

Maps are universal forms of communication, easily understood and appreciated regardless of culture or language. This truly magisterial book introduces readers to the widest range of maps ever considered in one volume: maps from different time periods and a variety of cultures; maps made for divergent purposes and depicting a range of environments; and maps that embody the famous, the important, the beautiful, the groundbreaking, or the amusing. Built around the *functions* of maps—the kinds of things maps do and have done—*Maps* confirms the vital role of maps throughout history in commerce, art, literature, and national identity.

The book begins by examining the use of maps for wayfinding, revealing that even maps as common and widely used as these are the product of historical circumstances and cultural differences. The second chapter considers maps whose makers employed the smallest of scales to envision the broadest of human stages—the world, the heavens, even the act of creation itself. The next chapter looks at maps that are, literally, at the opposite end of the scale from cosmological and world maps—maps that represent specific parts of the world and provide a close-up view of areas in which their makers lived, worked, and moved.

Having shown how maps help us get around and make sense of our greater and lesser worlds, *Maps* then turns to the ways in which certain maps can be linked to particular events in history, exploring how they have helped Americans, for instance, to understand their past, cope with current events, and plan their national future. The fifth chapter considers maps that represent data from scientific in-

struments, population censuses, and historical records. These maps illustrate, for example, how diseases spread, what the ocean floor looks like, and how the weather is tracked and predicted. Next comes a turn to the imaginary, featuring maps that depict entire fictional worlds, from Hell to Utopia and from Middle Earth to the fantasy game World of Warcraft. The final chapter traces the origins of map consumption throughout history and ponders the impact of cartography on modern society.

A companion volume to the most ambitious exhibition on the history of maps ever mounted in North America, *Maps* will challenge readers to stretch conventional thought about what constitutes a map and how many different ways we can understand graphically the environment in which we live. Collectors, historians, mapmakers and users, and anyone who has ever “gotten lost” in the lines and symbols of a map will find much to love and learn from in this book.

JAMES R. AKERMAN is director of the Newberry Library's Hermon Dunlap Smith Center for the History of Cartography and editor of *Cartographies of Travel and Navigation*, also published by the University of Chicago Press. ROBERT W. KARROW JR. is curator of special collections and maps in the Roger and Julie Baskes Department of Special Collections at the Newberry Library.