

Chapter 9

The Almost Perfect Tourist Map

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ABSTRACT

Creating the perfect tourist map is one of the appeals of map development and is driven by the desire to achieve an unbeatable model. This chapter aims to examine the state of the art by reviewing the literature on what a tourist map is and the different types of map customization, taking into account the different concepts, materials, designs, colors, and grids. The author conducted an analogical and digital bibliographic research of tourist maps to propose a personalization system called City Coordinate Orientation System (City COS®), which focuses on the mental representation of the city as a whole. This system makes use of a grid placed on the city map which allows users to observe the places they would like to visit and become familiar with the urban landscape.

INTRODUCTION

The history of human beings and the history of maps are one and the same. Humans have constantly sought to produce representations of their location on the Earth's surface, and use that as a reference to figure out how far they could move and by which routes. Throughout this journey, the map became a travel companion, allowing us to acquire knowledge and the ability to move around. The first steps of this journey (although there may have been earlier ones) began with the Bedolina map, known as one of the first maps. It was carved in Italy around 1500 BC., according to Lecourt et al. (2006), and is a schematic drawing engraved in stone depicting a valley with fields, houses, and roads; it was an attempt to outline the territory of a certain region. The map of Nippur, an ancient Sumerian city, was also discovered around the same time; the first time a representation of a city was created. We consider these two maps, of Bedolina and Nippur, to be the origin of the map. Later, in the 14th century BC, the Egyptians manufactured papyrus maps, which they used to depict fields along the Nile River (Lecourt et al., 2006). Later, the mathematicians Euclid, Pythagoras and Thales (300 BC? - 623 BC) understood that the Earth was not a flat surface and created measuring instruments to improve cartography, another step toward portraying the Earth. Two subsequent events, relatively close to each other, were the measure-

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ment of the circumference of the Earth (40,000 km) and the placement of a checkered grid on top of the map to mark latitude and longitude, achievements carried out respectively by Ptolemy and Eratosthenes (100 BC? - 170 BC and 90 BC? - 168 BC). At this point in time, the Earth's surface was considered to be round. But this theory was forgotten in the Middle Ages (5th-15th century) as religious thought and vision came to dominate the world, one which considered the Earth to, once again, be flat. To illustrate the spherical earth we have the "orbis terrarum" maps, or T and O maps, which mean Waters and Land, respectively (Lecourt et al., 2006). During these shifts of knowledge the Chinese invented the compass which, together with other tools, led to portolan charts, according to Brown's vision (Lecourt et al., 2006). These charts mark the maritime ports, the coastlines, and the wind direction, making navigation easier for sailors (Lecourt et al., 2006) by controlling the places of departure and arrival. At the beginning of the 15th century, the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French and English disputed over the territories that Portuguese cartography would register on a regular basis. The maps were secret documents, used to propose or induce thoughts, and were often forged to more easily achieve the desired goals. One of the highlights of this voluntary shaping (or forging) of maps occurred with the Treaty of Tordesillas, which divided the known world into two parts: the Eastern Hemisphere for the Portuguese and the Western Hemisphere for the Spanish. The Brazilian coast was depicted as having a greater land area than it actually did, thus attributing more land to Portugal. In the 16th century, the Mercator projection became a milestone in mapping because it used a mathematical system to represent the spherical Earth on a flat surface. This method marked the transition to scientific cartography. In the following century, the Dutch dominated the making and printing of maps, marked by the grandiose Blaeu's atlas, published in 1662 (Lecourt et al., 2006). This atlas represents the discovered and undiscovered areas of the Earth, at the height of knowledge at the time. Cartography gained in scope due to this multidisciplinary knowledge of geography, mathematics, photography, and computing, among other areas. The invention of lithography, already extensively used throughout the 19th century, allowed for maps to be reproduced more efficiently and in larger numbers. As more and more of the Earth was being discovered, the maps began to depict territories, mountains, rivers and seas. By the turn of the 20th century, most of the planet had already been well explored. Two more tools appeared to help cartography move toward its quest for perfection: photography and aviation. Using these tools together provided a much more accurate representation of the Earth. Even with this more real and thorough visual perspective of the Earth (including the 21st century with its satellites and digital language) maps continued to be deliberately inauthentic in terms of realistic representation. This was because maps were created to show what their creators wanted them to show. One example is the map of Moscow, released to the public during the cold war (mid-to-late 20th century). The KGB Committee for State Security building was not drawn on the map; it was replaced by a street design in order to make it undetectable. This is one of the moments where we can question the perfection of the map, as with the Treaty of Tordesillas and even the present day. Paula Scher, one of the most influential designers in the world and a partner at the Pentagram (n.d.), mentions in her book *MAPS* that her father, an engineer who worked with aerial photography for the US Geological Survey, often said that maps were not accurate tools.

We migrated from ancient stone maps to papyrus, parchment, paper and other supports, ultimately bringing us to the screen here in the 21st century. Screens are small and transportable formats which we use to visualize the Earth, from a global overview to the details of a street, allowing us to acquire information about the Earth's surface. It has been a long journey to the present day, one of tireless motivation in our search for perfecting and depicting the Earth, using the knowledge we have acquired from each era. "The dream of the perfect map – cartography and mathematics", published by National Geographic

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