Salvatore Liccardo

Narrating Frontiers of Geographical Imagination

Remembering Alexander the Great in the 'Peutinger Table'

Abstract Within the 'spatial turn', in the course of the last three decades a new theorisation of maps and mapping has fundamentally changed the way we look at maps and their production today. This rethinking of maps has paved the way to an innovative interaction between cartographers and literary scholars. If maps function within a communicative act, they can not only be 'read' but also 'narrated'. The type of maps that seems the most suitable to study from a narratological perspective is itinerary maps. Such maps, in fact, reflect more clearly how space is experienced, thus allowing us to detect the dialectic between place and narrative. They might present a scaled representation of space, but the main attribute of itineraries is to mirror a specific 'lived space', one made significant by the movement of people. This contribution focuses on a few details of the 'Peutinger Table' – the references to Alexander the Great and his campaigns in Central Asia and India – with the purpose of highlighting how such textual and iconographic elements assisted the imaginations of Roman and medieval observers and provided stories associated with these places. These map's elements reflect and preserve the emotional ties and intellectual engagement that map-readers might develop with these particular locations. They show the participation of political ideologies and ethnic discourse in the creation and representation of a distinct sense of place.

Zusammenfassung Der *spatial turn* hat im Laufe der letzten drei Jahrzehnte zur Ausbildung neuer Theorien über Karten und Kartierung geführt und unsere Sichtweise auf Karten und deren Herstellung grundlegend verändert. Das

Contact

Dr. Salvatore Liccardo,
Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Institut für Mittelalterforschung, Hollandstraße 11–13, 1020 Vienna,
salvatore.liccardo@oeaw.ac.at
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0863-6591

Salvatore Liccardo: Narrating Frontiers of Geographical Imagination. Remembering Alexander the Great in the 'Peutinger Table'. In: Fafinski, Mateusz and Riemenschneider, Jakob (Eds.): The Past Through Narratology, 143–160. Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing, 2022 (Das Mittelalter. Perspektiven mediävistischer Forschung / Beihefte, Band 18). DOI: https://doi.org/10.17885/heiup.921.c13620

neue Verständnis von Karten ebnete den Weg für eine innovative Interaktion zwischen Kartographen und Literaturwissenschaftlern. Wenn Karten innerhalb eines kommunikativen Aktes funktionieren, können sie nicht nur ‚gelesen', sondern auch ‚erzählt' werden. Besonders gut eignet sich dafür aus narratologischer Sicht das Studium von Routenkarten. Tatsächlich machen sie deutlicher als andere Kartentypen sichtbar, wie Raum erlebt wird, und erlauben uns so, die Dialektik zwischen Ort und Erzählung zu erkennen. Auch wenn sie eine maßstabsgetreue Darstellung des Raums bieten, besteht das Hauptattribut von Reiserouten dennoch darin, einen bestimmten „gelebten Raum" widerzuspiegeln, der durch die Bewegung der Menschen bedeutsam wird. Dieser Aufsatz fokussiert auf einige Details der ‚Tabula Peutingeriana' – die darin vorkommenden Hinweise auf Alexander den Großen und seine Feldzüge in Zentralasien und Indien –, um zu zeigen, wie solche textuellen und ikonographischen Elemente die Vorstellungskraft römischer und mittelalterlicher Beobachter unterstützten und Geschichten implizierten, die mit diesen Orten in Verbindung gebracht wurden. Diese Hinweise reflektieren und bewahren die emotionalen Bindungen, welche die Menschen durch das Studium der Karten zu diesen Orten entwickelt haben, und die intellektuelle Anregung, die sie erfahren haben könnten. Sie zeigen die Beteiligung politischer Ideologien und ethnischer Diskurse an der Schaffung und Repräsentation eines ausgeprägten Ortsgefühls.

Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say, 'When I grow up I will go there.'[1]

Introduction – Narrating Spaces and Mapping Narratives

At first glance, it might seem odd to include in a volume dedicated to narratology a contribution that revolves around a map rather than a text. After all, what we usually define as a map – the scaled representation of a section of earth's surface[2] – has nothing to do with the concepts of discourse or narrative structure. However, the now more than a half-century-old assertion of space into modern consciousness makes such a choice more justifiable.

Propelled by the work of Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault,[3] this 'spatial turn' has determined a new theorisation of space. According to this new paradigm, rather than being conceived as a given, material and somewhat external object, space is the product of the incessant reshaping act of ideologies, practices of power and life experiences.[4] In the light of this innovative and more nuanced understanding of space, critical geographers, such as David Harvey, Edward Soja and Derek Gregory, have progressively erased disciplinary boundaries and firmly anchored space and geography in history and social sciences.[5]

Within the 'spatial turn' in the course of the last three decades a new theorisation of maps and mapping, a sort of 'cartographic turn', has fundamentally changed the

1 Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness and The Secret Sharer, New York 1950, pp. 70–71.

2 For the tradition of this definition and an introduction to the history of mapping, Denis Wood and John Krygier, Maps, in: International Encyclopedia of Human Geography (2009), cols. 421–430.

3 Particularly significant for the following studies, Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space, Oxford 1974; Michel Foucault, Questions on geography, in: Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977, transl. by Colin Gordon, New York 1980, pp. 63–77. For an English translation of some of the major works of Foucault on spatiality and a number of essays analysing the impact that the French thinker had on the study of geography, Jeremy Crampton and Stuart Elden (eds.), Space, Knowledge and Power. Foucault and Geography, Aldershot, Burlington 2007.

4 For a detailed overview of the 'spatial turn', its origins and multidisciplinary effects, Barney Warf and Santa Arias (eds.), The Spatial Turn. Interdisciplinary Perspectives, London, New York 2009.

5 Among the many influential publications of these geographers it suffices to mention David Harvey, On the History and Present Condition of Geography. An Historical Materialist Manifesto, in: Professional Geographer 36, 1 (1984), pp. 1–11; Edward Soja, Postmodern Geographies. The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory, New York 1989; Derek Gregory, Geographical Imaginations, Cambridge MA, Oxford 1994.

way we look at maps and their production today. Pioneered by Brian Harley's 1989 article 'Deconstructing the Map',[6] this interpretation of cartography challenges its claims of objectivity, neutrality, and rationality and unmasked maps as ideologically laden representations. These studies have highlighted the reciprocal relationship between power and knowledge in modern theory and practice of mapping, analysing how power is captured and communicated through maps with the intent of exerting control over territories and social relations.[7] Although certainly not an absolute prerogative of modern Western societies, such use of maps has been a central factor for the formation of European nation-states and colonial empires.[8] Furthermore, examining maps as both products and symbolic representations of power has contributed to creating innovative forms of counter- and more participative mappings. Often voicing minorities' demands, these types of maps aim to create emancipatory cartographies and defy current socio-spatial relations.[9] The disclosure of the politics of mapping has promoted the development of a non-progressivist history of cartography.[10] Since all maps, even the most reliable and technologically driven ones of today, are nonetheless expressions of the ideology of their makers, they are not necessarily better than those that precede them. If maps are not only a matter of geometrically defined geographic data, it is useful to follow a contingent history of cartography and to analyse maps in their social, cultural and political contexts.

This understanding of maps has fostered a further epistemological shift, which questions the 'ontological security' of maps.[11] In other words, in addition to a critique of the existing maps, it has become necessary to re-evaluate the nature of cartography. Maps are not self-evident, objective and neutral products of science. Not only are they products of the here-and-now, but they are never fully formed because they

---

6 Cf. Brian Harley, Deconstructing the Map, in: Cartographica 26, 2 (1989), pp. 1–20.

7 Cf. Brian Harley, Maps, Knowledge and Power, in Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (eds.), The Iconography of Landscape, Cambridge 1989, pp. 277–312; Denis Wood, The Power of Maps, London 1992; Mark Monmonier, How to Lie with Maps, 2nd ed., Chicago 1996. For an overview of the subject, Martin Dodge, Rob Kitchin and Chris Perkins, Introductory Essay. Power and Politics of Mapping, in: The Map Reader. Theories of Mapping Practice and Cartographic Representation, Oxford 2011, pp. 388–394.

8 Cf. the map-as-logo in Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, London, New York 1991, pp. 170–178.

9 Cf. Nancy Peluso, Whose Woods are These? Counter Mapping Forest Territories in Kalimantan Indonesia, in: Antipode 27, 4 (1995), pp. 383–405.

10 Cf. Matthew Edney, Cartography without 'Progress'. Reinterpreting the Nature and Historical Development of Mapaking, in: Cartographica, 30, 2 & 3 (1993), pp. 54–68.

11 Two overviews of such change of paradigm are in Martin Dodge and Rob Kitchin, Rethinking Maps, in: Progress in Human Geography 31, 3 (2007), pp. 331–344; Martin Dodge, Justin Gleeson and Rob Kitchin, Unfolding Mapping Practices. A New Epistemology for Cartography, in: Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 38, 3 (2013), pp. 480–496. See also Jeremy Crampton and John Krygier, An Introduction to Critical Cartography, in: ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies 4, 1 (2006), pp. 11–33. Very influential in this context, Jeremy Crampton, The Political Mapping of Cyberspace, Edinburgh 2003; John Pickles, A History of Spaces. Cartographic Reason, Mapping and the Geo-coded World, London 2004.

are constantly recreated every time they are engaged with. Cartography is therefore processual. It entails a communication system between perceived reality, map-maker, map-reader and the map itself that rests on a specific code, the cartographic language, and the capacity of the individual interlocutors to transmit and decipher it. In conclusion, maps are always mappings – practices that address relational problems through the representation of space.

This rethinking of maps, and now I come to 'narratology', has paved the way for an innovative interaction between cartographers and literary scholars. If maps function within a communicative act, they can not only be 'read' but also 'narrated'. This map–literature relation has often been studied to emphasise the role of maps and cartographic thinking in literature.[12] However, especially in the last ten years, this intellectual exchange has started to be relevant for researchers of cartography as well.[13] The interactive nature of maps – i.e. their being an element of a broader communication system – allows us to study them through the lenses of narratology. In comparison to the usual narrative triangle, maps function somewhat similarly to the narrated world, while map-maker and map-reader act as the narrator and the narratee. Moreover, maps should be considered novels rather than reference works because they encourage readers' curiosity, require a certain degree of intellectual and emotional absorption, and facilitate narrative processes.[14]

If these assumptions are valid for any kind of map, pre-modern ones reveal their narrative content more explicitly. The interwoven nature of stories and maps pre-exists their creation. Ancient and medieval map-makers relied on stories from merchants, ambassadors and explorers to complete their artefacts and especially for filling in the blanks in the peripheral areas on their maps. In some cases, the core message of these maps is so pervasive as to be expressed by the mere shape and overarching structure of the map. Some of the so-called T-O maps – sketched representations of the earth

12 Ground-breaking in this sense, Phillip Muehrcke and Juliana Muehrcke, Maps in Literature, in: Geographical Review 64, 3 (1974), pp. 317–338. More recently, Marie-Laure Ryan, Narrative Cartography. Toward a Visual Narratology, in: Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller, What Is Narratology? Questions and Answers Regarding the Status of a Theory, Berlin, New York 2003, pp. 333–364; Adam Burrows, Time, Literature, and Cartography After the Spatial Turn, New York 2016; Marie-Laure Ryan, Narrative Mapping as Cognitive Activity and as Participation in Storyworlds, in: Frontiers of Narrative Studies 4, 2 (2018), pp. 232–247. For an example of a literary work pervaded by cartographic imagination, Davide Papotti, Il fiume e la sua mappa. La carta geografica come principio narrativo in *Danubio* di Claudio Magris, in: Bollettino dell'Associazione Italiana di Cartografia 139–140 (2010), pp. 287–302.

13 Particularly insightful is the overview provided in Tania Rossetto, Theorizing Maps with Literature, in: Progress in Human Geography 38, 4 (2014), pp. 513–530. "The Cartographic Journal" has dedicated a special issue to the subject, which provides the reader with a thorough debate of the theoretical background and thought-provoking case studies, Cartography and Narratives, in: The Cartographic Journal 51, 2 (2014). See also Sébastien Caquard, Cartography I: Mapping Narrative Cartography, in: Progress in Human Geography 37, 1 (2011), pp. 135–144.

14 For an example of 'narrative turn' with regard to the study of medieval maps, Ingrid Baumgärtner, Erzählungen kartieren. Jerusalem in mittelalterlichen Kartenräumen, in: Annette Hoffmann and Gerhard Wolf (eds.), Jerusalem as Narrative Space, Leiden 2012, pp. 231–261.

depicted as a circle divided into three parts – contain for each section the names of the sons of Noah (Shem, Cham and Japheth) and thus combine the classical division of the earth into three continents with the Christian narrative regarding the origin and the geographical location of ethnicities.[15] Furthermore, some of the most famous medieval *mappae mundi*, such as the Psalter Map and the Hereford Map, display around a world, whose centre corresponds to the city of Jerusalem, a plethora of both textual and figurative elements, e.g. Christ in majesty and censing angels, that serve to convey a distinctively Christian worldview.[16]

However, the type of map that seems the most suitable to study from a narratological perspective is the itinerary map. Such maps, in fact, reflect more clearly how space is experienced, thus allowing us to detect the dialectic between place and narrative. They might present a scaled representation of space, but the main attribute of itineraries is to mirror a specific 'lived space', one made significant by the movement of people.[17] These journeys not only connect different places but also engage the readers in a certain understanding of space. In the following pages I will focus on a few details of the only map to survive from Greco-Roman antiquity, the 'Peutinger Table', highlighting how narratives shared by map-makers and map-readers shaped both imagination and representation of the eastern frontiers of the Oikumene.

The 'Peutinger Table' and the Alexander Romance

Composed of eleven leaves originally bound together, the 'Peutinger Table' is a long and narrow parchment roll (6.75 meters long and 32.8–33.7 centimetres high) intended

15 The bibliography on the subject is extremely vast and this is not the place to indulge in citing it. However, although somewhat outdated, a detailed introduction to the study of this type of maps is David Woodward, Medieval *Mappaemundi*, in: Brian Harley and David Woodward (eds.), History of Cartography. Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean, Chicago 1987, pp. 286–370. On the mixture of biblical and classical traditions in the geographical conceptions of early medieval thinkers, especially Isidore of Seville, Silke Diederich, Oikumene im Wandel – Isidor von Sevilla, in: Klaus Geus and Michael Rathmann (eds.), Vermessung der Oikumene, Berlin, Boston 2013, pp. 255–263; Andy Merrills, Geography and Memory in Isidore's Etymologies, in: Keith D. Lilley (ed.), Mapping Medieval Geographies. Geographical Encounters in the Latin West and Beyond, 300–1600, Cambridge 2013, pp. 45–64.

16 As a useful summary of the creation of such medieval worldview and its constant engagement with the Classics, Mark Humphries, A new created world: classical geographical texts and Christian contexts in Late Antiquity, in: David Scourfield (ed.), Texts and Culture in Late Antiquity: Inheritance, Authority, and Change, Swansea 2007, pp. 33–67. On the interplay between narratives and images in medieval world maps, Ingrid Baumgärtner, Die Welt als Erzählraum im späten Mittelalter, in: Ingrid Baumgärtner, Paul-Gerhard Klumbies and Franziska Sick (eds.), Raumkonzepte. Disziplinäre Zugänge, Göttingen 2009, pp. 145–177.

17 For a particularly remarkable study of this subject, and an ingenious method for representing narratives in cartographic language, Margaret Wickens Pearce, Framing the Days: Place and Narrative in Cartography, in: Cartography and Geographic Information Science 35, 1 (2008), pp. 17–32.

to represent the inhabited world.[18] Even though it survives in a medieval copy (late twelfth to early thirteenth century), its final revision dates to the first half of the fifth century.[19] Because of its elongated shape, the landmasses appear heavily distorted. The representation of the Mediterranean Sea is dominated by the Italian peninsula, which occupies roughly a third of the map and lies flat, extending from west to east. While the western extremity of the map, which arguably corresponded to the British Isles, the Iberian peninsula and present-day Morocco, did not survive, its eastern end is occupied by a downsized depiction of Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. Although many of its characteristics suggest that the main purpose of the map was ideological rather than practical,[20] most of the data comes from Roman itineraries, and the route network represents the basic structure of the 'Peutinger Table'. The whole map is covered by a dense network of red lines marking the routes that connect most of the settlements and also stretch outside of the Roman Empire.[21] This organisation of space emphasises the narrative value of the map because, just as narratives are temporally ordered, the itineraries of the 'Peutinger Table' translate distances into temporal units. Toponyms are not in the nominative but in various oblique cases and are therefore articulated as elements of a sentence (from X to Y, Z miles). These relative rather than absolute spatial relationships conceive of places not as absolute locations of a homogeneous space but as points of departure or arrival of potentially infinite journeys.

However, there is one section in which this impressive bundle of lines progressively thins out, and the number of cities shrinks: the eastern end of the map. Itineraries also spread across this part of the 'Peutinger Table', but here the map-makers had a limited number of sources at their disposal. With the help of a few symbols and longer captions, they turned to a narrative known by their audience to trigger the imagination of map-readers and fill with meaning an area of the map that would have otherwise remained empty. This narrative is the life and the myth of Alexander

18 Fundamental for the study of the Tabula, Richard Talbert, Rome's World. The Peutinger Map Reconsidered, Cambridge 2010. For an introduction to the digital edition of the map, Tom Elliott, Constructing a Digital Publication for the Peutinger Map, in: Richard Talbert and Richard Unger (eds.), Cartography in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, Leiden, Boston 2008, pp. 99–110. See also Benet Salway, The Nature and Genesis of the Peutinger Map, in: Imago Mundi 57, 2 (2005), pp. 119–135; Michael Rathmann, Tabula Peutingeriana. Die einzige Weltkarte aus der Antike, Darmstadt, 2016. Currently, the DFG-funded project "Kommentar zur Tabula Peutigneriana" is assembling a new and improved database of the map's inscriptions. See https://tp-online.ku.de/ (10 December 2021).

19 On the dating of the map see Ekkehard Weber, Die Datierung des antiken Originals der Tabula Peutingeriana, in: Orbis Terrarum 14 (2016), pp. 229–258; Michael Rathmann, New Perspectives on the Tabula Peutingeriana II, in: Orbis Terrarum 18 (2020), pp. 197–251.

20 E.g. the subject of the map (no one uses a world map to travel), its lack of scale, its extreme distortion, the clear interest shown by the map-makers in its aesthetic appearance, the unsystematic use of measurement units, as well as the lack of gridlines or axes.

21 Specifically on the road network, Manlio Magini, In viaggio lungo le strade della Tabula Peutingeriana, in: Francesco Prontera (ed.), Tabula Peutingeriana. Le antiche vie del mondo, Firenze 2003, pp. 7–15.

the Great. References to Alexander's deeds play a central role in the map's portrayal of the eastern lands. The campaigns of the Macedonian king are evoked through a series of iconographic and textual elements. The more explicit references are the numerous cities that bear his name,[22] the mention of the Indian elephants,[23] and two isolated symbols, the so-called 'altars of Alexander'.

The figure of Alexander had, and still has today, a rich evocative power. Relatively soon after his death, his already impressive biography started to be modified and enriched by later traditions, quickly assuming the lineaments of a myth. The so-called Alexander Romance, of which a large number of different redactions and translations survive,[24] testifies to hundreds of years of interest in and fascination with this figure. Alexander lived in the memory and imagination of humans of very different periods and contexts, influencing subsequent imperial propaganda and political agendas. In the period in which the extant version of the 'Peutinger Table' was drafted, recalling Alexander's campaigns could provoke a whole spectrum of different thoughts and emotional reactions. Although the figure of Alexander presented a series of sinister nuances, which came in handy while depicting the vices of contemporary rulers,[25] the *imitatio Alexandri* became a recurrent element of the late Roman political message.

Beloved by the emperors of the Severan dynasty, in particular by Caracalla, who is described by Cassius Dio as obsessed with Alexander,[26] the Macedonian became the

---

22 E.g. *Alexandria* (name, no symbol) 11A4; *Alexandria Bvcefalos* (symbol, named) 11B3; *Alexandria catisson* (symbol, named) 9B4.

23 *In his locis elephanti nascvntvr* (special feature / notice) 11C4.

24 The literature on the Romance of Alexander is immense. For a detailed study on the role of Alexander in Persia and the East, Richard Stoneman, Kyle Erickson and Ian Netton, The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East, Groningen 2012. Editions and translations I have used are Il romanzo di Alessandro, 2 vols., ed. by Richard Stoneman, transl. by Tristano Gargiulo, Milano 2007–2012. For a recent translation and commentary of the Latin rendition of the Alexander Romance by Ps.-Callisthenes, traditionally attributed to Julius Valerius Alexander Polemius, consul in 338, Frédéric Foubert, La geste d'Alexandre le Grand, version latine de Julius Valerius, Leuven 2014.

25 For an overview of the possible uses of the figure of Alexander made by Roman authors, Dawn Gilley, The Latin Alexander: Constructing Roman Identity, in: Kenneth Moore (ed.), Brill's Companion to the Reception of Alexander the Great, Leiden, Boston 2018, pp. 304–324. See also Elizabeth Baynham, Barbarians 1: Quintus Curtius' and Other Roman Historians' Reception of Alexander, in: Andrew Feldherr (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Historian, Cambridge 2009, pp. 288–300; Christopher Mallan, The Spectre of Alexander: Cassius Dio and the Alexander-Motif, in: Greece & Rome 64, 2 (2017), pp. 132–144.

26 Cf. Cassius Dio, Roman History 78 [77], 7–8, ed. and transl. by Earnest Cary and Herbert Baldwin Foster, London 1927, pp. 292–295. On this, Urbano Espinosa, La alejandrofilia de Caracala en la antigua historiografia, in: Jean-Michel Croisille (ed.), Neronia IV: Alejandro Magno, modelo de los emperadores romanos. Actes du IVe colloque de la SIEN, Bruxelles 1990, pp. 37–51; Dora Baharal, Caracalla and Alexander the Great. A Reappraisal, in: Carl Deroux (ed.), Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History 7, Bruxelles 1994, pp. 524–567; Clare Rowan, Under Divine Auspices: Divine Ideology and the Visualisation of Imperial Power in the Severan Period, Cambridge 2012, pp. 152–157; Antonio Ignacio Molina Marín, Desmontando un tirano perfecto: Caracalla y la imitatio Alexandri, in: Studia Historica. Historia Antigua 33 (2015), pp. 223–250.

primary model to emulate for fourth-century Roman emperors involved in military actions against the Persians. After his triumph over Licinius, Constantine, who spent the last months of his life planning a campaign against the Sasanians, fashioned his image after Alexander adorning himself with Hellenistic symbols of authority, such as the diadem, and minting coins where he was depicted with the so-called heavenly gaze, mimicking this popularised pose of Alexander.[27] To one of Constantine's sons, Constantius II, is dedicated the so-called *Itinerarium Alexandri,*[28] a mixture of historiographical and panegyrical prose, in which the campaigns of Alexander are a prefiguration of and a model for the emperor's upcoming expedition against the Persians.[29]

However, the largest body of evidence attesting admiration for Alexander the Great involves Emperor Julian.[30] Although Alexander's lack of mercy, even towards his *hetairoi*, casts a disturbing light on his reign, in Julian's own writings Alexander is second only to Marcus Aurelius as the model of an excellent leader.[31] As attested by the writings of the emperor and his contemporaries, both Julian's and Shapur II's rationale behind their foreign policy was to reassert their respective powers over one another, which was once exercised by their respective predecessors Alexander and Xerxes.[32] Finally, although his intent is polemic, it is nonetheless significant that

27 On this aspect of Constantine's political discourse, Frank Kolb, Herrscherideologie in der Spätantike, Berlin 2001, pp. 201–204; Jonathan Bardill, Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age, Cambridge 2012, pp. 11–27. This "heavenly gaze" could be interpreted in a Christian context as mimicking the posture of the prayer, Eusebius of Caesarea, Vita Constantini 4, 15, transl. by Averil Cameron and Stuart Hall, Oxford 1999, pp. 158–159.

28 The original title might have been *Itinerarium Alexandri Magni Traianioque*, but the Codex Ambrosianus P 49, which preserves the work, contains neither the final accomplishments of Alexander nor the campaign of Trajan. Cf. Raffaella Tabacco, Itinerarium Alexandri. Testo, apparato critico, introduzione, traduzione e commento, Firenze 2000. For the question of its authorship and the use of this text in the contemporary political discourse, see Lane Fox, The Itinerary of Alexander. Constantius to Julian, in: The Classical Quarterly 47, 1 (1997), pp. 239–252.

29 On the political implications of this work, in the context of Roman–Persian relations at the time of Constantine and his immediate successors, Timothy Barnes, Constantine and the Christians of Persia, in: The Journal of Roman Studies 75 (1985), pp. 126–136, here pp. 135–136.

30 On this, Carlo Franco, L'immagine di Alessandro in Giuliano imperatore, in: Studi Classici e Orientali 46, 2 (1998), pp. 637–658; Rowland Smith, The Casting of Julian the Apostate "in the Likeness" of Alexander the Great: a Topos in Antique Historiography and its Modern Echoes, in: Histos 5 (2011), pp. 44–106.

31 E.g. Julian, Epistula ad Themistium philosophum 253a, transl. by Wilmer Cave Wright, London 1913, pp. 202–203; Julian, The Caesars 316b–316c, transl. by Wilmer Cave Wright, London 1913, pp. 366–369. On Julian's use of the myth of Alexander and the narrative of the Greco-Persian wars, with a focus on the fate of Nisibis, Kyle Smith, Constantine and the Captive Christians of Persia. Martyrdom and Religious Identity in Late Antiquity, Oakland 2016, pp. 49–50.

32 For an examination of Julian's intentions, Arnaldo Marcone, Il significato della spedizione di Giuliano contro la Persia, in: Athenaeum 57 (1979), pp. 334–356; David Frendo, Dangerous Ideas. Julian's Persian Campaign, Its Historical Background, Motivation, and Objectives, in: Bulletin of the Asia Institute 21 (2007), pp. 79–96. On Shapur's goals, Rahim Shayegan, On the Rationale behind the Roman Wars of Šābuhr II the Great, in: Bulletin of the Asia Institute 18 (2004), pp. 111–133.

Socrates of Constantinople could describe Julian's desire to emulate Alexander as the consequence of his belief that he was the reincarnation of the Macedonian.[33]

In addition to these political implications, the references to Alexander had a broader impact on the understanding of these peripheral areas of the maps. Particularly telling is the case of the 'altars of Alexander'. These three drawings, one located east of the Caspian Sea and the other two paired north of the Himalayas, consist of two concentric squares, with the inner one containing four triangle shapes that have the shortest side near the centre and stretch towards the angles. Even though only the lonely one is explicitly named *ara*, all represent altars marking the north-eastern and eastern limits of Alexander's campaigns.[34]

Determining the exact location of the altars is an arduous task. The single altar matched with the inscription *Ara alexandri* (Fig. 1) is far away from any route, so in order to suggest its position, one has to take into account the surrounding elements of both the physical and human landscape. A river called Oxus (today known as the Amu Darya) flows north of the altar, while a small unnamed mountain chain and the river Sygris (identified as the river Iaxartes, nowadays the Syr Darya) are depicted right beneath it.[35] West of the altar, one finds the inscription *ATRAPATENE* (region) 11A2, referring to the north-western part of Media,[36] while east of the symbol there is the ethnonym *ESSEDONES SCYTHAE* (people) 11A3.[37] The viewers could use these physical and ethnic elements as reference points in order to contextualise the altar in their own mental map. Unlike the road network, however, these details do not provide particularly accurate information. The portrayal of this area presents some rather clumsy mistakes. First, either the map-makers or the copyists inverted the position of the names of the rivers Oxus and Iaxartes. Second, they shifted the region of Atropatene eastward from the south-western to the south-eastern shores of the Caspian Sea. Moreover, the mention of the Essedones does not clarify the position of the altars since the dwelling place of this nomadic group was not known to ancient

33 More specifically, the author refers to the Pythagorean and Platonic doctrine of the metempsychosis. On the image of Julian in Socrates of Constantinople, who describes the Persian campaign essentially as the consequence of his megalomania, David Buck, Socrates Scholasticus on Julian the Apostate, in: Byzantion 73, 2 (2003), pp. 301–318, here p. 314.

34 For a short note on these symbols, Wilhelm Tomaschek, Arae Alexandri, in: Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, vol. 2, 1 (1895), cols. 339–340. See also Alexander Podossinov, Vostochnaya Evropa v rimskoi kartograficheskoi traditsii, Moskva 2002, pp. 375–376. For allusions to the altars in the literary sources, e.g. Arrian, Anabasis Alexandri 5, 29, 1–2, transl. by Iliff Robson, Cambridge MA 1933, pp. 96–97; Curtius Rufus, Historiae Alexandri Magni 9, 3, 9, ed. by Henry Crosby, London 1854, pp. 223–224; Solinus, Collectanea rerum memorabilium 52, 7, ed. by Theodor Mommsen, Berlin 1864, p. 204.

35 The entries I am referring to are *Fl. Oxvs* (river, no. 132) 11A2–11A4 and *Fl. Sygris* (river, no. 133) 11A2–11A3.

36 On this, Franz Heinrich Weissbach, Atropatene, in: Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft 2, 2 (1896), cols. 2149–2150.

37 For an introduction to this ethnic group, Albert Herrmann, Issedoi, in: Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft 9, 2 (1916), cols. 2235–2246.

Fig. 1 | *Ara alexandri* (isolated symbol, named) 11A3.

geographers and historians. In other words, the 'Peutinger Table' does not give enough information to guide a hypothetical traveller who wanted to visit the famous altar. However, creating a detailed map of this remote area was not the main goal of the map-makers. The altar does not function as a practical landmark but rather as a historical and literary point of reference. Despite their geographical vagueness, the surrounding elements of physical and human landscape serve to hint at the narrative of Alexander's campaigns in the East.

These allusions could have been fully understood by a well-informed viewer who was able to match them with information provided by ancient geographers, such as Pomponius Mela, Pliny the Elder or Solinus. Integrating these sources of information, one is able to understand the complex meaning behind this symbol and caption. The position of the altar next to the river Iaxartes recalls a passage of Pliny's 'Naturalis Historia',[38] which refers to certain *arae* located near this river, built by famous historical and mythical figures, such as Hercules, Dionysus (called *Liber Pater* in the work of the Roman geographer), Cyrus, Semiramis and, indeed, Alexander the Great. While Pliny helps to localise the drawing and contextualise Alexander's altars in a longstanding geographical tradition, knowledge of Solinus' work would have helped any map-reader to better appreciate the savage and uncivilised nature of this particular borderland. A reader familiar with Solinus' text would have recognised in the *Essedones* a barbarian group, which practised cannibalism. According to Solinus, the *Essedones* were accustomed to eating the bodies of their relatives in the course of their funeral ceremony. They organised banquets in which they mixed the limbs of the relatives with animal flesh and used the skulls of the dear departed as cups to drink from.[39] While the altar's precise location does not seem to be at stake, and

38 Cf. Pliny the Elder, Naturalis Historia 6, 49, ed. and transl. by Roderich König and Gerhard Winkler, Zürich, Düsseldorf 1996, pp. 42–43.

39 Cf. Solinus, Collectanea rerum memorabilium 15, 13, ed. by Theodor Mommsen, Berlin 1864, p. 95: *Inter Anthropophagos in Asiatica parte numerantur Essedones qui et ipsi nefandis funestantur*

an ignorant viewer would have perceived this illustration and inscription simply as hints at unspecified exotic scenery, a well-informed reader could judge them as a clear reminder of Alexander's achievements and as the marker of the extreme limit of the civilised world.[40]

Analogous conclusions can be drawn from examining the second altar related to Alexander (Fig. 2). Regarding the physical landscape, the altars are located near the edge of the Asian continent, close to the shore of the Eastern Ocean, and right above a mountain chain named *MONS IMEVS* (mountain, no. 109A) 11B3. Contrary to the previous example, these altars are placed near a road itinerary. Above the caption, one can recognise the last stops of a route that heads eastward, namely *Asbana* (name, no symbol) 11A4, *Alexandria* (name, no symbol) 11A4, and *+ntiochia* (symbol, named) 11A5.[41] While the distribution of these toponyms on the map appears somewhat approximate,[42] the vicinity of a city bearing the name of the Macedonian king alludes to Alexander's campaign in Central Asia. It allows the viewer to link this double altar to Alexander's renowned policy of founding new cities. The long caption makes it clear how to contextualise this symbol in the Alexander narrative. It reads "*Hic Alexander Responsvm accepit Vsq(ve) qvo Alexander*". Any learned viewer would have recognised the drawings as the altars that Alexander ordered to be built when, heeding the pleas of his soldiers, he decided to interrupt his expansion eastwards.

But when situated within the framework of Alexander's campaign, the place that the altars occupy on the map is very peculiar. Instead of placing them in India next to the Hyphasis (modern Beas River) – the river on whose shores Alexander stopped his journey – the map-makers put the altars north of the Hindu Kush, next to the Eastern Ocean and far away from any Indian river. The relocation of the altar is the result of rudimentary knowledge of Central Asian geography[43] and the extreme compression of the illustration in this particular area. However, despite the undeniable lack of information, one can also recognise in the map-makers' choice

inter se cibis. Essedonum mos est parentum funera prosequi cantibus et proximorum corrogatis coetibus corpora ipsa dentibus lancinare ac pecudum mixta carnibus dapes facere; capitum etiam ossa auro incincta in poculorum tradere ministerium. See also Mela, De chorographia 2, 1, 9, ed. and transl. by Alain Silberman, Paris 1988, pp. 36–37.

40 Richard Stoneman sees in this altar an early echo of the tradition of Alexander's enclosure of Gog and Magog. Cf. Richard Stoneman, India in the Tabula Peutingeriana, in: Orbis Terrarum 18 (2020), pp. 253–265, here pp. 262–264.

41 The initial "A", except for its right-hand vertical stroke, is not visible because of a hole in the parchment. On the first place-name, Wilhelm Tomaschek, Asbana, in: Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, vol. 2, 2 (1896), col. 1518.

42 For example, in another section of the map, the distortion flattens the road between Alexandria Ariorum (modern Herat) and Antiochia (modern Merv), stretching it longitudinally, whereas it should run from north to south.

43 On the very limited knowledge of this area, which was enriched by the campaign of Alexander, Michael Rathmann, Wahrnehmung und Erfassung geographischer Räume im Hellenismus am Beispiel Asiens, in: Michael Rathmann (ed.), Wahrnehmung und Erfassung geographischer Räume, Mainz 2007, pp. 81–102.

Fig. 2 | *Hic Alexander Responsvm accepit Vsq(ve) qvo Alexander* (special feature / notice) 11B4–11B5.

their peculiar visual strategies. Although the altars are not in India, around them one can read two versions of the same ethnonym that directly refers to India: *CIRRABE INDI* (people) 11B4 and *CIRRIBE INDI* (people) 11B4. Leaving aside the question of the correct identification of this lesser-known group,[44] these inscriptions provide two clear pieces of information: first, the people in question dwelt on both sides of the *mons Imeus*, and second, they were considered a sub-group of the larger ethnicity of the Indians.

One can also elucidate both the caption and the unusual location of this double altar by comparing the map with a few late antique and early medieval texts. Regarding the content of the inscription, the closest example is found in the 'Ravenna Cosmography'. Compared to the map, this text also indicates from whom Alexander received the response, i.e. "not only from Indian Stoics, but also from demons, who even when they do not want to utter the truth are accustomed to say it".[45] Although the map does not include this detail, the inscription mentions a *responsum*. This alludes to an external intervention that admonished Alexander

44 On this, see Konrad Miller, Itineraria Romana, Stuttgart 1916, pp. 626–627.

45 Ravenna Cosmographer, Cosmographia 1, 8, ed. by Joseph Schnetz, Berlin, Boston 1990, p. 7: *non solum a Stoicis ex Indorum genere hominibus sed et a demonibus qui etiam nolentes proferre veritatem ut assolent.*

from travelling further east, thus reflecting a narrative spread by the Alexander Romance.[46]

In addition to the caption, the proximity of the altars to the ocean seems to hint at the tradition of the Alexander Romance rather than at the historical figure of Alexander alone. Even though the altars are not on the Asian coast, nothing divides them from the eastern edge of the world so that no other symbol, city or road is located east of the altars' latitude. In other words, on the 'Peutinger Table' the ocean appears as the only limit that Alexander did not cross. Pushing the limit of Alexander's campaigns eastwards is characteristic of the late antique and medieval tradition.[47] By placing the altars near the eastern edge of the Oikumene, the map enhances their meaning from a geographical point of view. The altars mark the end of the inhabited world and, at the same time, are both a warning about human limitations and an encouragement to world domination.

The intellectual conceptualisation of these distant places and the creation of a sense of otherness could not come without extraordinary natural phenomena. The 'Far East' is the only section of the map where the landscape swarms with exotic animals (Fig. 3). Near the south-eastern corner of the 'Peutinger Table' one finds the captions "*In his locis scorpiones nascvntvr*" (special feature / notice) 11C3 and "*In his locis elephanti nascvntvr*" (special feature / notice) 11C4.[48] Although these inscriptions

46 According to Richard Stoneman, the caption is almost a direct quotation from a specific episode of the Romance (2.41). This describes Alexander encountering a flying creature, who prevents him from exploring the heavens. Cf. Stoneman (note 40), pp. 261–262. For a comprehensive commentary on the passages of the Romance dealing with Alexander's expedition to India, Krzysztof Nawotka, The Alexander Romance by Ps.-Callisthenes: a Historical Commentary, Leiden, Boston 2017, pp. 189–201. Similar information is found in the 'Life of Apollonius of Tyana'. This text – a largely fictionalised account of the travels of Apollonius – contains two valuable details. First, the dedication to the gods affixed on the altars, which contained a peculiar mixture of Greek and Hellenised divinities. These are Father Ammon, Heracles, Athena Providence, Zeus of Olympus, the Cabeiri of Samothrace, the Indian Sun and the Delphian Apollo. Second, it attests to an inscription not so dissimilar from the one found on the map. Placed on a brass column it went: "Alexander stayed his steps at this point". The author expresses two possible interpretations for this monument. Either it was erected by Alexander to honour the limits of the empire, or by the local Indians who wanted to express their pride in having remained unconquered by Alexander. Cf. Philostratus, Vita Apollonii 2, 43, transl. by Frederick Conybeare, Cambridge MA 1912, pp. 228–229. On this, Balbina Bäbler and Heinz-Günther Nesselrath, Philostrats Apollonios und seine Welt, Berlin, Boston 2016, pp. 92–95. Although I am inclined to recognise in the caption an echo of a late antique tradition, it is not impossible to connect it to an older cultural framework, such as the time of Augustus. In this sense, Alexander Podossinov, Northern Asia on the Tabula Peutingeriana, in: Orbis Terrarum 18 (2020), pp. 167–196, here pp. 187–189.

47 The Greek Alexander Romance is reluctant to describe Alexander giving up on his project of conquering the rest of India down to the outer ocean, while the Syrian and the Ethiopian versions of the Romance, as well as the Romance-derivate Persian and Arabic traditions, see Alexander waging war even further east, in China, cf. Gósciwit Malinowski, Alexander the Great and China, in: Krzysztof Nawotka and Agnieszka Wojciechowska (eds.), Alexander the Great and the East, Wiesbaden 2016, pp. 151–157.

48 For an introduction to the Roman perception of Central Asia, Giusto Traina, Central Asia in the Late Roman Mental Map, Second to Sixth Century, in: Nicola Di Cosmo and Michael Maas

Fig. 3 | *In his locis scorpiones nascvntvr* (special feature / notice) 11C3, *In his locis elephanti nascvntvr* (special feature / notice) 11C4.

had a strong suggestive power, it is misleading to reduce them to a simple manifestation of ignorance or naivety. A more romantic view would still imagine Roman and medieval observers fearing the unknown and, according to the common preconception, labelling it with the words *hic sunt leones*.[49] Legends referring to exotic lands were surely fascinating and sometimes terrifying, but what is important here is that they were, in fact, narratives. To write these concise and apparently dry captions, the various hands that created the map resorted to a broad spectrum of literary traditions, arousing opposing sentiments in the observers. First of all, these two notes contain a core of geographical truth. The regions described as the dwelling-places of scorpions (roughly corresponding to the Indus valley) and elephants (northern India) were, and essentially still are, habitats of said animals. Finally, the mention of the elephants might also provide information of commercial nature, alluding to ivory production.

(eds.), Empire and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity. Rome, China, Iran and the Steppe, ca. 250–750, Cambridge 2018, pp. 123–132. A detailed account of the Indian fauna can be found in the 'De natura animalium' of Claudius Aelianus, Steven D. Smith, Man and Animal in Severan Rome, Cambridge 2014, pp. 165–178. A recent and insightful analysis of the depiction of India, and its rivers, is in Monika Schuol, Indien und die großen Flüsse auf der Tabula Peutingeriana: die östliche Oikumene zwischen paganer und christlicher Kartographie, in: Orbis Terrarum 14 (2016), pp. 92–154.

49 Matched by a drawing of a lion, the caption *hic abundant leones* on the Cotton world map (first half of the eleventh century) is the oldest historical evidence of this practice. On the well-known and often quoted similar expression *hic sunt dracones* and, more generally, on the monstrous imaginary used for describing the edges of the world, Chet Van Duzer, Hic sunt dracones: The Geography and Cartography of Monsters, in: Peter Dendle and Asa Mittman (eds.), The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous, Farnham, Burlington 2012, pp. 387–435.

However, these terms acquire an even larger range of meaning if one connects them with the references to Alexander's travels placed nearby. When Alexander led his army back from India through the deserted region of Gedrosia, he encountered an extremely inhospitable environment. It goes without saying that elephants were a central feature in the Alexander narrative. The fear of fighting elephants, employed by Indian armies, was among the main factors behind the mutiny of Macedonian soldiers before the crossing of the Hyphasis in 326 BCE.[50] As said before, in relation to the altar and the ocean, one could say that the elephants also marked the limits of Alexander's adventure as well as being one of the most eastern details depicted on the 'Peutinger Table'. The campaigns of Alexander served as a model for Roman expeditions against the Persians but could also act as an archetype for the relationship between man and nature. According to Pliny the Elder, Alexander was "inflamed with the desire to know the qualities of the animals"[51] and the later romance tradition emphasised this sort of scientific purpose of his campaigns, especially regarding his stay in India. In other words, in the coeval and later accounts, his conquest was described as a political as much as a cultural enterprise.[52] Crossing the Hindu Kush, invading the Indus Valley or marching through the Lut Desert, Alexander was not pursuing any specific strategic goal but was instead driven by his knowledge of mythology, his claim of divine ancestry, and his will to augment Greek scientific knowledge.[53] Alexander lived on a boundless yearning for glory (in Greek φιλοτιμία or πόθος),[54] which made him challenge human as well as natural dangers. Hence, the accounts of Alexander's travels combine history, fable and science. On the one hand, Alexander had been portrayed as attempting to bring the wonders of nature under the control of Greek philosophy, and, on the other, these wonders provided his deeds with an extraordinary evocative symbolic landscape.

---

50 E.g. Plutarch, Life of Alexander 62, 1–4, transl. by Bernadotte Perrin, Cambridge MA 1919, pp. 399–402; Curtius Rufus, Historiae Alexandri Magni 9, 2, 6, ed. by Henry Crosby, London 1854, pp. 219–220. On this famous episode, Lee Brice, Military Unrest in the Age of Philip and Alexander of Macedon: Defining the Terms of Debate, in: Waldemar Heckel and Timothy Howe (eds.), Greece, Macedon and Persia. Studies in Social, Political and Military History in Honour of Waldemar Heckel, Oxford 2015, pp. 69–76.

51 Pliny the Elder, Naturalis Historia 8, 17, 44, ed. and transl. by Roderich König and Gerhard Winkler, Zürich, Düsseldorf 2007, pp. 42–43: *inflammato cupidine animalium naturas noscendi.*

52 Cf. Hans-Joachim Gehrke, Alexander der Große – Welteroberung als Welterkundung, in: Klio 93, 1 (2011), pp. 52–65. For an introduction to the wonders of the East, James Romm, The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought, Princeton 1992, pp. 82–120.

53 Cf. Richard Stoneman, Alexander the Great: A Life in Legend, New Haven, London 2008, p. 68.

54 Cf. Andrew Stewart, Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics, Berkeley 2007, p. 84.

Conclusions

The altars of Alexander and the captions on the exotic animals reveal the presence of narrative discourse embedded in the 'Peutinger Table'. In comparison to medieval *mappae mundi*, such as the Hereford Map, the Ebstorf Map and the Catalan Atlas, the figure of Alexander has a significant but relatively delimited impact on the 'Peutinger Table'. These later world maps contain dozens of direct and indirect allusions to the deeds of Alexander, which not only contribute to the portrayal of the Far East but are also an integral part of the image of all three continents and, by the connection with the narrative of Gog and Magog, acquire an eschatological value.[55] On the contrary, the references to Alexander the Great found in the 'Peutinger Table' are numerically limited and visually sober.[56] However, they represent bits and pieces of stories that invite the reader to interact with the map. They foster performativity and can create a certain intimacy between the map and the viewer (the same one we feel when we recognise a specific place on a map and start associating it with our memories or future plans). Potentially unknown spaces are transformed into fascinating, maybe horrifying, but familiar places.[57] The words and lines of the 'Peutinger Table', as well as their interpretation by the map-readers, confer meanings and certain feelings on distant spaces that nearly no one could directly experience.

While the "blank spaces on earth" intrigue the protagonist of 'Heart of Darkness', the altars and the captions assisted the imagination of Roman and medieval observers, providing stories to associate with these places. They both reflect and preserve the emotive bonds and intellectual engagements that people could develop with those particular locations and environments. They display the involvement of political ideologies and ethnic discourse in the creation and representation of a distinct sense of place.[58] Just as Rome was the centre of the world, these elements from the outer eastern edge of the map are a vivid signal of the end of the earth and, at the same time, an indication of the limits of the road network, and thus of civilisation. In the following centuries, the map was preserved and copied, becoming a relic of the Roman worldview, which influenced medieval cartography. Made with the primary intent of transmitting authoritative knowledge, rather than recent

---

55 On the influence of the Alexander Romance on medieval geography and cartography, Hartmut Kugler, Der Alexanderroman und die literarische Universalgeographie, in: Udo Schöning (ed.), Internationalität nationaler Literaturen. Beiträge zum ersten Symposion des Göttinger Sonderforschungsbereichs 529, Göttingen 2000, pp. 102–120; Danielle Lecoq, L'image de Alexandre à travers les mappemondes medievales XIIe–XIIIe siecles, in: Geographia antiqua 2 (1993), pp. 63–111.

56 Just to give an example of the later lavish representations, in the Catalan Atlas Alexander is depicted enlisting Satan's help to enclose the unclean nations.

57 For a definition of place, Tim Cresswell, Place. A Short Introduction, Malden 2011, pp. 1–14.

58 On the meaning and applications of sense of place, Kenneth Foote and Maoz Azaryahu, Sense of Place, in: International Encyclopedia of Human Geography (2009), cols. 96–100.

experiences, medieval maps incorporated and manipulated this Roman, imperial, organisation of space and shaped a new image of the world integrating classical and biblical geographical knowledge.[59]

Finally, in a volume dedicated to the use of narratology for the study of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, it seems fitting to conclude with the words of a contemporary narrator. As this analysis of the 'Peutinger Table' has hopefully shown, while studying maps one should always bear in mind that "LA CARTE EST PLUS INTÉRESSANTE QUE LE TERRITOIRE".[60]

Acknowledgements

This article evolved from a paper I have presented at the conference Narratology for Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages (15–17 November 2019, Innsbruck). I am very grateful to Jakob Riemenschneider and Mateusz Fafinski for having organised that marvellous gathering of researchers and to the participants for their productive observations. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers, Walter Pohl, Danuta Shanzer and the colleagues participating with me at her Privatissimum for their invaluable advice and stimulating criticisms.

---

59 Cf. Alfred Hiatt, Mapping the Ends of Empire, in: Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Deanne Williams (eds.), Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages. Translating cultures, Cambridge 2005, pp. 48–76.

60 Michel Houllebecq, La carte et le territoire, Paris 2010, p. 82. The sentence is in capital letters in the original.