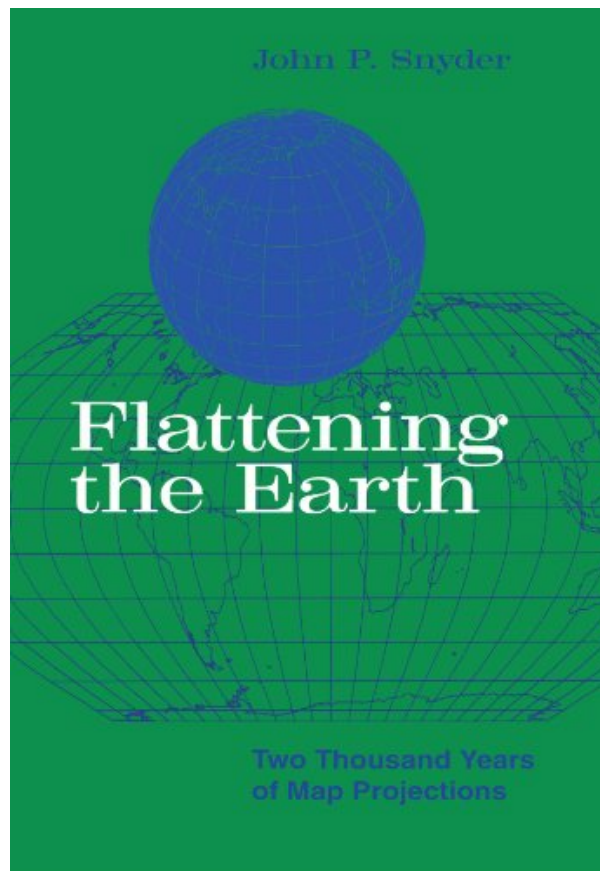
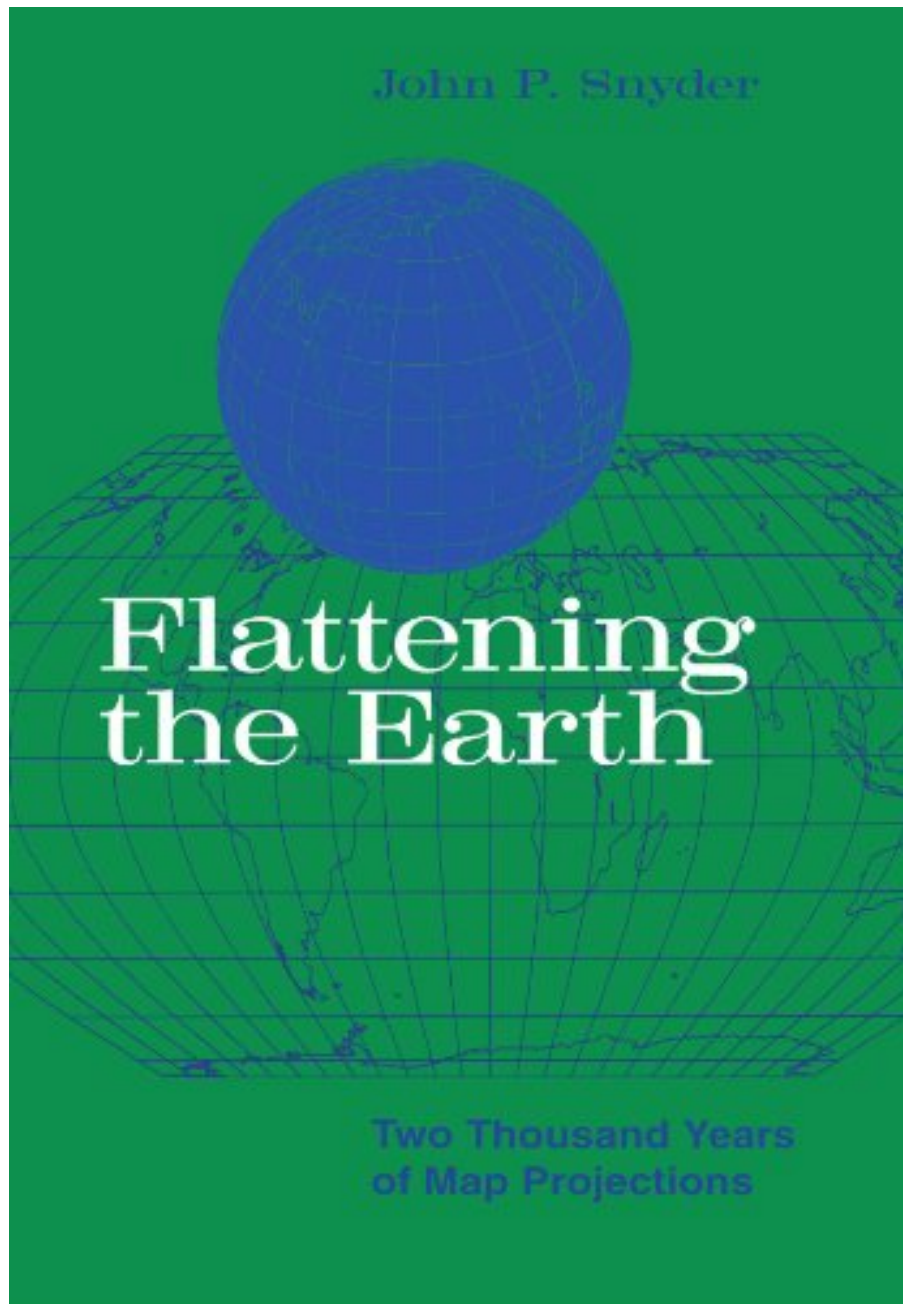


**FLATTENING THE EARTH: TWO
THOUSAND YEARS OF MAP PROJECTIONS
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As long as there have been maps, cartographers have grappled with the impossibility of portraying the earth in two dimensions. To solve this problem mapmakers have created hundreds of map projections, mathematical methods for drawing the round earth on a flat surface. Yet of the hundreds of existing projections, and the infinite number that are theoretically possible, none is perfectly accurate.

Flattening the Earth is the first detailed history of map projections since 1863. John P. Snyder discusses and illustrates the hundreds of known projections created from 500 B.C. to the present, emphasizing developments since the Renaissance and closing with a look at the variety of projections made possible by computers.

The book contains 170 illustrations, including outline maps from original sources and modern computerized reconstructions. Though the text is not mathematically based, a few equations are included to permit the more technical reader to plot some projections. Tables summarize the features of nearly two hundred different projections and list those used in nineteenth-and twentieth-century atlases.

"This book is unique and significant: a thorough, well-organized, and insightful history of map projections. Snyder is the world's foremost authority on the subject and a significant innovator in his own right."—Mark Monmonier, author of *How to Lie with Maps and Mapping It Out: Expository Cartography for the Humanities and Social Sciences*.

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- Binding: Paperback
- 384 pages

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16 of 16 people found the following review helpful.

For its price, an amazingly good book.

By Bruce R. Gilson

About two months ago, I reviewed "Understanding Map Projections" by Melita Kennedy and Steve Kopp. While in certain minor ways this book falls short of Kennedy and Kopp's book, it is generally head and shoulders above it. And while it is true that Snyder's book is almost twice the price of Kennedy and Kopp's book, it is worth it. Other books of comparable value cost much more.

The only negative thing I really have to say about Snyder's book is that he tries to do two different things in it. This book is both a history and a survey of map projections, and what is appropriate for a history may not be best for a survey. In particular, it means that Snyder covers the various projections not in a sensible order

(grouping similar types together), but chronologically. Projections popularized, say, in the 19th century are all covered in the same section.

I prefer the organization of Kennedy and Kopp's book, and I think the use of color in that book makes for a more attractive book. But my primary rating of a book on map projections is going to be based on three criteria: (1) Does it cover a large variety of different projections? (2) Does it give illustrations of what they look like? and (3) Does it give formulas or other information by which one can actually construct maps on the projections listed? This book ranks much higher than Kennedy and Kopp's on two of these three criteria (the first and last), and does not fall very far short of it on the remaining one.

Over a hundred projections (actually, close to twice that many) are treated in this book, from familiar ones to novelty projections that never will be used in a serious atlas. And a large proportion of them are illustrated (though not all, and the ones that are do not use color as in the Kennedy & Kopp book) and either have the formulas for plotting them or are described in terms equivalent to giving formulas (By contrast the Kennedy-Kopp book has almost no formulas, and the descriptions do not allow you to produce them).

If you don't want to spend over \$50, this is the one map projection book to buy.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Map projections in history

By Baby_Moon

Excellent historical description of the different map projections used throughout history. This book describes the methods used during various periods of Western civilization. If you are looking for information on the development of map projections and how such things came to be this is a well researched and scholarly compendium of information. An interesting tour from classical times to the twentieth century. The material has been put in a form that makes it accessible to more than just the specialist. Anyone who has an interest in maps would do well in reading this work. The ingenuity of trying to project a globe on a flat surface is revealed here.

3 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

An invaluable resource for the amateur cartophile!

By Julian Elson

I have not yet completed reading this book, but I've skimmed through many parts and done a thorough reading of little bits of it. It has a solid -- if not particularly rich, in terms of details (if it did, the book would be thousands of pages long) -- history, along with many pictures of the projections (a bit austere: just the graticules and the outlines of the boundaries between water and land are shown, but then, that's all that's really needed). It has many useful mathematical formulas for translating latitude-longitude coordinates on the Earth into x-y coordinate on maps of various projections. If you're into map projections, here's where to start. (or, at least that's where I'm starting, and I have no complaints yet!)

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