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Richard J. A. Talbert
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INTRODUCTION

Seldom are visitors to the Manuscript Collection of Austria's National Library in Vienna permitted to inspect its set of eleven parchment segments that together form an elongated, squat, and not quite complete map of the Roman world, the so-called Peutinger map. The bold manipulation of landmasses, the detailed plotting of land routes with names in Latin, and the vibrancy of the color on most of the segments are just three among the wealth of impressive features that at once strike the viewer. Here is a major map that in its reshaping of continents recalls the futuristic Atlantropa project devised by Herman Sörgel (1885–1952).[1] Altogether, however, it is a map without close match in any period or culture worldwide. Not least because autopsy is inevitably such a rare privilege,[2] the primary purpose of this book is to render the map more widely accessible and more comprehensible with the support of up-to-date scholarship and technology. At the same time, the opportunity is taken to reconsider the map's design, purpose, history, and significance in the light of current ideas and methods.

The book proceeds on the basis of the long-standing view that the map itself is not an original creation, but a copy at several removes of a lost Roman forerunner. Such copying is the typical means by which texts from antiquity have been preserved. Even so, a vast range of classical authors' works no longer survives. Of those that do, an alarmingly high number are preserved in just a single copy, and there is no manuscript of any classical text that survives from its author's own time, or even close to it. Roman production of maps (especially large ones) was never as prolific as that of texts. So it is hardly a surprise that a mere couple even remotely comparable to this one have survived, both of them as original stone monuments in fact (now fragmented), rather than through copying by scribes. In the present case, while any serious study has to consider the circumstances and context both of the original Roman map and of the successive copies

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now lost, it is as well to bear in mind from the outset that all conclusions reached can be no more than conjecture. This is hardly good cause to be deterred, however. After all, the map's plight is shared by countless material objects from antiquity and later, which have likewise been set adrift. In this connection a confession by Antoine Lancelot, the first scholar to take a close interest in what has come to be called the Bayeux Tapestry, may readily be appreciated. In the early 1720s, when he first saw incomplete drawings of part of it that lacked even the briefest explanatory note, he frankly admitted his inability to identify the nature of the object, let alone where it might have come from. It might, he thought, be "a bas relief, a sculpture around the choir of a church, round a tomb, on a frieze, a fresco, a design for windows or even a tapestry."[3]

The production, early history, and discovery of our sole surviving copy of the map are in turn virtually a blank record. Only once it had the good fortune to be rescued from obscurity early in the sixteenth century and safeguarded in the private library of Konrad Peutinger at Augsburg, Germany, did we begin to become informed. Among many other preoccupations, Peutinger was actively engaged in assisting the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I to forge a historical link for himself with the Roman Empire and its rulers. In general, moreover, humanists of the period were eager seekers of new materials for the study of classical antiquity and its heritage. Lectures on Tacitus' *Germania* given by Konrad Celtis in the 1490s fired widespread interest in this text for the first time after its rediscovery about forty years earlier.[4] Meanwhile, alongside the emergence of a German national identity, a new awareness of scientific cartography and its global application was also developing.[5]

Around 1500, it seems, Celtis stumbled upon the map. Understandably enough, his extraordinary new find, of a most unusual type, thrilled fellow humanists. The limited circle who first gained the opportunity to inspect the map at once seized upon it to further their researches into the history of the Germans or their studies of place-names. "There are various conjectures on this issue," explained Beatus Rhenanus about the naming of Boulogne in antiquity, "but the military map which we have seen at the Augsburg residence of our friend Konrad Peutinger removes all our doubts."[6] Another scholar, who had not been able to inspect the map, nonetheless reflected optimistically: "Learned men were beginning to reckon that with this map as the arbiter of territorial disputes, able to overrule every objection, it would be possible for many of the almost everlasting disagreements among geographers to be resolved, and for many of the knots that seemed to defy disentanglement in books by historians to be untied."[7]

The issue of who had commissioned the original map became a favorite topic for speculation – a Roman emperor, it was readily assumed, but which one? The full span of the first four centuries A.D. from Augustus to Theodosius was wide open, and has been revisited repeatedly ever

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since. The impossibility of achieving consensus on this issue (in the sixteenth century, or indeed down to the present) in turn contributed to long-standing lack of agreement on a name by which to refer to the map, a difficulty only compounded by the lack of any term in classical Latin that indisputably equates to "map." The very first sentence, no less, of the preface introducing the first publication of any part of the map alludes to inconsistency in naming it. For a noun, on the one hand, *tabula* – otherwise commonly used to refer to a large piece of parchment stretched on a frame or fastened to a wooden tablet – relatively soon came to be preferred to *charta* (chart) or *itinerarium* (itinerary). For a much longer time, on the other hand, there was no agreement on an apt descriptive phrase or adjective (one or more) such as *Augustana* (from Augsburg), *Itineraria*, *Militaris*, *Provincialis*, *Theodosiana*. However, references to the map commonly did include some mention of Konrad Peutinger, its owner from a very early stage after the rediscovery. It was the adjective *Peutingeriana*, therefore, that frequently came to be attached to *tabula* – either alone, or with one or more others – and was certainly the most distinctive indicator for purposes of identification. Hence arose the formulation *Tabula Peutingeriana*, or "Peutinger Table," for which I substitute the less latinate and more immediately informative "Peutinger map." "Map" also serves to remove any chance of misconception that the object in question is a piece of furniture or set of statistics.

It was not unalloyed good fortune that the map came into Konrad Peutinger's possession, devoted bibliophile though he was. To be sure, he treated it with the utmost pride and respect, and was mindful of the stipulation by which it had been bequeathed to him, namely, that on his death he should make it publicly available – in a library, for example. In fact he sought to do more, and sooner, by attempting to have the map engraved for publication, a pathbreaking step for his day. In the event, however, his successive efforts were thwarted. Quite apart from the map's sheer size – 672 cm wide by 33 tall (or approximately 22 × 1 ft.) – the difficulties of first elucidating all its complex details, and of then reproducing them flawlessly, presented engravers with unfamiliar and almost insuperable challenges. In addition, willingness aside, it was not always possible for an engraver to work directly from the map; instead, he might have to be supplied with drawings made by others. It would be these renderings that he then engraved, thus opening up further scope for error. Moreover, as was acknowledged right from the sixteenth century, it was simply not feasible for an engraver to capture the exact style of the map's smaller lettering, especially if his commission was to deliver a scaled-down image. Nor was it practical for any publication to reproduce the map's coloring, integral part of its presentation though that is. Such limitations could not be overcome, and they were to bedevil even the most painstaking of intentions to reproduce the map faithfully for publication through the nineteenth century. Even today, they continue to make themselves felt,

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insofar as the type of image chosen as a convenient illustration of the map is often still a drawing.

When pondering the map's checkered history of publication from its discovery to the present, it is sobering to realize that only once during these five centuries (in the 1750s) was it engraved at full size by an engraver on the spot who first made his own tracing of it. Unfortunately he reproduced lettering less ably than line work, these errors went uncorrected, and the outsize, costly volume did not sell. Over a century later, one expert could venture the depressing opinion that even then (in the 1860s!) the most reliable presentation of the map remained the first engraving published of it in its entirety, in 1598, although this is little over half-size and the hasty job of an engraver who never set eyes on the map itself. It was this engraving that several subsequent publications were content to reuse or reengrave time and again. With the aid of lithography, two improved presentations of the map – one full-size, the other two-thirds – did eventually come to be produced in the late nineteenth century, even incorporating the map's colors, albeit in somewhat rudimentary manner. The problem of the prohibitive outlay entailed in preparing any presentation of the map remained intractable, however. Costs, in turn, undermined the forward-looking scheme to issue a set of high-quality (monochrome) photographs of each of the map's eleven parchment segments in 1888; few of these sets went into circulation because they had to be priced so high. Not for almost another century did a set of color photographs at last become available, as recently as 1976.

In short, for obvious enough reasons, it has proven an unremitting struggle in various related respects – artistic, paleographic, technological, financial – to present the Peutinger map satisfyingly and accurately for those unable to inspect it in person. No less have scholars continued to struggle over equipping their fellows with the kind of supporting apparatus that was already considered invaluable in the sixteenth century. The nature and scope of some of the desirable elements for this purpose are more easily settled than others. Compilation of a gazetteer of all the names marked on the map, for example, gives rise to fewer conceptual and organizational dilemmas than the preparation of a commentary. For the latter purpose, which features and names are to be singled out for attention? In which order should they be treated, and how extensively? Much to its credit, a preliminary publication (1591) of a limited part of the map offered a commentary and gazetteer that together respond to such fundamental issues in well-judged ways. But the immense task of publishing a commentary on the entire map was not accomplished successfully – after several failures – until 1825. This work was already outdated when it appeared, however, and the continued advancement of knowledge on all fronts during the nineteenth century both encouraged further efforts and slowed them down. Only the effort by Konrad Miller in Germany succeeded in fact. His work was eventually published in Stuttgart in 1916 and has still to be superseded.

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Today, Miller and his work, impressive as it is, appear to be the epitome of traditional approaches to scholarship in general and to the map in particular since its discovery four centuries earlier. Miller labored alone as an amateur enthusiast; the images of the map on which he relied were drawings; and his lines of enquiry hardly diverged from those established in the sixteenth century. He never queried the conviction that the map was created exclusively for practical purposes, and his principal concern was to test the accuracy of its land routes and accompanying distance figures. At the same time – like all scholars before the present generation – he showed next-to-no concern for the entire dimension of the map's design and presentation from a cartographic perspective, an omission that in turn calls into question his overconfident reconstruction of its lost Western end.

Beyond all doubt, therefore, an effort to present the Peutinger map anew and to rethink it has long been overdue. But, until very recently, viable means by which to branch from the traditional path and to develop alternative ways forward seemed elusive. Now, however, four related but very different stimuli have together removed long-standing obstacles and encouraged an advance. First, the *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*, published by Princeton University Press in 2000, has at last furnished comprehensive, informed maps of classical antiquity's physical and cultural landscapes according to modern norms. Before, in the absence of such maps, a satisfactory cartographic lens through which to interpret the Peutinger map today had for too long been lacking. However, to continue considering a Roman map largely in relation to the scientific perspectives and accumulated knowledge of the twentieth or twenty-first century is no longer appropriate. Fortunately, second, the ongoing *History of Cartography* project initiated by Brian Harley and David Woodward during the 1980s has offered fruitful new models for the interpretation of mapmaking in premodern cultures, with stress on the need to evaluate such activity above all within its contemporary intellectual and social context. Third, my own immersion in mapmaking as director of the project that produced the *Barrington Atlas* has enabled me to penetrate for the first time the overlooked, but vital, process by which the Peutinger map was conceived and made. Finally, fourth, the growing capacity and robustness of digital technology over the past decade have now furnished versatile means to present and analyze the map that in a print medium are either prohibitively expensive or quite unattainable. The Stanford Digital Forma Urbis Romae Project (http://formaurbis.stanford.edu), launched in 1999, has set an instructive example in this respect. In retrospect, the fact that the last systematic presentation of the Peutinger map dates as far back as 1916 may hardly seem surprising from a practical viewpoint. The new digital technology has proven literally a godsend for informative dissemination and study of such an unwieldy, complex item.

The new technology is the reason why the present work was conceived as a digital product from the outset. It not only displays the map at full

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size and in color as a seamless whole, but also adds multiple layers, which deconstruct its components as well as label and highlight names and features. Accordingly, the map may be examined in greater or lesser detail on screen, and the layers may be displayed in any combination or removed altogether. Associated with this display is a database with entries and commentary for over 3,500 individual names and features. In addition, for the modern viewer's perspective, the routes followed by the Peutinger map and Antonine and Bordeaux Itineraries, as well as the identifiable rivers appearing on the map, are all traced on a mosaic of *Barrington Atlas* maps.

However, limits have been set for the scope of the commentary associated with the database. In particular, quite deliberately no attempt has been made to expand upon local matters – for example, the history of a place, the style of its name, the accuracy of a distance figure, or the course of a route on the ground – in the way that Miller and his predecessors did. For further investigation of these and related questions, the *Barrington Atlas* and its *Map-by-Map Directory* are simply cited as the best single resource in the first instance. The vast scope of the map's coverage and its mass of detail make it a Herculean, not to say Sisyphean, labor to tackle local matters. Given today's range of scholarly reference tools, such unrewarding duplication of effort becomes a counterproductive diversion when so much else of importance about the map has long remained neglected. The perils of entrapment in local matters may be clearly perceived in the length (421 pages) and density of just one recent exemplary monograph devoted to routes in a single region for which the map furnishes vital testimony.[8] This said, however, the electronic format of the present work's database equips it with the potential to become the framework where others from here on may usefully graft further comments to individual entries.

Following this Introduction, five chapters and a conclusion seek to elaborate upon a range of questions that should concern all scholarly users of the map. Chapter 1 addresses the map's discovery around 1500, its ownership thereafter, and the successive struggles to publish it and to provide commentary. These stages, with their multiple ramifications, have never been described so fully or objectively. Nor has their wider significance been recognized as a classic example of the formidable challenges facing all efforts to reproduce a large, complex map at any period before the development of color photography and printing. Chapter 2 breaks fresh ground by offering a detailed, long overdue analysis of the map's paleography, not least with a view to determining what claims may fairly be made about where this surviving copy was made, and when. Chapter 3 probes the decisions underlying the design of the map and the principles by which it is presented; for these purposes, its physical and cultural components are closely examined in turn. Chapter 4 tackles the vital but enigmatic issue

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of the extent to which the surviving copy – as a reflection of work by one copyist after another – succeeds in reproducing the original map now lost. Chapter 5 focuses squarely on fundamental issues associated with the lost original: its likely sources, date, authorship, context, and purpose. Finally, the Conclusion reflects upon the map's place within classical cartography, its subsequent circulation, and its impact upon medieval mapmaking.

The interpretation of the map and its influence that emerges forms a radical, not to say provocative, departure from established opinion. I dare to regard the map as having been part of a decorative scheme for a specific public space inside some imperial palace of the Tetrarchic period, when the Roman Empire was ruled by Diocletian and three coemperors (around A.D. 300). The unknown mapmaker's purpose is seen as primarily artistic and celebratory, not practical or geographic; no one was ever seriously expected to plan a long journey or a military campaign from this map. Rather, its viewers were invited to marvel at the sweep of Roman power and civilization, and to be engaged – even teased – by the strikingly elongated representation of the known world from the Atlantic to as far as India, where the city of Rome dominates at the center, landmasses are manipulated and much open water drained. To quote the Tetrarchs' own rhetoric, the world seen here is one now – thanks to their exertions – "in tranquility, placed in the lap of a most profound calm, as well as benefiting from a peace that was toiled for with abundant sweat." Far from being just a rather dull itinerary diagram recording land routes – an artistically and culturally isolated product – the map embodies the traditional ideals of the *pax Romana* and creatively projects Late Antique taste, ideas, and values.

Moreover, the map's innovative design and content are seen to have made a widespread impact that continued to be felt for many centuries. In particular, medieval "world maps" (*mappaemundi*), while original creations in their own right, are at the same time also products of the creative inspiration projected by the Peutinger map. Henry VIII, king of England from 1509 to 1547 – as it happens, almost exactly the same period as Konrad Peutinger's ownership of the map – took with him on his royal progresses "a mappa mundi in parcheament," which formed part of "the Removing Guarderobe . . . attendaunt at the Courte uppon the kinges most Roiall personne where the same for the tyme shall happen to be." Nor was this the only *mappamundi* that Henry owned; maps were a regular feature of his court ceremonials and diplomatic conferences. Had he seen the Peutinger map, he would surely have grasped its value to a ruler. So too would have his earlier namesake, Henry III (reigned 1216–72), who is said to have positioned a *mappamundi* on the wall behind his throne in the Painted Chamber at Westminster (destroyed by fire in 1263).[9]

If the unapologetically controversial views advanced in this book can act to arouse lively debate across disciplines as well as closer attention to

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Roman cartography and worldview, this will be a welcome outcome for a lengthy and daunting endeavor. For too long now, the Peutinger map has been awaiting fresh vision, from new and wider perspectives.

PRESENTATION OF THE MAP

Reference to the map is offered in various forms:

Map A presents the map full-size in color as a seamless whole by assembling the digital photographs presented individually as Map B (ii) below. Layers overlaid on Map A identify and distinguish the map's components. Appendix 8 offers a Guide.

Map B (i) presents the map's eleven segments individually, as photographed in monochrome in 1888. Each is full-size, or very slightly enlarged; see further Chap. 1, sec. 5.

Map B (ii) presents the map's eleven segments individually, as photographed digitally full-size in color in 2000.

Database with Commentary containing entries for individual features and names. Appendix 7 offers a Guide.

Map C outlines the Peutinger map's rivers on a "mosaic" of *Barrington Atlas* bases, eastward as far as the Euphrates and Tigris. Appendix 9 offers a Guide.

Map D outlines the Peutinger map's routes on a "mosaic" of *Barrington Atlas* bases, up to Maps 87 and 89. Appendix 9 offers a Guide.

As an aid to comprehensibility, the transcription of the map's lettering throughout has been simplified as follows:

(i) "Display capitals" and "capitals" are not distinguished; see further Chapter 2.2 (b) (i);
(ii) the alternate forms of **s** (round and tall) are all transcribed as round;
(iii) the alternate forms **u** and **v** are all transcribed as **v**;
(iv) stops marked before or after words and numbers, as well as dots above **y**, are normally ignored;
(v) where the initial letter of a word appears to be a capital, it is transcribed as such. However, where a letter *within* a word written in minuscule appears to be a capital, it is *not* transcribed as a capital. The copyist has a quirky habit of frequently introducing such capitals within words, as explained in Chapter 2.2 (c) and illustrated immediately below. Even so, there are many instances where it is unclear whether the form of a letter really is to be regarded as a capital. More generally, the appearance of capitals within words creates a strange and disorienting impression upon today's readers without particularly enhancing their appreciation of the map. Hence my decision on balance has been to refrain from further complicating the presentation in this way. As an illustration of

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the practice that I have decided *not* to adopt, note the following sample names from Segment 1A:

1A1 Ad taVM, SinomaGi
1A2 BReVodVRo, TeRVanna
1A3 CoNDaTE, DVRocassio, IVLioMaGo, LvRa, PeTRVM viaco, TeVceRa
1A4 AQVis SeGeSTe, Baca coneRVio
1A5 AtVaca, Colo(nia) TRaiaNa, coRtovallio, Fl. RiGeR, Vet-eRibVs.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE SURVIVING COPY

HISTORY, PUBLICATION, SCHOLARSHIP

The "PEUTINGER MAP," which this study presents and analyzes, is today universally, and in my view correctly, considered to be no more than the sole surviving copy of a lost original. That original map – which is Roman in character even if not necessarily in date – must be this study's eventual concern, but it can only be approached through the copy, which is therefore addressed from many different perspectives in Chapters 2 through 4. This preliminary chapter establishes an essential foundation by treating the copy's discovery around 1500, its ownership over the next half millennium to the present, and above all the successive efforts to publish it and comprehend it.

1. DISCOVERY AND BEQUEST TO KONRAD PEUTINGER[1]

The earliest testimony to the copy – the surviving Peutinger map – is its bequest to Konrad Peutinger in the will of Konrad Pickel (or Bickel; latinized as Celtis or Celtes); this was made on January 24, 1508, shortly before his death on February 4 at age forty-nine:[2]

> Item. Ego lego d(omi)no doctori Conrado Peutinger Itinerarium Antonini Pii, qui etiam eundem nunc habet; volo tamen et rogo, ut post eius mortem ad usum publicum puta aliquam librariam convertatur. [Plate 1]
>
> I bequeath to Mr Dr Conrad Peutinger the *Itinerarium Antonini Pii*, the very same item that is at present in his possession; I wish, however, and request that after his death it should be turned over to public use, such as some library.

Celtis was a passionate, unscrupulous collector of manuscripts both on his own behalf and that of the emperor Maximilian I (1459–1519);

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