

Breaking the Rules: A Medieval View of the World

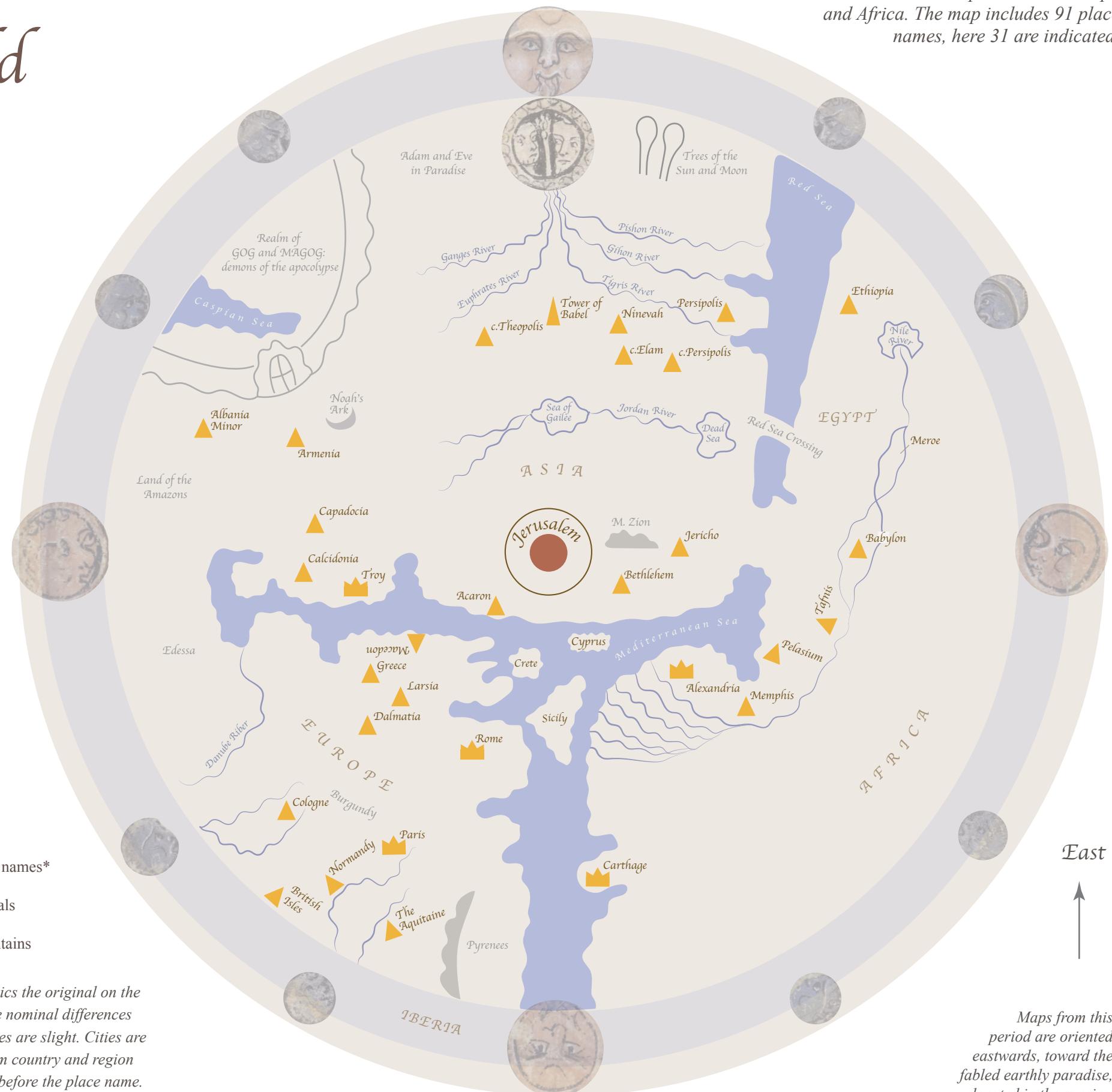
Scholars agree that the medieval period did not create maps based on the Ptolemaic forms of the past. These classical forms, which utilized standardized projection schemes and graticule lines, are comproable to maps made today that are rooted in mathematical formulae.

Instead, the medieval mappaemundi (maps of the world) were created based on parameters defined by biblical and secular histories; the locations of places are dictated by relative distance.

Recreating 13th Century Geography

This **Equidistant Azimuthal** projection, created in ArcGIS, illuminates the geographical framework of the 13th century world map (right image).

Below is a reconstruction of the British Library Psalter World Map, created in 1262 by an unknown artist. The map divides the known world into three parts: Asia, Europe and Africa. The map includes 91 place names, here 31 are indicated.



* This legend mimics the original on the Psalter Map. The nominal differences between place names are slight. Cities are distinguished from country and region labels with a “c.” before the place name.

Maps from this period are oriented eastwards, toward the fabled earthly paradise, located in the sunrise.

