# Muhammad al-Idrisi

## Muslim Geographer and Cartographer



Muhammad al-Idrisi was born in 1100 in Ceuta, Morocco into the Ḥammūdid Dynasty that ruled Malaga until 1157. Al-Idrisi was an avid traveler who journeyed to Northern Africa,  Spain, and even Turkey at the age of 16. He is known to have studied in Cordova, Spain and possibly taught in Constantine, Algeria. His most notable achievements were accomplished during his time in the service of the Norman king, Roger II of Sicily. Roger II was interested in geography and became al-Idrisi's primary financial sponsor.  During this time working in King Roger II's court, al-Idrisi achieved his greatest successes:

I. A Silver Planisphere* showing the known world in the 12th Century.

II. A World Map** divided into 7 climate zones and 10 lines of longitude.

III. *The Book of Roger,* that served as a geographic guide to the Planisphere.

These were all completed by January 1154 before Roger II's death. Unfortunately, the planisphere has been lost, but al-Idrisi's books and maps have survived, providing modern-day geographers a glimpse into how people perceived the world almost one thousand years ago!  No one is sure when al-Idrisi died, but it is most likely he died in 1165 or 1166.

* A map formed by projecting a sphere onto a plane.

**The map below has been inverted to proper North—South direction.

Work Cited:  Jwaideh, W. (2015, October 27). Ash-Sharif al-Idrisi | Arab geographer. Retrieved October 28, 2015, from http://www.britannica.com/biography/al-Sharif-al-Idrisi

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*Muhammad Al-Idrisi World Map.* Digital image. *Transpacific Project.* N.p., 2015. Web. 27 Oct. 2015. <http://www.transpacificproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Tabula-Rogeriana_Idrisi.jpg>.

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