Ice Age Mapmakers?
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Abstract
Ancient mapmakers often depicted animals and supernatural beings to designate regions where they were believed to exist. This tradition is carried forth in the present where we use animals and caricatures of them to mascot political and geographic regions as well as athletic teams and educational institutions. The tradition may have originated in prehistory where Ice Age artists depicted animals they presumably had seen.

This poster explores such animals that were unique within and outside of the Iberian Peninsula, along with supernatural characters, sequentially depicted more than 34,000 years ago on a wall in an Iberian cave. These images may help us to better understand the early evolution of mapmaking, why animals and supernatural beings came to be depicted in maps, and how we learned to find ourselves in time and space.

Geographic Journey
The Gallery of Discs panel in the El Castillo Cave, Cantabria, Spain depicts terrestrial animals that are indigenous to the Iberian Peninsula (north on panel) and the Atlas Mountains of western North Africa (south on panel), and marine animals (central on panel). The approximate walk and swim from Cantabria, Spain to Toubkal, Morocco is 349 hour/30 days, over 1,713 km.

Further Resources
https://beforeorion.com
https://independent.academia.edu/TaylorBernie

Gallery of Discs, El Castillo Cave, Cantabria, Spain ~ 33,000 BCE