



Plotting the Globe: Stories of Meridians, Parallels, and the International Date Line (Explorations in World Maritime History)

Avraham Ariel, Nora Ariel Berger

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People use concepts such as time and date to structure their lives on a daily basis. They often measure their travel by marking points arranged along great circles on the globe. Yet most do not understand the origin and history of these terms and the stories of the intrepid adventurers, scientists, and seafarers who shaped our picture of the world today. Ariel transports readers to faraway lands and ancient cultures that span more than 3500 years of exploration. Phoenicians, Spaniards, Portuguese, British, French, and many others star in an epic that stretches from Lapland to Cape Horn, via Greenwich, Paris, the Andes and the Fortunate Islands.

This book is a collection of stories and myths about geography, navigation, and geodesy—the science that deals with the Earth's figure and the interrelationship of selected points on its surface—that reaches far beyond dry scientific texts to concentrate on the people behind the discoveries. The knowledge and understanding of abstract notions such as the Prime Meridian, the Equator, and the International Date Line is conveyed through emphasis on the human spirit that motivated the pioneer scientists and sailors. It is a tale littered with heroes and villains, battles, tragedies and international intrigue. Readers will learn of a time when nothing was certain—even the shape and size of the earth were the subjects of fierce competition, conflict, and politics.

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