



## 4.2 Placing Yourself at the Center

**Instructions:** There are a series of pre-Columbian “world” maps available on Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early\\_world\\_maps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_world_maps), accessed December 1, 2018). They include a reproduction of the oldest known world map, the *Imago Mundi* of 6th century BC Babylonia and the Anaximander map (ca. 550 BC), which shows the known world in circular form radiating out from the Aegean Sea. Anaximander was a Greek philosopher and a contemporary of Pythagoras.

 A circular map reconstruction of Anaximander's world. The world is depicted as a circular disk with the Aegean Sea at the center. Three main landmasses are shown: Europe to the north, Asia to the east, and Libya (Africa) to the south. The word 'OCEAN' is written around the perimeter of the circle.	 A detailed, colorful world map from 1154 AD, known as the Tabula Rogeriana. It shows a rectangular world with Europe, North Africa, and Asia. The map is highly detailed, showing coastlines, rivers, and various geographical features. The title 'TABULA ROGERIANA' is visible at the bottom.
<p><b>Reconstruction of Anaximander map</b></p>	<p><b>Tabula Rogeriana by Moroccan cartographer al-Idrisi</b></p>

Other interesting maps located at the site include one from 1154 AD by Moroccan cartographer al-Idrisi that shows the south hemisphere at the top of the map. Most of these maps are circular and show either the land of the mapmaker or a religious site (Jerusalem) at the center. Examine these maps and discuss (a) why do so many of these maps present the world as a flat disk and (b) why do so many of these societies place themselves at the center of human civilization?