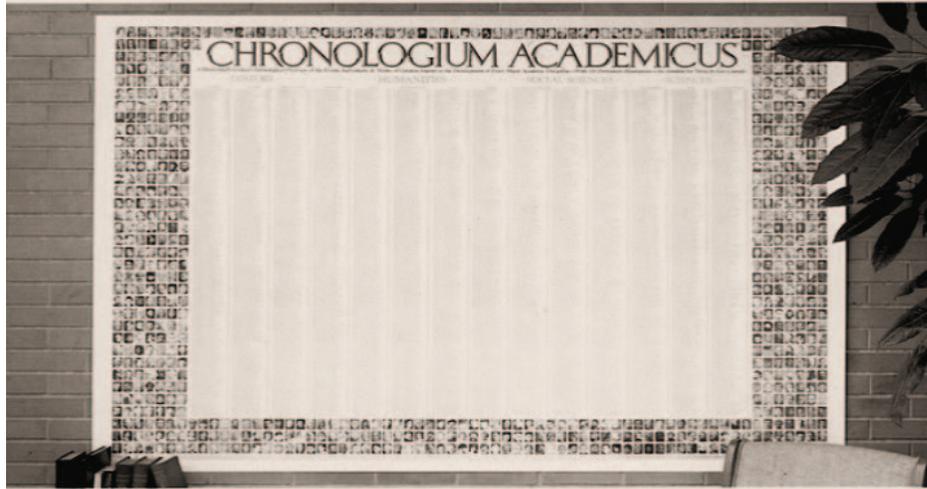


Chronologium Academicus



CHRONOLOGIUM ACADEMICUS

By Guy Cutrufo

\$65 at www.chronaca.com

Review by Steve Glines

There was something about the Victorians you have to admire. They searched for the source of the Nile River; they build magnificent cast iron, filigreed suspension bridges; they published multi-volume novels and generally established what was meant by the word "Civilized." If the project was enormous there was some crazy Brit or determined Yankee willing to try it. Although we still build enormous things like the Space Station or the Saturn V moon rocket or Boston's "Big Dig." Somehow they just don't have the same magnificence, the same panache of their Victorian ancestors. Even the Channel Tunnel lacks the touches the Victorians would have embellished it with.

These are silly complaints of course, progress marches on. If projects on the scale of the Suez Canal aren't done anymore then the progress in microelectronics and communications is just as astounding. Still it's gratifying to find a humanistic project befitting of the highest Victorian standards. Chronologium Academicus is a project of this scope and perfection.

The Chronologium Academicus is an enormous poster that represents an intellectual timeline on a world wide scale. The Chronologium Academicus is to history and intellectual thought what a World Map is to geography. To quote from its website (www.chronaca.com):

Just as a world map is a representation of the physical world, Chronologium Academicus is a representation of the academic landscape. Chronologium Academicus provides an overview of the "geographic" differentiations of academic areas, disciplines, and time that bound or computer-based references can not match.

It presents the first *visualization* of the whole of history and academia, which effectively delimits and systematizes the scope, breadth, and parameters of academia.

The layout devised for Chronologium Academicus was of central importance to its development. Vertically, its 14 columns present the history of every major academic discipline from the development of language by Neanderthal man to the present, and it's bordered by 700 portraits of the greatest contributors to that history. ... its horizontal layout: at any point all the way across the columns, each row covers the same years. That feature places the isolated bits of information of every major discipline into the historical and academic context of every other discipline, which facilitates our ability to make linkages between events, individuals, and works that occurred during the same period.

This is truly a monumental work. The poster itself is an enormous 53.25" x 73.25" which means it would take up far more space than anything but a "Jumbotron." Unless you live in a barn or have an unusually large unused wall this poster is not for the amateur. We temporarily mounted the Chronologium Academicus across a large glass sliding door (It still had to be curled up at one end) to get a good look at its breadth of information. We stood staring in awe until the spell was broken by a viewer who said, "I'd hate to have the fact checking job on this."

A very spotty check of a dozen or so "facts" matched up with Wikipedia. That's neither an endorsement or a condemnation of the data presented. Given the incredible volume of information presented it would be surprising not to find an error. However we will leave that onerous duty to others. In the mean time it will become a challenge to find a public wall in our little town that is unencumbered enough to do the Chronologium Academicus justice.