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Introduction to Mappings

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Introduction to Mappings by Dan Terkla, Illinois Wesleyan University

My co-editor, Asa Mittman, and I welcome you to the second biennial issue of “Mappings” here at *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture*. In this issue we offer you Chet Van Duzer’s “Graphic Record of a Lost Wall Map of the World (c. 1490) by Henricus Martellus”; Asa Mittman’s “A Blank Space: Mandeville, Maps, and Possibility”; and Arnold Otto’s “The Map in the Böddeken Cartulary.” All of our contributors focus on unusual cartographical artifacts, one of which no longer exists, one that never existed, and one that seems to present a uniquely innovative way of representing place and possession.

Chet Van Duzer introduces us to a wall map that appears in a miniature from 1497 Bíblia dos Jerónimos (Lisbon, Arquivos Nacionais da Torre do Tombo, MS 161/7). This painting, by Attavante degli Attavanti, depicts St. Jerome interacting with Hieronymite monks from the royal Mosteiro dos Jerónimos in Belém, near Lisbon. Van Duzer confidently ascribes the map to Henricus Martellus, one of the fifteenth century’s most important cartographers. Given that the map in the painting no longer exists, the miniature enables Van Duzer to add a map of the world to Martellus’s cartographic catalog.

Moving from one non-existent map to another, Asa Mittman invokes Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* to set the stage for his investigation of a fifteenth-century *Book of Sir John Mandeville* (BL Harley MS 3954). This manuscript’s final folio confronts the reader with a blank space, “neatly framed” in black ink. Just below the frame is a reference to “a bok of Latyn that
contented al that and myche more, aff wych bok the mappa mundi was mad.” Mittman is
tantalized by the rubrication highlighting “mappa mundi” and sets out to discover what the
framed map might have looked like and what it might have told us about the ways in which the
Book portrays Jews.

Arnold Otto introduces us to a curious artifact, the Böddecke Kopiar, which is found in
the fifteenth-century Böddecke Cartulary (Hs 44 and 45). The cartulary belonged to the
Carolingian convent of Böddecke, founded in 836 by the archdeacon St. Meinolf which quickly
became an important religious center for the area around Paderborn, in what is now eastern
North Rhine-Westphalia. Otto shows us why the Kopiar is a map and, further, that it is “an
innovation, a new method of describing possessions.”

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