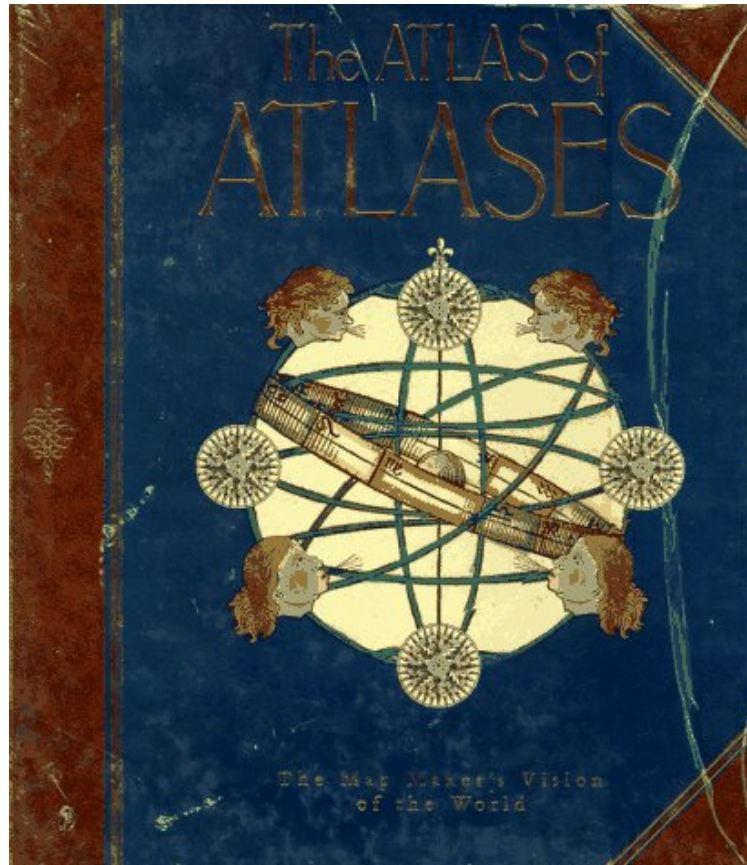


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The Atlas of Atlases: The Map Maker's Vision of the World

Phillip Allen

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Phillip Allen : The Atlas of Atlases: The Map Maker's Vision of the World before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Atlas of Atlases: The Map Maker's Vision of the World:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This book is truly an atlas of atlases By Gene Rhea Tucker This book is truly an atlas of atlases, tracing the history of atlases from the 1482 Ptolemy to the imperial "The Times Atlas" of 1897. These include greats like Mercator, Ortelius, and the like. Since these are the atlases from Birmingham Central Library (in Britain), some of the copies are substandard. The colors of Blaeu's "Atlas Maior," for instance, are pale and devoid of life. (Check out Taschen's Blaeu.) There is no copy of Vincenzo Coronelli's important atlases. Though the photographs are grand and generally beautiful, the text and captions by Phillip Allen are nothing less than horrible. Aside from being sluggishly written, there are incomplete sentences, awkward phrases, and even some outright errors. Still, the book accomplishes its goal, a pictorial reference to the greatest atlases since the printing press was created; and with a good magnifying glass can provide hours of intellectual entertainment. [The hardcover edition is under a different title.] 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Vision of the World by Medieval Europe By Cosmas Topographicos "Men in Seville, Amsterdam or London had access to knowledge of Mexico, India, Canada or Brazil, while the native peoples knew only their own immediate environment." Peter Whitfield Atlas Visionaries: If

you, like my namesake Cosmas Indicopleustes, who loved to write about his exploration and discoveries, have an interest in cartography, its history or at least, enjoy looking at maps, or review atlases, this is then your book. The Maps and illustrations are stunning, the text is reader friendly and informative. Not a dull moment, that you are to encounter throughout. This Atlas is truly the one atlas, mother of first printed atlases, tracing their history from the Ptolemy's 1482 *Cosmographia* to the *The Times Atlas* of 1897.

Brief History of Cartography: Strabo, writing in Alexandria in 20-10 BC, tells us that the first map of the world was compiled by Anaximander of Miletus in the early part of the sixth century BC, followed soon after by a treatise on geography, including a map showing the earth as a plane or disc by Recataeus. They believed in the Homeric theory of a disc-shaped world surrounded by the great river Okeanus with Delphi and the Aegean at the center of the inhabited world. Others, however, leaned to the Pythagorean theory of a spherical world, a theme taken up by Plato, Herodotus and Aristotle, which gradually came to be accepted throughout the Mediterranean world. Strabo's mis-interpretation of the rival calculations of the circumference of the world made by Eratosthenes and Posidonius was accepted a century later by Claudius Ptolemy who consequently presented a distorted view of the world which dominated geographical thought until the sixteenth century.

Ptolemy's Geographia: Ptolemy's, a mathematician, astronomer and geographer, living in Alexandria, assembled and systematized his forerunners' cartographic theories especially those of Marinus of Tyre (Ca AD 120) to whom he was indebted. About AD 150 he published his *Geographia*, a work in 8 volumes, illustrated with a world map, few regional maps and a great deal of smaller maps. Although the text of 'Geographia' survived, no original maps (older than the twelfth century) have come down to us and consequently, we have no means of knowing whether the 'Ptolemy' maps on which we set so much store were, in fact, drawn by him or were the interpretations of later map makers using his textual description. Later, Cosmas Indicopleustus, explorer and cartographer, in his *Christian Topography* (written 547-549) insisted on verifying, by reference to numerous scriptural passages, the flatness of the earth.

Medieval Cartography in East West: Richard Bernstein Declares, in a review, "One of the differences between the West and other parts of the world, and one of the reasons for the global spread of Western power, is that Europeans inscribed their knowledge on maps while others didn't." This was not always the case, earlier, in mediaeval Alexandria, to close with the work of Ptolemy whose map of about A.D. 150 portrayed not only the extent of the explored world but also projected conceptual outlines of parts of the Old World continents not yet explored. By contrast, despite the subsequent expansion of knowledge of new lands resulting from extensive travel, the Middle Ages witnessed little of record in the progress of regional geography. As a matter of fact, some prominent travelers and writers actually retarded progress by their archaic observations of the earth and its inhabitants. Thus to the Mid-Easterner rather than to the European, belongs the credit of expanding the frontiers of geographic knowledge during this dark period. After numerous trading expeditions to the Orient from about the ninth to the fourteenth century, travelers left detailed descriptive accounts of hitherto unvisited countries.

The mother of All Atlases: This accessible, clearly written, extensively and handsomely illustrated is also well arranged. After a forward on the atlases collection, mapping during the Medieval Ages makes a good introduction, Era of exploration, Trade simulation of map making, Age of European expansion, and ultimately Growth of knowledge in the nineteenth century. The choice of maps to accompany the text is good, and reflect Allen's wide and well-grounded knowledge of his subject. Mostly all are reproduced in color. Most of the analysis is alternative or apposite. These include great cartographers started with twelve versions of Ptolomy, Almagest, and Ortelius, Mercator, Speed, De Witt, all the way to Bartholomew. Some of the colors look pale and devoid of life. Though the photographs are grand and beautiful, the text and captions by Phillip Allen are nothing other than classic. Still, the Atlas accomplishes its goal, a pictorial reference to the greatest atlases since the printing press was created; and with a powerful magnifying glass can provide hours of intellectual entertainment.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Pleasant 'coffee table book' on cartography

By Ron Hekier This pleasant casual book on cartography is richly illustrated. Particulary appealing are the reproductions of the atlas maps in situ, with the atlas open to the map and the other pages and edges of the cover visible. Along similar lines, several closed atlases are pictured allowing one to view the cover and clasps. Also interspersed throughout this text are cartouches and title pages. I would not consider this an authoritative review of cartography. For example the maps illustrated from the monumental 1513 Waldseemeuller *Geography* include two maps of Africa, and a map of Crete, hardly considered among the most influential maps from that Atlas. Nonetheless, this is a pleasurable book, richly illustrated, with an emphasis on the visual not written experience. Note that this book was reprinted in the U.S. in 2000, with the title "Mapmaker's Art", a more appropriate title given the book's emphasis.

A distinguished collection of some of the most stunning and important maps from five centuries of atlases. From the anonymous early atlases of the 15th-century to works by all the great cartographers, this volume spans the finest altases in existence through 1900, showing global history in the making. 300 full-color illustrations.