The geographer Strabo is referred to in the sources and manuscripts by that name alone, ‘Strabo’ or, in Greek, Στράβων. The Greek name Στράβων, meaning ‘cross-eyed’, is first held by Greeks of the pre-Roman period. The Roman cognomen ‘Strabo’, also meaning ‘cross-eyed’, subsequently becomes established in the Roman naming system, including those which, like ‘Strabo’, are traditional cognomina from the Roman naming system, including those which, like ‘Strabo’, are
naming system in Republican times. The geographer Strabo was Greek by descent but was born into a Romanised world. His family’s ancestral home, Amasia, had been part of the Greek kingdom of Pontus in Asia Minor before its defeat by the Romans in 66 BC, and Strabo himself was born in the late 60’s or 50’s BC. Scholars have long been intrigued by our geographer’s name. One approach has been to use it to identify possible family connections for, although Strabo names his great great-grandfather and his great-grandfather, he names neither parents nor grandparents. Etторе Pais deduced from our geographer’s name and from the information that he received his early education at Nysa that he might be related to the ‘Servilius Strabo’ included by Cicero among the ‘Nysaeans’ in a letter of commendation. A second approach has been to establish whether our geographer’s name is Greek or Roman, and the recent tendency has been to see it as a Roman cognomen and to link it with the Roman citizenship which, it is generally assumed, our geographer held. Most influentially, Glen Bowersock

ultimately of non-Latin origin. For the difficulty in finding an appropriate term, see notes 27 and 34.  
6) Latin Cognomina, 239.  
7) Strabo calls Amasia his ‘fatherland’ (πατρὶς) (12.3.15 C547—all references are to Strabo’s Geography unless otherwise indicated) and ‘my or our city’ (ἡμετέρα πόλις) (12.3.39 C561), which might simply mean that he considered it his family seat, or that it was his actual birth-place. Even if Strabo was born in Amasia, his own words show that he was at Nysa in Roman Asia for his early education (14.1.48 C650).  
8) Strabo’s birth used to be put in 64 BC, but I suggest, in The Expression ‘Our Times’ in Strabo’s Geography, CP 92.3 (1997), 235-246, that our geographer was born in the following decade. See also Katherine Clarke, In Search of the Author of Strabo’s Geography, JRS 87 (1997), 92-110.  
9) Strabo himself (10.4.10 C478; 11.2.18 C499; 12.3.33 C557) provides the only information we have on his family tree. See ‘Strabo’s Family Tree’ at the end of this article.  
10) Etторе Pais, Intorno al tempo ed al luogo in cui Strabone compose la geografia storica, in: idem, Italia Antica, 1 (Bologna 1922), 267-316, esp. 299 n. 1, noted by Honigmann, Strabon 3, RE 4A.1 (1931), 79-80. Pais sees in ‘Servilius Strabo’ a possible client of Publius Servilius Isauricus, to whom our geographer was possibly connected in some way (12.6.2 C568).  
11) Cicero Fam. 13.64.1. Cicero uses the inverted form ‘cognomen + nomen’, i.e. ‘Strabo Servilius’. Since the letter is written ca. 50 BC, if Servilius Strabo is a relative of our geographer, he is an older relative.  
12) G.G. Richards, Strabo. The Anatolian who failed of Roman Recognition, Greece and Rome 10 (1940-41), 79-90, esp. 81: “...it is difficult to say whether the name... came to him from a Roman or a Greek source”. G.W. Bowersock, in