

Einladung zum Gastvortrag

von Prof. Dr. Vasileios Liotsakis
(University of the Peloponnese)

BEYOND THE VULGATE: COMPOSITIONAL PATTERNS AND NARRATIVE DESIGN IN DIODORUS' BOOK 17

It would not be an exaggeration to argue that Book 17 of Diodorus' *Bibliothēke* is the least studied source for Alexander. It is telling that even the scholarship on the early, fragmentarily preserved histories of Callisthenes, Nearchus, and Cleitarchus is markedly more extensive and multifaceted than that devoted to Diodorus' text. The lack of interest in Diodorus' compositional initiatives in Book 17 is only one manifestation of the broader tendency to assume that, for each book of the *Bibliothēke*, Diodorus followed a single source closely and without creative intervention. In this particular case, the extensive structural and thematic similarities between Book 17 and the *Historia Alexandri Magni* of Quintus Curtius Rufus, together with Curtius' admission that he relied on the work of Cleitarchus, formed the basis of the so-called 'Vulgate Theory,' which effectively consigned Diodorus to the role of an unthinking and lifeless copyist of Cleitarchus. Although for decades it has been repeatedly argued that Diodorus made use of his sources, both in Book 17 and throughout the *Bibliothēke*, in a far more creative manner than was previously assumed, no systematic attempt has been made to identify and analyze the techniques by which he processed the material he drew from his sources on Alexander and reshaped it so as to distribute it within Book 17.

In the present paper, I propose a way of reading Book 17 which, in my view, has the potential to free us from the methodological sterility of the tendency to view Diodorus merely as a copyist of Cleitarchus. The approach I propose builds on a method that has recently proved particularly fruitful in the works of Iris Sulimani *Diodorus' Mythistory and Pagan Mission. Historiography and Culture-Heroes in the First Pentad of the Bibliothēke* (2011) and Charles Muntz *Diodorus Siculus and the World of the Late Roman Republic* (2017): namely, reading the *Bibliothēke* as a whole in order to trace recurring patterns of thought across its full extent. Such patterns, Sulimani and Muntz argue (and I agree), reflect Diodorus' own thematic concerns and stylistic preferences. My contribution is to apply this perspective more specifically to Book 17, by tracing the presence and function of such patterns within it. In Diodorus' account of Alexander, we can discern a number of recurring motifs that are characteristic of the *Bibliothēke* as a whole: the clemency of rulers toward the defeated and their subjects, the benefactions they bestow upon the communities they encounter, and the honors they receive in return (as highlighted by Sulimani). Another important motif is that of necessity or expediency (χρεία), emphasized by Muntz. By examining how these motifs are distributed across the narrative, I argue that Diodorus does not simply insert them as brief, formulaic additions, but rather uses them to structure the narrative and to shape the moral evaluation of historical figures.

Donnerstag, 11.06.2026 | 18:00-19:30 | Seminarraum 7

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Organisation: Julian Degen