The Saint-Sever, a.k.a. Paris I Beatus.

The Beatus derivative mappa mundi referred to as the Saint-Sever or Paris I, is an oval shaped format, measures 37 x 57 cm (14.5 x 22.5 in) and is the largest and most detailed map of the Beatus mappae mundi family. With 270 names, the Saint-Sever world map contains the most geographical detail of all the maps in the Beatus tradition and one that moves away from the Hispanic cartographic models and reveals a French identity. Unlike the original and most of all the other Beatus manuscripts, the codex of Saint-Sever was not made in Spain, but in a French scriptorium, that of the abbey of Saint-Sever-sur-l'Adour in Gascony in the third quarter of the 11th century. We know the name of one of the illuminators who worked this manuscript, as it appears in fol. 6r°, Gregorius Abba Nobilis, and the name of the person to whom it was dedicated is in fol. 1r°, Gregarius of Montaner who was abbot of Saint-Sever from 1028 to 1072. The Saint-Sever derivative is considered by most scholars as the most valuable, the most carefully executed and the richest in content of all the 14 known transcripts of Beatus that contain a mappa mundi. The Saint-Sever copy is also considered by some researchers to be the copy most representative of the original Beatus design, with respect to both form and content. As a reference, this map falls into Peter Klein’s "Second Recension" and Wilhelm Neuss' Family I stemma which consists of the following maps:

- Mappa mundi of Saint-Sever (third quarter of the 11th century) #207.13.
- Mappa mundi of El Burgo de Osma (1086) #207.14.
- Mappa mundi of Milan (late 12th century or beginning of the 13th) #207.26.
- Mappa mundi of Navarre (late 12th century) #207.23.
- Mappa mundi of Lorvao (1189) #207.22. Only half of the map survives, specifically the recto folio that relates to Africa with the fourth part of the world and the south of Asia. The map is badly bound into the codex, appearing in inverted form, in other words, with the west in the upper section.
- Mural mappa mundi from the church of the monastery of San Pedro de Rocs in Orense (middle or late 12th century). This monastery, founded originally as a hermitage and carved out of the rock of a hillside, has been linked with the diocese of Astorga due to its hermit-related history. Sadly, the mural map is in a very bad state of preservation and only some fragments are visible, based on which Serafin Moralejo Alvarez partially reconstructed the map.

The physical geography is more defined than in the maps of Families Iab, especially in Saint-Sever. The River Tanais, whose name is in written form, appears to rise in the Rhyphem Mountains and is punctuated along its course by widenings and narrowings: it flows out into a lagoon, the paludes Mesotis [the Azov Sea], whose name is shown in the Family I mappae mundi, and subsequently continues until the ponto Euxino [Black Sea], without being identified in the maps of El Burgo de Osma and Milan. In the Saint-Sever map it appears written as Eusinus pontus, Equor ponti and Elles pontum. The Caspian Sea is shown as a gulf in the far northeast of the encircling ocean, both in the maps of El Burgo de Osma and Milan as well as in Saint-Sever. Except for the maps of Lorvao and Navarre, there are gulfs shown on the west coast of the African continent, one in the maps of El Burgo de Osma and Milan, two in that of Saint-Sever. The Adriatic Sea is shown in the map of Saint-Sever, where it is called sinus Noricum and sinus Adriaticus, as also in the El Burgo de Osma and Milan maps. Except for the Lorvao map, the Red Sea appears as two gulfs—the Arabian and Persian Gulfs—perpendicular to the sea that separates off the fourth part of the world, which in the Saint-Sever map is also identified
as the Red Sea. There are rivers shown such as the Tigris and Euphrates in the maps of *El Burgo de Osma* and *Saint-Sever*, and the Jordan rising in the Lebanese Mountains and divided into two tributaries whose course is later combined so as to discharge into a lake, the Dead Sea.

The *Saint-Sever* map also shares many similar traits to the maps of *Family II*, especially *Family IIb*, which distinguish them from those of *Family I*. Sandra Sáenz-López Pérez has singled out among them the following common traits:

- The world has an oval shape (as in *Family IIb* particularly).
- The *Earthly Paradise* is shown by means of the depiction of the first parents (as in *Families IIab*).
- The Red Sea separates off the fourth part of the world (as in *Family IIa*).
- The River Nile has a double channel (as in *Family IIb*).
- Mount Carmel and Mount Sinai are included (as in *Family IIb*).
- Mount Olympus fits with the pattern of mountains or mountain chains that have convex and wavy symmetrical sides, which is characteristic of *Families IIb*.
- The texts of the fourth part of the world, of *Dacia* and *Gothia*, of the *Amazons* and the text referring to the boundaries between Asia and Europe are identical to those of *Family IIb*.
- The text referring to Ethiopia simulates that of *Family Ila*.
- The Danube shows numerous tributaries (as in *Family IIb*).
- The map omits certain apostolic lands (as in *Family IIb*).

The points of the compass are to be found only on the *Saint-Sever* and the *Navarre* Beatus *mappae mundi*; the windrose, so frequent in the larger medieval maps of later time, only occurs on the *Saint-Sever*. The classical world employed two kinds of windrose: one of these was eight-fold, the other twelve-fold. Both of these, of course, were based upon the four cardinal compass points. In the twelve-fold division, which was a favorite one among Greek scientists from the time of Aristotle, a classification of seven intermediate winds played a part. It is this twelve-fold division which is also to be found in Isidore, on the map of *Saint-Sever*, and in most of the circular designs of the later Middle Ages. The eight-fold arrangement was derived from Eratosthenes, and was accepted by Pliny, Orosius and also by Isidore of Seville, as a compliment to the twelve-fold partition.

France in the *Saint-Sever mappa mundi* occupies most of the territory of Europe, while the little space remaining is taken up by Northern Europe, Greece, Italy, and Spain. It is surrounded by the *Flumen Rhenus* [River Rhine], the *Alpes*, the *Pyrenei montes* [Pyrenees Mountains] and the circumfluent ocean. Ten rivers are represented in the French territory with emphasis on those that are natural boundaries between provinces. From north to south, these are the already mentioned River Rhine, the *Mosa flumen* [River Mosa], the *Flumen Liger* [Loire], the *Flumen Garunna* [Garonne], the *Flumen Adurris qui alio nomine alirris [?] dicitur* [Adour], and two affluents for the *Gaver* [Gave d’Oloron] and the *Flumen* [Nive]. In the east are the *Flumen Rodanus* [Rhone] and the *Araris* [Saone]. An unidentified river which must be the Isere is shown flowing into the Mediterranean Sea. Between these rivers, the names of the provinces appear in capital letters: *FRANCIA*, that is, the region of the Francs, *GALLIA BELGICA*, *GALLIA LUGDUNENSE*, *AQUITANIA*, *WASCONIA*, that is Gascony, *SEPTIMANIA*, and *PROVINCIA*, is, Provence.
Spread throughout France, there are 31 schematic symbols that represent cities. Among them, we can distinguish Lugdunno [Lyon], Belvagus [Beauvais], Senones [Sens], Remis [Reims], Nanetes [Nantes], Andegavis [Angers], Turonis [Tours], Aurelianis [Orleans], Limouix [Limoges], Arvernis [Clermont], Bituricas [Bourges], Pictaui [Poitiers], Sancti Severi [Saintes], I golismo [Angouleme], Petrogirix [Perigueux], Caturcis [Cahors], Rodinis [Rodez], Albia [Albi], Carcassonna [Carcassonne], Vienna [Vienne], Tolosa [Toulouse], Burdigala [Bordeaux], Basata [Bazas], Agenia [Agen], Ausia [Auch], Laburdom [Bayonne], Aquis [Dax], Lascar [Lescar], Biggorna [Tarbes], Narbonne [Narbonne], and Are las [Aries]. It is interesting to note that all are archiepiscopal cities, which shows how ancient geography was merged with ecclesiastical history and thus, with medieval geography. The striking absence of Paris is due to the fact that it did not become an archbishopri until 1622. Moreover, most of the cities in the Saint-Sever mappa mundi are from southern France because the main ecclesiastical centers were established on Roman cities and these were more numerous in that region. The emphasis placed on the south could also be explained by the preeminence that the artist gave to the region in which the manuscript was made.

Although most of the symbols of cities are illustrated in the same way, as the yellow facade of a building or a fortress wall, with two or three rounded gateways and crowned with triangles that may evoke cantilevers, as Francois de Dainville has shown, this map gives particular importance to three buildings closely connected with the place where the Saint-Sever Beatus was copied. These are the church of Saint-Sever Ecclesia Sancti Severi in Gascony, a fortress represented next to it, and the church of Mimizan Santa Maria Mimisanensis. Despite their relative small role within Christianity these two religious buildings rival in size and graphic emphasis with important cities such as Constantinople, Rome, and even Jerusalem. Constantinople is remarkable for its two-story facade, Rome for being represented with the Tiber River crossing it, which alludes to the development of the city in both sides of the river, and Jerusalem is the only city on the map in blue. Although Saint-Sever and Mimizan are individual buildings, they are represented as being larger than most of the cities on the map; moreover, both are crowned by a cross, the main emblem of Christianity to emphasize their importance in the eyes of the authors of the map, while the cross is absent from Rome, Constantinople, and Jerusalem.

Although, as we said before, most of the toponyms derive from classical sources, the map was updated with names and images of contemporary medieval places namely that of the medieval abbey and scriptorium.

Scholars such as Wilhelm Neuss and Marcel Destombes have argued that this map was of all the Beatus mappae mundi the closest to the eighth-century archetype of the Beatus of Liebana. However, as John Williams stated, it seems to be a thorough revision of the original. To the arguments of this scholar Sandra Sáenz-López Pérez also adds the fact that the Saint-Sever mappa mundi does not fulfill the original purpose of the map, which was to explain graphically the text of the missio apostolorum which precedes it, for it does not include all the toponyms of the geography of the apostles’ evangelization mentioned textually. Saint-Sever omits Bartholomew’s place of evangelization, which is Lycaonia, and also has non-standard toponyms for other places of evangelization: instead of Gallia for Philip it has Gallia Belgica and Gallia Lugdunense; instead of Spania for James it has only Galicia and instead of “Asia” for John it has Asia Minor. Moreover, the map of Saint-Sever does not include the heads of the apostles as in El Burgo de Osma, Milan and Lorvão, and as the original mappa mundi of Beatus of Liebana probably did.
Thus, the mappa mundi of the Beatus of Saint-Sever is not only far from Beatus of Liebana’s original map but also from other Hispanic Beatus mappa mundi. The authors of Saint-Sever probably used two Hispanic Beatus maps, from the Families I and II codices, but changed the image of the world to give preeminence to the French territory, and within it to the region where the manuscript was copied; moreover, in their illustration of the world they used a stylistic and iconographic language that can only be seen in other French or French-related medieval maps.

A key detail that distinguishes this map from the other examples of the Beatus cartographical corpus is related to the representation of the cities. Their simplicity and schematism, triangular crowning and yellow color are not found in any other Beatus mappa mundi, can be seen in other French or French-related medieval maps, such as the map of Europe of the French Benedictine monk Lambert of Saint-Omer (ca. 1112-15) in his monograph Liber Floridus (#217). In this map, the city of Rome which is the most important graphically, is very similar to the image of the abbey of Saint-Sever in the Saint-Sever Beatus mappa mundi.

Apart from certain graphical similarities in their depictions of cities, it is curious to note that the Saint-Sever and the Peutinger Table (see #120) maps share a few legends and representations that in some cases surprisingly appear only on these two maps, and not on any other extant medieval map. Among the images that they share, we can mention the lake of the River Nile surrounded by mountains; a text next to it explains the representation in the same way in both maps: “These mountains lie beneath a marsh similar to the Sea of Azov through which the Nile flows”. Another example is the texts on the Tribe of Isreal’s exodus through the desert.

The encircling ocean is illustrated as a river enfolding the earth without names, except in the Saint-Sever and Navarre maps. In the Saint-Sever map this ocean is described and labeled according to the regions which it occupies: oceanus Britannicus, oceanus Germanicus, mare Egeum and Oceanus Hircanus. The encircling ocean on the Saint-Sever map is interrupted by inlets representing mare Caspivm [the Caspian Sea] in the northeast and two gulfes off the southwest coast of Africa north of the Atlas Mountains. This ocean is also filled with illustrations of fish in a blue color, boats with oars but no sails, but no sea monsters. According to Chet van Duzer, the sea creatures on the Beatus mappa mundi serve the obvious function of helping the viewer to distinguish between land and sea, and also lend a dynamic character to the circumfluent ocean, making the watery edge of the world just as visually interesting as the land, and suggesting the wildness of distant regions. However, as the part of Beatus’ Commentary on the Apocalypse that the map illustrates makes no mention of sirens or other sea monsters, and as there is no consistency or chain of influence in the specific sea monsters depicted on other Beatus maps, we can conclude that the illuminators of each manuscript were able to choose which sea monsters to paint.

Also in this ocean are sprinkled many sausage-shaped islands including Insula Tile, Insula Brittannia (Lindinio, Lindo, Ulirigonio, Moriduno, Condeaco, with the caption: Isle of Britain, which has a length of 800 miles and a width of 200 miles), Insula Argire, Insula Crise, Scolers, Insula, Insula Bitter, Hibernia, Insula Fortunatarum (shown as two separate islands Insula and Fortunatarum, a typical way to illustrate an archipelago), Insulae Gadjes; and in the Mediterranean Sea: Corsica, Maiorca, Minorica, Insula Sardinia, Insula Sicilia, Insula Creta and Insula Cipros. Some of the islands (Britain and Sardinia) are labeled with their dimensions in miles in a tradition that dates back to Pliny. On these islands and on the
continental landmasses are depicted castles, houses and churches of various sizes to symbolize major cities, famous sites or shrines.

The rivers on the Saint-Sever map are strikingly modern in their presentation when compared with the other Beatus derivatives or other maps of the 11th century. Also there are more rivers depicted on the Saint-Sever than any of the other Beatus derivatives, though none of these rivers are specifically identified with a label. All of the rivers in the Saint-Sever mappa mundi are colored blue and appear to originate in the adjoining mountains, such as the River Tanais from the Rhypean Mountains [the Urals?] and the River Jordan from the Mountains of Lebanon. The Nile River in the Saint-Sever map, which originates in a lake within a mountain chain near the mons Atlantis [Atlas Mountains], is shown as two rivers that join and unjoin three times, creating two interior islands, among which we find the insula Meroen, and ends in the form of a delta before flowing into the Mediterranean. The flumen Danubius [Danube River] begins as seven tributaries emanating from the mountains, forming into one stream and flows into the Eusinus pontus [Black Sea] in the form of a seven-phase delta. The flumen Eusis [the River Phasis?] appears in the continent of Asia and has its source in the Caucasus Mountains and eventually also flowing into the Black Sea. The River Jordan [flumen Iordanis] is depicted in the form of two feeder rivers [ior and Dan] and flows from the Mountains of Lebanon and culminates in an oval lake. Next to it is a caption that states: This sea is called the Sea of the Dead because it does not engender any living thing, nor does it admit any living creature. Its length is 780 stadia and its width is 150 stadia. Lake Tiberias [mare Tiberiadis] is draw in the middle of the River Jordan’s course and is also depicted in an oval shape with the caption: Lake Genesar [Gennesaret] or Tiberias has a size of 140 stades in length by 40 in width. Near here Mount Carmel and Mount Sinai are illustrated. Mons Sinai particularly is emphasized graphically as well as with the caption: Mount Sinai, where the Sons of Israel accepted the law.

In the south the Mare Rubrum [Red Sea], colored red, cuts off the African continent and branches into two gulf in the east, the Arabian and Persian Gulfs [sinus Arabicus and sinus Persicus]. The island of Tapaprone, bearing a long inscription, floats in the eastern part of this sea. In Arabia an Isidorian text appears that states: The name of Arabia means “the sacrosanct” due to the fact that it is a country that produces incense and perfumes. The Greeks called it eudaimon, that is “the blessed place”. In its zones with vegetation are grown myrrh and cinnamon; there the Phoenix Bird is born and precious stones are found like the sardonyx agate. This region is also known as Saba, thus named for the son of Cush whose name was Saba. Over the course of time, the naming of Arabia as Saba would come to be associated with the biblical Queen of Sheba (Saba).

The Asian city of Babylon is the city linked to Nebuchadnezeer II, located on the banks of the Euphrates River as it is placed on the Saint-Sever map (in text, but not graphically). Here, also, there is a caption of text which states: The city of Babylon is the capital of Babylonia, from which it also derives its name. It is so famous that at one time or another Chaldea, Assyria and Mesopotamia came to be included under its name.

The only mappa mundi of the Beatus codices which mentions Islam is the Saint-Sever, which in the Nabatea regio features the following caption: Saracens. They rise in the Euphrates and extend toward the Red Sea.

A “fourth part of the world”, represented as a strip of land along the southernmost edge of the earth, beyond the Mare Rubrum, is, as it is on all other Beatus mappae mundi, displayed here as well. A legend, again taken from Isidore, informs us on the map that “In addition to the three parts of the world, there is a fourth part beyond the ocean
in the midst of the south and unknown to us on account of the heat of the sun. Within its confines the Antipodians are fabulously said to dwell.”

City symbols crowd western Europe, northern Africa and Asia Minor, while the rest of the world is filled with lengthy quotations, mostly from Isidore, about the wonders to be found there. The scribe, hoping to please his patron, has drawn the humble church of Saint-Sever as large as the city symbols of Rome and Constantinople. Roma is one city specifically named as well as represented by a prominent architectural symbol. Constantinople is displayed as a two-story building accompanied by a caption that references the city’s older name of Byzantium.

The waters extending northwards from the East Mediterranean are represented in a highly peculiar fashion. The sequence of the Aegean Sea, the [H]ellespont [Strait of Dardanelles], Equor ponti [Sea of Marmara, Propontis], Elles pontum [the Dardanelles strait] the Bosphorus, the Eusinus pontus [Black Sea] and the Sea of Azov are shown more or less along a line, in various oblong, oval, trapezoidal and flattened shapes. To the west of this string of waterways the very long inlet is Sinus Adriaticus [Adriatic Gulf], which is extended to the North and entitled sinus Noricum, with Roma situated nearby. Like the encircling ocean the names within the Mediterranean Sea change in relation to the adjacent areas, from west to east are: the Tirrenum mare, mare Ligusticum, mare Balearicum, mare Siculum, mare Libicum and mare Creticum, names that trace back to Antiquity.

Another feature that this map has in common with most of the other Beatus mappae mundi is the vignette of Adam and Eve and the Tree of Knowledge that are placed at the top of the map (East) in the representation of the Earthly Paradise. Here Eve (on the right) is in the very act of plucking the fatal apple, while Adam stands by and the serpent is wound around the tree trunk. Unique to the Saint-Sever map with respect to the other Beatus mappae mundi, is the separation of the Earthly Paradise from the rest of the world by using the more natural barrier of mountain ranges.

In the region of Ethiopia there is a caption that states the following: In Ethiopia there are fearsome people with their different faces and monstrous appearance. It extends to the frontier of Egypt. It is full of a quantity of wild beasts and serpents. Here there are precious stones, cinnamon and balsam.

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].

As mentioned above, the Saint-Sever Beatus in Paris has several boats and many generic and essentially uniform fish in its circumfluent ocean, but no sea monsters. However, there is another image of the earth in the same Beatus manuscript (see below) that contains both fish and sea monsters. The map supplies no geographical details about the earth, but instead presents it as a stage for the playing out of Christian history, as some other medieval mappae mundi do: specifically, it is an illustration of the part of the Apocalyptic drama described in Revelation 7:1-8. It shows the “four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree”, and an angel comes from the east carrying the seal of God to place it on the foreheads of the many servants of God gathered in the center of the map. The earth is labeled terra, and the circumfluent ocean
There are several large fish in the ocean, and at the left hand side of the map, that is, in the north, there are two sea monsters. One is clearly a hybrid but is difficult to identify; it seems to be a *leo marinus* or an aquatic lion, with the forequarters and paws of a lion and a fishy tail. The other is a goat-fish; neither Pliny nor Isidore mentions such a sea creature, but this hybrid was known to ancient and medieval culture as the classical representation of the constellation Capricorn, which was depicted as a goat with a fishy tail. The choice of Capricorn as a sea monster on this map is a bit surprising, but it was probably selected merely as an exotic hybrid, rather than because of its astronomical significance.

While not illustrated graphically, in text the forests of *Hircania* in Asia are described: *Hircania is thus called due to the Hircanian forest, which is at the foot of Scythia. It is also a wild forest, abounding in fierce tigers, panthers and leopards* (yet another passage attributable to St. Isidore’s *Etymologiae*). *Hircania* [Hyrcania] is an area along the southern border of the Caspian Sea.

We may be quite certain that the eighth-century archetype manuscript of Beatus’ *Commentary* included a *mappa mundi*: the text contains a phrase introducing the map, and the latest study of the text of the *Commentary* indicates that this phrase has been in the book from the beginning. The presence of sea creatures on all but three of the Beatus *mappae mundi*, and indeed their presence on the two Beatus maps which are thought to be artistically closest to the archetype, renders it very likely that the archetype contained sea creatures. Thus the *Beatus mappae mundi* permit us to extend the history of sea monsters on medieval maps back to the eighth century.

All three continents are named in highlighted colored letters: *EOROPA*, *ASIA* (MAIOR and MINOR) and *LIBIA* [Africa]. However, the legend *Hic capud Europae* [here begins Europe] and *Hic Finis Asiae* [here ends Asia], between Europe and Asia, is marked. The mountains are drawn as a series of triangles and are colored brown.

With all this the *Saint-Sever* map stands out among all other Beatus *mappae mundi* as a unique example within this cartographical corpus. In its execution it did not simply follow the Hispanic models but distanced itself from those to emphasize French territory, and thereby the map praised its local identity. In conclusion, and quoting François de Dainville, we can assert that the *Saint-Sever* Beatus *mappa mundi* is “the oldest representation of France designed in France and ... a precious testimony of our religious and cultural history.”

Beatus, a Benedictine monk, lived in a monastery in the mountains of northern Spain. After the Arab invasion in 7II, many Christians who did not convert to Islam sought refuge in that rugged and sparsely settled area. A considerable scholar, Beatus was a tutor to members of the Spanish royal family, who allowed him access to the royal library in addition to that of his Own monastery.

A few Spanish Christians were tolerated after the Arab invasion but were referred to as *Mozarabs*, or "the Arabicized." The visual art that emerged combined Christian themes with Islamic decorative motifs and forms. The illustrations in this manuscript from the St. Sever Monastery in Gascony are considered among the most characteristic of Mozarabic style. With the exception of the Latin inscriptions, this could be an Islamic map, incorporating bright colors and Arabesque design. Mountains, rivers, islands, fish, boats, and the Ocean Sea that shapes the outer border all resemble Islamic forms. The resulting delineation of the world is considered the sole surviving map associated with the Carolingian Renaissance. This cultural flowering of the early Middle
Ages emerged during the reign of Charlemagne (768-814), when the emperor's patronage of the arts encouraged the fusion of numerous previous styles.

In 766 Beatus compiled his commentary on the Apocalypse based on the writings of church fathers. His manuscript featured a series of seventy-five splendid illustrations, including a world map indicating missionary destinations of the apostles throughout the world. The original manuscript did not survive, but an 11th century copy contained this - the most detailed, cartographically important, and artistically significant of surviving Beatus maps. It was executed by the calligrapher Stephanus Garsia for the abbot of St. Sever during a Beatus revival.

An image of the world in the late 11th century Saint-Sever Beatus, with fish, a sea goat and an aquatic lion in the circumfluent ocean.

Bibliotheque Nationale, MS. Lat. 8878 (S. Lat. 1075), fol. 45, Paris.
Farther to the right is a unique delineation of a fourth continent, or antipode, in the far south, separated from Africa and Asia by the Red Sea. British American historian of cartography David Woodward translated the legend on that continent, offering insight into the mapmaker’s thinking: "Outside the three parts of the world there is a fourth part, the farthest from the world, beyond the ocean, which is unknown to us on account of the heat of the sun. We are told that the Antipodean, around whom revolve many fables, live within its confines."

Two additional features from the map reveal both European scholars’ limited knowledge and increasing awareness of Asia. One, the large yellow island at the east end of the Red Sea at bottom right, is named Taprobane Indie, using the classical name for Ceylon. When Taprobane, known to the Greeks since before 300 BCE, was rediscovered by the Romans in 20 CE, Greek traders began to frequent the island, and Ceylonese envoys visited Rome. Taprobane Indie as used here is a generalization for Sumatra, Java, and isles eastward. Earlier the name was used for Ceylon.

Another interesting text appears in eastern Asia, south of the Garden of Eden. It refers to India and its many peoples and towns, "famous for gems and elephants ... rich in gold and silver. The land is said to produce crops twice per year. There are men of all colors, huge elephants and dragons, the Monoceros beast, the parrot bird, ebony wood, cinnamon, pepper, and aromatic reed. It sends forth ivory, precious stones, beryls, adamant, burning carbuncles, and pearls. There are mountains of gold impossible to approach because of dragons and griffons, and monsters of enormous men." Beatus’ source of this information, much of it relatively accurate, remains an enigma. Other inscriptions refer to Gens Seres [people of the silk], Oceanus Sericus [Chinese ocean], and nomadic people and cannibals of northern Asia.
St Sever showing the River Nile, the Red Sea, Taprobane Island and the Antipodes
Location: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, MS Lat 8878, ff.45bis-45ter [text I, map II].

Size: 37 x 57 cm

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*illustrated
Reproducing the Beatus Saint-Sever map on vellum
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