Erhard Etzlaub Encyclopedia Article

Erhard Etzlaub

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Erhard Etzlaub

fl. c. 1500

German cartographer who produced the first European road map. Based in the German town of Nüremberg, Etzlaub in 1500 produced the Romweg Map, which provided a guide for pilgrims travelling to Rome from parts of central and western Europe. In the map, Etzlaub applied principles of stereographic projection, which would later be improved by Gerhard Mercator (1512-1594), to render the curved surface of the Earth on a flat plane. Etzlaub's Compass Map (1501) offered a conformal projection—that is, a representation of small areas free of the distortions often necessary to render a mathematically accurate, if less useful, map.