

ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN MAP LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES
BULLETIN

Book Reviews

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Emma Willard, Maps of History, by Susan Schulten

Reviewed by Rhys Stevens, University of Lethbridge

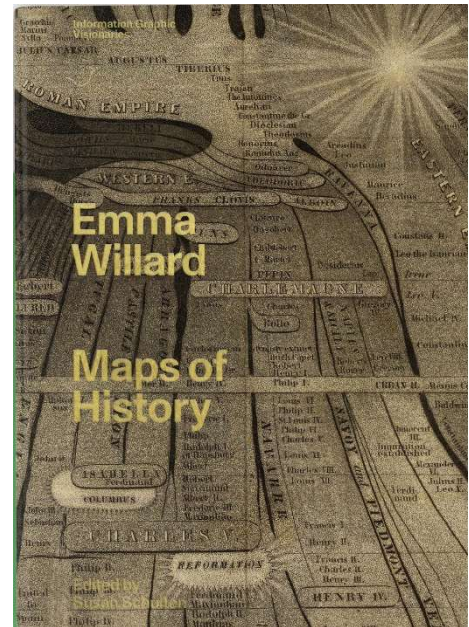
Susan Schulten (Editor). *Emma Willard, Maps of History.*
 San Francisco, CA: Visionary Press, 2022. 248p. \$88.00
 US. ISBN: 9798986194509.

Keywords: Women cartographers; Information visualization; Visual communication; Historical geography; Education history, Review

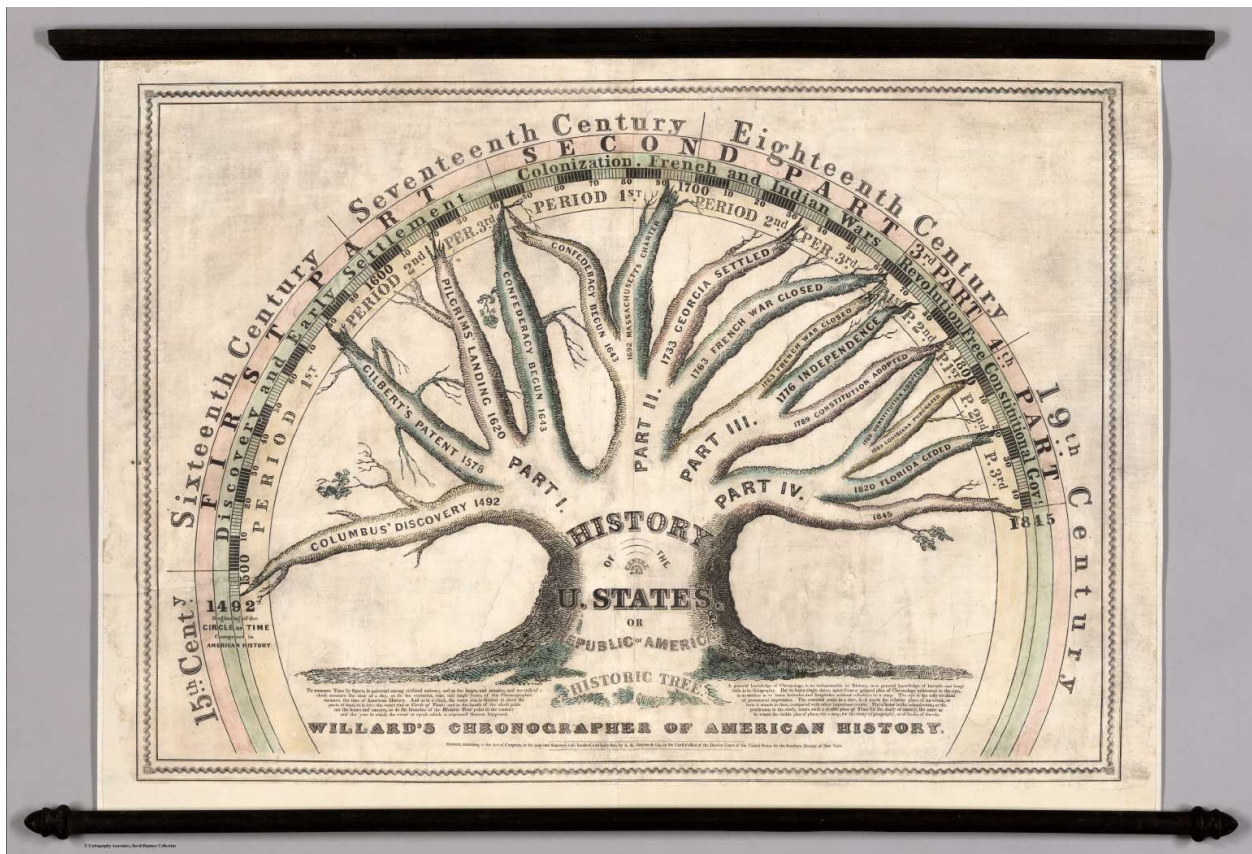
Review

Recognizing and celebrating spectacular data visualization creators whose ideas have revolutionized our understanding of the world is the aim of the new Information Graphic Visionaries book series by the Visionary Press. One of the first visionaries profiled within their own volume is 19th-century American educator Emma Willard (1787-1870). In *Emma Willard, Maps of History*, editor Susan Schulten, Professor of History at the University of Denver, provides details about Willard's influences and achievements in the form of a 100-page illustrated essay entitled "A Graphic Mind." The remainder of the 248-page book is a visual catalogue containing 100+ republished colour images from Willard's groundbreaking atlases, classroom charts and textbook graphics. Complementing the images are critique and historical context.

In her essay about Emma Willard (pp. 15-114), Schulten indicates that, as a teacher of young



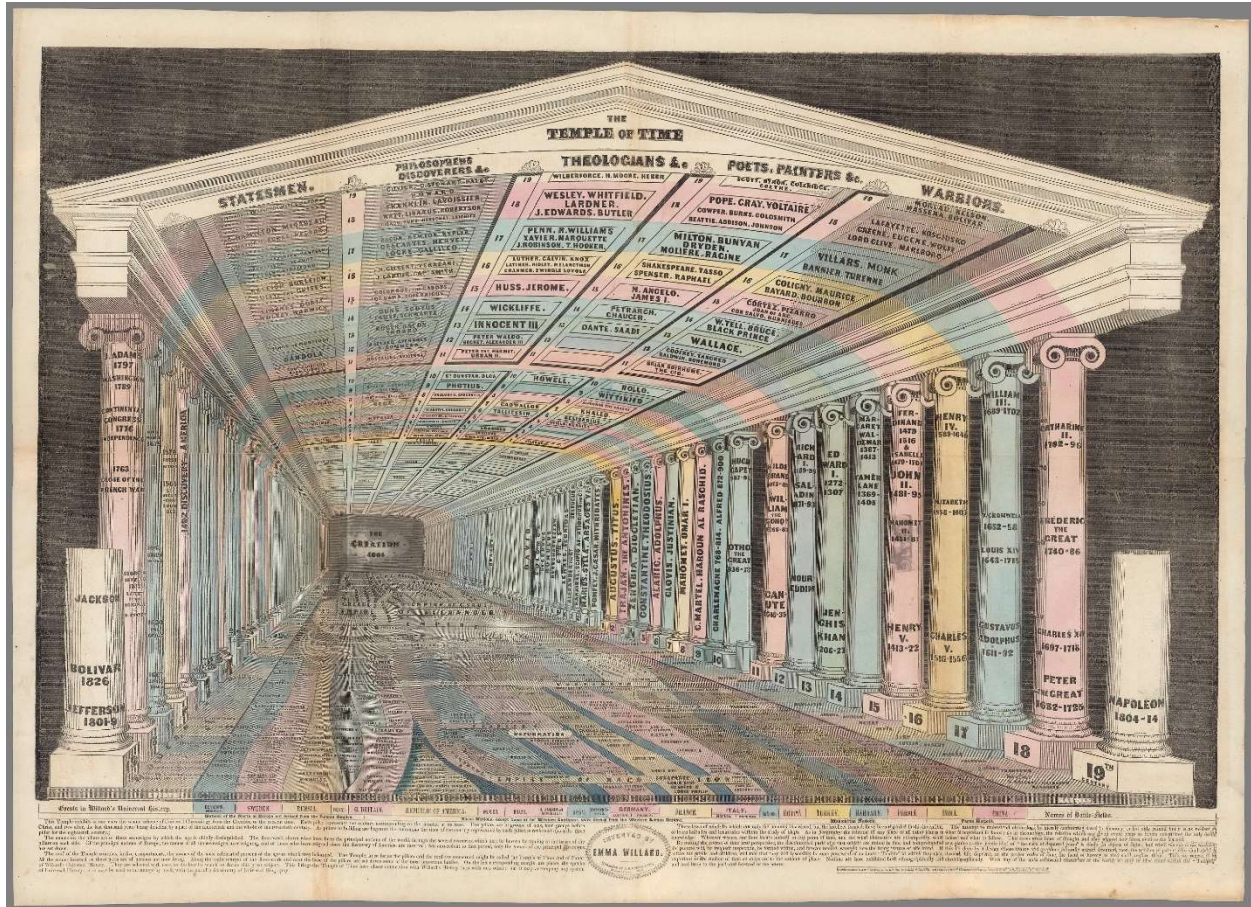
women in the New England region during the early 1810s and 1820s, Willard became dissatisfied with existing geography textbooks and their “dry, encyclopedic approach to the subject.” In response, she set about using her love of drawing and self-taught knowledge of geometric perspective to develop her own more visual curriculum materials for the interdependent disciplines of geography and history. Willard’s classroom materials incorporated colour and iconography in a way that she believed would be most effective in allowing her students to acquire, process and retain information. In 1822, Willard’s efforts resulted in the publication of her first textbook, entitled *Ancient Geography*, which she later accompanied with *Ancient Atlas* (1827). Willard would continue to author influential and popular new textbooks and atlases - including the first-ever atlas of American history (*A Series of Maps to Willard’s History of the United States, or Republic of America*, 1829). Over time, more than a million copies of Willard’s textbooks and wall charts would circulate throughout America’s schools, libraries and homes. Examples of several notable and innovative visualizations within Willard’s four atlases have been republished and described by Schulten (pp. 117-190).



"Willard's Chronographer of American History" (1845) by Emma Willard — [Source](#) (Cartography Associates: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0).

Readers of *Emma Willard, Maps of History* will be particularly interested in learning about the next stage of Willard’s career, that Schulten describes as moving beyond traditional textbooks and maps to more complex graphical tools. This involved Willard reconsidering the appearance of the historical timeline graphic, which was itself so novel in the eighteenth century that it required its own explanation. Drawing again upon her artistic skill, she charted American history on a tree (*Willard’s Chronographer of American History*, 1845) in order to “give students a way to order the

past and thereby understand its larger meaning.” Another of Willard's charts was *Temple of Time* which she felt to be her greatest single contribution to education. According to Schulten, Willard referred to the Temple as her “map of time”, and she designed it to coordinate geography and history in the same way that a map coordinates longitude and latitude. Reproductions of Willard's classroom charts appear within the book (pp. 193-209) in addition to a full-sized colour poster reproduction of *Temple of Time*.



"The Temple of Time" (1846) by Emma Willard — [Source](#) (Cartography Associates: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0).

Schulten's author biography indicates that she “uses old maps to tell new stories about history,” and, indeed, within *Emma Willard, Maps of History*, she has provided a fascinating background about Willard's revolutionary use of visualizations and infographics within educational settings. Schulten expertly selects and describes examples from among Willard's innovative maps, charts and graphics appearing within the pages of her 19th-century textbooks and atlases. In doing so, Schulten also explores Willard's ardent nationalism and how it was reflected in her graphical materials and their portrayal of American history.

In summary, the book *Emma Willard, Maps of History* provides an excellent overview of the life and work of information graphic visionary Emma Willard. Recommended for academic libraries with collections relating to historical geography, cartography, and the history of education.

Atlas of Design, Published by North American Cartographic Information Society (NACIS)

Reviewed by Francine Berish, Queen's University

Case, Nat., Koelker, Aaron., Ryan, Josh., and Tracy Tien (editors). *Atlas of Design*. Golden Valley, MN: Shapco Printing, 2022. 102p. 25.00\$ US. ISBN 979-8-9866856-6-3.

Keywords: Map Design, Compilation, Cartographic Innovation, Maps as Storytelling, Medium is the Message, Review

Review

Published by the North American Cartographic Information Society (NACIS), Volume 6 of the *Atlas of Design*, released during the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic, showcases an array of 32 maps from various sources and perspectives. While some maps are in keeping with cartographic traditions resonating with readers' nostalgia, others push the boundaries of innovation and are deeply personal, artistic, or tactile representations. Akin to hearing an artist preface their works at a gallery opening, the accompanying descriptions of each map afford the cartographer an opportunity to introduce their positionality to contextualize and justify their cartographic

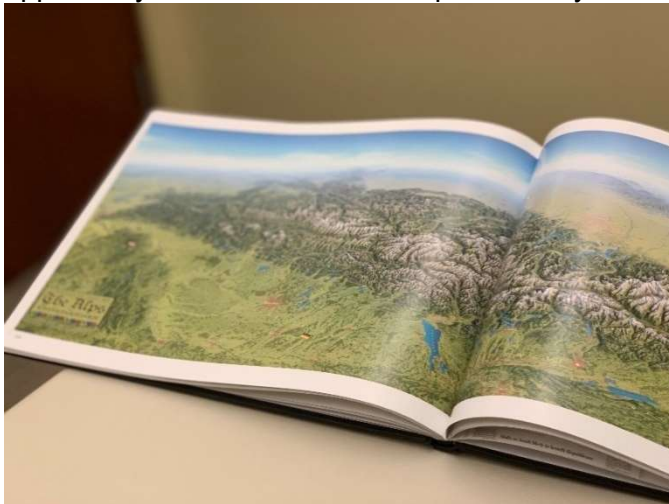


Figure 2: "Panoramic Map of the Alps"

approaches and design elements, like fonts and colour schemes. On one hand, getting a sense of scale is challenging when one sees the maps outside of their original contexts and publications. For example, the awe-inspiring oblique "Panoramic Map of the Alps" published by National Geographic could be room-sized, and it is difficult to imagine a version with readable labels in any printed publication (Figure 1).

On the other hand, the *Atlas of Design* creatively uses headers and multipage spreads to zoom to elements and parts of the maps to highlight details the reader would not otherwise see. "The Atlanta Rap Map" was particularly stand-out in that it combines both artistic and traditional cartographic approaches through the creative integration of abstracted portraits of hip-hop artists and timelines into the cartouche (Figure 2). Maps do not have to be complicated to aid in our navigational understanding. The "Takamatsu Public Transportation Map"

approaches and design elements, like fonts and colour schemes. On one hand, getting a sense of scale is challenging when one sees the maps outside of their original contexts and publications. For example, the awe-inspiring oblique "Panoramic Map of the Alps" published by National Geographic could be room-sized, and it is difficult to imagine a version with readable labels in any printed publication (Figure 1).



Figure 1: "The Atlanta Rap Map" showing zoomed-in portion and descriptive text retrieved from <https://atlasofdesign.bigcartel.com/product/atlas-of-design-volume-6>.

promotes the idea that simplification and arrangement of successive planes can help tourists navigate the transit map using above-ground landmarks.

From mapping hospital smells to personal narratives, *The Atlas of Design* is an inspiring compilation of artistic and geospatial approaches to cartography that pushes its boundaries while simultaneously functioning as a gateway to the non-academic audience.

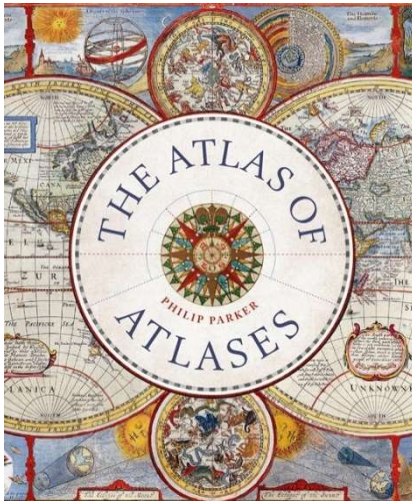
The Atlas of Atlases: Exploring the most important atlases in history and the cartographers who made them., By Philip Parker

Reviewed by Zack MacDonald, Western University

Parker, Philip, *The Atlas of Atlases: Exploring the most important atlases in history and the cartographers who made them.* London: The Ivy Press, 2022. 272 pages. \$56.68. ISBN 9780711268050.

Keywords: Atlas, Cartography, History, Historical Maps, Historical Cartography, Review

Review



The Atlas of Atlases aims to introduce its readers to the long and storied history of the atlas, from its most ancient origins to its questionable future in the age of digital mapping. The atlas includes over 200 high-quality, full-colour illustrations spanning nearly the entire history of western cartography, beginning with the Çatal Hüyük town plan (6200 B.C.) and ending with an image of a Google Street View car in action. Parker has published widely on the history of maps and cartography, including *History of the World in Maps* (2015), *History of Britain in Maps* (2017), and *History of World Trade in Maps* (2020). He brings this considerable expertise to bear to deliver an engaging and accessible survey of the history and development of the atlas.

The Atlas of Atlases is geared towards a general audience and introduces readers to the broad historical and technical developments of map making that led to the modern atlas. The atlas follows a chronological approach over its nine chapters, with each chapter focusing on a general theme. The early chapters cover an immense temporal scope and collectively address the development and rise of cartography in the Western tradition. The middle chapters cover the era of “peak atlas”, in which Parker provides a dense overview of the individual cartographers and map makers, socio-political, economic, technical, and intrapersonal forces that drove the development of atlases forward into the modern period. These chapters provide a concise, if not hasty, survey of the scientific and technical advances that enabled large-scale national mapping projects. Readers are reminded here of the pivotal and reciprocal role that atlases and mapping had in the legitimization of both nations and empires. The final three chapters cover the diversification, specialization, and subsequent “decline” of the atlas. These final chapters feel rushed compared to the previous chapters, despite the monumental changes wrought by new technologies in creating and disseminating cartographic materials.

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Perhaps unsurprising, given the attempt to squeeze the entire history of cartography into a single volume, the work is not without its limitations. Parker is forced to gloss over or selectively omit topics in such limited space. He warns his readers, for example, not to assume that the European West was alone in making advances in cartography and map making. He includes the Kangnido map of 1402 as a stunning example of the work of Asian cartographers but provides few other examples.

Similarly, the chapter covering 1900-1950 may leave readers with the impression that only military mapping projects were undertaken during that half-century. Furthermore, the coverage of the rise and diversification of thematic atlases felt less complete than the chapters covering their pre-modern predecessors. Despite espousing the ubiquity of atlases with the emergence of web mapping, and Google Maps in particular, little attention has been given to developments since that 2005 release. Although the chapters cover the introduction of air photography and satellite imagery, advances in geographic information systems, remote sensing, and digital mapping applications are absent. Nevertheless, Parker ends on a positive note, leaving the door open for future developments and transformations of the atlas rather than its obsolescence.

The *Atlas of Atlases* sets out to bring its readers a general overview of the rise and fall of the atlas as a cartographic medium, and it accomplishes this well. I found myself leafing through the volume until a map grabbed my interest, and then would read that section again. To this reader's pre-modern sensibilities, it is in the early chapters where the volume truly shines. Here, Parker does well to connect pre-modern mapping and their thematic and cosmographic, rather than strictly geographical approaches to the growth of the atlas as we know it today. While the high-quality images of rare and ancient maps grab your attention, the compelling accompanying narrative urges you to turn the page.

Readers looking for a general and accessible introduction to the history of cartography and rise of the atlas will find *The Atlas of Atlases* to be a fine starting point.

[Images from: <https://www.quarto.com/books/9780711268050/the-atlas-of-atlases>]