Diodorus may seem an odd choice of focus for an entire chapter. He is widely known for having taken over long stretches of text from his sources, paraphrasing and summarising, but not adding anything new in terms of historical analysis or interpretation. I have argued my point of view on Diodorus’ source usage in detail elsewhere, but it is necessary to restate my case briefly here before embarking on an analysis of Diodorus’ moralising.\(^1\) It is clear from the sections of Diodorus’ *Bibliotheke* for which the sources are extant that Diodorus generally stayed close to the text of the source, that is, he rephrased and abbreviated rather than create a new narrative from scratch. This explains why, although Diodorus’ language is similar throughout his work,\(^2\) his narrative style is uneven, being characterised by detached summary in some books in contrast with an emotionally involved mixture of summary and scenes in others: it seems that he often took over the style and tone as well as the content from his sources.\(^3\) In this chapter,

\(^1\) The scholarship on this ‘Diodoran question’ is vast. It mainly falls into two camps: the traditionalists who argue that Diodorus more or less ‘copied’ his sources, only changing the wording (e.g. Stylianou 1998), and the revisionists who argue that Diodorus did have a vision of history which he followed by imbuing his work with certain themes and structures not found in his sources (the seminal work is Sacks 1990). My own view falls somewhere in between and has been argued in Hau (2009), which also gives a detailed bibliography of the scholarship. See also the Introduction to Hau et al. (forthcoming).

\(^2\) This has been shown by Palm (1955).

\(^3\) E.g. Diod. Sic. 3.2–55 compared with Phot. *Bibl.* codex 250 summarising Agatharchides of Cnidus, and Diod. Sic. books 22–32.26 compared with what remains of Polybius’ *Histories*. Both of these comparisons are less than straightforward, however: the former because the work of Agatharchides itself is lost and can only be accessed through Photius’ summary (see Chapter 3), and the latter because all of Diodorus 22–32.26 and much of Polybius only survive in excerpts collected by epitomisers with other interests at heart than the preservation of the original text. Nonetheless, wherever it is possible to compare a section of Diodorus closely with its source, such as Diod. Sic. 31.15 with Polyb. 30.18, as I have done elsewhere (Hau 2006), both Diodorus’ strong dependence and sporadic changes are obvious.
we shall examine moralising in the Bibliothèque comprehensively and see that Diodorus seems to have followed this working method also in terms of moralising: he took over moralising passages from his sources, in some cases changing the point slightly, but he does not seem to have written new moralising passages from scratch. However, we shall also see that there is nevertheless a high degree of consistency in the moral lessons offered by the Bibliothèque as a whole. The possible reasons for this surprising finding will be discussed in the conclusion to the chapter.

It has been a favourite sport of scholars to try to surmise which source(s) Diodorus used for each stretch of his narrative. Without entering into the finer points of such Quellenforschung, it will be useful here to give a brief overview of some of the more certain sources used by Diodorus in different parts of the Bibliothèque, as we shall be referring to them time and again throughout this chapter, and return to some of them in Chapters 3 and 7. The sources used by Diodorus in the early books of the Bibliothèque are still much discussed, but something approaching a communis opinio exists for some of the middle and later books. Most scholars agree that he probably used Timaeus of Tauromenium for the Sicilian narrative of books 13–14 and 19–21; Ephorus of Cyme for the Greek narrative of books 11 or 12 to 16.14; an Alexander historian, perhaps Clitarchus, for book 17; possibly Hieronymus of Cardia for the narrative of the Successor Wars in books 18–20; Polybius for at least books 27–32.26; and possibly Posidonius of Apamea, the Stoic philosopher, for books 32.27–38. His sources for books 7–10, 16 and 39–40 are too uncertain to be considered here.

That Diodorus’ Bibliothèque is a moralising text no one would deny. The work is frequently held up as symptomatic for the kind of Hellenistic historiography deemed less worthy and serious than its Classical counterpart, partly because of its moralistic tendency. Many have observed that moral didacticism seems to have been one of Diodorus’ main purposes with his work, but few have taken his moral didacticism seriously enough to try to uncover its moral lessons in any detail. The most successful treatment is

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4 This conclusion goes contrary to the arguments of most other scholars who have taken Diodorus’ moralising seriously: Sacks (1990), Camacho Rojo (1994), Lens Tuero (1994), de Morais Mota (2010). None of these face the fact that the moralising is not equally distributed in the Bibliothèque.


7 Drews (1962) argues that moral didacticism was the main purpose of Diodorus’ work and influenced his choice of sources, but does not discuss its contents or techniques. Sacks (1990: 24–36) discusses Diodorus’ moralising with the main purpose of arguing that Diodorus did not take over every moralising passage from Ephorus. Vial (1977: xiv–xix) and
the overview of moralising themes in the Bibliotheca offered by Ambaglio, which ends with an eloquent expression of moral didacticism as Diodorus’ ‘philosophy of history’ (his inverted commas), intimately connected with his project of writing universal history. The analysis offered in this chapter agrees with most of his findings, but goes significantly further.

As in the preceding chapter on Polybius, we shall begin with examining Diodorus’ preface and programmatic passages in order to get an idea of his theoretical approach to moral didacticism. Then we shall proceed to an analysis of his moralising techniques before finally considering his moral messages. Throughout, the emphasis will be on Diodorus’ moral didacticism in comparison with that of Polybius and with their predecessors and contemporaries (to be examined in subsequent chapters) rather than on Diodorus as an isolated phenomenon. For that reason Diodorus’ relationship with his sources is not a problem: if the moralising of the Bibliotheca is of his own crafting, it is worth analysing in its own right; if it has been taken over from his varied sources, it is evidence that moral didacticism was ubiquitous in late Classical and Hellenistic historiography. Both alternatives will be kept in mind in the discussion, and we shall return to the implications of our findings in the conclusion to the chapter.

**PREFACES AND PROGRAMMATIC PASSAGES**

Diodorus’ preface is far longer than any other preserved preface of Classical or Hellenistic historiography, and most scholars would now agree that he wrote it himself even if its ideas are not original. It is largely focused on moral didacticism. The Diodoran narrator begins by stating that we owe a debt of gratitude to writers of (universal) history, because they benefit human society (τὸν κοινὸν βίον: i.1.1). Historiography provides ‘a lesson without danger in the advantageous’ (ἀκίνδυνον διδασκαλίαν τοῦ συμφέροντος: i.1.1) and thereby gives its readers the ‘best experience’ (καλλίστην ἐμπειρίαν: i.1.1). It does this, he continues, by letting them


10 For discussions of the preface that focus on Diodorus’ self-representation see Wiater (2006) and Hau (forthcoming).
learn from the experiences of others (1.1.2). Thus, the success or failure of others are examples for correction or improvement (πρὸς διόρθωσιν παραδέιγμα: 1.1.4), particularly in the varied vicissitudes of life (πρὸς τὰ συγκυροῦντα ποικίλως κατὰ τὸν βίον: 1.1.4). A number of parallels with Polybius are present in these first four chapters of the Bibliothèque: the benefit of history, both practical and moral; the value of vicarious experience; the use of paradeigmata for the ‘correction’ (διόρθωσις) of the reader’s life; and the idea that such moral instruction is particularly valuable when one is faced with the vicissitudes of fortune.

So far Diodorus has been talking about learning by exempla, but now he turns to another way in which historiography can teach morality: by its commemoration of good and bad deeds, history makes leaders and soldiers strive for honour, and in general makes bad men ‘turn away from the impulse of wickedness’ (1.1.5). This striving to create a good reputation for oneself in the pages of history is elaborated upon in the next few paragraphs, and finally the praise of good men by history is said to be the only monument that does not perish over time (1.2.5). This is why history is useful and beneficial (χρήσιμα: 2.7). This emphasis on the fame gained in written history is again recognisable from Polybius, but in the Bibliothèque we see a complete intermingling of the ideas of history as memorial and history as teacher. A reader is thought to be willing to learn from history precisely because of its function as memorial; only by learning from the people history commemorates can a reader ensure his own commemoration by later historians.11 Thus, like Polybius, Diodorus expresses his purpose in purely didactic terms. There is no mention of preserving the memory of the past for its own sake; rather, the memory of the past seems to be good for one thing only, namely the emulation to which it spurs contemporary readers. Interestingly, more than Polybius, Diodorus connects the didactic usefulness of his work intimately with the fact that it is a work of universal history rather than a monograph or a work about a particular time period. In 1.3 he states that ‘the benefit for readers lies in being able to take the greatest number of and most varied circumstances’ (κειμένης γὰρ τοῖς ἀναγινώσκουσι τῆς ὠφελείας ἐν τῷ πλείστας καὶ ποικιλωτάτας περιστάσεις λαμβάνειν) and that ‘from this work it will be possible for each reader to take with ease what is useful in his own situation, just as if drawing from a large spring’ (ἐξέσται γὰρ ἐκ ταύτης ἑτοίμως λαμβάνειν τὸ χρήσιμον, ὡσπερ ἐκ μεγάλης ἀρυόμενον πηγῆς).12

12 Throughout the chapter the utility and benefit of this genre of historiography are repeatedly stressed: τὸ συμφέρον: 1.3.1, τῆς ὠφελείας: 1.3.2; ὠφελήσαι: 1.3.3; εὐχρηστοτάτην: 1.3.6; χρησιμότερον: 1.3.8. The connection between utility and universal history in the preface has been pointed out also by Wiater (2006). Some scholars have wanted to see Stoic
Diodorus Siculus

For Diodorus, the didactic worth of his work lies exactly in the fact that it encompasses all times and places and can therefore show the reader examples of how to act in the greatest variety of situations. Although he does not say so explicitly, the wide scope also enables him to show the reader what types of actions and behaviour are morally good across space and time, and how these generally lead to success.\(^{13}\)

Outside of the preface, Diodorus has only a few programmatic statements. Some of these come in the prefaces to individual books; sixteen such book-prefaces are extant, but these prooemia are notoriously inconsistent, and there is disagreement over whether Diodorus wrote them himself or copied them from sources.\(^{14}\) The prefaces to books 2 and 3 are mere tables of contents. The preface to book 13 is a sort of anti-preface, which justifies the absence of prefaces to some books in a long work, and the preface to book 37 focuses on arguing that the war narrated in that book, the Italian Social War, was the greatest war of all time.

The prefaces to books 12, 14, 18, 19, 26 and 32 are all moralising: each offers a generalising statement or moral gnome and argues that it will be proved by the events of the following book. Thus, book 12 begins with the statement that ‘One may justly be perplexed when thinking about the inconstancy of human life’; book 14 with the observation that ‘It is perhaps reasonable to hear bad things said about oneself reluctantly; for even those whose moral wickedness is completely obvious so that it cannot be denied nevertheless are upset when they encounter criticism and try to defend themselves against accusations.’\(^{15}\) Regardless of the fact that it would be a very reductionist reading that saw the narrative of a given book of the Bibliotheca as merely an attempt to teach the lesson propounded by the generalising of its preface, the preponderance of this technique shows both the importance moral didacticism held for Diodorus every time he wanted thought behind Diodorus’ universalism, even going so far as to attribute his main preface wholesale to Posidonius (Schwartz 1903, Canfora 1990).

\(^{13}\) This is what Ambaglio (1995: 118) calls Diodorus’ ‘philosophy of history’.

\(^{14}\) Prefaces are extant for books 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 26, 32 and 37. Kunz (1935) offers a detailed analysis of every preface in the Bibliotheca, which is still useful, even if her assumption that this can be used to determine from which exact source Diodorus ‘copied’ each preface is grounded in a ruthlessly optimistic Quellenforschung which is now outdated. She includes in her discussion the prefaces to books 21 and 25, which I ignore because of the impossibility of knowing whether the brief fragments sometimes assigned to these prefaces do in fact come from the proems or from later passages of the books. The prefaces are also discussed by Sacks (1990: 9–22), who argues that Diodorus composed all of them from scratch.

\(^{15}\) Δικαίως ἄν τις ἀπορήσει τὸν νοῦν ἐπιστήσει τῇ κατὰ τὸν ἀνθρώπινον βίον ἀνωμαλίᾳ,· Πάντας μὲν ἴσως εἰκὸς ἐστὶ προσάντως ἀκούειν τὰς καθ’ ἑαυτῶν βλασφημίας· καὶ γὰρ οἱ κατὰ πᾶν ἔκδηλον ἔχοντες τὴν ἑαυτῶν κακίαν ὅστε μηδ’ ἐξαιρεθεί, δύμως ψόγου τυγχάνοντες διαγανακτοῦσι καὶ λόγους εἰςφέρειν πειρῶνται πρὸς τὴν κατηγορίαν: 14.1.1.
to express the purpose of his work, and the degree to which he considered this moralising part of a tradition, whether he wrote the prefaces himself or decided to take them over from others: *gnomai* were a traditional way of expressing ethical wisdom used in both poetry and prose since Homer, Hesiod and Herodotus. The *gnomai* in the prefaces were probably not composed by Diodorus, but were taken over from this tradition, not necessarily from any one historiographical predecessor, but perhaps from an Alexandrian collection of proverbs, or simply from his own mental stock of such sayings collected through extensive reading. It is important for our understanding of the purpose of the *Bibliotheca* that the prefaces do not claim that the work will break new philosophical ground, but that the narrative of the *Bibliotheca* exemplifies time-honoured truths expressed (or at least expressable) in proverbial maxims.

Only the prefaces to books 4, 5, 15, 16, 17 and 20 are programmatic in the sense that they discuss historiographical issues and the way these are resolved in the *Bibliotheca*. Of these, the prefaces to books 5, 16 and 17 concern the best way of structuring a work of universal history, again with an eye to its usefulness (πάντων μὲν τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἀναγραφαῖς χρησίμων προνοητέων τοὺς ἱστορίαν συνταττομένους: 5.1.1). The preface to book 20 censures historians who include too many speeches in their works, apparently on the basis that a high proportion of speeches hinders the reader’s enjoyment of the work; utility is not mentioned, although a reader who is discouraged from his reading because of lack of enjoyment, as envisioned in 20.1.5, will obviously derive no benefits from the work. Only the prefaces to books 4 and 15 have a direct bearing on the didactic purpose of the *Bibliotheca*.

The preface to book 15 echoes the main preface by stating that:

Παρ’ ὅλην τὴν πραγματείαν εἰωθότες χρῆσθαι τῇ συνήθει τῆς ἱστορίας 
παρησίᾳ, καὶ τοῖς μὲν ἄγαθοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἐπὶ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων τὸν δίκαιον 
ἐπιλέγειν ἐπαίνον, τοὺς δὲ φαύλους, ὅταν ἐξαιρετάνσωσιν, ἀξιόν δικαίας 
ἐπιτιμήσεως, διὰ τὸ τοιοῦτον τρόπον νομίζομεν τοὺς μὲν εὖ πειράματα 
πρὸς ἀρετὴν τῷ διά τῆς δόξης ἀθανατισμός προτρέψειν ταῖς καλλίσταις 
ἐγχειρεῖν πράξεσιν, τοὺς δὲ τὴν ἐναντίαν ἰχνός διάθεσιν ταῖς ἁρμοτούσαις 
βλασφημίαις ἀποτρέψειν τῆς ἐπὶ τὴν κακίαν ὁρμής.

Throughout my work I have been accustomed to use the freedom of speech customary to historiography, and to praise good men justly for their good deeds while thinking it right to criticise the bad justly whenever they commit a wrong. Through such a method I believe that those who are by nature well suited for moral excellence will be propelled towards undertaking

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the noblest actions because of the possibility of obtaining immortal fame, and those who have the opposite disposition will be turned away from the impulse to wickedness by the thought of their fitting reputation. (Diod. Sic. 15.1.1)

The confident belief in the power of his writing to change the behaviour of his readers is recognisable from the main preface, but this passage is more explicit about the paradeigmata mechanism: praise of historical characters is meant to inspire readers to emulation, criticism is meant to scare them away from wicked deeds. In both cases it is the immortality accorded by historiography that is thought to be the spur to action; moralising and commemoration go hand in hand.

Commemoration is also the focus of the preface to book 4, which justifies the inclusion of mythological events in the Bibliothèke. Such events are included, says the narrator, because the heroes and demigods have performed great deeds (μέγισται καὶ πλεῖσται πράξεις) and benefactions (ἐφεργεσίαις) for mankind and so deserve to be praised in the pages of history (ὁ τής ιστορίας λόγος τοῖς καθήκουσιν ἐπαίνοις εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καθύμνησεν: 4.1.4). The same thought is reiterated in 4.8, which functions as a preface to a long narrative of the labours of Heracles. In other words, Diodorus’ choice of material is dependent on history’s function as memorial, and it is the job of historiography to bestow praise on those who deserve it. The prefaces to books 4 and 15, then, express the twin purposes of commemoration and didacticism, which we know from the main preface are two sides of the same coin.

Interestingly, we are never told that historiography may have any other purpose. This is worth stressing because one might assume, certainly from a modern standpoint, that a historian who compiled such an enormous amount of information about such a vast time period had at least some intention of preserving knowledge of the past for its own sake. If this was part of Diodorus’ motivation, he does not mention it in the preserved books. The past seems to have value for him only as a treasury of useful and edifying paradeigmata, which perpetuate the fame or notoriety of their protagonists.

18 Outside of prefaces, this dual purpose is referred to at 10.12, 10.21.1, 11.38.6 and 11.46.1.
19 χρηματιστήριον: Diod. Sic. 1.1.3. This is an extremely unusual word, which can denote either a sanctuary or a place where business is conducted. I have chosen ‘treasury’ in order to cover both the idea of storage of something precious (like votive offerings in a sanctuary) and the idea of valuable transactions. The idea of transaction may well be significant: readers go there to interact or ‘do business’ with historical characters of the past and come away not monetarily but morally enriched.
CHARACTERISATION OF DIODORUS’ MORALISING

Distribution

A large part of the Bibliotheca only exists as paraphrases and quotations in later works, known as ‘fragments’. Out of the forty books, 6–10 and 21–40 are fragmentary. Here, moralising is ubiquitous. As with Polybius, the majority of Diodoran fragments have been preserved by excerptors who were more interested in moralising anecdotes and sound bites than in historical narrative, and the result is an overrepresentation of this material among the fragments. Such decontextualised passages can help us establish Diodoran moral themes and interests, but their lack of narrative context makes them unsuitable as the basis of analysis of his moral-didactic programme and techniques. They will therefore only be used as contributory evidence.

More interestingly, even the non-fragmentary parts of the Bibliotheca are an uneven read. The contents and the historical treatment of events vary widely. The first six books are ethnographical and mythological. In the ethnographical sections, there is hardly any moralising; customs are described, but not evaluated on a moral scale. In the mythological sections, moralising is also scarce; where it does occur it mostly takes the form of didactic introductions telling the reader how to interpret a story. However, a reader consuming the mythological tales from beginning to end would have found himself under the influence of a more subtle type of moralising, namely the ‘correlation between behaviour and result’ also found in parts of Polybius’ Histories. We shall return to this below.

In the historical part of the work, the amount of moralising and the techniques used vary between sections, most probably dependent on what source Diodorus used. For instance, there is little moralising in the narrative of the Peloponnesian War in books 12–13, but plenty in the narrative of the Carthaginian Wars in Sicily in books 13–14. Likewise, there is little moralising in the narrative of Alexander the Great in book 17 and the Successor Wars in books 18–20, and plenty in the narrative of the Sacred War in book 16 and of the Sicilian tyrant Agathocles in books 20–1. Such variation will be one of the areas of focus for the analysis both of moralising techniques and of moral messages.

For an explanation of the terminology used in the analysis of Diodorus’ moralising techniques the reader is referred to the overview offered in the Introduction, and its exemplification in Chapter 1.

20 For a close reading of a passage from each of these two sections that shows the difference clearly, see Hau (2009).
Moralising in Narrative Pauses

Much of Diodorus’ moralising takes place explicitly, in narrative pauses. He is particularly fond of guiding moralising, which, as in Polybius, can be introductory, concomitant or concluding and sometimes proleptically comments on a character’s future fate. This technique is found in all parts of the Bibliotheca. These short passages often contain metaphors and similes, such as ‘they took the bait, so to speak, for their own destruction’, or generalising gnomai, such as ‘fortune is good at unexpectedly tripping up the arrogant and teaching them not to be too confident about the future’ (15.33.3) and ‘every act of kindness, if performed freely, bears noble fruit in the praise it receives from the beneficiaries; for even if they can’t all repay it, at least one of those who have received the kindness sometimes pays it back on behalf of all’ (10.16.3). Such gnomic expressions are not used by Polybius and are distinctive of Diodorus’ moral-didactic style. The memorable phrases clearly impressed the Constantinian excerptors, with the result that a large number of the surviving fragments are decontextualised sententiae. Out of context they tell us nothing more than that such pithy expressions were ubiquitous in the Bibliotheca, and that many of their themes were recurrent throughout the work.

There are also some prominent and memorable moralising digressions in the work: the encomium of the dead at Thermopylae (II.11), the comparison of Themistocles and Gelon of Syracuse (II.23) and of Pausanias of Sparta and Aristides of Athens (II.46), the interpretation of the Carthaginian defeat at Syracuse as divine punishment (14.76), and the obituaries of Pelopidas (15.81.1–4) and Epaminondas (15.88). Diodorus’ digressions are generally less well defined than the digressions of Polybius: often they are introduced with a brief justification (e.g. ‘we must go back in time a little and explain everything from the beginning’: II.67.1; ‘it would be unfitting to pass by the death of this man without according him the appropriate praise’: 15.88.1), but the endpoint is left unclear, with the digression simply segueing into narrative (e.g. II.67.7, 15.40.4–5).

The moral-didactic digressions cluster in certain sections of the

21 καθαπερεὶ δέλεαρ ἔλαβον τῆς ἑαυτῶν ἀπωλείας: 14.101.3.
22 ἀγαθὴ γὰρ ἡ Τύχη τοὺς μέγα φρονοῦντας παραδόξως σφῆλαι καὶ διδάξαι μηδὲν ἄγαν κατελπίζει: 15.33.3.
23 πᾶσα χάρις ἀμεταμέλητος οὖσα καλὸν ἔχειν τὸν παρὰ τὸν εὐεργετομένου ἐπαινοῦ: καὶ γὰρ ἂν μὴ πάντες, εἰς γέ τις τῶν εἰς πεπονθότων ἐνίοτε τὴν ὑπὲρ ἁπάντων ἀπέδωκε χάριν: 10.16.3.
24 This may well have to do with the school practice of writing progynasmata, often including or concluding with a moralising maxim, which seems to have developed in the second–first century BC (a thought I owe to Christopher Burden-Strevens in conversation). For the tradition of progynasmata see Kennedy (2003: ix–xiii).
Biblōtheke; there are eight in book 11 and seven in book 15, against only two in book 14 and one in book 17.25 This probably means that Diodorus took over these digressions from his sources and that, although he may have added to them and altered some details, he did not compose moralising digressions from scratch where he found none in his source.26 His digressions can be explanatory, evaluative, philosophical, polemical or associative – in other words, he uses the entire spectrum of possibilities. None of his digressions, moralising or otherwise, are as long as Polybius’ book 6. The longest digression in the Biblōtheke is 12.11.4–19.3, which sets out and praises the laws of Charondas, the lawgiver of Thurii.27 This digression functions partly as a description of a ‘marvel’ (θαύμα – as important to Diodorus as to Herodotus), partly as a praise passage of the lawgiver, partly as a piece of moral didacticism on all the different actions and vices covered by Charondas’ laws. The second-longest digression is 16.61–4, which details with relish the divine punishment that befell those who had committed the grossest impieties during the Sacred War. In other words, when Diodorus does offer long digressions, they usually have a moral-didactic function.

In addition to full-blown moral digressions, Diodorus frequently uses very short digressions of one or two sentences, which can perhaps better be termed ‘moralising asides’. These asides are closely tied to the narrative and add information which in a modern text might have been put in brackets or a footnote. They often outline the character of a historical person in a few words:

(οὐκ ἔχων δὲ στρατηγὸν ἄξιόχρεων, μετεπέμψατο Χαβρίαν τὸν Ἀθηναίον,) ἄνδρα καὶ φρονίσει καὶ συνέσει στρατηγικῆς διάφορον καὶ δόξαι ἐπὶ ἀρετῆς μηγάλην περιπεποιημένον.

(Not having any capable general, he sent for Chabrias the Athenian,) a man outstanding in both intelligence and strategic ability and with an established reputation for great and noble bravery. (Diod. Sic. 15.29.2)

or give brief background information:

καθόλου γὰρ ἐπὶ πολὺ τῇ δυνάμει προκόπτοντες οὐκέτι τοῖς συμμάχοις ὐσπερ πρότερον ἑπιεικῆς ἐχρόντο, ἀλλὰ βιαῖος καὶ ὑπερηφάνως ἦρχον. Διότερ οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν συμμάχων τὴν βαρύτητα φέρειν ἀδυνατόντες ἄλλοις διελέγοντο περὶ ἀποστάσεως, καὶ τινες τοῦ κοινὸς συνεδρίου καταφρονήσαντες κατ’ ἱδίαν ἐπάττοντο.


26 This corresponds to my conclusion with regard to Diodorus’ moralising on the changeability of fortune in Hau (2009).

27 Its companion piece is 12.20–1 on the laws of Zaleucus of Italian Locri.
For overall, now when they (the Athenians) were advancing greatly in power they no longer treated their allies as well as before, but ruled violently and arrogantly. For that reason most of their allies felt unable to bear the harshness and discussed rebellion with each other, and scorned the common Assembly and were making arrangements individually. (Diod. Sic. 11.70.3–4)

These ‘moral asides’ cannot provide the same level of analysis or moral outrage as fully fledged digressions and they do not guide the reader’s interpretation of an episode as precisely as guiding moralising. Rather, they are used to give the reader a bit of inside information on a character or situation without breaking the flow of the narrative. They are extremely common in the Bibliothèke and are a large part of what gives the work its moralising feel.28

Moralising in the Narrative of Events

The moralising ‘feel’ of Diodorus’ text persists also in the narrative of events. One important factor in creating it is his pervasive use of evaluative phrasing. Like the narrative of Polybius, much of the narrative of Diodorus is adorned with evaluative words and phrases which guide the reader’s moral response to the events. This is true of almost all of the Sicilian narrative most probably based on Timaeus (in books 13–14 and 20), and of certain passages in all the other parts of the work. It is relatively rare in the narrative of Alexander the Great and the Successors in books 17–20, where the moralising tends to take the form of moral introductions and conclusions with a few digressions. The example below, however, is from this part of the work and has been chosen because it perfectly illustrates the characteristics of Diodorus’ use of evaluative vocabulary, which is significantly less subtle than Polybius’. This is the account of how Olympias, mother of Alexander the Great, treats her captured rival Eurydice:


28 Other examples are 13.76.2, 15.31.3, 15.63.2, 15.64.4, 16.65.2, 16.83.2, 18.28.6.
(4) When Olympias in this way had got the royal persons into her power and had taken over the kingdom without danger, she did not bear her good fortune like a human being, but she threw Eurydice and her husband, Philip, in prison and began to maltreat them. She walled them up in a small space and had their necessities ministered to them through one narrow passage. (5) When she had unlawfully abused the unfortunate persons for many days and was gaining a bad reputation among the Macedonians because of their pity for the sufferers, she ordered some Thracians to stab Philip, who had been king for six years and four months. But Eurydice, who was expressing herself freely and shouting that the kingdom belonged to her rather than to Olympias, she judged worthy of a greater punishment. (6) So she sent her a sword, a noose, and some hemlock and ordered her to use whichever of these she liked to kill herself. She did not feel any regard for the former prestige of the unlawfully treated woman at all, nor was she moved to pity by common fortune. (7) For that reason, when she met with her own similar reversal in fortunes, she ended her life in a manner worthy of her cruelty. For Eurydice laid out her husband’s corpse in the presence of the attendant, praying that Olympias would meet with similar gifts. When she had taken care of his wounds as best she could in the situation, she hanged herself by her girdle and ended her life, neither crying over her own fate nor brought low by the enormity of her misfortunes. (Diod. Sic. 19.11.4–7)

The passage is introduced with a moral introduction telling the reader to consider it an instance of the abuse of good fortune (19.11.4). Negative verbs are used of the actions of Olympias (κακουχεῖν: 19.11.4, παρανομήσασα: 19.11.5), while her victims are termed ‘unfortunate’ (ἠτυχηκότας: 19.11.5). By telling the reader what the queen did not do, that is, bear her good fortune like a human being (19.11.4) and feel regard for Eurydice’s former station and be moved to pity (19.11.6), the narrator implies that these were the sentiments and actions one would expect, and so draws attention to Olympias’ aberrant behaviour by ‘presentation through negation’.30

29 For this expression see Hau (2009: 176–7) and below.
30 ‘Presentation through negation’ has been identified by de Jong (1987: 61–8) as a Homeric technique of drawing the reader’s attention to significant behaviour or events. It has been applied to Thucydidus by Hornblower (1994: 152–8) and is common in Diodorus, as well as in Xenophon, as we shall see.
idea here of ‘common fortune’ is typical of such passages in Diodorus and will be discussed below, p. 100.) The nobility of Eurydice is stressed by the positive verb ‘expressed herself freely’ (παρρησιαζομένην: 19.11.5), which in the Bibliotheca is regularly used of those who risk life and limb to speak the truth to autocratic rulers.31 In another presentation through negation, the information (19.11.7) that Eurydice did not cry or let herself be crushed by the weight of her misfortunes makes us understand that such behaviour would have been expected and understandable, but that Eurydice was too brave and dignified to engage in it. In the middle of the passage, the moralising is strengthened by internal evaluation: the Macedonians, Olympias’ own people, feel pity for the captives and think that she has gone too far (19.11.5). In addition, towards the end, we get a proleptic statement about Olympias’ own death, making it a direct result of her present behaviour (τοιγαροῦν: 19.11.7).

By the end of the passage, the reader has not so much been guided to a moral reading as been forcefully dragged to it. The narrator does not seem to trust his reader to arrive at the obvious conclusion on his own, and so the message is made abundantly clear. This is typical of much of Diodorus’ moralising and is part of what has alienated him from post-historicism readers.

The passage also shows another feature that is typical of Diodorus’ moralising: his fascination with scenes of cruelty and suffering. From such passages the reader gets the impression that the narrator paints a detailed picture of the horror partly because he enjoys provoking a strong reaction. This kind of tabloid sensationalism has often been criticised, by modern scholars and by other ancient historians: Polybius’ ridiculing of Phylarchus’ ‘tragic’ style of historiography is notorious (Polyb. 2.56–68). But considering Diodorus’ sensationalist passages as a means of moral didacticism allows us to see them in a new light. There is not just delight in the horror stories, but also a focus on pity for the sufferers and a moral lesson to be taken away.32 The elaboration of detail has a mimetic rather than a sensationalist purpose and is intended to make the readers emotionally involved in the story, thereby bringing the moral point home more strongly.33

In the passage just quoted, the point is that Olympias has gone too far in her revenge and will end up suffering for it. The cruelty (and greed) of the perpetrator(s) is a typical message of passages that use pathos to enhance their moralising, as are the dignity and courage of the victim(s) and their

32 This is recognised by Chamoux (1993: lxi–lxii).
33 For an excellent discussion of the manipulation of readers’ emotions by ancient historiographers see Marincola (2003).
immortal fame, or, sometimes, the deservedness of the horrors inflicted. The pity of the onlookers is often mentioned and is supposed to guide the reader’s emotional response. This moralising technique, which we can call **moralising through pathos**, seems to have been common in some other Hellenistic historiographers, most notably Agatharchides of Cnidus, as we shall see in Chapter 3.

The distribution of moralising through pathos in the *Bibliotheke* is even less balanced than the distribution of digressions. This is doubtless partly because this mimetic mode of readerly engagement only works in narratives of people similar enough to the intended readers for them to feel sympathy and pity (see Arist. *Rh.* 2.8) and so would not be a viable mode for presentation of mythological material. However, even in the non-mythological books, moralising through pathos is predominantly found in the Sicilian narrative of books 13–14 and 20, which Diodorus probably based on Timaeus, and in book 17, which deals with Alexander the Great and was perhaps based on Clitarchus. This is a strong indication that Diodorus took over this type of moralising from his sources where he found it, but did not compose it from scratch.

Like Polybius, Diodorus also uses **speeches** to further his moral didacticism. As in Polybius, speeches in the *Bibliotheke* gain authority from narratorial endorsement (13.102.1–3, 14.25), from the way they are received by their internal audience (12.6–16, 14.65–70), or from correspondence between the views they express and narratorial moralising elsewhere in the work (13.19–33.1). However, full-length speeches are not very common in the *Bibliotheke*. A more usual way for Diodorus to make the reader hear the actual words of his characters is by quoting – or paraphrasing – their most pithy remarks as part of a vividly described situation, making the episode into a moralising **vignette**. It is in the nature of such vignettes that they are individually very different, so there is no one typical format. An example is the riotous scene of Philip II celebrating his victory at Chaeronea with a drinking party, and jeering at his prisoners of war until he is reproached ‘with Attic charm’ by the captive Athenian orator Demades and changes his behaviour (16.87). Another, more subtle, instance is the detailed narrative of Alexander sitting on Darius’ throne after his capture of Persepolis and being offered a golden table for a footstool. This makes a captive eunuch burst into tears and comment on the changeability of fortune, which in turn makes Alexander worry that he

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34 See e.g. 14.112, 13.57–8, 14.52–3 with 14.46, 17.13, 17.35–6, 17.70, 19.7–8, 20.15.4–6 and 20.54.

may inadvertently have abused his good fortune, only to be reassured by Philotas that this is not the case as he meant no harm (17.66.3–7). What the vignettes have in common is a setting of the scene, a short speech or sententia by a character, possibly a reply, and sometimes a result or a response to the reply. Interestingly, the didactic interpretation of a vignette is most often left open, without any moralising conclusion to guide the reader. In this they differ from most other moral-didactic techniques employed by Diodorus and come close instead to the famously ambiguous dialogues of Xenophon’s Hellenica (see Chapter 6).  

A final type of moral didacticism in the Bibliotheke is equally implicit, but dominates by its near-ubiquity and contributes greatly to the work’s overall moralising feel. This is the constant and often explicitly emphasised correlation between behaviour and result. This moralising technique plays an even more dominant role in the Bibliotheke than in Polybius’ Histories. Throughout the historical books, good men and mild rulers are rewarded with loyalty and success (11.71.2, 15.31.1, 18.28.6) or, if all else fails, with immortal fame (14.112.5; discussed below, p. 105), while bad men suffer (13.86.1–3, 16.45.4), or at least leave behind them a deservedly evil reputation (14.1–2). In the mythological books, kings are loved and famed for their mildness and other qualities (e.g. 2.28, 2.38.5, 4.73.6, 5.78.4), and heroes and gods perform benefactions and are rewarded with loyalty and immortal honours (e.g. 1.13.4, 1.20.5, 3.58–9, 4.53.6–7, 5.71–72.1), while the cruel and impious suffer spectacular punishments (e.g. 1.64.5, 3.43.5, 4.74, 5.50.5, 6.7.2–3, 7.5.11). The overall impression is clear, even without the narrator’s explicit intervention: good behaviour is rewarded, bad behaviour is punished. We shall return to this below as such a correlation teaches a moral lesson as much as it constitutes moralising technique.

MORAL LESSONS OF THE BIBLIOTHEKE

The aim of this section is to analyse Diodorus’ moral messages and compare them with those of Polybius, in preparation for a comparison between Hellenistic and Classical moral didacticism in Part II. Before we begin, however, it is necessary to discuss the interpretative implications of the differences in narrative style between the ‘mythological’ (1–7) and ‘historical’ (8–40) books of the Bibliotheke. Diodorus himself was aware that he was doing something different in the early books from the later ones, as his preface to book 4 shows: his sources for them were

36 Other moral-didactic vignettes are 8.18.2, 9.2.2, 9.26–8, 10.25.4, 11.6.1–2, 12.33, 12.38, 14.25, 15.11, 15.87, 15.93.2.
different, and his treatment of the myths was characterised by ‘great care’ (ἐπιμέλειαν: 4.1.4) rather than the ‘truth’ (τῆς ἀληθείας) claimed for historiography more generally in the main preface (1.2.7–8). This corresponds to a difference in moralising techniques between these two parts of the Bibliothèque, as we saw above. In fact, it is the entire narrative style that differs between the mythological and historical books: the mythological books are characterised by fast-paced summaries, variants of the same story, and little emotional involvement, while the historical books make copious use of scenes, speech, moralising narrative pauses, and evaluative and emotional phrasing. This makes the mythological books and the historical books very different reading experiences. These differences and Diodorus’ own awareness of them make it reasonable to distinguish between the two parts of the work when discussing individual moral messages, and this will be done frequently in the following analysis. Nonetheless, it will be seen that the moral lessons propounded by the two parts of the Bibliothèque largely correspond, and are always in support of each other.

Divine Justice

The main moral message of the Bibliothèque seems to be that you get what you deserve: the good are rewarded and the bad punished. This correlation between behaviour and result has been described above as a moralising technique. Here we shall focus on the moral lessons propounded by this model of causation, as well as by a large number of passages that make the causal relationship explicit. These explicitly moralising passages fall into two categories: those that attribute the deserved result to divine influence, and passages without such an attribution.

In contrast with the Histories of Polybius, the overall justice of the world of the Bibliothèque seems to be largely due to divine influence. The fact that the first seven books of the work cover mythological times and largely concern themselves with the history of the gods means that no one who reads the work from beginning to end can be in any doubt that the reader is meant to believe in the existence of divine beings. This is worth stressing, as modern readers all too often make assumptions about the response of ancient readers on the basis of their own sharp distinction between the ‘mythological’ and the ‘historical’ part of ancient works of historiography. The distinctions Diodorus draws in the preface to book 4, which we discussed briefly above, do not justify taking the historical books more seriously in moral terms than the mythological books. The stories of the early books of the Bibliothèque show that divine beings take a keen interest in human beings, sometimes reward piety and good deeds and, more often,
punish impiety and cruelty. Only after a hefty dose of this moralistic theology does the reader enter into what we today consider the historical period, conditioned to expect divine involvement in the interest of justice.

In the ‘historical’ books, divine punishment also figures prominently. Sometimes it works on a large scale as a historical explanation, so that falling under the control of the Thirty Tyrants is punishment of the Athenian demos for wrongfully executing the generals of the Battle of Arginusae (13.103.1–2), and the Carthaginians are defeated in the Second Carthaginian War because of their impiety and cruelty (14.73–6). At other times the divine punishes individuals, such as the generals responsible for the robbing of Delphi during the Sacred War (16.61–4), and the tyrant Agathocles, who has murdered a guest-friend (20.70) and robbed temples (20.101). Explicit instances of divine vengeance cluster in certain parts of the work and are most frequent in the Sicilian narrative of books 13–14 and 20–1 (probably based on Timaeus), the narrative of the Sacred War in book 16 (probably based on Theopompus) and the fragments of books 27–31 (probably based on Polybius, an oddity which will be discussed below). Divine vengeance strikes the Carthaginians more often than anyone else, proving that the concept is closely bound up with the author’s patriotic bias. Whether we consider this author Diodorus himself or Timaeus, his likely source for these passages, hardly matters for the present purpose: they were both Sicilian, and it is not strange if they both had strong anti-Carthaginian feelings. Diodorus probably found the references to divine vengeance in Timaeus and transferred them to his own work because they suited his own attitude both to the history of his own region and to historical causation more generally.

An intriguing feature of many of the instances of superhuman punishment in the Bibliotheca is that they in some way mirror the offence. An obvious example is 19.103.4–5. Here, some Carthaginians who, during their war with the Sicilian Greeks, have captured some innocent Athenian sailors and cut off their hands are afterwards captured by the Syracusans and suffer the same fate. This is the narrative of their capture and punishment:

δοξάντων δ’ αὐτῶν ὀμῶς κεχρῆσθαι μηδ’ ὁτιοῦν ἀδικοῦσι ταχὺ τὸ δαιμόνιον αὐτοῖς ἐκεσήμανεν· εὐθὺ γὰρ τοῦ στόλου τινὲς νής ἀποσχιζθεῖσα περὶ τὴν

37 Divine rewards in 1–6, 3.65, 4.22.5. Divine punishments in 1–6, 3.65, 4.22.4, 4.63.4, 4.68.2, 4.69.3–5, 4.71, 4.81.5, 5.3.6, 5.55.6–7, 5.71–72.1.
38 Other instances of divine punishment: 6.7.1–3, 7.7, 8.30.1, 13.86.1–3, 14.46.3–4, 14.63, 14.69.4, 15.24, 16.31.4, 16.38.6, 16.36.4, 16.36.8, 16.58.5–6, 23.12, 27.4, 27.12, 28.3, 28.7, 29.15, 29.25, 31.35, 31.45, 32.18, 32.26, 34/35.9, 38/39.6, 38/39.19.
39 In 13.86.1–3, 14.63.1–2, 14.69.4, 14.73.5, 14.74.3, 14.74.4, 14.76, 14.77.4 and 15.24.
40 For an analysis of the narratives of the First and Second Carthaginian Wars in books 13–14 that clearly shows the divine aspect see Hau (2009: 184–7).
The divine soon sent them a sign to show that they had seemed to treat cruelly men who had done nothing wrong: for immediately some ships of their fleet which had been scattered around Brettia were captured by Agathocles’ commanders, and those of the Phoenicians who were captured alive suffered a similar fate to what they had done to their captives. (Diod. Sic. 19.103.5)

Apparently, the sign by which the divine showed the Carthaginians that they had acted unjustly is the fact not that they were caught, but that they suffered the very same fate as those they had wronged. From a non-religious standpoint it could be argued that the Syracusans knew about the Carthaginian cruelty to the Athenians, and that the similar treatment therefore was a result of their revenge rather than of divine displeasure. However, characteristically for the Diodoran narrator, he is in no doubt that the talionic punishment is a sign of divine vengeance.

A more elaborate example is 16.64.2, on the fate of two women who wore necklaces stolen from Delphi during the Sacred War:

The fates of the women have obvious points of similarities with the legends of the mythological women whose jewellery they wear, and the οὖν ('and
so’) of the last sentence shows that the reader is meant to see a causal connection between these similarities and the divine vengeance. Such talionic, mirroring or somehow ironic punishment occurs throughout the Bibliotheca, but is most frequent in the passages based on Timaeus.41

The final sentence of the passage is one of the most explicit statements of divine support in the Bibliotheca: as the temple-robbers are punished, so the pious Philip II is rewarded. Such divine support is a noteworthy feature of the Bibliotheca – it does not feature in Polybius’ Histories – but it figures markedly less often than divine punishment. On the macro-level, Rome conquers Philip V and Antiochus III because of divine support earned through piety (28.3). On an individual level, some morally good characters have the support either of individual deities or, more frequently, of ‘the divine’ (τὸ δαιμόνιον), ‘the gods’ (οἱ θεοί) or ‘fortune’ (τύχη), which seem to be interchangeable expressions. For instance, the Sicilian hero (of Corinthian origin) Timoleon is said to have the support of ‘the divine’ as well as of Demeter and Persephone (16.66.1-5) and to win his famous victory by a combination of courage and divine support (16.79.5). Likewise, Alexander the Great is aided by Athena (17.17.6-18.1), and fortune has a hand in his recovery from illness (17.31.6). Also, Alexander’s general Ptolemy is saved from his wounds in a way which ‘some’ ascribe to divine providence (17.103.7-8), just after the reader has been assured of his general goodness, and later enjoys divine favour because of ‘his courage and his honest treatment of all his friends’.42 Most instances of divine support occur in the narrative of Timoleon in book 16 and the narrative of Alexander in book 17. In book 11, Delphi escapes plundering by ‘some divine foresight’ (δαιμόνια τίνι προνοίᾳ: 11.14.4), and the same power makes the victory of Gelon over the Carthaginians in Sicily and the honourable defeat at Thermopylae occur on the same day (11.24.1).43

This unevenness in moralising on a topic as world-defining as divine involvement may be infuriating to modern scholars. However, to a reader who reads the entire Bibliotheca without paying attention to the difference between its parts – which is surely the way Diodorus meant it to be read – the fact that divine forces play an explicit role, even if inconsistently, in punishing the wicked and supporting a few extraordinary individuals delivers a moral message which cannot be misunderstood. (In some ways

41 Other examples: 14.76, 16.64.2-3, 20.65.2, 20.70.3-4 and 38/39.19.
42 οἱ δὲ θεοί διὰ τὴν ἀρετὴν καὶ εἰς πάντας τοὺς φίλους ἐπιείκειαν ἐκ τῶν μεγίστων κινδύνων παραδόξως αὐτὸν διέσωσαν: 18.28.6
43 The fact that these two are the only references to divine involvement in book 11, despite the fact that it contains subjects as conducive to the concept as the Persian Wars and Gelon’s war against the Carthaginians, might be a reason for conjecturing that Diodorus did not base this part of the Bibliotheca (primarily) on Timaeus.
this is reminiscent of the situation in Herodotus, where some wicked deeds bring about divine vengeance whereas others are left unpunished. We shall see this in Chapter 4.)

Even in the parts of the Bibliotheca where there are no explicit references to divine justice, the same overall message pertains. In wars, the most moral side tends to be victorious: Athens treats its allies harshly and is dominated by mob politics, and so is defeated by moderate Sparta in the Peloponnesian War (11.70.3–4, 13.102, 15.30.1); the impious temple-robbers are defeated by the benefactor of the Greeks, Philip II, in the Sacred War (e.g. 16.64.2–3); and the all-round good Ptolemy is the person to come out of the Successor Wars most successfully (e.g. 18.28.5–6, 18.33.2–5). By the same token, rulers who treat their subjects well are successful (e.g. 11.26.4–7, 12.50.1–3) while those who mistreat their subjects are rebelled against (9.23, 11.44.4–5), and tyrants ‘usually’ meet miserable ends (26.15). A step down the pecking order, traitors are often executed by their new masters (16.45.4, 19.16.4), and courtiers who plan assassinations end up suffering nasty deaths (9.18–19, 17.5.3–5). Whenever a villain meets a sticky end, the narrator likes to label it ‘deserved’ or ‘fitting’.44 When he cannot point to any physical suffering on the part of evil-doers, the narrator often has recourse to the idea that they somehow suffer in retrospect because of the evil reputation they gain (10.16.2, 14.1–2) or that they suffer from fear of retribution (27.4.8). Likewise, when good characters suffer undeserved fates, the narrator sometimes tries to make up for it by dwelling on the fame they won by their dignity and courage (14.112).

At regular intervals, the narrator reminds us in pithy gnōmai that this is how the world works; for example, ‘those who plot evil against others usually end up entrapped by their own designs’ (9.29)45 and ‘divine punishment usually follows unjust deeds and brings deserved punishment to the perpetrators’ (10.16.2).46 These are some of the sound bites that are often preserved out of context (see above).47 However, their presence throughout the work shows that this message was high on the list of moral-didactic lessons to be learned from the Bibliotheca.

At this juncture it is instructive to compare Diodorus’ version of the Atilius Regulus story with that of Polybius. Both historiographers narrate the story of the Roman general who treats Carthaginian envoys haughtily

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44 4.27.3; 5.11.4, 11.77.6, 16.31.4, 17.2.1, 18.8.6, 19.48.4, 20.65, 21.16.5, 22.1, 23.19, 27.4, 29.14, 32.18, 38/39.11.
45 οἱ γὰρ κατὰ τῶν ἄλλων βουλευόμενοι τι φαῦλον ώς ἐπίπαν ταῖς ἰδίαις ἐπιθυμίαις εἰώθασιν ἁλίσκεσθαι: 9.18.
46 ταῖς ἀδίκοις πράξεσιν ώς ἐπίπαν ἀκολουθεῖ τις νέμεσις οἰκείους τιμωρίας τοῖς ἀμαρτάνοντας ἐπιφέρουσα: 10.16.2.
47 E.g. 9.33.1, 10.16.2, 37.17.
during peace negotiations after a Roman victory in the First Punic War and then shortly afterwards suffers defeat and capture. Both take the opportunity to moralise, but their messages are subtly different. Polybius uses the episode to give the prescriptive advice that one should always distrust fortune and particularly in success (1.35; see pp. 49–50). Diodorus says that Regulus disregarded ‘divine vengeance’ (τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ νέμεσιν) and suffered ‘deserved punishment’ (ἀξίᾳ τιμωρίᾳ: 23.12). The behaviour the two historiographers want to foster in their readers is clearly the same: respectful treatment of envoys and, more generally, a humble and moderate conduct even in great success. Their underlying reasons, however, are different: Polybius warns that fortune is random and always likely to change, while Diodorus predicts that divine forces will deliberately punish wrongheaded behaviour. This neatly captures the difference in worldview between the Histories and the Bibliotheca.

However, there is one part of the Bibliotheca where the message of universal justice is not strongly present, and that is the narrative of the Successor Wars in books 18–20, which is, as has been noted above, overall less moralising than the rest of the work. Instead, this narrative seems committed to the idea of human life as influenced by random fortune, tychē. This is seen most clearly in a highly rhetorical digression at 18.59.4–6, which begins with the statement that ‘All wondered at the changeability and unexpected nature of fortune’ (18.59.4), asks the rhetorical question ‘who would then trust in the success enjoyed in good fortune and conceive an arrogance too big for human weakness?’ (18.59.5), then proclaims paradoxically that ‘therefore it is surprising not if one unforeseen thing happens, but if not everything that happens is unexpected’ (18.59.6), and finally makes the didactical claim that historiography is the one thing that can correct both the arrogance of the fortunate and the desperation of the unfortunate (18.59.6). It seems that Diodorus found this carefully crafted digression in his source (usually thought to be Hieronymus of Cardia), and was so seduced by the similarity with his own didactic message about

48 Polybius’ moralising occurs in a digression at the end of the narrative of Regulus’ capture; Diodorus’ at the end of the narrative of Regulus’ arrogant treatment of the envoys, proleptically predicting his fate. There may well have been a piece of concluding moralising in Diodorus as well, but that part of the narrative is lost.

49 It is intriguing that both Diodorus and Polybius choose to make a negative para-deigma out of Regulus, who is considered a paragon of virtue in the Roman tradition, see e.g. Hor. Carm. 3.5 and Cic. Off. 3.99. Diodorus either did not know this version of the story or chose to ignore Roman sources in favour of the Greek tradition represented by Polybius. See Leach (2014).

50 Divine justice may be at work at 18.20.1, 19.11.7 and 19.48.4.

51 See 18.8.7, 18.20.1, 18.53, 18.59.4–6, 18.67.5.

52 But see Meeus (2013), with references to earlier literature.
mistrusting good fortune and staying humble in success (see below) that he
did not notice, or care, that such universal randomness would cancel out
any claim to universal justice in his narrative world.53

On balance, a less than straightforward picture emerges of Diodorus’
source usage with regard to moral didacticism. On the one hand, he seems
to have let his sources guide him in his choice of episodes to turn into
moral-didactic paradeigmata and not to have added many (any?) mor-
alising digressions or asides to a largely non-moralising source narrative
like Hieronymus’. On the other hand, it is clear from the comparison with
Polybius that he felt free to rewrite any moralising that he found in his
source in order to express his own views.54 The conclusion must be that
Diodorus generally cared enough about his moral-didactic programme to
make an effort in crafting passages that would convey what he considered
the right message out of source material that was making a different point,
but that he could also be seduced by a clever turn of phrase to keep one that
was subtly different. When there was no moralising in his source, he either
forgot about his moral-didactic agenda or considered writing moralising
from scratch too much of an effort.55

Overall, then, the narrative world of the Bibliotheke is one where good
deeds pay and bad deeds are punished, often by means of divine intervention.
Random fortune, however, also plays a part, and human beings must always
guard against becoming arrogant in their success. Let us turn now to look at
this and other lessons about the morally good life taught by the Bibliotheke.

The Virtues

Within the framework of universal justice, the Bibliotheke has plenty of
advice on how to live a moral life. One thing is conspicuously missing in
comparison with Polybius, however: moralising digressions on how to be
a good king or a good military commander, which may well show that
Diodorus did not take over every moralising passage he found in his sourc-
es.56 In fact, Diodorus does not seem to draw much of a distinction between

53 Hadley (1996) has argued that Diodorus wrote this passage himself and added it to
Hieronymus’ account. For my counter-argument see Hau (2009: 180–1).
54 This is also seen in e.g. 28.3 (cf. Polyb. 15.20) and 31.15 (cf. Polyb. 30.18; see Hau
55 I have argued for a similar conclusion in Hau (2009), but there maintain that Diodorus
wanted the moralising collected from his sources to speak for itself rather than redacting it
to suit his own moral-didactic programme. I no longer agree with this. I rather think that
Diodorus had his own moral-didactic programme and worked towards it when the moralising
of his sources reminded him of it, but tended to forget about it when they did not.
56 Although we cannot be certain, as the part of the Bibliotheke that is based on Polybius
is fragmentary.
the virtues needed for a good ruler, a good general and a good private person. We shall look first at the virtues he recommends, then at the vices he advises the reader to avoid.

Piety
In a world largely ruled by divine forces, the most important human virtue can be expected to be piety. That this is indeed the case is established in a passage in book 8 (8.15), which is clearly a moralising digression, but has been transmitted out of context so that we cannot know which episode provoked it. The digression begins with the pious statement that it is impossible for human beings to honour the divine (τὸ δαιμόνιον) in a worthy manner (κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν) and that the only hope we have of avoiding divine punishment for this is to show ourselves grateful (εὐχαριστεῖν: 8.15.1). It then declares that the difference between the pious and the impious is that the former can expect their own prayers to be fulfilled, the latter those of their enemies (8.15.2). Piety consists in taking the gods themselves even more seriously than one takes their altars and the oaths one swears by them (8.15.3). In fact, piety is the one virtue that distinguishes human beings from animals (8.15.4). The digression is fragmented, but the final passage extant states that piety is even more important for states than for individuals, and that states too can expect to be rewarded for piety and punished for impiety (8.15.5). The reader is clearly meant to take piety seriously, and the urgency of the digression’s tone perhaps shows that Diodorus did not expect this to come easily to all of his readers. Piety, however, stays at the forefront throughout most of the Bibliotheca.

In a remarkable passage early in the Bibliotheca, Diodorus signals the importance of piety programmatically when justifying his lengthy treatment of Heracles. It would be ‘absurd’ (ἄτοπον), he says, to ‘forget’ the benefactions of Heracles and ‘not to maintain the pious devotion to the god passed down from our forefathers’ (ἡμᾶς δὲ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν μηδὲ τὴν πατροπαράδοτον εὐσέβειαν διαφυλάττειν: 4.8.5). In other words, it is piety that dictates his decision to narrate the labours of Heracles at length despite the difficulty of doing the demigod justice (4.8.1), and despite the fact that many of his contemporaries do not believe in the truth of the account (4.8.2). The reader is also no doubt meant to remember the preface to book 4 only a few chapters earlier, where the narrator stated that many of his predecessors have avoided narrating the history of the gods and demigods because of the difficulty this entails (4.1.1–2). For

57 Diodorus also demonstrates his own piety in 15.48.4, where he states that while some people attribute earthquakes to natural reasons, ‘the pious’ (οἱ δ’ εὐσεβῶς διακόιμοι) point to other ‘plausible reasons’ (πιθανὰς τινὰς αἰτίας), namely divine anger at impiety.
the Diodoran narrator, the benefactions performed by the divine beings necessitate a pious response, in his case by means of commemoration in narrative.

This profession of piety is suitable for a historiographer who spends his first eight books on prehistorical times and includes the stories of not only Heracles, but also Zeus, Dionysus, Demeter, Isis and Osiris, to name only the most prominent godheads. It only fits, however, because the narrative of the gods is itself pious: although the approach is often euhemeristic, there is no sarcasm and no dwelling on divine immorality (in contrast with e.g. the treatment by Agatharchides; see p. 156). The gods act primarily out of concern for human beings and bring them civilisation and culture. When they are honoured by their beneficiaries, they reward them; when they are scorned, they earn the narrator’s approval for punishing the impious. Imitating the gods, human beings in these books hate and rebel against the impious (4.68.2) and honour and reward the pious (7.4).

In the ‘historical’ books, piety (εὐσεβεία) is often mentioned as one out of several virtues of good characters. When demonstrated in practice, by sparing suppliants (11.91), by showing more consideration for one’s country than for oneself (13.102.3) or by refraining from taking revenge on envoys (27.12.2), it is praised by the narrator. It is also their basis in piety towards the gods that gives Zaleucus’ laws their moral authority (12.20). At the opposite end of the scale, impiety tends to lead to disaster, usually brought on by the gods. Thus grave-destruction (13.86.1–3, 38.7), sacrilege (34/35.9), oath-breaking (16.48.3–6, 20.70, 31.45, 32.18) and, above all, temple-robbing (14.63.1–2, 16.38.6, 16.56.4, 16.58.5–6, 16.61–4, 20.101) are punished with divine vengeance. It is important to note, though, that impiety is never the only vice engaged in by Diodoran villains: the main perpetrators of impiety, that is, the Carthaginians in Sicily, the Phocians during the Sacred War and Agathocles of Syracuse, all combine impiety with cruelty and greed, vices which are more likely to bring them to grief at the hands of other human beings. We shall consider these vices below.

A fragment of book 35 seems to indicate a more pragmatic approach to religion akin to what we see in Polybius. It states that it is in society’s best interest to maintain a certain superstitious fear of the gods (τὴν ἐκ θεῶν δεισιδαιμονίαν) because this is the only way to get people to act justly (35.9). Without its context it is impossible to ascertain the significance of

58 The concept of the gods as culture heroes is discussed by Sacks (1990: 61–82) and Sulimani (2011).

59 Piety rewarded: 3.65, 4.21.3, 4.24, 5.4; impiety punished: 3.65, 4.22.4, 4.63.4, 4.81.5, 5.55.6–7, 6.7.1–3, 7.7, 8.30.1.

60 E.g. 33.5.6, 34/35.33.3, 37.8.2.
this remark. On the one hand it would not be impossible for Diodorus to propound belief in the gods both for its own sake and for the sake of societal law and order; on the other hand it might not be beyond him to copy the statement out of his source without fully subscribing to it simply because it sounds catchy and clever; and finally the statement may have been part of a speech uttered by a character and not the narrator’s own words.

In short, Diodorus’ concept of piety seems to be entirely traditional. What is striking, certainly in comparison with Polybius, is the extent to which it is a yardstick not just of narratorial approval, but also of success in the world of the Bibliotheca. Differences between parts of the work in this respect are slight: despite the fact that spectacular divine vengeance is restricted to certain parts (see above) and that the narrative of the Sacred War for obvious reasons contains more references to piety and impiety than any other historical narrative in the work, the concepts are important throughout, and ἐυσεβεία and ἀσεβεία and their cognates are used frequently in every book.

Mildness, kindness and the danger of good fortune
The virtue most often extolled in the Bibliotheca is not piety, however. It is mildness, kindness or a generally fair way of treating the people in one’s power, expressed by the noun ἐπιείκεια and its almost-synonym φιλανθρωπία.

ἐπιείκεια and its cognates occur no fewer than 123 times in the Bibliotheca, against only nine times in Polybius’ Histories. In Diodorus, this word is used to describe an uneven relationship: it denotes good treatment of those in one’s power, such as that which a ruler shows his subjects, or a commander his men, or a victorious general his captives; hence the common translation ‘mildness’. It can also denote general approachability and sympathetic behaviour by someone in power; hence the other common translation, ‘kindness’. φιλανθρωπία and its cognates occur no fewer than 167 times in the Bibliotheca, against an equally impressive 126 in Polybius’ Histories. This is a wider concept than ἐπιείκεια, pertaining not just to relationships between unequal parties, but also to kindness between equals. In the Bibliotheca, however, it is used as a synonym of ἐπιείκεια, and the two are often employed in hendiadys.

Throughout the work, mild/kind treatment is repeatedly shown to be the way to ensure the loyalty of one’s subjects and the praise of posterity.61 Conversely, harsh treatment of subjects repeatedly leads to disloyalty and

revolt. The maxim is set out in a *gnome* in the preface to book 14, although in slightly different words: ‘the power of rulers is maintained by goodwill and justice, but is dissolved by unjust acts and the hatred of the subjects’ (14.2.1). Sacks has called it ‘a pattern for the rise and fall of empires’ and identified it – correctly, I think – as Diodorus’ own interpretation of history. Remarkably, this moral rule holds true for every single part of the *Bibliotheke*, from Egyptian and Ethiopian kings in book 1 (1.60, 1.68.5) to the divine and heroic rulers of the mythological books (3.61.4, 4.45.3–5), to Spartan kings (11.44.4–5), Sicilian tyrants (11.67.2, 14.45.1), the Athenian and Spartan hegemonies (11.70.3–4, 15.28), the Successor kings (19.86.3–5), the Eastern kings of the second century BC (33.18.1, 34/35.3) and even Roman officials (37.5–6) and rebels (38.22a). This must mean that the message that those in power should treat the less powerful with mildness and kindness, and that this will in turn enhance and secure their power and gain them fame, was at the heart of Diodorus’ didactic programme. The notion is not new, of course. We have seen that Polybius stresses the close correlation between a ruler’s or ruler-state’s treatment of his/its subjects and his/its success, and we shall see in the next chapter that a similar message is found in the Classical historiographers. However, no extant work of Classical or Hellenistic Greek historiography puts as much emphasis on this moral-didactic point as Diodorus’ *Bibliotheke*.

62 1.60, 1.64.5, 4.45.3–5, 4.68.2, 9.23, 11.44.4–5, 11.68.7, 11.70.3–4, 14.47.5 and 48.1, 15.1.3–5, 15.28, 15.61.2–3, 16.40, 17.5.3, 19.89.3, 28.14, 34/35.2, 34–40, 34/35.3, 38.22a.

63 αἱ γὰρ τῶν ἁγεμόνων ὑπεροχαὶ τηροῦνται μὲν εὐνοίᾳ καὶ δικαιοσύνῃ, καταλύονται δὲ ἀσφαλίζονται διὰ φόβῳ καὶ καταπλήξει

64 Sacks (1990: 6, 42–53).

65 An apparent contradiction is 32.2, which states that ‘Those who want dominion over others use courage and intelligence to get it, moderation and consideration to extend it, and paralysing terror to secure it’ (οἱ τὰς ἁγεμονίας περιποιήσασθαι βουλόμενοι κτῶνται μὲν αὐτὰς ἀνδρείᾳ καὶ συνέσει, πρὸς αὔξησιν δὲ μεγάλην ἄγουσιν ἐπιεικείᾳ καὶ φιλανθρωπίᾳ, ἐσφάλιζονται δὲ φόβῳ καὶ καταπλῆξει), and which has been used to argue that its author (usually considered to be Polybius, from whom Diodorus is then supposed to have copied the maxim) condones such rule by terror. I have argued elsewhere that the statement says nothing about its author’s attitude to this way of ruling, only about the way he sees rulers generally behaving (Hau 2006).

66 Unfortunately a direct comparison of Diodoran passages on this topic with their Polybian source passages is not possible, as the fragmentary state of both texts means that the passages on which Diodorus based his moralising on the virtue of *epieikeia* have all been lost. The closest match is between Diod. Sic. 30.23 and Polyb. 29.20, which both deal with Aemilius Paullus after his defeat and capture of Perseus. It is obvious that Diod. Sic. 30.23 is based on Polybius’ account, but of this latter only a short fragment is extant, which quotes part of Aemilius’ speech to the Senate about how to bear good fortune with moderation, whereas the Diodorus fragment has both this advice (in *oratio obliqua*) and a concluding narratorial evaluation which moralises explicitly on the *epieikeia* of Aemilius and other Romans more generally. Whether or to what extent this conclusion is based on Polybius is impossible to determine.
Closely related to the message that rulers should treat their subjects mildly is the message that victorious commanders should treat the defeated well. Again, this is not only the morally right way to behave, but also tends to lead to loyalty and fame. Scenes of victorious generals abound in the Bibliotheca, and the narrator is always interested in how they respond to their victory. In this way, the message of the desirability of mildness and the message of the general human inability to bear good fortune with moderation become closely connected. An example of this is the narrative of how Scipio Africanus the Elder receives the captive Syphax and its moralising conclusion, found in two slightly different versions in the Constantinian Excerpts (Diod. Sic. 27.6):

That) when Syphax and those with him were brought to Scipio and he first saw the man in chains, he burst into tears, thinking about Syphax’s ancient prosperity and royal state, now gone. After a little while, deciding to stay moderate like a human being in his good fortune, he ordered that Syphax should be unchained and gave him his own tent and agreed to letting him keep his retinue. Guarding him in free custody he associated with him in a friendly way and often invited him for dinner. (Const. Exc. 2(1), pp. 267–8)

(That) when Scipio had taken King Syphax prisoner, he unchained him and associated with him in a friendly manner; for he thought it right to keep his hostility against his enemy until the point of victory, but when a king

67 I have discussed ‘victor after the victory’ scenes in Diodorus in the context of Greek historiography more generally in Hau (2008).
had had suffered the fate to become a prisoner of war, not to overstep the line, human as he was. For some divine retributive justice, it seems, watches over human life, and quickly reminds those who become too arrogant for a human being of their own weakness. For that reason, who would not praise Scipio, realising that he was a source of terror to the enemy, but that his own mind was defeated by pity for the unfortunate? For often those who are terrifying to the enemy ranged against them are moderate towards those who fall into their power. For that reason Scipio soon obtained Syphax’s gratitude for his mildness. (Const. Exc. 4, pp. 356–7)

The close connection between mildness/kindness and the ability to stay moderate in good fortune is clear: Scipio’s treatment of Syphax is described as φιλανθρώπως (twice in the passage above, but probably only once in the original passage, here quoted by both excerptors) and τῆς εἰς αὐτὸν ἐπιεικείας (27.6.2) and is brought about by his decision to ‘stay moderate like a human being in his good fortune’ (ἄνθρωπινα φρονεῖν ἐν τοῖς εὐτυχήμασιν: 27.6.1) and ‘not to overstep the line, human as he was’ (μηδὲν ἐξαμαρτάνειν ἄνθρωπον ὄντα: 27.6.2).

We recognise the idea from Polybius: good fortune, most often in the form of military victory, is a test of a man’s moral integrity, and most people fail it. The quoted passage is in all likelihood based on a now lost passage of Polybius, and two features of it are typical of the Histories rather than of the Bibliotheca: the fact that Scipio cries (see p. 53), and the rhetorical question ‘who could fail to praise such a man’ (27.6.2). These two features were probably already in Polybius’ version. We also recognise the gratitude (χάριν: 27.6.2) that is the result of staying moderate and treating the defeated with consideration; this is a topos in both the Histories and the Bibliotheca.

Diodorus, however, has put his own spin on the reason why human beings must strive for moderation in success. The repeated stress on Scipio’s humanity (ἄνθρωπινα φρονεῖν: 27.6.1, ἄνθρωπον ὄντα: 27.6.2) and its inherent weakness (ἀσθενείας: 27.6.2), that is, on the fact that he is a human being and not a god and is therefore subject to the superhuman powers that rule the world, is typical for this sort of passage in the Bibliotheca (and we saw it in the passage about Olympias’ mistreatment of Eurydice; above, pp. 83–4). The thought is expressed very clearly in the first sentence of the conclusion to the episode: ‘For some divine retributive justice, it seems, watches over human life, and quickly reminds those who become too arrogant for a human being of their own weakness.’ This religious idea seems to be in contrast with the didactic programme of Polybius, according to which victors should treat the defeated with moderation out of a feeling of solidarity based on their shared humanity. The moralising conclusion, then, must be an addition of Diodorus’ to whatever he took over from Polybius. Likewise, the use of the verb ἐξαμαρτάνειν to express the mistake
Scipio would make in mistreating his prisoner shows that the narrator is thinking about that mistake in religious terms as a transgression against the divine, and is therefore most probably an addition of Diodorus’. It is also in his work and not in Polybius’ that the reference to ‘human weakness’ repeatedly occurs in connection with the message that one should not abuse one’s good fortune. The idea seems to be that all human beings are helpless in the face of divine powers (including fortune, $tyche$), and that this common helplessness should make us feel solidarity with each other and avoid mistreating those who happen to be in our power when we are successful. Rather, we should remember that we may well one day end up in a similar situation. In some Diodoran passages this idea is combined with the thought that human beings share a ‘common fortune’ (see e.g. the Olympias/Eurydice passage we encountered earlier, pp. 83–4), which sounds closer to the Polybian idea of moderate treatment based on a feeling of solidarity and the thought that the roles might have been reversed, but could equally well be another way of saying that all human beings are equally powerless in the face of superhuman forces.

The admonition to behave moderately towards one’s defeated enemy and examples of how this leads to positive results are ubiquitous in the *Bibliotheke*. The message is propounded in a prescriptively moralising digression in 27.15.3, and at four different junctures the message is delivered in very similar *gnomai* stating that ‘forgiveness is preferable to punishment’. Aemilius Paullus and some of his fellow-Romans are said to practise this as a deliberate policy, being tough on their opponents, but mild towards the defeated (πρὸς μὲν τοὺς ψυσταμένους ὄντα βαρὰν ἑαυτὸν, πρὸς δὲ τοὺς κρατηθέντας ἐπιείκη: 30.23.2), which is why Rome’s rule was not hated (at that time?). Very often it is connected with the idea of behaving moderately in good fortune.

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69 ἔξωμαρτάνυ is used ten times in the *Bibliotheke* and only once in Polybius’ *Histories*.
70 E.g. 9.33.3, 10.14.2, 17.38.6, 18.59, 19.11.6, 23.12. For wider discussion of the theme of the abuse of good fortune in Diodorus see Hau (2009).
71 3.72.5–6, 4.53.1–3, 16.20.5–6, 11.25.1–2, 11.26.1, 13.19–33.1, 14.105, 15.17.5, 16.87, 17.38.3–7, 17.59.7, 18.18.4–6, 19.11, 23.12, 27.13–18 (fragments, probably from speeches in the Roman Senate about the fate of Carthage after its defeat), 30.23, 31.3 (fragments, probably from a speech), 31.4
73 This echoes the prophecy in Verg. *Aen.* 8.653 that the Romans must *parcere subjectis et debellare superbos*. By Polybius, the doctrine is put into the mouth of Flaminius in his speech to his Greek allies after his victory over Philip V (πολεμοῦντας γὰρ δὲ τοὺς ἄγαθοθεν ἀνδράς βαρὲς εἶναι καὶ θυμικοὺς, ἡττωμένους δὲ γενναίους καὶ μεγαλόφρους, νικώντας γε μὴν μετρίος, καὶ πραξὶς καὶ φιλανθρώπους: 18.37.7). This is probably evidence that such a policy was deliberately articulated by some Senators of Republican Rome.
The message that one should take care to stay humble in success is, however, also expressed in other connections, usually in the context of powerful people becoming arrogant and/or abusive and ending up suffering in return.\footnote{Hau (2009).} It is especially common in the context of hegemonic powers, such as Athens rejecting a Spartan peace offer during the Peloponnesian War, which provokes the narrator to a proleptic mention of the defeat of Athens (13.53), and in the narrative of the downfall of tyrants, such as Dionysius II, which earns a moralising conclusion turning the tyrant into a \textit{paradigma} for those who become arrogant in success (16.70.2–3). In these passages the downfall is usually not explicitly attributed to divine punishment, but the fact that such punishment figures prominently in most parts of the \textit{Bibliotheke} (as established above), and that a downfall is unfailingly expected to follow upon abusive behaviour brought on by feeling secure in one’s success, makes it natural for a reader to see an element of divine punishment of the arrogant.

I have demonstrated elsewhere that moralising on the topic of the difficulty of coping with good fortune and the dangers of letting it go to your head is inconsistent in the \textit{Bibliotheke}: in some parts, particularly those probably based on Timaeus and Polybius, it is pervasive; in others, particularly book 17 and the Greek narrative of 18–19, it only shows up occasionally.\footnote{Hau (2009).} Even in these books, however, the theme of the necessity of bearing good fortune with moderation is present; just more sporadically (e.g. 17.38.4–7, 18.59.3–6, 19.11). The theme was clearly high on Diodorus’ list of moral-didactic priorities, even if he did not always superimpose it on narratives in his sources that did not already display it.

\textit{Courage}

As in Polybius’ \textit{Histories}, so also in Diodorus’ \textit{Bibliotheke} courage is a much-praised virtue and a mark of a good man. Unlike Polybius, however, Diodorus only rarely acknowledges that courage has to be tempered with intelligence and planning. Only three times is ill-advised courage commented on: in Thebes’ and Tyre’s resistance against Alexander the Great (προπετῶς καὶ ὡβούλως: 17.10.1, and ἀνδρειότερον μᾶλλον ἢ φρονιμώτερον: 17.10.6; γενναιότερον μᾶλλον ἢ φρονιμώτερον: 17.46.5), and in Athens’ decision to rebel against Antipater (πρὸς εὐδοξίαν εὖ βεβουλεῦσθαι, τοῦ δὲ συμφέροντος διημαρτηκέν: 18.10.4–5).

Otherwise, courage in the \textit{Bibliotheke} is usually both an admirable and a useful virtue. It wins battles (4.28.3, 11.74.4, 16.4, 31.44, 36.10.1),

kingly power (4.73.6, 20.22.6)\textsuperscript{77} and freedom from tyranny (16.9, 16.12). Moreover, Diodorus has a fascination with spectacular courage displayed on the battlefield. A rhetorically profuse encomium of the dead at Thermopylae takes up a whole chapter of book II (II.11), and in battle narratives heroic deaths figure prominently. A typical example of such a heroic battle episode is the last stand of the Spartan general Mindarus:

The forces all converged towards one point, but Mindarus was not struck with terror by the influx of Theramenes and his troops. He divided the Peloponnesians, met the attackers with one half, and then took the other half himself and ranged them against Alcibiades and his troops, exhorting each of the men not to disgrace the glory of Sparta, especially in a land-battle. He organised a heroic battle by the ships and risked his own life in the front line; he killed many of those ranged against him, but in the end he was killed by Alcibiades' troops, having fought in a manner worthy of his country. When this man had fallen, the Peloponnesians and all the allies ran together and, struck with fear, turned to flight. (Diod. Sic. 13.51.5–6)

Almost every feature of this passage is typical of the heroic battle anecdote in Diodorus. It starts off with applying a positive statement or epithet to its protagonist: here ‘Mindarus was not struck with terror’, but often the protagonist is said to be ‘outstanding’,\textsuperscript{78} or some group of people, often his soldiers, which he surpasses, is specified.\textsuperscript{79} If the protagonist is a Spartan or a Roman, he then thinks of upholding the honour of his fatherland (13.51.5).\textsuperscript{80} During the battle, his fighting is extolled, usually with the adverb \textit{λαμπρῶς} (‘brilliantly’) or \textit{ηρωικῶς} (‘heroically’),\textsuperscript{81} and called ‘worthy of his fatherland’ (13.51.6).\textsuperscript{82} He kills many enemies (13.51.6),\textsuperscript{83}

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\textsuperscript{77} Adversely, power can be lost be cowardice: 16.70.2–3.
\textsuperscript{78} 12.43.2, 15.17, 15.64.3, 15.80.1, 17.45.6.
\textsuperscript{79} 15.64.3, 16.16.3, 19.72.7–8; see also καὶ πρὸ πάντων αὐτῶν κινδυνεύων: 13.51.
\textsuperscript{80} 14.83.6, 15.64.4, 19.72.7–8.
\textsuperscript{81} 12.43.3, 15.87.1, 17.63.4, 17.45.6.
\textsuperscript{82} 14.83.7.
\textsuperscript{83} 14.83.7, 15.17.1, 15.64.5, 15.80.5.
but in the end (τὸ δὲ τελευταῖον: 13.51.6) he himself is slain. In many of the episodes, the protagonist is said to strive to be the one to bring about victory, even if it cost him his life, and he is killed while he is ‘fighting heroically’, and only after he has been wounded repeatedly.

In four instances (14.83.6–7 Pisander, 15.64.3–5 Ischolas, 17.45.6 Admetus, 19.72.7–8 Q. Aulus) the heroic anecdote is the only mention of the hero in the Bibliotheca; Diodorus apparently found the instance of the heroic death so valuable that it had to be included in his work even if it was performed by a character who had otherwise no part to play in the story. In three other instances the heroic death is the only event related from the battle: 15.33.6 (Phoebidas), where the whole battle takes up just five lines of the Loeb text; 16.7.3–4 (Chabrias), which receives six lines; and 16.16.3 (Philistus), which receives a full paragraph focused solely on Philistus’ heroic suicide. These brief scenes are composed of only three elements: (1) the general is introduced, (2) the battle is joined, and (3) the general dies heroically. In 15.33.6, the defeat of the dying general’s side is hinted at; in 16.7.3–4 and 16.16.3, he is specifically said to choose death before defeat. Other than that, in these three battle narratives the reader is not told which side was victorious or why. There is no information about deployment of troops or the course of the battle. Clearly, the paradeigma of the heroic death of the general held more interest for Diodorus than such military facts.

There are fifteen heroic battle episodes in Diodorus, which all follow this pattern. Thirteen of them are found in the Greek narrative of books 11–16, which he is generally believed to have based on the work of Ephorus of Cyme. This makes it likely that such episodes were characteristic of Ephorus, and that Diodorus took over these passages from this author. Their similarity in structure and focus may well also go back to Ephorus.

84 τὸ δὲ τελευταῖον: twice in 13.99, 14.83.7; τέλος δὲ: 15.80.5.
85 14.83.7, 15.17, 15.64.5, 15.80.5, 17.45.6, 19.72.8.
86 ἐπευθεὶν ἐπιφανεστάτον έαυτῷ περιστομισθεῖσιν θάνατον: 13.99; πάντα κίνδυνον ὑπομενόν: 15.55.5; σπεύδων διὰ τῆς ἱδίας ἀνδρείας κρίναι τὴν μάχην ἐπ’ αὐτὸν ὥρμησε τὸν ἀλέξανδρον: 15.80.5.
87 ἁγιονισίμους λαμπρῶς: 13.99.5, 14.83.7, 15.33.6; μαχόμενος ἡρωικῶς: 15.17.1, 15.17.1, 15.55.5, 17.45.6; ἀριστεύων: 15.80.5.
88 13.99, 14.7.3, 15.33.6, 15.55.5, 15.80.5, 15.87.1, 16.7.3.
89 In the narrative based on Ephorus: 12.43.2–3 Brasidas, 13.51.6 Mindarus, 13.99 Callicratidas (with 13.97.5), 14.83 Pisander, 15.17.1 Leptines, 15.33.6 Phoebidas, 15.64 Ischolas, 15.69 Chabrias, 15.79.2 and 15.87 Epaminondas, 15.80 Pelopidas, 16.7.3–4 and 16.16.3 Philistus. (The Leptines and Philistus episodes take place in the Sicilian narrative, but are nevertheless most probably based on Ephorus. Diodorus seems for some reason to have switched from using Timaeus to using Ephorus as his main source for Sicily at the end of book 14. See Schwartz 1903, Meister 1967 and Pearson 1984, 1987; contra Stylianou 1998: 64–78.)
although it is entirely possible that Diodorus extracted these pieces of information from fuller battle narratives and thereby created his own heroic battle _topos_. The two heroic battle episodes found outside of the ‘Ephoran’ narrative are in books 17 and 19 respectively. This could either mean that they go back to Diodorus’ sources for those books, who were perhaps inspired by Ephorus, or that Diodorus chose to highlight these particular instances of heroics in the same way as he had done in the ‘Ephoran’ books although they were presented differently in his other sources. Whatever the exact relationship between Diodorus’ text and his sources in these instances, it is clear that he found heroic death by a general in battle interesting and important and that certain features of such deaths seemed to him to be particularly worthy of mention.

When we look at the typical features of these episodes, we realise that they are not retold just for cheap thrills: they are not visual, blow-by-blow descriptions of the fighting and do not wallow in pathetic details of the general’s death. Instead they highlight two things: the general’s courage and his patriotism. Courage more than fighting skill is surely what is meant when he fights _λαμπρῶς_ or _ἕρωικῶς_, and courage and patriotism are combined in the general’s thoughts about Spartan/Roman honour and his desire to win the battle by his own efforts regardless of the cost. It is the repetitiveness of the episodes that makes them didactic. The reader is not told explicitly that such behaviour is good and noble, or that it benefits the general’s city; these causal connections are founding premises for all ancient (and later?) ideas of battlefield behaviour and go without saying. The episodes reinforce the standard ideal, and by their structural and semantic repetitiveness drill into the reader the nobility and moral rightness of sacrificing one’s life in battle for one’s country. In this way they fulfil the promise to make soldiers ‘more ready to face dangers’ of the preface (1.1.5).

Another type of heroic courage showcased by the _Bibliothèke_ is courage under torture. These episodes are often narrated more vividly than the heroic battle deaths, giving visual details and letting the victim and/or the torturer(s) speak in direct speech. Examples are the torturing of the pre-Socratic philosopher Zeno of Elea by the tyrant Nearchus (10.18), where Zeno lures the tyrant to lean close in order to hear a promised confession and then bites off his ear, and of the Rhegian general Phyton by the tyrant Dionysius I of Syracuse (14.112), where Phyton responds with defiance to the report of the killing of his son and earns the respect and sympathy of the tyrant’s soldiers for his courage. Such episodes are less frequent than the heroic battle episodes, but more memorable because of their vivid,
pathetic style. The difference in style could be due to Diodorus’ use of different sources: while the heroic battle deaths are primarily found in the ‘Ephoran’ books, the torture scenes are primarily encountered in book 10, whose sources are uncertain, and in the Timaean, Polybian and Posidonian sections of the Bibliotheke. It is more likely, however, that the difference is due to the fact that the torture scenes are advocating a kind of courage less suited to shorthand moralising than the kind displayed in the brief and colourless battle episodes. The courage displayed by the torture victims is less patriotic and more individual, and it is chiefly demonstrated through their defiant speech acts, which can therefore not be ignored, and which need a detailed setting in order to make sense.

Courage at the point of death, whether in battle, under torture, by one’s own hand in order to avoid capture or in any other circumstance, is always admired in the Bibliotheke, even to the point where it blots out any blemishes on a character’s previous moral record. Thus, Olympias dies ‘without any ignoble or womanish utterance’ and receives a positive (although amoral) obituary (19.51) despite the moralising account of her previous mistreatment of Eurydice and Philip, during which her unpleasant death was predicted and called ‘worthy of her cruelty’ (19.11.7), and rebellious slaves die ‘heroically’ at their own hands rather than fight in the arena (36.10.3).

Justice and Lawfulness

Throughout the Bibliotheke, good men are described as ‘just’ (δίκαιος) or ‘excelling in justice’ (διαφέρων δίκαιοσύνη and similar expressions). Especially pervasive in the mythological books, these are labels fitted to a range of kings, heroes and gods, from Aegyptus (1.51.4) through Hesperus (3.60.2) to Priam (4.32 and 49), Minos (5.78.4) and Zeus (5.71.1). Here, justice (δίκαιοσύνη) is often paired with courage (ἀνδρεία), mildness/kindness (ἐπείκεια/φιλανθρωπία) and, above all, piety (εὐσέβεια). This places justice as the fourth and final virtue that completes Diodorus’

91 E.g. 10.17.2–3, 10.18, 14.112, 19.11.4–7, 26.14, 36.10.3.
92 An exception is the scene of the torture of Aristogeiton by Hipparchus at 10.17.2–3, which reads like a heroic battle death: Aristogeiton is more distinguished than his fellow-conspirators, and his courage is extolled without quotation of any speech. The passage is fragmentary, however, so the speech and other details may well have been lost.
93 See e.g. 17.84, 18.22, 37.27.
94 1.51.4 Aegyptus, 1.95.1 Amasis, 2.32.2 Cyaxares, 3.60.2 Hesperus, 4.18.3 ‘a certain king’ (in Iberia), 4.32 and 4.49 Priam, 5.7.7 Aeolus, 5.8.3 sons of Aeolus, 5.66.4 Cronus, 5.71.1 Zeus, 5.78.4 and 5.79 Minos, 5.81.5 Macareus, 5.83.4 Tennes, 5.84.2 Rhadamanthus, 6.6.1 the Dioscuri, 8.30.2 Demonax.
95 5.71.1, 5.78.4, 6.6.1.
96 1.51.4, 1.95.1, 3.60.2, 5.81.5.
97 1.2.2, 1.92.5, 3.60.2, 3.64.7, 4.18.3, 5.7.7, 5.8.3, 4.49.6, 6.6.1.
picture of the good man. Interestingly, however, ‘just’ is not applied as an epithet to those gods and heroes whose stories are told at greatest length, that is, Isis and Osiris, Dionysus and Heracles. Instead, these divine protagonists demonstrate their moral goodness by their actions, specifically termed benefactions (εὐεργεσίαι). This shows that ‘just’ in this part of the work is little more than shorthand, used simply as a stamp of approval on a mythological character, whose personality could not be known and whose deeds would not be explored in any great detail. The main protagonists of the mythological books have more complex personalities, which can be surmised from their deeds.

In the historical books, the appellation ‘just’ carries more weight. It is only used of characters for whom it is a defining characteristic, such as Pittacus, one of the Seven Sages (9.11), Aristides the Just (11.47.2) and Callicratidas, ‘the most just man in Sparta’ (13.76.2). These men are all admired for their justice, which earns them influence and loyalty. In the preface to book 14 on the importance for hegemonic states of treating their subjects well, justice (δικαιοσύνη) is paired with benevolence (εὐνοία) as the qualities that preserve such power securely.

In contrast, the antonym ‘unjust’ is used in a consistent manner throughout the mythological and the historical books of the Bibliothèque. Rather than a catch-all term to label any character or action immoral, the adjective ἄδικος and its cognates are throughout the work primarily used for actions that are unjust in a legal sense, either in the court room or in unwritten international law, although the verb ἄδικα is sometimes used to mean simply ‘harm’ without a strong sense of legality. A fragment of book 25, possibly from the preface, states that ‘injustice is the metropolis of evil’ and praises Epicurus for realising this (25.1). There is, however, no discussion of what injustice might entail or how it brings about other evils. Such lack of reflection is characteristic of the Bibliothèque’s approach to both injustice and justice. No extant digression reflects on what actually

98 Euergesiai: Isis and Osiris 1.13.1 and 5, 1.17.2, 1.18.6, 1.22.2; Dionysus 3.64.2, 3.66.3, 3.70.8, 3.72.4; Heracles 4.8.5, 4.15.2, 4.27.4. Heracles is described as a hater and punisher of injustice and lawlessness at 4.17.5 and 5.76.1.

99 Also Cyaxares (9.20.4), Micythus of Zankle 11.66.2, Diomedon 13.102.1, Agesipolis 15.19.4, and – in the limited area of distributing booty – Viriathes the bandit captain 33.1.

100 E.g., 1.71.1, 1.75, 1.77, 1.79, 2.28.5–7, 2.42.3, 3.12.2, 3.59.3, 4.17.5, 4.43–4, 5.71.1, 5.76.1, 5.83.4, 8.25.3, 9.13.3, 10.23.1, 11.58.4, 12.56.6, 13.102.3–5, 14.37.7, 14.66.4, 14.113.5, 15.25, 15.29.6, 16.49.5, 17.30.5, 18.23.4, 18.65.5, 20.10.3, 20.70.4, 20.82.2, 25.2, 28.4.

101 2.40.4, 2.59.3, 3.18.7, 8.15.3, 11.67, 13.67.5, 17.69.9, 19.103.5. In many of these cases the harm is or can be perceived to be unjust, but the emphasis seems to be on the hurt rather than the injustice.

102 The expression ‘X is the metropolis of evils/evil-doing’ recurs about greed at 21.14a, while the main preface claims that history/historiography is the metropolis of philosophy (1.2.2). It was clearly a favourite expression of Diodorus’.
constitutes justice or how this can be determined. This presents a stark contrast to Polybius’ *Histories*, where the justice of various historical acts is often discussed at length, and it means that the moral message that one should act justly remains not only largely implicit in the *Bibliotheke*, but also unnuanced.

If Diodorus’ approach to justice is unreflective, he seems to have thought more carefully about law, its importance for human society and how it is best constituted. In the mythological books, part of the civilising programme of many of the culture heroes consists in setting down laws (1.14.3 Isis, 2.38.5 Dionysus, 5.5.2 and 5.68.3 Demeter, 5.66.5–6 Cronus, 5.67.4 Themis, 5.71.1–3 Zeus, 5.78.3 Minos), often said to lead to greater justice (1.14.3 Isis, 5.5.2 Demeter, 5.66.5–6 Cronus, 5.71.1–3 Zeus). Lawgiving is also mentioned in the preface as one of the many great deeds human beings have undertaken under the inspiration of universal history (1.2.1).

In the historical part of the work also, lawgivers are given much space: in the fragmentary book 9, in a section apparently dedicated to the Seven Sages, the description of Solon as the perfectly virtuous man seems to be left over from a longer discussion of his lawgiving (touched on in 9.1.4, but the details are left out by the excerptor), and a laudatory anecdote about his dedication to his laws is told in 9.4 and again at 9.20 (the repetition is due to the passage being preserved with variations by two different excerptors). Likewise, Pittacus of Mytilene receives very positive treatment in 9.12, where his lawgiving is mentioned among his benefactions, and Bias is praised for his justice (9.13). In between Solon and Pittacus are discussed the Delphic maxims, according to Diodorus phrased by Chilon, which are taken as obscurely expressed laws for behaviour (9.9–11).

In book 12, the longest digression of the *Bibliotheke* recounts the laws of Charondas, praising them repeatedly for their excellence (12.11–19) and ending with an anecdote about how this lawgiver’s dedication to his laws led to his death. It is followed immediately by a digression on the laws of Zaleucus, which are likewise praised, but discussed less extensively (12.20–1). In book 13, in an episode very similar to the narrative of the death of Charondas, Diccles the Sicilian lawgiver dies by his own hand to uphold his laws (13.33.2–3 and 35). The connection between law and justice is only made explicit occasionally in these lawgiver passages (12.20.3 and 13.35.4), but the repeated insistence on the excellence of the laws and of the men who made them leads the reader to understand that they increased the justice of their respective societies.

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103 See e.g. Polyb. 18.13–15 and 36.9.
104 12.11.4, 12.12.1, 12.12.4, 12.15.1, 12.16.2, 12.20.1–3, 13.35.1–2.
105 Diodorus’ fascination with what constitutes just laws is also seen in 15.11, a lively anecdote in which three Persian judges explain their reasons for acquitting an alleged traitor.
These passages seemingly demonstrate a strong Diodoran interest in laws and lawgiving, but strangely the interest seems to disappear after the narrative of Diocles in book 13. If Diodorus wrote anything on the laws of Rome, this passage has been lost. Perhaps, as with the other parts of his moral-didactic programme, he took over passages on laws and lawgiving whenever he found them in his sources, but did not go in search of supplementary sources to fill the gap when he did not find such information.

Since we have spent some time on Polybius’ ideas about lawful warfare, it would be interesting to compare what Diodorus has to say about the subject. Whatever he once had to say, however, is now so fragmentary that it hardly rewards study. In the late, fragmentary books, there are two mentions of the Romans pursuing only just wars (28.3.1, 32.5.1), one of them with the explicit comment that this ensures them the support of the gods (28.3.1). An example in book 8 from Rome’s early history of how the Romans manipulate matters into making their wars just according to the letter, if not the spirit, of divine law does not receive narratorial comment (8.25), and had perhaps been forgotten by both author and reader by the time they reached the narrative of Rome’s wars against Philip V and Numantia, in which context the enthusiastic comments about bellum justum are found. The expression ‘unjust war’ is used a few times in the work, but the narrator never puts stress on the point and never explains what constitutes an unjust war. More intriguingly, a lacunose passage in book 30 seems to be the remnant of a digression on the ‘laws of war’:

πᾶς γὰρ πόλεμος ἐκβεβηκὼς τὰ νόμιμα καὶ δίκαια τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὅμως ἔχει τινὰς ἰδίους καθαπερεὶ νόμους, οἴον ἄνοχάς μη λύειν, κήρυκα μη ἀναιρεῖν, τὸν τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ κατισχύοντος πίστιν <παραδόντα μη> τιμωρεῖσθαι.

For, although all warfare is a transgression of human laws and justice, nonetheless it has something like laws of its own, such as not to break a truce, not to kill a herald, and not to take vengeance on someone who has surrendered his person to the good faith of his conqueror. (Diod. Sic. 30.18.2)

As far as it goes, this statement follows traditional Greek ethics and is perfectly in line with Diodorus’ pious moral didacticism: truces, heralds and suppliants/surrendered opponents were sacrosanct according to religious law. It is possible that the original and complete passage held more nuanced views, but the fact that it survives in the context of Antiochus III’s

107 The emendation is by van Herwerden and is reproduced by the Belles Lettres edition of Diodorus (Fragments vol. III), where the fragment is numbered 30.22b.
murder of the child-king Ptolemaeus, his nephew, makes it likely that the focus remained on the betrayal of the defenceless in one’s power.

Justice in the Bibliotheke, then, is unfailingly a positive quality, even if the word is used in an unreflective manner. Laws and lawgiving seem to have held special interest for Diodorus, but again we see no reflection on the nature of good laws or the correct balance between punitive laws and the exercise of that all-important virtue epieikeia. Apart from the difference in the use of dikaios and its cognates between the mythological and historical books, we see no difference in Diodorus’ approach to justice between different parts of the Bibliotheke: the concept is important throughout, and the adjective and adverb are used to designate characters and actions in every book.

Minor Virtues: Moderation, Education and All the Others
Piety, mildness/kindness, courage and justice are the virtues that receive the most attention in the moral didacticism of the Bibliotheke. Beyond these, a plethora of other virtues and positive behaviours are presented positively at varying intervals.

The traditional virtue of moderation is worth spending a moment on. It is extolled explicitly in the context of the Delphic maxims (9.10) and the teachings of Pythagoras (10.3.1–3) and is often what tyrannical rulers are lacking (12.24–5, 20.104.3–4). It is also a positive characteristic of good characters such as Scipio the Younger (27.1). In the mythological sections, much like δικαιοσύνη (‘justice’), σωφροσύνη (‘moderation/temperance’) seems to be shorthand for goodness, particularly in women and young men.108 That it does not always mean simply ‘chastity’ is proved by 3.60.5, where the daughters of Atlas are said to excel in moderation (σώφρονας διαφερόντως) almost in the same breath as we are told that they slept with ‘the most renowned heroes and gods’ (3.60.4). The nature of the myths told means that Diodorus must necessarily employ different standards for the sexual moderation of male characters in this part of the work and in the historical parts: Zeüs’ and Heracles’ habit of impregnating every mortal princess they come across is tacitly accepted while historical rulers are castigated for indulging their lust (e.g. 20.104.3–4, 26.15). Presumably Zeüs’ and Heracles’ efforts to populate the world with extraordinary descend-ants are to be considered among their benefactions,109 which cannot be said for the sexual transgressions of historical tyrants.

Like moderation, most of the other virtues of the Bibliotheke are tradi-

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108 Titaea 3.57.2, Basileia 3.57.3, Cybele 3.58.2, Marsyas 3.58.3, Athena 3.70.3, Alcmene 4.9.3, the Atlantides 4.27.2, Medea at the beginning of her marriage 4.54.2, Hippolytus 4.62.4.

109 This seems to be implied by 4.14.4.
tional and expected: gratitude (20.93), dignity (4.13.3, 9.36.4, 17.118.3) and – expected from our reading of Polybius – intelligence (4.13.1–2, 5.31.5). Other virtues propounded by the Bibliotheke are more surprising: friendship (e.g. 10.8, 16.50.5–8), for instance, is an important virtue in Xenophon, but is largely absent from the other historiographers under consideration, and education (παιδεία) is not extolled by any of the earlier extant historiographers, while it is often mentioned as a quality of good characters of the Bibliotheke along with key virtues such as justice or courage. In the mythological books, it is a repeated trait of Orpheus (3.65.6 and 4.25.2–3) and the Muses (4.4.3, 4.5.4, 4.7.3–4) as well as the guardian of Dionysus (3.70.1). In the ethnographic sections, Diodorus repeatedly comments on the level and manner of education of various classes of Egyptians and other peoples (e.g. 1.73.2, 1.92.5), and he mentions paideia as a trait of both Iambulus (2.54.2) and a nameless Indian king (2.60.3) who receives him. In the fragmentary books of early Greek history, education, and not just wisdom, is mentioned as a virtue of the Seven Sages collectively (1.96.1) and individually of Solon (3, 9.1.1 and 3) and Pythagoras (10.3.1), and the Delphic maxim ‘know thyself’ is interpreted at length as an exhortation to get educated (9.10). The description of Pythagorean asceticism offered in 10.7 quickly slips into a digressive diatribe against the ‘youth of today’, who cannot be bothered with either moderation or education (10.7.3).

In the later historical books, paideia is mentioned as a positive characteristic of all of Greece in the glorious years between the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars (12.1.4); Athenian paideia is part of the Syracusan Nicolaus’ argument for sparing the Athenians captured at the end of the failed Sicilian Expedition (13.27.1), and in the end only the best-educated Athenians are rescued from the Syracusan quarries (13.33.1). Paideia – rather than dikaiosyne, as might have been expected – is mentioned as the virtue of both Charondas and Zaleucus that makes their fellow-citizens choose them as lawgivers (12.11.3 and 12.20.1), and the summary of the laws of Charondas is interrupted by a passionate encomium of paideia in the sense of reading and writing (12.13.1–3), ending with the lofty gnome: ‘therefore, although admittedly nature is the cause of life, the cause of living well is the education that arises from reading and writing’ (διὸ καὶ τοῦ μὲν ζῆν τὴν φύσιν αἰτίαν ὑποληπτέον, τοῦ δὲ καλῶς ζῆν τὴν ἐκ τῶν γραμμάτων συγκειμένην παιδείαν). As a virtue, paideia is ascribed to various characters, most memorably Epaminondas, whose paideia is the reason why he ignores bad omens and marches out confidently to win the Battle of Leuctra (15.52.7).\(^{110}\)

\(^{110}\) Paideia is also ascribed to Dion (16.20.2), Cephalus of Corinth (16.82.7), Tiberius Gracchus (34/35.5.1), Micipsa, son of Massinissa of Numidia (34/35.35), and a Roman of the dubious name of Lucius Asyllius or Syllius (37.8.2).
Beside these specific virtues, some characters in the Bibliothèque are endowed with a mysterious bundle of qualities called ‘all the other virtues’ or ‘every other virtue’ (αἱ άλλαι πάσαι άρεταί or πάσα άρετή). On the one hand, this seems to signal a certain laziness on the part of Diodorus, who could not always be bothered to enumerate the good qualities of the characters with whom he wanted his readers to sympathise. This laziness makes it a lot harder to gain any real sense of his characters than of the carefully sketched personalities of Polybius’ Histories. On the other hand, the use of such an expression shows that the author imagines a fairly fixed set of virtues, readily recallable to his readers, to which he can safely refer in shorthand without running the risk of being misunderstood, and this says something interesting about moral didacticism in Greek historiography in the first century BC: it points both to a high degree of similarity in the virtues extolled by the genre, and to a large area of overlap with popular morality. The historiographers could expect their readers to agree with what they described as virtuous and vile, freeing them from any obligation to discuss the complexity of moral goodness or any of the qualities that constitute it.

The Vices

The moral-didactic programme of Diodorus features not only virtues and behaviours to emulate, but also, and often more memorably, vices and behaviours to avoid. The ones that receive the most space are cruelty, greed and luxurious living. These vices are often combined, for example, in the description of the behaviour of tyrants or the sacking of cities. For the sake of clarity, however, we shall examine each one in turn.

Cruelty

In contrast with Polybius, Diodorus has a lot of space for cruelty. Cruelty (ὠμότης) and brutality (βιαιότης) are the hallmarks of a tyrant, from Astyages the Mede in book 9 over the early Sicilian tyrants Hiero and Thrasydaeus (11.53 and 67) and the Athenian Thirty (14.4), to Agathocles of Syracuse (see below), Charops of Epirus (31.31) and Diegylis of Thrace (33.14). For most of Diodorus’ tyrants, their brutality leads to hatred

111 1.92.5, 2.33.1, 3.61.5, 4.54.2, 5.71.1 Zeus, 5.83.4 Tennes, 9.11.2 Pittacus, 9.22.1 Cyrus the Elder, 10.9.9, 10.12.2, 11.46.4, 13.102.1 Diomedon, 16.65.2 Timoleon, and 31.26 Scipio the Younger.

among their subjects, and most often to revolt and loss of power,\textsuperscript{113} teaching the moral lesson that wickedness does not pay, even on a grand scale.

In fact, Diodorus shows a fascination with cruelty. While in the case of some tyrants it is enough for him just to mention the vice, in many cases he dwells on it and describes with scandalised relish the exotic punishments and tortures devised by his villains. We have seen an example above in Dionysius’ torture of Phyton of Rhegium (14.112); other examples include the story of Phalaris and the brazen bull (9.19), Diegylis’ habit of chopping off and swapping around the limbs of his still living victims (33.14), and the many atrocities of Agathocles (19.1.6–8, 19.107, 20.15.4–6, 20.54, 20.71–2). There is usually no explicit moralising connected with these pathetic scenes of suffering; the scandalised descriptions are left to speak for themselves. Such vivid depictions of atrocities may seem to us to be no more than tabloid sensationalism, and this is almost certainly the kind of writing on which Polybius heaps scorn in his criticism of Phylarchus (Polyb. 2.56–8); but, tasteless as it may seem to us and to some ancient readers, it probably found a dedicated readership, and – in contrast with viewers of twenty-first-century torture horror – the reader is never left in any doubt that the cruelty is despicable and an example to be avoided, not followed.

Graphic descriptions of atrocities occur in the context not only of the transgressions of tyrants, but also of soldiers sacking a city.\textsuperscript{114} Typical features include the crying and screaming of the victims (13.57.1, 13.89.1) and the shouting or egging each other on of the conquerors (13.57.1, 17.13.1, 19.6.5), the desperate courage of the citizens’ last stand (13.57.2, 17.13.2–3, 19.6.6), the greed of the invading soldiers and their brutality in getting their booty (13.57.2, 17.70.4, 19.7.3), the indiscriminate slaughter (13.57.3, 13.90.1, 17.13.6, 17.702, 19.6.6–7.2), the disregard for the sanctity of temples (13.57.4–5, 13.90.3–4, 17.13.6, 19.7.3–4), children and women being dragged away as slaves (17.13.3, 17.35.7, 17.70.6), the pity felt by some onlookers, imagined or real, for the victims (13.58.1, 17.36.1–2, 19.7.4), the changed fortune of the victims, particularly the women (15.58.1–2, 13.89.1–3, 17.35.4–7, 17.70.3 and 6), allusions to the sexual abuse of captive women and girls (13.58.2, 17.35.7, 19.8.3–5), the richness of the spoils (13.90.3–4, 17.35.2–4, 17.70.2–3) and the number of the dead and captive (13.57.6, 17.14.1, 19.8.1–2). As with the detailed descriptions of torture, these vivid

\textsuperscript{113} Astyages 9.23, Hipparchus and Hippias 10.17, Thrasydaeus 11.53, Thrasybulus 11.67, the Thirty 14.4.3, Zilmius 34/35.12.

\textsuperscript{114} Selinus by the Carthaginians 13.57–8, Thebes by Alexander the Great 17.13, the Persian camp at Issus by the soldiers of Alexander the Great 17.35–6, Persepolis by the soldiers of Alexander the Great 17.70. Very similar are 13.89–90, where the Acragantines leave their city before it is sacked by the Carthaginians, and 19.6.5–8.6, where Agathocles’ party takes power in Syracuse.
narratives of the destruction of cities and enslavement of citizens may seem tasteless (and 19.8.4 shows that Diodorus was aware that some readers might think so), but – apart from probably giving a fair picture of what the sacking of a city was really like – they appeal to the pity and sympathy of the reader and encourage condemnation of the brutal acts perpetrated by the conquerors. It is more than just tear-jerking; it is moralising through pathos.

Narratorial condemnation of atrocities does not always take such a spectacular form. Sometimes the use of the adjectives ὠμός (cruel) and βίαιος (brutal) or their cognates is enough to let a reader know that a character or action is a negative paradeigma. Thus Cleon is called ‘ὁμός καὶ βίαιος’ when pushing for the massacre of the Mytilenians (12.55); the Chalcedonians and Byzantines are said to show ὠμότης in their invasion of Bithynia (12.82.2); the Spartans demonstrate ὠμότης in demanding the handing over of all Athenian exiles to the Thirty (14.6.2); and killing child hostages in an armed conflict is termed an ‘action of outstanding cruelty’ (πρᾶξιν ὠμότητι διαφερόσαν: 37.19.5). In an instance of moralising by means of correlation between action and result, the brutality of the slave masters is shown to be a root cause for the Sicilian Slave War in the long and detailed narrative of this revolt (34/35.2).

The Diodoran narrator often seems shocked by the cruelty of the characters in his history; in this he is very different from Polybius’ narratorial persona, who can moralise in a passionate voice when he wants to, but who much more often comes across as a wry man of the world who has seen it all and can no longer be shocked. This may sometimes give the Bibliotheke a tabloid feel, but it also brings historical human suffering to life and reminds its readers to take pity on sufferers in a way that Polybius’ Histories never does.

A striking contrast is presented by the mythological books of the Bibliotheke. Here moralising on cruelty is largely absent. Bloody deeds abound in the mythologies of Greece and Egypt, but they rarely receive narratorial comments. It is particularly noteworthy that Dionysus’ torturing of those who refuse to follow him is described in some detail, but without any hint that the reader is supposed to disapprove. Perhaps this savage side of the god was considered such an ingrained part of his divine nature that criticism was unthinkable for the pious Diodorus. By contrast, Apollo’s flaying alive of Marsyas is called ‘excessive revenge’ (τιμωρίαν ὑπὲρ τὴν ἄξιον: 5.74.3), and we are told that Apollo himself regretted it and destroyed his lyre in penitence (3.59.5 and 5.74.3). Among mortals, only the Egyptian king Amasis (in an intriguing departure from the Herodotean

115 Other examples: 12.82.2, 19.11.7–9, 26.14, 36.11.
narrative of this king) and the members of the mythical family group of
Aeetes (Perses, Hecate and Circe) are called cruel (βιαιότερον: 1.60.1;
various forms of ὀμός: 4.45–47), and their cruelty leads to their downfall.
The only one to receive a scandalised narratorial outburst is Medea when
she murders her children (4.54.7). In other words, as we saw with the virtue
of moderation, there seem to be different standards of morality between
the mythological and historical books: apparently, cruelty is only really
worth moralising on in historical time, and most atrocities committed in
mythology are considered either too distant in time, or legitimate because
they were committed by gods.

Only very occasionally does the narrator of the Bibliothēke express
his satisfaction with someone suffering, and almost exclusively when it
can be presented as divine punishment for previous transgressions such as
impiety or cruelty (e.g. 16.56.4, 20.65.2). Satisfaction with cruelty inflicted
as human vengeance only occurs when the revenge is taken by the Sicilian
Greeks on their Carthaginian neighbours (14.46 and 53). The Diodoran
narrator does not discuss these actions, and his moral judgement seems
unreflective. He does not, like the Polybian narrator (at least in the
extant parts of the Bibliothēke), offer any thoughts on situations where
brutality can be condoned for reasons of war or necessity. The closest he
gets to such a discussion is the pair of speeches given at Syracuse after the
failed Sicilian Expedition, debating what to do with the captured Athenians
(13.20–32). In this instance, the scene-setting for the debate, during which
the Syracusan people behave like a mob (θορυβοῦντος) and the statesman
Hermocrates echoes narratorial moralising by saying that ‘more noble than
victory is bearing victory with moderation’ (κάλλιόν ἐστι τοῦ νικᾶν τὸ τὴν
νίκην ἐνεγκεῖν ἀνθρωπίνως: 13.19.5), shows that the reader is supposed to
side with mildness. The passage may well have been mirrored by a debate
in the Roman Senate over what to do with Carthage after the end of the
Second Punic War in book 27 (27.13–18), which is now fragmentary. This
debate, in contrast with the Syracusan one, must have ended with a deci-
sion for mildness, and it is a shame that its context is lost so we cannot see
how Diodorus signalled his agreement. Overall, by delegating the power of
just vengeance in his narratorial world to the gods, Diodorus largely avoids
the didactic inconsistency which we saw in Polybius’ Histories between
the moral lesson that good fortune must not be abused and the idea that
revenge can be just.

116 Ambaglio (1995: 113) seems right to say that the moralising here ‘disguises and
justifies’ the cruelty of the Sicilians.

117 The context of the fragments is recoverable because of Appian’s narrative of the same
debate (Pun. 57–61). For a comparison of these two speeches with the ones in the Syracusan
Greed
If Diodorus differs from Polybius in his emphasis on cruelty as a vice, he is much more in tune with him on the topic of another favourite vice, namely greed. For most Diodoran tyrants, it is greed (φιλαργυρία or πλεονεξία) that leads to (some of) their acts of cruelty: they want the money of the wealthy citizens and will happily use murder and torture to get them.¹¹⁸ It is also greed that leads to some of the worst atrocities committed during the sacking of cities.¹¹⁹ Likewise, the greed of the Carthaginians is responsible for the Iberian silver mines and the hardship suffered there, described with incredulous wonder by the Diodoran narrator (5.38.2), and greed is also the driving force behind the cruel treatment of Sicilian slaves by their masters which leads to the Sicilian Slave War (34/35.2.25–6 and 34–40). This causal connection between greed and cruelty is ubiquitous in the historical books of the Bibliotheca. Greed also leads to a whole host of other types of evil-doing – as the narrator says in 21.1.4a, it is the ‘very metropolis of many evils’. It is an almost universal flaw, which mars the characters of even otherwise good men such as Pausanias, victor at Plataea (II.23.3, II.46–47), and the Roman Marius in his old age, although his youth had been characterised by an impressive lack of greed (37.29). The greed of others is therefore naturally a favourite tool for those who want to buy loyalty and support: thus the Phocians gain supporters in the early stages of the Sacred War by distributing the wealth of Delphi (16.30.2, 33.3, 37.4), the unlikeable Perdikkas in contrast with the universally liked Ptolemy secures loyalty by gifts (18.33.3–5), and Philip II wins over cities with bribes rather than weapons (16.54.2–4) in acts of ‘evil socialising’ (πονηραῖς ὁμιλίαις: 16.54.4).¹²⁰

In typical Diodoran fashion, greed also often leads to disaster for the greedy. Pausanias and the equally greedy Gylippus are both condemned by their fellow-Spartans (II.23.3, II.46–7, 13.106.10), the Phocian Onomarchus is executed by Philip II (16.35.6), and Marius’ greed spells disaster not just for himself but for Rome with him (37.29). Similarly, it is greed that brings Perseus down (30.19, 30.21, 31.14), and the Delphic

¹¹⁸ Lucius Tarquinius 10.22, Hiero 11.67, the Thirty 14.2.1, 14.5–7, Agathocles 20.4.8, 20.72, Apollodorus 22.5.2, Diegylis 33.14. For a discussion of the role played by the attitude to money in Diodoran leaders see Bissa (2010).
¹¹⁹ 13.57.2, 17.70.4, 19.7.3.
¹²⁰ Nonetheless, in the next chapter the king’s generosity during symposia held after the capture of Olynthus, which is said to win him numerous supporters, is twice termed ‘benefactions’ (16.53.4) with no hint that the narrator disapproves. This apparent contradiction is symptomatic of Diodorus’ inconsistent attitude to Philip, who is in some passages portrayed as a divinely supported saviour of Delphi and Greece and in others as a tyrant who exerts a corrupting influence on the Greeks. The usual explanation that he inexpertly combined two different sources may well be true. See McQueen (1995: 8–14).
Oracle predicts to Lycurgus that greed will destroy Sparta in the end (7.12.5). Greed, in short, is a particularly bad vice in the Bibliotheca and only attaches to despicable characters.

Correspondingly, lack of greed (ἀφιλαργυρία) is, as in Polybius, the mark of a noble man. This characterises the Spartan Callicratidas, who in contrast with his fellow-citizens Pausanias and Gylippus refuses bribes (13.76.2), and it is the defining characteristic of the two Roman heroes whom Diodorus has taken over from Polybius, Aemilius Paullus (31.26.1–2) and Scipio the Younger (31.27). Actual generosity, rather than simply lack of greed, plays a slightly larger part in the Bibliotheca than in Polybius’ Histories. It is displayed not only by Scipio the Younger (31.27), but also, conspicuously and with explicit narratorial approval, by the Sages Pittacus (9.12) and Bias (9.13) as well as by the famed Acragantine Tellias (13.83).

The despicability and destructive force of greed are a theme found in all parts of the historical books of the Bibliotheca. In the mythological books, however, neither greed nor generosity plays any significant part. The only god or hero said to possess the vice is Cronus, father of Zeus (3.61.1). This absence perhaps reflects the fact that the myths take place in a heroic world where motivations are rarely explored, and where typical benefactions consist in inventing agriculture and founding civilisations rather than handing out monetary gifts.

Luxury/Degeneration

The third cardinal vice of Diodoran villains is an extravagant and luxurious lifestyle, sometimes described in detail, sometimes called simply πολυτέλεια or τρυφή. This is characteristic of many of the tyrants of the Bibliotheca. Likewise, luxurious living is coupled with cruelty and greed in the slave masters who cause the Sicilian Slave Revolt (34–5.2.26, 34.34). Correspondingly, good rulers and leaders can be praised for not giving in to luxury (33.18, 38/39.10).

Despicable though it is, such a lifestyle is also a source of fascination to the narrator of the Bibliotheca. Often he combines breathless description of the extravagances with evaluative vocabulary to show that such behaviour should only be admired at a distance, but must be considered both undignified and un-Greek. This mixture of fascination and condemnation can be seen, for example, in a passage describing Alexander the Great’s appropriation of Persian customs (17.77.4–7). The passage begins

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121 See also 23.19, 28.4.1.
122 E.g. the ignoble, miserly king Remphis 1.62.5–6, Cronus father of Zeus 3.61.1, Italian merchants corrupting the Gauls with wine 5.26.3, greedy and treacherous Roman tribunes 23.19, the evil king Artaxias of Armenia 31.22, a false friend of Gracchus 34/35.9.
with the statement that Alexander now believed that he had secured his power over the Persian empire, and so began to ‘emulate Persian luxury and the extravagance of the Asian kings’ (ζηλοῦν τὴν Περσικὴν τρυφὴν καὶ τὴν πολυτέλειαν τῶν Ἀσιανῶν βασιλέων). A description of this luxury and extravagance follows, focusing on clothing and the institution of a harem of 365 women, including the piquant detail that they would parade around the king’s bed every night so that he could decide whom to sleep with on each occasion. The narrator is clearly enjoying providing these details, and the reader is no doubt expected to enjoy them too. Suddenly, however, the tone changes. Following immediately on the information about the nightly beauty pageant comes this surprising statement: ‘And so Alexander followed these customs rarely and for the most part kept to his previous lifestyle, afraid to offend the Macedonians’ (τούτοις μὲν οὖν τοῖς ἐθισμοῖς Ἀλέξανδρος σπανίως ἐχρῆτο, τοις δὲ προϋπάρχουσι κατὰ τὸ πλεῖστον ἐνδιέτριβε, φοβούμενος τὸ προσκόπτειν τοῖς Μακεδόσιν: 17.77.7). This patently contradicts the introductory statement that Alexander began to emulate the luxurious lifestyle of the Persians and the Asian kings, and it also raises the question why the narrator would spend time on describing costumes and customs which Alexander only rarely used. In fact, it smells of backtracking. Alexander the Great is an overwhelmingly positive character in the Bibliothèke, and so the narrator cannot let the reader imagine him descending into a luxury-loving, Eastern way of life, enjoyable though the description of such a lifestyle may be.

Eastern luxury is an important part of such barbarian rulers as Semiramis (2.13.3–4) – mentioned in the same breath as the juicy and un-Greek detail that she refused lawful marriage and instead slept with the most handsome of her soldiers and then killed them – her effeminate son Ninyas (2.21) and, in historical times, the ever-hated satrap Tissaphernes (14.80.2). It is also a feature of the life of the young Oriental Dionysus, before he forms his band of women into an army and goes on campaign (almost) like a proper Greek (3.64.6–7). The quintessential undignified, luxury-loving king is Sardanapallus of Assyria, who receives a chapter-long moralising introduction ending with the damning statement: ‘Being a man of this character, he not only ended his own life ignominiously, but also completely destroyed the Assyrian empire, which had been longer-lived than any other in human memory’ (2.23). The causal connection is explained in the next chapter where Sardanapallus’ despicable lifestyle leads his subjects to revolt. It does not matter for Diodorus’ moralising stance that Sardanapallus actu-
ally puts up a staunch and sensible defence and holds out for a long time; the unmanly luxuriousness of his way of life makes him a negative <em>paradigma</em> of the fact that luxury (1) is undignified and un-Greek, (2) leads to weakness of morals and body, and (3) ultimately leads to disaster.

This three-pronged message is borne out by a number of passages in the <em>Bibliotheke</em>. Some narrative passages in the ethnographic sections express wonder at peoples who derive extraordinary strength and toughness (the Ligurians, 4.20 and 5.39) or a simple nobility (the Britons, 5.21.6 and 5.40) from a freedom from luxury; others draw explicit connections between increased wealth and luxury on the one hand and degeneration and loss of strength and power on the other (the Tyrrhenians, 5.40.4–5; the Spartans, 7.12.8). In the historical books, an evaluative digression passes scathing judgement on Pausanias for turning traitor to his country out of ‘love for Persian wealth and luxury’ (<em>ἀγαπήσας τῶν Περσῶν τὸν πλοῦτον καὶ τὴν τρυφήν</em>) and ‘imitating Persian luxury and lack of self-discipline’ (<em>τὴν δὲ τῶν Περσῶν ἀκολασίαν καὶ τρυφήν ἐμιμήσατο: 11.46.3</em>). In the second half of the digression, the reader is assured that the Spartan brought about both his own destruction and his city’s loss of sea-power by his defection to barbarian luxury (11.46.4–5). The same causal connection between a descent into luxury and loss of power – often by way of degenerate morals – is brought out by implicitly moralising narrative passages throughout the <em>Bibliotheke</em>. Following the same logic, the laws of Zaleucus, which are repeatedly praised by the narrator, all rest on the assumption that there is a connection between luxury and lax morals, and that both need to be guarded against (12.20–1). In the detailed narratives of the sacking of cities, discussed above, the luxury of the city and its inhabitants is a <em>topos</em> (13.58.1, 13.89.3, 17.35.1–5), which both enhances the pathos of their suffering and functions as an explanation for why the city was worth sacking in the first place.

An evaluative digression sparked by a description of Pythagorean doctrine deals with the timeless theme of the decadence of contemporary youth (10.7.2–3). In the late historical books, presumably based on Posidonius, the extravagant lifestyles and moral decadence of Rome’s youth seems to have been a major theme (37.2.2–3, 37.3). The fragmentary state of these books unfortunately makes it impossible to see how Diodorus used this <em>topos</em>, that is, whether it was, as in Polybius, simply a backdrop against which to allow a favoured protagonist to shine so much the brighter, or whether it was developed into a moral-didactic theme in its own right.

125 19.71.1–5, 26.11, 29.2, 30.17, 32.19, 37.2.2–3. Sacks (1990: 46–52) argues that Diodorus’ ‘model of empire’ shows states losing hegemonic power because of harsh treatment of their subjects rather than because of luxury and decadence. It is certainly true that ἐπιείκεια carries more explanatory force than τρυφή in the <em>Bibliotheke</em>, but both have a place.
That extravagant luxury is nevertheless considered an entertaining subject is clear from such passages as 8.18–19, which describes the legendary luxury of the Sybarites and reports humorous Sybarite sayings supporting this stereotype (a favourite ancient joke topic, to judge from Ath. *Deipnosophistae* 12); 17.108.4–6, which gives scandalised details of the immorally luxurious lifestyle of Alexander the Great’s corrupt treasurer Harpalus; and the lengthy, overawed *ekphrasis* on the wealth of Tellias and other Acragantines at 13.82–4, which functions as an ominous fore-shadow of the imminent destruction of the city by the Carthaginians (13.86 and 89–90).

The moral theme of the despicability and dangers of a life in luxury is present throughout the *Bibliotheke*, in the mythological, historical and ethnographical books. Detailed descriptions of luxury and decadence, however, are only present in certain parts of the work, namely book 8, whose source is uncertain, and in the parts most probably based on Timaeus, Clitarchus and Posidonius.

**CONCLUSION**

On a reading from cover to cover, the extant parts of the *Bibliotheke* teach a simple moral lesson: good men are pious, mild towards those in their power, courageous and just, and know how to stay humble in good fortune; villains are cruel, impious, greedy and often addicted to a life in luxury. Moreover, both heroes and villains generally get what they deserve in the end. Teaching this lesson was a main purpose of the *Bibliotheke* and is stated as such in its preface, where it is closely connected with the project of writing universal history: only a universal history can offer the reader the comprehensive overview that leads to a true picture of how the world works, in moral terms or otherwise. And for Diodorus, only moral causation, driven by divine justice, can make sense of this world. In this sense, moral didacticism is certainly Diodorus’ ‘philosophy of history’.126

However, just as the narrative style and moralising techniques vary between different parts of the *Bibliotheke*, so does the intensity of the moralising, and different parts of the lesson are dominant in different parts of the work. This unevenness is most easily explained by the theory that Diodorus took over most of his moralising from his sources, and that, although he sometimes changed the tone and adapted the message to suit his own view of history, he did not usually compose moralising passages from scratch. This tells us something about Diodorus, namely that although moral didacticism was apparently important to him – to

judge from his programmatic statements and the large amount of strong, explicit moralising in his work – he was too insecure, absent-minded, pressed for time or lazy to compose moralising from scratch. More interestingly, however, it tells us something about the historiographical tradition in which he was working: it seems that in the first century BC moral didacticism was an ingrained part of the genre of historiography. Although Diodorus’ sources went about it in different ways and to differing degrees, they all engaged in it.

And we may be able to go further. The most explicit and pervasive moralising of the *Bibliothèke* is found in the parts of the work that are most probably based on Polybius, Timaeus of Tauromenium (the Sicilian narrative of books 13–14 and 19–21) and Posidonius of Apamea (books 32.27–38). The moralising found in the parts assumed to be based on Ephorus of Cyme (i.e. the Greek narrative of books 12–16.14) and Hieronymus of Cardia (the narrative of the Successor Wars in books 18–20) is much more subtle and less world-defining (i.e. in these parts of the *Bibliothèke* it is less obvious that the good thrive and the bad suffer). We may hypothesise that this difference reflects a difference in the moralising of those works. Having made this observation, it is worth pointing out that, considering this dependence on sources, Diodorus’ moral messages are actually surprisingly consistent. We may unpick this discovery into three distinct statements:

1. The moralising techniques vary more between parts of the *Bibliothèke* than do the moral lessons.
2. The moral lessons may be unevenly represented, but they are not mutually contradictory.
3. Most moral lessons are present throughout the work, although each message is more dominant in some parts than in others.

Taken together, these observations point to two possible conclusions: either Diodorus tidied up contradictory moralising from his sources and moulded the passages into a coherent moral-didactic system, or the moral lessons in his sources were very similar to begin with; the variation was in the detail, which could be changed (as with the moralising on Regulus taken over from Polybius) or ignored, and sometimes in the moralising techniques. The latter theory is supported by the fact that Diodorus’ moral lessons are very similar to the moral lessons propounded by Polybius, although they are generally expressed less analytically. If Diodorus often did take over his moral lessons from his sources, the *Bibliothèke* shows that not just the phenomenon of moral didacticism but also a canon of moral lessons were an established part of the genre of historiography by the first century BC.
Building on this hypothesis, we shall end this chapter with a tentative overview of what moralising in Diodorus’ now lost sources may have looked like, on the basis of the moralising seen in different parts of the Bibliothèque. This will then be brought into the discussion of the preserved fragments of those sources in Chapters 3 and 7.

**Tentative Characterisation of Moralising in Some of Diodorus’ Sources**

**Ephorus of Cyme**, whose work Diodorus most probably used for the Greek narrative of books 11 or 12 to 16.14, seems to have moralised sparingly, by means of a restrained use of moralising phrasing, a few moralising digressions, and some moralising introductions, conclusions and asides. His moral lessons seem to have mainly concerned battlefield courage (by means of heroic battle narratives and digressions such as the one on the Spartans at Thermopylae), justice and the positive effect of mildness/kindness.

By contrast, the Alexander historian, perhaps Clitarchus, whose work Diodorus used for book 17, seems to have moralised mainly by means of vignettes with speech and pathetic descriptions of atrocities and suffering, with a heavy-handed use of moralising phrasing in some passages, supported by internal evaluation and a few moralising introductions and conclusions. His favourite topics seem to have been divine support (for Alexander), the positive effect of mildness/kindness and the negative effect of luxury.

The source used for the Greek narrative of books 18–20, often assumed to be Hieronymus of Cardia, was perhaps the least moralising of Diodorus’ sources for the historical period. He seems to have employed evaluative phrasing sparingly along with internal evaluation, supplemented by a few moralising digressions and asides. He seems to have presented a world governed by random fortune rather than divine justice, and to have moralised on cruelty and on the positive effects of mildness/kindness.

**Timaeus of Tauromenium**, whose work Diodorus probably used for the Sicilian narrative of books 13–14 and 19–21, seems to have been the most flamboyantly moralising of Diodorus’ sources. He seems to have used the entire toolbox of moralising techniques in order to offer lessons on divine justice (including mirroring punishment), human inability to bear good fortune, piety, cruelty and the dangers of luxury. Interestingly, mildness/kindness does not seem to have played a big role in his work.

**Posidonius of Apamea**, on whose work Diodorus most probably based books 32.26–37 and perhaps some of 38–9 of the Bibliothèque, also seems to have had a strong moralising voice, although it is hard to tell from the fragmentary state of these last books of the Bibliothèque. He seems to have...
used plenty of evaluative phrasing, moral digressions, and moral introductions and conclusions in the service of lessons on divine justice, the positive effects of mildness/kindness, and the evils of greed, luxury and cruelty.

Finally, as a check on the trustworthiness of this reconstruction, it is worth comparing the picture we get of Polybius from books 27–32.26 of the Bibliotheca with what remains of his Histories. On the basis purely of the Bibliotheca we should say that Polybius used a variety of moralising techniques, principally evaluative phrasing, moral digressions, moral introductions and conclusions, and moralising vignettes. This is confirmed when we look at the Histories. However, when we turn to moral lessons, the picture is less tidy: to judge from the Bibliotheca, Polybius mainly moralised on the topics of divine justice, mildness/kindness, human inability to handle good fortune, and the dangers of greed. In fact, only the latter two lessons play a big part in the Histories. As for the former two, mildness is certainly a virtue, but is only part of what makes a good ruler. And it is true that historical characters in the Histories often get what they deserve, but this is by no means as universal as in the Bibliotheca, and it is always due to human causes rather than divine intervention. Overall, the picture we get of moralising in the Histories through the Bibliotheca is reasonably accurate, but skewed in at least one important way. This is worth remembering when we try to imagine the moralising of Diodorus’ lost sources on the basis of his use of them.

**Characteristics of Diodorus’ Moral Didacticism:**

*Mildness and Divine Justice*

In the overview of the moral lessons of parts of Diodorus’ work offered above, one thing is striking: the message that mildness and kindness lead to good results is ubiquitous. This may mean that this was a lesson pro pounded across the board by Diodorus’ various sources; but considering the more limited role that this theme plays in Polybius’ Histories, it is perhaps more likely that Diodorus has emphasised what was there already and drawn it into a unifying theme. The same may well be true for the lesson about divine justice, which is also near-ubiquitous in the Bibliotheca and which, revealingly, plays a large part in the books based on Polybius, from whose work we have seen that such a message is absent. These moral messages, then, are distinctive of Diodorus’ didactic programme.