The Evesham World Map: A Late Medieval English View of God and the World

By PETER BARBER

ABSTRACT: The newly-discovered *Evesham* world map, a map that was almost certainly commissioned for Evesham Abbey in about 1390, was added to and amended some 20 years later, and was then reused by 1452. It derives from what was probably a standard world map copied for Ranulf Higden for his *Polychronicon (#232).* However, there is no evidence that the *Evesham* map was ever intended to illustrate any particular text. Within the traditional geographical and spiritual framework, the pre-occupation with the universal, ancient, and mythical-typical of earlier large world maps-has yielded primacy to the depiction of contemporary England and the territorial, dynastic, and commercial aspects of English patriotism.

The College of Arms in London is England's most important heraldic institution, where coats of arms are officially devised and registered. Over many centuries it has accumulated an unrivalled collection of heraldic and genealogical manuscripts. Among them is a lengthy pedigree on eleven membranes of vellum tracing the descents of King Henry VI and of Sir Ralph Boteler K.G., Lord Sudeley. The pedigree was executed between 1447 and 1452 at Evesham Abbey, where Lord Sudely's wife, Elizabeth, was admitted to the confraternity in1415, and includes the succession of the abbots of Evesham and a portrait of John Wickham, Abbot of Evesham at the time the pedigree was compiled.

On the verso of the sixth membrane, which is thicker than the rest, is a map of the world. An exhibition catalogue of 1936 concentrated mainly on the pedigree, and the map was simply reported as 'a fourteenth century map of the world, with Adam and Eve, the tree and serpent at the head'. In so fit as is known, it has not been subject to any further published research. However, the map belongs to a well-established group of English maps, the so-called *'Higden'* world maps.

The *Evesham Abbey* map tells us much about the context of English map making at the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries and about some English perceptions of their country and the world at that time. It also raises questions about the relationship between medieval authors and the maps illustrating their works. More specifically, it questions the validity of referring, as has hitherto been the case, to a Higden group of world maps.

To understand the map now in the College of Arms, it is essential to go back to Ranulf Higden and to his use of maps in his best-known work, the *Polychronicon (#232)*. Higden was a monk of St. Werburgh's, Chester, from 1299 until his death in 1363/4. His *Polychronicon* became the most popular history book in medieval England and even today more than 120 manuscript copies survive. It traces the history of the world from the Creation down to Higden's own days. It consists of seven volumes. Book I is devoted to a geographical description of the world, while Books 2 to 5 encompass the history of the world. Only the list two volumes deal with English history.

The *Polychronicon* is highly traditional in structure and sources. It depends largely on classical writings such as Pliny's *Etymologia* (especially as transmitted by earlier medieval writers and encyclopaedists, notably Isidore of Seville, *Book II, #205*), on medieval chronicles, on travel accounts such as those of Vincent of Beauvais, Giraldus Cambrensis and Marco Polo, on the Alexander legends and, above all, on the Bible. Although Higden occasionally interjected stories and observations of his own, and sometimes criticized earlier authors, he was generally satisfied with their information.

He shows little sign of being aware of the advances in knowledge made after 1250. Although he was evidently proud of Chester and of the English language, the tone of his text is not at all nationalist. Indeed, he is sometimes quite critical of the English.

Higden began work on the *Polychronicon* early in the 1320s and regularly updated it until his death in 1363. Other chroniclers contributed their own 'continuations' to Higden's text until after 1400. Scribal copies of Higden's own work, with his own continuations, have survived in three versions: a short version which includes events up to and including 1327; an intermediate version extending the narrative to 1340 which was probably written in that year (this is the most common of the three, with nearly seventy surviving copies); and a final-the rarest-version which goes to 1360 and was presumably written shortly after that date. The original manuscript of the earliest version is lost, but the Huntington Library possesses whit is now generally accepted as Higden's working copy for the intermediate version, which contains the text tip to c.1327 with continuations recording events tip to 1352. In this case, Higden himself is likely to have been responsible for the additions as well as the core text, and the Huntington Library manuscript, therefore, should be regarded as the most authoritative expression of Higden's own intentions.

Maps in the *Polychronicon*

Maps are found in some copies of the intermediate version of Higden's *Polychronicon*. Their occurrence or non-occurrence, however, is so apparently arbitrary and the design of most of them so unrelated to the text as to prompt questions about Higden's attitude towards maps and about the nature and purpose of these so-called *Higden* maps.

There is no evidence that Higden himself, unlike his famous predecessor, the chronicler Matthew Paris, was particularly cartographically literate. Almost certainly the now-lost original short version of the *Polychronicon* did not contain a map. After a few years, however, Higden evidently concluded that a Map would be appropriate, and the intermediate and final versions of the text specifically refer the reader to a map. Unlike Paris, however, Higden was either unable or unwilling to create a map specifically for his description of the world. Indeed, evidence suggests he had some difficulty in finding a suitable world map. It is surely significant, as John Taylor has pointed out in his *The Universal Chronicle of Ranulf Higden (1966)*, that several of the later copies of the earliest version have a blank folio-or a completely unrelated piece of text-at the end of the prologue to the first book-exactly where the map is to be found in the Huntington Library manuscript.

The map that Higden finally selected for what is now the Huntington Library manuscript was probably an already rather ancient model. It presented the essentials of his world-view without the frills (such as the texts and illustrations relating to the Marvels of the East and to the Bible) found on the great 13th century world maps. The map in the Huntington Library manuscript is simple. Its basic structure is to be found also on the Beatus *(Book II, #207)* and the Anglo-Saxon world maps *(Book II, #210)* of several centuries earlier, two map types probably deriving from a now-lost later Roman prototype and possibly thus going back to the administrative world map known to have been made for a portico on the Via Flaminia, Rome, under the direction of Augustus's son-in-law, Vipsanius Agrippa (63-12 BC).

There is no pictorial illustration on the Huntington map apart from the depiction of Adam and Eve in Paradise and two dogs' heads outside the map. Only the principal cities, rivers, seas and provinces of the classical world are named, except in western

Europe where some medieval place-names appear. Boundaries are picked out in red. The map omits all legends, notably those referring to the Marvels of the East or to the Bible (with the exception of an indication of the passage of the Hebrews across the Red Sea) even though these are dealt with in detail in the text.

The absence of any explicit connection between illustration and text brings to mind the acute observation made by Rudolf Wittkower in relation to the divergence between the illustrations and the text in 15th century copies of Marco Polo's travels: 'No medieval artist aimed at a descriptive illustration of a text. As a rule he addressed his public through exemplars ... fixed by long tradition ... [The] medieval reader on his side did not expect a literal text illustration, but rather a visual clarification in terms familiar to him'. As with illustrations, so with maps. Higden may have realized that the map he selected was not ideal, but he was not sufficiently cartographically sophisticated to be bothered by, it. Almost certainly his chosen map was a familiar image that, because of its very familiarity, would have been as acceptable to his readers as to himself in providing an illustration of the world.

In the course of the 1340s - possibly before Higden had selected a map to fill the space left in the text for it - a copyist, perhaps working for Ramsey Abbey, Huntingdonshire, created a larger, more detailed and better-executed world map, which illustrates the text much more fully. In some ways this work resembles the great maps of the previous century with their descriptive texts. Armando Cortesão, R. A. Skelton and David Woodward have all followed Konrad Miller (who, however, did not know of the Huntington Library map) in focusing their attention on this map from Ramsey Abbey. Undoubtedly it is relatively more informative than the Huntington Library map, but there are major problems in terming it *the* Higden map, as has been the practice. First, the Ramsey Abbey map has no proven link with Higden himself. Second, the inclusion in the same manuscript of another simpler map that is closely related to the Huntington Library map (and may, therefore, be a slightly later addition to the Ramsey Abbey copy of the *Polychronicon*, suggests a loss of confidence on the part of the copyist - a feeling, perhaps, that with the fuller map he was unacceptably stepping out of line. Third, it is worth recalling that the fuller Ramsey Abbey map produced no cartographic progeny, whereas the Huntington Library map is related to, and is probably the ancestor of, no fewer than ten oval or circular maps, including the *Evesham* world map, which were being created up to and into the 1460s.

If evidence is needed of the decline of cartographic consciousness in England in the second half of the 14th century - perhaps as a consequence of the Black Death pandemic of 1348 – one needs also to bear in mind that only twenty of the surviving 120 or so complete *Polychronicon* texts in Latin (and only those of the intermediate text and its continuations) contain maps. Even if a few of the other hundred mapless texts may originally have been accompanied by larger, separate maps - in the way that a copy of Gervase of Tilbury's *Otia Imperialia* may once have accompanied, explained and elucidated the *Ebstorf* world map *(Book II, #224)* -the likelihood must be that most had none. Furthermore, the one copyist of the 1340s who was sufficiently enthusiastic to create the more elaborate of the Ramsey Abbey maps, which closely corresponds to Higden's text, was an isolated figure. The other copyists became, if anything, less cartographically concerned than Higden and their maps even more conventionalized. By the 1370s they were creating circular maps (or maps shaped like the aureoles often shown surrounding Christ in medieval art), which mostly lacked even the rudimentary coastlines and decoration shown on the Huntington Library Map. The relatively high

level of map consciousness and cartographical skill that had distinguished England and the English in 13th century Europe had sunk low.

Creation of the Evesham World Map

The map now at the College of Arms can only be understood in the general context of these Higden maps. However, its particular context was that of the prosperous wool country of the Cotswolds rather than Higden's hometown of Chester or the fens and marsh and water then surrounding Ramsey Abbey. There can be little doubt that the map it the College of Arms was made in, or commissioned for, Evesham Abbey, Gloucestershire. Evesham is the only place in England, apart from Canterbury, to be highlighted on the map by the depiction of a church instead of a tower (like those used for the cities of London, Dover, Bristol and Exeter) or a place-name alone. The church symbol presumably refers to Evesham Abbey rather than to the secular town of Evesham, and the use of such a symbol must indicate the importance that the maker of the map attached to Evesham Abbey over all other English religious foundations - despite their greater contemporary importance - apart from St. Augustine, Canterbury.

In the second half of the 14th century, Evesham Abbey was the centre of considerable intellectual activity, typified by the production of works such as the *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi,* a chronicle of events in England during the reign of Richard II, which is usually found as a continuation of the *Polychronicon*. The *Historia* contains two distinct parts: the first and longer was probably written about 1390-92; the second, compiled before 1415, covers the period 1390 to 1402. Textual analysis has revealed two major sources for the first section. One was the continuation of the *Polychronicon* for the years 1348 to 1381, composed in the 1380s by John of Malvern, prior of nearby Worcester from 1395. The other source for the whole period to 1390 was the group of chronicles compiled at St. Albans by the monk Thomas of Walsingham, consisting of the shorter *Chronicon Angliae* (1328-1388), the more detailed *Historia Anglicana* (1372-1392) and the *Annales Ricardi II et Henrici IV* (1392-1406). In demonstrating how the *Evesham* chronicle repeats long passages verbatim from the *Chronicon Angliae* and the *Historia Anglicana*, Stow has deduced that the *Evesham* compiler must have had early versions or drafts of both works available to him.

This brief excursion into English chronicle writing is relevant to the *Evesham* world map for two reasons. First, the tone of the *Evesham* chronicle and of its principal sources, unlike the internationalism of Higden, is distinctly local and patriotic - a characteristic that is also a notable feature of the *Evesham* map. Second, the two Higden maps that most closely resemble the *Evesham* map, though probably created a few years later, are both to be found in continuations of the *Polychronicon* that are directly or indirectly linked to Walsingham's *Chronicon Angliae*. One, now in Corpus Christi College, Oxford, but formerly owned by St. Peter's Abbey in Gloucester (near Evesham), accompanies a copy of the *Chronicon*. The second map, now in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris but formerly owned by Norwich Cathedral, accompanies a *Polychronicon* continuation to the year 1377. The text of this exemplar is in a similar hand to that of yet another text, namely Bodley MS 316, which is a copy of the *Polychronicon* with a continuation in the form of Walsingham's *Chronicon Angliae* that was probably also originally owned by Norwich Cathedral. Thus the Paris map may also be related to those found in the Walsingham texts.

The Bodley MS 316 has a further significance. This manuscript, which lacks a map and was probably written at St. Albans in or soon after 1388, is textually the closest to the Walsingham source for the *Evesham Historia*. It can therefore be suggested that the immediate source for the *Evesham* map was probably a now-lost map in the early version of Walsingham's chronicles utilized by the *Evesham* chronicler in about 1390-92, which gives us a likely date for the *Evesham* map's creation.

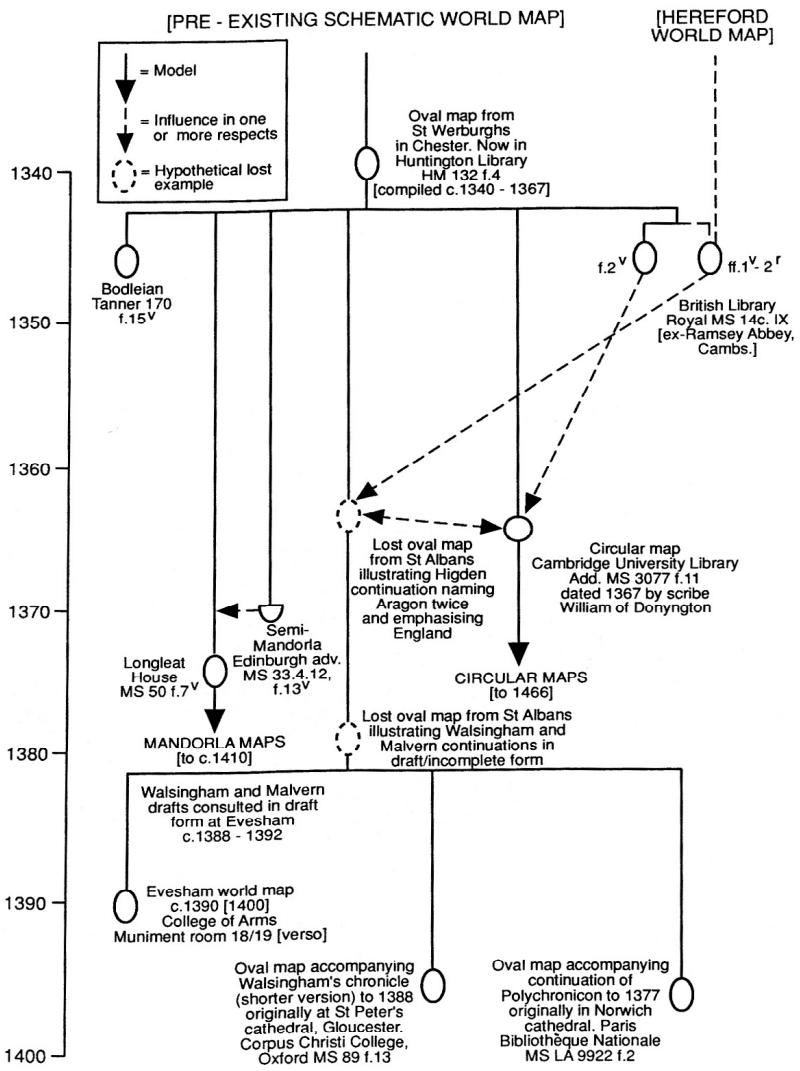
Thus we can summarize the main lines of descent of the various Higden maps (see time diagram below). Both the Oxford and the Paris maps may have been indirectly derived from a circular map in a text of the *Polychronicon*, dated 1367 by its scribe, one Walter of Donyngton, and now in Cambridge University Library. All three may go yet further back, to the map in the Huntington Library manuscript. In terms of descent, the Oxford, Paris and Cambridge maps strongly resemble the *Evesham* map in both nature and disposition of content. In particular, the Paris and Oxford maps share with their Huntington Library predecessor the same striking oval shape of the *Evesham* map, a shape which Woodward has convincingly argued stems less from the form of the codex leaf on which they were drawn than from Hugo of St.Victor's comparison of the shape of the world to that of Noah's Ark. Moreover, like the *Evesham* map, the Oxford map pays particular attention to England, though England is almost pushed into Europe (as on the larger and more elaborate of the Ramsey Abbey maps), whereas on the *Evesham* map it floats freely in the surrounding ocean.

The resemblance in coastal outline is particularly striking in all the maps. The depiction of the Nile on the *Evesham* and *Paris* maps is almost identical. Most significant of all, however, the *Cambridge, Oxford, Paris* and *Evesham* maps all name *Aragon* twice. This duplication is found neither on the Huntington Library map nor on either of the Ramsey Abbey maps. On the *Paris* and *Cambridge* maps the name *Aragon* is duplicated with identical spelling. On the *Oxford* map, however, the copyist seems to have realized the duplication too late and deleted one of the *Aragons*, replacing it with another name, now illegible. On the *Evesham* map, the process seems to have been taken a step further, with a distinction made between *Aragonia* and a fictional *Haragama*.

Between 1352 and his death in 1392, the prior of Evesham was one Nicholas Herford. Herford was a man of some learning who has been suggested as the author or patron of the *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*. On Herford's death a list, with valuations, was made of the vestments, chalices and books that he had bought or commissioned for Evesham. The Abbey's cartulary, now among the *Harleian* manuscripts in the British Library, contains a copy of the valuation.

The books bear witness to his interest in history, geography and astronomy. In addition to a *Polychronicon* (*Polichronica*) and another chronicle (a *chronicae abbreviatae*), the list details a *Descriptio orbis cum chronicis abbreviatis*, a *Quaternus de Peregrinatione Terrae Sanctae*, an *Imago de Mounde*, a treatise on making astrolabes, an *Albumasar* (perhaps an Arabic astronomical treatise), an unbound volume on the division of historical time (*Quaternus Divisione Temporum*), the writings of the English medieval cosmographer John of Holywood (Johannes de Sacro Bosco) and a *Quaternus de Mirabilibus mundi et Astronomiae.* Also included is a text of the Alexander legends (*Vita Alexandri*), an important medieval source for the *Marvels of the East* and other Asian and African features depicted on the larger world maps, and the writings of Hugo of St. Victor, one of the few scholars who in the 12th century had described and theorized about the construction and nature of world maps. Most significant of all, however, is a

note at the end of the document recording the price (*pretium*) of six Marks (*vj. marc.*) paid *'pro factura unius mappae mundi'*.



Possible relationships of maps associated with surviving manuscripts of Ranulf Higden' Polychronicon, c. 1390 and the Evesham Map

It is highly probable that the map now owned by the College of Arms is the map referred to in the Herford inventory. As we have seen, circumstantial evidence suggests a date of around 1390 for the map. The word *factura* rather than *scriptura* would imply a map of some considerable size, possibly of the kind often appended to the fabric of the monastery, and almost certainly not a map for use as a book illustration (as was, probably, the *Descriptio orbis cum chronicis abbreviatis*). The price of 6 Marks, or £3 13s 4d (£3.66p), was roughly equivalent to the annual earnings of an agricultural laborer or to the cost of an agricultural cart and horse. Although, therefore, not in the same league as luxuriously produced illuminated manuscripts such as the grander books of hours, the Evesham map cost a considerable sum.

Features of the Evesham Map

The most striking features of the *Evesham* map are its size and its extremely good state of preservation. At 940 x 460 mm, on a skin measuring 990 x 550 mm, it is far smaller than the *Ebstorf (Book II, #224)* and *Hereford (Book II, #226)* world maps but is of comparable dimensions to the Vercelli *(Book II, #220.2)* world map (840 x 720 mm). It compares most closely in size to *portolan* [nautical] charts drawn on a single skin. Such charts were generally kept rolled and the unfaded state of the Evesham map suggests it too may have been stored in this way. The thickness of the skin and the size of the lettering, which would have been legible from a considerable distance, suggest that the map's creator may have intended it for display - for temporary consultation or for longer-term edification -somewhere in the monastery or even within the church itself.

In content, the *Evesham* map is in many respects highly traditional. The known, inhabited world or *oikumene* is divided into three continents, subdivided into provinces and surrounded by an *Ocean Sea* dotted with islands including (as in all other Higden maps) *Wyndlond* which has traditionally been associated with Finland, Denmark-Jutland or, less probably, the land of the Wends and Sorbs (now in eastern Germany), but which might also be an echo of Vinland. Evidence of the map's place at the end of a long tradition that was already in decline can be seen in the numerous mis-transcriptions of names, as in *Ahemania* [Allemania], *Aviazonna* [Amazonia], *Masagaler* [Masagala] and *Hoilandia* [Hollandia]. Apart from the passage of the Hebrews across the Red Sea (indicated by parallel lines at the crossing point and the words *Transitus Ebreorum*), and depictions of Adam, Eve and the Serpent and of the Tower of Babel, no biblical events are referred to, although Bethlehem is dignified by a squat tower with a spire.

As in the case of the Huntington Library map and its successors, the *Evesham* map neither depicts nor refers to any of the fabulous creatures or *Marvels of the East* that make a regular appearance on so many of the more elaborate *mappaemundi* such as the *Ebstorf, Psalter, Hereford, Duchy of Cornwall* and the *Aslake* maps. Given the detailed attention paid to the *Marvels* in the text of the first book of the *Polychronicon*, their omission from the map is unlikely to be due to a more rigorous intellectual analysis or to a narrower focus on Higden's part, though these factors may have been relevant to the map that Higden seems to have copied from. The readiness to copy the Higden/Huntington Library prototype unquestioningly in this respect, together with the paucity of biblical references, contrasts with the manner in which religious and recent political information has been modified and expanded on the *Evesham* map. It suggests a shift in the mapmaker's interest away from traditional learning towards contemporary reality.

Despite the relative absence of biblical references on the *Evesham* map, the mapmaker's profound piety is obvious and not surprising. In an age troubled by foreign wars, civil unrest (for example, the *Peasants' Revolt*), religious dissent (Lollards and Hussites) and fresh memories of the Black Death, the reality of human mortality and the evidence for divine wrath were ever-present. On the *Evesham* map, the Holy Land and Jerusalem are represented by pictorial signs that are disproportionately large even in comparison with the Huntington Library map and its progeny. Jerusalem is shown as grandiose walled Gothic cathedral city dominating the upper part of the map. Paradise, personified by a roughly sketched depiction of Adam, Eve and the Serpent, is depicted in its traditional place at the top of the map, in the East immediately above India. Yet the scene is significantly different from the depictions of Adam and Eve found at the top of

other Higden world maps by being set into the back of en elaborately carved throne. In its general form, the throne on the map broadly resembles the abbatial Great Chair of Evesham Abbey, now in the Almonry Museum at the Abbey's former Almonry in the town of Evesham. The Abbey's throne or Great Chair dates from the 14th century and could thus have been well known to the creator of the map, interpretation of the allegorical role of the ensemble has to be tentative, but it could be that here as in the moral frames of the *Hereford* and the *Duchy of Cornwall* world maps we again see the symbolic representation, on the one hand, of divine authority over the world and, on the other, of the passage of human time. As well as representing Paradise, Adam and Eve could also be personifications of the beginning of human time, while the throne would symbolize both divine authority over the world and the seat of judgment at the Last Judgment-the end of human time. On the *Evesham* map, therefore the throne takes the place of the representation of Christ on the better of the known of the two *Psalter* maps and of the *Last Judgment* on the *Hereford* world map. It was, after all, a commonplace in late medieval art to depict the sovereignty of Christ, the Virgin and the Trinity as enthroned, and most moderately cultured contemporary viewers would have understood the allegory without difficulty. The provinces of Asia and Africa are those of classical antiquity and the Roman Empire. However, as on other Higden maps, Scandinavia, a European region that was never a Roman province, is shown east of the River Don, bordering on Judea. Unlike maps that are closest in comparison with the *Evesham* map, the size of Asia Minor has been reduced, presumably in order to make more space for the Holy Land. As a result, the Black Sea has virtually disappeared. The Marvels of the East, Ethiopia and the provinces of *Trogodite* and *Garamante* are all shown without comment. Amidst the classical and biblical toponomy are echoes of the Crusades. Acre, which had remained in crusader hands until 1291, is shown with the name *Acon*, as on the maps of Matthew Paris and several Higden maps, rather than with its classical name of *Ptolemais*. The Prominence given to Tyre - misplaced, like Sidon, to the south of Jerusalem - may also reflect its importance during the period of the Crusades as well as in classical antiquity.

Unique to the *Evesham* map, and not seen on any other map associated with the *Polychronicon*, is the land of the Huns. This is shown as a castellated tower labeled *Hungri* placed between Gothia, Scandinavia and the province of the Amazons, which is shown as close to Asia Minor. It is quite distinct from *Hungaria*, located in approximately the correct position on the Danube near Bohemia. The position of *Hungri*, which is found in the correct place on the *Hereford* world map (on which, however, Hungary is not shown), should correspond roughly with that described as the home of the Huns in the text of the *Polychronicon*.

The prominence given to the Huns - the only place or territorial name apart from Jerusalem to place have its name picked out in red - is difficult to explain. It is unlikely to be a reflection of the power achieved by Louis I of Hungary, whose domains in the 14th century stretched from the Baltic to the Balkans, but it could well reflect a confusion in the mind of the Cartographer between the Huns and the equally fierce Mongols. Memories of the Mongol invasions of Europe in the 12th century were still vivid even in the late 14th century. In the early 13th century, the Christian rulers of Europe had repeatedly attempted to ally with the Mongols of Iran against the Muslim Turks who were occupying the Holy Land.

Furthermore, the position of *Hungri* on the *Evesham* map corresponds approximately to that of the land of *Gog* and *Magog* on the *Anglo-Saxon, Psalter* and other world maps. Since *Gog* and *Magog* were to sweep through the world on the Day of Judgment, it was perhaps feared that the Mongols would act in a similarly apocalyptic fashion.

On the *Evesham* map, Europe is divided into its medieval provinces, though Mount Olympus, a reference from classical antiquity, is shown. Europe, too, that the differences between the *Evesham* map and the other oval *Higden* maps are most apparent. These could be explained by reference to contemporary English national loyal ties as well as to their commercial interests, reflecting the increasing patriotism that accompanied the Hundred Years' War and that is also seen in *Polychronicon*. continuations, such as the account of the life of Richard II, which – as George Stow and Antonia Gransden have noted - have lost Higden's universality to become markedly Anglo-centered and chauvinistic in tone. For instance, like the majority of *Higden* maps, the *Evesham* map depicts England as an island separated by the sea from Scotland and Wales, both shown as islands as are Ireland and the Isle of Man. England, however, is distinguished by its size. It extends from near Flanders and Zeeland, past the northern shores of Spain, which frequently adjoin the southern shores of England on other medieval world maps (for example the *Anglo-Saxon, Henry of Mainz* and *Hereford* maps)-to reach the north coast of Africa and the *Fortunate Islands*! This archipelago is still synonymous with the last insular land link several centuries later. In the Evesham map, in which the Atlantic coast is given prominence, the *Fortunates*, situated close to the large depiction of England, are drawn as two big segments of land sharing space with other empirically known Atlantic islands. This raises two interesting questions: on one hand, the consolidation of a certain traditional way of seeing and representing the world, and, on the other hand, the survival of the *Fortunates* as the last edges of the world as late as the beginning of the 15th century.

The patriotic tone continues on the European mainland. Exceptionally, *Artois* (Artyes) is indicated on the map (there appears to be no sign of it on other *Higden* world maps) in order to make possible the depiction of Calais, which had come into English hands in 1347. In accordance with the subsequent claims Of English king to be also kings of France, the royal Abbey of St. Denis (*Deinsia*) - burial place of the kings of France - is shown. However, merely to, observe that Calais and St. Denis are depicted on the *Evesham* map is to understate the case. The pictorial signs for these two places dominate the lower part of the map. Together, they cover the equivalent of Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and the Isle of Man. Each sign is second only to that representing Jerusalem while Rome is overshadowed. In contrast but as on the other oval *Higden* maps, the rest of France on the *Evesham* map his been reduced to the size of an insignificant province, with the sign for Paris so small that it can easily be overlooked.

For the significance of this manner of portraying France, reference should be made to the representation of Britain and France on the *Hereford* world map about a century earlier. There, England is far smaller than it is on the *Evesham* map while France is far bigger, and more French towns are marked than English towns. On the *Hereford* map, Paris is indicated by a particularly large sign (exceeding even that for Rome), while nearby St. Denis is indicated by a small one. In light of the changing English attitude France reflected by these on the two maps, it is likely that the marks of scouring that disfigure France - and only France – on the *Hereford* map point to vandalism by a later English viewer enraged at such apparent favoritism towards the national enemy.

Later Additions to the Evesham Map

Thus far we have described the *Evesham* map as it was originally executed. There is clear evidence, however, that the map was further embellished at some unknown date. On paleographical grounds, it is unlikely to have been much later; it could have been in the first decades of the 15th century when the *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* was also being added to and completed by a distinctly Anglo-centered and chauvinistic monk at Evesham. The most likely patron for these textual additions would have been Roger Yatton, Abbot at Evesham from 1379 to 1418. It was Yatton who had the frater and the south cloister walk paved and some time before 1395 had a new detached bell tower built, the ancestor of the present bell tower that dates from the 1530s.

In the case of additions to the map, the new draughtsman was much less skilled than his predecessor and much less geographically aware. Some of his additions outside Europe relate to the most traditional aspects of the map. For instance, *Mons Dotayin* has been scribbled in, together with a hill sign, to the southeast of the Red Sea crossing. Mount Lebanon is now identified, and *Acre* appears to be labeled as the gateway *(Jaunensis)* to the Holy Land. It may have been at this time that Bethlehem was embellished with a pictorial place sign. *Mount Atlas* is named in Africa. Close examination also suggests that the scribe enhanced the predominance of Jerusalem by over painting the two rows of small squat pinnacles (not unlike those to be found as town symbols on the more elaborate Ramsey Abbey map) in the place sign, and replacing them with a profusion of crenellations, spires and a central tower surmounted by what look's like a weather vane in the shape of a bird top an orb.

Additions of greater significance are found within Europe. As might be expected, they emphasize the wealth and power of England and its allies. English-controlled Rouen *(rona)* is given its own sign, and the capital of the English-ruled province of Gascony, Bordeaux an important entry point into southern Europe for English wool as well as an export center for claret, is named. Bruges, another major entry point for English wool within tile dominions of England's ally the Duke of Burgundy, is also named and graced by a large tower. The important trading city of Cologne [*Colonia*] is shown in Germany with a curious Gothic tower that may perhaps refer to its famous Gothic cathedral, then under construction. Yet another testimony of the influence of commercial interests on the map is the insertion of the Alps and between Catalonia, Provence and the Roman Campagna - of the Gotthard (Mons Godardi) the alpine pass which had been steadily gaining in importance as one of the main conduits for trade between northern and southern Europe since about 1220.

The Depiction of England

It is in England, however, that the later additions to the *Evesham* map are most striking. The original intention would seem to have been to depict England on a north-south alignment consistent with the rest of the map. Viewed from this perspective, and given the constraints imposed by the need to accommodate the island on the outer extremity of the ocean sea, on the edge of the map, there is some resemblance to geographical reality. The River Severn has become a sea separating England from Wales and the Devon-Cornwall peninsula a hump resembling East Anglia. East Anglia itself is left with no room for expression because of the lack of space between it and a circular Europe. Northern England's curve to the right, reminiscent of the Ptolemaic maps of Britain, is almost certainly accidental and the result, once again, of the overall shape of the map.

The evidence of erasures on the map's surface shows unmistakably that the original map was later revised. The scribe responsible for these revisions evidently failed to understand the alignment of England. He mistook the east coast of the island for the south coast and transformed the interior into an image of England as viewed from Evesham. With more than fifty place-names, England is toponymically richer on the *Evesham* map than on any other surviving medieval map of Britain apart from these by Matthew Paris and the *Gough* map and its derivatives. A handful of place-names, including Minehead, Torrington, Penryn and Winchcombe, are shown on a map for the first time. Almost all the place-names are given in English, a distinct change from the practice of a century earlier and evidence of the growing importance of the vernacular language. In contrast, only a handful of place-names fall beyond a line running southwest to northeast from St. Michael's off the south coast of Cornwall, to Lincoln.

The West Country and the southwestern Midlands dominate England. The distribution of place-names is particularly thick in two regions. That one should be the Evesham district is not surprising. In relation to Evesham, the locations of Worcester [*Worceter*]. Tewkesbury [*Tewkyburi*], Gloucester [*Glouceter*], Cheltenham [*Chelteham*], Northleach [*Northlach*], Cirencester [*Susceter*] and Malmesbury [*Malmisbury*] and the abbeys of Winchombe [*Wynchombe*] and Hailes [*haylies*] are more or less correct. In this connection, it is worth remembering that the *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* was partly, derived from the chronicles of John of Malvern, a monk in Worcester, while information about events of the year 1400 were probably supplied by an informant in the Augustinian house at Cirencester. Such links demonstrate Evesham's associations with both towns.

The principal towns and ports of the south coast of Devon and Cornwall - Exeter [*exeter*], Totnes [*Tottenis*], Dartmouth [*dertemowth*], Plymouth [*plinmowth*], Liskeard [*leskyrt*], Fowey [*Fowey*] and Penryn [*peryn*] - are shown more or less in their correct sequence, with only Totnes and Exeter somewhat misplaced. The ports may have been included on the map primarily because of their trade with the foreign ports of Bruges, Rouen and, especially, Bordeaux. It is also not inconceivable that either the abbot or the scribe had personal links with merchants or mariners in the area. Interestingly, St. David's (*S[aicitu]S* David) in Wales is marked by a tower as large as the place sign for London whereas towns in Scotland and Ireland are named but given no sign at all.

Most unexpected of all is a group of place-names on or near the north coast of Devon. The place-names start with the tiny settlement of Taddiport [*Tadiport*], which at that time would have possessed little more than a chantry chapel, a leper hospital and a bridge across the Torridge. The place-names include Great Torrington [*Torington*], in the west, and then, in correct sequence, a number of places along the line of the A39 road (the modern version of an ancient route) from Barnstaple [*Barstapel*] to Bath [*Baton*] by way of Bridgwater [*Brigwate*r], Minehead [*Minhed*], Glastonbury [*Glassenburi*] and Wells [*Welles*], a place with which Evesham Abbey had close links. From Bath, a variety of routes would have taken the traveler through Gloucester to Evesham.

Taddiport is not mentioned in the cartularies of Evesham Abbey, making its inclusion on the map very strange. Small settlements with bridges such as Taddiport do indeed feature prominently on the *Gough* map because of their importance as intermediate points along the routes that constituted the map's internal structure. This is not the case with Taddiport's presence on the *Evesham* map, however, since it features at the start and not in the middle of an itinerary.

It is more likely that Taddiport owes its presence on the map to a family connection, possibly with the unknown scribe or with Abbot Yatton, the likely patron of these later additions to the map. Abbot Yatton is known to have been related to the Boteler family - probably the Botelers, or Butlers, of Droitwich, Worcestershire - who were also associated with the village of Yatton, now known as Eaton Bray, in Bedfordshire. Moreover, one of the monks who voted for Yatton's successor in 1418, at about or shortly after the time the later additions were made to the map, was a Richard Boteler. The heads of another branch of the Botelers - albeit of unproven relationship with the Yatton Botelers - were lords of the manor of Littleham, which lies mid-way between Bideford and Great Torrington, and tenants in chief of Hole (of the eponymous parish). The Littleham Botelers may have had links with the chantry chapel and leper hospital at nearby Taddiport. The naming of the hamlet of Taddiport on the *Evesham* map may even have been a way of commemorating the foundation of the leper hospital there, which we hear of for the first time in 1418.

Another peculiar feature of the *Evesham* map, however, can be more firmly explained in terms of Boteler family links. That the scribe responsible for the revisions on the maps may have had direct or indirect experience of a route leading north from Evesham to Warrington [*Warynton*] and Wigan [*Wygeen*] is suggested by the sequence of place names: Worcester [*Worceter*], Hereford [*Herford*], Shrewsbury [*Schrewysberi*] and Chester [*Chaster*]. All these place, except Worcester and Chester, lie on the modern A49 road, yet neither Warrington nor Wigan is mentioned in cartularies of Evesham Abbey. However, another branch of the Boteler family were at one time lords of the manor of Warrington. Indeed, William le Boteler (died c.1280) was the founder of the Augustinian friary at Warrington.

Finally, the map contains some surprising archaisms. For example, Carlisle [*Carlyl*] is placed in Scotland even though it had been finally ceded to England a century and a half earlier, in 1157. It looks very much as though the scribe and his patron were personally familiar with the places between Evesham and Taddiport and with the ports of the southwest of England. In contrast, the other place-names - either well-known monastic and religious centers or important market towns - may only have been known to them indirectly from family links or from travelers who visited Evesham. This was, after all, the means by which Matthew Paris in St. Albans learned of many of the places on his maps. The *Evesham* scribe, however, did not have Paris' skill in placing hearsay evidence within at least an approximately correct spatial frame.

Wider Considerations: *Function*

The *Evesham* map's close similarity to maps found with some of the continuations to Higden's *Polychronicon* could lead to the reasonable assumption that, despite its size, it had a particular association with Evesham Abbey's own continuation (the *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*). Scholars have increasingly emphasized the vital importance of the interplay between text and image to the intended didactic purpose of medieval maps. The fact that the two phases of the creation of the *Evesham* map probably coincided with those of the composition of the *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* might be thought to support the possibility that the map's creator – probably Nicholas Herford - intended the map to clarity the *Historia's* text, and the opening chapters of the *Polychronicon* to amplify the visual image.

However, several formidable arguments militate against such an interpretation. The first must surely be that had the map been intended to be associated with the

Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi, or with the *Polychronicon*, or had it been so regarded by contemporaries, the monk who compiled the inventory following Nicholas Herford's death would have linked them in some way. Instead, the reference to the map in the inventory (always, assuming, of course, that it refers to the map under discussion) stands alone. The map in the inventory is no more connected with the Higden text or its continuation than with any other entry, such as the Abbey's *Imago de Mounde*.

Another equally strong argument against an intellectual link between the Evesham map and either the *Polychronicon* or the *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* is The map's simplicity. Despite its size and the opportunities this could have given for textual and visual elaboration, the map lacks the traditional imagery and explanatory texts found on the great 13th century world maps and the miniature *Psalter* map *(Book II, #223)*, or even on maps from the previous generation, such as the more elaborate Ramsey Abbey *Higden* map and the fragmentary *Aslake* map. Apart from a mention of the Hebrews' crossing of the Red Sea, the depiction of Adam and Eve, and some mountains and towns, the *Evesham* map shows little more than coastlines, boundaries and the names of towns and provinces. Unlike the other great maps, it could have only marginally enhanced a reader's understanding of the *Polychronicon* or the *Historia*. At the same time, these texts would have provided much more information than a reader could readily have visualized in cartographic terms.

The likelihood must be that its very simplicity means the *Evesham* map was intended as an *aide-memoire* about the nature of the world and that its function was to illuminate in a limited way all the traditional scholastic texts rather than one in particular, just as the T-O diagram *(Book II, #205*) was so often appended to geographical sections of medieval encyclopedic text. Of course the *Evesham* map is cartographically much more complex than a T-O diagram and reflects its creators' mentality and their immediate concerns, which are also evident in the *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* on which they were probably working simultaneously.

In their essentials - and despite the modernisms and innovations that most contained - world maps had become standardized in their contents, and their general image was conventionalized by the 14th century. Written explanations would have been almost superfluous. The *Evesham* map, too, is so highly traditional in its essentials that most minimally educated viewers would have needed no special elucidation from Higden or any other writer to have understood its basic points. Contemporaries, sharing the patron or the scribe's prejudices, would have easily comprehended its peculiarities, such as the derogatory depiction of the city of Paris. The map would have looked well when displayed. With its large lettering, it would have been easily seen from a distance: a conventional image conveying an essentially conventional message.

The *Evesham* map thus provides further circumstantial evidence of the premise with which we started: that the map Higden initially used to illustrate his text would have been no more than the standard, basic image of the world of a design which had long been thought suitable for any didactic geographical purpose regardless of author and which could be elaborated to illustrate any text. Such an argument accords with the lack of intellectual originality that is so characteristic of Higden's writings. Indeed, one might question the extent to which the various simple maps traditionally associated with particular authors such as Isidore of Seville and Paulus Orosius or with subjects such as the *Apocalypse* had been specifically created to illustrate their texts or were simply selected from a stock of traditional images of the world. Chroniclers, encyclopedists and their copyists do not, after all, have to be graphically or

geographically conscious. Still less do they have to be active artists and cartographers, even if some, most notably Matthew Paris, Hugo of St. Victor and Paul Minoritas, possessed all or most of these attributes.

Cartographic Signs

The original scribe of the *Evesham* map was relatively consistent in his use of map signs. In this respect the *Evesham* map represents an advance from the *Gough* map of the Previous generation (itself possibly derived from an earlier prototype). Brian Hindle has commented that, contrary to the opinion of earlier writers, the creator of the *Gough* map used signs, such as those for towns, arbitrarily and inconsistently. In contrast, on the *Evesham* map, seas are consistently shown in green-blue except for the Red Sea which, as is usual with these early maps, is painted red, and the Dead Sea which, more unusually, is also shown in red. A tower or group of towers with spires of varying designs and splendor represents all the settlements (except for *Acre* and *Sidon*, which are only named) in a tradition that can also be found on some other *Higden* maps and that can be traced back to the *Vercelli (Book II, #220.3), Ebstorf (Book II, #224), Matthew Paris (Book II, #225)*, and *Hereford (Book II, #226)* maps and in some senses To ancient Rome.

In size and complexity these signs vary according to the relative importance of the settlements as perceived by the mapmaker. Jerusalem is the most elaborate. As on other Higden maps, such as those in the Huntington Library and the National Library of Scotland, mountains on the *Evesham* map are indicated by greenish blots except for the Caucasus (shown in blue) and the Alps, which seem to have been mistaken for a settlement and are shown as a half-finished tower, as though the scribe had realized his mistake early enough to leave the tower incomplete but too late to substitute the proper sign. Again in keeping with many, but not all, *Higden* maps, rivers are uncolored and are shown as broad blank spaces indistinguishable from provinces. They are generally not even labeled *fluvius*, though the Nile, serpentine in its course as on the *Paris, Oxford* and *Cambridge* maps, is depicted in red as though it were a continuation of the Red Sea.

The second scribe was not as consistent in his use of map signs as the first. He continued to mark settlements outside the British Isles with roughly sketched towers of different designs, but he used no sign for Bordeaux or for most of the named towns in England, Scotland and Ireland. Canterbury and Evesham are understandably but inconsistently shown as churches. It is in the portrayal of mountains, however, that the second scribe shows the greatest deviation from his predecessor. The yellow-painted Mounts Dotayin and Gotthard appear as deciduous trees. Possibly the scribe, who may not have known Latin, was confusing the *Tree of Melopos* on his exemplar with nearby *Mons Garthabathmon.*

If the work of the first scribe suggests that even away from the main centers of teaming there were those who had some grasp, albeit imperfect, of the nature and role of cartographic signs, the work of the second serves to remind us that such a consciousness was by no means universal. It brings to mind the inconsistent use of signs by the creator of the *Aslake* map a generation earlier.

Re-use

There is no evidence as to why the verse of the leaf containing the world map was re-used for an illustrated genealogy in 1450, barely sixty years after its creation, and probably less than fifty after the most recent changes had been made. Copies of Higden's *Polychronicon*, sometimes accompanied by a map, were still being produced

elsewhere in England in the mid-15th century and Caxton printed John Trevisa's English-language translation as late as 1482.

By the time the *Evesham* map was being created, however, maps of the world produced in the Mediterranean countries and influenced by the more accurate coastal profiles of *portolan* charts had already begun to reach England. While maybe not immediately appreciated by native mapmakers, evidence shows that by 1450 merchants and mariners in certain ports, notably Bristol, were beginning to take these modem maps seriously. It could be, then, that by 1450 the authorities in Evesham, a relatively short distance from Bristol, had recognized their map as being unacceptably out-dated and inadequate in its form and conception. Its excellent state of conservation suggests that it was never much used, and the step from redundancy and neglect to re-use and renewed relevance as a pedigree of an influential family must have seemed a small one.

The map of the world now owned by the College of Arms is striking because of the topicality of its perspectives and allusions. This contrasts with the widespread view of the immutability of medieval world maps. In fact, such modernisms were normal on the larger world maps and even, where space allowed, on some of the smaller ones. Studies of the *Vercelli, Ebstorf, Hereford* and *Psalter* world maps have demonstrated such updating. In the case of the *Evesham* map the modern allusions are somewhat more prominent.

Despite its close resemblance to the maps most commonly found in surviving copies of the *Polychronicon*, we have concluded that the *Evesham* map was above all a wall map for general instruction and edification. It was not specifically intended as an accompaniment to the *Polychronicon* or any other written text. This suggests that the tradition of classifying a certain group of maps as *Higden* maps simply on the basis of the context in which they are most commonly found today is misleading.

One final point can be made. The relative lack of intellectual freshness of all the Higden maps contrasts as much with the great world maps of the 13th century as with the *portolan* charts of the 14th and the newly circulating Ptolemaic maps of the 15th century. Despite the enhanced interest in the contemporary world which it displays, the *Evesham* map reinforces the evidence of the *Aslake* map: that English cartography, until so recently in the vanguard in western Europe, had taken an abrupt downturn after about 1350.

Location: College of Arms, London: Muniment Room, 18/19

References:

*Barber, P., *The Map Book,* pp. 66/67.

Barber, P., *The Evesham World Map: A Late Medieval English View of God and the World.*

Edson, E., *The World Map, 1300-1492*, p. 169.

Scafi, A., *Mapping Paradise,* pp. 136-137.

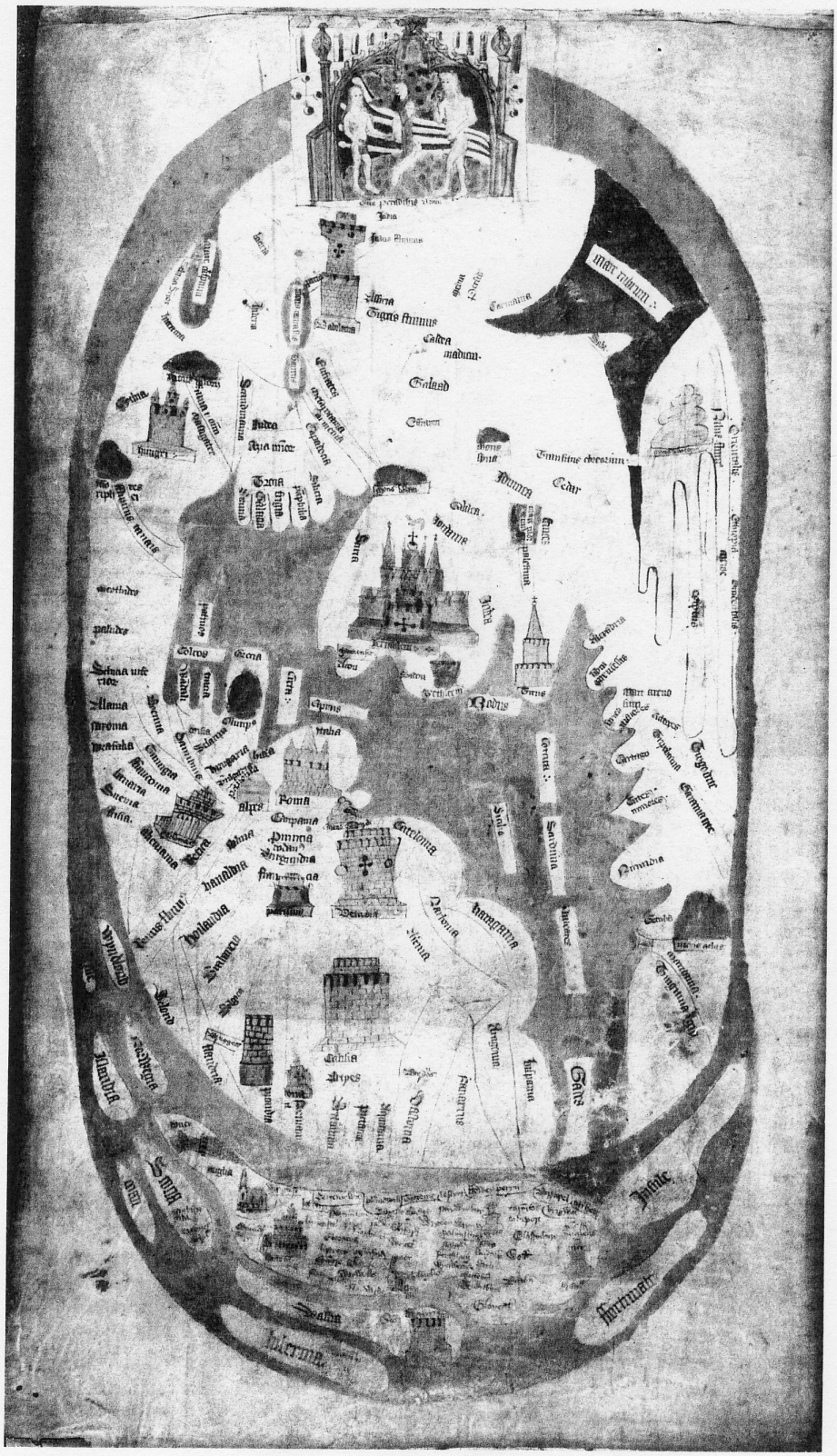
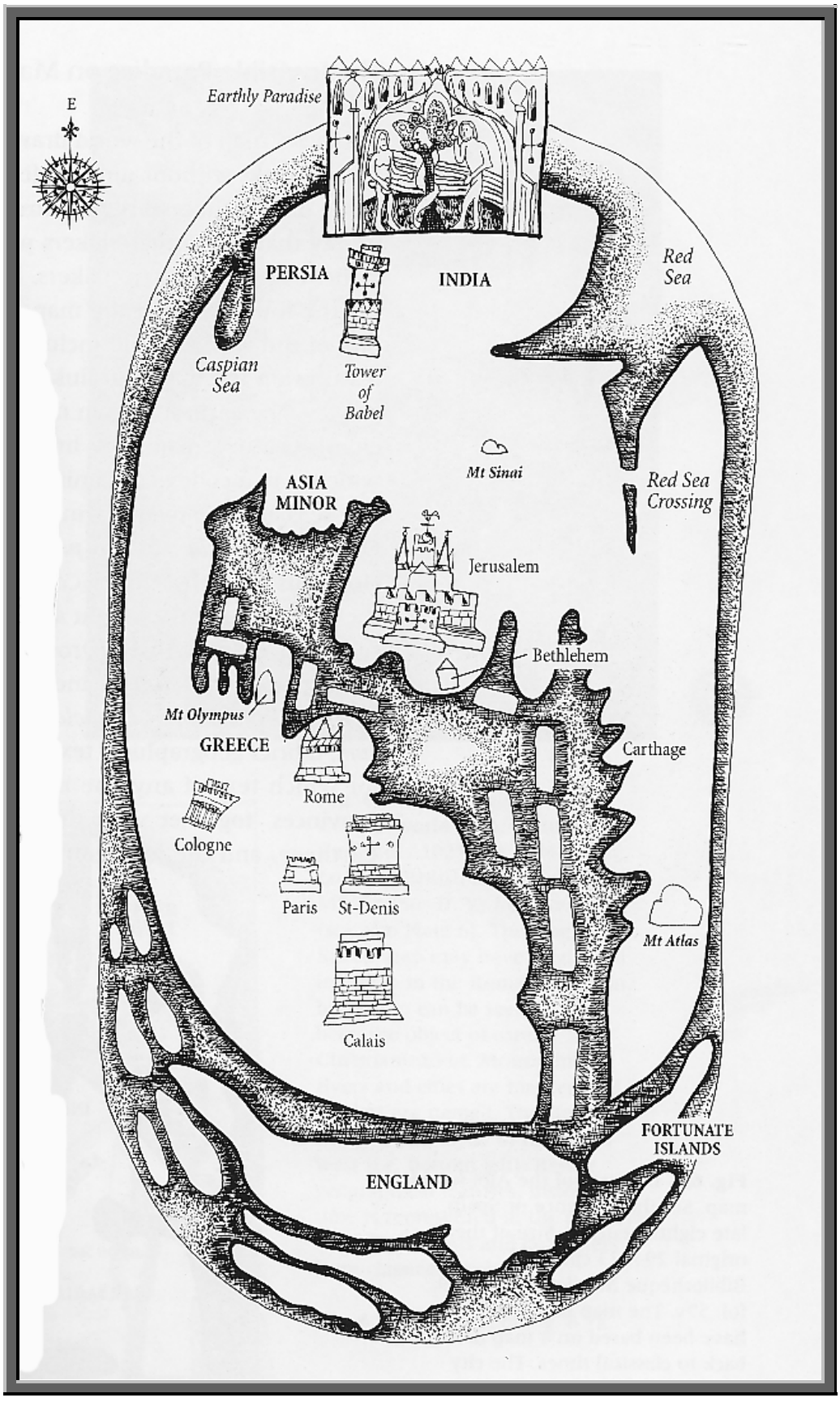


Fig. 1. The College of Arms (Evesham) Map. (Courtesy of the College of Arms.)


E
Earthly Paradise
PERSIA
INDIA
Red Sea
Caspian Sea
Tower of Babel
Mt Sinai
Red Sea Crossing
ASIA MINOR
Jerusalem
Bethlehem
Mt Olympus
GREECE
Carthage
Rome
Cologne
Paris
St-Denis
Mt Atlas
Calais
FORTUNATE ISLANDS
ENGLAND