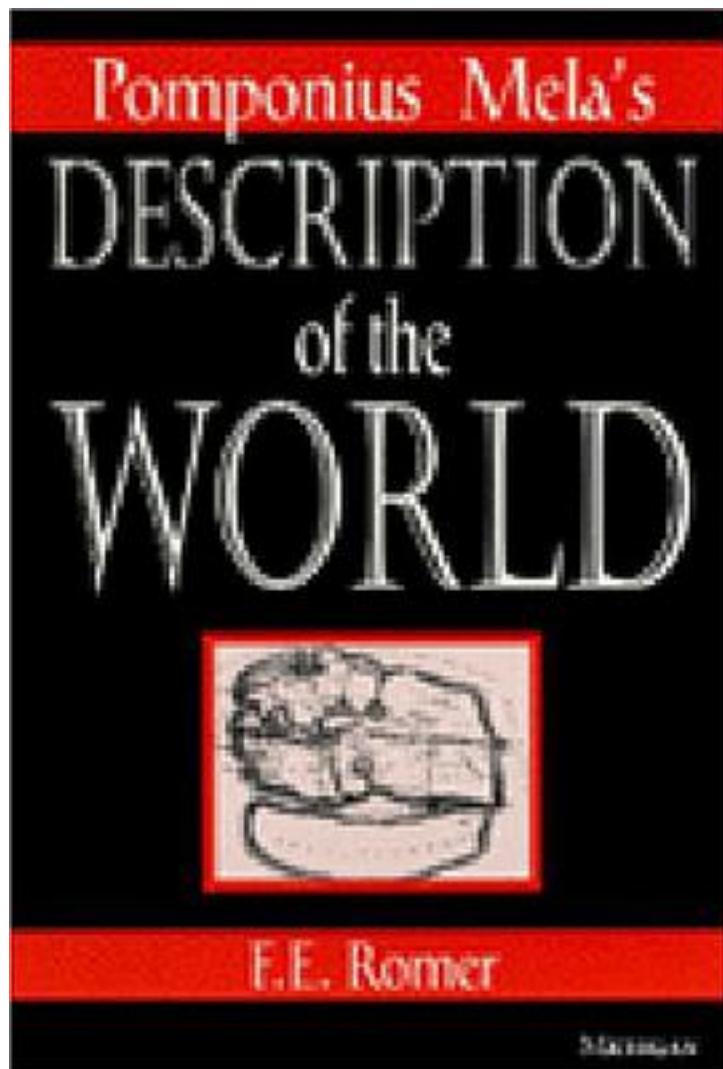


Pomponius Mela's Description of the World



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"The Description of the World (Chorographia)," written by Pomponius Mela, was last translated into English over 400 years ago, and is the earliest surviving geographical work in Latin. Although first published at the height of the Roman Empire, in roughly 44 C.E., Pomponius Mela's work circulated during Europe's great Age of Exploration. His description is in the form of a voyage around the three "known" continents--Africa, Asia, and Europe. Mela integrates geographical description with more familiar historical, cultural, and mythological information. F. E. Romer's translation and commentary on this work help the reader to appreciate the intellectual and physical shape of the ancient world as Mela and the Romans perceived it. Frank Romer's introduction assesses Mela as a literary and geographic writer, while his translation matches Mela's style. Mela knows of the Chinese and reports geographical and cultural information about Sri Lanka and India, as well as Mediterranean and European locales that are less remote to his experience. The outer edges of all the continents, including Europe, however, remained unfamiliar to the Romans, and it is on the inhabited world's outer edges that the creatures of legend and mythology were believed to live. Romer's commentary clarifies specific ideas raised in the text. He identifies and explains issues, and he points the reader to ancient sources and modern studies. This new study will intrigue students and teachers of ancient history. This edition of Mela's geography will be of interest to map lovers, historians, classicists, and anyone interested in history of travel, geography, and education. F. E. Romer is Associate Professor of Classics, University of Arizona. He is the author of numerous articles and has received awards for both his writing and teaching.

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