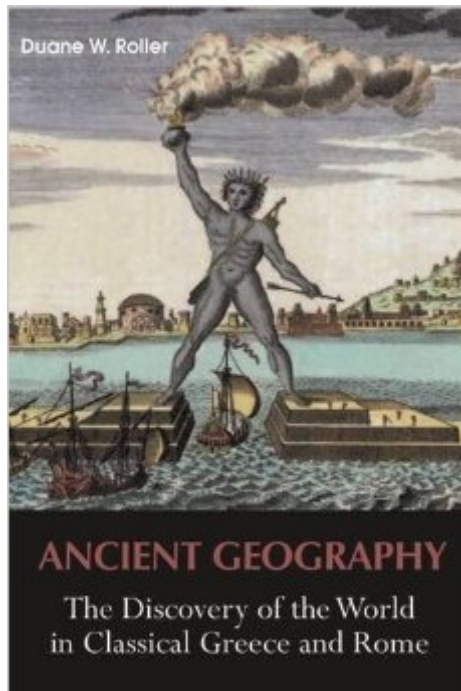


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Ancient Geography: The Discovery Of The World In Classical Greece And Rome (Library Of Classical Studies)



Synopsis

The last dedicated book on ancient geography was published more than sixty years ago. Since then new texts have appeared (such as the Artemidoros palimpsest), and new editions of existing texts (by geographical authorities who include Agatharchides, Eratosthenes, Pseudo-Skylax and Strabo) have been produced. There has been much archaeological research, especially at the perimeters of the Greek world, and a more accurate understanding of ancient geography and geographers has emerged. The topic is therefore overdue a fresh and sustained treatment. In offering precisely that, Duane Roller explores important topics like knowledge of the world in the Bronze Age and Archaic periods; Greek expansion into the Black Sea and the West; the Pythagorean concept of the earth as a globe; the invention of geography as a discipline by Eratosthenes; Polybios the explorer; Strabo's famous Geographica; the travels of Alexander the Great; Roman geography; Ptolemy and late antiquity; and the cultural reawakening of antique geographical knowledge in the Renaissance, including Columbus's use of ancient sources

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Customer Reviews

Geography and medicine are the principal places in ancient thought at which the study of humankind and the study of physical things intersect. Geography itself has a large intersection with astronomy: notions like the cardinal directions can be defined using the celestial sphere, and various celestial phenomena are involved with determining latitude and longitude (for longitude, eclipses matter). This is a perfect book introducing geographical thought in antiquity. There are many

classical writers of poetry and prose who mention geographical topics in passing, and Roller does a masterful job curating this material. There are some questions that I felt were not sufficiently explained: for example, I still only have a shallow idea of how distances were determined by water and land travel. Did different places and times have different conversions between days of sailing and stades? What about land travel-- was there a rough conversion used between days of travel in different terrains and stades? If there are not explicit statements about this in extant writings, nevertheless this is so important for getting a feel for ancient geography that I would like to be shown plausible reconstructions. I would like to have an explicit description of the work of bematists (measuring distances by pacing): it is simple to say the words "they measured distances by pacing", but this only makes precise sense if they walked on an arc of a great circle, and I want to know the steps of how this actually was done.

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