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Foreword: Deep Mapping of Lost Worlds

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Maps are symbolic representations of an environment that provide important knowledge for users. Early maps, such as the *mappae mundi*, contained information about religion, government, economy, myths, and other social and cultural knowledge, as well as the locations of places, features, boundaries, and routes. These maps were sophisticated responses to the world views of medieval society, but were plotted and measured using a reference system other than Ptolemaic geographical coordinates. The rise of 19th century positivism demanded rigorous measurement on a well-defined grid system to support claims of empire, wars, and military necessity, the emergence of transnational markets and industrial economies, and new modes of transportation. The late 20th century arrival of geographic information systems (GIS) made convenient and economical what once was the province of experts and, with global

positioning systems, made possible the navigation apps that are standard on our smartphones. Yet these developments also embody a sterile, route-based view of the world that relies heavily upon an administrative, material, and physical view of reality.

Deep mapping embodies an acknowledgement that what we know about the world is socially constructed. We each see the world differently, depending on our unique experiences and on the intellectual framework we use to make sense of them. The emergence of feminist geography in the 1970s helps us to understand this point. Led by such scholars as Linda McDowell and Joni Seager, among a host of others, it became clear that ideas about gender, race, class, and other categories shaped the way people understood and navigated space. A woman's "place" was not merely a symbolic expression of separateness, it marked a real geography of difference that provided women with experiences and perspectives that did not correspond to dominant male views. Our maps should reveal these differences.

Making deep maps, then, is more than a matter of applying GIS and related geospatial tools, no matter how central the technology may be in constructing maps. The aim is to embed the map with the evidence and

perspectives we require to understand the problems and issues that interest us.

To accomplish this, we may have to push the map beyond its typical 2-D expression into different forms, using a wide array of technologies and methods.

We must insist that the map acknowledge the incompleteness and ambiguity of our data and be open to new information as we discover it. We must find ways to move the textual evidence that is most available to humanists into this new flexible, open-ended environment.

Deep maps, like all maps, are highly visual, but unlike the route maps or thematic maps we use daily, we ask them to provide us with multiple perspectives within the same viewing frame. *How can medieval studies help us achieve the complex visualizations that makes our maps truly deep?* Perhaps by recalling the example of the *mappae mundi*. These maps brimmed with narrative, theological, ideological, and cultural knowledge. Many were encyclopedic, with their multiple perspectives and complex visualizations reminding us that the world itself was a complex place. Most importantly, they encouraged exploration, mentally as well as physically, expanded imaginations, and often raised as many questions as they answered. This collection of essays about a

world long past but still resonant because of its link to our contemporary concerns invites us to begin this journey. 🐼