



# Myth and Science in the Twelfth Century: A Study of Bernard Silvester (Princeton Legacy Library)

*Brian Stock*

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The *Cosmographia* of Bernard Silvester was the most important literary myth written between Lucretius and Dante. One of the most widely read books of its time, it was known to authors whose interests were as diverse as those of Vincent of Beauvais, Dante, and Chaucer. Bernard offers one of the most profound versions of a familiar theme in medieval literature, that of man as a microcosm of the universe, with nature as the mediating element between God and the world. Brian Stock's exposition includes many passages from the *Cosmographia* translated for the first time into English. Arising from the central analysis are several more general themes: among them the recreation by twelfth-century humanists of the languages of myth and science as handed down in the classical tradition; the creation of the world and of man, the chief mythical and cosmographical problem of the period; the development of naturalistic allegory; and Bernard's relation to the "new science" introduced from Greek and Arabic sources.

Originally published in 1972.

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