

Old World view

A colossal undertaking when it appeared in 1665, the *Atlas Maior* was the largest, most expensive book of its time, and it's still a stunner in this splendid reprint. Amsterdam cartographer Joan Blaeu set out to overwhelm any mapmaking competition, so the huge *Atlas Maior* is truly encyclopedic — with illustrations, for example, of four different theories of the solar system. The modern reader encounters not just our physical globe laid out in maps that can unfold to wider than 3½ feet, but also the mental landscape of the 17th century, when geography, Blaeu writes, “is the heart and illumination of history.”

■ Taschen, \$200.

Jerome Weeks

