The Las Huelgas, a.k.a. New Yok II Beatus.

Also known as (a.k.a.) the New York II, the Las Huelgas Beatus mappa mundi derivative, produced as part of Beatus’ Commentary on the Apocalypse in 1220, is now preserved in the Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS. 429, fols. 31v-32 in New York City. As a reference, this map falls into Peter Klein’s “Fourth Recension” and Wilhelm Neuss’ Family Iib stemma. Sandra Saenz-Lopez Perez has identified the following common features of this family of Beatus mappamundi: The Las Huelgas 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 Sáenz-López Pérez 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 Rhyphem 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 Rhyphem 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 which 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 Ila 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.

Produced at the convent of Santa María la Real de las Huelgas, or in Toledo, Spain, the Las Huelgas mappa mundi is considered by some authorities to be a copy of the Beatus codex of Tábara and that of the San Andrés de Arroyo Beatus. This double-page oval-shaped world map is one of the manuscript’s most intriguing illustrations. It is not called for by the Apocalypse text itself but is alluded to by Beatus, who writes about the various regions the twelve apostles were to evangelize (Peter, for example, went to Rome, Andrew to Acaya, Thomas to India, James to Spain, and John to Asia). The two vertical green areas on either side of the gutter represent the Mediterranean Sea (the yellow rectangles are islands, such as Crete and Corsica). Europe is at the bottom left. In Spain, only Andalusia (Betica), Asturias, and Saragossa (Cesaraugusta) are listed. Africa is at the bottom right page, while Asia fills the top half of both pages. Below Adam and Eve in Paradise are Jerusalem and Mt. Sinai, and lower down are Judea and Babylonia.

The Las Huelgas map is oriented win East at the top as is all of the Beatus derived maps. Like most of the other Beatus maps in the IIb Family, this map labels two of the three continents (Europe and Asia (without the last vowel, i.e., ASI)). Also the legend Hic capat Garope [here begins Europe] and Hic finis Asie [here ends Asia], between Europe and Asia, is marked. The name Garupe which appears in the maps of the Family IIb must be interpreted as an orthographic error for Europe.

All of the bodies of water (i.e., the rivers, encircling ocean, Mediterranean Sea) are colored a green except a North African river and the Red Sea which are both colored red. The encircling ocean is filled with fish, boats, snake-like creatures (sea serpents?) and islands (seven named and several unidentified, some square-shaped, others irregularly shaped, almost as orographic features). In the Mediterranean Sea there are 14 islands displayed, only six of which are identified (the Corsice Insula, Cretis, Sicilia, Samino Insula, Cursis and Coos Insula). It is interesting to note that the northern shore of the Mediterranean Sea appears to be “unfinished” due the lack of coloring (also noted in the southwestern part of Africa, the uncolored “wavve lines” – montes athlani, the Atlas Mountains?). The Red Sea is shown running almost the entire east-west extent of the land mass, but interrupts its course at Arabia and proceeds inland and creates the Arabian Gulf [sinus Araucius].
In the unnamed western African region we see the Pillars of Hercules as two adjacent mountains (Duo Alpes contra arusipi – two mountains confronting each other), a treatment common to many of the Beatus maps. Mountains, or orographic elements, are displayed in three different colors on the Las Huelgas map – green red and yellow.

In the Earthly Paradise, Adam and Eve are portrayed on the Las Huelgas map, along with the Tree of Life and the serpent entwined around it. Here Adam (right) and Eve (left) cover their groin areas with leaves indicative of the fact that the “original sin” has already been committed as explained in Genesis. Unlike most of the Beatus maps, the background here is red instead of the luxuriant green.
The only three cities represented architecturally and displayed in the Asian and African regions in multi-colored features (red, white, yellow, pink): Iherusalem, Babilonia and Judea.

And, of course there is the “fourth part of the world”, the antipodean region, south of the African region and separated from the other three by the Red Sea and another east-west body of water that runs parallel. Here there is the long caption derived literally from the Etymologiae of St. Isidore: “Apart from these three parts of the world there exists a fourth part, beyond the Ocean, further inland toward the south, which is unknown to us because of the burning heat of the sun; within its borders are said to live the legendary Antipodes”.

Also because of the heat of the sun, Ethiopia is referred to as a desert, Deserta et arenosa et Eziopia. Among the mappae mundi of the Beatus codices, the maps of Girona, Las Huelgas and Turin of Family IIb, as well as the Saint Sever map from Family I, include the caption referring to the land of the Amazons (mythical women who lived without men and who were warriors), repeated practically in an identical form, with slight orographic differences: Timiscifici campi deserti in ac regione gens amazona fertus abitasse [The desert plains of the Temiscirians in this region are said to be inhabited by the amazons]. This region, in the Family IIb maps erroneously place this caption in the southeastern area, specifically between Abicusia and India, instead of in the vicinity of the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea or Asia Minor.

The Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation, is not only the last Book of the New Testament, but its most difficult, puzzling, and terrifying. It provided challenges to medieval illustrators and was the source for a number of popular images, such as Christ in Majesty, the Adoration of the Lamb, and the Madonna of the Apocalypse and contributed to the widespread use of the evangelists’ symbols.

The Morgan’s Las Huelgas Apocalypse—the latest dated (1220) is the largest surviving manuscript of a Spanish tradition of illuminated commentaries on the Apocalypse by the monk Beatus of Liébana. The series of manuscripts constitutes Spain’s most important contribution to medieval manuscript illumination.

The Las Huelgas Apocalypse contains three sections: the Prefatory Cycle, the Apocalypse, and the Book of Daniel.

**Location:** Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, M. 429, ff.31v-32 [IIb]*, 530 x 340 mm.

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*illustrated
A fourth continent lies on the other side of the ocean, to the south, unknown to us because of the heat of the sun.