

The Valcavado Beatus.

This Beatus *mappa mundi* takes its name from the fact that it was found at the monastery of Valcavado, near Saldaña, Palencia. The codex of *Valcavado* dates from 970 and measures 35 x 24 cm. Despite the organic and coherent nature of the *mappae mundi* found in the Beatus codices, attributes to which Beatus researchers Gonzalo Menendez-Pidal and Carlos Cid Priego refer, a detailed comparison highlights numerous similarities among and differences between these maps. Because of these, the cartographic corpus of the Beatus can be subdivided into families or groups which, in turn, coincide with the groupings within which the Beatus codices have been organized, based on the artistic analysis of the manuscripts: *Family I*, the oldest, pertaining to the editions of Beatus himself of 776 (*Family Ia*) and of 784 (*Family Ib*), and *Families IIab*, derived from the posthumous edition of ca. 940. The names we use to refer to the *mappae mundi*, as well as the manuscripts to which they belong, are related to their place of origin, to the addressees of the codices, or to the place in which they are currently preserved. As a reference, this map falls into Peter Klein's "Third Recension" and Wilhelm Neuss' *Family Ila* stemma. The *Family Ila* consists of the following maps:

- *Mappa mundi* of Escalada, a.k.a. Ashburnham, Morgan 644, Ashmolean, New York I, and/or Magius (tenth century) #207.2.
- *Mappa mundi* of Valcavado (970) #207.4.
- *Mappa mundi* of Urgel (last quarter of the tenth century) #207.8. Note this map has no polychromy, neither does the rest of the quire in which it is found.
- *Codex of El Escorial* (ca. 1000). It does not include the *mappa mundi*, and instead there appears the illustration of the *Earthly Paradise*. Although other scholars have concluded, based on studies of the text and illustrations, that the Beatus of El Escorial belongs to *Family I*, this image is closer to the *Earthly Paradise* of the *mappae mundi* of *Family Ila*, and is therefore included here.
- *Mappa mundi* of Fernando I & Sancha a.k.a. Madrid (1047) #207.11.
- *Mappa mundi* of Silos a.k.a. London (1091-1109) #207.16.

Sandra Sáenz-López Pérez has identified the following common features of this Family of Beatus *mappae mundi*:

- The toponyms are practically identical. Gonzalo Menendez-Pidal was aware of the confusion between Rome and Marseilles as being an inherent trait of these maps. They include all the toponyms relating to the apostolic geography.
- The captions which refer to the *Phoenix Bird*, to Arabia, to Ethiopia, to the fourth part of the world and to *Gothia* are the same in each.
- The elements of physical geography are the same and are represented in a similar manner. The following traits in particular define this group:
 - The Red Sea separates off the fourth part of the world, linking the west to the east.
 - As regards hydrography, the River Nile follows a single route towards the west of Africa; the River Danube, also with a single route, flows into the encircling ocean. The same occurs with the *River Tanais*; and *Gothia*, as a result, is represented as an island.
 - As regards the mountains and mountain chains, there are depictions of the *Rhyphlean Mountains* within *Gothia*; also of the *mons Aquilo*; *mons Sauceranus*; *mons Ceraunius*, the Caucasus Mountains; the Lebanon Mountains (in duplicate); the Taurus Mountains; the *Pillars of Hercules*;

the Pyrenees (except in the *Escalada* map); the French Alps; and others not identified by name, such as the four mountain chains in Europe, perpendicular to the Mediterranean sea and parallel to each other; the mountains of Egypt; and the mountains to the west of India.

- The islands have a rectangular form and are shown not only in the encircling ocean but also in the Mediterranean Sea. The oceanic islands are as follows, starting with the east, and going clockwise: *Chryse* and *Argyre* (in the map of *Fernando I & Sancha* divided into two islands); an unidentified island in the far south west (except in the *Fernando I & Sancha* version, where it does not appear); *Scaria insula*; the Fortunate Isles; Ireland; Great Britain; *Thanatos*; and *Thule*. Those of the Mediterranean Sea, from west to east: Gades; Menorca; Mallorca; Corsica; Crete (except in *Silos* and *Fernando I & Sancha*); Sicily; Samos; and Tarsus.
- The desert and sandy zones coincide in all these maps and are located in the northeastern and south-western extremes of the world.
 - The *Earthly Paradise* is illustrated with the image of the original sin.
 - The only city represented is Jerusalem.
 - The encircling ocean appears decorated with fish, which are also present in the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea in the map of *Silos*; in the case of the *Escalada* and *Valcavado* maps the ocean also portrays ships.
 - The myth of the Phoenix Bird – *Hic abe Fenix* [Here [is found] the Phoenix Bird] to the west of India.

A more detailed comparison of the *Family Ila* maps enables us also to establish closer links between one and the other. Such is the case with the Beatus *mappae mundi* of *Valcavado* and *Urgel*, which share details such as the representation of the serpent of temptation in the *Earthly Paradise* as if floating in the air, or the image of Jerusalem, which is very similar to that of the *Silos* Beatus map. The *Valcavado mappa mundi* is rectangular in shape with rounded corners, much like the *Girona Beatus mappa mundi* (#207.6).

The encircling ocean, like on all of the Beatus *mappae mundi*, appears as a river surrounding the earth. In the *Valcavado mappa mundi* it is populated with both ships and fish. The ships that are illustrated show the hull divided length-wise into sections, the keel, a prominent upper gunwale, the protruding bow and the reduced poopdeck (for the two ends of the ship are asymmetrical), a visible row of oars and no sails. The fish are drawn in black with their bodies highlighted using red and white lines, and yellowish colored dots. There are seven identified islands in this encircling ocean: *Crise et Argire Insula*, *Scaria Insula*, *Furtunarum Insula*, *Scocia Insula*, *Britania Insula*, *Tantuto Insula* and *Tile Insula*. In the Mediterranean Sea there are eight named islands: *Gaddis*, *Min[ori]*, *Maio[ric]a*, *Corsice*, *Cretis*, *Sic[ili]a*, *Samino* and *Tarsis*.

Flowing to the encircling ocean from the Mediterranean Sea is the *River Tanais* [representing the Don River, Black Sea Caspian Sea complex]. The Danube River is shown splitting off from the *Tanais* and into the encircling ocean.

The Pyrenees mountains are depicted and identified by name, separating off Spain. The *Pillars of Hercules* are shown in the shape of “bird’s wings” in western Africa (not on the Iberian peninsula and northwest Africa) and titled *Dvo Alpes contrarii sibi* [two mountains confronting each other]. Also in North Africa there is a display of vegetation in neat rows, interwoven with place names.



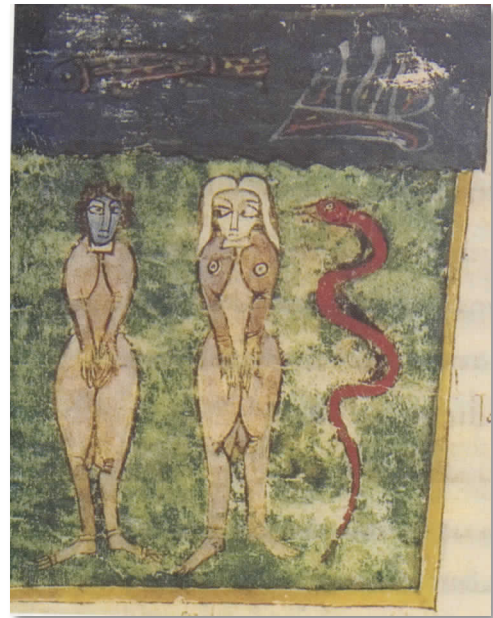
Like the *Silos Beatus mappa mundi*, only one castellated city is depicted, apparently representing Jerusalem. This city is represented like the letter "M". It is flanked by two side-towers topped at their highest point by a horizontal overhanging structure. Next to this structure is, again, the framed picture of Adam (blue-faced) and Eve using their hands to cover their groin area, indicating that the sin has already been committed as is explained in *Genesis*. Adjacent to them is the coiled serpent to the right of Eve that seems to float in the air. The serpent speaks into Eve's ear; Adam and Eve appear in a frontal position; Eve's breasts are reduced to circles, they are both lacking shoulders, and their heads are virtually set on their arms. *Paradise* is bounded by a simple rectangular gold frame and a green background.

All the *mappae mundi* of *Family Ila*, as well as those of *Milan*, *Saint-Sever* and *Lorvão* of *Family I*, conceive of Ethiopia as a land where precious stones, cinnamon and balsam abound, but one finds lurking natural dangers in this region, specifically serpents and the inhabitants, horrible monstrous beings with different faces. Although the maps of the *Beatus* codices only allude in writing to these dangers, the depiction of the serpents in the Ethiopian region is relatively common in mediaeval cartography. These maps of the *Beatus* codices repeat the textual information on Ethiopia in an almost identical form, with some orthographic differences: *Eziopia ubi sunt gentes diuerso uultu et monstruosa specie orriuilis precensa est usque ad finis Egypti ferarum quoque est serpentium, referta est multitudo ibi gemme pretiose, cinnamum et balsamum*. [In Ethiopia there are fearsome people with their different faces and monstrous appearance. It extends to the frontier of Egypt. It is full of a quantity of wild beasts and serpents. Here there are precious stones, cinnamon and balsam].

Location: Biblioteca de la Universitaria de Valladolid, Ms 433, ff.36v-37 [Ila],
Size: 350 x 240 mm.

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