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– Section 1: Editorials –

Philosophy and Geography

by

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# Philosophy and Geography

Manuela Albertone, Simone Mammola, Enrico Pasini, Ernesto Sferazza Papa



AFTER “Erasmian Science” and “Gastronomy and Revolution”, the Journal of Interdisciplinary History of Ideas has again issued a Call for Paper, for a special issue dedicated to the historical relations of Philosophy and Geography. It will be guest-edited by Ernesto Sferazza Papa and Simone Mammola, and appear end 2017. As it is stated in the Call for Papers, the aim of this special issue of the Journal of Interdisciplinary History of Ideas will be to answer the many relevant questions concerning the historical connections between philosophy and geography, exploring the possible theoretical intersections between them to which this history points.

The relationship between philosophy and geography, especially in the european tradition, has gone overlooked. If we look briefly at the history of philosophy, we notice that only a few authors seems to show a deep interest to geographic knowledge. Only in recent years the analysis of the connections between philosophy and geography has gained interest, especially thanks to the classical works of authors such as Carl Schmitt, Michel Foucault, Claude Raffestin, Brian Harley and David Harvey, just to mention a few of the leading figures in this field of studies. The rapid development of similar studies is due mostly to the complex global conditions of today’s society, but also to the theoretical necessity to overcome a lack of communication existing the disciplines.

This lack of interest seems to be a real paradox, if one considers Strabo’s *Geographica*, one of the first examples of a systematic elaboration of geographic thought, which not only highlights a vague affinity between geography and philosophy highlighted, but also considers this affinity as a general methodology to study the universality of knowledge: “the science of Geography, which

I now propose to investigate, is, I think, quite as much as any other science, a concern of the philosopher” (I, 3).

After all, man’s geographic position is one of the most fascinating topic of the entire history of philosophy from its very beginning. For instance Anaximander was the first, at least in the Western World, who drew a map of the known world. And Thales had already conceived the Earth as a body floating in waters, implicitly defining a radical dichotomy between land and sea, establishing for the first time one of the most important categories of political and legal philosophy developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century primarily by Carl Schmitt. So, these are the main topics that we intend to target with this Call:

- i. The most general topic to deal with in this issue concerns the mutual influence of geography and philosophy from an historical, political and theoretical point of view. When, why, and how has philosophy been influenced by geography, and viceversa?
- ii. The second point we would like to develop is the relevance of geographical knowledge in the history of science, especially for the modern period, and its philosophical background.
- iii. In the third place, the contributions should analyze the role of geography, especially the rising cartographic techniques in the so called “age of discovery”. This topic should be addressed both from a political and historical point of view.
- iv. A fourth point involves the problematic legacy of Ptolemy’s doctrines in the modern age. Indeed, while astronomic discoveries were mostly influenced by Copernicus’ works, the revival of Ptolemy’s Geography provided the theoretical frameworks for the representation of the world according to the laws of perspective and its “canonization” in the famous atlases of modern age. The authors interested in this topic should focus their contributions on the impact of Ptolemy’s works on the modern geographical knowledge.
- v. A further, more theoretical point, deals with the question of a possible epistemology of geography. What is geographic knowledge? Is it autonomous from other forms of knowledge? How can we know something

from a geographic knowledge? Is there such a thing as “truth” in the geographic knowledge?

- vi. Finally there’s one last theme in need of a closer examination, related to a possible ontology of geographical concepts. What is a border? What is a place? What is a territory? Are the traditional tools of ontology able to answer such questions?

Deadline for the Call is May 15, 2017. More information can be found at:  
<http://www.ojs.unito.it/index.php/jihi/announcement/view/57>