

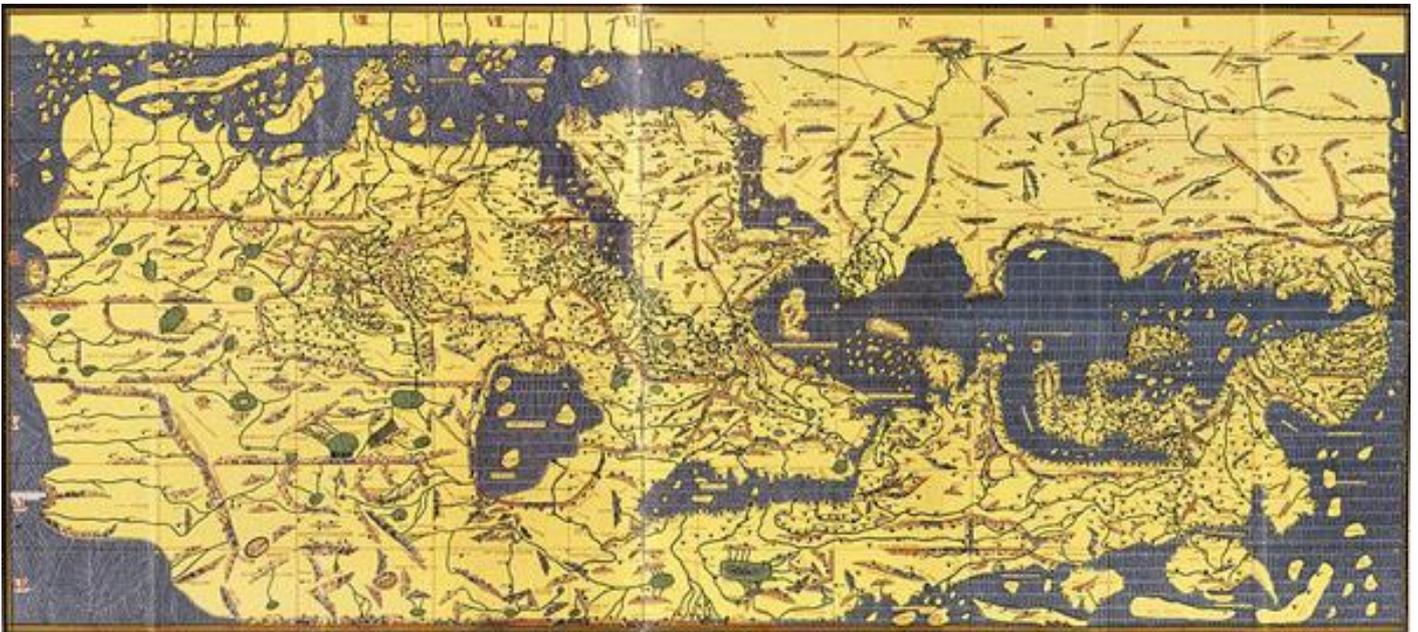
Brief (2000 year) history of cartography

Below are a few notable historic maps. Carefully observe how they becoming increasingly accurate. <https://www.gislounge.com/mapping-through-the-ages/>

I want you also to realise that since the burning down of the library of Alexandrina and since Ptolemy's incredibly detailed and accurate map, there was a few hundred years where minimal advancements were made cartographically.

To have a glimpse of China's cartographic history click on the following link: <https://www.viewofchina.com/ancient-chinese-maps/>

Tabula Rogeriana, 1154



Tabula Rogeriana by Al Idrisi, isn't just a map of the world- it's an extensively researched geographical text that covers natural features, ethnic and cultural groups, socioeconomic features, and other characteristics of every area he mapped. This work was created for King Roger II of Sicily. Al Idrisi drew upon his own extensive travels, interviews with explorers, and draftsmen paid to travel and map their routes in order to create the maps in the Tabula Rogeriana. These maps describe the world as a sphere, and break it up into seventy different rectangular sections, each of which is discussed in exacting detail in the remainder of the Tabula.

Hereford - Mappa Mundi, ca. 1300.



“Mappa mundi” is a generic term for medieval European world maps. The Hereford Mappa Mundi is notable for being the largest medieval map still in existence, as well as one of the most elaborately drawn and coloured. The illustration of the map itself is circular, with Jerusalem placed at the center of the map, the garden of Eden in a ring of fire near the top of the map, and the whole thing oriented with east at the top. One odd feature of the Hereford map is that Europe is mislabelled as Africa, and vice versa. Though the map is circular, experts don't think it's evidence that the cartographer believed in a flat earth. Instead, the Hereford Mappa Mundi is widely regarded as being a type of projection, with the uninhabitable regions to the north and south omitted from the map.

Fra Mauro's World Map 1450



The Fra Mauro Map was created by the monk Fra Mauro around 1450 AD. It's considered one of the finest pieces of medieval cartography in existence. It's a large round map, around two meters in diameter, painted on vellum and stretched in a wooden frame. The map itself depicts the known world at the time—Europe, Asia, and Africa. One interesting feature of Fra Mauro's map is that it is oriented with south at the top of the map, as opposed to the Ptolemy map, another well-known historical map. Fra Mauro chose this orientation instead of Ptolemy's northern orientation because he felt that Ptolemy's map was no longer accurate, having been created based on information gleaned from works of Ptolemy dating from long before much of the world had been thoroughly explored.

Cartography during the Early Modern Period

Printing, plus the big impulse in the developing of different methods of surveying and new instruments of measurement that took place specially during the 16th century, were responsible for the rise of cartographers as influent people in the most powerful countries of the world. The commercial expansion, the colonization of new parts of the world, and the search for military superiority over other countries, brought the realization of the need to accurate maps to control as much as the world as possible, putting great emphasis on the cartography of the coastal areas and the new inland regions discovered during these times. The Spanish sailor and cartographer Juan de la Cosa, for instance, created the first cartographic representations of the Americas, and other maps of Africa and Eurasia as well, and many others followed and even improved his cartographic work.

Now to the following resource that nicely shows the unveiling of the shape of countries and their connectedness.

SHAPE OF THE WORLD

*Have you ever been surprised that accurate maps precede planes and satellites?
Accurate world maps came about earlier than many think, yet they were a long, long way coming.*

150 AD

Claudius Ptolemy, Alexandria, Egypt

The first to use positions of latitude and longitude based on astronomical observations. Ptolemy's book 'Geographica' listed the positions of 6,345 sites and probably also included maps.

Lost for centuries, but rediscovered and reconstructed from the list of coordinates in the 14th Century, we don't know the exact extent of the original maps.

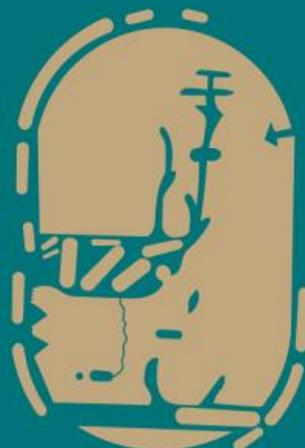


1050

Unknown monk, Saint-Sever Monastery, France

A classic Medieval 'T-O map', this depicts Asia (right half), Europe (upper left) and Africa (lower left). Its main objective, however, was not to explain the world but the Bible: More prominently than continents, it features Jerusalem and Calvary (center), the Biblical lands, the Red Sea, Sinai, the Garden of Eden and Paradise.

Originally oriented with east up. Eden was at top center, closest to the Heavens.



1375

Abraham Cresques, Majorca, Spain

This early chart was based on ships' logs, and is very accurate where distances and directions were well known. For areas outside the Mediterranean, the Black Sea and parts of the North Atlantic, however, it relies on hearsay and guesswork like earlier maps.



1489

Henricus Martellus, Florence, Italy

A milestone in depicting the Old World, Martellus' map used sources like Marco Polo's travels in Asia and Bartolomeu Dias' first circumnavigation of Africa.

Sailors had long known to calculate latitude by the sun (this map accurately depicts the north-south extent of Africa), but not yet longitude, leading to distorted east-west distances.



1529

Diego Ribeiro, Seville, Spain

The Spanish Crown's official and secret 'master map' was updated by Spanish explorers under penalty of death. Based on an enormous number of ships' logs, it covered most of the world's coasts. Charts at the time, however, were based on port lists and dead reckoning from a few fixed positions, ignoring curvature and magnetic declination, and were not well suited for tiling into a larger map.

Areas explored by non-Spanish, e.g. Northern Europe and North America, are depicted fancifully.



1778

Jacques Nicholas Bellin, Paris

With the invention of the marine chronometer in the 1760s, ships were able to correctly determine longitude, perfecting the east-west rendition of coasts.

After the Cassini family successfully calculated France's shape and size by triangulation in the 1740s, several European states set up surveying bodies which in time provided accurate maps of whole countries.

Although some coasts were still unexplored or needed larger data sets for correction, this was truly a modern world map.



1832

Adolf Stieler, Gotha, Germany

The 'Stieler' was the leading European atlas since the early 1800s. In this second edition of the world map, only unexplored Polar regions are missing or depicted inaccurately, while the rest of the world's coasts are reliably positioned. By now, ships' instruments were so accurate that a single journey could provide good maps of new lands.

The continents' interiors, however, are a completely different story...



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