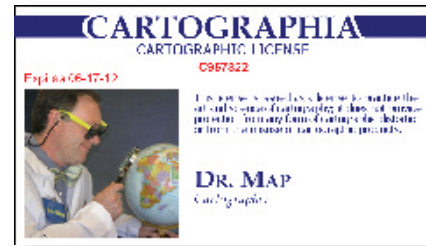


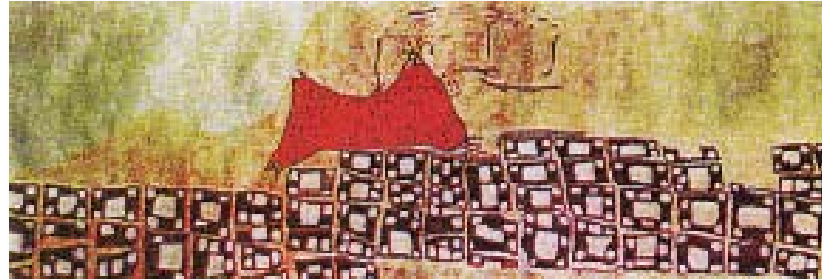
# Ask Dr. Map!

Dear Dr. Map



**Q:** I read your recent answer about the wall paintings at the Çatalhöyük archaeological site in Turkey being the oldest example of a map showing a volcano, and possibly the world's oldest map. I also read a blog about this being a case of cartocacoethes. Would you care to comment?

**A:** Cartocacoethes is the compulsion to see maps everywhere. The Çatalhöyük map, as discussed in a recent column, dates from around 6200 BC and has been called "the oldest map in the world." The aspersion here is that the map may not be a map at all, but wishful thinking! James Mellaart in *Anatolian Studies* 14 (1964, pp. 39-119), seems to be the origin of the map idea, reinforced by Mellaart's *Çatal Hüyük: A Neolithic Town in Anatolia* (1967). In a 2006 article, also in *Anatolian Studies*, Stephanie Meese states "This article re-evaluates the claim that one of these paintings is a map of the village, with Hasan Dağ erupting above it. It is argued that the excavator's first interpretation of the objects depicted in the painting, i.e., that they are a leopard skin above a panel of geometric design, is in fact a far more reasonable one, when this painting is contextualized within the entire corpus of painting and other art objects found at the site." (*Anatolian Studies* 56, 2006, pp. 1-16). Meese points out that the next known maps appear 4000 years later, in the urban societies of Mesopotamia. Her case against the item being a map can be summarized as follows: (1) The map pattern is consistent with depictions of leopards and geometric designs elsewhere at the site. (2) The view of the volcano Hasan Dağ, would not be that from the village, but

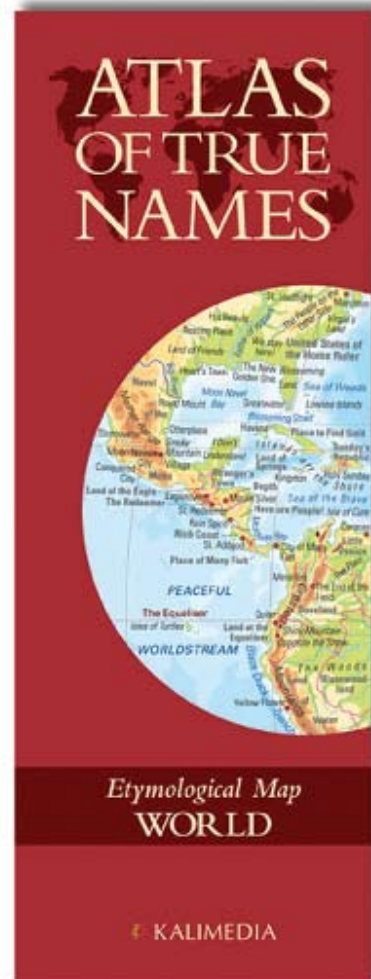


from elsewhere. In fact, another author believed that the map showed instead Melendiz Dağ, near Nigde, based on the proportions of the heights. (3) No obsidian from Hasan Dağ has been found at Catalhoyuk, or elsewhere, so associating the two was not necessary. (4) Mellaart raised doubts about his interpretation at first, and only later called the mural a map. (5) Neolithic man did not think of the world from an abstract viewpoint, so would not have conceptualized a town plan. (6) Since we are used to modern cartographic depictions, we cannot imagine how the residents of Catalhoyuk viewed their geography. Dr. Map is intrigued. For sure, humans have been able to draw "birds-eye" views of the world long before they learned to fly; indeed the view of a settlement from above could be that from a high point or even a volcano. Cave art dates back to 35,000 years ago, and clearly depicts many landscape features, though admittedly not abstracted the way they would be on a map. The possibilities are there that this map is indeed a map. Lets call its uncertainty factor, however, high. Any ideas on the topic? E-mail askdrmap@cox.net.

**Q:** Many geographical place names contain descriptions of features. For example "Ridgedale" is both a place name and two types of geographical fea-

ture: a ridge and a dale. Where can I find more example of these?

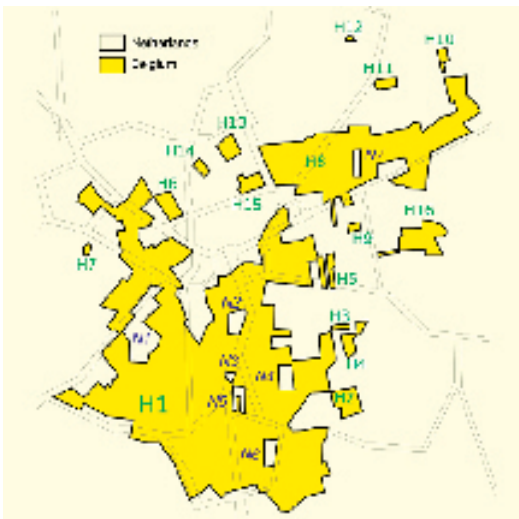
**A:** Dr. Map receives many geographically themed gifts from family and friends. A recent edition to his eclectic map collection was the "Atlas of True Names," an Etymological Map of the World published by Kalimedia (See: Kali-



media.com). This map contains an index of all the translated names, and a Robinson projection world map with “true” labels. Thus Australia becomes “Land of the South Wind,” the Atlantic Ocean becomes “World Stream by the Mountain of Mountains,” and Canada is “Land of Villages.” Here is a couple to seek out: “St. Herldwolf’s Stone,” and “Land of the Chaste One.”

**Q:** Where is the world’s most complex political border?

**A:** Without doubt, the winner of the most complicated political border is that between Belgium and the Netherlands in the municipality of Baarle-Hertog (2006 population of 2,306, area 7.48 km<sup>2</sup>). The international boundary between Baarle-Hertog in Belgium and Baarle-Nassau in the Netherlands surrounds 21 land parcels that are exclaves of Belgium, and has three more parcels along the border. There are seven other Dutch exclaves in the Netherlands and three others on the border. The largest, Zondereigen in the Belgian town of Merksplas, even has Dutch exclaves within it! The Treaty of Maastricht in 1843 established the border by individually listing the nationality for 5732



parcels of land. Those interested in the entire history of the division since 992 AD can reference [ontology.buffalo.edu/smith/baarle.htm](http://ontology.buffalo.edu/smith/baarle.htm). Some houses are divided between the two countries. In the past, Dutch laws required restaurants to close earlier than Belgian. Diners could simply change their tables to the Belgian side at closing time. A

map (Source: Wikipedia) and photo of one of the border points are included. Thanks to David Cowen of the University of South Carolina for the picture. Fortunately, at least both sides now use the Euro. Dr. Map wonders which passport would be issued to someone born in a house that straddles the border!

**Dr. Map has a PhD and a cartographic licence. Send questions to Dr. Map at [askdrmap@cox.net](mailto:askdrmap@cox.net) or visit him on the web at <http://www.drmpa.info>.**