

## CATHAEANS, THE LAND OF SOPEITHES AND A CERTAIN KAI IN STRABO'S *GEOGRAPHY*

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**ABSTRACT:** Having in view a critical analysis of the first sentence of chapter XV 1, 30 of Strabo's *Geography*, the author of the paper refers to the Greek and Latin accounts of a country named Cathaea, its people – the Cathaeans, and a country named the land of Sopeithes, all situated in contemporary Punjab. The comparison of sources, i.e. of the appropriate passages from Diodorus, Curtius Rufus and Strabo, indicates that despite general similarities that can be spotted in the three descriptions of customs of the land of the Cathaeans and that of Sopeithes, there can also be noticed some significant differences in which Strabo opposes the other accounts. The customs attributed to the people of the land of Sopeithes by Diodorus and Curtius are attributed to Cathaea by Strabo, the latter jointly presenting what is attributed to the two different countries in the other texts. The question arises whether the closer association of the two described countries was intentional in the original account of Strabo. In consequence, the value of modern editors' insertion of the conjunction καί separating both countries in the first sentence of Strabo's description has been questioned.

The starting point for the considerations upon which this paper is based is information about a country named Cathaea (Καθαία – Κάθαια or Καθαία), its people named the Cathaeans (Καθαίοι – Κάθαιοι or Καθαῖοι [cf. Arr. *Anab.* 5.22]) and a country named the land of Sopeithes (Σωπειθης; ἡ Σωπέιθους), as presented by Strabo of Amasea in chapter XV 1, 30 of his *Geography*. The paper has in view a critical approach towards the first sentence of the chapter and a certain emendation which, despite a lack of manuscript evidence, has been accepted by modern editors of Strabo's work.

Strabo's (ca 64/63 BC–ca AD 23/24) geographical compendium, entitled most probably Γεωγραφικά [ὑπομνήματα] (*Geography/Geographical Notes*), consists of 17 books and is, most likely, the first ancient attempt at picturing the world as it was known at the time in a complex way. Moreover, it is the only fully preserved ancient work dedicated to chorography (descriptive geography) with respect to mathematical (physical) geography. Apart from strictly geographical information (such as the size of particular lands, landform features and climate), *Geography* contains a large amount of ethnographic, historical, religious, philological and economic information, communicating a lot about the cultural history