Visualizing the Never-Seen
Models of Time, Space and History in Fantasy Cartography

Judith Klinger

Maps belong to Fantasy literature more than any other genre, as Diana Wynne Jones points out satirically in *The Tough Guide to Fantasyland*: »Find the map. It will be there. No Tour of Fantasyland is complete without one« (Jones 1996: 1).[1] Maps depicting Fantasy realms help to shape imaginary spaces, which cannot be explored or experienced outside the book and the map. Unlike maps aiming to represent geographical formations or political structures of the past, Fantasy maps spatialize universes that are not (or not in all aspects) bound to the same configurations of space and time as the extra-literary world.[2] In George Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* this is evidenced by a temporal expansion and spatialization of seasons. In his seven *Narnia* books, C. S. Lewis introduces a parallel world where time passes differently – in fact a multiverse. And J. R. R. Tolkien's Arda cosmos features zones of heterotemporality and heterospatiality, which shift with the succession of different eras.

The cartographic visualization of other worlds has clearly become one of the paratextual conventions of Fantasy literature. In the terms of Gérard Genette's functional model of paratextuality, these maps operate on the threshold between the book and the exterior world, leading readers into the »thicket of the work's margins« (Nitsche 2001: 388) and out on the other side.[3] Since one of their functions is to offer readers spatial orientation and context, in interaction with the narrated

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1   The sample surveyed by Ekman 2013: 22–24, based on 200 Fantasy novels, showed that 27 to 40 percent of the examined books featured maps. This does not, however, invalidate the close connection between the map and the narrative genre; cf. Bushell 2020: 199: »the map is endemic to the point of redundancy for this genre (as it is not for any other)«.

2   Sundmark 2017: 223 describes, on this basis, a tension between the supposed realism of the cartographic medium and Fantasy as a genre that creates its own worlds. For the construction of thresholds and boundaries see Ekman 2013: 68–128.

3   According to Genette 1997: 2, the paratext is »a ›vestibule‹ that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back. It is an ›undefined zone‹ between the inside and the outside, a zone without any hard and fast boundary on either the inward side (turned toward the text) or the outward side (turned toward the world's discourse about the text),« yet it still controls readings of the text.

story, Fantasy maps draw on different cartographic conventions and employ established two-dimensional models for systematizing and symbolizing spaces. In this manner, they act as transmission zones between pre-existing models of time and space and cartographic conventions on the one hand and the (partial) spatio-temporal alterity of Fantasy universes on the other. Even beyond the narrated world and the book, they can inspire viewers to imagine other spatialities.[4] Fantasy maps thus shape a very distinct liminal zone, characterized by a *transitionality* between divergent constructs of space and time, which yet awaits systematical description. The maps' textual references and their functions for the reception process are an integral part of this complex; my paper will however focus on the principles and strategies of visual representation, and the fundamental tension inherent in Fantasy cartography. While Fantasy maps draw on conventional ways of modelling measurable spaces, they also introduce spatialities that can point beyond the familiar representations of geographical structures and challenge perceptual habits.[5] Based on this observation, I propose that incoherencies and ruptures within historical patterns of representation, along with their complexity and hybridity, could prove to be constitutive features of Fantasy maps – albeit with different characteristics in each specific case.

I will start out by examining the tensions discernible in Tolkien's maps of Middleearth. The second section of this paper explores how the semiotic systems of historically different cartographies are combined and modified within the map of Middleearth, the map for C. S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*, drawn by Pauline Baynes, and some of the maps that accompany George Martin's unfinished series *A Song of Ice and Fire*. The third and final section then focuses on the serialization and transformation of these maps and considers examples that cross media boundaries.

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4   Bushell 2020: 228–236, describes how maps have become independent of the books and cites the secondary cartography (»post-authorial maps and atlases«) that followed Tolkien's publications as an example. Further on this aspect see Danielson 2018, esp. 7–11, on »fan cartography«.

5   Mendlesohn 2008: 14, in particular has emphasized that Fantasy maps help to consolidate the narrated history: »portal-quest fantasies reconstruct history in the mode of the Scholastics, and recruit cartography to provide a fixed narrative, in a palpable failure to understand the fictive and imaginative nature of the discipline of history«. See Ekman's overview of studies on this topic (2013: 15–19). For a critical view on Mendlesohn see Bushell 2020: 201f.: her study of Tolkien's integrated approach (which interlaces the writing process with the development of maps; ibid.: 206–220) aims at a dynamic understanding of the production of meaning with and through maps. For similar arguments see Tally 2016: 16; Timpf 2017.

1. Tensions in the Cartography of Middle-earth

Tolkien's work on his literary texts was closely interwoven with the emergence of cartographic designs. *The History of Middle-earth*, edited by Christopher Tolkien in twelve volumes, contains a number of map sketches and drafts and thus offers a variety of insights into the creation process. More recently, exhibitions in Oxford and Milwaukee[6] have given prominence to literary cartography, lending additional visibility to these interconnections. Tolkien's papers provide ample evidence of the way maps served as starting points for the narrative, helped to consolidate individual scenes and provided orientation for the author himself. They frequently show regional or local details[7] or appear as small sketches in the middle of text segments, as continuations of the narration by different means.[8] On 25 April 1954 Tolkien wrote to copy-editor Naomi Mitchison: »I wisely started with a map, and made the story fit (generally with meticulous care for distances)« (Tolkien 1995: 177, letter 144).[9] It is obvious, however, that the process was not so much governed by linear sequence (the drawing of a map followed by story-writing), but involved reciprocal modifications and developments. Clear evidence emerges from manuscript pages that show cartographic sketches embedded in the text and interwoven with its genesis.[10] Maps were part of the story's evolution and – like the text – underwent modifications, revisions and expansions.

An »integrated model of writing and mapping« (Bushell 2020: 202) underlies the geography of Middle-earth in *The Lord of the Rings*: narrative exploration of the geography went hand in hand with continuous additions and revisions to the general

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6   The exhibition at Oxford's Bodleian Library, *Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth* (2018), was subsequently shown in Paris. In 2022, Marquette University in Milwaukee presented *J. R. R. Tolkien: The Art of the Manuscript*. The accompanying publications (McIlwaine 2018 and Fliss/Schaefer 2022) supplement the maps' reproductions with information and comments on Tolkien's literary cartography. For further introductions see also Campbell 2007; Fliss 2022; Hammond/Scull 2022.

7   See McIlwaine 2018 for sketches of the Crossroads (387, Fig. 174) or the areas around Minas Tirith and Osgiliath (389, Fig. 175) in addition to maps of larger regions.

8   See the manuscript pages published in Fliss/Schaefer 2022 featuring sketches of Minas Tirith (160, Fig. 121), Stonewain Valley/Minas Tirith (161, Fig. 122) and the map sketch of Rohan, Gondor and Mordor in McIlwaine 2018, 402f. (Fig. 181).

9   In a letter to Allen & Unwin on 9 October 1953 (letter 141), Tolkien describes the difficulties he faced while producing the maps: »The Maps. I am stumped. Indeed in a panic. They are essential; and urgent; but I just cannot get them done. I have spent an enormous amount of time on them without profitable result. Lack of skill combined with being harried« (Tolkien 1995: 171).

10   Cf. Bushell 2020: 218–220 (Fig. 6.9), referring to Tolkien's sketch of the summit of Mindolluin and Minas Tirith.

›working map‹ of Middle-earth.[11] The large composite map shows multiple traces of the production process, ranging from annotations that were crossed out or erased to the area around Rohan, where a whole section was pasted over. In its palimpsest-like materiality, the map reveals – more clearly than the cleaned-up, subsequently printed version – the intense attention given to every detail as well as uncertainties, fluctuations and a peculiar openness to the perception of the drafted spaces. For Tolkien, everything from sketches and drafts to the large-format general map served to spatialize the interlaced plot lines. His ostensible aim was to present a comprehensible, true-to-scale depiction of the routes travelled (in line with his »meticulous care for distances«), embedded in the landscapes that his characters traverse. Yet the cartographic approaches to the world of Middle-earth are by no means limited to this function.

The publication of not one but three maps employing divergent visual and semiotic codes, highlights that the maps in *The Lord of the Rings* eschew a single, coherent representation of the space described in the narrative. From the now well-known ›general map of Middle-earth‹,[12] drawn by Christopher Tolkien in 1953, to a map showing »A Part of the Shire«, placed between the Prologue and the first chapter of the first volume (*The Fellowship of the Ring*, 1954), and an additional isoline map of Rohan and Gondor inserted at the end of the third volume (*The Return of the King*, 1955), the differences are easily visible. The principles of representation employed in the two supplementary maps, magnifying areas of particular importance, vary significantly – and both again differ from the general map's visual patterns.[13] Even at a brief glance, the juxtaposition of the three maps reveals a multiperspectivity, due to different visualization strategies, that invites readers to compare or combine the mapped spaces, or to shift them, by turns, into the focus of attention during the reading process. Yet the topography and toponymy[14] of Middle-earth continued to evolve even after the novels were first published. From the late 1960s survives a map of Middle-earth with comments and additions by Tolkien and illustrator Pauline Baynes, intended as amendments to the published map.[15] A revision process that

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11   Reproduced and documented in McIlwaine 2018: 398f. (Fig. 179, also reproduced on the book's front and back pastedowns and the free endpapers); for the development of the general map see Tolkien 1989: 295–323; for the ›working map‹ see Tolkien 1990: 433–439.

12   Tolkien himself used this term several times in his correspondence (Tolkien 1995: 168, 177, 210, 247).

13   For a detailed discussion of the Shire map see Ekman 2013: 44–55; on the combination of the three maps see Bushell 2020: 223–225.

14   On the importance of toponymy for the construction of Fantasy worlds see Algeo 1985: 80–82; for the linguistic principles behind the construction of place names in Tolkien's work see ibid.: 83–94.

15   See McIlwaine 2018: 382f. (Fig. 172). The Tolkien Society has published Baynes's and Tolkien's comments, transcribed by Susan Theobald (cf. Theobald, online)

extended over decades finally culminated in the general map of 1980, with additions and modifications executed by Christopher Tolkien, which has been published in all subsequent editions of *The Lord of the Rings* (Fig. 1). I will examine this map's key principles of representation below.

Fig. 1: ›The West of Middle-earth at the End of the Third Age‹, drawn by Christopher Tolkien, 1980
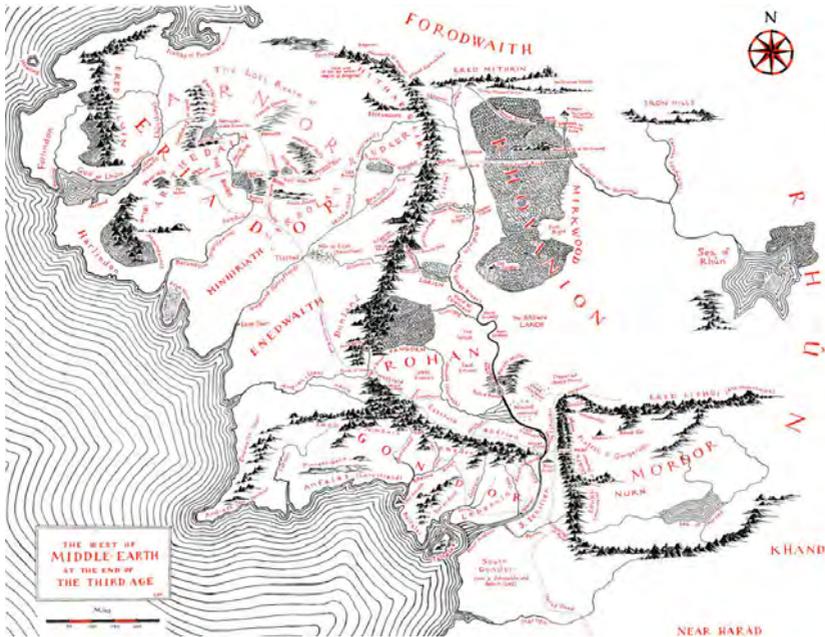
Given Tolkien's expressed interest in a plausible relationship between plot sequences and distances, it is not surprising that the topographic map adheres to established conventions of indicating scale, with a scale bar giving distances in miles. Unlike historical maps, whose legends sometimes contain several alternative systems of measurement (cf. Fig. 9), a single, overriding norm is applied here.

This arrangement suggests a traceability of the characters' journeys, consistent with extra-literary conceptions of space.[16] At the same time, the general map of Middle-earth is a complex composite sign system, as indicated by the two-coloured (black and red) combination of pictorial elements and labels. In more precise terms,

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16   See Ekman 2013: 35: »the scale on the fictional map announces that there is another space to which the map positions correspond, strengthening the impression that the map not only portrays but represents, that there is a measurable space to which the map refers«.

the »composite sign system of the map«, as described by Robert Stockhammer, generates »an *iconic* illusion, is dominated by an *indexological* function, but is based, not least, on *symbolic* signs« (Stockhammer 2007: 50).[17] In cartography, the ›iconic illusion‹ – that is, the notion of a *similarity* between the map and the spaces it represents – is always achieved by strategies of generalization, including »selection, simplification, elimination, smoothing over, typification« (Schlögel 2003: 101). On closer inspection, the map of Middle-earth does not follow a single coherent mode of selection, but rather reveals a layering of different principles.

The map's fragmentary status is obvious even at first glance: neither does it encompass the entirety of Middle-earth, nor are the contained regions shown with the same level of detail.[18] In the revised version of 1980, this is underlined by the title »The West of Middle-earth at the End of the Third Age«, denoting both spatial and temporal limitations. In contrast to the superabundance of places, regions and labels in the Westlands, i.e. in the northwest, large blank areas and unlabelled tracts of land are noticeable elsewhere, particularly in the south and east. Only on the surface can this imbalance be linked to the journeys described in the narrative. While some regions not visited by the characters remain blank, many other equally untravelled areas are labelled with great precision, particularly in the northwestern section of the map. Ricardo Padrón suggests that the unlabelled *terrae incognitae* invite imaginary exploration (Padrón 2007: 272); above all, however, they emphasize the limits of cartography and signal an opening towards the unknown.[19]

In contrast to these empty spaces and blanks, the northwest of Middle-earth is densely labelled and rendered accessible in much pictorial detail – even in areas where no narrated action occurs. In many places, the map also features locations and regions of historical significance, such as the extensively labelled area in the upper northwestern quadrant, identified as »the lost realm of Arnor«: the kingdom of the Dúnedain, which ceased to exist long before the story picks up. Another long-lost kingdom included on the map (albeit one ruled by the opposing party) is Angmar, with its capital Carn Dûm in the far north: the domain of the ›Witch-king‹

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17   Charles Sanders Peirce defines the referenced semiotic terms as follows: while the icon is based on a perceived similarity between the sign and the referent, the index indicates an actual connection. The symbol, in contrast, is an arbitrary, conventionalized sign (see Peirce 1903/2016).

18   The process of reduction becomes sharply visible if we compare the detailed ›working map‹ with the published map. Christopher Tolkien undertook the selection process his father struggled with, as expressed in a letter to Allen & Unwin on 9 October 1953: »I could do maps suitable to the text. It is the attempt to cut them down and omitting all their colour (verbal and otherwise) to reduce them to black and white bareness, on a scale so small that hardly any names can appear, that has stumped me« (Tolkien 1995: 171; letter 141). Cf. ibid.: 177.

19   Cf. Miller 2016: 134: »The ›blank spaces‹ offer the possibility that the world holds things as yet unexperienced, even unimagined.«

and later lord of the nine Ringwraiths or Nazgûl. A third, less obvious example is situated north of Lórien, where the name »Gladden Fields« appears next to the confluence of two rivers: a momentous site in the history of the One Ring, as it was on this battlefield that Isildur lost the ring – allowing it to fall into Gollum's hands much later.[20]

The map's toponyms thus indicate historical events and contexts, linked with pictorial elements, ›natural‹ formations such as mountains and rivers, or markers of settlements. As a result, the *layered map* superimposes different but not precisely delimited eras and expands the narrated sequence of events. It lends temporal depth to the charted spaces, a depth also noticeable in the visual entanglement of toponyms.[21] The contrast between this excess and the map's fragmentary status can be addressed as a primary source of tension. At the same time, the historically significant sites and regions are not entirely absent from the story; a variety of references – from the characters' dialogues to the appendices of the *Lord of the Rings* – establish their place within the imagined world. Embedded in the map, they gain a phantom presence, implicitly suggesting that historical events may be spatially experienced: diachrony is translated into synchrony.

A more subtle trace of the distant past emerges from the bilingual toponymy. Throughout the map, the names of localities, regions and kingdoms are inscribed in both English (the language of the text) and Sindarin (the most common Elven language of Middle-earth). In many cases, an English translation accompanies the Sindarin toponym.[22] This combination both reflects and reduces the multiplicity of different languages, cultures and peoples that coexist in Middle-earth: clearly more than two in the narration. Yet this obvious reduction turns the toponymy into the readable trace of a settlement process, in the course of which Elven peoples, followed by human refugees from Númenor arrived in Middle-earth and established their own realms and cities. In contrast, names given only in English – especially in the Shire and the surrounding area – are associated with cultures based solely in Middle-earth and do not attest to previous migratory movements.

The map's strong emphasis on the west unlocks a further dimension of meaning. In addition to the dense weave of labels, a marked westward protrusion in the coastline stands out. And although the Western Sea serves as narrative setting on only one occasion, when Gandalf, Galadriel, Bilbo, Frodo and others embark on a westbound journey at the very end of *The Lord of the Rings*, the sea itself takes up a strikingly large

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20   In the story, these events are introduced by Gandalf (Tolkien 1954/1955: 51); for a more detailed description see Tolkien 1980: 351–372 (*The Disaster of the Gladden Fields*).

21   Ekman 2013, 61, points out that the toponymy renders the historical dimension tangible via names preceded by ›Old‹.

22   Cf. »Ered Lithui/Ash Mountains« to the north of Mordor and the river »Gwathló/Greyflood«, to name just two examples.

area. In addition, the west coast of Middle-earth exhibits a noteworthy opening at the »Gulf of Lhûn«, the location of the »Grey Havens«, from which the last Elven ships set sail. The map first published in 1954 even featured small drawings of ships by the Havens, a pictorial signal underlining the site's historical and mythological significance as well as the westward inclination of the landmass. The strong visual presence of the Great Western Sea (*Belegaer*) implicitly reverses the direction of the settlement history outlined above and instead points to the Elves' gradual disappearance from Middle-earth. Beyond the map, on the far side of the sea, lie the »Undying Lands« of Valinor and Tol Eressëa,[23] where the long-living Elves of the late Third Age still sail. On the one hand, the geographical opening towards the Western Sea indicates a connection to a mythical order of space. On the other, it suggests a fundamental ambivalence and a tension between history and myth, since Valinor could under no circumstances appear on this map, even if it included the far west.

Only Tolkien's *Ambarkanta* maps arrange Middle-earth and Valinor within a two-dimensional continuum.[24] These world maps, sketched in the 1930s, represent the First Age of Arda, before the catastrophic fall of Númenor led to the bending of the world into rounded shape.[25] In the Third Age, Valinor no longer exists on the same spatial plane as Middle-earth, and may only be reached across a mysterious ›straight road‹. As a result, the Undying Lands are situated beyond the boundaries of everything the two-dimensional map of Middle-earth (which represents a section of the round world after all) can depict. This representational limit informs the emphasis given to the coastline and the sea. Ricardo Padrón describes cartographic visualizations of Thomas More's *Utopia* as »emblems of our *desire* to know and possess that island, itself a symbol for the true, the beautiful, and the good« (Padrón 2007: 270). Similarly, the extent of Middle-earth's coastline with its protrusion into the Western Sea, may be read as an articulation of desire – albeit with a focus on the absence and

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23   The western continent of Aman (with the inhabited region of Valinor) and the offshore island of Tol Eressëa occupy the position of an earthly paradise within the Arda cosmos as residence of the godlike Valar and the origin of all inner-worldly light. Only in very rare cases can this region be accessed by mortals.

24   This series of diagrams and map sketches, of which maps IV and V show the combination of Aman and Middle-earth, accompanies the cosmological text *Ambarkanta: The Shape of the World* (Tolkien 1986: 242–251).

25   The cataclysm of Númenor, an island between Middle-earth and Aman, occurs in the Second Age as a result of human hubris, incited by Sauron: when the settlers, already privileged by the Valar, prepare to conquer Valinor, their island is submerged by an enormous tidal wave. At the same time, the world changes its shape and becomes spherical. As a consequence, no route by which mortals can access Valinor remains. For the development of the material see Tolkien 1996: 140–165 (*The History of the Akallabêth*). Tolkien's tales of the fall of Númenor link the restructuring of the world to a radical change of episteme, from myth to history: cf. Klinger 2006.

inaccessibility of the world of Valinor, which has become an epistemological problem in the course of Arda's history.

A final example may illustrate how the map intertwines mythological and symbolic dimensions. Sauron's realm of Mordor appears as an area enclosed by mountain ranges. In fact, their over-precise rectangular shape is disconcerting: here, the symbolism of fortified inaccessibility seems to have solidified into ›nature‹. This anomaly, argues Stefan Ekman, suggests that supernatural rather than tectonic forces have shaped the terrain (Ekman 2013: 57). Not only is Mordor the residence of evil, Sauron's presence also serves to interweave it with the history and mythology of Arda.

Reviewing the map's selection and representation principles reveals its multilayered character. Its overcrowded appearance suggests a dense and detailed knowledge of the terrain, yet at the same time the map hints at the limits of cartographic representation – though these boundaries (or openings) assume different shape in the east and west.[26] Another area of tension emerges from the presentation of diachrony as synchrony: the intersecting, superposed inscriptions that refer to different time periods contradict the impression given by the scale bar, suggesting that the represented spaces may be experienced in the narrated present. Scale as a basic principle furthermore insinuates a relation of coherence to the exterior world and renders the map compatible with established models for measurable spaces. The measurability of distances, which implies a precise cartographic approach based on unchanging selection criteria, is in turn undermined by the combination of different selection principles, which draw on historical and mythological concepts of space. In effect, the superimposition of competing perspectives contradicts the superficial impression of a coherent, uniform spatiality of Middle-earth.

2. Visual Design Strategies: Hybrid Historicization

If the Middle-earth map appears homogeneous at first glance but turns out to be fraught with tensions on closer inspection, the same can be said for the visual design principles, symbolic languages and stylistic borrowings combined thereon. Once again, the map of Middle-earth may serve as a starting point to demonstrate how historically divergent strategies of visualization, especially medieval and modern

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26   By identifying territories without recording their boundaries as cultural markings, the Middle-earth map challenges a central cultural and geopolitical function of cartography: that of asserting control over a space by means of representation. See Ekman 2013: 59: »no administrative (political or other) borders are to be found anywhere on the general map. [...] It portrays an internal tension between its natural landscape and cultural control of that landscape.«

ones, intermesh. Beside the specific use of imaginings of the Middle Ages (that is, the particular form of medievalism), another matter must be of special interest: namely the way the map processes the underlying tension between discrepant world views and models of time and space.

Both the lettering and signs on the map of Middle-earth deftly position it within the twentieth century. The typography is dominated by serif lettering, albeit hand-written, so that it cannot display the uniformity of a printed font.[27] This calligraphic reversion – from the printed book back to manuscript culture – underlines a nostalgic tendency of the typography. At the same time, this leaning is combined with a modern, military system of signs and symbols. The catalogue documenting the exhibition *The Art of the Manuscript* (2022) points out that Tolkien, as a signals officer in the First World War, was familiar with instructions for the production of field sketches (such as those that appeared in a handbook by E. J. Solano, first published in London in 1916 and reissued several times).[28] Tolkien adopted various elements from this contemporary inventory, including the symbols for roads, fords and certain types of terrain.

On the map, the sober visual code of the field sketch meets elements that are given a three-dimensional appearance by means of shading. One of its striking aspects is the persistent mixing of two-dimensional orthogonal projection with representations from a bird's-eye view. Throughout the map, light appears to enter from the east, creating an impression of three-dimensionality, especially in the mountain ranges. Bird's-eye elements invite viewers to gaze into a landscape similar to various others sketched by Tolkien. For example, a study of the area surrounding Minas Tirith and Osgiliath, sketched in 1946, shows a mountainscape drawn in the same style that characterizes the map (McIlwaine 2018: 388, Fig. 122). In effect, the described combination opens up the terse, subjectless sign system of mapping for subjective spectator positions. Here Tolkien selects a mode of representation with a history of its own: aerial views of cities and landscapes first appeared alongside the

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27   See Ekman 2013: 58, on the use of font sizes and capital letters as well as the direction of writing.

28   Cf. Fliss/Schaefer 2022: 146 (Fig. 107) as well as the comment on the illustration. Danielson 2020: 2f., describes customary cartographic styles of the early twentieth century and ascribes a fundamentally military outlook to Tolkien: »He approaches these maps in much the way that a military officer would, with a concern for being exact about distances that individuals and armies can travel, and topographic barriers to their maneuvers. This is reflected in his use of stylistic conventions similar to those he would have encountered in military maps – hachures and contour lines for elevation, with individual pictorial trees for forests that allow underlying topography to show through« (ibid.: 9). In my opinion, this generalization stretches the point, since the map's overall appearance – including the style of inscriptions and the selection principles described above – is incompatible with a military or strategic approach to topography.

development of linear perspective in the Renaissance and became popular with the beginning of aviation (cf. Asendorf 2009; Doucet/Hunter/Robbins 2021).

Fig. 2: Mappa Mundi. Psalter world map, 1262–1300

Moreover, contemporary, modern forms of representation are combined with pre-modern types. By adopting specifically medieval cartographic conventions, the map of Middle-earth is visually connected to a fundamentally different conception of space. Medieval *mappae mundi*, after all, are based on a pre-modern cosmology.[29]

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29 For an introduction to the origin and design of the *mappae mundi* see Edson 2007: 11–32; Baumgärtner 2017: 67–69; on the relationship between medieval world maps and world view see Baumgärtner/Schröder 2010; see Dünne 2011: 47–59, for the basic patterns of the cartographic imagination.

In the well-known Psalter World Map (London, created after 1262) this cosmology is reflected in a bisection of space and, implicitly, of time (Fig. 2).

The earthly sphere is tucked into a vast ›beyond‹ while linear, historical time is embedded in eternity: a supratemporal present that simultaneously contains end and beginning.[30] In the Middle Ages this Christian model of time and space nevertheless coexisted with pre-Christian mythologies and their literary adaptations, featuring special zones of the otherworldly as well as temporal anomalies and asynchronies. Such paradigms of discontinuity necessarily clash with the modern model of a single space-time continuum, based on the assumption of universally valid rules – at least in a terrestrial context. When Tolkien (like his contemporary and friend C. S. Lewis) draws on the pre-modern, religious image of the world, borrowings from medieval forms of representation in the book and the map generate a fundamental tension between different models of perception and representation that cannot be fully explored here.[31]

One essential design principle of medieval world maps is immediately discernible in the Psalter Map: the image's proportions are not based on any quantifying scale, but on the relative importance of the represented figures and objects.[32] Both the size of the monumental otherworldly figures and the *orbis terrarum* itself bear witness to this principle. Jerusalem, as the centre of Christianity, occupies the middle of the map, and the Holy City is given a size roughly equivalent to the island of Sicily (which appears slightly to the south). Similarly, the 1954 map of Middle-earth reveals, on closer inspection, a visual hierarchy which abandons the principles of scale and consistent proportion. Instead, important places such as Hobbiton or Minas Tirith are oversized in comparison to the surrounding areas and other settlements. In the revised version of the map from 1980, this application of size to emphasize significance has been noticeably reduced.

The map of Middle-earth shares another representational principle with the Psalter Map: in both, diachrony is compressed into synchrony. The medieval *mappa mundi* records important historical events spatially: for example, the confinement of the savage hordes of Gog and Magog by Alexander the Great is illustrated by a mountain range bent into a ring wall, the Caspian Wall, breached only by the Gates

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30   The oversized figures of Christ and the angels, which tower up behind the *orbis terrarum*, not only indicate a spatial and temporal hierarchy between the earthly and otherworldly spheres, they also point to a categorically different quality of the transcendent realm. Further on the Psalter Map: Schöller 2015; van Duzer 2019: 179–196; Grčić 2021: 25–46.

31   In a previous paper (Klinger 2011), I have examined Tolkien's mythopoetic transformation of landscape in relation to medieval concepts of space and passages into the otherworld.

32   This representational convention, usually known as ›hierarchical scale‹, dominated medieval art but did not exclude other types of perspective. Renaissance art replaced this prevailing convention by linear perspective, which constructs a single, homogeneous perception of pictorial space. Cf. Abels 1985; Ortmann 2014.

of Alexander. Immediately below appears a smaller, schematic representation of Noah's Ark after its landing. This pictorial reference to an Old Testament event of historical significance documents the embedding of earthly history within a religious and mythological spatial order.[33]

The Caspian Wall with the Gates of Alexander points to a further principle of visualization, manifested in various places on the map: namely that territorial boundaries often coincide with mountain ranges, rivers or coasts.[34] Instead of being presented as culturally or politically defined constructions, they are naturalized – in exactly the same way as mountain-palisaded Mordor. This pattern of *naturalization* can likewise serve to organize mapped spaces outside the cultural sphere, as an early modern forest map of Württemberg, the *Chorographia Ducatus Wirtembergici* of 1596 by Georg Gadner (Fig. 3; cf. Bull-Reichenmiller 1996) shows on a regional level.

Fig. 3: Georg Gadner: Chorographia Ducatus Wirtembergici, 1596 (detail: regional map)

Almost everywhere on the map, the forests, each identified by name, are clearly set apart from the surrounding area, lending them an appearance of territoriality. Several forests on the map of Middle-earth, drawn with equally distinct outlines, convey exactly the same impression, most notably Mirkwood, Lórien and Fangorn.

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33   For the cartographic linking of geography and history see Kugler 1998; von den Brincken 2008.

34   The Psalter Map once again employs a principle of representation which is characteristic for the *mappae mundi* as a whole; it is equally evident on the Ebstorf and Hereford world maps (both around 1300).

Furthermore, Gadner's map contains elements lost to the past, such as Dachen-hausen (Tachenhusen) castle, which had disappeared nearly two hundred years be-fore the map was drawn.[35] Nonetheless, it is featured among other castles, towns and settlements without any visual distinction to highlight its phantom status. As in the *mappae mundi* and the map of Middle-earth, a diachronic dimension is spa-tially visualized.

The map created by Pauline Baynes for C. S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia* – a se-ries in seven volumes published between 1950 and 1956 – also displays motifs and structures borrowed from medieval maps. While Baynes supplied illustrations and partial maps for the books at the time of publication, the coloured general map was produced as a poster and published as late as 1972 (Fig. 4).[36]

Yet Lewis had already pictured a visual approximation to pre-modern cartogra-phy at an early stage. On 8 January 1951 he wrote to the illustrator: »My idea was that the map should be more like a medieval map than an Ordnance Survey[37] – moun-tains and castles drawn – perhaps winds blowing at the corners – and a few heraldic-looking ships, whales and dolphins in the sea« (Lewis 2007:75). Some of the elements he envisioned, such as the »mountains and castles drawn« or the personified winds, correspond to the iconographic conventions of the *mappae mundi*.[38] The »heraldic-looking ships« and the depictions of sea creatures, on the other hand, are mostly found on portolan charts that became widespread in the late Middle Ages and Re-naissance, and on the world maps that succeeded them. Lewis's imagined map thus amalgamates different map types and historical styles of cartography.

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35   Cf. the historical information provided on the website of the Baden-Württemberg state archive (Leobw, online).

36   Besides illustrations, the books contained maps that were reproduced (originally on the end papers) in black and white or in colour in different editions. A preliminary drawing by C. S. Lewis is preserved in the Bodleian Library (MS. Eng. lett. c. 220/1, fol. 160; available online at Sappho to Suffrage, online). It served as a starting point for Baynes's series of maps that accompanied the books: »Narnia and Adjoining Lands« (*Prince Caspian*, 1951), »Bight of Calor-men und The Lone Islands« (*The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, 1952), »Wild Lands of the North« (*The Silver Chair*, 1953), »Tashbaan, the Desert and Archenland« (*The Horse and His Boy*, 1954). Baynes's poster map was also used as a book cover for the illustrated complete edition in German, published by Ueberreuter in 2019.

37   Lewis refers to the national mapping agency of the British Isles, the history of which dates back to the eighteenth century. Its name contains a clue to its original military focus, as ›sur-vey‹ here relates specifically to reconnaissance.

38   The Hereford map (c. 1300) already shows personified winds, which continued to appear on the edges of maps into the modern age, frequently in the shape of heads blowing out fierce gusts (for example on the world map of the Nuremberg Chronicle of 1493).

Fig. 4: Pauline Baynes: map relating to the Chronicles of Narnia by C. S. Lewis, poster 1972

Once again, only a section of the imagined world is shown on Baynes's general map, not the entirety of Narnia. The map's status as a fragment is furthermore emphasized by the oversized head of the lion Aslan, in the upper left corner, which stands out from its cartographic surroundings in a cosmic kind of breakthrough. Both Aslan's character and story show marked similarities with the passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ and his status as the son of God.[39] Given this context, the

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39   Cf. Schakel 2013. The choice of animal, too, underscores the parallel, as the lion, based on the *Physiologus*-tradition, frequently typifies Christ in medieval art and literature.

visual parallel with the depiction of Christ on medieval *mappae mundi* is hardly acci-
dental. Like Christ on the Psalter Map, Aslan is associated with a transcendent space
and his monumental depiction recalls the enormous head of Christ near the eastern
top of the Ebstorf world map. This iconographic borrowing can be read as a refer-
ence to the underlying concept of a religious order of creation, linking Lewis's liter-
ary cosmos with the medieval Christian world view.[40]

The Narnia map borrows several other motifs and design principles from late
medieval regional maps and portolan charts,[41] which focus on travel routes and
connections between localities and regions, in accordance with new forms of usage.
The portolan chart, of which the earliest extant examples date back to the late
thirteenth century, mainly records coastlines and maritime routes. Navigation
aids are complemented by striking depictions of ships, possibly an inspiration for
Lewis's »heraldic-looking ships«. Baynes's map of Narnia also gives emphasis to
the coastline, matched by the high proportion of space taken up by the sea, which
– unlike the great ocean on Tolkien's map – is not left unfilled but animated by
drawings of ships and connecting lines that indicate the routes travelled by the
characters. These iconographic references prompt a reading of the sea as a realm
of travel, rather than a mythologically significant transition zone into a spatio-
temporally removed otherworld. While these ingredients suggest the conception of
a travel map, the Narnia map lacks a characteristic feature of late medieval regional
maps and nautical charts, namely the »effort to be historically up to date, and in
part to provide a true-to-scale reproduction« (Baumgärtner/Schröder 2010: 77).[42]
In its overall appearance, the Narnia map bears a closer resemblance to Fra Mauro's
world map (around 1450), which combines elements of the *mappa mundi* with nau-
tical chart principles and presents the sea as a site of travel (Fig. 5; cf. Edson 2007:
141–164).

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40   Unlike the Psalter Map (and the map of Middle-earth), this map contains no indications of
      historical kingdoms or events. The naturalization of political/cultural territories is equally ab-
      sent. Instead Baynes chooses to indicate different types of terrain by varying colours. These do
      not, however, coincide with territories or with label-bearing regions such as the »Wild Lands
      of the North«. In some cases the names of these areas cut across the geographical features.
      In effect, the only precisely drawn border is the coastline.

41   For an introduction to these map types, which were increasingly widespread in the late Mid-
      dle Ages, see Baumgärtner/Schröder 2010: 76–80; for more on the portolan charts see Camp-
      bell 1987; Edson 2007: 37–59; Baumgärtner 2015.

42   While Baynes's map contains a scale bar with distances in miles at the bottom edge, it almost
      disappears among the heraldic ornamentation, and the highly stylized landscapes render it
   difficult to apply the scale.

Fig. 5: Fra Mauro: world map, 1450 (detail: coast of Africa)

A visual alignment with nautical charts is also apparent in some of the maps accompanying George Martin's series *A Song of Ice and Fire*. The third and final section

of this paper will illuminate their distinctive features. For now, a juxtaposition of one of these maps with the Narnia map can reveal striking shifts in the historicizing details. The fifth volume of Martin's series, *A Dance with Dragons* (2011), includes a partial map created by Jeffrey L. Ward, illustrating the area around the destroyed city of Valyria on a peninsula in Essos (Fig. 6).

*Fig. 6: Jeffrey L. Ward: map of Valyria, in George R. R. Martin: A Dance with Dragons, 2011*
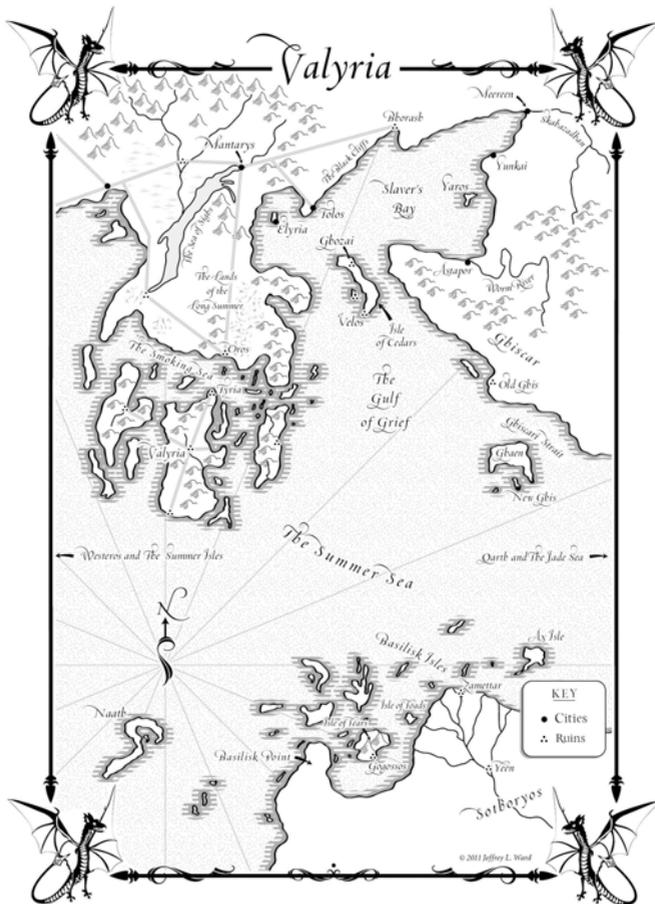
This map as well as others in the Bantam Spectra edition incorporate a central feature of the portolan chart: the clearly visible network of lines used by navigators

to set course. Known as ›rhumb lines‹, these threads emanate from the wind rose of portolan charts (Fig. 7).[43]

On the Valyria map, a stylized compass replaces the wind rose, and while the layout of the rhumb lines is obviously not suitable for navigation, it alludes to another cartographic function: to gain mastery over the world by means of reliable nautical routes and advanced navigation techniques. Pauline Baynes's illustration, in contrast, assigns the curvate lines traversing the sea exclusively to the protagonists' individual journeys: a substantial departure from the function of portolan charts.[44]

Fig. 7: Vesconte Maggiolo: portolan chart, Genoa 1547 (detail)
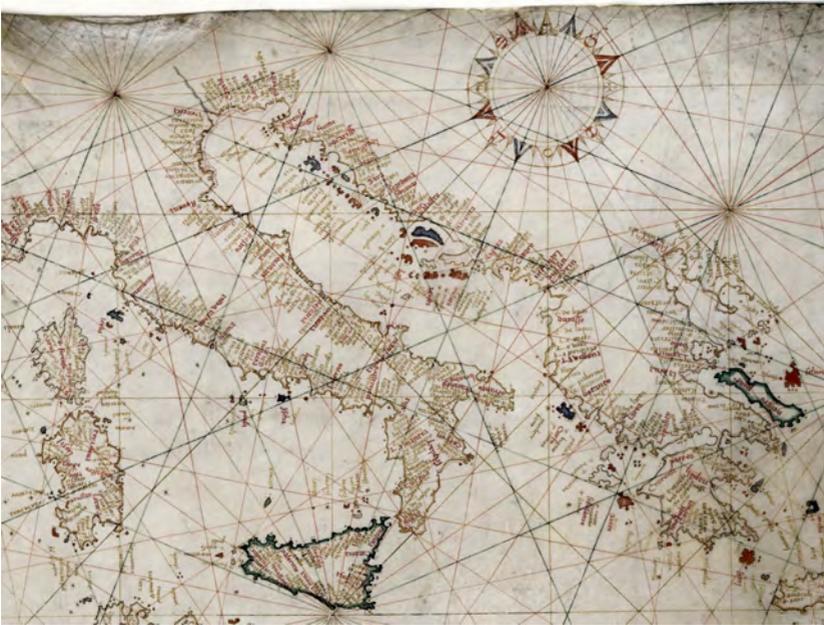
Baynes's map clearly endows Narnia's realms with historicizing references, but must at the same time ignore key aspects of the literary conception and its modernity. In Lewis's books, Narnia emerges as a parallel world, which coexists with 1940s

43   For more on rhumb lines or windrose lines, which were used on nautical charts into the nineteenth century, see Neumann 1998: 407f. The map of Middle-earth features a compass at the top right with a modern northward orientation, while medieval *mappae mundi* were nearly always east-oriented. Pauline Baynes also drew a north-oriented compass rose for the poster map.

44   Other ships are positioned outside these connecting lines, clearly signalling that they are not intended as indicators of frequently travelled maritime routes.

England and can be accessed via specific portals (for instance through the wardrobe in Professor Digory Kirke's country house). Indeed other parallel worlds exist alongside Narnia, and they are all connected to the ›Wood Between the Worlds‹. The idea underlying these stories with their intricate web of worlds is the markedly modern notion of a multiverse. Lewis, however, links this idea with Christian, religious concepts (cf. Schwartz 2014: 37), as Baynes's poster testifies, where Aslan, the world's creator, bursts through the surface of the map.

Baynes's map acquires a distinct multilayered effect by means of framed vignettes inserted at the top right and bottom left,[45] each reproducing scenes from individual Narnia volumes and labelled with the respective book titles. This transgression of boundaries between representational levels can be identified as a visual metalepsis:[46] the framing world of the self-contained books is encapsulated inside the internal world of the map. In addition to Aslan's incursion from another dimension, this element represents another shift between levels. Yet a subtle tension arises between this second shift and the religiously coded order of creation: implicitly, the creation of the world itself is confronted with the author's literary creation.

As in Tolkien's works, features of modern cartography appear in the maps for Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia* and Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*, in both cases combined with the above-mentioned borrowings from historical iconography and pre-modern cartographic paradigms. The medievalization resulting from these re-creations has prompted some critics to refer to a general ›pseudo-medievality‹ of Fantasy maps.[47] However, the map-specific medievalisms[48] described here extend beyond surface

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45   Baynes had already used this stylistic device on a poster map for the *Lord of the Rings*, published by George Allen & Unwin in 1970. Here (with the express permission of the author) a pictorial frieze was added at the top and bottom of Tolkien's map of Middle-earth, as well as framed vignettes in the central section. Since these ten vignettes show important scenes of the action, however, there is no leap to another level of the narration (smaller, less sharply demarcated vignettes of this kind can also be found on the Narnia map). The *Lord of the Rings* poster map is available at Tolkien Gateway 2019, online.

46   The concept of narrative metalepsis, introduced by Genette, refers to the intentional crossing of a boundary between the (extradiegetic) world of the narration and the (intradiegetic) narrated world (»a deliberate transgression between the world of the telling and the world of the told«; Pier 2016).

47   Ekmann 2013: 41, describes this tendency within Fantasy cartography — »(high) fantasy's general proclivity for pseudomedieval settings« — and ascribes »that same pseudomedieval aesthetic« to Tolkien's map of the Shire (ibid.: 49).

48   The terms *medievalism* and *neomedievalism* are sometimes treated as synonyms. However, individual authors distinguish between *medievalism* as imaginings and recreations of medievality that arise from engagement with historical sources or work by historians, and *neomedievalism* as an eclectic processing of the medieval, filtered through literary and other adaptations. See e.g. Kaufman 2010: 4: »Neomedievalism is thus not a dream of the Middle Ages but a dream of someone else's medievalism. It is medievalism doubled up upon itself.« Robinson/ Clements 2009: 62, similarly state: »Neomedievalism does not look to the Middle Ages to

textures. In Tolkien's and Lewis's work, they are anchored in space-time variations which resist the modern paradigm of a measurable, uniform continuum. Not least, the inhabitants of these mapped worlds include non-human beings with magical or ›supernatural‹ abilities, whose cultures and temporalities inform the maps in different ways. Their presence in Middle-earth and Narnia unlocks connections to a mythological array of meaning, most prominently a cosmology whose basic structures are rooted in the pre-modern religious mindscape. Within the framework of modernity, however, these structures become subject to a remodelling fraught with tension. The concept of a Narnian multiverse, or, in Tolkien's Arda cosmos, the narrative of the world's disastrous rounding with its attendant divergence of myth and history, indicate this tension most clearly.

The Narnia and the Middle-earth map, then, present us with forms of *hybrid historicization*. Postcolonial theory has reformulated the concept of the hybrid, shifting it from dubious mixing or crossbreeding to the breaking up of dominant discourses, into which »the voices of the Other are inscribed« (Schwarz 2015: 173).[49] If the notion that mapping spaces grants control over them is one of the rhetorical gestures of cartography, hybrid historicization, which indicates ruptures and tensions, can challenge or question this gesture of sovereignty. By integrating pre-modern elements, the maps discussed above, in my reading, provide clues to a challenge of this kind, expressed in the ›voice of the Other‹. On the map of Middle-earth, the bilingual toponymy gives the most obvious evidence. It can be read as either a settlement history or the trace of an exodus, leading to the disappearance of magic from Middle-earth. The Narnia map articulates this challenge across the layering of creation levels: a transcendent and a human, literary level each interrogate the other. Both maps oscillate between a confrontation and a homogenization of world views. From this context derives the particular importance of the limits of cartographic representation and the references to things beyond the maps.

The ›Brendan map‹ from the late twelfth century[50] (Fig. 8) shows a dimension that is tellingly absent from the maps of Middle-earth and Narnia: it represents the entire world, and, on a level angled away from it, earthly paradise – in a shape that

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use, to study, to copy, or even to learn; the perception of the Middle Ages is more filtered, perceptions of perceptions (and distortions), done without a concern for facts or reality.«

49   For more on the history of the term see Schwarz 2015: esp. 172–176. See also Coote 2010: 32: »At one end of the spectrum, the neomedieval encourages the substitution of superficial understanding, the ›gist‹ gathering of cultural bits and pieces, for real knowledge and understanding of the Middle Ages. On the other, it offers the insights of *a space in which the medieval can ›speak back‹* from the margins to which it has been confined by the domination of the modern.« [emphasis added]

50   The map is preserved in Bischofszell in the Canton of Thurgau in Switzerland (museum of local history, Dr. Albert Knoepfli-Stiftung); cf. Scafi 2006: 168–170 (Fig. 7.8a, 7.8b).

somewhat resembles a flying carpet.[51] Such visualizations of transcendent spatiality are omitted in Fantasy maps that follow modern conventions of representation. The multiverse surrounding Narnia and its connections to the historical present lie beyond the map, whose references to transcendence can only be decoded in an allegorical mode. The connections between Middle-earth and Valinor shape a mythological subtext on the Middle-earth map, whereas the ›straight road‹ escapes the cartographic mode of representation. In contrast, the neomedievalism that characterizes the universe of George Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* results in quite different cartographic gaps and representational limits.

Fig. 8: ›Brendan Map‹, Bischofszell (southern Germany, late 12th century)
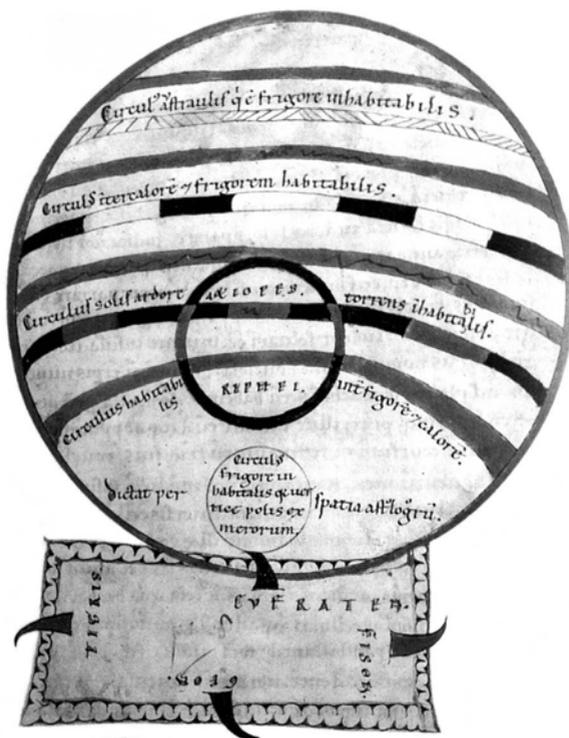
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3. Serialization and Transformation

Of George Martin's Fantasy series *A Song of Ice and Fire* (1996–2011), five books have so far been published. The maps accompanying these novels have a markedly different history of creation and development than those in Tolkien's and Lewis's works. The series' individual volumes contain partial maps that vary according to edition and country of publication; furthermore, their fragmentation reflects the incomplete nature of the narrated story. Alongside the books, a collection of twelve poster maps is advertised under the title *The Lands of Ice and Fire – Maps from King's Landing to across The Narrow Sea* (Bantam Books/HarperCollins Voyager 2012), and the television series *Game of Thrones* (2011–2019), produced by HBO Entertainment, features much-lauded title sequences, designed as flights across moving map landscapes. As might be expected, the manifold maps encompass a broad spectrum of media, styles and patterns of representation. Since the cartographic world of the *Ice and Fire* universe is constantly growing, the following discussion can only consider a few characteristic examples. They are part of a collective, market-driven creation process whose official strand is coordinated by publishers and production companies. Their design is therefore less closely linked to the practice and principle of (book) authorship than in the case of Tolkien and Lewis. George Martin himself reported that he provided preliminary map sketches at the publishers' request and elaborated them on demand.[52] The partial maps were then produced professionally by various commissioned illustrators. In the first volume (*A Game of Thrones*, 1996), partial maps of Westeros (»The North«/»The South«) appeared separately; later volumes added detailed maps of certain regions and expanded the represented areas. As individual plot strands shifted to Essos, partial maps of this much larger continent were published.

Instead of a large general map, then, the books contain a series of partial views which can and will be complemented in accordance with the story's progress. The wide stylistic variation of the *Ice and Fire* cartography is immediately obvious. Three illustrators have emerged as leading map artists: James Sinclair, Jeffrey L. Ward (for the American edition at Bantam Spectra) and Richard Geiger (for the British edition at HarperCollins Voyager). The maps designed by Geiger not only differ stylistically from the American versions; they also contain additional place names. At present, the most widely distributed maps appear to be those by Jeffrey Ward, reproduced in the latest US editions of all volumes. They are loosely based on representation patterns and selection principles that were common from the late eighteenth century until well into the nineteenth century, particularly on regional maps. These maps

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52   Among other things, he admitted that it took an effort to fill the blank spaces in his map with the names of regions and localities. These and other remarks are recorded in a video from 2014 (cf. Aegon Targaryen 2021, online). One of Martin's map sketches is archived at Whitehead 2012, online.

give precedence to settlements and cultural sites; a map of the island of Menorca, printed in Madrid in 1780, presents a typical example (Fig. 9). Besides roads and rivers, the map foregrounds aerial views of landforms in three-dimensional relief. These features reappear in Ward's illustrations, and the key that (with slight variations) accompanies all *Ice and Fire* maps published at Bantam provides a selection similar to the historical map. The latter spotlights towns, buildings and localities, while the former decodes the symbols for *Cities, Towns, Castles, Ruins* and *Ruined Castles*.

Fig. 9: Tomás López de Vargas Machuca: map of Menorca, 1780 (detail)

In addition to the black and white maps within the books, Random House commissioned cartographer Jonathan Roberts to produce the above-mentioned, official collection of large-format regional, continental and world maps, *The Lands of Ice and Fire*. In his blog, *Fantastic Maps*, Roberts underlines the canonical status of his maps, but at the same time addresses their provisional nature: »George RR Martin was quite specific that these maps would be an interpretation of the current state of knowledge of the world rather than a faithful satellite imaging.« (Fantastic Maps 2013, online). The phrasing reveals a tension between the ideal of the satellite image, a complete view obtained by neutral technical equipment from a great dis-

tance, and limited knowledge, requiring additional interpretation. Roberts's use of hypsometric colouring to indicate elevations conforms to contemporary representation principles. This conformity, alongside the vivid depiction of relief, suggests that the shown landforms comply with common standards of measurement. In another blog, *Atlas of Ice and Fire*, Science Fiction expert Adam Whitehead not only presents his own maps, but juxtaposes the *Lands of Ice and Fire* collection with non-canonical general and partial maps (›fan maps‹) in great abundance. Moreover, his posts discuss the HBO series *Game of Thrones* and offer detailed commentary on the maps published in the books.[53]

In addition to the proliferation of maps and illustrators, an open-ended process of supplementation, revision and expansion characterizes the current *Ice and Fire* cartography – a process that the digitally produced maps of Roberts and Whitehead attempt to counteract with a visual impression of completeness and permanence. Their work is intensely concerned with sustaining the ›iconic illusion‹: use of representational paradigms from contemporary cartography as well as geoscientific touches serve to suggest a factual similarity between the maps and extracartographic, extra-literary spaces. One such feature on Whitehead's maps is the specification of latitudes. Yet the scale bar, which gives distances in miles, creates coherence with a somewhat quaint-looking signal instead of the presently common reduction ratio.[54] Overall, the cartography surrounding the books inevitably reflects the incompleteness of the series, since new volumes may reveal new regions or prompt inevitable revisions. At the same time, the maps' growth is dominated by a canon-forming dynamic, which has its counterpart in the close conformity to contemporary representation principles and the use of the latest digital design technologies. Only the caption »the known world« on Roberts's large general map hints at the limits of cartographic possibilities (Fantastic Maps 2013, online).

In the context of a Fantasy-specific tension between familiar cartographic patterns and the visualization of never-seen spaces with their own laws, one area of the *Ice and Fire* world must be of particular interest: heterotemporality and heterospatiality of the narrated universe cluster in the far north of Westeros, beyond the Wall. On the earliest published maps of the North, this region contained only a few labels covering large areas – »the Haunted Forest«, »the Frostfangs« (a mountain range), »the Frozen Shore«. As the series continued, the cartographic focus shifted northward, in line with plot developments. However, even the embellished presentation of areas »Beyond the Wall«, designed by Jeffrey Ward, looks quite barren (Fig. 10). Names have been accorded to certain places, bodies of water and mountain regions,

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53   For an introduction see Whitehead, online.
54   See for example the design of a map of Westeros, aimed at calculating the size of the continent and its position on the globe (cf. Whitehead, online). Contemporary maps customarily provide a numerical scale indicating the reduction ratio.

but the labelling remains sparse overall – due, by all appearances, to the geopolitical selection principle embodied in the key, which gives priority to settlements and the remnants of destroyed settlements. The great variety of life-forms and cultures beyond the Wall that the story itself explores have left no mark on the map: evidently, because they failed to construct castles or towns.

Fig. 10: Jeffrey L. Ward: 'Beyond the Wall' map, in George R. R. Martin: A Dance with Dragons, 2011
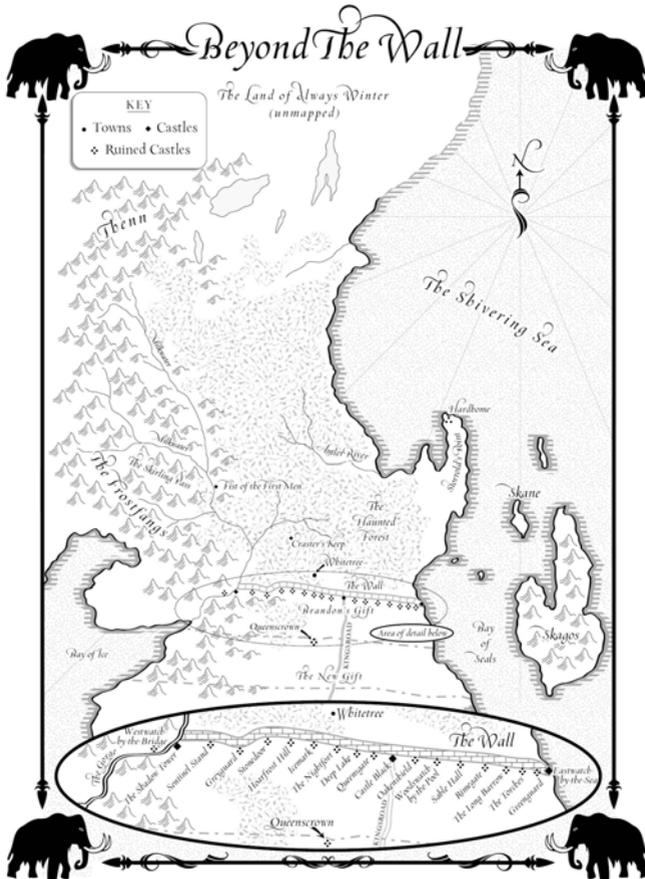
The significance of the zone beyond the Wall of Westeros arises from the peculiar paradigm of winter, which intermeshes temporal and spatial dimensions.[55] On the one hand, the seasonal cycle of Westeros is extended, irregular, and cannot be reliably predicted. Since summer has already stretched across several years as the narrative picks up, widespread fears anticipate a prolonged winter of possibly apocalyptic proportions. Winter does in fact set in at the end of the fifth volume, *A Dance with Dragons*, but its longer-term effects are so far unknown. On the other hand, a »Land of Always Winter« exists in the extreme north of Westeros. Between this area and the Wall extends a zone largely covered by »the Haunted Forest« and peopled by threatening creatures. Besides human wildlings and giants, »shapechangers« or »skinchangers« and »White Walkers« (or simply »Others«), who transform the dead into undead revenants or »wights«, populate the area. Due to this threat, the inhabitants of Westeros fear any breach of the Wall that would allow these outsiders to invade the mapped and civilized parts of the continent. The frequently quoted motto of House Stark, »Winter is Coming«, emblematically embodied in the prehistoric direwolf, signals a paradoxical resilience which already incorporates defeat: while war can be waged against the creatures of winter, there is no way of fighting the change of seasons.

Ward's »Beyond the Wall« map therefore places visual emphasis not on the dwellings of threatening strangers and otherworldly creatures, but on defensive fortifications. The line of forts or watchtowers along the Wall is duplicated below the main map, enlarged as if under a magnifying glass. This stylistic device emphasizes and reinforces a highly significant border, separating the sphere of civilization with its culture-fostering economy, its political territories and conflicts – »the plane of organization, denoted by houses, sigils and banners, games of thrones and clashes of kings« (Leederman 2015, 200) – from the unstructured wilderness. The Land of Always Winter is now explicitly marked as »unmapped«, a distinction which further stresses the underlying opposition between civilization and wilderness. For the people of Westeros, the populations roaming the intermediate zone between the Wall and the land of winter display no discernible form of organization; they are the embodiment of wildness, chaos, and excessive violence, augmented by magic.[56]

In Martin's books, the area beyond the Wall is not conceptually rooted in a mythological order of space. The paradigm of winter defines it as a separate spatio-temporal zone, where the threat of a future apocalypse coincides with the living

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55   Cf. Martins 2020 on the overlapping of political, climatic and supernatural meanings. Nahornave 2023 proposes an eco-critical interpetation, arguing that the books contain a commentary on climate change and environmental crises.

56   For the constructions of foreignness/otherness see Leederman 2015; Marques 2016 (on the ›Haunted Forest‹ as a medievalized space of the Other). See also the postcolonial reading in Elnahla 2013.

return of prehistory. Beyond the Wall, ice-age conditions prevail, mammoths still roam, and human cave-dwellers and hunters live at a primeval stage of civilization. The onset of winter is personified by the White Walkers, whose bodies radiate cold – a climatic invasion on the micro level. Yet the maps fail to visualize the distinctive intermeshing of temporal and spatial dimensions, the heterotemporality of winter, the spatial confrontation between epochs and the diversity of magical possibilities beyond the Wall. On Ward's expanded map of the North, only the silhouettes of mammoths that guard its corners as prehistoric emissaries allude to the temporal agglomerations and entanglements. Once again, the key provides clues to the specific historicity of the maps, drawing attention not just to inhabited settlements and castles, but also to »ruins« and »ruined castles« – that is, to relics of earlier events and conflicts, indicators of what once was. A diachronic dimension is accessible exclusively from the perspective of the narrated present, instead of emerging as a phantom presence of the past. The map's geopolitical focus on territorial dominions includes traces of war, destruction and decline, but – apart from broadly sketched landforms – does not yield a distinctive signature for the bewildering Outside of civilization. Only the focus on the Wall, a boundary of fundamental significance for the Westerosian world view, suggests a critical zone of contact and conflict.[57] And only the way the map fades into the unknown and unmapped north indicates the limits of representation.

A transposition into moving pictures expanded and transformed the cartographic code of images and signs. In the opening sequence of the HBO series *Game of Thrones*, awarded an Emmy for Outstanding Main Title Design in 2011,[58] a simulated camera-eye flies across the digitally animated map landscape, zooming in and out, while buildings, towns and castles rise out of the ground like mushrooms (Fig. 11).[59]

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57   On the historical implications in an American context see Zontos 2015, 109f.: »Martin may have been inspired by Hadrian's Wall, but his Wall has a unique American identity. It is the same old frontier line that [Frederick Jackson] Turner first mentioned. But it has changed into a multisided frontier, a frontier as a setting of conflict as well as of contact. Its complexity and transformation reveal the changes that have been wrought upon American identity itself.«

58   The production company Rock Paper Scissors/Elastic created all the title sequences under creative director Angus Wall. The following remarks refer exclusively to the opening credits of the first season in 2011 (cf. Art of the Title 2011, online).

59   Axelrod 2013 describes the elaborate production process, divided among several contributors, as follows: »Using only pencil and paper, an artist begins by transforming the city into a clockwork model, with mechanical diagrams detailing how the city will build itself in the title sequence. The designs are handed off to the computer graphics department. One team member fine-tunes the shadow cast by the buildings. Another oversees the camera shots, adjusting angles and frames. Still another worker, the so-called smoke artist, adds final tint and color.«

Fig. 11: Title sequence of HBO series Game of Thrones, 2011 (extract)
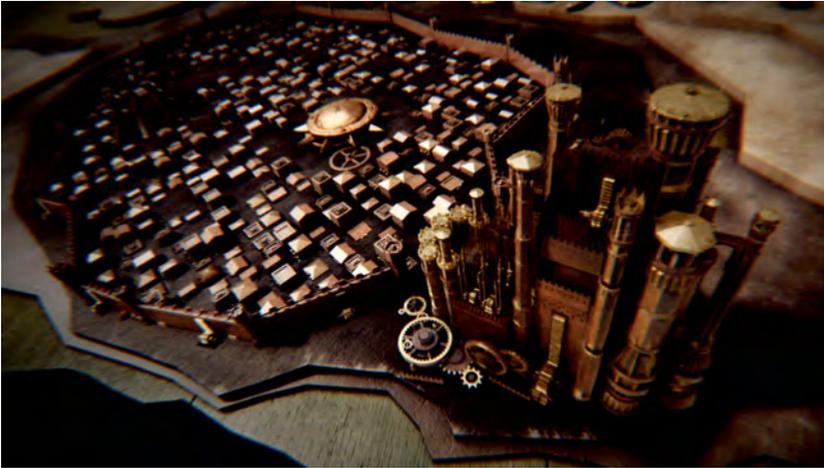
However, the structures shown are made of cogwheels, pistons, screws and bolts interlocking like clockwork or machine components. According to statements by the creative director and title designer Angus Wall, they were inspired by the inventions of Leonardo da Vinci.[60] The focus on settlements and seats of power remains the dominant principle; natural landscapes are reduced to clusters of geometric shapes that flit past the edges of the image. In this sequence, the machinery of power sprouts from a landscape designed like a game board, interlinking organic growth and architecture in a bustling array of cogwheels and pistons. The details show military equipment and fortifications, as well as territorial demarcations between seats of power. The visibly constructed nature of the fictional world – a cross between a diorama and a labelled map – is rendered dynamic as the camera-eye shifts from hovering to rapid flight, with frequent changes of direction and viewing angle. In this manner, the sequence generates tension between the artificiality of the rigid, board-like map and the interplay of a mobile gaze with animated cityscapes. The animated maps, too, underwent a process of serialization, as a new title sequence was produced for each season of *Game of Thrones*, each presenting central settings.

In each title sequence, the viewer enters the *Game of Thrones* universe through a spherical astrolabe that acts as frame and gateway to the invented world. An artistic replication of the literary cosmos is epitomized by an astronomical instrument, suggesting an identification of world-building with the process of surveying it. At the

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60   »Art Director Rob Feng referenced Leonardo's machines [...]. We wanted the title sequence to be rooted in the world of the show, which is a technically unsophisticated place, but to also have a complexity that gives it life.« Angus Wall, quoted in Perkins 2011.

same time, the astrolabe functions as a historicizing signal for a pre-industrial universe, and the materiality of the mapscape provides further reference to pre-modernity. Its cogs, gears and machinery are intended to look as though exclusively fashioned from ›natural materials‹, such as wood, metal and leather.[61] In addition, the allusion to Leonardo da Vinci's machines points to the liminal period of the Renaissance and the concept of a technological progress anticipating modernity.

Unlike the two-dimensional maps in the books, the HBO title sequence features distinct signs of historicity – albeit with a starkly homogenizing effect. They point to the Renaissance as an age of discoveries and inventions and employ this topos as well as the moving mechanical devices to insinuate a compelling path towards future industrialization and mechanization. In contrast, the world described in the books and the television series is dominated by an eclectic neomedievalism, which assembles ingredients from different eras.[62] Although the books primarily borrow from the Middle Ages and the early modern period, imaginings of pre- and protohistory underpin key concepts of the foreign or Other. Compared to this approach, the cartographic worlds of this Fantasy universe prove to be reductionist and schematizing rather than hybrid.

Their seriality and incompleteness, however, invites ongoing visualizations – including non-commercial and non-canonical creations. An inventive, complex example from the diverse and productive realm of fan art may therefore serve to spotlight an alternative approach. Working on a private commission, freelance artist Francesca Baerald painted a watercolour map of the North of Westeros. Her work adopts the continent's ›canonical‹ outline, but its lavish design, replete with concrete details, diverges substantially from the unadorned maps in the books (Fig. 12).

The displayed section of the continent is framed by strips of parchment, showing traces of aging and wear. The parchment frame in turn is filled with celticized ornaments and vignettes, containing named castles, the abandoned tower of Queenscrown and forts on the Wall: a graphic visualization of the omnipresent key to the printed maps. The desolation evoked by deserted sites of dominion and war is reinforced by two skulls in each of the top corners. They gaze forward as if from catacombs, in vivid contrast to the pair of oversized living animals at the painting's bottom, a raven and an albino direwolf. The actual map is designed as a labelled

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61   »Some people have actually thought that we built those titles practically out of wood and metal, but they are all done on the computer to emulate real physical textures and materials.« Angus Wall, quoted in Axelrod 2013.

62   See Marshall 2011, 22, who defines *neomedievalism* as »a self-conscious, ahistorical, non-nostalgic imagining or reuse of the historical Middle Ages that selectively appropriates iconic images, often from other medievalisms, to construct a presentist space that disrupts traditional depictions of the medieval.«

landscape, drawn in perspective, from which solitary, disproportionately large cas-
tles project. In the surrounding sea, obviously inspired by the iconography of early
modern world maps, a sinking ship and a sea serpent hint at maritime dangers.

Fig. 12: Francesca Baerald: The North, 2017

The colour scheme, with its muted earthy tones and cool nuances, matches the
densely packed signs of transience and historicity and reinforces the link to the
theme of winter. A striking feature overall is an eclectic use of historical pictorial
signals and motifs, ranging from the early Middle Ages to the early modern era,[63]
very much in keeping with Martin's practice of textual montage. The visual promi-
nence of the raven and the wolf suggests a rule of animals over the depopulated
world, and simultaneously recalls a common motif in Old English literature, namely
the carrion-feeding ›beasts of battle‹ (cf. Neubauer 2014). The only dynamic element
is the white wolf placed directly beside the lettering for ›Westeros‹, its hind part
bursting from the ice in flame-like shape: an embodiment, it seems, of winter's
threatening nature. The painting's animal protagonist is most probably Ghost, the
direwolf of Jon Snow, Lord Stark's illegitimate son who will head the defence of the
Wall. Strikingly, the figure of the wolf not only breaches the boundary between the

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63   Possibly as far as the Baroque period, as the pairs of skulls recall the visual motif of *vanitas*,
      which was particularly popular in the seventeenth century.

embedded continent and the frame drawing, but is on the point of leaping across this outer frame as well.[64] Its direction of movement evokes the expulsion and exile of the Starks (who display a direwolf on their coat of arms), but also links the space of the image with that of the viewer. While the raven, its beak wide open as if to emit an alarm call, seems to emulate a narrator's function, the leaping wolf actively transmits a message which could well be »Winter Is Coming«. Baerald's map-painting displays various links to the text and cartography of *A Song of Ice and Fire* and offers an interpretation of the north and of winter that underscores the significance of animals as intermediaries. Beneath the mapped continent, her painting exposes an ice shelf, indicating the transtemporal presence of winter.

Baerald's map stands apart from the paratexts of the published books and implicitly distances itself from their cartography. By disrupting standard geoscience-based representations and reductions and combining them with strongly themed and embodied pictorial elements, the artist gestures towards heterospatiality and encourages viewers to envision the literary concepts of spatio-temporal alterity. With her montage of historical visual patterns, of frames and nesting elements, she creates a hybridity and complexity equally present in the maps of Middle-earth and Narnia, but absent from the ›official‹ *Ice and Fire* maps.

In conclusion, hybrid historicization emerges as a prominent visualizing mode employed to signal the Fantasy-specific incoherences and fractures between incompatible models of space and time. Against this background, a shift of perspective and an investigation of the ways in which Fantasy maps engage with modernity, or comment on (post)modernity could certainly produce stimulating new insights. In the maps relating to *A Song of Ice and Fire*, cartographic modernisms are more obvious and more dominant than in the older works of Tolkien and Lewis. Their prevailing function – to offer guidance within the narrated realms – and their inventory of geopolitical symbols foreclose visual experiments that might, for instance, illustrate the merging of space-time parameters in the concept of winter, or the conflation of future apocalypse and prehistory. While the *Ice and Fire* poster maps emphatically strive to approximate contemporary models of mapping and to lend geographical fixity to the Fantasy world, the HBO title sequences, in contrast, show how visualized assumptions about history and modernity can intermesh and thereby highlight the alterity of Fantasy universes. In diverse ways, the discussed visualizations of Fantasy worlds can inspire us to imagine alternative space-time connections, and

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64   See the discussion of the wolf motif in Leederman 2015, 190–199, and the observation: »The boundaries of the wolf's territory are mellifluous, ever-changing according to need and population« (ibid.: 191). The strong presence of animals in direct relation to the space of the map contrasts markedly with Jeffrey Ward's maps, where the silhouettes of animals and mythical creatures are banished to the ornamental edges.

to reflect critically or creatively on our own preconceptions about cartographic representation.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: ›The West of Middle-earth at the End of the Third Age‹, drawn by Christopher Tolkien, 1980. In: *J. R. R. Tolkien: The Lord of the Rings*. New York 2005, © HarperCollins. © The Tolkien Estate. Source: https://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/File:Christopher_Tolkien_-_The_West_of_Middle-earth.png [accessed: 1 March 2024].

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