

533.15. d. 95.1

File to Maniken

FROM THE  
RENAISSANCE  
TO THE  
COUNTER-  
REFORMATION

Essays in honour of Garrett Mattingly

EDITED AND WITH AN  
INTRODUCTION BY  
CHARLES H. CARTER



JONATHAN CAPE  
THIRTY BEDFORD SQUARE  
LONDON

1966

1-437

119. *Quippes for upstart newfangled gentlewomen* (London, 1595), p. 9.
120. *Romeo and Juliet*, V,i; *Henry IV, Part One*, V,iv; *Henry VI, Part One*, IV,vii, III,iii.
121. III,iii; IV,iii; *Challenge for Beauty*, quoted in Webster, *Works*, F. L. Lucas, ed. (4 vols, London, 1927), II, p. 189.
122. *The Artillery Garden, a poem* (Oxford, 1952), f. Bi<sup>v</sup>.
123. Patten, *op. cit.*, esp. ff. G v<sup>r-v</sup>.
124. *The bataille of Agincourt, Works*, J. William Hebel, ed. (five vols, Oxford, 1961) III, pp. 28-29.
125. *Fruitfull Sermons* (London, 1571), f. 2<sup>r</sup>.
126. *The Trumpet of Warre* (London, n.d.), f. G vi<sup>r</sup>.
127. A. R. Hall, *Ballistics in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1952), p. 9.
128. J. U. Nef, *War and Human Progress* (London, 1950), pp. 132-33.
129. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
130. II,iii.
131. *Henry IV, Part One*, I,iii.
132. Bern Dibner, "Leonardo da Vinci; military engineer," in *Essays in the History of Science and Learning offered . . . to George Sarton*, M. F. Ashley Montagu, ed. (New York, 1944), p. 104.
133. T. M. Spaulding in *Adams Memorial Studies*, J. G. McManaway, G. E. Dawson, E. E. Willoughby, eds. (Washington, 1948), p. 497.
134. Nef, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-22.
135. *Certain Additions to the Booke of Gunnery* (London, 1601), A2<sup>r</sup>.
136. L. Simeoni, *Le Signorie* (2 vols, Milan, 1950), I, pp. 551 and 570.
137. L. Van der Essen, *Alexandre Farnèse* (5 vols, Brussels, 1933-37), IV, pp. 55 ff.
138. *Ed. cit.*, pp. 430-31.
139. For example, by Gustavus Adolphus' ally, the Landgrave William of Hesse-Cassel; Michael Roberts, *Gustavus Adolphus, A History of Sweden 1611-1632* (2 vols, London, 1953-58), II, p. 227.

## A SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ENCYCLOPEDIA: SEBASTIAN MÜNSTER'S *COSMOGRAPHY* AND ITS EDITIONS

G E R A L D S T R A U S S

*Indiana University*

Sebastian Münster's *Cosmography* was first published in 1544 and quickly became the most popular work of its kind. Although Münster's claim to a place in the scholar's pantheon rests most securely on his significance as a Hebraist<sup>1</sup> (his dictionaries, vocabularies, text editions, and translations were landmarks in the early phase of Hebrew studies), it was the *Cosmography* with which his name came to be principally associated in the minds of sixteenth-century readers. During the author's own lifetime (he died in 1552) the *Cosmography* went through eight printings. And after his death, revised and expanded versions continued to appear until 1628: thirty-five editions in all—twenty in German, five in Latin, six in French, three in Italian, and one in Czech,<sup>2</sup> plus several English epitomes and extracts.<sup>3</sup> Thirty-one of the full editions issued from Heinrich Petri's press in Basel; the others were printed in Paris, Cologne, Venice, and Prague.

Münster's *Cosmography*<sup>4</sup> belongs to the species of work that Jean

Bodin, in his *Methodus*, called "geographistory." In the course of a leisurely perambulation of the countries of Europe, the Near and Middle East, Asia, Africa, and the New World, the author reveals what he has been able to learn about the places traversed, about their inhabitants, their institutions, manners, cultures, ways of life. There was scarcely a limit to the amount and the kind of information that could be conveyed; everything was relevant, whether it pertained to the flora and fauna flourishing in a given region or to the operation of a secret judicial tribunal, ecclesiastical and political questions of the day, the latest news from Peru. A book of this sort was easily revised and augmented when it became expedient to do so, and the many successive editions of the *Cosmography* bear witness, in their increasing bulk as well as in the arrangement of what they contain, to the diligence with which editors tried to keep the volume informative and useful.

Even a cursory glance at a few of these editions shows an extraordinary abundance. Given the eager response to the book, the publisher decided to meet public interest not only by keeping the work up to date in its historical and geographical subjects, but by expanding it to contain all, or nearly all, that an inquisitive and imaginative person might wish to discover about the world. Even in its first German edition of 1544 the book ran to over 650 folio pages. In 1598 it had reached 1,461 pages, and in 1628, about 1,700. The Paris version of 1575, the work of François de Belleforest, the noted historian and anthologizer, was printed in two huge folio volumes of over 4,000 pages.<sup>5</sup> The Italian edition published at Cologne in 1575 ran to 1,237 large pages. Each editor included in his redaction such material as he thought his readers would expect. Thus the 1568 French edition expands Münster's scanty references to France in book two,<sup>6</sup> while Belleforest added to his version no fewer than 627 pages on the history and geography of his own country in order to balance the long third book on Germany which had formed the heart of Münster's original work. Many of these augmentations then found their way into subsequent German editions: the last of the editions of the *Cosmography*, that of 1628, devotes 190 large pages to France and 263 to Italy, compared to 61 pages and 123 pages, respectively, in 1559. Items of general interest on historical, geographical, cultural subjects were included

as they became available. Illustrations, maps, plans, charts, portraits became profuse. The principle of this proliferation of facts and lore had been declared by Münster at the outset, and was reiterated by the editor of the last edition:<sup>7</sup> Nothing is stated in this volume that has not been previously written, in thousands of other books. But what elsewhere appears in fragments, and in scattered places, has here been brought together, "without any alterations or additions of our own." Sources are nearly always given. The best cure for disbelief in the book's trustworthiness, Münster notes, is to look up the sources cited. Taken all together, the editions of Münster's *Cosmography* constitute a chronicle of the taste, particularly the expanding taste, of the lay public in the second half of the sixteenth century. They have hardly been studied as such, even though the work's attractions strike one who merely turns the pages to look at the pictures. A book which, in less than a century, saw thirty-five editions and circulated as widely as the many surviving copies suggest, deserves close scrutiny.

To make a beginning, it might be interesting to explore one aspect of the *Cosmography* that impressed me as I traced some subjects through the editions: its character as a kind of encyclopedia of general knowledge.<sup>7a</sup> Münster's preface promises the prospective reader an exhaustive survey of all that is significant and interesting in his world. "The art of cosmography," he begins, "concerns itself not only with the countries, habitations, and lives of the various peoples of the earth, but also with many other things, such as strange animals, trees, metals, and so on, things both useful and useless, to be found on land and in the sea; [also] the habits, customs, laws, governments of men, . . . the origins of countries, regions, cities, and towns, how nature has endowed them and what human inventiveness has produced in them, [also] what notable things have happened everywhere. . . ."<sup>8</sup> But between preface and postscript, the fare is even richer than that. Far from drawing the contents of the work merely from his own learning and observations, Münster affirms that he shirked no effort to make the knowledge of others available to himself. "It is not possible nowadays that a man can see everything for himself. Life is too short, and there are too many perils to health and safety on the land." He has read, he says, histories and chronicles and other books without number, "and

taken from each whatever suited my purpose." Moreover, "wherever I heard of a learned and travelled man, I wrote to him, told him about my project, and asked his help. And I found many who were willing to speed my work by sending a book or supplying a description."<sup>9</sup> This was the usual procedure for the production of books of this sort.<sup>10</sup> As Münster himself notes: "more often than not I give another's opinion rather than my own."<sup>11</sup> The resulting compilation did not have much unity of viewpoint<sup>12</sup> and could not pretend to balance and style, but it did bring together an extraordinary wealth of erudition of the most varied sort. Even today it is impossible to settle down to an hour's browsing in Münster without learning something. In the sixteenth century, the book brought knowledge and enlightenment to nearly three generations of readers.

What one calls an encyclopedic work is, of course, a matter of definition. Encyclopedias, in the proper sense of the word, existed at least since Roman antiquity.<sup>13</sup> Every age organizes its sum of knowledge in the way that suits it best, not necessarily in the dictionary order familiar to us now. The example from antiquity closest to the spirit of Münster's *Cosmography* is the elder Pliny's *Natural History*, a compilation made from the books of over four hundred Roman and other writers, in nearly twenty-five hundred chapters on everything from astronomy to pharmacology, very unequal in both compass and quality. The *Natural History* was enormously popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. By 1544 more than forty printed editions had been published;<sup>14</sup> it was a treasure house of information for professional and lay readers alike. For other kinds of knowledge, one could, in Münster's day, look in Gregor Reisch's *Margarita philosophica*, first printed in 1503 and important especially as a popularization of natural science; Raffaele Maffei Volaterranus' *Commentarii rerum urbanarum*, published 1506, and, despite its title, a comprehensive encyclopedic work; Joachim Fortius Ringelberg's *Lucubrationes vel potius absolutissima kyklopaideia*, according to Gert Zischka the first book to use the word "encyclopedia" in a title, printed Basel, 1541; Paul Skalich's *Encyclopaedia seu orbis disciplinarum epistemon*, 1559; Theodor Zwinger's gigantic *Theatrum humanae vitae* of 1565; and several others. Each author chose a different method of arranging

and presenting his facts. Zwinger tried his hand, unsuccessfully, at a complicated systematic order in which subjects are taken up under categories tagged "*avaritia*," "*memoria*," and so on. Polydore Vergil found a unifying scheme for imparting encyclopedic knowledge in his *De inventoribus rerum libri VIII* by tracing the first invention or discovery of things. Volaterranus used a complex, but rational and efficient scheme proceeding from geography to history and anthropology, to philology, philosophy, politics, and natural science and mathematics, the items arranged in alphabetical order within each category. Others tried to find a workable scheme in chronology, calendar days, the alphabet, or in idiosyncratic methods like that of the physician and dramatist Tobias Kober, whose description of diseases, injuries, and epidemics proceeds in an order determined by the native countries of his patients.<sup>15</sup> At the very least, these arrangements encouraged consecutive reading, an impossibility where the order was rigorously alphabetical. Provided there is a good index, such as that in Polydore Vergil's *De inventoribus rerum* and in Volaterranus' *Commentaries*, the book could be easily used for reference and thus made to serve the function of a modern encyclopedia without destroying its character as a work of literature.

As a matter of fact, the indices to the editions of Münster's *Cosmography* give a rather clear indication of the use to which these volumes must have been put. The *Cosmography* was, I think, an encyclopedia in the sixteenth-century sense: universal in scope, touching on nearly all subjects, incorporating, or making use of, all pertinent sources of information as they were or became available, and aiming at completeness: *all* the emperors of Rome with dates and brief biographies, *all* the Turkish sultans, lists of *all* the islands off the Greek mainland and of *all* the cities and towns in Tuscany, and so on. Though the manner in which such knowledge was conveyed to the reader was informal, often anecdotal, the amount of solid learning packed into the text makes perusal a formidable task. To be sure, the appearance of the books was inviting and designed specifically to counteract the massive text: each page diversified with chapter headings, marginal summaries, and—above all—splendid illustrations. But the writing itself is utilitarian and does not ring with the sonority usually associated with historiog-

raphy in humanist circles.<sup>16</sup> It was not for style or moral uplift that the *Cosmography* was read, but for the concrete facts contained on its crowded pages.

To these facts the Index, or *Register* as it is called in the German versions, is a key. As the later editions swelled the pages of the work to more than twice their original number, the text became gradually less manageable without a guide of some sort, and in response to this need the index was made ever more elaborate and effective. The first edition of 1544 had no index at all, the second edition, published a year later, came supplied with a *Register* covering fourteen and a half pages, a fact announced to readers on the title page: "This *Cosmography* has been greatly augmented and improved by the author himself, and a Register has been added to make it much more useful than before." The indices of the later German editions are longer, more detailed, and technically superior. Instead of merely giving place and proper names, the later registers analyze the contents: "CHILDREN, how they are to be brought up"; "METALS, how they are extracted, why some are preferred to others, their mixture and utility . . ."; "TURKS, invade Italy, what laws they keep, how they treat Christian prisoners, why they may not drink wine . . ."; "JEWS, when expelled from Spain, expelled from France, murder a child in Trent, massacred in Nördlingen . . .". Since the indices had to be redone in any case each time a new edition was being prepared, there were many opportunities to improve them in amplitude and clarity. The 1628 edition, the last one published, is equipped with an admirable working index indispensable to the modern student of the *Cosmography*. Every battle taken up in the text is listed in the index under BATTLES, every river under RIVERS, every island, monastery, bishop. There is a long list of entries under the name of each country. Exotic information, which a chairbound traveler might well turn to first, is carefully analyzed: BRASILIANS with wife and child [illustration]; how they go to war; how they kill and slaughter a prisoner [illustration]; how their wives welcome guests; terrible drinking; how they eat; how they mourn their dead. . . ."

The clearest evidence of the importance attached to the index by both readers and publisher is given by the Latin versions which tended to enlist the collaboration of the professionally most com-

petent editors. The first Latin edition of 1550 had an index of only 12 pages; in the edition of 1572 the index extended over 176 pages. In 1550 the index had been rudimentary, only general references being made: ALEXANDER MAGNUS, CUBA INSULA, GLADIATORA ARS, and so on. In 1572 the editors provided a properly analytical instrument for surveying the entire contents of the *Cosmography* and locating each item on its page. The forty-two separate entries under ALEXANDER MAGNUS constitute in themselves a thumbnail history of Alexander's conquests. The entries under ANIMALS refer to fauna in all countries taken up; ROME and ROMANS cover nearly five columns of analyzed entries. There are references under HOMICIDE, PEPPER, SULTAN, and a thousand more. The date and the full story of the Turkish siege of Vienna, the parts of Hungary under occupation—such information can be looked up in a moment. There is an analyzed index entry for every city described and depicted, as there is for every individual whose name figures in the text.<sup>17</sup> To make the work still more useful, editors often inserted cross references linking information presented in different parts of the volumes. For example, a note attached to the description of Waldshut: "For the battles fought in or near this town, see above in the description of Switzerland." Or a marginal note: "For more information on this, see above, page 238." These cross references are carefully altered in later editions to take account of changes in pagination.

In general, the tendency of the editions is to become not only bigger and richer, and more profusely illustrated, but also increasingly practical as works of reference. Even visually this is true. In the earlier editions, the lists and inventories which, in accord with the taste of the time for such things, make up much of the bulk of the book, are always written out as lines of text, indistinguishable by the eye from the narrative and, of course, difficult and wearisome to read. In the later editions, these catalogues of islands and bishops and delegates to the Council of Constance<sup>18</sup> are usually arranged in columns down the page according to some rational order, alphabetical, chronological, geographical, hierarchical. Order and arrangement were evidently major concerns with the editors of the later versions. Münster himself had not worried much about meth-

odology. His organization, as he explained in 1545, was that of the ancient periegesis:

I shall take you on a tour from country to country and across the oceans, and I shall point out cities, mountains, rivers, deserts, and other things diverting and pleasant to know about, such as the customs and ways and activities of strange peoples, also what the soil of their country produces. . . .<sup>19</sup>

Thirty years later, Belleforest not only vastly expanded the range of subjects, but brought method to its organization. In addition to everything that previous editions had offered, he writes, his two big volumes contain

catalogues of law makers, philosophers, poets, orators, historians, nymphs, muses, sybils; also myths, oracles, rites, idols, marvels and other prodigies surpassing nature; also the names of the inventors of many arts, of the founders of religious orders. . . ; also the names of mountains, promontories, mines, quarries, fountains, rivers, lakes, oceans, gulfs, whirlpools, and deeps—all this well and clearly arranged and disposed according to the principles of chronology, topography, and prosopography.<sup>20</sup>

Clarity and logic of organization, the disposition of matter on the printed page, became, in fact, a preoccupation of editors, almost an end in itself. It is a phenomenon familiar to a student of encyclopedic books of the late sixteenth century, related to the increased fascination with the technical possibilities of typesetting and to the great influence exerted by the methodology of Peter Ramus on the accumulation and distribution of knowledge. The Ramist doctrine that every subject could be treated topically, that the best kind of exposition was that which proceeded by analysis, by breaking everything down into its constituent parts, was enthusiastically adopted by publishers and editors, including Münster's. The years of Ramus' greatest impact on German thought coincided precisely with the publication of the later editions of the *Cosmography*.<sup>21</sup> While the dispositions and layouts of the *Cosmography* do not attain (or, if one is to follow Walter Ong, descend to) the extremes of the manifold divisions and endlessly dichotomized tables of Johannes Piccator and Bartholomäus Keckermann,<sup>22</sup> the method of Ramism is

clearly discernible in the editions from 1578 to 1628. The entire geography of Italy faces us on eleven large pages of carefully associated and bracketed names of regions, cities, and other settlements, down to hamlets, rivers, islands, mountains, thermal baths, bridges, fortified towers, and ancient monuments.<sup>23</sup> The territorial and political organization of Sicily is set out on three and a half pages of differentiated type showing feudal relationships and political jurisdictions.<sup>24</sup> A complete list of popes provides each pontiff with his dates and gives the duration of his pontificate in years, months, and days.<sup>25</sup> An elaborate bracketed table indicates the places of hundreds of German localities in the Imperial Circles.<sup>26</sup> Delegates to the Council of Constance are tabulated by rank, title, origin, and size of retinue.<sup>27</sup> Genealogical tables illustrate nearly every line of descent. In aspect alone, these devices render the later editions of the *Cosmography* very different from the volume that had appeared in 1544, more useful as reference books, as repositories of rationally organized items of related knowledge, but also far less readable. Readers could, and—as marginal remarks in many surviving copies seem to indicate—often did, follow the narrative through the 1544 or 1550 versions from cover to cover. By 1580 the bulk had become so great and the massed material so oppressive that it is not possible to imagine a reader so keen as to take in the entire volume. Readers of the later versions probably tended to spot read, to consult, to refer, to check.

The character of the book thus being transformed, it became a matter of urgency that its contents be full, accurate, and up-to-date. Throughout the career of the *Cosmography*, therefore, its editors were busy (though not always very successful) keeping their volumes abreast of new and better sources of knowledge. Münster himself augmented and improved those editions of his work which he lived to oversee. That he worked the text over carefully is evident not only from the addition of specific items, but also from the interpolation of remarks and comments where the text re-engaged his opinions.<sup>28</sup> There is very little rewriting: changes are made by means of insertions between existing sentences or by addenda at the end of a paragraph. But there is a conscientious attempt to correct errors<sup>29</sup> and to fill gaps.<sup>30</sup> Above all, Münster tried to broaden the purview of his work and give its contents a more lucid exposition.



Lengthy addenda take up such matters as mining in the Alsace, business life in Augsburg,<sup>32</sup> the characteristics of Silesians and the scenery of their country, the course of the Nile.<sup>33</sup> In 1544 Münster had had to concede his ignorance of the northern countries: "I went to great pains," he noted, "writing to Denmark and to the Archbishop of Upsala in Rome, but I was not able to obtain the information I lacked on the kings of Denmark." But soon after seeing the first version through the press, he must have succeeded, for the second edition adds nineteen pages on Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, bringing the history of Scandinavia up to the year 1543.<sup>34</sup> The changes respond to the interest of Münster's time in such topical questions as the Turkish wars (there are eight new pages on Turkish government and customs in the 1545 version), the Mediterranean naval campaign of Charles V against Barbarossa (a good account of the attack on Fez and the siege of Algiers<sup>35</sup>), and the news coming in from the East Indies and the New World (there are additional pages on Sumatra, China, and on the later voyages of Columbus<sup>36</sup>). Throughout, Münster tried to improve the arrangement of his facts. Several scattered chapters on Swiss history were gathered into a connected account in 1545. Kings and bishops and abbots are sometimes, arranged in catalogues with running numbers in the left-hand margin and vital dates on the right. Münster seemed to be aware that his big book, if it were to hold its readers, would have to be not only diverting and interesting, but also efficient.

The editors of the later versions carried on with Münster's procedures for keeping the work up to date.<sup>37</sup> Wars, even such local conflicts as the protracted feud between the Margrave Albrecht of Brandenburg and the city of Nuremberg<sup>38</sup> are reported as soon as they occur. Death dates of rulers who died shortly after one edition went to press are given in the next, though frequently the changes reflect national limitations of interest.<sup>39</sup> The editors must have kept close track of the careers of even minor European, particularly German, princes; deceased rulers are rarely listed among the living.<sup>40</sup> The 1559 Latin edition inserts an account of the civil war in Germany,<sup>41</sup> and the articles on important or notorious persons increase in length from edition to edition as their impacts on European history are appreciated.<sup>42</sup> There is a tendency to incorporate information of a statistical character: a list of knights and

princes fallen in the Swiss wars, a list of abbots of every monastery mentioned, a monster catalogue of all tournaments ever held in Germany, with a complete roster of all participants by rank,<sup>43</sup> and so on. A great deal of local history provides much of the bulk of the later editions;<sup>44</sup> in this, too, the updating is conscientious. Another welcome change was the replacement, in the later editions, of stereotyped faces by proper portraits. In the early versions illustrations of rulers, heretics, philosophers have only symbolic and decorative value. In the editions of the 1580s and after, true-to-life likenesses of famous men add a great deal of topical interest to the volumes. Maximilian, Charles V, Frederick the Wise, Franz von Sickingen, Luther, Oecolampadius are familiar faces on the pages.<sup>45</sup> The same is true of the city profiles which, from 1550 on, form one of the main attractions of the *Cosmography*. In the 1544-1545 editions, there had been little attempt at verisimilitude. Stock woodcuts are used over and over to illustrate different towns. Beginning in 1550, however, the stereotype outline of moat, walls, church towers, and tile roofs disappears, and proper city portraits, drawn at the scene, usually by local artists, make their appearance.

One of the flaws in Münster's original work was its abrupt decline, quantitatively as well as qualitatively, as the author strays from Western and Central Europe into the East.<sup>46</sup> This imbalance is corrected to some extent by the editors of later versions, depending on their independence from the original work and on the quality of the sources available to them.

François de Belleforest, of all the editors, did most to improve the Eastern sections of the *Cosmography*. In the chapters on Greece, for example, he was entirely on his own, merely retaining Münster's general scheme of history and politics on a geographical basis, with stress on institutions and customs. Belleforest, despite the disdain in which he was held by many of his contemporaries and successors,<sup>47</sup> made an able and ingenious adapter of a work of this sort. He increased the emphasis on political and administrative matters, taking his facts from good classical and modern sources, which he cites conscientiously, by book and often by chapter, in the margins of his text. This competent interest in practical politics, amounting, in the aggregate, to a comparative description of government, is the main intellectual contribution Belleforest makes to Münster's

original work. "Münster is very weak on the government of this city," he notes occasionally, then sets out to describe in detail the political structure of, for example, Genoa and the operation of her government.<sup>48</sup> His most notable achievement is the long section on France which replaces Münster's meager chapter: 627 pages of geography, history, chronology, genealogy, flora and fauna, folklore, government, and municipal histories and descriptions. In the narration of these matters, Belleforest was in full stride, writing confidently from the fullness of his erudition, the extent of which he was to show soon in his lavish *Grandes Annales et histoire générale de France*, published in two huge volumes in 1579. Especially interesting is the long account of French government, with descriptions of the Court, the role of the aristocracy, the *parlements*, and the organs of municipal government.<sup>49</sup> There is an interesting, detailed chapter on the University and its colleges,<sup>50</sup> described with enormous pride as the greatest institution of learning in Christendom, also a great many plans and illustrations of cities, each punctuated with numbers indicating and identifying landmarks and noteworthy buildings.

But elsewhere, too, Belleforest improved the proportions of Münster's badly balanced work, adding paragraphs or whole sections,<sup>51</sup> cutting and trimming where Münster was verbose.<sup>52</sup> The entire work reveals, in its organization, its style, and in its usefulness as a repository of concrete knowledge, Belleforest's superior critical acumen. He made a show of scrutinizing the works of others, and he regularly dissected the books on which he based his own account.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, he served the less scientific prepossessions of his age by retaining Münster's fanciful genealogies and the ubiquitous references to natural portents and to freaks and monsters.<sup>54</sup> Where it counts, however, Belleforest is precise and objective. In the chapters on the New World, the whole tone is different. To Münster, the reality of these exotic countries and their strange creatures and vegetation was still nearly incredible. His words are full of wonder and his account underlines the extraordinary and the fabulous. Belleforest, on the other hand, is businesslike. The New World exists, it is part of our extended experience, it needs to be described. In his handling, Brazil and Peru emerged from the mists of fantasy into the light of the empirical world.

The adequate description of "The Islands Newly Discovered" constituted one of the thorniest tasks for the later editors of the *Cosmography*. Despite his professional interests in geography, Münster had, in his own editions, furnished little of value on the New World, probably because, when he wrote the pages on America at the end of his fifth book, and with the description of Africa in the sixth still to be undertaken, his energies had flagged and the size of the work had begun to frighten him. In any case, his main purpose had been to explain the European world, especially Germany. The chapters on the New World were chiefly intended to titillate his readers' taste for the outlandish.

Although the subsequent descriptions of America never attained the amplitude proper to the subject, editors made a valiant effort to improve on Münster in scope and quality. The description became realistic where it had been fanciful—though favorite tales of bestial cruelty and cannibalism persisted—and illustrations and maps became informative where they had been merely quaint. The 1572 Latin edition, for example, inserts a *Novi orbis succincta descriptio*<sup>55</sup> summarizing all the voyages and incorporating some new information procured since 1550. It adds a fine two-page drawing of Cuzco, the famous Inca city,<sup>56</sup> a map of Cuba, and various other items. But it is only in the last edition, of 1628, that the new material takes on significance. Here the narrative for the first time is ample. It opens with a few questions: Did the ancients have knowledge of America? (The answer is in the negative.) How did the present inhabitants reach the New World? (Various possibilities, including migration from Russia and Lapland, are considered.) The Columbus voyages are described, then come illustrations and descriptions of animals and plants, the histories of the settlement of Virginia and Florida, quite competently told, the exploration and conquest of Central America, a long description of Mexico, then of Guatemala, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Patagonia, Chile, Peru, and the Caribbean Islands. The stories of the circumnavigations of the world bring the account to a close. The narrative returns again and again to details of customs, dress, agricultural procedures, methods of warfare, religion, funeral practices. There is no attempt to conceal the cruelty of the conquests, but the Spanish excesses are more than matched by Indian barbarism, illustrated in much de-



scriptive and pictorial detail. The sources for all this are cited in the margins and, sometimes, in the text. They corroborate the impression conveyed by other parts of this edition, that the editors made an informed effort to procure pertinent books as they appeared and to incorporate them in their expanding text.

Given the size which the *Cosmography* had now attained, keeping it current was a considerable task. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that the great enterprise came to an end in the second quarter of the seventeenth century. The book had become too big and too amorphous to serve a clear purpose. It was, in structure, a narrative work telling a story in books and chapters, but the story had become too prolix and too disjointed to be readable. Its pictures and maps and portraits were to have illustrated the world, but the woodcuts in the later editions are noticeably inferior to the ones in 1550; even the magnificent double-page city illustrations of the edition of 1550 were later reduced in size, and show up blurred and cramped. For all practical purposes the book had turned into an encyclopedia but it could not change its format to dispose its contents accordingly. By 1600, furthermore, there existed competitors for each of the several purposes served by the *Cosmography*: Johann Rauw's *Cosmographia* of 1597; the splendid regional topographies of Johann Stumpf, Peter Albinus, Cuspinian, Guler von Weineck, and many others; Braun and Hogenberg's *Civitates orbis terrarum* of 1572 to 1618; and, from 1642 on, Merian-Zeiller's visually superb *Topographia Germaniae*. As an encyclopedic repository of universal learning, Münster could hardly match Johann Heinrich Alsted's *Scientiarum omnium encyclopedia* which was first published in 1630,<sup>57</sup> two years after the printing of what turned out to be the last edition of Münster's work.

Münster's *Cosmography* thus vanished from the shelf of the great books of general knowledge, books to be consulted and used, and took its place among the stacks of tomes which, when exhumed by an occasional scholar, serve merely to illustrate the intellectual predilections of their time. It was one of the last attempts to contain between the covers of a single narrative volume all that was useful and interesting to know. When it disappeared in the early seventeenth century, it made way for works of specialized erudition to whose authors Münster's procedures were to seem amateurish and

a little foolish. But in the more than eighty years of its publishing life, the *Cosmography* had taught nearly three generations of laymen most of what they knew about the world beyond their native places. Today it serves as a reminder that sixteenth-century readers were not so parochial in their interests as they are often made out to be, that there were sources of information available to all who could and would read, and that the knowledge purveyed in them was not only broad, but by and large also sound.

## NOTES

1. Viktor Hantzsch, "Sebastian Münster: Leben, Werk, wissenschaftliche Bedeutung," *Abhandl. d. philol.-hist. Cl. d. kgl. sächsischen Ges. d. Wiss.*, XVIII, no. 3 (Leipzig, 1898). Herbert Hunger et al., *Geschichte der Textüberlieferung der antiken und mittelalterlichen Literatur* (Zurich, 1961), p. 202. Hantzsch's treatise, until now the only biographical-critical study of Münster's life and work, has been superseded by Karl Heinz Burmeister, *Sebastian Münster: Versuch eines biographischen Gesamtbildes* (Basler Beiträge zur Geschichtswissenschaft, Vol. 91; Basel and Stuttgart, 1963).

2. Several of the editions listed by Viktor Hantzsch, *op. cit.*, note 77, are declared non-existent by Werner Horn, "Sebastian Münster's Map of Prussia and the Variants of it," *Imago Mundi*, VII (1950), pp. 67-73, notes 29 to 33. See also Harold L. Ruland, "A Survey of Double-Page Maps in thirty-five Editions of the *Cosmographia Universalis* 1544-1628 of Sebastian Münster and in his Editions of Ptolemy's *Geographia* 1540-1552," *Imago Mundi*, XVI (1962), pp. 84-97.

3. For titles, see *British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books* vol. 166 (London, 1963), column 413.

4. The full title, in the first edition of 1544, reads: *Cosmographia, Beschreibung aller Lender . . . , in welcher begriffen aller völker herrschaffen, stetten, und namhafter flecken, herkommen, sitten,*

gebreuch, ordnung, glauben, secten, und hantierung, durch die  
gantze welt, und fürnemlich teutscher nation. Was auch besunder  
in jedem landt gefunden unnd darin beschehen sey. . . .

5. The paging of all the volumes is confused and replete with error. My figures are approximate, but tend to low estimates. The last page of the 1628 edition is numbered 1,752; that of Vol. One of the 1575 Paris edition is numbered 1,873, of Vol. Two 2,235.
6. For example, the fine description of Rouen missing in earlier editions; also illustrations and plans of Poitiers, Tours, Bourges, Bordeaux, Montpellier, Lyon.
7. 1628 German edition, p. 1,752. Cf. Münster's address to the reader on the last page of the 1545 edition.
- 7a. Burmeister, *op cit.*, p. 160, refers to the "encyclopedic character" of the *Cosmography* but does not explore it. The present essay was finished and in the editor's hands when a copy of Burmeister's excellent book reached me. Burmeister's work will be, from now on, the starting point of every serious study of Münster.
8. E.g., 1578 edition, leaf a iii recto ff. Münster's preface is maintained unchanged in the various editions.
9. *Ibid.*
10. For a detailed description of how a compilation like Münster's was put together, and for some additional information about the publication history of the *Cosmography*, see Gerald Strauss, "The Production of Johann Stumpf's 'Description of the Swiss Confederation,'" *Medievalia et Humanistica*, XII (1958), pp. 104-122. Burmeister, *op cit.*, pp. 133-51, deals at length with the collaboration and the collaborators that produced the *Cosmography*.
11. Last page of Preface, any edition.
12. The absence of conceptual unity is best exemplified by the halfhearted attempts to make the 1568 French edition, published by Petri in Basel with a privilege from King Henry II (cf. verso of title page), acceptable to Catholic readers. Some offensive passages, references, illustrations were taken out, many others left untouched.
13. For the following paragraph, see Gert A. Zischka, *Index Lexicorum Bibliographie der lexikalischen Nachschlagewerke* (Vienna, 1959), Introduction. Also, the article "Encyclopaedia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, eleventh edition (1910), Vol. 9, pp. 369-382; Bernhard Wendt, *Idee und Entwicklungsgeschichte der enzyklopädischen*

*Literatur* (Würzburg, 1941), 13 ff.; Ernst Herbert Lehmann, *Geschichte des Konversationslexikons* (Leipzig, 1934).

14. Zischka, *op cit.*, xv; "Encyclopaedia," *loc. cit.*, p. 370.
15. *Decades tres observationum medicarum castrensiarum Hungaricarum* (Frankfurt, 1606).
16. Münster himself echoes the humanist exaltation of history. But it is a perfunctory exhortation, quite unrelated to the body of his work. See Address to Charles V in the 1550 Latin edition, p. 2 recto.
17. The Czech edition (Prague, 1554) has an index of twenty-seven pages; the French edition of 1575 expanded by Belleforest has the most detailed index of all the editions: eighty-seven pages in Vol. I, 174 pages in Vol. II.
18. E.g., 1598 German edition, pp. 584 ff.; 1588 German edition, p. 1,023; 1572 Latin edition, p. 854. These are random examples.
19. 1545 German edition, a iii verso.
20. 1575 French edition (Belleforest), verso of title page.
21. See Walter Ong, *Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), esp. pp. 298-301, and the same author's *Ramus and Talon Inventory* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), pp. 407-14, for titles and descriptions of "methodized" compendia published in Germany between 1582 and 1663. Ong states that the peak of Ramist influence in Germany falls between 1580 and 1620 and that it was most intense in the upper Rhineland, where Ramus himself had visited earlier, while in exile from France. "In Germany," Father Ong continues, "[Ramism's] diagrammatic approach to knowledge fires the imagination of polyhistorians and of codifiers of all the sciences, so that Ramist method moves into the uppermost branches of the curriculum with a drive which cannot be matched in any other country." (*Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue*, p. 298.)
22. Cf. Ong, *Ramus, Method*, . . . , pp. 299-300.
23. 1598 German edition, 218-28.
24. *Ibid.*, 379-82.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 244-45.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 479-80.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 584-92.
28. For Example: 1545 edition, p. 426: an anticlerical comment added to the account of an altercation between the Bishop of Cologne and the city. Or the comment on the hardships of the German peasant, added to the chapter on customs in Book three. Or the outburst on slave trade: 1545 edition, p. 672.
29. For example: an error in numbering Byzantine emperors in 1544 is rectified in 1545: 1544 edition, p. 620; 1545 edition, p. 676.
30. For example: The 1545 edition gives the pre-Roman rulers of Spain, describes the emancipation of Geneva from Savoy, gives a sketch of the contemporary politics of the Italian states, explains the government of Genoa, devotes five pages to the Swiss-Austrian wars and a paragraph to the great flood of the Rhine in 1480.
31. As a result of a letter from Johann Hubinsack, a judge, who wrote to Münster regretting the absence of references to mining in the 1544 edition. Münster immediately indicated his interest, whereupon "a huge letter arrived, crammed with facts on mining and similar wonderworks of God." Cf. chapter "Von Berkwercken." 1545 edition, Book three.
32. 1545 edition, pp. 491-92.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 797 ff.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 511, 595-613.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 781-82.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 767-70.
37. One example for many to illustrate updating: The German editions of 1578, 1592, and 1598 bring the list of Spanish kings up to date: 1578, p. 82; 1592, p. 80; 1598, p. 88.
38. Cf. 1568 French edition, p. 786; 1572 Latin edition, p. 789; 1575 Italian edition, p. 721.
39. For example: In the 1550 Latin edition, Henry II is given as the reigning King of France. The 1568 French edition extends the line of French kings to Francis II, while the 1575 Italian edition retains the genealogy as it was in 1550. The same is true of the Dukes of Lorraine and many other lines.
40. For example: The 1559 Latin edition records the death in 1552 of Margrave Ernst of Baden who had been given as the reigning prince in the 1552 edition. (1552, p. 556; 1559, p. 556 also.)
41. 1559 Latin edition, p. 725.
42. Cf. the article on Charles V in 1628 (p. 650), five or six times as long as the one in 1559.
43. 1628 German edition, pp. 1204-1248.
44. For example: Worms, in 1559, merits two pages of description; in 1628 seven pages.
45. 1598 German edition, pp. 456, 457 (Maximilian and Charles V), p. 458 (Luther), p. 886 (Oecolampadius).
46. On the paucity and unreliability of sources for Eastern Europe and Asia, see Gerald Strauss, *Sixteenth-Century Germany: its Topography and Topographers* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1959), p. 126.
47. See the article on Belleforest in Pierre Bayle's *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (fourth edition, Amsterdam, 1730), I, pp. 510-11.
48. 1575 French edition, I, p. 637.
49. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 181-87.
50. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 187-202.
51. E.g., *ibid.*, I, pp. 150-55: long addition on the provinces and bishoprics of the Iberian kingdoms.
52. Belleforest does a good deal of judicious cutting in Münster's book on Germany, which is, however, left substantially intact.
53. For example: he discovers that Franz Irenicus, the author of *Germaniae exegeseos volumina duodecim* (Hagenau, 1518), in his attempt to ascribe all existing virtues to the ancient Germans, quotes not only the complimentary comments of Tacitus, but appropriates also a nice passage from the Greek medical writer Athenaeus, who had written about the Celts, not the Germans. 1575 French edition, I, p. 909.
54. See especially *ibid.*, II, p. 161, where specific arguments for the existence of monsters are presented. Also I, pp. 1,720 ff.
55. 1572 Latin edition, pp. 1,273-74.
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 1,276-77.
57. Gert A. Zischka, *Index Lexicorum*, pp. xxxvi-xxxvii.