"Mapping the Sacred" is Focus of Virginia Garrett Lectures in October

by Katherine R. Goodwin

The Fifth Biennial Virginia Garrett Lectures on the History of Cartography and the Texas Map Society are again joining forces to bring an outstanding cartographic extravaganza to UT Arlington. In store for attendees will be a cartographic weekend filled with world class presentations, the opening of an exhibition, and a tour of UT Arlington's new planetarium. The meetings will take place on Friday and Saturday, October 6 and 7, at the university's Central Library with the session at the planetarium scheduled for Saturday afternoon. The Garrett Lectures are sponsored by Special Collections at the UT Arlington Library, the Texas Map Society, the Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography, and the Friends of the UT Arlington Library.

Titled "Mapping the Sacred: Belief and Religion in the History of Cartography," the Virginia Garrett Lectures will focus on how various religious use maps to depict sacred ideas as well as to keep track of worldly territories. Many of the world’s major religions, including Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Mormonism, and Native American will be represented in the lectures. This is the first time, to our knowledge, that a conference addressing maps and religion has been held. The speakers for the Garrett Lectures will be:

- **Klara Bonsack Kelley**, Independent Cultural Resources Consultant in Navajoland, and **Harris Francis**, a Navajo and an American Indian Cultural Rights Protection Consultant. Their presentation is titled "On the Trail of the Trail to the Sun's House: Navajo Maps and Religion."
- **Karen C. Pinto**, Assistant Professor and authority in Islamic Cartography, American University of Beirut, Lebanon. Her presentation is titled "Traces of the Diabolic and the Divine in Islamic Maps."
- **Catherine Delano-Smith**, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Historical Research, University of London, England, and editor of *Imago Mundi*, the foremost periodical on the history of cartography. Her presentation is titled "To Draw Is to Understand: Mapping the Bible Text."
- **Richard Francaviglia**, Director of the Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography, The University of Texas at Arlington. His presentation is titled "Mapmakers of New Zion: The Significance of Cartography in Mormon History, 1830-2005."
- **Rehav Rubin**, Chairman of the Department of Geography at Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. His presentation is titled "Jewish Cartography: Between Tradition and Imitation."

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In conjunction with the Garrett Lectures, the Virginia Garrett Cartographic History Library, at UT Arlington is presenting an exhibition focusing on the relationship between religion and cartography titled "Mapping the Sacred." Curated by Ben Huseman, the library's new cartographic archivist, the exhibition explores how belief and religion have influenced cartography and mapmaking in many cultures around the world. Drawn primarily from the Virginia Garrett Cartographic History Library at The University of Texas at Arlington, along with some rare maps and books graciously lent by the DeGolyer Library at Southern Methodist University, the exhibit contains an incredible diversity of maps and mapmakers that are related to spiritual and religious cartography. Be sure to see Huseman's article in the forthcoming issue of The Compass Rose describing the rich treasures in the exhibition which opens on Friday evening, October 6, in Special Collections at UT Arlington’s Central Library.

The Texas Map Society follows the Garrett Lectures on Saturday, October 7, also at the Central Library, with a talented array of speakers and a tour of UT Arlington’s new state-of-the-art planetarium—one of the largest in the nation. The TMS, in addition to hosting an outstanding slate of presentations, is continuing the popular "Cartographic Corner" as "Members Map Forum" with new host David Finrock. Members are encouraged to bring maps, atlases, or other cartographic materials to the meeting for discussion.

Speakers for the TMS meeting will be:

- **David Buissere**, recently retired professor of History and chair holder of the Jenkins and Virginia Garrett Endowed Chair in the History of Cartography, The University of Texas at Arlington will discuss "Franciscans and Jesuits: Contrasting Styles of Mapping."

- **David Finrock**, TMS board member, collector, and NBC5 Chief Meteorologist, will host the Members Map Forum.
- **Robert J. Bonaduer**, Astronomer and Director of UT Arlington’s Planetarium, will invite us into the planetarium for his talk, "Mapping the Heavens."

The two-day meetings are hosted and sponsored by Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Library, the Texas Map Society, The Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography, and the Friends of the UT Arlington Library. Events will be on the Sixth Floor of the UT Arlington Central Library and at the UT Arlington Planetarium. The Garrett Lectures are underwritten, in part, by the Virginia Garrett Cartographic History Endowment. For more information on the Members Map Forum, please contact TMS Secretary-Treasurer Kit Goodwin at 817-861-1425 or goodwin@uta.edu. For more information about the Garrett Lectures and the Texas Map Society meeting, please contact Carolyn Kadri, Special Collections, UT Arlington Library, Box 19497, Arlington, Texas 76019-0497, or (phone) 817-272-7153, (fax) 817-272 3360, or (email) kadri@uta.edu.
Maps and Religion: An Enduring Relationship
by Richard Francaviglia

We usually use maps to locate tangible places — for example, a destination we seek, real estate we might buy, or countries we hope to visit. That type of search connects us to the everyday or practical side of cartography, but maps can also serve a far different purpose. They have long been used to depict or locate intangible places — such as heaven and hell — that are linked to the human imagination or the human spirit. It can be argued that some of the earliest known maps are, in fact, cosmological. By cosmological I mean those thoughts that pertain to deeper meanings about our place in the universe. Cosmological maps depict a world or universe based not on actual observation, but rather on belief. An early (ca. 600 BC) map from Babylon cast into a clay tablet not only shows actual features like the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, but also a symmetrical body of water that forms the border of earth and heavens. This oceanic orb was never seen by the ancient Babylonians, but they evidently believed in it enough to represent it with considerable precision on this early map. It helped position Babylon, and Mesopotamia, as central to the entire universe.

We may think that the Babylonian map is a fanciful depiction of the earth by an ancient people with little connection to us, but consider how the Christian people of Europe in the Middle Ages represented the world as a simple T-O map (Orbis Terrarum). We recognize the "O" as the perimeter of the world, but the T is so regular that it seems more like part of a logo than a map. Yet, when we look closer, we see that the T represents three important bodies of water — the Mediterranean Sea, the Nile River, and the Don River — that separated the continents of Europe, Africa, and Asia. Note that this map is oriented (that is positioned with reference to top) so that the most important direction — east — is up. Today we commonly place north in that position, but at that time, east was most important. It was not only the direction from which the sun rose to renew life each day; it was also the direction in which the most important single place in the world — Jerusalem — was found. Even today, however, we still use the word for the east — orient — to indicate which direction is "up" on (that is, at the top of) a map.

T-O maps are as much cosmological statements as they are cartographic. They reveal a belief about the ultimate arrangement of a perfect world created and sustained by God. Moreover, the basic design of the map divided in three by a T serves yet another cosmological purpose. The T is a symbol for the cross, or rather the crucifixion. Then, too, the concept of three, as in the trinity, is fundamental to Christianity. The basic design of the T-O map is a reminder of the power of a religious ideology to shape both the world, and the map of the world.

Cosmological maps survive to the present. However, they are rare because they were replaced by increasingly scientific maps based on part on a revival of the Greek Ptolemaic tradition, which began to appear about 1500. That same scientific tradition has relegated religious maps to the position of "curiosities" in the popular/secular mind, but they are worth a closer look. Consider next how Christian missionaries used maps in the nineteenth century to render stories in the Bible more relevant. Maps from the nineteenth century often feature places mentioned in the Bible. Note, for example, how the richly-ornamented cartouche of a map may contain important religious information, such as scenes from the Bible. Locations like the Garden of Eden, which are fairly vaguely defined in the Old Testament (Genesis) as being between two rivers, are sometimes placed with complete confidence on missionaries' maps of the Bible lands. Other locations — for example, the place where Moses is believed to have parted the Red Sea, or climbed Mt. Sinai, are also shown as a way of positioning a religious story in the real world. Still other places, like Jerusalem, and Antioch in Asia Minor, are located with more precision, for they were among the many actual places mentioned in the Bible. Maps of the 1500s-1700s frequently feature scenes from the Bible — a perfect example of how maps and related images work together to inform, and sometimes inspire, map users. Some maps compared the United States, or even the state of Texas, to the Holy Land. Using familiar geographic areas, people could better understand the size of the Holy Land.
Religions have a practical as well as spiritual side, and so they often use maps for fairly mundane purposes—such as plotting where missionary activity should be directed, or showing the percentage of believers (versus non-believers) in an area. For example, the Mormons (as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are often called), have a rich cartographic tradition. Beginning with the City of Zion Plan (1833), their leader Joseph Smith used maps to convey lessons about the way perfect communities—which is to say, those that would be the locations where "angels will visit"—should be laid out. After Smith's murder by a mob in 1844, Brigham Young guided the Latter-day Saints westward using the best maps he could find. Recognizing that non-Mormon mapmakers were making increasingly accurate maps, Young commanded a fellow official in 1847 to "bring me one half dozen of Mitchell's new map of Texas, Oregon & California...or rather the latest edition and best map of all the Indian countries in North America." At that time, Young was unsure of exactly where the Mormons would settle, but he knew it would be somewhere in the mountainous West. Young knew precisely what type of maps he wanted, adding that "the pocket maps are the best for our use." Young wanted not only the best, but the latest, maps. As he put it, "If there is anything later or better than Mitchell's, I want the best." The Mormons made many of their own maps as they settled the West and developed their faith into a world-wide religion. I should also note that maps can help religious people like the Mormons to illustrate ancient religious history. Recently, Mormon filmmakers used maps to show the route allegedly taken by the ancient Nephites who traveled from the Holy Land to the Americas long before Columbus. That journey is a key aspect of the original Book of Mormon, and the 2005 video production Journey of Faith features interesting maps upon which the journey is retraced. The Mormons, in other words, have been producing and using maps since 1833. But surprisingly little has ever been written about this process. That reminds us just how new and exciting the study of maps and religion can be. Despite the long historical association between religions and maps, the study of how maps are made and used for religious and spiritual purposes is still in its infancy.

We need to better understand how each faith uses maps, but before we do so, we should note that many native or indigenous peoples also use maps in their religions. For example, Navajo sand paintings often delineate cosmological beliefs, as did the maps of Christian denominations that later came to the Southwest. Worldwide, we need to know more about how people of the largest religions—Islam, Judaism, Shinto, Buddhism, Hinduism—delineate their varied geographic and celestial worlds. In so doing, however, we should remember the smaller religions which contribute to the rich diversity of the spiritual—and cartographic—tapestry.

The books listed below can provide a start, but there is no substitute for studying the maps themselves. With a map in one hand, and a religious text in the other, astute map collectors and enthusiasts, as well as people interested in religion, will no doubt help make some of the most exciting discoveries in this area of map study.

Suggested Reading:

Denis Congrove, Apollo's Eye: A Cartographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Imagination (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001)


Rehav Rubin, Image and Reality: Jerusalem in Maps and Views (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 1999)


Ariel Tishby, ed., The Holy Land in Maps (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum and New York: Rizzoli; Distributed by St. Martin's Press, 2001)

NOTE: Richard Francaviglia is professor of history and geography at the University of Texas at Arlington, where he also directs the Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography. He has a long-term interest in the geography and history of religions.
New Atlas Depicts History of Arlington and Dallas-Fort Worth Area in Maps

In the early 1990s, UT Arlington’s Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography hosted a series of conferences about local history in the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington area. As part of these conferences, maps of Arlington from various times — 1876, 1890, 1925 — were provided to attendees. The maps proved very popular, and very informative: As those maps revealed, history has a geographic dimension that, once grasped, helps everything else fall into place. This is important in a rapidly growing area like ours where landmarks change and new communities develop.

The book discussed here is actually a small and very interesting atlas (or book of maps). It was written by Dr. David Buissnet, who served as UT Arlington’s Jenkins and Virginia Garrett Endowed Chair in Greater Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography. When Professor Buissnet arrived at the University of Texas at Arlington in the mid 1990s, he began to collect maps of the area in hopes of making them available to the public. Over a ten-year period until his retirement in the spring of 2006, “Dr. B” (as his students call him) envisioned putting these maps together in atlas form as a publication that could help local people better understand how the area developed.

Upon his retirement, Dr. Buissnet announced that he had achieved that goal — an informative, 50-page book titled A Cartographic History of Arlington and the Dallas-Fort Worth Area. Containing detailed studies of twenty significant maps, many in original color, this is far more than a simple atlas. In fact, each map is annotated and placed side-by-side with a sketch map showing the features covered. This technique is very effective because a number of these historic maps pre-date features — like communities and freeways — we take for granted today.

Among the twenty maps illustrated in this book are several from early Spanish and French cartographers. They provide a glimpse of portions of Texas in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Stephen F. Austin’s “Mapa Original de Texas” (1829) reveals a fusion of earlier information with new material garnered by the father of modern-day Texas. Professor Buissnet next describes how mapmakers in the mid-nineteenth century represented the natural and cultural features in this area, including the prairies and Cross Timbers, and the Indian villages. Some maps from the mid to late nineteenth century are by private individuals like the German geologist Ferdinand Roemer; others are government maps such as those from the Texas General Land Office. In the twentieth century, when the population of the area grew even more rapidly, we see the spread of settlements and highways often obscuring, and sometimes obliterating, natural features like the Cross Timbers. The many lakes in the area, all created in the twentieth century, represent part of this phenomenal change. By 2004 — the date of the last map in this atlas — much of the area in the Metroplex was completely urbanized.

There are some real cartographic gems in this publication. One, a map of Arlington done by ROTC students in 1924, has never been seen by most Arlingitans. It reveals much about this small community whose population would “boom” rapidly after World War II. Like most works of this type, this cartographic history features maps from numerous collections, including UT Arlington’s excellent Virginia Garrett Cartographic Collection, UT Austin, the Texas Department of Transportation, and the General land Office in Austin. This cartographic history is available at the office of the Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography, The University of Texas at Arlington, 702 Planetarium Drive, 650 Central Library, Arlington, Texas 76019. The price is $10.00 for those who purchase it at our office, or can be mailed post paid for $12.00. For information on how to order your copy, call 817-272-3997 or e-mail swcenter@uta.edu.
Meet the Center Faculty

Christopher R. Scotese is a Professor of Geology at UT Arlington. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, and his research includes plate tectonics, paleoecology, and paleoclimatology. The PALEOMAP Project, which produces lithologic maps of the past configuration of the continents and ocean basins, is the primary focus of this research. His maps showing the ways in which the earth's surface has changed over hundreds of millions of years have been produced in both paper and digital forms and provide a stunning recreation of how the earth has changed. In 2006, Professor Scotese was named a member of UT Arlington’s Academy of Distinguished Scholars, based in part on his internationally recognized, cutting-edge research.

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Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography
The University of Texas at Arlington
Box 19497
Arlington, Texas 76019-0497