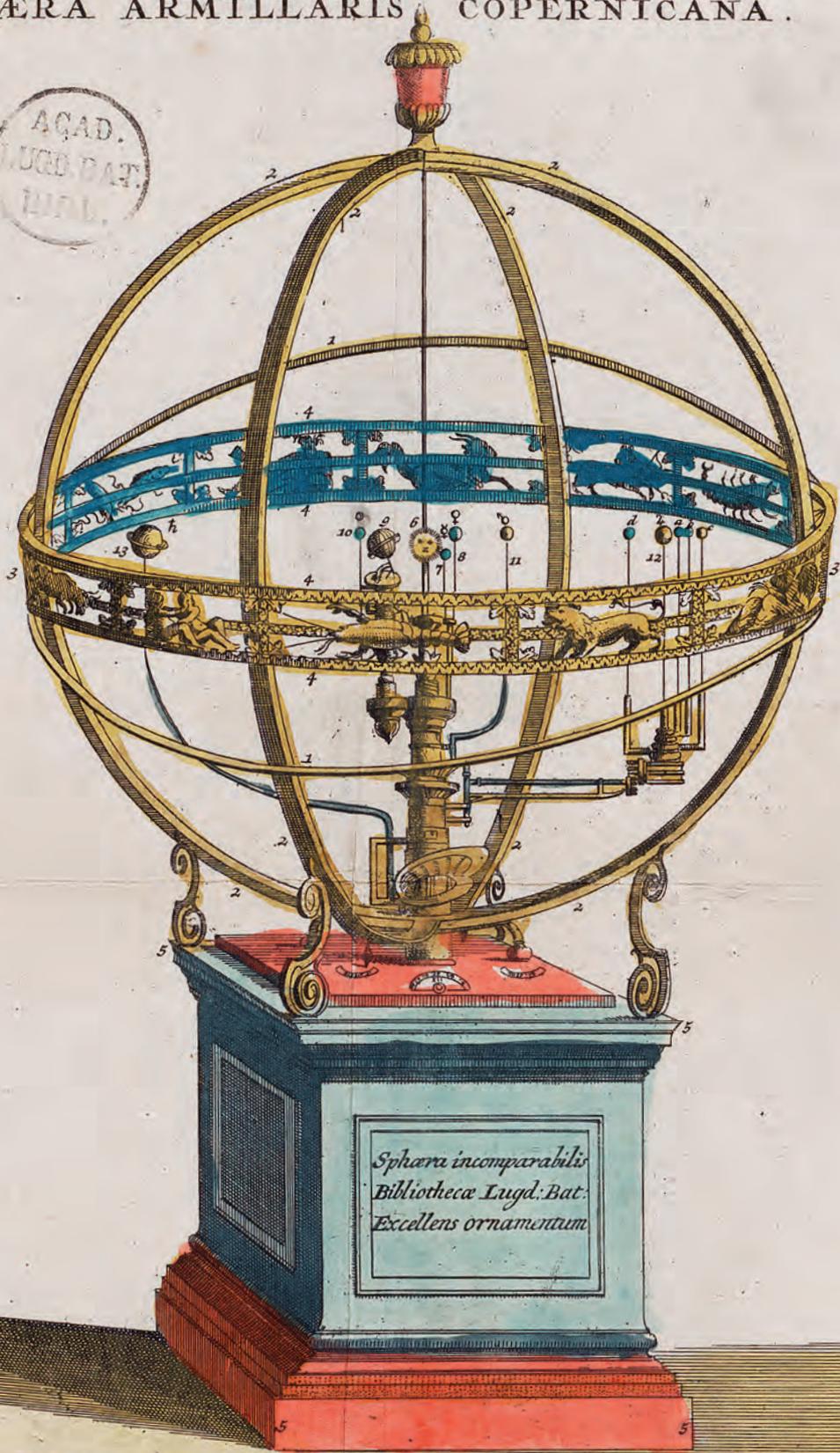




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*Sphæra incomparabilis  
Bibliotheca Lugd. Bat.  
Excellens ornamentum*

*Machina ingenioso artificio extracta,  
ope et industria Bernardi a Cloese restituta,  
Europæ admiratio.*

1000 Years  
of World History

# Maps That Made History

in 100  
Old Maps

— Martijn Storms —

Edited by  
Michiel van Groesen, Kasper van Ommen, Anne-Isabelle Richard,  
Alicia Schrikker, Martijn Storms and Garrelt Verhoeven



1. Konings maasjet of kerck.      4. Konings nacharac of spelbuys  
 2. Konings karams of vinnen. King paort.      5. de weg na de groete maerck gen. kerck.  
 3. Konings katoal genaamt Alakapi.      6. de kerck of maasjet van d' konings moeder  
 7. Konings kerologie.      8. middel punt van d' meyden of beins  
 9. de weg na d' sulpha.

# Foreword

---

*Maps That Made History* is the apposite title of the beautiful book you have in your hands. This book is not primarily about the cartographic backdrop to the maps and atlases but more about their historical significance. They are maps that not only make history clearer but have often helped to shape it. Not that it is always a history to be proud of. Many of the maps in the collection of the Leiden University Libraries bear traces of the colonial past of the Netherlands and of other European powers, for example. However, that is precisely why such a collection of maps and atlases is a rich source of research into that past today.

With Leiden designated as the European City of Science in 2022, there has never been a better time to showcase this extraordinary collection, which we are doing through a fine exhibition at the National Museum of Ethnology and through this wonderful publication, which is appearing in both Dutch and English. It does justice both to the richness of the cartographic exhibits and to the intrinsically international character of our collection. The foundations for that collection were laid in 1872, when the map collector Johannes Tiberius Bodel Nijenhuis bequeathed his vast cartographic treasure trove to Leiden University. Above all, this publication is intended to encourage students, teachers, researchers and other aficionados to consult the material, either at our Special Collections Reading Room in Leiden or via the digital collections on our website.

A major project like this can only succeed thanks to the involvement and enthusiasm of many people. I would first of all like to express my huge appreciation for Martijn Storms, Jef Schaeps, Kasper van Ommen and Garrelt Verhoeven, the initiators of this publication from the circle of the Special Collections. As curator, Martijn Storms has been the driving force behind the project for the past two years and is responsible for most of the texts.

Many thanks too to the book's editorial team, consisting of Michiel van Groesen, Anne-Isabelle Richard and Alicia Schrikker, all three of whom are researchers in Leiden's Faculty of Humanities, along with the book historians Kasper van Ommen and Garrelt Verhoeven on behalf of Leiden University Libraries.

Thanks too to the authors who wrote one or more of the essays in this book: Sunil Amrith, Eduard van de Bilt, Peter Bisschop, Jeroen Bos, André Bouwman, Mirjam de Bruijn, Marco Caboara, Koen De Ceuster, Joseph Christensen, Raymond Fagel, Karwan Fatah-Black, Miko Flohr, Carrie Gibson, Marissa Griffioen, Charles van den Heuvel, Henk den Heijer, Tycho van der Hoog, Rivke Jaffe, Alexander Kent, David Koren, Radu Leca, Fan Lin, Thomas Lindblad, Ariel Lopez, Margot Luyckfasseel, Tsolin Nalbantian, Djoeke van Netten, David Onnekink, Ruud Paesie, Niek Pas, Norbert

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I would also like to thank all the staff of Leiden University Libraries who have contributed in various ways to the realisation of this book: Anneke Beekhof, Saskia van Bergen, Jos Damen, Carola van der Drift, Marc Gilbert, Kevin Idenburg, Doris Jedamski, Nicolien Karskens, Nadia Mishkovskiyi-Kreeft, Ernst-Jan Munnik, Lam Ngo, Joke Pronk, Carlo Verstijlen and Vincent Wintermans. Jaap de Vreugd and Jacqueline Abrahamse were responsible for acquiring the photographs. Eva van 't Loo and Nico van Rooijen handled the digitisation of all the maps from our collections that have been shown. Thanks also to \*Asterisk for the translation of the texts and to John Steegh and Paula van Gestel-van 't Schip for their help with the content.

Last but not least, I would like to thank our partners at Uitgeverij Lannoo: director Maarten Van Steenberg, publisher Pieter De Messemaeker, editors Ineke Vander Vekens, Tamsin Shelton and Els Peeters, designer Stef Lantsoght and all the other employees of the publishing house. Right from the very start, they were highly enthusiastic about this project, building on the fundamental concept of *De geschiedenis van Nederland in 100 oude kaarten* (The History of the Netherlands in 100 Old Maps) by Marieke van Delft and Reinder Storm, and its Belgian counterpart *De geschiedenis van België in 100 oude kaarten* (The History of Belgium in 100 Old Maps). They handled the publication of this extensive book with great professionalism and enthusiasm, for which I thank them.

The result is a beautiful and comprehensive book with a hundred maps from ten centuries of world history, a hundred maps that wrote history, selected from the many thousands of maps and atlases that we manage in our library and make available daily. I would dare to believe that Bodel Nijenhuis would also have been proud of this publication, which does justice in all respects to the huge importance – both historical and cartographic – of the collection of maps and atlases in the Leiden University Libraries.

Kurt De Belder  
University Librarian  
Director of Leiden University Libraries

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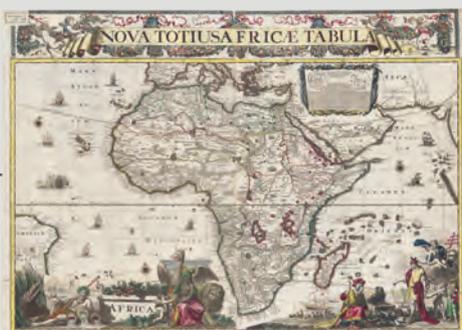
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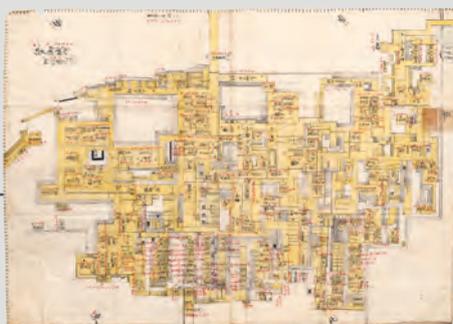
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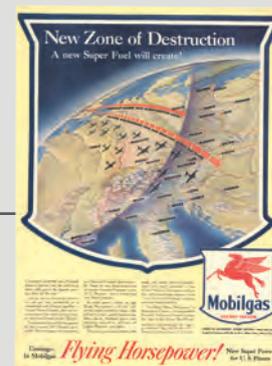
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# The travelling index finger

Ilja Leonard Pfeijffer

---

Where does it start? What awakens your awareness of elsewhere, of other places? Every human being, no matter how privileged, will only come to love the place where they were born once they have seen other places in the world. And perhaps not even then. The known does not lure us, because it is something we are already familiar with; it is at most a place of refuge later on, when the tears fall like rain from the sky. I was born in one district and grew up in a neighbouring area. My neighbourhood was safe and wholesome, but bordered by streets called Doctor H.J. van Mooklaan, Sir Winston Churchillaan and Monseigneur Bekkerslaan, none of which my mother allowed me to cross. Being a good kid, I respected that restriction, but my longing for the wider world beyond the borders of my neighbourhood had been ignited.

The very first humans in their very first caves did not always have it easy either, I suppose. There was never enough of the good things like food, and always too much of the bad things – like the enemies with bigger clubs and scary bones through their noses who came at night, when the very fires trembled in fear. Sooner or later, the idea takes root that the grass is greener elsewhere.

Or maybe that's not the way it starts. Maybe the trigger is curiosity. The far horizon is to blame for everything, because that damned horizon seems to be there for the sole purpose of making us curious about what lies beyond. "*Utinam ne in nemore Pelio,*" wrote Ennius, the father of Roman poetry: "Would that the very first tree in the sacred woods had never been felled with the very first axe, that the very first ship had never been built." The beginning of all our ills, he said, was when we had to go out instead of sitting by the hearth with our slippers on and a mug of cocoa. But Ennius is talking with the benefit of hindsight. The first tree had long been felled and ships had set sail centuries earlier to find out what might be beyond the horizon. That's what makes us human. From the moment we stood up on two legs, we started walking and we have never stopped. We may now feel glued to our little planet, but Mars, Proxima Centauri, the Andromeda Galaxy and the great beyond are still beckoning.

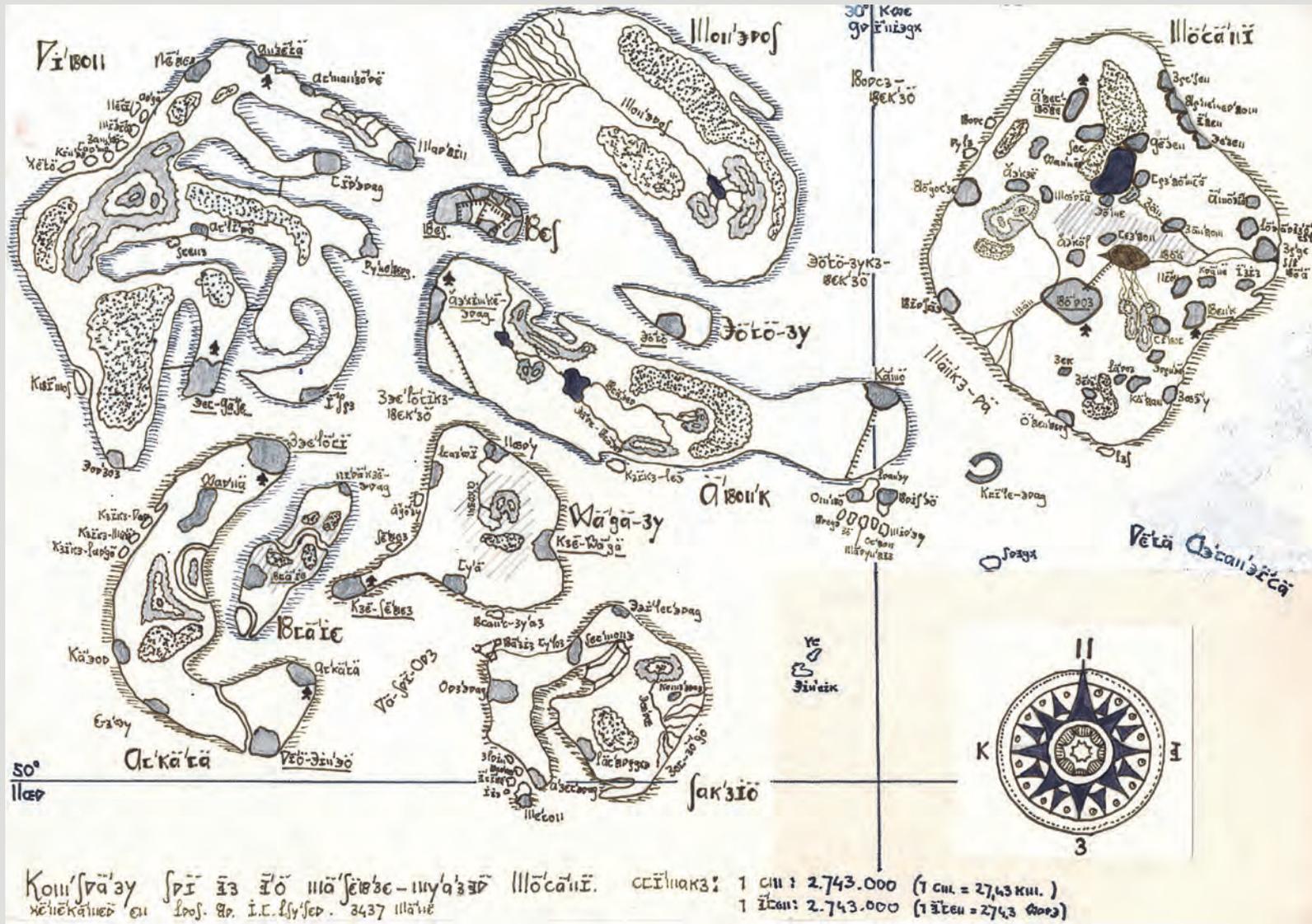
When I was eleven or so, I invented my own country. I called it Mocania. It didn't much matter where it was, as long as it was far enough away that it maybe could have existed. And the very first thing I did in order to make my country real was draw a map. Once I had sketched in the cities, rivers, mountains and forests, my mind could already take me there. Thanks to my map of the country,

I could cross the forbidden streets – Doctor H.J. van Mooklaan, Sir Winston Churchillaan and Monseigneur Bekkerslaan – and live in a country that was far beyond my own neighbourhood.

I remember my grandparents having a lovely, big, old atlas in the bookcase in their living room. During the Sunday visits, while the grown-ups were wasting their time with conversation about real-world matters, I was allowed to take the atlas, lug it over to the dining table and leaf through it. On those Sundays, I travelled the world with my index finger. Letting my finger glide over the detailed, coloured maps, I thought about all the places I was visiting, amazed and wanting to find out what it was like there. And how far it was to each one. How far away they all were. How many far-away things there actually are.

People say that a map is a schematic, highly simplified, scaled-down representation of reality. That is a crass lie. Nothing could be further from the truth. It's precisely the other way round: a map is not a derivative of the world's reality – it creates the world, just as a poem creates emotions. A map makes the world possible because the world only starts to exist as a whole through our representations of it. If *all the world's a stage*, the map is the book in which the play's narrative is told. How can we think that the story would exist if the book had never been written?

We define freedom in terms of being able to go in any direction and we perceive the fact that we have thought of time travel but have not yet invented it as one of our greatest limitations. In our one-way journey through time at a constant speed of one second per second, we occasionally get the irrepressible desire to go faster or to turn around. What might lie beyond the horizon of tomorrow?



Ilija Leonard Pfeijffer's map of Mocania, his imaginary archipelago between Great Britain and France with its own language and history (Literature Museum, The Hague).

Nothing terribly positive, probably, but I'm still curious about it. History is an endless series of fascinating places that we would love to visit, or at least I would. I want to visit those very first people in their very first cave and meet the poet Ennius. Ancient Egypt, Athens, Alexandria, Rome, the Middle Ages, springtime in Florence during the Renaissance, drinking tea with Chinese emperors in the Forbidden City, skating with Avercamp when there were still winters in Amsterdam in the time of Vondel and Rembrandt, visiting Inca and Aztec temples before they became tourist traps, hearing Mozart, going on a campaign with Napoleon, going to the South Pole with Amundsen, dancing on the Titanic (but then getting beamed back in good time), the Roaring Twenties, Paris, New York, smoking non-stop with real artists in real cafés, my youth in the neighbourhood... When I think about how much I would like to see all that, it brings tears to my eyes.

Historical maps are a miracle. They satisfy the wanderlust for legendary times for those who have such sensitive index fingers that they can use them to travel. A historical map lets us travel dis-

tances in our minds within a worldview of the past, so that when we look around us in amazement, we have arrived not only in another country but also in another time. Just as a modern map creates the world of today, a historical map – with perished cities and drowned continents, with strange borders and white spaces, with drawings of lions and sea monsters – evokes not only the old world but also the curiosity of the past.

That might perhaps be an answer to my question. Where it all starts is with curiosity. A map is solidified curiosity, and a historical map tells the story of times when there was much more to be curious about than today because the world seemed much bigger then than it does nowadays. What awakens the awareness of elsewhere is our ability to travel where our precisely delineated curiosity takes us with our index fingers.





الحا

مفازة

دمار العود

ملاذ المخرج

المسار

المسار

الفرجة

رومية

العق

الكه

ملاذ السروم

مفاز الدار

مدار الشمال



## 1193 — The world as a bird

### The Muslim worldview of al-Istakhri

The oldest atlas in the collection of the Leiden University Libraries is a Persian manuscript from the end of the twelfth century. The work is entitled *Kitab al-masalik wa'l mamalik*, which means 'Book of Routes and Realms' or 'Book of Roads and Countries'. The first map in this book is a circular, schematic world map in which several blue areas with large red circles stand out. It is not easy for today's map readers to recognise the locations on the map or to place them. The geographical forms of the countries depicted are greatly simplified and represented symbolically. Moreover, the map faces south, which does not facilitate recognition.

Surviving world maps from Arabic and Islamic traditions should not be separated from the writings in which they are usually found. The emphasis on those textual sources makes us wonder if the maps were intended mainly for the literate, urban elite in Muslim society. And of course, until the eighteenth century, maps in the Islamic world were almost exclusively distributed in the form of manuscripts. The earliest geographical sources were lists of places along pilgrim and postal routes in the Middle East. Several authors then elaborated the lists into geographical writings, often entitled *Kitab al-masalik wa'l mamalik*. This kind of work became the geographic standard in the Islamic world.

The Greek geographical tradition, recorded in Claudius Ptolemy's *Geographia* or *Kosmographia* in the second century AD, strongly influenced Arab geography. In some respects, Ptolemy's work is a set of instructions for how to create maps. It consists of an enumeration of approximately 8,000 place names displaying their geographical longitude and latitude. Geographical tables also appeared in the Arab world and they consisted of lists of place names with their corresponding coordinates. Initially, those data were not recorded on maps, as was the case with Ptolemy. The earliest known Arab global maps were generally not based on a projection method or exact geographical locations. They did, however, share Ptolemy's idea that the Earth is 'spherical' and only one half is habitable. Such a hemisphere can be depicted as a circle. One of

**MADE BY** Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Muhahammad al-Farisi al-Istakhri (mapmaker) **TITLE** [World map in a summary of] *Kitab al-masalik wa'l mamalik* **PLACE OF ISSUE** [Persia] **DATE** 1193 [Islamic year: 589] **TECHNIQUE** Manuscript atlas **DIMENSIONS** 42 x 62 cm **SCALE** c. 1:30,000,000 **ORIENTATION** North down **SIGNATURE** Oriental Manuscripts Collection, Or. 3101



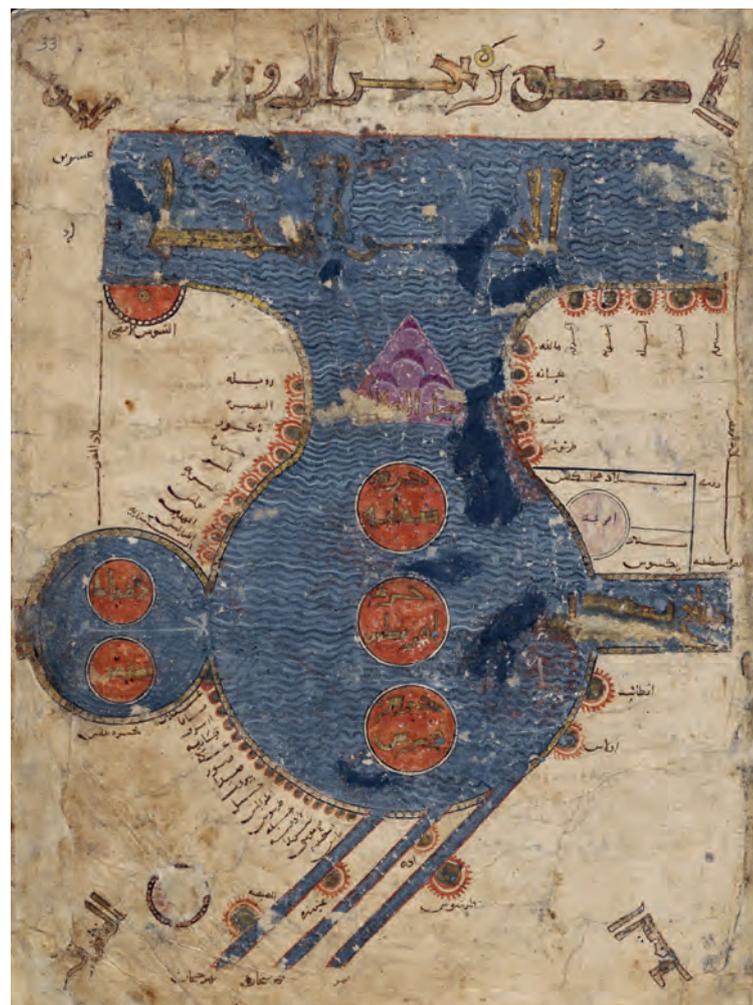
Map of the Arabian Sea in al-Istakhri's *Book of Routes and Realms* (Or. 3101).

the earliest world maps in the Arabic-Islamic tradition was a large world map from the ninth century, produced on the initiative of caliph al-Ma'mun. Unfortunately, it did not survive and all we know about it has come from contradictory references in works by later authors.

Most preserved Islamic world maps from the Middle Ages belong to the works of the Balkhi School of geographers, named after the Persian multifaceted scientist Abu Zayd Ahmad ibn Sahl al-Balkhi (849/850–934). Later geographers would build on the work of the earliest authors in that tradition. There are 59 known manuscripts worldwide that can be counted among the works of this school of geographers, dating from the eleventh to the nineteenth century. Balkhi's original manuscripts have not survived, which also applies to the works of Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Farisi al-Istakhri (?–957). The oldest preserved manuscript dates from 1086 and was written by Abu al-Qasim Muhammad ibn Hawqal (?–fl. 978). Most manuscripts from the Balkhi School are copies or summaries of works by these three geographers. Each of the manuscripts contains twenty-one maps: a world map, three sea maps (of the Mediterranean, the Arabian Sea and the Caspian Sea) and seventeen maps of provinces. Among the province maps, thirteen relate to the Persian-speaking provinces of the Islamic Empire. The other four provinces are the Arabian Peninsula, Syria, Egypt and North Africa (including the Iberian Peninsula), where they spoke Arabic.

The world map shown here is from a summary of the *Book of Routes and Realms* by al-Istakhri from 1193. Hence the preserved manuscript is a copy of the original and was produced more than two centuries after Istakhri's death. There are eighteen coloured maps in this manuscript. This world map is a good example of the early model of the Islamic worldview in the Balkhi School and typifies the worldview from a Persian-Islamic perspective. The world known in medieval Persia stretched from southern Europe and northern Africa in the west to China in the east. As mentioned earlier, the map faces south. The geography is greatly simplified and typically shows stylised straight and curved lines. The map was probably designed for mnemonic purposes, in other words for the ease of memorisation, rather than practical use. Such maps would be an important asset to geography education. In this worldview we recognise the shape of a bird, with the Arabian Peninsula as its head, Asia and Africa as its wings and Europe as its tail. It makes it easier to remember the map in broad outlines rather than in detail.

The map has a degree of symmetry owing to the two major seas: the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. Each has three islands that are depicted as three big red circles. In the Mediterranean, from left to right, they are Cyprus, Crete and Sicily. Red lines indicate the borders between the various regions of the Islamic Empire. The division is most detailed in the Middle East and in Persia. Persia's provincial division into rather rectangular areas is notable. Beyond the Arab world, the division is less precise.



Map of the Mediterranean in al-Istakhri's *Book of Routes and Realms* (Or. 3101).

In Russia and Asia (India, Tibet, China), countries and regions are represented by concentric circles. Rivers tend to be straight lines, as is clearly seen in the Nile in Africa and the Euphrates and Tigris flowing into the Persian Gulf.

All the world maps in the works produced by the Balkhi School are slightly different, although they all feature a stylised appearance and a great simplification. The circular world map by the later famous geographer Muhammad al-Idrisi (1100–1165/1166) greatly resembles those of the Balkhi School, but the landforms on this map, particularly in Europe and the Arab world, are much more recognisable to Western eyes. Al-Idrisi also added climate zones to his world map.

The highly simplified world map from the Balkhi School largely determined the worldview in the Arab-Islamic world. The surviving manuscript atlases are not only very early sources but also unique when studying Islamic cultural history. (ms)





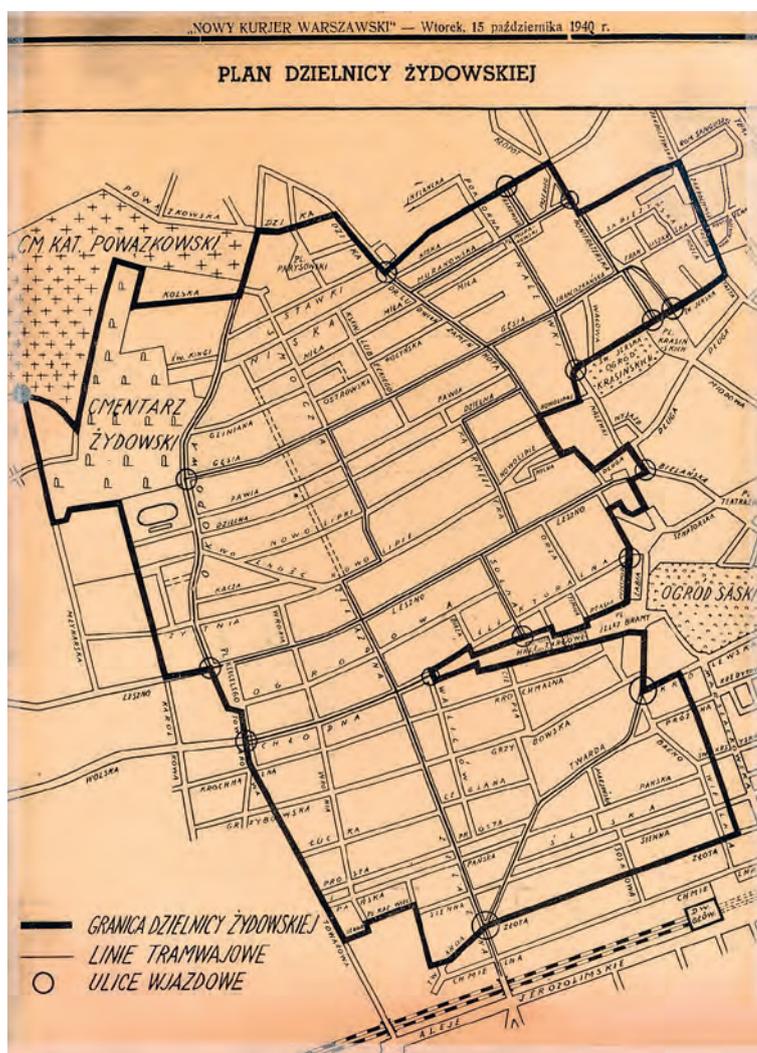




## 1940 — Topography of terror

### The SS plan for the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw

In November 1940, the SS officer Max Jesuiter (1897–1972) took a secret street plan of Warsaw and used a purple pencil to draw in the area to be rapidly turned into a Jewish ghetto. This unique design had its origins in a bye-law issued by the German governor of the district of Warsaw. However, the highly irregular boundary line is the result of quarrels between the Jews and the Poles about the living areas allocated to them. Few streets, workshops or houses escaped the uncertainty and the chaos increased over time. The Poles usually came off best in these arguments, and the continual restrictions led to even more panic among the Jews. The ghetto that eventually enclosed some 400,000 Jews was almost entirely in line with this SS plan. Chaim Kaplan (1880–1942) wrote in his diary: “We are sitting imprisoned behind two walls: a brick wall for our bodies and a wall of silence for our souls.”

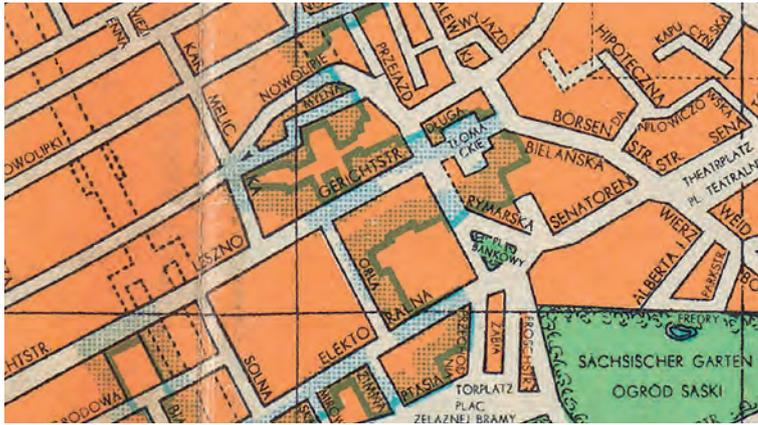


Ghetto plan in *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*, 15 October 1940.

The secret street map of Warsaw was made by the General Staff of the German army. Its military geography department, the *Topographietruppe*, produced numerous war maps by amending local maps using aerial photos and information collected by spies. Symbols in red and purple indicated barracks and weapons depots, airfields and radio transmitters, factories and government buildings, post offices and paper factories, train stations and hospitals, and many more structures. This map was used in combination with photos of the targets in the preparation for the air attacks on Warsaw in September 1939. The heaviest bombing led to devastation in the old Jewish quarter. The bombardment took place on 25 September, which was Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, in the Jewish calendar.

Just over a month later, on Saturday, 4 November 1939, the SS called an extraordinary meeting of the recently established Jewish Council to order all the Jews to congregate in the old Jewish quarter within a matter of days. The SS brought maps in which various boundaries had been drawn. News of the plan to set up a ghetto spread like wildfire and caused panic. According to one chronicler, “Families across the city, who are assimilated into Polish society, are now being ordered to move to the Jewish quarters, to a community that they often no longer have anything in

**MADE BY** Generalstab des Heeres (publisher), Max Jesuiter (draughtsman/user) **TITLE** Mil. Geo. Stadtplan Warschau **PLACE OF ISSUE** Berlin **DATE** 1939–1940 **TECHNIQUE** Colour print on paper **DIMENSIONS** 90 x 85 cm **SCALE** 1:20,000 **ORIENTATION** North on top **SIGNATURE** Steegh-Teunissen collection, w.zt.92



Detail of the street plan of Warsaw, Plan Miasta Warszawy, early 1941 (COLL.S/T W.2t.7).



Detail of the main map with the contours of the ghetto drawn in.

common with.” After tough negotiations between the Jewish Council chairman Adam Czerniaków (1880–1942) and the city’s military commander, the Germans renounced their plan. That created the impression that it was possible to negotiate and reach agreements with the occupying forces.

Months later, in March 1940, the Jewish Council was ordered to cordon off streets around the old Jewish quarter, allegedly because the area was at risk of epidemics (*Seuchensperrgebiet*). “They are treating the Jews like lepers,” noted Chaim Kaplan in his diary. The erection of these barriers coincided with anti-Jewish actions. That same week, shops were robbed, apartments plundered, Jews in traditional garb beaten up and anti-Jewish slogans aired. These abuses were inspired by the Nazis but carried out by Polish thugs. This had the intended propaganda effect: the Poles were compromised and the Germans were able to present themselves as protectors of the Jews. Two contrasting images were in operation here: Jews as a threat to non-Jews because they were supposedly spreading infectious diseases, and Jews as being under threat themselves. Both led to the same solution, namely to close off the Jewish quarter.

On 12 October 1940, Yom Kippur again, a decree made the ghetto to an inevitability. On 15 October, the new plan was published in the German-controlled newspapers *Gazeta Żydowska* and *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*. All the Jews living in Warsaw outside the specified area had to move to the ghetto within a few weeks. The ghetto itself was located in the poorest and most densely populated part of the city. The decision to designate the old Jewish quarter as a ghetto raised fears among the Jews, but they also cherished a hope that the worst outcome – a closed ghetto – could be avoided. “It is difficult to live in a time when you are not sure about the next day, and there is no greater torture than waiting,” wrote Kaplan in his diary. This newspaper map from 15 October 1940 was the first public plan for the Warsaw ghetto. While families who lived elsewhere were desperately selling their possessions and searching for somewhere to live in the ghetto, the arguments about the borders grew fiercer.

The next day, it transpired that both sides of the streets along the border had been allocated to Aryans. The Jews had to leave. As a result, the ghetto walls ran largely through back gardens. That was not to be the last change. On the contrary, the chaos only increased. On 22 October, Kaplan noted: “The Polish side started haggling – they have a church in this neighbourhood; another block mainly houses Aryans; [...] here is a factory where thousands of Aryan workers are employed [...]. In this way, they [...] cut off street after street from the Jewish quarter and the ghetto boundaries became tighter and tighter.” This constant process of pushing back the boundaries meant thousands of families had to move multiple times. This quotation also shows how successful the Nazis were in embedding their racial framing, because it speaks of arguments between Aryans and Jews rather than between Catholic Poles and Jewish Poles.

The date on which SS Sturmbannführer Max Jesuiter, head of the SS staff bureau, drew in the contours of the Jewish ghetto on this secret map of Warsaw must have been about 12 November. On 14 November, the *Nowy Kurier Warszawski* newspaper published a section of the plan with a change to the boundary on the east of the ghetto. The difference with respect to Jesuiter’s design was that a Protestant enclave had been removed from the ghetto. This small enclave with a Protestant hospital and church is still shown in a German-Polish street plan from early 1941. On 16 November, the ghetto was closed off. People were only allowed to leave the ghetto for limited periods and required special work passes to do so. The gates were guarded by German Gendarmerie, Polish police and, on the ghetto side, Jewish police. The irregular shape of the ghetto boundary was the result of the pressure exerted on the German authorities by Polish leaders. They lobbied on behalf of the Christians against the Jewish Council, which only managed to get a few minor changes implemented. The forced relocation of 113,000 Christian Poles compared with 138,000 Jewish Poles only made the conflict of ‘Jews versus Poles’ more bitter. And this was merely the start of the Warsaw ghetto. (HT)

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**COVER IMAGES**

**FRONT** Anonymous, *Het Spaens Europa*, 1598 (COLLBN Port 212 N 3).  
**BACK, TOP RIGHT** Maximilien-Henri de Saint-Simon (mapmaker) and Pieter Mol (engraver), *Carte Plani-Sphère d'une portion des quatres parties du monde*, c. 1785 (COLLBN Port 144 N 188).  
**BACK, BOTTOM LEFT** Netai Dass Ghose (designer) and Kailasha Pustakalaya (publisher), *Map of Gaya*, 1960 (COLLBN 054-19-006).  
**FRONTISPIECE** Print of the *Leiden Sphaera*, a model of the solar system powered by clockwork, following the ideas of Nicolaus Copernicus, c. 1670. In the eighteenth century, the *Leiden Sphaera* was installed in the university library. Today, it is exhibited in Museum Boerhaave (COLLBN Port 315-II N 31).  
**IMAGE PAGE 4** Drawing of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square in Isfahan by Gerard Hofsted van Essen, 1703 (COLLBN 314-I N 58).  
**ENDPAPERS** World map with western and eastern hemisphere (front) and northern and southern hemisphere (back) from *Cedid Atlas Tercümesi*, Istanbul, 1803-04 (COLLBN Atlas 81).

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