

MYTHOLOGY, PARADOXOGRAPHY
AND TERATOLOGY IN
STRABO'S *GEOGRAPHY*

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STRABO, historian and philosopher¹, wrote his *Geography*, as a complement to his Historical Sketches² in forty-seven books, which started from the point where Polybius left off, and covered the history from 146 BC to the reign of Augustus. Unfortunately, this monumental work is lost, but the seventeen books *The Geography* have survived. It is far more than a mere geography. It is a compendium of practical and theoretical knowledge of the Earth, which should be useful for a statesman and a commander. Strabo undertook to write upon the whole inhabited world. His work is not a concise summary but a real storehouse of information concerning various countries. Strabo adds many physical, natural, political, ethnographic, historical, philological, antiquarian and mythological details to the general description of separate countries. In the nature of things, such a colossal work as Strabo's *Geography* is a compilation.

1 I 1,1: Τῆς τοῦ φιλοσόφου πραγματείας εἶναι νομίζομεν, εἴπερ ἄλλην τινά, καὶ τὴν γεωγραφικὴν.

2 Cf. D.M. Schenkeveld, *Strabo on Homer*, Mnemosyne XXIX (1976), p. 52-64 ; J. Engels, *Augusteische Oikumenegeographie und Universalhistorie im Werk Strabons von Amaseia*, Stuttgart 199, p. 91-95.

But he attempts to judge critically the collected excerpts, and he also takes care of composition and content of his own work.

He entirely observes the dominant principle of Greek historiography, its dogmatic attitude, which is known from a sentence of Hecataeus : « I write what I believe to be the truth, for the Greeks have many stories which, it seems to me, are absurd. »³ Consequently, Strabo attempts to distinguish between the *historia* - facts which are worth being recorded in Geography and the *mythos* - tale, fiction, untrustworthy, unreliable and unreal story.

Strabo pays special attention to the Homeric poems. He calls the poet « the founder of the science of geography » (I 1,2 ἀρχηγέτην εἶναι τῆς γεωγραφικῆς ἐμπειρίας). He is convinced that « Homer tells his story, agreeing in some respects with matters of history, but adding to them an element of myth, thus adhering to a custom that is not only his own but one common to poets »⁴ (I 2,40) and that his descriptions are founded on reality. The vexed questions with which Strabo was confronted in relation to Homer's mythical data, and his rules of interpreting Homer's poetry, have been fully described by many scholars. So it is not my intention to discuss these problems. What I would like to do, is to investigate what the word *mythos* means for Strabo, what kind of events and beings he regards as fabulous, fictitious, unreal. I will also attempt to make some remarks on the *mythos-historia* antithesis in his Geography and to demonstrate the place for myths in the construction of such a scientific work as Geography is.

3 FGtH I F1 : Ἐκαταῖος Μιλήσιος ὧδε μυθεῖται τάδε γράφω, ὡς μοι δοκεῖ ἀληθεῖα εἶναι οἱ γάρ Ἑλλήνων λόγοι πολλοί τε καὶ γελοῖοι, ὡς ἐμοῖ φαίνονται, εἰσίν.

4 All citations come from the English translation of Strabo's *Geography* by H.L. Jones in the Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1917-1932).

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At first, the word *mythos* was synonymous with *logos*, and both of them meant « word, speech, story » with no distinction between true or false. The antithesis of false *mythos* and true *logos* seems to be introduced by the first prose writers (e.g. Herodotus II 45)⁵, and the early Sophists contributed to the fact that the word *mythos* established its meaning of « fiction, legend, fable story »⁶. Strabo entirely maintains this antithesis, replacing the word *logos* by *historia*, whenever he describes what he believes to be real events.

In *Rhetorica ad Herennium* I 13⁷ we can find the following definition : Id, quod in negotiorum expositione positum est, tres habet partes : fabulam, historiam, argumentum. This division is also known to Strabo. He writes that poetic licence is compounded of history, rhetorical composition, and myth (I 2,17 ποιητικὴν ἐξουσίαν, ἣ συνέστηκεν ἐξ ἱστορίας καὶ διαθέσεως καὶ μύθου). The aim of the first is truth, vividness of the second and the latter is to please and to excite amazement⁸. The *argumentum* - *diathesis* is not important for the purposes of a geographical work, so we may omit this question.

5 Cf. also Pi. O. I 28-29 ; N. VII 23).

6 M. Winiarczyk, *Mit w Grecji antycznej*, Meander LXII 1997, p. 417.

7 Cf. Cicero, De inventione I 27 : ea, quae in negotiorum expositione posita est, tres habet partes : fabulam, historiam, argumentum. fabula est, in qua nec verae nec veri similes res continentur, cuiusmodi est : 'Angues ingentes alites, iuncti iugo . . . '. historia est gesta res, ab aetatis nostrae memoria remota ; quod genus : 'Appius indixit Carthaginensibus bellum'. argumentum est ficta res, quae tamen fieri potuit. huiusmodi apud Terentium : 'Nam is postquam excessit ex ephebis, [Sosia] . . . '.

8 Τῆς μὲν οὖν ἱστορίας ἀλήθειαν εἶναι τέλος, ὡς ἐν νεῶν καταλόγῳ τὰ ἐκάστοις τόποις συμβεβηκότα λέγοντος τοῦ ποιητοῦ, τὴν μὲν πετρήεσαν τὴν δ' ἐσχατόωσαν πόλιν, ἄλλην δὲ πολυτρήρωνα, τὴν δ' ἀγχιάλων τῆς δὲ διαθέσεως ἐνέργειαν εἶναι τὸ τέλος, ὡς ὅταν μαχομένους εἰσάγη μύθου δὲ ἡδονὴν καὶ ἐκπληξιν.

Defining history and myth an unknown Latin author emphasises the truth: *Fabula est, quae neque veras neque veri similes continet res, ut eae sunt, quae tragoedis traditae sunt. Historia est gesta res, sed ab aetatis nostrae memoria remota.* Strabo presents a similar definition of myth and history, when he considers the peculiar account of the Amazons. « Our accounts of other peoples keep a distinction between the mythical and the historical elements; for the things that are ancient and false and monstrous are called myths. But history wishes for the truth, whether ancient or recent, and contains no monstrous element, or else only rarely. »⁹

In order to demonstrate the meaning of *mythos* for Strabo I would like to say a few words about its features, which are quoted above, I mean: ancient times, falsehood and oddity or even monstrosity.

ancient times

The word « mythology » is commonly used in modern languages, to signify ancient stories of gods and heroes, which happened in remote times preceding historical events. Therefore we tend to identify all events from ancient times with myths. But unlike modern scholars, who recognise as historical only these events, which are testified by trustworthy, contemporary sources, ancient historians were convinced that wanderings of Argonauts and of Odysseus, war of Seven against Thebes etc. were indeed historical facts. Strabo explicitly says about Homer that « he took the Trojan war, an historical fact, and decked it out with his myths; and he did the same in the case of the wanderings of Odysseus; but to hang an empty story of marvels on something wholly untrue is not Homer's way of doing

⁹ XI 5,3 οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλοι [λόγοι] τὸ μυθῶδες καὶ τὸ ἱστορικὸν διωρισμένον ἔχουσι· τὰ γὰρ παλαιὰ καὶ ψευδῆ καὶ τερατώδη μῦθοι καλοῦνται· ἡ δ' ἱστορία βούλεται ἀληθές, ἢν τε παλαιὸν ἢν τε νέον, καὶ τὸ τερατώδες ἢ οὐκ ἔχει ἢ σπάνιον.

things. »¹⁰ The geographer adds in other passage that « Homer transferred the Odyssey, just as he had already transferred the Iliad, from the domain of historical fact to that of creative art, and to that of mythical invention so familiar to the poets » (III 2,12). Because for Strabo as for other Greek historians this particular feature, I mean ancient times, did not decide, whether a fact should be considered as mythical or true.

false

The other feature namely « falsehood » is more important. As the early historians do not agree one with another in their accounts of particular events, Strabo considers many of their stories untrue (VIII 3,9). « When different writers tell the myth in different ways, joining difficulty to difficulty; and both the names and numbers they use are different » (X 3,22), it arouses the suspicions, that the event itself may be false.

Judging whether a fact is mythical or not, Strabo makes use of the rule of probability. He mentions the tomb of Neoptolemus in the sacred precinct at Delphi (IX 3,9). The son of Achilles was slain by Machaereus, a Delphian, because according to the myth Neoptolemus sought redress for the murder of his father in the temple of Apollo. Everywhere up and down the pages of his Geography Strabo refuses to accept the idea that Olympic gods could take part in any historical event. He writes that according to all probability Neoptolemus was murdered because he attacked the temple. The contention between a god and a man is improbable for Strabo, but to completely deny this story does not seem appropriate to him. The antithesis (ὡς μὲν ὁ μῦθος (...) ὡς δὲ τὸ εἰκός) is characteristic and it suggests the words of Servius in his commentary in Verg. Aen. I 235: *et sciendum est, inter fabulam et argumentum, hoc est historiam, hoc interesse,*

¹⁰ I 2,9 οὕτω δὴ τὸν τε Ἰλιακὸν πόλεμον γεγονότα παραλαβὼν ἐκόσμησε ταῖς μυθοποιαῖς, καὶ τὴν Ὀδυσσεῶς πλάνην ὡσαύτως· ἕκ μὴδενὸς δὲ ἀληθοῦς ἀνάπτει κενὴν τερατολογίαν οὐχ Ὀμηρικόν.

quod fabula est dicta res contra naturam, sive facta sive non facta, ut de Pasiphae, historia est quicquid secundum naturam dicitur, sive factum sive non factum, ut de Phaedra.

monstrosity

The last feature that was included in the definition of myth, mentioned above, is oddity or monstrosity, which along with discrepancy, contradictions and lack of consistency induces Strabo to recognise an event, a thing or a person as mythical or false. Strabo seems to explicitly divide marvels into two groups. One of them includes all events which are wonderful, curious, incredible, but real, true, and explicable in the course of nature. Strabo calls them *paradoxa*. The other group consists of things and beings which are strange, monstrous, portentous, and, of course unnatural and untrue. He names them *teratodes*. Only the latter seem to be mythical.

The adjective *τερατώδης*, which is used three times by Strabo to define the idea of *mythos* in his *logos* of Amazons (XI 5,3), is derived from the noun *τέρας*. It means in general sense « a sign, wonder, marvel, portent » equivalent of Latin *prodigium*, or in specific sense « a monster ». Up and down the pages of *Geography* we find several derivatives and compounds of *τέρας*. One of them *τερατολογία* was used by Strabo to denote « telling of marvels, which are untrue, mythical », so I have adopted this term in the title of this article.

Teratology was the most important component of the myth composition. Eratosthenes criticises the poets, that they introduce each incident as too awe-inspiring and too marvellous¹¹, so « everything beyond the range of observation has been filled, not only by Homer but by others also, with mythical marvels »¹²,

11 I 2,19 ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τὸ δεινότερον καὶ τὸ τερατωδέστερον ἕκαστα ἐξάγειν.

12 I 2,3 ἀλλ' ταῦτα μὲν οὕτως εἴρηκε, τὰ δ' ἐξω τῆς αἰσθήσεως καὶ οὗτος καὶ ἄλλοι τερατολογίας μυθικῆς πεπληρώκασι.

But Strabo does not deny the didactic values of monstrosity. « If you add thereto the marvellous and the portentous, you thereby increase the pleasure, and pleasure acts as a charm to incite to learning » (I 2,8 ὅταν δὲ προσῆ καὶ τὸ θαυμαστὸν καὶ τὸ τερατώδες). But portentous is not only pleasing but fear-inspiring as well οὐ μόνον ἡδύ, ἀλλὰ καὶ φοβερὸν τὸ τερατώδες), so « we can employ the pleasing myths, like Labours of Heracles or of Theseus or honours bestowed by gods - to spur children, illiterate and half-educated men, and the fear-inspiring myths - like Lamia, Gorgon, Mormolyce - to deter them ».

Strabo is convinced that wanderings of Odysseus are historical facts. But Homer decked the real events with myths. Strabo writes that « the poet is indulging in marvels when he tells of Oceanus, Hades, cattle of Helios, entertainment by goddesses, metamorphoses, huge Cyclopes and huge Laestrygonians, Scylla's shape, distances traversed on the voyage, and many other things of a similar nature (I 2,11). »¹³

Having analysed all passages of *Geography* where Strabo uses the root *myth-* and the derivatives and compounds of *tšraj*, I may conclude that for him both terms are strictly connected. The teratology forms an indispensable component of the mythology, so we can assume that adjectives *mythodes* and *teratodes* are synonymous. For Strabo, every mythical story consists of falsehood and marvellousness, though we do not have to find a actual monster in each of them. I would like to mention some examples of events, things and creatures, which Strabo does not believe, assuming they are or may be mythical. Every story concerning gods or other supernatural beings is untrue for him, whether honours bestowed by gods I 2,9, or love affairs (XIV 1,5 - like Branchos and Apollo) or anything created by a god (VIII 3,22-6 like Neda, a spring, which was caused to break forth by Rhea, after she had given birth to Zeus,) or any kind of divine activity (XII 8,15 - the

13 ἐκείνου ὠκεανὸν καὶ Αἰδὴν καὶ Ἥλιου βόας καὶ παρ' θεαῖς ξενίας καὶ μεταμορφώσεις καὶ μεγέθη Κυκλώπων καὶ Λαιστρυγέων καὶ μορφήν Σκύλλης καὶ διαστήματα πλοῦ καὶ ἄλλα πλείω τοιαῦτα τερατογραφούντος φανερώς.

contest between Marsyas and Apollo) or I 2,9 - arms of gods - thunderbolt, aegis, trident, torches, snakes, thyrsus-lances and the entire ancient theology. I suppose that Strabo doubted also after-life. Describing Brachmanes, Indian sophists, he writes « they also weave in myths, like Plato, about the immortality of the soul and the judgements in Hades and other things of this kind (XV 1,59)¹⁴.

Another instances of teratology are various unnatural monsters from ancient times like Antaeus, whose sixty feet long skeleton was exposed by Sertorius (XVII 3,18), and also exotic human beings: creatures who are half-dog half-man, long headed men, Pygmies, web-footed men, dog-headed men, men with eyes on their breasts, one-eyed men (I 2,35; VII 3,6), men who sleep in their ears, swift-footed men, men without noses (XV 1,57). Not only appearance, but also behaviour of people may be monstrous. Other distinct examples of teratology seem to be the story of Amazons (XI 5,3), Hyperboreans who live a thousand years (V 1,57) or the Seres who can prolong their lives even beyond two hundred years (XV 1,37).

Moreover, Strabo qualifies as mythical some natural phenomena (III 2,9) when the forest in Iberia had been burned, the soil, since it was composed of silver and gold ores, melted and boiled out»; incredible incidents: VI 1,10 the news of the result of the battle at Sagra in Italy was reported on the same day in Olympia; some marvellous buildings: IX 3,9 the temples « with wings » made of wax and feathers at Delphi¹⁵, every kind of metamorphoses, V 1,9 the transformation of Meleager's sisters into guinea-fowls on the Electrides Islands; some monstrous animals - XV 1,37 the ants that mine gold.

I have quoted a few examples of events and creatures, which seem mythical to Strabo, but it is evident that many of them are not

¹⁴ παραπλέκουσι δὲ καὶ μῦθους, ὥσπερ καὶ Πλάτων περί τε ἀφθαρσίας ψυχῆς καὶ τῶν καθ' Αἴδου κρίσεων καὶ ἄλλα τοιαῦτα.

¹⁵ Paus. X 5,9.

ancient. Not every myth has to describe remote times, because I 2,8: myth is a new language to them [children] - a language that tells them, not of things as they are, but of a different set of things (καινολογία τίς ἐστὶν ὁ μῦθος, οὐ τὰ καθεστηκότα φράζων ἀλλ' ἕτερα παρὰ ταῦτα).

paradoxography

The adjective παράδοξος is the opposite of τερατώδης. It means « contrary to expectation, incredible, marvellous », determines the things, events and creatures which are uncommon and unusual but really existing, manifest to everybody, sometimes widely known, like the Nile. This river is the best-known and the *most marvellous* thing in Egypt and decidedly the most worthy of mention and historical record (I 2,22)¹⁶.

Neither Strabo nor the other ancient Greek authors ever used the word *paradoxography*. Strabo makes use of the compound *paradoxologia* «telling of marvels, wonders, incredibility» as analogous to teratology. But I decided to use the term *paradoxography*, for the first time used by Tzetzes, because it was established by custom, as for example in *Corpus Paradoxographorum Graecarum* etc. Ancient paradoxographers wrote various stories, many of them Strabo may reject as teratology. For him paradoxon is a natural phenomenon, which is marvellous but true. Only the rarity causes surprise i.e. *paradoxia* (XI 11,5 τὸ δὲ σπάνιον ποιεῖ τὴν παραδοξίαν).

Strabo mentions many paradoxical phenomena. Many of them are connected with water (III 5,7 the spring or the wells in the Heracleium at Gades, VIII 8,4 rivers flowing underground), seismic or volcanic activities (XVI 2,26 tsunami; V 4,9 Pithecusae), different forms of the earth's surface (XII 2,4 gorge of the river Pyramis; IV

¹⁶ εἰ δὲ τῶν κατ' Αἴγυπτον τὸ γνωριμώτατον καὶ παραδοξότατον καὶ μάλιστα πάντων μνήμης ἄξιον καὶ ἱστορίας ὁ ποταμὸς καὶ ἦν καὶ ἐστίν.

1,7 - Stony Plain between Massilia and the outlets of the Rhodanus), geological processes (XVII 1,34 - the heaps of stone-chips lying in front of the pyramids, among which chips are found that are like lentils both in form and size). Another instances of paradoxa are uncommon animals (IV 1,7 the « dug mullets », species of fish), plants (XV 1,21 some Indian trees - πολλά γὰρ δὲ δένδρα παράδοξα Ἰνδικῆ τρέφει), and customs of a man (XI 11,8 of various tribes near Caspic Sea).

In his Geography Strabo usually separates paradoxography from the mythology. And also distinction between historia and mythos was fundamental for him. Strabo criticizes those historians, who have written their works in a guise of myth and who have then showed a tendency to confound myth and history. He blames Herodotus, Ctesias, Hellanicus, and the authors of the Histories of India for « weaving in myths intentionally, not through ignorance of the facts, but through an intentional invention of the impossible, to gratify the taste for the marvellous and the entertaining » (I 2,35) ; for « adding to their account marvellous tales, to give it a kind of tune or rhythm or relish » (XVII 1,52¹⁷). He writes that Megasthenes « going beyond all bounds to the realm of myth, speaks of people five spans long etc. » (ὑπερεκπίπτων δ' ἐπὶ τὸ μυθώδες). Those bounds are, of course, the bounds of probability.

Strabon was not « in the least fond of myths, because the facts in their case border on the province of mythology » (X 3,23). He omits the things which are very old and mythical and for the most part not agreed upon (IX 4,18). He consistently disregards most of the mythical or false stories, and analyses only historical accounts, which he relates insofar as they may be historically useful.

In Strabo's opinion paradoxa are strictly connected with historical accounts. Several times he uses this adjective in the context of the word « historia » (I 2,22 : παραδοξότατον καὶ μάλιστα

17 πολλά δ' Ἡρόδοτος τε καὶ ἄλλοι φλυαροῖσιν, ὥσπερ μέλος ἢ ἔυθμον ἢ ἡδυσμαῖα τι τῷ λόγῳ τὴν τερατείαν προσφέροντες.

πάντων μνήμης ἄξιον καὶ ἱστορίας ; III 5,7 ; XVI 2,26 ; XI 7,5 : Καὶ τοῦτο δ' ἐκ τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ὑρκανίαν ἱστορουμένων παραδόξων ἐστὶν ἀπὸ Εὐδόξου καὶ ἄλλων). So I would like to conclude that for Strabo *paradokson* means « incredible, rare and marvellous but true story » in prevailing majority of cases.

However, we can find in his Geography two exceptions to this rule. When Strabo describes the holy temple of Coloenian Artemis, he quotes an improbable story. At the festivals in this temple the baskets dance. Strabo concludes « I do not know why in the world they talk marvels rather than tell the truth » (XIII 4,5 : οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως ποτέ παραδοξολογοῦντες μάλλον ἢ ἀληθεοῦντες). The text of Geography seems to be somewhat corrupt, but without doubt in this case paradoxography and teratology are synonymous.

The other exception we find in the book Fifteen when Strabo describes the Indian country of Abisares, who kept two serpents or dragons, one eighty cubits long and another one a hundred and forty, according to Onesicritus. In this place Strabo allows himself to name ironically Onesicritus the arch-pilot of the things that are incredible, not the arch-pilot of Alexander (XV 1,28 Ὀνησίκριτος, ὃν οὐκ Ἀλεξάνδρου μάλλον ἢ τῶν παραδόξων ἀρχικυβερνήτην προσείποι τις ἄν). « For though all the followers of Alexander preferred to accept the marvellous rather than the true, Onesicritus seems to surpass all those followers of his in the telling the prodigies » (πάντες μὲν γὰρ οἱ περὶ Ἀλέξανδρον τὸ θαυμαστὸν ἀντὶ τ' ἀληθές ἀπεδέχοντο μάλλον, περβάλλεσθαι δὲ δοκεῖ τοῦς τοσοῦτους ἐκεῖνος τῇ τερατολογίῃ).

Nevertheless, in all the other cases paradoxon means a marvellous but true thing and paradoxography, as stories of natural phenomena, is more important for construction of the geographical works than mythology.

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But at this point a question arises, why and what for Strabo expatiates on so many fabulous stories, if he considers that the myths are not trustworthy or reliable sources for a historian. *Geography* was addressed to the men of affairs, so Strabo laid particular stress on the need for usefulness. The knowledge of the inhabited world allows the statesmen and commanders to be more successful and to avoid calamities (I 1,16-19). As well as the practical wisdom, « a work on geography also involves the theory of no mean value, the theory of the arts¹⁸, of mathematics, and of natural science, as well as the theory which lies in the fields of history and myths »¹⁹. Strabo has to admit that « myths have nothing to do with practice, (...) unless a man should insert the useful lessons to be drawn from the hardships those heroes underwent. »²⁰. What's more, the myths would be a generous entertainment « for the hearer who takes an interest in the regions which furnished the scenes of the myths ». Men of affairs are fond of just this kind of entertainment, because the localities are famous and the myths are charming. »²¹ Although Strabo declares that « the geographer should direct his attention to the useful rather than to what is famous and charming », his *Geography* abounds in mythical references.

So in many cases Strabo treats myths as an erudite ornament to his scientific work. In order to entertain his readers he adds many

18 G. Aujac (Strabon, *Géographie*, t. I - 1re partie, texte établi et traduit par..., Paris 1969) translates these words - *de la technique*.

19 I 1,19 ἔχει δὲ τινα καὶ θεωρίαν οὐ φαύλην ἢ πραγματεία, τὴν μὲν τεχνικὴν τε καὶ μαθηματικὴν καὶ φυσικὴν, τὴν δὲ ἐν ἱστορίῃ καὶ μύθοις κειμένην οὐδὲν οὔσι πρὸς τὰς πράξεις.

20 Πλὴν εἰ καταμίσγοι καὶ τῶν γενομένων ἀναγκαίων τὰ παραδείγματα χρήσιμα.

21 διαγωγὴν δ' ὅμως πορίζοι ἂν οὐκ ἀνελεύθερον τῷ ἐπιβάλλοντι ἐπὶ τοὺς τόπους τοὺς παρασχόντας τὴν μυθοποιίαν.

exegetical and antiquarian details (e.g. describing Peloponnesos he mentions various places connected with Labours of Heracles : (VIII 5,1 ; VIII 6,2 ; VIII 6,8 ; VIII 6,19). Strabo quotes also aetiological and etymological myths, like that of Minthe. A mountain near Pylus was named after her. Minthe, « according to myth, became the concubine of Hades, was trampled under foot by Core, and was transformed into garden-mint » (VIII 3,14). Sometimes Strabo rejects a literal interpretation of the myth, but accept its metaphorical meaning. For instance when he examines the aetiological story, which has explained the ancient name of Aeginetans, he concludes they were called Myrmidons not because, « when a great famine occurred, the ants became human beings in answer to a prayer of Aeacus, but because Aeginetans excavated the earth after the manner of ants and spread the soil over the rocks ... and because they lived in the dugouts. »²²

Sometimes Strabo had to introduce myths into his *Geography*, because he lacked trustworthy sources. A situation like that happens in the chapter devoted to Mauretania. « The historians, beginning with The Circumnavigation of Ophelas, have added numerous other fabrications in regard to the outside coast of Libya ... I am again speaking of them, asking pardon for introducing marvellous stories, if perchance I shall be forced to digress into a thing of that sort, since I am unwilling wholly to pass them over in silence and in a way to cripple my history.

22 VIII 6,16 Μυρμιδόνας δὲ κληθαί φασιν οὐχ ὡς ὁ μῦθος τοὺς Αἰγινήτας, ὅτι λοιμοῦ μεγάλου συμπεσόντος οἱ μύρμηκες ἄνθρωποι γένοιτο κατ' εὐχὴν Αἰακοῦ, ἀλλ' ὅτι μυρμήκων τρόπον ὀρύττοντες τὴν γῆν ἐπιφέροιν ἐπὶ τῆς πέτρας ὡστ' ἔχειν γεωργεῖν, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ὀρύγμασιν οἰκεῖν φειδόμενοι πλίνθων.