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ESTRATTO

da

Posidonio πολύτροπος

Filosofia e scienza, storia e geografia.

Nono seminario di Geographia Antiqua (Perugia 18-19 novembre 2021)

A cura di Paolo Desideri e Francesco Prontera



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XXXI
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POSIDONIO ΠΟΛΥΤΡΟΠΟΣ
FILOSOFIA E SCIENZA, STORIA E GEOGRAFIA



LEO S. OLSCHKI

GEOGRAPHIA ANTIQUA

*rivista di geografia storica
del mondo antico
e di storia della geografia*

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PAOLO DESIDERI e FRANCESCO PRONTERA

FRANCESCA ALESSE

POSIDONIO E LA VISIONE ORGANICISTICA DELLA FILOSOFIA

The paper focusses on Posidonius' vision of philosophy as a systematic but organic complex of both theoretical doctrines and scientific competencies (including technical skills of measurement), in the context of the traditional tripartition of philosophy into logic, physics, ethics. The contribution dwells on Posidonian simile of philosophy as a unitary and living being, underlines some differences between Posidonian and other Stoics' points of view and metaphors, and tries to highlight the profound coherence between the definition of philosophy as an organism and the main aspects of Posidonius' psychological, metaphysical and cosmological doctrines.

Keywords: Tripartition of philosophy, Philosophy as organism, Stoic theodicy, Stoic providentialism.

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PAOLO DESIDERI

POSIDONIO E LA STORIA

Posidonius, the great representative of Middle Stoicism, was, apparently, the only ancient philosopher who also wrote an (important) historical work: it was the history of his own lifetime, covering the period from the end of Polybius' Histories to the first Mithridatic war, at least. Relating and interpreting historical events was evidently considered by him an appropriate way to improve a philosopher's knowledge of human individual and collective behaviour. My purpose is to investigate the impact of this decision on the character and style of his Histories. In particular, I focus on Posidonius' interest in explaining the causes of the great slave insurrections of the final Roman Republican period, which ought, in his opinion, to suggest the opportunity of a more human treatment of these unfortunate people.

Keywords: Posidonius, historiography, ethics, Diodorus, slave wars.

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FEDERICO SANTANGELO
POSIDONIUS IN CONTEXT

This paper discusses the social and political context in which Posidonius of Apamea and of Rhodes scoped and pursued his intellectual project, taking as its main vantage points the evidence of his historical fragments and the testimonia on his life and work. It discusses his interactions with Rome and some key figures of the Roman establishment, and proposes to regard him as a product and interpreter of Mediterranean connectivity in the late Hellenistic period.

Keywords: Posidonius, Hellenistic historiography, Roman Republic, Rhodes, Pompey the Great, Cicero, Mediterranean world, connected history.

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PIETRO JANNI
POSIDONIO MISURA LA TERRA

The measurement of the earth by Posidonius (ca. 135-50 BC), much less well known than that of Eratosthenes (ca. 267-193 BC), is based on the same principle: to compare the difference in celestial appearances as observed in two terrestrial localities whose linear distance is known, which of course presupposes the sphericity of the earth, concentric to the celestial sphere. However, Posidonius's application of this principle was unfortunate: he chose for his observation Canopus, alpha Carinae, a star that grazed the horizon in Rhodes while in Alexandria it rose a few degrees above it. The phenomenon of atmospheric refraction, which makes stars near the horizon appear higher than they really are, compromised therefore any accuracy of measurement. The phenomenon was perfectly well known to the scientists of the later epoch (Ptolemy), but in all probability Posidonius could also have been aware of it. In this way he showed, as has been observed many times, by many scholars, that his interest lay in the procedure itself, not in the result. His choice fell on Canopus because by a lucky chance the conspicuous difference in visibility concerned a very bright and famous star and two important centres of ancient science. The example was thus particularly apt to attract attention and become popular. The essay emphasises the epoch-making intuition of the men who devised a procedure that embraced earth and sky in a single act of perception.

Keywords: Posidonius of Apameia, Measurement of the Earth.

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ROBERTO NICOLAI

POSIDONIO A GADEIRA: L'OSSERVAZIONE DIRETTA E LA TESTIMONIANZA DEI MARINAI

Ancient geographers followed two methods to construct their maps: they could apply geometrical or astronomical knowledge and make use of the testimony of travellers and sailors. Posidonius of Apamea exploited both methods, while Strabo tended to mistrust travellers' and sailors' accounts when these conflicted with data derived from geometrical-astronomical speculation. In this contribution, I have turned my attention to some of Strabo's accounts of Posidonius' research in the city of Gadeira/Gades, a privileged place of observation for astronomers and geographers.

Keywords: Strabo, Posidonius, Gadeira/Gades, travellers' accounts, scientific-mathematical geography.

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DIDIER MARCOTTE

LA MÉTÉOROLOGIE DE POSÉIDONIOS ET LA CRUE DU NIL

This paper re-examines a papyrus fragment, P.Oxy. 4458, which describes the flooding of the Nile and discusses its causes. It proposes to attribute this papyrus to the meteorology of Posidonius, whose content and method it analyses thanks to several hitherto neglected passages of Strabo and Priscianus Lydus.

Keywords: Posidonius, Strabo's Geography, Greek physics and meteorology, Nile flood.

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ANTOINE RÉGNIER

LA GÉOGRAPHIE DU VOLCANISME CHEZ POSEIDONIOS ET STRABON

This paper studies Posidonius of Apamea's theory of volcanic activity in the Geography of Strabo. Volcanism was a difficult problem for ancient meteorology which required one to delve into physics, natural history and geography: such was the method of the treatise *Περὶ ὤκεανου*. After Aristotle had developed his theory of pneumatic fire, natural scientists of the Hellenistic period sought better to understand the origins of 'underground fire'. Posidonius gathered data from his personal trips and the works of his predecessors – Aristotelian more than Stoics – which allowed him to link systematically volcanic activity, *πνεῦμα*, and combustible material, and thus to use a geological *αἴτιον* for the definition of volcanic areas. This evolution is displayed by Strabo himself in the depiction of the *Κατακεκαυμένη* field in book XIII.

Keywords: volcanism, meteorology, physical geography, sources of bitumen, Aristotelianism.

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FRANCESCO PRONTERA

POSIDONIO E LA CARTOGRAFIA ELLENISTICA

As fr. 249 E.-K. (= Str. VI, 2, 1) shows, Posidonius modified the orientation of the triangular figure of Sicily in Eratosthenes' map of the earth. This article suggests that Posidonius might have also improved the orthogonal frame that characterises the representation of Central Asia and Europe in Strabo's Geography.

Keywords: ancient cartography, Eratosthenes, Posidonius, Strabo, Sicily, Alps.
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ARNALDO MARCONE

POSIDONIO NEGLI STUDI DEL SECOLO SCORSO

The issue of the reception of Posidonius in the history of scholarship poses a number of problems. It seems as though Posidonius' works and ideas returned to being an independent focus of interest, quite apart from their context, for a limited number of scholars and philosophers, particularly in Germany, between the late 18th and the early 19th century. Then, between the late 19th century and the 1930s, some important works were published with the aim of rediscovering traces of Posidonius and defining his role in ancient philosophy. The approach adopted was to attempt to identify his personality through the numerous genuine or alleged fragments that have reached us. Among the specific topics discussed was the existence of a Posidonian commentary on Plato's Timaeus. The enduring influence of 19th-century doctrines, particularly German idealism, influenced most of the works in question, down to Karl Reinhardt's landmark studies on Posidonius.

The image of an 'Oriental' or mystical Posidonius has variously been criticised, starting from certain general hypotheses, which soon became outdated, especially outside the German cultural area. The research in question primarily concerned religious history; its unjustified conclusions have been especially noted by French-speaking scholars, chiefly in relation to the origins of Platonic thought.

Keywords: Posidonius, philosophy, reception, Stoicism. 19th-20th century.
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JEANNE CAPELLE - AUDE COHEN-SKALLI

LA MAGNÉSIE DU MÉANDRE DE STRABON, UNE CAPITALE DU
MAUVAIS GOÛT? SUR *I. MAGNESIA* 129 DANS LA *GÉOGRAPHIE*,
XIV, 1, 41 C648

Strabo's account of Magnesia, a city he knew, and of its illustrious men is unusually long and negative (XIV, 1, 39-41 C647-648). Concerning honorific portraits of Anaxenor, a contemporary kitharode hired by Mark Antony, Strabo dwells on the spelling of the Homeric dative in the inscription (Od. IX, 3-4 ap. *I. Magnesia* 129) accompanying a new statue (probably replacing the one of *I. Magnesia* 92a) in the epiphanestatos topos of the theatre. Because of the carelessness of a letter-cutter, Magnesia was exposed to a criticism rooted in analogist thought, which Strabo had studied in Nysa. This is at odds with the accusative given by the manuscripts of Homer and by Eustathius, Strabo's commentator, as well as with the common use of the iota mutum at the time: this grammatical purism definitely turns the neighbouring city into a capital of poor taste.

Keywords: Magnesia on the Maeander, Strabo, letter-cutter, iota mutum, analogist/anomalist grammarians, Homeric text, theatre, honorific statue.

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ELVIRA MIGLIARIO

DA CATONE A PLINIO: QUALI RETI?

Ancient authors' information about the Raethians depend on sources produced in some very different historical and cultural contexts and cannot therefore be treated as a consistent and unified whole. The information about the transalpine Raethians all dates back to not before the Augustan age, while the bulk of information about the Raethians in the Adige Valley and in other neighboring valleys derives from traditions that originated in the Veneto region between the 4th and the beginning of the 2nd century BC, some of which attributed an Etruscan origin to the Raethians, which is however controverted by linguistic data and archaeological evidence.

Keywords: Raethians' ethnogenesis, Cato the Elder, Pliny, pre-Roman North-Italian peoples.

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FRANCESCO PRONTERA

LA MAGNA GRECIA E LA PUNTA DELLA IAPIGIA NELLE
RAPPRESENTAZIONI GEOGRAFICHE
DEGLI ANTICHI

In ancient cartography, the position of Magna Graecia derived from the alignments of Western Mediterranean's landmarks and the distances between them. Before Strabo, the expression ἄκρα Ἰαπυγία referred to the peninsular area below the line from Taranto to Brindisi; it did not indicate strictly the Cape Santa Maria di Leuca. In the classical age, the only topographical reference associated to ἄκρα Ἰαπυγία is Otranto, which marks along with Ceraunians Mountains the entrance to the Adriatic.

Keywords: ancient cartography, Strabo, Apulia, Otranto, Leuca.

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MASSIMO DONATTINI

GIAMBATTISTA RAMUSIO, LE CARTE CINESI
DI MARCO POLO, I «DISEGNI» DEGLI «ECCELLENTI UOMINI
FRANCESI». A PROPOSITO DI ALCUNI INTERVENTI SULLA
CARTOGRAFIA
NELLE NAVIGATIONI ET VIAGGI

Following pages deal with some problems relating to the correct interpretation of historical sources. I will analyze two different passages, respectively taken from the second and third volumes of G.B. Ramusio's *Navigazioni et viaggi* (Venice, 1550-1559), and some recent interpretations (misleading, in my opinion) that have been given of them. Both passages concern cartographic topics: in the former case, Ramusio expresses his opinion on Fra Mauro's *Mappamundi*; in the second, he exposes his intentions on the cartographic set provided for the third volume of his great work.

Keywords: Ramusio, Giovanni Battista; Fra Mauro; Gastaldi, Giacomo; Cartografia, storia della; Polo, Marco.

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