

History of Cartography

History of Cartography – Study Notes

1. Introduction

- **Cartography** = the art and science of map-making.
 - Its development mirrors advances in technology, exploration, and cultural worldview.
 - Key themes: *representation of space*, *accuracy vs. symbolism*, and *the map as a tool of power*.
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2. Pre-Historical & Ancient Mapping

Period / Culture	Notable Maps / Artifacts	Characteristics	Significance
Paleolithic (c. 30,000–10,000 BCE)	Engravings of rivers & coastlines on cave walls (e.g., Lascaux)	Symbolic, not scaled	Early spatial awareness
Mesopotamia (c. 2500 BCE)	Imago Mundi (Babylonian world map), clay tablets	Circular world, Babylon at center; simple symbols for mountains, rivers	First known world map; reflects cosmology
Ancient Egypt (c. 2000 BCE)	Tomb ceiling maps, cadastral maps for land tax	Grid-based, oriented to the Nile	Practical use for administration
Ancient Greece (c. 500–200 BCE)	Anaximander (first world map), Eratosthenes (latitude/longitude grid)	Move toward geometric projection, use of latitude/longitude	Foundations of scientific cartography
Roman Empire (c. 100 BCE–200 CE)	Tabula Peutingeriana (road map), Ptolemy's Geographia (later)	Emphasis on roads & imperial control; use of coordinates (later)	Maps as tools of governance and military logistics

3. Medieval Cartography (5th–15th c.)

3.1. Types of Maps

Type	Purpose	Example
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Mappa Mundi (world maps)	Religious & cosmological illustration	<i>Hereford Mappa Mundi</i> (c. 1300)
Portolan Charts	Navigation along coastlines	14th-century Italian charts (e.g., <i>Carta Pisana</i>)
T-O Maps	Symbolic Christian worldview (East at top)	<i>Ebstorf Map</i> (c. 1235)
Cadastral Maps	Land ownership, tax	English <i>Domesday Book</i> (1086)

3.2. Key Developments

- **Compass rose** appears on portolan charts (late 13th-c.).
- Use of **latitude** (via celestial observations) becomes common; longitude remains problematic.
- **Islamic cartography** (e.g., Al-Idrisi's *Tabula Rogeriana*, 1154) integrates Ptolemaic knowledge with new observations, producing highly accurate regional maps.

4. Age of Exploration (15th?–17th?c.)

Explorer / Cartographer	Map / Atlas	Innovations
Gerardus Mercator (1569)	<i>Mercator Projection</i>	Conformal cylindrical projection; preserves angles ? vital for navigation
Abraham Ortelius (1570)	<i>Theatrum Orbis Terrarum</i> (first modern atlas)	Standardized map size, systematic bibliography
John Speed (1611)	<i>Prospect of the Most Famous Cities</i>	Detailed city plans, decorative elements
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