

Multiple characters, one name: Heracles' multiplicity in Herodorus of Heraclea and its influence in Late Antiquity

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1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to explore the occurrence in the mythographic tradition of different characters clustered under a single name. These “artificial multiplicities”, as Fowler calls them,¹ are an answer in most instances to inconsistencies in the characters' stories and/or discordant aspects of their personality. This phenomenon is very common in regards to marginal or less-known characters within mythography. Nonetheless, it is also present for some well-known figures, such as Orpheus, whose variegated number of characters are distinguished but always carry the same name. Eustathius (fr. 868 Bernabé) claims that there were two Cicones identified as Orpheus, and Hermias (*in Phdr.* 244 A) distinguishes three Thracian Orpheus.

¹ Fowler (2013: 328).

Furthermore, the *Suda* differentiates seven Orpheus from their locations². This technique operates in two different ways: sometimes mythographers *cluster* different characters under a single name – as it is the particular case of Orpheus. At other times, mythographers *cluster* different names under a single character – the syncretization of Zeus and Belos constitutes a clear example³. Fowler differentiates them as two separate kinds of theorizing, when in fact both procedures are, in our opinion, symmetrical.⁴ After all, both have the same purpose in common: give coherence to mythical accounts. Moreover, apropos Heracles and Melqart, Parker argues that the process at play must have been an initial identification of both characters and a posterior distinction pointing out their differences⁵. Be that as it may, this kind of “rationalization” seems rather forward-thinking and deserves a deep examination of its early appearances. The presence of the multiple Heracleis in Herodorus of Heraclea offers a productive example. We think that the main motivation for this multiplicity was Herodorus’ acquaintance with certain Pythagorean knowledge. There might be other criteria at play, like geographical and genealogical inconsistencies. Therefore, how those Pythagorean, genealogical and geographical frameworks interact with each other will also be taken into account.

2. Herodorus of Heraclea

The multiplied Heracleis in Herodorus’ account are the main object of study. Although it might seem that this kind of “sophisticated” mechanism belongs to Hellenistic mythography, Herodorus of Heraclea’s work can be considered as an early-stage manifestation of this trend. It is worthwhile noticing that this author does not limit himself in distinguishing between the two controversial sides of Heracles’ identity – Heracles is perceived as both a hero and a god. Herodorus states that there were seven different Heracleis. The amount of multiplicity lingered in some imperial authors; although we would not dare to declare that the primary source of these authors was Herodorus’ work. Nonetheless, the thesis of this research is that Herodorus was the first author to provide such a vast number of Heracleis, possibly influenced by his knowledge of Pythagorean doctrines.

The early mythographer’s scarce *testimonia* seem to suggest that Heraclea Pontica was his hometown, a Megarian colony located in the Pontic Coast of

² *Suda* 0654 s.v. Ὀρφεύς.

³ Another relevant example would be Glaukos, see Corsano (1992). The clustering of different names appears predominantly in theonyms, cf. Parker (2017). See Hirzel (1896) about divine homonyms and their interpretation within authors from Antiquity.

⁴ Fowler (2013: 328).

⁵ “Wherever Greeks went they encountered a new Herakles, and the process of identification followed by division was repeated again and again” (Parker 2017: 38).

Bithynia (Asia Minor)⁶. Herodorus' birth has been traced back to the second half of the fifth century BC⁷. We can certainly state that he lived after Hellanicus and Pherecydes due to Herodorus' knowledge of their genealogies and accounts⁸.

Herodorus main work was known as 'Ο καθ' Ἡρακλέα λόγος, *Heracleia*, in which the mythographer tries to compile the maximum possible amount of information about Heracles, patron of his city⁹. However, Herodorus' interest resides in his rationalized mythological reports¹⁰. Even though so-called "rationalizing tendencies" are usually ascribed to later authors, it seems that Herodorus was already using this approach in order to develop and create his narratives. In addition, some Pythagorean motifs have been identified in Herodorus' texts¹¹. It is not possible to thoroughly analyse each Pythagorean element in Herodorus' fragments here. To point out a few of them, Herodorus' fragment 1 (= Sch. Hes. *Op.* 41) contains a reference to ἄλιμος, which is believed to be a Pythagorean appetite-suppressing concoction;

⁶ Herodorus is called ὁ Ἡρακλεώτης by Athenaeus (Ath. 11.49; Ath. epit. 2.50; Ath. 6.19) and Aristotle (Arist. *GA* 3.6 p. 757a); ὁ Ποντικός by John Tzetzes (Tzetzes Schol. Lycophron. *Alex.* 663; 1332; *Chil.* 2.210-211; 2.363-366; Schol. ad Antehomerica 22) and Plutarch (Plu. *Rom.* 9.6).

⁷ In order to establish a chronology based on the limited biographical information, most scholars rely on the kinship between him and Bryson, a renowned sophist and possibly Neo-Pythagorean within the intellectual Athenian circle (Döring 1972: 157-166). Aristotle (*HA* 6.5 p. 563a 7; 9.11 p. 615a 9) claims that Herodorus was ὁ Βρύσωνος τοῦ σοφιστοῦ πατήρ, "the father of the sophist Bryson". The vast majority of academics locate Herodorus' *floruit* on the first half of the fourth century BC: Jacoby (1912: 981); Desideri (1991: 8); Fuentes & Campos (2000: 671); Fowler (2013: 696). Guadagno (2016: 5-8) prefers to establish Herodorus' birth in the second half of the fifth century BC.

⁸ Herodorus' acquaintance with their works can be easily confirmed by looking at their genealogical similarities (Fuentes & Campos 2000: 672).

⁹ A portion of his fragments display a different theme and they sometimes appear titled as Ἀργοναυτικά, *Argonautica*. Most of those fragments have been transmitted through Apollonius' scholia, which leads us to think that they were a separate work. Furthermore, according to Herodorus, Heracles didn't take part in the Argonauts' expedition (Herod. fr. 41a-b), so it would not make any sense for such a long *excursus* about it. Α Πελοπεία, *Pelopεία*, and an Ὀρφείως καὶ Μουσαίου ἱστορία, *History of Orpheus and Mousaios*, are titles also present in Herodorus' fragments. Nevertheless, each of them appears just once (Herod. fr. 11 and 12 Fowler).

¹⁰ For example, Herodorus (fr. 57 Fowler) claims that the Golden Fleece is actually a silver plate with a golden ram depicted in it. This kind of "rationalizing procedures" can be found in most of his fragments.

¹¹ For a brief analysis of certain Pythagorean fragments and its parallels in other authors: Fuentes & Campos (2000: 674-5). Detienne (1960: 26-31) also considers Herodorus a Pythagorean mythographer.

in fragment 21 (=Ath. 2.50) Herodorus is quoted as an authority about the measurements of the Selenites which concurs with Philolaos' vision¹²; Herodorus also believed that the Nemean Lion (fr. 4 = Tat., *Orat.* 27) and vultures (fr. 22 = Arist. *HA* 6.5; 9.11; Plu. *Rom.* 9; *Quaest. Rom.* 93) came from the moon.¹³ Thus, the rationalizing tendencies along with the author's Pythagorean background will be crucial to understand the apparent logic behind the several Heracleis.

3. Seven different Heracleis

An allegory of the Golden Apples of the Hesperides labour can be found in a fragment with a complicated textual transmission (fr. 14 Fowler).¹⁴ The sources for this fragment are Pseudo-John Antiochenus (Ps.-Io. Ant. 454 fr. 6.6 *FHG* from cod. gr. 854 Par. 1630 ed. Cramer); Georgius Cedrenus (1.33 ed. Bekker); Constantine Porphyrogenitus, in Büttner-Wobst (1906: 1.164); and John Malalas (Io. Mal. *Chron.* 1.14 ed. Thurn). Heracles is introduced as a philosophical hero, as the fetching of the apples would be another way to explain how διὰ τοῦ ῥοπάλου τῆς φιλοσοφίας, “through the club of philosophy”, he was able to obtain three virtues: τὸ μὴ ὀργίζεσθαι, τὸ μὴ φιλαργυρεῖν, τὸ μὴ φιληδονεῖν, “not getting angry, not being avaricious, and not being self-indulgent”. The fragment ends with an affirmation that we consider to be the genesis of a long-term tradition. It is stated in a sentence that depends directly on Herodorus' authority that he had differentiated seven Heracleis:¹⁵

(...) καθὼς Ἡρόδωρος ὁ σοφώτατος συνεγράψατο, ὃς καὶ ἄλλους Ἡρακλεῖς ἱστορεῖ γεγενῆσθαι ἑπτὰ.

(...) as wisest Herodorus wrote down, who records also that there were seven different Heracleis¹⁶.

Based on this final sentence, it is clear that Herodorus accepts the coexistence of different characters that share the same name. The exact number of characters will depend on how we understand ἄλλους. If ἄλλους is to be interpreted as “other”, it is necessary to add those “seven other Heracleis” to the one that is being allegorized in the fragment. Then the final sum would be eight Heracleis. On the other hand, ἄλλους can also be

¹² Aetius 2.30. For a complete commentary, see Huffman (1993: 271-276).

¹³ γῆν ἄνω (fr. 4) and ἐτέρας γῆς (fr. 22).

¹⁴ See Roberto (2005: LXXXIII n94) for a thorough discussion of Pseudo-John Antiochenus' manuscript tradition on this specific instance.

¹⁵ The manuscripts feature Herodotus, and Diodorus is present in the Slavonic tradition. Herodorus was proposed for the first time by Wesseling (1758: 24).

¹⁶ Translations are ours, unless otherwise stated.

understood as “different”, which would narrow down the number to seven Heracleis.¹⁷ Both interpretations are present in the scholars who have addressed this issue¹⁸. Concerning the superlative that characterizes Herodorus, σοφώτατος, it could refer to the philosophical aspects of his work suggested by several fragments, especially the predominant influence of Pythagoreanism, or perhaps just to the considerable erudition of the author and to the many expertise fields present in his writings.

Nevertheless, the Pythagorean undertones in Herodorus’ literary production compel us to think that a splitting in seven Heracleis would fit better in this doctrine. The number seven is already present in certain Heracleian mythical episodes collected by Herodorus. Herodorus’ fragment 20 (= Ath. 13.4) explains Heracles’ deflowering of the fifty daughters of Thestius during seven days. However, Pausanias (9.27.6) explains that Heracles laid down with all of them except one, that is to say, forty-nine, multiple and perfect square of seven. Seven Heracleis per seven nights would result in forty-nine daughters deflowered in total. Furthermore, later traditions contain either six or seven Heracles, as will be examined *infra*. Therefore, we are inclined to believe that the correct interpretation of this sentence is “seven different Heracleis”.

4. Rationalization at work

What could have been Herodorus’ motivations in order to offer this multiplicity of Heracleis? In this particular case, authors prior to Herodorus implicitly point out the plurality of Heracles’ persona. The Homeric *Odyssey* already distinguishes between a Heracles that “lives among the immortals”, and a Heracles’ εἶδωλον seen by Odysseus during the νέκυια¹⁹. Many

¹⁷ This interpretation is supported by Guadagno (2014: 255).

¹⁸ Fowler (2013: 328), Hawes (2014: 11) Moore (2017: 35) think that it refers to eight Heracleis; Detienne (1960: 30) and Guadagno (2014: 256) seven.

¹⁹ Hom. *Od.* 11.602-4. Cf. Heubeck & Hoekstra (1990: 114): “It is, however, possible that the poet did not wish to suppress the idea of Heracles’ divine status, which had gained widespread currency (...) but was unwilling to forgo the scene planned for 601-27, and so attempted a (strictly speaking, illogical) compromise between the popular belief about the hero and the εἶδωλον concept fundamental to the rest of the book.” See Karanika (2011) about the thoughtful choice of Heracles as the final encounter of the νέκυια.

interpretations of this passage have come forward²⁰; even since the ancient times these verses were considered an interpolation²¹.

Later on, Herodotus tries to give an explanation to the duplicity of Heracles' heroic and divine worship in Greece and Egypt. Herodotus (2.146.1-2) justifies the gaps between Egyptian and Greek theogonies as it follows: the Egyptian gods were adopted by the Greeks and established in the first generations of Greek theogonies. Given the fact that Heracles, Dionysus and Pan came later, they were situated within newer generations and sometimes considered demigods. Herodotus differentiates the Egyptian Heracles, who went to Thassos five generations before the mortal Heracles, son of Amphitryon²². However, in both instances the multiplicity is binary because it probably states a distinction between a Heracles mortal/hero and a Heracles immortal/god²³.

The splitting goes beyond these two aspects of Heracles' personality in Herodorus' account. A similar rationalizing procedure is made by Herodorus concerning Orpheus. In Apollonius' *Argonautica* scholia it is mentioned that Herodorus (fr. 42a-b Fowler) believed that there were two Orpheus. Some have tried to elucidate this statement by looking at the similarities with Hellanicus' earlier genealogy about this subject²⁴. Fowler suggests that Herodorus had in mind an Orpheus Argonaut and another Orpheus who was a poet-musician and lived during the same time as Homer²⁵. The incentive for creation of multiple Orpheus, then, would be a direct response to a chronological incompatibility. And given the fact that Herodorus was

²⁰ Nagy (1979: 208) asserts that Heracles' immortality meant that he had a regenerated body at Mount Olympus. On the other hand, more recently Burgess (2009: 103) suggests "that the Olympic Herakles is the ascended immortal part, whereas the *eidolon* of Herakles in Hades represents the burned mortal part of the hero."

²¹ Cf. Ameis & Hentze (1889: 124): "Übrigens wurden die Verse 602. 603 athetiert und ebenso wie 604 dem Onomakritos zugeschrieben." See Petzl (1969: 28-41) about the scholarly discussion of the passage.

²² Cf. Leitao (2012: 71-73). Vannicelli (2001: 229-230) stresses not only the impossibility of becoming a god if both parents are mortal, but also how the coexistence of these two Heracleis it was perceived as a chronological problem.

²³ This duality has been analysed in Stafford (2005) and Stafford (2010). In relation to his worshipping in Thassos and a detailed analysis of the terms used by Herodotus in this account, see Pitz (2016). López Saco (1997: 62) alleges that "para el poeta homérico, el Heracles del mito fue un ser humano, que en época arcaica se convierte por segunda vez en un dios, nuevo, distinto al que dio el origen al héroe griego por excelencia. En su forma desarrollada combina en su figura dos héroes locales, separados en origen, el Heracles peloponesio, nieto de Alceo y el héroe beocio conocido como el Valiente (Alceo)."

²⁴ Hellanic. fr. 5. Fowler.

²⁵ Fowler (2013: 212).

familiarized with Hellanicus' work, at first glance one might think that Heracles' case could be justified by a plausible chronological inconsistency.

On the other hand, the act of saying that someone was "Heracles" or "a Heracles" had become at some point proverbial. There is an account about the idiom *omnes qui fecerant fortiter, Hercules vocabantur* in Servius' *Commentary on the Aeneid*²⁶. Servius glosses over how Varro had enumerated forty-three Hercules at first, *hinc est quod legimus Herculem Tirynthium, Argivum, Thebanum, Libym*²⁷. Varro is not concerned with the dual aspect of Heracles previously seen, rather it seems that the multiplicity present in his account is a direct response to a geographical incompatibility – there are Heracleis from Tiryns, from Argos, from Thebes and from Libya. Certainly, this should indicate that similar characters from those regions were at some point compared with the Panhellenic hero par excellence. And hence the name "Heracles" would be associated with them as an appellative.

However, the conundrum is not solved yet. The lack of information of those seven Heracleis in Herodorus' fragment denies us the possibility of identification and the establishment of their chronology. Moreover, not every duplication of characters can be explained due to a chronological intervention, even in Hellanicus²⁸. At least one of them must be the renowned son of Amphitryon and Alcmena, but what about the others?

5. Multiple Heracleis in the mythographic tradition

By examining the continuity of this plurality of Heracleis in authors from Late Antiquity, we might be able to shed some light on the matter. Cicero, in *De natura deorum*, lists six different Hercules (Cic. *ND* 3.42 ed. Plasberg; Ax):

Quamquam quem potissimum Herculem colamus scire sane velim; pluris enim tradunt nobis i qui interiores scrutantur et reconditas litteras, antiquissimum Iove natum – sed item Iove antiquissimo, nam Ioves quoque pluris in priscis Graecorum litteris invenimus: ex eo igitur et Lysithoe est is Hercules quem concertavisse cum Apolline de tripode accepimus. alter traditur Nilo natus Aegyptius, quem aiunt Phrygias litteras conscripsisse. tertius est ex Idaeis Digitis, cui inferias adferunt ꝑcui. quartus Iovis est <et> Asteriae Latonae sororis, qui Tyri maxime

²⁶ Serv. Verg. *Aen.* 8.564.

²⁷ Apropos this *passus*, cf. Leonardis (2017: 26): "Varrone spiegava così l'origine dei diversi appellativi dati a Ercole, enumerandone 43 casi, evidentemente tutti quelli da lui conosciuti. Allo stesso tempo rivelava il meccanismo per cui si erano creati questi appellativi, ovvero chiarendo come diverse popolazioni, avendo ricevuto un beneficio da una figura valorosa e forte in senso fisico o morale, fossero state portate a chiamarla 'Un altro Ercole', ovvero il loro specifico Ercole (di Tirinto, di Tebe, etc.)."

²⁸ Cf. Möller (1996: 26): "Die Verdoppelung von Personen bei Hellanikos muss wiederum keine chronologische Funktion haben, sie konnte auch rein der Erklärung bestimmter Unstimmigkeiten in den Traditionen gegolten haben."

colitur, cuius Carthaginem filiam ferunt, quintus in India qui Belus dicitur, sextus hic ex Alcmena quem Iuppiter genuit, sed tertius Iuppiter, quoniam ut iam docebo plures Ioves etiam accepimus.

Nevertheless I should like to know what particular Hercules it is that we worship; for we are told several by the students of esoteric and recondite writings, the most ancient being the son of Jupiter, that is of the most ancient Jupiter likewise, for we find several Jupiters also in the early writings of the Greeks. That Jupiter then and Lysithoe were the parents of the Hercules who is recorded to have had a tussle with Apollo about a tripod. We hear of another in Egypt, a son of the Nile, who is said to have compiled the sacred books of Phrygia. A third comes from the Digi of Mount Ida, who offer sacrifices at his tomb. A fourth is the son of Jupiter and Asteria, the sister of Latona; he is chiefly worshipped at Tyre, and is said to have been the father of the nymph Carthago. There is a fifth in India, named Belus. The sixth is our friend the son of Alcmena, whose male progenitor was Jupiter, that is Jupiter number three, since, I will now explain, tradition tells us of several Jupiters also²⁹.

The enumeration of the six Hercules calls for the need to be examined as one of several lists of homonymous gods and goddesses in Cicero's work³⁰. The orator mentions that the sources used are *qui interiores scrutantur et reconditas litteras*³¹. Those must be placed in connection with the authorities, which are also quoted in other lists within the same book – *genealogi antiqui* (3.44), *ii qui theologi nominatur* (3.53) and *antiqui historici* (3.55). Even though Herodorus' Heracleis were seven; six is pretty close to that number.

In the first place Cicero lists a divinely worshiped Heracles. He is the son of the oldest of all the Jupiters³², the one called Aetherius, and Lysithoe, an Oceanid³³. This Heracles is the protagonist of the theft of the Apollonian tripod from Delphi. Heracles was sick after slaying Iphitus and since the Pythia refused to respond to him oracularly, he tried to carry off the tripod to establish his own oracle³⁴. Secondly, a Heracles son of the river Nile is mentioned. If the first one looks like it should be established in the Greek

²⁹ Trans. H. Rackham.

³⁰ Michaelis (1898) and Bobeth (1904) dedicated two monographs to this issue. Bobeth (1904: 57) even came up with a *stemma* for the sources, which all rely on a lost Greek archetype from the first century AD.

³¹ "The word implies the opposite to that which is superficial and commonplace [...] here however it is used of research in the region of mythology" (Mayor 1885: 106).

³² Cicero enumerates three different Jupiters (*ND* 3.53).

³³ Lysithoe is only mentioned by Cicero and Lydus (*De mens.* 4.67), as we will see *infra*.

³⁴ The story is well documented both in literary sources (Apollod. 2.6.2; Paus. 3.21.8, 8.37.1, 10.13.7; Serv. 8.300; Sch. Pi. *O* 9.29; Hyg. *Fab.* 32) and iconography (*LIMC* 5.2947-2961).

domain, the latter has an Egyptian origin³⁵. What stands out the most about this Heracles is the fact that he was said “to have compiled the sacred books of Phrygia.” The allusion to Phrygia would fit better with the next Heracles on the list, the one “from the Digi of Mount Ida”. This was believed to be the Heracles that founded the Olympic games³⁶. There was in fact a Mount Ida in Phrygia where these daimones dwelled, even though the confusion between Curetes, Corybantes, Telchines and Dactyls also locates them at the Cretan Mount Ida³⁷. In fourth position, Cicero attests a Heracles son of another Jupiter – different from the previous one, Jupiter Aetherius – and Asteria. This Heracles was worshiped in Tyr and was the father of the nymph Carthago. Cicero is recalling the Tyrian god Melqart, a figure widely attested in the Carthaginian colonies and assimilated later on with Heracles, especially during Alexander’s imperium³⁸. The fourth Heracles mentioned by Cicero is one called Belus in India. We know for a fact that at least Heracles’ iconography was used by the Semitic tradition to represent Bel/Ba’al, “lord”³⁹. Megasthenes in his *Indica* (fr. 13a) talks about a Heracles worshiped in India that should not be confused with the other ones, since “it would have to be some other Heracles, not the Theban, the Tyrian or the Egyptian, or else some great king who dwelt in the high country not far from India”⁴⁰. Lastly, we find the Panhellenic hero son of Jupiter – a third one – and Alcmena.

³⁵ Cf. Mayor (1885: 108) “The Nile was thought to be the same as Oceanus and to have given birth to all the gods (Diod. 1.12).”

³⁶ See Hubbard (2007) on that matter.

³⁷ Cf. Cruccas (2018: 11): “Questo Eracle, identificato dall’epiclesi ‘Dattilo’ anche secondo gli scritti orfici, sembra avere caratteristiche che in parte lo distinguono dall’eroe olimpico, in parte lo accomunano. Nel già citato passo di Pausania nel libro sull’Elide e Olimpia, il Periegeta riconnette questa figura alla tradizione della nascita di Zeus nella gratta dell’Ida, identificando sostanzialmente Dattili e Cureti: Eracle, Peoneo, Epimede, Iaso e Ida sarebbero i nomi di questi fratelli, incaricati da Rea di proteggere il neonato padre degli dei. Un’origine cretese di questo Eracle sembra plausibile, ma va sicuramente contestualizzata nell’identificazione tarda e nella successiva confusione ingenerata nelle fonti tra questi gruppi semi-divini come Cureti, Dattili, Telchini e Coribanti.” For a Presocratic overview of these daimones, see Blakely (2007).

³⁸ Cf. Nitschke (2013: 258): “We have no literary sources in Phoenician to relate his mythology and characteristics; our knowledge of his existence and his sphere of influence both in the Levant throughout the Mediterranean is dependent on inscriptions and Greek and Roman writers, who portray him as a deified king/founder of the city, as well as having chthonic associations.” See Bonnet (1988) for a substantive work on the Tyrian Heracles by the Mediterranean basin.

³⁹ Cf. Wood (2018: 345).

⁴⁰ “ἄλλος ἂν οὗτος Ἡρακλῆς εἴη, οὐχ ὁ Θηβαῖος ἢ ὁ Τύριος [οὗτος] ἢ ὁ Αἰγύπτιος, ἢ τις καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἄνω χώραν οὐ πόρρω τῆς Ἰνδῶν γῆς ὤκισμένος μέγας βασιλεύς.”

Perhaps what stands out the most from this list is the geographical variety of the different Heracleis – an Egyptian, a Carthaginian, an Indian, etc. The image of the hero – and probably also the myth – was amalgamated to foreign yet similar figures⁴¹. Maybe, instead of a chronological inconsistency as seen with Orpheus' case, here Herodorus and these later authors were dealing with a geographical incompatibility, as we have seen through Varro's testimony. They tried to solve it by providing distinct genealogies to these Heracleis that most likely are similar figures from different cultures. It is important to have in mind that genealogies play a central role in the development of the early mythography and the configuration of its standards of plausibility⁴². Thus, Herodorus' original account most certainly had to include the genealogy of each of these Heracles, since, as expected, some of the author's fragments provide genealogical information.⁴³ Ampelius, on the other hand, offers a significantly correspondent list of Hercules (Ampel. *Lib. Memor.* 9.12 ed. Arnaud-Lindet):

Hercules sex: primus Iovis et Aetherii filius; secundus Nili filius quem principem colunt Aegyptii; tertium conditorem loci sui Hellenes dicunt; quartus Croni filius et Cartheres, quem Carthaginenses colunt, unde Carthago dicta est; quintus Ioab filius qui cum rege Medorum pugnavit; sextus Iovis filius ex Alcemena qui Atlanta docuit⁴⁴.

There were six Hercules: the first, the son of Jupiter also called Ethereal; the second, son of the Nile, which the Egyptians honour first; the Hellenes say that the third is the founder of their country; the fourth, son of Cronus and Carthere, whom the Carthaginians honour, after which Carthage was named; the fifth, son of Ioab, who fought the king of the Medes; the sixth, the son of Jupiter, born of Alceme, who educated Atlas.

Despite a few divergences, Ampelius' list is quite similar to Cicero's. The divergences start at the third Heracles. Instead of the expected Heracles from the Digi of Mount Ida, Ampelius avoids that information and states that he was the founder of the country of the Hellenes. The fourth deviates only in genealogy, since Ampelius says that he is son of Cronus and Carthere.

⁴¹ Cf. Wood (2018: 330): "The widespread popularity of Heracles' image across Eurasia is, however, a significant factor to consider in as much as it suggests there were certain traits in his projected character or image, or indeed, mythology, which appealed to varied cultures and levels of societies."

⁴² Cf. Jacob (1994: 170): "Elle [la généalogie] invite dès lors à penser des rapports abstraits de synchronie ou de diachronie, où des relations sont établies entre des faits et des personnages, dans des cités et des régions différentes, sur la base abstraite d'une relation temporelle."

⁴³ For example, in fr. 38 and 39 (Fowler) Herodorus establishes the genealogy of Phrixus and Helle.

⁴⁴ *Domuit* in some manuscripts, but *docuit* makes more sense in connection to Herodorus' fragment (fr. 13 Fowler), as Arnaud-Lindet acknowledges (1993: 67).

Therefore, even with a different kinship than the one present in Cicero's account, this Heracles is also related to Tyr/Carthage. In fifth position, the appellative Belus is not attributed to an Indian Heracles, but we find a genealogy that relates him to Ioab, the one who fought the king of Medes. Thus, this Heracles belongs as well to the Semitic tradition. Finally, it is worth noticing that Ampelius thinks that Heracles was the instructor of Atlas, whereas Herodorus' fragment 13 (= Clem. Al. *Strom.* 1.15.73.1-2) reflects the opposite:

Φρύγες δὲ ἦσαν καὶ βάρβαροι οἱ Ἰδαῖοι δάκτυλοι. Ἡρόδωρος δὲ τὸν Ἡρακλέα μάντιν καὶ φυσικὸν γενόμενον ἱστορεῖ παρὰ Ἄτλαντος τοῦ βαρβάρου τοῦ Φρυγῶς διαδέχσθαι τοὺς τοῦ κόσμου κίονας, αἰνιττομένου τοῦ μύθου τὴν τῶν οὐρανίων ἐπιστήμην μαθήσει διαδέχσθαι.

The Dactyls of Ida were non-Greek Phrygians. Herodorus records that Heracles was a seer devoted to natural philosophy and received the columns of the world from Atlas, a Phrygian. The legend is an allegory of the acquisition, by learning, of the knowledge of the sky⁴⁵.

Therefore, Herodorus believed that Heracles learned soothsaying and physics from a Phrygian Atlas⁴⁶. Ampelius might have mixed up this information if Herodorus was indeed his source. Heracles' education by Atlas is not exclusively Herodorean, but the authors that provide the allegorization of their relationship are more recent than Herodorus⁴⁷.

However, Cicero's and Ampelius' lists are lacking one of the expected seven Heracleis. In addition to the six Heracleis we have previously seen, Lydus in his treatise about the months, *De Mensibus*, holds space for another one, son of Zeus and Maia (Lyd. *De mens.* 4.67 ed. Wunsch):

ὑπὸ δὲ Εὐρυσθέως προστάττεται ὁ Ἡρακλῆς τοὺς δυοκαίδεκα ἄθλους ἐκτελεῖν, ἀντὶ τοῦ ὁ ἥλιος κελεύσει τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ, ἀντιβαινούσης τῆς Ἥρας – οἰονεὶ τῆς σφαίρας – ἀντίρροπος αὐτῇ τὸν δωδεκαζώδιον διαφεύγει οὐρανόν. οὕτως μὲν οἱ φιλόσοφοι. ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν ἱστοριῶν εὐρίσκομεν ἑπτὰ Ἡρακλεῖς γενέσθαι, πρῶτον Διὸς τοῦ Αἰθέρος καὶ Λυσιθόης τῆς Ὠκεανοῦ, δεύτερον Νείλου παῖδα, τρίτον Ἑλληνοῦ τοῦ Διὸς καὶ Νύμφης Ἀγχιάλῃς, τέταρτον Διὸς καὶ Θήβης τῆς Αἰγυπτίας, πέμπτον τὸν Λιβάνου καὶ Νύσσης τὸν ἐν Ἰνδοῖς γενόμενον, ἕκτον Διὸς καὶ Ἀλκμήνης, ἕβδομον Διὸς καὶ Μαΐας τῆς Ἄτλαντος.

And Heracles was commanded to carry out his twelve labours by Eurystheus – meaning that the sun, by the order of the great god, with

⁴⁵ Trans. J. Ferguson.

⁴⁶ About the unusual Oriental location of Atlas – and the Hades – in Herodorus' fragments, see Guadagno (2016).

⁴⁷ Servius (*Aen.* 1.741) states that Heracles was able to defeat various monsters thanks to Atlas' education. Diodorus Siculus (3.60.2; 4.27.4) claims that, due to the fact that Heracles had saved Atlas' daughters, he willingly taught astronomy to the hero.

Hera – that is, the sphere – moving against it, runs in counterpoise to her through the heavens with its twelve signs of the Zodiac. So [say] the philosophers. But from the histories we find that there have been seven Heracles: First, [the son] of Zeus [son] of Aether and Lysithoe [daughter] of Ocean; second, the child of Nilus; third, [the son] of Hellen [son] of Zeus and the nymph Anchiale; fourth, [the son] of Zeus and Thebe the Egyptian; fifth, the [son] of Libanus and Nyssa – the one who was among the Indians; sixth, [the son] of Zeus and Alcmena; seventh, [the son] of Zeus and Maia [daughter] of Atlas⁴⁸.

Thus, Lydus offers a list of seven different Heracleis. Most of them are clearly recognizable from the previous lists from Cicero and Ampelius. The first and second ones are once again identical in the three authors. The third one is related to the Hellenes in a genealogical way, since he is the son of the eponymous hero and the nymph Anchiale. The reference to the Digi/Dactyls found in Cicero is missing here as well. The one in fourth position also differs slightly, since his mother isn't either Asteria or Carthere, but Thebe the Egyptian. The Indian Heracles in Lydus' account is said to be the son of Libanus and Nyssa. The son of Zeus and Alcmena is indeed enumerated as the sixth one, while about the seventh one Lydus says only that he was born from Zeus and Maia, daughter of Atlas. Maia's maternity of this last Heracles should attract our attention, inasmuch as she is traditionally the mother of Hermes. It seems that an assimilation between Hermes and Heracles is at play⁴⁹.

There is a plausible chance that Herodorus could have been the primary source, even though it might seem that both authors are remote chronologically from each other. One must bear in mind that most of Herodorus' fragments are transmitted in Late Antiquity authors such as Lydus.⁵⁰ Moreover, the wording τῶν ἱστοριῶν most certainly refers to the work of a mythographer, namely Herodorus.⁵¹ The structure of Lydus' text should be compared to that of fragment 14: presentation of an allegorical reading, first, then a list of the different characters named Heracles. But, in addition to the difference in allegorical reading, it should certainly be noted that Lydus attributes these two passages to apparently different kinds of authors. The "philosophers" give the allegorical reading of the twelve labours, and the historians the different Heracleis and their genealogies. Herodorus fragment

⁴⁸ Trans. M. Hooker.

⁴⁹ See Larson (2019) about the similarities between the myths of Hermes and certain elements present in Heracles' biography.

⁵⁰ Herodorus' *Heracleia* is quoted mostly by Late Antiquity authors, such as Clement of Alexandria (fr. 13 Fowler), Stephanus of Byzantium (fr. 2a, 2b, 2c, 29, 35, 36), Tatian (fr. 4) or John Tzetzes (fr. 25b, 25b) among others.

⁵¹ About the uses of ἱστορία and its meaning in the context of commentary, cf. Delattre (2016).

14 seems to attribute both the allegorical and the genealogical information to the same author.

The allegorizing explanation of Heracles' twelve labours that precedes the list deserves some attention. Heracles is an allegorized form of the sun and the twelve labours represent the twelve Zodiac signs, "so [say] the philosophers". We can infer from certain testimonies that the number seven in the Pythagorean numerology represents the sun.⁵² Thus perhaps this multiplicity of seven Heracleis belongs to a Pythagorean doctrine. It is plausible that Herodorus was one of the first authors to represent Heracles in this Pythagorean mode in his writings. And Lydus, who exhibits Pythagorean lore in other sections of his work⁵³, might have had access to a better and more complete source than Cicero's (and Ampelius)⁵⁴. There is no evidence of correlation between Herodorus' and Lydus' accounts, but the similarities in the number of Heracleis and the likely Pythagorean motivation invite us to trace a line between both texts. Moreover, not far from this account (4.70), Lydus talks about Miletus and how it was formerly called Anactoria without quoting an authority. A report about the hero and city origins is in fact attested in Herodorus' fragment 45 (Sch. A.R. 1.185-8a)⁵⁵.

In conclusion, although we cannot be sure about the extent of Herodorus' influence on these authors, the presence of such procedures in an early mythographer is remarkable. If we take into account the possibility of the Herodorean influence in Cicero, Ampelius and Lydus, the inspiration for the splitting into different Heracleis may be traced back to the obscure Pythagorean tradition. Reconciliation of the presence of similar characters in different regions must have also played a significant role. Herodorus, in his duplication of Heracleis, ushers in a long-standing strategy that would persist in the European tradition. The idea of different Heracleis is still present even in the seventh book of the influential *Mythologiae* of Natalis Comes. After quoting Cicero's list, the Italian mythographer concludes that *cum tot fuerint Hercules, omnium reliquorum res gestae uni Alcumenae filio tribuuntur*. And if we expand our scope even more, we can recognize that the detection of inconsistencies and subsequent alterations were central to the first modern

⁵² Huffman (1993: 288).

⁵³ Lyd. *De mens.* 2.12, while talking about the seventh day of the week, quotes Philolaus (fr. 2o Huffman) and the qualities ascribed to that number by Pythagoreanism.

⁵⁴ Cicero's source for those lists has been speculated to be Neopythagorean Nigidius Figulus and his work *De diis* (Pease 1958: 1903).

⁵⁵ "ὄνομασθῆναι δὲ αὐτὴν πρῶτον λέγουσι Πιτυοῦσαν, οἱ δὲ Ἀστερίαν, εἶτα Ἀνακτορίαν, εἶτα Μίλητον."

scholars that tried to make sense of mythographic irregularities⁵⁶. The fragments of Herodorus thus must be considered valuable evidence of both the pioneering effort of multiplying characters in order to fit them in a rationalizing programme, and the likely influence of Pythagorean doctrines on this process.

Appendix: comparative overview⁵⁷

	Herod. fr. 14	Cic. <i>ND</i> 3.42	Ampel. <i>Lib. Memor.</i> 9.12	Lyd. <i>De mens.</i> 4.67
1	ἄλλους Ἡρακλείς (...) ἑπτὰ	Jupiter ^a + Lysithoe	Jupiter Aetherius	Zeus son of Aether + Lysithoe daughter of Ocean
2		Nile (Egypt), compiler of the sacred books in Phrygia	Nile (Egypt)	Nile (Egypt)
3		One of the Idaeon Dactyls	Founder of the country of the Hellenes	Zeus + Anchiale (Hellenes)
4		Jupiter ^b + Asteria (Carthago, Tyre)	Cronus + Carthere (Carthago)	Zeus + Thebe (Egypt)
5		Called Belus in India	Ioab (fought against the king of the Medes)	Libanus + Nyssa (India)
6		Jupiter ^c + Alcmene	Jupiter + Alcmene (Atlas)	Zeus + Alcmene
7		—	—	Zeus + Maia daughter of Atlas

⁵⁶ Farnell (1921: 95-145) can be considered an example of a modern attempt to reconcile the different facets of Heracles.

⁵⁷ Inspired in Mayor's (1885: 202) and Guadagno's (2014: 257).

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