Diodorus' Mythography : The Distinctive Features of Mythology within Universal History

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Diodorus Siculus wrote a unique mythography. It forms an integral part of a universal history and, embracing the myths of various peoples, is in itself 'universal'. There are, in addition, two levels in Diodorus' mythography. The first is the myths as narrated by his sources and the second is the tales with Diodorus' own modifications. This study concentrates on the second level, demonstrating that Diodorus' accomplishments as a writer of the myths agree with his statements on the nature of mythography and its importance within a historical work. Influenced by both the Greek and Roman worlds, Diodorus updates the mythical tales to correspond with the events of his own day. Concomitantly, he incorporates into his descriptions his own thoughts and convictions. Furthermore, attempting to offer his readers a useful universal history, Diodorus integrates in his mythography elements borrowed

from the literary genres of historiography, biography and geography. It seems that he employs the mythical section of the *Bibliotheke* not only to tell the *archaiologia* of peoples and their ancient myths, but also to provide a geographical introduction to the entire work, to convey notions that he considered essential and to present his readers with role models to emulate.

Introduction

The mythography of Diodorus Siculus is in many ways unique. To begin with, it forms an integral part of a historical work, stretched over the first six books of the Bibliotheke. Moreover, since Diodorus wrote a universal history that records the affairs of the civilized world all together, his mythography is in itself 'universal', embracing the myths of various peoples (such as Egyptians, Assyrians, Libyans and Greeks). In addition, there are two levels in Diodorus' mythography. The first is the myths as narrated by his sources; the second is Diodorus' own work, that is, the stories with his own additions and modifications.

In this study, I concentrate on the second level of Diodorus' mythography, attempting to reveal his perception of mythography and its role within universal history. I show that Diodorus deliberately incorporated the myths into his Bibliotheke, assigning to them important roles in the general purpose of history. Hence the first section scrutinizes Diodorus' discussions and references to mythology and the advantages of recording it. The second section analyses the unique characteristics of Diodorus' mythography, demonstrating that his versions of well-known tales are affected by contemporary events and that they reveal certain features taken from the genres of biography and geography[1].

I. Diodorus' idea of mythology and the advantages of recording it

In the general introduction to his work, Diodorus states that he composed a universal history (ἡ κοινὴ ἱστορία or, more frequently, αἱ κοιναὶ πράξεις). He argues that it is appropriate that all men should accord gratitude to the writers of universal histories, since they have aspired to be of service to the life of the human race as a whole (1.1.1). Pointing out the advantages of history and its utility, Diodorus maintains that when people understand the failures and

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successes of others through the study of history, they may be able to use their mistakes as examples to correct their own errors and to imitate the successes of the past (ἔχειν... μίμησιν τῶν ἐπιτετευγμένων) (1.1.2, 1.4). History affords teaching without causing any danger since it preserves both the achievements of outstanding men and the evil deeds of the wicked (1.1.1-2, 2.1-2). Diodorus further remarks that men prefer the counsels of the oldest men to those of the younger, because of the elderly's experience. However, such experience is surpassed by the understanding gained from history, because history contains a large amount of facts. Thus history gives young people the wisdom of the elderly and multiplies the experience of the old man. It also trains men to be leaders and encourages leaders to undertake great enterprises, whereas urging soldiers to face dangers in defence of their country more readily. Furthermore, by commemorating the good deeds and the glory of those who accomplished them, it is history that has inspired men to found cities, to introduce laws and to discover new sciences and arts in order to benefit mankind (1.1.4-5, 2.1). History, according to Diodorus, incites men to act justly and denounces the malefactors (I.2.8).[2] Thus, as Hau rightly points out, Diodorus' views concerning history reveals "a purely didactic purpose". Moreover, this didacticism is realized precisely within his universal history, because of its geographical breadth and temporal scope.[3]

These essential criteria become apparent not only as one reads the Bibliotheke, but also through Diodorus' explicit statements. Explaining his perception of a universal history, the author specifies five principles: first, a universal history must begin with the events of the earliest times, ἀπὸ τῶν ἀρχαιοτάτων χρόνων (1.3.6, cf. 3.2), incorporate the ancient mythologies, τὰς παλαιὰς μυθολογίας (1.3.2) and attempt to recount the events until the historian's own times, μέχρι τῶν καθ᾽ αὐτὸν καιρῶν (1.3.6, cf. 3.2); second, the author must record the affairs of the world all together, τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου πράξεις, as though they were the affairs of a single city (1.3.6), and include the deeds of the barbarians (1.3.2); third, a universal history should embrace many and most varied circumstances, πλείστας καὶ ποικιλωτάτας περιστάσεις, as opposed to histories that record complete wars of a single people or a single polis (1.3.1-2); fourth, each event should be given its proper time, τοὺς οἰκείους χρόνους (1.3.2, cf. 3.8); fifth, the author ought to create a sequence by connecting the events to one another, since "the whole is more

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[2] These ideas are echoed elsewhere in the *Bibliotheke*: 9.33.1; 10.12.1-3; 11.3.1, 38.6; 30.15.1; 32.26.1; 37.4.1; 38/39.18.1.

[3] Hau 2016a, 233-244; Hau 2016b, 73-123.

useful than the parts and the continuity than the discontinuity" (1.3.8). Diodorus maintains that a history of this type will benefit the reader more than any other historical work. History, in general, offers men the most effective way of achieving honour and success. Yet it is universal history that offers men the best guidance, since from such a wide-ranging treatise each person can easily take what is of use for his own purpose (1.3.7)[4].

The significant contribution of the myths in a universal history becomes clearer in Diodorus' introduction to his fourth book, where he discusses the difficulties in recording the myths. The historian mentions four such obstacles: the antiquity of the events; the absence of any exact proof regarding their dates; the multitude of heroes, demi-gods, men and their complex genealogies; and disagreement among those who have recounted the myths. He then censures reputed historians, such as Ephorus, Callisthenes and Theopompus, who have renounced the narration of the ancient myths, beginning their works with more recent events. Diodorus himself, holding the opposite opinion, emphasizes that he treated the myths with the utmost care, since gods and heroes also performed many noteworthy exploits in war, made useful discoveries, and enacted good laws. As a consequence, they received divine honours and have been eternally commemorated by history (4.1.1-5)[5]. The story of Heracles provides Diodorus with a specific case to prove his point. In an introductory chapter to Heracle's exploits, he refers again to the difficulties in recording the myths, adding yet another obstacle, that is, to write an account worthy of the greatness of the hero as a historian is obliged to do (4.8.1). Echoing his views stated in the prooemium to the fourth book, Diodorus argues that the antiquity of the events and their wondrous nature make the myths seem incredible in the eyes of many men. He further complains that some readers set an unfair standard when they demand the same accuracy in the ancient mythologies (ἐν ταῖς ἀρχαίαις μυθολογίαις) as "in the events of our own time" (τοῖς πραττομένοις ἐν τοῖς καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς χρόνοις) (4.8.2-3), asserting that as far as the mythical narratives are concerned, one should not scrutinize the truth so sharply.[6] Comparing the

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[4] For the genre of universal history in general, see, e.g., Alonso-Núñez 1990; Clarke 1999; Alonso-Núñez 2002. For Diodorus' universal history, see Sulimani 2011, 21-55 with further bibliography. For a discussion of various aspects of Diodorus' *prooemium* to the first book, see Sacks 1982; Sacks 1990, 9-22; Sulimani 2011, 127-134; Hau 2016a, 233-244; Muntz 2017, 3-9.

[5] For a discussion of this *prooemium*, see also Hau 2016a, 236-238; Ring 2018, esp. 392-395. On the role of the gods in Diodorus' history, see recently Durvye 2018.

[6] For the differences between the mythical narrative of Diodorus and his historical narrative, see Hau 2016a, 241-242, emphasizing that, unlike the historical section, most of the mythological account consists

narration of the myths with the presentation of mythical figures in the theatre, Diodorus concludes that just as one applauds the scenes on stage, so one should accept the accounts of the myths in order to enhance the honour of Heracles (4.8.4-5).

The above sections reveal Diodorus' belief in the utility of the myths and his perception that the mythical stories ought to be included in historical works. At the same time, they show his compound view of the myths. He claims that they must be a part of universal history, since gods and heroes, like outstanding mortals, performed many noteworthy deeds, from which the readers may be able to learn. However, he also maintains that the myths are not as accurate as history and thus the truth should not be severely examined in them[7]. In fact, Diodorus repeatedly recognizes the difference between μυθολογία and πράξεις, that is, real events, his synonym for history. Discussing Isis, for example, he mentions her healing abilities and the consequent benefactions that she has conferred upon human beings. He adds that in proof of this, the Egyptians do not present mythologies, like the Greeks, but visible deeds (φέρειν... οὐ μυθολογίας ὁμοίως τοῖς Ἕλλησιν, ἀλλὰ πράξεις ἐναργεῖς), since almost all the inhabited world, which honours Isis because of her healing skills, serves as their witness (1.25.4). The distinction between μυθολογία and πράξεις is also manifested at the end of Book 1, where Diodorus states that in his next book he will discuss both the events and mythologies (πράξεις καὶ μυθολογίας) of other peoples, beginning with the Assyrians (1.98.10).

Acknowledging the value of the myths and yet admitting their weaknesses, Diodorus also states that the ancient myths do not give a simple and harmonious account; thus it is not surprising to find in certain accounts details that do not agree with those given by every poet and historian (4.44.5-6). Nevertheless, the purpose of the myths, according to Diodorus, is not only to entertain the readers, but primarily to benefit them. He interestingly criticizes Herodotus who, in order to amuse his readers, preferred the invention of stories to the truth in his account of Egypt (1.69.7; cf. 10.24.1). Diodorus' serious attitude towards the myths may be also inferred from his choice of two mythical figures, Hades and Heracles, as examples to demonstrate the contribution of history to the well-being of men. In 1.2.2,

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of brief fast-paced descriptions, with few references to emotions and attempts at characterization, and almost no *oratio recta*. For the latter aspect, see also Sulimani 2014.

[7] See Hau 2016a, esp. 240, arguing that in Diodorus "the purpose of truth telling more often than not disappears behind other purposes: worship of heroic benefactors, praise for those who deserve it, moral instruction and didactic usefulness".

Diodorus states that history is the guardian of the virtue of illustrious men, the witness of the evil deeds of the wicked and the benefactor to the entire race of men. In addition, he regards history as the προφῆτις (prophetess) of truth and the mother-city of philosophy as a whole. Then, in order to underline his statements, Diodorus compares history with the myth of Hades, saying that although its subject matter is fictitious, it still contributes to piety and justice among men. Hence history is much more effective in providing men with noble virtues[8].

In the following section, Diodorus notes the difference between those who have done nothing worthy of note in their lifetime and those who have achieved fame by their virtues. In the case of the former, everything they have pertained during their lifetime perishes when their bodies died, while the deeds of the worthy men are rightly remembered eternally, because they are voiced by history (1.2.3). Diodorus' immediate example for this is Heracles. It is well known, he states, that the hero endured many toils and hazards in order that, by conferring benefits upon mankind, he might gain immortality. Similarly, other good men achieved either heroic honours or honours equal to those of gods and, since history immortalizes their accomplishments, they are all held in high regard (1.2.4)[9].

When Diodorus recommends that men use the failures and successes of others as recorded by history to correct their own errors and to emulate the successes of the past (1.1.2, 1.4), by employing the word "others" he refers to both mythical and historical figures. This is clearly indicated by the selection of Diodorus' statements discussed above, and further reinforced by a comparison between two such statements, one from his general introduction to the work and the other from his introduction to the fourth book. In 1.2.1, he states that history has inspired men to found cities, to introduce laws and to discover new sciences and arts in order to benefit mankind; in 4.1.5, he claims that heroes and demi-gods (ἥρωες καὶ ημίθεοι) have performed notable exploit in war and, in time of peace, have made some useful discovery or enacted some good law contributing to man's social life. The striking resemblance between these statements leaves no doubt as to the author's intention. Yet Diodorus' approach to myth and its utility is revealed not only

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[8] Cf. Hau 2016a, 234, who argues that despite the fact that the myth of Hades is made up, according to Diodorus it is didactically efficient, whereas history has a similar effect on a greater scale.

[9] On myth in history according to Diodorus, see further Marincola 1997, 119-121; Sulimani 2011, 10-13 and passim; Muntz 2017, 104-117; Muntz 2018.

by his explicit statements, but also by the manner in which he presents the myths.

II. The unique characteristics of Diodorus' mythography

Diodorus evidently does not incorporate into his history the mythical tales as he found them in his sources,[10] but rather creates distinct versions that fit into his perception of the importance of mythology and its role within history. His accounts of well-known mythical stories are closely linked to contemporary events. In addition, they reveal certain features taken from the genres of biography and geography.

1. Mythical tales and contemporary events

In writing his versions of the myths, Diodorus was obviously influenced by the events of his age, beginning with Alexander the Great and ending with the occurrences of his own day. I will discuss here a few conspicuous examples, showing both the impact of Alexander's accomplishments[11] and the developments of the first century BCE on the manner in which Diodorus presents the myths.

Throughout his mythical narrative, Diodorus describes journeys made by gods and heroes, the tracks of whom he is accustomed to model on Alexander's expedition[12]. In some cases, however, one may also clearly see the imprint of the author's own day[13]. The journeys of Sesostris and Zeus provide good examples. Sesostris' itinerary resembles that of the Macedonian king in more than one way. The Egyptian king not only passed through sites visited by Alexander – setting out from Egypt, Sesostris made his way to India and travelled through Asia to Asia Minor and Thrace – but, like Alexander, he

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[10] The opinions of scholars on Diodorus' use of sources are divided; some of them have a low estimate of his writing skills, emphasizing his debt to his sources (e.g., Schwartz 1903, cols. 663-704; Tarn 1948, vol. 2, 63-91; Drews 1960, 1-3, 147-149; Drews 1962, 383-392; Hornblower 1981, 18-27; Stylianou 1998, 1-3, 49-84, 132-139), while others esteem Diodorus' own contribution to his work (e.g., Spoerri 1959; Reid [Rubincam] 1969; Rubincam 1987; Sacks 1990; Sacks 1994; Green 2006, 1-47; Yarrow 2006, esp. 116-118, 152-156; Chamoux 1990; Clarke 2008, 121-139; Hau 2009; Sulimani 2011; Rathmann 2016; Muntz 2017). For a further bibliography, see the introduction and first chapter in Sulimani 2011.

[11] Cf. Muntz 2017, 171-172, who underestimates Alexander the Great's impact on Diodorus. See Sulimani 2017b.

[12] In this section, I am interested only in the contemporary details incorporated in the description of the journeys. The geographic aspect will be dealt with in the last part of this study.

[13] The journeys of some of the figures mentioned here and in the following sections (especially, Sesostris, Semiramis, Myrina and Heracles) are treated in Sulimani 2011. My concern here is more restricted, as I wish to explore in greater depth the contemporary aspect of Diodorus' descriptions, supplementing the examination with new material and further examples.

also split up his forces. Travelling from Ethiopia to India, Sesostris himself made his way by land, while sending his fleet into the Red Sea (that is, the Arabian Sea) to take control of the islands and the coast of the mainland (1.55.1-10)[14]. This bears a striking resemblance to Alexander's conduct, recorded, among others, by Diodorus (17.104.3, 107.1). The Macedonian king ordered Nearchus to sail with the fleet along the coast of the ocean from India and to meet him at the mouth of the river Euphrates, while the king himself made his way by land[15].

Yet Sesostris reached places where Alexander never set foot. Diodorus himself calls attention to this, saying that the Egyptian king not only visited the territory conquered later by Alexander, but also certain peoples whose country Alexander did not invade (1.55.3). Thus Sesostris crossed the river Ganges and travelled all over India as far as the Ocean. These places attracted later rulers, such as the Seleucid kings, the Ptolemies and Octavian, soon to be Augustus. By the first century BCE, interest in India had increased. The Romans' growing passion for luxury articles and their conquest of Egypt contributed to the growth of trade with India. Among his many activities at the beginning of his reign, Augustus was concerned with India and the routes leading to it. He sent the first praefecti of Egypt to explore both Ethiopia and Arabia (e.g., Strabo, 2.5.12 C 118; Dio, 53.29.3) and mentioned India in his Res Gestae, boasting that Indian embassies were often sent to him, a thing never seen before in the camp of any Roman general (Mon. Anc. 31; cf. Suet. Aug. 21.3). Both contemporary and later writers reflect Augustus' interest in India[16]. This is particularly evident in Augustan poetry. In his second Georgic (2.172), Virgil refers to Octavian as the one who turns the cowardly Indian away from the fortresses of Rome, while predicting the expansion of the Roman rule beyond the lands of the Garamants and the Indians to a land lying beyond the stars, in his Aeneid (6.794-795, 8.705). Horace stresses in the first book of his Odes (1.12.55-56) that Augustus will rule over the Indians who live in the region of the rising sun and mentions Indian envoys dispatched to him in his Carmen Saeculare (55-56). Finally, Propertius,

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[14] See map 1 at the end of this paper.

[15] The fact that Sesostris and Alexander advanced in opposite directions might be explained by the increasing interest in India of the Greeks, and later the Romans, following the expedition of Alexander. Attempts to explore the land of India until the time of Alexander, such as that of Scylax about 515 BCE, had been made from East to West. Scylax was sent by Darius I: Hdt. 4.44; cf. Arist. *Pol.* 7.13.2 (1332b) and the confused entry in *Suda*, s.v. Σκύλαξ. See further in Sulimani 2015, 87.

[16] Strabo, 15.1.4 C 686, 73 C 719; Suet. *Aug.* 21; Florus, 2.34.62; Eutrop. 7.10; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 1.7; Hieron. *Chron.* Ol. 188; Oros. 6.21.19.

singing the praises of Augustus, states that India bows its neck to his triumph (2.10.15, cf. 4.3.10). Apart from Horace's Carmen Saeculare, composed about 17 BCE, the poems in which these references to India appear are dated to the very first years of the principate (29-23 BCE)[17].

Similar to these poets, Diodorus may have preserved the flavour of the beginning of Octavian/Augustus' reign in his mythography[18]. I am not unaware of the prevailing opinion, according to which Diodorus completed his work before 30 BCE. Yet certain signs found precisely in the mythological part of his universal history indicate that he completed his work shortly after the establishment of the Augustan principate[19]. Sesostris' tale provides a good example. In addition to allusions to contemporary events in the description of his journey, Diodorus portrays him as a sovereign who expanded his empire, created peace and let his subjects enjoy it (1.55.12, 56.1). To put it succinctly, the Egyptian king brought about the "Golden Age"[20]. This depiction of Sesostris recalls Virgil's representation of Augustus, where the poet also states that Augustus Caesar, Divi genus, aurea condet saecula (Aen. 6.791-800; cf. G. 2.170).

Like Sesostris, Zeus passed through places visited by Alexander. In his relatively short journey, Zeus traversed five sites, of which three were visited by the Macedonian king, as described by Diodorus himself: Syria, Cilicia and Babylon (6.1.10; 17.27.7, 32.2-4, 52.7, 64.3-6). However, in depicting Zeus' expedition, Diodorus emphasizes, again, the expansion of empires beyond the territory that was conquered by Alexander. Zeus, according to the historian, made his way to Panchaea, an island that lies in the Ocean (i.e. the Indian Ocean, 6.1.10; cf. 5.42.3),[21] whereas the king's campaign came to an end at the river Hyphasis (17.93.1). The attraction of the Indian region increased after Alexander, as noted above, and especially in the first century BCE. Furthermore, Zeus not merely reached a place where Alexander never set foot; he visited an imaginary site, a utopia. Panchaea is discussed twice in the Bibliotheke (5.42.4-46.7; 6.1.1-11), based on the work of Euhemerus[22].

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[17] For the dates of Horace, see, e.g., Rudd 2004, 3-9. For further discussion, see Sulimani 2011, 32-33.

[18] The fact that other mythical heroes visited India, arriving there via various existing routes, further illustrates Diodorus' emphasis on this country.

[19] For this idea, see Sulimani 2011, 31-38.

[20] Cf. Muntz 2017, 191-214, maintaining that Diodorus presents the Egyptian monarchy under its good kings as a role model for Rome of his day.

[21] See map 2 at the end of this paper.

[22] Most of Euhemerus' account is found in Diodorus' Book 5, but part of it appears in the fragmentary Book 6 and is known to us from Eusebius' summary (*Praep. Evang.* 2.2.59B-61A). Euhemerus' *Hiera*

Establishing the island at a defined geographical setting,[23] Diodorus portrays it as fertile, well-watered and rich in trees, plants, beasts, and birds of all sorts. It also possesses mines of gold, silver, copper, tin and iron. Owing to its features, the island provides the inhabitants with every kind of food, contributing to their health and good life (5.42.4-46.7). By locating Panchaea on the real map of the world notwithstanding its idyllic motifs, Diodorus hints that, although utopian, it is within reach. Describing five other utopian islands,[24] Diodorus was obviously interested in the fashionable "utopian genre" that, following the conquests of Alexander, was influenced by the flowering of geographical literature, travel tales, and ethnographic accounts[25]. Yet he may have also conveyed the longing of his contemporaries for a better world after years of wars and their destructive results[26].

Furthermore, according to Diodorus, the inhabitants of Panchaea consist of natives and various other peoples who coexist (42.4–5, 44.6). This recalls the practice of Alexander, who settled Greek mercenaries, Macedonian veterans and local inhabitants in the cities which he founded, as Diodorus himself records (17.83.2). In addition, the idea of coexistence of various peoples is related to the notion of ὁμόνοια, the unity of mankind, attributed to Alexander and developed during the Hellenistic era. Aware of this idea, Diodorus introduced it in his work. In 3.64.7, for instance, he states that Dionysus settled the quarrels between peoples and poleis, consequently creating concord and great peace instead of strifes and wars (ἀντὶ τῶν στάσεων καὶ τῶν πολέμων ὁμόνοιαν καὶ πολλὴν εἰρήνην κατασκευάζειν). In 5.65.3, the Curetes are praised because they showed human beings how to live together, and because they were the originators of concord and good order (ὁμονοίας καί τινος εὐταξίας ἀρχηγοὺς γενέσθαι). The connection to Alexander appears in Book 18, where Diodorus recounts the last plans ascribed to the king, claiming that Alexander intended to found cities and to relocate populations from Asia to Europe and from Europe to Asia, in order to bring the continents to common unity and friendship of kinsmen (κοινὴν ὁμόνοιαν καὶ συγγενικὴν φιλίαν) through marriages and family ties (18.4.4; cf. Plut. Alex. 68.1; Arr. Anab. 7.1.2; Curt. 10.1.17-18.). Despite the obvious impact of

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Anagraphe is also preserved in Lactantius' *Institutiones Divinae*, with references to Ennius' now lost translation of Euhemerus' work into Latin. See Winiarczyk 1991; Winiarczyk 2013.

[23] Panchaea's precise location is discussed below, in the final section dealing with geography.

[24] See Sulimani 2017a.

[25] See, e.g., Gabba 1981, esp. 55-60; Hägg 1983, 117-118; Holzberg 2003, 621-628; Whitmarsh 2010.

[26] See Muntz 2017, 133-189, 215-247 on how Caesar and the Roman civil wars affected the composition of Diodorus' work.

Alexander, the idea of the unity of mankind, associated also with the notion of magnanimity towards the "other", accords well with some of Julius Caesar's deeds. Thus, for instance, he conferred Roman civil rights upon the entire population of Gadeira (Cic. Balb. 43; Liv. Per. 110; Dio, 41.24.1; cf. Caes. B Civ. 2.18), as well as upon the Gauls (Suet. Iul. 76.3; Dio, 41.36.3; cf. Tac. Ann. 11.24), perhaps even allowing men who had been given Roman citizenship into the senate, including half-barbarian Gauls (Suet. Iul. 76, 80; cf. Cic. Fam. 9.15.2)[27].

Indeed, it is Julius Caesar that most affected Diodorus' presentation of the myths[28]. Tracing the dictator's influence on Diodorus' account of various mythical figures underlines the author's habit of intermingling historical data with his mythical stories. Heracles, according to Diodorus, was admired extremely because he saved the life of the sister of Eurystheus, his enemy; thus he resolved to surpass all others in clemency (ἐπιείκεια, 4.12.7). Furthermore, he convinced the sons of Phineus to renounce their attempt to execute their stepmother, an act for which they gained reputation of clemency (ἀπενέγκασθαι... δόξαν ἐπιεικείας, 4.44.3-4). Myrina treated the Atlantians kindly (ἐπιεικῶς) after their surrender. She first established friendship with them and then founded a city in which she settled both the captives taken by her and any native who wished to join (3.54.5). Diodorus attributes leniency to Dionysus at least four times[29]. He states that Dionysus was enthusiastically welcomed everywhere because he was known for treating all men moderately (ἐπιεικῶς) and for contributing to the improvement of their lives (3.65.1). Elsewhere Diodorus maintains that Dionysus freed the captives taken by him from the charges, allowing them to decide either to join him in his campaign or to go free (3.71.5). The historian also emphasizes that Dionysus punished the impious among the conquered peoples, but treated the rest of them humanely (ἐπιεικῶς / φιλανθρώπως, 3.65.7, 72.4).

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[27] For the change in the treatment of the "other" in the Hellenistic era, see Sulimani 2011, 315-330 with further references and bibliography.

[28] To mention another utopian island, Diodorus describes the Island of the Hyperboreans, which is situated in the north and lies in the Ocean beyond the land of the Celts (2.47.1). Whether or not Britain is meant (see Bridgman 2005, 127-140 with further references), it is quite possible that Caesar's invasion of Britain led Diodorus to include this island in his work. On Diodorus' account of the Hyperboreans, see also Eck's introduction to the 2003 Les Belles Lettres edition of Diodorus' Book 2 (Budé edition), xxxvi-xxxvii.

[29] It should be noted that Diodorus presents four versions of Dionysus' myth: 3.62.3-10; 3.63.1-66.1; 3.67.1-74.6; 4.2.1-5.4. This does not mean that he failed to edit the information available to him; rather, it may well be that he deliberately intended to introduce to his readers the variety of accounts found in his sources (see also on Prometheus below). The fact that Diodorus refers to Dionysus' leniency in two different versions further attests to his originality.

The notion of merciful behaviour of rulers both towards their subjects and their enemies pervades Diodorus' work. The historian describes the leniency of numerous mythical figures, such as Jason (4.53.1), Actisanes, the king of the Ethiopians (1.60.3), and Arbaces of Media (2.28.5-7), as well as mythical nations in positions of power, notably the inhabitants of Iambulus' Island of the Sun (2.55.4, 56.1). Diodorus also dwells on the clemency of historical individuals and nations, such as Philip II (32.4.1-2) and his son Alexander (17.69.9, 73.1, 76.1, 91.7; 32.4.3), the Sicilian ruler Gelon (11.38.1), the Athenians (11.50.8, cf. 70.3) and the Romans (32.4.4). In most of the cases Diodorus uses a similar wording to express this notion, employing ἐπιείκεια and φιλανθρωπία as synonyms for clemency.

To be sure, the idea of benevolent behaviour of rulers appears in the works of Diodorus' predecessors. Polybius, for example, deals in quite some length with the importance of clemency in a leader's character (5.9.1-12.4) and ascribes this trait to leaders such as Philip II (5.10.1-5) and Scipio Africanus (15.17.3-4; 21.4.10). By Diodorus' time, however, the notion of clemency becomes more frequent. It is quite obvious that Caesar's statements that he would treat his adversaries with moderation, as well as his deeds during the civil wars, had their impact on the authors of his day. Moreover, Caesar himself put the notion in writing. In his Bellum Civile (3.98), for instance, he speaks of his own gentleness (de lenitate sua) and his intention to preserve the lives of Pompey's soldiers after the battle of Pharsalus. The reactions of his contemporaries were not long in coming. In his letters to Atticus, Cicero occasionally praises Caesar's moderation (Att. 9.16, cf. 8.13), yet he repeatedly doubts Caesar's frankness and fears that his clementia would eventually turn into cruelty, naming it treacherous clemency (insidiosa clementia) (Att. 8.9, 8.16, 10.4). Unlike Cicero, Sallust does not doubt Caesar's sincerity. In his Bellum Catilinae (54.2-3), the historian argues that Caesar became distinguished through his mildness and mercy (mansuetudine et misericordia). Augustus is also worth mentioning in this short list of examples, since he adopted a similar quality, although evidently showing mercy only when his position as the sole ruler of Rome was secured. Alluding to his victory at Actium, Augustus states that when triumphant he spared all those who had asked for forgiveness (Mon. Anc. 3). He also describes an inscription on a golden shield, attesting that it was given to him owing to his valour, clemency, justice and piety (Mon. Anc. 34). Virgil's famous verse, displaying leniency as policy and clearly hinting at Augustus, should be mentioned in this respect. In his Aeneid, composed after the battle of Actium,

the poet writes: parcere subiectis et debellare superbos (to spare the surrendered and to suppress the arrogant, 6.853)[30].

The examination of earlier and later writers confirms the deduction that the issue of clemency as a virtue belongs to the time of Caesar and Augustus. Herodotus, for instance, does not depict mythical figures such as Sesostris, Dionysus and Heracles as merciful. A comparison between Herodotus' account of Sesostris and that of Diodorus reveals a conspicuous difference. Like Diodorus, Herodotus describes the expedition of the Egyptian king, during which he conquered many peoples. He adds that Sesostris commemorated his achievements by monuments and inscriptions, underlining that when those oppressed had struggled bravely for their freedom, the inscription showed how he had overcome them with his own power; yet when the defeated men had made no resistance, Sesostris placed the same inscription accompanied by a drawing of the privy parts of a woman, attempting to demonstrate that the people were cowardly (2.102-106). Unlike Diodorus, Herodotus does not mention any benevolent act on the part of Sesostris towards the vanquished[31]. Diodorus, on the other hand, states that Sesostris dealt leniently (ἐπιεικῶς) with all the conquered peoples (1.55.10). Furthermore, as part of his preparations to his campaign, Sesostris took steps in order to secure the loyalty of the Egyptians, be they the soldiers in the battle field or the inhabitants left behind in their native lands. Some of them he won over by gifts, others by remission of penalties. The entire people he attached to himself by friendliness and kindness (τῇ...ἐπιεικείᾳ) (1.54.1-2).

Later authors such as Plutarch and Suetonius lay emphasis on the notion of leniency with regard to Caesar and Augustus, but do not highlight it in relation to others. In his Life of Caesar, Plutarch recounts Caesar's clemency towards Pompey's men after the battle of Pharsalus (Caes. 46.2, 48.2), and maintains that the decision to dedicate the temple of Clemency (τό...τῆς Ἐπιεικείας ἱερὸν) to Caesar was appropriate because of his mildness (ἐπὶ τῇ πρᾳότητι), for he forgave many of those who had fought against him (Caes. 57.3). Concomitantly, Plutarch has his doubts concerning Caesar's genuine benevolence. He describes how Caesar addressed the senators in a moderate manner at the beginning of his war against Pompey, adding that no one

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[30] For further discussion and examples, see Sulimani 2011, 93-102. For piety, kindness and related concepts in both Polybius and Diodorus, see Hau 2016b, 35-71, 95-102. See also below, for Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

[31] Later in his account of Sosostris, Herodotus refers to his deeds in Egypt. Here, too, there is no mention of his moderate behaviour (2.107-110).

would listen to him, either because they feared Pompey, or because they thought that Caesar did not mean what he said (Caes. 35.2). Plutarch's doubts concerning Caesar's genuine kindness are also manifested in his account of the battle of Thapsus, where he introduces two versions of the dictator's conduct, both portray him as a commander who maltreated his enemies (Caes. 53.2-3). Suetonius also elaborates on the virtue of kindness in the character of a leader, devoting an entire chapter of his biography of Caesar to this topic (Iul. 75.1-5). He states that Caesar showed admirable moderation and clemency (moderationem… clementiamque… admirabilem) both during the civil war and on achieving victory. Mentioning names of men whom Caesar pardoned, Suetonius cites the dictator's exclamation to his soldiers at Pharsalus to spare the citizens (ut civibus parceretur). Suetonius echoes this idea in his biography Augustus, where he asserts that the fame of the princeps' virtue and moderation (virtutis moderationisque fama) reached even India and Scythia (Aug. 21.2-3)[32].

The comparison with other authors, be they of Diodorus' time, earlier or later, proves that the discussion of clemency is typical of Diodorus' day. It seems that Diodorus was influenced by contemporary events just as much as Cicero and Sallust were. He was not a Roman; nevertheless, Roman affairs affected his mythical narrative[33]. Thus he ascribes to his heroes, both mythological and historical, a virtue that he valued in Caesar, providing his readers with role models worthy of imitation in accordance with the purpose of history defined by him.

Diodorus' versions of the tales of the mythical characters mentioned above for their moderation differ considerably from those of other writers of the myths. Herodotus, as noted previously, does not attribute clemency to his mythical figures. Dionysius of Halicarnassus is indeed concerned with tolerance in the conduct of both individuals and states, making an extensive use of the words ἐπιείκεια and φιλανθρωπία. In his Romaike Archaiologia, for example, he depicts Servius Tullius, the Roman king, as a clement and moderate man (ἐπιεικὴς δὲ καὶ μέτριος ἀνήρ), under whose rule Rome showed clemency (ἐπιείκεια) and moderation (μετριότης) towards hostile people who surrendered and admitted their faults (Ant. Rom. 4.40.3, 27.5). In addition, Dionysius stresses that it is better for people to overcome their enemies through humane acts rather than in punishments (Ant. Rom. 12.6.3). This

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[32] See further in Sulimani 2011, 102-108.

[33] See also Muntz 2017, 133-189, 215-247 (n. 27 above).

notion is also found in Diodorus. He maintains that leaders such as Pittacus of Mitylene (9.12.3), Demetrius Poliorcetes (21.9) and Julius Caesar (32.27.3) preferred forgiveness rather than punishment,[34] and alludes to a similar conduct of Heracles, who persuaded the sons of Phineus to refrain from inflicting punishment upon their stepmother (4.44.3-4, cited above). A fair treatment of captives is another concept traced in both Diodorus (e.g., 3.54.5, 71.5, cited above) and Dionysius (19.18.8). Unlike Diodorus, however, Dionysius does not incorporate the idea of clemency into his mythical stories. Thus his account of Heracles does not include any reference to a moderate act performed by the hero, particularly his description of the Heracles' journey from Iberia to Italy during which he gained control of many cities by force of arms except for some that yielded to him voluntarily (Ant. Rom. 1.34.1-35.3, 38.2-44.2).

Diodorus obviously puts much more emphasis on temperate behaviour, employing his mythical narrative to convey this theme. A comparison with a mythographer par excellence, Apollodorus, the author of the Bibliotheke, highlights Diodorus' distinct treatment of the myths. In his long discussion of Heracles (Bibl. 2.4.8-8.1), Apollodorus does not mention the hero's clemency at all.

Moreover, Apollodorus' description of Heracles' journey with the cattle of Geryon (Bibl. 2.5.10) highlights another unique feature of Diodorus' mythography. Whereas both authors provide a detailed account of Heracles' ports of call, their number is almost double in Diodorus (4.17.4-25.1). Significantly, sites such as Alesia and the Alps, closely related to Roman history in Diodorus' day, and Agyrium in Sicily, Diodorus' hometown, are missing from Apollodorus' account. While the crossing of the Alps seems to be inspired by Hannibal's march to Italy, Diodorus further updates the myth to correspond with recent events, adding Alesia, a Gallic town that Caesar conquered. Diodorus states that Heracles founded a city in Celtica (Transalpine Gaul), naming it Alesia after the wandering (ἄλη) on his campaign. He settled his soldiers in the new city, intermingling many of the natives with them. Remarking that from the time of Heracles onwards Alesia remained free, Diodorus emphasizes that Caesar was the first to conquer it (4.19.1-2; 5.24.2). Diodorus is the only author who incorporates Alesia in Heracles' journey with the cattle of Geryon[35]. Influenced by the conquest of this town by Caesar and wishing to glorify the conqueror, he possibly

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[34] For this concept and similar phrasing in Diodorus, see also 21.14.3; 27.15.1, 3; 31.3.1.

[35] Cf., e.g., Hdt. 4.8; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom*. 1.34.1-35.3, 38.2-44.2.

intended to give the event an ancient precedent. Furthermore, Heracles built a new city during his expedition, a common act of rulers such as Alexander the Great and Caesar, whom Diodorus admired[36]. In populating the new city with his veterans and blending them with the local inhabitants, Heracles operated, again, like historical figures such as Alexander and Caesar.

One final example further underlines the impact of the occurrences of the first century BCE on Diodorus' mythography. Rendering the well-known story of Prometheus, the historian produces a unique version[37]. Prometheus, according to him, was a governor of an Egyptian district, who was made desperate by the damage to his district resulting from the flood of the Nile, thus wishing to take his own life. Heracles came to his rescue, stopping the flood of the river – also called Aetus (eagle) because of its violent flood – and turning it back into its former course. Subsequently, Diodorus remarks at the end of the tale, certain poets converted this story into a myth, according to which Heracles had killed the eagle that was devouring the liver of Prometheus (1.19.1-3). Indeed, this is a good case of rationalization, Diodorus' preferred approach to interpreting the myths, yet it also contains some contemporary items. First, it should be mentioned that there is one similar story, found in the Scholia on Apollonius Rhodius and attributed to Agroitas (2.1248). The latter's date is uncertain, but he is assumed to have lived in the third or the second century BCE. It is possible, then, that Diodorus employed Agroitas directly. However, although Agroitas' version bears resemblance to that of Diodorus, the differences between the two accounts are of interest to us here. While Diodorus makes Prometheus a governor of a specific district in Egypt that was devastated by the flooding Nile, Agroitas does not give a location for the event, simply stating that Prometheus' lands were devastated by an unlocated river called "Eagle." Even if Diodorus found his inspiration in Plato (Tim. 22d),[38] he is clearly adding something of his own. To begin with, he visited Egypt, where he was engaged in doing research for his work. Attesting to this himself (1.44.1, 46.7, 83.9,

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[36] It is interesting to note here, however, the recent suggestion of Westall 2018, according to which Diodorus' narrative reveals his devotion to Pompey rather than Caesar. Indeed, Diodorus may have been influenced by a few Roman leaders of his age; Caesar was certainly one of them.

[37] The Greek known version is also given by Diodorus in 4.15.2, where he states that because Prometheus had taken fire and given it to men, Zeus put him in chains, setting an eagle at his side to devour his liver. When Heracles saw him suffering because of the benefit that he had conferred upon mankind, he killed the eagle and persuaded Zeus to cease from his anger. As noted (n. 30 above), Diodorus gives various versions elsewhere in his mythical books, as in the case of Dionysus, where he presents four versions.

[38] Burton 1972, 85-86.

3.11.3, 38.1, 17.52.6) and hinting to self eye witnessing (e.g., 1.22.4, 45.7-46.6, 84.8), Diodorus is obviously familiar with the division of Egypt into districts (1.54.3) and aware of the problems caused by the flood of the Nile (1.37.1-41.10). He therefore incorporated these contemporary issues into his account of Prometheus.

2. Mythical biographies

In accordance with his belief that the multitude of gods and heroes and their complex genealogies should not deter writers from including the myths in their histories, and in line with his explanation that the myths should be treated with the utmost care, since gods and heroes performed numerous noteworthy exploits (4.1.1-5), Diodorus recounts the tales of many mythical figures throughout his first six books. Quite a few of these tales are written in the form of biography.

The account of Heracles is one interesting example. Following an introduction, in which methodological problems are discussed (4.8.1-5), Diodorus elaborates on the birth of Heracles and his ancestors (4.9.1-10.1). A description of Heracles' early deeds (4.10.2-7), his twelve labours and journeys (4.11.1-37.5) appears next. In the last chapters of the tale, Diodorus deals with the disease of Heracles and his passage from the realm of men into the ranks of the gods (4.38.1-5), concluding with the honours paid to him as a hero and later as a god and emphasizing his reluctance to be enrolled among the twelve gods, because he did not wish to deprive another god of his honour (4.39.1-4). This structure – consisting of a prologue, a description of the origin and the ancestors of the protagonist, his deeds, his death and an encomium – resembles the structure of Plutarch's Lives[39]. His biography of Lycurgus, for instance, opens with a discussion of the difficulties arising from dealing with the lawgiver's life and work (Lyc. 1.1-4). Referring to his protagonist's ancestors (Lyc. 2.1-3.1), Plutarch describes his early career (Lyc. 3.1-5) and his journey (Lyc. 3.5-5.1). He then elaborates on Lycurgus' reforms and laws (Lyc., 5.1-29.2) and mentions his second visit to Delphi (Lyc. 29.3-4). Next the biographer recounts Lycurgus' death (Lyc. 29.5) and discusses the effects of his deeds (Lyc. 29.5-30.6). He concludes the biography with a eulogy and a discussion of various versions of Lycurgus' place of death and the location of his tomb (Lyc. 31.1-5).

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[39] The scholarship on Plutarch's *Lives* is vast. See, e.g., Duff 1999; Pelling 2002; Chrysanthou 2018.

Against the assumption that Diodorus' account of Heracles is written in the form of biography, one may argue with much justification that it includes frequent digressions from the main narrative. In five occasions, Diodorus deviates from Heracles' story in order to recount the tales of related figures: Orpheus (4.25.2-4), Atlas and the Hesperides (4.27.1-2), the Amazons (4.28.1-4), Iolaus (4.30.1-6), and Meleager (4.34.1-35.2). However, Diodorus always makes clear his digressions through comments placed at the beginning and at the end of each deviation. In 4.25.2, for instance, he notes that since he mentioned Orpheus, it will not be inappropriate to discuss him briefly, whereas in 4.25.4, he concludes that having discussed Orpheus, he will return to Heracles. Diodorus' working method is important, since it demonstrates that Heracles is the centre of attention in the story that runs from 4.8.1 to 4.39.4. Again, a comparison with Plutarch's Life of Lycurgus provides further support. The biographer evidently does not concentrate uninterruptedly on his hero. In fact, the biography of Lycurgus amounts to much more than the law-giver's bios, comprising a detailed description of the Spartan constitution and way of life. Discourses on various issues are found throughout the work: a commentary on the rhetra (Lyc. 6.2) and a later supplement to it (Lyc. 6.3-5), discussions of the ephors (Lyc. 7.1-3), Spartan coins (Lyc. 9.2) and unnecessary arts (Lyc. 9.3-5), the syssitia (Lyc. 10.1-3, 12.1-7), marriage (Lyc. 15.1-10), education (Lyc. 16.1-18.4), laconic speech and apophthegms (Lyc. 20.1-6), music and poetry (Lyc. 21.1-4), discipline and conduct in time of war (Lyc. 22.1-5), training of the young Spartans (Lyc. 24.1-4), attending the leschai rather than the market-place (Lyc. 25.1-2), examples of Spartan utterances (Lyc. 25.3-5), voting system by which the members of the gerousia were elected (Lyc. 26.2-4), the crypteia (Lyc. 28.2-6) and finally some future developments and features of Sparta (Lyc. 30.1-6). In short, many of the sections dealing with the politeia have little relevance to the life story of the lawgiver.

Unlike Diodorus, who is accustomed to delimit his deviations,[40] Plutarch rarely do so, often using a simple transition to a new topic or commencing with his digression without any indication[41]. This is evident in other biographies. The first chapter of the Life of Lysander, for instance, contains a discussion of the Spartan hairstyle, which Plutarch does not underline as deviation (Lys. 1.2). Also, Plutarch's patriotic description of the landscape

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[40] For examples other than the story of Heracles, see Sulimani 2011, 147-149.

[41] For a discussion of Plutarch's digressions and examples of explicit remarks to signal them, see Almagor 2013 with further bibliography.

around Chaeroneia and its related myths, incorporated in the discussion of Sulla's campaign in this region, is not defined as a departure from the main subject (Sull. 17.4-5). Although their working methods are different, Diodorus' tale of Heracles and Plutarch's Life of Lycurgus do not differ from one another as far as digressions are concerned. Both authors employ this device in order to elaborate on subjects that they considered related to the life of their protagonists. While Diodorus is interested in the myths of associated heroes, Plutarch's discourses show his interest in the political and social structure of Sparta, occasionally even its history (e.g., Lyc. 7, 30).

Diodorus records the lives of a variety of mythical figures using the same structure throughout the mythological section of his work[42]. To look briefly at other examples, his story of Sesostris, the Egyptian king, begins with an introduction that includes a discussion of methodological problems (1.53.1), followed by a description of Sesostris' birth, education and training (1.53.2-4). Next Diodorus recounts Sesostris' early deeds and ascendency to the throne (1.53.5-9), and specifies his endeavours in Egypt as well as his expedition abroad (1.54.1-58.2). In the last chapter of the tale, Diodorus deals with the achievements of Sesostris, his suicide and the honours paid to him as a great king (1.58.3-5). In like manner, Diodorus tells the story of Aristaeus. Following a sentence that signals the beginning of the tale (4.81.1), Diodorus dwells on Aristaeus' birth, his parents, the names given him by his father Apollo and his studies as a youth (4.81.1-2). He then elaborates on Aristaeus' exploits and the consequent honours bestowed upon him, being equal to those of the gods (4.81.2-3). After referring to Aristaeus' marriage and the fate of his child (4.81.3), Diodorus describes his hero's journey and further deeds to benefit mankind (4.82.1-6). The tale ends with Aristaeus' disappearance from among men and his subsequent immortal honours (4.82.6). Other enlightening examples are those of mythical characters such as Semiramis (2.4.1-20.5), Myrina (3.52.1-55.11) and Dionysus (4.2.1-5.4).

It seems that, in order to offer his readers a useful historical composition, Diodorus practically integrates biographies in his Bibliotheke. This is perfectly compatible with the didactic purpose of his history, mentioned above, and his belief in the advantages of imitation and the role played by history in this respect. This belief is manifested not only in Diodorus' introductions to his first and fourth books, as already cited, but also in his

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[42] When recording complex tales, such as that of Dionysus (see n. 30 above), the task became more difficult and yet one may still observe the basic structure of a *bios* (see, especially, the third and fourth versions of Dionysus' myth: 3.67.1-74.6; 4.2.1-5.4).

recurrent statements throughout his work. In 11.38.6, for instance, concluding his account of Gelon, the ruler of Syracuse, Diodorus remarks that it is appropriate that history should slight worthless rulers, while beneficent leaders should be accorded immortal remembrance. He explains that in this way many men of later generations will be encouraged to work for the common good of mankind. In 30.15.1, discussing the Hellenistic kingdoms, Diodorus attests to his effort to render a proper account of both good and bad principles by which men live and act. He then underlines his intention to direct the minds of his readers towards the emulation of the good (πρὸς τὸν τῶν καλῶν ζῆλον). Accordingly, Diodorus presents both mythical and historical figures as role models worthy of emulation. Believing that mythical figures could serve as role models just like historical figures, he constantly ascribes to them certain traits that he valued and thought vital for those who strive for success and glory. Such traits are valour, military skill, clemency, kind treatment of foreigners and promoting unity among human beings. Not surprisingly, Diodorus recognizes these qualities in Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar[43].

3. Mythical tales and geography

It is not only with the genres of historiography and biography that Diodorus' mythography is associated; it is also linked to geography. I have already mentioned the expeditions of Sosostris, Zeus and Heracles. These are three examples of various journeys of gods and heroes depicted by Diodorus in his first six books. Although portraying mythical travels, Diodorus did not describe merely imaginary routes and places; rather, he drew on real geographical data and modelled the paths of his heroes on journeys made by historical figures.

3.1. Accurate geographical information mingled in Diodorus' mythography

In his journey, Zeus, as we have seen, visited five sites; all of them are real, except for the island of Panchaea. Nevertheless, and although Panchaea is clearly an imaginary place, Diodorus locates it on the real map of the world, employing accurate geographical data. He states that "several islands lie opposite the extremities of this land (i.e. Eudaimon Arabia) that borders on

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[43] For Diodorus' notion of emulation and further examples, see Sulimani 2018.

the Ocean". Three of these islands are "worthy of historical record" (ἄξιαι τῆς ἱστορικῆς ἀναγραφῆς): the first is called Hiera; the second lies near it, at a distance of 7 stades; the third island lies 30 stades distant from Hiera toward the eastern part of the Ocean. It is many stades in length, and from its easternmost promontory one can catch sight of India (5.41.4, 42.3). The last island is evidently Panchaea, referred to by name in the next sentence that opens his detailed description of the island (5.42.4)[44]. In his concluding remark, Diodorus refers, again, to the location of this island: "regarding the islands (lying) in the Ocean opposite Arabia, we will be satisfied with the things that have been said" (5.46.7).

It is also significant that Diodorus includes Panchaea in two journeys. One is that of Zeus, who travelled from Babylon to Panchaea, an island that lies in the Ocean. He then passed through Syria and met Casius, the ruler of the country, who gave his name to Mount Casius, whence he reached Cilicia (6.1.10). Zeus made his way from one site to another in a logical order and his route seems to accord with the actual road network. Although his path from Babylon to Panchaea is not clear, his return journey demonstrates that he travelled along the trade route that leads from Syria to Asia Minor via the Syrian Gates and Cilicia[45]. This trade route, elsewhere in Diodorus, is traversed by both historical and mythical figures. Cyrus the younger, for instance, made his way from Sardis to Babylon, passing through Cilicia, the Cilician Gates, the Syrian Gates, and Syria (14.20.1-21.7), while Alexander the Great marched through Cilicia, the Syrian Gates, and Syria (17.27.7, 32.2-4, 52.7).

The other journey was made by Euhemerus. Setting sail from Eudaimon Arabia, he made a voyage in the Ocean for many days, at the end of which he put in at the islands in the open sea. One of these islands was called Panchaea (6.1.4). Although brief, the description of Euhemerus' voyage reflects the actual features of the Red Sea.[46] The voyage is also clearly situated within Hellenistic history. Diodorus states that Euhemerus was a friend of King Cassander and was required by him to carry out certain royal affairs as well as great journeys to foreign lands; hence, he took a trip southwards to the Ocean (6.1.4). This indicates that Diodorus connects Panchaea to the geographical developments following Alexander's campaign; at the same

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[44] See, e.g., Brown 1946, 259-260; Winiarczyk 2013, 79-81.

[45] Strab. 14.2.29 C 663 (cf. Strab. 12.2.10 C 539-540; Xen. *An*. 1.2.5-21, 4.1-6). See, e.g., Mitchell 1993, esp. 124-136); Syme 1995, 3-23; Ma 1999, 35, 115-116.

[46] According to Diodorus, the Red Sea usually refers to the modern Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea, but it may also include the modern Red Sea (the ancient Arabian Gulf), as in 3.18.3.

time, he echoes the impact of the deeds of Alexander, the Hellenistic kings, and the Romans on his writing. Leaders throughout the Hellenistic period sent men to investigate foreign lands, both out of curiosity and for commercial purposes[47].

To mention Sesostris' journey again, this time as an example demonstrating Diodorus' use of accurate geographical information in his narration of the myths, the Egyptian king made his way from Egypt to India, travelling through Ethiopia and Arabia. He then turned north and reached Scythia, Lake Maeotis and the river Tanais. His next destinations were the Cycladic islands, whence he went to Thrace and returned to Egypt (1.55.1-10). A careful examination of Sosostris' routes shows that he travelled along existent main roads, mostly trade routes, and stopped at places that were recognizable landmarks. The sea route from Ethiopia to India is particularly interesting. According to Diodorus, Sesostris sent his fleet from Ethiopia into the Red Sea (the modern Arabian Sea) and occupied the islands and the coast of the mainland as far as India (1.55.2). The author clearly refers to a voyage that followed the curves of the bays. His mention of islands further strengthens this conjecture, since there were several islands along the coasts of Arabia and in the Persian Gulf[48]. Indeed, it is probable that in the first century BCE the Greeks were already using the monsoon to sail to India across the open sea. However, scholars point out that there is a difference between the date of the discovery of the use of the direct sea route to India by the westerners and their extensive utilization of this route. They argue that, since full exploitation of new discoveries and technological developments occurred only with favourable economic conditions, the prosperity that followed the peace at the beginning of Augustus' reign set the stage for the growth of western commercial activities in the Arabian Gulf and the Indian Ocean[49]. From that time onwards, western merchants used the direct sea route, discovered earlier, on a large scale[50]. While Diodorus was

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[47] For examples of such expeditions, see Sulimani 2011, 169-170. As for presenting Panchaea as part of the real world, it is worth noting that Diodorus' description of Panchaea reveals a salient resemblance to his accounts of real islands, namely, Lipara and Lesbos. See Sulimani 2017a, 231-234.

[48] These islands are attested to in works such as Strabo's *Geography* (16.4.4 C 769, 16.4.13 C 773) and the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (25, 30, 33, 34). Diodorus himself describes the prosperous islands near the coast of Arabia (3.47.9, 5.41.4, 6.1.4). For further details and discussion, see Sulimani 2015, 86-87.

[49] See Raschke 1978, 662 with notes (for studies dealing with the theory of technological change, see especially n.1304, p. 974); Sidebotham 1986, 8.

[50] Strabo, who visited Egypt in 26-20 BCE, attests to this development (though the details given by him are questionable, see Raschke 1978, p. 662 with notes); he states that in his day large fleets sailed as far as India and the extremities of Ethiopia, whence they returned with valuable cargoes (17.1.13 C 798). See

writing, then, sailors were still using the old method of sailing to India. He therefore describes the actual route in his mythical tale[51].

These are merely a few examples of the numerous accurate geographical data contained in the journeys depicted by Diodorus in his mythography. Since the following discussion reveals further cases that illuminate Diodorus' practice, it would be better to draw conclusions later on.

3.2. Journeys of mythical heroes modelled on the tracks of Diodorus' contemporaries

As already mentioned, Diodorus is accustomed to model the paths of his mythical figures on Alexander's expedition. Sesostris' journey is a conspicuous example, yet the influence of the Macedonian king is evident in other mythical expeditions, such as that of Semiramis. Setting out from Babylon in the direction of Media, the Assyrian queen passed through the Bagistanus Mountain, the city of Chauon, the Zarcaeus (probably Zagros)[52] mountain range and Ecbatana. Stopping at Persis and other places throughout Asia, she went to Egypt and proceeded to Libya, where she sought the advice of the oracle of Ammon. Semiramis also visited Ethiopia and, returning to Asia, she came to Bactra. Attempting an invasion of India, Semiramis crossed the river Indus but then she was defeated and forced to go back to Bactra, where her campaign came to an end (2.13.1-14.3, 16.1-2, 18.1-19.10)[53]. With the exception of Ethiopia, all Semiramis' ports of call were visited by Alexander. The route followed by Semiramis from Babylon to Ecbatana illustrates well not only the similarity between the journey of the mythical queen and that of the historical king, but also Diodorus' custom of depicting actual paths and sites in his mythical narrative. All three places where Semiramis stopped – namely, Bagistanus, Chauon and Zarcaeus (Zagros) – appear in Isidore of Charax's description of the highway that runs from Seleucia to Ecbatana (Parth. 2-6). This indicates that the Assyrian queen travelled along the existing main road. The difference in the starting point (Babylon in Diodorus, Seleucia in Isidore) may be explained by the gradual decline of Babylon and the rise of Seleucia towards the first century

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also the comments of Pliny (e.g., *NH*, VI.101) and the author of the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (e.g., 49, 56).

[51] See further in Sulimani 2015.

[52] Treidler 1967a, cols. 2283-2285; Treidler 1967b, col. 2329; Boncquet 1987, 104-105.

[53] See map 3 at the end of this paper.

CE[54]. Furthermore, Alexander obviously made his way along the same road. Travelling from Babylon to Ecbatana, he made a slight detour and visited Bagistanus (D.S. 17.110.5-6; cf. Curt. 10.4.3), while encountering with the Cossaeans, who lived in the Zagros, on his way back (D.S. 17.115.5-112.1; Curt. 10.4.3; Arr. 7.15.1-4; cf. Plu. Alex. 72.1, 73.1)[55].

Whereas both expeditions of Sesostris and Semiramis bear resemblance to Alexander's campaign, Heracles' journey westwards reflects the boundaries of the Roman Empire in Diodorus' own day. Similar to Diodorus' other heroes, Heracles went from one point to another in a reasonable order. Setting sail from Crete, he visited Libya, where he stopped at Hecatompylus (probably Capsa in Numidia). He then crossed the ocean to Iberia at a point that was known later as the Pillars of Heracles and put in at Gadeira. Marching to Celtica (Transalpine Gaul), where he founded Alesia, he crossed the Alps and came into Galatia (Cisalpine Gaul). He passed through the lands of the Ligurians and of the Tyrrhenians (Etruscans) and reached Italy. Heracles, according to Diodorus, camped at the site where Rome now stands, explaining that this was in the vicinity of the river Tiber and the Palatine Hill. Heading south, he arrived in the Phlegraean plain, Cumae, Lake Avernus and Poseidonia (Paestum). After resting for a while on the border between Rhegium and Locris, the hero swam across the straits to Sicily. He made a circuit of the entire island, visiting Pelorias, Himera, Egesta, Eryx and Syracuse. Then, turning inland, he went through the plain of Leontini and arrived at Agyrium, Diodorus' hometown. Upon his return to Italy, he stopped at the site of the city of Croton and chose to go back to Greece on foot. He made a circuit of Adriatic Sea, passed through Epirus and ended his journey in the Peloponnesus (4.17.4-25.1)[56].

This detailed and well-ordered description of real sites speaks for itself, yet it may be helpful to underline the significance of some of the places in the first century BCE. In addition to Alesia, discussed above, Heracles visited Hecatompylus, identified with the city captured by Marius during the war against the Numidian king Jugurtha (Sall. Iug. 89.4-6, 90.1-92.2, 97.1)[57] and destroyed again later by Julius Caesar during the civil wars (Strabo, 17.3.12 C 831). Gadeira, Heracles' port of call in Iberia, is also related to

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[54] See Sulimani 2005, 46-48.

[55] See further in Sulimani 2005.

[56] See map 4 at the end of this paper.

[57] Interestingly, Sallust maintains that the Libyan Heracles was the founder of Capsa (*Iug.* 89.4; cf. Oros. 5.15.8).

Caesar. While he was quaestor in Hispania Ulterior, Caesar visited the sacred precinct of Heracles in Gadeira and there, beholding the statue of Alexander the Great, he decided to ask for greater enterprises at Rome (Suet. Iul. 7.1). Caesar returned to the city after his victory in Ilerda, an occasion in which he conferred Roman citizenship on the inhabitants of the city (Dio, 41.24.1). The Phlegraean plain, Cumae and Lake Avernus are also worth mentioning. This area was the centre of activity during the war between the triumvirs and Sextus Pompey that occurred at the very same time that Diodorus was engaged in writing (42-36 BCE). Pompey sent his legates to recruit pirates in the vicinity of Cumae (e.g., Strabo, 5.4.4 C 243), while the war itself was waged partly near Cumae (e.g., App. BCiv. 5.81, 84-85). More substantial, however, is the fact that Agrippa, having received the command of the fleet from Octavian, turned the city into his naval base. Preparing for the naval battle, Agrippa constructed a new harbour in Lake Avernus and connected the lake itself to Cumae and to Lake Lucrinus by canals (e.g., Dio, 48.49.2-51.5; Strabo, 5.4.5 C 244). In his description of Heracles' journey, Diodorus not only notes that the hero visited Lake Avernus, but he also remarks that Heracles "constructed works about the lake" (4.22.1), a further indication that the deeds of Agrippa led him to include these details in his account of Heracles.

As one reads all Diodorus' geographical descriptions integrated in his mythography, embracing accurate details and reflecting historical expeditions and empires, one gets the impression that he planned to draw a real map of the world. This assumption is further strengthened by the fact that Diodorus includes all four edges of the earth in his accounts of mythical journeys. Myrina, the Amazon queen, arrived at the Atlas Mountain (3.54.1) that marks the western limit of the known world, together with the Pillars of Heracles and Gadeira, reached by Heracles (4.18.2). Osiris, Sesostris, Semiramis and Dionysus visited India, the eastern frontier of the world (1.19.6, 55.2; 2.18.2). Sesostris travelled as far as Scythia, Lake Maeotis and the river Tanais in the northern extremity of the oikoumene (1.55.4), and invaded Ethiopia, the southern boundary, as did Osiris and Semiramis (1.18.3, 55.1; 2.14.4).[58] To some extent, Diodorus' version of the mythical journeys might be classified as written itineraries, frequently used in antiquity instead of graphic maps[59]. He obviously had no intention of putting a

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[58] For these boundaries of the world, see, e.g., Strabo, 2.1.1-3 C 67-68; Plin. *NH*, 2.242-246.

[59] A good example of such an itinerary is "The Parthian Stations" of Isidore of Charax (first century BCE-first century CE), describing the overland trade route from Antioch on the Orontes to India. See the reference to his work above, in the discussion of Semiramis' journey.

practical instrument into the hands of travellers, and thus omitted details such as the distance from one place to the other. Yet it seems that he used his mythography to provide some kind of geographical introduction to his work, in a unique way that would allow him to evade any criticism of his geographical skills[60].

Conclusions

Diodorus' accomplishments as a writer of the myths agree with his statements on the nature of mythography and its importance within a historical work. Preserving the main thread of the mythical tales, he updates them to correspond with the events of his own day. He was influenced by both the Greek and Roman worlds and, at the same time, incorporated into his descriptions his own thoughts and convictions. Moreover, attempting to offer his readers a useful universal history, Diodorus integrates elements borrowed from other literary genres in his mythography. It seems that he assigns to the mythical section of the Bibliotheke several functions: to tell the Archaiologia of peoples and their ancient myths;[61] to provide a geographical introduction to the entire work; to convey notions that he believed in and considered essential; and to offer his readers role models to emulate. Consequently, his version of the ancient mythologies is a blend of myth and history, and a combination of mythography, historiography, biography and geography.

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[60] It should be noted that Diodorus' first three books are also concerned with ethnography. See Muntz 2017. It is also interesting to note here Baumann's suggestion, according to which Diodorus offers his readers *enargeia* (vividness), encouraging his readers to read his history actively, hence, for instance, to travel through their imagination to many places, even the remotest parts of the *oikoumene* (Baumann 2018). On Diodorus' geography, see also Bommelaer's introduction to the 1989 Les Belles Lettres edition of Diodorus' Book 3 (Budé edition), xiv-xxxi.

[61] At times, Diodorus uses the word ἀρχαιολογία as a synonym for μυθολογία. See, e.g., 1.4.6 (where ἀρχαιολογία replaces both πράξεις and μυθολογία); 4.1.4.

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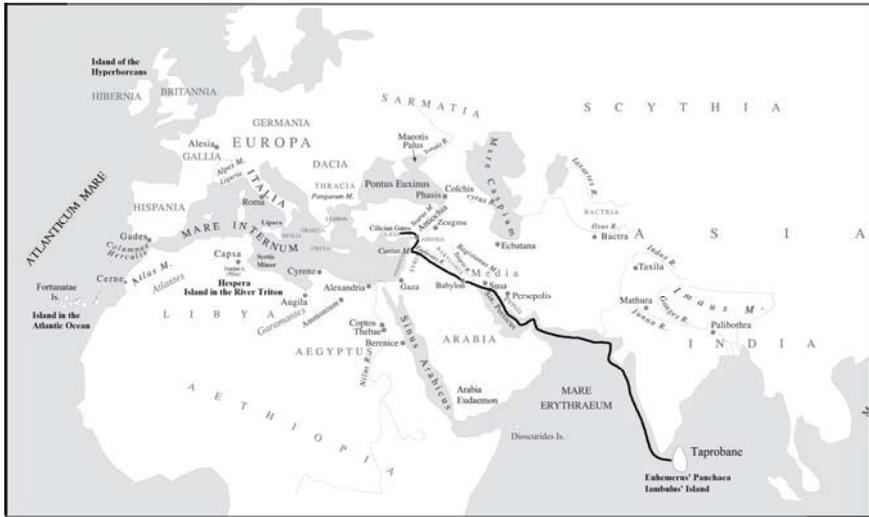
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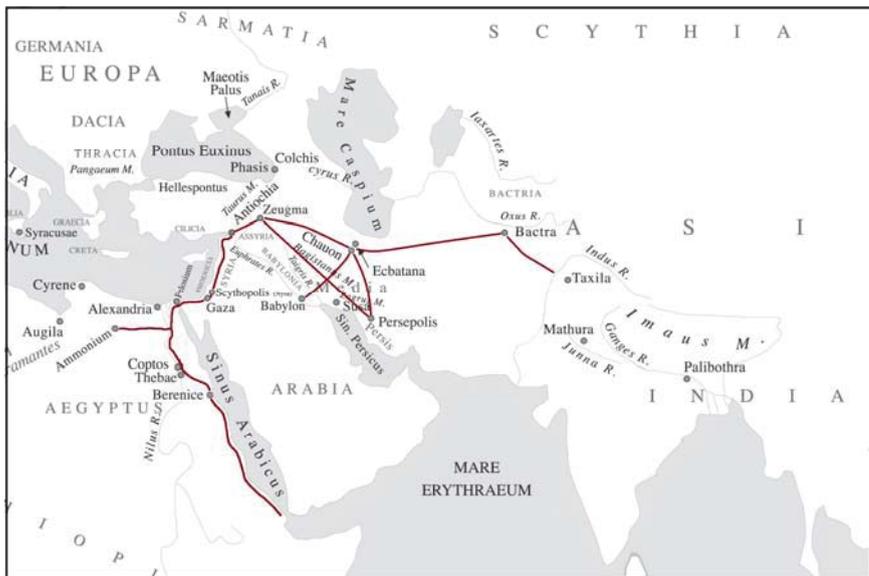
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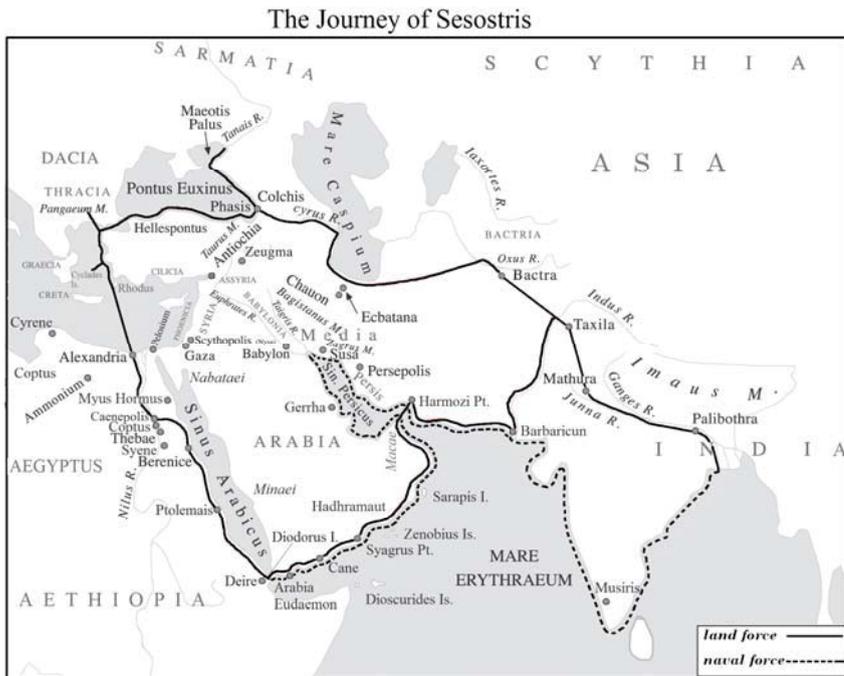
Map 1

Map 2

Map 3

The Journey of Heracles in the Western Mediterranean Basin

Map 4