

Diodoros of Silicy, *Library of History* 1.1-29 (on Egyptian customs)

Source: Charles Henry Oldfather, *Diodorus of Sicily: Books I and II, 1-34* (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 1933), with adaptations.

1 (*preface*)

It is appropriate that all men should always show gratitude to those writers who have composed universal histories, since they have aspired to help society as a whole by their individual labours. For by offering an education, which entails no danger, in what is advantageous they provide their readers with a most excellent kind of experience through such a presentation of events. For although the learning which is acquired by experience in each separate case, with all the attendant toils and dangers, does indeed enable a man to discern in each instance where utility lies (and this is the reason why the most widely experienced of our heroes suffered great misfortunes before he “Of many men the cities saw and learned their thoughts”). Yet the understanding of the failures and successes of other men, which is acquired by the study of history, affords an education that is free from actual experience of ills. Furthermore, it has been the aspiration of these writers to marshal all men, who, although united one to another by their kinship, are yet separated by space and time, into one and the same orderly body. And such historians have therein shown themselves to be, as it were, ministers of Divine Providence. For just as Providence, having brought the orderly arrangement of the visible stars and the natures of men together into one common relationship, continually directs their courses through all eternity, apportioning to each that which falls to it by the direction of fate, so likewise the historians, in recording the common affairs of the inhabited world as though they were those of a single state, have made of their treatises a single reckoning of past events and a common clearing-house of knowledge concerning them. For it is an excellent thing to be able to use the ignorant mistakes of others as warning examples for the correction of error, and, when we confront the varied vicissitudes of life, instead of having to investigate what is being done now, to be able to imitate the successes which have been achieved in the past. Certainly all men prefer in their counsels the oldest men to those who are younger, because of the experience which has accrued to the former through the lapse of time. But it is a fact that such experience is in so far surpassed by the understanding which is gained from history, as history excels, we know, in the multitude of facts at its disposal. For this reason one may hold that the acquisition of a knowledge of history is of the greatest utility for every conceivable circumstance of life. For it endows the young with the wisdom of the aged, while for the old it multiplies the experience which they already possess; citizens in private station it qualifies for leadership, and the leaders it incites, through the immortality of the glory which it confers, to undertake the noblest deeds; soldiers, again, it makes more ready to face dangers in defence of their country because of the public encomiums which they will receive after death,

and wicked men it turns aside from their impulse towards evil through the everlasting opprobrium to which it will condemn them.

2

1 In general, then, it is because of that commemoration of goodly deeds which history accords men that some of them have been induced to become the founders of cities, that others have been led to introduce laws which encompass man's social life with security, and that many have aspired to discover new sciences and arts in order to benefit the race of men. And since complete happiness can be attained only through the combination of all these activities, the foremost meed of praise must be awarded to that which more than any other thing is the cause of them, that is, to history. 2 For we must look upon it as constituting the guardian of the high achievements of illustrious men, the witness which testifies to the evil deeds of the wicked, and the benefactor of the entire human race. For if it be true that the myths which are related about Hades, in spite of the fact that their subject-matter is fictitious, contribute greatly to fostering piety and justice among men, how much more must we assume that history, the prophetess of truth, she who is, as it were, the mother-city of philosophy as a whole, is still more potent to equip men's characters for noble living! 3 For all men, by reason of the frailty of our nature, live but an infinitesimal portion of eternity and are dead throughout all subsequent time. And while in the case of those who in their lifetime have done nothing worthy of note, everything which has pertained to them in life also perishes when their bodies die, yet in the case of those who by their virtue have achieved fame, their deeds are remembered for evermore, since they are heralded abroad by history's voice most divine.

4 Now it is an excellent thing, I think, as all men of understanding must agree, to receive in exchange for mortal labours an immortal fame. In the case of Heracles, for instance, it is generally agreed that during the whole time which he spent among men he submitted to great and continuous labours and perils willingly, in order that he might confer benefits upon the race of men and thereby gain immortality. And likewise in the case of other great and good men, some have attained to heroic honours and others to honours equal to the divine, and all have been thought to be worthy of great praise, since history immortalizes their achievements. 5 For whereas all other memorials abide but a brief time, yet the power of history, which extends over the whole inhabited world, possesses in time, which brings ruin upon all things else, a custodian which ensures its perpetual transmission to posterity.

History also contributes to the power of speech, and a nobler thing than that may not easily be found. 6 For it is this that makes the Greeks superior to the barbarians, and the educated to the uneducated, and, furthermore, it is by means of speech alone that one man is able to gain ascendancy over the many; and, in general, the impression made by every measure that is proposed corresponds to the power of the speaker who presents it, and we describe great and human men as "worthy of speech," as though therein they had won the highest prize of

excellence. 7 And when speech is resolved into its several kinds, we find that, whereas poetry is more pleasing than profitable, and codes of law punish but do not instruct, and similarly, all the other kinds either contribute nothing to happiness or else contain a harmful element mingled with the beneficial, while some of them actually pervert the truth, history alone, since in it word and fact are in perfect agreement, embraces in its narration all the other qualities as well as that are useful. 8 For it is ever to be seen urging men to justice, denouncing those who are evil, lauding the good, laying up, in a word, for its readers a mighty store of experience.

3

1 Consequently we, observing that writers of history are accorded a merited approbation, were led to feel a like enthusiasm for the subject. But when we turned our attention to the historians before our time, although we approved their purpose without reservation, yet we were far from feeling that their treatises had been composed so as to contribute to human welfare as much as might have been the case. 2 For although the profit which history affords its readers lies in its embracing a vast number and variety of circumstances, yet most writers have recorded no more than isolated wars waged by a single nation or a single state, and but few have undertaken, beginning with the earliest times and coming down to their own day, to record the events connected with all peoples. Regarding the latter, some have not attached to the several events their own proper dates, and others have passed over the deeds of barbarian peoples; and some, again, have rejected the ancient legends because of the difficulties involved in their treatment, while others have failed to complete the plan to which they had set their hand, their lives having been cut short by fate. And of those who have undertaken this account of all peoples not one has continued his history beyond the Macedonian period. 3 For while some have closed their accounts with the deeds of Philip, others with those of Alexander, and some with the Diadochi or the Epigoni, yet, despite the number and importance of the events subsequent to these and extending even to our own lifetime which have been left neglected, no historian has essayed to treat of them within the compass of a single narrative, because of the magnitude of the undertaking. 4 For this reason, since both the dates of the events and the events themselves lie scattered about in numerous treatises and in divers authors, the knowledge of them becomes difficult for the mind to encompass and for the memory to retain.

5 Consequently, 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. 6 For if a man should begin with the most ancient times and record to the best of his ability the affairs of the entire world down to his own day, so far as they have been handed down to memory, as though they were the affairs of some single city, he would obviously have to undertake an immense labour, yet he would have composed a treatise of the utmost value to those who are studiously inclined. 7 For from such a treatise every man will be able readily to take what is of use for his special purpose, drawing as it were

from a great fountain. 8 The reason for this is that, in the first place, 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, that, because the works vary so widely and are so numerous, the recovery of past events becomes extremely difficult of comprehension and of attainment. Whereas, on the other hand, the treatise which keeps within the limits of a single narrative and contains a connected account of events facilitates the reading and contains such recovery of the past in a form that is perfectly easy to follow. In general, a history of this nature must be held to surpass all others to the same degree as the whole is more useful than the part and continuity than discontinuity, and, again, as an event whose date has been accurately determined is more useful than one of which it is not known in what period it happened.

4

1 And so we, appreciating that an undertaking of this nature, while most useful, would yet require much labour and time, have been engaged upon it for thirty years, and with much hardship and many dangers we have visited a large portion of both Asia and Europe that we might see with our own eyes all the most important regions and as many others as possible. For many errors have been committed through ignorance of the sites, not only by the common run of historians, but even by some of the highest reputation. 2 As for the resources which have availed us in this undertaking, they have been, first and foremost, that enthusiasm for the work which enables every man to bring to completion the task which seems impossible, and, in the second place, the abundant supply which Rome affords of the materials pertaining to the proposed study. 3 For the supremacy of this city, a supremacy so powerful that it extends to the bounds of the inhabited world, has provided us in the course of our long residence there with copious resources in the most accessible form. 4 For since the city of our origin was Agyrium in Sicily, and by reason of our contact with the Romans in that island we had gained a wide acquaintance with their language, we have acquired an accurate knowledge of all the events connected with this empire from the records which have been carefully preserved among them over a long period of time. 5 Now we have begun our history with the legends of both Greeks and barbarians, after having first investigated to the best of our ability the accounts which each people records of its earliest times.

6 Since my undertaking is now completed, although the volumes are as yet unpublished, I wish to present a brief preliminary outline of the work as a whole. Our first six Books embrace the events and legends previous to the Trojan War, the first three setting forth the antiquities of the barbarians, and the next three almost exclusively those of the Greeks. In the following eleven we have written a universal history of events from the Trojan War to the death of Alexander. 7 And in the succeeding twenty-three Books we have given an orderly account of all subsequent events down to the beginning of the war between the Romans and the Celts, in the course of which the commander, Gaius Julius Caesar, who has been deified because of his

deeds, subdued the most numerous and most warlike tribes of the Celts, and advanced the Roman Empire as far as the British Isles. The first events of this war occurred in the first year of the One Hundred and Eightieth Olympiad, when Herodes was archon at Athens.

5

1 As for the periods included in this work, we do not attempt to fix with any strictness the limits of those before the Trojan War, because no trustworthy chronological table covering them has come into our hands: but from the Trojan War we follow Apollodorus of Athens in setting the interval from then to the Return of the Heracleidae as eighty years, from then to the First Olympiad three hundred and twenty-eight years, reckoning the dates by the reigns of the kings of Lacedaemon, and from the First Olympiad to the beginning of the Celtic war, which we have made the end of our history, seven hundred and thirty years. So that our whole treatise of forty Books embraces eleven hundred and thirty-eight years, exclusive of the periods which embrace the events before the Trojan War.

2 We have given at the outset this precise outline, since we desire to inform our readers about the project as a whole, and at the same time to deter those who are accustomed to make their books by compilation, from mutilating works of which they are not the authors. And throughout our entire history it is to be hoped that what we have done well may not be the object of envy, and that the matters wherein our knowledge is defective may receive correction at the hands of more able historians. 3 Now that we have set forth the plan and purpose of our undertaking we shall attempt to make good our promise of such a treatise.

6

1 Concerning the various conceptions of the gods formed by those who were the first to introduce the worship of the deity, and concerning the myths which are told about each of the immortals, although we shall refrain from setting forth the most part in detail, since such a procedure would require a long account, yet whatever on these subjects we may feel to be pertinent to the several parts of our proposed history we shall present in a summary fashion, that nothing which is worth hearing may be found missing. 2 Concerning, however, every race of men, and all events that have taken place in the known parts of the inhabited world, we shall give an accurate account, so far as that is possible in the case of things that happened so long ago, beginning with the earliest times. 3 Now as regards the first origin of mankind two opinions have arisen among the best authorities both on nature and on history. One group, which takes the position that the universe did not come into being and will not decay, has declared that the race of men also has existed from eternity, there having never been a time when men were first begotten. The other group, however, which hold that the universe came into being and will decay, has declared that, like it, men had their first origin at a definite time.

7

1 When in the beginning, as their account runs, the universe was being formed, both heaven and earth were indistinguishable in appearance, since their elements were intermingled: then, when their bodies separated from one another, the universe took on in all its parts the ordered form in which it is now seen; the air set up a continual motion, and the fiery element in it gathered into the highest regions, since anything of such a nature moves upward by reason of its lightness (and it is for this reason that the sun and the multitude of other stars became involved in the universal whirl); while all that was mud-like and thick and contained an admixture of moisture sank because of its weight into one place; 2 and as this continually turned about upon itself and became compressed, out of the wet it formed the sea, and out of what was firmer, the land, which was like potter's clay and entirely soft. 3 But as the sun's fire shone upon the land, it first of all became firm, and then, since its surface was in a ferment because of the warmth, portions of the wet swelled up in masses in many places, and in these pustules covered with delicate membranes made their appearance. Such a phenomenon can be seen even yet in swamps and marshy places whenever, the ground having become cold, the air suddenly and without any gradual change becomes intensely warm. 4 And while the wet was being impregnated with life by reason of the warmth in the manner described, by night the living things forthwith received their nourishment from the mist that fell from the enveloping air, and by day were made solid by the intense heat; and finally, when the embryos had attained their full development and the membranes had been thoroughly heated and broken open, there was produced every form of animal life. 5 Of these, such as had partaken of the most warmth set off to the higher regions, having become winged, and such as retained an earthy consistency came to be numbered in the class of creeping things and of the other land animals, while those whose composition partook the most of the wet element gathered into the region congenial to them, receiving the name of water animals. 6 And since the earth constantly grew more solid through the action of the sun's fire and of the winds, it was finally no longer able to generate any of the larger animals, but each kind of living creatures was now begotten by breeding with one another.

7 And apparently Euripides also, who was a pupil of Anaxagoras the natural philosopher, is not opposed to this account of the nature of the universe, for in his *Melanippe* he writes as follows: "Tis thus that the heav'n and earth were once one form; But since the two were sundered each from each, They now beget and bring to life all things, The trees and birds, the beasts, the spawn of sea, And race of mortals."

8

1 Concerning the first generation of the universe this is the account which we have received. But the first men to be born, he says, led an undisciplined and bestial life, setting out one by one to secure their sustenance and taking for their food both the tenderest herbs and the

fruits of wild trees. Then, 2 since they were attacked by the wild beasts, they came to each other's aid, being instructed by expediency, and when gathered together in this way by reason of their fear, they gradually came to recognize their mutual characteristics. 3 And though the sounds which they made were at first unintelligible and indistinct, yet gradually they came to give articulation to their speech, and by agreeing with one another upon symbols for each thing which presented itself to them, made known among themselves the significance which was to be attached to each term. 4 But since groups of this kind arose over every part of the inhabited world, not all men had the same language, inasmuch as every group organized the elements of its speech by mere chance. This is the explanation of the present existence of every conceivable kind of language, and, furthermore, out of these first groups to be formed came all the original nations of the world.

5 Now the first men, since none of the things useful for life had yet been discovered, led a wretched existence, having no clothing to cover them, knowing not the use of dwelling and fire, and also being totally ignorant of cultivated food. 6 For since they also even neglected the harvesting of the wild food, they laid by no store of its fruits against their needs; consequently large numbers of them perished in the winters because of the cold and the lack of food. 7 Little by little, however, experience taught them both to take to the caves in winter and to store such fruits as could be preserved. 8 And when they had become acquainted with fire and other useful things, the arts also and whatever else is capable of furthering man's social life were gradually discovered. 9 Indeed, speaking generally, in all things it was necessity itself that became man's teacher, supplying in appropriate fashion instruction in every matter to a creature which was well endowed by nature and had, as its assistants for every purpose, hands and speech and sagacity of mind. 10 And as regards the first origin of men and their earliest manner of life we shall be satisfied with what has been said, since we would keep due proportion in our account.

9

1 But as regards all the events which have been handed down to memory and took place in the known regions of the inhabited world, we shall now undertake to give a full account of them. 2 Now as to who were the first kings we are in no position to speak on our own authority, nor do we give assent to those historians who profess to know. For it is impossible that the discovery of writing was of so early a date as to have been contemporary with the first kings. But if a man should concede even this last point, it still seems evident that writers of history are as a class a quite recent appearance in the life of mankind. 3 Again, with respect to the antiquity of the human race, not only do Greeks put forth their claims but many of the barbarians as well, all holding that it is they who were autochthonous and the first of all men to discover the things which are of use in life, and that it was the events in their own history which were the earliest to have been held worthy of record. 4 So far as we are concerned, however, we shall not make the attempt to determine with precision the antiquity of each nation or what is

the race whose nations are prior in point of time to the rest and by how many years, but we shall record summarily, keeping due proportion in our account, what each nation has to say concerning its antiquity and the early events in its history. 5 The first peoples which we shall discuss will be the barbarians, not that we consider them to be earlier than the Greeks, as Ephorus has said, but because we wish to set forth most of the facts about them at the outset, in order that we may not, by beginning with the various accounts given by the Greeks, have to interpolate in the different narrations of their early history any event connected with another people. 6 And since Egypt is the country where mythology places the origin of the gods, where the earliest observations of the stars are said to have been made, and where, furthermore, many noteworthy deeds of great men are recorded, we shall begin our history with the events connected with Egypt.

10

1 Now the Egyptians have an account like this: When in the beginning the universe came into being, men first came into existence in Egypt, both because of the favourable climate of the land and because of the nature of the Nile. For this stream, since it produces much life and provides a spontaneous supply of food, easily supports whatever living things have been engendered. For both the root of the reed and the lotus, as well as the Egyptian bean and corsaeon, as it is called, and many other similar plants, supply the race of men with nourishment all ready for use. 2 As proof that animal life appeared first of all in their land they would offer the fact that even at the present day the soil of the Thebaid at certain times generates mice in such numbers and of such size as to astonish all who have witnessed the phenomenon. For some of them are fully formed as far as the breast and front feet and are able to move, while the rest of the body is unformed, the clod of earth still retaining its natural character. 3 And from this fact it is manifest that, when the world was first taking shape, the land of Egypt could better than any other have been the place where mankind came into being because of the well-tempered nature of its soil. For even at the present time, while the soil of no other country generates any such things, in it alone certain living creatures may be seen coming into being in a marvellous fashion.

4 In general, he says that if in the flood which occurred in the time of Deucalion most living things were destroyed, it is probable that the inhabitants of southern Egypt survived rather than any others, since their country is rainless for the most part; or if, as some maintain, the destruction of living things was complete and the earth then brought forth again new forms of animals, nevertheless, even on such a supposition the first genesis of living things fittingly attaches to this country. 5 For when the moisture from the abundant rains, which fell among other peoples, was mingled with the intense heat which prevails in Egypt itself, it is reasonable to suppose that the air became very well tempered for the first generation of all living things. 6 Indeed, even in our day during the inundations of Egypt the generation of forms of animal life

can clearly be seen taking place in the pools which remain the longest. 7 For, whenever the river has begun to recede and the sun has thoroughly dried the surface of the slime, living animals, he says, take shape, some of them fully formed, but some only half so and still actually united with the very earth.

11

1 Now the men of Egypt, he says, when ages ago they came into existence, as they looked up at the firmament and were struck with both awe and wonder at the nature of the universe, conceived that two gods were both eternal and first, namely, the sun and the moon, whom they called respectively Osiris and Isis, these appellations having in each case been based upon a certain meaning in them. 2 For when the names are translated into Greek Osiris means "many-eyed," and properly so. For in shedding his rays in every direction he surveys with many eyes, as it were, all land and sea. And the words of the poet are also in agreement with this conception when he says: "The sun, who sees all things and hears all things." 3 And of the ancient Greek writers of mythology some give to Osiris the name Dionysus or, with a slight change in form, Sirius. One of them, Eumolpus, in his Bacchic Hymn speaks of "Our Dionysus, shining like a star, With fiery eye in ev'ry ray; while Orpheus says: And this is why men call him Shining One And Dionysus."

4 Some say that Osiris is also represented with the cloak of fawn-skin about his shoulders as imitating the sky spangled with the stars. As for Isis, when translated the word means "ancient," the name having been given her because her birth was from everlasting and ancient. And they put horns on her head both because of the appearance which she has to the eye when the moon is crescent-shaped, and because among the Egyptians a cow is held sacred to her.

5 These two gods, they hold, regulate the entire universe, giving both nourishment and increase to all things by means of a system of three seasons which complete the full cycle through an unobservable movement, these being spring and summer and winter; and these seasons, though in nature most opposed to one another, complete the cycle of the year in the fullest harmony. Moreover, practically all the physical matter which is essential to the generation of all things is furnished by these gods, the sun contributing the fiery element and the spirit, the moon the wet and the dry, and both together the air; and it is through these elements that all things are engendered and nourished. 6 And so it is out of the sun and moon that the whole physical body of the universe is made complete; and as for the five parts just named of these bodies — the spirit, the fire, the dry, as well as the wet, and, lastly, the air-like — just as in the case of a man we enumerate head and hands and feet and the other parts, so in the same way the body of the universe is composed in its entirety of these parts.

12

1 Each of these parts they regard as a god and to each of them the first men in Egypt to use articulate speech gave a distinct name appropriate to its nature. 2 Now the spirit they called, as

we translate their expression, Zeus, and since he was the source of the spirit of life in animals they considered him to be in a sense the father of all things. And they say that the most renowned of the Greek poets also agrees with this when he speaks of this god as “The father of men and of gods.”

3 The fire they called Hephaestus, as it is translated, holding him to be a great god and one who contributes much both to the birth and full development of all things. 4 The earth, again, they looked upon as a kind of vessel which holds all growing things and so gave it the name "mother". And in a similar manner the Greeks also call it Demeter, the word having been slightly changed in the course of time; for in olden times they called her Gê Meter (Earth Mother), to which Orpheus bears witness when he speaks of “Earth the Mother of all, Demeter giver of wealth.”

5 And the wet, according to them, was called by the men of old Oceanê, which, when translated, means Fostering-mother, though some of the Greeks have taken it to be Oceanus, in connection with whom the poet also speaks of “Oceanus source of gods and mother Tethys.” 6 For the Egyptians consider Oceanus to be their river Nile, on which also their gods were born; since, they say, Egypt is the only country in the whole inhabited world where there are many cities which were founded by the first gods, such as Zeus, Helios, Hermes, Apollo, Pan, Eileithyia, and many more.

7 The air, they say, they called Athena, as the name is translated, and they considered her to be the daughter of Zeus and conceived of her as a virgin, because of fact that the air is by its nature uncorrupted and occupies the highest part of the entire universe; for the latter reason also the myth arose that she was born from the head of Zeus. 8 Another name given her was Tritogeneia (Thrice-born), because her nature changes three times in the course of the year, in the spring, summer, and winter. They add that she is also called Glaucopis (Blue-eyed), not because she has blue eyes, as some Greeks have held — a silly explanation, indeed — but because the air has a bluish cast.

9 These five deities, they say, visit all the inhabited world, revealing themselves to men in the form of sacred animals, and at times even appearing in the guise of men or in other shapes; nor is this a fabulous thing, but possible, if these are in very truth the gods who give life to all things. 10 And also the poet, who visited Egypt and became acquainted with such accounts as these from the lips of the priests, in some place in his writings sets forth as actual fact what has been said: “The gods, in strangers' form from alien lands, Frequent the cities of men in ev'ry guise, Observing their insolence and lawful ways.” Now so far as the celestial gods are concerned whose genesis is from eternity, this is the account given by the Egyptians.

13

1 And besides these there are other gods, they say, who were terrestrial, having once been mortals, but who, by reason of their sagacity and the good services which they rendered to all

men, attained immortality, some of them having even been kings in Egypt. 2 Their names, when translated, are in some cases the same as those of the celestial gods, while others have a distinct appellation, such as Helius, Cronus, and Rhea, and also the Zeus who is called Ammon by some, and besides these Hera and Hephaestus, also Hestia, and, finally, Hermes. Helius was the first king of the Egyptians, his name being the same as that of the heavenly star. 3 Some of the priests, however, say that Hephaestus was their first king, since he was the discoverer of fire and received the rule because of this service to mankind; for once, when a tree on the mountains had been struck by lightning and the forest near by was ablaze, Hephaestus went up to it, for it was winter-time, and greatly enjoyed the heat; as the fire died down he kept adding fuel to it, and while keeping the fire going in this way he invited the rest of mankind to enjoy the advantage which came from it. 4 Then Cronus became the ruler, and upon marrying his sister Rhea he begat Osiris and Isis, according to some writers of mythology, but, according to the majority, Zeus and Hera, whose high achievements gave them dominion over the entire universe. From these last were sprung five gods, one born on each of the five days which the Egyptians intercalate; the names of these children were Osiris and Isis, and also Typhon, Apollo, and Aphrodîtê; 5 and Osiris when translated is Dionysus, and Isis is more similar to Demeter than to any other goddess; and after Osiris married Isis and succeeded to the kingship he did many things of service to the social life of man.

14

1 Osiris was the first, they record, to make mankind give up cannibalism; for after Isis had discovered the fruit of both wheat and barley which grew wild over the land along with the other plants but was still unknown to man, and Osiris had also devised the cultivation of these fruits, all men were glad to change their food, both because of the pleasing nature of the newly-discovered grains and because it seemed to their advantage to refrain from their butchery of one another. 2 As proof of the discovery of these fruits they offer the following ancient custom which they still observe: Even yet at harvest time the people make a dedication of the first heads of the grain to be cut, and standing beside the sheaf beat themselves and call upon Isis, by this act rendering honour to the goddess for the fruits which she discovered, at the season when she first did this. 3 Moreover in some cities, during the Festival of Isis as well, stalks of wheat and barley are carried among the other objects in the procession, as a memorial of what the goddess so ingeniously discovered at the beginning. Isis also established laws, they say, in accordance with which the people regularly dispense justice to one another and are led to refrain through fear of punishment from illegal violence and insolence; 4 and it is for this reason also that the early Greeks gave Demeter the name Thesmophorus, acknowledging in this way that she had first established their laws.

15

1 Osiris, they say, founded in the Egyptian Thebaid a city with a hundred gates, which the men of his day named after his mother, though later generations called it Diospolis, and some named it Thebes. 2 There is no agreement, however, as to when this city was founded, not only among the historians, but even among the priests of Egypt themselves; for many writers say that Thebes was not founded by Osiris, but many years later by a certain king of whom we shall give a detailed account in connection with his period. 3 Osiris, they add, also built a temple to his parents, Zeus and Hera, which was famous both for its size and its costliness in general, and two golden chapels to Zeus, the larger one to him as god of heaven, the smaller one to him as former king and father of the Egyptians, in which rôle he is called by some Ammon. 4 He also made golden chapels for the rest of the gods mentioned above, allotting honours to each of them and appointing priests to have charge over these. Special esteem at the court of Osiris and Isis was also accorded to those who should invent any of the arts or devise any useful process; 5 consequently, since copper and gold mines had been discovered in the Thebaid, they fashioned implements with which they killed the wild beasts and worked the soil, and thus in eager rivalry brought the country under cultivation, and they made images of the gods and magnificent golden chapels for their worship.

6 Osiris, they say, was also interested in agriculture and was reared in Nysa, a city of Arabia Felix near Egypt, being a son of Zeus; and the name which he bears among the Greeks is derived both from his father and from the birthplace, since he is called Dionysus. 7 Mention is also made of Nysa by the poet in his Hymns, to the effect that it was in the vicinity of Egypt, when he says: "There is a certain Nysa, mountain high, With forests thick, in Phoenicê afar, Close to Aegyptus' streams."

8 And the discovery of the vine, they say, was made by him near Nysa, and that, having further devised the proper treatment of its fruit, he was the first to drink wine and taught mankind at large the culture of the vine and the use of wine, as well as the way to harvest the grape and to store wine. 9 The one most highly honoured by him was Hermes, who was endowed with unusual ingenuity for devising things capable of improving the social life of man.

16

1 It was by Hermes, for instance, according to them, that the common language of mankind was first further articulated, and that many objects which were still nameless received an appellation, that the alphabet was invented, and that ordinances regarding the honours and offerings due to the gods were duly established; he was the first also to observe the orderly arrangement of the stars and the harmony of the musical sounds and their nature, to establish a wrestling school, and to give thought to the rhythmical movement of the human body and its proper development. He also made a lyre and gave it three strings, imitating the seasons of the year; for he adopted three tones, a high, a low, and a medium; the high from the summer, the low from the winter, and the medium from the spring. 2 The Greeks also were taught by him

how to expound (hermeneia) their thoughts, and it was for this reason that he was given the name Hermes. In a word, Osiris, taking him for his priestly scribe, communicated with him on every matter and used his counsel above that of all others. The olive tree also, they claim, was his discovery, not Athena's, as the Greeks say.

17

1 Of Osiris they say that, being of a beneficent turn of mind, and eager for glory, he gathered together a great army, with the intention of visiting all the inhabited earth and teaching the race of men how to cultivate the vine and sow wheat and barley; 2 for he supposed that if he made men give up their savagery and adopt a gentle manner of life he would receive immortal honours because of the magnitude of his benefactions. And this did in fact take place, since not only the men of his time who received his gift, but all succeeding generations as well, because of the delight which they take in the foods which were discovered, have honoured those who introduced them as gods most illustrious.

3 Now after Osiris had established the affairs of Egypt and turned the supreme power over to Isis his wife, they say that he placed Hermes at her side as counsellor because his prudence raised him above the king's other friends, and as general of all the land under his sway he left Heracles, who was both his kinsman and renowned for his valour and physical strength, while as governors he appointed Busiris over those parts of Egypt which lie towards Phoenicia and border upon the sea and Antaeus over those adjoining Ethiopia and Libya; then he himself left Egypt with his army to make his campaign, taking in his company also his brother, whom the Greeks call Apollo. 4 And it was Apollo, they say, who discovered the laurel, a garland of which all men place about the head of this god above all others. The discovery of ivy is also attributed to Osiris by the Egyptians and made sacred to this god, just as the Greeks also do in the case of Dionysus. 5 And in the Egyptian language, they say, the ivy is called the "plant of Osiris" and for purposes of dedication is preferred to the vine, since the latter sheds its leaves while the former ever remains green; the same rule, moreover, the ancients have followed in the case of other plants also which are perennially green, ascribing, for instance, the myrtle to Aphroditê and the laurel to Apollo.

18

1 Now Osiris was accompanied on his campaign, as the Egyptian account goes, by his two sons Anubis and Macedon, who were distinguished for their valour. Both of them carried the most notable accoutrements of war, taken from certain animals whose character was not unlike the boldness of the men, Anubis wearing a dog's skin and Macedon the fore-parts of a wolf; and it is for this reason that these animals are held in honour among the Egyptians. 2 He also took Pan along on his campaign, who is held in special honour by the Egyptians; for the inhabitants of the land have not only set up statues of him at every temple but have also named

a city after him in the Thebaid, called by the natives Chemmo, which when translated means City of Pan. In his company were also men who were experienced in agriculture, such as Maron in the cultivation of the vine, and Triptolemus in the sowing of grain and in every step in the harvesting of it. 3 And when all his preparations had been completed Osiris made a vow to the gods that he would let his hair grow until his return to Egypt and then made his way through Ethiopia; and this is the reason why this custom with regard to their hair was observed among the Egyptians until recent times, and why those who journeyed abroad let their hair grow until their return home.

4 While he was in Ethiopia, their account continues, the Satyr people were brought to him, who, they say, have hair upon their loins. For Osiris was laughter-loving and fond of music and the dance; consequently he took with him a multitude of musicians, among whom were nine maidens who could sing and were trained in the other arts, these maidens being those who among the Greeks are called the Muses; and their leader (hegetes), as the account goes, was Apollo, who was for that reason also given the name Musegetes. 5 As for the Satyrs, they were taken along in the campaign because they were proficient in dancing and singing and every kind of relaxation and pastime; for Osiris was not warlike, nor did he have to organize pitched battles or engagements, since every people received him as a god because of his benefactions. 6 In Ethiopia he instructed the inhabitants in agriculture and founded some notable cities, and then left behind him men to govern the country and collect the tribute.

19

1 While Osiris and his army were thus employed, the Nile, they say, at the time of the rising of Sirius, which is the season when the river is usually at flood, breaking out of its banks inundated a large section of Egypt and covered especially that part where Prometheus was governor; and since practically everything in this district was destroyed, Prometheus was so grieved that he was on the point of quitting life wilfully. 2 Because its water sweeps down so swiftly and with such violence the river was given the name Aëtus; but Heracles, being ever intent upon great enterprises and eager for the reputation of a manly spirit, speedily stopped the flood at its breach and turned the river back into its former course. 3 Consequently certain of the Greek poets worked the incident into a myth, to the effect that Heracles had killed the eagle which was devouring the liver of Prometheus. 4 The river in the earliest period bore the name Oceanê, which in Greek is Oceanus; then because of this flood, they say, it was called Aëtus, and still later it was known as Aegyptus after a former king of the land. And the poet also adds his testimony to this when he writes: "On the river Aegyptus my curvéd ships I stayed." For it is at Thonis, as it is called, which in early times was the trading-port of Egypt, that the river empties into the sea. Its last name and that which the river now bears it received from the former king Nileus.

5 Now when Osiris arrived at the borders of Ethiopia, he curbed the river by dykes on both banks, so that at flood-time it might not form stagnant pools over the land to its detriment, but that the flood-water might be let upon the countryside, in a gentle flow as it might be needed, through gates which he had built. 6 After this he continued his march through Arabia along the shore of the Red Sea as far as India and the limits of the inhabited world. 7 He also founded not a few cities in India, one of which he named Nysa, wishing to leave there a memorial of that city in Egypt where he had been reared. He also planted ivy in the Indian Nysa, and throughout India and those countries which border upon it the plant to this day is still to be found only in this region. 8 And many other signs of his stay he left in that country, which have led the Indians of a later time to lay claim to the god and say that he was by birth a native of India.

20

1 Osiris also took an interest in hunting elephants, and everywhere left behind him inscribed pillars telling of his campaign. And he visited all the other nations of Asia as well and crossed into Europe at the Hellespont. 2 In Thrace he slew Lycurgus, the king of the barbarians, who opposed his undertaking, and Maron, who was now old, he left there to supervise the culture of the plants which he introduced into that land and caused him to found a city to bear his name, which he called Maroneia. 3 Macedon his son, moreover, he left as king of Macedonia, which was named after him, while to Triptolemus he assigned the care of agriculture in Attica. Finally, Osiris in this way visited all the inhabited world and advanced community life by the introduction of the fruits which are most easily cultivated. 4 And if any country did not admit of the growing of vine he introduced the drink prepared from barley, which is little inferior to wine in aroma and strength. 5 On his return to Egypt he brought with him the very greatest presents from every quarter and by reason of the magnitude of his benefactions received the gift of immortality with the approval of all men and honour equal to that offered to the gods of heaven. 6 After this he passed from the midst of men into the company of the gods and received from Isis and Hermes sacrifices and every other highest honour. These also instituted rites for him and introduced many things of a mystic nature, magnifying in this way the power of the god.

21

1 Although the priests of Osiris had from the earliest times received the account of his death as a matter not to be divulged, in the course of years it came about that through some of their number this hidden knowledge was published to the many. 2 This is the story as they give it: When Osiris was ruling over Egypt as its lawful king, he was murdered by his brother Typhon, a violent and impious man; Typhon then divided the body of the slain man into twenty-six pieces and gave one portion to each of the band of murderers, since he wanted all of them to share in the pollution and felt that in this way he would have in them steadfast supporters and

defenders of his rule. 3 But Isis, the sister and wife of Osiris, avenged his murder with the aid of her son Horus, and after slaying Typhon and his accomplices became queen over Egypt. 4 The struggle between them took place on the banks of the Nile near the village now known as Antaeus, which, they say, lies on the Arabian side of the river and derives its name from that of Antaeus, a contemporary of Osiris, who was punished by Heracles. 5 Now Isis recovered all the pieces of the body except the privates, and wishing that the burial-place of her husband should remain secret and yet be honoured by all the inhabitants of Egypt, she fulfilled her purpose in somewhat the following manner. Over each piece of the body, as the account goes, she fashioned out of spices and wax a human figure about the size of Osiris; 6 then summoning the priests group by group, she required all of them an oath that they would reveal to no one the trust which she was going to confide to them, and taking each group of them apart privately she said that she was consigning to them alone the burial of the body, and after reminding them of the benefactions of Osiris she exhorted them to bury his body in their own district and pay honours to him as to a god, and to consecrate to him also some one that they might choose of the animals native to their district, pay it while living the honours which they had formerly rendered to Osiris, and upon its death accord it the same kind of funeral as they had given to him. 7 And since Isis wished to induce the priests to render these honours by the incentive of their own profit also, she gave them the third part of the country to defray the cost of the worship and service of the gods. 8 And the priests, it is said, being mindful of the benefactions of Osiris and eager to please the queen who was petitioning them, and incited as well by their own profit, did everything just as Isis had suggested. 9 It is for this reason that even to this day each group of priests supposes that Osiris lies buried in their district, pays honours to the animals which were originally consecrated to him, and, when these die, renews in the funeral rites for them the mourning for Osiris. 10 The consecration to Osiris, however, of the sacred bulls, which are given the names Apis and Mnevis, and worship of them as gods were introduced generally among all the Egyptians, 11 since these animals had, more than any others, rendered aid to those who discovered the fruit of the grain, in connection with both the sowing of the seed and with every agricultural labour from which mankind profits.

22

1 Isis, they say, after the death of Osiris took a vow never to marry another man, and passed the remainder of her life reigning over the land with complete respect for the law and surpassing all sovereigns in benefactions to her subjects. 2 And like her husband she also, when she passed from among men, received immortal honours and was buried near Memphis, where her shrine is pointed out to this day in the temple-area of Hephaestus. 3 According to some writers, however, the bodies of these two gods rest, not in Memphis, but on the border between Egypt and Ethiopia, on the island in the Nile which lies near the city which is called Philae, but is referred to because of this burial as the Holy Field. 4 In proof of this they point to remains

which still survive on this island, both to the tomb constructed for Osiris, which is honoured in common by all the priests of Egypt, and to the three hundred and sixty libation bowls which are placed around it; 5 for the priests appointed over these bowls fill them each day with milk, singing all the while a dirge in which they call upon the names of these gods. 6 It is for this reason that travellers are not allowed to set foot on this island. And all the inhabitants of the Thebaid, which is the oldest portion of Egypt, hold it to be the strongest oath when a man swears "by Osiris who lieth in Philae."

Now the parts of the body of Osiris which were found were honoured with burial, they say, in the manner described above, but the privates, according to them, were thrown by Typhon into the Nile because no one of his accomplices was willing to take them. Yet Isis thought them as worthy of divine honours as the other parts, for, fashioning a likeness of them, she set it up in the temples, commanded that it be honoured, and made it the object of the highest regard and reverence in the rites and sacrifices accorded to the god. 7 Consequently the Greeks too, inasmuch as they received from Egypt the celebrations of the orgies and the festivals connected with Dionysus, honour this member in both the mysteries and the initiatory rites and sacrifices of this god, giving it the name "phallus."

23

1 The number of years from Osiris and Isis, they say, to the reign of Alexander, who founded the city which bears his name in Egypt, is over ten thousand, but, according to other writers, a little less than twenty-three thousand. 2 And those who say that the god was born of Semelê and Zeus in Boeotian Thebes are, according to the priests, simply inventing the tale. For they say that Orpheus, upon visiting Egypt and participating in the initiation and mysteries of Dionysus, adopted them and as a favour to the descendants of Cadmus, since he was kindly disposed to them and received honours at their hands, transferred the birth of the god to Thebes; and the common people, partly out of ignorance and partly out of their desire to have the god thought to be a Greek, eagerly accepted his initiatory rites and mysteries. 3 What led Orpheus to transfer the birth and rites of the god, they say, was something like this.

4 Cadmus, who was a citizen of Egyptian Thebes, begat several children, of whom one was Semelê; she was violated by an unknown person, became pregnant, and after seven months gave birth to a child whose appearance was such as the Egyptians hold had been that of Osiris. Now such a child is not usually brought into the world alive, either because it is contrary to the will of the gods or because the law of nature does not admit of it. 5 But when Cadmus found out what had taken place, having at the same time a reply from an oracle commanding him to observe the laws of his fathers, he both gilded the infant and paid it the appropriate sacrifices, on the ground that there had been a sort of epiphany of Osiris among men. 6 The fatherhood of the child he attributed to Zeus, in this way magnifying Osiris and averting slander from his violated daughter; and this is the reason why the tale was given out among the Greeks to the

effect that Semelê, the daughter of Cadmus, was the mother of Osiris by Zeus. Now at a later time Orpheus, who was held in high regard among the Greeks for his singing, initiatory rites, and instructions on things divine, was entertained as a guest by the descendants of Cadmus and accorded unusual honours in Thebes. 7 And since he had become conversant with the teachings of the Egyptians about the gods, he transferred the birth of the ancient Osiris to more recent times, and, out of regard for the descendants of Cadmus, instituted a new initiation, in the ritual of which the initiates were given the account that Dionysus had been born of Semelê and Zeus. And the people observed these initiatory rites, partly because they were deceived through their ignorance, partly because they were attracted to them by the trustworthiness of Orpheus and his reputation in such matters, and most of all because they were glad to receive the god as a Greek, which, as has been said, is what he was considered to be. 8 Later, after the writers of myths and poets had taken over this account of his ancestry, the theatres became filled with it and among following generations faith in the story grew stubborn and immutable. In general, they say, the Greeks appropriate to themselves the most renowned of both Egyptian heroes and gods, and so also the colonies sent out by them.

24

1 Heracles, for instance, was by birth an Egyptian, who by virtue of his manly vigour visited a large part of the inhabited world and set up his pillar in Libya; 2 and their proofs of this assertion they endeavour to draw from the Greeks themselves. For inasmuch as it is generally accepted that Heracles fought on the side of the Olympian gods in their war against the Giants, they say that it in no way accords with the age of the earth for the Giants to have been born in the period when, as the Greeks, Heracles lived, which was a generation before the Trojan War, but rather at the time, as their own account gives it, when mankind first appeared on the earth; for from the latter time to the present the Egyptians reckon more than ten thousand years, but from the Trojan War less than twelve hundred. 3 Likewise, both the club and the lion's skin are appropriate to their ancient Heracles, because in those days arms had not yet been invented, and men defended themselves against their enemies with clubs of wood and used the hides of animals for defensive armour. They also designate him as the son of Zeus, but about the identity of his mother they say that they know nothing. 4 The son of Alcmenê, who was born more than ten thousand years later and was called Alcaeus at birth, in later life became known instead as Heracles, not because he gained glory (kleos) by the aid of Hera, as Matris says, but because, having avowed the same principles as the ancient Heracles, he inherited that one's fame and name as well.

5 The account of the Egyptians agrees also with the tradition which has been handed down among the Greeks since very early times, to the effect that Heracles cleared the earth of wild beasts, a story which is in no way suitable for man who lived in approximately the period of the Trojan War, when most parts of the inhabited world had already been reclaimed from their wild

state by agriculture and cities and the multitude of men settled everywhere over the land. 6 Accordingly this reclamation of the land suits better a man who lived in early times, when men were still held in subjection by the vast numbers of wild beasts, a state of affairs which was especially true in the case of Egypt, the upper part of which is to this day desert and infested with wild beasts. 7 Indeed it is reasonable to suppose that the first concern of Heracles was for this country as his birthplace, and that, after he had cleared the land of wild beasts, he presented it to the peasants, and for this benefaction was accorded divine honours. 8 And they say that Perseus also was born in Egypt, and that the origin of Isis is transferred by the Greeks to Argos in the myth which tells of that Io who was changed into a heifer.

25

1 In general, there is great disagreement over these gods. For the same goddess is called by some Isis, by others Demeter, by others Thesmophorus, by others Selenê, by others Hera, while still others apply to her all these names. 2 Osiris has been given the name Sarapis by some, Dionysus by others, Pluto by others, Ammon by others, Zeus by some, and many have considered Pan to be the same god; and some say that Sarapis is the god whom the Greeks call Pluto.

As for Isis, the Egyptians say that she was the discoverer of many health-giving drugs and was greatly versed in the science of healing; 3 consequently, now that she has attained immortality, she finds her greatest delight in the healing of mankind and gives aid in their sleep to those who call upon her, plainly manifesting both her very presence and her beneficence towards men who ask her help. 4 In proof of this, as they say, they advance not legends, as the Greeks do, but manifest facts; for practically the entire inhabited world is their witness, in that it eagerly contributes to the honours of Isis because she manifests herself in healings. 5 For standing above the sick in their sleep she gives them aid for their diseases and works remarkable cures upon such as submit themselves to her; and many who have been despaired of by their physicians because of the difficult nature of their malady are restored to health by her, while numbers who have altogether lost the use of their eyes or of some other part of their body, whenever they turn for help to this goddess, are restored to their previous condition. 6 Furthermore, she discovered also the drug which gives immortality, by means of which she not only raised from the dead her son Horus, who had been the object of plots on the part of Titans and had been found dead under the water, giving him his soul again, but also made him immortal. 7 And it appears that Horus was the last of the gods to be king after his father Osiris departed from among men. Moreover, they say that the name Horus, when translated, is Apollo, and that, having been instructed by his mother Isis in both medicine and divination, he is now a benefactor of the race of men through his oracular responses and his healings.

26

1 The priests of the Egyptians, reckoning the time from the reign of Helios to the crossing of Alexander into Asia, say that it was in round numbers twenty-three thousand years. 2 And, as their legends say, the most ancient of the gods ruled more than twelve hundred years and the later ones not less than three hundred. 3 But since this great number of years surpasses belief, some men would maintain that in early times, before the movement of the sun had as yet been recognized, it was customary to reckon the year by the lunar cycle. 4 Consequently, since the year consisted of thirty days, it was not impossible that some men lived twelve hundred years; for in our own time, when our year consists of twelve months, not a few men live over one hundred years. 5 A similar explanation they also give regarding those who are supposed to have reigned for three hundred years; for at their time, namely, the year was composed of the four months which comprise the seasons of each year, that is, spring, summer, and winter; and it is for this reason that among some of the Greeks the years are called "seasons" (horoi) and that their yearly records are given the name "horographs."

6 Furthermore, the Egyptians relate in their myths that in the time of Isis there were certain creatures of many bodies, who are called by the Greeks Giants, but by themselves . . . , these being the men who are represented on their temples in monstrous form and as being cudgelled by Osiris. 7 Now some say that they were born of the earth at the time when the genesis of living things from the earth was still recent, while some hold that they were only men of unusual physical strength who achieved many deeds and for this reason were described in the myths as of many bodies. 8 But it is generally agreed that when they stirred up war against Zeus and Osiris they were all destroyed.

27

1 The Egyptians also made a law, they say, contrary to the general custom of mankind, permitting men to marry their sisters, this being due to the success attained by Isis in this respect; for she had married her brother Osiris, and upon his death, having taken a vow never to marry another man, she both avenged the murder of her husband and reigned all her days over the land with complete respect for the laws, and, in a word, became the cause of more and greater blessings to all men than any other. 2 It is for these reasons, in fact, that it was ordained that the queen should have greater power and honour than the king and that among private persons the wife should enjoy authority over her husband, the husbands agreeing in the marriage contract that they will be obedient in all things to their wives.

3 Now I am not unaware that some historians give the following account of Isis and Osiris: The tombs of these gods lie in Nysa in Arabia, and for this reason Dionysus is also called Nysaeus. And in that place there stands also a stele of each of the gods bearing an inscription in hieroglyphs. 4 On the stele of Isis it runs: "I am Isis, the queen of every land, she who was instructed of Hermes, and whatsoever laws I have established, these can no man make void. I am the eldest daughter of the youngest god Cronus; I am the wife and sister of the king Osiris; I

am she who first discovered fruits for mankind; I am the mother of Horus the king; I am she who riseth in the star that is in the Constellation of the Dog; by me was the city of Bubastus built. Farewell, farewell, O Egypt that nurtured me." 5 And on the stele of Osiris the inscription is said to run: "My father is Cronus, the youngest of all the gods, and I am Osiris the king, who campaigned over every country as far as the uninhabited regions of India and the lands to the north, even to the sources of the river Ister, and again to the remaining parts of the world as far as Oceanus. I am the eldest son of Cronus, and being sprung from a fair and noble egg I was begotten a seed of kindred birth to Day. There is no region of the inhabited world to which I have not come, dispensing to all men the things of which I was the discoverer." 6 So much of the inscriptions on the stelae can be read, they say, but the rest of the writing, which was of greater extent, has been destroyed by time. However this may be, varying accounts of the burial of these gods are found in most writers by reason of the fact that the priests, having received the exact facts about these matters as a secret not to be divulged, are unwilling to give out the truth to the public, on the ground that perils overhang any men who disclose to the common crowd the secret knowledge about these gods.

28

1 Now the Egyptians say that also after these events a great number of colonies were spread from Egypt over all the inhabited world. To Babylon, for instance, colonists were led by Belus, who was held to be the son of Poseidon and Libya; and after establishing himself on the Euphrates river he appointed priests, called Chaldaeans by the Babylonians, who were exempt from taxation and free from every kind of service to the state, as are the priests of Egypt; and they also make observations of the stars, following the example of the Egyptian priests, physicists, and astrologers. 2 They say also that those who set forth with Danaus, likewise from Egypt, settled what is practically the oldest city in Greece, Argos, and that the nation of the Colchi in Pontus and that of the Jews, which lies between Arabia and Syria, were founded as colonies by certain emigrants from their country; 3 and this is the reason why it is a long-established institution among these two peoples to circumcise their male children, the custom having been brought over from Egypt. 4 Even the Athenians, they say, are colonists from Saïs in Egypt, and they undertake to offer proofs of such a relationship; for the Athenians are the only Greeks who call their city "Asty," a name brought over from the city Asty in Egypt. Furthermore, their body politic had the same classification and division of the people as found in Egypt, where the citizens have been divided into three orders: 5 the first Athenian class consisted of the "eupatrids," as they were called, being those who were such as had received the best education and were held worthy of the highest honour, as is the case with the priests of Egypt; the second was that of the "geomoroi," who were expected to possess arms and to serve in defence of the state, like those in Egypt who are known as husbandmen and supply the warriors; and the last class was reckoned to be that of the "demiurgoi," who practise the

mechanical arts and render only the most menial services to the state, this class among the Egyptians having a similar function.

6 Moreover, certain of the rulers of Athens were originally Egyptians, they say. Petes, for instance, the father of that Menestheus who took part in the expedition against Troy, having clearly been an Egyptian, later obtained citizenship at Athens and the kingship. . . 7 He was of double form, and yet the Athenians are unable from their own point of view to give the true explanation of this nature of his, although it is patent to all that it was because of his double citizenship, Greek and barbarian, that he was held to be of double form, that is, part animal and part man.

1 In the same way, they continue, Erechtheus also, who was by birth an Egyptian, became king of Athens, and in proof of this they offer the following considerations. Once when there was a great drought, as is generally agreed, which extended over practically all the inhabited earth except Egypt because of the peculiar character of that country, and there followed a destruction both of crops and of men in great numbers, Erechtheus, through his racial connection with Egypt, brought from there to Athens a great supply of grain, and in return those who had enjoyed this aid made their benefactor king. 2 After he had secured the throne he instituted the initiatory rites of Demeter in Eleusis and established the mysteries, transferring their ritual from Egypt. And the tradition that an advent of the goddess into Attica also took place at that time is reasonable, since it was then that the fruits which are named after her were brought to Athens, and this is why it was thought that the discovery of the seed had been made again, as though Demeter had bestowed the gift. 3 And the Athenians on their part agree that it was in the reign of Erechtheus, when a lack of rain had wiped out the crops, that Demeter came to them with the gift of grain. Furthermore, the initiatory rites and mysteries of this goddess were instituted at Eleusis at that time. 4 And their sacrifices as well as their ancient ceremonies are observed by the Athenians in the same way as by the Egyptians; for the Eumolpidae were derived from the priests of Egypt and the Ceryces from the pastophoroi. They are also the only Greeks who swear by Isis, and they closely resemble the Egyptians in both their appearance and manners. 5 By many other statements like these, spoken more out of a love for glory than with regard for the truth, as I see the matter, they claim Athens as a colony of theirs because of the fame of that city.

In general, the Egyptians say that their ancestors sent forth numerous colonies to many parts of the inhabited world, the pre-eminence of their former kings and their excessive population; 6 but since they offer no precise proof whatsoever for these statements, and since no historian worthy of credence testifies in their support, we have not thought that their accounts merited recording.

So far as the ideas of the Egyptians about the gods are concerned, let what we have said suffice, since we are aiming at due proportion in our account, but with regard to the land, the Nile, and everything else worth hearing about we shall endeavour, in each case, to give the several facts in summary.