

**Zeitschrift:** Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde  
**Herausgeber:** Historische und Antiquarische Gesellschaft zu Basel  
**Band:** 80 (1980)  
  
**Artikel:** Oporinus, Olivarius and Pomponius Mela  
**Autor:** Milham, Mary Ella  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-118020>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 24.08.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

# Oporinus, Olivarius and Pomponius Mela

by

Mary Ella Milham

In spite of his lofty connections among the learned and powerful of 16th century Europe, the life of Petrus Johannes Olivarius (Pedro Juan Oliver) is rather poorly documented, and he seldom appears in the biographies of the countries in which he spent his adult life. Born at Valencia at an unknown date and educated there and at Alcala, he went early to study at Paris, although he later travelled widely in England, France, Germany and the Low Countries. One of the most complete biographies, contained in a note to Epistle 1791, Olivarius to Erasmus, in Allen's *Epistles of Erasmus*, gives his death date as about 8 January, 1553. The last reference to him is cited as being his dedication to the archbishop of Cologne of his *Confirmatio praesentiae corporis et sanguinis Christi in sacramento altaris* (Cologne: Soter, 1553)<sup>1</sup>. Although this death date is repeated in the more recent Amerbach correspondence<sup>2</sup>, I have found a pair of complementary documents which account for nearly four more years of his life, both associated with his commentary to Pomponius Mela.

In the same period, Johannes Oporinus of Basel (1507–1568)<sup>3</sup> had laid the foundations of his later fame as one of Basel's greatest printers by a harried young manhood which nevertheless had led him by the mid-1530's to a post at the university. He had also taken as second wife the sister of the printer Rupprecht Winter when, in 1536, he, Winter, Balthasar Ruch (Lasius) and Thomas Platter formed a partnership to purchase the press of Andreas Cratander. In this partnership Winter and Lasius operated the press while Platter and Oporinus, university teachers of Greek and Latin respectively, no doubt made the editorial decisions. As the Latinist of the group, it is probable that Oporinus decided what Latin works were to be printed, and by what editors or commentators.

<sup>1</sup> P.S. Allen, *Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterdami* (1906–58) 6, p. 471–2.

<sup>2</sup> A. Hartmann, *Die Amerbachkorrespondenz* (Basel, 1942) 5, p. 92, footnote 1.

<sup>3</sup> C. Steiff, 'Johannes Oporinus', *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (Berlin, 1970) 24, p. 381.

In 1536 Olivarius' first commentary to Mela was published at Paris by Christian Wechel<sup>4</sup>. Up to this time the only printed commentary to Mela had been that of Joachim Vadian (Vadianus, von Watt) of St. Gall, first printed at Vienna in 1518<sup>5</sup> and reprinted in a handsome 1522 edition by Cratander at Basel<sup>6</sup>. Before giving up his press to the younger partners, Cratander had at least twice tried to persuade Vadian to revise his commentary<sup>7</sup>, which Oporinus may have known. At any rate 1536 appears to have been a busy year for Melan studies, for in March Georg Binder of Zurich wrote to his old friend Vadian telling him that he had met Oporinus, whom he considered the most learned man at Basel, Erasmus excepted, but warning him that this Oporinus had prepared notes to Mela, as well as C. Julius Solinus, which he wanted to publish. Binder had warned Oporinus that he should not undertake publication without consulting Vadian, his senior and the acknowledged dean of contemporary Swiss geographical scholars<sup>8</sup>. I think it is probable that the abortive commentaries to both authors which we have from Oporinus, commenting upon only a few opening chapters of each<sup>9</sup>, were already complete when Binder sent his warning letter to Vadian in 1536. Oporinus was a man of many interests and passions whose life was not marked by order; the Binder letter in fact implies a more substantial threat to Vadian than the fragmentary legacy from Oporinus would have warranted, but at that time Oporinus must have intended to finish his works.

It is possible that the publication of Olivarius' Mela in 1536 itself deterred Oporinus from his own work. He must have received a copy very soon after it was printed at Paris, for by February of 1537, when he writes to Vadian about the Olivarius commentary, several exchanges had already passed between Basel and St. Gall. In this letter we find that the Swiss have been rankled by Olivarius' disparagement of Vadian in his preface (P.I. Olivarius *geographiae studioso* S.):

<sup>4</sup> Pomponius Mela (hereafter P.M.), *de situ orbis libri tres* (Paris: C. Wechel, 1536).

<sup>5</sup> P.M. *de situ orbis* (Vienna: J. Singrenius, 1518).

<sup>6</sup> P.M. *de situ orbis libri tres* (Basel: A. Cratander, 1522).

<sup>7</sup> E. Arbenz and H. Wartmann (hereafter A.-W.), *Die Vadianische Briefsammlung* (1890–1913) 5, p. 184–5, no. 785, Cratander to Vadian, August 26, 1534, and p. 243, no. 834, Cratander to Vadian, August 21, 1535.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237–8, no. 829, Binder to Vadian, July 20, 1535.

<sup>9</sup> M.E. Milham, 'Pomponius Mela', and 'C. Julius Solinus', *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum* (hereafter CTC) 5 (forthcoming).

Nam Vadianus, vir omnium iudicio eruditissimus . . . raro adducit quo vel locos depravatos emendet, vel desideratos restituat, contentus illa doctissima ostentatione, quanquam iis quae ad historiam spectant, non minus valuerit ille, quam digressionibus prolixissimis & molestissimis<sup>10</sup>.

Although Olivarius had continued by praising Vadian and explaining that he had used much of his work, the charge of learned ostentation and prolixity was too close to the truth to have gone unnoted in Switzerland. Thus when Oporinus had received a copy of the work, he had sent it to St. Gall for perusal, and at the time of writing he had in hand Vadian's own refutation of Olivarius' charge. The purpose of Oporinus' letter is to ask Vadian's permission for the printing of that refutation in an *opusculum* which Oporinus is planning, presumably for the Winter press:

Quod reliquum est, gratias ego non tam ob remissum ad me Pomponius, quam tuum de Olivario sive scholiis ipsius iudicium; quod simul etiam pulchre te purgas, falsum illum affirmans, qui te ostentationis gratia digressionibus illis in commentario tuo usum scribere non dubitavit . . . saltem id mihi permittere a tua Humanitate impetratum exoratumque velim, ut eam epistolae tuae ad me partem, qua falso de te temereque ita prolatum illius iudicium refellis . . . praefigere opusculo excudendo audeam . . .<sup>11</sup>

No such refutation appears to have been printed, and we do not know what *opusculum* is meant.

In 1538 a new Basel edition of commentaries to both Mela and Solinus was produced by Isingrin and Petri<sup>12</sup>, its author unnamed on the title page but acknowledged in the text to be Sebastian Münster, also a professor in the university. The anonymity of his commentaries to the Roman geographers must have been approved by Münster, for he held his printers in high regard<sup>13</sup>, and was in fact the stepfather of Petri<sup>14</sup>. There were now three extensive printed commentaries to Pomponius Mela, by Vadian, Olivarius and Münster, and Oporinus had shown some interest in producing a fourth. In 1538, however, Oporinus' career took an unexpected turn when he found himself involved, as did Münster, in

<sup>10</sup> P.M. de situ orbis libri III (Leyden: S. Luchtmans et fils, 1748) p. 1038.

<sup>11</sup> A.-W., 5, p. 406-7, no. 943, Oporinus to Vadian, Feb. 1, 1537.

<sup>12</sup> Solinus, followed by P.M. de situ orbis libri tres (Basel: M. Isingrinus and H. Petri, 1538).

<sup>13</sup> K.P. Burmeister, Briefe Sebastian Münsters, ([Ingelheim], 1964) p. 28, no. 4, Münster to Tschudi, August 17, 1537.

<sup>14</sup> Burmeister, Sebastian Münster (Basel and Stuttgart, 1963) p. 102.

a complex controversy about the qualifications for teaching at the university.

Partly through his own unwillingness to compromise, the affair dragged on for Oporinus until his final dismissal by the Rat in 1542, but he did not teach at the university after 1538.<sup>15</sup> Although he taught the classics in lesser posts for several years, the major result of this debacle for Oporinus was that it flung him more deeply into the work of the press and freed him for his famous career as a printer in his own right.

Also in 1538, the Winter press produced Olivarius' notes to Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*<sup>16</sup>. I feel that Oporinus may, perhaps must, have been in correspondence with Olivarius about this printing, since he was not only the Latinist of Winter's group but a fellow scholar of Mela. It is possible that Oporinus and Olivarius had corresponded as early as 1536, when the printing of the Melan commentary and its prefatory criticism of Vadian had surprised the Swiss. Surely the contacts between the two humanists to be described below suggest a continuing correspondence. In the same year, however, Iselin had written from Paris about Olivarius and his reputation as an Aristotelian scholar, sending Olivarius' greetings to Amerbach<sup>17</sup>. There is little doubt that Olivarius was by that time known in Basel.

In January of 1539 Oporinus wrote to Vadian about a plan for the Winter press which may in fact again have involved Olivarius. As a young man in Spain Olivarius had known J.L. Vives<sup>18</sup> and had gone with him to visit England, where he had met Linacre and Bishop Warham. Vives had become a very important personage in England until he was imprisoned and then banished because of his disagreement with Henry VIII's divorce; meanwhile Olivarius had gone to France, known Budé and become tutor to the Queen. Winter does not appear to have been in the first rank of Basilean printers, and Oporinus was not yet well-established among continental humanists at this time, but they knew Olivarius, who in turn knew Vives; this may be the link which brought the work of Vives to their press, as Oporinus describes to Vadian:

<sup>15</sup> M. Steinmann, *Johannes Oporinus* (Basel und Stuttgart, 1967) p. 17.

<sup>16</sup> In M.T. Ciceronis de Somnio Scipionis fragmentum, P.J. Olivarii... scholia... (Basel, 1538).

<sup>17</sup> Hartmann, 5, p. 92, no. 2183, Iselin to Amerbach, Feb. 22, 1538.

<sup>18</sup> 'J.L. Vives', in J.F. Michaud, *Biographie universelle* (Graz, 1970) 43, pp. 687-8.



... Excudimus nunc Lodovici Vivis De lingue Latine exercitio dialogos aliquot, eiusdem in Vergilii Bucolica expositionem allegoricam, item Graecorum aliquot auctorum de agricultura collectanea, in libris 20 comprehensa ...<sup>19</sup>

Both the Winter press and Oporinus were involved with the works of Vives before and after his death in 1540, but the details are beyond the scope of this study.

In January of 1540 Oporinus sent a copy of Olivarius' notes to Mela to Vadian – the 1536 copy had merely been lent and returned – but he tells Vadian explicitly that Olivarius is in the process of revising his notes, that the revision will be printed at Paris, that he expects a copy of the revision soon, and that he will send it to Vadian immediately.

Mitto interim scholia illa Olivarii in Melam, quae an digna tamen sint, in quibus perlegendis occupere, ipse facile aestimabis. Audio tamen, eadem illa scholia, ab ipso Olivario iam denuo recognita, nunc quidem Lutetiae recudi cum luculenta accessione; itaque exspecto uti et ad me, quamprimum absoluta fuerint, mittantur. Accepta igitur uti etiam ad te quamprimum mittantur, curabo sedulo<sup>20</sup>.

In March he again tells Vadian he is awaiting the revision: *Auctarium Olivarii in Melam adhuc exspecto*<sup>21</sup>. There are several Paris editions of Olivarius' commentary to Mela from 1539<sup>22</sup>, but they closely resemble each other and the 1536 original. If Oporinus had his advance notice from Olivarius, as is probable, he would appear to have been somewhat misled.

1541–1544 was a chaotic time in the never-quiet life of Oporinus, nor is it well-documented for Melan studies. By 1541 Oporinus must have known Olivarius had not yet revised his commentary, but he was still nursing a hope that predated the Winter press, namely that Vadian would revise his own commentary to Mela. The correspondence about this chimerical revision is extensive. Proposed by Andreas Cratander in 1534<sup>23</sup>, this revision was urged by Oporinus in virtually every extant letter of his to Vadian until 1544<sup>24</sup>. That the revision was no mere whim of Oporinus' is

<sup>19</sup> A.-W., 5, pp. 522–24, no. 1033, Oporinus to Vadian, Jan. 10, 1539.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 5, pp. 586–7, no. 1087, Oporinus to Vadian, Jan. 2, 1540.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 5, p. 611, no. 1103, Oporinus to Vadian, March 7, 1540.

<sup>22</sup> Milham, 'Mela', CTC.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. footnote 7.

<sup>24</sup> A.-W., 6, pp. 362–3, no. 1373, Oporinus to Vadian, Dec. 8, 1544.

shown by other contemporary correspondence. Bullinger mentioned it in several letters to Vadian<sup>25</sup>, Arnold Arlen of Holland offered material he had found in Italy<sup>26</sup> and Froschauer wrote two German letters on the subject, the first telling of a fruitless search for manuscripts of Mela at the Frankfort Fair<sup>27</sup> and the second reminding Vadian of their publishing agreement<sup>28</sup>. Yet Vadian never published a revised commentary to Mela.

This period was decisive in Oporinus' own life, for in it he began to print under his own name, although it is not sure when he established a permanently independent press. He occasionally worked with Winter after he began his own printing in 1541, but in 1542 he alone printed Olivarius' *De prophetia et prophetico spiritu*, the same year in which he produced one of his most famous and controversial works, Theodore Bibliander's translation of the Koran, for which he was censured by the university and briefly imprisoned<sup>29</sup>. Münster comments upon the situation in a 1542 letter to Conrad Pellican:

... Sicut et Oporinus iam propriam instituit officinam. De novis ista accipe: Oporinus periclitatur propter Alchoranum a se impressum. Nam hic liber ab universitate damnatus est isto tempore. Exspectatur magistratus sententia. Nec dubium, si evulgatus fuerit, damnabitur et ab imperatore<sup>30</sup>.

When in 1542 Oporinus was summoned to Zurich to be tried on the matter of the Koran, Amerbach and Sebastian Münster were among those who voted against him<sup>31</sup>. In the same year the Rat dismissed him from the university, but he was becoming a printer to be reckoned with, and in 1543 he produced another controversial 'first' as startling as his Koran, Vesalius' *Anatomy*.

Perhaps the most interesting link between Oporinus and Olivarius in this period is not *De prophetia* but an edition of Mela and Solinus, without date, place or typographer but including an anonymous commentary to the first seven chapters of Solinus, as well as the full commentary of Olivarius to Mela, duly attributed to its

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 5, pp. 576–7, no. 1077, Bullinger to Vadian, Nov. 5, 1539.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 6, pp. 210–11, no. 1295, Gesner to Vadian, April 7, 1543; p. 235, no. 1307, Arlen to Vadian, Sept. 9, 1543.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 5, p. 619, no. 1111, Froschauer to Vadian, April 20, 1540.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 6, p. 413, no. 1394, Froschauer to Vadian, May 10, 1545.

<sup>29</sup> Steinmann, p. 25.

<sup>30</sup> Burmeister, Briefe, p. 53, no. 13, Münster to Pellican, 1542.

<sup>31</sup> Steinmann, p. 25.

Spanish author on the title page<sup>32</sup>. Without suggesting a date, the contemporary Conrad Gesner of Basel identified this work, in his 1545 edition of *Bibliotheca Universalis*, as the printing of Winter<sup>33</sup>, and the abortive commentary to Solinus as the work of Oporinus<sup>34</sup>. While the history of editions of Solinus lies outside the scope of this study, this is perhaps further evidence for a close relationship among these men; even when Winter and Oporinus were working anonymously, they were careful to give Olivarius his due.

Two problems arise with this [Winter] edition of the geographers, neither here soluble but also neither discussed in the literature. I have found it most interesting that there are two similar editions, one the original [Winter] production and the other a pirated version of it in identical format. These are clearly described in the *National Union Catalogue* since both copies are held, and therefore comparable, at the New York Public Library and both at Columbia University<sup>35</sup>. The University Library at Leyden also holds both, but most older European libraries do not indicate which they possess and may therefore be unaware that two separate works exist, differing in type and in errors in pagination. There is no way, short of an exact identification of type, to know when or where the piracy was produced.

But it is also difficult to determine when Winter first produced this work at Basel. We have a *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* between which we can only speculate. 1536 is of course the earliest possible date, because it marks the first printing of the Olivarius commentary at Paris, and we have seen above that Oporinus must have possessed a copy before the end of that year. Most bibliographies use the date [1536], which I think highly improbable. The latest possible date emerges from evidence which I have found and demonstrated elsewhere: the use of Oporinus' commentary to the first two chapters of Solinus in the second edition of Münster's commentary, printed by Isingrin at Basel in 1543<sup>36</sup>. Since Isingrin also added the commentary of Olivarius to his 1543 edition, it seems almost certain that his source for both additions to the original 1538 edition of Münster must have been the [Winter] edition.

<sup>32</sup> P.M. de situ orbis libri tres ([Basel: Winter, ca. 1541]).

<sup>33</sup> C. Gesner, *Bibliotheca Universalis* (Basel, 1545) p. 568.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 446.

<sup>35</sup> *National Union Catalogue* (London, 1975) 374, p. 262.

<sup>36</sup> Solinus, followed by P.M., de situ orbis libri tres (Basel: M. Isingrinus, 1543).



Adams' date of about 1540<sup>37</sup> is tempting for the Winter edition, but the description makes me feel that Adams' copy may be the piration. I would think that the original work would not have been produced while Oporinus was planning his own commentaries to the geographers, as he was doing in 1536, but that he may have abandoned this hope by 1538 when he began in earnest to beg Vadian to revise his commentary. Although this encouragement to Vadian continues as late as 1544, Oporinus may well have despaired either of the completion of the work or of acquiring its printing rights, which Froschauer clearly expected to get. At any rate, Oporinus probably approved and arranged the undated edition for Winter after 1540, when his hopes for any major revision by Olivarius, Vadian or himself must have been fading away.

Whether or not there was lost correspondence between Oporinus and Olivarius in the 1530's and 40's, there is a very interesting unpublished letter from Olivarius at Utrecht to Oporinus at Basel dated March 9, 1556<sup>38</sup>. The aging Olivarius seems to have fallen in station, which is perhaps why there are so few documents for this period of his life. The letter, found in Basel UB: Ms. Frey-Grynaeum II 5a fol. 86<sup>39</sup>, reads as follows:

Optimo ac charissimo amico Joanni Oporino Basileiensi S.D. Mitto ad te, Oporini doctissime, auctarium meum in Melam. Praestiti (sic) me tantum instauratorem et non interpretem. Tam est ille liber mendosus; nam si velles omnes locos desideratos vel restituere vel castigare<sup>40</sup>, necessum esset re vera totum librum invertere. Fabulas et historias aliis reliqui; nova vero nomina veteribus congrua dedi in meis annotationibus. De mea diligentia et sudore quem accepi in his inquirendis testis est Hermanus, qui has tibi reddet. Mirum in homine sene et paupere voluisse id praestare quod non potuit sine magno suae valetudinis incommodo. Ex prioribus meis annotationibus expunge primum epistolam praeliminarem et clausulam illam de vita Pomponii; postea in descriptione universali Europae cura ut totum illud caput referatur ad universam Europam et non solum ad Hispaniam, in Aegypto totum illum

<sup>37</sup> H.M. Adams, *Cat. of books printed on the continent of Europe 1501–1600 in Cambridge libraries* (Cambridge, 1967) 1, p. 731, no. 1061, but it is unclear whether Adams is describing the original Winter edition or the piration.

<sup>38</sup> Steinmann, p. 135.

<sup>39</sup> The salutation and the note which I have placed at the end of the letter are found on f. 86<sup>b</sup>; the main body of the letter is on f. 86<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> vel castigare has been added in the left margin of f. 86<sup>a</sup> in the hand of Olivarius.

locum de annis Aegyptiorum et illam rationem astronomicam. Interea, quia hactenus a mille morbis tam animi quam corporis molestatus fui, non potui extremam adhibere diligentiam; propterea, si quicquam occurrerit (sic) quod non videatur tibi politum, dabis tu opera ut expolias. Cuperem ad me mitteres decem exemplaris libri mei de prophetia et spiritu prophetico, tunc unum vetus testamentum in minima forma; hoc est omnia biblia nostra. Bene Vale, Traiciti Batavorum Nonis Martii M.D.LVI

Tuus ex animo  
Olivarius<sup>41</sup>

[h?] unc librum cum aliquot  
[al] ijs exemplaribus mittes  
[ad?] me bruxelle vel  
[?] hermano nam ille  
[c] urabit ut reddatur mihi ibidem<sup>42</sup>.

This letter, dated March 1556, more than three years after the last known evidence for Olivarius' life, contains some interesting information. Olivarius writes from Utrecht but offers an alternate address in Brussels. He is sending the revision of his commentary on Mela to Oporinus in the expectation that he will print it and with a few specific recommendations for that printing. The courier for the manuscript is one Hermanus, surname unknown, whom he describes as old, impoverished, and risking his health to make the journey. Olivarius also requests ten copies of *De prophetia* and a copy of the Old Testament, which Hermanus will bring back to him. He speaks of himself as beset by a thousand ills of body and spirit and unable to apply himself to the proper polishing of his manuscript, which he hopes Oporinus will do for him if necessary. We do not know the birth date of Olivarius, so we do not know just how old he was at this time, but he had clearly declined in health and vigor.

We do not know whether Oporinus refused to print the work, which does not differ greatly from its original, but we are sure that he did not do so, for later in 1556 we find Olivarius' revised commentary to Mela's being printed by Jacob Kerver at Paris. It is dedicated to Charles, Cardinal of Lorraine:

<sup>41</sup> For assistance with this transcription I am indebted to Michael J. Mills, University of New Brunswick.

<sup>42</sup> For this emendation of the damaged note on f. 86<sup>b</sup> I am indebted to Dr. Martin Steinmann, Öffentliche Bibliothek der Universität Basel.

Reverendissimo ac illustrissimo D.D. Carolo a Lotharingia S.R.E. Cardinali amplissimo P. Ioannes Olivarius Valentinus. S.D.

... Opus est summo atque quotidiano amicorum meorum convitio Coloniae inceptum, Traiecti batavorum continuatim, & tandem Lutetiae Parisiorum absolutum, & inde a novis amicis plane extortum ...

Lutetiae Parisiorum. 7. Idus Octobris. 1556<sup>43</sup>

In this excerpt from the dedication, Olivarius accounts for his whereabouts in recent years, and the information, not surprisingly, accords exactly with other evidence. As Allen records, he was in Cologne at the beginning of 1553, where his *Confirmatio* was published<sup>44</sup>. He says that he went from there to Utrecht, from which he sent his 1556 letter-cum-manuscript to Oporinus at Basel. At the time of writing this preface, October 1556, he was in Paris. In spite of Oporinus' expectation of the new commentary as early as 1540, Olivarius says that he began it at Cologne, continued it at Utrecht and finished it only at Paris, which implies some final revision after it had been sent to Oporinus. He also says that he has found new friends in Paris who 'wrested' the manuscript from him. There is no mention of such old friends as his last known patron, George of Austria, Bishop of Liège, who was still alive<sup>45</sup>.

It has been assumed that there are two extant editions of the Kerver Mela, dated 1556 and 1557. The former contains the following title-page:

POMPONII ME-/LAE DE SITU ORBIS/LIBRI TRES./Una cum auctario Petri Ioannis Olivarii Valen-/tini, instauratione totius libelli & Castigatione/perquam multorum locorum, insertis quo-/que locis plerisque in eodem libello desideratis./AD/CAROLVM LOTHARINGVM/CARDINALEM./ (mark: unicorn with shield) PARISIIS,/Apud Iacobum Kerver, in via Iacobeae/sub duobus Gal-  
lis./1556./CVM PRIVILEGIO:./

The 1557 version has an identical title-page except for the date.

I have recently investigated the foliation of both and find the copies from both dates identical, including a glaring error in folia

<sup>43</sup> P.M. de situ orbis libri tres (Paris: Kerver, 1556).

<sup>44</sup> See footnote 1.

<sup>45</sup> A. Wandruszka, Georg von Österreich, Neue Deutsche Biographie (Berlin, 1964) 6, p. 210.

numbering: 1–8, 13, 10, 7, 12, 17–112, with 13–16 missing. The signatures, however, are continuous with no gaps:

4°: a<sup>4</sup> A<sup>6</sup> (A<sup>6</sup> blank and missing in some copies)  
B–Ee<sup>4</sup>; 10 p. ff., 12, 17–112 ff.; 118 ff.

Such similarities must indicate a single edition, perhaps at the very end of 1556 and beginning of 1557, so that the printer had to change his date in the midst of his press run<sup>46</sup>.

The revision of Olivarius' commentary was insubstantial; it neither deserved nor got more than a single printing. The original version of 1536, however, was printed seven times after 1550, five times at Lyons and finally at Leyden in mid-17th Century<sup>47</sup>.

Thus the life of Olivarius can be documented for nearly four years after his presumed death date, his continuing work upon Pomponius Mela is demonstrated by the two versions of his commentary, and his relationship to the great Oporinus of Basel appears to have extended over a period of about 20 years.

As for Oporinus, he had been deeply interested in Pomponius Mela from his early years in Erasmian Basel, perhaps even before his ill-starred university appointment in 1533. His own fragmentary commentary to Mela was never printed in his lifetime, but it must have passed, with the manuscript of his fragmentary commentary to Solinus, to the printing house of Petri. At any rate, the Melan fragment was twice printed by Sebastian Henricpetri, in 1576<sup>48</sup> and 1595<sup>49</sup>. The great printer's interest in the only Roman geography from classical times had, by that time, influenced the intellectual life of Basel for well over half of the 16th century; it is perhaps ironic that no edition of Mela was ever produced at his press<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> The locations of the Kerver edition are: (1556) BM; BN; NN; NjP; InU; (1557) BN; Berlin: Free U; Cambridge UL; MH; MnU. To determine the common errors in pagination I have consulted all of the American libraries here listed.

<sup>47</sup> Milham, 'Mela', CTC.

<sup>48</sup> P.M. de situ orbis libri III (Basel: S. Henricpetri, 1576).

<sup>49</sup> P.M. de situ orbis libri III (Basel: S. Henricpetri, 1595).

<sup>50</sup> For this and other studies of Pomponius Mela I am indebted to The Canada Council.