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Introduction to Mappings

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Introduction to Mappings

Five of the six essays in this special issue of *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art & Architecture* started their lives as talks given at the International Medieval Congress [IMC] at the University of Leeds. The essays appear here thanks to the editors of *Peregrinations* who contacted Asa Simon Mittman to suggest that the organizers of the IMC “Mappings” sessions consider soliciting, vetting, and editing extended versions of talks delivered in those sessions. Asa and two of those organizers, Felicitas Schmieder and Dan Terkla, saw this as a job worth doing, a unique opportunity to showcase new work on old maps, and took it on.

Until 2011, there were no annual sessions on critical cartography at large congresses like those organized by The Medieval Academy and The Medieval Institute in the United States or at the IMC in England. Of course, the International Conference on the History of Cartography [ICHC] meets every other year, and there are series devoted to the study of maps: for example, the Maps and Society Lectures at the Warburg Institute, London; the Oxford Seminars in Cartography; and the Cambridge Seminar in the History of Cartography. These well-established gatherings feature first-class work but, the ICHC aside, draw a relatively small audience, most of whom are map enthusiasts. In order to reach a wider audience on a regular basis, the first “Mappings” sessions were organized for the 2011 IMC. The organizers hoped that the sessions would become an annual presence and provide opportunities for map historians and scholars in complementary disciplines—art, architectural, cultural, literary, and social history; diplomatics; numismatics; paleography; and

sigillography, for example—and at various stages of their careers to gather and present their work to a large, multidisciplinary audience of medievalists. This hope has been fulfilled: to date there have been nine sessions, and there are three more on the 2013 IMC program. At the conclusion of the 2013 Congress, thirty talks from a variety of disciplines will have been given in twelve sessions, and the 2014 IMC program is in the planning stages.

These six essays by map scholars at various career stages interweave art, cultural, literary, religious, and social history and so target *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art & Architecture*'s diverse audience of medievalists. The first two essays consider the role sources, broadly construed, play in the construction of maps. In "Burchard of Mount Sion and the Holy Land," Ingrid Baumgärtner considers "the relationship between the description and mapping of spaces and the feasibility of describing and mapping such spatial representations."¹ She examines the ways in which verbal texts and images interact with and inform one another and shows how contexts for use and reuse matter, even in works influenced by a single source. Bettina Schoeller also considers textual sources and their impacts on maps. In "Transfer of Knowledge: *Mappae Mundi* between Texts and Images," she uses an understudied map from the Lambeth Palace collection to explore how, when presented with a complex textual source, a mapmaker might have created such a map. This small T-O exemplar oscillates between tradition modes of representation and innovations resulting from its designer's engagement with the manuscript in which the map is embedded. Schoeller moves beyond a discussion of the map's relationship with its textual complement to consider the impact on the mapmaker of the manuscript's rubrications and marginal annotations.

Gerda Brunnlechner's "The so-called Genoese World Map of



¹ Ingrid Baumgärtner, "Burchard of Mount Sion and the Holy Land," *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art & Architecture* volume IV, number 1, p. 6.

1457: A Stepping Stone Towards Modern Cartography?” serves as a transition from these source studies to discussions rooted in the specifics of place. Indeed, she examines what she calls a “transitional map,” that is, a world map situated between the ecclesiastical *mappae mundi* of the Middle Ages and their heterogeneous presentation of space and the more empirical portolan charts of the Early Modern period, with their homogenous presentation of space. Her careful reassessment of the map finds more continuity than radical change, and suggests that closer attention to the Genoese map might “expose our modern understanding of homogeneous space as an illusion.”² The second half of the collection features three essays about English cartography, all of which are concerned with the marginal location of the mapmaker and the centrality of Jerusalem. In “The Noachide Dispersion in English *Mappae Mundi* c. 960 – c. 1130,” Marcia Kupfer writes about the Thorney Abbey Map and two of its close cognates, asking: “How did medieval inhabitants of the British Isles understand their place on the Atlantic fringe of the known world, a place that, from the classical Roman perspective, put them outside the civilized order?”³ Her close reading of their layouts, and contextualizing texts, reveals that some “errors” or “problems” previously cited by scholars were instead the result of a careful design meant to encourage viewers to consider the “juxtaposition, parallelism and opposition” of details that guide them toward an understanding of Britain’s distinctive role in the narrative of salvation.

Diarmiud Scully also considers the special role afforded to Britain by *mappae mundi*, in his study of the Hereford Map. His “Augustus, Rome, Britain and Ireland on the Hereford *mappa mundi*: Imperium and Salvation,” situates the image of Britain in relation to Rome, triangulating via the curious image of Augustus as emperor and pope. In so doing, he writes Britain into the dual narrative of Roman imperialism and evangelism. Finally, in “Forking Paths? Matthew Paris, Jorge Luis Borges, and Maps of the Labyrinth,” Asa Simon Mittman uses the magical realist’s “Garden of Forking Paths” and medieval labyrinths to draw attention to vital qualities of Matthew Paris’ itinerary maps and their culmination in his maps of the Holy Land. In each, Paris created a tension between openness and restriction, between choice and inevitability. All three maps draw their viewers into dynamic interactions that seem to offer choices, while showing them that there is but one destination for the faithful, one inevitable choice: the Heavenly Jerusalem.

The essays in this special issue of *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art & Architecture* offer a diversity of maps, sources, and methodologies and are but a sampling of the rich sessions now established

² Gerda Brunnlechner, “The so-called Genoese World Map of 1457: A Stepping Stone Towards Modern Cartography?” *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art & Architecture*, volume IV, number 1 (Spring 2013), p. 80.

³ Marcia Kupfer, “The Noachide Dispersion in English *Mappae Mundi* c. 960 – c. 1130,” *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art & Architecture*, volume IV, number 1 (Spring 2013), p. 81.

at the International Medieval Congress. The editors thank the authors for submitting their extended essays and Sarah Blick for her hard work and unflagging support. They hope, too, that this issue incites future debate and discussion about the design, creation, use, and afterlives of medieval and Early Modern maps.

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