HISTORY AND RHETORIC IN DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS

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This article explores the relationship between historical truth and rhetorical education in the *Antiquitates Romanae* of Dionysius of Halicarnassus.[1] These two concerns dominate Dionysius' output, and have provided fuel for a long tradition of adverse criticism. Schwartz's *RE* article set the standard for a series of dismissive accounts; his premise is that by choosing a period of such remote history, Dionysius can fulfil his desire to make history the servant of rhetorical display, adding, with scorn, that Dionysius' love of the Romans disqualifies him from being a real Greek.[2] Palm, still using Schwartz over fifty years later, is so convinced that Dionysius cannot have believed what he was writing that he ascribes the meticulously executed proof that the Romans were Greeks to 'paradoxe Effekte', in which anyone writing a rhetorical exercise of this kind would be careful to indulge.[3] Polemic has recently waned, although by far the most common use of Dionysius' history is as a source for antiquarian anecdote or the lost annalistic tradition, often to highlight the originality of Livy.[4] The recently published lectures of Gabba will do much to redress the balance, and are the first concerted attempt at harmonizing the details of Dionysius' rhetorical theory with his history.[5]

That such a harmonization is thought necessary demonstrates how far removed Dionysius' critical categories are from modern approaches to historical writing. What is needed is an understanding of how Dionysius' claims to give a true account of early Rome should be evaluated. The rhetorical element of his history can be viewed in context, and modern prejudices concerning the inapplicability of rhetorical values to history reassessed. A way of approaching idealizing, rhetorically constructed historiography can be found, and not only for the purpose of defending Dionysius. The proportion of idealizing rhetorical history written in antiquity vastly outweighed writing that can be more easily assimilated to modern expectations of history. Furthermore, Dionysius' work can provide historians of Augustan Rome with evidence of the effect of Augustus' new empire.

Nowadays, Schwartz's criticisms appear dated; Gabba detects proto-Nazi sentiments in his positivist adulation of Thucydides' rationality.[6] However, the passage of time has not detracted from Schwartz's challenge: in choosing early Rome, Dionysius was free from the constrictions of historical sources. He could characterize the period as he wished. Such an analysis is hard to contradict. I shall argue, however, that it approaches Dionysius with an inappropriate and unproductive set of expectations. To step outside these expectations requires awareness not only of the processes by which Dionysius constructed his historical account, but also of those by which we understand it. Are rhetoric and history always ill-suited companions? Does our assessment of a good historical reconstruction have any relevance to Dionysius? Do our claims to have found historical truth differ from his? These are all issues which have long exercised philosophers of history and historical theorists, but which are only now beginning to concern ancient historians and classicists.

The very idea of idealizing historiography is the antithesis of a positivist view of the historian's task. Instead of investigating and reproducing the historical world, the idealizing historian shapes his account around a preconception.[7] This preconception will correspond to the historian's sense of his political or literary aims. There are two major traditions of modern

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[2] 'Die tragischen Schmerzen, die jenen echten Hellenen das Begreifen des römischen Primats gekostet hatte, sind dieser kleinen Seele fremd', E. Schwartz, *RE* v.1,934.

[3] J. Palm, *Rom, Römertum und Imperium in der griechischen Literatur der Kaiserzeit* (1959), 10. This idea seems to have existed from at least the fourth century: see E. Manni, 'Relazione fra Roma e il mondo ellenistico', *Parola di Passato* 11 (1956), 170–90; E. Gabba, *Dionysius and The History of Archaic Rome* (1991), 114 and n. 46.

[4] J. P. V. D. Balsdon, 'Dionysius on Romulus: a political pamphlet', *JRS* 61 (1971), 18–27, gives a critical summary of the supposed sources for the account of Romulus' legislation.

[5] Gabba, op. cit. (n. 3).

[6] Gabba, op. cit. (n. 3), 6–9.

[7] Standard positivist examinations of ancient historiography are H. Strasburger, *Die Wesensbestimmung der Geschichte durch die antike Geschichtschreibung* (1966), who does not discuss Dionysius, and H. Peter, *Wahrheit und Kunst* (1965), who condemns him, pp. 333–5.

thought which provide alternatives to the positivist model. The first arose in the same period as positivism, namely the German hermeneutic tradition of Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, Gadamer; the second is represented by the work of Hayden White,[8] vigorously challenged among ancient historians by Momigliano.[9] The importance of the two traditions can be stated briefly. Both provide descriptions of the creation of interpretative written reconstruction of the past which acknowledge the divergence of historical studies from the traditional model of scientific research. Both analyse in various ways the conceptual patterns, frameworks or structures which the researcher brings to the object under scrutiny, be it a text, an event, or an epoch; structures which are inescapable, a precondition of an intelligible written analysis. The hermeneutic tradition ties these structures more to the historical moment of writing; the constitution of truth is itself an historical event, and as such, accessible to historical enquiry. For White, the prefiguration of historical material necessary for writing replicates the rhetorical structures of language itself. The truth of any historical account resides in the inseparability of language and historical representation. In the case of Dionysius, a failure to acknowledge the extent of the conditionality of truth has hindered critics from looking at the criteria which he, unusually clearly, sets out for his own researches. Recalling these theories can support the critical readjustment necessary for tackling idealizing historiography.

The abandonment of the idea of a separate reality for historical material outside the written record has led to a fear of a threatening relativism, and the political manipulation of history. White's work has received criticism on these grounds.[10] Historians are faced with a choice: on the one hand, of adopting theoretical awareness and the acceptance of the impossibility of objectivity, with its corollary that political implications, if not stated, can at any rate be deduced; or, on the other hand, of waiting in the hope that a theory will appear which will again vindicate the discreet nature of the historical observer. Dionysius' theoretical work reveals a firm stand on a similar question, based upon a different evaluation of rhetoric and history. At the same time, the interplay between his own historical situation, his views of historical truth, and his concern for rhetoric, provide clear evidence of the intellectual climate of Augustan Rome.

I. DIONYSIUS' PREFACE AND EARLY HISTORY

Dionysius' prologue opens with a statement of the tasks of a historian; in a closely bound set of ideas, the morality of the historian, his choice of subject matter, and respect for historical truth are brought together.

> I realized that those choosing to leave behind to future generations memorials to their own spirit, that it may not vanish with their body, and especially those writing history which we think of as the residence of truth, the source of prudence and wisdom, must first choose subjects that are altogether magnificent, and such as bring great benefit to their readers. Then they must take great trouble and pains to find suitable means for writing about those subjects. (1.1.2)

The subject is the place where the historian and history join for the scrutiny of posterity. Those who choose an unworthy subject, motivated by the hope of fame, or to display ἡ περὶ λόγους δύναμις (literary skill), are judged by their readers to have admired the men they describe and to share their moral standards. Dionysius' choice is highly suitable, and he compares the Roman Empire to other successful regimes. Rome is the largest and most durable state there has ever been. He then concedes that some may wonder at his choice of Rome's early history.

[8] Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (1973).

[9] cf. Momigliano, 'The rhetoric of history and the history of rhetoric: on Hayden White's tropes', in *Settimo Contributo* (1984), 49–59, and the obituary in *JRS* 77 (1987), ix–x.

[10] Hayden White, 'The politics of historical interpretation: discipline and desublimation', in *The Content of The Form* (1987), 58–82.

> They might say I had, in describing a city famous only in our own time, chosen the obscure and ignoble beginnings, such as are quite unworthy of historical record, it being only a few generations since Rome arrived at prominence and repute. Rome's early history is still unknown to all but a very few Greeks, and certain reports, not true, and based on random hearsay, have gained prominence and deceived most of them; reports that Rome's founders were homeless barbarian wanderers, not free men, and that she has come with time to her universal dominance not through piety, justice and other virtues, but accidentally, through some unjust blow of Fortune, who always grants the greatest good to the least deserving. (1.4.2)

This is not just the viewpoint of the ordinary man; it is the work of particular malicious historians, writing for barbarian kings, whom they presented with οὔτε δικαίας οὔτε ἀληθεῖς ἱστορίας, 'histories neither fair nor true'.[11] Dionysius intends to supplant these wayward conceptions with true ones, by discussing who the founders of the city were, and showing that in fact they were Greeks. In the following books he will give an account of the actions of the first Romans, omitting nothing that is worthy of historical record, so that people may observe the appropriate way to think of a great city, know that their subjection is in accordance with reason, and not make accusations against Tyche for granting dominion to an undeserving city.

> They will learn from history that right from the start, after the foundation, Rome brought forth countless examples of virtue, and that no city, neither Greek nor barbarian, has ever produced men more pious, nor more just, behaving with more prudence throughout her history, nor more formidable adversaries in war. That is, if envy does not cloud their judgement, such as is bound to greet the promise of something so unexpected and extraordinary. (1.5.3)

Dionysius accepts that this claim may provoke scepticism, and he explains the scepticism's origin: the absence of a comprehensive history of this early period written in Greek; he then proceeds to a brief discussion of this tradition. What will distinguish his account from those of his predecessors is the cursory way in which they described the early period. The Greek historians, Hieronymus of Cardia, Timaeus, Antigonus, Polybius and Silenus, all wrote differently, but their accounts of ἡ Ῥωμαϊκὴ ἀρχαιολογία (Roman antiquity) were inadequate: 'Each wrote little, inaccurately rushing over it, compiling it from random hearsay' (1.6.1–2). In contrast to the summary treatment of others, Dionysius proposes to treat his material in detail, ἀκριβῶς.[12] He then explains other benefits that his history will have, this time for Romans; it will help them to live up to their origins and ancestors.

Dionysius clearly felt that his sources and treatment of the historical tradition of archaic Rome needed to be dealt with more comprehensively. He is aware that those who have read earlier Greek historians, and who find new material in Dionysius' account, may suspect that he has invented it. He counters this suspicion with an account of the length of time he has lived in Italy, his knowledge of Latin, and a list of the Roman authors he has consulted. He also says that he learnt some things from personal instruction from learned men at Rome.

Its emphasis on the critical use of sources apart, the preface is useful for the light that it sheds on a number of connected points of interest. First, it makes it clear how important the period around the foundation of Rome is to Dionysius' particular view of Rome's development. Anti-Roman polemic seems to have been directed against the founders of Rome, and is refuted by revealing their virtues. It is also from this period of origins that Roman readers will derive moral inspiration. In other words, the preface is an explicit statement of the aetiological character of the period of origins, corresponding to traditional narrations, and found in Cicero

[11] E. Gabba, 'Storici Greci dell'impero Romano da Augusto ai Severi', *RSI* (1959), 365–8, attributes this to a particular historical tradition, which included Timagenes and Pompeius Trogus. G. W. Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek World* (1965), 131, cf. 108ff., points out that Dionysius means those historians who lived at barbarian courts, so Timagenes cannot be included. On Timagenes, see M. Sordi, 'Timagene di Alessandria: un storico ellenocentrico e philobarbaro', *ANRW* 30.1 (1982), 775–97. On anti-Roman historiography, H. Fuchs, *Der geistige Widerstand gegen Rom* (1938); H. Volkmann, 'Antike Romkritik: Topik und historische Wirklichkeit', *Gymnasium Beihefte* 4 (1964), 9–20; E. Burck, 'Die römische Expansion im Urteil des Livius', *ANRW* 30.2 (1982), 1148–89, esp. 1158ff.

[12] On ἀκριβέα as a motivating force, see E. Noé, 'Ricerche su Dionigi d'Alicarnasso: la prima stasis a Roma e l'episodi di Coriolano', in E. Gabba (ed.), *Ricerche di storiografia Greca di età Romana* I (1979), 36–7. Schultze, 'Dionysius of Halicarnassus and his audience', in I. S. Moxon *et al.* (eds), *Past Perspective* (1986), 121–41, at 138, n. 104, points out that Dionysius makes light of the achievement of Timaeus.

and Varro.[13] Second, it contains evidence for two important features of the intellectual background to the work; the composition of Dionysius' audience and the anti-Roman historiographical tradition. Dionysius' account of anti-Roman histories is a revelation of Greek resentment of Roman rule, and its incorporation in certain historical ideas; that the early Romans were vagabonds whose rise was due solely to Fortune and nothing to do with virtue, which such barbarians would not display.[14] Dionysius' refutation is clearly intended for a Greek readership, something underrated in the past.[15] The claim that Romans were in fact Greeks, although a compliment to Romans, is clearly aimed at Greeks. It demonstrates a lack of accord with the indigenous Italian ideology preferred by the Principate.[16] It is more satisfactory to locate Dionysius' hellenocentrism within the context of a presumed Greek readership; a parallel can be found in Timagenes.[17]

Laying great stress upon a Greek audience helps explain the major focus of Dionysius' regal period narrative, the consistent depiction of the expansion of the city. The favourable explanation of this expansion will be Dionysius' justification of Roman world rule. The first chapter of his narrative opens with a summary of the Romans' racial origin; they began as Greek Pelasgians, who drove out the native Sicels, and remained in the same area continuously, changing their name twice, first to Aborigines, then, under Latinus, to Latins. Thereafter,

> they contrived to grow from the least nation to the most eminent, from the most insignificant to the most conspicuous by humanely taking to themselves those in need of a dwelling place; by sharing power with those whom, after a noble struggle, they conquered in war; by allowing their freed slaves to become citizens, and by despising no one, if he was likely to benefit the community. (I.9.4)

This opening section encapsulates Dionysius' vision of Rome's whole history; it was the humane enlargement and expansion of a group of Greeks, who displayed the virtues any Greek would expect from his compatriots. Φιλανθρωπία (acting humanely) recurs frequently in the narratives of conquest, and is the most obvious characteristic of the Roman kings. We shall see that it is not only a deduction that because the Romans were descended from Greeks they behaved virtuously. They were aware of their Greekness, and often used Greek precedent as a starting-point for their humane institutions.

It is clear from the preface that Dionysius will present an idealized account. When he sets out to vindicate Roman rule by looking at the first inhabitants, and counters accusations of barbarity by discovering that the earliest Romans were in fact Greeks, one wonders whether his evaluation is due to study of Roman history or whether he shapes his historical account in order to further a previously formed conclusion. He has defined his political and moral aims, and in his conception of Rome's development he blurs the distinctions between what is true and what is good, between the morally praiseworthy and an unbiased reading of the historical evidence. However, the preface suggests that to dismiss Dionysius' history is to miss the opportunity for a greater understanding of ancient historiography. Dionysius makes two things clear: first, that what we may think of as an idealization is for him the best and most true way of describing Roman history, and second, that he foresees likely objections to his account, and counters them by citing his sources. What makes his claims for the truth of this obviously idealizing account seem so inflated is that none of these sources are extant, and that Livy's account of the regal period is so different. However, a cursory glance at Cicero's *de Republica*, or at what remains in Augustine of Varro's treatment of Numa or Tarquinius Priscus, actually suggests that what seems to us gross idealization was in fact the normal way of depicting the regal period. The difference of Livy's account rests not on a greater scepticism towards his

[13] Cicero, *de Republica* I and II. Reconstructing Varro's conception of the period of origins is problematic, but fragments of the *Vita Populi Romani*, ed. B. Riposati (1939) and the *Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum*, ed. B. Cardauns (1976), *De Lingua Latina* V.41ff., with P. Boyancé, 'Sur la théologie de Varron', *REA* 72 (1955), 57–84, E. Rawson, *Intellectual Life in the Late Roman Republic* (1985), 242–7 and B. Cardauns, 'Stand und Aufgaben der Varroforschung (mit einer Bibliographie der Jahren 1935–80)', *AAWM* (1982), no. 4, might help those wishing to do so.

[14] cf. II.8.3 for an anti-Roman etymology of patrician.

[15] e.g. Bowersock, op. cit. (n. 11), 130–1; Palm, op. cit. (n. 3), 11. But see now Gabba, op. cit. (n. 3), 80.

[16] H. Hill, 'Dionysius of Halicarnassus and the origins of Rome', *JRS* 51 (1961), 88–93, rejected by Bowersock, op. cit. (n. 11), 131 n. 5; 110 n. 7.

[17] Sordi, op. cit. (n. 11), discusses Timagenes' reputation for being anti-Roman, observing that it rests more upon anecdotal than firm evidence from the fragments.

sources, so much as a different view of the course of Rome's history, around which Livy then shapes his account of Rome's beginning.[18] The idea that Dionysius should have known better stems from a predisposition not to take him seriously.

II. THE CHARACTER OF DIONYSIUS' NARRATIVE

Central themes of the preface can be found at work in the narrative. Here I sketch some examples from Romulus' reign. Established as a benign and enlightened ruler after someone quite different had dispatched his brother, Romulus realized that neighbouring peoples would be unwilling to intermarry with the insignificant newly-established state. If forced, however, they would yield, provided no insult were attached to the compulsion. The idea he thought up was approved by his grandfather, Numitor, and was also voted on in the senate.[19]

Dionysius gives only a cursory narration of events, and then moves to discussion, first of the chronology. Some have said it occurred in the first year of Romulus' reign, but Dionysius, following Gnaeus Gellius, thinks it was in the fourth year.

> The founder of a new city would have no reason to try such an action before he had established political order. (II.31.1)

As to motivation, some point to a scarcity of women, but others, οἱ δὲ τὰ πιθανώτατα γράφοντες (those writing most believably), with whom Dionysius agrees, cite the need to enter into bonds of alliance with neighbouring states. The response of Rome's neighbours to the event was correspondingly mixed:

> some were furious at what was done, but others, considering the intention behind it and the outcome, bore it with restraint. (II.32.1)

Dionysius carefully re-incorporates his own preferred analysis, the intention and outcome (διάθεσις and τέλος), into the perceptions of Rome's neighbours. It is a revealing point; Dionysius ascribes this theory of the motive for the deed to the historians who provide the most probable account, and shortly afterwards we find the contemporary witnesses reflecting upon the same analysis. The assessment of what is most probable does not remain within the realm of the evaluation of the historical tradition; rather, the result of historical conjecture is manifested in the considerations of the historical figures themselves. Something similar occurs in the discussion of the chronology: what Romulus would have done in the first and fourth years of his reign is evaluated with undefined criteria of what is reasonable for rulers of new cities, and Romulus is shown to act in accordance with these principles. Likewise when Romulus, speaking to the Sabine women, cites archaic Greek marriage rites as a consolation for the method of his abduction, he is replicating the interest in Greek precedent that Dionysius himself claims so often for Rome.[20] There is no difference in type between the interpretations of Dionysius and the motivation of Romulus, no suggestion of a gap of comprehension caused by the distance in time.

The preface highlights the significance of Rome's expansion, and Dionysius has a consistent sense of the processes. When Romulus first offers the citizens of Rome a new constitution, they reject the idea, recognizing that their ancestral one already provides them with the greatest benefits known to man, freedom and rule over others.[21] It is a basic assumption that conquest and rule are good in themselves. Likewise expansion: Romulus does not need to be credited with any particular reason for wishing his city to grow at the expense of his neighbours. Consequently, he made regulations concerning the exposure of infants and set up the asylum, responding to the refugee problem created by the Italian cities where tyrannies and oligarchies existed.[22] οἰκεῖα κακὰ (domestic evils) drove these people to seek exile at

[18] Gabba points out that Livy could in fact be much less discriminating in his use of sources, op. cit. (n. 3), 96.

[19] II.30.2–3.

[20] Romulus: II.30.5. Dionysius on Greek precedent in the same portion of the work: II.8.1–2; II.12.3–4; superiority to Greece in social openness: II.17; religion: II.19; in placing sons under the jurisdiction of their fathers: II.26.

[21] II.4.1–2.

[22] II.15.1–4.

Rome; once there, Romulus' kindness kept them. Romulus' most important policy concerned the treatment of conquered peoples, whom he integrated into the Roman state.[23] It was an area in which Rome was greatly superior to Greece. Dionysius devotes some time to comparing it to the importance placed upon birth at Athens and Sparta.[24] But it was not just in opening the citizenship to the conquered that Rome secured its expansion; Romulus' institution of patronage was the mechanism for maintaining stable relationships between Rome and her satellites, an institutional realization of φιλανθρωπία.[25]

> Romulus adorned the institution with a respectable title, calling the protection of the poor and lowly 'patronage'. He assigned proper duties to each party, creating bonds between them of a humane and civilized kind. (II.9.3)

> It was not only in the city itself that the mob were under the protection of the patricians; each of Rome's colonies, states which had volunteered alliance, and conquered in war, had those Romans she chose as patrons and guardians. (II.11.1)

As with the rape of the Sabine women, the virtues that Dionysius sees in Roman rule are not simply those things which he observes to have happened; they are the product of the deliberate application of ideas by the early Romans themselves. Dionysius credits his protagonists with insights that are beyond the reach of historical enquiry; their actions and conscious reflections fit an already defined conception of what history was about, of where Rome's early development was leading.

The reminiscence of classical authors in the narrative follows a similar structure. There is no space for the textual analysis necessary for a definition of how imitation functions in Dionysius' narrative, so generalization with a few examples must suffice. Consider this routine description of the character of warfare in the conflicts between Rome and the Latins which followed the destruction of Alba Longa:

> It was a war within one nation, and it went on for five years. The warfare was of a political, old-fashioned kind. There was no great confrontation between the full forces of each side, causing great death and destruction, nor was any city razed or destroyed by siege or other irreparable misfortune. Rather, they made incursions into each other's territory when the corn was at its height, ravaged the crops, and lead their forces home again, exchanging prisoners. (III.34.4)

In other words, it was a replica of the early stages of the Peloponnesian war, as described by Thucydides. The routine nature of the similarity gives it its significance; reading such a passage, one cannot avoid the conclusion that Dionysius is recreating classical Greece in Italy before its time. The fall of Alba Longa is the centre-piece of Dionysius' early books, the archetype for Rome's humane expansion, providing ample opportunity for adumbrating her ideological superiority.[26] In the copious speeches where Rome and Alba put forward rival claims, we find explicit citation by the speakers of the precedent of Athens or Sparta, and in the surrounding narrative, all kinds of casual reminiscences to different Thucydidean ideological types by the narrator.[27] In line with Dionysius' criticisms of Thucydides, these never accrue into clear-cut prejudice against either party, so that one cannot say that the Albans become the Corinthians of the Corcyrean debate, nor are they really the conservative Spartans. What occurs instead is that once more the words of the protagonists reproduce what the narrative itself conveys; the recollection of neutralized, contourless 'extracted highlights from Thucydides'.[28]

The processes of such narrative are varieties of idealization. Historical protagonists and historical narrative derive their character from a preconceived notion of what that character should be. The examination of Dionysius' theoretical writings enables such idealization to be reconciled with historical truth.

[23] II.16.

[24] II.17.

[25] II.11.

[26] III.1–31.

[27] Lists of echoes can be found in J. Flierle, *Ueber Nachahmungen des Demosthenes, Thucydides und Xenophon in den Reden der römischen Archäologie des Dionysius von Halicarnass* (1890); S. Ek, *Herodotismen in der römischen Archäologie des Dionys von Halikarnass* (Diss. Lund, 1942). S. Usher, 'The style of Dionysius of Halicarnassus in the *Antiquitates Romanae*', *ANRW* 30.1 (1982), 817–38, reassesses the value of such research.

[28] In the words of one critic, 'Für den Kenner der klassischen Literatur ist es ein Graus, die von echtem, wahrem Pathos getragenen Reden eines Thucydides oder Demosthenes hier in leeres rhetorisches Phrasengeklingel aufgelöst zu sehen': H. G. Strebel, *Wertung und Wirkung des Thucydideischen Geschischtswerkes in der griechisch-römischen Literatur* (Diss. Munich, 1934), 47.

III. THE HISTORIAN'S VIRTUES AND THE USE OF HISTORICAL MODELS

Dionysius' idea of historical truth rested upon a coherent and well defined set of values. A central element is the moral goodness of the historian's work. In his *Letter to Pompeius*, Dionysius compares Herodotus and Thucydides, and the terms of the comparison are clearly moral ones.[29] The first point of comparison concerns the choice of subject matter, about which Dionysius maintains the same view that he gives in the preface to his own history, that 'the first, and virtually the most essential of all tasks to those writing history, is to choose a noble subject, one bringing pleasure to readers.' Herodotus is superior to Thucydides, whose choice is wholly reprehensible:

> Thucydides wrote about one war, and an inglorious, ill-fated one at that. It would have been much better had it never occurred, and since that is not possible, to have been consigned to silence and oblivion, unknown to those born later. (*Pomp.* 3, p. 372)

The catalogue of cities destroyed and of natural disasters, given in the prologue, is Thucydides' way of making clear his bad choice, and of alienating his readers before they have even begun:

> He himself makes clear in the prologue that he has chosen a miserable subject. He says that because of that war, many Greek cities were laid waste, either by barbarians, or by the Greeks themselves. The result is that readers are alienated from the subject matter, since it is Greeks that they are to hear about. (ibid.)

Dionysius then directs his criticism to the second major task in the historian's treatment of his subject, where to start and how far to go. Thucydides is criticized for choosing as a starting-point a stage when Greek fortunes began to turn bad. This was unnecessary, especially for an eminent Athenian; it was really the product of φθόνος (envy) against his own city.

The criticisms that Dionysius makes of Thucydides in his essay on the historian are revealing for his view not only of how history should be written, but more generally of what kinds of things actually happen, and what kinds of interpretation it is fitting for the historian to make. In his discussion of the Melian debate Dionysius rejects as historically implausible the harshness with which Thucydides treats Athens and the Athenian Empire. The basis for this rejection is not just taste or sensibility, but also his own sense of the historical traditions of Greek values. Dionysius begins his analysis of the dialogue with stylistic criticisms, which gradually admit an element of moral evaluation.[30] This leads to a short explanation of how Greek history influenced the kinds of things that it was likely the Athenians would have said to the Melians:

> That is the sort of thing barbarian kings would say to Greeks. It was not suitable for the Athenians to say to other Greeks, whom they had freed from the Persians, that mutual justice is for equals, but brute force for the strong towards the weak. (*Thuc.* 39, p. 580)

He continues for some time in outrage at the atrocities uttered by the Athenians, until in very similar language he objects to Thucydides' wrong assessment of the respect of the Athenians for divine intervention, and claims that the famous maxim that the strong will rule where they can is δυσείκαστος, hard to make out, and quite outside human experience. He concludes that Thucydides makes the Athenians say all kinds of things which were quite unfitting for any Greek. He then explains why such things constitute downright historical errors: Thucydides was certainly not on Melos, and his invention here exceeds the criteria set out in 1.22.1, which Dionysius quotes. These criteria are adjuncts to the more universally applicable ones of τὸ πρέπον or τὰ προσήκοντα (what is right or fitting) which Dionysius usually defends by referring to traditions of Athenian piety or wisdom which Thucydides' judgement contravenes.

[29] I follow K. S. Sacks, 'Historiography in the rhetorical works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus', *Athenaeum* 61 (1983), 65–87, on the relationship of the contents of the letter to the earlier treatise *περὶ μιμήσεως*. Sacks argues that rather than simply reproducing juvenile material, Dionysius used the letter as the opportunity to give a general account of his views on historiography, something he did not do elsewhere. The crudity of the criticism in comparison to *Thuc.* results from the comparative method of criticism; it need not be evidence that the letter was an early work, unrepresentative of the mature Dionysius.

[30] *Thuc.* 39, p. 580ff.

As in the *Letter to Pompeius*, Dionysius conjectures that Thucydides' motivation for his slanderous account is the grudge he holds against Athens for banishing him.[31]

Dionysius should not be dismissed at once for simple-mindedness; the skill with which Thucydides represents the moral decline of Athens in the course of the war is one of the most compelling aspects of his work. Dionysius is speaking of the feelings of alienation experienced by Greeks when reading this account, and in this respect his word need not be doubted.[32] It is clear from the defensiveness of Dionysius' *Thucydides* that his detraction of the historian invited considerable opposition, although it is likely that it was predominantly his criticisms of Thucydides' style that irritated Dionysius' critics — Thucydides was a fashionable model for classicizing rhetoric.[33] In any case, it is not the criticisms of his morals themselves that need examination; Dionysius rightly perceives that Thucydides consciously set out to give a bad impression of Greece. What really is problematic is the narrow conception of the value of historical writing, whereby history that offends is bad history, and only those histories that are pleasing can be useful or morally good, or even respond to the demands of historical writing. Dionysius' criticism of the Melian dialogue makes clear that there is no incongruity between what was οὐ πρέποντα (unfitting) and what was untrue.

In this connection, the preface to the *Antiquitates* gives the same view as the *Letter to Pompeius*, and the morality of historical individuals complements that of the choice of subject.[34] A historian who records the actions of ignoble men may fairly be judged to admire them.

> They leave the impression to those reading their histories that they themselves admired lives which were like their writings, for people reasonably assume that words are the image of each man's spirit. (1.1.3)

This corresponds to the main claims of the preface, that Rome provided models of imitation right from the start, and that it is these examples of virtue that justify the writing of this history. The same process of admiration and reproduction defines the mimetic theory of writing behind all of Dionysius' critical writings. Two famous definitions survive from Dionysius' treatise *On Mimesis* as isolated fragments:

> μίμησίς ἐστιν ἐνέργεια διὰ τῶν θεωρημάτων ἐκματτομένη τὸ παράδειγμα.
>
> Mimesis is the action of taking an impression of the model according to principles.
>
> ζῆλος δέ ἐστιν ἐνέργεια ψυχῆς πρὸς θαῦμα τοῦ δοκοῦντος εἶναι καλοῦ κινουμένη.
>
> Admiration is the action of the soul motivated to wonder at what seems good. (Fr. 3, U–R)

Both of these, but particularly the second, could describe both the admiration of particular historical events, and the use of literary models for composition. The overlapping of these two rather different categories is another aspect of the negation of the history of unpleasant events; just as one must avoid certain literary models in composition, so one must avoid bad historical subjects. It is only the good that is entertained as an object for imitation.

It is clear that Dionysius was particularly aware that whatever the nature of the historical event, the written account would have an immense influence in determining the understanding of the event's character. Dionysius recommends that anyone writing a history should not choose his subject matter as Thucydides did; in this aspect, Thucydides is not a good model for imitation (although in other aspects, of course, he is).[35] If anyone is tempted to describe the Peloponnesian War, they should do it in quite another way, and as Dionysius shows in the subsequent discussion, and again in the *Thucydides* in less castigating terms, second to choice of subject is where to start and end, which exerts a huge force upon the character of the narrative; it is possible to give the Peloponnesian War a happy ending.[36]

[31] 'Unless the writer, in his grudge against the city for his sentence, is showering her with reproof, hoping that all will come to hate her', *Thuc.* 41, p. 591.

[32] cf. *Thuc.* 41, p. 590; the Athenians themselves would have been very upset.

[33] Cicero, *Orator* 9.30: 'Ecce autem aliqui se Thucydidios esse profitentur: novum quoddam imperitorum et inauditum genus.' See G. W. Bowersock, 'Historical problems in Late Republican and Augustan Classicism', *Entretiens Hardt* 25 (1978), 57–78. esp. 64 ff.

[34] He praises Thucydides explicitly for being fair in his judgement of individuals: *Thuc.* 8, p. 480.

[35] In *Pomp.*, he is superior in συντομία, for example 3, p. 382.

[36] *Pomp.* 3, p. 374–6. Cf. *Thuc.* 10.

For Dionysius, the creation of a historical account does not consist in the objective observation of a set of events that defines itself. Rather, the historian's decision about where to begin and end depends more upon the reasons for writing history than upon the nature of the events. If one is a good historian, these reasons will be admirable, and if not, they will be mean. Dionysius believed first of all that good historians pick good subjects. However, looking beyond this initial process of selection, with a different emphasis, a different framework and a different explanation, the same event could be represented in several different ways. A good historian perceives what the right way to represent each event is, responding to its actual character by choosing the right ending, for example. A better historian than Thucydides would have produced a different account of the Peloponnesian War. Best of all, since the event was itself a miserable one, would have been if it had never been given an historical account. This is perhaps the most important part of Dionysius' historical theories. It makes clear Dionysius' awareness of the complexity of the relationship between fact and interpretation, and the different interpretation which a different arrangement of facts can produce. Likewise he describes the very thin boundary which demarcates explanation of the past from the significance and effect of an historical account. Like modern formalists, Dionysius lays emphasis on the ordering of material within a historical text as a basis for the meaning which the events described convey. He envisages the possibility of other texts, differently arranged, which are rejected. His solution to the problem of how to choose between different potential accounts lies in his vision of the historian's virtues. For him, the writing of history was guided by universal moral criteria (including truth), and it was these that dictated the way in which the historical material would be explained and described, the significance of the past to its readers made clear.

Here we encounter the crux of Dionysius' method: the lack of interest in an objective historical truth. Dionysius holds certain opinions as to the nature of good and bad history, and good and bad are moral categories, which he would apply just as readily to the behaviour of his contemporaries as to the achievement of Thucydides. He shapes his history to a preconceived notion of historical goodness, which in no way derives from an objective consideration of the events which he describes.

It is at this point that the tenacity of our own positivist tradition can be most clearly felt. It drives us to dismantle what for Dionysius was obviously a coherent and holistic sense of how to write history, and to judge it too with our own assumption of objectivity. Dionysius' lack of objectivity is only problematic, however, if one takes a view of interpretation that is unaffected by the theoretical advances made this century. The contribution that hermeneutics can make to our approach to Dionysius can be summed up as follows: any interpretation always proceeds from the use of the unconscious structures which make understanding possible, and these structures are different at different points in history. Truth will thus look entirely different at different times, but this does not necessarily entail any difference in the degree of veracity. Heidegger produced a sophisticated model of how historical context and conditions totally determine all understanding. For him, all existence should be defined as existence within time, of the individual within history, so that the historical process is part of our being. Each person lives in the middle of a process of constant reflection on the past and anticipation of the future. Heidegger's interest was the definition of human existence in relation to time.[37] Gadamer, aiming to describe the processes of understanding in relation to encounters with texts, reapplied Heidegger's model to a slightly different end.[38] He summarizes lucidly Heidegger's idea of the pre-structuring (Vorstruktur) of understanding (though he describes it as a 'grobe Abbreviatur'). The reading of a text is described, but the process applies equally well to the historian's understanding of the past.

> Whoever wants to understand a text always completes a process of construction. He projects in advance a sense for the whole work as soon as some initial sense appears in the text. In turn, such a sense only appears because the text is read with particular expectations of a certain meaning. The understanding of what is actually in the text consists of working out such a preconceived structure, which will clearly be constantly revised in the light of what emerges from further exploration of the meaning. (*Wahrheit und Methode*, pp. 270–1)

[37] Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (16th edn, 1986).

[38] H.-G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, *Ges.Werke* Vol. 1 (5th edn, 1986).

The creation of any historical account, modern or ancient, can be thought of as the production of an analysis, formed by expectation, and then reassessed in the light of the evidence. Even the attempt at objective history is inseparable from the subject undertaking that attempt. The creation of an historical interpretation should not be thought of in terms of two separate entities, the events and the historian. The historian's understanding and reconstruction of those events can only take place with a dialectic between his own criteria of what kinds of meanings historical events have, and the evidence supplied by the events themselves. When Dionysius uses a preconceived model to reconstruct the regal period, he is doing nothing extraordinary. In method, his work is akin to any other historical reconstruction.

This is not to claim that the result resembles a modern historical account. If all interpretations depend upon the situation of the interpreter with regard to his own history, then historical truths will differ widely, without being aberrant. What can be isolated as the ideal around which Dionysius forms his historical account would not have appeared as an ideal to Dionysius. Rather, it seemed to emerge naturally from the material he was treating. The process of obsolescence in modern historical accounts can be described in similar terms: as the dominant idea around which they are formed no longer appears natural, but becomes obtrusive, they can be considered to have dated, and to be in need of replacement. It is by no means necessary that the next historical analysis will have a theoretically superior basis which will enable it to last longer. Endurance is more likely to be linked to continuity in the historical, more specifically the ideological, conditions in which the analysis was produced. The truism that Dionysius had a different view of the past from us can be explicated: his historical understanding is defined by his own history, his interpretations are an expression of expectations of meaning and of the future, based upon his experience and understanding of the past. His view of the regal period was true to him, and satisfied his conceptions of historical accuracy. Methodologically it was different from ours only in terms of the criteria around which historical accounts are usually shaped.

Gadamer's model of hermeneutics displays one feature that is at once a significant shortcoming and a positive merit. In finding a universal basis for understanding in culture and educational tradition, he avoids the questions of the ideology of interpretation, of the idea that particular dominating values tend to influence more than others the preconceptions necessary to understanding.[39] As such, his focus upon the creation of truth out of a kind of consensus between reader and text denies the possibility of truth for more self-consciously radical re-interpretations of the past, ones dependent on values differing from traditional meanings — black or feminist history, for example. While our appreciation of the way in which Dionysius' account was true need not be affected by this problem, it does serve one particularly useful purpose. If we consider the ideas which are the basis for Dionysius' reconstruction, and take them as the components in his search for a credible truth, then we gain a more concrete sense of the power of Augustan ideologies even within the realm of historical belief itself. Dionysius' interpretation of early Rome is shaped by his analysis both of history and of his own world. It is fair to assume that ideas which form those preconceptions necessary to a true reconstruction bear the mark of a successful ideology, of a society in which one kind of self-definition has been particularly adept at penetrating the realm of ideas.

Dionysius' view of the truth about Rome's whole history relates to his positive representation of his own position, as a Greek in a world dominated by Rome. With the coming of the Principate, Roman history could be seen to demonstrate that the tradition of great men controlling affairs, which began with the kings, was one that ultimately led to peace and prosperity rather than to strife. Dionysius perceived that recent events showed that the early view of Rome's kings, the view attested by a variety of sources, and preserved in most fragmentary republican narratives of the regal period, was after all the correct one.[40] He feels compelled to supplant the misapprehension of Rome, and the ignorance of the past which fed this misapprehension, with a true version of events. Further, he is driven by a political aim: to replace an account based upon a view of injustice, barbarism and the perversity of the

[39] See Georgia Warnke, *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason* (1987), 108–17, with notes, for Habermas' criticism of *Wahrheit und Methode* on these grounds, and Gadamer's response.

[40] C. J. Classen, 'Die Königszeit im Spiegel der Literatur der römischen Republik', *Historia* 14 (1965), 385–403. M. A. Guia, 'La valutazione della monarchia a Roma in età repubblicana', *SCO* 16 (1967), 308–29.

universe, with one that stresses order, progress, and historical significance. To him, however, this political aim was synonymous with promulgating what he could witness to be true.

The credibility of his reconstruction rests upon the veracity of key ideas, that the Romans were Greeks, that the Roman kings were the founding fathers of the city, whose virtues have now found their corollary in the statesmen of Augustan Rome. These ideas form the basis for Dionysius' comprehension of his own world, and of its place within history. He recognizes the novelty of his interpretation, and it is his insistence on his new interpretation that can act as evidence of the change in perception of Rome which could become credible under Augustus. An analysis which presupposes deliberate perversity and the motivation of a blatant propagandist can provide a version of how Dionysius came to construct his history; as an alternative I offer a more critical approach to the connection of ideology and historical reconstruction.

IV. RHETORIC, POLITICS AND HISTORY

We can now look at Dionysius' treatment of the idea of philosophical rhetoric, in order to understand how his conception of historical good and bad functioned, and how it related to his views on rhetoric. Dionysius begins the preface to his collection of essays *de Oratoribus Veteribus* by praising the age in which he lived, which was witness to a revival of the old φιλόσοφος ῥητορική (philosophical rhetoric). This is more than simply the demise of decadent Asiatic rhetorical styles. The cause of the revival is Rome, and particularly the example of virtue and education that Rome's leading men provide for her whole realm.[41]

> Rome's rulers manage the common good in accordance with virtue and excellence, being very well educated and noble in their judgements. They have further encouraged the prudent section of the state, and compelled the thoughtless to pay heed. (*Orat. Vett.* pref. 3)

According to Dionysius, the result of this renewed political sense has been a great flood of histories, political and philosophical works, by both Greeks and Romans, marking, so he hopes, the imminent end of the ζῆλος ἀνοήτων λόγων (admiration of thoughtless ideas). This treatise will contribute to the decline; he is not modest in describing its universal appeal:

> I have chosen a subject of universal interest and humanity, and capable of bringing great benefit. It is this: which of the old orators are most worthy of study, and what were the aims of their life and works, and what from each should one adopt or avoid . . . (*Orat. Vett.* pref. 4)

The virtues and faults of the ancient writers are not just stylistic; the decisions they make in their writings and those they made in their lives are juxtaposed, and both can be an example to humanity. This continues the picture of the cultural revival at Rome; Dionysius clearly envisages education, rhetoric, literary production and political leadership as forming a whole, in which the contiguity of personal behaviour and rhetorical style is assumed.[42] Again, this is the idea that writing reflects the soul of the author; in the works of the great orators, the blend of life and writing is obviously much closer.

Isocrates was a particularly important figure in Dionysius' conception of philosophical rhetoric.[43] He begins his *Isocrates* by praising the zeal with which Isocrates tried to inspire his readers to political action; it is an aim which he shares, both in this work, and in his history. Dionysius begins his section on the *Panegyricus* with a rhetorical question, of a kind that gradually becomes very familiar: 'Who would not become a lover of his city and people, and who would not strive for the common good, having read the *Panegyricus*?'[44] Reading Isocrates will change your political consciousness. The historical parts of the *Panegyricus* are the most efficacious; Dionysius' discussion is limited to the retelling of the virtues of the men of old who liberated Greece from the barbarians. He reproduces what he finds most inspiring, commending its effect to his readers.

[41] K. Heldmann, *Antike Theorien über Entwicklung und Verfall der Redekunst*, Zetemata 77 (1982), 122–31, discusses Dionysius' conception of rhetorical revival against a background of his and other authors' conceptions of history and the history of rhetoric. See also Gabba, op. cit (n. 3), ch. 3.

[42] The idea of direct access to the author through his writings, and of criticism including both, was not new: see Polybius XII.24.1, and Pédech, ad. loc. (Budé ed.), and H. Homeyer, 'Zu Plutarchs *De Malignitate Herodoti*', *Klio* 49 (1967), 181–7.

[43] See H. M. Hubbell, *The Influence of Isocrates on Cicero, Dionysius and Aristides* (Diss. Yale, 1913), 41ff.

[44] *Isocr.* 5.

The need for history to provide examples of virtue is thus not an isolated idea, but rather forms part of the mimetic theory of writing, whereby virtue is perpetuated in a stream of admiration and imitation.[45] According to this theory, anyone embarking on composition knows first that his words will reflect his character, and is thus motivated to leave the most favourable impression of his character that he can to posterity. Secondly, he must know what constitutes true nobility, a knowledge which comes from reading history or the speeches of historical figures, and will lead him in turn to realize how he can represent noble events in the best possible way. The judgement of what is best is taken partly from the use of historical models themselves (perhaps in the form of a ready-made analysis by Dionysius), and partly from the idea of benefit to readers, which is in turn the product of the mimetic theory, in that everything that is well written is so because it inspires admiration in its readers, which can in turn lead to desire for imitation. In this way, to conclude his discussion of Thucydides, Dionysius examines the work of Thucydides' imitators, as if it were an integral part of the study of that author.[46] Modern distinctions between writing, life, written history, actual historical events, subject matter and historical account furnish a vocabulary inappropriate for comprehending the absence of distinctions and holism which the mimetic theory of composition assumes.

Conceptions of admiration and imitation explain the terms in which good and bad history are assessed, and they add a historical dimension to what otherwise appear as unhistorical moral criteria. The idea of Greece, and how it should be represented, which plays such an important part in the correct depiction of early Rome, is the result of Dionysius' wide reading of Greek authors. Indeed, this knowledge of Greece often leads him to comparisons which are more favourable to Rome. Such a comparison shows Dionysius striving to create a sense of early Rome's own cultural identity. It is based not upon the application of an ahistorical ideal, but upon the process of evaluation in the light of other historical accounts, and, in rhetorical works, documents.

A central problem about historical truth in Dionysius' account is whether the reuse of motifs from Thucydides or Herodotus prevents Dionysius from considering Roman history's own nature. In the light of Dionysius' writings on imitation, this problem can be more narrowly defined. The use of classical models produces a Rome closely resembling classical Athens, where protagonists cite as precedent the virtues of a culture that had yet to come into existence. Nothing can diminish the difficulty for the modern historian, who finds obtrusive Dionysius' identification of one culture with another, and one period with another. However, the quantity of historiography available to instil in Dionysius a sense of historical relativity and cultural diversity was much smaller than it is today. It is apparent from his theoretical work that the classical authors were repositories of material of which the historical importance was not temporarily limited, or in any way subject to changes brought by different historical conditions. Truth and virtue, as well as other, less admirable qualities were to be found in a form that could be adopted without concern for the historical context in which it originated. They formed the criteria around which historical analysis was based, and from which historical characterization was created. Imitation is always, in Dionysius, part of the wider vision of the production of historical truth. Knowledge of the past and an understanding of earlier historical writing are the corner-stones of a rhetorical education; the aim of such education is the reproduction, either in action or writing, of the improving power which reading about the past can produce.

V. THE PRACTICAL USE OF HISTORY AND THE PROBLEMS OF EARLY HISTORY

A difficulty that Dionysius himself acknowledges is that when dealing with periods about which little is known, there is the danger of seeming to invent. Reconstruction is necessary with scantily documented pre-history, but Dionysius has firm guidelines in his historiographical theories. Apart from its aetiological rôle in Rome's later history, Dionysius' decision to treat such an early period corresponds to his particular idea of the benefit of history, and to his views on the rôle of myths in historical accounts.

[45] cf. [Longinus] 13–14. See H. Flashar, 'Die klassizistische Theorie der Mimesis', *Entretiens Hardt* 25 (1979), 79–111, for a discussion of Dionysius' theory in a context that goes back to Aristotle.

[46] *Thuc.* 52–5.

Dionysius understood that different types of history presumed different types of audience, with congruent differences in the practical use of history. He gives specific treatment to the question of readers' benefit when discussing Thucydides, where his words are an important side-light on the projected readership of his own work. It comes towards the end of the *Thucydides*, after he has critically examined the impenetrable and rebarbative language of the speeches. He turns to certain critics, who have claimed that such a style should not be judged by the same terms as actual forensic writing, and was well suited to a historical work. They believe that Thucydides' language was not aimed at the man in the street, but at those who had been thoroughly trained in rhetoric and philosophy.[47]

> To those who think that it is only for the highly educated to read and be conversant with the language of Thucydides, I have this to say: In removing from common experience the element which is necessary and useful to all (and nothing could be more essential or bring more benefit), they are acting entirely for the benefit of a few men, just as in cities ruled by oligarchies or tyrannies. (*Thuc.* 51)

If we recall the preface to the history, the harmony is obvious between this criticism of Thucydides and Dionysius' own hopes of benefiting his readers. Furthermore, the twofold nature of Dionysius' aims, the two different kinds of audience, continues this democratic idea of benefit, in that the encouragement to Romans to live up to their ancestors is part of the imitative process of reading and living, while the political aim of helping the Greeks to understand Rome corresponds to a wider, but no less moral idea of the benefit of history.

When it comes to the idea of the direct practical use of history, mention of Polybius cannot be omitted. Like Dionysius, Polybius emphasizes at the start of his work that his choice of subject matter is the most noble possible.[48] Dionysius cannot avoid contact with Polybius; he holds an identical view of the importance of the central theme, 'how did Rome reach world domination?' Dionysius also shares his predecessor's concern with the importance of evidence and scientific research; together with the noble subject, it is the main criterion for any history worthy of the name at the start of his preface.[49] However, there are key areas where Dionysius must conflict with Polybius, and these centre on the possibility for the collection of evidence from sources other than eye-witnesses. The decision by Dionysius to end his history at the point where Polybius began can usefully be seen as an epitome of their relationship. It implies both reverence, as if Polybius' account makes revision redundant, but also suggests a significantly different historical method from the one Polybius propounded. Gozzoli singles out a different view of the importance of the reader as a key point of Dionysian polemic.[50] She isolates the two authors' opinions of the historian Theopompus as embodying this difference. Polybius believed that emotion and ψυχαγωγία (sensationalism) detracted from the true aim of history, and that what we might describe as cultural or local history was aimed specifically at *psychagogia* and the entertainment of readers.[51] This criticism is directed specifically at Theopompus at XVI. 12, where he is criticized for including records of events that go against the laws of what is both reasonable (εὔλογος) and possible (δυνατός), in this particular case in the narration of miracles. Polybius is strict in limiting his history to factual matters: here, those that are within the field of reasoned discussion. The entertainment value of local history is presumably thought to depend on such things as mythological figures in local genealogies, or in the childish (παιδικός) observation of peculiar customs. Polybius regards such entertainments as unnecessary for his purpose, and not required by his reader.

For Dionysius' views on Theopompus, we can turn to the *Letter to Pompeius*. There, Dionysius attributes to Theopompus many of the virtues of the historian that Polybius claims for himself: recognition of the importance of autopsy or full-time dedication to history.[52] Dionysius then points out that the many-sided nature of Theopompus' narrative does not lead merely to *psychagogia*, but is entirely beneficial.

[47] *Thuc.* 50.

[48] Polybius I.1ff. At I.4 he puts forward the idea of universal history.

[49] I.1.2.

[50] S. Gozzoli, 'Polibio e Dionigi d'Alicarnasso', *SCO* 25 (1976), 149–76.

[51] See Polybius IX.2. ὠφέλεια and τέρψις are contrasted at XV.36.

[52] *Pomp.* 6, p. 392 (Loeb).

> Let no one take this for mere sensationalism. It is not, but, to tell the truth, totally beneficial. Putting everything else aside for the moment, who will not agree that it is necessary for practitioners of philosophical rhetoric to study the many nations of Greeks and Barbarians, to hear of different laws and forms of government, and men's experiences and actions, and aims and fortunes? (*Pomp.* 6, pp. 392–4)

The answer to this rhetorical question may well be imagined to be Polybius. However, any such answer is here implicitly dismissed. Dionysius envisages great benefit for the student from just the kinds of subject Polybius rejects. He divorces them from the charge of *psychagogia*.

The ground for holding out against Polybius is the difference of practical aim that Dionysius envisages for his history. Polybius believed his work would be directly useful to politicians, but was exclusive about this; his history was for one kind of reader only.[53] The projected readership of Dionysius is much broader, and we have seen that the great politicians of Rome are only part of it. Certainly, the wide political significance with which he invests literary erudition is a significant rebuff to Polybius' narrow conception both of the rôle of history in political life, and of the rôle of literary value in history. The blending of the literary and political in the rôle that Dionysius imagines for the student of rhetoric vindicates the inclusion of much material into his history against the forbidding achievement of Polybius. In this vindication, the first book of the *Antiquitates* is crucial, where the evidence for the most important theme of the work, that the Romans were Greeks, is adduced. This evidence is drawn from material which Polybius would exclude, myth and local history. Dionysius sets out to treat these sources with the same criteria of rational assessment that could be applied to contemporary evidence. It is not for nothing that at the start of the work he discusses the importance of rigorous handling of evidence, even before he proclaims the importance of the subject of his work. Set against Polybius' criteria for history, the first book of the *Antiquitates* is outrageous, but Dionysius determines to meet the challenge.

In the first book, the result of the application of rigorous criteria to mythical evidence is, naturally, a bizarre rationalization of myth. I include an illustration to supplement understanding of the more historical part of Dionysius' narrative: the account of Hercules' killing of Cacus. To begin, Dionysius alerts us to the fact that there are two versions of the story: 'Of what is said about this demigod, some is rather mythical, some more truthful' (I.39.I). Whereas one might imagine that Dionysius would then produce two very different accounts, we find instead two narrations which vary only in the degree of rationalization. In the mythical version, Heracles is driving the cattle of Geryon back from Spain, stops in the attractive neighbourhood of Pallantium, and falls asleep. At this, a local bandit, Cacus, finds the cattle and abducts a few of them. He has none of the monstrous characteristics that Virgil gives him, and behaves throughout in a thoroughly comprehensible, rational way. At no point does Dionysius allow the narrative to become even the slightest bit racy, and the whole episode is characterized by the careful delineation of each point, focusing on the minute decisions of the protagonists. There is nothing distinctively mythical, one might say.

However, the contrast that Dionysius predicts between the two versions is carried through. An extreme degree of rationalization is found in the version that is ὁ δ' ἀληθέστερος, ᾧ πολλοὶ τῶν ἐν ἱστορίας σχήματι τὰς πράξεις αὐτοῦ διηγησαμένων ἐχρήσαντο (truer, used by many who relate his deeds in the form of history),[54] with Heracles as the greatest general of his day. His journey through Italy was part of his mission to reform and civilize the world. He destroyed tyrants, thwarted bandits, reconciled hostile neighbours and performed many feats of engineering: changing the course of rivers, building cities in deserts, roads through mountains. He was not just passing through with his cattle. Rather, he was leading an army, came on purpose to subjugate the country, and was detained by the absence of his fleet and the recalcitrance of the inhabitants. Paradoxically, in this version Cacus is much more brutal and monstrous as the leader of a band of brigands, and he deliberately sets out to oppose Heracles. The version ends with the assertion that it was because of his great deeds that Heracles gained great fame and reputation, and that this led to honours that were ἰσόθεοι (godlike). The account is essentially an euhemeristic one, and closely resembles the one given by Diodorus Siculus.[55]

[53] IX.I. This leads in turn to the dismissal of entertaining history.
[54] I.41.I.
[55] Diodorus IV.17ff. Polybius' shadow hung just as heavily over Diodorus: see Rawson, op. cit. (n. 13), 223–4.

The idea of the ἱστορίας σχῆμα (form or shape of history) encapsulates the way in which Dionysius can attempt to meet Polybius' distrust of myth. It implies, if one interprets it cynically, that history is characterized by a certain method of discourse, that can be applied even where the subject matter is unsuitable. In other words, if something looks like history, then it is historical. However, if one brings to bear the mimetic theory of literary creation, it is a very short step from this cynical interpretation to one that is derived from a consideration of the significance of *mimesis*. The assumption behind Dionysius' account of Heracles is that somewhere in the traditional accounts lies a body of fact, and that if analysed according to the demands of historical writing, an improving and essentially true version will result. Dionysius is asserting the value of myth as a historical source, while simultaneously showing that it can be narrated with other aims than the gratuitous entertainment of its readers.[56]

The polemic with Polybius concerns the possibility for narration of early history using the historical criteria that Polybius set for his treatment of contemporary events. It is clear from the preface to the *Antiquitates* that a rigorous examination of evidence will fit the grandeur of Rome, and the rational character of the myths in the first book, like the antiquarian researches, is directed to the production of a historical account of a subject that seems to us beyond the scope of history. It was only with the growth of antiquarianism that such ideas were possible: by Dionysius' time, Varro had made euhemeristic research respectable at Rome, and had himself used it in his investigations into distant pre-history. For Polybius, the field had yet to be expanded in this way. The technique for dealing with myth, as demonstrated in the versions of the story of Heracles and Cacus, is essentially to analyse the figures as though they were real, investigating their motives and thoughts. Dionysius prefers to go further, with an account that makes Heracles into a historical figure.

To sum up, we can refer again to the idea of practical use for history. Myth for Dionysius does not imply *psychagogia*, but rather contains the evidence necessary to prove that the Romans were in origin Greek, and from the earliest times behaved better than the Greeks themselves. The justification of his choice of subject matter is the importance of his political aims, the benefits that he hopes his work will bring, both to Greeks and to Romans. He has an ambitious view of the effect of his work upon his audience, and the idea of improving their understanding, as described in the preface, depends upon helping them to recognize the Greek origin, and in describing, in appropriate language, the models of morality and statesmanship that Rome brought forth from the earliest times. It is important to make a link with the processes of mimetic composition. The presentation of an event to bring out its improving and beneficial quality depends upon giving a true version. Knowledge of the truth is, for Dionysius, the result of his reading, of the awareness of how a true and beneficial historical account should be written. In mimetic composition, historicity is thus created through the reminiscence of classical historians. It is from his dependence upon models for historical discourse, without which no good historical account could be produced, that the events he narrates are shown to be historical.

VI. REGAL POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS

A final, and important, example is Dionysius' depiction of political processes at Rome. Schultze points out that although Dionysius recognized different political groups that did exist in the Republic, *plebs* and *populus*, *assidui* and *proletarii*, these disappear in the narration of events, to be replaced by an all-purpose distinction between δῆμος and ὀλίγοι (people and rulers).[57] Within the regal period, the matter is different, since during this time Rome's political institutions were formed. Although the first inhabitants of Rome, an undifferentiated πλῆθος (mob), approve the continuation of the constitution of the Albans, this only means that they agree to continue having a king.[58] Romulus at once demarcates plebs and patricians, the tribes, and senate; for the first and last of these, he followed direct Greek example.[59] Previously there has been no analysis of the nature of Alban society; the process by which Romulus had access to Greek precedent is left unclear; there is nothing to make us think that

[56] The historicizing treatment of myth persists: C. Sourvinou-Inwood, '"Myth" and history: on Herodotus III.48 and 50–53', *Opusc. Ath.* 17 (1988), 167–82.

[57] Schultze, op. cit. (n. 12), 130f.

[58] II.4.

[59] II.8.1–2; II.12.3–4.

there was an unbroken tradition from the time that the Greeks who were the ancestors of the Romans came to Italy. And there is very little in the ensuing narrative concerning the rôles of these institutions. The elections of the kings reinforce the picture of democracy, as senate and people play an important rôle, and occasionally a decision is referred to the senate.[60] When it comes to the differentiation of the interests of these groups, Dionysius is vague. During the first interregnum, tension arises between factions in the senate, and when Numa comes to power, he relieves the poor and placates the patricians.[61] However, when Tullus and Ancus come to power, their first actions, the distribution of land, and the revival of Numa's religious institutions, are measures responding not to any social disturbances, but more an indication of the kings' own interests and characters.[62] And so it is for almost the whole of the narrative of the regal period. The battles whereby the city expands are described in terms of the king and the enemy city. It is the king who hears foreign ambassadors and sends out his own.[63] If the constitution is mixed, the rôle of the senate is understated.[64] Suddenly, however, at the start of the reign of Servius Tullius, we hear of the indignation of the patricians at the diminution of senatorial power, their recognition of the disparity between their own and the people's interests, and the cunning of the king in harnessing popular support.[65] A political structure has emerged for which we are totally unprepared.

Gabba suggested that the political issues were those of the Gracchi: Dionysius began his account of Servius by following Fabius Pictor, but abandoned him, to tap a later, post-Gracchan, source.[66] Gabba responds to the obtrusion of what appears as an anachronism in Dionysius' account. By focusing on sources, however, a more basic idea is obscured. The sudden appearance of a different political structure is typical of the account as a whole. Dionysius' dependence upon earlier authors as models for effective writing leaves no space for a well defined sense of the historical uniqueness of the period described. There is no reason why political events within the period should have a mutual coherence. Some things, such as the grim fratricide of the last remaining Horatius,[67] or the character of warfare between Rome and the Latins,[68] can be explicitly old-fashioned; other things, like these political processes, or Servius' response to them, can seem too modern. However, the function of the early Romans as moral models and exemplary Greeks, and the view of writing which leads Dionysius to represent them as he does, imparts no fixed temporal identity against which modernity, antiquity, or anachronism can be judged. Further, there is no need to imagine a distinction between those authors who helped Dionysius write a good history by example, such as Thucydides, and those upon whom he actually depended for information, the lost annalists. Both were subjected to the same process of reading and selection, both used for the formation of a picture of what is likely to have happened.[69]

VII. CONCLUSIONS

This account of Dionysius' representation of early Rome has isolated as a characteristic of the narrative lack of interest in the creation of a consistent sense of the character of the period, at least in terms of its political or cultural development. Concurrently, the narrative is shaped strongly by the implementation of predictions which Dionysius makes in the prologue, namely that Rome's virtue can be vindicated in the behaviour of her first inhabitants. Dionysius' political aims, and the belief that the Romans were Greeks, are formative influences in the narrative.

[60] The Sabine women ask their permission to act as ambassadors, II.45–3–4.

[61] II.62.

[62] III.1.4ff.; III.36.

[63] e.g. from the Etruscans to Tarquinius Priscus, III.50; Ancus to the Latins, III.37.3. Tullus postpones an audience with the Alban ambassadors, III.3.3.

[64] Schultze describes how in the transition from monarchy to republic, Dionysius lays particular emphasis on the king/consul equivalence, and upon continuity with the regal constitution, op. cit. (n. 12), 131.

[65] IV.10.4ff.

[66] E. Gabba, 'Studi su Dionigi da Alicarnasso II, il regno di Servio Tullio', *Athenaeum* n.s. 39 (1961), 98–121; op. cit. (n. 3), 164ff.

[67] III.21.7 lays particular emphasis on the savagery of early Rome: 'So remorseless in hatred of baseness was the character and morality of those early Romans that if one were to compare them to present practices and ways of life, they would appear cruel and harsh and not far from savage nature.'

[68] III.34.4.

[69] Gabba, op. cit. (n. 3), ch. 5 is the culmination of many years' study of the Roman annalists preserved in Dionysius. The interpretation which I have proposed here, trying to reconstruct Dionysius' way of reading and writing, differs from Gabba's, with its aim of restoring a lost period in Roman historiography.

From examining the rhetorical writings for Dionysius' ideas on how to write history, it can be seen that this failure to create a distinct character has its basis in the mimetic conception of literary composition, and in the emphasis that this theory lays upon the text and the historian. It is clear that Dionysius regards himself as fulfilling the duties of the historian; his depiction of a glorious subject in appropriate terms leads him to the production of a classicizing account. However, this account is not based solely on ideas derived from rhetorical theories. Dionysius is not simply paying lip-service to the idea of truth in history. It is as the result of lengthy research that he concludes that Rome's founders were in origin Greek; the way in which he then depicts the Romans as Greeks responds to his ideas of how Greeks behaved, for which there was also ample literary testimony. The greatest logical shortcoming in Dionysius' account is the deduction that the earliest Romans can guarantee the virtues of the latest, but in this, he is in tune with an important tradition concerning the regal period, also represented by Varro and Cicero.

Modern philosophy of history suggests that there can be no historical understanding without the use of an *a priori* model. Dionysius' own particular model derives from his other theories concerning the nature of writing, and its relationship to philosophy and life. It would be a mistake to underestimate the rhetorical in φιλόσοφος ῥητορική, but it is also abundantly clear that rhetoric means educated discourse, language consciously controlled to a particularly appropriate end.[70] Dionysius' history and his writing both find their guiding principle in the ideal of virtues derived from a vision of a glorious past, capable, in the present political climate, of living again. History and the language in which it has been recorded provide the means of expression for new historical writing, and it is the cultural flowering particular to Augustan Rome which makes those old values once more appropriate. The course of history now vindicates a reinterpretation, and the language in which Greece once celebrated itself can come into its own to celebrate Rome.

Dionysius supports the contention that patterns of historical explanation derive from the historian in his linguistic and social context, rather than directly from the material. His emphasis upon the effect of the historical work, and the contribution of the historian's political aims, can be thought of as awareness that history can never simply neutrally reflect *the facts*, and in this, he resembles modern historical thinking. He counters the problem which is then raised, of the impossibility of objectivity, by advocating philosophic rhetoric as the historian's aim, with its moral and political commitment, and its desire for truth. This account of Dionysius has shown that the difference between idealization and historical reconstruction is one of historical context rather than method. What motivated Dionysius' version of Rome's beginnings was a desire to give an account which made sense in terms of what happened later in Rome's history, a task not altogether different from the one which historians of archaic Rome have to set themselves today.

As a witness to the success of an Augustan world view, with Rome the unifying culmination of world history, Dionysius' representation can only take its rightful place if the processes which provide it with credibility are acknowledged. We should lay greater emphasis on the extent of Dionysius' optimism, and we should look at the change in intellectual climate which he represents. It is here that we can discover the preconditions for his beliefs, and for his particular construction of the truth. In the quest for a true account of Rome's beginnings, he produces a universal history which, in contrast to Polybius, could employ a totalizing explanation to incorporate mythical material, tempered with the analytical tools provided by antiquarianism and, in euhemerism, religious philosophy. Seen in this way, its methodological choices inseparable from historical conditions, Dionysius' history is a valuable guide to appreciating other Augustan representations of the past.

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[70] cf. Vico's conception of *sensus communis*, the idea of common educated language as the basis for rhetorically informed utterance, articulated as a defensive response to Cartesian logic: Gadamer, op. cit. (n. 38), 19ff. and John D. Schaeffer, 'The use and misuse of Giambattista Vico: Rhetoric, orality and theories of discourse', in H. Aram Veeser (ed.), *The New Historicism* (1989), 89–101, esp. 95–101.