

Ancient geography is that which explains the primitive state of the world, and its political divisions prior to the subversion of the Roman Empire in the west. By the geography of the middle ages, is understood that which acquaints us with the political state of the nations who figured in history from the fifth century to the end of the fifteenth, or the beginning of the sixteenth. Modern geography represents to us the state of the world and its political divisions, from the sixteenth century to the present time.

Antiquity has handed down to us the works of several very eminent geographers, the most celebrated of whom are Strabo, Ptolemy, Pomponius Mela, Pausanias, and Stephanus of Byzantium. Among the moderns who have laboured in this department of geography, those more particularly deserving of notice, are Cluverius, Cellarius, Briet, D'Anville, Gosselin, Mannert, and Ukert.

The geography of the middle ages is but little known; and remains yet a sort of desert which demands cultivation. There does not exist a single geographical work which gives a correct representation of that new order of things, which the German nations introduced into Europe after the downfall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century. The literati of France and Germany have thrown some rays of light on certain parts of these obscure regions; but no nation in Europe can yet boast of having thoroughly explored them.

Of modern authors, the most conspicuous as the restorer of geographical science, is Sebastian Munster, a German, who published a voluminous work on cosmography, towards the middle of the sixteenth century. The Flemings and the Dutch have been among the earliest cultivators of geography since the revival of letters. Ortelius, Gerard Mercator, Varenius, Janson, Bleau, and Fischer, are well known by the maps and learned works which they have produced.

Among the number of celebrated French geographers are to be reckoned Sanson, Delisle, Cassini, D'Anville; and more recently Zannoni, Bauche, Mentelle, Barbié du Bocage, Malte-Brun, &c. Delisle is the first who submitted geography to the touchstone of astronomical observation. Büsching, a German, wrote a work on geography, which has been translated into several languages, and has received various additions and improvements, especially in the hands of the French translators. M. Ritter, a professor at Berlin, published a work in which he gives a new and scientific form to geography.

It was during the latter half of the eighteenth century, that the attention of the learned was turned more particularly towards