

# Cartography Through the Years – Personal Views About a Young Science

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## **Abstract:**

Although cartographic products have been produced for thousands of years, cartography as a science has only been established in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Great works of cartography include, for instance, the conic map projections by Ptolemy, the Tabula Rogeriana by Idrisi, the Waldseemüller map, and the Mercator map. Numerous cartographers, predominantly mathematicians, have shaped the theory of map projections throughout the centuries.

With the advent of geographic information systems (GIS) in the 1960s and the rapid developments of digital technologies, cartography found itself in the middle of an identity crisis. For some time, it was not clear whether cartography would become obsolete and be replaced by GIS mapping technologies or whether GIS is a novel manifestation of cartography. During this period various misconceptions about the role of maps and mapping as well as uncertainty about the future developments of mapping in general added to this confusion.

This contribution elaborates the major characteristics of cartography versus other disciplines, in particular geography and GIS, and takes a look at possible future directions and developments with regard to the theory of cartography as well as novel and future display technologies. Personal observations of the author during his professional life since the early 1980s illustrate these developments.