

# The First German Road Map: Erhard Etzlaub, *This is the Road to Rome* (c. 1500)

## Abstract

This map of Central Europe by Nuremberg compass-maker and physician Erhard Etzlaub (1460–1532) is the first known German road map. It dates from c. 1500 and was made for the Holy Year of 1500, when many pilgrims were expected to travel to Rome. It is entitled *This is the Road to Rome, from one mile to the next, with points marked from one city to another through the German countryside* [Das ist der Rom-Weg von meyllen zu meyllen mit puncten verzeychnet von eyner stat zu der andern durch deutsche lannt]. As the title suggests, the pilgrimage routes are represented by dotted lines. The map features color-coded language areas and schematic representations of mountain ranges, both of which must have proven helpful not only to pilgrims but also to other travelers, merchants, scholars, and diplomats. The map is oriented to the south and does not mark the borders between the Holy Roman Empire and neighboring kingdoms, making it difficult to determine which territories belonged to the empire.

## Source



Source: Erhard Etzlaub, *Das ist der Rom-Weg von meyllen zu meyllen mit puncten verzeychnet von eyner stat zu der andern durch deutsche lannt*. Nuremberg: Hochfeder-Nachfolger und Georg Glockendon, c. 1500. Munich, Bavarian State Library -- Rar. 287#Beibd.4. Available online at: <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb00033752?page=1>

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