

*Novel Research: Fiction and Authority in
Ptolemy Chennus*

Submitted by Beth Hartley to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Classics, June 2014.

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Abstract

This thesis explores how Ptolemy Chennus' *Novel Research* blurs the lines between fact and fiction by playing with issues concerning authority and reliability, making it difficult for readers to discern the authentic from the bogus within the work. Matters are complicated because a complete version of the text does not survive, although it is possible to get an overall sense of the text from a book-by-book epitome of the work by Photius. This summary reveals that the text contained farfetched and eclectic material, drawing upon several literary traditions including, paradoxography, mythography, miscellany, and literary revisionism. The result is an unusual collection of elaborated "information" such as: revised myth, *paradoxa*, literary facts, questions and answers, and outlandish anecdotes mainly about legendary characters, although some historical figures also feature. Using Photius' epitome I will take a thematic approach and explore how Ptolemy blends invented and revised material, and bogus and genuine sources, to produce a work of pseudo-scholarship that not only amuses but also challenges readers' *paideia*. I will also establish how Ptolemy is aware of contemporary literary and cultural trends, as well as situate the *Novel Research* among other Imperial works of fiction to contribute to our understanding of Ptolemy and his work.

Note on Texts and Translations

The translations from Photius' epitome of Ptolemy's text are my own and the Greek is from TLG, which follows Henry's Budé edition of Photius' *Bibliotheca*.

Translations and texts from other authors are from the Loeb library, unless otherwise stated.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Overview	9.
1.2. Reconstructing Ptolemy and His Works	11.
1.3. The <i>Novel Research</i> : Text and Transmission	18.
1.3.1. Photius	18.
1.3.2. Tzetzes and Eustathius	27.
1.4. Prior Approaches and Studies	29.
1.5. The Approach of this Thesis	34.

Chapter 2: Ptolemy's Paratext: Navigating the Reading Protocols of the *Novel Research*

2.1. Introduction	37.
2.2. Readers and Reading the <i>Novel Research</i>	37.
2.2.1. Context	37.
2.2.2. Implied Readers	45.
2.3. Establishing the Paratextual Features of the <i>Novel Research</i>	50.
2.3.1. Paratext	50.
2.3.2 Reconstructing Ptolemy's Paratext	52.
2.4. Reading Ptolemy's Paratextual Features	57.
2.4.1. The <i>Novel Research Intended for Polymathy</i> as a Title	57.
2.4.2. Dedications and Implied Readers of the Text	66.
2.4.3. Criticizing Literary Predecessors	70.
2.4.4. Ptolemy's Claims about the <i>Novel Research</i>	77.
2.5. Conclusion	85.

Chapter 3: Wondrous Fictions: Paradoxography and the Discourse of (Dis)belief

3.1. Introduction	89.
3.2. Myths and <i>Paradoxa</i> : Belief and Reality in Mythography and Paradoxography	91.
3.2.1. Hybrid Tales	91.
3.2.2. Mythography	98.
3.2.3. Paradoxography	103.
3.4. Paradoxography and False Discourse	109.
3.4.1. Natural <i>Paradoxa</i>	109.
3.4.2. Wonders, Authority, and Fiction	115.
3.4.3. Curiosities, Fiction, and Wonder-Culture	125.
3.5. Conclusion	135.

Chapter 4: Ptolemy and the Mythological Revisionist Games of the Imperial Period

4.1. Introduction	137.
4.1.1 Ptolemy's Rock of Leucas Legend	137.
4.2. Homer and Myth	148.
4.2.1. The Importance of Homer	148.
4.2.2. Homeric Citations	151.
4.2.3. Rationalizing Myth	156.
4.2.4. Parodying Myths	162.
4.2.5. Homer and the pre-Homeric Epics	178.
4.3. Conclusion	190.

Chapter 5: Herodotean Palimpsests: Ptolemy and his Revisionist Treatment of Herodotus and the *Histories*

5.1. Introduction	193.
5.1.1. Herodotus in Antiquity	194.
5.2. Herodotean Palimpsests	198.
5.2.1. Croesus	198.
5.2.2. The Battle of Salamis	201.
5.2.3. The King of Kings	207.
5.3 Herodotus' Honesty and Reliability	214.
5.3.1. Withholding Information	214.
5.3.2 Gyges	223.
5.3.3. Herodotus the Plagiarist	234.
5.4. Conclusion	238.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Bibliography	243.
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Chapter 1

Introduction: Ptolemy Chennus and the *Novel Research*

1.1. Overview

This thesis explores the little known work that is Ptolemy Chennus' *Novel Research*, a compilation text that was written around the end of the first or the beginning of the second century CE. Unfortunately the original work does not survive. What remains of the text is a book-by-book epitome by Photius (codex 190) that dates from the ninth century and some quotations from two Byzantine scholars, Eustathius of Thessalonica and John Tzetzes, both of which date from the twelfth century. These texts offer us the only opportunity to get close to Ptolemy's original text; therefore we have to be aware that what information we learn from these sources about Ptolemy and his text can have limitations and drawbacks, not only because of their distance from Ptolemy chronologically, but also because of the nature of the texts and the different agendas of these later authors.

Although there are limitations to what these later authors have preserved of Ptolemy's work, it is possible to get some sense of the original text from Photius' epitome. It is from the epitome that we know the work contained an eclectic range of material, which drew upon several literary traditions such as paradoxography, mythography, miscellany, and revisionism. From what we can ascertain from Photius' epitome, the *Novel Research* seems to have contained a farfetched collection of elaborated, revised, and invented material, including wonders, myths, literary facts, and *problemata*. This type of material is found in a wide range of compilation works from the Imperial period including Aelian, Plutarch, Aulus Gellius, Phlegon of Tralles, and Pliny the Elder. Where Ptolemy seems to differ from these authors is that his text is thought to contain a mixture of bogus and genuine sources,¹ creating a work that is designed to challenge and amuse readers by testing their ability to discern fact from fiction. Therefore, a close reading of the text can be problematic, as there are different ways to read and interpret the purpose of the text, something that has previously been discussed by both Cameron and Ní Mheallaigh.

Cameron has argued that Ptolemy's inclusion of both authentic and fabricated sources and tales was an intentional strategy of Ptolemy that was

¹ Cameron (2004), 134-163; Ní Mheallaigh (forthcoming).

calculated to elude the notice of the gullible or under-resourced reader, so that only the astute reader would see through Ptolemy's deceptions. It is possible that the work could take advantage of some readers because it contains so many "red flags", such as a bilingual lamb and a list of fourteen bearers of the name Achilles, two of which were dogs. This led Cameron to argue that Ptolemy must have been aiming for entertainment rather than conviction.² Building on Cameron's idea of how the text can mislead unprepared readers, Ní Mheallaigh has argued that Ptolemy's work draws readers in by appearing to be a text that appears to offer *polymathy* as a shortcut to *paideia*.³ However, anyone who approaches the work in this utilitarian manner will find him or herself the victim of the work's ploy, because to read the work straight-faced is to miss the point of it entirely, as the ironic strategies of the *Novel History* are mobilized against its readers. It is designed to involve readers in a clever and intricate game of pseudo-erudition, which is designed to challenge readers and their ability to discern the authentic from the bogus.⁴ Although they differ in what they believe the ultimate purpose of the text was, both Cameron and Ní Mheallaigh see the work as a playful text that tests readers' *paideia*.

This thesis builds upon the ideas established by Cameron and Ní Mheallaigh and will flesh them out through a close reading of Photius' epitome of the text.⁵ I have chosen to focus on Photius' epitome of the text because it provides modern readers the best opportunity of getting an overall impression of Ptolemy's original work. Although there are quotations preserved by Eustathius and Tzetzes, their material supplements what is already in the epitome, they do not provide new or contrary information.⁶ Although a commentary based on Photius's summary would be a valuable piece of research, especially since it has never been done,⁷ I have chosen to undertake a thematic approach to my thesis in order to explore how Ptolemy plays with ideas of fact and fiction, knowledge and *paideia*, to situate him in the wider context of Imperial compilation and fiction writing. I will argue that Ptolemy has created a text that challenges readers' concepts of authenticity and credibility, and taps into the wider contemporary literary interest concerning fact and fiction by

² Cameron (2004), 134-163.

³ See Chapter Two.

⁴ Ní Mheallaigh (forthcoming).

⁵ I will be using Henry's Budé edition of the text Henry (1959-1977) *Bibliothèque* Tome III: Codices 186-222. However, there is also a Teubner edition of the *Bibliotheca*.

⁶ I discuss what we have of the text in the section of Photius, Eustathius and Tzetzes below.

⁷ It seems that Anton Chatzis planned to produce a commentary to complement his monograph (1914) on the *Novel Research*, but with the outbreak of the First World War this never materialized.

hinting at its own fictionality through parody, which seems to satirize contemporary social and cultural interest in knowledge and *paideia*.

1.2. Reconstructing Ptolemy and His Works

Up until the early medieval period Ptolemy's *Novel Research* appears to have been known among some Byzantine scholars who cite and quote Ptolemy for his "knowledge" of and material on myth and Homer. However, in modern scholarship the *Novel Research* is relatively obscure and Ptolemy's reputation does not travel far beyond those who have an interest in mythography, fiction, and compilation works from the Imperial period. Even then Ptolemy is often relegated to the footnotes when discussing the extant texts of well-known authors such as Lucian, Dictys, and Philostratus. This is a result of the work being lost, possibly when Byzantium was sacked during the Fourth Crusade (1204 CE),⁸ as we still have Byzantine scholars from as late as the twelfth century who cite the *Novel Research*.⁹ As a result, very little is known about this enigmatic author, and what scant biographical information we know about Ptolemy is ascertained from the *Suda*:

Πτολεμαῖος, Ἀλεξανδρεύς, γραμματικός, ὁ τοῦ Ἡφαιστίωνος, γεγονώς ἐπὶ τε Τραϊανοῦ καὶ Ἀδριανοῦ τῶν αὐτοκρατόρων, προσαγορευθεὶς δὲ Χέννος. Περὶ παραδόξου ἱστορίας, Σφίγγα (δρᾶμα δὲ ἐστὶν ἱστορικόν), Ἀνθόμηρον (ἔστι δὲ ποιήσις ῥαψωδιῶν εἰκοσιτεσσάρων), καὶ ἄλλα τινά.¹⁰

Ptolemy of Alexandria: a *grammaticus* and the son of Hephaestion. He lived under the emperors Trajan and Hadrian; he was called Chennus. He wrote *Paradoxical Research*; *Sphinx* (a historical drama); *Anthomerus* (a poem in twenty-four rhapsodies), and certain other works.

Although the *Suda* provides us with this valuable information, it is not without its limitations. The first issue is that it dates from the tenth century, which is much later than Ptolemy's date of the late first or early second century. The second problem is that although some of the *Suda*'s collected material on its entries was obtained by drawing on information directly from some ancient sources, much of

⁸ Wilson (1994), 6-7.

⁹ Wilson (1994), 6-7.

¹⁰ *Suda* pi, 3037.

the *Suda*'s information was not gathered from the primary sources.¹¹ The *Suda* frequently relied on compilations and abridgements of older works made by scholars from Late Antiquity and the Early Byzantine period. This is problematic because it is almost impossible to tell what has come directly from ancient texts and what has come second, third, or even fourth hand from another compiler. The *Suda* is by its very nature a compilation of compilations, and we have to be aware that like other works of its kind it contains inaccuracies and misinformation passed on from one compiler to the next. Despite these drawbacks, many of the authors and works the *Suda* mentions have not survived in an extant form, as is the case with Ptolemy and his works. Therefore, the very brief entry on Ptolemy is crucial for modern scholars wanting to learn anything about him.

The first thing that the *Suda* tells us about Ptolemy is that he was from Alexandria. By the Imperial period the main centre of learning in Alexandria was the *Museion*, which had been established under Ptolemaic patronage. Although other excellent centres of learning and erudition existed in the Roman Empire, the Alexandrian *Museion* was unmatched as an intellectual centre where a scholar could discuss and research ideas.¹² In this period Alexandria would have attracted a large number of intellectuals and prominent scholars who would have journeyed there for research or to give public readings and speeches.¹³ A great deal of original literary activity and material would have passed through the social networks of the upper-echelons of Alexandrian society. Therefore, being born and raised in the centre of Greek learning in Antiquity would have provided Ptolemy ample opportunity to gain a high level of education, and he would also have had easy access to canonical texts and scholarship. This leads on to the second point that the *Suda* makes about Ptolemy, he was a *γραμματικός*, which is not surprising considering the intellectual nature of the city that he hailed from.

In the Greek world a *grammaticus* belonged to the long tradition of people who painstakingly analysed texts and classified linguistics.¹⁴ According to Sextus

¹¹ The *Suda* is based on two lexica of conventional type, the so-called enlarged synagoge and the similar Lexicon Ambrosianum, but where the *Suda* differs from these is that it incorporates a mass of articles and material that are intended to be informative rather than lexicographical. The result is that the *Suda* is a cross between a dictionary and an encyclopaedia and marks an important evolutionary stage of this type of reference book since ancient encyclopaedias had previously not been organized in this way.

¹² Watts (2006), 145-151.

¹³ Watts (2006), 154.

¹⁴ Quintilian *Institutio Oratoria* 1.4.2.

Empiricus: ‘The *grammaticus* appears to interpret the writings of poets, such as Homer and Hesiod, Pindar and Euripides, and Menander, and the rest’.¹⁵ *Grammatici* offered an accurate reading of a text, explained the literary devices contained within it, provided notes on phraseology and subject matter, discussed etymology, worked out irregularities and discrepancies within a text, and offered a critical study of literature.¹⁶ In Rome from the late second century BCE onwards, *grammatici* were often associated with schools and were responsible for the first stage of a student’s education, before the rhetoricians, educating pupils in language and literature.¹⁷ *Grammatici* were prized not only for their erudite knowledge, but because they could impart this education to others. However, rather than guaranteeing *grammatici* an esteemed place in social and educational hierarchy, this increase in demand led to *grammatici* striving to distinguish themselves as individuals and competing with rhetoricians for erudite social status, as unlike rhetoricians, *grammatici* were not required to be charismatic or innovative in their teaching or works.¹⁸ Instead, a good *grammaticus* was considered to be someone who offered affirmation and continuity when discussing a canonical text; offering an independent and fresh approach was not required or encouraged.¹⁹

Therefore, when the *Suda* claims that Ptolemy was a *grammaticus*, we can infer that he was highly educated and was trained in literary analysis and criticism, training that is apparent with his interactions with literary canons such as Homer²⁰ and Herodotus.²¹ However, although his background as a *grammaticus* has shaped the *Novel Research*, as we shall see, Ptolemy has gone against conventional expectations of what is required from a *grammaticus*, as he offers his readers an innovative approach to canonical literature and myth. Moreover, it is possible that as a *grammaticus* Ptolemy was involved in the practice of *Echtheitskritik*, distinguishing the authentic from the inauthentic. This practice was developed by the Hellenistic scholars in the third century BCE²² and is mentioned by Quintilian: ‘The old school of teachers indeed carried their criticism so far that they were not content with correcting lines or rejecting books whose titles they regarded as

¹⁵ Sextus Empiricus *Against the Mathematicians* 1.58.

¹⁶ Cribiore (2001), 185.

¹⁷ Kaster (1988), 15-31; Watts (2006), 1-5.

¹⁸ Kaster (1988), 50-70.

¹⁹ Kaster (1988), 205-206.

²⁰ See Chapter Four.

²¹ See Chapter Five.

²² Peirano (2012), 37-42.

spurious, as though they were expelling a supposititious child from the family circle, but also drew up a canon of authors, from which some were omitted altogether'.²³ If Ptolemy did have a background in this *grammatici* tradition of discussing issues of authorship and authenticity, where he corrected (*διόρθωσις/διοθοῦν*) and edited (*ἔκδοσις*) texts,²⁴ it would have given him the training to enable him to create plausible bogus sources and material throughout the *Novel Research*.²⁵

The *Suda* also says that Ptolemy was the son of Hephaestion, which is how Photius refers to him in his epitome of the *Novel Research*, but the *Suda* also claims that he was also known as Chennus (*Χέννος*) or 'quail', the name in modern scholarship by which Ptolemy is known. This is an unusual name that is only found in the *Suda*, but the *Suda* does not divulge why he is known as this.²⁶ Nevertheless, it is useful for distinguishing Ptolemy from the vast array of Ptolemies in Greek history and literature. It is because of this unusual nickname that Bowersock proposed that the poet Martial (c.38-104 CE) might have known of Ptolemy, because in one of his epigrams, Martial compares poor forgeries of his work to the mimicry of a quail (*coturnix*):

*Vernaculorum dicta, sordidum dentem,
et foeda linguae probra circulatricis,
quae sulphurato nolit empta ramento
Vatiniorum proxeneta fractorum,
poeta quidam clancularius spargit
et volt videri nostra. credis hoc, Prisce?
voce ut loquatur psittacus coturnicis
et concupiscat esse Canus ascaules?
procul a libellis nigra sit meis fama,
quos rumor alba gemmeus vehit pinna:
cur ego laborem notus esse tam prave,
constare gratis cum silentium possit?*²⁷

Quips of home-bred slaves, vulgar abuse, and the ugly railings of a hawkers' tongue, such as a dealer in broken Vatinians would not want to buy for a sulphur match – these a certain skulker of a poet scatters abroad and wishes people to think them mine. Do

²³ Quintilian *Institutio Oratoria* 1.4.3. *Quo quidem ita seuere sunt usi ueteres grammatici ut non uersus modo censoria quadam uirgula notare et libros qui falso uiderentur inscripti tamquam subditos summouere familia permiserint sibi, sed auctores alios in ordinem redegerint, alios omnino exemerint numero.*

²⁴ Peirano (2012), 37-42.

²⁵ Cameron (2004), 134-163; Ni Mheallaigh (forthcoming).

²⁶ A quail appears in the work itself where it is inserted into a revised Herodotean story, which Ptolemy may have used to acknowledge this name; see Chapter Five.

²⁷ Martial *Epigrams* 10.3.

you believe it, Crispus? Shall a parrot speak with the voice of a quail, and Canus crave to play the bagpipes? May black fame be far from my little books that jewelled report wafts on white wings. Why should I strive for such evil notoriety, when silence can be had free?

According to Bowersock, the skill of the parrot was much admired in antiquity with its ability to imitate the human voice and language, while in contrast the sound of the quail left something to be desired. Based upon Ptolemy's ability to fabricate sources and material, this comparison in Martial led Bowersock to raise the possibility that Martial may be making a playful reference to Ptolemy and his reputation through his agnomen, establishing Ptolemy in the post-Domitian period of the first century CE and that he was known by this moniker.²⁸ This is supported by the fact that the *Suda* claims that Ptolemy was active during the reigns of the emperors Trajan (98-117 CE) and Hadrian (117-138 CE). This also roughly fits in with a reference to the Emperor Vespasian's Temple of Peace in Ptolemy's work,²⁹ which gives a *terminus post quem* of 75 CE when the temple was completed. This indicates that Ptolemy was active in the later quarter of the first century CE, a period when *paideia* played an important role in Imperial society and culture. Moreover, the mention of the Temple of Peace in Rome, along with a dedication to a Roman woman in the prologue³⁰ and references to Roman history and locations in Italy, suggests that Ptolemy was familiar with Rome and Italy; he may have spent time there, possibly in his capacity as a *grammaticus*.³¹

Although this thesis focuses on the *Novel Research*, one particular work of Ptolemy, according to the *Suda* Ptolemy wrote other works: the *Anthomerus* (*Ἀνθόμηρον*), the *Sphinx* (*Σφίγγα*), and the *Paradoxical Research* (*Περὶ παραδόξου ἱστορίας*). The *Suda* also hints at the existence of other works of Ptolemy (*καὶ ἄλλα τινά*), but these are not named. None of these works survive in an extant form, but the *Paradoxical Research* has long been accepted as being the same work as the *Novel Research*.³² However, the *Anthomerus* and *Sphinx* are entirely lost and we can only speculate about these texts from their titles.³³

²⁸ Bowersock (1994), 26-27.

²⁹ Photius *Bibliotheca* 149b, 32-33.

³⁰ See Chapter Two.

³¹ Chatzis (1914) v-vi; Dowden *Antipater* (56) *BNJ*.

³² Chatzis (1914), xviii-xix.

³³ Chatzis (1914) xxvi-xxx, lists some texts that could possibly be the works of Ptolemy.

The *Anthomerus* was a poetical work and as the name of the poem suggests it was an anti-Homer poem, which according to the *Suda* was twenty-four rhapsodies long, matching the number of books in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.³⁴ Anti-Homer poems were not a new phenomenon in antiquity, as they are almost as old as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* themselves. The earliest surviving example is Stesichorus of Himera's *Palinode* from the sixth century BCE, quoted by Plato,³⁵ in which Stesichorus recounts how he had been blinded by Helen for saying that she had gone to Troy (which tallies with the Homeric version), and only regained his sight when he told the "true" version of events surrounding the story, which is that Helen had in fact never gone to Troy, but had been impersonated there by a ghost or an *eidolon*.³⁶ Although Homer is not explicitly mentioned in any of the surviving fragments of Stesichorus' *Palinode*, the implication behind the poem is that Homer's version of events surrounding the Trojan War was not true, which is how Plato, the first author to refer to Stesichorus' story interprets it.³⁷ Stesichorus' version of events concerning the Trojan War, with its fantastic and amusing autobiographical spin is designed to deliberately provoke scepticism in his readers' mind concerning the veracity of Homer, earning him the place of 'the patron saint of the historical revisionist tradition'.³⁸ After Stesichorus there is a vogue for creative Homeric revisionism in the Classical period, notably Euripides's *Helen*,³⁹ a play that takes up Stesichorus' theme of the *eidolon* and which seems to be his own palinode aimed at rectifying his vilified portrayal of Helen in his earlier play the *Trojan Women*.⁴⁰ Then there is Herodotus' account concerning Helen, which although makes no reference to the *eidolon* story of Stesichorus, claims to be the true account of the Trojan War, which he learnt from Egyptian priests.⁴¹ Herodotus' account not only completely contradicts and revises the Homeric version of events, but also claims that Homer

³⁴ Chatzis (1914), xx-xxi.

³⁵ Plato *Phaedrus* (243a)

³⁶ Our primary source for this story is Plato in the *Phaedrus* (243a-b) and *Republic* (586c).

³⁷ Austin (1994), 1-20.

³⁸ Kim (2010), 15.

³⁹ Austin (1994), 137-203.

⁴⁰ See Wright (2005) for Euripides' treatment of Helen.

⁴¹ Herodotus *Histories* 2.112-120. Herodotus claims that Helen never made it to Troy because the ship that she and Paris were travelling in en route to Troy was blown off course, which forced them to land in Egypt, where the pharaoh upon discovering Paris' crime, detained Helen. However, the Greeks did not realise that Helen was not at Troy, but in Egypt, until after they had sacked the city.

knew this version of events, yet decided against recounting them because he considered them to be unsuitable for epic poetry.⁴²

By the Imperial period the tradition had come into its own with a wide range of works that were the heirs to the Stesichorean tradition, which revised the Homeric texts: Dio Chrysostom's *Trojan Oration*, Lucian's *True Stories*, and Philostratus' *Heroicus*. These works intertextualise with the Homeric texts but revise Homer's version of the story, challenging common perceptions about events during and after the Trojan War, using authentication strategies to verify their accounts.⁴³ Homeric revisionism runs throughout the *Novel Research*⁴⁴ and if the *Suda* is correct in stating that Ptolemy wrote an anti-Homer poem, it would firmly establish him in the Homeric revisionist tradition. What sets Ptolemy's *Anthomerus* apart from the works of the other revisionists is the supposed length of it, twenty-four books, which is a number that is synonymous with the Homeric epics. It is unlikely to be a coincidence that Ptolemy's *Anthomerus* was also twenty-four books in length; it seems to have been a calculated move that enabled Ptolemy to revise the Homeric works by matching them in length. The result would have been a text that was a substantial piece of work in its own right, but it would also be far longer than any of the revisionist works that survive.

The *Suda* also states that Ptolemy wrote a work called *Sphinx* and that it was a *δρᾶμα ἱστορικόν* 'historical drama', which suggests that the *Suda* is implying that it was a novel.⁴⁵ In antiquity there was not a specific word to designate what we refer to as the novel genre; *δραματικόν* is the best candidate, but this does not appear before Photius and even then it seems to refer to the dramatic aspects of the plot (the sufferings and reversals of fortune), rather than the novel itself.⁴⁶ As a title for a novel *Sphinx* is unusual, as the evidence that we have from the Greek extant novels and fragments suggests that we can identify three broad categories of title elements: *τὰ περί* or *τὰ κατά* and the name(s) of protagonist(s); content descriptions using a neuter plural noun or adjective ending in *-ικά*; the names of the female protagonists (*Χαρίκλεια*, *Λευκίππη*), without *τὰ περί* or *τὰ κατά*.⁴⁷ This is apparent with the extant novels we have, such as Chariton's *Callirhoe*, Xenophon of Ephesus'

⁴² Neville (1977), 3-12; Austin (1994), 118-136; Kim (2010), 30-33.

⁴³ See Kim (2010).

⁴⁴ See Chapter Four.

⁴⁵ Chatzis (1914), xix-xx.

⁴⁶ Whitmarsh (2005), 588.

⁴⁷ Whitmarsh (2005), 596.

Ephesiaca, Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon*, Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*, and Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*. Moreover, we also find the same pattern with the fragments and epitomised novels of Lollianus' *Phoenicica* and Iamblichus' *Babyloniaca*.

Although an unusual title, if *Sphinx* was used to refer to a woman, it could, to a certain extent, fit the pattern of female names, and it is possible that having such an enigmatic title was a deliberate ploy to draw in readers. However, surmising what the *Sphinx* was about and where it fits in with relation to other novels, only from its title, is a difficult task. Since the word sphinx conjures up images of Egypt and considering that Ptolemy was from Alexandria it is feasible that some of the novel's action could have taken place in Egypt. This would not be the first time a novel has been partially set in Egypt; Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* is partially set in Egypt and Achilles Tatius, who as with Ptolemy was also a native of Alexandria, has some of the narrative of his novel *Leucippe and Clitophon* take place in Alexandria. However, since sphinxes are also associated with the ancient Near East and Greek mythology, it is impossible to establish the exact scope, plot, and setting of the work. Moreover, since *Sphinx* is a title used for a comedy of Epicharmus and a satyr-play of Aeschylus,⁴⁸ it is possible that the work may have been a comedic play rather than a novel.

Therefore, from the scant information presented by the *Suda*, the picture of Ptolemy that we have is of an erudite individual who had access to the best literary resources available in the ancient world. Ptolemy seems to have used his training as a *grammaticus* to produce several texts that belonged to popular traditions at the time he was active, which suggests that he was plugged into Imperial literary culture and actively participating in it. If we are to establish a greater understanding of Ptolemy and the literary milieu he was writing in, exploring Photius' epitome of the *Novel Research* provides our only opportunity for this.

1.3. The *Novel Research*: Text and Transmission

1.3.1. Photius

The epitome of Ptolemy's *Novel Research* is found in Photius' *Bibliotheca* (ninth century CE) a work that contains around sixteen hundred pages, making the

⁴⁸ Dowden *Antipater* (56) BNJ.

Bibliotheca an extensive text, even by modern standards.⁴⁹ Roughly half of the books described by Photius do not survive,⁵⁰ these include lost compilation texts such as Pamphila's *Collection of Miscellaneous Research*⁵¹ and Alexander's (of Myndus) *Collection of Wonders*;⁵² lost novels such as Antonius Diogenes' *The Incredible Things beyond Thule*⁵³ and Iamblichus' *Babyloniaca*;⁵⁴ and Ctesias' historiography and ethnography texts the *Persica* and *Indica* respectively.⁵⁵ As a result, Photius' entry on a work is often our best or only means of forming an impression of the original text, as is the case with Ptolemy's *Novel Research*.

The *Bibliotheca* contains two hundred and eighty chapters or codices (although Photius gives the number of two hundred and seventy-nine), of which the *Novel Research* is codex one hundred and ninety. Each codex corresponds to a book that Photius had read and they vary in length from a few of lines (such as John Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Synopsis of the Histories*, Clement of Alexandria's *The Tutor*, and Timaeus' *Lexicon to Plato*),⁵⁶ to several pages (Procopius' *History*, Theophylact Simocatta's *Histories*, Olympiodorus' *Histories*, and Arrian's *Anabasis of Alexander*).⁵⁷ Despite the differences in length, the majority of the codices consist of a description of the text, accompanied by some biographical details about the author; there is also often criticism of the author and their work from a stylistic perspective.⁵⁸

In Photius' epitome of Ptolemy's *Novel Research*, he gives us a book-by-book summary of the content of the *Novel Research*, and from this we know the work was seven books long⁵⁹ and that it contained historical, mythological, paradoxographical, and aetiological anecdotes. The epitome also reveals certain motifs within the work, making it possible to get some sense of particular themes and the content of the

⁴⁹ Wilson (1983), 89; see Treadgold (1980) for a good introduction to the problems of the *Bibliotheca*.

⁵⁰ Wilson (1994), 6.

⁵¹ Photius *Bibliotheca* codex 175, 119b-120a.

⁵² Photius *Bibliotheca* codex 188, 145b.

⁵³ Photius *Bibliotheca* codex 166, 109a-112a.

⁵⁴ Photius *Bibliotheca* codex 94, 73b-78b.

⁵⁵ Photius *Bibliotheca* codex 72, 35b-49b.

⁵⁶ Photius *Bibliotheca* codices 27, 6a; 84, 65a; 119, 93a-93b; 151, 99b.

⁵⁷ Photius *Bibliotheca* codices 63, 21b-26a; 65, 27a-33b; 80, 56b-63b; 91 & 92, 67b-73a.

⁵⁸ Wilson (1994), 1-8.

⁵⁹ Photius mistakenly lists six books at the beginning of his epitome, (*Ἀνεγνώσθη Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Ἡφαιστίωνος περὶ τῆς εἰς πολυμαθίαν καινῆς ἱστορίας λόγοι ς*). However, this is rectified at the end of the summary, (*Ἐν οἷς καὶ τὰ τοῦ ζ' τῆς Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Ἡφαιστίωνος εἰς πολυμαθίαν καινῆς ἱστορίας τὰ κεφάλαια*). Although it is tempting to see this as some ploy of Ptolemy, the fact that there are similar mistakes throughout the *Bibliotheca* with other codices (46, 165, & 200), suggests that the discrepancy occurred when the text was epitomized. See Treadgold (1982); Wilson (1994); and Chapter Two for more information.

text. Book one focuses on deaths, transformations, Homeric revisions and problems, and information about the mentors of heroes; book two is mainly about Heracles and stories connected to him, as well as some information about Alexander the Great; book three has mythological revisionism and historical coincidences; book four is almost entirely about Helen and other women who share her name; book five is a disparate collection of revised myths, aetiological anecdotes, and names connected with epithets, which make the original theme of this book impossible to determine; book six focuses on Achilles; and book seven is almost entirely occupied by a collection of anecdotes concerning the Rock of Leucas legend.⁶⁰ Other themes include topics that related to Homeric myth and Herodotus, as well as an excessive number of invented male lovers of epic heroes. Whether these themes reflect Ptolemy's personal tastes and the main scope of the original text,⁶¹ or if it is the content that Photius has singled out, is impossible to say.⁶² However, since three of the books have discernable themes, and because other Imperial compendia texts such Pliny's *Natural History* and Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights* have clear book and even chapter themes, the possibility that each of Ptolemy's seven books had a thematic structure seems to be a logical assumption, even though it is not entirely apparent from Photius' summary. However, although Photius' epitome of the *Novel Research* is fairly lengthy, consisting of twenty two Budé pages of Greek, it has been roughly calculated that Photius' epitome runs at one word for every twenty of Ptolemy's. Therefore, while book one has four hundred and eleven words in Photius' codex, the original text might have had around eight thousand words per book.⁶³ Without the *Bibliotheca* we would not be able to tentatively reconstruct the *Novel Research*, but it is clear that Photius has had a dramatic impact upon the text and there are questions surrounding his reliability as a source for these texts.⁶⁴ The main reason for this is the circumstances of the *Bibliotheca*'s composition.

According to the text's dedicatory letter, Photius hastily compiled the *Bibliotheca* for the benefit of his brother Tarasius before setting out on an embassy to the Arabs after Tarasius requested a summary of the books read by Photius when

⁶⁰ Chatzis (1914) xxxviii-xl.

⁶¹ Hercher (1855/56), 281; Cameron (2004), 142.

⁶² Chatzis (1914) argues that boyfriends are common in the whole of Greek literature (lxiii) and that boyfriends maybe derived from comic sources (lxxix).

⁶³ Dowden (2004), 282; Dowden *Antipater* (56) BN⁷.

⁶⁴ Chatzis (1914), liii-lxx; Tomberg (1968), 40-62.

Tarasius was absent.⁶⁵ What the *Bibliotheca* represents is a critical account of numerous books that Photius had read over a certain length of time; it is the product of an unusual situation and had to be composed in a great hurry. How exactly Photius managed to compose the *Bibliotheca* in such haste has been the subject of much controversy and debate. Photius states that he wrote about the texts reviewed from memory (*μνήμη*), which may be the case with some of the entries in the *Bibliotheca* and it could explain why some of the codices differ in format and why there are some omissions from some texts.⁶⁶ However, remembering so many texts, even for someone with an eidetic memory, would be a complex and difficult task. Therefore, rather than translating *μνήμη* as memory it is often translated as ‘record’, which implies that Photius took notes when reading ancient texts and that he consulted these notes when composing the *Bibliotheca*. Photius does not tell us how many of these books he owned; it is likely that his personal collection may well have been substantial, but books were extremely expensive in antiquity and a collection of fifty may well have been exceptional, which suggests that Photius must have relied on libraries for his reading.

Photius’ choice of texts is striking; of the two hundred and eighty works documented, theology and history predominate, although oratory, novels, philosophy, science, medicine, and lexicography also come within its scope, but poetry is almost entirely neglected and he appears to have a weakness for strange and exotic places.⁶⁷ A possible reason for this can be found in Photius’ conclusion of the *Bibliotheca*: ‘To conclude, the books which I happen to recall having read in private – apart from those which are studied and mastered for crafts and skills – from the time when I acquired some perception and judgement up to the present summary synthesis of my reading, amount – I think- to three hundred less one fifteenth and one three-hundredth’.⁶⁸ Photius’ comments are thought to mean that he has intentionally omitted school texts such as, Nicomachus of Gerasa’s *Introduction to Arithmetic*, Euclid’s *Elements*, Aphthonius’ *Progymnasmata* and

⁶⁵ Photius *Bibliotheca praef.*

⁶⁶ Wilson (1994), 1-8.

⁶⁷ Bigwood (1989), 305.

⁶⁸ Photius *Bibliotheca* codex 280, 545, 1-7. ἄ μὲν οὖν φιλολογουμένοις ἡμῖν καθ’ ἑαυτοὺς εἰς ἀνάμνησιν ἐλθεῖν συνηνέχθη, χωρὶς ὧν ἡ σπουδὴ καὶ μελέτη τέχνας φιλεῖ καὶ ἐπιστήμας ἐργάζεσθαι, ἀφ’ οὐπὲρ τις αἴσθησις ἡμῖν ἀμηγέπη καὶ κρίσις λόγων ἐνεφύη μέχρι τῆς παρουσίας τῶν ἀνεγνωσμένων ὡς ἐν τύπῳ συνεκδόσεως, εἰς τοσοῦτον, οἶμαι, συνάγεται πλήθος, τριακκοσιοστῶ καὶ πεντεκαϊδεκάτῳ μέρει προελθεῖν ἄχρι τῶν τριακκοσίων κωλυόμενον.

Hermogenes' *De Ideis*.⁶⁹ Moreover, Photius has also left out the famous poets that any well-educated Byzantine would have read at school including, Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, and Theocritus, as well as prose authors such as, Thucydides, Plato, Xenophon, and Aristotle. This may in part reflect Photius' and his brother's literary interests, but it also implies that Photius has ignored texts that were widely available in favour of works that were difficult to find and were not that well known to himself or to Tarasius.

Photius' literary tastes, along with the hasty nature of the *Bibliotheca's* composition may account for the haphazard nature of the work. For instance, there is no logical organization of the contents and the presentation of the codices is not uniform with codices 234-280 differing from the others as they are considerably longer, open with a slightly different formula, tend to contain verbatim excerpts, and lack critical comments.⁷⁰ Moreover, there are drawbacks with the epitomes since Photius' summarizing of texts is uneven, which is apparent when we compare Photius' summaries with works that have survived. For instance, Photius' epitome of Herodotus' *Histories* is around forty lines in length. If we only had Photius' epitome to rely on and not an actual copy of Herodotus' text, we would have no inkling of the actual scale and scope of Herodotus' work, since Photius gives only the briefest summary of the succession of Persian kings and mentions that the work is full of fables and digressions.⁷¹ Also the very fact that Photius included the *Histories* in the *Bibliotheca* suggests that Herodotus' text was not that widely accessible in the ninth century, or at the very least, it was not being used as a standard school textbook, which is why it ended up in the *Bibliotheca*. There is a similar problem with the epitome of Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon*. Photius' summary consists of around twenty-five lines, which does not reflect the highly complex nature of the novel that we actually have. Photius says *Leucippe and Clitophon* is very similar to Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*, which is not the case since Achilles Tatius' novel has a first person narrative and Heliodorus' does not. Moreover, while it seems from Photius' comments that he has read Achilles Tatius' novel, as he stresses the erotic nature of the text,⁷² in his epitome of Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* he says the episodes in the novel are short and compressed, which is far

⁶⁹ Treadgold (1980), 6-7.

⁷⁰ Wilson (1994), 3.

⁷¹ Photius *Bibliotheca* codex 60, 19b.

⁷² Photius *Bibliotheca* codex 87, 66a.

removed from the very lengthy reality of the work, suggesting that he may not have fully read the text.⁷³ Even with the longest codices, like that of codex seventy-two which epitomises Ctesias' *Persica* and *Indica*,⁷⁴ detailed information has still been lost and his approach in summarising Ctesias' texts is inconsistent. The epitome of the *Indica*, a one-volume book that occupies fourteen Budé pages, while books seven to twenty three of the *Persica* receive twenty seven pages.⁷⁵ Furthermore, unlike Herodotus, Achilles Tatius, and Heliodorus there are no surviving copies of Ctesias' texts with which to compare with Photius' epitome to determine how accurate Photius' more detailed epitomes are; instead, as with Ptolemy's *Novel Research*, we are reliant on Photius for the text.

As with his summaries of these texts there are some limitations with Photius' epitome of Ptolemy's work. In many places in the work Photius does little more than indicate the topics that were originally discussed; the result is that we are often left both intrigued and confused by the lack of information that Photius gives us. For instance, at the opening of book one Photius tells us that there is a story about the death of Sophocles, but no details are given.⁷⁶ In book three we are told about the reed of Midas, which said that Midas had the ears of an ass and we are also told about the quest for Askestalian birds which are sought in a poem by Stesichorus; in both of these anecdotes no further information is divulged to explain what Ptolemy was talking about.⁷⁷ At the very end of book two there is a clear focus on Alexander the Great with the following: 'Who was the author of the verse that Alexander son of Philip used to say: "Proteus, drink wine, since you have eaten human flesh"; and much is said about Proteus. What poem did Alexander son of Philip have in his repertoire? For whom did the same Alexander son of Philip write a lament?'⁷⁸ Although this quotation is supposed to be about Alexander and reveal something about him, the anecdote as it appears in Photius' epitome tells us more about Photius' impact on the text than Alexander himself. Photius gives little detail and does not reveal the origins of the quotation, the poem that Alexander had in his

⁷³ Photius *Bibliotheca* codex 73, 50a.

⁷⁴ Photius *Bibliotheca* codex 72, 35b-49b.

⁷⁵ Bigwood, (1989) 305-306.

⁷⁶ Photius *Bibliotheca* 146b, 17.

⁷⁷ Photius *Bibliotheca* 148a, 30-33. *Περὶ τοῦ καλάμου τοῦ εἰπόντος ὅτι Μίδαξ ὄνου ἔχει ὄτα. Περὶ τῶν παρὰ Στησιχόρῳ ζητουμένων Ἀκεσταλίων ὀρνίθων.*

⁷⁸ Photius *Bibliotheca* 148a, 4-9. *Τίνος ἐστὶ τὸ ὑπ' Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Φιλίππου εἰρημένον Πρωτέα, τῆ, πίε οἶνον, ἐπεὶ φάγες ἀνδρόμεα κρέα καὶ πολλὰ περὶ Πρωτέου· ποίαν ᾠδὴν εἶχεν ἐν συνηθείᾳ Ἀλέξανδρος καὶ τίνος ἦν ποίημα, εἰς τίνα ἔγραψεν ἐπικήδειον ὁ αὐτὸς Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ Φιλίππου.*

repertoire, or the poem that he wrote for a lament. However, it is likely to have been explained in Ptolemy's original text in order to elucidate a point that he wanted to make about Alexander. The implication from this is that Ptolemy discussed these topics at some length, but in summarising these points Photius chose not to go into detail. Photius has reduced what was likely to have been a substantial passage to a brief sentence that offers no context and very little understanding.

Reading Photius' epitome of the *Novel Research* can be deeply frustrating, as he frequently fails to give details on anecdotes that would offer a much better understanding of Ptolemy's methods and the composition of the text as a whole. Indeed, it is likely that Photius has omitted entire sections, as he often uses *ὅτι* to introduce sections, which here as well as his other substantial epitomes is thought to signify that material from the original text has been altered or omitted.⁷⁹ In fact Photius' summarizing has distorted the original in many ways. There are questions surrounding the original work's structure, as Ptolemy's work has been referred to as a muddled and unsystematic account,⁸⁰ but this is far more likely to be due to Photius' methods rather than reflect Ptolemy's text. This is because Photius is concerned primarily with the subject matter of the work before him and not the details of the description, as he does not give a line-by-line account of the text. Instead, Photius reproduces details that catch his attention, or would interest his brother; as a result they are divorced entirely from their context, which results in a series of disconnected anecdotes. Furthermore, Photius feels no need to distinguish between a short anecdote and a lengthy extended passage.⁸¹ This means that in Photius' hands the *Novel Research* has turned into a jumbled sequence of tales and topics, adding to the difficulty of trying to determine what type of format that original work took. It is possible that this muddled form may have been a conscious decision of Ptolemy. Pamphila in her *Collection of Miscellaneous Research* claimed to have composed her work at random as each thing came to her, because it is more pleasant to present a polymorphous variety,⁸² while Aulus Gellius says that he has deliberately adopted a haphazard approach to his work.⁸³ However, although Ptolemy's choice of themes and unusual material is eclectic, it is possible to see certain themes in some of the books. Therefore, it is feasible that Ptolemy's original

⁷⁹ Hägg (1975), 30ff; Bigwood (1989), 306.

⁸⁰ Gainsford (2012), 68.

⁸¹ Bigwood (1989), 311-312.

⁸² Photius *Bibliotheca* codex 175, 119b.

⁸³ Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights*, *praef.* 2.

text was not as haphazard as it appears in Photius' epitome and that instead of using an excerpt format, each anecdote might have led into the next in a continuous narrative.⁸⁴ If this were the case, the sequence in the original text would have been much easier to read and follow.

Although it may seem that Photius' epitome acts as a hindrance rather than an aid, this is not the case. Photius usually gives the subject matter that he has summarised in its original sequence.⁸⁵ Therefore, although distorted, the material is likely to be in its intended running order with the exception of a few possible discrepancies on Photius' behalf. Moreover, although the majority of Photius' epitome is a summary, there are portions of the text that are closer to excerpts, such as a detailed passage on Helen and other women that share her name in book four,⁸⁶ a passage on why Achilles is called swift-footed in book six,⁸⁷ and Ptolemy's version of the Rock of Leucas legend in book seven of the work.⁸⁸ These are still a free form of excerpt where Photius may have omitted material and where he slips into summary, but these passages give us a better insight into how the original text may have appeared because of the detail that they contain.

Since I will be relying on Photius' epitome of the text, an important factor that is easy to forget but needs to be stressed is that we have to be aware that we are reading the text through the prism that is Photius; it is his version of Ptolemy's work that we are reading and not Ptolemy's. This is apparent at times throughout the summary when it is clear that it is Photius' voice we are hearing and not Ptolemy's. For instance, at the beginning of the epitome where Photius appears to include some of Ptolemy's original prologue about the benefits of the text,⁸⁹ there is a line which says: 'Much of its content is overtly fantastical and poorly contrived, and what is even more nonsensical is the attempt to give reasons for why some tales exist' (*Ἐχει δὲ πολλὰ καὶ τερατώδη καὶ κακόπλαστα, καὶ τὸ ἀλογώτερον, ὅτι καὶ ἐνίων μυθαρίων αἰτίας, δι' ἃς ὑπέστησαν, ἀποδιδόναι πειρᾶται*).⁹⁰ As these comments are in

⁸⁴ The reason for supposing this is that with Photius' epitomes of other compendia texts (notably Conon's *Narratives*, codex 186, 130b-142b), he lists the numbers or title of each anecdote, which appears to replicate what Conon did in his original text. This feature is not apparent in Photius' epitome of the *Novel Research*.

⁸⁵ Bigwood (1989), 308 n.30.

⁸⁶ Photius *Bibliotheca* 149b, 3 -38; see Chapter Three.

⁸⁷ Photius *Bibliotheca*, 151b, 29 – 152b, 7; see Chapter Four.

⁸⁸ Photius *Bibliotheca* 153a, 7 -153b, 21; see Chapter Four.

⁸⁹ See Chapter Two.

⁹⁰ Photius *Bibliotheca* 146a, 5-7. *Ἐχει δὲ πολλὰ καὶ τερατώδη καὶ κακόπλαστα, καὶ τὸ ἀλογώτερον, ὅτι καὶ ἐνίων μυθαρίων αἰτίας, δι' ἃς ὑπέστησαν, ἀποδιδόναι πειρᾶται*.

direct contrast with the benefits of reading the text, it would seem that this comment is Photius' thoughts on the work itself, especially since this is followed by the statement that: 'The compiler of these stories is somewhat shallow, and is inclined towards false pretention and unrefined language' (*Ὁ μέντοι τούτων συναγωγεὺς ὑπόκηνός τέ ἐστι καὶ πρὸς ἀλαζονείαν ἐπτοημένος, καὶ οὐδ' ἀστεῖος τὴν λέξιν*),⁹¹ and then: 'In any case, most of his research, especially any of it that is untainted by the fantastic and the incredible, offers a varied education which is not unpleasant to know' (*Τά γε μὴν πλεῖστα τῶν ἱστορουμένων ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὅσα τοῦ ἀπιθάνου καὶ ἀπίστου καθαρεύει, παρηλλαγμένην ὅμως καὶ οὐκ ἄχαρι εἶδέναι τὴν μάθησιν ἐμπαρέχει*).⁹² Moreover, Photius' presence is not just apparent at the beginning of the epitome as elsewhere in the text there are comments that constantly remind readers of how the text is being transmitted through him, and that we are reading his version of the *Novel Research*, not Ptolemy's. For instance: 'our mythographer here, writing nonsense, says that Moses the Hebrew lawgiver was called alpha because he had leprosy on his body' (*Ὅτι φλυαρῶν οὗτος ὁ μυθογράφος, Μωσῆς, φησὶν, ὁ τῶν Ἑβραίων νομοθέτης ἄλφα ἐκαλεῖτο διὰ τὸ ἀλφουὺς ἔχειν ἐπὶ τοῦ σώματος*).⁹³ In this statement Photius is giving his opinion to something that he disagrees with in Ptolemy's work, while in another: 'the sixth book contains the following principal points' (*Τὸ δὲ ζ' βιβλίον κεφάλαια περιέχει τάδε*),⁹⁴ there is a clear case that Photius has reduced information in Ptolemy's text to the bare minimum to give a general sense of the work.

It is possible to regard Photius' epitome as a hypertext of Ptolemy's original hypotext, with Photius's epitome being grafted from Ptolemy's original text.⁹⁵ According to Genette, this means that the original point of view and interest of the text has been displaced, because no summary can be pure and simple, transparent or innocent, it is an interpretation of another work. Yet despite the issues surrounding Photius' hypertextual relationship with Ptolemy, in order for Photius to have summarised the original, it would have been necessary for him to at least acquire partial mastery and understanding of the *Novel Research* in order to convey elements of it.⁹⁶ It is his knowledge and mastery of Ptolemy's text that makes Photius'

⁹¹ Photius *Bibliotheca* 146a, 8-9.

⁹² Photius *Bibliotheca* 146a, 14-16.

⁹³ Photius *Bibliotheca* 151b, 9-10

⁹⁴ Photius *Bibliotheca* 151b, 29.

⁹⁵ Genette (1997), 5.

⁹⁶ Genette (1997), 237-245.

epitome so useful and since the ultimate pleasure of any hypertext is its literary relationship to the hypotext,⁹⁷ it is why I will be using his epitome to try to piece together themes and aspects of Ptolemy's original text.

1.3.2. Tzetzes and Eustathius

Although the focus of this thesis is using Photius' summary to help establish the themes of Ptolemy's work and how readers may have read the text, Photius is not the only Byzantine author who knew of Ptolemy's *Novel Research*, John Tzetzes and Eustathius of Thessalonica (twelfth century CE) both mention specific passages of Ptolemy's text. Tzetzes was a prolific scholar, claiming to have written about sixty books, most of which were the result of his teaching and are devoted to Homer. His principal work the *Βίβλος Ἱστορική* (also known as the *Histories* or *Chiliades*), was a review in twelve thousand, six hundred, and seventy four verses of Greek literature and learning, with quotations from over four hundred authors, many of whom are now lost, including Ptolemy. However, a lot of Tzetzes information is second hand and as a result he is extremely unreliable and inaccurate, and much of his uncorroborated evidence is viewed with suspicion.⁹⁸ Eustathius is perhaps the best known of the Byzantine scholars and he has a better reputation for scholarly learning than Tzetzes. Eustathius composed numerous works, tending to focus on commentaries such as commentaries on Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (*Παρεκβολαὶ εἰς τὴν Ὀμήρου Ἰλιάδα (Ὀδύσειαν)*), a vast compilation where the *Iliad* commentary is twice as long as that on the *Odyssey*. The prefaces focus on the differences between the Homeric poems and the cultural importance of Homer, while the notes discuss issues of style, language, history, geography, and mythology. Eustathius' discussion of ancient texts makes his work is invaluable, as he draws on material from the old scholia and the lost works of earlier scholars and lexicographers. However, it likely that most of Eustathius' quotations from ancient literature are second hand rather than directly from an author's original text.⁹⁹

Between the works of Tzetzes and Eustathius we have eighteen passages that are from the *Novel Research*, six of these are from three of Tzetzes' works, the

⁹⁷ Genette (1997), 399.

⁹⁸ Wilson (1983), 191-192.

⁹⁹ Wilson (1983), 199.

Chiliades, *On Lycophron*, and *On Homer*,¹⁰⁰ and twelve passages from Eustathius' commentaries.¹⁰¹ This has enabled comparisons between the quotations of Tzetzes and Eustathius with what is found in Photius' epitome.¹⁰² These comparisons have revealed that the passages from Eustathius and Tzetzes do not offer any new or contrary material, which drastically alter our view of Photius' epitome. Instead, they offer some supplementary information that complements Photius' summary, mainly sources that Photius has excluded. For instance, in a passage found at the end of book one of the *Novel Research*,¹⁰³ Photius lists the names of mentors that Ptolemy gave for some Homeric heroes: Muisus for Odysseus, Noemon for Achilles, Eudorus for Patroclus, Dares for Hector, Dardanus for Protesilaus, and Chalcon for Antilochus the son of Nestor.¹⁰⁴ The same passage is also found in Eustathius, where we are told that Chalcon was appointed by Nestor to protect Antilochus because he was fated to be killed by an Ethiopian (Memnon), but then Chalcon fell in love with the Amazon queen Penthesilieia and was killed by Achilles; his body was then impaled by the Greeks.¹⁰⁵ More sources are cited by Eustathius than Photius: for Antilochus' *mnemon*, Asclepiades of Myrlea;¹⁰⁶ for Achilles' *mnemon*, Lycophron; for Protesilaus', Eresius; for Patroclus', Timolaus of Macedon; and for Hector's, which is preserved by Photius, Antipater of Acanthus.¹⁰⁷ Elsewhere in Eustathius we also find more extended information, such as the metamorphoses of Tiresias,¹⁰⁸ where Photius just states that he transformed seven times, without giving any information about the changes.¹⁰⁹ In contrast Eustathius goes into great detail and provides a source for all of this additional information, Sostratus.¹¹⁰ Unlike Eustathius, Tzetzes does not offer any detailed information that can add to material found in Photius' epitome. Instead, what Tzetzes provides are sources for Ptolemy's material, such as Sotas of Byzantium for why Heracles was originally known as

¹⁰⁰ Tzetzes *Chiliades* 3.351; 7.481; 8.398; *On Lycophron* 786; 1350; *On Homer* 811 (see also *On Lycophron* 178).

¹⁰¹ Eustathius *Commentaries* 748.50; 1190.54; 1379.61; 1496.24; 1658.48; 1665.47; 1696.40; 1696.49; 1696.52; 1697.52; 1712.56; 1817.20.

¹⁰² See Chatzis (1914), 10ff for detailed comparison between what is mentioned in Photius and how it compares to Tzetzes and Eustathius.

¹⁰³ See Chapter Four.

¹⁰⁴ Photius *Bibliotheca* 147a, 23-31.

¹⁰⁵ Eustathius *Commentaries* 1697.52.

¹⁰⁶ Trachsel *Asklepiades of Myrlea* (697) BNJ.

¹⁰⁷ Dowden *Antipater* (56) BNJ.

¹⁰⁸ See O'Hara (1996); Ceccarelli *Sostratos* (23) BNJ.; and Chapter Four.

¹⁰⁹ Photius *Bibliotheca* 146b, 38 – 147a, 2.

¹¹⁰ Eustathius *Commentaries* 1665.47.

Nilos but then became Heracles after saving Hera from a giant,¹¹¹ and Agamestor of Pharsalus as a source for Achilles being given that name because of his burnt lips.¹¹²

These parallel passages reveal what we already know, that Photius omits details from the *Novel Research*. This led Chatzis to argue that both Eustathius and Tzetzes must have had access to a copy of the *Novel Research* in order to have this detail, and Chatzis goes as far to say that Tzetzes and Eustathius offer a more reliable way of getting close to Ptolemy's text compared to Photius.¹¹³ Hercher on the other hand argued that Eustathius did not have a copy of Ptolemy's text; instead his quotes came from earlier compilers who had access to Ptolemy's work, although he concedes it is possible that Tzetzes had access to an original copy of Ptolemy's work.¹¹⁴ It is impossible to say whether Tzetzes and Eustathius had access to Ptolemy's text, or if they relied on other compilers for Ptolemy's material, as they do elsewhere in their works. However, what is clear is that Tzetzes' and Eustathius' passages from the *Novel Research* are only relevant because of Photius' epitome, since they are scattered throughout their texts among the quotes and passages from a range of other authors on different topics. As a result, there is no sense of cohesion, the passages appear in accordance with the topic that Tzetzes or Eustathius are currently discussing; there is no attempt to present some semblance of the overall content of the *Novel Research*. This is why Photius' epitome of the work is so valuable, because although they can occasionally offer some extra detail on certain anecdotes, their worth is solely connected with Photius' epitome of the text, elaborating on what he has summarised. This is why I have chosen to focus on using Photius' epitome, since it is the only one that enables us to get a sense of how the whole text may have appeared, including themes and structure, giving us the best insight into Ptolemy's *Novel Research*.

1.4. Prior Approaches and Studies

Ptolemy's *Novel Research* is a text that is not widely known, although it has received some attention from modern scholarship. This is most likely due to the fact that there is no monograph in English on the work and neither does a published English translation of the epitome exist. In the last one hundred and fifty years, there have

¹¹¹ Tzetzes *On Lycophron* 1350; Photius *Bibliotheca* 147b, 16-21.

¹¹² Tzetzes *On Iliad* 811; *On Lycophron* 178; Photius *Bibliotheca* 152b, 29-33.

¹¹³ Chatzis (1914), xlvi-lii.

¹¹⁴ Hercher (1855/56), 272.

been three studies, all in German, which have been dedicated to examining Ptolemy and the *Novel Research* by Hercher,¹¹⁵ Chatzis,¹¹⁶ and Tomberg respectively.¹¹⁷

In his article Hercher labelled Ptolemy a *Schwindelautor*, because Ptolemy cites a large number of sources in the *Novel Research* that are otherwise unattested. This led Hercher to conclude that Ptolemy's sources were bogus and that they were invented by Ptolemy to support his fabricated material.¹¹⁸ For Hercher Ptolemy was a charlatan and this view remained unchallenged until Anton Chatzis published his monograph on Ptolemy and the *Novel Research*.¹¹⁹ Chatzis believed that Ptolemy has been subject to a devastating and unparalleled attack by Hercher that sought to destroy his credibility, his *Glaubwürdigkeit*, so much so that Chatzis thought Hercher had portrayed Ptolemy as a brazen crook and had created a caricature of Ptolemy and the *Novel Research*.¹²⁰ In direct contrast to Hercher, Chatzis argued that Ptolemy was a genuine collector and a grammarian who attempted to create a scholarly work following the Peripatetic tradition.¹²¹ For Chatzis, the honesty and integrity of Ptolemy was never in doubt. Ptolemy's only mistake was to copy stories and sources from other works without checking or correcting them. Chatzis also argues that the inconsistencies in Ptolemy's work demonstrate that he could not have fabricated material, because if he deliberately did invent information he would have been more careful about disguising such things; rather he made simple errors in judgment and should not be unfairly judged for this.¹²² In his approach Chatzis is as vehement as Hercher, which leads him to claim that many of Ptolemy's sources are well known and documented from older sources. However, Chatzis does not prove or substantiate these claims with any evidence; as a result it is something he believes that Ptolemy did and because of this his claims have been almost universally rejected.¹²³

With the works of Hercher and Chatzis, scholarship on Ptolemy and the *Novel Research* was represented by two extreme, but polar opposite views. It was not until the 1960s that another scholar, Karl-Heinz Tomberg, approached Ptolemy's

¹¹⁵ Hercher (1855/6).

¹¹⁶ Chatzis (1914).

¹¹⁷ Tomberg (1968).

¹¹⁸ Hercher (1855/6).

¹¹⁹ Chatzis (1914).

¹²⁰ Chatzis (1914), i, liii-lxx.

¹²¹ Chatzis (1914), lxxi-lxxxviii.

¹²² Chatzis (1914), liv.

¹²³ Dowden *Antipater* (56) BNj.

text and offered a detailed account of the problems surrounding Ptolemy's sources.¹²⁴ Tomberg's study on the *Novel Research* attempted to counter argue Hercher's assessment of Ptolemy and his work, but with a far more balanced and open-minded manner than Chatzis. Tomberg identified the type of activity Ptolemy was engaged in and detailed its prevalence in his time, mainly the imperial literary game of devising ingenious solutions to mythical and literary 'problems', where much energy had gone into problematizing the unproblematic.¹²⁵ Tomberg acknowledges that Ptolemy always intended to include unusual material to bring the most obscure stories to surprise his readers and create an entertaining read, but this was not the fault of him blindly copying source material without any critical thinking as Chatzis previously argued. Instead, Ptolemy extracted information from texts and sources that lied or recorded very unreliable information.¹²⁶ According to Tomberg, Ptolemy did not distinguish between legitimate and bogus sources when compiling his work, but cited the authentic and the fabricated alongside one another believing he was genuinely aiding his readers by citing works for them to read themselves.¹²⁷ In Tomberg's opinion Ptolemy was a serious scholar and collector, and although some of his material may be suspect, this can be blamed on his sources. As a result, to a certain extent Tomberg's approach and assessment of the *Novel Research* is almost as conservative as Chatzis'.

Something that both Chatzis and Tomberg consider in their monographs is a possible sympotic function for the *Novel Research*. The reason for this is that Ptolemy's revisions and analysis of Homer and other canonical authors is typical of the intellectual games found at symposia, where guests were encouraged to give entertaining and scholarly answers to literary problems.¹²⁸ For instance, Ptolemy attempts to discover Achilles' name when he disguised himself as a girl,¹²⁹ which according to Suetonius was a favourite topic of discussion for the emperor Tiberius at symposia.¹³⁰ Although Ptolemy does not mention Tiberius in relation to the question of Achilles' name, he does mention the emperor Augustus in discussion of

¹²⁴ Tomberg (1968).

¹²⁵ Tomberg (1968), 54 ff; Chatzis (1914), xxxv–lxxxix.

¹²⁶ Tomberg (1968), 19-53.

¹²⁷ Tomberg (1968), 74-93.

¹²⁸ Chatzis (1914), lxxxv–lxxxix; Tomberg (1968), 54-62.

¹²⁹ Photius *Bibliotheca* 147a, 18-20. 'Aristonicus of Tarentum says that when Achilles lived among the girls in Lycomedes' house, he was called Cercysera, and was also called Issa, Pyrrha, Aspetos, and Prometheus', (Ὡς Ἀχιλλεὺς μὲν Ἀριστόνικος ὁ Ταραντίνος διατρίβοντα ἐν ταῖς παρθένοις παρὰ Λυκομήδει Κερκυσεράν καλεῖσθαι φησιν, ἐκαλεῖτο δὲ καὶ Ἰσσαν καὶ Πυρρὰν καὶ Ἄσπετος καὶ Προμηθεύς).

¹³⁰ Suetonius *Tiberius* 56.

a line from Homer's *Iliad*¹³¹ in connection with a change of names between Menelaus and Menedemus, which appears to take place in a sympotic setting.¹³² Although Ptolemy's knowledge of Homer displays his credentials as a *grammaticus* as he analyses a line of Homer, it is the mention of Augustus that is interesting, but not for any historical grounding as this is unlikely to be based on fact.¹³³ Rather, because of Augustus' presence and with his raising the question about the line in a sympotic context, there is the suggestion that Ptolemy knew of the literary games that were common at symposia and may even have been aware of sympotic literature.¹³⁴

Symposia were a special place for scholarly accumulation and they were a suitable context where *paideia* could be shown in action,¹³⁵ as learned texts became vehicles for the creation of a sense of an elite community based on their shared mastery of the literature of the past.¹³⁶ The best examples of Imperial period sympotic texts are Plutarch's *Table Talk* and Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*,¹³⁷ which idealise and embody the sympotic tradition, as well as Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights*,¹³⁸ which shares some similarities with these texts.¹³⁹ These works contain dialogue between different speakers who pose questions and answer them, quote famous passages and present new information on old topics to display knowledge, ingenuity and intellect, all of which takes place in a sympotic setting.¹⁴⁰ Although there is no evidence of any kind of sympotic dialogue or setting in Ptolemy's text and neither does he seem to be writing a sympotic text,¹⁴¹ it is possible that Ptolemy wrote the *Novel Research* with this social context in mind. Since the educated elite strived to

¹³¹ Homer *Iliad* 4.127.

¹³² Photius *Bibliotheca* 151a, 24-30. About the Homeric line concerning someone about to be wounded, "the blessed gods do not forget you Menelaus"; this has been changed by the Pythian god who substituted Menedemus for Menelaus. A question proposed at the banquet of the emperor Augustus was what was the line in Homer that the oracle changed, and who is mentioned by the oracle, ("Ὅτι τὸ Ὀμηρικὸν τιτρώσκεσθαι μέλλοντος Οὐδὲ σέθεν, Μενέλαε, θεοὶ μάκαρες λελάθοντο, τοῦτον τὸν στίχον παρώδησεν ὁ Πύθιος Μενέδημε ἀντὶ τοῦ Μενέλαε. Προετάθη δὲ τὸ ζήτημα παρὰ δεῖπνον Αὐγούστου τοῦ βασιλέως, ποῖον στίχον Ὀμήρου παρώδησεν ὁ χρησμός, καὶ τίς ἐστὶν ὁ ἐν τῷ χρησμῷ ἱστορούμενος).

¹³³ Horsfall (1987), 16-18.

¹³⁴ Chatzis (1914), 85-89.

¹³⁵ Goldhill (2009), 111; König (2012), 37.

¹³⁶ Johnson (2009), 320-330 & (2010), 3-16.

¹³⁷ On Plutarch's *Table Talk* see Klotz & Oikonomopoulou (2011); on Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* see Braund & Wilkins (2000).

¹³⁸ Oikonomopoulou (2007), 233-292.

¹³⁹ Although the works of Athenaeus, Plutarch and Aulus Gellius embody sympotic literature, certain works of Lucian (*On Salaried Posts*, *Lexiphanes* and *Symposium*), debunk the intellectual mystique of symposia. See König (2012), 17-19.

¹⁴⁰ König (2012), 7-11.

¹⁴¹ Chatzis (1914), 89.

increase their *paideia* through reading and then felt the need to display their *paideia* in a social setting to establish and reinforce their position as one of the intellectual elite, it is feasible that Ptolemy's material would have found its way into symposia via readers who would have read his work and then attended such a gathering. Owing to Ptolemy's unusual revisions and his uncanny ability to outdo other texts by having answers to questions that no one else thought to ask, it is easy to see how his text could have been used in this context by providing amusement and pseudo-knowledge at symposia for those readers aware of his games.¹⁴²

From the three main works on Ptolemy and the *Novel Research* the impression we have of Ptolemy is either a charlatan, a legitimate but naïve scholar, or a preoccupied compiler who wanted to amuse his readers so much he spent too much time focusing on that and not enough time checking his facts and sources. What unites these scholars is the issue of Ptolemy's sources. There is evidence from antiquity that some authors fabricated sources,¹⁴³ but whether Ptolemy did is still open to debate. Photius takes the text seriously enough to relay an enormous amount of its content, but notes its overtly fantastical and poorly contrived content.¹⁴⁴ Among modern scholars opinion is divided; Lloyd-Jones & Parsons,¹⁴⁵ Wilson,¹⁴⁶ and O'Hara,¹⁴⁷ are all fully aware that much of the *Novel Research*'s material was absurd, but they have all been convinced by Tomberg's argument that his sources were valid and that any discrepancies are the result of Ptolemy using bad sources. Dowden, like Chatzis, believes that Ptolemy was the victim of an unfair attack by Hercher, because unlike the attack of Ronald Syme on the *Historia Augusta*,¹⁴⁸ there is no misrepresentation of history, which is a serious matter, only of mythology, therefore the fact that he presents misinformation is not that significant.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, Dowden feels that Hercher's attack on Ptolemy still has credence because it is a stance that has been adopted by Cameron, who argues that Ptolemy has cleverly and deliberately blended legitimate and bogus sources in the *Novel Research* to create a bogus work that misleads unsuspecting readers, because

¹⁴² Tomberg (1968), 54-62; Cameron (2004), 162.

¹⁴³ Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 1.8.21.

¹⁴⁴ Photius *Bibliotheca* 146b, 6. Ἔχει δὲ πολλὰ καὶ τερατώδη καὶ κακόπλαστα.

¹⁴⁵ Lloyd-Jones & Parsons (1983), 14, 313, 733.

¹⁴⁶ Wilson (1971), 135.

¹⁴⁷ O'Hara (1996), 199 n.37.

¹⁴⁸ Syme (1968).

¹⁴⁹ Dowden (2009), 158-159.

Ptolemy would not expect his readers to check his sources.¹⁵⁰ Taking a slightly different stance, Ní Mheallaigh agrees with Cameron that Ptolemy merges fact with fiction, but that the mixture of bogus and genuine sources are games for the reader that are designed to challenge erudite readers who revelled in the intellectual bibliophile games of the period.¹⁵¹

1.5. The Approach of this Thesis

Whether Ptolemy invented his sources or not seems to depend upon one's assessment of what remains of Ptolemy's text. Unless an extant copy of the *Novel Research* is discovered this debate is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Rather than making his sources the focus of this thesis, I have chosen a thematic approach to the text instead. However, when discussing Ptolemy it is impossible not to touch upon the debate that surrounds his sources. I believe that the most convincing argument belongs to Cameron, which is that Ptolemy blends genuine authors with bogus ones, because statistically too great a proportion of the authors named are otherwise unknown. Although Dowden argues that this scepticism is in danger of reducing the available knowledge of the ancient world and inhibiting proper examination of the ways in which various different *grammatici* built on and enhanced literary tradition,¹⁵² I will argue that Ptolemy's material, although indebted to his training as a *grammaticus*, shows that he had no intention of contributing to a scholarly tradition of *grammatici* writing. Instead, it seems that Ptolemy is challenging the narrowness of role and function of the *grammatici*, which is wittily stereotyped and criticized by Aulus Gellius, to produce a bogus and fictional work.¹⁵³ This thesis will focus on how Ptolemy has created a text that combines revised and elaborated material from genuine sources with sources and material invented by him, merging fact with fiction, and parodying the source material and various traditions he draws upon. In doing this I do not believe that it was Ptolemy's sole intention to mislead gullible readers, or to only appeal to erudite ones for that matter. Rather, the text creates different levels and types of reader by challenging readers' ability to discern the authentic from the bogus. By playing with concepts of fact and fiction, Ptolemy undermines many of the literary traditions he

¹⁵⁰ Cameron (2004), 134-163.

¹⁵¹ Ní Mheallaigh (forthcoming).

¹⁵² Dowden *Antipater* (56) *BNJ*.

¹⁵³ Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* 12.13; 16.17; 18.4; 19.10; See Howley (2011), 53-60.

incorporates within the *Novel Research* that were designed to impart knowledge to their readers, and ultimately satirizes the literary culture of the period that led to the provision of and need for compendia texts.

In Chapter Two I begin analysing Ptolemy's text by reconstructing the paratext of the *Novel Research* from what is preserved in Photius' epitome, attempting to separate Ptolemy's voice from Photius'. I then explore how Ptolemy's prologue creates different levels and types of readership subject to how they interpret his programmatic statement. Some readers will accept his claims at face value that he is offering them a useful handbook to aid their acquirement of knowledge, as a result the *Novel Research* will take advantage of their naiveté as they fail to distinguish between fact and fiction within the text. In contrast some readers will read between the lines in the prologue and pick up on signals that reveal Ptolemy is playing with conventional prologal tropes and exploiting reader expectations; these readers will see the text for what it is, a pseudo-scholarship work and they will enjoy how Ptolemy manipulates his material for this reason. Yet there will also be other readers who are not quite sure what to make of his claims, hesitating between wanting to accept his statement as truth, but wary enough to know something is not quite right. Readers like this may want to accept certain information and sources as being authentic, but they are aware of some of the more blatantly bogus "knowledge" the text contains.

In Chapter Three I examine how Ptolemy has created an amusing text of pseudo-scholarship with bogus "knowledge" and "information" by exploring how he combines elements of paradoxography with mythography to create hybrid tales and a discourse of disbelief. These tales cannot be read as amazing yet believable paradoxographic cases as they involve mythological figures, and paradoxography needs to be firmly established in reality in order to convey an element of truth to inspire wonder and awe in the reader. However, neither can these anecdotes be read as myth because the paradoxographical aspects bring in a bizarre and humorous spin that often reduces the tale to farce, which is far removed from the mythographical scholarly pursuit of collecting various versions of myth for academic purposes. The result is strange collection of paradoxographic anecdotes that push the boundaries of credibility and authority, and fact and fiction, to test readers' ability to discern the authentic from the bogus within the *Novel Research*.

In Chapter Four I establish how Ptolemy revises, corrects, and elaborates myth and Homeric material by manipulating it to suit his purposes of creating a pseudo-scholarship text. Throughout the *Novel Research*, Ptolemy incorporates myth, alludes to passages from the Homeric epics, and quotes Homeric lines for analysis, but rather than collecting this information for a scholarly purpose, Ptolemy revises myth and the Homeric epics in such a manner that it becomes a parody, including his presentation of Homer as a plagiarist and forger. In his approach he has much in common with other revisionists of the Imperial period, such as Dio Chrysostom, Lucian, and Philostratus. Ptolemy is clearly aware of and fully immersed in the revisionist literary culture of the era. Moreover, Ptolemy's treatment of Homer in particular, especially his claims about Homer's authority, can be interpreted as self-conscious acknowledgement of his own playfulness with the truth.

In Chapter Five I explore how Ptolemy's interest in revisionism extends beyond myth and Homer to Herodotus. As with Homer, Ptolemy has a palimpsestic relationship with Herodotus as he revises passages from the *Histories*, raising questions and issues that no one else had previously thought to ask. In doing so he creates humorous parodies that draw attention to and play on Herodotus' reputation for unreliability by playing on his own persistence that he only discusses things that are supported by some form of authority. Ptolemy challenges Herodotus' authority and portrays him as unlucky in love; he is demystified and portrayed as all too human. However, unlike Plutarch's *Malice of Herodotus*, this is not an overt critical attack on the work and character of Herodotus, rather Ptolemy is using Herodotus as a mirror for his own text, drawing attention to the play between authentic and the bogus in the *Novel Research*.

Chapter Two

Ptolemy's Paratext: Navigating the Reading Protocols of the *Novel Research*

2.1. Introduction

This chapter explores how the *Novel Research* creates different levels of readership depending on how readers interpret Ptolemy's claims in the prologue. In his prologue Ptolemy professes to offer readers a chance of gaining sought-after knowledge from the information and material that he had condensed from other works. Ptolemy's prologal claims are similar to those found in other compendia texts of the period that profess to aid readers' pursuit of knowledge and erudition, including: Pliny's *Natural History*, Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights*, Pseudo-Apollodorus' *Library*, and Aelian's *Miscellaneous History* and *On the Characteristics of Animals*. However, unlike these texts, Ptolemy's work is full of bogus source citations and fraudulent material, combined with genuine sources and information.¹⁵⁴ As a result, the *Novel Research* is a text that appears to offer knowledgeable material to readers, a prized commodity in a period when establishing one's *paideia* was important attribute, but in reality it offers something very different, a text of pseudo-scholarship. By comparing Ptolemy's paratext with compendia texts and works of extended fiction, I will argue that Ptolemy's claims in the prologue are designed to create different types of reader by exploiting readers' expectations about the benefits of reading compilation texts in the period, which he does by playing with the conventions of the miscellany tradition. The result is a paratext that satirizes the compendia tradition, and the reliance upon these texts for aiding the pursuit of *paideia* in this period, and a work that hints at its fictionality.

2.2. Readers and Reading the *Novel Research*

2.2.1. Context

Before establishing and exploring the conventional paratextual tropes that Ptolemy exploits in his prologue, I want to clarify and demonstrate the way in which a text can create different levels of readership. The question of who read compendia texts or any text in antiquity has seen much debate and it is not something that I wish to

¹⁵⁴ See Chapters One and Three for a discussion of Ptolemy's bogus sources.

discuss at length as it is beyond the scope of this thesis.¹⁵⁵ However, what is apparent is that the *Novel Research* was written at a time when what you knew said a great deal about who you were, as knowledge and *paideia* were intimately tied up with social self-positioning, so much so that it is hard sometimes to avoid the impression that the accumulation of knowledge was the driving force behind Imperial prose literature.¹⁵⁶ This was a period shaped by the dynamics of the so-called ‘cult of *paideia*’, as *paideia* was the primary means through which the shared past of the Greeks could be mined as a treasury of knowledge, but also reinvented as a set of cultural values, historical memories, and moral exemplars.¹⁵⁷ In this sense, *paideia* served as an affirmation of the link between past and present, and as an agent that bolstered Greek identity, conceived in terms of such continuity.¹⁵⁸ However, *paideia* in this period did not always operate as a mark of collective identity, it also served to distinguish between individuals or individual groups, as it became a mark of privilege and the prerogative of the elite, enabling admittance into elite social circles.¹⁵⁹ This double function, simultaneously inclusive and exclusive, made *paideia* play a central role in culture of the Imperial period. The period fostered an intellectual culture that was preoccupied with the acquisition of books and libraries, and bookshops flourished as a direct result of the readers’ need to acquire texts and add to their education.¹⁶⁰ The cultured readers of this period were so imbued with textual culture that they should have been able to (and may have been expected to) recall much of what they had read and acquired from memory.¹⁶¹ This phenomenon led Sandy to use the term ‘Bibliomania’ to help define this cultural activity.¹⁶² The preoccupation with *paideia* and the scholastically conditioned reliance upon earlier literary authorities encouraged the composition of learned works whose purpose was to assemble knowledge of various sorts, making it accessible to an eager and enthusiastic body of readers.¹⁶³

The need for accessible knowledge led to the provision of compilation texts, such as Pliny’s *Natural History*, Aulus Gellius’ *Attic Nights*, Pseudo-Apollodorus’

¹⁵⁵ See Chapter One for more information.

¹⁵⁶ König & Whitmarsh (2007), 3-39.

¹⁵⁷ Oikonomopoulou (2007) 52-53.

¹⁵⁸ Bowie (1970), 3-41; Swain (1996), 65-100; Whitmarsh (2001), 90-132.

¹⁵⁹ Whitmarsh (2001), 129-31.

¹⁶⁰ Hansen (2010), 3-16; White (2010), 268-287.

¹⁶¹ Too (2010), 84. For a late antiquity example of this in practice see Photius below.

¹⁶² Sandy (1997), 42.

¹⁶³ Sandy (1997), 42-91; Klotz & Oikonomopoulou (2011), 22.

Library, and Aelian's *Miscellaneous History* and *On the Characteristics of Animals*. These texts present their readers with knowledge derived from the canons of literature, offering a more manageable way of gaining knowledge and advancing one's *paideia*. Moreover, it is apparent from the prologues of Pliny and Gellius in particular that they envisaged their works as a giving their readers a profound opportunity to enhance their lives through knowledge.¹⁶⁴ These works claim to enhance their readers' cultural capital by instilling normative cultural standards and by offering a veneer of legitimate culture, while at the same time, they offered credentials of rare or unusual erudition that could, in certain instances, impress exclusive reading communities and elite circles.¹⁶⁵

According to Johnson, reading communities affect how any reader reads and approaches a text,¹⁶⁶ because reading is not a simple act, but a highly complex sociocultural system developed from and maintained by literary traditions.¹⁶⁷ In antiquity, both writers and readers were fully aware of established traditions and protocols surrounding texts, as authors used certain tropes to establish themselves in a literary tradition, such as miscellany. As a result, what one read, how one read, how one understood what one read, and how one deployed the mastery of language and literature attained from what was what read was important and mattered because social standing was at play.¹⁶⁸ With compilation works such as the *Novel Research*, this is particularly relevant because these texts could be used to help bolster one's intellectual and social standing.¹⁶⁹ These works were designed to assist in the construction of the elite reading community; they invite a defined level of readership, but also advocate a certain type of reading community through different ways of interacting with texts.¹⁷⁰ Although papyri are not very useful in indicating the numbers of real-life readers, without ancient readership compendia texts would not have survived to be read, enjoyed, and debated by modern readers.¹⁷¹ However, attempting to ascertain who the *Novel Research* might have appealed to in the Imperial period and why is a difficult task, especially since the only known readers of the work, Photius, Eustathius, and Tzetzes, are all scholars who read Ptolemy's

¹⁶⁴ Pliny *Natural History praef.* 16; Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights praef.* 17.

¹⁶⁵ Morgan (2004), 187-205; Oikonomopoulou (2007) 53.

¹⁶⁶ Johnson (2009), 320-330 & (2010), 3-16.

¹⁶⁷ Johnson (2010), 11-12.

¹⁶⁸ Johnson (2010), 206.

¹⁶⁹ König & Whitmarsh (2007), 22-23.

¹⁷⁰ Johnson (2009), 329.

¹⁷¹ On papyrological evidence for reading, see Houston (2009), 233-267.

work between six hundred and a thousand years after Ptolemy was wrote the *Novel Research*. Therefore, the questions I wish to address are not who exactly or how many people read Ptolemy's *Novel Research*, but why the text would have appealed to readers and how it promotes different levels of readership. Insights into how people read compendia texts and how reading communities operated can be seen in Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights*,¹⁷² where elite society seems to exist for literary events, but another perspective can be gained from Achilles Tatius' novel *Leucippe and Clitophon*.

In Tatius' novel, the character Clitophon is high born and well educated; he can read and has books to read for pleasure,¹⁷³ which makes him an ideal candidate for the reading of miscellany works. Throughout the novel, Clitophon constantly interrupts the flow of his ego-narrative to relate descriptions of art, philosophy, and wonders, which appear to have been sourced from miscellany texts. These interruptions are commonly referred to as *sententiae* and their role in the novel has been widely disputed by modern scholars. Some believe them to be little more than useless digressions,¹⁷⁴ which are used by Tatius to show off his own sophisticated wares,¹⁷⁵ while others regard them as being integral to the text because they are used proleptically to promote reader anticipation (although this is not applicable to all of the *sententiae*),¹⁷⁶ creating a game of hermeneutic hide and seek in the novel.¹⁷⁷ I would argue that these *sententiae* are included in the novel by Tatius to characterize Clitophon as a learned individual with a high enough level of *paideia* to read miscellanies to add to his knowledge.¹⁷⁸ As a result, Clitophon can be regarded as embodying the knowledge seeking culture of the Imperial period and the *sententiae* within the narrative support this.

An insight into the characterization of Clitophon as the type of reader who reads miscellany texts occurs near the end of book one. Here there is a cluster of

¹⁷² See Johnson (2009), 323-327; Johnson (2010), 98-136; and for a detailed study of elite reading in Aulus Gellius see Howley (2011).

¹⁷³ Achilles Tatius *Leucippe and Clitophon* 1.6.6.

¹⁷⁴ Reardon (1991), 161 argued that, 'the sophistic novel can absorb them without strain; but for all that they are subordinate, in the design of the novel, to the story'. McDermott (1989), 33 claimed that these *sententiae* are digressions or irrelevancies, and that they are the 'cause of frustration' because their presence in the text is too jarring for many modern readers. Gaselee (1917), 341 said that the *sententiae* are 'extremely tiresome', and Sedelmeier (1959), 113 argued that a clear structure in the novel only becomes apparent when the various descriptions and digressions have been discounted.

¹⁷⁵ Perry (1967), 119.

¹⁷⁶ Bartsch (1989), 155; Morales (2004), 98.

¹⁷⁷ Nimis (1998), 100.

¹⁷⁸ Goldhill (2009), 96-113.

sententiae all connected to wondrous things in nature: the peacock (1.16), the magnet (1.17), the palm trees (1.17), the river Alpheus and the spring Arethusa (1.18), and the snake and eel (1.18), all recounted by Clitophon in an attempt to impress and to woo Leucippe with his vast learning. Much of the focus on this scene has been on its erotic nature, Clitophon's designs on Leucippe, and his eagerness to break Leucippe in the ways of desire (*βουλόμενος οὖν εὐάγωγον τὴν κόρην εἰς ἔρωτα παρασκευάσαι*)¹⁷⁹ However, if we take a step back from the erotic nature of this scene and the sexual connotations of the *sententiae* involved it is apparent that something else is at play here, particularly the characterization of Clitophon.

The first and most important *sententia* for understanding the nature of Clitophon is the peacock (1.16). The comparison between the peacock's self display and Clitophon's display of knowledge is immediately apparent; the peacock's display is in order to catch the attention of the peahen and Clitophon uses his *sententiae* to display his erudition in order to attract the attention of Leucippe. Both the peacock and Clitophon strut around and use what they have at their disposal to get female attention, their beauty and their erudition respectively. While the peacock's display is a visual one, Clitophon's is a verbal one, *ἐπαγαγέσθαι* (1.16.2) echoing *εὐάγωγον* (1.16.1), strengthening the association between the two exhibitionists,¹⁸⁰ and reinforcing the idea that the peacock's visual display is a metaphor for Clitophon's verbal display.

Parallels between peacocks and verbal performers or sophists are not new, they have been made by others in the ancient world who are renowned for their sophistry, notably Lucian in *On the Hall* and Dio Chrysostom in his *Twelfth Oration* or *Olympic Discourse*.¹⁸¹ Chrysostom uses the peacock as an analogy for sophists,¹⁸² because the peacock not only uses his beauty as a way to puff up his plumage to attract a mate, as we see in Clitophon's *sententiae*, but also uses his appearance and the way in which he presents himself to draw the spectators' gaze, as if he were on parade and deliberately wanted to astound his audience. The comparison is far from subtle, the elaborate visual display of the peacock and the flamboyant oratorical display of the sophist are both designed to draw a crowd and hold their attention, especially when further on in the passage Chrysostom explicitly links peacocks and

¹⁷⁹ See Morales (2004), 184ff, for detailed analysis of the erotic nature of the garden scene.

¹⁸⁰ Morales (2004), 185.

¹⁸¹ Dio Chrysostom *Oration* 12; Lucian *On the Hall* 11; Aelian. *On the Characteristics of Animals* 5.21.

¹⁸² Dio Chrysostom *Oration* 12.2-3.

sophists by saying that large numbers of sophists resemble peacocks, (ὡς ταῶς ποικίλους, πολλοὺς σοφιστάς).¹⁸³ Moreover, when we compare the two descriptions, both Clitophon and Chrysostom highlight the connection between the elaborate display of the peacock's plumage and theatrical display to emphasize that the peacock is a highly visual and display orientated creature, which is there to be viewed by others.¹⁸⁴ The peacock thematizes the act of viewing with the presence of false eyes on its tail feathers. Although Chrysostom goes further in his description by explicitly linking peacocks and sophists, Clitophon's apparent similarities with the bird suggest that we are to make the same connection as Chrysostom makes between the peacock and sophists in the case of Clitophon.

The peacock, as a performing bird, establishes Clitophon as an elaborate performer, who as with any sophist enjoys putting on a public display. It also appears that since Clitophon is the ego-narrator of the narrative he is more than happy for this analogy to be fully realized, because self-presentation and erudition were inextricably bound up in one another in the Imperial period.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, it seems that Tatius was familiar with compendia texts, as not only does he seem to have been aware of Dio Chrysostom's description of the peacock, but the other *sententiae* in this scene, with the exception of the magnet, might have been drawn from other works.¹⁸⁶ This is not surprising when we consider that according to the *Suda*, Tatius himself was also the author of several compendia texts: 'He wrote *On the [Heavenly] Sphere, Etymologies, and Historical Miscellany*, which mentions many great and admirable men' (ἔγραψε δὲ Περὶ σφαίρας καὶ ἐτυμολογίας, καὶ Ἱστορίαν σύμμικτον, πολλῶν καὶ μεγάλων καὶ θαυμασίων ἀνδρῶν μνημονεύουσιν). None of these works survive, but they demonstrate that Tatius was bound up with the literary culture of the period and possibly aware of other compendia texts. For instance, the anecdote about the viper and the eel, which is particularly striking, can

¹⁸³ Dio Chrysostom *Oration* 12.5.

¹⁸⁴ Clitophon (Achilles Tatius 1.16.2) likens the gorgeous display of the peacock's tail feathers to the 'theatre' (τὸ θέατρον ἐπιδεικνύσαι τῶν πτεπῶν), while in Dio Chrysostom's description the peacock displays his tail feathers arched about him like a theatre (ὁσπερ εὐιδὲς θεατρον), Dio Chrysostom *Oration* 12.2.

¹⁸⁵ See Whitmarsh (2001) for a detailed discussion of *paideia* and its place among the educated elite; see Goldhill (2009) for how this applies to Clitophon.

¹⁸⁶ The peacock is described by Dio Chrysostom (*Oration*. 12.2-5); Lucian (*On the Hall* 11-12); and Aelian (*On the Characteristics of Animals* 5.21). The palm trees are mentioned by Herodotus (*Histories* 1.193). The transmarine marriage of the river Alpheus and the spring Arethusa is mentioned by Pindar (*Nemean Ode*. 1.1-2); Virgil (*Aeneid*. 3.694-696); and Ovid (*Metamorphoses*. 5.577-641).

also be found in three compilation texts.¹⁸⁷ This type of information that is so abundant in miscellany works, has led Goldhill to argue that it is easy to see how material from miscellany texts might become part of the discourse of the *pepaideumenoí* ‘educated elite’, when wanting to impress in social situations.¹⁸⁸ This is especially true for Clitophon, for whom education and knowledge are a performance. The recounting of the different anecdotes in this scene becomes a game of one-upmanship for him and a scholarly challenge for readers who are trying to ascertain where Clitophon’s *sententiae* fit in with other authors who have discussed the same topics.

With Clitophon, Tattius has created a character that uses knowledge as a tool to reinforce his social acceptability and cultural affiliation.¹⁸⁹ Clitophon is a character who reflects Imperial period cultural concerns about knowledge and social posturing, but who is also ironized in the narrative,¹⁹⁰ which is important to consider when exploring Ptolemy’s *Novel Research*, its reader(s), and possible readings. Ancient readers would have used compilation books and the knowledge acquired from them to advance their *paideia*, leading to an increased textual self-consciousness in a society concerned with acquiring knowledge from literature and books.¹⁹¹ This was fuelled by the anxiety of how easily knowledge could be lost, particularly at a time when there was a real concern about the authority and authenticity of a text in a literary culture where forged texts and plagiarism was rife.¹⁹² Therefore, for every Pliny or Gellius who wanted to genuinely add to their readers’ *paideia*, there were texts that embraced the trend of pseudo-documentation, forgery, and pseudo-citation.¹⁹³

Ptolemy wrote the *Novel Research* in the midst of this literary culture that

¹⁸⁷ Aelian *On the Characteristics of Animals* 1.50 & 9.66; Oppian *The Art of Fishing* 1.554-79; and Pliny *Natural History* 9.76 & 32.14.

¹⁸⁸ Goldhill (2009), 102.

¹⁸⁹ König & Whitmarsh (2007), 22-23.

¹⁹⁰ Whitmarsh (2003), 191-205.

¹⁹¹ Ní Mheallaigh (2008), 425.

¹⁹² This is apparent from Martial’s numerous complaints about plagiarism that it seems to have been an extremely lucrative business (*Epistulae* 1.29; 1.38; 1.52; 1.53; 1.66; 1.72; 2.20; 10.100; 10.102; 11.94; 12.63). Moreover, Galen has also commented about how the competitive demand for rare books stimulated the forgery trade, including forged books bearing his own name (*In Hippocratis de natura hominis commentarium* II, praef. 109.5-9; *De Libris propriis* 19.8-9).

¹⁹³ These range from pseudo-documentary novels, such as Iamblichus’ *Babyloniaca* and Antonius Diogenes’ *Incredible Things beyond Thule*, which parody the quest for knowledge, to scientific works such as Thessalus of Tralles’ *On the Virtues of Plants* and Harpocration’s *Cyranides*, which both use pseudo-authentication strategies that exploit the theme of the quest for wisdom to elevate their works.

was preoccupied with gaining knowledge and *paideia*, at a time when forgeries were common.¹⁹⁴ As it will become apparent throughout this thesis, Ptolemy uses bogus sources and information, as well as elaborated and revised material from well-known texts, to create a finely woven interplay of authentic and invented, sources and material. The result is a self-conscious text that deliberately creates different readings of the work when read under close scrutiny. If one text from this era embodied the complex literary culture, as well as the relationship between readers and texts of the period, it would be the *Novel Research*.¹⁹⁵ The *Novel Research* promotes different levels of readership depending upon how they interpret Ptolemy's paratext, which establishes the reading protocols of the work. Some readers might have accepted his claims that he is offering them a useful handbook to aid their accumulation of knowledge at face value. As a result, the *Novel Research* will take advantage of their naiveté as they fail to distinguish between fact and fiction within the text. This does not necessarily mean that they are a less educated reader, just a too trusting one who has bought into Ptolemy's bogus source citations, similar to how some modern scholars have been misled by Ptolemy and his work.¹⁹⁶ In contrast, other readers will pick up on signals that reveal Ptolemy is playing with conventional tropes and exploiting reader expectations. These readers will see the text for what it is, a pseudo-scholarship work, and they will enjoy how Ptolemy manipulates his material for this reason. However, there will also be some readers who are not quite sure what to make of his claims, hesitating between wanting to accept his claims as truth, but wary enough to know something is not quite right. Readers like this may want to accept certain information and sources as being authentic, but they are aware of some of the more blatantly bogus "knowledge" the text contains. To explore the text further, it is necessary to ascertain how the text can create different readers.

¹⁹⁴ Peirano (2012), 42-54.

¹⁹⁵ The work led Bowersock (1994), 24, to state that, 'in the whole history of Imperial fiction there is no personality who combines so fully the talents of deadpan mendacity, Homeric revisionism, and extravagant narration. The Quail is truly an embodiment of fiction, and yet – for good or ill – he inhabited and undeniably reflected the real world'.

¹⁹⁶ Both Chatzis (1914) and Tomberg (1968), in their monographs argue that Ptolemy was a legitimate scholar who was misled by his unreliable sources.

2.2.2. Implied Readers

According to Iser the reader is: ‘a construct and in no way to be identified with any real reader’.¹⁹⁷ Yet the real reader must nevertheless identify with this construct because even a theoretical reader constructed by the text cannot in reality be completely divorced from the real-life readership: ‘No matter who or what he may be, the real reader is always offered a particular role to play, and it is this role that constitutes the concept of the implied reader.’¹⁹⁸ The implied reader embodies the programmatic reading of the text itself, and it is the implied reader that can help us understand the responses elicited to the reader that are dictated by the text. However, there can be more than one implied reader of a work because a text can create different levels of readership. Eco argues that different levels of reading or double-coding are implicitly present in and constitutes a phenomenon of all texts. Eco distinguishes between the semantic reader, the reader who wants to know what happens in a text and only has to read the work once to find out, and the semiotic or aesthetic reader, who wants to know how what happens has been narrated and to do so has to read the text several times.¹⁹⁹ In simpler terms these types of readers can be defined as the naïve reader, who accepts the text at face-value without needing to know anything other than the contents of the work, and the astute reader who stops, thinks and questions the material before them, and is therefore far more aware of what they are reading and the wider literary context in which the text was written.

In order to demonstrate how an ancient text creates different levels of reading, I want to draw attention to the prologue from Antonius Diogenes’ *Incredible Things beyond Thule* to help explain how different levels of reading function within the prologue of an ancient text. Despite the obvious differences between Diogenes’ much longer pseudo-documentary novel and Ptolemy’s pseudo-scholarly text, an exploration of how Diogenes dramatizes the two implied readers of his text will provide useful context for our understanding of how Ptolemy’s creates different readers in the paratext of the *Novel Research*. Moreover, Diogenes’ text is not only an excellent example of a text that establishes different reading protocols, but he is also thought to be a contemporary with Ptolemy, which suggests

¹⁹⁷ Iser (1978), 34.

¹⁹⁸ Iser (1978), 34–35.

¹⁹⁹ Eco (2002), 212-235.

that their works and their different levels of readership are not isolated occurrences, but rather a product of the literary culture of the period.²⁰⁰

Diogenes' *Incredible Things beyond Thule* is an elaborate pseudo-documentary work. This means that it is a work where the author dissociates himself or herself from his or her text with superfluous and insignificant detail, with claims that the work has been authored by someone else, in another time and place, in order to add verisimilitude to the work.²⁰¹ As with Ptolemy's *Novel Research*, the *Incredible Things beyond Thule* does not survive apart from a few scattered fragments and an epitome by Photius upon which modern analysis of the text is reliant.²⁰² Photius' summary of Diogenes' novel reveals that the narrative is an autobiographical account of an Arcadian named Deinias who travelled the world, eventually coming to Thule where he met Mantinias and Dercyllis, a brother and sister from Tyre whose own adventures and travels are also recounted in the narrative. In Deinias' latter years the Arcadians sent an ambassador, Cymbas, to bring Deinias home from Tyre where he had settled with Dercyllis, but on account of his age he was unfit for the journey. Therefore, Deinias recounted his and Dercyllis' adventures to Cymbas who had Erasinides write it all down on cypress tablets; one copy for Cymbas to take back to Arcadia, the other to be stored in a box and placed in Deinias' tomb after his death.

Diogenes' work is a multifaceted novel of extreme complexity featuring adventures, wonders, and romance; its series of first-person embedded narratives has been likened to Chinese boxes due to its arrangement of receding narratives.²⁰³ Although on first appearance Diogenes' extensive novel, twenty four books in total, seems to have little in common with Ptolemy's much shorter seven-volume work (although it contains pseudo-documentary features is not a pseudo-documentary text like that of Diogenes' work), they have several features in common. For instance, both texts share a deep interest in paradoxography and tap into the

²⁰⁰ Diogenes' novel is thought to date from the end of the first century or the beginning of the second century CE, with the decade after 98 CE having been tentatively suggested; see Bowie (2002), 58-60.

²⁰¹ Hansen (2003), 303.

²⁰² Photius *Bibliotheca* codex 166, 109a-112a. Fragments are discussed in Stephens & Winkler (1995), 101-172; while the most recently discovered fragment *P.Oxy* 4760 is discussed by Parsons (2006). There are also numerous testimonia to Diogenes' work by other ancient sources, and he is cited by name more than any of the other ancient novelists, which implies that he and his work were fairly well known in antiquity; see Stephens (2003), 675.

²⁰³ Stephens (2003), 675.

wonder-culture that was popular in this period.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, although Diogenes' work is a fictional narrative, it is highly indebted to the compilation tradition since according to Photius he cited sources for each book, although only one cited source is preserved by Photius, Antiphanes (see section on predecessors below for more detail), and it also contained paradoxographical material.²⁰⁵

Here I want to focus on how Diogenes' novel is about reading, writing, narration, and fiction, which is signalled in the way it deconstructs its central pseudo-documentary fiction in the paratext of the novel with a double epistolary prologue comprising of two letters. The first is addressed to Isidora (thought to be Diogenes' sister),²⁰⁶ which offers the reader a complex fantasy of reading a long lost text, and the other to Faustinus, which exposes this fantasy as an antiquarian ruse. This double epistolary prologue of Diogenes is important for understanding how Diogenes exploits the pseudo-documentary features in the *Incredible Things beyond Thule*. Moreover, although Isidora and Faustinus might represent real and historical readers of the text, they also illustrate how a work can create two implied readers of the same text and explicitly thematize the reader's encounter with its fiction.²⁰⁷ It will become apparent that these two dedications say rather different things about the work and create two possible approaches to reading it, implying that Diogenes was aware that reading can be dualistic and can differ depending upon the reader and how they approach the text.

In the letter to Isidora, Diogenes dedicates the work to her and then gives an elaborate account of how the cypress tablets on which the narrative of the text was written and were found in a tomb along with six mysteriously inscribed coffins by Alexander the Great after the sack of Tyre in 332 BCE. The sarcophagi in the tomb contained bizarre epitaphs and next to the epitaph of Deinias the Arcadian was a small box, inscribed upon which was: 'Stranger, whoever you are, open to learn about things that are astonishing to you' (Ἔξενε, ὅστις εἶ, ἀνοιξον, ἵνα μάθῃς ἃ θαυμάζεις). Upon opening this box, Alexander and his companions discovered the cypress tablets containing Deinias' story, which was then purportedly transcribed by Alexander's general Balagros, who in turn sent it to his wife Philia, the daughter

²⁰⁴ See Goldhill (2009), 96-113. The fascination with the wonderful and bizarre is something that I discuss in Chapter Three.

²⁰⁵ Morgan (1985); Morgan (2009).

²⁰⁶ Isidora is usually thought to be Antonius Diogenes' sister, but she could be Faustinus' sister. See Schissel von Fleschenberg (1912), 101.

²⁰⁷ Ní Mheallaigh (forthcoming).

of Antipater, with a cover letter that is quoted in Diogenes' letter to Isidora. Although no specific details are given, it seems that readers are supposed to infer from the letter to Isidora that at some point Diogenes stumbled across Balagros' copy of the text and as a result, Diogenes has become the reader and subsequently the editor of a historical text as he brings it to the attention of his readers.²⁰⁸

The process that is described in Diogenes' letter to Isidora is an elaborate example of a pseudo-documentarism strategy, which Hansen categorizes as conventional or normative.²⁰⁹ As a pseudo-documentary device it shares many features with Dictys of Crete's prologue to the *Journal of the Trojan War (Ephemeris Belli Troiani)*,²¹⁰ which claims to be an account of a Greek soldier who fought at Troy.²¹¹ The pseudo-documentary strategies in both texts contain similar tropes.²¹² One is the gratuitous relay of information about how the text was discovered in a tomb and how it was then passed from person to person until it comes into the hands of its eventual editor; this is a commonly used ploy in ancient forgery.²¹³ Another pseudo-documentary device is the text's romantic or exotic pedigree; a text may be both extremely old and written in another language that links the work to an ancient and lost world. Lastly there is the celebrity association between the text and a prominent historical figure, often emperors but high-ranking statesmen also suffice.²¹⁴ All this information is given in intricate and superfluous detail; its purpose is to give "authority" to the text and to convince the reader of the "genuine"

²⁰⁸ Hansen (2003), 303; Morgan (2009), 118.

²⁰⁹ Hansen (2003), 305.

²¹⁰ The Latin text dates to the fourth century CE, but it is based upon a Greek text that was composed much earlier, no later than 200 CE with a *terminus ante quem* provided by the older of our two surviving papyrus fragments. See Merkle (1989); Merkle (1994); and Merkle (2003).

²¹¹ Dictys was a supposedly a companion of Idomeneus and Meriones, and was instructed to write a chronological account of the Trojan War, for which he produced nine tablets made of linden wood, written in Phoenician, and upon his dying wishes they were buried alongside him in his tomb at Knossos, in a chest made of *stannum* (an alloy of silver and lead). The tomb remained undiscovered for over a millennia, until during the thirteenth year of the emperor Nero's reign (66 CE) an earthquake revealed the tomb and its contents. Shepherds hoping to find treasure in the metal chest instead found the tablets with an unintelligible script, which they brought to their master Eupraxides who was equally puzzled by the text, so he took it to the Roman governor of Crete, Rutilius Rufus, who suspecting it might contain secret information had it sent to Rome to Nero himself. Nero recognised the text as being Phoenician and found an expert to decipher it, and discovering it was a Greek eyewitness account of the Trojan War, Nero ordered it be translated into Greek and housed in the Greek library at Rome. The prologue finishes by stating that the text (the Greek translation) follows the sequence of events as recorded in Dictys' original Phoenician account. For a discussion of this elaborate paratext see Ní Mheallaigh (2008), 406-407 & (2013), 196-210. For parallels between the pseudo-documentation strategies in Diogenes and Dictys, see Bowie (1994), 185-186; Hansen (2003), 303-308.

²¹² See Chapter Four for possible links between Dictys and Ptolemy.

²¹³ Discussed at length by Speyer (1970), 43-124.

²¹⁴ Hansen (2003), 306-307; Ní Mheallaigh (2008), 407-408.

documentary nature of the fiction they are reading by grounding the work in reality through its association with historical figures, events, and places. In the case of Diogenes' novel one pseudo-documentary strategy did not suffice as Diogenes layers these devices. This means that Deinias' ancient document that supposedly records his adventures is "authenticated" by another pseudo-documentary device, Balagros' "historical" letter. Ní Mheallaigh argues that as a result of the complexities of Diogenes' pseudo-documentation strategies they: 'induce a sense of vertigo in the reader...one suspects that this was a bumper edition designed for aficionados of pseudo-documentary fiction'.²¹⁵

Despite going to such elaborate lengths to substantiate the historical authority of the text in the letter to Isidora, in the letter addressed to Faustinus, Diogenes offers a completely different explanation for the text's origins. Rather than following the complicated pseudo-historical documentation that he strived to establish in the letter to Isidora, Diogenes explains to Faustinus how he undertook the difficult task of compiling historians' and travellers' reports to compose his narrative. In doing so, Diogenes prefaced each book with the names of the sources he had used to create his fiction in order to lend his work greater authority. As a result, in the Faustinus letter Diogenes appears to be establishing the truth of his account by locating himself within a serious scholarly tradition, which is in contrast the letter to Isidora that confirms the truth of the novel by meticulously accounting for the production and the survival of the narrative.²¹⁶ This means that instead of discovering a lost text, Diogenes has simply composed the work himself with the help of earlier literature for knowledge and inspiration; therefore he is the sole author of the work, but has shifted authority onto ancient texts. The letter to Faustinus, then, deconstructs the elaborate pseudo-documentation carefully created in the letter to Isidora, as Diogenes reveals that Deinias' narrative is not a long lost work, but a hoax fabricated by Diogenes himself.

However, matters are complicated further because how and when Diogenes revealed his work was a ruse to his readers is unclear, as the precise configuration of these two letters within the text is uncertain. Photius states that the letter to Isidora was located at the beginning of the book, but he is not specific about the location of Faustinus' letter, although he does mention the letter to Faustinus

²¹⁵ Ní Mheallaigh (2008), 417.

²¹⁶ Stephens (2003), 676.

(Photius *Bibliotheca* 111a, 32-40) before the letter to Isidora (111a, 41 - 111b, 30). The general consensus is that the letter to Faustinus was also located at the beginning of the work and the letter to Isidora either preceded or was included in the letter addressed to Faustinus, which would mean that the novel would have had a double epistolary preface. Alternatively Faustinus' letter may have been located at the end of the novel as a way to finish off the narrative, which would mean that the work would have been framed by both prologal and epilogal letters. The location of the Faustinus letter is important because it determines whether Diogenes was forthcoming about his hoax from the beginning of the text, or whether he asked his readers to suspend their disbelief in the fantasy only to disclose the true origins of the work right at the end of the twenty four books. Although we cannot determine the precise layout from Photius' epitome, the fact remains that each of these letters is an independent strategy for asserting the veracity and believability of the novel on their own; therefore when presented alongside each other the two letters come into conflict.²¹⁷ As a result, these competing framing devices undermine and ironize the purpose of the pseudo-documentarism strategy included in the paratext of the novel, because the authentication strategy actually acts contrary to the way in which readers would have expected.²¹⁸ No other text that we know of from antiquity deliberately constructs a self-presentation that is both serious and undercutting of its own seriousness.²¹⁹ The interplay between the two letters dramatizes the protocols of reading that are present in pseudo-documentary fiction: the desire to believe, which is intertwined with and inseparable from the possibility of fraud.²²⁰

2.3. Establishing the Paratextual Features of the *Novel Research*

2.3.1. Paratext

In contrast to Antonius Diogenes' novel, Ptolemy's *Novel Research* does not contain an elaborate pseudo-documentary paratext to the work that is used to create double-coding within the text. Ptolemy's method for creating different levels of implied readership within the same text is to play with readers' expectations of conventional

²¹⁷ Stephens (2003), 676; Ní Mheallaigh (forthcoming). Although Morgan (2009), 154, disagrees and says it is not contradictory because he was the learned editor and elaborator of the text.

²¹⁸ Stephens & Winkler (1995), 102; Ní Mheallaigh (2008), 417.

²¹⁹ Stephens (2003), 676.

²²⁰ Ní Mheallaigh (forthcoming).

tropes of the period, which undermine preconceived ideas concerning the reading protocols of a compendia text. This section will reconstruct Ptolemy's paratext from Photius' epitome and establish what these tropes are, as well as the literary context that they are part of.

In order to clarify, by using the terms prologal tropes and the prologue, I am referring to the introductory part of a long text that is referred to as the prologue, preface or proem by modern scholars, where the author has not yet begun to treat the main subject of their work but uses the space in the book to introduce himself or herself and their work to their readers. The reason I want to attempt to reconstruct the original tropes of Ptolemy's prologue is because it is an important feature of the paratext of a text. Texts are rarely presented in an unadorned state; rather they are usually accompanied by literary conventions both within and outside the book including titles, prologues and epilogues (in the case of modern books this would also include covers and blurbs). These devices form part of the complex mediation between the text, the author, and the reader; together they are collectively known as the paratext of the work.²²¹

The paratext of a text presents the work and transforms the text into a book, by establishing reading protocols.²²² Some of these paratextual features, especially titles and prologues, can reveal much about ancient texts; they can identify the author, state the theme and purpose of the text, justify the author's motives for writing the work, authorize or naturalize the fictional text.²²³ Prologues are also where the author addresses his or her readers, enabling them to establish a complex relationship between reader, author, and subject matter, as well as offering a programmatic reading of the text through the creation of the implied reader(s) of the work; this is where the reading protocols that govern the text are established.²²⁴ However, it must be noted that paratextual features of ancient texts are much more fluid than their modern counterparts as they were not governed by printing and publishing conventions. Moreover, we must be aware of the possibility that some titles have been imposed on a text by someone other than the original author of a work, although for some texts we can be reasonably sure that the title we have is

²²¹ Genette (1997a), 1.

²²² Gibbons (2007), 2.

²²³ Due to varying literary traditions these broad definitions are not applicable to every ancient text with a prologue, and not all prologues fulfil all of these functions. See Morgan (2001), 154.

²²⁴ Fowler (1982), 98; Genette (1997a), 196-197; Dowden (2001), 123; Kahane & Laird (2001), 1.

authentic, such as the *Incredible Things beyond Thule* being Antonius Diogenes' original title.²²⁵

The importance of a prologue in a text led Janson to explore their function in Latin prose works, where he argues that there are recurring literary tropes found in prologues including: the author's attempt at brevity, the listing of literary predecessors, the emphasis on nocturnal studies, and the author's discussion of his or her qualifications for the subject.²²⁶ While these conventions can be found in various traditions of Latin literature, Janson's study reveals that these tropes are widespread in compilation texts. Furthermore, although his monograph focuses on Latin prologues, Janson does acknowledge that the prologal tropes found in Latin miscellany texts were greatly indebted to their Greek forebears. Therefore, to a certain extent it is also possible to apply the literary conventions that Janson identified to Greek compilation works. However, it is important to note that not all texts contain every one of these tropes, although numerous Imperial miscellany texts contain many, if not all, of these features. Therefore, in order to understand how Ptolemy established double-coding within his work, the first step is to explore the prologue of the work and determine which of these features form and define Ptolemy's introduction to the text.

2.3.2 Reconstructing Ptolemy's Paratext

As I mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, Ptolemy's work was lost at some point in antiquity, and a consequence of not having Ptolemy's original text is that the original paratextual features of the work are lost. This is problematic because the key to understanding how different readers might have read the *Novel Research* lies in the claims found in Ptolemy's prologue. The fact that we do not have Ptolemy's original text makes attempting to establish the reading protocols of Ptolemy's work and understanding how he creates the implied readers of his work by playing with conventional miscellany prologal tropes, far more difficult than is the case for a text that has survived with these features intact. Moreover, it is not just the paratextual features that are lost but our understanding of the work as a whole, since we do not know whether the content of Ptolemy's work was presented in an extended narrative format, which Photius' epitome seems to suggest, or in

²²⁵ The antiquity of the title is supported by its citation in Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras* (10.1) in the third century CE.

²²⁶ Janson (1964), 96-100.

short excerpts, which was common for compendia texts.²²⁷ Indeed, our ability to understand the text is severely limited, yet despite this, it is possible, with caution, to piece together some of the original features of Ptolemy's prologue from the paratextual features that Photius has preserved in his epitome of the *Novel Research*.

What follows is an attempt to reconstruct Ptolemy's prologue from Photius' epitome. I have quoted the opening passages of Photius' epitome in full below because these lines are crucial to our understanding of Ptolemy's work. By analysing this passage and by comparing some of its elements with those that are found in the prologues of extant Imperial texts, it is possible to demonstrate that Photius has preserved the ghost of Ptolemy's prologue. From this I will explore how he has created different readers of the text, depending on how they perceive his authorial persona established in his programmatic statement through the use of conventional tropes of the era.

Ανεγνώσθη Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Ἡφαιστιῶνος περὶ τῆς εἰς πολυμαθίαν καινῆς ἱστορίας λόγοι ζ΄.

Χρήσιμον ὡς ἀληθῶς τὸ βιβλίον τοῖς περὶ τὴν ἱστορικὴν πολυμαθίαν πονεῖν ὠρμημένοις· ἔχει γὰρ δοῦναι συνειλεγμένα βραχεῖ χρόνῳ εἰδέναι, ἃ σποράδην τις τῶν βιβλίων ἀναλέγειν πόνον δεδεγμένος μακρὸν κατατρίψει βίον. Ἐχει δὲ πολλὰ καὶ τερατώδη καὶ κακόπλαστα, καὶ τὸ ἀλογώτερον, ὅτι καὶ ἐνίων μυθαρίων αἰτίας, δι' ἃς ὑπέστησαν, ἀποδιδόναι πειρᾶται. Ὁ μέντοι τούτων συναγωγεὺς ὑπόκενός τέ ἐστι καὶ πρὸς ἀλαζονείαν ἐπτοημένος, καὶ οὐδ' ἀστεῖος τὴν λέξιν. Προσφωνεῖ δὲ τὸ σύνταγμα Τερτύλλα τινί, ἣν καὶ δέσποιναν ἀννυμεῖ καὶ τὸ φιλολόγον αὐτῇ καὶ πολυμαθὲς ἐπιφημίζει. Διαβάλλει δ' ἐνίους καὶ τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ οὐχ ὑγιῶς ἐπιβαλόντας τῇ ὑποθέσει. Τά γε μὴν πλεῖστα τῶν ἱστορουμένων ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὅσα τοῦ ἀπιθάνου καὶ ἀπίστου καθαρεύει, παρηλλαγμένην ὁμῶς καὶ οὐκ ἄχαρι εἰδέναι τὴν μάθησιν ἐμπαρέχει.²²⁸

Read: the six books of Ptolemy son of Hephaestion about the *Novel Research Intended for Polymathy*.

The book is truly useful for those keen to work hard on polymathy research, for it offers the possibility of enabling one to know things in a short space of time, a collection of scattered facts which someone who has taken the trouble to collect from books would otherwise take a life-time to compile. Much of its content is overtly fantastical and poorly contrived, and what is even more nonsensical is the attempt to give reasons for why some tales exist. The compiler of these stories is somewhat shallow, and is inclined

²²⁷ See Chapter One for a discussion of what can be ascertained about the *Novel Research* from Photius' epitome.

²²⁸ Photius *Bibliotheca* 146a, 41 – 146b, 16.

towards false claims and lacks a refined style. He dedicates the work to a certain Tertulla whom he addresses as his mistress and praises her love of literature and her erudition. He criticizes some of his literary predecessors for their unsound approach to the subject under discussion. Nevertheless, most of his research, especially that which is untainted by the untrustworthy and the incredible, offers a varied range of education that is not unpleasant to know.

It is apparent that the passage comprises a mixture of Photius' own comments and judgements about Ptolemy and his work, and some recorded features of Ptolemy's original prologue. Therefore, although Photius acts as a prism through which we have to read Ptolemy's work, because of common patterns in the *topoi* of ancient prologues, it is possible tentatively to extrapolate some of Ptolemy's original prologue from Photius' epitome in order to separate Ptolemy's voice from Photius' and unearth some of the original features of his prologue. Doing so will elucidate how Ptolemy creates different levels of implied reader within the text, establishing what conventional tropes he has included and exploited within the text in order to achieve this.

As with the majority of Photius' epitomes in the *Bibliotheca* the passage begins with the verb *Ἀνεγνώσθη* 'there was read', which acts as a reminder of Photius' presence throughout the summary.²²⁹ Photius then introduces the author he is discussing, Ptolemy son of Hephaestion, otherwise known as Ptolemy *Χέννος* or 'quail'. The rest of the statement that follows - *τῆς εἰς πολυμαθίαν καινῆς ἱστορίας λόγοι ζ'* - reveals the original title of the text, the *Novel Research Intended for Polymathy*. Although the much shorter title *Καινῆ Ἱστορία* or *Novel Research* is commonly used to refer to the work in modern scholarship, Photius' epitome discloses that the work has in fact the much longer title of *Novel Research Intended for Polymathy*. This is also reiterated at the end of the epitome where Photius says: 'These are the main points in the seven books of Ptolemy son of Hephaestion's *Novel Research Intended for Polymathy*' (*Ἐν οἷς καὶ τὰ τοῦ ζ' τῆς Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Ἡφαιστιῶνος εἰς πολυμαθίαν καινῆς ἱστορίας τὰ κεφάλαια*).²³⁰ Although Chatzis has tried to argue that 'for polymathy' was not part of the original title, arguing that it

²²⁹ The exceptions to this are most of the codices numbered 234-280, which begin with the formula *Ἀνεγνώσθη ἐκ* 'there was read from'.

²³⁰ Photius *Bibliotheca*, 153b, 27-29.

related to the dedicatee,²³¹ the similarities between the two statements are apparent. There is a discrepancy in the number of books cited by Photius - six books in the sentence at the beginning of the epitome and seven books at the end - with the latter being the actual number of books summarized. Although it is tempting to see this as some ploy of Ptolemy, the fact that there are similar mistakes throughout the *Bibliotheca* with other codices,²³² suggests that the discrepancy occurred when the text was epitomized.²³³ In both sentences the words *εἰς πολυμαθίαν* appear alongside *καινῆς ἱστορίας*. Polymathy in this context, as we shall see below, is a loaded term because of its association with Heraclitus' famous adage,²³⁴ but the fact that this happens twice, suggests that these words intentionally belong together, and that they were part of Ptolemy's original title for the work.

This would mean that the original title of the work is not the abbreviated *Novel Research* (which for convenience I refer to throughout most of this thesis), but the longer *Novel Research Intended for Polymathy*.²³⁵ The likelihood that this was the work's original title is strengthened by the fact that it appears both at the beginning and at the end of the epitome. Its position at the end of the summary seems significant as it immediately follows an anecdote about a *sphragis* or 'seal' that Helen of Troy possessed, which seems to be too much of a coincidence to be Photius' doing. Rather it suggests that Ptolemy has placed his *sphragis* to conclude the work as a whole deliberately after the story about the *sphragis* of Helen as a paratextual feature to frame the main narrative of his work.²³⁶ This is similar to the way some authors, such as the novelist Chariton²³⁷ and possibly Herodotus,²³⁸

²³¹ Chatzis (1914), xxxiv.

²³² In codex 46, Photius says that Theodoret's *Eranistes* has three books, but then describes four; in codex 200 he mentions the eight books of Mark the Hermit then summarizes nine; and in codex 165 Photius says Himerius' orations were about seventy in number, even though he has just listed seventy-two. The discrepancies seem to have been a consequence of the hasty nature of the *Bibliotheca*'s compilation. See Treadgold (1982); Wilson (1994).

²³³ Most likely Photius, not finding the number of books written down for a work, quickly leafed through his summary of a text and miscounted, or his secretary who wrote the *Bibliotheca* based on Photius' notes made the error. See Treadgold (1980), 72.

²³⁴ Heraclitus 22B40 'Polymathy does not teach people to have sense; otherwise it would have taught Hesiod and Pythagoras, and then again Xenophanes and Hecataeus', (*πολυμαθίη νόον ἔχειν οὐ διδάσκει· Ἡσίοδον γὰρ ἂν ἐδίδαξε καὶ Πυθαγόρην αὐτίς τε Ξενοφάνεα καὶ Ἐκαταῖον*).

²³⁵ See Chatzis (1914), xxxiv-xxxv, for seventeenth-century to nineteenth-century translations of the *Bibliotheca* and the titles that they gave to Ptolemy's work.

²³⁶ Chatzis (1914), xxxiv.

²³⁷ Chariton *Callirhoe* 8.8.16, 'So ends the story I write about Callirhoe' (*Τοσάδε περὶ Καλλιρόης συνέγραψα*).

²³⁸ Herodotus' *Histories* may originally have finished with a conclusion. According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ad Pompeium* III. 2.) in a letter to Pompey Magnus discussing how to write historical works, Dionysius says that Herodotus's prologue began, and concluded the *Histories*: 'For the same

introduced their works with a prologue and then concluded their works with a *sphragis*, which suggests that Ptolemy was aware of literary framing devices for beginning and concluding his work.

After the brief opening statement that includes Ptolemy's title for the text, the rest of the passage contains a variety of third-person-singular verbs such as *πειράται* (he attempts), *προσφωνεῖ* (he addresses), *ἀννυμεῖ* (he praises), and *διαβάλλει* (he criticizes), which Photius uses to refer to Ptolemy and his work. In these instances Photius reports some of the main features of Ptolemy's original prologue, which include criticisms of earlier writers and a dedication of the text to a woman named Tertulla. Alongside the original features of Ptolemy's prologue that Photius records, there are occasions where it is clear that we are seeing some of Photius' thoughts on Ptolemy and the text, such as when he refers to Ptolemy being shallow and overly fantastical. These comments of Photius give modern readers an insight into what Photius made of Ptolemy and his work since he was an actual reader of Ptolemy's text.²³⁹ It is also worth noting that similar instances of frustration are also found in Photius' epitome of Antonius Diogenes' *Incredible Things beyond Thule* when he comments on the excess of fantasy in the work, which suggests that Photius does not like fabulous works and yet the *Bibliotheca* contains epitomes of several ethnographic and paradoxographic works.²⁴⁰

Among Photius' own comments there is one sentence in particular that stands out: 'The book is truly useful for those keen to work hard on historical scholarship, for it offers the possibility of enabling one to know things in a short space of time, a collection of scattered facts which someone has taken the trouble to collect from books that would otherwise take a life-time to compile'. The reason that this sentence is particularly interesting is because it is in direct contrast with other comments that Photius makes about Ptolemy or the *Novel Research* elsewhere, exalting the virtues of the text rather than focusing on its negative aspects. Furthermore, there is also a distinct lack of third-person-singular verbs in this

proem is used as the beginning and the end of his history', (τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ προοίμιον καὶ ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος ἐστὶ τῆς ἱστορίας). Furthermore, Dio Chrysostom (*Oration* LIII.9) appears to have also known of such a version of Herodotus' text: '...all other writers with any reputation for skill in composing either verse or prose write their names both at the beginning and at the end, and many even in the body of their works, both prose and verse. Take for example Hecataeus, and Herodotus...' (καίτοι τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων, ὅποσοι τινὰ ἔδοξαν ἔχειν δύναμιν ἢ περὶ ποιήσιν ἢ καταλογάδην συγγράφοντες, καὶ πρῶτον καὶ τελευταῖον τὸ ἑαυτῶν ὄνομα γραφόντων, πολλῶν δὲ καὶ ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῖς λόγοις τε καὶ ποιήμασιν, ὥσπερ Ἐκαταῖός τε καὶ Ἡρόδοτος).

²³⁹ See Chapter One for Photius' relationship to Ptolemy's work.

²⁴⁰ See Chapter One.

statement, which when read alongside the promises about the work, suggests that this is a quotation from Ptolemy's original prologue that Photius has recorded - possibly verbatim - in his epitome. Therefore, this statement would appear to be a feature that Photius has recorded from Ptolemy's prologue, and it is a feature that is commonly found in miscellany works.²⁴¹

Based upon the epitome it would seem to be safe to assume that Ptolemy's prologue originally contained the title of the work, the dedication to Tertulla, criticisms of his literary predecessors, and claims about the usefulness of the book and the benefits that one would gain from reading it. Having established these tropes it is important to note that they are not unique to Ptolemy and his work, but can be found in numerous other compendia, miscellany, and scholarly treatises of the period that profess to offer wisdom or knowledge, or both, to their readers amongst which include: Diodorus Siculus' *Library* (*βιβλιοθήκη*), Vitruvius' *On Architecture* (*De Architectura*), Valerius Maximus' *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* (*Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*), Pliny's *Natural History* (*Historia Naturalis*), Frontinus' *On Aqueducts* (*De Aquaeductu*), and Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights* (*Noctes Atticae*). This establishes Ptolemy in a particular textual tradition and the next step is to examine Ptolemy's paratext: the title, dedication, criticism of predecessors, and claims of usefulness. In doing so, I will argue that although these tropes are in keeping with conventions of the compendia tradition of the period, Ptolemy plays with readers' preconceived expectations associated with them. The result, depending on how well readers understand what Ptolemy is doing with these tropes, creates different ways in which the text can be read, and ultimately reveals that Ptolemy's is playing with these conventions and readers' expectations of them, to satirize the purpose of miscellany texts.

2.4. Reading Ptolemy's Paratextual Features

2.4.1. The *Novel Research Intended for Polymathy* as a Title

Having established that the *Novel Research Intended for Polymathy* is the complete and original title of Ptolemy's work, the next step is to consider the implications behind Ptolemy's choice of title for his text. In modern textual theory, titles are classified as an important feature of the paratext, because they identify the text and disclose the contents of a work, and they advertise the book and attract the

²⁴¹ Janson (1964), 96.

attention of potential readers.²⁴² This would also have been the case in antiquity, when titles were affixed to literary works in order to facilitate their identification, with the author's name and the title of the work being designated on the outside of papyrus roll, on a shelf, or in a catalogue entry.²⁴³ According to Genette, titles offer the key to the work's interpretation by either having a 'thematic title' (indicating the subject matter of the text), a 'rhematic title' (explaining what the text is), or a 'mixed title' (a combination of 'thematic' and 'rhematic' that begins by designating the genre and therefore the text, before going on to designate the theme). All Greek titles beginning with *περι* and all Latin titles beginning with *De* are always 'mixed' titles whose 'rhematic' part is implied).²⁴⁴ Therefore, whether they are aware of it or not, readers are able to recognize a number of literary, religious, and scholarly genres of works which are self-consciously pointed out in the work's title page.²⁴⁵ Titles can indicate what genre the work belongs to and introduce the reader to the text; they are often the first indicator to the reader about what to expect from the text and they initiate terms on which text and reader should meet.²⁴⁶

As a title the *Novel Research Intended for Polymathy* is a 'mixed title', according to Genette's definition. Moreover, since readers are trained to read actively across a range of books, skimming titles for information about a text's content,²⁴⁷ Ptolemy's title with the incorporation of the word *ἱστορία* ('research' or 'inquiry'), indicates to readers that the work is associated with the miscellany tradition, since it is a word that frequently appears in miscellany texts of the Imperial period, for example: Pamphilia's *Collection of Miscellaneous Research* (*Σύμμικτα Ἱστορικὰ Ὑπομνήματα*),²⁴⁸ Favorinus' *Miscellaneous History* (*Παντοδαπή Ἱστορία*), and Pliny's *Natural History* (*Historia Naturalis*).²⁴⁹ Miscellany is a tradition of works that compiled and condensed a vast array of information from earlier texts. Although the compilation aesthetic of accumulating vast amounts of information tends to appear unwieldy or purely functional to a modern perspective, in antiquity these works enjoyed a much higher prestige than modern criticism has often

²⁴² Vardi (1993), 298.

²⁴³ Vardi (1993), 298; Swain (2001), 55.

²⁴⁴ Genette (1997), 77-89.

²⁴⁵ Sullivan (2007), 643.

²⁴⁶ Grivel (1973), 169-170; Fowler (1982), 92; Sullivan (2007), 644.

²⁴⁷ Sullivan (2007), 646.

²⁴⁸ Known principally from Photius' *Bibliotheca* codex 175, 119b-120a, and from citations in Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights* 15.17; 15.23.

²⁴⁹ See Barigazzi (1966).

allowed them.²⁵⁰ The fact these works occupy an impressive portion of Greek and Latin literature production in the Imperial period is not accidental, as miscellany's popularity is a direct result of the era's fascination with and striving for knowledge.²⁵¹

It is important to note that talk of titling conventions presumes a coherent sense of genre operating in antiquity, which is not universally accepted.²⁵² It is difficult to isolate and define the ancient genre of miscellany, or even accept that it was a genre that existed at all, especially since miscellany is a modern term applied to a body of ancient texts that share certain features; there is no evidence that anyone tried to define these works in antiquity.²⁵³ The lack of any precise denotation does not necessarily mean that there was no genre, or that the genre lacked a strong sense of conventions.²⁵⁴ It is apparent that there was a wide body of works from this period that are defined primarily by the disparateness of material that they accumulate.²⁵⁵ Specific words are also incorporated into their titles and prologues such as: *satura*, *anthologion*, *historia*, *bibliotheca*, *quaestiones*, *problemata*, *hypomnemata*, and *apomnemoneumata*.²⁵⁶ These tropes can be used to define a wide body of works from the Imperial period that contain miscellany features, texts that can be as varied as Pliny's encyclopaedic *Natural History* and Plutarch's sympotic *Table Talk*. Despite their differences, these works seem to presume that a reader engages self-consciously with a tradition and with established literary tropes,²⁵⁷ which suggests that Greek and Roman writers seem to have recognized the concept of this genre, even if there was not a generic term for it.²⁵⁸

Therefore, when looking at the titles of other compilation works, both Latin and Greek, it is apparent that there is a certain pattern among these works with the titles signalling to readers the focus of the work. Aelian's 'thematic' titles for both of his miscellany works, *On the Nature of Animals* (*De Natura Animalium* or *Περί Ζώων Ἰδιότητος*), and the *Various Research* (*Varia Historia* or *Ποικίλη Ἱστορία*) relates to the contents of each work. There are the self-explanatory *Greek Questions*

²⁵⁰ König & Whitmarsh (2007), 3.

²⁵¹ Klotz & Oikonomopoulou (2011), 22.

²⁵² See Whitmarsh (2005), 588 for how this applies to the ancient novels.

²⁵³ Vardi (2004), 164-165; Morgan (2011), 49.

²⁵⁴ Whitmarsh (2005), 588.

²⁵⁵ König (2007), 43.

²⁵⁶ Morgan (2011), 50.

²⁵⁷ Whitmarsh (2005), 588.

²⁵⁸ Morgan (2011), 50.

(*Quaestiones Graecae*) and *Roman Questions* (*Quaestiones Romanae*) of Plutarch, which present information about Greek and Roman customs respectively by posing questions and then answering them following the tradition of writing about *problemata*.²⁵⁹ The titles of Plutarch's *Dinner with Seven Wise Men* (*Συμπόσιον τῶν ἐπὶ σοφῶν*) and his collection known as *Table Talk*,²⁶⁰ and Athenaeus' *Banquet of the Sophists* (*Deipnosophistae*);²⁶¹ relate to the sympotic setting in which the material is provided, and to the long tradition of literary symposia.²⁶² Diodorus Siculus and Apollodorus both chose to use the symbolic title *Library* (*Βιβλιοθήκη*) for their historiographic and mythographic works respectively, but because they convey the idea that a text is a repository of varied information their titles have some similarities with 'rhetic' titles. These two works are very different texts yet they share an extraordinarily bold title choice that essentially claims their work contains a library's worth of knowledge, endowing their works with a remarkable amount of authority.²⁶³ Pliny modelled the scope of his work on earlier Greek miscellany texts that focused on encyclical education (*τῆς ἐγκυκλίου παιδείας*) from which the word encyclopaedia is derived; a Roman literary concept that is the result of the Roman encounter with Greek ideals of all-embracing and encompassing education.²⁶⁴ Pliny's 'thematic' title *Natural History* (*Historia Naturalis*) refers to the overarching theme and scope of his research on the natural world, compared to the earlier Greek texts he cites.²⁶⁵

A more imaginative title can be found with Aulus Gellius' choice of title *Attic Nights* (*Noctes Atticae*) for his compilation text. Inspired by the imaginative titles of earlier works, Gellius makes explicit in his prologue how he decided upon the title for his work saying: '...since, as I have said, I began to amuse myself by assembling these notes during the long winter nights which I spent on a country place in the land of Attica, I have therefore given them the title of *Attic Nights*'.²⁶⁶ The title of the work refers to the circumstances of the work's composition, with *noctes* evoking the hard labour of nocturnal scholarly toil, which is also suggested

²⁵⁹ On the literary tradition of *problemata* see Slater (1982); Jacob (2004).

²⁶⁰ See Klotz & Oikonomopoulou (2011) on Plutarch and the sympotic tradition.

²⁶¹ See Braund & Wilkins (2000) on Athenaeus and the sympotic tradition.

²⁶² See Chapter Four for more information.

²⁶³ Too (2010), 143.

²⁶⁴ Murphy (2004), 13-14 & 194-196.

²⁶⁵ Doody (2010), 1-10.

²⁶⁶ Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights*, praef. 4. *Sed quoniam longinquis per hiemem noctibus in agro, sicuti dixi, terrae Atticae commentationes hasce ludere ac facere exorsi sumus, idcirco eas inscripsimus Noctium esse Atticarum.*

by *hibernarum vigiliarum* (winter's vigils).²⁶⁷ As a title it is designed to encapsulate the idea of burning the midnight oil, a theme first found in Callimachus who created a word for the practice, *ἀγρυπνία*.²⁶⁸ It is a common motif in Latin literature when there is any suggestion of scholarly activity, which is why Janson includes it among the common literary conventions of Latin prose prefaces.²⁶⁹ It is designed to emphasize one's diligence in spending the night in study,²⁷⁰ playing upon the notion that men of learning sit up at night and work by candlelight when the rest of the world is asleep.²⁷¹

There is also the impression that the production of scholarly works should be secondary to daytime business. This is something that Pliny is keen to stress,²⁷² hence the nocturnal toil, which does not take away time from pressing daytime matters.²⁷³ With Gellius there is the sense that writing the *Attic Nights* was a task that consumed Gellius' life and leisure time, so preoccupied was he with his endeavour.²⁷⁴ Therefore, the title is meant to convey to readers his erudition and hard work,²⁷⁵ but also the variety of the content with the many nights that Gellius has spent reading and compiling.²⁷⁶ Furthermore, by alluding to Athens in his title, Gellius associates his work with Athens' intellectual heritage and sophistication, which in turn is designed to reflect upon the erudite nature of his work. The combination of *Nights* and *Attic* in the title gives the work its intellectual prestige, because, as Vardi notes, if Gellius' *noctes* had been Milesian, a place synonymous with erotic tales in antiquity, rather than Attic, then, Gellius' title could have suggested a rather different nocturnal pursuit and altogether different type of text.²⁷⁷ Therefore, what at first may appear to be a whimsical choice for a title has in fact been carefully conceived by Gellius to reflect the scholarly pursuit he undertook in compiling the text, as well as the educational content of the work.

It is apparent from the titles of different miscellany texts that while there are differences and a certain amount of fluidity in the choice of titles for these

²⁶⁷ Vardi (1993), 300.

²⁶⁸ Callimachus *Epigrams* 27.4.

²⁶⁹ Cicero *Paradoxa* 5; Pseudo-Virgil *Ciris* 46; Statius *Thebaid* 12.811ff.

²⁷⁰ Stevenson (2004), 125.

²⁷¹ Janson (1964), 97-98.

²⁷² Pliny *Natural History praef.* 18.

²⁷³ Stevenson (2004), 125-126.

²⁷⁴ Too (2010), 65.

²⁷⁵ Vardi (2004), 159.

²⁷⁶ König (2007), 43.

²⁷⁷ Vardi (1993), 300.

works, there is some consistency that emphasizes the similar character of such texts, which is why modern scholars tend to group these works together under one genre despite some of their disparities.²⁷⁸ The ingenious, if often bizarre title choices are often self-explanatory; they either reveal what the work is about or display an author's attempt at being innovative, or both, in an attempt to draw readers in. Furthermore, the play on titles suggests that these authors recognized that they belonged to the same literary tradition, even if there was not an all-encompassing label to define these works in antiquity.

Ptolemy's title suggests that he is deliberately aligning himself with other compendia texts when he discloses the main theme of the text in the title of his work with the use of the word *καινός*. *Καινός* is a loaded and intriguing word that is usually translated as 'new', 'fresh', 'innovative', or 'novel'. However, *καινός* was regarded as being different from the other Greek word for new, *νέος*, in that *καινός* is often linked with discovery and has an association with being wrought by humans rather than by nature or the gods.²⁷⁹ Therefore, by claiming in his title that the work is *καινός*, Ptolemy is specifically appealing to a reader who seeks novelty and is stressing the fact that he has included innovative material in his handbook. The need to be new and different was a particularly pressing concern for compendia texts, as novelty and innovation were important features because these are works that rely heavily on previous scholarship. In order to appeal to readers these authors could not simply regurgitate the same old information, they had to bring something fresh and exciting to their readers, whether it is new information or older material that has been packaged in a new and different manner. This is why in the prologue to the *Natural History*, Pliny stresses the novelty of his work several times by saying it was a novel task (*novicium*) to write his work and that it is difficult to bring novelty (*novitatem*) to what is old.²⁸⁰ Aulus Gellius says he will be flattered if his topics are repeatedly taught in schools or found in other compilation texts, and he raises the possibility that readers will find new (*nova*) and unknown (*ignotaque*) information.²⁸¹ Therefore, Ptolemy's use of the word in his title signals to readers, before they even begin to read the text, that he has taken the time to research new and exciting information and that his work is full of innovative material.

²⁷⁸ For more information on the definition of miscellany and its literary tradition see Morgan (2007); Oikonomopoulou (2007); Morgan (2011).

²⁷⁹ D'Angour (2011), 72-73.

²⁸⁰ Pliny *Natural History*, *praef.* 1 & 15.

²⁸¹ Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights*, *praef.* 15-16.

However, *καινός* does not just simply mean new, it also has particular associations with the strange or unusual, which some have supposed to have been the word's original meaning,²⁸² because of its connection with the mythological character Kaineus who changed sex.²⁸³ Therefore, the word, *καινός* tends to refer to things that are new and mysterious, rather than just simply new. This can be seen in Lucian's prologue of the *True Stories*, where he uses the word *καινότητος* to refer the strange ways that other peoples live because other peoples' customs are new and bizarre to Greeks: 'Many others, with the same intent, have written about the imaginary travels, and journeys of theirs, telling of huge beasts, cruel men, and strange ways of living'.²⁸⁴ This connotation of the word *καινός* and the use of it in this context, suggests that Ptolemy deliberately used the word as a self-conscious attempt to refer to the new and bizarre contents of his work, strengthening the text's affiliation with works of paradoxography, as it implies that the work will focus on the novel and the bizarre, appealing to reader curiosity about the weird.²⁸⁵

Although the first half of Ptolemy's title suggests to readers that the text will contain novel and strange material, the second half of the title, *εἰς πολυμαθίαν* 'for polymathy', advocates its usefulness for potential readers. By claiming that the work is for polymathy, Ptolemy is suggesting that the work contains material that could be useful in an educational or academic environment. Therefore, as a complete title, the *Novel Research Intended for Polymathy* suggests to readers that it is a work that can benefit readers by offering them new scholarly information to read and digest at their leisure, and that it has a particular focus on material not found elsewhere, because they were stories from outside the normal traditions.²⁸⁶ This is not unusual; we have already seen how Aulus Gellius' title *Attic Nights* conveys academic toil and numerous miscellany texts, including Ptolemy's, contain the word *ἱστορία* in their titles to convey a sense of scholarly research, a legacy that goes back to Classical works of historiography and ethnography. The impression of academic worth is something that compendia texts have in common and are keen to convey to

²⁸² D'Angour (2011), 90.

²⁸³ Kaineus, the legendary Lapith warrior in Homer's *Iliad* (1.260-265) and Apollonius' *Argonautica* (1.57-64.), was born Kainis, a Lapith princess, who was raped by the god Poseidon. Afterwards Poseidon granted Kainis a wish, and she chose to be transformed from female to male, and thus Kainis became Kaineus. See also Phlegon of Tralles *On Marvels* 5.

²⁸⁴ Lucian *True Stories* 1.1. πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ ἄλλοι τὰ αὐτὰ τούτοις προελόμενοι συνέγραψαν ὡς δὴ τινὰς ἑαυτῶν πλάνας τε καὶ ἀποδημίας, θηρίων τε μεγέθη ἱστοροῦντες καὶ ἀνθρώπων ὠμότητος καὶ βίων καινότητος.

²⁸⁵ See Chapter Three for links with paradoxography.

²⁸⁶ Chatzis (1914), 36-37; Tomberg (1968), 20

readers.²⁸⁷ This is apparent with Aelian when he says that he has been persuaded that his *On the Characteristics of Animals* is a treasure, and that some readers may find it profitable.²⁸⁸ Frontinus claims that his *Stratagems* will offer commanders military knowledge and wisdom,²⁸⁹ and Aulus Gellius stresses how his work can act as a starting point for readers unfamiliar with the complexities of scholarly knowledge.²⁹⁰ In this context, Ptolemy's choice of *Novel Research Intended for Polymathy* as a title seems to be no different from many of the titles of other compendia texts that are designed to convey the work's erudition. This has led Tomberg to conclude that Ptolemy's title indicates that his purpose was to bring the most obscure information to light, and in doing so he was misled by unreliable sources that he had used.²⁹¹

Ptolemy's title is the first opportunity he gives his readers to make a decision as to what type of text it is. Depending on how readers interpret the title, the text can be read and approached in different ways. For instance, some readers could have focused on the *καινή* aspect of the title, believing that what they have got their hands on is a paradoxographic text dedicated to wondrous and farfetched information. There are issues with how *εἰς πολυμαθίαν* fits in with this, as paradoxography works do not usually contain such a statement in their titles; instead their titles tend to stress the marvels that they are going to relate with words such as: *θαῦμα* 'wonders', *παράδοξον* 'paradoxical', *ἴδιος* 'peculiar', *ξένος* 'strange', *τέρας* 'marvel', and *ἄπιστον* 'incredible', which draw attention to the marvellous nature of things that they are describing in order to appeal to readers' curiosity about the unusual and unknown. Paradoxography texts are designed to induce a sense of wonder in their readers and their titles advertise this. Although much of what they describe is farfetched, many of the wonders in the texts have a grain of truth to them (although this has often become distorted). Therefore, authors of paradoxography have to attempt to make their wonders believable by grounding their marvels in reality, in order to achieve their desired effect on the reader. However, despite their grounding in reality, works of paradoxography do not emphasize a scholarly purpose, although there are numerous compendia texts that claim to be able to add to one's education that also contain paradoxographical

²⁸⁷ König & Whitmarsh (2007), 3.

²⁸⁸ Aelian *On the Characteristics of Animals*, praef.

²⁸⁹ Frontinus *Stratagems*, praef.

²⁹⁰ Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights*, praef. 12-13.

²⁹¹ Tomberg (1968), 21.

elements (notably Pliny's *Natural History*, Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights*, Valerius Maximus' *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, and Aelian's *On the Characteristics of Animals*). In contrast, rather than claiming to have a scholarly purpose, paradoxography's primary aim seems to be to entertain their readers by shocking, amusing, or titillating them with wonders.

As a result, while some readers might have ignored *εἰς πολυμαθίαν* and read the work as they read other paradoxography texts, mainly for entertainment purposes with little thought given to the whys and wherefores, for other readers it is possible that *εἰς πολυμαθίαν* in this context would give the impression that not only does the work contain marvels, but these are ones that have some educational purpose and may even have been reliably verified. This could have resulted in Ptolemy being regarded as a reliable expert by some readers. Other readers might have thought that *καινός* was being used to refer to new or novel material, rather than strange or wondrous information. In this sense *καινῆ* combined with *εἰς πολυμαθίαν* could suggest to readers that Ptolemy has gone out of his way to provide new information to his readers that would be of some educational use to them, similar to how Pliny claims his work contains new information in his prologue, but envisages the work as having a scholarly purpose. Therefore, some readers might have read and accepted Ptolemy's work at face value, believing that Ptolemy was establishing himself and his work as being comparable with other compendia texts that have a didactic use, especially since polymathy suggests a possible shortcut to scholarly learning (see below).

As a choice of title the *Novel Research Intended for Polymathy* can signal different approaches to the text depending on how readers interpret and respond to the title, creating different reader expectations of the text. However, it is possible that Ptolemy's combination of *καινῆ* and *εἰς πολυμαθίαν* is intended to be ironic, because although it is possible to read the text as a straightforward handbook, the title plays with titling conventions and readers' expectations, demonstrating an awareness of other texts and literary traditions to which his work is closely aligned. It is feasible that if only the title of the work had survived to the present day, there would be less reason to suspect any ulterior motives behind Ptolemy's choice of title for his work. Yet, as we shall see, when read alongside his claims in the prologue, it becomes apparent that the work is designed to create different reading of the text. Although readers could misconstrue the true character of Ptolemy's work from the

title, the prologue and the play on conventional miscellany prologal tropes within, demonstrate that Ptolemy is playing with reader expectations in order to create different readings and interpretations of the same work.

2.4.2. Dedications and Implied Readers of the Text

Earlier on I drew attention to how Antonius Diogenes' letters to his two dedicatees in the prologue of his novel the *Incredible Things beyond Thule* contextualizes Diogenes' readers by giving them shape and form as real addressees, and significantly as a female and male reader of the text. Since Ptolemy dedicates his work to a woman named Tertulla, it is possible that she may have been an actual reader of Ptolemy's text, just as Isidora and Faustinus may represent real readers of Diogenes' narrative. Moreover, both Ptolemy's dedication to Tertulla and Diogenes' dedication to Isidora are interesting, because in the Roman world education and learning were typically male pursuits, with knowledge of literary culture and the liberal arts being the mark of the Roman male elite.²⁹² However, here we have two contemporary works with dedications to women and this requires further attention.

It is not clear who Tertulla was, or if she was a real historical figure. The name Tertulla and the masculine version Tertullus are names that start to appear frequently toward the end of the first century and the first decades of the second century CE, coinciding with the time that Ptolemy was active. Bowersock argues that Ptolemy's Tertulla ought to be identified with Julia Tertulla, who is mentioned in an inscription in Tlos in Lycia.²⁹³ This Julia Tertulla is described as being the wife of Lucius Julius Marinus Caecilius Simplex, who served as proconsul of the Roman province of Lycia-Pamphilia in 96-99 CE and consul in 100 CE, during the reign of Trajan.²⁹⁴ Although there is no indication in Ptolemy's work that he is referring to this Julia Tertulla, or that there is any concrete evidence to support Bowersock's hypothesis, the possibility that this is the same Tertulla is tempting. Taking into account Julia Tertulla's social standing as the wife of a Roman statesman, she is likely to have acquired a high enough level of education to be able to read and comprehend the work, as well as to have had the leisure time available for reading. Dedicatees tended to come from the higher end of the social scale because there was a crucial link between wealth and education in antiquity. Suitable leisure time was

²⁹² Hemelrijk (1999), 7.

²⁹³ Bowersock (1994), 26.

²⁹⁴ Burrell (2004), 253.

necessary for education and indeed for the ability to lead the good life in general, which is not snobbery so much as practical reality.²⁹⁵ Ptolemy emphasizes Tertulla's learned nature by saying that she was a lover of literature (*φιλολόγον*), and by praising her erudition (*πολυμαθής*). A high level of education would have been crucial for reading a compilation text like that of Ptolemy's, to have the ability to navigate and read through the work, as well as to digest the information contained within.²⁹⁶

A clue about Tertulla could come from the manner in which Ptolemy addresses Tertulla, since he refers to her as his 'mistress' (*δέσποιναν*). It is possible that due to her social standing Julia Tertulla could have had the opportunity to encourage writers by acting as patron to them, and this is what Ptolemy is alluding to here. In Roman society there was a long tradition of female patronage, especially among women from the Imperial family.²⁹⁷ The most famous was Julia Domna the wife of the Emperor Septimus Severus, who notoriously professed an interest in literature and had a literary circle of writers around her at court, including Philostratus, who she encouraged to write about Apollonius of Tyana.²⁹⁸ There are also some examples of other women with high social standing who acted as patrons, but they are not as common as female patrons from the Imperial family, mainly because the level of support that they could give to their clients was far less.²⁹⁹ Therefore, it is feasible that Ptolemy's Tertulla could be identified with the historical figure of the same name and that she was the female patron of Ptolemy, making this a seemingly innocent and straightforward patron client dedication in a text.

Another possibility is that Tertulla might also be a creation of Ptolemy. As I touched upon in the introduction of this thesis (and explore further in Chapter Three), Ptolemy enjoys inventing sources to support his farfetched and otherwise unattested material. Therefore, it is feasible that this apparently innocuous dedication to Tertulla may also be fabricated and that her inclusion in the prologue is to emphasize a particular type of implied reader of the text. This might be similar

²⁹⁵ Stephens (1994), 407.

²⁹⁶ Ptolemy's praise of Tertulla's intellectual attributes is remarkably similar to those used by Plutarch to describe the priestess Clea who is described as 'well-read' (*βιβλίους ἐντυχῶσαν*) in his dedication of his works to her, *On the Virtues of Women* (242e & 234d) and *Isis and Osiris* (351d). It is also similar to Cicero remarking that his daughter Tullia is very like him, referring to her as *doctissima* in the *Consolatio*, suggesting that Tullia could enter into some of Cicero's more complex intellectual interests, see Cicero *Consolatio* in Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 1.15.20

²⁹⁷ Hemelrijk (1999), 97-128 & 143-145; Rife (2009), 113.

²⁹⁸ Philostratus *Life of Apollonius* 1.3.

²⁹⁹ Hemelrijk (1999), 128-145.

to how Diogenes' letters to Isidora and Faustinus say rather different things about the work and the implied reader of the text, making it possible to inscribe two different possible approaches to the reading of the work based upon the way in which the letters to Isidora and Faustinus characterize and stereotype readers' approaches to the novel.³⁰⁰ For instance, readers represented by the Faustinus reading are the semiotic reader of the text. This reader is aware of the immersive Isidoran reading, but has a more detached appreciation of how the fiction is created by Diogenes; it is to this reader that Diogenes reveals the true nature of his work. On the other hand, Diogenes characterizes Isidora as being driven by intellectual curiosity and the desire to learn (*φιλομαθῶς ἐχούση*), which reflects the narrator of Diogenes' novel, Deinias, whose own travels are motivated by the spirit of intellectual inquiry. Therefore, it is possible to characterize Isidora as the semantic reader; she wants to read the work to discover what happens next in the text and she only has to read the book once to find out and satisfy her curiosity. As a result, the pseudo-documentary fiction of the novel is addressed to readers represented by Isidora, as they are more willing to engage with the fictional world as an imaginative reality.³⁰¹

It is possible that something similar might be going on in Ptolemy's prologue as he characterizes Tertulla along similar lines to how Diogenes refers to Isidora. For instance, Diogenes' says that Isidora is *φιλομαθῶς ἐχούση*, which are traits remarkably similar to how Ptolemy describes Tertulla as *φιλολόγον* and *πολυμαθές*. It is possible, then, that Tertulla like Isidora represents a reader who is all too ready to accept material at face-value, and in the case of Tertulla, accept the bizarre contents of Ptolemy's work without stopping to question Ptolemy, his sources or his motives. It is tempting to differentiate these two types of implied readers along gender lines in Diogenes' novel. Isidora can be regarded as the naïve female reader, who is far more ready to engage with the fictional world as an imaginative reality and enjoys the novel's exoticism, glamour and romance. In contrast, Faustinus can be seen to represent the astute male reader, since he is the one who Diogenes' reveals his hoax to and is sent the list of sources to verify himself if he so wishes, making him the more ironic and reflexive reader.³⁰² Since Isidora and Tertulla share the same attributes of being highly educated and intellectually curious women, it is possible

³⁰⁰ Morgan (2009), 128.

³⁰¹ Morgan (2009), 128. n.5.

³⁰² Stephens & Winkler (1995), 103; Morgan (2009), 128 n.5.

that both texts appealed to female readers and that their authors were fully aware of this. Diogenes characterizes Isidora as the more naïve and knowledge hungry reader when compared to the astute Faustinus, because she is motivated by intellectual inquiry but is not concerned with how, why or where the text came into being, instead this is the concern of the male semiotic reader. Therefore, Diogenes' portrayal of Isidora as a curious yet naïve reader of his text may represent a wider association between naivety and female readers in the Imperial period.³⁰³

Since it is possible to apply the Isidoran reading to Tertulla, especially as there are parallels in how they are described, by dedicating the work to Tertulla, Ptolemy could be alluding to this notion concerning a naïve female readership. However, in Diogenes' prologue there is a final twist. Although the truth of the work is divulged to Faustinus, there is an issue concerning one of Diogenes' sources. The only source of Diogenes that Photius actually names is Antiphanes; this must be Antiphanes of Berge who wrote a work on the far north in the late fourth century BCE possibly called *Ἄπιστα ὑπὲρ Θούλην* or the *Incredible Things beyond Thule*, which may have been a parody of the travel narrative of Pytheas of Massilia.³⁰⁴ Antiphanes' tales were so farfetched that the verb *βεργαίζω* was coined from the name of his hometown to denote the telling of falsehoods; therefore of all the sources that Diogenes could have chosen to cite, Antiphanes was the one least calculated to verify his work. His reputation as a liar was so widespread in antiquity that this can hardly have been a mistake by Diogenes.³⁰⁵ Rather the reference to Antiphanes must be a calculated move deliberately undermining Diogenes' own *Beglaubigungsapparat*. However, whether Faustinus and the implied reader he represents is meant to be complicit in this irony or is enfolded by it is difficult to say.³⁰⁶ As a result, in the *Incredible Things beyond Thule*, Diogenes creates a conundrum, because if the reader represented by Faustinus is ultimately misled by Diogenes, it is possible that the implied Isidora reader with her learned background and knowledge of literature might in fact represent a much more knowing and complicit reader because she would be used to these intellectual games; this reader enjoys the fiction because he or she knows it is fiction.

³⁰³ See Bowie (1994) and (2003), for how this applies to the ancient novels.

³⁰⁴ Knaack (1906), 135-138.

³⁰⁵ Morgan (1985), 483.

³⁰⁶ Ní Mheallaigh (2008), 417-418.

Owing to the similarities with the Isidora reader, Tertulla with all her learning, knowledge, and love of literature may actually represent the implied ideal reader of Ptolemy's work, because she is in the position to know how he fabricates sources and adapts material to suits his whims. The reader represented by Tertulla might know how to handle the complex reading protocols that govern Ptolemy's text, because she is complicit with and actively engages in Ptolemy's games of pseudo-erudition. This reader, as with the reader represented by Isidora in Diogenes' novel, enjoys and engages with the fiction of the text because he or she knows its fiction. Therefore, the reader that is represented by Faustinus becomes problematic, because it was in his letter that Diogenes created a fact/fiction dichotomy.³⁰⁷ However, the way in which the Faustinus reader reads the text is still open to an extent, as the result depends upon how this reader interprets Diogenes' elaborate pseudo-documentary features. This can be applied to Ptolemy, because in his title, prologue, and through his use of real and bogus sources,³⁰⁸ he flags up the fact/fiction dichotomy in his work, similar to how Diogenes uses the Faustinus letter to create this antithesis. Ptolemy indicates to readers that he is content to show readers that confusing fact and fiction is what he does, but as with Diogenes in his work, he does not make this explicit; instead the co-presence of different readers implies it is necessary to consider both approaches to the narrative.

2.4.3. Criticizing Literary Predecessors

When Photius states that Ptolemy criticized other authors, although it is difficult to be certain what Photius means, or how exactly Ptolemy went about doing this because Photius does not elaborate on this feature, it would seem Photius is referring to a trope that appears in many literary traditions in antiquity where authors refer to earlier, predominantly Greek studies, on their subject.³⁰⁹ The listing of other writers is a feature that is frequently found in the prologues of compendia texts. Often the references are given as a way of swelling already formidable catalogues, clearly designed to give readers the impression of a great learning.³¹⁰ However, the listing of literary predecessors is used by many authors as an opportunity to attack their literary or indeed other adversaries, as had previously

³⁰⁷ Ní Mheallaigh (forthcoming).

³⁰⁸ See Chapter Three for more information on Ptolemy's sources.

³⁰⁹ Janson (1964), 97.

³¹⁰ Varro *Agricultural Topics in Three Books*, 1.1; Pliny *Natural History*, *praef.* 17.

been the practice of both Greek and Latin writers of comedies in particular.³¹¹ In the case of Ptolemy, it is possible that he cited real and bogus authors,³¹² as he does throughout the *Novel Research*, to undermine readers' sense of *paideia* and to maintain the different ways in which the text could be read.

According to Clement of Alexandria, source citations in prologues were common: 'Come, and let us adduce the Greeks as witnesses against themselves to the theft. For, in as much as they pilfer from one another, they establish the fact that they are thieves'.³¹³ The best surviving examples of this trope can be found in Pliny's *Natural History* and Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights*, both of which criticize earlier examples of compilation handbooks. In his prologue Pliny singles out and lists works that had silly yet intriguing titles, all of which happen to be earlier Greek miscellany type handbooks. The works listed include titles such as: *Honeycomb*, *Muses*, *Gardens*, and *Horn of Plenty*, a title that deliberately draws attention to the rarity of its contents.³¹⁴ About these texts Pliny says that although these intriguing works arouse reader curiosity, so much so that they might lead a man to forget an important engagement because they have been tempted to read the book instead, when you actually get hold of a copy of one of these books the contents of the work are a disappointment, because you will find nothing between the covers.³¹⁵ This sentiment is also found in Aulus Gellius, who initially expresses his excitement at finding books of *paradoxa*, but discards them shortly after when he finds them disappointing.³¹⁶ Moreover, some of the same intriguingly titled compendia texts are also mentioned by Gellius in his prologue, along with other Greek and Latin miscellany works including: *Fruits of my Reading*, *Discoveries*, *Torches*, as well as more commonly used titles of *Universal History* and *Miscellanies*.³¹⁷ Of these texts Aulus Gellius remarked that they left no lasting impression on him and furthermore, the authors of these works were not discriminating in the information they

³¹¹ Janson (1964), 97.

³¹² Cameron (2004), 134-159.

³¹³ Clement of Alexandria, 6.2.1. καθ' ἑαυτῶν παραστήσωμεν τοὺς Ἕλληνας· οἱ γὰρ τὰ οἰκεῖα οὕτως ἄντικρυς παρ' ἀλλήλων ὑφαιρούμενοι βεβαιοῦσι μὲν τὸ κλέπται εἶναι.

³¹⁴ Pliny *Natural History*, praef. 24, 'so that you can hope to find a draught of hen's milk' (*ut vel lactis gallinaei sperare possis in volumine haustum*).

³¹⁵ Pliny *Natural History*, praef. 24. *inscriptiones, propter quas vadimonium deseri possit; at cum intraveris, di deaque, quam nihil in medio invenies.*

³¹⁶ Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* 9.4.

³¹⁷ Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights*, praef. 5-10. Of the thirty titles cited by Gellius about half of them can be assigned to their authors, many of whom Gellius mentions throughout his work, while there are many others he used but does not cite by name. See Rolfe (1927), xxviii-xxix, in his translation of Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights*.

included; instead they incorporated whatever they found, aiming for sheer quantity over quality.³¹⁸

In listing these earlier miscellany works and comparing their works to them, both Pliny and Gellius are displaying a high degree of self-consciousness about their works' place in the compilation tradition. Both Pliny's and Aulus Gellius's criticisms stress the fact that there was a long established and popular tradition of such writing, and that authors of miscellany texts knew what tropes to include in their texts to align themselves with this literary tradition, because apart from explicit labelling, the most direct form of indication is reference to previous writers or representatives of the genre.³¹⁹ Furthermore, both Pliny's and Aulus Gellius' damning assessments of other works is a deliberate strategy used to emphasize the quality of their own works, and to suggest that although their subject matter or contents may not be entirely original, they have compiled them differently or have added further information that sets their work above and beyond their predecessors' attempts.

Although there is an emphasis on criticism, to a certain extent there was also an effort to help the reader navigate their way through these complex compilation works, as some miscellany texts referenced earlier sources in their works as a guide to further reading. For instance, Varro in the *Agricultural Topics in Three Books* (*Rerum rusticarum libri III*) lists some fifty-two earlier works, mainly Greek writers on agriculture.³²⁰ Moreover, sources and source referencing can also be used as a method for establishing themes and structure in miscellany texts. This can be seen in both Pliny's and Aulus Gellius's works where they devised a table of contents for their works, as a way of helping their readers find specific information. Pliny in book one of the *Natural History* lists the contents of the text chapter by chapter for each of the thirty-seven books that make up his monumental work. Following each of these synopses is a list of his sources and authorities used in that book. Aulus Gellius also provides a table of contents that comes immediately after his prologue, in which he identifies the main concern for each of his chapters, providing a synopsis of his work (as Pliny does in his), as well as the names of some of his main sources for that book. Aulus Gellius also names authors or uses quotations from

³¹⁸ Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights*, praef. 11. *Namque illi omnes et eorum maxime Graeci, multa et varia lectitantes, in quas res cumque inciderant, "alba," ut dicitur, "linea" sine cura discriminis solam copiam sectati converrebant.*

³¹⁹ Fowler (1982), 88.

³²⁰ Stevenson (2004), 125.

authors for many of his chapter and book headings, and in this way he identifies his textual sources.

Criticizing literary predecessors is a strategy found in numerous works, but it is particularly common in historiography; it is implicitly present in Herodotus to Hecataeus and Thucydides to Herodotus, and it is explicit when Thucydides criticizes Hellanicus. As a trope it establishes a work in a literary tradition, since the listing of sources, referencing, and criticizing them is one of the clearest signs of an awareness of a pre-existing tradition that compendia writers share.³²¹ It also serves to elevate the importance of their text in a highly competitive literary field.³²² Although Pliny's and Aulus Gellius' prologues offer modern readers the best examples of this trope, the simultaneous claim of adherence to and divergence from the tradition of one's predecessors is unlikely to be a feature of Pliny and Aulus Gellius alone, since a writer had to be fully aware of the tradition in order to diverge from it.³²³ Since Photius states that Ptolemy criticized his literary predecessors, it is possible that Photius is referring to a similar trope used by Ptolemy. How this would have appeared in Ptolemy's prologue is unknown; he may have listed the titles of earlier works, similar to Pliny and Aulus Gellius, or included a table of contents in or after his prologue, in which there was a synopsis for each of his seven books, along with a list of his sources. It is also possible that Ptolemy may even have listed his sources at the head of each chapter and book heading, as Aulus Gellius does and as (according to Photius) Antonius Diogenes did in the *Incredible Things beyond Thule*. Ptolemy may have done this to draw attention to the deficiencies of earlier works to present his work as being superior in comparison, similar to Pliny and Aulus Gellius, enabling him to establish himself in the compilation tradition.

Although we do not know how this feature would have appeared within the text the fact that Ptolemy incorporated it into his prologue demonstrates that he is aligning his work with this literary tradition, and that he has included the trope to reinforce this association. It also plays on readers' desires for acquiring new material and knowledge, because the reader, on picking up a copy of Ptolemy's text, may find an author listed that they had relied heavily upon in the past, only to find them criticized in a newer text; in this way Aulus Gellius relegates Pliny's *Natural History* to the titles he later criticizes, suggesting that Pliny's work is out-dated, and

³²¹ Stevenson (2004), 125.

³²² Janson (1964), 97.

³²³ Stevenson (2004), 126-127.

that he will improve upon it.³²⁴ However, while Pliny and Aulus Gellius use this strategy as an opportunity to stress that their works have valued quality over quantity unlike the earlier Greek texts they list, it is possible that Ptolemy's purpose may have been more devious. It is tempting to hypothesize that because Ptolemy's title, the prologue, and the work as whole plays on the tropes of miscellany texts and readers' expectations of them, Ptolemy may have done the same with this feature especially since the convention could easily be exploited. Therefore, although authors such as Pliny and Aulus Gellius usually cited older, genuine sources (as when Aulus Gellius mentions Pliny's work), the odd, unverifiable source could easily have found itself included whether the author knew about it or not. However, since Ptolemy blends real and bogus sources when discussing material in his work,³²⁵ here in his prologue, Ptolemy may have deliberately included fabricated texts and authors, possibly alongside authors that were known for their own falsehoods.

I have already mentioned how Antonius Diogenes in his novel the *Incredible Things beyond Thule* cites Antiphanes of Berge as a source, a man who was known for lying and is responsible for the creation of the verb coined for far-fetched tales. However, Diogenes is not alone in doing this; the narrator in the prologue of Lucian's quasi-Herodotean fantastical travel narrative the *True Stories*,³²⁶ states that he used numerous unnamed poets, historians, and philosophers throughout the work:³²⁷ 'I would cite them by name, were it not that you yourself will recognize them from your reading'.³²⁸ These encouraging claims made by the narrator of the *True Stories* have spurred many modern scholars on to hunting for the references within the text.³²⁹ However, Lucian's narrator also singles out two individual authors that he used for inspiration: 'One of them is Ctesias, son of Ctesiochus, of Cnidus, who wrote a great deal about India and its characteristics that he had never seen himself nor heard from anyone else with a reputation of truthfulness. Iambulus also wrote much that was strange about the countries in the great sea: he made up a falsehood that is patent to everybody, but he wrote a story that is not uninteresting

³²⁴ Holford-Strevens (2004), 28.

³²⁵ See Chapter Three.

³²⁶ Rütten (1997); Georgiadou & Larmour (1998); Fusillo (1999); von Möllendorff (2000).

³²⁷ The narrator is identified as 'Lucian', although this identification is subverted. See Whitmarsh (2004), 465-468.

³²⁸ Lucian *True Stories* 1.2.11-12. οὐς καὶ ὀνομαστί ἄν ἔγραφον, εἰ μὴ καὶ αὐτῶ σοι ἐκ τῆς ἀναγνώσεως φανεῖσθαι.

³²⁹ Stengel (1911); Hall (1981), 339-354; Georgiadou & Larmour (1998), 22-44; Möllendorff (2000).

for all that'.³³⁰ Ctesias of Cnidus is the fourth century BCE author of the *Indica*,³³¹ a work on Indian ethnography filled with marvellous descriptions of animals, people, and customs,³³² while Iambulus, late second or early first century BCE, wrote a fantastic account of his travels to, among other places, the Ethiopian Island of the Sun.³³³ Owing to a lacuna in the manuscripts, the relation of Ctesias and Iambulus to the authors that Lucian's narrator deliberately chooses not to name is unclear, but it seems that they are singled out as models and inspiration because they were famous for their falsified evidence and fabricated stories.³³⁴

Therefore, by claiming to withhold the names of obvious and more esteemed sources, and then choosing to name unreliable ones as his inspiration, the narrator of Lucian's narrative is deliberately satirizing the convention of listing sources.³³⁵ Moreover, by having his narrator do this, Lucian is spoofing how authors use this trope to lend authority and reliability to their work by citing two of the most famous literary liars in antiquity, who were renowned for stories that were a figment of their imaginations.³³⁶ This ironic disavowal of the text's veracity inverts the tropes found in historiographical prologues, where the author typically asserts and justifies the work's faithful account of events; it playfully highlights the fallacy of the notion that an author's intentions are reliably recoverable through the text.³³⁷ As a result, for readers it becomes difficult to interpret the truth-claims of a self-confessed liar, as paradoxically those who should be concerned with truth (historians) tell lies, while Lucian tells lies that he admits are lies, thus he is telling a form of truth.³³⁸ It is only astute readers who would see the irony in naming authors such as Antiphanes, Ctesias, and Iambulus as sources, and would understand how Antonius Diogenes and Lucian are both playing with and parodying this convention by associating their own authority and reliability with these authors.

³³⁰ Lucian *True Stories* 1.3.1-5. *Κτησίας ὁ Κτησιόχου ὁ Κνίδιος, ὃς συνέγραψεν περὶ τῆς Ἰνδῶν χώρας καὶ τῶν παρ' αὐτοῖς ἃ μήτε αὐτὸς εἶδεν μήτε ἄλλου ἀληθεύοντος ἤκουσεν. ἔγραψε δὲ καὶ Ἰαμβούλος περὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ μεγάλῃ θαλάττῃ πολλὰ παράδοξα, γινώσκων μὲν ἅπασιν τὸ ψεῦδος πλασάμενος, οὐκ ἀτερπηρὴ δὲ ὅμως συνθεῖς τὴν ὑπόθεσιν.*

³³¹ Ctesias also wrote the *Persica*, a work of historiography on Persia and the Persian court.

³³² The *Indica* is summarized by Photius *Bibliotheca* codex 72, 49b, 39 - 50a, 4. There are also some fragments in *FGrH* 688. See Nichols (2011) for a translation and commentary on the work.

³³³ The work is only known through Diodorus Siculus (2.55-61).

³³⁴ Kim (2010), 152 n.11.

³³⁵ Möllendorff (2000); Ní Mheallaigh (2008), 419; Ní Mheallaigh (2009), 11-12; Kim (2010), 152 n.11.

³³⁶ Pinheiro (2009), 22-24. However, Romm (1992), 212 n.86, disagrees with this view and argues that the works of Ctesias and Iambulus are supposed to be taken as serious literary models for Lucian.

³³⁷ Ní Mheallaigh (2009), 12.

³³⁸ Sciolla (1988), 58; Popescu (2009), 57 & 81-82.

It is possible that in his prologue Ptolemy could have listed well known, unreliable sources, such as Ctesias or even Antiphanes, using them as a mirror for his own work as a self-conscious acknowledgement of the lines blurred between fact and fiction within the text.³³⁹ However, since Ptolemy has the habit of fabricating material and sources, it is feasible that instead of listing suspect authors he might have invented works to criticize.³⁴⁰ If Ptolemy did do something similar to this, it is likely that some readers could have believed in the existence of these texts, which have resulted in them spending many an hour attempting to track down and locate these works that he criticizes. This is similar to how in Lucian in the prologue of the *True Histories* creates an interactive text, as he expects his readers to trawl through his work for references to the authors he does not name, becoming in a sense literary archaeologists.³⁴¹ In this way the fictional narrative of Lucian's text offers, for the scholarly reader an intellectual journey through the literature of the past; it is a text that points to other texts.³⁴²

As with Lucian's *True Stories*, the *Novel Research* is a text that points to other texts. However, unlike Lucian, Ptolemy is thought to have invented many of his sources and their texts. As a result, if Ptolemy's criticisms of earlier authors and texts were fabricated, then, Ptolemy is expecting his readers to engage in an even more complex game of erudition and *paideia* than Lucian, because the odds are stacked against them in a game they cannot win. This would mean that Ptolemy's relationship with fiction, especially the complex relationship between reality and the world of the book, becomes a way of testing readers' own perception of fiction. Readers of Ptolemy's text would need to be able to recognize and understand this, but it is highly unlikely that every reader of the *Novel Research* would be able to read and approach the text in this way. As a result, the text would create different levels of readership depending on how well the reader understands what game Ptolemy is playing here. Some readers will immediately see through this ploy, realizing that becoming a literary archaeologist and investigating these works is entirely futile, because they are bogus. Other readers would have not been so aware, and as a result they will try to find copies of these fake texts by bogus authors because they would not entertain the possibility that an author would actually make them up. Yet there

³³⁹ See Chapter Four.

³⁴⁰ For a discussion of Ptolemy's bogus sources see Cameron (2004), 134-159, and Chapter Three of this thesis.

³⁴¹ Ní Mheallaigh (2008), 419; Pinherio (2009), 25.

³⁴² von Möllendorff (2000), 44-45; Ní Mheallaigh (forthcoming).

will also be some readers that occupy a position between these two extremes. These readers would have been educated enough to know that they have never heard of these authors and suspected that they did not exist, but in a period when knowledge, education, and *paideia* were important attributes, they could not risk the possibility that they had not read these texts. Therefore, they had to at least attempt to track them down even if they knew it was probably futile, because by listing unfamiliar authors, Ptolemy may have caused readers to doubt their own level of *paideia*.

2.4.4. Ptolemy's Claims about the *Novel Research*

The most important part of any prologue is the author's claims about the purpose of the work; it is here that the author explains to the reader what he or she is offering, and fully establishes the reading protocols of the text. These claims are crucial to understanding a text's purpose, even more so with a work like Ptolemy's, which uses this trope to instigate different readings of the work. In the section above on establishing the original features of Ptolemy's prologue, I concluded that the statement: 'The book is truly useful for those keen to work hard on historical scholarship, for it offers the possibility of enabling one to know things in a short space of time, a collection of scattered facts which someone who has taken the trouble to collect from books would otherwise take a life-time to compile',³⁴³ seems to be an example of a place where Photius has recorded Ptolemy's own claims about the benefits of reading the *Novel Research*, rather than expressing Photius' opinions on the text. The implication of this claim is that Ptolemy is the 'someone' who has spent many hours in a library, delving through books and compiling what he thought was novel, interesting, and important enough to go into his work all for the benefit of readers; essentially he has done all the research and hard work so that they do not have to. These claims of Ptolemy have much in common with the tropes that Janson identified as 'brevity' and the 'qualifications of the author' on the subject under discussion, which authors seem to have used to establish their works in the tradition, and to lure readers into reading the rest of the text.³⁴⁴ Therefore, it

³⁴³ Photius *Bibliotheca* 146b, 1-5. *Χρήσιμον ὡς ἀληθῶς τὸ βιβλίον τοῖς περὶ τὴν ἱστορικὴν πολυμαθίαν πονεῖν ὠρημένοις· ἔχει γὰρ δοῦναι συνειλεγμένα βραχεῖ χρόνῳ εἰδέναι, ἃ σποράδην τις τῶν βιβλίων ἀναλέγειν πόνον δεδεγμένος μακρὸν κατατρίψει βίον.*

³⁴⁴ Janson (1964), 96 & 99.

is necessary to consider how Ptolemy's claims fit with the claims found in other miscellany works.

It is important to stress the scope and scale of a work because it emphasizes the author's research and subsequently their knowledge about the subject of the book. This is why Pliny in the *Natural History* draws attention to the text's size and coverage of material in his work, claiming to have perused about two thousand volumes and to have collected, in thirty-six volumes, twenty thousand noteworthy facts obtained from one hundred authors, including facts that have previously been ignored.³⁴⁵ Just as Ptolemy claims to have done, Pliny has abstracted all of his information and material from other books, writing down what he found; the result was that the younger Pliny inherited one hundred and sixty papyrus rolls, filled on both sides with his uncle's notes.³⁴⁶ Where Pliny's work differs from Ptolemy's is that the former's work is on a much grander scale, and from the passage cited it seems that Pliny is clearly conscious about the work's scale and the work involved in creating such a text.³⁴⁷ However, apart from highlighting the research he has done on his topic, it is clear that Pliny also wants his readers to be aware of the effort that has gone into the work, especially since the all-encompassing nature of Pliny's work is in effect an epitome of a library's worth of texts.³⁴⁸

The notion that compiling information is a laborious task also appears in the prologues of Aelian and Aulus Gellius. Aelian states: 'Now I am well aware of the labour that others have expended on this subject, yet I have collected all the materials that I could; I have clothed them in un-technical language, and I am persuaded that my achievement is a treasure far from negligible'.³⁴⁹ Aelian is emphasising the more accessible and approachable nature of his work in comparison with other texts, while Aulus Gellius emphasizes the scholarly toil, already reflected in his title, undertaken by him when researching his work: 'I

³⁴⁵ Pliny *Natural History*, praef. 17. *viginti milia rerum dignarum cura – quoniam, ut ait Domitus Piso, thesaurus oportet esse, non libros – lectione voluminum circiter duorum milium, quorum pauca admodum studiosi attingunt propter secretum materiae, ex exquisitis auctoribus centum inclusimus triginta sex voluminibus, adiectis rebus plurimis quas aut ignoraverant priores aut postea invenerat vita.*

³⁴⁶ Pliny *Ep.* 3.5.10, 17.

³⁴⁷ Too (2010), 59.

³⁴⁸ The sheer scale of Pliny's work has led to the *Natural History* to be often referred to as the first western encyclopaedia: See Collinson (1966), 21. However, as Doody points out, ancient readers would not have recognised it as an encyclopaedia, at least in accordance with modern definitions; rather it is far more likely that it would have been viewed as a miscellany text, albeit one with a much larger scope, see Doody (2010), 1-10.

³⁴⁹ Aelian *On the Characteristics of Animals*, praef. *ὥς μὲν οὖν καὶ ἑτέροις ὑπὲρ τούτων ἐσπούδασται, καλῶς οἶδα· ἐγὼ δὲ ἐμαντῶ ταῦτα ὅσα οἶόν τε ἦν ἀθροίσας καὶ περιβαλὼν αὐτοῖς τὴν συνήθη λέξιν, κερμήλιον οὐκ ἀσπούδαστον ἐκπονήσαι πεπίστευκα.*

wear myself in unrolling and running through many a scroll, working without cessation in all the intervals of business whenever I could steal the leisure'.³⁵⁰ The emphasis placed on the difficult chore of compiling information in each of these texts gives an insight into how compendia writers actually went about gathering their material; it would have been time-consuming work, which is something that Diodorus Siculus stresses when he states that his *Bibliotheca* took thirty years to complete.³⁵¹

It is also apparent that this scholarly pursuit would only have been open to the rich. Apart from the leisure time that would have been required, we know that ancient scholarship was not the occupation of one man but of many, including a coterie of readers and note takers, something that only the wealthy could afford.³⁵² Pliny the Younger says that his uncle, the elder Pliny, when composing the *Natural History*, read books himself and was also read to by a slave, as well as having a slave write everything down.³⁵³ This suggests that authors of compilation works were all extremely wealthy, since they had the time and resources available to them to undertake their research. Moreover, by stressing the nature of the work involved in writing a compilation text, Ptolemy, Pliny, Aulus Gellius, and Diodorus Siculus all characterize themselves in their prologues as being erudite and highly knowledgeable about their subject, which makes them suitably qualified to educate their readers on these topics. The intended result of these claims is that authors like Pliny, Aulus Gellius, and Diodorus Siculus want to reassure their readers about their academic credentials and expertise on the subject matter under discussion; readers are supposed to feel at ease and understand that they are reading a text full of material and information that has been diligently researched.

However, the corollary of these claims about the author's qualifications for handling the subject is that they imply that it would be far too challenging, problematic, and time consuming for the vast majority of their readers to undertake. A high level of comprehension, analysis, and leisure time would have been required for the task of combing through the vast array of previous scholarship that existed in libraries. This is where the claims that Janson termed 'brevity' in the prologues of

³⁵⁰ Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights. praef. 12. ipse quidem volvendis transeundisque multis admodum voluminibus per omnia semper negotiorum intervalla in quibus furari otium potui exercitus defessusque sum.*

³⁵¹ Diodorus Siculus *Library* 1.3.4. *τριάκοντα μὲν ἔτη περὶ αὐτὴν ἐπραγματεύθημεν.*

³⁵² Bloomer (1992), 60.

³⁵³ Pliny *Epistles* 3.5.

miscellany texts start to merge with the claims about the author's knowledge.³⁵⁴ For instance, the time and effort required for the reader to undertake the same task as the author would according to Aulus Gellius; 'exhaust the mind through weariness or disgust, before it finds one or two notes which it is a pleasure to read, or inspiring to have read, or helpful to remember'.³⁵⁵ This is echoed by what Diodorus Siculus said two hundred years prior to Aulus Gellius when he was writing at the very beginning of the Imperial period: 'it is not easy for those who propose to go through the writings of so many historians to procure the books which come to be needed, and in the second place, because the works vary so widely and are so numerous, the recovery of past events becomes extremely difficult of comprehension and of attainment'.³⁵⁶

The claims of scholarly toil that the authors make in their prologues are designed to signal to readers that they have done all the hard work - trawling through countless texts and filtering all of the relevant information - so their readers do not have to, making their work indispensable to their readers. From this there seems to have been a sense among compilation works that the authors were aware not only that their readers' time was precious, but just how difficult it is to handle the scope of their subject when it is displaced across a vast body of literary works.³⁵⁷ This is particularly relevant in a period when an individual could only hope to see a few of the books that they had heard of and seen referenced.³⁵⁸ Furthermore, the sheer quantity of texts that were available in the Imperial period, especially miscellany works, meant their numbers had swollen far beyond the capacity of any person to read, let alone remember, even if copies of the texts were widely available, which they were often not.³⁵⁹ As a result, miscellany authors are keen to draw attention to the reasons why their work is a helpful and even necessary resource. Pliny says that he chose to write a work that provides a useful service rather than a

³⁵⁴ Janson (1964), 96.

³⁵⁵ Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights praef.* 11-12. *quibus in legendis ante animus senior ac taedio languebit quam unum alterumve reppererit quod sit aut voluptati legere aut cultui legisse aut usui meminisse.*

³⁵⁶ Diodorus Siculus 1.3.8. *τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ἐπιβαλλομένοις διεξιέναι τὰς τῶν τοσούτων συγγραφέων ἱστορίας πρῶτον μὲν οὐ ῥάδιον εὐπορῆσαι τῶν εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν πιπτουσῶν βιβλῶν, ἔπειτα διὰ τὴν ἀνωμαλίαν καὶ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν συνταγμάτων δυσκατάληπτος γίνεται τελέως καὶ δυσέφικτος ἢ τῶν πεπραγμένων ἀνάληψις.*

³⁵⁷ Janson (1964), 96 & 99.

³⁵⁸ Russell & Winterbottom (1972), 42.

³⁵⁹ Holford-Strevens (2004), 28-29.

source of entertainment.³⁶⁰ Diodorus Siculus says: ‘after we had examined the composition of each of these authors’ works, we resolved to write a history after a plan which might yield to its readers the greatest benefit, and at the same time incommode them the least’.³⁶¹ Aulus Gellius claims his work can help by: ‘pointing out the path they may afterwards follow up those subjects, if they so desire, with the aid of books or teachers’.³⁶² Another example would be Polyaeus’ *Strategems*, which was intended to be: ‘... a small aid to military science; which, by exhibiting as in a picture the bravery and experience of former commanders, their conduct and operations, and the various successes that they achieved, may in some instances possibly be of service to yourselves, your polemarchs, your generals, the commanders of troops of ten thousand, or one thousand, or six hundred men, and whoever you may think fit to invest with military command’.³⁶³

All these works vary from each other in scope, topic and function, yet each of these authors envisages a profound and life enhancing, educational, and utilitarian function for their works. These authors claim to genuinely want to advance their readers’ knowledge on their subject, steering them in the right direction if they required further education on it by offering them accessibility and convenience. This is particularly true of Aulus Gellius’ *Attic Nights*, which it is not meant to compete with Pliny’s or Diodorus’ works in scope or scale, since he makes no pretensions of completeness instead offering isolated facts to retain his readers’ interests.³⁶⁴ Instead, Aulus Gellius is keen to contrast his work and methodology with that of his Greek predecessors, who he claims recorded facts just for the sake of it without any overall purpose, making it clear that he privileges quality over quantity by selecting material that is educational or useful. To reinforce this Aulus Gellius recalls Heraclitus’ wise adage that: ‘Much learning does not teach sense’ (*πολυμαθίη νόον οὐ διδάσκει*).³⁶⁵ Aulus Gellius presents the *Attic Nights* as being superior to these earlier Greek attempts in providing knowledge to readers, and he

³⁶⁰ Pliny *Natural History praef.* 16. *Equidem ita sentio, peculiarem in studiis causam eorum esse, qui difficultatibus victis utilitatem iuvandi praetulerint gratiae placendi.*

³⁶¹ Diodorus Siculus 1.3.5-6. *ἐξετάσαντες οὖν τὰς ἐκάστου τούτων διαθέσεις ἐκρίναμεν ὑπόθεσιν ἱστορικὴν πραγματεύεσθαι τὴν πλεῖστα μὲν ὠφελῆσαι δυναμένην, ἐλάχιστα δὲ τοὺς ἀναγινώσκοντας ἐνοχλήσουσαν.*

³⁶² Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights praef.* 17. *quasi demonstratione vestigiorum contenti, persequantur ea post, si libebit, vel libris repertis vel magistris.*

³⁶³ Polyaeus *Strategems, praef.* 2-3. *τῆς στρατηγικῆς ἐπιστήμης ἐφόδια ταυτὶ προσφέρω, ὅσα τῶν πάλαι γέγονε στρατηγήματα, ὅμιν τε αὐτοῖς πολλὴν ἐμπειρίαν παλαιῶν ἔργων, τοῖς τε ὑπὸ ὑμῶν πεμπομένοις πολεμάρχοις ἢ στρατηγοῖς ἢ μυριάρχοις ἢ χιλιάρχοις ἢ ἑξακοσιάρχοις ἢ ὅσαι ἄλλαι ὄπλων ἀρχαί.*

³⁶⁴ Holford-Strevens (2004), 29.

³⁶⁵ Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights praef.* 11-12.

seems to envisage his work as inspiring further study and stimulating readers' minds by improving memory and eloquence,³⁶⁶ equipping them with the means to pursue their quest for knowledge independently if they wanted to.³⁶⁷

Therefore, when we compare Ptolemy's prologue to the prologues of other authors, his claims of *polymathia* appear to take on a more subversive tone. The claims about the benefits of reading the *Novel Research* would initially appear to be offering similar to the texts of other miscellanists, especially since his claims of brevity is rather similar to comments made by serious, pedagogic miscellany texts. For instance, Aulus Gellius says that the *Attic Nights*: '...by furnishing a quick and easy short-cut, can lead active and alert minds to a desire for independent learning, and to the study of the useful arts, or would save those who are already fully occupied with the other duties of life from an ignorance of words, and things which is assuredly shameful, and boorish'.³⁶⁸ This led Ní Mheallaigh to argue that Ptolemy's claims in his prologue are designed to appeal to readers who wanted to possess knowledge, but did not necessarily want to put the hard work and patience into acquiring it.³⁶⁹ This shortcut to knowledge is advocated in the message found at the beginning of Photius' epitome of Pseudo-Apollodorus *Library*, which states: 'By gathering the coils of time from my learning, come to know the myth of ancient times. Look not into the pages of Homer or of elegy, nor to the tragic Muse or the lyric, nor seek clamorous verse of Cyclic poets. Look into me and you will find in me all the cosmos holds'.³⁷⁰ Although there is some doubt as to whether this message was by Pseudo-Apollodorus or was a later addition,³⁷¹ the message claims to be able to save readers the trouble of reading the original sources by offering them a much quicker route to knowledge, while also claiming to be useful because it supersedes the texts on which it drew material from.

The idea that readers might be encouraged to forgo the trouble of reading the classics for knowledge and gain *paideia* from elsewhere, is satirized by Lucian in

³⁶⁶ Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights praef.* 16.

³⁶⁷ Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights praef.* 17.

³⁶⁸ Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights praef.* 12. *sed modica ex his eaque sola accepi quae aut ingenia prompta expeditaque ad honestae eruditionis cupidinem utiliumque artium contemplationem celeri facillique compendio ducerent aut homines aliis iam vitae negotiis occupatos a turpi certe agrestique rerum atque verborum imperitia vindicarent.*

³⁶⁹ Ní Mheallaigh (forthcoming).

³⁷⁰ Phoitus *Bibliotheca* codex 186: 142b, 9-15. *αἰῶνος σπεῖρημα ἀφυσσάμενος ἅπ' ἐμῆιο παιδείης, μύθους γνῶθι παλαιγενέας, μηδ' ἐς Ὀμηρεῖην σελίδ' ἔμβλεπε μηδ' ἔλεγείην, μὴ τραγικὴν Μοῦσαν, μηδὲ μελογραφίην, μὴ κυκλίων ζῆτει πολύθρονον στίχον· εἰς ἐμὲ δ' ἀθρῶν εὐρήσεις ἐν ἐμοὶ πάνθ' ὅσα κόσμος ἔχει.* Trans. Smith & Trazaskoma (2007).

³⁷¹ Cameron (2004), 160-161; Simelidis (2009), 70-73.

A Professor of Public Speaking. In this work the eponymous professor offers advice to a young scholar that is unconventional to say the least: ‘As for reading the classics, don’t you do it – either that twaddling Isocrates or that uncouth Demosthenes or that tiresome Plato. No, read the speeches of the men who lived only a little before our own time, and these pieces that they call “exercises”, in order to secure from them a supply of provisions which you can use up as occasion arises, drawing, as it were, on the buttery’.³⁷² The professor in Lucian’s essay is advocating avoiding the canonical texts because it is less important to have studied the original texts and to have remembered all material from them, than to master the ability to invent obscure information and sources on the spot: ‘If you commit a solecism or a barbarism, let shamelessness be your sole and only remedy, and be ready at once with the name of someone who is not now alive, and never was either a poet or a historian’.³⁷³

It is possible that Ptolemy’s claims about the benefits of reading the *Novel Research* would have attracted the readers who did not want to read the classics, believing that the text was designed give them the veneer of erudition without requiring much scholarly effort, essentially providing them with what Aulus Gellius and Heraclitus despised so much, *polymathy*, which as Heraclitus said does not teach sense.³⁷⁴ These were readers who required the pretence of knowledge rather than knowledge itself and were put off reading the works of Pliny, Aulus Gellius, and Aelian, with their condensed a plethora of facts and information, which were not an easy or quick read, being texts that require the reader to invest time and effort into reading and absorbing their content. These types of readers were fully prepared to bluff in order to convey the appearance of the vastly learned by either getting their information from works like Ptolemy’s, or by making up sources to support their own fantastical claims, as Ptolemy does himself. Since Ptolemy invents sources to support his stories it would appear that he champions this method of accumulating knowledge. Yet as Ní Mheallaigh argues, readers who approach the text in this utilitarian manner looking for a short cut to *paideia* will find themselves

³⁷² Lucian *Professor of Public Speaking* 17. ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀναγίγνωσκε τὰ παλαιὰ μὲν μὴ σύ γε, μηδὲ εἴ τι ὁ λῆρος Ἰσοκράτης ἢ ὁ χαρίτων ἄμιρος Δημοσθένης ἢ ὁ ψυχρὸς Πλάτων, ἀλλὰ τοὺς τῶν πρό ἡμῶν λόγους καὶ ἅς φασὶ ταῦτας μελέτας, ὡς ἔχῃς ἀπ’ ἐκείνων ἐπιστισάμενος ἐν καιρῷ καταχρησθαι καθάπερ ἐκ ταμείου προαιρῶν.

³⁷³ Lucian *Professor of Public Speaking* 17. ἂν σολοικίσης δὲ ἢ βαρβαρίσης, ἐν ἔστω φάρμακον ἢ ἀναισχυντία, καὶ πρόχειρον εὐθὺς ὄνομα οὔτε ὄντος τινος οὔτε γενομένου ποτέ, ἢ ποιητοῦ ἢ συγγραφέως.

³⁷⁴ Ní Mheallaigh (forthcoming).

a victim of Ptolemy's intellectual ploy, because to read Ptolemy's miscellany straight-faced is to miss the point of it entirely. Ptolemy's bogus sources and invented material parodies the function of works that offer short cuts to *paideia*, and ultimately undermines the *paideia* of those who are not aware of it.³⁷⁵

It is possible that Ptolemy goes further than just parodying texts that offered shortcuts to *paideia* and actually undermines the function of serious and scholarly compendia texts. This is apparent in the similarities between Ptolemy's claims of brevity and those made in the prologues of scholarly treatises of Valerius Maximus' *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* and Frontinus' *On Aqueducts*. For instance Valerius claims that: 'I have determined to select from famous authors and arrange the deeds and sayings worthy of memorial of the Roman city and external nations, too widely scattered in other sources to be briefly discovered, to the end that those wishing to take examples may be spared the labour of a lengthy search'.³⁷⁶ Frontinus says: 'I have gathered in this sketch (into one systematic body, so to speak) such facts, hitherto scattered, as I have been able to get together, which bear on the general subject, and which might serve to guide me in my administration'.³⁷⁷ The similarities between the prologues is remarkable and implies that these specific claims of brevity, combined with stating that the material outside of the book is widely scattered, was a common prologal trope. However, Ptolemy wrote in Greek, while both Valerius Maximus and Frontinus both wrote in Latin. Although there are parallels with statements in other Latin prologues, notably Aulus Gellius' prologue, Greek compendia comparisons are lacking.³⁷⁸ This might suggest that Ptolemy was extremely knowledgeable about Latin literature as well as Greek, although none of Ptolemy's sources named by Photius, Eusthais, and Tzetzes are Latin authors, they are all Greek.³⁷⁹ Yet in the *Novel Research* there are references to the emperors Augustus, Claudius, and Vespasian, and to the Temple of Peace in Rome. This

³⁷⁵ Ní Mheallaigh (forthcoming).

³⁷⁶ Valerius Maximus *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, praef. *Urbis Romae exterarumque gentium facta simul ac dicta memoratu digna apud alios latius diffusa sunt quam ut breviter cognosci possint, ab inlustribus electa auctoribus digerere constitui, ut documenta sumere volentibus longae inquisitionis labor absit.*

³⁷⁷ Frontinus *On Aqueducts* 2. *Quapropter ea quae ad universam rem pertinentia contrahere potui, more iam per multa mihi officia servato in ordinem et velut corpus diducta in hunc commentarium contuli, quem pro formula administrationis respicere possem.*

³⁷⁸ An example of a Greek text that claims to have collected scattered sources is Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* (1.3). See Chapter Three for more on Philostratus' text.

³⁷⁹ Although it is feasible that since so few of the names of the Greek authors cited by Ptolemy have been preserved, it is possible that there might have been Latin authors referenced by Ptolemy in the original text, which are not recorded.

demonstrates some knowledge of Rome and Roman history, which could suggest that he may even have spent time in Rome.³⁸⁰ When this is considered alongside his dedication to Tertulla, it suggests that Ptolemy had some connection to Rome and possibly Latin texts. Therefore, it is possible that Ptolemy might have based his prologal claims on Latin pedagogic and utilitarian authors such as Valerius Maximus and Frontinus, because he wanted to associate himself with these texts to Roman readers who wanted to advance their knowledge of Greek material. If this is the case it might suggest that Ptolemy was fully aware of what appealed to Roman readers and that he used this convention to target them specifically. The similarities between Ptolemy's prologue and the prologues found in the treatises of Valerius Maximus and Frontinus, as well as his use of compilation tropes, could suggest that Ptolemy's prologue is intended to imitate these texts. Furthermore, as we shall see in the following chapters, when we consider that the *Novel Research's* content blurs the lines between fact and fiction, and plays with the concepts of authority and credibility, these similarities must be ironic. As a result, rather than simply misleading readers who wanted a quick fix to erudition and parodying texts who offered *polymathia* in this vein, Ptolemy is in fact satirizing the function of serious compendia texts and what it means to accumulate knowledge and *paideia* in a text, by challenging his readers ability to discern the pseudo-scholarly function of his text.

2.5. Conclusion

Ptolemy's prologal claims reveal that unlike Aulus Gellius, or indeed the majority of compilation authors, he has no genuine desire to offer readers a helping hand to establish themselves as an intellectual; rather his claims signal different things to different types of readers, depending upon how much they accept what Ptolemy says, question his motives, and doubt their own level of *paideia*. Therefore, when Ptolemy claims to offer knowledge in a short space of time, he creates different ways in which the text can be read; it can be read as a shortcut to knowledge, as an entertaining pseudo-scholarship text, or even as another serious mythological compendium work in the context of collecting obscure mythography,³⁸¹ depending on how readers' read and interpret the dubious and fabricated material throughout

³⁸⁰ Chatzis (1914), v; Dowden *Antipater* (56) *BNJ*.

³⁸¹ Dowden (forthcoming).

the work. When combined together, Ptolemy's paratextual tropes play on the established compilation tradition to establish the reading protocols of the text, which can vary depending upon how the reader interprets the implications behind the title, the dedication, the criticizing of previous authors, and most importantly Ptolemy's claims.

It is possible to see similarities with Lucian's choice of title for his novel *True Stories* (*ἀληθῶν διηγημάτων*) and his claims in his prologue, which also plays upon contemporary prologal conventions. For instance, by including the word *ἀληθοῦς* (true), it suggests that Lucian's work contains factual or real information, followed by *ἱστορίας*, which is a word used in miscellany texts because it connotes research and investigation. However, the term *διήγημα* refers to a story that is not necessarily bound by the element of truth, as Polybius argues that *διήγημα* is nothing but the decadent form of *ἱστορία* stripped of truth.³⁸² In the prologue of the *True Stories*, the protagonist and narrator of the text states that the only truth that will be told is that he is a liar and that everything recounted in the work is a fabrication. Therefore, a dichotomy is created by seemingly honest and straightforward title of the narrative, and the reality offered by the narrator that everything in the *True Stories* is an illusion, as the whole work is a satirical pastiche of other literary traditions.³⁸³ Lucian's title is the first step in signalling what type of text it is to its readers and astute readers tuned into the complex literary games of the period (especially if they were familiar with Lucian's other works), would treat a title that claims to contain true material with extreme caution. The claims that follow in the prologue reveal the text's true purpose; it is a satire and a hoax directed at poets, historians, philosophers, and miscellanists who narrate fanciful falsehoods while claiming to tell the truth.³⁸⁴ Lucian's *True Stories* is a comic paradox in which falsehoods can be a form of truth by telling the truth that one is lying; Lucian's tales are true in the sense that they are tales that are true to their fiction, unlike the tales of other writers that are false in their claims of verisimilitude.³⁸⁵ Therefore, Lucian points to the text's own fictionality and at the same time, through intertextual references, highlights the fictionality of the writings of the poets, historians, philosophers, and miscellanists whom Lucian is ridiculing; the reader is invited to play an active role

³⁸² Polybius *Histories* 2.56; Popescu (2009), 50.

³⁸³ Fusillo (1998), 351-352.

³⁸⁴ Morgan (1985), 476.

³⁸⁵ Swanson (1976), 228.

in going beyond the surface meaning of the text and discovering the truth that lies embedded in the fictional narrative.³⁸⁶

Although not as explicit as Lucian's prologue where he points to his text's fictionality by playing on the paradox of truth and lies, Ptolemy's prologue, with his awareness of the conventional miscellany paratexts and his manipulation of them is designed to be ironic and implicitly highlight the fictional nature of the *Novel Research*. In doing so Ptolemy creates a fact/fiction antithesis for the reader as Antonius Diogenes does with his novel's paratext, as his ironic use of conventional miscellany tropes is mobilized against its own implied readers.³⁸⁷ The result is a prologue that satirizes the function of compilation texts in this period, as well as the value of *paideia*, but as we shall see in the next chapter, he has also created a text that establishes a complex relationship with fiction by pushing the limits of authority.

³⁸⁶ Georgiadou & Larmour (1998), 310.

³⁸⁷ Ní Mheallaigh (forthcoming).

Chapter Three

Wondrous Fictions: Paradoxography and the Discourse of (Dis)belief

3.1. Introduction

This chapter will explore how Ptolemy incorporates features of paradoxography within the *Novel Research* to create a discourse of belief and disbelief, which plays with ideas of fact and fiction, and authenticity and credibility. Ptolemy's incorporation of paradoxography is unusual because his work is dominated with mythological material. This is important because the provenances of the material from these two traditions play against the believability of each genre. Mythography collected, documented, and interpreted myth as a method of retelling or capturing its essential features to provide a reliable version of that myth. By packaging and presenting myth in manner similar to history, mythography offered a way of making sense of the heroic past, which helped establish a comprehensive knowledge and timeline of this era.¹ Paradoxography specialized solely in the collecting of marvels to the exclusion of everything else and although many of the wonders seem far-fetched and border on the absurd, much of the information presented is true and focuses on the idea that fact can be stranger than fiction, in order for the wonder to amaze its readers.²

This distinction needs to be stressed because mythography collects myths based on inherited and traditional beliefs, while paradoxography collects wonders based on empirical beliefs. The differences between the traditions led William Hansen in his translation of and commentary on Phlegon of Tralles' paradoxographical work *On Marvels*, to state that mythology, despite its fabulous content, never came to play a major role in paradoxography.³ As a result, the *Novel Research* is a difficult and possibly an impossible text to define or categorise. In earlier studies the work is referred to as a mythographic text,⁴ grouping it together with works such as Apollodorus' *Library*⁵ and Hyginus' *Fabulae*.⁶ Although previous

¹ Higbie (2007), 237-238; Smith & Trzaskoma (2007), xvii-xx.

² See Schepens (1996).

³ Hansen (1996), 8.

⁴ Chatzis (1914); Tomberg (1968).

⁵ Pseudo-Apollodorus' *Library* is the most famous representative of the mythographic genre to have survived from antiquity; its size and scope set it apart and it has become one of most important

studies have acknowledged that the text contains paradoxographical features, the interest in the mythographic aspects of Ptolemy's work, as well as the preoccupation with the controversy surrounding his sources, means that the paradoxographic elements of the text have received considerably less attention. Chatzis claimed that the paradoxographic features were insignificant,⁷ despite the fact that throughout the seven books of the *Novel Research*, paradoxographical material is seamlessly blended with myth to create highly unusual, hybrid anecdotes.

Two modern scholars who have discussed the combination of wonders and myth in the *Novel Research* are Alan Cameron and Ken Dowden. Cameron argues that the work, along with Pseudo-Plutarch's *De fluviis*,⁸ occupies a middle ground between mythography and paradoxography.⁹ This is because the collection of *paradoxa* and *thaumata* attributed to Antigonus of Carystus, Apollonius, and Phlegon of Tralles include very little mythographical material but are linked to mythographers by their systematic and seemingly genuine but seldom verifiable documentation. Moreover, the works of Antigonus, Apollonius, and Phlegon, which are considered to be works of paradoxography, survive in just one manuscript along with the mythographic texts of Parthenius and Antoninus Liberalis, as well as Pseudo-Plutarch's *De fluviis*.¹⁰ Recently Dowden has argued that Ptolemy's text belongs to a group of works that he calls the New Mythography, which is used to define a special type of mythographic text in the Imperial period that is highly inventive and tends to treat myth as fact. These works are rooted in the work of *grammatici* and include a broad range of texts, notably Dictys' *Ephemeris belli Troiani* and Pseudo-Apollodorus' *Library*, but also Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.¹¹ As a result, Dowden argues that Ptolemy should not be seen as an isolated writer, but someone who is part of a golden period of mythographical

sources for modern knowledge of Greek myths. The work is a systematic handbook of Greek mythology arranged genealogically, and it contains a comprehensive and straightforward narrative account of well-known Greek mythology from the birth of the gods to the death of Odysseus in three books. See Simpson (1976) for a discussion and commentary on the text; and also Smith & Trzaskoma (2007), xxxii-xxxiii.

⁶ Hyginus' *Fabulae* is an example of a Latin mythographic text, and it is the closest mythographic text to the *Library* in size and scope. Although the work is in Latin and would have drawn upon some Latin sources, the text focuses on Greek mythology and is heavily dependent upon unnamed Greek sources. Rose (1933) viiii-xi; Cameron (2004), 34-35; Smith & Trzaskoma (2007), xlii- xliii.

⁷ Chatzis (1914), xl.

⁸ Discussed in more detail below.

⁹ Cameron (2004), 28-29.

¹⁰ Heidelberg Pal. gr. 398 of mid s IX. See Diller (1952), 3-10.

¹¹ Dowden (forthcoming)

writing, which entertained readers with a tantalising mixture of authority, credibility, and innovation, because that is what readers of the period wanted from their literature.

Building upon Cameron's idea that the work is a liminal text between two traditions and Dowden's theory that the text entertains by blending concepts surrounding authority and believability, this chapter will argue that by combining two traditions that operate on different belief systems, Ptolemy's narrative raises issues concerning belief and authority. When these parallel traditions are combined there are two opposing ways to interpret their coming together; the wonders can be seen as authenticating the myth, or alternatively, that the myths destabilize the reliability of the wonder. I believe that Ptolemy deliberately combines these two traditions to blur the lines between fact and fiction, and test his readers' *paideia* by challenging their perceptions of belief and reality, and what is fact and what is fiction when reading about wondrous things.

3.2. Myths and *Paradoxa*: Belief and Reality in Mythography and Paradoxography

3.2.1. Hybrid Tales

In order to give readers who are unfamiliar with Ptolemy's *Novel Research* a sense of how he creates hybrid anecdotes that combine myths with wonders, I will begin by discussing a selection of passages that demonstrate how Ptolemy's blending of myth and *paradoxa* is so unusual and raises issues concerning believability and authority. The first passage I want to draw attention to is about the river Styx, particularly the anecdote about Hyllus son of Heracles that is found at the beginning of the passage:

Τὸ δὲ γ' περὶ Ὑλλου τοῦ Ἡρακλέους υἱοῦ, ὡς κέρασ εἶχε περὶ τὸ ἀριστερὸν μέρος τῆς κεφαλῆς ἐκπεφυκὸς μικρὸν, καὶ τοῦτο λάβοι ὁ Σικυώνιος Ἐπωπεὺς ἐκ μονομαχίας ἀνελὼν αὐτόν, καὶ κομίσοι ἐν τῷ κέρατι τὸ Στυγὸς ὕδωρ, καὶ βασιλεύσοι τῆς χώρας. Ὅτι περὶ τοῦ ἐν Ἀρκαδίᾳ Στυγὸς ὕδατος οὕτω φασίν, ὡς Δημήτηρ πενθοῦσα τὴν θυγατέρα, ἐπεὶ Ποσειδῶν αὐτὴν ἐν κατηφείᾳ οὕσαν ἐπέιρα, εἰς ἵππον ἑαυτὴν μετεμόρφωσε χαλεπήνασα, ἐλθοῦσα δ' ἐπὶ τὴν πηγὴν καὶ θεασαμένη τὴν μορφήν ἐστύγησε τε καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ μέλαν ἐποίησε.¹²

In the third book is a story about Hyllus the son of Heracles, who had a little horn on the left side of his head, but Elopeus of Sicyon

¹² Photius *Bibliotheca* 148a, 10-19.

took it from him after killing him in a duel; [Epopheus] kept water from the Styx in the horn and was king of his country. About the water of the Styx in Arcadia they say this: when Demeter was mourning for her daughter, Poseidon tried to rape her while grieving; enraged [Demeter] changed herself into a horse and coming upon the spring and seeing her reflected form, she hated the sight and turned the water black.

This passage appears at the very beginning of book three of the *Novel Research*, introducing this book to readers. The passage is designed to be read as a continuous whole; I have reproduced it here as the anecdote about Hyllus, which appears at the beginning, leads directly on to another tale, an alternative origin story explaining why the goddess Demeter turned the river Styx black, for which Ptolemy creates a pun by having Demeter hating (*ἐστύγησε* from the verb *στυγέω*), her own transformed appearance that is reflected in the Styx, which means ‘the hateful’. The thematic link between two tales clearly demonstrates that Ptolemy intended these tales to be read alongside each other. However, the reason I want to examine this passage is because the Hyllus anecdote provides a useful illustration of how Ptolemy creates a hybrid tale, by merging aspects from paradoxography with mythography.

Although the Hyllus anecdote reads as a straightforward myth, albeit one that rewrites the conventional myth(s) about how Echemus, king of Tegea killed Hyllus in single combat,¹³ the most striking feature is the paradoxographical detail about Hyllus’ physical appearance. According to Ptolemy, Hyllus had a horn on the one side of his head, and that after he was slain in battle, the horn was cut off by Epopeus of Sicyon who used it to keep water from the river Styx; this mention of the Styx then introduces the anecdote about Demeter. No other source shares this information about Hyllus, not even those that discuss Hyllus’ giant remains.¹⁴ This paradoxographical embellishment seems to be Ptolemy’s invention, which is what makes the tale unusual. If the mythological information about Hyllus being the son of Heracles had been omitted from the passage, the focus of the excerpt would be on the horn, a physical abnormality. Yet it is the inclusion of the horn that is the most striking aspect of this tale. On its own, this would make the anecdote a straightforward example of a strange paradoxographical account, in keeping with the type of paradoxographical motif that dominates Phlegon of Tralles’

¹³ Diodorus Siculus *Library* 4.57-58.

¹⁴ Pausanias *Description of Greece* 1.35.7-8.

paradoxographical work.¹⁵ However, where it differs from Phlegon is that rather than focusing on a nameless individual and grounding the wonder in the historical record by dating it to a specific time by mentioning when a specific archon or consul was in office, the wonder here is mixed with myth as it centres on a mythological character. Moreover, in no way is the wonder presented as being separate from the myth. The horn is inextricably tied up with the mythological aspect of the tale, it is part of Hyllus and it cannot be removed because it is the horn that drives the narrative of the excerpt and leads on to the next about Demeter.

Therefore, what we have here is a ludic discourse where a mythological tale has been subjected to the tools of historical science, in this case paradoxography as this weird detail is added to the myth.¹⁶ However, in applying methodology associated with paradoxography to a myth, how that hybrid anecdote is then read and interpreted, becomes open to interpretation. On the one hand the *paradoxa* element can be seen as verifying the myth by grounding it in a reality associated with paradoxographic writing, bringing a sense of empirical authority and believability to the myth. However, on the other hand the mythological aspect can be seen as undermining the authority and believability of the wonder, because it is not firmly established in the historical or scientific reality, and for marvels to be believed and to induce a sense of wonder in readers they have to be grounded in reality.¹⁷ As a result, because myths are based on inherited and traditional beliefs and wonders are based on empirical beliefs, the anecdote plays with concepts concerning reality and believability, authority and credibility. This combination along with the innovation in the passage has created a hybrid that is unusual and entertaining, and tests readers' understanding of fact and fiction.

This combination of paradoxography and mythography, which creates new and unusual anecdotes that play on beliefs about fact and fiction, as well as issues concerning authority and reality, can also be found in a much longer passage from book four of the *Novel Research*. Book four focuses primarily on Helen of Troy, but in the passage below, which I have included in full despite its length to give a sense of context and thematic links, Ptolemy relates information about Helen and then uses her as a way to also discuss homonyms of her name, which leads to the inclusion of the following elaborate mythographical and paradoxographical

¹⁵ See section on wonder-culture below.

¹⁶ Dowden (forthcoming).

¹⁷ These issues are discussed in the section on mythography and paradoxography below.

information:

Φασί δ' Ἠχώ μὲν τὴν Ἑλένην τὸ κύριον κληθῆναι διὰ τὸ φωνόμιμον αὐτὴν γενέσθαι, Ἑλένην δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐν ἔλει ὑπὸ Λήδας τεχθῆναι. Ὅτι ὁ ἐν Λακεδαιμόνι τόπος τὸ Σανδάλιον ἀπὸ τοῦ τῆς Ἑλένης σανδαλίου, ἐκπεσόντος αὐτῆς ἐν αὐτῷ διωκομένης ὑπ' Ἀλεξάνδρου ἔλκει τὴν κλῆσιν. Ὡς γένοιτο παῖς θήλεια ἐξ Ἀλεξάνδρου Ἑλένη, διαφιλονεικησάντων δὲ περὶ τῆς κλήσεως (ὁ μὲν γὰρ Ἀλεξάνδραν, ἡ δ' Ἑλένην ὀνομάζειν ἤξιον) νικᾷ Ἑλένη, ἀστραγάλοις λαβοῦσα τὸ κύρος, καὶ ἡ παῖς τῇ μητρὶ ὀμώνυμος ἐγεγόνει. Ταύτην ἀναιρεθῆναι φασιν ὑπὸ Ἑκάβης ἐν τῇ Ἰλίου ἀλώσει.

Ὅτι ἀπὸ τῶν Ἰλιακῶν ὀνομαστὰι γεγόνασιν Ἑλένη ἢ Αἰγίσθου καὶ Κλυταιμνήστρας θυγάτηρ, ἣν ἀνεῖλεν Ὀρέστης, καὶ ἡ διακονήσασα Ἀφροδίτῃ ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ἄδωνιν ὀμιλίᾳ, ἡ Ἐπιδάμνιου θυγάτηρ, ἣν Ἐπιδάμνιοι ἐν Ἀφροδίτης σχήματι τιμῶσι, χρήματα λμώττουσιν ἐπιδοῦσαν, καὶ ἡ Φαιστύλου θυγάτηρ τοῦ ἀναθρεψαμένου Ῥῶμον καὶ Ῥωμόλον. Καὶ ἡ τρεῖς ἐρίφους ἐσθίουσα καθ' ἡμέραν Ἑλένη ἐκαλεῖτο, καὶ ἡ Δικαιάρχου τοῦ Τελεσίνου ἀδελφῆ, καὶ ἕτεραι ὀκτωκαίδεκα, ὧν καὶ ἡ πρὸ Ὀμήρου Ἑλένη ἢ τὸν Ἰλιακὸν συγγραψαμένη πόλεμον, Μουσαίου τοῦ Ἀθηναίου θυγάτηρ γενομένη· παρ' ἧς καὶ Ὀμηρον λέγεται λαβεῖν τὴν ὑπόθεσιν· ἣν καὶ κτήσασθαι τὸ δίγλωσσον ἄρνιον· καὶ ἡ Τιτύρου τοῦ Αἰτωλοῦ θυγάτηρ, ἣτις εἰς μονομαχίαν Ἀχιλλεῖα προκαλεσαμένη, ἐκεῖνον μὲν κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἐγγὺς θανάτου τραύματι ἔτρωσεν, αὐτὴ δ' ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἀνήρηται.

Καὶ ἡ ζωγράφος Ἑλένη τοῦ καταλόγου ἐστὶ τούτου, Τίμωνος τοῦ Αἰγυπτίου θυγάτηρ, ἣτις τὴν ἐν Ἰσσω μάχην, ἐν ἐκείνοις ἀκμάζουσα τοῖς χρόνοις, ἔγραψε· καὶ ἐν τῷ τῆς Εἰρήνης τεμένει ἐπὶ Οὐεσπασιανοῦ ἀνέκειτο ἡ γραφή. Ἀρχέλαος δὲ ὁ Κύπριος Στησιχόρου φησὶ τοῦ ποιητοῦ Ἑλένην Ἰμεραίαν ἐρωμένην γενέσθαι, Μικύθου θυγατέρα· ἀποστᾶσαν δὲ Στησιχόρου καὶ πρὸς Βούπαλον πορευθεῖσαν ἀμυνόμενον τῆς ὑπεροψίας τὸν ποιητὴν γράψαι ὡς Ἑλένη ἐκοῦσα ἀπῆρε· ψευδῆ δὲ τὸν περὶ τῆς πηρώσεως εἶναι λόγον.¹⁸

They say Helen was called by her legitimate name Echo, because she was able to imitate voices. The name Helen came from Leda giving birth in a marsh. That Sandalion a place in Sparta is named after a sandal of Helen that fell in this place while she was being chased by Alexander. Helen had a female child with Alexander. They argued about what to call her (he wanted to name her Alexandra, she wanted to name her Helen), Helen won, taking the winning throw in dice, the child was named after her mother. They say Hecuba killed this daughter when Troy was conquered.

From the time of the Trojan War there were many Helens; the daughter of Aegisthus and Clytaemnestra that Orestes killed, the one who assisted Aphrodite in her sexual liaisons with Adonis, the daughter of the Epidamnon, whom the Epidamnians honour in

¹⁸ Phoius *Bibliotheca* 149b, 3 -38.

the form of Aphrodite, because she distributed money during a famine, and the daughter of Faustylus who raised Romulus and Remus. The woman who ate three kid goats a day was called Helen, as well as the sister of Dicaearchus son of Telesinos and eighteen others. Among which was Helen daughter of Musaeus, who wrote about the Trojan War before Homer, from which Homer is said to have taken his plot, she possessed a bilingual sheep; and the daughter of Tityrus the Aetolian, she challenged Achilles to single combat, she wounded him in the head with a near fatal wound, but she herself was then killed by him.

Helen the artist is on this list, she was the daughter of Timon the Egyptian and she painted the Battle of Issus at that very time; the painting was offered to the sacred precinct of Peace under Vespasian. Archelaus of Cyprus says that the poet Stesichorus loved Helen of Himera, she was the daughter of Micythus and she left Stesichorus and went to live with Boupalus. The poet defending himself against contempt wrote that Helen left willingly, and the story that [Stesichorus] came to be blinded is false.

The passage is full of new, unusual, and alternative myths about Helen of Troy. It begins with Ptolemy saying her original name was Echo, a name itself that implies a double nature and is surely an allusion to Helen's sinister voice-mimicry in book four of the *Odyssey*,¹⁹ which Ptolemy cites elsewhere in the *Novel Research*.²⁰ This is followed by the marsh-etymology of her name and the aetiological explanation for a place in Sparta. We find these puns and word play games elsewhere in the text with the names of Odysseus²¹ and Achilles,²² as Ptolemy plays with Homeric capital and seems to exploit the duplicity that is already inherent in the mythographical tradition to create further spin-offs, in this instance the traditional etymologies of Helen's name.

What stands out in this passage is when Ptolemy moves away from the familiar Helen of Troy and focuses on women of the same name. It is here that we find the inclusion of extraordinary paradoxographical information: first there was a

¹⁹ Homer *Odyssey* 4.277-279.

²⁰ Photius *Bibliotheca* 149a, 29-31.

²¹ 'Photius *Bibliotheca* 147a, 10-13. 'Odysseus was first called Outis because he had big ears; he also says Odysseus' mother could not stand the rain, and being pregnant she gave birth by the roadside and Odysseus is thus named on account of this' ('Ότι Όδυσσεύς, διότι ότα μεγάλα είχεν, Ούτις πρότερον έκαλειτο· ύετοϋ δέ φησι γενομένου μη άντισχοϋσαν την μητέρα έγκυον οϋσαν κατὰ την όδον τεκειν, και τον Όδυσσεά δια τουτο οϋτως όνομασθηναι).

²² Photius *Bibliotheca* 152b, 29-32. After Achilles was saved from the fire he was called Purissoos, 'Saved-from-the-Fire' by his mother, but because his lips were burned his father called him Achilles' (Ός Άχιλλεύς δια μέν τό έκ πυρός αυτόν σωθηναι καόμενον ύπό τής μητρός Πυρίσσοος έκαλειτο, διότι δέ έν τών χειλέων αυτού κατακαυθειή, Άχιλλεύς ύπό του πατρός ώνομάσθη).

woman called Helen who ate three kid goats a day, and second, Helen the daughter of Musaeus, who possessed a bilingual sheep. How and why the woman called Helen ate three kid goats a day is not mentioned, and neither is the most crucial piece of information concerning the bilingual sheep mentioned; what languages the animal was bilingual in. These anecdotes differ from the Hyllus anecdote above as they are not hybrids, rather they are straightforward examples of *paradoxa* that are in keeping with the human freaks that we find in Phlegon's work, and they have been woven into a passage with mythological associations due to its Helen of Troy theme. Moreover, while Phlegon frequently attempts to date the wonders in his text, in the next paragraph we find a genuine historical reference in the text, when Ptolemy claims that Helen the daughter of Timon painted a picture of the Battle of Issus, which was offered by the emperor Vespasian to the Temple of Peace in Rome. This not only acts as *terminus post quem* for dating Ptolemy's work,²³ but since Ptolemy refers to a specific historical place and date, a sense of reality and authority is brought to the passage.²⁴ The inclusion of Vespasian is similar to the device of celebrity association, which is found in connection with works in some Imperial works as a pseudo-documentary device to bring authority to a text, such as Nero in Dictys' *Ephemeris belli Troiani*.²⁵ Vespasian is being used to substantiate the painting of the Battle of Issus and from this there is the sense that because the Temple and its association with the emperor Vespasian is historical, by association we should trust and believe Ptolemy when he says that there was a Helen who ate three goats a day and another Helen with a bilingual lamb. It seems that Ptolemy is grounding these two wonders in historical reality to bolster their verisimilitude and add to their believability.

Yet rather than ending on this historical date, Ptolemy concludes the passage with information about the poet and Homeric revisionist Stesichorus. According to Ptolemy, the otherwise unknown Archelaus of Cyprus claimed that the lyric poet Stesichorus loved Helen of Himera (a town that Stesichorus was known to frequent), and when she left him he wrote that she left willingly. This is clearly alluding to Stesichorus' Homeric revisionist work *Helen*, in which he claimed that Helen left Sparta and went to Troy on her volition, rather than being a passive

²³ See Chapter One for more information about dating the text.

²⁴ Hansen (2003), 307.

²⁵ See below for more on pseudo-documentarism and Ptolemy.

abductee.²⁶ From this there was a story in circulation in antiquity that because of Stesichorus' unfavourable portrayal of Helen in his poem, Helen blinded him and he only regained his sight when he composed a retraction, the *Palinode*.²⁷ Ptolemy seems to be exploiting the duplicity that is already inherent in the mythographical tradition to create further spin-offs, in this case offering a rationalised story to revise Stesichorus' already rational and revised approach to the Homeric myths connected to the Trojan War.²⁸

With the exception of the anecdote about the woman who ate three kid goats a day and the other who raised a bilingual lamb, this extended passage can be read as a collection of alternative and rational myths, albeit slightly bizarre myths that are connected to Helen of Troy. They are in keeping with the Homeric revision tradition that can be traced back to Stesichorus, as well as the type of literary games that are to be expected from a *grammaticus*. However, the reading of the rationalized story about Helen of Troy and Stesichorus becomes problematic because of the inclusion of the two anecdotes, which contain wonders that have been carefully woven into the mythological content of this passage. The extraordinary content of these two wonders is striking compared to the myths that surround them and their inclusion at this point in the narrative, combined with their shared name association, is in direct contrast to the rationalized story concerning Stesichorus and Helen. As a result, by bringing these two traditions together Ptolemy blurs the lines between fact and fiction by mixing the different levels of reality that paradoxography and mythography operate on. It is possible to regard the *paradoxa* as helping to bring credence and history to Ptolemy's material about Helen; it authorizes the anecdote, especially with the inclusion of the Temple of Peace and Vespasian, which then gives authority to his account about Stesichorus. However, reading myths alongside *paradoxa* can be problematic, because the mythological content undermines the possibility of the marvels being firmly grounded in historical reality, and therefore the believability needed to induce a sense of wonder in the reader cannot be fully realised. To an extent the passage creates double-coding and different levels of readership, similar to Antonius Diogenes' narrative,²⁹ as Ptolemy plays with readers' preconceptions about belief

²⁶ See Pratt (1993), 132-6; Austin (1994), 1-20; Wright (2005), 86-109; Kim (2010), 15.

²⁷ Plato *Phaedrus* 243a; Plato *Republic* 586c; Isocrates *Helen* 64.

²⁸ See Chapter Four for Ptolemy's connection with the tradition of Homeric revisionism.

²⁹ See Chapter Two.

and authority, and pushes them to use their *paideia* to decide how much is fact and how much is fiction. The passages above provide an illustration of how Ptolemy blends myths with wonders, creating hybrid passages. I now want to explore what characterises mythography and paradoxography and the issues that arise from combining them, to clarify how and why these genres differ, and how they operate on different levels of reality and belief.

Both mythography and paradoxography belong to the wider miscellany genre; they share a similar format and style of excerpting and they seem to have emerged at around the same time in the fourth century BCE as offshoots of the different interests of the Peripatetics; one preoccupied with the collecting of wonders, the stranger and the more unusual the better, the other was concerned with collecting unusual or alternative myths, anecdotes, and solutions to Homeric *problemata*.³⁰ These collections had a significant role to play in the establishment of both traditions, as they brought a new methodology and format to the long established interest in the compiling of myths and wonders, which signalled a shift away from verse poetry that related myths (e.g. Homer) and texts of extended prose that contained wonders embedded in the main narrative (e.g. Herodotus), to works that recorded wonders as facts and figures and myths as brief stories.³¹ Yet despite these shared origins and similarities, ultimately myths and *paradoxa* have different purposes and levels of reality from each other, which puts their different relations to reality into conflict when they are thrown together as Ptolemy enjoys doing.

3.2.2. Mythography

Mythography is a compilation genre whose purpose was to present, collect, and also interpret myths, with its aim being to reduce bulky sources into texts of manageable size when scholars began collecting and evaluating myths used in epic and tragedy.³² This purpose is apparent in its name, *μυθογράφος*, which is first found in

³⁰ Wendel (1935); Giannini (1964); Giannini (1966), 149-163; Henrichs (1987); Pellizer (1993); Hansen (1996); Schepens (1996); Higbie (2007); Scott & Trzaskoma (2007); Popescu (2009).

³¹ Higbie (2007), 238.

³² The roots of the genre go much further back to the role of myth in epic and didactic poetry, especially in the hexameter catalogues of Hesiod that recorded the names, families, and deeds of the gods and the heroes, and also provided material and a structuring principle for mythographic texts. Furthermore, in some respects mythography is anticipated by earlier works of chronography, the local historians and genealogists of the fifth-century BCE, such as the *Genealogies* of Hecataeus and Acusilaus, the *Histories* of Pherecydes and many of Hellanicus' texts. However, the mythological content of these works tends to be part of a text that covered a wide chronological range, rather than being a catalogue of mythological stories. See West (1985), 123-171; Higbie (2007), 242.

Pseudo-Aristotle's work *On the Flooding of the Nile*, and thereafter in Polybius, while *μυθογραφία* seems first to occur in Strabo;³³ both terms stem from the Greek word *μῦθος* and can mean word, speech, or story, since there is no clear definition that is satisfactory for all significant uses of the word.³⁴ For the sake of convenience and to avoid getting mired in the complex study of Greek mythology, which is far beyond the scope of this thesis, myth will be taken to connote stories, legends, and tales as well as explanatory accounts of gods and the world. Mythology can be broken down into three main aspects: (1) stories about the major gods and the cosmos; (2) legends about heroes, heroines, places and their cults; and (3) folk-tales.³⁵

Myths and mythography are elusive and complex concepts to define; this is because the focus is on the very distant and legendary past where there is no evidence or sources to verify the stories from this time. From a modern perspective myths are something to be disputed, because they cannot be firmly established in reality via the historical or the archaeological record. This is in contrast to the situation in antiquity, because although a *μῦθος* focused on the time of gods and heroes, a time before there was written history, which is something that the ancients themselves seem to acknowledge, a myth was still regarded as a true story.³⁶ In antiquity myths offered a form of inherited and universal truth, a collective memory that was thought to unveil the origins of the world and human beings, which is why many of the *poleis* trace their history back to a foundation legend with a hero.³⁷ Therefore, although not everyone in antiquity believed in specific myths, such as Theseus defeating the Minotaur, and although the ancients knew that poets could be unreliable or even lie,³⁸ for people in antiquity, Theseus was thought to have existed in the distant past.³⁹ Myths, then, while not factually exact and not wholly true or reliable, at least in the form that they survive in, had a power that transcends their inaccuracy especially where history could underlie the myth, such as with events surrounding the Trojan War.⁴⁰

³³ Fowler (2000), xxvii.

³⁴ Dowden & Livingstone (2011), 3.

³⁵ Celoria (1992), 23.

³⁶ Veyne (1988) 1-4 & 5-16.

³⁷ On city's hero cults see Antonaccio (1994); Antonaccio (1995).

³⁸ See Chapter Four on Homer and Homeric revisionism.

³⁹ Veyne (1988), 1.

⁴⁰ Dowden (1992), 3-5; See Kim (2010) for the rationalization and historization of the Trojan War legend in the Imperial period.

However, although myth had a collective value there were prose authors who distinguished between myth and history, *mythos* and *logos*.⁴¹ For instance, Herodotus differentiates between the human age and the age of gods and heroes, drawing a distinction between King Minos and the tyrant Polycrates of Samos as the first lords of the sea;⁴² the latter being from the human, historical age and not the legendary past like King Minos.⁴³ Furthermore, Herodotus also stresses the differences between the mythological causes of the Persian Wars, with the abductions of various women from across the Mediterranean, and the “true” causes, which Herodotus sees as beginning with Croesus’ aggression towards the Greeks.⁴⁴ This distinction between *mythos* and *logos*,⁴⁵ with *logos* being a word associated with validity or truth is also found in Thucydides, when he proposes to exclude *μυθώδεις* from his history of the Peloponnesian War.⁴⁶ Going further in his distinction, Strabo makes it clear that he regards myths as old fictional tales, while history aims to get at the truth.⁴⁷ This seems to echo the view of Plato, where in his much cited definition he stated that there were two kinds of *logoi*, one false and one true;⁴⁸ the false type is the one that describes a legend, while the true type is based on history and research. This does not mean that *mythos* and *logos* were polar opposites; myth was something that could be used for serious reflection and the methods that were applied to *logos* were applied to myth.⁴⁹ Plato appears to distinguish between the type of reality that myth operates on; for philosophers myth was an allegory of philosophical truths, while for historians it was a slight deformation of historical truth, and both interpretations are found in his works.⁵⁰

This scholarly interest in myth and what it could offer, whether some useful teaching, a physical or theological doctrine hidden behind a veil of allegory, or the memory of the distant past,⁵¹ led to the development of mythography. The role of

⁴¹ Fowler (2011), 47.

⁴² Herodotus *Histories* 3.122.

⁴³ Although Herodotus settles upon the historical figure of Polycrates because he is from the so-called human age, Thucydides (1.3) goes into great detail about Minos’ naval expertise, with no attempt made to distinguish Minos from being from the age of gods and heroes. See Griffiths (2011), 197.

⁴⁴ Herodotus *Histories* 1.1-5. See Chapter Five for a discussion of this passage from Herodotus.

⁴⁵ *Logos*, like *mythos*, can mean ‘word’ and ‘story’, but also is primarily used to refer to a ‘book’ or ‘argument’. See Fowler (2011), 49.

⁴⁶ Thucydides 1.22.4.

⁴⁷ Strabo *Geography*, 11.5.3.

⁴⁸ Plato *Republic* 377a.

⁴⁹ Veyne (1988), 1.

⁵⁰ Veyne (1988), 65.

⁵¹ Veyne (1988), 66.

the mythographer was to organize myth. The different versions of a myth and sources had to be evaluated for their interest and reliability; the contradictory aspects accounted for somehow, or smoothed over to give a better presentation.⁵² As a result, surviving mythographic texts vary greatly from each other, in size, scope, and theme. For instance, Pseudo-Apollodorus' *Library*⁵³ is a systematic handbook of Greek mythology arranged genealogically,⁵⁴ providing a comprehensive and straightforward narrative account of well-known Greek mythology from the birth of the gods to the death of Odysseus in three books.⁵⁵ However, unlike Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which also describes the history of the world from its creation to the deification of Julius Caesar in fifteen books of verse poetry, the *Library* is not a work of art.⁵⁶ Instead, it is a compendium of mythology that is written in an extended prose narrative in straightforward and simple Greek, with its most likely purpose being a handbook in schools in antiquity for the education of children in Greek mythology.⁵⁷ Hyginus' *Fabulae*, like Pseudo-Apollodorus' text, is a work that specializes in the origins and ancestry of Greek gods and heroes. However, although the text focuses on Greek mythology and is heavily dependent upon unnamed Greek sources, the work was written in Latin and would have drawn upon some Latin sources.⁵⁸ As a result, Hyginus often struggles to translate the Greek into Latin.⁵⁹ Moreover, Hyginus displays a lack of interest in the very early stories of the

⁵² Smith & Trzaskoma (2007), xi-xii.

⁵³ Although the work has survived with the name Apollodorus attributed to it, Apollodorus of Athens the second-century BCE scholar and author of *On the Gods*, did not write it. As with the author, the precise date of the work is unknown; it could be as early as the first century BCE or as late as the third century CE, although a tentative date of the first century CE is most likely.

⁵⁴ Any mythology concerning Rome and the West is conspicuous by its absence. See Fletcher (2008), for a discussion of the work's lack of interest in Rome and the West.

⁵⁵ Modern scholars divide the *Library* into three books. The divisions were introduced in the first modern edition of the work and do not occur in the surviving manuscripts, although we do have evidence in the form of citations that certain stories were found in specific books of Pseudo-Apollodorus, therefore the work does appear to have been broken up into three books in antiquity. Book one discusses the beginning of the universe, the gods and the mortal lineage of Deucalion, the son of Prometheus. Book two examines the lineage of Inachos, the Argive river-god. The third book breaks off and the remainder of the text exists only in an abridged form, and what remains of the book as well as the surviving epitomes of the end of the text, reveal that the book focused upon the lineage of Agenor, the mortal son of Poseidon; that is, until 3.96, when Pseudo-Apollodorus begins gathering all the loose ends and genealogies together in order to prepare for his account of the Trojan War, the culminating event of Greek mythology. See Simpson (1976) for a discussion and commentary on the text; and Smith & Trzaskoma (2007), xxxii-xxxiii.

⁵⁶ Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is also regarded as a Latin mythographic text, but which focuses on Greek myth. However, I have chosen not to focus upon it because it is a work of poetry in verse, making it considerably different not only from the mythographic texts that I have chosen to look at, but more importantly in genre from Ptolemy's *Novel Research*.

⁵⁷ Simpson (1976), 1-2.

⁵⁸ Rose (1933), viiii-xi.

⁵⁹ Cameron (2004), 34-35.

gods, such as the origins of the universe, the battles of the gods with giants and titans, and the leadership of Zeus;⁶⁰ instead Hyginus' main focus is upon the affairs of gods and heroes during the heroic age.⁶¹ Hyginus' interest in origins also stretches to the geographical, since there are thirty-one tales that offer explanations of place names, seas, and countries that all have some mythological connection.⁶²

The *Library* and the *Fabulae* are unusual amongst the surviving mythographic texts for their size and scope, as the other far more common type of mythographic text is one where myths are organised according to specific themes. Parthenius' *Erotica Pathemata* focuses on tragic love and comprises of a collection of thirty-six mythological and supposedly historical love-stories, all of which have tragic or sentimental endings concerning the darker side of love;⁶³ Conon's *Narratives* is a collection of fifty mythological stories that focus on foundation legends, many of which are set in a specific locality, ranging from mainland Greece and Magna Graecia, to Assyria, Chalcidice, and Asia Minor;⁶⁴ and Antoninus Liberalis' *Metamorphoses*, consists of forty-one stories, each telling of a change suffered by a person or a group of persons or, in two cases, by animals, not found anywhere else.⁶⁵ Almost all the surviving mythographers we know of wrote this type of specialized mythography. These surviving works reveal that mythographers

⁶⁰ Grant (1960), 6-7.

⁶¹ Much of the contents of Hyginus' work can be organised into three categories: (1) a short theogony providing a genealogy of the gods; (2) narrative accounts of myths; and (3) lists compiled from different myths under an individual category; conveniently the work also contained a table of contents which indexed the *Fabulae*, which made searching for specific information much easier. See Smith & Trzaskoma (2007), xlv-xlvi.

⁶² Grant (1960), 12.

⁶³ Parthenius' work is one of the few mythographic texts that has survived more or less intact from antiquity to the present day, it is also one of the few that we can confidently date to between 52 to 26 BCE. This is based upon an epistolary dedication to Cornelius Gallus in the prologue of the *Erotica Pathemata*; the earlier date providing a *terminus post quem* when Gallus was an active poet and had moved to Rome, while the later date provides a *terminus ante quem* when Gallus committed suicide. See Lightfoot (1999), 215-217.

⁶⁴ Conon's *Narratives* (*Διηγήσεις*), is thought to date from the reign of Augustus, most likely between 36 BCE and 10 CE. With the exception of fifty-two lines containing parts of two stories on two papyrus fragments, Conon's work does not survive in its original form, only in an epitome by Photius in his *Bibliotheca* (codex 186). Photius' epitome reveals that Conon records several of the same myths that were included in Parthenius' *Erotica Pathemata* and some of the other accounts complement each other (Byblis (II cf. X Parth.), Pallene (X cf. VI Parth.) and Oinone (XXIII cf. VI and XXXIV Parth.)) this suggests an awareness of his older contemporary's work. It also reveals that foundation legends and cult and local aetiologies appear to have dominated the text. This mixture of tragic love theme and aitiological myth runs throughout Conon's work, and many of his myths depart from the usual tellings and are otherwise unattested. See Brown (2002), 8 -11 and his work as a whole for a discussion of Conon's text; see also Smith & Trzaskoma (2007), xxv.

⁶⁵ The date of the *Metamorphoses* is unknown, although the second to third century CE is often speculated. Despite his Latin sounding name, Antoninus wrote in simple and unassuming Greek, but whether he was Greek or Roman is unknown. See Celoria (1992), 1-5.

drew upon myths from oral transmissions and local traditions.⁶⁶ However, most of their material came from the canons of literature: the Homeric epics and other lost epic poetry, as well as lyric poetry, tragedy, comedy, historiography, oratory, and philosophy. Despite the differences in scope and thematic focus found in mythographic works, what mythographers have in common is that they treat myth as being factual and educational, just as historians treated history. Mythography, then, collected, documented, interpreted, and purified myth by reason,⁶⁷ as a method of retelling or capturing a myth's essential features to provide a reliable version of that myth. By packaging and presenting myth in manner similar to history, mythography offered a way of making sense of past, which at first seems intractable,⁶⁸ helping to establish a comprehensive knowledge and timeline of this era.⁶⁹

3.2.3. Paradoxography

Paradoxography is a modern term⁷⁰ derived from the word *παραδοξογράφοι* that is first attested in the twelfth century by John Tzetzes,⁷¹ which is used to refer to a body of texts that date from the third century BCE to the third century CE that specialized solely in the collecting of marvels to the exclusion of everything else.⁷² The wonders in these works could encompass a wide variety of topics and themes from the natural world (animals, plants, rivers, and springs), and from the world of man (human physiology, unusual social customs, and curious historical facts).⁷³ Interest in *paradoxa* had a long history in Greek literature prior to the inception of paradoxographical works in the Hellenistic period. It can be traced all the way back to Homer and the *Odyssey* with Odysseus' infamous encounters with the lotus-eaters, the Cyclops, and the sirens. This connection led Lucian in his prologue of the *True Stories* to proclaim Odysseus as the founder and master of *paradoxa*-telling.⁷⁴ Wonders also played an important role in prose literature, particularly in works of

⁶⁶ See Chapter Four for further discussion of mythographers and some examples from mythographic texts.

⁶⁷ Plutarch *Theseus* 1.5. 'myth purified by *logos*' (*ἐκκαθαίρομενον λόγῳ τὸ μυθῶδες*).

⁶⁸ Smith & Trzaskoma (2007), xvii-xx.

⁶⁹ Higbie (2007), 237-238.

⁷⁰ It was introduced in the nineteenth century by Antonius Westermann (1839).

⁷¹ Tzetzes *Chiliades* 2.35.151.

⁷² What name these works were referred to, if any, in antiquity is unknown; which is why attempting to define and establish the genre by ancient criteria is so difficult.

⁷³ Schepens (1996), 381.

⁷⁴ Lucian *True Stories* 1.3.

Classical historiography and ethnography.⁷⁵ However, it is the single-minded preoccupation with recording wonders that makes works of paradoxography so distinct. The determination of paradoxographers to collect only wonders is apparent from Antigonus of Carystus, who stated that he would only include information that was: ‘strange and paradoxical’ (τὸ ξένον καὶ παράδοξον) in his work,⁷⁶ it is also why Pausanias refers to paradoxographers as: ‘the keepers of wonders’ (οἱ ἐπὶ τοῖς θαύμασι).⁷⁷

The earliest figure associated with paradoxography is the poet and scholar Callimachus of Cyrene (c.305-240 BCE) with his work *A Collection of Wonders from the Entire Earth Arranged by Locality* (Θαυμάτων τῶν εἰς ἅπασαν τὴν γῆν κατὰ τόπους συναγωγή).⁷⁸ Although this work does not survive we know from other texts that preserve some of Callimachus’ material that he discussed material geographically and that he had a special interest in wonders connected with water.⁷⁹ Two other important paradoxographers connected with paradoxography’s emergence as a genre in Hellenistic Alexandria include Philostephanus of Cyrene⁸⁰ and Archelaus,⁸¹ although other authors from this period may also have contributed to paradoxography’s development.⁸² Yet although there appears to have been an

⁷⁵ Hecataeus of Miletus’ *Periegesis* showed an interest in foreign customs, flora and fauna. Pseudo-Scylax’s *Periplus*, which is supposedly a record of Scylax of Caryanda’s (sixth century BCE) journey down the Indus at the behest of Darius, charting coastlines as they explored new areas and is full of descriptions of exotic and distant lands. The works of the Ionian Logographers of the fifth century BCE were also important precursors; Charon of Lampsacus’ *Persica*, *Aethiopica* and *Periplus*, as well as Dionysius of Miletus’ *Persica*, all of which are now completely lost. Some fragments of Xanthus of Lydia’s *Lydiaca* survive revealing an interest in natural phenomena and foreign customs, while Hellanicus of Lesbos’ *Persica* also looked at the customs of foreign peoples. Herodotus’ *Histories* is full of wondrous material; he advertises wonders in his prologue and says that extremities of the world are usually perceived as possessing the most beautiful and rare things (*Histories* 3.116). Later works influenced by Herodotus include Ctesias’ *Indica* and Megasthenes’ *Indica*. Moreover, the eighth book of Theopompus’ *Philippica* won notoriety for its digressions on marvels, and later sources (Diogenes Laertius 1.115-116; Apollonius *Wondrous Researches* 10), refer to a work of Theopompus that focused on marvels (Θαυμάσια). See Schepens (1996), 380-388; Popescu (2009), 39.

⁷⁶ Jacob (1983), 130.

⁷⁷ Pausanias *Description of Greece* 8.46.5.

⁷⁸ Callimachus’ position in the Alexandrian library, and his work the *Pinakes*, a catalogue of the library’s acquisitions, would have placed him in a unique situation when it came to collecting and compiling information from other texts.

⁷⁹ Giannini (1964), 105-109; Fraser (1972), 454.

⁸⁰ Philostephanus was a disciple of Callimachus who focused on wonders related to water, especially rivers, and may have written a verse paradoxography (Tzetzes *Chiliades* 7.650-1).

⁸¹ Archelaus is credited with a paradoxographical work called *Ἰδιοφυνῆ* or *Peculiar Phenomena* (Diogenes Laertius 4.17), and he wrote *paradoxa* in epigrams to Ptolemy, either Philadelphus or Euergetes (Antigonus *Collection of Marvellous Researches* 19).

⁸² These include: Philo of Heraclea who wrote mostly on animal *paradoxa*; Strato of Lampsacus, the Peripatetic teacher of Ptolemy Philadelphus who wrote treatises on strange animals; Bolos of Mendes who is credited with writing on supernatural phenomena, and Myrsilus of Methymna who wrote a collection of historical wonders.

outpouring of works of paradoxography from the third to the first century BCE, the surviving texts are limited.⁸³

Pseudo-Aristotle's *On Wondrous Things Heard* (*Περί Θαυμασιῶν ἄκουσμάτων*), better known by its Latin title *De Mirabilibus Auscultationibus*,⁸⁴ explores paradoxographic material on animals (1-30), humans (31-32), fire (33-41), metals (42-62), animals again (63-77), after which the arrangement changes from topical to geographical (78-138), and then to a mainly zoological theme (139-151), ending with a general miscellany (152-78).⁸⁵ Antigonus of Carystus' *Collection of Marvellous Researches* (*Ἱστοριῶν παραδόξων συναγωγή*),⁸⁶ contains one-hundred and seventy-three brief entries, with no preface, focusing on zoology (chapters 1-108), human physiology (109-118), dangerous places (110-128) and excerpts from Callimachus mainly focusing on water (129-73), and eschews Callimachus' geographical arrangement for a topical method.⁸⁷ Antigonus also uses a wide variety of sources that he emphatically mentions, especially Aristotle and Callimachus.⁸⁸ Apollonius' *Wondrous Researches* (*Ἱστορίαι Θαυμάσιαι*),⁸⁹ which dates from the second century BCE is a collection of fifty-one fairly brief entries including six entries on men with wondrous powers or to whom something wondrous happened. This latter motif seems to be an innovation of his,⁹⁰ although the main focus of the work is on wonders from the natural world (botany, zoology, natural springs and rock formations), all organised according to no obvious methodological principle.⁹¹

The trend for paradoxography continues beyond the Hellenistic period into the late Republic, and the Imperial period, where interest in paradoxography may even have influenced Christian apocryphal acts such as the *Acts of Paul and*

⁸³ Including the *Periploi* of Nymphodorus of Syracuse and the work of Polemon the Periegetes; the works of Agatharchides of Cyndus who wrote historiographical and geographical works but always had a keen interest in *paradoxa*; Iambulus who wrote about his alleged sea journey to a blissful and utopian land, which is full of *paradoxa* (Diodorus Siculus *Library* 2.55-60.); and Nicolaus of Damascus who wrote a collection of *paradoxa* that focused on customs of different nations and dedicated it to King Herod. See Giannini (1964), 124 & 125-127; Giannini (1966), 149-163; Delcroix (1996), 425; Popescu (2009), 41-43.

⁸⁴ There are various versions of the texts in circulation dating from the third-century BCE all the way up to the sixth century CE, all of which vary in size, with the largest containing one hundred and seventy eight entries, but it is essentially a jumbled assortment of the smaller versions of the text. See Vanotti (2007).

⁸⁵ Hansen (1996), 6-7.

⁸⁶ Giannini (1964), 112-117; Musso (1985); Leigh (2013), 188-193. For a difference in opinion over the authorship see Dorandi (1999).

⁸⁷ von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (1965), 16-26; Hansen (1996), 4-5.

⁸⁸ Popescu (2009), 42.

⁸⁹ Giannini (1964), 122-123; Giannini (1966), 119-143; Schepens (1996), 385.

⁹⁰ Hansen (1996), 5.

⁹¹ Giannini (1964), 122-123.

Thecla.⁹² Known Latin writers of the paradoxography in this period include Cicero and the Roman antiquarian par excellence Varro, who both wrote paradoxography works titled *De Admirandis (On Marvels)*,⁹³ while the general, statesman, and writer Gaius Licinius Mucianus continued this trend into the Imperial period proper.⁹⁴ In the first century CE a collection of wonders is attributed to Alexander of Myndus;⁹⁵ there is evidence that Sotion focused exclusively on *paradoxa* concerned with rivers, springs, and stagnant waters;⁹⁶ and Protagoras the Periegetes' collection of wonders was apparently conceived as an appendix to his geographical treatise.⁹⁷ Among Imperial examples of paradoxography is Phlegon's *On Marvels*, which is the best surviving example of any paradoxographic text as it is almost complete; it dates from the reign of Hadrian and focuses on human oddities.⁹⁸ Other Imperial works of paradoxography include the remains of the works by the so-called Florentine (c. second century CE), Vatican (c. second century CE) and Palatine (c. third century CE) paradoxographers. These include forty-three entries concerning water (in the Florentine paradoxographer), and sixty-two entries on animals, waters, ethnography, and geology, which were grouped thematically at least to a certain extent (in the Vatican paradoxographer), and twenty-one entries on animals, waters, stones, and medicinal plants, some grouped thematically and some not (in the Palatine paradoxographer).⁹⁹

What these surviving works reveal is that the descriptions are usually associated with terms meaning 'contrary to general opinion' and 'unexpected' (*ἀδοξότατα, παράλογου, ἀνέλπιστον, ἄλογον*), 'monstrous' (*τερατώδη*), 'marvellous' (*θαυμάσιον, δαμονίως, ὑπερφῶς, θαυμαστά, θαῦμα*), 'frightening' (*φοβερός*), 'rare' (*σπανίων*), and 'magical' (*μάγγανον, γοητεία, μαγγανεία*).¹⁰⁰ Moreover, it was important, as we have seen in the case of Ptolemy's title, that these marvels are represented as 'new' and strange', (*ζένον, ἄτοπον, νεοχμός, νέος, καινῶς*). However, as a result of their strange collections, paradoxography is also often associated with

⁹² Johnson (2006), 172-220.

⁹³ Pliny *Historia Naturalis*, 31.8.12 & 31.28.51.

⁹⁴ Delcroix (1996), 430.

⁹⁵ Photius *Bibliotheca* codex 188.

⁹⁶ Photius *Bibliotheca* codex 189.

⁹⁷ Giannini (1964), 130.

⁹⁸ Discussed in more detail below.

⁹⁹ Giannini (1964), 135-138; Hansen (1996), 7.

¹⁰⁰ Popescu (2009), 3.

‘falsehoods’ (τερατεία, τερατολογίαι, ψευδολογία), and the desired affect is ‘astonishment’ (ἐκπλαγεῖς).¹⁰¹

This is an issue because it seems that paradoxography was originally conceived as being an instructional and entertaining discourse, partly appropriating the functions of historiography, yet constructing a different type of discourse.¹⁰² As I discussed above, historiography is considered to be a “true” discourse that combines instruction with gratification, satisfying not only the need to learn but also the pleasure of reading.¹⁰³ According to Gabba, the emergence of the genre comes through a change in cultural interests, particularly a wider, though not a deeper, public interest in history that led to a new manner of producing historiography. As a result of this, improperly made historiographical texts functioned as popular pseudo-history, which then made the production of paradoxographical works much easier.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, while paradoxography inherits features of historiography, rather than focusing on the didactic features of historiography, paradoxography tends to blend its form of instruction and gratification in a manner that focuses on novelty and the strange, as its main function is to astonish the reader.¹⁰⁵

This means that paradoxography had to regulate its own believability by walking a fine line between belief and disbelief, real and extraordinary, because no matter how strange or farfetched a wonder appears, it still needs to be believable. The reality of paradoxography is self-conscious, since according to Schepens:

An astonishing item can only be termed a *θαυμαστόν* if, indeed, it belongs to the real world, if it is witnessed or reported to have happened or to have been observed. To put it another way, the unusual will not produce its proper effect on the reader unless this reader is brought to believe that the phenomenon described is part of reality and that it does not merely exist in the imagination of the paradoxographer. Hence, for the paradoxographers, to uphold certain standards of credibility is vital to their aim; the trustworthiness of the report is intrinsically bound up with the very idea of *θαῦμα*.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Popescu (2009), 3.

¹⁰² Jacob (1983), 135-136; Schepens (1996), 407-408.

¹⁰³ The need to verify wonders stems from paradoxography’s historiographic origins, and in particular Herodotus’ *Histories*, which provided a blueprint for later historians, ethnographers and paradoxographers. See Romm (2006), 178-179 & Munson (2001), 233.

¹⁰⁴ Gabba (1983), 14-15.

¹⁰⁵ Popescu (2009), 48-49.

¹⁰⁶ Schepens (1996), 382-383.

These texts wanted to entertain and astonish their readers, and although many of the wonders seem far-fetched and border on the absurd, much of the information presented is true and focuses on the idea that fact can be stranger than fiction, so that the wonder can amaze its readers. This is very different from the provenance of the material in works of mythography, which collect myths based on inherited and traditional beliefs; paradoxography on the other hand collects wonders based on empirical beliefs. This distinction is important, because marvels need to be grounded in reality in order to be believed and to induce a sense of wonder in readers. Myths on the other hand, because of their basis in traditional belief, do not need to be grounded in reality. Therefore, because of the different levels of reality that they operate on, mythography and paradoxography require different types of belief, and a belief in the reality of a wonder is vital in paradoxography, otherwise this delicate balance between belief and disbelief is lost and the work is thought to be full of lies. As Schepens states, in order for paradoxography to achieve this:

There are basically two techniques to ascertain factuality: the first is to show that the information is derived from one or more trustworthy authorities and/or that it has been processed through personal inquiry. To stress their value, the named sources can, moreover be qualified as careful or competent. The complement *a contrario* to these procedures is the acknowledged omission of ‘incredible’ information or, when the occasion arises, the criticism or the correction of unreliable data.¹⁰⁷

These methods for substantiating material allow paradoxographers to retain their illusion of truth when relating absurd information. By referring to and challenging or amending earlier sources, paradoxographers display critical evidence of their sources,¹⁰⁸ presenting himself or herself as someone who is actively acquiring

¹⁰⁷ Schepens (1996), 382-383.

¹⁰⁸ For instance: Antigonus *Collection of Marvellous Researches*, 22: ‘The bat is the only bird that has teeth, breasts and milk. Aristotle says that seals and whales also have milk and he records something even more amazing than this, which is that on Lemnos so much milk was milked from a he-goat that cheese was made from it’ (*Ἡ νυκτερίς δὲ μόνον τῶν ὀρνέων ὀδόντας ἔχει καὶ μαστοὺς καὶ γάλα. φησὶν δὲ ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης καὶ φώκην καὶ φάλαιναν ἴσχειν γάλα. τούτων δὲ οὐχ ἦττον καταγράφει τερατώδεις· ἐν Λήμνῳ γὰρ φησὶν ἀμελχθῆναι γάλα τράγου τοσοῦτον, ὥστε τροφαλίδας γενέσθαι*). Another example: Apollonius *Wondrous Researches* 14: ‘Phylarchus says in the eighth book of his historical treatise that in the Arabian Gulf there is a spring of water and if a man rubs his feet with it, his genitals immediately become extremely erect. Some persons’ genitals do not contract again at all, whereas others’ do return to normal size, but only after great suffering and treatment’ (*Φύλαρχος ἐν τῇ ἡ’ τῶν ἱστοριῶν [καὶ] κατὰ τὸν Ἀράβιον φησὶ κόλπῳ πηγὴν εἶναι ὕδατος, ἐξ οὗ εἴ τις τοὺς πόδας χρίσειεν,*

information and investigating the veracity of it.¹⁰⁹ It also provides an opportunity to ground the wonder in reality via literary history, while enabling paradoxographers to present the wonders in isolation, which emphasises their peculiarity and deprives the reader of any context that might diminish the effect of the marvel.¹¹⁰

Paradoxography pushes the boundaries of what is plausible, but does so while regulating its own level of belief and reality by purporting to document real and factual wonders, which are supported by verifiable sources.

Therefore, mythography and paradoxography are parallel genres where the criteria for judging what is plausible differ. If we think of them as two gravitational forces, when combined, one possible way of reading a hybrid anecdote is that it pulls the reader towards the sphere of reading myth as empirical fact, albeit a weird fact. Alternatively the other way it can be read is that the myth prevents the marvel being established in reality, and therefore it cannot operate as a true *paradoxon*, it becomes little more than an elaborate and amusing myth. I will now explore how Ptolemy, through his use of *paradoxa*, seems to display an acute awareness of how fact and fiction can be manipulated within a text.

3.4. Paradoxography and False Discourse

3.4.1. Natural *Paradoxa*

Having established the literary traits of mythography and paradoxography, and the issues concerning authority that arise from combining them, I want to explore examples of anecdotes from the *Novel Research*, which I believe deliberately signal to readers the fictional nature of Ptolemy's material. The first group of anecdotes I want to explore are ones that combine natural wonders with myth. The influence of paradoxography on Ptolemy and his work is apparent from the paratext of the work,¹¹¹ but also in the much of his material since in the *Novel Research* there are four examples of natural wonders. One of these is particularly striking since unlike the other examples there is no myth associated with it. This particular anecdote appears in book three of Ptolemy's text and is about a giant rock in the Ocean that could only be moved by an asphodel. This is the only example of a natural wonder

συμβαίνειν εὐθέως ἐντείνεσθαι ἐπὶ πολὺ τὸ αἰδοῖον, καὶ τινῶν μὲν μῆδ' ὅλως συστέλλεσθαι, τινῶν δὲ μετὰ μεγάλης κακοπαθείας καὶ θεραπείας ἀποκαθίστασθαι).

¹⁰⁹ Popescu (2009), 46-47.

¹¹⁰ Jacob (1983), 132-134; Romm (1992), 93; Schepens (1996), 390-394; Popescu (2009), 47.

¹¹¹ See Chapter Two.

in the *Novel Research* that has no mythological connections; as a result it is similar to the *paradoxa* that are found in the Hellenistic paradoxographic texts such as Pseudo-Aristotle's *On Wondrous Things Heard*, or Antigonus of Carystus' *Collection of Marvellous Researches* (Ἱστοριῶν παραδόξων συναγωγή), which all contain numerous examples of natural wonders.

Γιγωνίας πέτρας, καὶ ὅτι μόνῳ ἀσφοδελῶ κινεῖται, πρὸς πᾶσαν βίαν ἀμετακίνητος οὔσα.

About the giant rock by the Ocean, which can only be moved by an asphodel, being entirely immovable by brute strength alone.¹¹²

The excerpt is extremely brief and contains little information, there is no source and the position of the excerpt in the text provides no sense of context as there are only two other tales that are reported in the same paragraph, both of which play on names; the first claiming that Rhopalus 'club' was the son of Heracles and the second about someone named Amphiarus who was so called because his mother prayed she would give birth without distress.¹¹³ Despite the lack of information and context surrounding the wonder, enough detail is stated to present the fact as a marvel of nature, which is that a giant rock can only be moved by an asphodel, a perennial plant found in western and southern Europe that was associated with death in antiquity.¹¹⁴ If there was a connection with death in Ptolemy's original anecdote the relation is unclear from this sentence preserved by Photius, but the topic of plants and their magical or wondrous properties are discussed by paradoxographers such as Pseudo-Aristotle,¹¹⁵ who also mentions a giant rock, except that his spurts fire in the summer and water in the winter.¹¹⁶ Moreover, rocks, stones, and gems were also a popular topic for ancient paradoxographers (Apollonius and the Palatine paradoxographer contain information on these topics),¹¹⁷ and Pliny's encyclopaedic *Natural History* also contains an example of a marvel about a giant rock.¹¹⁸

¹¹² Photius *Bibliotheca*, 148a, 32-34.

¹¹³ Photius *Bibliotheca*, 148a, 36-37.

¹¹⁴ Homer *Odyssey* 11.539; 11.574; 24.14.

¹¹⁵ Pseudo-Aristotle *On Marvellous Things Heard*, 78; 82; 86; 111.

¹¹⁶ Pseudo-Aristotle *On Marvellous Things Heard*, 114.

¹¹⁷ Hansen (1996), 5-7.

¹¹⁸ Pliny *Natural History*, 2.98.211.

Although this wonder is in keeping with what can be found in some works of paradoxography, Ptolemy chooses to eschew presenting his natural wonders in this traditional paradoxographic manner and instead combines marvels with myth. Therefore, excluding the example of the natural wonder above on the giant rock, which contains no mythological material, there are three examples of natural marvels blended with myth: one is about a fish,¹¹⁹ and two relate the magical/medicinal properties of different types of plant.¹²⁰ The first of these I want to draw attention to is the last excerpt to appear in the *Novel Research* at the very end of book seven and it is the same anecdote that I examined in Chapter Two for its functions as a “seal” marking the conclusion of Ptolemy’s work:

Πᾶνά φασιν ἰχθῦν εἶναι θαλάσσιον κητώδη, ὅμοιον τῷ Πανί κατὰ τὴν ὄψιν· ἐν τούτῳ λίθον εὕρισκεσθαι τὸν ἀστερίτην, ὃν εἰς ἥλιον τεθέντα ἀνάπτεσθαι, ποιεῖν δὲ καὶ πρὸς φίλτρον. Τοῦτον δὲ τὸν λίθον εἶχεν Ἑλένη, γλυφὴν ἔχοντα αὐτὸν τὸν ἰχθῦν τὸν πᾶνα, καὶ ταύτη ἐχρήτη τῇ σφραγίδι.¹²¹

They say the Pan fish is a monstrous fish from the sea and that it resembles Pan in appearance; in its body a stone is found, the ‘asterite’, which when placed in sunlight, lights up and it makes a useful love-charm. Helen possessed this stone, which had the engraved image of the Pan fish itself, and she used it as a seal.

In this excerpt Ptolemy is focusing on another natural wonder, but this time an example from the animal kingdom, the Pan Fish, a hideous creature that contains a thing of beauty, an asterite, which lights up when placed in sunlight and can also be used for creating a love-charm.¹²² The description has the characteristic pseudo-scientific air that some earlier paradoxography works use for describing animals and medicinal and magical uses they have.¹²³ What stands out about this passage is not

¹¹⁹ Photius *Bibliotheca*, 153b, 22-25.

¹²⁰ Photius *Bibliotheca* 149a, 35-39; Photius *Bibliotheca* 148b, 25-31.

¹²¹ Photius *Bibliotheca*, 153b, 22-25.

¹²² It is possible that Ptolemy’s Pan Fish may be referring to the Goatfish, which was extremely popular and expensive fish in the Imperial period, not eaten as a delicacy, rather, used as a source of amusement and aesthetic pleasure; although the fish are unassuming and often drab in appearance they are able to change their coloration depending on their current activity, and when they asphyxiated there is a shifting kaleidoscopic play of colour that gradually fades (Pliny *Natural History* 9.66; Seneca *Natural Questions* 3.17.2 & 3.18.1). Romans apparently took pleasure in watching this spectacle, and Ptolemy’s description might be alluding to this distasteful practice, which can be deemed a wonder of nature. See Andrews (1949), 186-188.

¹²³ For example, Pseudo-Aristotle (*On Marvellous Things Heard*, 12) writes that, ‘The penis of the marten is said to be unlike that of other animals, being as hard as a bone, in whatever condition it is. They say it is an excellent cure for strangury and is administered in powdered form’, (Τὸ τῆς ἰκτίδος

just the wonder itself, but the inclusion of Helen after the *paradoxon*, which makes it markedly different from the wonder about the giant rock discussed above.

Helen and her connection with the *φίλτρον* ‘love-potion’ or even ‘erotic amulet’, may hint at a rational explanation for her extraordinary erotic allure. Therefore, the use of the wonder when applied to myth in this passage can be seen as historicizing Helen and offering a rational explanation for why so many fought and died for her. The wonder can be seen as authorizing Helen’s erotic allure in attempt to bring credibility to Helen and her famous beauty. However, as with the extended Helen passage is it possible to read this in another way. Since Helen cannot be dated or grounded in historical reality, her presence undermines the authority and veracity of the account. This is because, as I discussed above, wonders need to exist in a tangible reality in order to function as a marvel and be believed. In contrast myths, even when they are historicized, cannot be firmly located in reality or the recent historical record. Therefore, although Helen and the asterite seem to be included to lend credibility and veracity to the wonder of the Pan Fish, because she herself had a seal made from one, the reality of the *paradoxon* pushes against the myth. As a result, this can be interpreted as a deliberate attempt to throw the credibility of the anecdote into doubt, by admitting to the fictionality of the account.

This negotiation for authority between the two traditions is also apparent with the last two examples of natural wonders in Ptolemy’s work, which both appear in book four of the work and also include mythological figures, Helen and Amycus respectively. However, in these two passages, unlike the Pan Fish passage where the myth immediately follows the wonder and Ptolemy connects the two, here the myth and the wonder are intertwined; the one cannot be separated from the other. In the first anecdote Ptolemy tells us about the Helen flower in Rhodes, which according to Ptolemy grows under the tree where Helen hanged herself and those that eat it are apparently reduced to strife:

Περὶ τῆς Ἑλενίου βοτάνης, ἣ ἐν Ρόδῳ φύεται, ὅτι ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑλένης ἐπωνομάσθη (παρὰ γὰρ τὴν δρῦν ὥφθη φυεῖσα, ἀφ’ ἧς ἑαυτὴν ἀπῆγξεν Ἑλένη) καὶ ὡς οἱ φαγόντες αὐτῆς πάντως εἰς ἔριν καθίστανται.¹²⁴

λέγεται αἰδοῖον εἶναι οὐχ ὁμοιον τῇ φύσει λοιπῶν ζώων, ἀλλὰ στερεὸν διὰ παντὸς οἶω ὅστοῦν, ὅπως ἂν ποτε διακειμένη τύχη. Φασὶ δὲ στραγγουρίας αὐτὸ φάρμακον εἶναι ἐν τοῖς ἀρίστοις, καὶ δίδοσθαι ἐπιξυόμενον)

¹²⁴ Photius *Bibliotheca* 149a, 35-39.

The Helen plant that grows in Rhodes is named after Helen (because it was seen growing beside the oak tree from which Helen hanged herself), and those who eat it are entirely reduced to strife.

According to the passage the Helen plant grows in Rhodes at the spot where Helen hanged herself and those who eat it are reduced to strife. The information is not found anywhere in ancient literature and the anecdote itself is unusual because it operates on two levels. At first the passage appears to be an alternative, albeit strange myth, about the death of Helen. This type of information would warrant its inclusion in a mythographic text, but that is until we consider the wonder that is included in the anecdote, the Helen plant. If the passage contained the information about the plant and its properties, without the mythological connection to Helen, then the anecdote could read as a classic example of a natural wonder. However, the inclusion of Helen changes our perspective because she cannot be grounded in the same reality as the wonder. Therefore, on the one hand the *paradoxon* authenticates the myth by associating death with a particular plant, making it an attempt to offer an alternative Helen myth and historicize it by incorporating a scientific approach. On the other hand, because the *paradoxon* requires an empirical belief rather than one based on tradition and functions on a different level of reality to myth, one could also argue that the anecdote undermines itself, which then points to its fictional nature.

The same tension between fact and fiction is also found in the second anecdote about a type of plant. This time Ptolemy relates how those who consumed rose-laurels that grew on the tomb of Amycus were consumed with a desire to box, like the mythological boxer himself:

*Εἶτα διαλαμβάνει περὶ συνεμπτώσεως ἱστορικῆς, ὡς Ἀμύκου τῷ τάφῳ
ρόδοδάφνη ἔφυ, καὶ οἱ φαγόντες αὐτῆς ἐπεθύμουν πυκτικὴν, καὶ ὡς
Ἀντόδωρος φαγὼν αὐτῆς δεκατρεῖς στεφάνους ἀνείλετο, πλὴν ὑπὸ
Διοσκόρου τοῦ Θηραίου ἐν τῇ τεσσαρεσκαιδεκάτῃ ἀγωνίᾳ ἠττήθη,
ὥσπερ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Ἄμυκος λέγεται ὑφ' ἐνὸς τῶν Διοσκούρων
καταπαλαισθῆναι.¹²⁵*

Next he relates historical coincidences. A rose laurel grew on the

¹²⁵ Photius *Bibliotheca* 148b, 25-31.

tomb of Amycus and whoever ate it longed to box. Antodorus having eaten it won thirteen crowns, but in the fourteenth match he was defeated by Dioscurus of Thera, just like Amycus himself is said to have been defeated in wrestling by Dioscuris.

As with the previous passage, the focus of this anecdote is the effects of eating a certain plant; in this case one that grew on the tomb of Amycus, which caused the person who ate it to take up boxing. Amycus was a son of Poseidon who was a boxer and a king in Bithynia; Polydeuces beat him in a boxing match when the Argonauts went through Bithynia, but he survived and followed Aeneas from Troy to Italy, where he was killed by Turnus.¹²⁶ If Amycus was removed from the passage the anecdote would read as an example of a natural wonder, especially since Ptolemy supplements the wondrous aspect of the anecdote by giving the name of a person who ate it, and then claims that he was victorious in thirteen boxing matches as a result of consuming the plant. However, as with the Helen passage, the plant is inextricably connected to a mythological figure; the plant grows on Amycus' grave and a comparison is drawn between him and Antodorus, who ate the plant, at the end of the passage. Myth and history is interwoven in this passage and Ptolemy uses this to draw comparisons between the coincidences that happen in history and myth: Antodorus became a boxer just like Amycus, and like Amycus, he was also defeated by Dioscuris. Ptolemy treats Amycus as a historical character and in doing so he blurs the realms of reality between history and myth.

Unlike the excerpt about the Pan Fish, in these two passages the mythological characters cannot be extricated from the wonder itself, as the wonder hinges upon its association with Helen and with Amycus. The result is that Ptolemy creates a deliberate overlap between the sphere of myth and history, as what happens in the mythical realm finds parallels in the natural world. Ptolemy seems to deliberately connect this overlap between the sphere of myth and history, and in doing so it blurs the lines between fact and fiction, because the mythological aspect of the passage operates on a different level of believability from the paradoxographical feature. As a result, these passages occupy an uneasy space between the two traditions, belonging to neither one nor the other because the criteria for judging what is plausible is different; the tension caused between the

¹²⁶ Apollonius *Argonautica* 2. 1.ff & 2. 94 ff; Pseudo-Apollodorus 1.9.20; Hyginus *Fabulae* 17; Virgil *Aeneid* 10.702 & 12.509.

two in the same passage then undermines the reading of the anecdote.

3.4.2. Wonders, Authority, and Fiction

This testing of the boundaries between fact and fiction can be found in other Imperial texts that use wonders to play with these concepts. Lucian in his *True Stories* uses paradoxographical discourse to criticize the literature on marvels that proclaim to tell the truth, while displaying his own form of paradoxography as avowed false discourse. The *True Stories* is a first person narrative about a nautical adventure that takes the protagonist (Lucian) to wondrous places full of incredible sights, such as: the multi-lingual Vine-women who try to seduce them and consume those they do (1.5-9), pumpkin-pirates (2.37-38), and cannibal ox-heads (2.44). Most wondrous of all, after a storm Lucian ends up on the moon and is caught up in a cosmic battle between Endymion, the ruler of the moon, and Phaethon, the ruler of the sun (1.11-25), which enables Lucian to describe strange creatures like three-headed-dog-faced men, cloud-centaurs, and giant fleas.¹²⁷ As Popescu argues in her thesis, the stated purpose of Lucian's *paradoxa* in the *True Stories* is to offer "suitable rest" (ἐμμελής ἢ ἀνάπαυσις) from more serious readings (τῶν σπουδαιοτέρων ἀνάγνωσιν), to offer not just mere pleasure (ψιλὴν τὴν ψυχαγωγίαν), but also the occasion for thought and meditation (θεωρίαν). Lucian uses *paradoxa* to make his text seductive (ἐπαγωγόν), and the seduction comes from novelty (τὸ ξένον τῆς ὑποθέσεως), pleasantry of thought (τὸ χαρίεν τῆς προαιρέσεως), and the variety of lies (ψεύσματα ποικίλα), from *paradoxa* being told in a plausible way (πιθανῶς τε καὶ ἐναλήθως). Furthermore, the work's seduction comes from comic allusions to and implicit criticism of those who mixed *paradoxa* (τεράστια καὶ μυθώδη) in their writings, pretending to be truthful.¹²⁸

As with Ptolemy's text, Lucian's work is a search for novelty (πραγμάτων καινῶν ἐπιθυμία)¹²⁹ and his *paradoxa* are generally defined as novel in the same sense of Ptolemy's title, that they are strange (καινὰ καὶ παράδοξα;¹³⁰ καινῶ τῶ τρόπῳ).¹³¹ Lucian then supports his wonders with autopsy, particularly when he has not seen or experienced the wonder first hand, such as the sparrow or ostrich-

¹²⁷ Popescu (2009), 51-55; see Ní Mheallaigh (forthcoming) for a detailed analysis of the Vine-women and Moon passages.

¹²⁸ Popescu (2009), 59.

¹²⁹ Lucian *True Stories* 1.5.

¹³⁰ Lucian *True Stories* 1.22.

¹³¹ Lucian *True Stories* 2.45.

acorns and horse-vultures.¹³² Throughout the narrative of the *True Stories*, Lucian invests his paradoxographical material with new aesthetic values, which he uses to express his literary novelty and its aesthetic validity. Whereas earlier writers such as Herodotus and Ctesias, whose works contain paradoxographical features, claim to have undertaken extensive journeys to compile their wonders, Lucian mimics the travel aspect of their works, but then parodies their journeys because his is imaginary and entirely fictitious. As a result, since Lucian claims everything is a lie, the work is littered with pseudo-paradoxographical material in a self-conscious play with fact and fiction, belief, and disbelief.¹³³

This playing with paradoxography's authority and credibility is something that Ptolemy also does with his combination of marvels and bogus sources. As I mentioned in the section above, works of paradoxography went to great lengths to confer truthfulness on their works through the use of autopsy, by acknowledging their sources, and offering criticism of them, both positive and negative.¹³⁴

Paradoxography also has a long association with source citation. This strategy is apparent when works tend to cite earlier and well-known paradoxographers to support their material, such as Antigonus using Callimachus and Apollonius using Pseudo-Aristotle. Citing sources presents the paradoxographer as someone who engages with critical thinking, and as a result they seem reliable and trustworthy to their readers. As I discussed in Chapter One, there is much debate surrounding Ptolemy's sources, because although he cites some genuine sources for his material (notably Homer, Herodotus, and Lycophron),¹³⁵ many of the sources found in the text are not found anywhere else. Furthermore, Ptolemy frequently uses the vague Alexandrian footnote reference of *φασιν* ('they say'), and this combined with otherwise unattested authors, means that the prevailing view is that Ptolemy blends real sources with ones that he has fabricated.¹³⁶ An excellent example of an anecdote that contains paradoxographical elements and a bogus source concerns the

¹³² Lucian *True Stories* 1.13.

¹³³ Popescu (2009), 59-61.

¹³⁴ Schepens (1996), 382-383.

¹³⁵ Not every anecdote in Photius' epitome of the *Novel Research* has a source associated with it, but based on the fact that some of the parallel passages found in Eustathius' and Tzetzes' works have sources that Photius did not include, Tomberg has reasonably argued that it is highly likely that every anecdote in the text was accompanied by a source citation in keeping with the aim of the problem-based research of a grammaticus. Tomberg (1968), 74-93.

¹³⁶ That Ptolemy invented sources see Hercher (1855/56); 267-293 Cameron (2004), 134-163. For the opposing view that Ptolemy's sources are genuine and not open to suspicion see Chatzis (1914), xii-xiv; Wilson (1971), 135. See also Dowden *Antipater* (56) *BNJ*.

hydra:

*Ὅτι τὴν μέσην κεφαλὴν τῆς ὕδρας Ἀριστόνικος φησιν ὁ Ταραντῖνος χρυσοῦν εἶναι.*¹³⁷

Aristonicus of Tarentum says the middle head of the hydra was made of gold.

This example of a hybrid factoid contains mythological information on the hydra that is not found anywhere else. Although the middle head of the hydra was thought to be immortal,¹³⁸ the idea that it was made of gold is not found in another text. The fact that Ptolemy says it was made of gold is clearly an attempt to rationalize why the head could be immortal; an issue that no other ancient author that we know of seems to have attempted to explain.¹³⁹ If the mythological hydra did not feature, the anecdote would read as a classic example of an animal wonder from a work of paradoxography, although any animal with a golden head would push the realms of believability and plausibility even in a paradoxographic text. However, the combination of the mythological creature and the wondrous element of its golden head cause friction, because it is impossible to know with certainty what the mythological hydra looked like. As a result, by presenting this information as fact, the levels of believability of the myth and the wonder are no longer operating as they would independently, because it converts the hydra into an empirically knowable creature.

Ptolemy seems to have been aware of issues surrounding the issues of belief and the plausibility of this anecdote, which is why he has cited a source for the information, Aristonicus of Tarentum. This is the same Aristonicus that Ptolemy cites for answering the question to one of the Emperor Tiberius' favourite mythological questions: which is what was the name Achilles went by when he disguised himself as a girl on Scyros?¹⁴⁰

Ὡς Ἀχιλλέα μὲν Ἀριστόνικος ὁ Ταραντῖνος διατρίβοντα ἐν ταῖς παρθέναις παρὰ Λυκομήδει Κερκυσεράν καλεῖσθαι φησιν, ἐκαλεῖτο δὲ καὶ Ἰσοῦν καὶ Πυρράν καὶ Ἄσπετος καὶ Προμηθεύς.

¹³⁷ Photius *Bibliotheca* 147b, 22-23.

¹³⁸ Pseudo-Apollodorus *Library* 2.5.2; Zenobius *Epitome collectionum Lucilli Tarrhaei et Didymi* 6.26.5.

¹³⁹ See Pausanias *Description of Greece* 2.37.4, for a completely rationalised approach to the myth.

¹⁴⁰ Suetonius *Tiberius* 70.

Aristonicus of Tarentum says that when Achilles lived among the girls in Lycomedes' house, he was called Cercysera, but he was also called Issa, Pyrrha, Aspetos, and Prometheus.¹⁴¹

In this anecdote Ptolemy is displaying his credentials as a *grammaticus* by offering suggestions as to what Achilles' name was while on Scyros; a question that seems to have received some debate in antiquity, as it is also mentioned by Suetonius and Hyginus as well. Hyginus in his mythographical text the *Fabulae* says that Achilles name was Pyrrha (red-head),¹⁴² which is also one of the names that Ptolemy mentions. This is a respectable answer that is in keeping with the alternative name of Pyrrhus borne by Achilles' son Neoptolemus, as well as with the fact that Pyrrhus King of Epirus claimed descent from Achilles. As for the other options that Ptolemy gives, Achilles was honoured at Epirus under the name Aspetos,¹⁴³ a word found in Homer where it is used to convey a sense of the unstoppable, huge, or countless.¹⁴⁴ Prometheus, which may refer to having foreknowledge of his own death,¹⁴⁵ is a man's name, as is Aspetos, while Issa and Issus were Latin baby names or endearments,¹⁴⁶ although Issa is also the name of a city on Lesbos.¹⁴⁷

Despite these far more plausible options for Achilles' female name, Ptolemy argues that the name was Cercysera, a name that is thought to be a joke because of its associations with *κέρκος*, a tail or a penis, and it is possible that the name has been corrupted from the word *Κερκουράς* 'he who urinates by means of his tail'.¹⁴⁸ Yet it is for this name and this name alone that the only source is cited, Aristonicus of Tarentum. Since Ptolemy is contributing new information to this debate by opting for the least likely name, which only seems to appear because of the pun on the word, Ptolemy is deliberately using Aristonicus as a source to support his argument, especially since he dismisses the far more rational alternatives that seem to have already been in circulation. As a result, the reader has to decide whether they are willing to accept Ptolemy's offering, because even though it appears to be

¹⁴¹ Photius *Bibliotheca* 147a, 18-20.

¹⁴² Hyginus *Fabulae* 97.

¹⁴³ Plutarch *Pyrrhus* 1.

¹⁴⁴ Dowden *Aristonikos of Tarentum* (57) BNj.

¹⁴⁵ Plato *Protagoras* 320d.

¹⁴⁶ Cameron (2004), 141.

¹⁴⁷ Dowden *Aristonikos of Tarentum* (57) BNj.

¹⁴⁸ van der Valk (1963), 369 n.228.

joke, it is the only one with the source citation. This suggests that the reader can follow up the anecdote, although it probably did not occur to most to check or verify source references.¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Aristonicus' presence still brings a level of authority and credibility to Ptolemy's anecdote.

The situation becomes more complex since according to Cameron, despite the fact that Aristonicus appears to be an expert on mythography, he cannot be found in any of the surviving mythographic texts.¹⁵⁰ In contrast Dowden argues that Aristonicus is a genuine source, this is because a note of Servius on Virgil's *Aeneid* cites Aristonicus as a source for the fact that Epirus was called Campania, for which Varro seems to have been an intermediate source.¹⁵¹ As a result, Dowden argues that on balance, Aristonicus of Tarentum is likely to be the author that Servius is referring to.¹⁵² Cameron disputes this because it is not definitive since it is only the name Aristonicus that is mentioned, not Aristonicus of Tarentum who is only specifically cited by Ptolemy.¹⁵³ This points to the possibility that Aristonicus of Tarentum only exists in Ptolemy's mind and when combined with other possible bogus sources such as Eresios, Timolaus, and Antipatros,¹⁵⁴ along with his frequent use of the Alexandrian footnote, it points to a complex game of allusion and intertextuality that seems designed to test readers' *paideia* and belief. The combination of a bogus source and a *paradoxon*, suggests that Ptolemy is pushing the boundaries of authority and reality that the paradoxographic tradition is built upon. However, although Ptolemy's hybrid mythographical and paradoxographical anecdotes are unusual among surviving ancient texts, he is not the only author who creates anecdotes where *paradoxa* are connected to a myth and uses fabricated sources to support them, as there is evidence that suggests Pseudo-Plutarch did this as well.¹⁵⁵ The similarities between the two authors led Hercher to label Pseudo-Plutarch a *Schwindelautor*, just as he did with Ptolemy.¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁹ Cameron (2004) 124-163; Ní Mheallaigh (2013), 208.

¹⁵⁰ Cameron (2004), 141 & 202.

¹⁵¹ Servius *Aeneid* 3.334.

¹⁵² Dowden *Aristonikos of Tarentum* (57) BN].

¹⁵³ Cameron (2004), 202.

¹⁵⁴ Photius *Bibliotheca* 147a, 23-32.

¹⁵⁵ A possible example of a hybrid text has been attributed to Lysimachus of Alexandria, who may or may not be the same Lysimachus who according to Josephus wrote about the Jews exodus from Egypt. Lysimachus appears to have written about mythological wonders in his *Theban Paradoxes*, but the work does not survive in any form, so we cannot compare his text with Ptolemy's. See Mason (2007), 159. Notes to commentary on Josephus' *Against Appion* 1.34.304; Popescu (2009), 43.

¹⁵⁶ See Hercher (1851), 22-23; Cameron (2004), 127-134.

Pseudo-Plutarch's *De fluviis* is a work that contains passages that begin with a mythographical origins story of the name of the river, which is then followed by a paradoxographical wonder associated with the river, discussing the marvellous powers of rare stone and plants that grow in or near them.¹⁵⁷ The work dates from the second century CE and while it is not clear who the author is, the modern consensus is that it definitely was not Plutarch although his name is attached to it.¹⁵⁸ In total the *De fluviis* contains twenty-five anecdotes, most of which relate how a person bearing the name of the river, drowned in its waters out of grief, fear, or some other destructive emotion. As a result, the work initially appears to be an aetiological mythographic text, similar to Conon's *Narratives*, because of the geographical approach to myth. This is perhaps why in the sole manuscript from which it survives, the ninth century codex Palatinus gr. Heidelbergensis 398, it was grouped with Parthenius' *Erotica Pathemata* and Antoninus Liberalis' *Metamorphoses*, two of the best surviving examples of the mythographic tradition. Yet on closer inspection its content reveals that like Ptolemy, Pseudo-Plutarch creates tales that combine myth with natural *paradoxa*. For instance, in one passage about the origins of the river Ganges, after discussing how the river got its name by having Ganges commit suicide after he got drunk and slept with his mother, we are told that the juice from a herb that grows in the river, when sprinkled outside a tiger's den, traps the tiger inside.¹⁵⁹ In another anecdote Pseudo-Plutarch talks about the river Arar in Gaul, named after a warrior who committed suicide after seeing his brother mortally maimed by wild beasts. In this river is found a fish, which like Ptolemy's Pan Fish also contains a stone that has a purpose, but unlike Ptolemy's fish that was connected to the sun, Pseudo-Plutarch's is connected to the moon. According to Pseudo-Plutarch, during the waxing of the moon the fish is white but during its waning is black and in its head is found a stone, which when applied to the body when the moon is on the wane, cures certain ailments.¹⁶⁰ Both Ptolemy and Pseudo-Plutarch seem to be aware of similar paradoxographical information relating to fish and both combine myth with *paradoxa*.

What is even more striking, is that as with Ptolemy, it is thought that most if not all of Pseudo-Plutarch's sources in *De fluviis* are fabricated, and that like the

¹⁵⁷ The author has little idea where many of the rivers and mountains under discussion actually were, see Cameron (2004), 129.

¹⁵⁸ Hercher (1851), 37.

¹⁵⁹ Pseudo-Plutarch *De fluviis* 1152a.

¹⁶⁰ Pseudo-Plutarch *De fluviis* 1153b-d.

Novel Research the *De fluviis* is a pseudo-scholarship text.¹⁶¹ This is because there are far too many convenient coincidences with names,¹⁶² as many of the sources' names begin with the same syllable as one of the characters in the story. For instance, Chrysermus is cited for stories about Chrysorrhöe and Chrysippe,¹⁶³ and Timagoras for Timander.¹⁶⁴ This has led Müller, one of Pseudo-Plutarch's more sympathetic critics, to conclude that Pseudo-Plutarch's sources are likely to have all been invented by the same mind, Pseudo-Plutarch himself.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, Pseudo-Plutarch's other work, a miscellany called *Greek and Roman Parallel Stories*, better known as the *Parallela Minora*, also has the same reputation for bogus sources.¹⁶⁶ One source in particular, Dercyllus, who appears as the author of the *Italica* and *Foundations* in the *Parallela Minora*,¹⁶⁷ is cited five times in *De fluviis* where Pseudo-Plutarch's credits him with writing several works including: *On Stones*,¹⁶⁸ *On Mountains*,¹⁶⁹ *Aetolica*,¹⁷⁰ and even a work called *Satyrica*.¹⁷¹ Whether Dercyllus is real or not and if he should be identified with an author named Dercylus who wrote the *Argolika* has been subject to speculation. In the manuscripts that we have of his work Pseudo-Plutarch always spells Dercyllus with two lambdas, while Dercylus is always spelled with one. Moreover, Dercylus wrote in a local dialect, which is something that is not apparent in Pseudo-Plutarch's citations of Dercyllus. This suggests that Dercyllus should not be identified with Dercylus.¹⁷² However, it seems strange that if Dercyllus was real and such a prolific author, he left no other record other than in the works of Pseudo-Plutarch.¹⁷³ Therefore, it is feasible that Pseudo-Plutarch may have invented Dercyllus and used him throughout his works as an in-joke, referencing a bogus author for fabricated sources. This is something that only astute readers would have fully realised and appreciated, as Dercyllus is used as one of Pseudo-Plutarch's favourite sources for this purpose.¹⁷⁴ It is possible that Ptolemy

¹⁶¹ Cameron (2004), 162; Dowden disagrees and argues that there is no sense of satire in Pseudo-Plutarch's text, see Dowden *Antipater* (56) *BNJ*

¹⁶² Bidez (1935), 25-38; Cameron (2004), 129-130.

¹⁶³ Pseudo-Plutarch *De fluviis* 1153f-1154c; 1149a-1150b.

¹⁶⁴ Pseudo-Plutarch *De fluviis* 1163b-1163c.

¹⁶⁵ Müller (1861), lv.

¹⁶⁶ Hercher (1851), 22-23; Cameron (2004), 127-134.

¹⁶⁷ Pseudo-Plutarch *Parallela Minora* 315c; 309e-309f.

¹⁶⁸ Pseudo-Plutarch *De fluviis* 1162d.

¹⁶⁹ Pseudo-Plutarch *De fluviis* 1150c; 1155b.

¹⁷⁰ Pseudo-Plutarch *De fluviis* 1164c.

¹⁷¹ Pseudo-Plutarch *De fluviis* 1156c.

¹⁷² Ceccarelli *Derkyllus* (288) *BNJ*.

¹⁷³ Jacoby (1940), 73-144.

¹⁷⁴ Cameron (2004), 134; Ceccarelli *Derkyllus* (288) *BNJ*.

could have used Aristonicus of Tarentum in a similar manner as Pseudo-Plutarch does with Dercyllus, citing him throughout the *Novel Research* and possibly in his other works as well. Although this is only speculation because not enough information can be gleaned from Photius, or Eustathius and Tzetzes on this matter, the possible parallels with Pseudo-Plutarch make it a tantalizing prospect. Moreover, similarities can be drawn with the pseudo-documentary features that can be found in other Imperial texts, in particular Philostratus' *Damis*, a source that he apparently used to help write the *Life of Apollonius*.

Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* is an extensive biography, eight books in length on Apollonius, which was published sometime after the death of the empress Julia Domna in 217CE.¹⁷⁵ Although Apollonius was a historical figure we know very little about him other than that he is presented as a wandering ascetic/philosopher/wonder-worker type figure common in the eastern part of the Roman Empire.¹⁷⁶ The work begins with Apollonius' prodigious birth and then follows his extraordinary youth and piety concerning religion and education. This background leads to Apollonius wanting to discover the source of piety and wisdom among the Brahmans of India, which enables Philostratus to provide readers with two and a half books filled with travel, philosophy, and wonders. It is at the beginning of Apollonius' journey while in Nineveh that he first meets his lifelong companion and disciple, *Damis*. According to Philostratus, *Damis* kept a record of Apollonius' ideas, discourses, and prophecies; a descendant of *Damis* presented these tablets to Julia Domna,¹⁷⁷ who in turn passed them on to Philostratus with the command that he recast them in a more appropriate literary style. It is what was written on these tablets that supposedly form the basis of Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*.¹⁷⁸

Damis' memoirs serve as a *Beglaubigungsapparat*, a device designed to enhance the authority and plausibility of the narrative,¹⁷⁹ which is reinforced by the

¹⁷⁵ This is based on the fact that although the work was commissioned by the empress (1.3), but it is not dedicated to her. Moreover, the *Life of Apollonius* predates Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists* as the former is referenced in the latter (570). See Francis (1998), 420.

¹⁷⁶ He is likely to have been born in the early half of the first century CE in Tyana in Cappadocia, and he dies sometime during the reign of Nerva (96-98). See Francis (1998), 419.

¹⁷⁷ Philostratus *Life of Apollonius* 1.2-3.

¹⁷⁸ Francis (1998), 420.

¹⁷⁹ Whitmarsh (2004a), 426.

continued use of Damis as a source throughout the text.¹⁸⁰ However, this becomes an issue because the *Beglaubigungsapparat* is an established trope in literary fiction.¹⁸¹ This has inevitably drawn attention to the truth status of the text, which has led to speculation surrounding these memoirs of Damis about whether they were an authentic document or a fictional device.¹⁸² As Bowie has previously noted, there are remarkable parallels between the tablets of Damis that contained his memoirs¹⁸³ with the wooden-tablets found in Antonius Diogenes' *Incredible Things beyond Thule*¹⁸⁴ and Dictys' *Ephemeris belli Troiani*.¹⁸⁵ The tablets in Antonius Diogenes' and Dictys' works are pseudo-documentary devices; they are designed to respectfully distance the author from the account, while also bringing authority and credibility to their extraordinary narratives.¹⁸⁶ Due to the similarities between Philostratus' tablets and those of Antonius Diogenes and Dictys, it suggests that Damis' memoirs serve a similar pseudo-documentarism function; they are the grounds of fictive belief as they authorize the text by establishing its source and by citing that source's provenance.¹⁸⁷ These features deepen the reader's pleasure in the text by reifying the fiction, testing the limits of the reader's grasp of what is reality and what is fantasy.¹⁸⁸

According to Hansen, pseudo-documentarism practices of adding fabricated authentication devices became common in the Imperial period, particularly in the novels and practical literature.¹⁸⁹ Although Ptolemy and Pseudo-Plutarch do not claim that their works are based on ancient rediscovered texts, their fabricated sources are part of the same self-conscious trend as they make it difficult for readers to determine the truth-value of their material by blurring the boundaries between fact and fiction. Evidence points towards the fact that Ptolemy was aware of pseudo-documentarism strategies, as there are possible links between his work and Dictys'

¹⁸⁰ Philostratus *Life of Apollonius* 1.24; 1.32; 1.34; 2.10; 2.28; 3.15; 3.27; 3.36; 3.41; 5.9; 6.22; 7.15; 7.21; 7.34; 7.42.

¹⁸¹ Speyer (1971), 78-79; Whitmarsh (2004a), 426-427.

¹⁸² On the possibility that the memoirs were real, see Grosso (1954); Anderson (1986); Flinterman (1995). That the document is a fictional device, see Meyer (1917); Bowie (1978); Dzielska (1986); Francis (1998).

¹⁸³ Bowie (1979), 1663.

¹⁸⁴ See Chapter Two.

¹⁸⁵ See Chapter Four.

¹⁸⁶ Hansen (2003), 313-314.

¹⁸⁷ Francis (1998), 432.

¹⁸⁸ Ní Mheallaigh (2008), 404.

¹⁸⁹ Hansen (2003), 313-314.

pseudo-documentary text.¹⁹⁰ Ptolemy seems to actually parody the theme of burials and texts, which is a popular trope in this period,¹⁹¹ by reciting a list of people and the texts they were buried with:

Ἵτι τελευτήσαντος Δημητρίου τοῦ Σκηψίου τὸ βιβλίον Τέλλιδος πρὸς τῆ κεφαλῇ αὐτοῦ εὐρέθη· τὰς δὲ Κολυμβώσας Ἀλκμάνους πρὸς τῆ κεφαλῇ Τυρονίχου τοῦ Χαλκιδέως εὐρεθῆναι φασι, τοὺς δ' Ὑβριστοδίκας Εὐπόλιδος πρὸς τῆ Ἐφιάλτου, τοὺς δὲ Εὐνίδας Κρατίνου πρὸς τῆ Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ βασιλέως Μακεδόνων, τὰ δ' Ἔργα καὶ τὰς Ἡμέρας Ἡσιόδου πρὸς τῆ τοῦ Σελεύκου τοῦ Νικάτορος κεφαλῇ. Ὁ μέντοι νομοθέτης Ἀρκάδων Κερκίδας συνταφῆναι αὐτῷ τὸ α' καὶ β' τῆς Ἰλιάδος κελεύσειεν. Ὁ δὲ Πομπηῖος ὁ Μάγνος οὐδ' εἰς πόλεμον προίει, πρὶν ἂν τὸ λ' τῆς Ἰλιάδος ἀναγνώσειε, ζηλωτῆς ὦν Ἀγαμέμνονος· ὁ δὲ Ῥωμαῖος Κικέρων Μήδειαν Εὐριπίδου ἀναγινώσκων ἐν φορείῳ φερόμενος, ἀποτμηθεὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν.¹⁹²

After the death of Demetrius of Scepsis, near his head was found the book of *Telis*. They say the *Diving Girls* of Alcmeon was found near the head of Tyronicus of Chalcis, Eupolis' *Abusers of Justice* next to the head of Ephialtes, Cratinus' *Children of Euneus* of next to the head of Alexander the king of Macedon, and Hesiod's *Works and Days* next to the head of Seleucus son of Nicator. The lawgiver of Arcadia, Cercydas, ordered that books one and two of the *Iliad* be buried with him. Pompey Magnus never went to war before reading book eleven of the *Iliad*, because he admired Agamemnon. The Roman Cicero was beheaded while being carried in a litter reading Euripides' *Medea*.

With this passage Ptolemy seems aware of the motif of buried texts, but instead of discovering pre-Homeric epics or lost adventures, similar to the works of Dictys, Antonius Diogenes, and Philostratus, Ptolemy's discoveries are genuine texts by famous authors.¹⁹³ In choosing to discover texts that are already known it suggests that Ptolemy is being ironic here and is satirizing the trope, because it is at odds with Ptolemy's predilection for fabricated sources and material elsewhere in the *Novel Research*. There is still complex interaction between fact and fiction at play here, because this passage seems have been invented by Ptolemy and ironize the people who have been buried with certain texts. Therefore, although the genuine works invert how this trope is usually employed as a pseudo-documentarism

¹⁹⁰ See Chapter Four.

¹⁹¹ See Speyer (1971) for a list of texts with this theme.

¹⁹² Photius *Bibliotheca* 151a, 6-20.

¹⁹³ Tomberg (1968) 104.

strategy, paradoxically, Ptolemy is using a pseudo-documentarism strategy to present his fictitious discovery as fact, just as Dictys, Antonius Diogenes, and Philostratus do in their works. Ptolemy seems to enjoy using pseudo-documentarism as an authenticating device, but also takes pleasure in ironizing the strategy, similar to Antonius Diogenes' *Incredible Things beyond Thule* paratext,¹⁹⁴ to explore how fiction works and challenge readers' perceptions.¹⁹⁵

3.4.3. Curiosities, Fiction, and Wonder-Culture

So far I have explored how Ptolemy merges myth with *paradoxa* and incorporates natural wonders into the *Novel Research* to play with the boundaries between fake and authentic, real and unreal. I now wish to explore how Ptolemy pushes his readers' imaginations and belief in wonders even further by including material in his text that plugs into the wonder-culture of the period. Imperial wonder-culture ranges from the emperor's *Wunderkammer*, to museums that house curiosities, as well as the extravagant spectacles of the amphitheatres. Wonder-culture thrived on novelty and tested the interplay between the real and the fake, and Ptolemy's interactions with the wonder-culture of the period further blurs the lines between fact and fiction in his work as he draws contemporary culture into his text.

Ptolemy's interest in contemporary wonder-culture is apparent with his descriptions of sensational physical phenomena, where there is a character to whom something extraordinary happens or who has some physical abnormality that sets them apart. We have already encountered some of Ptolemy's human oddities at the beginning of this chapter in the Hyllus anecdote and in the extended passage on Helen where we find the woman named Helen who ate three kid goats a day.¹⁹⁶ Other examples of Ptolemy's strange human phenomena range from the mundane, 'The poet Philostephanos of Mantinea who from birth never used a cloak, while Matris of Thebes a composer of hymns, ate myrtle leaves his whole life' (Φιλοστέφανος ὁ Μαντινεὺς ὁ ποιητῆς ἐκ γενετῆς ἱματίῳ οὐκ ἐχρήσατο, καὶ ὡς Μάτρις ὁ Θεβαῖος ὑμνογράφος, μυρσίνας παρ' ὄλον τὸν βίον ἐσιτεῖτο),¹⁹⁷ to the plausible, 'The son of a certain Galates was called Achilles, who he [Ptolemy] says was grey-haired from birth' (Γαλάτου τινὸς υἱὸς Ἀχιλλεὺς ἐκλήθη, ὃν ἐκ γενετῆς πολὺν γενέσθαι

¹⁹⁴ See Chapter Two.

¹⁹⁵ Ní Mheallaigh (2008), 418-419.

¹⁹⁶ Photius *Bibliotheca* 149b, 3-38.

¹⁹⁷ Photius *Bibliotheca*, 148b, 1-3.

φησίν),¹⁹⁸ to the completely bizarre, ‘Stichius the Aetolian, the lover of Heracles, was found to have a hairy heart when he was cut open’, (Ὡς Στίχιος ὁ Αἰτωλός, ἐρώμενος ὦν Ἡρακλέους, εὐρέθη ἀνασχισθεὶς τετριχωμένην ἔχων τὴν καρδίαν).¹⁹⁹ This type of marvel, where an individual has something extraordinary happen to them, can do something unusual, or has some physical abnormality that sets them apart, is far more common than wonders concerned with nature. This suggests that Ptolemy prefers these types of marvels to traditional examples of *paradoxa* such as zoology, botany, metallurgy etc.

Although the first example is not particularly striking as a marvel, Philostephanus and Matris can be regarded as human oddities because they both had strong constitutions, enabling them to withstand the natural elements and a diet of myrtle leaves respectively. Moreover, there is the possibility here that Ptolemy is playing on names in the anecdote, and this may affect our understanding of the wonder since we have Philostephanus whose name means ‘the lover of garlands’, and then Matris who only eats myrtle leaves. It is possible that these anecdotes were intended to be read together, with one leading on to the next, although it perhaps would have made more sense to have Philostephanus as ‘lover of garlands’ as the one who survived on a diet of myrtle leaves, but this may be a deliberately bad pun on Ptolemy’s behalf, or a consequence of the epitomization of the text.

The second anecdote about Achilles, the son of Galates, who was born with grey hair, can be found in book six of the *Novel Research*.²⁰⁰ This is a book that focuses mainly on Achilles and this theme is carried through the extended passage below where the anecdote about Galates’ son can be found. The anecdote appears at the end of a series of anecdotes about the famous Achilles from the Trojan War and others that share his name. The thematic topic enables Ptolemy to recount a tale about the first Achilles, who helped Hera, and explains why his name was passed down through generations including: the teacher of Chiron, the inventor of ostracism in Athens, and the son of Zeus and Lamia, until we get to the human wonder that is Achilles son of Galates, as well as two amazing dogs also called Achilles. The anecdote lacks specific details; readers are only told that the child was born this way and it seems that it is for this reason that the incident has been recorded, implying that this was an unusual occurrence. Although a child being

¹⁹⁸ Photius *Bibliotheca*, 152b, 5-6.

¹⁹⁹ Photius *Bibliotheca*, 152b, 36-37.

²⁰⁰ See Chapter Four for full passage.

born with grey-hair is highly unusual, it is not unheard of as there are documented modern cases with children being born with partially grey-hair, as well as children's hair turning grey at a very young age. This ties in with Schepens' argument that wonders need an element of truth to make them believable, as it makes them more astonishing despite their extraordinary nature.²⁰¹ This may explain why Ptolemy is not alone in recording this specific type of human anomaly since a similar wonder is also related by Aulus Gellius who says: 'it was handed down by tradition that in a distant land called Albania, men are born whose hair turns white in childhood'.²⁰²

As with Ptolemy's account there is little detail in Gellius' record, but the similarities between the two suggests that in antiquity there were numerous versions of this particular human oddity in circulation in ancient texts that have since been lost, possibly related to documented cases, and Ptolemy and Gellius might have collected this wonder directly from another text or modified it to suit their own tastes. Moreover, since both authors include this particular human phenomenon, it suggests that grey-haired infants were seen as something particularly strange and fascinating, as it is something that marks the child or children with this feature as being physically different from the perceived norm. Indeed, according to Seneca it is the extraordinary that we desire,²⁰³ while Horace says it is the abnormal and the unusual that captures and transfixes the eyes.²⁰⁴ In the wonder-culture of the period a physical abnormality would at the very least arouse curiosity and interest, and at the worst scorn and suspicion. The interest in this type of human phenomena suggests that Ptolemy is tapping into the contemporary wonder-culture, especially since there are similarities between his work and that of his contemporary Phlegon's of Tralles' paradoxographical text *On Marvels* (*Περὶ Θαυμασίων*).²⁰⁵

Phlegon's *On Marvels* is the best surviving example of any paradoxographic text from antiquity, which unlike the majority of paradoxographic works survives in an almost complete form. The work contains thirty-five entries in total, arranged thematically with a fairly logical progression from one topic to the next. However,

²⁰¹ Schepens (1996), 382-383.

²⁰² Aulus Gellius *Noctes Atticae*, 9.4.6. *praeterea traditum esse memoratumque in ultima quadam tera, quae Albania dicitur, gigni homines, qui in pueritia canescant.*

²⁰³ Seneca *Epistulae*, 105.3.

²⁰⁴ Horace *Epistulae*, 1.6.

²⁰⁵ According to the *Historia Augusta* (*Hadrian*. 16.1.), Phlegon became entangled in malicious court gossip concerning Hadrian, who was supposedly so keen to write literary works that he published books under his freedman's name.

where *On Marvels* differs from the other surviving paradoxographic is that Phlegon rarely cites sources for his material, but far more striking is that the beginning of the work comprises of three fairly lengthy stories or novellas about ghosts,²⁰⁶ which are then followed by a list of a variety of wonders including: hermaphrodites, monstrous and multiple births, long-lived people, and discoveries of giant bones, which tend to become all the more grotesque and elaborate as the work progresses. Phlegon's extended narratives at the beginning of his text and his almost exclusive interest in sensational marvels that are concerned with human phenomena, makes *On Marvels* unusual among the surviving paradoxography texts we have, as they tend to prefer natural wonders.²⁰⁷ This led Schepens to raise the possibility that Phlegon, and this could also be applicable to Ptolemy, could represent a transitional figure in the development of paradoxography, in that he marks the shift away from Hellenistic works that were concerned with wonders from the natural world, to Imperial texts more interested in human marvels.²⁰⁸

Evidence from this period suggests that as Rome expanded, human phenomena became increasingly popular as more and more curiosities were brought back to Rome.²⁰⁹ As a result, the exaggerated and the astonishing permeated Roman life and manner to a degree unprecedented in their history.²¹⁰ These curiosities could be found in temples and museums, which claimed to display the remains of heroes and mythological creatures.²¹¹ This has been interpreted as an attempt to present a fantasy of Greece that no longer existed, a phenomenon called *Archaism*,²¹² which used wonders to create a sensory experience by bringing things

²⁰⁶ See Morgan (2013) 293-322.

²⁰⁷ The only exception being Apollonius' *Wondrous Researches* (*Ἱστορίαι Θαυμάσιαι*), which as I mentioned above, is the earliest surviving text to include wonders about people, with information such as, 'Eudoxus of Rhodes says that there are Celts who are blind by day but are able to see at night', (*Εὐδόξος ὁ Ρόδιος περὶ τὴν Κελτικὴν εἶναι τι ἔθνος φησὶν, ὃ τὴν ἡμέραν οὐ βλέπειν, τὴν δὲ νύκτα ὁρᾶν*). However, although the work contains some human oddities, Apollonius' human wonders are vastly outnumbered by his traditional *paradoxa* that focus on topics such as zoology, botany, hydrography, mineralogy, and ethnography. See Hansen (1996), 11; Schepens & Delcroix (1996), 430 - 432.

²⁰⁸ Schepens & Delcroix (1996), 431.

²⁰⁹ Pliny *Natural History* 9.4.9-11; Pausanias *Description of Greece* 9.21.1; Aelian *On the Characteristics of Animals* 13.21 & 17.9.

²¹⁰ Barton (1993), 86.

²¹¹ For instance, Tantalus' bones were kept in a bronze vessel in Argos (Pausanias *Description of Greece* 2.22.2), the bones of his son Pelops were kept in a bronze chest in Olympia (Pausanias *Description of Greece* 6.22.1), Orestes' remains were kept in Sparta (Pausanias *Description of Greece* 3.11.10), Oedipus' were on the Hill of Ares in Athens (Pausanias *Description of Greece* 1.28.7), and a temple in Tanagra kept a Triton (Pausanias *Description of Greece* 9.20.4-5).

²¹² Arafat (1996), 1-42; Porter (2001), 63-92.

from the past into the present to see, read and wonder at.²¹³ However, Plutarch and Longinus inform us about the dark side of Imperial wonder-culture, as those people who were considered to be physically different or abnormal aroused such interest they could end up being put on public display.²¹⁴ Macabre curiosity in human wonders became so popular the value and demand for physically abnormal people escalated. This resulted in cases of people being deliberately deformed by being bound and confined in boxes for the monster markets of Rome to pander to people wanting to collect human freaks.²¹⁵ It is likely that this was to meet demand for many of the elite who started to surround themselves with people that were considered to be freaks or unnatural to create their own cabinets of curiosities to emulate those of public figures.²¹⁶

It is not surprising that since interest in human curiosities appears to have been widespread in the physical world; it started to spill over into the literature of period, with its natural home being paradoxography, which acted as a literary *Wunderkammer* for readers. How widely available such curiosities were for the general public to view is impossible to know. Therefore, it is likely that works like Phlegon's *On Marvels* offered an alternative way to learn about such cases and satisfy one's curiosity if one could not gain access to something in the flesh.²¹⁷ Texts that specialized in human wonders may have appealed to the *curiosi*, the type of people who frequented the monster-markets, museums, arenas, and private collections in order to satiate their morbid curiosity with their eyes. These were people who enjoyed gazing upon human oddities and if there was nothing for them to cast their gaze upon in the flesh, as readers they may have satisfied their curiosity

²¹³ Goldhill (2001), 154-194; Zeitlin (2001), 195-266.

²¹⁴ Plutarch *De curiositate* 10.

²¹⁵ Longinus *De sublimitate* 44.5.

²¹⁶ For instance Pompey Magnus established a museum that housed life-sized models of human curiosities (Pliny *Natural History*, 7.3). The bodies of Posio and Secundilla, the tallest men alive in the reign of Augustus, were preserved in Sallust's Gardens in Rome because of their extraordinary height, and the bodies of Manius Maximus and M. Tullius, two dwarves who were only two cubits (three feet) tall, were put on public display (Pliny *Natural History*, 7.16). There was a pinhead in red livery that stood beside the Emperor Domitian (Suetonius *Domitian* 4), the dwarf Conopas who was a pet of Julia the granddaughter of Augustus, and Andromeda a tiny freedwoman of the elder Julia (Pliny *Natural History* 7.16). Moreover, Augustus' interest in human curiosities was apparently so great that Suetonius reported that if anything unusual or rare was brought to the capital, Augustus was in the habit of making it available to view on a day when no other shows were scheduled (Suetonius *Augustus* 43). For more information on the emperor's curiosity collections, see Barton (1993), 85-95; and Garland (1995), 45-58.

²¹⁷ Although since Phlegon mentions a centaur that is on public display in Rome (*On Marvels* 34-35), it suggests that at least in Rome human curiosities were easy to find, whether in museums or the monster markets.

by reading about human freaks and marvels, feeding their imagination by knowing of even more bizarre cases of human abnormalities.²¹⁸

This may explain why these wonders become part of Imperial fictional narratives, as their extraordinary nature required readers to suspend their belief far more than classic *paradoxa* on rocks and rivers. For instance, in the *Incredible Things beyond Thule* Antonius Diogenes says that there are people in Iberia that see at night and are blind by day,²¹⁹ and how the character Astraeus' pupils change size according the phases of the moon.²²⁰ Sensational wonders also seem to have played an important role in Iamblichus' *Babyloniaca*.²²¹ The work is now lost, but it has been epitomized by Photius who gives us some insight into the work.²²² Photius' summary reveals that the narrative takes place in ancient Mesopotamia with no Greek characters or setting and that it contained wonders such as Doppelgängers, a goat-like ghost, poisonous bees and honey.²²³ It also contains a variety of magic and magicians including a locust magician, a lion magician, a hail magician, a snake magician, and a mouse magician because mice have preeminent magical powers.²²⁴

That Ptolemy is tapping into the Imperial wonder-culture and taste for human curiosities is apparent with his two anecdotes about hairy hearts. The first of these hairy heart stories appears in book three of the text and is about Ptolemy, the Macedonian general of Alexander and later pharaoh of Egypt, who owned a dog that had a hairy heart:

Περὶ τοῦ Πτολεμαίου κυνός, καὶ ὡς συνεμάχει τῷ δεσπότην, καὶ ὡς

²¹⁸ Barton (1993), 88-90.

²¹⁹ Photius *Bibliotheca* 109b. This is remarkably similar to an anecdote found in the paradoxographer Apollonius's *Wondrous Researches* 24: 'Eudoxos of Rhodes says that there is a people in Celtic territory who see not during the daytime but during the night' (Εὐδοξὸς ὁ Ῥόδιος περὶ τὴν Κελτικὴν εἶναί τι ἔθνος φησὶν, ὃ τὴν ἡμέραν οὐ βλέπειν, τὴν δὲ νύκτα ὁρᾶν).

²²⁰ Photius *Bibliotheca* 109b.

²²¹ The work is thought to date from the latter half of the second century CE. This is based upon Iamblichus mentioning the war waged by Lucius Verus against the Parthian King Vologaeses III in the years 162-165 CE. The focus of the novel is on the trials and tribulations of the married protagonists, Rhodanes and Sinonis, which includes murder and crucifixion when they try and escape the cruel Babylonian king Garmus when he wants Sinonis for himself; this leads to adventures all over the Near East.

²²² Photius *Bibliotheca* codex 94,

²²³ Poisonous bees and honey is also found in Pliny's *Natural History* 21.44.74-78; Columella's *De Re Rustica* 9.4; and Xenophon's *Anabasis* 4.8.

²²⁴ This ties into the fact that in the novel Iamblichus himself claims to have been a Babylonian magician, making himself part of the exotic world in which he narrates, and indeed the whole novel may have been designed to entertain and titillate a Greek readership by incorporating Eastern stereotypes of the time and by playing upon the Greek sense of the other. See Holzberg (1986), 85-87; Whitmarsh (2011), 75.

μετὰ τελευτήν ἀνασχισθεῖς τὴν καρδίαν εὐρέθη ἔχων τετριχωμένην·
ἦν δὲ γένος Μολοττός, ὄνομα Βριάρεως.²²⁵

A story about Ptolemy's dog, which fought with his master, and how after its death was cut open and found to have a hairy heart; he was a Molossian by breed and named Briareus.

The anecdote appears in a paragraph that briefly mentions Hecale and possible homonyms of her name, which it appears to have no obvious connections to, and a story about Alexander immediately precedes the Briareus tale. The second example, which appears in book seven, is about Stichius, which I mentioned briefly above, a lover of Heracles, who like the dog Briareus, also supposedly had a hairy heart. This anecdote appears in a paragraph full of novel mythographical information about famous mythological characters, such as why Achilles has the name he does²²⁶ and an anecdote about Odysseus that I will come back to:

Ὡς Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐν Τυρρηνίᾳ ἠγωνίσαστο ἀύλητικὴν καὶ ἐνίκησεν·
ἠύλησε δὲ Ἴλιου ἄλωσιν, Δημοδόκου ποιήμα. Ὡς Στίχιος ὁ Αἰτωλός,
ἐρώμενος ὦν Ἡρακλέους, εὐρέθη ἀνασχισθεῖς τετριχωμένην ἔχων τὴν
καρδίαν· ἀνῆρέθη δ' ὑπ' αὐτοῦ Ἡρακλέους, ὅτε μανεῖς καὶ τοὺς ἰδίους
ἀνεῖλε παῖδας· καὶ ἐπὶ τούτῳ μόνῳ φασὶ θρηνηῖσαι τὸν ἥρωα.²²⁷

When Odysseus was in Tyrrehenia he took part in a flute-playing competition, which he won; he played the "Fall of Troy", by the poet Demodocus. Stichius the Aetolian, the lover of Heracles, was found to have a hairy heart when he was opened up. Heracles killed Stichius when in his madness he also killed his own children; they say that Stichius was the only one the hero lamented.

Both of the anecdotes are bizarre and their immediate context in the text does not shed much further detail on there being any connection between the tales other than the hairy hearts themselves. Moreover, the presence of the same wonder in a work creates a paradox: the wonder needs to be new in order for it to be astonishing and in keeping with the implication of the title of the *Novel Research*, yet the marvel already needs to be known about in order for it to be substantiated.²²⁸ This paradox

²²⁵ Photius *Bibliotheca*, 148a, 23-26.

²²⁶ See Chapter Four.

²²⁷ Photius *Bibliotheca*, 152b, 32-40.

²²⁸ The wonder itself can and does happen because it is caused by the medical condition, fibrinous

becomes even more apparent when we consider that this type of wonder is not unique to Ptolemy, since according to the *Suda* the sophist Hermogenes was found to have a hairy heart.²²⁹

When we turn to the anecdotes themselves, the first one concerning Briareus reads as a straightforward example of a *paradoxon*, as there are no mythological associations with it and it is located in a passage with a supposed historical piece of information about Alexander, which adds to the historical grounding. Moreover, the inclusion of the historical Ptolemy is important because he has a small but pivotal role; he reinforces the historical nature of the story and grounds the event firmly in reality and the historical past in order to provide provenance and substantiation to the anecdote so that it can function as a astonishing yet believable wonder. I have already mentioned how this type of celebrity association is a common pseudo-documentarism strategy used by ancient authors of fiction to lend authority to their works, notably Antonius Diogenes' *Incredible Things beyond Thule* and Dictys of Crete's *Ephemeris belli Troiani*, who use historical figures such as Alexander the Great's general Balagrus and the Emperor Nero respectively, to add authority and verisimilitude to their works.²³⁰

It is also a strategy employed by Phlegon in *On Marvels*, especially when recounting some of his more outlandish material, as he uses famous figures as a way to ground the wonder in reality by establishing when it happened. For instance, when Phlegon relates information about several monstrous births, in all but one of them Phlegon refers to historical figures, including consuls of Rome, archons of Athens, as well as a Roman emperor. In one such example Phlegon says that: 'A child was brought to Nero that had four heads and a proportionate number of limbs when the archon at Athens was Thrasyllus, and the consuls in Rome were Publius Petronius Turpilianus and Caesennius Paetus',²³¹ and in another Phlegon tells his readers: 'In Rome a certain woman brought forth a two-headed baby, which on the advice of the sacrificing priests was cast into the River Tiber. This happened when

pericarditis, which is when there is an inflammation of the pericardium, the fibrous sac surrounding the heart, the result of which gives the heart a hairy appearance.

²²⁹ *Suda* e3046. 'After his death he was cut open, and his heart was found to be covered in hair and far to exceed in size the human nature, (ὅτι τελευτήσαντος αὐτοῦ, ἀνετμήθη καὶ εὐρέθη ἡ καρδία αὐτοῦ τετριχωμένη καὶ τῷ μεγέθει πολὺ τῆς ἀνθρωπείας φύσεως περβάλλουσα).

²³⁰ See Hansen (2003), 306-307; Ní Mheallaigh (2008), 407-408.

²³¹ Phlegon of Tralles *On Marvels* 20. Παιδίον πρὸς Νέρωνα ἐκομίσθη τετρακέφαλον, ἀνάλογα ἔχον καὶ τὰ ἄλλα μέλη, ἄρχοντας Ἀθήνησι Θρασύλλου, ὑπατευόντων ἐν Ῥώμῃ Ποπλίου Πετρωνίου Τουρπιλιανοῦ καὶ Καισιωνίου Παίτου.

the archon at Athens was Hadrian, who later was emperor, and the consuls at Rome were the Emperor Trajan for the sixth time and Titus Sextus Africanus'.²³²

Phlegon's purpose in referring to these historical figures, even though they are not directly involved with the wonder, is to document the incident as real history and bring some historicity, authority, and believability to his astonishing tales of monstrous births.

Although Ptolemy does not use an emperor, a famous general and later pharaoh has the same effect, since any historical figure brings veracity and a sense of reality to an otherwise extraordinary account.²³³ However, Ptolemy's use of the general and pharaoh differs from Phlegon because he is not just included to roughly date and ground the tale in historical reality. Instead, it is actually Ptolemy's dog that had the hairy heart, which means that he is directly involved in the wonder and not just an authentication strategy. Therefore, Ptolemy's relationship with the wonder is even closer than what we find with the celebrity associations in the *Incredible Things beyond Thule* and *Ephemeris belli Troiani*, as he is directly involved in the wonder rather than just transmitting it. Ptolemy Chennus then adds the characteristic fine but superfluous detail that is characteristic of pseudo-documentarism by including information about the dog's name and breed in the story, which gives a sense to the reader that Ptolemy has put some effort into researching this snippet of information, adding to the believability and factual nature of the marvel. Yet although Ptolemy is keen to ground Briareus and his hairy heart in the historical past, what led to the dog being dissected in the first place is not mentioned. Rather, as is the case with paradoxographical information, without context the peculiarity of the *paradoxon* is emphasized; it is the strangeness of the story that is important rather than whys and wherefores, which could undermine the effect of the wonder on readers.²³⁴

With the second anecdote about a hairy heart the situation is very different. The Stichius anecdote is a mythographical and paradoxographical hybrid, as we have the wonder of a hairy heart combined with a mythological figure. Although readers might have found the initial case of Briareus the dog with a hairy heart a strange and slightly macabre account, when they later come across Stichius and his

²³² Phlegon of Tralles *On Marvels* 25. Ἐν Ῥώμῃ δικέφαλόν τις ἀπεκύησεν ἔμβρυον, ὃ ὑποθήκαις τῶν θουσκῶων εἰς τὸν Τίβεριν ποταμὸν ἐνεβλήθη, ἄρχοντος Ἀθήνησιν Ἀδριανοῦ τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος <ὑστερον> γενομένου, ὑπατευόντων ἐν Ῥώμῃ αὐτοκράτορος Τραιανοῦ τὸ ἕκτον καὶ Τίτου Σεξτίου Ἀφρικανοῦ.

²³³ See Hansen (2003), 306-307; Ní Mheallaigh (2008), 407-408.

²³⁴ Schepens (1996), 390-394; Jacob (1983), 132-134; (Romm) 1992, 93; Popescu (2009), 47.

hairy heart, readers may have felt they were reading a rehashed tale with the only difference being that a dog has been swapped for a man. However, unlike the story of Briareus that reads as a straightforward *paradoxon*, the story about Stichius has no grounding in historical reality. Instead, the wonder of his hairy heart is firmly located in the unverifiable mythological past and belongs to the realm of myth when he is identified as being a lover of Heracles. Therefore, although there may be an initial sense of a *déjà vu* for the reader when they encounter the second tale, the way the two anecdotes operate within the text are very different; the former is a straightforward paradoxographical tale and the later is a hybrid mythological and paradoxographical concoction. As with the Hyllus tale, the fact that the wonder is blended with myth in the Stichius anecdote means that it lacks any reliability or authority. Once again the mythological elements of the tale are functioning on a different level of reality from the paradoxographical features; the mythological characters cannot be substantiated and located in the historical past, which is necessary for the *paradoxon*, the hairy heart, to function as a believable wonder. This becomes all the more apparent when compared to earlier hairy heart anecdote, as the inclusion of the general and pharaoh Ptolemy, grounds the wonder in reality and gives a rough date of when this marvel occurred. Therefore, while it is easy for readers to suspend their belief and believe in the Briareus anecdote, in contrast, the tangible reality and believability of the Stichius wonder remains out of readers' grasp.

The context for the Stichius' anecdote also has an important role to play as the story that immediately precedes it is about Odysseus winning a flute playing competition by playing Demodocus' *Fall of Troy*. Demodocus is the fictional bard that appears in the *Odyssey*,²³⁵ and this anecdote is not attested anywhere else. That Ptolemy attributes Odysseus' win to playing a song he heard Demodocus play while he was staying with the Phaeacians is a clever twist. It is packed with Homeric allusiveness and sly humour, which nods at its own fictionality by having Odysseus emerge triumphant with a piece that was composed by the great bard Demodocus and featured the heroic exploits of Odysseus himself.²³⁶ The fact that this excerpt draws attention to its own fictionality and comes immediately before the Stichius' anecdote, suggests that it has been placed to undermine the reliability of the

²³⁵ Homer *Odyssey* 8.41-109.

²³⁶ Cameron (2004), 147; see Chapter Four.

anecdotes that are in the passage with it, and to hint at the fictionality of them as well. As a result, the truthful nature of the Stichius' anecdote is called into doubt, not only by the anecdote itself, but also by the Odysseus story that precedes it.

This becomes an issue for the earlier Briareus tale, because not only is the reliability and the truthfulness of the Stichius anecdote called into question, but because of association of topic, the reader is reminded of the earlier anecdote. Owing to the unreliability of the Stichius tale, the Briareus anecdote is destabilised and undermined by the fact the other anecdote cannot be substantiated because of its mythological associations, and because it appears immediately after a story that self-consciously proclaims its fictionality. The shared theme is unlikely to be a mistake or an issue that Ptolemy was not aware of; it is something that Ptolemy intended to deliberately play the two anecdotes against each other to test readers' believability in this particular wonder. Although the former reads like a straightforward sensational *paradoxon*, in keeping with Phlegon's material, the latter hinges upon a mythological figure. When they are read alongside each other, they problematize the relationship between reality and fiction, demonstrating how wonders can be used to highlight the fictionality of a text.

3.5. Conclusion

Ptolemy's *paradoxa* and interaction with contemporary wonder-culture raises issues concerning belief and authority in his narrative. By combining myths and wonders, Ptolemy creates anecdotes that can be interpreted in two ways; the wonder authenticates myth and grounds it in reality, or that myths because of their traditional rather than empirical belief system destabilize the reliability of the wonder. Ptolemy's combination of these two traditions blurs the lines between fact and fiction, testing his readers' *paideia* by challenging their perceptions of belief and reality, and what is fact and what is fiction when reading about wondrous things. This is reinforced by his combination of paradoxographical material and pseudo-documentarism devices, which play with issues concerning truth, reliability, and believability, as they paradoxically authorize the wonder but destabilize it as well, essentially admitting to the fiction of the account. Ptolemy's interest in *paradoxa* establishes him and *Novel Research* in the wonder-culture of the Imperial period, a culture where the fake and the bizarre blurred the boundaries between reality and fantasy. Ptolemy's interaction with paradoxography and wonder-culture challenges

readers' perceptions of belief and reality, as he requires them to suspend their (dis)belief about what is fact and what is fiction in the work when it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between the two.

Chapter 4

Ptolemy and the Mythological Revisionist Games of the Imperial Period

4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter we saw how Ptolemy combined myths with *paradoxa*; the result is that it highlights the fictionality of his hybrid anecdotes, but also calls into question the credulity of the *Novel Research* itself. This chapter will also explore Ptolemy's treatment of myth but from another perspective. Here the focus will be on how Ptolemy's mythographical and Homeric revisions show that he was an active participant in the revisionist literary culture of the period. I will explore the different ways in which Ptolemy revises myth and in doing so I aim to shed light on how, through his revising of myths, citation of bogus sources, and calling into question the authority of Homer, Ptolemy raises issues concerning how reliable or truthful is myth, as well as Homer himself. I believe that Ptolemy expected astute readers to see how he manipulated material to show off his own *paideia*, but how he also uses it to test the erudition of his readers, by using mythological revisions as a mirror to reflect the playful and bogus nature of his own text. In this way Ptolemy's satirical treatment of myth and of Homer can be read as commentary on the reliability and truthfulness of Ptolemy and the *Novel Research*, as well as for the literary culture that led to its creation.

4.1.1 Ptolemy's Rock of Leucas Legend

Before exploring how Ptolemy revises myth, particularly Homeric material and how this relates to the wider revisionist context in which he was writing, I want to convey how Ptolemy's revisionist material is wickedly humorous and often irreverent towards its source material and mythological origins, to give a sense of his ambition and skills as a revisionist. To do this, I will begin by discussing the most substantial passage in Photius' epitome, which concerns a detailed list of all of those who have jumped from the Rock of Leucas in order to cure themselves of the sickness of love. Although it is not a Homeric revision, as a mythographical revision it fits in with the Imperial literary trend for revising canonical texts and established

myths,¹ which is why I have included it.

The most famous version of the Rock of Leucas legend from antiquity involves Sappho.² According to a quotation from Menander's play *Leucadia*,³ which is preserved by Strabo, Sappho was the first to make the jump from the Rock of Leucas because of her passion for Phaon the ferryman: "Where Sappho is said to have been the first", as Menandros says, "when through frantic longing she was chasing the haughty Phaon, to fling herself with a leap from the far-seen rock, calling upon thee in prayer, O lord and master."⁴ This fragment of Menander is quoted by Strabo, who cites the story as part of a geographical description of the rock. Strabo goes on to say that Menander's claims that Sappho was the first to put the leap to the test are wrong; instead he gives an alternative account which represents the rationalizing approach of the legend, as he explains: 'Now although Menandros says that Sappho was the first to take the leap, yet those who are better versed than he in antiquities say that it was [the mythical hero] Cephalus, who was in love with Pterelas the son of Deïoneus. It was an ancestral custom among the Leucadians, every year at the sacrifice performed in honour of Apollo, for some criminal to be flung from this rocky look-out for the sake of averting evil, wings and birds of all kinds being fastened to him, since by their fluttering they could lighten the leap, and also for a number of men, stationed all round below the rock in small fishing-boats, to take the victim in, and, when he had been taken on board, to do all in their power to get him safely outside their borders'.⁵

According to Strabo, those who supposedly know more about the rock, which we can infer means him and other like-minded, rationalized, and scientific minds, say that it was in fact Cephalus who was the first to jump and not Sappho. Strabo is historicizing the rock's legend in a similar way to how he historicizes

¹ See Kim (2010).

² The origins of Sappho's association are likely the invention of one of the comic poets, since we know of at least six comedies called Sappho that were in circulation in antiquity, and the tale probably originated as a comic distortion of something Sappho said in one of her poems. See Cameron (2004), 153.

³ Nagy (1973), 141.

⁴ Strabo *Geography* 10.2.9.1-6. "Ἐχει δὲ τὸ τοῦ Λευκάτα Ἀπόλλωνος ἱερὸν καὶ τὸ ἄλμα τὸ τοὺς ἔρωτας παύειν πεπιστευμένον· οὗ δὴ λέγεται πρώτη Σαπφῶ ὡς φησὶν ὁ Μένανδρος τὸν ὑπέρκομπον θηρώσα Φάων' οἰστρώωντι πόθῳ ῥίψαι πέτρας ἀπὸ τηλεφανοῦς ἄλμα κατ' εὐχὴν σήν, δέσποτ' ἀναξ.

⁵ Strabo *Geography* 10.2.9.6-15. ὁ μὲν οὖν Μένανδρος πρώτην ἀλέσθαι λέγει τὴν Σαπφῶ, οἱ δ' ἔτι ἀρχαιολογικότεροι Κεφαλὸν φασὶν ἐρασθέντα Πτερέλα τὸν Διονέως. ἦν δὲ καὶ πάτριον τοῖς Λευκαδίοις κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ἐν τῇ θυσίᾳ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος ἀπὸ τῆς σκοπῆς ῥιπτεῖσθαι τινὰ τῶν ἐν αἰτίαις ὄντων ἀποτροπῆς χάριν, ἐξαπτομένων ἐξ αὐτοῦ παντοδαπῶν πτερῶν καὶ ὀρνέων ἀνακουφίζειν δυναμένων τῇ πτήσει τὸ ἄλμα, ὑποδέχεσθαι δὲ κάτω μικραῖς ἀλάσι κύκλω περιεστῶτας πολλοὺς καὶ περισώζειν εἰς δύναμιν τῶν ὄρων ἔξω τὸν ἀναληφθέντα.

Homer and the Homeric epics, by grounding them in the geographical landscape to present a rationalized historical and geographical perspective of the world.⁶ This is why Strabo relates details about ancestral and cult traditions surrounding the site to give some historical origins and geographical context for how the legend could have originated. However, as von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff argued, Menander probably chose this setting for his play because it was known for its exotic cult practices that Strabo describes.⁷ Moreover, Strabo is not alone in rationalizing the myth, as the cult aspect of the legend can also be found in Aelian. Aelian's account differs as it lacks a mythological aspect; instead he offers the most rationalized and realistic origins for the legend, stating that: 'In the island of Leucas there is a high promontory on which a temple of Apollo has been built, and worshippers style him Apollo of Aktion. Now when the festival is about to be held there in which they make the Leap in honour of the god, men sacrifice an ox to the flies, and when the latter have sated themselves with the blood they disappear.'⁸

Both Strabo and Aelian focus on a possible cult tradition that may be behind the legend and in doing so they provide a rationalized account for the origins of the myth. However, when we turn to Ptolemy's account, we see that Sappho, the most famous person associated with the rock, is conspicuous in her absence. Moreover, although the passage initially adopts a rationalized approach that is in keeping with Strabo's and Aelian's rationalized versions, offering some grounding in history by including the historical figure of Artemisia, as we shall see many of Ptolemy's anecdotes in the passage are outlandish and humorous. It is highly likely that this collection of anecdotes is intended to be read together, because when read in this way they build upon, and continue, the absurdity of the one that preceded it, creating a humorous passage, which seems to parody the rationalized accounts of writers such as Strabo and Aelian. This is why I have chosen to quote the passage as a whole, despite its considerable length, in order to give a sense of the overall content and context, and because it is unusual to have such an extensive passage preserved in detail by Photius.

⁶ Strabo views Homer through a historian-geographer lens, and presents him as an intrepid historian who was dedicated to passing on historical and geographical knowledge, fashioning a Homer in his own image. See Kim (2010), 47-84.

⁷ von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1913), 25-40; Nagy (1973), 141.

⁸ Aelian *On the Characteristics of Animals* 11.8.4-9. *ἐν δὲ τῇ Λευκάδι ἄκρα μὲν ἐστὶν ὑψηλή, νεὼς δὲ Ἀπόλλωνι ἴδρυται, καὶ Ἄκτιόν γε αὐτὸν οἱ τιμῶντες ὀνομάζουσιν. οὐκοῦν τῆς πανηγύρεως ἐπιδημεῖν μελλούσης, καθ' ἣν καὶ τὸ πήδημα πηδῶσι τῷ θεῷ, θύουσι βοῦν ταῖς μυῖαις, αἱ δὲ ἐμπλησθεῖσαι τοῦ αἵματος ἀφανίζονται.*

Ὡς ἡ Λευκὰς πέτρα ἀπὸ Λεύκου τοῦ Ὀδυσσέως ἐταίρου τὴν κλῆσιν ἔλαβεν, ὃς Ζακύνθιος μὲν γένος ἦν, ἀνηρέθη δ', ὡς φησὶν ὁ ποιητής, ὑπ' Ἀντίφου· τοῦτον ἰδρύσασθαί φασι καὶ ἱερὸν Λευκάτου Ἀπόλλωνος. Τοὺς μὲν οὖν καθαλλομένους ἀπὸ τῆς πέτρας παύεσθαί φασι τοῦ ἔρωτος. Καὶ ἡ αἰτία· μετὰ τὸν Ἀδώνιδος φασι θάνατον περιερχομένη καὶ ζητοῦσα ἡ Ἀφροδίτη εὗρεν αὐτὸν ἐν Ἄργει πόλει τῆς Κύπρου ἐν τῷ τοῦ Ἐριθίου Ἀπόλλωνος ἱερῷ, καὶ ἀνεῖλεν αὐτόν, ἀνακοινωσαμένη Ἀπόλλωνι καὶ τὸν περὶ Ἀδώνιδος ἔρωτα. Ὁ δ' Ἀπόλλων ἀγαγὼν αὐτὴν ἐπὶ τὴν Λευκάδα πέτραν προσέταξε ρίψαι κατὰ τῆς πέτρας· ἡ δὲ ἑαυτὴν ρίψασα ἐπαύσατο τοῦ ἔρωτος. Ζητούσης δὲ τὴν αἰτίαν εἰπεῖν λέγεται τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα, ὡς μάντις ὢν ἐγνώκει διότι ὁ Ζεὺς, αἰεὶ ἐρῶν Ἥρας, ἐρχόμενος ἐπὶ τῇ πέτρᾳ ἐκαθέζετο καὶ ἀνεπαύετο τοῦ ἔρωτος.

Καὶ πολλοὶ δὲ ἄλλοι καὶ πολλαὶ ἔρωτι κάμνουσαι ἀπηλλάγησαν τοῦ ἔρωτος, ἐπεὶ τῆς πέτρας καθήλαντο. Ὡς καὶ Ἀρτεμισία ἡ Λυγδάμιδος, ἡ τῷ Πέρσῃ συστρατεύσασα, ἐρασθεῖσα Δαρδάνου Ἀβυδηνοῦ καὶ ὑπερορωμένη ἐκκόψειε τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς κοιμωμένου, τῆς δ' ἐπιθυμίας κατὰ θεῶν μῆνιν ἐπιταθείσης, πορευθεῖσα κατὰ χρησμὸν εἰς Λευκάδα ἔρριψεν ἑαυτὴν κατὰ τῆς πέτρας καὶ ἀναιρεθεῖσα ἐτάφη. Καὶ Ἴππομέδοντά φησιν Ἐπιδάμνιον, παιδὸς ἐγχωρίου ἐρασθέντα καὶ μὴ τυγχάνοντα, ὅτι πρὸς ἕτερον κλίνειεν, ἀνελεῖν, εἰς δὲ τὴν Λευκάδα παραγενόμενον καὶ ρίψαντα ἑαυτὸν ἀποθανεῖν. Καὶ Νικόστρατον δὲ τὸν κωμικὸν Τεττιγιδαίας τῆς Μυριναίας ἐρασθέντα ρίψαι ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀπαλλαγῆναι τοῦ ἔρωτος. Μάκητα δὲ φασὶ τὸν Βουθρώτιον Λευκοπέτραν ἐπικληθῆναι διότι τετράκις αὐτὸν καταβαλὼν τῶν ἐρωτικῶν κακώσεων ἀπαλλάττοιο.

Καὶ πλῆθος ἄλλο οὕτως ἀπαλλαγῆναι λέγεται. Καὶ Βουλαγόραν δὲ τὸν Φαναγορίτην ἐρασθέντα Διοδώρου τοῦ αὐλητοῦ, καταβαλόντα αὐτὸν ἀναιρεθῆναι γηραιὸν ἤδη ὄντα. Ἀναιρεθῆναι δὲ καὶ Ῥοδόπην Ἀμισσηνὴν καταβαλοῦσαν ἑαυτὴν, διδύμων παίδων σωματοφυλάκων Ἀντιόχου τοῦ βασιλέως ἐρασθεῖσαν, οἷς ὀνόματα Ἀντιφῶν καὶ Κῦρος. Χαρίνος δὲ ἱαμβογράφος ἠράσθη Ἔρωτος εὐνούχου τοῦ Εὐπάτορος οἰνοχόου, καὶ πιστεύσας τῷ περὶ τῆς πέτρας λόγῳ κατέβαλεν ἑαυτόν· ἐπεὶ δὲ καταβαλὼν τὸ σκέλος κατεάγη καὶ ὑπὸ ὀδύνης ἐτελεύτα, ἀπέρριψε τάδε τὰ ἱαμβεῖα·

ἔρροις πλανῆτι καὶ κακῇ πέτρῃ Λευκάς,
Χαρῖνον, αἶ αἶ, τὴν ἱαμβικὴν Μοῦσαν
κατηθάλωσας ἐλπίδος κενοῖς μύθοις.
τοιαῦτ' Ἔρωτος Εὐπάτωρ ἐρασθεῖη.

Νιρεὺς δὲ Καταναῖος ἠράσθη τῆς Ἀττικῆς Ἀθηναίας, καὶ ἐλθὼν κατέβαλεν ἑαυτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς πέτρας, καὶ ἀπελύθη τοῦ διοχλοῦντος· πεσὼν δ' οὖν, εἰς δίκτυον ἐνέπεσεν ἀλιέως ἐν ᾧ ἀνελκύσθη σὺν κιβωτῷ χρυσίου· ἐπεδικάζετο δὲ πρὸς τὸν ἀλιέα περὶ τοῦ χρυσίου, ἀλλ' ὁ Ἀπόλλων νυκτερινῇ ὄψει ἀπέστησεν αὐτὸν τοῦ ἐπιδικάζεσθαι δέον εὐχαριστεῖν ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀπαλλαγῆς, ἀπειλησάμενος, ἀλλὰ μὴ καὶ ἀλλότριον περιεργάζεσθαι χρυσίον.⁹

⁹ Photius *Bibliotheca* 153a, 7 -153b, 21.

The rock of Leucas took its name from Leucas, a companion of Odysseus, who was a Zacynthian by race. The poet says he was killed by Antiphos; this person it is said founded the temple of Apollo Leucates. Therefore, those who leap off the rock, they say, are released from their love. For this reason, they say, after the death of Adonis, Aphrodite searched around and found him in Argus, a city on Cyprus, in the temple of Apollo Erithius, and killed him. Having shared with Apollo her love for Adonis, Apollo led her to the rock of Leucas and ordered her to throw herself from the rock; she threw herself and her love [for Adonis] ceased. Seeking the reason for this, it is said that Apollo in his capacity as a prophet told her he knew it would work, because Zeus when he loved Hera, went to the rock, sat down and was released from his love.

And many others, men and women, afflicted with love were set free from love by leaping down from the rock. Artemisia daughter of Lydamis, who campaigned with Dardanus of Abydos, loved him but was overlooked by him, so she cut out his eyes while he was sleeping. With her desire increased by the wrath of the gods, she went to Leucas on the instruction of an oracle and threw herself from the rock, killed herself and was buried. The author says Hippomedon of Epidamnos loved a boy of his country but was unable to entice him since the boy was interested in another, so he killed the boy and went to Leucas, jumped and killed himself. Nicostratus the comic loved Tettigidaia of Myrinaia; he jumped and was released from his love. Maces of Buthrotium, they say, had the surname 'White Rock', because he was set free from the evils of love because he jumped four times.

Many others it is said were delivered this way. Boulagoras the Phanagarite, loved the flute player Diodorus, he threw himself [from the rock] and was killed being already of an advanced age. Rhodope of Amisene was killed after throwing herself from the rock because she loved twin boys who were the bodyguards of King Antiochus; they were called Antiphon and Cyrus. Charinus the Iambic poet loved the eunuch Eros, Eupator's cupbearer, and trusting in the legend about the rock, he threw himself from it, but because he jumped he broke his leg and died of pain while casting forth the following iambics:

'To hell with you deceptive rock of Leucas,
Alas, alas, you have burnt out the hopes of Charinus
the Iambic Muse with empty promises,
May Eupator enjoy such Eros'.

Nireus of Cantana loved Athena from Athens, and he went to the rock and threw himself off and was freed from his trouble. But in jumping he fell into a fisherman's net and was hauled in along with a chest of gold. Nireus went to court against the fisherman about the gold, but Apollo appeared to him at night and threatened him, telling him to cease with his claim and that he should be

thankful for his deliverance, and it was not proper to meddle with gold that belonged to another.

To give some context in which Ptolemy's version of events appears, this long passage is found in book seven of Ptolemy's text, the last of the seven books of the work and it takes up around two-thirds of Photius' epitome of the book. Ptolemy begins his passage in a similar manner to Strabo by explaining and rationalizing the mythological origins of the rock, but in doing so there is no mention of Sappho. Instead, Ptolemy explains that Leucas was a companion of Odysseus, and in order to support this he refers to (although Photius does not quote in the epitome) Homer's *Iliad* where Leucas met his death at the hand of Antiphos: 'Now Antiphos of the shining corselet, Priam's son, made a cast at him in the crowd with the sharp spear but missed Aias and struck Leucas, a brave companion of Odysseus, in the groin, as he dragged a corpse off, so that the body dropped from his hand as he fell above it'.¹⁰ By mentioning Homer, Ptolemy brings credence and authority to his account and reminds readers who are well versed in the *Iliad* of the section where Leucas is killed. Ptolemy associates the Homeric Leucas with the Leucas who founded the temple of Apollo Leucates, for which Servius provides an aetiological myth about Apollo's attempt to abduct and rape Leucas, who threw himself from the cliff to avoid this fate.¹¹ The two mythological characters do not appear to have any connection other than their name, unless the Leucas who jumped from the cliff survived and then went on to become the companion of Odysseus.¹²

From the outset of his tale Ptolemy has covered the origins of the rock's name and tried to bring some aetiological context to a mythological tale, which suggests that he is going to offer his readers a rationalised account of a mythological legend, much as Strabo and Aelian do. However, what follows from the rational introduction is far from rational and it differs from all of the other stories we know of that are about the Rock of Leucas. When he begins narrating his tale, Ptolemy mentions neither Sappho nor Cephalus as the first person to jump. Instead, according to Ptolemy, it was Aphrodite who made the first jump on the advice of

¹⁰ Homer *Iliad* 4.489-493. τοῦ δ' Ἄντιφος αἰολοθώρηξ Πριαμίδης καθ' ὄμιλον ἀκόντισεν ὀξείῃ δουρί. τοῦ μὲν ἄμαρθ', ὃ δὲ Λευκὸν Ὀδυσσεύος ἐσθλὸν ἐταῖρον βεβλήκει βουβῶνα, νέκυν ἐτέρωσ' ἐρύοντα· ἦριπε δ' ἄμφ' αὐτῶ, νεκρὸς δέ οἱ ἔκπεσε χειρός.

¹¹ Servius *Commentary on the Aeneid of Virgil* 3.279.

¹² Such a connection is not made clear in the other accounts of the mythology surrounding Leucas, it is only Ptolemy makes the connection between the two.

Apollo, a version that is not mentioned anywhere else. Having Apollo and Aphrodite open the story proper cleverly ties in with Apollo's cult connections with the site, which suggests that Ptolemy knew of the religious nature of the rock and in particular Apollo's association with it. It is entirely appropriate that Apollo would have been present for the first jump, and for readers familiar with Apollo's cult history and association with the site, this detail gives credence to the account and seems to set up what is going to be a rationalised story about the rock's mythological legend. Ptolemy's rationale here was so logical that it led Nagy to argue that it was significant there was no mention of Sappho, and because of this he argues that the myth is independent of Sappho's own poetry. As a result, although Nagy questions the full historicity of the account,¹³ he takes seriously Ptolemy's claim that Aphrodite was the first to jump in order to get over her passion for Adonis, believing that what Ptolemy has recorded is the older, original version of the myth that existed before Sappho's association with the rock.¹⁴

Taking into account the number of people that Ptolemy lists who throw themselves from the rock to release themselves from love, it does seem a little strange that he does not mention Sappho and her association with the rock. If Sappho's connection with the rock was so renowned in antiquity, Ptolemy's exclusion of Sappho may be a calculated move to deliberately unsettle his readers because they would have anticipated her involvement in the tale. It may also be that because Sappho's association with the rock was so well known, Ptolemy felt that going over the same old story would not be in keeping with a work bearing the title *Novel Research*. The other surprising omission is Cephalus from Strabo's version, who Strabo claims was the first to jump from the rock. When we consider the possibility that Ptolemy may have known of Strabo's account, because of information about people jumping and being caught in fishermen's nets (see below for more detail), it is possible that Cephalus' omission may be because he was associated with Strabo's account and Ptolemy did not want to explicitly allude to it, preferring to offer a new version of events.

Although Ptolemy does not mention Cephalus, what it suggests is that other writers had also offered alternative versions of the Rock of Leucas legend and that Ptolemy is contributing to a well-established revisionist tradition surrounding the

¹³ von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1913), 28 n.17.

¹⁴ Nagy (1973), 142-143.

rock. However, by changing the story and having Aphrodite as the first to jump and not Sappho or Cephalus, Ptolemy has the opportunity to have the goddess ask Apollo why jumping from the rock should work, which apart from establishing the origin of the leap enables Ptolemy to indicate from the start that this is not going to be a rational tale after all. This is because Apollo claims that being a prophet he knew that when Zeus loved Hera he went to the rock, sat down, and was released from his love. This strange and ambiguous line led Cameron to argue that this can only be read as a joke; Zeus and Hera's marriage was not even a happy one, let alone a loving one, since Zeus was the most notorious of adulterers. Yet despite Zeus' philandering ways it seems that even serial adulterers can sometimes be in love with their spouse, which can be a hindrance when you want to pursue other women. Therefore, the implication from this line is that when his love for Hera overcame Zeus, his solution, according to Ptolemy's tale, was to go and sit on the Rock of Leucas to get rid of it, freeing him up to chase after whatever mortal or nymph caught his roving eyes.¹⁵ This is the first clue that Ptolemy's tale is already far removed from the tragic outcome that is associated with Sappho's leap, or the rationalised origins of a cult tradition explained by Strabo and Aelian.

As the passage progresses, Ptolemy's list of jumpers becomes more far-fetched, which makes the account increasingly comical as it descends into farce. For instance, Ptolemy claims that Artemisia of Halicarnassus jumped and killed herself after falling in love with and then maiming the general Dardanus when he did not return her feelings. This anecdote effectively rewrites and challenges Herodotus' accounts of events during the Persian Wars involving Artemisia, and portrays a weaker and more emotional Artemisia, which is very different from Herodotus' characterisation of her as a smart tactician.¹⁶ Then Ptolemy says that a certain Hippomedon of Epidamnus (not to be confused with the Hippomedon who was one of the seven against Thebes), jumped from the rock after killing a boy in his homeland of Albania, and that Nicostratus the comic jumped to get over his desire for a woman. This is followed by Ptolemy's claim that the otherwise unknown Maces of Buthrotium happened to be a serial jumper, as he survived jumping from the rock no fewer than four times. That Maces survived jumping several times is clearly meant to be humorous, as it presents Maces as someone with issues

¹⁵ Cameron (2004), 154.

¹⁶ Herodotus *Histories* 7.99; 8.69; 8.87-88; 8.101-103.

surrounding love. It also suggests that Ptolemy is satirizing love poetry, like that of Sappho,¹⁷ where people are always falling into a form of all consuming love,¹⁸ which is apparent with Maces here and Zeus the serial adulterer above. It may also allude to a fragment of Anacreon where the speaker's desire is rejected and he finds himself driven to desperate measures one again: 'again risen from Leucas' rock, I tumble into the grey sea, drunk with love'.¹⁹ It is the idea of 'again' in Anacreon's poem that must be intended to be ironic, as by declaring he is so miserable he is prepared to end it all 'again', inviting readers to contemplate the improbable repetition of a suicidal leap motivated by erotic misfortune.²⁰ It is possible that Ptolemy has Anacreon's poem in mind, with Maces the serial jumper risking death by jumping four times. As with Anacreon's poem, it creates a joke by playing on the rational idea that you can escape eros by dying, but not necessarily by jumping from a cliff, as both Maces and Zeus use the rock to as a tool to enable them to move from one love to the next.

The frivolous nature of the passage is cemented with the climax of Ptolemy's final two jumpers, the iambic poet Charinus and Nireus of Cantana. There is no other record of an iambic poet named Charinus, which implies he is one of Ptolemy's fabrications, invented here for a specific role in this passage.²¹ According to Ptolemy, this Charinus was in love with a eunuch cupbearer of Mithridates Eupator, called Eros, and he wanted to rid himself of this desire for Eros. Here Ptolemy is creating pun on the eunuch's name and the desire that Charinus has for him. Moreover, as with the anecdote concerning Maces which seems to satirize the *topos* of people continually falling in love and being under the assault of love in love poetry.²² This anecdote continues the joke on the idea that jumping from a cliff may not necessarily rid you of eros, as unfortunately for poor Charinus when he jumped he was not rewarded with a swift death, but a lingering and agonizing one. However, despite his predicament, Charinus remained true to his talent and

¹⁷ For eros in Sappho's poetry see: Segal (1974), 139-160; Burnett (1983), 229-276.

¹⁸ Alcman *fr.* 59a; Sappho *fr.* 130; Ibycus *fr.* 287; Anacreon *fr.* 358, 378, 400, 413, 428. In each of these poems a first-person speaker describes some way in which 'desire' (in the person of Eros) is acting upon him. See Mace (1993), 335-336.

¹⁹ Anacreon *fr.* 376. ἀρθείς δηῦτ' ἀπὸ Λευκάδος πέτρης ἐς πολὺν κύμα κολυμβῶ μεθύων ἔρωτι. Trans. Acosta-Hughes (2010), 146.

²⁰ The expression 'drunk with Eros' contributes its own witty point, as one would have to be besotted with desire in the first place to be planning a dive from the Leucadian Rock, but it also seems to have been part of the tradition of this lover's leap that one would not undertake the dive sober. Mace (1993), 340-341.

²¹ Cameron (2004), 154-155.

²² Smythe (1900), 196; Campbell (1967), 266; Mace (1993), 335.

profession by still having the time to conjure up a quick and amusing iambic poem as he lay dying, in which he curses the White Rock of Leucas and wishes Eupator success with Eros. In the context of the tale, this anecdote has a double meaning: Eros meaning passion and the eunuch Eros. The implication from this is that Eupator had also been pursuing the cupbearer, which also seems to play on satirizing lyric poetry and the idea of pursuing eros for the sake of it.

Then there is the final jumper, Nireus of Cantana, again an otherwise unattested figure. As with so many before him, Nireus jumped to rid himself of his affliction, but after his leap there was a surprising turn of events; instead of jumping to his death, Nireus was caught in a fishing net along with a chest of gold, and he thought he had a right to this gold, rather than the fisherman who had caught both him and the chest. Nireus attempted to take the fisherman to court to claim the gold, but Apollo intervened and told Nireus to be grateful for his lot. It is the circumstances surrounding Nireus' jump that enables Ptolemy to keep up the humorous take on his Rock of Leucas myth, because although his love for Athena of Athens may have been resolved, his desire for wealth is unaffected as he tries to exploit the opportunity of being in the right place at the right time. The anecdote also suggests that Ptolemy might have known of Strabo's version or at least of the source Strabo used, since Strabo mentions that prisoners were thrown from the rock and caught in the nets of fisherman below, a detail echoed by Nireus' fate.²³

By concluding his version of the legend with this anecdote, Ptolemy seems to have put some careful planning into the account, by having Apollo at the beginning of the passage and the end creating a ring pattern. As I mentioned earlier, Apollo and his temple cult is crucial to the rock's legend; his connection to the rock is the only constant feature in the different versions of the legend recorded by different authors.²⁴ Ptolemy has taken Apollo's involvement further than any of the other accounts by having him appear as a character in the first and last tale. This essentially means that Apollo bookends the whole tale by introducing the legend of the rock in the first jump with Aphrodite, and then by having him in final jump as judge where he acts as the *deus ex machina* to tie up the Nireus anecdote, concluding the passage as a whole. This gives the impression that Ptolemy's account of the Rock of Leucas legend seems to have been carefully conceived and executed.

²³ Strabo *Geography* 10.2.9.6-15. See above for quotation.

²⁴ Virgil *Aeneid* 3.272-277; Strabo *Geography* 10.2.8; Aelian *On the Characteristics of Animals* 11.8.

The opening paragraph gives a detailed history of the rock, the result of which is that it appears that Ptolemy is going to offer a rationalized mythological version, like Strabo's account. The rationalization pretence is upheld so well that one expects Ptolemy to launch into an explanation about cults surrounding the rock, especially the cult associated with the temple of Apollo, right up until the last line of the opening paragraph when Ptolemy uses the tumultuous relationship of Zeus and Hera for comedic effect. It is only after this point that it becomes increasingly apparent that this is no attempt to offer a rational explanation surrounding an irrational legend, but rather a farcical take on the legend where each anecdote builds upon the humour of the one that preceded it by having more jumpers attempt to find a cure. As a result, because the passage begins as a rational account, but then diverges from this by including more and more unusual and humorous anecdotes, the account seems to parody rational accounts, like that of Strabo and Aelian, demonstrating that Ptolemy is engaging with the revisionist culture of the period.

Furthermore, since the connection between love, death, and the rock, can be found not just in the Menander fragment, but also in Anacreon²⁵ and Euripides,²⁶ both of which associate being drunk with love and tumbling from the cliff and into the sea below, it suggests that this theme is bound up with the legend of the rock. In both Anacreon and Euripides falling from the rock is parallel to falling into a swoon, be it from intoxication or from making love,²⁷ and it is probable that Menander's allusion to Sappho's plunge from the rock had a similar motif, which has not survived.²⁸ This shows that Ptolemy is engaging with a wide range of myth and literature, as he seems to satirize the rock's cure for troubled love,²⁹ and even love poetry and its preoccupation with all consuming love by offering cases of infatuation and desire that turn out to be darkly humorous. As I mentioned at the beginning of this section, although the Rock of Leucas legend is not a Homeric myth, Ptolemy's treatment of the legend is part of the contemporary trend of mythological and Homeric revisionism that was explored by Kim in his monograph on literary revisionism.³⁰ I will now explore how Ptolemy fits in with this literary trend.

²⁵ Anacreon *fr.* 376.

²⁶ Euripides *Cyclops* 163-168.

²⁷ Nagy (1973), 142.

²⁸ von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1913), 33-37.

²⁹ Mace (1993), 340-341.

³⁰ Kim (2010).

4.2. Homer and Myth

4.2.1. The Importance of Homer

The importance of Homer to the Greeks operated on two levels: the first was exemplarity, as the Homeric poems present models for all behaviour and knowledge, while the second was historical authenticity, with the poems' "historical" account of the events of the past, since Homer was the first to recount events from the distant and shared past of the Greeks.³¹ Homer was thought to be closer to the heroic age than any other writer,³² and as a result his status was higher than other authors who also wrote about the era of gods and heroes. Under the Roman Empire, Homer became a way of representing the glorious past of the Greeks, elevating his status further,³³ requiring a firm belief in his authority.³⁴ This meant that heroic history presumed belief in the historicity of Homer himself, with the stories he tells from his poetry thought of as being situated in distant historical past. The proximity of Homer to the past, when combined with the canonical authority, explains the abiding faith in his historical reliability. Yet although Homer is treated as canonical in antiquity, the Greeks still recognised that a certain amount of invention and elaboration were involved in the Homeric epics. This is apparent from Strabo, who thought that Homer could offer useful geographical and historical knowledge, but acknowledges the fact that Homeric poetry contains much that is fantastic.³⁵ Therefore, although there was the firm belief in the reality of the Trojan War, there was a suspicion that the stories told about it were not completely accurate and that Homer needed to be corrected. As a result, there was the need to negotiate a balance between Homer the poet and Homer the historian, and it is this need that pervades

³¹ Mestre (2004), 127.

³² Only a small minority of ancient scholars actually thought Homer was contemporary with the Trojan War, most date him between fifty and one hundred and fifty years later. See Graziosi (2002), 90-124.

³³ For the Greek phenomenon of looking back to the Homeric past to reaffirm their cultural identity in the present, see Arafat (1996), 1-40; Porter (2001), 63-92; Whitmarsh (2001).

³⁴ Kim (2010), 23.

³⁵ Strabo *Geography* 1.1.10. 'We must forgive him too for intermingling fabulous narrative with his historical and instructive work. This should not be complained of; nevertheless, what Eratosthenes says is false, that the poets aim at amusement, not instruction, since those who have treated upon the subject most profoundly, regard poesy in the light of a primitive philosophy. But we shall refute Eratosthenes more at length, when we have occasion again to speak of Homer', (συγγνοίη δ' ἂν καὶ εἰ μυθώδη τινὰ προσπέλεκται τοῖς λεγομένοις ἱστορικῶς καὶ διδασκαλικῶς, καὶ οὐ δεῖ μέμφεσθαι. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀληθές ἐστίν, ὃ φησιν Ἐρατοσθένης, ὅτι ποιητῆς πᾶς στοχάζεται ψυχαγωγίας, οὐ διδασκαλίας: τάναντία γὰρ οἱ φρονιμώτατοι τῶν περὶ ποιητικῆς τι φθεγξαμένων πρώτην τινὰ λέγουσι φιλοσοφίαν τὴν ποιητικὴν. ἀλλὰ πρὸς Ἐρατοσθένη μὲν αὖθις ἐροῦμεν διὰ πλειόνων, ἐν οἷς καὶ περὶ τοῦ ποιητοῦ πάλιν ἔσται λόγος).

many Imperial Greek texts.³⁶ This is because if Homer described the past, the past had to be as authentic as possible; there was no room for symbols or allegory and the account must appear plausible to the reader.³⁷

In the Imperial period sophisticated mythological and Homeric games had become particularly fashionable among the cultivated circles of the educated elite. Exploring the tension between Homer the poet and Homer the historian became a way of wryly commenting on the Imperial Greek obsession with the past under the Roman Empire, while also satirically undermining commonplace claims to Homer's authority and sagacity. This can be seen in several different revisionist works of the period. For instance, Dio Chrysostom's *Trojan Oration* offers a rationalized and alternative account of the Trojan War where Helen was rightfully married to Paris, Hector killed Achilles, and Troy won the war, which is achieved through a close examination of the *Iliad*.³⁸ In Lucian's *True Stories*, Homer is an essential element in Lucian's work both as a source of quotations and allusions, as he uses Homer to invite readers to identify the numerous parodic and revisionist allusions he makes throughout the text,³⁹ including a miniature variant of the Trojan War.⁴⁰ Lucian also presents Homer as a character that is contrary to the general consensus: Homer was not a Greek but a Babylonian, he had written the lines removed by Hellenistic *grammatici*, he was not the author of the *Odyssey*, he was not blind, and he lost to Hesiod in a poetry contest.⁴¹ Then there is Philostratus' *Heroicus*, which occupies a fine line between piety and parody, as he refutes and revises Homer by having Protesilaus tell the true version of events that transpired during the Trojan War, but incorporates a religious element by including the cult of Protesilaus.⁴² The result is a text that at times is sublime, but also offers a healthy dose of the absurd.⁴³

These Imperial revisionist texts, like Ptolemy's work, are all tinged with humour; Homer in these texts is still presented as canonical, but his status is acknowledged through parody and revision. In a period where the ability to discourse knowledgeably and wittily on Homer became a prized attribute, Ptolemy's training as a *grammaticus* would have enabled him to assert his knowledge of

³⁶ Graziosi (2002), 1-12.

³⁷ Mestre (2004), 129.

³⁸ Saïd (2000), 161-186; Hunter (2009), 43-61; Kim (2010), 85-139.

³⁹ Georgiadou & Larmour (1998); Kim (2010), 140-174; Ní Mheallaigh (forthcoming).

⁴⁰ Lucian *True Stories* 2.25-26.

⁴¹ Lucian *True Stories* 2.20-22.

⁴² For the cult aspect of Philostratus' text see Pache (2004); Whitmarsh (2004b); Whitmarsh (2009).

⁴³ Mestre (2004), 127-141; Rusten (2004), 143-158; Bowie (2009), 19-32; Kim (2010), 175-215.

Homer and the Homeric epics. This is why throughout the text we find citations for a specific line he wants to draw attention to from one of the epic poems, makes Homeric allusions, and there are occasions where he questions Homer's authority and reliability on events concerning the Trojan War. However, it is important to note that Ptolemy also offers (often humorous) alternatives to well-known myths from the epic cycle that are not directly tethered to Homer, such as in his retelling of Heracles' cleaning of the Augean Stables:

Καὶ ὡς Μενέδημος Ἡλεῖος Βουνέα υἱὸς ὑπέδειξεν Ἡρακλεῖ περὶ τῆς καθάρσεως τοῦ Αὐγέου κόπρου, ὥστε ἀποστρέψαι τὸν ποταμόν· ὃν καὶ συμμαχήσαι Ἡρακλεῖ ἐν τῷ πρὸς Αὐγέαν πολέμῳ φασίν, ἀναιρεθέντα δὲ ταφῆναι ἐν Λεπρέῳ παρὰ πεύκης δένδρῳ.⁴⁴

Menedemus of Elis, son of Bounias, secretly revealed to Heracles how to cleanse the stables of Augias by diverting the river; they say this man fought alongside Heracles in his fight against Augias, he was killed and buried in Lepreon close to a pine tree.

In this anecdote Ptolemy revises the myth about the fifth labour of Heracles, by including the character of Menedemus, and by stating that it was Menedemus' idea to divert the river to clean the stables; the implication of which is that Heracles owes much to Menedemus' ingenuity for completing the labour. However, although this is presented as a straightforward revised myth, there is an implicit sense of humour present, due to the fact that according to Ptolemy, Menedemus, who died in manure and filth helping Heracles complete this labour, was buried next to a pine tree. There is a subtle sense of irony here, in that Menedemus, who died in a place reeking of manure, will in death be surrounded by a far more appealing fragrance. Although implicit, this additional information to the myth seems to be intentional, it is darkly humorous and ironic; it reveals that Ptolemy does not take his revisions seriously and he does not expect his readers to do so either. There may also be a deep and obscure literary play here with Lycophron's satyr-play *Menedemus*,⁴⁵ since Ptolemy displays an interest in Lycophron elsewhere in the *Novel Research*.⁴⁶ Satyr-plays usually display a preference for stories where the activity of violent fiends or monsters is curbed or thwarted; they can also contain certain motifs, such as plans,

⁴⁴ Photius *Bibliotheca* 151a, 30-37.

⁴⁵ See Shaw (2014), 136-148, for a recent discussion of Lycophron's text.

⁴⁶ Photius *Bibliotheca* 151b, 32-34.

imprisonment, and rescue,⁴⁷ as well as revise mythology by taking a myth and adding satyrs.⁴⁸ Some of these elements appear to be present in Ptolemy's anecdote, in particular the motif of imprisonment and plans. As we shall see, Ptolemy demonstrates that he was fully aware of the Homeric games of the period when he blatantly questions Homer's authority or subtly undermines Homeric myth.

4.2.2. Homeric Citations

By the time Ptolemy was active, Homer was firmly established at the heart of Greek (and Roman) *paideia*, he became a personification of Greek culture and even Greekness itself.⁴⁹ This was a period where being able to quote Homer was a way in which one could assert one's place among the cultured and educated Greek elite,⁵⁰ and learned citations became a highly visible indication of literary culture, as the desire to advance one's *paideia* led to an increased textual self-consciousness in a society concerned with acquiring knowledge from literature and books.⁵¹ When we consider this context that Ptolemy was writing in, along with the fact that as a *grammaticus* his role was to interpret the writings canonical literature,⁵² it is not surprising that we find lines of Homeric poetry in the *Novel Research*, which Ptolemy analysed and commented on.⁵³ For instance: 'About Polydamus, what does this line of the poet mean: "when the daughter of Pandareus, Chloreis the songstress", and the following' (*Περὶ Πολυδάμαντος· τί ἐστὶ τὸ παρὰ τῷ ποιητῇ ὡς δ' ὅτε Πανδαρέη κόρη Χλωρηΐς ἀηδῶν καὶ ἐξῆς*).⁵⁴ This quotation refers to a specific line from book eleven of the *Odyssey*: 'Even as when the daughter of Pandareus, the nightingale of the greenwood, sings sweetly, when spring is newly come, as she sits perched amid the thick leafage of the trees, and with many trilling notes pours forth her rich voice in wailing for her child, dear Itylus, whom she had one day slain with the sword unwittingly, Itylus, the son of king Zethus'.⁵⁵ Although we know that Ptolemy is referring to this line, the lack of detail in the epitome means that the

⁴⁷ Seidensticker (2005), 44-49.

⁴⁸ Lissarrague (1990), 236.

⁴⁹ Kim (2010), 9-10.

⁵⁰ Whitmarsh (2001), 26-38.

⁵¹ Ní Mheallaigh (2008), 425.

⁵² Sextus Empiricus *Against the Mathematicians (MI Against the Grammarians)* 1.58.

⁵³ See Chapter Two for more information about reading and social context.

⁵⁴ 148a, 27-28.

⁵⁵ Homer *Odyssey* 19.518-522. ὡς δ' ὅτε Πανδαρέου κόρη, χλωρηΐς ἀηδῶν, καλὸν ἀείδησιν ἔαρος νέον ἱσταμένιοι, δεινῶν ἐν πετάλοισι καθεζομένη πυκνοῖσιν, ἧ τε θαμὰ τρωπῶσα χέει πολυηχέα φωνήν, παῖδ' ὀλοφυρομένη Ἴτυλον φίλον, ὃν ποτε χαλκῶ κτεῖνε δι' ἀφραδίας, κοῦρον Ζήθιοιο ἄνακτος.

actual reason that he cited it and the point he was making is unknown. We also have the same problem with another Homeric line: ‘What is said by Homer about Helen, “she had a voice like all the wives of the Argives”’, (*Τί ἐστὶ τὸ παρ’ Ὀμήρω περὶ τῆς Ἑλένης εἰρημένον· Πάντων Ἀργείων φωνὴν ἴσκουσαν ἀλόχοισιν*),⁵⁶ which refers to a line from book four of the *Odyssey*,⁵⁷ where Menelaus tells Telemachus how Helen walked around the Trojan horse when the Greeks were hidden inside imitating the voices of their wives to try and lure the men out. However, the meaning and specific analysis of this line in Ptolemy’s text has been lost in the transmission through Photius,⁵⁸ although there seems to be an intratextual link with the fact that Ptolemy claims Helen’s original name was Echo.⁵⁹

This type of quotation, followed by an analysis, is typical of a *grammaticus*. *Grammatici* pick a line from a well-known text and analyse it for style, phraseology, subject matter, but also inaccuracies (or where the *grammaticus* perceives there is an inaccuracy), which then enables them to present their more accurate version. As a result, a *grammaticus* can present himself as more knowledgeable than Homer on the same topic.⁶⁰ What is slightly unusual about the quotations preserved by Photius is that Ptolemy seems to prefer the *Odyssey* to the *Iliad*. Although, this may be the result of Photius’ epitomizing of the text, it is unusual, because based upon surviving papyri and other texts, it is usually the *Iliad* and specific books from the *Iliad* that receive more attention, not only from *grammatici* but school children, as evidence for school based exercises displays a preference for the *Iliad*.⁶¹ However, since the *Odyssey* is associated with descriptions of wonders and fiction, particularly with the Cretan tales, it is perhaps not that surprising that Ptolemy favours the *Odyssey* and that in Photius’ epitome there is only one surviving quotation (although there are allusions) that comes from the *Iliad*, which concerns a play on names raised at a banquet of Augustus.⁶²

One such allusion to the *Iliad* comes from book two, as Ptolemy recounts how a serpent travelled with Heracles and helped him fight the Nemean lion:

⁵⁶ Photius *Bibliotheca* 149a, 29-31.

⁵⁷ Homer *Odyssey* 4.277-279.

⁵⁸ Although both of these refer to lines from the Homeric poems, Ptolemy does not limit himself to only singling out lines of Homer, he also cites the poets Euphorion (Photius *Bibliotheca* 146b, 31-35); Crinagoras (Photius *Bibliotheca* 150a, 23-26); and Lycophron (Photius *Bibliotheca* 151b, 32-34).

⁵⁹ Photius *Bibliotheca* 149b, 3-5. See Chapter Three.

⁶⁰ Criore (2001), 185-219.

⁶¹ Criore (2001), 194-197.

⁶² See Chapter One.

ἽΟτι Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ Μύνδιός φησι δράκοντα γηγενῆ συμμαχῆσαι Ἡρακλεῖ πρὸς τὸν Νεμεαῖον λέοντα, ὃν καὶ ἀνατραφῆναι ὑπὸ Ἡρακλέους καὶ συνακολουθήσαντα αὐτῷ εἰς Θήβας ἐν αὐλίδι μεῖναι· καὶ τοῦτον εἶναι τὸν τοῦς νεοσσοῦς καταφαγόντα τῆς στρουθοῦ καὶ ἀπολιθωθέντα.⁶³

Alexander of Myndus says an earth-born dragon fought with Heracles against the Nemean lion, which had been fed by Heracles and followed him to Thebes and remained in a tent; this one devoured sparrow chicks and was turned to stone.

This passage appears in the middle of the second book of the *Novel Research*, where the main theme seems to be Heracles. It alludes to a prophecy recounted in the *Iliad* where a serpent, sent forth by Zeus, devoured a sparrow and her eight chicks, and afterwards Zeus turned the serpent to stone to make him a monument for all to see.⁶⁴ This portent in the *Iliad* is interpreted by Calchas as indicating the number of years that the Greeks will continue to fight at the gates of Troy, eight years for the chicks, a ninth year for their mother; only in the tenth will they be victorious. In the *Iliad* the serpent eating the sparrows and being turned to stone is an important prophecy that is relevant to the story; it is a case of divine intervention that foreshadows events to come. In contrast, in Ptolemy's version the dragon is a pet of Heracles, who, as with any loyal companion, fought with Heracles against the Nemean lion and then traveled with Heracles, sleeping in his tent and was fed by him. Therefore, in his account, Ptolemy has reduced an important episode of Homeric poetry to an amusing anecdote about a pet of Heracles. This is reinforced by the fact that Ptolemy goes out of his way at the end to mention that this is the serpent that devoured the sparrow and was turned to stone, presumably to ensure his readers knew that this is the same serpent. In his version Ptolemy has given the serpent from the prophecy in the *Iliad* an amusing backstory, and then he has tied that serpent to Heracles who is a prominent figure in this book.

What is unusual about this excerpt is that Ptolemy has named a legitimate source for this anecdote, Alexander of Myndus, a miscellanist who wrote works on different topics including: *A History of Beasts* (*Κτηνῶν Ἱστορία*),⁶⁵ which is likely to

⁶³ Photius *Bibliotheca* 147b, 23-27.

⁶⁴ Homer *Iliad* 2.301-320.

⁶⁵ Athenaeus 2.65 & 5.221; Aelian *On the Characteristics of Animals* 3.23; 4.33; 5.27; 10.34.

be the same work as *On Animals* (Περὶ Ζώων),⁶⁶ as well *On Birds* (Περὶ Πτηνῶν).⁶⁷ Alexander also wrote a paradoxographic work called *A Collection of Wonders* (θαυμασιῶν συναγωγῆ) which is mentioned by Photius: ‘He relates in this book a number of prodigious and incredible things, but he lists first other authors who have reported these facts before him and who are not without renown. He speaks of animals, plants, certain countries, rivers, springs, pastures, as well as other similar subjects. He has a clear and concise style, which is not disagreeable’.⁶⁸ Whether what Ptolemy talks about here came directly from Alexander we cannot say because the latter’s works do not survive, and without Alexander’s text this cannot be substantiated. Moreover, because this story appears nowhere else in Heracles’ mythology, it is thought that Ptolemy may have cited Alexander even if he has no connection to the myth because he had a favourable reputation as a serious and reliable scholar, thus he would have provided authority to the account.⁶⁹ On the other hand, it is possible that Photius may have accidentally cited Alexander of Myndus instead of Botras of Myndus, who Ptolemy mentions elsewhere in the *Novel Research* and who seems to be an invention of Ptolemy.⁷⁰

As I mentioned earlier, although the *Iliad* is alluded to in the *Novel Research*, it is the *Odyssey* that seems to have predominantly featured in Ptolemy’s text, and for which we have examples of Ptolemy analysing quotations from the Homeric epic. This is apparent with an anecdote that appears at the end of book four (a book that mainly focuses on Helen), but here in this passage the focus is on Odysseus:

Καὶ ὡς ἐν Τυρρηνίᾳ φασὶν εἶναι Ἄλως πύργον καλούμενον, ὀνομασθῆναι δὲ ἀπὸ Ἄλως Τυρρηνῆς φαρμακίδος, ἣ Κίρκης θεράπεινα γενομένη διέδρα τῆς δεσποίνης. Πρὸς ταύτην δέ φησι παραγενόμενον τὸν Ὀδυσσεά εἰς ἵππον μετέβαλε τοῖς φαρμάκοις καὶ ἔτρεφε παρ’ ἑαυτῇ ἕως γηράσας ἐτελεύτησεν. Ἐκ ταύτης τῆς ἱστορίας λύεται καὶ τὸ παρ’ Ὀμήρῳ ἀπορούμενον· θάνατος δέ τοι ἐξ ἄλως αὐτῷ.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Athenaeus 9.392.

⁶⁷ Athenaeus 9.387-390; Plutarch *Marius* 17.

⁶⁸ Photius *Bibliotheca* (codex 188), 145b, 9-15. Ἀνεγνώσθη Ἀλεξάνδρου θαυμασιῶν συναγωγῆ. Λέγει μὲν ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ πολλὰ τερατώδη καὶ ἄπιστα, πλὴν ἄλλους τῶν οὐκ ἀφανῶν εἰσάγει ταῦτα προϊστορήσαντας. Λέγει δὲ περὶ τε ζώων καὶ φυτῶν καὶ χωρῶν τινῶν καὶ ποταμῶν καὶ κρηνῶν καὶ βοτανῶν καὶ τῶν τοιούτων. Σαφῆς δὲ τὴν φράσιν καὶ κεφαλαϊώδης ἐστὶ, καὶ οὐδὲ τοῦ ἡδέος ἀπεστερημένος

⁶⁹ For a list of all authors that cite Alexander, and for what little information we know about him, see Asirvatham *Alexander of Myndos* (25) BNJ.

⁷⁰ Dowden *Botryas of Myndos* (58) BNJ.

⁷¹ Photius *Bibliotheca* 150a, 12-19.

They say that in Tyrrhenia there is a tower called Halos, as is the name of a Tyrrhenian witch who was a servant of Circe and fled from her mistress. To this woman he says, came Odysseus, and with drugs she changed him into a horse and raised him with her until he died of old age. This story solves the puzzle posed by Homer: “death will come to you from the sea”.

The line of Homer that Ptolemy is referring to in the passage is from the *Odyssey*, when Odysseus travels to the underworld and the shade of Teiresias tells him that he will die far from the sea.⁷² Ptolemy’s version of events hinges upon a pun created from this line of Homer, specifically on the word *άλός* ‘sea’, which in Ptolemy’s account is the name of a tower in Tyrrhenia and also the name of the witch who presumably lived there. According to Ptolemy, this woman turned Odysseus into a horse and seems to have kept him in that form until he died. Therefore, although Odysseus died far away from the sea as a physical place, in keeping with the line from Homer, indirectly Odysseus’ death also came from the sea, the witch who bore that name in a place that shared the name. Ptolemy has over-rationalized the line from Homer, until his explanation is no longer rational; the result is a bad pun.

This play on Homeric names runs throughout Ptolemy’s work, as he singles out the Homeric heroes. For instance, regarding Odysseus, Ptolemy claims: ‘Odysseus was first called Outis because he had big ears; he also says Odysseus’ mother could not stand the rain, and being pregnant she gave birth by the roadside and Odysseus is thus named on account of this’ (*Ὅτι Ὀδυσσεύς, διότι ὦτα μεγάλα εἶχεν, Οὗτις πρότερον ἐκαλεῖτο· ὑετοῦ δέ φησι γενομένου μὴ ἀντισχοῦσαν τὴν μητέρα ἔγκυον οὔσαν κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν τεκεῖν, καὶ τὸν Ὀδυσσεά διὰ τοῦτο οὕτως ὀνομασθῆναι*).⁷³ The play on names here comes from *ὦτα* ‘ears’ and *ὁδὸν* ‘road’, and although no source is provided by Photius, Eustathius supplies one, book two of Silenus of Chios’ *Mythica*,⁷⁴ who is only known from Ptolemy’s work.⁷⁵ Etymologies and puns surrounding names are dispersed throughout the text including Achilles’ name, which according to Ptolemy comes from the fact that his lips were burnt off (*ἀ-*

⁷² Homer *Odyssey* 11.133-135.

⁷³ Photius *Bibliotheca* 147a, 10-13.

⁷⁴ Jacoby thought Silenus was a legitimate source (*FGrH* 27 F 1). See Cameron (2004), 142, for opposing view.

⁷⁵ Tell *Silenos of Chios* (27) *BNJ*.

χειλος);⁷⁶ Corythus because he was the first to construct helmet;⁷⁷ eunuchs are called ‘peritanoi’ because Peritanos was castrated;⁷⁸ and that Heracles was originally called Nilos, but changed his name after saving his nemesis, Hera.⁷⁹ With these fanciful etymologies, Ptolemy is involved in an established literary tradition, and displaying his own literary knowledge and ability to revise and provide new etymologies in a competitive field.⁸⁰

4.2.3. Rationalizing Myth

As I mentioned earlier, an important aspect of Homeric revisionism since its inception is rationalization and historization.⁸¹ We see this in Herodotus’ account of why Helen did not go to Troy and also in Dio Chrysostom’s *Trojan Oration*, where both offer alternative and more rational accounts that contradict the established myths of the Homeric epics. This is also apparent in the *Novel Research*, as a key feature of Ptolemy’s treatment of myth is rationalization and indeed over rationalization, this is apparent with his account of the Judgement of Paris, the famous beauty contest that Paris judged, which in turn led to the events of the Trojan War.

The conventional version of the Judgement of Paris myth is that Zeus held a banquet to celebrate the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, to which all the gods were invited except Eris, the goddess of discord, because she would have brought discordance to the celebration and ruined the event.⁸² Angered by this snub, Eris arrived at the celebration with a golden apple from the Garden of the Hesperides,

⁷⁶ Photius *Bibliotheca* 152b, 29-32. ‘After Achilles was saved from the fire he was called Purissoos, ‘Saved-from-the-Fire’ by his mother, but because his lips were burned his father called him Achilles’ (Ὡς Ἀχιλλεύς διὰ μὲν τὸ ἐκ πυρὸς αὐτὸν σωθῆναι καόμενον ὑπὸ τῆς μητρὸς Πυρίσσοος ἐκαλεῖτο, διότι δὲ ἐν τῶν χειλέων αὐτοῦ κατακαυθεῖη, Ἀχιλλεύς ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ὠνομάσθη).

⁷⁷ Photius *Bibliotheca* 147b, 34-36. ‘Corythus, an Iberian, the lover of Heracles, was the first to construct a helmet from which he says the armour take his name’, (Ὡς Κόρυθος, Ἰβηρ τὸ γένος ὦν καὶ Ἡρακλέους ἐρώμενος, πρῶτος κόρυθα κατεσκεύασεν, ἐξ οὗ καὶ τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν λαβεῖν φησι τὸ ὄπλον).

⁷⁸ Photius *Bibliotheca* 147a, 14-17. ‘A certain Arcadian named Peritanos had sex with Helen when she was with Alexander in Arcadia, Alexander, exacting retribution for his adultery castrated him and that is why they say Arcadians call eunuchs “peritanoi”’, (Ὅτι Περίτανός τις ὄνομα Ἀρκὰς Ἑλένην συνοῦσαν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ἐν Ἀρκαδίᾳ ἐμοίχευσεν, Ἀλέξανδρος δ’ αὐτὸν ποινήν τῆς μοιχείας εἰσπραττόμενος ἐξενοούχισε, καὶ ἐξ ἐκείνου Ἀρκάδες τοὺς εὐνοούχους περιτάνους λέγουσιν).

⁷⁹ Photius *Bibliotheca* 147b, 16-21. ‘When Heracles was born he was called Nilos, but when he saved Hera by killing the nameless fire-breathing giant who was attacking her, from then on, because he warded the battle off, Hera changed his name’, (Ὅτι Νεῖλος ὁ Ἡρακλῆς ἀπὸ γενέσεώς φησιν ἐκαλεῖτο, ἐπεὶ δ’ Ἥραν ἔσωσεν ἐπερχόμενον αὐτῇ ἀνελὼν τὸν ἀνώνομον καὶ πυρίπνοον γίγαντα, ἐκεῖθεν διὰ τὸ ἀπαλαλκεῖν τῆς Ἥρας τὸν πόλεμον μετέβαλε τὴν κλήσιν).

⁸⁰ Cameron (2004), 142.

⁸¹ See Kim (2010).

⁸² Homer *Iliad* 24.25-30; Ovid *Heroides* 16.71ff, 149–152 & 5.35f; Lucian *Dialogues of the Gods* 20; Pseudo-Apollodorus *Library* E.3.2; Hyginus *Fabulae* 92.

upon which was the inscription *καλλίστη* 'for the fairest one', which she threw into the proceedings. Three goddesses claimed the apple - Hera, Athena and Aphrodite - and they asked Zeus to judge who was fairest. Zeus, who was reluctant to favour any of the goddesses above the others, declared that Paris, the Trojan prince, would judge their cases, for he had previously shown his exemplary fairness in a contest where Ares in bull form had bested Paris' own prize bull and the prince had awarded the prize to the god without hesitation. With Hermes as their guide, the three goddesses bathed in the spring of Ida, and then met with Paris on Mount Ida to receive his verdict. As Paris inspected them, each goddess attempted to bribe him: Hera offered to make him king of Europe and Asia, Athena offered wisdom and skill in war, and Aphrodite offered the world's most beautiful woman (Helen of Sparta, wife of the Greek king Menelaus). Paris accepted Aphrodite's gift and awarded the apple to her, receiving Helen as his bride, but instigating the enmity of both the Greeks and Hera.

Ptolemy's version of events differs from this conventional telling of the myth, as his version has no connection to the Trojan War; instead he offers a more rational explanation for the origins of the myth, by attributing it to a mistake concerning word play and meaning. According to Ptolemy, the goddesses Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite quarrelled over Melos, the son of river god Scamander, about whose priest he should be, and Paris decided to award victory to Aphrodite:

Ὡς Σκαμάνδρου τοῦ ποταμοῦ υἱὸς Μῆλος γένοιτο καλὸς τὴν ὥραν, περὶ οὗ ἐρίσαι φασὶν Ἥραν τε καὶ Ἀθηνᾶν καὶ Ἀφροδίτην τίνος γένοιτο ἱερέυς, Ἀλέξανδρον δὲ κρῖναι νικᾶν Ἀφροδίτην. Ἐκ ταύτης γοῦν τῆς ἱστορίας ὁ περὶ τοῦ μήλου λόγος διεδόθη.⁸³

Melos the son of the river Scamander was so beautiful in appearance, they say Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite quarreled about whose priest he should be; Alexander judged and Aphrodite won. It is from this the tale about the apple is handed down.

This passage comes in the last paragraph of book six of the *Novel Research*, a book where the main focus is Achilles (see below). The paragraph it comes from mainly consists of a list of tales loosely connected by the theme of supplementing Homeric

⁸³ Photius *Bibliotheca* 152b, 15-20.

myth, which leads Ptolemy to offer a rational account of the Judgement of Paris myth where there are no golden apples or bribes offered. Instead, according to the Ptolemy, the name of the boy, Melos (*Μῆλος*), was mistaken for the word ‘apple’ (*μηλον*); this is where the far more elaborate and better-known version of events stems from. With his version Ptolemy presents a response to the contemporary concern surrounding Homer’s historical accuracy, which he does by purporting to present the rationalized origins of the myth and the “true” story behind the Homeric legend. The anecdote seems to be a straightforward rationalisation of the Judgement of Paris myth, but this is not the only beauty contest in Ptolemy’s text. Ptolemy seems to have been attracted to the motif of beauty, or the fallout that such contests result in, as there are two other anecdotes concerning beauty contests. In book six, in an extended passage describing men (and dogs) of note who bore the name Achilles, Ptolemy includes a story about a beauty contest for which Pan was the judge; he awarded victory to Achilles, son of Zeus and Lamia. However, Aphrodite was not satisfied with this outcome, and as a result she inflicted desire upon Pan for the nymph Echo, and changed his appearance so that he would appear ugly and undesirable. Ptolemy uses the myth of the beauty contest to explain why Pan was consumed by passion for Echo; it was because Aphrodite was punishing him, presumably because she did not win this particular contest.⁸⁴

The other beauty contest appears in book five, this time the contest is between Medea and Thetis, judged by the Cretan king Idomeneus, which resulted in Thetis being declared the victor and Medea insulting Cretans:

Ὡς Ἀθηνόδωρος ὁ Ἐρετριεύς ἐν ὀγδόῳ ὑπομνημάτων φησὶ Θέτιν καὶ Μήδειαν ἐρίσαι περὶ κάλλους ἐν Θεσσαλίᾳ, καὶ κριτὴν γενέσθαι Ἰδομενέα, καὶ προσνεῖμαι Θέτιδι τὴν νίκην, Μήδειαν δ’ ὀργισθεῖσαν εἰπεῖν Κρήτες ἀεὶ ψεῦσται, καὶ ἐπαράσασθαι αὐτῷ μηδέποτε ἀλήθειαν εἰπεῖν, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῆς κρίσεως ἐποίησε· καὶ ἐκ τούτου φησὶ τοὺς Κρήτας ψεύστας νομισθῆναι. Παρατίθεται δὲ ἱστοροῦντα τοῦτο ὁ Ἀθηνόδωρος Ἀντίοχον ἐν δευτέρῳ τῶν κατὰ πόλιν μυθικῶν.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Photius *Bibliotheca* 151a, 40 – 152b, 5: ‘They say that Achilles, the son of Zeus and Lamia, was an incredible beauty; he won a beauty competition that Pan judged. However, because Aphrodite was resentful [of the result] she inflicted upon Pan desire for Echo, and worked upon his appearance so that he would appear ugly and undesirable, (Καὶ Διὸς καὶ Λαμίας Ἀχιλλέα φασὶ γενέσθαι τὸ κάλλος ἀμήχανον, ὃν καὶ ἐρίσαντα περὶ κάλλους νικῆσαι τοῦ Πανὸς κρίναντος. Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο Ἀφροδίτη νεμεσήσασα ἐμβάλλει Πανὶ τὸν Ἥχοῦς ἔρωτα, καὶ μὴν καὶ κατειργάσατο καὶ εἰς τὴν ἰδέαν αὐτόν, ὅπως ἐκ τῆς μορφῆς αἰσχρὸς καὶ ἀνέραστος φαίνοιτο).

⁸⁵ Photius *Bibliotheca* 150a, 37 – 150b, 5.

Athenodorus of Eretria in the eighth book of his *Commentaries* says that Thetis and Medea had a dispute in Thessaly about who was the most beautiful. Idomeneus was judge and he granted victory to Thetis. Medea in anger said the Cretans were always liars, and cursed him to never speak the truth, just as he had lied when he made his judgement. It is from this he says that Cretans are considered liars. Athenodorus adds Antiochus as a source in the second book of his *Tales of the City*.

This unusual passage about a beauty contest appears in a paragraph on its own, close to the beginning of book five of the *Novel Research*. This is a strange story that, like his take on the Judgement of Paris, recombines familiar elements from established myths, to create a new myth with characters that have no previous connection to each other in established mythology. Neither does the tale fit in with the conventional chronology and mythology of the figures involved.⁸⁶ For instance, Thetis' saga involves her dealings with Zeus, Peleus, and Achilles, and her role is often restricted to being a sea-nymph, saving Hephaestus after his fall from Olympus into the sea and saving Dionysus when he jumped into the sea in fear. Idomeneus is limited to wooing Helen and to his exploits at Troy. However, it is tempting to suppose that the link between Medea and Idomeneus comes from the story about Idomeneus' wife Meda who committed adultery; if this is the case then this gives us insight into the workings of Ptolemy's leaps of imagination that went into his composition.⁸⁷ Medea, on the other hand, has led a more varied and active mythological life, with her adventures focused around magic and murder, taking vindictive and terrifying revenge on those who cross her. However, the intimidating characterization of Medea found elsewhere in myth is absent, as rather than cutting up people (as she did with her brother) or making them spontaneously combust (as she did with Jason's new bride), the worst that she does in Ptolemy's account is claim that all Cretans are liars and curse Idomeneus to never speak the truth. This is an ironic twist on the character of Medea, which brings a humorous edge to the myth; the result is that it deconstructs the seriousness of the rationalisation, emphasising the playful character of the revisionism.

Medea's punchline is also the most striking aspect of this revision. The line itself refers to Epimenides' famous liar paradox,⁸⁸ but it also ties into the popular

⁸⁶ Cameron (2004), 140.

⁸⁷ Pseudo-Apollodorus *Library* 6.9-10.

⁸⁸ Epimenides F1 (*Κρήτες ἀεὶ ψεύσται, κακὰ θηρία, γαστέρες ἀργαί*).

consensus in antiquity that Cretans cannot be trusted,⁸⁹ a reference going back to the time that Idomeneus was appointed judge to decide who should get the spoils of Troy, where after persuading the other heroes to abide by his decision he assigned the lot to himself.⁹⁰ It seems to be for this reason that the author of the *Ephemeris belli Troiani* attributed the fraudulent memoir to Dictys of Crete, a name inevitably associated with Mount Dicte on Crete,⁹¹ which seems to be a self-referential joke of the pseudonymous author.⁹² In Dictys' text this causes the reader to doubt the text's claim to truth and authenticity, because Cretans are liars. Ní Mheallaigh argues it also converts the work into a Cretan tale by creating an intertextual association with Odysseus' Cretan tales,⁹³ when he links his work directly with one of the Cretan tales from the *Odyssey* by claiming to have learnt about Odysseus' visit to Idomeneus on Crete.⁹⁴ The Cretan tales in the *Odyssey*, also known as the lying tales, reflect Odysseus' cunning and intelligence, but it is only the readers and audience of all three tales who are able to perceive the self-revelation of Odysseus.⁹⁵ As a result, the tales are thought to be the first examples of a proto-pseudo-documentary fiction in ancient Greek literature, which are self-consciously intratextual as Odysseus uses them to manipulate the truth to suit his own agenda.⁹⁶ In the Cretan tales Odysseus fabricates three lies upon his return to Ithaca and delivers them to three individuals who have loved Odysseus longest: the goddess Athena (13.256-86); the loyal swineherd Eumaeus (14.191-359); and his wife Penelope (19.165-342). What unites these tales is Odysseus' claim of Cretan origin, his description of the island of Crete, and his supposed relationship to Idomeneus the Iliadic king of Crete.⁹⁷

In the *Novel Research* the liar paradox seems to allude to the Cretan tales and this link is supported by Idomeneus, who appears in both. The Idomeneus that is depicted by Odysseus in the tales is the Idomeneus of the *Iliad*, a man of honour who ranks foremost amongst the heroes. Therefore, Idomeneus' presence in the

⁸⁹ Plato *Laws* 636c; Ovid *Amores* 3.10.19; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 8.123; Martial *Epigrams* 9.34.1.

⁹⁰ Zenobius *Proverbs* 4.62.

⁹¹ Merkle (1989), 16 n.11; Grossardt (1998), 380.

⁹² Horsfall (2008/09), 47-48.

⁹³ Ní Mheallaigh (2013), 204-205.

⁹⁴ Homer *Odyssey* 14.191-359.

⁹⁵ Haft (1983), 291 & 300.

⁹⁶ The Homeric Cretan Tales contain an over-accumulation of detail in order to add a sense of reality, and they intermingle facts with fiction in order to blur the lines between the two and build a persuasive fiction, while maintaining a close affiliation with the main narrative of the *Odyssey*; see Ní Mheallaigh (2013), 204.

⁹⁷ See Haft (1983), 305-306 for all the recurring themes.

Cretan tales is to provide credibility to Odysseus' lies,⁹⁸ and we find the same subterfuge employed in the *Ephemeris belli Troiani*, where he is supposed to have ordered Dictys to write the annals of the Trojan War.⁹⁹ Once again Idomeneus' presence is used to evoke a remote heroic past and possibly even a poetic tradition of Minoan epic,¹⁰⁰ to add verisimilitude to a fabrication.¹⁰¹ The fact that Ptolemy casts Idomeneus as judge in his contest suggests that Ptolemy is also trying to capitalise on his heroic reputation and place in the distant past to bring authority and credibility to his anecdote, as Odysseus does in his tales. In doing so he may be trying to make it appear that the myth comes from an older tradition that pre-dates Homeric epic, similar to what Dictys implies in his text.

Although Dictys exploits Odysseus' lies in the *Odyssey* to authenticate his own version of the Trojan War, the intertextuality between the Cretan tales and the *Ephemeris belli Troiani* lays bare the fictionality of his text, as when read through the lens of the tales, Dictys appears to be as much a disguise as Odysseus' Cretan alter-ego.¹⁰² When this is applied to Ptolemy's beauty contest, the fact that he alludes to the liar paradox and possibly by association the Cretan tales, suggests that Ptolemy is openly admitting that this rational tale is not actually an alternative or older explanation of the myth. Instead, just as Dictys seems to hint at his fiction through intertextuality with the Cretan Tales, Ptolemy seems to signal that he has fabricated the tale through a similar association, as well as the liar paradox and by the irony of Medea's curse. Moreover, we find something similar in Lucian's *True Stories*¹⁰³ when he reworks the liar paradox by declaring that his journey, which he is relating, is fake. By doing this Lucian highlights the importance of the themes concerning truth and lies throughout the work, providing a faux genealogy for the tradition of lying.¹⁰⁴ Many of the myths that Ptolemy reports seem to contain a similar self-reflective quality, such as his claims about inauthenticity concerning

⁹⁸ Haft (1983), 294.

⁹⁹ The *Ephemeris belli Troiani* is the Latin translation of a Greek original. The Greek text according to the *Suda* was nine books in length, of which only four papyri fragments survive. The Latin translation of Septimius condensed the Greek original into six books. For a discussion of the text see Merkle (2003), 566-7; Gainsford (2012), 58-87.

¹⁰⁰ West (1988), 159.

¹⁰¹ Ní Mheallaigh (2013), 205.

¹⁰² Ní Mheallaigh argues this intertextual relationship functions in the opposite direction too, as the hierarchy between truth and lies within the *Odyssey* is inverted when the tales are read through the lens of Dictys' work. See Ní Mheallaigh (2013), 206-207.

¹⁰³ Lucian *True Stories* 1.4.

¹⁰⁴ Ní Mheallaigh (forthcoming), 155.

Herodotus' prologue¹⁰⁵ and Homer's plagiarism (see below),¹⁰⁶ which act as collusive nudges to his reader(s) about the nature of the *Novel Research* itself.

The final twist with Ptolemy's revision here is the double citation complete with titles and book numbers: the eighth book of Athenodorus of Eretria's *Commentaries* who cited book two of Antiochus' *Tales of the City*. Both of these writers are otherwise unattested and most likely they exist only in Ptolemy's mind,¹⁰⁷ but the fact that he has gone to the trouble to fabricate them and then to locate them in the text after this myth is revealing.¹⁰⁸ The purpose of Athenodorus of Eretria's and Antiochus' presence here is to bring authority to Ptolemy's account, just as Idomeneus' involvement does, as he challenges Homer's authority on myth. However, as with the myth itself, the sources are fabricated by Ptolemy. Therefore, if a reader was intrigued or suspicious after reading Ptolemy's alternative myth and then felt the need to track down his "sources" for more information to reassure themselves about their level of *paideia*, he or she might end up confused, frustrated, and possibly even paranoid about the level of their knowledge and education when their attempt to track down the works of Athenodorus and Antiochus fails.¹⁰⁹ As a result, Athenodorus and Antiochus are included as part of Ptolemy's fabrication to uphold the fiction for some readers; their inclusion is to provide pseudo-documentation in order to blur the lines between fact and fiction by creating another layer of fiction to support the invented myth.¹¹⁰

4.2.4. Parodying Myths

The examples above show how Ptolemy rationalizes famous myths, but elsewhere in the *Novel Research* Ptolemy provides myths, which are more elaborate, farfetched, irrational, and often humorous than the conventional telling; the result is that these myths seem to deliberately parody their conventional counterparts. We have already seen this in the case of the Rock of Leucas myth, but he also does it with three tales of metamorphosis that appear together near the beginning book one of *Novel Research*.

¹⁰⁵ Photius *Bibliotheca* 148b, 10-16; see Chapter Five.

¹⁰⁶ Photius *Bibliotheca* 149b, 22-26; 151a, 37 -151b, 6.

¹⁰⁷ Tell. *Antiochos* (29) BNJ.

¹⁰⁸ That is unless Antiochus is to be identified with the pseudonymous Antiochus-Pherecydes cited in Clement and the scholia to Aristiades (*FGrH* 57 & 29), although this is doubtful. See Cameron (2004), 140

¹⁰⁹ See Chapter Three for more information on bogus sources and pseudo-documentary fiction.

¹¹⁰ On pseudo-documentation strategies see Ní Mheallaigh (2008); Hansen (2003).

Καὶ ὡς Κάδμος καὶ Ἄρμονία εἰς λέοντας μετεμορφώθησαν, καὶ ὡς Τειρεσίας ἑπτὰκις μετεμορφώθη, διὰ τί τε ὑπὸ Κρητῶν οὗτος Φόρβαντος κόρη ἐκαλεῖτο. Ὅτι Ἐρύμανθος ὁ παῖς Ἀπόλλωνος ἐτυφλώθη διότι ἴδοι λουμένην Ἀφροδίτην ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀδώνιδος μίξεως, καὶ Ἀπόλλων μὴνίσας ἑαυτὸν εἰς σύαγρον μετεμόρφωσε καὶ τοῖς ὀδοῦσι πλήξας ἀνεῖλε τὸν Ἄδωνιν.¹¹¹

Cadmus and Harmonia were metamorphosed into lions, and Tiresias was transformed seven times, and he [Ptolemy] explains why the Cretans call him the daughter of Phorbas. Erymanthus, son of Apollo was blinded because he saw Aphrodite bathing after having sex with Adonis; in anger Apollo changed himself into a boar, and struck and killed Adonis with his tusks.

This passage appears immediately after a Herodotean revision,¹¹² while the paragraph that follows features an anecdote about Alexander the Great and Aristotle discussing Homer; therefore there appears to be a deliberate interaction with the canons of literature, both poetry and prose, in this passage. However, it is the three anecdotes that focus on metamorphosis that I want to draw attention to, as with the exception of Demeter transforming herself in the Hyllus passage,¹¹³ they are the only instance of metamorphosis in the entire text. As we shall see, these three transformations are designed to be read together; all three demonstrate Ptolemy's skills at revising well-known myths for comedic effect, but also how Ptolemy expects his readers to be familiar with the conventional versions for them to achieve their full potential as a parody of myth.

In the first story, the metamorphosis of Cadmus and Harmonia, Ptolemy claims that Cadmus and Harmonia were turned into lions, a transformation that is unique to Ptolemy. In the conventional story found in Pseudo-Apollodorus and Hyginus, they are transformed into snakes. Apollodorus reports the myth thus: 'Cadmus and Harmonia were changed into serpents and were sent off to the Elysian Fields by Zeus',¹¹⁴ and Hyginus writes: 'After his children were killed by Mars in retribution for his having slain the serpent that guarded the Castalian Spring, Cadmus, the son of Agenor and Argiope, went to Illyria with his wife, Harmonia,

¹¹¹ Photius *Bibliotheca* 146b, 38 – 147a, 2.

¹¹² See Chapter Five.

¹¹³ Discussed in Chapter Three.

¹¹⁴ Pseudo-Apollodorus *Library* 3.5.5. αὐτὸς δὲ μετὰ Ἄρμονίας εἰς δράκοντα μεταβαλὼν εἰς Ἡλύσιον πεδῖον ὑπὸ Διὸς ἐξεπέμφθη.

the daughter of Venus and Mars. Both of them were turned into serpents'.¹¹⁵ Chatzis argued that the move from snakes to lions in Ptolemy's version is due to a typographical error, because of the similarity between the words *λέοντας* and *δράκοντας*.¹¹⁶ Although errors can occur in the transmission of ancient texts, Chatzis' argument is an attempt to prove that Ptolemy is a reliable mythographer and his far-fetched material and unreliable citations are not his mistakes or deliberate, they are due to his sources, or to Photius, or to both.¹¹⁷ This suggests that *λέοντας* was in fact the word in Ptolemy's original text, but why Ptolemy chose lions over snakes, is impossible to say based on what is contained in Photius' epitome. However, what is apparent is that readers would have expected snakes, as this was the conventional version; therefore the fact that Ptolemy changed it to lions would play with his readers' expectations and knowledge of myth. Depending upon the reader it is likely to have either delighted them by informing them of an alternative myth, or caused them to doubt their own level of *paideia* by discussing something they had no idea about.

That Ptolemy is playing with readers' expectations becomes more apparent with the two other transformation myths in the same passage, the metamorphosis of Tiresias and the Erymanthian boar. In the conventional version of the Teiresias myth, Teiresias is transformed from a man into a woman when he sees some snakes mating, and some time later he is transformed back into a man when he witnesses the sight again. Teiresias is then called upon by Zeus and Hera to give judgment using his unique insight into whether men or women receive the greatest pleasure from sex; when he says that women do, Hera blinds him but to compensate for the loss of sight, Zeus bestows the gift of prophecy upon him.¹¹⁸ However, in another version of the myth, rather than being blinded by Hera, Teiresias is blinded by Athena when he sees her naked while she is bathing.¹¹⁹ This version of the Teiresias myth is connected with Ptolemy's anecdote about Aphrodite and Adonis, which I discuss below.

¹¹⁵ Hyginus *Fabulae* 6. *Cadmus Agenoris et Argiopes filius, ira Martis quod draconem fontis Castalii custodem occiderat suorum prole interempta, cum Harmonia Veneris et Martis filia uxore sua in Illyriae in dracones sunt conuersi.*

¹¹⁶ Chatzis (1914), 66.

¹¹⁷ For the words to be mistaken for each other during the text's transmission many things would have to have gone wrong, because in reality the words are not at all similar and actually difficult to confuse.

¹¹⁸ Apollodorus *Library* 3.70-72; Hyginus *Fabulae* 75; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 3.323-338; Phlegon *On Marvels* 4; Antoninus Liberalis *Metamorphoses* 17.

¹¹⁹ Apollodorus *Library* 3.70-72; in the same passage as the conventional myth.

It is immediately apparent when we compare the well-known versions of the Teiresias transformation myth that Ptolemy's tale differs. Although there is no detail given by Photius and no mention of the debate between Hera and Zeus on the pleasure of sex, what stands out in Ptolemy's version is his claim that Teiresias was transformed seven times (*ἑπτάκις*) instead of the usual two. From this it is clear that Ptolemy is not following the established mythological convention with his version. None of the surviving mythographical works mention anything about the seven transformations of Teiresias; therefore the fact that Ptolemy mentioned this is highly unusual. However, there is one other work apart from the *Novel Research* that mentions the seven transformations of Teiresias, a poem attributed to an author named Sostratus. As we shall see, this poem recounts all of the seven metamorphoses of Teiresias and each transformation becomes more elaborate than the previous: (s)he is changed from a woman into man, back into a woman where (s)he has a child, back into an ugly man, into a woman where (s)he killed a man, into the man we know as Teiresias, into a grey-haired old woman, and finally into a mouse. The result is a humorous passage that seems to parody the Teiresias myth. The tale in full is as follows:

Σώστρατος δὲ ἐν Τειρεσίαι—ποίημα δὲ ἐστὶν ἐλεγειακόν—φησὶ τὸν Τειρεσίαν θήλειαν τὴν ἀρχὴν γεννηθῆναι καὶ ἐκτραφῆναι ὑπὸ Χαρικλοῦς. καὶ ἑπτὰ ἐτῶν γενομένην ὀρειφοιτεῖν· ἐρασθῆναι δὲ αὐτῆς τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα καὶ ἐπὶ μισθῶι συνουσίας διδάξαι τὴν μουσικὴν· τὴν δὲ μετὰ τὸ μαθεῖν μηκέτι ἑαυτὴν ἐπιδιδόναι τῶι Ἀπόλλωνι, κάκεῖνον ἀνδρῶσαι αὐτήν, ἵνα πειρῶιτο ἔρωτος. καὶ αὐτὴν ἀνδρωθεῖσαν κρίναι Δία καὶ Ἥραν, ὡς ἀνωτέρω ἔρρηθη. καὶ οὕτω πάλιν γυναικωθεῖσαν ἐρασθῆναι Κάλλωνος Ἀργείου, ἅφ' οὗ σχεῖν παῖδα κατὰ χόλον Ἥρας τὰς ὄψεις διεστραμμένον· διὸ καὶ κληθῆναι Στράβωνα. μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα τοῦ ἐν Ἄργει ἀγάλματος τῆς Ἥρας καταγελῶσαν εἰς ἄνδρα μεταβληθῆναι ἀειδῆ, ὡς καὶ Πίθωνα λέγεσθαι. ἐλεθθεῖσαν δὲ ὑπὸ Διὸς εἰς γυναῖκα μορφωθῆναι αὐθις ὠραίαν καὶ ἀπελθεῖν εἰς Τροίηνα, ὅπου ἐρασθῆναι αὐτῆς Γλύφιον ἐγχώριον ἄνδρα καὶ ἐπιθέσθαι αὐτῇ λουομένη· τὴν δὲ ἰσχύι περιγενομένην τοῦ μείρακος πνίξαι αὐτόν· Ποσειδῶνα δὲ, οὗ παιδικὰ ἦν ὁ Γλύφιος, ἐπιτρέψαι ταῖς Μοίραις δικάσαι περὶ τούτου· καὶ αὐτὰς εἰς Τειρεσίαν αὐτὴν μεταβαλεῖν καὶ ἀφελέσθαι τὴν μαντικὴν. ἦν αὐθις μαθεῖν ὑπὸ Χείρωνος, καὶ δειπνήσαι ἐν τοῖς Θέτιδος καὶ Πηλέως γάμοις. ἔνθα ἐρίσαι περὶ κάλλους τὴν τε Ἀφροδίτην καὶ τὰς Χάριτας, αἷς ὀνόματα Πασιθέη Καλὴ καὶ Εὐφροσύνη. τὸν δὲ δικάσαντα κρίναι καλὴν τὴν Καλὴν, ἣν καὶ γῆμαι τὸν Ἥφαιστον, ὅθεν τὴν μὲν Ἀφροδίτην χολωθεῖσαν μεταβαλεῖν αὐτόν εἰς γυναῖκα χερνήτιν γραῖαν· τὴν δὲ Καλὴν χαίτας αὐτῇ ἀγαθὰς νεῖμαι καὶ εἰς Κρήτην

ἀπαγαγεῖν, ἔνθα ἐρασθῆναι αὐτῆς Ἄραχνον, καὶ μιγέντα αὐχεῖν τῇ Ἀφροδίτῃ μιγῆναι· ἐφ' ᾧ τὴν δαίμονα ὀργισθεῖσαν τὸν μὲν Ἄραχνον μεταβαλεῖν εἰς γαλῆν, Τειρεσίαν δὲ εἰς μῦν, ὅθεν καὶ ὀλίγα φησὶν ἐσθίει ὡς ἐκ γράος, καὶ μαντικός ἐστὶ διὰ τὸν Τειρεσίαν.¹²⁰

And Sostratus in the *Tieresias*, an elegiac poem, says that Teiresias was originally born female, and was raised by Chariclo. At the age of seven she was wandering in the mountains, and Apollo fell in love with her, and taught her music as payment for sexual intercourse. But after being taught the girl no longer gave herself to Apollo, and he changed her into a man, so that she would have experience of Eros.

Having been changed to a man, he acted as judge for Zeus and Hera, as has been mentioned above. Having been changed back into a woman, she fell in love with Callon the Argive, by whom she had a son, who was called Strabo or 'Squinter', because he was born with squinting eyes, due to the anger of Hera.

After this Teiresias laughed at the statue of Hera at Argos, and was changed into an unsightly man, and so called Pithon or 'Monkey'.

Zeus pitied her and changed her back to a woman in the bloom of youth and sent her to Troezen.

There a local man named Glyphius fell in love with her and assaulted her as she was bathing. But she was stronger than the young lad, and strangled him. Glyphius was the beloved of Poseidon, who turned the matter over to the Moerae for judgment. The Moerae turned her into Teiresias, and took away the skill of prophecy.

But he learned this again from Chiron, and dined at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis. There a beauty contest was held between Aphrodite and the Graces, whose names were Pasithea, Cale, and Euphrosyne. He acted as judge, and judged Cale most beautiful, and Hephaistus married her. This made Aphrodite angry, and she changed him into a poor old grey-haired woman, but Cale made her extremely attractive, and led her away to Crete. There Arachnus fell in love with her, and after lying with her he boasted that he had lain with Aphrodite.

At this the goddess became angry and changed Arachnus into a weasel, and Teiresias into a mouse. He says this is why a mouse eats little, from having been an old woman, and has the power of prophecy, because of Teiresias. That the mouse has prophetic powers is made clear both by the way that their squeakings are a timely sign of a storm, and by the way they flee and run away from houses that are in danger of collapse.¹²¹

The passage seems to have been abbreviated - prophecy is mentioned only as it is

¹²⁰ Eustathius *Commentaries* 10.494; *FGrHIA*, 23, F7.

¹²¹ Translation from O'Hara (1996).

taken away from Teiresias, who then has to learn the skill again from Chiron – but this is not unusual considering it is only preserved in an epitomized form in the twelfth century CE Homeric commentary of Eustathius, the same Eustathius who has also preserved some quotations of Ptolemy. Despite its epitomized form, it is clear that Sostratus’ version ‘incorporates’ and at the same time ‘plays against’ earlier accounts of the myth.¹²² For instance, it cannot be coincidence that the first (of seven metamorphoses) should happen exactly when Teiresias (who lived seven lives) was seven and that having been turned back into a woman, (s)he has a son who squints, which contradicts the traditional version in which Hera provoked his blindness.¹²³ Teiresias’ transformation into a mouse may seem a strange addition, but that is until we consider the fact that mice were thought to have prophetic attributes in antiquity and are known for their high sex drives, which relates to this story.¹²⁴ Moreover, noticeably the gift of prophecy and the punishment of blindness play a minimal role in the story,¹²⁵ and while in the other accounts Teiresias is mainly a male, here the sex with which he begins and ends his life is female.

Since Sostratus’ poem explains the seven transformations in detail, he is thought to have been the source for Ptolemy tale involving Teiresias, yet who this Sostratus was is unknown. There are many citations and works attributed to the name Sostratus, too many for one person to have written; therefore it is thought that there were numerous authors who shared the name.¹²⁶ Moreover, matters are complicated further because although the poem appears in Eustathius’ commentaries on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*,¹²⁷ it is thought that Eustathius did not have access to a copy of Sostratus’ poem; rather it is widely accepted that Eustathius copied the poem from Ptolemy’s *Novel Research*, the only other work that mentions the seven metamorphoses of Teiresias.¹²⁸ If it is the case that Ptolemy’s original work contained the extended passage above, it is a prime example of how much of an impact Photius has had upon the original text of the *Novel Research*, reducing a

¹²² Interestingly, the seven changes of Teiresias correspond to the statement that Teiresias had seven lives, present from early on in the story, at any rate already in the Hesiodic corpus Hesiod, F 276 Merkelbach-West; scholia to Lycophron, *Alexandra* 682). See Ceccarelli *Sostratos* (23) BNJ.

¹²³ Ceccarelli *Sostratos* (23) BNJ.

¹²⁴ For a detailed analysis of Sostratus’ version in terms of the other versions of the story, see Brisson (1976), 84-11; also Brisson (1997), 112-115.

¹²⁵ Ugolini (1995), 107-108.

¹²⁶ For a full list of all citations and a discussion of them, see Ceccarelli *Sostratos* (23) BNJ.

¹²⁷ Eustathius’ *Commentaries* 10.494.

¹²⁸ Chatzis (1914), 11-13; van der Valk (1963), 404; Tomberg (1968), 172-173; Lloyd-Jones & Parsons (1983), 353; O’Hara (1996), 173; Cameron (2004), 150-152.

substantial and detailed story to a brief sentence of bare facts with no mention of Sostratus.

However, there is a far more tantalizing possibility to the origins of the seven transformations of Teiresias. Although there is little doubt among modern scholars that Eustathius extracted this passage from Ptolemy, there is an issue surrounding Sostratus as the author of this story. O'Hara believes that the *grammaticus* Sostratus of Nysa (c. first century BCE) is the most likely candidate to have written it,¹²⁹ while Lloyd-Jones and Parsons attribute the poem to a poet Sostratus (or Sosikrates) of Phanagoreia.¹³⁰ This is a view that was initially shared by Cameron,¹³¹ but more recently he has argued that the tale is a parodic invention of Ptolemy who attached the name Sostratus to it as a bogus source.¹³² This could mean that the passage above is in fact Ptolemy's work, which was created by him and not something that he extracted from an author he used. Moreover, the author who cites Sostratus the most is Pseudo-Plutarch, twice in *De fluviis*,¹³³ and once in the *Parallela minora*.¹³⁴ Although both Ptolemy and Pseudo-Plutarch cite Sostratus and both are unreliable when it comes to their sources,¹³⁵ van der Valk argued that it is unlikely that Ptolemy and Pseudo-Plutarch would have independently invented a fictive author bearing the name of Sostratus; therefore they both must be referring to an author (and presumably to works) that really existed.¹³⁶ This argument, while interesting is not entirely compelling, especially since it is possible that Ptolemy or Pseudo-Plutarch might have known of the other's work(s),¹³⁷ which could possibly explain the use of the same name if one was alluding to the other.¹³⁸

Another reason why Sostratus is thought to be fictitious in Ptolemy's text is that each of the successive changes represents a reshaping of motifs from other mythical stories that goes beyond a variant on a familiar story and into the realm of parody, something that is associated with Ptolemy, as we have seen in the case of the Rock of Leucas myth and his anecdotes concerning beauty contests. It does this

¹²⁹ O'Hara (1996), 204-212.

¹³⁰ Lloyd-Jones & Parsons (1983), 353.

¹³¹ Cameron (1995), 382.

¹³² Cameron (2004), 150-152.

¹³³ Pseudo-Plutarch *De fluviis* 2 & 24.

¹³⁴ Pseudo-Plutarch *Parallela minora* 28.

¹³⁵ See Chapter Three for section on Pseudo-Plutarch and the possibility of his invented sources, which he uses across several works.

¹³⁶ van der Valk (1963), 405.

¹³⁷ Cameron (2004), 127-134.

¹³⁸ See Chapter Three for more on Pseudo-Plutarch.

by borrowing motifs from other myths: the breaking of the bargaining with Apollo is borrowed from the Cassandra story; the incurring of Hera's wrath by laughing at her statue comes from the daughters of Proteus; judging the beauty contest is from Paris, and we have already seen how Ptolemy likes to use this topic as a theme; and the boasting of sleeping with a goddess from the story of Anchises, although the inclusion of the character Arachnus must also be meant to recall the ill-fated boast of Arachne.¹³⁹ In the case of Teiresias, gone is the blind seer who sees the future and has wisdom from being both a man and a woman, to be replaced by a sighted man whose son squinted; instead of stumbling upon Athena bathing, it is Teiresias who is seen naked while bathing, yet unlike most mythological tales of rape, Teiresias fights back and kills her would-be-attacker.¹⁴⁰ The passage reaches its climax by having Teiresias, who after under going several successive sex changes receives one last indignity; he is transformed into a mouse with enough of his powers of prophecy remaining to enable him to forecast the weather.¹⁴¹ As a result, the passage can be read as a humorous parody of the original myth, similar to Ptolemy's account of the Rock of Leucas legend, or it may even parody readers who read myth seriously. The similarities between the seven transformations of Teiresias with how the Rock of Leucas account keeps a momentum going between each anecdote, particularly the clear sense of humour running through the passage, is a crucial factor in why Cameron believes that Ptolemy wrote both.¹⁴²

The possibility of Ptolemy being the author of the passage is strengthened by how the "Sostratus" account leads effortlessly on to the next metamorphosis and incorporates one of the famous motifs from the Teiresias story: spying on someone naked and being struck blind for it, when Erymanthus, a son of Apollo, stumbles upon Aphrodite and Adonis after they had sex. This suggests these stories were written by the same author and were intended to be read together, as it is this transgression that leads Aphrodite to blind Erymanthus, and then in a rage Apollo transforms himself into a boar and kills Adonis in revenge. On one level the story offers an alternative origin story for the Erymanthian boar and can be read as such, but it is also possible to read something humorous about the tale with the choice of Aphrodite as the naked goddess. In other myths we are used to the chaste virginal

¹³⁹ Cameron (2004), 151.

¹⁴⁰ Cameron (2004), 151-152.

¹⁴¹ Aelian *Nature of Animals* 7.10, talks about the supposed ability of mice to sense coming storms.

¹⁴² Cameron (2004), 151-152.

goddesses such as Athena or Artemis,¹⁴³ who punish a mortal for seeing them naked, but here Aphrodite, the goddess of lust and sex, who is not known for her modesty or chaste nature, is the one taking offence at being seen naked. Of all the goddesses one would have thought that Aphrodite would have taken the least offence in such a situation and had very little to be modest about. The absurdity of it may be another instance of Ptolemy parodying mythological conventions, as he did with the Rock of Leucas legend and possibly the seven transformations of Teiresias.

Therefore, it would seem that from the escalating absurdity that is apparent in the Teiresias tale, its location between the Cadmus and Harmonia myth and Ptolemy's take on the Erymanthian boar, these three tales of metamorphosis have been carefully constructed by Ptolemy to lead from one to the other. In doing so Ptolemy has created an entertaining mini narrative set piece within the larger narrative of the book as a whole, which revises and parodies established myths while still alluding to the conventional version. However, he also offers new character portrayals of mythological figures, as they react differently in new situations, thus refreshing myth to make it new and different for his readers. This new perspective on mythological characters is something that Ptolemy enjoys doing, as many of his revisions focus on famous figures from myth, in particular Heracles, Helen, and Achilles. Each of these characters is the main focus of a book in the *Novel Research*: book two for Heracles, book four for Helen, and book six for Achilles. In extended passages on these figures, Ptolemy revises their mythological history and produces new, rationalized myths about them. The result is very different portrayals of these figures, since they are demystified and demoted from their legendary status and cast in a more rational and often unfavourable light. In order to demonstrate this, the first passage I wanted to draw attention to focuses on Heracles:

Ἡ δὲ β' περὶ Ἡρακλέους, ὡς μετὰ τὴν μανίαν ἐλλεβόρω καθαρθεῖη ὑπὸ Ἀντικυρέως τοῦ καὶ τὸ φάρμακον εὐρόντος τὸ ἐν Ἀντικύρᾳ τῆς Φωκίδος πλεονάζον, κἄν ἄλλοι ἄλλως αὐτόν φασι καθαρθῆναι. Ὅτι Νέστορά φησιν ἐρώμενον Ἡρακλέους γενέσθαι. Ὅτι οὐ Φιλοκτήτης, φησὶν, ἀλλὰ Μόρσιμος ὁ Τραχίνιος ὑφήψεν Ἡρακλεῖ τὴν πυράν. Ὅτι Ἡρακλῆς ἀποβρωθέντος αὐτοῦ τῶν δακτύλων ἐνὸς ὑπὸ τοῦ Νεμαίου λέοντος ἐννεαδάκτυλος γέγονε, καὶ ἔστι τάφος τοῦ ἐκκεκομμένου

¹⁴³ Callimachus *Hymn* 5: Actaeon stumbles upon Artemis bathing, and as punishment he is turned into a stag and killed by his own hunting dogs.

δακτύλου· οἱ δὲ κέντρῳ τρυγόνος ἀποβαλεῖν τὸν δάκτυλον ἔφασαν, λέοντα δ' ἔστιν ἰδεῖν τῷ τοῦ δακτύλου τάφῳ ἐφεστῶτα λίθινον ἐν Λακεδαίμονι, σύμβολον τῆς τοῦ ἥρωος ἀλκῆς. Ἐξ ἐκείνου δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλων τάφοις λιθίνους ἐφιστῶσι λέοντας. Ἄλλοι δ' ἄλλως περὶ τῆς τοῦ λέοντος ἀναστηλώσεως φασιν. Ὡς ἐκ τῆς Ἡρακλέους πυρᾶς ἀκρίδες πλῆθος ἀνήφθησαν καὶ λοιμοῦ δίκην τὴν χώραν ἐσίνοντο, καὶ ὡς ἀνηρέθησαν).¹⁴⁴

The second book is about Heracles and how after his madness he was purified with hellebore by Anticyreus who found the remedy in Phocis where it abounds; others, they say, would give different cures. He [Ptolemy] says that Nestor was the lover of Heracles, and he also says that it was not Philoctetes but the Thracian Morsimus who lit the pyre of Heracles. Heracles had one of his fingers bitten off by the Nemean lion and had only nine fingers, and there was a tomb erected to the severed finger; others claim that Heracles lost the finger by the barb of a stingray. It is possible to see a stone lion standing on the tomb of the finger in Sparta, a symbol of the hero's strength, and from this other people have chosen to erect stone lions on tombs; others say give different reasons for the lion monuments. That out of the pyre of Heracles a swarm of locusts rose up and like a plague they ravaged the land and then they were destroyed.

This passage is from book two of the *Novel Research* and from what we can tell from Photius' epitome, the book seems to have mainly focused on Heracles. Although there are numerous anecdotes about Heracles dotted around this particular book, which is also interspersed with other mythological material, this is the longest section where the narrative is solely about Heracles. As we have seen with Ptolemy's material elsewhere, at times he likes to stick close to established mythological stories but still offer alternative versions of it, as he does with the opening anecdote about Heracles being cured of his madness. The conventional account is that Hera drove Heracles into a temporary fit of rage that led him to slew his wife and two children. Afterwards he sought purification from King Thespius at Mount Helicon, but this was not enough to absolve him of his crime. Heracles then journeyed to Delphi where the oracle told him he had to serve King Eurystheus for twelve years, and it was during this twelve-year period that Heracles had to perform the labours the king would require of him.¹⁴⁵ None of this conventional myth appears in Ptolemy's account. Instead of Heracles' fit of rage passing after he killed his family, a rationalized explanation is given for his cure; Anticyreus used

¹⁴⁴ Photius *Bibliotheca* 147a, 33 – 147b, 8.

¹⁴⁵ Pseudo-Apollodorus *Library* 2.4.12-2.5.12.

hellebore from Phocis to cure Heracles of his madness.¹⁴⁶ This is a different take on the mythology surrounding Heracles, which provides an alternative mythological timeline and backstory for him.

Following this revised information Ptolemy tells his readers that Nestor was the beloved of Heracles, which is in keeping with Ptolemy's interest in male lovers of epic heroes. However, their friendship is already mentioned in established myth, so this is not entirely new information.¹⁴⁷ Ptolemy then tells us that it was the Thracian Morsimus who lit Heracles' funeral pyre and not Philoctetes, but there are other versions of the myth where it is Poeas and not Philoctetes who lit the pyre of Heracles,¹⁴⁸ so it is possible that Ptolemy is alluding to something specific here that has been lost in Photius' epitome. However, what is apparent is that this does not tie in with Ptolemy's anecdote about Heracles right at the beginning of book one, in which he says that Heracles chose self-immolation because he could no longer string his bow;¹⁴⁹ if Heracles burned himself alive, there would be little need for a funeral pyre. This may be something that Ptolemy simply overlooked, but because he contradicts his own information elsewhere,¹⁵⁰ it seems that Ptolemy does this on purpose to ensure that readers are paying attention and to reinforce issues concerning the reliability of myth and authors.

The most striking anecdote in the passage is about how Heracles lost a finger to a stingray,¹⁵¹ a mythological snippet of information that is not found in any other source from antiquity that relates myths concerning Heracles. Although there is no other account of Heracles losing a finger, Pausanias mentions the Tomb of the Finger of Orestes, which marks the place where Orestes, when driven mad by the Eumenides, bit off one of his fingers.¹⁵² However, while Orestes' biting off his finger while mad is a tragic situation, in contrast Heracles appears to have his wits about him when he lost a finger to the barb of a stingray. Moreover, that Heracles underwent all his labours and survived unscathed, despite many of them being

¹⁴⁶ According to Pausanias (*Description of Greece* 10.36.5), he was a contemporary of Heracles.

¹⁴⁷ See Chapter One.

¹⁴⁸ Pseudo-Apollodorus *Library* 2.7.7.

¹⁴⁹ Photius *Bibliotheca* 146b, 19-20.

¹⁵⁰ See Chapter Five on Herodotus.

¹⁵¹ The word *τρυγόνος* is usually translated as 'turtledove', but it can also mean 'stingray'. Although losing a finger to either of these animals would be rather mundane and pitiable for a figure like Heracles, based on the context of the passage and the connection with the word *κέντρον*, which can refer to any sharp point such as 'spur', 'spike', 'stinger', and 'barb', losing a finger to a stingray seems to be the more likely option.

¹⁵² Pausanias *Description of Greece* 8.34.

dangerous and even deadly, but then lost his finger in a random encounter is a un-heroic scenario to happen to a demi-god. This seems to be in keeping with Ptolemy's propensity for parodying myth and mythological characters. It is also possible that Ptolemy drew inspiration from the cult surrounding the finger of Orestes, especially since he claims that a tomb was erected for the lost finger, which he then claims influenced the erection of stone lions on tombs. Therefore, Ptolemy's bizarre myth about Heracles' loss of a finger is used to provide a rational explanation for actual architectural phenomenon and local traditions, similar to what we find in Pausanias' work when he explores the links between myths and local cult traditions.¹⁵³ As a result, it is possible to read this as an attempt of Ptolemy to bring a level of credence and believability to his myth, as he blurs the lines between fact and fiction by linking it with real and documented tomb features. However, since the way in which Heracles lost his finger is so absurd, it would seem that Ptolemy did not intend this story to be taken seriously; instead he has created an amusing anecdote that parodies certain hero cults built around unusual myths.

The Heracles that is presented in this collection of anecdotes is very different from the tragic portrayal usually found in mythography and tragedy; he is less godlike and impressive, and his well-known heroics are not related. The Heracles that is presented is a shadow of the Heracles found in conventional myth, because of this there is the impression that Ptolemy is deliberately deflating his legendary status. This is something that we also get a sense of with a much longer passage on Achilles, which opens book six of the *Novel Research*. Although this is a lengthy passage, I have included it as whole to give a sense of context and because there is a clear thematic link:

Τὸ δὲ ζ' βιβλίον κεφάλαια περιέχει τάδε, ὡς Ἀχιλλεὺς ὑπὸ Πενθεσιλείας ἀναιρεθεὶς, δεηθείσης αὐτοῦ τῆς μητρὸς Θέτιδος, ἀναβιοῖ καὶ ἀνελῶν Πενθεσίλειαν εἰς Ἄιδου πάλιν ὑποστρέφει. Ὡς ἐν τῇ Ἀλεξάνδρᾳ Λυκόφρων εἰπὼν «ποία δ' ἀηδῶν στεῖρα κενταυροκτόνος» τὰς Σειρῆνας κενταυροκτόνους εἶπεν. Ὡς Ἐλενος ὁ Πριάμου Ἀπόλλωνος ἐρώμενος γένοιτο, καὶ ἔλαβε παρ' αὐτοῦ δῶρον τόξον ἐλεφάντινον ᾧ Ἀχιλλεὺς τοξεύσειε κατὰ τῆς χειρός.

Ἵτι μετὰ Ἀνδρομάχης καὶ τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ Πριάμος ὑπὲρ τῶν Ἐκτορος ὄστων ἰκέτης ἀφίκετο ὡς Ἀχιλλεὺς. Ὡς Θέτις τοὺς ἐκ Πηλεὺς αὐτῇ γινομένους παῖδας πυρὶ λαθραίῳ κατηνάλου ἔξ γεγονότας· ὡς δὲ καὶ Ἀχιλλεὺς ἐπεχείρησε, γνοὺς Πηλεὺς ἐξείλετο τὸν

¹⁵³ See Arafat (1996), 43-79; Rutherford (2001), 40-52.

ἀστράγαλον μόνον τοῦ δεξιοῦ ποδὸς κεκαυμένον καὶ Χείρωνι παρατίθησιν· ὁ δὲ ἀνορύξας τὸ Δαμύσου τοῦ Γίγαντος σῶμα ἐν Παλλήνῃ κείμενον (ταχύτατος δ' ἦν ὁ Δάμυσος πάντων Γιγάντων) καὶ ἀνελόμενος αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀστράγαλον, ἐναρμόζει τῷ Ἀχιλλέως ποδί, καὶ φαρμάκοις αὐτὸν σωματοποιεῖ. Τοῦτον δὲ τὸν ἀστράγαλον ἀποπεσεῖν διωκομένου ὑπὸ Ἀπόλλωνος, καὶ οὕτως αὐτὸν ἀναιρεθῆναι καταπεσόντα. Φασὶ δὲ ποδάρκην αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ ποιητοῦ λέγεσθαι ὅτι φασὶ τῆς Ἄρκης τὰ πτερὰ τὴν Θέτιν περιθεῖναι τῷ παιδί γεννηθέντι, καὶ εἶναι τὸ ποδάρκης ὁ ἐν τοῖς ποσὶ τὰ τῆς Ἄρκης πτερὰ ἔχων. Ἡ δ' Ἄρκη Θαύμαντος ἦν θυγάτηρ, ἧς ἡ ἀδελφὴ Ἴρις· πτερὰ δ' εἶχεν ἑκατέρα. Ἐν δὲ τῷ πρὸς Τιτᾶνας τῶν θεῶν πολέμῳ ἀποπτᾶσα τῶν θεῶν ἡ Ἄρκη πρὸς τοὺς Τιτᾶνας ἦλθε. Μετὰ δὲ τὴν νίκην, ὁ Ζεὺς τὰ μὲν πτερὰ αὐτῆς ἀφείλετο, αὐτὴν ταρταρώσας, παραγενόμενος δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ Πηλέως καὶ Θέτιδος γάμῳ δῶρον τὰ πτερὰ τῇ Θέτιδι προσάγει. Ὡς Πηλεῖ ἐπὶ τῷ γάμῳ φασὶ δωρήσασθαι Ἥφαιστον μὲν μάχαιραν, Ἀφροδίτην δὲ φιάλην ἐγγεγλυμμένην Ἔρωτα χρυσῆν, Ποσειδῶνα δὲ ἵππους Ξάνθον καὶ Βάλιον, Ἥραν δὲ χλαμύδα καὶ Ἀθηνᾶν αὐλοῦς, Νηρέα δὲ τοὺς θεῖους ἄλας καλουμένους ἐν κοίτιδι· τούτους δὲ δύναμιν ἔχειν ἀμήχανον πρὸς πολυφαγίαν καὶ ὄρεξιν καὶ πέψιν, ἐξ οὗ λύεται σοι καὶ τὸ πάσσε δ' ἄλως θείοιο.

Περὶ Ἀχιλλέως τοῦ γηγενοῦς, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν Ἰλιακῶν ὅσοι ἐγένοντο Ἀχιλλεῖς περιώνυμοι. Καὶ ὡς οὗτος ὁ γηγενὴς φεύγουσαν τὴν Ἥραν ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ Διὸς μίξεως ὑπεδέξατο ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ ἄντρῳ καὶ ἀνέπεισε συνελθεῖν τῷ Δί· καὶ πρώτην μίξιν Ἥρας καὶ Διὸς ταύτην γενέσθαι φασίν· ὁ δὲ Ζεὺς ἐπηγγείλατο Ἀχιλλεῖ πάντας τοὺς τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ κληθησομένους περιωνύμους ποιήσειν. Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ Ἀχιλλεὺς περιώνυμος ὁ τῆς Θέτιδος. Καὶ ὁ Χείρωνος δὲ διδάσκαλος Ἀχιλλεὺς ἐκαλεῖτο, ἀφ' οὗ καὶ ὁ Πηλέως ἐκλήθη ὑπὸ Χείρωνος. Καὶ ὁ τὸν ὀστρακισμὸν ἐπινοήσας Ἀθήνησιν Ἀχιλλεὺς ἐκαλεῖτο, υἱὸς Λύσωνος. Καὶ Διὸς καὶ Λαμίας Ἀχιλλέα φασὶ γενέσθαι τὸ κάλλος ἀμήχανον, ὃν καὶ ἐρίσαντα περὶ κάλλους νικῆσαι τοῦ Πανὸς κρίναντος. Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο Ἀφροδίτη νεμεσήσασα ἐμβάλλει Πανὶ τὸν Ἥχοῦς ἔρωτα, καὶ μὴν καὶ κατειργάσατο καὶ εἰς τὴν ιδέα ἀυτόν, ὅπως ἐκ τῆς μορφῆς αἰσχροὺς καὶ ἀνέραστος φαίνοιτο. Καὶ Γαλάτου τινὸς υἱὸς Ἀχιλλεὺς ἐκλήθη, ὃν ἐκ γενετῆς πολὺν γενέσθαι φησίν. Καὶ ἕτεροι Ἀχιλλεῖς ἐπιφανεῖς γεγόνασι ἰδ'· ὧν οἱ δύο κύνες ἦσαν καὶ θαυμάσιοι τὰ κυνῶν ἔργα).¹⁵⁴

The sixth book contains the following principal points: Penthesileia killed Achilles, but he was then resurrected on Thetis' request, killed Penthesileia, and once again returned back to Hades. He [Ptolemy] says that in the *Alexandra* when Lycophron said, "how is the childless nightingale a centaur killer", he [Lycophron] meant that the sirens were centaur killers. Helenus, son of Priam, was the beloved of Apollo, and received from him a gift of an ivory bow with which he wounded Achilles on the hand.

He says that Priam came to Achilles, along with Andromache and her sons, as a suppliant for Hector's body. Thetis had six children with Peleus, and she killed them in a secret fire.

¹⁵⁴ Photius *Bibliotheca*, 151b, 29 – 152b, 7.

When she went for Achilles, Peleus, realizing what was happening, pulled him out of the fire and only the ankle of his right foot was burnt; Peleus then entrusted Achilles to Chiron. Chiron exhumed the body of the giant Damysos who was buried in Pallene (Damysos was the swiftest of all the giants) and removed his anklebone and fixed it to Achilles' foot, making him whole with drugs. This anklebone fell off when Achilles was pursued by Apollo and he was killed after he had fallen. They say Achilles was called swift-footed by the poet, because Thetis put the wings of Arce around the child, and swift-footed means that his feet had the wings of Arce. Arce was the daughter of Thaumus and the sister of Iris; each had wings. During the war between gods and Titans, Arce flew away from the gods and went to the Titans. After the victory, Zeus removed her wings and sent her to Tartarus, and going to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis he brought these wings as a gift for Thetis. They say that at the wedding Peleus was presented by Hephaestus with a sword, by Aphrodite with a golden jar carved with the figure of Eros, by Poseidon with the horses Xanthus and Balius, by Hera with a cloak, by Athena with a flute and by Nereus with the so-called divine salt in a basket. On the question of why it is called divine, he says the salt had a great power against appetite and digestion, from this the phrase "sprinkled some divine salt", is explained.

About Achilles the earth-born and all the other Achilleses who were famous after the Trojan war. It is the earth-born who, when Hera fled from her sexual encounter with Zeus, received her into his cave and convinced her to have sex with Zeus; this they say was the first sexual encounter of Hera with Zeus. Zeus promised this Achilles that all of those named Achilles after him would be famous; because of this, Achilles son of Thetis was famous. The teacher of Chiron was called Achilles, and after him the son of Peleus was so named by Chiron. The inventor of ostracism in Athens was called Achilles, son of Lyson. They say the son of Zeus and Lamia was an incredible beauty, and won a beauty competition which Pan judged, and because Aphrodite was resentful she inflicted upon Pan desire for Echo and went to work on his appearance so that he would appear ugly and undesirable. The son of a certain Galates was called Achilles, who he says was grey-haired from birth. And there were fourteen other famous Achilleses, among which were two dogs and their deeds as dogs were wondrous.

This passage is much longer than the one on Heracles and this may explain why the beginning contains the line: 'the following principal points', which seems to be from Photius and suggests that at this point in his summary of Ptolemy's work, he was getting a little bored of Ptolemy's fun and games. There is also a reference to Lycophron at the beginning, which seems a little out of place with the rest of the

material within the passage.

The first anecdote relates how Achilles was brought back from the dead to kill the Amazon queen, an otherwise unattested version that changes the conventional story of how Achilles, when still alive, killed Penthesilea in battle and was said to have fallen in love with her at the point of her death.¹⁵⁵ The anecdote plays with the idea of love and death, by having Achilles resurrected to kill and presumably fall in love with Penthesilea at the point of her death. After relating his story about a resurrected Achilles, Ptolemy includes the Lycophron quotation, an anecdote about Helenus shooting Achilles and one about Andromache being present for the ransom of Hector's body, both of which are also found in Dictys' *Ephemeris belli Troiani* (see below). Ptolemy then moves on to several interconnected anecdotes that offer a rationalized reason for why Homer calls Achilles swift-footed, which he does fifty-three times in the *Iliad*.¹⁵⁶ It begins by having Peleus save Achilles from the fire that Thetis was trying to kill him in, pulling him out just in time so that all that was injured was his right ankle. Ptolemy's version of the legend surrounding Achilles' heel differs from the established myth that has Thetis dip him in the river Styx to make him invulnerable, but the heel which she held him by was the only part that was not exposed to the waters of the Styx.¹⁵⁷ Ptolemy inverts the usual story and in particular the role of Thetis, transforming her from caring and protective mother into a woman that has already killed six of her children and attempts to kill the seventh. However, this resonates with Apollonius' account in the *Argonautica*, which has Thetis burning Achilles in the household hearth and being saved by Peleus and then sent off to live with Chiron.¹⁵⁸ Ptolemy then goes on to explain that Chiron exhumed the anklebone of the giant Damysos and fixed it to Achilles' foot, presumably to replace his damaged one, but this anklebone detached itself when Achilles fell while being pursued by Apollo, which resulted in his death.

With this collection of anecdotes, Ptolemy has rationalized why Homer calls Achilles swift-footed; it was because the wings of Arce, the messenger of the Titans, were given as a wedding present to Thetis and Peleus and they were attached to Achilles at some point. Again, this partially ties in with myths surrounding the

¹⁵⁵ Quintus of Smyrna *Fall of Troy* 18ff; Sextus Propertius *Elegies* 3.11; Pausanias *Description of Greece* 5.11.2 & 10.31.1.

¹⁵⁶ See Parry (1973) on Homeric epithets.

¹⁵⁷ Ovid *Metamorphoses* 12.580-619.

¹⁵⁸ Apollonius *Argonautica* 4.869-872.

wedding of Thetis and Peleus and the gifts that they receive.¹⁵⁹ In the *Iliad* no explanation is given for why Homer refers to Achilles in this way, most likely because it is intended to be self-explanatory, Achilles was *podarques*. Focussing on such a minor description and discussing it in detail is due to Ptolemy's background as a *grammaticus*; picking apart the Homeric epics would have been second nature to someone like Ptolemy. What is noticeable and actually conspicuous in its absence, is that there is no mention of Achilles' heel, which has an equally strong if not stronger association with Achilles than the epithet swift-footed, and yet here discussing Achilles' feet, there is not mention of it. Therefore, despite appearing to offer a rational approach, with descriptions of anklebones falling off and wings being attached to feet, this collection of anecdotes is far from rational; in fact it has the opposite effect and makes Ptolemy's rationalization farfetched and convoluted. Although, this could be interpreted as a situation where Ptolemy has tried too hard to rationalize Homer's Achilles and has failed in doing so, what follows, which is a collection of various homonyms of Achilles, reveals that Ptolemy has no intention of producing a rationalization of Achilles in this passage and that the absurdity of the passage is intentional. This is because in his collection of various other Achillesees, including the earth-born Achilles, the teacher of Chiron, the inventor of ostracism in Athens, as well as Achilles son of Zeus and Lamia mentioned earlier, and Achilles the grey-haired son of Galates,¹⁶⁰ Ptolemy concludes his list of famous Achillesees with two dogs whose deeds as dogs were truly wondrous (*θαυμάσιοι*). This last line is the punchline of the passage. Throughout the passage Ptolemy has rationalized myths surrounding Achilles, and then continued the rationalization when he lists other men who shared Achilles' name, who were also famous for their own deeds. However, by ending on the two dogs, the passage comes to an abrupt and bathetic end, there is no heroic climax here and this must be intentional, as the last line indicates the whole passage is designed to be read tongue-in-cheek. It satirizes the legendary and heroic status of Achilles that has been built up in myth and epic poetry, but through Ptolemy's over rationalization he reduces him to just one Achilles in a long list of others. Achilles, just like Heracles in the previous passage has been deflated and humanized, they are no longer superior men and idols, and they can be just as fallible as mere mortals.

¹⁵⁹ Catullus 64.

¹⁶⁰ Discussed in Chapter Three.

Evidence for the tales being intentionally absurd can be seen in these passages and the anecdotes that they contain, by the way in which they have been carefully organised by Ptolemy to run continuously from one story into the next, similar to what can be seen with the Rock of Leucas and metamorphoses passages. This is why the anecdote about Heracles' losing a finger leads to a tomb for the finger and a pyre for the rest of Heracles. In the Achilles passage swift-footed leads onto wings, Arce had wings, Zeus took Arce's wings from her and gave them to Peleus; the result is a cyclical telling of revised myth, which explains how Thetis had the wings of Arce in the first place and gave them to Achilles. This 'mini ring-cycle' feature is also apparent in the Rock of Leucas anecdotes, with Apollo framing the beginning and end of the passage, but it can also be seen in the extended Helen passage as well.¹⁶¹ Despite the odd collection of alternative myths and paradoxographical material that can be found in the passage, Helen is playing a game of dice at the beginning and end of the passage, demonstrating that Ptolemy put some careful consideration into the framing of the passage. This suggests, along with the fact that certain books seem to follow specific themes that the *Novel Research* was a carefully conceived and constructed text, far more than Photius' epitome reveals. If Ptolemy could pay such careful attention to the use of framing devices in these passages, as well as his tendency to over-rationalize to the point of absurdity, it seems far more likely that he is intentionally doing this to parody myth, these mythological figures, and even the trend for rationalising myth.

4.2.5. Homer and the pre-Homeric Epics

Ptolemy shows himself to be adept at interacting with myth and Homeric material in order to create and solve elaborate problems, rationalise myths, and also parody myth and mythological characters. There is the sense from this that for someone who engages with myth as much as he does, Ptolemy is not inclined to take it seriously. This can also be seen in Ptolemy's treatment of Homer as a character, when he relates four otherwise unknown stories about Homer himself, claiming that there were texts that pre-date Homer. The first of these appears at the end of book one where he claims that, 'Antipater of Acante said that Dares, the one who wrote the *Iliad* before Homer, was the one who advised Hector not to kill the companion of Achilles', (*Ἀντίπατρος δὲ φησιν ὁ Ἀκάνθιος Δάρητα, πρὸ Ὁμήρου γράψαντα τὴν*

¹⁶¹ Photius *Bibliotheca* 149b, 3 -38; See Chapter Three.

Ἰλιάδα, μνήμονα γενέσθαι Ἐκτορος ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ ἀνελεῖν ἑταῖρον Ἀχιλλέως).¹⁶² This line appears in the final paragraph of book one of the *Novel Research*, in a usual passage concerning the guardians or mentors of Homeric heroes:

Ἵτι Ὀδυσσεῖ ἔπεσθαι δίδωσιν ὁ πατήρ μνήμονα Μυῖσκον τοῦνομα Κεφαλλῆνα. Εἶπετο καὶ Ἀχιλλεῖ μνήμων τοῦνομα Νοήμων, γένει Καρχηδόnius, καὶ Πατρόκλω Εὐδωρος. Ἀντίπατρος δὲ φησιν ὁ Ἀκάνθιος Δάρητα, πρὸ Ὀμήρου γράψαντα τὴν Ἰλιάδα, μνήμονα γενέσθαι Ἐκτορος ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ ἀνελεῖν ἑταῖρον Ἀχιλλέως. Καὶ Πρωτεσιλάου δὲ φησι Δάρδανον γενέσθαι γένος Θεσσαλόν· καὶ Ἀντιλόχῳ δὲ Χάλκωνα ὑπασπιστὴν καὶ μνήμονα ὑπὸ Νέστορος συνεζεύχθαι τοῦ πατρός. Ταῦτα μὲν ἐν τῇ ἀ΄ βίβλῳ τὰ κεφάλαια.¹⁶³

The father of Odysseus gave him a guardian to accompany him, named Muiscus, a Cephallenian. Achilles' guardian was named Noemon, he was a Carthaginian by race, and Patroclus had Eudorus for a guardian. Antipater of Acanthe said that Dares the one who wrote the *Iliad* before Homer, advised Hector not to kill the companion of Achilles. He also says Protesilaus was the guardian of Dardanus, a Thessalian by race, and that Chalcon was appointed the shield-bearer and guardian to Antilochus by his father Nestor.

The passage focuses on a list of *μνήμονες*, 'guardians' or 'mentors' of a number of Homeric heroes: Muiscus for Odysseus, Noemon for Achilles, Eudorus for Patroclus, Dardanus for Protesilaus, Chalcon for Antilochus, and Dares for Hector. Nowhere in all the abundant Homeric scholia that have survived is there any reference to *μνήμονες*, nor are any of these names or stories known from any other source.¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, with the exception of Allen,¹⁶⁵ no modern scholar has believed that they are anything but pure fiction; the only question is whether Ptolemy made them up himself or used unreliable authors.¹⁶⁶ A greater understanding of this passage comes from Eustathius and Tzetzes where we find the same passage, but with some additional information.¹⁶⁷ We are told Chalcon was appointed by Nestor to protect Antilochus because he was fated to be killed by an Ethiopian (Memnon), but Chalcon fell in love with the Amazon queen Penthesilieia and was killed by Achilles, his body impaled by the Greeks. Moreover, more sources are cited: for Antilochus'

¹⁶² Photius *Bibliotheca* 147a, 26-29.

¹⁶³ Photius *Bibliotheca* 147a, 23-32.

¹⁶⁴ Cameron (2004), 137.

¹⁶⁵ Allen (1924), 175 n.1.

¹⁶⁶ Wilson (1971), 135.

¹⁶⁷ Eustathius *Odyssey* 1379.50; Tzetzes *Events before Homer* 106.

mentor Asclepiades of Myrlea, for Achilles' mentor Lycophron, for Protesilaus' Eresius, for Patroclus' Timolaus of Macedon, and for Hector's, which is also preserved by Photius, Antipatrus of Ascanthus.

Since both Lycophron and Asclepiades of Myrlea are both authentic Hellenistic authors, it is tempting to believe in the other three as well. The only one that can be checked is Lycophron, as his text *Alexandra* survives complete. The passage in question is: ὁ τλήμων, μητρὸς οὐ φράσας θεᾶς, μνήμων ἐφετμάς.../...θανεῖται.¹⁶⁸ The μνήμων in the sentence has puzzled readers. Modern editors regard it as an adjective: 'the wretch will die, not having spoken, mindful, the instructions of the goddess mother', but scholia took it as a proper name: 'the wretched Mnemon will die, not having spoken the instructions of the goddess mother'.¹⁶⁹ According to the Homeric scholia, Thetis sends Memnon as a messenger to Achilles to remind him not to kill Tennes because it was fated that Achilles would die by the hand of Apollo if he killed a son of his.¹⁷⁰ However, Memnon forgot to deliver the message and Achilles killed Tennes and then Memnon. Although the Tennes part of the story is related elsewhere,¹⁷¹ Lycophron implies that there is a tradition behind this story, but it is unlikely that in archaic epic the forgetful messenger was called Memnon, and neither is there anything in Lycophron that warrants Achilles' mentor the name Noemon and him being a Carthaginian. This suggests that Ptolemy was familiar with Lycophron and the ancient scholia on him, and that he came up with this interpretation, inventing the name and ethnicity.¹⁷²

Regarding the other sources, the existence of Asclepiades of Myrlea is beyond doubt; he is learned enough to cite archaic sources such as the Cyclic *Thebaid*, but he is otherwise an unoriginal *grammaticus* who is unlikely to have fabricated the romance of Chalcon and Penthesileia.¹⁷³ It also seems unlikely that an otherwise unknown character who played a pivotal role in the Penthesileia story is unattested, and encounters such an un-heroic and un-Homeric end by being impaled;¹⁷⁴ although there are some un-heroic stories in the Epic Cycle.¹⁷⁵ The other sources, Eresius and Antipatrus, have no grounding in history and although

¹⁶⁸ Lycophron *Alexandra*, 240-242.

¹⁶⁹ Cameron (2004), 138.

¹⁷⁰ *Scholia vetera*; Cameron (2004), 138.

¹⁷¹ Pseudo-Apollodorus *Epitome* 3.26.

¹⁷² Cameron (2004), 138 -139.

¹⁷³ Adler (1914), 39-46; Cameron (2004), 139.

¹⁷⁴ Cameron (2004), 139.

¹⁷⁵ Griffin (1977), 39-53.

Timolaus of Larissa in Macedon is mentioned by the *Suda* for writing the *Iliad* in which he inscribed a line of his own after every line of Homer, the *Suda* entry appears to be the same words of Eustathius,¹⁷⁶ which may actually derive from Ptolemy.¹⁷⁷ One of the most suspicious aspects about the passage is the different sources for each mentor. Even if we put Lycophron aside, readers are still supposed to believe that four other writers independently rediscovered epic *μνήμονες* and that Ptolemy just happened to stumble across all of them; the probability is that Ptolemy invented all six mentors, complete with names, biographies, and source references (both falsified and bogus).¹⁷⁸

The reason I wanted to examine this passage is because of Dares, whom Ptolemy uses as a character rather than as a source, but claims that he wrote his own *Iliad* before Homer. Since Ptolemy refers to Dares as a character, he is clearly referring to Homer's character Dares in the *Iliad*, who is a Trojan priest of Hephaestus.¹⁷⁹ Therefore, it is not unreasonable that this man would have given advice to Hector in this capacity. However, Dares is also the name attributed to the revisionist work *De excidio Troiae historia*,¹⁸⁰ which claims to be a "true" account of the destruction of Troy from the Trojan perspective, supposedly written before Homer's account of the fall of Troy in the *Iliad*.¹⁸¹ Dares' work, along with Dictys' *Ephemeris belli Troiani*, are pseudonyms for two fictitious pseudo-documentary accounts of the Trojan War, written by a Trojan (Dares) and a Greek (Dictys), who claimed to have fought there.¹⁸² A date of the second century CE is proposed for Dares' original Greek version of the text, although there is some dispute if there was a Greek original and whether the Latin text we have is complete or an epitome.¹⁸³ However, based upon a testimony of Aelian in which he says: 'According to the Troezenian tradition the poems by the Troezenian Oroebantios were written before Homer. It is also told that Dares the Phrygian – whose *Phrygian Ilias* is still preserved, as I know – lived before Homer',¹⁸⁴ a Greek original is thought to have

¹⁷⁶ Eustathius *Odyssey*, 1379. 50.

¹⁷⁷ Cameron (2004) 138 n. 70.

¹⁷⁸ Cameron (2004), 140.

¹⁷⁹ Homer *Iliad* 5.9; 5.27.

¹⁸⁰ Aelian *Miscellaneous Research* 11.2.

¹⁸¹ Merkle (2003), 563-580.

¹⁸² Merkle (1999), 131-140; Merkle (2003), 563-580; Ní Mheallaigh (2008), 403-431.

¹⁸³ See Merkle (2003), 572-577 for a discussion of the origins and state of the text.

¹⁸⁴ Aelian *Miscellaneous Research* 11.2. Ὅτι ἦν Ὀροιβαντίου Τροϊζηνίου ἔπη πρὸ Ὀμήρου, ὡς φασιν οἱ Τροϊζήνιοι λόγοι. καὶ τὸν Φρύγα δὲ Δάρητα, οὗ Φρυγίαν Ἰλιάδα ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἀποσωζομένην οἶδα, πρὸ Ὀμήρου καὶ τοῦτον γενέσθαι λέγουσι.

existed, but since no fragments survive, its existence is dependent upon testimonies.¹⁸⁵

This brings us to Ptolemy's claim that Dares wrote his *Iliad* before Homer, which is similar to the claim made by Aelian. The issue here is the date, Aelian's passage is thought to be the earliest account that mentions a Greek text, which ties in with the consensus that if a Greek original did exist, it dated from the second century CE. However, Ptolemy's mention of Dares' pre-Homeric epic could be used with some caution, as proof of the existence of a Greek original that is a few decades earlier than the current consensus.¹⁸⁶ Although this is tentative,¹⁸⁷ the possibility that Dares' pseudo-documentary novel was already well known by Ptolemy's time is important, because it is a work that aims to blur the lines between fact and fiction by playing with pseudo-documentary conventions to lend its fiction an air of authenticity. The possibility that Ptolemy might be alluding to this work suggests that Ptolemy was fully aware of other texts that revised Homer, by claiming to be or know of pre-Homeric epics. Furthermore, by referring to such as text, it could be seen as a self-conscious reflection of his own work, which also manipulates the realities that fact and fiction operate on.

Elsewhere in the *Novel Research*, Ptolemy claims that other pre-Homeric epics existed. In book four when he is discussing the homonyms of Helen he says: 'Helen, the daughter of Musaeus, wrote about the Trojan War before Homer, from which Homer is said to have taken his plot; she possessed a bilingual sheep' (ὤν καὶ ἡ πρὸ Ὀμήρου Ἑλένη ἢ τὸν Ἰλιακὸν συγγραψαμένη πόλεμον, Μουσαίου τοῦ Ἀθηναίου θυγάτηρ γενομένη· παρ' ἧς καὶ Ὀμηρον λέγεται λαβεῖν τὴν ὑπόθεσιν· ἦν καὶ κτήσασθαι τὸ δίγλωσσον ἄρνιον).¹⁸⁸ Then near the end of book five a passage appears that directly contradicts the previous one about Helen: 'Phantasia, a certain woman from Memphis and daughter of Nicarchus, composed a work on the Trojan War and a narrative about Odysseus before Homer. They say that the books were deposited in Memphis, and Homer upon arriving there, obtained copies from Phanitus the scribe, and he composed his work in accordance with them ("Ὅτι Φαντασία τις Μεμφίτις

¹⁸⁵ For all the testimonies see: Erdas *Dares* (51) BNJ.

¹⁸⁶ See Farrow (1991/192), 334 n.17; Pavano (2001), 1006; although Bretzigheimer (2008), 395 regards this testimony as unbelievable.

¹⁸⁷ There may have been other pre-Homeric epics with the name Dares attached to them in circulation, or that Aelian may have read Ptolemy, although Aelian does imply that he read the work he mentions. See Cameron (2004), 148.

¹⁸⁸ Photius *Bibliotheca* 149b, 22-26.

Νικάρχου θυγάτηρ συνέταξε πρὸ Ὁμήρου τὸν Ἰλιακὸν πόλεμον καὶ τὴν περὶ Ὀδυσσεΐας διήγησιν καὶ ἀποκεῖσθαι φασι τὰς βίβλους ἐν Μέμφιδι, Ὁμηρον δὲ παραγενόμενον, καὶ τὰ ἀντίγραφα λαβόντα παρὰ Φανίτου τοῦ ἱερογραμματέως, συντάξαι ἐκείνοις ἀκολούθως).¹⁸⁹

As Kim explores in his monograph, these anecdotes are similar to tales that are found in the works of Dio Chrysostom, Lucian, and Philostratus, where Homer's authority is called into question.¹⁹⁰ These authors summon up a picture of Homer where he is historicized, deflated, and his authority called into question, while fabricating their own fictions that compete with Homer's. This suggests that their texts are reflections of their own literary relation to Homer as their monumental predecessor. Therefore, although the tone of rewritings tends to be tinged with humour, Homer in these texts is still canonical, but this position is acknowledged through parody, reinvention and rewriting.¹⁹¹ This is also the case with Ptolemy, as there is irony in the manner in which Ptolemy portrays Homer as a plagiarist who passes off the works of others as his own, because as a fabricator of sources and material, Ptolemy is engaged in precisely the opposite (though no less fraudulent) activity that he assigns to Homer. This reflects Ptolemy's own play with the truth, whether through an unattested source, such as a certain Naucrates (in Eustathius) for Phantasia's pre-Homeric epic according to Eustathius,¹⁹² or when in book seven he mentions the existence of another pre-Homeric epic: 'Odysseus in Tyrrehenia took part in a flute playing competition, which he won; he played the *Fall of Troy* by the poet Demodocus' (Ὡς Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐν Τυρρηνίᾳ ἠγωνίσαστο ἀύλητικὴν καὶ ἐνίκησεν· ἠϋλήσῃ δὲ Ἰλίου ἄλωσιν, Δημοδόκου ποίημα).¹⁹³ Here Ptolemy is claiming the impossible; a fictional character created by Homer, the poet Demodocus from the *Odyssey*, wrote a pre-Homeric epic, which Odysseus played in a competition, presumably after stealing it while in Phaeacia, and won as a result.¹⁹⁴

This self-conscious play with fiction and questions concerning truth and falsehood situates Ptolemy very near Dio Chrysostom, Lucian, and Philostratus, who also test their readers' willingness to believe their new, revisionist accounts,¹⁹⁵ and

¹⁸⁹ Photius *Bibliotheca*, 151a, 37 -151b, 6.

¹⁹⁰ Kim (2010), 19-20.

¹⁹¹ Kim (2010), 19-20.

¹⁹² Cameron (2004), 147; Kim (2010), 20.

¹⁹³ Photius *Bibliotheca* 152b, 34-36.

¹⁹⁴ Cameron (2004), 147.

¹⁹⁵ Kim (2010), 20.

in the case of Lucian, present a radically different portrayal of Homer.¹⁹⁶ Owing to this shared literary and cultural context, whether these authors knew of each other's texts is open to debate. It is almost certain that Philostratus was acquainted with Dio Chrysostom's *Trojan Oration*,¹⁹⁷ and perhaps it is more than coincidence that the title of Philostratus' work *Ἡρωικός* is only one letter removed from Dio Chrysostom's *Τρωικός*.¹⁹⁸ However, it is also possible that Philostratus knew of Ptolemy's text, as some of the same Homeric topics mentioned by Ptolemy can also be found in the *Heroicus*: the divinity of Achilles' horses,¹⁹⁹ the plant moly,²⁰⁰ the relationship of Helen and Achilles in the afterlife,²⁰¹ the enmity between Agamemnon and Palamedes,²⁰² as well as Odysseus' mysterious death from the sea.²⁰³ These same topics appear in both texts, but they are treated differently; this led Kim to argue that while Philostratus may not have known the *Novel Research* directly, he was certainly writing in the same cultural and literary milieu.²⁰⁴ However, it is possible that Philostratus did know of Ptolemy's *Novel Research* and that he could have adapted material from his text to suit the *Heroicus*. Although we cannot say definitively that Philostratus had access to Ptolemy's text, the probability seems more likely when we consider that there are possible links between Philostratus' *Heroicus* and Dictys' *Ephemeris belli Troiani*.²⁰⁵

In the *Heroicus* Philostratus appears to indirectly attack Dictys' account when Dictys' text is contradicted by Protesilaos saying that Idomeneus never participated in the Trojan War, implicitly denying the authenticity of Dictys' report. Moreover, it is also asserted in the *Heroicus* that writing was first invented by Palamedes; therefore if writing was not yet in use at the time of the Trojan War, it would also seem to challenge the pseudo-documentary framing device of Dictys' text.²⁰⁶ The possible intertextuality between Philostratus and Dictys is important because Dowden argues that Dictys' pre-Homeric, pseudo-documentary text the

¹⁹⁶ Lucian *True Stories* 2.20-22.

¹⁹⁷ Grentrup (1914), 44-46; Grossardt (2006), 70.

¹⁹⁸ Kim (2010), 178.

¹⁹⁹ Photius *Bibliotheca* 150b, 7-10 & Philostratus *Heroicus* 50.1-3.

²⁰⁰ Photius *Bibliotheca* 149b, 39-42 & Philostratus *Heroicus* 6.1.

²⁰¹ Photius *Bibliotheca* 149a, 18-20 & Philostratus *Heroicus* 54.

²⁰² Photius *Bibliotheca* 150b, 38-151a, 4 & Philostratus *Heroicus* 36.14-49.

²⁰³ Photius *Bibliotheca* 150a, 12-19 & Philostratus *Heroicus* 25.13-17.

²⁰⁴ Kim (2010), 178-179.

²⁰⁵ Merkle (1994), 193-194.

²⁰⁶ Dué & Nagy (2004), 56.

Ephemeris belli Troiani is a New Mythographical text similar to that of Ptolemy's.²⁰⁷ Therefore, it is feasible that if Philostratus knew one work, he may have been familiar with the other. The reason for supposing there may be a connection between Ptolemy's work and that of Dictys is because of four parallels between the texts: Helenus shooting Achilles in the hand,²⁰⁸ Andromache's presence at the ransom of Hector's body,²⁰⁹ the gold vine that Priam gave to Eurypylus²¹⁰ and Agamemnon's shooting of a goat and Palamedes being given command of the Greeks,²¹¹ which is presented in full below:

Ὡς Παλαμήδης ἀντ' Ἀγαμέμνονος Ἑλλήνων βασιλεύοι· ἐν Αὐλίδι γὰρ παραγενόμενος Ἀγαμέμνων αἶγα ἀγρίαν ἱερὰν Ἀρτέμιδος κατατοξεύοι· ἀπλοίας δὲ γενομένης τοῖς Ἑλλησι χρᾶ Κάλχας λυθῆναι τὸ δεινὸν εἰ θύσειε τὴν θυγατέρα Ἴφιγένειαν Ἀγαμέμνων Ποσειδῶνι. Τοῦ δὲ μὴ ἀνασχομένου, ὀργισθέντες οἱ Ἕλληνες ἀφείλαντο αὐτοῦ τὸ κράτος, καὶ κατέστησαν βασιλέα Παλαμήδην.²¹²

Palamedes was the leader of the Greeks instead of Agamemnon, because upon arriving in Aulis, Agamemnon shot dead a wild goat sacred to Artemis. Then, with the Greeks finding it impossible to set sail, Calchas prophesized that the disaster would be resolved if Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia to Poseidon. When he refused the angry Greeks deprived him of his command and appointed Palamedes as king instead.

The passage above is a retelling of the story of the sacrifice of Iphigenia in order for the Greeks to sail for Troy, which is a well-known myth. Traditionally the story goes that while out hunting Agamemnon kills a deer and Artemis, aggrieved by this act, prevents the winds that the Greeks need to sail to Troy; in recompense Agamemnon must sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia.²¹³ This version of the myth goes back to the Cyclic Cypria and Proclus' *Chrestomathy* in the sixth century CE, but is best known from the mythographic works of Apollodorus and Hyginus.²¹⁴ However, there are alternative versions where Iphigenia is saved because Artemis switched

²⁰⁷ Dowden (forthcoming).

²⁰⁸ Photius *Bibliotheca* 151b, 34-37; Latin Dictys *Ephemeris* 3.6.

²⁰⁹ Photius *Bibliotheca* 151b, 37 - 152a, 1; Latin Dictys *Ephemeris* 3.22.

²¹⁰ Photius *Bibliotheca* 152b, 8-11; Latin Dictys *Ephemeris* 4.14.

²¹¹ Photius *Bibliotheca* 151b, 34-37; Latin Dictys *Ephemeris* 1.19.

²¹² Photius *Bibliotheca* 150b, 48 - 151a, 3.

²¹³ Aeschylus *Agamemnon*, 190-255; Euripides *Iphigenia at Aulis*.

²¹⁴ Apollodorus *Library* E.3.16; Hyginus *Fabulae* 98.

her with a deer and whisked her away before anyone noticed.²¹⁵ The situation in the conventional version highlights the vindictive nature of the gods by forcing Agamemnon to make a choice where there will be serious repercussions for whatever choice he makes. In the end Agamemnon chooses to sacrifice his daughter in order to appease the gods and to save his own honour, as well as the honour of the Greeks, by enabling them to travel to Troy and seek retribution against the Trojans for Paris' abduction of Helen.

When we look at Ptolemy's version we can see that he has changed some key motifs of the myth, albeit without any of the obvious humour as seen in the Rock of Leucas tale; instead of a deer we have a goat, and instead of Artemis it is Poseidon who must be appeased (although it is still Artemis who is offended by the killing of the animal). It is the choice that Agamemnon makes, which differs greatly in Ptolemy's account, as the Agamemnon of Ptolemy's version cannot go through with the sacrifice, choosing his daughter over honour. As a result, Agamemnon is deposed and replaced by Palamedes as the general of the Greek army. When compared to many of the other examples throughout this chapter, this tale does not use humour to overtly parody the traditional myth in the case of the Rock of Leucas tale or the metamorphoses of Teiresias. Despite this it still undermines the myth, because by rewriting and revising a crucial event in the mythology of the Trojan War, Ptolemy has created a Homeric palimpsest that dramatically changes Homer's version of events, similar to how Stesichorus' *Palinode* contradicted the Homeric canon by claiming that Helen never went to Troy. Ptolemy's version removes Agamemnon from the key events that transpire during the Trojan War and afterwards. This means that if Agamemnon was not in charge of the Greek forces (and possibly not present at all during the events of the Trojan War), the feud between Agamemnon and Achilles over the captive women, which is the driving force behind events in the *Iliad*, would not have happened because Agamemnon would not have been able to abuse his power as the commander of the Greeks. Furthermore, it would also mean that much of the mythology concerning the fall of the House of Atreus after the events of the Trojan War could not have happened either, since these subsequent events hinge upon Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice his daughter. Therefore, if Agamemnon was removed from command, the events during the ten year siege of Troy would be entirely different from what we have

²¹⁵ Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris*.

learned from epic poetry and mythography, where Agamemnon plays a pivotal role. This passage rewrites not only Homer, but also Greek mythology in a much wider sense. Yet although he has revised the Homeric epics in a drastic way, Homer and the epics are conspicuous by their absence here, as Ptolemy has made no direct reference to the epics or to Homer. The differences between the conventional myth and Ptolemy's version are often explained away; the change in the animal from a deer to a goat can be explained due to the various versions of the myth popular in different localities, which have Iphigenia substituted for different animals when she is sacrificed.²¹⁶ Admittedly, with this passage it is much easier to take Ptolemy seriously as the passage lacks the parodic tone of his accounts of the Rock of Leucas legend and the Teiresias myth, but a crucial reason why some scholars believe this passage is important is because it is not unique to Ptolemy, since it is also found in Dictys' pre-Homeric, pseudo-documentary work *Ephemeris belli Troiani*.

Interim in ipsa navigandi festinatione Agamemnon, quem a cunctis regem omnium declaratum supra docuimus, longius paulo ab exercitu progressus forte conspicit circa lucum Dianae pascentem capream imprudensque religionis, quae in eo loco erat, iaculo transfigit. neque multo post irane caelesti an ob mutationem aeris corporibus pertemptatis lues invadit. atque interim in dies magis magisque saeviens multa milia fatigare et promiscue per pecora atque exercitum grassari. prorsus nullus funeri modus neque requies; uti quidque malo obvium fuerat, vastabatur. quis rebus sollicitis ducibus mulier quaedam deo plena Dianae iram fatur: eam namque ob necam caprae, qua maxime laetabatur, sacrilegii poenam ab exercitu expetere, nec leniri, priusquam auctor tanti sceleris filiam natu maximam vicariam victimam immolavisset. quae vox ut ad exercitum venit, omnes duces Agamemnonem adeunt eumque primo orare recusantemque ad postremum cogere, uti malo obviam properaet. sed ubi obstinate renuere vident nec ulla vi queunt flectere, plurimis conviciis insecuti, ad postremum regio honore spoliavere. ac ne tanta vis exercitus sine rectore effusius ac sine modo militiae vagaretur, praeficiunt ante omnes Palamedum, dein Diomedem et Aiace[m] Telamonium, quartum Idomeneam. ita per aequationem numeri atque partium quadripertitur exercitus.²¹⁷

While we were hastening to sail, Agamemnon (who, as we have said above, had been unanimously chosen as commander-in-chief), having gone some way from the camp, noticed a she-goat grazing near a grove of Diana and, feeling no awe because of the place, struck it through with his spear. Soon afterwards, either because of

²¹⁶ See Dowden (1989), 9-47 on Iphigenia in myth.

²¹⁷ Latin Dictys *Ephemeris* 1.19.

heavenly wrath or atmospheric contamination, a plague began to attack us. Day after day it raged with greater and greater violence, destroying many thousands as it passed indiscriminately through herds and army, laying waste everything that stood in its way, there being no abatement, no end to death. While our leaders were seeking some remedy, a certain woman, divinely inspired, revealed the reason for our affliction: the wrath of Diana; the goddess was exacting punishment from the army for the sacrilege of slaying the she-goat in which she especially delighted, nor would she relent until the perpetrator of this awful crime had made full atonement by sacrificing his oldest daughter. When this solution was brought to the army, all of our leaders approached Agamemnon. Begging and then threatening, they tried to make him offer the remedy quickly, but he obstinately and absolutely refused. And so they reviled him and finally stripped him of his command. But in order that their huge army, being leaderless, might not become an undisciplined mob, they chose four men to share the command: Palamedes, Diomedes, Ajax the son of Telamon, and Idomeneus. And they divided their forces, according to the number of leaders, into four equal parts.²¹⁸

Although Dictys' version is longer and more detailed, the similarities between his account and Ptolemy's are immediately apparent; they both share the inclusion of the goat and removal of Agamemnon from power. However, in Dictys' version, Palamedes shares authority with Diomedes, Ajax, and Idomeneus rather than assuming sole command. Owing to the parallels between the texts, Dowden has argued that Dictys and Ptolemy belong to a period of flowering inventiveness, which he refers to as New Mythography; the results of which are works such as Ptolemy's and Dictys' that contain unusual revisions of important and well established myth.²¹⁹ Moreover, Dowden and Gainsford have both argued, that in order for both authors to share some of the same myths, they must have relied upon the same older sources and that this is reflected in their texts.²²⁰ Although contrary to this, Cameron argues that a common shared source between both authors is doubtful.²²¹ For Dowden, what Ptolemy represents is an important mythographic source for some of the more colourful mythographical writings that have been lost. This means that we should take Ptolemy and his work seriously because they can give us an insight into the wider literary movement of the Imperial period, such as

²¹⁸ Trans. Frazer (1966).

²¹⁹ Dowden (forthcoming).

²²⁰ Dowden (2009), 157-161; Gainsford (2012), 67-68.

²²¹ Cameron (2004), 149.

the work of Dictys, as well as other authors that were interested in compiling and incorporating unusual myths. Although Dowden is surely right to suggest that Ptolemy and other Imperial works that revise myths in a colourful manner are working in a similar context²²² and were tapping into literary trends of the time, it is possible that Ptolemy could have used Dictys as a source or Dictys could have used Ptolemy,²²³ which would explain the similarities between the two tales, especially if Philostratus knew of Dictys's and even Ptolemy's works.²²⁴

The similarities are important because Dictys is the author of a pseudo-documentary text, his work being a fictitious eyewitness account of the Trojan War from the Greek perspective, which he presents as a plausible, rationalistic account of the war without any gods or superhuman heroism. He does this in the paratext of novel, where it is revealed that Dictys was a correspondent of the Cretan King Idomeneus and ordered the *Ephemeris* to be buried with him after his death, where it supposedly lay until it was discovered in the thirteenth year of Nero's reign, when Nero had it translated from Phoenician into Greek and kept it in his library. This is a cleverly conceived *Beglaubigungsapparat* or authentication strategy of the text, which is supposed to produce in the reader a belief in the text's reliability and genuineness.²²⁵ Dictys' text is one of the pre-Homeric epics or so-called *Troy Romances*²²⁶ that like Philostratus' *Heroicus* offers readers a way of connecting to the Greek fantasy of the Homeric past. It is also a prime example of a fictional text using a pseudo-documentary authentication strategy to suggest that it is based upon real events, but which actually functions as a mirror for readers who see their own encounter with the text through these literary games.²²⁷

The possibility that one author may have used the other as a source, is a tantalizing prospect. Although Gainsford disputes the possibility that Dictys could have used Ptolemy as a source, because Dictys' text is streamlined compared to

²²² Dowden (forthcoming).

²²³ Dictys' original Greek text must be later than 66CE, which is the date given in the pseudo-documentary prologue of the text. The most recently publishes POxy. 4943, gives a *terminus ante quem* of the first half the second century CE. Therefore, the most likely date of composition was around the first century. See Gainsford (2012), 59-65; Dowden *Diktys of Crete* (49) *BNJ*.

²²⁴ Cameron (2004), 149.

²²⁵ Merkle (2003), 566.

²²⁶ Along with Dares' *Acta diurnal belli Troiani* and the possibility of a third account by Sisyphus of Cos (*FGrH* 50 F 1-3), embedded in John Malalas' sixth century CE *Chronographia* who Malalas mentions in the same sentence as Dictys. On Sisyphus see Griffin (1908), 332-4; Cameron (2004), 149-50; Kim (2010), 179 n.12.

²²⁷ Hansen (2003), 301-313; Ní Mheallaigh (2008) 406-414.

Ptolemy's jumbled narrative,²²⁸ Ptolemy's text seems to have been a far more sophisticated text than Photius' epitome would initially suggest. The jumble as Gainsford calls it is due to Photius' epitomization, because on closer inspection, it is possible to see some remains of a thematic and narrative structure in the summary; Gainsford's dismissal of Ptolemy's text, then, is an out-dated viewpoint. Instead, if Dictys used Ptolemy as a source, it would be in keeping with the *Novel Research's* intention of being read as a handbook for useful information.²²⁹ Moreover, it would mean paradoxically that Dictys used unverified versions of myths from a work of pseudo-scholarship to create a pseudo-documentary novel that claimed to be true. Since Dictys was also part of the literary culture that Ptolemy belongs to, it is likely that if he did use Ptolemy as a source, he did so intentionally, fully aware of what type of text Ptolemy was writing and would have enjoyed the irony of using Ptolemy's text to support his invented revised version of the Trojan War. On the other hand, it is also easy to imagine an author like Ptolemy who invents sources, rewrites famous myth, and blurs the boundaries between fact and fiction, would find satisfaction from using Dictys as a source since he also plays with issues concerning truth and reliability, and as with Ptolemy seems to parody motifs associated with serious scholarship.²³⁰ Although at present this is impossible to substantiate one way or the other, the possibility of intertextuality between these two texts suggests that Ptolemy expected his readers to be complicit in the same textual games that are apparent in the *Ephemeris belli Troiani* when engaging with his own text. By referring to texts that claim to be authentic pre-Homeric epics, but which are in fact entirely bogus, they act as a mirror by reflecting the fictional nature of his interactions with Homer.

4.3. Conclusion

Using his background as a *grammaticus*, Ptolemy displays an adept ability for creating puns with heroes names, revising familiar myths, as well as creating new myths from established ones. Ptolemy also has a talent for offering unusual and sometimes humorous discussions of Homeric lines and passages, and he questions Homer's canonical status by portraying him as a plagiarist. This demonstrates that not only did Ptolemy have a vast knowledge of Greek myth and Homeric epic, but

²²⁸ Gainsford (2012), 68.

²²⁹ Griffin (1907), 109-110.

²³⁰ See Horsfall (2008/2009), 41-63, for a discussion of how Dictys parodies scholarship.

he also expected his readers to do so as well, in order to be fully immersed and appreciate how he revises his mythological and Homeric material. Yet although Ptolemy's sophisticated revisionist games require the reader to have detailed knowledge of the mythological corpus and of Homer, his playful revisionist treatment of Homer and myth reveals that he did not necessarily expect readers to take his revised myths and characterisation of Homer seriously. Instead, readers are meant to appreciate and even revel in, how Ptolemy challenges authority and tradition with his fictions, by creating parodies and allusions with humorous twists. Although Ptolemy appears to rewrite and challenge established myths and Homer, his parodic treatment of them acknowledges the fictionality of his revisions and ultimately the fictional and pseudo-scholarly nature of the text as a whole. This use of a canonical author being held up as a mirror to reflect the fictionality of the *Novel Research* is also apparent with Ptolemy's intertextual relationship with Herodotus, which I explore in the next chapter.

Chapter Five

Herodotean Palimpsests: Ptolemy and his Revisionist

Treatment of Herodotus and the *Histories*

5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I explored how Ptolemy taps into the contemporary trend of mythographical and Homeric revisionism, demonstrating that he was not only aware of this literary phenomenon but was fully engaged with it. However, Ptolemy's interest in revising literature is not limited to Homer and epic myth, as after Homer the most commonly cited and alluded to author in Photius' epitome of the *Novel Research* is Herodotus.¹ That Herodotus is the second most commonly cited author in the *Novel Research* is noteworthy. In most Imperial texts, after Homer it is often Plato and then the tragedians, especially Euripides, followed by the Greek comics who tend to play a significant role in a text.² This suggests that the presence of Herodotus in this capacity within the *Novel Research* is significant. It is possible that Photius found Herodotean material interesting, but when we consider that his epitome of the *Histories* is so brief and only mentions the rise of Cyrus and the Persian Wars, it seems more likely that Herodotus' presence in the epitome reflects Ptolemy's relationship with him and the *Histories* rather than Photius'.³

This chapter leads on from the previous as it explores how Ptolemy incorporates revised Herodotean material into his text, which enables him to display his detailed knowledge of both Herodotus and the *Histories*. As with his mythological and Homeric revisions, Ptolemy's Herodotean revisions are humorous as they parody episodes from the *Histories*. Despite Herodotus' capacity within the

¹ Compared to Ptolemy's Homeric revisions Herodotus receives considerably less attention since there are only seven references to the author in total; four of these are where Ptolemy cites Herodotus by name, and the other three are allusions to well known Herodotean passages from the *Histories*. It is possible that the original text contained more references and allusions, but these are the only examples that Photius has preserved in his epitome of the *Novel Research*. Three of the four Herodotean references appear in book three of Ptolemy's work but from this scant evidence it is impossible to ascertain whether this collection of Herodotean material is particularly relevant to book three or if there were originally more examples that Photius chose to ignore. As I mentioned in Chapter Four, book three mainly contains a significant amount of mythological material on numerous mythological characters and in particular Heracles. Therefore, it would seem that rather than the passages indicating that book three was a Herodotean themed book, the material was designed to fit into the context of information that Ptolemy was discussing at that time, making the grouping of Herodotean material in the book a coincidence.

² Avery (1997), 2.

³ Photius *Bibliotheca* codex 60, 19b.

work, the Herodotean material has been neglected in previous studies on the *Novel Research* in favour of debate surrounding his sources and his mythographical revisions. However, Cameron argues that a thorough study of Ptolemy's text would reveal Herodotean influence and allusions; he also stated that: 'it is disturbing to reflect that he may genuinely have thought he was following in Herodotus' footsteps'.⁴ This is because Herodotus cites sources more freely than any other surviving work of historiography and although no ancient text directly accuses Herodotus of fabricating these sources, Ptolemy is equally obliging in offering sources,⁵ many of which seem to be fabricated; therefore Cameron is suggesting that Herodotus may have influenced Ptolemy in this manner.

This chapter will argue that Ptolemy's palimpsestic relationship with Herodotus and the *Histories* is about fiction and how we read and understand fiction. The parodic allusions to the *Histories* and the playful characterizations of Herodotus as an unreliable author reveal that they have been carefully planned to create parallels between Ptolemy and Herodotus, in order to place Ptolemy in a genealogy of unreliable authors. Ptolemy's intertextual relationship with Herodotus is designed to reflect the absurd nature of Ptolemy's own material, which in turn characterizes Ptolemy and his own dubious literary activities. By doing this Ptolemy establishes intertextual links with one of the most famous and unreliable storytellers from antiquity, emphasizing his own skills as a storyteller and the untrustworthy nature of the *Novel Research*.

5.1.1. Herodotus in Antiquity

As I discussed about Homer in the previous chapter, by the Imperial period, Herodotus was a canonical author who could be argued with, pillaged, and adapted.⁶ Herodotus was recognized as being most like Homer (*Ὅμηρικώτατος*),⁷ emulating Homer,⁸ as well as being described as the 'prose Homer of history', in an inscription dating from the second century BCE in his home city of Halicarnassus.⁹ The *Histories* became an important text for many ancient authors, especially for those who wrote prose, both fiction and non-fiction, as Herodotus' style, discussion of

⁴ Cameron (2004), 156.

⁵ It is possible that he may have cited a source for every anecdote, See Tomberg (1968), 74-93.

⁶ Hornblower (2006), 315.

⁷ Longinus *On the Sublime* 13.3.

⁸ Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Ad Pompeium* 3.11.

⁹ Isager (1999), 1-23.

wonders, focus on autopsy, and abilities as a storyteller, made him a paradigm for later authors of historiography, ethnography, and narrative fiction that contained these features.¹⁰

This is because prior to the *Histories* the majority of Greek literature (the exception being the sixth and fifth century BCE Ionian authors such as Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, Hecataeus, and the Presocratic Philosophers), had surprisingly little interest in the natural world, tending to focus on themes connected to the polis, a walled space for which the wonders and marvels of nature were excluded. As with later paradoxographers, the importance of wonders is stressed at the beginning of the *Histories* where Herodotus states he is going to set out to record, ‘the great and wondrous deeds of the Greeks and the Barbarians’.¹¹ These wonders are both ethnographic and historical; the historical wonders focus on exceptional monuments that have been constructed by man (both Greek and Barbarian), as well as actions performed by humans and animals, while the ethnographic wonders tend to be a foreign artefact or natural phenomena (landscape, flora or fauna). Writing for a Greek audience, Herodotus focused on what Greeks would find strange, mapping the world in terms of marvels. No matter how astonishing the marvels are, they are presented as real, documented cases, and Herodotus goes to great lengths throughout his narrative to preserve the traces of his process of inquiry for his readers to stress the veracity and historicity of these wonders, relying upon what he has seen (*opsis*), heard (*akoē*), reasoned (*gnōmē*), and what he has inquired (*historiē*). Herodotus’ focus on the documenting and authenticating of wonders that are beyond his audience’s realm of knowledge and first-hand experience is one of the defining features of Herodotus’ work, and Herodotus’ legacy becomes a crucial blueprint for later works of ethnography, paradoxography, and historiography.¹²

However, although Herodotus’ style ensured his place as a classic at schools of rhetoric, his merits as a historian were called into question, as Herodotus’ narrative persona as part man of science part storyteller led the reliability of him and the *Histories* being criticised.¹³ Thucydides, without mentioning him by name,

¹⁰ Bowersock (1989), 407-414; Bowersock (1994), 100-101.

¹¹ Herodotus *Histories* 1.1. ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι.

¹² See Romm (2006), 178-179 & Munson (2001), 233 for Herodotus and wonders. See Marincola (1987), 121; Hartog (1988), 261; Dewald (2002), 271-272, on the importance of Herodotus’ different methods of inquiry.

¹³ Asheri, Lloyd & Corcella (2007), 49-51.

criticises Herodotus for preferring pleasure above truth and usefulness;¹⁴ Ctesias became the first to slander Herodotus by name, accusing him of lying, being unreliable, and even plagiarism;¹⁵ Harpocration wrote a book on the lies of Herodotus;¹⁶ and Plutarch criticised many of Herodotus' reported incidents during the Persian Wars for being inaccurate, absurd, telling out-right lies, and being pro-Persian.¹⁷ Moreover, Plutarch also claimed that Herodotus deliberately presents his narrative persona in the text as charming and somewhat naïve, so that he could slander all the great heroes of the Persian Wars.¹⁸ Despite his vitriolic attack on Herodotus, it is only his historical information that Plutarch has a problem with; not once does he single out a wonder for attack, which is what other critics have issues with.¹⁹ It is likely that in antiquity Herodotus was known as the 'father of lies'²⁰ long before becoming the 'father of history',²¹ and yet no other ancient writer has received such criticism in antiquity and still remained influential and popular among later authors.²²

As a result, Herodotus occupies a strange position between being a man of history and science, because of his use of autopsy to bring authority to the text,²³ and being a storyteller or fabulist,²⁴ because he was thought to be a liar. This complex and contradictory dynamic surrounding Herodotus makes him influential with Imperial period authors such as Lucian, who enjoys telling stories and playing with concepts of fact and fiction.²⁵ Since Herodotus chose to write through the medium of prose, it automatically implies a factual discourse and it is possible to see a parallel with Ptolemy and Lucian, as Ptolemy relates elaborate stories and combines scientific wonders with myths to create elaborate stories and anecdotes, blending fact and fiction and blurring the line between the two. Herodotus seems to be a model for both authors.

As we shall see, revising Herodotean material is different from revising

¹⁴ Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.21.1

¹⁵ Lenfant (1996), 348-380.

¹⁶ Cameron (2004), 156.

¹⁷ Plutarch *Malice of Herodotus*, 854e-874c.

¹⁸ Dewald (1987), 151.

¹⁹ Bowen (1992), 4-5.

²⁰ Cicero *De Divinatione* 2.56.116.

²¹ Cicero *Laws* 1.5.

²² Asheri, Lloyd & Corcella (2007), 51-52.

²³ See Redfield (1985) & Thomas (2000) for an examination of the scientific, proto-anthropologist approach of the *Histories*.

²⁴ Tatum (1997), 29-48.

²⁵ See Avery (2007), 1-13. Avery's thesis also provides a detailed analysis of how Lucian interacts in different ways with Herodotus throughout his numerous works.

Homer and myth, because the history and the enquiries in the *Histories* are already rational. Moreover, although the *Histories* contain wondrous and farfetched material, it is presented in a scientific and factual manner, which Herodotus claims to have verified through his use of autopsy. Herodotus' hands-on-approach is firmly grounded in the historical and literary record. This is different from interacting with less tangible myths, and rationalizing and historicizing Homer, which cannot be firmly dated or located in reality. Therefore, although almost equal to Homer in canonical status, since he is the only other author given a paternal status in ancient literature, Herodotus cannot compete with Homer's almost divine status because of the heroic era he brings to life, but also because so little is known about Homer himself; his name does not appear in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, nor is there any anonymous *sphragis* to him in either poem.²⁶ In contrast Herodotus' use of prose over verse, his use of autopsy, and his authorial presence established at the beginning of the *Histories* with his name and which is apparent throughout the text,²⁷ firmly grounds him in and his work in history and literature. As a result, for authors interested in wonders and travel,²⁸ Herodotus became a prose Homer, but without the semi-mythical status that Homer acquired. The *Histories*, with its use of autopsy and fabulous tales became an Ur-text for authors who enjoyed complex literary games with the fact/fiction antithesis. Therefore, for Ptolemy, establishing a relationship with Herodotus through revision and parody became a crucial step in cementing his own place in the fabulist tradition, just as much as he does with

²⁶ Graziosi (2002), 51-55.

²⁷ Scattered throughout the text are first-person statements that indicate different methods of inquiry, usually encompassing words such as *πυνθάνομαι*, *οἶδα*, *συμβαλλόμενος*, *εὕρισκω*, *δηλώσω*, and *δοκέω*, see Marincola (1987), 121. These remarks have been referred to as the 'monitorial mode' of historical discourse which 'covers any mention of sources and witnesses' accounts', see Barthes (1970), 146. According to Dewald (1987), 150 n.10, in total there are 1086 examples of Herodotus' authorial intervention in the text, although many of these occur within in a line or two of each other, so the number of perceptible interruptions upon the narrative seems much smaller. Dewald also says that first person statements can be divided into four different ways of understanding how Herodotus interacts with his material: as a bystander, as an investigator, as a critic, and as a narrator, all of which are designed by Herodotus to draw a distinction between his voice as an authorial persona and the sources of information he uses. See Dewald (2002), 271-272.

²⁸ The language that Herodotus uses in 1.5. such as 'will go forward' (*προβήσομαι*) and 'going through' (*ἐπεξιών*), is language associated with travel. Therefore at the beginning of the *Histories* Herodotus is introducing his authorial persona as a traveller to his audience, and is preparing his readers for what to expect. Moreover, his desire to record wonders, fits in with any traveller who expected to encounter the weird and the wonderful on his travels, making it entirely feasible then that Herodotus may have started his work looking outward at exotic phenomena, before turning his gaze inward to the Greek world and Greek history much later on in his research. See Friedman (2006).

Homer, since Herodotus seems to play these games himself.²⁹

5.2. Herodotean Palimpsests

5.2.1. Croesus

The first Herodotean allusion appears at the beginning of book one of the *Novel Research*, and is a very brief line about one of the most famous characters from the *Histories*, Croesus, about whom Photius simply states that there was: ‘... a story about Croesus saved from the pyre’ (περί τε τῆς Κροίσου ἐν τῇ πυρᾷ σωτηρίας).³⁰

This short statement comes from a paragraph that I have already discussed for its blending of myth and paradoxography,³¹ but which I have included for context:

Περιέχει μὲν οὖν τὸ ἀ΄ βιβλίον περὶ Σοφοκλέους τῆς τελευτῆς, καὶ πρὸ αὐτοῦ περὶ τῆς Πρωτεσιλάου, εἶτα καὶ περὶ τῆς Ἡρακλέους, ὡς πυρὶ αὐτὸν ἀνεῖλε μὴ δυνηθεὶς τὸ οἰκεῖον ἐντεῖναι τόξον πεντηκοντούτης γενόμενος, περὶ τε τῆς Κροίσου ἐν τῇ πυρᾷ σωτηρίας, περὶ τε τῆς Ἀχιλλέως τελευτῆς, καὶ περὶ Λαΐδος τῆς ἑταίρας, ὡς τελευτήσοι ὅστωι ἐλαίας καταπιούσα. Τούτων ἕκαστον διεξιὼν ἀποφαίνεται τοὺς πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἐσφαλμένως τὰ περὶ τούτων ὑπολαβεῖν τε καὶ ἀναγράψαι.³²

The first book comprises the death of Sophocles and before him a story about Protesilaus. Then there is one about Heracles who killed himself by fire when he was unable to string his own bow at the age of fifty; a story about Croesus surviving the pyre; one about the death of Achilles; and a story about the courtesan Lais who died swallowing an olive-stone. In going through each of these stories he [Ptolemy] claims that his predecessors were amiss when they took these stories and wrote them down.

The rise and fall of Croesus was popular among the ancient Greeks, and its focus on the instability of human fortune made a huge impact on the ancient Greek consciousness. Although no further detail is given by Photius here, it is likely that in this passage Ptolemy is alluding to Herodotus’ account of the fall of Croesus in the Lydian *logoi* of book one of the *Histories*, since the story of Croesus on the pyre is best known from Herodotus.³³ According to Herodotus, after the Persian conquest

²⁹ Tatum (1997) argues that Herodotus plays literary games between myth and history, fact and fiction, often parodying myth in his elaborate tales.

³⁰ Photius *Bibliotheca* 146b, 21.

³¹ See Chapter Three.

³² Photius *Bibliotheca* 146b, 17-25.

³³ What happened to Croesus after Sardis fell is unknown; see Evans (1978) for some possibilities.

of Lydia, Cyrus the Persian king planned to execute the Lydian king Croesus on a pyre. As Croesus is on the lit pyre facing his imminent demise, he cries out the name Solon, realizing that in his encounter with Solon, Solon had been right about the cycle of man's fortune.³⁴ Intrigued, Cyrus questioned Croesus about Solon, and he became worried about upsetting the balance of human fortune and concerned of retribution as a result of his actions. Therefore, Cyrus ordered the pyre to be doused, but the flames could not be quenched and realizing his predicament, Croesus beseeched Apollo for help; the god heard Croesus' prayers and sent rain to put out the pyre and Croesus was spared and became an advisor to Cyrus.³⁵

Herodotus' version is not the only account of Croesus on the pyre; there is also an earlier poetical account by Bacchylides that differs from Herodotus' version in that instead of being placed on pyre by Cyrus as a form of execution, Croesus, his wife and daughters arrange to go on the pyre to commit self-immolation by fire in order to avoid becoming Persian captives. While on the pyre Croesus invokes the gods and it is Zeus rather than Apollo who sends the rain clouds to put out the pyre, but then Apollo appears and whisks Croesus and his family away to live out their days among the Hyperboreans.³⁶ Herodotus' account, while still displaying some supernatural involvement with the appearance of the rain, removes much of the miraculous nature of Bacchylides' version and offers a far more rationalized and historical version of events to explain what happened to Croesus after being saved from the pyre.³⁷ Whether Ptolemy's version of the Croesus on the pyre story followed Herodotus' account or Bacchylides' version is impossible to say based on Photius' brief sentence, as there is so little information in this brief statement. However, when we consider that there are no references to Bacchylides in the *Novel Research*, but there are references to Herodotus, one may conclude that Ptolemy was alluding to Herodotus' version of the tale.

Although this may be the case, Ptolemy's version seems to have departed from Herodotus' by rewriting the story because Croesus may not have been saved from the pyre at all. This is because of the contradiction between the word *σωτηρίας*, which can be translated to mean 'saved' and the context in which the

³⁴ Herodotus *Histories* 1.29-33.

³⁵ Herodotus *Histories* 1.86-88.

³⁶ Bacchylides *Ode* 3.

³⁷ For a version with no divine or supernatural element see Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (7.2) where there is also no mention of Croesus being on a pyre, only of his defeat by Cyrus and then his subsequent appointment as an advisor to the Persian king.

reference to Croesus appears. On its own the sentence about Croesus is in keeping with Herodotus' and indeed Bacchylides' accounts that Croesus was saved from the pyre, which is how Henry translates the sentence in the Budé edition of the *Bibliotheca*, 'un récit sur Crésus sauvé du bûcher'.³⁸ The issue arises when we consider the passage as a whole, which focuses on the deaths of famous figures, both historical and mythological, in which all of the characters have met unusual ends, similar to those found in Valerius Maximus' *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*,³⁹ or Lucian's *Macrobii*.⁴⁰ Since all the other figures mentioned in this passage died from strange deaths, a story about Croesus being saved from the pyre seems out of place, unless in Ptolemy's version Croesus died on the pyre and we are lacking the details from Photius.

What does seem to be apparent is that Ptolemy is tapping into a wider cultural interest in celebrity deaths, which is also shared by Valerius Maximus and Lucian. Ptolemy was probably offering his own revised and rationalized versions to supplement famous accounts by other authors. This is supported by the fact that he criticises his literary predecessors in the passage for providing wrong or false information. As I discussed in Chapter Two, this is a common literary trope, which Ptolemy is using to invite his readers to read him against other authors and their accounts. Ptolemy is simply doing what would be expected of a *grammaticus*; he is offering his improved versions over established anecdotes. This is apparent with the death of Lais, in which the more commonly cited cause of her death was being stoned or beaten to death,⁴¹ not choking on an olive stone, which is similar to Lucian's claim that Sophocles died choking on a grape,⁴² and implies that there was popular tradition in this vein. Therefore, although we cannot be sure how Ptolemy revised the Croesus anecdote, when we consider that he offers different and rationalised versions of the deaths of Lais and Heracles, it is feasible that his Croesus on the pyre offered a rationalised version of how Croesus came to be saved from the pyre, compared to Herodotus' human (in the form of Cyrus) and then divine (Apollo) intervention. Croesus' deliverance from the pyre may also have been used by Ptolemy to stand out in the context in which it appears, and it is possible that Ptolemy is playing on something here. However, without any further detail

³⁸ Henry (1962), vol.3, 52.

³⁹ Valerius Maximus *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 9.12.1-10.

⁴⁰ Lucian *Macrobii* 10ff.

⁴¹ Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 13.589.

⁴² Lucian *Macrobii*, 24.

from Photius (Eustathius and Tzetzes offer no help in elucidating the anecdote either), it is impossible to fully determine what Ptolemy is doing here.

5.2.2. The Battle of Salamis

Photius' summary of Ptolemy's other passages that allude to Herodotean material contain far more detail than the brief statement about Croesus on the pyre. As a result, although Herodotus is not named in them, it is clear that they allude to famous Herodotean passages and they do so in some detail, making it far easier to understand how Ptolemy is revising them and is putting his own parodic spin on them. The first of these is where Ptolemy alludes to the *Histories* by filling in the blanks left by Herodotus in his description of how Xerxes was able to watch and see everything that transpired during the Battle of Salamis:

Καὶ ὡς Εὐπόμπου τοῦ Σαμίου, ὃς δράκοντα θηρίον τέρας ἔτρεφεν ἄπιστον καὶ εἰπεῖν καὶ ἀκοῦσαι, τούτου τοῦ Εὐπόμπου παῖδα Δράκοντα τοῦνομα ὄξυωπέστατον γενέσθαι φασίν, ὡς διὰ σταδίων κ' θεωρεῖν ῥαδίως· ὃν καὶ Ξέρξη ἐπὶ χιλίοις συγγενόμενον ταλάντοις καὶ συγκαθεζόμενον ὑπὸ τῆ χρυσοῦ πλατάνω διηγείσθαι βλέποντα τὴν Ἑλλήνων καὶ βαρβάρων ναυμαχίαν καὶ τὴν Ἀρτεμισίας ἀνδρείαν.⁴³

Eupompus of Samos raised a marvel, a wild serpent (it is said to have been an incredible thing to speak and hear of). They say the son of Eupompus was named Dracon and that he was sharp-sighted, because he could easily see twenty stadia. He [Dracon] came to live with Xerxes for a thousand talents, and sat beneath a golden plane-tree with him, describing in full everything he could see of the naval battle of the Greeks and Barbarians, and of Artemisia's bravery.

The beginning of the passage contains no hint of any connection to Herodotus; instead it reads like an example of a *paradoxon*, similar to those discussed in Chapter Three, as Ptolemy explains how Eupompus of Samos raised a serpent. The paradoxographical nature of the passage is expressed through words such *τέρας* or 'marvel', and *ἄπιστον* 'incredible'; two words commonly used in paradoxographical works to describe wondrous material. It is only after the anecdote has been read through that it becomes apparent that the focus of the passage is not a random *paradoxon*, but that Ptolemy is using it to introduce and explain one tiny and

⁴³ Photius *Bibliotheca* 148b, 3-10.

specific detail that is easy to overlook; Xerxes' vantage point and his ability to view the events that transpired during the course of the Battle of Salamis.⁴⁴ In the *Histories*⁴⁵ Herodotus mentions these events in two separate passages. In the first Herodotus says: 'It is said that the king, as he watched the battle, saw her ship ram the other, and one of the bystanders said, "Master, do you see how well Artemisia contends in the contest and how she has sunk an enemy ship?" When he asked if the deed was truly Artemisia's, they affirmed it, knowing reliably the marking of her ship, and they supposed that the ruined ship was an enemy'.⁴⁶ In the second passage according to Herodotus: 'Whenever Xerxes, as he sat beneath the mountain opposite Salamis which is called Aegaleos, saw one of his own men achieve some feat in the battle, he inquired who did it, and his scribes wrote down the captain's name with his father and city of residence'.⁴⁷

In both of Herodotus' accounts of Xerxes' watching the Battle of Salamis there are no embellishments to the scenarios and although Herodotus shows a particular interest in his fellow countrywoman Artemisia, in his full description of the battle his account is matter-of-fact; any elaboration of detail is only used as a way of giving an insight into the characters of Xerxes and Artemisia. Furthermore, although Herodotus tells us that Xerxes watched the battle, he does not elaborate on how he was able to see everything in such detail and distinguish people in the chaos of battle. Herodotus' motivation behind having Xerxes watch the battle is that it offers Herodotus a way to narrate the battle as if his readers are watching events unfold as they happen. It also enables him to show Xerxes' incompetence as a leader of the invading force because he does not realize that Artemisia defects to the Greeks half way through the battle and sinks one of the Persian allies' ships.

⁴⁴ Herodotus *Histories* 8.83-96.

⁴⁵ Herodotus, writing about the event a generation after it happened, is our main source for information on the Battle of Salamis, and modern historians interested in this pivotal event of the Persian War are reliant upon what Herodotus has written about the battle. Whether Herodotus was the best source about the battle in antiquity is difficult to say; the only other writer we know of that discusses the battle is Diodorus Siculus (*Library* 11.28-34) who was writing over three hundred years after Herodotus, and much of his information is derived from the fourth century BCE writer Ephorus, who may have used Herodotus as a source since the account is fairly consistent with Herodotus' version of events.

⁴⁶ Herodotus *Histories* 8.88.2. λέγεται γὰρ βασιλέα θεούμενον μαθεῖν τὴν νέα ἐμβαλοῦσαν, καὶ δὴ τινα εἰπεῖν τῶν παρεόντων 'δέσποτα, ὄρας Ἀρτεμισίην ὡς εὖ ἀγωνίζεται καὶ νέα τῶν πολεμίων κατέδυσε;' καὶ τὸν ἐπιπέσειν εἰ ἀληθῆς ἐστὶ Ἀρτεμισίης τὸ ἔργον, καὶ τοὺς φάναι, σαφέως τὸ ἐπίσημον τῆς νεὸς ἐπισταμένους: τὴν δὲ διαφθαρεῖσαν ἠπιστέατο εἶναι πολεμίην.

⁴⁷ Herodotus *Histories* 8.90.4. ὅπως γὰρ τινα ἴδοι Ξέρξης τῶν ἐωυτοῦ ἔργων τι ἀποδεικνύμενον ἐν τῇ ναυμαχίῃ, κατήμενος ὑπὸ τῷ ὄρει τῷ ἀντίον Σαλαμῖνος τὸ καλέεται Αἰγάλεως, ἀνεπυθάνετο τὸν ποιήσαντα, καὶ οἱ γραμματισταὶ ἀνέγραφον πατρώθεν τὸν τριήραρχον καὶ τὴν πόλιν.

Just how exactly Xerxes was able to witness everything is a minor plot hole in Herodotus' account concerning the battle; it does not affect the main narrative about the Battle of Salamis since it is not even noticeable until someone like Ptolemy points it out. As a *grammaticus* Ptolemy was trained to find issues with texts that no one else has noticed and pose questions no one had previously thought to ask. Here he seizes upon this plot-hole and offers an explanation, albeit a very strange one, for why Xerxes was able to see everything that transpired during the battle. It is because Xerxes had bought Eupompus' son, who happened to be named Dracon. From this Ptolemy creates an elaborate etymological pun by playing with the Greek verb *derkomai*, which in the Aorist is *edrakon* 'I see clearly'; his name 'Clearsight', which then reflects his extraordinary vision and explains why Xerxes knew what was transpiring. It is also because of the boy's name that there is confusion surrounding Eupompus' son, hence the paradoxographical information at the beginning which depicts him as a serpent. However, this is the unreliable story that Ptolemy will correct, while simultaneously exploiting Herodotus' lack of information in this passage.

As Kim explores in his monograph on Homeric revisionism, the supplementing of a canonical author's text is something that was common in the Imperial period with Homer and the epic poems, where the reimagining of Homeric characters, narrative or style can be found in the works of Dio Chrysostom, Lucian, and Philostratus.⁴⁸ Although these texts take pleasure in travestying the most respected representative of Greek culture, they depend upon erudite familiarity with the Homeric epics in order to discourse knowledgably and wittily on Homeric topics, such as historical, moral, or theological concerns, but also narrative verisimilitude, consistency, character, and plot. In these cases the correctness of the answer was less important than the persuasiveness and originality proposed,⁴⁹ as Dio Chrysostom, Lucian, and Philostratus display an intimate knowledge of the Homeric hypotext and exhibit a thorough grasp of Homeric criticism by manipulating "problems" from the Homeric epics for their own purposes.⁵⁰ Moreover, as I discussed in Chapter Four, Ptolemy's training as a *grammaticus* would have enabled him to interact with and manipulate the Homeric epics and

⁴⁸ Georgiadou & Larmour (1998); Saïd (2000), 161-186; Hunter (2009), 43-61; Kim (2010), 85-139, 140-174, 175-215; Ní Mheallaigh (forthcoming).

⁴⁹ Jacob (1994), 169-202.

⁵⁰ Kim (2010), 15-18.

myth to create and solve “problems” by producing original and often bizarre material. However, with his revision of Herodotus’ Battle of Salamis episode, Ptolemy is not just limiting himself to transforming Homeric material, but is applying his skills as a *grammaticus* and the culture of revisionism to Herodotus by using the *Histories* as a hypotext. Ptolemy has seized this opportunity to supplement Herodotus’ account with embellishments that are unique to him, but he is not alone in singling out this particular episode from the *Histories* and analysing it in a way more commonly associated with discussion of the Homeric poems.

Where Xerxes sat when he watched the battle has seen much discussion by both modern and ancient scholars. Although Herodotus provides no specific details, debate has focused on whether Xerxes sat upon a throne or not, and whether this would mean he ordered the Persian fleet to engage in battle in a specific place so that he would have the perfect vantage point.⁵¹ Neither Herodotus in the *Histories* nor Aeschylus in the *Persians* specifies Xerxes’ seating arrangements,⁵² but later sources such as Demosthenes and Plutarch both mention that he sat upon a *δίφρος* ‘stool’,⁵³ while Libanius and Tzetzes say he sat upon a throne.⁵⁴ It is interesting to note here that Chatzis in his study on Ptolemy argued that Tzetzes had access to a copy of the *Novel Research*.⁵⁵ However, in Tzetzes’ account of Xerxes at Salamis he does not allude to or mention Ptolemy’s version of events, which suggests that Tzetzes might not have had access to a complete text of Ptolemy, but relied upon previous epitomes by other scholiasts.

Herodotus’ account of Salamis seems to have generated some interest and debate in antiquity. This implies that just as Homer’s status was acknowledged through humour and parody by using the Homeric epics as hypotexts for revisions and rationalisations, later authors also picked over the *Histories* looking for discrepancies, plot holes, and “problems” within the text, which led them to offer rational and alternative explanations where they felt they were needed. As a *grammaticus*, Ptolemy contributed to this erudite literary culture by giving his own supplementary account to what he perceived to be a Herodotean problem. Furthermore, Ptolemy does not just offer an answer to a perceived literary problem with this passage, because although the plane-tree is a seemingly a minor detail

⁵¹ Frost (1973), 118.

⁵² Aeschylus *Persians* 465-467.

⁵³ Demosthenes *Against Timocrates* 24.129; Plutarch *Themistocles* 13.1.

⁵⁴ Libanius *Declamations* 9.39; Tzetzes *Chiliades* 1. 975-981.

⁵⁵ Chatzis (1914), xlvi-lii.

compared to the addition of Dracon, it is nevertheless an important inclusion in Ptolemy's version because it displays detailed knowledge of the *Histories*.

In the *Histories* there are two occasions, both in book seven, where Herodotus mentions a plane-tree in connection with Xerxes. The first of these is as follows: 'In this city Pythius son of Atys, a Lydian, sat awaiting them; he entertained Xerxes himself and all the king's army with the greatest hospitality, and declared himself willing to provide money for the war. When Pythius offered the money, Xerxes asked the Persians present who this Pythius was and how much wealth he possessed in making the offer. They said, "O king, this is the one who gave your father Darius the gift of a golden plane-tree and vine; he is now the richest man we know of after you".⁵⁶ Then in the second passage: 'Passing from Phrygia into Lydia, he came to the place where the roads part; the road on the left leads to Caria, the one on the right to Sardis; on the latter the traveller must cross the river Maeander and pass by the city of Callatebus, where craftsmen make honey out of wheat and tamarisks. Xerxes went by this road and found a plane-tree, which he adorned with gold because of its beauty, and he assigned one of his immortals to guard it. On the next day he reached the city of the Lydians'.⁵⁷

The first passage of Herodotus is used to convey Pythius' extraordinary wealth and Xerxes' ignorance, while the second passage is seen as a way of characterizing Xerxes as someone who likes to indulge himself in follies, even when there are more pressing matters at hand. Aelian thought the second passage portrayed Xerxes as a fool, because he seemed more interested in a tree whose decorations had no purpose than in his futile attempts to cross to Greece. Aelian goes on to say that a tree is beautiful in its own natural state and that decorating it with gaudy baubles did not ennoble it.⁵⁸ This sentiment is shared by one of the speakers in Lucian's in *De Domo* who uses the example of the golden plane-tree as a

⁵⁶ Herodotus *Histories* 7.25. ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ πόλει ὑποκατήμενος Πύθιος ὁ Ἄτου ἀνὴρ Λυδοῦ ἐξείνισε τὴν βασιλέως στρατιὴν πᾶσαν ξεινίῳσι μεγίστοισι καὶ αὐτὸν Ξέρξην, χρήματά τε ἐπαγγέλλετο βουλόμενος ἐς τὸν πόλεμον παρέχειν. ἐπαγγελλομένου δὲ χρήματα Πυθίου, εἶρετο Ξέρξης Περσέων τοὺς παρεόντας τίς τε ἐὼν ἀνδρῶν Πύθιος καὶ κόσμα χρήματα ἐκτημένος ἐπαγγέλλοιτο ταῦτα. οἱ δὲ εἶπαν ὃ βασιλεῦ, οὗτος ἐστὶ ὅς τοι τὸν πατέρα Δαρεῖον ἐδωρήσατο τῇ πλατανίστῳ τῇ χρυσέῃ καὶ τῇ ἀμπέλῳ: ὃς καὶ νῦν ἐστὶ πρῶτος ἀνθρώπων πλούτῳ τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν μετὰ σέ.

⁵⁷ Herodotus *Histories* 7.31. ὡς δὲ ἐκ τῆς Φρυγίης ἐσέβαλε ἐς τὴν Λυδίην, σχιζομένης τῆς ὁδοῦ καὶ τῆς μὲν ἐς ἀριστερὴν ἐπὶ Καρίης φεροῦσης τῆς δὲ ἐς δεξιὴν ἐς Σάρδεις, τῇ καὶ πορευομένῳ διαβῆναι τὸν Μαϊάνδρον ποταμὸν πᾶσα ἀνάγκη γίνεται καὶ ἵεναι παρὰ Καλλάτηβον πόλιν, ἐν τῇ ἄνδρες δημοεργοὶ μέλι ἐκ μυρίκης τε καὶ πυροῦ ποιεῦσι, ταύτην ἰὼν ὁ Ξέρξης τὴν ὁδὸν εὔρε πλατανίστον, τὴν κάλλεος εἵνεκα δωρησάμενος κόσμῳ χρυσέῳ καὶ μελεδωνῶ ἀθανάτῳ ἀνδρὶ ἐπιτρέψας δευτέρῃ ἡμέρῃ ἀπίκετο ἐς τῶν Λυδῶν τὸ ἄστυ.

⁵⁸ Aelian *Miscellaneous Research* 2.14.

wonder that astounded viewers, but only because of its expense; it lacked beauty and symmetry because so much gold was tasteless.⁵⁹ Although neither of these authors cites Herodotus by name, it is clear that they are both alluding to Xerxes' decoration of the plane-tree with golden ornaments that only Herodotus records, because it acts as a prime example of Persian ostentatiousness.⁶⁰

However, Ptolemy does not criticize the grandiose decoration of the plane-tree as Aelian and Lucian do, but the fact that it appears in his tale about Xerxes at Salamis, alongside his mentioning that Xerxes paid the exorbitant sum of one thousand talents for Dracon and his abilities, characterizes Xerxes as someone who is so wealthy he has money to burn, as well as to stress that there is nothing that extraordinary wealth cannot buy, including wonders. It cannot be a coincidence that according to Ptolemy, Xerxes chose to sit under a golden plane-tree, as judging by Aelian's and Lucian's allusions to the tree, Herodotus' story must have been well known in the Imperial period. Therefore, Ptolemy's inclusion of it seems to be a pastiche, as it not only strengthens Xerxes' association with the tree in the popular imagination, but his incorporation of it here shows his knowledge of the *Histories* by taking elements of one Herodotean passage and placing it within another to bring further Herodotean detail to the passage. As a result, Ptolemy demonstrates how well he knows Herodotus and how closely he has read the *Histories*; this intertextual relationship may give the impression to some readers that he is a scholarly expert on Herodotus.

Ptolemy's supplementary revisions to this Herodotean passage require readers to be familiar with Herodotus for them to appreciate Ptolemy's account, as he highlights the improbable nature of Herodotus having Xerxes watch and follow the battle in detail; a nigh on impossible feat from his vantage point, unless he really did have supernatural aid. However, although Ptolemy offers a somewhat rational explanation for why Xerxes could see what transpired at Salamis, Dracon's presence and ability is not the most logical or rationalised explanation that Ptolemy could have offered. Moreover, although unique to Ptolemy, the explanation within the context of the *Novel Research* is not entirely original or new as he uses the same ability in another Herodotean allusion; a revised passage on Gyges (discussed below) to explain how the Lydian queen could have perceived Gyges slipping out

⁵⁹ Lucian *De Domo* 5. It is worth noting that Herodotus actually appears in *De Domo* as a witness to present evidence supporting the speaker's view, see Avery (1997), 23-34.

⁶⁰ Stubbings (1946), 63; Newby (2003), 128-129.

through the door.⁶¹ That Ptolemy could have concocted a more mundane and believable alternative is revealing, because it means that he deliberately chose to offer an explanation that turned Herodotus' straightforward account into an extraordinary tale. Therefore, while it may initially appear that Ptolemy is going to rationalize Herodotus, his over-rationalization has the opposite effect; it makes the whole episode seem farfetched and unbelievable when compared to Herodotus' account and seems to advertise its own fictionality. We saw a similar situation with his mythological revisionisms, as Ptolemy initially presents alternative myths in a rational manner, but often the explanation itself is far from being rational; instead it is so farfetched it becomes absurd, which ends up being amusing and makes the original look far more reliable. There is the sense that Ptolemy is not just parodying Herodotus as part of a Herodotean revisionism culture that existed alongside Homeric revisionism. Rather he seems to be using Herodotus to raise issues surrounding fact and fiction in order to draw attention to his own fictions, as well as possibly satirizing the literary culture of rationalising canonical authors' works with his strange, outlandish and over rationalized solutions to literary "problems". This is something that is also apparent with another Herodotean passage, this time about Darius.

5.2.3. The King of Kings

In another passage from book three of the *Novel Research*, a paragraph after the Salamis passage above, Ptolemy alludes to another famous story from the *Histories* about how Darius became king: 'Darius son of Hystaspes was exposed by his mother and was suckled on mare's milk and raised by Spargapises the horse-keeper, and became king by the neighing of a horse' (Ὡς ὁ Ὑστάπου Δαρεῖος ἐκτεθείς ὑπὸ τῆς μητρὸς ἵππου θηλαῖς ἀνετρέφη ὑπὸ Σπαργαπίση τῷ ἵπποφορβῶ, καὶ ἵππου χρεμετισμῶ βασιλεύει).⁶² This anecdote in which Ptolemy claims Darius was exposed as a child, found and raised by a horse-keeper, and weaned on mare's milk, appears in a much larger passage about historical coincidences, which I have included for context:

*Εἶτα διαλαμβάνει περὶ συνεμπτώσεως ἱστορικῆς, ὡς Ἀμύκου τῷ τάφῳ
 ῥοδοδάφνη ἔφν, καὶ οἱ φαγόντες αὐτῆς ἐπεθύμουν πυκτικὴν, καὶ ὡς*

⁶¹ Photius *Bibliotheca* 150b, 18-28.

⁶² Photius *Bibliotheca* 148b, 36-38.

Ἀντόδωρος φαγὼν αὐτῆς δεκατρεῖς στεφάνους ἀνείλετο, πλὴν ὑπὸ Διοσκόρου τοῦ Θηραίου ἐν τῇ τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτῃ ἀγωνίᾳ ἠττήθη, ὥσπερ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Ἄμυκος λέγεται ὑφ' ἐνὸς τῶν Διοσκούρων καταπαλαισθῆναι. Καὶ τὸν Κροῖσόν φασι γεννηθῆναι ἐν ἑορτῇ Ἀφροδίτης, καθ' ἣν Λυδοὶ τὸν ἅπαντα πλοῦτον περιτιθέντες αὐτῇ πομπεύουσι. Καὶ ταῦρον θύοντι τῷ πατρὶ ἀπήγγελλται τεχθῆναι Θεμιστοκλῆς, καὶ ταύρου πιὼν αἷμα ἀπεβίω. Ὡς ὁ Ὑστάπου Δαρεῖος ἐκτεθεὶς ὑπὸ τῆς μητρὸς ἵππου θηλαῖς ἀνετράφη ὑπὸ Σπαργαπίση τῷ ἵπποφορβῷ, καὶ ἵππου χρεμετισμῷ βασιλεύει. Καὶ ὡς Ἰβύκου τοῦ μελοποιῦ θεραπείων τοῦνομα Ἡρακλῆς, ζῶν ἐκαύθη, συναράμενος τοῖς λησταῖς κατὰ τοῦ δεσπότη.⁶³

Next he has a separate section on historical coincidences; that a rose laurel grew on the tomb of Amycus, and whoever ate it longed to box, and Antodorus having eaten it, won thirteen crowns, except for in the fourteenth contest where he was defeated by Dioscorus of Thera, just like Amycus himself is said to have been overthrown in wrestling by one of the Dioscuri. Croesus, they say, was conceived during a festival of Aphrodite, during which the Lydians have a procession placing all their wealth around her. Themistocles' birth was announced to his father, while he was sacrificing a bull; drinking the blood of the bull, he died. Darius son of Hystapes was exposed by his mother and was suckled on mare's milk and raised by Spargapises the horse-keeper, and became king by the neighing of a horse. An attendant of the lyric poet Ibycos, named Heracles, was burned alive for conspiring with pirates against his master.

This foundling and rise to power story about Darius is unique to Ptolemy; it is not found in the *Histories* or indeed any other Greek or Persian source that discusses the rise of Darius. Instead, the historical version of events is that Darius was the son of Hystaspes, a Persian official, who Herodotus says was the satrap of Susa.⁶⁴ Although the initial focus of the anecdote is on historical coincidence, which is why it leads on from the story of Themistocles' father, there seems to be more to this anecdote than the theme and context of historical coincidence in the passage as a whole since it alludes to Herodotus and reworks Herodotean episodes. This is because, although there is no foundling story associated with Darius, there is one attached to Cyrus' early life. According to Herodotus, when Astyages the king of Media and grandfather of Cyrus had a dream that foretold a child of his daughter would usurp his throne and conquer all of Asia, he ordered a man called Harpagus to take away

⁶³ Photius *Bibliotheca* 148b, 25-40.

⁶⁴ Herodotus *Histories* 3.70.3.

the newly born Cyrus and kill him. When faced with the task at hand Harpagus could not go through it, so he sent for a herdsman called Mithradates and asked him to take the infant Cyrus and kill him. Mithradates took the child home, where fate would have it that his wife had given birth that day but the baby had died, so Mithradates and his wife chose to keep Cyrus and expose the body of their dead son in his place. Cyrus was raised as their child, oblivious of his true origins until he was ten years old.⁶⁵

Although there are differences in the details, the similarities between Ptolemy's foundling tale about Darius and Herodotus' foundling tale concerning Cyrus is surely intended to make readers who are familiar with the *Histories* realise the intertextual connection that is being established. In the *Histories* the Cyrus foundling story is there to demonstrate how prophetic dreams can be fulfilled, it also stresses the particular status of Cyrus as a foundling, a status shared by legendary figures such as Oedipus, Moses, and Romulus and Remus. However, rather than alluding to Herodotus' Cyrus foundling tale to add credence or at the very least establish a continuity by following the same theme, Ptolemy appears to be mocking Herodotus' Cyrus story and indeed the farfetched aspect of all foundling tales. This is because despite its farfetched nature, Ptolemy includes the anecdote because it serves a purpose, albeit a different one from Herodotus' Cyrus foundling story. It is used to explain Darius' supposed affinity with horses and how he became king with the neighing of a horse, a connection that is clearly alluding to the famous passage in *Histories* where Darius becomes king in this manner:

περὶ δὲ τῆς βασιληΐης ἐβούλευσαν τοιόνδε: ὅτεν ἂν ὁ ἵππος ἡλίου ἐπανατέλλοντος πρῶτος φθέγγηται, ἐν τῷ προαστείῳ αὐτῶν ἐπιβεβηκότων, τοῦτον ἔχειν τὴν βασιληΐην. Δαρείῳ δὲ ἦν ἵπποκόμος ἀνήρ σοφός, τῷ οὖνομα ἦν Οἰβάρης. πρὸς τοῦτον τὸν ἄνδρα, ἐπεῖτε διελύθησαν, ἔλεξε Δαρεῖος τάδε. 'Οἴβαρες, ἡμῖν δέδοκται περὶ τῆς βασιληΐης ποιέειν κατὰ τάδε: ὅτεν ἂν ὁ ἵππος πρῶτος φθέγγηται ἅμα τῷ ἡλίῳ ἀνιόντι αὐτῶν ἐπαναβεβηκότων, τοῦτον ἔχειν τὴν βασιληΐην. νῦν ὧν εἴ τινα ἔχεις σοφίην, μηχανῶ ὡς ἂν ἡμεῖς σχῶμεν τοῦτο τὸ γέρας καὶ μὴ ἄλλος τις.' ἀμείβεται Οἰβάρης τοῖσιδε. 'εἰ μὲν δὴ ὧ δέσποτα ἐν τούτῳ τοι ἐστὶ ἢ βασιλέα εἶναι ἢ μὴ, θάρσσει τούτου εἵνεκεν καὶ θυμὸν ἔχε ἀγαθόν, ὡς βασιλεὺς οὐδεὶς ἄλλος πρὸ σεῦ ἔσται: τοιαῦτα ἔχω φάρμακα.' λέγει Δαρεῖος 'εἰ τοίνυν τι τοιοῦτον ἔχεις σοφισμα, ὦρη μηχανᾶσθαι καὶ μὴ ἀναβάλλεσθαι, ὡς τῆς ἐπιούσης ἡμέρης ὁ ἀγὼν ἡμῖν ἐστὶ.' ἀκούσας ταῦτα ὁ Οἰβάρης ποιέει

⁶⁵ Herodotus *Histories* 1.107-116.

τοιόνδε: ὡς ἐγίνετο ἡ νύξ, τῶν θηλέων ἵππων μίαν, τὴν ὁ Δαρείου ἵππος ἔσπεργε μάλιστα, ταύτην ἀγαγὼν εἰς τὸ προάστιον κατέδησε καὶ ἐπήγαγε τὸν Δαρείου ἵππον, καὶ τὰ μὲν πολλὰ περιῆγε ἀγχοῦ τῇ ἵπῳ ἐγχρίπτων τῇ θηλέῃ, τέλος δὲ ἐπῆκε ὀχεῦσαι τὸν ἵππον. ἄμ' ἡμέρη δὲ διαφωσκούσῃ οἱ ἕξ κατὰ συνθήκαντο παρῆσαν ἐπὶ τῶν ἵππων: διεξελαυνόντων δὲ κατὰ τὸ προάστιον, ὡς κατὰ τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον ἐγίνοντο ἵνα τῆς παροιχομένης νυκτὸς κατεδέδετο ἡ θήλεα ἵππος, ἐνθαῦτα ὁ Δαρείου ἵππος προσδραμὼν ἐχρεμέτισε: ἅμα δὲ τῷ ἵπῳ τοῦτο ποιήσαντι ἀστραπή ἐξ αἰθρίης καὶ βροντὴ ἐγένετο. ἐπιγενόμενα δὲ ταῦτα τῷ Δαρείῳ ἐτελέωσε μιν ὥσπερ ἐκ συνθέτου τευ γεγόμενα: οἱ δὲ καταθορόντες ἀπὸ τῶν ἵππων προσεκύνεον τὸν Δαρεῖον.⁶⁶

As for the making of a king, they decided that he should be elected whose horse, after they were all in their saddles in the suburb of the city, should first be heard to neigh at sunrise. Now Darius had a clever groom, whose name was Oebares. When the council broke up, Darius said to him: "Oebares, we have resolved to do as follows about the kingship: he shall be elected whose horse, after we are all mounted on our horses in the suburb of the city, neighs first at sunrise. Now if you have any cunning, figure out how we and no one else can win this prize". "Master", Oebares answered, "if this is to determine whether you become king or not, be confident for this reason and have an easy mind, for no one else shall be king before you, such are the tricks I have". "Then", said Darius, "if you have any trick such as you say, use it and don't put it off, for tomorrow is the day of decision". When Oebares heard that, he did as follows. At nightfall he brought one of the mares which Darius' horse particularly favoured, and tethered her in the suburb of the city; then bringing Darius' horse, he repeatedly led him near the horse, bumping against the mare, and at last let the horse mount. At dawn of day the six came on horseback as they had agreed. As they rode out through the suburb and came to the place where the mare had been tethered in the past night, Darius' horse trotted forward and whinnied; and as he so did there came lightning and thunder out of a clear sky. These signs given to Darius were thought to be foreordained and made his election perfect; his companions leapt from their horses and bowed to him.⁶⁷

In Herodotus' account, Darius contrives his way to the Persian throne and the story is designed to portray Darius as someone who is capable of outwitting his opponents; he is as cunning as he is intelligent and this is the characterisation of Darius that we see throughout the *Histories*. Moreover, Herodotus' portrayal of how Darius became king is close enough to the account inscribed in the Behistun inscription that it raises the possibility that he had access to an oral tradition

⁶⁶ Herodotus *Histories* 3.84.3-86.

⁶⁷ Herodotus *Histories* 3.84.3-86.

derived from it, or even a translation.⁶⁸ This is intriguing as it suggests that Darius had no qualms about emphasising the marginality of his rights to the Persian throne, something that is reflected in the numerous revolts during Darius' reign, which is very different from most ancient kings who tend to be keen to stress their sagacity through a divine right to rule, not one established through cunning.⁶⁹

In Ptolemy's version the wider political and historical ramifications of the story that Herodotus is keen to convey and often to Hellenize, is entirely neglected in favour of a bizarre and convoluted tale that alludes to Cyrus' foundling story, but is then reworked to play on the popular account of how Darius became king through his ingenuity, which is why the tale claims he was raised by a horse and became a king by the neighing of one as well. As with his version of the tale of Xerxes at Salamis, Ptolemy is showing off his own knowledge of Herodotus and establishing an intertextual relationship with the *Histories*. The inclusion of the foundling tale within the account of Darius' claiming of the Persian throne acts as an ironic twist that ingeniously riffs off Herodotus' version. Ptolemy would have expected his readers to be well acquainted with Herodotus in order to realize this relationship, as it wryly comments on the plausibility of Herodotus' foundling story about Cyrus, which he satirizes by highlighting the unlikeliness of Herodotus' version of events and uses for inspiration for his own preposterous version. Indeed, because Ptolemy's rationalized revision is actually more absurd than Herodotus' foundling story and his account of how Darius became king, it does not add anything to Herodotus' account; rather it suggests that he is being subversive and is not only parodying Herodotus, but is satirizing the culture of revisionist literature with his absurd over rationalizations.

Ptolemy's over-rationalizations often result in a version that is less rational and believable than the canonical original, and it becomes difficult to tell whether he is satirizing, Herodotus or the phenomenon of revisionism itself. This is an issue that is also apparent with another Imperial author, Achilles Tatius. In Achilles Tatius' novel *Leucippe and Clitophon*, the presence of Herodotus as a literary canon also makes his mark in the form of his descriptions of wonders from Egypt. Amongst Clitophon's, the protagonist of the novel, descriptions of *paradoxa* he describes a hippopotamus, about which he says: 'It happened that some of the men

⁶⁸ Flower (2006), 279.

⁶⁹ Khurt (1995), 665.

had caught a river beast, a real spectacle: the Egyptians call it the horse of the Nile. It is indeed a horse, as its name indicates, in terms of its belly and feet (except in the case of the hoof, which is cloven). Its size is that of the largest ox; its tale is short and without hair – which also goes for its entire body. Its head is round and far from small, its jowls like a horse's. Its snout flares out broadly, and it exhales fiery gases as if from a fiery fount. Its jaw is as broad as its jowls. Its mouth opens as far as its temples. It has bent, canine teeth, like a horse's in appearance and arrangement but three times as big'.⁷⁰

Clitophon's description here is a distorted picture of a hippopotamus⁷¹ and although the general description of the animal is accurate enough, the elaboration of the fiery breath portrays the hippopotamus as a supernatural beast, rather than a real creature. The result is a strange and inaccurate description of an animal that depicts the hippopotamus as more wondrous than it actually is. From this it seems that Clitophon may have seen a hippopotamus, but that he is embellishing his description to add to his tale to make it more incredible, or that he did not see one at all, and is describing the creature based on hearsay, much like Herodotus' famous description of the same animal: 'Hippopotamuses are sacred in the district of Papremis, but not elsewhere in Egypt. They present the following appearance: four-footed, with cloven hooves like cattle; blunt-nosed; with a horse's mane, visible tusks, a horse's tail and voice; big as the biggest bull. Their hide is so thick that, when it is dried, spear-shafts are made of it'.⁷²

Herodotus' inaccurate description is thought to be because he never saw one, and he based his description on the animal's name, 'river-horse', incorporating Hecataeus' equally inaccurate account of the hippopotamus.⁷³ Although it is not explicit, when read alongside each other Clitophon's elaborate description of the hippopotamus seems to allude to Herodotus' account by reminding readers of

⁷⁰ Achilles Tatius *Leucippe and Clitophon* 4.2. ἔτυχον ποτάμιον θηρίον ἄνδρες τεθηρακότες θέας ἄξιον· ἵππον δὲ αὐτὸν τοῦ Νείλου ἐκάλοιν οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι. καὶ ἔστι μὲν ἵππος, ὡς ὁ λόγος βούλεται, τὴν γαστέρα καὶ τοὺς πόδας, πλὴν ὅσον ἐν χηλῇ σχίζει τὴν ὀπλήν. μέγεθος δὲ κατὰ τὸν βοῦν τὸν μέγιστον· οὐρὰ βραχεῖα καὶ ψιλὴ τριχῶν, ὅτι καὶ τὸ πᾶν τοῦ σώματος οὕτως ἔχει. κεφαλὴ περιφερής· οὐς μικρόν· ἐγγὺς ἵππου παρεῖαί. μυκτῆρ ἐπὶ μέγα κεχηνῶς καὶ πνέων πυρῶδη καπνὸν ὡς ἀπὸ πηγῆς πυρός. γένυς εὐρεία, ὄση καὶ παρεῖα· μέχρι τῶν κροτάφων ἀνοίγει τὸ στόμα· ἔχει δὲ καὶ κυνόδοντας καμπύλους, κατὰ μὲν τὴν ἰδέαν καὶ τὴν θέσιν ὡς συός, τὸ δὲ μέγεθος εἰς τριπλάσιον. Trans. Whitmarsh (2001).

⁷¹ Gaselee (1917), 193 n.1.

⁷² Herodotus *Histories* 2.71. οἱ δὲ ἵπποι οἱ ποτάμιοι νομῶ μὲν τῶ Παπρημίτη ἱροὶ εἰσι, τοῖσι δὲ ἄλλοισι Αἰγυπτίοισι οὐκ ἱροὶ. φύσιν δὲ παρέχονται ἰδέης τοιήνδε: τετράπουν ἐστί, δίχηλον, ὀπλαὶ βοός, σμιόν, λοφιὴν ἔχον ἵππου, χαυλιόδοντας φαῖνον, οὐρὴν ἵππου καὶ φωνήν, μέγαθος ὅσον τε βοῦς ὁ μέγιστος: τὸ δέρμα δ' αὐτοῦ οὕτω δὴ τι παχὺ ἐστί ὥστε αἰῶν γενομένου ζυστὰ ποιέεσθαι ἀκόντια ἐξ αὐτοῦ.

⁷³ Hecataeus f. 324.

Herodotus' inaccurate description. This is supported by the fact that several of Clitophon's descriptions can also be found in the *Histories*. These include a description of a crocodile, which when compared to Herodotus' account is far more accurate since Herodotus claims that they have no tongue and are blind in water,⁷⁴ once again displaying Herodotus' lack of knowledge concerning these animals. As a result, the passages subtly call into question Herodotus' versions and the reliability of them, similar to the way Ptolemy calls into question Herodotus' reliability through parodying Herodotean passages; the implication being that Clitophon is more knowledgeable and reliable than Herodotus on the matter. That is until we consider the two other instances where the novel alludes to the *Histories*: where Clitophon describes the love between palm-trees⁷⁵ and when he describes a phoenix.⁷⁶

In contrast to the hippopotamus and the crocodile these allusions to Herodotus do not draw attention to Herodotus' deficiencies, rather they show up Clitophon's lack of knowledge and naiveté as he gets the roles of the male and female palm-trees confused, and he wholeheartedly believes the description of the phoenix, unlike Herodotus who is rather cynical about the bird. Therefore, in these situations Herodotus comes across as a far better narrator of wonders than Clitophon, because Clitophon, in his attempts to display Herodotean material, ends up getting information wrong and offers no improvement on the original. Goldhill argued that it is easy to see how anecdotal material might become part of the discourse of the educated elite of the Roman Empire, and that Clitophon represents how educated people read texts and used material from them to reinforce their social standing among the erudite.⁷⁷ Yet because Clitophon gets his Herodotean material wrong and believes things that Herodotus dismisses as farfetched, this suggests that Achilles Tatius is deliberately using Herodotean material to characterise Clitophon's lack of *paideia*; the result is that while Clitophon is well read, he is not as clever and as good at being a sophist as he thinks he is.⁷⁸

This is a more subtle approach compared with Ptolemy, who seeks out and creates Herodotean "problems" to parody Herodotus' tales through over rationalization and by supplementing them with absurd material. Therefore, what

⁷⁴ Achilles Tatius *Leucippe and Clitophon* 4.19; Herodotus *Histories* 2.68.

⁷⁵ Achilles Tatius *Leucippe and Clitophon* 1.117; Herodotus *Histories* 1.193.

⁷⁶ Achilles Tatius *Leucippe and Clitophon* 3.25; Herodotus *Histories* 2.73.

⁷⁷ Goldhill (2009), 102-103.

⁷⁸ See Chapter Two.

initially appears to be a parody of Herodotus may be more subversive as Achilles Tatius uses Herodotus to undermine the over-confident and highly erudite Clitophon. Clitophon is portrayed as someone who is likely to have been schooled on Herodotus and had training in the erudite literary games of the period, and yet when attempting to display that knowledge he falls short of Herodotus' *paideia*. As a result, it becomes difficult to tell who Achilles Tatius is satirizing; Herodotus and his unreliable descriptions of things that he probably never saw, or Clitophon's attempts to display his own knowledge, some of which seems to have been drawn and unsuccessfully revised from Herodotus.

5.3 Herodotus' Honesty and Reliability

5.3.1. Withholding Information

So far I have shown how through exegesis, Ptolemy establishes a playful intertextual relationship with Herodotus. Ptolemy does this by drawing attention to plot holes in Herodotus' material and by pointing out "problems" with the text to parody and to offer his alternative and rationalised accounts to some famous Herodotean passages. Although there is no explicit criticism of Herodotus along the lines of what is found in Plutarch's *Malice of Herodotus*, nor does Ptolemy explicitly call Herodotus a liar, as Lucian does in his *True Stories*⁷⁹ and *Philopseudeis*,⁸⁰ Ptolemy does hint at the unreliable aspect of Herodotus's narrative persona in the *Novel Research*. In doing so Ptolemy seems to paradoxically establish himself as more reliable than Herodotus, but also place himself in a genealogy of literature that has Herodotus as its founder.

One such passage where Ptolemy does this appears shortly after the passage that contains the line about Croesus,⁸¹ in the same paragraph as the three metamorphoses,⁸² which also happens to be the first passage in the *Novel Research* that cites Herodotus by name:

Λέγει δ' ὅτι ὁ παρ' Ἡροδότῳ ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ τῶν ἱστοριῶν ὑπὸ Ἀδράστου τοῦ Γορδίου ἀνηρημένος Ἀγάθων ἐκαλεῖτο, καὶ ἀναιρεθῆναι αὐτὸν περὶ ὄρνυγος φιλονεικοῦντα.⁸³

⁷⁹ Lucian *True Stories* 2.31.

⁸⁰ Lucian *Philopseudeis* 2.

⁸¹ Ptolemy also supplies the name of another character from the *Histories*, the queen of Lydia and wife of Candaules, which is discussed below.

⁸² See Chapter Four.

⁸³ Photius *Bibliotheca* 146b, 35-38.

He [Ptolemy] says that the person in book one of Herodotus' *Histories* who was killed by Adrastus son of Gordias was called Agathon, and he was killed in an argument about a quail.

In this passage Ptolemy is referring to the passage in the *Histories* where Herodotus discusses the arrival of Adrastus at Croesus' court in Sardis in order to be cleansed of bloodguilt from murdering his brother:

ἔχοντι δὲ οἱ ἐν χερσὶ τοῦ παιδὸς τὸν γάμον, ἀπικνέεται ἐς τὰς Σάρδις ἀνήρ συμφορῆ ἔχόμενος καὶ οὐ καθαρὸς χειρᾶς, ἐὼν Φρυγὸς μὲν γενεῆ, γένεος δὲ τοῦ βασιληίου. παρελθὼν δὲ οὗτος ἐς τὰ Κροῖσου οἰκία κατὰ νόμους τοῦ ἐπιχωρίου καθαρσίου ἐδέετο κυρῆσαι, Κροῖσος δὲ μιν ἐκάθηρε. ἔστι δὲ παραπλησίη ἢ κάθαρσις τοῖσι Λυδοῖσι καὶ τοῖσι Ἑλλησι. ἐπεὶ δὲ τὰ νομιζόμενα ἐποίησε ὁ Κροῖσος, ἐπυνθάνετο ὁκόθεν τε καὶ τίς εἴη, λέγων τάδε: ὦνθρωπε, τίς τε ἐὼν καὶ κόθεν τῆς Φρυγίης ἦκων ἐπίστιός μοι ἐγένεο; τίνα τε ἀνδρῶν ἢ γυναικῶν ἐφόνευσας; ὁ δὲ ἀμείβετο ὧ βασιλεῦ, Γορδίῳ μὲν τοῦ Μίδεω εἰμι παῖς, ὀνομάζομαι δὲ Ἄδρηστος, φονεύσας δὲ ἀδελφεὸν ἐμῶντοῦ ἀέκων πάρεμι ἐξεληλαμένος τε ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ ἐστερημένος πάντων. Κροῖσος δὲ μιν ἀμείβετο τοῖσιδε: ἀνδρῶν τε φίλων τυγχάνεις ἔκγονος ἐὼν καὶ ἐλήλυθας ἐς φίλους, ἔνθα ἀμηχανήσεις χρήματος οὐδενὸς μένων ἐν ἡμετέρου, συμφορὴν τε ταύτην ὡς κουφότατα φέρων κερδανέεις πλείστον.⁸⁴

Now while Croesus was occupied with the marriage of his son, a Phrygian of the royal house came to Sardis in great distress and with unclean hands. This man came to Croesus' house, and asked to be purified according to the custom of the country; so Croesus purified him (the Lydians have the same manner of purification as the Greeks), and when he had done everything customary, he asked the Phrygian where he came from and who he was: 'Friend,' he said, 'who are you, and from what place in Phrygia do you come as my suppliant? And what man or woman have you killed?' 'O King,' the man answered, 'I am the son of Gordias the son of Midas, and my name is Adrastus; I killed my brother accidentally, and I come here banished by my father and deprived of all.' Croesus answered, 'All of your family are my friends, and you have come to friends, where you shall lack nothing, staying in my house. As for your misfortune, bear it as lightly as possible and you will gain most'.

The Herodotus passage is much longer and far more detailed than Ptolemy's; as a result we learn who Adrastus is, where he is from and what he did to become

⁸⁴ Herodotus *Histories* 1.35.

banished and seeking purification from Croesus. Yet although the Herodotus passage contains this information, it does not divulge what the brother's name was or how Adrastus accidentally killed his brother, since in the *Histories* this is not important. What is important is Adrastus' presence at Croesus' court and the role he has to play in events to come, which have a direct impact on events in Croesus' life and the entire narrative of the Lydian *logos*. Therefore, as in the case of the Xerxes passage the lack of this information does not affect the narrative of Herodotus' account, especially as it is not noticeable in any way. The lack of information only becomes apparent when Ptolemy points it out, since it is not something that the majority of readers would notice. Once again it displays Ptolemy's ability as a *grammaticus* to find plot holes and discrepancies within a text, even when they are not really there and come up with questions that no one else had thought to ask, which he attempts to resolve with his alternative and supplementary version of events, like that found in Homeric revisionism.⁸⁵

However, by including this material Ptolemy is drawing attention to the fact that in Herodotus' tale this basic information is noticeably absent and even though the information has no relevance or effect on the tale, it causes doubt in the reader. As a result, although this additional information is not important, once Ptolemy has pointed it out it niggles away at the reader, since Ptolemy is implying that Herodotus neglected to tell because he was either not privy to this information, or worse that Herodotus deliberately kept it to himself. For readers this means that Herodotus cannot be regarded as a reliable source for this information and it has the effect of portraying Ptolemy as more honest and knowledgeable than Herodotus on the same subject. Ptolemy, then, is undermining Herodotus' authority by playing on an issue that has existed in reader's consciousness since Ctesias explicitly accused Herodotus of being unreliable and a liar when compared to himself.⁸⁶ Although what Ptolemy is doing is more implicit when compared with Ctesias' approach, the effect is the same as Herodotus' reliability and authority are called into question and are undermined by an author who has no qualms about inventing his own material.

That Herodotus deliberately suppressed information is made explicitly clear in another passage from Ptolemy:

⁸⁵ Kim (2010), 1-21.

⁸⁶ Photius *Bibliotheca* (codex 72) 49b, 39 – 50a, 5.

Ἵτι τὸν ὑπὸ Φημονόης χρησμὸν μόνον Νεοπτόλεμον τὸν Μακιώτην παρὰ Αἴθου τινὸς τῶν Δελφῶν ἀκοῦσαι φασί· περὶ τούτου δὲ τοῦ Αἴθου καὶ Ἡρόδοτος φησὶν ἐν πρώτῃ ἱστοριῶν ὅτι εἰδὼς αὐτοῦ τὸ ὄνομα οὐκ ἐπιμνησθήσομαι.⁸⁷

They say that only Neoptolemus Makiotes heard about a certain Aithos of the Delphians from the Phemonoe oracle. About this Aithos, Herodotus says in the first book of the *Histories* that, ‘although I know his name, I will not mention it’.

In the passage about Aithos Ptolemy is referring to the Herodotean passage about a Delphic dedication: ‘The golden vessel bears the inscription “Given by the Lacedaemonians”, who claim it as their offering. But they are wrong, for this, too, is Croesus’ gift. The inscription was made by a certain Delphian, whose name I know but do not mention, out of his desire to please the Lacedaemonians’.⁸⁸ Here Ptolemy exploits the fact that Herodotus has deliberately withheld information that he knew from his readers. Ptolemy uses Herodotus’ own work against him to create doubt in the minds of his readers about Herodotus’ reliability and consequently raise his own status by providing information that Herodotus has not.

Herodotus’ withholding of information is not a unique occurrence, because elsewhere in the *Histories* he deliberately suppresses the names of the Spartans who fought with Leonidas at Thermopylae: ‘Leonidas, proving himself extremely valiant, fell in that struggle and with him other famous Spartans, whose names I have learned by inquiry since they were worthy men. Indeed, I have learned by inquiry the names of all three hundred’.⁸⁹ Macan, in his commentary on the *Histories*, long ago noted the curiosity of omitting the names of these men,⁹⁰ and it is striking that Herodotus lets his readers know that he knows the names of the dead Spartans but is not willing to divulge them.⁹¹ Furthermore, Herodotus underscores his open suppression of this information by immediately continuing his narrative with the specific names of the fallen Persian warriors of Xerxes’ family: ‘Many famous Persians also fell there, including two sons of Darius, Abrocomes and Hyperanthes,

⁸⁷ Photius *Bibliotheca* 150a, 5-8.

⁸⁸ Herodotus *Histories* 1.51.3-4. τῶν τῷ χρυσέῳ ἐπιγέγραπται Λακεδαιμονίων φαιμένων εἶναι ἀνάθημα, οὐκ ὀρθῶς λέγοντες· ἔστι γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο Κροίσου, ἐπέγραψε δὲ τῶν τις Δελφῶν Λακεδαιμονίοισι βουλόμενος χαρίζεσθαι, τοῦ ἐπιστάμενος τὸ ὄνομα οὐκ ἐπιμνήσομαι.

⁸⁹ Herodotus *Histories* 7.224.1. καὶ Λεωνίδης τε ἐν τούτῳ τῷ πόνῳ πίπτει ἀνὴρ γενόμενος ἄριστος καὶ ἕτεροι μετ’ αὐτοῦ ὀνομαστοὶ Σπαρτιητέων, τῶν ἐγὼ ὡς ἀνδρῶν ἀξίων γενομένων ἐπυθόμην τὰ οὐνόματα, ἐπυθόμην δὲ καὶ ἀπάντων τῶν τριηκοσίων.

⁹⁰ Macan (1907).

⁹¹ Larson (2006), 227.

born to Darius by Phratagune daughter of Artanes. Artanes was the brother of king Darius and son of Hystaspes son of Arsames'.⁹² It has been argued that the motives behind Herodotus' omission of the Greek names here is that in honour to the glory of the dead Spartans he has chosen not to record them; honour could also be the case with suppressing the name of Aithos and that the Persians are not offered this same form of respect.⁹³ However, as Boedeker notes,⁹⁴ Herodotus also likes to spare his readers the names of men of ill-repute, such as the name of the Samian who stole a large amount of money from a eunuch in the service to Achaemenids,⁹⁵ where Herodotus emphasise his knowledge of the man's name and his wilful omission of it.⁹⁶

Herodotus seems to suppress names either out of respect for the people he is discussing, or in some circumstances, if the person being discussed does not meet his standards. Yet what makes Herodotus' suppression of information noteworthy is that Herodotus claims that Homer suppressed information about his knowledge of Helen coming to Egypt: 'In my opinion, Homer knew this story, too; but seeing that it was not so well suited to epic poetry as the tale of which he made use, he rejected it, showing that he knew it'.⁹⁷ According to Herodotus, Helen never made it to Troy because the ship that she and Paris were travelling in en route to Troy was blown off course, which forced them to land in Egypt, where the pharaoh, upon discovering Paris' crime, detained Helen. However, the Greeks did not realise that Helen was not at Troy, but in Egypt, until after they had sacked the city.⁹⁸ Herodotus claims to have discovered this true account of the Trojan War, which he learnt from Egyptian priests, exploiting Egypt's status in antiquity as the repository of obscure and historical knowledge of greater antiquity than the Greeks.⁹⁹ It is this Egyptian version of events that Herodotus claims Homer knew, but chose not to recount, because he considered it to be unsuitable for epic poetry.

⁹² Herodotus *Histories* 7.224.2. *καὶ δὴ Περσέων πίπτουσι ἐνθαῦτα ἄλλοι τε πολλοὶ καὶ ὀνομαστοί, ἐν δὲ δὴ καὶ Δαρείου δύο παῖδες Ἀβροκόμης τε καὶ Ὑπεράνθης, ἐκ τῆς Ἀρτάνεω θυγατρὸς Φραταγούνης γεγονότες Δαρείῳ. ὁ δὲ Ἀρτάνης Δαρείου μὲν τοῦ βασιλέως ἦν ἀδελφεός, Ὑστάσπεος δὲ τοῦ Ἀρσάμεος παῖς*

⁹³ Lateiner (1989), 68; Boedeker (2000), 109.

⁹⁴ Boedeker (2000), 109.

⁹⁵ Herodotus *Histories* 4.43.

⁹⁶ Larson (2006), 226.

⁹⁷ Herodotus *Histories* 2.116. *δοκίει δέ μοι καὶ Ὅμηρος τὸν λόγον τοῦτον πυθέσθαι: ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ ὁμοίως ἐς τὴν ἐποποιήν εὐπρεπὴς ἦν τῷ ἐτέρῳ τῷ περ ἐχρήσατο, ἐκὼν μετήκε αὐτόν, δηλώσας ὡς καὶ τοῦτον ἐπίσταιτο τὸν λόγον.*

⁹⁸ Herodotus *Histories* 2.112-120.

⁹⁹ Herodotus *Histories* 2.4; Plato *Timaeus* 21dff.

Veracity and accuracy was so important for Herodotus that he corrects Homer's mythology and calls into question Homer's reliability and authority over ancient Egyptian sources, which Herodotus believes to be the more accurate because of the age and wisdom of ancient Egyptian civilisation. We have already seen how Ptolemy taps into the Imperial culture of revising Homeric myth and questioning Homer's preeminent authority on the Trojan War, but long before authors like Ptolemy, Lucian, Dio Chrysostom, and Philostratus were doing this, Herodotus raised the issue of Homer's reliability and honesty.¹⁰⁰ To a certain extent Ptolemy is imitating Herodotus by doing the same thing with him that Herodotus did with Homer, and it is possible that Herodotus' challenging of Homer on this issue could have acted as an impetus for Ptolemy to challenge Herodotus in the same manner. Therefore, just as Herodotus presents himself as more forthcoming than Homer with his own Homeric revision, Ptolemy is using these Herodotean allusions to present himself as being Herodotus' better, by appearing to give fuller and more comprehensive accounts than Herodotus.

Herodotus' obsession with veracity and levels of autopsy make him susceptible to parody and criticism by other Imperial authors, especially when he does not abide by these standards himself. We see this in Lucian's interactions with Herodotus, as he fashions a significant intertextual relationship with Herodotus to draw attention to his interaction. Lucian's *mimesis* of Herodotus mainly encompasses his works that are comprised of fantastic tales, such as the *Philopseudeis*,¹⁰¹ but it is not confined to the imitation of narrative episodes in Herodotus' *Histories*.¹⁰² Lucian's interactions with Herodotus also display complex dynamics as Herodotus' influence manifests itself throughout Lucian's *oeuvre* in various ways: appropriation of subject matter, *mimesis* of language and style, and small-scale and large-scale representations of episodes from his *Histories*. The *De dea Syria* displays an extensive programme of *mimesis* of Herodotus on several levels, including dialect, phraseology, critical method, and subject matter.¹⁰³ Moreover, in addition to interacting with Herodotus' text he also incorporates Herodotus himself into some of his works,¹⁰⁴ summoning Herodotus as a witness to support the

¹⁰⁰ Neville (1977), 3-12; Austin (1994), 118-136; Kim (2010), 30-33.

¹⁰¹ Avery (1997), 58-60. For a detailed analysis of the text see Ogden (2007).

¹⁰² Avery (1997), 2-3.

¹⁰³ See Lightfoot (2003) for a detailed study of this text, and how Lucian imitates Herodotus style, language, and authorial presence.

¹⁰⁴ For a detailed study on Lucian's relationship with Herodotus see Avery (1997).

speaker's view in *On the Hall*¹⁰⁵ and presenting him as a liar being punished for his lies in *True Stories*.¹⁰⁶

A famous example of where Lucian draws attention to the Herodotus' tall tales appears in the *True Histories*, not long after the prologue where the narrator of the text reveals the fact that the only truth he will tell is that he is a liar, the narrator of the text talks about sailing through the Pillars of Heracles to the Western Ocean, where on the eightieth day he and his shipmates make land on a wooded island where they make the following discovery: 'When we had gone forward through the wood about three furlongs from the sea, we saw a slab of bronze, inscribed with Greek letters, faint and obliterated, which said: "To this point came Hercules and Dionysus". There were also two footprints in the rock close by, one of which was a hundred feet long, the other less – to my thinking, the smaller one was left by Dionysus, the other by Hercules'.¹⁰⁷ It has long been recognized that this passage is directed at Herodotus who records that in Scythia there is a footprint of Heracles that is two cubits in length, '...they show a footprint of Heracles by the Tyras river stamped on rock, like the mark of a man's foot, but forty inches in length'.¹⁰⁸ While Herodotus' footprint in Scythia is four cubits long, Lucian has amplified his Herodotean allusion to fantastic proportions, as four cubits becomes one hundred feet. Lucian's mimetic footprints become an aggressive emulation; his wonder is bigger and more wondrous than his predecessor.¹⁰⁹ By exaggerating Herodotus' account so absurdly, Lucian is both criticizing Herodotus for his gullibility or dishonesty and making a good joke at his expense;¹¹⁰ it characterises Herodotus, as well as Lucian's own literary activities, since he has already established himself as a liar in the prologue. Lucian's footprints function as a metaphor that flags up the very act of *mimesis*; readers are reminded in a surreal

¹⁰⁵ Lucian *On the Hall* 20-31. See Avery (1997), 23-34.

¹⁰⁶ Lucian *True Stories* 2.31.

¹⁰⁷ Lucian *True Stories* 1.7.1-7. προελθόντες δὲ ὅσον σταδίους τρεῖς ἀπὸ τῆς θαλάττης δι' ὕλης ὀρώμεν τινα στήλην χαλκοῦ πεποιημένην, Ἑλληνικοῖς γράμμασιν καταγεγραμμένην, ἀμυδροῖς δὲ καὶ ἐκτετριμμένοις, λέγουσαν Ἄχρι τούτων Ἡρακλῆς καὶ Διόνυσος ἀφίκοντο. ἦν δὲ καὶ ἵχνη δύο πλησίον ἐπὶ πέτρας, τὸ μὲν πλεθριαῖον, τὸ δὲ ἔλαττον – ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν, τὸ μὲν τοῦ Διονύσου, τὸ μικρότερον, θάτερον δὲ Ἡρακλέους. προσκυνήσαντες δ' οὖν προῆμεν.

¹⁰⁸ Herodotus *Histories* 4.82. ἵχνος Ἡρακλέους φαίνουσι ἐν πέτρῃ ἐνεόν, τὸ ἔοικε μὲν βήματι ἀνδρός, ἔστι δὲ τὸ μέγαθος δίπηχυ, παρὰ τὸν Τύρην ποταμόν.

¹⁰⁹ Ní Mheallaigh (forthcoming).

¹¹⁰ Morgan (1985), 477.

literary way that they are following in the footsteps of the literary giants of the past.¹¹¹

We find another mimetic interaction in Dio Chrysostom's *Trojan Oration*, when he claims to have used Egyptian priests as sources for his revised account of the Trojan War.¹¹² This plausible fantasy of a pre-Homeric text exploits Egypt's status in the Greek imagination,¹¹³ just as Herodotus also corrects Homer with knowledge gained from Egyptian priests.¹¹⁴ This seems to be a clear allusion to the passage from the *Histories*, as Dio Chrysostom not only builds his pseudo-documentary fiction upon beliefs about Greek culture's status alongside civilisations of greater antiquity, but he uses the allusion to signal to readers the fictionality of his account.¹¹⁵ Both Lucian and Dio Chrysostom imitate Herodotus' authorial persona to use it against him and undermine the authority of the *Histories*, but in doing so their mimetic relationship with Herodotus highlights their literary debt to this canon of literature.

As with Lucian and Dio Chrysostom, Ptolemy uses Herodotus' authorial persona against him to portray himself as someone who is more forthcoming and trustworthy in supplying withheld information. However, just as Dio Chrysostom's Egyptian source is an ironic nod to Herodotus that acknowledges the fiction of his alternative account of the Trojan War, Ptolemy seems to do something similar when he withholds a name himself. For instance: 'They say that when Heracles was born he was initially called Nilos, but when he saved Hera by killing the anonymous fire-breathing giant who was attacking her, from that point on he changed his name in response to thwarting the attack against Hera'.¹¹⁶ In this anecdote the pun is created by the lack of name, and this hints at its playful nature. In contrast to other anecdotes and his revisions of Herodotean material, this is at odds with Ptolemy's keenness to supply this information when other authors have not. As a result, it would seem that Ptolemy is imitating Herodotus' foibles of withholding names, and is parodying it not only as a nod to Herodotus' narrative persona, but to signal the fictional nature of the anecdote.

¹¹¹ Ní Mheallaigh (forthcoming).

¹¹² Dio Chrysostom *Trojan Oration*, 37-38.

¹¹³ Ní Mheallaigh (2013), 199.

¹¹⁴ Kim (2010), 108-112.

¹¹⁵ Fuchs (1996), 134-135.

¹¹⁶ Photius *Bibliotheca* 147b, 16-19. 'Ὅτι Νεῖλος ὁ Ἡρακλῆς ἀπὸ γενέσεώς φησιν ἐκαλεῖτο, ἐπεὶ δ' Ἥραν ἔσωσεν ἐπερχόμενον αὐτῇ ἀνελών τὸν ἀνόνομον καὶ πυρίπνοον γίγαντα, ἐκεῖθεν διὰ τὸ ἀπαλαλκεῖν τῆς Ἥρας τὸν πόλεμον μετέβαλε τὴν κλῆσιν.

Returning to the Adrastus passage above, by adding the extra information there is the sense that Ptolemy is portraying himself as either being more knowledgeable or more truthful and forthcoming than Herodotus when he recounted the story. This could be seen as alluding to and criticizing Herodotus' unfavourable reputation in antiquity, which he does far more explicitly in the Aithos passage. However, there is sense that something much more playful is going on when we consider the name that he supplies: Agathon, (meaning 'good, well-born or gentle'), which seems to have been used by Ptolemy as a pun. This must be in imitation of Herodotus who used the name Adrastus ('not running away' or 'not inclined to do so'), as a play on words in the *Histories*. However, since Herodotus makes a pun with the name of Adrastus, Ptolemy's account starts to take on the appearance of being a pastiche rather than a parodic revision, as he seems to be acknowledging, and then participating with Herodotus' literary game. Ptolemy appears to be showing his appreciation of Herodotus' black sense of humour by telling his readers that the other man was called Agathon; the result is a darkly humorous pun of his own that plays on Herodotus' with the inclusion of such unfortunate but aptly named characters.

This then brings us to the standout feature in Ptolemy's revision, where according to him, the death of Agathon occurred when he and Adrastus had an argument over a quail. The addition of the quail to the story is strange and it seems to be a completely bizarre reason to get into an argument, let alone a violent one. As a result, the absurdity of it, as with the play on names, must be intentional because it changes readers' perspective on the character of Adrastus. In the *Histories*, Adrastus is portrayed as a haunted man with a tragic past who cannot escape an even worse future that fate has in store for him. However, by mentioning that he killed someone over an argument about quail, Ptolemy reduces Adrastus' tragic past into a farce. In filling in some of the blanks left by Herodotus, Ptolemy has undermined the tale and the character of Adrastus; it becomes difficult to sympathise with someone and find them tragic when they killed another person over something so strange but at the same time so mundane. It is Ptolemy's addition of the quail that changes our perspective and understanding of Herodotus' tale.

A tempting scenario with this addition is that Ptolemy is using the story to refer to himself. As I mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, although Ptolemy is referred to as Ptolemy son of Hephaestion by Photius, he is also known by the

moniker Ptolemy Chennus or 'Ptolemy the quail'. Due to this name, Bowersock proposed that the poet Martial might have known of Ptolemy, because in one of his epigrams, Martial compares poor forgeries of his work to the mimicry of a quail (*coturnix*),¹¹⁷ which could imply that Martial is making a playful reference to Ptolemy and his reputation through his agnomen.¹¹⁸ When we consider that here in this passage there is the word *ὄρνυγος*, which also means quail, it is possible that Ptolemy is not only playing with a famous Herodotean tale to add a humorous touch to it, but is also using it as a way to refer to himself in his own work.

Although this possibility does rely on the fact that Ptolemy had to have referred to himself as the quail during his lifetime, or at least been aware of the fact that others referred to him by that name, rather than it being a nickname attached to him by others at a later date, it does seem notable that we have a writer known as the quail inserting a quail into a story that has no need for such an unusual and irrelevant addition. The prospect that Ptolemy chose a revised Herodotean tale that calls into question Herodotus' honesty as a way to refer to himself, implies that Herodotus is not just someone to parody and whose reputation makes him fair game. Instead, it hints that the intertextual relationship goes beyond parody, suggesting that Herodotus has a more crucial role to play in the establishment of fact and fiction, and what is rational and what is absurd, as Ptolemy uses his Herodotean revisions and allusions to establish himself in the genealogy of unreliability and fictionality for which Herodotus is the ancestor.

5.3.2. Gyges

The complex intertextual and palimpsestic relationship between Ptolemy and Herodotus, which Ptolemy seems to be building in order to reflect on the *Novel Research* becomes clearer in Ptolemy's passage on Gyges, the ancestor of Croesus and the bodyguard to Candaules, who became King of Lydia after killing Candaules and usurping the throne. In the passage Ptolemy once again claims that Herodotus has deliberately withheld names from his readers when he related this story.¹¹⁹ However, he also revises the story in such a way that it parodies one of the most famous scenes from the *Histories*, where Gyges spies on the Lydian queen while she

¹¹⁷ Martial *Epigrams* 10.3.

¹¹⁸ Bowersock (1994), 26-27.

¹¹⁹ Larson (2006), 229-234.

was undressing, because he divulges salacious information about Herodotus' personal life, which had a direct impact upon the text. The result is that Ptolemy blurs the lines of reality between Herodotus and the *Histories*; one is no longer separate from the other and it becomes difficult to tell where the *Histories* end and the character of Herodotus begins in a passage where fact meets fiction:

ὡς ἡ Κανδαύλου γυνή, ἧς Ἡρόδοτος οὐ λέγει τοῦνομα, Νυσία ἐκαλεῖτο· ἦν καὶ δίκωρον καὶ ὄξυωπεστάτην φασὶ γενέσθαι, τὸν δρακοντίτην κτησαμένην λίθον, διὸ καὶ αἰσθέσθαι τὸν Γύγην ἐξιόντα διὰ τῶν θυρῶν· ἄλλοι Τουδοῦν αὐτὴν καλεῖσθαι, οἱ δὲ Κλυτίαν, Ἄβας δὲ Ἀβρῶ ταύτην καλεῖσθαι· σιγήσαι δὲ τοῦνομά φασι τῆς γυναικὸς τὸν Ἡρόδοτον, ἐπεὶ ὁ ἐρώμενος Ἡροδότου Πλησίρροος Νυσίας ὀνόματι ἐρασθεῖς, Ἀλικαρνασσίας τὸ γένος, ἐπεὶ μὴ τύχοι τῆς ἐταίρας οὐκ ἀνεχομένης βρόχῳ ἑαυτὸν ἀνήρτησε· διὸ φυλάξασθαι ὡς ἀπεχθὲς εἰπεῖν τὸ τῆς Νυσίας ὄνομα Ἡρόδοτον.¹²⁰

The wife of Candaules whom Herodotus does not name is called Nyssa; they say she had double-pupils and was sharp-sighted, and that she acquired a dragon stone for which reason she perceived Gyges going out through the door. Others say that she was called Tudo, others Clytia, Abas says she was called Abro. They say that Herodotus is silent about the name of the wife because Plesirrhous, whom Herodotus loved, loved a woman called Nysia who was from a family in Halicarnassus, and when he could not woo her because the courtesan was not interested in him, he hanged himself with a noose. On account of this woman, Herodotus avoided the name Nysia because it was abhorrent to him.

The story of Gyges was popular in antiquity; he was famous for his wealth¹²¹ and dedications at Delphi helped spread his fame around the Greek world, but it is his accession to the Lydian throne for which he is best known.¹²² The most famous version of the Gyges story can be found in Herodotus' *Histories*,¹²³ a story of transgressive desire and its tragic consequences that focuses on the act of Gyges' looking,¹²⁴ which has been described as one of the most sophisticated pieces of ancient fiction.¹²⁵ Although Herodotus' account is the most famous, there are other versions of the Gyges story from antiquity, some of which also have a connection to

¹²⁰ Photius *Bibliotheca* 150b, 18-28.

¹²¹ Archilochus f. 19.

¹²² Herodotus *Histories* 1.14.3.

¹²³ Herodotus *Histories* 1.7.4-13.

¹²⁴ Travis (2000), 333.

¹²⁵ Tatum (1997), 37-43. Tatum argues that the Gyges story is a sophisticated piece of fiction that cleverly and intentionally inverts the gender and power relationships established in Herodotus' earlier rationalisation of mythological rapes.

Ptolemy's version and will be discussed below: there is the philosophical account by Glaucon in Plato's *Republic*,¹²⁶ a possible tragedy based upon a papyrus fragment,¹²⁷ Nicolaus of Damascus' version,¹²⁸ as well as a very brief description by Plutarch,¹²⁹ and Justin's summary of a version by Pompeius Trogus.¹³⁰

In Herodotus' Gyges tale Candaules, the Lydian king, became so enamoured of his wife he believed her to be the most beautiful woman alive. In order to prove his point Candaules coerces his bodyguard Gyges to spy on the queen while she undresses so he can see her naked and better understand Candaules' obsession with his wife. Gyges goes through with it and thinks he has managed to get away with spying on the queen, but she notices him slipping out the door. The next day the queen summons Gyges and offers him a choice in order to appease her shame at being seen naked: either commit suicide or kill Candaules and become king; unsurprisingly Gyges chooses the latter and becomes king.¹³¹ The specific passage from the *Histories* on the Gyges story that Ptolemy is parodying above is as follows:

ὁ μὲν δὴ ὡς οὐκ ἐδύνατο διαφυγεῖν, ἦν ἔτοιμος· ὁ δὲ Κανδαύλης, ἐπεὶ ἐδόκεε ὥρῃ τῆς κοίτης εἶναι, ἤγαγε τὸν Γύγεα ἐς τὸ οἶκημα. καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα αὐτίκα παρήν καὶ ἡ γυνή. ἐσελθοῦσαν δὲ καὶ τιθεῖσαν τὰ εἴματα ἐθηεῖτο ὁ Γύγης. ὡς δὲ κατὰ νότου ἐγένετο ἰούσης τῆς γυναικός ἐς τὴν κοίτην, ὑπεκδὺς ἐχώρει ἔξω, καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἐπορᾷ μιν ἐξιόντα. μαθοῦσά δὲ τὸ ποιηθέν ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός οὔτε ἀνέβωσε αἰσχυνθεῖσα οὔτε ἔδοξε μαθεῖν, ἐν νοῶ ἔχουσα τίσεσθαι τὸν Κανδαύλεα. παρὰ γὰρ τοῖσι Λυδοῖσι, σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ παρὰ τοῖσι ἄλλοισι βαρβάροισι καὶ ἄνδρα ὀφθῆναι γυμνόν ἐς αἰσχύνην μεγάλην φέρει).¹³²

As Gyges could not escape, he consented. Candaules, when he judged it to be time for bed, brought Gyges into the chamber; his wife followed presently, and when she had come in and was laying aside her garments, Gyges saw her; when she turned her back upon him to go to bed, he slipped from the room. The woman glimpsed him as he went out, and perceived what her husband had

¹²⁶ Plato's *Republic* 359c-360b.

¹²⁷ *POxy.* 2382.

¹²⁸ *FGrHist* no. 90, f 45-47.

¹²⁹ Plutarch *Moralia* 301f-302a.

¹³⁰ Justin *Epitoma historiarum Philippicarum Pompei Trogi* 1.7.

¹³¹ Little is known about the historical figure of Gyges but what can be pieced together is that he ruled Lydia c.680-645 BCE, during which he started the exploitation of gold from the Pactolus, attacked Miletus and Smyrna, captured Colophon and sent lavish offerings to Delphi. He gained Assyrian protection against the Cimmerians but lost it later by helping Psammetichus I of Egypt, and was later killed in a new Cimmerian invasion. Like his wealth his tomb was famous in antiquity and has been identified in the royal tumulus cemetery at Bin Tepe.

¹³² Herodotus *Histories* 1.10.

done. But though shamed, she did not cry out or let it be seen that she had perceived anything, for she meant to punish Candaules; since among the Lydians and most of the foreign peoples it is felt as a great shame that even a man be seen naked.

The focus of Herodotus' Gyges tale is the act of spectating, which drives the entire narrative of the story from beginning to end; Candaules wants Gyges to see the queen, Gyges hides from view, Gyges sees the queen and the queen sees him. The entire scene is both apophthegmatic and transgressively lewd, resulting directly from the narrator's and the reader's placement in a similar position to that of Gyges; like him, readers are forced into the royal bedchamber so that the narrative can proceed.¹³³ Despite the emphasis on the act of spectating, Herodotus does not reveal how the queen was able to see Gyges, even though her back was to him, when he slipped out of the room after he spied on her undressing. Here is where Ptolemy steps in and offers several farfetched supernatural explanations for how the queen saw Gyges: she had double-pupils, was sharp-sighted, and she had acquired a dragon stone. Being sharp-sighted is self-explanatory and intratextualises with Ptolemy's Herodotean passage about Xerxes with Dracon and his keen eyesight, by using the same extraordinary ability to offer a rational solution to a Herodotean "problem". This rational explanation is then followed by the addition of the double-pupil and the dragon stone, both of which are striking, but when combined the queen's supernatural arsenal seems excessive and bizarre.

Possession of a double-pupil, a physical attribute that is found in some people, was thought to increase the likelihood of the eye's magical power because the doubling of the pupil would double the number of the openings from which the eye emitted its shafts, since there was the idea that the eye of the possessor sent malign shafts to the victim.¹³⁴ This is a theory that seems to go back to Democritus who said that damage was done by particles of hatred and malice that emanated from the eyes of the caster;¹³⁵ therefore the doubling of the pupil would double its possessor's magical powers.¹³⁶ Dragon-stones, according to Philostratus, were also thought to have magical properties,¹³⁷ but what is particularly interesting is that he says they gave their possessor the same powers as Gyges' ring rather than

¹³³ Travis (2000), 343.

¹³⁴ Plutarch *Moralia* 680b-682b.

¹³⁵ Democritus 5.5.68A.

¹³⁶ Beagon (2005), 140-141.

¹³⁷ Philostratus *Apollonius of Tyana* 3.6.

counteracting those powers.¹³⁸ This is interesting because there is no supernatural element in Herodotus' Gyges story, especially not a magic ring;¹³⁹ instead Philostratus must have Plato's version in mind, in which a magic ring plays a crucial role.¹⁴⁰

In Plato's version Glaucon the narrator of the story uses the tale to further his philosophical argument that the only thing that prevents even the best of people from doing wrong is the fear of being caught. Glaucon argues that his point could be proved if both a good man and a bad man were given some means to render their detection impossible, they would both commit an unjust act. This leads Glaucon to his version of the Gyges story, where instead of Gyges the loyal bodyguard and trusted confidant whom we find in Herodotus, we now have an ancestor of Gyges in Glaucon's tale.¹⁴¹ Gyges is a lowly shepherd who by chance found a ring of invisibility and decided to take advantage of that opportunity by contriving a way into the palace; once in the place he commits adultery with the queen, and with her help he kills the king and seizes the Lydian throne. Therefore, Plato's version differs from Herodotus' version because it is a naive fantasy where Gyges' ancestor is the central figure of the tale. Moreover, Herodotus' portrayal of Gyges is tragic; he is a victim of circumstance whose purpose is to be a tool in Candaules' ruin as he is forced into situations out of his control.¹⁴² In contrast, Plato's Gyges creates the

¹³⁸ Pliny *Natural History* 37.158 also mentions dragon stones but he does not associate any magical powers with them.

¹³⁹ Other accounts of the Gyges story include: the philosophical account by Glaucon in Plato's *Republic* (359c-360b), a possible tragedy based upon a papyrus fragment (*POxy.* 2382), Nicolaus of Damascus' version *FGrHist* (no. 90, f 45-47), as well as a very brief description by Plutarch (*Moralia.* 301f-302a), and Justin's summary of a version by Pompeius Trogus (1.7).

¹⁴⁰ Plato *Republic* 359c-360b.

¹⁴¹ Laird argues that Plato's version has always had Gyges' ancestor and not Gyges himself since it is highly unlikely to be an error within the text because Gyges' ancestor is preserved in the earliest manuscripts of the *Republic*, and the philosopher Proclus refers to the narrative about Gyges' ancestor in the Fifth Century CE. Although later on in the *Republic* (612b) Socrates refers to Gyges' ring and not Gyges' ancestor's ring, Laird argues that this is a deliberate act of affected carelessness on the part of Socrates to show his indifference to Glaucon's tale. See Laird (2001), 14 & 22.

¹⁴² The tragic nature of Herodotus' Gyges story has seen much discussion, and it is clear that the overall style of the Gyges story closely resembles a Greek tragedy since they share similar recurring themes and motifs, such as: having three main characters is a common feature of Greek tragedies, and we also see the faithful servant a common motif that we see recurring in tragedies. See Lattimore (1939), Grene (1961), Immerwahr (1966), Raaflaub (1987), Gould (1989) and Evans (1991). Furthermore, in 1950 a papyrus fragment (*POxy.* 2382) was found on which was an Attic tragedy that dealt with the Gyges story. In the fragment the angry queen relates how she saw Gyges slip out of the room, saw that her husband was awake and unconcerned at what had happened and she immediately understood the plot, so after a sleepless night summoned Gyges for the fateful interview, Griffin (2006), 50. The discovery of the fragment led some scholars to argue that this was an early tragedy that pre-dated Herodotus, and either Phrynicus, Ion of Chios or more vaguely a pupil of Aeschylus was responsible for it. See Lobel (1950); Page (1950), (1951), (1962); Cautaudella (1957); Snell (1973). Page even went as far to argue that Herodotus' narrative was in effect nothing

circumstances he finds himself in; he is ruthlessly ambitious and he gets to fulfil his ultimate wish by taking full advantage of his chance discovery of a magic ring. Readers follow Gyges on his unscrupulous and murderous path to the throne, as he alone initiates the crimes that enable him to become king and negates any sense of tragedy within the tale.¹⁴³

The magic ring in Plato's version is the feature that distinguishes it most from Herodotus' story and it first appears in Plato's version; there is no earlier tradition of it preserved, which raises the possibility that Plato added the ring for the purpose of his argument.¹⁴⁴ However, it should be noted that in ancient literature there are numerous magic rings that conferred extraordinary powers on their wearers against disease and enchantment,¹⁴⁵ or the Evil Eye.¹⁴⁶ According to Laird the motifs of seeing and being seen demonstrate that there is a link between Herodotus' and Plato's stories. Furthermore, the magic ring in Plato can be linked and traced back to Herodotus by the fact that Plato's word for ring *δακτύλιος* has an uncanny assonance with *Δάσκυλος*, the name of Gyges' father in Herodotus' version.¹⁴⁷ Therefore, Plato may have taken Dascylus' name and played with it to create an intertextual relationship with Herodotus by constructing an implicit aetiological reference.¹⁴⁸

With Ptolemy and his version of the tale, if it was widely accepted that dragon-stones had some connection to magic rings, as Philostratus suggests, then Ptolemy's inclusion of the dragon stone in his tale implies that he was familiar with Plato's Gyges' story as well as Herodotus', hinting to readers who also knew both

but a prose version of an Attic tragedy, and he also suggested that this tragedy may have been the first of a trilogy on the fall of the house of Mermnadae dynasty in Lydia. See Page (1951), 12 & 28. However, it is now generally accepted that the fragment dates from the Hellenistic period, and may have been composed largely paraphrasing Herodotus' version of the Gyges story. See Latte (1950); Maas (1950); Galiano (1950/1); Cantarella (1952); Gigante (1952); Lesky (1953); Bickel (1957); Kassel (1974); Erbse (1992); Griffin (2006).

¹⁴³ Nichols (1984), 34-35.

¹⁴⁴ Smith (1902), 268 n. 2; Laird (2001), 14.

¹⁴⁵ Smith (1902), 268, cites ancient writers such as Eupolis, possibly Aristophanes, Kratinos, Theophrastos, Lucian, and Heliodorus, all of who mention a ring that bestows some form of power on the wearer. It is also possible that Polycrates' ring in the *Histories* had some magical properties, which would explain its importance and value, as well as its ability to find its way back to him.

¹⁴⁶ The Evil Eye is common in magical lore; it was the most ancient, widespread, and deep-seated belief in the Mediterranean basin. Therefore, anything that could offer protection against it e.g. a magical ring would have been a highly desired possession. This might be why Polycrates' ring (Herodotus 3.40-42) was important to him because although it is not mentioned that it could make him invisible like Gyges' ring, it was a prized possession for some reason. Beagon (2005), 113 & 139.

¹⁴⁷ Laird (2001), 17-18.

¹⁴⁸ Plato has a habit for this type of discreet aetiologising, for instance the possibility that Critias the elder referred to in *Timaeus* 20e might be Plato's great-grandfather. Laird (2001), 18 n 28.

versions that Gyges is wearing his ring when the queen sees him. However, the queen's supernatural arsenal seems excessive, especially since the possession of either a dragon stone, or having double pupils would theoretically counteract the ring's properties and would enable its possessor to see through any form of enchantment. Therefore, since having one or the other would have been sufficient, the juxtaposing of both in the same story is magical overkill, something that Ptolemy must have intended. Moreover, because the double-pupil is not found in any other version of the tale, it would seem safe to assume that this is Ptolemy's own inventive, albeit more rationalized addition to the story and that the dragon-stone is a deliberate allusion to Plato's version of the tale. This would mean that not only has Ptolemy once again put his own spin on a famous Herodotean story, but also by alluding to elements of the versions of Herodotus and Plato, he has created a tale that is far more complex than it initially appears.

Ptolemy displays in-depth knowledge of both versions as he integrates elements of one into the other in order to offer a rational explanation for how the queen in Herodotus' version knew that Gyges was spying on her, which Herodotus neglects to tell. However, although the anecdote manages to revise and challenge Herodotus's authority by filling in the details, the over rationalisation and contradictory explanations create the most convoluted reason behind why the queen could see Gyges. The result is an unbelievable and highly fictional tale, which ultimately makes Herodotus appear the more reliable narrator of the tale because it does not contain any of the supernatural elements and the absurdity that arises from them. Moreover, the fictionality of the anecdote is signalled when Ptolemy goes on to stress why the queen is not named in the *Histories*. When looking at the Herodotus passage, it is striking that the queen is never named; she is only referred to as Candaules' wife or queen.¹⁴⁹ We have already seen how Herodotus suppressed the name of Aithos and possibly the name of Agathon, and although Herodotus does not openly admit to doing this here, the queen's name is conspicuously absent from the tale. Owing to the voyeuristic nature of the tale that objectifies the queen and breaches Lydian morals about the shame of being seen naked, Larson has argued the omission of the queen's name reflects Herodotus' attempt to preserve the queen's

¹⁴⁹ See Larson (2006) for a detailed discussion as to why Herodotus does not name her, and some other high profile women in the *Histories*.

modesty by letting her remain anonymous.¹⁵⁰ In contrast it is clear that Ptolemy has no such sense of propriety when he shares not only what he says is the queen's real name, Nysia, but also the names that other writers have claimed were the queen's name - Tudo, Clytia and Abro - as he displays his training and skills as a *grammaticus* by supplying names that Herodotus has omitted. I will come back to Ptolemy's name for the queen, but for the time being I want to focus on the name Tudo and its intertextual connections.

Ptolemy claims that other authors cite the names Tudo, Clytia, and Abro, but with the exception of Tudo, these names are not found anywhere else in connection with the Gyges myth (and it is unclear whether Abas was an actual writer;¹⁵¹ he is likely to be another source fabricated by Ptolemy).¹⁵² The name Tudo is important because it is the name given to the queen in another Gyges story written by Nicolaus of Damascus, which suggests Ptolemy knew Nicolaus' version as well as those of Herodotus and Plato. Nicolaus of Damascus' Gyges tale is much later than Herodotus' and Plato's, written in the first century BCE. It would have been in the sixth book of his *Historiai*, but the original text does not survive, as a result the story reaches us only in an epitome of Constantine Porphyrogenetos from the Tenth Century CE (*FGrHist* 90).¹⁵³ Nicolaus' version lacks the transgression and voyeurism of Herodotus' version, as well as the supernatural elements found in Plato's; instead it has a complicated love triangle that has more in common with the Greek novels. Despite these differences, if we compare Nicolaus' Gyges story with that of Herodotus we can see that while the plots of the stories differ there are some parallels that suggest that Nicolaus knew Herodotus' version: Nicolaus mentions that Gyges is the son of Dascylus as does Herodotus;¹⁵⁴ while the name of the king differs (in Nicolaus' version he is Sadyattes instead of Candaules), we are told that his father was called Myrsus and we find the same in Herodotus.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, elsewhere in Nicolaus' work it is apparent that there is an intertextual relationship

¹⁵⁰ Larson (2006), 229-234.

¹⁵¹ Dowden *Abas* (46) *BNJ*; see also Dowden (forthcoming).

¹⁵² Cameron (2004), 134-159.

¹⁵³ It is possible that Porphyrogenetos' epitome is incomplete since it seems that there should be another passage after the king's death in which we might have been told how the queen became the *de facto* wife of Gyges, and fulfilled the omen about the eagles. See Smith (1902a), 265-265 n.2. Despite the possible incomplete nature of the story, an important aspect of the Nicolaus' version is that it suggests that Gyges' background could have led him to establish a political faction that was loyal to him and supported his usurpation of the throne, which may reflect actual historical events. See Danzig (2008), 174.

¹⁵⁴ *FGrHist* (90, f 46-47); Herodotus *Histories* 1.8.1.

¹⁵⁵ *FGrHist* (90, f 46-47); Herodotus *Histories* 1.7.2.

with Herodotus; therefore it is logical to conclude that Nicolaus has freely borrowed and elaborated on Herodotus' stories about Lydia.¹⁵⁶

Yet unlike Herodotus, Nicolaus names the queen and according to him her name was Tudo, which is one of the names that Ptolemy puts forward in his version of the tale. Herodotus of course does not name the queen and if Herodotus was Nicolaus' primary source for the story then this raises the problem of where the name came from. One possibility is that Nicolaus may have based his tale on the fifth-century BCE historian Xanthus of Lydia's account and this is supported by three factors.¹⁵⁷ First, although Xanthus' *Lydiaca* does not survive intact, there are a few fragments that have some similarities with what is discussed in Nicolaus' work especially stories about the Heraclid kings,¹⁵⁸ which Herodotus does not mention.¹⁵⁹ Second, is Nicolaus' use of Ionic forms, because apart from Herodotus, Xanthus is the only other early writer known to have discussed Lydia in his work; as a result when Nicolaus uses Ionic forms for discussing topics from Lydia that are not mentioned by Herodotus, such as the Heraclid kings, it has been assumed that Xanthus must have been his source.¹⁶⁰ Third, is Ephorus' statement that Xanthus gave *τὰς ἀφορμὰς* 'inspiration' to Herodotus, which some have interpreted as meaning that Xanthus was the earlier,¹⁶¹ others have argued it means that chronologically Herodotus picked up where Xanthus left off,¹⁶² but due to lack of evidence some simply argue that they were direct contemporaries and used common folktale stories as their sources.¹⁶³

I do not want to become embroiled in the debate as to which of Herodotus and Xanthus was earlier, and who influenced whom as it is outside the scope of this

¹⁵⁶ Nicolaus' Croesus on the pyre story (*FGrHist* 90. f. 68) is an obvious adaptation and elaboration of Herodotus' version of the story (*Histories* 1.81-88). Furthermore, his story about Ardys (*FGrHist* 90. f. 44) appears to be an elaborated version of Herodotus' and his story about the Heraclid king Spermus, which is similar to the Gyges story since he becomes king through intrigue with Damonno the wife of king Cadys (*FGrHist* 90. f. 44) and Nicolaus' fragment about the Mysians (*FGrHist* 90, f. 71) is very similar to Herodotus' story about Darius' return to Sardis after the Scythian expedition (*Histories* 5.12-14). This intertextuality between the two authors implies that Nicolaus has freely borrowed and elaborated on Herodotus' stories about Lydia.

¹⁵⁷ Pearson (1939), 117-119; Drews (1973), 101.

¹⁵⁸ Xanthus mentions Scamandrius as the leader of the Phrygians who settled in Asia (*FGrHist* 765. 5); this is corroborated by Nicolaus (*FGrHist* 90. 26). Nicolaus' story about king Camblites (*FGrHist* 90. 22) is an elaboration of Xanthus' tale (*FGrHist* 765. 12).

¹⁵⁹ Pearson (1939), 122.

¹⁶⁰ Pearson (1939), 122.

¹⁶¹ Pearson (1939), 109

¹⁶² Drews (1973), 102

¹⁶³ *FGrHist* 70, f 180; Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 12. 515d-e.

thesis.¹⁶⁴ However, the reason I have drawn attention to the link between Nicolaus and Xanthus, is that while Nicolaus may have thought he was copying legitimate information from Xanthus, such as the queen's name Tundo, it is possible that Xanthus did not actually write about the Mermnadae kings (Gyges and his descendants including Croesus), and instead his account might have ended with the Heraclids (Candaules).¹⁶⁵ This would mean that Nicolaus' information about the Mermnadae had to come from somewhere else, and this led von Fritz to argue that Nicolaus' immediate source was a Hellenistic writer that had meddled with Xanthus' original text.¹⁶⁶

The writer in question is Dionysius Scytobrachion 'the leather-arm'; this is because Xanthus' work is characterized by rationalizations, which is a trademark of Scytobrachion.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, in the *Deipnosophistae* Athenaeus cites information from Xanthus of Lydia along with a reference to a refutation that Xanthus' work was composed by Scytobrachion and not Xanthus himself.¹⁶⁸ Scytobrachion, as with many authors from the Hellenistic Period, is an almost forgotten individual; he was active c.250 BCE, and is a central figure in the history and fiction issue of ancient literature due to what survives of his work, but also because of the name Scytobrachion.¹⁶⁹ Although the most logical reason that he is called Scytobrachion is in order to try to distinguish him from the multitude of Dionysii that were active during the Hellenistic Period (as quail has become attached to Ptolemy), the nickname Scytobrachion may also be due to his reputation as a forger, with 'leather-arm' a reference to the rate and volume of dubious works that he was able to produce.¹⁷⁰ From what survives of his works, we know that he revised Homer by writing a pre-Homeric epic, for which he used the so-called *Phrygian Poem* of Thymoetes as a source.¹⁷¹ It is possible, that if Scytobrachion was a forger who

¹⁶⁴ Diller (1956), 78; von Fritz (1967), 88; Fowler (1996), 64.

¹⁶⁵ Drews (1973), 102.

¹⁶⁶ von Fritz (1967), 348-377.

¹⁶⁷ Rusten (1980), 82-84, denies that there is any possibility that Scytobrachion forged Xanthus; instead he argues that there is no reason to suppose that Scytobrachion wrote what survives of Xanthus' work, rather that it is far more likely that the changes were made by Nicolaus of Damascus, or that Scytobrachion used Xanthus as a source.

¹⁶⁸ Athenaeus 12.515.

¹⁶⁹ The name Scytobrachion is known from four testimonia: the *Suda*; Suetonius *De Illustribus Grammaticis* 7; Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 12.515; and Eustathius *Iliad* 3.40 (F 39a-b). None of these sources actually explain why Dionysius is known as Scytobrachion. See Rusten (1980), 91.

¹⁷⁰ Rusten (1980), 11-18 & 76-84.

¹⁷¹ See Rusten (1980) for a detailed discussion of Scytobrachion and his work.

included bogus material and sources in his works, then, he may be a forerunner to later authors, including Ptolemy, who enjoy creating pseudo-scholarship texts.¹⁷²

It is thought that it was probably Scytobrachion who invented the melodramatic and fantastic tales of Ardys, Gyges and Croesus that appear in Nicolaus' work, and that he attributed them to Xanthus, knowing full well that his references could not be substantiated if Xanthus' original text was already lost by this time.¹⁷³ This brings us back to Ptolemy and his inclusion of the name Tudo. Ptolemy may have simply copied it from Nicolaus when using him as a source and may have been none the wiser about the origins of the name. Yet Ptolemy was an astute writer, and unlikely to be easily deceived by other authors. Instead, because he goes to so much effort of fabricating material and sources, it is unlikely that he would be duped by the same ploy when used by someone else. Therefore, although we cannot know for sure, it is tempting to suppose that Ptolemy was aware of Scytobrachion's meddling with Xanthus' original text, knowing that the name Tudo was his addition to the tale and not a feature in Xanthus' *Lydiaca*. If this were the case, this would mean that Ptolemy was deliberately using information that he knew had come from a prolific Hellenistic forger. This could make Ptolemy's questioning of Herodotus' honesty with his readers all the more ironic, since he may have used dishonest information from a forger to correct Herodotus, which adds to the parodic nature and unreliability of Ptolemy's own version of the tale.

The climax in Ptolemy's game of rewriting this Herodotean passage and his supplying of the queen's name reaches its pinnacle with what he claims was the actual name of the Lydian queen, Nysia. According to Photius, Ptolemy argued that Herodotus knew the Lydian's queen's name but chose to suppress it because he had a personal connection to the name; it was because the queen shared the name Nysia with a courtesan that Herodotus' lover, Plesirrhous, became infatuated with, but when his feelings were not reciprocated he committed suicide by hanging himself. There is no mention of Plesirrhous found in any other ancient text and neither are there any other stories about Herodotus having a male beloved; this information seems to have sprung from the vivid imagination of Ptolemy. The effect of Ptolemy's fabricated revelations about Herodotus and his private life initially portray Herodotus as an emotionally unstable and unreliable author, since by

¹⁷² See Ní Mheallaigh (2012) for Scytobrachion as a forerunner to Dictys.

¹⁷³ Pearson (1939), 110-114.

claiming that Herodotus' suppressed the queen's name in the first place, Ptolemy is playing on Herodotus' already damaged reputation by once again pointing out his lack of willingness to share information (especially names) with his readers. This tactic further undermines readers' tendencies to put complete faith and trust in Herodotus and his version of events in the *Histories*. When he then explains Herodotus' reasons for not divulging the queen's name, Ptolemy reveals that it was not out of honour or decorum that her name was not revealed (as Larson supposed),¹⁷⁴ but because the name Nysia has a personal connection to Herodotus; his boyfriend killed himself over a woman called Nysia and as a result he cannot abide the name. The entire tale, then, appears to be a spoof; not only is the Gyges tale itself parodied, but Herodotus himself is satirized as well, as Ptolemy plays on Herodotus' reputation to parody the tale to create an elaborate piece of fiction.

5.3.3. Herodotus the Plagiarist

As we have already seen in Chapter Four, Homer's authorship was called into question by claims that Ptolemy makes, such as accusing him of plagiarism, which undermines the authority of Homer. Herodotus also receives similar treatment, as Ptolemy enjoys drawing attention to Herodotus' storytelling capabilities and his reputation, which he exploits to parody famous Herodotean material and create a caricature of Herodotus himself as a plagiarist. However, although these could be construed as a negative attack on Herodotus, I do not believe that Ptolemy simply wants to lambast Herodotus; rather he is keen to embrace Herodotus and his reputation, and play on it, in order to draw attention to the absurd and fictional nature of his revised Herodotean material. The result is a complex relationship that comprises of a mixture of parody and pastiche, and by focusing on Herodotus' unreliable or untrustworthy nature, Ptolemy is in fact creating a parallel between himself and Herodotus. This is reinforced in the last Herodotean passage in Ptolemy's work:

Καὶ ὡς Πλησίρροος ὁ Θεσσαλὸς ὁ ὑμνογράφος, ἐρώμενος γεγωνῶς Ἡροδότου καὶ κληρονόμος τῶν αὐτοῦ, οὗτος ποιήσκει τὸ προοίμιον τῆς πρώτης ἱστορίας Ἡροδότου Ἀλικαρνασσεῶς· τὴν γὰρ κατὰ φύσιν εἶναι τῶν Ἡροδότου ἱστοριῶν ἀρχήν· Περσέων οἱ λόγιοι Φοίνικας αἰτίους γενέσθαι φασὶ τῆς διαφορῆς.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ Larson (2006), 229-234.

¹⁷⁵ Photius *Bibliotheca* 148b, 10-16.

Plesirrhous the Thessalian, composer of hymns, was the beloved of Herodotus and was also his heir; he composed the introduction to the first book of Herodotus of Halicarnassus' *Histories*, he [Ptolemy] says the proper beginning of the *Histories* is: 'The storytellers of the Persians say the Phoenicians were the cause of the animosity'.

In this passage Plesirrhous makes another appearance, and once again he is referred to as Herodotus' beloved. Yet despite having committed suicide in the previous passage, according to Ptolemy he still managed to write the introduction to the *Histories* instead of Herodotus. In the previous chapter we saw how Ptolemy playfully accused Homer of plagiarism twice, and on one of those occasions he had help from an Egyptian priest, which was a subtle nod to Herodotus' own claims that Egyptian priests were more reliable than Homer (see above). In this passage, Ptolemy has decided to treat Herodotus in a similar manner, but he has been far more specific about which section of the *Histories* Herodotus did not write, the introduction.

The prologue to the *Histories* is one of the most famous in ancient literature. It has seen much modern scholarly discussion because it is where Herodotus introduces himself and his work, and establishes themes and topics that will run throughout the text. However, Herodotus' account of the numerous abductions of women by the East and the West, which he purports to be based on Eastern accounts, do seem out of place when compared to the prologue that precedes these passages and what immediately follows where Herodotus states he will proceed to tell history and begins with his account of Lydia.¹⁷⁶ This is because, instead of focusing on the heroic, mythic, and epic rapes of Io, Europa, Medea, and Helen, the basis of epic poetry and Greek identity, Herodotus has turned them into a banal sequence of stories about trade and marital commerce. The result is an interpretation that may have startled his Greek readers because this is the supposed Persian version of long established Greek myths.¹⁷⁷

The nature of this sequence has led some modern scholars to argue that Herodotus is amusing himself here at the expense of Homer and other writers of the mythological tradition, because the Eastern account is essentially a rationalized

¹⁷⁶ Herodotus *Histories* 1.1-5.

¹⁷⁷ Dewald (2012), 65.

parody of Greek myths, similar to what Ptolemy himself does with myth,¹⁷⁸ and the comedic nature of it is so at odds with the prologue and what immediately follows.¹⁷⁹ The humorous nature of this section of the *Histories* is not something that has only been argued by modern scholars, it has been noted in antiquity: Aristophanes incorporated the slapstick elements into the *Archanians*;¹⁸⁰ and Lucian in the *True Stories* alludes to it with his abduction of Helen by Cinyras, who approves of the plan for her own abduction and happily goes along with it.¹⁸¹ Moreover, Herodotus' rationalization that Europa was abducted by Greek sailors, who must have been Cretans, from Tyre, is corrected by Lucian in his *De dea Syria* where he says that the temple in Sidon is sacred to Europa not Astarte, because she was the daughter of Agenor and was honoured after her disappearance, which happened after Zeus transformed himself into a bull and carried her off to Crete.¹⁸² That Lucian relates this myth is significant with regard to his relationship with Herodotus in the *De dea Syria*, as it strengthens his link with Herodotus.¹⁸³ Given that the account is not crucial information on the Syrian goddess that his readers would have lacked, this myth seems to have been included as a response to Herodotus, who himself was presenting an alternative account of the abduction of Europa; the result is that Lucian is offering a more mythical account to correct Herodotus' rationalized correction of myth, achieving a humorous effect.¹⁸⁴

From Photius' epitome is it unclear whether Ptolemy is referring to this section, or where Herodotus introduces himself. It is possible that because Herodotus may be parodying Homer with his Persian account, Ptolemy chose to ignore this section and instead focus on the prologue. Nevertheless, Herodotus' prologue is one of the most famous in ancient literature and is an important feature of the *Histories*. It establishes the programmatic reading of the text and sets out the scope of the work, consequently later historians often chose to adopt Herodotus' introduction as a model and then adapt it for their own works.¹⁸⁵ Therefore,

¹⁷⁸ See Chapter Four.

¹⁷⁹ Howald (1944), 34-37; Drews (1973), 89; Hartog (1991), vii; Thomas (2000), 268 & 274; Bravo & Węcowski (2004), 149-155; Dewald (2006), 146-147; Said (2012), 87-106.

¹⁸⁰ Aristophanes *Archanians* 423-429.

¹⁸¹ Lucian *True Stories* 2.25-26.

¹⁸² Lucian *De Syria dea* 4.

¹⁸³ Anderson (1976), 75.

¹⁸⁴ Avery (1997), 149-149.

¹⁸⁵ Some examples of later historians who incorporated the Herodotean prologue into their own works include: Thucydides, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Josephus and Appian. Asheri, Lloyd & Corcella (2007), 72.

Ptolemy's claim that Plesirrhous was the one who wrote it significantly undermines Herodotus' authority as an author. Although as we saw in the previous passages Ptolemy questioned Herodotus' willingness to share specific information with his readers, which hints at and plays with Herodotus' reputation, here Ptolemy has not held back, he questions the entire integrity and veracity of the *Histories* by claiming Herodotus has attached his name to a work that another man had written.

It is possible that Ptolemy is displaying his familiarity with Herodotus and his work by alluding to an alternative edition of the *Histories* that contained a slight variant on the known prologue, which is recorded by Aristotle: 'This is the exposition of the investigation of Herodotus of Thurii' (*Ἡροδότου Θουρίου ἢ δ' ἱστορίας ἀπόδειξις*).¹⁸⁶ The notable difference is that according to Aristotle, Herodotus is known as 'Herodotus of Thurii' (*Ἡροδότου Θουρίου*) and not 'Herodotus of Halicarnassus' (*Ἡροδότου Ἀλικαρνησέως*), and Aristotle's version also has a different word order, although no modern editor follows it.¹⁸⁷ This variant reading is intriguing because ancient sources unanimously agree that Herodotus' birthplace was Halicarnassus.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, Aristotle is not the only ancient author to give the alternative version: the Lydian Chronicle (99 BCE) quotes 'Herodotus the Thurian',¹⁸⁹ the Emperor Julian called Herodotus the 'λογοποιός from Thurii',¹⁹⁰ while Strabo¹⁹¹ and Plutarch also refer to Herodotus as 'Herodotus of Thurii'.¹⁹² The association between Herodotus and Thurii is connected to the tradition in antiquity that Herodotus emigrated to Thurii where he died and was buried, but whether this is conjecture based upon the variant in the prologue, or that the variant was based on biographical fact has not been ascertained. What is apparent is that the testimonies of the authors above support an alternative version of the text, which raises the highly likely prospect that there was another text of the *Histories* that contained the Thurii prologue in circulation at the same time as the surviving

¹⁸⁶ Aristotle *Rhet.* 3.9.2.

¹⁸⁷ Goldhill (2002), 11n. 7.

¹⁸⁸ This supported by an ancient inscription bearing the names of Herodotus' father and brother in Halicarnassus. See Asheri, Lloyd & Corcella (2007), 3.

¹⁸⁹ Asheri, Lloyd & Corcella (2007), 3.

¹⁹⁰ Julian *Epistulae* 22.

¹⁹¹ Strabo *Geography* 14.2.16. 'Among the natives of Halicarnassus were Herodotus the historian, who afterwards was called Thurius because he was concerned in sending out the colony to Thurii', (*ἄνδρες δὲ γεγόνασιν ἐξ αὐτῆς Ἡρόδοτός τε ὁ συγγραφεύς, ὃν ὕστερον Θούριον ἐκάλεσαν διὰ τὸ κοιωνῆσαι τῆς εἰς Θουρίου ἀποικίας*).

¹⁹² Plutarch *Malice of Herodotus* 868a. 'He ought not to come down so fiercely even on the Greeks who medized; after all he is only a Thurian, according to the usual account, through his own attachment is to Halicarnassus', (*Ἔδει μὲν οὖν μηδὲ τοῖς μηδίσασιν Ἑλλήνων ἄγαν ἐπεμβαίνειν, καὶ ταῦτα Θούριον μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν ἄλλων νομιζόμενον, αὐτὸν δὲ Ἀλικαρνασσέων περιεχόμενον*).

version with Halicarnassus. Moreover, as the difference of word order in Aristotle's text suggests, it is feasible that the other version did not just contain a variant reading of Herodotus' city, but that it could have been an entirely different edited version of the *Histories* and may have contained some alternative information, such as the *logoi* that Herodotus refers to but does not include in our surviving version *Histories*.¹⁹³

Ptolemy may have been aware that there were two versions of the *Histories* in circulation, and his claim in this passage that it was the lover of Herodotus who wrote the introduction could be his satirical take on the situation and on the discrepancies between the two versions of such a famous text. As a result, as with Ptolemy's treatment of Homer, Ptolemy's claims about Herodotus' plagiarism of Plesirrhous, initially seem to represent an attack on Herodotus' damaged reputation. Yet when we consider that elsewhere in the *Novel Research* Ptolemy claims that Plesirrhous committed suicide, it makes his involvement all the more farfetched. It does not seem very likely that Ptolemy managed to collect information from two separate sources on Herodotus, both of whom mention Plesirrhous, especially since Plesirrhous is not mentioned in any other text. Instead, it points to the likelihood that Ptolemy invented him, especially since male lovers appear to be a topic of interest for him,¹⁹⁴ and that he points to his fabrication by creating a contradiction of having a dead man write the introduction. Therefore, although on first appearances it may seem that Ptolemy is exploiting Herodotus' reputation and tapping into issues surrounding the introduction to the *Histories* in antiquity, the inclusion of Plesirrhous as the author and then Ptolemy's subsequent undermining of the possibility of his authorship by having him removed from the equation, demonstrates that Ptolemy never intended for this claim to be taken seriously.

5.4. Conclusion

By bringing attention to the veracity of Herodotus and the *Histories*, especially in a prologue where an author inscribes his or her name, Ptolemy is questioning how reliable and truthful any author can be. Ptolemy draws attention to Herodotean "problems" and offers solutions in the form of parody, which play on issues

¹⁹³ In 1.184 Herodotus mentions a History of Assyria *logos* that does not appear in the text; but whether it did not survive or never existed is impossible to say. There are also some references to topics within the *Histories* (1.106; 7.213) that do not exist in the version of the text that has survived.

¹⁹⁴ See Chapter One.

concerning Herodotus and reliability, questioning Herodotus' place in the literary and in particular, prose canon. However, although the portrayal of Herodotus as an unreliable author seems to play on issues surrounding his authority in antiquity, Ptolemy's over-rationalisations and revisions of Herodotus' material are ultimately far more unbelievable and unreliable than Herodotus'. As a result, rather than simply parodying Herodotus and correcting Herodotean material to make himself appear to be the better author as part of a culture of challenging Herodotus to assert one's own literary credentials, as we also see with Homer in this period, Ptolemy is highlighting Herodotus' shortcomings, but is deliberately sabotaging his own attempts to appear more authoritative, signalling to readers that he is more unreliable than Herodotus. In doing so, Ptolemy highlights the fictionality of the *Novel Research* and creates parallels between Herodotus and himself, satirizing the reliability of his own work, not just the *Histories*. This is similar to the way in which Lucian's *True Stories* relegates Herodotus to a place of punishment for his lies, which reflects the true nature of Lucian's narrative and emphasizes the irony of the work when the narrator says that the only truth he will tell is that he is a liar.¹⁹⁵

Therefore, while Ptolemy's parodic interaction with the *Histories* and his portrayal of Herodotus might seem to take advantage of Herodotus' unreliable reputation in antiquity, Ptolemy is in fact acknowledging Herodotus' importance as a literary predecessor for combining fact and fiction, and for rationalizing myth. Moreover, with his Herodotean interactions, Ptolemy is acknowledging the fictionality of the *Novel Research* by satirizing the phenomenon of rationalization with his over-rationalistic approach that borders on the absurd, which results in his over-rationalized versions being far more unbelievable when compared to "unreliable" and "lying" Herodotus. As a result, rather than Herodotus being someone to ridicule, as with his treatment of Homer and Homeric revisionism, he is a tool used by Ptolemy to question what makes an author truthful and reliable, in order to satirize the *Novel Research*'s own relationship with fact and fiction.

¹⁹⁵ Lucian *True Stories* 1.7.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore how based upon a reading of Photius' epitome, Ptolemy Chennus' *Novel Research* is a text that plays with ideas of fact and fiction, knowledge and *paideia*, by challenging readers to discern the authentic from the bogus among the work's combination of revised, elaborated, and invented material and sources. I hope to have compellingly argued that Ptolemy would have created a text that establishes itself in the literary culture of the period by tapping into the wider contemporary literary interest concerning fact and fiction, authentication and authority, and the cultural preoccupation with knowledge and *paideia* in the Imperial period.

With the *Novel Research* Ptolemy has created a text that exploits readers' preconceived expectations of handbooks that professed to offer knowledge on a wide variety of topics. Due to Ptolemy's subversion of this tradition, his text can create different levels and types of readership, depending upon how they interpret his material and sources. The work does this by pushing the boundaries concerning fact and fiction, authority and credulity, through his incorporation of *paradoxa* and paradoxographic tropes. Ptolemy's intertextual relationship with and satirical treatment of Homer and Herodotus demystifies their preeminent positions in the literary canon and acts as a mirror for reading his own text, drawing attention to play the between the authentic and the bogus in the *Novel Research* by questioning their handling of fact and fiction. Ptolemy was aware of the contemporary trends of revisionism and pseudo-documentarism, and how they can be used to blur the lines between fact and fiction, as he incorporates these elements into his text to test his readers' believability in his material. The result is a work that signals its fabulous and fictional nature to readers who have a high enough level of *paideia* to comprehend how the work is self-consciously fictional and satirical; its existence and function is inherently bound up with the social and literary culture of the educated elite in the Imperial period.

I have not attempted to be exhaustive in my examples or study, and there are still many aspects of the text to explore. Nevertheless, I hope to have compellingly argued that reading the *Novel Research* is a challenging and explorative experience,

and while the work is clearly entertaining, it would have been much more organised, detailed, and complex than Photius' epitome of the work would suggest. The way in which the text pushes the boundaries of belief and limits of *paideia* demonstrates that the work is a product of its time. The *Novel Research* is a text that deserves to receive more recognition for its place in Imperial Greek fiction and compilation writing than it currently has. Hopefully, this study has to some extent contributed to achieving this, and that it will open up new paths of investigation on Ptolemy and his text.

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