

**A Road Trip with Strabo:  
Memory and Composition in the *Geography***

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**Abstract**

A number of places that feature in Strabo's description of the Asian peninsula were situated on the ancient road that ran between the Euphrates river and the city of Ephesus. It is likely that Strabo journeyed along the entire thousand kilometre length of the road, even though he makes explicit reference to his presence in only a few locations. He most probably made the journey as a youth on his way to Roman Asia, in the south west of the peninsula, from Pontus in the north. Decades pass before Strabo, as an old man, writes the *Geography* and includes in it the memories of places he had visited. The outdated tone of some of his descriptions reflects this passage of time.

**Keywords**

Strabo, biography, *Geography*, composition

In his description of the world, the Greco-Roman geographer Strabo often turns aside from the dry recitation of data and adopts a more informal tone, providing his audience with humorous anecdotes or with small but brilliantly observed details about the

location in question. It is as if he is lecturing, and wants to ensure that he still has his listeners' attention by changing pace and adding colour to the content. In the course of these asides, Strabo sometimes inadvertently lets drop an expression like 'I saw' or 'during my stay' and, startled, we suddenly realise that Strabo was personally present in the location in question. While these informal asides characterise Strabo's description of several parts of the world,<sup>1)</sup> this article restricts itself to those which betray Strabo's presence at five locations on the Asian peninsula: the watershed of the Pyramus river (*Ceyhan Nehri*) in the Cataonian Plain, and the temple of Cappadocian Comana (*Şar*), in what is now central Turkey; and Hierapolis (*Pamukkale*), Nysa (*Sultanhisar*), and Ephesus (*Selçuk*), all in south west Turkey.

Strabo's presence at these five locations on the Asian peninsula has long been noted by scholars but the locations themselves have incorrectly been treated as scattered, random, and unconnected. In fact, all five were situated on, or accessed via, a well-used and long-established ancient road running some thousand kilometres between the Euphrates river and Ephesus. Moreover, the five locations were distributed along both the eastern and western stretches of the road. Since Strabo had to get from one location to another, and since he presumably did so by travelling along the road, the natural assumption would be that Strabo stayed in, or at least passed by, locations along the road other than the five where his narrative asides happen to make his personal presence known (see Fig. 1).

What I set out to do in this article is to take the modern reader on a quasi-journey along the ancient road, past the twenty or so way-stations that feature in Strabo's narrative. The fact that these way-stations, some of them quite insignificant from a

geographical point of view, are included in Strabo's narrative at all is perhaps indicative of his personal experience of them. The twenty way-stations include the five where Strabo accidentally betrays his presence, together with some fifteen or so where he does not. We will pass through these way-stations in the order in which they would appear to a traveller heading westwards along the road, which is not at all the order in which they are encountered by a reader working his way through the narrative. Such a reader comes across the way-stations in very disparate sections of Strabo's account of the Asian peninsula, a result of the way in which Strabo chooses to arrange his material.<sup>2)</sup> In one extreme example, two locations only ten kilometres apart are separated by some fifteen thousand words in the narrative!<sup>3)</sup>

Prime among the five locations along the road where Strabo makes his presence explicit is Nysa (*Sultanhisar, south west Turkey*), on the western stretch of the road, in the Roman province of Asia. This is where Strabo received his 'grammatical' (in modern parlance, his secondary) education, and probably his 'rhetorical' (college-level) education too.<sup>4)</sup> Yet Strabo was born in the northern part of the Asian peninsula, where his mother's family had a long pedigree in the Pontic city of Amasia (*Amasya, north central Turkey*).<sup>5)</sup> Strabo must at some stage and by some means have travelled from Pontus to Nysa. The ancient road from the Euphrates provides an obvious route, at least for part of the journey.

On the way to starting his secondary education, Strabo was no more than a young teen. Nearly seven decades would pass before Strabo incorporated observations he made *en route* into what was essentially a work of his old age.<sup>6)</sup> While the incorporation of such early memories might seem at first glance unlikely, in fact it explains a glaring

feature of Strabo's descriptions, particularly his descriptions of locations along the eastern stretch of the road. Many of these reflect circumstances which lay decades in the past at the time of composition. The discordant note struck by such passages has caused modern scholars some legitimate discomfiture. Their response has been to interpret the passages in question as remnants of what is supposed to have been a first draft of the *Geography*. The precise date of this putative first draft has been a matter of contention, but the dates suggested have all been around the end of the first century BCE/beginning of the first century CE.<sup>7)</sup> The narrative as we have it is then interpreted as a second and final draft which, in keeping with its references to contemporary events, is dated some two decades later.

Formulated to save Strabo from the sin of being out of date, the two-draft theory fails in its quest, since the dates chosen for the putative first draft still leave numerous passages behind the times.<sup>8)</sup> I argue in this article that the discordant nature of these passages reflects Strabo's memory at work. The outdated information contained within them reflects circumstances at the time Strabo acquired his memories, not the circumstances many decades later when Strabo accesses those memories for the purposes of composition. The lapse of time between Strabo's acquisition of his memories and their incorporation into his narrative is similarly evident in the boyish enthusiasm which characterises his descriptions, reflecting Strabo's youth as he travels along the road. The child-like glee is recalled and perhaps re-lived years later when, in his old age, Strabo at last gets around to committing his remembered experiences to writing.

Strabo does not, within his systematic account of the Asian peninsula, routinely specify the presence of the Euphrates-Ephesus road in describing its individual way-

stations, except for a short western stretch.<sup>9)</sup> Yet he does eventually come clean about the road, albeit in a rather circuitous way. In a passage which I label the ‘road retrospective’ (14.2.29; 663 C, 19-33), Strabo gives a list of precise distances between the road’s main way-stations. Many of these way-stations have featured earlier in his narrative. Yet, in the ‘road retrospective,’ Strabo makes no back-reference to his previous descriptions. Nor does he mention his presence in any of the way-stations, even where he has earlier explicitly commented on it. Strabo’s silences are generally telling. I will return to Strabo’s silence over his presence on the road at the conclusion of this article.

The route followed by the ancient road is shown schematically in Fig. 1, and can be traced in greater detail on the maps of the *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World* (henceforth *BA*).<sup>10)</sup> To make this process easier, the *BA* map number and coordinates of each way-station are given in the notes to this article. Turkey’s modern highways – D300, D320, and E87 -- still roughly track the ancient road, and can be followed on *Google Earth* by searching for the Turkish names of places described by Strabo. Ancient place-names<sup>11)</sup> mentioned in this article are followed in brackets by their present-day Turkish equivalents, using the identifications and spellings adopted in the *Map-by-Map Directory (Vol. 2)* that accompanies the *BA*.<sup>12)</sup>

### **From the Euphrates to Ephesus**

The Euphrates river formed the boundary between two ancient kingdoms: Cappadocia (*central Turkey*) on the west bank, and Armenia (*eastern Turkey*) on the east bank. At the very outset of his work, in staking his claim to be well-travelled, Strabo states that he had journeyed ‘westwards from Armenia’<sup>13)</sup> (2.5.11; 117 C, 13-4). This

need not mean that Strabo had travelled within Armenia itself. It suggests, rather, that Strabo had travelled westwards from the part of Cappadocia bordering on Armenia. We should compare his claim with the statement that follows in the same passage, namely that he had journeyed ‘southwards ... as far as the borders of Ethiopia’ (117 C, 14-5). Strabo’s later account of Egypt and Ethiopia shows that he means only that he had travelled south through Egypt to its borders with Ethiopia, not through Ethiopia to that country’s own southern borders.

The part of Cappadocia that borders on Armenia, known as Melitene, is precisely the point at which a road from Pontus (*northern Turkey*) joined the ancient east-west road.<sup>14)</sup> Travellers from the north could at this juncture either turn right and head west, ultimately to the city of Ephesus; or they could turn left and follow the road east across the Euphrates, where there was an old fort on the far bank. The fort was called Tomisa (*?nr. İzolu, central Turkey*).<sup>15)</sup> Strabo mentions this fort (12.2.1; 535 C, 8-11), but does so as part of his description of Cappadocia rather than Armenia. At first glance this seems illogical, given the location of Tomisa on the ‘far’ (i.e., Armenian) side of the river. An explanation is provided in the very anecdote Strabo gives us, according to which the Tomisa fort had been sold to the king of Sophene for a great deal of money -- only for it to be given back<sup>16)</sup> to the Cappadocian king by the Romans!

To appreciate the humour of the anecdote, we have to fill in the historical background. Sophene had once been an independent kingdom; the Sophenian king had purchased the fort at some stage before he lost his kingdom to the Armenian king [c. 93 BCE]; the Armenian king had taken the side of the Pontic king against the Romans; the Cappadocian king had supported the Romans and in the process had joined in the Roman

attack on Armenia [69-68 BCE]; the Romans, having successfully contained the Armenian king, rewarded the Cappadocian king for his support with the return of the fort [68-66 BCE]. The whole story smacks of local lore, highly amusing to the Cappadocians but not nearly so funny to the Armenians (and even less so to the Sopheniens).

The return of the fort, in the early 60s BCE, would have been a relatively recent event at the time that Strabo was making his way to Nysa, probably in or soon after 50 BCE.<sup>17)</sup> The anecdote about Cappadocian reacquisition of the Tomisa fort would have still been current (and funny) – something with which the Cappadocian locals could regale the travellers in their midst. By the time Strabo writes out his narrative some seven decades later, the return of the fort has retreated into history, and is neither so funny nor so relevant, although the passage of time has lent the story some irony. The Cappadocian king having died some three years earlier [17 CE],<sup>18)</sup> his territory has become a Roman province. The fort is now presumably a Roman possession and the Cappadocians laughing on the other side of their faces.

A similarly outdated tone is found in Strabo's descriptions of other way-stations along the road, especially along its eastern stretch. As noted above, these apparent anachronisms have been seen by some scholars as evidence for an early draft of the *Geography*, written decades before its final draft. More likely, these stories reflect the date at which Strabo acquired his memories -- memories which he will dredge up many years later as an old man, when he brings together all the information amassed over his many years to produce his landmark work.

Proceeding some one hundred kilometres west, still in Cappadocia, the ancient road enters the Cataonian plain. This plain forms the watershed of the Pyramus river

(*Ceyhan Nehri*).<sup>19)</sup> In one of the piquantly observant asides with which he leavens his narrative, Strabo provides a stunningly vivid account of this river (12.2.4; 536 C, 3-20) and, in doing so, incidentally reveals his own presence. He describes a hole in the ground through which it is possible to see the river as it runs through a subterranean passage. He notes that, if you lower a javelin down through the hole, the javelin barely gets wet, the water's force is so great. Once the river reaches the mountains, its course narrows and deepens, running between cliffs: 'I saw', says Strabo, 'how the cliffs on either side of the Pyramus, reaching almost to the tops of the mountains, ... have hollows corresponding to the projections opposite' (536 C, 13-5). At this point, he tells us, the river runs through a fissure 'narrow enough for a dog or hare to jump across' (536 C, 16-7). 'A sound like thunder,' Strabo notes, 'is the first thing that strikes you from afar' (536 C, 19-20).

Strabo must have departed somewhat from the road in order to visit the points along the Pyramus river that he mentions. Why he undertook such a detour, we do not know. Given that Strabo was a young teen at the time of his journey, he was presumably accompanied by a parent, or both parents. The detour to the sites he mentions along the Pyramus river perhaps reflects some interest of theirs. The description of the immense power of the water, however, is surely that of the young Strabo himself, excited and impressed by what he saw. The memory is stored away and accessed decades later when the aged Strabo incorporates it into his master work.

Only fifty kilometres from the end of the Cataonian plain, still in Cappadocia, was the huge temple complex at Comana (*Şar, central Turkey*),<sup>20)</sup> described at 12.2.3; 535 C, 20 – 536 C, 3. The number of temple slaves, says Strabo, 'was more than six thousand, men and women, at the time of my [*or 'our'*] stay' (535 C, 25-6). The possible



circumstances of Strabo's stay emerge from Strabo's description later in his narrative of another temple with the same name, but situated further north, i.e., the temple of Comana in Pontus (*Kılıçlı, north central Turkey*).<sup>21)</sup> In his description of the northern (Pontic) temple, Strabo is at pains to tell us that an ancestor of his – specifically, the nephew of the great-grandfather of Strabo's mother<sup>22)</sup> -- had once held the priesthood there. Strabo's maternal connections with the northern temple, which was an offshoot of the southern (Cappadocian) temple, surely came in useful to Strabo and his family as they headed off to their new life in Roman Asia. The fact that one of Strabo's maternal relatives had been a priest in the Pontic temple explains why Strabo is found staying in Cappadocian Comana.

Strabo's contrasting use of verbal tenses in describing the two Comanas – Pontic Comana and Cappadocian Comana -- is illuminating. With regard to Pontic Comana, where Strabo's maternal relative had been priest, we are told that the priest 'ranked second in prestige to the king'.<sup>23)</sup> The past tense is used because Strabo is talking about 'the period of the kings before this period',<sup>24)</sup> i.e., before the Romans defeated the Pontic king [66 BCE] and annexed much of his territory. It is only the ranking of the Pontic priest relative to the king that has fallen into abeyance, not the priesthood itself. The Pontic priesthood was still operating when Strabo stayed at the mother temple in Cappadocia, and is still going at the time when Strabo writes out his work.<sup>25)</sup>

In contrast to Pontus, Cappadocia is still governed by a king at the time of Strabo's journey. As a result, Strabo's comments about the Cappadocian priesthood and its relationship to the king are couched in the present tense. First, Strabo tells us that the inhabitants of the Cappadocian temple are Cataonians, 'in some respects answerable to

the king, but largely subject to the priest' (535 C, 23-4).<sup>26)</sup> Then he tells us that the priest 'ranks second in prestige to the king in Cappadocia' (535 C, 27-8). The ranking is still valid, as there is still a king to whom the Cappadocian priest ranks second. The formula 'second in prestige to the king' would remain valid in Cappadocia for almost seven more decades, but would ultimately be rendered obsolete by the death of the Cappadocian king [17 CE] and Roman annexation of his kingdom.

The death of the Cappadocian king occurred just three years before Strabo, in his old age, commits his memories of Cappadocia to writing. Given that the formula 'second in prestige to the king' primarily indicates the importance of the priest, rather than the existence of the monarchy, we can perhaps forgive Strabo his continued use of what is now, strictly-speaking, an outdated formula. In the very next sentence, in a less formulaic expression, Strabo correctly uses the past tense: 'in general the priests were from the same family as the kings' (535 C, 29). Just as the humour in Strabo's anecdote about Tomisa reflects circumstances at the time Strabo initially acquired the story rather than the time he recollects it many decades later, so Strabo's use of the present tense in his ranking of the priest at Cappadocian Comana reflects conditions when he was staying at the temple rather than the circumstances when he accesses the memory of his stay for purposes of composition.

Some hundred kilometres further west along the ancient road was the important city of Mazaca (*Kayseri, central Turkey*).<sup>27)</sup> Strabo describes it at length (12.2.7-9; 537 C, 33 – 539 C, 26) and in extremely vivid terms. He tells us that the plains in its immediate vicinity are sandy and stony, but 'if you go a little further out, the plain is volcanic and full of fiery pits' (12.2.7; 538 C, 11-2). The area at the foot of densely-forested mount

Argaeus is characterised by underground fires and streams of cold water so that, although the ground may appear safe, the only people who can make the trip across it are those with local knowledge of the terrain: ‘there is a widespread risk, particularly for cattle, that they will fall into the fiery pits without seeing them’ (538 C, 20-2).

We find the same strangely antique nature to Strabo’s description of Mazaca as we did at Comana, starting with the name of the city. The name ‘Mazaca’ would later be changed to ‘Caesarea’ (still reflected in the present day name *Kayseri*). The name change is datable to some point in the period 12-9 BCE. Strabo’s silence over the new name has been used to support the theory of an early draft.<sup>28)</sup> This theory overlooks the way human memory works. I think of the now-dwindling number of my aged relatives, born and raised as British expatriates in what was then the British colony of Ceylon. They continue to this day to refer to the island as ‘Ceylon’ regardless of the fact that its name was changed to ‘Sri Lanka’ in 1972. That is to say, they use the name that was current at the time of the experiences they remember, even though it is no longer correct in geo-political terms.<sup>29)</sup> Strabo is surely showing the same tendency. As an old man writing out his memories, he uses the name that was valid in his youth, at the time he was travelling through Cappadocia.

Strabo’s description of Mazaca contains reference to the indignities suffered by its citizens at the hands of Tigranes, the king of Armenia, memories of which would still have been raw at the time when Strabo was passing through the city (12.2.9; 539 C, 22-6). Strabo reports on the invasion of Cappadocia by Tigranes [95/4 BCE]; on Tigranes’ relocation of the Mazacenans to form the population of his newly-founded [after 80 BCE] city, Tigranocerta,<sup>30)</sup> in Mesopotamia; and on the eventual return to Mazaca of at least

some of those citizens, after Tigranocerta had been successfully attacked by the Romans [69 BCE]. The homecoming of the Mazacenans lay just twenty or so years in the past at the time of Strabo's journey. By the time Strabo writes out his narrative, it has retreated into more distant history.

As with Strabo's description of Comana, the Cappadocian kings are strangely to the fore in the description of Mazaca. Strabo rehearses the reasons why the 'kings' might have chosen to site their city in an area which was rendered unsuitable in many ways by its volcanic activity. He suggests that the city was the most central location available to them that could supply wood and stone for building, and fodder for livestock; and that the fortresses that ringed the city provided security (539 C, 10-6). These were all relevant facts at the time of Strabo's passage through Mazaca. They would remain so for decades into the future. They have, however, have just recently slipped into irrelevance (with the death of the last Cappadocian king) at the time Strabo commits his memories to writing.

The vivid descriptions of the landscape around Mazaca – the dangers lurking under apparent grasslands, the burning pits into which people and animals might inadvertently fall, the subterranean fires -- may be taken as Strabo's own, the memories of a boy that have become the more distant memories of an old man by the time Strabo finally incorporates them into his monumental work. Strabo's memory may not be as sharp as it once had been. Relating how the Cappadocian king had caused the river Melas to be dammed, Strabo locates the dam where the Melas joins the 'Euphrates' (12.2.8; 538 C, 31-3). He means the Halys. Although the manuscript wording, 'Euphrates,' is corrected by modern editors to 'Halys,' it should perhaps be allowed to stand as genuine, if forgetful, Strabo.

In his description of Cappadocia so far -- Tomisa, the Cataonian plain, Comana, and Mazaca -- Strabo never once mentions the location of these places on or near the road, not even in the verbal asides from which we deduce his own presence. Yet the road explains many facets of Strabo's account of Cappadocia, such as the disproportionate amount of time he spends describing the districts through which the road runs -- Melitene, Cataonia, Cappadocian Cilicia (in which Mazaca was located), and Garsauritis -- as opposed to what he calls the 'remaining' districts.<sup>31)</sup> Moreover, the east-west road was intersected at Mazaca by a road running south from Pontus.<sup>32)</sup> Thus, when Strabo locates Mazaca geographically by giving its distance south of Pontus as around eight hundred stades, and its distance from the Euphrates as 'slightly less than double' eight hundred stades (12.2.9; 539 C, 16-8),<sup>33)</sup> he is using distances measured along the roads, even if that fact is not explicitly stated.

Some hundred and fifty kilometres west of Mazaca lay Garsaura (*Aksaray, central Turkey*), and some twenty or thirty kilometres further on, Coropassus (*Akhan*) (12.6.1; 568 C, 27-9; also 12.2.6; 537 C, 11-3).<sup>34)</sup> Strabo tells us that between these two locations is 'the Lycaonian/Cappadocian border.' He does not mean that the border runs from one to the other but rather that a traveller moving between the two locations crosses the border from Cappadocia into Lycaonia. The situation of Garsaura and Coropassus on the road is thereby implied even if not explicitly mentioned. Furthermore, Strabo gives the distance between the two way-stations as one hundred and twenty stades (12.6.1; 568 C, 28-9). The measurement is made along the road, even if that fact is not stated here.

The same antiquarian nomenclature informs Strabo's description of Garsaura as it does for Mazaca. Archelaus, the Cappadocian king, re-founded Garsaura as a city and

changed its name to ‘Archelaïs’ at some as yet undetermined point during his reign.<sup>35)</sup> Since the change cannot have occurred before 37/36 BCE (the year that Archelaus ascended the throne), the likely explanation for Strabo’s non-use of the new name is that Garsaura had not yet been renamed at the time he passed through it in his youth. Since the name had presumably been changed by 17 CE when Archelaus’ reign ended, Strabo could theoretically have used the new name when writing out his memories as an old man. However, as has already been discussed in connection with Mazaca, this is simply not the way that the human mind works. People continue to use names valid at the time of their experiences, even when those names are no longer politically accurate.

Strabo’s presence on the road from the Euphrates through Cappadocia provides context to an offhand remark he makes in the course of describing a different part of the world entirely, namely Persia and Susiana (*southern Iran*). Having provided an account of the religious rituals performed by the priestly class known as the ‘Magi’ in Persia and Susiana, Strabo continues: ‘In Cappadocia, where the tribe of the Magi (also called ‘*Puraethi*’) is large and temples belonging to the Persian gods are numerous, they slay sacrificial victims not with a sword but with a log, beating them as if with a cudgel. There are *Puraethia*, too – sacred chambers of great renown – with a central altar on which there is a lot of ash and an ever-burning fire over which the Magi keep watch. Going in daily, they recite incantations for something like an hour, holding in front of the fire their bundle of wands. They wear felt head-dresses which have cheek-pieces hanging down on either side far enough to cover the lips. The same customs are practised in temples dedicated to Anaïtis and Omanus: they have their sacred chambers too, and a cult-statue of Omanus is used in processions’ (15.3.15; 733 C, 7-16).

With Strabo's ensuing comment 'these things I have seen',<sup>36)</sup> we are jolted into the realisation that he had visited the Persian temples in Cappadocia of which he speaks. The probability is that the Cappadocian temples in question were seen by Strabo as he travelled along the road from the Euphrates (although the temples to Anaïtis and Omanus may have been seen in Pontus).<sup>37)</sup> The fact that Strabo places his Cappadocian observations in the part of his narrative where he describes Persia and Susiana is illuminating. It illustrates that the few explicit self references made by Strabo in his account of the Asian peninsula do not reflect the totality of his personal experience there.<sup>38)</sup>

The tone of Strabo's description of the Persian temples in Cappadocia is striking in its attention to detail: the heaps of ash, the cheek-pieces hanging down to the lips, even a specification of the amount of time ('something like an hour') that the Magi spend holding their bundles of wands in front of the fire. We have noticed the same keen observation of sometimes odd details in Strabo's description of the river Pyramus being narrow enough for a hare or a dog to jump across, and the burning pits at Mazaca into which unwary cattle might fall. The bludgeoning to death of sacrificial victims by the Magi could so easily be what would stand out in the memory of a young teen. Strabo's interest in the gruesome aspects of religious ritual will, as we shall see, be mirrored in his accounts of the more westerly way-stations.

Just east of Coropassus lay the southern reaches of lake Tatta (*Tuz Göl, central Turkey*), 12.5.4; 568 C, 8-15,<sup>39)</sup> which Strabo tells us acts as a natural salt pan. Strabo does not explicitly state his presence on the shores of lake Tatta but the account he gives of it is similar, in its eye for detail, to his account of the Pyramus river. Describing the

lake, Strabo tells us that ‘its water so readily encrusts anything dipped into it that loops of rope, when lowered down into it, are raised back up as garlands of salt!’ (568 C, 11-3). This sounds like a young teen’s science project. There is, too, the same interest in the fatal effects on animal life that we will see in Strabo’s later accounts: ‘birds are caught when they brush the water with their wingtips and immediately plummet downwards because of the encrustation of salt’ (568 C, 13-5).

The next two hundred kilometres or so of the road, winding through Lycaonia,<sup>40)</sup> warrant little space in Strabo’s narrative, except for the comment that ‘Tatta, the Orcaorci region, the Pitnissus region, and the mountain plateaus of the Lycaonians are cold, treeless, and fit only for grazing wild mules; water is very scarce’ (12.6.1; 568 C, 15-7). The same unflattering view of Lycaonia has earlier been evident in Strabo’s description of the extreme south of Cappadocia, which is deemed fit only for grazing wild mules ‘like much of the rest of the territory, especially the Garsavira/Lycaonia/Morimene region’ (12.2.10; 539 C, 33 – 540 C, 1). There were, apparently, few enjoyable experiences here for the young Strabo. By the time Strabo writes out his work, the area has seen the kingdom of Amyntas come and go, and Strabo is able to drop into his account a few events from these intervening years.

With the city of Philomelium (*Akşehir, west central Turkey*), we reach Phrygia. Phrygia, like Lycaonia, was an ancient cultural entity rather than a contemporary political one. Philomelium lay at the foot of the Parorius mountain range (*Sultan Dağ*); on the other side lay Antioch (*Yalvaç*). Both cities are described at 12.8.14; 577 C, 1-10.<sup>41)</sup> Strabo refers a little inelegantly to Antioch as the one called ‘by-Pisidia’ (577 C, 4). The epithet is necessitated by the fact that there was another Antioch in Phrygia, further west



along the same road. The Antioch at the Pisidian end of Phrygia needs to be distinguished from the more westerly, but still Phrygian, Antioch, to which we will come later in our quasi-journey and which was differentiated by the epithet ‘on-Maeander.’

Another hundred kilometres or so west of Antioch lay Apamia<sup>42)</sup> (*Dinar, west central Turkey*), 12.8.15; 577 C, 20 – 578 C, 7.<sup>43)</sup> Strabo opens his account of Apamia with the words ‘Apamia is a great emporium of Asia specifically so-called, ranking second to Ephesus’ (577 C, 20-1). The qualifier ‘specifically so-called’ suggests that Strabo uses ‘Asia’ in the sense of the Roman province of that name<sup>44)</sup> rather than in the sense of the Asian peninsula or the continent as a whole.<sup>45)</sup> Strabo uses the same turn of phrase when he refers to the province of Pontus as ‘Pontus now specifically so-called’.<sup>46)</sup> Apamia, after having been allocated for some years to the Roman governor of Cilicia, was returned to the Roman province of Asia in 49 BCE.<sup>47)</sup> This would be around the time that Strabo was heading to Nysa for his education. It was perhaps the contemporary reclassification of the city that made the ranking stick in Strabo’s memory.

Lying another hundred kilometres to the west along the Ephesus road was the city of Laodicia-on-Lycus; and some ten kilometres north of Laodicia was the sacred site of Hierapolis (*Pamukkale, south west Turkey*), 13.4.14; 629 C, 24 – 630 C, 9.<sup>48)</sup> In describing Hierapolis, Strabo paints an astonishingly visual picture of the subterranean shaft that existed there, sacred to the god of the underworld, filled with a dark, dense mist that guarantees instant death to any living creature that enters. When bulls are driven in, Strabo tells us, they are dragged out as corpses. Then, in one of those asides which so inadvertently but so indubitably indicate his presence, Strabo announces ‘I sent in some sparrows, and they immediately suffocated and dropped down dead’ (630 C, 2-3). The

fascination with dying animals, as seen in Strabo's memories of the way in which the Magi in Cappadocia slew their victims and birds dropped down into the water over lake Tatta, is consistent with Strabo's young age. Similarly, Strabo notes with almost child-like glee that, while the eunuchs in charge of the shrine could supposedly enter the shaft without suffering any ill-effects from the deadly vapours, 'I saw that they had a look on their faces as if they were choking' (630 C, 5-6). Their immunity, far from being the result of divine providence, was the result of them holding their breath!

Because of the way Strabo arranges his material, his description of Hierapolis is encountered by the reader some fifteen thousand words after his account of Laodicia. The separation of the two passages in the narrative obscures the geographical proximity of the locations described. In order to access Hierapolis, Strabo must have travelled through Laodicia on the main east-west road. With Laodicia (*Eski Hisar -- nr. Karsiyak -- south west Turkey*), 12.8.16; 578 C, 8-24,<sup>49)</sup> we are only one hundred kilometres or so from Nysa. Strabo's descriptions of cities that form the way-stations along the road now start to lose their antique overtones. Most notably, from here on in, Strabo begins his practice of listing each city's famous sons (and sometimes daughters),<sup>50)</sup> many of whom would go on to play pivotal roles in Asia in Strabo's adult years.

At Laodicia, the famous citizens included Polemo and his father, Zeno (578 C, 13-5). When noting this fact, Strabo has just described Laodicia as undergoing expansion 'in our times and in the times of our fathers' (578 C, 8-9). The implication is that Strabo in some way identifies himself and his own father with the son-and-father duo, Polemo and Zeno. Laodicia was the city from which, in the early part of the year 50 BCE, Cicero in his capacity as governor of Cilicia sent off a series of letters. One of those letters was

to the Roman governor of Pontus and Bithynia, commending one ‘Servilius Strabo’.<sup>51)</sup> It seems increasingly probable that this Servilius Strabo was a relative of our Strabo. Chronology-wise, Servilius could be Strabo’s father.<sup>52)</sup> Is it possible that Servilius’ business in Pontus would include picking up his young son and his wife, and bringing them back to Roman Asia?

Strabo shows the same fascination with volcanic formations and subterranean rivers in Laodicia as at Mazaca and in the Pyramus watershed. He notes the river Lycus from which Laodicia takes its name of ‘Laodicia-on-the-Lycus,’ and the river Cadmus which flows underground for some distance before rising to the surface ‘illustrating how the terrain is porous and seismically-formed – for Laodicia is seismically-formed, if anywhere is’ (578 C, 23-4). Given Strabo’s explicitly-attested presence in Hierapolis, just ten kilometres further north, we can assume that Strabo passed through Laodicia, lingering for long enough to make these observations personally; and that many decades later he includes these youthful observations in his final work.

The road proceeded westwards from Laodicia some twenty-five kilometres to Carura (*Tekke, south west Turkey*), 12.8.17; 578 C, 26-30.<sup>53)</sup> In describing Carura, Strabo notes that it marks the boundary between Phrygia and Caria, thereby implicitly referring to the road and to the point where the road passes from Phrygia into Caria (just as he does in the case of the Cappadocia/Lycaonia boundary). Strabo’s description of Carura involves a wonderful example of local lore which can only have been picked up *in situ*. Supposedly to illustrate the seismic activity at Carura (but surely in reality simply because it is a good story), Strabo tells the tale of a brothel-keeper who set himself up

with a horde of prostitutes in the town's inns – and disappeared along with all the women one night during an earthquake (578 C, 28-30)!

Another twenty-five kilometres west along the ancient road brings us to the second city in Phrygia called 'Antioch', the one distinguished by the name 'Antioch-on-Maeander' (*Aliğaçiftliği, south west Turkey*), 13.4.15; 630 C, 17-25.<sup>54)</sup> In describing Antioch, Strabo makes no explicit reference to the road running through it. Later on in the narrative, however, Strabo alludes to the extreme western stretch of the road as running inland from Ephesus 'to Antioch and the Maeander'.<sup>55)</sup> Thus, Antioch turns out to be the first place for which the road's presence is asserted – first, that is, as encountered by a traveller moving along the road from the east, as we are doing in our quasi-journey. In contrast, when a reader following the order of Strabo's narrative first encounters Antioch, he finds only an implicit reference to the road in Strabo's mention of its bridge across the Maeander river (630 C, 21). We can assume that Strabo passed over this bridge; and that in mentioning it, along with Antioch's dried figs and seismic activity, Strabo is drawing on personal memory.

Another forty to fifty kilometres brings us to Nysa (*Sultanhisar, south west Turkey*),<sup>56)</sup> 14.1.43; 649 C, 18-24; also 14.1.46-8; 650 C, 17-32. We are treated to a vivid description of the mountain stream forming a ravine that splits the city in two, making it into what Strabo calls a *dipolis* ('a double-city'). The ravine is spanned by a bridge (implying the existence of the road) and an amphitheatre; and there are two mountain spurs, beneath one of which lies a 'gymnasium for youths' (14.1.43; 649 C, 21-3). After inserting a description of the neighbouring village of Acharaca, Strabo returns to conclude his description of Nysa, with the result that Nysa is a *dipolis* in the narrative as

well as in reality. In concluding his description, Strabo lists Nysa's famous sons. Among these is Aristodemus 'under whom in his extreme old age I studied for the whole period of my youth in Nysa' (14.1.48; 650 C, 26-7). This belated announcement serves as an excellent illustration of Strabo's reluctance to prioritise his personal experience.

Since Strabo spent his school years in Nysa, he presumably frequented its 'gymnasium for youths,' which he mentions just before inserting into his account of Nysa a description of the neighbouring village of Acharaca (*Salavatl, south west Turkey*),<sup>57)</sup> 14.1.44; 649 C, 25 – 650 C, 9. The insertion is at first sight rather odd but, as with the Tomisa-story, what Strabo tells us about Acharaca explains its position in the narrative. Acharaca was the site of a cave sacred to the underworld which, as at Hierapolis, could be entered by the priests but was deadly to others. Strabo paints a colourful picture of the annual festival at Acharaca in which 'youths and young men from the gymnasium strip down, anoint themselves with oil and then, around noon, take a bull which they drive enthusiastically into the cave; after they let it go, it manages only a few steps before it falls down and breathes its last' (650 C, 6-9).

The 'gymnasium' that supplies the 'youths and young men' who have so much fun driving bulls into the cave at Acharaca is surely one and the same as the 'gymnasium for youths' at Nysa. The description of the activities in which these youths indulge, with its reference to the bull falling down dead, is vintage Strabo. It bears a striking resemblance to Strabo's account of the bulls that are dragged out as corpses from the cave at Hierapolis, the sparrows that suffocate when Strabo releases them into the cave, and the unlucky birds who dip their wings into the salty water of lake Tatta and are rendered flightless. There is the slightly strange detail concerning the time of day

(‘around noon’) when the bull gets driven into the cave, reminding us of Strabo’s specification of the amount of time (‘something like an hour’) spent by the Magi in Cappadocia holding their bundles of wands before the fire. Strabo further tells us that the celebrants in the annual festival at Acharaca see and hear about the priests’ healing activities in the sacred cave (650 C, 4-6). Since he makes this statement just after describing these activities in detail (649 C, 28 – 650 C, 4), the implication is that Strabo himself has been one of the celebrants. Everything points to Strabo, as a youth from the Nysa gymnasium, being one of the ‘youths and young men’ who take part in the various rituals at Acharaca. He clearly enjoyed himself, as he did at Hierapolis. Writing down these memories as an old man, he is perhaps reliving the pleasures of his youth.

Although Nysa was where Strabo spent several years being educated, he at some point travelled the eighty kilometres or so to the western terminus of the road at Ephesus (*Selçuk, south west Turkey*), 14.1.21-5; 640 C, 10 – 642 C, 11. Strabo’s presence in Ephesus is revealed in an incidental aside made during his account of the city. At Ephesus there was a magnificent temple, one of the two largest in Asia,<sup>58)</sup> nearly three centuries old already at the time of Strabo’s youth. Strabo tells us that the temple was full of works of art by any number of craftsmen but that the altar was especially graced with works by Praxiteles. He continues: ‘some works by Thrason were pointed out to me, too: the *Hecatesium*, the ... *Penelope*, and *Old Euryclia*’ (14.1.23; 641 C, 12-4). We see signs that a youth whose earlier interests had centred on asphyxiating sparrows, expiring bulls, and the bludgeoning of sacrificial victims, is beginning to take an interest in more refined matters. Strabo’s schooling is perhaps having its desired effect.

Ephesus was much more than the site of a famous temple. It was the largest city in the whole of the Asian peninsula: ‘it grows bigger’, says Strabo, ‘by the day’ (14.1.24; 641 C, 33). Ephesus had an important harbour, albeit one that was already in the process of silting up, as Strabo points out (641 C, 24-32). The harbour at Ephesus, the major embarkation point for voyages into the Mediterranean, is the likely point from which Strabo, after his education in Nysa was over, set out on the next stage of his life, his overseas education.<sup>59)</sup> After spending some years abroad, it is quite possible that Strabo sailed back to Ephesus and retraced the road to Nysa, which was after all as much his home now as Amasia.<sup>60)</sup> Strabo’s memories of the stretch of road between Ephesus and Nysa may therefore have been acquired over more than one journey, travelling in both directions.

It is interesting in this respect that Strabo, in describing the cities between Ephesus and Nysa, for the first time uses the road to provide order to his narrative<sup>61)</sup> and that, in doing so, he follows the road eastwards from Ephesus. We will at this point reverse our direction and travel eastwards with him. Some twenty kilometres east of Ephesus was the city of Magnesia (*Tekke, south west Turkey*),<sup>62)</sup> 14.1.39-41; 647 C, 7 – 648 C, 28. Magnesia, like Ephesus, boasted a magnificent temple, described by Strabo as ‘inferior to the one at Ephesus in terms of the size of its temple and in its collection of offerings, but far superior as regards the sensitivity and skill with which the inner sanctum was constructed’ (14.1.40; 647 C, 26-9). Strabo’s appreciation of the ‘sensitivity and skill’ inherent in the construction of the temple can be taken as derived from his own observation, and his comparison of it to the Ephesus temple can be taken as a matter of personal judgement.

Thirty kilometres to the east lay the city of Trallis (*Aydın, south west Turkey*),<sup>63)</sup> 14.1.42; 648 C, 29 – 649 C, 17. Strabo specifies that for those travelling towards Trallis from Magnesia ‘the Mesogis is on the left-hand side, while the Maeander plain is at the road itself and on the right-hand side’ (648 C, 29-30). The same topography, Strabo tells us, applies as far as Nysa and Antioch (648 C, 32-3). Strabo dwells at length on Trallis’ famous citizens whose description, as at Laodicia, suggests some familiarity. These famous citizens include a father-and-daughter duo: Pythodorus and Pythodoris.<sup>64)</sup> Strabo tells us that Pythodorus was originally from Nysa; his daughter Pythodoris is ‘currently’ [i.e., c.20 CE] the reigning monarch in the kingdom of Pontus (649 C, 4-9). This is of course the kingdom of Pontus in its latest incarnation, much reduced from its glory days under Mithridates.

Another thirty kilometres or so along the road brings us back (from the point of view of our quasi-journey) to Nysa, the lynchpin of Strabo’s early travels, the city to which he had immigrated as a youth, the place where he received a sterling education in his (or perhaps his father’s) intellectual and cultural heritage, a site marvellously located within striking distance of many of the treasures of Roman Asia.

### **An ‘all-inclusive’ package**

The passages where Strabo’s presence in the Asian peninsula is made explicit have previously been studied without attention to the part played in the narrative by the locations in which that presence is attested, or to the physical connectedness of the locations on the east-west road.<sup>65)</sup> Such an approach has ignored the out-dated tone and youthful zest that frequently characterise the descriptions of these locations. It has failed



to recognise that other way-stations along the road also feature in Strabo's narrative; and that the descriptions of these other way-stations sometimes share the same youthful tone. It has overlooked Strabo's need as a youth to get from Pontus to Roman Asia, and the limited number of ways in which that journey could be made. I argue not only that we need to raise the profile of each of these factors independently, but also that we should combine them to produce a coherent picture. Taken together as a package, they suggest that Strabo was familiar with the entire road from the Euphrates to Ephesus, and that he acquired that familiarity early in his life.

Other interpretations are admittedly possible regarding the exact pattern of Strabo's familiarity with the road. He might, for instance, have travelled the eastern and western stretches independently – but then how did he get from the eastern stretch to the western stretch? A possible scenario is that Strabo joined the east-west road at the more central juncture, at Mazaca<sup>66</sup>); headed east towards the Euphrates; then retraced his steps to Mazaca and westwards to Ephesus. This can certainly not be disproved. The quasi-journey we have followed in this article is intended only to support the contention that Strabo travelled the entire length of the road between the Euphrates and Ephesus, not necessarily that his journey was consistently and exclusively in one direction. In pure theory, Strabo might even have headed across the Euphrates and travelled into Armenia, although this seems highly unlikely given that his description of locations in Armenia – other than Tomisa -- lacks any sense of familiarity.

Admittedly, too, there might be other explanations for the tenor of Strabo's descriptions. Vivid accounts bearing the hall-marks of personal experience, but not explicitly claimed by Strabo as his own, might be lifted from another writer. Where eye-

witness accounts are specified as Strabo's own, what appear to be youthful fascinations might simply indicate an eternally inquisitive mind. However, given that these accounts concern locations along a road which Strabo is known to have travelled, and given that they betray the interests of a young teen such as Strabo would have been when travelling from Pontus to Roman Asia, surely we must seriously consider the likelihood that they are born of Strabo's own early experience.

Taking this more connected approach pays dividends for the interpretation of those passages of apparently early date that have made scholars so uncomfortable. I argue that, rather than being the relics of a putative first draft of the *Geography*, these passages show Strabo taking memories acquired as a young teen on the way to Nysa, and incorporating them into a work written in his old age. Strabo may add newer and more recent information at the time he writes his memories down, but the original flavour tends to dominate. Who can forget the excitement with which the subterranean course of the Pyramus river is described, and the sense of lowering a javelin down through a hole and watching the water's immense force push it aside?

Finally, I return to the question of Strabo's silence over his own presence on the road. As noted at the outset of this article, Strabo appears to maintain this silence even in the 'retrospective' of the east-west road (14.2.29; 663 C, 19-33). Immediately prior to this retrospective, Strabo provides distances along another road, running broadly north-south through Caria and Ionia (663 C, 8-19).<sup>67)</sup> Attributing these distances to the earlier writer Artemidorus, Strabo then introduces the retrospective with the words 'since there is a common road, well-trodden by all who travel east from Ephesus, he [*i.e.*, *Artemidorus*] goes along this too' (663 C, 19-20). In view of the findings of this paper,

Strabo himself should be included among the 'all' who have travelled the road, albeit starting from Cappadocia in the east rather than Ephesus in the west. Strabo's silence about his presence on the road is not as complete as it first appears.

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<sup>1</sup> Dueck 2000, 15-30.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo describes the Asian peninsula as if working his way across a map from top to bottom and, broadly, from right to left, using ancient divisions based on culture, ethnicity, and language (see Fig. 1): first, Cappadocia, Pontus, Paphlagonia, and Bithynia; then Galatia, Lycaonia, and Pisidia; Mysia and Phrygia; coastline of Sea of Marmara; Aegean coast and hinterlands; southern coastline and hinterlands.

<sup>3</sup> One location is Laodicia-on-Lycus: 12.8.16; 578 C, 8-24. The other is Hierapolis: 13.4.14; 629 C, 24 – 630 C, 9. Numerical references are to book, chapter, and section of Strabo's *Geography*, followed by C-page and line numbers as per Radt 2002-11. Repeat references to a specific passage are by C-page and line numbers alone.

<sup>4</sup> Potheary 2011, 40-2.

<sup>5</sup> Strabo calls Amasia 'my [*or* 'our'] homeland' (12.3.15; 547 C, 29-30) and 'my [*or* 'our'] city' (12.3.39; 561 C, 5). See Lindsay 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Dueck (1999, 475-8), *idem* (2000, 147-51), and Potheary (2002), argue that the *Geography* was started in 17 or 18 CE, and finished in 23 or 24 CE, when Strabo was in his late seventies/early eighties.

<sup>7</sup> Syme (1995, 356-67), Lindsay (1997), Dueck (1999, 467-75), and Potheary (2002, 390-2) survey and critique the earlier scholarship on the two-draft theory. Syme supported the two-draft theory; Lindsay suggested multiple layers of composition over a prolonged period. Dueck and Potheary reject the two-draft theory and support composition of a single draft, written in real time.

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<sup>8</sup> See nn. 26, 28, and 35.

<sup>9</sup> See n. 61.

<sup>10</sup> Talbert 2000 (= *BA*). *BA* is an excellent source for the network of roads in the Asian peninsula. The Euphrates-Ephesus road, including detours and short-cuts, can be traced from east to west on *BA* Maps 64, 63, 62, 65, and 61.

<sup>11</sup> I have Latinised or, in some cases, Anglicised (e.g., ‘Antioch’ rather than ‘Antiochia’) the Greek spellings used by Strabo. *BA* sometimes uses different spellings.

<sup>12</sup> In some cases, Turkish names are of locations near, rather than at, the ancient site.

<sup>13</sup> Translations are from Potheary, *Strabo and the Modern World*, forthcoming.

<sup>14</sup> See *BA* Map 64 for the road from Pontus via Megalopolis (E1) to Melitene (G4).

<sup>15</sup> Tomisa: *BA* Map 64, H4. Road retrospective: 14.2.29; 663 C, 32-3.

<sup>16</sup> Strabo does not explicitly state that the Tomisa fort had earlier belonged to the Cappadocian king but the anecdote relies on that assumption for its humour. Syme (1995, 96-7) suggested that the Tomisa fort had, in the first instance, been gifted to the Cappadocians by the Sophenians, which would add yet another twist to the story.

<sup>17</sup> Schwartz (1895, 926) and Potheary (2011, 48) date Strabo’s education in Nysa to the 40s BCE.

<sup>18</sup> Strabo has already mentioned the death of the last Cappadocian king in Book 6 (6.4.2; 288 C, 6-7), as well as earlier in Book 12 (12.1.4; 534 C, 26), by the time he tells the Tomisa story. Potheary (2002, 401, 403-8) argues that the Book 12 was written c.20 CE.

<sup>19</sup> Pyramus river: *BA* Map 64, D-E 4.

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<sup>20</sup> Cappadocian Comana: *BA* Map 64, C 4. In the road retrospective, Erpha (Map 64, C3) rather than Comana is mentioned as a way-station: see n. 33.

<sup>21</sup> Pontic Comana: 12.3.32-36; 557 C, 14 -- 559 C, 20.

<sup>22</sup> 12.3.33; 557 C, 22-3.

<sup>23</sup> 12.3.32; 557 C, 19-20.

<sup>24</sup> 12.3.32; 557 C, 18.

<sup>25</sup> Strabo provides a list of the Roman-appointed incumbents at Pontic Comana up to the time of writing: 12.3.34-35; 558 C, 8 – 559 C, 7.

<sup>26</sup> Pais (1890, 339) and *idem* (1908, 398-9) used Strabo's statement to support the two-draft theory, dating the putative first draft around 7 BCE. Strabo's statement will remain true until 17 CE so, while not inconsistent with Pais' putative date, it does little to confirm it. Pais did not explain why Strabo's statement was not emended in the putative second draft.

<sup>27</sup> Mazaca: *BA* Map 63, G3. Road retrospective: 14.2.29; 663 C, 30-2.

<sup>28</sup> One might assume that the putative first draft would be dated before the name-change. However, Syme (1995, 298) cited the name-change in support of a draft dated to 1/2 CE, at which point Strabo's use of the name Mazaca would already be ten years out of date. Lasserre (1981, 6-10) cited Strabo's silence over Mazaca's name-change in support of the two-draft theory but was uncertain how a date for the first draft could be established.

<sup>29</sup> Similarly, a friend who spent time in Leningrad in the 1970s continues to refer to the city by that name, despite the fact that the name 'Leningrad' was changed (back) to 'St. Petersburg' in 1991.



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<sup>30</sup> Tigranocerta was probably situated on the same road as Mazaca (*BA* Map 89, D3)

some 650 kilometres to the east.

<sup>31</sup> 12.1.4; 534 C, 30-1.

<sup>32</sup> See *BA* Map 64 for the road from Pontus via Megalopolis (E1) to Mazaca (A3).

<sup>33</sup> In the road retrospective (14.2.29; 663 C, 32-3), Strabo specifies the distance from the Euphrates to Mazaca as 1440 stades, measured along an alternative route via the town of Erpha (*BA* Map 64, C3). Strabo's vaguer wording within his detailed description of Mazaca may be intended to cover the slightly longer distance via Cappadocian Comana.

<sup>34</sup> Garsaura: *BA* Map 63, E4. Coropassus: *BA* 63, D4. Road retrospective: 14.2.29; 663 C, 29-30. The same figure (120 stades) is given for Garsaura-Coropassus in the road retrospective as at 568 C, 29.

<sup>35</sup> Anderson (1923, 3 and 10) used Strabo's silence over the change of name to 'Archelaïs,' despite the uncertainty of its date, to support the theory of a first draft in 3/2 BCE. Anderson did not adequately explain why this first draft was not updated at the time of the putative second draft.

<sup>36</sup> Strabo contrasts (15.3.15; 733 C, 16-7) his own observations in Cappadocia with the account he has given (15.3.13-14; 732 C, 18 – 733 C, 6) of the Magi's rituals in Persia taken from written sources.

<sup>37</sup> Strabo's description of a temple to Anaïtis and Omanus in Pontus: 11.8.4; 512 C, 3-7; also 12.3.37; 559 C, 22-8.

<sup>38</sup> Similarly, in describing Iberia, Strabo mentions two types of local tree. He compares the first with an Egyptian tree of which he tells us he has personal knowledge, and the

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second with a Cappadocian plant which grows close to the ground and is used in the production of woven goods (3.5.10; 175 C, 15-22). The implication is that Strabo has personal knowledge of the Cappadocian plant, as well as of the Egyptian tree.

<sup>39</sup> Lake Tatta was more extensive in antiquity than currently: *BA* Map 63, C-D 2-4.

<sup>40</sup> Lycaonia: *BA* Map 63, C-D4. Road retrospective: 14.2.29; 663 C, 27-8.

<sup>41</sup> Philomelium and Antioch-by-Pisidia: *BA* Map 62, F5. Road retrospective (Philomelium): 14.2.29; 663 C, 27.

<sup>42</sup> Syme (1995, 337) incorrectly stated that ‘there is no evidence that the young Strabo ... had penetrated [*assuming a start point in Nysa*] as far as Apamia, still less traversed the roads of inner Anatolia between that city and ... Amasia in Pontus.’

<sup>43</sup> Apamia: *BA* Map 62, D5; also Map 65, D1. Road retrospective: 14.2.29; 663 C, 24.

<sup>44</sup> Other rankings by Strabo within Asia (in the sense of the Roman province) include Cibyra, ‘among the most important dioceses in Asia’ (13.4.17; 631 C, 15, and see n. 47 below), and the Magnesia temple, the third largest ‘in Asia’ (see n. 58 below). See also Strabo’s description of Trallis as a well-constituted city ‘of Asia’ (14.1.42; 649 C, 2).

<sup>45</sup> For Asia= Asian peninsula and continent: 12.1.3; 534 C, 14-5. For Asia= peninsula: 12.2.11; 540 C, 14; also 12.3.40; 562 C, 8; and 14.1.24; 642 C, 1. For Asia= Roman province and continent: 13.4.2; 624 C, 29-30.

<sup>46</sup> 14.5.24; 678 C, 28-9. This passage should be added to the discussion in Mitchell 2002, 48-9, on the newness of the name ‘Pontus.’

<sup>47</sup> Magie 1950, 402 (with his nn. 76-7 on p. 1256), 418. Magie notes that Cibyra-Laodicia was returned to Asia at the same time.

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<sup>48</sup> Hierapolis: *BA* Map 65, B2.

<sup>49</sup> Laodicia: *BA* Map 65, B2. Road retrospective: 14.2.29; 663 C, 23.

<sup>50</sup> Engels 2005.

<sup>51</sup> Letter 138 (ed. Shackleton-Bailey, 1977) = 13.64, discussed in Potthecary 1999, 692, and *idem* 2011, 45.

<sup>52</sup> Cassia 2000, 222, modifying a suggestion in Pais 1890, 359-60, and 1922, 299 n.1. Cassia's suggestion came too late to be included in Potthecary 1999. Bowersock (2000, 19) sees Cicero's 'Servilius Strabo' as a member of the Roman Servilii, one who may have been responsible for bringing Strabo to Rome. It is perhaps more probable, given the tone of Cicero's letter, that 'Servilius Strabo' is an Asiatic Greek who has enjoyed the patronage of the Roman Servilii.

<sup>53</sup> Carura: *BA* Map 65, A2. Road retrospective: 14.2.29; 663 C, 21, 26.

<sup>54</sup> Antioch: *BA* Map 65, A2; also Map 61, H2. Road retrospective: 14.2.29; 663 C, 22.

<sup>55</sup> See n. 61.

<sup>56</sup> Nysa: *BA* Map 61, G2. Road retrospective: 14.2.29; 663 C, 22.

<sup>57</sup> Acharaca: *BA* Map 61, G2.

<sup>58</sup> This ranking of the Ephesus temple is implied by Strabo's ranking of the Magnesia temple as 'exceeding in size all [sc. the temples] in Asia except for the one in Ephesus and the one in Didyma' (14.1.40; 647 C, 29-30). In this context, Asia= Roman province.

<sup>59</sup> Strabo's first overseas destination was probably Rome. Potthecary (2011, 49) puts Strabo's studies in Rome in the 30s BCE. For other indications of Strabo's presence in Rome in the 30s BCE: Lindsay 1997, 489; Dueck 2000, 85. Strabo's specification of

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Servilius Isauricus as the man ‘whom I saw’ (12.6.2; 568 C, 34) should not be used as proof that Strabo was in Rome before Isauricus’ death in 44 BCE, as Strabo probably saw Isauricus in Roman Asia; nor should it be used to support 64 BCE as Strabo’s birth year. See Engels 1999, 26-7; and discussion in Potthecary 2011, 44-6, 48.

<sup>60</sup> There is an increasing awareness of Nysa’s relevance to our understanding of Strabo: Lindsay 2005, 185-6.

<sup>61</sup> ‘What remains to be described inland from the Ionian coast is the area associated with the road from Ephesus to Antioch and the Maeander’ (14.1.38; 647 C, 4-5). Strabo proceeds to use the road to frame his description of Magnesia, Trallis, and Nysa (14.1.39-48; 647 C, 7 – 650 C, 32), Ephesus having been described earlier as part of Ionia (14.1.21-5; 640 C, 10 – 642 C, 11) and Antioch as part of Phrygia (13.4.15; 630 C, 17-25).

<sup>62</sup> Magnesia: *BA* Map 61, F2. Road retrospective: 14.2.29; 663 C, 22.

<sup>63</sup> Trallis: *BA* Map 61, F2. Road retrospective: 14.2.29; 663 C, 22.

<sup>64</sup> Pythodorus and Pythodoris: Bowersock 2000, 18; Lindsay 2005, 185 and 198-9.

<sup>65</sup> Pais 1908, 418-9; Honigmann 1931, 81; Engels 1999, 31; Dueck 2000, 18-9, 24.

<sup>66</sup> See n. 32.

<sup>67</sup> For the road through Caria and Ionia (which, between Trallis and Ephesus, coincides with the east-west road), see *BA* Map 61, G4-E1; Map 56, E4-5.