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WELCOME TO THE MEDITERRANEAN SEMI-PERIPHERY: The place of Illyricum in book 7 of Strabo¹

Abstract: It is possible to argue that the concept of civilisation in Strabo's *Geography* was so significant that Strabo composed at least some of his books following a rigid descriptive trajectory from barbarity to civilisation. Strabo's depiction of Illyricum stands oddly between these two categories. While pointing out barbarity in his cultural assessment, he often contradicts himself and shows that the area was culturally much more advanced than he was prepared to admit. This paper recognises certain reasons behind his inconsistency. One is Strabo's ideological intention to present Roman political and military force as the agent of civilisation in the framework of Augustan imperial discourse.

1. Introduction: Barbarity and Civilisation in Strabo

Strabo is one of the more intriguing ancient scholars. Not only for the significant quantity of historical information preserved in his work, but also for certain ways of composition and structure in his colossal work. On the surface Strabo can be seen as a compiler who attempts to collect previous, often scattered knowledge, into a single account which he updates with recent events. However, if one looks at the *Geography* as a carefully planned work and Strabo as an author of integrity and originality, a philosopher and scholar, rather than a compiler of sources², some of the occasional silences and flaws that

¹ Special thanks to Dr. Hugh Lindsay (University of Newcastle), Dr. Han Baltussen and Dr. Ron Newbold (University of Adelaide) for their suggestions and constructive criticism and Ms. Barbara Sidwell for her help in editing.

² P. Thollard, *Barbarie et civilisation chez Strabon: Etude critique des livres III et IV de la Géographie*, Paris, 1987, esp. 3-4 and 88; K. Clarke, *Between Geography and History: Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World*, Oxford, 1999, 194 ff.; D. Dueck, *Strabo of Amasia. A Greek Man of Letters in Augustan Rome*, London, New York, 2000, 154 ff. all recognise the complexity of Strabo's work in its different aspects. If Syme's posthumously published book (R. Syme, *Anatolica: Studies in Strabo*, Oxford, 1995) was published earlier, his negative opinion of the "Grand Master of Classics" would affect scholars even more in their assessment of Strabo. Syme fiercely criticized Strabo as a compiler and even a copyist; cf. 356, "Strabo has no style and his opinions matter very little ...".

appear in the *Geography* might be explained in a more satisfactory way. It is generally accepted today that his way of synthesising available material reveals the intellectual purpose of the work and betrays its author as a composer rather than a simple compiler³, as well as the attitude of the period in which the *Geography* was composed⁴.

Strabo's omission of the settlement and cultural impact of the Greeks and Italians in Dalmatia is evident immediately in the context of his description of Illyricum in 7.5. The Adriatic Greeks remain insignificant in Strabo in spite of their role as Roman allies in the Illyrian wars as well as their significant economic potential⁵, with only bare mention of the settlements in 7.5.5, while Roman Dalmatia is completely omitted, lacking even a single notice. Thriving *conuentus* – vibrant and numerous communities of Roman citizens in Pola, Iader, Salona, Naronia and Lissus – were raised to the status of colonies some 40-50 years before Strabo composed his work, and contemporary references mentioning them were available in the sources he was using for the *Geography*⁶. Despite that, his description of Illyricum in 7.5 reveals an archaic political landscape deriving mostly from sources of the third and second century BC, with only occasional and very selected updates. This inadequacy or neglect should not be explained as only due to the obscurity of the sources that Strabo had at his disposal. It seems as though Strabo projected a particular picture of Illyricum according to his philosophical and political views that significantly impacted upon the composition of some parts of the *Geography*, as this paper shall argue.

³ A. N. Sherwin-White, *Racial Prejudice in Imperial Rome*, Cambridge, 1968, 2; F. Lasserre, "Strabon devant l'Empire romain", *ANRW* II.30.1, 1982, 872 (Strabo's perception of the empire); S. Potheary, "Strabo, the Tiberian author: Past, Present and Silence in Strabo's *Geography*", *Mnemosyne*, 55(4), 2002, 387-443 (Augustan and Tiberian political atmosphere); E. Ch. L. Van der Vliet, "Review of J. Engels, *Augusteische Oikumenogeographie und Universalhistorie in Werk Strabons von Amaseia*", *Mnemosyne*, 56(4), 2003, 502.

⁴ G. Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul*, Cambridge, 1998, 50 ff.

⁵ B. Kirigin, T. Katunarić, L. Šešelj, "Preliminary notes on some economic and social aspects of amphorae and fine ware pottery from Central Dalmatia, 4th-1st BC" (title of English summary), *VAPD*, 98, 2005, 7-21.

⁶ Strabo knew Caesar (Dueck, [n. 2], 93-4) and *conuentus* from Salona and Iader each play a prominent episodic role in his writings; *Caes. B Ciu.* 3.9 and *B Alex.* 42-47. The *Autobiography* of Augustus that included his campaigns in Illyricum is now lost, but was used by Strabo, see below (n. 32), and M. Šašelj-Kos Appian and Illyricum (Situla 43), Ljubljana, 393-94.

Barbarity and civilisation in Strabo's work have attracted significant attention from modern scholarship,⁷ as indeed, their polarity might be seen as a key element in unlocking and understanding the *Geography* as an integrated work on many structural sub-levels and not only as a manual for the administrators of the Empire, as he stated in 1.1.1⁸. The role of barbarians in this work was much more complex than a simple embodiment of otherness and stereotypical opposition to the values of civilisation. Civilisation and barbarism are the values juxtaposed in Strabo's work in a number of different contexts that are purposely used by him⁹. Interaction of civilisation and barbarism in Strabo is frequently shown through the model of a civilisational centre and periphery¹⁰. Posidonius, who made a strong impact on Strabo's philosophical foundations, distinguished two levels of barbarism according to the way of life and the influence of climate zones (cold - barbarian / warm - civilised), and a spatial West-East and South-North axis, thus developing the notion of a cultural semi-periphery.¹¹ However, although accepting the gradation of barbarians on a scale of cultural development, Strabo decisively departed from his influences¹². Instead of immutable Posidonian categories of barbarism, civi-

⁷ L. A. Thompson, "Strabo on civilization", *Platon*, 31, 1979, 213-29; E. Ch. L. Van der Vliet, "L'ethnographie des Strabon: Idéologie au tradition", in: F. Prontera (ed.), *Strabone: Contributi allo studio della personalità e dell'opera* I, Perugia, 1984, 29-86; Thollard, (n. 2); Dueck, (n. 2), 75-84.

⁸ Dueck, (n. 2), 75.

⁹ E. Almagor, "Who is a barbarian? The barbarians in the ethnological and cultural taxonomies of Strabo", in: D. Dueck, H. Lindsay, S. Potheary (eds.), *Strabo's Cultural Geography: The Making of a Kolossourgia*, Cambridge, 2005, 42-55 race/ethnicity, language, culture. Cf. also Dueck, (n. 2), 75 ff.; E. Ch. L. Van der Vliet, "The Romans and Us: Strabo's Geography and the Construction of Ethnicity", *Mnemosyne*, 56(3), 2002, 257-72. According to F. Lasserre, "Histoire de premiere main dans la Géographie de Strabon", in: Prontera, (n. 7), 11-26 barbarity and civilisation are also juxtaposed in a political context as barbarity explains the refusal of some peoples to accept Roman rule.

¹⁰ There is scholarly agreement on Strabo's centre-periphery point of view, but views on its structure differ considerably; cf. J. S. Romm, *The Edges of Earth in Ancient Thought*, Princeton, 1992, 46-47 and 47 n. 4 after Strabo 17.1.36, (Strabo structures the world into concentric circles based on an ethnocentric principle); Thompson, (n. 7), 213, 221 (division in rustic, semi-rustic and urban spheres); Clarke, (n. 2), 210 ff (a circular model with differentiated centre and periphery), Van der Vliet, (n. 7), 44 (a multi-centred model of civilisation).

¹¹ See also the "vier Welte" model of Dobesch, distinguishing: Greco-Romans, "civilised barbarians" of the East, "semi-barbarians" of Europe and "wild barbarians"; G. Dobesch, *Das europäische "Barbaricum" und die Zone der Mediterrankultur*, Vienna, 1995, 16-21, or "les phases de la barbarie" of Y. A. Dauge, *Le Barbare: Recherches sur la conception romaine de la barbarie et de la civilization* (Collection Latomus 176), Bruxelles, 1981, 486 ff.

¹² Dobesch, (n. 11), 100-03 (the system of Posidonius), 104-05 (the influence on Strabo); Van der Vliet, (n. 7), 35-38, 44 ff.; Thollard, (n. 2), 22-26; Dueck, (n. 2), 60 ff.

lised barbarism and civilisation, he accepted the dialectical view that the evolution from barbarity to civilisation is always possible (2.5.26), most certainly developing his view under contemporary Roman discourse on barbarians that perceived the barbarians as ‘others’ but it did not make a significant opposition between ‘self’ and ‘other’.¹³

Thollard argued convincingly that Strabo’s interest in civilisation and its counterpart, barbarity, so strongly influenced the composition of some books of his *Geography* that, at least, some of them were conceptually composed. In this view the “ordre de la civilization” in books 3 and 4 affected and determined their composition and organisation, equally significant to the actual geographical layout. Thollard also argued that Strabo followed precise ways of composition, using “un système scientifique” that determined who is more barbarian and who is less barbarian and accordingly organised his description in that way¹⁴. Certainly, this “system” should be understood very loosely, because it is occasionally difficult to say how specific and consistent Strabo was in his standards for measuring barbarity. This objection of Clarke is perfectly valid. Yet, she is not able to disprove the existence of a loosely determined system in Strabo that establishes the hierarchical structure of different levels of civilisation. It is also necessary to take into account that Strabo’s system is relative, not absolute, i.e., determined through comparison (A is more civilised than B) rather than through measuring it as an absolute value¹⁵.

For Strabo, the distinction between barbarian and civilised can be seen in a few key areas, especially in social customs and social organisation, crucial factors that determined the way of life of a particular people¹⁶. Urbanised, settled, sophisticated and peaceful denotes civilisation, while warlike, nomadic, pastoral, unusual and simple denotes the domain of the *Barbaricum*. Also, the impact of environment was very significant in Strabo’s system, such as coast and plains

¹³ Van der Vliet, (n. 7), 37; Dauge, (n. 11), 481 ff.; Clarke, (n. 2), 213-15.

¹⁴ Thollard, (n. 2) shows that the “ordre de la civilization” follows the line from civilisation to barbarism in the composition of books 3 and 4.

¹⁵ Clarke, (n. 2), 213-15. A similar, if not the same, discourse as developed amongst the Romans is described by Dauge, (n. 11), 467 ff. as the “anthropologique barbarologique”.

¹⁶ The ultimate aim is achievement of ‘efficient government’ (τὰ πολιτικά), whether self-developed, or imposed by the Greeks, Macedonians and Romans (2.5.26) and whether particular people live “according to the rules” (πρὸς διαγωγὴν) cf. Sherwin-White, (n. 3), 4-5. Van der Vliet, (n. 7), 50-56, 66 distinguishes a hierarchical sequence of social/civilisational types in Strabo’s system, following the sequence urban-agricultural-nomadic-hunters/gatherers as well as brigands, who stood beside the sequence, but still very low on the scale.

opposed to mountains, south and temperate opposed to north and cold. Even physical proximity to civilisation was significant in this respect, certainly when influenced by a human factor (ἐπιμέλεια, προνοία)¹⁷. It was, in a way, a very complex system based on natural characteristics and social values that together determined a degree of civilisation for a certain area. The key value of civilisation for Strabo remains the polis, but the polis as a political entity, a municipality, rather than the polis as a settlement¹⁸. The political nature of the polis is the quality that separated civilised from uncivilised in Greek eyes, and it is not surprising that this belief strongly influenced Hellenistic ethnography and the attitude of Strabo's authorities, and certainly made an impact on his own attitude¹⁹.

2. Book 7 of Strabo's Geography

The depiction of Illyricum is a part of book 7, which is concerned with the remainder of Europe, the space between the Gaul-Alps-Italy line and Greece. Strabo divides this space into two sub-areas: northern and southern, separated by the Danube, and starts with the description of the northern part consisting of Germany, the Dacians, Scythians and northern shores of Pontus Euxinus. The difference between the sub-areas is not only in their actual position but also in the level of cultural development. The description of the northern area is the description of the cultural periphery, unknown and terrifying, timeless and remote, "... timeless world of barbarian customs"²⁰. It is, in Strabo's own words, "much simpler than the other part" (7.1.1)²¹. There are no cities, no political history, all this vast space is sparsely inhabited by barbarians. Strabo insists on an

¹⁷ Thompson, (n. 7), 215-17; Dueck, (n. 2), 77-79; Thollard, (n. 2), 12-19; cf. Sherwin-White, (n. 3), 1-13 (customs and social organisation); J. De Churruca, "Le commerce comme élément de civilization dans la Geographie de Strabon", *Revue Internationale des droits de l'Antiquite*, 48, 2001, 41-56 (trade).

¹⁸ Thompson, (n. 7), 221 ff. See P. Pédech, "La Géographie urbaine chez Strabon", *Ancient Society*, 2, 1971, 239-44 for functions and classification of cities in Strabo.

¹⁹ "... si l'homme, c'est-à-dire le Grec, est un animal politique, c'est-à-dire de la polis, le village, c'est l'autre, c'est-à-dire le primitif, le Barbare ou le simple paysan, qui deviendra un jour le païen." (footnote and quotation marks from the original are omitted), E. Lévy, "Apparition en Grèce de l'idée de village", *Ktéma*, 11, 1986, 127. See Van der Vliet, (n. 7), 44-47 for the Hellenistic origins of this ethnological approach, and C. Marcaccini, "Strabone e l'etnografia Ellenistica", in: A. M. Biraschi, G. Salmeri, (eds.), *Strabone e l'Asia Minore*, Perugia, 2000, 591-619 for its impact on Strabo 7.3.

²⁰ Clarke, (n. 2), 305 n. 21.

²¹ Cf. 4.5.2 - the Britons are much more simple than the Gauls.

idealised notion of justice amongst the Northerners, that is entirely due to the influence of Hellenistic ethnography that idealised primitive peoples, and it was Strabo's own intention to contrast their ideal way of life with the moral decadence of his own civilisation²². They might be morally superior to the Mediterraneans, but that does not make them less barbarian. There is a visible "ordre de la civilization" as the description goes from west to east, and Strabo finishes the subsection with its most civilised part, the north shore of the Pontus Euxinus²³.

The description of northern Pontus Euxinus seems very unusual, especially taking into account its strong links with the Greek world, and the considerable degree of civilisation it had achieved. The historical description Strabo presents is oddly inadequate and insufficient, especially for the period prior to the age of Mithridates and Augustus.²⁴ The general impression of the area is in agreement with his usual picture of barbarity: it is too far from the civilisational core, barely inhabited and too cold (7.3.18), and Strabo's perception of its indigenous population was that of barbarians, as they lack settled and urban life. The Nomads inhabited the hinterland, and they are generally very low on Strabo's civilisational scale, despite the moral qualities he acknowledges they have²⁵. Strabo sees even the Georgi, the most civilised amongst them, as unjust, money-getters and pirates (7.4.6)²⁶. They are an example of the Nomads falling from grace, after having been infected with the virus of civilisation²⁷. Preference for the term κώμη instead of κατοικία for the depiction of smaller settlements is notable in this passage, (7.4.4; 7.4.5)²⁸ and the word

²² Marcaccini, (n. 19), 598-99 and ff.

²³ Marcaccini, (n. 19), 615 opposes this view, but his study looks only at 7.3 as isolated from the wider context and thus lacks a perspective of the whole of book 7.

²⁴ F. Bosi, "La storia del Bosforo Cimmerio nell'opera di Strabone", in: G. Maddoli (ed.), *Strabone: Contributi allo studio della personalità e dell'opera* II, Perugia, 1986, 171-88. Strabo also minimises the role and position of anti-Roman rulers of the Bosporan kingdom in his times: B. Funck, "Das Bosporanische Reich aus der Sicht Strabons", *Klio*, 67, 1985, 273-80, somewhat differently seen in D. Braund, "Greek geography and Roman empire: the transformation of tradition in Strabo's Euxine", in: Dueck et al. (n. 9), 230-31.

²⁵ See above, (n. 16) and (n. 22). Cf. Dauge, (n. 11), 620-26, nomads as the antithesis to civilisation in Roman eyes.

²⁶ Agriculture alone is not a sign of civilisation for Strabo, it is the polis that ultimately shows it; Thompson, (n. 7), 220-21.

²⁷ De Churruca, (n. 17), 55.

²⁸ Strabo prefers the term κατοικία over κώμη for more civilised societies, Thollard, (n. 2), 10. The meaning of κώμη varies with context and period; cf. M. H. Hansen, "Kome. A Study in How the Greeks Designated and Classified Settlements

‘barbarians’ often employed in the description (7.4.3; 7.4.4; 7.4.5). It is interesting to note the transformation that happened to a number of Greek settlements in the area. They have been noted as poleis in earlier sources, while in Strabo they are presented as either a κώμη or a small city. One reasonable guess as to why he prefers this term is that in time they deteriorated in their city-status and lost their polis identity, especially during the Mithridatic wars and the devastating earthquake of 63 BC²⁹, but no definite explanation can be given.

7.5 starts a new section consisting of areas south of the Danube: Illyricum with Moesia, Epirus, Macedonia and Thrace. The parts on Macedonia and Thrace are lost, but can be reconstructed from the fragments quite accurately³⁰. The description of the areas that follow Illyricum reveals a civilised, urbanised world, well known and in a long and close relationship with the Mediterranean civilisational core. Illyricum, however, stands somewhere between the barbarian world of the north from the earlier section, and the semi-peripheral areas inhabited by civilised non-Greeks of the Balkans that follow in the description. In general, Strabo’s description of Illyricum (τὰ Ἰλλυρικὰ) is very unusual. He mostly relies on the older Greek sources like Polybius and Posidonius, even Hecataeus in some parts, combined with modern updates, so his description produces an unreal picture of the area that never existed in time or space³¹. Strabo avoids the use of Roman sources that dealt with Illyricum, such as Caesar or Asinius Pollio, both acknowledged as his sources elsewhere. The only Roman sources he obviously uses in 7.5 are Augustus’ *Autobiography* and Agrippa’s *Chorographia*³², and his own knowledge which were not Poleis”, in: M. H. Hansen, K. Raaflaub (eds.), *Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis* (Historia Einzelschriften 108), Stuttgart, 1995, 78-80 (κώμη in barbarian communities) and Lévy, (n. 19) (κώμη in general). See below (n. 51).

²⁹ Y. Ustinova, “The Bosphoran kingdom in late antiquity: ethnic and religious transformations”, in: S. Mitchell, G. Greatrex (eds.), *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity*, London, 2000, 153 with references; G. R. Tsetsckhladze, “A Survey of the Major Urban Settlements in the Kimmerian Bosphoros (With a Discussion of Their Status as Poleis)”, in: T. H. Nielsen (ed.), *Yet More Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis* (Historia Einzelschriften 117), Stuttgart, 1997, 68.

³⁰ See recently K. Boshnakov, *Die Thraker südlich vom Balkan in den Geographika Strabos. Quellenkritische Untersuchungen* (Palingenesia 81), Stuttgart, 2003 on southern Thrace.

³¹ For Strabo’s sources see R. Baladié (ed.), *Strabon: Géographie* Vol. 4 (Livre VII), Paris, 1989, 14 ff. (book 7 in general); D. Dzino, “Strabo 7.5 and imaginary Illyricum”, *Athenaeum* (forthcoming 2007); (section 7, 5 in particular).

³² Strabo and Roman sources; Dueck, (n. 2) 85-106. Strabo using Augustus, as his description of Segestica as a good place to wage war against the Dacians (7.5.2) is identical to Appian, *Ill.22* who admits following the *Autobiography* as the only source for those events. Strabo knew the names of the lapodean (7.5.4) and Delmataean (7.5.5) *ciuitates* that were defeated and burned by Octavian in 35-33 BC.

of the Pannonian uprising, *Bellum Batonianum* AD 6 – 9. Strabo notes Siscia and Sirmium, Roman strongholds that played a significant role in the war (7.5.2), he also knows of Bato (the Daesitiate), the leader of the Pannonii (7.5.3) and mentions the place Andetrium where Bato surrendered to the Romans (7.5.5). Whether his information derives from some eye-witness account, or common knowledge, is impossible to determine.

3. *Barbarity and Civilisation in Illyricum*

Strabo's description shows signs of both civilisation and barbarity in Illyricum. The aspects of barbarity are shown in the following sections of 7.5:

7.5.1 – “Barbarian parts”, but it must be noted that the word ‘barbarian’ is there applied in a general ethnic context to the non-Greek areas bordering on Greece (πρὸς νότον δ’ ἢ τε Ἑλλάς καὶ ἡ συνεχῆς βάρβαρος μέχρι τῆς ὀρεινῆς). Strabo never applies the word ‘barbarian’ to Illyricum and its inhabitants in any cultural context of 7.5, except for the Delmatae who ‘do not use money like the other barbarians’ (7.5.5), discussed below.

7.5.1 – “Illyrian mountains” (Ἰλλυρικὰ ὄρη), mentioned quite a few times (7.5.3; 7.5.10). The mountains are the domain of the barbarian for Strabo, compared with the coast or plains.

7.5.4 – The Iapodes, best known for fighting Octavian 35-34 BC, are “war-mad” (ἀρειμάνιοι)³³. Strabo points out the poverty of their land, another clear sign of barbarity³⁴, and also the tattooing custom that existed in Illyricum and Thrace, and was generally considered by the Greeks and Romans to be barbarous custom in his times³⁵.

7.5.5 – The Delmatae, who were fighting Romans on numerous occasions in the second and first century BC³⁶, used no coined money, unlike the other peoples inhabiting that coast, a custom that is in Strabo's view common with the other barbarians³⁷. He also sees them

³³ War is a sign of barbarity for Strabo, Thollard, (n. 2), 43-44 see (n. 40) below. Contra, Van der Vliet, (n. 7), 54-55, 66 arguing that it requires an organised and therefore civilised society.

³⁴ Their brigandage is directly caused by the poverty of the land, like the other Alpine peoples that preceded them in the description; Thollard, (n. 2), 13-14.

³⁵ C. P. Jones, “Stigma: Tattooing and Branding in Graeco-Roman Antiquity”, *JRS*, 77, 1987, 139-55.

³⁶ See above, (n. 33).

³⁷ He mixes up his authorities Posidonius and Polybius on that point. The Delmatae did not mint coins like some of their neighbours, but used it in everyday

as a greedy folk whose greed was punished by destruction of their leading *ciuitas* Dalmium in 155 BC by Scipio Nasica³⁸.

7.5.6 – The Ardiaei are described as pirates, ultimately resettled from the coast to the hinterland by the Romans in 135 BC³⁹. Strabo omits to note anything on the Illyrian (Ardiaean) kingdom, that was a highly organised social structure in the third – second century BC. Also there is his perception of perpetual warfare in the area, and the great pride of the natives that was crushed by the Macedonians and Romans⁴⁰. This is typical of Strabo who sees the arrival of Mediterranean political powers, especially Rome, as the moment of ultimate pacification of the area, and the catalyst of civilisation⁴¹.

7.5.7 – Very vivid description of the wild, animal-like Dardani (ἄγριοι τελέως)⁴². It seems that they suffered from quite bad publicity in Strabo's sources, so that they looked to him rather uncivilised and wild, compared with the other peoples from the Illyrian coast that preceded and followed the Dardani in the description⁴³.

7.5.10 – Strabo gives a general geo-economical overview of the area and points to neglect of the land, due to the intemperance of the natives (before the arrival of the Romans), scarcity of wine and coldness of the interior as well as the 'piratical nature' (ληστρικὸν ἔθος) of the natives⁴⁴. A benevolent physical environment is not therefore

life according to the archaeological finds; S. Čače, "Dalmatica Straboniana" (title of English summary), *Diadora*, 16-17, 1994/1995, 120-27.

³⁸ Cf. Polyb. 32.9.13; App. *Ill.* 11; Liv. *Per.* 47.

³⁹ App. *Ill.* 10; Liv. *Per.* 56; Plin. *HN* 3.142. Appian does not mention piracy but the raid of the Ardiaei and Pleraei into 'Roman Illyria', i.e., south-east Illyricum, as a cause for Roman intervention.

⁴⁰ The Romans also see war as a barbarian domain through the concept of *belli furor*; Dauge, (n. 11), 430-31, but as van der Vliet points out (n. 7), 54-55, 66, Strabo is aware that war requires a higher level of social organisation, cf. above (n. 33).

⁴¹ Clarke, (n. 2), 213-16, 235-39; Dueck, (n. 2), 115-22.

⁴² Bestial impulses as sign of barbarity; Thompson, (n. 7), 220; a way of living, Sherwin-White, (n. 3), 5.

⁴³ F. Papazoglu, *The Central Balkan tribes in pre-Roman times*, Amsterdam, 1978, 515-16.

⁴⁴ De Churruca, (n. 17), 51-54 is alone in his opinion that Strabo saw nothing particularly unusual in it, regarding it as another face of trade, thus a sign of civilisation. Van der Vliet, (n. 7), 66-67; P. De Souza, *Piracy in the Graeco-Roman World*, Cambridge, 1999, 200-04, are opposed to this view and see brigandage and piracy in Strabo as a sign of barbarity, because piracy shows the lack of good, unified and efficient rule. In fact, the use of the term ληστής in Greek shows no difference between piracy and brigandage; De Souza, 2-12.

supported by an adequate human factor, and the result is that civilisation did not appear on its own⁴⁵.

7.5.10 – Finally, describing Moesia Strabo points out that the ethnic Thracian people of the Bessi live a wretched life, and are called brigands even by the other brigands.

On the other hand, Strabo notes civilisation throughout Illyricum in a number of examples in 7.5:

7.5.2 – Segestica is described as a polis of the Pannonii, and the word polis is very common in the rest of the description, signalling the existence of an ordered and civilised life⁴⁶. In total there are 15 native cities mentioned, not counting Greek settlements. For comparison, the first part of book 7 (7.1- 4) has altogether 5 non-Greek poleis mentioned by Strabo. He notes that Segestica was on the crossroads of the trade routes, and for Strabo it is trade that comes only with the blessing of civilisation⁴⁷.

7.5.3 – In the description of the Pannonii Strabo sees Bato as ἡγεμῶν, not king, τύραννος, σκηπτουχος or φίλαρχος, the terms he usually reserved for barbarian chieftains⁴⁸. Strabo does not bring forth examples of their barbarity or savageness, as he did for the Germans earlier. They are not described as barbarians in a cultural context, although one should take into account their dispersed settlement and lack of Mediterranean diet and customs⁴⁹.

7.5.4 – There are 4 poleis of the Iapodes mentioned, taken by Octavian in 35 BC. Strabo observes that the Iapodes live on spelt and millet, living a poor but essentially settled life of agriculturalists.

7.5.4 – Strabo notes Scardona, a polis of the Liburni, and the trade route through the river Krka (Titius) towards the Delmatae. It is interesting that he overlooks other significant places in the otherwise highly urbanised Liburnia⁵⁰.

⁴⁵ Thollard, (n. 2), 12-19 προνοία and φύσις. Cf. the Numidians 17.3.15, who had a good environment but failed in the human factor, and the Greeks 1.3.1, who dealt with a harsh environment but developed a high level of civilisation.

⁴⁶ Polis in Strabo always signals a municipal organisation; Pédech, (n. 18), 239, and that is a sign of πολιτεία that leads to παιδεία. Sherwin-White, (n. 3), 5, 8; see Van der Vliet, (n. 7), 48-50 and ff. on παιδεία in Strabo. Strabo was tough in ascribing the status of polis to the settlements; see 3.4.13, where Strabo criticises Polybius for inflating the number of poleis in Iberia.

⁴⁷ De Churruca, (n. 17).

⁴⁸ Van der Vliet, (n. 9), 264-65.

⁴⁹ Cassius Dio, 49.36.2-4, and Appian, *Ill.* 22, did not hesitate for a moment to point out their barbarian nature.

⁵⁰ Urbanisation and municipalisation in Liburnia. G. Alföldy, *Bevölkerung und Gesellschaft der römischen Provinz Dalmatien*, Budapest, 1965, 68-96; J. J. Wilkes, *Dalmatia*, London, 1969, 160, 193 ff.

7.5.5 – The Delmatae till the soil and have a peculiar custom of land redistribution every eight years. Also there are 5 poleis and 50 κατοικίας of the Delmatae, and Delmion, destroyed in 155 BC is even noted as a μεγάλη πόλις⁵¹. Salona is shown as the ‘port’ (ἐπίγειον) of the Delmatae, which is inaccurate, as it was essentially a Hellenistic emporium taken over by Italian and Roman *conuentus* that sprung up there in the mid-first century BC, while Delmataean Salona was located more inland⁵².

7.5.7 – Rhizon and other small poleis are noted, Strabo even noticed an unnamed ancient city in Dardania. The Dardani are presented as musicians. Their care for music is a sign of civilisation, in spite of their wretched lives lived in caves⁵³.

7.5.9 – In the depiction of south-eastern Illyricum Strabo notes numerous local cities, and Apollonia as an exceedingly well governed city.

7.5.10 – Strabo brings forth the favourable and benevolent natural circumstances of the Eastern Adriatic coast, which is even compared with Italy.

4. Conclusion

On the basis of the foregoing review of section 7.5, we can see that Strabo’s depiction of Illyricum shows an equal case for and against civilisation in this region. It is obvious, but very odd that Strabo omits to mention significant settlements of Italians in Salona, Lissus, Iader, and Naron. Only Salona is mentioned, but in a wrong context as the port of the Delmatae. Strabo does note Greek Dalmatia but reveals nothing more than the names of the settlements and their

⁵¹ Clarke, (n. 2), 273; cf. G. Maddoli, “Fra Ktisma ed Epoikia: Strabone, Antioco e le origini di Metaponto e Siri”, in: Maddoli, (n. 24), 137-57, is not right with linking generally κατοικία with ἀποικία only in the aspect of initial foundations of settlements, as κατοικία has a wider application in Strabo. Κατοικία denotes dispersed settlement in Strabo; Pédech, (n. 18), 251, and sometimes just small settlements or fortresses, as might be seen in Italy 5.3.9; 5.4.8; 5.4.11. It is significant to see a link between the military nature of κατοικία that appears in the Hellenistic period and numerous *gradine* (hillforts) of the Delmatae. See Čače, (n. 37), 108-13 on κατοικίας of the Delmatae.

⁵² Discussed in more detail in Dzino, (n. 31). See also D. Dzino, “Late Republican Illyrian Policy of Rome 167-60 BC: The Bifocal Approach”, in: C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 12 (Collection Latomus 287), Bruxelles, 2005, 60-61, with references.

⁵³ Sherwin-White, (n. 3), 11. This fondness for music should be perhaps linked with orgiastic cults/Dionysus, G. Aujac, “Strabon et la musique”, in: Maddoli, (n. 24), 12-14; see also Papazoglu, (n. 43), 519.

founders, failing even to note the founders of Issa in 7.5.5⁵⁴. That is a somewhat surprising fact in light of his consistency⁵⁵ in mentioning Roman colonies in the West as the factors and significant catalysts of civilisation⁵⁶, and acknowledging earlier civilising role of the Greeks⁵⁷. Native political institutions such as the Illyrian kingdom also remain unnoticed, as Strabo follows the Graeco-Roman ethnographic tradition that stresses picturesque details rather than the political or sociological structure of observed “barbarian” society⁵⁸. There is a good parallel with the Tauriscan Chersonesus, where the dynasty of Spartokides and Pontic Greeks in general remain almost unnoticed, and are pushed by Strabo into the historical background until the conquest of Mithridates⁵⁹.

Strabo’s note in 7.5.10 about the ληστικὸν ἔθος of the natives in Illyricum, their only truly barbarian common characteristic, directly contradicts everything he has said about them, and seems a superficially superimposed opinion of Strabo, or a common opinion he agrees with⁶⁰. The brigands and pirates in Strabo otherwise refuse to obey any authority⁶¹ and have developed no polis institutions, unlike the inhabitants of Illyricum as mentioned in 7.5. Strabo accuses explicitly only the Ardiaei for piracy and the Bessi (7.5.12) for brigandage. The Ardiaei and other southern Illyrians used to live in the cities and had an organised and complex society that in no way corresponded

⁵⁴ This silence of Strabo gives strength to the claims of G. Woodhead, “The ‘Adriatic empire’ of Dionysius I of Syracuse”, *Klio*, 52, 1970, 504-12, that Dionysius I of Syracuse was not behind the foundation of Issa, and that his “Adriatic empire project” from the 380s BC is largely a conjecture of modern scholarship.

⁵⁵ Consistency but not persistence; colonies in Gallia Narbonensis are omitted; Syme, (n. 2), 361. However, Strabo, unlike in Illyricum, otherwise acknowledges the strong Roman presence, and Roman cultural and political influences in Narbonensis.

⁵⁶ Lasserre, (n. 3), 892-94, as opposed to Roman colonies in the East that were resented and ignored by Strabo. Whether Strabo resented Roman rule in the East is questionable; Clarke, (n. 2), 239-44.

⁵⁷ Sherwin-White, (n. 3), 5, 8.

⁵⁸ A. M. Riggsby, *Caesar in Gaul and Rome: War in words*, Austin, 2006, 48-50.

⁵⁹ Funck, (n. 24); Bosi, (n. 24), 174-78.

⁶⁰ Endemic piracy in the Adriatic is largely a construct of Roman foreign policy, H. J. Dell, “The Origin and Nature of Illyrian Piracy”, *Historia*, 16, 1967, 344-58, and recently S. Fuscagni, C. Marcaccini, “Illiri, *hostes communes omnium*: l’immagine de una conquista” in: L. Moscati Castelnuevo (ed.), *Identità e Prassi Storica nel Mediterraneo Greco*, Milan, 2002. This view is challenged by C. Ferone, “Appiano Illyr. 3 e la pirateria illirica nel IV sec. A.C.”, *Hermes*, 132(3), 2004, 326-337, but his, mainly literary, evidence is not convincing enough to seriously challenge it.

⁶¹ Van der Vliet, (n. 7), 68.

with Strabo's archetypal pirates and brigands⁶². Perhaps the influence of Polybius should be blamed for this negative assessment of the Ardiaei, as his account of the First Illyrian War 229 BC in book 2 carries a visible pro-Roman bias. Polybius exaggerated the Roman role as the protectors of international trade against Ardiaean piracy, while the actual reasons behind the war were more related to the rise of the Ardiaean kingdom in the 230s BC as a regional political and maritime power, than to their endemic piracy⁶³.

Although some blame should be placed on Strabo for the neglect of his sources, it looks as if his description of Illyricum was indeed partly made to fit in order to introduce to his audience the more civilised parts of the Balkan peninsula, and the layer of reasonably civilised but not ethnically Greek areas. Civilisation in Dalmatia is minimised, especially in the description of the north and central Adriatic coast, while the description of Pannonia is brief and neutral, without implying raw barbarity, such as the areas of the far north described in the first part of book 7. Illyricum begins in the circle of semi-periphery, being in a way the continuation of the earlier section on the Tauriscan Chersonesus. In the context of book 7, the Chersonesus seem to be the most civilised barbarian region and, as such, complements Illyricum, the most barbarian of the (semi)civilised parts. They are as twins dwelling on opposite sides of Strabo's civilisational divide. The Chersonesus was a meeting place between the centre and periphery⁶⁴, touched by the cultural superiority of the centre, but still held back by the utterly alien nature of the periphery. Strabo's Illyricum is a long neglected sibling of the Greco-Roman world, familiar but primitive and violent. It stands on the fence between periphery and semi-periphery because it is in the temperate zone, it has natural benefits, its people know agriculture and engage in trade and live orderly lives in cities. However, it is also driven back from civilisation and prevented from advancing by the fierce nature of its inhabitants and their brigandage, as well as the unfortunate abundance of mountains. The Danube plays a prominent role in book 7, achieving

⁶² P. Cabanes, *Les Illyriens de Bardylis à Genthios: IV^e – II^e siècles avant J. – C.*, Paris, 1988, 207-33. Strabo notes Rhizon, the capital of the Ardiaean kingdom later in 7.5.7 as a polis, but makes no connection whatsoever between the Ardiaei and Rhizon.

⁶³ Dell, (n. 60); P. S. Derow, "Kleemporos", *Phoenix*, 27, 1973, 118-34; De Souza, (n. 44), 76-80.

⁶⁴ Bosi, (n. 24), 186 sees it as a meeting point of the Greeks and the Nomads. This seems far more believable than Clarke, (n. 2), 239, who sees it as a meeting point between East and West. The Nomads are too low on the scale of civilisational development for Strabo. They are rather a peripheral North than a semi-peripheral West.

its significance in Strabo, not only as a geographical feature, but also as a symbolic line, as it sharply divides semi-barbarians from barbarians. The symbolism of the Danube is, perhaps, influenced and conveniently determined by the extent of direct Roman power⁶⁵.

There is even a miniature “ordre de la civilization” inside Illyricum, with the order opposite to the one Thollard noticed in books 3 and 4, as the description goes from interior to the coast, from the less civilised Pannonii to the more civilised coastal areas. Thus we can see book 7 not only in its geo-historical context but also as being conceptually composed according to the “ordre de la civilization”. Strabo achieves structural equilibrium leading his description from ultimate Barbarity to the fringes of ultimate Civilisation. It is interesting to note that the order is opposite to the one employed in the books 3 and 4, as it follows the sequence Barbarity – Civilisation instead of Civilisation – Barbarity. Perhaps an even more complex sequence can be determined in Strabo. Books 3-4 (Civilisation-Barbarity); 5-6 Italy (Civilisation); 7 Europe and the Balkan peninsula (Barbarity-Civilisation); 8-10 Greece (Civilisation) i.e. Civilisation-Barbarity-Civilisation-Barbarity-Civilisation. The centrality of the books describing Greece in a total of 17 books (7 before and 7 after) looks apparent, and this also emphasises its centrality as the ultimate core of civilisation.

The Roman military and political advance helped the area to finally start its march towards civilisation, and enter inside the zone of cultural semi-periphery⁶⁶. This view of Roman conquest as a catalyst of civilisation is a part of the ongoing Augustan imperial discourse in Strabo's lifetime and he is certainly not immune to those influences⁶⁷. Roman conquest is the crucial element that helps to explain his assessment of civilisation in Illyricum: it is in the zone of civilisation, close to both Italy and Greece, and due to the piratical nature of its inhabitants it does not achieve civilisation on its own, until it is conquered by Rome. The references to Roman conquest and military might are numerous and obvious in 7.5⁶⁸. Greek Dalmatia and

⁶⁵ Clarke, (n. 2), 215, clear-cut frontiers; Dueck, (n. 2), 115-22, Rome as a bearer of culture.

⁶⁶ In many ways fitting the category “la barbarie secondaire” of Dauge, (n. 11), 489-91.

⁶⁷ Van der Vliet, (n. 7), 75-78. See R. Hingley, *Globalizing Roman Culture: Unity, diversity and empire*, London, 2005, 50 ff. with detailed bibliography on Roman “imperial ideological discourse”.

⁶⁸ 7.5.3 (fortresses Siscia and Sirmium); 7.5.4 (Octavian and the Iapodes); 7.5.5 (Octavian and the Delmatae); 7.5.6 (Rome and the Ardiaei); 7.5.11 (Rome and the Scordisci).

Italian *conuentus* have no space in this scheme, as they mainly cohabited with the natives developing specific cultural forms⁶⁹ and did not conquer them like the Massilians, whose military valour secures them a prominent place in Strabo (4.1.5). To paraphrase what Woolf observed for Gaul⁷⁰, Illyricum is a Roman artefact, a cognitive geographical concept invented and organised by Roman power that provided the optimal conditions for this region to achieve its full moral, political and economic potential.

Thus, we can see more clearly why Strabo ignored Roman and downgraded Greek settlement in the Eastern Adriatic. Strabo's political and ideological point is obvious, the civilising influence of Rome finally pacified the area and included it in the Mediterranean cultural orbit, ending all warfare and piracy of the natives. The political and military force of Rome is the agent of civilisation, rather than the cohabitation of colonists and natives and their cultural interaction. This fact reveals the ideological core of Strabo's understanding of what civilisation is. He takes his Hellenistic authorities such as Posidonius or Polybius into an entirely different cultural level; it is the Roman concept of *humanitas*, rather than the Greek concepts of *παιδεία* or *φιλανθρωπία* of his predecessors that Strabo understands as civilisation in this context. The political institutions and urban lifestyles of the Romans (and Carthaginians) are maybe not enough to see them civilised sufficiently (1.4.9), but they are just the agents of civilisation who took over that role from the Greeks, the creators of civilisation. Rome is the force analogous to Nature, that brings civilisation and thus reshapes the world, rather than creates it⁷¹.

Humanitas in Strabo's times became a thoroughly Roman concept that provided an ideological blueprint for the invention of an imperial culture, the establishment of the empire and the development

⁶⁹ D. Rendić-Miočević, "Les Illyriens sur les inscriptions des colonies grecques en Dalmatie" (title of French summary), *VAHD*, 53, 1950/1951, 28 ff.; B. Kirigin, "The Greeks in Central Dalmatia. Some New Evidence", in: J-P. Desceœudres (ed.), *Greek Colonists and Native Populations*, Canberra, Oxford, 1990, 299, 305-10; *Idem*, "The Greeks in Central Dalmatia", in: L. Bracessi, S. Graciotti (eds.), *La Dalmazia e l'altra sponda: Problemi di archaiologia Adriatica*, Florence, 1999, 156-61, cf. Woodhead, (n. 54), 509-11: the cohabitation of the Greeks and natives in central Dalmatia, especially in Issa and Black Corcyra.

⁷⁰ Woolf, (n. 4), 54; cf. E. O'Gorman, "No place like Rome: Identity and difference in the *Germania* of Tacitus", *Ramus*, 22(2), 1993, 135-54 for the Roman creation of Germany, or P. C. N. Stewart, "Inventing Britain: the Roman creation and adaptation of an image", *Britannia*, 26, 1995, 1-10 for the invention of Britain.

⁷¹ Pliny clearly defines this, a few decades after Strabo, cf. R. Evans, "The Cruel Sea? Ocean as Boundary Marker and Transgressor in Pliny's Roman Geography", *Antichton*, 39, 2005, 105-18.

of a new imperial identity. The Augustan age reinvented the earlier Roman identity and created imperial perception of the world. It also emphasised the civilising mission of the empire to spread *humanitas* throughout the world, and through this it gave a meaningful purpose and justification of Roman imperialism.⁷² Civilisation and the empire are one and the same indistinguishable category in Strabo, and they also redefine the sense of Romanness in his times as a heterogeneous, hybrid and inclusive identity that reassembled different geographical identities into the common Roman identity open for all those willing to share it.⁷³ He was one of the intellectual children of the “Augustan revolution”.⁷⁴ There was no conflict between his Roman and Greek identity, to build upon the argument of Clarke,⁷⁵ but rather a dialogue as they were both incorporated and embraced by his imperial Roman identity, which maintained an internal ideological cohesion of his *Geography* through its juxtaposition of barbarity and civilisation.

⁷² Woolf, (n. 4), 54-60; Hingley, (n. 67), 49 ff.

⁷³ P. Lee-Stecum, “*Tot in vno corpore formae: Hybridity, Ethnicity and Vertumnus in Propertius book 4*”. *Ramus*, 34(1), 2005, 22-46.

⁷⁴ H. Lindsay, “Syme’s ‘Anatolica’ and the Date of Strabo’s ‘Geography’”. *Klio*, 79(2), 1997, 484-507; Dueck, (n. 2), 151.

⁷⁵ See K. Clarke, “In Search of the Author of Strabo’s *Geography*”, *JRS*, 87, 1997, 92-110.