What can the architecture of ancient ships tell us about their capacity to carry cargo or to navigate certain trade routes? How do such insights inform our knowledge of the ancient economies that depended on maritime trade across the Mediterranean?

These and similar questions lie behind *Sailing from Polis to Empire*, a fascinating insight into the practicalities of trading by boat in the ancient world. Allying modern scientific knowledge with Hellenistic sources, this interdisciplinary collection brings together experts in various fields of ship archaeology to shed new light on the role played by ships and sailing in the exchange networks of the Mediterranean. Covering all parts of the Eastern Mediterranean, these outstanding contributions delve into a broad array of data – literary, epigraphical, papyrological, iconographic and archaeological – to understand the trade routes that connected the economies of individual cities and kingdoms.

Unique in its interdisciplinary approach and focus on the Hellenistic period, this collection digs into the questions that others don’t think to ask, and comes up with (sometimes surprising) answers. It will be of value to researchers in the fields of naval architecture, Classical and Hellenistic history, social history and ancient geography, and to all those with an interest in the ancient world or the seafaring life.

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2. Evolutions of the Representation of the Eastern Mediterranean in the Hellenistic Period

Jean-Marie Kowalski

Studying the evolutions of the representation of the Eastern Mediterranean in the Hellenistic period is a quite challenging task. There is a substantial lack of evidence and in some cases, the granularity of the manuscript sources is quite poor. Moreover, the quality of information varies from one source to another. Nevertheless, by comparing these sources we create a context within which to examine the different ways Cyprus was integrated within the network of maritime routes. The calculation of the length of these routes is unsurprisingly based on an asymmetrical representation of space, but a closer look reveals the importance of seasonality to navigation. The winds blow from sharply different directions in summer and in winter, so it was sometimes impossible to sail certain routes, and a statistical assessment demonstrates that some were much more frequently sailed in summertime than in winter. Lastly, the variety of landscapes around Cyprus makes it necessary to focus on the different kinds of landmarks, and what makes them products of their environment.

This chapter will address the representation of the Eastern Mediterranean during the Hellenistic period, focusing in particular on the case of Cyprus and its place within the maritime routes of the Eastern Mediterranean. I shall compare Classical and Ancient representations with late Hellenistic
examples in order to highlight some of the differences and continuities of the representation of this particular region.

The first difficulty that arises is the lack of reliable, datable evidence from this period. Cyprus is very often mentioned in classical literature: for example in the writings of Herodotus, Xenophon, Plato, Thucydides, Isocrates, Demosthenes, and Ephorus.¹ Until the late first century BC (Diodorus Siculus, Strabo) and the first century AD (Flavius Josephus,² Dioscorides³) almost no information is given about the island and its geography apart from brief references in Menander’s comedies, in Polybius’ histories, in Theopompus’ fragments or in those by Clearchus the philosopher (fourth century BC).⁴ Most of the references deal with political or military issues, but very inadequate information is given about navigation and maritime routes.⁵

We will pay a particular attention to the *Stadiasmus* (or *Periplus Maris Magni*) and to Strabo’s *Geography*, even if the *Stadiasmus* raises several challenging questions as it is rather difficult to say precisely when it was written and the author’s sources.⁶ Timosthenes of Rhodes (c. 270 BC) is one of the most important sources, but some late information dating from 10 BC can also be identified. It is even more difficult to say when this book was written as the different assumptions range from 50 CE

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¹ Hdt., 1.72.10; 1.105.10; 1.199.26; 2.79.4; 3.91.7; 4.162.7; 4.164.6; 5.31.14; 5.49.30; 5.108.7; 5.109.2; 5.109.10: 5.113.12; 5.115.3. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.1.29; 4.8.24; 5.1.10; 5.1.31; *Cyropaedia* 8.6.8; 8.8.1; *Athenaeus, Resp.* 2.7.4. Plato, *Menexenus* 241e. Thucydides, 1.94.2; 1.104.2; 1.112.2; 1.112.4; 1.128.5. Isocrates, *Panegyricus* 134.7; 141.2; 153.6; 161.2; *Eclogae* 18.5; 51.4; 53.1; 58.2; 60.2; 62.3; 67.5; *de Pace* 86.5; *Philippus* 62.3; 102.1; *Demosthenes, adversus Leptinum* 76.4. Ephorus, Jacoby *FGrH*, 70F119; 70F191; 70F192; 70T20. All the sources used here are issued from the Loeb edition, unless mentioned otherwise.


³ *De materia medica* 1.71.1; 1.97.4; 1.127.3; 5.32.1; 5.76.2; 5.91.1; 5.102.1; 5.103.1; 5.109.1; 5.138.1.

⁴ Menander, *Misenenum* 32; 231, Fr. 5 l.1; Fr. 151 l. 231; Polybius, *Historiae* 5.34.7; 5.59.5; 12.25.2; 18.54.1; 18.55.6; 27.13.1; 29.27.9; 33.5.1; 31.10.3–10; 31.17.4–8; 31.18.2–8; 31.20.6; 33.5.2; 33.11.7; 39.7.6; Theopompus, Jacoby, *FGrH* 115F19, 103, 105, 116, 222; Clearchus Phil., *Fragmenta*, Fr. 19; 43a.

⁵ Other sources are only fragmentary or completely lost, such as Artemidorus’ description of earth (first century BCE); Posidonius (from second to the first century BCE); and Timosthenes’ *About Harbours* (from the second half of the third century BCE), who influenced Strabo, Eratothenes and Dicearchus.

to the fifth century. There are several layers of information that mainly belong to the Hellenistic period and the beginning of the Roman era, but they are probably scattered on a very large span of time. It is also important to note that this text was written long after the Hellenistic period and Strabo’s *Geography*. We must therefore recognise that this document cannot be considered a fully reliable piece of evidence that reflects the way maritime spaces were represented during a specific period. What is more, there is no real consistency in the descriptions of the different geographical areas within the *Stadiasmus*. The author gives a very accurate depiction of the coast on the west of Alexandria — this is the only part of the text that could be compared to modern Nautical Instructions — but there is a real lack of detail in the description of the coast of Asia Minor.

As far as the Archaic period is concerned, the island of Cyprus is mentioned only once in Homer’s *Iliad*, and five times in the *Odyssey*. In the *Iliad*, Cinyras learns that the Achaeans are about to sail to Cyprus. This rumour appears to spread beyond the Aegean, but absolutely no indication is given about the island itself. We therefore cannot really say that Cyprus was integrated in the maritime communications network during the poet’s time. In the *Odyssey*, Cyprus is first mentioned as the place visited by Menelaus when he is wandering on his way back to his country. He then calls in at Phoenicia, in Egypt, before meeting the Ethiopians, the Sidonians, the Eremboï and the Libyans in a clockwise trip around the Eastern Mediterranean. In Cyprus, one can also see Aphrodite’s forest and altars in Paphos. Ulysses also arrives in Cyprus after he has been captured as a pirate in Egypt.

We cannot draw any significant conclusions from Homer’s references to the island of Cyprus, apart from the fact that the island was clearly well integrated into the network of maritime routes that criss-crossed the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea. No information is given about its harbours and ports, although the sanctuary of Aphrodite in Paphos appears to have been considered a useful landmark for sailors. The existence of this sanctuary is the only accurate information about Cyprus given in Homer’s *Odyssey*, and it is also mentioned in the

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8  *Od*. 4.83; 8.362; 17.443–444; 17.448.
10 *Od*. 17.443; 448.
although it is said to be situated near a city that faces the south, with a triple harbour. Homer’s geographical knowledge about Cyprus was evidently quite poor.

While the poet describes Paphos, Aphrodite’s birthplace, possessing an altar dedicated to the goddess as well as a forest, the Stadiasmus does not include the forest — although the sanctuary is still there, as is a south-facing city with a triple harbour, which is said to be accessible in all wind conditions since its entrance faces the south. This is the only ‘triple harbour’ mentioned in the Stadiasmus with breakwaters that were built during the Hellenistic period. It is therefore a particularly interesting harbour, because it is highly representative of the Hellenistic world before the damage wreaked by earthquakes and by the constant silting of the basins. The exact meaning of ‘triple harbour’ is not completely clear, but it is highly probable that this refers to the division of the main basin into several parts, inside a limen kleistos, a closed harbour. This naming is specifically Hellenistic, as ‘closed harbours’ are not mentioned in classical literature, but they are present in Hellenistic writings.

2.1. Granularity of Information

The granularity of the information given is rather different in the Stadiasmus and in Strabo’s Geography (Figs. 2.1 and 2.2).

11 297.1.
12 Od. 8.364.
13 297
14 Raban 1995, 168, Fig. 42. Paphos 2: See Leonard, Dunn and Hohlfelder 1998, 151, Fig. 4.
15 The shape of the triple harbour described in the Stadiasmus has been imagined in different ways. For instance, it has been suggested that there was a triple internal division with the main basin contained inside the breakwaters, and at the same time the use of the bays to the north and south. Geophysical surveys have revealed that the bedrock of the basin is divided into two uneven parts, upon which can be identified the remains of constructions that in effect would have created two basins. The placement of a wharf in the Western part of the basin could in theory have created a harbour with three sections. Surveyors’ plans reveal remnants of building material at two points at right angles to the beach in the west harbour. A triple scheme could also be envisioned using the natural separation of the Eastern harbour from the stream that flowed into it. Similarly, the triple harbour may have consisted of the division of the Eastern and Western sections of the port, and also utilised the natural bay that exists to the south, which was used in medieval times when the main harbour became too silted.
Fig. 2.1 Itineraries mentioned in the *Stadiasmus* (CAD Anne-Laure Pharisien/CReAAH).

Fig. 2.2 Itineraries mentioned in Strabo’s *Geography* (CAD Anne-Laure Pharisien/CReAAH).
In the *Stadiasmus*, no fewer than twenty-two different itineraries from Cyprus or around the island are mentioned, while in the *Geography*, some thirteen routes around Cyprus, and between Cyprus and other places, are mentioned.\(^\text{16}\) At a first glance, it looks as if Strabo’s *Geography* and the *Stadiasmus* share many commonalities, but a further examination of these texts reveals significant discrepancies between them. Indeed, among the twenty-two different itineraries around and from Cyprus mentioned in the *Stadiasmus*, eighteen are parts of the periplus around the island, while Strabo does not give very accurate information about the distances around Cyprus, but he replaces it in the global network of maritime routes. That is to say that Strabo’s homage to Homer in his introduction to the *Geography* is not some kind of compulsory tribute,\(^\text{17}\) but a true allegiance to Homer’s vision of the world. Strabo’s representation places Cyprus inside a network of maritime routes\(^\text{18}\) while the *Stadiasmus* focuses the reader’s attention on a large number of sometimes very short itineraries around the island. It looks as if the discrepancy between testimonies was not a matter of their age, but rather a matter of sources and purposes. The *Stadiasmus* also reveals the very dense network of harbours and port facilities that seafarers could find around the island.

In spite of these discrepancies, some common features can be identified between these representations.

### 2.2. Distances and Maritime Experience

At first it might appear both difficult and almost meaningless to make comparisons between the distances mentioned by the *Stadiasmus* and those mentioned by Strabo, as the former mainly deals with short-range itineraries while the latter deals with long-range journeys. However, if we consider the quantitative information given by the authors, the *Stadiasmus* and the *Geography* give similar information about the distances involved. Nonetheless, no firm conclusions can be drawn from the distances mentioned, as many different factors have led to some irrelevant indications. The main factor is the granularity of manuscripts.

\(^{16}\) See Figs. 2.1 and 2.2.  
\(^{17}\) *Geography* 1.1.2.  
\(^{18}\) He also mentions distances within the island.
The two main editions in use nowadays derive from one tenth-century manuscript (Matritensis 121), in which the text of the Stadiasmus comes immediately after the Chronicle of Hippolytus.\textsuperscript{19} This unique manuscript is badly damaged and can hardly be deciphered. That is why Müller’s edition of the Stadiasmus in the Geographi Graeci Minores contains many corrections and much additional information. Helm’s edition is more recent (1929) but it does not contain as many corrections of Müller’s edition. The manuscript history of the Stadiasmus means that the reader must be very careful when applying the quantitative data given by the text about the different itineraries.

These factors will not be thoroughly discussed, but one can see, for example, that according to the Stadiasmus, Kargaia is supposedly only 40 stadia\textsuperscript{20} away from Kouriakos, while the true distance is approximately 13 nautical miles. This would suggest that there are only 3.08 stadia per mile, but the distance between Keryneia and Lapathos is said to be 450 stadia: it is in fact no more than 6 miles.

Whatever the causes of these discrepancies, they should make one very cautious when assessing the reliability of the distances given. Nevertheless, the average number of stadia per mile is very similar between Strabo and the Stadiasmus: 12.7 for Strabo and 14.3 for the Stadiasmus.

Even if each individual indication cannot be considered fully reliable, these are quite close as a group, in spite of differences between the nature of sailing as outlined in these texts. While Strabo mainly refers to long-distance routes on the high seas, the Stadiasmus merges different types of journey, from very short coastal navigation to oceangoing maritime routes. Therefore, the apparent resemblance of their representations is a kind of trompe l’œil similarity insofar as it is not based on the same items. Additionally, nothing is said about the size and type of ships that are supposed to sail these routes.

Some indications about the weather conditions given by the Stadiasmus shed new light on these distances, since they introduce qualitative features to the long lists of distances. Paphos\textsuperscript{21} is said to be a triple harbour whatever the wind conditions are, just like the city of

\textsuperscript{19} See Arnaud 2009.
\textsuperscript{20} There are almost 79 stadia per nautical mile.
\textsuperscript{21} 297.1.
Ammochostos. On the contrary, Amathus is said to be deprived of any kind of harbour (alimenos) which makes it an unsafe destination. But this does not mean that the city does not have any mooring place. Strabo says that Amathus is a city but does not say anything about its facilities. The indication of strong gales that blow from the north (boreas wind) in Arsinoe and in Karpaseia raises the question of the precise meaning of the verb used by Strabo. The author writes ‘kheimazei’, which can be understood in two different ways, as ‘heimazein’ refers to winter conditions rather than to generic storms. On the same coast, Melabron is said to have good summer mooring.

2.3. Seasonality of Weather Indications

At first glance, the Stadiasmus does not indicate directions in the same way in all descriptions. As far as Cyprus is concerned, directions are described using cardinal points to indicate wind directions. One specific type of wind is mentioned, the zephyros, which blows from the west, while the south is said to be ‘mesembria’, that is to say, from the sun’s side at noon. The contemporary weather statistics of this area provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) provide useful indications. Indeed, during the summer, winds usually blow from the west, while in winter, they predominantly blow from the north east with an average speed of 10 knots. When they blow from the north, they are usually stronger and reach an average speed of 15 knots. In both cases, they make harbours and moorings quite difficult and unsafe for ships, as even moderate winds from the north east usually become stronger along the northern coast.

This seems to be a significant indication of the seasonality of navigation or, at least, the seasonality of distance indications, as the Stadiasmus explicitly mentions unfavourable winter conditions on the

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22 304.1.
23 302.1.
24 309.1.
25 314.1.
26 310.1.
27 See https://opencpn.org/OpenCPN/info/downloadplugins.html. These indications do not take into account local winds such as sea breezes, land breezes, venturi effects in narrow places or modifications of wind direction around capes.
Fig. 2.3 Weather conditions around Cyprus in December (CAD Anne-Laure Pharisien/CReAAH).

Fig. 2.4 Weather conditions around Cyprus in June (CAD Anne-Laure Pharisien/CReAAH).
north coast of Cyprus and does not deal exclusively with summer
navigations (Figs. 2.3 and 2.4).

In winter, the average north wind is stronger than the average north-
easterly wind. Lastly, these indications do not take into account the
local weather phenomena that were well known in antiquity.

This qualitative information suggests a new approach to the
indications of distances from and around the island. Instead of paying
attention solely to these distances, the information given about the
quality of harbours and moorings suggest that we should make
connections between weather conditions and distances.

2.4. Influence of Weather Conditions
Over Navigation

Even if climatology has changed within a timespan of two millennia,
the lack of statistics before the second half of the twentieth century
made it acceptable to use NOAA’s data. We have decided here (table
2.1) to rate this data according to the average winter (end of December)
and summer conditions (end of June) according to the angle between
the wind and the route supposedly followed by the ships along the
itineraries mentioned (from 180 to 135 degrees: 3 — fair conditions –,
from 135 to 90 degrees: 4 — highly favourable conditions –, around
90 degrees: 2 — average conditions –, from 90 to 45 degrees: 1 — poor
conditions –, and from 45 to 0 degrees: 0 — unfavourable conditions –).

If this assessment can be applied to the capacities of the ancient
ships, two further conclusions can be drawn. First, Strabo and the
author of the *Stadiasmus* both mention maritime itineraries that are
more favourable for ships during summer. This does not mean that
sailing in winter was impossible, but the winds were much less
favourable, and some harbours and moorings were made unsafe,
especially on the north coast of Cyprus. Secondly, even if the *Stadiasmus*
and Strabo both rely on information derived from accounts of summer
navigation, the *Stadiasmus* seems to depend more explicitly on the
maritime experience of sailors, because the itineraries mentioned are
more favourable during summer.
2. Representation of the Eastern Mediterranean

Table 2.1 Comparison of the impact of weather conditions on navigation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Departure</th>
<th>Arrival</th>
<th>Wind</th>
<th>Favorable wind in summer</th>
<th>Favorable wind in winter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stadiasmus</td>
<td>KouriaKos</td>
<td>Kargai</td>
<td>4,00</td>
<td>W 10</td>
<td>0 variable 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stadiasmus</td>
<td>Noumenion</td>
<td>Palaiapaphos</td>
<td>4,00</td>
<td>W 10</td>
<td>0 variable 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stadiasmus</td>
<td>Palaiapaphos</td>
<td>Tretous</td>
<td>4,00</td>
<td>W 10</td>
<td>0 variable 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stadiasmus</td>
<td>Pedalio</td>
<td>Islands</td>
<td>0,00</td>
<td>W-N 10</td>
<td>2 variable NE 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stadiasmus</td>
<td>Lapathos</td>
<td>Karpaseia</td>
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<td>W 10</td>
<td>0 NE 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>KouriaKos</td>
<td>Amathus</td>
<td>3,00</td>
<td>W 10</td>
<td>0 variable NE 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stadiasmus</td>
<td>Krommyakos</td>
<td>Melabron</td>
<td>3,00</td>
<td>W 10</td>
<td>3 variable NE 15</td>
</tr>
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<td>Paphos</td>
<td>Noumenion</td>
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<td>W 10</td>
<td>2 variable NE 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strabo</td>
<td>Krommyon</td>
<td>Kleides Islands</td>
<td>3,00</td>
<td>W-N 10</td>
<td>0 NE 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stadiasmus</td>
<td>Karpaseia</td>
<td>Akra</td>
<td>3,00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stadiasmus</td>
<td>Soloi</td>
<td>Kerynea</td>
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<td>Palaia</td>
<td>3,00</td>
<td>W-NW 10</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Anemourion</td>
<td>Krommyon</td>
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<td>2 E-NE 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3 NE 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Paphos</td>
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<td>3 NE 10-15</td>
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<td>3 NE 15</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Kition</td>
<td>Berytos</td>
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<td>0 NE-E 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strabo</td>
<td>Akamas</td>
<td>Side</td>
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<td>Strabo</td>
<td>Akamas</td>
<td>Selinus</td>
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<td>Strabo</td>
<td>Akamas</td>
<td>Chelidonian Islands</td>
<td>0,00</td>
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<td>3 NE 10</td>
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<td>Soloi</td>
<td>2,00</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Arsinio</td>
<td>4,00</td>
<td>W-N 10</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stadiasmus</td>
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<td>Lapatosh</td>
<td>0,00</td>
<td>W-N 10</td>
<td>4 NE 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stadiasmus</td>
<td>Tretous</td>
<td>KouriaKos</td>
<td>4,00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Akra</td>
<td>Anemourion</td>
<td>0,00</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strabo 2,25 1,50
Stadiasmus 2,71 1,43

2.5. Granularity and Quality of Information:
The Problem of Salience

Distance is a core datum in geographic literature, but both authors give a series of additional information that is rather qualitative than quantitative, and therefore shed a new light on the question of the evolution of the representation of maritime spaces. At a first glance, the granularity seems to be finer in the Stadiasmus than in Strabo’s Geography.
Fig. 2.5 Akrai and akroteria in Strabo’s Geography (CAD Anne-Laure Pharisien/CReAAH).

Fig. 2.6 Akrai and akroteria in the Stadismus (CAD Anne-Laure Pharisien/CReAAH).
Some geographic entities, usually described as capes or promontories, should be considered as structural elements of space, especially the *akroteria* and *akrai* around Cyprus (Figs. 2.5, 2.6 and Table 2.2). *Akroteria* and *akrai* cannot be considered only as capes or promontories, that is to say horizontal or vertical salient geographical features. These are elements that organize space because they are useful landmarks which form nodes on the network of maritime routes.

Some of these *akrai* or *akroteria* can hardly be considered as visually salient landmarks, but they are undoubtedly cognitive landmarks. This is particularly the case for Akroterion Tretous in the *Stadiasmus*, which could be the *akra* Strabo places after Kourion. This place was known as the anchorage of al-Itritus during the Ottoman period. This anchorage offered good protection against the winds blowing from the north (*boreas*) and the east/south east (*euros*).

This example highlights that geographical entities do have formal features, but they are also characterized by their multiple capabilities: to protect ships, to offer safe mooring places, to be good landmarks, to create a landing place on shore, to provide ships with fresh water, or to make seafaring possible. This could be the case with Tretous, as the adjective ‘*tretos*’ generally describes rocks with holes through which mooring lines are to be pushed.

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### Table 2.2 Main *akroteria* and *akrai* mentioned in the *Stadiasmus* and in Strabo’s *Geography*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Stadiasmus</em></th>
<th>Strabo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akroterion Tretous (hardly located)¹</td>
<td>Krommyon (cape Kormakitis) akroterion defined as an akrà²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akroterion Kargaia³ (cape Gata): provides a harbour, a mooring place and water.</td>
<td>Anemourion (akra of Cilicia)⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akra (cape Apostolos Andreas)⁵</td>
<td>Sarpedon akrà (cape Aspostolos Andreas)⁶</td>
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<td>Akra (kai oros): cape of Aphrodite’s temple⁷</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Akra Pedalion (cape Greco)⁸</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Akra after Kourion (no name = Tretous?)⁹</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Akra Zephyria (north of Palaipaphos)¹⁰</td>
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28 Rapoport and Savage-Smith 2014, 476.
2.6. Salience and Visually Distinctive Features: The Case of Cape Pedalion

Salience derives from affordances, but salience also derives from visually distinctive features. The *Stadiasmus* description of Cyprus gives quite scanty details about these elements. Absolutely no information is given about Cape Pedalion, which is nowadays known as Cape Greco in the southern part of the island. On the other hand, Strabo’s description provides the reader with accurate and granular details. According to the geographer, Pedalion is a cape (*akra*), with a rough hill (*trakhus lophos*) on the top, which is high, and is both table-shaped and dedicated to Aphrodite. All these details give visual indications that characterize this cape and help the reader recognize it.

The concept of salience is also a relative one. Cyprus is an island with very sharp geographic contrasts, the Eastern part being much lower than the Western. In spite of this, Strabo’s description of the Eastern cape of Cyprus mentions an *akra* with an *oros*, on the top of which (*akrôreia*) is built a temple to Aphrodite Akraia, which cannot be entered by women. In front of this cape lie several islands. The *Stadiasmus* does not mention any of these details, but what is striking here is that Strabo’s description seems to describe a mountain in a location that is actually one of the lowest parts of Cyprus.

The only thing we can say is the little elevation at the very end of the cape is the only noticeable distinctive feature of this place. Therefore, the *oros* cannot be considered literally as a mountain, but simply as a prominent element in the landscape that characterizes an important landmark around Cyprus. What is more, this landmark is only noticeable when ships are navigating close to the coast, in an area made dangerous by the different islands around it.

2.7. Conclusion

Therefore, what makes the difference are actually the man-made buildings and facilities on shore. However, at the same time, the texts reveal that the basic features of the human representation of spaces

30 Geographia 14.6.3.
remain the same. While quantitative information cannot be considered as truly reliable for many reasons, such as the asymmetry of the distances estimated or some defects belonging to the manuscript, qualitative elements should be considered closely. Firstly, the texts we have studied put into sharp relief the fact that, if distances are usually based on rough estimates and closely linked to the length of time it takes to travel by sea, they are also somehow connected with seasonality and the estimation of good travel conditions. What is more, the definition of geographical elements at the end of the Hellenistic period is still based on affordances rather than on formal features. These geographers could say that a place was an oros even if it was not a mountain, just because it was somehow higher than its environment, and this specific feature made it highly salient in its environment. Akraï are neither particularly large capes nor high promontories, but they are salient in their environment and can provide seafarers with safe moorings, or offer good protection against the winds in specific conditions.

Bibliography


