

U.S. HYDROGRAPHIC OFFICE PUBLICATION 249

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These tables tabulate the values of hour angle and azimuth for six selected stars for integral degrees of local hour angle of Aries and for integral degrees of latitude from pole to pole. The principal difference between HO 249 and other recent tables is that the former uses the local hour angle of Aries, or local Sidereal Time, instead of the meridian angle of the body, and azimuth has replaced the azimuth angle. The arrangement of the tables also differs somewhat due to the fact that the six selected stars change with latitude and hour angle.

Since HO 249 makes no provision for solutions of sun, moon, or planet observations, it is necessary to have at hand another method or methods to make up this deficiency. Also unlike such tables as HO 214, HO 249 must be recomputed every few years to allow for the precession of the equinoxes.

In principle HO 249 provides a short simple solution, but obviously the serious limitation is the fact that only six stars are tabulated for any instance of time and for any given latitude. Furthermore the required corrections due to annual changes in the position of the stars is a serious drawback. There are two wrinkles, however, which may be used to simplify the methods given in HO 249. First, the almanac may be replaced by one sheet giving on one side the daily values for 0 hours G.C.T., the local Hour Angle of Aries, and on the reverse side the G.C.T. correction for hours, minutes, and seconds. The daily tabulation plus the correction gives the local hour angle of Aries for direct entry in the HO 249, and this without reference to the Nautical Almanac or to the Air Almanac. (See Sheet A) Fig. 1.

Second, the "Adjustment of the longitude for the precession of equinoxes" given on the front inside cover page as an annual correction, may be replaced by an annual altitude correction for each star. This correction varies in amount from 0 to about 0'8 a day and the correction might be either plus or minus. Since the correction is given in terms of altitude, it is very easily applied direct to the sextant, when the observation is made. This would be much more simple than applying it to the longitude before plotting and since the changes in star positions are uniform over a period of years, these corrections may be used for ten or twenty years without inaccuracy.

Figure 1 shows a portion of the two pages of corrections which may be used to replace the almanac when using HO 249.

Figure 2 shows a portion of the page from the Star Altitude Curves giving the annual altitude corrections as they are applied when using the Star Altitude Curves. Since the tabulated values of HO 249 are identical with the plotted values of the Star Altitude Curves, the annual altitude correction may be used the same way. In fact it appears desirable to have the annual altitude correction printed directly at the head of the tables in HO 249 for each star.

In fact HO 249 might be considered the tabulated values from points on the Star Altitude Curves, the principal difference being that six instead of three stars are used. While six stars have a certain advantage over three stars, it must be remembered that in either case the method must be considered "a fair weather method" with both HO 249 and the Star Altitude Curves suffering this deficiency and requiring supplementary methods for use with the sun, moon, planets, and stars. A short, compact accurate and universal method, such as the *Line of Position Book* or the *New Line of Position Tables* should be used to supplement HO 249 or the Star Altitude Curves.

As it stands, HO 249 is proving a very popular method and this popularity should be still further increased by providing for each star the correct annual altitude correction, and for some users a separate sheet showing the Hour Angle of Aries would be a convenience.



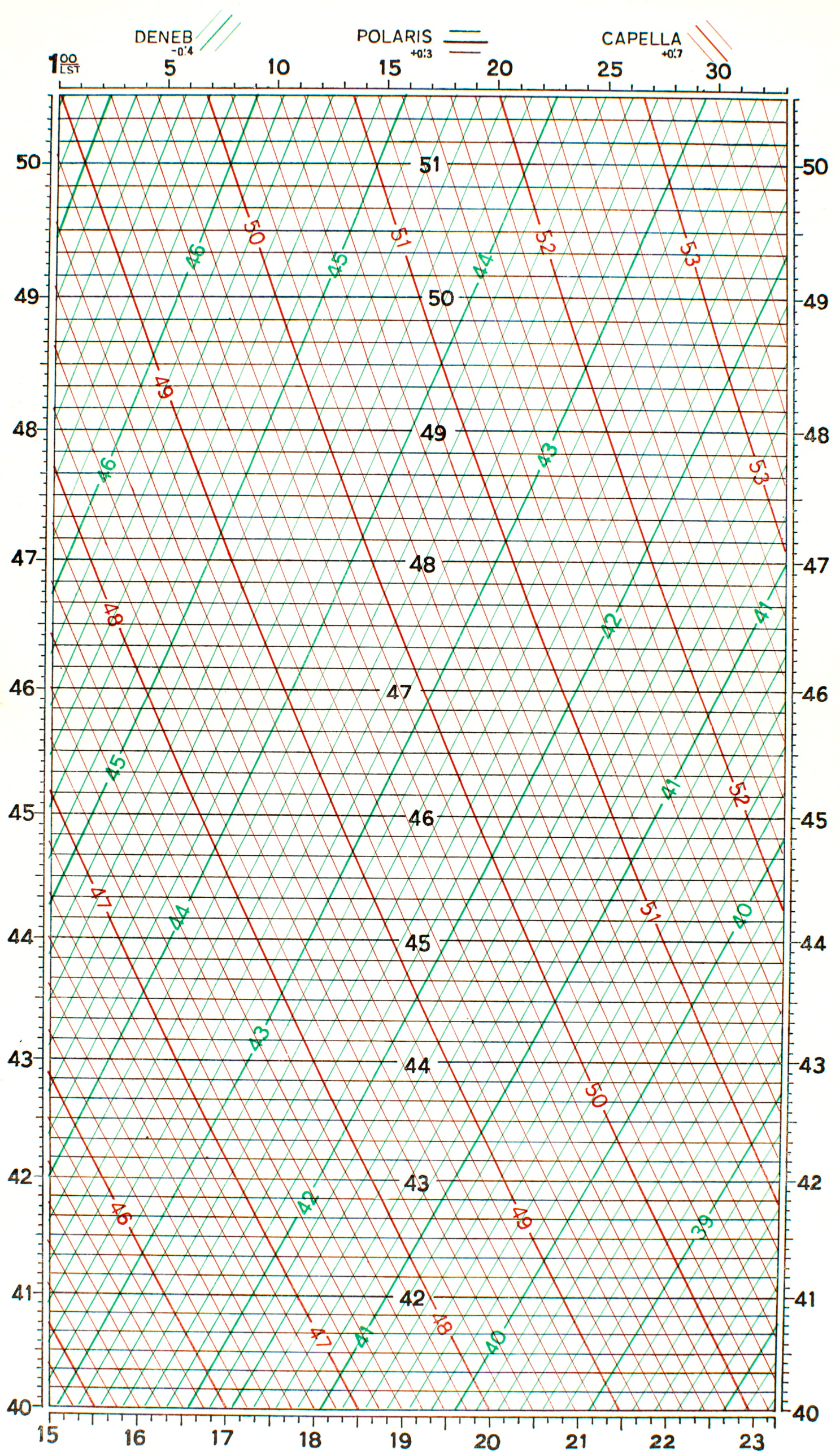


FIG 2