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Geographers as Mythographers: The Case of Strabo

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Writing Myth: Mythography in the Ancient World

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10. GEOGRAPHERS AS MYTHOGRAPHERS: THE CASE OF STRABO[1]

Lee E. Patterson

Strabo the geographer, Strabo the historian. Yes. Strabo the mythographer? There are two compelling and closely related reasons why we should affirm that mythography is a present and indeed vital genre in his monumental work the *Geography*, aside from the fact that the term *mythographia* is first attested in Strabo.[2] The first has to do with the way ancient authors conceived of 'mythography' as a genre, the second with the ease with which Strabo slips into the company of such traditional mythographers as Hecataeus. It is perhaps acceptable enough to say of mythography in general, from its earliest practices in the archaic period to the handbooks of the Roman, that its goal was to bring order to the myriad traditions that circulated in the Greek world. Mythographers, whatever differences in context, agenda, and scope, sought for canonicity, authenticity, and plausibility, and used rational methods to sift through the material. But this exercise was more than simple clinical scholarship, for the mythographers were drawn to it by the fact that myths, whether political, familial, communal, and so on, were vessels of meaning, centrally important to all Greeks for understanding the world. In terms of both methodology and appreciation of myth's function, Strabo is no different from the traditional mythographers.

[1] This paper began as a presentation on a panel organized by R. Scott Smith and Stephen M. Trzaskoma at the 140th Meeting of the American Philological Association in 2009. I am deeply grateful to them for their invitation to revise the piece for inclusion in this volume. The Greek text used here is from the edition of Stefan Radt. The translations of Strabo have been adapted from those of H.L. Jones in the Loeb series.

[2] Strabo uses *mythographia* at 1.2.35 C42-43 and 8.3.9 C341, in both cases as a derogatory term to denote a type of prose writing that allowed myth to compromise the reliability of its historical or geographical content. See R.L. Fowler, *Early Greek Mythography*. Vol. 1 (Oxford, 2000) xxvii and note 27 below. For a brief history of the term, see Bremmer, this volume, Ch. 4.

The *Geography* is a massive exploration of the world in the early first century CE in so many facets as to incorporate many genres, including geography, history, ethnography, and mythography, and Strabo, like Hecataeus, applied rigorous scholarly standards, at least as he saw it, to all of them. There is also a similarity to Hecataeus, as we shall see in a moment, in the way Strabo perceived genre, despite the different circumstances in which they composed. More so than in our own thinking, genre was a very fluid concept to the ancients. Such fluidity bears on how Strabo was a mythographer because he used myth to serve the greater needs of geography when he, for instance, included charter and other myths as markers of local identity (civic and regional). Mythography was vital to his endeavor, working seamlessly with history and geography to make his presentation of the *oikoumenē* meaningful to his audience.[3]

Since we think of mythography as a distinct genre, we should briefly consider the challenges such an approach creates when we compare it to Strabo's conception. When one confronts the surviving fragments of Hecataeus, who as a mythographer wrote *The Genealogies* and as a geographer wrote *Description of the Earth*, how does one know which fragment to assign to which work? For example, to which work should one assign fr. 18 on the Argonauts and their journey across many lands? This state of affairs contributed to Felix Jacoby's thesis that the prose tradition beginning with Hecataeus and invigorated by Herodotus was a venue in which the genres of history, geography, ethnography, and mythography were initially indistinct, only to develop into separate but related genres later on.[4]

[3] From this characterization one might further conclude that Strabo had an innovative attitude about geography. Strabo certainly thought so. Rather than writing purely technical treatises like Eratosthenes or scattering geographical material into various historical works like Polybius, Strabo created a universal geography filled with locations described not only in toponymic and cartographical terms, but with reference to history, myth, ethnography, and other areas (8.1.1 C332). See further D. Dueck, 'The Geographical Narrative of Strabo of Amasia,' in K.A. Raaflaub and R.J.A. Talbert (eds.), *Geography and Ethnography: Perceptions of the World in Pre-Modern Societies* (Malden, MA, 2010) 236–51 at 237. Together these locations were essentially the collective efforts of humanity in the past and present, which comprised the *oikoumenē* that was now the subject of his investigation. Another reason for this multifaceted approach no doubt is the attitude Strabo cultivated toward the role of philosophy, on which more is said below.

[4] F. Jacoby, 'Über die Entwicklung der griechischen Historiographie und den Plan einer neuen Sammlung der griechischen Historikerfragmente,' in H. Bloch (ed.), *Abhandlungen zur griechischen Geschichtsschreibung* (Leiden, 1956) 16–64. Useful summations of the influence of Jacoby's theory and the criticisms it drew can be found

Jacoby's thesis has had much support and much criticism, the latter largely because of the method he used to arrange the historiographical fragments he collected.[5] But the basic premise is sound enough,[6] and it seems to have provided a starting point for Katherine Clarke's 1999 study of Strabo, in which she shows that geography and history worked together to create meaning in Strabo's text.[7] I will explain how that works presently, but the more immediate point to make is that, the aforementioned difficulties with genre notwithstanding, we can likewise show how mythography and geography worked together. From this premise arises the answer to two specific questions: why was a given location or region worthy of inclusion in Strabo's *Geography* and what is it about the identity of this place that drew his interest?

We might note at the outset that Strabo's conception of geography, as well as of history and mythography, was fundamentally informed by his sense of responsibility as a philosopher. The *Geography* begins with this statement: 'The science of geography, which I now propose to investigate, is, I think, quite as much as any other science, a concern of the philosopher.'[8] Strabo goes on to name previous 'philosophers' who have made contributions to geography, including Anaximander, Hecataeus, Ephorus, Eratosthenes, Polybius, Posidonius, and, most importantly, Homer. While we might wonder at this list and the category into which these authors have been placed, here, as above, we should be careful. As Christina Roseman reminds us, 'Strabo's contemporaries would have found the current

in O. Murray, 'History,' in J. Brunschwig and Sir G.E.R. Lloyd (eds.), *Greek Thought: A Guide to Classical Knowledge* (Cambridge, MA, 2000) 328–37 at 330 and J. Marincola, *Greek Historians* (Oxford, 2001) 1–3.

[5] See especially R.L. Fowler, 'Herodotos and His Contemporaries,' *JHS* 116 (1996) 62–87 at 65–9, where Jacoby is criticized for letting his theory become the basis of a faulty arrangement of the fragments, one based on the putative development of the historiographical tradition rather than a more chronological approach.

[6] Though critical of Jacoby's methodology (see previous note), Fowler, *Early Greek Mythography,* xxix does seem to accept Jacoby's premise enough to express doubts that Hecataeus 'drew any intellectual, qualitative, or generic distinction between his activity in the *Genealogies* and that of the *Periodos* [*Description of the Earth*].' I take Fowler to mean that Hecataeus did not perceive fundamental differences between the genres of mythography (as relayed in the former work) and geography and ethnography (the primary focus of the latter).

[7] The example of the Argonauts mentioned above comes from K. Clarke, *Between Geography and History: Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World* (Oxford, 1999) 61.

[8] Τῆς τοῦ φιλοσόφου πραγματείας εἶναι νομίζομεν, εἴπερ ἄλλην τινά, καὶ τὴν γεωγραφικήν, ἣν νῦν προῃρήμεθα ἐπισκοπεῖν, 1.1.1 C1.

narrow definition of philosophy strange indeed: all of these writers dealt with empirical data about the natural world and Strabo evaluated them in the same manner.'[9] Strabo saw philosophical training as necessary for geographical inquiry. As a practical genre for statesmen and generals (1.1.1), geography had to be based on evidence provided by reputable sources of philosophical merit, as well as on eyewitness observations and measurements. Further, it required a command of the many sciences that deal with the natural world, including geometry, zoology, botany, and so on. Strabo's assessment of myths and their usefulness to his geographical goals was based on this training, which allowed him to separate those myths or particular elements of myths that were false, from those stories whose veracity was not to be doubted.

We will examine presently the criteria he used to decide these issues, but for now we might summarize by noting the range of material with which he worked and his attitudes toward it.[10] Strabo traveled extensively across the Mediterranean basin and based much of his description on autopsy. Many of the local myths he included in his narrative were relayed to him in person by local informants. Strabo often used these stories as source material to help form a picture of why a location was significant. That is not to say he himself necessarily believed the story to be true, but he felt that omitting it would render the narrative incomplete, as he suggests, for instance, at 17.3.3 C826, a passage I will discuss below. At other times, Strabo, much like Pausanias,[11] went into rationalizing mode and reconciled local tradition with the stronger evidence he had from written sources, especially Homer, as we shall see in the case of Nestor's Pylus below. In terms of written material, Strabo was clearly well read, and even my short analysis will bring forth epic poets like Homer, tragedians like Sophocles, historians like Herodotus, and mythographers like Pherecydes. The range of Strabo's sources suits the range

[9] C.H. Roseman, 'Reflections of Philosophy: Strabo and Geographical Sources,' in D. Dueck, H. Lindsay, and S. Pothecary (eds.), *Strabo's Cultural Geography: The Making of a* Kolossourgia (Cambridge, 2005) 27–41 at 31; cf. Dueck, *Geography and Ethnography*, 238.

[10] A general survey of the sources Strabo used throughout the *Geography* may be found at D. Dueck, *Strabo of Amasia: A Greek Man of Letters in Augustan Rome* (London, 2000) 180–6.

[11] On local and panhellenic myths in Pausanias, see L.E. Patterson, *Kinship Myth in Ancient Greece* (Austin, 2010) 127; M. Pretzler, 'Pausanias and Oral Tradition,' *CQ* 55.1 (2005) 235–49 at 241–3; M. Pretzler, *Pausanias: Travel Writing in Ancient Greece* (London, 2007) 81.

of his subject, the *oikoumenē*. Strabo's use of these sources for his discussion of mythological matters was in keeping with his philosophical training—he found them important sources of information, especially for those places he had not visited, but also judged them for their accuracy and plausibility, and thus for their usefulness to his geographical endeavor. On some occasions he also found them to be a useful safety net, relying on their authority, on whose assessment we shall get a clearer picture below, to cover himself in case the information given was erroneous.[12]

The proposal made here brings up the possibility that other ancient writers who treated geography and other genres in their own way might also qualify as mythographers, and we have a further reason to consider such fluidity where genre is concerned in the case of Plutarch and Pausanias. I highlight these two authors because of a basic similarity they share with Strabo, that all three were Greeks living in a Roman world. A question one might ask is how the contemporary context informed the way these writers conceived of myth and how these three conceptions compare to each other. Plutarch (ca. 46–120 CE) and Pausanias (*fl.* ca. 160 CE) are normally associated with the so-called Second Sophistic. More of a collective effort than an actual movement, it had a number of features shared by its participants, including a heightened appreciation for the Greek past, especially the glory days, both ancient (i.e., mythical) and more recent, before the spread of the Roman Empire into the Greek world.

Much study has been done on how these two writers carved out new Greek identities, even as a countermeasure against the realities of Roman rule. In essence, both crafted a hellenocentric view of the world. In his *Greek Questions* and *Roman Questions* Plutarch attributes modern culture, both Greek and Roman, to Greek origins, as when Janus, a Greek from Perrhaebia, gave to the Romans agriculture and political orderliness (*QR* 22). Doing so, Janus lifted the Romans out of the morass of their barbarian origins through the gift of Greek civili-

[12] In other words, on these occasions, those in which Strabo does not make the final determination on what the reader should believe, he recedes into the background, becoming what Gresens calls a 'zero degree' narrator, and allows his source to take responsibility for the accuracy of the information. See further N. Gresens, *Genres of History: ΜΥΘΟΣ, ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ, Legend, and ΠΛΑΣΜΑ in Strabo's* Geography (Diss. Indiana University, 2009) 54–6, 129–32. I am grateful to him for making his dissertation on Strabo available to me.

zation.[13] Pausanias' *Periēgēsis* was a sort of tourist guide with greater substance than used to be recognized before the investigations of Habicht and those who have followed him. There are certain features shared by the *periēgēsis* and the geography, including concern for the local culture and history of the places under study. In this mode Pausanias did more than describe art, architecture, and myths. He presented individual Greek cities and a collective Greek nation in terms that muted the current dominance of Rome, creating a timeless reality that was both the putative past and a construct of the present.[14]

Strabo, writing during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, predates the Second Sophistic and does not entirely share its concerns. In general Greek intellectuals in this period had not yet developed the rhetorical interests by which their successors would invoke an earlier world. So we can go only so far when trying to account for the context in which Strabo handled myth. One congruence with Plutarch and Pausanias is a tendency to hold Greek culture as superior to Roman.[15] With Plutarch Strabo shares the notion that, as modern barbarians are civilized through Roman rule, the Romans themselves were once barbaric and only brought up to civilization through the adoption of Greek culture (1.4.9 C66). Even so, Strabo lived in a Roman Empire which brought many benefits to various provinces (9.4.15 C429). Indeed, the expansion of Roman rule brought more of the world into the sphere of what was knowable and could be researched (1.2.1 C14, 11.6.4 C508). According to Maria Pretzler, this attitude about the empire and Strabo's aims as geographer mark his differences with Pausanias. True enough, Pausanias' work makes Greek identity its focus, and his own identity is invested in it. This focus is missing in Strabo because he is concerned to rep-

[13] R. Preston, 'Roman Questions, Greek Answers: Plutarch and the Construction of Identity,' in S. Goldhill (ed.), *Being Greek under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire* (Cambridge, 2001) 86–119 at 97–109. In his *Parallel Lives* Plutarch also reshaped the past by bringing parity to the Greeks' and Romans' cultural and political achievement, in contrast to Polybius' Romanocentric (and more realistic) presentation of the Mediterranean world. See R. Lamberton, *Plutarch* (New Haven, 2001) 64–5; Patterson, *Kinship Myth*, 169.

[14] Patterson, *Kinship Myth,* 125–6, J. Elsner, 'Pausanias: A Greek Pilgrim in the Roman World,' *P&P* 135 (1992) 3–29; cf. C. Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece* (Berkeley, 1998) 120–3; Pretzler, *Pausanias,* 28–31.

[15] M. Pretzler, 'Comparing Strabo with Pausanias: Greece in Context vs. Greece in Depth,' in Dueck, Lindsay, and Pothecary (eds.), *Strabo's Cultural Geography,* 144–60 at 157–8; Dueck, *Geography and Ethnography,* 242–4.

resent the whole world. Not to be given undue emphasis, Greece is simply part of a wider Roman world.[16] But I part company with Pretzler in her characterization of Strabo's view of myth. Both writers were attentive to the creation of identity through myth, if not for the same purpose. The enormity of myth's presence in the *Geography* speaks to its importance, despite Strabo's oft-expressed misgivings, as we shall see below. In fact, it is notable that Strabo's engagement with myth increases dramatically in Books 8–14, which cover Greece and Asia Minor, the core of the Greek world. Ultimately, we can plausibly argue that mythography as a genre applies to the writings of all three scholars. To understand reality, each of them had to understand myth and the way it manifested in the spheres of interest to them, even if their agendas differed.

Of course, in his survey of locations throughout the Roman Empire and beyond, Strabo considered identity in various terms, not just myth: the physical layout, geographical location, distances of borders, local customs, and a location's history. But his geographical endeavor would have failed without a consideration of a location's myths when possible. Generally speaking, Strabo viewed heroic myth as an account of ancient history. Therefore, Clarke's analysis of Strabo's conception of history is especially useful here. Drawing from the traditional conceptions of geography covering space and history covering time, Clarke has shown that both space and time play vital roles in Strabo's conception of geography. A place such as a city is more than a collection of physical characteristics and customs in the here and now. As a location of habitation it also exists in time, its true significance lying in the story of how it came to be the way it is now, a story of human endeavor across the ages. That is not to say that Strabo gives continuous narratives of the history of locations and regions in the *Geography*, but he situates them in time, focusing especially on important highlights, or turning points, that are most significant in the evolution of the city's identity, such as its foundation, arrivals of new (sometimes foreign) inhabitants, refoundations, and so on.[17]

From here we have but a short hop to mythography and its role in Strabo's *Geography*. Myth provides much of the information Strabo

[16] Pretzler, 'Comparing Strabo with Pausanias,' 158–9; cf. L.E. Patterson, 'Strabo, Local Myth, and Kinship Diplomacy,' *Hermes* 138 (2010) 109–18 at 112–3.

[17] Clarke, *Between Geography and History,* 264–76. Strabo makes this goal explicit at 6.1.2 C253.

needs to accomplish his goals as geographer. The earliest highlights of many locations' histories are their foundations, which often take place in heroic times. These often constitute local myths, but also important are the more broadly known traditions Strabo read about that provide aetiologies for, as an example, the distribution of the various ethnic groups in the *oikoumenē*.[18] A curious seeming paradox that arises from Strabo's heavy use of myth is the fact that he is so critical of 'myths.' This attitude, however, is very complicated, made so especially by ostensibly contradictory statements scattered throughout the *Geography*. Let us begin to get inside Strabo's head with the proposition that he joins the ranks of Hecataeus, Thucydides, Ephorus, and other intellectual Greeks in embracing heroic myth as ancient history and recognizing a basic continuity in the history of many cities going back to heroic times.[19] Strabo acknowledges the historicity of the Trojan War, the Return of the Heracleidae, the voyage of the Argonauts, and other events we today assign to myth and generally reject as historical, at least as presented to us in the surviving literature. We occasionally get overt declarations to this effect, as when he emphasizes that the Trojan War itself is a 'historical fact' (1.2.9 C20).[20] Moreover, the Trojan War and the Return of

[18] Some places that are worthy of mention are principally significant for other mythological associations, even if Strabo gives a few other non-mythological details. For example, we have Daulis in Phocis, the setting of the story of Tereus, Procne, and Philomela (9.3.13 C423, cf. Apd. 3.193–5 [3.14.8], Paus. 1.41.8, Thuc. 2.29.3). Mount Messapius, looming over Anthedon in Boeotia, is the site where a fisherman named Glaucus turned into a sea-monster. This is all Strabo says explicitly, but he is referring to the origin of a famous sea god or creature known for delivering prophecies (9.2.13 C405, cf. Ap. Rhod. 1.1310ff., Eur. *Ores*. 356ff., Paus. 9.22.7). In Comana in Cappadocia, which Strabo expressly mentions visiting, the local rites for Tauric Artemis were introduced by Orestes and Iphigeneia when they arrived from the Crimea, the land of the Taurians. The name of Comana derived from the hair (*komē*) that Orestes left here, having clipped it from his head to signify the end of his mourning (12.2.3 C535).

[19] As argued by Clarke, *Between Geography and History,* 250, Dueck, *Strabo of Amasia*, 73–4, and Pretzler, 'Comparing Strabo with Pausanias,' 149. I say 'intellectual' to distinguish them from the majority of Greeks, mostly less educated, who were unimpaired by excessive skepticism and rationality when it came to their perception of the truth of myth. See further P. Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths?* (Chicago, 1988) 11–4; Patterson, *Kinship Myth,* 24–6.

[20] The point of making such a statement is to delineate the historical from the fanciful, as to be found in Homer. We will consider Homer in greater detail below, but suffice it to say for now that Strabo discusses Homer throughout his work and struggles to separate the wheat from the chaff, as far as Homer's trustworthiness is concerned.

the Heracleidae are especially important chronological markers that help situate in time events of the distant past.[21]

The complication arises not only from the fact that myth can provide both truth and falsehood but also from Strabo's acknowledgment that even fictiveness can play a legitimate role in the presentation of geography. In these situations his criteria seem to be, first, the appeal of good stories to the masses and, second, the importance of tradition to the identity of many locations. Regarding the first, Strabo says that fondness for myths is what makes great literature endure; moreover, when the account has something to teach, this fondness baits people into learning. Myths are much more successful for the majority of people in conveying such lessons than the rational attempts of philosophers. He implies that even some historians of the past were receptive to such mythological appeal, whereas he and other intellectuals of the current age are less so, even as philosophy continues to influence only a few (1.2.8 C19–20). From this, one would think that Strabo, having declared himself a philosopher at 1.1.1 and with the intention of the most rational handling of source material, would have no use for any myths whose veracity he doubted. And, yet, clearly they pervade his seventeen books.

No doubt Strabo, consciously or otherwise, felt that the inclusion of such stories had the same effect on his own account—they made it more interesting. We have to wonder if that idea motivated his insistence, as at 7.7.10 C328, that false myths belong more properly to poetry but still had a place in geographical inquiry. Likewise, we must wonder at his intention when he states of previous fabrications, 'Let me now speak of them, asking pardon for introducing marvelous stories, if by chance I shall be forced to digress into a thing of that sort, since I am unwilling wholly to pass them over in silence and in a way to cripple my investigation.'[22] The implication here is that the omission of such stories would diminish Strabo's geography, perhaps by making it less appealing. Strabo implies as much at 1.1.19 C11 when he admits that even 'practical men,' i.e.,

[21] Clarke, *Between Geography and History*, 252–4.

[22] νῦν δὲ λέγωμεν, συγγνώμην αἰτούμενοι τῆς τερατολογίας, ἐάν που βιασθῶμεν ἐκπεσεῖν εἴς τι τοιοῦτο φεύγοντες τὸ πάντα σιγῇ παραπέμπειν καὶ τρόπον τινὰ πηροῦν τὴν ἱστορίαν, 17.3.3 C826.

statesmen, intellectuals, and others who might benefit from his opus, can enjoy a good tale.[23]

But the other criterion I mentioned above for the role of inventions is also in play. Clearly, Strabo wanted his narrative to resonate with his audience. For all his proclamations of rationality and philosophical competence, Strabo had no choice but to acknowledge the importance of tradition both in the construction of identity in various locations and in his audience's appreciation for why such places were worthy of mention in the *Geography*. By tradition, I mean the authority granted to some myths in the collective memory of the Greeks, both the players in the narrative—for example, the citizens of a particular *polis* who expressed their identity through local myths—and the audience of the narrative, who recognized or learned from Strabo the significance of the myth to a given location. Strabo's true feelings about the realities behind those perceptions were immaterial to the mission of explaining the importance of the myth. In other words, like Herodotus before him, Strabo recognized that myth plays an important role in the creation of meaning, both for the players and for his audience.[24]

But in the end Strabo's normal mode of operation was to separate reliable myths from the untrustworthy ones. A discussion of the Amazons provides us with his mission statement: 'A peculiar thing has happened in the case of the account we have of the Amazons; for our accounts of other peoples keep a distinction between the mythical and the historical elements; for the things that are ancient and false and monstrous are called myths, but history wishes for the truth, *whether ancient or recent*, and contains no monstrous element, or else only rarely.'[25] Although Strabo generally regards more recent investigations as more trustworthy than older (except for Homer), here we have his bottom line. Even recent accounts are no good if they exhibit erroneous, irrational, or nonsensical claims, as those

[23] But otherwise, he goes on to say, any use they might get out of myth, such as what one finds in a geography, will be limited to what is 'practical,' such as lessons from the hardships of Odysseus.

[24] For a similar conclusion based on a detailed analysis of narrative patterns and rhetorical devices in the *Geography*, see Gresens, *Genres of History,* 109–10. On the role of myth in Herodotus' methodology, to whom we could no doubt add many other ancient scholars, see Patterson, *Kinship Myth,* 5, 10–11.

[25] Ἴδιον δέ τι συμβέβηκε τῷ λόγῳ τῷ περὶ τῶν Ἀμαζόνων. οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλοι τὸ μυθῶδες καὶ τὸ ἱστορικὸν διωρισμένον ἔχουσι· τὰ γὰρ παλαιὰ καὶ ψευδῆ καὶ τερατώδη μῦθοι καλοῦνται, ἡ δ' ἱστορία βούλεται τἀληθές (ἄν τε παλαιὸν ἄν τε νέον) καὶ τὸ τερατῶδες ἢ οὐκ ἔχει ἢ σπάνιον, 11.5.3 C504.

that insist, even now, that there should be a flourishing society of warrior women that excludes all men. Conversely, ancient accounts (which meld history and myth in the way I discussed above) may yet be of use, even those that contain fabulous elements, as long as one can tease out those elements and leave behind only the reliable parts (as he also says at 10.3.23 C474).[26]

Such sorting is primarily how Strabo approaches Homer and other early material. The problem he repeatedly identifies in his predecessors is that they are less successful than he in sifting out the untrustworthy from the reliable. In the case of some, the crime is a tendency to present the marvelous out of ignorance. For others it is one of deliberate embellishment for the sake of gratifying the audience and, worse still, doing so without acknowledging it. Thus Theopompus is superior to Herodotus, Ctesias, Hellanicus, and those who wrote of India after Alexander's expedition in that he, unlike they, at least owned up to his flawed methodology (1.2.35 C42–3).[27] An example of both flaws in some earlier historians is their handling of peripheral peoples. Their ignorance and imprecision proved debilitating as they tried to account for the so-called 'Hyperboreans,' 'Sauromatians,' and 'Arimaspians' in the case of the northern Scythians and 'Sacians' and 'Massagetans' in the east. Also, their credulity and 'love of myth,' or *philomythia*, led to untrustworthy accounts of Persians, Medes, and Syrians (11.6.2 C507). At 9.3.12 C423, Strabo takes umbrage with Ephorus' discussion of the Delphic Oracle, ostensibly a rationalized account of how Apollo established it: 'But what could be more mythical than Apollo shooting with arrows and punishing Tityuses and Pythons, and travelling from Athens to Delphi and visiting the whole earth? But if Ephorus did not take these stories for myths, by what right did he call the mythological Themis a woman, and the mythological Dragon a human being—unless he wished to confound the two types, history and myth?'[28]

[26] A would-be contradiction lies in Strabo's occasional opposition of myth, tradition, and popular belief on one side and history and reason on the other, as at 1.1.16 C8–9, in which the former is represented by older traditions.

[27] This passage, incidentally, provides us with the first known usage of the term *mythographia* (Fowler, *Early Greek Mythography,* xxvii), as noted at the outset of this paper. The term is used to denote the prose writings of the authors named above; it indicates the same type of writing at 8.3.9 C341, with the attendant criticism (see n. 34 below). See also Bremmer, this volume, Ch. 4.

[28] τί δ' ἂν εἴη μυθωδέστερον ιἢ Ἀπόλλων τοξεύιων καὶ κολάζων Τιτυοὺς καὶ Πύθωνας | ικαὶ ὁδεύων ἐξ Ἀθηινῶν εἰς Δελφοὺς καὶ γῆν πᾶσαν ἐπιιών; εἰ δὲ ταῦτα μὴι ὑπελάμβανε μύθους εἶναι, τί ἐχιρῆν τὴν μυθευομένηνι Θέμιν γυναῖκα καλεῖν,

If we see a contradiction with 7.7.10 and 17.3.3—that is, if Strabo accuses earlier scholars of doing the same thing he himself often does—we might suspect hypocrisy or incompetence. Certainly one can excuse Strabo for inconsistency across his *kolossourgia* (the term he uses to describe his work at 1.1.23 C14), especially given the fact that the work is largely a compilation of numerous other texts. We should not be surprised to find Strabo adopting different attitudes toward the same subjects, perhaps unconsciously reflecting the different views of his sources.[29]

What often results from the mission he has declared is the rationalization of myth, of which he is expressly aware. Who were the Myrmidons of Aegina? Ants turned to men by a prayer of Aeacus? No, they were humans who dug into the earth like ants in order to produce tilling ground on an otherwise rocky island (8.6.16 C375). Did Heracles really defeat a river god called Acheloüs in order to win the hand of Deianira, daughter of King Oeneus of Aetolia? No, aside from being a mythological rendering of the border disputes between Aetolians and Acarnanians, the myth contains imagery that can be explained in rational terms. According to Sophocles, whom Strabo quotes, Deianira's suitor took the forms of a bull, a coiling serpent, and a part-ox, part-man creature with horns.[30] The bull represents the roaring of the river waters and the serpent and horns the coiling of the river. Further, the horns, associated with Amalthea, the she-

τὸν δὲ μυθευόμενον δράκοντα ἄνθρωπον, πλὴν εἰ συγχεῖν ἐβούλετο τόν τε τῆς ἱστορίας καὶ τὸν τοῦ μύθου τύπον;

[29] J.S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration, and Fiction* (Princeton, 1992) 95–103 has noticed an interesting pattern in Strabo's handling of the aforementioned chroniclers of India, as well as earlier ones such as Herodotus. Having accused the earlier writers of feigned ignorance at 1.2.35 C42–43, as we noted above, Strabo is harsher toward those like Megasthenes for whom Alexander's expedition had opened up the subcontinent (2.1.9 C70). Some writers of this sort were motivated by a desire to flatter Alexander, who had reached lands so distant as to contain the oddities they claim. But, fortunately, we now live in an era of the greatest scholarly sophistication and with the world opened to us by the unification of many lands under the Romans and Parthians (11.6.4 C508). Yet, when Strabo turns to India in his formal treatise in Book 15, he moderates his earlier criticisms, admitting that even modern accounts will have difficulty achieving truthfulness on regions so far away (15.1.2 C685). Later, he seems to lose himself in relating the fabulous descriptions of Megasthenes (15.1.37 C703, 15.1.57 C711), going on and on in what almost reads like—dare we say it—an epic catalogue, carried along by the momentum of indirect statements, when really only one or two examples would have sufficed to support his criticism. Romm refers to this passage as one in which Strabo was 'captivated' by the wonders he was supposedly condemning.

[30] *Trachiniae* 7–11.

goat sacred to Zeus with horns of plenty, represent Heracles' gift to Oeneus, namely, the diverting of the river to create dry farm land (10.2.19 C458–9). Was the pelt of the famous Calydonian Boar responsible for the war between the Curetes and the people of Calydon under Oeneus? No, it was a territorial dispute (10.3.6 C466). Was the Golden Fleece real? No, it is based on the fleecy skins the natives of Colchis use to catch the gold that flows down from the mountains (11.2.19 C499, cf. 1.2.39 C45–6).

This is the mode in which Strabo tries to make use of the most important source for his geographical, historical, and mythographical endeavors. There are two main reasons why Homer is ubiquitous in the *Geography*. First, he was of enormous importance to *tradition*, a key concept in Strabo's presentation of the *oikoumenē*, as we have seen. Homer had become so ingrained in his and everyone's thinking about the world that the epic poet became the blueprint on which Strabo based his account of Greece.[31] The geographer is practically obligated to use Homer, Strabo explains, because of the poet's unparalleled fame and, consequently, the authority he holds for all subjects (8.3.3 C337). He speaks in similar fashion in Book 8 when he insists that Homer cannot be tossed aside. As an ancient writer, Homer may not be as up-to-date as a practical geographer would like, but his importance lies in his association with 'legends that have been taught us from boyhood.'[32] By aligning the *legendary* with stories that are *ancient*, Strabo again acknowledges the importance of tradition, which justifies his discussion of such accounts as the charter myths of many locations.

The other reason for Homer's ubiquity is Strabo's insistence on Homer as the first geographer of merit, whose epics gave evidence of a thorough and well-informed presentation of the world and its inhabitants (e.g., 1.1.2 C2, 1.1.11 C7). As with myth in general, Strabo spends a great deal of time qualifying this judgment. If Homer's work is poetic, containing the mythical, which would appeal to ordinary people, how can we deem him useful in discussing more practical matters?[33] Strabo's plan is laid out in several places in the *Geogra-*

[31] D.M. Schenkeveld, 'Strabo on Homer,' *Mnemosyne* IV 29 (1976) 52–64; Clarke, *Between Geography and History,* 248–49; Pretzler, 'Comparing Strabo with Pausanias,' 150–1. See also Dueck, *Strabo of Amasia*, 31–40 and Gresens, *Genres of History*, 126–8 on Strabo's use of Homer.

[32] ἐκ παίδων ἡμῖν παραδεδομένη φήμη, 8.3.23 C348.

[33] Strabo routinely gives Homer some latitude, allowing him to be the great artist and storyteller he is, which necessitates some fabrication, while regarding him as

phy. In short, the key is to perform the procedure I have outlined above—to separate the wheat from the chaff. Strabo repeatedly highlights the challenge of isolating the elements that Homer added for 'flavor and adornment' from an otherwise historical account, as in the case of the Trojan War and Odysseus' wanderings (1.2.9 C20, 1.2.14 C23, 3.2.13 C149) and when Homer has the voyage of the Argo to the historical Colchis take place in Oceanus (1.2.40 C46).

To get around these difficulties, with both Homer and other equally problematic sources, Strabo often turns to a simple criterion: what agreement can he find in his various sources? Where consensus was reached, Strabo feels confident that he has arrived at the truth, and where it is lacking he is compelled to sort out the variants and reject the less plausible (8.3.23 C348, 10.3.23 C474), or perhaps even throw out the entire discussion, as with the debate over the origin of the Phoenicians, their would-be association with Ethiopia, and how this matter affects the setting of the story of Andromeda (1.2.35 C42–43). Perhaps with richer traditions with which to work, Strabo finds himself in this position more often in Book 8, where he embarks on the Greek world. He makes his almost formulaic declaration at 8.3.9 C341 as he discusses the alleged kinship of Epeans and Eleans: 'the early historians say many things that are not true, because they were accustomed to falsehoods on account of the use of myths in their writings; and on this account, too, *they do not agree with one another concerning the same things*.'[34] He implies that modern writers can also be susceptible to contradiction, as to what Peloponnesian cities to assign to Oenomaus, Salmoneus, and Augeus: 'in general one should follow only what is commonly accepted.'[35] The same state of affairs attends the flatterers of Alexander, not merely because of the implausibility of many of their claims but because they do not agree (15.1.9 C688). The methodology I have described here reminds us of the approach taken by those early mythographers like Hecataeus as they likewise sorted through mythological accounts to arrive at the most plausible, or at least the most authoritative, as we shall consider in greater detail below in our look at Strabo's account of the Ionian migration.

essential for such 'practical' endeavors as geography. See, for example, 3.4.4 C157 and 8.3.16 C345.

[34] πολλὰ μὲν οὖν καὶ μὴ ὄντα λέγουσιν οἱ ἀρχαῖοι συγγραφεῖς συντεθραμμένοι τῷ ψεύδει διὰ τὰς μυθογραφίας (διὰ δὲ τοῦτο καὶ <u>οὐχ ὁμολογοῦσι πρὸς ἀλλήλους περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν</u>) (emphasis mine).

[35] δεῖ...τοῖς ὁμολογουμένοις ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ ἀκολουθεῖν, 8.3.31 C356.

But Strabo bears another similarity to the early mythographers, their concern for how myth creates meaning. As we turn now to specific examples of local myths in Strabo and his treatment of them as a mythographer, we should keep in mind that local myths, while constituting a fraction of the mythological material in the *Geography*, are especially useful to examine for a better understanding of how Strabo, as other mythographers, explored the meaning of myth. Local identity often drove Strabo's decision on what material to include. When describing human activity (as opposed to, for example, topographic features), Strabo recognized a distinctiveness in each place he covered, as relayed through history, myth, religion, and so on.

Admittedly, not all 'local' identity as represented in our sources, whether historical, geographical, or ethnographical, is necessarily local but a construct imposed from outside, especially when expressed by myths that were known from Homer or other panhellenic sources. That is a question best left for another study. My concern here is with those myths that are *demonstrably* local, expressions that Strabo has accepted, not necessarily for the veracity of their content, but because they contribute to the identity of the community. They are useful to Strabo for the same reasons such putative constructions are to Herodotus, Pausanias, and similar explorers of the world; Strabo wants to give an accurate account of the wondrous variety of human experience across the Roman Empire and beyond. We can find such demonstrably local myths in those passages in which we have definite or at least reasonable evidence that Strabo visited the location or otherwise accessed its local myths directly. We shall want to have a clear declaration that he visited the site or adequate description of minute details. Further, cities lying between two locations meeting either or both of these criteria will likely have been visited by Strabo.[36] It bears noting that in terms of the geographic scope of Strabo's autopsy, he claims (rather proudly) to have gone as far as northern Italy in the west (so he did not reach Gaul or Iberia), Armenia in the east, southern Egypt in the south, and the southern littoral of the Black Sea in the north (2.5.11 C117).

[36] Dueck, *Strabo of Amasia*, 22–3. One point Dueck makes is that Strabo's use of the verb *deiknumi* can often indicate he was physically 'shown' features of a locality in person. Context can usually allow us to tell if we should take *deiknumi* in this sense or in the sense of 'shown' at second hand in what Strabo read in his sources.

With much of his time spent in Rome, Strabo would naturally have visited many places in Italy.[37] In Etruria was the city of Pisa, near the western end of his claimed range of autopsy, and I follow Dueck in accepting Strabo's description of the Arnus and Ausar rivers, which join to form an extremely wide river, as evidence that Strabo visited this site.[38] We learn a few things about Pisa: its prosperity goes back to ancient times and is attributable to marble quarries (which now supply material for buildings in Rome), good timber, and good farmland. In the midst of this description is a charter myth that we can presume Strabo heard from the locals but which exhibits similar characteristics to many other such foundation stories: Pisa 'was founded by those Pisatae who lived in the Peloponnesus, who made the expedition to Ilium with Nestor and on the return voyage went astray, some to Metapontium, and others to the territory of Pisa, though all of them were called Pylians.'[39] We have seen that 1) one of Homer's positive qualities, in Strabo's mind, is the comprehensiveness of his epics, the coverage of the world they provide, and 2) Homer is of central importance in the collective memory of the Greeks, the foundation of much panhellenic tradition. It would not be surprising, then, to find communities, whether Greek or hellenized, to seek to ennoble themselves by claiming a Homeric context for their foundations, even if they are not mentioned in the Homeric texts, as Pisa. Note here that Strabo does not reject Pisa's claim, despite his sporadic denunciations of myth. Indeed, this myth distinguishes it from any other city that might also have good timber and farmland and provide marble for Augustus' Rome.

In Asia Minor the same state of affairs is at work in the city of Phygela. Strabo's visit there is suggested by his detailed description of a road leading from Ephesus eastward, of the temples and marble quarries of Mylasa, of the scorpions and luxurious lifestyle of Alabanda, of a painted portrait of Anaxenor the cithara player in the agora and bronze statue of the same in the theater in Magnesia-on-the-Maeander, and of the natural fortifications and plain of Tralles,

[37] See Dueck, *Strabo of Amasia*, 85–96 for a compilation of evidence of Strabo's presence in Rome.

[38] Dueck, *Strabo of Amasia*, 27.

[39] κτίσμα μέν ἐστι τῶν ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ Πισατῶν, οἳ μετὰ Νέστορος ἐπὶ Ἴλιον στρατεύσαντες κατὰ τὸν ἀνάπλουν ἐπλανήθησαν οἱ μὲν εἰς τὸ Μεταπόντιον, οἱ δ' εἰς τὴν Πισᾶτιν (ἅπαντες Πύλιοι καλούμενοι), 5.2.5 C222.

all of which lie in close proximity to Phygela.[40] There are only two things Strabo says about this town, in a short passage tucked in between accounts of Neapolis and of the environs of Ephesus—that there was a temple of Artemis Munychia there and that the city had been founded by Agamemnon (14.1.20 C639). In other words, aside from its temple, it is the city's charter myth that makes it distinctive and virtually nothing else. At least nothing else is worth mentioning. The story went that the name 'Phygela,' or 'Pygela,' derived from the disease of the buttocks (*pugalgias*) that caused some of Agamemnon's men to be left behind and ultimately settle there. We also learn from an inscription (*SEG* IV.513) that the Phygelans had a tribe called Agamemnonis. Interestingly, although Strabo does not note this, it may even be that, despite being Ionians by ethnicity, the Phygelans regarded themselves as Achaeans, a separate ethnic group whose association with Homer's Achaiwoi would have been firmly established by the Hellenistic period, according to Jonathan Hall.[41] It is worth noting that Phygela was not a member of the Ionian League. Given the tribal name Agamemnonis and the fact that the only local myth Strabo records points to an Achaean identity, the Phygelans' Ionian associations may have been somewhat muted. Their Achaean associations were perhaps preferable because it gave them a specific link to the Trojan War, even if that link was through an account of founders with an unflattering quality.[42]

In some cases, Strabo's visit is indicated by references to observations of local temples, festivals, or knickknacks that themselves suggest a local myth at work. At Circaeum, not far from Rome, Strabo not only sees a temple of Circe and an altar to Athena but is shown (*deiknusthai*) a bowl reputedly belonging to Odysseus (5.3.6 C232). Strabo uses Homer's text, perhaps at the prompting of the locals, to situate Temesa (in southern Italy) in the Homeric mosaic. Strabo contends that Homer's line 'Temesa, in search of copper' (*Od.* 1.184) refers to this city rather than to Tamassos in Cyprus (6.1.5 C255). He notes copper mines nearby which lend further support. Interestingly, Temesa also gives us an example of a local myth not supported by Homer, as in the cases of Pisa and Phygela. Strabo mentions a

[40] Ephesus: 14.2.29 C663; Mylasa: 14.2.23 C658–59; Alabanda: 14.2.26 C660–61; Magnesia: 14.1.41 C648; Tralles: 14.1.42 C648. See further Dueck, *Strabo of Amasia*, 24.

[41] J.M. Hall, *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago, 2002) 58–65.

[42] For more on Phygela's possible political use of its quasi-Homeric origins in a treaty made with Miletus, ca. 300 BCE (*StV* III 453), see Patterson, 'Strabo, Local Myth,' 115.

temple to Polites, a companion of Odysseus, in a grove near the town. This Polites was supposedly killed by native Brettii here, although the one reference to him in Homer says nothing of that (*Od.* 10.224).[43]

In the case of Pylus (or rather the three Pyluses in the Peloponnesus), Strabo has to use the text of Homer to refute the claims made by some local Pylians that theirs is Nestor's city, backed up with local evidence shown directly to the geographer during his visit.[44] Thus Strabo concludes that evidence of sandiness (given Homer's famous epithet, 'sandy Pylus') and local toponyms like Gerenus (a site), Geron (a river), and Geranius (also a river), associated with Nestor's epithet 'Gerenian,' are insufficient to trump the text of 'the poet': Pylus in Triphylia (southern Elis) was Nestor's Pylus, not the one between the Peneus and Selleis rivers in northern Elis nor even the one most 'modern' writers prefer, the Messenian Pylus (8.3.7 C339–40). In similar fashion, two communities in Thessaly presented local evidence to identify Homer's references to the country (or city) of Hellas, where the Hellenes were said to be ruled by Achilles (the term obviously used to apply to all Greeks only in post-Homeric times) (e.g., *Il.* 2.683, 9.443, 9.478). Either Hellas was the ruin sixty stades distant that the Pharsalians pointed out (*deiknuousin*) to Strabo or a city ten stades from Melitaea. The Melitaeans claimed that the Hellenes had migrated to their city in ancient times and cite as evidence the tomb of Hellen, son of Deucalion, in the marketplace of Melitaea. In this case, Strabo makes no final judgment on who has the better claim (9.5.6 C431–2).[45]

If not overtly Homeric, we have some charter myths that Strabo presents to represent the origins of many of the Ionian states of Asia

[43] Polites' ghost supposedly demanded regular tribute from the people of Temesa and was eventually expelled by a boxer named Euthymus (6.1.5). This is also likely to be a local myth, for Pausanias implies that he heard it from a merchant who had visited Temesa (6.6.7–11). See also B. Currie, 'Euthymos of Locri: A Case Study in Heroization in the Classical Period,' *JHS* 122 (2002) 24–44.

[44] So we can infer that Strabo traveled in this area not only from a detailed knowledge of local toponyms, which admittedly might have been relayed in a text, but also from the detailed descriptions of nearby places in the western Peloponnesus. The evidence is gathered at Dueck, *Strabo of Amasia*, 27.

[45] Other examples of local phenomena shown to Strabo include the tomb of Memnon, son of Tithonus, near the village of Memnon in the region around the Granicus River (13.1.11 C587), the Palisade of Bellerophon and tomb of his son Pisander in Cabalis (southern Pisidia) (13.4.16 C630), and the tomb of Endymion in a cave near Heraclea-at-Latmus (14.1.8 C636). Note Bremmer, this vol., Ch. 4.

Minor. Indeed, this section, 14.1.3 C632–33, is interesting because, as it introduces the entire section of *The Geography* on Ionia (14.1), it chooses myth to do so, rather than more strictly geographical descriptions, as is more typical elsewhere. Moreover, we have at 14.1.3 a sort of overview of the Ionian migrations, which seems to be based primarily on one source, Pherecydes of Athens, a mythographer who, in the early- to mid-fifth century BCE, may have been reflecting home-grown traditions about the Athenian origin of the Ionian states, although we cannot be certain about all the details, especially as Strabo fills in some minor ones with the help of Mimnermus and Anacreon.[46] So for instance we learn that non-Greeks, Carians and Leleges, had occupied this region before they were driven out by the Ionians. Then we get a dizzying array of foundations, including many from sons (legitimate or otherwise) of the mythical Athenian king Codrus: Ephesus by Androclus, Miletus by Neleus, Myus by Cydrelus, Teos by Nauclus (a refoundation), and Erythrae by Cnopus. All of this is in 14.1.3. Then Strabo moves forward to deal with each city in turn throughout 14.1, such as Miletus, beginning at 14.1.6 C634–35, on which he provides details about harbors, accomplishments in colonization, famous citizens such as Thales and Hecataeus, significant points in history such as its resistance to Alexander, and so on. But his Milesian treatise begins with another charter myth, this one specific to Miletus and coming from Ephorus, which provides the variant that Miletus had been founded by Sarpedon with colonists from Crete, specifically from a city in Crete called Miletus. Afterwards, as in Pherecydes, Miletus was refounded by Neleus from Athens (cf. 7.7.2 C321, Paus. 7.2.5–6, Hdt. 9.97).

This amounts to Strabo trying to bring order to myriad traditions, as Pausanias also did (e.g., 5.1.3, 7.2.5–6, 7.4.1–2, 10.1.1). The Milesian case is one of a number in which both authors took variant or even conflicting accounts and harmonized them, often by assigning chronological priority. Thus, in both authors the arrival of Neleus and the Ionians is presented as the last phase of a series of migrations (Pausanias includes a third founder named Miletus from Crete). Hecataeus himself was known for this sort of scholarly treatment of myth, as he makes clear in the first fragment from Jacoby's collection: 'Hecataeus of Miletus says the following: I write about those

[46] That is not to say, however, that by Strabo's time, legends such as those of Neleus in Miletus had not become local expressions of identity. On Miletus see Patterson, *Kinship Myth,* 141–3.

things that seem true to me, for in my view the stories of the Greeks are many and ridiculous.'[47] Here we have another congruence between Strabo and more traditional mythographers. Strabo shares with Hecataeus the need to sort out the 'many and ridiculous' accounts that conflict with each other and challenge questionable claims that do not hold up to rational scrutiny.[48]

All the above examples show an intersection between local and panhellenic myth, which is consistent with the characterization made above of Strabo's concern for universal geography, in contrast to Pausanias. This universality operates on at least two levels: the reach of the Roman Empire (not quite universal, especially east of the Euphrates River, but close) and the reach of Homer's geography. Virtually the entire *oikoumenē* came under their purview, and to this domain they applied a unity that served Strabo's needs, given the equally universal scope of his geography. Situating locations in this wider context was fundamental to Strabo's goals and called upon his skills as geographer, historian, and mythographer to weave the mosaic in which he himself expressed pride at 8.1.1 C332.

The case has been made, I hope, that mythography often played a vital role in determining what put a given location on the map, so to speak. Strabo shares with more traditional mythographers an interest in what myth means and how it is used. Part of this correspondence is methodological, as I suggested in the case of Hecataeus. But

[47] Ἑκαταῖος Μιλήσιος ὧδε μυθεῖται· τάδε γράφω, ὥς μοι δοκεῖ ἀληθέα εἶναι· οἱ γὰρ Ἑλλήνων λόγοι πολλοί τε καὶ γελοῖοι, ὡς ἐμοὶ φαίνονται, εἰσίν, *FGrHist* 1 F. 1.

[48] On Hecataeus' views of traditional stories, especially the Hesiodic corpus, and his resulting methodologies, including his tendency to rationalization, see L. Bertelli, 'Hecataeus: From Genealogy to Historiography,' in N. Luraghi (ed.), *The Historian's Craft in the Age of Herodotus* (Oxford, 2001) 67–94 at 83–94. We might also note that Hecataeus was part of a collective effort by early mythographers to set to writing oral familial traditions. Since oral traditions tended not to have fully developed pedigrees linking the heroic ancestor to the current aristocratic generation, mythographers often had to invent those links. See further R. Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 1989) 161–73. Regarding Strabo's affinities with Hecataeus, we can go further and note that Hecataeus is a principal source for Strabo on matters concerning Epirus and Macedon, including the complicated movements of peoples described at 7.7.8 C326, on which see N.G.L. Hammond, *Epirus* (Oxford, 1967) 447ff. One can imagine that the process that compelled Strabo to make sense of the *ethnoi* in this part of the *oikoumenē* was also at work in Hecataeus. Also significant is 8.7.1 C383, which lays out the main ethnic divisions of Greece as established in ancient times. Notable is the role played by the sons and grandsons of Hellen, especially Dorus, Achaeus, and Ion, who go off to establish their own kingdoms and thus create new ethnicities. The narrative reads very much like that of 14.1.3 with myriad foundations by sons of Codrus.

more important is their shared concern for the ways myth creates meaning. In Strabo's case, such meaning lies in identity. No less important than the immutable distances and terrain of the physical world are the putative constructions of culture that gave inhabited places their character; i.e., each has its own identity, and Strabo, wearing several hats at once—geographer, ethnographer, historian, and mythographer—explores these constructions with zeal. Strabo's use of myth is consistent with his acknowledgement of the sway of tradition in the way cities and regions were depicted, whatever his own views on the historicity of such accounts as foundation stories. Showing respect for expressions of identity, local or otherwise, Strabo operates much the way Hecataeus did when he used myth to support familial traditions of elite families, except that Strabo is relaying earlier traditions and not, as far as we can tell, inventing new ones. As with his accounting for the origins of the Ionian states, such use of myth again reminds us of the sort of thing Hecataeus seems to have done, letting myth illuminate rather than obfuscate the past. Put another way, mythography often worked with history and other genres to create meaning, for Strabo, Plutarch, Hecataeus, Herodotus, and so forth. Whatever dominating characteristics history, geography, and mythography may have in our delineation of these genres, I am not sure our criteria would always make sense to Strabo and his fellows, so that we might argue for the presence, even in later prose writers, of the sort of fluidity Jacoby identified in the earliest ones. Geographer and historian Strabo undeniably was, and he should likewise be called mythographer.