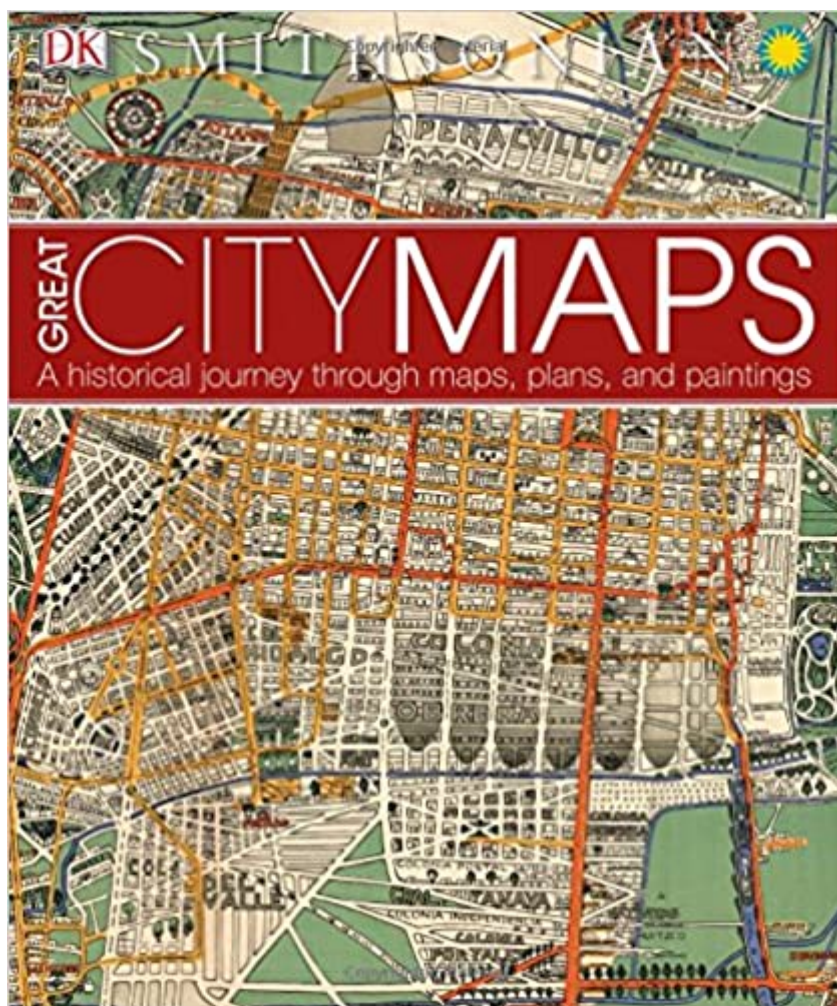


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# Great City Maps



## Synopsis

A beautifully illustrated history of the world's most celebrated historical city maps, from the hubs of ancient civilization to sprawling modern mega-cities, created in association with the Smithsonian Institution. Great City Maps explores and explains 30 of the world's greatest historical city maps, providing a captivating overview of cartography through the ages. The book's unrivaled reproduction of these fascinating and intricate documents provides graphic close-ups and reveals more than just pure geography—it offers insight into the cultures and beliefs of the great civilizations that gave rise to them. From classical cities like Rome and Jerusalem to modern hubs like New York and Tokyo, the stories behind each map are revealed: why it was created, who it was intended for, and how it was achieved. Profiles of key cartographers, planners, and artists give even further insight into the history of each urban masterpiece. With its genuinely unique and superbly illustrated approach to the most celebrated city maps in history and its lavish textured and foiled jacket, Great City Maps is a beautiful piece to add to any collection and a must-have for all history and geography enthusiasts.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Jerusalem Floor Mosaic "The mosaic has loosened ... by change of temperature, by influence of moisture ... and by sinking of the soil, to such an extent that it reacts even upon pressure by hand."

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Medieval Trading Centers Trade

played by no means a minor part in the ancient world, with amber, spice, incense, and silk routes evolving in the the first millennium BCE. These gradually developed into an intricate network, binding together disparate transcontinental regions via increasingly wealthy urban trading cities across the world.

**The Wonderground Map of London Town** Commissioned shortly before the outbreak of World War I by Frank Pick, the commercial director of the Underground Electric Railway Company (now London Underground), and displayed in Tube stations across the metropolis, this is an eye-catching, charming, and comical poster map of London and its attractions.

**Map of Cape Town** Late 19th-century Cape Town was a city in rapid transition, enjoying a sudden economic boom after the discovery of diamond fields to the north of it. In this 1884 map of the capital of the British Cape Colony—which is usually oriented with southwest at the top—the grid plan of the original Dutch settlement is still clearly visible.

**Constantinople Tinted Engraving** "These [mosques] with the towers, ports, palaces ... together with the myriads of small domes ... press an appearance so Oriental ... as to defy description." [View larger](#)

[View larger](#) [View larger](#) [View larger](#) **Paris, 1878** The man who revolutionized Paris, Georges-Eugène Haussmann (1809-91), was himself a native Parisian. However, he was not sentimental and even demolished the house he was born in because it stood in the way of progress (it made way for what was to become Boulevard Haussmann).

**Rio de Janeiro Print on Cloth** This map, oriented with west at the top, depicts Rio in a period of rapid expansion. The more or less regular north-south grid plan of the original settlement can be clearly seen, as can the ring of forts, strategically placed on the hills—morros in Portuguese—overlooking the city center.

**New Amsterdam, 1660** The man who drafted the original Castello Plan arrived in the New World in 1652 as a tutor. Five years later he was appointed surveyor-general of the province of New Netherland, of which New Amsterdam was part. He lived on Long Island but kept this small office (top left), where it is likely that his maps was prepared.

**Paris Hand-Colored Print on Linen** "Most of the streets of this wonderful Paris are nothing but intestines, filthy and permanently wet with pestilential water." [View larger](#)

"A perfect companion to [DK]'s 2014 Great Maps, but also a worthwhile stand-alone purchase,

especially where cartography books are needed that serve YA as well as adult patrons." •  
Library Journal (Starred Review)"Historic, colorful maps show how great cities evolve." •  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

It is a beautiful book, and I am but an amateur architecture/city planning/cartography enthusiast; but there are some frustrating omissions here. In the maps for Washington, DC, the book credits Elliott with the first official map/blueprint, but doesn't mention that his work was based on the ideas and work of Pierre Charles L'Enfant. Later, it mentions the McMillan plan (note: McMillan was a senator who incorporated L'enfant's ideas in his plans - NOT a mapmaker), but again, NO WHERE does it mention L'enfant's tremendous contribution (both good and bad) to the look, feel, and function of Washington DC. His name is nowhere to be found in the book, much less the few pages on DC. Also, I do get that the focus of the book is on maps, more so than cities - and showing certain cities through time is really illuminating. But, I wish some maps of Chicago before & after the fire, plus a modern map or two could have been found. For US cities, San Francisco, NYC, DC are the only ones covered in the book. Quite a few ancient/medieval cities without a lot of modern day maps for comparison. There is one stylistic (aka artsy) modern map of Tokyo - would have loved to see a more accurate one included for comparison. I would really suggest seeking this book out in a local library to view what city maps are available and their ages before purchase, to help one decide whether to own it. If you are buying for a library reference section, I'd say go for it - but be mindful of the caveats mentioned above.

This is one of the great map books, one of a series of late generated by publishers in full color, bring to us maps never before seen in print. If you are an aficionado of fine Map books, or a collector of such, this is a must have or must be seen (and studied) addition to the corpus! And yes, the descriptions and discussions are scholarly.

I bought this set of Smithsonian map books for my husband for Christmas and he loves them. He's a history buff, opened them right away and plunged right in! Thank you for having these in stock. They were out of stock on the Smithsonian website.

Endlessly fascinating to anyone who is a history buff and who travels. I try to find the old city in the new.

Extremely well-presented graphics, high quality and good accompanied text

Purchased for a map geek who loved it totally.

As long as you don't expect most of your "whys" to be answered, you will find this to be an absorbing and captivating book. It is a book of maps, their makers, or cartographers, and key sights. Scrutinize them very conveniently within this book or take a world tour and visit hundreds of museums to see them in person. This is a great introduction to urban geography and urban sociology. I got caught up in its pages from the first chapter "Ancient Cities" and the first city, Rome. Beautiful and colorful, printed large enough for the eye to scrutinize, how can one resist getting drawn into its history? And that is where the book failed me: I wanted too much from it. But I cannot fault it for that. I learned the history of the map itself, and I received a "virtual tour" of some key sights, but I chose this book with the impression that the book would tell the history of the city through the progression of maps. It does not. Now, if you purchase this book fully aware that you are getting maps and cartographers and some key sights, with a shallow spattering of history, then you will surely categorize it as a five-star effort. For me, after I studied one or two old maps from each city, I was eager to turn the page and see at least one more recent map of that city or area. No such luck. For the most part, my questions: Why the city was established where it was; how it grew; why it grew; how it evolved into what it is today, etc., were not addressed. There are no topographical maps to help the reader get oriented to the site. There are no current maps to show how the cities grew and sprawled. (I loved seeing the New York City subway map, but it was not oriented to any of the other NYC maps. In its limited way, this is a great compilation of old maps, and will surely whet the appetite of someone with a beginning interest in the history of cities. As such, it could be a great tool, fodder for learning more and more and more. It certainly filled my head with questions.

A big challenge to a massive project like "Great City Maps" is keeping the topic fresh through 245 pages of more than 74 maps. It's a heavy burden because it turns out that most maps look just like the map before it and the map after it, too, because, it turns out, most cities are remarkably similar in structures and layout to other cities of the same time and place. DK books, a publisher of "general reference and illustrated non-fiction books," partners with Smithsonian, as well as a cadre of historians, artists and writers to produce this beautifully rendered and written work. The integrity of this massive

tome is not in question here. My concern is more for the wisdom in producing a work of such single-minded focus with a wide-ranging scope. As we move through 44 cities and 10 centuries. It's a breathtaking journey of a stupefying landscape. Page after page, it seems that no matter where you go there you are. A generic essay opens this impressive though tedious - collection of map knowledge and history. The preface could have elaborated on the thinking behind the genesis of this project, the city and time period selections and the special interests of the many contributors. Urban planners, libraries and map geeks will love this work. For them, this is a five-star work. For the more casual map enthusiast, who I think was the intended audience, I give it four stars.

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