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"I Their Map": The Poetics of Medieval Mapmaking in John Donne's "Hymn to God my God, in my Sickness"

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> Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush afire with God;
> But only he who sees, takes off his shoes,
> The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries
> —Elizabeth Barrett Browning[1]

It should not be surprising that poetry in the early modern period, an age of rapidly expanding intellectual and geographic horizons, exploits cartographic imagery. The way in which John Donne so insistently and repeatedly turns to conceits of maps and cartography in order to understand his world, however, is remarkable. Perhaps Donne's own wandering youth, travelling in Europe and joining the Earl of Essex's 1597 expedition to the Azores, indelibly flavored his literary imagination. Or perhaps the very nature of Donne's metaphysical poetry, scouring the visible heavens and the earth for analogues to invisible, spiritual realms and seeing the physical world as a legible image of more abstract truth, causes Donne to reach towards cartographic imagery as a tool to explore his own personal and spiritual placement. Donne strives to read his world intelligibly; to make the landscape and events around him part of a larger, decipherable whole; to relate unlikely points in experience to each other; and to locate himself. In his poetry, lovers see themselves as opposite poles of

[1]Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh*, ed. Margaret Reynolds (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), VII, 821–24.

globes,[2] compasses connect separated partners,[3] and heavenly spheres probe the mysteries of Easter.[4] Whether from his travel experiences, a naturally restless spirit, or his love of elaborate conceits, Donne frequently permeates his poetry with geographic sensibility and imagery.

However, the exact *type* of maps which Donne uses is not always clear. Scholars have long debated his choice of epistemological paradigms used in his conceits; from Empson to Falck, they have debated the degree to which Donne's conceits reflect Ptolemaic or Copernican astronomy,[5] Catholic or Calvinist theology.[6] But of all of Donne's many conceits, few are as persistent or wide-ranging as maps, and various critics have investigated the varying paradigms and patterns of cartography in his poetry. Robert L. Sharp, for example, argues that the imagined map in Donne's "The Good Morrow" should be read as heart-shaped (cordiform) in order to read the poem properly.[7] However, none of Donne's poems is more cartographically focused than "Hymn to God my God, in my Sickness." In *Sickness*, the speaker not only deploys cartographic imagery and tropes but also conflates his very self with a map, a conceit upon which he centers the poem. While Donne does not define the cartographical paradigm—modern or medieval—he is exploring, this area of ambiguity could have great interpretational significance for the poem as a whole.

Yet, when one turns to the critical record, there has been little attention paid to the type of map the speaker invokes in *Sickness* or,

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[2]"The Good Morrow," ll. 10–21.

[3]"A Valediction: forbidding Mourning," ll. 25–36.

[4]"Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward," ll. 1–8.

[5]Claire Falck, "Purer Spheres: The Space Systems of Donne's Courtly Epithalamions," *John Donne Journal* 30 (2011): 123; Christopher Stone, "John Donne and the Astronomers in *Ignatius his Conclave*," *John Donne Journal* 30 (2011): 153; Empson, "Donne the Spaceman," *The Kenyon Review* 19.3 (1957): 337–39; Kermode, *Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 123.

[6]R.V. Young, "Donne's Holy Sonnets and the Theology of Grace" in *John Donne's Poetry: Authoritative Texts, Criticism*, ed. Donald R. Dickson (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007), p. 375.

[7]Robert L. Sharp, "Donne's 'Good Morrow' and Cordiform Maps," *Modern Language Notes* 69.7 (1954): 493–95.

more importantly, how this type would affect a reading of the poem. Several readers and critics over the years, such as John Gillies and Harry M. Campbell, have emphasized the map's connection to early-modern charts with modern conventions that contemporary traders and explorers would use, the sort of map that is most widely used today.[8] Many, even most, readers simply gloss over the map type or take it for granted. A few, though, such as Ludmila Makuchowska and Layan Niayesh, have linked the poem to the medieval *mappa mundi* map type but not in great detail.[9] Some of these simply note that *Sickness* makes reference to the Noahic division of the continents, broadly calling to mind the *mappa mundi* tradition.[10] However, scholarship has otherwise been fairly silent on this point, with the exception of Niayesh and Makuchowska. Niayesh helpfully points out the association of the east with Paradise and the connection between Christ's crucifixion and the T-O form world map.[11] However, Niayesh's article, though useful, is limited; it mainly makes passing observations on these general resemblances of the map in *Sickness* to the T-O form maps of the Middle Ages and focuses more on a broad survey of maps in John Donne. Makuchowska's book also connects the sons of Noah cited in the poem to the *mappae mundi*, passingly mentions the crucifix shape of the *mappae mundi*, and makes a very brief reference to the centrality of Jerusalem and the importance of Paradise in these maps; but she does little to link *Sickness* explicitly to these map features.[12]

Donne's references and allusions to medieval cartography are neither cursory nor insignificant. Niayesh and Makuchowska are right

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[8]Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp.182–88; Campbell, "Donne's 'Hymn to God, my God, in my Sickness,'" *College English* 5.4 (Jan. 1944): 193–94.

[9]Makuchowska, *Scientific Discourse in John Donne's Eschatological Poetry* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), p. 42; Niayesh, "'All Flat Maps and I are One': Cartographic References in the Poetry of John Donne," *Études Épistémè* 10 (2006): 46–47.

[10]Henry S. Turner, "Literature and Mapping in Early Modern England, 1520–1688," *The History of Cartography*, Vol. 3, ed. David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 416–17.

[11]Niayesh, pp. 46–47.

[12]Makuchowska, pp. 34–36.

in pointing out that Donne holds the medieval and early modern conceptions of cartography in tension throughout the poem, but *Sickness* develops the conceit of medieval maps far beyond what they explore. When the reader grasps the extent to which medieval map-making traditions shape the poem's central conceit, as well as its poetics and internal structure, her understanding of the poem will only deepen. The conceit of medieval map-types shapes the dynamic of the speaker's desire for both self-preservation and identification with Christ, his appeal to God as a Reader, and the readers' devotional interaction with the poem. It informs our understanding of the speaker's identity, the significance of the physical world, the tension between the world's transience and reflection of God's glory, and the complexities of his meditation as pilgrimage, undertaken both for himself and others. In short, the medieval qualities of Donne's map are far from trivial but rather greatly enrich a critical understanding of the poem.

Influenced primarily by the *mappa mundi* form but also, to a lesser extent, pilgrimage maps, Donne develops his conceit by portraying the map's geographic features indistinctively and by layering temporal history onto the spatial representation of the map. The latter effect not only further establishes the *mappa mundi* trope but also powerfully adds to the speaker's argument and theological understanding. The poem's pattern of multiple overlapping and mutually informing texts enriches and adds to the interpretive and devotional significance of this chronological layering. Finally, *Sickness* draws upon medieval pilgrimage maps, furthering the devotional function of the poem, both for the speaker and for the reader.

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It would be helpful at this point to elucidate the differences between modern maps, as we shall call them henceforth, and the medieval *mappae mundi* (literally, "maps of the world" or "cloths of the world") and pilgrimage itineraries. The organizing principles of the typical political or geographic maps used today, from road atlases to online maps, are so pervasive and normalized to the modern reader as to be almost invisible. The area on the map's page corresponds regularly and predictably to the physical world it depicts, with an

established scale of representation and great attention to proportion. Spaces on modern maps look the way the landforms would look if viewed from a great height. Historically, they are often associated with the rise in European practical knowledge of the world in the Age of Exploration.[13] Such maps, even from Donne's time or before, would seem familiar to the modern reader, with the continents identifiable and looking roughly as they do now, though not precisely, due to incomplete exploration and charting. Ideological points of view are, though not absent, at least not typically foregrounded. In a modern map of the world, the centering of the map or the location of borders may subtly convey a real political message,[14] but the implicit ideology takes a subordinate position to accuracy of physical representation and realism. This attention to proportion and realistic representation responds directly to practical need, as such maps are often used for navigation in the physical world.

The modern map also typically depicts a specific place in a *specific time*, with time being limited to a singularity. For instance, a modern map may be a representation of the world in 1967. Such fixity of time enables and augments the modern map's overriding concern with strict representational fidelity, as, in principle, the mapmaker can set borders with accuracy and crystallize the exact state of things at one moment in time. These principles, with a focus on mathematical accuracy, representation, and the focalization of time, are manifestations not only of the methodological capabilities of the modern world, with its precise measuring instruments and standardized systems of measurement, but also of a worldview which prioritizes these empirical qualities in the first place. To describe a map of such characteristics to a modern reader can almost seem an exercise in tautology, a description of something which could not exist otherwise without ceasing to be a "map."

To be fair, this vision of the modern map is not completely absent in Donne's "Hymn to God my God, in my Sickness." The mention of

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[13]John. P. Snyder, "Map Projection in the Renaissance," *The History of Cartography*, Vol. 3, Part 1, ed. David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 365.

[14]See, for example, the People's Republic of China's "Nine Dash Line" Maps. http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/chinas-new-map-just-another-dash/

the "Pacific Sea" (l. 16)[15] shows knowledge of recent exploration largely unavailable to medieval Europeans. And although Europeans knew the globular shape of the world since Ancient Greek times and maintained this belief throughout the Western Middle Ages (contrary to popular caricature), the emphasis on the eastern route to the "eastern riches" (l. 17) of Asia—an obsession of the Age of Exploration—fits well with an early modern recognition of the spice trade, though Medieval Europe had some awareness of the tremendous wealth of Asia, too.[16] The poem likewise alludes to the contemporary obsession with finding and controlling routes to the desired lands of Asia with the mentioning of three named straits—"Gibraltar," "Magellan," and "Anyan" (l. 18), which one could read as corresponding to the sea routes to Asia around Africa, South America, and through the North-West Passage respectively.[17] While some of these elements suggest a modern cartographic understanding, many of the features of Donne's map in this poem, as well as his argument, make much more sense when investigated with an understanding of medieval map culture.

Medieval maps of the world take many different forms, but they all share a very different approach to portraying the earth than the modern map in almost every respect previously listed. There is a startling variety of world maps from the period. They could be almost psychedelically shaped like flowers, cathedral windows, or diamonds; they could contain written genealogies, abstractions of the five elements, or astrological charts.[18] In shape, concept, and detail, they are strikingly diverse. However, they share a lack of concern with accurate spatial representation or navigational utility.[19] And despite the diversity, there are some general patterns to medieval maps and several prominent and influential genres.

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[15]All quotations from Donne's poetry come from *John Donne's Poetry*, ed. Donald R. Dickson (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007).

[16]C.S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 140–41.

[17]Clay Hunt, *Donne's Poetry*, (New Haven, USA: Yale University Press, 1956), p. 105.

[18]Evelyn Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers viewed their World* (London: The British Library, 1997; pap. ed. 1999), p. 41–45.

[19]Ibid., pp. 13–14.

Arguably the most prominent type of map in the middle ages—and one which will occupy a great part of this investigation—is the *mappa mundi* or "world map." Although a variety of maps have been labeled as *mappae mundi*, this paper will focus on those known as T-O maps. They were by far the most common type, produced throughout Western Europe, particularly in the late medieval period:[20] this paper will use the term *mappae mundi* to refer specifically to them, to avoid confusion.

Medieval *mappae mundi* originated in the early middle ages, around the 5th and 6th centuries, when Christian scholars adapted earlier map styles of Classical Greece and Rome for their own religious purposes.[21] Over approximately the next millennium, the tradition of *mappae mundi* developed, with certain common idiosyncrasies.[22] The T-O *mappae mundi* (and a number of those influenced by them) shape the earth into a round form with three continents: Asia dominates the top half of the map, Europe the bottom left, and Africa the bottom right. Waterways separate the continents in the very particular capital T-shape of a cross over the map.[23] This combination of a round world map separated internally by T-shaped waterways gives the T-O maps their name.[24] The maps orient the world towards the east, often with a sort of Paradise at the top.[25] Furthermore, vignettes of Biblical and Classical lore often pepper the map to the effect where the map can appear to be a sort of cartographic picture book.[26] All of these details, along with distorted or heavily schematized presentations of landmasses, can cause the modern reader to be quite confused.[27]

Modern scholars have established that medieval mapmakers did not compose *mappae mundi* for realistic navigational purposes but for

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[20]David Woodward, "Medieval *Mappaemundi*," *The History of Cartography*, Vol. 3., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 297.

[21]Ibid., pp. 209–302.

[22]Ibid., pp. 300–18.

[23]Edson, pp. 4–5. Some maps, particularly the Hereford map, do not present the waterways in as clear a T-shape but have the same general form of waterways.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid., p.15.

[26]Ebstorf, pp. 14–16; Woodward, pp. 326–33.

[27]Ebstorf, pp. 13–14.

ideological, symbolic, and contemplative purposes.[28] Medieval scribes across Europe produced *mappae mundi* for a diversity of settings, including as informative additions to historical texts and psalters, in separate atlases, or as monumental altar-pieces.[29] Though the larger, more famous *mappae mundi* were in fixed geographic locations, the vast majority were circulated in manuscript form.[30] Furthermore, some contemporary scholars would verbally describe famous *mappae mundi*, such as the Ebstorf map, in separate texts.[31] One can find examples of these maps throughout Europe in many centuries of the Middle Ages. Cartographic historian David Woodward tallies several hundred extant surviving *mappae mundi* from the 8th to the 15th centuries but also argues that an unusually high percentage of the originals seems to have been lost or destroyed; they seem to have been fairly accessible cultural artifacts.[32] Interestingly, some examples from the 15th century display the format of *mappae mundi* but start to incorporate new geographic findings,[33] which suggests that the presence of early modern geographic details alone cannot discount Donne's map as a *mappa mundi*.

Two of the most famous examples are the Hereford *mappa mundi* (see Fig. 1) and the Ebstorf *mappa mundi*. The first is a 13th-century cloth world map, approximately 1.6 by 1.3 meters, hung on the wall of the cathedral in Hereford, England.[34] The latter is a 3.6 by 3.6 meters 12th-century world map located in Ebstorf, Saxony, until it was destroyed in Second World War bombing raids; only a facsimile remains.[35] Despite the idiosyncratic differences in both, these two maps represent well the later *mappa mundi* tradition of the middle ages. It seems that *mappae mundi* and their descriptions were not uncommon in the 16th and 17th centuries. Considering that Donne travelled widely around England and continental Europe as part of his Renaissance education, living for two years in Germany in his later life,

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[28]Ibid., pp. 14–15.
[29]Woodward, pp. 299–318.
[30]Ibid., p. 286.
[31]Ebstorf, p. 11.
[32]Woodward, p. 292.
[33]Ibid., pp. 314–18.
[34]Ibid., p. 309.
[35]Ibid., p. 307.

it is not unlikely that he would have had the chance to see several examples of this tradition, possibly even the two to which this paper refers.

Fig. 1. Hereford *Mappa Mundi* © The Dean and Chapter of Hereford Cathedral. Used by permission.

The modern reader, with modern expectations, may well first be struck by the *mappa mundi's* inaccurate, disorienting quality, with wildly indeterminate landforms. In fact, she might not immediately recognize she is actually looking at a map of the world. Continents

exist, but have only the vaguest resemblance to their modern depictions—indeed, too vague a resemblance for the casual reader to identify them at first glance. There is quite a literal skew of orientation, with the top of the map generally being fixed on the east instead of the north. The map can also exaggerate the size of areas deemed to be important.[36] However, the *mappae mundi's* gross lack (in modern eyes) of representational accuracy of the world as we know it does not merely reflect a lack of medieval geographic knowledge. As C.S. Lewis notes about the Hereford *mappa mundi* in a general discussion of medieval maps:

> [the mapmaker] cannot have been anything like so ignorant as the cartographer appears to be. For one thing, the British Isles themselves are the most ludicrously erroneous parts of his map. Dozens, perhaps hundreds of those who looked at it when it was new, must have at least known that Scotland and England were not separate islands. The bluebonnets had come over the border too many times to permit any such illusion.[37]

Lewis continues to argue that educated medieval readers would understand that the earth was not flat and that even some non-educated contemporary readers of the map would, at times, disregard the actual representational quality of the Hereford *mappa mundi*.[38] Surely, the lack of navigational instruments would have something to do with this lack of geographic accuracy, but it cannot account for all of it. In the words of Evelyn Edson:

> The concern with geographical blunders that so occupied the cartographic historians of the last generation was based on the assumption that the purpose of medieval maps was similar to ours—to represent the world by a physically accurate model, which would enable one to find one's way about. Perhaps this was true for some medieval maps, but these would have been regional or local maps. . . .[39]

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[36]Woodward, p. 288.
[37]Lewis, p. 143.
[38]Ibid.
[39]Edson, p.13.

Edson goes on to say that, in the same period during which *mappae mundi* were produced, very accurate regional representations of coastlines emerged, first in verbal charts, then in pictorial maps.[40]

The inaccuracy and indeterminacy of the maps, then, do not simply follow from a lack of *ability* or *knowledge* about the arrangement of the outer world but rather a lack of *interest* in strict geographic fidelity or even, possibly, an intentional distortion or conflating of areas. The medieval creators of the world maps concerned themselves little with representational veracity, as the purpose of the *mappae mundi* was not physical navigation but contemplation. As Woodward explains, their "primary purpose . . . was to instruct the faithful about the significant events in Christian history rather than to record precise locations."[41] This paradigm had long changed by Donne's time in favor of more modern, widely available, projection-based maps, compared to which the *mappae mundi* would seem grossly inaccurate, lacking regular dividing lines of longitude and latitude. One of the overarching aesthetic qualities of the *mappa mundi* tradition, then, especially in early modern eyes, is spatial-mimetic indeterminacy, inaccuracy, and irregularity. Despite such representational spatial distortions, though, the maps display what the medievals saw as the true spiritual character of the world.

A lack of certainty and regularity likewise characterize the shape of geography in Donne's "Hymn to God my God, in my Sickness." The map is marked by doubt in definite location. As the speaker describes the cartographic scene of his final hours, he cannot locate exactly where his metaphorical destination or home is, asking, with three interrogatives, "Is the Pacific sea my home? Or are / The eastern riches? Is Jerusalem" (ll. 16–17). Likewise, in line 18, the speaker struggles to chart exactly what his route must be to arrive at his uncertain destination, asking whether it is through the straits of "Anyan [or] Magellan [or] Gibraltar." Nor does he label the continents with certainty (ll. 19–20). The world map which surfaces in *Sickness*, particularly this fourth stanza, is a murky one, with wildly uncertain, even shifting, borders and placements. This geography of representational indeterminacy evokes the spatial confusion of the *mappae mundi.*

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[40]Ibid., p. 14.

[41]Woodward, p. 286.

Even so, Donne's map has a careful order and purpose, eschewing geographic realism in favor of presenting the world as a place charged with theological significance.

Certain geographic features, namely waterways, structure *mappae mundi* and Donne's map. As Woodward claims, "[i]n the absence of a grid of latitude and longitude, the main locational structure of the *mappae mundi* was provided by prominent hydrographic features."[42] In Donne's poem, bodies of water provide internal structure. The south-west of the speaker's map is marked by "*Per fretum febris*, by these straits to die" (l. 10). The third stanza, too, cites "straits" (l. 11) and "currents" (l. 12), while the fourth stanza features the "Pacific Sea" (l. 16) as well as more "straits," particularly, as previously mentioned, "Anyan, and Magellan, and Gibraltar." Although these waterways, once again, are marked by indeterminacy, they order the map of the world much more than landforms do, consistent with the *mappae mundi*.

Other consistent, distinctive geographic conventions and features of the *mappa mundi* are relevant for comparison with Donne's poem. First, as mentioned above, the *mappa mundi* is generally orientated towards the east, with the earthly Paradise often at the very top of the map, somewhere where one would expect Japan to be, although the exact location shifts from map to map and is impossible to identify with confidence.[43] The identification of the Far East with Paradise is fairly consistent, constantly reminding the viewer of the perfection from which Man fell and the heavenly perfection to which he might eventually journey.[44] Such an association of the east with Paradise extends past the *mappae mundi*, echoing throughout Israelite cosmography and the church fathers. In the words of John of Damascus:

> It is not without reason or chance that we worship towards the East. . . . [for as] Christ is called in the Scriptures Sun of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2) and Dayspring, the East is the direction that must be assigned to His worship. . . .

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[42]Woodward, p. 328.

[43]Edson, p. 15.

[44]Suzanne Conklin Akbari, "From Due East to True North: Orientalism and Orientation," in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), p. 21.

> Moreover the Scripture also says, *And God planted a garden eastward in Eden*. . . . So, then, we worship God seeking and striving after our old fatherland.[45]

Secondly, three continents—Africa, Asia, and Europe—occur on the map in a similar fashion, with Asia dominating the top half of the map, Africa the lower right quadrant, and Europe the lower left. Importantly, they bear the designation of Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, who, according to tradition, each settled a different continent, though the exact identification of particular sons with particular continents differs.[46] Finally, the map centers on the world's *omphalos*, Jerusalem, the space in which Christ died and was resurrected, sanctifying it in the process.[47] The map reflects the European Christian desire to return to Jerusalem in the Crusades or in pilgrimage; the holy city, as Suzanne Conklin Akbari notes, "is figured as a place of return,"[48] but even this martial desire springs from a Christian spiritual need to return to the place of Christ's cross, to the spiritual home.[49] These three features—the Noahic division of the continents; the eastward, paradisiacal orientation of the map; and the centrality of Jerusalem, with its own center of Christ's cross and necessity of return—give the *mappae mundi* a consistent and idiosyncratic system of geographic organization.

The organization of space in *Sickness* mirrors this patterning. As other critics have noted, the reference to the lands "where Japhet dwelt, or Cham, or Shem" (l. 20) alludes to the organization of the continents between the sons of Noah.[50] Curiously, the speaker does not identify the continents with their modern names, as he does the straits which could lead him there, but instead uses the same nomenclature as the *mappae mundi*. His geographic identification here is consciously medieval, to the exclusion of the modern.

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[45]John of Damascus, *An Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, Chapter 12. http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/33044.htm.

[46]Akbari, pp. 22–23.

[47]Edson, p. 9; Makuchowska, p. 44; Woodward, p. 340.

[48]Akbari, p. 21.

[49]*King James Bible*, Hebrews 12:22; Revelations 21:2.

[50]Makushowska, p. 42; Niayesh, p. 21.

The speaker shows a modern understanding of world geography when he confidently states that "West and East / In all flat maps (and I am one) are one" (ll. 13–14). However, he ironically plays both paradigms off each other with a subtle, but insistent fixation and focus on the East. He specifies the east as the place of resurrection and the west as the place of death,[51] an arrangement strongly suggestive of the *mappae mundi*'s practice of identifying the east with the lost, untainted Paradise. The speaker reinforces his subtle allusion when he muses over where he should map the place of his pilgrimage, his return, first suggesting "the Pacific Sea" (l. 16) then "the eastern riches" (l. 17). One could simply read the mapping of his spiritual home onto the east as an extension of a more obvious conceit, where travelling to the east from the west is a simple image of journeying from death to resurrection, an image with solar allusions, as Niayesh, among others, has noted.[52] But even this identification of death with reaching the boundaries of the known world finds precedent in a strange detail of the Hereford *mappa mundi*: around the borders of the world map, letters spell "MORS"—Latin for "death."[53] Death's literal bounding of the world in this medieval map complicates a simple reading of Donne's *Sickness*, where critics see the speaker's leaving the edge of the map as a mere image of the contiguity of east and west, a reflection of the world's global shape. Regardless, though, the speaker's treatment of the east as his focus, the spiritual "home" (l. 16) from which he is estranged and to which he must return, just as Man himself is estranged from Paradise with a yearning to return, accords powerfully with the medieval custom of placing the lost Paradise in the east, at the top of the map.[54]

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[51]Ibid., ll. 9–10.

[52]Niayesh, p. 46.

[53]Edson, p. 142.

[54]Makuchowska, it should be noted, also recognizes the eastern placement of Paradise in *mappae mundi*; but she claims that, in contrast to Milton's writing, "Donne's *mappa mundi* does not seem to feature the exact location of Paradise" (p. 44). The lack of exact location is consistent with my argument, but she further does not explicitly link Paradise to any features of the map, instead describing the eastern lands in terms of the "New Geography": they are, to her, "destinations of trade voyages, adventure travels or scientific expeditions" (p. 46). She argues that the poem tries to locate the terrestrial

Donne's medieval organization of the main geographic features of his map continues in his centralizing treatment of Jerusalem, which he depicts as a place of return and of pilgrimage. Although the speaker does not explicitly refer to Jerusalem as the center of his map, it is undoubtedly the place of his longing and the end of his meditative journey. Throughout the short poem, the reader can trace the speaker's journeys from the South-West straits, across the Pacific to Asia and finally to Jerusalem (ll. 9, 16–17). Clearly, it is the focus of the speaker's attention, the place of necessary return. Akbari's assertion that the obsessed Christian imagination centers on the Jerusalem of the *mappae mundi*, desiring to reclaim the site of Christ's cross, could just as easily apply to Donne's map. At the very imaginative center of Jerusalem in *Sickness* is the *omphalos* of the entire world, the tree which is mystically both Adam's Tree of Knowledge and the Cross of Christ. It is the center of Christian history, of the speaker's spiritual longing and fulfillment, of his eschatological destiny, and, quite literally, of his world. Makuchowska, similarly to her treatment of Paradise, raises the fact that Jerusalem is central in *mappae mundi*, but does not argue that this centrality is also present in the poem. Rather she emphasizes that Jerusalem is "anticipated only as one of many alternative ends of earthly pilgrimage,"[55] suggesting that she sees this as a digression from the model of the *mappae mundi*. At the very least, she draws no positive comparison between the Jerusalem of the medieval map and that of Donne's *Sickness*.

Both the Eastern Paradise and Jerusalem are centers of focus, sites of return. The Eastern Paradise, though, figures briefly as the site of Man's lost original bliss, the lost "home" of Man's Nature. It remains, in the wake of Original Sin, unattainable and impossible to map with confidence in the medieval maps and in *Sickness*. Without this home, Man wanders in the Augustinian *regio dissimilitudinis* (the realm of

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Paradise among the disparate interpretations of space," but her analysis stops at generally commenting on the differences between "space structured by the Christian faith [Jerusalem] . . . [and] the space of burgeoning capitalist order [the Eastern islands]." Her reading raises the question of Paradise on the medieval map but ultimately denies its place on Donne's map.

[55]Makuchowska, p. 46.

Unlikeness), cut off from God and his own very Nature.[56] This spiritual and existential alienation stands at the heart of Donne's poem, reinforced by the subsequent recalling of other realms, those of Noah's three scattered sons, themselves reminders of Man's frustration in dissimilitude. The second site of the speaker's focus in the poem is Jerusalem, the place where Nature, Grace, and Original Sin meet in the speaker's imagination. The speaker tentatively shifts his previous focus on the East, claiming that "[w]e *think* that Paradise . . . stood in [this] place" (l. 21, emphasis added). Here, too, the injury of Man's Nature took place, the site of the first Adam's "tree" (l. 22)—an emblem of his rebellion against God—and his "sweat" (l. 24), synecdochical for all suffering resulting from the Fall. Yet it is here that Christ, the second Adam, dispenses Grace through his "cross" (l. 22) and his "blood" (l. 25), an act which restores Man's wounded original Nature. The Eastern Paradise, then, the first site of the speaker's gaze, emblemizes the longed-for unfallen Nature. It cannot be located with certainty in either the *mappae mundi* or in the poem, a situation which reflects the state of Man: he cannot ignore his lost Nature yet cannot recover it, apart from Grace. The speaker's shift of attention to the more central Jerusalem refocuses the reader's gaze on the Grace of Christ. Here, the stories of the original Nature, now wounded and lost, and of the Original Sin which effected this loss of Nature are not ignored; at Jerusalem's center, the cross binds them up together and even redeems them. Paradise floats hauntingly on the Eastern boundary of the map, unreachable and tantalizing, yet the speaker can now access it and enter "that holy room" (l. 1) through Grace. The "eastern riches" (l. 17) picture a good, but irrevocably lost Nature; Jerusalem pictures its redemptive recovery.

Hence, the geographic details of this short poem, with its Noahic nomenclature of the continents, paradisiacal Eastward-orientation, and centering of Jerusalem as a place of return, mirror the *mappae mundi's* geographical organizing features. Yet this placement is not merely decorative but is structurally related to the issues of Nature, Sin, and Grace that are so enwreathed throughout the poem, just as they are,

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[56]*Confessions*, trans. by Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 20.

without exaggeration, through all medieval thought. This medieval map arrangement explores very medieval problems and solutions.

Similarities in the treatment of time also connect Donne's poem with the *mappae mundi*. As previously suggested, the modern map seeks to limit the existence of time on a map to a singularity, a slice of time. A typical modern map would seek to illustrate the world in a very particular point of time, such as the hypothetical 1967 map of the world. The *mappae mundi*, however, take a very different approach. They portray the world not excluded from the passage of time, but quite contrarily, as the space which contains the grand scope and flow of Christian redemptive history. As Edson argues, "The overwhelming interest behind these maps was . . . not geography alone, but geography in the context of history, particularly ancient history."[57] The pictures on the Hereford *mappa mundi* depict some events from classical antiquity, but most are from Christian history.[58] On this, the reader can see Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, Noah's ark, the wife of the patriarch Lot (in her more mineral form), the journeys of the Israelites, and, of course, the crucifix of Christ in the center, with "historical time flow[ing] down the map, from the expulsion from Paradise in the east . . . to the newest cities in the west."[59] Such an inclusion of Christian time within the map is not merely a curiosity, but an expression of the rather Augustinian idea that the world is primarily important as the site of salvation history. The layering of events in the text graphically represents the ideological significance of the story of God intervening in human history and saving some by His Grace. The world is a text enacting, at all moments, the narrative of God interacting with His people from the beginning of time, through the Cross of Christ, through the present, and into the everlasting future. The presence of past figures on the *mappae mundi* represents the origins and teleology of Christian history.

Donne also writes the presence of Christian history onto the very geography in *Sickness*. As previously suggested, when Donne describes the different regions of the world "whether where Japhet dwelt, or Cham, or Shem" (l. 20), he is, like the *mappa mundi* designers, not only

[57]Edson, p. 135.
[58]Ibid., pp. 139–44.
[59]Edson, p. 140, Plates VII, IX, and X.

describing the world with biblical history lying over it but also mapping the continents as belonging to the progeny of the three respective sons of Noah.[60] The physical geography reflects biblical history through its very system of identification. Even more specifically, and more importantly for his textual agenda, Donne states:

> We think that Paradise and Calvary,
> Christ's cross and Adam's tree, stood in one place;
> Look, Lord, and find both Adams met in me.
> As the first Adam's sweat surrounds my face,
> May the last Adam's blood my soul embrace.
> (21–25)

Donne here centers the importance of his poem around Golgotha in Jerusalem, just as the medieval mapmakers would literally center their maps on Jerusalem. And at this spot, he layers the time of redemptive history. The place where the speaker locates the "I" of the poem, the place in the world where he finds himself not traveling but stationary, consciously recalls both the histories of the first "Adam," who brought death into the entire human race through the fruit of a tree, and the second "Adam," Christ, whose death upon a tree brings life to His people. In one stanza then, in "one place," Donne recalls and summons the entire story of Man's fall from Grace, with "the first Adam," and his redemption through Christ, "the last Adam." Such a compounding of images, with the recollection of the two Adam figures, the cross of Christ, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, the sons of Noah, and Paradise, is not merely an aesthetic flourish or confirming detail of the medieval cartographic approach. Like the spatial arrangement of the map itself, it is central to the argumentative and theological dynamic of the poem, as shall be later discussed. The imaginatively conjured map which the speaker transverses, like the *mappae mundi*, is one littered, for such a small poem, with images and characters from Jewish and Christian history; the spaces themselves recall and retell Christian history with each iteration.

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[60]Akbari, p. 28.

The speaker's purpose in layering time onto the image of his *mappa mundi* is not a mere formal exercise but has deeply personal implications. For the speaker writes not only Adam and Christ onto the imaginative landscape of the poem but himself as well, urging God to read the map of redemptive history in connection with himself, saying "[l]ook . . . and find both Adams met in *me*" (emphasis added). The description is a complex pairing of the speaker's self being written into sacred history and sacred history being written onto his very being as a map, a phenomenon of transposition. As God reads the map-like text of the speaker's life, he will read the salvation story of Christ written onto the map which is him, or, alternatively, when God reads the story of his redemption, he will see the speaker as part of this story, as another figure on the *mappa mundi*. In either interpretation, the speaker implicates himself in the map-like text of salvation, and thus, has the security of knowing that God will not abandon him. God, the Great Map Reader, will read him into this history, thus allaying his anxiety of damnation, which is so prominent in this poem.

This overlapping of temporal events on the physical space of the map, the *mappae mundi*'s tendency to layer texts on top of one another, goes further. Beyond this phenomenon of representing time diachronically, though related to it and extending from it, is a curious layering and overlapping of the spaces of texts themselves, an effect which occurs in multiple ways. As previously mentioned, the *mappae mundi* do not, to use a crude analogy, "slice" time to create a synchronic representation of the world, but rather "stack" it on top of the map, with multiple times being recreated simultaneously on the same geographic space, mutually illuminating and interpreting each other. But these maps encode other aspects of layering that interestingly resemble Donne's habit of reading bodies as texts or maps in other ways. Some maps literally write texts such as family charts or explanations of the elements on their landforms.[61] As Edson argues, the very T-O map shape, with a T-shaped set of waterways inscribing the earth, has medieval pedigree "as a crucifix superimposed on the spherical earth;" one abbey in France featured a *mappa mundi* as a meditational symbol of Christ's cross over the

[61]Edson, pp. 42–71.

world.[62] The Ebstorf *mappa mundi*, with Christ superimposed as crucified over the four quadrants of the map, merely extends this concept.[63] Here, the crucifixion site of Jerusalem, as per usual, occupies the central point of the map, and Christ's arms, feet, and hands protrude out of the cardinal points.

But whether in the simple cross of the usual T-O map or the more elaborate illustration of the Ebstorf *mappa mundi*, Christ, like the speaker's body in *Sickness*, lies flat as a text superimposed over the map of the world. In some ways, He has been made into a map. The two texts mutually inform each other. The map of the world has, once again, the story of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection applied to it, marking its geography as sacred, and the body of Christ presides majestically over the physical world, marking his claim to the entire world. Readers either could see in the map of the world the triumphal redemptive effects of Christ on the cross applied to it, lending sacredness to the world, or they could look at Christ and see the world applied to him, in a sort of gesture towards Christ's kingly ownership. In either case, the "the coterminousness of the body of Christ and the earth itself"[64] causes the texts to be seen through each other in a dynamic of simultaneous and mutual interpretation. It is as if they stack on top of one another in a sort of transparency of texts. In a strangely related effect, as critic Katherine Breen notes, one of the better known medieval pilgrimage itineraries, in Matthew Paris' *Historia Anglorum*, exhibits a similar yet different effect of literal transparency and interchangeability between the maps of England and the Holy Land, which occupy opposite sides of the same, thin page. As she states:

> Matthew's representation of England and Jerusalem must be closely intertwined, and indeed they are. . . . Jerusalem itself . . . shines unmistakably through the blank expanse of western Scotland, while other features of the Holy Land are visible throughout Britain and its surrounding seas.

[62]Ibid., p. 5.
[63]Ibid.
[64]Akbari, p. 20.

> Conversely, the outline of Britain is superimposed on the sacred geography of Palestine.[65]

As Breen argues here, the physical transparency of the text allows for the meaning of one text to be superimposed over and inform other texts, in this case lending religious importance to the landscape of Britain. In both cases, the maps contain multiple texts which are layered over one another in an almost transparent fashion, transferring meaning from one to another. The coterminous text-maps mutually inform one another and interpret each other.

A great deal of textual layering occurs throughout Donne's *Sickness*, too, with an extensive effect of transparency. The initial and central transposition of texts is the layering of the speaker's body-as-text and the map of the world. As Christ's body is stretched out like a transparency on top of the world map in the Ebstorf *mappa mundi*, so the speaker is spread out on a bed, with the world written upon him, text-like, in *Sickness*. As the speaker says, his physicians have "grown / Cosmographers, and [he] their map, who lie[s] / Flat on this bed" (ll. 6–8). These lines introduce the notion, first of all, that the speaker is a text, specifically a "map," that can be read intelligibly. His special audience of "cosmographers," though, does not merely "read" the speaker as if he were his own map. The reader cannot understand the details of the speaker's internal state in and of themselves; rather, the map of the world figured upon them renders them fully intelligible. Each aspect of the speaker's experience correlates with and maps onto details of the physical world; to see his anxieties, his physical sufferings, his hope, his consolation is to see the various straits, the spherical curve of the earth, the Pacific, Jerusalem, and vice versa. Simply put, the speaker's horizontal, flat body becomes a text which has the signification of a map of the physical world projected onto it, like Christ's body in the Ebstorf *mappa mundi*. When one looks at the speaker's body, one sees the world.

This principle of transparent maps, with meaning transferred between layers, also intimately relates to the theological crux that lies

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[65]Katherine Breen, "Returning Home from Jerusalem: Matthew Paris's First Map of Britain in its Manuscript Context," *Representations* 89.1 (2005): 62.

at the heart of this poem and the speaker's quest for spiritual comfort. As the speaker says "in his [Christ's] purple wrapp'd, receive me, Lord" (l. 26), he introduces the basis of his spiritual security. Many readers, many eyes view the "I" of the text: the speaker himself, the physicians, and the actual reader of the poem. The speaker's particular anxiety springs, however, from the readerly position of God, who can look at his "map" and see his sinfulness. When he urges, "Look, Lord, and find both Adams met in me" (l. 23), he wishes for God to view him not merely as the first Adam, with the inherited taint of original sin, but as having the story of the second Adam, Christ, projected onto him. The speaker urges God the reader to see an image of Christ to lie on top of the world map of the self, whilst the first map—the Adamic original—is still visible. This theological plea, of course, is none other than the Protestant teaching of imputed righteousness, in which Christ's righteousness covers and is credited to sinful Man.[66]

Both the atoning blood of Christ which "embrace[s]" (l. 25) his soul, and the "purple wrapp'd" (l. 26) around the speaker—as symbol of Christ's regal righteousness covering over sin and shame—overwrite the natural map of the self without obliterating it, so that the Divine Reader sees Christ when he looks at the speaker and can accept the speaker. The "purple wrapp'd" is literally a Christly layer wrapped around the self which informs external viewing. The similarities between this phenomenon and the reader of a *mappa mundi* looking at the world and seeing Christ's body, or looking at secular England and seeing the Holy Land bleed through are intriguing. Both present the "secular" text as doubly sacralized by and belonging to the Christly overlay. In fact, this dynamic is part of the central argument of the text itself.

When one considers this imputation of righteousness in the context of overlapping, "transparent" texts, the layers of text begin to multiply. As already discussed, the speaker initiates the process by projecting a map of the world onto his body. But the map of the world itself, in the vein of the *mappae mundi*, reminds the reader of another text, that of the history of Christ's redemptive action in the world, or the gospel. *Sickness* represents this text on Donne's *mappa mundi* with a variety of references to Biblical history but crystalizes the action at

[66]Young, p. 375.

Jerusalem, in the center. Here, the speaker adds the textual layer of Christ's imputed righteousness to his original self, clearly calling upon God to "*look* . . . and *find* both Adams met in [him]" (emphasis added). The layering of text is further complicated as the entire poem is written onto the real, physical pages of the book with physical ink, and the reader sees through all the layers of representation by the act of reading. Meaning thus easily transfers between the multiple texts of the poem. To see the speaker is to see the physical world, which is to see the mark of God's action in time throughout human history; all of these are visible through the act of reading the poem on the page. To see him is also to see Christ's Grace, given through imputed righteousness. The reader can repeat the action of reading in any configuration by changing the "primary text" through which he looks, as all the other transparent texts are visible and reflected throughout. Such is the logic of typological truth, where all significant texts eventually lead back to the greatest Signification, the urtext, the Gospel. All the world is a text suitable for reading. This layering of maps allows reading to be so fruitful, as the speaker's self is a map into which he reads multiple layers of significance, allowing him to call himself "my text, my sermon to mine own" (l. 29). The medieval map-making tradition, then, ignores meanings which are limited and fixed, but rather allows for almost unlimited transfer of meaning from text to text.

A dynamic of multiple "readers" of these multiple "texts" further complicates a critical understanding of the transparency of the map. The assumed reader of the poem is not fixed. The concept of reader includes the speaker himself, who is searching for consolation in the face of death. He must read his own soul and the world well, transposing his own text for Christ's imputed text, as he stands on the brink of a new world. The speaker also explicitly labels the physicians as "cosmographers" who read and study the map-as-speaker; they gather around the supine speaker and see his mortality pictured in the map which is his body. God, too, will read the speaker as a layered text, seeing Christ inscribed on him. However, though Donne constructs the poem as a personal piece of meditation, it is, like much of Donne's poetry, conscious of external readers beyond even the physicians. The reader of the poem, too, is one of the assumed "readers" of Donne's layered "text"; the speaker implies that he is

used to preaching sermons to others. Such an understanding of the reader as a "reader" in the poem's system of overlapping texts raises the possibility of one more text being added to the already bustling terrain: the reader himself. For, is it not probable that the speaker, too, a self-admitted writer of sermons, would expect the reader to write his own self onto the landscape of the speaker's mortality, spiritual anxiety, and comfort?

This reading resembles and responds to other critical interpretations of the speaker's self-mapping. Matthew Horn argues that Donne's poetry shows a profound fear of self-erasure after death, which he addresses by writing himself into poems designed to be read by God.[67] By doing this, Horn argues, Donne seeks to gain a permanent existence in the immutable and eternal mind of God. Contrary to this reading of Donne's poetry, which seeks the preservation and remembrance of the speaker, Frances Cruikshank claims quite the opposite and asserts that when the speaker wishes to be "wrapp'd" in Christ's purple and embraced "[h]e desires the disintegration and disappearance of his own flawed self, and the erasure of his identity in a final and very extreme unction" and to be "finally consume[d]."[68] These two disparate readings of the poem—of self-preservation and self-erasure—both bear a resemblance to the reading proposed in this essay.

Yet, a *mappa mundi*-informed interpretation of the poem can shed light on both. For, as in Horn's reading, the speaker's quest to be read onto God's map of salvation history, to be a part of God's story, is definitely a plea to be remembered, to preserve the self through attaching itself to something of unquestionable permanence. And yet, the preserved self can only continue with a Christly overlay, with God the Reader seeing Christ's identity over the speaker. The speaker continues to exist, but the imputed righteousness of Christ literally covers him, providing another appearance for the Divine Reader. Cruikshank is almost right to claim that the speaker wishes for "the

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[67]Matthew Horn, "John Donne, godly inscription, and permanency of self in *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*," *Renaissance Studies* 24.3 (2010): 365–80.

[68]Frances Cruikshank, *Verse and Poetics in George Herbert and John Donne* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), p. 22.

disappearance of his own *flawed* self."[69] But the speaker's desire for the removal of guilt does not amount to the disintegration of this self or the "erasure of identity," as the speaker clearly asks "Look, Lord, and find *both* Adams met in me" (l. 23, emphasis added). Contrary to Cruikshank's argument, the speaker asks for the self, explicitly linked to the sinful Adamic original, to remain and even to be visible. Two Adams are simultaneously visible. Such a dynamic, where Christ's self wraps over and gives righteousness to the original self, which yet remains, finds clear interpretation in the *mappa mundi* model, where the corporeal original can continue to exist with Christ's salvation written over and onto it.

This devotional and meditative function of *Sickness* draws not only upon the characteristics of the *mappa mundi* tradition but also upon another prominent medieval cartographical genre: the pilgrimage itinerary. Possibly the most famous example of the genre, which the images in this essay are taken from and which this discussion will refer more particularly to, is the work of Matthew Paris, a 13th-century Benedictine monk from St. Alban's Abbey in Hertfordshire (Fig. 2). The pilgrimage itinerary is a map that reconstructs a journey taken for religious purposes, ultimately ending at a holy place. Like the *mappae mundi*, it does not mean to accurately represent the physical space of the world. Such a map reconstructs a journey in a purely linear form, as the path of the pilgrim cuts its way through the physical world, with cities and places aside from the pilgrim's road representing a subtle threat of distraction from the task of reaching one's spiritual destination, represented most often by Jerusalem.[70] The world outside of the destination is two dimensional, with the end of the pilgrimage and places of rest depicted as three-dimensional open cities on the map.[71] Distances between cities show not in terms of physical space but in terms of time, helping to break the pilgrimage into discrete steps.[72]

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[69]Ibid., p. 110. Emphasis added.
[70]Breen, pp. 75–83.
[71]Ibid., pp. 61–65.
[72]Ibid., p. 61.

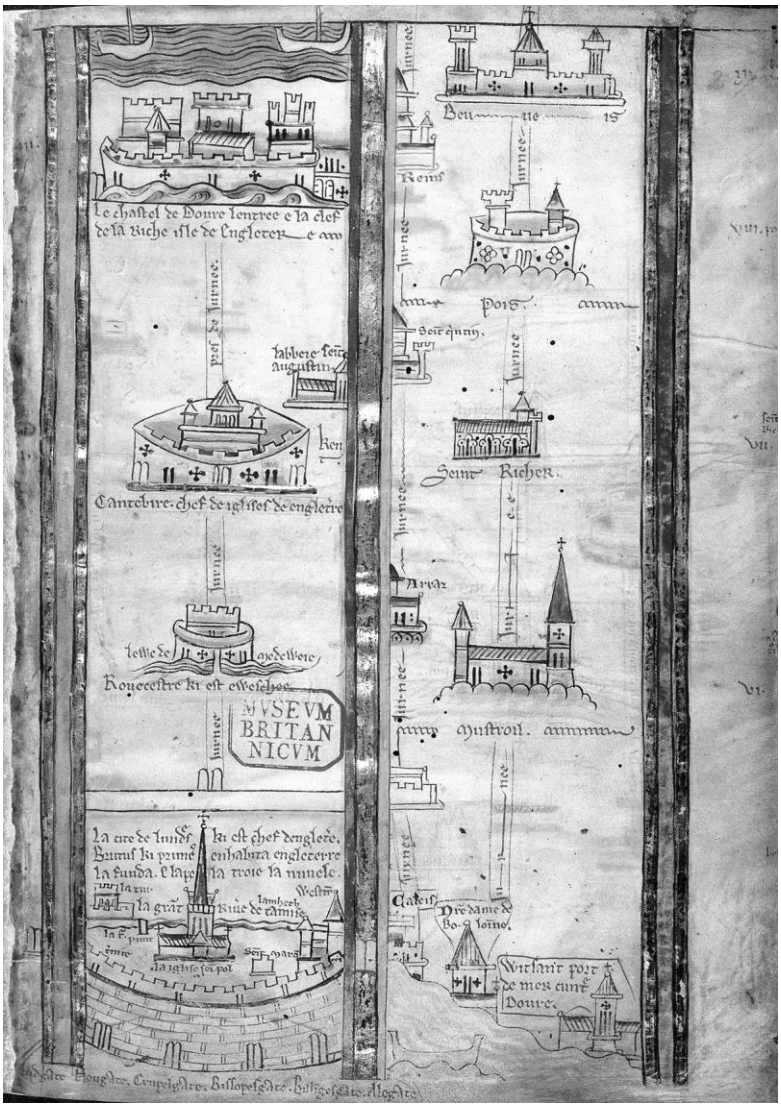

Fig. 2. Excerpt of Matthew Pilgrimage Itinerary Map © The British Library. Used by permission.

Significantly, though, according to several scholars, the creators of pilgrimage itineraries never intended for them to function as actual guides to pilgrims making the physical journey, but as meditative

guides for those who could not travel. As Katherine Breen says of Matthew Paris, "Matthew's geography is an imaginative syntactical ordering of space [that] situates him within an established tradition of presenting movement through space in linguistic terms (and vice versa)."[73] The medieval pilgrimage itinerary situates the reader as a vicarious traveler who imaginatively participates; in the very act of turning the pages and following the track of the virtual pilgrim's path through the earth, the reader enters a mental pilgrimage, which ultimately has real devotional value.

The map of the world in "Hymn to God my God, in my Sickness" also employs this dynamic of spiritual journey. The speaker's imagined movement is, essentially, a pilgrimage. He prepares to leave his home and undertake a perilous voyage towards a holy destination, a repose for his soul. His considered endpoints include both possible locations of the Eastern, earthly Paradise and Jerusalem itself, the city which medieval pilgrims most intensely longed to see. Of course, both of these stand in for "that holy room . . . with [God's] choir of saints" (ll. 1–2)—Heaven itself, the eternal home for each Christian pilgrim, the New Jerusalem. The speaker even carries out his spiritual journey towards Jerusalem with signs of contrition befitting a pilgrimage. His sweat suggests the labor of both hard travel and death. His crown of thorns seems like a penitential piece of clothing worn on pilgrimage, even though it is imposed on him involuntarily. The speaker evokes the asceticism of a pilgrim who leaves his home and embarks on a dangerous and harrowing journey for the hope of a spiritual home and of God's restoration and glorification in response to the speaker's abnegation. The speaker's assertion that "Therefore that he may raise, the Lord throws down" (l. 30) allows him to reframe the sufferings of his pilgrimage in terms of the rewards that these trials will give him: in the words of Jesus in the Beatitudes, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."[74] The experience of physical anguish, alienation, and humiliation as a pilgrim is not final, but will be exchanged for glory, a sense of home, and a regally purple reception in the New Jerusalem. Donne's journey is not merely exploratory, then, but is a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

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[73]Ibid., p. 60.

[74]Matthew 5:4.

His description of the map, too, resembles that of a pilgrimage itinerary in several ways. Although the map has the form of a *mappa mundi*, displaying the rich history of God's redemption on the earth, it also has an inherently transitory quality: it emphasizes movement through the world. Donne does not just describe a landscape, a fixed location, but, just as importantly, a route through the world. The speaker's map depicts not a static place to inhabit or explore but a place to travel through. The one repeated geographic image in *Sickness*, of course, is that of straits, which the speaker only mentions because he must pass through them in order to reach his goal (ll. 10–11). The entire fourth stanza describes space that must be traveled through, as the speaker says "All straits, and none but straits, are ways to them [spiritual destinations]"(l. 19). This thirty-line poem includes the word "straits" four times (five if one includes the Latin iteration in line 10), with three specific examples being named. As a geographic feature, straits exist entirely to pass through. They are marks on Donne's pilgrimage map, the maritime equivalent of city gates on a road that proceeds in a linear fashion towards Jerusalem. The straits are the speaker's *via dolorosa* to the base of Golgotha, the painful path he must walk in following Christ towards the very site of Jesus's sufferings. The straits—his maritime path—are oddly central in his map, just as the pilgrimage itinerary places the pilgrim's road in the center of the map. The map Donne conjures, then, even as it calls to mind God's story in the world, dramatizes the movement of the pilgrim through the world.

As a reciprocal motion to its centralizing of the pilgrim's path, *Sickness* peripheralizes the sights and curiosities of the world, just as the pilgrimage itinerary does. Whereas pilgrimage itineraries de-emphasize the larger temporal world by placing interesting but ultimately distracting sites, such as Rome and Sicily,[75] to the side of the pilgrim's path, *Sickness* does so by doing little to describe the world. In a poem featuring a map of the world and in a time almost obsessed with exploration and the strangeness of newly found parts of the globe, it is a present absence. The poem presents little of the curiosity of Donne's contemporaries in exploring the exotic locales of the far-flung corners of the world. *Sickness* does not delight in the gold

[75]Breen, pp. 75–80.

mines of El Dorado or the intoxicating spices of the East Indies, because this world is one to be travelled through; any diversions would merely distract from reaching Jerusalem. The speaker's eyes are trained on the way ahead. He sees the straits ahead of him, and his gaze reaches forward anxiously to the goal of his journey. He does not glance to the side descriptively, nor does he turn back to mention the home that he is forever leaving. Indeed, he begins the poem not with a scene of what he is leaving, but with a vision of his destination. In his pilgrim's map, the temporal world barely attracts his gaze. The world's cities and sites, excepting Jerusalem and Paradise, are to him peripheral; the road is central. As in pilgrimage itineraries, what is visible is little more than a conduit for a journey to a spiritual space.

But the map of *Sickness* does not centralize only the road. His destination, of course, is the purpose for his journey, and this endpoint of his journey, his "home," receives special attention. The "Pacific Sea" and the "eastern riches" —figures of the earthly Paradise—offer themselves as possible endpoints for his pilgrimage, but Jerusalem and Heaven—the New Jerusalem—occupy the center of his travelling gaze. And interestingly, his destination looks very different from the rest of the world in terms of dimensionality and movement.

The world which the speaker travels through is not primarily two-dimensional. It is one-dimensional, tracing a line, because it exists to facilitate movement in a straight line towards a set destination. The first part of the map, from lines 9–20, highlights paths, routes, lines, not wandering exploration or space. As formerly mentioned, the author mentions "straits"—a one dimensional route of travel—five times, with three additionally named straits. The speaker often mentions vectors of travel, with a "southwest discovery" (l. 9), "currents [that] yield return to none" (l. 11), and "ways" (l. 19). The map emphasizes one-dimensional and one-directional lines of travel, a path that proceeds towards Jerusalem. Correspondingly, movement dominates this part of the map. Currents thrust the speaker definitively through straits. The world here is mainly moved through.

At line 21, when the eye of the speaker encounters Jerusalem for the first time, the characteristic of the map changes immensely. Whereas the first part of the map focuses on movement in one-dimensional tracks, this part of the map is static and three-dimensional. The inclusion of the verb "stand" (l. 22) is significant, as

it signals a shift from the restless movement of the first part of the map. It is in Jerusalem that the pilgrimage ends and the speaker can find repose. Additional verbs and verbal adjectives in this section also invoke the speaker's sense of rest after striving, his acceptance after a distressing journey: "met" (l. 23), "embrace" (l. 25), and "receive" (l. 26). Jerusalem is a place of rest for the soul after long toil, a place of welcome and restoration. Jerusalem, too, has a sense of three-dimensionality, of real space. Donne's tentative claim that "Paradise and Calvary, / Christ's cross and Adam's tree, stood in one place" (ll. 21–22) contrasts strongly with the many straits of the earlier section. Here, the map "opens up," so to speak, so that the reader can see the actions of redemption happen in the city. The verbs here reinforce a sense of three-dimensionality and opening up, as well: "Adam's sweat *surrounds* [his] face" (l. 24, emphasis added), his soul will be "embrac[ed]" (l. 25) by Christ's blood, and he aspires to be "wrapp'd" (l. 26) in purple. Significantly, the speaker describes the Heavenly scene he aspires to enter at the beginning of the poem as a "holy room," an intrinsically three-dimensional space.

This dynamic of one-dimensional roads facilitating movement towards the three-dimensional space of Jerusalem, a place of rest, finds a parallel in the pilgrimage itinerary, such as the one pictured in Fig. 2. The world in both exists to be travelled through, with its sights rendered peripheral. Jerusalem, in Paris's maps, appears three-dimensional. As Breen notes, "Where [other cities] function as way stations, Jerusalem is a destination, ideal and uniquely sacred"[76] precisely because medieval Christians believed that "it was the closest earthly approximation of the Heavenly Jerusalem, goal of all human life."[77] In other words, the Jerusalem of the pilgrimage itinerary is, as it is in the *mappae mundi*, a sort of longed-for home, the true destination of the soul, just as it is in *Sickness* for the disease-ravaged speaker.

The journey the speaker enacts through the geographic space of the poem is also chiefly imaginative, as in pilgrimage itineraries. The speaker traces both a geographic voyage through the physical straits of the world to the apocalyptic New Earth and New Jerusalem and a passage through his own physical sufferings and death to the New

[76]Breen, p. 83.
[77]Breen, p. 81.

Heaven and a new body. He journeys from doubt and anxiety towards assurance and security as he struggles to come to grips with the implications of his mortality. But the speaker clearly explains and describes his travel before he even undergoes it. It is while he is lying on his back that he imaginatively works his way through the map, through the straits of death, which he must eventually go through so that he can be prepared for the real journey he must make. In his own words, "what I must do then, think here before" (l. 5). As the speaker's "reader" traces his way through the itinerary map of the poem, through the straits of fever, the real speaker gains assurance of the eternity that awaits him on the other side of death in the world outside the page. As he imagines himself in the destination of Jerusalem he finds on the map, he discovers the assurance, through imaginatively viewing the cross of Christ, to face God after death. As the Paris map ends in the city of Jerusalem, opening up into three-dimensional space, so the speaker's imagined, winding path ends up in the three-dimensional "holy room" of heaven, so that he may literally end up in that room. The ironic placement of his destination at the very beginning of the poem only highlights its importance as the place of rest anticipated throughout the action in the flat map of the world. The map which the speaker conjures is clearly for his own preparatory devotional purposes, like a pilgrimage map, as he imagines the journey to be undertaken before setting out upon it.

But even the journey of recollection is, in a sense, imagined and performed theatrically. The speaker does not lack an understanding, as he lies on his deathbed, of the comforting promise the Gospel offers to him; he does not undergo the process of conversion during the narrative space of the poem. Rather, he recollects a journey which has formerly taken place, imaginatively tracing the steps of his previous conversion to reaffirm the comfort of the Christian gospel.

This effect occurs because the "map" does not function as a pilgrimage itinerary to just the speaker in the poem. It is not only the speaker who reads the text of his own body; he claims that the map functions as a "sermon to [his] own" (l. 29), possibly his own spiritual flock. The very reader of the poem participates in the act of reading the text of the pilgrimage itinerary and can enter imaginatively into the space of the map. The reader can figuratively look over the speaker's shoulder as he looks at his body and at his own interior

journey. She has the opportunity to assess Donne's body as it lies flat on a table, dying and emaciated, to follow him on his last dying moments, and to return spiritually edified and transformed. She can follow the speaker imaginatively on his own interior pilgrimage, as the path of the poem winds its ways though the "*fretum febris*" (l. 10) and the gates of death to the New Jerusalem, and benefit spiritually without yet having to undertake the awful journey of death herself. The speaker makes explicit his consciousness of the possibility of his text being read and followed by others for their own devotional use when he remembers that "to other souls I preach'd thy word" (l. 28). The map-text is dually his body and his poem, and the readership is doubly himself and the reader. The reader's imaginative and meditative journey through death to the resurrection—or through treacherous straits to Jerusalem—through reading this poem and Donne's emaciated body is a meditation very much like a pilgrimage itinerary. The poem offers a space in which mental journeys take place for spiritual benefit, for anyone who reads the text, whether the speaker or the modern reader.

The question may arise, though, whether reading both of these two maps models in *Sickness* is ultimately contradictory. The *mappa mundi* tradition focuses on the world as a place imbued with significance as the site of God's actions in the world, while the pilgrimage itineraries depict much of the world as peripheral, focusing on Jerusalem, the end of pilgrimage. What best harmonizes these map traditions is a shared understanding of the world as a place which does not derive its ultimate significance from itself. Both map types receive their meaning from an Other, from God. Medieval *mappae mundi* revel in the diversity of the world and the people and histories found there; but these varied tales and places join together to tell the one great story of God's Gospel, centered on the one place of Jerusalem, a precursor of God's eternal kingdom. The beauty of the earth here is real but ultimately a reflection of the beauty of God; it is a borrowed dignity, as it were. In the poem, such a map type answers the speaker's questions of identity. As the world is beautiful as a reflection of God, so the speaker is made in *imago Dei*—the image of God. At Jerusalem, he finds "both Adams met in [him]." The first Adam gives the speaker the image of God in which he was made but also the horrible weight of sin and disfigurement that drives the poem. The second Adam, Christ,

allays these same fears of sin and damnation through lending His very identity to the speaker. The *mappa mundi* then sheds light on identity in the poem, with the world, the original Man, and the redeemed Christian all borrowing their selfhood and dignity from God.

The map of the pilgrimage itinerary similarly denies the self-existence and self-importance of the world but does so in a way which may initially seem more radical. That is because, whereas the conceit of the *mappa mundi* addresses questions of identity and being, that of the pilgrimage itinerary focuses on the speaker's devotional movement, purpose, and destination in emergent occasions. Donne frames the agony of dying in terms of a barely-noticed departed home and constricted, torturous lines of straits which will give way to the open spaces of Jerusalem, where Calvary promises relief and a warm welcome in a Truer Home. The journey is involuntary, "through . . . currents [that] yield return to none" (l. 12), but he does not so much deny the beauty of the world he knows he must leave as he speeds towards a destination more lasting and worthy.

To finally conclude that modern maps do not influence Donne's "Hymn to God my God, in my Sickness" would be unwise. Donne's penchant for potent ambiguity should not be underestimated. It is true that *Sickness* seems informed in places by contemporary innovations in cartography. However, the contribution of medieval cartography to the landscape of the poem is far-reaching and deep. The speaker's map is not merely a geographic location but a space charged with destiny. The ambiguity of physical boundaries and geographic organization of Donne's map, with the centrality of Jerusalem, the prominence of the east, and the allocation of the three continents to Noah's sons, causes Donne's world to resemble that of the *mappae mundi*. But this resemblance goes beyond the surface. Donne replicates in his poem the layering of time on top of geographic space featured in the *mappae mundi*; as these maps make earth the scene of God's redemptive narrative, *Sickness* recalls the same narrative on the landscape so that the speaker may write himself into the story of salvation, or have it written upon him, in order to allay his fears of death. Furthermore, Donne uses the medieval layering of texts and maps extensively. Upon his own self, he layers a map of the world, Christian history, the poem itself, and the salvific work of Christ so that a variety of readers—himself, the physicians, God, and the reader

of his poem—may have their vision of the speaker, the world, and themselves transformed, a phenomenon which is intimately related to the theological concept of imputed righteousness. This layering renders each of the "texts" into devotional tools, allowing the speaker himself or the reader to imaginatively enter into the pilgrimage which is death. Both the speaker and the reader can trace a virtual journey through the speaker's body to Jerusalem, reaffirming the belief in Christ's forgiveness, so that they may face death with assurance. This devotional function recalls the maps of medieval pilgrimage itineraries, in which the reader imaginatively and meditatively journeys through the world to Jerusalem for real spiritual benefit.

Such a carefully constructed interplay between the cartographic paradigm of the metaphysical conceit and the poetics of the poem itself in *Sickness* is both thoughtful and enriching. Although useful, perhaps the significance of this approach to Donne's poem does not end with *Sickness*. It may be the case that the variance in paradigms in Donne's metaphysical conceits in his other works—so often discussed—may have significance beyond imagery itself. Our understanding of Donne's paradigms in natural philosophy and theology may, in fact, have an influence on the way in which we interpret his poetics and argumentation. It would be fitting if in Donne's metaphysical poetry, already so focused on the transaction of meaning and similarity of form between different conceits and ideas, the paradigm of tenor in the metaphysical conceit could be found to generally influence the mode and structure of communication itself. Perhaps, then, Donne's use of medieval maps in "Hymn to God my God, in my Sickness"—implicitly shaping the imagery, interacting with the poetic style, defining the transfer of meaning, and suggesting the purpose of reading—could be found to be not a curiosity but one iteration of a pattern.

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