Diodorus’ account of the swelling of the Nile provides an instructive example of his methods in history writing. I have referred to this subject elsewhere in order to demonstrate his unique source-citation practice which, in this particular case, bears resemblance to our methods. I would like to address it here again, in an attempt to show the author’s attitude towards other facets of the historian’s craft. At the beginning of the discussion, Diodorus remarks that since there is great perplexity regarding the flooding of the river, many of the philosophers and the historians have endeavoured to explain its causes. He then adds that he will deal with their views briefly in order not to make the digression too long nor leave unwritten a matter for which all men are searching (I.37.1). In the first chapter, out of five devoted to the discourse on the Nile, he offers an introduction to the main topic, to which he refers at the beginning of the next chapter: “now that we have ended the discussion of the sources and the course of the river, we will attempt to explain the causes of its flooding” (I.38.1). In conclusion, he states that with regard to the swelling of the Nile, although he could have answered in greater detail all those who had suggested explanations, he would be satisfied with the things that have been said, in order that he may not deviate from the brevity announced at the beginning (I.41.10). An author who incorporates statements such as the above three in a discussion of one single topic is obviously concerned with the structure and the organization of his work. In fact, Diodorus is

1 Sulimani 2008.
2 It is generally agreed that Diodorus drew on Agatharchides of Cnidus (either directly, or via the writings of Artemidorus) for his account of the Nile (see the summary in Burton 1972, pp. 21–25). However, as Sacks 1990, pp. 110–112 convincingly demonstrates, Diodorus did not simply copy Agatharchides or Artemidorus. The following discussion contributes to Sacks’ arguments, showing that the statements concerning the organization of the discussion, incorporated in the account of the Nile, are Diodorus’ own, since similar statements (in similar phrasing) recur throughout the Bibliothèke.
very much concerned with methodological issues, as can be inferred not only from his direct comments on the subject, but also from the introductions to the individual books and their conclusions, the structure of the tales of the gods and heroes, as well as sentences and phrases recurring throughout the *Bibliotheke*. The identical phrases that he places at the beginning and at the end of a discussion of a certain topic, clear transitions from one issue to another and emphasis on every digression from the main topic also attest to that. The fact that he arranges the material according to geographical areas and, whenever possible, devotes one book to one subject, might be added to this list. An examination of all these categories will show that Diodorus had a set of principles and rules on which he constructed his universal history.

This organizational strategy is obligatory for a work which the author himself, by explaining its scope and objectives, characterizes as encyclopaedic. As the discussion of Diodorus’ definition of his chosen genre demonstrates, he strove to record the history of the entire inhabited world from the earliest times, including the ancient mythologies, until his own times, to embrace the deeds of both the Greeks and the barbarians and to refer to very many and most varied circumstances (I.3.1–2, 3.6; cf. I.9.1), accomplishing that in only forty books (I.4.6–7, XL.8); by pursuing such a plan, he aims to create one narrative, a common counting-house of past occurrences (I.1.3), and a treatise from which anyone will be able to take whatever is relevant to his project, as though one were drawing from a great fountain (I.3.7). Apart from the metaphors used by Diodorus, this purpose bears a remarkable resemblance to Pliny’s comment in his *Naturalis Historia*, an obvious example of encyclopaedic work in antiquity. Stating that he wrote a table of contents of each book, Pliny adds that by this means “ne perlegant, sed ut quisque desiderabit aliquid id tantum quaerat, et sciat quo loco inveniat”, (the readers) will not read through, but each one will search only for the thing that he will desire,

Hence I find it rather odd to read in Ameling’s study of Agatharchides, with regard to Diod., I.37.3–4, that “writing on the sources of the Nile, Agatharchides gives a short summary of his most important predecessors and the reasons for their failure”, without so much as acknowledging Diodorus’ role (Ameling 2008, pp. 28–29).

3 See Rubincam 1997, p. 129. This is not to say that the *Bibliotheke* is an ’Encyclopaedia’, a term created in the Renaissance, but it is a model of an early work with encyclopaedic features or, as Rubincam puts it, a ’proto- encyclopaedia’ (p. 136).

4 See above, Part I Chapter 1, pp. 23–26.

5 For Diodorus’ original plan to write a work of forty-two books, see Rubincam 1998a, pp. 229–233.