

Spatio-temporal regimes have undergone a series of significant changes in the past 150 years or so, from the classically modern implication of a standard world time with its grid of 24 time zones in 1884 to the time-space compression ushered in by global capitalism and the more recent inauguration of a logic of global imperial interventionism. Historically, theoretical and performative resistances and counter-aesthetics to the modernist regime of empty homogeneous time (and space) are well documented. While this kind of critique is in many pockets still very much on the agenda, the hegemonic doctrines and realities of neoliberalism engender the necessity of new oppositional forms of practice and agency while simultaneously rendering such new forms impossible. The contributions in this volume engage critically and from current theoretical perspectives with questions of spatio-temporal regimes and subjectivities, both recent and historical.

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# Re/defining the Matrix



Reflections on Time – Space – Agency

transpekte // transpects

Dagmar Reichardt

## Mapping Sicily

### From Postcoloniality to Neo-Metaphorization

Where and how do you map Sicily? For those who think that they readily have a clear picture of the island, most of the time knowing Sicily primarily means looking up Sicily in an atlas. Demarcating or imagining a (foreign) territory in picture form, i.e. on a map, is a process with a long tradition dating back to 1585, when Gerhard Mercator published his extensive *Atlas, sive cosmographiae meditationes de fabrica mundi*.<sup>1</sup> That procedure constantly pursues the (distant) goal – even when only mentally – of taking hold of a certain area, of occupying it, conquering it, capturing it for oneself, exploiting it and/or to dominate it as well.

Yet Sicily can also look like a woman who becomes an allegory for the *Regnum Siciliae*.<sup>2</sup> This is the case in a depiction that dates back to 1640. It was drawn up by the renowned Dutch cartographer Johannes Jansson, who publicized the figure that same year in a French compilation of maps bearing the title *Le nouveau théâtre du monde ou Nouvel Atlas*.<sup>3</sup> Here the land receives a likeness, it's being personified. It not only has outlines, it has an incarnate shape with a three-dimensional effect. I'll return to this body of a woman later on.

So there are two ways of imagining a place on this globe: mathematically-spatially, or three-dimensionally-humanly. I call these principles of human fantasy occupying/power-oriented versus symbolic/metaphoric. I would like to use the example of Sicilian cartography in the following to illustrate how the op-

<sup>1</sup> The notion of *atlas* derives from this title published on the frontispiece of his work (cf. Dufour/La Guminia 1998: 38/39) and defines in the 17<sup>th</sup> century a domain over which the Dutchman held the unchallenged supremacy. Schneider (2004: 54) indicates 1595 as year of publication of Mercator's *Atlas*. Dufour/La Guminia (1998: 38) distinguish between maps of Sicily that originate from an atlas and such that were published as loose leaves.

<sup>2</sup> The representation of a land, state or continent as a woman has a long tradition in the history of maps (cf. Ueckmann 2004).

<sup>3</sup> The frontispiece of the French edition from 1640 shows, among other things, allegorical representations of the continents.





fig. 1: Johannes Jansson: *Sicilia Regnum*, 1640 [detail]

pressive status of postcoloniality on the one hand and the opposing tendency towards metaphorization on the other have characterized the image that we associate with Sicily today. Before delving into that, I am going to deal briefly with Sicily's postcolonial status, a point closely linked to the island's history, so that I can follow up with a more in-depth examination of the historic backgrounds of cartographic development. A concluding step is to assess the value of the cultural representation emerging from the maps. This is intended towards answering the question – To what extent can Sicily together with Leonardo Sciascia be regarded as a metaphor for Italy, Europe or even the whole world from a postcolonialist point of view?

### Postcoloniality

“Eppure da duemila cinquecento anni siamo colonia” (Tomasi di Lampedusa 1996: 170) – “And yet we have been a colony for two thousand, five hundred years”: In Tomasi di Lampedusa's world-famous novel *Il Gattopardo* (1958; Engl. *The Leopard*), this is how Sicilian nobleman Don Fabrizio Salina sums up the problems Sicily had to face in the course of Italy's unification process

around 1860. As a matter of fact, when relying on Tomasi's account one can say that Sicily has been forced to lead an existence as a “colony” for what has meanwhile become 2,600 years, since the post-Hellenistic era began cultivating a postcolonialism *avant la lettre*. The so-called *Continente Sicilia* had been colonized by the Greeks since the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC,<sup>4</sup> and experienced its last foreign invasion under the rule of the Spanish Bourbon dynasty during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Nonetheless, postcolonialist discourses on the island's society, politics and culture continue to have an effect to the present day. Viewed from this standpoint one can say that the island is in a permanent state of decolonization, involved in other words with the renunciation of both foreign invaders and external influences on power.

As I have already explained elsewhere (cf. Reichardt 2006a; Reichardt 2006b: 92), and even though I cannot go into more detail here, due to Sicily's special nature it seems to me to be appropriate in this case to principally refer less to *postcolonialism* as a topic, and instead to speak rather more of real *postcoloniality* on the part of Sicily.

### History of Cartography

Let's move on to the history of cartography, particularly Sicilian cartography: To all intents and purposes, the historic development of the art of map-making is marked by the functional change away from the historically divine *Mappae mundi* – maps drawn up in monasteries offering orientation in a realm historically mandated by God's saving grace – to the topographic maps of modern times (cf. Schneider 2004). Among other aspects, these have formed the basis for references to science and for using geography as a spatial science. Since then, such things as satellite photos or orientational guides via GPS (*Global Positioning System*) are being measured in terms of their purported realistic correctness and the degree of their geographic precision.

A clay tablet from Mesopotamia is regarded as one of the oldest maps of the world handed down over the centuries. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, Babylonians etched the world into it as a circle with Babylon as its center. Analogously, the drafter of the Ebstorf World Map dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century AD shifts Jerusalem into the center of his manuscript: Only two cities are emphasized through the symbol of a flag – Jerusalem and Lüneburg in today's Germany. In accord with the message of this map, the royal house of the Lüneburger Welfen ought to promptly set off on a crusade to liberate Jerusalem (to the east). In the drafter's view, the Holy City is midpoint for the world, a

<sup>4</sup> The first wave of Sicily's colonialization by the Greeks lasted until 688 BC when a mixed group of Rhodesians and Cretans founded the Sicilian colonial town of Gela (cf. Finley 1994: 38/39).



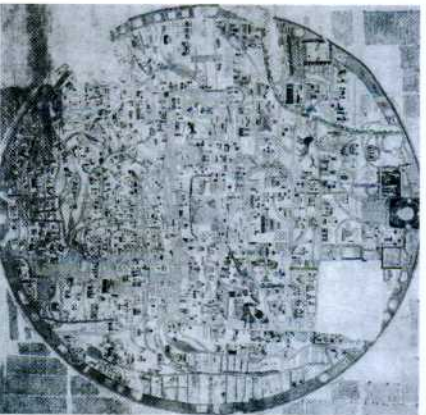


fig. 2: *Ebstorfer Weltkarte*, 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century AD [total view]

place where order reigns. Chaos lies in wait at its margins, symbolized by the man-eating Gog and Magog to the north, and by birdmen or humans without ears to the south. Sicily too is clearly recorded to the southeast in the shape of a heart, the precise contours of the island still being unknown.

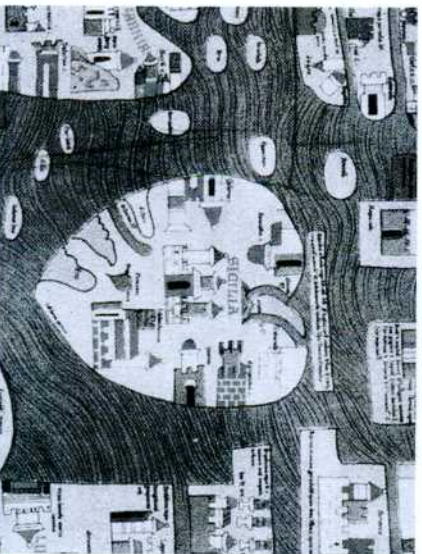


fig. 3: *Ebstorfer Weltkarte*, 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century AD [detail: Sicily]

In other words, medieval maps had a dogmatic-religious background (representation of the power of the church) or pursued a theological-philosophical finality. Seen in a formal sense, they primarily possessed a mythical, symbolic value. Although Sicily does figure as a bridge between Africa and Italy in such medieval documents, i.e. as a strategic base for Byzantium, the spatial mapping

and drawn profile accorded to the isle belong without a doubt in the realm of fantasy (cf. Dufour/La Gurnina 1998: 15).

### Maps of Sicily

As regards the historic development of maps of Sicily, that development is to be considered within this general framework: The first printed map of Sicily reiterates a draft of Sicily and Sardinia drawn up by Ptolemy (i.e. the Alexandrian-Greek geographer Claudius Ptolemaios, approx. 100–180 AD),<sup>5</sup> and dates back to 1478.

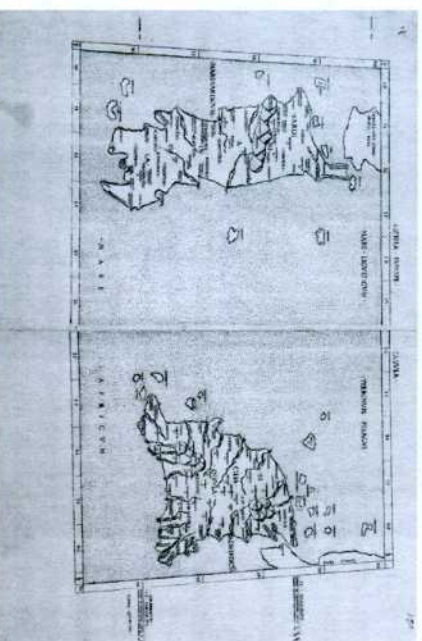


fig. 4: Claudius Ptolemaios: *Septima Europe Tabula*, 1478 [on the right: *Sicilia Insula*]

On Sicily that map was considered to be just as much a "bestseller" as the map of Sicily by Sebastian Münster that followed. Münster's map was published in his *Cosmographiae Universalis* in 1550 (cf. Dufour/La Gurnina 1998: 36).

During the Renaissance of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the rebirth of geography from ancient times builds upon the fundamental Ptolemaic period (as is the case with Münster). The focal point for this work shifted slowly but surely from the center of Flemish cartography (Abraham Ortelius and Gerhard Mercator) in Antwerp to Leiden and Amsterdam, where Dutch production assumed leadership. After the invention of letter-press printing in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, maps circulated at first in the form of xylographies (woodcuts), then as copperplate engravings (cf. Dufour/La Gurnina 1998: 36). These production techniques were

<sup>5</sup> Ptolemy's world system considered the earth to be the center of the motions of the sun, moon and all other planets. Until the Copernican shift at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century which fixed the sun as such a centre, Ptolemy's major work entitled *Almagest* formed the basis of the astronomical knowledge.



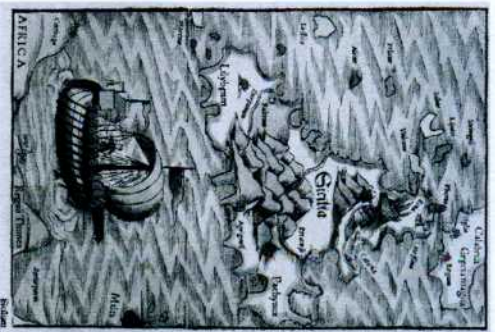


fig. 5: Sebastian Münster: *De Italiae Siciliae Insulae [...]*, in: id.: *Cosmographiae Universalis*, 1550

replaced by lithography during the *Seicento* (17<sup>th</sup> century). Cartography now experiences its Golden Age, a time in which it is increasingly regarded as a science in the spirit of 18<sup>th</sup>-century enlightenment, especially in England and France: What became particularly well-known were the maps of Sicily by Frenchman Guillaume Delisle, the map by Austrian General Samuel von Schmettau (who submitted a geographically individualized map of Sicily in 1809/10 on the orders of Emperor Karl VI), and the 1823 *Map of Sicily* by British Royal Navy Captain William Henry Smyth.



fig. 6: William Henry Smyth: *Sicily, Schmettau's Map Corrected [...]*, in: id.: *The Hydrography of Sicily, Malta and the Adjacent Islands*, London, 1823

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, land maps eventually served more and more for purposes of warfare and military personnel. With the founding of the Topographic Institute in Palermo in 1808 (cf. Dufour/La Gumina 1998: 34), the new land map of Sicily from 1866 which had been produced in Italy, and as a result of the emerging improvement of surveying techniques, this situation rang in the end of historically drawn maps of Sicily (cf. Dufour/La Gumina 1998: 5).

### Cultural Representation

What can we deduce? – As Liliane Dufour (cf. Dufour/La Gumina 1998: 42) concludes in her article from 1998 on the “*Imago Siciliae*”, even today maps represent a never-achievable approximation of the island's reality, and thus an infinite work in progress phenomenon posing a basic postmodern principle *par excellence*. Even a satellite photo freezes only one of infinitely many potential moments. What is symbolized thereby is the postmodern view oriented on plurality, i.e. that there is not an absolute reality unto itself, but many realities in their plural instead. So, in the end maps themselves are mostly not any form of text, yet they are a weighty means towards causing the readers to write a text of their own or towards leading them to art. The maps thus take on an ambivalent, hybrid position as hinge or interface between reception and creation. The favorizing of the visual corresponds completely with the thesis of the *iconic turn*.<sup>6</sup> According to that thesis and pursuant to Horst Bredekamp, that turn marks our Western societies of today as a cultural shift from text to image, and in turn tills a fertile, receptive soil for the map genre (cf. Burda/Maar 2004: 15).

However, no map can make do without text, and maps are frequently the basis for texts: whether literary or academic texts, speeches or political agreements, journalistic or didactic commentaries etc. (cf. Buzan 1993). Our rapid study of the history of Sicilian cartography demonstrates clearly that two moments have made their mark on it: an empirical recording on the one hand, i.e. mapping bound to reality, and the cultural representation of the respectively prevailing view of the world (*Weltbild*) on the other. As Nicholas Visser's world map from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century shows, a complete picture is given only through the interplay of geographical calculation and fantasy-filled

<sup>6</sup> I am taking over the notion of *iconic turn* from the programmatic title of a transdisciplinary lectures series held at the University of Munich in the period ranging from summer 2002 to summer 2003. The series dealt with the increasing importance of visual expressions within social communication in the fields of medicine and culture, i.e. science and humanities. The lectures were published under the same title (Burda/Maar 2004). In the introduction to this book the German art historian Horst Bredekamp explains how the formulas of a *pictorial* or *iconic turn* derive from the notion of the *linguistic turn* (cf. Burda/Maar 2004: 15). For further details on Visual Culture Studies cf. the basic texts by Mitchell (1994), Boehm (1994) and Mitroff (1999).



allegorization (in the four corners we see allegories for the four elements: fire, air, water, earth). At this point I am going to return to the woman's figure on Jansson's map of Sicily from 1640 which I had mentioned at the beginning. The woman embodies the *Regnum Sicilia*. Her position as the frame for a cartographic description of Sicily is necessary to ensure completeness with respect to what holds the world and/or Sicily together: She stands for what the cartographer is withholding, does not understand how to say in a different way or simply doesn't know.



fig. 7: Johannes Jansson: *Sicilia Regnum*, 1640 [total view]

Accordingly, the value of Sicily's cartography has decisively been culturally marked. In the concepts used by *Italian Cultural Studies* (Forgacs/Lumley 1996), both the "Imagined Italies"<sup>7</sup> and the "Images of the South"<sup>8</sup> belong to the topic of examination for academic analyses. Even as late as the 1990s, a cartoon drawn by Giorgio Forattini for the September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1990 issue of *La Repubblica* displays an example of pejorative symbolization in relation to Italy's southernmost island<sup>9</sup> (cf. Forgacs/Lumley 1996: 103). On the front page of the Italian newspaper appears an intentionally amputated map of Italy which is not only reduced to the *Mezzogiorno* (Southern Italy) but also upside down when compared to present-day cartographic conventions. Forattini shaded three regions (Campania, Calabria, and Sicily) where the problem of organized crime

(Mafia and Camorra) is at its most serious. A warning sign in the middle of the drawing reads "Attenzione!!! State entrando nella zona dove si ammazzano i bambini" – "Beware!!! You are entering the area where they kill children". This "fantasy map" or "imaginary map" (Forgacs/Lumley 1996: 102) shows that the symbolic depiction of the world definitely did not become lost during the Middle Ages:<sup>10</sup> Sicily, Italy's south and the copy "blurb" stand for the semantic sectors of the Mafia, crime, illness, exclusion etc. "Mappa means depiction, thus Mappa Mundi means about the same as depiction of the world" (Schneider 2004: 25).



fig. 8: *Carta simbolico-geografica dell'Italia irredenta*, approx. 1913

In light of this "Symbolic-geographical map of Italy" (fig. 8) for example, that meaning could be extended to a depiction of a world view (*Weltanschauung*), whereby its symbols, framing and coloring recall the "unredeemed" regions of Trento and Trieste. The map expresses a political discourse by noting Italy's situation prior to the First World War: The oversized *Italia* in the middle of the picture leads a group of soldiers (including mountain troops with Tyrolian hat and feather, the so-called *Alpini*) marching toward two women chained and bound to the stake symbolizing Trento and Trieste. The map is framed by

<sup>7</sup> Forgacs/Lumley 1996: 13-17 (chapter by John Dickie).

<sup>8</sup> Forgacs/Lumley 1996: 72-87 (chapter by Gabriella Gribaudi).

<sup>9</sup> The south of Sicily located islands *Isola di Pantelleria*, *Pelagian Islands* and *Isola di Lampedusa* are Italian State territory as well.

<sup>10</sup> As references for this thesis Ute Schneider produces e.g. the *Clark's Chart* from 1822 and the *Weltatlas für Kinder* from 2004 (cf. Schneider 2004: 106/107 and 55).



portraits of heroes from the *Risorgimento* i.e. the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Garibaldi, Mazzini, Vittorio Emanuele II, Cavour), so that the map's political and theoretical aspects in terms of power, which Ute Schneider (cf. Schneider 141) points out in her publication on the "Power of Maps" – *Die Macht der Karten* (2004) – cannot be overlooked.

### Neo-Metaphorization

In an age of the accomplished territorial mapping of Sicily, the value of the space's cultural representation is meanwhile on the rise: All of the major stages of occidental history are reflected in Sicily's eventful historic past. Often enough, the dynamics of Sicily's own self-determination were representative of leading intellectual events going on in the world. Sciascia's thesis of a *Sicily As Metaphor* (Sciascia 1994) is to be understood in this sense:<sup>11</sup> Sicily actually is a metaphor for Italy, Europe, yes, even for the whole world. And making that thought comprehensible can hardly be done more impressively and illustratively in any other field than in cartography. In Sicily's history, the figurative power of man's imagination plays a role that marks its culture and forms the basis of science and literature right from the start.

In more recent times, after Sciascia, an increasing interest in a neo-metaphorization has been established, particularly in academic terminology since the 1980s.<sup>12</sup> For instance, iconic articulations can be found in Deleuze and

<sup>11</sup> The original Italian title *La Sicilia come metafora* was published in 1979. A few months before appearing on the Italian book market the volume was originally printed and entitled in French language: *La Sicile comme métaphore. Conversations en italien avec Marcelle Padovani* (Paris: Editions Stock), Sciascia's interviewer Padovani being a correspondent of the French newspaper *Le Nouvel Observateur*. James Marcus translated the book into American English in 1994 (Sciascia 1994).

<sup>12</sup> Of course the phenomenon is verifiable also before the 1980s. Concerning the cultural terminology in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, metaphorical adoptions can be quoted also outside Literary Studies, in the scientific fields of botany (see the concept of a *rhizome* by Deleuze/Guattari), biology (*Culturas híbridas* by Néstor García Cancellini), linguistics (*Creolizzare l'Europa* by Armando Gnisci), ethnology (*Traité de nomadologie [...] in: Deleuze/Guattari 1980: 434-527*), medicine (the *heterotopies* by Michel Foucault), physics (Stephen Greenblatt's idea of the circulation of social energy), history (the *Habsburg* theory in Feichtinger/Prutsch/Csáky 2003) or on the industrial sector of electronics i.e. in the IT branch (see the metaphor of a net or the cultural *Netzwerk-Design* in Welsch 2002). The theoretical models of an *Empire* (Hardt/Negri) or *mapping the world* (cf. the metaphor of a "carte" which is inspired by cartography in Deleuze/Guattari 1980: 20) also join the tradition of an increasing displacement towards visual terms in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The latter is ascertainable since the appearance of Vasconcelos' book entitled *Raza cósmica* in 1927, but especially after the end of World War II, when a political forming of concepts followed which referred to metaphors such as the *Iron Curtain*, the *Cold War* or the *Third World*.

Guattari, who drafted first *mental maps* using their metaphor of a "carte" (Deleuze/Guattari 1980: 20), or through the cartography in their *Mille plateaux* (1980). On a theoretical level of reception, Deleuze's and Guattari's metaphors of the "carte" were developed further into a postcolonialist concept of *mapping the world*. Among other works, this led to Homi K. Bhabha's *Third Space* metaphor (Bhabha 1998), as well as to the metaphoric recoding of the motto *When margins become the center* (Adobati et al. 2001).

Alongside satellite photos, X-rays or a glance into the nano-world through a scanning tunnel microscope (cf. e.g. Burda/Maar 2004: 129 pp.; Harmon 2004: 14 pp.), "personal geographies" (Harmon 2004) and the previously mentioned *mental maps* – i.e. the representation of space in our imaginary world (the term goes back to Tony Buzan; cf. Buzan 1993) – are increasingly becoming the focus. Among other areas, the link to literature and language is to be mapped in the conceptual pre-drafting of a narrative *Histoire* before the author's inner eye, or in the reader's imagination that accompanies the reading of a text. As I explained elsewhere, the *mental map of siciliana* ("Sicilianness") poses the true main subject matter, especially on the collective level, around which all narrative texts by Sicilian authors and writers revolve (cf. Reichardt 2004).

Without a graphic vividness, language – even literary language – cannot be written or brought to life, let alone grasped in a comprehensible way that is understood or put to gainful use. The development of Sicilian cartography shows in an exemplary manner that, when viewed iconographically, it is just as multilayered as the cultural history of this South European island. It is the *mappa*, in other words the cartography of cultural influences that Sicily has experienced and put into practice, which makes up this region's authenticity. And in the process it emerged that the power of maps is not least of all an aesthetic power.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Knipp 2004. Knipp emphasizes not only the aesthetic significance of geographical maps but also stresses the political function of cartography: Stalin parceled out Poland on 28-09-1939 bending over a map, holding a pencil in his hand, European colonizers drew up the inland frontiers of Africa with a ruler, and in the pact of Tordesillas, in 1494 Spaniards and Portuguese agreed upon the southwestern distribution of the landmasses laying in the just "discovered" America, without even knowing their realistic dimensions of the landmasses. In this sense, possessing a map made of paper often implies the possession of the corresponding land in reality. So, with the help of maps, men not only depict their world but recreate it at the same time and arrange it according to their own image.



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## Illustrations

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- Fig. 6: Doufour, Liliane / Antonio La Guma (ed.) (1998). *Imago Siciliae: Cartografia storica della Sicilia 1420-1860*. Catania: Sanfilippo, 261.
- Fig. 7: Doufour, Liliane / Antonio La Guma (ed.) (1998). *Imago Siciliae: Cartografia storica della Sicilia 1420-1860*. Catania: Sanfilippo, 120.
- Fig. 8: Schneider, Ute (2004). *Die Macht der Karten. Eine Geschichte der Kartographie vom Mittelalter bis heute*. Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 141.