
This extremely important work must be consulted to be believed. Sumptuously printed, with six plates in color and one in black with many line drawn maps, the edition of Berggren and Jones is a major epoch in the scholarly history of ancient geography and applied astronomy.

To the uninitiated, the *Geography* of Claudius Ptolemy appears to be a forest, dense, murky, and highly dangerous to humanists. Moreover modern editions, from the Renaissance on, are either incomplete or based upon selected manuscripts. This work has been ignored except in studies of ancient cartography, geography, and the application of astronomical techniques to ‘real’ life in antiquity.

Despite the apparent narrow interest of such a book, the two editors have managed to steer clear of arcane symbology, detailed mathematical analysis, and complicated reasoning. In fact, one of the remarkable aspects of this edition is not just the artistic layout of the text but, more importantly, the simplicity of explanation. Style, at last, is employed as a means of teaching the ancient exact sciences. For example, there is an excellent and well-written Introduction concerned with the parameters of latitude, longitude, the sphere of the earth, and cartography in general. Page 9 in particular outlines the phenomena that Ptolemy needed for determining latitude. There follows a brief yet detailed discussion of units of distance, the value of the *Geography* in Ptolemy’s research output, and
finally the importance of Marinos for the later work of Ptolemy. The two basic maps of the astronomer-cartographer are then described, with the summation focused on the manuscript tradition of the Geography. I liked the explanation of the map projection itself and the necessary coordinate lines.

Berggren-Jones follow the accepted dichotomy between a Byzantine revision and the non-Byzantine manuscripts. Problems with the separate textual transmission of the maps are another matter. The editors stress the intricacies of the ancient and medieval visual appreciation of the earth according to Ptolemy.

The translation of the original then begins, with Books 1, 2, 7, and 8 covered. Useful footnotes on the page deal with Greek astronomical and mathematical terminology, history, and problems of interpretation (celestial astronomy, spherical geometry, and similar matters). Neither lengthy nor lapidary, these commentaries on Ptolemy’s text are helpful to the inexperienced reader and useful for advanced students of ancient science. Surprisingly, they do not interrupt the flow of the translation thanks to the editors’ style of presentation.

One great advantage of the work reviewed here is its simplicity. Berggren and Jones have avoided mathematical obfuscation. Likewise, they have addressed a broad public instead of the small coterie of historians of science. The result is as splendid in expression as the original work must have been in importance. This edition can be consulted by a non-specialist. To prove my point, let me cite the remarkable Appendices (A to H) that conclude the study. All are necessary for a proper understanding of Ptolemy and his Geography, and all are accessible to the interested reader who is not versatile in mathematics.

At the risk of repeating myself, let me conclude by indicating that this edition is challenging but not crushing. Those having motivation to investigate Ptolemy and ancient cartography will not find Berggren-Jones off-putting. What to others would have been an arduous task has been performed skillfully by these two scholars. Truly, this work is outstanding, not only for the original mind of Ptolemy and the results
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contained in his work; it is equally valuable owing to the well-mannered, fair, and brilliant translation—not to mention the ably researched and adroitly presented Introduction.

We are in debt to Berggren-Jones for completing this study.

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