Un monde partagé : la Sicile du premier siècle av. J.-C. entre Diodore et Cicéron
édité par Stefania De Vido et Cécile Durvye

Moralising and Immersive Big Man History
Diodorus' Representation of Gelon, Dionysius I, and Agathocles

Lisa Irene Hau
The University of Glasgow, Scotland, UK

Abstract This article analyses Diodorus' accounts of the Sicilian tyrants Gelon, Dionysius I, and Agathocles, on a stylistic and thematic basis. It argues that the significant differences between the three narratives are due partly to Sicilian social memory, partly to the differences between the sources used by Diodorus, and it offers some thoughts on the lost works of Timaeus of Tauromenium and Duris of Samos. However, in their present form, all three narratives are Diodoran: he chose to take them over from his sources in differing levels of detail, he kept the themes he wanted to keep and probably left out others, and he may well have added his own evaluative phrases and historiographical or moral-didactic comments. His Sicilian narrative is dominated by 'big men' in a way that his narrative of mainland Greece is not (apart from the Alexander narrative in book 17), and all three narratives are designed to show the importance and interest of Sicily, for the double purpose of pleasurable reading and moral improvement.

Keywords Diodorus. Gelon. Dionysius I. Agathocles. Immersion. Narrative. Narratology. Duris of Samos. Timaeus of Tauromenium.

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The history of Sicily as told by Diodorus is big-man history, and he is our best source for the Sicilian tyrants of the Classical and Hellenistic period. In order to be able to use him as a source for these men and the events surrounding them, however, we need to understand his treatment of them better: what are his interests and preoccupations, how does he craft the tyrant narratives stylistically, and what overall purpose do they serve in his historiographical project?

This article hopes to go some way towards answering these questions by analysing his portrait of the three great Sicilian tyrants, Gelon, Dionysius I, and Agathocles. These three Sicilian tyrants dominate Diodorus' extant account of Sicily, and so they will function as case studies for how an analysis of Diodorus' narrative techniques can throw light on his thematic and historiographic preoccupations in his treatment of great men generally, and the great men of Sicily in particular.[1]

In what follows, each of the three narratives will be summarised briefly and analysed on both a thematic and stylistic level, the latter using narratological tools and terminology. The three narratives will then be compared, and some suggestions for the reasons for the differences between them will be ventured, including the consideration that they may depend on different sources. Finally, we shall consider what this can tell us about Diodorus' attitude to the big men of Sicily and their role in the *Bibliotheke* overall.

1 The Gelon Narrative (Diod. Sic. 11.21-26)

1.1 Summary of the Gelon Narrative

Book 10 of Diodorus' *Bibliotheke* only survives in a fragmentary condition. The first two mentions of Gelon come in two short fragments. In the first, John Tzetzes gives Diodorus as the source for two stories about Gelon and animals:[2] first a story of how his dog barked to wake him from a nightmare, and secondly a, more supernatural, account

1 Other great Sicilians treated in the extant text of Diodorus: Hermocrates (13.1-75 intermittently), Dionysius the Younger (15.74; 16.5-20; 16.66-70), Dion (16.6-20; 16.31), Timoleon (16.65-73; 16.77-83; 16.90). Timoleon is the only one of these who receives enough attention from Diodorus to enable his narrative to be used as a case study, but his narrative is still relative short compared with those of the three tyrants discussed in this paper, and since he was not himself a tyrant, it does not provide a good comparison with them.

2 This passage is not so much a fragment as a source reference. Tzetzes wrote poetry in the 12th century AD and used many historical works as sources, but did not pretend to quote or even paraphrase them. See Cohen-Skalli 2015, LXI-LXII, and Yarrow 2018.

of how Gelon as a child was saved from an earthquake by a wolf.[3] This shows that Diodorus' original text covered Gelon's childhood, and that this narrative contained marvellous events that marked out Gelon as an extraordinary individual. The second fragment relating to Gelon comes from the *Excerpta Constantiniana* and states briefly that a delegation from mainland Greece came to Gelon at the time of the Persian invasion of 481 and asked him to send help, but that it foundered because he demanded overall command of the Greek navy in return and the Greeks refused.[4]

The preserved continuous narrative of Gelon runs over seven chapters, from 11.21 to 11.26. It begins with Gelon's response to the Carthaginian invasion of 480 BC and continues to tell the story of his decisive victory over the Carthaginians by a stratagem at the Battle of Himera the same year. The narrative ends with the tyrant consolidating his position in Syracuse, putting the prisoners of war to work on public building projects, and being cheered by the populace. In the course of this narrative, two digressions break the flow of the story. The first one comes just after Gelon's victory in the battle and is an extended comparison of the achievements of the mainland Greeks against the Persians with the achievements of Gelon and the Sicilian Greeks against the Carthaginians. It concludes that the achievement of Gelon is the greater (11.23.1-24.1). The second digression describes the lavish building projects which Gelon initiates in Acragas after his victory, using the Carthaginian prisoners as his work force (11.24).

1.2 Thematic Analysis of the Gelon Narrative

The thematic focus throughout this narrative is Gelon's excellence, which is commented on at every juncture and is marked out as almost superhuman. The supernatural events of his childhood show that he is meant for greatness, and in the rest of the narrative his intelligence and foresight are constantly highlighted, making it clear that it is his intellectual and strategic superiority that vanquishes the Carthaginians. At the outset, his military speed, an essential part of generalship, is underlined: he "set out from Syracuse with all speed" (κατὰ σπουδήν, 11.20), "[h]e covered the distance swiftly" (ταχέως, 11.20); and its effect on the Himerans is noted as it inspires them with

3 Tzetzes *Hist.* 4.266-78 = Diod. Sic. 10.61. The numbering of the Diodorus fragments used here is that established by the Belles Lettres edition (CUF).

4 This can more properly be called a fragment, as the Constantinian excerptors tended to quote or paraphrase the original, but it may well be a slightly abbreviated version of what Diodorus said. See Cohen-Skalli 2015, XXXVI-XLVII, especially XLV-XLVII, Rafiyenko 2017, and Németh 2018.

boldness. Then we hear that his unexpected arrival takes the enemy by surprise as their troops are scattered about the countryside foraging without paying any attention to a possible threat (11.21.2). This is a *topos* in Greek historiography, and it is always used to juxtapose the bad general, who lets his men forage carelessly, with the good general, whose disciplined troops surprise the careless foragers.[5] In this passage, Gelon's sudden appearance results in "more than 10,000" prisoners taken by the Greeks, and we are told that Gelon was "accorded great approbation" (μεγαλὴς ἀποδοχής) by the Himerans. Such an evaluation by internal audience typically functions as guidance for how the reader should respond to events and characters in the narrative. Then, in 11.21.4, we launch into the narrative of the stratagem Gelon will use to defeat the Carthaginians; the focus is again Gelon's ability as general, and the whole section is introduced by references to his "skill as a general and intelligence" (στρατηγίᾳ καὶ συνέσει) and his "ingenuity" (ἐπίνοιαν) (11.21.3).

After the victory, the narrator offers his own explicit evaluation, again foregrounding Gelon's strategic ability, and stressing the fame it gained him:

> Gelon, who had won a victory in a most remarkable battle (ἐπιφανεστάτῃ μάχῃ) and had gained his success primarily by reason of his own skill as a general (μάλιστα διὰ τῆς ἰδίας στρατηγίας), acquired a fame that was noised abroad (περιβόητον ἔσχε τὴν δόξαν), not only among the Siceliotes, but among all other men as well; for memory recalls no man before him who had used a stratagem like this, nor one who had slain more barbarians in one engagement or had taken so great a multitude of prisoners.[6]

After his victory, Gelon's moral superiority is demonstrated as he rewards his men, dedicates spoils to the gods, rewards his allies, and sets the captives to work for the public good (11.25.1-2). He even receives ambassadors from the defeated side graciously, and they display their gratitude by agreeing to pay extra war damages (11.26.1-3).[7] He then appears before his people in common dress and unarmed, and they cheer him enthusiastically, demonstrating that he is not an oppressive dictator, but a benevolent and beloved

5 For this and other *topoi* in Greek historiography see Hau 2014.

6 Diod. Sic. 11.22.5 (transl. C.H. Oldfather).

7 On the *topos* of the victor who handles his victory well or poorly, particularly in terms of his treatment of the defeated, see Hau 2008. On the importance of this *topos* in Diodorus, see Hau 2016, 97-102.

monarch (11.26.6).[8] Finally, he builds temples to Demeter and Kore, and then he dies, "his life having been cut short by fate" (μεσολαβηθεὶς τὸν βίον ὑπὸ τῆς πεπρωμένης, 11.26.7).

It is clear from the narrative that the reader is meant to admire Gelon, both for his intelligence and his magnanimity, and that his subjects' adoration is the natural reward earned for these qualities. The comparisons with the Persian Wars show that we are supposed not just to admire Gelon's quality *tout court*, but to admire it especially in comparison with that of the mainland Greeks, whose achievement pales in comparison.

1.3 Stylistic Analysis of the Gelon Narrative

In terms of style, the Gelon narrative is mostly told in a fast, distant summary of events, which foregrounds Gelon's intellectual ability, as we have seen above, rather than details of events as they unfold. The pace of the narrative slows down when we approach the crucial point of the Battle of Himera and Gelon's stratagem. Here we get more details than before as we are told of Gelon's interception of a message to Hamilcar, which gives him the information he needs to carry out the stratagem (11.21.4). Then the pace slows down further when we reach the day of the battle (11.21.5): we hear in detail about Gelon's plan to send cavalry pretending to be Hamilcar's allies into the Carthaginian camp to kill the general and burn their ships; we hear how he sends these out, and how he readies his army. There is a distinct sense that time is slowing down as we approach the crucial moment. Then the narrative follows the cavalry on whom the stratagem hinges. The summary now moves fast to mirror the speed of events:

> Τῶν δ' ἱππέων ἅμα τῇ κατὰ τὸν ἥλιον ἀνατολῇ προσιππευσάντων τῇ ναυτικῇ τῶν Καρχηδονίων στρατοπεδείᾳ, καὶ προσδεχθέντων ὑπὸ τῶν φυλάκων ὡς συμμάχων, οὗτοι μὲν εὐθὺς προσδραμόντες τῷ Ἀμίλκᾳ περὶ τὴν θυσίαν γινομένῳ, τοῦτον μὲν ἀνεῖλον, τὰς δὲ ναῦς ἐνέπρησαν· ἔπειτα τῶν σκοπῶν ἀράντων τὸ σύσσημον, ὁ Γέλων πάσῃ τῇ δυνάμει συντεταγμένῃ προῆγεν ἐπὶ τὴν παρεμβολὴν τῶν Καρχηδονίων.
>
> At sunrise the cavalrymen rode up to the naval camp of the Carthaginians, and when the guards admitted them, thinking

8 Τοσοῦτον ἀπεῖχε τοῦ μὴ τυχεῖν τιμωρίας ὡς τύραννος, ὥστε μιᾷ φωνῇ πάντας ἀποκαλεῖν εὐεργέτην καὶ σωτῆρα καὶ βασιλέα ("so far was he from being a victim of vengeance as a tyrant that they united in acclaiming him with one voice Benefactor, Saviour, and King"; 11.26.6).

> them to be allies, they at once galloped to where Hamilcar was busied with the sacrifice, slew him, and then set fire to the ships; thereupon the scouts raised the signal and Gelon advanced with his entire army in battle order against the Carthaginian camp.[9]

It is no coincidence that this is the most exciting or, with a narratological expression, *immersive*, part of Diodorus' Gelon narrative. As immersion is a fruitful concept for analysing the difference between the three tyrant narratives, it will be useful to spend a moment here on outlining what it is and how it may be achieved.[10] Immersion is the feeling a reader experiences when he or she is caught up in a good story. Commonly the concept is applied to fictional stories, but it works equally well for historical narratives. Immersion is achieved by a variety of means, primary among them slow narration which approximates real-time, the use of verbs in the present or imperfect tense, visual and auditory details, focus on physical movement, and information about the characters' thoughts and emotions. It is sometimes useful, for analytical purposes, to distinguish between spatial immersion, which is the feeling of being present in the location of the story; temporal immersion, with is the feeling of living alongside the characters of the story, fearing and hoping for how it will turn out, and feeling suspense about the outcome; and emotional immersion, which is the feeling of being emotionally engaged in the fates of the characters.

In the quoted passage, the slow, almost real-time narration, the focus on swift movement, and the visual and aural details all help the reader become immersed in the text. They are stylistic details employed to highlight Gelon's greatest achievement and draw the reader in on an emotional as well as a spatial and temporal level. The narrative of the actual battle is dull in comparison:

> Συνάψαντες μάχην εὐρώστως ἠγωνίζοντο· ὁμοῦ δὲ ταῖς σάλπιγξιν ἐν ἀμφοτέροις τοῖς στρατοπέδοις ἐσήμαινον τὸ πολεμικόν, καὶ κραυγὴ τῶν δυνάμεων ἐναλλὰξ ἐγίνετο, φιλοτιμουμένων ἀμφοτέρων τῷ μεγέθει τῆς βοῆς ὑπερᾶραι τοὺς ἀντιτεταγμένους.
>
> As the lines closed they put up a vigorous fight; at the same time in both camps they sounded with the trumpets the signal for battle and a shout arose from the two armies one after the other, each eagerly striving to outdo their adversaries in the volume of their cheering.[11]

9 Diod. Sic. 11.22.1 (transl. C.H. Oldfather).

10 See Ryan 2001; Allan 2018; 2020; Grethlein, Huitink 2017; Huitink 2019; Hau 2020a.

11 Diod. Sic. 11.22.2 (transl. C.H. Oldfather).

This passage has details of sound (the trumpets), but it moves too fast and is seen from too far a distance to be immersive. It could be any battle narrated by Diodorus.[12] What distinguishes this battle from all the others is purely the stratagem which ends up deciding the battle. The effect of this stratagem is described in some detail:

> Πολλοῦ δὲ γενομένου φόνου, καὶ τῆς μάχης δεῦρο κἀκεῖσε ταλαντευομένης, ἄφνω τῆς κατὰ τὰς ναῦς φλογὸς ἀρθείσης εἰς ὕψος, καί τινων ἀπαγγειλάντων τὸν τοῦ στρατηγοῦ φόνον, οἱ μὲν Ἕλληνες ἐθάρρησαν, καὶ ταῖς φωναῖς καὶ ταῖς ἐλπίσι τῆς νίκης ἐπαρθέντες τοῖς φρονήμασιν ἐπέκειντο θρασύτερον τοῖς βαρβάροις, οἱ δὲ Καρχηδόνιοι καταπλαγέντες καὶ τὴν νίκην ἀπογνόντες πρὸς φυγὴν ἐτράπησαν.
>
> The slaughter was great, and the battle was swaying back and forth, when suddenly the flames from the ships began to rise on high and sundry persons reported that the general had been slain, then the Greeks were emboldened and with spirits elated at the rumours and by the hope of victory they pressed with greater boldness upon the barbarians, while the Carthaginians, dismayed and despairing of victory, turned in flight.[13]

At this point the attention turns back to Gelon. We hear how his order not to take prisoners results in great slaughter (11.22.4), and then we are offered the narrator's conclusion, quoted above, which tells us explicitly that we must admire Gelon, now and for ever, for his *strategia* and *synesis* in coming up with such a stratagem and defeating the Carthaginians (11.22.5).

Throughout this narrative, the narrator's presence has been clearly felt. There is no pretence that these events 'tell themselves'; they are obviously mediated through a narrator, who is keen to direct his reader's understanding of them.[14] This becomes even clearer in chapter 23, which offers the comparison between the achievements of Gelon against the Carthaginians and the mainland Greeks against the Persians and carries over into the first paragraph of chapter 24 with a comparison between the Battle of Himera and the Battle of Thermopylae, which Diodorus claims happened on the same day.

12 For battle narratives in Diodorus, see Williams 2018. For the typicality of battle scenes in Greek historiography more generally, see Lendon 2017a; 2017b.

13 Diod. Sic. 11.22.3 (transl. C.H. Oldfather).

14 Events are often said to 'tell themselves' in the narratives of the Classical historiographers Thucydides and Xenophon. This is, however, nonsensical, and against the basic premise of narratology: events cannot speak; they are always told by a narrator, who mediates between the events in the story and the narratee/intended reader. The kind of narrative where events seem to 'tell themselves' is narrated by a covert narrator and often has narrator focalisation (also sometimes known as zero-focalisation).

In 24.2, we are told that a few Carthaginians did manage to escape, but most of them drowned in a storm on the way back to Carthage. The narrative ends with the dramatic sentence: "Some few managed to save themselves in a small boat to Carthage and made clear to their fellow-citizens in a short statement that everyone who had crossed over to Sicily had been destroyed" (ὀλίγοι δέ τινες ἐν μικρῷ σκάφει διασωθέντες εἰς Καρχηδόνα διεσάφησαν τοῖς πολίταις, σύντομον ποιησάμενοι τὴν ἀπόφασιν, ὅτι πάντες οἱ διαβάντες εἰς τὴν Σικελίαν ἀπολώσασιν). This seems a clear reference to Thucydides' famous conclusion to his narrative of the Sicilian Expedition of Athens:

> Ξυνέβη τε ἔργον τοῦτο [Ἑλληνικὸν] τῶν κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον τόνδε μέγιστον γενέσθαι, δοκεῖν δ' ἔμοιγε καὶ ὧν ἀκοῇ Ἑλληνικῶν ἴσμεν, καὶ τοῖς τε κρατήσασι λαμπρότατον καὶ τοῖς διαφθαρεῖσι δυστυχέστατον· κατὰ πάντα γὰρ πάντως νικηθέντες καὶ οὐδὲν ὀλίγον ἐς οὐδὲν κακοπαθήσαντες πανωλεθρίᾳ δὴ τὸ λεγόμενον καὶ πεζὸς καὶ νῆες καὶ οὐδὲν ὅτι οὐκ ἀπώλετο, καὶ ὀλίγοι ἀπὸ πολλῶν ἐπ' οἴκου ἀπενόστησαν.
>
> This passage of events was the most momentous of any in this war and indeed, in my view, of any we know reported in Greek history – for the victors the most glorious, for the vanquished the most disastrous. They were completely and utterly defeated. Their misery was extreme in every respect and it was, as the expression goes, a case of total annihilation. They lost army, ships, everything; and few out of many returned home.[15]

The purpose of the Thucydidean echo seems to be to emphasise the size of Gelon's victory by highlighting the totality of the destruction of his enemies, but it may carry more significance than that: in Thucydides too, it is the Sicilian Greeks who wreak total destruction on an enemy, and so the reader is reminded of the formidableness of Sicily also after the time of Gelon.

The theme of the total destruction of the enemy continues in the following section, where we hear of the grief of the Carthaginian citizens when news of the defeat reaches them (11.22.4). Interestingly, this is the only emotional part of the entire Gelon narrative, but its purpose seems not to be to make us sympathise with the victims, but rather to glory in the complete victory of the Greeks.[16]

After the digression on the building projects at Acragas, and the details of Gelon's humane and splendid handling of the aftermath of victory, the narrator offers a concluding evaluation of Gelon's character

15 Thuc. 7.87.5-6 (transl. J. Mynott).

16 A parallel for this use of a focus on the suffering of the enemy is Aeschylus' *Persians*.

(11.24-5, quoted above). This is crowned by the scene outlined above of Gelon appearing before the people unarmed, offering himself up to anyone who wants to hurt him, while the people simply cheer. The scene is made immersive with details of sight (Gelon's dress and gestures) and sound (the shouts of approval and amazement), and it is clearly intended to leave a lasting impression on the reader.

2 The Dionysius Narrative

2.1 Summary of the Dionysius Narrative

The Dionysius narrative is much longer and more detailed than the Gelon narrative, and not just because the Gelon narrative is fragmentary. It unfolds over roughly half of the chapters from 13.91 to 14.112 and 8 chapters in book 15, intermingled with chapters telling the contemporaneous history of the mainland Greeks.[17]

The story begins with Dionysius taking power in Syracuse (13.91) at a crisis point in the war with Carthage when the populace is unhappy with the oligarchic generals and eager to support a populist leader. There are no details of his childhood, but rather a detailed account of how he manages to make himself tyrant by means of plots and clever demagogy (13.91-6). The narrator then intervenes to state his reason for dealing with Dionysius in detail: "it seems that this man, single-handed, established the strongest and longest tyranny of any recorded by history" (δοκεῖ γὰρ οὗτος μεγίστην τῶν ἱστορουμένων τυραννίδα περιπεποιῆσθαι δι' ἑαυτοῦ καὶ πολυχρονιωτάτην, 13.96.4). This shows a clear fascination on the part of Diodorus with the institution of tyranny, but not necessarily an endorsement of Dionysius as a tyrant.

The narrative then follows in considerable detail Dionysius' consolidation of power in Syracuse and other Sicilian cities alongside his first war with Carthage, which sees victories and defeats on both sides, but ends with Greek victory and a withdrawal of the Carthaginian forces under cover of darkness, made possible by a large bribe to Dionysius (14.75). Then follows Dionysius' conquest of more Sicilian cities, a peace treaty with the Carthaginians (14.96), and his brutal subdual of the city of Rhegium (14.111-12). In book 15, after a couple of chapters detailing Dionysius' tyrannical treatment of poets and philosophers who exercise free speech (15.6-7), the narrative becomes less detailed as we hear about Dionysius' plans to plunder Delphi (15.13), his successful plundering of a Tyrrhenian temple (15.14)

17 The narrative of Dionysius I: 13.91-6, 13.108-14, 14.18, 14.40-78, 14.87-107, 14.111-12, 15.6-7, 15.13-17, 15.24, 15.73-4.

and then, very briefly, his second (15.15-18) and third (15.73-4) war with Carthage, and his death from excessive drinking (15.74).

2.2 Thematic Analysis of the Dionysius Narrative

Thematically, this is a very different narrative from that of Gelon. There are no indications that Dionysius is predestined for or particularly suited to the great power that he comes to hold: no supernatural omens and no narratorial highlighting of any special intelligence. There is an interest in technical details of military manoeuvres (e.g. 14.18, 14.50-1), and advances in military technology are described (e.g. 14.41-3), but, although Dionysius is sometimes said to be their author (if not exactly their inventor), they are never framed by references to the tyrant's στρατηγίᾳ καὶ συνέσει as was the stratagem of Gelon. In every crisis situation Dionysius acts with cool-headed deliberation (e.g. 13.112-13), and every military move is carefully planned (e.g. 14.40-4); yet the narrator never pauses his narrative of events to praise Dionysius for such cleverness. When he is victorious over the Carthaginians, it is presented as the achievement of his soldiers as much as his own (e.g. 14.64.1-3, 14.73.1-2, 14.74.1), and in the end he is shown to take a bribe ignominiously from the Carthaginians to let them go rather than claiming the ultimate victory, not out of fear, but in order to preserve an outside enemy that will keep his people from revolting against him (14.75). His army also proves troublesome at points, with the cavalry revolting against him at an early stage and maltreating, perhaps killing, his first wife (13.112 with 14.44.5), and some malcontent mercenaries later being deliberately deployed as cannon fodder (14.72.3). The reader seems to be encouraged to admire Dionysius as a capable leader as long as he is successful against the Carthaginians (14.41-3, 14.73.2), but to understand that he is also a vile tyrant (13.91-6, 14.45.1, 14.72.3, 15.6-7) with whom we are not supposed to sympathise.

Nonetheless, there are points of thematic overlap between the narrative of Dionysius and that of Gelon. In both narratives, there is an interest in the relationship between the tyrant and his people, which in both cases is the foundation for the tyrant's power: the only characteristic of Dionysius on which the narrator ever pauses to comment is his ability to appear as a "man of the people" and thereby get the soldiers, workmen, and common populace on his side (e.g. 14.18.6-8, 14.43.1-2). However, it is also made explicit time and again that Dionysius only treats his people well when he thinks he has something to gain from it (e.g. 14.44.3, 14.45.1), and that the people are only temporarily supportive of Dionysius and is planning to revolt as soon as they get the chance (e.g. 14.45.5, 14.64.3-69.3). In other words, while the narrative of Gelon is wholly laudatory and the love of his

people is real, the narrative of Dionysius is dominated by a sense of the tyrant's Machiavellian manipulations and his people's duplicity.

2.3 Stylistic Analysis of the Dionysius Narrative

Stylistically, there is a clear break after 15.17. The narrative of Dionysius' second and third wars with Carthage (15.15-18 and 73-4) is extremely brief and summative compared with the narrative of his coup (13.91-6) and that of his first Carthaginian war (14.18-96). We shall discuss the possible reason for this below. For now, the stylistic analysis focuses on the Dionysius narrative in books 13 and 14 and the early part of 15 (until 15.17).

It is obvious even to the casual reader, that the Dionysius narrative is stylistically very different from the Gelon narrative. Firstly, the narrative generally moves more slowly and is much more detailed. There is a multitude of technical details of the preparations for war (14.18, 14.41) and executions of sieges (14.50-1), but also plenty of speech, both direct (14.65-9) and indirect (e.g. 13.94, 14.45.3-4), and the reader is often made to feel like an eyewitness to events (more about this below). The focalisation shifts constantly from Dionysius (e.g. 14.43.3-5, 14.45.1), to the Syracusans (e.g. 14.44.5), to the other Sicilians (e.g. 14.46.2), and even to the Carthaginians (e.g. 14.45.4, 14.49.1-2), letting the reader know everyone's motivations for action. This shifting perspective is characteristic of much of the *Bibliotheke* (and of Greek historiography more generally),[18] but it is missing from the Gelon narrative, which is focalised exclusively through the Greek side.

Furthermore, by contrast with the Gelon narrative, the narrator remains covert for long stretches of narrative. Only very occasionally and briefly does he intervene directly to comment on events (e.g. on the length and strength of Dionysius' tyranny, 13.96.4, quoted above). Throughout the rest of the narrative, the narrator remains covert and manipulates the reader's sympathy and general response subtly by means of evaluative words and phrases.

Some historically significant moments are marked by significant immersion. An example is the final Greek victory over the Carthaginian fleet in the Great Harbour:

> Ταχὺ δὲ τῆς φλογὸς εἰς ὕψος ἀρθείσης καὶ χεομένης ἐπὶ πολὺν τόπον ἐφλέγετο τὰ σκάφη, καὶ τῶν ἐμπόρων τε καὶ ναυκλήρων οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο παραβοηθῆσαι διὰ τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ πυρός. Ἐπιγενομένου δὲ μεγάλου πνεύματος ἐκ τῶν νενεωλκημένων σκαφῶν ἐφέρετο τὸ

18 See Hau 2014.

> πῦρ ἐπὶ τὰς ὁρμούσας ὁλκάδας. Τῶν δ' ἀνδρῶν ἐκκολυμβώντων διὰ τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς πνιγὸς φόβον, καὶ τῶν ἀγκυρίων ἀποκαιομένων, διὰ τὸν κλύδωνα συνέκρουον αἱ ναῦς, καὶ τινὲς μὲν ὑπ' ἀλλήλων συντριβόμεναι διεφθείροντο, τινὲς δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος ὠθούμεναι, αἱ πλεῖσται δ' ὑπὸ τοῦ πυρὸς ἀπώλλυντο. Ἔνθα δὴ τῶν φορτηγῶν πλοίων ἀναφερομένης τῆς φλογὸς διὰ τῶν ἱστίων καὶ τὰς κεραίας καταφλεγούσης, τοῖς ἐκ τῆς πόλεως θεατρικὴν συνέβαινε γίνεσθαι τὴν θέαν καὶ τοῖς δι' ἀσέβειαν κεραυνωθεῖσι φαίνεσθαι παραπλησίαν τὴν ἀπώλειαν τῶν βαρβάρων.
>
> Quickly the flame was lifted up into the sky and, pouring over a large area, caught the shipping, and none of the merchants or captains was able to bring any help because of the size of the blaze. Since a strong wind arose, the fire was carried from the ships drawn up on land to the merchantmen lying at anchor. When the crews dived into the water from fear of suffocation and the anchor cables were burnt off, the ships came into collision because of the rough seas, some of them being destroyed as they struck one another, and others as the wind drove them about, but the majority of them were victims of the fire. Thereupon, as the flames swept up through the sails of the merchant-ships and consumed the yardarms, the sight was like a scene from the theatre to the inhabitants of the city and the destruction of the barbarians resembled that of men struck by lightning from heaven for their impiety.[19]

The movement and visual details draw the reader in and makes him follow the flame with his mind's eye as it leaps from ship to ship and destroys the fleet. The end of the passage with the explicit reference to the onlookers is reminiscent of Thucydides' famous description of another battle in the Great Harbour (Thuc. 7.71), but the theatrical simile is thoroughly Hellenistic.[20] The passage is somewhat similar to the narrative of the result of Gelon's stratagem at the Battle of Himera, but it is longer, more detailed, and much more immersive. Other immersive passages are the murder by the Greeks of their Phoenician neighbours in Motye, which is presented as deserved vengeance (14.52-3), the plague in the Carthaginian camp, which is presented as divine punishment for impiety (14.70-1), and Dionysius' torture and murder of the Rhegian general Phyton, which is presented as a tyrannical atrocity (14.112).

19 Diod. Sic. 14.73 (transl. modified from C.H. Oldfather).

20 See Chaniotis 2013.

Overall, the Dionysius narrative is more detailed, more subtle, and more nuanced than the Gelon narrative. Dionysius is presented as a more complex character, one to alternately admire and despise. The portrait of him is almost entirely intellectual, however: we hear much about his thoughts and plans (e.g. 14.41: ἐνόμιζε, νομίζων, ἔκρινε, ὑπελάμβανε), but only really encounter his emotions when he punishes Phyton in anger (14.112) and when his vanity comes to the fore in his poetic aspirations (15.6-7).

3 The Agathocles Narrative

3.1 Summary of the Agathocles Narrative

The Agathocles narrative is as extensive and detailed as the Dionysius narrative and runs alongside the narrative of mainland Greece and Rome in books 19-21.[21] It begins with the folktale-like story of Agathocles' exposure as a baby because his father had been told by Delphi that the child would be a source of misfortune to "the Carthaginians and all of Sicily"; how he was saved by his mother's coming back for him in secret, and how he was later adopted by his father (19.2). The story is semi-mythical and has a Herodotean feel; it has many points of overlap with the story of the early years of Cyrus the Great. The story is followed by the equally Herodotean omen of bees building a honeycomb on a statue of Agathocles (19.2.8). It is clear now that the child is marked for greatness, but also that the greatness will be problematic.

The narrative continues with Agathocles' rising through the military ranks through bravery and love affairs and finally taking power in Syracuse in a violent coup (19.2-9). He then consolidates and extends his power (19.70-2 and 101-4) before losing much of Sicily to the Carthaginians (19.106-10). In a novel move, he leaves behind Syracuse under siege and takes the war to Africa to fight the Carthaginians on their home ground (20.3-18). While in Africa, his troops mutiny, but he manages to turn their feelings around and lead them to a victory against the Carthaginians (20.33-4). The fighting, however, continues, and eventually Agathocles returns to Syracuse after a second mutiny and tortures large numbers of people in order to get hold of their wealth (20.71); his sons who were left behind in Africa with the army are murdered by them (20.69). The story ends in the fragmentary book 21: here, Agathocles conquers various South-Italian cities (21.3-8), but is then poisoned through the agency of his grandson and dies a grisly death (21.16). This chapter is followed

21 The Agathocles narrative: 19.2-9, 19.65, 19.70-2, 19.102-4, 19.106-10, 20.3-18, 20.29-34, 20.38-44, 20.54-72, 20.77-9, 20.89-90, 20.101, 21.16-17.

directly by a chapter criticising the historian Timaeus of Tauromenium for being unduly biased against Agathocles (21.17).

3.2 Thematic Analysis of the Agathocles Narrative

Some of the themes here are similar to those encountered in the Gelon and Dionysius narratives. The semi-mythical events surrounding Agathocles' early childhood mark him out for greatness in a similar way to the supernatural events during Gelon's early years, only negatively. It is also clear from the narrative of his youth that he is an extremely intelligent and capable individual, like Gelon, even if morally unscrupulous, like Dionysius. A significant contrast with Gelon is pointed when Agathocles commits perjury at the temple of Demeter (19.6), in contrast with his famous predecessor, who built temples to Demeter and Kore for money captured from the Carthaginians.

As with Gelon and Dionysius, Diodorus shows a strong interest in the relationship between Agathocles and his people, and in how the combination of terror and adulation keeps him in power. However, the focus in the Agathocles narrative is largely on the brutality of the tyrant: during the coup that puts him in power the violence is described in immersive detail (see below), and the narrative is punctuated throughout with detailed descriptions of his atrocities, often enabled by treachery (19.6.4-8.4, 20.4.6-8, 20.39.6, 20.54.2-7, 20.55, 20.71, 20.72). This makes Agathocles a less likely character for the reader to sympathise with than Dionysius and points to what sets his narrative apart, thematically, from those of Gelon and Dionysius.

The theme of brutality is signalled from the beginning when the narrative is introduced by a moralising introduction[22] telling the reader how to respond to the narrative of Agathocles' career:

> More than anywhere else this tendency toward the rule of one man (ἡ πρὸς τὰς μοναρχίας ὁρμὴ) prevailed in Sicily before the Romans became rulers of that island; for the cities, deceived by demagogic wiles (ταῖς δημαγωγίαις ἐξαπατώμεναι), went so far in making the weak strong that these became despots over those whom they had deceived. The most extraordinary instance of all (ἰδιώτατα δὲ πάντων) is that of Agathocles who became tyrant of the Syracusans, a man who had the lowest beginnings, but who plunged not only Syracuse but also the whole of Sicily and Libya into the gravest misfortunes. Although, compelled by lack of means and slender fortune, he turned his hand to the potter's trade, he rose to such a peak of

22 For a typology of moralising in Greek historiography, incl. moralising introductions, see Hau 2016.

> power and cruelty (δυνάμεως ἅμα καὶ μιαιφονίας) that he enslaved (καταδουλώσασθαι) the greatest and fairest of all islands, for a time possessed the larger part of Libya and parts of Italy, and filled the cities of Sicily with outrage and slaughter (ὕβρεως δὲ καὶ σφαγῆς). No one of the tyrants before him brought any such achievements to completion nor yet displayed such cruelty toward those who had become his subjects (οὐδεὶς γὰρ τῶν πρὸ τούτου τυράννων ἐπετελέσατό τι τοιοῦτον οὔτε τοιαύτην ὠμότητα κατὰ τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων ἔσχε).[23]

This tells the reader to pay attention both to Agathocles' achievements – and, implicitly, his capability – and to his cruelty. These two themes are present also in the Dionysius narrative, but much less explicitly: there, the reader has to extract information about the tyrant's natural abilities and moral shortfalls from the narrative; here, we are told to look out for them from the outset, and the narrator pauses the narrative frequently to comment on them (e.g. 20.3.2: πρᾶξιν ἀνέλπιστον καὶ παραβολωτάτην). The cruelty is a particularly strong theme in the Agathocles narrative, with frequent elaborate descriptions of Agathocles' atrocities (see list above). In comparison, the Dionysius narrative contains only one atrocity narrated in detail, namely the tyrant's subjugation of Rhegium by starvation and his subsequent torturing to death of its general Phyton (14.111-12).

In terms of characterisation, Agathocles is shown to be intelligent and capable, like both Gelon and Dionysius, but alone of the three the reader also gets a sense of him as an emotional being. He is brave (19.4, 20.3) and impulsive (20.69.1-3), joking and convivial (20.33.3-4, 20.63), flamboyantly theatrical (20.7, 20.34), and ultimately utterly selfish (20.69).[24] As such, the portrait of Agathocles feels more rounded than the ones of Gelon, who seems a half-myth, and even Dionysius, who comes across as a largely intellectual being.

The other thematic features that set the Agathocles narrative apart are a strong emphasis on the tyrant's problematic relationship with his army (20.33-4, 20.68-9) and the important role played by the tyrant's family, particularly his sons (20.33-4, 20.68-9, 21.16). The relationship with the army is never mentioned in the (extant) Gelon narrative and is only occasionally important in the Dionysus narrative where it is overshadowed by the relationship with the common population more generally. The tyrant's family is likewise never mentioned in the Gelon narrative, and only becomes important in the Dionysius narrative after the tyrant's death.

23 Diod. Sic. 19.1.5-8 (transl. R.M. Geer).

24 For a detailed examination of Diodorus' portrait of Agathocles and a comparison with the protagonist of much of the parallel narrative of mainland Greece, Demetrius Poliorcetes, see Durvye 2018, XXXVIII-XLVI and LXXIX-LXXXII.

Finally, the Agathocles narrative is often framed as a narrative about the changeability of fortune and the paradoxes this brings about. This theme is hardly present in the Gelon narrative (or at least only implicitly in the praise of Gelon for bearing his good fortune with moderation), and although fortune, often in the guise of a just punisher of arrogance, is clearly a force to be reckoned with in the narrative of Dionysius' war with Carthage,[25] it is only in the Agathocles narrative that the narrator pauses time and again to comment on this theme explicitly (e.g. 20.13, 20.30.1, 20.33.2-3, 20.34.7, 20.62.1).

3.3 Stylistic Analysis of the Agathocles Narrative

In terms of style, the Agathocles narrative resembles the Dionysius narrative in that it is a detailed and engaging narrative with shifting focalisation, which offers insight into the motivations of all the different actors involved. It is, however, even more immersive than the Dionysius narrative, offering more visual and aural details and a greater density of evaluative and emotive language.[26] Many of the immersive passages narrate atrocities committed by Agathocles. The first of these will serve as an example:[27]

> 6 [4] As soon as he had everything ready, he ordered the soldiers to report at daybreak at the Timoleontium; and he himself summoned Peisarchus and Diocles, who were regarded as the leaders of the society of the Six Hundred, as if he wished to consult them on some matter of common interest. When they had come bringing with them some forty of their friends, Agathocles, pretending that he himself was being plotted against, arrested all of them, accused them before the soldiers, saying that he was being seized by the Six Hundred because of his sympathy for the common people, and bewailed his fate. [5] When, however, the mob was aroused and with a shout urged him not to delay but to inflict the just penalty on the wrongdoers out of hand, he gave orders to the trumpeters to give the signal for battle and to the soldiers to kill the guilty persons and to plunder the property of the Six Hundred and their supporters. [6] All rushed out to take part in the plunder, and the city was filled with confusion and great calamity (ὁρμησάντων δὲ

25 See Hau 2009, 184-7, for an interpretation of the Sicilian narrative of books 13-14 in the light of the changeability of fortune.

26 Especially immersive passages in the Agathocles narrative: 19.6-8, 20.5-8, 20.15-16, 20.54-5, 20.65, 20.66-7, 20.72. Already Schwartz 1903, 687 judged that "die Geschichte des Agathokles ist diejenige Partie des diodorischen Werkes, die sich am bestem liest" (but then adds "– womit über die historische Richtigkeit nichts gesagt sein soll").

27 Bizière 1975, XIV fn. 1 has called this "un morceau de bravoure".

πάντων ἐπὶ τὴν ἁρπαγὴν ἡ πόλις ἐπληρώθη ταραχῆς καὶ μεγάλων ἀτυχημάτων); for the members of the aristocratic class (οἱ μὲν γὰρ χαριέστατοι τῶν πολιτῶν), not knowing the destruction that had been ordained for them, were dashing out of their homes into the streets in their eagerness to learn the cause of the tumult, and the soldiers, made savage both by greed and by anger (τὰ μὲν διὰ τὴν πλεονεξίαν, τὰ δὲ διὰ τὸν θυμὸν ἠγριωμένοι), kept killing these men who, in their ignorance of the situation, were presenting their bodies bare of any arms that would protect them.

7 [1] The narrow passages were severally occupied by soldiers (διαληφθέντων δὲ τῶν στενωπῶν κατὰ μέρος ὑπὸ τῶν στρατιωτῶν), and the victims were murdered (ἐφονεύοντο), some in the streets, some in their houses (οἱ μὲν κατὰ τὰς ὁδούς, οἱ δ' ἐν ταῖς οἰκίαις). Many, too, against whom there had been no charge whatever, were slain (ἀνῃροῦντο) when they sought to learn the cause of the massacre. For the armed mob having seized power did not distinguish (διέκρινε) between friend and foe, but the man from whom it had concluded most profit was to be gained, him it regarded (ἡγεῖτο) as an enemy. [2] Therefore one could see the whole city filled with outrage, slaughter, and all manner of lawlessness (διὸ καὶ παρῆν ὁρᾶν πᾶσαν τὴν πόλιν πεπληρωμένην ὕβρεως καὶ φόνων καὶ παντοίων ἀνομημάτων). For some men because of long-existing hatred abstained (ἀπείχοντο) from no form of insult against the objects of their enmity now that they had the opportunity to accomplish whatever seemed to gratify their rage; others, thinking by the slaughter of the wealthy to redress their own poverty, left no means untried (ἐμηψανῶντο) for their destruction. [3] Some were breaking down (ἐξέκοπτον) the doors of houses, others were mounting (προσανέβαινον) to the housetops on ladders, still others were struggling (διηγωνίζοντο) against men who were defending themselves from the roofs; not even to those who fled into the temples did their prayers to the gods bring (παρείχετο) safety, but reverence due the gods was overthrown (ἐνικᾶτο) by men. [4] In time of peace and in their own city Greeks dared (ἐτόλμων) commit these crimes against Greeks, relatives against kinsfolk, respecting neither common humanity nor solemn compacts nor gods, crimes such that there is no one – I do not say no friend but not even any deadly enemy if he but have a spark of compassion in his soul – who would not pity the fate of the victims (καὶ ταῦτ' ἐτόλμων ἐν εἰρήνῃ καὶ πατρίδι παρανομεῖν Ἕλληνες καθ' Ἑλλήνων, οἰκεῖοι κατὰ συγγενῶν, οὐ φύσιν, οὐ σπονδάς, οὐ θεοὺς ἐντρεπόμενοι, ἐφ' οἷς οὐχ ὅτι φίλος, ἀλλὰ καὶ παντελῶς ἐχθρός, μέτριός γε τὴν ψυχήν, οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις οὐκ ἂν τὴν τῶν πασχόντων τύχην ἐλεήσειεν).[28]

28 Diod. Sic. 19.6.4-7.4 (transl. modified from R.M. Geer).

This passage is immersive, temporally, spatially, and, above all, emotionally; it is this passage in particular which has won the Agathocles narrative the reputation of being 'tragic history'.[29] There is spatial information: "The narrow passages were severally occupied by soldiers" (19.7.1), "some were murdered in the streets, some in their houses" (19.7.1); visual details moving gradually from the ground up to rooftops: "Some broke down the doors of houses, others mounted to the housetops on ladders, still others struggled against men who were defending themselves from the roofs" (19.7.3); and a visualisation through internal spectators: "one could see the whole city filled with outrage, slaughter, and all manner of lawlessness" (19.7.2). There are also plenty of phrases which are meant to engage the reader emotionally: "made savage both by greed and by anger" (19.6.6), "presenting their bodies bare of any arms that would protect them" (19.6.6), "the armed mob […] did not distinguish between friend and foe" (19.7.1). The finite verbs throughout are in the imperfect which give the impression that we are experiencing events as they unfold.

The scene ends with a disgusted conclusion by the narrator ("In time of peace… victims", 19.7.4). It is clear that the reader is meant to share the narrator's moral outrage. The remark is typical of the narratorial stance throughout the Agathocles narrative. The narrator here is much more overt than in the Dionysius narrative, constantly guiding the reader's response to the narrative by means of brief didactic introductions and conclusions to episodes.[30] Some of these expand into full-blown moral-didactic digressions (20.70, 20.78).

The following section, 19.8.3-4, has attracted a lot of scholarly comments. Here Diodorus states that Agathocles' supporters deliberately violated the female relatives of their political opponents, but he provides no visual or emotional details. The rape of the women could easily have been worked into a harrowing scene, as indeed it is in Diodorus' account of the sack of Persepolis in book 17, but here he abstains from giving any details. The explanation comes with yet another narratorial remark in 8.4:

> Ἀφ' ὧν ἡμῖν περιαιρετέον ἐστὶ τὴν ἐπίθετον καὶ συνήθη τοῖς συγγραφεῦσι τραγῳδίαν, μάλιστα μὲν διὰ τὸν τῶν παθόντων ἔλεον, ἔπειτα καὶ διὰ τὸ μηθένα τῶν ἀναγινωσκόντων ἐπιζητεῖν ἀκοῦσαι τὰ κατὰ μέρος, ἐν ἑτοίμῳ τῆς γνώσεως οὔσης.

29 For 'tragic history' see Hau 2018; 2020a; 2020b; and Hau, forthcoming.

30 Examples of narratorial introductions: 20.57.3, 20.67.1, first line of 20.101.2. Examples of narratorial conclusions: last line of 20.42.5, 20.43.6, last line of 20.44.6, 20.54.7, 20.61.8, 20.65.2, 20.67.4, 20.69.5, 20.89.5, 20.101.4.

> We must keep our accounts of these events free from the artificially tragic tone that is habitual with historians, chiefly because of our pity for the victims, but also because no one of our readers has a desire to hear all the details when his own understanding can readily supply them.[31]

It seems that Diodorus' source gave more details of the mistreatment of the women and that Diodorus decided to leave out such details because he thought them tasteless (more about this below). The narratorial remark breaks the reader's immersion in Agathocles' story and engages him instead in a methodological debate about how to narrate atrocities. This debate was on-going in Hellenistic historiography. Echoes can be seen in Polybius, in his famous criticism of Phylarchus, and also in the fragments of Agatharchides of Cnidus, who insists that horrific events should be told with *enargeia* rather than with stylistic wordplay.[32] One further passage in the Agathocles narrative likewise looks outward to the practice of historiography more generally and discusses the problem of writing a continuous narrative of events that happen simultaneously (20.43.7). We find no passages of such a methodological or polemical kind in either the (extant) narrative of Gelon or that of Dionysius.

4 Comparison of the Narratives of Gelon, Dionysius, and Agathocles

4.1 Thematic Comparison

In order to draw some conclusion, let us first summarise the similarities and differences between the three Sicilian tyrant narratives. Firstly, there are two overall themes which characterise all three narratives, namely the tyrant's relationship with his subjects and his ability as leader of war against Carthage. In both of these areas, Gelon comes off best as a benevolent monarch and an extraordinarily gifted general. Dionysius comes second, knowing when to treat his subjects kindly in order to win their support and winning one significant victory over the Carthaginians even if he taints it by taking a bribe. Agathocles is a poor third, his relationship with both his subjects and the Carthaginians characterised by brutality and treachery.

Other themes are only shared between two of the narratives. Diodorus treats Gelon and Agathocles as extraordinary individuals,

31 Diod. Sic. 19.8.4 (transl. R.M. Geer).

32 Polyb. 2.56-63; for Agatharchides see Phot. *Bibl.* 250.21. For discussion of the debate, see Zangara 2007; Maier 2018; Hau 2020a; 2020b; forthcoming.

marked out by divine powers for greatness – for good or evil – but does not bestow such honour on Dionysius, who perhaps falls too much in between the two extremes to seem under divine influence. An interest in Carthaginian suffering and efforts to engage the reader emotionally in it are part of the Gelon and the Dionysius narratives, but not the Agathocles narrative, probably because it is easier to feel sympathy for an enemy who is being or has been vanquished than for one who is winning. The relationship between the tyrant and his army is a theme in the narratives of Dionysius and Agathocles, not in that of Gelon, perhaps because the latter had already become so semi-mythologised that such mundane details were felt to be unfitting for his story (more about this below).

The theme of the tyrant's relationship with his family only appears in the Agathocles narrative. He is also the only one of the three tyrants who is portrayed on an emotional as well as an intellectual level. In the case of Gelon, the absence of such an emotional side can probably be explained by the same mythologising that left out the mundane details of his handling of his army; but in the case of Dionysius it is an odd omission. We shall return to its possible reasons below.

Finally, the theme of the changeability of fortune is persistent in the Agathocles narrative where the narrator often draws out a moral to this effect. Sometimes it is connected with divine justice, a theme which also occurs in the Dionysius narrative, albeit usually in the guise of as divine punishment of the Carthaginians.

4.2 Stylistic Comparison

In stylistic terms, the Gelon narrative has a strong narratorial presence, which guides the reader's appreciation of Gelon's achievements throughout by means of explicit evaluations and comparisons. More time is spent on Gelon's character and attitude than on actual events, and the whole narrative is framed as a justification of the narrator's great reverence for him. The Agathocles narrative has an equally overt narrator, who frames episodes with didactic introductions and conclusions and digresses to moralise on the changeability of fortune or muse on historiographical problems. The Dionysius narrative, by contrast, is narrated by a mostly covert narrator, who only rarely breaks into the narrative to comment on events. His presence is mainly felt in the use of evaluative vocabulary which steers the reader's sympathy towards or away from Dionysius, his opponents, and the Carthaginians at various points without explicit moralising.

In terms of focalisation, the Dionysius and the Agathocles narratives are similar, with the perspective frequently changing from one side to the other or between characters or groups of characters. The narrator frequently gives the reader access to the thoughts and

motivations of all actors in the events. In the Gelon narrative, on the other hand, it is only the tyrant's thoughts and motivations that are imparted to the reader. This is part of what makes the Dionysius and Agathocles narratives more nuanced and interesting.

With regard to immersion, the three narratives are on a sliding scale. The Gelon narrative proceeds mainly by fast-paced summary, slowing down and becoming immersive at particularly important points such as Gelon's great victory at Himera. The Dionysius narrative is a lot more detailed, has plenty of direct and indirect speech and more frequent immersive passages. The Agathocles narrative is the most immersive of the three: much of this narrative is characterised by details of sight and sound and emotionally evocative phrases, and fully immersive passages are much more frequent than in the Dionysius narrative.

4.3 Possible Reasons for the Differences: Diodorus and His Sources

Why do the three narratives differ in such significant ways? There are several possible answers to this question.[33]

The first possible answer has to do with the difference in temporal distance. Gelon's reign was so far in the past (he was tyrant 491-478/477) and so deeply revered in Sicilian social memory[34] that his deeds had long since been turned into legend, and on a narrative level into type scenes, and it was impossible any longer to conceive of him as a flesh-an-blood person. For this reason, his narrative is framed as a justification of his status as Sicilian hero and intended to put him on the map, so to speak, in mainland Greece as well. There is no attempt to offer a sense of Gelon as a person. He remains a symbol of Sicilian greatness and a *paradeigma* of moral behaviour. Dionysius, for his part, does not come across as a legendary figure, but he is still not a fully-drawn individual. What matters is his motivations and actions, not his emotions or his character. Agathocles, by contrast, seems like a flesh-and-blood person, whose thoughts and

33 Rathmann 2016, 182-5, asks this question differently. Without offering a detailed analysis of the two narratives, he states that Diodorus gives a completely negative portrait of both Dionysius and Agathocles, and the question then becomes why he chose to focus on the negatives. Rathmann is no doubt right to see Agathocles at least partly as a foil which allows Timoleon to shine the brighter, but I would argue – and believe to have shown above – that the portrait of Dionysius is much less negative than that of Agathocles.

34 For the concept of social memory, see Steinbock 2012, 7-19 and *passim*. Social memory is less institutionalised than cultural memory and more flexible than collective memory.

feelings the reader is allowed to share in order to gain a picture of a fascinating, repulsive, theatrical, and larger-than-life personality.

This difference points to the fact that while Gelon's actions had long since been turned into legends and emptied of all individuality, those of Dionysius and Agathocles had not. This is odd if seen from the temporal point of view of Diodorus in the first century BC: although Dionysius lived roughly 100 and Agathocles c. 200 years after Gelon, they were both characters of the long past when Diodorus was writing.[35] Why should their actions in Sicily have become less fixed as type scenes in the island's social memory than those of Gelon? And why should Agathocles be remembered as more of a flesh-and-blood person than Dionysius?

This points to the difference in themes and style between the three narratives originating with Diodorus' sources, as has traditionally be assumed by Diodoran scholarship. I do not mean that Diodorus copied those sources *verbatim*, but that he probably took over much of their content and style while changing individual words and phrases and also adding something of his own.[36]

Diodorus' accounts of both Gelon and Dionysius are most often thought to derive from Timaeus of Tauromenium, who, writing in the late fourth and early third century (ca. 356-260), was already so far removed from the deeds of the early fifth century that the actions of Gelon had become partly mythologised. The career of Dionysius was closer in time and had not yet become legend; for that reason it is recorded with more details and more insight. (It is possible that the summative treatment of Dionysius in book 15 is due to a change in source, and that Diodorus relied on Ephorus for this part of the Dionysius narrative. It is also possible, however, that Timaeus was still his source, but he decided to abbreviate his source material more ruthlessly because he realised that his narrative was progressing too slowly).[37]

The narrative of Agathocles is often thought to rely on a combination of the works of Timaeus, who both Diodorus and Polybius say was bitterly hostile to that tyrant because he had been exiled by him (Diod. Sic. 21.17.1-3; Polyb. 12.15.1-10), and the work of Duris of

35 Agathocles died in 289/288, more than 200 years before Diodorus was writing.

36 For my stance on Diodorus and his sources, see Hau 2009.

37 For a variety of views on the distribution of sources (mainly Timaeus and Ephorus) in 14-15, see Schwartz 1903, c. 686; Sinclair 1963; Meister 1967; Pearson 1987, 188; Stylianou 1998, 79-84; Parmeggiani 2011, 349-91; and Parker 2011. Caven 1990, 186-8, argues that the chapters on Dionysius in book 15 are only an epitome of a much longer narrative originally written by Diodorus, but extracted for other purposes already in antiquity.

Samos, who perhaps offered a less negative portrait of him.[38] It is important that both of these sources were contemporary with Agathocles.[39] This means that they were written before the actions of Agathocles had entered social memory, while they were still fresh and could be described in eyewitness detail, including details – true or false – about the tyrant's feelings and family relations.[40]

Our stylistic analysis of the Dionysius and Agathocles narratives has revealed some significant differences between the two, which are most easily explained by the theory that Diodorus used different sources for them. On this basis, it seems most likely that the Dionysius narrative (at least until 15.17) is based on Timaeus and the Agathocles narrative on Duris.[41] Interestingly, a fragment of Duris shows that this historiographer valued *mimesis*, vivid writing – or, perhaps, immersive writing – as a quality of historiography.[42] It is not hard to imagine that a historiographer with a commitment to *mimesis* could produce a narrative such as the one we find in Diodorus about Agathocles. It also seems likely that a historiographer who was prepared to discuss in a methodological passage the role of *mimesis* might elsewhere discuss the best way to report atrocities such as the rape of the Syracusan women (Diod. Sic. 19.8.4) and the difficulty of dealing with simultaneous events in a written account (Diod. Sic. 20.43.7), and so that these passages too originated with Duris (even if

38 For the question of whether Diodorus used Duris as a source, see Meister 1967; Kebric 1977, 72-9; Pédech 1989, 302-13; Landucci Gattinoni 1997, 141-8 and 152, with earlier bibliography; Rathmann 2016, 156-27; and Durvye 2018, XXVI-XXXIII.

39 This is also pointed out by Durvye 2018, XXXIII.

40 This is not, of course, a guarantee of the veracity of such details. For social memory, see above.

41 See also Meeus 2017 on most ancient historiographers using only one source at a time. This goes against an argument I made in Hau 2009, 187 fn. 64, to the effect that the similarities in moral outlook between the narratives of the Graeco-Carthaginian wars of Dionysius and Agathocles respectively point to a common source. I now believe that the difference in degree of immersiveness points to two different sources, and that the undeniable similarities in moral outlook shows that such a similarity existed already in Diodorus' sources, i.e. between the moral outlooks of the works of Timaeus and Duris. This conclusion is supported by my investigation of moral didacticism throughout Classical and Hellenistic historiography (Hau 2016), which indicates that there was a high degree of similarity in moralising *topoi* and moral lessons of the genre throughout the period.

42 *FGrH* 76 F1: Δοῦρις μὲν οὖν ὁ Σάμιος ἐν τῇι πρώτηι τῶν αὑτοῦ Ἱστοριῶν οὕτω φησίν· Ἔφορος δὲ καὶ Θεόπομπος τῶν γενομένων πλεῖστον ἀπελείφθησαν· οὐτε γὰρ μιμήσεως μετέλαβον οὐδεμιᾶς οὐτε ἡδονῆς ἐν τῶι φράσαι, αὐτοῦ δὲ τοῦ γράφειν μόνον ἐπεμελήθησαν ("Duris of Samos says in the first book of his *Histories*: 'Ephorus and Theopompus fell very much short of the events; for they did not value either vivid representation (μίμησις) or pleasure (ἡδονή) at all in their narratives, but only took care over their style (τὸ γράφειν)'"). This fragment has occasioned much scholarly debate. For a summary of the debate see Parmeggiani 2016. For the main positions see Fornara 1983, 124-34; Gray 1987; Pédech 1989, 369-82; Halliwell 2000, 289-96; Ottone 2015; Baron 2016, 73-9.

Diodorus changed the latter to suit his purposes, see below). On this interpretation, it seems likely that the theme of the changeability of fortune, since it is much more prominent in the narrative of Agathocles than in the narratives of Gelon and Dionysius, was more prominent in at least this part of Duris' work than in Timaeus'.[43]

Nonetheless, all three narratives as they stand in the *Bibliotheke* are Diodorus'. He abbreviated the narratives he found in his sources and decided what to keep in and what to leave out. It is also likely that some of the narratorial comments are his own. In the few places where we have the luxury of comparing Diodorus' text with its source or a summary of its source, it is clear that his changes to the source material (beyond abbreviation) are mainly of this kind: changes to or additions of evaluative vocabulary and moralising remarks.[44] Some of the narratorial praise of Gelon sounds distinctively Diodoran, e.g. the remark that Gelon "was bearing his good fortune as men should" (τὴν εὐτυχίαν ἀνθρωπίνως ἔφερεν), which is seen in various forms throughout the *Bibliotheke*;[45] this was probably Diodorus' own addition to what he found in his source. Likewise, some of the themes of that narrative run like red threads throughout his *Bibliotheke*, i.e. the idea of the importance of being moderate in success and the certainty of a benevolent leader being rewarded with fame and the devotion of his people.[46] The comparison between the achievement of Gelon and that of the mainland Greeks, on the other hand, most likely goes back to Timaeus as Polybius criticised him for always wanting to make Sicily look more significant than it was.[47] The idea that the Battles of Himera and Thermopylae happened on the same day is probably also Timaean as we can see from the fragments of his work that he was particularly keen on synchronisms.[48] Diodorus did not take over these passages unthinkingly, but chose to do so because he was equally interested in making the history of Sicily rival that of mainland Greece in his readers' minds, and because the idea of

43 Fornara 1983 has argued forcefully that Duris invented a new type of historiography where the reader's emotions and pleasure were more important than didacticism, and that the dominant emotion was supposed to be surprise at the workings of fortune. Zangara 2007 has developed this line of argument further, but essentially agrees with him. I would disagree that pleasure/emotional engagement and didacticism need to be opposed goals and would argue that learning can happen through the reader's pleasure or emotional engagement and that this may well have been Duris' purpose.

44 See Hadley 1996; Hau 2006; 2011; 2019. For a recent argument that it was general ancient practice to take over one's sources more or less wholesale, see Meeus 2017.

45 E.g. 1.60.3, 4.74.2, 10.13, 11.26.1, 15.17.5, 27.1.2. See Hau 2009.

46 For this theme in Diodorus, see Sulimani 2011, 64-82, and Hau 2016, 97-9.

47 *FGrH* 566 F119a = Polyb. 12.23.4-7.

48 *FGrH* 566, F60 = Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.74.1; F105 = Plut. *Mor.* 8.1.1.717C; F106 = Diod. Sic. 13.108.4-5. For all of these, see the commentary by Champion 2016.

synchronisms fitted into his concept of history as guided by divine forces.[49] By keeping from his source what conformed to his own ideas and interests, leaving out what did not, and adding a few extra moral-didactic passages, he ensured that the narrative of Gelon he included in his work was a Diodoran one.

The Dionysius narrative has no such long digressions or explicit moralising, but it is likely that many of the evaluative words and phrases which throughout guide the reader's sympathies are Diodoran, as is most probably the introductory remark about why Dionysius is worth spending time on. In the Agathocles narrative, it is impossible to know how many of the frequent narratorial interventions are Diodorus' own additions. On the one hand, the themes of the changeability of fortune, divine justice, and punishment of the wicked are all part of Diodorus' moral-didactic programme and frequent throughout the *Bibliotheke*. On the other, these were all traditional themes of Greek historiography, and it is entirely possible that they were already in Diodorus' sources and he chose to replicate them because they fitted with his own world view.[50] Likewise with regard to the criticism of 'tragic history' found in 19.8.4. This may go back to Duris as suggested above, or it may be Diodorus' own justification for cutting out the most salubrious details of Duris' narrative. In the latter case, it may have replaced a similar discussion with a different point of view which was in Duris' text.

5 Conclusion: Diodorus and the Big Men of Sicily

What can we conclude from this discussion about Diodorus' historiographical approach to the big men of Sicily?

Firstly, it seems clear that 'big men' are what makes history happen in Sicily. This is not the case to quite the same degree in Diodorus' history of mainland Greece: although it has its Lysander, Epaminondas, and Alexander's successors, only in book 17 does the narrative focus on one individual (Alexander the Great) to the same extent that the Sicilian narrative does when dealing with Dionysius and Agathocles. The narratives of the great men of Sicily are given as much space and weight as those of contemporary events in the rest of the Greek world, giving the impression that what had happened in Sicily was as important as what had happened in the rest of the world collectively. In this way, these powerful and colourful men fulfil the function of raising the profile of Sicily for Diodorus' readers.

49 See Hau 2016, 88-94.

50 For the similarity of moral-didactic themes throughout the Classical and Hellenistic periods, see Hau 2016, 272-7.

Secondly, some big men, such as Gelon, are just cultural flag-bearers and moral examples; they do not feel like flesh-and-blood persons, but exemplify certain character traits which Diodorus holds up to the reader as worthy of emulation or of avoidance in line with the moral-didactic programme which he outlines in his preface (1.1-5).[51] Other big men, however, are characters in the story, complex personalities who can do both good and evil. They play their part as the movers and shakers of history, but are also ultimately used to draw moral-didactic lessons. Thus, Dionysius exemplifies the Diodoran maxim that harsh rulers have rebellious subjects whereas mild rulers have compliant and adoring subjects. Agathocles, for his part, shows that the gods will punish an evil man with an evil death.[52]

In conclusion, Diodorus took over the narratives of the great tyrants of Sicily from his sources; but he chose to take them over and devote space to reproducing them in more or less detail, and he moulded them to fit his own historiographical and moral-didactic framework. In this way, these narratives came to support the idea of the importance of Sicily and of moral-didactic historiography. As he says in his preface,

> it is because of that commemoration of goodly deeds which history accords men that some of them have been induced to become the founders of cities, that others have been led to introduce laws which encompass man's social life with security, and that many have aspired to discover new sciences and arts in order to benefit the race of men. […] For we must look upon it as constituting the guardian of the high achievements of illustrious men, the witness which testifies to the evil deeds of the wicked, and the benefactor of the entire human race (1.2.1-2).[53]

The tyrant narratives show that illustrious men and evil deeds flourished in Sicily, which made Sicilian history worthwhile for readers, for the double purpose of pleasurable reading and moral improvement.

51 For moral didacticism in Diodorus see Hau 2016, 73-123.

52 For such correlation between behaviour and result as a cornerstone of Diodorus' moral-didactic programme, see Hau 2016, 87 and 92-4.

53 Καθόλου δὲ διὰ τὴν ἐκ ταύτης ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ μνήμην οἱ μὲν κτίσται πόλεων γενέσθαι προεκλήθησαν, οἱ δὲ νόμους εἰσηγήσασθαι περιέχοντας τῷ κοινῷ βίῳ τὴν ἀσφάλειαν, πολλοὶ δ' ἐπιστήμας καὶ τέχνας ἐξευρεῖν ἐφιλοτιμήθησαν πρὸς εὐεργεσίαν τοῦ γένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων. […] Ἡγητέον γὰρ εἶναι ταύτην φύλακα μὲν τῆς τῶν ἀξιολόγων ἀρετῆς, μάρτυρα δὲ τῆς τῶν φαύλων κακίας, εὐεργέτιν δὲ τοῦ κοινοῦ γένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων. (Diod. Sic. 1.2.1-2)

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