The Turin Beatus.
The famous Turin Beatus mappa mundi of the 12th century, measuring 39 x 27.5 cm (15.4 x 10.8 in), was produced in Catalonia, Spain, perhaps Ripoll or Girona. It was once supposed to be a medieval design of the first importance, and was thought by the historian Konrad Miller to be a derivative of the Beatus Girona map of ca. 975. In the text of the accompanying Beatus’ The Commentary of the Apocalypse of St. John Commentary illustrated by this map emphasis is laid on the dispersion of the twelve apostles though surprisingly this is not displayed on the Turin mappa mundi itself (like the El Burgo de Osma ca, 1086, #207.14, and the 12th century Milan, a.k.a. Mapa de Oña, #207.26 mappae mundi that display the apostles and their evangelical distribution). It is not now thought to be so ancient or so important as once supposed; but since it has been before the modern world for almost two centuries, far longer than any other Beatus mappa mundi, it has therefore become a classic in medieval cartography. Its remarkable peculiarities have naturally made the Turin map a favorite subject of reproduction. Although the celebrated wind-blowers, so prominent here, are also to be found in other medieval mappae mundi, their execution on this Beatus derivative are far more vigorous and detailed; each wind-spirit being seated on a sack or Aeolus-bag out of which they are squeezing a lively ‘blast of air’. It is fairly certain that in this shape the picture is not a feature of the prototype work of 776 A.D.; the simpler form of the wind-blowers in the 13th century Beatus Navarre/Paris III (#207.13) mappa mundi has a greater claim in this respect.

As a reference, this map falls into Peter Klein’s “Fourth Recension” and Wilhelm Neuss’ Family IIb stemma. The Turin map has been classified as belonging to the IIb Beatus Family group. The Family IIb consists of the following maps:

- Manuscript of Tabara (970). Although its mappa mundi has not survived, as we said in reference to the manuscripts of the Commentary on the Apocalypse which contain the mappa mundi, it must have been very similar to the maps of Las Huelgas and Girona.
- Mappa mundi of Girona. (975) #207.6.
- Mappa mundi of Turin (first quarter of the 12th century) #207.15.
- Mappa mundi of Manchester (ca. 1175) #207.20.
- Mappa mundi of Las Huelgas (1220) #207.24.
- Mappa mundi of San Andrés de Arroyo (ca. 200 - ca. 1248?) #207.25.

Sandra Saenz-Lopez Perez has identified the following common features of this Family of Beatus mappae mundi:

- The toponyms are virtually identical. Gonzalo Menendez-Pidal recognized the following as being inherent traits of these maps: the inclusion of Cappadocia and Mesopotamia, as well as the addition of the names of Gallia Belgica and Gallia Lugdunensis (instead of just the basic Gallias as shown in the maps of Family IIa). These maps do not contain all the references pertaining to the apostolic geography.
- The captions are the same, repeating the reference to the Amazons, to the River Nile and the fourth part of the world (except in the Manchester and San Andrés de Arroyo maps, which lack them). Also, in all of them there are texts relating to Dacia, and to the frontiers between Europe and Asia.
- The elements of physical geography are the same and are shown in a similar way. The ones that stand out are the following:
1. The Red Sea does not connect the west and the east (except in the Turin map), but rather, its course is interrupted before reaching the Far East and penetrates inland, thus forming the Gulf of Arabia. Parallel to it is the Persian Gulf, so that both of them form the Arabian Peninsula. An inland sea, and not the Red Sea, separates off the fourth part of the world. Among the hydrographic elements, the River Nile stands out, as it has a double branching—western and eastern—the latter branch approaching close to the East African lake. The River Danube branches into four, combined in a two plus two format, which finally join up into a single river: the most southerly branch is the one with the name *flumen Danubius*. None of them disgorge into the encircling ocean, and one of them, possibly the Rhine (named *Ren*) emanates from an orographic feature which we can identify as the *Rhyphen Mountains* (illustrated further to the west than in the maps of the IIa family), or more probably as the Alps, due to their geographical position. The *flumen Eusis* (colored red) appears to be duplicated in Asia and Europe. In the Iberian Peninsula we find the Tajo and another river, the Guadalquivir or the Guadiana. A North African river (colored red) rises among some mountains next to an area occupied by the *Garamantes, Baggi* and *Getuli* and flows towards the interior of the continent. In Mesopotamia there is a river that could be the Tigris or the Euphrates. The River Jordan is divided into two branches where it crosses the Lebanese Mountains (except in the *San Andrés de Arroyo* map).

2. Regarding the mountains and mountain chains, the one we might identify due to its location as the *mons Aquilo* in the maps of Family IIa, has been modified into two mountain chains at the far north-east of the world (except in the *San Andrés de Arroyo* map which excludes this item). These mountain chains are shown merging in a similar way to the *Pillars of Hercules*, except in the *Las Huelgas* map, where they appear parallel. The Caucasus Mountains are the source of the Asiatic *flumen Eusis*. In Armenia there is another mountain. In Asia we also find the Lebanese Mountains; Mount Carmel; Mount Sinai; a mountain in Arabia; as well as others in the vicinity of Antioch and India. In the northeast of Europe we see the *Rhyphen Mountains*, which, in comparison with the maps of family Ha, seem to have been displaced towards the west, although they might be the Alps. The French Alps and the Pyrenees are shown as being parallel. A mountain in the centre of Europe, which is not named, becomes the source of the European *flumen Eusis*. In North Africa there are three mountain chains arranged in a parallel form and perpendicular to the Mediterranean Sea. There is also a mountain in the region settled by the *Garamantes, Baggi* and *Getuli*, which is the source of a river that flows out into the Mediterranean Sea. In West Africa are the *Pillars of Hercules*. To the south of them, are the *montes at luni*. Parallel to the Red Sea is a mountain chain that is unidentified.

3. The islands have a rectangular shape, except in the *Las Huelgas* map, where one also finds similar irregular shapes and orographic elements in the encircling ocean, and in the *San Andrés de Arroyo* map, where they are oval with wavy outlines. The number of islands increases in the maps of
family lib, and curiously more of them are unidentified, compared with only one island lacking a name in the far southeast of the world in the maps of the IIA Family. Perhaps, in addition to modifying the islands into decorative features, the reason for the absence of names could stem from the unreadable nature of the island toponyms in the reference map. This explanation could be valid especially for many of the islands in the Mediterranean Sea, where we run into extreme cases, such as the Manchester map, in which none of the islands has a name. One supposes that, due to the manipulation of the codices, the central zone of the reference map suffered from much wear and tear, and the reading of the place-names was rendered complicated or even impossible. In the maps in this group, the islands are also shown both in the encircling ocean and in the Mediterranean Sea, except in the map of San Andrés de Arroyo, which shrinks the Mediterranean into a narrow channel of water, as if it were a river, and hence, its islands are transferred into the ocean. Thus we find in the encircling ocean of this map the following islands, starting from the east, clockwise: Cecilia; Sardinia; Bitinia insula; Tile insula; Maiorga; Lino de Suez; Anglia; Irlanda; Scocia; and [...]archia. In the remaining maps, the islands of the ocean are as follows: Taprobane; Chryse and Argyre; an unidentified island to the far southeast; Scaria insula (now lacking a name); the Fortunate Isles; Ireland; Great Britain; Thanatos; Thule; and an unidentified island in the Manchester map. Many of the numerous islands of the Mediterranean Sea lack any identification or are now unreadable. The following can be recognized in some maps, from west to east: Corsica; Crete; Sicily; Samos; Tarsus; and Cos.

4. The northeastern zone of the world is described as desert and a sandy area. Also, the maps of Girona, Las Huelgas and Turin allude to Ethiopia and India being likewise.

5. The *Earthly Paradise* is illustrated by means of original sin, and the River Jordan seems to rise there (except in the San Andrés de Arroyo map).

6. There is no homogeneity in the depiction of cities within the maps of this group, and this ranges from their total absence to a truly profuse decoration: the maps of Girona and Turin do not include any image; that of Manchester shows only the city of Jerusalem; that of Las Huelgas enhances the decorative interest by including, besides Jerusalem, the images of Ascalon and Babylon; and lastly, the San Andrés de Arroyo map shows all the cities, and also illustrates with symbols of cities certain elements of the physical or human geography.

7. Except for the Turin map, there are drawings of fish, marine animals and ships in the encircling ocean. By contrast with Family IIA, those of Family IIB display a certain tendency towards introducing sea monsters, especially the maps of Girona, Manchester and San Andrés de Arroyo.

A more careful comparison between the maps of this family by Sandra Sáenz-López Pérez allows us to form deeper links between certain ones. Undoubtedly the closest relation is found between the maps of Girona and Turin; and not surprisingly, the Turin manuscript is thought to be a copy of the Girona one. Despite the difference in the shape of the map (Girona is rectangular and Turin circular), and other details (such as the presence of winds solely in Turin, not in Girona; the absence of depictions of fish and/or
boats in the encircling ocean in *Turin*; or the extension of the Red Sea from east to west, also in the *Turin* map), the coincidences between both these *mappae mundi* are clear-cut: neither of them has pictures of cities; in both there is a mention of St James the apostle; and the serpent of temptation is coiled along one of the sides of the rectangle of the *Earthly Paradise*, as if it were a support for it, and this occurs likewise in the *Manchester* map. Allegedly the *Las Huelgas* map was a faithful copy of that of *Tabara*, and the *Girona* map was also similar to it. However, we cannot ascertain very much on this topic, as the *Tabara* map no longer exists.

The *Turin* map omits both the boats and fishes/monsters in the great circling ocean, and displays only nine rectangular islands, two of which remain unnamed. The Mediterranean shows fourteen uniformly shaped islands, only six of which are labeled (*Scotia Insula* [Ireland], *Britania Insula*, *Tantutos Insula*, *Tile Insula*, *Crise et Ar*gire *Insula*, and *Furtinarum Insula*). The illustration of Adam and Eve in the *Earthly Paradise* is still to be found traditionally at the top of the map (East). Several rivers and mountain ranges are shown; *EUROPA* [Europe] and *ASIA* are specifically named but there appears no label for the general area of Africa (*or Lybia*); and across the narrow sea, to the south, is, of course, the *Antipodes*. The caption *Hic caput Garope* is placed on the frontier between Europe and Asia. The *River Tanais* [the Don River], which is unnamed, is depicted, as is customary in medieval maps, as the boundary between Europe and Asia and flows from the Mediterranean Sea to the encircling ocean.

With respect to the orographic features on the *Turin mappa mundi*, the author uses various different colors, but the same basic symbology to depict mountain ranges. The two “bird’s wing” shaped mountains (one colored orange, the other yellow) depicted in West Africa on this map labeled *Duo Alpes contra arasibi* [two mountains confronting each other] represent the *Pillars of Hercules*. To the south of these in Africa are the *montes atlanni* [Atlas Mountains].

The land of the Amazons is labeled *Timiscifici campi deserti in hac regione gens amazona fertur habitasse* [The desert plains of the Temiscirians in this region are said to be inhabited by the amazons] and is erroneously located in the southeast between *Abicusia* and *India*.

The *Turin* map is devoid of any architectural features representing cities or lighthouses that populate some of the other Beatus *mappae mundi*.

Again East is placed at the top, where Adam and Eve form a conspicuous feature in the Asiatic landscape which is represented by various mountains and rivers. Asia, Europe and Africa are represented as separated from each other by expanse of sea drawn at right angles; except where a connection between Asia and Africa is left at the headwaters of the Blue Nile and the southeastern extremity of the Red Sea. To the northwest of this isthmus the White and Blue Nile, in a strangely overlapping way which reminds one of a flying pennant, flow into the Mediterranean opposite an island without name, intended no doubt for Crete or Cyprus. Likewise, the River Jordan is represented as rising from two springs labeled the *lor* and the *Dan*. The *lor* is shown rising from *Paradise* and its course is interrupted by the Mountains of Lebanon; the *Dan* is shown rising from these same mountains and terminates in a lake or possibly the Dead Sea.

The narrow Isthmus of Suez, instead of being laved on the north side by the Mediterranean, is confined on that side by a spur of the *Mountains of the Moon* and the source of the Blue Nile indicated by a lake, which must be meant for Lake Tzana, otherwise called *Dembea*. On the side of the Red Sea (colored in blue, not red) the waters
represented are those of the Gulf of Aden at the south entrance to the Red Sea; Mushkah Bay and the promontory that juts out to the north of the islands of that name being clearly set down close to the words Mare rubrum on the map. Away to the west another lake, either the Albert Nyanza or the Victoria Nyanza, indicate the source of the White Nile. The Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean are indicated, but bear no names. Of the two islands in the extreme east, i.e. at the top of the map, one bears the name of Crisa and is either meant for the Golden Chersonesus or Sumatra; the other island may be intended for Java.

To the south of Africa and Asia, and separated by the Indian Ocean, a fourth part of the world is represented beyond the Equator. This fourth part of the world bears the following Latin legend written right across it: Extra tres aut partes orbis quarta pars trans oceanum interior est qui solis ardore incognita nobis est cuius finibus Antipodes fabalatore inhabitare pudentur [Besides these three parts of the world there is a fourth part beyond the interior ocean (Indian Ocean, supposed by some to be a Mediterranean ocean, hence the term interior ocean), which on account of the heat of the sun is unknown to us, and where may live the fabulous antipodeans]. The inhabitants of this part of the world, the antipodeans, are described textually, but not illustrated.

This then is the origin of the terra Australis incognita; at least it is so far the first representation we have of it on a map. Nor can we argue that because it is roughly set down, it was not known, because Asia, Europe, and Africa are set down in the same way. The geometrical arrangement of the mappa mundi points to an archaic origin, preserved in later, and especially Arabian, maps.

Other features of this venerable specimen of cartography can be traced to an early period; we have seen, for instance, reference made to a southern continent Silenus 350 years before our era. The immediate origin however of the Latin legend quoted above may be attributed to Isidore of Seville (#205).

As another proof of the antiquity of the origin of this mappa mundi we cannot do better than call the critic’s attention to those quaint figures dispensing wind and rain from sea shells and inflated skins in the atmospheric regions which correspond with the realm of IM or MERMER of the Shumiro-Accadian records. These figures represent Boreas, Euros, Notos and Zephuros of the early Greek period, as far as their respective positions are concerned.

Location: Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, MS. I.II.1, fols. 38v-39, Turin, Italy.

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*Destombes, M., Mappemonde, A.D. 1200-1500, #17.
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*Galichian, R., Countries South of the Caucasus in Medieval Maps: Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, pp. 66-81.
*Hapgood, C., The Maps of Ancient Seakings, p. 5; Figure 1.
The Beatus Maps: Turin

*Nordenskiöld, A. E., *Facsimile Atlas*, p. 33, Figure 17.

*illustrated
A reproduction of the Turin Beatus map
The Turin map, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, MS. I.II.1, fols. 38v-39, Turin, Italy