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Edward Anson ✦ David Hollander ✦ Timothy Howe
Joseph Roisman ✦ John Vanderspoel ✦ Pat Wheatley ✦
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Contents of volume twenty-eight

Numbers 1-2

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Hugh Lindsay, <i>Strabo and the shape of his Historika Hypomnemata</i> |
| 20 | Paul McKechnie, <i>W.W. Tarn and the philosophers</i> |
| 37 | Monica D'Agostini, <i>The Shade of Andromache: Laodike of Sardis between Homer and Polybios</i> |
| 61 | John Shannahan, <i>Two Notes on the Battle of Cunaxa</i> |

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Strabo and the shape of his *Historika Hypomnemata*

Hugh Lindsay

Strabo's *Geography* and its historical focus¹

Strabo's best known work is his *Geography* in 17 books, and 19th century critics, who despaired of his amateurism in the areas of maths and astronomy, pointed out that even in the *Geography*, his most obvious strengths seem to lie rather in the field of history.² In her sympathetic study of Strabo, Katherine Clarke has explored the overlap between historical and geographical thinking, with a strong emphasis on the construction of the concepts of space and time.³ Her book is a serious attempt to evaluate what Strabo understood by geography within his Augustan context, and how he saw it in relation to history. The close relationship between geography and history had its immediate antecedents in the work of Polybius and other Hellenistic authors.⁴ Strabo emerges as an author who had a keen sense of the need for his *Geography* to expose present physical realities, without excluding what was, in his view, relevant discussion of the past (Strabo 6.1.2=C253). Scientific aspects of geography were not central to his approach, and were quickly surveyed in the introductory books (1 & 2). The overall product can be labelled as cultural geography, and its concerns, including his obsessive interest in Homer, can be construed as an outcome of his traditional Hellenistic education.⁵ His focus on urbanisation resonates better with modern notions of a geographical theme.⁶ He views other cultures through Hellenised eyes, and favours centres which foster Greek culture.⁷ Clarke's attention is largely focused on the extant *Geography*, but Strabo started with an earlier historical work, which owed conspicuous debts to Polybius, including conceptualising the work as a continuation of his famous predecessor. Here the aim is to examine the fragments of the earlier work, and try to isolate some prominent characteristics, in so far as this is possible. Limitations include the small number of surviving citations from the work, and the motives of the restricted number of authors employing it. Strabo's historical work appears most frequently in Josephus, generally in the *Antiquities*, but these references do not always clarify

¹ Thanks to the readers for *AHB* for further references and advice.

² See, for example, P. Otto, 'Strabonis *Historikon Hypomnematon* Fragmenta' *Leipziger Studien* 11 (1889) 3-4.

³ K.J. Clarke, *Between Geography and History: Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World* (1999), especially chapters 4 and 5. Reviewed by S. Pothecary in *BMCR* 2000.09.06.

⁴ There is dispute over whether Polybius had an extensive separate treatment of geography in book 34. Clarke is strongly against this theory. Compare F.W. Walbank, 'The Geography of Polybius' *C & M* 9 (1948) 155-182; P. Pédech, 'La Géographie de Polybe: structure et contenu du livre XXXIV des *Histoires*' *LEC* 24 (1956) 3-24.

⁵ See D. Dueck, *Strabo of Amasia: A Greek Man of Letters in Augustan Rome* (2000) 8-14. On his Homeric interests, see D.M. Schenkeveld, 'Strabo on Homer' *Mnemosyne* 29 (1976) 52-64; A.M. Biraschi, 'Strabo and Homer: A Chapter in Cultural History,' in D. Dueck, H. Lindsay and S. Pothecary (eds), *Strabo's Cultural Geography* (2005) 73-85.

⁶ See P. Pédech, 'La Géographie urbaine chez Strabon' *Ancient Society* 21 (1971) 234-253.

⁷ See J. Engels, 'Andres endoxoi or men of high reputation in Strabo's *Geography*' in D. Dueck, H. Lindsay and S. Pothecary (eds), *Strabo's Cultural Geography* (2005) 129-143.

the shape of the original. Some investigation of how and why Josephus cites Strabo may help to comprehend this.

The extant fragments

Jacoby's edition of nineteen identified fragments of the separate historical work, or works, is now available in an English translation by D.W. Roller in the *BNJ*.⁸ There is also further recent comment on the material in Roller's newly published translation of the entire *Geography*.⁹ The fragments were previously edited by D. Ambaglio, who included a potentially relevant papyrus, which, if accepted as the work of Strabo, extends known fragments later, into the 20s BC.¹⁰ It deals with the capture of Pselchis (Dakka) in Nubia by the Augustan prefect of Egypt, P. Petronius, in the period between 25/24-21 BC.¹¹ This is an episode which appears in the *Geography* (Strabo 17.1.54=C820), and therefore could be attributed to the *Historika Hypomnemata* with some plausibility. It has not, however, been included in Roller's new edition in the *BNJ*.

Some now discarded work from the end of the 19th century lies in the past. P. Otto believed that Strabo employed his earlier historical work as a mine for his geographical project; he thought a careless approach to this reuse helped to explain inaccuracies in the *Geography*. He claimed all the considerable number of passages on historical subjects from the *Geography* as reused fragments of the earlier work; his cavalier approach could never be approved today.¹² Nevertheless critics today would emphasise Strabo's historical abilities, and the material can usefully be reviewed to discover the range of Strabo's interests, and how he applied them to his theme of cultural geography.¹³ Pédech also claimed that the historical

⁸ *FGrHist* 91 = IIA: 430-436; IIC: 292-295. See now Duane W. Roller, 'Strabo of Amaseia (91)' *Brill's New Jacoby*. Editor in Chief: Ian Worthington. Brill Online 2014: <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-jacoby/strabo-of-amaseia-91-a91> (Strabo entries henceforth *BNJ* 91). I have cited the *BNJ* references throughout, but all translations are my own.

⁹ D.W. Roller, *The Geography of Strabo: An English Translation with Introduction and Notes* (2014).

¹⁰ D. Ambaglio, 'Gli *Historika hypomnemata* di Strabone: Introduzione, traduzione italiana e commento dei frammenti' *Memorie dell'Istituto Lombardo - Accademia de Scienze e Lettere, Classe di Lettere - Scienze Morali e Storiche* 39:5 (1990) 377-425. His edition includes as fragment 20 the papyrus P. Vogliano 46. See Ambaglio (1990) 405; 416, originally attributed to Strabo's *Historika Hypomnemata* by G. Manganaro, 'Il Pap. Vogl. 46 (40) di Milano e la battaglia di Pselchis,' *QUCC* 18 (1974) 157-71.

¹¹ For the chronological problems, see S. Jameson, 'Chronology of the campaigns of Aelius Gallus and C. Petronius' *JRS* 58 (1968) 71-84.

¹² See P. Pédech, 'Strabon Historien' *Studi Cataudella* 11 (1972) 395-408 at 395. For comment on Otto's methods see J. Engels, *Augusteische Oikumenengeographie und Universalhistorie im Werk Strabons von Amaseia* (1999) 76-80; and his 'Strabo of Amasia and his importance in the development of ancient universal historiography' in P. Liddel-A. Fear (eds), *Historiae Mundi. Studies in Universal Historiography* (2010) 71-86

¹³ On Strabo's life and career see D. Dueck, *Strabo of Amasia* (2000); on the controversy over the date of the *Geography* see H. Lindsay 'Syme's *Anatolica* and the date of Strabo's *Geography*' *Klio* 79 (1997) 484-507; D.W. Roller,

notices in the *Geography* did not derive from new and targeted research, but rather from a process such as Otto had described; while this may be doubted, Pédech took the reasonable view that the main thrust of the historical work can still be discerned from emphases later apparent in the *Geography*, where matters have certainly at least been reshaped to suit the central geographical theme.¹⁴

Structure and scope of the *Historika Hypomnemata* and the possibility of more than one historical work

The *Historika Hypomnemata* may have contained a preamble in four books followed by a sequel to Polybius in forty three, although others believe there were two separate works on the basis of the following passage.¹⁵

Strabo 11.9.3=C515 = FGrHist 91 F1 = BNJ 91 F1:

Having said many things about Parthian customs in the sixth book of my *Historika Hypomnemata*, the second book of the sequel to Polybius, I shall pass them by here, so that I do not seem to be repetitive, saying just this, that Posidonius says that the council of the Parthians is in two parts, one part of kinsmen, the other of wise men and Magi, from both of which kings are chosen.

Roller, who approves of the idea of a unified work, suggests that the emphasis on Parthia in these introductory books could be a result of the centrality of Mithridates I (171-139-8 BC) to the thinking of the Pontic geographer, and this approach has merit.¹⁶

Strabo explains the relationship of his earlier work to the *Geography* in the preamble to the *Geography*:

Strabo 1.1.22-23=C13 = FGrHist 91 F2 = BNJ 91 F2:

This book of mine must simply be equally helpful to the people and the political man, like my work on history. In that, I talk of a political man as not the wholly uneducated man, but one who has participated in the cycle of education customary for free men and philosophers. For anyone who has not cared for virtue and wisdom, and arguments about these matters, would not be able to criticise or praise appropriately, nor to judge which facts are worthy of memory.

When I had completed my *Historika Hypomnemata*, of use I assume, for moral and political philosophy, I decided to undertake this further treatise. For it is of similar

The Geography of Strabo (2014) 14. Roller also emphasises that Strabo 'was in many way more historian than geographer' (op. cit. [n. 9] 7). On Strabo as cultural geographer, see D. Dueck, H. Lindsay and S. Potheary (eds), *Strabo's Cultural Geography* (2005).

¹⁴ Pédech (n. 12) 395.

¹⁵ For the sequel to Polybius, see *Suda* s.v. Polubios = BNJ 91 T2. W. Ridgeway thought that two separate works were referred to. His interpretation, outlined in 'Contributions to Strabo's Biography' CR 2 (1888) 84, has been accepted by Dueck (2000) 69-70.

¹⁶ BNJ 91 F1.

form, and for the same men, especially those of high station. And moreover, in the same manner as in that work, affairs concerning distinguished men and their lives happen to be recorded, and the insignificant and unworthy are omitted, so here I must bypass the insignificant and inconspicuous, and spend my time on those that are distinguished and great, and those matters which are useful and memorable and pleasing.

He goes on to explain that just as in reviewing a colossal statue critics should concentrate on the impact of the whole, so with his geographical work the book should be viewed as a whole rather than on the basis of its parts (Strabo 1.1.23=C13-14).¹⁷ This passage also seems to suggest that there was but one historical work, and that the *Geography* was a second project, still with a strong emphasis on utility. His notion of history appears to place a lot of emphasis on recording the role of outstanding individuals, so much so that no other class are to be given coverage. Outstanding individuals will provide models of behaviour (both to the people and his preferred educated audience), while those events which are to be covered have to pass the test of being useful, memorable, or pleasing.¹⁸

His audience has been seen as more inclusive than that of Polybius, extending beyond community leaders to the people, but still insisting on the practical application of knowledge. His reference to a requirement for a 'political man' to have undertaken 'the cycle of education customary for free men and philosophers' – a nebulous phrase that encompasses the main ideals of Hellenistic education – may signify people who had been educated by Greek teachers of the sort who crop up in his descriptions of Greek communities throughout the Mediterranean, but especially in Asia Minor.¹⁹

Strabo continued his account from where Polybius broke off, in 146 BC.²⁰ His coverage in 43 books is of comparable dimensions to the work of Polybius in 40 books, as Roller points out.²¹ Polybius had adopted a region by region approach, and this appears to be a major feature of the work.

A separate work on Alexander was suspected by some authorities on the basis of a reference in the *Geography*:²²

Strabo 2.1.9=C70 = FGrHist 91 F3 = BNJ 91 F3:

¹⁷ On the *Geography* as a colossus, see S. Potheary, 'Kolossourgia: 'A colossal statue of a work'' in D. Dueck, H. Lindsay and S. Potheary (eds), *Strabo's Cultural Geography* (2005) 5-26.

¹⁸ Roller plausibly thinks there may have been a strong geographical emphasis in the earlier work, which would fit in with Strabo's close interest in Polybius. He also suggests the influence of Herodotus (BNJ 91 T2).

¹⁹ See Engels (n. 7).

²⁰ See F.W. Walbank, *Polybius* (1972) 16-19.

²¹ BNJ 91 T2.

²² See P. Pédech, 'Strabon Historien d' Alexandre' *GB* 2 (1974) 129-145. Roller approves a separate work on the basis of Strabo's extensive knowledge of major works on Alexander (BNJ 91 F3).

For the most part, all those writing about India have been charlatans, but excessively so Deimachus. Second to him is Megasthenes. Next, Onesicritus and Nearchus and other such people, who mutter something of the truth. And it sufficed for me to recognise this at length when I was recording the deeds of Alexander...

The most likely explanation is that the deeds of Alexander formed an important theme in the introduction to the *Historika Hypomnemata*. A great deal of material on Alexander appears in the *Geography*, especially in Book 15, and this relates to the fact that geographical horizons were substantially challenged by Alexander's campaigns. Strabo comments that the expansion of the Roman and Parthian empires has resulted in a comparable increase in geographical knowledge. The advances facilitated by Alexander's expeditions had already been highlighted as pertinent to geographers by Eratosthenes (Strabo 1.2.1=C14).²³ Strabo also appears to have had a strong interest in the rise and fall of empires, including that of Alexander, and this could be brought into alignment with the Polybian regional approach. The treatment of the Parthian empire also fits this scheme (Strabo 11.9.3=C315 = *FGrHist* 91 T2 = *BNJ* 91 T2). As is well known, a key theme in Polybius was the rise of Rome to supremacy in the Mediterranean. Strabo himself lived much of his life in the relatively settled world of Augustus and Tiberius, once a level of stability had been achieved after Actium in 31 BC. The *pax Augusta* had changed perspectives considerably since the time of Polybius.

What was the starting date for Strabo's sequel to Polybius? If the Alexander was a major figure in the introductory books to a single historical work, it is possible that the introductory books reviewed imperialism, first treating Alexander's conquests, the rise of the Parthian empire, and the growth of Rome down to 146 BC. The main part of Strabo's *Historika Hypomnemata*, his sequel to Polybius, would have started in book 5. The 43 books stretched into Strabo's contemporary scene and certainly covered the activities of Antony in the East. After the sack of Jerusalem by C. Sosius in 37 BC, Strabo's *Historika Hypomnemata* reports that Herod had Antigonus II sent to Antony at Antioch with a request for his execution; Antony complied, not without shocking the populace (Jos. *AJ* 15.9= *FGrHist* 91 F18=BNJ 91 F18).²⁴ Strabo goes to some length to demonise Antony for this deed, and claims that Antony was the first Roman to resort to the execution of a monarch, so determined was he to uphold his Eastern arrangements. Other fragments also deal with the fortunes of Hellenistic monarchies; Strabo's own links to the Pontic dynasty go far towards explaining this focus. No later episode is covered in the extant fragments unless the fragment dealing with the battle of Pselchis is admitted. An obvious terminal date for the *Historika Hypomnemata* would be the end of the Civil Wars and the defeat of Antony at Actium in 31 BC, but the narrative could have continued until the settlement of 27 BC.²⁵

Diller suggested that the extensive treatment of the Arabian venture of Aelius Gallus of c. 25 BC in the *Geography* might imply that coverage in the *Historika Hypomnemata* stopped short

²³ Further details of Eratosthenes' view of the contribution of Alexander, and Strabo's assessment of it, emerge from Strabo 1.4.9=C66-67; 2.1.6=C69; 2.1.9=C70. For the collected fragments, translation, and commentary on Eratosthenes, see D.W. Roller, *Eratosthenes' Geography* (2010).

²⁴ The episode is more fully discussed below.

²⁵ Discussed by Ambaglio (1990) 381; Engels (1999) 80; Dueck (2000) 70.

of this time.²⁶ However, Strabo himself insists that the importance of the Arabian expedition lies in the expansion of contemporary geographical horizons (Strabo 2.5.12=C118). It has no wider implications for the coverage of the *Historika Hypomnemata*. Syme saw 30 BC as a crucial date for an author whose world was so wrapped up in the past of the Hellenistic kingdoms.²⁷ This marked the fall of Alexandria, the death of the last Ptolemy, and the lapse of the last Hellenistic kingdom to the Romans. Tarn fittingly described Strabo's *Geography* as the 'swansong' of Hellenism.

The time and place of writing

There is internal evidence within the fragments that Strabo had been to Alexandria and Rome when he wrote the history (FGrHist 91 F7; F14 = BNJ 91 F7; F14). He had already been to Rome in 44 BC (Strabo 12.6.2=C568) and is found on his way there again in 29 BC (10.5.3=C485). We do not know how many separate trips he made to Rome, but in 20s BC he is in Alexandria in the company of Aelius Gallus, who became prefect of Egypt in about 25 BC; he was still there in 20 BC.²⁸ It seems then that a date after 20 BC will suit the *Historika Hypomnemata*. By then he would be a man in his forties. The place of publication is very uncertain. Aly thought he had started on his *Geography* by 15 BC.²⁹ Syme thought he spent a lot of his life in Naples.³⁰

The historiographical tradition

What exactly were *Historika Hypomnemata*? When Strabo talks of writing a *hypomnema* on the deeds of Alexander he is neither writing a commentary on previous depictions of Alexander's life, nor a pastiche of his predecessors.³¹ The term is often used to denominate memoirs, but Strabo's usage seems to imply a serious discussion in a finished state which did involve re-sifting the evidence; he also uses the term to refer to books of his own *Geography* (Strabo 17.1.25=C804; 1.3.8=C53; 17.1.36=C809).

Strabo claims that his *Geography* was based on the same plan as the *Historika Hypomnemata*. The *Geography* is plainly organised on region by region basis, and this appears to be what is indicated. Polybius is an important influence on the shape chosen for organising his history, and Polybius employed a region by region scheme to treat the events of each year. Sometimes a resumtive section was utilised to clarify a contemporary issue. Strabo appears

²⁶ A. Diller, *The Textual Tradition of Strabo's Geography* (1975) 3.

²⁷ R. Syme, 'Livy and Augustus' *HSCPh* 64 (1959) 27-87 at 65; 85 n. 240.

²⁸ See H. Lindsay 'Syme's *Anatolica* and the date of Strabo's *Geography*' *Klio* 79 (1997) 490

²⁹ W. Aly, *Strabon von Amaseia: Untersuchungen über Text, Aufbau und Quellen der Geographika* (1957) 397.

³⁰ See Lindsay (n. 28) 493. See now Roller (2014) 13-14.

³¹ Pédech considered there would be some originality in Strabo presentation of Alexander. See his 'Strabon Historien d' Alexandre' *GB* 2 (1974) 129-145 at 145.

uninterested in the evolution of internal struggles within Roman politics, and does not treat such issues as the conflict of the orders, or the emergence of the *populares* at the time of the Gracchi. Focus is more on the reception of Roman imperialism in the provinces. Rome is the centre of this world, and the regional treatments are set against this backdrop.³² Major Roman players often appear in these contexts.

Polybius was more interested in Roman institutions and the contribution they had made to Rome's dominant position within the Mediterranean, and the speed with which this was accomplished (Polyb. 1.1.5), while Strabo was interested in the emergence of civilisation and the crushing of barbarism, something he defined in terms of Hellenised ideals.³³ His concerns have moved on from the process of conquest to pacification and the development of civilised life. All rulers and national groups are judged in the *Geography* according to this yardstick. On two occasions in the *Geography*, he provides brief accounts of contemporary Roman control of the inhabited world and the operation of the imperial system (Strabo 6.4.2=C286-288; 17.3.24-25=C839-840).

Strabo's view of the Pontic past in his homeland allowed for some complexity. The end of the domination of Mithridates formed a milestone in his family's evolution. Strabo's paternal grandfather had deserted his cause because of the Pontic king's cruelty to a relative (Strabo 12.3.33=C557), and there are other signs of Strabo adopting a comparatively impartial attitude to Mithridatic imperialism. His native Pontus had undergone substantial change through the campaigns of Lucullus and Pompey, and later through administrative arrangements set up by Antony and Octavian.³⁴

Nevertheless, despite differences of focus, Polybian themes reappear in almost identical language in Strabo's *Geography*. Like history for Polybius, geography is touted as an instrument of great practical use for the *pragmatikos aner*. Polybius started this trend, and was followed by Diodorus (Diod. 1.1-1.5). When Strabo expands on the utility of geography, he also explains that utility is the most important principle in historical writing. An additional Polybian theme is that mythological material should be kept to a minimum (Strabo 1.2.17=C25; 11.5.3=C504; 11.6.2=C507). Furthermore, Strabo promotes the utility of his historical work at an ethical level, echoing statements of Dionysius of Halicarnassus in the preface to the *Roman Antiquities* on the moral value of history (Dion. Hal. AR 1.1.1-4). As we have already seen, to accomplish this end, Strabo claims he will only record the lives of men of distinction, omitting the petty and ignoble.

³² As Katherine Clarke notes (1999) 213.

³³ See L.A. Thompson, 'Strabo on civilisation' *Platon* 31 (1979) 213-230; cf. P. Thollard, *Barbarie et Civilisation chez Strabon* (1987); and see comments of Clarke (1999) 213.

³⁴ See my 'Amasya: Strabo's Patria in Pontus' in D. Dueck, H. Lindsay & S. Potheary (eds) *Strabo's Cultural Geography: The Making of a Kolossourgia* (2005) 180-199.

Sources and their role

Strabo was heavily influenced by the theoretical approach of Polybius, but the subject matter, a continuation beyond the period covered by Polybius, would require more recent authorities. Strabo must have had access to a large range of sources in phases of his very mobile adult life, which started at Nysa in the Maeander valley and included residence at Alexandria and in Rome.³⁵

In a passage in Josephus *Antiquities* (AJ 14.104= *FGrHist* 91 F13=BNJ 91 F13), Josephus notes great similarity between the views of Strabo and Nicolaus of Damascus on the subject of the expeditions of Pompey and Gabinius against Jews; this could be construed as indicating that these authors were far from independent thinkers, but may not be so hostile: his point may be to underline that external observers assessed the situation uniformly.

Josephus also cites Polybius and Nicolaus in the same breath as Strabo in relation to the plundering of the temple at Jerusalem by Antiochus Epiphanes in 170 BC (Jos. *Contra Apionem* 2.83-84 = *FGrHist* 91 F10 = BNJ 91 F10), and by other Romans from Pompey to Titus (Jos. *Contra Apionem* 2.82), a topic also covered by Timagenes, Castor of Rhodes, and Apollodorus. Strabo himself need not have dealt specifically with the depredations of Antiochus, who appears to lie outside the temporal scope of his historical interests, and would presumably have appeared in Polybius.³⁶ Interdependence seems not to be the point. Here Josephus names Greek authors all of whom could confirm sacrilege against the temple at Jerusalem motivated by greed rather than doctrinal opposition to the Jewish faith. He emphasises that opponents of the Jews were not at loggerheads with the Jewish religion itself.

For Timagenes, attack on the record of Roman imperialism was something of a theme. Timagenes appears as a source of Strabo in other fragments; he came to Rome from Alexandria as a captive of A. Gabinius in 55 BC, and was liberated by Faustus Sulla. In due course he became a favourite of Augustus, but was later forced to transfer to the house of Asinius Pollio because of his frank opposition to Roman imperialism.³⁷ His universal history, of which a few fragments survive, exhibits this hostility.³⁸ Asinius Pollio himself had a chequered relationship with Augustus.³⁹

Other sources appearing in the fragments of Strabo's historical work include Asinius and Hysicrates (*FGrHist* 91 F16; F17 = BNJ 91 F16; F17). These authorities are cited on the civil war in Alexandria between Pompey and Caesar (*Bellum Alexandrinum*), and activities in Egypt at

³⁵ See Roller (2014) 24-27 for an assessment.

³⁶ Compare Dueck (2000) 71, who speculates on how Strabo came to deal with Antiochus in his sequel to Polybius, and concludes that this reference must have appeared in the *Historika Hypomnemata*, which she flags as a separate work.

³⁷ For his career see G.W. Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek World* (1965) 109f.

³⁸ *FGrHist* 88 = BNJ 88.

³⁹ *PIR*² A 1241; see A.B. Bosworth, 'Asinius Pollio and Augustus' *Historia* 21 (1972) 441-473.

the time of the death of Pompey, when Caesar was assisted by troops from Judaea. There are few signs of Latin writers, and even the Asinius referred to may not be Asinius Pollio, the consular historian, but his lesser known client from Tralles, who appears to have translated his patron's work into Greek.⁴⁰ Strabo had a preference for Greek sources, although he did use some Latin sources; he may have been more at ease with the text of Pollio in Greek.⁴¹ It is possible that Strabo already became acquainted with the client from Tralles while he was being educated at Nysa, nearby in the Maeander valley, rather than later in his career at Rome. Hypsicrates hailed from Amisus, and was in the service of Caesar who freed Amisus in 47 BC. This too was familiar territory for Strabo, who originated in a distinguished family from Amaseia.⁴²

Generally speaking, Strabo seems to cite sources because they can provide specialised knowledge on a given topic, and there is no need to convict him in advance of excessive dependence.

The fragments and Josephus and his use of Strabo as historian

12 of the 19 fragments of Strabo are cited by Josephus in the *Antiquities*, and this raises questions about why Josephus found him such a useful commentator on affairs in the East.⁴³ It is not from shared religion or even particularly sensitive understanding of Jewish affairs. Strabo in the *Geography* gives a summary of Herod's career that claims that Herod seized the office of High Priest from Hyrcanus (Strabo 16.2.46=C765). Apart from being unfounded, he apparently did not realise that Herod was not a native Jew, but an Idumaeian convert, and would never have been eligible for the post.⁴⁴ This is enough to show that he had no detailed acquaintance with Jewish affairs or contemporary Jewish history.⁴⁵ Josephus might rather be attracted to Strabo's interest in the Hellenistic monarchies in the East. Additionally, Strabo reports alien cultures without animus – although not without bias – and shows himself prepared to judge every situation on its merits.⁴⁶ Strabo is used by Josephus to illustrate to his Hellenised audience external perceptions of Jewish life from the pen of a cultured and worldly

⁴⁰ Known from the Suda s.v. Polion; see *PIR*² A 1239; Dueck (2000) 94. Strabo cites Asinius on the length of the Rhine in stades (Strabo 4.3.3=C193), but normally gives distances in miles on the infrequent occasions when he quotes from Roman sources. See Aly (1957) 289.

⁴¹ See Dueck (2000) 88.

⁴² On his familiarity with Amisus and other parts of Pontus see H. Lindsay, 'Amasya and Strabo's *patria* in Pontus' in D. Dueck, H. Lindsay and S. Potheary (eds), *Strabo's Cultural Geography* (2005) 180-199 at 195.

⁴³ Yuval Shahar has explored this topic, and has put the case for much more extensive use by Josephus of Strabo, including 'a hidden dialogue' with the *Geography*. See his 'Josephus hidden dialogue with Strabo' in D. Dueck, H. Lindsay & S. Potheary (eds) *Strabo's Cultural Geography: The Making of a Kolossourgia* (2005) 235-249.

⁴⁴ See B.Z. Wacholder, *Nicolaus of Damascus* (1962) 4.

⁴⁵ W.W. Tarn also remarks that Strabo was 'at sea on Jewish history' (*Hellenistic Civilisation* [1952] 211). Further mistakes are detailed in R. Syme, *Anatolica: Studies in Strabo* (1995) 363.

⁴⁶ For some of Strabo's biases, particularly his cultural preference for Hellenism, see L.A. Thompson, 'Strabo on civilisation' *Platon* 31 (1979) 213-23.

Greek. Josephus does not always employ Strabo for anything like the reason Strabo treated the subject matter in the first place.⁴⁷

In Strabo's *Geography* there is a single reference to his previous treatment of India in the *Historika Hypomnemata* (Strabo 2.1.9=C70 = *FGrHist* 91 F3 = *BNJ* 91 F3). This fragment, already discussed, dealt with fabulous material in accounts of Alexander's Indian expedition. Their unreliability is important to his geographical theme. He goes on to highlight fiction in Deimachos and Megasthenes, as well as Onesicritos and Nearchos, and to recommend Patrocles as more trustworthy. Clearly Strabo hopes to establish himself as an historian with a serious purpose – someone who shuns fictions. The introduction to the *Geography* expands on attitudes to the role of fiction in geographical writing. In the introduction to the sequel to Polybius, Strabo apparently reviewed the rise and fall of Macedon, and showed a certain amount of discrimination in his analysis of the worth of the historical sources.

Following chronological order, the next citation from Strabo's *Historika Hypomnemata* is from Josephus (Jos. AJ 13.284-7 = *FGrHist* 91 F4 = *BNJ* 91 F4). The citation relates to the prosperity of Jewish affairs not only in Jerusalem but abroad, as a result of the supportive behaviour of Cleopatra III (reigned 116-101 BC), under whom Ptolemaic rule in Egypt began to fracture.⁴⁸ Her father, Ptolemy VIII Physcon had a bastard son, Ptolemy Apion, who was granted a separate kingdom in Cyrenaica under the terms of his father's will; Apion in due course handed on his kingdom to the Romans (96 BC). Cleopatra, in her conflict with her own son and co-ruler, Ptolemy IX Lathyrus, employed as generals over her army Chelkias and Ananias, sons of the Jew Onias IV, who had built the Jewish temple in the prefecture of Heliopolis at Leontopolis in about 154 BC, with permission of Ptolemy VI Philometor (Jos. AJ 12.387-388). Onias and his offspring had high prestige at the Ptolemaic court, and had been granted land between Memphis and Pelusium on condition of supplying military support to the dynasty, after arriving in Egypt as result of conflict over the high priesthood at Jerusalem. Their new temple resembled in plan the temple at Jerusalem. Josephus cites Strabo as authority that Cleopatra did nothing without the advice of these men.⁴⁹ The party of Onias remained loyal to Cleopatra even when the remaining Egyptians went over to Ptolemy IX Lathyrus. Lathyrus had been governor of Cyprus early in his mother's reign, and later, when expelled in about 103 BC, retreated there and got local support as well as support from the mainland (see *FGrHist* 91 F12 = *BNJ* 91 F12, below). At the time of the Ptolemies, Cyprus was a possession of Egypt until it was bequeathed to Rome by Ptolemy XI in 80 BC; the Romans annexed it in 58 BC, and converted it into a praetorian province in 22 BC, some years after the fall of Antony (Strabo 14.6.6=C684; Dio 54.4.1).

⁴⁷ Dueck notes that some five passages seem to involve verbatim quotation (Dueck [2000] 70).

⁴⁸ For an account of her reign see J. Whitehorne, *Cleopatras* (1994) 132-148.

⁴⁹ On their fate see Roller's commentary at *BNJ* 91 F4.

Strabo here seems to have been concerned with the internal political arrangements within Ptolemaic Egypt; his emphasis is on internal relations of the dynasty with feuding royal factions. Included in the power politics were these influential Jews. Strabo demonstrates considerable knowledge about factional and religious politics in Ptolemaic Egypt, and is interested in the firm loyalty of these Jewish acolytes of Cleopatra. His more general theme is the rise and fall of empires, and it seems that Josephus has adapted Strabo's material to suit his own interest in the rise and success of Jewish communities in Egypt and elsewhere. In a later fragment, Strabo comments on the Jewish population at Cyrene, but again as part of a wider understanding of the social dynamics of that community, rather than because of any specialised insights into the religion (Jos. AJ 14.114 = FGrHist 91 F7 = BNJ 91 F7).⁵⁰

A brief reference in Tertullian (*De anima* 46 = FGrHist 91 F5 = BNJ 91 F5), cites Strabo on a dream relating to Mithridates' arrival in Pontus. This bare reference is hard to date. Roller associates it with the rise of Mithridates I rather than Eupator. Other sources record that Antigonos I had a dream about the potential of his younger rival, and tried to hunt him down and kill him (Plutarch *Demetr.* 4; Appian *Mithr.* 9).⁵¹ Mithridates established his Pontic kingdom from a fortress by the name of Cimiata in Paphlagonia, near mount Olgassys (Strabo 12.3.41=C562). This story clearly does not belong temporally in the main body of the sequel to Polybius, but could derive from the introductory books. Like other ancient writers, Strabo gave his audience notice of omens and dreams as premonitory events (see also FGrHist 91 F19 = BNJ 91 F19, below).

Josephus discusses the plundering of the temple at Jerusalem by Crassus in 53 BC (Jos. AJ 14.111-113 = FGrHist 91 F6 = BNJ 91 F6), the wealth of which derived from contributions from Jews everywhere. Strabo is cited as an external witness of the extent of the monies held by Jewish communities for religious purposes. Strabo's evidence relates to monies leeches from Cos by Mithridates Eupator in 88 BC – monies of Cleopatra III, sent to Cos as early as 103 BC,⁵² as well as 800 talents belonging to the Jews. As Josephus underlines, this cannot be money from Judaea or Alexandria, but must be money gathered by the Jews of Asia for sacred purposes, and sidelined at Cos to prevent Mithridates getting his hands on it. Here Strabo is not cited for his specific impartiality in relation to Jewish affairs – it is simply the case that his text can demonstrate Josephus' theme.

According to Josephus, when Sulla went to Greece to make war on Mithridates, he sent Lucullus to crush a Jewish rebellion in Cyrene in 86 BC (Jos. AJ 14.114-118 = FGrHist 91 F7 = BNJ 91 F7). Strabo's evidence, which is cited here, gives quite detailed demographic detail on Jewish presence in Cyrene – one of four classes of men at Cyrene – and their penetration into all major cities of the *oikoumene*. Egypt and Cyrene, managed together first under Ptolemaic and later under Roman government, are claimed as examples of communities which imitate the Jewish way of life, and sustain the Jewish community for mutual financial benefit, and share

⁵⁰ Dueck also notes the different concerns of Josephus and Strabo over arrangements in Egypt (Dueck [2000] 72).

⁵¹ See Roller, BNJ91 F5 for details of the dream. He doubts that Tertullian consulted Strabo directly. Cf A.B. Bosworth & P.V. Wheatley, 'The Origins of the Pontic House' JHS 118 (1998) 155-164.

⁵² Jos. AJ 13.349; Appian *Mithr.* 23; see Roller BNJ91 F6.

common laws. Jews have been granted land in Egypt as well as part of Alexandria (a large part of the city). They have also been granted an ethnarch who allows them some legal and administrative independence. In Strabo's view, they have been accepted so comprehensively in Egypt because they were originally Egyptians, and Cyrene was chosen because of proximity to Egypt.

In the *Geography*, these details are absent (Strabo 17.3.21=C837). The Jewish presence in Alexandria is not detailed in the *Geography*, where little attention is paid to the composition of the community, despite Strabo's own residence there for several years. His description of the city has much emphasis on Ptolemaic structures (Strabo 17.1.6=C791-17.1.11=C797). Little is said about ethnic divisions at Alexandria, a topic on which he cites Polybius (Strabo 17.1.12=C797-8).

Sulla's activities in Greece could be expected to get a bad press from Strabo, but he is not that critical of the destruction of the long walls at Athens (Strabo 9.1.15=C396), or even the removal of Apellicon's Aristotelian library to Rome (Strabo 13.1.54=C609).⁵³ A passage from Plutarch's life of Sulla could suggest that Strabo believed that bad things happened to bad men (Plut. *Sulla* 26 = *FGrHist* 91 F8 = *BNJ* 91 F8).⁵⁴ Sulla at Athens (i.e. 86 BC) was affected by numbness and heaviness in the feet which Strabo says is a warning sign of gout. He therefore sailed to Aedespus to take the waters – a coastal spa in Euboea (Strabo 10.1.9=C447; Plut. *Mor.* 487f.; 667c). Bad health involving serious physical consequences could be seen in similar terms to messages in dreams. Bad health and bad character belonged together.

Plutarch in his life of Lucullus gives an account of the battle of Tigranocerta, the incomplete fortified city of Tigranes II (the Great), below Mt Masius, which capitulated in 69 BC to the forces of Lucullus (Plut. *Lucull.* 28.7 = *FGrHist* 91 F9 = *BNJ* 91 F 9). Tigranocerta was located in Arzanene, Armenia, and had a continued history in the empire. It was occupied by Corbulo (AD 50). Plutarch cites Antiochus the philosopher on the outstanding status of the battle. Strabo claims the Romans themselves were ashamed and jested about needing arms against such runaway slaves. It seems that the Armenians dispersed in disgraceful circumstances on the Roman assault (Plut. *Lucull.* 28.3-6). Strabo's observation can be taken as a comment on the lamentable quality of Tigranes' leadership.

Strabo in the *Geography* talks of the destruction Lucullus wrought on the half-finished Tigranocerta (Strabo 11.14.15=C 532). Previously Tigranes had overrun Cappadocia and used his prisoners to populate this new city (Strabo 12.2.9=C 539). These people were allowed to return home by Lucullus (Plutarch *Lucullus* 29.5; Strabo 11.14.15=C 532).⁵⁵ Strabo's image of

⁵³ See further in H. Lindsay, 'Strabo on Apellicon's library' *Rheinisches Museum* 140 (1997) 290-298.

⁵⁴ On moralistic accounts of the demise of Sulla see T. Africa, 'Worms and the death of kings: A Cautionary Note on Disease and History' *Classical Antiquity* 1 (1982) 1-17. Roller thinks that Strabo, like Plutarch, depended for this information on Sulla's memoirs (*BNJ* 91 F8).

⁵⁵ H. Manandyan, *Tigranes II and Rome* (2007) 103-104.

Tigranes is far from flattering, perhaps unsurprisingly in view of the damage he inflicted on Cappadocia and specifically on Mazaca, in support of Mithridates the Great. This brought the Romans into play, when Sulla was sent to deal with Mithridates. Tigranes later took advantage of the decline of Mithridates to retrieve his ancestral kingdom in Atropatene (Strabo 11.14.15=C 532).⁵⁶

As already noted, Strabo is cited as one of many Greek writers including Polybius attesting to the plundering of the temple at Jerusalem (Jos. *Contra Apionem* 2.83-4 = *FGrHist* 91 F10=BNJ 91 F10). Josephus includes most recently Titus (2.82). His main point is that the depredations are unrelated to questions of religious faith, but directly related to financial greed. Even Antiochus Epiphanes was only looking for money (170 BC), and his attack was despite extensive association with the Jews.⁵⁷ A range of authorities is cited to support this, including both Nicolaus and Timagenes, both cited by Strabo and others (for Timagenes see also AJ 13.319 = *FGrHist* 91 F11 = BNJ 91 F11).

The historical fragments then take a step back to follow the history of Judaea under the Hasmonaeans. Josephus retails the story of Aristobulus, the eldest son of the high priest, John Hyrcanus I, who initiated the Hasmonaean kingship (104 BC). His brother Antigonus was treated initially as an equal – but not so other close family. Later Aristobulus was alienated from Antigonus and killed him (103 BC). He then died himself, apparently with much drama, and the story in Josephus is loaded with moralistic trappings (AJ 13.314-317)(103 BC). Despite this, Strabo gives Aristobulus a very favourable press, citing his pro-Hellenic stance and his modesty (AJ 13.318), on the authority of Timagenes (Jos. AJ 13.319 = *FGrHist* 91 F11 = BNJ 91 F11). He is credited with adding Ituraea to Jewish territory, and forcing the Ituraeans to undergo circumcision. Strabo is elsewhere uncomplimentary about the Ituraeans, labelling them evil-doers (Strabo 16.2.18=C755). Nevertheless Aristobulus was seen as a suitable model of behaviour by writers such as Strabo and Timagenes, perhaps because of his support for Hellenistic ideals.

Alexander Jamneus took over from Aristobulus on his death in 103 BC, and made an expedition against Ptolemais, one of few maritime cities still requiring conquest. The local ruler Zoilus held Strato's Tower and Dora. The only assistance available was from Ptolemy Lathyrus, who held Cyprus where he had been driven when ousted by Cleopatra III, his mother. The people of Ptolemais were talked out of this by Demenetus. Ptolemy still arrived, but was not received by the people of Ptolemais. Zoilus however tried to get his assistance and this raised the siege on Ptolemais. Alexander then invited Cleopatra to come against Ptolemy. Ptolemy made a league with Alexander and subdued Zoilus, but then heard that Alexander had an arrangement with Cleopatra; Ptolemy fell on Alexander and laid siege to Ptolemais. He went on to devastate the rest of Judaea. Ptolemy met Alexander at Asochis in Galilee and took it and enslaved 10,000. He moved on to Sepphoris with less success, but eventually turned the tables. Timagenes says there were 50,000 casualties (Jos. AJ 13.320-344). Ptolemy now overran the country, and butchered villagers of Judaea – their limbs were to be sacrificed and cannibalism

⁵⁶ See Manandyan (2007) 101-107.

⁵⁷ Dueck attributes the reference to Antiochus to Strabo, who certainly dealt with the later depredations by Pompey and Crassus (*FGrHist* 91 F6; F15= BNJ 91 F 6; F15). See D. Dueck, *Strabo of Amasia* (2000) 71; above n. 36.

was threatened, according to Strabo and Nicolaus, to put the wind up them (Jos. AJ 13.345= *FGrHist* 91 F12=BNJ 91 F12). These authors are hardly favourable, but the focus is really on the career of Ptolemy Lathyrus rather than Jamneus and Jewish interests.

The fragment which claims that Strabo and Nicolaus do not differ from one another on the expeditions of Pompey and Gabinius (Jos. AJ 14.104= *FGrHist* 91 F13=BNJ 91 F13) appears in a compressed section of narrative which covers the period between the sack of Jerusalem by Pompey in 63 BC and the start of Crassus' tenure as governor of Syria in 54 BC (Jos. AJ 14.80-104). Pompey had taken Aristobulus, son of Alexander Jamneus, with him to Rome after the siege of Jerusalem (Jos. AJ 14.79), and Gabinius later recaptured Aristobulus after escape, and sent him back to Rome. Gabinius planned a Parthian expedition, but turned back to Egypt to restore Ptolemy XII Auletes to his kingdom in 55 BC. On return from Egypt, Syria was in chaos after a rebellion by Alexander, the son of Aristobulus. Gabinius quickly sorted out serious problems and handed over power to Crassus. Josephus clearly uses information from Strabo and Nicolaus sparsely and selectively.

Another passage from Josephus relates to events in 63 BC, when Aristobulus was trying to win support for his faction in the Hasmonaean civil war against his brother the high priest Hyrcanus (Jos. AJ 14.34-36 = *FGrHist* 91 F14 = BNJ 91 F14). Hitherto Aristobulus had been in the ascendant because he had won the support of Scaurus for the Judaeian throne in 66 BC.⁵⁸ Strabo mentions a munificent present sent from Aristobulus to Pompey at Damascus at a time when ambassadors were also sent to Pompey from Syria and Egypt. Despite the gift, Pompey favoured Hyrcanus, but refused an absolute commitment. Aristobulus retired but was commanded to give up his troops and eventually withdrew to Jerusalem where he was soon under siege by Pompey.

Before this reverse, Aristobulus had hoped to win over the Roman with his gift. The present, according to the Josephus, was a golden vine valued at 500 talents. Strabo identifies the present of the Egyptian delegation as a crown valued at 4000 pieces of gold, and the gift from the Judaeian delegation as the vine. Strabo had seen the offering in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus at Rome, and calls it *terpole*, the delight.⁵⁹ He declares that it was inscribed 'the gift of Alexander, the king of the Jews', as well as reporting its valuation at 500 talents. Strabo knew that it was gifted by Alexander's son Aristobulus. Some authorities suggest that a couple of words have dropped out and that it should read 'Aristobulus, son of Alexander'. This passage shows perhaps that Strabo had some knowledge of the competitive bribes offered on this occasion, as recounted by Josephus (AJ 14.34ff), and Pompey's reaction to the atmospherics. Strabo no doubt had access to several accounts of the deeds of Pompey on which he could base his account.

⁵⁸ R. Seager, *Pompey the Great* (2002) 59.

⁵⁹ Strabo mentions the treasures on the Capitol several times in the *Geography*. See 5.3.8=C236; 12.3.31 = C557; 14.114 = C637.

A fragment deals with the siege of Jerusalem by Pompey in 63 BC at the time of his intervention in the Hasmonaean power struggle between Aristobulus and Hyrcanus (Jos. AJ 14.66 = *FGrHist* 91 F15 = *BNJ* 91 F15). The longer term result was the consolidation of Roman influence over Judean affairs. Initially Aristobulus offered to surrender and agreed terms, but Gabinius could not get the terms complied with. Pompey intervened, imprisoned Aristobulus, and besieged the city. Josephus comments on the careful religious observances by the priests of the temple during the siege (AJ 14.65-67), and cites Strabo, Nicolaus and Livy on the courage of the priests under the circumstances (AJ 14.68). Strabo and the others are here described as writing about Pompey. Josephus' point seems to be that these do not represent Jewish partisan sources.

Two fragments concern the role of Mithridates of Pergamon in assisting Caesar in his war against Egypt after the death of Pompey (the *Bellum Alexandrinum*) (Jos. AJ 14.137 = *FGrHist* 91 F16 = *BNJ* 91 F16); Jos. AJ 14.139 = *FGrHist* 91 F17 = *BNJ* 91 F17). Josephus provides a Jewish perspective, even though this has the effect of showing that Herod's father, Antipater, was indispensable to Caesar. Josephus generally seems far more favourable to Antipater than to Herod, perhaps because, unlike his son, he had not infringed status barriers, but was at this time acting as agent of the Hasmonaean high priest, Hyrcanus. Roller however suggests that Josephus gets the emphasis on Antipater from Herod's memoirs.

In view of his links with the Pontic dynasty, Strabo was better informed about Mithridates of Pergamon than about Antipater. He provides some genealogical material in the *Geography*. Mithridates of Pergamon, son of Menodotus and Adobogiona, was claimed to be a son of Mithridates by his concubine Adobogiona (Strabo 13.4.3=C625). When Caesar was trapped at Alexandria in winter 48/47 BC, under siege by Achillas, general of Ptolemy XIII Philpator. Antipater brought him 3000 Jews, as well as other contingents, through an agreement with Mithridates of Pergamon, who was delayed at Ascalon (Jos. AJ 14.127-128).⁶⁰ Mithridates in due course joined Antipater in the siege of Pelusium, and it was taken. Antipater helped Mithridates to overcome problems with the Egyptian Jews who would not allow the passage of the combined armies beyond Pelusium to Caesar (Jos. AJ 14.129-132). After the final battle, Mithridates sent word to Caesar of Antipater's key role (Jos. AJ 14.133-136). Caesar responded by honouring Antipater and confirming Hyrcanus in the high priesthood (Jos. AJ 14.137-138). Strabo is cited as authority for the fact that Hyrcanus actually joined this invasion of Egypt (AJ 14.137 = *FGrHist* 91 F16 [citing Asinius Pollio as his source] = *BNJ* 91 F16; AJ 14.139 = *FGrHist* 91 F17 [citing Hypsicrates as his source] = *BNJ* 91 F17). How much of the rest of the story in Josephus derived from Strabo (or his source) is hard to assess, but he does deal with Mithridates elsewhere. Hyrcanus and his Hasmonaean background provide the necessary status to merit an appearance, but Strabo does not mention Antipater in the *Geography*, and overall has little to offer on Jewish hierarchy.

We learn from Strabo's *Geography* that Mithridates continued to have a conspicuous role in Caesar's entourage, and that as a reward after Zela, Caesar put Mithridates in charge of the Bosporan kingdom, where he supplanted Dynamis and Asander until the death of Caesar,

⁶⁰ Ascalon may have a close connection with Herod's family. See N. Kokkinos, *The Herodian Dynasty: Origins, Role in Society and Eclipse* (1998) 100-127.

as well as being a Galatian tetrarch over the Trocmi as a result of his maternal inheritance (Strabo 13.4.3=C 625). Later Octavian restored the Bosporan kingdom to Dynamis and Asander. The control over the Galatian tetrarchies ended up in the hands of Amyntas, until the formation of the Roman province in 25 BC. (Strabo 12.5.1= C 567).

When Josephus cites Strabo on the execution of the Hasmonaean, Antigonus II, by Antony in 37 BC (*AJ* 15.8 = *FGrHist* 91 F18 = *BNJ* 91 F18), the choice of Strabo as his source was an obvious one: Strabo, with his distinguished background in Pontus, is generally hostile to Antony, and in this instance particularly disapproves of the idea of a Roman official executing an established monarch. Although in due course Herod was kept on as a Roman client and prospered under Augustus, Strabo was on safe ground when he criticised the behaviour of Antony in the East. Strabo shared with Josephus revulsion at the status of Herod, in particular his lack of a royal lineage, and disapproved of the favour he obtained from Antony and other leading Romans, but was not necessarily interested in the same issues as Josephus. He had little concept of internal Jewish politics, and seems not to have understood fundamentals of their religion.

Josephus was himself of Hasmonaean blood. He despised the background and status of the Idumaeans, Herod. In 37 BC, Herod's strength had prospered as a result of Hasmonaean infighting. Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus II, brother and rival to John Hyrcanus II, was in danger of gaining the upper hand in Judaea. Hyrcanus, like the Romans, saw advantages in using Herod to protect his interests. This was logical since Herod's father Antipater had been employed in a like role.

Herod's rise to favour at Rome can be charted in some detail. In 42 BC, as a result of his improved status with Hyrcanus, Herod strategically became betrothed to Mariamne, a granddaughter of the rival strands of the Hasmonaean dynasty (daughter of the children of Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II, Alexandra and Alexander). From Herod's point of view, this represented a method of quelling some of the Jewish opposition to his prominence. In the eyes of the Romans, the dynastic link would also be seen as advantageous, but it did little to impress his detractors. Hyrcanus must have thought a link to the house of Antipater was of sufficient status, and in the short term he was able to convince Alexandra, Mariamne's mother, of the suitability of the match. He had some level of wider support (*Jos. BJ* 1.241; *AJ* 14.300). Jewish opposition however was a different matter, and delegations were sent to Antony in Bithynia in 42 BC after Philippi (*Jos. BJ* 1.242; *AJ* 14.301-302), and later to Antioch and Tyre. The last met with firm rejection by Antony, who had appeared on the scene with responsibility for Syria, Judaea and Egypt, and is rumoured to have received bribes from Herod (*BJ* 1.242-245; *AJ* 14.324-329). Herod's marriage to Mariamne was not to take place until 37 BC, but the betrothal already gave him added status during his visit to Rome in 40 BC.

Herod already had Antony's support, and his status as king was acknowledged by the Senate in 40 BC, when Messalla and Atratinus spoke on his behalf. Their proposals were

completely aligned with triumviral policy (Jos. BJ 1.284; AJ 14.384-5).⁶¹ According to Josephus, Antony and Octavian quite unexpectedly gave Herod the kingly role, when Herod's original intention had been to negotiate it for his wife's brother, Aristobulus III, who was Hasmonaeen. He is said to have believed that he had no hope of the role because of his own lack of royal lineage (Jos. AJ 14.386-389).⁶² The ambitions of Antipater and his sons had however been on open display since the time of Caesar, and both Caesar and the triumvirs had already placed great reliance on them.⁶³ The overall context of Herod's visit to Rome in the latter part of 40 BC was to ask Antony for support against the Antigonus II and the Parthians, and to retrieve his own administrative role in the face of Jewish opposition. From the Roman point of view, Herod's intermediate status as a 'half-Jew' meant that he had to bolster his position in Judaea, while continuing to act in the Roman interest.⁶⁴ A person of truly royal lineage was not necessarily the Roman ideal, especially since Jewish support was being lavished on Antigonus II, who was backed by the Parthians. Herod relied on prestige by association through his betrothal to the Hasmonean princess Mariamme, who at least was aligned to a different Hasmonaeen faction.

Herod was immediately required to prove his mettle as a Roman client through acting in cooperation with Roman military manoeuvres against the Parthians. He was destined to supplant the Parthian candidate, after another Roman siege of Jerusalem, by the governor of Syria in 37 BC, C. Sosius. This time, Antony's general did not sack the Temple (Jos. BJ 1.342-363; AJ 14.468-15-95).⁶⁵ The Roman troops had to be bribed by Herod not to loot (Jos. AJ 14.486), and Herod hoped thus to protect his very uncertain relationship with the established Jewish community. It was however Antony who was the real power behind the role of Herod, and this status was consolidated by a flow of gifts from Herod which only ended with Actium.⁶⁶

After the fall of Jerusalem, Herod had Antigonus II sent to Antony at Antioch with a request for his execution; Strabo, as reported by Josephus, details what he sees as a disgraceful travesty perpetrated by the sinner Antony (AJ 15.9 = BNJ 91 F18);⁶⁷ Josephus adds that Antony was influenced by signs of disturbance in Judaea where there was discontent over the deposition of Antigonus II and widespread hatred of Herod (AJ 15.8 = BNJ 91 F18). Plutarch merely sees the execution as a by-product of Antony's obsession with Cleopatra, and the need to satisfy her craving for additional territory (Plut. Ant. 36.2). As can be seen from the above, Herod swung with the political wind, and his status as 'half-Jew' made him a highly questionable character for the mainstream Jewish population of Judaea. In his *Geography*, Strabo gives a summary of his career that reflects some of these ambiguities, but also

⁶¹ J. Osgood, *Caesar's Legacy* (2006) 87.

⁶² Osgood (2006) 192.

⁶³ Josephus' source seems apologetic for Herod, and has been suspected to be Herod's memoirs, perhaps used through an intermediary.

⁶⁴ See M. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem* (2007) 53-54.

⁶⁵ For what may be the Jewish view of the siege see K. Atkinson, 'Herod the Great, Sosius, and the Siege of Jerusalem (37 B.C.E.) in Psalm of Solomon 17' *Novum Testamentum* 38 (1996) 313-322.

⁶⁶ Goodman (2007) 54.

⁶⁷ Osgood (2006) 244.

mistakenly claims that Herod seized the office of High Priest from Hyrcanus (Strabo 16.2.46=C765), apparently not realising that Herod could not hold this post.⁶⁸ Strabo is more interested in the villainy of Antony than the attributes of Herod.⁶⁹

The final fragment of the *Historika Hypomnemata* is cited by Plutarch in his life of Caesar (Plut. *Caes.* 63 = *FGrHist* 91 F19), where Strabo is cited on omens before Caesar's death in 44 BC; the omens involve fire, multitudes of men on fire, and a slave whose hand threw out a flame, but showed no injury when the flame ceased. Furthermore, when Caesar was sacrificing, the heart of the victim was found not to be present. This prodigy engendered fear because it was against nature. Strabo's attitudes to both prodigies and to Caesar are relevant to this passage, which clearly noted more than one monitory event.

Strabo was undoubtedly very interested in the activities of major Romans who had an impact on the regional history of Pontus, as well as figures such as Caesar whose career had wider implications for the shape of his contemporary Roman world.⁷⁰ Caesar had set free Amisus, formerly a possession of the Pontic kings, later besieged by first Lucullus and then Pharnaces from the Bosporan kingdom. This liberation of a town so closely bound up with Strabo's personal history should have predisposed him in Caesar's favour. Omens of Caesar's death were widely reported, and Suetonius as well as Plutarch cite a representative selection (Suet. *Iul.* 81; cf. Dio 44.17). In the *Geography*, Strabo shows an extensive acquaintance with Caesar's commentaries on the *Bellum Gallicum*.⁷¹ Part of the interest was in the expansion of geographical horizons, since Strabo sees great empires as catalysts for developments of this sort, and the *Bellum Gallicum* had quite extensive treatment of both geographical and ethnographic topics.⁷² Strabo seems to consider Caesar's disregard for the signs as an important precursor of his fate. Roller connects the omen with the stage-managed spontaneous conflagration of Caesar's body, as recorded by Suetonius (Suet. *Iul.* 84; *BNJ* 91 F19).

The fragments of the *Historika Hypomnemata* are thus not only very scanty in number, but give a very uneven and uncertain coverage of the scope of the work. The evidence suggests that Strabo followed the regional approach of Polybius which was popular with later Hellenistic universal historians. Strabo had a modified view of imperialism deriving from his aristocratic background in Pontus and his life as a scholar in the Augustan world. The regional approach placed emphasis on the major Hellenistic kingdoms and their political interactions with neighbours, but also took notice of Roman interventions, sometimes critically. The gaze of Josephus was primarily on Jewish affairs, and this led him to adapt and reuse Strabo's

⁶⁸ See B. Z. Wacholder, *Nicolaus of Damascus* (1962) 4.

⁶⁹ I doubt Roller's contention that Strabo spent time at the court of Herod (DW. Roller, *The Building Program of Herod the Great* [1998] 22; 64-65).

⁷⁰ See Dueck (2000) 71.

⁷¹ A. Klotz (in *Cäsarstudien* [1910] 69-75) believed that Strabo cited him only indirectly via Timagenes, but today it is usual to allow that Strabo could have used the Latin text directly. See Dueck (2000) 93-94.

⁷² Dueck (2000) 124-125

Strabo and the shape of his 'Historika Hypomnemata'

Historika Hypomnemata. A theme running through his narrative was that Jewish populations had a successful coexistence in other communities such as Alexandria and Cyrene, and that conflicts with the Jews were generally not caused by religious factors, but were often motivated by financial greed. Strabo is useful to him because in the process of describing life in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt and Cyrenaica, he incidentally and relatively impartially deals with the Jewish population, because of their involvement in politics and other aspects of community life.

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