

Nomination form  
International Memory of the World Register

The Mappa Mundi of Albi

2014-74

1.0 Summary (max 200 words)

The *Mappa mundi*<sup>1</sup> of Albi, one of the first two non-symbolic and non-abstract world maps, is a representation of the known world drawn up on parchment in the 8th century. It is a document of exceptional importance for global cartographic history and, more widely, for the history of the representation of space. Depicting 25 countries on three ‘continents’ or geographic spheres, its content is of universal interest. It is a record of particular significance for the early Middle Ages, enabling us to understand the nature of geographical knowledge at the time as well as the transmission of classical knowledge after the fall of the Roman Empire.

Albi’s *Mappa mundi* differs significantly from other examples of the most ancient world maps. These differences accentuate its importance.

Very well known by specialists, to this day it still remains unfamiliar to the public. Today, with requisite mediation, it could reassume its pedagogical role of the Middle Ages. This is one of the objectives behind the inscription proposal. Besides, the map constitutes a natural unity and deep coherence with the episcopal city of Albi, which became a world heritage site in 2010. It would be the most ancient cartographic document of the International Memory of the World.

2.1 Name of nominator (person or organization)

Philippe Bonnacarrère, Mayor of Albi and President of Greater Albi, simultaneously represents:

- The town council of Albi: local authority that is co-responsible for the conservation and development of documentary heritage kept at the Pierre-Amalric multimedia library (heritage collections).
- The community of Greater Albi: local authority that is co-responsible for the management of the Pierre-Amalric multimedia library (staff, budget, non-heritage collections, building).

The proposal is put forward jointly by the two groups.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Albi’s *Mappa mundi*’ refers to the map and the Index of winds and seas detailed on the following page (c.f. 3.1)

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## 2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

Philippe Bonnacarrère is mayor of the town where Albi's *Mappa mundi* is kept. The *Mappa mundi* is part of a manuscript that has been owned by the State since the 1789 revolutionary confiscations at the library of Albi's Sainte-Cécile cathedral chapter<sup>2</sup>. Since 2000 it has been kept at the Pierre-Amalric multimedia library. In 2010 the community of Greater Albi took over the library's management, but the documentary heritage kept there has remained under the town's authority.

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## 2.3 Contact person(s) (to provide information on nomination)

Jocelyne Deschaux: Director of the *Grand Albigeois* multimedia library network, head library curator, archivist-palaeographer.

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## 2.4 Contact details

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>
Jocelyne Deschaux	Communauté d'agglomération de l'Albigeois BP 70304 81009 ALBI CEDEX Geographical address: 30 avenue Charles de Gaulle 81000 Albi

<i>Telephone</i>	<i>Facsimile</i>	<i>Email</i>
Landline: (+33)5 63 38 56 10 / 13 (direct) Mobile: (+33)6 81 18 61 15	05 63 38 56 15	<a href="mailto:jocelyne.deschaux@grand-albigeois.fr">jocelyne.deschaux@grand-albigeois.fr</a>

## 3.0 Identity and description of the documentary heritage

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<sup>2</sup> \*Words that are followed by this asterisk are defined in the glossary, c.f. p.30

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3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

Figurative representation of the known world drawn up in the 8th century, Albi's *Mappa mundi* (see photo 1) is found in a manuscript of 77 sheets (156 pages) that forms a collection of 22 different texts entitled '*Miscellenea*' (collection<sup>3</sup>). The manuscript is listed as Ms 29 (115). The *Mappa mundi* is situated on sheet 57 and is immediately followed by an *Index of winds and seas* (sheet 58, see photo 2).

Manuscript 29 (115) is one of the manuscripts that made up the library of Albi's cathedral chapter. On the reverse of the blank cover sheet at the start of the document there is the following manuscript bookplate\* (in 13th century writing): 'Ex-libris Ven. Capituli Ecclesiae Albiensis' ('part of the venerable chapter of the church of Albi': see photo 3).

Manuscript 29 (115) is a parchment manuscript. It is probably sheepskin, or, taking into account the southern origins of the document, goatskin<sup>4</sup>. It is a relatively thick skin; very yellow on the 'hair' side. Original perforations (damage to the skin due to animal wounds) are fairly numerous in the manuscript<sup>5</sup>. There are none to worry about on the sheets of the *Mappa mundi* and the *Index*. The sheets are irregular in size<sup>6</sup>. These elements are completely characteristic of 8th century parchment manuscripts.

Manuscript 29 (115) is in excellent condition. It was restored in 1958 (sheets and binding). The current binding is not original.

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<sup>3</sup> See list of contents of the collection in annex 1

<sup>4</sup> The management plan (cf. annexes 6 and 7) provide a detailed examination on this point, notably through a microscope study of the dispersion of hairs

<sup>5</sup> Sheet 18 for example (see photo 4)

<sup>6</sup> Sheets 7 to 9 for example (see sheet 7, photo 5)

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### 3.2 Catalogue or registration details

#### Description of Albi's *Mappa mundi*

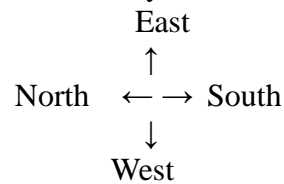
The *Mappa mundi* map measures 27 x 22.5 cm. The *Mappa mundi* and the *Index* have always been held in this collection<sup>7</sup>. They were devised and created together at the same time.

Complementary, the two elements constitute the *Mappa mundi* in its totality.

Today it is one of the most ancient surviving representations of the inhabited world, dating from the 8th century.

The inhabited World (*oecumène* for the Greeks, *orbis terrarum* for the Romans) is oblong-shaped, a sort of horseshoe with the opening representing the Gibraltar strait:

- It is oriented, that is to say East is situated at the top of the page:



-The central section is occupied by the Mediterranean sea (21 cm long, 8.5 cm at its widest point), painted in dark green, very developed towards the East. From top to bottom (so from East to West), the large islands of Crete (*Creta*, oval-shaped, 2 x 1.6 cm), Cyprus (*Cypr(a)*, oval, 1 x 0.6 cm), Sicily (*Sicilia*, diamond, 2.5 x 1.7 cm), Sardinia (*Sardinia*, oval, 1.8 x 0.7 cm) and Corsica (*Cursical*, oval, 1.6 x 1.2 cm) are identified; see photo 6.

-The Orient, situated at the top of the page, is occupied by Asiatic regions from India to the Mediterranean sea. It is made up of a band measuring 2.7 cm in the middle, and is surrounded at its extremities by ocean painted in green. The names of identified countries are (from North to South): *Armenia*, *India*, *Scitia*, *Media*, *Persida*, *Judea*, *Arabia* (see photo 7).

-To the North (that is, on the left of the page), appears Europe; on one hand from *Gotia* to *Britania* (Great Britain; an almost circular island measuring 1.5 x 1.3 cm), and from Greece (*Agaia*) to Italy and Spain on the other. The ocean surrounding the land forms an indentation in the North-East for the Caspian sea (*Caspium*). The northernmost part of the outer ocean is named 'Cymiricum mare'. In southern Europe, the three peninsulas of the Balkans, Italy and Spain are identified, bringing out the seas named *Pontum* (that is to say the Pontic Sea, classical name for the Black Sea), *Adrias* (Adriatic) and *Ionium mare* (Ionian sea). The identified European countries are: *Ispania*, *Britania*, *Gallia*, *Italia*, *Gotia*, *Tracia*, *Macedonia*, *Agaia* (Achaia). The territory of the « *Barbari* » is also identified (see photo 8).

-Africa (*Afriga*) is represented in almost rectangular form to the right of the map, with Mauritania (*Mauritania*), Numidia (*Nomedia*), Carthage (*Cartago*), Libya (*Libiae*), Ethiopia (*Etiopia*), Egypt (*Egyptus*) with Alexandria (*Alexandria*). The identified countries are separated from each other by regular horizontal double lines. A large vertical line is drawn in the far south to demarcate Ethiopia and the Ganges. The ocean surrounding the ecumenic to the right has two indentations; one corresponding to the golf of Persia, unnamed, between Persia (*Persida*) and the desert (*deserto*), where Mount Sinai (*Sina*) appears; and the other at the Red sea

(*Rubrum*). 'Zephirus', the West wind, is labelled on the far right of the map, beyond the ocean limit (placed there by mistake); see photo 9.

-The ecumenic is surrounded by ocean (*Oceanum*) painted in green<sup>8</sup>. Small circles are depicted on almost all the coasts. This figuration is very unusual. Is it a way of evoking the rocks, to

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<sup>7</sup> This is known from observing the stitches, when the manuscript disassembled during its restoration in 1958

<sup>8</sup> Probably in copper green. The management plan foresees a special study to confirm this.

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highlight the ‘solid’ nature of land in relation to water? It is a reminder of home ports for coastal navigation, evoking the scale of the Phoenicians? These circles are not present in the North; below and a little above the Caspian sea at the level of the Adriatic sea, to that of the ‘Pontum’. They are more frequent in the South, appearing around the golf of Persia but not the Red sea (see example photo 10).

- Towns are represented by arrangements of small circles. There are not many: Babylon (*Babillonia*), Athens (*Atenas*), Ravenna (*Ravenna*), Rome (*Roma*); Antioch (*Antiocia*), Jerusalem (*Iherusalem*), Alexandria (*Alexandria*), Carthage (*Cartago*). Two other towns, in Italy and in India, are depicted but not identified (see photo11).
- A few rivers are drawn in green, in the same colour as the seas:
  - . two in Asia: the *Tigris* and the *Fison* (Indus)
  - . the Nile (*Nilum*) and the Ganges (*Ganges fluvius*), depicted by mistake in Africa
  - . The Rhône (*Rodanum*) et the Rhine (*Renus*) in Europe (see [photo 12](#)).
- The 51 names of towns, countries, rivers and seas of the *Mappa mundi* are written in uncial\* script that is contemporary to the making of the map.

The *Index (Indeculum quod maria vel venti sunt)* mentions twelve wind names et 35 sea names (only one wind name and seven sea names are identified on the map itself).

Aquilo	Oceanum	Auster
Boreus	Cymiricum	Supsolanus
Corus	Caspium	Favonius
Coecius	Euxinum	Notus
Renotus	Pontum	Africanus
Zephyrus	Propontidis	Auster
	Ellispontum	
	Rubrum	
	Myrceum	
	Pamphilu(m)	
	Sirium	
	Aegeum	
	Ionum	
	Phiniciu(m)	
	Magnum	
	Carpaciu(m)	
	Libicum	
	Hicariu(m)	
	Creticu(m)	
	Adrias	
	Terrenu(m)	
	Dallearicu(m)	

### 3.4 History/provenance

EARLY MIDDLE AGES AND MIDDLE AGES: creation, integration in a ‘living’, constantly developing library, and permanent use (tool for understanding, teaching, and mediation aid)

The *Mappa Mundi* and manuscript 29 (115) come from Albi’s cathedral chapter. They were kept in the library from when they were made until 1789.

Albi, a modest locality retiring behind prosperous countryside, became a city and bishopric\* seat in the 4th century. The bishops were to play a leading role in the town from then on. One of their initiatives was the creation of a library and *scriptorium*\* in the cathedral chapter. The origins of this library go back to the 6th century, when the Albi bishop Dido asked the priest

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Perpetuus to gather all the Church's regulatory texts together. Albi's religious duties made it an important intellectual and cultural centre until the 10th century. Scribes moved in to copy and amass fundamental texts, ending up with one of the largest manuscript collections of the period.

Manuscript 29 (115) and the *Mappa mundi* were made in the second half of the 8th century in Gaul; probably in Albi, or in Septimanie<sup>9</sup>, or even in Spain (two features are suggestive of this origin: the presence of the Rhine and Rhône rivers and the writing style, without further precision being possible<sup>10</sup>).

The texts contained in manuscript 29 (115)<sup>11</sup> that surround the *Mappa mundi* are by authors of different periods (from Cicero, 1st century BC, to Pseudo-Aethicus, 7th century). The writing style and coherence of the manuscript indicates that all the texts were copied and gathered together in the 8th century at the same time.

The *Mappa mundi* is an exceptional document contained in a completely unique collection. It signifies a very strong, lasting Episcopal desire to enrich the spiritual centre of 8th century Albi with a major work.

The manuscript was kept in the library of Albi's cathedral chapter throughout the Middle Ages. From the 9th to the 12th century this collection included numerous other manuscripts (there remain 35 surviving today that date from these times).

The *Mappa mundi* also makes sense in relation to the collection in which is included. This collection confers the map part of its exceptional character.

The *Mappa mundi* was used as a pedagogical document for teaching<sup>12</sup> from its creation until at least the 11th century, and then as a meditation aid (cf p. 23).

#### A teaching manual

The manuscript, this collection of texts, would have been used as a reference book for clergymen to teach. The creation of this collection is therefore directly linked to teaching. It is an example of a manual containing various geographical texts: from a description of the inhabited world in the geography chapter attributed to Pseudo-Aethicus (n°12), to the list of winds and seas (n° 11) and the provinces of the Roman Empire (n°13). The duplication of the latter enters directly in relation to the organisation of the Church in provinces and dioceses. The geographical element only makes sense when we consider the volume in full. It is in fact a complete *vademecum* (though an ordered arrangement of materials cannot be made out). It broaches:

- . problems of language and grammar;
- . biblical exegesis, through texts by Eucher of Lyon (sanctus Aucerius, n°2), saint Jerome and saint Augustine;
- . the pastoral, through a few saint Augustine sermons (n°4, 22);
- . the description of a world in which, from Christian Europe, other lands must be christianised;
- . and finally, time and the inscription of history in space, through the *Chroniques* ('Chronicals') by Isidore of Seville (n°5) and the *Six âges du monde* ('Six Ages of the World'), described after the chronicle by saint Jerome (n°17).

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<sup>9</sup> Septimanie: southern region of Gaul, more or less corresponding to the 7 provinces of the diocese of Vienna. See annex 2.

<sup>10</sup> A more in-depth study of the writing could perhaps enable progress to be made around this question, (see annexes 6 and 7).

<sup>11</sup> See precise list of the texts contained in the manuscript in annex 1.

<sup>12</sup> In the 12th century, many things changed (the status of the image; development in teaching, urban development and so on); for that matter the OT or TO diagrams (see note 21), more or less filled with toponyms, were used until the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

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The inclusion of Eucher's *Institutiones*, a clearly pedagogical text, (n°8), reinforces this hypothesis of the map's use as both a means of exegesis and general education.

Educationally, the map could have been used in accordance with two, complementary pedagogical means to imprint a mental image of the *orbis terrarum* on the student's mind: the map and the list of names to remember.

Furthermore, in the Middle Ages maps also had an ideological aim: they were also used to portray the necessity of spreading Christ's Word, through evangelising regions that remained pagan.

For that matter, throughout the entire manuscript the lower corners of the parchment sheets were badly damaged. They were restored in 1958, but the description of the map's condition at the time insists on large gaps in the parchment around the corners due to wear. In fact, this is the place where fingers are positioned when handling the work; thus proving long and regular use. Sheets 57 and 58, presenting the *Mappa mundi* and the *Index*, have the same gaps in the lower corners of the parchment (it has been restored).

Additionally, following the lead of Albi's *Mappa mundi* world specialist, P. Gautier Dalché, it can be thought to have been used throughout the Middle Ages<sup>13</sup> as a **meditation aid**, to help contemplation, due to the fact that it offers a perspective on the world that is similar to that of God, who alone can see the world in full from the skies<sup>14</sup> (see p. 23).

The manuscript was still consulted in the 10th and 12th centuries. A note in the margin in 10th century handwriting attests to use at this time (f. 39v). Similarly, an addition in 12th century handwriting has been revealed on the Saint Augustine text, *De Genesi contra Manicheos*, likewise proving prolonged use (f. 71).

We do not have evidence of medieval use after the 12th century at this time.

ANCIEN RÉGIME : likely continuous use; evidence of an understanding of the document's importance

We currently have only a few pieces of information on the document's history between the 12th and 18th century<sup>15</sup>.

The examination of the binding of manuscript 29 (115) carried out during the restoration work in 1958 informs us that it had been **rebound in the 17th century, and doubtlessly again in the 18th century. That the binding was damaged at these times, necessitating a new binding, reveals that it was widely used. That the manuscript was kept despite the damaged binding reveals that it was considered important.**

The manuscript conserves **numerous traces of use** during the centuries of the *Ancien Régime*, including the insertion of cover sheets, probably in the 17th or 18th century. This sheet bears the following information:

. on the front: in 18th century writing: '*Miscellanea, scilicet : Dictionarium verborum synonymorum*' ('Cicero' in another handwriting); '*Glossa in Evangelia a Sto*

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<sup>13</sup> An in-depth codicological\* study will perhaps allow us to discover elements confirming this hypothesis (see annexes 6 and 7).

<sup>14</sup> Patrick Gautier Dalché : « De la glose à la contemplation. Place et fonction de la carte dans les manuscrits du haut Moyen Age », in : *Testo e immagine nel alto medioevo*, t. II, Spolète, 1994 (Stimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, XLI, p. 753-757) ; and « Mercator « médiéval » », in : Der « mittelalterliche » Mercator, to appear in *Das Werk Mercators: Perspektiven und Herausforderungen* (Leipzig, 2014).

<sup>15</sup> Notably we do not know whether the *Mappa mundi* was known to Albi's inhabitants, if it was consulted or seen by travelers or intellectuals during visits or trips through Albi. The management plan (annexes 6 and 7) foresees a study in this area.

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*Aucerio; Oratio Dominica interpretata; Variarum homiliarum; Chronicon Sti Isidori; De proprietatibus sermonum vel rerum* (in another handwriting: *Homelia Sti Augustini ad castigandum*); *Isidorus de quaest. diffic. Vet et Nov. Testamenti; Geographia: nomina provin. Roman.* (in another handwriting: 'Very ancient geographical map, Index of seas and winds'); *Definitio ecclesiast. dogmatum; Gelasius de recipendis et non recipiendis; Hieronimi chron. De sex aetat. Saecul*'. See [photo 13](#).

. on the reverse: *Ex libris ven. Capituli Ecclesiae Albiensis*'.

These elements provide tangible proof that the manuscript's importance was granted and recognised in the 18th century. In the 18th century, it was no longer 'used' for learning geography or meditation. There is no doubt that the manuscript was conserved because it was considered significant for its age and exceptional rarity. This is why, for easier use, it was necessary to list the important parts of the collection in this partial summary written at the front of the work.

Likewise, on the inside cover, an old library-sorting label (probably dating from the 18th century), attests to the persistence of this use.

Besides, the numerous traces of damp, as well as rodent bites, are also proof of the trials borne by the manuscript over the centuries. If the manuscript had not been considered important on a documentary level, it could have been destined to willful destruction by the cathedral chapter due to its damaged material state.

**This manuscript, and therefore in all likelihood the *Mappa Mundi* within it (as the only unique document of the collection and doubtless the most important) has traces 17th and 18th century use.**

FRENCH REVOLUTION: confiscation, description and conservation in Albi

In 1789, Jean-François Massol, a priest and professor of rhetoric, was tenured canon\* of Sainte-Cécile and chapter trustee\*. As such, he was the library's guardian and director. In 1789, the clergy's possessions were made available to the nation, including the books of the cathedral. They were confiscated and moved to the literary depot in Albi. This consisted of, on top of the chapter's collections, the collections of the convent of Carmes (which is where the depot was installed), the Capucins, Dominicans and Cordeliers, the seminar\* and the college\*, as well as the Archbishop. In 1790 it consisted of 9500 volumes; in 1791 it counted 10,853 volumes and 128 manuscripts. The manuscript containing the *Mappa mundi* was one of them.

The manuscript followed the different historical stages of the literary depot where it had been deposited: library of the *Ecole centrale du Tarn* in 1794, then municipal library in 1802. It was catalogued. The collection was classified, and subject to sorting and exchanges, but the *Mappa mundi* manuscript remained in Albi.

The *Mappa mundi* remained in the Albi collections because at the time its age and rarity was understood and it was in good condition.

19TH CENTURY: it became a cartography 'monument'

In 1843, Albi's *Mappa mundi* was nearly sold. A document kept in the Tarn<sup>16</sup> departmental Archives effectively enabled us to discover that the budgetary needs in 1843 were such that the council of the time announced its willingness to exchange 'the most ancient manuscript of the library, dated from the 7th and 8th centuries, for publications that will be useful to our

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<sup>16</sup> AD Tarn, series 4T(1).



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studious youth'. The manuscript was sent to Paris for examination, and was slow to return. It is very likely that this stay in Paris can be explained by the consultation request of the **first cartography historians** (the viscount of Santarem and J. Lelewel). They marked it out as a 'monument' of cartography from 1849 (Cf. bibliography, p. 11). They both consulted it and allowed it to be recognized internationally for the first time.

20TH AND 21ST CENTURY: improved conservation and heightened recognition

In 1908 manuscript 29 (115) was moved, along with the rest of the municipal library's collections, to the Rochegude hotel in Albi. It was restored in 1958 and the dossier includes a description of its condition at this time (as well as the different constitutive stages since its creation). See photo 14.

In 2001 the entirety of the collections were transferred to the new multimedia Pierre-Amalric library. Manuscript 29 (115) was then placed in the Reserve.

Since 2001 the *Mappa mundi* has been the subject of a resurgence in scientific work (cf. bibliography, see below): 12 publications in 13 years. The scientific domain of cartography and the representation of space is thus signaling a growing interest in this document.

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#### 4.0 Legal information

##### 4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

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Name	Address
Etat Français - Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles de Midi-Pyrénées (Regional Office of Cultural Affairs, Midi-Pyrénées)	- Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles de Midi-Pyrénées, 32 rue de la Dalbade. BP 811 31080 Toulouse Cédex 6
- Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, Service du livre et de la lecture (Ministry of Culture and Communication, department of books and reading)	- Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, Service du livre et de la lecture, 182 rue saint Honoré 75033 Paris cédex 01

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Telephone	Facsimile	Email
- (+33)5 67 73 20 69	- 05 61 23 12 71	
- (+33)1 40 15 80 00	- 01 40 15 74 04	

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##### 4.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner)

Name

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## Town of Albi

### Address

16 rue de l'Hôtel de Ville  
81023 ALBI cédex 9

### Telephone

(+33)5 63 49 10 10

### Facsimile

05 63 49 10 50

The *Mappa mundi*, along with the heritage collections of the Pierre-Amalric multimedia library, is kept in premises belonging to:

The Communauté d'agglomération de l'Albigeois

Parc François Mitterrand

BP 70304

81009 ALBI CEDEX.

Telephone: (+33)5 63 45 72 47; fax: 05 63 45 72 45

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## 4.3 Legal status

Provide details of legal and administrative responsibility for the preservation of the documentary heritage

The manuscript containing the *Mappa Mundi* is a document that has belonged to the State since the French Revolution. Its management has been entrusted to the town of Albi since 1802; in 1933 the municipal library of Albi was classified by the Department of Public Instruction<sup>17</sup>. Today, the director (paleographer-archivist and State-independent curator) assures the management, conservation and development of the heritage collections in Albi's multimedia library.

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## 4.4 Accessibility

### - For the general public

The *Mappa mundi* is regularly presented to the general public during visits of the multimedia library's heritage collections and conferences on the collection. In these instances it is explained and contextualised. In effect, the document needs keys in order to be understood; it cannot be delivered to the general public without mediation.

The project of Albi and the community of Greater Albi is to develop scientific knowledge about the *Mappa mundi* through the combined efforts of various approaches, and to enable the general public to appropriate it through essential, high quality mediation. The current request to be inscribed in the Memory of the World Register is part of this project.

### - Digital consultation

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<sup>17</sup> Under French law classified municipal libraries enjoyed a special status: their direction could only be entrusted to graduates of the Ecole nationale des Chartes (article 1 of the decree of 1933).

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During a recently completed programme a large number of the medieval manuscripts kept in the Pierre-Amalric multimedia library were digitalised in high definition. Consultation of the *Mappa mundi* is therefore principally carried out firstly on-screen, at the multimedia library and on the website.

[http://archivesnumeriques.mediatheques.grand-albigeois.fr/app\\_php\\_mysql/app/recherche\\_alpha\\_cles.php](http://archivesnumeriques.mediatheques.grand-albigeois.fr/app_php_mysql/app/recherche_alpha_cles.php).

In 2014 Albi's *Mappa mundi* will also be accessible on the site of the Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes (Institute of Research and History of Texts), via the Bibliothèque Virtuelle des Manuscrits Médiévaux (Digital Library of Medieval Manuscripts): <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/>.

#### - For researchers

- The *Mappa mundi* is kept in the Pierre-Amalric multimedia library, located at 30 avenue Charles de Gaulle in Albi, open from Monday to Saturday. The Tarn and heritage room, where consultation of the heritage collections takes place, is open every afternoon. Outside this window consultation is possible by appointment.

- For conservation reasons access to the original is restricted and reserved to readers having a scientific reason to consult it.

Consultation of the original takes place uniquely in the reading room, in the presence of staff and upon submission of a piece of identity, with specific material guaranteeing the conservation conditions and security during consultation: consultation futon, cotton gloves, pencil use only, restricted light.

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#### 4.5 Copyright status

No copyright: the document has fallen into the public domain.

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## 5.0 Assessment against the selection criteria

### 5.1 Authenticity

Several pieces of information allow us to affirm that the *Mappa mundi* is truly an authentic document that can be dated to the second half of the 8th century.

#### - The parchment surface of the map and manuscript

The parchment (which is quite thick), with its original perforations and irregular size in different sections, is characteristic of the period. In effect, the numerous original holes correspond to damage to the skin caused by animal wounds and have been there since the copy was made. The presence of parchment sheets that are in some cases too short in relation to the general size of the manuscript can be explained by the employment of all usable material for the copy. At the time parchment was excessively expensive and the copyist would have used any format and all qualities of parchment.

The parchment's somewhat 'simple' appearance must not be misunderstood: at the time copyists were not in the habit of buying more refined parchment for manuscripts, even for exceptional

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documents. Besides, it is not certain that the *Mappa mundi* was considered an exceptional document in the 8th century. It is a document with a pedagogical role, and the objective was not to make it a ceremonial object or one of particular aesthetic value. Its value was educational and spiritual, and the use of ordinary parchment for this does not contradict its function in any way. These material elements reinforce our sureness in the document's authenticity.

#### - No additions

No additions have been made to the *Mappa mundi*. It is entirely original.

#### - Visual form

The visual format presented in the manuscript containing the *Mappa mundi* is typical of the 8th century: very simple, with no illuminations, it presents titles or passages written in bigger letters than the rest of the text, sometimes in red (f. 24v-31v, 40, for example), sometimes with decorations (in red and black: f. 22v, 24 (see photo 15), 24v, 32v, 58v and in orange: f. 34). Its authenticity is certain.

#### - Writing

The *Mappa mundi* is written in uncial\* style, which originates from Albi, Septimanie\* (southern France) or Spain. This late-antique writing, used earlier in the 8th century, is both evidence of its authenticity and an indication of its age. The manuscript's different texts were copied by several hands.

Two types of writing can be seen in the *Mappa mundi* and the *Index of seas and winds*:

- the title of the *Indeculum* is in stretched 'rustic' capitals (see photo 16);
- the rest is in a uncial font that is strongly influenced by the lowercase: small bodies and long stems; the 'e's', overrunning beneath other letters, which also generally join up with the following character. It has been noted that in '*Phinicium*' (see photo 17) a '*massage*' (normally reserved for the lowercase) was even absentmindedly added to the stem, instead of the right-angled serif. The map's captions were treated in the same way. Despite the difference in font, the idea that the hand of the same scribe is found in lowercase in the rest of the manuscript cannot be ruled out.

One might wonder as to why this uncial writing was used in the map, since uncial was already dated in the second half of the 8th century. Two hypotheses can be formulated: either the *Mappa mundi* was made after a model written in uncial style that was copied right down to the form; or there was a desire to give it a particular luster by choosing this ancient writing style.

#### - Dating the manuscript and the *Mappa mundi*

The *Mappa mundi*, like the whole of manuscript 29 (115), does not bear an explicit fabrication date. Specialists propose the second half of the 8th century.

The main piece of information behind this proposition is the identification and inclusion of the town of Ravenna, which is represented as the same size as Rome. From the fifth century Ravenna had successively been the official residence of the last Occidental emperors, then capital of the Goth kingdom of Italy, and finally the residence of the exarch\* who, until 751, represented the Byzantine power. In 752, the town was taken by Aistolf, king of the Lombards, then in 756 by Pepin the Short, King of the Franks, who gave it to the pope.

These events, whose impact was felt across Europe, and the fact that Ravenna is also mentioned on this map allows us to propose a fabrication date in the second half of the 8th century.

In conclusion, therefore, the identity, authenticity and provenance of Albi's *Mappa mundi* are completely certain. There remain uncertainties around where it was made, but codicological studies and investigations into the materials (parchment and pigments), which are scheduled in the management plan (cf. annexes 6 and 7), will doubtless allow more precise hypotheses to be carefully

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put forward on this topic, as well as, perhaps, a more refined date.

## 5.2 World significance

The main criteria for the global importance of Albi's *Mappa mundi* are as follows:

- Uniqueness: it is unique and irreplaceable, forming part of a medieval manuscript with no existing copy or double.
- Age: it is one of two of the oldest manuscript documents representing the inhabited world (second half of the 8th century) (see p.17).
- Precious evidence of a state of understanding and conception of the world (see p. 17);
- Offers a singular representation of the world (see p.21).

Albi's *Mappa mundi* is globally important because it is a representation of the known world, as such translating a fundamental human initiative: that of representing the world in its totality, so as to make it visible in the blink of an eye. This work is therefore part of the memory of the world.

It assumes global importance for the different countries it depicts, for the memory of the world, and at the same time for the history of global cartography.

The importance of Albi's *Mappa mundi* was revealed in the first inventories of world maps (in 1849 by the viscount of Santarem, then in 1850 by J. Lelewel). Effectively, from the beginnings of the history of cartography it was known and considered as a major element. Its inclusion in 2001 in the important Milan exhibition (Milan, 2001, Palazzo reale, *Segni e sogni della terra : il disegno del mondo dal mito di Atlante alla geografia delle reti*), and the bibliographic development since 2001, likewise show how crucial it is in the eyes of specialists: 12 recorded publications, half of which came from non-French researchers.

**The *Mappa mundi* is of global importance because it is at the crossroads between two eras:**

- Antique elements: the main towns of classic Antiquity such as Athens and Carthage are identified; on one side there is a British isle, with the principle antique empires on the other (Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, Roman). The North, traditionally the home of threats to civilisation (according to roman ethnography), is occupied by the *Barbari*, an element which calls to mind the fall of the western Roman Empire. The names given for northern Europe are fewer (*Gotia, Barbari, Britania*).
- Christian elements:
  - Two of the four rivers of the Garden of Eden mentioned in Genesis (1, 11 and 14) are represented: the Tigris and the Pishon (Indus).
  - Jerusalem is identified, but unlike other Christian world maps it is not found at the centre of the *orbis terrarum*. Judea is distinguished by coloured hatching. Ravenna is identified.
  - Mount Sinai is represented by a triangle in the Arabian Desert.
  - The presence of Babylon, Persia, Macedonia and Rome can also be interpreted as geographically expressing the succession of the four Empires evoked in the Bible by the prophet Daniel in his vision of four beasts (Daniel, 7); a basic principle of tardo-antique, and especially medieval, Christian historiography. See photo 18.

As it was aimed at a student audience the impact and influence of the *Mappa mundi* was probably very strong when it was created right up to the 13th century. It was still used throughout the Middle Ages, perhaps as a meditation aid. It is therefore likely to have still enjoyed significant influence.

## 5.3 Comparative criteria:

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## 1 Time

The crucial importance of Albi's *Mappa mundi* essentially depends on its age.

Dating from the 8th century, it is one of the earliest surviving attempts at representing the world; not in a purely abstract or symbolic way, but really to put in place the provinces and regions of the world.

It is one of the two most ancient surviving records in the successive stages of the representation of the world in the Christian era. It is particularly representative of its time.

Intense cartographic activity has been observed during late Antiquity and the Middle Ages<sup>18</sup>. The numerous *mappae mundi* that survive or are attested to, which most often represent the *orbis terrarum* in circular form, bear witness to this activity. Geographical texts were transferred to maps in several locations in the scholastic environments of the Latin world during the period between the 5th and 8th century. To this day no evidence of this crucial activity has been inscribed in the Memory of the World Register.

Of all the surviving *mappae mundi*, in its form and content Albi's is the closest to a model that would have existed in late Antiquity, which has not survived but which, thanks to studies, we can suppose the existence of. As such it is exceptional, as it enables us to form an idea of the conception of the world that was held by the men of late Antiquity.

Only one other manuscript map from the same period is known of. This is the manuscript kept in the Vatican (Bibl. apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 6018, f. 63v-64r., see photo p. 18). The manuscript in which it is found reveals traces of a Byzantine original; it was drawn up and probably copied in Italy between 762 and 777. The map, traditionally and incorrectly known by the name of the 'Map of Isidore of Seville', can be dated to the same time bracket.

The Vatican and Albi's *Mappae mundi*, both dating from the second half of the 8th century, have no link or point in common, neither in their form nor general distribution. The only things they have in common are the date when they were made and the nomenclature (which is normal, as these are elements that necessarily appear on all maps). Today's scientists are not sure of which of the two came first.

## 2 Place

Albi's *Mappa mundi* contains determining information for world history and culture.

### - Information on Albi

There is very little information on 8th century Albi. The diocese was founded in the 4th century. This political and religious role assured its durability throughout the early Middle Ages. Towards 655, it nevertheless remained a *civitula* dominated by the great Desiderii-Salvii family that gave Quercy (a former province of France) saint Didier and saint Salvi of Albi. In the *Vie de saint Didier* ('Life of saint Didier'), which was written at the end of the 8th century, Albi remained classed as an *oppidum*, as opposed to Rodez and Cahors which were designated as *urbes*. The term *city* only appeared in the 9th century. We know that Pepin the Short passed through the town in 767. After the disaster of Ronvevaux in 788 the former duchy became a kingdom under Charlemagne's authority. He then established a Frank, Haimon, to control the earldom of Albi.

It is possible that Albi's *Mappa mundi* was copied in the very library of Albi's Sainte-Cécile cathedral chapter. In any case, it is certain that it was acquired and kept there, doubtlessly from the beginning. Whether or not it was made in Albi, it remains proof of the bishop's desire of to count it among his collection of books that were available in the cathedral's chapter. **It therefore provides essential information on Albi and its cathedral chapter. It is evidence of the bishop's will to develop teaching, and in particular to include geography in this teaching; to provide visual means to situate and position oneself in space, and so to register Albi as a major cultural place**

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<sup>18</sup> P. Gautier Dalché. « L'héritage antique de la cartographie médiévale, les problèmes et les acquis », in : R. J.A. Talbert, R. W. Unger ed. *Cartography in Antiquity and the Middle Ages : Fresh perspectives, New Methods.* (Technology and Change in History, 10). Leyde, Boston, 2008.

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(as is also evidenced by the presence of the scriptorium).

A cathedral chapter contains a certain number of ‘intellectuals’; scholars, men of letters, cultivated people. The cathedral chapter of Sainte-Cécile is the only in Albi to possess a library at this time, and would remain so for several more centuries. Primarily destined for chapter members, the library could be opened up beyond the narrow circle of canons through the practice of lending to students and lettered men of the city.

In this way it can be supposed that Salvi, the earl of Albi and father of saint Didier of Cahors, who was born in 590 in Albi, found books for his instruction before sending him to the court of king Clotaire II. He is one of the most representative members of the Desiderii-Salvi family; a gallo-roman aristocratic lineage that ruled over the regions of Albi, Rouergue and Quercy in the Merovingian period. This family held important administrative, military and religious roles at court and in the imperial administration from the 4th century onwards. Saint Didier, after having studied eloquence, the humanities and law, lived at the ‘Palace’ of Clotaire II (613-630). Around fifteen letters written by him, and twenty addressed to him, confirm that he belonged to the world of the powerful that governed the kingdom during the first half of the 7th century. He was perhaps able to begin his studies and training through the books of Albi’s cathedral chapter.

The ecclesiastical libraries of Merovingian Gaul were clearly in contact with the teaching programme of the monastic and Episcopal schools.

The library of the cathedral chapter in the early Middle Ages, from what can be understood today through the presence of other works bearing the same membership label in any case (a label dating from the 18th century), consisted almost exclusively of conciliar texts (8th-9th century), canonical texts (9th-10th century), liturgical texts (10th, 11th, 12th century) texts of the Fathers of the Church (9th-10th century), and Biblical extracts (11th century). **Manuscript 29 (115) is therefore the only work that has been handed down to us from this early Middle Age library that was made to teach other disciplines than the strictly religious.**

It should also be noted that very few chapter libraries survived in France: they were dispersed or destroyed during the pillages of the religious wars, seized in the Revolution, or sold to collectors and bibliophiles.

#### - Information on the countries depicted

- Albi’s *Mappa mundi* contains decisive information for all the countries of the European basin and beyond. 25 countries or geographical regions are represented and named: Spain, England, Gaul, Italy, Thrace, Macedonia, Armenia, India, Media, Persia, Judea, Arabia, Egypt, Libia, Africa, Mauritania, Ethiopia, Corsica, Sicily, Sardinia, Cyprus, Crete, country of the Goths, Achaea, Numidia. Often, this is the earliest surviving figurative representation of these countries. The historians of countries such as Armenia therefore made no mistake, as they cited and reproduced Albi’s *Mappa mundi* in their 2007 publication (cf. bibliography, p. 11). The map portrays a way of representing the world, with the Mediterranean at the centre, which is no longer used today but was prevalent at this time in this part of the world. Likewise, it signals the presence of towns that have now disappeared (Babylon for example). In addition, almost equal importance is given to the territories situated to the north of the Mediterranean (8.5 cm) as well as to those to the south (7cm).
- Today it is difficult to say whether the *Mappa mundi* was made in Albi or elsewhere. The Visigothic writing used in the texts of the collection associated with the *Mappa mundi* was used in the south of Gaul and in Spain. As seen, considering the inclusion of the Rhone and Rhine rivers, it is most likely that it was made in Gaul, but Spanish provenance thus remains a possibility. Throughout the 7th and 8th centuries, Spain, not far from Albi, held quite close relations with France, notably in the domain of the transmission of manuscripts. In fact, we know that relations

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between Visigothic Spain and the Loire region (in particular the Benedictine monastery of Fleury-sur-Loire) certainly existed from the end of the 7th century. We also understand that the episcopal library of Autun was enriched by books coming from Spain. The episcopal library of Lyon likewise saw its collections enriched by the Spanish refugees hoping to escape the arab invasion in 711. It is possible that the path taken from Spain to Fleury-sur-Loire or Spain to Autun passed through Albi...

Studying the writing style, an exercise which needs to be developed further (cf. management plan, annexes 6 and 7), will perhaps enable a more precise localisation. The relations between Albi's *Mappa mundi* and the works of Isidore of Seville and Beatus of Liébana, both Spanish and major actors in the domain of world cartography, must also be examined, as well as an ordinary Septamanic geography manual dating from the late 8<sup>th</sup> or early 9th century<sup>19</sup>.

### 3 Persons

The cultural context around the creation of Albi's *Mappa mundi* reflects significant aspects of human behaviour: representing space and including oneself in it, teaching and learning, and, perhaps, close intellectual contact with a neighbouring country.

- It is impossible to determine an author (or authors) for this map. Naming a map's creator was in no way part of the mentality of the period (and, moreover, this was to remain the case for a long time). However, we can cite authors whose texts influenced this invention in the representation of the known world in the 8th century: Paul Orose, author in the 5th century of the first universal Christian history *Histoire contre les paiens*, (History against the pagans), and, for the map's form, Denys; author of the *Périégèse* in the beginning of the 2nd century, a high level scholastic text for teaching and easier comprehension of geography.
- The making of the map reflects the desire to visually represent the world as it was known at the time, and consequently to place the map's users inside this representation of the world. Using cartographic figuration was probably more common than is suggested by the rarity of the surviving examples, and **as such Albi's *Mappa mundi* only takes on more significance on a global level.**
- The entire manuscript, and particularly the map, clearly had a scholastic, pedagogical leaning; it could have been a 'teacher's handbook', a personal collection made by a teacher for class preparation or his own personal training.

Albi's *Mappa mundi* is highly representative of 8th century scholarly practice: it is not a question of symbolic or imaginary representation of the world, but that of reality; of men of this time, of their world and their vision. As evidence of this intellectual practice, its protection is paramount.

- The map is characterised by an elimination of the human figure, save through place names.

There are traces suggesting that the users of this map were numerous throughout the ages: traces of readers who have worn the lower corners of the sheets, manuscript annotations from the 10th, 11th and 13th centuries, and traces of rebinding in the 17th and 18th century.

### 4 Subject and Theme

Albi's *Mappa mundi* is one of the first representations of the known inhabited world and as such it represents a major aspect of humanities' cultural development.

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<sup>19</sup> P. Gautier Dalché : «Situs orbis terre uel regionum': un traité de géographie inédit du haut Moyen Age », in *Revue d'histoire des textes*, t. 12-13, 1982-1983, p. 149-180, cited in P. Gautier Dalché, *Géographie et culture. La représentation de l'espace du VI<sup>e</sup> au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Aldershot, 1997 (Variorum, Collected Studies Series).



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Albi's *Mappa mundi* is characterised by its global nature: it presents a significant number of countries or territories (25) in a representation of what was thought to be the whole world in one single map.

Albi's *Mappa mundi* is at the crossroads between geographical, historical, metaphysical and religious representations. The subjects treated in the map are geography (countries represented, users of this geographical tool), the perception of space, and the contemplation of the world in the image of God.

## 5 Form and Style

Albi's *Mappa mundi* is completely exceptional in terms of form: appearing in the shape of a frond, it does not resemble any of the other surviving *mappae mundi*.

### - Frond shape

While many medieval *mappae mundi* are round, this one represents the world in a **frond shape (or a laid out horseshoe), which is most exceptional**. This frond shape may come from a reading of *Périégèse* by Denys, (early 2nd century AD, translated into Latin from Greek in the 6th century by the grammarian Priscien of Caesarea), which bears witness to one of the initiatives of late Antiquity for teaching and facilitating understanding of geography. In his work Denys compares the form of the world to that of a frond. Glosses were made of the text, and these were gathered towards the end of the 8th century or the beginning of the 9th century. However, Denys' map (*pinax*, in Greek) had already been recommended by Cassiodore in the 6th century, in his pedagogic programme aimed at the monks of Vivarium (a monastery founded by Cassiodore, in Squilace, Calabre): the *Institutiones divinarum litterarum*<sup>20</sup>.

Albi's *Mappa mundi* can therefore be considered as strong evidence of the realisation of these figurative objects.

### - Different in form to other maps from approximately the same period

° Different from the *Mappa mundi* by Cosmas Indicopleustès

It is different from the *Mappa mundi* by the merchant Cosmas Indicopleustès who, in his *Topographie chrétienne* written in Alexandria in the 6th century, stuck to a rigorous interpretation of the Scriptures and contested the spherical nature of the earth. He represents the world in the form of a rectangular 'tabernacle', bearing no resemblance to the ecumene of Albi's map. The earliest surviving copy of the *Mappa mundi* by Cosmas Indicopleustès, dating from the 9th century (Biblioteca apostolica Vaticana, Vatican city, Vat. Gr. 0699), comes after Albi's.

° Different from the Vatican's *Mappa mundi*

The Vatican's *Mappa mundi* (Ms. Vat. Lat. 6018, f. 63v-64) is painted on a double sheet; the world is represented as round in form (see photo p.18).

### ° Albi's *Mappa mundi* is completely unique

- Albi's *Mappa mundi* may be the most ancient map made (at least in part) after Orose (like the 11<sup>th</sup> century anglo-saxon 'Cotton Map' (London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B.v.), the world map of Sawley (12th century) and the world map of Hereford (13th century), but these are later).
- Truly unique, Albi's *Mappa mundi* is not strictly speaking an illustration of the chapter written by Orose, *Historiae adversus paganos* (I, 2), which is placed after it in the manuscript. It does not name three parts of the *orbis terrarum*. It of course includes 50 geographical names, 49 of which are found in the *Etymologies* by Isidore of Seville, and 41 in the chapter by Orose. Nevertheless

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<sup>20</sup> P. Gautier Dalché, *L'espace géographique au Moyen Âge*, Florence, Sismel, edizioni del Galuzzo, 2013, p. 15, 114-115.

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these names were used frequently and are found in many publications. In addition, in Albi's map Spain is not represented as a triangle, as described by Orose.

- Of all the surviving ancient *mappae mundi* (see the non-exhaustive list in annexe 4), Albi's is probably the closest, in its form and content, to a model dating from late Antiquity.
- Albi's *Mappa mundi* does not derive from a reading of Isidore of Seville either, who proposes a three part division originating in Greek Antiquity (Europe, Asia, Africa, surrounded by ocean), which was to produce the type 'TO'<sup>21</sup> map. Albi's *Mappa mundi* could therefore be at the crossroads between the maps made after Orose's description and those, type 'TO', made after Isidore of Seville.

Albi's *Mappa mundi* thus has no equivalent.

### 6 Social/ spiritual/ community significance:

If today Albi's *Mappa mundi d'Albi* no longer takes on important role on a social, spiritual or community level, in the Middle Ages it certainly did just that. It was in fact a representation of the world like the one proposed in Antiquity, but completed with Biblical and Christian elements. It was probably even used by men of the church to help in contemplative meditation.

- From late Antiquity and throughout the medieval period, geography teaching, which manuscript 29 (115) would have been used for, could have reached quite a diverse public as part of a liberal arts education, particularly of grammar and rhetoric.

In Antiquity the apprentice orator would have been required to know that writing History included the work of describing and analyzing the places where reported events took place. Administrative geography, essential for civil servants in the antique Roman Empire, was understood in a more general framework and taught through author commentaries. This training was completed by diagrams and drawings that imprinted mental images on the students' minds.

In order to become an imperial civil servant, it was necessary to have acquired in-depth knowledge of the Empire's geography. Teaching included enunciating the Empire's provinces and exterior territories. Traces of this are found in this manuscript, with the *Nomina provinciarum omnium* (n° 16)<sup>22</sup> and the *Laterculus* (n° 18) by Polémus Silvius, dating from 449 and dedicated to Eucher of Lyon. Such a collection, adapted to the educational needs of the late-antique school, was reused during the early Middle Ages to train future clerks.

Albi's *Mappa mundi* is characteristic of the desire to represent the world, originating in antiquity and adapted to biblical exegesis, even though there are fairly few Christian and biblical elements. The map effectively enables the user to situate the events of sacred history and their continuation in the history and spread of Christianity.

- Patrick Gautier Dalché<sup>23</sup> notes another certain function of *mappae mundi* of this period: as **an aid to meditation** on the beauty and grandeur of Creation. Looking at a *Mappa mundi* could be a way to meditate. Although this practice was carried out in particular through the *Mappae mundi* painted on monastery walls<sup>24</sup>, it is possible that it could also have been envisaged through a map

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<sup>21</sup> « Map type « TO » or « OT » : representation of the world in the Middle Ages, oriented towards the East, in which three parts of the ecumene, Asia, Europe and Africa, are placed on either side of vertical and horizontal lines, forming a T.

<sup>22</sup> See the list of the contents of manuscript 29 (115) in annex 1.

<sup>23</sup> P. Gautier Dalché, « Pour une histoire des rapports entre contemplation et cartographie au Moyen Age », *Les méditations cosmographiques à la Renaissance (Cahiers V. L. Saulnier, t. 26, 2009)*, p. 19-40.

<sup>24</sup> P. Gautier Dalché, « Eucher de Lyon, Iona, Bobbio : le destin d'une Mappa mundi de l'Antiquité tardive. *Viator* 41 Multilingual (2010).

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painted in a manuscript. It is therefore possible that Albi's *Mappa mundi* may also have been used to this end. This hypothesis probably enables an explanation as to why the *Mappa mundi* was still used throughout the Middle Ages (as the wear and tear on the bottom of the sheets seems to indicate), after having seen its day in the 8th century as a pedagogical tool in the tradition of geography teaching in late Antiquity. The canon Saint Cécile, contemplative, educated, even a geographer in his spare time, sought reach an 'elevated vantage point' through the *Mappa mundi*, to unite his soul with God and claim to approach God's perspective on Creation.

It is not inconceivable that this use could have been carried out collectively. Although meditation was rather an individual exercise, it could possibly have appeared within the community. The presence of *Mappae mundi* on monastery walls could have led to collective meditation among the monks of a congregation, a habit that was perhaps also collectively reinitiated with Albi's *Mappa mundi*, whose limited dimensions (only one sheet of 22.5 x 27 cm) enable the practice, thanks to its maneuverability. We have no written evidence of this practice, but future studies will perhaps allow it to be attested to.

In any case, numerous traces of material use on the sheets and the binding prove frequent and prolonged use across the centuries, throughout the Middle Ages and the *Ancien Régime*.

## 6.1 Contextual Information

### Rarity

With the exception of two tablets, one Mesopotamian (around -2600) and the other Babylonian (around -600), **Albi's *Mappa mundi* is one of the two oldest surviving documents presenting the inhabited world.** Other world maps do exist; copies of documents or more ancient representations of the world (such as Peutinger's *Table*, kept at the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna), but they survive in copies subsequent to that of Albi.

The map kept at the Vatican comes from approximately the same era, but, as seen previously, they are two different attempts that have nothing in common.

Albi's *Mappa mundi* has no known equivalent; no later copy was made of it, and in any case none survive today.

See, in annex 4, a list of the most ancient known representations of the world and some of the surviving *Mappae mundi* made after the 8th century.

Age, singularity of style (the form of the frond) and original use of sources in relation to other maps of approximately the same period, make Albi's *Mappa mundi* an absolute rarity.

### Integrity

Albi's *Mappa mundi* shows all signs of integrity. No modifications and no desecration have been detected. It has always formed part of the manuscript now listed as 29 (115), from its creation to the present day.

To conclude, Albi's *Mappa mundi* is a crucial element in the history of humanity; its disappearance would constitute a major impoverishment of our cultural heritage.

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'Nomination form translated by Ms. Molly Ashbie under the UNV Programme'