

**Zeitschrift:** Museum Helveticum : schweizerische Zeitschrift für klassische Altertumswissenschaft = Revue suisse pour l'étude de l'antiquité classique = Rivista svizzera di filologia classica

**Herausgeber:** Schweizerische Vereinigung für Altertumswissenschaft

**Band:** 70 (2013)

**Heft:** 2

**Artikel:** The so-called Artemidorus papyrus : a reconsideration

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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-358003>

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## The so-called Artemidorus papyrus A reconsideration

By Luciano Canfora, Bari

**Abstract:** In the light of the researches that lead to consider Constantine Simonides as the creator of the so-called Artemidorus Papyrus, this paper deals with the following subjects: the unfounded belief that Artemidorus wrote an “auto-epitome”, the Byzantine and modern theological culture emerging from the “proem”, the idea that the papyrus resulted from the joining of two different pieces (the proem and the description of Spain), the problem of the map, the culture and the methods of work of the forger.

### 1. Epilogue of a long story

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 public at large.

For quite a lot of time, since about 1980, it had been discussed in a rather informal way<sup>1</sup>; then a partial preview was offered in a specialist journal<sup>2</sup>. Here it was claimed that the text included in the papyrus was the second book of the *Geography* of Artemidorus of Ephesus (end of second century BC). The whole artefact was paraded to public view in Turin, February 2006. An excellent exhibition catalogue was then circulated, along with an impressive media fanfare that otherwise proved in due time to be the harbinger of a growing and far-reaching critical response.

The critical edition, said at the time to be ready for publication, and indeed already announced as long ago as 1998, did not actually appear for another couple of years (until March 2008), and then, after being greeted with a substantial body of critical literature, fell into a serious tangle of contradictions. In less than one year the proposed reconstruction of the process of production of the papyrus, was thrown into disarray and opportunely substituted by another, completely opposite version<sup>3</sup>, the point of which seems to have remained absolutely unclear.

The whole of this rather tangled affair has been critically reviewed in a masterly ‘Bericht’ by Condello, to which the candid reader should be addressed<sup>4</sup>.

\* The author wishes to thank Luigi Lehnus for his precious revision of the English.

1 Cf. C. Gallazzi et al., *Il papiro di Artemidoro* (Milano 2008) 54.

2 C. Gallazzi/B. Kramer, *Artemidor im Zeichensaal. Eine Papyrusrolle mit Text, Landkarte und Skizzenbüchern aus späthellenistischer Zeit*, «Archiv für Papyrusforschung» 44 (1998) 198–208.

3 G.B. D'Alessio, *On the “Artemidorus” Papyrus*, «Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik» 171 (2009) 27–43.

4 F. Condello, *Artemidoro 2006–2011: l'ultima vita, in breve*, «Quaderni di storia» 74 (2011) 161–256.

All that needs to be added to Condello's 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)*.

Facts, at this point, inevitably lead to the following conclusions: a) the so-called Artemidorus papyrus is a modern fake manufactured from ancient materials; b) the author of this fake is the Greek scholar Constantine Simonides (ca. 1820–1890). Let us review them.

## 2. Typical characteristics of a modern fake

What makes at once clear that we are dealing with a fake is the remarkable habit of the scribe of writing and drawing around already existing gaps on the papyrus. This characteristic practice can be spotted 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 the papyrus fragments<sup>5</sup>.

The only explanation possible of this notable feature is that a forger has been at work on a papyrus 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 – damage is an advantage in that it fosters the overall impression of authenticity. On the other hand, it entails the drawback of having to write around the gaps. Oddly enough, scholars who had devoted themselves to defending the authenticity of the papyrus (and to insisting on its attribution to Artemidorus) did not even touch upon this patent difficulty. The argument that the same could happen with a papyrus that was really the work of an ancient copyist will not work. What invalidates it in this case is the frequency of the phenomenon in so short a 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 guess of an imperfect repositioning of the fibres. Moreover, the same fault is apparent in both the text and the drawings, and that settles the matter. Needless to say, this also explodes any speculation on the alleged “de luxe” nature of the papyrus, which precisely on account of its putative sumptuousness was said to be of Alexandrian provenance<sup>6</sup>.

Not less important is the presence of graphite in the ink of the *recto* side. Traces of graphite were detected by the Chemistry for Technologies Laboratory of the University of Brescia (par. 2.1. microdiffraction analysis): “As far as analysis of the pigment is concerned, a peak value at  $d = 3.33$ , attributable to carbon in the graphite phase was observed”. Since graphite was not discovered

5 On the subject of the drawings, see the essay by Alberto Cottignoli in the volume *Fotografia e falsificazione*, edited by L. Canfora et al. (Repubblica di San Marino 2011) 69–76 and the relative illustrations.

6 C. Gallazzi/S. Settis, *Le tre vite del papiro di Artemidoro* (Milano 2006) 16 col. II.



until the end of the Middle Ages, the claim that the text might date from ancient times can be ipso facto ruled out.

Otherwise, a legitimate question would sound: why graphite? An expert forger such as pseudo-Artemidorus surely would have been more than able to reproduce the ink used by the ancients. The ingredients were all well-known, see Vitruvius, VII 10, Pliny, XXXV 41, Dioscorides, *De materia medica*, V 162. Just how expert Simonides was in this field is apparent not only from what he himself tells us, but also from the expressed testimony of his archi-rival, Andreas David Mordtmann<sup>7</sup>. Such a lapse by a forger of Simonides' calibre is not plausible. How much more probable that the traces of graphite be due to the elementary procedure of first copying the text onto the papyrus with a pencil and then going over it with a carefully prepared "vintage" ink. That is why nowadays sophisticated testing has been succeeded in revealing the "graphite peak".

Another rather modern characteristic of the so-called Artemidorus papyrus is the "stamping effect" of the writing on the *recto*, which spills over – upside down – onto the *verso*. Mutually contradictory theories have been paraded to try to explain away this phenomenon: overhasty rolling of the papyrus before the ink was dry<sup>8</sup> (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<sup>9</sup>, which would at worst have left a black ring, but certainly not a "stamping" or "mirror-writing" effect. The only reasonable explanation for an event of this kind, extensive as it is, is the use of an inking implement which accidentally left traces when it came into contact with the *verso* of the papyrus. Such an inking implement used to transcribe the text – which we now see upside down on the *recto* – could only have been a lithographic device.

Simonides, himself an 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 approach he adopted for example with the *Periplus of Hanno*, with the fragments of Matthew's Gospel, and with a number of his other creations, including epigraphs. He tells us of this procedure in notes which survive (BL MS Addit. 42502A f. 128), while his lithographic equipment is today preserved in the World 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 sporadic and sometimes rather improbable instances of minor writing appears on parts of some of the drawings (and certainly not with the regularity observable with the written text) just contributes to throw disquieting light on the much more recent refinements that were made to the

7 «Allgemeine Zeitung» (Augsburg, 28.11.1853) col. 5307. On all of this subject, cf. Agatemero, in *Wie kann das ein Artemidor-Papyrus sein?* (Bari 2008) 193–208.

8 C. Gallazzi/B. Kramer, *cit.*, 189–208, esp. 191.

9 Gallazzi/Settis, *cit.*, 17 col. II (at the top).



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 obvious reason is that whole sentences and drawings known to belong to Simonides are to be found also in the papyrus<sup>10</sup>. The suggestion that Simonides was involved has been frequently greeted with disdain by people who knew nothing about him and had not even heard of his works. Now a few instances may suffice to substantiate the point:

col. I 12–15: τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ ταύτῃ συναγωνίσασθαι [...] ἔτοιμός εἰμι παραστήσαι  
Simonides, *Epistolimaia Diatribé* (London 1860) 25: ἔτοιμος γάρ εἰμι ἵνα ὑπὲρ  
τῆς ἐπιστήμης ποιήσω πᾶν ὅτι δύναμαι.

In fact, Simonides' phrase in his bizarre polemical pamphlet on the interpretation of hieroglyphics happens to be splitted, in pseudo-Artemidorus, into two: a) "it is no trifling labour τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ ταύτῃ συναγωνίσασθαι", b) "I am prepared *in fact* (ἔτοιμός εἰμι) to compare (παραστήσαι) this science to the most divine philosophy".

Be it observed that ἐτοίμως ἔχομεν + παραστήσαι is to be found only in the acts of the Third Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (680–681 AD)<sup>11</sup>, while σὺν ἐπιστήμῃ διαγωνίζεσθαι recurs in the letters of Manuel Gabalas and τὴν ἀστρονομικὴν ἐπιστήμην ῥαθυμία τῶν βοηθεῖν δυναμένων in those of Nicephorus Gregoras<sup>12</sup> (ca. 1330–1340). Both of these are texts with which Simonides, who had frequented the Patriarchal Theology School of Halki, was very well acquainted. In particular, the passage from Gregoras is significant not only because of the recurrence in it of the curious concept of βοηθεῖν ἐπιστήμῃ. The idea therein expressed that the science of astronomy is "in extreme difficulty" as it is targeted by the βασκανία Τελχίνων τινῶν resurfaces in column II 22–23 of the papyrus, where it 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 same 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.

10 Readers will find parallels between phrases from the pseudo-Artemidorus and phrases used by Simonides in his writings and various creations in the commentary included in Pseudo-Artemidoro, *Epitome: Spagna. Il geografo come filosofo*, a c. di L. Canfora (Roma/Padova 2012).

11 *Concilium universale Constantinopolitanum tertium, Concilii Actiones I–XI*, ed. R. Riedinger (Berlin 1990) 22, 21–22.

12 *Correspondance de Nicéphore Grégoras*, edited by R. Guiland (Paris 1927) ("Collection Byzantine") 153.

Meletios of Ioannina, a geographer and theologian of the beginning of the 18th century who was well known to Simonides – the latter incidentally attributed to a Meletios his own *Συμαίς* published at Athens in 1849 – adapted Nicephorus Gregoras' preface to his own needs as a geographer incorporating it into the introduction to his *Γεωγραφία παλαιὰ καὶ νέα* (Venice 1728), a very popular handbook among students of modern Greek culture.

Col. II 11–12: τῇ ὑποκειμένῃ χώρᾳ περίξ βλέπων  
Simonides, *Σύμμικτα* (Odessa 1853): τὴν περίξ χώραν (*passim* in the text attributed to Callinicus Hieromonachus).

Col. I 35–37: πάντα περίξ σκοποῦνται ἄγρυπνον εἶναι νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας.  
Simonides, *Λείψανα ἱστορικά* (Liverpool 1864) 8 (*sub fine*): Νυκτὸς καὶ φωτὸς ἄγρυπνος φύλαξ εἰμί.

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

Right the beginning of pseudo-Artemidorus τὸν ἐπιβαλλόμενον γεωγραφία τῆς ὅλης ἐπιστήμης ἐπίδειξιν ποιεῖσθαι δεῖ προταλαντεύσαντα [or either προπλαστεύσαντα] τὴν ψυχὴν (col. I 1–5) comes very close, in structure and wording, to another text which Simonides on that same page of the *Λείψανα* claims to have translated from an Egyptian original into Greek, and which reads as follows: δεῖ πάντας ἀνθρώπους καθαρῶ νῶ καὶ σώματι αἰνεῖν τὸν κύριον [...] σιγῇ καὶ κεκαθαρμένη ψυχῇ – where it should be noted that geography too, which in pseudo-Artemidorus is compared to theology as well, equally σιγῇ.

This opening framework (the same that features in pseudo-Artemidorus) is a favourite of Simonides. He resumes it in his reworking of the manual of Christian iconography by Dionysius of Fournia that he himself rewrote and of which he made numerous copies in his own hand (in Athens he sold one of these copies to the French collectors Didron and Durand in 1847): Ὁ τὴν ζωγραφικὴν ἐπιστήμην μαθεῖν βουλόμενος ὃς ὁδηγῆται πρὸς αὐτὴν κατὰ πρῶτον καὶ ὃς 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”: translation by Paul Durand, 11–12 of the *Manuel d'iconographie chrétienne grecque et latine* (Paris 1845)).

What we are dealing with 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 copies in his own hand, and that he cited as crucial proof of the continuity between Hellenistic and Byzantine painting (*Facsimiles of Certain Portions of the Gospel of*



*St. Matthew*, ed. Simonides (London 1862) 32). In other words, it is a text that is very much his, and the echoes of its opening part in pseudo-Artemidorus are unmistakable.

The 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 by him subsequently inserted in his various books (from the *Συμαίς* to the *Θεολογικαὶ γραφαὶ τέσσαρες* to the papyrus fragments of the Gospel of Matthew) are all constructed according to the very principles, dimensions, and proportions prescribed in Dionysius' manual. And that is not all. He also illustrated some of his handwritten copies of Dionysius' handbook with images he had produced himself. Among these is the portrait of a certain Panselinos, supposed to be the teacher of Dionysius of Fourn<sup>13</sup>, whose face could be made to match almost perfectly with that on the extreme right of the *recto* of the pseudo-Artemidorus papyrus, soon after the array of limbs and heads. The astonishing resemblance between a portrait surely drawn by Simonides and one of the faces featuring in the pseudo-Artemidorus is in fact the culmination of a series of impressive coincidences between Simonides' own works and the text of the papyrus. Here is why we consider Simonides and the author of pseudo-Artemidorus one and the same person.

And that is not all. Within this frame one should include clues that have emerged quite early on in the story of the controversy: the late neo-Platonic, patristic, Byzantine, and even modern Greek vocabulary, apparent "modernisms" such as *μεμειγμένα ὅπλα* (col. I 18–19), and the rather startling echoes of the introduction to Karl Ritter's *Allgemeine vergleichende Geographie* already pointed out by Maurizio Calvesi<sup>14</sup>.

#### 4. The non-existent Artemidorus' auto-epitome caused the forger to fail

Didier Marcotte, one of the foremost scholars of ancient Greek geography, wrote: "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"<sup>15</sup>. And he finally remarks: "On est moins fondés à vouloir prêter à Artémidore même les colonnes I–II–III" – that is, may we add, the columns steeped in Byzantine theology (p. 360).

Marcotte is completely right. Besides opening with the only fragment of Artemidorus (fr. 21 Stiehle) of any considerable length (apart, obviously, from a scattered page *περὶ τοῦ Νείλου* that came to light in the early 19th century), columns IV and V *are meant to look like an "epitome"* (an *abrégé*) of what Artemidorus had written on Spain. In fact, what the real Artemidorus wrote

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

14 *Un Artemidoro del XIX secolo*, «Storia dell'arte» 119 (2008) 109–128.

15 «Revue d'Histoire des Textes», n.s., 5 (2010) 354.



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 a contorted description of the Iberian coasts, which is bizarrely positioned after the mention of the division into provinces of that part of Iberia that was under Roman control<sup>16</sup>, the author of the papyrus announces the periplus using the following words: *Ληψόμεθα δὲ νῦν τὸν παράπλουν αὐτῆς 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) 2): *καὶ τὰ διαστήματα τῶν μέρων αὐτῶν [...] καὶ τοὺς καθολικότερους σχηματισμοὺς αὐτῶν ὀλίγα τινὰ ἡμεῖς λαμβάνομεν 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 Marcianus of Heraclea, between the 4th and 5th centuries, made his own (which he tried, moreover, to pass off as the work of Artemidorus)<sup>17</sup>, was widespread amongst scholars between the 17th and 19th centuries. There were even those who, like Meursius, in his *Bibliotheca Graeca* (published by J. Gronovius in his widely-circulated *Thesaurus Graecarum Antiquitatum*), maintained that Artemidorus *had written nothing else but a geographical epitome*: “Ac fuit totum illud Opus Epitome tantum”<sup>18</sup>.

This misunderstanding arose from the fact that in Stephanus 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 Marcianus, who had passed it off as the work of Artemidorus. It was a misunderstanding hard to die. As late as the middle of the 19th century Robert Stiehle, at the end of his worthy collection of the fragments of Artemidorus<sup>19</sup>, gave serious consideration to the possibility that two epitomes of Artemidorus had been made: one by the author himself, the other by Marcianus. But Stiehle himself then realised that the fragments cited by Stephanus as coming from “Artemidorus’ epitome” could in fact only be from Marcianus’.

So our forger, who meant 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

16 So, very different from ἡ σύμπασα χώρα.

17 Cf. *Geographi Graeci minores* (Paris I 1855) 567, 26.

18 Johannes Meursius, in Jacobus Gronovius, *Thesaurus Graecarum Antiquitatum* (Venetiis 1735) 1266, entry: *Artemidorus Ephesius*.

19 *Der Geograph Artemidoros von Ephesos*, “Philologus” 11 (1856) 193–244.

a work by Artemidorus *which never existed*, and this, one might say, is a definite proof that the whole thing is a forgery<sup>20</sup>.

Let us not forget that Simonides suffered from a kind of obsession with epitomes. In fact he *conceived*<sup>21</sup> quite a lot of forgeries of *epitomes* by Greek historians and geographers, and offered an impressive number of important lost authors (which he claimed to possess) to the Science Academy of Saint Petersburg at the beginning of January 1851. In fact, he had already mentioned some of them in the critical apparatus appended by him to his (completely invented) geographical dictionary by the non-existent Eulyros<sup>22</sup>. In his lists and apparatuses we in fact find the following items: Epitome of the 40 books of Diodorus reduced to 17 (Saint Petersburg List, No. 11); Epitome of Duris of Samos' ὅροι [sic] (No. 12 = Eulyros List No. 8); Summary of the History of the Greeks and the Samians (No. 13 = 9); Epitome of Arrian's History (No. 15 = 11); Epitome of Aristodemus (No. 16)<sup>23</sup>; 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<sup>24</sup>.

We know the source of this veritable obsession (which is easily explained in a professional forger, as it is simpler to create an epitome than an original), and of the decision to incorporate Artemidorus fr. 21 in an epitome. There existed a (today) rather rare modern 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 [= fr. 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 on p. 475 of Tome I (1807) includes that very fragment between the τεμάχια Ἀρτεμιδώρου. The Συλλογή declares that *all the material it contains comes from epitomai*: this is immediately clear both from the title and from the rest of the frontispiece where Artemidorus is explicitly named.

20 Only a person completely innocent of how “epitomes” were made in antiquity – 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 Marcianus's Epitome: cf. M. Billerbeck, in «Eikasmós» 19 (2008) 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 pseudo-Artemidorus. It goes without saying that the whole process went the other way round: it is col. iv 1–13 that is a rewriting of the pre-existing fragment (which 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 fiction.

21 Not all of what he planned was actually produced.

22 The documents pertaining to this whole affair are now in C. Simonides, *Opere greche*, I, (Κεφαλληνιακά) (Bari 2012).

23 The nature of this διαδραμάτιον is controversial.

24 On Simonides' obsession with epitomes, cf. also: *Il viaggio di Artemidoro* (Milano 2010) 278.



The Συλλογή presents itself as “funded by the Zosimadai brothers” χάριν τῶν τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς παιδείας ἐφιεμένων Ἑλλήνων. Amongst the beneficiaries of this generous patronage was Simonides himself, to whom Athanasios Zosimas provided funding in 1853 for his edition of Ἑρμηνεία τῶν ζωγράφων, by Dionysius of Fourna, published in Athens. To the “immortal brothers” Zosimadai, Simonides would subsequently dedicate his rather eccentric work *Horus of Nilopolis* (1863). The Zosimadai had shown themselves to be generous patrons by providing funding for A. Korais’ “Hellenic Library”, and had made important contributions to the cause of Greek patriotism: they had close connections with Ypsilanti, who was 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 in St. Petersburg, that he was indirectly related to Ypsilanti himself).

To return to the Viennese *Collection of geographical epitomes*, the final evidence of the direct use that Simonides made of it lies in his adoption of the title-phrase “the Epitome of Artemidoros and Menippos”<sup>25</sup>, which exactly mirrors the formula of the *Collection*: τεμάχια τινὰ Μενίππου καὶ Ἀρτεμιδώρου. It was there, in the *Collection*, and certainly not in Müller’s *Geographi Graeci minores* (Paris I 1855), from which – with the exception of two pages at the end of volume I containing just a handful of fragments “from the Epitome of Artemidorus” – Artemidorus is missing, that Simonides could actually find the fragments of Artemidorus. In short, all the information available to him led Simonides to believe that there had existed an epitome of Artemidorus’ monumental work written by the geographer himself; whence his decision to have “his” Artemidorus say: ληψόμεθα [...] ἐν ἐπιτομῇ [...] τὰ διαστήματα τῶν τόπων.

As regards columns IV–V of the papyrus, it should be remarked that the (rather insane) plan to create an epitome of Artemidorus’ book on Spain goes not separate from the naïve idea of providing a text that be *complete in itself*, ending as it does with the peremptory and conclusive assertion that “nobody has seen the rest”. So, what we now have then is a “true fragment” – one of Simonides’ finest works, almost on a par with the Hanno and the Matthew papyri, his best achievements in the field of the papyrus forging.

### 5. A typically byzantine “incipit”

Let us dwell for a moment on the wording by which pseudo-Artemidorus begins: τὸν ἐπιβαλλόμενον γεωγραφία τῆς ὅλης ἐπιστήμης ἐπιδείξιν ποιεῖσθαι δεῖ [...] κατὰ τὴν τῆς ἀρετῆς δύναμιν, apparently recalls Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 17: δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ἐπιβαλλόμενον διηγήσει τινὶ κατὰ δύναμιν ἐπιβάλλεσθαι. What needs to be highlighted here is the syntactic structure adopted for the 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

25 In *The Periplus of Hannon King of the Karchedonians* (London 1864) 16.



introduction to Dionysius of Fournas's *Manual*, which was such a favourite of Simonides', or rather in Simonides' pseudo-Egyptian text (δεῖ πάντας ἀνθρώπους καθαρῶ νῶ καὶ σώματι αἰνεῖν τὸν κύριον), but also in a series of "*initia epistularum Byzantinorum*" (which can be easily consulted in Michael Grünbart's collection (2001) 324): τὸν ἀοίδιμον σταυρὸν δίκαιον προσειπεῖν | τὸν ἄρχοντα, ὡς ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ, χρὴ καὶ ἀγαθὸν εἶναι | τὸν ἔμφονα μοναχὸν δόκιμον εἶναι χρὴ ζυγοστάτην | τὸν εὐδόκιμον κρείττονα εἶναι χρὴ τῶν συμφορῶν. It is possible to find similar examples in other *openings* to works even from the very late Byzantine era, such as Meletios' *Rhetorica*: μέλλουσιν ὁμιλίαν γράφειν πρῶτον μὲν σκεπτέον ὅτι (Paris. Suppl. Gr. 1248, f. 84r), or χρὴ δὲ τὸν ἀναγιγνώσκοντα προσέχειν τὴν ψυχὴν (Paris. Suppl. Gr. 1238, f. 82v), δεῖ τὸν προεστώτα πᾶσαν ἐνδείκνυσθαι σπουδὴν (Athos, Monḗ Pantokrátoros, 382, f. 473), δεῖ τὸν ἀληθῆ κεκτημένον σοφίαν (Paris. Suppl. Gr. 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' ἡμίσειαν ἡμέρας (Paris. Suppl. Gr. 1148, f. 79). And it would be possible to produce many more examples.

To sum up: 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 some heavy distortions of the original)<sup>26</sup>, and then, as he went on, to other well-known geographical sources (Strabo, Marcianus, 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<sup>27</sup>, spinning it out with arguments and *topoi* from his own theological knowledge. This in turn led on to the bright idea of arguing that there is an affinity between geography and theology (= most divine philosophy), and of asserting that geography too is heavily armed with its own "dogmatic panoply" (I 16–19: τοῖς ἰδίους δόγμασι λαλεῖ. τί γὰρ οὐκ; ἔγγιστα καὶ τοσαῦτα μεμειγμένα ὅπλα βαστάζει).

## 6. A theological culture

The Byzantine theological background that permeates this weird "Panegyric of Geography" is palpable in almost every line. Only by fully recognizing these sources of inspiration is it possible to find a meaning (of course a wholly anachronistic one, the author being supposed to be an Ephesian writer from the

26 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.

27 The suggestion in Christoph Kuffner's *Artemidor* (Brno/Wien 1822–1833) on this point – that there is a merging into one Artemidorus of the philosopher and the geographer – is indisputable. Simonides knew this work. Cf. L. Canfora, *La meravigliosa storia del falso Artemidoro* (Palermo 2011) 77–91.

2nd cent. BC) in sentences that at first sight appear to be absolutely meaningless, such as the one we have just considered, where geography “speaks in dogmas because it is armed” (with a “dogmatic panoply”). Immediately afterwards there is another no less eccentric passage which can only be understood within the way of reasoning that is to be found, for instance, in Theodorus Studita’s *Parva Catechesis* (759–826 AD). This is what might be defined as the “suffer to avoid suffering” theory. In chapter 105 of that treatise, the 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 ζωὴν ἀπήμονα.

Here is the same kind of “logic” that is to be found in lines 26–29 of column I of 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*. Such an 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 thanks to another image: (ἵνα προσαγκαλίζεται τὴν ἰδίαν ψυχὴν μηδὲν κοπιῶσαν μηδὲ βαρουμένην)<sup>28</sup> *in order to embrace his own soul which is in no way either fatigued or weighed down*. Philosophy reduces the fatigue inherent in its own practice precisely because one has accepted that fatigue, and accordingly whoever undertakes that endeavour is able to *embrace his own soul* (an image taken from Olympiodorus and from St. Basil), *which is now lightened and in no way fatigued*.

*Soul* dominates this bizarre text, which could hardly be styled a literary success. This was jokingly pointed out by Luciano Bossina in a pregnant remark: “There is too much soul in this introduction”<sup>29</sup>. And no doubt a preamble to Geography (by a Hellenistic author) entirely pointing to the soul as its main subject, quite in the manner of the first chapter of the *Introduction to Religious Painting* by Dionysius of Fournia, is strikingly 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”

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

29 L. Bossina, *Artemidoro bizantino. Il proemio del nuovo papiro*, in L. Canfora, *Il papiro di Artemidoro* (Roma/Bari 2008) 332.



(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 elsewhere in extant Greek literature, and for which the way is paved a few lines earlier by the “willing organs” (θεληματικά ὄργανα) of the soul, needs indeed to be explained rather than, as usually happens, perfunctorily examined and dismissed. Once again it is the Byzantine literature περὶ ψυχῆς that comes out to our aid, beginning with Nikephoros Blemmydes λόγος περὶ ψυχῆς (13th century), that became available since 1784, together with similar treatises by Theophanes of Medeia and by Gennadius Scholarios (published at Leipzig, Breitkopf, at the expenses of the Greek patriot Panagiotis Ioannitis).

### 7. There are two works

The panegyric of Geography (cols. I–III)<sup>30</sup> and the epitome of Spain were devised as 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 apparently not the intention of their diligent creator that they should go together. The impression that they belong together was produced – 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<sup>31</sup>. (It is no coincidence at all that the pigments of the *verso* have never been chemically analysed).

No one who is acquainted with Simonides’ work with papyri will be surprised to see that the handwriting in the *Panegyric of Geography* and the *Epitome of Spain* appears to be the same. His papyri in fact, as Livia Capponi had accurately pointed out in her essay *Visita ai papiri di Simonides*, “although presented as texts by different authors from different periods, are characterised by similar writing. In other words, papyri supposed to come from utterly different ages and genres and of completely different provenance are often written in precisely the same hand”. Dr. Capponi goes on to specify: “Simonides uses no more than four palaeographic styles which resemble each other and are sometimes even found alongside each other in the same text”<sup>32</sup>.

The photographic material gathered by L. Capponi is particularly instructive and demonstrates moreover Simonides’ increasing interest in creating damaged, frayed papyri (see plates 14 and 15 in the volume cited in n. 32).

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

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

32 L. Capponi examined the collection of Simonides’ papyri at the Liverpool Museum on 9 November 2007. She wrote an excellent 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 L. Canfora, *Il papiro di Artemidoro* (Roma/Bari 2008) 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 (cf. Capponi, 458): and this same characteristic is to be found in pseudo-Artemidorus<sup>33</sup>.

### 8. A delirious map

People wishing to portray pseudo-Artemidorus as nothing less than a portent have been toying for too long with the many both human and animal drawings to be found on the *recto* and the *verso* of the papyrus, as well as with the notorious “map” (occasionally even styled a “geographic chart”) which some of them even tried to pass off as the oldest map in the western world. All this, as well as aiming to increase the sales price of the manufacture (it was after all a work of art), served as starting point for the amusing theory of the “three lives” of the papyrus, a theory now abandoned after the wise observations of one of its own founders: 1) “An explanation is still badly needed 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 simply cutting the roll”<sup>34</sup>. Now, with the “three lives” theory dead and buried, with the mask from which the papyrus was supposed to have emerged rotting as a compost heap, with the “Konvolut” – which in March 2008 was wheeled in to replace the mask, only to be rumbled as a photomontage<sup>35</sup> – ingloriously buried, and with the new theory that it all began with a “theft” half-heartedly circulated, this unique, half-miraculous fake breaks down into three parts spuriously held together by the bizarre bestiary on the back: a) a *περὶ γεωγραφίας* (a *Panegyric of Geography*, as some like to call it); b) a faint attempt at a *Periplus of Spain* (in the form of an epitome that is aimed to appear to be the work of Artemidorus and thus begins with fr. 21 Stiehle 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 whose work in this field nothing survives except a title) and of Dionysius of Fournia (both authors were very popular with Simonides) and modelled on anatomical illustrations from modern treatises on drawing (e.g. Charles Antoine 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 these modern treatises is immediately apparent as soon as they are placed side by side. That the heads inserted by the editors in the *agraphon* before the first column belong with the

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

34 S. Settis, *Artemidoro. Un papiro dal I al XXI secolo* (Torino 2008) 28 and 77.

35 Cf. *Fotografia e falsificazione*, cit.

anatomical illustrations (just as in modern illustrations for self-taught painters, where hands, feet, and heads dominate) has been demonstrated by D'Alessio<sup>36</sup> and by Bastianini<sup>37</sup>, whose arguments are difficult to ignore.

Failure to analyse the pigments of the ink used on the *verso* is a highly significant confirmation that this is where the “trick” lies – in that kaleidoscopic bestiary with its unconvincing subtitles in a decidedly timeless writing, all surmounted with a general title which constitutes damning evidence itself, as none of the “catalogues” cited in order to make sense of the whole thing would have ever had a general title.

From the debris of what was itself an unlikely concoction, now the so-called “map” is peeping out. The generous exploits of imagination that aimed at making sense of the so-called map often degenerate into unfounded suppositions. Theories range from Baetica – which the would-be buyer did not like in that position, and is thus to be considered the cause of all the mishaps that would subsequently befall the roll – to the region of the mouth of the Rhone, to an upside-down Cyprus, to an “ideal” and purely theoretical map that actually depicts nothing, to a private ranch perhaps belonging to the customer himself, where the little squares – previously interpreted by the editors as “stazioni di posta [post houses]” – have become pedestals of statues or even pergolas<sup>38</sup>.

In fact, the crazy tangle of hypotheses regarding this outline of a landscape (rashly elevated to the rank of geographical map) unravels itself when account is taken of the fact that the adoption of cartographic illustrations to accompany geographical texts (invented ones, of course) had been part of Simonides' *modus operandi* right from the beginning. When Simonides introduces the reader to Eulyros' geographical lexicon (entitled Ἑθνικά like Stephanus' lexicon) adding that he is including only the section on Cephalonia, he bothers also to describe the characteristics of the whole manuscript that he claims he owns: “τὰ Ἑθνικά φέρουσι καὶ πίνακας χωρογραφικοὺς (= illustrations, geographical maps) χρώμασι παντοίοις ἐπὶ μεμβρανῶν” (thus begins the third paragraph of the Προαγγελία τῆς πρώτης βίβλου τῶν Ἑθνικῶν Εὐλύρου, at the end of the short volume Γεωγραφικά τε καὶ Νομικά τὴν Κεφαλληνίαν ἀφορῶντα published in Athens in 1850, 28). Eulyros' bulky manuscript, of which Simonides previewed only a small sample in his slender edition, should thus include πίνακες χωρογραφικοί. It is clear that the so-called map in pseudo-Artemidorus is the πίναξ χωρογραφικός meant to “embellish” the geographical *Epitome* that features right alongside it (in cols IV and V).

36 D'Alessio, *On the “Artemidorus” Papyrus*, cit.

37 G. Bastianini, *Sull'avvolgimento del rotolo di Artemidoro*, in «Archiv für Papyrusforschung» 55 (2009) 215–221.

38 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. Cf. L. Canfora, *L'Artemidoro «sconosciuto» di Michael Rathmann*, “Quaderni di storia” 75 (2012) 339–343.



## 9. Simonides the “geographer”’s professional instruments

In 1853 Simonides, having failed in his attempt to establish the core 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 to us<sup>39</sup>. In London he attempted (otherwise with some success) to peddle his merchandise to the British Museum, where at the time the manuscripts department was sternly 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 St. Petersburg Academy in 1851). All 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, or at least suspect or dubious. Unfortunately, over the course of more than a century, Phillipps’ collection went dispersed and, as a result, some of Simonides’ pieces, such as the already mentioned fragment of Eulyros’s Ἑθνικά, kept reappearing within the world antiquarian market (Sotheby’s, Christie’s, and elsewhere): in July 1972, in 1973, and again in June 2005.

Otherwise, the pieces acquired by the British Museum have obviously remained where they were. Outstanding among these is an especially precious 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<sup>40</sup>. Suffice here to say that there is an apparent connection between these contents and Simonides’ “creative” dealings in the field of ancient geography:

1) Among these folios is to be found the *Periplus of Hanno* (13r–v), one of the most painstakingly forged geographical fakes created and circulated by Simonides.

2) MS BL Additional 19391 opens with an anonymous ὑποτύπωσις γεωγραφίας ἐν ἐπιτομῇ (= *Geographi Graeci minores* (Paris II 1861) 494–509), which opens with ἡ τῆς ὅλης and ends with ἡ καθ’ ἡμᾶς θάλασσα τοιαύτη. From the lists of “unpublished works” that Simonides compiled for the St. Petersburg Academy and for his Athens edition of Eulyros, we gather that in the case of his (planned) Posidonius’ *Epitome of Geography* (n. 24 on the St. Petersburg list = n. 16 in the Eulyros edition) he intended to include an introductory section 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 cursory description (ff. 20v–21r), and this is in turn 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 *Biographical Memoir of Constantine Simonides* (London 1859, 33) describes this (and the following) map as “two very curious geographical

39 The information provided in the pseudo-Callinicus (cf. *Il viaggio di Artemidoro*, cit., 290–291) may not be entirely accurate.

40 *Il papiro di Artemidoro*, cit., 449–456.



tablets". He is not wrong; what is striking here is the unusual decision to designate the various localities with very sketchy drawings of little houses, not always followed by place names. The map of Spain is particularly riddled with mistakes, both as regards the rivers that run through Lusitania and flow into the Ocean, and in the drawing of the Atlantic coastline (where the Sacred Promontory seems to recur twice). BL Additional 19391, in other words, contained numerous clues toward the creation of an "Epitome of Spain" complete with map – which is precisely what we find in the so-called Artemidorus papyrus. Here we also find, as is well known, a second text consisting of a "general" treatise *On Geography*, a text that looks both erratic and perfunctory.

4) MS BL Additional 19391 immediately also contains Agathemerus as well as part of pseudo-Arrian's *Periplus Ponti Euxini*, where the name of Artemidorus is mentioned. Both texts, from a stylistic point of view (the arid, formulaic style of the σταδιασμός), offer a starting point for the σταδιασμός contained in column V (from line 17) of pseudo-Artemidorus, as well as, of course, for pseudo-Eulyros.

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

6) The manuscript also contains the beginning of Strabo's *Chrestomathies* (f. 26), with an introductory illustration of the philosophical nature of geography (the same topic by which pseudo-Artemidorus begins).

From the very fact that he removed those folios we gather that Simonides *must have been personally acquainted with the rest of MS Vatopedi 655* and with the huge wealth of geographical materials therein contained. The idea of a *miscellaneous* manuscript, *entirely on the subject of geography* and opening with a general epitome "On Geography", was thus further suggested.

Amongst the many Byzantine authors he was acquainted with, thanks to his constant frequentation of Greek manuscripts in a wide range of libraries, Simonides must have found a wealth of epitomes, διαγνώσεις, ὑποτυπώσεις, synopses, and geographical summaries<sup>41</sup> – first in the pages he removed from the Vatopedi (now BL Addit. 19391), and secondly in manuscripts of Nikephoros Blemmydes, Dionysius Periegetes, Eustathius and so on. All these authors were, from 1861 included in the second volume of *Geographi Graeci minores*.

Indeed, how deeply familiar Simonides was with the literary genre of the geographical epitome and the περὶ γεωγραφίας treatise is now apparent.

#### 10. *Is anyone on Simonides's side?*

Of course, it is possible to cling to the belief that Simonides' creations were genuine, and there are people 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.

41 Some of them he was able to consult in volume II of *GGM*.

In 1923 the Italian scholar 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 at Leipzig), 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)”. It was in vain that C. Tischendorf produced evidence that Simonides himself, who had turned up in Leipzig in 1855<sup>42</sup>, had created those pages very well imitating a medieval Greek script for his translation back into Greek of the Latin version of *The Shepherd*. And it was on that occasion that Simonides started to see Tischendorf as a rival: a prelude to his later making the infuriating claim that he himself, the unrelenting forger, was the author of the Codex Sinaiticus of the Bible, a “revelation” that nearly led to the cool Tischendorf losing, if not quite his mind, his usual self-restraint.

Even as recently as 1990 the theologian and papyrologist Carsten Thiede (*Jesus: Life or Legend?* (Oxford)) embarked with the fervour of an apologist on a defence of Simonides’ Matthew papyrus. Only an admittedly justifiable prejudice against Simonides – wrote Thiede – might lead to the conclusion that the Matthew papyrus is also a fake. But in this case, he objected, “he cannot have forged 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” (86). We are well acquainted with Simonides’ strategy, which (with the complicity of Rev. Stobart) consisted in fostering the impression that he had never seen the parchment or papyrus in question until the very moment when the innocent 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 major scandal) because he was keen to point to an early – or rather, *very* early – evidence of the Gospel; and, according to its long, implausible *subscriptio*, the papyrus Simonides had produced provided just such evidence. It was the same mental process as that which had led Thiede and others to claim that a “Markusfragment” had indeed come down to us from the Qumran caves. These people are not prepared to admit that there is no written evidence of the corpus of the New Testament from before the end of the 1st century AD. But it never deserves to use such methods, whether for religious or other reasons, while

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



attempting to ignore the difference between fake and truth. One risks paying an astronomical amount for an almost perfect Cimabue, from a corner of which a “small but perfectly identifiable Mercedes-Benz” peeps out<sup>43</sup>.

### 11. The signature

For years the “last stand” of the honour of pseudo-Artemidorus was the highly unusual shape of the *sampi* (a three-legged Greek *pi*) surmounted by an alphabetical letter functioning as a multiplier. Jürgen Hammerstaedt was prepared to fight gallantly 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 the Elephantine documentary papyri<sup>44</sup>. Hammerstaedt maintained that Simonides could not even have sighted the numerous inscriptions 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 inscriptions is on p. 328 of Hammerstaedt’s article). Hammerstaedt insists not only that it would not have been possible for Simonides to see by 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 inscriptions of the Didymaion near Miletus where that symbol is found recurrently (and where its meaning is absolutely unambiguous).

But these theories will no longer hold: Simonides had first-hand knowledge of the inscriptions at Priene (*I. Priene* 37); he copied and made profitable use of them<sup>45</sup>. As for Didyma, one would have had to do nothing more than read B. Haussoullier’s notebooks in the Institut de France in Paris, to realise that most of the material was *en plein air*, fairly accessible or forming part of the walls of local dwellings. Professor Hammerstaedt’s error of perspective was to believe that self-taught Greek erudite who had been born and brought up in those districts, who was fascinated by the antiquities and eager to make use of them, and who from the 1840s had been particularly interested 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.

The presence of the *sampi* with the multiplier in some lines of column V is, if anything, Simonides’ “signature”

43 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 collected short stories, *The Veteran* (2001).

44 J. Hammerstaedt, *Warum Simonides den Artemidorpapyrus nicht hätte fälschen können: Eine seltene Schreibung für Tausender in Inschriften und Papyri*, «Chiron» 39 (2009) 323–337.

45 L. Canfora, *Simonidis conosceva direttamente, ricopiava e metteva a frutto le epigrafi di Priene (a proposito del sampi in P. Artemid. col. V)*, “Quaderni di storia” 73 (gennaio–giugno 2011) 199–209.

## 12. A proem that begins to make sense

The history of the interpretation of the so-called proem to pseudo-Artemidorus is rather curious. Those who used to defend its authenticity or even the attribution to Artemidorus were resigned to not appreciating the exact meaning of that text, and went no further than styling it, in an over-simplified or purely defensive way, “grandiloquent” (in the sense that it “says nothing”) or erratic or perhaps – privately – “delirious”. On the other hand, people who started from the rather obvious premise that the proem had to mean something gradually discovered that there was indeed sense to it and that the idea expressed therein was coherent. One just needs a grounding in Byzantine theological culture and an adequate knowledge of late Greek and neo-Greek vocabulary in order to get a grasp of what that sense was. Here lies the objective proof of the modern origin of that “proem” and of the sham nature of the whole thing, given that the same hand wrote everything on it, and all in the same script.

Let us now consider 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 opening sentence of Strabo’s *Geography*. Here it is affirmed that if any discipline can be defined as philosophical in its nature, geography is such. This assertion is otherwise developed and supported with completely different arguments from those employed by Strabo – who (it is worth remembering) lists all the authors whose works had best displayed the philosophical character of geography but omits to mention Artemidorus. The arguments used by the modern author of the proem are, on the other hand, of a wholly different kind and betray a different origin.

The philosophy to which the author refers is, according to his own definition, “most divine” and is right from the opening remarks concerned with the relationship with the soul. The soul makes its first appearance as early as the fourth line in the 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 – this crucial breakthrough was provided by Maurizio Calvesi<sup>46</sup> – that the only geographical treatise which similarly opens with a clear reference to the relationship between the geographer (or rather “whoever embarks on the task of presenting geography in its entirety”) and his own soul is Karl Ritter’s *Die Erdkunde im Verhältnis zur Natur und zur Geschichte des Menschen* (1817, 1822<sup>2</sup>, French translation 1835). It is striking that the proem to 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 now return to the ways of reasoning of the author of our 19th century papyrus. It will be useful at this point to provide a close paraphrase in order to make clear the consequential connections in the whole text:

46 M. Calvesi, cit.



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 the most divine philosophy. Geography, in fact, although it remains silent, nonetheless speaks through its dogmas. 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 (πόνος) brought on by the science which is a μόχθος”<sup>47</sup>.

Here the sense only becomes clear if one takes account of the specific meaning in Byzantine philosophy and in the modern age of the “dogmatic panoply”: the connection between *weapons* and *dogmas* can be explained in no other way. The author clearly believes 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 eloquently stated in the proem of Nicephorus Gregoras’ *History*, which develops the concept of physical reality as a “dumb witness” to that divine creation of which (on the other way round) literary, geographical and historical works “speak” loud.

III. “It is promised (ἐπαγγέλλεται τις) that the dogmas of philosophy are, and have always been, attainable through constant strain, so that whoever decently practises philosophy, by taking on himself a burden worthy of Atlas, experiences this as in fact lightness and embraces his own soul which is by no means fatigued and in no way disdains having still greater desire (μηδὲ βαρουμένην ἔχειν ὄρεξιν) of such practice, and looks around in every direction, while the volitive faculty of his soul remains watchful, alert 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 a philosophy suitable to divinity makes him utterly holy in virtue. In the same way the geographer too, when he sets foot on the ground of a given place, sets about adapting his own soul to the abode where he finds himself, drawing on his many years of previous experience of other places.”

In order to decipher this long and tangled passage, which proved an onerous task particularly for the defenders of “P.Artemid.”, one must be acquainted with the typically late-Byzantine, and usual modern Greek, meaning of κόσμος in the sense of *saeculum*, the “outer world” (e.g.: “To Bishop Maximus, in the world Sophianòs” [κατὰ κόσμον Σοφιανός]). Chosen at random, this is the heading of a letter from Gennadius Scholarius (15th century) to Maximus (*PG*, 160, col. 538).

47 Here there is a play on the words πόνος and μόχθος. The second term denotes much greater exertion and suffering.

But it is important to learn that κόσμος meaning “the outer world, the ‘profane’ world, the *saeculum*”, is the norm in modern Greek, just as ἀπλώνω (that is ἀπλόω 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 remarkable series of parallels may be found in the Διδασκαλῖαι (*Doctrinae diversae*) by Dorotheus of Gaza (6th century AD), where in a commentary to St Paul’s *Galatians* 6,14 ἐμοὶ κόσμος ἐσταύρωται καὶ γὰρ κόσμῳ, Dorotheus observes ἐσταύρωται ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῷ κόσμῳ (I 13, p. 166, ed. Regnault-de Préville, in “Sources chrétiennes” 92 (1963)). What Dorotheus says 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 to the purposes of identifying the culture which informs the proem to 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 ὅπλα, ζώννυται τὴν μάχαιραν (ll. 356 ff.). This comparison has to some extent implications for the whole of our proem. It goes without saying that the image used by St. Paul recurs frequently in Byzantine hymnography (e.g.: τῷ κόσμῳ συνεσταύρωμαι).

Given all this, it can be seen that the author’s tangled line of argument grounds on the analogy 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 previous experience which the geographer will make use of every time he will find himself in a new place (ἐπελθὼν εἰς τὴν ἡπειρον χώρας τινός).

Another useful reference, again connected with Greek medieval religiosity, toward a correct understanding of this actually rather vacuous “proem-like” passage, is the reasoning that permeates Theodorus Studita’s *Parva Catechesis*: arriving, through the hardships of a spiritual trial, to imperturbability in the face of the sufferings involved in that trial, taking always the harder road and, as a result of that very choice, feeling that road as the easier one, etc. It is only through this kind of mental model that it becomes possible to understand the seemingly contradictory phrasing distinguishing the whole development of the proem (where the key words are *fatigue* and *soul*): “[...] in order that taking upon oneself a burden worthy of Atlas, one might feel it light”.

Deserving of attention is also the passage that begins by the words ἐπαγγέλλεται τις [...] συχναῖς μερίμναις δι’ αἰῶνος ἄγεσθαι [εἰς τὰ] φιλοσοφίας δόγματα (col. I 22–25). In extant Hellenistic literature included in the *TLG* there are only two instances of the opening ἐπαγγέλλεται τις; in Origen (*Selecta in Psalmos*) and in Olympiodorus Diaconus (*Commentarii in Ecclesiasten*)<sup>48</sup> (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 in order that, in taking on

48 PG, 12 col. 1083, and PG, 93 col. 540.



that terrible burden, he may actually feel light". And all this is consistent with what has just been said (lines 20-21) on the *πόνος* / *μύχθος* as commitment to science.

Account must also be taken of the gap at the end of line 24, where after *ἄγεσθαι* there is nothing readable and the papyrus is damaged. (Gallazzi's description of the dots he claims are visible after *ἄγεσθαι* is both amusing and fallacious)<sup>49</sup>. Here it is obvious that between *ἄγεσθαι* and *τὰ φιλοσοφίας δόγματα* we are dealing with a complement of motion and that accordingly 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 has been restored thanks to the analysis 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 expressions in this at last comprehensible passage, such as *ὅπλα μεμειγμένα* and *Ἀτλάντειος φόρτος*, are actually translations from modern languages: "mit gemischten Waffen", "mixed weapons", "aux armes mélangées", "Atlantean labour". Needless to say, this provides final confirmation that this piece of writing and, as necessary consequence, the whole artefact has been the work of a modern hand.

The whole proem has a meaning which can only be grasped with the help of Byzantine theological culture, the stylistic features of which are apparent at every line. If this guiding thread goes out of view, one ends up lost amid a sea of ungrounded theories (excerpts, excerpts from excerpts, schoolboys' attempts at writing, and so on). All flimsy hypotheses: the fact that it has been extracted from 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 pseudo-Artemidorus Simonides, himself an aspiring bishop<sup>50</sup>, imitates the letter in which Synesius of Cyrene writing to his brother describes the "stirring of his own soul" at the prospect of becoming a bishop<sup>51</sup>.

Let us compare the two texts:<sup>52</sup>

49 Gallazzi et al., *Il papiro di Artemidoro*, cit., 145: "Of t<sup>3</sup> 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 t<sup>3</sup>, 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".

50 Cf. 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.

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

52 It should not be forgotten that in the Vatopedi monastery there is a manuscript (no. 685) of the letters of Synesius.

Synesius, *Letters*, 105

ἐγὼ δὲ καταμανθάνων ἑμαυτὸν [...] δι-  
αλέξομαι πρὸς σὲ περὶ τῶν **τῆς ἑμαυτοῦ**  
**ψυχῆς** κινήματων [...] σὲ γὰρ εἰκὸς [...] καὶ **νύκτωρ ἄγρυπνεῖν** καὶ μεθ' ἡμέραν **σκοπεῖν** ὅπως ἂν **ἀγαθόν** 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 φροντίδων κτλ.

Pseudo-Artemidorus, i 22–39

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

Synesius's *Letter* 105 appears in the collection soon after the one (*Letter* 101) where at the end there is an adulatory allusion to σεβασμιώτατος Marcian, of whom it is said that in the *Panhellenion* of Cyrene “he searches 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<sup>53</sup>.

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53 Cf. D. Marcotte, *Le “corpus” géographique de Heidelberg (Palat. Heidelb. Gr. 398) et les origines de la “collection philosophique”*, in *The Libraries of the Neoplatonists. Proceedings of the European Science Foundation Network “Late Antiquity and Arabic Thought. Patterns in the Constitution of European Culture”* held in Strasbourg, March 12–14 (2004) edited by C. D'Ancona (Leiden/Boston 2007) 172.