Boundaries in Strabo's Italy: Space, Time and Difference[1]

Boundaries are central to our understanding and construction of the world we inhabit. The internet is seen as liberating precisely because, give or take some repressive cyber-sovereignty here and there, it crosses the boundaries which otherwise order the world. National boundaries can only otherwise be crossed with the right combination of personal identification and state permission (or the limited suspension of state permission, or delegation to a higher entity); boundaries encode the limits of political rights, pricing and taxation regimes, and jurisdictions. At the time of writing the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic has proven a crucial sticking point in Brexit negotiations. What is at issue is not the border, but its nature, its 'hardness' or 'softness', with the corresponding implications for security, transit and customs arrangements. Borders are often invisible, straight lines drawn across deserts or through forests by diplomats in offices thousands of miles away (*e.g.* the Skyes-Picot agreement of 1916), or by explorers or surveyors on the ground (*e.g.* the Mason-Dixon Line, of 1767-8). That modern governments want to build walls along them (or Roman emperors for that matter) demonstrates the importance of the border to the state, and the wish to project visibly the control which the wall symbolises, whether in Berlin, Israel or between the U.S.A. and Mexico. Perhaps the clearest indicators of how intensely we have reified the concept and the inevitability of the boundary are invisible, conceptual frontiers, universally accepted, unchallengeable and essential to the operation of our world: the borders of common currency zones, and above all international time-zones and datelines.

As L.P. Hartley famously wrote at the opening of his novel *The Go-Between*, "The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there". To be able to think seriously about ancient boundaries and frontiers we need to defamiliarise ourselves, stepping back from our multiply-bounded world, and think about them as 'necessary'

[1] I am very grateful to the conference organisers, Elvira Migiario and Franco Luciani, for inviting me to speak, and for their patience in waiting for my contribution. I am also grateful to all the participants at the Trento colloquium for a most stimulating and well-focused series of discussions. I am equally grateful to Lisa Bligh for reading the piece and offering some suggestions. All mistakes are my own. I have, to avoid confusion, Latinised the names of Italian *ethnē* in Strabo, except where it is necessary to capture precise nuances of his usage, where I have transliterated from the Greek. I have not generally Latinised Greek *polis*-names.

in different ways, and as less normative and more contingent than they are for us. To explore some of the tensions between the normative and the contingent, the essential and the fluctuating, the 'Newtonian' and the 'quantum' as regards ancient boundaries, this paper will take as a case study Strabo's the treatment of Italy in books 5 and 6 of his *Geography*.

Strabo was not a chorographer, but he surely worked with knowledge of graphic maps such as Agrippa's in the Porticus Vipsania in Rome, as well as written texts. Whatever his sources, his text has frequently been used as the basis for mapping and for dividing up the ancient world. The work thus seems to embody a comfortable and familiar exercise, imposing order on, and measuring the relative positions of, the political and ethnic sub-divisions of the *oikoumenē*. But examination of his treatment of boundaries shall show that the situation Strabo tried to capture, at least in this section of the work, was both spatially complex and historically layered, dependent on Italy's shifting geo-politics over time, its history as non-Roman and as Roman. We shall see that much of what Strabo has to say about boundaries shows them as contingent and flexible, and that sometimes, rather than defining and articulating the world neatly, boundaries show contestation and uncertainty.[2]

This is not to say that boundaries were not real and important in the ancient world, whether symbolically (as when Kroisos debated whether to cross the Halys) or practically (Hasdrubal made an agreement with the Romans in 226 that the Karthaginians would not cross the Ebro to make war).[3] In Italy the Cippus Abellanus shows us how important it was for Nola and Abella to manage some aspects of their common frontier where it was straddled by temple of Hercules, and to hold the temple and its revenues in common.[4] Strabo himself refers to the territories of Cales and Teanum Sidicinum as being separated by two temples of Fortune on either side of the Via Latina, and a similar mediating function was surely exercised here between what were, until the Social War, independent sovereign states.[5]

---

[2] Important discussion of Strabo and boundaries in Bourdin, *Les peuples de l'Italie préromaine* 216-24, 429-513.
[3] Polybios, 2. 13. 3-7, 22. 11; 3. 6. 2, 15. 5, 21. 1, 29. 2, *cf.* 27. 9.
[4] *Imagines Italicae* Abella 1.
[5] 5. 4. 11, 249C.

In order to appreciate the complexity and differently textured nature of borders and frontiers between cities and peoples in Strabo, we need to make some preliminary observations about the economy and operation of his account. It may seem that borders and boundaries are incidental here, just part of the furniture, but they are in fact fundamental. Strabo is not simply giving an account of physical geography; his *oikoumenē* is just that, an inhabited world, a dynamic one. The constituent peoples and cities need to be organised, not only for the purposes of recording and classification, but to allow the drawing of political and historical conclusions (reflecting a politics and a history in which they had also organised themselves). And this final aspect is crucial: as is well known, Strabo also wrote a history, and he is acutely conscious that the dynamism on which he is seeking to impose order is not only a 'horizontal' one in which current units of analysis jostle each other across space, but also a 'vertical', historical, one, with change over time determining both borders and their mutations.

This is not simply what we might call antiquarianism: large historical processes, like the rise of Rome to world power, discussed at the end of book 6, need to be understood both historically and spatially. Indeed, one gets the impression that the past is often more potent in Strabo's account of Italy than the present; as Katherine Clarke has shown in a classic analysis, 'now', *nun de*, in Strabo is a moveable feast, and refers as often to the 'now' of his sources as to the 'now' of writing.[6] Perhaps the most striking modern absence in Strabo's account is the one which Pliny uses to organise his description of Italy: the 11 Augustan *regiones*.[7] Strabo does break Italy into *merē* or parts, but these only serve as articulations of convenience, and do not play any important part in his analysis – indeed the second part seems to have no function at all, and he abandons the idea of 'parts' after the third.[8] Instead it is *ethnē* which appear as the fundamental building-blocks of the account. Already in Strabo's first attempt to describe Italy as a whole (5. 1. 3, 210-211C) natural features (mountains, coasts, gulfs) stand side-by-side in the text with blocks of territory occupied by *ethnē*. Like the natural features, these ethnically-formed units of analysis

[6] Clarke, *Between Geography and History. Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World* 281-893 on the 'present'.
[7] On the Augustan *regiones* see Bispham, forthcoming.
[8] First part: Cisalpina, Veneti and northern Ligures; second part: Apennine Ligures; third part: Etruria (5. 1. 12 – 5. 2. 1, 218C).

are meant not only to describe a geographical reality, but also to help the reader conceptualise, although we should note that the term can apply to larger or smaller cultural or political units.[9] Thus Italy south of a line drawn from the gulf of Poseidonia to that of Taras is defined as 'as much as (ὅσην) the Bruttii and some of the Lucani hold'; and the various changes in the direction of the Apennine chain are marked by towns (Ariminum and Ancona) or the territory of *ethnē* (Peucetians, Lucanians, Bruttians).

Unlike Pliny, then, Strabo uses no single unifying spatial concept to articulate his account. There is, however, a temporal one which surfaces at times: the unification of Italy under Roman power. Loosely tied to this, or as a prequel and almost a precondition for it, is the evolution of the very concept and location of Italy (see below), which is, by contrast, unstressed in Pliny's account. Strabo's book 5 begins the Italian geography proper by describing 'what is now' Italy (5. 1. 1, 209C); the phrase recurs at the end of the Italian section (6. 4. 1, 286C), in a kind of ring composition. On balance, within book 5, the more modern Italy of Strabo's own day (or close to it), while by no means universally present, marks the account in significant ways, not least in terms of the discussion of Cisalpina, Etruria, Rome, and of the bay of Naples.[10] In book 6 by contrast, as we move south, we hear of *archaia Italia*, ancient Italy, and the account becomes richer in myths[11] attached to places,

[9] Different nuances of *ethnos* in Strabo: Bourdin, *Les peuples de l'Italie préromaine* 217-18. Other types of collectivity (*i.e.* where the bond is not one of shared ethnicity) do appear fleetingly in Strabo's Italian account: at Alba Longa the temple survives war with Rome, 5. 3. 4, 231C); after the destruction of Fregellae (5. 3 10, 237C) the surrounding communities which it formerly controlled met on the site of the city for a religious festival and to trade; *cf.* 6. 1. 6, 258C on Rhegion for a similar arrangement. For another instance of the importance of cult acts in enacting and preserving a boundary: 5. 3. 2, 230C (the rite of the Ambarvalia and the 'boundary' of Roman territory), on which see Bourdin, *ibid*. 503-6.

[10] Cisalpina: current size of Mediolanum; successive colonizations of Comum: 5. 1. 6, 213C; census at Patavium: (A.D. 14) 5. 1. 7, 213C; Etruria: the Luna marble quarries: 5. 2. 5, 222C; Rome: Augustus' fire-brigade and building regulations: 5. 3. 7, 235C; Agrippa's water-supply: 5. 3. 8, 235C; Augustan public building: 5. 3. 8, 236C; Campania: Agrippa's military constructions of the 30s: 5. 4. 5, 243C – 4. 6, 246C; Augustus grants Pithekoussai to Neapolis: 5. 4. 9, 248C.

[11] Myths in northern Italy: Trojan origins of the Veneti (5. 1. 4, 221C, with Bourdin, *Les peuples de l'Italie préromaine* 103 n. 288); cult to Diomedes (5. 1. 9, 215C); Thessalian foundation of Ravenna (5. 1. 7, 214C); Kolchian foundation of Pola (5. 1. 9, 215-16C); myth of Etruscan origins (5. 2. 2, 219-20C, with Bourdin, *ibid*. 303); foundation of Caere (5. 2. 3, 220C, followed by a long digression about Pelasgians, 5. 2. 4, 220-1C); foundation of Pisa (5. 2. 5, 222C); Argonauts visit Elba (5. 2. 6, 224C); Iolaos on Sardinia (5. 2. 7, 225C); Pelasgians at Regisvilla (5. 2. 8, 225-6C). Note also that Polybios and Poseidonios are cited for different explanations of a Cisapline *thauma*: 5. 1. 8, 214-15C; other popular *thaumata* of the region are dismissed as fantasy (5. 1. 9, 215C). Rome, unsurprisingly, gets its fair share of origin myths, from Aeneas onwards: 5. 3. 2, 229C – 5. 3. 3, 230C.

sometimes given in variant versions, with one often attributed to Antiochos of Syrakuse, the other to Ephoros.[12]

At this point, however, I shall lay out some unexciting preliminary observations on Strabo's basic operating techniques. This may seem unnecessary, but unless we pause to understand how the work is put together, and grasp some of its fundamental (and not wholly coherent) underpinning assumptions, we will not be able properly to assess how Strabo uses and handles boundaries.

Structure and Succession

To begin at the beginning. At 5. 1. 1, 209C, the start of the Italian section, Strabo says that after the foothills of the Alps is the beginning (*archē*) of 'what is now' Italy.[13] The idea of the 'beginning' of a territory is found elsewhere: thus at 5. 2. 10, 227C, he says that Umbria takes its *archē* from the Apennines, and goes as far as the Adriatic sea; ἀπὸ γὰρ δὴ Ῥαουέννης ἀρξάμενοι κατέχουσιν οὗτοι τὰ πλησίον … ('For beginning indeed from Ravenna these people [the Umbrians] inhabit the neighbouring places … '), as far as Camerinum. Similarly, for example, we read of the Sabines and the Latins that 'these two peoples begin' (ἄρχεται μὲν οὖν τὰ δύο ἔθνη ταῦτα) at the Tiber and Etruria, and go as far as the Apennines; the Picentes inhabit country 'beginning' from the mountains and going as far as the plains and the sea.[14] A beginning implies an end (after all, neither the *oikoumenē* nor its *ethnē* are infinite). The 'Etruscans 'stop', (παύονται) at the Apennine mountains (5. 2 1, 219C). And if we begin somewhere and stop somewhere else, and in so

[12] 6. 1. 12, 262C (Antiochos and Ephoros); Antiochos cited on foundation of Taras: 6. 3. 2, 278-9C, Ephoros, 6. 3. 3, 279-80C, has another version; 6. 1. 15, 264-5C (colonization of Metapontion as an Achaian bulwark against Taras, versions in Antiochos and Ephoros); 6. 1. 7, 259C (disagreement with Ephoros); *cf.* 6. 1. 8, 260C (Ephoros); 6. 1. 14, 264C (Antiochos on the foundation of Herakleia; *ibid.* for the dubious claims of *sungrapheis* about statues allegedly brought from Troy); other authors in the account of the south: 6. 1. 9, 260C (Timaios); 6. 3. 6, 282C (Herodotos on Hyria). On Strabo's treatment of southern Italy, see also Prontera 1988.

[13] For the phrase: 6. 4. 1, 286C; *cf.* 5. 4. 1, 240C: the need to begin again ἀπὸ τῶν Κελτικῶν ὅρων ('from the Celtic boundaries').

[14] Sabines: 5. 2. 10, 228C; Picentes: 5. 4. 2, 240C.

starting and stopping, we define a territory, it follows that such termini will constitute the lines of demarcation between peoples. These demarcations often coincide with geographical features (although they need not do so: thus both the Etruscans and the Umbrians crossed the Apennines, according to Strabo, in attempts to dominate the Po valley).[15] Mountains clearly divide groups one from another: thus they ὁρίζουσι ('bound') Picenum where it meets the Camertes in Umbria, and form the end of one unit and analysis, and the start of another.[16] Mountains are an obvious type of boundary, but they are not the only natural one: flat land can also be a boundary. Thus the Pomptine plain was ὅμορον τοῖς Λατίνοις ('bordering on the Latins'); having first belonged to the Volsci; its quality as a boundary may be to do with its marshiness, as a sort of no man's land.[17] To no one's surprise, rivers can also be boundaries. The Po divides the Cispadana from the Transpadana. This is a division of geographical areas, but rivers more often divide peoples. Thus the Tiber divides Etruscans from the Umbrians: καὶ μέσον ἔχοντα τὸν Τίβεριν ποταμὸν ('and having between them the river Tiber'). The lower Tiber also divides (διορίζων), along in its lower course as far the coast, the Etruscans from the Sabines and the Latins. The Veneti are divided (διορίζονται) from the Illyrians near the Danube by a river flowing from the Alps. Finally, the Halex river marks the boundary between the territory of Rhegion and that of Lokroi.[18]

Starting and stopping points not only allow characterisation of the territory in between as belonging to group *x* or *y*; by marking terminal points along various axes across or beside the unit so defined, Strabo has the points for constructing basic extent of territories, which can be subdivided in various ways, between communities, or between natural features. Or we can have an entire region defined by a series of natural features, as for example Gallia Cisalpina.[19]

Once we can define the edges of a two-dimensional unit, we can measure it in various ways. Unsurprisingly, Strabo's entire work is full of distances from *a* to *b* and so on,

[15] 5. 1. 10, 216C.
[16] 5. 2. 10, 227C.
[17] 5. 3. 4, 231C.
[18] Po: 5. 1. 4, 212C; Tiber: 5. 1. 10, 216C, 5. 2. 1, 218C; Veneti: 5. 1. 8, 214C; Halex: 6. 1. 9, 360C; Bourdin, *Les peuples de l'Italie préromaine* 107, 117, 445, 478, 499.
[19] 5.1. 3, 211C ('within these … boundaries').

enumeration of which in these two books I shall happily spare the reader. It is worth, however, briefly drawing attention to one characteristic of these measurements, which look at first sight very similar to the display of knowledge (in this case of relative distance) as power that we find, for example, on Roman milestones, and on other analogous texts, such as the Polla *elogium*.[20] Such assertions of knowledge, and thus of control, rely for their force on being excepts derived from the gaze of the ruling power, and that in turn depends on their being correct and indisputable. Strabo's measurements look similar at first blush, but at times we come across comments which point the other way. Strabo, despite having access to the data of the Chorographer (usually thought to be Agrippa, who would have accompanied his map with tabulations of distance), tends to rely on other sources. The Chorographer, of course, uses the Roman unit of measurement, the mile. Strabo sometimes uses miles, often when citing the Chorographer, but more often, writing as he is for a Greek audience, he uses *stadia*. And, interestingly, these measurements in *stadia* do not always agree with the mile distances of the Chorographer; in fact the former come from different sources, which do not always agree with each other. Strabo's sources are, of course, often geographical: thus at 5. 2. 6, 224C, he disagrees with both Eratosthenes and Artemidoros about various distances measured from Populonia. They are also historical, or historical with an interest in the *oikoumenē*: thus Polybios is more than once cited as an authority for distances given.[21]

These various writers can be unclear, or disagree, about coastal distances, for example those to the Lacinian promontory; Strabo also records disagreements between the Chorographer and Artemidoros regarding the gulf of Tarentum.[22] At 6. 3. 10, 285C, we learn that the distances in *stadia* (or at least those relating to the Adriatic coast) come from Artemidoros, but that these differ from those given by the Chorographer, in miles. Polybios offers yet another total distance, interestingly in miles; and these authorities in turn do not agree with the commonly accepted distance along the opposite coast of the Adriatic. At this point Strabo offers us a revealing editorial comment about his own working methods. As he 'often' says, writers commonly disagree about distances; where he can reach his own verdict, he gives it, but where

[20] *ILLRP* 454.
[21] 5. 2. 5, 222C (Etruria).
[22] 6. 1. 11, 261-2C – none of these are given 'clearly' by the sources, says Strabo.

he cannot decide he gives his various authorities, and if they say nothing, the lack of agreement is not worth worrying about:

καὶ πάντες δὲ πρὸς ἅπαντας μάλιστα περὶ τῶν διαστημάτων οὐχ ὁμολογοῦσι πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ὡς πολλάκις ἐλέγομεν. ἡμεῖς δ᾽ ὅπου μὲν ἐπικρίνειν δυνατόν, ἐκφέρομεν τὸ δοκοῦν ἡμῖν, ὅπου δὲ μή, τὰ ἐκείνων εἰς μέσον οἰόμεθα δεῖν τιθέναι. ἐὰν δὲ μηδὲν παρ᾽ ἐκείνων ἔχωμεν, οὐδὲν θαυμαστὸν οὐδ᾽εἰ παρελείψαμέν τι καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἐν τοιαύτῃ καὶ ταῦθ᾽ ὑποθέσει: τῶν μὲν γὰρ μεγάλων οὐδὲν ἂν παραλίποιμεν, τὰ δὲ μικρὰ καὶ γνωρισθέντα μικρὸν ὤνησε καὶ παραπεμφθέντα ἔλαθε καὶ οὐδὲν ἢ οὐ πολὺ τοῦ παντελοῦς ἔργου παρέλυσε.

And they all disagree with each other, especially about the distances, as I have often had occasion to say. I, wherever it is possible for me to adjudge, produce my own opinion, and wherever it is not possible, I think it is necessary to bring to the readers' attention the opinions of those writers. But if I have nothing on their part, there is no reason for astonishment, if I too have passed something over, in such a subject as this. For while I would not pass over any of the matters which are of importance, little matters are ones which, when known, bring little profit and whose omission escapes notice and takes away nothing, or very little, from the work as a whole.

The crucial point here is not so much the predictable one that sources disagree: but that even the 'empirical' underpinnings of geography, the distances between fixed points, are disputed. This has important implications, since it introduces an element of uncertainty into the further analyses which are often predicated on apparently empirical geographical data. Among these are boundaries, which start to become labile, and, conceptually at least, to be no less a subject of contestation than the distances which separate them.

Let us return to Strabo's conceptual armature of beginning and stopping, by which the description is most basically segmented and ordered. We have said that this can also encode the division of one group from another. The next level of conceptual organisation is to express a series of such divisions, in sequence, as a succession, where one group follows another, and so on. This could of course be a purely abstract exercise, a sort of mental geometry in two dimensions. But it can also express a hypothetical or a real progression in a particular direction, by land or water.

In many cases Strabo simply expresses succession of peoples or places, without the reader being able to decide if this is a highly abstract process of conceptualising a

general movement in a particular direction, as it might be, north or south; or a more specific journey, real or potential, whether expressed by a source, extrapolated from a map, or made in person by Strabo. Examples of succession can be succession of peoples: at 5. 2. 1, 219C we have the succession of Umbrians, then Sabines and then Latins ('first … after these … finally').[23] And in speaking of the Alpine tribes, he says that the Salassi are after the Taurini, the other Ligures, (μετὰ δὲ τούτους) and the Padus.[24] Succession is also that of communities: the Umbrian cities Sarsina, Ariminum, Sena and Camerinum come ἐφεξῆς, 'after', Ravenna (5. 2. 10, 227C). In an extreme and paradoxical example, the coastline of the Bay of Naples presents to the maritime viewer the appearance of a single city with no boundaries, when in fact it is a succession of communities, which Strabo enumerates.[25]

In other cases we can clearly see that Strabo imagines a traveller, or describes a journey which can be, or has been made, sometimes by Strabo himself. Thus he writes of a traveller heading across Cisalpine Gaul in the direction of the Cottian Alps; for this individual Ticinum is beyond Placentia, going 'to the boundaries of the land of Cottius'). Again, in recapping his description of western Italy as far as Latium, he says ἀρξάμενοι … ὑπερβάντες … ἐπήλθομεν … ἐπανιόντες, δηλώσομεν ('beginning … passing over … we traversed … returning, we shall make clear').[26] In Umbria he gives the distance for someone travelling the Via Flaminia from Ariminum towards Rome, as far as Ocriculum.[27] This process of describing a defined, programmatic movement, whether real or conceptual, is what Strabo, for example at 5. 2. 1, 218C, calls *periegēsis*.

Roads, in fact, are often used by Strabo as a means of structuring his account of the interior, in a narrative of spatial succession.[28] Thus some towns in the south are listed along the mule-road from Brundisium to Beneventum, and along the Via Appia via

[23] 5. 2. 10, 228C, ἐφεξῆς ('next in order'), referring to Sabinum; 5. 3.2, 228C, ἑξῆς δ᾽ ἡ Λατίνη ('and next in order Latium'); 5. 4. 2, 240C, Picenum is μετὰ ('after') the cities of the Umbrians between Ariminum and Ancona; 5. 4. 3, 242C: Campania and the Samnite country come after Latium.
[24] 4. 6. 6, 204C.
[25] 5. 4. 8, 247C.
[26] 5. 1. 11, 217C.
[27] 5. 2. 10, 227C.
[28] *Cf*. Coarelli 1988: 78-84.

Taras. Venusia, on this last route, is ἐν μεθορίοις Σαυνιτῶν καὶ Λευκανῶν ('in the border country of the Samnites and the Lucanians'); Strabo then goes on to list the towns on the Appian Way from Caudium to Sinuessa; he also tells us of a third (longer) road from Rhegion through Bruttian, Lucanian and Samnite country to Campania, where it joins the Via Appia.[29] In Latium, proceeding along the Via Latina, settlements are listed in order moving away from Rome, with rivers noted as flowing past each settlement, a feature which Strabo uses more than once for the purposes of cross-referencing. Similarly he lists settlements along the Via Valeria and the Via Appia.[30]

Indeed, Strabo sees roads as articulating his treatment of Latium in more complex ways than by succession. We see from 5. 3. 9, 236C, the close inter-relation of notable roads, which are 'spread across' Latium, and the cities of the region. Strabo uses the roads to organise the territory lying *between* them into easily manageable units for description. Thus he lists cities 'on each side' of the Via Latina, starting with those between the Latina and the Appia, going on to those between the Latina and the Via Valeria.[31] The Via Flaminia also structures one axis of description in Umbria, as well as allowing Strabo (again) to group together another set of communities on the right and left sides of the road.[32]

Strabo perceives, at least in some parts of his account, a structural interaction between roads and cities. This is not something accessible only to the eye of the geographer. Roads are not simply passive vectors: they can be active agents in change, especially population change. Strabo remarks on this aspect of the roads in the Tiber valley, which he sees as having driven population change. Indeed, he says that the roads have been more potent in this regard that any *politikon sustēma* (political organisation). This in turn opens up the possibility of changes and movements taking place in Italy, shaping its appearance and its population, with which the slower movement of *politika sustēmata* and their boundaries cannot keep up.[33]

---

[29] 6. 3. 7, 282-3C.
[30] Via Latina: 5. 3. 9, 237C; Via Valeria: 5. 3. 11. 238C.
[31] 5. 3. 10, 237-8C; *cf.* 5. 3. 12. 239C, locations on either side of the Via Appia.
[32] 5. 2. 10, 227C.
[33] 5. 2. 10, 227C.

Travel by land, especially by road, is complemented by travel by sea, which in geographical literature had been used since Pseudo-Skylax in the fourth century to give accounts of foreign coasts useful for sailors. This tradition of the *periplous*, 'sailing around', was to be taken up by a number of writers, and in the case of Italy was used, importantly, by Varro, and passed on by him to Pliny. It is the sole technique common to all the parts of Strabo's account of Italy, and one which he refers to by the term *paraplous* and its cognates. The centrality of the *paraplous* to Strabo's methodology is clear. Already in trying to reconcile predecessors' schematic descriptions of Italy (which envisaged it as a triangle) with the geographical reality, Strabo had recourse to the *paraplous*, as the basis of experiential adjustments to the geometrical shapes proposed for the peninsula.[34] More concretely, these *paraplous* journeys work on the principle of succession, as do many of the accounts of the interior; again, they seem to be a mix of imagined or putative journeys, and ones actually made by Strabo himself, as in his account of parts of the Etruscan coast.

So, for example, Cosa is 'after' Populonia in the *paraplous* (παραπλέουσι), and Strabo goes on to list the coastal communities 'travelling from' Cosa. Further on Strabo follows the coast of Latium: Antium comes next after Ostia, Lavinium is in between them (Laurentum, which follows, is actually closer to Ostia than Lavinium), and 'beyond' Lavinium, Ardea, and so on.[35] Intervals in the journey south from the river Silarus, around the 'toe' of the 'boot' and up to the 'instep' are clearly marked and distances between them given.[36] Moving from the Iapyges, Strabo tells us that 'above these' to the north are the Peucetii and the Daunians. On the journey by sea from Taras to Brundisium the towns are listed.[37] 'After' the Daunians, the *paraplous* continues to the Frentani and Buca, where he links back to his earlier discussion of the coast to the north in book 5.[38]

If the use of the coastal *paraplous* is a constant, the treatment of the interior is differential: Strabo adopts varying treatments from region to region. Thus while

[34] 5. 1. 2, 210C.
[35] Although neither Lavinium nor Ardea is in fact on the coast.
[36] 6. 1. 1, 253C; 6. 1. 4, 254C; 6. 1. 13, 262C; 6. 1. 14, 264C.
[37] 5. 2. 8, 225C (Cosan coast); 5. 3. 5, 232C - 5. 3. 6, 234C (Latium); 6. 1. 10, 261C ('toe' of Italy to Kroton); 6. 3. 1, 277C (Peucetians and Daunians); 6. 3. 5, 281-2C (Taras to Brundisium); *cf.* 5. 4. 3-9: the Campanian coast.
[38] 6. 3. 11, 185C.

roads help to structure some of this treatment of the interior, this is by no means universal, and is used mainly for more urbanised regions (Latium, Umbria, Etruria), and not even for all of those. Elsewhere the road network is not strongly associated with urban centres, or does not exist in a form which Strabo can use. In its absence Strabo has recourse to a number of expedients, with varying success. The relative positions of the Cisalpine and Venetic settlements are rarely given, and this is one of the hardest parts of the geography to map in the mind's eye while reading, as there seems to be no one organising principle, and a lot of economic or historical material is woven in. The treatment of the Cispadana is better structured, starting from the main settlements, and then working along the Via Aemilia for the lesser settlements, and along other roads heading north and north-west; there are also more measurements in this section than for Transpadana, all packed into a short section, in stades and miles.[39]

In Etruria the treatment of the inland towns sometimes has no discernible order; at one point he seems to be moving (mainly) along the Via Cassia from north to south (from Arretium to Sutrium; the list of *polichnai* which follows, however (Blera, Ferentinum, Falerii, Faliscum, Nepet and Statonia) seems to be drawn from a Roman list, since, transposed into Latin, the towns form an alphabetical list, which they do not in Greek.[40] Equally the treatment of the Sabines has no clear organising principle.[41] Strabo begins his discussion of Campania 'in the interior' with the *mētropolis*, Capua, from where his account fans out along the Appian Way, and along the region's rivers, to list other cities. Again, beyond the centrality of Capua and some use of the Appia, which ran through the city, there is no real organising principle at work here.[42] The account of the Bruttians in sequentially arranged from north to south, but moves uneasily between the coast and the hinterland.[43] This oscillation between coast and inland may be a function of one way in which Strabo does try with some regularity to tie the two together, something which reflects the

[39] 5. 1. 11, 216-17C (Cispadana).
[40] 5. 2.9, 226C. Bispham 2007a: 51-2, where I argued that this list is not from Agrippa, but from an earlier, post Social War source. Pasquinucci 1988: 54-5 notes that while Strabo does not explicitly name any of the Etruscan roads, they seem to be the only recurrent structuring thread in the account of Etruria.
[41] 5. 3. 1, 228C.
[42] 5. 4. 10, 248-9C.
[43] 6. 1. 5, 256-7C.

realities of local economies and geopolitics, rather than impulses to geographical tidiness. This is the noting of settlements on the coast which are *emporia*, ports or *entrepôts* of inland communities. Thus, to take a few examples: Salapia is located nearby the *emporion* of Canusium on the Aufidus, and is itself said to be the *emporion* of Arpi. Further north Aternon is a shared port for the Paeligni and Marrucini.[44]

Time, Space and Labile Geographies

So much for a some of Strabo's first principles, and the assumptions and techniques which structure his account. As I hope will become clear, this will prove not (only) to be a statement of the banal, but will be useful in understanding how Strabo approached the topic of boundaries, and will help to account for some, but not all, of the problems we face in his account, problems with which he was often well aware that he was grappling.

The foregoing dealt with space, but we should also be concerned about Strabo's handling of time, and its imbrication with his treatment of space. As Clarke has shown, the interrelationship of the temporal and the spatial are crucial for understanding Strabo's account.[45] He is acutely aware of Italy as formed of layered successions of both places and peoples, and that he has a duty to write about some historical succession, as well as dealing with spatial succession. As he himself says: the geographer must speak of the past sometimes, as well as 'things as they now are'.[46]

Some of these peoples were actually fossils in Strabo's account: the Faliscans are perhaps the most striking example, together with vanished *ethnē* of the south, like the Oinotrians. In other cases Strabo recognises that he is talking about the territory of groups which have been actively exterminated, like some of the Celtic tribes in

[44] 6. 3. 9, 283C (Apulia); 5. 4. 2, 241C (Aternon).
[45] Clarke, *Between Geography and History. Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World* 193-336.
[46] 6. 1. 2, 253C.

Cisalpine Gaul. And while Strabo is alive to the *politika sustēmata* of the various Italian peoples (and to the demise of the *koinon sustēma* as being implicated in the dissolution of historical political entities – see below), it is also the case that none of them had any political agency at the time he was writing, and indeed none of them had done so for a century at least.[47] It is, then, striking, that *ethne* are Strabo's preferred unit of analysis, and that he used them as his first-level tool for organising Italy. They are more often (but not exclusively) spoken as peoples than as territories. Various explanations can be offered for this: the Augustan interest in *origines*, deep cultural nostalgia in support of a new mythic discourse of identities; the related survival of these ethnic units as bearers of meaning and identity in the Augustan imaginary; and Strabo's dependence on his sources, which contribute to a kind of temporal universality, with past and present co-existing in the spatial framework. Thus the view of the peninsula becomes an aggregate of separate peoples over time, but sometimes expressed as a current political and social reality.[48]

The very fact that these apparently obsolescent ethnic units are not only his units of analysis, but can be measured, quantified and characterised, is important. Gaul within the Alps, is seen, before the Roman conquest, as ethnically homogeneous, to be distinguished from the territory of the Veneti and the Ligurians.[49] Again, Strabo defines the country of the Sabini as having a maximum extent from the Tiber and Nomentum 'as far as the Vestini (5. 3. 1, 228C). One can accept that the Sabines were so central to the Roman imaginary as to be indispensible in a treatment like Strabo's, but the same is *not* true of the Vestini. But even with regard to the Sabines, we may note that Strabo himself is aware of a degree of incongruity in using the political or ethnic groupings of the past as units of analysis. He feels obliged to account for their survival, which he attributes to their courage and other virtues: τὴν δ᾽ ἀρχαιότητα τεκμήριον ἄν τις ποιήσαιτο ἀνδρείας καὶ τῆς ἄλλης ἀρετῆς ἀφ᾽ ἧς ἀντέσχον μέχρι πρὸς τὸν παρόντα χρόνον ('One could make their old-fashioned ways a proof their courage and their other virtues, because of which they have endured to the present time').

[47] For the *koinon sustēma* in relation to the Lucanians, see Bispham 2014a: 320-1, 327.
[48] For the survival in the late Republic and early empire of Italian ethnic identities and cultural traits: Bradley 2007: 306-19; *cf.* Farney 2007.
[49] 5.1. 3, 211C.

All of this complicates the way Strabos think about boundaries. We have already seen that the treatment of Italy is differential in modality and in quality. Broadly speaking, in the interior, the fewer roads and towns there are, and the harder it is to find clear-cut geographical or topological reference points, the less well articulated and more vague the description becomes. Thus, at the end of 5. 3. 10, 238C, the narrative moves from Venafrum to Allifae and Aesernia. Venafrum is tied to the description of towns on either side of the Via Latina, although not on the Latina itself. For Strabo Venafrum is Campanian and not Samnite, whereas the others are Samnite, but no boundaries are mentioned; the transition from the area of Venafrum to that of Allifae or Aesernia is left unexplained in geographical terms, and there is no reflection of the fact that after leaving Venafrum the traveller must either turn north up the Volturnus valley to Aesernia, or south-east to Allifae. Few boundaries are mentioned when we follow the Via Valeria away from Rome (5. 3. 11, 238C), going towards the territory of the Marsi and Paeligni, although later on, Strabo says that Alba Fucens, the farthest inland of the city of Latium in his classification, is ὁμοροῦσα ('bordering on') the Marsi; and the Fucine Lake is used by the Marsi and all the 'neighbouring people'.[50] The relative positions of the Central Italian peoples are quite vague – for example not all of them have a coastline as Strabo seems to think.[51] One of the few detailed points is the note that Aternon, a little city on the coast, is 'on the border' with the territory of the Picentes, and shares a name with the river which separates (διορίζοντι) the Vestinian and Marrucinian country (just as the Sagrus – the modern Sangro – separates the Paeligni from the Frentani); further south the territory of Buca borders on (ὅμορον) that of Teanum Apulum. Again, the Bruttii hold the interior above Lokroi, but no boundary is given.[52] Even in Iapygia the towns of the interior are handled in no special order.[53]

In the case of the Samnites and central Italy, Strabo to some extent fills out the account with historical excursus, as he is prone to do throughout the work, but here it may be more by way of compensation for the lack of geographical specificity. For

[50] 5. 3. 13, 240C.
[51] 5. 4. 2, 241 – 242C; on the description of these peoples see also Pasquinucci 1988: 55, 57-8.
[52] 6. 1. 9, 261C.
[53] 6. 3. 6, 282C.

central Italy, for example, he gives an overview of the Marsci War; he also gives a historical review of Samnite decline and origins (reversing the expected order). He then says 'next are the Hirpini, they too being Samnites' (5. 4. 12, 250C); they συνάπτουσι ('border on') the Leukanoi of the interior.[54] Similarly the location of the Picentinoi deported from Picenum to the gulf of Poseidonia (the *ager Picentinus*) is 'after Campania and the Samnite country as far as the Frentani on the Tyrrhenian sea'. He then adds that it extends as far as the river Silaris, and is 120 stades from Pompeii; it also separates 'archaian Kampanian (or 'Kanian' in one MS)' from Lucania. Note that the first part of the description is so vague as to be almost pointless, and it is only when Strabo specifies the relation to a river (and the debouching of rivers is the concern of the *paraplous*) and the distance from the coastal city of Pompeii, in a highly urbanised zone, that he really succeeds in anchoring the area geographically.[55] The net effect of all this is a differential level of empiricism with regards to frontiers: some parts of Italy have, in Strabo's account, fuzzier and more labile borders than others, with less certainty as to where they are, and how they relate to other peoples and to geographical features.

An additional factor promoting uncertainty about frontiers and boundaries is that they are also mobile along the temporal axis, and this, as we saw, is very important to Strabo. And mobility along the temporal axis is interleaved with mobility along the spatial axis; succession of *ethnē* is indissociable from spatial succession. Settlements in Strabo's world do not often move, but ethnic boundaries do, and so towns change their identity and place with respect to those boundaries. Thus in his account of Latium Strabo says that it now includes what cities 'of what was not Latium', by which he means settlements of the Aequi, Volsci, Hernini and Rutuli and other συστήματα **(**'communities', 'polities', or perhaps 'ethnic groups'**)**. In an earlier period had Latium extended only to Circei; later there was also an inland extension

[54] 5. 4. 12, 250C. For the physical metaphor of 'touching' for the territories of cities and people: 5. 3. 2, 230C (early Rome); 5. 1. 11, 217C (the Rubicon and the territory of Ariminum); 5. 2. 1, 219C, (the territory of the Sabines and the Apennines which are inhabited by the Vestini, Paeligni and Marsi; 5. 3. 9, 237C (Cales and the territory of Casilinum). For the same usage in a geographical context, *cf. e.g.* Pol., 4. 70. 3 (Arkadia).
[55] 5. 4. 13, 251C; 6. 1. 1, 252C.

towards Campania, and in the direction of the Samnites, Paeligni and others who inhabit the Apennines.[56]

The most famous case of a mobile boundary in the context of a shifting historical identity is that of Italy itself. As is well known, the name and location of Italy are egregiously mobile. Strabo tells us that 'old' Italy[57] extended only from the toe of the 'boot' to the Gulfs of Taras and Poseidonia. At 6. 1. 4, 254-5C, he cites Antiochos as his source for this area as being Italy, specifically the land from the river Laos to Rhegion, and thence from Rhegion to Metapontion; but Tarantine territory, ἡ συνεχὴς τῷ Μεταποντίῳ ἐστίν ('which is contiguous with the territory of Metaponion'), is outside Italy – according to Antiochos from this point onwards the Iapygians lived. But at an even earlier period, we are told, those called 'Italians' and 'Oinotrians' had lived only within the isthmus bounded by the seas and (roughly) the 160 *stadia* line imagined between the Hipponiate and Skulletic gulfs.[58] Subsequently the name Italy was extended, and thus the other boundary ('the boundary of Italy at that time'), came to be that with Iapygia, which was also the boundary about which a resolution was reached in a territorial war between Taras and Metapontion.[59] Subsequently, with a linguistic turn which appears at first sight to reflect the process of the Roman conquest, Strabo says that, following its initial application to the south of the peninsula, Italy 'prevailed' (ἐπικρατῆσαν), and its name advanced to the Alps, including not only Liguria, which extends 'from the Tyrrhenian boundaries' to the Varus river, but also Istria as far as Pola.[60]

However, things are not quite so simple. Strabo notes that the first Italians extended the name to their neighbours incrementally in a period until the *epikrateia* ('dominance') of the Romans.[61] The Roman conquest, in Strabo's view spasmodically continued this first (not clearly defined) process, but was not the same as it. The Romans gave *isopoliteia* (equal political rights, that is, citizenship) to the

[56] 5. 3. 2, 228-9C; 5. 3. 4, 231C. See also Coarelli 1988: 84-6.
[57] For the term see *e.g.* 6. 3. 1, 277C, *cf.* 5. 1. 1, 209C.
[58] *Cf.* 6. 1. 10, 261C; 6. 1. 15, 265C. On Oinotrians see Bispham 2014a: 315-21.
[59] 6. 1. 15, 265C, 6. 3. 1, 277C.
[60] 5. 1. 1, 209C, *cf.* 5. 1 9, 215C; Harris 2007 on the historical development of the name Italy; on the Roman appropriation of the name Italia, Bispham 2007b: 53-73.
[61] 5. 1. 1, 210C.

Italiōtai (Italians), which did not, however, negate their identity (or identities) as Italians. We are entitled to infer this from his explicit statement that subsequent to that point (*i.e.* the Social War), the Romans also gave the citizenship to the Cisalpine Gauls and Veneti, and as a result called them *both Italiōtai and Rhomaioi*.[62] This is mainly, but not exclusively, a question of being able to maintain two identities simultaneously. It is also the case that, at least in the north of Italy, Romans have, he says, become mixed with Etruscans and Umbrians, and replenished the stock of the latter.[63] In these cases too, then, there are Romans who are also Etruscans, Umbrians, Veneti, Ligures or Insubres.

The 'boundary' of Cisalpine Gaul, 'towards' the rest of Italy, was once constituted by, Strabo says, the Tyrrhenian Apennines and the river Aesis (near mount Cingulum, Sentinum and the Metaurus river and Fanum Fortunae); subsequently the latter was replaced by the Rubicon.[64] Importantly he goes on: καίπερ μετατιθέντων πολλάκις τῶν ἡγεμόνων ('even though the rulers often changed it'): the Aesis was replaced as the boundary by the Rubicon at a later date. These boundaries, whether at the Aesis or the Rubicon, formally excluded Ravenna from being classified as a part of Umbria (Ravenna was north of the Rubicon). Since the triumviral period Italy has been extended to the Alps, and as a consequence it is easier for Strabo to insist on including Ravenna in Umbria, as 'all agree' since the old boundaries can 'be left alone'. The extension of the Roman citizenship, and of Italy, paradoxically restores and strengthens the unity of Umbria.[65]

We have already noted that Strabo used the Silaris river as the boundary between the *ager Picentinus* and Lucania (and for that matter he added that it was the boundary of the 'ancient Campania'). Whatever Strabo meant by 'ancient Campania', we are reminded that movement along the temporal axis, as *ethnē* rise and fall, expand and contract over time, will be matched by movement along the spatial axis, of which the movement of boundaries constitutes the strongest reflex. This has interesting

[62] 5. 1. 1, 210C.
[63] 5. 1. 10, 216C.
[64] 5. 1. 11, 217C; 5. 2. 10, 227C (περὶ γὰρ τούτους τοὺς τόπους ἐστὶ τὰ ὅρια τῆς Ἰταλίας τῆς πρότερον καὶ τῆς Κελτικῆς κατὰ τὸ πρὸς τῇ θαλάττῃ ταύτῃ μέρος ('around these places is the boundary of Italy, the former one, and of Gaul, on the part near to this sea').
[65] 5.2. 10, 227C; for the reference of 'all' here see Radt 2007: 180, 16.

implications for rivers as boundaries. The Aesis and the Rubicon (see below), because they constituted strong administrative boundaries (and ritual ones, linked to the validity of certain auspices), anchored in the power of the Roman *res publica* over *terra Italia*, acted to exclude Ravenna from Umbria until the boundary moved north. Thus the interests of the hegemonic power could be said to have made the dividing function of the river prevail over the integrative possibilities of the Umbrian *ethnos* (at least in the geographical gaze). Elsewhere, in cases where the Romans had less at stake in the symbolism of particular rivers, it could be the case that the boundary moved, and one river (or some other feature) was substituted for another as a boundary (and, indeed, the Aesis was replaced by the Rubicon as the frontier of Roman Italy).

An interesting example is Strabo's treatment of the Makras river in northern Etruria. Strabo writes, at 5. 2. 5, 222C, that the river has been commonly used as a boundary: μεταξὺ δὲ Λούνης καὶ Πίσης ὁ Μάκρας ἐστὶ χωρίον, ᾧ πέρατι τῆς Τυρρηνίας καὶ τῆς Λιγυστικῆς κέχρηνται τῶν συγγραφέων πολλοί: 'between … is the Makras, which many of the historians have used as the boundary between Etruria and Liguria'.[66] The phrasing is interesting, as it differs in a revealing way from Strabo's normal usage, where river *x* is the boundary between *y* and *z*. In this usage the implication is that agency about the choice (or recognition) of a boundary lies with the two neighbouring peoples (or cities), who have accepted, or negotiated, that the boundary should run along that course (or, as sometimes happened, have accepted arbitration of a third party); or where two parties have fought, and the victor has imposed a new boundary on the defeated as the result of the victory. In all cases the implication is that there is local agency in determining boundaries, whether local or delegated. Even in the case where the delegation is to a hegemonic power like Rome, the outcome, as in the arbitration between Genua and her neighbours preserved in the *sententia Minuciorum*, is often based on observation of the local situation, and where it is not the implication is often that such arbitration is scandalous and aberrant.[67] But in the case of the Makras, Strabo places the agency

[66] *Cf*. Livy, 39. 32; 40. 41; Ptol., *Geogr*. 3. 1. 3; Pliny, *HN* 3. 7f. (who has it as the northerm boundary of Augustus' *Regio VII*); see also Pasquinucci 1998: 54; Bourdin, *Les peuples de l'Italie préromaines* 449-52.
[67] *Sententia Minuciorum*: *ILLRP* 517; on such arbitrations in Italy see Bispham 2014b.

elsewhere: in the hands of historians (among whom we should probably include geographical writers). There is a clear implication that boundaries are set by external judges, who have certainly not been asked by any local parties to set them.

Now, behind that agency may lurk different scenarios, to be sure, and some of them are worth unpacking. At one end of the spectrum we might imagine that the agency of the historians simply lies in an investigation of the possibilities, either directly on the ground, or indirectly in the work of predecessors (much as Strabo says he works when giving distances, above). At the other end of the spectrum the historian or geographer simply imposes what he thinks ought to be the boundary. This might end up reflecting reality (*e.g.* Etruscans do live on one side of the Tiber and not on the other), but it might reflect the triumph of convenience and genre over the lived reality. Above all, the *periplous* practitioner needs, for the purposes of his work, clearly recognisable features (headlands, islands, mountains, rivers) to articulate his work, and the need for this articulation may mean that ethnic or other groups are bundled into a Prokrustean bed, and either cut up or stretched to suit the needs of the alien sailing by. For current purposes I am going to assume that in many cases the truth lies somewhere in between, with the added complication that by the time we get Strabo's text, both descriptions which tried to capture the reality of ethnic situations and those which sought to squeeze realities into literary or culturally-predetermined matrices have been themselves filtered by subsequent recycling, reinterpretation and debate. As we shall see, however, there are echoes in Strabo's own text of the recuperation of indigenous viewpoints.

Competing Gazes and Elusive Boundaries

The post-colonial turn has led many scholars, in the course of a quite proper reassessment of the discourses surrounding power and imperialism, to be critical of the tendency of hegemonic Greek and Roman writers to simply over-write the cultural coding of indigenous peoples in a self-serving and self-satisfied way. Starting from this viewpoint is problematic for two reasons. We tend to lament the 'genocidal' removal of the indigenous voice, as if what it could have told us would somehow be

true simply because it is not what the horrible Greeks and Romans said. Yet a moment's reflection might make us consider that indigenes could be equally self-serving and mendacious, if we had the fortune to access their viewpoint, which might turn out not to be simply that of plucky 'resisters' of Greek or Roman domination! The second problem is that since we know that most of our sources have in fact over-written indigenous viewpoints, we tend to assume that they did so consciously, systematically and prejudicially, and thus tend not to excuse ourselves from care and objectivity in keeping open the possibility that some indigenous viewpoints are in fact embedded at points in those texts.

There are some indications that Strabo was aware of, and actively interested in, some of what the indigenous voice had to say. And yet what does it mean to speak of the 'indigenous voice', other than 'not Greek / Roman'? Clearly there are a range of possibilities, and a range of modalities by which what indigenes said or thought might find a way into Greco-Roman texts. Some ancient writers, on the model often accepted for Herodotos, might have learnt from direct questioning of locals, whether traders, priests or in some other capacity. This might have been done by an interpreter; or the visiting enquirer, or the indigenes, or both, might have been bi- or tri-lingual (as it seems Ennius was), allowing for a shared language to be used, at least to an extent. All this might make for a bewildering range of perspectives and modes of communication, and a significantly divergent range of answers to questions like: 'who lives on the other side of the river / mountain?'; 'are they your people?'; 'how far in this direction must I go before I encounter strangers?' and so on. Further, how far were either travellers from outside or locals able to capture the granular detail of social realities? How likely is it that, having been told that there were Etruscans on one side of the Tiber and Umbrians on the other, a traveller would capture the strong Etruscan imprint on some communities very close to the Umbrian side of the river, such as Tuder?

There ought to have been a good deal of agreement about where a community's boundaries lay, but much less about how to define the edges of a larger ethnically constituted group, which, as we have seen, could have offered one of a number of nested identities available, further complicating the situation to be described. What is hard to imagine is that wider ethnic groupings were self-identifying in a stable way at

a political level. Who, after all, were the Lucanians or Samnites or Etruscans who would say 'this is where 'our territory' stops or starts'? There was no stable over-arching political entity in any of these cases; the institutional expressions of these ethnic units were fluctuating and flexible entities. It is not clear that they had the sort of political self-consciousness of, say, the Aitolian *koinon* in Hellenistic Greece, which extended *isopoliteia* to those who joined it in order to join the protection racket which it operated.[68] In other words, whatever the XII Etruscan peoples were, it is hardly likely that they concerned themselves with, or had strong views on, the 'boundaries' of 'Etruria'.

If so, how then could one get 'local' information helpful to delimiting larger ethnic units, themselves essential building blocks for creating a workable picture of the *oikoumenē*? Faced by a range of local 'emic' assessments which were not entirely congruent, what level, and what kind, of etic input are required to identify a boundary? And where does 'identification' on the basis of evidence stop, and 'choosing' to suit one's own agenda(s) begin? These are impossible questions to answer but I think we need to be aware of them in thinking about how Strabo goes about describing boundaries. As noted, he is the heir to an already developed and bifurcating tradition, although this (discussion of the Makras) is one of the first points in his Italian account that he lets us glimpse the historical depths which underlie its composition, the accreted, overlaid views of what could constitute the point when one area or group stopped and another started. And that stratigraphy of judgements, as we have seen, reflects (or even causes) the movement of boundaries.

One way of thinking about how Strabo's predecessors came to agree about the Makras as the boundary of Etruria may be to remember that in some cases the frontiers between cities are also the frontiers between *ethne*. In other words, did the Makras represent the point beyond which there were no more self-identifying Etruscan communities; or beyond which there were no more communities which seemed to outsiders to have Etruscan characteristics; or both? Something like this has happened in the case of Ravenna as an Umbrian community: we should accept that

[68] Aitolian *isopoliteia*: for example Chios: *SEG* ii.258, xviii.245 = Austin^2 64; 247/6 B.C.

Umbria extends as far as Ravenna, *since* Umbrians inhabit the city.[69] A similar process of classification underlies the marking of other ethnic boundaries. At 5. 1. 8, 214C, we read that Aquileia is 'outside … the boundaries of the Veneti'. The *polis* of Sinuessa marks the southern extension of Latium on the coast; inland, on the Via Latina, Casinum is the 'last (city) of the Latini'.[70] Similarly, the Etruscan coastline is defined as running from Luna to Ostia.[71] In the transition from Lucanian to Bruttian territory, Laos is the last of the Lucanian cities; again, '(moving) from' Laos the first city of the Bruttians is Temesa.[72] In the 'heel' of Italy, Baris / Veretum lies 'on the boundaries of Sallentine territory'.[73] Yet as to what gave a place a cultural cohesion, we may be leaning in general more towards the etic than the emic perspective. One thing which made an outside observer ascribe a particular kind of cultural cohesion and identity to a group was, in Strabo's mind, the *koinon sustēma*, the 'shared community', 'common structure' or 'common organisation', which seems to be cultural as well as political. At 6. 1. 2, 253-4C, writing of Lucanians, Bruttians and Samnites, Strabo says:

οὕτω δ᾽ εἰσὶ κεκακωμένοι τελέως οὗτοι καὶ Βρέττιοι καὶ αὐτοὶ Σαυνῖται οἱ τούτων ἀρχηγέται, ὥστε καὶ διορίσαι χαλεπὸν τὰς κατοικίας αὐτῶν: αἴτιον δ᾽ ὅτι οὐδὲν ἔτι σύστημα κοινὸν τῶν ἐθνῶν ἑκάστου συμμένει, τά τε ἔθη διαλέκτων τε καὶ ὁπλισμοῦ καὶ ἐσθῆτος καὶ τῶν παραπλησίων ἐκλέλοιπεν, ἄλλως τε ἄδοξοι παντάπασίν εἰσιν αἱ καθ᾽ ἕκαστα καὶ ἐν μέρει κατοικίαι.

The people (the Lucanians) are so absolutely degenerated, they themselves and the Bruttians and the Samnites themselves, their founders, that it is difficult to distinguish their settlements; the reason is that no common organisation of the individual *ethne* remains, and their customs in respect of dialects and armour and dress and similar things have come to an end, and in any case their settlements, in whole and in part, are utterly obscure.

This lack of clarity, the inability to separate, as an external observer, one from the other, means that he treats the Lucanians of the interior and their Samnite and Bruttian neighbours *koinōs*, although he also says 'I think' that Venusia and the cities beyond

[69] 5. 2. 10, 227C.
[70] 5. 2. 1, 219C; 5. 3. 4, 231C; 5. 3. 6, 233C; 5. 3. 9, 237C.
[71] 5. 2. 5, 222C.
[72] Laos: 6. 1. 1, 253C, also noting that it is a colony of Sybaris, reflecting the polyhedric nature of identity in the historical perspective. *Cf.* Temesa (founded by the Ausones): 6.1.5, 255C; but note that at 5. 3. 6233C, Strabo says that the Ausones never settled this far south.
[73] 6. 3. 5, 281-2C.

it heading to Campania are Samnite (6. 1. 3, 254C). We may doubt whether the local communities were in quite such a state of *aporia* when it came to their identity. We may note, in passing, that Strabo is not always willing to follow his subjects down ethnic rabbit-holes. For instance, while listing many of the towns of what we call Latium Adiectum, he notes that they lie in the territory of the Hernici, the Aequi and the Volsci, although they were all founded by the Romans, a questionable claim.

Returning to the Makras, Strabo also implies, that while 'many' historians placed the boundary there, there were a few who disagreed with that identification. Indeed he implies that he disagrees himself, since he places Luna north of the Makras, but includes it in Etruria.[74] Nor is this the only point when history and geography coincide to problematise a boundary. When trying to class settlements on the Latin way we meet an analogous set of difficulties. Casinum is the last of the Latin settlements, he says (5. 3. 9, 237C); Teanum, which comes after it, as the epithet Sidicinum shows, belongs to a different *ethnos*. Strabo identifies the Sidicini, in a somewhat heterodox move, as 'Oskoi', a sub-tribe of the Campanians, who have disappeared. For that reason, it can also be classed ('one might say') as part of Campania (and indeed he does list it within Campania at 5. 4. 11, 249C!), as could the city immediately after it, Cales. It seems Strabo is unaware that Cales was once a Latin colony, and thus culturally closer to Latium than the Oscan-speaking parts of Campania.[75] The difficulty of locating cities with respect to a boundary is noteworthy. So too is the way in which history comes to the rescue here, allowing emic and etic judgements to meet each other half-way.

Nor is this the only evidence that Strabo was sensitive to emic forms of evidence: in a remarkable passage on Neapolis, discussing the demographic stratigraphy of the city, he cites, as evidence for the admission of 'Kampanoi' to the city, the lists of

[74] Bispham 2007a: 49, in retrospect, was hasty to claim that this passage shows that Strabo's northern boundary was at the Makras too. In any case, the modern river Magra debouches just north of Luna.
[75] Elsewhere, depending on the part of the peninsula under discussion, Strabo is quite well informed on Roman colonization, although he does not trouble to sift out colonial foundations from the former allied cities: 5. 3. 10, 237C. There are few references to colonization in southern Italy: 6. 1. 13, 263C, Copia Thurii; 6. 3. 4, 281C: Tarentum; by contrast, at 5. 1. 1, 210C, he stresses the number and quality of the Cisalpine colonies; *cf.* 5. 1. 8, 214C, on Aquileia; he discusses the scale of Cispadane colonization: 5. 1. 10, 216C; mentions Ariminum and Ravenna as Roman colonies: 5. 1. 11, 217C; and notes Roman colonies in inland Etruria: 5. 2. 9, 226C.

demarchs, and the mixed names therein, Greek and non-Greek.[76] He also notes the survival of Greek cultural elements, 'even though they are Romans'; and at 6. 1. 2, 253C, says some parts of Greek Italy were taken by the Campanians, 'and by these in name, but in truth by the Romans; for these too have become Romans'.[77] Capitulum is the *polichnē* of the Hernici, but here again, as with Teanum Sidicinum, the epithet Hernicum often given to the city is probably giving Strabo a steer. He knows the ethnogenesis story of the Picentes, following a woodpecker to Picenum; the Greek origins of Ancona; and the 'Tyrrhenian' origins of Cupra.[78] He registers disagreement over the presence of Opikoi and Ausones in Campania (as argued between Antiochos and Polybios) and the view of 'others', who think that the Osci drove out the Opikoi and Ausones; here he also discusses the fate of the Etruscans in Campania, and of the Samnites who were ejected by the Romans.[79] He also discusses the antiquity of Cumae, and its takeover by the Kampanoi; and notes how Herculaneum and Pompeii have been held in turn by Osci, Tyrrhenoi, Pelasgi, then by the Samnites, who were themselves were thrown out. We are told about the succession of occupants of Pithekoussai; and at Poseidonia / Paestum.[80] And at 6. 1. 6, 257C, he tells us of the succession of inhabitants of the 'toe of the boot', according to Antiochos, who has the Sikels and Morgetes expelled by the Oinotrians.[81]

Now much of this detail comes from Greek sources, and Greek sources with an agenda: Antiochos, for example, by recording the waves of expulsions from Italy conducted by indigenes before the Greeks arrived, provided a historical 'precedent' for Greek expulsions of natives, showing that the Greeks simply carried on where the natives left off in a 'natural' historical sequence. Some of it, however, such as the presence (and fate) of the Samnites in Campania, the stories of Sabellian ethnogenesis, and the Etruscan origins of Cupra, look to be more likely to reflect an indigenous voice, albeit with some degree of refraction. Equally, the interest of

[76] 5. 4. 7, 246C.
[77] Here he implies a difference with respect to the Lucanians and others, who also took territory away from the Greeks; but at 6. 1. 3, 254C, however, he says of the Lucanians 'now they are Romans'.
[78] 5. 4. 2, 240C (Picentes); Ancona: 5. 4. 2, 241C (*ibid*. for Cupra).
[79] 5. 4. 3, 242C; at 5. 3. 6, 232-3C he claims that Ausones and Osci both have a share in Campania; he also notes the dialect of the latter survives.
[80] 5. 4. 4, 243C; *cf*. 5. 4. 8, 247C; 5. 4. 9, 247-8C; 5. 4. 13, 251C.
[81] *Cf*. 6. 1. 11, 262C – 6. 1. 15, 265C for the more expansive economy of treatment for Magna Graecia, even of the lost Achaian *poleis*.

Daunians (and Adriatic peoples generally) in Diomedes must reflect both Greek and indigene views of themselves.[82]

In other cases an interest in non-Greek perspectives is yet closer to the surface. Writing of the *paraplous* of the Adriatic coast of Italy, Strabo gives the distance from the Aesis to Castrum (800 stades), and then that (490 stades) from the Picentes to the Apulians, 'whom the Greeks call Daunians'.[83] He tells us that the Greeks call Iapygia also Messapia; but that the *epichōrioi* ('the locals') call those who live to the south Salentini, and those to the north Calabri; 'above these' to the north are the Peucetii, and those whom the Greeks call Daunians; but the *epichōrioi* call the whole of the country north of the Calabri 'Apulia'.[84] It is not just that Greeks and indigenes have different names for places and peoples, and that these differences lead to overlap, but that Greeks and indigenes are not always talking about the same category: there is not Greek equivalent for Salentini or Calabri, they are just Messapian or Iapygian, which are interchangeable. This leads to some confusion, which makes it hard to be precise about spatial and temporal boundaries. From Brundisium Strabo takes us along the coast: the Peucetians extend 'thus far' (*i.e.* to Barium) on the sea, but inland 'as far as Silvium'; 'the successive country' is inhabited by Daunians, then the Apuli, 'as far as the Frentani':

ἀνάγκη δέ, Πευκετίων καὶ Δαυνίων μηδ᾽ ὅλως λεγομένων ὑπὸ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων πλὴν εἰ τὸ παλαιόν, ἁπάσης δὲ ταύτης τῆς χώρας Ἀπουλίας λεγομένης νυνί, μηδὲ τοὺς ὅρους ἐπ᾽ ἀκριβὲς λέγεσθαι τῶν ἐθνῶν τούτων: διόπερ οὐδ᾽ ἡμῖν διισχυριστέον περὶ αὐτῶν.

'But it is necessary, since the terms Peuketians and Daunians are not at all used by the indigenes, except unless in antiquity, and all of this country is now called Apulia, that one cannot speak accurately of the boundaries of these *ethnē*. For this reason neither can I make any affirmations about them'.[85]

Akribeia is sometimes beyond Strabo, and where the breach between past and present is sharp, as it is here, he refuses to commit himself to defining their boundaries.

[82] 6. 3. 9, 284C, and elsewhere in this part of the book.
[83] 5. 2. 4, 241-2C.
[84] 6. 1. 15, 265C, 6. 3. 1, 277C.
[85] 6. 3. 8, 283C.

In a rare linguistic note on Italy, Strabo says of the Apuli, which he says they are called *idiōs* ('specifically'), and writes that they speak the same language as the Danuii and Peucetii (Latin?), and they are in all other respects alike, at least now. Nevertheless, the three different names make it reasonable to assume that they were once different from each other. Strabo here appears to forget some of his own earlier distinctions; indeed, this looks like something from a different source from that he used earlier. Yet it (again) shows an awareness of what we should call cultural assimilation, and again shows how Strabo sometimes has to work from inference to reach both historical and geographical conclusions on how to handle various Italian *ethnē*.[86] In both instances just discussed the discussion of the complex vertical (historical) and horizontal (spatial) stratigraphy in the 'heel' of Italy reveals the challenges faced in addressing peoples and their borders, and the limits of what was possible.

Conclusions

I hope that I have provided some justification for the claims advanced at the outset: that boundaries have little to do with any essentialist view of space, or ethnicity, and that they are contingent, constructed; that they can not only move over time, but that they move because they are debated and contested. Moreover this a contestation in literature which reflects the push and pull of political and demographic change, the ebb and flow of history. By looking at how Strabo built his Italian geography, from the landscape up, and at the importance of human dynamism within it, I argued that we can see the construction of boundaries as right at the core of Strabo's undertaking – without them he is lost. Perhaps more surprisingly, at least at first sight, we found that the Italian *ethnē* were reified by being described and bounded, and form a vital constitutive part of Strabo's Italy.

[86] 6. 3. 11, 285C; *cf*. 6. 1. 4, 255C: Antiochos has spoken **ἁπλουστέρως … καὶ ἀρχαϊκῶς** ('… and in an old-fashioned way'), and has not divided the Lucanians from the Bruttians (the latter, however, did not exist when Antiochos was writing).

This was necessary for three main reasons: (a) Strabo's own sense that the *oikoumenē* needs to be understood across time and space leads him to a sort of ethnic synchrony where past and present both pervade and shape the account; (b) the Italian *ethnē* were alive and well in several ways in late republican and Augustan Italy, in terms of symbolism and 'national' identity, but also in terms of a number of regional identities, both old and re-imagined; and (c) because they were essential to Strabo's own undertaking. By this I mean that while the two principal approaches to geography, the *paraplous* and the land-journey are analogous, they are not homologous: the fusing of data about the coast and data about the interior is challenging, unless there are units of analysis big enough to hold them together. These also need to be small enough to be manageable, and to have their own historical diversity and interest, whether on their own account or because of their constituent communities. Strabo needed boundaries, but he needed the bounded *ethnē* even more, as the actors on his Italian stage, actors with a past, with a back-story, motivations, characters and ambitions.

The *ethnē* inhabited a dynamic peninsula, and made it more dynamic by their interactions. Italy was a moving target before Rome had attracted anyone's attention, and the tides and currents of Italian history before and during the conquest made frontiers and boundaries sometimes ephemeral and often contingent. For the geographer, this is a difficult situation to capture, the more so once the author's logic lead him to stress the necessity of historical depth in the account. Add to this the interlacing and sometimes destabilising tensions between a series of indigenous and external, local and hegemonic viewpoints; and attempts to shape big arcs of historical evolution, moralising judgements about the rise and fall of cities and peoples. Add all this and the pursuit of the kind of boundaries which our world depends on seems a dangerous business. It would, given all this, be very surprising if Strabo could ever find, or find satisfactory, one single set of 'real' Italian frontiers. It would seem, in turn, to follow, that we should not be looking in his text for them either.

Edward Bispham
Brasenose & St Anne's Colleges, Oxford

E.H. Bispham, 'Pliny the Elder's Italy', in E.H. Bispham, G. Rowe and E. Matthews (eds), Vita Vigilia Est. *Essays in Honour of Barbara Levick. BICS* Supplement 100 (London, 2007), 40-67 = 2007a

E.H. Bispham, *From Asculum to Actium. The Municipalization of Italy after the Social War* (Oxford, 2007)

E.H. Bispham, 'The Lucanians: Historical Perspective. Missing in Action? Oinotrians, Leukanoi, Lucani, Lucanians', in M. Aberson, M.C. Biella, M. di Fazio & M. Wullschlager (eds), *Entre archéologie et histoire: dialogues sur divers peoples de l'Italie préromaine*. EGeA 2 (Bern, 2014), 311-30 = Bispham 2014a

E. Bispham, 'Roma *iudex*', in J. Dubouloz, S. Pittia & G. Sabatini (eds), *L'* imperium Romanum *en perspective. Les savoirs d'empire dans la République romaine et leur heritage dans l'Europe médiévale et moderne* (Besançon, 2014), 231-42 = 2014b

E.H. Bispham, 'The *Regiones* of Italy: between Republic and Principate', in M. Aberson, M.C. Biella, M. Di Fazio & M. Wullschlager (eds), 'Nos sumus Romani qui fuimus ante': *Memories of Ancient Italy* (Geneva, forthcoming)

S. Bourdin, *Les peoples de l'Italie préromaine. Identités, territoires et relations inter-ethniques en Italie centrale et septentrionale (VIII^{e}-I^{er} s. av. J.-C.* BEFAR 350 (Rome, 2012)

G.J. Bradley, 'Romanization. The End of the Peoples of Italy?', in G.J. Bradley, E. Isayev & C. Riva (eds), *Ancient Italy. Regions without Boundaries* (Exeter, 2007), 295-322

K.J. Clarke, *Between Geography and History. Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World* (Oxford, 1999)

F. Coarelli, 'Strabone: Roma e il Lazio', in G. Maddoli (ed.), *Strabone e l'Italia antica*. Università degli Studi di Perugia, Pubblicazioni degli Istituti di Storia Antica e di Filologia Classica della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia (Perugia, 1988), 73-91

G. Farney, *Ethnic Identity and Aristocratic Competition in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge, 2007)

W.V. Harris, ‘Quando e come l’Italia divenne perla prima volta l’Italia? Un saggio sulla politica dell’identitá’, *Studi Storici* 48 (2007), 301-22

M. Pasquinucci, ‘Strabone e l’Italia centrale’, in G. Maddoli (ed.), *Strabone e l’Italia antica*. Università degli Studi di Perugia, Pubblicazioni degli Istituti di Storia Antica e di Filologia Classica della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia (Perugia, 1988), 45-59

F. Prontera, ‘L’Italia meridionale di Strabone. Appunti tra Geografia e storia’, in G. Maddoli (ed.), *Strabone e l’Italia antica*. Università degli Studi di Perugia, Pubblicazioni degli Istituti di Storia Antica e di Filologia Classica della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia (Perugia, 1988), 93-109

S. Radt (ed.), *Strabons Geographika* Band 6, Buch V-VIII: Kommentar (Göttingen, 2007)