***Friedrich Ratzel* - Biography of Carl Ritter**

Carl Georg Ritter

A distinguished geographer, born on 7 August 1779 in Quedlinburg, died on 28 September 1859 in Berlin.

Ritter's father was the personal physician to Prince Friedrich Wilhelm R., a remarkable man, revered by a wide circle of his contemporaries, who, having passed away at the age of 38, left behind six children, the youngest of whom was our Karl R. His widow demonstrated, in the upbringing of these children, rare intelligence and character; the way in which she organised it with the help of the young Guths Muths (cf. A. D. B. X, 224) appeared, even in an era when people found it difficult to be satisfied with education, to be particularly attentive and thoughtful. Excerpts remain from the correspondence she maintained with this eminent educator regarding the upbringing of her children; these constitute a fine testimony to a pious and idealistic soul, whose entire aspiration was summed up in a single wish: 'that my children might one day become people useful to the world and Christians pleasing to God'. R. lost his mother at the age of 21. She had lived long enough to sow seeds in his soul that never perished as long as he lived. Her sincere piety and her conduct, inspired by the highest ideals, bore witness until the very end to the excellence of this woman who, even in her youth, had exerted upon him not only the educational influence of a mother, but also the ennobling influence of a friend—an influence that sees into the deepest depths and from which nothing escapes. For a long time, Guths Muths, the tutor whom Ritter's father had taken into his home whilst he was still at school, was the only one to share this influence with his mother, and it is to him, at her side, that the greatest share of the boy's and young man's upbringing is due. This man, who was intimately connected to the natural world with which he had become thoroughly familiar, to the extent that a family bond linked him to it, also exerted an influence on Ritter's subsequent development, and indeed on his scientific orientation. Yet fate decreed that the young Karl should be entrusted to the care of this tutor more than the other children. Indeed, when Salzmann purchased the small estate of Schnepfenthal in 1784, at the foot of the Thuringian Forest, with the aim of founding, in the rural solitude, an educational institution based on natural principles, and whilst he was still seeking to recruit a sufficient number of pupils, he happened to learn of the death of the personal physician R. in Quedlinburg and that the latter had left behind a widow with six minor children. He had Karl, the youngest, examined, deemed him suitable for admission, and it was with him that Guths Muths then joined the fledgling establishment as a teacher. Later, an eldest son of the widow Ritter also came to Salzmann, and Guths Muths, in accordance with the local custom which assigned each teacher a pair of pupils for private tuition, was reunited here too with his former pupils whom he cherished so dearly.

Karl Ritter remained in Schnepfenthal until he went to university; here he acquired everything that education and instruction at this model school—much admired in its day—had to offer. But his upbringing was the main thing. He grew into a young man of outstanding strength and agility, developed skills in arithmetic and drawing, and gained knowledge of modern languages, history and, in particular, geography. From the very beginning, he showed great aptitude and was praised for having an 'exceptionally bright mind'. In the summer of 1787, Guths Muths wrote of him: 'Karl is diligent, retains things far more easily than his brother, is very attentive in lessons, already far advanced for his years in sound and correct judgement, very engaging, cheerful and lively, agreeable, but, when it comes down to it, also rather disorderly. The drive to acquire knowledge still slumbers deep within him (it was one of Schnepfenthal educational principles to introduce the boys to the practicalities of life as early as possible by accustoming them to small commercial transactions involving paper, pens, pencils, etc.), and I cannot be angry about that, for he is still too young, too innocent, too flighty for such things. 'He produces the best maps among many, even great pupils.' In geography, Guths Muths gives him the highest praise; he says it is a joy to teach him and even jokingly predicted that he must one day become a professor of geography. Salzmann, who with the confidence of an enthusiast also used to tackle the difficult task of career choice for his pupils, placed one-sided emphasis on Karl's demonstrated inclination and talent for art and manual skills when he suggested to him that he become a painter or engraver, whilst Guth, with the insight of one who could see deeper into the soul of his young friend, guided him towards a career as an educator of scholarly formation. Ritter entered the University of Halle in 1796 to train as a tutor according to a clearly defined plan. The previous year, he had met the Frankfurt merchant Hollweg in Gotha and had made such a favourable impression on this man, who was seeking a tutor for his sons, that Hollweg decided to have him specially trained for this profession. His prior education may have left gaps in the philological field, but his character development was well underway, and the general school education with which Ritter entered university provided suitable preparation for the diversity of studies he now had to undertake. However, the man who, at the age of 30, was still studying Greek at the

Frankfurt grammar school, later managed to fill that gap; when the time came to lay a broad foundation for his future in education, Ritter did not complete a specialised degree course. Formally enrolled as a student of cameralistics, he attended lectures on the history of Greek and Roman literature with F. A. Wolf, on ethics and pedagogy with Niemeyer, on history and statistics with M. C. Sprengel, and on logic, mathematics, physics and chemistry with others. Reinhold Forster was no longer lecturing at that time and died before Ritter left Halle. Ritter felt keen regret that he could no longer hear lectures on his favourite subject from the famous traveller, the versatile naturalist and ethnographer.

The educational path and the work of a youth educator offer the greatest prospect of a broad range of knowledge, which is not necessarily linked to superficiality; they are therefore a good preparatory ground for the geographer. Consider this educational journey, stretching over many years and branching out in the most diverse directions. With his pupils and in their interests, but just as strongly driven by his own thirst for knowledge, he spent the years from 1798 to 1820 in uninterrupted study, which repeatedly returned to geography and history, yet necessarily remained wide-ranging. If one accompanies him through these long, formative periods of his life, which lie close to the very beginning of his creative teaching career in Berlin, one realises that life itself allowed this man to mature into a geographer. And if one wishes to understand Ritter's scholarly nature and work, it must always be borne in mind first and foremost that the great geographer developed quite naturally from the highly significant educator, the pupil, friend and colleague of Salzmann, Guths Muths and Pestalozzi. When Ritter moved from Halle to Frankfurt in 1798, he had received the education of a man of the world just as much as that of a teacher and educator. Of the many threads he had woven here, he let none slip away. He was always as open to artistic and aesthetic interests as he was to those of natural science, geography and history, and he was as skilled a gymnast as he was a draughtsman, a passionate 'man of nature', as he called himself, deeply imbued with Rousseau's maxim, which at the time seemed to many like a gospel: "At every age, the study of nature dulls the taste for frivolous amusements, prevents the tumult of passions, and provides the soul with nourishment that benefits it by filling it with the most worthy object of its contemplations"[1] When he visited Cologne for the first time, it struck him as "a German Herculaneum and Pompeii, where a treasure has suddenly been revealed that could not be more important for German art and history". In Vogt and Weitzel's *Rheinisches Archiv* for 1810, an essay by him entitled "The Ruins on the Rhine. On the Antiquities of Cologne", which bears witness to his enthusiasm and his refined understanding of medieval art. Ritter was one of the first at that time to seek to direct the eyes of his compatriots towards the splendours of their artistic antiquity, as embodied in the art collections of Wallraff, Boisserée and Bertram. How telling that it was Ritter who, in a subtle obituary, had to draw the attention of the Frankfurters of that time—a people, according to his descriptions, of little charm, who were on the one hand frozen in imperial civic egoism and on the other hand accommodated the French without character—to the excellent painter C. Prestel, an old fellow citizen. When, following Ritter's obituary, the Prince-Primate purchased paintings from the deceased's children for 1,200 talers, 'it now also became fashionable to speak of good old Prestel and his merits, whereas here they had almost let him starve to death'. Ritter's unpublished, detailed diaries from this Frankfurt period must offer a very interesting picture of the intellectual and moral climate in the higher circles of one of Germany's most significant cities. In Frankfurt, Ritter found resonance for many aspects of his intellectual and social life; only in his sense of patriotism, which had something of the Prussian spirit about it, did he stand alone. After the collapse of Prussia, he was ashamed but not despairing. Fichte's addresses to the German nation, Jean Paul's sermon on peace, and Schleiermacher's and Villers' writings on the German universities struck a deep chord in his soul. He was offered a prestigious position in Weimar, which he declined. He wrote to his brother about it: 'For in our present situation, I expect nothing at all from princes and authorities. Just as it is no right when force is used in the name of the law, so nothing noble can arise where everything stems from the base, the unworthy, the debased. I shall never allow myself to be used as a tool in the hands of the unworthy for the purposes of the day, and I shall reject everything that conflicts with this belief. My trust is placed in the nobility of the private individual; I believe that the ennoblement of the race proceeds from the private individual, that the tree of goodness must take shape anew from the root to the crown. An old era has passed, and a new one is beginning".

Ritter's scientific achievements between 1798 and 1818 were merely a side note to his true vocation, which lay in the education of the children entrusted to his care. His geographical ideas and plans gradually took shape out of his

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educational practice. The school the boy attended in Schnepfenthal had a profound influence on the direction his mind later took, once he had matured into independent thought. The way geography was taught there nurtured his natural inclination and aptitude for this science. The geographer Ritter has his earliest roots in Salzmann's school. Other things he learnt there he later abandoned as his outlook took a different course; but he held fast to the geography he studied there, and the method by which it was taught provided him with the material for his first literary works, which are also his first geographical ones. The reform of geographical education is certainly one of the most indisputable outcomes that the philanthropy of Basedow and Salzmann, building upon Rousseau's ideas, has had for pedagogical practice. Schütz's methodological treatise (1783), which emerged from this movement, contains the first detailed guide to a natural approach to geographical instruction. Until then, geography had been taught in a stiflingly dry manner. Instead of the previous overload of rote learning, the emphasis was now on a thorough understanding, above all, of one's immediate surroundings, from which one would then venture further afield. Accordingly, in Schnepfenthal, geography lessons were conducted in a lively and practical manner; the basic concepts were learnt in nature itself during walks and longer hikes; pupils described and drew what they saw, they familiarised themselves with foreign countries, mountains and so on through map-drawing and frequent consultation of the globe and maps, heard interesting facts about their inhabitants and produce, and the reading of travelogues—which had only recently been made truly accessible to young people by the Philanthropists—effortlessly brought about further knowledge and inspiration. Young people swapped a stifling education for one that was stimulating and refreshing, and this innovation was a great boon that should not be forgotten. It is to Ritter's credit that this innovation in the field of education gave rise to a corresponding revival, and later also to a revival in scientific geography.

Ritter's first connection to these reformist endeavours—which later became a lifelong bond—was forged through J. C. F. Guths Muths, who became his tutor in his early years, his mentor and patron, and his friend for as long as he lived. Guths Muths was of no small importance to Ritter the educator and of very great importance to Ritter the geographer. Admittedly, in the case of a man who, even in his early youth, had the good fortune to associate with such good and outstanding people, and whose whole nature surrendered itself to good influences with childlike openness, one would not lightly venture to claim that this or that person from his circle had a primarily decisive influence on him. But of all of them, no one came so close to Ritter at such an early age and remained so close for so long as Guths Muths. Ritter was of such a steadfast nature that even in manhood he could boast of never having lost a friend, yet he was attached to this friend of his youth with a particularly deep affection. He must also have been a charming character, this honest 'man of nature', who, in a body of steel, harboured a strong heart, and in a dignified, broad-foreheaded head, nurtured spirit and knowledge in abundance, this inspiring teacher, whose geography and technology lessons the pupils of Schnepfenthal always held in the highest regard of all they learnt there, who led them from the lathe to map-making, from tree cultivation to topographical surveys, in whose lessons observation was never idle. It was a great stroke of luck for Ritter that he was able to share, with this simple man of the natural life, the joys of spending time with 'his children' and of working on the idyllic little estate which he had acquired from his own meagre savings. If Ritter's entire being demonstrates the precious value of the union of a healthy soul with a healthy body, then this fine sight also reminds us of Guths Muths' significance for German gymnastics, for which he—an enduring achievement! —founded the first German gymnastics ground (in Schnepfenthal).

Above all, Guths Muths became Ritter's geography teacher. To begin with, Ritter's views on the method of teaching geography are rooted entirely in what he learnt at that school. Long before he was known as a geographer, he had expressed these views so decisively and clearly that even half a century later he was able to adhere to the principles he had laid down there. These principles corresponded to the structure of the method named after Ritter, which introduces today's youth to geography in a more stimulating and fruitful manner than had previously been found. In his early pedagogical writings, Ritter presents the ideas of the Philanthropists in a refined form, in which they appear freed from much that was playful and haphazard. They were not his creation, yet they appeared new to the majority of teachers; and in any case, presented here in a measured and well-considered manner, they appealed quite naturally to common sense as well as to any philosophical conception of geography. When Ritter visited Iserten in 1807, where, during a stay of several weeks, he gained deep insights into the educational and teaching methods of Pestalozzi and his assistants (his two 'Letters on Pestalozzi's Method, Applied to Scientific Education', which were published in Guth's Muth's New Library of Pedagogy and were, in their time, among the most faithful and clearest accounts of the famous educational system), he found in the elementary geography lessons of Tobler, Pestalozzi's disciple, the ideas he had expressed in that essay put into practice. Both he and Tobler may have drawn inspiration from Salzmann's work, and much of the convergence of their ideas on geographical instruction was also necessarily rooted in the development of

the latter. Ritter had summarised the fundamental idea of Pestalozzi's teaching in the following words: 'It is not the subject matter, even in its greatest variety, nor the mass in its greatest extent, that helps every person to become aware of their intellectual life, but the shaping of this variety into something distinctive, the power with which, by grasping the root concept, he strives to make the entire field his own, a field overgrown by this concept with all its roots, tendrils and shoots' (Letters on Pestalozzi's Method); it was from this idea that geography lessons in Iserten also received their impetus, that is to say, they were intended to advance towards an understanding of the distant through self-observation of the near. Within the confined space of one's own experience, the mind was trained to learn to grasp the vastness and distance lying beyond. Later, Ritter played a close part in the practical development of the geographical teaching method in the spirit of Pestalozzi, when J. W. Henning's excellent work on this subject, which appeared in Iserten in 1812, was produced under Ritter's influence and with his assistance. He was responsible for the draft of an elementary geography for the same.

Ritter's first work on the teaching of geography appeared in 1806 in Guths Muths' *_Bibliothek der geographischen Literatur_* under the title: 'Some Remarks on the Methodical Teaching of Geography'. It is based on the following principles: 'Geography belongs to the historical sciences in the broader sense. The essence of these historical sciences lies in the fact that they relate to individual things encountered in experience. Whilst they share the field of knowledge with the rational sciences, they are empirical, whereas the latter are rational. Geography is knowledge derived from experience, and upon this is based the assertion that its teaching method must be entirely opposed to the methods of rational science". Geographical instruction is intended 'to acquaint people with the setting of their activity, both in particular and in general'; therefore, it does not provide a description of this setting, but in relation to people. This is the natural reason why geography extends into the fields of almost all practical knowledge. To reproach it for this would be to destroy its very essence. As long as it cannot be denied that locality has the most decisive influence on all three realms of nature—on the acquisition of natural products, their processing and distribution, as well as on the physical constitution and temperament of human beings, and on their potential or actual union as peoples— the state, and on the acceleration or retardation of their physical, intellectual and moral culture, so long will geography by no means be confined to a narrower field. On the contrary, it is the link between the natural and human worlds, inseparable from both, since it is the most essential and primary condition for the characterisation of both. I maintain it is quite impossible to present any of these three subjects—geography, natural history and history, together with ethnology—in isolation from the others. With every step one takes along this monastic, restricted path, one would long a thousand times over for freer movement of the mind. And if this ardent desire is not fulfilled, one goes one's way as if on an errand, the goal of which is the end. One does not walk with pleasure in nature, where heart and mind open themselves to the riches that surround them, and where one regards the path itself as the purpose, whilst the goal recedes further with every step. One must not think of these sciences as goddesses who, on three marked-out military roads, jealous of their domain, advance side by side at measured intervals; they are like-minded sisters who walk arm in arm towards a single goal, the universe, and who can only attain this lofty goal by joining forces." Ritter has, in broad strokes, derived from this perspective—which encapsulates the fundamental idea of his entire later work *General Geography*—the guidelines for how geographical instruction should be handled in detail. At this point, it should simply be emphasised how great importance he attached to the distinction between natural regions, which must form the starting point for the teaching of political geography, and furthermore how he placed map-making at the forefront, creating a model of geographical school drawings as late as 1806 in his "Six Maps of Europe".

These maps constitute Ritter's first geographical work, which purely reflects his conception of the geographical science. In them, he depicts the mountain ranges of our continent in broad strokes, the distribution limits of cultivated plants, wild trees and shrubs, wild and domesticated mammals, the vegetation limits at the mountain ranges, and the distribution patterns of the tribes in Europe. In detail, these depictions, which have evidently suffered from neglect (a relief map of Germany drawn by Ritter in 1803, and a map of the Zillertal from a slightly later period, held by the Municipal Museum in Frankfurt am Main, demonstrate the finest execution), leave much to be desired; they were far too far ahead of the research of their time. Even in the depiction of the mountain ranges, we encounter the watershed mountains that had already been overcome by more experienced researchers at that time. That five 'floral zones' are grouped around the five main mountain ranges as the starting points for the distribution of plants was, even in this era when Wahlenberg's and Humboldt's works on plant geography had not yet come to light, a flight of fancy that cannot be condoned. In general, the boundary lines drawn by Ritter here are based less on the indispensable body of observations than they are a schematic expression of a general idea of how things might or should be. This attempt, whilst it cannot be called scientifically satisfactory, is nonetheless the first attempt at a physical atlas; moreover, it

remains pedagogically significant and, in both respects, rests upon a sound fundamental principle. Only the latter can be said of the more recent debut work 'Europe: A Geographical, Historical and Statistical Portrait', which appeared in 1804. One must fully endorse the aim stated in the preface: 'to elevate the reader to a vivid view of the entire country, its natural and man-made products, and the human and natural world, and to present all this as a coherent whole in such a way that the most important findings concerning nature and humanity emerge of their own accord, particularly through mutual comparisons'. In detail, too, the plan to precede each state with a historical introduction, then to set out its natural conditions, followed by the cultural-geographical aspects and a summary of the numerical data in tables, is all well and good. But the execution reveals a wide gap between intention and realisation; the material is not intellectually mastered, and the facts lie side by side as dead material, lacking the connecting links. There is something of a foreshadowing in the beautiful, careful conception of the idea, from which the realisation remains so far removed due to the failure to fully subdue the fragmented, recalcitrant facts. Even in later years, a large part of Ritter's geography came to life only in the form of boldly conceived programmes and did not develop beyond that. Even in his prime, Ritter did not create a work of perfect harmony between idea and reality, of complete fusion of the material with the thought; he did not create a fully mature work. A conflict runs through the work of his life, the great 'General Geography', and has prevented it from reaching completion and from allowing the seeds of great impact sown within it to unfold fully. At its very core, it is the same conflict that has consigned these early works to oblivion.

When Ritter exclaims in the first of the two works mentioned above: 'Separation lies solely within us; in reality, everything is connected in a necessary way, and we can never comprehend this connection by separating the manifold', he was also expressing a sound pedagogical idea; yet one who sought to achieve a goal in self-education that went far beyond general education could not adhere to it. Because Ritter took his teaching duties at the Frankfurt household so seriously, he turned them into a school for himself. Every educator learns alongside his pupils, but here he did not content himself with what might have sufficed; rather, the teacher sought to delve deeply into the sciences in which he was to instruct his pupils; he systematically filled the gaps left by his university education and added to the breadth he had always sought a depth that was indispensable for the scholar he would later become. From 1805 onwards, he attended the grammar school in Frankfurt with his pupils and did not rest until he had mastered Latin and Greek. When, in 1808, he read Homer and Herodotus with enthusiasm, he wrote: 'Hardly any study has captivated me as much as this, but unfortunately, I am already too old. Nevertheless, I am learning enough to value it ever more highly.' From 1809 onwards, Ritter himself taught geography, history and natural history at the grammar school from time to time, as well as at the Engelmann Institute. From 1807 onwards, he had also become more closely involved with mountaineering and, in particular, geology and mineralogy. The circle to which he belonged included A. von Humboldt, L. von Buch, Sömmering, Ebel, Oelsner and von Beyme. He was able to discuss geographical plans with Buch, engage in colour theory and debate natural history problems with Sömmering, and receive inspiration from Ebel, an expert on the Alps, regarding the scientific utilisation of the Alpine journeys he had undertaken frequently since 1807. He himself attributed a great influence on the formation of his geographical views and plans to the latter two friends. Of Sömmering he said in the introduction to the 2nd edition of Geography: "If, in the understanding of the laws governing the geographical relationships of all living nature, an interesting perspective should emerge here and there in the present arrangement, the author owes this entire direction of his attention to the many years of instructive and, it may be said with pride, intimate association with a noble man, S. Th. Sömmering'. And of Ebel in the same place: 'The present work owes whatever life and warmth it may possess in its initial conception to the author's many years of association with this noble man.' During the years of this association, Ritter laid the foundations for his Allgemeine Erdkunde; we know that in 1809 he was engaged in a comprehensive work of this kind, which, shared in manuscript form with friends, appears to have influenced, among other things, the organisation of geographical instruction at Pestalozzi's school. This work never saw the light of day; it was the first attempt at treating geography in the grand style of his magnum opus.

From 1810 to 1812, Ritter lived with his pupils in Geneva, where he found fresh inspiration. In this city, so well situated and excellently suited to intellectual exchange between peoples, his training as a geographer made great strides. Ritter took root in this hospitable soil more quickly than he, who throughout his life harboured an aversion to all things French—extending even to the language—had anticipated. He found himself greatly encouraged by his association with eminent, instructive individuals, whilst the magnificent natural surroundings reawakened in him a passion for mountain hiking, collecting plants and stones, and drawing maps and panoramas. With Sismondi he attended lectures on the literatures of the peoples of southern Europe; with Pictet he pursued physical and geological studies; in the Staël salons he heard political and literary issues discussed, whereupon he traversed the Mont Blanc massif and later

the entire Central Alps as far as the Rhine over a distance that was rare at the time; in the process he produced panoramas from outstanding vantage points, which Pictet declared to be the finest available at that time. In a letter from this period to Guths Muths, Ritter writes: 'Our life in Geneva is extraordinarily rich in many new experiences. Nature has opened her sacred workshop to us with all her treasures and has already blessed us abundantly with her splendour. People have shown us both sides of themselves; we are loved and taught by them … But more than all this, the study of people in entirely new national and local circumstances is a subject of interest to us, which I seek to deepen through a more intimate acquaintance with the French language and literature, which, incidentally, still leaves me cold," he himself most aptly described the significance of this stay in Geneva. Ritter's pedagogical work essentially came to an end with a trip to Italy that followed this stay. His pupil was ready to enter university; Ritter's task in this field was thus largely fulfilled, and his own life plans, long held back, now pressed towards realisation. But not without first waging a bitter struggle with himself, Ritter resigned from the post which he had held for so long, fulfilling with clarity the duties it imposed upon him. He arrived in Göttingen in the middle of the summer of 1813, by which time the inextinguishably glowing sparks of national enthusiasm had already spread to north-western Germany, which was occupied by the French. At 34, a young man of fiery passion and pure conviction, with his pupil by his side who was equally inflamed by the same ideal, it lay very close to Ritter's heart, like so many others, to 'go into battle and death for the fatherland'. But there were considerations on the part of the tutor, the teacher, that a duty fulfilled over 15 years must not be violated at its very end. Ritter was deeply affected by the sudden death of his older pupil the previous year, and even more so by the grief his mother had borne for him. Now he could not endanger the life of the young man entrusted to his care. With a bleeding heart, he chose the duty closer at hand. One senses the full gravity of this struggle in a letter he wrote to his sister in December 1813, whilst still suffering from the weight of the decision he had made, and which bears valuable testimony to the German man.

What Ritter achieved in the field of science between 1798 and 1818 was merely a side note to his true vocation, to which he devoted himself entirely. For twenty years he was a tutor and nothing else, and all the intellectual development and experience he absorbed were directed towards this central focus, just as all his literary works sprang from it. During this long period, he lived to educate and learnt to teach. In his youth and early manhood, even the most brilliant career opportunities failed to lure him into a wider sphere. Admittedly, he does write once: 'I feel like a prisoner who senses the strength to march further yet is confined to a few steps. At times I am seized by an indescribable longing for a wider sphere of activity'; but he soon adds: 'The conviction that here, too, I can strengthen the inner strength of a few, and that here I do not succumb to the external burden of business, and can nevertheless live carefree in a world I have created for myself—this always leads me back to peace of mind'. Now, however, it was part of the young Ritter's freedom of character and spirit not to allow higher powers to wither away in this, after all, limited position—powers which, through work that is too early imposed and monotonous, easily become incapable of great achievements. Yet the powers of his soul did not find peace; they wrestled with the task of education, and as they were tempered, Ritter's human personality—which later bore a large part of the teacher and scholar's effectiveness—grew to a rare maturity. Whilst, in unselfish recognition, he placed the character and powers of discernment of his pupils far above his own, he experienced moments of self-doubt from which he rose to the greatest exertion. He confided the confessions of these inner struggles to a friend such as Sömmering, and if we compare the extraordinarily clear self-assessment evident in these letters with the serene calm that was a hallmark of Ritter's character in later decades, the former appears as a necessary outcome, the latter as an inevitable prerequisite. Need we add that such self-restraint must have been founded above all on the religious devotion cultivated from his youth? The deeper Ritter delved into the sciences, the truer and warmer his faith became.

Ritter was entirely correct in regarding scientific immersion as the most essential thing remaining for him to strive for, following such a long period of devotion to practical tasks. Character formation and the creation of ideas had far outstripped the accumulation of knowledge and its clarification and inner maturation, both of which are possible only in tranquillity, under the pressure of ever-increasing masses that make critical comparisons ever easier. Ritter had come to Göttingen in the summer of 1813 and remained here for six years, interrupted only by a shorter and a longer stay in Berlin. His two pupils attended the university here and, whilst they enjoyed his company and advice, did not unduly restrict his time for his own work. He remained voluntarily, when nothing more bound him to them, in the small town which, with its large number of capable, diligent scholars and its rich library, is as if made for the synthesis and scholarly clarification of the views that had flowed to an inquiring mind in years richer in work and experience, of the ideas that had dawned upon him. Ritter writes from his first year in Göttingen: "The reason why I am staying here in Göttingen, of all places, the place where, of all those I know, I would least like to spend my life, is the tranquillity, the leisure and

the library that I find here, so that I may finally complete my geographical work, to which I have now devoted several years, and then move on to a different sphere of activity." Over time, Ritter found even more in Göttingen than he had sought friends. His close association with Blumenbach and Hausmann not only enriched the draft of 'Geography' in many technical respects but also gave it an entirely new form. He developed a close friendship with Hausmann, the outstanding mineralogist, who was a subtle observer, an excellent stylist and possessed a delicate sensibility for all that is good and beautiful; this is evidenced by a correspondence that continued right up until Ritter's terminal illness. Perhaps it was Hausmann who first conceived the idea of recruiting Ritter for the Georgia Augusta, a proposal which was, however, opposed by Blumenbach and Heeren—though not to Ritter's detriment, as his work required time to mature. Hausmann, the successor to the erudite and dazzling Beckmann on the Chair of Technology, offered Ritter much inspiration through the breadth of his interests and encouraged him particularly in the field of geology. Their shared calmness, perseverance, and conservatism in the best sense of the word, in their views and inclinations, also contributed to bringing them ever closer together. Schrader, too, had a stimulating influence on Ritter during this period through his instruction in natural history, at a time when Ritter was most earnestly endeavouring to complete the physical-geographical foundations of his geography, so that he might then turn his entire study 'towards the inner, spiritual activity of man'. The first volume appeared in the summer of 1817. The work immediately aroused widespread interest, was widely circulated, and drew the attention of scholarly circles to its author, Ritter. The truly daunting scope, the contradiction in which it stood in relation to prevailing intellectual trends, and the inadequacy of certain details all faded before the fact that here lay an entirely new perspective on the Earth and its peoples, superior to anything previously seen in similar attempts. The reviews were favourable. But when friends suggested that this marked the very foundation of the science of geography, they were, of course, overstating the case, for the development and life of a science are more closely linked to individual research than to works that synthesise from broad perspectives, and fortunately the former precede the latter. There had never been a shortage of such individual studies, yet they lay scattered across all fields of knowledge. Ritter's work belongs to the summarising category, and not a single specific problem is solved anew within it. If it nevertheless represents a milestone in the development of geography, the reason lies in the fact that geographical facts and problems, which had hitherto been assigned to the most diverse sciences, are now scientifically regarded as general geography from the perspective of understanding 'the laws and conditions under whose influence the great diversity of things, peoples and human beings on Earth is generated, transformed, disseminated and developed'. Geography had previously drawn upon astronomy, geology, the physical and natural sciences, anthropology and history, but it had rarely, and then only in a sense intuitively, embarked upon the same path itself. Ritter introduced the search for laws into the general sections of geography as well, for although the dependence of the history of peoples and states on the nature of their soil already comes to the fore in this first great precursor to his General Geography, the introduction nevertheless states: 'The Earth is independent of man; even without him and before him, it is the theatre of natural phenomena; the law governing its formations cannot originate from him.'

Ritter did not contribute creatively to the development of physical geography in the way his contemporary A. von Humboldt did, but he followed its progress with keen interest. In this way, a division naturally arose among the leading German geographers, which – apart from a few ironic remarks made by A. von Humboldt in earlier years – was not exacerbated into a conflict between them, though it was to be turned into one after both their deaths. Why Ritter did not engage in natural science himself becomes clear from his entire career; it was sufficient for him, the geographer, that he adhered to the natural scientific foundations of physical geography, whilst he made a fruitful contribution through his own work in the field of anthropogeography.

The publication of this work had the favourable effect for Ritter of drawing attention to him in wider circles. In Weimar, he was sought after as a tutor to several princesses; Bremen and Frankfurt invited him to their grammar schools, and after serving for only a short time at the latter as Schlosser's successor, he was appointed in 1820 as a teacher of geography and statistics at the War College and as a professor of geography, regional studies, ethnology and political science at the University of Berlin. The terms of this appointment were favourable for the time, Ritter, who had been engaged to Lilli Kramer since 1818, now strove even more earnestly than before to secure a position that would grant him a peaceful independence; and finally, he was drawn to Berlin also because his brother Johannes, managing director of the Nicolai Bookshop, promised him there the pleasure of brotherly intimacy, which for many years he had been able to enjoy only through letters. Ritter moved to Berlin on 20 September 1820 and soon settled into his professional life and thus into his new home so thoroughly, whereas he had never really felt at home in Berlin, or rather amongst the Berliners, before, that he felt at home here, was happy to return here from all his travels, and gratefully embraced

the intellectual stimulation that no other city in Germany could offer him at that time, as well as an unpretentious social life. An exceptionally happy family life made this settling-in easier. The fact that his wife was taken from him in 1840 meant, for him, a man without children, the most profound change in the second half of his life. His professional life opened up a suitable sphere of activity for him, without unduly hampering his scholarly work, and this in particular was a relief to him after the uncertainty and haste of the preceding years. Nor was he lacking in external recognition. He became a member of the Academy of Sciences in 1822, a full professor in 1825, and in the same year Director of Studies at the War College. When, in 1828, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the service of the capable cartographer Reymann, a small association of friends of geography was formed to hold regular meetings, he was elected chairman for the first year, and it was largely to his credit that this seed of the Society for Geography, which later became so significant, grew vigorously. From 1828 to 1860, Ritter stood at its head – with the interruptions required by the statutes – mostly alternating with Dove, and later also with Barth, and did by far the most to fulfil its aims through countless lectures and communications. He also facilitated the connection of many a practical traveller with the Society. For many years he headed the committee entrusted with the publication of the monthly reports.

Although Ritter did not produce any further works after his early writings that dealt exclusively with elementary geography teaching, he never lost sight of the pedagogical significance and application of his science, and some of his later minor works are scarcely less important for the development of geographical methodology than those early attempts that arose from his practical teaching activities. Methodological remarks can be found in prefaces, such as that to Roon's well-known textbook, in shorter journal articles, but above all in the two academic treatises 'On the geographical position and horizontal extent of the continents' and 'Remarks on means of illustrating spatial relationships in geographical representations through form and number'. These works were published in 1829 and 1831 in the Proceedings of the Berlin Academy of Sciences and are related in that they encompass the elements of the theory of a constructive method of geographical instruction. Greater than the undeniable scientific value of these attempts to collate, organise and compare the much-discussed regularities in the distribution and forms of solids and liquids on Earth, their significance for practical teaching could have been had they been accorded greater attention. It was only because Ritter put into practice in his own teaching the idea that 'the correct use and judicious comparative application of geometric figures to physical spaces in a geographical theory of proportions would be entirely suitable for leading to more definite concepts in a very simple and comprehensible manner' was the use of constructive drawing in geographical instruction transferred to the classroom by some of his pupils and bore fruit, before a new method of geographical instruction was decisively founded upon it. In the spirit of these two works, a more detailed treatment of the problems posed by horizontal and vertical arrangements on the Earth's surface would have been appropriate. With regard to the development of numerical ratios from a comparative examination of geographical features (ridge height, pass height, summit height), he was able to refer to A. von Humboldt's works; for coastal topography and river development, he demonstrated the methods by which similar results might be attained, and indeed also communicated some findings of his own. It must, however, be noted that Ritter, despite his in-depth knowledge of the Alps, did not produce any penetrating or definitive work in this field either; but we have already noted as a characteristic of his scientific work that he was content to limit himself to stating what ought to be done, adding at most hints as to the 'how?' or a few of his own preliminary findings, whilst leaving the actual, deeply probing research work—the unearthing of the core of truth—to the future. This is the peculiarity of the synthetically inclined mind, which, by virtue of this disposition, is more attuned to teaching and life than the analyst inclined towards the abstract. It is also telling that Ritter very rarely took a critical stance. A younger colleague could reproach him for having solved not a single problem in comparative geography, and this reproach cannot be entirely dismissed. Yet Ritter is not alone among the outstanding minds of his own time and the immediately preceding one in possessing this tendency that is more contemplative than incisive. Herder, too, and the natural philosophers, preferred to erect grand domes of thought rather than perform the stonemason's work required to prepare the material for such monumental endeavours. Even A. von Humboldt, who in his early and middle years achieved much that people liked to hold up as a model of scientific depth in contrast to Ritter's works, paid tribute in *Kosmos* to his era's preference for a grand style of intellectual architecture. In Ritter's case, a major reason for the sketchy, unfinished nature of so many of his thoughtful drafts was the strenuous work on the *Allgemeine Erdkunde*, which demanded all his energy. In this great work, countless detailed difficulties had to be overcome, which demanded and exhausted all the energy available for solving individual tasks.

Among the shorter works that deserve to be called scientific treatises are the further academic essays 'On the Historical Element in Geographical Science' (1833) and 'On Spatial Arrangements on the Surface of the Globe and Their Functions

in the Course of Historical Development' (1850), as well as "The Telluric Connection between Nature and History in the Products of the Three Natural Kingdoms, or On a Geographical Study of Products" (1836). Although the latter work is, once again, merely a grand programme, individual sections of General Geography indicate the direction in which Ritter would have proceeded with its execution had the entire grand design "the knowledge of the distinct products of the Earth according to their spatial distribution across solid and liquid forms, in their quantitative and qualitative, absolute and relative relationships to the individual countries and peoples of the Earth, as well as to the entire system of the globe" had remained little more than a rough outline. The sections on the distribution of tea, the palm trees of India, the Indian elephant, the sacred fig, opium cultivation, opium consumption and the opium trade, the cultivation of sugar cane, frankincense, the coffee tree, the camel, manna, gum acacia, and the date palm are fragments of great erudition, which are built into the structure of the great work, rather than belonging to a commercial geography, the creation of which Ritter left to others who came after him. If this branch of geography, then flourished far removed from the field in which Ritter worked, if Ritter's name was scarcely mentioned by its cultivators, the blame must be laid not at the nature but at the form of these scholarly works, and indeed at the fragmented manner of their publication. The academic treatise on cotton (1851), which remained a fragment, would, had it been completed, have become the most scholarly of these monographs. In 1852, Ritter combined these and other academic writings with the 'Introduction to General Comparative Geography' into a small but distinctive work.

Two very characteristic genres of Ritter's works are his lectures and prefaces. Where it was a matter of promoting or expanding his science, or even where milder purposes were to be served, Ritter was happy to address his words to wider educated circles in the Scientific Society, the Society for Scientific Communications, and the Society for Geography. Many of these lectures have been published and are a delight thanks to the instruction presented in a refined, here entirely unburdened form, which is underpinned by a far-sighted, worldly-wise view of the most distant circumstances. A lecture on 'The Colonisation of New Zealand' is particularly appealing because in it Ritter appears as a judge of a political entity still in the making, in which capacity he keeps himself entirely free from the clichés and exaggerations so often attached to such young, promising communities, nor does he employ the vivid colours so readily used in descriptions of distant lands. This little work offers a genuinely worldly-wise assessment of things as they are, with no pushing of personal views and no dreams of the future. 'A Glimpse into the Land of the Nile's Source' (1844), 'A Glimpse of Palestine and its Christian Inhabitants' (1852), the numerous lectures—some published in full, others in extract form in the monthly reports of the Geographical Society—which deal with subjects of equal human and scientific interest, demonstrate the same warm and broad-minded perspective and presentation. We shall mention only the most extensive of these, adhering to the lists in the Society's Monthly Reports, which have only been published since 1840: 'The Conditions in Liberia' (1840 and 1853), 'The Nestorians' (1840), 'The Australians on the Gulf of Vincent' (1841), 'The Journeys of Missionaries Krapf and Isenberg in East Africa' (1842 and later), 'Abich's Survey of Ararat' (1846), 'On the Sources of the Oxus and Jaxartes' (1847), 'On America's Trade with the East' (1849), "On the Syrian-Jacobite Christians" (1849), "P. Knoblecher's Journey on the White Nile" (1850), "On the Aral Sea" (1851), "The Ancient Monuments of Guatemala" (1853), "The Northwest Passage" (1853), 'The Western Eskimos' (1854), 'Lins' Chinese Geography' (1855). As evidenced by hundreds of brief reports he delivered at meetings of the Society for Exploration, Ritter followed the fortunes and achievements of geographical explorers with keen interest. His interest and active involvement fostered many an undertaking. Men such as Krapf, Leichhardt, Schomburgk, Werne, von Wildenbruch, Barth, Overweg, the Schlagintweit brothers and many others shared their findings with him, which he in turn introduced to the scientific community. Together with A. von Humboldt and L. von Buch, he supported many explorers in this spirit. The growing interest in the exploration of Africa and the polar regions that later developed in Germany found in him one of its earliest, most ardent and most active representatives and advocates. He was always willing to lend his pen and his name when it came to introducing debut works. His prefaces to Hoffmeister's Letters from India, Tams' Portuguese Possessions in South-West Africa, Barth's and Overweg's Letters from the Sahara and the Sudan, and many others, are most delightful works of stylistic perfection, rich in thought, and expressing the purest sympathy for the authors. Even the smallest contributions of this kind characterise the man, and particularly his disposition. The text accompanying Kummer's relief depiction of Mont Blanc (1824) may be counted among these works of more fortuitous origin.

The various treatises, both major and minor, that Ritter published during the last 40 years of his life are, however, merely secondary works and by-products of his 'Geography'. One feels awe at the work that such a man carried in his mind throughout the entire period of his mature thought and labour, to which he devoted his best efforts. Ritter's life's work rests in this long series of volumes, and naturally the stages of life through which it passed find their expression

in them. The two volumes of the first edition, which were soon replaced by a new one, were based on the draft dating back to 1809 and 1810, which we mentioned earlier, and were intended to be a kind of perfected handbook of geography of moderate size. In 1822, the new major edition began to appear, the second volume of which came to light in 1832. These first two volumes are the most mature and thoroughly worked out. They are the work of the man. The rest belongs to the old man, who may still create with the vigour of youth, but who readily goes into great breadth and who sometimes loses his sense of proportion and context in the enjoyment of unrestricted exposition. Yet the scholarly man, who was deeply earnest and enthusiastic about his work, was so far removed from mere compilation that he retained intellectual direction and an overview right through to the final volumes and never allowed his work to degenerate into a jumble of notes, even as the material grew to overwhelming proportions. If one endeavours, in all fairness, to understand the work within the context of its time, one is struck by its novel, distinctive and bold structure. Even the headings of the volumes, sections and chapters have either created a wealth of new terms for large and small natural regions or at least brought them into general use. Even a cursory glance at the table of contents of the volume on Africa, published in 1822, gives one an impression of the intellectual mastery of a subject matter that, in its fragmentary nature, is highly intractable. Ritter's conception of this continent, which was the least known at the time, is so true to nature that later research findings could be classified without difficulty into the categories he had established. No part of the earth had previously been organised and described in this way, and later, in many geographical works, less natural classifications were adopted. Nor does the clarity yet suffer from an excess of digressions, additions and expansions. Admittedly, numerous 'explanations' already appear here, which cluster around the core of the sections presenting the basic features of soil formation, irrigation, climate, soil products, peoples and the history of discovery; but this core is not yet overgrown, as is the case, for example, in the second volume in the Gobi chapter, where it becomes virtually invisible; or indeed in the volumes on Asia Minor, where the description of the so confidently presented, well-defined peninsula disintegrates into a jumble of nothing but route descriptions. Ritter himself once says: 'In a field of such immeasurable scope, interest can only be aroused, not satisfied; hence the citation of sources. But he no longer contents himself with citing sources, but immediately draws a good portion of them into the increasingly bulging vessels of the introductory chapters with each volume. There is no doubt that the incompleteness of the work is chiefly due to this increasing breadth, which led to internal fragmentation despite the well-thought-out structural plan. Even in the 1st and 2nd prefaces to 'Africa', 12 volumes are envisaged, into which Ritter still hoped to cram the material as late as 1832. There is no doubt that geography would have benefited greatly from the realisation of this plan, particularly if, as in the case of 'Africa', the entire body of our knowledge up to a certain point in time had been compiled, so that only supplements and improvements would subsequently need to be appended to this book, completed in 1820, or to the volume on East Asia, finished in 1830. It is, even from a purely human perspective, painful to see how a work, begun with such maturity and carried out with such dedication, remained fragmentary in its development and thus also in its impact. As a collection of countless facts, however, 'Geography' has lost nothing through these formal flaws; it remains the most scholarly work of modern geography, which is unlikely to be equalled or surpassed for a long time to come. Moreover, it is the geographical work which first consistently applied, in such a detailed description of the countries, the idea—formulated by Herder in a historical-philosophical sense—of the profound influence of the external environment, of the setting, upon the destinies of peoples. That the Earth is destined by Providence to be the dwelling and educational home of peoples is a thought which Ritter expressed in almost every one of his works; it remained closer to him than any other, and he therefore sought time and again to prove it and demonstrate its effects. For him, a goal of scholarship was 'to demonstrate the necessary course of development for every people in their specific part of the world, which had to be followed in order to attain the prosperity allotted to every faithful people by eternally just destiny.' The description of the scenes of world-historical developments and events, which are densely clustered together on Asian soil, is imbued with this idea and imbues all the volumes of the work with a distinctive, spiritualising aura. It is certainly from this perspective that the most significant and, at the same time, most effective characteristic of 'Geography' emerges. It is the same direction in which Ritter's teaching left the deepest mark. The teleological element, for which this perspective was often criticised, could not prevent it from having a revitalising effect on the conception of history. To recount the history of a people without knowing and describing the soil on which it unfolded seems, as E. Curtius once aptly put it, no longer possible since Ritter, and undoubtedly this has endowed historiography with greater philosophical depth. As for the accusation of teleology, however, this is meaningless, because Ritter sees the creator's intentions only in the final cause and, as a sincere Christian, must see them there, whilst the whole vast space between this and the phenomenon remains open to science. At most, one might see a source of error in the fact that those who seek higher intentions perceive more of those connections between the earth and human destinies than may actually exist. But Ritter, as the

first to have consistently and thoroughly researched and presented this connection, can at least claim the same right as other discoverers to indulge in a favourite inclination towards his ideas, which embellishes and even overestimates them. Ritter never allowed this inclination to overshadow his role as a friend and connoisseur of nature. Though he was not a scientific geographer like A. von Humboldt, his affectionate depiction of mountains, river courses, climatic phenomena and natural products reveals a man who was able to test the fruits of journeys recorded in books, on maps and in documents against his own, first-hand observation of nature. 'Geography' is not entirely a product of the study. Ritter did not, admittedly, travel to either Africa or Asia, but his views and descriptions are not those of dry scholarship. Ritter was a man of life, of practical learning, a worshipper of God in nature. This is evident in his keen interest in new discoveries, colonisation, missionary work, and the development of downtrodden peoples. Hence, even amidst the sections of 'Geography' that are crammed with dry lists of facts, there are delightful oases of human feeling. Though his travels were not extensive, they allowed him to know individual significant places, such as the Alps, all the more thoroughly. But he also travelled through Italy, England, Scotland, Ireland, Greece and the countries of the Balkan Peninsula. And just as his early, intimate and frequently repeated encounters with the Alps shine through, so too does his later acquaintance with Greece in Ritter's works. The beautiful words dedicated to Greece in the Lectures on Europe bear the stamp of personal experience; they therefore also rank among the stylistically finest of Ritter's writings.

What Ritter published in the form of larger and smaller treatises during the last 40 years of his life, however, is all merely secondary work and a by-product of his 'Geography'. One feels awe for the work that such a man carried in his mind throughout the entire period of his mature thought and labour, to which he devoted his best efforts. In this long series of volumes lies Ritter's life's work, and naturally the stages of life through which he passed find their expression in them. The two volumes of the first edition, which were soon replaced by a new one, were based on the draft dating back to 1809 and 1810, which we mentioned earlier, and were intended to become a sort of perfected handbook of geography of moderate size. In 1822, the new major edition began to appear, the second volume of which came to light in 1832. These first two volumes are the most mature and thoroughly worked out. They are the work of the man. The rest belongs to the old man, who may still create with the vigour of youth, but who readily goes into great breadth and who sometimes loses his sense of proportion and context in the enjoyment of unrestricted exposition. Yet the scholarly man, who was deeply earnest and enthusiastic about his work, was so far removed from mere compilation by piling up material that he retained intellectual guidance and an overview right through to the final volumes, and never allowed his work to degenerate into a jumble of notes, even as the material grew to massive proportions. If one endeavours, in all fairness, to understand the work within the context of its time, one is struck by its novel, distinctive and bold structure. Even the headings of the volumes, sections and chapters have either created a wealth of new terms for large and small natural regions or at least brought them into general use. Even a cursory glance at the table of contents of the volume on Africa, published in 1822, gives one an impression of the intellectual mastery of a subject matter that, in its fragmentary nature, is highly intractable. Ritter's conception of this continent, which was the least known at the time, is so true to nature that later research findings could be classified without difficulty into the categories he established. No part of the earth had previously been organised and described in this way, and later, in many geographical works, less natural classifications were adopted. Nor does the clarity yet suffer from an excess of digressions, additions and expansions. Admittedly, numerous 'explanations' already appear here, which cluster around the core of the sections presenting the basic features of soil formation, irrigation, climate, soil products, peoples and the history of discovery; but this core is not yet overgrown, as is the case, for example, in the second volume in the Gobi chapter, where it becomes virtually invisible; or even in the volumes on Asia Minor, where the description of the so confidently presented, well-defined peninsula disintegrates into a jumble of nothing but route descriptions. Ritter himself once says: 'In a field of such immeasurable scope, interest can only be aroused, not satisfied; hence the citation of sources. But he no longer contents himself with citing sources, but immediately draws a good portion of them into the increasingly bulging vessels of the introductory chapters with each volume. There is no doubt that the incompleteness of the work is chiefly due to this increasing breadth, which led to internal fragmentation despite the well-thought-out structural plan. Even in the 1st and 2nd prefaces to 'Africa', 12 volumes are envisaged, into which Ritter still hoped to cram the material as late as 1832. There is no doubt that geography would have benefited greatly from the realisation of this plan, particularly if, as in the case of 'Africa', the entire body of our knowledge up to a certain point in time had been compiled, so that only supplements and improvements would subsequently need to be appended to this book, completed in 1820, or to the volume on East Asia, finished in 1830. It is, even from a purely human perspective, painful to see how a work, begun with such maturity and carried out with such dedication, remained fragmentary in its development and thus also in its impact. As a collection of countless facts, however,

‘Geography’ has lost nothing through these formal flaws; it remains the most scholarly work of modern geography, which is unlikely to be equalled or surpassed for a long time to come. Moreover, it is the geographical work which first consistently applied, in such a detailed description of the countries, the idea—formulated by Herder in a historical-philosophical sense—of the profound influence of the external environment, of the setting, upon the destinies of peoples. That the Earth is destined by Providence to be the dwelling and educational home of peoples is a thought which Ritter expressed in almost every one of his works; it remained closer to him than any other, and he therefore sought time and again to prove it and demonstrate its effects. For him, a goal of scholarship was ‘to demonstrate the necessary course of development for every people in their specific part of the world, which had to be followed in order to attain the prosperity allotted to every faithful people by eternally just destiny.’ The description of the scenes of world-historical developments and events, which are densely clustered together on Asian soil, is imbued with this idea and imbues all the volumes of the work with a distinctive, spiritualising aura. It is certainly from this conception that the most significant and at the same time most effective characteristic of ‘Geography’ emerges. It is the same direction in which Ritter’s teaching left the deepest mark. The teleological element, for which this conception was often criticised, could not prevent it from having a revitalising effect on the conception of history. To recount the history of a people without knowing and describing the soil on which it unfolded seems, as E. Curtius once aptly put it, no longer possible since Ritter, and undoubtedly this has endowed historiography with greater philosophical depth. As for the accusation of teleology, however, this is meaningless, because Ritter sees the creator’s intentions only in the final cause and, as a sincere Christian, must see them there, whilst the whole vast space between this and the phenomenon remains open to science. At most, one might see a source of error in the fact that those who seek higher intentions perceive more of those connections between the earth and human destinies than may actually exist. But Ritter, as the first to have consistently and thoroughly researched and presented this connection, can at least claim the same right as other discoverers to indulge in a favourite inclination towards his ideas, which embellishes and even overestimates them. Ritter never allowed this inclination to overshadow his role as a friend and connoisseur of nature. Though he was not a scientific geographer like A. von Humboldt, his affectionate depiction of mountains, river courses, climatic phenomena and natural products reveals a man who was able to test the fruits of journeys recorded in books, on maps and in documents against his own, first-hand observation of nature. ‘Geography’ is not entirely a product of the study. Ritter did not, admittedly, travel to either Africa or Asia, but his views and descriptions are not those of dry scholarship. Ritter was a man of life, of practical learning, a worshipper of God in nature. This is evident in his keen interest in new discoveries, colonisation, missionary work, and the development of downtrodden peoples. Hence, even amidst the sections of ‘Geography’ that are crammed with dry lists of facts, there are delightful oases of human feeling. Though his travels were not extensive, they allowed him to know individual significant places, such as the Alps, all the more thoroughly. But he also travelled through Italy, England, Scotland, Ireland, Greece and the countries of the Balkan Peninsula. And just as his early, intimate and frequently repeated encounters with the Alps shine through, so too does his later acquaintance with Greece in Ritter’s works. The beautiful words dedicated to Greece in the Lectures on Europe bear the mark of having been lived through; they therefore also rank among the most stylistically exquisite of all that Ritter wrote.

All things considered, Ritter’s teaching must surely have had a highly stimulating effect. Much of his disposition and background pointed to this as his preferred field. The teacher’s personality took up more space than was typical of the average German professor. His successes reflected this. Having begun with a disappointingly small number of listeners, Ritter’s lectures soon took their place among those which were considered essential to the general education of Berlin’s academic youth. Adults with a thirst for knowledge also attended his lectures. To speak brilliantly was as far removed from Ritter’s nature and inclination as possible; his impact lay in the full commitment of a personality that inspired trust and awe and was entirely independent. Whilst comparisons were often drawn between Ritter and A. von Humboldt—comparisons which did not do the former full justice—people failed to emphasise that this kind of impact would have been entirely beyond the great traveller’s reach, even had he sought it. Ritter was, first and foremost, a teacher in the lecture hall and devoted his entire humanity to this profession. His calm explanations captivated and convinced through the seriousness and warmth of his delivery, which aroused a lasting interest in geography among thousands. Drawings on the blackboard supported his speech. In the latter, a certain originality of choice of words and structure was also captivating. What emerged into the public domain after his death of Ritter’s geographical lectures cannot provide a complete and clear picture of what they were and what effect they had (History of Geography and Discoveries, 2nd ed. 1880. Europe 1863. Both edited by A. H. Daniel), yet the former lectures are to be counted among the most appealing of what has been preserved of Ritter’s work.

Among the charms of Ritter's diction were the well-chosen comparisons and images which, more meaningful than bold, more profound than brilliant, made the seriousness of his discourse more engaging. He approached geography not merely in a scientific sense, but also in a pedagogical one. When he describes the Nile as four times the length of the Rhine, twice that of the Danube and navigable as far upstream as the Amazon, when he compares its course to the distance between the southern tip of the Peloponnese and the North Cape, when he compares its journey along the familiar stretch to the sea to that of a deliberate man and an old man, and then seeks to answer the question of where the cradle of his childhood stands? then this soothing endeavour for clarity stands before us, gaining ground. Thus, nowhere in Ritter's works—even where they are brimming with erudition—is there a lack of those oases of rest and respite offered by imaginative comparisons, which possess just enough geographical substance to remain within the bounds of reason. These are the beautiful blossoms of the somewhat mystical, or at least intuitive, thinking of his earlier years, which as late as 1820 appeared in 'The Vestibule of European Ethnology before Herodotus, around the Caucasus and on the shores of the Pontus. A Treatise on Antiquity', a somewhat wild tangle of bold conjectures based on the idea of ancient Indian priestly colonies migrating with the Buddha cult as far as Europe. When we read of the time, which, like the rising sun, gradually shortens one shadow after another as it progresses, we have before us a sample of the style of expression which also prompted a master such as A. von Humboldt to judge 'Geography' as being 'full of life, often of great beauty of speech'. Ritter's excellent letters from Switzerland, Greece and other countries also contain beautiful descriptions of the landscape, some of which have been reprinted in the books by Kramer and Geilfuß mentioned below. In a vivid and entirely accurate depiction, one feels one is rediscovering the connoisseur of natural forms, accustomed to drawing. Ritter drew very precise maps, and a sample of the lifelike pencil sketches he sought to produce whilst travelling has been published by Roß et al. in the first part of the Greek travelogue.

Zur Erinnerung an Karl Ritter Von G. Kramer, Zeitung f. allg. Erdkunde, N. F. Bd. VII.

Karl Ritter *Ein Lebensbild nach seinem handschriftlichen Nachlass* dargestellt von G. Kramer, 2 Bde., Halle 1864. 2 Ausgabe. 1876.

Karl Ritters Briefwechsel mit J. F. L. Hausmann, hrsg. von J. E. Wappäus, Leipzig 1879.

Über Karl Ritter in Abhandlung z. Erd- und Völkerkunde von O. Peschel, I. 1877.

F. Ratzel, *Zu Karl Ritters hundertjährigem Geburtstag*. Allg. Ztg. 7.–15. Aug. 1879.

F. Marthe, *Was bedeutet Karl Ritter für die Geografie?* Berlin 1880.

Geilfuß, *Das Leben des Geographen Dr. Jakob Melchior Ziegler*, 1884.

K. v. Fritsch, *Karl Ritters Zeichnungen des Lophiskos* in Mitth. d. V. f. Erdkunde zu Halle 1885.

E. v. Oven, *Eine von Karl Ritter gezeichnete Karte des Zillerthals*. Jahrbuch d. V. s. Geografie zu Frankfurt 1888.

The development of Ritter's ideas is carefully documented in Hermann Wagner's *Reports on the Methodology of Geography in the Geographical Yearbook since 1878*. Oberländer's *Geographical Instruction According to the Principles of the Ritter School* (1875) is the principal work on the application of Ritter's ideas in geography lessons. Portrait in Kramer's biography.

Friedrich Ratzel.