



APOLLODORUS OF ARTIMITA

APOLLODORUS OF ARTEMITA, historian. He was originally from the Greco-Parthian city of Artemita (Chalasar), in Apolloniatis. According to W. W. Tarn he flourished in the years between 130 and 87 B.C. (*The Greeks in Bactria and in India*, Cambridge, 1951, p. 47); later dates have also been suggested: the first third of the 1st century B.C. in the opinion of Jacoby (*Fragmente* III C, p. 773) and F. Lasserre, (ed., *Strabo Géographie*, Paris, 1975, VII, p. 13), and between 66 and 44 B.C. according to A. Behr (*De Apollodori Artamiteni reliquis atque aetate*, Strasbourg, 1888, pp. 45-50). He was therefore a contemporary of Mithridates II. We know nothing about him except that he was the author of a *Parthian History* (*Parthica*), which comprised at least four volumes (see Athenaeus *The Deipnosophists* 15.29, 682 cd, ed. C. B. Gulick [Loeb Classical Library], VII, Cambridge, Mass., 1961, pp. 153-55).

Apollodorus' work is lost apart from one quotation in Athenaeus (loc. cit., *Fragmente* I) and some valuable traces in the *Geography* of Strabo. These several fragments have been assembled by Jacoby (*Fragmente* III C, pp. 773-76). It is by means of Strabo's quotations that one can get an idea of the contents of Apollodorus' work.

The precision of the information furnished by Apollodorus and other authors of histories of Parthia is emphasized by Strabo (2.5.12). The latter owes undoubtedly much more to Apollodorus than the few quotations which mention his name, e.g., much of the historical and geographical information about the northern and eastern provinces of the Parthian Empire: Hyrcania (Gorgān), not far from the river Ochus (OPers. Vahauka, doubtless the Atrak



rather than the Taġan of Morġāb), was the land where the ancestors of the Parthians had settled. It possessed many remarkable towns, one of which, Tape, situated at 1,400 stades from the Caspian, was a royal residence (11.7.2-3; *Fragmente* 4); Parthia in the strict sense of the term, originally a small country, by encroaching on Media came to stretch from the Caspian Gates up to Rhaga (Ray) and the country of the Tapyri (Ṭabarestān) (11.9.1); the vast steppe from the Caspian to the far side of the Aral sea was inhabited by nomadic peoples of the Scythian race, i.e., the Dahae, of whom the Parni constituted a branch (see [Aparna](#)), and further east the Massagaete and the Sakas (11.8.2-8; but Erotosthenes is quoted in 11.8.8); there was also Aria (the upper Harī-rūd valley) and the Margiana (the oasis of Marv): the capital of the latter, Marv, was refounded by Antiochus I under the name of Antiocheia (11.10.1-2). It appears that Apollodorus emphasized Bactria (approximately the territory of Afghan Turkestan), and its conquest and colonization by the Greeks (11.11.1-6, 15.1.3). Strabo twice quotes Apollodorus in connection with Bactria (11.11.1, 15.1.3). It is from Apollodorus that the geographer cites the tradition of the Scythian origin of Arsaces (11.9.2), accepted, among others, by J. Wolski (“Untersuchungen zur frühen parthischen Geschichte,” *Klio* 58/2, 1976, p. 453, n. 60), with excluding the tradition of a Bactrian origin (11.9.3). In his long chapter (11) on Great Media, where he describes the origins, population, frontiers, towns, manners, and customs of the Medians and Armenians, Strabo refers once to Apollodorus (11.13.6; *Fragmente* 5b). For the history of Armenians, Strabo certainly depends on Apollodorus, but when the latter spoke of the Araxes as the river separating the Iberians and the Armenians (11.3.21; *Fragmente* 2), Strabo could justly find fault with him, since the river in question was in fact Cyrus (Kura). Apollodorus is also mentioned with regard to distances; he counted 500 stades from the Caspian Gate to Ray and 1,260 stades from the same point to Hecatompylos (11.9.1, 13.6; *Fragmente* 5). He estimated the distance from Artemita to the Caspian Gates and to the outlet of the Persian Gulf to be 8,000 stades (11.11.7; *Fragmente* 6). These numbers are of great interest, specially for the question of the site of Hecatompylos, the capital of the Arsacids in the time of the author. There is also preserved a reference by Apollodorus to the flora of Parthia where the plants, *philadelphion* and *smilax* are mentioned (see Athenaeus, loc. cit.; *Fragmente* 7).

Apollodorus has been suggested as the source of the passage that the *Philippic Histories* of Trogus Pompeius (abridged by Justin, *Epitomae historiarum Philippicarum*, ch. 41; ed. O. Seel, 1972, pp. 276f.) devotes to the origins, morals and customs of the Parthians and to the reigns of Arsaces I and his first successors



(cf. F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, *Geschichte Mittelasiens im Altertum*, Berlin, 1970, pp. 359f.; Strabo *Géographie*, ed. Lasserre, VII, p. 15). But this opinion is questionable: Justin does not mention Apollodorus by name in this passage; moreover, concerning the Parthian history, he does not agree in every point with the passages of Apollodorus quoted by Strabo. Tarn (*The Greeks*, p. 45) must surely be right in drawing a sharp distinction between Apollodorus and the anonymous author consulted by Trogus.

On what sources did Apollodorus draw? Doubtless he knew the historians of Alexander and earlier geographers. But he may also have visited some of the countries that he described; for, unlike most writers of Parthian histories, he was a subject of the Arsacids and thus well situated to obtain useful information. He might even have utilized documents preserved in the archives of Graeco-Parthian towns like Artemita and Seleucia on the Tigris. He could have obtained geographical data from the Greek compatriots, merchants and travelers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also Pauly-Wissowa, I/2, cols. 2853-54.

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