



# Te Moana Meridian

Proposal for a new Prime Meridian

*Second edition*

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# Te Moana Meridian

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A Prime Meridian for a new global era

The Geographic Coordinate System is an international system for defining, measuring, and communicating geographic coordinates. It is based on latitude and longitude that respectively measure space north-south of the equator, which represents 0-degrees of latitude, and east-west of the Prime Meridian, which represents 0-degrees of longitude and is also used to coordinate global time zones. Earth's rotational axis determines how we measure latitude, but no such natural phenomena exist from which to measure longitude.

How we measure longitude is in fact completely arbitrary. The actual location of our international Prime Meridian doesn't matter. It could be anywhere. What matters is that there's a consensus to its use. Thus the location of an international Prime Meridian is not a matter of nature, but politics.

Before 1884, many regional longitudinal meridians were in use around the world. But, as humanity became increasingly interconnected through travel and globalised trade, the lack of a commonly referable means of reckoning longitude became a critical issue. This spurred a series of international conferences on the subject, concluding with the 1884 Conference of the Prime Meridian hosted by the US State Department in Washington DC, where twenty-six nations gathered to decide on the location for a single international Prime Meridian.

For many of the scholars who advanced the proposal of a single international Prime Meridian, its establishment was intended to usher in a new era of global modernity

that, they asserted, should be defined by cosmopolitanism and humanitarian universalism. Central to this thesis was the premise that its location should be determined by the highest degree of political neutrality possible. The prime meridian was to be an international utility in service to all humanity. Following these principles, many locations were proposed over the decades including the Great Pyramids of Egypt, Jerusalem, the Canary Islands, as well as several major astronomical observatories. One proposal that received wide and prolonged attention, put forth by prominent scientist and advocate Sandford Flemming, was to locate the prime meridian in the Pacific Ocean / Te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa, thus avoiding land and nationalistic [terrestrial] territories altogether.

However, for the twenty-six nation-states that sponsored and sent delegates to the final 1884 conference, interests were inherently more commercial, industrial, militaristic, and political in nature. Interests that eventually subverted the entire conference proceedings. For, despite years of ambitious scholarly debate, all but three of the conference delegates ended up voting to affix the new international prime meridian to the Royal Observatory of Greenwich, London, on the grounds that it “possessed the greatest degree of accuracy in observing and measuring longitude.” Beyond covertly weaponizing the concept of scientific impartiality against itself, it becomes clear through inference that at play here is the rather assuming, ethically dubious, and distinctly colonialist/capitalist logic that having the power to impose control over something somehow begets a moral authority and obligation to do so. As if time and space are the subjects of humanity rather than of nature.

Such a “squaring the circle” approach to human-nature relationality is exactly the kind of ideology that paved the way to today’s situation: an existential crisis so all-encompassing that it required creating an entirely new geological epoch in order to fully conceptualise and communicate it; the Anthropocene. The obvious

geological extension of the current Prime Meridian. For what it does to local time, the Anthropocene does to deep time; scorch the earth.

Returning to the conference, let us ask, how well did it actually achieve the international consensus that it claimed? To begin with, of the then 128 nations on Earth, only 26 were represented (some, like Britain, France, and the US more prominently than others). And although a moderate degree of geographic diversity was represented between them, the fact that none of them could credibly claim to be neither a colonial power nor colonial progeny (except for Switzerland, which financed much of the European colonial project) exposes such a metric to be little more than a colonial smokescreen.

It could further be argued that the political constructs known as nation-states are inherently unreliable means of determining genuine pan-human consensus. Even without going there though, it becomes clear that, European or not, the make-up of the conference's delegates implicitly functioned to ensure the results of the conference benefited white supremacy and the European colonial project. For, despite the claims of international diplomacy and advanced critical discourse, the coercive machinations of Western imperialism were in full swing.

Rather than serving all humanity, the Greenwich Prime Meridian unequivocally privileges England. Literally positioning it as the center of the world from where everyone else must measure their positions in relation to. This undoubtedly served to implicitly legitimize British Imperial hegemony, not only over huge swaths of the physical planet but over humanity's entire metaphysical orientation to time and space. For, just as how all the roads leading to Rome concentrated Roman Imperial power during the Roman period, today's GPS and "Coordinated Universal Time" (Greenwich Mean Time's successor) point to London and concentrate its power.

Rather than a symbol of human universalism, the Prime Meridian today functions as a de facto monument to Western imperialism's conquest over global diplomacy and the British Empires' coercive geopolitical dominance over international affairs. An imperial Modus Operandi that - judging by how the Royal Observatory of Greenwich has chosen to engage this project (even after being invited to its table), arbitrarily revoking its public film permits and trying (unsuccessfully) to undermine its critical legitimacy - seems relatively intact.

But just as the Prime Meridian of 1884 ushered in an era of global modernity that violently burned its way through the centuries, it can today be reappropriated to help stop that bleeding. Even help usher in a new era altogether. A future no longer shaped by the injustices of the past, but rather the kind of just, sustainable, and equitably prosperous world that can only be rendered through true global multilateralism.

It may sound technically complicated, but relocating the Prime Meridian is astonishingly simple. The hardest part is choosing to do so. A choice that, unlike in 1884, we today have a (albeit still problematic, but nonetheless) much more effective and equitable diplomatic device for rendering international consensus through, the United Nations General Assembly, to whom I hereby propose draft and ratify the following resolutions:

1. Relocate the Prime Meridian,
2. to a location as physically and metaphysically distant from Greenwich, UK, as possible,
3. where its capacity to politically privilege any place over another is rendered fully and permanently inoperable, and

4. where a 100 square kilometer international oceanic and cultural heritage sanctuary can be established under the multilateral guardianship of regional and international partners.

A Prime Meridian relocated in the open waters of Te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa / the South Pacific Ocean. Anchored not to firm land, but the planet's ephemeral yet existentially vital hydrosphere. A prime meridian that is symbolised by what binds us, not what divides us.

A Prime Meridian that defers temporal-spatial authority back to nature. For the ocean better reflects the empirical reality that time is not absolute but elastic and fluidly dilates in relation to mass. To paraphrase NOAA climate physicist Nadir Jeevanjee, a multitude of geophysiological temporalities exist between the various depths of the world's oceans.

A prime meridian that subverts Pierre Bourdieu's maxim "unification profits the dominant", for, although the transient omnipresence of the ocean makes it seem like a paradoxical choice for representing the Prime Meridian's singularity, such inherent qualities provide the necessary antipode for countering the prime meridians intrinsically discriminatory affect. A paradigm supported by the fact that no physical monument can ever be erected there. If anything, the ocean *is* the monument.

A Prime Meridian that acknowledges its predecessor by its transition to being the antimeridian, but untethers itself from its imperialist disposition. Becoming a beacon to help navigate us across the turbulent present towards a future untethered to the trappings of the past.

A geographical and temporal lingua franca, not subjugating humanities multiplicitous means of locally and universally relating to and reckoning time and

space, but operating as a relational nexus among them, a bridge rather than a road, an additional reference point for facilitating a genuinely multilateral, healthy, and prosperous cosmopolitan commons.

To avoid drowning, become ocean.

Te Moana Meridian

# Te Poutūmarotanga o Te Moana

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He poutūmaro mō te ao hou

Ko te pūnaha mātai matawhenua taunga ahuroa he pūnaha o te ao ka tautuhia, ka inea, ka whakaputatia I ngā matawhenua taunga ahuroa ki te whakaahua, ki te ine, ki te whakakōrero I ngā matawhenua taungaroa mā ngā ahopae, me ngā ahopou, hei ine I te ātea o te ahu whakateraki ki te tonga o te weheruatanga o te ao ahu whakaterāwhiti ki te uru o te poutūmaro tuatahi.

Tō te mea kāre kē he aroaro whenua hei whakakitekite i a ia, ko te taunga o te poutūmaro Tuatahi o te ao he mea hanga noa, pēnei ana ko hea, ko hea I runga I te mata o Papatūānuku, ko te mea nui kia whakaaengia te katoa ki te whakamahia. Ko tana wāhi nohanga e hā I te mea nō te ao tūroa, engari he mea tōrangapū.

Mua mai i te tau kotahi mano waru rau waru tekau mā whā he nui tonu ngā pou tūmaro horapa te ao. Heoi, nā te pikitanga o ngā tūhonohono mā runga i te haerere-ā-whenua me te ohanga-ā-ao, me te korenga o tētahi rautaki hei whakakite i te ahoroa i puta mai te raruraru nui, I hua mai te tini o ngā wananga huri noa te ao mā runga tēnei kaupapa. I te tau kotahi mano waru rau waru tekau mā whā I rūmene mai ngā iwi rua tekau mā ono ki Washington DC ki te whakatau I te nohonga o tētahi pou tūmaro motuhake I te ao.

Mo te nuīnga o ngā tāngata matatau nā rātou I ākina I te kaupapa o te pou tūmaro kotahi o te ao, ko te whakaaro kei muri I tana whakatū koia ko te pōhiri mai I tetahi ngaru hou he whakahouhia I te ao hou, nā rātou anō I whakatenatena, me whakaahuahia e te mana ōrite, e te mana tangata tohatoha ratonga tā ngā matea. Ko te iho matua o tēnei whakapae me whakatūria ma te kore whai hereherenga ki tētahi tangata, tē tahi whenua, kia tōrangpū kore te noho.

Ko te Pou Tūmaro ka noho hei ratonga mā ngā iwi o te ao hei kaupapa manaaki I te ira tangata o te ao anō hoki. Ma te whai atu I enei whainga pono, he nui tonu ngā

wāhi I whakatauhia pēnei I ngā Toka Tūkoraha o Ihipa, Hiruharama, āmoutere o Canary, me ētahi atu whare matai whetu rarahi.

Ko tētahi tonu I whakawhiwhia I te tirohanga roa, tirohanga whānui, I whakatakotoria e Sanford Fleming te kaipūtaiao rongonui, mangai nui, kia whakanohia I te Pou Tūmaro ki te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa hei kaupare atu I te whenua me aua rohenga whenua ā- motu katoa.

Ahakoā rā, ko ngā aronganui o aua whenua rua tekau mā ono nāna I tautoko, I tonoa a rātou taraketi pōti ki te hui nui whakamutunga I te tau kotahi mano waru rau waru tekau mā whā ko te ohanga, te ahumahi, te tūngārahu me te tōrangapu te takenga. Ko ēnei take I taurititia, I hunaia I te rakau a Tū hei ariā pūtaiao herenga kore hei huanga mā rātou anō.

Hāunga, te nui o ngā tau tītohea I te kaupapa, ka mahue kia toru anake nga māngai tarakete kāre I pōtitia me whakapiri atu te Pou Tūmaro hou o te ao ki te Whare Matai Whetu a Te Whare Ariki ki Greenwich, Rānana, I te mea “ I a ia te tiketiketanga o te ōrau totika ka kitea ka inengia I te ahoroa”

I kōnei e takarongia ana ko te whakahihī, matatika werewere, ngako koroni ki a whakatuānui pēnā mā te kaha o te mana ki te pēhi I te whakahaere o tētahi mea ka whanau mai ko te mōtika tangata me whakatutukingia. Pēnei ana ko te taima me te wā he marau nō te ira tangata kauaka ko te taiao.

Kāti, “takiritia te porowhita” hei whainga mā te noho ira tangata-taiao nei te whakawhanaungatanga atu koia rā te ariā whakaaro I para te huarahi o naiane me tōna horopaki: he mōrearea ira tangata taiāwhio mā reira I toko ake he ingoa hou mō te whakapapa o te wā e ai ngā tamariki o Papatūānuku kia kite atu I te whakakikokikotanga o tona āheitanga; ko te Ira Tangatatanga.

Me hoki atu ki te hui nui nei, me ui atu tāua, I pēwhea te whakatūtukihanga o te whakaaetanga a ngā iwi o te ao I kokorahotia e te kaupapa nei? Kia timataria, I te kotahi rau rua tekau mā waru iwi o te Ao, ko te rua tekau mā ono noa iho I

whakakanohitia I te hui nui rā, ko ētahi I pakari ake te tū I ētahi atu (koia pū ko Piritania rāua ko Amerika).

Hatia, he paku noa te rerekētanga o a rātou noho matawhenua rātou I whakakanohi mai, tērā pea pai kē atu ko te tino kaiwhakaatu o te pono o te korero o aua iwi rua tekau mā ono, kotahi anake ka tareka te kokorahotia ehara rātou I te iwi whakatūānui pēnei I te mana koronitanga nui tonu, ko te whenua o Switzerland tērā, nāna I utungia te hui nui rā, me te kaupapa whakatūānui koronitanga o Uropi rahi rawa.

Mā kōnei ake e mārara kehokeho ana, ko Kirimā, ko Uropi noa, ko te whakatinanatanga o ngā taraketi o tāua hui nui rā I matua āheia mai ki te whakatenatena I te huanga mariu kia rewaina te mana potaea a te Kiri mā me tōna kaupapa Koronitanga a Uropi. Hāunga, ngā kokoraho hangahanga ā - ao me te whanake whakamia o te tātari kōrero, ko te “mana ngohengohe” me ōna nukarautanga o te whakatuanui a te Uru I nui ai te whiu.

Ahako he tino taunaki tēnei kawenga whakatahe I te whakahangahanga o nga iwi o te ao, ko te āta wetewete I te tuhinga o te Pou Tūmaro o Greenwich kāore kē I matū ai. Hei ahako te kore manaaki I te ira tangata o te ao, ko te Pou Tūmaro o Greenwich rokohanga ka whakamanangia I a Ingarangi motuhake rawa, pēnei ka whakanohia i te pito o te ao mai I reira ka inengia e tangata kē ake o rātou turanga.

Ko tēnei āheinga tūturu I whakamanangia I te whakaturenga kia aupēhia, kia autāmia e Piritania mo te kotahi rau toru tekau mā waru tau, kauaka ko runga I te nuīnga o te ao tūroa engari ki runga ōhoki I te wairua o te ao hangai pū ki te wā, te 1wāhi me te ātea. Tō te mea he rite ngā ara katoa ka anga atu ki Roma me tona whakawhaititinga ki te mana o Roma, ko te GPS me te CUT (ara te tētēkura hou o GMT) ka hangai te tohu atu ki Rananga me te pūngaia o te mana whakatuanui a te karauna o Piritania.

Mahue ake te tohu o te whakakotahitanga, ko te Pou Tūmaro o tēnei rangi he aheinga kē o te noho hei āwhai maumaharatanga ki tō te mana whakatuanui a te karauna o Piritania ki runga I ngā whakahangahanga huri rauna I te ao me te uruhi torangapu a whenua I ngā take Aorere o te Ao. He kawanga nana rā, e ai te tirohanga

o te Whare Matai Whetu a te Kuini ki Greenwich kua roa e whakaauaaungia kia tokatū tēnei tū kaupapa, me te tangohia I ana pepa whakaae kia kiriata whakahopungia, me te mea nei kāore ōna pānonitanga.

I te mea nā te Pou Tūmaro o te tau kotahi mano, waru rau, waru tekau mā whā I tomo mai te ao hou ki te ao whānui, ā, I tahuna kinongia tōna huarahi ki roto I ngā rautau o te tekau mā iwa me te rua tekau, ko tōna taumanu anō ka whakaara ake I tētahi wā hou rerekē hoki, tētahi ka maunu I te haepapa, I te whakahou, I te mana ōrite hei tirohanga a Ao hei tino taonga mō ngā uri whakatipu o anamata.

Otia, he rongō mānukanuka tēnei, engari ko te āta whakanohia I te Pou Tūmaro he mea matakū māmā nei. Ko te wāhi uaua ko te whiringa kia mahia. He whiringa, kīhai I rite ki tā te kotahi mano waru rau waru tekau mā whā, I tēnei rangi I a mātou te puritanga whakahangahanga o te kakau takawaenga māna e whakamana I te kokiri whakaaetanga nāna i whakakotahi I ngā iwi o te ao kia koi ngā niho, kia tōkeke e te whakaminenga nui o United Nations, ki a rātou māku e whakatakotoria I tēnei tauāki kia whakamanangia ēnei whakataunga e whai ake nei:

- Nukuhia te Pou Tūmaro.
- Ki tētahi wāhi mamao rawa a kikokiko, a wairua I te amionga o tana mana whakatuanui a te karauna o Piritania, I te koroni, I tana whānautanga ake hei take horo rawa.
- Ki tētahi wāhi kauaka e tarea te whakatau I tētahi nui atu, I tētahi atu e ai te tatanga ā matawhenua, a tōrangapū rānei.

- Kia kotahi rau kiromita pūrua te wāhi rāhui ā- moana, ā- ahurea o te ao e taea ana te whakatū I tōna kaitiakitanga I raro I āna hoa ā rohe, ā iwi o te ao anō hoki.

Ko te Pou Tūmaro ka āta nuku atu kia kotahi rau waru tekau tākiri ki ngā taunga tukutuku o Aotearoa me Ahitereiria I roto I te Moana-nui-ā- Kiwa. Ka pūngaia kaua ki te whenua, engari ki ngā wai o Papatūānuku. Ko ngā wai ēnei e whakatinanatia ai, e hereherengia ai tāua.

He Pou Tūmaro ka whakahoki ake I te mana o te wā, o te wāhi ki te Taiao. Kia turakina te whakatauaiki a Pierre Bourdieu” He whakakotahitanga mā te monihua o te ahurea awenui”, nā, ahakoa te whānuitanga o te moana he mana tāiāhio tāna ka tohetohengia te whiringa nei tō te mea ko te Pou Tūmaro he takitahi, koia ko tana koarotanga he mea whakatūtū ai I tōna mana aupehi.

Hei tā te moana he whakaata mai I te whakatatarengia ko te taima ehara kau I te motuhake engari he kūtorotoro, he kōtētē kia nui ake ki tā te papatipu, e taunakitia ana e te marama me tōna awenga I runga I ngā tai o te moana.

He poitu whakarewa hei ārahi I te whakaterenga o te wā tukituki onaiānei ahu atu ki te wā kāore anō kia tutaki e herengia ana ki te onamata. Ko te Pou Tūmaro he mihi whakatau ki tona tuakana – ko te Pou Koaro Tūmaro he hoa kanikani I te ia rā, I te ia rā - heoi he whakakore I āna hiahia whakatuanui I tētahi atu.

He reo tipu whenua kāore I aupehinga a tātou rautīni hononga ki te wā, ki te ātea, engari kē ia ka whakamanawa mai I ngā kupu ōhaki a te Pou Tūmaro hei ara pō kāore anō kia kitea I tōna whānaungatanga ki te pito o Papatūānuku te marae ātea mō ngā iwi katoa o te ao.

Kia kaua e toromia, me moana te hanga.

Te Poutūmaro o Te Moana.

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