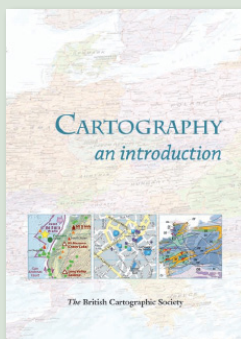


absent on other map projections (p. 63). The positioning of some maps inside their border in this section is unbalanced. Some map borders are tight along the west-east extent, but spacious along the north-south extent (p. 78). For other maps, this juxtaposition is reversed with the map border tight against the north-south coastline with extra space between the west-east coastline (p. 78).

In summary, this atlas will serve map libraries and other institutional settings best where there is a range of user curiosity about the nature of Earth's geographic phenomena. An individual, however, would have to give considerable thought as to whether or not to purchase this atlas. Aside from its cost, one has to reconcile the fact that most of the data that is presented in this atlas is available via the web. Its size and weight practically eliminates portability. Conversely, while you may be able to find the *data* on the web, you are not going to find it assembled together in such an artful, creative, and visually impressive way. Yes, there are issues with the map design. But, with a massive research and compilation undertaking such as this, perfection is largely fleeting. The bottom line is: if you are someone who needs the most recent and timely statistic, craves the ability to query and click, and salivates at the latest techno-whiz-bang web app for your geographic pleasure, then this atlas is obviously not for you. If, on the other hand, you cherish the laborious construction involved in compiling a world atlas, luxuriate in the lavish feel of glossy paper between your thumb and forefinger, enjoy casually leafing through large format pages, and marvel at the wonderment that unfolds before your eyes, then this atlas should be on your short list.



CARTOGRAPHY: AN INTRODUCTION

By Giles Darkes and Mary Spence.

London: The British Cartographic Society, 2008. 64 pages, maps, figures. £4.99 (about US \$7.99), softcover.

ISBN: 978-0904482232

Review by: Trudy Suchan

The British Cartographic Society published this little book because they were "... convinced that with a little knowledge of cartography a map's message can be communicated much better" (Foreword, p. 5). How little is the book? The maps and illustrations are postage-stamp sized. Does it impart a little knowledge? Much more than that. All of the basics are here—scale, projections, generalization, symbolization, classification, color, text, legends, and marginalia. The authors encapsulate the evolution of cartography in three pages, including space for six illustrations. They emphasize the importance of knowing

the audience of and purpose for a map, and they introduce concepts of data quality and map quality.

The book is written for the lay mapmaker. The text is punctuated vigorously with exclamation marks and speaks directly, even casually, to the reader: "Maps which don't work are often unclear, imprecise and inefficient! ...But don't worry, we hope some of the ideas and issues in cartography explained in this booklet will help you to design a better map" (p. 9). If the explanations seem too long winded, we are assured that "The impatient or harried can immediately refer to [the chapter] Better Mapping in 5, 15 and 50 Minutes" (p. 60).

In its appeal to the lay audience, the book employs visual design gambits from other media: the running page footer is reminiscent of a TV news screen crawl, while the "did you know...?" balloons and useful tip boxes would be pop-up text in an online guide. Typically, unfamiliar terms and acronyms should be defined at first use, but the GIS acronym is used at the top of page 8, expanded to "Geographical Information Systems (GIS)" at bottom of page 8, and is at last defined on page 21. Similarly, cartograms are referred to on page 8, defined on page 15, and finally illustrated on page 33. I would guess that these rules were waived in the name of non-technical, breezy writing, but it is perhaps a little too breezy for an introduction.

One strength of the book is the variety of maps shown. There are snippets of antique maps, political maps from contemporary world atlases, navigation charts, geological maps, Ordnance Survey maps, a subway map, a walking map, and imagery; all are miniaturized nicely. In addition, the second author enriched the book with numerous contributed illustrations; most notably, a 4 x 8 cm cartogram of population for the world.

Organizing the technical and conceptual body of topics in such a short volume must have been a challenge. The authors developed five sections: "An Introduction to Cartography," "Some Map Basics, Issues in Producing Good Maps," "Designing Better Maps," and the two-page "Tips for Improving Your Maps." Separating basic precepts from design forced some artificial breaks in the flow of information about certain topics, for example, color, symbolization, and GIS technology. But even that separation is not clean; conceptual content (know your audience, what makes for good map design, integrity in data representation) is found in the midst of technical topics. Still, in 64 pages, it's easy enough to find all that the book has to offer on a given topic.

In summation, the maps and illustrations are notable, and the book content is up-to-date and satisfyingly complete. The price is so reasonable that I would buy several; one to keep and one to lend, but over-40 readers should factor in the cost of a magnifier.