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AFRICA IN ANCIENT GEOGRAPHICAL SOURCES

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CLUJ-NAPOCA

2024

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Keywords: Ancient Africa, Ancient Greece, Roman Empire, Libya, Ancient Geographical Sources, Literary Sources, Geographical Imaginary, Cartographic Sources, Geographical Perceptions, eco-historia.

Summary

This paper explores how Africa was perceived and described in ancient geographical sources, analyzing both Greek and Roman literary sources, as well as indigenous and cartographic ones. The work is structured into several chapters that address this theme from different perspectives, providing a comprehensive analysis of how Africa was represented in various periods and by different ancient authors.

In the context of the undertaken research, secondary objectives were also defined, aiming to: synthesize information regarding the geographical representations of Africa in ancient sources; contextualize these representations within the broader framework of ancient geographical knowledge; and establish a general chronological framework for the evolution of geographical perceptions of Africa in the analyzed sources.

To achieve these objectives, data extracted from relevant ancient literary and geographical sources were used. In the absence of direct research on ancient texts and maps, the available information would have been insufficient to conduct critical analyses of how Africa was represented and integrated into the geographical knowledge of the time. Thus, thirteen literary and geographical sources were analyzed, allowing for a more precise delineation of how Africa was conceptualized in different periods. This formed the basis of a representative sample necessary for comprehensive analyses.

The data presented in this paper contributes to the valorization of ancient sources from both scientific and cultural perspectives, being relevant for the historical understanding of how Africa was perceived and described in antiquity. Moreover, the results of this research provide a reference framework for reevaluating the contribution of ancient geography to the knowledge of the continent. The work is divided into nine chapters, with the first five being further subdivided into multiple subchapters.

The first chapter of the paper explores the reasons behind choosing the topic, highlighting its relevance in the context of ancient history and geography studies. It emphasizes that Africa played an important role in the geographical knowledge of the ancient world, being considered not only an exotic and distant territory but also a source of wealth and natural resources. This chapter also discusses the research opportunities offered by the

subject, especially in terms of reevaluating ancient sources through the lens of modern methodologies. The choice of topic is justified by the desire to correct certain persistent stereotypes and to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of Africa's geographical image in antiquity.

The second chapter provides an overview of the evolution of studies on the geography of Africa in ancient sources, from the earliest descriptions to modern approaches. It explores the different stages of research, beginning with early descriptions in ancient, medieval, and Renaissance sources, and continuing with the advancements made in the 20th century and contemporary research. A central aspect of this chapter is the analysis of how stereotypes and misinterpretations have influenced the understanding of Africa, highlighting the need to approach ancient sources with a critical eye and to acknowledge the limitations of the geographical knowledge of the time.

In the third chapter, the discussion focuses on the analysis of indigenous literary sources, particularly the „Periplus of Hanno”. This text is one of the few sources that provides a perspective on Africa from the point of view of an African explorer or someone from the proximity of the continent. The chapter explores the content and historical context of the „Periplus”, emphasizing its importance for understanding how Africa was perceived by its inhabitants and by those who directly interacted with the continent.

Chapter four offers a detailed analysis of how Africa was described in the Greek literary sources, examining the works of authors such as Homer, Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Ptolemy, and Strabon. Each author is studied in depth, with a focus on the particularities of how Africa is presented in their works. The chapter also compares different Greek sources, highlighting both the common elements and significant differences in perceptions of Africa. It underscores the crucial role that Greek sources played in shaping the image of Africa in antiquity and how they influenced perceptions of the continent in the centuries that followed.

Chapter five examines the representations of Africa in the Roman literary sources, in the works of authors such as Sallustius, Pomponius Mela, Pliny the Elder, Lucanus, and Solinus. The analysis reveals a diversity of perspectives on Africa, reflecting both the Roman imperial interests and the intellectual curiosity of the time. The chapter also highlights how the representations of Africa in Roman sources were influenced by Rome's political and

commercial relationships with African regions, contributing to a complex and often contradictory image of the continent.

Chapters six and seven focus on the analysis of the *Itinerarium Antonini* and the *Tabula Peutingeriana*. These sources offer a unique perspective on how Africa was perceived geographically in antiquity, highlighting trade routes, important settlements, and the relationships between different regions of the continent. The analysis of these itineraries reveals not only the geographical knowledge of antiquity but also how this knowledge was influenced by various factors. The chapters emphasize the importance of these sources for understanding geographical perceptions of Africa, showcasing both the accuracy and the limitations of these representations.

Chapter eight provides a comparison between the various sources analyzed in the work, identifying both the convergences and discrepancies in how Africa was described and perceived during the ancient period. This comparative analysis allows for a more nuanced understanding of the diversity of perspectives on Africa, highlighting the cultural, political, and economic influences that shaped these representations. The chapter also discusses how the image of Africa evolved over time, reflecting changes in geographical knowledge and the relationships between different regions of the ancient world.

The work concludes with a chapter summarizing the main findings of the research. It argues that the representations of Africa in ancient geographical sources were profoundly influenced by a range of factors, including the political, economic, and cultural interests of the authors. The need for a critical study of these sources is emphasized to overcome the stereotypes and myths that have shaped perceptions of Africa throughout history. The contribution of this research to understanding the complexity of Africa's image in antiquity is outlined, along with the relevance of this image for contemporary geographical and historical studies.

Thus, the present work represents a contribution to the understanding of how Africa was perceived and described in ancient geographical sources, offering a detailed and critical analysis of the texts and geographical sources that shaped the image of this continent in the consciousness of ancient Greece and Rome. By integrating Greek and Roman literary sources, indigenous accounts, and geographical representations, the research aimed to outline

a complex and nuanced image of Africa, highlighting the diversity of perceptions and the cultural, political, and economic influences that underpinned them.

Throughout the analysis, it has been demonstrated that representations of Africa varied significantly depending on the historical and cultural context, and these variations were reflected in both literary and cartographic sources. From the mythological and exotic images painted by Greece to the more precise and detailed descriptions of the Roman era, Africa was consistently a region that sparked interest and curiosity in the ancient world. However, these representations were often filtered through the lens of stereotypes and imperial interests, leading to a sometimes distorted or fragmented perception of African realities.

Finally, the last part of the work includes a bibliography and a list of figures.

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