Maps and Globes

The Renaissance coincided with the sea voyages and explorations of Columbus, Vasco da Gama, and others, necessitating the development of accurate globes and maps for use at sea. The problem of representing the spherical earth on a flat sheet of paper led to new types of map projection and to improved maps for navigators.

The first “modern” maps of the world were created by **Gerard Mercator** (1512–1594), obtained by projecting the sphere outward onto a vertical cylinder and then stretching

the map in the vertical direction in such a way that the lines of latitude and longitude appeared as straight lines and all the angles (compass directions) were correct.

In 1570 the Belgian cartographer **Abraham Ortelius** (1527–1598), geographer to the king of Spain, produced his *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, a collection of seventy maps considered to be the first atlas. Mercator coined the word “atlas” for his three-volume collection of maps in 1585–1595.

During the 16th century, terrestrial globes also became increasingly in demand; Nuremberg mapmaker **Martin Behaim** constructed the first known globe in 1492. **Johannes Praetorius** of Nuremberg constructed the terrestrial globe in 1568. The map inscribed on it depicts the continents of Europe, Africa, Asia, and America, with America shown joined to Asia.

Mercator

Mercator projection

Ortelius

Ortelius map

Behaim globe

Terrestrial globe

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