

THE HISTORY OF CARTOGRAPHY

November 2021

Dear Friends:

I suspect you are on our mailing list because you love maps! I do, too.

And so did Brian Harley and David Woodward, who conceived *The History of Cartography* in 1977. We have often described how Brian and David began thinking about *how* and *why* people made and used maps through the ages. They wanted to help others consider and interpret maps through this new lens. It was a novel and rather radical idea at the time. Early maps had been viewed as *objets d'art* or as tools that guided people on land and sea. Some maps were not even considered maps. As founding editors, Brian and David hoped to engage others and foster new research.

There is nothing wrong with loving maps because they are useful and compelling. But *The History of Cartography* gives us the “value added” that Brian and David imagined—social and cultural contexts, new interpretations, and accurate facts and references—all to serve as the basis for further studies. On the

back of this letter you will find one such study; I have begun to explore what it means to view maps in (or out of) their original setting.

The founders’ idea has come to fruition and the series is a success. The Project has expanded the field and published seven books organized by period and region: Volumes 1, 2 (three separate books), 3, 4, and 6.


We are now preparing *Cartography in the Nineteenth Century* (Volume 5), which completes the series! I won’t belabor the point, but as you may imagine, it will take time and also money to get the job done.

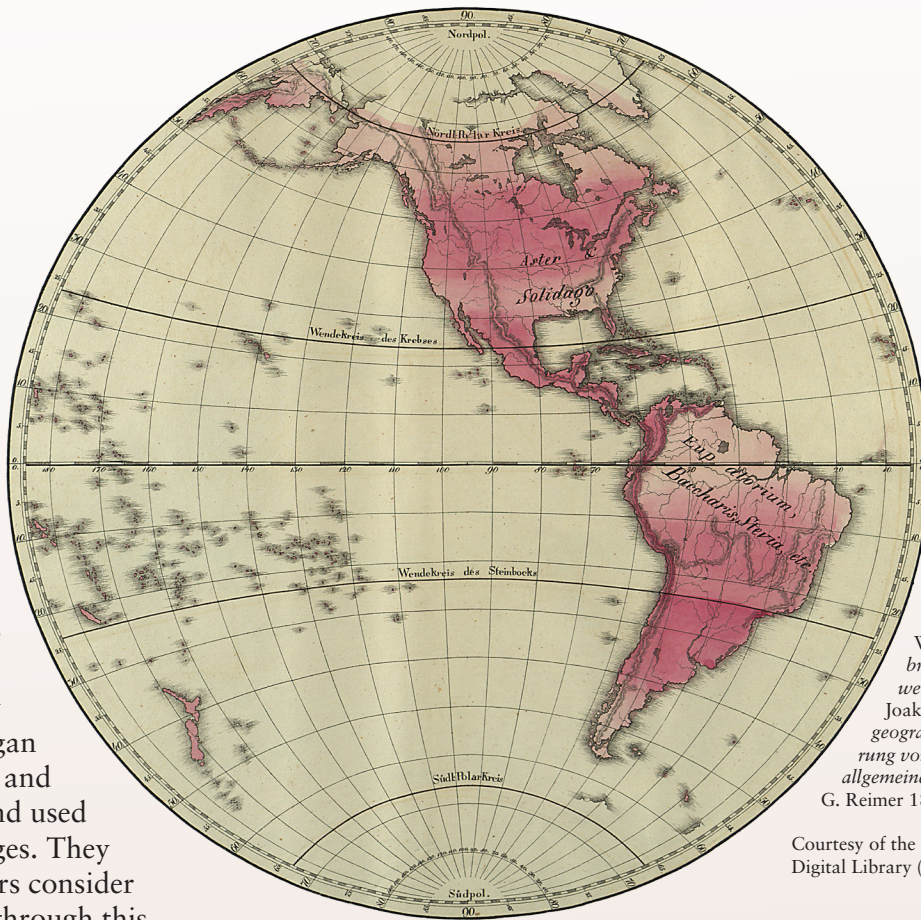
With sufficient support we can maintain a schedule that allows for publication in 2027. Many factors are out of our hands, but a gift from you will have a great impact.

Will you donate this year? Gifts of any size are most welcome and make a difference.

Thanks for your confidence in our efforts—and for your support!

Sincerely,


Matthew Edney
Project Director



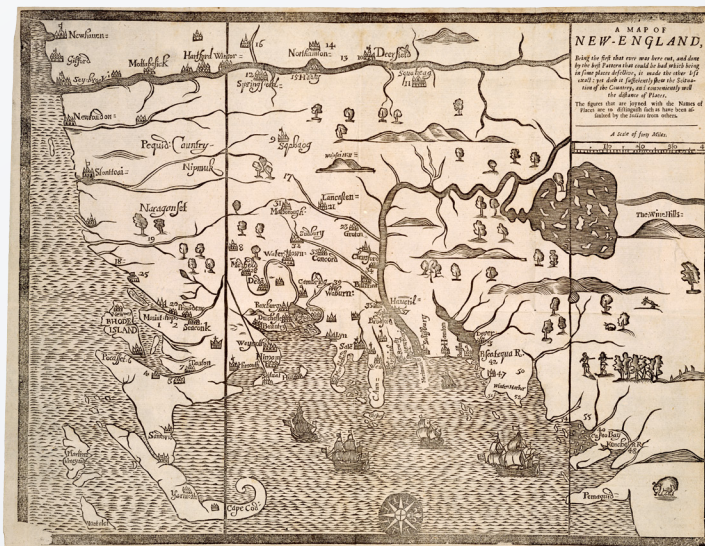
Western hemisphere from *Verbreitungsbezirk und Vertheilungsweise der Syngenesisten*. From Joakim Frederik Schouw, *Pflanzengeographischer Atlas zur Erläuterung von Schouws Grundzügen einer allgemeinen Pflanzengeographie* (Berlin: G. Reimer 1823), Taf. IX (left half).

Courtesy of the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Digital Library (520 Te 3).

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Left: William Hubbard, “A Map of New-England, being the First That Ever Was Here Cut,” in his *The Present State of New-England* (London, 1677). The derivative of the map that John Foster cut and printed in Boston. Courtesy of the Osher Map Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education, University of Southern Maine (Osher Collection 12777).

Below: Map of central and eastern Tibet (1857). Courtesy of the British Library, London, UK / © British Library Board. All Rights Reserved / Bridgeman Images. Size of the original: 48 cm × 63 cm.



Putting Maps Back into Context

by Matthew Edney

We are attracted to maps because of their power as *images*. They open windows onto the world, but how we read and interpret these images depends on how we understand their *context*. The *History of Cartography* strives to establish the contexts in which maps were made and used so that we might read them in an historically sensitive manner. The *History* is known for emphasizing the social and cultural contexts of maps and mapping, but it also pays close attention to *physical* context.

Unfortunately maps were often physically removed from their original settings. To understand these early maps, we must reestablish the relationship.

The traditional emphasis on maps’ geographical content meant that scholars commonly grouped them by the regions they depicted; to do so, they removed them from their original books and atlases. Conversely, some people wanted complete and unblemished books—they *reinserted* maps. By 1890, the maps of New England in the Boston and London editions of William Hubbard’s 1677 account of King Philip’s War (1675–76) had been so thoroughly mixed and matched that no one had a clue which map went in which edition.

The chain of custody, as it were, could easily be broken through poor record keeping. A collection of fifty-five glorious manuscript “picture maps” and

other pictures from nineteenth-century Tibet has long been an enigma. Called the “Wise Collection,” librarians did not even know who Wise was. Through careful detective work, Diana Lange has identified not only Wise but also the British agent in the western Himalaya who had actually commissioned the materials from an unfortunately still anonymous lama traveling from Lhasa in 1857. Lange unearthed more details, which she presents in her Volume Five entry on the Wise Collection.

We’ll have to wait for that, but for now I have prepared a more in-depth, illustrated essay that explores why people removed maps from where they started—and why it is important to put them back! You’ll find it online at geography.wisc.edu/histcart/2021-extras/ Please visit!

Thank you to all our friends and supporters. Each of you plays a role in our progress, and we are grateful. Special thanks to granting agencies and institutions: the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Science Foundation, the University of Wisconsin–Madison (College of Letters & Science and Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education, with funding from the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation), and the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation.