Tarrants einleuchtende Verbesserung fremzuque in 3, 716 (statt des überlieferten und wenig sinnvollen trepidumque, das eine Antizipation von trepidum aus 717 zu sein scheint) übernommen.


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Pomponius Mela’s De Chorographia libri tres occupies a special place among the classical works on geography which are transmitted to us. Although its form and content resemble those of the specialist Periplus and other works on geography like Strabo’s Geography and Pliny’s geographical books, the aims of Mela’s are different. He states his intentions more or less explicitly in the proemium: to write a rhetorical work on a subject which is by its character in principle unsuited to such a performance (impeditum opus et facundiae minime capax compare Cic. Att. 2, 4, 3, and 2, 6 and—not quoted by Parroni—Strabo XIV, 1, 9, C. 636 τὸ περιπελέες τῆς τοιαύτης γεωγραφίας). His intentions become clear in the numerous rhetorical phrases and figures of speech. Eventually, geographical exactitude is sacrificed to this purpose (see pp. 34-37).

Since the textual edition by G. Ranstrand which already was an improvement on the current Teubner edition by C. Frick, which appeared in 1971, one may ask how the work done by Parroni compares with that done by Ranstrand. The whole textual tradition of Mela is founded on one manuscript, Vat. lat. 4929 (second half of the 9th century). A number of corrections are provided by a second, contemporary, and a third, 11th to 12th century hand in this manuscript, as well as by later copyists and editors. Parroni mainly follows the text as corrected by V2, and although he often accepts the emendations proposed by Ranstrand he also in some cases prefers the text of V2. In chapter VI “Il Vat. Lat. 4929 e i suoi discendenti” (pp. 55-81) Parroni presents a survey of the available manuscripts with bibliography, and in chapter VII a survey of the most important editions, translations and commentaries (pp. 83-93). In the last introductory chapter, VIII: “La presente edizione” (pp. 95-108) Parroni expounds the methodological principles underlying his edition.

In my opinion, however, the main interest of this work lies in its extensive commentary (pp. 175-441). To provide nowadays an up-to-date commentary on a classical geographical text has become a tremendous and nearly impossible task in the light of the mass of secondary literature especially of archaeological and regional studies, which nobody can be expected to command on the whole of the classical οἰκουμένη. Parroni restricts his references to modern literature to those books and articles which are directly relevant to the understanding of Mela’s words, and he is right in doing so. Frequently the commentary refers to RE. Sometimes, however, the omission of a reference to special studies is debatable. For instance, in the discussion on the question of the origin of the flood of the Nile one could expect the mentioning of B. H. Stricker, *De overstroming van de Nijl*, Leiden, 1956, which presents a complete survey of all ancient theories on this subject. Also one wonders why the later article by J. W. Spaeth on the “floating islands in the Nile” has not been referred to *ad I*, 55 (CW 28, 1934-1935, p. 126).

The main value of this commentary consists in its extensive quoting of parallel passages and remarks by classical authors on peoples, places and other geographical features mentioned by Mela. Parroni has not confined these references to geographical literature in particular (Herodotus, Pliny, Strabo, Solinus, GGM, to mention a few of the most important) but also consulted the historiographical literature (e.g. Curtius Rufus, Xenophon, and