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INTRODUCTION: NARRATIVE AND  
INTERPRETATION IN THE  
HELLENISTIC HISTORIANS\*

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**T**his volume aims to offer some new perspectives on Hellenistic historiography by focussing on its narrative dimension. After some brief remarks about Hellenistic historiography, I shall in this introduction address some of the criticisms voiced against narratology in recent scholarship and argue why and how I think a narratological approach can be useful; this is followed by an overview of the book's chapters.

**1. Scholarship on the Hellenistic Historians**

The narratological study of ancient historians has become very popular in the last two decades, after Hornblower's 1994 article demonstrated the fruitfulness of such an approach in the case of Thucydides.<sup>1</sup> This approach has not been applied to Polybius and especially Diodorus and Dionysius as often as to the classical historians.<sup>2</sup> Although

\* I would like to thank Lisa Irene Hau for reading an earlier draft of this introduction and Melanie Meaker for drawing the version of the historical matrix printer here.

<sup>1</sup> Hornblower (1994). De Jong (2014) offers an excellent introduction to narratology for Classicists which includes a chapter on historiography.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Marincola (2006) 23 on the absence of Diodorus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus from De Jong–Nünlist–Bowie (2004), a standard work on narratology that does include many other historians. Recent studies of nar-

the tide seems to be turning in recent years, these authors still seem to attract less interest as writers than their classical counterparts. Although Polybius does fare better than Dionysius and especially Diodorus, even some recent overviews of Hellenistic literature pay scant attention to them, despite their being among the most extensively preserved Hellenistic prose authors.<sup>3</sup>

Admittedly, many claim that Polybius is the only preserved Hellenistic historian and situate Diodorus and Dionysius rather in a Roman context, but this seems open to debate. Rome is far more central to Polybius' historiographical project than it is to that of Diodorus.<sup>4</sup> Dionysius' perspective on Greece and Rome is very

rative in the Hellenistic historians include Wiater (2017) on Polybius, Hau (2018) on Diodorus, and Fromentin (2010) on Dionysius, to name just a few.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Wallace (2012) 97–8. Believe it or not, even Diodorus has literary aspirations: see 1.2.5–7; Palm (1955), esp. 196; Schmitz (2011) 238. Gutzwiller (2007) 207 covers the period 323–30 BC and thus excludes Dionysius, but Diodorus also makes only a few brief appearances, and only as cover-text author for the fragments of lost authors. In Clauss and Cuypers (2010), a highly interesting essay by Gowing argues that Hellenistic historiography ends with Polybius and that Diodorus and Dionysius require a different label, although it is hard to say what that should be (Gowing (2010) 384). Scanlon (2015) 190 has the Hellenistic period end in 146 BC and places Polybius, Diodorus and Dionysius in the Roman Era (237). In Scardino (2014) the latest authors included are Strabo and Juba II.

<sup>4</sup> For Polybius see 3.1.4 and 3.4.6 with, e.g., Marincola (2001) 117, 121–2 and 142 n. 123; for Diodorus, Rathmann (2016) 27–44, 295–305 and Cohen-Skalli (2018), though see also the different perspective of Yarrow (2006), esp. 152–6. That Diodorus can be placed in the 'Augustan period' (e.g., Schmitz (2011) 237) seems quite unlikely: on his date, see now Westall (2018). Schmitz's (2011) interesting analysis recognises some limited proto-classicising features in Diodorus which connect him to the second sophistic, but he may dismiss the role of *paideia* in Ephorus too easily (Stylianou (1998) 10–11 with references to Schepens and Burde; cf. Hau (2009) on the method of Sacks) and overstate the classicising dimension of Diodorus' moralising (cf. Hau 2016); it is also unclear how some of these proto-classicising features would have compared to other Hellenistic works of history.

different again,<sup>5</sup> but the question of a definition of Hellenistic historiography surely involves more than that. In their language Polybius and Diodorus are very close, and Dionysius' language is surely closer to theirs than he would have cared to admit himself.<sup>6</sup> Hau has shown interesting narratorial similarities between Polybius and Diodorus which distinguish them from their classical predecessors, and which it would be interesting to compare to Dionysius and later post-classical historians.<sup>7</sup> Obviously, even these issues do not exhaust the question, and it is surely a matter that deserves further study. Periodisation is always arbitrary and no ancient author had any idea that he might have been living in the Hellenistic age, yet it is useful as a way of structuring our answer to the question whether historians living close to each other in time also shared other characteristics that they did not share with those who lived at a greater temporal distance from them. In discussing historical narrative from Diodorus to Plutarch whilst also looking

<sup>5</sup> Delcourt (2005); Gowing (2010); Wiater (2011) who does, however, use the label 'Hellenistic' (194); cf. also Hogg, below, Ch. 5, on Romanness and Greekness in Dionysius.

<sup>6</sup> Palm (1955) 201–2 and 206; Usher (1982), esp. 825–30 and 837–8; Kim (2010) 473–5 and (2017) 49–51; Asirvatham (2017) 478: the change in language only really comes after Plutarch (see also Hogg, this volume, pp. 147–8 n. 9). Given the connection between Atticism and identity, the scope of this observation goes well beyond the merely linguistic. In that respect, one may wonder whether a history of Hellenistic historiography should end only with the time of Hadrian, like Chaniotis' recent history of what he calls the 'long Hellenistic Age' (Chaniotis (2018)). This somewhat resembles the approach taken to the history of Greek literature by Schmid and Stählin (1920) 29–31, whose volume II.1 covers the period 320 BC–AD 100, although they subdivide it into 'die schöpferische Periode' and 'die Periode des Übergangs zum Klassizismus', the transition being in 146 BC in part for reasons similar to those of Gowing and Scanlon; yet they do not see any watershed ca. 30 BC. For an overview of the different views on the beginning and end of the Hellenistic Age as a period in the history of literature, see Kassel (1987).

<sup>7</sup> Hau (2018) 280–2. There is a great deal of scholarship about Luke as a Hellenistic historian, comparing him to Polybius, Diodorus and Dionysius: e.g., Moessner (2016); cf. Moles (2011), who takes the broader perspective of 'classical historiography'.

back to Polybius, the papers in this volume contribute to such an enhanced understanding of Hellenistic historiography.

## **2. A Narratological Approach to Ancient Historiography: Problems and Benefits**

The focus on narrative may need no justification to many, but some basic problems seem worth being addressed here. In an excellent essay, Whitmarsh has recently argued that the difference between author and narrator, though known to the ancients, often was not observed by them even in cases where we would consider this absurd; he concluded from this that ‘too heavy a dependence on modern critical schemes risks inattention to the reading instincts and habits of the ancients themselves’.<sup>8</sup> On this basis one may doubt how useful narratology, developed as a tool for the study of the *modern* novel, is for the analysis for ancient texts.<sup>9</sup> This

<sup>8</sup> Whitmarsh (2013) 67. Cf. 64: ‘Ancient critics regularly took narrators’ words as authors’, even in instances where it often seems to us absurd to do so’. Whitmarsh is primarily concerned with fiction, but similar problems may arise in the narratological analysis of historical writing, for instance in Wiater’s (2006) narratological analysis of Diodorus’ historiographical programme, which fails to take into account some of the workings of the self-fashioning of the ancient historian, and reads the text too much from a modern perspective: cf. Hau (2018) 283–5, and the earlier conclusions of Marincola (2007) 26–8 and Rathmann (2016), esp. 200–25. Yet one may also say, in narratological terms, that Wiater at times even confuses narrator and narratee (cf. Hau (2018) 284 n. 17).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Hall (2014): ‘There are many ancient prose authors whose achievements are being misunderstood or diminished by forgetting about ancient critics’ criteria of literary assessment in favour of Genette’s’; Grethlein (2018) 18: ‘Nearly all narratological concepts have been developed for the modern novel and its analysis. [...] They are of little help though for capturing aspects that distinguish ancient narrative. In this regard, the success of narratology may have actually impeded our comprehension and appreciation of ancient narrative on its own terms’. Rood, below, Ch. 2, addresses a somewhat similar problem with applying modern understandings of East and West to ancient Greek historiography.

call for a more historical approach to the study of ancient literature is most welcome and deserves emphasis, but at the same time there is no reason why modern theories should not be used as heuristic tools even if they would have been incomprehensible to the ancients.<sup>10</sup> Yet the discrepancy between ancient and modern forms of narrative is but one of the relevant problems when we turn to historiographical narratives: narratology has been developed for the purpose of analysing the modern *novel*, i.e. for works of fiction, but history is not fiction.

De Jong, among others, has argued that narratology can nevertheless be applied to historiography because ‘ancient historians make use of the same narrative devices as their literary counterparts’.<sup>11</sup> This is most certainly true, and the fact that it is so obvious would almost make one forget the significance of this observation which has for so long been, and sometimes still is, ignored in the study of ancient historiography. De Jong also rightly notes that historians use these devices ‘to convey their view of the past’, and in the accompanying case study of the Atys and Adrastus story she brilliantly (though with little use of the technical vocabulary of narratology) demonstrates how Herodotus’ literary mastery serves to emphasise his historical interpretation.<sup>12</sup> One may wonder, however, whether it is not an overstatement of the importance of Greek tragedy or too much of a literary viewpoint to say that ‘Herodotus’ worldview is primarily a tragic one’ rather than that Herodotus and the tragedians share the same fifth-century BC Greek world-

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Grethlein (2018) 2: ‘by no means does this mean that Genette’s and other narratological categories cannot be applied to ancient texts. Such a claim would be hermeneutically naïve and is eloquently belied by the many insights that can be gained from narratological interpretations of ancient literature’. For the question of whether and how modern theories can be applied to ancient literature, see also e.g. Feeney (1995) and Heath (2002). Nünlist (2009) *passim* discusses many of the concepts of narratology as they appear in Greek scholia, though see 132–3 on the failure to distinguish between author and narrator.

<sup>11</sup> De Jong (2014) 171; cf. Almagor, this volume, below, pp. 175–8.

<sup>12</sup> De Jong (2014) 172–92.

view.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, it is easy to take this one step further and presume for instance that Herodotus actually used a tragic trilogy as his source for this account:<sup>14</sup> a purely literary analysis thus easily risks forgetting that historians use literature—both their own text and those of writers they interact with—as a means of understanding the world rather than simply engaging with literature.<sup>15</sup>

Evidently, the risk of overemphasising the literary dimension is not specific to narratology. Much in the same way as for the fictional autobiographies of Whitmarsh's analysis, however, the modern formal model for the analysis of fiction may be ill-suited to address fundamental aspects of the ancient historical text. When the narrator of a historical text makes a claim about his use of sources, it is obviously relevant to know that this claim serves to increase the authority of his narrative, but it is all-important to know in addition whether the historian behind the narrator has actually used this source and in what way: at this point any meaningful distinction between author and narrator evaporates, for a historical source belongs to the material world of the author, not to the immaterial universe of the narrator.<sup>16</sup> As a result, ancient historiographical polemics

<sup>13</sup> I am not sure what to make of the statement that Herodotus here 'turns a historical event into a quintessential Greek narrative with a beginning, middle, and end, replete with dreams, speeches and instances of dramatic irony' (De Jong (2014) 174). Is the claim that Herodotus is fictionalising the event or merely that he interprets it in a Greek way and does not appear as epistemologically sensitive as the modern historian? Surely the choice of a beginning and end, and thus a middle, is inevitable for the historian, as is the use of some degree of narrative.

<sup>14</sup> This proposal has been made by Rieks, as de Jong (2014) 191 n. 47 points out.

<sup>15</sup> Rood, below, Ch. 2, explores how Diodorus' engagement with Thucydides is part of his historiographical interpretation, as Almagor does for Plutarch and Polybius (below, Ch. 6).

<sup>16</sup> On this point I disagree with the excellent analysis of Hau (2018) 284, who does, however, show that a focus on the narrator can be both a useful way of avoiding the prejudice one almost inevitably brings to the text after two hundred years of negative interpretations of Diodorus

were discussions with the real-world author of the text, not with its narrator, much as is the case with modern scholarship.<sup>17</sup>

Again, none of this means that we should not use narratology, for it is, as Bloch said so well in a different context,

nothing more or less than a perspective whose legitimacy is proved by its fruitfulness, but which must be supplemented by other perspectives to be complete. Such, indeed, is the true function of analysis in any category of research. Science dissects reality only in order to observe it better by virtue of a play of converging searchlights whose beams continually intermingle and interpenetrate each other. Danger threatens only when each searchlight operator claims to see everything by himself, when each canton of learning pretends to national sovereignty.<sup>18</sup>

I thus wish to join the plea of Grethlein and Rengakos to use narratology but to do so in combination with other approaches.<sup>19</sup> In this respect it is surely remarkable that

(unless one wishes to ignore the value of previous scholarship) and of systematising much more clearly the differences between the various sections of the *Bibliothēke*.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Whitmarsh (2013) 63 on the parallel with the modern scholar: ‘The words you are reading now are mine to the extent that you can hold me to them [...]. But in another sense this is not the “real me” speaking: I do not adopt this persona when buying fish, talking to my children or playing soccer. Perhaps it is better to say that all of those separate verbal identities are facets of the same person, different roles that are assumed in the performance of everyday life. [...] As a writer of non-fiction I may adopt stylistic mannerisms that are peculiar to [literary] writing, but I do not introduce claims I know to be counterfactual; if I am found to have done so, reviewers will take me to task.’

<sup>18</sup> Bloch (1954) 124.

<sup>19</sup> Grethlein and Rengakos (2009a) 3 and 11 on the need to combine the formal analysis of narratology with other approaches that explain the meaning of these formal elements.

within the field of Classics so little use has been made of the theory of history, which since the late 1960s has been very interested in questions of narrative, questions that for some have even been the central issue in the field.<sup>20</sup> In establishing the relationship between narrative and interpretation in ancient historiography, this research is thus of obvious relevance: although it has likewise been developed mostly for the study of modern narratives, it can help us to systematise the various questions that need to be asked of a historical text, ancient as well as modern.

In so doing, it may for instance help to place the literary dimension of ancient historiography in its proper context.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> See Lorenz (2011) 23–6 on the dominance of narrative in the theory of history in 1970s and 1980s. The exception seems to be Hayden White, whose emphasis on rhetoric has obvious appeal to the classicist, but whose theory is too narrow from an epistemological perspective (cf. Lorenz (1998)). The only paper in Grethlein and Rengakos (2009b) which explicitly engages with historical theory is Grethlein (2009), which is not in the section on historiography. Pelling’s contribution to that volume, to name just one example, demonstrates that this can also be done excellently without explicit reference to the theory of history (Pelling (2009)), but that does not mean that such a more explicit engagement has no potential to sharpen further our analysis. Blank and Maier (2018) appeared too late to be taken into account here.

<sup>21</sup> Scanlon (2015) vi–vii is symptomatic of the current overemphasis on the literary dimension of ancient historiography: ‘The study of Greek historical writing—what is called “historiography”—differs from the direct study of Greek history by focusing on the literary aspects of the historical texts, their narratives and themes, and less on the absolute veracity of their accounts. Historiography treats historical writing as a form of literature, and one that furnished a connected narrative of events within the chosen topic. Along the way, we look at the general structure of the major narratives, their use of prefaces, digressions and speeches, and direct authorial comments. [...] Each chapter aims to situate the works it presents in their time and culture, specifically through a discussion of the life of each author, the structure of his work, and its debt to other literary and philosophical phenomena’. This is a necessary corrective to the neglect that the literary dimension has long suffered, and admittedly, questions of truth and research do feature in the introduction and throughout the book. But it remains telling that in the preface a programme is set out that does not contain these elements as central issues.



So as to avoid simplified polemics in this brief overview, I limit my discussion *exempli gratia* to a mistake I made myself in this respect in discussing the role of the many *peripeteiai* in the work of Diodorus. These reversals seem one of the main characteristics of his narrative, and their effect is often reinforced by mentioning the protagonist's hopes which will later be cheated, or by pointing out just before the reversal occurs that things were going according to plan.<sup>22</sup> One may argue that this focus on such *peripeteiai* aimed to satisfy Diodorus' desire to narrate a good story, as the resulting suspense (e.g. in the description of the flight of Themistocles at 11.56–7) offers the same entertainment as suspense in fictional stories whilst it also occasionally diminishes Diodorus' value as a source.<sup>23</sup> Yet this is to forget that in ancient historiography the forms of representation are no means in themselves but serve to create and communicate historical meaning.<sup>24</sup> The interconnections of the different aspects of history have been systematised most usefully by Rüsen in his khunian 'disciplinary matrix' of history, or,

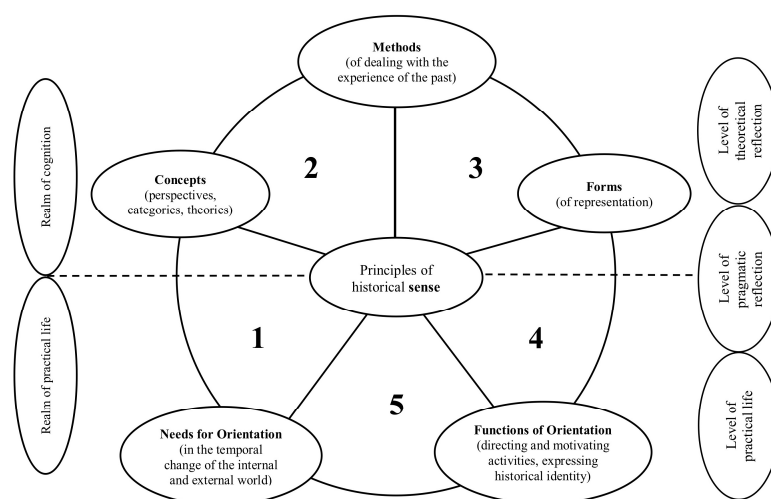
<sup>22</sup> Vial (1977) XXI: 'Diodore écrit une histoire des surprises. Il écrit, en même temps, une histoire des renversements. Il aime construire un récit autour de retournements de situation et se plaît à souligner comment la Fortune (Tyché) intervertit les rôles [...]. Diodore utilise ces renversements comme prétexte à moraliser, mais surtout comme élément dramatique parfois pathétique. Il cherche l'effet'; Stylianou (1998) 4: 'Diodorus is in effect writing a history of surprises and reversals'; Schmitz (2011) 239: 'one of Diodorus' favourite *topoi*, the strange reversals of fortune'. For a narratological analysis of the unexpected, see Currie (2013) and Grethlein (2009) and (2013).

<sup>23</sup> Meeus (2013) 86–7; cf. Vial, *loc. cit.* Evidently, the question of an ancient work of history's value as a source for the events it narrates is not necessarily a helpful question in historiographical analyses, since we only use such texts in that way because we do not have sufficient documentary evidence (cf. Meeus (2017a) 187–8; Morton, below, Ch. 3). Nevertheless, the loss in the domain of the history of events suggests potential in the field of the history of ancient thought by what this teaches us about Diodorus' worldview and, as I hope to argue elsewhere, ancient Greek thinking in general.

<sup>24</sup> For an excellent theoretically informed discussion of the social and cultural function of Greek historiography, see Gehrke (2014).

more appropriately in the context of ancient historiography, ‘matrix of historical thinking’. This matrix is not only an excellent means for understanding what history is nowadays but also for conceptualising changes in the history of historiography: in line with its original aim of explaining paradigm change, the various elements in the matrix and their relative importance can be conceived in any number of ways.<sup>25</sup> Rösen gives due credit to the formal aspects of historiography, but connects the forms of representation to research methods and the cognitive and social functions that history fulfils:

1. **Semantic** discourse of symbolisation
2. **Cognitive** strategy of producing historical knowledge
3. **Aesthetic** strategy of historical representation
4. **Rhetorical** strategy of providing historical orientation
5. **Political** discourse of collective memory



‘Matrix of historical thinking’, Rösen (2017) 43.

<sup>25</sup> Rösen (1983) 23–32; id. (2013) 66–96 = (2017) 42–66. For his view of the narrative dimension of history, see also e.g. Rösen (1987) and (2001). For Rösen, writing about research-based historiography, the existential orientation is to some extent a by-product (cf. Rösen (1983) 30–1). That this may be different in other historical cultures, such as the ancient one, is no reason in itself to consider them less historiographical: Hau (2016); Meeus (2018) 172 with n. 88.

That Diodorus is indeed concerned with creating sense and offering social orientation in his focus on unexpected reversals, is most clearly expressed at 18.59.5–6:

*καὶ τοῦτ' εὐλόγως ἔπασχον ἅπαντες οἱ τότε τὰς Εὐμενοῦς ἐπισκοπούμενοι περιπετείας. τίς γὰρ οὐκ ἂν λαβὼν ἔννοϊαν τῆς κατὰ τὸν ἀνθρώπινον βίον ἀνωμαλίας καταπλαγείη τὴν ἐπ' ἀμφότερα τὰ μέρη τῆς τύχης παλίρροϊαν; ἢ τίς ἂν ταῖς κατὰ τὴν εὐτυχίαν ἐξουσίαις πιστεύσας ἀναλάβοι φρόνημα μείζον τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ἀσθενείας; ὁ γὰρ κοινὸς βίος ὥσπερ ὑπὸ θεῶν τιнос οἰακίζόμενος ἐναλλάξ ἀγαθοῖς τε καὶ κακοῖς κυκλεῖται πάντα τὸν αἰῶνα. διόπερ παράδοξόν ἐστίν οὐκ εἰ γέγονέν τι παράλογον, ἀλλ' εἰ μὴ πᾶν ἐστὶ τὸ γινόμενον ἀνέλπιστον. διὸ καὶ τὴν ἱστορίαν προσηκόντως ἂν τις ἀποδέξαιτο· τῇ γὰρ τῶν πράξεων ἀνωμαλία καὶ μεταβολῇ διορθοῦται τῶν μὲν εὐτυχούντων τὴν ὑπερηφανίαν, τῶν δ' ἀκληρούντων τὴν ἀτυχίαν.*

And it was reasonable that all those who at the time beheld the reversals of fortune of Eumenes experienced such feelings. For who could have considered the inconsistency in human life and not have been struck by the way in which fortune flowed back and forth? What person, experiencing good fortune, would trust in his abundance and have thoughts greater than human weakness? Our common life, as if steered by some god, moves in a circle throughout time alternately between good and evil. And so it is not unusual if one unforeseen event happens; what is unusual is that everything which happens is not unexpected. And so one would fittingly approve history, since by the irregularity and constantly changing nature of events it corrects both the arrogance of the fortunate and the despair of the poor. (trans. Marincola (2017) 162)

The unexpected reversals in the historical narrative, in correcting the arrogance of the fortunate and the unhappiness of the unfortunate, serve a function of *diorthosis* (*διορθοῦται*), the moral rectification which is a central aim of Diodorus' historical project.<sup>26</sup> To see the suspense of these narratives as merely literary, then, is to misunderstand completely Diodorus' aims in writing history. The best way to avoid this is to bear in mind that—as extremely helpful as it is—a literary analysis *alone* cannot explain historiographical texts because from the many fields in the matrix of historical thinking it only addresses the field of representation. The matrix thus serves as 'a tool-box, containing questions that can be asked with illuminating effect of the immense and varied body of historiography that [...] confronts' the historian of historiography, to paraphrase Megill: it thus 'can help practitioners to see beyond their specialties, opening their minds to broader issues and improving their work in the process'.<sup>27</sup> In that sense, the matrix can perhaps even be put to use to help us understand the development of Hellenistic historiography, including, to borrow Gowing's phrase, its decline and fall, or indeed whether it makes sense to have a concept of Hellenistic historiography at all.

Part of the problem that leads to such one-sided literary interpretations may well be the tendency to apply the word 'fictional' to historiography in studying formal parallels between historiography and fictional literature: yet what is fictional in the latter kind of literature will more properly be termed 'interpretational' in historical writing, no matter how strong the formal parallel. When historians present a

<sup>26</sup> Hau (2016) 76; Meeus (2018) 155–9.

<sup>27</sup> Megill (1994) 58 and 60. He is concerned with modern, professional historiography, but there is no reason why the questions could not be asked of other historiographical cultures (with which he just did not happen to be concerned). On p. 59 Megill lists some examples of such questions based on his own simplified version of the disciplinary matrix.

character's thoughts,<sup>28</sup> they are not making them up on the basis of the requirements of the story as the novelist does, but they are interpreting the character's actions: they assume, as Collingwood does, not only that these have some origin in the character's thoughts but also that her or his observable actions can provide at least some degree of access to the unobservable thoughts behind them.<sup>29</sup> Of course, historians may get it wrong, e.g., by inadvertently imposing their own overall understanding of their topic in this process of interpretation, but even a wrong interpretation is not the same as fiction: as Lorenz puts it, not everything that has been thought-out is necessarily fictional or imaginary.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, we cannot exclude that at times the ancient historians or their sources, often themselves involved in the world of politics they describe, may have known the actual thoughts of their protagonists.<sup>31</sup> However this may be, no proper understanding of ancient historiography can be achieved without distinguishing *on its own terms* between deliberately false history, accidentally

<sup>28</sup> Cf. also the contributions in this volume of Wallace and Almagor.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Hau (2018) 298 n. 54. One need not agree with Collingwood (1946) for my point to hold true, for I think it remains valid on even a weak formulation of his theory, namely that there can be no history of human affairs without including the aspect of thought. See e.g. Collingwood (1946) 215: 'the historian of politics or warfare, presented with an account of certain actions done by Julius Caesar, tries to understand these actions, that is, to discover what thoughts in Caesar's mind determined him to do them. This implies envisaging for himself the situation in which Caesar stood, and thinking for himself what Caesar thought about the situation and the possible ways of dealing with it'. For a good introduction to Collingwood's views, showing that they are not as naïve and simplistic as often thought, see van der Dussen (2016): especially important is that they can only be understood from the point of view of a philosophical justification for the possibility of historical knowledge, not as a prescriptive account of historical method (van der Dussen (2016) 11) (as is also clear from Collingwood's work on the history of Roman Britain).

<sup>30</sup> Lorenz (1997) 40: 'was erdacht wurde, ist ja nicht zwangsläufig fiktional oder imaginär'.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Wallace, below, p. 70 with n. 3.

mistaken history (whether caused by incompetence or missing the mark despite a brilliant attempt), and fiction.

### 3. The Contribution of this Volume

That one may disagree about these theoretical observations is to state the obvious, and indeed it is also illustrated by the different perspectives to be found in the papers in the present volume. Because of that, however, they can contribute both to a better understanding of the historians whom they discuss and to the theoretical discussion about the narrative dimension of ancient historiography.

In the first chapter, Timothy Rood analyses the way Diodorus presents parallels between mainland Greece and Sicily in various sections of the *Bibliothēke*. In contrast to the current trend among Diodoran experts, Rood—in my view rightly—acknowledges that much of the patterning we observe in the *Bibliothēke* may go back to Ephorus and Timaeus.<sup>32</sup> He also points out, however, that its presence in Diodorus' narrative 'at the very least shows that he was concerned to preserve any parallels that he did take over from earlier historians', and in some cases he does seem to have added some patterning of his own. Rood thus shows how the didactic aims of Diodorus' work also affect its narrative structure: by its implication of historical repetitiveness the deliberate patterning across time and space stresses the validity of the *Bibliothēke*'s moral lessons.

<sup>32</sup> Hau (2009) remains fundamental in this respect, and is all too rarely taken seriously in studies of Diodorus; see also Parker (2009); Bleckmann (2010); Rathmann (2016) 156–270; Schorn (2018) 243; Wallace, below, Ch. 3. For general reasons why we should not necessarily expect much originality in the *Bibliothēke*, see Meeus (2017b) and (2018) 150–4, and from a different perspective Cohen-Skalli (2014) 494; yet I do not claim that Diodorus was not in control of his narrative (see e.g. Meeus (2012) 90). Different views about Diodorus' use of sources have been put forward, e.g., by Green (2006) 25–9, Sheridan (2010) 42–4, Parmeggiani (2011) 349–94, Muntz (2011) and Occhipinti (2016) 57–86; see also the papers in Hau–Meeus–Sheridan (2018).

Shane Wallace, who highlights the unevenness between different source units in the *Bibliothēke*, likewise points out that even the preservation of certain features of the narrative of his sources reflects Diodorus' own thought and planning. Wallace is concerned with the representation of the thoughts of the protagonists in Books 18–20 and the interplay between this narrative technique on the one hand and characterisation and historical interpretation on the other. Regardless of the originality question, in focalising the narrative through historical characters such as Peithon, Peukestas and Polyperchon, Diodorus presents his understanding of the historical process, for instance as it concerns the hybris of his protagonists, in a more emphatic way. Even when Diodorus' source cannot be identified with certainty, the implications of this narrative technique remain just as relevant for historians of the early Hellenistic period who at times seem overly obsessed with Hieronymus of Cardia.<sup>33</sup>

The problems that occur when the narrative needs to serve as a historical source and its readings are guided more by the hopes and wishes of the modern historian than by the aims and methods of the ancient historian, are central to the chapter by Peter Morton. These problems only increase when the narrative is fragmentary,<sup>34</sup> as is the case with Diodorus' narrative of the First Sicilian Slave War (though Morton prefers the term 'Sicilian Insurrection'), which historians tend to consider a reliable and comprehensive account despite its state of preservation. Morton argues that Diodorus' causal explanation for the insurrection's outbreak is anachronistic, and he explores the effects of this anachronism on the way we interpret the fragmentary narrative and the events it describes: Diodorus' moralism once more appears as the element that governs his interpretation and obscures our historical understanding.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. the astute analyses of Landucci Gattinoni (2008) XII–XVIII and Rathmann (2016) 255–66.

<sup>34</sup> On the problems with Diodoran fragments, see now also Yarrow (2018).

In the next chapter, Dan Hogg analyses the tragic setting of Dionysius' account of the exile of Coriolanus and its focus on emotions, the treatment of which reveals Dionysius' Greek background. The comparison with other preserved versions of this event shows all the more clearly how narrative structure and literary *topoi* underscore the interpretation of the individual historian. The tragic and epic elements in the story do not make it less historical, but they do reveal how strongly historical thinking is embedded in its wider cultural context and, in the case of the tragic elements, how historians can make use of space as a narrative means to accentuate their interpretation of events.<sup>35</sup>

In his chapter on Plutarch's use of Polybius, Eran Almagor asks why the narrator sometimes cites sources by name although he usually does not, and how the implication of research suggested by the source-citation connects Plutarch's *Lives* to other forms of historical writing.<sup>36</sup> Stressing the need for a clear distinction between narrator and author, he argues that Polybius' text is being used to create Plutarch's narrative world, and that mentions of the figure of Polybius are used to highlight significant aspects of this narrative world: appearances of Polybius in the text are interpreted as parallelisms to the historical events described, and because the Polybian version never seems to be the first choice, his reliability appears to be doubted.

The chapters in this volume thus shed new light on aspects of Hellenistic historiography that have been rather understudied, and I hope that they will inspire many further such studies.

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<sup>35</sup> See also above, on tragic elements in Herodotus and Diodorus.

<sup>36</sup> On biography as history, see Schepens (2007) and Schorn (2014) 688–90 and (2018), esp. 431–44; for a somewhat different perspective, Chrysanthou (2017).



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