

REVIEWS

Edited by Sarah Simpkin

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Frederick de Wit and the First Concise Reference Atlas

Tomasz Mrozewski

Carhart, George. *Frederick de Wit and the First Concise Reference Atlas*. Boston: Brill Hes & De Graaf, 2016. 589p. USD \$162. ISBN 978-9004299030.

This gorgeous, weighty tome details the life and work of Dutch Golden Age mapmaker, bookseller and publisher Frederick de Wit (1629/30 - 1706). *Frederick de Wit and the First Concise Reference Atlas* is the 16th volume of the Explokart Studies in the History of Cartography (formerly the Utrecht Studies in the History of Cartography), a series dedicated to the "exploration and accessibility of Dutch cartographic documents, 16th-20th century." *Frederick de Wit* is the author's doctoral dissertation packaged with an extensive cartobibliography and reproductions of De Wit's work.

Carhart's seeks to rehabilitate De Wit's standing in the history of cartography, arguing that De Wit "was not just a purveyor of maps but also an innovator in the field of commercial cartography [who] changed the form in which atlases were consumed in the second half of the seventeenth century, a change which continues... today" (p. 12). De Wit's innovation, according to Carhart, was the concise reference

atlas - a more accessible alternative to the large, expensive and multi-volume encyclopedic atlases of predecessors such as Mercator, Janssonius and Blaeu. De Wit's single-volume, programmatically assembled and text-free atlases were commercially successful and influential to his own contemporaries and subsequent generations, as evidenced by the continued reuse of his printing plates after his death and even the misappropriation of his name on maps by other publishers (p.119-120). Carhart does get stuck in the weeds at one point, splitting hairs to show that De Wit edged contemporaries to create the first concise reference atlas but the argument, if valid, seems moot in light of other evidence for De Wit's influence on other map publishers.

Carhart's research comes off as exhaustive and well considered. He makes extensive reference to archival materials in his research and reproduces a great number of documents to accompany the text. He uses documentary evidence to establish more precise and accurate dates for De Wit's oeuvre and uses new evidence to elaborate on the biographical sketch of De Wit - some readers may be interested to learn that, according to new evidence, De Wit was likely a Lutheran and not a Catholic. Overall, Carhart's prose is not particularly exciting but, as a dissertation, it is not meant to be. Unfortunately, scholarly prose is made less readable by peculiar

typesetting: the lack of space between paragraphs or first-line indentation, the justified text alignment and small font size make for a difficult slab of text.

Perhaps the main attraction of *Frederick de Wit* are the full-colour reproductions of over 200 maps and charts created or edited by De Wit, crossreferenced with the cartobibliography and featuring illustrations of variations between different versions of the same map. The reproductions are of excellent quality and are taken from high-resolution digital images. The only complaint here is the size: despite the book's large format, the original maps are of such a size that a magnifying glass would be required to see many details on the maps and to read the labels.

Overall, an excellent addition to any collection emphasizing the history of cartography.

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QGIS Map Design

Meg Miller

Graser, Anita and Peterson, Gretchen N. *QGIS Map Design*. Chugiak: Locate Press, 2016. 195p. USD \$24.99. ISBN 978-0989421751

Graser and Peterson are both well-known professionals in the realm of GIS. Graser is currently working as a researcher at the Austrian Institute of Technology, is part of the QGIS steering committee and is an OSGeo Board member. She also maintains a personal/professional blog on open source GIS and has authored a number of books and papers on the topic. Peterson runs her own GIS consulting company and is active in the GIS community. She has authored several publications on cartography as well as an adult coloring book of maps. Both are prolific Twitter users with large followings.

Having been recommended *QGIS Map Design* by

several people before getting the opportunity to review it, my hopes were very high, and I dove right in, skipping the Foreword, and "Who this book is for" sections. I was disappointed. It is a recipe book. A resource designed for a specific release (so will be current for approximately 1 yr.), with step-by-step instructions of what buttons to click for a variety of tasks. I then put the book down for around a month feeling cheated. When I picked it back up I decided to start at the beginning. In the Introduction they state that this is not a resource on cartographic technique and all the 'why's' of making design decisions. It is a resource for the intermediate GIS user on how to use a specific set of cartographic tools found within a specific software.

The book is a softcover and measures 8.5 x 11 in. The pages themselves are matte, and images can be pixelated at times. The content is written in conversational plain language (which is nice). Key words are italicized, but there is no glossary to explain them. Tips and additional explanations are found in the page margins.

Topics include (but are not limited to):

- Graduated symbology
- Hillshades
- Colour blending
- Mapping election results
- Hierarchical labelling
- Placing labels by hand
- Curved labels
- Customizing legends
- Graticules
- Infographics
- Dynamic masks
- Designing aesthetic scale-bars

Data is available for download to work through these provided examples. Working through several of these examples without issue demonstrated that instructions were accurate, clear and concise. In terms of print publications, there is nothing else out there like this (a workbook/recipe book of