

WHEN DID HISTORICAL ATLASES REALLY ORIGINATE?

Walter Goffart

Historical atlases are collections of maps reconstructing happenings or scenes out of the past. The three-volume *Historical Atlas of Canada* is a particularly luxurious example of the genre; a more modest example is the pocket-size Barnes and Noble *Historical Atlas of the World*, originally published in Norway.¹ What lies behind such collections? Who thought them up, and how did they develop? Recent commentators, including Professor Jeremy Black, the author of *Maps and History*, are agreed on one point. They believe that "the first historical atlas" stems from the dawn of modern atlas-making.² This inaugural atlas, they say, was a work called *Parergon*, meaning "supplement" in English; it was compiled and published by Abraham Ortelius of Antwerp between 1579 and 1595. If this opinion is correct, all other historical atlases are more or less extensive and skilful elaborations of the Ortelian impulse. From his establishment of this genre, a gallery of examples would lead steadily and undramatically to the present.

I think this Ortelius-centred approach is radically flawed. What Ortelius produced in the *Parergon* was admirable; but it was different from an historical atlas. I would argue that the collections familiar to us resulted from sporadic, haphazard initiatives that jelled only in the early nineteenth century. My account stresses discontinuity, and moves the beginning of historical atlases much later than Ortelius.

A few terms need clarification; the subject is strewn with ambiguities. Curiously enough, historical atlases cannot be said to contain "historical maps." An historical map may be a primary source for history and historical maps may have documentary value; they are splendid and important, but . . . they are not the normal ingredients of historical atlases.

Historical atlases are also distinct from the branch of today's discipline of geography called historical geography. I'm not sure what the interests and pursuits of historical geographers are, but I know that sitting around compiling historical atlases is *not* what they do.³ Finally, a little caution about the term "atlas." Atlases are not the exclusive property of geography. Many, perhaps most, atlases are medical and surgical, sometimes even botanical. Geographical atlases are a minority. The term is often equivalent to "album," a large book, profusely illustrated but not necessarily with maps. Diversity does not stop there. An eighteenth-century French journal uses "atlas" to mean a single map. The second work called "historical atlas" by its author (in the Latin form, *Atlas historicus*) is dated 1718; it is a world chronicle couched in miniature pictures rather than in words.⁴ Whether we like it or not, atlas is not a strictly defined technical term; books bearing this name cannot be relied on to have predictable contents.

Historical atlases contain maps fashioned for students of history; that is their defining feature. The maps themselves are what I call, failing a better term, maps for history, i.e. maps designed to help those who consult them understand or visualize some aspect, broad or narrow, of the past. Their major clientele are students in schools or uni-versities, private researchers, and interested laypersons. A map for history portrays an historical event or condition; it is drawn either now, at present, or was drawn in the more or less distant past, but always as a reconstruction of an earlier time.

In 1568 an Englishman named William Lambarde demarcated on a map of England the seven early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms known as the Heptarchy. The seven kingdoms had lasted roughly from 600 to 850 CE. Lambarde's woodcut map was the frontispiece for his treatise on the early laws of the English. Lambarde's Heptarchy is an excellent model of what a map for history is all about.⁵

¹William G Dean et al. eds, *Historical Atlas of Canada*, 3 vols (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987-93); *Historical Atlas of the World* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970).

²Jeremy Black, *Maps and History: Constructing Images of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 9; J Dörflinger, "Geschichtskarte," in *Lexikon zur Geschichte der Kartographie*, 2 vols (Vienna, 1986), I, 266; William G Dean, "Sic enim est traditum," *Journal of the Historical Atlas of Canada* 1 (1980): 6.

³The contents of the journal *Historical Geography* since its comparatively recent launch bears out the distance of this discipline from maps for history.

⁴Even before the eighteenth century, let alone afterwards, "atlas" could refer to an outsized book with a variety of contents (*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "atlas, 3, 4"). Library catalogues bear out that many more atlases concern medicine, surgery, anatomy, etc, than geography. For "atlas" as one map, see *Journal des sçavans* (July, 1761): 377, a single, cut-down map of Bordeaux, i.e. a synonym for "carte." For a representative "album," see the *Grand livre de l'histoire du monde* (Paris, 1966), published in English translation as the *Collins Atlas of World History* (London: Collins, 1987).

⁵See W Goffart, "The First Venture into 'Medieval Geography': Lambarde's Map of the Saxon Heptarchy (1568)," in *Alfred the Wise, Festschrift for Janet Bately*, eds Jane Roberts and Janet L Nelson (Rochester: Boydell and Brewer, 1997), 53-60. I have since learned that Lambarde's *Archaionomia* includes a two-page commentary on the map (it came to my attention at

There is no lack of historical atlases today. Armin Wolf found more than forty major works of this kind between World War II and 1970.⁶ The genre used to be predominantly pedagogic; Shepherd's *Historical Atlas*⁷ was the standard for historical atlases in North America down to the 1970s (it began life in 1911 as the authorized adaptation of a standard German school atlas). The tendency, now, is more to coffee table or reference books, suggestive of dictionaries and also more expensive than school atlases could be.⁸ An obvious example is the massive *Historical Atlas of Canada* with its many displays. Even in the one-volume, concise edition that is now available, the Canadian atlas remains a book for libraries and coffee tables. Also suggestive of a reference work is the *Oxford Atlas of World History* recently reviewed by *The Globe and Mail* and a steal at \$136; it is apparently the first comprehensive historical atlas of English origin in twenty years. Another current format worth mentioning is the historical bonus—a geographical world atlas enhanced by pages of maps for history. In whatever form of publication, "historical atlas" today is an unambiguous term: it is a special collection of historico-geographical information, completely different from geographical atlases of the world.

The maps for history that I am concerned with all descend from post-medieval map making. Renaissance geography began in the early 1400s with the translation from Greek, and dissemination among scholars, of the *Geographia* or *Cosmographia* by the second-century Alexandrian scientist, Claudius Ptolemy. With Ptolemy's treatise there also came twenty-seven maps. These twenty-seven were the original western atlas. The Ptolemaic atlas was first printed in Bologna in 1477. For almost a century, these few maps were the backbone of European atlas publication.⁹

Already in the 1400s, Ptolemy's maps were adjusted to include places he had not known about, such as Scandinavia, and were augmented with new maps (Latin *tabulae novae*). The first map that may properly be called a map for history was probably created to replace Ptolemy's non-sectarian Palestine with a portrayal of the Christian Holy Land. Gatherings of *tabulae novae* were made to individual order in Italy in the 1560s and 70s; these assemblages, sometimes called atlases, were portfolios of differently sized sheets.¹⁰ In 1570, Abraham Ortelius, started to publish what scholars in the field consider to be the first real atlas. Its name was *Theatrum orbis terrarum* — a showcase of the whole world in an anthology of the best available modern maps.¹¹ Nine years after launching the *Theatrum*, Ortelius started a supplement, giving it the Greek name *Parergon*. Ortelius said that his supplement consisted of "maps of ancient geography." He began with three such maps in 1579 and had attained more than thirty in the edition of 1595. He died soon after.¹²

Ortelius's *Parergon* includes eight biblical and classical scenes: typically, the travels of Abraham, of St Paul, of the Argonauts, and of Alexander the Great. There is also a map of the Roman Empire, and a portrayal of the Exodus which was also mapped several times earlier in the century. The maps featuring Abraham, Paul, Alexander, and a few others imply definite dates. But about three-quarters of the *Parergon* maps show the topography of regions of the ancient world: South Italy, Greece, Tuscany, Italy, Britain, and many more.

Ortelius drew these regions on the basis of modern cartographic sources, systematically avoiding the regional maps of Ptolemy. This exclusion is astonishing and must have been Ortelius's deliberate plan. The regional

the Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame). I have not had a chance to study it.

⁶ Armin Wolf, "Das Bild der europäischen Geschichte in Geschichtsatlanten verschiedener Länder," *Internationalen Jahrbuch für Geschichts- und Geographie-unterricht* 13 (1971): 1-38 (with an English summary).

⁷William R Shepherd, *Historical Atlas*, 7th ed (New York: Henry Holt, 1929).

⁸ The maps for Shepherd's Atlas were supplied by Velhagen and Klasing of Leipzig, the publishers of *Putzgers historischer Schul-Atlas* (Leipzig, 1877 and after), long the leading school atlas in Germany and a by-word for the genre. Continually revised, the *Putzger* atlas continues to be published today, but its decades in the German Democratic Republic have clouded its fame.

⁹ Eila M J Campbell, "The Early Development of the Atlas," *Geography* 34 (1949): 187-95; Tony Campbell, *The Earliest Printed Maps 1472-1500* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 124, 136-7.

¹⁰ The Italian collections made to order are generically called "Lafréri" (after a French printer in Rome). The catalogue of the Biblioteca nazionale Vittorio Emanuele, Rome, describes three Lafréri collections, "Tavole moderne di geografia de la maggiore parte del mondo di diversi autori e messe secondo l'ordine di Tolomeo." R A Skelton, "Early Atlases," *Geographical Magazine* 32 (April, 1960): 530; dealers in Venice and Rome after 1550 assembled collections of *modern* maps to order. Numa Broc, *La géographie de la Renaissance, 1420-1620* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1980), 117; Lafréri gathered maps of many scales, projections, and types of engraving.

¹¹ The definition of "atlas" has been much debated; for a discussion, see James R Akerman, "From Books with Maps to Books as Maps: The Editor in the Creation of the Atlas Idea," in *Editing Early and Historical Atlases*, ed. Joan Winearls (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 3-48. About Ortelius's main work, see Cornelis Koeman, *The History of Abraham Ortelius and his "Theatrum orbis terrarum"* (New York: American Elsevier, 1964); Peter H Meurer, *Fontes cartographici Orteliani* (Weinheim: VCH, 1991).

¹² On the *Parergon*, see Meurer, *Fontes Orteliani*, 21-24; Koeman, *Ortelius and his "Theatrum"*, 44. The *Theatrum* had no editions after 1612, but the *Parergon* was often reprinted after that date. For a detailed list of its maps, with variations by edition, see Marcel P R van den Broecke, *Ortelius Atlas Maps: An Illustrated Guide* (Netherlands: HES Publishers, 1996).

maps were reprinted in 1618 by Bertius as a kind of alternative Ptolemy.¹³ Except when *Parergon* maps mention dated persons, they portray a generalized antiquity. The emphasis on topographic maps, the avoidance of Ptolemy, and the lack of chronological definition are characteristic of Ortelius's supplementary collection.

Scholars have been right to highlight Ortelius and the *Parergon*; Ortelius did something important. But what was that something? Affirmations that Ortelius produced the first historical atlas are less frequent now. A recent authority, Peter Meurer, chooses his words carefully: "As an atlas of the ancient world, the *Parergon*-part of the *Theatrum* is most of all the beginning of modern scientific mapping for history"; he adds that Ortelius's "greatest significance in the history of cartography resides in the elaboration of topographic maps with historical contents." Meurer's cautious assessment is endorsed by Johannes Dörflinger of Vienna.¹⁴ The accent in these views is on "scientific" mapping. Mapmakers before Ortelius had represented the Exodus and other biblical scenes. What matters to Meurer and Dörflinger is that Ortelius took pains to reconstruct classical antiquity on the basis of the ancient and modern sources available to him. This was serious, scholarly mapping of the past, rather than, for example, piously imaginative maps of Bible scenes.¹⁵

These opinions, though cautious and true as far as they go, have a basic flaw: they substitute the term "history" for Ortelius's own declaration of what he was doing; Ortelius says that he was providing maps of "ancient geography." We must take him at his word. Ancient geography was real, not just an old-fashioned or euphemistic way of saying "history." It was the science of the world as learned from classical authors, such as Ptolemy, Strabo, Pliny, and many others. Right down to the nineteenth century, geography came in an ancient and a modern variety; the two were incessantly compared in atlases specially designed for this purpose.¹⁶ According to a learned committee in 1808, "Ancient geography is an essential and integral part of geographical science properly speaking."¹⁷ Some decades later it was said of a prominent cartographer that, owing to his very busy life, he could not master the learned languages well enough to be able to "raise himself over modern geography."¹⁸ The paragon of eighteenth-century cartographers, Bourguignon d'Anville, published the first critically satisfactory atlas of the ancient world.¹⁹ Toward 1620, Petrus Bertius produced two atlases expressly devoted to ancient geography; neither atlas is historical in orientation.²⁰

Ancient geography was not a euphemism but a real activity of geo-graphers. Ortelius's *Parergon* is probably a milestone in the development of this discipline. The independent way Ortelius handled his maps may mark the moment when ancient geography outgrew Ptolemy and was modernized. However that may be, once the

¹³ Meurer, *Fontes Orteliani*, 22: "Bemerkenswert ist, dass Ortelius sich hier völlig unabhängig bewegt, z.B. von Ptolemäus. . . Im topographischen Grundgerüst sind nur in einigen Fällen Anklänge an Vorlagen erkennbar. . . . [Gastaldi, Bellarmati, Mercator, Clusius]." Meurer, 23, shows the *Parergon* title page (first used in 1592): "Parergon sive veteris geographiae aliquot tabulae." Petrus Bertius (1565-1629), *Theatrum geographiae veteris*, 2 vols (Amsterdam, 1618-19); Ortelius's maps were included as the alternative to the Ptolemaic twenty-seven in Mercator's purified edition.

¹⁴ Meurer, *Fontes Orteliani*, 1, "Der *Parergon*-Teil des *Theatrum* als Atlas des antiken Welt ist der Beginn der modernen wissenschaftlichen Geschichtskartographie überhaupt"; 21, "liegt seine grösste Bedeutung wahrscheinlich in der Erarbeitung von Landkarten mit historischen Inhalten." Johannes Dörflinger, "Geschichtsatlanten vom 16. bis zum Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts," *Vierhundert Jahre Mercator, Vierhundert Jahre Atlas*, ed. Hans Wolff (Weissenhorn, 1995), 179.

¹⁵ The weight of the statement is on "scientific, erudite, learned": Ortelius reconstructed past geography on the basis of authoritative sources. It is conceded that there were maps for history before him, such as Tilleman Stella's "Exodus" (which he reprints), the anonymous "Travels of St Paul" in a Bible of 1549 (see *Imago Mundi* 42 [1990], 71, fig 2d), and the inset of Frisia under Augustus in the *Theatrum*. Distinguishing scientific from unscientific mapping of history is not necessarily prudent or called for; a thin line divides one from the other.

¹⁶Comparative atlases, a small selection: at least eight sixteenth-century editions of Ptolemy have facing modern maps; Philippe Briet, *Parallela geographiae veteris et novae*, 3 vols (Paris, 1647-49), 2 vols (1748-49); Edme Mentelle, *Géographie comparée, ou Analyse de la géographie ancienne et moderne des peuples de tous les pays et de tous les âges* (Paris, 1778-84), with 6 vols of text; A Arrowsmith, *A Comparative Atlas of Ancient and Modern Geography . . . for the Use of Eton School* (London, 1828); Alexander G Findlay, *Comparative Atlas of Ancient and Modern Geography* (London, 1854); *Philips' Modern School Atlas of Comparative Geography* (London, 1913).

¹⁷The 1808 committee: B J Dacier, *Rapport historique sur le progrès de l'histoire et de la littérature ancienne depuis 1789* (Paris, 1810), 222 (the report was called for by Napoleon and presented to him in 1808).

¹⁸The prominent geographer is Pierre Lapie, in *Archives biographiques françaises* (Munich, 1988), fiche 598, frame 068.

¹⁹About d'Anville, *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* (1811), 328.

²⁰ Bertius, *Theatrum geographiae veteris* (1618-19), and *Geographia vetus ex antiquis et melioris notae scriptoribus nuper collecta* (Paris, 1628) are very austerely and learnedly geographical by comparison with such *Parergon* descendants as the Jansonius *Accuratissima orbis antiqui delineata sive geographia vetus* (Amsterdam, 1652). All present themselves as "old geo-graphy"—not history.

The *Lexikon zur Geschichte der Kartographie* contains no entry for "vetus geographia, ancient geography." Cornelis Koeman, ed., *Atlantes Neerlandici: Bibliography of Terrestrial, Maritime and Celestial Atlases and Pilot Books Published in the Netherlands up to 1880*, 6 vols (Amsterdam, 1967-85), III, 69-70, at least grants that the *Parergon* maps illustrate "the wide-spread interest in classical geography."

integrity of ancient geography is recognized, a new approach has to be taken to the origin of historical atlases.

For one thing, ancient geography, via Ortelius, but also from Ptolemy onward, was the fountainhead from which biblical and classical atlases eventually proceeded. Bookstores, now as in the past, sell such atlases; many examples are available. The two types used to be combined. This distinctive segment of the atlas market definitely descends from the *Parergon* through a succession of mapmakers and works. An ambitious current example is Richard Talbert's admirable, cooperative *Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*, which is just on the point of publication after long preparation.²¹ But classical and biblical maps, though they used to be central in historical mapping, have long been a side issue. The historical atlases that you and I normally deal with are different. They sometimes include antiquity, but what they mainly provide are scenes of medieval and modern history, such as, "The Routes of the Crusaders," "The Zenith of Napoleon's Empire," "The Great Discoveries," "Europe after the Treaty of Westphalia," and much more of the like. Ortelius's *Parergon* does not help us to understand how a repertory of events and conditions later than the fall of Rome came to be mapped and gathered into atlases. And that is what we need to do.

A good point of departure involves asking where early maps and atlases located history. Ortelius used the epigraph *historiae oculus geographia*, meaning that geography allows history to be visualized. A seventeenth-century French Jesuit coined the similar phrase that geography and chronology were the two eyes of history.²² If geography was the eye of history, the chances are that early maps did not relegate history to a separate, segregated sphere. In fact, there are three historical insets in Ortelius's modern *Theatrum*, two of them referring to moments in the thirteenth century.²³ These *Theatrum* maps also have other historical aspects. History was not the solitary preserve of the *Parergon*; it could also be found in Ortelius's main atlas.

Early maps were encyclopedic; our maps tend to be focussed (eg, road maps); theirs went in many directions. A famous early map of Iceland looks like a catalogue of photogenic fish; a much loved map of British North America shows a colony of beavers carefully practising the division of labour near the site of the future General Brock Hotel; an early delineation of Russia provides a rudimentary account of Russian government; etc. There is more to this diversity than specialized pictures. Anyone examining a map of, for example, Germany could imagine himself looking into the past, a layering of older and newer place and district names, many of them evocative.

Early maps are pervaded by unfocused history, of a kind that can still be found sometimes in today's maps. Early maps of Europe were occasionally placed under historical labels. Gerard Mercator's 1585 map of southern France is up-to-date for its time; yet Mercator's title for the eastern half is "Kingdom of Arles." There was no Kingdom of Arles in 1585; the kingdom of Arles began in 933, joined the Holy Roman Empire in 1032, and was absorbed into the French kingdom in the 1370s. Mercator expected viewers of his map to look at these French provinces and recognize in them the medieval Kingdom of Arles that had been gone for two hundred years. The map showed not just the moment when Mercator compiled it, but also a tunnel of time reaching back through the centuries that had elapsed since the fall of Rome.

The practice of envisaging a map as containing a long stretch of the past—the whole of antiquity or the whole of modern times—was not peculiar to Mercator. Geographers and historians seem to have believed that, where maps were concerned, "One size fits all." There could be exceptions and special scenes, such as the travels of St Paul; but the general premise was that one map of, say, ancient Italy was applicable to Italy in all of antiquity, and one map of modern Italy was applicable to Italy at all times since the fall of Rome. This assumption continued to hold in the eighteenth century: writers of guides to historical sources did not hesitate to accept maps of recent landscapes as adequate portrayals of medieval kingdoms and principalities. Their attitude to maps is a valuable measure of their historical sense.

As late as the nineteenth century, most maps were taken to have an indefinite but real historical content. Some basically geographical atlases from the 1680s to the 1850s have titles that include the adjective "historical," usually in a series, such as, "commercial, geographical, and historical atlas of the world." By our standards, these are misnomers; the maps have no special historical features. Their titles reflect the indefinite historicity of those who made them.²⁴ From 1705 to 1722, l'Honoré and Châtelain, Huguenot publishers in

²¹ Richard J A Talbert, *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 99 color maps in 175 pp.

²² Ortelius's epigraph is on the *Parergon* title page. The other dictum is by Joseph de Jouvancy, S J (1643-1719); see I Stegman, *Anselm Desing, Abt von Ensdorf* (Munich, 1929), 132.

²³ Van den Broeck, *Ortelius Atlas Maps*, 121, no 77 (Flanders under Gui de Dampierre), 125, no 81 (Ancient Frisia under the emperor Augustus), 127, no 83 (eastern Frisia before 25 Dec. 1277). I am grateful to Professor P D A Harvey (Durham) for drawing these insets to my attention.

²⁴ *Geographische en Historische Beschryvingh der vier bekende Werelds-Deelen* (Geographic and Historical Description of the Four Known Parts of the World) (Utrecht, 1683); *Edinburgh Geographic and Historical Atlas* (Edinburgh: J Hamilton successor to Daniel Lizars, 1831); *National Atlas of Historical, Commercial and Political Geography* (Edinburgh: Arthur Keith

Amsterdam, issued an *Atlas historique* — the first occurrence of 'Historical Atlas' as an all-inclusive title. The volumes in question are not antecedents of our atlases of world history. The Amsterdam *Atlas historique* is really a geographical atlas of the modern world, like the multi-volume Dutch atlases of the seventeenth century. As late as 1808, the committee I quoted before lacked awareness of any such thing as a specialized historical atlas.²⁵ Some did exist by then, but they were still so limited a phenomenon that not everyone noticed.

In 1805 the London publisher Robert Wilkinson issued a carefully engraved and attractively coloured work called *Atlas classica, being a collection of Maps of countries mentioned by the ancient authors both sacred and profane with their various subdivisions at different periods*. Wilkinson's forty-odd maps, grouped with no regard for chronological order, are in the tradition of Ortelius's *Parergon*. One difference is the inclusion of four scenes from the Middle Ages, for example, the Islamic world. Wilkinson's atlas, which sold well, has the value of showing that, after two centuries, the atlas of ancient geography had not changed or widened its scope; the introduction of four maps for the Middle Ages had not transformed "ancient geography" into a comprehensive atlas of all history. The *Parergon* had been a starting point, but the destination was nothing bolder or wider-ranging than the biblical and classical atlases in our bookstores. The paths toward the historical atlases we are familiar with involve aspects that the *Parergon* tradition failed persistently to address, notably, chronology, subject matter, and structure.

Wilkinson's atlas did not organize its maps in chronological order; Ortelius certainly had not. Diffuse history was not inhibited by time. Maps were normally dealt with as isolated pieces. A salient exception occurs in 1651, when Philippe de La Ruë issued a small atlas called "The Holy Land in six geographical maps." The subject is traditional. La Ruë's six maps are new in that they run consecutively from ancient Canaan to modern Syria under Ottoman rule; in other words, La Ruë shows the Holy Land step by step "from the origins to the present."²⁶ To us, a design of this kind is boringly familiar. In 1651, La Ruë's strict chronology was totally unprecedented—so much so that a half a century went by before any other atlas maker followed suit. Suddenly, near 1700, several authors felt that historical maps should be lined up in order of time.²⁷

I need to move back a few steps from Lamare. Many early cartographers dabbled in classical and biblical maps; a very few ventured to portray moments later than the fall of Rome, of the era they called modern. Here are the scenes of such "modern history" that were created precociously; all are isolated items, usually in books: Lambarde's Saxon Heptarchy;²⁸ after a half-century gap, Petrus Bertius,²⁹ The Empire of Charlemagne, 1623; 1627, John Speed, Battles in England 1066-1600;³⁰ 1641, Nicasius Fabius, Flanders under its founder, Count Baldwin;³¹ 1649, Camillo Pellegrino, Duchy of Benevento;³² 1651, Johannes Meier comparisons of Frisian districts;³³ then, after four decades, 1692, Hubert Jaillot, the Desert Fathers;³⁴ and, 1696, the first chronologically defined moment of French history, Nicolas Berrey, "Description of France in the reign of Clovis and his children."³⁵ These seven items are not a selection; they are the total of seventeenth-century maps of modern

Johnston, 1851 and 1855).

²⁵ Dacier, *Rapport*, 248; the works of Sanson, Delisle, and d'Anville are used as a club to smite the Las Cases atlas as though no distinction of type were involved.

²⁶ Philippe de La Ruë, "Terra Chanaan ad Abrahami Tempora," in *La Terre sainte en six cartes géographiques* (Paris: Mariette, 1651).

²⁷ For a fuller account of this development, see W Goffart, "Breaking the Ortelian Pattern: Historical Atlases with a New Program, 1747-1830," in *Editing Early and Historical Atlases*, 49-81.

²⁸ William Lambarde, "Angliae Heptarchia," copperplate copy see also note 5 of this article by Richard Lyne, 1575. See Rodney W Shirley, *Early Printed Maps of the British Isles 1477-1650* (East Grinstead, West Sussex: Antique Atlas Publications, 1991), 48, no 106.

²⁹ Petrus Bertius, "Empire of Charlemagne" (1623): Henr. Hondius and Joannis Ianssonii, *Atlantis novi pars secunda exhibens Germaniam inferiorem, Galliam, Helvetiam atque Hispaniam* (Amsterdam, 1638), no 149. NYPL.

³⁰ John Speed, "The invasions of England, with al their Civill wars since the Conquest," in *A Prospect of the Most Famous Parts of the World* (London, 1627), 121, no 22. LC

³¹ Nicasius Fabius, *Nova antiquae Flandriae geographica tabula qualis sub Baldwino Ferro et Judith fuit* (Amsterdam, 1641), in Antoine Sanderus, *Flandria illustrata sive descriptio comitatus istius*, 2 vols (Cologne; Amsterdam: Blaeu, 1641-44); Chapin Library, Williams College.

³² Camillo Pellegrino, *Descriptio antiqui ducatus Beneventani* (Naples, 1644), from his *Historia ducum Langobardorum*. Cambridge University Library.

³³ "Frisia Borealis 1651 [et] 1240," in Johannes Mejer and Caspar Danckwerth, *Neue Landesbeschreibung der zweij Hertzogthümer Schleswich und Holstein* (Husum, 1652); slide from facsimile, *Géographie Blaviane* (Amsterdam, 1663), I, xxxvii.

³⁴ Hubert Jaillot, "The Fathers of the Desert" (1692). From Kenneth Nebenzahl, *Maps of the Holy Land* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986), 136-7.

³⁵ Nicolas Berrey (the younger), *Description de la France par rapport au règne de Clovis et de ses Enfans*, in Gabriel Daniel, SJ, *Histoire de France* (Paris, 1696).

history—all of them involving the segment we call medieval.

Somewhat more vigorous steps toward atlases of specialized history took place in the eighteenth century, but they were still cramped or in-termittent. A burst of excitement marked the start of the century. In the same year as Lamare's maps of Paris, 1705, Guillaume Delisle, an outstanding mapmaker, published a two-sheet "Historical Vista for AD 40."³⁶ This is a portrayal of the late Roman Empire that clearly looks ahead to the early Middle Ages. In the same years, three mapmakers — two Germans and Delisle himself, a Frenchman—planned multi-map atlases of medieval history, though none came to fruition.³⁷ Much as it is believed that the Middle Ages were scorned in the Enlightenment, interest actually mounted. A friend of Guillaume Delisle commented, "How useful a corpus of [maps for the Middle Ages] would be is well known, because they have much greater bearing on the current condition [of the world] than do maps of Antiquity."³⁸

When this was said, someone had already carried out such a corpus of maps, though on a limited basis. He was Menso Alting, burgomaster of Gröningen in the northern Netherlands. Between 1696 and 1701 Alting published a two-part atlas in fourteen maps, entitled, "Description of the whole region that now belongs to the Seventeen United Provinces on both sides of the Rhine." Alting, probably without realizing it, produced the first atlas of a single country and, simultaneously, the first collection in which maps of medieval times directly follow the ancient period. In careful chronological order, Alting's maps run from the Netherlands in Roman times down to the great floods of the thirteenth century that created the Zuyder Zee. Along with La Ruë, Alting has hero status in my story.

This promising start fizzled out. It took about twenty years for the next hero to come along. He was Johann Matthias Hase, a mathematics professor at Wittenberg, who died in 1742, before his maps for history were published. An omnibus of his work appeared in Nuremberg under the title *Atlas historicus* in 1750 and was on sale until 1818. Hase's main work is a succession of maps of the greatest empires of antiquity and medieval and modern times, twenty-eight maps in all. Hase's empire-by-empire order is topical, but chronology is respected where it is called for. Hase also produced a seven-map atlas of the Holy Roman Empire—the first national atlas of Germany. Both his historical collections imply a consecutive narrative that the maps illustrate and dramatize. Hase has as good a claim as anyone to having first created a historical atlas directly foreshadowing ours.³⁹

Hase's work was influential. Soon after his death, there began the era of the "universal sequential" atlases, an era that lasted at least until the 1830s. Whereas in the past every initiative was detached from every other, now a series of mapmakers, strangers to each other, adopted much the same design for stringing together maps for history. Where there had just been individuals, there now was a "school."⁴⁰

The universal sequential atlases are somewhat like the successive frames of a movie or cartoon. Each frame is the same, a geographical background. They are universal because the frames show Eurasia—a diminutive version of the universe. They are also universal in chronology. The Lattré atlas of 1763 runs from the dispersal of the sons of Noah (widely considered to be the beginning of history) down to 1738 (the union of Lorraine to France); roughly equal attention is paid to the eras before and after the fall of Rome. Frame by frame, the boundary colouring of these successive maps documents the changes, or revolutions, experienced by humanity in the course of history: Lattré; Rizzi-Zannoni, France only in sixty maps; J Christoff Gatterer; Christian Kruse (Europe only and no antiquity); Friedrich Benicken; Edward Quin (1830, 1859). A German theorized in 1805 that this design was *the* form for historical atlases: many maps in chronological order so that they would show the unfolding of events—a narrative in pictures.⁴¹

The making of maps for history had developed to the point of involving a circle of mapmakers. Another milestone was passed at the opening of the nineteenth century when an historical atlas actually became a commercial success.

Among the voluntary exiles of the French Revolution was a marquis and naval lieutenant named Emmanuel de Las Cases. For years Las Cases lived in England as a penniless refugee. In 1801 he published in London a folio-sized *Genealogical, Chronological, Historical, and Geo-graphical Atlas*. Las Cases adopted a geographic rather than chronological order; he probably didn't know the universal sequential plan. His maps were rather crude; he deployed many colourful ribbons and arrows; and he included many columns of letterpress, with ancillary information. The work was presented less as a map book than as a comprehensive introduction to

³⁶ Guillaume Delisle, *Theatrum historicum ad annum Christi quadringentesimi, pars occidentalis, pars orientalis* (Paris, 1705).

³⁷ Goffart, "Ortelian Pattern," 54-5.

³⁸ *Mercure de France* (April, 1720), 129; the context is an anonymous obituary of Guillaume Delisle's father.

³⁹ Dörflinger, "Geschichtsatlanten vom 16. Jht," 184-93.

⁴⁰ A contemporary (anonymous) review of Rizzi Zannoni's atlas of French history realizes that Hase had set something new in motion: "Hase's project was very well received, and several persons have aspired to imitate it in greater detail"; the reviewer thinks that Zannoni's application of the plan to a single country is a step in the right direction: *Journal des sçavans* (August, 1765), 563-64.

⁴¹ *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (Halle), no 346, 4 (December, 1804), 522 (in a review of the Las Cases atlas).

history, including recent times.

Las Cases hit the jackpot. His atlas was a best-seller in England and France (to which he returned in 1802), and later in Italy, Germany, and even America, where a derivative version was widely distributed out of Philadelphia.

Had Las Cases produced the better mousetrap for which the world had been waiting? His product does not adequately explain why it sold so well. I think he chose the right moment. After 1789 and the other revolutionary turmoil, the public—which for centuries had had a taste only for maps of classical and biblical history—now finally became eager to look at specialized maps of the Ancien Régime, the medieval and modern past. Las Cases was a talented popularizer (he was not at all scholarly), and he had virtually no competitor for a decade or two. By the 1830s, however, with the help of the new technique of lithography, the makers of maps for history, formerly scattered and isolated in every European country, turned into a historical atlas industry. There was, at last, a clientele for its output.

Looking back over this long development, what matters for determining the question of origins is not that Ortelius compiled maps of ancient geography, but that decades and even centuries passed after Ortelius without anyone compiling specialized atlases of medieval and modern history. The absence of activity, the eloquence of silence, weighs more heavily than the momentary traces of initiative. Half a century passed between Lambarde's map of the Heptarchy and the next portrayal of a medieval entity, namely, Bertius's "Empire of Charlemagne." After Bertius it took more than another century for Charlemagne's empire to be mapped for a second time. In 1651, La Ruë arranged a thin atlas in chronological order; no less than fifty years passed before Alting produced something of the same kind. Three medieval atlases were planned between 1700 and 1720 but were still-born. These projects were sincere; nevertheless a half-century separates Alting's Dutch atlas from Hase's "Greatest Empires." After that, a certain continuity was sustained; the interruptions were shorter, but significant gaps occur even then. The atlas of French history by Rizzi-Zannoni, published in 1764, is not much worse than the several dozen French history atlases marketed in the nineteenth century. The conditions of the later 1700s were less favorable: Zannoni's work was reprinted a few times; but there were no revisions, expansions, or copies; no competitor popped up. The Zannoni atlas was generally unnoticed. The next atlas of French history was produced in 1822, almost six decades after Zannoni; and it was not a commercial success either. Professor Black and others suggest that historical atlases were known and appreciated from the 1570s onward. This claim is inconsistent with the halting, limping, intermittent advance of a type of map and map book that became secure and continual only between 1800 and 1830.

Let me sum up. Historical atlases vividly illustrate how central classical antiquity was to European schooling. They also allow us to see how, bit by bit, the hold of classical antiquity was shaken and forced to make room for more recent subject-matter. Historical atlases are tangible evidence for changing accents in educational curricula.

This chronology helps to illustrate historical perceptions in Europe. The historical sense of a Guillaume Delisle, Mattheus Hase, and Christian Kruse was much keener than that of the Edinburgh atlas maker of 1854 who called his collection historical despite its not having any discernible historical content. Atlases are an underused source for these developments in sensitivity to a changing past.

Finally, there is the matter of early as against late dating. Any student of history should be aware of these opposing tendencies in the analysis of historical phenomena and conscious of the need to choose. Early dating—starting a series of events as early as possible—is a stubborn temptation. I have shown that, in the case of historical atlases, how much late dating can matter and what benefit can come from giving it a chance.