notevole fortuna già da Esiodo (*Theog.* 1011–1018), ma che fu appunto un fenomeno successivo: una “storicizzazione del mito”.¹⁴ Non è Omero, o chi per esso, a rappresentare le sue storie sui luoghi della colonizzazione occidentale, ma – al contrario – sono questi ultimi che vengono nobilitati dall’associazione colla saga epica per eccellenza della grecità.


La geografia omerica, con tutti i problemi storici e filologici connessi, è argomento sul quale non si finirebbe mai di discutere, di ragionare, di ipotizzare e di fantasticare, e l’ampia e articolata ricerca dei fratelli WOLF stimola ulteriormente questo desiderio e riaccende la passione. La metodologia seria e razionale, i paralleli affascinanti con la cultura materiale antica e recente, la conoscenza e l’amore che traspaiono dal testo per questi luoghi mediterranei e italiani, continuano a fare di quest’opera una lettura piacevole e avvincente, compensando – e giustamente suscitando – alcune perplessità e inevitabili dissensi.

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Even by the standards of the early Hellenistic period, Douris of Samos led an unusually eventful life. Born around or shortly after the mid-fourth century BC, his lifetime witnessed the annexation of his native island by the Athenians, the conquests of Alexander the Great, the breakup of Alexander’s empire and the wars of the Successors. Along with his brother Lyncaeus, known primarily as an author of comedies, he is said to have studied with Theophrastus in Athens. Later, he returned to Samos to rule as the island’s tyrant.

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Douris was also a prolific writer on a wide range of subjects. Living in such a turbulent age, it is hardly surprising that he devoted particular attention to contemporary history, composing a local history of Samos as well as a four-volume “life and times” of the Sicilian tyrant Agathocles. His most ambitious historiographical project was a “History of Macedonia” (Makedonika) in more than twenty books covering the period c. 370–280 BC.

Dealing with such a multi-faceted personality poses a challenge – especially in this case, since all of Douris’ works are lost and known only from fragments. The contributors to this volume primarily focus on Douris the man and the historian, but two chapters (by Prioux and Naas) also deal with Douris as a historian of art.

Following a short Introduction by Agnès Rouvet, the volume is loosely divided into three thematic sections: ‘Douris et son temps’ (p. 15–120); ‘Douris, filiation et héritage’ (p. 123–256); ‘Douris et l’histoire romaine’ (p. 259–359).

The first two papers of section 1 (Denis Knoepfler, Douris et l’histoire d’Athènes: les connexions oropo-samiennes, p. 15–36; Franca Landucci Gattinoni, Duride, Samo e i Diadochi: uno storiografo nella storia, p. 37–56) discuss the historical work of Douris and its contemporary context, the following three his intellectual milieu (Adele Cozzoli, Duride di Samo e i circoli letterari contemporanei, p. 57–70; Maria Rosaria Falivene, At the Table of Kings: Lynceus, the brother of Douris, and his friends, p. 71–90; Évelyne Prioux, Douris et Posidippe: similitudes et dissemblances de quelques éléments de critique d’art et de critique littéraire, p. 91–120). Particularly interesting from the point of view of historical geography is Knoepfler’s proposal that Pausanias’ brief and imprecise sketch of the history of Oropos1 may derive from his misreading of Douris’ Macedonian history (p. 32–3).

Section 2 on ‘filiation et héritage’ deals with Douris as historiographer (Pascale Giovannelli-Jouanna, Douris et l’historiographie d’Agathocle, p. 121–56; Claudio William Veloso, Minèsis et historiographie chez Aristote et chez les historiens des époques hellénistique et impériale: quelques réflexions, p. 195–208; Gabriella Ottone, La critica a Eforo e Teopompo: Nuove prospettive ermeneutiche a proposito del F 1 di Duride di Samo, p. 209–42). Anca Dan (Le Thermodon, fleuve des Amazones, du Pont-Euxin et de la Béotie: un cas d’homonymie géographique qui fait histoire, p. 157–93) highlights the problem of a Boeotian watercourse, the ‘Thermodon’, mentioned by Plutarch in his Lives of Theseus and Demosthenes2 – in the latter, explicitly quoting Douris – but otherwise unknown. Dan traces the origins of the tradition associating Thermodon with the battle of Chaironeia and the links, mythical and symbolical, between the elusive Boeotian river and its more famous Pontic namesake.

Given that most of his work is lost, it is difficult to form an impression of Douris as a historian. In the section of Photius’ Library dealing with the Philippika of Theopompus3 (and competently analysed by Ottone) Douris is briefly quoted for his

1 Paus. 1.34.1.
2 Plut., Thes. 27; Dem. 19.
3 Phot., Bibl. 176.
criticism of Theopompos as well as Ephorus. According to Douris, their work was
deficient in regard to *hedone* and *mimesis* and, by implication, inferior to that of
Douris himself. Lack of *hedone* presumably meant that the writings of Ephorus and
Theopompos made for boring reading, but what are we to make of *mimesis*?

To judge from the results of KNOEFLER and DAN, geographical accuracy was
not among the ingredients in Douris’ recipe for *mimesis*, and this impression is con-
firmed in the study by VALERIE NAAS (Douris de Samos chez Pline l’Ancien, p. 243–56). Though his works were clearly available to Pliny, Douris is never quoted
in the geographical books 3 to 6 of the *Natural History* but makes his first appear-
ance in book seven (NAAS, p. 245) with an apocryphal description of Indians mating
with animals and producing hybrid offspring.\(^4\)

The last section, *Douris et l’histoire romaine*, examines the reception of Dou-
ris’ work and style by later writers of Roman history. Following a brief overview
of the main questions (THOMAS BAYER, Douris et l’historiographie romaine, p. 259–
71) the following chapters zoom in on three historical episodes. First, the death of
Alexander I, king of Epirus, c. 330 BC as retold by Livy (MATHILDE SIMON, Douris
et le récit livien de la mort d’Alexandre le Molosse, p. 273–90), then the *devotio* of
Publius Decius Mus at the battle of Sentinum, 295 BC (DOMINIQUE BRIQUEL, Un
événement capital de l’histoire de Rome, la bataille de Sentinum: le témoignage de
Douris et ses limites, p. 291–302; CHARLES GUITTARD, Douris et la tradition de la

The third episode, the death of Sophonisba as retold by Livy in book 30 of *Ab
urbe condita*, obviously does not derive from Douris, who died sometime in the
270’s BC, but is examined by MARIELLE DE FRANCHIS (L’épisode de Sophonisbe
dez Tite-Live, 30.12–15: un morceau d’histoire tragique ?, p. 303–28) as a possi-
bile example of the genre ‘tragic history’, of which Douris was at one time seen as
a representative. The idea of ‘tragic history’ as a separate genre within Roman his-
torography is further explored, then discarded by ROBERT B. KEBRIC in the final

Merging a selection of papers on an author whose *oeuvre* is known only through
disjointed fragments into a unified whole is no easy task, and the editors are not to
be blamed if the image of Douris that emerges from a reading of this book remains
somewhat fragmentary and disjointed. Even so, the organisation of the volume
could have been more helpful to the reader. There are no indices, not even an index
of the fragments of Douris – which would have required no great effort to compile
and would greatly facilitate the task of a reader wishing to compare different con-
tributors’ reading of the same passage.

Bibliographical references are given in the footnotes, with no bibliography at
the conclusion of each paper. If one wishes to know whether a contributor has
addressed a specific work by an earlier researcher, the only way is to trawl through
the footnotes of the entire chapter. Ancient source quotations in the text are some-
times given in the original and translation, sometimes only the one or the other.

\(^4\) Plin., nat. 7.30.
Other oddities include the duplication, in Greek text as well as translation, of Douris fragment 18 = Athenaeus, Deipnosophistae 13.84 within a single chapter (p. 127 and 142) and the separation of the two papers dealing with the tenth book of Livy (BRIQUEL and GUITTARD) by an intervening chapter on Livy’s book 30 and ‘tragic history’ (DE FRANCHIS) which logically, as well as chronologically, belongs together with the last paper by KEBRIC.

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This impressive volume offers different scholarly approaches to the library of Alexandria. Aply, the first contribution (HÉLÈNE FRAGAKI, 3–42) addresses the location of the library, while the last two are devoted to its destruction. CHRISTOPHE RICO (293–328) reviews the various sources and theories on the destruction of the library in Alexandria and concludes that Caesar was, indeed, responsible for the initial destruction. ERAN ALMAGOR (257–91) focusses on Plutarch’s depiction of Caesar within the Alexander-Caesar biography specifically and the Parallel Lives in general, in which Caesar’s deed, historical or not, serves particular literary purposes typical of the Second Sophistic. Three chapters are devoted to the scholarly outputs facilitated by the generosity of the Ptolemies. JANE L. LIGHTFOOT (125–38) addresses the groundbreaking philological achievements while focusing on onomastica, and CHRISTOPHE CUSSET (141–62) investigates the role of Apollonios and Eratosthenes as chief librarians whereas ANCA DAN (165–222) provides a lengthy, learned and pedagogical introduction to the difficult geography of Eratosthenes.

DANIELA DUECK (228–43) surveys Strabo’s intensive use of sources. Although these do not allow us to conclude to which extent the Pontic historian gathered his information in the Library during his stay in Alexandria, they provide us with a feeling of the atmosphere of a research institution such as the one in the old Ptolemaic capital.

Four chapters deal with Jews in relation to the Library. Thus, the Letter of Aristeas is the linchpin of the contributions of SYLVIE HONIGMANN (45–77), JAN JOOSTEN (79–87) and ÉTIENNE NODET (89–120), who more or less come to the same conclusion: the Greek translation of the Pentateuch, which was carried out in Egypt, could in theory have been stored in the Library, but in practice it almost certainly was not. EMMANUEL FRIEDHEIM (245–55) focuses on the missing references to the Library in Philo of Alexandria. The paper argues that the anti-Jewish movements in Alexandria in AD 38–40 disappointed Philo to such an extent that he decided never to mention the Library, a not very convincing argument from silence.