

ABSTRACTS

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CORCYRA IN STRABO'S GEOGRAPHY

Corcyra, one of the most important Greek islands in the southern Adriatic, is mentioned by Strabo in different books and different contexts. It is situated close to the coast of Epirus, which made it an almost obligatory stop for those sailing either to southern Italy or towards the northern Adriatic; it also had a significant impact on the nearby Illyrian world. Strabo first refers to Corcyra in the first book of his *Geography*, in a passage in which he mentioned Apollodorus' criticism of Callimachus, who, contrary to the intention of Homer to transfer Odysseus' wanderings to the outer ocean (*exokeanismos*), mentioned Gaudos and Corcyra as places where these wanderings took place. Strabo (who accepted the identification of Scheria with Corcyra) explained the inconsistencies in Homer's poems with his deliberate inclusion of mythical elements, to please the audience and impart the true facts more easily. Strabo did not favour an Adriatic setting for Odysseus' wanderings, as proposed by Apollonius of Rhodes. According to Apollonius, Poseidon abducted the nymph Corcyra, the daughter of the river-god Asopus, to Black Corcyra; however, Apollonius did not identify this with Scheria; he called the island of the Phaeacians Drepane, placing it on Corcyra. A colony was established on Black Corcyra by the Cnidians, probably with the participation of the Corcyraeans.

Corinth founded a colony on Corcyra at more or less the same time as when it colonized Syracuse; traditionally this happened in 733 BC. Strabo speaks of the Liburni as the former masters of the island, not mentioning an earlier Eretrian settlement on Corcyra, which is attested by Plutarch; the data are not necessarily incompatible. The Liburnian control of the island (even if short-lived) is corroborated by their presence in Epidamnus, mentioned by Appian, and should be regarded as a historical fact. However, it is important for the correct assessment of the Liburnian expansion to distinguish between Illyria and the Liburni, whose homeland was in northern Dalmatia; at the time of their predominance in the Adriatic they equally threatened the Greeks and the Illyrians.

Strabo made mention of Corcyra several times in a geographical context and even recorded two proverbs linked with it. One is "*the whip of the Corcyraeans*", derived from a bronze cauldron in the sanctuary of Dodona, above which a statue was placed, holding a bronze whip; it was dedicated by the Corcyraeans.

The whip was made of three chains, with bones hanging from them, which were continuously striking the bronze cauldron when they were swung by the winds. The proverb was used to characterize those who talked too much, but the primary meaning of the Dodonaean ringing bronze cauldron was of a protecting nature, to keep the sacred precinct free from any evil influences. The second (“*Corcyra is free, shit where you wish*”) referred to the political and economic decline of Corcyra. The island had earlier been prosperous, but was ruined by wars and tyrants; it did not recover even after it had been proclaimed free by the Romans.

Keywords: Corcyra, Corcyra Nigra, Liburni, Strabo, Proverbs

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AT THE CURRENTS OF RIVER ARACHTHOS

THE *SEMA* OF ARNIADAS AND THE EPIC ORAL TRADITION

The aim of this paper is to analyze the epic diction and the functions of communication in the inscription of Arniadas (IG IX , 1 868, Corcyra, VII -VI BC), from the point of view of the oral tradition of heroic poetry. The inscription is a clear proof of the common use of the epic formulas as memorable language that transcends the limits of time. The use of writing as a new technology for funeral monuments recognizes the function of the epic tradition as a common poetic language for the celebration and collective memory. The cognitive patterns in the stele and in the inscription of Arniadas, a warrior of Corcyra who fell on the banks of the river Arachthos at the end of the seventh century BC, reproduce the rules of communication and memory that can be found in the oral composition of Homer. In Homer's poems there are many heroic monuments, but of course the oral poetry does not know the use of writing. They have the basic function as a metonymy of an event and of a person and as a material sign of kleos of heroes beyond the boundaries of time and space. At the end of the article I propose a brief comparison with the cognitive patterns of memory in the inscriptions of the monuments of the British soldiers killed in World War I on the banks of the river Piave.

Keywords: Homer, Oral Tradition, Writing, Memory, Arniadas

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ATHENS, CORCYRA, AND THE IONIAN ISLANDS (415-344 A.C.)

This paper aims to investigate the evolution of the relations between Athens and the Ionian Islands, especially Corcyra, from the second Athenian expedition in Sicily (415-413 BC) to Timoleon's accomplishments in the West (344 a.C.). The analysis of the scant available evidence shows Athens' constant interest for the area, which in these years becomes essential for two of the main actors of the Greek political scene: Sparta and Dionysius I of Syracuse. The renewed struggle between Athens and Sparta for the hegemony in the area, which began with Timotheos' expedition (375 BC), shows both the difficulty of Corcyra to maintain her in-ternal stability when involved in foreign conflicts, and the beginning of a process that brings the island to develop a new relation with Corinth as well as to become, in the second half of the 4th century BC, a reference point for the Corinthian colonies overlooking the Ionian Sea.

Keywords: Athens, Corcyra, Ionian Islands, Sparta, Dionysius I

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CORCYRA IN THE 4th CENTURY BC BETWEEN SPARTA AND SYRACUSE: WHERE HAVE ALL MY VESSELS GONE?

In the 6th and 5th centuries BC Corcyra's fleet was important enough to plan to confront its metropolis Corinth for the control of the western route. In order to do so it did ally with Athens when the Peloponnesian War broke out, taking part in the expedition to Sicily by its side. But its option to challenge Corinth had already led to great disorders within the Corcyro-Corinthian network and the outbreak of what had been – according to Thucydides – the worst civil war ever, due to endless rebellions. Getting involved in the expedition against Syracuse was a major tactical error. The routed Athenians dragged Corcyra down in their fall. Never after 413 BC would Corcyra regain the high position it used to have. Neither the rebellion of the Corinthians – outraged by the privileged alliance between Sparta and Syracuse – nor the end of the Spartan leadership making Athens reconsider its political options by drawing closer to Sparta and Corinth – thus de-priving Corcyra of support –, not even the Macedonian seizure of Co-

rinth, together with the Hellenistic kings' views on the Adriatic Sea, which prevented Corcyra from taking over Corinth as metropolis, would be any good. Symbolically, from the late 4th century to the early 3rd century Corcyra had fallen into the hands of the Spartan Kleonymos before being ruled by several monarchs: Kassandros, Agathokles, Pyrrhos. Corcyra had eventually failed in taking the best advantage of its situation on the West sea routes. Geography may well contribute towards the understanding of history but it cannot set its rules.

Keywords: Adriatic Sea, Corcyra, Corinth, Sparta, Syracuse

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CORCYRA'S WEALTH AND POWER

The aim of this paper is to examine all literary, epigraphic, numismatic and archaeological evidence and explain how Corcyra became a rich and powerful city. The wealth of its various natural resources (mainly wine and possibly timber) combined with its geographical location turned the city into a meeting place for traders from East and West. The numismatic policy of the city transformed Corcyra into a closed monetary zone where only the city's coinage could circulate and be recognized as legal tender. The coinage of Corcyra was on the Corinthian standard but with types connected to Eretria, the city that first colonized the island. The large fleet of Corcyra also protected merchants against piracy. By guaranteeing the safety of routes through the Ionian Sea, Corcyra attracted merchants from all over the Mediterranean and became a significant center of commerce.

Keywords: Corcyra, Eretria, Natural Resources, Coinage, Ionian Sea

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KING AGATHOCLES AND THE IONIAN SPACE:
PERSPECTIVES AND MODELS

In 306 B.C. Agathocles, tyrant of Syracuse, proclaims himself *basileus* by imitation of the *Diadochi* of Alexander: this date marks his political life and the defini-

tion of autocratic power in Syracuse and in Sicily. Above all, Agathocles was a great *strategos*: according to Diodorus he based his *basileia* on army, territory, and military enterprises. Before 306, his largest and most famous enterprise is his expedition to Libya; after becoming king, Agathocles turns back to Italy and to the Ionian area. In this strategic plan, he resumes some aspects of Dionysius' political project: in fact Dionysius and Alexander the Great were his most important models. At the same time, Agathocles wanted a stronger role in the Mediterranean balance of power. Unfortunately this stage is badly documented both in literary and historiographic sources, but it's evident he pursued a meaningful relationship not only with Ptolemy of Egypt, but with Macedon and the Macedonians. The focus of this political relation was the island of Corcyra: it was besieged by Cassander and freed by Agathocles. The Syracusan king gave it as dowry to his daughter Lanassa, who married Pyrrhus in 295 and then, in 291, Demetrius Poliorcetes: the latter probably intended to enlarge his power towards the West and particularly towards Sicily. At that moment, Corcyra was the centre of a network of relations among the new Hellenistic kings.

Keywords: Agathocles, *Basileia*, Demetrius Poliorcetes, Ionian Space

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LANASSA AND CORCYRA:

THE BRIDE, THE ISLAND, THE CULT OF DEMETER AT THE SERVICE
OF THE NEW HELLENISTIC KINGSHIP

Lanassa, daughter of Agathocles, was married to Pyrrhus in 295 BC and soon after (291/0 BC) to Demetrius Poliorcetes bringing with her the island of Corcyra as dowry. The event, central to the history of Ionic space in early Hellenism and an example of the confrontation between the kings of the period, is studied in this paper from a dual perspective: a reading of the symbolic potential of the island, the wedding, the bride and the dowry, and another centered on the value of the mythical-religious gesture of Agathocles, who evokes important cultic elements such as that of Zeus Olympius, the Nymphes and Poseidon, and Demeter and Kore, to place them at the service of the new Hellenistic *basileia*.

Keywords: Agathocles, Lanassa, Pyrrhus, Demetrius Poliorcetes, Royal Wedding