IN SEARCH OF THE AUTHOR OF STRABO'S *GEOGRAPHY**

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I. ACADEMIC PROSE AND IMPERSONALITY

'As intellectuals and academics we are constantly engaging in projects of representation, but in the dominant epistemologies that guide our work, our role as representers is effaced'.[1]

'At the heart of the issue lies a fundamental insistence on the *contextualised* nature of *all* forms of knowledge, meaning and behaviour. There is a further recognition of the partial and partisan edge to inquiry, theory construction, and scholarly (re)presentation, as well as an explicit acknowledgement of the importance of the author's biography in this creative process'.[2]

The assertions of two modern geographers, Katz and Merrifield, are symptomatic of an underlying, but persistent, debate within their field of study. To what degree should academic prose aim at impersonality? The discipline of modern geography, perhaps more than any other academic subject at pains constantly to justify and redefine itself, has taken on this problem, formulated its history, and posited some solutions.

The tradition, lasting through most of this century, by which the geographer attempted to absent himself from the text, was largely reactionary against preceding colonial accounts, onto which the invariably superior cultural viewpoint of the conquerors had been firmly imprinted.[3] The new 'unbiased' geographical style has, however, been challenged in turn by those demanding an open acknowledgement of the author's standpoint. In particular, feminist geographers have complained that the pretence of an objective, anonymous geography implicitly and without justification makes claims to omniscience and the incorporation of *all* viewpoints.[4] They see their demand for the authors of geographical texts to state their social and intellectual background, in other words to give a thorough representation of themselves in the text, as the only honest way for the subject to proceed. In any case, they argue that the subject can only benefit from embracing, rather than denying, the variety of these 'situated knowledges', a notion based on the premise that 'knowledge is always embedded in a particular time and space; it doesn't see everything from nowhere but rather sees *something from somewhere*'.[5] Katz has commented, in connection with a closely related field, that although it was traditional for the ethnographer 'to erase himself from the text or to report with omniscient authority, there, of course, could be no ethnography without the ethnographer'.[6] Geertz' formulation that 'the culture of a people is an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains to read over

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[1] C. Katz, 'All the world is staged: intellectuals and the projects of ethnography', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 10 (1992), 496.

[2] A. Merrifield, 'Situated knowledge through exploration: reflections on Bunge's "Geographical Expeditions"', *Antipode* 27.1 (1995), 50.

[3] The story of how subject peoples were depicted in both literary and pictorial representations in such a way as to conform to the ideals of their conquerors requires little illustration. For the phenomenon in art, see L. Bell, 'Artists and empire: Victorian representations of subject people', *Art History* 5.1 (1982), 73–86; for a cartographic and literary parallel, see A. Godlewska, 'Map, text and image. The mentality of enlightened conquerors: a new look at the *Description de l'Egypte*', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* N.S. 20 (1995), 5–28, on how written texts and maps, collated as part of Napoleon's conquest of Egypt, were designed to justify the conquest and to confirm France's cultural superiority.

[4] See, for example, S. Christopherson, 'On being outside "the project"', *Antipode* 21.2 (1989), 83–9, arguing for an acceptance of different authorial perspectives in geography.

[5] The phrase was coined, at least for use in modern geography, by D. Haraway in 'Situated knowledges: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective', in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* (1991), 183–201.

[6] Katz, op. cit. (n. 1), 495–510.

the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong' has clearly had a major influence on debates over the position of the author and the development of the notion that the viewer and narrator of culture is an active participant in the process by which the world comes to be described.[7] Such an approach naturally contributes to the reinstatement of the author as a figure of interest both in his own right, and as the key to decoding the assumed values and presuppositions of the text.

The relevance of the questions: 'How should academic prose be written?' and 'How, and to what extent, should the author make his presence felt within the text?' clearly stretches beyond the realms of modern geographical debate. Those arguments provide the stimulus for us, in turn, to re-examine our preconceptions about how ancient writers present themselves in their works. The contexts of composition and purposes of ancient academic prose-writing may differ in many respects from their modern counterparts, but the issues raised in the modern debates may, nevertheless, enrich our approach to ancient authors by heightening our awareness of authorial self-representation as the result of a deliberate choice, rather than being a foregone conclusion. The ancient geographer, Strabo, makes a particularly good case-study for several reasons. Firstly, he was himself engaged in writing academic prose, setting out and criticizing the tradition of his subject, as well as adding his own ideas; secondly, although not crucially for my argument, since I wish to draw from the modern debate approaches rather than precise parallels, Strabo was part of the very geographical tradition which is locked into the current discussion over the author's place in academic texts; thirdly, Strabo's *Geography* has rarely been discussed from the point of view of the authorial voice; and finally, all we know about Strabo comes from the text of his *Geography*, giving us a self-contained personality with whom to deal.

The last two points deserve further elaboration, as they have implications for the nature of the project of searching for the author of the *Geography*. The lack of external evidence concerning Strabo immediately poses problems for his biographers. We have little indication that anyone read anything by this author for many years after his death. As well as his *Geography*, Strabo also wrote a *History*, preserved in just nineteen fragments. Only three ancient readers of Strabo's *History* are attested — Josephus, Plutarch, and Tertullian.[8] After this the *History* disappeared from the tradition. The *Geography* fared no better initially. As Diller points out, it would be remarkable if Pliny, Pausanias, and Ptolemaeus all knew of the work, but deliberately ignored it. The earliest known reader was Dionysios Periegetes, whose description of the known world appeared in around A.D. 120. There are no named citations in the work, but Dionysios' inclusion of a piece of information which Strabo states explicitly that he received orally from Cn. Piso makes Strabo an extremely likely source.[9] In fact, there are few references to Strabo's *Geography* in the first five centuries after it was written. That we know the text at all is due to its lucky survival through the great sixth-century transference from papyrus to parchment, an example of which is preserved in the Strabo palimpsest (Π) — the earliest known text of part of the *Geography*.

The lack of external contemporary evidence can be frustrating, especially given biographical contradictions within the text, and even the most basic facts about Strabo's life remain highly controversial. Strabo's *Geography* has for so long been used selectively as a reference work that the author himself has rarely featured in discussion. The *Geography* has been read to find out individual pieces of information, with little attention paid to its overall design; and the author disappears behind the search for facts. The only interest taken in Strabo himself has been from a strictly biographical point of view, and by two specific groups: firstly, those attempting to solve the biographical inconsistencies; secondly, the biographical details have been used by those evaluating

[7] C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), 452.

[8] See *FGrH* 91 for the nineteen extant fragments of this 47-book work, described, like Poseidonios' *Histories*, as τὰ μετὰ Πολύβιον (T 2). A. Diller, *The Textual Tradition of Strabo's Geography* (1975), 7, has suggested that the historical works of Strabo and Nicolaus of Damascus were associated as a pair, perhaps explaining the survival of one and the disappearance of the other.

[9] Dionysios 174–219; Strabo 2.5.33. The comment concerns the nature of Libya – like a leopard's skin, spotted with oases.

and dating certain historical notes in the *Geography*. But we might add a third party, potentially interested in autobiographical references in the text, namely those pursuing literary questions of focalization.

Looking for indications of authorial presence in a text and identifying an authorial viewpoint might appear to offer separate rewards to those concerned with the historical Strabo and those concerned with him as a literary figure. That the two enquiries could be seen as separable issues is implicit in Syme's statement of why Strabo's text and biography were worthy of study at all: 'The search for precise dates may help to reveal the development of an author's manner and sentiments. Such an enquiry is always legitimate, often remunerative. Directed upon the *Geography* of Strabo, however, it has a different aim and justification. Strabo has no style, and his opinions matter very little; but chance has made him the principal, sometimes the only, source for historical facts . . . It is therefore important to ascertain the period to which certain of Strabo's statements refer'.[10] Foucault's sympathy with this distinction between historical person and literary persona comes through in his comment: 'If I discover that Shakespeare was not born in the house that we visit today, this is a modification which, obviously, will not alter the functioning of the author's name. But if we proved that Shakespeare did not write those sonnets which pass for his, that would constitute a *significant* change and affect the manner in which the author's name functions'.[11] By analogy, if we found out that Strabo did not come from Amaseia after all, this would not affect our understanding of Strabo as author of the *Geography*.

I shall argue, however, that the apparently separable issues of Strabo's authorial voice, the way in which he presents himself in his lengthy piece of academic prose, and Strabo's biography, to which most attention has traditionally been devoted, can be brought together. Not only can, but should. The lack of external evidence makes a close look at Strabo's authorial voice the only way towards understanding and enriching our picture of Strabo the historical figure. We cannot dismiss his authorial persona, his self-presentation, because his 'situated knowledge' includes not only what he tells us about the external world, but also all we can find out about Strabo himself and his project, making the two questions inseparable.

II. ABSENT AND PRESENT AUTHORS

The debate among modern geographers over the degree to which authors of geographical accounts should openly acknowledge their inevitable involvement in the text, and abandon the pretence of objectivity, has, in spite of its apparent novelty, ancient parallels. The Greek historiographical tradition formalized the issue of authorial presence by turning an introduction of the author into a topos of the preface to historical works. Thucydides and Herodotos led the way, giving not only their names, but also their places of origin, as the first two words of each work respectively.[12] The identity of the author was sometimes withheld until the end of the preface. Dionysios of Halikarnassos started his work by stating that he must give some details about himself (περὶ ἐμαυτοῦ).[13] But, although he creates a persona for himself as a non-Roman who came to the city around 29 B.C. (1.7.2), was educated there, and wrote his work starting in 7 B.C., it is not until the end of the preface that we know the two crucial features of his identity — name and origin: 'I, who composed this work, am Dionysios, son of Alexander, from Halikarnassos'.[14]

That the topos was firmly in place is demonstrated by historians of the second sophistic who played on the theme. Arrian overturned it, thus reinforcing the view that some authorial self-identification was expected. Nothing is said about the author of the

[10] R. Syme, *Anatolica. Studies in Strabo* (1995), 356.
[11] M. Foucault, 'What is an author?', in P. Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (1984), 101–21.
[12] Thucydides 1.1.1: Θουκυδίδης Ἀθηναῖος . . . ; Herodotos 1.1: Ἡροδότου Ἁλικαρνησσέος . . .
[13] Dionysios, *A. R.* 1.1.1.
[14] *A. R.* 1.8.4.

Anabasis until several chapters into the work: 'As to who I am who make this claim about myself, I need not write my name since it is not unknown to men, nor is my country nor my descent, nor any office I may have held in my land.'[15] Arrian's game was reliant for its success on the reader's expectation that the author *would* reveal who he was and where he was from. In Moles' words, 'this is, of course, a formal *recusatio* of the traditional historiographical τόπος whereby the historian announces his name and various particulars about himself, such as his city, family and public career'.[16] Appian tried to play the same game, but backed out at the last minute: 'Who I am, who have composed all these things, many people know and I myself have already indicated. To say it more clearly, I am Appian of Alexandria, and I have reached the highest level in my country, and pleaded cases in Rome before the emperors, until they considered me worthy of being their procurator. If anyone wishes to find out more about me, I have written additionally on this subject.'[17]

Ancient geographical texts are harder to assess, due to their fragmentary nature, making it treacherous to posit what expectations about authorial self-representation were there for Strabo to adopt, reject, or modify. Hanno's voyage along the west coast of Africa was written up in the first person, but it is in the initial section, written in the third person as an explanation of the contents of the following inscription, that we find out who is the nominal author of the rest of the text: 'The Carthaginians decided that Hanno should sail out beyond the Pillars of Herakles and found Libyphoenician cities.'[18] As the inscriptional heading to the account, in the form of a public notice, this does not necessarily tell us anything about authorial self-representation.

In general, it is striking how many of the geographical texts were described by Müller in his great corpus as anonymous. One periplus is traditionally attributed to Skylax of Karyanda, another to Skymnos of Khios, but the fact that these are merely attributions serves only to stress the degree of authorial absence from the texts. Of course, anonymity does not preclude the creation of an authorial persona. Even in the fragmentary geographical texts, such a voice can occasionally be heard. The author of 'Skymnos' ' periplus wrote a preface in the first person singular, in which the addressee is named as Nikomedes of Bithynia.[19] Whichever Nikomedes was meant, and this is not clear from the text itself, although it was presumably obvious to the original audience, the dedication to a named person does locate the author in a certain historical context. The preface is also used by the author to create a literary persona for himself. He relates his work to that by a pupil of Aristarkhos written for the kings of Pergamon, and in this work finds an explicit model for his use of comic verses.[20] He describes his method of composition and lists some of the subjects treated. The introduction becomes increasingly fragmentary, but it is clear that the author listed those writers who had been influential on his work, including Ephoros, Eratosthenes, Demetrios of Kallias, and Timaios. We thus gain a relatively detailed picture of the author in his strictly literary role; but no biographical information such as his name or place of origin. The start of the poem focuses on the work and its creation, rather than on the author himself, a point to which I shall return.

So far, there appears to be a contrast between Greek historical texts, in which some kind of formal appearance by the author was expected at, or near, the beginning of the work, and geographical texts, in which, as far as can be seen from scant evidence, anonymity and a formal authorial absence might have been expected. So, were the geographers being 'scientific' and 'objective' as opposed to the subjectivity of the historians? Just as modern academics seem unable to decide on the degree to which they

[15] Arrian, *Anabasis* 1.12.5.

[16] J. L. Moles, 'The interpretation of the "Second Preface" in Arrian's *Anabasis*', *JHS* 105 (1985), 162–8, at 164.

[17] Preface 15, mirroring the language of Arrian. But has Appian really said enough to make this claim?

[18] C. Müller (ed.), *Geographi Graeci Minores* (1882). For a useful edition see J. Ramin, *Le Périple d'Hannon. The Periplus of Hanno*, B.A.R. Supp. Ser. 3 (1976).

[19] Müller, *GGM* I, 196 ff. For Nikomedes, see l. 2.

[20] ll. 33–44.

should absent themselves from their texts, so too was the issue unresolved in the ancient world, and remained a source of interest and debate through to Late Antiquity.[21]

The seventh-century A.D. historian, Theophylact Simocatta, wrote about the reign of the emperor Maurice (582–602) in the period shortly after the text of Strabo finally begins to be mentioned by our extant sources.[22] In contrast to the historians of whose works he was continuator, namely Agathias and Menander, whose prefaces contain numerous autobiographical details, Theophylact provided no such introduction of himself. In place of a self-referential preface, Theophylact presented a dialogue between personifications of Philosophy and History, the latter naturally referring to himself and to his work. Whitby has pointed out 'the impersonality and indirectness of the discussion' (40). Theophylact's 'personal function is that of a narrator rather than creator'. Agathias had explicitly confirmed that the historiographical topos still stood, claiming that it was customary for historians to record their name and origin.[23] Theophylact went further than Arrian and Appian in not only questioning the topos, but actually replacing it altogether. In Whitby's words, 'Theophylact's intention is to present History as a supra-human personification, an independent being who will narrate her own story to the audience, so that the role of the individual historian is relegated towards that of a passive mouthpiece'.[24] We are a long way here from the active role in the creation of the text which some modern geographers have demanded that the author should acknowledge.

I shall return to Strabo in more detail, but for the moment simply point out some of the similarities with Theophylact, which should warn us against positing clearly distinguished 'historical' and 'geographical' authorial voices. Both authors decline to introduce themselves formally at the start of their works. Theophylact breaks the barrier of anonymity, but it is interesting to note in passing that both 'Strabo' and 'Simocatta' are 'nicknames', and of a personal nature, although neither name appears in the work of the respective authors. 'Squinty' and 'Snub-nosed cat' paradoxically evoke for us a physical image of these authors, who were apparently at pains to conceal themselves. Another similarity lies in each author's choice of substitute for a formal self-introductory preface. Theophylact's dialogue between History and Philosophy corresponds in Strabo also to a definition of the subject matter of his work. In his first sentence Strabo describes geography as a theme of interest to philosophers.[25] That Theophylact rejected in favour of history precisely the subject with which Strabo aligned his project is interesting in itself. But in terms of strategies of impersonality, both authors adopt the same technique; namely to deflect attention from themselves by replacing an introduction to the author with a discussion focusing on the project. Just as Theophylact replaces himself with History, Strabo does the same with the project of Philosophy in its geographical manifestation.

It is, of course, not necessary to step outside the earlier Greek historiographical tradition to find examples of historians who abstained from the practice of self-introduction. Polybios and Diodoros never, to my knowledge, name themselves. Further, Polybios considered the use of the first person singular and particularly self-referential phrases as alien to his project. His discussion of the intrusion of the authorial

[21] One late historian, Zosimus, author of ἱστορίαι νέαι in the early sixth century A.D., certainly kept the debate open. The first words of his work are Πολυβίῳ τῷ Μεγαλοπολίτῃ, who turns out to be Zosimus' model in reverse. Polybios' rise of Rome was now to be given its counterpart as Zosimus described its decline. But by placing a name other than his own in the position where traditionally the historian introduced himself, Zosimus was playing on the convention. We can only imagine what confusion could have ensued if the start of the text had survived in isolation. Would this fragment have meant the attribution of a new lost work to Polybios himself?

[22] For excellent discussion of the author and his work see Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and his Historian. Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balkan Warfare* (1988). It is interesting that Theophylact almost certainly spent some time as a law student in Constantinople (Whitby, 29), which is where our sixth-century references to Strabo suggest a text of the *Geography* was at that period. There can be no proof that Theophylact knew Strabo's work, but parallels between their modes of authorial self-presentation are interesting none the less.

[23] Theophylact did mention his name once, in the formal title at the start of his Table of Contents, 'Book One of the Universal History of Theophylact, *ex-praefectus* and *antigrapheus*'. On this point even Theophylact was defeated in impersonality by Strabo.

[24] Whitby, op. cit. (n. 22), 42.

[25] Strabo, *Geography* 1.1.1: τῆς τοῦ φιλοσόφου πραγματείας εἶναι νομίζομεν, εἴπερ ἄλλην τινά, καὶ τὴν γεωγραφικήν, ἣν νῦν προῃρήμεθα ἐπισκοπεῖν.

voice into his universal history provides a rare methodological statement on the subject from antiquity.[26] His conclusion is that, although it may sometimes be necessary for the author to refer to himself in person, he should not 'offend by constantly repeating his name', nor use self-referential phrases too often, so as to 'avoid as much as possible the offence of speaking too much about oneself'.

The practice of adopting a singular or plural voice warns further against postulating a specifically 'historical' or 'geographical' approach to impersonality. Historians were undecided as to whether they should refer to themselves in the singular or plural. Arrian, Appian, and Dionysios use the first person singular of themselves. Thucydides and Herodotos did the same in the main body of their texts, but used the third singular in their prefaces. Polybios and Diodoros, however, wrote of themselves in the first plural, as a general rule. The early geographical authors also divide on this issue. Hanno's periplus was written up in the first plural, giving the impression of being the account of a whole crew, and further reinforcing the public nature of the account. The texts attributed to Skylax and Skymnos, by contrast, use the first singular, with the effect that they read like more personal accounts of Mediterranean voyages. One question to be considered is whether it is reasonable to draw comparisons between the ancient use of a plural voice and the modern technique of writing up scientific reports in the passive, both routes to impersonality, creating distance between the individual author and the subject matter of the text. But there is clearly no single interpretation to be imposed on the use of a plural voice. In the case of Hanno, we might argue that the plural verbs refer simply to the many participants in the journey. And this brings us to the important and related issue of whether or not geographical texts should reflect real experience of the places described, and genuine personal involvement on the part of the author, or whether they are written as from a single external viewpoint.

The relationship to reality of some ancient periplus texts has been the subject of some debate. Jacob's assertion that they were simply literary constructs examining the nature of non-Greek 'alterité' is countered by Cordano's belief that the literary periplus texts were firmly rooted in the accounts given by sailors of their voyages.[27] Given the longer history of exploration and the resultant literary output, it is hard to be convinced by Jacob's theory, which still needs to explain why the periplus form was chosen as the medium for expressing 'the other', and does not even address the issue of whether divisions between 'self' and 'other' formed a significant part of the ancient mind-set.[28] And, if Hanno did not actually sail down the coast of Africa, then who are 'we' whose travels are apparently recounted, and what of the Libyphoenician cities he was sent to found? Whether or not the journey took place, it is significant for the question of authorial involvement that this geographical account was written *as though* recounting actual experiences of the places along the route, and of the route itself.[29] This mode of geographical writing relies on authorial involvement, rather than trying to deny it. The experience of passing through space is central to the exposition. The periplus texts represent a mid-way stage between 'place geography' and 'space geography', and perfectly exemplify Merrifield's suggestion that space and place can be bound by 'emplotment' — the narrative binding our experiences of different places so as to cover space. The main concern of the periegetic geographical literature is precisely with the narrative of travelling across space from place to place.[30] These ancient texts show that

[26] Polybios 36.12.1–2.

[27] C. Jacob, *Géographie et ethnographie en Grèce ancienne* (1991), 73–84; F. Cordano, *La Geografia degli antichi* (1992), 29.

[28] P. Fraser, 'The world of Theophrastus', in S. Hornblower (ed.), *Greek Historiography* (1994), 167–91, illustrates a quite different medium through which the opening up of the world could be expressed. Fraser explores how Theophrastus' botanical works could be seen as a 'mirror of the great changes that the world had recently undergone' (169).

[29] Another ancient example is Dikaiarkhos' *Periegesis of Greece* (See Müller, *GGM* I, 97–110), in which the experienced nature of the journey is made very clear. The reader is taken along the pleasant ὁδός to Athens and shown everything of interest both on the way and in the city itself (§ 1–4). We are told that the route from Athens to Oropos is a journey of one day for a person without baggage, and that the steepness of the route is compensated for by plenty of resting places (1.6).

[30] For this distinction see J. Langton, 'The two traditions of geography. Historical geography and the study of landscapes', *Geografiska Annaler* 70B (1988), 17–25; see also A. Merrifield, 'Place and space. A Lefebvrian reconciliation', *Transactions and Papers of the Institute of British Geographers* N.S. 18.4 (1993), 516–31.

highly personalized accounts of exploration need not necessarily be associated with imperialist writings, to which objective, unbiased, impersonal geography has been seen as the reaction.

So, one strand of the ancient geographical tradition not only tolerated, but actually demanded, personal involvement, real or fictional, on the part of the author. His authority depended on his presence, and the focalization changed according to the change of scene. There is, however, another possible use of the plural voice, which has exactly the opposite effect, and to which I have already alluded; namely as a way of writing the author as an individual out of the text. In this sense it may perform a similar function to that of the modern passive scientific voice, referring to an undefined group of intellectuals who form the assumed readership and share in an understanding of the external, objective viewpoint from which the world is described.

Anonymity in itself is not enough to qualify an author as writing in an impersonal style, as the 'experienced' nature of the anonymous periplus texts shows. But the combination of anonymity with a plural voice might begin to point in the direction of a deliberate distancing of the author from the text. This combination is common to Polybios, Diodoros, and Strabo (of the authors whom I have considered), all writers of universal accounts, and this is the point at which to recall that Theophylact too was engaged in writing what he described as universal history. Although it would be rash to conclude, on the basis of such a small number of sometimes fragmentary texts, that authorial absence was a distinguishing feature of universal histories and universal geographies, it is noteworthy that Strabo cited Polybios and Ephoros, Diodoros' main source, as major influences on his own *Geography*, aligning himself and his project with this type of writing.[31] This grouping may be of little significance in itself, but at least it warns against setting historical and geographical authorial styles in neat opposition to each other, and possibly offers additional insight into the interpretation of Strabo's project, as a spatial counterpart to universal histories.

III. THE CASE OF STRABO'S *GEOGRAPHY*

I turn now in detail to Strabo's *Geography* as a case-study in authorial self-presentation in antiquity. Strabo never names himself in his *Geography*.[32] He uses the plural of himself even when giving autobiographical details, for which pure logic demands singular verbs. In formal terms he is largely absent from his account of the world, but not in a way comparable with the post-colonial geographers. Although it is interesting for us to try to 'situate' his knowledge, my reasons for doing this are not those initially formulated by the feminist geographers. By looking for Strabo within the *Geography* I am not aiming to show the limitations of his viewpoint in the hope than an anti-Strabonian world will then be written to redress the ideological balance. If anything, Strabo himself should have been the ideal candidate to write a view of the world from the margins, coming from the outer limits of the Roman Empire and from a family involved in the downfall of Mithridates at Roman hands. Instead of trying to encircle Strabo's knowledge, I would rather study his place inside or outside the text as a route towards understanding him not only as a historical figure of first-century B.C. Pontos, the traditional aim, but also as an intellectual, engaged in writing a lengthy piece of academic prose, and needing to create for himself a literary persona within the context of past and present scholarship.

[31] Strabo 8.1.1 gives Ephoros and Polybios as examples of writers who have included geographical descriptions ἐν τῇ κοινῇ τῆς ἱστορίας γραφῇ.

[32] Our attribution of the text to a 'Strabo' is derived from several pieces of information. Athenaeus cites Strabo as the author of passages bearing a strong similarity to parts of the text as we have it (see Diller, op. cit. (n. 8), 8); Stephanus of Byzantium in the sixth century A.D. cites Strabo's text in the form Στράβων ἐν ζ′ etc. without title, as he obviously knew only one work by this author; other sixth-century authors to mention Strabo as author of the *Geography* include Marcianus of Heraclea and Priscianus of Lydia. The manuscript tradition shows the name of Strabo attached to the text (or parts of the text) of the *Geography*, starting with the sixth-century palimpsest (Π), which has the heading ΣΤΡΑΒΩΝΟΣ Θ in the margin above the text of Book 9.

I have stated that Strabo is largely absent from his *Geography*, and this is certainly true in so far as there is no self-introductory preface. But, we need to consider whether or not we actually gain any sense of the author's location in time and space; and, if so, at what stage in the work and with what degree of consistency. A certain amount of autobiographical information is given explicitly in the text, and I shall examine this first.

i. *Explicit self-reference*

What we can confidently assume about Strabo's life from autobiographical notices in the *Geography* can be summarized in a paragraph. The author was a native of Amaseia in Pontos (12.3.15; 12.3.39).[33] His father's side of the family remains a total mystery; his mother's relatives had strong connections with the Mithridatic dynasty stretching back several generations (11.2.18; 12.3.33). These connections had led to contacts with Crete, now lost (10.4.10), and had been the source of problems after the downfall of the dynasty for both those who had sided with the defeated Eupator, and those who moved to support Lucullus, only to fall foul of Pompey (12.3.33). We know of the author himself that he had been educated in Asia Minor by Aristodemos of Nysa (14.1.48), but also that he had visited Rome, witnessing, for example, the death of the Sicilian brigand, Selurus (6.2.6), and seeing the looted treasures of Corinth (8.6.23). It is impossible to determine an itinerary or timetable for most of the author's travels, but he crossed the Aegean via Gyaros in 29 B.C. (10.5.3), and accompanied Aelius Gallus up the Nile as far as Aithiopia in 25/4 B.C. (2.5.12; 17.1.24). He claims to have travelled westward from Armenia to Tyrrhenia, and southward from the Euxine to the border of Aithiopia (2.5.11–12). He had seen temple-servants in Kappadokia (12.2.3), and the stunning narrowing of the river Pyramos as it reached the Tauros; he describes the journey from Asia Minor to Rome, by sea to Brundisium and then by road to Rome (6.3.7), presumably from experience.

This much Strabo says explicitly about himself, and it forms the basis for the many attempted biographies by modern scholars. Strabo's travels, in particular, have been the focus of some attention. Pais claimed that Strabo knew little of Greece, and had rarely visited it: Waddy, by contrast, argues that Strabo had in fact visited more places than he explicitly states.[34] Waddy points out the careful way in which Strabo treats sources, including his own autopsy, rarely trusting casual or isolated pieces of information, not considering a fleeting visit to a place to be worth recording. The argument is significant from the point of view of biography, but tells us little about self-representation. We cannot do more than speculate on what Strabo chose *not* to tell us. Other details of travel, such as the expedition in Egypt with Aelius Gallus, serve a biographical purpose, indicating that Strabo was at least a young man by the mid-twenties B.C. But we can go further than this. Strabo calls Gallus ἀνὴρ φίλος ἡμῖν καὶ ἑταῖρος, aligning himself with a prominent member of the Roman élite and sowing the seeds for one of the many strands which will go to make up his identity. Furthermore, Strabo's claims to autopsy through travel are not only of interest to those who wish to reconstruct his itineraries, but also help to begin his assignment to an intellectual context. Strabo both makes the same kind of claim to authority through autopsy as was made by historians such as

[33] Josephos persistently refers to Strabo as ὁ Καππάδοξ (*A. J.* 13.286; 14.35; 14.104; 14.111; 14.138; 15.9). Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus in the tenth century cites Strabo four times and describes him as Καππαδόκης ὢν τὸ γένος ἐξ Ἀμασείας τῆς πόλεως (see Diller, op. cit. (n. 8), 81), combining two aspects of his identity.

[34] L. Waddy, 'Did Strabo visit Athens?', *American Journal of Archaeology* 67 (1963), 296–300, argues against the view that Strabo saw nowhere in Greece at first hand except for Corinth. It is only because of the chance meeting with envoys on their way to see Octavian that we know Strabo visited Gyaros, according to this argument. Strabo probably passed through Athens on one of his journeys from Asia Minor to Rome, but did not consider himself sufficiently well acquainted with the place to claim autopsy as he does for Corinth. The description that Strabo gives of Athens fits well with the devastation that it suffered at Sulla's hands in 87/6 B.C., described also by Servius Sulpicius Rufus to Cicero in 45 B.C. as 'nunc prostrata et diruta' (*Ad Fam.* 4.5.4). This view is supported by Strabo's comment concerning Eratosthenes (1.2.2) that to write about the Mediterranean without having seen Athens would lay one open to criticism.

Polybios, and at the same time shows how he is taking the geographical tradition forward. He had, so he says, travelled in certain areas more extensively than any other geographer.[35] So, both Strabo as a historical figure and Strabo as an intellectual begin to be revealed, but only in an elliptical and allusive way.

Indeed, my summary of the autobiographical information given explicitly by Strabo in the text totally fails to reflect the extremely incoherent manner in which it gradually leaks out through the seventeen books. The few explicitly self-referential notes in the first half of the *Geography* are either concerned with his travels or are claims to autopsy, made in passing as he describes places and objects of interest, particularly in Rome. Some help on the strictly biographical front can be derived from these passages. Strabo mentions two paintings taken from Corinth, which Polybios had seen actually in Corinth, but which Strabo himself saw in the temple of Ceres in Rome, before it burned down.[36] From this we can tell that Strabo must have visited Rome at least before 31 B.C., when the temple was destroyed.[37] But we wait until the tenth book to hear anything of his family background, and then this is fairly distant history of only the maternal side of the family. Strabo explains here how his family came to have connections with Knossos, the city presently being described. A friend of Mithridates Euergetes, Dorylaüs, went to Knossos to enlist mercenaries for Euergetes, ended up staying there, and married a Cretan woman. Both sons of the marriage, Stratarkhas and Lagetas, and the daughter (unnamed), eventually went to the Pontic region; the daughter was to become Strabo's grandmother.[38]

It is not until the twelfth book, and the description of the Pontic region itself, that Strabo's family really comes, however briefly, to the fore. A short note in the account of the Moskhian country, concerning its administration by Mithridates' friends, leads Strabo to mention that one of these was Moaphernes, his mother's uncle, reinforcing the link between Strabo's family and the Mithridatic court. At 12.3.33 Strabo finally gives a more detailed and coherent account of the involvement of his mother's family in Mithridatic circles. These connections have led scholars, such as Pais, to suggest that Strabo held a court post, setting him in a position not unlike that of Nikolaos of Damaskos. Pais put forward the view that the *Geography* itself was composed for Queen Pythodoris and her family.[39] 'In the entire *Geography* no other ruler is mentioned so frequently as Pythodoris. With the exception of Augustus, Tiberius and the governors of Egypt, Strabo compliments and eulogizes her alone.'

This view is clearly problematic. As Anderson points out, we have no evidence for such an official position for Strabo.[40] In spite of Pais' assertion that Pythodoris is prominent in Strabo's account, the text does not uphold this. Certainly her wisdom and statesmanlike attitude are praised.[41] Yet, Strabo mentions her by name only five times in the whole work — hardly a prominent position, and one which does not begin to outweigh the references to Augustus, Tiberius, Pompey, and Julius Caesar, none of whom can reasonably be swept aside as an exception. Pais' stress on this Pontic perspective for Strabo overplays scant evidence.

Rather than create a Pontic court-post for Strabo, it seems more profitable to return to the issue of self-presentation. Firstly, it is striking that he has waited until so far into the work to tell the reader anything coherent about his background, his *origo*. This is a very different tactic from the placing of a formal introduction to the author at the start of the work. Secondly, even now we know very little about the author himself. Finally, the Pontic references contribute towards the creation of a second geographical focus for

[35] 2.5.11. It would be interesting to know to which geographers Strabo refers.

[36] 8.6.23.

[37] But 10.5.3 shows Strabo crossing the Aegean again in 29 B.C. We do not know for certain that he was on his way to Rome when he met the envoys from Gyaros, but it seems likely that he made several visits. Possibly the journey in 29 B.C. was the prelude to his travels with Aelius Gallus.

[38] 10.4.10. Strabo mentions that he met Stratarkhas in his extreme old age.

[39] E. Pais (trans. C. D. Curtis), *Ancient Italy* (1908), 421–6.

[40] J. G. C. Anderson, 'Some questions bearing on the date and place of composition of Strabo's *Geography*', in W. H. Butler and W. M. Calder (eds), *Anatolian Studies presented to Sir William Mitchell Ramsay* (1923), 1–13.

[41] 12.3.39.

the author, in addition to Rome, where he had connections with the élite. But this is not the last spatial focus to emerge from explicitly autobiographical notes. If we recall that the author mentions Aristodemos of Nysa as his tutor, and add the point that he describes Diodoros from Sardis, an author of historical treatises and poetry, as 'our friend', we begin to see the creation of yet another focal point, with which the author associates himself; namely the intellectual circles of the Greek East. I shall return to this issue, but before leaving explicitly self-referential passages I must finally mention the note which has caused endless chronological difficulties for those reconstructing the author's biography.

The two villages named Isaura give rise to Strabo's note that the piracy, which was prevalent there, was suppressed by a P. Servilius Isauricus, 'whom we saw'.[42] This clause provides the sole piece of evidence for the largely unquestioned item of Strabo's biography whereby he visited Rome in 44 B.C. But the argument leading to this conclusion seems to me tenuous. The P. Servilius Vatia Isauricus who earned his cognomen through his exploits against the pirates in 76/5 B.C., and to whom the context of Strabo's comment points, died in 44 B.C.[43] But the deduction that Strabo was in Rome in 44 B.C. relies on several assumptions: firstly, that this is the person seen or known by Strabo; secondly, that Strabo necessarily met or saw him in Rome; and thirdly, that Strabo had the good fortune to meet him in the very year of his death (in order to avoid giving Strabo himself an even longer life than is already the case). It is not inherently impossible that the ninety-year-old Servilius was acquainted with the very young Strabo, newly arrived in Rome, but this scenario begins to stretch the bounds of probability.

One possibility is that Strabo was referring to P. Servilius Isauricus, son of the above. In chronological terms, this figure fits much more comfortably into Strabo's plausible life-span. He was born around 94 B.C., praetor in 54, consul with Cicero in 48, proconsul of Asia in 46–44, a partisan of Octavian after Caesar's death, and consul again in 41 together with L. Antonius. But a major objection offers itself, in that Strabo says specifically that the man he knew or saw had won the name Isauricus for his exploits, whereas this second Isauricus had presumably inherited the cognomen.[44] So it appears that either we must accept that Strabo was acquainted in some way with the older Servilius and lived for an extremely long time, since he must have been alive until at least A.D. 23 if he wrote the whole *Geography* as we know it;[45] or, he met the younger Servilius, which has the geographical advantage of providing a meeting place for the two, during Servilius' proconsulship of Asia, not requiring Strabo to be in Rome precisely when he was being educated in the Greek cities of Asia Minor, but entails that we reject Strabo's own account.[46] Neither answer is satisfactory, but amid such uncertainty it seems that we should at least not use this passage as the only evidence for Strabo's early birth-date and visit to Rome in 44 B.C., especially given the existence of one further possible solution. It is possible that the 'we' of Strabo's comment refers not specifically to himself, but incorporates his assumed readership or circle of acquaintances. In other words, Strabo might not be claiming to have seen Servilius with his very own eyes, but merely that people he knew *had*, making the statement all the more redundant for dating purposes.

So much for explicit self-reference. It is these passages which have generally been used to reconstruct Strabo as a historical figure. But they do not amount to a formal presentation of the author, and they certainly do not appear anywhere near the start of the work, with the result that we might be justified in taking the authorial tone of this work to be largely impersonal. But explicitly autobiographical notes are not the only

[42] 12.2.6: ὃν ἡμεῖς εἴδομεν. The verb itself is problematic. It is often translated 'I was acquainted', but surely this would usually be ᾔσμεν, with εἴδομεν meaning 'I saw'. But what would 'whom I saw' signify in this context? Strabo may simply be indicating contemporaneity, or possibly referring to some official πομπή.

[43] Cicero, *Phil.* 2.12 mentions the recent death of Servilius and was composed in Sept./Oct. 44 B.C.

[44] *Pace P.-W.* on Isauria, it does not seem likely that the P. Servilius who was proconsul of Asia in 46–44 B.C. actually won (*erwerben*) the name Isauricus.

[45] 17.3.7.

[46] If the younger Servilius was meant, then, of course, Strabo could have met him in Rome in the 20s B.C.

route towards creating an authorial presence within a work. I shall now turn to indirectly self-referential phrases, and assess their effect in bringing the author into the *Geography*. In particular, I shall consider whether they simply reinforce or actually add to the authorial persona which is explicitly drawn.

ii. *Oblique self-reference*

The most striking form of oblique self-reference in the *Geography* occurs in temporal phrases, such as 'in my time' (καθ' ἡμᾶς) and, more indirectly still, 'recently' (νεωστί). I shall focus on these temporal expressions both because they occur so frequently and because they have traditionally been studied for one particular purpose, namely to clarify the limits of the author's lifetime. I shall argue that not only are they unhelpful for this aim, but that they actually contribute to a quite different question, that of Strabo's self-presentation as an intellectual. These phrases do little to help us with Strabo the historical figure from first-century B.C. Pontos, but instead help us to understand Strabo the author and his geographical project. The expressions 'shortly before my time' (μικρὸν πρὸ ἡμῶν) and 'recently' (νεωστί) both seem at first to be strikingly specific and full of potential for an attempt to locate the author in time. But some instances are immediately ruled out for this purpose since they refer to whole life spans.[47] Other uses of the phrase are more specific, but not unproblematic. The settlement of pirates by Pompey at Dyme happened μικρὸν πρὸ ἡμῶν, allowing us to place the author after 67 B.C.[48] The rule by several people over Paphlagonia before the Romans took over is also given this temporal designation, and reinforces the implications of the previous note.[49] But another change in administration complicates the picture. The kings of the House of Bogos and Bokkhos ruled Mauretania 'slightly before my time', but they were succeeded by Juba, who was given the land by Octavian.[50] Juba II was not established on the throne until around 25 B.C., but Dio states that Octavian annexed Bokkhos' kingdom in 33 B.C., creating a chronological problem. Mackie saw the intervening period as an interregnum, resolved in 25 B.C. in answer to the annexation of Galatia on the death of Amyntas.[51] It is presumably the period just before 33 that the author designates as μικρὸν πρὸ ἡμῶν, but this is incompatible with the fact that he accompanied Aelius Gallus around Egypt in the mid-twenties as at least a young adult. All we can conclude is that, if μικρὸν πρὸ ἡμῶν refers as easily to the sixties as to the thirties B.C., it cannot be used as a means of dating the author.[52]

At the other end of the chronological spectrum, νεωστί proves to be just as unhelpful. It is applied to Sextus Pompey's activities on Sicily in the mid-thirties B.C., the burning down of the temple of Ceres in Rome (31 B.C.), Octavian's settlement of troops at Patrai (*c.* 30 B.C.), and Aelius Gallus' expedition of 25/4 B.C.[53] However, Tiberius' help to the earthquake cities such as Sardis, the appointment of Zenon as king of Greater Armenia (A.D. 18), and the death of Juba II of Mauretania (A.D. 23) are also 'recent'.[54] If νεωστί covers a span of around sixty years, it can scarcely be an accurate guide to the author's biography.

But the issue of what counts as recent does raise the question of the time of writing of the *Geography*. No small amount of effort has been put into devising a timetable for its composition. Pais most influentially suggested that the *Geography* was started soon

[47] Apollonios of Tyre (16.2.24) and Antiokhos of Askalon (16.2.29) are both described as μικρὸν πρὸ ἡμῶν. We hardly know enough about these intellectuals independently of Strabo's testimony to be able to draw any chronological conclusions.

[48] 8.7.5.

[49] 12.3.41. Two possible dates could be referred to: 63/2 B.C. when Pompey added the coastal part of Paphlagonia to Pontos, or 6 B.C. when inland Paphlagonia was added to the province of Galatia. Of these the first seems to offer the only plausible solution.

[50] 17.3.7.

[51] N. K. Mackie, 'Augustan colonies in Mauretania', *Historia* 32 (1983), 332–58.

[52] Ἐπὶ τῶν πατέρων τῶν ἡμετέρων and ἐπὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων πατέρων are used with no greater precision, but refer to whole lives or events. See 12.8.16; 12.8.20; 14.2.25.

[53] 6.1.6; 8.6.23; 8.7.5; 15.4.22.

[54] 13.4.8; 12.3.29; 17.3.7.

after the *History* and completed by 7 B.C., but was then reworked following the arrival of Germanicus in the East and the subsequent reduction of Kappadokia and Kommagene to Roman provinces.[55] He also saw the death of Augustus as a stimulus to the revision of the work. 'With the succession of Tiberius the new political form which had been created by C. Caesar was permanently established.' Pais supported his view of the method of composition by pointing out that only a small proportion of the historical allusions in the work refer to events after 7 B.C., and that the later references concern mainly the eastern provinces and are clustered around the years A.D. 17 and 18.[56]

But Diller favours the view that Strabo's *Geography* was unfinished at the time of his death.[57] This does not lead Diller to assign Strabo's death to any moment earlier than the twenties A.D., but provides an explanation for the various disjunctions in the text, as being the result of inaccurately inserted marginalia, which Strabo did not live long enough to work into the text himself. While I am not convinced by this picture of Strabo's practice of composition, it is in Diller's favour that his study reveals the futility of identifying different phases of writing, rewriting, and emendation. In any case, late references are not confined to a sudden last-minute interest in Asia Minor (Pais' picture), nor do they appear to be the result of hasty or unpolished emendations. Rather, they concern all three continents described in the *Geography*, covering a wide range of topics, both military and political, and are integral to the work as it stands.

The enormous time span to which an apparently precise phrase such as 'recently' is applied in the *Geography* suggests various possibilities concerning both the method of composition and the author's self-presentation. In terms of composition, the fact that a span of sixty years could be seen as recent hints at a process of accumulation of data and writing of the work which was gradual and long-lasting. Or, even if the work was finally put together in a relatively short period, the author speaks *as though* events from the whole of the mid-first century B.C. onwards formed the backdrop to his composition. This is supported by the fact that almost equal prominence is given to phases of history from the whole of Strabo's supposed life-time.

Given Strabo's close connections with the cultural and political life of Asia Minor and the impact of Roman generals, such as Lucullus and Pompey, on its shape and character, it is no surprise to find that these characters and events find prominence in his account. Rostovtzeff pointed out the severe financial difficulties faced by Asia Minor in the aftermath of Sulla's 20,000-talent demand as part of his settlement with Mithridates at Khersonesos in 84 B.C.[58] Lucullus' pacification of Asia and Pompey's subduing of the pirates must have had the effect of easing the economic situation, as well as altering the nature of the whole area.[59] Although Rome had been attempting to address the problem of piracy for some time,[60] it was only with the advent of Pompey that the situation was

[55] In this he was taking up and developing the arguments of A. Forbiger, *Handbuch der alten Geographie* I (1842) and P. Meyer, 'Quaestiones Straboniana', *Leipziger Studien* 2 (1879), 47–72. Forbiger had envisaged a text largely completed well before A.D. 18, but emended and enlarged upon through Strabo's old age; Meyer argued that the first seven books were written between 6 B.C. and A.D. 2, with the rest of the work following later.

[56] Pais, op. cit. (n. 39), 407. Pais never states what he envisaged happening to the work between 7 B.C. and the revised version of A.D. 17/18. Was it published, and then republished, or stored unread for a quarter of a century?

[57] Diller, op. cit. (n. 8), 6, developing the arguments of A. Meineke, *Vindiciarum Strabonianarum Liber* (1852), whose picture was of a text revised at intervals over a long period, but lacking the final stage of alterations. For a discussion of the various suggestions concerning the production of the text as we know it see R. Nicolai, 'Scelte critico-testuali e problemi storici nel libri V e VI della *Geografia* di Strabone', in G. Maddoli (ed.), *Strabone e l'Italia antica* (1988), 267–86.

[58] M. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* (1941), 953.

[59] See Plut., *Lucullus* 23 for Lucullus' beneficial actions. T. R. S. Broughton in T. Frank (ed.), *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome* IV (1938), 519–25, stresses the real hindrance to trade and communications caused by the pirates. Piracy had become an increasingly grave problem during the second century as the powers, such as Rhodes, which had tried to check it, went into decline. H. Strasburger, 'Poseidonios on problems of the Roman Empire', *JRS* 55 (1965), 40–53, argues that Rome was responsible for this decline and so, indirectly, for the severity of the pirate problem, exacerbated by Rome's promotion of Delos over Rhodes as a slave emporium.

[60] This is amply demonstrated by the Lex de provinciis praetoriis of late 101 B.C. (see M. H. Crawford (ed.), *Roman Statutes* (1996), no. 12).

brought under control, according to Plutarch within three months.[61] But Strabo never expresses the praise for the settlement of the pirates which is found in other sources. His version of Pompey's expedition against the Iberians and Albanians does nothing to enhance his image, with the military encounter with the latter being juxtaposed with a description of their idyllic lifestyle and their honesty.[62] No comment is passed on the rearrangement of Mithridates' Pontic kingdom and its territories, nor on Pompey's completion and renaming of Mithridates' dynastic foundation of Eupatoria as Magnopolis. We should, of course, keep in mind that Strabo's family had enjoyed strong connections with this dynasty. Pompey's building-up of Kabeira into a city — Diospolis — is thrown into the background by its further adornment at the hands of Queen Pythodoris and its second change of name to Sebaste.[63]

In general, it is hard to discern in Strabo's ambivalent account of these events much to reveal the viewpoint of a native of the region. Rather, his concern is with the transformation of part of the world effected by these generals. His interest in Lucullus and Pompey seems to be determined by the nature of the project to describe the world, together with its vicissitudes through time, rather than by his own Pontic perspective.

This impression is reinforced by the clustering of events mentioned by Strabo around the crucial year 31 B.C. Not only the defeat of Antonius, but also the celebrations of Octavian and his foundation of the victory city of Nikopolis, feature in Strabo's text. The references to Sextus Pompey naturally focus on his Sicilian exploits of the mid-thirties.[64] However, we also hear about the consequences of that war for the shape of Sicily in the aftermath. Octavian repopulated the city of Rhegion with an expeditionary force, after ejecting Sextus Pompey from the island.[65] He also restored Syrakuse, and rewarded Ortygia for its part in overthrowing Pompey.[66]

In spite of Strabo's negative view of Antonius, the latter actually appears in the work about as often as the much more positively portrayed Julius Caesar. His contacts with the Parthians and betrayal of Artavasdes; the support he enjoyed from Kleon until Kleon's defection to Octavian; his promotion of Polemon I; his various dispositions of land; and the story of his defeat all receive some degree of coverage.[67] In particular, the Battle of Actium is mentioned several times as a chronological reference point. Large numbers of veterans were, for example, settled at Patrai, recently (νεωστί) and 'after the Battle of Actium'; Strabo met the envoys from Gyaros going to see Octavian at Corinth, on his way to celebrate Actium; the attack on the Romans by Adiatorix, the Galatian, who received from Antonius the Heracliot part of Herakleia Pontika, is said to have taken place 'shortly before the Battle of Actium'.[68] After Octavian's victory at Actium, Adiatorix was killed. The consequences of Actium for the cities of Asia Minor are to be seen again in the case of Amisos. After being given by Antonius to the kings, it was freed again after Actium by Octavian, and restored to good government.[69] As with events in Asia Minor in the sixties, Strabo's concern seems to be with periods of geographical transformation.

At the other end of Strabo's life-span, the reign of Tiberius is referred to a surprising number of times if the work was only emended after 7/6 B.C.[70] It is of some interest that Strabo appears in the *Suda* as a Tiberian author.[71] Most striking of all is Strabo's description of Rome's evolution as a world power whose empire needs one man at the helm. Tiberius appears at the end as the successor of Augustus, making his

[61] Plut., *Pompey* 28. Appian, *Mithridatic Wars* 96 stresses the speed with which Pompey was able to subdue the pirates of Kilikia simply by force of his name.

[62] 11.4.5.

[63] 12.3.1; 12.3.30; 12.3.31.

[64] 5.4.4; 6.1.6; 6.2.4.

[65] 6.1.6.

[66] 6.2.4.

[67] On the Parthians and Artavasdes 11.13.3; 11.14.9; 11.14.15; 16.1.28; on Kleon 12.8.9; on Polemon 12.8.16; on land 14.5.3; 14.5.10; on Actium 17.1.9; 17.1.10.

[68] 8.7.5; 10.5.3; 12.3.1.

[69] 11.3.14.

[70] 3.3.8 on Tiberius and Kantabria; 12.8.18 on Tiberius and the earthquakes affecting the cities of Asia Minor; 12.1.4 on his decree, in conjunction with the Senate, of Kappadokia as a Roman province after the death of Arkhelaus.

[71] The *Suda* says of Strabo: γέγονεν ἐπὶ Τιβερίου Καίσαρος (*FGrH* 91 T2). But note the judgement of Pais, op. cit. (n. 39), 380–1: 'The question as to whether the Geography of Strabo is a product of the age of Tiberius and written between 18 and 19 A.D. should be answered with a decided "No".'

predecessor his model, and assisted by his children, Germanicus and Drusus.[72] The passage clearly must have been written between Tiberius' accession in A.D. 14 and the death of Germanicus in 19, as the use of the present tense (παρέχει) confirms.

The main region to be undergoing Roman attempts at transformation towards the end of Strabo's life was northern Europe, and Germany in particular. Strabo mentions several German campaigns, and denotes some of them as happening 'now'.[73] This does not help in determining the date of writing, since it is not always clear to which of the campaigns he is referring, that of Drusus Germanicus, or of Varus, or of Germanicus the Younger. But as far as the date of composition is concerned, it seems impossible to conceive of the German description without these late references. Only four chapters are devoted to the area, but all except one deals with the Roman campaigns.[74] The first, in which the death of Drusus Germanicus appears, could fit with a completion date for the work of 7/6 B.C., but by far the most extensive German narrative concerns the Varus disaster and a lengthy description of Germanicus' triumph. Without this, the whole force of the description of Germany would be lost, as Strabo is making the point here that the German tribes have become known to the Romans only through a protracted series of wars.[75]

So, we have a range of references to Strabo's own lifetime which reveal no particular temporal privileging of any period, but are concerned with precisely the subject of his work, the transformation of the world into its present state. There is no bias which might indicate the time of writing or elucidate biographical details, but this is in perfect accord with the vague use of temporal phrases so far discussed. Strabo's *Geography* is a work reflecting the preoccupations of his whole life-span, when the world was being altered beyond recognition.

This brings us back to one of the issues raised at the start, the separability of Strabo as a historical figure, a product of his time, and Strabo as author of the *Geography*. I shall return to the question of the authorial persona, but for the moment turn to argue why, in my opinion, we should consider the search for both 'Strabos' as a single project. I have mentioned the way in which attempts to find precise limits to Strabo's life and to reconstruct his biography tend to fail, firstly because explicit autobiographical details are rare, and secondly because Strabo himself is so broad in his application of self-referential temporal phrases. The story of how Strabo was born in late 64 B.C., travelled to Rome in 44 B.C., and returned to the Pontic region to write up his work as a dedication to the royal court, has little or no basis in the text.

While it is frustrating from the strictly biographical point of view not to be able to work out the exact parameters of Strabo's life, there is a positive reason for being reconciled to our ignorance. We might say that it matters whether Strabo's adult life spanned the transition from Republic to Principate, or whether a world without the Principate was, for him, scarcely imaginable. But would this have affected his project? The great feature of Strabo's work was that it attempted to provide an account of the entire world known to the Romans. In this sense it was the first universal geography, and thus, perhaps fittingly, adopted the literary register of at least Polybios and possibly also Ephoros/Diodoros. It is true that the world could not be conceived of and written about as a truly unified whole until the *pax Augusta* had finally taken hold, but Diodoros shows that the project to write a universal account was as topical in the mid-first century as under Augustus and Tiberius.

[72] 6.4.2. A contrast must be drawn between this passage and the parallel one at 17.3.25, in which Tiberius is not mentioned. However, nor is it asserted that Augustus was still in power at the time of writing. We are told simply that the provinces are 'at the present time (ἐν δὲ τῷ παρόντι) as Augustus Caesar arranged them'. This, if anything, implies that Augustus was by now dead, thus making it noteworthy that the provincial arrangements had not been altered by his successor.

[73] As at 6.4.2. At 7.1.3 he relates the victory over the Bructeri on the river Amasias, and the death of Drusus between the Salas and the Rhine. At 7.1.4 he mentions the disaster that befell Quinctilius Varus in A.D. 9, followed by the triumph celebrated by Germanicus in May A.D. 17, having defeated the Cherusci and other tribes.

[74] The exception is 7.1.2, which gives details of physique and lifestyle; and discusses the names Galatai and Germani.

[75] 7.1.4.

This takes us back to Pompey and his prominence in the *Geography*. I have mentioned his involvement in the East, but Strabo does not fail to include also Pompey's impact on the West. His trophies are, for example, to be seen marking the boundary between Iberia and Celtica.[76] A crucial aspect of Pompey's image was that of universalism. It was with Pompey that the idea of Roman rule stretching right across the known world took on a coherent form. The extent of the command given to him by the law proposed by Gabinius in 67 B.C. is stressed both by Appian and by Plutarch. Indeed, by some it was thought excessive.[77] Yet this was only a foretaste of his later sphere of influence. Plutarch gives us a version of Pompey's aims for world dominion even before his final settlement with Mithridates. 'He wanted to recover Syria and march through Arabia to the Red Sea, so that he might bring his glorious career to the ocean which surrounds the world on all sides. For in Africa he had been the first to carry his conquests as far as the outer sea and in Spain he had made the Atlantic ocean the boundary of Roman dominion and in pursuit of the Albanians he had narrowly missed reaching the Hyrcanian sea.'[78] Pompey embodied Roman ambitions for world rule.

These ambitions are summed up in the accounts of Pompey's triumphal procession through Rome in 61 B.C. Diodoros describes an inscription set up probably in the temple of Minerva on the day of Pompey's triumph, recalling his πράξεις since the campaign against the pirates.[79] The victory over the pirates is explicitly linked with the move to Rome's aim of universal rule. Plutarch tells of how inscriptions were carried before the procession listing the nations he had conquered. The triumph was important, says Plutarch, because it involved victory over all three continents — Libya, Europe, and Asia — representing the whole inhabited world.[80] A similar picture is given by Appian. The boundaries of Roman hegemony after Pompey's exploits now reached from the West to the river Euphrates. The victory in Asia was even more to be admired because Mithridates was a formidable enemy. His resources are listed by Appian, and included the pirates from Cilicia to the Pillars of Herakles, in other words from one end of the Mediterranean to the other.[81] Appian sets the Mithridatic Wars in the context of growing Roman influence throughout the Mediterranean world. He ends his work with a description of the fate of Pontos after the fall of Mithridates Eupator. Although it was initially given to Mithridates of Pergamon to rule, a praetor was soon sent by Rome to govern both Pontos and Bithynia as one province. He concludes that the result of the Mithridatic Wars was to extend Roman hegemony from Spain and the Pillars of Herakles to the Euxine, Egypt, and the Euphrates, thus making Pompey's cognomen 'Magnus' truly appropriate. Only the coast from Cyrene to Egypt was now missing from a complete circuit of the Mediterranean.[82]

This desire for world dominion was not confined to Pompey. Plutarch details some of Julius Caesar's plans 'to make an expedition against the Parthians; and after subduing these and marching around the Pontos via Hyrcania, the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus, to invade Skythia; and after overrunning the countries bordering on Germany and Germany itself, to return through Gaul to Italy, and so to complete this circuit of his empire, which would then be bounded on all sides by the Ocean'.[83] The similarities with the aims expressed in *Pompey* 38 are striking, and must surely reflect the new, extended geographical horizons of the first century B.C.

It is this aspect of the public images of Caesar and particularly of Pompey, so strongly felt by authors who wrote specifically about that period of history, that refutes

[76] 4.1.3.

[77] Appian, *Mithridatic Wars* 94 and Plut., *Pompey* 25.

[78] Plut., *Pompey* 38.

[79] Diodoros 40.4. In Pliny, *N.H.* 7.97–8, the same connection between the suppression of piracy and Rome's further victories is present. The link is obvious in practical terms. Thalassocracy, won by Rome through the victory over piracy, had been seen since Thucydides as a step towards empire. At 1.8 he describes the process by which Minos of Crete put down piracy and gained great power as a result of the consequent control of the sea. The foreshadowing in the inscription for Pompey of Augustus' *Res Gestae*, set up before his Mausoleum after his death, is brought out by C. Nicolet, *Space, Geography and Politics in the Early Roman Empire* (1991), 32.

[80] Plut., *Pompey* 45: εἰσαγαγὼν τρόπον τινα τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐδόκει τοῖς τρισὶν ὑπῆχθαι θρίαμβοις. For inscriptions listing conquests, we may recall Strabo 4.3.2 and the altar to Augustus bearing an inscription listing the sixty tribes of the Galatai, now under Roman rule.

[81] Appian, *Mithridatic Wars* 119.

[82] ibid., 121.

[83] Plut., *Caesar* 58.6–7.

the need for the Principate to have been established before an author could have conceived of a universal geography. There is, in fact, no reason to believe that Strabo started writing his *Geography* until long into Augustus' reign, after the completion of the *History*. I simply wish to stress that the fully formulated idea of a world united under one power had a history that stretched continuously back to the sixties.[84] The task of securing rule over the world had not been completed even in Tiberius' time, but the idea that it *might* be accomplished had its origins in Pompey. Perhaps for this reason of continuity alone, the relentless pursuit by scholars of the elusive birthday of the anonymous author of the *Geography* has been carried far enough. The biographical problems have not been solved, but they do not need to be for us to make progress with the question of Strabo in his role as author of this work.

If the *Geography* was a product of the age, and the author's work a function of the author's biography, not in terms of detailed questions such as in which particular year the author was born, but in the broader sense that it reflected the horizons and preoccupations of the period in which the author lived, then the issue of separating Strabo as historical person from Strabo as literary persona might seem to have been solved. But this is the point at which to return to the self-referential temporal phrases, whose lack of specificity I have so far stressed.

I have considered how phrases such as νεωστί and μικρὸν πρὸ ἡμῶν refer in the *Geography* to such wide time-scales as to be useless for the purpose of determining the author's biography. I turn finally to the phrases meaning 'in our time' — ἐφ' ἡμῶν and καθ' ἡμᾶς — to see whether they can help us towards another interpretation. No particular significance seems to be attached to the former. It is used mainly of political events. The earliest roughly datable event described by this phrase is C. Antonius' foundation of a city in Kephallenia. The foundation cannot be dated exactly, but must have fallen between the year of his exile from Rome after his consulship with Cicero in 63 B.C., and the year of his return, 44 B.C.[85] Sextus Pompey's abuse of Syrakuse and the rest of Sicily in the mid-thirties B.C. also qualifies as ἐφ' ἡμῶν, as does the foundation of Nikopolis in 29 B.C.[86] The latest event to bear this description is Aelius Catus' transferal of 50,000 Getai into Thrace from the other side of the Istros.[87] Other applications of the phrase are not to events, but to on-going states of affairs, which makes it hard to assign any particular date to ἐφ' ἡμῶν.[88] So, this phrase includes anything from the early/mid-forties B.C. to the later years of Augustus' reign, which adds nothing to what we already knew about the author's life-span.

But by far the most common form of oblique self-reference in the entire work, occurring around thirty times, is the phrase καθ' ἡμᾶς. Like ἐφ' ἡμῶν, it too is used of political events. Early episodes to earn this designation suggest that Strabo must have been alive by the late fifties B.C.[89] The phrase is also used of several events which cluster around 31 B.C., the significance of which I have already mentioned.[90] The latest period to be designated καθ' ἡμᾶς is the reign of Tiberius.[91] Like ἐφ' ἡμῶν, καθ' ἡμᾶς covers a broad chronological span, simply confirming that the author lived from at least the late fifties B.C. to the reign of Tiberius.

[84] The notion of universalism can, of course, be traced back still further, not least in Polybios' *Histories*. But Polybios' universalism was very differently conceived, and it was not until Pompey that the incorporation of almost the whole known world under one power first became a real possibility.

[85] 10.2.13. We are told that Antonius had not yet completed the synoecism by the time he was given permission to return, so the foundation was presumably not started long before that date.

[86] 6.2.4; 10.2.2.

[87] 7.3.10. Aelius Catus (cos. in A.D. 4) may have carried out this operation in Thrace *c.* A.D. 2/3 as proconsul of Macedonia and legate of Moesia (see *CAH* x², 350).

[88] Amyntas' control of Derbe and the two Isaurai (12.6.3); revolts in Babylonia (15.3.12); and the large size of Laodikeia (12.8.16) are all ἐφ' ἡμῶν, but this does not help greatly in the attempt to pin down a temporal viewpoint for the author.

[89] Events to be described in this way are: the looting of the temple of Leukotheia by Pharnakes, the son of Mithridates Eupator, and who died in 47 B.C. (11.2.17); Julius Caesar's assistance in the restoration of Ilium after the attempts of Sulla (13.1.27); the rule of king Auletes of Egypt (died 51 B.C.) (17.1.11); the possession of Siga by Juba I (died *c.* 46 B.C.) (17.3.9).

[90] C. Iulius Eurykles, ruler of the Lakedaimonians καθ' ἡμᾶς, won this possession, as well as Roman citizenship, after fighting alongside Octavian at Actium (8.5.1); the career of Kleon, chief brigand in the mountains of the Troad, whose main anti-Roman activity took place before Actium (12.8.8); the establishment of Tarcondimotos as king of the Mount Amanos region (died 31 B.C.) (14.5.18).

[91] 13.4.8.

However, by far the largest category of references to which the phrase is applied is the life and works of the intellectuals of the Greek East. It is striking that over two-thirds of the occurrences of the phrase are found in Books 12–15, dealing with Asia Minor, particularly the Hellenized coast. It is even more striking that of these, two-thirds are in connection with the intellectual activity of the area, rather than with political events. As Strabo moves from city to city, he lists their famous *alumni* after describing the places themselves. Those writers and philosophers who are Strabo's peers are described as καθ' ἡμᾶς. It is not the case that Strabo ignores the political aspects of his day; far from it. It is thus all the more significant that he distinguishes between political events, which are described impersonally as happening 'now' (νῦν), and the intellectual life of the Greek East, which is given a temporal indicator linking it directly with the author and his own self-representation.

The references to famous intellectuals of the author's day do not help us to determine accurately what 'his time' was, since all apply to whole life-spans. Some fall neatly into what might be considered a reasonable Strabonian period. Potamon, Lesbokles, and Krinagoras of Mytilene are all known from other sources to have been politically active in the mid- to late first century B.C.[92] The orator, Hybreas, whom Strabo calls the greatest of his time, can be linked to the activities of Antonius and Labienus in Asia in the forties.[93] Some idea of the lower limits of 'Strabo's time' may be gauged from passages where he lists famous people in chronological order, breaking into the list at a particular point to indicate that the following are his contemporaries. For instance, Strabo notes that Tarsos produced Athenodoros, the tutor of Julius Caesar, but then goes on to say that a product of Tarsos 'in our time' was Nestor, the teacher of Marcellus.[94] In other words, the period at which Julius Caesar was being educated did not fall into Strabo's time; but the time when the next, or perhaps even next-but-one, generation was being tutored did.

The curious piece of information that Poseidonios is described by Strabo as being καθ' ἡμᾶς should in itself alert us to the possibility that this and other self-referential temporal phrases may be serving a purpose other than indicating precise dates.[95] The generally accepted dates for Poseidonios are around 135 to 51/50 B.C., but this seems to overlap hardly at all with the possible dates for Strabo. Rather than necessarily denoting time in a way which would help the biographers, this phrase evokes a particular intellectual and cultural setting. So, by describing a historian or a philosopher as καθ' ἡμᾶς, Strabo is not indicating a set of dates, but inserting the writer into his own intellectual background, and assigning him an influential role in the formation of his own outlook and ideas.

The specialized use of καθ' ἡμᾶς in relation to particular notes in Strabo's account of Asia also provides an important insight into the geographical outlook which the author is creating as part of his persona. That is, while he centres the world that he describes on the city of Rome, to which all regions are conceptually linked through the constant flow in that direction of goods, people, resources, and ideas, for *himself*, there is an additional, maybe even alternative, location in Asia Minor and its intellectual circles. It is ironic that a study of temporal phrases which starts as an attempt to locate the historical Strabo in time results instead in a new spatial definition for Strabo in his specifically authorial role. The idea of an objective, invisible, and anonymous author giving authority to his scientific work is not borne out in the text. If the author and text have separate geographical foci, the author must gain an identity which is independent of the text, thus paradoxically giving him a stronger presence within it.

[92] 13.2.3.
[93] 13.4.15; 14.2.23.
[94] 14.5.14.
[95] 16.2.10. Diller, op. cit. (n. 8), 9, dismisses as chronologically impossible the statement at Athenaeus 657 that Strabo said in Book 7 that he knew Poseidonios. I agree with the conclusion, but it does seem strange that two separate passages suggest contemporaneity, unless Athenaeus was mistaken about the book number, and was referring to the passage in Book 16.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

I hope to have shown that if we were to join Syme in dismissing Strabo as a literary figure we would lose valuable insights into both the autobiographical and authorial issues, since in this particular case, the work is the *only* source for the author's life. Authorial Strabo and historical Strabo must be searched for in unison. In any case, I suggest that by assuming he did have some style and was not choosing phrases at random, we can get further with pinpointing certain aspects of his self-presentation which are otherwise lost. The self-referential temporal phrases, for example, do not serve us well in the search for an accurate biography, but they do help us towards understanding something of the way in which this author was affiliating himself to the intellectual circles of the Greek East.

So it is both right and wrong to posit the impossibility of a division between the historical Strabo and the textual Strabo. All 'Strabos' derive from one source, the text. And yet, the image of Strabo created there has different facets, which are distinguished spatially, as is appropriate given the geographical nature of the work. Strabo's authorial persona is comprised of an explicitly drawn historical Strabo, who came from the Pontic region and had strong family attachments there; an explicitly and implicitly created Strabo the author, whose intellectual home was in the Greek cities of Asia Minor; and, in between the person and the author, a Roman Strabo with *real*, historical, Roman connections and at the same time one whose *literary* picture of the world was built around that city. The real world of Roman power was in any case confused with the intellectual world of the Greek East by the influx of writers, including Strabo, to the capital of the Empire, making neat divisions impossible. In this sense we can see the *Geography* less as a unique creation by a Greek from the margins, and more as a perfect reflection of the first-century phenomenon of great geographical complexity whereby intellectuals from various parts of Asia Minor were given a Greek education in the coastal cities and brought that mixture of outlooks both physically to Rome and conceptually to their accounts of its Empire.

Where does that leave the question of impersonality? There is no prefatory self-introduction, and we have to look fairly hard to find the author, but a close study of both explicit and implicit self-reference reveals that he is less absent from the text than at first appears. However, if we were to follow up this discovery by persisting with the well-worn, but apparently insoluble, issues of Strabo's date of birth and the itineraries of his travels, it would be possible to miss the way in which the author actually does present himself. The traditional topoi of name and *origo* prove to be delusive where the search for the author of the *Geography* is concerned. Although we do eventually find out his place of origin, among certain other autobiographical details, these occur late in the work and are not sufficiently coherent to deny the impersonality of the start.

It is, however, the start of the work, where we might have expected to be introduced to the author himself, which gives the clue as to Strabo's transformation of the topos, and consequently to his stance on impersonality. Strabo's replacement of himself with the academic subject treated in his work, precisely the technique of Theophylact Simocatta several centuries later, should alert us to the kind of Strabo we will find. His use of temporal phrases linked to himself tells us not about his dates but about his place in the geographical tradition, his intellectual affiliations and background; in other words, about his life as author of the text. His treatment of contemporary history is determined not by interests linked to his life, but by their relevance to the subject of the work, namely the transformation of the world into its present state. If Strabo 'has no style', the authorial voice of the *Geography* contains unexpectedly rich resonance, but its richness lies not in autobiographical details, but rather in the light it sheds on the project to write the first universal geography. Katz is right: there could be no ethnography without the ethnographer, and no geography without the geographer. Strabo is not

invisible.[96] But the appearances in the text of this particular author would not necessarily satisfy the demands of modern geographers for an acknowledged authorial standpoint. If a standpoint becomes apparent at all, it is simply stressing the author's engagement in γεωγραφία, about which we already knew. The author's intrusions into the text seem designed not to reveal the geographer and his 'situated knowledge', but to turn full attention back onto the definition of the geographical project itself, initiating the long tradition of self-assessment which has characterized the subject up to the present day.

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[96] See Katz, op. cit. (n. 1), 'simply positioning ourselves in our narratives as agents as well as storytellers, for example, undermines our ability to parade as "invisible men"' (498).