PART I

SEMANTIC FRAME OF RESONANCE
CHAPTER ONE

MAPPINGS

There was once an empire in which cartography was so perfected that a map of a province was the size of a city and that of the entire empire the size of a province. When this no longer appeared satisfactory, the guild of cartographers manufactured a map of the empire which had the empire’s measurements exactly.

Later generations had less veneration for cartography. They found the map useless and left it lying. In the Western deserts of the empire one may still find ruins of that map inhabited by beasts and beggars. Of the disciplines of geography, however, there is no trace.¹

I. Mapping: Prolegomena

This chapter is about textual representation of topography. Not, however, any and all topography. We shall make overtures to the way in which Bernard represents biblical topography. Focus lies with bifurcations of meaning. S. Tomasz says about Borges’s tale that “It warns against the intellectual hubris of reifying the image with such precision that no space remains between the signifier and the signified, between the simulacrum and the thing itself—that is, the text and the territory.”² In a different light, it may be considered as a retention of the parabolic character of mapping.

1. The hermeneutics of cartography

The methodological point of departure of this study is the communicative dynamics of cartography. Cartography is here perceived as the representation of a certain area in a graphic form and a handy format. It is further viewed as a communication of place to a recipient, and the following considerations have a hermeneutical orientation. The cartographic discourse could thus have been substituted by other variations

² Tomasz 1998, 5.