranean in the Medieval Muslim Cartographic Imagination", paper delivered at the 18th International Conference on the History of Cartography, Athens, Thursday 15th July 1999. Karen Pinto is currently a postgraduate student in the Department of History, Columbia University, New York. For the statue, see al-Zuhri, *Kitab al-Ja'rafiyara*, ed. M. Hadj-Sadok (1968), 239-40, and other references provided by Karen Pinto and Tom Goodrich in a discussion on the MapHist discussion list, November 4-11 1999, at MAPHIST@HARVARDA. HARVARD. EDU

islands and mountains. The Arnstein Bible map labels the Straits of Gibraltar as *Gades*, and the two pillars are shown on either side. However, the African one is labelled *athlas* instead of Abyla.[20]

Another confusion was between Mt. Abyla and Mt. Acho, one of the seven mountains surrounding the city of Ceuta (formerly Cetta, the name being derived from the number of mountains). Thirteenth-century Italian sources name the Straits of Gibraltar as 'the Strait of Septa', and these texts are thought to have influenced Dante's use of the name Ceuta in the account of Odysseus' western voyage in the *Inferno*, described below.[21] Maps such as the Cotton, Hereford and Ebstorf include the inscription *septem montes*, but generally in a separate context to the pillars.

On the Munich Isidore map, the pillars of Hercules are shown as three islands, labelled *gades*, rather than the usual two. Gautier Dalché cites this number of pillars as evidence of influence from the *Descriptio Mappe Mundi* (166-7). In the far eastern section, three pillars of Alexander are shown, labelled *columnae alexandri*, pointing to an interrelationship between the eastern and western pillars. There are also three western pillars on the Psalter map, and the 'Cades' map.

The Hereford map shows the pillars standing on an island, and they are named the Gades of Hercules, but are also called *Calpe* and *Abinna*. (The misspelling of Abyla as *Abinna* by Solinus was repeated by the Hereford map maker and in other sources). The two Hereford map inscriptions read: *Gades Herculis* near the pillars, and *Calpe et Abinna Gades Herculis esse creduntur* on the mountains. Bevan and Phillot note that the acceptance of the pillars as the two mountains seems to have been combined with the idea of real pillars on the island (*Medieval Geography*, 112-13). Strangely, two mountains called *Calpe* and *Abinna* on this map are positioned on the wrong sides of the strait.

The Vercelli map labels the area as *Galides*, a corrupt form of Gades. The area is badly damaged. On the other main thirteenth century map, the Ebstorf, the island of Gades is shown as a large area of southern Spain, and contains the pillars represented as buildings, in addition to a number of other cities. An accompanying inscription again associates the pillars with Calpe and Abylla.

The fourteenth-century Matthew Paris world map labels the two mountains as *Gades Herculis*, while the St. Denis map shows two mountains simply called *Gades*. By this period, *gades* had completely taken over from *columnae* as the appropriate cartographic terminology. The following section examines how this change occurred, and what it meant in terms of medieval perceptions of the original pillars of Hercules myth.

The word "Gades" in Medieval Maps and Texts

The word Gades is of Phoenician origin, originally meaning 'hedge', or 'enclosure', and probably alluded to the fact that the island was largely surrounded by water.

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[20] On this point see also von den Brincken's analysis of the Psalter recto map, *Fines Terrae*, 88 (Africa, item 11).

[21] Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, trans. C. Singleton, 2 vols. (London, 1971), vol. 2, 466.

Medieval writers followed this definition. There seems to be no connection between the concept of enclosure expressed by the original word and the concept of boundary symbolised by the landmark which was thought to be positioned there.

On most maps in the Corpus, the word 'Gades' seems to be synonymous with 'pillars', a transition in usage which was explained by Ralph (otherwise Ranulph) Higden in the fourteenth century. Describing the Isle of Gades, he says that it was

> where Hercules putte marvellous pyllors as a memorialle in the extremitie of the worlde, which be callede Gades, after the name of that yle. *Hug. capitulo Gades.* Wherof a consuetude [precedent] was taken, that pyllers sette of [by] myghty men in those places which myght not be paste [passed] were callede Gades.[22]

The Latin word 'Gades' was not in frequent use as anything other than a proper name until the fourteenth century. Its definition, as given by Higden (and earlier by Hugh of Pisa), places it in an unusual category, being neither a place-name nor a common noun, but a word which could only function as a prefix to an unusual kind of proper name, i.e. the 'Gades of Hercules', or other applications of the theme. There are a number of examples from maps and literature which are discussed here.[23]

A passage from a German redaction of Mandeville directly links the landmark icons with a system of directional symbolism derived from the sun. The two sets of pillars are used to symbolise 'pure' cardinal directions, and are associated with each other, forming a scheme of opposition:

> So he set up his token there as far as he had got, like as Hercules did on the Spanish sea towards the sunset. And the token that Alexander set up towards the sunrising, hard by Paradise, hight [is called] Alexander's Gades, and that other hight Hercules's Gades: and these be great Pillars of Stone, that stand upon lofty mountains, for an eternal Sign and Token that no man shall pass beyond those pillars.[24]

The close linking of the eastern 'Gades' with paradise in this passage reminds us that a pair of eastern 'gates' was indeed thought to exist in the Far East, blocking the return of Man into the Garden of Eden, and guarded by an Angel with a flaming sword (Genesis 3. 24). These are labelled *paradisi porte* on the Hereford map, and depicted as a door in the wall surrounding paradise. In this regard they show great similarity to

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[22] Ralph Higden, *Polychronicon*, in *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland in the Middle Ages* 41, ed. C. Babbington, 9 vols. (London, 1865), vol. 1, 305. The italicised reference is to the *Magnis Derivationibus* of Hugh, a bishop of Pisa in the thirteenth century. The translation is by an anonymous copyist in the early fifteenth century.

[23] The word Gades appears to have no formal connection to the English word "gates", which is of Germanic origin. Gades also has no usages listed by the OED until the sixteenth century. In the *Polychronicon* it is glossed as "compassed" in one manuscript and "byclypped" in another, both glosses referring to the fact that it is largely surrounded by water. These glosses are given despite Higden's far more unusual gloss in the text itself.

[24] Cited in "John de Marignolli's Recollections of Eastern Travel", in *Cathay and the Way Thither*, trans. and ed. H. Yule, vol. 3, 219.

the Caspian and Nubian Gates discussed in chapter 7. In this passage, and in the Marignolli passage from chapter 2, the location of the pillars and the location of paradise is treated as the same - both are metaphors for 'the furthest east'.

This solar symbolism in the passage might be based in part on the idea of the 'Gates of the Sun', a pair of openings at either end of the ecumene through which the light of the sun passed each day. Mela's description of the eastern gate says that no man may live nearby due to the intense heat. This tale found its way into Isidore's work, and was well known to later writers.[25]

The eastern and western 'Gades' appear to have been the most well known, and there are no accounts known to me of other 'Gades' in literature of the medieval period. However, on the 'Anonymous' map, the Gades of Bacchus are positioned in the north-west in addition to those of Hercules and Alexander in the west and east. On this map, the 'Gades' are written around the inside of the inner rim, while most of the other features are written horizontally. This way of showing the 'Gades' suggests that they were thought of as having as much in common with elemental features such as the winds and cardinal directions as they did with normal places. On this map, the 'Gades' are not quite on the cardinal extremes, but they are certainly suggestive of gateways from the 'inner' physical world to the 'outer' elemental world portrayed on this map.

In the twelfth-century 'Gades' map, four 'cades' icons are found directly on the four cardinal extremes. These are, clockwise from the top, *cades alexandri*, *cades gamel*, *cades herculis* and *cades Varacis* (only *Varacis* is given a captal letter on the map). All four are positioned at the extreme cardinal points, and, like their counterparts on the 'Anonymous map', appear to be as much a part of the rim or elemental border of the map as they are a feature of the geography of the real world. I have referred to these two maps as the strongest examples of the use of the word 'Gades' to mean boundary markers in other locations. The concept of the worldly symmetry they present is discussed in the final chapter. Suggested identifications of *gamel* and *Varacis* are found at the end of chapter 7.[26]

The two examples quoted above (from Higden and the Mandeville redaction) are notable exceptions to the general rule that medieval authorities gave little detail on the western pillars in their texts. Both exceptions deal with the function of the pillars in a pattern of worldly symmetry. Another example of this theme is found in Chaucer's *Monk's Tale*. The Monk (who discusses both Hercules and Alexander as examples of the fickle nature of fortune) says that a writer called "Trophee" has described Hercules' pillars at "bothe the worldes endes."

"Trophee", the writer, has not been certainly identified. The name may simply be a misunderstanding of the noun *trophea*, which means 'pillars'. It may also be a play on

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[25] Mela, *De Situ Orbis* (3. 7), trans. Golding, 84: "...there are the mouthes, called the Gates of the Sunne, so uninhabitable, that as soone as men enter into them, the outragious heat...smothereth them by and by." For the reference to Isidore, *Etymologies* (13. 1), and Aethicus, *Cosmographia* (18), see Bevan and Phillot, *Medieval Geography*, intr. ix.

[26] The map is discussed by Arentzen (*Imago Mundi*, 192), who unfortunately does not identify the northern and southern sites.

the surname of Guido de Colonne, who included an account of the pillars of Hercules in his *Historiae Destructionis Troiae*, a work Chaucer knew. The idea of pillars at each end of the world also features in an Irish version of the destruction of Troy, and in commentaries on Walter Map's *Epistola Valerii ad Ruffinum*, which were both works known to Chaucer.[27]

In summary, I suggest that the principal interest in the western pillars of Hercules during the medieval period concerned their possible relationship with similar structures in other parts of the ecumene. This point has been made briefly by Arentzen, who notes that the northern and eastern altars are related to the western pillars and that the idea of pillars in other locations may have been derived from the original western icon (*Imago*, 192). I take this view further: if medieval maps do show a pattern of symmetry in their use of boundary landmarks, the motivation for the creation of such a system will indicate much about the nature of medieval maps as a whole. I return to this argument in chapter 7, which deals with similar patterns of symmetry in the northern and southern frontiers.

3 - Additions to the symbolic meaning of the Pillars of Hercules in Medieval and Renaissance Thought

Death of Hercules in Spain

According to the Roman historian Sallust, Hercules died in Spain shortly after completing his conquest of the region. Hercules' army of Medes, Persians and Armenians broke apart, and became Mauretanians (Moors) and Numidians (Nomads). Sallust does not mention Hercules' erection of the pillars, and his curious historical ethnography of the region differs from what was otherwise known - other Classical texts retain the older idea that Hercules had died in Greece and was buried on Mt. Oeta (see for example the extract from Lucan in chapter 3).

Medieval geographers adopted Sallust's version of African geography, and medieval T-in-O maps of the region often follow Sallust's ethnography, and many of these show the site of Hercules' death in Spain (Edson, *Mapping Time*, 18-21). Moreover, geographers like Roger Bacon (*Opus Majus*, trans. Burke, 335) and Pierre d'Ailly (*Imago Mundi*, 32) repeated Sallust's account of Hercules' conquest and his subsequent death in their geographical works. The founding of the western pillars may have taken on a new meaning in medieval thought - Hercules, like Alexander, had never made it back to his homeland in Greece, but had died shortly after reaching the outer limits of the known world.

The association of the boundary pillars with death operates on a number of levels. Firstly, we have so far seen many instances in which the conquest landmark also functions as the tomb of the ruler in question. The tradition that altars and other landmarks were erected on the site of the death of famous rulers appears to have been quite common. Jordanes mentions that a certain war-leader Decius and his sons were all killed by the Goths in Moesia, and that the "place is to-day called the Altar of Decius, because he there offered sacrifices to idols before the battle" (*Origins*, 18,

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[27] *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 243, and see notes to lines 2117-18 on page 931.

trans. Mierow, 80). The place would doubtless have been remembered as a site of triumph had Decius won, but instead served as a memorial of his death.

The second link between landmarks and death is that oracles concerning the death of the ruler often occur at landmark sites (see chapter 7). Finally, the Far West was often conceived of as the place of death and judgement in Christian thought, and the pillars took on some of these associations - this becomes particularly evident in Dante's treatment of the theme, discussed below.

Alexander and the West

As previously stated, the western pillars were inscribed with *non* or *nec plus ultra*, and passing beyond them was considered the prerogative of the divine. In the medieval period, this trope underwent various changes and developments. 'Going beyond' the pillars was considered by some medieval writers to be a hubristic act. Later, it was to become a sign of political power and authority for Spanish conquerors in the New World.

A fourteenth-century translation of Guido's *Historiae Destructionis Troiae* confuses the western pillars with Alexander's march to the east in an interesting manner. The *Gest Hystoriale of the Destruction of Troy* discusses Hercules in reference to a variety of other heroes, and mentions that

> Tow pyllers he pight in a place lowe,
> Vppon Gades groundes that he gotton hadde:
> Too whiche pyllers priste as prouyt is before,
> The mighty Massidon Kyng maister of All,
> The Emperour Alexaunder Aunterid to come:
> He wan all the world & at his wille aght. [28]

> [He set up two pillars in an entrance place, upon the Isle of Gades,
> which was as far as he had got: Alexander, King of Macedon and
> Master of all, ventured to these noble pillars, as has been said before:
> He conquered all the world, and possessed whatever he wished.]

The story of Alexander's eastern march seems to have become associated with the western pillars in this text, as though Alexander had outdone Hercules in the west as well as the east. This idea is unusual. In most other texts, Alexander is said to have made plans to go to the Far West, which were never fulfilled. Thus, the pillars of Hercules function as a reminder of Alexander's failure to complete his world conquest by conquering all four of the cardinal extremes. For example, Walter de Châtillon notes that

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[28] *The 'Gest Hystoriale' of the Destruction of Troy...translated from Guido de Colonna's Hystoria Troiana*, ed. A. Panton and D. Donaldson (London, 1870), 11. The word 'lowe' in the first line probably does not mean 'low', which would run totally contrary to the normal myth, but instead means 'entrance' - see 549.

> The hapless man, unaware of what lay in the future, was of a mind
> to...proceed beyond the limits of Spain, where Rumor reported the
> pillars of Hercules to be, and to force the western sun to submit to him
> in war.[29]

Of course, this was never to occur. Alexander's failure to conquer the west was noted by both Roman and medieval authors as a reason why his empire collapsed. While three of the four extremes were marked by his name, the western landmark remained the site of Hercules' fame, a constant reminder of Alexander's failure to outdo his predecessor in all four areas of the ecumene.

The Western Pillars in Dante

As noted earlier, the lack of any detailed description of the western pillars in English sources necessitates an examination of works from other parts of Europe in order to gauge European notions of what this landmark may have meant within Christian cosmology. A fine account of the western pillars is found in the *Divine Comedy* of the Italian poet Dante. Ulysses and Diomedes are both imprisoned in a pillar of flame in the seventh circle of Hell for having passed Hercules' bounds. Ulysses, upon being questioned by Dante and Virgil, tells of his

> longing...to gain experience of the world, and of human vice and worth.
> But I put forth on the deep open sea with one vessel only...The one
> shore and the other I saw as far as Spain, as far as Morocco...I and my
> companions were old and slow when we came to that narrow outlet
> where Hercules set up his markers that men should not pass
> beyond...'O brothers', I said, 'who through a hundred thousand
> dangers have reached the west, to this so brief vigil of our senses that
> remains us, choose not to deny experience, following the sun, of the
> world that has no people. Consider your origin: you were not made to
> live as brutes, but to pursue virtue and knowledge. (*Inferno*, 26, trans.
> Singleton, vol. 1, 277-279)

The presence of Hercules' markers in the straits has spurred on Ulysses to travel beyond them, out of both curiosity and pride. (Dante has mentioned his own need to defend himself against the same sin earlier in the canto: "I curb my genius more than I am wont, lest it run where virtue does not guide it.") In a similar fashion to many of Alexander's speeches, Ulysses here presents curiosity as a virtue, and appeals to his crew's sense of shame, arguing that only proud and valiant men, not beasts, can proceed into the unknown. He and his men follow the course of the western sun out into the Atlantic, eventually reaching the other pole, and are shipwrecked against the mountain there.[30]

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[29] *Alexandreis,* trans. Pritchard, 222. This is based directly on Curtius Rufus, *History of Alexander* (10. 1. 17). The idea that Alexander had wished to conquer the west after returning from the east is well known in other medieval texts. For Alexander's failure to complete his empire, see G. Carey, *The Medieval Alexander*, 103-105.

[30] A very similar speech, including an allusion to the idea of circumnavigation, is found in the *Alexandreis*, 222f.

The thematic linking of curiosity with original sin provides the key to interpretation of this passage. Ulysses' desire to gain knowledge of human vice and worth is more than simple curiosity; it is desire for the knowledge of good and evil, expressed as a geographical metaphor. The *non plus ultra* may be interpreted as a type for God's proclamation not to eat the apple in paradise. Ulysses goes where he should not go, in order to acquire knowledge he should not have.

It would appear from this passage that Dante concedes Hercules' authority in establishing the world boundary, and considered the pagan *non plus ultra* efficacious within his Christian cosmology. Ulysses is damned for going beyond the pillars. The role of Hercules within the rest of Dante's poem is otherwise ambiguous, but Dante says that Alexander the Great resides on the third circle of hell, suffering for the sin of tyranny (*Inferno*, 12), and Jason also resides in hell, for the sin of deceit (*Inferno*, 18). We can assume that Dante had little sympathy for the plight of other explorers and would-be world-conquerors.

Why does a Christian writer such as Dante admit the effectiveness of the proclamations of a pagan hero? This question is one of the key issues of this study. Have the pillars of Hercules taken on some Christian connotation, symbolising the way in which people must curb their natural curiosity in order to achieve salvation? Perhaps the answer here is that Hercules is, like Alexander, an unwitting agent of God. Although the erection of the pillars is an act based on personal pride, and hence it is sinful, the *non plus ultra* declared on the pillars has been granted a place in Christian cosmology as a metaphor for the demands of God that humanity resist the temptations of the world.

Later Medieval Treatments

Thirteenth-century Italian poetry such as Dante's *Inferno* and Brunetto Latini's *Tresor* and *Tesoretto* deals with the western pillars of Hercules at considerably greater length than any English treatment in the same period. Latini writes in the *Tresor* that Calpe and Abyla were the mountains where "Hercules established his columns after conquering the entire earth", and in the *Tesoretto* he describes a journey to the Far West in which the famous columns are actually sighted.[31] The use of Classical poetry as source material was far more widespread in Italy during this period than in England, and the lack of any substantial treatment of the western pillars in English geographical sources may stem from the use of more scientific geographical material such as Pliny and Solinus by English writers.

A number of later medieval German sources cited by Arentzen (*Imago,* 192-196) such as Wolfram von Eschenbach, Sebastian Brant and Sebastian Münster do discuss the pillars with reference to the myth, but the passages are just as brief as the English sources mentioned above, and again reveal that the theme was thought worthy only of a basic account in the medieval period. One of Münster's views on the pillars is worth repeating, as he notes that the pillars of Hercules may be likened to similar structures,

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[31] These texts are both cited in Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, trans. C. Singleton (London, 1971), vol. 2, 466-67.

and that altars and pillars were used by kings in ancient times to mark out the borders of their kingdoms.[32]

It is rarely reported that the western pillars were statues like their eastern counterparts, although the fifteenth-century writer Pierre d'Ailly indicates that this belief may have been held by earlier Arabic writers:

> Hali says there were images on certain islands, all of which were held to be a sign that there was no habitation possible beyond those founded by Hercules. Hence they are designated the 'Gades' or 'Pillars of Hercules'. Some say that he placed figures in like manner in the Orient. Averroes...mentions these figures, saying that he saw them near Spain...[33]

In another section (chapter 52), d'Ailly gives the 'Gades' etymology in another form, arguing that the idols described by Hali and Averroes (two Arabic cosmologists) "were close to the passage of Hercules, by whom the idols were said to have been made. From this the 'gades' or columns took the name 'Hercules'" (trans. Keever, 34). He then goes on to relate that these statues were destroyed in 1051 by barbarian invaders. D'Ailly contrasts this with the more well-known view that the pillars were Calpe and Abyla, and that Hercules had cut a large mountain into two smaller ones, creating the Mediterranean. He then says: "However I place more confidence in the first story" (trans. Keever, 34).

D'Ailly's view that the pillars of Hercules were statues in Cadiz is similar to the original opinions of Strabo and Diodorus, but this idea was rare in the medieval period. Most other texts and maps did not attempt to distinguish between the Gaditian temple and the mountains, but combined the two ideas into a single icon.

'Bokes of old remembrance': Skelton's Disclaimer

Skelton's translation of Diodorus' *Library of History* contains a usage of the word 'Gades' previously discussed: "he pyght his pylers and made his boundes that he had ben so ferre trauaylled, and called those pylers Gades" (4. 18, trans. Skelton, 392). Diodorus does not in fact say this - the original Greek text translates as "he arrived at the ocean near Gadiera, where he set up his pillars on each of the two continents" (*Library*, 4. 18. 3, trans. Oldfather, vol. 2, 401). Skelton has adapted the medieval etymology of the pillars into his translation.

We have previously seen that Diodorus ended his section on the western pillars with the disclaimer: "On this question, however, it will be possible for every man to think as he may please" (*Library*, 4. 18. 7, trans. Oldfather, 403). Skelton's translation of this section turns this line into a lengthy passage on the nature of belief in wondrous geography.

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[32] Sebastian Münster (early sixteenth century), *Cosmography* (72), cited in Arentzen, *Imago*, 192.

[33] *Imago Mundi* (11), trans. E. Keever, 16. D'Ailly otherwise makes no mention of the eastern pillars, but he does report the idea of the north-eastern altars of Alexander (on the river Hypanis, in Scythia), 37.

> But alle these tradicions on the wonderful affayres of Hercules...we
> shall surrendre the credence therof vnto thestymaciouns of you that
> rede this our compilacioun - comprysyd in it none other thynge but
> suche as we hauve studyously ensereched [researched] in bokes of old
> remembrance...we now-a-dayes passe ferre the tapetes [surpass the
> limitations] of good maner and forme of humanyte, in that many, of
> ther wylful affectionat mynde, depraue [vilify] auncyent wryters that
> touche [describe] many thynges that seme to them incredyble for cause
> that theyr moche endulled witte can not atteyne...to the..knowlege of
> so hygh a processe...yet shall ye not discourage vs to put in
> remembraunce [of] as wonderful thynges as ony we haue
> recounted...accordynge as we fynde wreton in precedentys of formar
> recorde, how this sayd valyaunt Hercules made a werke of as
> wonderful operacioun as this...(*Library*, 4. 17, trans. Skelton, 394)

Skelton's defense of Diodorus is made on the basis that understanding the pillar myth
requires "the knowledge of so high a process", implying that a symbolic reading of the
myth was appropriate, one that could not be understood by those who took the myth
on face value. His fondness for antiquarian learning (also held by Caxton, Thomas
Twine, Arthur Golding and other early modern translators previously cited) cannot
have been shared by some of his other contemporaries, who attacked the supposed
falsity of Classical geographical myths, and thereby sought to extend the boundaries of
knowledge, by de-bunking ancient notions that lingered on well into the sixteenth
century.

The real change in the symbolism of the pillars, however, was due to a reshaping of the
old form, rather than a direct attack. For any symbol to thrive within the art and
literature of a given time and place, it must have relevance to other symbols and
thought processes When Columbus discovered America, the pillars as a boundary
ceased to be appropriate, and were re-integrated into art and literature by becoming a
gateway, rather than a barrier.

Afterword: 'Plus Ultra' - The Pillars of Charles the Fifth

One of the reasons that the western pillars are still well known today is that they were
adopted as a heraldic symbol by a variety of rulers in the early modern period. In the
same period as Skelton made his discaimer, Charles V of Spain incorporated the pillars
into his coat of arms, made in 1516, which bore the insignia *plus uoltre*. The 'non' or
'nec', denoting the Straits of Gibraltar as a boundary, was removed, symbolising the
expansion of European forces into the wider world. A number of Spanish Hapsburg
rulers continued the tradition. As well as being a symbolic assertion of territorial
control, Charles' reworking of the motto also linked him and all of his successors to
Hercules. For example, Philip IV of Spain had a series of the twelve labours of
Hercules painted in the Buen Retiro palace in Madrid, as pendants to a larger series of
paintings of the twelve great victories of the Spanish Crown.

The old symbolic structure of the ecumene was overwritten in the sixteenth century by
a new series of ideas - the limits of Hercules had been broken, but the memory of them

was still retained. They no longer functioned as a boundary, but as a gateway to European expansion. Arentzen refers to a variety of Italian, Spanish and Dutch maps from the middle of the sixteenth century which show the pillars on either side of the world - a world which now included America (*Imago*, 195-201).

The tradition was to continue into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the pillars were used on a variety of coins, medals, coats of arms and other emblems. They took on a variety of new meanings - they could stand for the Pope and the Emperor (the two 'swords' of the medieval political tradition), for the Indian and Spanish empires (the Two Worlds, or *Dos Mundos*), and sometimes the two Americas. It is even suggested that the origin of the American dollar sign is "that the two pillars became paired vertical bars, and their entwining ribbon [which bore the motto] became the s-shaped curve that binds them together."[34]

It is something of a historical irony that the western pillars were to take on such a wide variety of symbolic associations only after the Straits of Gibraltar had ceased to function as a valid geographical boundary. While they were frequently employed as a cartographic convention in the medieval period, there is little evidence that medieval geographical writers gave much thought to their symbolic meaning - they certainly did not form part of a narrative tradition in the same way that Alexander's eastern pillars did.

The adoption of the western pillars as an heraldic symbol by Charles V is another example of the idea expressed in the second chapter concerning Marignolli's pillar - such symbolism will only remain in use if it is made relevant by modernised usage. Concepts like 'the end of the habitable earth' and 'the gateway to the outer ocean' became redundant in geographical thought, as the ocean had been crossed, and new territory conquered. The pillars of Hercules took on a new role by becoming symbols of colonial and economic expansion, and functioned in European thought as a gateway to the New World.

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[34] J. T. Lanman, *Glimpses of History from Old Maps* (Tring, 1989), 80.

CHAPTER SIX - THE CORNERS OF THE WORLD: Studies in the Use of Quadripartite Cosmology in Medieval Art and Literature

Introduction

One of the central aims of this study is to explore the idea that the positioning of landmarks in the four corners of the earth aligned them with the quadripartite system of physical lore outlined in the introduction. The basic idea is that conquest landmarks could be representative of a 'pure' cardinal direction, as they were thought of as the furthest point attainable in that direction, and thus came to take on some of the elemental or spiritual properties associated with that direction.

The precise ways in which conquest landmarks functioned as quadripartite elemental symbols have been introduced in the previous chapter in the study of the word 'Gades', and is also referred to again in the next two chapters. I will not be dealing directly with this issue in this chapter, except in the conclusion, where I outline a proposed system of correspondences between boundary landmarks and various elemental properties.

The first section of this chapter is designed to provide some background to medieval directional symbolism, especially that based around the human body, and to explain some of the tensions and paradoxes in this body of lore. The systems of quadripartite symbolism used in the medieval period were syncretised from a variety of conflicting Graeco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian sources, and are thus complex and have a variety of internal inconsistencies.

In the second section, I will present a series of close studies of a number of texts, maps and diagrams. The purpose of these studies is to show a variety of ways in which the quadripartite division of space and the elemental properties of the cardinal directions influenced medieval geographical conceptions of the ecumene. These ideas were also instrumental in creating conceptions of smaller spaces, such as cities or temples, as microcosmic metaphors for the larger world. Much of this will involve an examination of the use of the word 'compass' to describe such quadripartite structures.

1 - An outline of the development of orientation symbolism

Astrological and Anthropomorphic symbolism

Two main views have been put forward concerning the development of circular, quadripartite symbolic schemes in a wide variety of cultures. The 'astronomical' view claims that orientation symbolism is mainly a product of observing the position of the rising sun, the setting sun, the pole star, and the sun at midday, and labelling these east, west, north and south respectively. As three of these directions are based on the position of the sun, they are subject to seasonal variation, and also vary from culture to culture, according to geographical location.

The 'anthropocentric' view argues that the four-part scheme was derived from the symmetry of the human body, providing humans with a natural sense of left, right, front and back. Linguistic analysis has shown that in most Indo-European languages, east seems to have been the original primary direction, and that words for east and

west are usually derived from the nomenclature of the sun (sunrise, sunset, etc.), whereas words for north and south are derived from the directional symbolism of the body (left, right). This pattern is found in Celtic and Germanic languages as well as in Greek and Latin. Initially, east was associated with 'front' in almost all European and Near-Eastern cultures. As the main religions developed specific local sacred sites, the 'front' direction was often fixed on local objects, such as mountains and cities. In many cases, 'east' was still used as a secondary sacred direction.

The 'anthropocentric' view is certainly the most appropriate to discussions of the directional symbolism of medieval world maps, most of which has little to do with astrology. This will be made particularly clear in chapter 8, in which I will discuss the various depictions of the body of Christ aligned along the two main lines of the world map. However, as we have seen in previous chapters, the locations of the rising and setting sun also played a role in medieval directional symbolism. Most of the following section thus concerns a combination of anthropocentric and solar symbolism.

Graeco-Roman Directional Symbolism - patterns of eschatology and ethnography

The ancient Greeks, and subsequently the Romans, favoured the east-west axis as the main focus of eschatological and directional symbolism. East was associated with the revelation of new mysteries, and soothsayers and oracles would favour this direction. West was the direction of death, but also of eternal life, and the pagan 'Isles of the Blessed' were commonly positioned in the western ocean beyond the pillars of Hercules.

Graeco-Roman conceptions of north and south are complex. There is a distinct tension, present in very early Greek texts and continuing through the Roman period, between the tendency to vilify races on the ecumenical boundary, and an inverse impulse to contrast the purity of the boundary races with the evil and moral decay in the centre. The normal ethnocentric model is normally found in epics and adventure cycles such as those of Hercules and Dionysius, who served as figureheads of the expansion of the Graeco-Roman ecumene, and their deeds symbolised the superiority of the central culture over the people of the outskirts.

The inverse model, often found in polemical satire or treatises on morality or religion, critiques the present 'central' society by describing a race or place which embodies perfection, and is usually described by listing all the faults that it does not have. Such a race, or place, is positioned on the outskirts to symbolise the 'moral distance' that separates the central culture from the desired state (Romm, *Edges*, ch. 2). Thus, for example, north in Greek thought was the home of the happy Hyperboreans, but also of the evil Scythians. Some of these inconsistencies are still present in medieval ideas of north and south, as is explained below.

Early Judaeo-Christian Directional Symbolism - the focus of prayer

East is mentioned as the favoured direction of prayer in early Hebrew texts. The Hebrew word for east literally means 'front' or 'head', with its counterpart, west, meaning 'back'. North was treated unfavourably, and is called the 'seat of the image

of jealousy' in Ezekiel 8. 3 and Jeremiah 1. 14, probably due to the stigma attached to the left hand. South was an occasional rival to east as the favoured direction, owing to its favourable association with the right hand. These associations assume that the observer is facing east.[1]

In later Hebrew texts, much of this symbolism was surpassed, when Jerusalem became the favoured focus for the direction of prayer, witnessed by the instructions in 1 Kings 8. 44 and Daniel 6. 10-11. However, another Judaic text, the *Tosefta*, states that the synagogue should face east, basing this on an interpretation of the 'tent of meeting' in Numbers 2. 2-3 as a model for all Jewish places of worship. The destruction of the Temple in AD 70 was taken by very early Christians to be a sign that God had forsaken the Jews, and that the 'True Israel' of the Christian faith was the new Promised Land. There was a general move away from directing prayer towards Jerusalem, and a return to the older tradition of facing east while praying, around the year 70. Either Judaic or Graeco-Roman alignment practices could have been an inspiration for this. The tradition continued throughout the medieval period.

The arrival of Christianity added a new set of values to the original symbolism of east. East became associated with the birth of Christ (the star in the east), the direction of the second coming, and the location of the terrestrial paradise. The association of east with sun-worship, which was a persistent doctrinal problem in the early Christian period, was played down by both Jews and Christians, who attached other values to this direction, or syncretised sun-worship into their religious practices by using the sun as a metaphor for God, or the light of revelation.

In the early Christian period, west was naturally associated with death and decay of both the individual and the entire world, and thus with the reign of Satan. Its association with the 'end of time' also lent it a positive quality, as west was the 'place' where Christ would judge the living and the dead. Various traditions say that Christ was crucified facing east, but he is more commonly described in medieval accounts of the Passion as facing west, towards the Last Judgement, as if renouncing death. This tradition is the stronger of the two in the middle ages, and predominates in church architecture and representations of the Last Judgement.

Early Medieval Views on North and South

A group of early Old English writings provides us with evidence of the development of the values of north and south within the Christian framework. The OE *Genesis A* mentions that Satan's throne is in the Far North, a concept which is not in the Biblical book of Genesis but taken from the account of Lucifer's fall from heaven in Isaiah 14. 12-14:

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[1] This section is based on B. L. Gordon, "Sacred Direction, Orientation, and the Top of the Map", *History of Religions* 10 (1971), 211-227. See also Fraanz Landsberger, "Sacred Direction in Church and Synagogue", *Hebrew Union College Annual* 38 (1957), 181-203.

> How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning...For you have said in your heart 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the highest stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation in the farthest sides of the north'.

The use of this passage in early medieval accounts of Creation and spiritual geography is also evidenced by two early German versions of Genesis, and subsequently in *Piers Plowman* and other writings. The OE *Genesis B,* however, specifically mentions north-west as the site of Lucifer's throne, a distinction which has no Biblical support, but is also found in some other extant sources of the period (detailed below), and is thought by Salmon to be based on the writings of the early Church Father Lactantius.[2]

Genesis B also positions the throne of God in the south-east, setting up a scheme of diametrical opposition between evil and good running diagonally across the ecumenical circle. This positioning of God's throne is also mentioned in the contemporaneous OE *Christ III.* The *Christ III* passage in question is derived from a symbolic reading of Zechariah 14. 4-5.

Zechariah describes God standing on top of the Mount of Olives, which is broken in half along the east-west axis, and the two halves then move north (or north-west in Jerome's account) and south (or south-east). Jerome's reading of the passage (upon which the *Christ III* passage is based) is that at the day of Judgement, the damned will be taken away to the north-west, while the saved will find God in the south-east. The stigma attached to north as the 'left' side plays a strong role in Jerome's argument, as do the qualities of the winds coming from those directions.[3]

The symbolism of north and south is further attested to in this era by a reference to dream-visions in the *Ecclesiastical History* of the Venerable Bede, although in this case, both south and north have been equated with east. The dreamer is led by a spirit guide to witness Heaven and Hell. The gate to Hell was in a north-easterly direction, the gate to Heaven to the south-east.[4] The association of north with Satan remained fairly consistent in the later medieval period. The idea that south was the location of

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[2] Paul Salmon, "The site of Lucifer's Throne", *Anglia* 81 (1963), 118-123. Hill disagrees with Salmon and argues that while the Lactantius passage is generally relevant, it does not directly mention that north-west was associated with evil or Satan. Hill thinks the source for the *Genesis B* passage in question is more likely to be Jerome's exegesis on Zechariah 14. See Thomas Hill, 'Some Remarks on "The Site of Lucifer's Throne" ', *Anglia* 87 (1969), 303-311. Jerome's passage is also discussed in J. Vickrey, "The Vision of Eve in Genesis B", *Speculum* 44 (Jan, 1969), 86-102. Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*, 2. 10 (*PL* 6, 307-308). Jerome, *Commentaria in Isaiam Prophetam* 6. 14 (*PL* 24, 219-220). The terminology of north and south in the early Middle Ages is complex. Kemp Malone has speculated that in some Old English texts, such as King Alfred's Orosius, and the interpolated voyages of Ohthere and Wulfstan, some attempt was made to focus on 'true north', as though it were an existing place somewhere in Scandinavia or Russia (ie. north-east of England). According to Malone, the term 'north' in fact means north-east (from England) in these texts, and similarly north-west would in fact mean true north. K. Malone, "King Alfred's North: A Study in Medieval Geography", *Speculum* 5 (1930), 139-167. See also A. K. Brown, "The English Compass Points", *Medium Aevum* 47 (1978), 221-246.

[3] Texts and articles referred to in previous footnote.

[4] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (5. 12), trans. L. Shirley Price, 3rd ed. (Harmondsworth, 1990), 284-285.

God's kingdom is uncommon in later texts, but may have influenced the symbolic association of Christ's left hand with 'south' on the Ebstorf map, which I discuss in chapter 9.

2 - Physical and Spiritual uses of the number Four in the Medieval Period

Directional symbolism was one of the most basic of the many related facets of the quadripartite system of what Esmeijer calls 'visual exegesis' employed in the Middle Ages. I propose here to outline other uses of the quadripartite scheme, and point to the links between these and medieval mappaemundi, so that much of the material outlined above may be placed in context.

Four- or twelve-part diagrams, almost always circular, were used in Classical times as scientific aids - the related quadripartite divisions of physical matter such as the elements, winds, tides and humours are all of Classical origin. The much earlier natural divisions of time (hours of the day, months of the year, and signs of the zodiac) were often incorporated into this programme.[5]

Another figure of very ancient origin is the Wheel of Fortune, which shows the figure of Fortune at the centre of a circular scheme, around which the 'archetypal man' runs his course through misfortune (down to the right) and prosperity (up to the left). Of similar design to the Wheel of Fortune is the Wheel of Life, which shows the Four Ages of Man arranged in a cycle, also from left to right, usually with a human figure in the middle representing fortune. (These iconographic devices were widespread in the medieval period, among the finest examples being the work of William de Brailles in England and the Lisle Psalter artist in France.)[6]

These circular schemes were adopted by early medieval thinkers, initially for teaching purposes, and became incorporated into the main body of Christian lore in a similar way to the Christian adoption of the T-in-O. As well as this, the quadripartite diagram provided a natural framework for a variety of divisions in Christian lore - the evangelists and their symbols, the four rivers of paradise, and the four gates of Jerusalem being among the most common elements in these schemes.

Divisions such as three (the trinity), seven (deadly sins, cardinal virtues) and ten (commandments) continued to play very specific roles within Christian numerological exegesis, but the four-part scheme was the one most commonly employed to integrate new material, and was certainly the most useful visually. Moreover, by the early medieval period, four was commonly considered the number of the world, and of humanity (Hopper, *Number*, 83). From the Carolingian period onward, four-part schemes (usually circular) incorporating physical and / or spiritual elements were common, and by the twelfth century, they were abundant. The notes below will lead the reader to hundreds of such figures, which comprise a fraction of what could be found by a systematic search.

[5] As well as Esmeijer's *Divina Quaternitas*, general information on the uses of the number four can also be found in V. F. Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism* (New York, 1938).

[6] See in particular S. Cockerell, *The Work of William de Brailles, an English Illuminator of the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1930).

Associated with many such four-part schemes is the mental process whereby pictorial sequences were interpreted on four levels known as the 'sensus' - history, allegory, tropology and anagogue. These are: history - the OT event (or historical fact); allegory - the NT equivalent (fulfilment of history in Christ); tropology - the moral interpretation (relevant to man's place in the world); and anagogue - the prophetic or eschatological interpretation (relevant to establishing the eternal truth, usually connected with the future). A fine example is found in the *Elucidarius* of Honorius of Autun, discussed below.

Esmeijer notes that early exponents of the four 'sensus' as a method of exegesis showed a "noticeable preference for quadripartite cosmic or architectonic symbols, e.g. the Paradise garden with 4 streams, the four-sided city of Jerusalem, the cross reaching out to the four parts of the compass...", and that later adaptations of these ideas into visual form employed them as "symbols of the harmony brought about by the application of the 4 'sensus'...adapting quadripartite, cosmic schemata long in use for school instruction, such as the 4 winds, the 4 elements, microcosmos, macrocosmos, 'mappa mundi', Annus and the seasons, etc." (Esmeijer, *Divina*, 33).

In summary, medieval Christian thinkers used a variety of circular diagrams to display the relationships between space, time, the body and the spirit. The similarity in appearance of such a wide variety of diagrams points to a pattern I will call 'associative linking.' Simply put, it is highly likely that medieval observers would have associated one 'wheel' or *rota* with another. With this in mind, it can be valuable for the modern scholar to take exegetical ideas from one 'wheel' or *rota* and apply them to another, trying to establish by analogy the thought processes of medieval artists and their audiences.

While it is never possible to prove such cognate processes if they are not directly stated, there is a great deal of contextual evidence which strongly suggests mappaemundi and other *rotae* would have been mentally associated with one another. The basic associative link between mappaemundi and other circular diagrams has been shown most clearly by Edson, who reviews a series of scientific diagrams which contain a T-in-O within them. Examples are a ninth-century tidal *rota* with a simple T-in-O inscribed with the name of the continents as its central circle, and a twelfth-century wind *rota* with a similar T-in-O composition at its centre.

Edson has also examined the kind of manuscripts in which larger mappaemundi are found. She has studied the context of the Rippol, Cotton, and Oxford maps, all of which are contained in manuscripts containing *computus* lore (material relating to the calculation of the date of Easter) and other scientific material. She concludes: "The idea of the map was gradually pulled by its association with the computus materials into representing time, so that the two aspects of the physical world - time and space - are presented in harmony with one another."[7]

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[7] E. Edson, "World Maps and Easter Tables: Medieval Maps in Context", *Imago Mundi* 48 (1996), 39. The material is substantially repeated in *Mapping Time*, chap. 3.

Kline has recently furthered the idea of associative linking in the construction of her CD- Rom version of the Hereford map. Kline directly relates other 'wheels' or circular compositions to the mappaemundi by allowing the reader to superimpose various circular diagrams over the Hereford map and other images, in order to display the symbolic connections between maps and *rotae*. She argues that the Hereford map is a 'Wheel of Memory', and must be linked mentally to similar constructions. Such associative links seem especially likely when two similar diagrams occur in close proximity in the same manuscript. Kline uses the Psalter verso and recto maps as a major example of this kind of connections.[8]

The twelfth-century *Tractatus de Quaternario* manuscript provides further evidence for the idea of associative linking between mappaemundi and other *rotae*. The *Tractatus* manuscript contains a *syndesmos* diagram, with the earth in the centre, also showing the four elements around the outside (f10v). In other diagrams, the main feature (four qualities, the four ages of man, the elements, the seasons and the cardinal directions) are portrayed as human figures (f3v, 22r, 23r, 27r, 31v). Many of these *rotae* also contain some of the main features of the other diagrams, placed in the border. The reader is clearly intended to build these representations up into a mental template picture containing all of the correspondences the author has described. The map itself (a zonal map showing four main ocean currents on f36r) also contains references to the cardinal directions and the climate zones. It should be considered as part of the general pattern the author is describing.[9]

Another piece of evidence for this kind of associative linking is the map in a fourteenth-century manuscript of the surgical writings of the English physician John Arderne. The 'Arderne Map' is a simple T-in-O diagram, showing the continents, winds, directions and elements and combinations of qualities (cold and dry, etc.) in a fairly standard arrangement. The map is not particularly noteworthy in its own right, but its appearance in a medical manuscript, together with another diagram showing the four humours, points to a simple connection between geography and Galenic medicine. The interlocking of geographical ideas with physical ideas was used by this fourteenth-century physician to understand the nature of sickness and health, and, potentially, to diagnose patients on the basis of the 'winds' and 'elements' to which they had been exposed.[10]

In this study, my position regarding the symbolic relationship between mappaemundi and other *rotae* is simply that it will be profitable to examine the function of a series of map icons within the quadripartite system. Conquest landmarks denoting boundary

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[8] The CD by N. Kline, *A Wheel of Memory - The Hereford Mappamundi* is due to be released in 2000 (Ann Arbor). My description here is based on a preliminary viewing of the CD ROM at the Hereford and Other Mappaemundi Conference in June 1999, for which I am greatly appreciative.

[9] The *Tractatus de Quaternario* is in Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 428. It is probably of twelfth-century English or French origin. An account is contained in M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Library of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1907-1908 and suppl. 1914), 500-502.

[10] British Library, Sloane MS 795, f20. Illustrated and discussed in P. M. Jones, *Medieval Medical Miniatures* (London, 1984), 19-21.

were part of a large and variable tradition of gateways from the physical to the elemental and spiritual worlds. Their positioning on mappaemundi is often highly suggestive of an arrangement in a quadripartite structure. Later in the chapter, I will be suggesting that a medieval observer of a variety of quadripartite schemes may have been reminded of the presence of four 'gates' on mappaemundi, linking the inner world portrayed or suggested by the circle to the elemental world outside.

3 - Directional Symbolism in the Medieval period

Basic paradoxes in medieval directional symbolism

Medieval directional symbolism is by no means a concrete body of lore. Like the various ideas concerning the measurement and shape of the earth, it contains a number of paradoxes and contradictions on a simple geometric level. The impossibility of finding or maintaining a stable pattern of relationships in the combined body of lore is witnessed by two modern attempts to reconstruct the medieval system of quadripartite directional symbolism. Jean Seznec provides a table of these relationships in his study of the survival of the physical lore of the Classical period in the Middle Ages. The table lists autumn as associated with earth, north, black, and the melancholic humour. Winter is placed in the west. This is one of a number of disagreements with a similar table in Woodward's section on mappaemundi in the *History of Cartography*. Woodward's table lists west as associated with autumn, while north is equated with winter. Neither table is wrong, but different source selection has led to different results.[11]

An interesting example of this kind of tension within a single document can be found in a diagram known as the 'physiological fours' by the English monk Byrthferth of Ramsey, who lived between 970 and 1020. He wrote a number of texts on history and saints' lives, as well as his well-known *Computus* (c. 990) and the later *Enchiridion* (c. 1010), which is a commentary on the earlier work. His work survives in a number of English manuscripts from the twelfth century, which are versions of the annals of Thorney, Winchombe and Peterborough (plate 13).

This commentary focuses on a diagram in the twelfth-century St. Johns College manuscript of the *Computus* (which also contains the 'Oxford' map). The diagram is oval-shaped, with a mandorla as the central element. At the exact centre is a complex figure interpreted by Singer as the 'microcosmos', or 'Man'. In the border, the elements, solstices, seasons, humours, qualities (cold, dry, hot, moist), cardinal directions and signs of the zodiac are all included, as well as the A-D-A-M acrostic (for which, see below).[12]

The main discrepancies in the diagram stem from the attempt to link up quadripartite symbolism with astrological symbolism in a comprehensive and logical manner, within

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[11] Woodward, "Medieval Mappaemundi", Table 18.6, 336. Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, trans. B. Sessions (New York, 1953), 47. Chapter 2, "The Physical Tradition", includes an account of the medieval reception of the *mundus annus homo* inheritance. Both tables are rectangular.

[12] S. J. Crawford, *Byrthferth's Manual* (London, 1929). For discussion, see C. Singer and J. Grattan, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine* (London, 1952), 32-5 and 39-40.

a round frame. Such a task is in fact impossible without the inclusion of a considerable number of illogical elements. The maker of the diagram (not Byrthferth, but a later scribe) has shown 'earth' corresponding to east, and 'fire' corresponding to north. This is in total disagreement with Byrthferth's ideas in the *Enchiridion*, in which it is clearly stated that east is to be equated with fire. If the mandorla within the diagram were to be rotated 90 degrees to the right, so as to place fire in the east, and so on, these problems would be solved, but then other problems would arise. The reconstructed diagram on page 77 of Parker and Lapidge's edition the *Enchiridion* is more in keeping with Byrthferth's original ideas, but this too has problems - summer is positioned in relation to north, and spring is in the west, which contradicts what was otherwise known.[13]

Another paradox of medieval directional symbolism concerns the facing of the human body in relation to the circular scheme. Did the various meanings of left and right apply to the body (literal or metaphorical) depicted within the circular scheme, as if it were looking out, or to the viewer facing in? In his *De Arca Noe Morali*, Hugh of St. Victor describes the ark aligned east to west, with the right side or 'arm' of the ark pointing to the north and the south 'arm' to the left (cap. 4). But elsewhere in the same text, these associations are reversed (cap. 6). As Carruthers notes, the inconsistency arises from "a difference in Hugh's mental orientation towards his figure, that is, whether he imagines himself looking towards it or out from it..." (*Memory*, 342-3). To face 'in' - towards the altar, or towards the circular scheme - is to face 'east', as north and south will be to the left and right respectively. To face 'out' is to assume the position of the human body depicted within the circle, and thus to face west. This puts the viewer in the position of Christ on Calvary, which results in a reversal of the symbolism of north and south.

As a result of these and other basic contradictions, a cardinal direction could have more than one 'meaning' within any context. For example, south was associated with the Throne of God, yet it was also considered to be the home of the monstrous races, and also uninhabitable due to intense heat. It is important to understand directional symbolism as a way of thinking that was related to the meaning of mappaemundi, but it is not always possible to use this lore to arrive at a definite, all-encompassing interpretation of the cardinal points on maps or cosmological diagrams.

Directional Symbolism in Church architecture

Much of the imagery used in relation to ecumenical geography was also expressed in medieval church architecture, especially in the Gothic period. The use of the cross shape in church design emphasised both the importance of the passion, and the role of the church as the body of the Lord (John 2. 19-22, Colossians 1. 24). The four corners of the church - towers in some cases - were associated with the four

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[13] Byrthferth of Ramsey, *Byrthferth's Enchiridion*, ed. P. Parker and M. Lapidge (Oxford, 1995), 76-77, 200-201.

evangelists and thus the spread of the gospel throughout the world embodied by the church.[14]

Medieval churches were generally entered by the western door, directing movement towards the eastern altar, where Christ was symbolically present, facing the faithful as they entered. The eastern end was also associated with the terrestrial paradise. The altar end of an Anglican church is today still called 'Ecclesiastical East', even if the building is not orientated in that direction.

The centre of the church symbolised God the Father, and towers or domes surmounting this section were often larger than those above the other two areas. The western end of the church became associated with the Holy Spirit, to complete the trinity, and the western end often housed the baptismal font. West also symbolised the Last Judgement, and representations of this scene are most commonly found on the *tympanum* above the exterior of the western door on many medieval churches. The main axis of the church is thus an axis of time, stretching from the Creation to the Judgement down the length of the building, and thus enclosing time as well as space within the body of the church.

The movements of the priest at the altar were also dictated by anthropocentric body symbolism. The gospel reading was often addressed to the north side of the altar, in order to drive out the influence of Satan that was thought to reside there. Further, unbaptised or excommunicated dead were buried on the north side of the church (outside the church grounds). The 'body of the church' was considered as a microcosmic representation of the larger world, and thus many of the symbolic associations of the direction within the cathedral can be considered in regard to the mappamundi tradition.

4 - 'In Maner of A Compas' - Quadripartite Worlds in Medieval Maps and Texts

Introduction

Map scholarship has been liberated in recent years by a re-definition of what a map is. Previous definitions had been generated by twentieth-century conceptions of what a map should be, rather than by what many previous maps actually were. However, the new formulation proposed by Harley and Woodward solves the problems associated with previous narrower definitions: "Maps are graphic representations that facilitate a spatial understanding of things, concepts, conditions, processes, or events in the human world." (Harley and Woodward, *History*, vol. 1, xvi).

The applications of this definition are broad. Large numbers of medieval diagrams, mostly of quadripartite nature, fit this definition. Edson's work, discussed above, brings these diagrams into the discussion of mappaemundi and shows their implications. In addition, the new definition also opens the door for a re-evaluation of what a 'textual map description' is. As we have seen, much scholarship on medieval

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[14] For church architecture, See Gordon, "Sacred Direction", 215-17, and the more detailed account in G. Lesser, *Gothic Cathedrals and Sacred Geometry* (London, 1957), 143-60.

cartography revolves around analysis of written descriptions of maps. If we may now perceive a map as any graphic representation of spatial arrangements, such literary constructions as the amphitheatre in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, Robert Grosseteste's symbolic *Castel of Love*, and the description of theatrical space in the *Castle of Perseverance* may function as literary descriptions of 'maps' or cosmological diagrams. All of these texts make full use of the symbolism inherent in the quadripartite layout to enforce their function as world-symbols.

This section includes analysis of a variety of such textual descriptions of space, as well as maps and diagrams appearing in a variety of contexts. The aim of the next two sections is simply to show both the frequency and diversity of the use of the 'compass', or circular shape, as a world-image.

The Elucidarius of Honorius of Autun

Honorius of Autun (1070-1140) was of English or Irish origins, and wrote a series of geographical and theological treatises which are found in manuscripts from the early twelfth century onwards. Honorius' influence on medieval geography is most commonly studied through his work the *Imago Mundi*, partly because it is in a manuscript of that work that the Sawley map is found. The *Imago Mundi* is a description of a stable, geocentric universe, which Flint has studied in detail and described as "built to elaborate upon the truths of Genesis; a cosmos...for pastors."[15]

In this study, I have chosen to concentrate upon Honorius' most popular work, the didactic treatise *Elucidarius*, which discusses many of the themes examined in this chapter. Honorius introduces the *Elucidarius* by stating that the foundation of his work is the "Rock which is Christ" (from 1 Corinthians 10. 4). Then he states that four columns, arising from the rock, support the platform of the work.

> The first column serves to hold up the understanding of the prophets;
> the second to support the honor of the apostles; the third to strengthen
> the wisdom of the fathers; and the fourth to uphold the wise concern of
> the teachers. (*Elucidarius*, trans. Firchow, 3)

The description is very reminiscent of both the tomb of Darius in the *Alexandreis*, and the pillars of wisdom described by Gautier de Metz in the *Image du Monde*. It is difficult to imagine the temple as any other shape than round, as so much imagery in the rest of the work is based on the circle. The image invites the reader to conceive of the book, and all Christian knowledge, as a microcosm, a way of understanding the world through the words of Christ and Christian learning.

The fourfold division of Christian lore also invites a historical interpretation, and is based on the four *sensus* detailed previously. The first pillar is prophecy of Christ's coming; the second, the spreading of his word; the third, interpretation of it; the fourth, the concerns of the present day. Honorius then explains that man is a microcosm for the world, using the Platonic formula to divide the body into the four

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[15] V. Flint, *Honorius Augustodunensis of Regensburg*, in *Authors of the Middle Ages*, ed. Geary, vol. 2, no. 6 (Aldershot, 1995), 140-41.

elements - flesh is earth, blood water, breath air and warmth (or vital heat) is fire. This is followed by a long list of similitudes between parts of the human body and features of the earth and the universe - grass is like hair, stones like bones, and so on (trans. Firchow, 15-17).

This is a standard medieval interpretation of the human body. Very similar material can be found in many other writings - for example, in Isidore's *De Natura Rerum*, the Irish *Liber de Numeris*, twelfth-century poetry like the *Microcosmos* of Godfrey of St. Victor, and many other medieval sources. Honorius' description of 'man' as a general concept turns naturally to a discussion of Adam, the first and penultimate embodiment of man as microcosm. Honorius explains a variety of ways in which the conceptual Adam teaches us about the world. When asked the question "How did Adam get his name?", Honorius answers

> From the four compass points of the world, that is from East and West, North and South. In Greek these are called Anatole, Dysis, Arktos, Mesembria, and they form an acrostic of Adam's name. He got his name from the four corners of the earth, since his kin was expected to spread out in all directions over the earth. For that reason he took on the shape of God, so that he could rule everything on earth as God rules everything in heaven (trans. Firchow, 17).

The A-D-A-M acrostic was a common concept in the medieval period. Use of the acrostic in contemporary cartography is illustrated by the Oxford map, where the Greek names for the cardinal directions are used in conjunction with the Latin names and the main four winds. It is also a prominent feature of the 'Anonymous' map (although the names are in the wrong places), and of the quadripartite diagrams of Byrthferth of Ramsey, discussed above.

The link between Adam and Christ is made clearer when the symbolism of the cross is explained, as follows:

> Disciple: Why did Christ want to die on a tree?

> Master: To vanquish him at a tree, who had been victorious through a tree; and to free him on a tree, who had sinned at a tree.

> Disciple: Why on a cross?

> Master: To heal the four parts of the world. (trans. Firchow, 37)

According to this typology, the initial sin of Adam has been spread from the centre throughout the world by his descendants. The original sin is then healed by Christ, also operating from a central position. The typology of Old and New Adam is based on a sequence of expansion, spreading sin to the limits, followed by a contraction towards the symbolic centre in order to achieve restoration. The A-D-A-M acrostic and the symbolism of the cross are used by Honorius to demonstrate this sequence.

The *Elucidarius* was intended as an introduction to basic medieval theology and number symbolism, and can still be used in this way. Manuscripts of this work

contain no maps or diagrams, but running throughout the text is a consistent use of four-part symbolism suggestive of an 'inner' diagram visualised by Honorius as he wrote, which may well have resembled Byrthferth's diagram.

The Castel of Love of Robert Grosseteste - an introduction to the word 'compass'

Robert Grosseteste was a Bishop of Lincoln in the thirteenth century. He wrote several works, including treatises on geography and history. He also produced an English translation of the French *Château d'Amour*. The poem is based around a rich and complex description of a castle, a metaphor for the terrestrial paradise, in which a virtuous maiden (the Virgin Mary) lives in a condition of purity and chastity.

The four towers surrounding the castle are likened to the four cardinal virtues possessed by the maiden inside. There is a well at the centre of the castle, from which spring four rivers which run out to water the world outside, a reference to the four rivers of paradise. In a ring around the well are a series of three 'baileys' (courts formed by the spaces between the circuits of walls which surrounded the keep). In addition, there is a deep moat, representative of the circle of the ocean. These concentric rings are symbolic of the various defences by which the maiden protects her chastity, the core of her being. The rock upon which the castle is built symbolises her steadfast heart.

Like the *Elucidarius*, the *Castel of Love* is not a text that would normally be studied in relation to geography. Repeated use of quadripartite symbolism, and body imagery, link this poem to the other diagrams discussed in this section. I am particularly interested in the use of the word 'cumpas' in this poem. This word is used twice. Firstly, the line "wit cumpas i-throwen and wit gin al to-do" refers to the circular nature of the building and the 'gins' or tricks that protect the maiden within. The second use is similar: "And i-cast wit cumpas and walled aboute" again refers to the circular nature of the scheme.[16]

The word 'compass' has a complex and obscure origin, and has a variety of uses in English dating back to the thirteenth century. The OED lists a variety of early uses, most of which either concern the navigational instrument, or simply denote that the word can be applied to any circular formation. I will argue that in early English literature, it was most commonly applied to the world, or to any symbolic structure which functioned as a microcosm of the world, or had a role to play in world-image symbolism.

The word is of French origin, and one of its earliest uses in that language is to describe the perimeter of the world, seen by Alexander from atop a mountain in the Far East.[17] Later English writers continued to use it in in a geographical sense. Hampole's *Prick Of Conscience* says that "the erth...Es bot a poynt ymyddes a compase [of the universe]." The fifteenth-century romance *Partenay* relates that "All rounde the

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[16] Robert Grosseteste, *Castel of Love - an Early English Translation of an Old French Poem*, ed. P. Weymouth (London, 1984), 33-4.

[17] See Tattersal, "Sphere", 41-43, for the use of the word 'compass' in the Alexander Romances.

compas though man be sekyng, in all the worlde so noble a king is noght." Stanhurst's *Aeneis* (1583) says: "With seed of Aeneas shal coompasse earthlye be ruled."[18]

Early English translations of Mandeville are one of many places in which the word is used to describe the symbolic centre of Jerusalem. (I have taken the following from Seymour's edition of the Cotton version, as modern English translations such as Moseley's translate the word as 'circle').

> And in myddes of that chirche is a compas in the whiche [on which]
> Ioseph of Aramathie leyde the body of oure lord whan he had taken
> Him down of the croys...and that compas seye men is the myddes
> [middle] of the world.[19]

This use of the word was also reasonably widespread in medieval England. Wycliffe's Bible and other usages testify to the continued use of the word after Mandeville, and earlier, pilgrims such as Saewulf (see below) had also used it to describe the world-centre. This usage suggests that the word originally had a specific geographical meaning, one which underlies its meaning in later texts. Just as it is nowadays difficult to use the word 'crucifixion' without being reminded of the Passion, it seems unlikely that any English writers would have described a symbolic 'compass' in their work without being reminded of the centre of their spiritual world.

The various 'compass' schemes I will be examining below share a common, basic meaning - they are all symbolic worlds, each one a remembrance of the place marked out by the body of Christ. The word 'compass' is a simple expression of the macrocosm / microcosm concept, a word that could be used to describe both outer and inner worlds, and would have suggested both to the reader.

The Cursor Mundi

The thirteenth-century *Cursor Mundi, or World History*, was written in northern England, probably in Lincolnshire, about the time of the construction of the Hereford map. It contains many examples of the themes I have been discussing, as it uses the cross as the unifying historical concept, tracing its development from the Tree of Life in Paradise to the Crucifixion. The six ages scheme predominates, but there is a more noticeable emphasis on the history of the Holy Tree in its various guises (the Rod of Aaron, the Tree in the Temple of Solomon, etc.) than in other histories of this type (ed. Morris, esp. vol. 2, 1238-42).

The reference in this text to the A-D-A-M acrostic is particularly interesting. The author relates the standard idea that each letter is representative of a cardinal point, and that Adam's name symbolises the spread of the human race throughout the world. He also notes that each of the four letters corresponds to one of the four "gates", which he names only as "east, west, north and south". This is a further example of the idea of 'world-gates' or 'world-ways' discussed in chapter 5. Four 'gates' are also mentioned in the parable of the Castle of Love and Grace, which is almost identical in

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[18] Both quoted from OED, 'Compass'.

[19] This version of Mandeville in *Mandeville's Travels*, ed. M. C. Seymour (Oxford, 1967), 58.

content to the version by Grosseteste (detailed above). The *Cursor* author also describes the castle as a 'compas'. Concerning the symbolism of the cross, the author again uses the word, writing that Divine power may be seen "ouer, vnder, ryght and lefte, in this compasse Godde has lefte." The world here is 'the compass', the circular framework in which God's miracles are wrought through the power of the cross.[20]

Like the *Elucidarius*, there are no diagrams in any of the manuscripts of the *Cursor Mundi*, but the repeated use of fourfold imagery suggests the author wrote using a 'mental map' or world-diagram, based on the symbolic properties of the cross.

Pilgrim Texts and Maps - Saewulf, Fetellus and others

The best available material on medieval conceptions of Jerusalem in the Crusades period comes from the writings of pilgrims. Many of these are stories of individual experiences, and are also guides to the Holy Land for the benefit of other travellers. There are a large number of these writings extant, detailed in a survey by Donald Roy and published by the Palestine Pilgrim's Text Society. Only one of these travellers, a certain Saewulf (early twelfth century) was English, and this account will focus on his work.[21]

Concerning the 'compass', later mentioned by Mandeville, Saewulf says:

> At the head of the church of the Holy Sepulchre...not far from the place of Calvary, is a spot called Compas, where...our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, *with His own hand assigned and marked out the middle of the world*, as the Psalmist testifies ; 'But God, our King before the ages, wrought salvation in the middle of the earth." (Ps 58. 12)[22]

Pilgrims in the later half of the twelfth century made similar reports. Both the belief and the word probably originated in the twelfth century, and most subsequent uses of the word (including the navigation instrument) occur only after the original, basic meaning had been established.

Another consistent theme in these pilgrimage texts is the idea that Adam had been buried beneath the Holy Cross, and that the blood from Christ's wounds had run down onto Adam's skull. This conflicts with scriptural tradition, which states that Adam was buried in Hebron. Saewulf says:

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[20] *Cursor Mundi*, ed. Morris. The parable of the Castle of Love and Grace is in vol. 2, 586f. The A-D-A-M acrostic and the use of the word 'gates' (probably meaning 'ways') is vol. 1, 42. The reference to God's compass is in the discussion of cross symbolism, vol. 3, 1238.

[21] Donald Howard, *Writers and Pilgrims: Medieval Pilgrimage Narratives and their posterity* (Berkeley, 1980), 11-52.

[22] "The Pilgrimage of Saewulf to Jerusalem", trans. C. Brownlow, *Library of the Palestine Pilgrim's Text Society*, vol. 4 (1897) 12. Italics mine. Other references to this use of the word are in "The City of Jerusalem", trans. C. R. Conder, *Library*, vol. 6 (1898), 34, and generally throughout the early volumes of the collection.

> Underneath [Calvary] is the place which is called Golgotha, where
> Adam is said to have been raised from the dead by the stream of our
> Lord's blood falling upon him, as we read in our Lord's passion: 'and
> many bodies of the saints that slept arose.' (Matt. 27. 52).
> ("Pilgrimage", trans. Brownlow, 11)

The typology of old and new Adam expressed here directly links the bodies of Adam and Christ, physically as well as symbolically. The spread of Adam's seed, expressed through the A-D-A-M acrostic, was also thought to be the spread of the original sin. Jerusalem in Christian thought is the centre of a quadripartite system of influence, whereby man is first damned, and then redeemed.

A quadripartite map of Jerusalem is found in a manuscript of Fetellus' *Description of Jerusalem and the Holy Land*. Fetellus travelled to Jerusalem in about 1130, and the map seems to have been made shortly afterward.[23] The map is very reminiscent of the T-in-O map form, and it is likely to have been influenced in its design by the standard ecumenical divisions. Four main gates are shown, and four main streets, forming a very rigorous quadripartite structure quite unlike the real geography of the region. The map is oriented to the east, and is surrounded by a round wall with twelve gates.

At the eastern end is the Temple of the Lord, and at the western end is the Holy Sepulchre. These two monuments are placed within smaller circles, which highlights their special significance. Other monuments, such as the Temple of David, appear as normal buildings. The name Calvary appears near the centre, but no hill is shown - perhaps indicating that it was intended to be recognised as the exact centre of the map, where the four roads meet.

The representation of Jerusalem as a quadripartite scheme became prevalent in the Crusades era. As examples, I have referenced two other maps in crusader texts from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which also show the city (or the central temple) as a circular device. The positioning of Jerusalem at the centre of the earth did not become prevalent until the twelfth century, and it is likely that the idealisation of both the city and the temple into a geometric pattern is connected with the similar idealisation of the ecumene as a symmetrical ordered space.[24] As a later example, a plan of Jerusalem in a fourteenth-century manuscript of Arculf's description of the Holy Land (originally written in the seventh century) also shows the Holy Sepulchre as a 'compass' scheme, with the tomb in the exact centre, and three altar tables in the east, north and south (Harvey, *Medieval Maps*, 13).

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[23] "Description of Jerusalem and the Holy Land by Fetellus", trans. J. McPherson, *Library*, vol. 5 (London, 1897). The map is facing page 3.

[24] The first Jerusalem image is in the Hague, Royal Library MS 76 F5, f1r (c1180). See Friedman, "Cultural Conflict in Medieval World Maps", in S. Schwatz, ed. *Implicit Understandings: Observing, reporting and reflecting on the encounters between Europeans and other peoples in the early modern era* (Cambridge, 1994), fig. 2.9, 83. The second image is actually a map of the Holy Sepulchre, showing Christ's body on the 'compass', with four altars arranged in a quadripartite pattern in the cardinal extremes of the circular building. The eastern orientation is labelled on the diagram. This is in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS 609, f4r. Illustrated in Smalley, *Historians*, 136.

In both world and regional cartography, the sacred city was also often reduced to a geometric design. The Hereford map shows Jerusalem in an almost identical manner to the Fetellus map. The Jerome regional maps and Matthew Paris' map of Palestine also portray it as a round, walled city. The Ebstorf displays it as a square city, with a representation of the risen Christ over it. In all cases, geometric symbolism has prevailed over accuracy, out of a desire to depict the city in a manner reminiscent of the description of the Heavenly Jerusalem in Revelation.

The Arena in Chaucer's Knight's Tale

Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* contains a description of an arena which has many resonances with much of the other material I have been discussing. Duke Theseus has the 'theatre' constructed for the duel between the champions of Palamoun and Arcite to resolve their conflict over Theseus' daughter, Emelye. From the description, it is clear that if mapped, the arena would greatly resemble a simple mappamundi or another quadripartite diagram:

The circuit a myle was aboute,
Walled of stoon, and dyched al withoute.
Round was the shap, in manere of a compas,
Ful of degrees, the heighte of sixty pas.

. . . .

Estward ther stood a gate of marbul whit,
Westward right swich another in the opposit.
And shortly to concluden, swich a place
Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space;[25]

As well as the marble gates, the theatre contains three temples on its perimeters. Venus' temple is placed in the east, and those of Mars in the West, and Diana in the North. East is thus associated with generation, and west with destruction. North, personified by Diana, is here associated with neutrality and purity.[26]

The arena has often been interpreted as a symbolic astrological reading of the various conflicts in the play, and "noon in erthe" is taken as a reference to the astrological significance of the arena. Analysis of the astrological material in the tale (Chaucer gives the exact dates) has revealed that Saturn, the fourth deity involved in the combat, would have been in the south part of the sky during the tournament, completing the quadripartite structure.

Once the structure has been established, a large number of fourfold symbolic concurrences become apparent - the ages of man, humours, seasons, colours, and so on. These have been listed in an article by Brooks and Turner, and they substantially agree with Woodward's table of quadripartite symbolism on mappaemundi. Tomasch

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[25] *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 1887f., pp50-51.

[26] The negative associations placed on the northern cardinal direction are largely of Judaeo-Christian origin. In original Greek thought, North was the home of the Amazons, who were both geographically and sexually isolated and thus often associated with Diana, and also with the Hyperboreans, who are often cited as being blameless and spiritually perfect.

has also noted the resemblance between the arena and mappaemundi and provides a similar analysis.[27]

The conflict in the *Knight's Tale* is resolved in the centre of the arena after all four participants have come from their respective quadrants. Arcite, who is to die, rides in through the westward gate, a direction associated with death, while Palamoun, the victor, comes from the east. The outskirts of the arena (the altars) are the place from which conflicting forces come, and the centre is the place where order is restored. During the resolution, Theseus cites God's unification of the four elements to create the earth, as a precedent for the resolution of smaller conflicts, such as the marriage dispute (*Knight's Tale*, lines 2986f).

Lydgate and Donne: a Map of Love

John Lydgate uses the word "compaswise" to describe the shape of the *Temple of Glas*, an allegorical building seen in a dream. The poem includes a detailed *ekphrasis* of the temple, which is painted with a sequence of scenes showing the woes of various lovers from history:

> I saugh depeynt opon euere wal,
> From est to west, ful many a faire Image
> Of sondri lovers, lich as thei were of age
> I-sette in ordre...[28]

Lydgate was influenced by Chaucer - one of the scenes in the temple is the battle between Arcite and Palamoun, "as Chaucer tellith us" (3). It is also clear that he used the *Hous of Fame* and the *Parlement of Fouls* as analogues for the poem. Perhaps his use of the word 'compaswise' is also a reference to Chaucer's arena, but it seems more likely that Lydgate is using the word to suggest that the *Temple of Glas* is an antitype for the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. The 'Mary' figure, in this case, is the statue of Venus, whom Lydgate describes last of all. The lover adresses his complaint to Venus, addressing her in terms we might expect would be reserved for the Virgin Mary:

> O ladi Venus, modir of Cupide
> That al this wolde hast in gouernance
> . . . .
> And with thi stremes canst eueri thing discerne
> Thurugh heuenli fire of loue that is eterne. (13)

The Lady and the Knight are eventually united, and the dreamer awakes. Again we see the word 'compass' used to describe a historical world, which is a place where conflict is resolved. This passage is also pertinent to the fourth chapter, as Lydgate's

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[27] D. Brooks and A. Fowler, "The Meaning of Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*", *Medium Aevum* 39 (1970), 123-146. F. Turner, "A Structuralist Analysis of the *Knight's Tale*", *Chaucer Review* 8 (1974), 279-295. S. Tomasch, "Mappaemundi and the *Knight's Tale*: the Technology of Power and Control" in *Literature and Technology*, ed. M. Greenbergh and L. Scachterle (London, 1992), 66-98.

[28] John Lydgate, *Temple of Glas*, ed. J. Schick (London, 1891), 2. The word 'compaswise' is used in an otherwise uninteresting line on page 1.

long *ekphrasis* on an allegorical building (especially one containing an east-to-west series of historical events) has so many resonances with other material discussed there. The use of the word "compaswise" decided its inclusion here.

By the time Donne came to use the compass analogy in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning", the idea that 'compass' could mean both the centre of the world and its perimeter was well established. Donne's conceit is made all the more complex by the recognition that the drawing instrument he refers to is tracing out a 'map of love' like the temple described by Lydgate. As well as referring to the drawing instrument, the word 'compass' also carried a series of geographical and religious associations which Donne would certainly have been familiar with. The lover's movements around the outside of the world are determined by the central position of the object of his love - we might read his movements as an exploration of boundary, physical and spiritual, while her steadfastness is a type for the rock of Christ.

> If they [the lovers' souls] be two, they are two so
> As stiffe twin compasses are two,
> Thy soule the fixt foote, makes no show
> To move, but doth, if the'other doe.
>
> And though it in the centre sit,
> Yet when the other far doth rome,
> It leans and hearkens after it
> And grows erect, as it comes home
>
> Such wilt thou be to me, who must,
> Like th'other foot, obliquely runne;
> Thy firmness makes my circle just,
> And makes me end where I begunne.[29]

The Theatre Diagram in the Castle of Perseverance

The anonymous fifteenth-century *Castle of Perseverance* is a late example of a long tradition of medieval English theatrical cycles based on religious themes. Richard Southern's book *Medieval Theatre in the Round* has examined the staging of this play in relation to the Cornish mystery play *Origo Mundi* (The Origin of the World) and to other mystery cycles using a round theatre.[30] I will concentrate here on the use of the round space, and the positioning of various features in the cardinal extremes according to a pattern of directional symbolism. The word 'compass' is not used in the text to describe the theatrical space. Nonetheless it is clear that the theatre was conceived of as a model world, of much the same variety as the arena in the *Knight's Tale*, or Grosseteste's *Castel of Love*.

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[29] From *The Metaphysical Poets*, ed. H. Gardner, 2nd. ed. (London, 1972), 74.

[30] R. Southern, *The Medieval Theatre in the Round: A Study in the staging of the 'Castle of Perseverance' and Related Matters*, 2nd ed. (London, 1975). Some texts give the title as *'Castel'* or *'Castell'* - I have followed Southern's modernisation throughout. The *Origo* map is on p xiv; the *Castle* map, p 18-19. Southern's reconstruction in fig. 21 clearly shows the quadripartite nature of the theatre.

Both the *Castle* and the *Origo* manuscript contain maps of the theatrical space in which the action occurs. Each details the position of features called 'scaffolds' or sub-stages around the outside of the round theatre facing inwards. The *Origo* map is very simple. It consists of two circles, one inside the other, with eight Latin names, one for each cardinal and diagonal point. Presuming that east is at the top, these are: East - Heaven; North-East - Tormentors; North - Hell; North-West - Pharaoh; West - King David; South West - King Solomon; South - King David; and South-East - 'Garden' (paradise).

The *Castle* map is strikingly similar in appearance to the quadripartite images of Jerusalem discussed above. The text of the map is mostly in Middle English (as is the play), with the occasional Latin title word. The map's frame consists of two concentric circles with directions for the constructions of a wall and moat (the ocean stream) in between them. A large castle stands in the exact middle, labelled 'this is the Castle of Perseverance, that stands in the middle of the place'. This is the position of the figure of Man, whose bed is to be positioned under the castle, according to another inscription. The *Castle* map has south at the top. The outer scaffolds of the *Castle* map are labelled as follows: South - Flesh, or 'Caro'; West - World, or 'Mundus'; North - The Devil, or 'Belyal'; North-East - 'Covetyse'; East - God, or 'Deus'.

Many of the associations here are similar to those on medieval mappaemundi. North and north-east are equated with evil and the Devil, witnessed on mappaemundi by the presence of Gog and Magog (in the north-east, the realm of 'covetyse') and other races like the Scythians. South, the realm of the flesh, is the realm of moral corruption and resulting physical deformity on many mappaemundi. East on mappaemundi is the location of the terrestrial paradise, which is the realm of God in both theatres, with the 'Garden' close by. West, the direction of the world in the theatres, is the direction of the end of the world on mappaemundi.

The action in the *Castle of Perseverance* concerns the influence of the figures in the four main directions over Man in the centre, and particularly the struggle between the 'good angel of the east' and the 'evil angel of the north' for control of his soul. Like the arena in the *Knight's Tale*, the boundary scaffolds are the positions of the contrasting forces, and the centre is the place where order is composed. Both spaces are symbolic worlds, bounded by a variety of forces requiring resolution.

Conclusions

Control of the Boundary through Control of the Centre

We have seen the quadripartite division of space applied to the human body, Jerusalem, the cross, and the world itself, as well as the archetypal Christian church, and a number of symbolic castles, arenas and theatrical spaces. The word 'compass' has been the unifying theme of these discussions. It was used to refer to both the microcosm and the macrocosm, the body, the temple, and the world outside. As I noted in chapter four, any symbolic 'world' in medieval thought can be related to mappaemundi on some level.

Despite the various resemblances of these structures to mappaemundi, the nature of various gates and altars on the border of these Christian microcosmic worlds is of a different order to the appearance of boundary landmarks on mappaemundi. The different kinds of boundary features can be related to one another in simple visual terms, and all are based on a natural human tendency to conceive space as a circle, and then attempt to define it by the placement of a series of symbolic objects in the perimeter. A symbolic world nearly always has 'gates' of some kind. The resemblance should probably not be taken any further.

A comparison between the various kinds of boundary structure showing their differences will be more revealing. The gates and towers within constructions like the idealised Jerusalem, and the *Castle of Love*, represent different facets of a pure, spiritual world. All of these facets are complementary to one another. Conflict, or indeed action of any kind, is absent from these schemes - the centre is a place of peace, so the boundaries exist to support the static structure.

Boundary landmarks such as the pillars of Hercules represent movement towards the perimeter, in an attempt to control the circular space by defining its boundaries. In the Classical world-view, the control of boundary is one of the most important ways in which conflict is resolved, or potential conflict is thwarted. The centre (Greece in most cases) is assumed to be stable, a base of operations for the expansion of the ecumene and the spread of civilised values.

The various boundary forces in 'worlds' like the arenas and theatres just discussed represent the opposing forces existing in a dynamic situation. These worlds are places of combat, of action and its resolution. The movement of the forces here is inward, towards the place where it can be resolved. The resolution of this conflict may been likened to the creation of the world from the elements (God's victory over Chaos), the redemption brought by Christ, and the defeat of the powers of the Antichrist in the final resolution.

The ideal world-empire sought by Alexander, as many medieval writers knew it, is akin to the static, unified and peaceful system represented by the ideal city or castle. Thus, Alexander's placement of boundary markers represents an attempt to recreate the world as a stable structure. In the Christian religious and cultural framework, however, the centre did not become pure or stable until the crucifixion. The attempt to create a stable structure through violence and conquest can achieve transitory physical unification, but such a state will be neither pure, nor stable.

In chapter 8 I will be discussing representations of the power of Christ on mappaemundi and other cosmological schemes. In many of these, he is portrayed outside the world, containing the forces present within it. Christ's control from without in this way is only made possible through his actions at the centre whereby conflict is resolved. The medieval Alexander was not seen to have resolved the central conflict, but spread conflict to the boundaries, in much the same way as Adam.

The Symbolic Programme defined

Medieval cosmologists faced with the task of trying to describe a quadripartite system and relate it to medieval mappaemundi would have had to make choices concerning which associations they were going to adopt. The contradictions inherent in the body of lore that the cosmologist has to work with are one reason why the 'matter of the ecumene' takes such a large variety of forms in the middle ages. The complex interplay between boundary and centre, macrocosm and microcosm, is another reason for this diversity.

Having made this disclaimer, I will put myself in the position of a cosmologist attempting to compile a basic table of the associations between boundary landmarks and the symbolism of the cardinal points. The system will not be consistent with every source, but is intended to give a series of suggestions as to the associations that the pillars of Hercules and similar icons may have inspired in the minds of cartographers and their audiences.

The idea that boundary features on mappaemundi can be interpreted as quadripartite elemental symbols has previously been noted by John Friedman, who analyses the depiction of the monstrous races on the Psalter map, and argues that their arrangement is "reminiscent of a popular diagram of the microcosm and macrocosm often called Mundus Annus Homo..." (Friedman, *Races*, 45). He notes the positioning of Gog and Magog, the band of monstrous races in the Far South, and the location of paradise in the east, and concludes that the map resembles an elemental diagram to a noticeable degree. His suggestion is that

> The close visual association of the races with the winds, the oceans,
> and the great heat of the south connects them to three of the four
> elements, irreducible but chaotic building blocks of matter at the edge
> of creation. (Friedman, *Races*, 45)

I am applying much the same idea to the 'arae', 'columnae', 'gades' and to a lesser extent the 'portae' found on medieval mappaemundi. On many mappaemundi, their positioning is highly suggestive of an arrangement of elemental gateways around the perimeter of the ecumene. Many of the following ideas on east and west have been discussed in the previous chapters. The discussion of north and south in the following chapter will support many of the assertions made concerning those two directions.

EAST

The pillars of Hercules and Alexander are associated with gold, silver and other forms of great wealth, typical of medieval descriptions of the riches of India. East can be associated with both fire and air, springtime, childhood (the first of the four ages), and the first age of the world. This is a region of spiritual purity and freshness. It is here (perhaps between the pillars) that the sun rises and the first age of the world begins, and here also are symbols of eternal youth such as the Tree of Life and the Fountain of Youth. To found an eastern pillar is to seek eternal fame in the minds of men, and to travel beyond the eastern pillars is to seek eternal life.

WEST

The association of the pillars of Hercules with the end of time suggests a symbolic link with the end of the old year and the coming of the new one. The association of this icon with sunset has been observed in several texts. Both autumn and winter are equated with this direction in medieval texts. I have chosen autumn, as winter is more properly applied to the north. The appropriate properties are cold and dry, the elements earth and water. To sail past this point out onto the gloomy western ocean is to seek the experience that comes with the final age (both old age, and the sixth historical age), an arrogant and hubristic act which may lead to death and damnation.

NORTH

Northern landmarks such as Alexander's Gate are associated with darkness, winter, and great evil. The throne of Satan, and the gateway to Hell are found here. Travelling north is an arduous text of manhood (the third age), and success against Satan's hordes is only possible with the help of God. The relevant elements are water and air, the properties cold and moist, although infernal fire can also be found here. The frequent references to riches in descriptions of the east are entirely absent in accounts of the north, which is a poor and barren part of the ecumene.

SOUTH

South is the most difficult of the four quadrants to define. It can be associated with dry heat. The temple of Ammon, amidst the desert, is described in many texts as the centre of a hot and arid region. Other map features, such as the Burning Mountains and the Fountain of the Sun, support this association of the south with great heat. Summer is the obvious season, and Youth (the second age) is the age of life reserved for the south on quadripartite diagrams. There are suggestions of both purity (Moses at the source of the Nile, the throne of God) and decadence (the monstrous races) in this quadrant. (A rather fanciful reading is that the character of the region is not strictly determined, as if the purity of youth had not yet been tested or corrupted.)

I suggest that some of these ideas would have been in the minds of map-makers when they positioned landmarks at the four corners of the earth. The Platonic system of four-part associations was so well known that I doubt that any kind of circular diagram could have been constructed without its maker being aware that he or she was implying a series of elemental relationships of this kind.

CHAPTER SEVEN - GATEWAYS TO THE OUTER OCEAN: Landmark Sites on the Northern and Southern Frontiers

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to give a series of accounts of important boundary landmark sites on the northern and southern frontiers of the medieval ecumene. These accounts will not be as detailed as the individual discussions of single landmarks found in previous chapters. As we have seen, the symbolic nature of east and west was encapsulated into a simple series of landmark icons, readily linked to the course of the sun, or to a genuine geographical boundary, in the case of the western pillars of Hercules. The northern and southern frontiers are much broader, and more complex, having no single focus point determined by either solar symbolism or any major geographical features. Thus, there is no single landmark that defines either the northern and southern point, but rather a variety of altars, gates and pillars which I will detail in turn.

The chapter contains more references to specific geographical sites than the other two landmark studies, and the reader should refer to the modern map (figs 14-15) at the end of the volume if confusion arises. Unlike previous chapters, there will be no specific section on the treatment of these landmarks in cartography, but I will mention different aspects of their cartographic placement throughout the various sections. I will examine the idea that many of these features, particularly landmarks in the Far South, function in medieval cartography as symmetrical counterparts to similar icons found in the north and north-east.

1 - Alexander's Gate and the Historical development of the Northern Frontier

On the larger mappaemundi in the Anglo-Norman corpus, an icon depicting a wall or gate can be found in the north-eastern section, separating a small area of the northern coastline from the rest of the habitable world. The text accompanying this icon on the Hereford map reads:

> Omnia horribilia plus quam credi potest frigus intolerabile; omni tempore ventus acerrimus a montibus quam incole biza vocant. Hic sont homines truculenti nimis humanis carnibus vescentes cruorem potantes. filii caini maledicti. Hos inclusit dominum per magnum alexandrum nam terre motu facto in conspectu principis montes super montes in circuitu eorum ceciderunt, ubi montes deerant ipse eos muro insolubili cinxit.

[Besides being intolerably cold, it [this region]is filled with
unimaginable horrors of every sort; for at certain times there is a very
fierce wind from the mountains. The inhabitants call this wind 'biza'.
Here there are savages who feed on human flesh, and drink human
blood, accursed sons of Cain. God shut them in through the agency of
Alexander the Great; for when an earthquake occurred, the king saw
mountains torn from the earth and thrown up as a barrier against them,
and where mountains were lacking, he himself surrounded them with an
impassable wall.][1]

Alexander's Gate has of many the features of a standard conquest landmark. It
symbolises territorial division, and the separation of the ecumene from the world
outside, and its construction was considered to be an important moment in the history
of ecumenical definition, and the relationship of God with his chosen people. In many
versions of the legend, the gate is made with direct supernatural intervention. Like
other landmarks, its position on the various maps and texts is quite mobile, and was
determined by the expanding ecumenical horizons it symbolised. Lastly, its
construction was, to an extent, a claim by Alexander to be following a pre-ordained
pattern of activity set by his predecessors (figures such as Hercules and Dionysius).

As well as all these features, Alexander's Gate has particular relevance to a study of
medieval European conceptions of geography, due to the links made in that era
between the tribes of Gog and Magog of legend and the Mongol invasion, which in the
thirteenth century was a very visible and frightening reality. Some writers of this era
explore the idea that the Mongols, or Tartars as they were then known, were none
other than the people of the Inclosed Nations, who had broken out from behind
Alexander's ancient and crumbling wall and, according to legend, would conquer the
known world, and prepare the way for the arrival of Antichrist. Other writers were
not so certain of the direct identification of the Tartars with the legend of Gog and
Magog, but it is certainly the case that the northern ecumenical frontier took on a new
importance in the minds of all writers on geography in this era due to the Mongol
invasion.

Perhaps because of this new historical relevance, Alexander's Gate is one of the most
frequent legendary features on maps in the Anglo-Norman corpus, and mention of it
can be found in nearly all the literature of travel and geography in this period. It
rivalled Jerusalem and the terrestrial paradise in the fascination it held for
contemporary commentators, serving as a counterbalance to these holy places with its
grim role in the Christian eschatological framework. This section is primarily a study
of the motif in the thirteenth century, but begins with a preliminary section on the
development of the motif proir to this time.

The text from the Hereford map, quoted above, is based on the common source for
many descriptions of Alexander's Gate in the medieval period: the *Cosmographia* of
Aethicus Ister, a geographer of the seventh century. Aethicus' account of the site was

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[1] Text from Westrem, *Hereford*, 32. Slightly punctuated. Translation from J. A. Leake, *The Geats of Beowulf: A
Study in the Geographic Mythology of the Middle Ages* (Madison, 1967), 89-90.

a fusion of several earlier strands of belief.[2] The development of this myth up until the reception of Aethicus in the Anglo-Norman era has been closely documented by Anderson in *Alexander's Gate, Gog, Magog and the Inclosed Nations.* I will give a summary of this work here, adding material relevant to the study of the gate in relation to similar map features.

The Site of the Gate

In studying Alexander's Gate, it is useful to distinguish between the function of Alexander's Gate and that of another location, the Caspian Gates. Alexander's Gate encloses hostile nations. The Caspian Gates, properly speaking, do not. This is a distinction that medieval writers and cartographers were not always clear on. Moreover, Alexander's Gate on mappaemundi appears on the north-eastern border of the ecumene, and is thus a true boundary landmark in that sense, while the Caspian Gates are commonly found some way inland, and did not function as a gateway to the outer world in the medieval period.

Many of the confusions in medieval accounts of Alexander's Gate stem from the fact that they are based on the work of Aethicus, who was very unclear on its location, providing a number of different conflicting descriptions. The confusion between the Caspian Gates and Alexander's Gate also arises from the fact that many mountain ranges in Asia (Carpathian, Caucasian, Caspian, Elburz, Caucasus, even the Hindu Kush in the Himalayas) were known in medieval times as the Caspian Mountains, and thus any gate or pass positioned in a mountain range with this name was likely to be associated with the Caspian Gates.

The original Caspian Gates, also called the *Caspiae Pylae*, are thought to have been somewhere in the Elburz mountain range, east of the volcanic mountain Demawend, in what is now Iran.[3] They were a major pass in the trade route from Asia minor to the Caspian Sea. The *Caspiae Pylae* were one of the most important places in Greek geography and many geographical measurements were taken from them to other places in the region. They are mentioned for a variety of reasons in geographical literature of the medieval period, but do not have any particular symbolic function in this body of lore.

To many early Greek writers, the original Caspian Gates marked the northern limits of the known world. Alexander was associated with this place in most accounts of his travels because he had chased Darius through them, as is told in the historical accounts of Alexander's battles such as those of Arrian and Curtius Rufus. Both Alexander and Hercules were also thought to have had a variety of adventures involving the Amazons, who were believed to have dwelled on the other side of these gates.

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[2] A. R. Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog, Magog and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, Mass., 1932). (I have preferred the spelling 'enclosed' in all cases, except where referring to Anderson's text or to the Inclosed Nations as a group noun.) The *Cosmographia* of Aethicus purported to be a translation by Jerome of a Greek original, but is in fact of a much later provenance. 'Aethicus' or 'Ethicus' is simply a synonym of *philosophus* but was given the status of a real name. See *King Alisaunder*, vol. 2., 124, note on line 4777.

[3] Smith, *Dictionary*, 'Caspiae Pylae'.

Hercules also had other associations with the Far North, due to the positioning of the river Acheron (*fluvius Achen* on the Hereford map) in the Far North by medieval cartographers. This river was described in Aethicus as the river of Gehenna (Hell), and it is mentioned by Mela and Solinus that Hercules captured the dog Cerberus from a cave at the mouth of this river. This area of the north was considered to be a 'gateway to hell' to Classical authors, and may have been considered so in medieval times also.[4]

Alexander's Gate, in its earliest form, was a wall between two mountains in a place called the Pass of Dariel, which is thought to be north of the city Tbilis on the river Aragus (modern Kura) in what is now Georgia. The Pass of Dariel was also named the Gates of the Caucasus, and the *Sarmaticae Pylae*, but was also, unfortunately, known as the Caspian Gates by some writers.[5] Pliny, in an effort to clear up the confusion between the Pass of Dariel and the original Caspian Gates, described the former as

> the Gates of the Caucasus, which many very erroneously call the Caspian Gates, an enormous work of Nature, who has here suddenly rent the mountains asunder. Here gates have been placed, with iron-covered beams, under the centre of which flows a river emitting a horrible odour; and on this side of it on a rock stands the fortress of Cumania, erected for the purpose of barring the passage of the innumerable tribes. (6. 10, trans. Rackham, vol. 2, 359)

Pliny later notes the reason for the confusion between the natural pass and the man-made gate:

> In this place we must correct a mistake made by many people...These [people] have given the name of Caspian Gates to the pass in Hiberia, which, as we have stated, is called the Gates of the Caucasus...There are however *other Caspian Gates adjoining the Caspian tribes*; the distinction between the two passes can only be established by the report of those who accompanied the expedition of Alexander the Great. (6. 15, trans. Rackham, vol. 2, 367. Italics mine.)

In the third century AD, the writer of the *Greek Alexander Romance* avoided the difficulty pointed out by Pliny, by positioning the wall 'somewhere near to the country of the Amazons', and called the mountains the *Ubera Aquilonis*, i.e. the 'Breasts of the North' (quoted below). Anderson notes the way in which the gate mentioned in the *GAR* had become itinerant, "and to preserve its mysterious character [it] receded to remote places" (Anderson, *Gate*, 25). The 'Breasts of the North' should not be directly associated with any particular pass or other site in the Caspian region, but instead should be interpreted as a symbolic depiction of the general nature of the northern frontier - "right pure north", as the *KA* calls them (317).

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[4] Bevan and Phillot, *Medieval Geography*, 63. See Mela, *De Situ Orbis* (1. 19), and Solinus, *Collectanea* (43. 2).

[5] Smith, *Dictionary*, 'Aragus'.

The Greek and Syrian versions of the Alexander Romance are the first to show signs of Christian influence. In these versions, the gate is no longer a long wall built between two mountains, but a shorter barrier, formed by the movement of two mountains together, with the aid of the Christian God. This is the image of the gate in most subsequent versions of the Alexander Romance cycle, and on most mappaemundi.

The sixth-century chronicler Jordanes (in the *Origins and Deeds of the Goths*) provides an early medieval example of the confusion between the two sites. He mentions a number of landmark sites in the Far North, the first being the 'Rock of Marpesia', where "Alexander the Great afterwards built gates and named them the Caspian Gates, which now the tribe of the Lazi guard as a Roman outpost" (6. 51-2, trans. Mierow, 64). The Marpesian Rock is named after the Amazon queen, Marpesia, who first conquered it. The name was used to refer to the entire Caucasus range.

Jordanes also mentions a number of similar sites when discussing the Caucasus range: "Here and there it [the range] divides where the ridge breaks apart and leaves a deep gap, thus forming now the Caspian Gates, now the Armenian, or the Cilician, or of whatever name the place might be" (Jordanes, *Goths*, 6. 55, trans. Mierow, 65). It is easy to see how confusion regarding the site of the gate arose, and this confusion only worsened in the medieval period when knowledge of the region was known only from a variety of earlier sources. Incidentally, the Armenian Gates are referred to as the 'pillars of Armenia' in later texts (for example, Pierre d'Ailly, *Imago Mundi*, chap 22.)

In later medieval literature the site of Alexander's Gate became fixed (according to travel accounts, and geographical literature based upon them) as being in Derbend, a city on the south-western shore of the Caspian Sea, in the territory covered by modern Dagestan (a province of Russia). There is a structure here called the Iron Gate of Derbend, which was in reality built by the warlord Khosro Anushirvan in 542 AD, but was later taken to have been made by Alexander. This is the identification of Alexander's Gate found in travel writings such as those of William of Rubruck, detailed below.

The idea that these various gates and passes represented 'the far north of the world' may confuse a modern observer, who will notice that they are all only marginally north of the east-to-west parallel running from Gades to the Indus valley. In medieval geography, the Caspian Sea was not known to be a land-locked sea, but considered to be a small inlet of the northern ocean, mirroring the Red Sea in the south. Also, as the area now belonging to modern Tajikistan and Uzbekistan was the furthest northward point reached by Alexander, this area became associated with 'north', although strictly speaking it is almost parallel with sites representing 'east' and 'west'. Moreover, the region is very mountainous, and high altitude lent it an association with winter, and thus 'north', although in fact it is in quite a central position according to the medieval climatic system.

The Gate on Medieval Maps

Many detailed maps in the corpus are essentially true to Pliny's distinction, showing the Caspian Gates as a door in the Caspian Ranges, while Alexander's Gate is shown

as a wall, much further to the north-east. The Hereford, Ebstorf and Psalter maps all show the two icons separately. The Vercelli map also shows a wall in the north-east, with an inscription relating to the Anthropophagi ('people-eaters') in the land of Gog, which is now illegible. Capello's edition reconstructs it from the Hereford version. Another nearby inscription mentions *Goz et Magoz*, but conflates the story of Alexander's enclosure with another strange tale concerning the Carimaspi tribe, who battle with Gryphons in order to obtain emeralds. (This battle is pictured in the Far North on the Hereford map.) A third inscription on the Vercelli, near a large icon of a door in the Caspian ranges (which is certainly intended to be the Caspian Gates), mentions that Alexander enclosed the Jews here, an error not found on other maps in the corpus.[6]

The Hereford map contains a variety of other enclosures in the Far North besides Alexander's Gate. Close to Gog and Magog is another mountainous enclosure in which the 'Albanian Kings' appear to be held captive. Immediately opposite this is an island on which the *Turki*, descendants of Gog and Magog, are positioned. The *Hyperboreans*, although they are a benign race, are also almost entirely enclosed in their mountain range in the extreme cardinal north. The icon for Alexander's Gate on the Hereford map is more imposing than any of the minor enclosures just mentioned. Despite this, these other enclosures are of considerable importance to my overall argument, as I wish to show that in examining all of these gates, the general nature of the northern frontier should be considered, as well as the specific location intended by any given icon.

As Anderson notes, Alexander's Gate is "the story of the [northern] frontier in a sublimated mythologised form" (*Gate*, 8). This statement, I argue, is equally true of other northern enclosures, which have escaped scholarly attention because a single gate site is sought by modern commentators. It would be a mistake to think of Gog and Magog as the only northern race kept at bay by the Caspian / Caucasus ranges in medieval geographical thought, or the only gateway to the hostile nothern landscape outside. Throughout this section, I stress that the complexity of the northern frontier led to the creation of a series of similar gates and blocked passes, all based on much the same theme - 'a northern race is kept out of the ecumene by mountains or man-made structures'.

Gog and Magog, or Alexander's Gate, do not appear with any frequency on maps before the eleventh century. Scott Westrem, in a recent article on the gate motif, urges caution to those who would uncritically adopt the general assumption that Alexander's Gate can be considered a widespread theme in European thought. He warns that many appearances of the inscription *gog et magog* on maps that show no wall or gate icon (such as the Cotton and Jerome maps) do not necessarily mean that the map-maker implied the presence of the gate simply by naming the tribes. This is particularly true of the Jerome maps, which were based on a source (Jerome's *Liber Locorum*) that mentions Gog and Magog in connection with Genesis (10. 2), in which

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[6] Capello, "Il Mappemonde", 71-72, and Bevan and Phillot, *Medieval Geography*, 61-62. The conflation of the two stories is probably a compression of the account in Isidore, *Etymologies* 14. 3. 10.

there is no mention of the gate.[7] *Gog et Magog* on these maps might be a simple way of rendering Biblical genealogical lore.

Westrem also notes that on the maps in the survey of 1,100 mappaemundi conducted by Woodward, Gog and Magog appear with "remarkable infrequency" (Westrem, "Against Gog", 59). The general statement which Westrem tries to redefine and critique is Flint's notion that "*Mappa mundi* makers loved to depict Gog and Magog" on their maps (Flint, *Landcape*, 13, n. 21). I must note here that the Anglo-Norman cartographic tradition accounts for the bulk of those that do show the wall: the Sawley, Hereford, Ebstorf, Psalter, Lambert of St Omer, Matthew Paris, Higden and St. Denis maps all include it in some form. Flint's statement is thus essentially true of detailed Anglo-Norman ecumenical maps in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Westrem's warning has been heeded for other maps on the corpus, on which the ambiguous nature of the inscription *gog et magog* has been noted, and resultingly, Gog and Magog and the gate itself have been listed separately on the Landmark Tables in Appendix 1.

The People behind the Gate

Another complex strand of the legend of Alexander's Gate concerns the various northern peoples it was created to exclude. The central issue of this discussion is how the peoples of Gog and Magog came to be associated with the lost tribes of Israel, as originally these two myths were separate.

The source for the Gog and Magog legend is Biblical, the relevant passages being Genesis (10. 2), Ezekiel (38. 1-3, 15, 20), and Revelation (20. 7-8). The Genesis passage is a simple genealogy of the sons of Noah, listing Magog as one of the sons of Japheth. Magog's sons are not listed. In later times Gog and Magog were associated with Cain, and Nimrod, out of a desire to simplify the Biblical genealogies, and divide the races of the ecumene between the accursed and the chosen races.

The Ezekiel and Revelation passages are prophecies concerning various Jewish tribes and their role in Salvation history. The Ezekiel passages concern his vision of the invasion of the people of Gog , and the words that God instructs him to say to these people. The sections most relevant to later commentators are as follows:

> Then you [the people of Gog] will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you...a great company and a mighty army. (38. 15).

> The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. (38. 20).

These passages are a memory of the Scythian invasion of Asia Minor in the seventh century BC, and for most of the Classical period, the gate was thought to enclose the Scythians. Later, the peoples of Gog and Magog were equated with the Celts, and then the Goths, at which time the names were changed to Goth and Magoth, as is explained below.

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[7] S. Westrem, "Against Gog and Magog", in Tomasch and Giles, eds, *Text and Territory* , 54-75.

Revelation 20. 7-8 reads:

> Now when the thousand years [of Christ's rule over Satan] have
> expired, Satan will be released from his prison / And will go out to
> deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and
> Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sands
> of the sea.

This passage suggests that 'Gog and Magog' was originally a term implying barbarous races from the outskirts of the ecumene in all directions, not simply the north. Ezekiel (38. 5-6) also suggests this, naming the races of Persia, Ethiopia and Libya as allies of Gog and Magog in the great battle. The theme in both books seems to be the gathering of hostile tribes around the central nation of Israel.

The two myths (Gog and Magog and the gate) were not associated with one another until the fourth century, at a time when Gog and Magog were equated with the Goths during the time of the invasion of the Huns into Europe (causing further Gothic immigraton that eventually led to the sacking of Rome). Isidore of Seville, in his *History of the Goths, Vandals and Suebi*, made a cautious identification based upon the two separate strands of thought: "The Goths are descended from Magog...and are shown to have sprung from the Scythians...".[8]

In the medieval period, writers such as Ralph Higden and Godfrey of Viterbo continued to state that the Goths were the same as Gog and Magog. Other writers noted that they were Alans, Huns, Saracens, Tartars, Bulgarians, or generally any race that came from Central Asia or North-Eastern Europe and appeared threatening (Anderson, *Gate*, 58f).

The other main element in the identification of the people behind the gate concerns the myth of the 'lost tribes of Israel'. This myth is essentially derived from Biblical accounts (see in particular 2 Kings 17) of the deportation of a total of twelve Jewish tribes from Palestine into northern regions: ten by the world-ruler Sargon of Assyria (confused with Shalmanesser of Assyria in various texts), and later, two by Artaxerxes of Persia. They were never 'lost', and there is a considerable body of prophetic Biblical material concerning their return from deportation, and the resulting reunification of Israel (Isaiah 11. 11; 26. 20; 44. 9; Ezekiel 37. 11f; Jeremiah 31. 7f).

No direct connection was made between the ten (or twelve) lost tribes of Israel and the myth of Gog and Magog until Orosius in the fifth century. Not all subsequent writers accepted this view, but many did follow Orosius in ignoring the positive nature of the Jewish tradition of the unification of Israel, and turned this idea into part of their own eschatology of the coming of Antichrist in the last days. Christian anti-Jewish prejudice, witnessed in writers like Albertus Magnus and Peter Comestor, replaced the Scythians and Goths with Jews, who were considered far more likely to be the allies of the Antichrist in this era (Anderson, *Gate*, 63f).

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[8] Isidore of Seville, *History of the Goths, Vandals and Suebi* (66), trans. G. Donini (Leiden, 1970), 30. See also *Etymologies* 14. 3. 31 for a similar identification of Gog and Magog as Scythians.

All the various strands of the myth accumulated around the figure of Alexander, in his role as the definer of ecumenical boundaries. The location of the icon on maps was mobile, and subject to the status of European knowledge of north-western Asia. This process of integration was by no means complete in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the forms taken by the motif in this era were still highly variable.

Anderson breaks all the accounts of the medieval period down into three main groupings. Firstly, writers like Matthew Paris and Peter Comestor held that the Inclosed Nations were the ten tribes, and are uncertain of the identification of these with Gog and Magog; Paris in various passages also suggests that the ten tribes are both Saracens and Tartars (see below). Secondly, writers like Godfrey of Viterbo held that the ten tribes were separate from Gog and Magog, but that they had also been enclosed, behind a separate but nearby wall. The third form, the most common, was that the ten tribes were identical to Gog and Magog (Anderson, *Gate*, 70f). Exemplary of this form is the account given by Mandeville, also quoted below.

2 - The Gates in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century literature

The Alexander Legends

The original *Greek Alexander Romance* version was the main source for subsequent versions such as the *Historia de Preliis*. The *GAR* relates that Alexander formed these gates with the aid of the Christian God, saying:

> 'God of gods, lord of all creation, who made all things by your
> Word...Through your name and your will I have done what you
> wished, and you have placed the whole world in my hands. I call upon
> your name that is so often praised: fulfil this request of mine and cause
> these two mountains to come together... (*GAR* 3. 26a, trans. Stoneman,
> 186)

God creates the earthquake which closes the mountains together, and Alexander then creates two bronze gates to stop up the remaining space, and covers them with bitumen, so strong that they might never be broken. The tale also says that these mountains (the *Ubera Aquilonis*) were called the Caspian Mountains.

An early Byzantine version of the romance confuses these brass gates with the pillars of Alexander, and notes that Alexander positioned a pillar inscribed with his name in front of them (Anderson, *Gate*, 43). This conflation of the two different kinds of landmark also occurs in several later sources, noted below.

As might be expected, Alexander's Gate gets lengthy treatment in all versions of the Alexander Romance from the twelfth century onwards. The episode was interpolated into the J[2] *Historia* from the *Epitome* of Julius Valerius and thus features in most subsequent vernacular versions. The increase in the space given to it in these later redactions is perhaps also a product of increased interest in the north Asian frontier during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[9] The *Historia de Preliis* version of the

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[9] The later redactions were generally longer and more descriptive than the originals, but even so, the treatment of Alexander's Gate in many late versions of the romance is noticeably longer than those of other features.

gate story can be found in works such as the *Prose Life* and the *Wars of Alexander*. Alexander's Gate can also be found in the main French source, the *Roman d'Alixandre*, although the editors note that the tale was so well known as to make the task of defining a particular source impossible.[10]

The *Roman de Toute Chevalrie*, and as a result the *King Alisaunder* version, show the influence of Aethicus, and consequently include lengthy accounts of Gog and Magog. The *KA* section on Gog and Magog contains a particularly interesting section describing this landmark, bearing many resemblances to other features such as the Symplegades and the pillars of Hercules.[11] The poem describes how Alexander built a gate with the help of a race of pirates known as the Meopari (see below). The purpose of the gate in this text is

> To stoppe the cee of Caspias
> Wharthorough hij hadden her pas,
> In and out forto ride
> And robbe shippes wyde and syde,
> (and out of the londe ne might ship go
> Bot bitwene roches two,
> Als high as any man mighth seen
> That was two milen bitwen.) (*KA*, 331)

> [To seal the Caspian sea-pass, which they [the Meopari] sailed in and out of in order to rob ships...(and no ship could get in or out, except between two rocks, as high as any man had seen, with a space of two miles between them.)]

The *KA* then relates that Alexander closes up this gap with "two pillars" made of strong metal, a hundred feet long, covered in bitumen and strong clay. Now, the writer says, no ship can break through from now until doomsday. (Incidentally, the purpose of the gate is not to inclose the Meopari, although the extract given might suggest this.) This is followed by another description of a similar structure positioned on the land pass between the Land of Gog in Tarraconta and the Caspian region. This structure is also said to last until doomsday. Thus, the *KA* has two gates, both built by Alexander, one on the land pass and another blocking the sea passage.

I do not detail the various other forms taken by the gate in the Alexander literature. While Alexander's Gate may have had its origins in the Alexander legends, the relevance of the site to both Christian eschatology and contemporary history was far greater than for other places mentioned in the romance cycle.

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[10] *The Medieval French Roman d'Alexandre*, vol. 2 ed. C. Armstrong (Princeton, 1937), 191-2, and vol. 6 ed. A. Foulet (Princeton, 1976), 41.

[11] An inscription on the Catalan Atlas takes the parallel even further, combining the imagery of the gate with that of the eastern statues: "And by means of his stratagem , Alexander enclosed here the Tartars Gog and Magog, and he made for them two images of metal...". Cited in Westrem, "Against Gog", 62.

Eschatology of the Gate

The importance of Alexander's Gate in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century thought is different from that of the other landmarks discussed in this study. Its role as a historical landmark was greatly overshadowed by its relevance to contemporary events. Travel 'beyond the gate' does not feature in medieval travel accounts or romances, and so the gate itself is not connected with the trope of 'outdoing', as are many of the other conquest landmarks. It was the emergence of the people behind the gate into the ecumene that was of concern to medieval writers and cartographers.

A detailed account of the eschatology surrounding Alexander's Gate is found in the *Cursor Mundi*. The text relates that the appearance of the 'folk from the north' is one of the signs by which Christendom would know of the impending arrival of the Antichrist, and the beginning of the sixth and final age of the world. The appearance of the Mongol Empire from the northern region of East Asia had lent this legendary material a new importance.

Some of the other signs of the coming of the sixth age were equally topical. As the author of the *Cursor* tells us, the traditional pattern for the translation of political power from one state to another (a trope called *translatio imperii*) should move along a westward course. In the proper order of things, the older states such as Greece and Persia had given way to the lordship of Rome. According the *Cursor Mundi*, this order would be subverted before the coming of Antichrist, and there would be great dissension arising from these older states. Then, a king of France, named Constantine, would be made lord of Rome, and he eventually would end the Roman Empire by travelling to Jerusalem and giving over his crown and sceptre to Christ.

The Antichrist would be born in Babylon, a city of idolatry, mirroring Christ's birth in Bethlehem, a place of peace. And he would pretend to be Christ, and lead the Jews into a condition of great wealth and plenty. This state of plenty would partly come about through the reign of Constantine who would take control over Greece, Rome and the rest of the ecumene. However, at this point, the evil race that Alexander had trapped in the land of Gog and Magog would come from the north and spread across the known world, causing devastation wherever they went, until they would eventually be defeated by Constantine, and then baptised. At this point Constantine would give over his crown and sceptre to Christ, as described earlier.[12]

The theme of *translatio imperii* (detailed in chapter 4) was interpreted by writers like Hugh of St. Victor and Otto of Friesing in order to argue that as civilisation had now reached the western end of the ecumene (France and England), the end of the sixth age was approaching. The emergence of powerful kingdoms in the east (Saracens) and north (Mongols), hostile to Christendom, furthered these apocalyptic speculations, by subverting the order of *translatio imperii*. The invasion of the Tartars, Saracens and other races was connected with this eschatological sequence, as will be seen in an

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[12] *Cursor Mundi*, ed. Morris. The direct reference to Gog and Magog is vol. 3, 1278. The general eschatology of Antichrist is related in vol. 3, 1258-1282.

investigation of the gate in Matthew Paris, Roger Bacon and Ralph Higden in the following section.

The Gates in Maps, Encyclopaedias, Histories and Chronicles

A good source for an examination of Alexander's Gate in the thirteenth century is the *Opus Majus* of the Franciscan friar Roger Bacon. This work is a lengthy plea for the reasoned and systematic discovery through observation of the nature of the world, so that man's place in it might be more thoroughly understood. Bacon held that the study of geography was of primary importance in this regard, as "the things of this world cannot be known except by a knowledge of the places in which they are contained" (Bacon, *Opus*, trans. Burke, 320).

Concerning Alexander's Gate, Bacon writes:

> Alexander, as Ethicus states, shut up twenty-two kingdoms of the stock of Gog and Magog, destined to come forth in the days of Antichrist. These nations will first devastate the world and then will meet Antichrist, and they will call him God of Gods....Oh, how necessary it is for the Church of God that prelates and catholic men should consider these regions, not only for the conversion of the races there, and consolation of Christian captives in the same, but because of the persecution of Antichrist, so that we may know whence he is to come and when, by studying this matter and many others. (*Opus*, trans. Burke, 382)

Bacon in these passages also makes frequent reference to the Mongols, who called themselves Tatars, and were known by Bacon and many others as Tartars. This was a play on the ancient Graeco-Roman word Tartarus, or Hell, and thus the Mongols were thought of as the 'people from hell' by many thirteenth-century Europeans.

Bacon does not directly state that the Tartars were the Inclosed Nations. In fact, he gives an account of the historical development of the Mongol empire, based on the report of William of Rubruck (see below). However, he does elsewhere mention the Tartars frequently in various connections with Alexander's Gate, as if to suggest that this identification, or something similar, should be made.

For example, Bacon mentions the account of the Gate in the report of William of Rubruck, who had travelled through it, *with the Tartars*, earlier in the century. This is part of the evidence he gives to support his claim that the gate had been broken. He also notes that Isidore had reported that the Huni, who were in league with the Bulgarians "and other northern nations broke, as Isidore states, the 'bars' of Alexander. Hence they have become more powerful than are the Tartars up to the present time" (Bacon, *Opus*, trans. Burke, 383).

We can be almost certain that Bacon would have included Alexander's Gate on his lost mappamundi, as the discovery of this region was one of his foremost geographical concerns. Bacon does not mention many other boundary landmarks in any detail throughout the *Opus Majus*, except for the *arae Philenorum* in Africa.

Another source for the thirteenth-century English treatment of the Tartar theme is the *Chronica Majora* of the chronicler and cartographer Matthew Paris, of St. Albans. Matthew's work is an adaptation and continuation of the *Flores Historiatum* of an earlier chronicler, Roger of Wendover. The *Flores* treats the entirety of world history from creation until 1235. Paris' *Chronica* is essentially an abridged reworking of the *Flores* until 1235, at which point the work is entirely Paris' own until 1273. The section from 1235 until 1273 is also known as the *Historia Majora*. Slightly different versions of the Crusader Kingdom map appear in the *Chronica Majora* and *Historia Anglorum* versions of the text.[13]

Up-to-date accounts of the extent of the 'Tartar menace' are found throughout the *Chronica*. Whenever fresh news arrived, Paris interrupted his accounts of happenings in St. Albans and the rest of England, to detail events in the regions beset by the Mongol invasion. An entry for 1240, labelled 'An irruption of the Tartars', is typical of his ideas concerning this race. This entry begins:

> In this year, that human joys may not long continue...an immense horde
> of that detestable race of Satan, the Tartars, burst forth from their
> mountain-bound regions, and making their way through rocks
> apparently impenetrable, rushed forth, like demons loosed from
> Tartarus (so that they are well called Tartars, as it were inhabitants of
> Tartarus)...

While this does not rate as a direct identification of Gog and Magog with the Tartars, the imagery is certainly very similar. Later in the same entry, Paris attempts to clear up the confusion as to the identification of the Tartars with the race enclosed by Alexander. Firstly, he writes that the Tartars attacked the Saracens in that region, and these Saracens turned to the Christians for aid

> and begged to be allowed to enter into alliance with the Christians, in
> order that they might, by multiplying their forces, be enabled to resist
> these human monsters. These Saracens [*not* the Tartars], the memory
> of whom is detestable, are believed to have been of the ten tribes, who
> abandoned the law of Moses, and followed after the golden calves; and
> Alexander also endeavoured to shut them up in the precipitous Caspian
> mountains by walls cemented with bitumen; but as the work appeared
> to be beyond human accomplishment, he invoked aid of the the God of
> Israel; upon which the ridges of the mountains united with one another,
> and the place became inaccessible and impassable.

Paris then suggests that there is some difficulty equating the Tartars with the folk of Gog and Magog:

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[13] The maps are discussed in S. Lewis, *The Art of Matthew Paris in the Chronica Majora*, chap. 6.

> Indeed it appears doubtful whether these Tartars, who at this time
> made their appearance, are the people mentioned [Gog and Magog];
> for they do not speak in the Hebrew tongue, nor know the Mosaic
> law...

But he then asserts that the Tartars are simply Jews who have forgotten their heritage:

> But the reply to this is, that it nevertheless is probable that they [the
> Tartars] are some of those who were inclosed in the mountains...And as
> in the time of the government of Moses their rebellious hearts were
> perverted to an evil way of thinking, so that they followed after strange
> gods and unknown customs, and...they were unknown to every other
> nation...[14]

So, Paris has finally asserted that the Inclosed Nations include the Tartars, although in the previous passage he has claimed that they are to be equated with the Saracens. Underlying the confusion is a persistent fear that somewhere in the Far North, the gates have broken, and that Gog and Magog, whoever they might be, are pressing south and westward to destroy Christendom.

All of Matthew Paris' Crusader maps show Gog and Magog and the enclosure in some form. The north-east corner of the Crusader Kingdom map in the *Chronica Majora* shows an enclosure made from the Caspian Mountains. Inside is written:

> The enclosure of the Caspian Mountains. Here dwell the Jews whom
> God locked up at the request of King Alexander [and] who will go
> forth on the eve of the Day of Judgement and will massacre all manner
> of peoples. They are enclosed by high and great mountains and cannot
> get out. (Cited in Lewis, *Art*, 349)

Inside a similar enclosure in the map in the *Historia Majora*, the inscription mentions the Tartars. The connection between the Tartars and the Inclosed Nations is made quite clear:

> This land is far away toward the northeast. Here remain the rows of
> ships where Alexander enclosed Gog and Magog. From here came
> those people called the Tartars, of whom it is said that they have shorn
> and cut so much of the mountains of hard rock that they have managed
> to gain a passage through...(Cited in Lewis, *Art*, 349)[15]

Alexander's Gate is the only landmark icon on these maps. (Matthew's mappamundi names the pillars of Hercules in a generic fashion - otherwise, Matthew's cartography is based on fairly contemporary knowledge.) The vast distortion in scale resulting from Matthew's placement of Alexander's Gate on a map of the Holy Land is an

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[14] Matthew Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History -1235-1273*, trans. J. A. Giles, 3 vols. (London, 1889), vol. 1, 312-314.

[15] See Lewis, *Art,* 507, n. 63-5 for the original texts. The reference to the ships is most obscure.

indication of how important it was to place the gate on a map showing modern Crusader concerns.

I will discuss the treatment of the gates in Ralph Higden's *Polychronicon* as a final example of the gate theme in medieval English cartography and literature. Higden's text has little to say concerning the gates themselves. Of the 'Caspian' Gates, he says simply that the Caspian Hills were closed together by God as a result of the prayers of Alexander. No mention is made of the folk who dwell behind them.[16]

Later, in an entirely different section, he notes that the Scythians are the most powerful people in the world, and relates that they are known as Gog and Magog. According to Higden, they defeated King Alexander in battle, and twice conquered Asia, and their female counterparts are the Amazons. In the same section, he mentions that Gothia is a region of Scythia, and that it is called Gog, named after Gog the son of Japheth. The people here are assumed to be entirely free of confinement, as their descendants include such a disparate range of people as the folk of Denmark in Europe, the Amazons in Asia, and the Getulians in Africa (*Polychronicon*, trans. Trevisa, 135-45).

The Higden map included in the survey shows an enclosed area in the north-east corner, in which is written some of the deeds of Alexander the Great, including the imprisonment of Gog and Magog. The gate itself is not shown, although a barrier is suggested by the shape of the mountain range. The maker of this map - not Higden himself - seems to have departed from what was written in the *Polychronicon* in order to show Gog and Magog in their usual position. The Caspian Gates, mentioned by Ralph as the site of the enclosure, are not depicted on the map as a separate icon.[17]

The Gates in Travel Literature - History meets Legend

Alexander's Gate was a commonly visited or described site in the travel literature of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The gate was mentioned by travellers such as William of Rubruck (1253-55), Marco Polo (1271-95), Friar Jordanes (1321-23), and Ibn Battuta (c. 1347), and in the anonymous Spanish text *The Knowledge of the World* (mid-fourteenth century). The fact that the gate receives treatment in these works cannot simply be attributed to the fact that it was in the region where the authors happened to be travelling. Many of the genuine travellers in this period actively sought out the place, and were most curious to know if it truly existed.

One of the most important of the thirteenth-century sources, the report of Friar William of Rubruck, distinguishes between the Iron Gate of Derbend (which he says was built by Alexander) and the "barriers" of Alexander, "shutting out the wild tribes, that is the desert nomads, so that they could not get in on the cultivated lands and the towns."[18] The barriers, according to Rubruck, are three days from Derbend, near the

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[16] Ralph Higden, *Polychronicon*, trans. Trevisa, ed. C. Babbington, vol. 1, 63-65.

[17] An account of Higden's map is in J. Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle of Ranulf Higden* (Oxford, 1966), 63-68.

[18] William of Rubruck, *The Journey of Friar William of Rubruck*, trans. W. Rockhill (London, 1900), 262. Derbend is also given as the location in Friar Jordanes' *Wonders of the East*, trans. H. Yule (London, 1863), 53.

town of Samaron. Once again, we see that some writers conceived of a variety of gates, and a variety of enclosed nations, within the northern region of the ecumene.

There are also various references to the gate motif in the *Travels* of Marco Polo. Polo first mentions the gates in his description of the Caucasus (Caspian) ranges. He says:

> And I should let you know that Alexander had a tower and a fortress
> built here, so that the natives could not sally out to attack him. This
> was called the Iron Gates. It is the place where the *Alexander Book*
> relates that he shut in the Tartars between two mountains. In fact they
> were not Tartars, but people called Comnanians and various other races
> besides, because there were no Tartars at that time.[19]

No version of the Alexander Romance that I am familiar with actually does say that Alexander enclosed the Tartars. In most versions, the Inclosed Nations are Jews or Scythians, as we have seen. Polo's attempt at historical accuracy is not really directed at the Alexander Romance tradition, but more at contemporaries such as Matthew Paris, who wished to draw a connection between the old myth and the modern reality of the Mongol Empire. However, Polo himself draws a similar connection later on in the work. In describing the province of Tenduc in China, he says:

> This is the place which we call in our language Gog and Magog; the
> natives call it Ung and Mungul. Each of these two provinces was
> inhabited by a separate race: in Ung lived the Gog, in Mungul the
> Tartars. (*Travels*, trans. Latham, 106)

The tribe known to Polo as 'Ung' were a people living near the Great Wall of China, which was known to Arab geographers as the 'Wall of Gog and Magog'. Various modern scholars have been tempted by the idea that the Great Wall of China was the original source of the legend of Alexander's Gate, but this is not the case. As we have seen, the original location of the gate was in the Caucasus range, between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The Great Wall of China became identified with the legend only when the boundaries of European geographical knowledge had reached China in the medieval period.

Alexander's Gate in Travel Fiction

The fourteenth-century writer John Mandeville mentions Alexander's Gate in an interesting passage in the *Travels* which pulls several strands of the legend together, and also includes some unusual material. He describes the Tartars at some length, and at no stage identifies these people with the Lost Tribes. (He does, however, position the gate in an area near the Tartar lands.) He describes the gate in a section on 'The lands beyond Cathay', placing it in a land called Cadhilhe (which has been identified with Korea):

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[19] Marco Polo, *The Travels*, trans. R. E. Latham (London, 1958), 49, and see 22-23.

> In this same land are the hills of Caspian which are called Uber [*ubera aquilonis*, 'breasts of the north wind', the Caspian mountains]. The Jews of the Ten Lost Tribes are shut up in these hills; they are called Gog and Magog, and they can get out on no side. (Mandeville, *Travels*, trans. Moseley, 165)

Mandeville describes how Alexander, "although he was a heathen", received the aid of God in closing the two mountains together to form a barrier. This barrier, accessible only by a pass called Clyrem, is closely guarded by the Queen of the Amazons, who lives in the hills nearby. Mandeville's description of the Amazons protecting the gate is a further example of the diversity of the myths of the northern frontier, and the way in which different strands of the myth could become merged.

In several other contemporary sources cited by DiMarco, it is also directly stated that the Amazons guard the opening to the gate, and there are suggestions of this idea in the *RTC* and the *KA*. The Crusade historian Jacques de Vitry compared the Christian women of Georgia to the Amazons, noting that these women would protect Christendom against the folk of Gog and Magog in the Last Days. Thomas of Cantimpré took this further, by arguing that the Amazons were Christians themselves, who protected Christendom against the Saracens. DiMarco also cites other texts in which the Amazons turn traitor, and join forces with Gog and Magog to become the allies of Antichrist in the last days. Mandeville may have been insinuating that the protection offered by the Amazon queen over the region was false, and her loyalty questionable, and that the entire situation was fraught with danger.[20]

Mandeville goes on to relate that on the other side of the hills, the tribes cannot escape because they cannot cross the Caspian Sea. He relates that if they did travel across this sea, they would find communication impossible, as they know no language other than their own. This is reminiscent of the original Graeco-Roman linguistic definition of the ecumene - barbarism is equated with the inability to speak in one of the recognised ecumenical tongues.

Mandeville does not describe the lost tribes in particular detail, simply noting that the other local inhabitants believe that "in the time of Antichrist those Jews will sally out and do much harm to Christian men." Then he states that other Jews outside Israel still insist on learning Hebrew partly so that when the lost tribes do break forth, they will recognise their fellows by their speech and not kill them, but rather lead them into triumph over the Christians (trans. Moseley, 166-7). Mandeville cleverly plays on the fears and prejudices of his readership in these passages, in the same way in which he he appeals to their hopes and fantasies in the description of Prester John's land and the terrestrial paradise elsewhere in the work.

The *Letter of Prester John* declares that the folk of Gog and Magog are ruled and controlled by the supposed author of the letter, the mythical Priest-King himself. The *Letter's* absurd claim is that Prester John's army take the folk of Gog and Magog out

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[20] See Vincent DiMarco, "The Amazons and the End of the World", in Westrem, ed., *Discovering New Worlds*, 69-90.

with them into battle, and allow them to eat many of the king's enemies. Then they are sent home, lest they begin eating the King's own men. The normal story of the enclosure is not mentioned - here, Alexander is the prisoner:

> This was the people that enclosed the King Alexander in Macedonia and put him into prison from which he escaped. But God will send upon them lightning and scorching fire and will burn and disperse them along with the Antichrist...(*Letter*, trans. Slessarev, 69-70)

This claim is typical of the text in general, which sought to assuage the fears of readers by claiming that a powerful Christian force had control over the north and east, and that Christendom was in no danger from these regions. The Amazons, over whom the King is also said to hold sway, are also mentioned shortly afterwards.[21]

3 - Decline in the Motif, and suggestions as to its meaning

As witnessed by Bacon's account, the accounts of missionary friars such as William of Rubruck had considerable influence on thirteenth-century conceptions of the gate. Vincent of Beauvaix, borrowing from the work of a certain Friar Simon of St. Quentin, noted that the historical versions of the gate did not appear to coincide with empirical accounts of the region:

> As our scholastic histories say that Alexander the Great, King of the Macedonians, besought God to shut up the Jews within the Caspian mountains, our Friars of the Holy Orders of Preachers...have diligently inquired of Georgians, Persians, as well as of Jews, concerning this shutting up, and they have all said, even the Jews, that they knew nothing certain of it, except what they have found in their histories.[22]

The failure of travellers like Friar Simon to find any concrete information on the precise site of the Inclosed Nations did not stop the legend becoming modernised and made into an aspect of contemporary history. Alexander's Gate continued to be included on later medieval maps, such as the fourteenth-century Catalan Atlas and various others, for several hundred years after Vincent first queried its existence.

The idea did not encounter serious challenge until the middle of the fifteenth century. The maker of the Borgia map gives an account of some historical accuracy, noting on

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[21] The idea that Gog and Magog enclosed 'Alexandre' (the city) is also found in the *Knowledge of the World*, written by an anonymous Spanish Francisan traveller in the middle of the fourteenth century. He writes: "These two provinces of YRCANIA and GOTIA were peopled by the GODOS who came from the closed TARTARIA, from the castle of GOT and MAGOT where they deliberated on the siege of ALEXANDRE, and the conquest of the greater part of the world." This is perhaps a conflation of Gog and Magog and Alexandria Ultima, described below. *Knowledge of the World* is the title provided by Markham. The full title is '*Book of the knowledge of all the kingdoms, lands and lordships that are in the world...*', trans. C. Markham (London, 1912), 61. A more standard description of the enclosure of 'Got and Magot', together with the notion that they had recently escaped their confines, is found on page 47.

[22] Vincent of Beauvaix, *Speculum Maius* (29. 89), cited in *The Journey of Friar William of Rubruck*, trans. Rockhill, 263. An account of Friar Simon's work is in G. Guzman, "Reports of Mongol Cannibalism in Thirteenth-Century Latin Sources: Oriental Fact or Western Fiction?", in Westrem, ed. *Discovering New Worlds*, 36-38.

the map that the province of Gog and Magog was where "the Jews where confined in the time of Artaxor [Artaxerxes], King of Persia".[23] On Fra Mauro's world map, the myth is debunked completely, and Mauro notes that "Some writers claim that those people [Gog and Magog] who were enclosed by Alexander of Macedon live beyond the foothills of the Caspian Mountains, but this is most obviously an error, for a great diversity of nations live there..." (Cited in Westrem, "Against Gog", 68).

In several instances discussed in the previous section, the mixture of ancient legends (the Amazon race, Alexander's Gate) with modern concerns (the incursions of Saracens and Tartars, and the loyalty of the Christian peoples of Georgia and India) has led to the development of the 'modernised' legend. The most important factor in the use of the gate motif is the preconceived notion in the minds of many medieval cartographers and writers that there should be a gate of some kind. The actual details of the site of the gate, and the people behind it, underwent continual change from the time of the foundation of the myth right into the early modern period.

Thus, the gate or something like it was sought, and found, at Derbend or somewhere nearby, or located in far-flung regions such as China, or even Korea. The people behind the gate were also an adaptable part of the motif - Jews, Tartars, Saracens and others were all made to play the role of Gog and Magog by one writer or another. The question posed by Smith, concerning the origin of the pillars of Hercules, is relevant here. "We are here again involved in the oft-recurring difficulty as to whether the legend was founded on a certain amount of knowledge, or whether, the legend being purely imaginary at first, a positive sense was given to it as geographical discovery advanced."[24] In the case of Alexander's Gate, the 'gate' theme would seem to be an entirely imaginary construct, applied to a variety of real places and peoples throughout its long history.

Pliny's account, quoted in the first section, makes it clear that the idea of the 'Caspian Gates' was well known in his era, but there was no real agreement on precisely which pass was to be properly called by that name. The same is true of Alexander's Gate in later accounts. Such fine distinctions between one pass and another had become almost irrelevant in the medieval period, when geographical knowledge of the nothern region of Asia was very limited. I am thus in agreement with Flint, and argue that it was important for many medieval cartographers to position Alexander's Gate and / or the Caspian Gates somewhere on their maps, as they were among the most well known and important features in the region. Precisely which mountain pass was intended would not have been their main concern.

4 - The Northern Altars of Alexander

Another northern landmark icon of considerable importance to my argument is the series of *arae* or altars, erected by Alexander, located on the shores of the northern ocean. On the Hereford map, these altars are labelled *Aree alexandri*, much like their

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[23] A. E. Nordenskiöld, *An Account of a Copy of a fifteenth century Map of the World* (reprint Stockholm, 1891), 24.

[24] Smith, *Dictionary*, 'Herculis Columnae'.

eastern counterparts. The icon used for them is a simple square with a patterned edge at the top, suggestive of a material covering. They are depicted as altars on many other detailed mappaemundi, an exception being the Ebstorf map, on which they are depicted as flaming columns, probably because the sacrifices conducted there were thought to be burnt offerings.[25]

The origin of the idea of temples or altars built by Alexander in the Far North is complex and obscure. A series of northern altars was thought to have been built by Alexander in Alexandria 'Ultima', a town on the Jaxartes river (modern Syr Dar'ya), also called Alexandria 'Eschate', or 'The Furthest.' This city equates to modern Khodzhent, formerly Leninbad, in Tajikistan. Alexander founded it as a bulwark against the north-eastern tribes of Scythia and Bactria, according to Arrian and Curtius Rufus.[26]

Pliny mentions the northern altars as being near Alexandria Ultima, on the river Jaxartes, as does Solinus, who notes that

> Alexander builded the thyrde Alexandria, to testifie the bounds of his journey. For this is the place where altars were erected first by Liber Pater, secondly by Hercules, thirdly by Semyramis, and lastly by Cyrus: and therefore it was counted one of the greatest commendations of Alexander, that he set out the bounds of his voyage so farre as this place.[27]

These altars in Alexandria were not generally confused with the altars that were positioned on the Hyphasis to mark the eastward limit of Alexander's journey. Both Pliny and Solinus discuss the two sets of altars separately. The northern altars also appear on the Peutinger table as a separate set of icons to the eastern altars. Both sets of altars are found on the last (easternmost) page in the Peutinger Table, suggesting that the northern altars were thought to have been at the north-eastern edge of the ecumene - almost as far east as the Hyphasis (which is in fact correct, according to modern geography). Medieval map-makers do not seem to have confused the two locations either, as on many maps (Hereford, Ebstorf, Psalter, Munich Isidore) both sets of altars/ pillars are shown or mentioned.

It should be noted that the large north-eastern town called Alexandria on the Hereford map is not Alexandria Ultima. Bevan and Phillot (36) note that the inscription *Cadrusima* identifies the city as Cadrusium, the Indian Alexandria, also called

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[25] Brigit Hahn-Woernle suggests that these icons on the Ebstorf are in fact three watchtowers, with night-fires, erected by Alexander to protect against the race called the Rhobasci. Given the common appearance of three standard altars in this position on other maps, I suggest that the Ebstorf version is intended to be a combination of both stories. B. Hahn-Woernle, *Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte* (Stuttgart, 1989), 61. An account of all of Alexander's deeds, as depicted on the Ebstorf map, is found on pages 60-66.

[26] Arrian, 4. 1. 3, Curtius Rufus, 7. 6. See Smith, *Dictionary*, 'Alexandria Ultima', and 'Alexandria in Ariana'.

[27] G. Solinus, *Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium* (49. 3) - translated Golding (*Excellente and Pleasant Worke*), cap. LXI. See also Pliny, *Natural History* (6. 18), and Smith, *Dictionary*, 'Alexandri Arae'. According to both Pliny and Solinus, the Jaxartes was later crossed by the general Demodamas, who " wente beyond the tytles of all that were before him", and set up altars to Apollo on its banks.

Alexandria in Ariana. Alexandria Ultima on the Hereford map is in fact called 'Panda' and is called 'a town of the Sogdiani' (Westrem, *Hereford,* 33), based directly on Solinus (49. 3). On other maps, it cannot be said for sure whether a city labelled 'Alexandria' in this location is intended to be Alexandria Ultima or another city.

The northern altars are not found in or near any city called Alexandria, or Panda, on medieval maps, but are instead found standing alone, in the extreme cardinal north. This has prompted previous writers (Bevan and Phillot, 52 and 57) to assume that the two boundary markers (the *aree alexandri* and 'Panda') are unrelated. I believe that they both refer to the same original event, and that, despite the fact that Panda is shown in another location, the northern altars on the Hereford map are still intended to represent the series of altars on the Jaxartes mentioned in Solinus, and thus to express the theme of competitive conquest, and the outdoing of Hercules and the other figures.

The basic source for the northern altars on the Tanais is the brief passage in Orosius (1. 2), describing the role of the Tanais in defining the boundaries of the continents: "the Tanais, sweeping past the altars and boundaries of Alexander the Great to the territories of the Rhobasci..." (*Seven Books,* trans. Raymond, 34). In another section (7. 2), Orosius says that the northern position of Greece (one of the four great Kingdoms mentioned in Daniel) is known by the positioning of the northern altars.[28]

There is no mention of the story behind these altars in Orosius' account. He probably based his account of them on Pliny. Pliny and Solinus both say that Alexander and his soldiers mistakenly thought that the Jaxartes river was the Tanais (Don) river, revealing an early and widespread confusion between the two rivers. The Jaxartes is actually called the Tanais in the historical account of Curtius Rufus and elsewhere. Ptolemy was later to position the northern altars of Alexander on the true river Tanais, based on this idea (*Geography,* 3. 5).[29]

Thus, the confusion between the Jaxartes and the Tanais caused the movement of the northern altars out of Panda / Alexandria Ultima into the Far North. The use of the Tanais as the boundary line between Europe and Asia in subsequent texts, particularly Orosius, meant that the northern altars then became associated with continental division. Their function as a boundary marker seems to have outweighed information in other sources relating to their true whereabouts in the north-east.

Over time, the northern altars became associated with a story concerning Alexander's attempt to enclose Gog and Magog with the help of a northern race known as the Meopari. In this way, the original location of the northern altars in Alexandria was forgotten, and their presence in the Far North became legitimised through their function in the Alexander legends. In the account of the northern altars in Aethicus, we read:

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[28] See also the account by Albertus Magnus in J. P. Tilmann, *An Appraisal,* 132-3: "Europe begins in the northern region, from the Tanais river (Don)...passing by the altars in the Macedonian territory of the Rhobasci of Alexander the Great...".

[29] Note that this passage in Ptolemy also mentions the 'Altars of Caesar' in a similar position on the Tanais. The Altars of Caesar are shown on the 'eighth map of Europe' in Stevenson's edition, appearing as a Christian church, and on the 'eighth map of Asia', appearing as a normal square altar.

In amicita secum Alexander ipsos adplicuit et munera multa dedit eis,
ibique aras magnas fixit, quae usque nunc Arae Alexandri Magni
dicuntur. Idemque ap ipsis Meoparis inventum dicit bitumen, unde
Caspias portas munivit, in Insola Tripicia parvola maris
oceani...(Aethicus, *Cosmographia*, 23-24)

[Alexander brought them [the Meopari] into friendship with himself,
and gave them many gifts, and erected great altars, which are now
called the Altars of Alexander the Great. He is also said to have
discovered bitumen from these same Meopari, with which he fortified
the Caspian gates, in a small island...of the ocean sea.]

These ideas found their way into the Alexander Romances. In the *KA*, the Meopari
are mentioned as pirates and sailors, and Alexander seeks their assistance in obtaining
the bitumen that forms naturally in their land by giving them presents and founding
altars in their honour. He uses the bitumen to enclose Gog and Magog (*KA*, 331-34).

Pliny, Orosius and the Alexander Romances were all used by medieval cartographers
to some extent, and the northern altars on medieval mappaemundi seem to based on all
three accounts. For example, Richard of Haldingham, the maker of the Hereford map,
would have known from Pliny and Solinus that the altars should be those founded on
the Jaxartes, but also from his reading of Orosius that they should be on the Tanais.
He would also have known from Aethicus that they were made in honour of the
Meopari.

The Hereford map shows the northern altars *between* the Jaxartes and the Tanais,
positioned in the Far North, so as to divide the continents according to the T-in-O
formula. The island of *Miopar* is in the northern ocean, adjacent to the altars. Next to
Mioparis is the *Insula Mirabilis*, with an inscription relating to Alexander's attempt to
enlist the help of those who live there with offers of friendship. In making the far
northern section of his map, Richard attempted to agree with as many of his sources as
possible.[30]

Mandeville, perhaps also in an attempt to blend together all the possibilities, mentions
that in the Caspian Mountains, Alexander had a city built called "Alexandria, to guard
the country, so that no-one should pass without permission; that city is now called the
Porte de Fer." (trans. Moseley, 161). The city he is referring to is clearly Alexandria
Ultima, but the altars here have been replaced with gates. The gate he mentions is the
Iron Gate of Derbend, discussed previously. Mandeville has either confused or
perhaps deliberately conflated the idea of Alexandria 'Ultima' with the gate motif.
Bevan and Phillot (63-4) suggest that this passsage might also be based on the notion
of the Far North being the "Gate of Hell", discussed earlier.

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[30] See Bevan and Phillot, *Medieval Geography*, 57-58 for the Meopari. Note that the Tanais on the Hereford
Map is called the *Fluvius Meotides Paludes*, but is intended to represent the Tanais. See Bevan and Phillot,
24.

The function of the northern altars within the romance cycle and other literature is essentially secondary to their function as a continental boundary marker, and as a symbol of the furthest point in Alexander's journey. I argue that the major function of the nothern altars on mappaemundi is to serve as a counterpart to other landmarks such as the *Castra Alexandri* and the 'gades' of Alexander and Hercules already discussed, thus creating a symmetrical series of ecumenical divisions based on the history of pagan conquests. I will be highlighting this idea in the following section.

5 - The Nature of the Southern Frontier

Introduction

Landmarks on the southern frontier of the Graeco-Roman ecumene are the hardest to define of all the four quadrants, and there are a number of sites which could be described as landmarks of the southern boundary. The boundary between Africa and Asia is particularly hard to determine. Early sources such as Sallust opted for Catabathmos (see chapter 3), Ptolemy argued for the Red Sea, while Orosius and later writers chose the Nile. However, the Nile circuit on medieval maps does not function as a straight border between Asia and Africa, and other icons had to serve this purpose. (Accordingly, it should be noted that some of the sites discussed here are technically in Asia according to medieval divisions, but have been included with other 'southern' material found in Africa.)

In terms of the Alexander Romances, the most important of these boundary sites is certainly the Temple of Ammon, at the Oasis of Siwah in western Egypt. Sites such as the altars of the Philaeni, the Nubian Gates, the 'Castra Alexandri' (camp of Alexander) and the city of Meroë are also commonly found on mappaemundi. All of these sites function in various ways to establish the boundary between Africa and Asia, and also to denote the southern ecumenical frontier, which stretched from the Red Sea to the Atlantic across the Sahara desert.

Some of these icons can be treated as landmarks of kingship in much the same way as those discussed in the previous chapters - they symbolise boundary and division of territory, and mark out points in the terrain where critical events were thought to have occurred, and particularly where Alexander came into contact with divine forces. Other sites appear to have had no real significance, and I will be arguing that their main function in cartography was conferred upon them by their similarity to sites in other areas.

6 - The Oracle of Ammon and other Egyptian Prophetic Sites

The Ammoneum and the Serapeum in the Greek Alexander Romance

The temple of Ammon is represented by a large, dome-shaped icon, reminiscent of the Greek letter 'omega' on most maps in the corpus that include it.[31] It was considered to be an extremely important site in the Graeco-Roman notion of the 'ecumenical definer' that I have been discussing. Hercules was thought to have visited the temple, as was Perseus, and the *Greek Alexander Romance* and many subsequent versions

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[31] Similar to the modern conventional map symbol for 'cave', and also known as the 'Horn of the Gods'.

state that Alexander went to this place in order to follow in the footsteps of his predecessors. Alexander was thought to have sacrificed there out of a desire to receive the blessing of Ammon, and to ensure his own success as a travelling conqueror.

The oracle here was considered one of the most important in the world by early writers, dating from the seventh century BC onwards, but by Strabo's time it had fallen into disrepair. Originally, it was a large stone sanctuary, covered in inscriptions telling the story of the various transfigurations of Zeus / Ammon. Alexander's journey through the desert to this place was an arduous one, and the Oasis is treated in later literature as the heart of the desert, symbolic of the fiery nature of the Far South.[32]

I mentioned in a previous chapter that Alexander was thought to have been descended from Zeus / Ammon. Alexander's genealogical link with the deity Ammon was made into a more direct relationship in the *Greek Alexander Romance*, in which he mistakenly thinks the god is his real father. Alexander's true father, the Egyptian wizard Nectanabus, disguised himself as Ammon, and in this guise impregnated Olympias, the wife of Philip of Macedon, while Philip was away on a campaign.

According to the *GAR,* the wizard Nectanabus was formerly the King of Egypt, who had used his magic arts to foresee a huge invasion of Egypt by peoples from all four parts of the world, led by Persia. Nectanabus fled Egypt, settling in Macedonia and eventually fathering Alexander. The Egyptians, worried about their missing king, received a prophecy from the statue of Nectanabus in the sanctuary of the deity Serapis, telling them that their king would return in the form of a youth, who would protect Egypt from the Persians (*GAR*, 1. 1-3).

The *GAR* also relates that Alexander went to the temple of Ammon and asked the god, his father, for instruction. It is not known what information Alexander really did receive, but in the *GAR,* it is written that Ammon instructed Alexander where to build the city of Alexandria - opposite the Isle of Proteus (the Old Man of the Sea - see chapter 5). Alexander later founds the city here, just as instructed (*GAR*, 1. 30).[33]

The *GAR* then tells how Alexander founds the Serapeum, the shrine of the deity Serapis:

> High in the hills Alexander discovered a cult-image, and the Helonian columns [of the sun god], and a hero-shrine. He searched for the Serapeum according to the oracle that had been given to him by Ammon...So Alexander...built a great altar opposite the hero-shrine, which is now called the Grand Altar of Alexander, and made a sacrifice there. (*GAR*, 1. 33, trans. Stoneman, 65).[34]

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[32] Smith, *Dictionary,* 'Oasis'.

[33] The Isle of Proteus is almost certainly the Isle of the Pharos in Alexandria. The Pillars of Proteus in Egypt on this island are mentioned in the *Aeneid* of Virgil (Book 11).

[34] The deity Serapis was invented by the Ptolemaic dynasty who were Alexander's successors in Egypt. Alexander's meeting with this deity is highly anachronistic and was probably included by the Alexandrian

The sacrifice is stolen by eagles, which Alexander follows. They lead him to the site of the Serapeum, where he finds pillars previously erected by Sesonchosis. The inscription on them reads "King Sesonchosis of Egypt, the ruler of the world, erected this to Serapis, the renowned god of the universe." Alexander calls upon Serapis, who appears and gives Alexander a lengthy prophecy concerning his rise to power, the success of Alexandria as a city, and Alexander's subsequent death. Then Alexander travels to Memphis, and finds the old statue of Nectanabus, engraved with the words of his prophecy related above. Alexander claims that he himself is the son mentioned in the statue, and assumes the Kingship of Egypt, taking all the tribute formerly given to Darius (*GAR*, 1. 33).

This story is a mythologised form of the story found in Arrian and Curtius Rufus concerning Alexander's march to the Ammoneum through the desert. Arrian (3. 3) tells how Alexander became lost in the trackless deserts of western Egypt, and was saved by two crows, who acted as guides and led Alexander to the Oasis. The 'Grand Altar of Alexander' in the *GAR* is not mentioned in later texts or maps.[35] Instead, Alexander's march to the Ammoneum was said to have passed through a site called the *Castra Alexandri* (described below).

Meroë and the Dwelling Place of the Gods

Meroë, which was widely held by medieval geographers to be an island in the Nile, was one of the main regions of East Africa in ancient times. The city is very well attested to on maps of the corpus but never comes with an accompanying inscription. To the medieval cartographer, it would have been known as the city containing the palace of Queen Semiramis, and associated with Saba, or Sheba, from whence came the wealthy queen mentioned in Isaiah and Ezekiel.

Meroë was positioned by Ptolemy and Arabic geographers as the marker for the latitude of the first climate zone, called Diameroes. Past this climate, no habitation was considered possible until one reached the southern temperate zone, the Antipodes. In this way, Meroë functioned partly as a boundary marker. However, its role in medieval geography and literature was more frequently connected with various prophecies given to Alexander in the region surrounding the city.

In the *Greek Alexander Romance*, Alexander visits Meroë, after sending word to the current queen, Candace, of his arrival. ('Candace' was in fact a general title for the queen of the royal household of Meroë, but medieval geographers and historians treated her as a specific person, and knew her as a ruler of Ethiopia.)[36] In this letter, he instructs her to bring the image of Ammon to her borders, so that he might sacrifice to the god. Her reply is that the oracle refuses to be moved, and that no one may

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author of the *GAR* in order to promote Ptolemaic claims to being the divinely- ordained rulers of Egypt. Serapis was commonly identified with Zeus by the Greeks. See *GAR*, 191 n.37.

[35] A fifteenth-century map of the world in British Library MS add. 37049 f2v contains the inscription *are libie* in the Far South (von den Brincken, *Fines Terrae*, 177 and pl. 48). These 'Libyan altars' may be a reference to the altar discussed here, or possibly to the *Arae Philenorum*, discussed below.

[36] See for example Roger Bacon, *Opus Majus*, trans. Burke, 330.

come into the country without being treated as an enemy. She sends her son, Candaules, to meet Alexander on the border, taking with him a huge array of treasure as tribute. Alexander helps Candaules to overcome the tyrannical king of the Bebryces, and afterwards travels (disguised as one of his attendants) with Candaules to meet Queen Candace. Candace recognises him as Alexander, and holds him captive for a time, but then releases him as he has saved her son (*GAR*, 3. 24).

Alexander is then dismissed graciously by Candace after their meeting and travels away from Meroë. Candaules had previously shown him the way to a place called the Dwelling Place of the Gods, but they did not venture there together. Now alone, Alexander makes his way back to the place and encounters the Egyptian warlord Sesonchosis, 'Lord of the World', and the deity Serapis. Alexander asks Serapis for a prophecy concerning how long he has to live. Serapis refuses, telling him that no man may know the hour of his death, but then tells him that "the city you have founded will be your tomb" (*GAR*, 3. 24, trans. Stoneman, 142-3).[37]

Medieval Accounts - a brief examination:

Much of this material concerning Egyptian warlords and deities found its way into medieval versions of the Alexander Romance. Although the geographical location of the events became highly variable, the nature of the prophecies remains largely unchanged. Two episodes in the *Prose Life* (from the *Historia de Preliis*) restate the material in the *GAR* already described, with minor but pertinent differences. Firstly, very early in the work, Alexander goes to Taphoresey in Libya and makes sacrifices to his gods. The figure of Serapis appears, and when Alexander asks the deity his fate, Serapis refuses to answer. Then Alexander asks if he is capable of moving mountains. Serapis replies:

> 'righte as this montayne sall never wit-owten end be removed hethen, so thi name and thi dedes schall be made mynde of to the worldes ende...goddez of the este partiez of the werlde sall telle the alle thi werdez.' (*Prose Life*, 15).[38]

> [just as this mountain is without end and will never be removed, so your name and your deeds will be remembered until the end of the world...gods of the east parts of the world will tell you your fate.]

The prophecy has changed considerably from the *GAR* version, the main difference being that the prophecies of Serapis and the Trees of the Sun and Moon (the 'gods in the east part of the world'), which were never originally connected, are now linked - Serapis knows that Alexander will encounter the oracular trees in the Far East. The text creates a pattern of oracles out of various separate episodes in the *GAR*, with one oracle leading to another, and all leading Alexander further and further into the unknown parts of the world, and closer to his death.

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[37] Alexander's body was supposedly taken to Alexandria from Babylon after his death.

[38] Of course, Alexander does indeed move mountains later in the *Prose Life* (104), but only with the aid of the God of Israel, as we have seen.

Another encounter with the divine occurs at the end of the *Prose Life*, this time in the region of Prasiac near the city of Meroë. Alexander converses with Candace, and tells her of his desire to go and sacrifice to Ammon in the mountains. She informs him of his responsibility to deities other than his father, Ammon (*Prose Life*, 96). This proves to be a timely reminder. Shortly after this he is travelling with Candaules and encounters Sesonchosis and Serapis in a cave. Sesonchosis is angered that Alexander has not made more temples to him. Alexander promises to build the deity a huge altar in Macedonia, when he returns there, but Sesonchosis tells him that he will never live to do this. Then Alexander speaks with Serapis, the "begynnynge of all goddez", who says "I saw the [you] in the lond of liby [Libya], and nowe I see the here" (a reference to the earlier episode). Serapis again refuses to tell Alexander his future, saying that no man can ever know such a thing, but provides more clues to the nature of Alexander's death, saying that it will occur in a rich city he has already conquered (*Prose Life*, 102-3).

The two events (one in the Serapeum, one in the "Dwelling Place") are very similar. They may be distinguished largely by the place in which they occur. The original Serapeum was a temple on the south side of Alexandria in Egypt. Similar temples to Serapis were also remembered in the medieval period - a site called *Templum Serapis* can be found on both the Peutinger Table and the Ebstorf map.[39] Remembrances of Ammon and Serapis feature in the geography of Egypt in much the same way as landmarks of Hercules and Dionysius feature in India.

Conversely, the "Dwelling Place of the Gods" is not based on any real temple, and is presumed in the romances to be 'somewhere near Meroë'. No reference to it can be found on any map in the corpus or in any other medieval geographical work, although it is possible that the presence of the *Castra Alexandri* (see below) on mappaemundi may have suggested such prophetic events to those that knew the romances well.

Other Sites

There are several examples of boundary pillars and statues in the Egyptian section of the *GAR*. One section is particularly revealing. Alexander, after travelling through Egypt and on into a country called simply 'the Interior', finds the pillar of the legendary ruler Sesonchosis, which is described as

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[39] Smith, *Dictionary*, 'Serapium'.

a huge statue set in a pile of stones....the writing on it said that it was of Sesonchosis, ruler of the world. It represented a young man strongly resembling Alexander. It was inscribed: 'He who has traversed the whole world may reach this far: but beyond this he may not go, just as I was stayed here and could go no further. Here I, Sesonchosis, ruler of the world, turned back and departed from life.' When Alexander had read this, he immediately covered the inscription with his cloak, pretending to honour the statue; but in fact he did it so that none of the Macedonians would see the writing and become frightened. He claimed instead that he had received an oracle from the statue: 'If you cross this place, Alexander, you will find another, better world, which you have not yet traversed.' (*GAR*, 2. 31, trans. Stoneman, 175-76)

The Macedonians are tempted by Alexander to continue exploring the outskirts of the world. Shortly after this, Alexander encounters two statues of gold, one of a man, the other of a woman. Alexander tells his army that these are of Hercules and the fabled queen Semiramis. They find the palace of Semiramis a short while later. Another extract from the *GAR* mentions a stone inscription made by Sesonchosis to mark a favoured watering-place on the Red Sea. In another, Alexander creates a bridge over a deep ravine, upon which he writes: "Alexander came here and erected an arch over which the whole army crossed; his intention was to reach the end of the earth, if Providence approved his plan" (All extracts from *GAR*, 2. 31 and 2. 37, trans. Stoneman, 175-180).

The basis of the *GAR* was probably composed in Greek-speaking Alexandria during the Ptolemaic period, shortly after Alexander's death, and much of this material was still present in the text version composed in the third century AD when Egypt was a province of Rome. The frequent references to the power of the deity Serapis, and particularly the notion that Alexander had actually founded the Serapeum, is almost certainly the product of Alexandrian bias within the *GAR*. (The Ptolemaic dynasty, who were the successors of Alexander's southern kingdom, invented Serapis as the figurehead of their new state religion).[40]

The importance of Semiramis, Sesonchosis and Serapis in these Egyptian scenes is similar to the importance of Hercules and Dionysius in the east. Their input into the story has been invented, after Alexander's conquest of Egypt, to satisfy various political and religious agendas. In some instances, Alexander prays to these figures, and seeks their aid and guidance. In other instances (particularly in going beyond the statue of Sesonchosis) he seeks to outdo them, and must cajole and deceive his men in order to do so.

Much of the Egyptian material in the *GAR* is not present in later versions, but the survival of several scenes concerning Serapis and Sesonchosis in the *Prose Life* (and also in the *Wars of Alexander*) indicates that some knowledge of these obscure deities was still current in medieval England. I wonder if Alexander's religious alliances

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[40] Stoneman's introduction to the *GAR*, 11-12.

perplexed medieval readers - he visits temples of Apollo, and then Ammon, sacrifices to Hercules and Dionysius, promises temples to Sesonchosis, and founds the chief temple of Serapis, before turning to the god of Israel for help.

Alexander's complex relationship with such a wide variety of deities prompts me to restate a point I made in the introductory chapter. Any attempt to analyse the religious meaning of medieval mappaemundi on their Christian content alone ignores the importance of both Graeco-Roman and Egyptian deities in the medieval world-view. Alexander's campaign was thought to have determined much of the shape of the ecumene, and the scope of his campaign was, to a large degree, thought to be determined by the words and actions of his Greek predecessors and Egyptian counterparts. The unknown regions of the medieval ecumene, as shown on mappaemundi, may be interpreted as a giant playing field, upon which pagan conquerors - Greek, Egyptian, and Babylonian - had acted out the game of competitive conquest in order to achieve world domination and divine status.

7 - Other Southern Sites

The Altars of the Philaeni

The *Aree philenor[um]*, as they are called on the Hereford map, are found on most
detailed maps of the corpus, and on a surprising number of simple maps that do not
contain other minor landmarks. They appear to have been one of the best-known sites
in Africa. The story behind them tells of two brothers, who allowed themselves to be
buried alive as sacrifices in order to settle a territorial dispute between Carthaginia and
Cyrene, and whose tombs were thought to form the boundary between Africa
Proconsularis (essentially Carthaginia) and the province of Cyrene in Roman times.
Their correct position is on the shore of the Mediterranean (near the town of Al-
Uqaylah in modern-day Libya), although they were not always positioned here by
cartographers, as will be explained.[41] The function of these altars as a territorial
boundary marker in the work of Orosius (1. 2, trans. Raymond, 35-6), and
subsequently in world gazetteers like the *De Natura Locorum* of Albert the Great (5.
1, trans. Tilmann 133) is probably the major reason for their widespread occurrence on
mappaemundi.

The major source for the story of the patriotic suicide is the work of the Roman poet
Sallust, who provided a large amount of detail on the geography of western Africa in
his *Jugurthine War* (book 8), which was a principle source for the region for later
geographers. The altars had been previously described by Strabo, who likens them to
other structures such as the pillars of Hercules and Alexander (see chapter 5). He says
that in his day, the altars were no longer there, but that their name had been given to
the region. Strabo does not mention the patriotic suicide, and nor does Pliny, but both
Mela and Dionysius do. The earliest source for the story has been firmly fixed as the
account in Sallust discussed above.[42]

The story behind the altars has some historical merit, as there were considerable
conflicts between the Greek colonists of Cyrene and the Carthaginians, and the
practice of consecrating great deeds with altars was well-established in that era.
However, it is also very likely that the story simply arose out of a desire to account for
and ascribe significance to a particularly noticeable geographical feature on the shores
of the Mediterranean. Bevan and Phillot have suggested that originally, these altars
were simply sand-hills, and that the story in Sallust grew out of a confusion between
arae (altars) and *harena* (sand-hills). This is stated in the account of the altars in
Pliny, who says "...ad Philenorum Aras: ex harena sunt hae" ["...to the Altars of the
Philaeni - these are formed of heaps of sand."][43]

The widespread appearance of the altars on all kinds of medieval maps is possibly
because they were linked with passages in Scripture, and came to have various

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[41] There appears to have been a village named *Philaeni* in this position during the Roman period, judging from
Ptolemy's *Geography* 4. 3. Fifteenth-century Ptolemaic maps such as those from the Ebner MS ('second map
of Africa', 'third map of Africa') show 'Philaeni' as a village.

[42] Smith, *Dictionary*, 'Arae Philenorum'. Strabo discussed in chapter 5.

[43] Bevan and Phillot, *Medieval Geography*, 92, and Pliny, *Natural History* (5. 4), trans. Rackham, vol. 2, 239.

eschatological associations within the Christian framework. On the Vercelli map (and only on this map), they are named *arae philistinorum*. This seems to have been a widespread confusion, and was noted by Roger Bacon, who firstly explains that

> The empire of Carthage extended toward Egypt as far as Arae Philenorum, which the Seventy-two Translators have placed [found a source for] in Ezekiel, where the Hebrew has Tharsi [Tarshish], as Jerome says on his book on Places, and....in Isaiah and frequently elsewhere.

The passages Bacon refers to (Isaiah 23, Ezekiel 27) both talk about the destruction of the city of Tyre by God. Tarshish is mentioned in both as a main mercantile city of the Tyrians, and the generally sandy and deserted nature of the region was thought of by later writers as being a product of this destruction.

Bacon then goes on to correct the misunderstanding witnessed in the Vercelli map:

> Since, however, the Arae Philenorum is found in many writings of the sacred authors and in the histories, and frequently is read corruptly, so as to be read Arae Philistinorum, for this reason to avoid error it is worthwhile to consider what Sallust has to say on this subject (Bacon, *Opus*, trans. Burke, 335-6).

He then relates the story quoted above. The same reference to Sallust was later given by Pierre d'Ailly in the *Imago Mundi* in the fifteenth century (trans. Keever, 27-28). The precise function of the 'altars of the Philistines' in Christian thought is unknown, but Bacon's work reveals that a 'false' biblical reading of the altars was current in his day. It is possible, although unlikely, that the makers of maps showing the altars may have included them due to their identification by Jerome with Tarshish, rather than the story in Sallust.

The altars of the Philaeni are representative of the use of the landmark to define division within the ecumene, rather than ecumenical boundary, which is the main object of this study. I have included a discussion of them for a number of reasons. The main interest in them is that the icon used to portray them is often identical to that used for the northern and eastern altars. This icon (a square device covered in a cloth) was used from the time of the Peutinger table to the time of the Hereford map to denote features such as the altars of Alexander, Hercules and the Philaeni brothers (Levi, ed., *Itineraria Picta*, segs. 7 and 11).

Two examples are particularly prominent evidence that the altars of the Philaeni were used to form a reasonably symmetrical pattern of boundary structures. Firstly, the Hereford and Sawley maps both show the altars of the Philaeni inland, in the Far South (instead of the coast), almost directly opposite the altars of Alexander in the north. The altars of Alexander in the east complete the pattern. The Hereford and Sawley map-makers have moved the altars of the Philaeni out of their correct position on the coast, possibly through a misreading of Orosius (1. 2), but also possibly out of a desire to associate them with other boundary features in a symmetrical arrangement.

Secondly, the Munich Isidore map shows three altars of the Philaeni on the coast in the south-west (their true position), the icon being identical to that used to describe the altars of Alexander in the north. The Ebstorf map is identical in this regard. There is no doubt that the *arae Philenorum* were linked by association with similar icons, and medieval cartographers would have known that they were the same basic type of structure as the more well-known landmarks of Hercules and Alexander.

The Camp of Alexander

The *Castra Alexandri*, or Camp of Alexander, was known from Orosius (1. 2) as part of the boundary line between Asia and Africa (and thus was positioned on mappaemundi in the cardinal south). On many maps in the corpus, it appears as a large building, similar to the icon used for cities. It is particularly noticeable on the Munich Isidore map, on which it is shown as a very large, three-chambered palace, which dominates the southern landscape (it is almost the largest feature on the entire map). The site is also mentioned in the related text by Hugh of St. Victor (Gautier Dalché, *Descriptio*, 69, 148). The *Castra Alexandri* is a perplexing map feature, as its size on many maps indicates it was a place of considerable importance, yet according to the main sources, nothing of any relevance to history seems to have occurred there. The meaning of the icon is largely a matter of supposition.

The use of this feature as a main cartographic division seems to be an Orosian innovation. The following passage was used by most medieval cartographers to some extent in their depiction of Africa:

> Africa begins with the land of Egypt and the city of Alexandria...the boundaries of Africa lead through districts which the inhabitants call Catabathmon, not far from the camp of Alexander the Great above lake Chalearzus...The western boundary of Africa is the same as that of Europe, that is, the entrance to the strait of Gades; its furthest boundaries are the Atlas range and the islands which people call Fortunate. (Orosius, *Seven Books*, 1. 2, trans. Raymond, 35)

The appearance of this site on maps of the corpus is indicative of how important such passages mentioning markers of boundary division were to medieval cartographers. Orosius' *Seven Books* 2. 1 was among the passages most commonly used by medieval cartographers for precisely this reason. The *Castra Alexandri* is not treated again in Orosius, not found directly referred to in the Alexander Romance cycle, and not often mentioned in medieval literature. Albert the Great mentions this site (*Natura Locorum*, 5. 1, trans. Tilmann, 133) in a manner almost identical to the description in Orosius. Again, the only function of the site in this text seems to be as a boundary marker.

The *Castra* is mentioned in some of the more historical accounts of Alexander, such as the *History of Alexander* by Curtius Rufus, but is not mentioned in Arrian or other major sources.[44] Curtius Rufus says little about the place other than that Alexander

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[44] Quintus Curtius Rufus, *History of Alexander* (4. 7). Notes here taken from the edition and translation by J. Rolfe, 2 vols. (London, 1962), 226-7. The precise site referred to is unknown, but Rufus' description suggests

stopped there on his way to Siwah, and makes no mention of the idea that the place was an important landmark, or that it was connected with Alexander's claims to kingship in any way. Further, Ptolemy (*Geography*, 4. 5) mentions the *Castra Alexandri*, naming it as a village of no great importance.

Alexander's trek through the desert to the Ammoneum was a well-known episode, and the icon may have been intended to represent the hardships suffered by his army on this journey. In particular, the icon may have represented a composite version of the story of how Alexander was led to the Ammoneum by two birds, and founded a variety of altars in this region (see above). In this case, the *Castra* on mappaemundi would have represented the 'Grand Altar of Alexander' and / or the 'Dwelling Place of the Gods' of the Greek Romance version. Accounts of Alexander's march through Egypt and Africa such as the *Prose Life* and the *KA* mention a number of such sites without tying them to any particular location. The *Castra* may have been thought of as the place where Alexander stopped to consult Serapis and Sesonchosis before founding Alexandria.

Alternately, the *Castra* may have had no function on maps other than to distinguish between Asia and Africa, as Alexander's altars in the Far North distinguished between Asia and Europe.

The Nubian Gates and the River Nile

On the Hereford and several other large maps, a doorway is shown in the Nubian mountains, labelled *portae nibie*. Like the *Castra Alexandri*, there is very little material concerning these gates in medieval literature, but they are surprisingly well represented on mappaemundi, either directly named, as on the Hereford, Ebstorf and Vercelli maps, or simply drawn in the mountain range separating Egypt from Nubia, as on several other maps of the corpus. Given that these gates had no apparent function in geographical literature, their widespread appearance on maps gives cause for comment.

Bevan and Phillot's suggestion is that the Nubian Gates represent the first cataract of the Nile, where the river pours from the highlands into the lowland plain of Egypt. In this case, other maps which do not show a gate but simply show the river passing through the Nubian Mountains (such as the Munich Isidore) might also refer to the location normally represented by the gate.

Miller has placed the original Nubian Gates at the Egyptian city of Sais, based on the account of the gateway of the temple of Athene in Sais found in Herodotus (2. 175). The blocks of stone used to create the gateway and temple were brought from other parts of Egypt, including Memphis, and the city of Elephantine, "twenty days down the river". The memory of this colossal engineering feat seems to have lingered on into the medieval period.

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that the camp was originally somewhere near Pelusium on the Nile Delta. Rolfe notes that there was in fact another site known as the *Castra Alexandri*, in the region of the Ammoneum (226). Precisely which site is intended on mappaemundi is unclear. For this reason, I have not included this icon on the location table (accompanying figs. 15-16).

Crone has noted the appearance of this gateway on the Hereford map, and gives the following suggestion as to its history, noting a number of sites near the first cataract as a possible identification:

> In Greek times the frontier between Egypt and Nubia was at Syene. From Augustus to Diocletian, it was pushed southward...Diocletian, however, withdrew the frontier to Philae and fortified it. In Byzantine times the region between Philae and Syene seems to have formed a 'limes' [boundary]. This organisation continued into Arab times, when the fortress of Al-bab, 'the door', or 'gateway', was the most southerly point. This name again is reminiscent of that given in ancient Egyptian times...to the neighbouring Elephantine, 'the door of the south'.[45]

From the research of Miller and Crone, it would seem that there had been some kind of southern 'doorway' site near the first cataract of the Nile since at least the fifth century BC. Precisely which of these gateways is represented on medieval mappaemundi is probably not a valid concern in this study. It is enough to say that there was thought to be a gateway in this region, and turn to focus on the stories that may have been associated with it.

In the medieval period, Nubia was thought to be the home of Ethiopian Christians converted by the missionary Frumentius in the fourth century. It was also held to be the location of the Burning Mountain, a mythical place mentioned by Pliny and Mela. Further, the source of the Nile was also thought to be in this region. The Hereford map shows Moses at the source of the famous river, probably based on an interpretation of Exodus 2. 10: "So she called his name Moses, saying 'Because I drew him out of the water.' " Bevan and Phillot note that the river in which Moses was placed was thought to be the Nile, and that the map-maker "transferred the meaning of the name Moses to the source of the river itself, from which he was rescued" (*Medieval Geography*, 82).

While the sources for other icons in this region (Nubian Mountains, Moses at the source of the Nile, the Burning Mountains, and the Christian Nubians themselves) are reasonably well known, the gates themselves are not mentioned in most geographical texts. An exception is the *Descriptio Mappe Mundi*, and as this text is simply a description of a map, the inclusion of the Nubian Gates here suggests that they were specifically a cartographic feature, with no real parallel in literature. They are not shown on the Munich Isidore map to which the *Descriptio* is related (Gautier Dalché, *Descriptio*, 148, 104).

My explanation for the presence of the Nubian Gates on a large number of Anglo-Norman world maps is based on a similarity between the icon used for this gate and that used for the Caspian Gates in the north-east. On the Psalter, these icons are

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[45] G. R. Crone, *The World Map*, 13. Crone's description of 'Hadrian's Gateway' at Philae (13) is also relevant in this regard. The gateway (which still exists) contains relief depicting the Nile God at the source of that river. The source of the Nile is pictured and sometimes directly named on various maps of the corpus, right next to the Nubian Gates. The Nile cataracts, which are shown as the Nile breaking through the Nubian mountain, may have been perceived as a related boundary motif.

identical, and almost directly opposite one another. On the Hereford map, while the icons are not quite directly opposite one another, they are very similar to each other, and to the icon used for the *porte paradisi* in the east.

On the Ebstorf map, the inscription relating to the Nubian Gates reads:

> Porte Nybie, Caspiarum similes, ubi custodie Nybiarum posite aditum praebent advenarum...[46]

> [The Nubian Gates, like the Caspian Gates, where guards posted by the Nubians guard against the approach of foreigners...]

I argue that the 'meaning' of the Nubian Gates on the Ebstorf map (and perhaps on other mappaemundi) was largely derived from its similarity to its counterpart in one of the other extremes of the ecumene. Perhaps the Nubians were considered to be counterparts of the Amazons, who guarded the Caspian passes. The Nubian Gates, having no major relationship to the Alexander Romance cycle, or any major events in Classical or Biblical history, functioned as a southern counterpart to the Caspian Gates in the north.

On the Aslake map, the Nubian Gates appear as a large and realistically-drawn gateway, possibly based on a real gate in England. The Caspian Gates are not in the area shown by the surviving fragments of the Aslake map, but it is my supposition that a similar depiction of them (such as can be seen on the Vercelli map) would have been found on this map.[47] The Aslake would thus have showed much the same pattern of gates as the Psalter map in this regard. Taking the supposition further, it also seems likely that if the far eastern and western sections of the Aslake survived, we would also find eastern and western 'gades' in these places, and also perhaps a large eastern doorway, representing the gates of paradise.

8 - A Close Examination of the 'Cades' Map

In chapter 5, I discussed the fourteenth-century map containing four 'cades', and delayed the discussion of *cades Varacis* and *cades gamel* until this chapter. I here provide possible identifications of these sites.

Possible Identifications of 'Varacis'

Araxes

The most likely identification is that *cades Varacis* means 'The gate on the river Araxes.'[48] This river, mentioned by Strabo, Pliny and Mela, flows through Armenia and joins with the river Cyrus, which then flows to the Caspian Sea. Its modern name

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[46] I have preferred a reading of *praebent* ('shows the approach of') as *prohibent* ('guards against the approach of') on the advice of David Hester of the University of Adelaide Department of Classics. Text from Miller, *Mappaemundi*, vol. 5, *Die Ebstorferkarte*, 53.

[47] The interesting tradition of representing mountain passes as doors is later found on the fifteenth-century Ptolemaic maps from the Ebner MS used by Stevenson to illustrate the *Geography*. On the 'second map of Asia', the Sarmatian Gates and the Albanian Gates are both shown in this manner.

[48] Note that the V in *Varacis* is sounded as a soft W.

is Araks. It parallels the Euphrates at one point, and flows between the two branches of that river, which is significant because the 'Cades' map shows the Euphrates as the central crossbar instead of the Nile.

The *Descriptio Mappe Mundi* mentions the river *Araxis* in connection with the race of Albanian Turks, and on the Munich Isidore map, the inscription *fl. araxis* accompanies a river leading from an area near the Caspian Gates to the northern ocean. Mela and the *Cosmographia* of Aethicus also mention a northern race of Turks living in this region.

Gautier Dalché also notes the influence of Aethicus' *Cosmographia* on the Cotton and Hereford maps in this regard. The Cotton shows the 'Albanian Kings' in the Far North, although no enclosure is shown. On the Hereford, the *Albani* are enclosed within a mountain range, in a similar fashion to Gog and Magog. It seems possible that the *cades Varacis* is intended to be the wall behind which the Albanian Turks are enclosed, as the river is very often associated with this race of people.

The Araxes had associations with Alexander, who was thought to have built a bridge over it, as is told in Isidore's *Etymologies* (13. 11. 16). This bridge appears on detailed world maps such as the Ebstorf (*pons Alexandri*). The river Araxes was also sometimes confused with the Jaxartes, discussed previously. *Cades Varacis* may be a conflated form of the northern altars of Alexander and the bridge of Alexander, rather than the 'Albanian Gate'.[49]

Aragus

The name *Varacis* may also possibly be derived from Aragus, a river flowing from the Caucasus to the river Cyrus mentioned by Strabo. This river flows out of the Caucasus through the same gorge in which is found the Pass of Dariel (Caspian Gates II), one of the early locations of Alexander's Gate.[50]

Possible Identifications of 'Gamel'

Gamala

The most plausible identification is that *cades gamel* is the old mountain fortress of Gamala in southern Palestine, and the appearance of the icon on this map is almost certainly derived from the description of Gamala by the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (*History of the Jews*, 1. 4. 8, and 3. 3. 5, and 4. 1. 3, etc.). Josephus describes the mountain as

> A rugged ridge...[which] rises in a lump midway, and elongates itself from the rise, declining as much before as behind, so as to resemble a camel in form, whence it derives its name...It inclines towards the mid-day sun; and served as a citadel to the town. (4. 1. 1, cited in Smith, *Dictionary*, 'Gamala')

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[49] For an account of this see Gautier Dalché, *Descriptio*, 165, and Smith, 'Dictionary', Araxes.

[50] Smith, *Dictionary*, 'Aragus'.

Gamala served as an important citadel during Jewish resistance of the Roman invasion but was eventually reduced by Vespasian after a long siege. The site was long forgotten, but eventually rediscovered by Lord Lindsay, who describes a mountain fortress in the area of Palestine now called 'El-Hossn' (Smith, *Dictionary*, 'Gamala'). *Cades gamel* probably appears on the map in recognition of the site as a vital part of Jewish history.

Gadiel

The map inscription I have treated thus far as reading *gamel* may possibly read *gadiel*, in which case the only plausible identification is that it is based on Gadiera, a Latin name for Gades. This would mean that the 'Cades' map contains two different pillars of Hercules, in different extremes, and thus essentially it has two separate 'wests'. The map-maker has, rather strangely, tried to distinguish between the pillars of Hercules in Calpe and Abylla and those on the Gades by placing them in separate locations. Inconsistencies in orientation of this kind are in fact not that unusual in maps of this era.[51]

Conclusions

My supposition is that the maker of the 'Cades' map wished to take the well-known symbolism of the eastern and western Gades a step further, by positioning similar sites in the north and south. The map-maker has then discovered that the range of possible 'Gades' sites in north and south was far wider and more complex than those in east and west. The resulting icons, *Varacis* and *gamel*, have essentially been invented, and are perhaps meant to express a variety of features, thus encapsulating the whole nature of the two frontiers into a single map icon. Thus, on one level, *cades Varacis* is 'The Gate on the Araxis', and *cades gamel* is probably named after Gamala. However, on a more symbolic level, *cades Varacis* and *cades gamel* may simply be a way of describing the general nature of the northern and southern frontiers.

On larger maps, such as the Hereford or Ebstorf, a selection of icons could be used to achieve a general description of 'north and south'. These large maps tried to express as accurately as possible what was known of landmarks in the north and south, based on what was known from Pliny, Orosius, Aethicus and the Alexander Romances. On smaller maps like the 'Cades', the 'Anonymous' map and others, a simple icon implying boundary would bring to mind a range of different associations.

8 - Conclusions

The northern and southern quadrants of medieval mappaemundi are a mythologised depiction of the nature and history of the frontiers in those regions. The emphasis on enclosure and exclusion is pronounced in both extremes. The historical and geographical reality behind these depictions is that, largely due to reasons of climate and fertility, the main centres of Eurasian civilisation arose in the temperate 'central' regions of the ecumene - Europe, the Middle East, India, and China. All of these

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[51] Smith, *Dictionary*, 'Gades'. Other examples of confused orientation may be seen in the Oxford and Fitzwilliam maps. The FitzWilliam shows Gades in the Far North, and a parallel island called 'Gor' in the Far South.

cultures fought with a variety of other races to both the north and south. In his study of the notion of the 'barbarian' in European thought, W. R. Jones has noted that climatic factors gave rise to

> the emergence of several primary centres of civilisation along an axis running from North Africa [and the Levant] eastward to China. From these civilised oases, surrounded by a sea of barbarians, there was a gradual extension of civilisation outward by the conversion or conquest of neighbouring non-civilised or barbarian peoples.[52]

Genuine boundary landmarks on the northern frontier such as Hadrian's Wall, the Iron Gate of Derbend and the Great Wall of China were all built for much the same purpose - the exclusion of 'uncivilised' (hostile) races from the central lands. Sites such as Alexander's Gate and the Nubian Gates are symbolic representations of a series of genuine factors in Eurasian history and geography.

It is a mistake to think that every icon on a mappamundi is linked to a well-known historical event of great significance, or that it was linked to any particular and identified place. The medieval desire to position landmark structures as a regular series of boundary markers outweighed information available in Classical authors about the places they were positioned in. The inclination of early authors such as Pliny and Strabo to attempt to accurately identify and distinguish between sites that were confused with one another was largely irrelevant in the medieval period. Most medieval geographers were content to position sites such as the Caspian Gates or the northern altars of Alexander in positions that suited the symbolic format of the mappamundi frame.

This is a significant departure from the idea of the 'landmark impulse' I have defined in previous chapters. The idea that 'meaning' was imparted into icons through a recognition of the people, the time and particularly the place they signified does not always hold true for medieval map icons. Many of the places under study in this chapter have no such 'meaning' in medieval literature, or the meaning they do have is relatively insignificant. Meaning must have been ascribed to these features on the basis of their similarity to other features, and a recognition of this similarity would have given the observer an understanding of the kind of place they might be.

For example, the appearance of a *porte,* depicted as a door in a mountain range, would have been linked to the Caspian Gates, and associated with the kind of events that occurred there. A 'gades' marker on a map would have been understood within the framework of competitive conquest, even if the name attached to it had no place in Alexander's campaigns. A series of square altars near a mountainous enclosure would show the observer that sacrifices had been made here, that disputes had been settled, and that here was a place where one region ended, and another began.

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[52] W. R. Jones, "The Image of the Barbarian in Medieval Europe", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13 (1971), 404-405. See also William McNeill, *Rise of the West* (Chicago, 1963).

CHAPTER EIGHT - EMBRACING THE WORLD: The Iconography of Sacred Kingship in relation to Anglo-Norman Cartography

Introduction

In this chapter, I present an overview of the frames of various mappaemundi, and then look at other representations of Christ's dominion over the ecumene, by examining various uses of the T-in-O map as an image of worldly power. I then turn to concentrate on the depiction of Christ known as the *syndesmos* motif, found on the Ebstorf map and on a number of other diagrams, and examine related ideas in contemporary art and literature.

I distinguish throughout the chapter between 'frame' and 'border'. As a general rule, the 'border' of a mappamundi is the outer edge of the ecumenical circle, in which is found material such as the twelve winds, the outer islands, the monstrous races, and other material which is mostly of Classical origin. The remaining space left by the circle in the surrounding rectangular page is called the 'frame'. It was common practice in the Anglo-Norman period to place extracts from geographical texts, or representations of Christ and other religious figures, in this frame.

The final section deals with possible symbolic connections between the frame images and conquest landmarks within the map. The composition of several mappaemundi suggests that parts of the body of Christ are positioned beyond the boundary landmark icons, thus suggesting that his spiritual conquest had 'outdone' that of the mortal rulers who positioned them. Representations of the parts of his body, particularly on the Ebstorf map, appear to be juxtaposed against landmark icons expressing human attempts at containment. I examine these images within a theological context in which humanity did not have the power required to contain human activity 'from without', but could act from within to have a profound (and mostly negative) influence over the spiritual condition of the world.

1 -The Importance of the Frame in the religious significance of Anglo-Norman mappaemundi

It has often been stated that the main way in which medieval word maps showed their theological meaning was not in the body of the map itself, but in the frame. I have previously pointed out that much of the material on mappaemundi was of Graeco-Roman origin, and here I will be arguing that the map frame was one of the most important ways in which medieval Christian map-makers syncretised this material into their new visions of a world which they wished to portray as being under the dominion of Christ.

The Hereford Map Frame

The frame of the Hereford map is one of the most important in terms of theological content. There are a variety of images and text found outside the map, and much material inside the map is designed to indicate the boundaries of the known world. Different ideas of boundary, physical, temporal and spiritual, are discussed here.[1]

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[1] All translations from the Hereford Map frame are taken from Bevan and Phillot, *Medieval Geography*, 1-24.

At the top of the Hereford map, Christ is shown in majesty surrounded by four angels. On his hands and feet are visible the four wounds, which were taken by various writers to be symbolic of the sources of the four rivers of paradise, whose waters nourished the entire world. Paradise, the first place in the known world, is directly below him, with the four rivers clearly visible inside it.

There is a scroll in Christ's hands, reading simply 'behold my evidence', a reference to the wounds. In the lower left corner of the frame is a depiction of Augustus Caesar, handing down his edict to the three surveyors, as discussed in the introduction. Perhaps Christ's 'evidence' is shown as a contrast with the proclamation of Augustus about the imperial survey ("and to confirm this I have attached my seal to this document"). This is one of a number of ways in which spiritual power is shown as superior to physical dominance.

The figure of Christ in majesty on the Hereford map serves as a reminder of the inevitability of both death and judgement. The map also contains several proclamations made by Christ which reinforce this theme. At the right hand of Christ, an angel says "Arise, and Come to everlasting joy", and another on the left proclaims "Rise and depart to hell-fire prepared". Below Christ, the Virgin and accompanying angels hold up a banner on which is written a plea to Christ to show mercy "On all who worship us pray pity take / Who me revere, who me their Saviouress take". (Hereford Cathedral was originally dedicated to the Virgin, and it is possible that this was written with the dedication in mind.)

At the left gate of heaven, two archangels are leading the damned down to the mouth of hell, and at the right gate, the other two archangels are leading the saved (shown arising from their coffins) into heaven. These gates might be interpreted as a Christian counterpart of the Classical boundary landmarks. They lie well outside the border of the map and are symbolic of permanent judgement. Around the circular border, the islands and winds are shown, but more importantly, the letters M-O-R-S are written in roundels attached to the diagonal extremes. Everything - winds, islands, the ocean stream, landmarks of finality such as the pillars of Hercules, and even the terrestrial paradise - is contained within the world which is governed by time, and therefore by death.

In the right hand corner is a depiction of a man riding a horse, and behind him is a man walking a greyhound. A small inscription nearby says simply "passe avante" or 'go forward'. The horseman is riding headlong into the 'R' of M-O-R-S, just as the 'S' is coming directly between the three surveyors and Caesar. So, while these illustrations do fall outside the 'world frame', it is still made clear by the use of the M-O-R-S acrostic that death comes between the inception of human projects and their completion. Only Christ is pictured outside this frame of death, having escaped it by sacrifice.[2]

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[2] This is a suggested interpretation of the M-O-R-S acrostic. Roger Mason expressed the view during the 1999 "Hereford and other Mappaemundi" conference that the 'R' had nothing to do with the depiction of the rider, which was simply positioned in the space available after the acrostic had been completed.

It is to be understood from all of this that the only way to defeat death and escape the world is through the intercession of Christ and the Virgin. The only true and complete 'survey' of the world is the omnipotence of God, and the only 'evidence' needed is the sacrificial wounds of Christ. The power and majesty of the Judgement scene at the top of the map are contrasted in a variety of ways with the mundane and limited attempts of Caesar and the surveyors at the bottom.

The Hereford map once formed the centrepiece of a triptych, dating back to the thirteenth century. On the left panel was the Angel of the Annunciation, looking across the central map to the right panel, showing the Virgin Mary. It is thought that the panel-work was attached to the map (which was made, or at least begun, in Lincoln) when it was moved to Hereford in the late-thirteenth or early-fourteenth century.

The panel-work no longer survives, and the triptych has been reconstructed from drawings made of it in the late eighteenth century by the antiquarian John Carter. The triptych is of great importance to the history of medieval art, being among the earliest known British panel paintings, the earliest large British triptych, and possibly also the forerunner of similar depictions of the Madonna in Italy.[3]

It is clear that the triptych had great religious significance. In relation to the map, the following interpretation seems likely. The Angel's promise to Mary that her son "will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1. 33) could be interpreted as meaning that Christ is destined to rule over the known world (the 'house'), which is pictured between the Angel and the Virgin as the subject of the prophecy.

The Frames of other major Anglo-Norman Maps

The Hereford map frame is certainly the most complex in the group. The borders of other Anglo-Norman world maps are simple in comparison. The Ebstorf map frame contains mostly text, although there is a simple T-in-O device included with it, revealing how the simple T-in-O orb image could be used in conjunction with its expanded form. The lack of illustration around the Ebstorf frame is unusual compared with other members of the group, but perhaps it is related to the fact that the *syndesmos* 'frame-image' is itself contained within the border.

The four angels that frame the 'Sawley Map' are those described by John in Revelation 7. 1: "I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow...". There are no wind roundels on the Sawley map, which is unusual in a construction of this size. The 'holding back of the winds' is one of the signs in Revelation that the seventh seal is about to be broken. The Sawley Map pictures the world on the eve of apocalypse and Judgement.[4]

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[3] M. Bailey, "The Hereford Mappaemundi Triptych: The full story of the Hereford Cathedral Panels", *Apollo* 137 (June 1993), 374-78.

[4] These four angels also feature on the fifteenth-century map in a MS of the work of Pomponius Mela in Reims, Bibliothèque de la Ville, MS 1321, f13. An illustration and discussion of this map is in J. Friedman, "Cultural Conflict", 87-88.

The frame of the tiny Psalter (recto) map shows Christ in majesty at the top, with angels on either side, holding what appear to be holy water sprinklers. Christ is in the *Majestas Domini* pose, signifying his dominion through peace, and in his left hand he holds a T-in-O orb. Both the 'real' interior world and the symbolic orb are shown to be governed by Christ.

From what remains of the frame of the Duchy of Cornwall fragment, it can be inferred that the primary theological focus of this map was on the nature of time in the universe. Along the bottom edge of the map are a series of roundels containing depictions of the 'Seven Ages of Man'. Only the last five (middle age, maturity, extreme old age, purgatory, angelic release) remain, with the first being incomplete (Haslam, "Duchy", 43).

It is interesting that the maker of the Duchy of Cornwall map did not choose to employ the model of the 'Four Ages of Man', which was a more well-known and more frequently used scheme in this era. Using the number four, which was thought of as the number of the world, would have enabled the map-maker to position the roundels around the frame in a similar position to the M-O-R-S acrostic on the Hereford map, thus visually enhancing the idea of a world surrounded by death. The seven ages scheme also includes the phases of Purgatory and Angelic Release, and so the Duchy of Cornwall map's theological message would have been that Christ had power over the spiritual as well as physical world.

Also surviving on the frame of the Duchy of Cornwall map is an inscription relating to the three surveyors, linking the map to the Hereford map, which it is thought to have closely resembled. Once again, the "grandiose project of Caesar's three *mensores* plays off against reminders of mortality."[5]

The Frames of other Medieval Mappaemundi

It is only the larger, illustrated mappaemundi from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that have important material in their frames. Most other kinds of medieval maps do not display the kind of imagery in question. It is necessary to examine the frames of other mappaemundi briefly, in order to show that religious frame imagery is a defining feature of the Anglo-Norman mappaemundi group.

Most simple T-in-O maps contain no border illustration. This is probably because they were considered too insignificant to merit it, and because marginal pictures would have overshadowed what was inside the map itself. Most T-in-O maps in fact contain nothing at all in the margin. Some, like the Arnstein map, have the name 'Oceanus' inscribed around the outer border. Others, such as the 'Gades' map, have the names of the 12 winds, and the terms for the cardinal directions. Scientific T-in-O maps such as the early type A diagram in the work of Bede, have material like the four elements and humours (Destombes, *Mappemondes*, item 6. 1, pl. H).

Gautier de Metz's detailed T-in-O is unusual in this regard. The frame contains four faces, placed in the diagonal extremes rather than the cardinal ones, and two more

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[5] This statement, applied to the Hereford Map by Kupfer, "Medieval World Maps", 272, is equally appropriate to the Duchy of Cornwall Fragment.

which seem to be positioned randomly. These are certainly an aberration from any standard wind pattern. Another exception is the thirteenth-century type C Isidore zone map in Leiden, which has the sea gods Triton, Neptune, Eolus and Tetis (Tethys) pictured around the ocean circle in the diagonal extremes. This use of pagan gods in a Christian map frame is unique to the best of my knowledge (Destombes, *Mappemondes*, item 26. 1, pl. D).

The borders of many early detailed mappaemundi (as opposed to T-in-O maps) contain very little. For example, there is nothing at all on the border of the Albi and Cotton maps. The border of the Rippol map shows only the 12 winds (although the border appears to be quite ornate). Most Beatus maps do not have any religious iconography in the borders, although many do contain winds, cardinal directions, or references to the fourth continent.

A very interesting exception is the late twelfth-century Beatus map in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS Lat. 1366. This shows a total of four angels blowing horns, two each at the north and south ends, which is also a depiction of Revelation 7. 1. These are positioned on either side of what appear to be gates or barriers of some kind. At the east end is a barbarous-looking man blowing another horn, with a much neater counterpart at the western end. There are also four figures holding up 'world-pillars' at the diagonal extremes, supporting the world above. The north-western figure is a *sciapod* (a shadow-foot, one of the monstrous races), who is holding up his pillar with his large foot.[6]

The Munich Isidore map contains winds and islands in a pattern reminiscent of the Hereford map. A common boundary feature on many mappaemundi are the islands that circle the ecumenical continent. These islands are not distinctly Anglo-Norman - many Beatus maps also display them. On the FitzWilliam map, they are the only marginal feature, as is the case with the Lambert world map. These mythical islands are all derived from Graeco-Roman material (and would be an excellent subject for a further study).

The 'Jerome' maps, which are regional, have nothing in the margin, and nor do the Matthew Paris itinerary maps. Other regional maps not on the corpus, such as the Gough map of Britain and Matthew Paris' maps of Britain also contain no border illustrations.[7] The reason for this is very likely to be that Christian map-frames, and the Classical border features such as the winds, directions, and so on, were relevant to the entire circular ecumene, and not to any particular region.

Frame-images in the fourteenth century show a distinct difference from those of the thirteenth century. There is a noticeable move away from the tradition of Christ in

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[6] John Williams, *The Illustrated Beatus: A Corpus of the Illustrations in the Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 2 vols. (London, 1994), vol. 1, item 20. Illustration in R. Pernoud, *Couleurs du Moyen Âge: 1 - Image du Monde* (Paris, 1987), 38-9. A reconstructed illustration is in Miller, *Mappaemundi*, vol. 2, plate 2. This map differs from the normal Beatus maps to a considerable extent, and it is worth considering the frame in relation to the Anglo-Norman corpus.

[7] Regional maps illustrated and discussed in P. Harvey, *Medieval Maps*, ch. 5. 'Gough' map of Britain, 78, Matthew Paris' maps of Britain, 74-75.

majesty, the inescapable nature of death, and the works of the three surveyors. The borders are also often greatly simplified. The St. Denis map, for example, has only a series of twelve demi-roundels in which are written the names of the winds.

The main English group in this period is the Higden group. Higden maps carry most of their theological meaning in large rectangular representations of paradise or another religious scene at the top of the map. The rest of the frame is usually unadorned, and there is a simple and traditional ocean border, complete with winds and islands. The smaller Higden map from Ramsey Abbey has a simple representation of Adam and Eve in the rectangular space, and much the same scene is found on maps in other early copies of the *Polychronicon*.

The Higden map on the survey (the larger of the two maps from the Ramsey Abbey manuscript) has a blank rectangle in the top position. Presumably the copyist intended to draw paradise in this space, and the work was interrupted. On the Evesham world map, a representation of the enthroned Trinity was placed in this rectangular space. The throne was the common way of depicting the sovereignty of Christ, the Virgin and the Trinity in late medieval England. It had replaced the standard form of the Last Judgement of the previous century. The blank space on the larger Ramsey abbey map, and the new scene on the Evesham map, suggest that the top rectangle of the Higden-based maps had become 'the space' for positioning the theological content of the map, and it may have been drawn in as part of the outline before any illustration was placed inside it.[8]

The Higden maps exemplify not only the decline in the Anglo-Norman tradition as a whole, but also the decline in the use of frame imagery. A final example is the total lack of any moral framework on the Aslake map. Barber and Brown, who were clearly keen to find frame-images during their examination of the remaining fragments, note:

> If it had contained what we have called the 'moral' frame [exemplified by the Hereford, Psalter and Duchy of Cornwall maps], one would expect to have found traces of it at the bottom of the main fragment...but one searches in vain for the exterior circle of the ocean-sea let alone for further decoration. (Barber and Brown, "Aslake", 28)

From the previous summary, a rough guideline to the development of religious map frames can be generated. Firstly, early mappaemundi, and T-in-O maps in general, contain material derived from Classical sources concerning winds and directions, and are very much in keeping with the quadripartite elemental system. The tradition of putting Christian images in the map frame seems to have arisen in the twelfth century, and was only used in detailed world maps, as the symbolism was not appropriate to regions. The moral frame tradition then declined in the fourteenth century, as did the mappamundi genre in general.

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[8] It is worth noting in this context that in several late copies of the *Polychronicon*, the frame and border of the entire map has been drawn in, and then the copyist has gone no further. The Higden map was repeatedly copied throughout the fourteenth century, with decreasing quality.

2 - Symbolic uses of the T-in-O orb in Christian art.

In all the maps on the Anglo-Norman corpus, the map itself is the main focus of the artwork, in the sense that it takes up most of the space. However, there are many artworks which show another use of the T-in-O map, and in these, the reverse is true. A large proportion of the extant T-in-O maps are included in depictions of Christ in majesty or in other images showing his dominion over the earth.

I will now give examples of such depictions, to show the main types of images in which the T-in-O can be found. It should be noted that these images are similar in many ways to the symbols of ecumenical domination used by the Roman emperors, which I dealt with in the section on the Graeco-Roman foundations of the mappamundi tradition. Most of these images have their origins in Egyptian and Babylonian symbols of cosmic kingship and were used in the palaeo-Christian period.[9]

The most common representation of Christ as the ecumenical ruler is the *Majestas Domini*, or Christ in majesty. Christ is here pictured seated on a throne, and holding an orb, on which is inscribed the outlines of the T-in-O. In some cases, the continents are named. The most well-known of these is by Lambert of St. Omer, in which Christ is shown presiding over the spheres of the planets with earth at their centre. There are a host of other examples of this image in the Anglo-Norman period.

Lambert also drew a representation of the emperor Augustus holding the T-in-O orb, indicating that such a distinction was not reserved for Christ. A fourteenth-century illustration of the Emperor Charles IV shows him holding a T-in-O orb in a similar way, as a reminder that the new empire was the continuation of the old (*Liber Floridus*, f138v). The Emperor Frederick II and King John of England also used the T-in- Orb in their royal seals. Matthew Paris' faithful rendition of Frederick's seal looks strikingly similar to depictions of Christ in majesty.[10]

Another Christ-image that often features the T-in-O is the representation of the Last Judgement. Christ is often shown treading on the orb in these images, which implied his total sovereignty over the earth, and also that the end of all things was at hand. A representation of Christ in the Pierpont Morgan MS 385 shows him standing on the orb. Scrolls in his hands denote the benevolent and forgiving justice of his right hand and the punishing justice of his left hand (Harley and Woodward, *History*, vol. 1, colour pl. 11).

Another representation of Christ treading on the orb is found in a *Majestas Domini* miniature from a twelfth-century manuscript of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*. This image is a combination of the last two types. Christ is here shown seated, as in the Christ-in- Majesty image, but with scrolls in either hand (Arentzen, *Imago*, pl. 86). There was a certain amount of flexibility in the use the various tropes, and an image could vary subtly in meaning depending on which configuration of iconographic ideas was used. Some representations of Christ with the orb are very unusual - a twelfth

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[9] An overview of the origin of the *Majestas Domini* and other images can be found in H. P. L'Orange, *The Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World* (New York, 1928), esp. ch. 15.

[10] Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 16, f126. See Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 80.

century-wall painting on permanent display in the Prado Museum in Madrid shows Christ, holding the T-in-O orb, riding on the shoulders of God, who holds a larger world-disc under his arm.

The third common use of the T-in-O map in medieval art is the representation of the Christ-Child in the arm of the Madonna. Christ is holding a ball or apple, on which can be seen the tripartite division of the continents.[11] Such an image can be seen in statues of the Virgin and Child in galleries throughout Europe. The ball, or 'world-apple', as a figure for the world is also used in the Alexander Romances in an interesting way. The Persian king Darius, as an insult to Alexander, sends him a ball, implying that a child's toy is a fitting gift for him. Alexander accepts the ball, and argues that his possession of it symbolises his coming dominion over the world.[12]

What is clear from all of these depictions and descriptions of both the secular rulers and Christ is the link between land and rule. Throughout European and Near-Eastern history, the image of the world, or ecumene, was intimately connected with the image of the king. The T-in-O orb was an owned, royal object, its boundaries and divisions determined by the processes of kingship and territorial sovereignty. Its function as a useful continental diagram was very minor compared with its symbolic role.

3 - The Syndesmos motif in Medieval Art and Cartography

Introduction

The word *syndesmos* is a Classical Greek noun meaning 'bond'. In Greek commentaries on the OT, it has a primarily negative sense, being used to imply the bonds of slaves and captives. In the NT, particularly in the Epistles, it is used to describe the love of Christ which holds the entire world together. There are various passages in which this idea is joined with microcosmic body imagery, and ecumenical concerns of the body of the church.

> For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and earth, visible
> and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.
> All things were created through Him and for Him. / And He is before
> all things, and in him all things consist. / And He is the head of the
> body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,
> that in all things he may have the preeminence. / For it pleased the
> Father that *in Him all the fullness should dwell*, / and by Him to
> reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or
> things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.[13]

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[11] Note that there are many of these that do not have the tripartite divisions on the apple.

[12] For example, *Alexandreis,* 58: "The ball's round form well denotes the spherical appearance of the world which I shall subject to myself."

[13] Colossians 1. 16-20. The italics denote the passage in which the word *syndesmos* is used in the original Greek text. See also Colossians 3. 14 and Ephesians 4. 3. The notion of Christ as 'the head of the body of the church' is a common element of Pauline theology.

I use the word *syndesmos* to refer to the iconographic tradition of representing Christ holding the world map in his arms. I borrow this use of the word from Anna Esmeijer, who uses it to describe the position of Christ on the Ebstorf map and in other medieval cosmological art, which she surveys in order to show a link between medieval cosmology and body imagery (Esmeijer, *Divina Quaternitas*, 97).

The *syndesmos* motif is shown on only one map in the corpus, the Ebstorf. However, it also appears on the map on the verso of the Psalter Map. This map (which is called the Psalter list or text map) is a simple T-in-O list diagram containing information on the races of the world. As in the Ebstorf map, Christ is shown behind the ecumenical circle, with his head visible in the Far East, feet in the Far West, and his arms to either side. Unlike the Ebstorf, in the Psalter map his arms are resting on top of the circle (north-east and south-east) rather than being aligned along the cardinal directions.

The *syndesmos* pose also features in an unusual world map by Petrus von Eboli (thirteenth century). The figure here is labelled Sapientia (Wisdom), a type for Christ. The inscription reads simply "wisdom holds everything together". This is comparable to the inscription on the western section of the Ebstorf map, also referring to the power of wisdom (see below).

The motif can be found in other cosmological diagrams as well, mostly in manuscripts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. A good example is in the *Tractatus de Quaternario*, an English manuscript of the twelfth century containing a series of diagrams on how the world and its contents can be divided into four categories (introduced in chapter 6). The *syndesmos* position here is used on fol. 10r, in a diagram showing the division of the elements and humours surrounding the central sphere of earth into four sections. Christ's head and arms are aligned along the two main lines, and his feet are shown protruding from the bottom of the text.

This arrangement is very similar to the arrangement of figures in a diagram found in a manuscript of Thomas of Cantimpré's *De Natura Rerum*. Here, a circle of four cherubs or angels (the elements and accompanying humours) are holding hands to form a ring around the central sphere of earth. On the diagonal extremes are another series of figures, the major winds, connected by a circle of breathing heads, the minor winds. Christ surrounds the entire elemental sphere, and his hands stretch all the way out to the edge of the universe.

Wolf, Arentzen, Esmeijer and Bronder have found and illustrated a number of other examples of the *syndesmos* motif. The appendix to this chapter cites these authors, and lists the majority of the relevant images, divided into the categories that I propose in the next section. Generally, it can be said that the motif was not uncommon as a cosmological concept in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

I know of no examples of this motif in European art from before the twelfth century. The *syndesmos* pose does not appear to have been one of the standard images of cosmic or sacral kingship in the near east, from which most of the later Graeco-Roman and Christian representations of cosmic rulers are derived. It is possible that there is a Byzantine source for the later European examples described below, but it is not one

that appears in general surveys of Byzantine art, and was certainly not a common way of representing Christ in the Greek orthodox tradition.

It is clear that the link between body imagery and ecumenical maps was recognised from the very earliest times of the T-in-O concept. Lanman has suggested a conceptual link between the T-in-O and the cross, citing in particular an eighth-century map (with geographic inscriptions) where the T is truncated so as to appear as a 'Tau' cross. The Tau cross within the circle was (and still is) a common altar illustration in medieval churches. In the medieval period it represented the power of Christ over the ecumene through the crucifixion.[14]

The *syndesmos* image may have been developed in the twelfth century as a way of directly expressing this concept. Its origins are in a combination of scientific diagrams showing the relationship between the world and the body, and mystical expressions of Christ's power developed by thinkers like Hugh of St. Victor and Hildegard of Bingen. Unlike the other images of kingship on medieval maps, there are no known examples of medieval artworks in which the *syndesmos* position is applied to a mortal ruler.[15]

4 - Various distinctions concerning the Syndesmos concept

1 - Christ within and Christ without

Armin Wolf, in a pioneering study of representations of Christ in medieval cosmological art, has distinguished between the figure on the Ebstorf map and the other figures I have been describing. The Ebstorf map, he argues, displays Christ as the body of the world, while all other types he has found show Christ outside the world. The idea of Christ 'within the world' is certainly a more joyful composition than the 'signs of coming Judgement' portrayed by the Hereford, an idea proposed by von den Brincken. Bronder and Arentzen have also similarly distinguished between 'Christ within' on the Ebstorf and 'Christ without' on other frames. Disagreement has arisen largely over whether the Christological imagery on the Hereford, Psalter verso and Ebstorf frames may rightly be compared in order to seek any kind of unifying theme.[16]

I accept the distinction between the Ebstorf's use of the Christ-figure and that found on other maps or diagrams. This distinction does not alter the fact that both kinds of diagram are representations of containment - 'all is within Christ' (Psalter-type *syndesmos*), or 'Christ is within all' (Ebstorf-type). The way in which Christ's containment is contrasted with human attempts to define the world boundary is the

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[14] J. Lanman, "The Religious Symbolism of the T in T and O maps", *Cartographica* 18, no. 4 (1981), 18-22. See also Arentzen, *Imago Mundi*, 235-36. The direct link between the *signum Tau* and the normal cross is explained in the *Cursor Mundi*, ed. Morris, vol. 3, 1243.

[15] A very late example of *syndesmos* from the work of the sixteenth-century cosmologist John Case gives us an interesting insight into later uses of kingship imagery on world maps. A diagram from his *Sphaera Civitatis* (Oxford, 1588) shows the figure of Queen Elizabeth I holding the cosmos in a similar fashion to the position of Christ on the Psalter verso. The term 'Elizabeth Syndesmos' is probably not appropriate, although it may have pleased her. I am grateful to Peter Barber for this reference.

[16] This material cited in the Appendix to this chapter.

essential point of this chapter, and the distinction between 'without' and 'within' does not affect this comparison.

For the purposes of this argument, a more important distinction is between *syndesmos* or diagrams showing the arms at the cardinal extremes (Ebstorf, *Tractatus de Quaternario*, Thomas of Cantimpré), and those that show the arms at the north-eastern and south-eastern diagonals (Psalter *verso*, Petrus von Eboli, Hildegard, etc.). The appendix has been divided into these categories for reasons explained in the final section.

2 - *Syndesmos and mundus annus homo*

There is a wide range of Classical and medieval art and scientific schemes that use the human body as a microcosmic metaphor. The main varieties of these are *mundus annus homo* diagrams and astro-medical diagrams. Generally speaking, such diagrams position an archetypal man within the centre of a circle, and then arrange a series of elemental or astrological features around the outside of the diagram in relation to the various parts of the central body. These should be placed in a different category to the *syndesmos* motif. *Syndesmos* may have been initially influenced by the *mundus annus homo* concept, but developed so as to express something quite different.

Normal *mundus annus homo* or astro-medical diagrams can be found in the very earliest of medieval manuscripts and their production continued well into the Renaissance. There is no space to go into these in detail here, but several general points can be made. Nearly all of these 'microcosmos' diagrams in medieval manuscripts are circular, although originally many were based on the mandorla shape. From the Classical period onward, the main use of such diagrams was connected with astrology, as they were used for displaying the relationships between the various parts of the body and the signs of the zodiac that were thought to govern them.[17]

The figure in an astro-medical diagram is not Christ, but an archetypal man or woman. In some cases, such as the famous scheme in the Book of Hours of the Duc du Berry, both man and woman are shown, a clear indication that the viewer is not meant to interpret the central figures as representative of divine power.

The distinction between the two types of diagram is important - the subject of *syndesmos* is the divine, while the microcosmos diagram refers to the mundane. In both images, the body in the circle, whether that of Christ or the archetypal man, has power to influence the world, and be influenced by it. The distinction between the two types of central body is a temporal one - the body of Christ is immortal, while the archetypal man is subject to time and death.

This distinction is best illustrated by examining the two related ideas in the twelfth-century mystical texts in which the *syndesmos* concept seems to have first been used. Firstly, I will discuss a well-known diagram from a manuscript of the *Liber Divinorum Operum* of the thirteenth-century mystic Hildegard of Bingen. In this picture, the

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[17] A good overview of early medieval *mundus* diagrams is in M. Wickersheimer, "Figures Medico-Astrologiques des IXe, Xe et XIe Siècles", *Janus* 19 (1914), 157-77.

'microcosmic man' is shown, arms outstretched, inside the circle representing earth. Behind and above the circle is the much larger figure of Christ, with arms resting on the circle as in the Psalter verso map. The head of a third figure (God) can be seen appearing out of the top of Christ's head.

Hildegard's text distinguishes between the Christ-figure and that of the microcosmic man. The Christ figure is the Godhead who embraces all. Among the words spoken by the Godhead figure are:

> With wisdom I have rightly put the universe in order...I have established the pillar that sustains the entire globe.

Hildegard describes the 'wheel' held by the figure, saying

> Just as the wheel incloses within itself what lies hidden within it, so also does the Holy Godhead inclose everything within itself without limitation, and it exceeds everything.

The man in the centre of the diagram is the mystic centre of the cosmos, the soul, receiving the influence from the stellar bodies controlled by the Godhead. Hildegard says:

> Humanity stands in the midst of the structure of the world...whatever it does with its deed in the right or the left hand permeates the universe...*the power of the soul extends over the entire globe.*[18]

I am using Hildegard's text and diagram in order to demonstrate that not every medieval representation of a human body within a circle should be viewed as a Christological image. The *mundus annus homo* and related diagrams should be viewed as an expression of the relationship between man's body and the world - each having influence on the other. This is not an expression of containment - humanity cannot contain the world from without, only influence it from within. The role of man within the cosmos can be expressed by the word 'involvement', to be contrasted with the 'containment' of Christ. Hildegard does not deny man influence - instead, she urges him to act responsibly so as to ensure that his spiritual power does not corrupt the world.

The theological meaning of the *syndesmos* position is also clearly expressed by Hugh of St. Victor in the *De Arca Noe Morali*, in which he states that

> If...the head of God is that which was before the foundation of the world, and His feet that which is to be after the consummation of the age, we must take the intervening portion of His body to be the period of time between beginning and end...This body is the Church, which will begin when the world began, and will last till the end of the age.

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[18] Hildegard's *De Operatione Dei* cited and discussed in *Illuminations of Hildegard of Bingen*, ed. M. Fox (Santa Fe, 1985), 39-41. Italics mine. See also H. Schipperges, *Hildegard of Bingen: Healing and the Nature of the Cosmos*, trans. J. Broadwin (Princeton, 1997), 38-42.

The *syndesmos* diagram is thus an eschatological model, and the appearance of the body of Christ on any map or cosmological diagram suggests the transitory nature of the world, and the importance of the Church in keeping the body of God pure. Hugh notes that the 'body of the church' is beset by the many evils of the world:

> You must however understand that, just as a human person is subject
> to bodily conditions, which are not part of his body nor directly related
> to it, so it is with Christ's body, the Church. She dwells in the midst of
> a perverted race; and when she is attacked by unbelievers, the ark is
> buffeted as it were by stormy waves. When however she suffers
> tribulation from false brethren, the body is racked inwardly, as by
> noxious humours.

The symbolism of the arms of Christ is also explained in the same passage, revealing that no matter how much the body suffers, God always retains control:

> But the fact that the arms of the Lord embrace all things on every side
> means that all things are under His control, and that no man can escape
> either the reward of His right hand or the punishment of His left. (*De
> Arca* 8, in Squire, ed., *Hugh*, 58)

As both the body of 'Man' and the body of Christ give and receive worldly influence, the distinction between *syndesmos* and *mundus* can only be a temporal one. The archetypal man is strictly mortal, and cannot escape judgement no matter where he goes on earth. Christ, in his role of the 'body of the Church', has taken on a temporal form, and is only subject to attacks on his body during the course of created time, but also exists in essence outside time at both its beginning and its end.

We have seen the symbolism of the 'body of Christ' expressed in several map frames so far. On the frame of the Hereford map, the saved and the damned are at Christ's right and left hands respectively. On the Ebstorf map, the left and right pattern creates some of the interpretative problems I referred to in chapter 6. Christ's left hand is in the Far South, punishing or 'containing' the monstrous races, but his right hand is in the north, a direction which was not normally associated with 'reward'. Despite this difficulty, Hugh's passages clearly state that the *syndesmos* diagram was designed to show the total power of God in a cosmological and cartographic framework.

As we have seen, God's power is also shown through the workings of the cross in literary descriptions, such as Honorius' *Elucidarius*, the *Cursor Mundi* and others. As there was a clear associative link between the cross and the body of Christ, these descriptions are related to the theological meaning of the *syndesmos* diagram. As the cross was also a recognised symbolic expression of the cardinal directions, any grouping of the images 'cross' / 'body' / 'world' can be considered to represent the idea that the crucifixion had united the world in the 'body of Christ' (symbolic of both the Church and the Eucharist) and had redeemed the sin of Adam.

3 - Syndesmos and 'Quadripartite Control'

As mentioned earlier, Christ was the only figure to whom the *syndesmos* motif was applied in the medieval period. When Alexander, the archetypal 'man within the

ecumene', features within circular diagrams, they are 'Wheel of Fortune' schemes, such as the illustration to the Old French *Prose Alexander*. This shows Alexander climbing to good fortune on the left, seated on the throne on top of the world-wheel, but also falling into misfortune down the right hand side. The stability expressed in the *syndesmos* position is something that Alexander was never granted in medieval art.[19]

While the *syndesmos* position was only ever used in art as a depiction of Christ (or Sapientia), the 'spreading of the arms' as a cosmological gesture could be applied to figures other than Christ in literature. The context of these descriptions shows that employing the gesture may have been perceived as a hubristic act. For example, the *Alexandreis* applies what sounds like *syndesmos* imagery to Alexander several times. If Ammon was coupled with the northern Boreas to indicate north and south, and the Ganges and Atlas served the same role for east and west, the span in between was thought of as the entire ecumene. Thus, the following words by Alexander:

> When the broad expanse of Asia has received my laws, when the Ganges has been overcome and Atlas overthrown, when Boreas and Ammon have perceived the strength of my Macedonians, and the world will thus be content with a single ruler as it is content with a single sun....

Also in this passage, Walter writes:

> For such was his confidence in his fate that he...thought that all the realms that lay under the four cardinal points of the earth were already his. (trans. Pritchard, 49)

Later in the *Alexandreis*, a Scythian envoy points out to Alexander that his mortality is the only thing which prevents him from total domination of the world:

> If you had a body that matched your greedy mind and heart that know no bounds in their desires...the great world itself would not suffice to contain you...Your right hand would hold the east, the left the west. (trans. Pritchard, 190)

Elsewhere in the text (following the description of the tomb map discussed in chapter 4), it is said that Alexander "embraces the whole world", a sign of his growing arrogance occasioned by the defeat and death of his main rival, Darius.

Other expressions of Alexander's dominance over the cardinal points in medieval literature do not employ body imagery, but statements of world-dominance through what might be termed 'quadripartite control' are common. For example, the *Prose Life* version describes a crown, commissioned by the King after his return to Babylon, on which was inscribed

> 'Ortus and occasus, Aquilo michi servit and auster', that is to say, 'Est and weste, Northe and southe dose servyce vn-to me.' (*Prose Life*, 109)

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[19] From a Stockholm Royal Library MS, illustrated in G. Carey, *The Medieval Alexander*, facing page 194.

In most cases, these statements of control are shown as inappropriate for a mortal ruler. His death can only have served as a reminder of the impermanence of any claims to world-dominance. Alexander never did conquer Europe, and while some medieval redactions of the romance say that he did (*Prose Life*), it was generally accepted that this activities had been confined largely to the other three main regions of the ecumene. As noted in chapter 5, Alexander's failure to conquer the Far West was often cited by Roman writers as the reason why he had failed in his plan for world domination, and his Empire had collapsed.

Kline's *Wheel of Memory* CD (due to be released in 2000) contains several images that clearly display the nature of Alexander's ecumenical conquest as portrayed on medieval world maps. The first diagram, an attempt to plot the journeys of Alexander (as told in the romance) onto the map, results in a tangled and confused itinerary which the map-maker clearly did not intend. The second diagram, a far more appropriate interpretation, shows all the sites related to Alexander on the Hereford map, with lines radiating outward from Macedonia to the outlying regions, in a symmetrical pattern that shows Alexander's control over all areas of the ecumene, except Europe.

A similar diagram could be constructed, superimposing places which Hercules was known to have visited over the Hereford map or another similar construction - this would show lines of influence radiating from Thebes to the pillars in the Far West, the temple of Ammon in the south, the river Acheron and the Caspian Gates in the north, and Mt. Emodus (the Golden Mountains) or another landmark site in the Far East. Alexander's activities followed this pattern to a large extent, and when modern writers discuss the influence of the Alexander romances on the mappamundi tradition, Hercules is something of a forgotten figure. I think medieval readers would have seen his conquests as an integral part of the mappamundi tradition.

5 -Syndesmos and Landmarks on Anglo-Norman maps

The *syndesmos* concept (and religious frame-images in general) were most predominant in the main era of the Anglo-Norman mappamundi tradition. It is noteworthy that the use of Graeco-Roman landmark icons was also more predominant in this period than at other times. This section focuses on the interplay between the two ideas.

A general interpretation of the *syndesmos* image, and other moral frame-images described above, is that humanity must operate within the confines of the known world, which have been prescribed by Christ. The all-encompassing nature of Christ's power renders all further attempts at ecumenical conquest irrelevant, even heretical, unless they are done in Christ's name. I will be adapting this interpretation, by pointing out that the moral frame images may refer not only to the entire contents of the world, but in particular to the nature of territorial power wielded within the world, and of map icons representative of this power. I argue that these symbolic connections were an important aspect of the programme of world-image symbolism I have been concerned with describing.

The Ebstorf mappamundi provides a good graphic example of these comparisons. The map shows Christ in the *syndesmos* position, and also features many of the landmark icons. Three of the cardinal extremes of this map juxtapose the landmark icons to the body of Christ.

Firstly, the eastern extreme of the map shows Christ's head, and nearby is an icon showing Alexander, at an altar table, receiving a prophecy concerning his death from the oracular Trees of the Sun and Moon. As we have seen, he ventured no further eastward after receiving this oracle, and began returning westward immediately, to meet his death in Babylon. The icon thus functions as a kind of boundary landmark, and is related to the eastern pillar.

The inscription in the Far East accompanying Christ's head is from the book of Revelation (22. 13 - "I am the Alpha and the Omega), and relates to the power of God. The east - west axis on the map shows Christ's containment as both temporal and physical. Alexander's eastern pillar, inscribed with a claim of personal, physical sovereignty, is contained within the scope of Christ's eternal power. Alexander's inability to reach the furthest east is a reminder of his mortality, and the ultimate impossibility of any human ambition to exceed the containing power of Christ.

The northern section shows the right hand of Christ, and just inside the map is an icon representing the altars that Alexander placed to mark the end of his northern journey, which were also used to mark the boundary between Europe and Asia. According to Orosius, the altars were symbolic of the role of Greece as one of the 'four kingdoms' of Daniel.

The inscription near the right arm of Christ on the Ebstorf map reads "the right hand of the Lord is exalted", from Psalm 118. The following passages of Psalm 118 mention the 'Gate of the Lord', through which only the righteous may pass, in connection with the right hand of Christ. I argue that on the Ebstorf map, the right hand 'contains' the northern altars. Passing 'through the gate' and beyond the world in the Christian sense comes only through the acceptance of Christ's power, in contrast to the Classical model of control through personal power.

The western section shows Christ's feet, which are juxtaposed against the pillars of Hercules, pictured here as buildings. Hercules, too, met his death in this place, according to Sallust and subsequent writers. Both the pillars and the feet represent the end of the world, and Christ's feet also represent the end of time, which is suggested by the map inscription relating to Christ's feet, which reads: "She deploys her strength from one end to the other, ordering all things for good." This again refers to the figure of Wisdom, described in the Apocrypha, Wisdom, 8. 1 (Arentzen, *Imago*, 273).

A further comparison may be made between the inscription in the western section, given above, and the *non plus ultra* thought to be written on the pillars of Hercules. The benign containment of Christ can be contrasted with the stern command of the pagan hero. The contrast is again between the temporal and the physical - Hercules' pillars are within the course of human history, while Christ's feet are the limits of that history. Consequently, Hercules' pillars are a statement of limited, personal glory, while Wisdom, represented by Christ's body, "orders all things for good."

The inscription on the southern axis is simply *terram palmo concludit*, a rough paraphrase of Isaiah 40. 12. There is no landmark on this map to which the left hand is visually related. The inscription generally refers to the benign, healing left hand of Christ, and as we have seen, the south was considered the region of the holy spirit and the throne of God. Some commentators have suggested that the hand 'contains' the monstrous races in the Far South, as a sign that even these aberrations were capable of receiving God's grace.

The same kind of interpretation may be applied to the four angels at the diagonal extremes of the Sawley map. The angel in the north-east corner is pointing in the direction of Gog and Magog. Santarem has argued that the other eastern angel is pointing to paradise, suggesting that these two angels symbolised the two main paths that humanity could follow - back to paradise, or on to damnation. Santarem also suggests that the two western angels (which are positioned with their heads in the corners and their feet pointing towards each other) are blocking off the straits of Gibraltar with their feet, showing that escape from Christ's judgement by this route was not possible.

Siebold argues that this interpretation of the Sawley angels is far-fetched and over-complicated, and it is true there is certainly not much visual evidence for it. However, Santarem's interpretation is in keeping with the general concept that the images in the frames of such maps were designed to show that God exercised total control over the ecumene, and that his judgement was inescapable.[20]

Visual evidence for this kind of analysis is less obvious on other maps in the corpus, and we must rely on the concept of 'associative linking' outlined in chapter 6. The best example comes from the two Psalter maps - the recto contains the landmark icons, the verso contains the *syndesmos* representation. If these two were combined mentally into a single world-image, then the right and left hands of Christ would be positioned in exact relation to Gog and Magog and the Red Sea / Nubian Gates, containing the various forces symbolised by those sites.

Lincini has made similar suggestions based on her reading of illuminations of the letter 'V' in manuscripts of the twelfth-century Benedictine milieu. She argues that the illuminated capital letter V (which appears in the manuscripts she studies as an oval-shaped latter with an opening in the top left hand side) would have been mentally related to mappaemundi by the illuminators and their readers. The 'opening' at the top of the letter symbolised Gog and Magog. Lincini also suggests that the *syndesmos* representation on the Psalter verso may have symbolised that Christ was 'covering' Gog and Magog with his right hand.[21]

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[20] For Santarem and Siebold's arguments, see Siebold, J. "Cartographic Images" website, http://www.iag.net/~jsiebold/215mono.html., page 3 of 4.

[21] Professor P. Lincini presented several *syndesmos* images and other maps in her paper "A Multi-layered journey from manuscript initial letters to encyclopaedic mappaemundi through the Benedictine semiotic tradition" delivered at the Hereford and other Mappaemundi conference in June, 1999. This material will be published as part of the conference proceedings in 2001.

If we take this concept of associative linking further, it can be argued that the role of landmarks within the general symbolism of the cardinal points can be superimposed onto other anthropomorphic diagrams. The positioning of landmarks and diagrams of anthropomorphic symbolism both represent different ways of representing what I have called 'quadripartite control'. The link between the two systems finds its best visual expression on the Ebstorf map, and other comparisons can only be suggested.

The reader may wonder if the placement of boundary landmarks, and the positioning of the sacred body in relation to the ecumene, might not be two unrelated uses of the four- part system - both are a result of quadripartite imagery, yet need not necessarily refer to one another. I would argue, on the contrary, that the essence of medieval four-part exegesis lies in positioning various features around or within a circular frame, and commenting on the correspondences between them. That there is only visual evidence for my argument here is not unusual. There is no extant medieval commentary on the meaning of mappaemundi frames, and it seems likely that none were ever written - modern interpretations of the moral frame tradition can only be generated by using techniques of exegesis similar to the ones medieval thinkers were themselves known to employ.

As I noted at the end of chapter 6, Christ's eternal power over the boundaries was thought to have stemmed from his sacrifice in the centre. The images of *syndesmos* and the Crucifixion are related both visually and in terms of their meaning. Thus, the Ebstorf map shows Christ crucified in the centre of the ecumene, and also shows his power over the boundaries of human experience in the *syndesmos* image. His power over the boundaries is a result of his sacrifice in the centre.

Alexander's attempts at 'quadripartite control' were destined to fail, as the medieval concept of ecumenical salvation through sacrifice was that only through the crucifixion was such a state of permanent power ever achieved. The system of conquest landmarks on medieval world maps can be considered as symmetrical, to a certain extent, but must also be seen as fragmented and incomplete, a reminder of a series of failed historical attempts to unite the ecumene through the conquest of its boundary, rather than through sacrifice and purification resulting in a stable spiritual centre.

Appendix to Chapter 8- Table of Representations of Christ Syndesmos[22]

In the previous section, I distinguished between quadripartite *syndesmos* diagrams and those which show Christ's arms in the north-east and south-east. This distinction is

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[22] Major Literature on Syndesmos, Mundus Annus Homo and the Ebstorf Mappaemundi not previously cited: A. Wolf, "Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte als Denkmal eines Mittelalterlichen Welt- und Geschichtsbilds", *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 8 (1957), 204-215. E. Esmeijer, "La Machina dell' Universo", in *Album Disciplinorum J. G. Van Gelder* (Utrecht, 1963), 5-15. B. Bronder, "Das Bild der Schöpfung und Neuschöpfung der Welt als orbis quadratus", in *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 6 (1972), 188-210. B. Hahn-Woernle, "Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte und Fortuna Rotis - Vorstellung", in Harmut., ed., *Ein Weltbilt vor Columbus: Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte*, 185-99. Hahn-Woerlne relates *syndesmos* to the image of Fortune's Wheel, see esp. pl. 2. A fuller bibliography can be found in A. Wolf, "Ikonologie der Ebstorfer Weltkarte und politische Situation des Jahres 1239", in H. Kugler and E. Michael, eds., *Ein Weltbild von Columbus*, 102.

important in the links between moral frame images and landmark icons. If the *syndesmos* image is of the Ebstorf (orthodox quadripartite) type, then the inference is that Christ is containing the landmarks in the cardinal extremes of north and south - Alexander's northern altars, the Camp of Alexander and the Temple of Ammon. If the *syndesmos* motif is of the Psalter type, the location of the hands suggests that Christ is containing the conquest landmarks in the north-east and south-east - Alexander's Gate, and the Caspian and the Nubian Gates.

Orthodox Quadripartite "Ebstorf" Type:

Thirteenth Century:

1 - Ebstorf Mappamundi (introduced in chapter 1).

2 - *Tractatus de Quaternario*, Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, MS 428, f10r (LeCoq, pl. 6). (Might be twelfth century.)

3 - Thomas of Cantimpré- *De Natura Rerum*, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, CLM 2655, f105r. (LeCoq, pl. 9). This figure is a combination of both types.

Fourteenth Century:

4 - Vårdsberg church, silver-gilt paten with *syndesmos* ideogram (Esmeijer, *Divina*, pl. 87). Christ's body is an entry point into the symbolic world of the church in this artwork.

North-East and North-West "Psalter" type:

Twelfth Century:

1 - Petrus of Poitiers, *Compendium Historiae in Genealogia Christi*, Linz, Bundesstaatliche Studienbibl. MS Qu. 14, f13v. (LeCoq, pl. 8).

Thirteenth Century:

2 - Psalter Mappamundi verso (introduced in chapter 1).

3 - Petrus von Eboli - *De Rebus Sicilis*, Bern, Bürgerbibl., MS 120, f140r (Arentzen, pl. 87).

4 - Hildegard of Bingen - *Liber Divinorum Operum*, Bibliothèque Municipale de Lucques MS 1492, f9r. (Wolf, "Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte", fig. 1).

Fourteenth Century:

5 - Fresco by Pierro de Puccio in Camposanto, near Pisa (Wolf, fig. 4). Might be fifteenth century.

CHAPTER NINE - CONCLUSION: Landmarks, Earthly Symmetry and Political Power

Development of the Boundary Pillar Motif

The conclusion to this study provides answers to the series of questions relating to the history and function of Graeco-Roman conquest landmarks, and their use in medieval cartography, that were posed in the introduction. Most of the statements made here have been discussed and illustrated in previous chapters.

Regarding the early origins of the pillar myth, it has been noted that the concept of 'world-gates', or passages to the outer ocean, existed in Greek thought in the work of Homer and Hesiod, the earliest extant pieces of European literature. It is probable that these mythical places were not originally linked to any particular site, but were expressions of the archetypal notion of the 'world-gate' which can be found in many cultures. Their initial function in Greek thought may have been as part of a system of cthonic shamanistic rituals, in which passing through the gates was seen as an act of defiance towards the ruling Olympian culture. In later times, the 'world-gate' idea became applied to real places - the Straits of Gibraltar, the Straits of Messina, and the Bosporus - and became associated with the deeds of adventurers such as Hercules, Ulysses and Jason.

We have also seen that conquest monuments, in the form of altars, pillars and statues, were erected by Greek and Near Eastern conquerors to mark the limits of their conquests. This idea too has very ancient origins, dating back at least to the fifth century BC. These conquest monuments became conflated in some cases with the idea of 'world-gates' discussed above. The western pillars of Hercules, for example, were considered as both a conquest monument and a world-gate.

Alexander the Great was the last of the great Graeco-Roman explorers, and the last figure to mark his conquests in such a manner, or at least the last that was well remembered in later times. He erected altars in honour of the Twelve Gods on the river Hyphasis, and may have also established altars in the city of Alexandria 'Ultima'. Much of Alexander's political rhetoric relied on favourable comparisons between himself and previous figures like Hercules and Dionysius, and thus those deities were also credited with having erected altars and pillars in a variety of places.

Maps and Landmarks

In the late Republican and early Imperial periods of Roman history, a number of rulers in this era made altars, pillars and statues as memorials of their own deeds. These monuments were no longer markers of boundary, but denoted the dominion of the ruler over the entire habitable world from a central point. Many of these monuments included detailed inscriptions, describing the territories they had conquered, or graphically depicting the history of their reign. One of these, the Portico of Agrippa / Augustus, may have contained a detailed map of the Empire, and is thought to be a direct forerunner of medieval mappaemundi.

Landmark pillars, statues and altars retained some of these associations with cartographic or historical structures throughout the Middle Ages. For example, the

statues of Alexander in the *Epistola* are said to be inscribed with an account of Alexander's deeds. Moreover, there are many similarities between the boundary pillars and a number of other structures erected by Alexander and other heroes described in medieval literature. Domes, shields, thrones, crowns, statues and entire palaces are often described as containing scenes from history, historical inscriptions, or complete maps in some cases.

The Classical method of poetic *ekphrasis* was adopted for these descriptions by the medieval Christian writers, particularly poets and mystics. All of this material must be understood within the theological framework in which the world itself was God's monument, and could be described and explained by a series of analogies in order to better understand his creation and its workings. Seen in this light, medieval mappaemundi are a visual depiction of the history of God's interaction with humanity.

Medieval Reception of Classical Geography and History

The ecumene, as it was known to Greek and Roman geographers, was a conceptual space running from Spain to India, and from the Caucasus range to the Sahara. It became synonymous with the Roman Empire, and many Roman rulers made claims to having conquered its entirety. The Graeco-Roman ecumene was, to a large extent, thought of as an area unified by cultural and religious values which had been spread from the centre to the outlying regions through exploration and conquest.

Medieval geographers and cartographers adapted the geographical information available to them from Classical sources into a symbolic framework, which was based as much on quadripartite Platonic elemental lore as it was on real geography. They reverted to an ancient method of depicting the ecumene as a circle, a shape which allowed for a host of symbolic associations with the cardinal directions to come into play, and also suggested a variety of resonances with domes, shields, and other structures commonly used as the subject of poetic *ekphrasis*.

Medieval writers also adapted a great deal of Classical historical lore concerning the conquest of the known world by a variety of hero figures, from the mythical Hercules to the historical Alexander. Medieval authorities recognised the importance of the conquests of these world-rulers, but for the most part were reluctant to suggest that their conquests had any lasting benefit, other than to prepare the way for the final unification of the ecumene under Christ's rule. The ecumene became a symbolic space in which various forms of conquest were enacted.

The standard medieval formula for describing the glory of pagan rulers is to follow any account of their deeds with an assertion of their mortality. History as a 'series of great men' thus becomes history as 'a catalogue of the victims of fortune'. The immortality sought by such figures was impossible, and eternal life could only be achieved through the acceptance of God's grace.

Basic Function of Boundary Landmarks on Medieval Cartography

A medieval cartographer undertaking the task of drawing a detailed ecumenical map would almost certainly have drawn the frame, border and rough continental outline of the map before placing any pictures or text within it. A technical survey of the

Hereford map (the only mappamundi to have been treated in this way) shows that the contours of the landmasses, the mountain ranges and the rivers were under-drawn in lead-point before any other features were positioned.[1] It is only natural that a map-maker should consider centrality, boundary and division before other features. Territorial division lines (such as the ones running next to the northern altars of Alexander and the altars of the Philaeni on the Hereford map) were also drawn at an early stage.

Orosius (1. 2) and other descriptions of the divisions of the continents such as those in Isidore (*Etymologies* 14-15 and *De Natura Rerum* 48), as well as less detailed accounts in Pliny, Mela, Lucan, Sallust and Dionysius (Priscian), were among the sources most frequently referred to in the construction of mappaemundi. In these passages, boundary landmarks fulfil their most basic functions. Basing a mappamundi on Orosius 1. 2, a medieval cartographer would have positioned the western pillars of Hercules, the northern altars of Alexander, the altars of the Philaeni and the camp of Alexander on his map, because these places are mentioned by Orosius as markers of continental and territorial division. The technical survey of the Hereford map argues that the cartographer had a sketch map showing where such icons were to go, and deliberately left room for these icons (and other features such as cities) so that the cartographer would not inadvertently draw over the areas where they were supposed to be positioned.

Complex Functions of Conquest Monuments in the Medieval Period

1 - Curiosity and Outdoing

Conquest landmark icons also had other, more symbolic functions in the medieval world-view. Some were symbols of the end of the habitable world, and marked out the limits of human habitation, but could also function as possible points of entry into the outer ocean and the spirit world. The act of 'going beyond' and thereby 'outdoing' the figure who established the boundary would have been interpreted as a claim to divine status.

This interpretation of the boundary landmark theme is clear from a reading of both Classical mythological sources, and medieval versions of Classical material. In medieval literature describing the deeds of contemporary Christian travellers, the idea underwent considerable change. Often, the pillars of deities such as Hercules and Alexander are not mentioned by medieval travellers, perhaps owing to the stigma attached to worldly curiosity, and the impious nature of any claim to have outdone the ancients and transgressed the boundaries of the world.

In other cases, the pillars of Hercules and Alexander were reworked into Christian symbols, or replaced with boundary landmarks that had accepted functions within Christian geographical eschatology, such as the gates of paradise or the Dry Tree. New Christian landmarks were inscribed with the insignia of royalty, or depictions of

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[1] N. Morgan, "The Hereford Mappa Mundi - Art Historical Aspects", 1. This paper was delivered at the 'Hereford and other Mappa Mundi' conference in Hereford, June 1999, as part of a technical survey by Morgan and Parkes.

the Pope, rather than claims to personal glory. Christian heroes spread the gospel, rather than their own fame.

2- Geographical and Spiritual Exclusion

While the east and west were places inspiring curiosity, and landmarks in these positions were attempts to prevent others passing further out, many of the boundary landmarks in the northern and southern frontiers were originally erected with the purpose of excluding hostile tribes from the ecumene, marking the boundary between safe Greek or Roman territory and the world of the barbarians outside.

In the Christian period, this physical exclusion was coupled with a tendency to demonise the excluded races and treat them as monsters, or cannibals. The hostile races were thought to be excluded to three of the four corners of the earth, but particularly the north. Alexander's Gate and the folk of Gog and Magog are the most obvious example of this theme. The northern altars of Alexander, Alexandria Ultima, the altars of the Philaeni and the Nubian Gates are also representative of various types of boundary and exclusion.

3 - Landmarks and Earthly Symmetry

The symbolism of ecumenical conquest, both by Christ and by the pagan heroes, was dictated to a large extent by a scheme of fourfold symbolism - symbols of ecumenical power were commonly arranged into patterns of what I have called 'quadripartite control'. Alexander the Great, as medieval writers knew him, was determined to 'make his mark' on all four corners of the ecumene in order to achieve a stable empire, but never did so - this was a distinction that cartographers and cosmologists reserved for Christ. Christ's worldly dominance was also expressed in terms of control of the four corners - expressed in the *syndesmos* position, the A-D-A-M acrostic and other lore relating to the spread of the gospel through the workings of the cross.

Thus, Christ's final spiritual victory was thought to have had physical antecedents, expressed on the mappaemundi by a series of pagan conquest landmarks, which were coordinated into a series which in many cases is quite symmetrical. Any reading of the religious meaning of a medieval mappamundi must take these and other icons showing the glory of pagan kings into account, and their meaning within the Christian world framework should be explained with reference to the Christian notions of mortality, eternity and sacred kingship.

Much of the imagery of quadripartite control stems from the use of anthropomorphic body symbolism, that is, the alignment of the four extremes of the body with the four cardinal directions. Moral frame images on mappaemundi of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries show Christ pantocrator and Christ *syndesmos* outside the frame of the world, or as the body of the world, in a manner suggesting his eternal dominance through his control over the cardinal points. These images can be interpreted with reference to smaller images of Christ at the centre of the map, or simple representations of Jerusalem in the case of smaller maps. Christ's power over the boundaries of the world has been achieved through his sacrifice in the centre.

The word 'compass' in the Middle Ages was used to mean both the microcosmic centre, where Christ's body lay after the crucifixion, and the outer circle of the ecumene. Other uses of the word, arising out of these initial meanings, were to describe symbolic circular spaces in which conflict was resolved. My examination of the use of this word sheds light on the previous statement regarding control through sacrifice - Christ's body represented both centre and boundary in medieval geography and theology. The positioning of kingship landmarks in the four corners of the earth was superseded and 'outdone' by the extremes of Christ's body.

The mappamundi tradition waned and eventually gave way to newer forms of mapping in the fifteenth century. The boundary landmark symbols studied here underwent a variety of changes in manifestation and treatment from the thirteenth century up until the discovery of America, at which point they became almost completely redundant. The pillars of Hercules were adapted by early modern rulers to become a gateway instead of a barrier, but similar landmarks in other parts of the ecumene faded from use and are now all but forgotten.

Afterword

During the early modern period, the symbolism of the ecumene was extended outwards, east and west, in order to encompass the entire world into the framework of Christian history. The notion of the 'habitable world' was for the most part forgotten, for now the newly-discovered branches of humanity in Asia and the Americas could receive the word of Christ, and hopefully become integrated or allied with the 'Old World' of the Christian homeland.

Territorial landmarks have now been placed in even more remote and inhospitable places than medieval cartographers would ever have dreamed of - the two poles, Mt. Everest, and, finally, the moon. As can be seen from the fame of figures like James Cook and Sir Edmund Hillary, the explorer has remained the symbolic figurehead of society into the present day, and the exploration of new territory is considered a matter of both personal and national pride. Each such quest to claim the role of 'boundary definer' has been a matter of considerable competition between individuals, and nations, in a manner which Classical historians would have found very familiar, but which would have been quite alien to the maker of a medieval mappamundi.

In this, modern attitudes towards exploration and territorial expansion bear more similarity to the Classical concept of conquest history than to the model of Christian history used in the creation of mappaemundi. The concept that land ownership can be depicted graphically assumes that a fixed and stable moment in historical time is being represented. The Peutinger Table shows the territory possessed by Rome during a particular period, in much the same way as a modern map of a country describes the extent of its sovereign territory at the time the map was made.

Conversely, the space depicted on a mappamundi cannot be owned, any more than one can own history itself, for mappaemundi are not static world models. Alexander's landmarks may still stand at the corners of the world, as it is depicted on a mappamundi, but he no longer owns the space that they contain. Their very antiquity

suggests the futile nature of his attempts to achieve immortality - history cannot be owned from within.

Appendix 1 - The Map Corpus and the Landmark Tables

Some items in the corpus have been included for the purpose of negative definition. List maps, small T-in-O maps with a fair number of names, and zonal maps with some detail in the ecumenical hemisphere were all reasonably common in the Anglo-Norman period, and so these have been given some degree of representation. However, such maps are not likely to display the landmark features in question. The purpose of a list-map is essentially demographic, and the purpose of a zone map or simple T-in-O diagram is to show the layout of the climate zones or continents. Ecumenical symbolism played a minor role in their composition.

Others, like the Hereford, Ebstorf, Psalter, Sawley and Munich Isidore maps, display many of the landmark icons, and these maps are at the core of the study. Their purpose was (partly) to display the programme of ecumenical 'world-image' symbolism I am interested in exploring. The content of this symbolic programme is essentially defined by what is included on such maps.

The tables provided in Appendix 1 (tables 2-6) are designed simply to show the frequency of the landmark series of icons, as well as other important cities and features discussed in connection with the landmark theme.

'YES' indicates that the feature in question is shown and directly named. 'NO' indicates the reverse, in situations where the icon in question is represented on other maps of a similar type, and its exclusion on the map in question may be noteworthy. In situations in which the icon would not normally be found on a map of this type (such as pictorial features on a list map), a dash is used to indicate that the feature is not present. A question mark indicates that the identification is not certain. 'Out of area' simply means that the map or fragment only shows a portion of the ecumene, and that the feature in question is not normally located in this area.

'Not named' indicates that an icon which is likely to be the feature in question is in the appropriate area, but there is no accompanying inscription which definitely identifies it. 'Confusion' means that the map-maker has incorrectly identified or misplaced the text or icon in question. For example, the maker of the Vercelli map treated Alexander's Gate and the Caspian Gates as though they were the same place, which disagrees with what was otherwise known. In some cases, I have included the map inscription within the table. All such cases will be dealt with in detail in the appropriate chapter.[1]

I have been unable to locate exact measurements for several items. These are all T-in-O based items in manuscripts, and the measurements of each are, in all probability, approximately 270mm diameter.

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[1] Much of the information provided in the tables can also be found in von den Brincken's *Fines Terrae*, and particularly in her study *Mappaemundi und Chronographia*, in which similar tables show the distribution of common features in a survey corpus which includes some of the maps on my survey. Von den Brincken's tables are in *Fines Terrae*, 155-157, and *Mappaemundi und Chronographia*, 162-167.

TABLE 1 - ANGLO-NORMAN MAP SURVEY

COMMON NAME	DATE	PROVENANCE	SIZE	LOCATION	MS
COTTON	1030	English	210x170mm	British Library	Cotton Tiberius BV, f58v
OXFORD	1100	English	d170mm	Oxford	St. John's College 17, f6
LAMBERT A	1120	French	d290mm	Leiden Univ. Bibl.	Voss Lat F.31, f175v-176
LAMBERT B	1120	French	-	Vienna Abb.	MS 4, f19
ISIDORE	12th cent.	French	d266mm	Munich Bayerische Staatsbibl.	CLM 10058, f154v
JEROME ASIA	12th cent.	French	356x230mm	British Library	Add. 10049, f64r
JEROME PALESTINE	12th cent.	French	356x230mm	British Library	Add. 10049, f64v
SAWLEY	1180	English	290x200mm	Cambridge	Corpus Christi College 66, Parker f2
CHÂTILLON	13th century	French	-	Paris Bibliothèque Nationale	Lat. 11334, f.1
ARNSTEIN	12th cent.	German?	d270mm	British Library	Harl. 2799, f.241v
"CADES"	13th cent.	German?	-	Munich Bayerische Staatsbibl.	CLM 14731, f83v
SALLUST/LUCAN	13th cent.	English	d85mm	Oxford	Lat. class D.14, f137v
GAUTIER	13th cent.	French	d66mm	Verdun B. M.	28, f22v
WALLINGFORD	1250	English	d82mm	British Library	Cotton Julius Dvii, f.46
FITZWILLIAM	13th cent?	English	-	Cambridge	Fitzwilliam 254, f1v
CORNWALL	1200	English	61cmx53cm (of d157cm)	Duchy of Cornwall Office	Maps and Pland MS 1.
EBSTORF	1245	German/English	d3metres	Ebstorf,near Lüneberg	Destroyed in 1940s.
PSALTER	1260	English	90mm	British Library	Add. 28681, f9
VERCELLI	1280	English / French	840x720mm	Vercelli Cathedral	Wall map - One only
HEREFORD	1290	English	165x135 cm	Hereford Cathedral	Wall Map - One only
MATTHEW A (the itinerary)	1250	English	350x450mm	British Library	Royal 14. C vii, f4-v5
MATTHEW B (the world map)	1250	English	354x232mm	Cambridge	Corpus Christi College 26 f284
HIGDEN (Oval world)	1350	English	465x342 mm	British Library	Royal 14 Cix, fiv-2
ANONYMOUS	14th cent.	French	240x170mm	Vienna N.B.	Cod. 505 f1
ST. DENIS	14th cent.	French	-	Paris, Bibl. St. Geneviève	782, f374v

TABLES 2 - 6 : DISTRIBUTION OF LANDMARKS ON THE ANGLO-NORMAN MAP SURVEY

TABLE 2

	COTTON	OXFORD	LAMBERT A	LAMBERT B	MUNICH ISIDORE
EAST:					
PILLARS OF HERCULES	NO	NO	NO	-	NO
PILLARS OF ALEXANDER	NO	NO	NO	-	YES (3)
PILLARS OF DIONYSIUS/BACCHUS	NO	NO	NO	-	NO
TREES OF SUN AND MOON	NO	NO	YES	-	NO
NORTH:					
ALTARS of ALEXANDER	NO	NO	NO	-	YES (3)
GOG and MAGOG	Gog et Magog	(Armenia Genti 33)	Hic inclusit Alexander regna 32	-	Gog et Magog
ALEXANDER'S GATE	NO	NO	(YES)	-	NO
CASPIAN GATES	NO	NO	NO	-	YES
WEST:					
PILLARS OF HERCULES	YES (2)	NO	NO	-	YES (3)
GADES	Not named	NO	NO	-	Named
TWIN MOUNTAINS	Septem Montes	NO	NO	-	NO
SOUTH:					
AMMON'S TEMPLE	NO	NO	NO	-	NO
NUBIAN GATES	NO	NO	Possible	-	Not named
CAMP OF ALEXANDER	NO	NO	NO	-	YES
ALTARS of PHILAENI	NO	NO	NO	-	YES (3)

TABLE 3

	JEROME ASIA	JEROME PALESTINE	SAWLEY	CHÂTILLON	ARNSTEIN
EAST:					
PILLARS OF HERCULES	NO	YES (3)	NO	-	NO
PILLARS OF ALEXANDER	NO	YES (3)	NO	-	NO
PILLARS OF DIONYSIUS/BACCHUS	Nysam civ liber pater, (3 pillars).	NO	NO	-	NO
TREES OF SUN AND MOON	NO	YES (next to pillars)	NO	-	NO
NORTH:					
ALTARS of ALEXANDER	YES (3)	NO	NO	-	NO
GOG and MAGOG	Gog gentes	Named?	YES	-	NO
ALEXANDER'S GATE	NO	Not named	YES	-	NO
CASPIAN GATES	Caspie Porte (twice)	Not named	YES	-	NO
WEST:	Not in area	Not in area			
PILLARS OF HERCULES	-	-	Not named (2)	-	Not named
GADES	-	-	Not named	-	Named
TWIN MOUNTAINS	-	-	Not named	-	Calpes - Athlas
SOUTH:	Not in area			(cross)	
AMMON'S TEMPLE	-	NO	Templum Jovi	-	NO
NUBIAN GATES	-	NO	YES	-	NO
CAMP OF ALEXANDER	-	NO	NO	-	NO
ALTARS of PHILAENI	-	NO	YES (3)	-	YES

TABLE 4

	'CADES' MAP	LUCAN / SALLUST	GAUTIER (list map)	WALLING-FORD	FITZ-WILLIAM
EAST:					
PILLARS OF HERCULES	NO	-	-	-	-
PILLARS OF ALEXANDER	cades alexandri (3)	-	-	-	-
PILLARS OF DIONYSIUS/BACCHUS	NO	-	-	-	-
TREES OF SUN AND MOON	NO	-	-	-	-
NORTH:					
ALTARS of ALEXANDER	cades Varacis (3)	-	-	-	-
GOG and MAGOG	NO	-	-	-	-
ALEANDER'S GATE	NO	-		-	-
CASPIAN GATES	NO	-	-	(Montes Caspios)	-
WEST:					
PILLARS OF HERCULES	cades herculi (3)	Not named	-	-	-
GADES	YES	Gad	-	-	YES (in far north)
TWIN MOUNTAINS	Not shown	NO	-	-	-
SOUTH:			-		
AMMON'S TEMPLE	NO	Possible	-	-	-
NUBIAN GATES	NO	-	-	-	-
CAMP OF ALEXANDER	(gades gadiet)	-	-	-	-
ALTARS of PHIILAENI	YES	-	-	-	-

TABLE 5

	CORN-WALL	EBSTORF	PSALTER	VERCELLI	HEREFORD
EAST:	(Not in area)				
PILLARS OF HERCULES	-	Area Missing	(YES)	NO	NO
PILLARS OF ALEXANDER	-	Area Missing	NO	NO	YES (3)
PILLARS OF DIONYSIUS/BACCHUS	-	(NO)	(YES)	NO	NO
TREES OF SUN AND MOON	-	YES	YES	YES (looks like altar)	YES
NORTH:	(Not in area)				
ALTARS of ALEXANDER	-	YES (3)	YES	NO	YES (2)
GOG and MAGOG	-	YES	Not named	Confusion	YES
ALEANDER'S GATE	-	YES	Possible	Confusion	YES
CASPIAN GATES	-	YES	Possible	Confusion - (large gate shown)	YES
WEST:	(Not in area)				
PILLARS OF HERCULES	-	YES	YES (3)	(Damaged)	YES
GADES	-	YES	(NO)	'Galides'	YES
TWIN MOUNTAINS	-	YES	(Damaged)	YES	YES (reversed)
SOUTH:					
AMMON'S TEMPLE	-	YES	NO	NO	YES
NUBIAN GATES	-	Shown?	Shown	YES	YES
CAMP OF ALEXANDER	-	YES	NO	NO	YES
ALTARS of PHILAENI	-	YES	YES	Are Philistinorum	YES (3)

TABLE 6

	PARIS A	PARIS B	HIGDEN	ANONY-MOUS	ST. DENIS
EAST:	(Not in area)	(Not in area)			
PILLARS OF HERCULES	-	-	NO	NO	NO
PILLARS OF ALEXANDER	-	-	NO	Gades Alexandri	NO
PILLARS OF DIONYSIUS/BACCHUS	-	-	NO	(Not in this location)	NO
TREES OF SUN AND MOON	-	-	YES	NO	NO
NORTH:					
ALTARS of ALEXANDER	NO	NO	NO	(Gades Bacchi)	NO
GOG and MAGOG	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES.
ALEANDER'S GATE	YES	NO	Barrier suggested	NO	YES
CASPIAN GATES	YES	Possible	NO	NO	NO
WEST:	(Not in area)				
PILLARS OF HERCULES		YES	YES	YES	YES
GADES	-	'Gades Herculis'	YES	Gades Herculis	Gades Herculis
TWIN MOUNTAINS	-	not named	NO	NO	NO
SOUTH:	(Not in area)	Not in area			
AMMON'S TEMPLE	-	-	NO	NO	NO
NUBIAN GATES	-	-	NO	(Gades Gadiel)	NO
CAMP OF ALEXANDER	-		NO	NO	NO
ALTARS of PHILAENI	-	-	YES	NO	NO

APPENDIX 2 - Table of Illustrations

Figure / Plate Number	Item Name	City / Library	MS
Pl. 1	Hereford Map	Hereford Cathedral	(Wall Map)
Pl. 2	Hereford Map (South)	Hereford Cathedral	(Wall Map)
Pl. 3	Ebstorf Map East	Kloster Ebstorf	(Wall Map)
Pl. 4	Ebstorf Map North	Kloster Ebstorf	(Wall Map)
Pl. 5	Ebstorf Map West	Kloster Ebstorf	(Wall Map)
Pl. 6	Psalter Recto Map	British Library	Add. 28681, f9r
Pl. 7	Psalter Verso Map	British Library	Add. 28681, f9v
Pl. 8	Munich Isidore Map	Munich BS	CLM 10058, f154v
Pl. 9	Jerome Map of Palestine	British Library	Add. 10049, f64v
Pl. 10	Sawley Map (a.k.a. Henry of Mainz)	Cambridge Corpus Christi	Parker 66, f2
Pl. 11	'Cades' Map	Munich BS	CLM 14731, f83v
Pl. 12	'Anonymous' Map	Vienna NB	Cod. 505f1
Pl. 13	Byrthferth's Diagram	Oxford, St. John's College	17, f7v
Pl. 14	Geography of Orosius with additions	(Reconstructed by Konrad Miller)	*Mappaemundi*, vol. 6, pl. 3
Figs. 15 / 16	Modern Map showing Landmark Sites with accompanying table - back plates.	-	-

Plate 1

Plate 2

monasteria in anton n̄ in detereo

vrbolom agda ciuitas

Echam ciuit.

Sochoth ciuit.

Babiloma e.

Solinus dic nascitur in yndia, equino corpore cauda elephanti nigro colore maxille longe: nec enim rigent...

Hic congregatus popu lus ifrael in eremo...

Otrea ioseph.

erba mirabiliter uirtuo ...

dracon uenenota.

Solinis in yndia nascitur cui color buxeus in naribus cornu unu...

Ifidorus in libro .xij. ethimologiar. capitulo...

Alexandria ciuit Eg.

Castra alex. andri magna.

Berenice ciuitas.

Magoma dicta Sirtis.

Lepus magna.

tripolitana.

Septuiana ciuit.

Suffetula ciuit.

lacus altarius pentapolimus.

Pcholomai da ciuita.

Cuba e.

Arsure ciuit.

Tree philenor.

garamantes habitant.

Camint ciuitas.

Iabila ciuitas.

Hic dicit ba bindoida.

Sol.

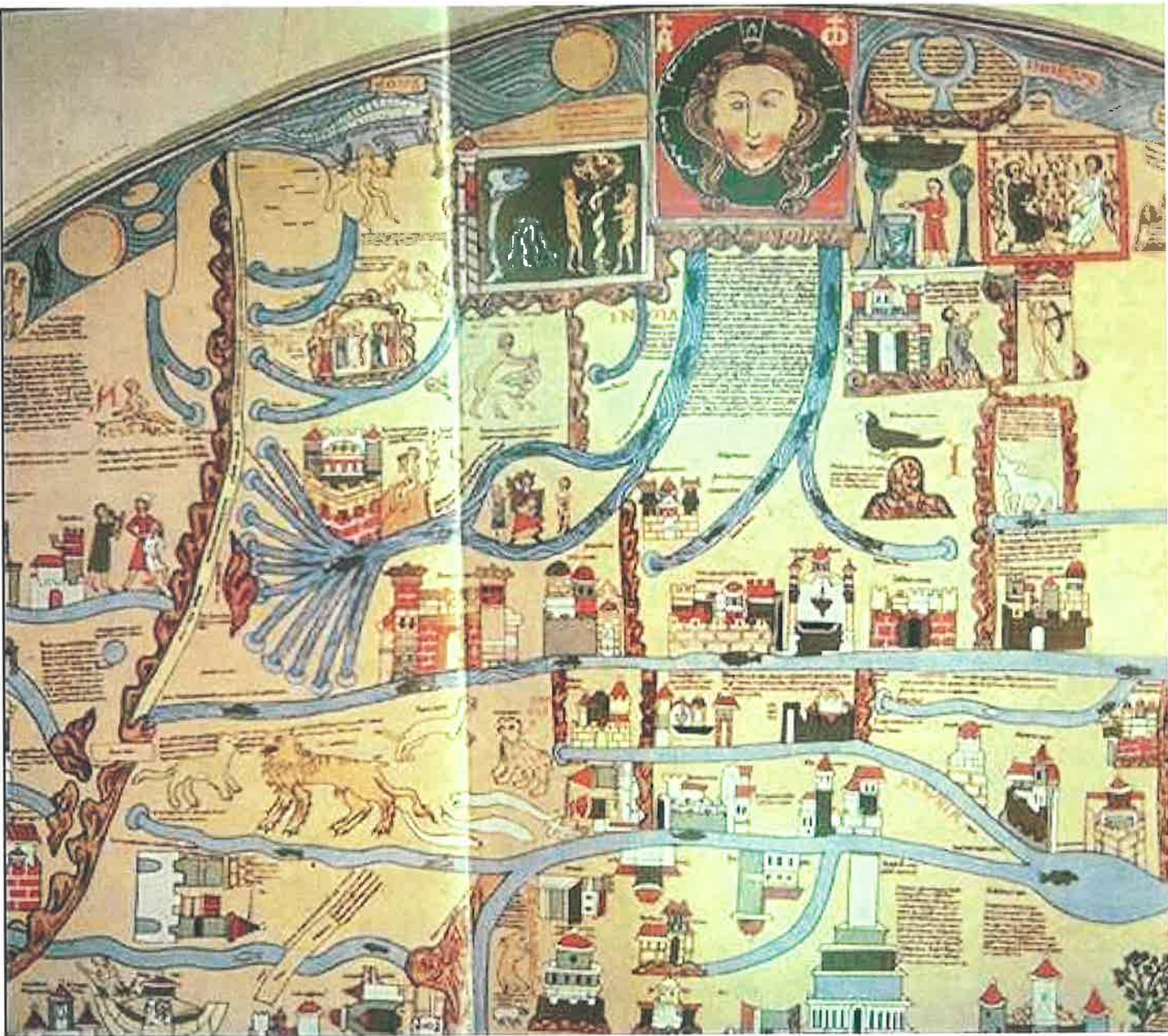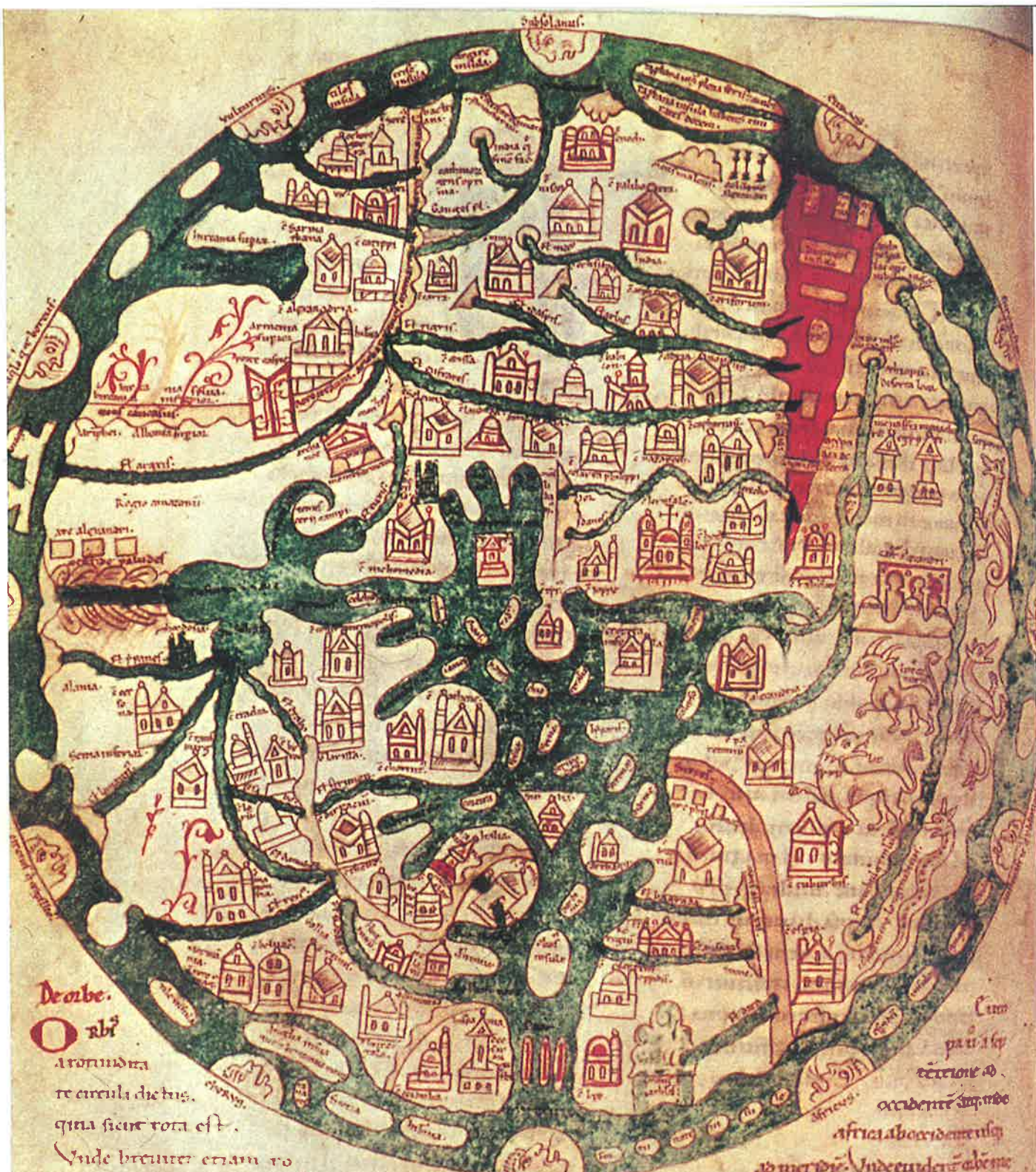unde tibi faciem obumbrans ad solem.

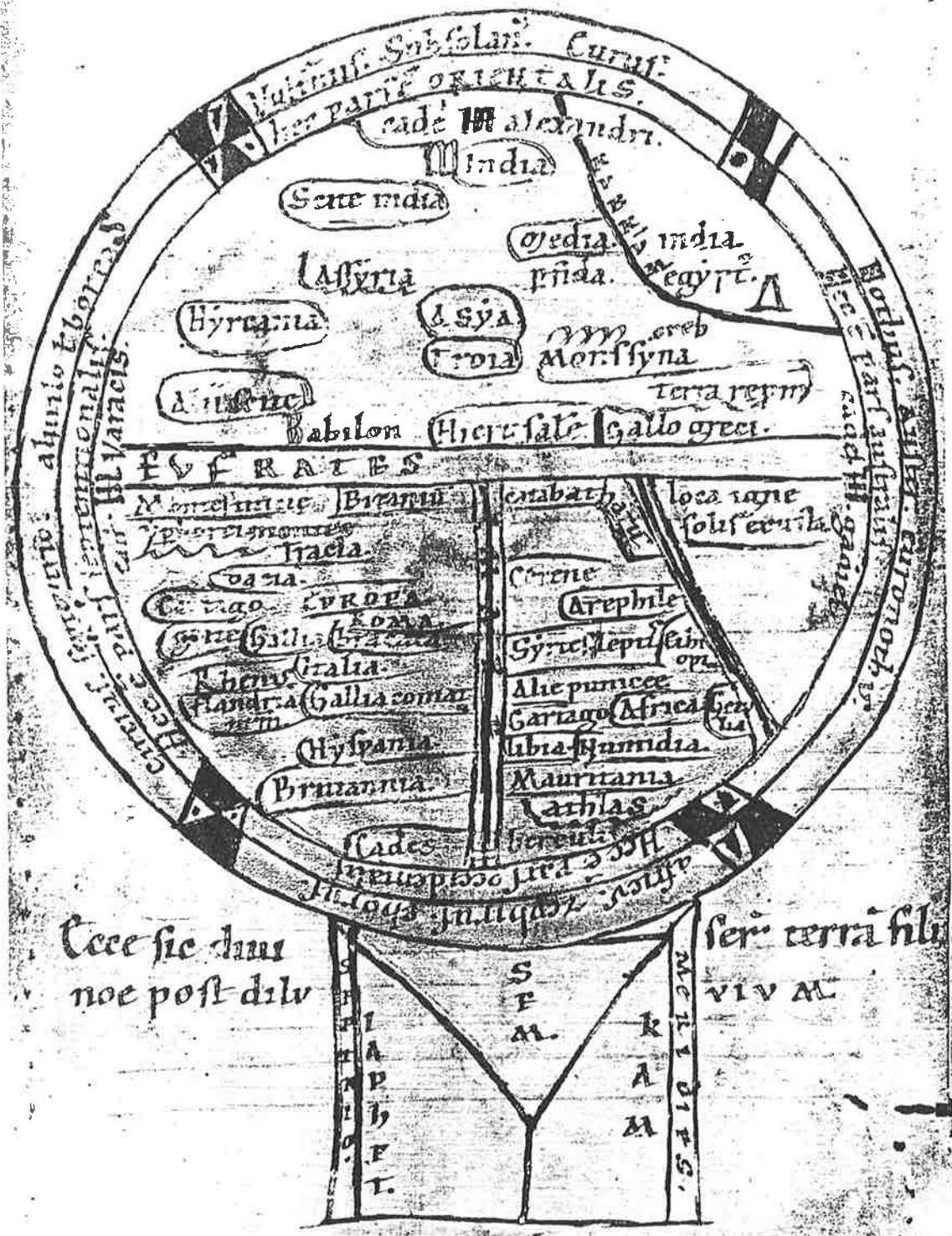**Plate 3**

Plate 4

Plate 5

Plate 6

Plate 7

De orbe.

Orbis a rotunditate circuli dictus, quia sicut rota est. Unde breviter etiam rotella orbiculus appellatur. Undique enim oceanus circumfluens eius in circulo ambit fines. Divisus est autem trifarie, e quibus una pars Asia, alia Europa, tertia Africa que est Libia nuncupatur. Quas tres partes orbis veteres non equaliter diviserunt. Hi Asia a meridie por oriente usque ad septentrionem pervenit.

Cum... pars in... regione ad occidente usque in orbe, Africa ab occidente usque ad meridiem. Unde eurus idem obtinem... dinim due tenent Europa et Africa, alii vero dimidium sola Asia. Sed ideo iste due partes facie si qua in utrinque ab oceano mari magno mediam... idem mi... factam. Propter si in duas partes idem orientem et occidentem orbe dividas, Asia erit in una, in altera vero Europa et Africa.

Plate 8

Plate 9 (Landscape)

Plate 10

Plate 11

Vukanus Subsolan. Curus̄ / hec partꝭ orientalis̄.
eade̅ ⅲ alexandri.
ⅲ India.
Sere india
Oedria india.
prsida. egyptꝯ
Assyria
Hyrcania
Asya
Troia
meb
Morssyna
Anstue
terra regm̄
Babilon Hierusale̅ gallo greci.
EVFRATES
Marcedonia Britani
nabath orī
loca iacie solis eoruk.
Portemonies̄
Tracia.
vaza.
Cirene
Cirrago EVROPA ROMA
Arephile
Grre Gallia Grecia
Syrtel leput sabi opꝯ.
Rheni Italia
Alie punice
Flandria Gallia comar
Cartago Africa Ger̄
Hyspania
Libia Numidia.
Brittania
Mauritania
Athlas
Cades herculis
Hec part̄ occidentalꝭ
Affer neupsio zira Zeph
filioꝯ iafugeꝫ

Ecce sic dixi
noe post dilu

SEM

ser̄ terra filu
viv̄

ⅠA P h ε T

CAM

Plate 12

Plate 13

Plate 14

Fig. 14 - Geography of Orosius, Reconstructed by Konrad Miller, with highlights and additions

East - Altars of Alexander (added, just beyond Indus - Hyphasis river assumed)

West - Pillars of Hercules on Gades, Calpe, Abylla (highlighted)

North - Altars of Alexander (highlighted)

North-East - Caspian and Caucasian Gates (highlighted); Region approximating to Alexander's Gate on later maps (added)

South - Altars of Alexander (drawn on near existing title) ; Camp of Alexander (highlighted); Nubian Gates (added)

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TABLE ACCOMPANYING MODERN MAP (Figs. 15-16, backplates)

MAP NUMBER	ANCIENT NAME	TRANSLATION (and / or other name)	MODERN NAME + LOCATION	RELEVANT CHAPTERS (and function)	NOTES
1	GADES	'Rocks', 'Enclosed'	Cadiz, Spain	5, 'West'	Temple of Hercules
2	CALPE	'Lofty Mountain'	Gibraltar, Jebel Tariq, in British Spain	5, 'West' (European side)	-
3	ABYLA	Ximeria, Septem Montes, Alyba (in error), Abylix	Jebel -el Mina, Morocco, part of Lesser Atlas chain	5, 'West' (African side)	Near Ceuta, (Spanish Morocco)
4	PLANCTAE	'Wandering Rocks'	Straits of Messina, Italy	5, general	Scylla, Charybdis
5	SYMPLE-GADES	'Clashing Rocks'	Bosporus, Turkey / Greece	5, general	Various minor altars
6	AORNOS	'Rock inaccessible to birds'	Juncture of Cophen and Indus rivers, North India	2, 'East'	Altars to Juno and Minerva
7	NYSA	-	Unknown, estimated position in North India	2, 'East'	Birthplace and /or Tomb of Dio-'nys'-us
8	ALEXANDRIA 'ESCHATE'	'The Furthest', 'Ultima' 'Panda'	Khodzent, formerly Leninbad, Tajikistan	7, 'North-East'	Altars of various deities and kings
9	CASPIAE PYLAE	Caspian Gates	Near Mt. Demawend, Iran	7, 'North'	Volcanic region
10	SARMATICAE PYLAE	Pass of Dariel, 'Caucasiae Pylae', Caspian Gates II	River Kura, north of Tbilis, Georgia	7, North	Exact location in some doubt
11	IRON GATE of DERBEND	'Albanie Pylae', Albanian Gates	Derbent, Dagestan, South Russia	7, 'North'	'Porte de Fer'
12	AMMONEUM	Temple of Ammon	Oasis of Siwah, Egypt	7, 'South' (Africa and Asia)	'Templum Jovi'
13	ARAE PHILENORUM	Altars of the Philaeni, Philaeni Village	near Al-Uqalah, Libya	7, 'South' (Carthage and Cyrene)	'Arae Philistinorum' Tarshish, Tyre
14	PORTAE NIBIE	Nubian Gates	First Cataract of the Nile, Egypt	7, 'South' (Egypt and Nubia)	Elephantine, Syene, Philae

FIG. 15

FIG. 16

SCYTHIA

GOTHIA

E U R O P E

SERIA (CHINA)

GEORGIA and ARMENIA

BACTRIA and SOGDIANA

TANAIS

RHINE

CASPIAN SEA

ARAL SEA

JAXARTES

HINDU KUSH

CAUCASUS

BLACK SEA

A S I A

AMAZONIA

ASIA MINOR

ARAXES

PARTHIA

MEDIA

ELBURZ

(PARADISE)

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

PERSIA

INDUS

HYDASPES

HYPHASIS

FORTUNATE ISLES

(CARTHAGE (CYRENE)

EGYPT

ARABIA

GANGES

NILE

NUBIA

A F R I C A