Mappa Mundi

The Only Flat Earth



The planet is a sphere; only the map is flat. This sheet collects the Latin from the episode, adds the vocabulary a reader needs in front of an old map, and offers two short source texts and a handful of exercises. No translations are given for the texts: the notes are there to help you read them yourself. An answer key for the exercises is on the last page.

1 Words from the episode

Latin	Meaning	Note
mappa, -ae *f.*	cloth, napkin	the starting-cloth of the Roman races; *mappa mundi* 'cloth of the world', pl. *mappae mundi*
orbis, -is *m.*	circle, disc	*orbis terrarum* 'the circle of the lands' = the world; the O of the T-O map
oriens, -entis *m.*	east	participle of *oriri* 'to rise' (understand *sol*); hence *to orient*
occidens, -entis *m.*	west	participle of *occidere* 'to fall, go down'
meridies, -ei *m.*	midday; south	from *medius dies*; hence *meridian*, and *a.m./p.m.* (*ante/post meridiem*)
septentrio, -onis *m.*	north	from *septem triones*, the seven plough-oxen of the Great Bear; often plural, *septentriones*
terra incognita	unknown land	*incognitus, -a, -um* 'not known'
globus, -i *m.*	ball, sphere	
aequator, -oris *m.*	equator	'the equaliser', from *aequare*; later astronomers wrote *circulus aequator diei et noctis*
terra continens	mainland, continent	participle of *continere* 'to hold together'
mercator, -oris *m.*	merchant, trader	the Latinised surname of Gerard de Kremer
tabula, -ae *f.*	board, tablet; map	*tabulae modernae*, the 'modern maps' added to printed Ptolemies
cosmographia, -ae *f.*	description of the world	a Greek loan; compare *geographia*
ad fontes	to the sources	the humanist motto; *fons, fontis m.* 'spring'
hic sumus	here we are	*hic* 'here' with a long *i*; not the pronoun *hic, haec, hoc*

Say it aloud

Latin stress falls on the second-last syllable if that syllable is long, otherwise on the one before it. The acute accent marks the stressed syllable here; it is a reading aid and not part of the spelling.

óriens · óccidens · merídies · septéntrio · septentriónes · orbis terrárum · terra incógnita · aequátor · cóntinens · mercátor · tábula · cosmográphia · ad fontes · mappa mundi

2 More mapmakers' Latin

These words are not in the episode, but they are the ones you meet most often in the legends of medieval and early modern maps.

Land

insula, -ae *f.*	island
paeninsula, -ae *f.*	peninsula ('almost-island')
promontorium, -ii *n.*	cape, headland
litus, -oris *n.*	shore
ora, -ae *f.*	coast
mons, montis *m.*	mountain
silva, -ae *f.*	forest
palus, -udis *f.*	marsh
desertum, -i *n.*	desert, wilderness
regio, -onis *f.*	region
regnum, -i *n.*	kingdom
fines, -ium *m. pl.*	borders; territory
civitas, -atis *f.*	city (post-classical)
oppidum, -i *n.*	town

Water

mare, -is *n.*	sea
oceanus, -i *m.*	the outer ocean
fretum, -i *n.*	strait
sinus, -us *m.*	gulf, bay ('fold')
portus, -us *m.*	harbour
flumen, -inis *n.*	river
fluvius, -ii *m.*	river
ostium, -ii *n.*	river mouth
fons, fontis *m.*	spring, source
lacus, -us *m.*	lake

The sphere

sphaera, -ae *f.*	sphere
polus, -i *m.*	pole
axis, -is *m.*	axis
circulus, -i *m.*	circle
zona, -ae *f.*	zone ('belt')
clima, -atis *n.*	band of latitude
latitudo, -inis *f.*	breadth; latitude
longitudo, -inis *f.*	length; longitude
gradus, -us *m.*	step; degree
plaga, -ae *f.*	region, quarter
antipodes, -um *m. pl.*	dwellers on the opposite side

The four winds

On many maps the winds stand in for the directions. Isidore's four principal winds:

Septentrio (also *Aquilo*, *Boreas*)	north
Subsolanus (also *Eurus*)	east
Auster (also *Notus*)	south
Favonius (also *Zephyrus*)	west

The maker's signature

fecit	made (it)
delineavit	drew
sculpsit	engraved
excudit	printed, published
auctore + *abl.*	by (the author) …
apud + *acc.*	at the house of …
cum privilegio	with (royal) licence

3 What the maps say

Map legends

The episode's *hic sunt leones* is the form in which the phrase is usually quoted. Legends that can be read on surviving maps include these:

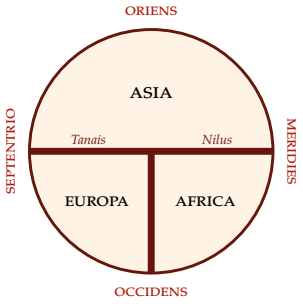
hic abundant leones	Cotton (Anglo-Saxon) world map, British Library
in his locis elephanti nascuntur	Peutinger Map
in his locis scorpiones nascuntur	Peutinger Map
hic sunt dracones	Hunt–Lenox Globe, c. 1508

Notes. *abundare* 'to abound, be plentiful' · *in his locis*: ablative of place, *locus*, -i *m.* · *nascuntur*: 3rd pl. present of the deponent *nasci* 'to be born'; passive in form, active in meaning.

Text 1 · Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* XIV.2.1 (c. 630)

The passage behind every T-O map.

> *Orbis a rotunditate circuli dictus, quia sicut rota est; unde brevis etiam rotella orbiculus appellatur. Undique enim Oceanus circumfluens eius in circulo ambit fines. Divisus est autem trifarie: e quibus una pars Asia, altera Europa, tertia Africa nuncupatur.*



The T-O scheme: east at the top; the stem of the T is the Mediterranean

Notes. *dictus*: supply *est*; *dicere a* + abl. is Isidore's formula for 'to be named from' · *rota*, -ae *f.* 'wheel'; *rotella* is its diminutive · *unde* 'whence, which is why' · *undique* 'on every side' · *circumfluens*: present participle with *Oceanus* · *ambit*: from *ambire* 'to go round'; its object is *fines* · *eius*: i.e. *orbis* · *trifarie* 'in three parts' (adverb) · *e quibus*: 'of which (parts)' · *nuncupare* 'to name'.

Questions. (a) From which quality does Isidore derive the word *orbis*? (b) What is the subject of *ambit*? (c) Find the three words in the passage that mean 'is called'. (d) Look at the diagram beside the text: which words does it draw?

Text 2 · *Cosmographiae Introductio*, ch. 9 (Saint-Dié, 1507)

The sentence that named a continent, from the booklet printed to accompany Waldseemüller's map.

> *Nunc vero et hae partes sunt latius lustratae, et alia quarta pars per Americum Vesputium (ut in sequentibus audietur) inventa est, quam non video cur quis iure vetet ab Americo inventore, sagacis ingenii viro, Amerigen quasi Americi terram, sive Americam dicendam: cum et Europa et Asia a mulieribus sua sortita sint nomina.*

Notes. *hae partes*: the three parts of the old world · *latius*: comparative adverb of *late* 'widely' · *lustrare* 'to survey, explore' · *per* + acc.: here the agent, 'by' · *in sequentibus* 'in what follows' · *quam … dicendam*: the relative is the object of *vetet*; with the gerundive, 'forbid it to be called' · *quis* = *aliquis* 'anyone' · *iure* 'rightly' · *sagacis ingenii*: genitive of quality · *Amerigen*: Greek accusative, 'Ameri-land' (*gē* 'earth') · *quasi* 'as it were' · *sortita sint*: perfect subjunctive of the deponent *sortiri* 'to obtain (by lot)', after causal *cum*.

Questions. (a) Which two names does the author propose? (b) What reason does the *cum*-clause give? (c) Which continents does the sentence name, and which one is missing? (d) Why is it *Americam* and not *Americum*?

4 Exercises

A · Turn the map

A medieval map has *oriens* at the top. Answer with one of the four directions.

1. Which direction is on the left-hand side of the sheet?
2. Which is at the bottom?
3. Al-Idrīsī's map has *meridies* at the top. Where is *oriens*?
4. Three of the four words come from the sun. Which one comes from the stars?

B · Known and unknown

Terra incognita is an adjective agreeing with its noun. Supply the right form of *incognitus, -a, -um*.

1. mare _____
2. orbis _____
3. insulae _____
4. regna _____
5. fines _____
6. in terra _____

C · A map sold everywhere

Marina says a map engraved in Antwerp could be sold in Kraków, Lisbon, Uppsala or Ragusa. Match the Latin names to the modern cities.

1 Antverpia	2 Cracovia	3 Olisipo	4 Upsalia	5 Ragusa
6 Basilea	7 Vindobona	8 Argentoratum	9 Hafnia	10 Zagrabia
a Vienna	b Dubrovnik	c Copenhagen	d Antwerp	e Zagreb
f Strasbourg	g Lisbon	h Basel	i Uppsala	j Kraków

D · Read the title

Two map titles from the episode, in full:

> *Universalis cosmographia secundum Ptholomaei traditionem et Americi Vespucii aliorumque lustrationes* 1507
> *Nova et aucta orbis terrae descriptio ad usum navigantium emendate accommodata* 1569

1. In the first title, which case does *secundum* take, and which two nouns depend on it?
2. List the genitives in the first title. Whose *lustrationes* are meant?
3. In the second title, what form is *navigantium*, and from which verb?
4. *aucta* comes from *augere*. What does the mapmaker claim about his map with *nova et aucta*?

E · Your own margin

Write two legends for the edge of a map of your own town or country, on the model of section 3: one with *hic sunt* or *hic abundant*, one with *in his locis … nascuntur*. Then write what stands at the centre: *hic* _____.

5 Further reading

Jerry Brotton, *A History of the World in Twelve Maps* (2012) · Evelyn Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed Their World* (1997) · Karen C. Pinto, *Medieval Islamic Maps: An Exploration* (2016) · Richard J. A. Talbert, *Rome's World: The Peutinger Map Reconsidered* (2010) · Chet Van Duzer, *Sea Monsters on Medieval and Renaissance Maps* (2013). The full list of sources is in the episode description.

Answer key

A 1 septentrio · 2 occidens · 3 on the left · 4 septentrio. **B** 1 incognitum · 2 incognitus · 3 incognitae · 4 incognita · 5 incogniti · 6 incognita (ablative). **C** 1d · 2j · 3g · 4i · 5b · 6h · 7a · 8f · 9c · 10e.

D 1 accusative; *traditionem* and *lustrationes* · 2 *Ptholomaei*, *Americi Vespucii*, *aliorum*; those of Vespucci and others · 3 genitive plural of the present participle of *navigare* · 4 that it is new and enlarged.

Text 1 (a) from the roundness of a circle (*rotunditas*) · (b) *Oceanus* · (c) *dictus*, *appellatur*, *nuncupatur* · (d) *Oceanus circumfluens* is the O; *divisus trifarie* with Asia, Europa and Africa is the T. **Text 2** (a) *Amerige* and *America* · (b) Europe and Asia took their names from women · (c) Europe and Asia; Africa is not mentioned · (d) it agrees with the feminine *terram* / *partem*, like the names of the other parts.