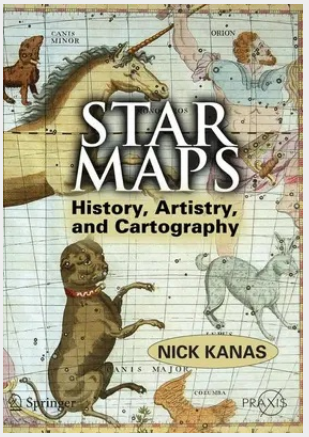
Kanas

Star Maps

History, Artistry, and Cartography

The beauty and awe generated by the celestial void captures our imagination and delights our aesthetic sense. Antiquarian map societies are prospering, and celestial maps are now viewed as a specialty of map collecting. This book traces the history of celestial cartography and relates this history to the changing ideas of man's place in the universe and to advances in map-making. Photographs from actual antiquarian celestial atlases and prints, many previously unpublished, enrich the text. The book describes the development and relationships between different sky maps and atlases as well as demonstrating contemporary cosmological ideas, constellation representations, and cartographic advances.

From 1600 to 1800 a number of beautiful star atlases depicting the constellations according to ancient myths and tales were printed. In Europe, where the quality of celestial atlases was unmatched, classical Greek traditions prevailed and the constellations were given allegorical visual representations of heroes and heroines, real and imaginary animals, scientific instruments and artistic tools. These images were placed in celestial latitude and longitude coordinate systems that allowed the positions of the stars to be mapped in the sky and formed the backdrop for predictions of the location of the planets and other heavenly bodies throughout the year. These celestial atlases also contained diagrams of the solar system that reflected both contemporary and ancient cosmological systems, thus tracing the development of man's view of his place in the universe. With the construction of the International Space Station, and with new plans for manned missions to the Moon, Mars and beyond, there is renewed interest in the heavens. An ever-increasing number of people are fascinated with the science of space and are becoming amateur astronomers. Antiquarian map societies are prospering, and celestial maps are now viewed as a specialty of map collecting. At the same time, the beauty and awe generated by the celestial void captures our imagination and delights our aesthetic sense. This book traces the history of celestial cartography and relates this history to the changing ideas of man's place in the universe and to advances in map-making. Photographs from actual antiquarian celestial atlases and prints, many previously unpublished, enrich the text, and a legend accompanies each illustration to explain its astronomical and cartographic features. Also included in the book are discussions of non-European celestial maps and chapters on early American influences and celestial map-collecting.



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