



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The pieces that fall together in any given issue of *CP* can sometimes prompt me to think about unexpected cartographic connections. This issue includes a piece that focuses on contemporary mapping practices, in which many maps are born online and are ever-changing, while another piece examines maps that are fixed in time, published in the static archives of a scholarly journal. As a product of scholarship, a published article represents a snapshot of the authors' thinking about a problem at a particular point in time. But the fixity of knowledge is illusory: scholars are often engaged in debate around the validity of a theory or understanding of a problem, and what is accepted as fact can sometimes change as we develop new methods, data sources, or technologies for understanding the world. Perhaps, then, publishers should encourage authors to explore the affordances of online maps for capturing scholarly thinking, and consider how their publications can evolve to include such materials in a cohesive way that encourages readers to not just read the maps but also to interact with them.

In *CP 99*, you will find two PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES. In the first, Sepideh Shahamati and colleagues present a critical reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of an open-source mapping tool, uMap, for online mapping projects. Their contribution explores how they used this tool for research, teaching, and community engagement purposes across six diverse projects. Readers who are considering what platform to use for their potential projects might find their piece and its linked maps to be of particular value. In the second article, Robert Hickey and Elvin Delgado discuss their analysis of the maps published in the *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* from 1950–2017. Their undertaking was prompted by an anecdotal observation that more than a few papers published in that journal were map-less. They sought to understand whether there were any temporal trends in how many articles included maps, and explored potential explanations for the trends they identified, including the impact of particular editors, the section in which the article was published, and wider changes in the discipline of geography and the nature of geographical inquiry.

In VISUAL FIELDS, Robert Hickey describes how he built a sculptural map of Australia that memorializes a field trip he took with his wife, an extremophile microbiologist. On the trip, they they sampled the microbiome of several lakes and visited sites of microbiological significance, such as Hamelin Pool in Western Australia, one of only two remaining sites world-wide where living stromatolites can be found. The map depicts characteristics of the sites as well as the route they traversed using natural materials such as wood, semi-precious gemstones, and copper wire.

CP99 includes four REVIEWS. In the first, Leo Dillon introduces readers to the charms of *An Atlas of Extinct Countries*, a small and humorous tome that profiles the borders that defined forty-eight places that once existed but have now been subsumed, subdivided, or otherwise erased from our political maps. Maya Daurio reviews a more serious treatment of borders and the work that maps do in defining them in her discussion of *The Power of Maps and the Politics of Borders*. Readers who have an interest in understanding the role that early American surveying and mapping practices played in dispossessing Indigenous peoples and in establishing the new republic's identity as a White, male American nation will want to explore her review, which traces how the contributions to this edited volume can help us to understand the history of early US mapping. Richard Bohannon's critique of Bertram Bruce's book, *Thinking with Maps: Understanding the World Through Spatialization*, invites us to remember that developing students' capacities to understand the power of maps is an ongoing project, relevant to contemporary maps and not limited to historical examples. Bohannon wishes there were more focus on this point in Bruce's book, seeing it as a missed opportunity. Finally, Daniel Cole's review of Kenneth Field's new volume, *Thematic Mapping: 101 Inspiring Ways to Visualise Empirical Data* describes a volume whose maps could be used as a sourcebook for learning to think critically about map design, through its presentation of some of the varied ways a mapmaker might represent a single dataset.

Amy Griffin (she/her)
Editor, *Cartographic Perspectives*

