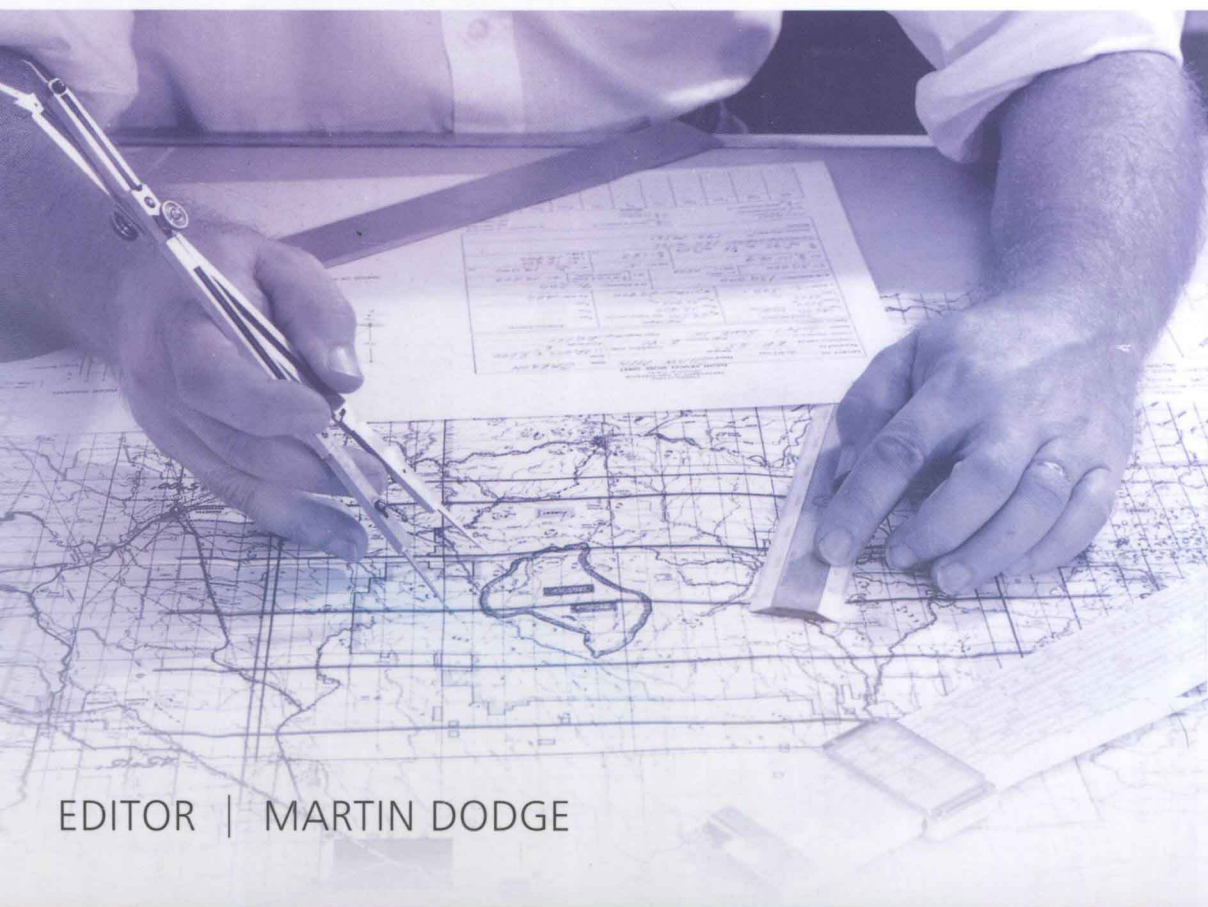


CLASSICS IN CARTOGRAPHY

REFLECTIONS ON INFLUENTIAL
ARTICLES FROM *CARTOGRAPHICA*



EDITOR | MARTIN DODGE

Classics in Cartography

Reflections on Influential Articles from *Cartographica*

Edited by

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With a foreword by Jeremy W. Crampton,
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Classics in Cartography

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His research has involved the compression of cartographic data in lines and surfaces, along with work on simple projections for quantitative mapping, polygon topology for dasymetric and choropleth maps, and shortest path algorithms.

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Theory: Postfoundational Geographies of the Nation-State (University of Minnesota Press, 2005), and *Introduction to Globalisation* (Blackwell, forthcoming), as well as over 50 articles, book chapters and reviews. In 2007 he received the University of Washington's Distinguished Teacher Award. His work on the politics of cartography is now leading into new research on the geography of global health, including attention to both neogeography Web 2.0 technologies used for risk management in rich countries, and the collective remapping of the globe itself – sometimes also enabled by volunteers – as a space of shared vulnerability and health citizenship.

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Independent Scholar

Denis holds a PhD in Geography from Clark University where he studied map-making under George McCleary. He was curator for the award-winning Power of Maps exhibition for the Smithsonian, and writes widely about maps. His most recent book is *Rethinking the Power of Maps* (Guilford Press, 2010). A former Professor of Design at North Carolina State University, Denis is currently an independent scholar living in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Foreword

Cartographica: The International Journal for Geographic Information and Geovisualization (to give its full title) is one of the longest standing peer review journals for the publication of cartography and mapping and geographic information systems (GIS).

The journal was founded by Bernard Gutsell (1914–2010) and his wife Barbara. As a young man in his native England, Gutsell was a squadron leader in the Royal Air Force during World War II. It might be that he found his love of geography and maps at that time. After the war, Gutsell moved to Canada, where he got a job with the government in the Geographical Bureau, later joining York University in Toronto. He retired from York in 1989. To some degree his career parallels that of another cartographer, the American Arthur Robinson. Like Gutsell, Robinson was involved in World War II, although his job was more directly cartographic, since he was in charge of the Map division of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), which became the CIA after the war. It would be interesting to compare their careers further, but they do highlight the deep interconnections between cartography and government.

In the early 1960s the Gutsells asked for funds to start a journal from Canada's National Research Council (NRC) and the Canada Council. The sponsors asked him to produce Volume 1 before they were prepared to issue any funds. Since Gutsell had no money to do this, he actually started the journal with Volume 2! This was May 1965. It was only a few years later that Volume 1 appeared (labelled '1964'), in response to many enquiries from people asking where they could get a copy.

At this time the journal was simply called *The Cartographer*, and although it has gone through several name changes, one constant of its first thirty years was Gutsell's editorship. His involvement is generation-spanning. When he started the journal I was a baby; when I published my first articles in the journal in the early 1990s he was still editor. He stepped down in 1994. Due to his long tenure I'm still only the fifth editor of the journal after 45 years (and the first from outside Canada, although like Gutsell I am originally British). Following Gutsell, the journal was edited by Michael Coulson (1994–1999), Brian Klinkenberg (1999–2004) and Peter Keller (2004–2007). Other significant figures include Roger Wheate and Cliff Wood, who served as co-editors from 2004–2010. In addition, Ed Dahl must be mentioned in a number of roles, such as Associate Editor (1981–1994) and Board member (1994–2007). It was Ed who arranged the responses to the Harley article I discuss later in this book.

The very idea of classics in cartography might seem anachronistic in an age when cartography has become GIS, and GIS itself is either going to have to revolutionise or be subsumed by so-called Volunteered Geographic Information (VGI) or the geospatial Web and their corporate ilk such as Google Earth. It raises the question not only of what constitutes a classic (Something cited a lot? Something 'old'? Something cited a lot at first but not much now?) but of what cartography actually is (and whether the answer to that is historically variable or constant). Perhaps, in fact, a classic is something which *changes the definition of cartography*.

Indeed, Denis Wood's manifesto cry that 'Cartography is Dead – Thank God!' might at first glance appear to be the *sine quo non* judgement upon cartography. But this idea bears further examination. Wood does not celebrate the end of maps and mapping, but rather of a certain species of cartographic enquiry (academic, dry, irrelevant to real-world map use) that he sees as all too prevalent – and after all he is on the editorial board of *Cartographica*. Wood's point is subtle, it is not maps that have betrayed us, rather we have betrayed maps. We have flogged them to death and analysed them as if they were disturbed mental patients on the psychiatric couch. We have prosecuted them for war crimes, for supporting militaristic conquests and colonial exploitation, for propping up ministers and monarchs. And perhaps most indefensibly we have forgotten the beauty and wonder of maps, not to mention their sheer power amongst the general public.

No doubt Wood has a point, and his own work on map art has done much to correct these imbalances. But cartography, as a study of maps and mapping, is a product of modernity, and like most disciplines has undergone shifts in emphasis. Cartography embraced the scientific reason of the European Enlightenment as a practice of mapping and surveying in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and as an academic discipline in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As this book neatly demonstrates, 'classics' come in a number of forms, and the classical scientific side of the discipline is well represented – notably the very influential work of Douglas and Peucker (now Poiker), which has been cited well over 1000 times according to Google Scholar (unfortunately academic citation databases have not indexed that year of *The Canadian Cartographer*, as the journal was then known). We also see from the selection how the study of mapping has evolved. Harley's article, which has been cited about half as much, represents a very different tradition, that of map critique. Newer concerns such as participatory GIS (PGIS) and experiential mapping are also included (see the Introduction for a fuller discussion of the choices included).

So classics can be thought of as articles that attract attention, whether formally through citations or more informally by word of mouth, that serve to shift the discipline and cause us to rethink maps.

Classics in cartography also raises the question of the relation and importance of the field in the larger sense. To Wood, it's dead, but I think that a little ungenerous to those of us still interested in thinking about mapping (and by 'us' I don't just mean academic cartographers, but map artists, geographers, philosophers, historians, political activists and the like). My old professor at Penn State, Peter Gould, used to say that geography was a great place to begin, but a bad place to remain. The same is probably true of cartography. Cartography is strongest (and I think to me this is what 'classics in cartography' ultimately means) when it reaches out and joins with these other forms of

questioning. Cartography for cartography's sake is probably not going to light up the world. But cartography for art's sake, for philosophy's sake or for politics' sake, now that's something.

Jeremy W. Crampton
Editor, *Cartographica* 2008–2010

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I also acknowledge Pete Fisher and his earlier book on GIS 'classics' for sparking the initial idea for this volume.

Martin Dodge

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