

only for location or to show distribution of products. In this chapter, which draws on the work of Woodward and Harley, the editors provide the now requisite discussion of “what is a map?” and a section titled “How to read maps”. Defining “map” is important here because most of the maps illustrated are not the conventional maps of traditional histories of cartography, but include such non-traditional types as transit maps, chamber of commerce maps, propaganda maps, and *arpilleras*—fabric maps of political resistance stitched by women. Many of these map types have been ignored by cartographic historians in the past as not being “real” maps.

How to read maps might seem at first to be an elementary subject for a book of this type, but it is crucial to understanding these discussions. Here the editors are not referring to how to use a road map to find the way from Point A to Point B, but to reading the meaning of maps, to analyzing and interpreting them. They provide a reading of a map of the Bolivar Railway as an opening to the Introduction and go on to discuss how title, legends, scale, projection, and symbols impact the interpretation of maps. Importantly, they discuss putting a map into the context of its time and technology. These last two contexts are often

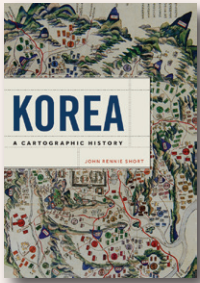
ignored in studies of maps as material culture and can lead to serious misinterpretations.

The editors also provide introductory essays for each of the chronological sections that discuss the period and mapping during that time. These nicely set the scene for the chapters that follow and are helpful for those readers who might be interested in the maps, but are not familiar with Latin American history.

Each essay has notes at the end and a list of resources/bibliography, but at the end of the book is a section titled “Additional Resources.” This is not simply a list of references, but is an essay in itself discussing the literature of the various topics that form the basis of the book, such as “Maps, Lies, and Silences,” “Critical Cultural Cartography,” and “Maps as Art” as well as “National Cartographies” and “Scientific Missions.” It is a succinct review of the literature on the subject of mapping Latin America.

Mapping Latin America could be used as a model of how to create a multi-disciplinary work and I highly recommend it.

KOREA: A CARTOGRAPHIC HISTORY



By John Rennie Short.

University of Chicago Press, 2012.

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Review by: Jonathan F. Lewis, Benedictine University

Having produced more than forty books about geography, urban development, and the history of cartography, John Rennie Short knows how to construct a focused and readable manuscript. *Korea: A Cartographic History* displays to good effect his writing and research skills in this short history of Korean cartography copiously illustrated with color plates.

Inspired by his late father, a veteran of the Korean War, Short directs his book toward a general audience rather than experts in historical cartography. He begins his

task with a brief description of global space and how Korea’s cartographic legacy fits into the narrative of that concept’s development and diffusion. He quickly documents the existence of this process by showing how two different regions generated similarly self-centered world maps at almost exactly the same time, using as examples one of Korea’s oldest maps (centered on East Asia) and a European world map made using Ptolemy’s *Geographia*. Each leaves unknown areas blank, which is to say everything that appears on the other region’s map (plus the Americas, an area unknown in both regions). A third map, produced in Korea a few centuries later, demonstrates the changes that cultural contact with the Jesuits and Chinese had by that time wrought on Korean mapmaking. By the book’s end, Korean cartography reflects mapping practices common throughout the world, with results comparable to maps made in other parts of the globe.

Short divides his book into three chronologically successive sections to explain how this convergence came about:

the early Joseon period in Korea (covering the 15th through the 16th centuries), the late Joseon period (covering the 17th through the 19th centuries), and the modern period of the 20th and 21st centuries. His first section (“Separate Worlds”) consists of two chapters. Given the enormous span of time involved in reaching the 17th century, the first chapter’s coverage is necessarily brief, identifying the major dynasties and monarchs shaping Korea’s political development and cultural practices. Short makes clear that key to both of those was the centrality of China, an influence that the country retains to this day. For example, until the 15th century, Korea’s written language utilized Chinese characters and literacy was restricted to a very small segment of the population. Even after a more popular version of the language appeared, Chinese script remained in use for official documents (including maps) for several hundred years. Though dominated by their much larger neighbor, Korean monarchs in the Joseon period saw an opportunity to legitimate their own authority over a distinct area by identifying themselves with the land they ruled, a process that relied on maps to help visualize both the country itself and the society inhabiting it. This visualization included landscape painting, another area greatly influenced by Chinese practices, and resulted in representations of land appearing throughout Korean political culture. Not surprisingly, professional landscape painters often became professional producers of pictorial maps. Short describes several of the more prominent mapmakers whose styles had an enormous impact on those who followed. Chong Ch’ok, for example, created national and provincial maps for two successive kings that had the effect of uniting in one detailed visual image what had previously been a disparate area. Demonstrating both the country’s diverse approaches to mapping and to the author’s commitment to acknowledge that variety, Short concludes this chapter with a description of a very different mapping tradition, one having more spiritual than administrative purposes. Connected with the Zen monk Doseon, this approach saw “the landscape as alive with energy or life force... A correct reading of the landscape to maximize positive energy was essential for the proper siting of graves, shrines, houses, temples, palaces, and other buildings” (26).

Short then devotes a chapter to Europe’s depictions of the Korean peninsula, beginning with reference to the Silk Road, whose easternmost terminus was in Korea. Traveler Marco Polo’s stories of his time in China included references to Korea, but it was not until descriptions from other travelers supplemented this information that European

maps began to include Korea. Foremost among these was Fra Mauro’s famous global map, “one of the first European maps to show the islands of Japan and to suggest the peninsula of Korea” (33). Europe’s persistent unfamiliarity with the area led it to produce a variety of different representations as more knowledge of Asia was acquired from merchants connected with the burgeoning spice trade, and augmented by observations from Christian missionaries. Entirely comfortable with their comparative obscurity, Korea’s leaders had no interest in encouraging greater contact with the outside world. This lack of knowledge led Korea to appear in European maps in one of three ways: “Korea unknown, Korea as an island, and Korea as a peninsula” (40), complicating European mapmakers’ attempts to complete their objective of creating a global gridded space.

In his book’s second part (“Cartographic Encounters”), Short examines influences on Korea’s mapmakers coming from East Asia, understandably beginning with China. Chinese cartographers, who by the 18th century had adopted longitude and latitude from European mapmakers, had access to Korea that Westerners did not. They produced hybrid maps of that region which combined Western practices with existing indigenous procedures. Given its later importance, Japan surprisingly had little impact on Korean cartography, possibly because Korea did not generate much interest among Japan’s mapmakers.

Due to Europe’s increasing contact with East Asia, it is also included in the chapter on Korea’s neighbors. Given their cold and sometimes hostile reception, Europeans generated representations consisting almost exclusively of outlines having no information about the country’s interior, which remained *terra incognita* for a very long time. Though a Jesuit priest became the first European to visit Korea in the late 16th century, for example, it would be another hundred years before Europeans generated first-hand written accounts of the country. The ability of Korea’s leaders to remain outside this expanding system was limited, however, as “Korea, despite its insularity, was gridded and plotted as part of a universal mapping endeavor, being incorporated into the production of global space and becoming part of the modern world” (73). The country’s resistance to becoming known did not prevent it from appearing on maps.

The third chapter in this section distinguishes between the early and late Joseon dynasty and explains how maps from

those periods reflected political struggles of their time. The neo-Confucian social order, for example, emphasized a respect for tradition, and a world atlas produced in the early 18th century contained only maps of China, Manchuria, and Korea, following the style of an atlas produced two centuries earlier. Some of the most interesting and beautiful maps in Short's book appear here, including a particularly striking type, *Cheonhado*, which "depict a circular world centered on East Asia, with the rest of the world on the margins" (86). Bearing a great resemblance to circular European world maps from two centuries earlier, these center on Tibet's Mount Kunlun and include a tree on both the east and west sides to indicate the direction of the rising and setting sun. Although the geography of the outside world was much better understood by Korean cartographers at this point, atlases continued to present Korea in a comfortably familiar Sinocentric world.

But this upholding of tradition could not withstand pressures for producing more scientifically informed maps containing updated information on the peninsula's interior. Short identifies several key figures crucial to this development. Their significant accomplishments included "maps made to a common scale, explicit use of the grid to organize and present geospatial data, and greater use of geodetic data ... Korea's first globe ... [and the] *Korean Geography Book* which described the geography of the country and defined the latitude and longitude of every Korean city" (94–96). One cartographer from this period, Kim Jeong-ho, became something of a national folk hero, as his humble background and devotion to hard work resulted in a map Short particularly admires as something of a hybrid between old and new mapping practices.

Tragically, this epoch closed with violent encounters between Korea and Western powers as Europeans, Americans, and Japanese exerted pressure to open the country to trade. Short documents this key period with maps of treaty ports where foreigners were awarded sweeping rights and permitted access to trade, the results of military defeat. They also were headquarters for Christian missionaries who began to build schools, hospitals, and churches. Though reluctant to employ the term "imperialism" to describe these developments, Short includes enough information to allow readers to reach their own conclusions about how a reclusive people came to relinquish their economic and religious practices in exchange for those from a region possessing superior firepower and

assisted by maps detailing the region they were determined to control.

Part Three ("Representing Korea In The Modern Era") continues the story of Korea's domination by other countries, beginning with Japan, whose comparatively stable and peaceful relationship with Korea ended as the Joseon regime lost power and Japan became more militaristic. Korea sought an isolationist approach that reinforced its close relationship with China, but the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–5 gave Japan considerable control over Korea, which it annexed in 1910. Japanese cartographers subsequently mapped their new territory in a manner reflecting colonial interests and objectives. This most prominently included identification of resources that could benefit the imperial homeland, such as food used to offset shortages in Japan and title to land—with large foreign landowners better able to register and protect their holdings than Koreans having smaller parcels. It also included suppression of the Korean language, reflected in maps by the replacement of Korean names with Japanese ones, revision of some names to more Japanese-sounding equivalents, and sometimes simply to the elimination of Korean names with no Japanese substitutions.

Short's book does not cover the Second World War, and instead moves directly to its aftermath, in which the Korean peninsula was promptly swept up in Cold War politics. In a history strikingly similar to that of China, the country was claimed by two politically opposed leaders, with the one backed by Western leaders having formed a government-in-exile during occupation and the opposing communist leader having participated directly in guerilla action against the Japanese. Outside political leaders arbitrarily imposed a line dividing the country in half along the 38th parallel, ignoring provincial boundaries altogether. Short concisely and effectively summarizes the subsequent military conflicts that led to the 1953 Armistice, a document that included a map depicting the current boundary. Yet because the Armistice was not signed by South Korea, considerable tension remained over how the peninsula would ultimately be mapped.

Short's subsequent chapter briefly examines maps produced of and by the two Koreas. The peninsula's division in a sense expresses its earlier history, with the North retreating into the kind of isolation often found in the early Joseon period while the South's incorporation into the global capitalist economy has led it to expand mapping

initiatives. While the North seeks to withdraw from the view of outsiders (unsuccessfully, given the power of the Internet and such services as Google Maps), the South sets the peninsula's past history aside as it encourages tourism, producing maps that enable outsiders easily to make their way around—for example—the Southern capital of Seoul. Short's example of a 2002 map of Seoul offers a combination of contemporary mapping practices and traditional landscape rendering that can be seen as either an attempt to balance historic, indigenous Korean mapping practices with contemporary scientific approaches or as an effective exercise in postmodern composition. Short's writing makes it clear that he sees it in terms of the former, but readers having different training are likely to see the latter as additional evidence of Korea's convergence with developments in the larger global culture.

Short concludes his book with a chapter describing three cartographic controversies that appear in contemporary Korean mapping. The first involves efforts by both North and South to depict the peninsula as far more unified than it actually is. Both sides cast the area as one nation and identify their own capital as the real (indeed, the only) national capital city. While the demilitarized zone is not entirely ignored, it usually appears as an obscure, thin line, not an internationally acknowledged boundary.

The second controversy involves the proper name of the body of water lying between Korea and Japan. Short provides an excellent summary of both the importance of place names and the difficulty of obtaining consensus on features shared by two countries, and then follows with a historical account of the reasons for Korea to identify as the East Sea what appears on Japanese maps as the Sea of Japan. But just as Korea's history was directly affected by China and Europe, so too is this debate over proper nomenclature. In the last portion of this section, Short encourages a compromise name that South Korea has suggested which accepts both names in a new one: East Sea / Sea of Japan (in contrast with North Korea's preferred East Sea of Korea). He encourages Japan to "embrace a more effective global citizenship. Japan needs to accept its colonial legacy in order to transcend it" (147).

The third mapping controversy centers on the island of Dokdo and the rocks surrounding it, roughly 135 miles east of the Korean Peninsula. An area also claimed by Japan, Short points out that Dokdo has for centuries appeared on Korean maps as part of its territory. In fact, Japanese rulers in the late 17th century acknowledged as

much, but two centuries later a more expansionist and militaristic Japan claimed control over the area, a claim solidified after Korea was subsequently ceded to Japan. After Japan's defeat in 1945, its claims to Korea were made void and Dokdo once again became contested space. Currently, Korea's claim seems the more solid one, as it has constructed a lighthouse there and declared the island a National Monument. Its only occupants are two Koreans. Short concludes this section, and his book, by pointing out the way in which earlier maps have been used to argue for historic claims to territory, despite their admitted shortcomings.

Overall, Short accomplishes exactly what he proposed: a brief but compelling introduction to the role of cartography in Korea's history, designed for the general reader. Although it includes some clear judgments about current cartographic controversies, the book avoids entanglement in the politics of North and South, seeing both as extensions or expressions of earlier cartographic struggles during Korea's long Joseon period. Such contextualization will benefit contemporary readers baffled by what may appear to them as North Korea's odd and unprecedented quest for removal from the global community or its receptivity to advice from China. Moreover, the book's historical sections provide informative insights into the mapping traditions of other areas. His summation of Japanese cartographic history, for example, as well as French efforts to map Korea's interior are particularly well done, making it easy to splice Korea's history and cartographic story with other, larger narratives. Another of the book's strengths is the number of color illustrations and their placement. Nearly all images are in vibrant color and located on the same page they are described. General audiences will find this arrangement (which is not as common as most readers would expect) allows them to engage more readily with the book's arguments, and the pages have ample margins where readers can jot notes. If there is one clear shortcoming in the book's design, it is the lack of an index.

Taken as a whole, *Korea: A Cartographic History* is a successful overview of Korea's history and introduction to the many beautiful maps produced by its cartographers and by mapmakers from other areas. Those interested in learning more about the subject matter can find a list of suggested readings located immediately at the narrative's end. It is well designed, attractive, clearly written, and represents a solid addition to the collection of anyone interested in its topic.