

ing settlements were made up mainly of one-room houses. Most permanent houses were made of wood or stone.

## *Europeans and Exploration*

Nearly five hundred years passed before the Europeans returned to the Americas. During these years most Europeans did not want to travel to unknown places. They believed the world outside the place they lived was very dangerous. They thought horrible sea monsters waited beneath the ocean, ready to swallow ships whole. They thought the sun was so hot in some places that it made the sea boil.

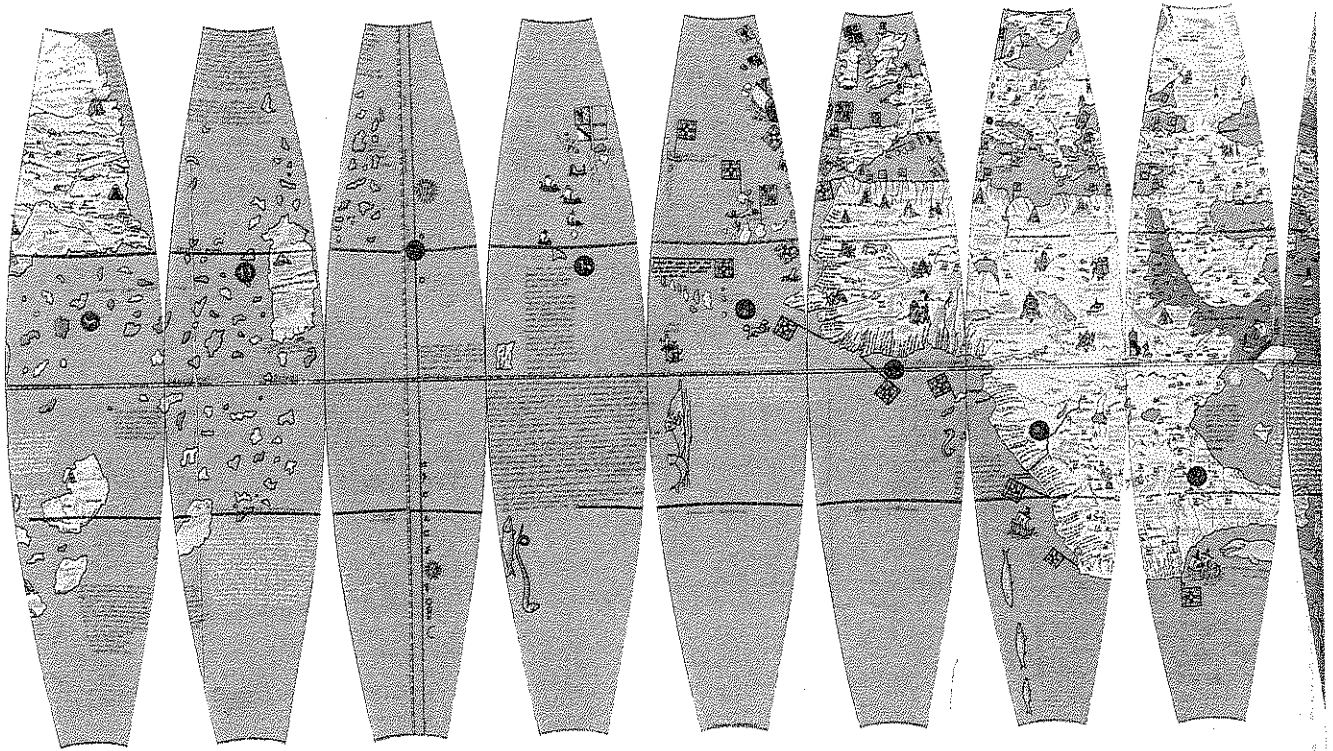
Another problem was that the Europeans had square-sailed ships that were slow and could sail only with the wind. This would have made a long ocean trip very hard. Even worse, there were not many maps. Those that could be found were so different from one another that no one knew which were correct.

In any case few European rulers were willing to spend their time or money on sailing trips past their borders. Until the 1400s, Europe did not have strong central governments. Instead, it was made up of many small kingdoms and villages. Each was ruled by a noble. These nobles spent too much time fighting each other to care about **exploration**, or searching the unknown.

**REVIEW** *What kept Europeans from searching for unknown lands?*

## *The Known World*

In 1492, the year the Tainos greeted Christopher Columbus, a group of people in Germany paid Martin Behaim (BAY•hym) an amount equal to \$75 to make a new kind of map. The map was in the shape of a ball. It was the first globe ever made in Europe.

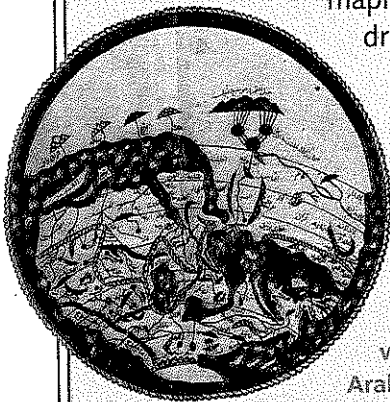


## HISTORY

### Muslim Mapmakers

Around the 700s the Muslims controlled lands that reached east to the Indus River, west to what is now Spain and Portugal, and south to the Sahara. Over time the Muslims established many trade routes over land and across the Indian Ocean. Years of travel and trade made the Muslims expert geographers. Using the study of stars and the journals of travelers, Muslim

mapmakers began to draw highly accurate maps. Many of these maps were used by European explorers.



Al-Idrisi's map shows the known world in 1154. The Arabian peninsula is shown in the center.

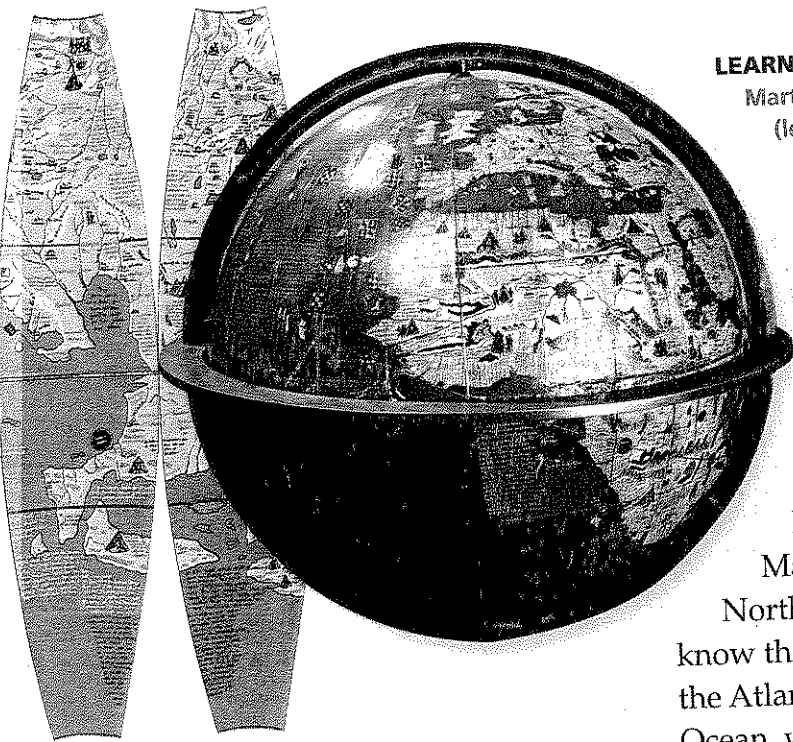
Behaim called it his "Earth apple." He made it from pieces of leather stitched together.

Behaim's globe showed what he and other European **cartographers**, or makers of maps, thought the Earth was like. Behaim wanted his globe to show the Earth as it really was, but he did not have the facts. Behaim's globe showed the Earth much smaller than it really is. This made it seem as if sailing west from Europe to Asia would be easy. The globe made the trip look as if it would be only about 3,000 miles (4,828 km) long. Today's globes show that the trip is about 10,000 miles (16,093 km) long. More importantly, North and South America block the way. Behaim had no idea that these two continents were there. He did not know about Australia or Antarctica, either. His globe also showed Africa too small and the wrong shape.

Behaim knew a lot more than other Europeans of his time, though. Some Europeans had heard about the riches in Asia. But few knew about China's cities,

**LEARNING FROM PHOTOGRAPHS** This is Martin Behaim's globe seen as both a globe (left) and laid flat (far left).

■ Which continents can you identify?



African city of Timbuktu (tim•buk•TOO) was a center of learning where people studied subjects from mathematics to medicine. And most Europeans knew nothing of the Chinooks, Hopis, Mandans, Cherokees, Mayas, or other Indian cultures of North and South America. They did not know that two other continents lay across the Atlantic Ocean. Even the Atlantic Ocean, which the Europeans called the Ocean Sea or the Green Sea of Darkness, was largely unknown.

**REVIEW** What was incorrect on Martin Behaim's globe?

highways, and art. Most Europeans had never heard of the great African empires, such as Mali (MAH•lee) and Songhay (SAHNG•hy). They had no idea that the

## LESSON 1 REVIEW

**A.D. 500**

A.D. 500s  
Brendan sails to new lands

**A.D. 1000**

About A.D. 1000  
Leif Eriksson sets sail from Greenland

**A.D. 1500**

A.D. 1492  
Columbus sails to the Americas

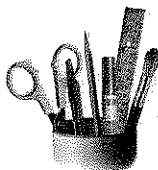
### Check Understanding

- 1 **Remember the Facts** What did most Europeans know about the Americas in the late 1400s?
- 2 **Recall the Main Idea** In what ways did early Europeans learn about the world around them?

### Think Critically

- 3 **Personally Speaking** Why do you think the Vikings stopped traveling to Vinland?

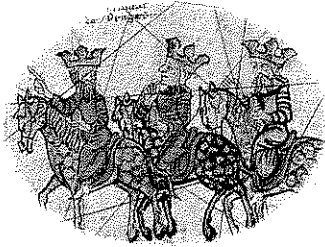
- 4 **Think More About It** Why do you think that Europeans explained the unknown with ideas about monsters living in the seas?



### Show What You Know

**Mapping Activity** Without looking at a map, draw the world and label the continents and oceans. Compare your drawing with the World Map in the Atlas on pages A2–A3. What areas are unknown to you?



**FOCUS**

What conditions might lead people to explore the unknown today?

**Main Idea** As you read, think about the conditions that led Europeans to begin exploring the unknown in the 1400s.

**Vocabulary**

monarch  
Renaissance  
compass  
navigation

Marco Polo (right) gave fantastic descriptions of Asia. Many of Polo's stories were about what is today Beijing, China. The drawing (above) appears in an atlas made in 1375. The three people shown are Marco Polo, his father, and his uncle.



# Background to European Exploration

1200

1350

1500

**M**arco Polo liked to tell stories. He often told of adventures to faraway places. Europeans called these places Cathay and the Indies. Marco Polo had been to Cathay, as China was then called. He had also traveled to the Indies, the islands off the China coast. He told of meeting Kublai Khan (KOO•bluh KAHN), China's ruler, and seeing amazing things—white bears, black stones that burned, and a place where night lasted all winter and day lasted all summer.

People laughed and called him Marco Millions because he told so many tales. Few Europeans had ever been to Asia, so they could not prove he was wrong. They just thought that the stories he told could not be true. But many were.

## Marco Polo

In 1271 Marco Polo left his home in Venice, Italy, to go to Asia with his father and uncle. Niccolò and Maffeo Polo were traders who had first heard of the riches of this far-off land from fellow traders. Marco was just 17 years old when they set out.

Four years later, after riding on horses and camels and walking thousands of miles through mountains and deserts, the Polos reached China. There they saw the palace of Kublai Khan. They described it as having walls "all covered with gold and silver and decorated with pictures of dragons and birds and horsemen and . . . scenes of battle." One hall was so big that "a meal might well be served there for more than 6,000 men."

The Polos went on to other places in Asia, such as India and Persia. Marco never reached Japan, but he described it from stories he had heard. In Japan, he said, there was so much gold that whole palaces were built of it.



Kublai Khan, the ruler of China during Marco Polo's visit

## Trade Routes to the East

For hundreds of years Europeans carried on a busy trade with people from Asia. The goods Europeans wanted most were gold, jewels, silk, perfumes, and especially spices. In the days before refrigerators, Europeans prized spices such as pepper, cloves, cinnamon, and nutmeg. They used these spices to make their food taste better and to hide the bad taste of spoiled meat.

Twenty-four years after leaving Venice, Marco Polo returned home with his pockets full of jewels. In time someone wrote down his stories. But it would be nearly 200 years before *The Travels of Marco Polo* appeared as a printed book. When it did, Europeans read it in amazement. Wanting to share in this great wealth, more and more traders took the long land route from Europe to Asia.

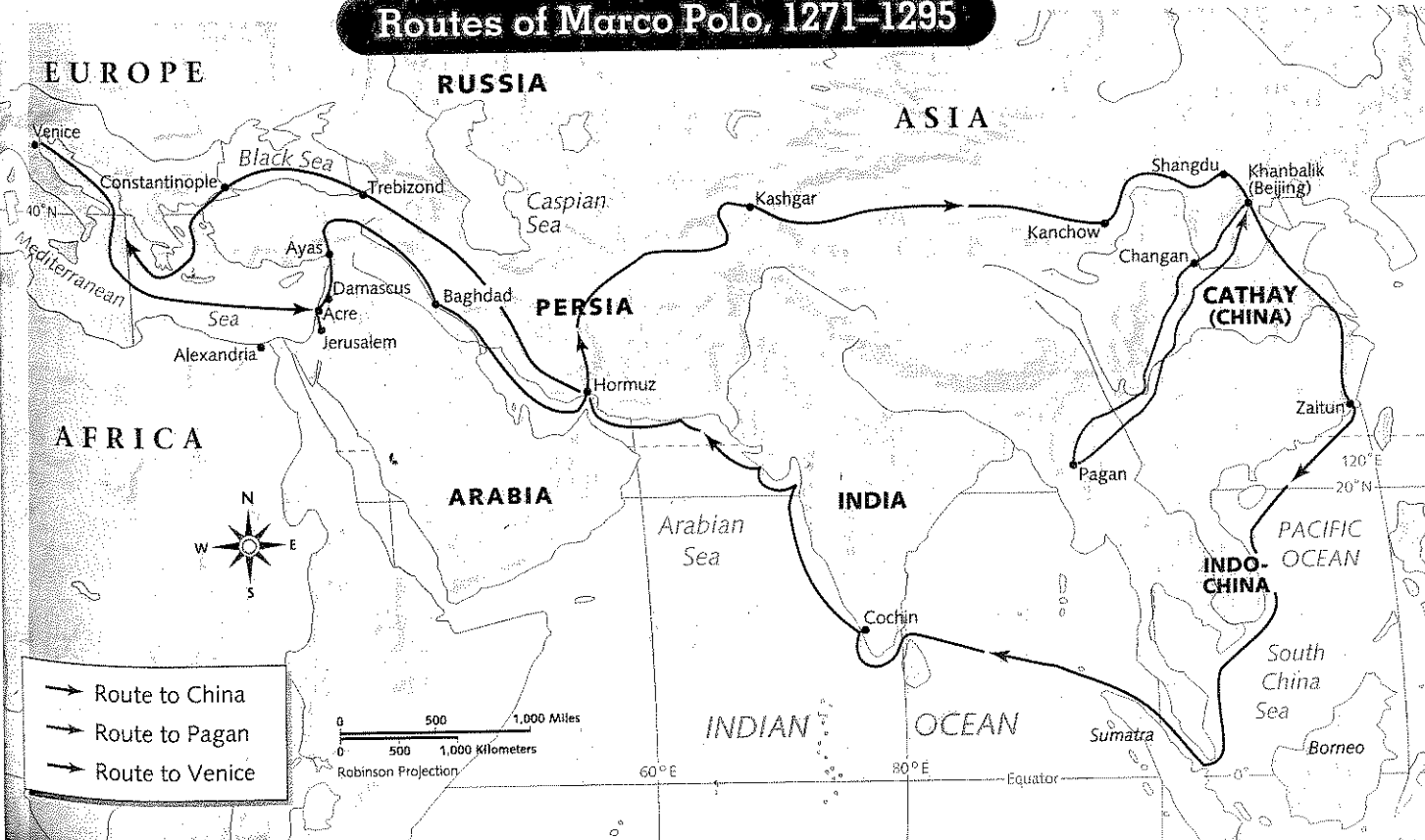
For most European traders, however, travel to Asia and back was too hard and took too much time. So instead of going to the Far East, as they then called Asia, most

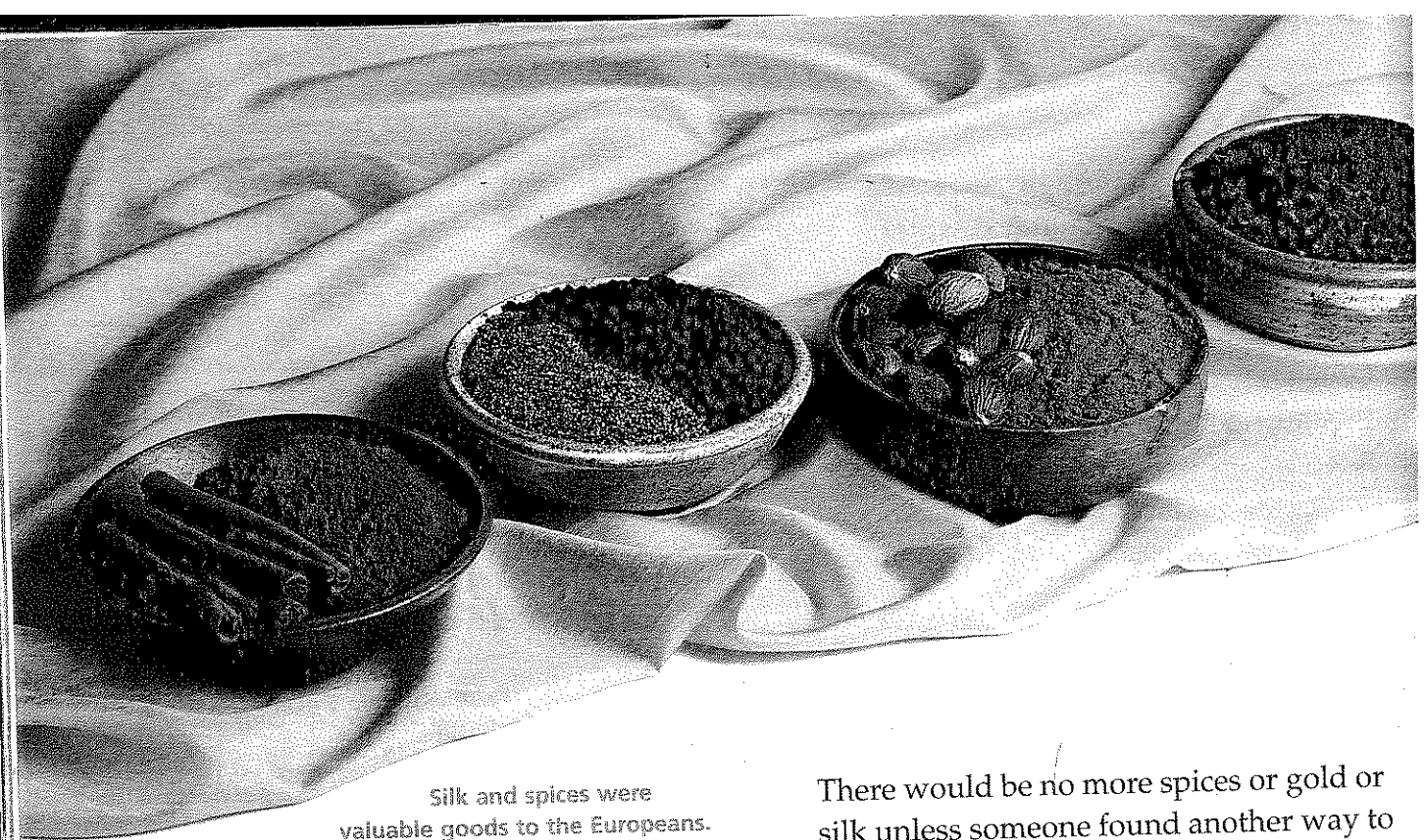
**REVIEW** What information did Marco Polo bring back to Europe?



**Movement** Marco Polo spent 24 years traveling in Asia.  
 ■ What lands did he visit on his way to China? on his way home to Venice?

### Routes of Marco Polo, 1271–1295





Silk and spices were valuable goods to the Europeans. The spices shown here are pictured both whole and ground. From left to right are cinnamon, pepper, nutmeg, and cloves.

Europeans traveled only part of the way. They went to cities in North Africa and Southwest Asia, which the Europeans called the Middle East. The cities they went to included Alexandria (a•lig•ZAN•dree•uh), Constantinople (kahn•stant•uhn•OH•puhl), Damascus (duh•MAS•kuhs), and Baghdad (BAG•dad). European traders exchanged their goods for goods that traders from the Middle East had gotten in Asia. Then the Europeans made the journey back home, where they sold the Asian goods at the highest prices people were willing to pay. The goods cost a lot. But at least Europeans could get them.

Then suddenly the trade with Asia stopped. In 1453 the Turks, a people from a huge land called the Ottoman Empire, captured the city of Constantinople and took control of the Middle East. This closed the trade routes between Europe and Asia.

There would be no more spices or gold or silk unless someone found another way to get to these treasures.

**REVIEW** Why was trade with Asia so important to Europeans?

## Changes in Europe

By the time the city of Constantinople was captured, many changes had taken place in Europe. One of the most important was that the lands ruled by warring nobles had become countries. Portugal, Spain, France, and England were now ruled by **monarchs**, or kings and queens. Most monarchs were strong leaders who kept close watch over their countries and their countries' money.

Over the years, Europeans also had made great advances in science and technology. With this new knowledge, Europeans entered into an age of thought, learning, art, and science. This period, which lasted from about 1400 to 1600, is called the **Renaissance** (REH•nuh•sahns), a French word meaning "rebirth." During this