



MAPPING RELIGIOUS PHENOMENA: A CULTURAL-CARTOGRAPHIC APPROACH

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Abstract: Many researchers who dedicate their time to the subfield of geography of religion claim that they are “mapping” religion by comparing the study of religious manifestations to the elaboration of a cartographic representation that could serve as a key for the understanding of myths, rituals and worldviews. However, cultural geographers seem to pay little attention to the potential of maps as forms to express and communicate the invisible and unspeakable of religion. The aim of this bibliographical essay is to discuss the relations between topics of religion and cartography in their visual dimension. For this purpose, two different strategies are employed: the analysis of maps in publications on the geography of religion, with emphasis on atlases about the diffusion, distribution, and dynamics of different religious movements and groups, and the insertion of religion in non-conventional and symbolical graphical approaches that combine material elements with cognition, performance, and non-representational processes.

Keywords: cartography; mappings; geography of religion; atlas of religion.

Introduction

Geographical research on religion has increased considerably during the last two decades. Cultural geographers agree that religion has essentially spatial characteristics and that geography of religion is “concerned less with religion per se than with its social, cultural and environmental associations and effects” (STUMP, 1986:1). The current research agenda shows an almost infinite number of topics, ranging from more “traditional” themes such as distribution, diffusion and dynamics of religion to “politics and poetics of religious place, identity and community” (KONG, 2001:211). Naming just a few themes, objects of study include the spatiality of religious events, the territoriality in candomblé yards, and the diffusion of Christian and non-occidental churches and congregations and their historical and political dimensions.

Though many authors claim to “map” religion, comparing the study of religion to a “variety of attempts to map, construct and inhabit (...) positions of power through use of myths, rituals and experiences of transformation” (SMITH, 1978:291), cartography in its literal meaning plays only a secondary role in the researchers’ activities and is frequently restricted to location and distribution maps. Cultural geographers seem to pay little attention to cartography’s potentiality to express and communicate the “invisible” and “unspeakable” of religion that cannot be revealed by words. A map allows us to represent various data, ideas, concepts and contexts simultaneously whereas a text, with its

linear structure, can only provide sequences of geographic information.

The aim of this paper is to reflect on how religious phenomena could be mapped from a cultural-geographic point of view. How can the cultural geographer as a “mapper” or “cartographer” of religion represent information from the material (and visible) world and visualize sacred places and ideas from the spiritual spheres of religion, not only from his/her own point of view, but from the believers’ standpoint?

I will carry out a qualitative analysis of selected cartographic and graphic representations in publications that deal with geography of religion in order to point out the possibilities and limits of this form of communication and expression. The emphasis of this study will be on how religious phenomena could be visualized or turned “visible”. The starting point for this paper is the analysis of maps from atlases that deal with aspects of religion (for example, GAUSTAD, 1962; GAUSTAD & BARLOW, 2001; AL FARUQI, 1974; HALVORSON & NEWMAN, 1978, 1994; ROONEY, ZELINSKY & LOUDER, 1982; O’BRIEN & PALMER, 1993). Complementary map and mapping data will be supplied through the references of several bibliographical reviews of the production in the sub-discipline (SOPHER, 1967, 1981; KONG, 1990, 2001, 2010; PARK, 1994; STODDARD & PROROK, 2003). The second (and shorter) part will be dedicated to non-conventional graphical and cartographic

representations according to the framework of cognitive, performance and material cartography in Non-Western societies proposed by Woodward and Lewis (1998a:3) in order to reflect on a “cultural-geographic” point of view in mapping.

Mapping religion_____

The importance of maps in geography has been emphasized by many geographers. Whereas cultural geographer Carl Sauer (1956:289) attributes an almost “human” character to maps, claiming that “[m]aps break down inhibitions, stimulate our glands, stir our imagination, loosen our tongues”, David Harvey (1969), still in his quantitative phase, alleges that of the “number of techniques for portraying, representing, storing and generalizing information (...) there is none quite so dear to the hearts and minds of geography as the map” (SAUER, 1956:369).

For the discussion on maps and mappings of religion it is not necessary to enter the current debates about cartographic representations in detail, since the majority of the publications (for example, MONMONIER, 1993; BERTIN, 1983; DENT, 1985; ROBINSON et al., 1995) show a deeper concern with technical, perceptual and cognitive issues of cartographic communication rather than an assessment to the phenomena to be mapped. However, in this text, the communicative power of maps should be highlighted. A text has not the same capacity to point out spatial relations as a cartographic representation; neither is a

map the only medium for conveying important information, nor necessarily always the best one. For Zelinsky, Rooney and Louder (1982), a good map is

“like a good picture, can contain an enormous amount of data that would be difficult to present, or even incomprehensible, in other forms. It can suggest, for various phenomena, possible relationships, origins, and consequences that otherwise remain unnoticed, and it can spark new questions and possibilities for research” (ZELINSKY, ROONEY & LOUDER, 1982, p.vii).

As for religious phenomena, the crucial point is the nature of religion conceived of as a symbolic system that does not only rely on “visible elements”, but includes values and worldviews that shape space and place. Mark C. Carnes (2000:8), for example, refers to “physical phenomena” such as railroads, migration flows or the clash of armies on battlefields that can be easily mapped for containing an “explicitly geographical dimension”. But how does one map ideas about God or religious practices? Park (1994) affirms that “geo-referenced” elements and their diffusion and distribution are not only preferred issues, but are also expected to be mapped by geographers:

“Spatial patterns have traditionally captured the

geographical imagination, and the study of the distribution of religion at different scales is doubtless what most other disciplines expect geographers to be engaged in. It is the most logical link between geography and religion, lends itself most readily to geographical analysis and interpretation, and is an area largely neglected by other disciplines" (PARK, 1994:56).

The most common and simplest form of representing data is by location maps that either indicate the locale or area of study in a broader geographic context or make use of symbols in order to show qualitative or quantitative information. Many so-called traditional cultural geographers also used maps to delimit religious culture regions (for example, MEINIG, 1965) or indicate the diffusion of religious practices and ideas (CROWLEY, 1978).

The following examples serve to visualize these forms of representation. Figure 1 shows the distribution of church congregations in Alaska (SHORTRIDGE, 1982). Each symbol (black or white triangle, square or circle) represents one church. The author confirms the presence of "several religious groups" in Alaska such as the Orthodox Church in America "that the faith brought to this continent by the Russians", but does not explain why they are not recorded on the map.

Quantitative information, when linked to space, is also easily "representable" in a map. A frequent starting point are statistics or a table with "geo-referenced" information, for example

census data about religious membership by county. Maps can be choropleth maps (coloring of areas according to values or attributed class) or a combination of point, line and area features and graphics.

Figure 2 shows a grey-tone map of the total number of followers of the Roman Catholic Church in 1971 based on county-level data (HALVORSON & NEWTON, 1978:32). The use of absolute numbers (the last class interval is from 3,411 to 2,409,464 (!) adherents) can distort the message of the map since it does not permit a comparison with the total population. Counties with an elevated population (mega-cities like New York, Chicago and Los Angeles) evidently show an elevated number of followers, but do not necessarily have a strong catholic influence. For this reason, the representation of the percentage of the adherents of the Roman Catholic Church in relation to the total population could be more adequate and eye-opening to supply data about the significance of the religious congregation in each county.

Figure 3 is a thematic map derived from a simple table. The author (KING, 1972) lists the number of pilgrims to Mecca, their countries of origin and the means of transport for the hajj and converts the data into a thematic map with pie charts (or "cake diagrams"). The same information could be expressed in form of columns, bars or flux lines of different width.

In many publications, principally in historical atlases, the main forms of representation are maps that show the

movement and migration of religions. They generally do not contain quantitative information (unless by using lines and arrows of different width) and only serve as a general explanation of religious dynamics.

Many authors avoid the complexity of religious phenomena by equaling religion with the institutions of religion. Countable, measurable and “reliable” elements such as church membership are preferential topics to

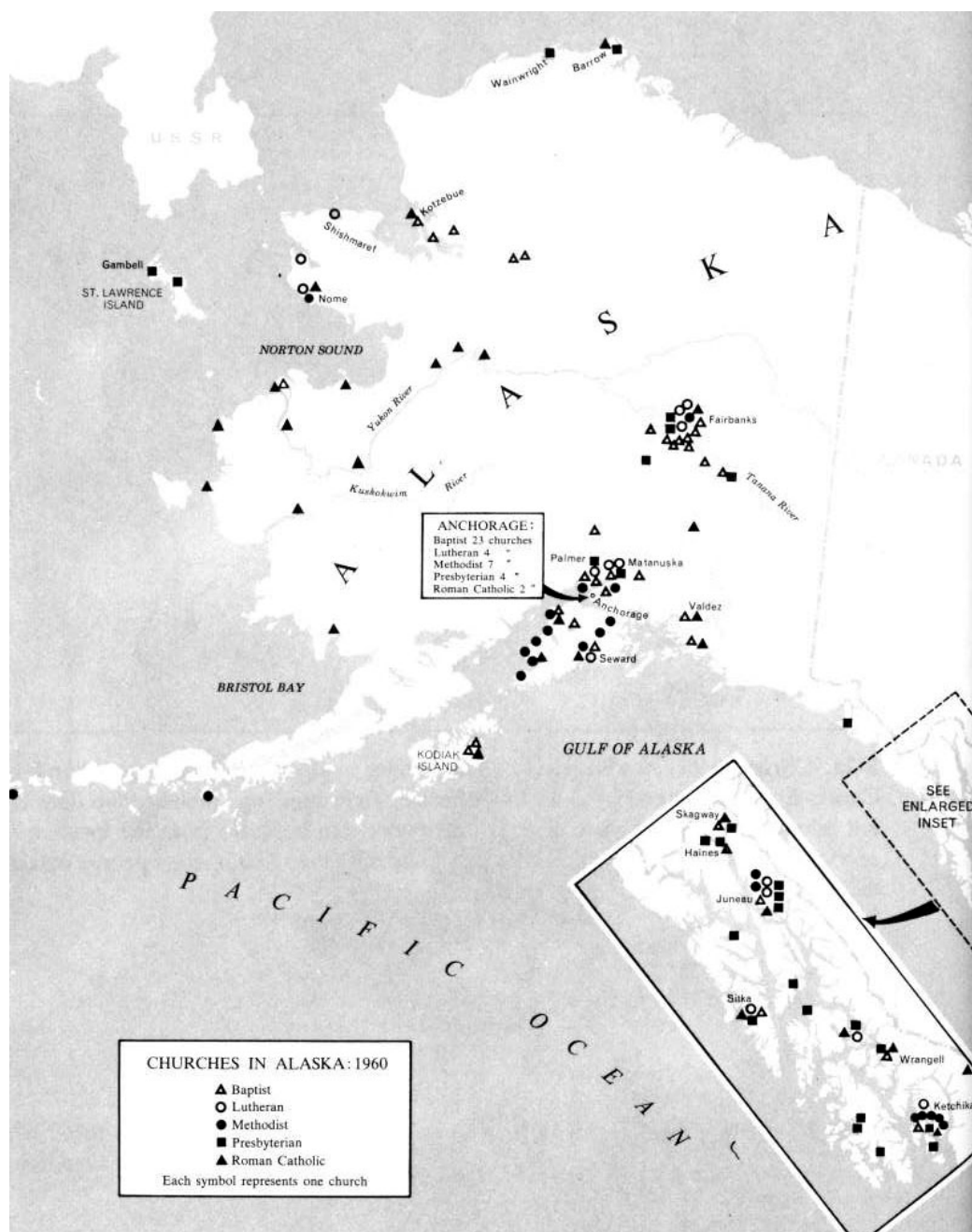


Figure 1: Churches in Alaska (SHORTRIDGE, 1982:200).

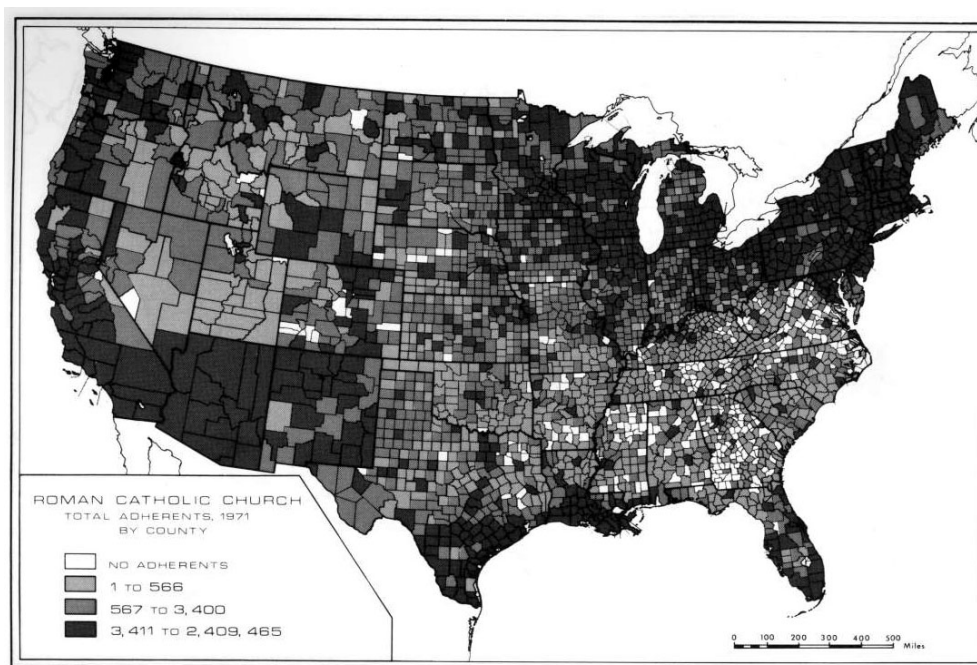


Figure 2: Total number of adherents of the Roman Catholic Church in 1971 (HALVORSON & NEWTON, 1978:32).

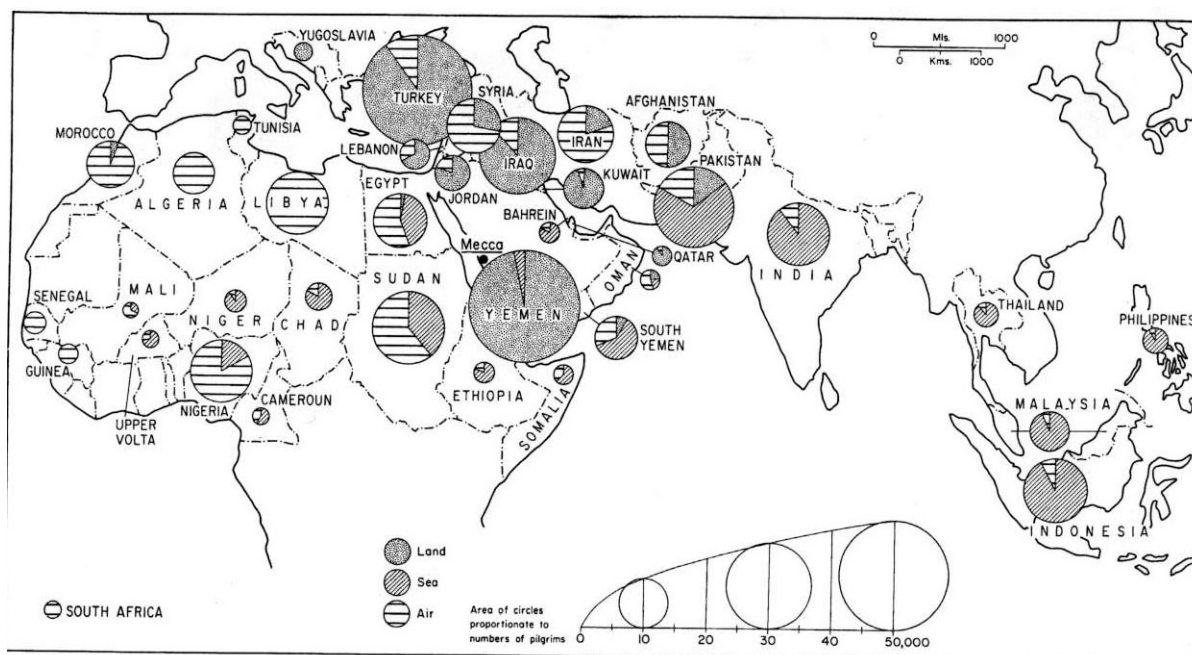


Figure 3: The Mecca pilgrimage in 1968: number of pilgrims by sending countries (KING, 1972:70).

point out religious tendencies in the USA and in the world, although they do not necessarily represent comparable data. Some congregations count membership, while others list their church buildings. Membership, denomination and conditions for admittance may vary from group to group and from age to age, and do not supply information on the degree of the persons' religiosity. In Gaustad's (1962:158) words,

"In the twentieth century, for example, it is usually the case that more persons 'belong' to a church than actually attend that particular church. In other words, the pastor may know that there are 2,000 members on his parish list; he is reasonably content with a Sunday morning congregation half that size".

In this context, representing religious adherence statistically and geographically is to "generalize dangerously and to court disaster openly. All statistics have their deceptions, their ambiguities, their non sequiturs" (GAUSTAD, 1962:x)².

In the most recent edition of the *Historical Atlas of Religion in America*, Gaustad and Barlow (2001) reiterate the problem of representation stating that some religious elements "impinge on geographic space more naturally, tellingly, and recognizably than others" (p.xxii), whereas "institutionally amorphous and ephemeral" (p.xxiii) phenomena such as atheism, modern Gnostic and New Age impulses or clusters

of denomination (for example, "liberalism" and "conservatism") have proven problematic. Denominational structures linked to space-bound statistics are "more readily subject to cartographic presentation than are most analytical concepts" (p.xxiii) so that the representation of religious phenomena generally privileges visible elements, major religious congregations and institutions – not humans.

Churches are territories, religion is an atlas ---

David Turnbull's (1993) exhibition catalogue of intercultural maps, entitled *Maps are Territories, Science is an Atlas*, serves as a metaphor to reflect about the complexity of religion and possible strategies to represent these phenomena and ideas.

The most accessible source for cartographic representations of religion and religious phenomena are the so-called atlases of religion, principally those that deal with the history of religions. Atlases of Islam and Christianity reflect current religious debates and have turned into a fashion due to the present-day geopolitical configuration in the world that is provoking an increasing interest in the better understanding of religious affairs and has stimulated many publishers to release "best-selling" encyclopedias and dictionaries on religion (for example, LITTELL; 2001; FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, 2002, 2006; BEL, 2002; RUTHVEN, 2004). Many of these conventional historical atlases contain historical analyses of the principal

religions and do not take into account minorities, failing to “maintain some degree of ecumenical balance in the allotment of maps among the religions” (SOPHER, 1974:vii) - according to each religion’s own view of the world. In the following paragraphs I will briefly discuss some of these publications and several sample maps included in these books.

Isma’il Al-Faruqi’s *World Atlas of Religion* (1974) is one of the first attempts to map the religious scenario of the world. The responsible map editor for the atlas, the cultural geographer David Sopher, explains that the atlas presents two kinds of histories in a geographic context that can vary considerably from religion to religion: the geography of the religious myths themselves and the communities of their believers (SOPHER, 1974:vii). Within this context, the mapmaker should be conscious about his own cultural bias, because

“by his insistence on giving ‘a local habitation and a name’ to what may be highly charged symbolic events he can severely distort their religious meaning. Such maps, if they can be provided at all, should be used then, chiefly as guides to the geographical horizons of the receivers of the myth, to their perceptions of their world and of their place in it” (p.vii).

The atlas contains 65 maps and is divided into regional chapters that present religious traditions in their historical and present-day contexts. Part 1 deals with religions of the past (Mesopotamia, Egypt,

ancient Greece and Rome and Amerindian religions) and contains more descriptive text than maps. The few maps are mainly location maps of Mesopotamia, the Egyptian pyramids, the myths in the ancient Greek world and the use of stimulants and narcotics in North America. The second part describes ethnic religions of the present (traditional religions in Africa, Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, Confucianism and Taoism, Shintoism, Zoroastrianism and Judaism). The maps show places of pilgrimage in India, the distribution of religions on the Indian subcontinent, indigenous Chinese religions in reference to land elevation, Japanese religious places of importance and Jewish migrations and diasporas from Biblical times to the present. The third section of the atlas is about universal religions of the present (Buddhism, Christianity and Islam) and represents places and events in the life of Buddha, the distribution and diffusion of Buddhism, the location of Christian monasteries and boundaries of church territories and the diffusion of Christianity and Islam until 1970.

Another example of a world atlas is the *State of the World Atlas* by O’Brien and Palmer (1993)³ that shows how to explore the graphic language to represent religion in a global scale in order to show “at a glance the major contours of the religious world, as summed up within the formal structures of the major faiths and the major relationships between them” (p.11). The atlas contains 34 colored maps, each with a short commentary, that deal with

a variety of issues ranging from conventional topics such as the percentage of followers of Christianity, Islam and Buddhism to special subjects such as banking in the Islamic world, female deities and religious figures in major religions or the involvement of religions in environmental campaigns (entitled “down to earth”). The authors’ intention is not a high-accuracy representation of reality, but a thematic display in a graphic language with a less rigorous use of symbols, serving as a starting point for discussion. Some of the maps are rather naïve or oversimplified. For example, the map entitled “Faith in the Future” is based on press reports and the “authors’ judgment” (p.78-79).

Besides the conventional maps, O’Brien and Palmer used two area cartograms (anamorphoses) in order to map the different global religious allegiances and the Jewish Diaspora in the world. In the case of the latter topic, the area of each country is proportional to the number of Jews who live there (figure 4). The anamorphosis points out that there are more Jews in the United States than in Israel, and that France, Russia, Ukraine and Argentina have important Jewish communities.

The mapping of religion in the United States is documented by several atlases on the diffusion and distribution of church membership under a historical-

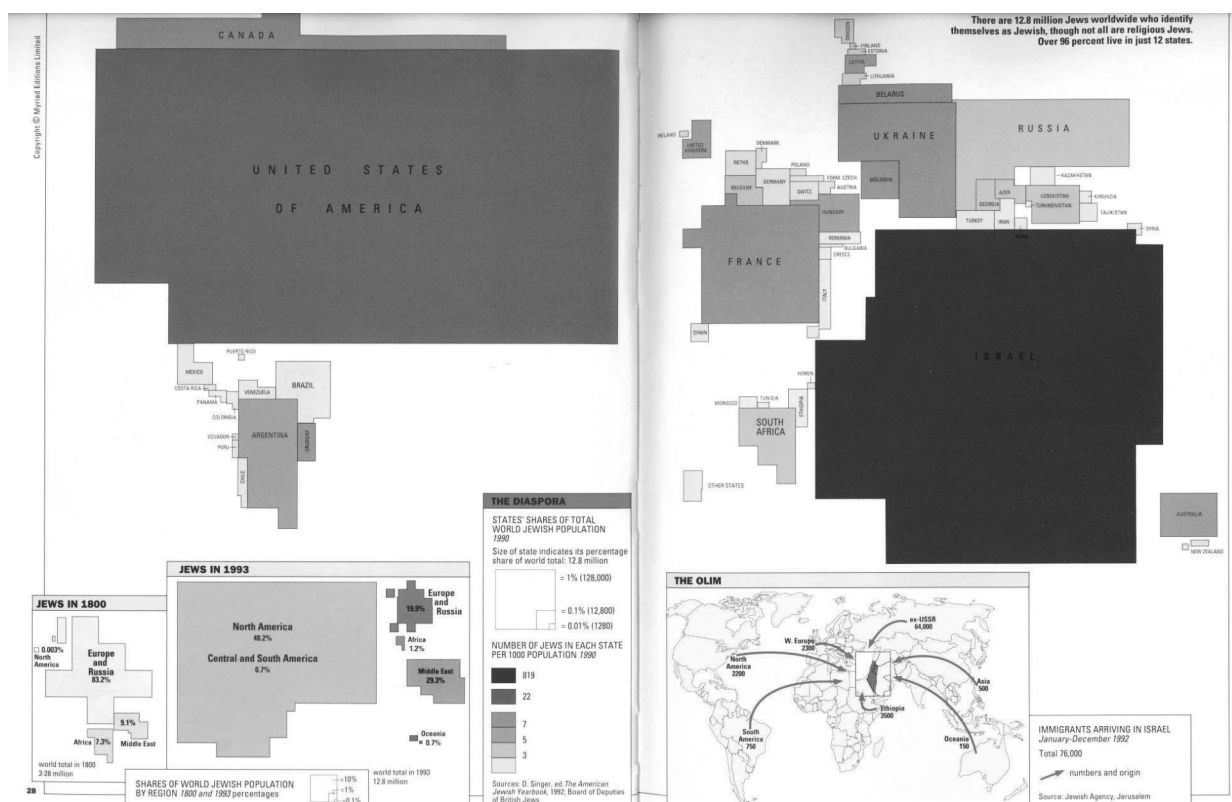


Figure 4: The Jewish Diaspora (O'BRIEN & PALMER, 1993:28-29).

geographical perspective. Edwin Gaustad's *Historical Atlas of Religion in America* (1962) is one the first thematic atlases that deals exclusively with religion and its historical context in the United States. The atlas is divided into four parts: the first colonial period from 1650 to 1800, the colonial and "additional non-colonial bodies" (for example, Seventh-Day Adventists or Jehovah's Witnesses) from 1800 to 1960 and "special aspects of religion" within a perspective from the 1960s, including Indian missions and reservations, American Jews, and regional case studies from Alaska and Hawaii. Within the context of racial segregation in the 1960s ("separate but equal"), Gaustad is at pains to draw an image of Afro-American religion in the United States, but due to lack of empirical data he restricts his cartographic representations to a general map showing the "per cent negroes (*sic!*) in the total population, by States: 1950" (p.151).

Most of the maps in the atlas do not show further details about religion, since they use state boundaries as smallest units. However, the heart-piece of the publication is a colored map showing the religious distribution and spatial "domination" of certain congregations in the middle of the twentieth century in the counties of the United States.⁴

Halvorson and Newman (1978) use a more statistical approach when analyzing religion in the United States by making use of county-level religious adherence statistics for the 35 dominant religious groups in the US that "encompass more than 80 per cent of the reported religious adherence in the United States

for the years 1952 and 1971" (p.1) For each denomination, the authors worked out a set of four maps: the absolute number of adherents in 1952 and 1971, percent change in adherents from 1952 to 1971 and a "shift-share measure" ratio to show "the extent to which a denomination has changed its share of the total religious adherence in a county between 1952 and 1971" (p.3)⁵. The more recent edition of the atlas for the period 1952-1990 (HALVORSON & NEWMAN, 1994) includes five maps for each religious denomination: (1) total adherents in 1990, (2) percent change in adherents 1980-1990, (3) percent share of population, (4) percent change in adherents 1952-1971 and 1971-1990 setting the 1971 as median value and (5) "median rates of change for each denomination's share of county population" (p.6).

The *Atlas of United States and Canadian Society and Cultures* (ROONEY Jr., ZELINSKY & LOUDER, 1982) aims to depict "important aspects of the cultural and social geography of the United States and Canada" (p.vii), including spatial dimensions of North American society and cultures, how inhabitants differ from place to place, their origins, traditions, beliefs, patterns of thought and behavior.

The chapter on religion (SHORTRIDGE, 1982)⁶ contains twenty-seven black-and-white and grayscale maps in different scales (USA, Canada, states, regions). According to the author, some religious groups show a geographical pattern, whereas others are "widely dispersed" (for example,

Episcopalian and Presbyterian) and remain “invisible” (p.178). He based his research on the 1971 survey of the National Council of Churches whose data on fifty-three religious bodies represents “81 percent of the estimated 125 million Christian church members in the United States” (p.177). Shortridge mentions the remaining 19% (“black denominations”, Eastern Orthodox Churches, Assembly of God and Jewish congregations), but does not mention the reasons for the missing data in the survey. The map collection deals principally with the distribution of church membership, the degree of religious diversity and the major religious regions in the United States. According to the author, the maps on church membership “must be interpreted with caution”, since “peer pressure and a host of other factors unrelated to true commitment undoubtedly are involved in church membership” (p.178). Shortridge also includes a map based on a different source: the “Sunday Audience Estimates for the Five Leading Independent Religious Programs” (p.187) to locate the so-called Bible Belt in relation to “fundamentalist-oriented television ministry” (p.178).

Thematic atlases on religion contain a concentration of cartographic representations, but a quick review of publications on geography and religion in academic journals shows a generally poor use of maps, principally limited to location and distribution maps. An exception is Rinschede’s (1997) multi-scalar approach that stresses the geographical aspects of the pilgrimage phenomenon in different scales from

micro-case studies to a worldwide perspective, presenting graphic and cartographic material for the discussion. Special emphasis is on micro case studies that can point out the impact of pilgrims on the economic structure of a place, but that are rather neglected in atlases. Rinschede cites the example of the pilgrimage town of Fátima in Portugal by presenting a town map in which he indicates the “religious catering structure”, reflected in a concentration of hotels, parking lots, restaurants, religious article shops and other economic activities (p.104). A comparative study of different pilgrimage centers in different places can lead to a generalized model of “land use patterns” of pilgrimage activities as pointed out in the model of catholic pilgrimage places in the United States (figure 5).

Most of the examples discussed above refer to conventional cartographic representations in the Judeo-Christian religious traditions that claim a separation between the sacred and the profane and are more concerned with the geographic space than with the spiritual space. In the next section, I will indicate directions for the mapping of cosmological and spiritual non-Western religious phenomena.

Religion and representation of space under a cultural perspective_____

The mapping of religion under a cultural perspective aims to register different ways of thinking, perceiving and representing space and is related to the cross-cultural definition of mapping and

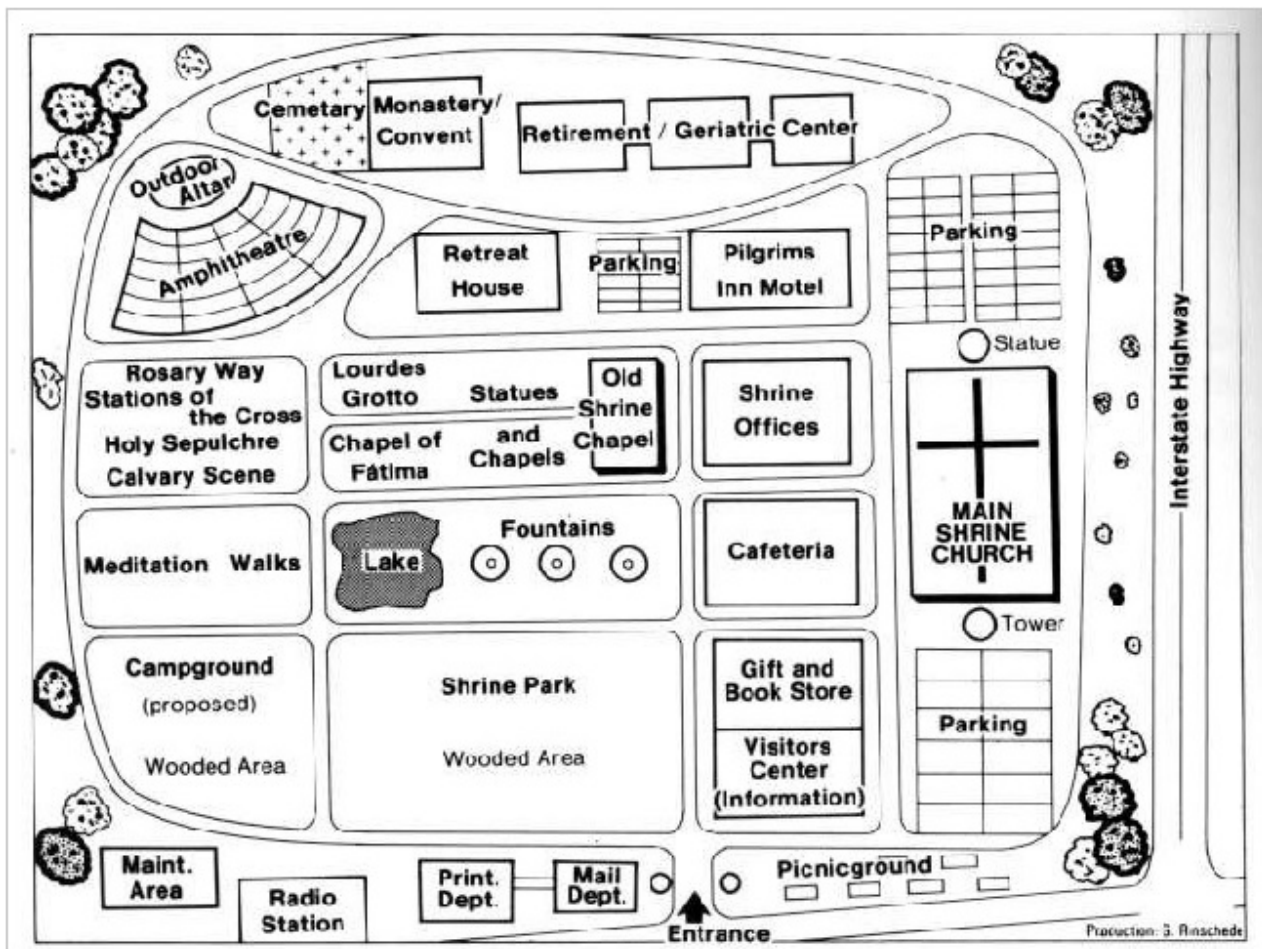


Figure 5: Model of a Catholic pilgrimage place in the United States (RINSCHEDÉ, 1997:110).

maps given by Cosgrove (1999) and Harley and Woodward (1987). Mapping can be defined as a measuring of the world in such a manner that it could be communicated, not only in a Cartesian and mathematical sense, but also spiritually, politically and morally (COSGROVE, 1999:1-2). As for the definition of maps, Harley and Woodward (1987), in their *History of Cartography*, see them as “graphic representations that facilitate a spatial understanding of things, concepts, conditions, processes, or events in the human world” (p.xvi).

Woodward and Lewis (1998a:3)

propose a framework for a broader view of cartography and include categories of representation of Non-Western spatial thought and expression as forms of cartographic expressions (table 1).

For them, there are internal processes (inner experiences) of a cognitive or mental cartography that consist of thoughts and images in the mind:

“This may be an image one remembers from having seen a physical map, or it may be

INTERNAL (Inner Experience)	EXTERNAL (Processes and Objects That Realize or Externalize the Internal Experience)	
COGNITIVE CARTOGRAPHY (Thought, Images)	PERFORMANCE CARTOGRAPHY (Performance, Processes)	MATERIAL CARTOGRAPHY (Record, Objects)
Organized images such as spatial constructs	<i>Nonmaterial and ephemeral</i> Gesture Ritual Song Poem Dance Speech <i>Material and ephemeral</i> Model Sketch	<i>In situ</i> Rock art Displayed maps <i>Mobile comparable objects</i> Paintings Drawings Sketches Models Textiles Ceramics Recording of "performance maps"

Table 1: Categories of Representations of Non-Western Spatial Thought and Expression (WOODWARD & LEWIS, 1998a:3).

constructed from one's experience of reality (...). This kind of mental map is often used to give directions, to rehearse spatial behavior in the mind, to aid memory, to structure and store knowledge, to imagine fantasy landscapes or worlds, or of course to make commonplace material maps." (WOODWARD & LEWIS, 1998a:3-4).

Apart from these inner experiences, there are external processes (that perform or externalize the internal experience) which include performance cartography, either nonmaterial and ephemeral (gestures, rituals, songs, poems, dance, speech) or material and

ephemeral (sketches in the sand). This material cartography appears in form of records and objects, ranging from rock art to paintings, drawings, sketches, models, ceramics and textiles. Under this perspective, it is possible to "undo" the Western separation of the sacred and profane, since in traditional societies, "[i]t is impossible to separate secular from sacred in the maps" (WOODWARD & LEWIS, 1998b:538):

"The cosmographical dimension is present everywhere in native representations of the world, where the landscape and the universe are regarded not as a passive backdrop against which human events unfold, but as active

participants in human life. (...) It is here that the associations between mapmaking and religious practices become tightly knit. Here shamanic rather than topographic knowledge is the gateway, with its emphasis on initiation, special or mystical knowledge, and an overarching scheme in which maps often include depictions of mythological personages and animals, as in Western astrology. Cartography becomes less of a gridded stage on which life takes place and more a model of how the spiritual world and physical world interact" (WOODWARD & LEWIS, 1998b:538)

Belden Lane (1988) follows the same train of thoughts when he affirms that religion and geography are "frequently intertwined, caught as they are in the same tenacious web of imagination" (p.33). He cites the example of the Indian city of Allahabad, where the so-called *Triveni Sangam* celebrates the confluence of three rivers, the Ganga, the Yamuna, and the Sarasvati. Originally the latter river is the personification of a Hindu goddess in form of a river that "is an invisible, mythical river, unseen except to those who enter the waters of faith" (*idem, ibidem*). At the same time, it sparks more imagination and story telling and turns into a "storied place" that drives the pilgrim (and even the researcher) simultaneously to "Cartography and poetic insight, to geographics and narrative – to that fine, fragile nexus where myth and terra firma intersect" (*idem, ibidem*).

In this kind of mapping, cosmology and space cannot be separated. Cosmology is like "a locative map of the world" (SMITH, 1978:292), and "[i]t is a map of the world which guarantees meaning and value through structures of congruity and conformity". Bhardwaj (1997:13) identifies a "spatial symbolic focus" in pilgrimage studies that stresses religious concepts, schema and symbolism, while research "is increasingly being anchored to endogenous cultural and perceptual worlds rather than to a priori spatial theories" (p.13). Cosgrove and Martin's (2000) example of "millennial geographics" illustrates the close relation between religion, space and performance. However, the Catholic Jubilee consisting of two pilgrim routes that link the four main basilicas of Rome forming a "processional geometry of the Christian cross inscribed into the fabric of the city" (p.102) is only a pale spatio-religious manifestation when compared to the Hindu cosmology that conceives whole cities as cosmograms (for example, MICHELL, 1994; SINGH, 1997). Maps of sacred places in South Asia frequently show less concern with the "mundane experience" and

"tend to sublimate portions of the material landscape that are devoid of religious meaning (...) and to highlight features of religious significance, which they characteristically portray in exaggerated scale and vivid hues, providing considerable detail, much of which conveys a strong

iconographic message to the map user” (SCHWARTZBERG, 1992:452).

Singh (1997), for example, describes the “sacred topography” and Hindu cosmogony of the city of Varanasi that combine earthly representation interlinking the macrocosm (= heavenly bodies) and the microcosm (individual

deities). The pilgrimage involves more than just traveling from one’s residence to a sacred site and incorporates elements of religious space such as the pilgrim movement on prescribed routes that can be converted into a western-style” location map (figure 6) or a 7-circle mandala (figure 7) whose concentric rings are identified with the seven routes of pilgrimage (SINGH, 1997:197). In this

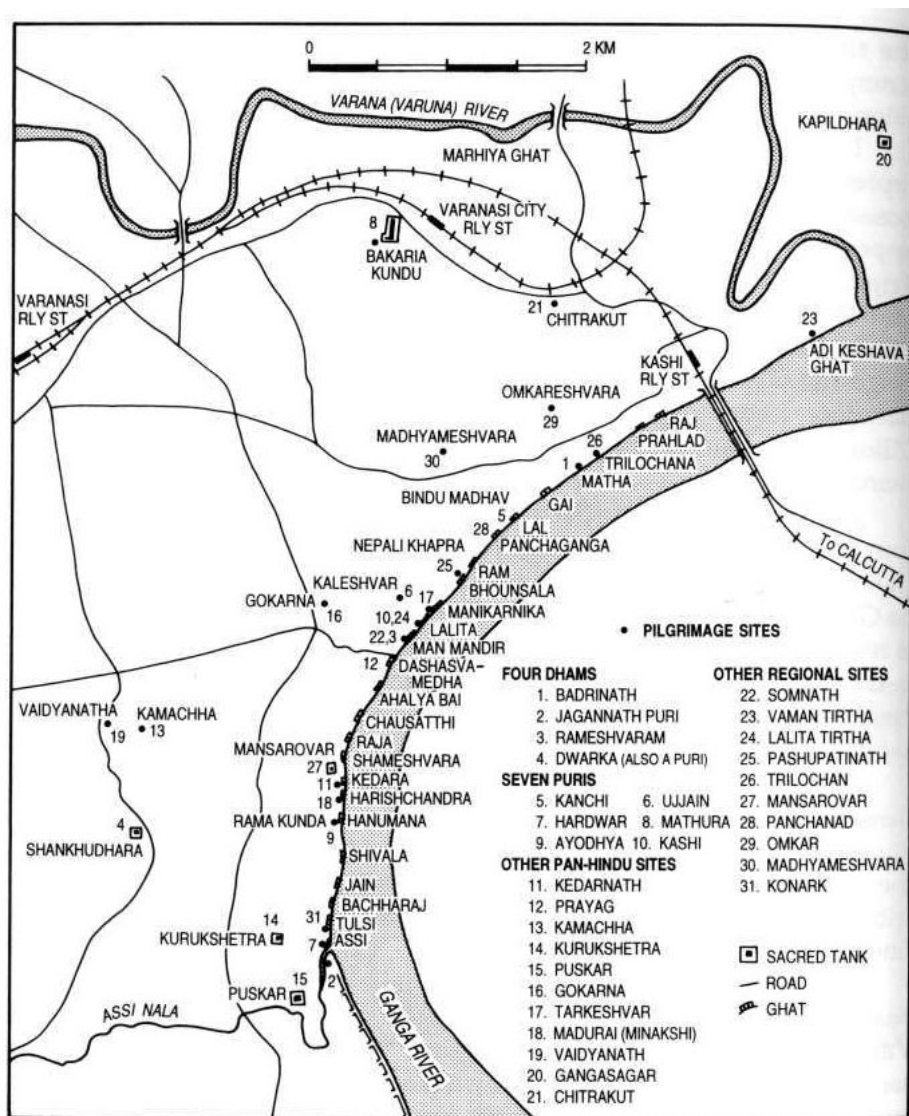


Figure 6: Spatial transposition of pilgrimage sites in the Varanasi region in India (SINGH, 1997:196).



Figure 7: Mandala of the city of Varanasi/India (SINGH, 1997:197).

context, Walcott (2005:86) states that mandalas serve as sacred spatial visualizations that “function as moral and mental maps, expanding the participants vision of interior space and adding a new dimension to non-Buddhist notions of cartographic imagery as well as cultural geography.”

Another example is given by King and Lorch (1992) who examine the impact of the sacred direction (*qibla*) on Arabic cartography. Due to the Muslim obligation to pray and perform ritual acts such as animal slaughter facing the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca, the cartographic science

in Islam had a dual nature: on the one hand, the world was symbolically divided into sections around the Kaaba whose *qibla* had been determined through procedures of folk astronomy (figure 8). On the other hand, mathematicians elaborated field methods to find out “the *qibla* in any locality by means of geometric construction or the application of trigonometric formulas” (KING & LORCH, 1992:189).

The examples that I presented above show the potential of merging religious practices and (carto)graphic

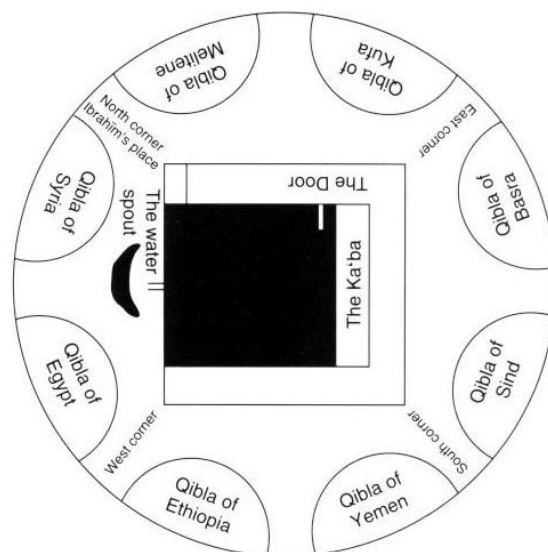
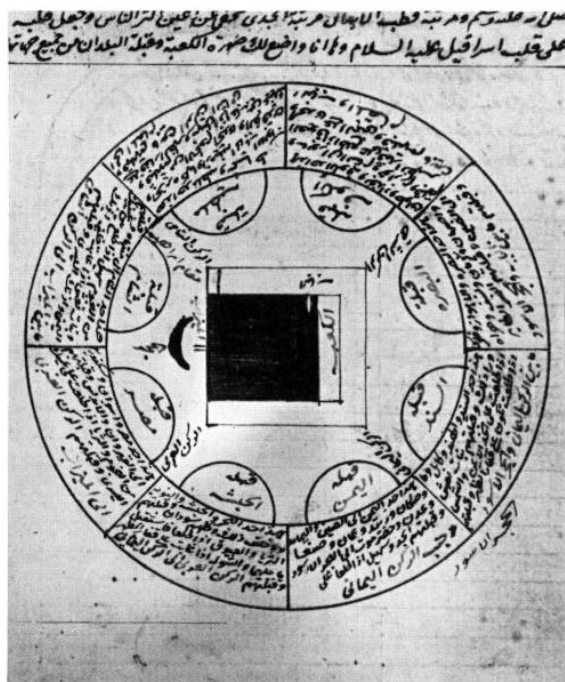


Figure 8: Ottoman Qibla map (original and transcription) from the eighteenth century (KING & LORCH, 1992:193).

representation. An emphasis on drawing instead of writing could contribute to a better understanding of the cultural and geographical dimension of religion that goes beyond the conventional techniques of mapping.

Concluding remarks_____

Geography of religion has grown into an interdisciplinary study area that is not only concerned with the three Ds (distribution, diffusion and dynamics) of religion, but also with the two Ps (poetics and politics) and the representation and spatial performance of religious, processes, patterns, and practices. By presenting two different ways of mappings - the "transcription" of

religious manifestations in the form of descriptive and explanatory maps, and the (carto)graphical forms of expression and communication of spiritualized and performative worldviews - my intention was to stimulate a broader debate on how to "capture" religious phenomena (carto)graphically, taking into account that "religion is a distinctive mode of human creativity, a creativity which both discovers limits and creates limits for humane existence" (SMITH, 1978:291). In general terms, maps were a far more frequent element in publications on the geography of religion till the 1980s. Cultural geographers used maps not only as location devices, but also as means of reflection, argumentation, and interpretation. Under the influence of postmodern and poststructuralist ideas

and the crisis of representation, academic writing has become extremely wordy and less visual, largely ignoring the recent debates in cartography that bring up fresh perspectives and methodologies to see maps and mappings in a different light, beyond representation and closer to practice, performance, and emotions (for example, PERKINS, 2009; DODGE, KITCHIN & PERKINS, 2009; WOOD, 2010). At any rate, geography of religion can only gain with the re(dis)covery of its mapmaking and the acceptance and experimentation of new mapping strategies.

Notes

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² For a thorough analysis of the problem of church membership see Zelinsky (1961). In his comments on the difficulties in representing data on religion, Gaustad refers to a religious census on church membership carried out in 1957 by the United States Census Bureau that only revealed the religious “preference” that persons 14 years of age or older had, but not “whether or not he [or she] was

actively involved in any synod or parish” (GAUSTAD, 1962:164).

³ A new edition under the title “The Atlas of Religion: Mapping contemporary challenges and beliefs” was published in 2007 (O’BRIEN & PALMER, 2007).

⁴ An updated 6-lb-heavy-weight edition with 435 pages and hundreds of maps was published in 2001 (GAUSTAD & BARLOW, 2001).

⁵ The excessively statistical approach used in this atlas led Sopher (1981:513) to classify the publication as a “dismaying hodge-podge of almost illegible maps and mindless factor analysis (R-mode analysis of absolute numbers of adherents!) that are the joint work of a geographer and a sociologist”.

⁶ See also Shortridge’s (1976) earlier and shorter paper on the “patterns of religion in the United States”.

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MAPEANDO FENÔMENOS RELIGIOSOS: UMA ABORDAGEM CARTOGRÁFICO-CULTURAL

RESUMO: MUITOS PESQUISADORES QUE DEDICAM SEU TEMPO AO SUBCAMPO DA GEOGRAFIA DA RELIGIÃO DECLARAM QUE ESTÃO “MAPEANDO” A RELIGIÃO AO COMPARAR O ESTUDO DE MANIFESTAÇÕES RELIGIOSAS COM A ELABORAÇÃO DE UMA REPRESENTAÇÃO CARTOGRÁFICA QUE SERVIRÁ COMO CHAVE PARA A COMPREENSÃO DE MITOS, RITUAIS E VISÕES DE MUNDO. PORTANTO, GEÓGRAFOS CULTURAIS PARECEM DAR POUCA ATENÇÃO AO POTENCIAL DOS MAPAS COMO LINGUAGEM PARA EXPRESSAR E COMUNICAR O INVISÍVEL E INDIZÍVEL DA RELIGIÃO. O OBJETIVO DESTES ENSAIO BIBLIOGRÁFICO É DISCUTIR AS RELAÇÕES ENTRE TEMAS RELIGIOSOS E A CARTOGRAFIA NA SUA DIMENSÃO VISUAL. PARA ESSA FINALIDADE, DUAS ESTRATÉGIAS SÃO UTILIZADAS: A ANÁLISE DE MAPAS EM PUBLICAÇÕES SOBRE A GEOGRAFIA DA RELIGIÃO, COM ÊNFASE EM ATLAS SOBRE A DIFUSÃO, DISTRIBUIÇÃO E DINÂMICA DE DIFERENTES MOVIMENTOS E GRUPOS RELIGIOSOS, E A INSERÇÃO DA RELIGIÃO EM ABORDAGENS GRÁFICAS NÃO CONVENCIONAIS E SIMBÓLICAS QUE COMBINAM ELEMENTOS MATERIAIS COM COGNIÇÃO, PERFORMANCE E PROCESSOS NÃO-REPRESENTACIONAIS.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: CARTOGRAFIA; MAPEAMENTOS; GEOGRAFIA DA RELIGIÃO; ATLAS DA RELIGIÃO.

MAPEANDO FENÓMENOS RELIGIOSOS: UN ABORDAJE CARTOGRÁFICO-CULTURAL

RESUMEN: MUCHAS INVESTIGACIONES DEL SUBCAMPO DE LA GEOGRAFÍA DE LA RELIGIÓN, AL COMPARAR EL ESTUDIO DE LAS MANIFESTACIONES RELIGIOSAS CON LA ELABORACIÓN DE UNA REPRESENTACIÓN CARTOGRÁFICA, SOSTIENEN QUE ESTÁN MAPEANDO LA RELIGIÓN COMO BASE PARA COMPRENDER LOS MITOS, LOS RITOS Y LAS VISIONES DEL MUNDO QUE ENTRAÑA CADA RELIGIÓN. ESTO INDICARÍA QUE LOS GEÓGRAFOS CULTURALES HAN PRESTADO Poca ATENCIÓN A LA POTENCIALIDAD QUE OFRECEN LOS MAPAS COMO UN LENGUAJE PARA EXPRESAR Y COMUNICAR LO NO VISIBLE Y LO NO ENUNCIABLE DE LA RELIGIÓN. EL OBJETIVO DE ESTE ENSAYO BIBLIOGRÁFICO ES DISCUTIR LAS RELACIONES ENTRE LOS TEMAS RELIGIOSOS Y LA CARTOGRAFÍA EN SU DIMENSIÓN VISUAL. A TALES EFECTOS SERÁN UTILIZADAS DOS ESTRATEGIAS: POR UN LADO, EL ANÁLISIS DE LOS MAPAS PRESENTES EN PUBLICACIONES SOBRE LA GEOGRAFÍA DE LA RELIGIÓN, CON ÉNFASIS EN EL ATLAS SOBRE LA DIFUSIÓN, DISTRIBUCIÓN Y DINÁMICA DE LOS DIFERENTES MOVIMIENTOS Y GRUPOS RELIGIOSOS; POR OTRO, LA INSERCIÓN DE LA RELIGIÓN EN LOS ABORDAJES GRÁFICOS NO CONVENCIONALES Y SIMBÓLICOS QUE COMBINAN ELEMENTOS MATERIALES COMO LA COGNICIÓN, LO PERFORMÁTICO Y LOS PROCESOS NO REPRESENTACIONALES.

PALABRAS CLAVE: CARTOGRAFÍA; MAPEO; GEOGRAFÍA DE LA RELIGIÓN; ATLAS DE LA RELIGIÓN.