**London: A Life in Maps**
by Peter Whitfield
London, The British Library, 2007.
208 pages, approx. 100 maps, 45 photos, 110 engravings and paintings.
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*London: A Life in Maps* was published in connection with an exhibition of the same title held at the British Library in 2006-2007. The book provides a panorama of London's history from the middle ages, when the first images of London in the form of maps were published, to the present day.

The book is divided into four sections: London Before the Fire (1252–1676), The Age of Elegance (1745–1780), The Victorian Metropolis (1814–1900), and The Shock of the New (1900–today). Each section includes between eleven and twenty unique topics. In the first section we find, among others, "Medieval London: The Earliest Images of the City," "Shakespeare's London," and "The Great Fire and the Map of London." The second section includes topics such as "The London that Wren Never Saw," "Fashionable Suburbs," and "The Gordon Riots." The third section shows maps such as "Regency London," "Victorian Cemeteries," or "Mapping Wealth and Poverty." The last and shortest section is made up of maps and photos on topics such as "The Underground," "The City Blitzed," and "Planning the Capital."

Each section starts with a four to eight-page overview of major events of the era covered in the subsequent pages. Following these introductions, significant events and related maps from each period are shown and discussed, typically on a double page. The majority of these maps are colorfully complemented by engravings, paintings, or photos. The book also includes an index as well as a select bibliography for further reading on some of the maps and historic events discussed.

*London: A Life in Maps* illustrates London's history through sixty-four historically significant events and describes these and their impact on the development of the city of London by means of contemporary maps. Although the historic events are the focus of this book, where possible these events are also linked to important developments in cartography.

One very interesting example of such an event, described in the first section of the book, is the great fire of 1666, which changed the look of the city considerably. Cartographic examples used to describe this event and its impact are the maps of London by John Leake (1666), Newcourt and Faithorne (1658), and Ogilby and Morgan (1676).

In the summer of 1666 London was hit by a disastrous fire which laid waste to 400 acres of the city and destroyed a total of 13,000 houses and 87 churches. After the fire, the lord mayor and the city aldermen quickly commissioned a survey to plan the rebuilding of the city. One result of this survey was the map published by John Leake in 1666, which was also sold throughout Europe to give news about the fire. Town maps of this era traditionally show individual buildings drawn in elevation, as can be found on the earlier Newcourt and Faithorne map of 1658. The aim was to give a picture of a city by showing streets and buildings as if seen from above. Typically, the buildings were not shown from one perspective only and often covered parts of streets or other buildings, which made detailed interpretation quite difficult. Such plans were not necessarily based on a consistent scale and so were not suitable for measurements or determining the exact locations of features. Leake's map (1666) shows the parts of London unaffected by the fire in this traditional way. In addition, the destroyed parts of the city, due to the devastation and subsequent lack of buildings, were shown as a simple plan of streets as it would be seen in modern orthographic views. This very clear and precise display very likely affected Ogilby and Morgan when they created their map of London a decade later, in 1676. The latter map is drawn in a consistent scale of 1:1,200, and for the first time pictorial elements were abandoned in favor of a more functional depiction of the entire city. This map, due to its clear and precise manner, was immediately recognized as a new era in the mapping of London and introduced a new type of city map: the scaled plan for a more scientific use. These maps, taken together, are a perfect example of how a particular event affected not only the city but also changed cartographers' work.

Another very different example of the use of maps in this book is a map in the second section which provides background information on the Gordon Riots of 1780. This most violent outbreak is illustrated by an old map and overlay of troop concentrations during the riots. The Gordon Riots are named for Lord George Gordon, a young Member of the Parliament, who assembled about 50,000 supporters to protest against the government's proposal to repeal some earlier anti-Catholic laws. In the course of several days of uproar, 11,000 troops were brought into London. The map on this double page illustrates the riot locations and some major troop movements.

The third part of the book includes a section of the famous map by Charles Booth, often referred to as the "Wealth and Poverty Map," which was originally part

of a series of maps published with his work *Life and Labour of the People in London* between 1889 and 1903. Based on extensive research, including thousands of interviews and door-to-door inquiries, Booth identified seven social groups of people based on their financial living conditions. The map shows the color-coded results of his analysis of social data per building block throughout London. This very detailed thematic map is not about London's layout or new geography but, for the first time, shows the social composition of the city in detail. Booth's work and his map, together with other factors, led to the development of state pensions for the elderly. Today, demographic mapping is still being employed as an indicator of social status. (For example, it is used by insurance companies to establish rates for household policies, based on location.)

The last section of the book addresses newer developments in London's history. It lacks the mapping focus of the previous sections, and relies more on air photos and drawings to illustrate the changes and developments of the city in the twentieth century.

This section provides a critical view of the influence that commercialization of life has had, and still has, on London since the beginning of the twentieth century. One important factor for these developments is the tube system, which offers a flexible transportation option, nowadays even more important than before. The history of the development of the underground system is illustrated by an early map of the railway system which shows the geographic layout of the city and the different railway lines. This kind of display seems very unfamiliar to us, as we nowadays expect to see a more diagrammatic display of an underground network. The typical visualization of such a network originates from the map of London's underground system designed by Henry Beck in 1932. His original, very schematic, display of the underground network was limited to straight lines constrained to 45 degree angles, and used color coding for the different lines. The map focused on relative locations, stations, and connections rather than on representation of geographic reality. Various cities around the world copied Beck's schematic map design, more or less successfully, to display their transportation networks. Unfortunately, Beck's original map is only mentioned in the discussion of the development of London's underground system but not included. This map would have been another example of innovative map design that had significant influence not only on London but also on the design of transportation network maps around the world.

As you would expect from a publication of the British Library, this book is of very high quality. Not only was high quality paper used, but the paperback edition is also bound by thread stitching, which makes it a pleasure to handle. Generally, the facsimile reproductions are also of very high quality, with only a very few exceptions where a relatively low scan resolution was used. Another minor point of critique is that some of the maps lack an indication of their date in the captions, a fault which is mainly found with newer maps (notably, in the fourth section, The Shock of the New).

I highly recommend this book. Even for someone like myself, who is neither very familiar with London's history nor a distinct historic/old map enthusiast, this book is fascinating and enjoyable to read. It is well written and gives concise, colorful descriptions of major historic events of significance to London. The fact that maps are not used only as decoration but to enhance explanations of historic events should please cartographers. In some cases these events are even used to explain changes in cartographic techniques, which makes this book even more valuable for someone who has an interest in cartography.

**Maps: Finding Our Place in the World**
James R. Akerman and Robert W. Karrow, Jr. Eds.
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This absolutely drop-dead gorgeous, more-or-less authoritative volume promises "a far-reaching examination of the human endeavor of mapmaking." Its eight essays, including the introduction, are accompanied by more than one hundred maps and map-related artifacts (newspaper and magazine advertisements, charts, graphs, globes, etc.) to insist upon mapping as an idea both of wayfaring (finding our place in the world) and what might be called way-understanding—knowing that place in its parts.

*Finding our Place in the World* is the companion volume to a comprehensive festival of maps mounted in 2007 jointly by Chicago's Field Museum and Newbury Library during that city's annual Humanities Festival. The quality of reproduction is exceptional and the rendering of the wealth of images reason enough to pay the price for this book. No less important are the essays by eight authors supposedly expert in map history and map things. Taken as a whole, the book suggests how far the field of map studies has come over the last generation, and, more importantly, how far serious thinking about maps has yet to go.

It would seem reasonable to compare this new volume to Arthur H. Robinson's seminal, 1982 *Early Thematic Mapping in the History of Cartography*, also