

Introduction

Interest in the size, shape, and inhabitants of the surface of the earth goes back to prehistoric times, as early humans moved beyond the limits of their own environment and encountered a world that was different from their own. The earliest literature is replete with travelers. Enkidu traveled to Uruk to meet Gilgamesh, Cain went from Eden to Nod, and Odysseus came to the Land of the Lotos Eaters. A primitive sense of geographical curiosity was an inevitable by-product of these wanderings. Enkidu met peoples whose lifestyles were different from his own, and Odysseus unfortunately learned both about the perils of sea travel and the dietary habits of the Lotos Eaters. The world was a complex place, and one's own clan was an insignificant part of its diversity.

Yet simple knowledge or even deep interest in the surface of the earth—whether its physical or anthropological qualities—did not automatically mean the development of geography. Scientific explanations for the character of the earth did not occur until the beginnings of Greek intellectualism in the sixth century BC; the Ionian monists Thales and Anaximandros were the first to theorize, however rudimentarily, about why the earth was the way it was. Yet only with Plato and Aristotle was there significant movement toward a discipline of geography, to be further stimulated by the extensive travels of Alexander the Great. But it was not until the efforts of the polymath Eratosthenes of Kyrene (ca. 285–205 BC), Librarian at Alexandria and tutor to the future King Ptolemaios IV, that geography took its place among the legitimate scholarly endeavors: indeed, it was Eratosthenes who created its terminology, including the very word *geographia* itself.

At some time during the 40 years after 245 BC, Eratosthenes wrote his three-book *Geographika*, the first scholarly treatise on the topic. Building on the thoughts of the previous three centuries, as well as the vast amount of data about places and peoples that had accumulated over the years, he laid out his conception of the nature of the surface of the earth (he had already determined its size in a previous treatise), with special attention to the *oikoumene*, or inhabited portions, and the

peoples living therein. Topics as diverse as the depths of the seas, the geological history of the earth, its climate, and the customs of its population were included. This seminal treatise established geography as an academic discipline, and spawned numerous followers who themselves refined Eratosthenes' thoughts, among them Hipparchos, Polybios, Poseidonios, and Strabo.

Yet, as is so often the case with Hellenistic academic works, Eratosthenes' *Geographika* did not last long. Strabo's detailed summation from the Augustan period hastened its disappearance, and it is probable that the work was lost by the second century AC. This has placed the modern scholar in a difficult position: access to the thoughts of Eratosthenes means starting with Strabo (and the handful of other authors who quoted the work, none nearly as extensively) and working through his Roman perspective. Strabo's synthesis also carries the weight of all those who wrote on geography between the time of Eratosthenes and his own era. As is the case with all ancient texts that survive only through quotation by later authors, recovery of the original is a difficult process, for the quotations may have been chosen less to preserve the original author's thoughts than to fit into the agenda of the later source. A complex process of reverse recension is necessary to unravel Eratosthenes' ideas from those of Strabo and the other authors quoted by Strabo.

Since there was no existing text of the *Geographika* of Eratosthenes, there were no early modern attempts to reconstruct it, and it was not until 1789 that Günther Carl Fridrich Seidel attempted to pull the extant fragments from those who preserved them. The only other edition was that by Ernst Hugo Berger in 1880. Although both of these editions are significant, much has been learned since the time of Berger about reconstruction of texts from fragments, ancient geography, and the Hellenistic world. Moreover, the text of Strabo is in much better shape than it was in 1880, due primarily to the efforts of Wolfgang Aly and the editors of the ongoing Budé edition.

The present edition is not only the first in over a century, but the first with an English translation of the fragments. It builds on the present author's previous work on ancient geography, and one dares to hope that it will assist in modern comprehension of not only the origins of ancient geographical scholarship but the importance of Eratosthenes in ancient intellectual creativity. Berger's 1880 edition was the model, but a new selection of the fragments has been made, including some material not used by him, and ordering and book attribution has been refined. His original fragment numbers appear in parentheses after the

new fragment number, yet the exact extents of Berger's fragments and of the present ones do not always correspond. In the analytical sections of this work, any fragment number without attribution (e.g. F1, F15) is from Eratosthenes; the authorship of other fragments is always stated (e.g. Dikaiarchos F121).

This edition of the *Geographika* also includes a set of maps, expertly drawn by the Ancient World Mapping Center at the University of North Carolina, that show virtually all of the over 400 toponyms cited by Eratosthenes. It is believed that this is the first time such an effort has been attempted. Although it is still in dispute whether Eratosthenes himself included a map with his text, these maps allow the modern reader to see the full spread of toponyms, from the northern Atlantic Ocean to beyond India, that were used to create the *Geographika*.

The author would like to thank the Loeb Classical Library Foundation of Harvard University, whose generous grant support allowed the completion of this project, as well as the Harvard College Library and the Library of the Ohio State University (especially its interlibrary loan services), James S. Romm and Grant Parker, both of whom read the manuscript and offered many valuable suggestions, Richard Talbert and the expert cartographers at the Ancient World Mapping Center, who produced the maps, and editor Rob Tempio, Natalie Baan, and many others from Princeton University Press. Further thanks go to A. B. Bosworth, David Braund, Stanley Burstein, John M. Fossey, Georgia L. Irby-Massie, and Letitia K. Roller.