



THE SO-CALLED ARTEMIDORUS PAPYRUS.

A RECONSIDERATION

di *Luciano Canfora*

1. *A long story reaches its epilogue*

The so-called Artemidorus papyrus has in recent years been brought, with the deployment of a remarkable array of media resources, to the attention not only of scholars but also of the wider public. For a considerable period of time, from about 1980, it was discussed informally;¹ then a partial preview was given in a specialist journal (*Archiv für Papyrusforschung*, XLIV, 1998): as previously, it was claimed that it was Book II of *Geography* by Artemidorus of Ephesus (2nd century BC). The parading of the whole artefact for public view took place in Turin in February 2006; the accompanying exhibition catalogue was excellent, and the media fanfare was most impressive, though it proved to be the harbinger of a growing and far-reaching critical response. That edition, which at the time was said to be ready for publication, and whose arrival indeed had been trumpeted as long ago as 1998, did not actually appear for another two years (until March 2008) and then, after being greeted with a substantial body of critical literature, fell into an impressive tangle of contradictions. In less than a year, the reconstruction of the process of production put forward by those promoting the initiative and “codified” in the 2008 edition, was thrown into disarray and, understandably (given the various jigsaw pieces on

¹ Cfr. C. GALLAZZI *et alii*, *Il papiro di Artemidoro*, Milano, LED, 2008, p. 54.

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the table), substituted by another completely opposite version,² the point of which, however, was unclear even to the very scholar who had engineered it.

The whole of this rather chancy, infelicitous affair has been recounted with objectivity in a masterly critique by Federico Condello, to which we would like to bring the reader's attention.³

All that needs to be added to this excellent review is mention of the persistent rumour that the so-called Artemidorus papyrus had, in its time, actually been stolen. This is territory that we prefer not to venture into. *Videant consules (vel praetores)*.

It will be more profitable, at this point, to provide a summary of the facts that inevitably lead to the following two conclusions: a) the so-called Artemidorus papyrus is a modern fake manufactured, obviously, from ancient materials; b) the author of the fake is Constantine Simonides (1820-1890 circa).

2. *The typical characteristics of a modern fake*

What makes it clear that we are dealing here with a fake is the admirable craftsman's habit of writing (and drawing) around the already existing gaps on the papyrus he was using. This disconcerting practice can be seen in columns I (line 43) and IV (lines 24 and 25), as well as in most of the drawings which abound on the *recto* of these papyrus fragments.⁴

This in itself invalidates the document. The only explanation possible is that what we have is a forger working on a papyrus that is already seriously damaged (holed and frayed). For a forger, such a scenario is, obviously, a double-edged sword: on the one hand, the "authentic" – as opposed to artfully constructed –

² G. B. D'ALESSIO, *On the "Artemidorus" Papyrus*, «Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik», 171, 2009, pp. 27-43.3. f.

³ F. CONDELLO, *Artemidoro 2006-2011: l'ultima vita, in breve*, «Quaderni di storia», 74, 2011, pp. 161-256.

⁴ On the subject of the drawings, see the essay by A. COTTIGNOLI in the volume *Fotografia e falsificazione*, edited by L. CANFORA *et alii*, Repubblica di San Marino, Aiep, 2011, pp. 69-76 and the relative illustrations.

damage is an advantage in that it nourishes the overall impression of authenticity; on the other hand, it entails the inconvenience of having to write around the gaps. It is a real pity that those who once devoted themselves to defending the authenticity of this papyrus (and, furthermore, to insisting on Artemidorus' authorship of it) did not even touch upon this glaring error.

The argument that the same thing could occur with a papyrus that really was the work of an ancient copyist will not wash. What invalidates it as a defence is the frequency with which the phenomenon occurs in what is, moreover, such a short space: there are three occurrences all very close to each other, and they are to be found in parts of the papyrus where it is impossible to speak of an imperfect repositioning of the fibres. The fact that the same carelessness is evident for both the writing and the drawings settles the matter definitively. It would be superfluous to point out that this renders obsolete all that was written on the "de luxe" nature of the artefact, which – precisely on account of its putative sumptuousness – was said to be of Alexandrian provenance!⁵

There is another objective fact, which it requires little mental effort to comprehend: the presence of graphite in the ink in which the text on the *recto* was written. The traces of graphite were brought to light by the Chemistry for Technologies Laboratory at the University of Brescia (par. 2.1. microdiffraction analysis): «As far as analysis of the pigment is concerned, a peak value of $d = 3.33$, attributable to carbon in the graphite phase, was observed». Since graphite was not discovered until the end of the Medieval Period, the theory that the text might date from ancient times can be definitively ruled out. All those sophist explanations for this – along the lines that although the graphite is there, it is as if it were not – are nothing but the kind of second-rate self-serving arguments that are not even worthy of mention here.

⁵ C. GALLAZZI, S. SETTIS, *Le tre vite del papiro di Artemidoro*, Milano, Electa, 2006, p. 16, col. II.

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A legitimate question would be: so why graphite? An expert forger such as the author of the pseudo-Artemidorus text would have been more than capable of reproducing the ink used by the ancients; the ingredients are well-known (Vitruvius, VII 10; Pliny, XXXV 41; Dioscorides, *De materia medica*, V 162). Just how expert Simonides was in this field is clear not only from what he himself tells us but also from the testimony of one of his rivals, Andreas David Mordtmann (*Allgemeine Zeitung*, Augsburg, 28 November 1853, col. 5307).⁶ Such a lapse by a forger of this calibre is not therefore plausible. It is most probable that the traces of graphite are due to the customary procedure of first copying the text onto the papyrus with a pencil and then going over it with the carefully prepared “vintage” ink. That is why the extremely sophisticated testing we are able to employ today revealed the “graphite peak”.

Another characteristic of the so-called Artemidorus papyrus which is alien to the ancient world is the “stamping effect” of the writing on the *recto*, which spills over – upside down – onto the *verso*. What is significant is the rapid churning out of mutually contradictory theories attempting to explain away this phenomenon (overhasty rolling of the papyrus before the ink was dry,⁷ which is at odds with the fact that all of the columns have left a mark; or exposure to damp for a certain period of time,⁸ which would at worst have left a black ring, and certainly not a “stamping” or “mirror-writing” effect). The only reasonable explanation for a phenomenon of this kind, precisely because it is so extensive, is the use of an inking implement which accidentally left traces when it came into contact with the *verso* of papyrus; and the inking implement used to transcribe the text – which we see upside down on the *recto* – can only actually be a lithographic

⁶ On all of this subject, cfr. “Agatemero” in L. Canfora, L. Bossina (edd.), *Wie kann das ein Artemidor-Papyrus sein?*, Bari, Edizioni di Pagina, 2008, pp. 193-208.

⁷ C. GALLAZZI, B. KRÄMER, *Artemidor im Zeichensaal. Eine Papyrusrolle mit Text, Landkarte und Skizzenbüchern aus späthellenistischer Zeit*, «Archiv für Papyrusforschung», XLIV, 1998, p. 191.

⁸ C. GALLAZZI, S. SETTIS, *Le tre vite del papiro di Artemidoro*, cit., p. 17, col. II (at the top).

device. Simonides, who was highly expert in lithography, did in fact use lithographic procedures to make facsimiles of his more sophisticated papyri in order to have suitable illustrations of his work to show around: this was the approach he adopted, for example, with the *Periplus of Hanno*, with the fragments of Matthew's Gospel and with many of his other creations, including epigraphs. He speaks of this procedure in notes which have been preserved (British Library, Addit. 42502A, f. 128). His lithographic equipment is today preserved in the Museum of Liverpool. The accident probably occurred while he was preparing the plates. In short, far from supporting the authenticity theory, the extensive "mirror writing" is strong evidence of the recent origin of the so-called Artemidorus papyrus.

In addition, the fact that there are very sporadic and, in some cases, incredible instances of the same phenomenon on parts of some of the drawings (and certainly not with the regularity that can be observed in the case of the writing) only serves to throw very worrying light on the much more recent finishing touches that were made to the so-called Artemidorus papyrus (by its promoter) in order to provide proof of its precious, and therefore valuable, uniqueness.

3. Why the forger can only be Constantine Simonides

The most glaringly obvious reason is that Simonides' phrases and drawings are to be found on the papyrus. It is curious to note, now that the matter has been settled, how at first the suggestion that Simonides might have been involved was greeted with disdain by academics who knew nothing about him and had not even heard of his works. And yet the golden rule is surely still that a scholar does not make pronouncements on a subject that he has not read up on. For the moment we will restrict ourselves to mentioning just a few among the several parallels between phrases from the pseudo-Artemidorus and phrases used by Simonides in his works and creations:

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Col. I 12-15: τῆ ἐπιστήμῃ ταύτῃ συναγωνίσασθαι [...] ἔτοιμος εἰμι παραστῆσαι
Simonidis, *Epistolimaia Diatribé*, London, 1860, p. 25:
ἔτοιμος γὰρ εἰμι ἵνα ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐπιστήμης ποιήσω πᾶν ὄτι
δύναμαι.

The phrase coined by Simonides in his bizarre polemical pamphlet on the interpretation of hieroglyphics is subdivided, in the pseudo-Artemidorus, into two: a) «it is no insignificant labour» (τῆ ἐπιστήμῃ ταύτῃ συναγωνίσασθαι); b) «I am disposed *in fact* (ἔτοιμος εἰμί) to compare (παραστῆσαι) this science to the most divine philosophy».

It is worth remembering that ἐτοίμως ἔχομεν + παραστῆσαι is found only in the acts of the Third Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (680-681 AD),⁹ while σὺν ἐπιστήμῃ διαγωνίζεσθαι recurs in the letters of Manuele Gabalas and τὴν ἀστρονομικὴν ἐπιστήμην ῥαθυμίᾳ τῶν βοηθεῖν δυναμένων in the letters of Nicephorus Gregoras (around the years 1330-1340).¹⁰ Both of these are texts with which Simonides, a theologian who frequented the Patriarchal Theology School of Halki, was very familiar. In particular, this passage from Nicephorus Gregoras is significant, not only because of the recurrence in it of the curious concept of βοηθεῖν ἐπιστήμῃ. The idea there expressed that the science of astronomy is “in extreme difficulty” because targeted by the βασκανία Τελχίνων τινῶν surfaces again in column II 22-23 of the pseudo-Artemidorus, which deals with those who καταφρονοῦσι γεωγραφίας. Moreover, it is precisely in the famous and much used preface by Nicephorus Gregoras to his *Roman History* that we find the opposition σιγᾶν/λαλεῖν (nature is a “dumb witness” to what words can say) that recurs in column I 16-17 of the papyrus («εἰ γὰρ σιωπᾷ γεωγραφία» etc.).

⁹ *Concilium universale Constantinopolitanum tertium*, in *Concilii Actiones*, I-XI, edited by R. Riedinger, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1990, p. 22, 21-22.

¹⁰ *Correspondance de Nicéphore Grégoras*, edited by R. Guiland, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1927 («Col-lection Byzantine»), p. 153.

Meletios of Ioannina, a geographer and theologian at the beginning of the 18th century who was well known to Simonides – the latter, incidentally, attributed to a certain Meletios the Συμάϊς that he himself had created out of nothing (Athens, 1849) – made use of Nicephorus Gregoras, adapting the preface to his work to his own needs as a geographer and incorporating it into the introduction to his own Γεωγραφία παλαιὰ καὶ νέα (Venice, 1728), which was a handbook widely read by students of Modern Greek culture.

Col. II 11-12: τῇ ὑποκειμένη χώρᾳ περίξ βλέπων
Simonides, *Σύμμικτα*, Odessa, 1853: τὴν περίξ χώρᾳν
(*passim* in the liminal text attributed to Kallinikos Hieromonachos).
Col. I 35-37: πάντα περίξ σκοποῦντα ἄγρυπνον εἶναι
νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας.
Simonides, *Λεῖψανα Ἱστορικά*, Liverpool, 1864, p. 8 (*sub fine*): Νυκτὸς καὶ φωτὸς ἄγρυπνος φύλαξ εἰμί.

The image of the ἄγρυπνος φύλαξ appealed to Simonides who, in the same pamphlet, invents the story that he had deciphered an Egyptian monument covered in hieroglyphs which, when translated into Greek, yielded a text culminating in the phrase «Δικαιοσύνης ἄγρυπνος φύλαξ αἰεὶ ἐγώ» (p. 7, *sub fine*).

The beginning of the pseudo-Artemidorus (col. I 1-5) «τὸν ἐπιβαλλόμενον γεωγραφία τῆς ὅλης ἐπιστήμης ἐπίδειξιν ποιῆσθαι δεῖ προταλαντεύσαντα [οἱ προπλαστεύσαντα] τὴν ψυχὴν» etc. corresponds, in its structure and lexis, to another text which Simonides – on the same page of the *Λεῖψανα* – claims to have translated from the original Egyptian into Greek, and which reads as follows:

Δεῖ πάντας ἀνθρώπους καθαρῶ νῶ καὶ σώματι αἰνεῖν τὸν κύριον [...] σιγῇ καὶ κεκαθαρμένη ψυχῇ (it should not be forgotten that geography too, compared to theology in the pseudo-Artemidorus, σιγῇ).

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This opening framework – which features in the pseudo-Artemidorus – is a favourite of Simonides'. He uses it again in the reworking of the manual of Christian iconography by Dionysius of Fournas that he himself rewrote and made numerous copies of in his own hand (in Athens in 1847 he sold one of the copies he had made to the French collectors Didron and Durand): 'Ὁ τὴν ζωγραφικὴν ἐπιστήμην μαθεῖν βουλόμενος ἅς ὁδηγῆται πρὸς αὐτὴν κατὰ πρῶτον καὶ ἅς προγυμνάζεται [...] καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ φωτίσας εἰς τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ Θεοῦ συνέτισον τὴν ψυχὴν («Que celui qui veut apprendre la science de la peinture commence à s'en approcher et à s'y préparer d'avance pendant quelque temps [...] éclairer son âme pour la connaissance du vrai Dieu» etc.: translation by Paul Durand, pp. 11-12 of the *Manuel d'icongraphie chrétienne grecque et latine*, Paris, 1845).

What we are dealing with here is a text that Simonides not only altered line by line in order to make it appear older than it was, but of which he also made numerous copies in his own hand, and that he cited as crucial proof of continuity between Hellenistic and Byzantine painting (*Facsimiles of Certain Portions of the Gospel of St. Matthew*, edited by Simonides, London, 1862, p. 32). In other words, it is a text that is very much his, and the echoes of its opening part in the pseudo-Artemidorus are unmistakable.

This manual also influenced Simonides in the specific field of painting. Right from his first attempts at forging, he set about putting together a store of iconographic illustrations, and the hieratic images that he subsequently inserted in his various books (from the *Συμμίξις* to the *Θεολογικαὶ Γραφαὶ τέτταρες* to the papyrus fragments of the Gospel of Matthew) are all constructed in line with the principles, dimensions and proportions prescribed in Dionysius' manual. And that is not all. He also illustrated some handwritten copies of the manual with images he had produced himself: for example, the portrait of a supposed "master" to

Dionysius of Fournā, Panselinos,¹¹ whose face could almost be superimposed on that which is to be found on the extreme right of the *recto* of the pseudo-Artemidorus, after the array of limbs and heads. The coincidental similarity, in itself significant, between a portrait drawn by Simonides himself and one of the faces which feature on the pseudo-Artemidorus is the culmination of a series of textual coincidences between Simonides' writing and passages – some of them, like the opening, extremely important – found on the papyrus.

That is why it is right to consider Simonides the author of the pseudo-Artemidorus.

To all that has been said so far, we need to add the clues that came to light early on in this affair: the late (neo-Platonic, patristic, Byzantine, even neo-Greek) vocabulary, the unforgiveable modernisms such as μμειγμένα ὄπλα (col. I, 18-19), or the rather startling echoes of the introduction to Karl Ritter's *Allgemeine vergleichende Geographie* pointed out by Maurizio Calvesi,¹² etc.

4. The myth of Artemidorus' epitome of his own work proved disastrous for the forger

Didier Marcotte, one of the finest scholars of Greek geography, writes in the *Revue d'Histoire des Textes* (n.s., 5, 2010, p. 354): «Les colonnes IV et V [of the so-called Artemidorus papyrus] seraient un abrégé qui, au tournant de notre ère, circulait déjà à côté de l'Artémidore complet». And he humorously adds: «On est moins fondés à vouloir prêter à Artémidore même les colonnes I-II-III»: in other words, those steeped in Byzantine theology (p. 360).

Marcotte is right: columns IV and V, which, besides, open with the only fragment of Artemidorus (fr. 21 Stiehle) of any considerable length (apart, obviously, from the curious page περι

¹¹ This is MS former inv. 13871 from the Thomas Phillipps Collection, now in the St. John's University, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (Collegeville, Minnesota, USA).

¹² M. CALVESI, *Un Artemidoro del XIX secolo*, «Storia dell'arte», 119, 2008, pp. 109-128.

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τοῦ Νείλου, which came to light in the early 19th century), *are supposed to look like an “epitome”* (un *abrégé*) of what Artemidorus had written on Spain. In fact, what the real Artemidorus wrote on the subject of Spain was extremely detailed: one need only think of his extensive accounts of the “sacred promontory” and of Gades, which Strabo, using Posidonius as his source, undertook to criticize. The whole of Strabo’s Book III gives us a clear idea of the notable difference in length of Artemidorus’ Spain. Why does Marcotte talk about an “abrégé”? Because in column V, after the contorted description of the Iberian coasts, which is bizarrely positioned after the mention of the division into provinces of the part of Iberia under Roman control,¹³ the author of the papyrus announces the periplus using the following words: «Ληψόμεθα δὲ νῦν τὸν παράπλου ἀυτῆς ἐν ἐπιτομῇ χάριν τοῦ καθολικῶς νοηθῆναι τὰ διαστήματα τῶν τόπων» (lines 14-16). The form adopted is almost identical to that in the above-mentioned treatise by Meletios of Ioannina (*Γεωγραφία παλαιὰ καὶ νέα*, Venice, 1728, p. 2): «καὶ τὰ διαστήματα τῶν μερῶν αὐτῶν [...] καὶ τοὺς καθολικωτέρους σχηματισμοὺς αὐτῶν ὀλίγα τινὰ ἡμεῖς λαμβάνωμεν χάριν εἰδήσεως».

How did the idea of an epitome written by Artemidorus himself come to the forger? The erroneous belief that Artemidorus had made an epitome of his own work long before Marcian of Heraclea, between the 4th and 5th centuries, made it (which he tried, moreover, to pass off as the work of Artemidorus)¹⁴ was widespread amongst scholars between the 17th and 19th centuries. There were even those who, like Meursius, in his *Bibliotheca Graeca* (published by Gronovius in his very widely-circulated *Thesaurus Graecarum Antiquitatum*), maintained that Artemidorus *had written nothing else but a geographical epitome*: «Ac fuit totum illud Opus Epitome tantum».¹⁵

¹³ So, very different from ἡ σύμπασσα χώρα!

¹⁴ Cfr. *Geographi Graeci minores*, I, Paris, Didot, 1855, p. 567, 26.

¹⁵ J. MEURSIUS, in J. GRONOVIVS (ed.), *Thesaurus Graecarum Antiquitatum*, Venetiis, 1735, p. 1266, entry: *Artemidorus Ephesius*.

The misunderstanding arose from the fact that in Stephen of Byzantium's geographical dictionary many entries are accompanied by the reference Ἀρτεμίδωρος ἐν τῇ ἐπιτομῇ, which is obviously a reference to the epitome made by Marcian, who passed it off as the work of Artemidorus. It was a misunderstanding that endured. As late as the middle of the 19th century, Robert Stiehle, at the end of his meritorious collection of fragments of Artemidorus (*Philologus*, XI, 1856, pp. 193-244), gave serious consideration to the possibility that two epitomes of Artemidorus had been made: one by the author himself, the other by Marcian. But Stiehle himself then realised that the fragments cited by Stephen as being from "Artemidorus' epitome" could in fact only be from Marcian's!

So our forger, who wanted to create a papyrus with a periplus of Spain ἐν ἐπιτομῇ that would immediately, right from the beginning of column IV, be recognizable as the work of Artemidorus, was simply buying into an erroneous belief that was still widely held in his day. The author has attempted to bring into being a work by Artemidorus *which never existed*, and this, one might say, is conclusive proof that the whole thing is a forgery.¹⁶

Let us not forget, while we are on the subject, that Simonides had a kind of fixation with epitomes. In fact he *conceived*¹⁷ numerous forgeries of *epitomes* by Greek historians and geographers, and offered an impressive number by great lost authors (which he claimed to possess) to the Science Academy

¹⁶ Only someone who was ignorant of how "epitomes" were made in the ancient world – that is, by dividing into sections and stitching back together the original text (*manus afferre πρὸς τὸ τέμνειν*, as Henri Estienne neatly put it in the *Admonitio de Thesauri sui Epitome*) – could naively believe that fr. 21 Stiehle (which comes from Marcian's Epitome: cfr. M. BILLERBECK, «Eikasmós», 19, 2008, pp. 301-322) might be based on the "full" text – of similar substance but completely different form – that is found in column IV, 1-13 of the pseudo-Artemidorus. It goes without saying that the process went in the reverse direction: it is col. IV, 1-13 that is a rewriting of the pre-existing fragment (and therefore begins with the insertion of a subject that serves to render the sentence "self-sufficient"): the only fragment of Artemidorus of any length, which the forger has positioned right at the beginning of his "creation".

¹⁷ Not all of what he planned was actually produced.

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of Saint Petersburg at the beginning of January 1851, but he had already made mention of some of them in the critical apparatus he appended to his (completely invented) geographical dictionary by the non-existent Eulyros.¹⁸ In his lists and apparatus we in fact find: Epitome of the 40 books of Diodorus reduced to 17 (Saint Petersburg List, n. 11); Epitome of Duris di Samos's ὄροι [sic] (n. 12 = Eulyros List n. 8); Summary of the History of the Greeks and the Samians (n. 13 = 9); Epitome of Arrian's History (n. 15 = 11); Epitome of Aristodemus (n. 16),¹⁹ Epitome of Democritus' Geography (24 = 16); Epitome of Ephorus' History (26 = 18); Epitome of Eratosthenes' Geography (27 = 19); Epitome of Polemon of Ilium's collection of epigraphs (28 = 20); Epitome of Charmos of Athens' Geography (38); Epitome of Posidonius' History (33); Epitome of Demetrius of Callatis's treatise on the eruptions of volcanoes (43); and so on.²⁰

We know the source of this veritable obsession (which is easily understandable in a forger, given that it is simpler to create an epitome than an original), and of his decision to incorporate fr. 21 of Artemidorus in an Epitome. There was a rare neo-Greek work, published in Vienna by the Zosimadai brothers, which confirmed beyond doubt – in the eyes of Simonides – that that fragment on the division into provinces of Roman Spain [= 21 Stiehle] was part of an *Epitome* by Artemidorus: it was the monumental Συλλογή τῶν ἐν ἐπιτομῇ τοῖς πάλαι Γεωγραφηθέντων, τύποις ἐκδοθέντων (Collection of printed and published geographical epitomes), which includes – on p. 475 of Tome I (1807) – that fragment between the τεμάχια Ἀρτεμιδώρου. The Συλλογή *declares that all the material it contains comes from epitomes*: that much is immediately clear from the title and the rest of the title page where Artemidorus is explicitly named. It is stated that the work

¹⁸ The documents pertaining to this whole affair are now in Volume C. SIMONIDES, *Opere greche, I (Κεφαλληνιακά)*, Bari, Edizioni di pagina, 2012.

¹⁹ The nature of this διαδραμάτιον is controversial.

²⁰ On Simonides' obsession with epitomes, cfr. also: *Il viaggio di Artemidoro*, Milano, Rizzoli, 2010, p. 278.

is «funded by the Zosimadai brothers», χάριν τῶν τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς παιδείας ἐφιεμένων Ἑλλήνων. Amongst the beneficiaries of this generous patronage was Simonides, to whom Athanasios Zosimas provided funding in 1853 for the edition of Ἑρμηνεῖα τῶν ζωγράφων, by Dionysius of Fourna, published in Athens. To the “immortal brothers” Zosimadai, Simonides would subsequently dedicate his eccentric work *Horus of Nilopolis* (1863). Incidentally, the Zosimadais had shown themselves to be generous patrons by providing funding for Korais’ “Hellenic Library”, and in the political field had made important contributions to the cause of Greek patriotism; they had close connections with Ypsilanti, a symbolic figure for all Greek irredentists and patriots (Simonides had sought to demonstrate, when he had succeeded in obtaining an introduction to the Science Academy of Saint Petersburg, that he was related indirectly to Ypsilanti himself).

To return to the Viennese *Collection of geographical epitomes*, the proof of the direct use that Simonides made of it is in his adoption of the title-phrase *the Epitome of Artemidoros and Menippos* (in *The Periplus of Hannon King of the Karchedonians*, London, Trübner, 1864, p. 16), which exactly mirrors the form used in the *Collection*: τεμάχια τινὰ Μενίππου καὶ Ἀρτεμιδώρου. And it should be remembered, besides, that it was right there in the *collection* – and certainly not in Müller’s collection *Geographi Graeci minores* (I, Paris, Didot, 1855), from which, with the exception of two pages at the end of the volume containing only a handful of fragments “from the Epitome of Artemidorus”, Artemidorus is missing – that he was able to actually find the fragments of Artemidorus. In short, all the information available to him led Simonides to believe that there was in existence an epitome of Artemidorus’ work written by the geographer himself: whence his decision to have “his” Artemidorus say, «λήψομεν ἐν ἐπιτομῇ τὰ διαστήματα τῶν τόπων».

As regards columns IV-V of the pseudo-Artemidorus, it should also be made clear, once and for all, that the (insane) plan to

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create an epitome of Artemidorus' book on Spain is not separate from the naïve idea of providing a text that is *complete in itself* and in fact ends with the peremptory, conclusive assertion that "nobody has seen the rest". What we have then is quite a paradox: a "complete fragment", one of Simonides' finest works, almost on a par with the Hanno and Matthew papyri, his real achievements in the field of forged papyri.

5. A typically byzantine "incipit"

It is worth dwelling for a moment on the wording with which the pseudo-Artemidorus begins: «τὸν ἐπιβαλλόμενον γεωγραφία τῆς ὅλης ἐπιστήμης ἐπίδειξιν ποιῆσθαι δεῖ [...] κατὰ τὴν τῆς ἀρετῆς δύναμιν» etc., which obviously recalls Eriphanius (*Panarion*, 17): «δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ἐπιβαλλόμενον διηγῆσαι τινὶ κατὰ δύναμιν ἐπιβάλλεσθαι» etc. What needs to be highlighted here is the syntactic structure adopted as an opening. While no (surviving) ancient work begins with τὸν and infinitive + δεῖ (or viceversa: δεῖ + τὸν and infinitive), we do find such a structure not only in the above-mentioned introduction to Dionysius of Fourna's *Manual*, which was such a favourite of Simonides', or rather in Simonides's pseudo-Egyptian text («δεῖ πάντας ἀνθρώπους καθαρῶ νῶ καὶ σώματι αἰνεῖν τὸν κύριον» etc.), but also in a series of *initia epistularum Byzantinarum* (which can be easily consulted in Michael Grünbart's collection, Olms-Weidmann, 2001, p. 324): «τὸν αἰόδιμον σταυρὸν δίκαιον προσεπειν / τὸν ἄρχοντα, ὡς ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ, χρῆ καὶ ἀγαθὸν εἶναι / τὸν ἔμφορα μοναχὸν δόκιμον εἶναι χρῆ ζυγοστάτην / τὸν εὐδόκιμον κρείττονα εἶναι χρῆ τῶν συμφορῶν» etc. It is possible to find similar examples in other *openings* to works even from the very late Byzantine era, such as Meletios' *Retorica*: «Μέλλουσιν ὁμιλίαν γράφειν πρῶτον μὲν σκεπτέον ὅτι» etc. (Paris, Suppl. Grec 1248, f. 84r), or «χρῆ δὲ τὸν ἀναγιγνώσκοντα προσέχειν τὴν ψυχὴν» etc. (Paris, Suppl. Grec 1238, f. 82v), «Δεῖ τὸν προεστῶτα πᾶσαν ἐνδείκνυσθαι

σπουδῆν» etc. (Athos, Monè Pantokrátoros, 382, f. 473), «Δεῖ τὸν ἀληθῆ κεκτημένον σοφίαν» etc. (Paris, Suppl. Grec 1311, f. 23), «Τὸν ἀσχολούμενον περὶ τὴν καθαρὰν προσευχὴν [...δεῖ]» (Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, cl. II 148, f. 31; cl. III 5, f. 378), «χρὴ σε γινώσκειν ὡς καθ' ἡμέσειαν ἡμέρας» etc. (Paris, Suppl. Grec 1148, f. 79). And it would be possible to cite many more examples.

To summarize: while for the *Epitome on Spain* Simonides was conveniently able to turn, for the introduction, to the fragment already available (fr. 21), which he made into the beginning of the epitome (not without certain ruinous distortions of the original text),²¹ and then, as he went on, to other well-known geographical sources (Strabo, Marcian, etc.), for the other part of the composition – consisting of a sort of περὶ γεωγραφίας or even ἐγκώμιον τῆς γεωγραφίας – he had to work “freelance” and thus resorted to using an incipit that he was particularly familiar with. For the substance of the text, he simply amplified *ad infinitum* Strabo’s initial sentence on the philosophical nature of geography,²² spinning it out with arguments and *topoi* from his own theological knowledge. And this led on to the bright idea to argue that there is an affinity between geography and theology (= most divine philosophy), and to assert that geography too is heavily armed with its own “dogmatic panoply” (I, 16-19: «τοῖς ἰδίοις δόγμασι λαλεῖ. Τί γὰρ οὐκ; ἔγγιστα καὶ τοσαῦτα μεινιγμένα περὶ ἑαυτὴν ὄπλα βασιτάζει»).

6. A theological culture

The Byzantine theological culture that permeates this weird *Panegyric to Geography* is palpable in almost every line. Only by recognizing these sources of inspiration is possible to find a

²¹ For example, the invention of the subject ἡ σύμπασα χώρα, which is not in the original, leads him to say, absurdly, that at the end of the 2nd century BC all of Spain was under Roman control.

²² The suggestion in Christoph Kuffner’s *Artemidor* (Brno-Wien, 1822-1833) on this point – that Artemidorus the philosopher and the geographer were the same person – is indisputable. Simonides knew this work. On it, cfr. *La meravigliosa storia del falso Artemidoro*, Palermo, Sellerio, 2011, pp. 77-91.

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meaning (a wholly anachronistic one, of course, given that the author is supposed to be an Ephesian writer from the 2nd century BC!) in sentences that at first sight appear to be absolutely senseless, such as the one we have just seen in which geography «speaks in dogmas because it is armed» (with a “dogmatic panoply”). Immediately afterwards there is another no less disconcerting passage which can only be understood in the light of the kind of reasoning that is to be found, for example, in Theodorus Studita’s *Parva Catechesis* (759-826 AD). It is what might be defined as the “suffer to avoid suffering” theory. In chapter 105 of that treatise, this theory recurs again and again:

- a) ἐλώμεθα κοπιᾶν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἵνα εὐρωμεν ἀνάπαυσιν;
- b) ἐλώμεθα τὸ κλαίειν ἵνα εὐρωμεν τὸ χαίρειν ἐν Κυρίῳ;
- c) ἐλώμεθα τὴν στενὴν καὶ τεθλιμμένην ὁδὸν ὁδεύειν ἵνα εὐρωμεν τὴν ἐντεῦθεν τικτομένην ζῶην ἀτήμονα.

It is the same pattern of “logic” that we find in lines 26-29 of column I of the pseudo-Artemidorus: «(ἐπαγγέλλεται τις [...] συχναῖς μερίμναις ἄγεσθαι τὰ φιλοσοφίας δόγματα) the teaching of philosophy makes it clear that the practice of philosophy is beset with difficulties and sufferings (ὅπως τὸν ἀτλάντειον ἐκείνον φόρτον βαστάζων [...] ἀκοπίατον φόρτον ἔχη) so that taking upon himself that burden worthy of Atlas, he might have a burden that does not fatigue him». This is the apparently paradoxical play on words: to carry a heavy burden so that it might feel light. The “reasoning” continues and the notion is explored in greater depth with another image: «(ἵνα προσαγκαλίζεται τὴν ἰδίαν ψυχὴν μηδὲν κοπιῶσαν μηδὲ βαρουμένην)²³ in order to embrace his own soul which is in no way either fatigued or weighed down». Practising philosophy reduces the fatigue inherent in the practice itself precisely because one has accepted that fatigue,

²³ Here the forger feigns to be a copyist making a mistake and puts both participles into the nominative.

and as a consequence whoever undertakes that endeavour is able *to embrace his own soul* (an image taken from Olympiodorus and from Basil of Caesarea), *which is now lightened and in no way fatigued*.

The *soul* dominates this bizarre text, which can hardly be called a great success. This was jokingly pointed out by Luciano Bossina in a detailed commentary: «There is too much soul in this introduction». And there can be no doubt that the preamble to a Geography (by a Hellenistic author) entirely on the subject of the soul, in the manner of the first chapter of the *Introduction to Religious Painting* by Dionysius of Fourna, is decidedly anachronistic, not to say constantly teetering on the brink of nonsense.

The geographer/philosopher must «weigh up (or mould) his own soul» (I, 3-4), he must have the «will to win» in relation to the «power of virtue» (I, 7) and be “ready” «with the willing organs of his soul» (I, 9-10); he must then «embrace his soul» (I, 29), and «desire the thing while his soul and will are in no way serene» (μηδὲν ἡρεμούσης αὐτοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ θελήσεως; I, 34-35); «the geographer must adapt his soul to the land that lies before him» (col. II, 10).

This last hendiadys, the “soul and will” (ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ θέλησις), a form not found anywhere else in extant Greek literature, and for which the way is paved a few lines earlier by “willing organs” (θεληματικὰ ὄργανα) of the soul, really needs to be explained rather than – as usually happens – perfunctorily examined and dismissed. Once again it is Byzantine treatises *περὶ ψυχῆς* that come to our aid, beginning with the pages of the *λόγος περὶ ψυχῆς* by Nikephoros Blemmydes (13th century), which were available from 1784, together with similar treatises by Theophanes of Medeia and by Gennadius Scholarios (Leipzig, Breitkopf, funded by the Greek, Panagiotis Ioannitis).

7. *There are two works*

The panegyric to geography (coll. I-III)²⁴ and the epitome of Spain were conceived as two distinct “works”. Even a first glance reveals that the form (height and width) of columns I-II is completely different from that of columns IV-V: it was quite clearly not the intention of their zealous creator that they should be together. The impression that they belong together was created – also for economic reasons – by whoever, with a view to commercialising the whole thing as a single “big-roll”, covered *all* the pieces of the *verso* with animals.²⁵ (It is no coincidence that the pigments of the *verso* have never been chemically analysed).

No one who is aware of Simonides’ impressive works with papyrus will be surprised to see that the writing in the *Panegyric to Geography* and the *Epitome of Spain* appear to be the same. His papyruses in fact, as Livia Capponi has accurately pointed out in her important essay *Visita ai papiri di Simonides*, «although presented as texts by different authors from different eras, are characterised by similar writing. In other words, papyruses [which are supposed to be] from completely different eras and genres and of completely different provenance are often in exactly the same writing». She goes on to specify: «Simonides uses no more than four paleographic styles which resemble each other and are sometimes even found alongside each other in the same text».²⁶

The photographic material gathered by Livia Capponi is particularly instructive and demonstrates moreover Simonides’ increasing interest in creating damaged, frayed papyruses (see plates 14 and 15 in the volume cited in the note).

²⁴The third column is suspect, and maybe it was never “born”. Or rather, it was born of the first syllables of headwords in the geographical dictionary.

²⁵Including the small fragment B, which has nothing to do either with the *Panegyric* or the *Epitome*.

²⁶L. Capponi examined the collection of Simonides papyruses at the Museum of Liverpool on 9 November 2007. She wrote an account of what she saw and this, along with a considerable quantity of accompanying photographic evidence, can be found in her above-mentioned essay, which is appended to the volume L. CANFORA, *Il papiro di Artemidoro*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2008, pp. 457-461.

One defect in the way he writes on papyrus is the almost total absence of ligatures between the letters as well as the distance between them (cfr. Capponi, p. 458): the same characteristic is to be found in the pseudo-Artemidorus.²⁷

8. *Map madness*

For a long time, those attempting to portray the pseudo-Artemidorus as nothing less than a marvel made great play of the many (both human and animal) figures to be found on the *recto* and the *verso*, as well as of the infamous “map” (on occasions even described as a cartographical chart!) which they tried more than once to pass off as the oldest map in the western world. All this, as well as serving to pump up the sales price (it was after all a work of art!), was the basis for the highly diverting theory of the “three lives” of the papyrus, a theory now in tatters after the memorably sage observations of one its own architects: 1) «An explanation is still required of the purpose in drawing so many animals together»; 2) «our first hypothesis too, that the drawing of the map was abandoned because the copyist realized that another map was supposed to go in that space, is difficult to accept [...] it would in fact have been possible to correct the mistake by cutting the roll».²⁸ Now, with the theory of the “three lives” dead in the water, the mask from which it is supposed to have emerged rotting on the compost heap, the “Konvolut” – which in March 2008 was wheeled in to replace the mask, only to be rumbled as a photomontage –²⁹ ingloriously buried, and the theory that it all began with a “theft” half-heartedly doing the rounds, this unique, semi-miraculous fake breaks down into three parts spuriously held together by the bizarre bestiary on the back: a) *περὶ γεωγραφίας* (a *Panegyric to Geography*, as some like to call it);

²⁷ This was highlighted in a number of papers presented during the workshop on the pseudo-Artemidorus held in Bologna, in the Department of Classical Philology, on 30 November 2011.

²⁸ S. SETTIS, *Artemidoro. Un papiro dal I al XXI secolo*, Torino, Einaudi, 2008, p. 28 and p. 77.

²⁹ Cfr. A. COTTIGNOLI, *Fotografia e falsificazione*, cit.

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b) a feeble attempt at a *Periplus of Spain* (in the form of an epitome that is designed to appear to be the work of Artemidorus and thus begins with fr. 21 rearranged so as to be syntactically self-sufficient); c) anatomical illustrations perhaps intended as part of a *περὶ ζωγραφίας* in the style of Duris (of his works of this kind nothing survives except a title) and of Dionysius of Fournà (both authors were very popular with Simonides) and modelled on anatomical illustrations from modern treatises on drawing (C. A. Jombert, *Nouvelle Méthode pour apprendre à dessiner sans maître*, Paris, J. Chardon, 1740; *Lumen picturae*, Amsterdam, 1690; G. Volpato, R. Morghen, *Principi del disegno tratti dalle più eccellenti statue antiche*, Roma, Pagliarini, 1786). That the anatomical illustrations on the papyrus are directly descended from those in the aforementioned modern treatises is immediately obvious when they are placed side by side. That the heads inserted by the Led editors in the *agraphon* before the first column belong with the others in the anatomical illustrations (just as in modern illustrations for self-taught painters, in which hands, feet and heads dominate) has been demonstrated by D'Alessio³⁰ and by Guido Bastianini,³¹ and it is difficult to ignore their arguments.

The failure to analyse the pigments in the ink used on the *verso* is a far from insignificant confirmation that this is where the “trick” lies: in that kaleidoscopic bestiary with its wholly unconvincing subtitles, and in decidedly timeless writing, all surmounted with a general title, which constitutes damning evidence itself, in that none of the “catalogues” cited in order to make sense of the thing would ever have a general title.

From the debris of what was a rather unlikely construction, then, a so-called “map” is peeping out. The attempts of frenzied imaginations to make sense of this degenerate on occasions into “ufology”. Theories ranged from Baetica – which the client did not

³⁰ G. B. D'ALESSIO, *On the “Artemidorus” Papyrus*, cit.

³¹ G. BASTIANINI, *Sull'avvolgimento del rotolo di Artemidoro*, «Archiv für Papyrusforschung», LV, 2009, pp. 215-221.

want in that position and was thus to be considered the cause of all the incredible mishaps that would subsequently befall the roll – to the region of the mouth of the Rhone, to the upturned Island of Cyprus, to the “ideal” map which actually depicts nowhere in particular, to a plot belonging to a private individual (perhaps the customer himself) on which the little squares – previously interpreted by the Led editors as “stazioni di posta [post houses]” – became the “pedestals of statues” or even pergolas!³²

In fact, the crazy tangle of hypotheses regarding this outline of a landscape (audaciously elevated to the rank of geographical map) unravels when account is taken of the fact that the adoption of cartographic illustrations to accompany geographical texts (invented ones, naturally) had been part of Simonides’ *modus operandi* right from the beginning. When he introduces the reader to Eulyros’ geographical lexicon (entitled Ἐθνικά, like Stephen’s lexicon) explaining that he is including only the section on Cephalonia, Simonides takes it upon himself to also describe the characteristics of the whole manuscript that he says he owns: «τὰ Ἐθνικά φέρουσι καὶ πίνακας χωρογραφικοὺς (= illustrations, geographical maps) χρώμασι παντοίοις ἐπὶ μεμβρανῶν» (thus begins the third paragraph of the Προαγγελία τῆς πρώτης βίβλου τῶν Ἐθνικῶν Εὐλύρου, at the end of the short volume Γεωγραφικά τε καὶ Νομικά τὴν Κεφαλληνίαν ἀφορῶντα published in Athens in 1850, p. 28). Eulyros’ lengthy manuscript, of which Simonides previewed only a small sample in that short edition, thus included πίνακες χωρογραφικοί. It is clear that the so-called “map” in the pseudo-Artemidorus is the πίναξ χωρογραφικός intended to “embellish” the geographical *Epitome* which features right alongside it (in coll. IV and V).

³² This has been Talbert’s repeated contention – even in public! Recently a young researcher (Michael Rathmann) claimed he had spotted a milestone on the map. Cfr. *Quaderni di storia*, 75, 2012, pp. 339-343.

9. *The tools of the trade of Simonides the “geographer”*

In 1853, Simonides, having failed in his attempt to establish the “epicentre” of his business first in Saint Petersburg and then in Constantinople, arrived in England after a long journey around the Mediterranean, of which not all the details are clear.³³ In London he attempted, with some success, to peddle his merchandise to the British Museum, where at that time the manuscripts department was rigorously presided over by Frederick Madden. Madden went to great lengths to make sure he was buying only genuine goods and turned down a large number of fakes (some of which had already been offered to the Academy of Saint Petersburg in 1851). Everything that Madden turned down, however, was purchased by Thomas Phillipps, a voracious collector who was by no means averse to acquiring items that were fake, suspect or dubious. Unfortunately, over the course of more than a century, Phillipps’ collection was broken up and, as a result, some of Simonides’ pieces, such as the aforementioned fragment of Eulyros’ Ἐθνικὰ, kept reappearing on the world antiquarian market (Sotheby’s, Christie’s, and elsewhere): in July 1972, in 1973, and again in June 2005.

On the other hand, the pieces acquired by the British Museum have, obviously, remained put. The one that stands out is a particularly valuable geographical manuscript consisting of about thirty folios of Manuscript 655 from the Vatopedi Monastery on Mount Athos, which Simonides had fraudulently removed: after being purchased by the British Museum, this “booty” was classified as *Additional 19391*. We have already analysed elsewhere the contents of these folios.³⁴ It is worth pointing out here, though, that there is a connection between these contents and Simonides’ “creative” dealings in the field of ancient geography:

³³ The information provided in the pseudo-Kallinicos (cfr. *Il viaggio di Artemidoro*, cit., pp. 290-291) may not be entirely accurate.

³⁴ C. GALLAZZI *et alii*, *Il papiro di Artemidoro*, cit., pp. 449-456.

1) Among these folios is to be found the *Periplus of Hanno* (13r-v), which is one of the most painstakingly put-together of the geographical fakes that Simonides created and circulated.

2) The *Additional* opens with an anonymous «ὑποτύπωσις γεωγραφίας, ἐν ἐπιτομῇ» (= *Geographi Graeci minores*, II, Paris, Didot, 1861, pp. 494-509), which begins with «ἡ τῆς ὅλης γῆς» and ends with «ἡ καθ' ἡμᾶς θάλασσα τοιαύτη». From the lists of “unpublished works” that Simonides compiled for the Academy of Saint Petersburg and the Athens edition of Eulyros, we can deduce that, in the case of the (planned) Posidonius’s *Epitome of Geography* (n. 24 on the Saint Petersburg list = n. 16 in the Eulyros edition), he intended to include an introductory part that would begin (or actually began) with the words «τάδε ἔστι γεωγραφικά».

3) These folios also include an incomplete map of Spain with an accompanying description (ff. 20v-21r): this is a portion of Ptolemy’s *Geography* now illustrated with maps, the rest of which is to be found in Vatopedi 655. Charles Stewart, in his biography of Simonides (*A Biographical Memoir of Constantine Simonides*, London, Skeet, 1859, p. 33) describes this (and the following) map as «two very curious geographical tablets». He is not wrong: what is striking is the unusual decision to designate the various places with very sketchy drawings of little houses, not always accompanied by place names. The map of Spain is particularly riddled with mistakes, both as regards the series of rivers that run through Lusitania and flow into the Ocean, and in the drawing of the Atlantic coast (where the Sacred Promontory seems to appear twice). The folios, in other words, contained numerous stimuli for the creation of an *Epitome of Spain* complete with map. And this is precisely what we find in the so-called Artemidorus papyrus. In which – as we know – there is also a second text consisting of a “general” treatise, *On Geography*, that manages to be both rambling and perfunctory.

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4) These folios of the *Additional* also contain Agathemerus as well as part of the pseudo-Arrian (Periplus Ponti Euxini), in which the name of Artemidorus appears. What we have, in both cases, are pages that from a stylistic point of view (the arid, formulaic nature of the *stadiasmòs*), appear to form the basis of the model of *stadiasmòs* contained in column V (from line 17) of the pseudo-Artemidorus, as well, of course, as for the pseudo-Eulyros.

5) The whole thing is accompanied by a land and sea map of the entire globe framed by the animals and the figures representing the signs of the zodiac.

6) The *Additional* also contains the beginning of Strabo's *Chrestomathies* (fr. 26), with the introductory reference to the philosophical nature of geography (the topic with which the pseudo-Artemidorus begins).

One cannot ignore the fact that in order to have decided to "remove" those folios, Simonides *must have been personally acquainted with the rest of the Vatopedi 655 Manuscript* and the whole wealth of geographical material that it contains. Thus the idea of a *miscellaneous* manuscript, *entirely on the subject of geography*, which opened with a general epitome *On Geography* was further nourished.

Amongst the numerous Byzantine authors he was acquainted with, thanks to his constant contact with Greek manuscripts in a wide range of libraries, Simonides found a number of Epitomes, Διαγνώσεις, ὑποτυώσεις, synopses, and geographical summaries:³⁵ first in the pages he removed from the Vatopedi (= Addit. 19391) and then in the manuscripts of Nikephoros Blemmydes, of Dionysius Periegetes, of Eustathius, etc., which, in any case, from 1861 were included in the second volume of *Geographi Graeci minores*.

He was especially familiar with the literary genre of the geographical epitome and the *περὶ γεωγραφίας*.

³⁵ And he was able to consult some of them in the second volume of *GGM*.

10. *Is anyone on Simonides' side?*

Of course, it is possible to cling to the belief that Simonides' creations were genuine, and there are those who have done so. Some scholars of African studies, for example, accepted the authenticity of the papyrus of the *Periplus of Hanno*, with all its alterations and final additions.

In 1923 a scholar named Maria Monachesi published *The Shepherd of Hermas* (Rome, Libreria di Cultura) with an Italian translation and notes. On pp. 4-5 of the introduction, she provided the reader with the following information: «The original text, in Greek, came down to us via two handwritten codices, one from the Monastery of St Gregory on Mount Athos, the other from the Monastery of St Catherine at Mount Sinai. The former (now in the Leipzig Library), which was discovered by Constantine Simonides in 1856, contains almost the whole work (except for the last part) on its 9 folios, and dates back only to the beginning of the 15th or the end of the 14th century [...] but until 1856 *The Shepherd* was known only in the Latin – or so-called Vulgate – version (of which there are many manuscripts), etc.». It was in vain that Tischendorf produced evidence that Simonides himself, who had turned up in Leipzig in 1855,³⁶ had created those pages using very good imitations of medieval Greek script for his translation back into Greek of the Latin version of *The Shepherd*. And it was then that Simonides began to see Tischendorf as a rival, a prelude to his making the provocative claim, years later, that he himself, the eternal forger, was the author of the Codex Sinaiticus Bible, a “revelation” that nearly led to the easy-going Tischendorf losing, if not quite his mind, then his ability to reason calmly.

Even as recently as 1990, Carsten Thiede (*Jesus: Life or Legend?*, Oxford) embarked, with the fervour of an apologist oblivious to the fact that for a scholar scientific rigour is absolutely obligatory,

³⁶ After an extremely long journey involving stops in Athens, Constantinople, Saint Petersburg, London, Paris and Leipzig in order to try to sell his “unpublished” works.

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on a defence of Simonides' Matthew papyrus. Only (admittedly justifiable) prejudice against Simonides – wrote Thiede – leads to the conclusion that the Matthew papyrus is also a fake. But in this case, he objected, «he cannot have faked the papyrus fragments because he had only obtained authorisation to read them, which he did in John Mayer's library, most of the time in the presence of the owner and other people» (p. 86). We are very familiar with Simonides' strategy, which – with the complicity of the Reverend Stobart – consisted in creating the impression that he had never seen the parchment or papyrus in question until the moment when the unwary buyer, encouraged by Stobart, called him in to decipher the script (which was actually his own work that Stobart was skilfully marketing). Thiede, who was perhaps aware of this, concentrates on championing the authenticity of the Matthew papyrus (the unmasking of which caused a scandal) because he needed to be able to point to early – or rather, *very* early – evidence of the Gospel; and, according to its long, implausible *subscriptio*, the papyrus Simonides had manufactured constituted just such evidence. It was the same mental process as that which had led him and others to claim that a “Markusfragment” really had come down to us from the Qumran caves. They do not want to have to admit that there is no written evidence of the corpus of the New Testament from before the end of the 1st century AD. It is not productive, however, to use such methods, whether for religious or other reasons, when attempting to ignore the difference between what is counterfeit and what is authentic. One risks paying an astronomical sum for an almost perfect Cimabue, peeping out from a corner of which is a «small but perfectly identifiable Mercedes-Benz». ³⁷

³⁷ As happens in Frederick Forsyth's well-constructed tale, *The Art of The Matter*, set in the world of the London auction houses: it can be found in Forsyth's collection of short stories, *The Veteran*, 2001.

11. *The signature*

For years the last line of defence of the honour of the pseudo-Artemidorus was the extremely unusual shape of the *sampi* (a three-legged Greek *pi*) surmounted by an alphabetical letter functioning as a multiplier. Prof. Jürgen Hammerstaedt (*Chiron*, 39, 2009, pp. 323-337) was practically prepared to fight to the death in defence of the theory that Simonides *could not* have known of the existence of that symbol, which appeared in the West in the early 20th century among Elephantine documentary Papyri; he maintained that Simonides could not even have seen the numerous epigraphs in the Temple of Athena at Priene, where the symbol is used more than once. (The specific reference to how it would have been impossible for Simonides to have seen those epigraphs is on p. 328 of Hammerstaedt's immensely long article). Hammerstaedt insists not only that it would not have been possible for Simonides to see with his own eyes the archaeological remains (which at the time had not yet been plundered) in places right on his doorstep, but also that he could not have seen the numerous epigraphs of the Didymaion at Miletus where that symbol is found recurrently (and where its meaning is always unambiguous).

But these theories will no longer fly: Simonides had first-hand knowledge of those epigraphs at Priene (I, Priene, 37); he copied and made profitable use of them (cfr. *Quaderni di storia*, 73, gennaio-giugno 2011, pp. 199-209). As for Didyma, Hammerstaedt perhaps would have had to do nothing more than go and read Haussoullier's notebooks in the Institut de France in Paris, to work out that most of the material was *en plein air*, accessible or walled-up in local dwellings. Hammerstaedt's rather bookish error of perspective was to believe that an erudite self-taught Greek who had been born and brought up in those areas, who was fascinated by the ancient world and eager to make use of it, and who from the 1840s had been particularly interested

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in the peculiarities of the Carian alphabet, would wait for the publication of books in German at the beginning of the 20th century to become acquainted with materials to which, as a matter of course, he had immediate access.

So the presence of the sampi with the multiplier in some lines of column V is, if anything, Simonides' "signature".

12. *The proem finally begins to make sense*

The brief history of the interpretation of the so-called proem to the pseudo-Artemidorus is rather paradoxical. Those who, in times gone by, defended its authenticity or even the attribution to Artemidorus were resigned to not understanding the exact meaning of that passage, and went no further than defining it, rather simplistically or "defensively", as "grandiloquent" (in the sense that it "says nothing") or rambling or perhaps – privately – "outlandish". On the other hand, those who started from the (obvious) premise that the passage had to mean something gradually discovered that, in effect, there was sense to it and that the idea expressed in it was indeed coherent; it was just that one needed a thorough grounding in Byzantine-theological culture and an adequate knowledge of late Greek and neo-Greek vocabulary in order to get a clear grasp of what that sense was. In it lies the objective proof of the modern origin of that "proem", and thus of the counterfeit nature of the whole thing, given that the same hand wrote everything on it, all in the same script.

Let us then reconstruct the meaning of that "proem", which has only recently been laid entirely bare.

The starting point adopted by the modern author of the "proem" was the sentence which opens Strabo's *Geography*: here it is affirmed that if any discipline can be defined as philosophical in nature, then geography is that discipline. This assertion, however, is developed and supported with completely different arguments from those employed by Strabo (who, it is worth remembering,

lists the authors whose work embodies the “philosophicalness” of geography, but does not mention Artemidorus). The arguments used by the modern author of the “proem”, on the other hand, are of a wholly different kind and origin.

The “philosophy” to which he refers is, according to his own definition, “most divine” and, right from his opening remarks, concerned with the relationship with the soul. The soul makes its first appearance as early as the fourth line in this “proem” and reappears, in a leading role, on lines 10, 30, 34 and II, 10: five times in 54 lines. It has now been established – the crucial insight was provided by Maurizio Calvesi³⁸ that the only geographical treatise which opens with a reference to the relationship between the geographer (or rather «whoever embarks on the task of presenting geography in its entirety») with his own soul is Karl Ritter’s *Die Erdkunde im Verhältnis zur Natur und zur Geschichte des Menschen* (1817, 1822², French translation 1835). It is striking that the “proem” to the pseudo-Artemidorus begins with exactly the same words as Ritter uses. This is irrefutable proof that the origin of the pseudo-Artemidorus is post-1817/1835.

But let us return to the thought processes of the author of our 18th century papyrus. It will be useful at this point to provide a very close paraphrase in order to make clear the consequential connections in the whole text:

I. Anyone intending to deal with geography has to provide a complete account of the whole science (of geography) after having pre-emptively weighed up [or moulded] his own soul with his will outstretched towards victory and, according to the force of (his own) value, must be just as ready with the organs of his soul connected to his will.

II. In fact it is no small task to enlist [fight] alongside this science. I do not hesitate, in fact, to place it alongside most divine philosophy. Geography, in fact, although it remains silent, nonetheless speaks through its dogmas.

³⁸ M. CALVESI, *Un Artemidoro del XIX secolo*, cit., pp. 109-128.

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And why should that not be possible? Close to it and all around it, it has a great number of weapons, mixed together, as a result of the fatigue (πόνοϛ) brought on by the science which is a μόχθοϛ.³⁹

[Here the sense only becomes comprehensible if one takes account of the specific meaning in Byzantine philosophy and in modern times of “dogmatic panoply”: the connection between *weapons* and *dogmas* can be explained in no other way. The author believes it to be obvious that to express oneself through one’s own “dogmas” means being “armed” to the teeth. And obviously the “philosophy” that the author has in mind is the philosophy which permeates the physical world seen as a divine creation: this is made abundantly clear in the proem to Nicephorus Gregoras’s *History*, which develops the concept of physical reality as a “dumb witness” to the divine creation that – in contrast – literary, geographical and historical works “speak” about.]

III. It is promised (Επαγγέλλεται τις etc.) that the dogmas of philosophy are, and have always been, attainable through constant suffering, so that whoever worthily practises philosophy, by taking on a burden worthy of Atlas, experiences it as lightness and embraces his own soul, which is in no way fatigued, and he in no way disdains having still greater desire (μηδὲ βαρουμένην ἔχειν ὄρεξιν etc.) of such practice, and he looks around in every direction, while the volitive faculty of his soul remains watchful, unsleeping and intent night and day on imprinting within himself most of the beneficial effects of the teachings [= of the precepts]. In fact it is into the world [into the *saeculum*] that man reaches out (ἀπλοῦται κόσμῳ), and devotes himself entirely to the virtuous announcements of the venerable Muses so that the scheme of philosophy befitting the divinity makes him utterly holy in virtue. In the same way,

³⁹ Here there is a play on the words πόνοϛ and μόχθοϛ. The second term denotes much greater exertion and suffering.

the geographer too, when he sets foot on the soil of a particular place, sets about adapting his own soul to the location in which he finds himself, drawing on his many years of previous experience of other places, etc.

In order to decipher this passage, which proved a particularly onerous task for the defenders of the “P. Artemid.,” it is essential to be acquainted with the typically late-Byzantine – and usual modern Greek – understanding of κόσμος in the sense of *saeculum*, the “external world” (e.g. «To Bishop Maximus, in the world Sophianòs» [κατὰ κόσμον Σοφριανός]).

This is the heading, chosen at random, of a letter from Gennadius Scholarius (15th century) to Maximus (*PG*, 160, col. 538). But it is important to remember that κόσμος meaning “the external world, the ‘profane’ world, the *saeculum*”, is the norm in neo-Greek, just as ἀπλώνω (that is, ἀπλώω in Ancient Greek) means, amongst other things, “reach out”, “immerse oneself” in something into which it is possible to get, to enter (to venture). A significant series of parallels can be found in the *Διδασκαλία* (*Doctrinae diversae*) by Dorotheus of Gaza (6th century AD), where in a commentary on St Paul’s words to the Galatians (6, 14) «ἐμοὶ κόσμος ἐσταύρωται καὶ ἐγὼ τῷ κόσμῳ», Dorotheus observes «ἐσταύρωται ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῷ κόσμῳ» (I, 13, p. 166, in *Sources chrétiennes*, edited by L. Regnault, J. de Préville, 92, 1963). What Dorotheus has to say is very clear: «The world is crucified for man, when man renounces the world, abandons his parents, wealth, his possessions, his affairs, giving and receiving: then the world is crucified for him».

Just as useful for the purposes of reconstructing the culture which spawns the proem to the pseudo-Artemidorus, is the following passage from Psellos’ second *Panegyric Oration*: «(He who ἀπαμφιέννυται τὰ παράσημα τῆς ἀρχῆς) τὸ νεκρὸν ἀποβάλλεται τῶν τριχῶν, καὶ ἀναίσθητον σταυροῦται τῷ κόσμῳ, ὀπλίζεται τὰ νοητὰ ὄπλα, ζώννυται τὴν μάχαιραν» etc. (rr. 356 sgg.). It is a comparison which to some extent has implications

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for the whole of our “proem”. It goes without saying that the image used by St Paul (συνεσταύρωμαι τῷ κόσμῳ) recurs also in Byzantine hymnody.

Now that this is clear, it can be seen that the contorted line of argument is based on the analogy which is drawn between the long philosophical “therapy” that serves as preparation for passing into the *saeculum* in order to put to work (or to put to the test) those teachings, and the past experience which the geographer will make use of when he finds himself in a new place («ἐπελθὼν εἰς τὴν ἡπειρον χώρας τινός»).

The other background detail – again connected with Byzantine religiosity – of which, as mentioned above, an awareness is crucial in order to understand the meaning of this virtuoso (and actually rather vacuous) “proem-like” passage, is the reasoning that dominates Theodorus Studita’s *Parva Catechesis*: coming, through the hardship of a (spiritual) trial, to imperturbability in the face of the suffering involved in that trial, taking the harder road and, as a result of that very choice, perceiving that road as the easier one, etc. It is only through this model of conceptualization and reasoning that it is possible to understand the (apparently) bizarre phrasing that underpins the whole development of the proem (in which the key words are *fatigue* and *soul*): «so that taking upon oneself an enormous burden worthy of Atlas, one might feel light»!

One passage deserving of attention is that which begins with the words «ἐπαγγέλλεται τις [...] συχνᾶς μερίμνας διαιδῶνος ἄγεσθαι [εἰς τὰ] φιλοσοφίας δόγματα» (col. I, 22-25). In extant Hellenistic literature included in the *TLG*, there are only two examples of an opening consisting of the phrase ἐπαγγέλλεται τις; in Origen (*Selecta in Psalmos*) and in Olympiodorus Diaconus

(*Commentarii in Ecclesiasten*),⁴⁰ 6th century AD. In both cases the meaning is “to proclaim, to promise”. In our case, the meaning can only be: «Sufferings are promised to whoever turns to philosophy so that, in taking on that terrible burden, he may actually feel light, etc.». This is consequent upon what has just been said (lines 20-21) on the πόνος/μόχθος concerning commitment to science.

Account must be taken of the gap at the end of line 24, where, after ἄγεσθαι, there is nothing legible and the papyrus is damaged. (As usual, Gallazzi’s description of the dots he claims are visible after ἄγεσθαι is both comical and fallacious).⁴¹ Here it is obvious that between ἄγεσθαι and τὰ φιλοσοφίας δόγματα we are dealing with motion towards and that therefore we need εἰς τὰ, not τὰ τῆς (wholly invented as the result of a misunderstanding of the meaning, as is confirmed by the translation given on p. 196 of the Led edition).

Now that the sense of the whole passage has been retrieved thanks to the elucidation of the medieval and modern terms and concepts contained in it (dogmatic panoply, *Parva Catechesis*, the modern meaning of κόσμος), it must be added that some of the phrases, such as ὄπλα μειγμένα and Ἀτλάντειος φόρτος, in this (at last comprehensible) passage, are actually translations from modern languages: *mit gemischten Waffen*, *mixed weapons*, *aux armes mélanges*, *Atlantean labour*, which provides final confirmation that this piece of writing (and, as an inevitable consequence, the whole artefact) was the work of a modern hand.

The whole proem has a meaning which can only be grasped with an understanding of Byzantine theological culture, the

⁴⁰ PG 12,1083, and PG 93,540.

⁴¹ C. GALLAZZI et alii, *Il papiro di Artemidoro*, cit., p. 145: «Of t³ on the R. almost all of the horizontal stem remains intact, while on the V the base of the vertical segment is recognizable. Also on the V, 2 mm from the vertical stem of t³, there is a slash sloping towards the right, which at the top joins to an oblique segment leaning towards the left. 2.5 mm further on, in the central part of the line, there is a short vertical stroke. Then, also on the V, at a distance of 4 mm, there is a vertical stem protruding a little above and below the line, to which there is attached on the right, at the height of the line above it, a short horizontal segment; of the vertical stem there remains also the top end – now reduced to a meagre dot – on the R». The motto is still the same: “invent the invisible”.

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stylistic features of which are evident in every line. If one lets go of this guiding thread, then one ends up lost amid a sea of muddled theories (excerpts, excerpts from excerpts, schoolboys' attempts at writing, and so on). They are all flimsy hypotheses: the fact that it has been taken out of its context does not give a sentence the right to mean nothing.

13. An indisputable model

Finally, it is worth noting how in the first column of the pseudo-Artemidorus, Simonides – himself an aspiring bishop –⁴² imitates the letter in which Synesius of Cyrene, writing to his brother, describes the “stirring of his own soul” at the prospect of becoming bishop.⁴³

Let us compare the two texts:⁴⁴

SINESIO, *Lettere*, 105

Ἐγὼ δὲ καταμαρνήσαντες ἑμαυτὸν [...] διαλέξομαι πρὸς σὲ περὶ τῶν **τῆς ἑμαυτοῦ ψυχῆς** κινημάτων. [...]. Σὲ γὰρ εἰκὸς [...] καὶ **νύκτωρ ἀγρυπνεῖν** καὶ μεθ' ἡμέραν **σκοπεῖν** ὅπως ἂν **ἀγαθὸν** τί μοι γένοιτο [...]. Μικρὸν ἀράμενος **φορτίον** καλῶς ἐνεγκεῖν μοι δοκῶ τὸ μέχρι τοῦδε **φιλοσοφίαν** [...]. Τὸν ἱερέα δὲ ἄνδρα δεῖ θεσπέσιον εἶναι [...] Πῶς οὖν οὐκ εὐμεγέθους **ψυχῆς** καὶ κρατίστης ἐνέγκαι τοσοῦτον ὄγκον φροντιδῶν κτλ.

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Ἐπαγγέλλεταιί τις συχναῖς μερίμναις δι' αἰῶνος ἄγεσθαι εἰς τὰ **φιλοσοφίας** δόγματα, ὅπως τὸν ἀτλάντειον ἐκείνον **φόρτον** βαστάζων τις τῶν ἀξίως φιλοσοφούντων ἀκοπίατον **φόρτον** ἔχη καὶ προσαγαλιζέται **τὴν ἰδίαν ψυχὴν** μηδὲν κοπιῶσαν μηδὲ βαρουμένην ἔτι μᾶλλον ἔχειν ὄρεξιν περὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα, μηδὲν ἡρεμούσης αὐτοῦ τῆς **ψυχῆς** καὶ θελήσεως πάντα πέριξ **σκοποῦντα ἀγρυπνον** εἶναι, **νυκτός τε καὶ ἡμέρας** προσενφορτίζοντα ἑαυτῷ τὰ πλείονα **ἀγαθὰ** τῶν προσταγμάτων.

⁴² Cfr. on this subject J. SCHMID, s.v. *Simonides*, in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, IX, 1964, col. 774.

The second edition of the *Lexikon* has no entry for Simonides.

⁴³ I am indebted for this very important insight to the erudition of Luciano Bossina.

⁴⁴ It should not be forgotten that in the Vatopedi Monastery there is a manuscript (n. 685) of the letters of Synesius.

Synesius' *Letter 105* appears in the collection shortly after the one (*Letter 101*) towards the end of which there is an adulatory reference to σεβασμώτατος Marcian, of whom it is said that in the *Panhellenion* of Cyrene «he scrutinises and elucidates παλαιὰ καὶ νέα». The idea that the Marcian referred to by Synesius might be not only the governor of Paphlagonia, but also the summarizer of Artemidorus is one worth exploring.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Cfr. D. MARCOTTE, *Le "corpus" géographique de Heidelberg (Palat. Heidelb. Gr. 398) et les origines de la "collection philosophique"*, in C. D'Ancona (ed.), *The Libraries of the Neoplatonists*, «Proceedings of the European Science Foundation Network 'Late Antiquity and Arabic Thought. Patterns in the Constitution of European Culture'», (Strasbourg, March 12-14, 2004), Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2007, p. 172.

