



The World Through Maps: A History of Cartography

John Short

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The history of mapping from prehistoric times to the present.

This book explores how maps were developed and why they reveal as much about the people who created them as they reveal about the world. Throughout the ages, maps have reflected religious beliefs, disseminated propaganda, expressed cultural attitudes, and promoted new theories.

Through accessible text and color images, the book traces the fascinating history of cartography. The ancient Greeks were brilliant cartographers whose mapping skills were honed as a result of the global conquests of Alexander the Great. Their understanding of a spherical Earth and how to depict it on a flat sheet of paper was nearly lost during the Middle Ages.

The book explains why in the 15th century, the value of sea charts rivaled gold as a primary target for buccaneer captains. Later, maps became status symbols among wealthy merchants who built vast fortunes thanks to thriving trade routes made possible by reliable sea navigation.

The World Through Maps is abundantly illustrated with historically important maps to explain the development of cartography. Significant maps include:

- Aboriginal Dreamtime map
- Ancient Greek maps including Ptolemy's map
- Medieval maps of Europe
- Ortelius's Atlas, World Theatre
- Early maps of the New World
- Lewis and Clark's maps of exploration
- Modern maps in the age of satellites

Contemporary maps are so accurate and plentiful that they are often taken for granted. **The World Through Maps** is a lively book that tells why this was not always so.

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