

Galison, Peter

Einstein's clocks, Poincaré's maps. Empires of time. (English) Zbl 1066.01005
New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co. Inc. (ISBN 0-393-02001-0). 389 p. (2003).

Publisher's description: Clocks and trains, telegraphs and colonial conquest: the challenges of the late nineteenth century were an indispensable real-world background to the enormous theoretical breakthrough of relativity. And two giants at the foundations of modern science were converging, step-by-step, on the answer: Albert Einstein, a young, obscure German physicist experimenting with measuring time using telegraph networks and with the coordination of clocks at train stations; and the renowned mathematician Henri Poincaré, president of the French Bureau of Longitude, mapping time coordinates across continents. Each found that to understand the newly global world, he had to determine whether there existed a pure time in which simultaneity was absolute or whether time was relative.

Esteemed historian of science Peter Galison has culled new information from rarely seen photographs, forgotten patents, and unexplored archives to tell the fascinating story of two scientists whose concrete, professional preoccupations engaged them in a silent race toward a theory that would conquer the empire of time.

MSC:

- 01A05** General histories, source books
- 83-03** History of relativity and gravitational theory
- 01-01** Introductory exposition (textbooks, tutorial papers, etc.) pertaining to history and biography

Cited in **1** Review
Cited in **5** Documents