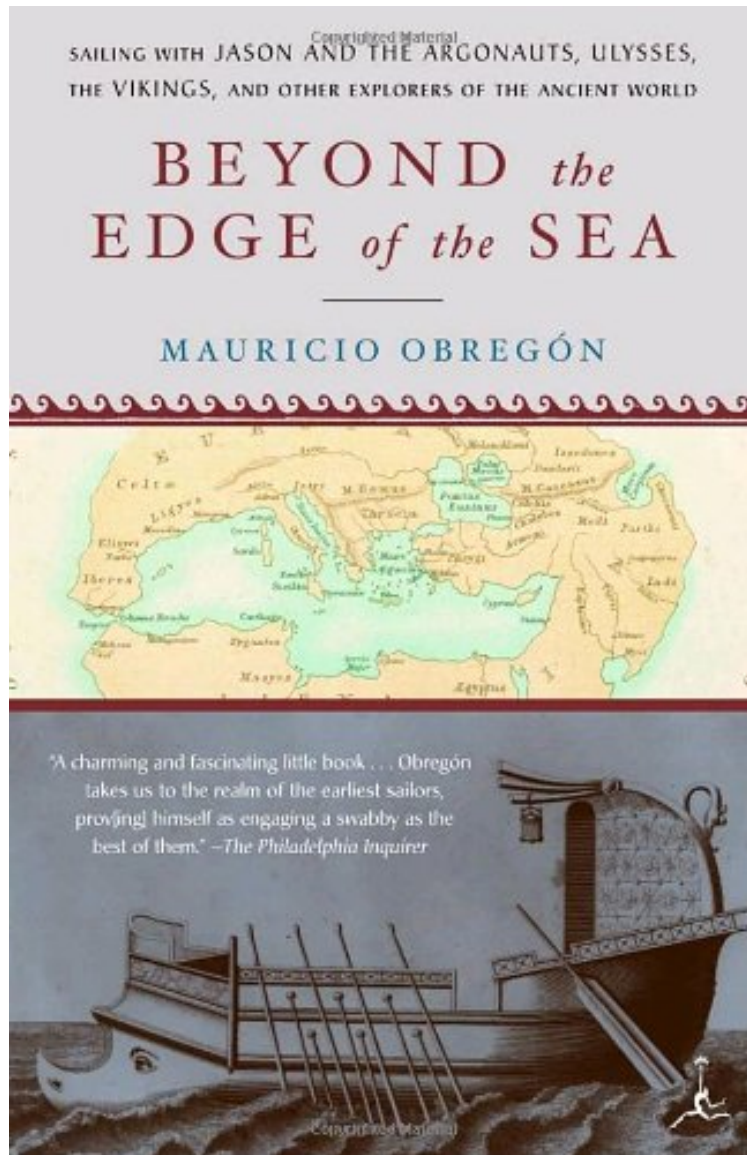


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Beyond the Edge of the Sea: Sailing with Jason and the Argonauts, Ulysses, the Vikings, and Other Explorers of the Ancient World (Modern Library Paperbacks)

Mauricio Obregon

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Mauricio Obregon : Beyond the Edge of the Sea: Sailing with Jason and the Argonauts, Ulysses, the Vikings, and Other Explorers of the Ancient World (Modern Library Paperbacks) before purchasing it in order to gage

whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Beyond the Edge of the Sea: Sailing with Jason and the Argonauts, Ulysses, the Vikings, and Other Explorers of the Ancient World* (Modern Library Paperbacks):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Amazing work of experience, research and ideas
By Kathelin Gray
We are preparing the Mediterranean expedition for the Vessel *Heraclitus*, on the seas for over 30 years. Obregon's book is a revelation to the expedition leaders, our captain of 15 years, and other colleagues investigating maritime history. We know from experience that his fresh ideas on history are based on experience. Obregon is no armchair historian; with daring and persistence, he has personally sailed the routes of Greeks, Vikings and others; he has also doggedly hunted down relevant archeological finds. The new twist he gives on classical texts is a delight, as well as comparative analysis of major seafaring traditions. Obregon spins compelling, poetic literature. A true classic, a must for anyone interested in maritime history, classics, and exploration.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.
Beyond the Edge of the Sea
By Alex C. Telander
Have you ever wondered where exactly Ulysses actually sailed in the real world, when he met and conquered the Cyclops, multi-headed dragon, and the giant whirlpool? How about where Jason and his Argonauts went to find the Golden Fleece? And how far across their respective oceans did the Polynesians and Vikings really get? All these answers can be found in the small and compact book by Mauricio Obregon, *Beyond the Edge of the Sea*. This book is laid out in eight succinct chapters, framed with an informative prologue and an illustrative epilogue. It provides pools of information and details to those who are already familiar with tests of Homer's *Odyssey* and Apollonius' *Jason and the Argonauts*, as well as other important texts of the ancient world. For those of you who have never read this renowned text, but are familiar with some of the happenings, do not fret. Obregon does not fail in providing the uninformed reader with background and setting, so that he or she may receive the full potential of the facts that the author is imparting. This book is filled with wonderful diagrams, pictures and charts that really aid in what is being read. Every other page has a depiction of some sort, albeit a half-page or full page in size; lending further continuity to the book. This book is recommended for all. For those who have read the classics, it provides an excellent reference. For those who are not so versed, this book may well serve as the impetus to make the reader tackle these fabulous pieces of literature. Originally published on October 29th 2001. Originally published in the Long Beach Union.

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15 of 16 people found the following review helpful. A Fascinating Look at Ancient Exploration
By Donald Mitchell
The author takes ancient texts, religions, and stories and turns them into factual accounts of the sea-faring adventures of Greeks, Polynesians, Muslims, and Norsemen. Among the four groups, most of the world was explored in ancient times. The observations are based on the author's real-life experiences of retracing these routes, often by sea and otherwise by air. The book succinctly captures enormous amounts of perspective in just a few pages and with many stunning illustrations. I have read no book that is its equal for making the ancient world real to us today. "At sea there are no atheists . . ." Ambassador Obregon, who is now deceased, looks at religious beliefs for clues about the voyages. Ancient peoples often calculated their locations by where they were compared to the constellations overhead. They saw the gods in these constellations, which made them doubly meaningful. He goes on to show the prevailing winds in the major parts of the world. Since much travel was by sail, these winds had a heavy influence on what routes were chosen. From there, he draws on whatever available evidence there is to answer questions like: How did the Argonauts get home? Where did Homer write the *Odyssey*? Are the 'Indians' of South America descendants of the Polynesians? Although the answers can be considered to be no more than hypotheses, they represent ideas that certainly help rule out some of the alternative explanations. If you are like me, it greatly adds to your appreciation of these ancient stories and peoples to see where they may have gone on a map, and to learn what the practical problems were that they probably encountered on these trips. I would otherwise not have realized that the Danube could be traversed by heavy boat with minimal portages. The hypothesis about the Polynesians is especially interesting. Since they were relying on sail for much of their travel, he suggests that they may have waited for winds to blow that countered the usual direction of the trades. This meant reducing the risk of going into an ocean of unknown length, because when the trade winds did return they would push one safely home. His perspective on all of this in the epilogue is quite interesting. "Between [the Greeks and the Polynesians] . . ., they explored more than half [the earth's] circumference, yet they never met." "The Muslims . . . never ventured into the [Atlantic or Pacific]." But these travels were important, because they laid the foundation for the rediscovery of ancient knowledge that became the Renaissance. The book is filled with little tidbits that would make a whole book for any other author. I particularly loved his explanation of how Eratosthenes of Syene (today's Aswan) came close to correctly calculating the earth's circumference in ancient times by measuring the length of a shadow in Alexandria to calculate its angle as compared to no shadow in Syene on the same day. How many of today's trigonometry or geometry students would conceive of this clever method? I also encourage you to read this book for the purpose of thinking about how multidisciplinary perspectives can advance knowledge in ways that a narrower focus cannot. I would love to see this kind of thinking applied to many other issues about ancient times, such as how the pyramids were built. I encourage you to do your own amateur sleuthing. Take something that seems unusual. What set of facts could explain it? In that way, you will strengthen your deductive powers. Look closely, think hard, and fit the pieces together carefully . . . like reconstructing

a broken pottery artifact!

The story of Jason and the Argonauts and Homers tales of Ulysses are among the greatest ancient epics, but are they merely nautical legends or true stories? Mauricio Obregon has combed through classical texts, focusing on the smallest details, and with his intimate knowledge of historical navigation, brilliantly reenacts the voyages the ancient heroes actually traveled. Using the clues embedded in these epic tales, Obregon deftly argues that many of the legends are not merely fiction, but are, quite possibly, true adventures.

From Publishers Weekly An experienced sailor, Obregon (who before his death in 1998 was a member of Harvard's board of overseers) succeeded in his lifelong attempt to replicate, in detail, the journeys of some of the most daring, famous, even mythic voyagers and seafaring peoples of the past, including the Argonauts' expedition in search of the Golden Fleece, Odysseus' 10-year journey home after the Trojan War, the Vikings' visits to North America, the Muslims' voyages to the east and Polynesians' exploration of the Pacific. He based his voyages on geographical, meteorological and celestial information available in ancient accounts such as the Icelandic sagas. As he recounts what it was like to re-create these ancient itineraries, Obregon comments not only on how the risks those sailors took opened up the world, but also on the types of ships and rigging they used, details of their navigational techniques and insight into their sophisticated understanding of the complexities of the varying winds coming from all four points of the globe. The book, although not scholarly (there are no footnotes and only a minimal bibliography), will appeal to professional historians precisely because Obregon's conclusions, for the most part reasonable, are based on his own considerable experience traveling on the same, largely immutable waters as his subjects. (Jan.) Forecast: In addition to those professional historians, the book, which exudes an almost bewitching charm, lends itself to a wider readership interested in seafaring and its lore. With 47 carefully selected illustrations, this title will make an excellent gift for anyone eager to be entertained by tales of adventure and romance from the distant past. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Booklist Obregon takes his reader on a maritime adventure through time, imagining the great explorers and their journeys, from Jason and the Argonauts to early Polynesians to Odysseus and the Vikings. Sweeping in scope, this slim text touches on every aspect of ancient travel by water, offering brief lessons in astronomy, cartography, oceanography, and carpentry. Some of Obregon's attempts to draw connections between extremely diverse and distant cultures through their ocean-faring ways are quite strained, but this book offers several surprisingly provocative and plausible conclusions. Could the Polynesians have traveled to South America? Perhaps, Obregon argues, if they chose to follow extraordinary winds, rather than prevailing ones. The choppy narrative is bound to make some readers figuratively seasick, but many will want to hang on for the ride, as the fascinating history of the sea, its mythic and historical figures, and the boats that changed the world are brought into a fresh and interesting perspective. Dozens of illustrations provide helpful information for the nautically challenged. John Green Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved A charming and fascinating little book . . . Obregon takes us to the realm of the earliest sailors, prov[ing] himself as engaging a swabby as the best of them. The Philadelphia Inquirer An utterly elegant book, written with a poetic lilt. The Philadelphia Inquirer The book, which exudes an almost bewitching charm, lends itself to a wide readership interested in seafaring and its lore. Publishers Weekly