



# The World at Their Fingertips: Eighteenth-Century British Two-Sheet Double-Hemisphere World Maps

*Geoff Armitage, Ashley Baynton-Williams*

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Between 1680 and 1807 several British publishers produced a sequence of double-hemisphere world maps, each printed on two conjoined sheets. The publishers of these world maps were the leading figures of the map trade at that time and had identified a ready market for maps of this type, which were aimed at a newly prosperous and upwardly aspiring class of purchasers.

A peculiarly British phenomenon of this period, two-sheet double-hemisphere maps are important in the history of cartography for exemplifying how the map trade used the popular ideas of the Enlightenment to target an emerging market. The buyers were hungry for geographical information, but they were also eager to acquire status symbols to display as a statement of their intellectual pursuits. The scientific appearance of the maps was thus more important than geographical accuracy, which few of them achieved. This study is the first of its kind and will be essential in understanding the eighteenth-century British map trade as well as the economics of mapmaking and the emergence of new marketing techniques.

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