CHAPTER I

Narrative and poetic creations

By way of a prelude, let us focus upon a text that is itself a prelude, but one of a quasi-indigenous nature. In the introduction to his *Life of Theseus*, Plutarch compares his work as a historian to that of a geographer trying to work out a map of the inhabited world. Once a surveyor has reached the edge of that world, he must make do with descriptions of an altogether generic kind: deserts infested by wild beasts, misty marshes or icy Scythian expanses. The same applies to a historical enquiry, and particularly to his *Parallel Lives* project, based as it is on an investigation into human actions (*historia pragmaton*) and on narrative discourse that aims for verisimilitude (*eikos logos*). Once the historian has ventured too far into the past, he feels he has reached the domain of prodigies and drama (*ta tragika*). From that point on, he is on terrain reserved not only for poets but also mythographers (*muthographoi*): a terrain from which proofs and transparency are banished.[1]

In this comparison in which time is substituted for space, the enquiring historian thus comes upon what we consider to be the domain of 'myth', if myth is taken to be a category introduced into our modern encyclopaedic knowledge with the following approximate meaning: a traditional story with social implications that, within a transcendent time-frame, sets on stage characters with supernatural and hence fabulous qualities; or, more simply, for our contemporary mythologists of Antiquity: 'a traditional tale' that refers, in part, to elements with a 'collective importance'.[2] It is into

[1] Plutarch, *Theseus*, 1, 1–2, 3; on Plutarch's attitude to legend, see the excellent remarks of C. Ampolo and M. Manfredini, *Plutarco. Le vite di Teseo e di Romolo*, Milan, 1988, pp. ix–xvii and 195–7; see also C. Calame, *Thésée et l'imaginaire athénien. Légende et culte en Grèce classique*, Lausanne, 1996, pp. 42–6.

[2] Ever since G. Vico, followed by G. Heyne, applied the Greek term *muthos* to stories that, up until the eighteenth century, had been called *fabulae* or 'fables', there have been countless attempts to define myth. From the point of view of Antiquity, see the remarks of F. Graf, *Greek Mythology: An Introduction*, Baltimore, MD, London, 1993, pp. 1–8, S. Saïd, *Approches de la mythologie grecque*, Paris, 1993, pp. 5–9, and C. Calame, *Mythe et histoire dans l'Antiquité grecque. La création symbolique d'une colonie*, Lausanne, 1996, pp. 9–20 (*Myth and History in Ancient Greece. The Symbolic Creation of a Colony*, Princeton, NJ, Oxford, 2003, pp. 1–12), which takes over and adapts one of the definitions of

precisely this distant temporal space that we consider to be the domain of myth that Plutarch resolves to venture as a biographer and historiographer. In the backward leap that he proposes to his reader, he will reach beyond the period of Lycurgus, the legislator of Sparta, and Numa, king of Rome, whose double biography he has recently published. For now he will write of the compared lives of Romulus and Theseus: Romulus, the father of Rome, and Theseus, the founder of the city of Athens. To justify his investigation deep into the time of legend, Plutarch claims to be undertaking a critical study that will subject the 'fictional' (*to muthodes*) to the discourse (*logos*) of historiographical enquiry. He believes that he has finally discovered that the least dramatic of the traditions (*hekista tragikos*) on the two great statesmen can be of use in a quest for the (historical) truth. In the 'archaeology' (*arkhaiologia*) that his research into the most ancient times constitutes, references to a historical and empirical reality count for less than political and moral examples.

The attitude adopted by Plutarch vis-à-vis those *arkhaia* of the Greeks is particularly interesting given that he can regard them from the distant position of a Greek who has spent part of his career in Rome; for him the Greek *arkhaia* do not quite represent his own past. However, his emotional attachment to a Greek culture that represents a model while at the same time allowing him to return to the time of origins causes him to value ethical aspects more highly than historical and empirical truth.[3] At the same time, this distant past that he presents as the domain of 'mythographers' is also the preferred terrain for poets. In the Hellenized Rome of the imperial period, the world of legend, which for us has become the world of mythical imaginary representations, was still inseparable from the activities of those creators of fictions, the *poietai*, the writers of poetry.

My use of the native Greek words *arkhaia* and *palaia* as alternatives to the term legend is not just a stylistic ploy or prompted by a desire for *variatio* in keeping with Hellenistic literary taste. The fact is that the term 'myth' is linked with a notion that possesses a history. It appeared as a practical term of classification in fledgling anthropological thought, linked first with the comparativist taste of the Enlightenment, then with the historicism that

W. Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual*, Berkeley, CA, 1979, p. 23, and J. Bremmer, 'What Is a Greek Myth?', in Bremmer (ed.), *Interpretations of Greek Mythology*, London, Sydney, 1987, pp. 1–8; see also C. Delattre, *Manuel de mythologie grecque*, Paris, 2005, pp. 6–43.

[3] On Plutarch as a 'transcultural mediator', see J. Boulogne, *Plutarque. Un aristocrate sous l'occupation romaine*, Lille, 1994, pp. 109–53; see also P. R. Hardie, 'Plutarch and the Interpretation of Myth', in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II, 33.6, Berlin, New York, 1992, pp. 4743–87; on the meaning of *arkhaion* and *palaion*, see C. Calame, 'La fabrication historiographique d'un passé héroique en Grèce classique', *Ktema* 31, 2006, pp. 39–50.

accompanied German Romanticism at the turn of the nineteenth century. The paradox is that, while bringing interest to bear upon the cultures of 'others', anthropological thought was so firmly oriented by European ethnocentrism that it turned into universals instrumental categories relating to the discipline's own epistemology. Furthermore, in the precise case of myth, it was not just a matter of conferring an ontological status upon a 'basic-level' category. The effect of this semi-abstract entity being given a Greek name was to project the modern sense assumed by the corresponding term 'myth' back upon its use in Antiquity.[4]

This is a conceptual altercation, concerned with wording. In the frequently cited elegiac composition in which he sets out the ritualistic rules to be observed in order to ensure the success of a symposium, the 'Presocratic' poet Xenophanes of Colophon recommended that those present should start off by 'hymning' (*humnein*) the gods.[5] Those songs specifically praising the gods, which Plato called 'hymns', can be divided into two groups. One was devoted to wishing the gods well (discourse designed to enhance the reputation of the gods); the other consisted of stories, pure and simple: *euphemoi muthoi* or *katharoi logoi*.[6] Any attempt to define the specific semantic features of a complementarity that associates *muthos* with *logos* in this way, instead of opposing the two, is rendered illusory by two factors: first, the extremely wide semantic spectrum of both terms and, second, the fact that, precisely in the fifth century BC, the one was liable to be substituted for the other. In any case, the use of the two terms by no means indicates any switch from 'myth' to 'reason'. In the archaic period *muthos* referred to any kind of discourse that produced some effect upon its public. It was speech that is described in English as 'performative' although it is preferable to envisage it as 'efficient' in relation to its wider pragmatic dimension. As for *logos*, for the historiographers who were Xenophanes' contemporaries, the term *muthos* essentially designated stories, stories

[4] I have tried to describe this double movement of transcultural projection in *Mythe et histoire*, pp. 9–11 (*Myth and History*, pp. 1–4); but the reader should, of course, consult M. Detienne's enquiry in *L'Invention de la mythologie*, Paris, 1981, pp. 225–42. In *Homo Necans. Interpretationem alt-Griechischer Opferriten und Mythen*, Berlin, New York, 1972, p. 3, W. Burkert had already warned against the use of foreign terms such as *totem*, *taboo* and *mana* to designate interpretative concepts.

[5] Xenophanes, fr. 1 Gentili-Prato, to be read together with G. Cerri's useful commentary, *Platone sociologo della communicazione*, Milan, 1991 (2nd edn), pp. 55–66; see also M. Piérart, 'L'historien ancien face aux mythes et aux légendes', *Etudes classiques* 51, 1983, pp. 47–62. For a contrasting analysis of the respective meanings of *muthos* and *logos* in archaic poetry, see B. Lincoln, 'Competing Discourses: Rethinking the Prehistory of *Mythos* and *Logos*', *Arethusa* 30, 1997, pp. 341–67 (now in *Theorizing Myth. Narrative, Ideology and Scholarship*, Chicago, IL, London, 1999, pp. 3–18).

[6] Plato, *Republic* 607a and *Laws* 700ab and 801ce; in the archaic period, *humnos*, in a far wider semantic spectrum, designated all types of poetic songs: see F. Càssola, *Inni Omerici*, Milan, 1975, pp. ix–xii.

reported or told by historians now known as logographers, who presented them either as true or, on the contrary, as lies.[7] In the language of tragedy, the two terms mean broadly the same. Thus, in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, the heroine Io, in an antiphrasis and an apotropaic gesture, in one single line uses both *muthos* and *logos* to refer to the prophetic account that she asks Prometheus to give her of her future travels. Lying *muthoi* are also synonymous with 'composed' *logoi*: 'Do not, of thy pity, seek to cozen me by words untrue; for foulest of plagues do I account dissembling words.'[8]

So that is the first surprise: neither in the archaic nor in the classical period did *muthos* designate a particular class of traditional narrative or tale of a purely imaginative nature. To that extent, *muthos* did not stand in opposition to any type of *logos*. But that surprise is accompanied by our realization that a narrative of praise, in particular when addressed to the gods, was invariably linked with a poetic form. Such a narrative was not recounted; rather, it was sung. In the *Odyssey*, the stories told by Odysseus, even if not inspired by the Muses, take the poetic forms demanded by Homeric diction; and for Pindar, the songs and the discourses (*aoidai kai logoi*) that tell of glorious actions are complementary. Of course, it may be objected that Herodotus, as storyteller (*logios*), is not a poet. All the same, any story that we, using our modern category, apprehend as 'mythical' is by definition poetry. That is fully confirmed by the famous conclusion to Xenophanes' poem: the stories to be banished from a symposium because they represent struggles between violent beings such as Titans, Giants and Centaurs are neither called *muthoi* nor considered to be such; rather, they are said to be 'fabrications', 'constructions', 'fictions' (in the etymological sense of the Latin *fingere*) of the ancestors (*plasmata ton proteron*). The reason why they are rejected is not that they are untrue, but that

[7] The various Homeric meanings of *muthos* have been explored by R. P. Martin, *The Language of Heroes. Speech and Performance in the Iliad*, Ithaca, NY, London, 1987, pp. 14–42. This matter has also been tackled by G. Nagy, 'Autorité et auteur dans la *Théogonie* d'Hésiode', in F. Blaise, P. Judet de La Combe, P. Rousseau (eds), *Le Métier du mythe. Lectures d'Hésiode*, Lille, 1996, pp. 41–52, by Lincoln, 'Competing Discourses', pp. 361–4, and by myself in '"Mythe" et "rite" en Grèce, des catégories indigènes?', *Kernos* 4, 1991, pp. 179–204. On the use of *legein* and its derivatives in Herodotus, see below, chapter 5, section 2.2.

[8] Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 685–6, trans. by Herbert Weir Smith (Loeb), see below, chapter 4, section 3.1; on the use of *muthos* in Plato and Aristotle, see the comments and references in *Mythe et histoire*, pp. 25–9. The problem, in the case of Plato, has also been tackled by L. Brisson, *Introduction à la philosophie du mythe*, vol. 1: *Sauver les mythes*, Paris, 1996, pp. 27–44, who notes the clear opposition that the philosopher draws between *muthos* and *logos*; see also H. Joly, 'Essai sur la rationalité et la pensée mythique grecque. "Etats" du mythe et "étapes" de la raison', *Recherches sur la philosophie et le langage* 1, 1981, pp. 87–113, and P. Murray, 'What is a *Mythos* for Plato?', in R. Buxton (ed.), *From Myth to Reason? Studies in the Development of Greek Thought*, Oxford, 1998, pp. 251–62.

they are of no use (*tois ouden chreston enestin*) to citizens gathered at a ritual banquet and involved in an act of piety and festive celebration dedicated to the gods.[9]

As *plasmata*, *muthoi* and *logoi* both result from the creative activity of poets or their successors, the logographers, as craftsmen. If the basis on which they rest was challenged, as it tended to be by philosophers concerned about the educative function of stories from the poetic tradition in an ideal city, it was not in the name of a criterion of empirical truth – that is to say the perceived or historical reality implied by that criterion. Rather, it was because of their moral or political verisimilitude – or the lack of it. If we agree not to restrict the meaning of the word 'literature' to the etymological sense that links it with a culture of writing, but rather to grant it the wider meaning that associates it with poetic creation, the Greek 'myths' cannot be said to have had any existence if they are isolated from the forms of discourse and poetic composition that brought them to their public. But let us not get ahead of ourselves.

1. MYTHO-LOGIES

1.1. Myth as seen by anthropologists

The anthropological concept of myth, which has now become part of the shared knowledge of our academic culture, would seem to be relevant to ancient Greece only if the poetic stories of the Greeks are stripped of their literary form and reduced to a few proper names involved in a plot. It was only in manuals of mythography that the Greek stories, lifted out of their many diverse forms of expression, became little more than skeletons. These were then transformed into myths which, due to their now schematic form, could be said to exist on an abstract and transcendent plane. This is also why our contemporary mythologists of Antiquity have come to regard myth simply as a 'traditional story' with social implications.[10] This form of

[9] For comments on the meaning of *plattein* and *plasma*, see below, part 2.2. Referring in particular to the stories that Odysseus tells in the *Odyssey* and Pindar, *Nemean* 6, 29–30 and *Pythian* 1, 92–4 (*logoi kai aoidoi*), L. Edmunds, 'Myth in Homer', in I. Morris and B. B. Powell (eds), *A New Companion to Homer (Mnemosyne, Supplement* 163), Leiden, New York, Cologne, 1997, pp. 415–41, has tried to draw a clear distinction between 'story-telling' and 'poetry'; but on the epic range of Herodotus' *logoi*, see G. Nagy, *Pindar's Homer. The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past*, Baltimore, MD, London, 1990, pp. 216–29, and below, chapter 5, section 2.3.

[10] The impact of the institution of mythography from Plato onward has been studied by Detienne, *Invention*, pp. 160–7 (see also 'The Double Writing of Mythology (between the *Timaeus* and the *Critias*)', in *The Writing of Orpheus*, trans. by J. Lloyd, Baltimore, MD, London, 2002, pp. 137–51); on

scholarly writing, based on erudite collections of purely narrative summaries, was instrumental in transmitting the literary patrimony of the Greeks to the Renaissance. It was only subsequently that people went back to reading the poetic renderings of the stories in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* or the tragedies of Euripides, or even the dramas of Seneca.

The establishment of this narrative tradition in a secondary, scholarly and academic form, goes some way toward explaining the evolution to be recognized as early as the eighteenth century in the creation of the categories of myth and mythology. In the case of the French tradition, it was in truth only at the beginning of the nineteenth century that, in encyclopaedic dictionaries, the entry *myth* began to replace *fable*. In Denis Diderot and Jean d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*, *fable* was 'a collective noun, without a plural form, that covers theological history, fabulous history and poetic history, in short, all the fables of pagan theology'. Essentially this meant the theology of Graeco-Roman Antiquity, the 'fables' of which appeared under the rubric *myth(ology)*. So even if myth did not appear in the *Encyclopédie*, the term was certainly in current use in the similar nineteenth-century works that succeeded the *Encyclopédie*. Christian Gottlob Heyne, who introduced the term *mythus* can thus be regarded as a precursor in this domain.[11]

Following the renaming of *fabula* as *mythus*, in the emergent thinking of anthropology the concept of myth underwent three essential transformations. First myths, which were at first regarded as expressions and manifestations of pre-philosophical thought peculiar to savage peoples, were situated at the dawn of a linear history; this evolutionist history was bound to lead to the enlightened progress and metaphysical achievements of Western civilization. The wordplay implicit in the notion of 'primitive' is significant: the role attributed to myth in cultures that were the most distant spatially was now being placed at the origin of a historical line. At this point Antiquity, with first its legends, then its philosophers, naturally took its place at the start of an evolution that was believed to have led European

mythography itself, see A. Henrichs, 'Three Approaches to Greek Mythography', in Bremmer (ed.), *Interpretations*, pp. 242–77, E. Pellizer, 'La mitografia', in G. Cambiano, L. Canfora and D. Lanza (eds), *Lo spazio letterario nella Grecia antica*, vol. 2, Rome, 1993, pp. 283–303, and C. Jacob, 'L'ordre généalogique. Entre le mythe et l'histoire', in M. Detienne (ed.), *Transcrire les mythologies. Tradition, écriture, historicité*, Paris, 1994, pp. 169–202, together with the complementary remarks in *Mythe et histoire*, pp. 41–4 (*Myth and History*, pp. 22–7). As for the definition of a myth as 'a traditional story', see above, n. 2.

[11] J. d'Alembert and D. Diderot, *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, vol. 8, Paris, 1757, p. 98; see also, for example, vol. 6, p. 342, where the figure of Helen is, on the contrary, classified as *Ancient History*! I am grateful to Christophe Schmidt for providing this information in the paper he presented at the Coralie Colloquium on stories about Helen, in Lausanne, in May 1995.

culture eventually to liberate itself from the obscurity of *muthos* and take decisive steps toward a rationality that was attributed to *logos*.

As a spatial image of human culture was being projected in this way upon a representation of time, and as the exotic became the primitive, the concept of myth underwent a second transformation. As the number of the many stories covered by the term 'myth' was progressively reduced and the concept of myth acquired a unity, myth seems to have lost its narrative aspect and come to express one particular mode of human thought: a specific form of reasoning peculiar to primitive cultures.

Third, the status of myth as an indicator of an early stage of civilization led to its being ascribed an ontology which, first in the eyes of the anthropologists, then within the shared knowledge of the Western intelligentsia, conferred a universal value upon it. Myth had initially emerged simply as a basic-level category which, because of its semi-empirical character, was an instrument of learning. But now it was elevated from the status of a practical notion to that of a transcendental reality.

However, in the process of this lexical and conceptual shift, myth led also to mythology, understood not only as a collection of the fabulous stories of a particular culture but also as a science that called for an interpretation of those fables. Myth was a mode of thought; but now, through this third metamorphosis, myth, transformed into a substance, proceeded to give rise to the science of mythology.

Not only the title but also the goal that Claude Lévi-Strauss assigned to his *Mythologiques* bear the mark of those three transformations. This work is a transformational and formal comparative study – and hence a mythology – of a corpus of stories mostly reduced to a textual plot in order to discover the logic that permeates them. This 'concrete logic', fuelled by its ethnographical context, also indicates the presence of mythical thought and its universal diffusion. For Lévi-Strauss,

> Mythological patterns have to an extreme degree the character of absolute objects, which would neither lose their old elements nor acquire new ones if they were not affected by external influences. The result is that when the pattern undergoes some kind of transformation, all its aspects are affected at once … What matters is that the human mind, regardless of the identity of those who happen to be giving it expression, should display an increasingly intelligible structure as a result of the doubly reflexive forward movement of two thought processes acting one upon the other.[12]

[12] C. Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques*, vol. 1, *Le Cru et le cuit*, Paris, 1964, pp. 14–22. (*The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. by J. and D. Weightman, Harmondsworth, 1992, pp. 12–20); see also his concluding remarks in *Mythologiques*, vol. 4, *L'Homme nu*, Paris 1971, pp. 559–621 (*The Naked Man*, trans. by J. and D. Weightman, London, 1981).

The idea of a transformational logic of myths set up as a universal mode of savage thought might restore the great divide that inevitably separates us from others by virtue of a series of distinctive features that are perceived as substantial (primitive/developed, oral/written, cold/hot, nature/culture, myth/reason, etc.). But it also has the effect of greatly reducing not only the extraordinary semantic richness of these discursive manifestations but also the wide range of social and symbolic functions that can be assumed by stories that are always told in a particular discursive manner and are associated with particular situations of utterance.

1.2. The story of the rape of Persephone

Mythology that is transformed into a mytho-logic as well as a mytho-logy does, however, produce one positive effect: it gives rise to a most productive spate of interpretative activity. Corresponding to the various epistemological paradigms that prompted their appearance, the salient moments of this hermeneutics of myth now themselves constitute a remarkable historical sequence.[13] So let us return to ancient Greece and retrace some of the decisive stages in this development by evoking some of the successive interpretations of what has become 'the myth of Demeter and Core'.

1.2.1. Ancient versions

The story of the rape of Persephone and her mother's search for her is particularly interesting in that, already in Antiquity, it aroused considerable curiosity as to how it should be interpreted. Using a variety of literary texts as their sources, historiographers and mythographers predictably produced summaries of the famous story that reduce it to the unfolding of its plot. To remind ourselves of this, let us cite Diodorus Siculus' historiographical version of the story, in which it became a *muthos* in the sense that Aristotle gives the term when he speaks of 'a composition of actions' (*sustatis ton pragmaton*).[14] Clearly, limitations of space will force us

[13] Focusing on ancient Greece, the history of the interpretation of myths has been successively studied by Detienne, *Invention*, pp. 15–49 and 190–224, Graf, *Greek Mythology*, pp. 9–56, and Saïd, *Mythologie grecque*, pp. 79–110; see also J.-P. Vernant's comments in *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne*, Paris, 1974, pp. 217–50 (*Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*, trans. by J. Lloyd, New York, 1988, pp. 203–60), which owe much to the work of M. Detienne, and W. Burkert, 'Griechische Mythologie und die Geistesgeschichte der Moderne', in O. Reverdin (ed.), *Les Etudes classiques aux XIXe et XXe siècles* (*Entretiens Hardt XXVI*), Vandœuvres, Geneva, 1980, pp. 159–99; see also C. Jamme, *Einführung in die Philosophie des Mythos, vol. 2, Neuzeit und Gegenwart*, Darmstadt, 1991, and E. Csapo, *Theories of Mythology*, Malden, MA, Oxford, 2005.

[14] On this singular and technical sense of *muthos* in relation to mythography, see below, n. 70.

to follow the practice currently adopted by the mythologists of today: we shall have to provide mythography about mythography! Nevertheless, we shall make a point of returning later to the enunciative context of the story summarized by the historian of the republican period. Diodorus recounts the legend at the beginning of Book V of his *Historical Library*, conceived as a *Universal History*. Paradoxically enough, he attributes it to the 'mythological' (*muthologousi*) activity of poets even as he integrates it into the chronology of his history of Sicily:

> The Siceliotae who dwell in the island have received the tradition from their ancestors, the report having ever been handed down successively from earliest time by one generation to the next, that the island is sacred to Demeter and Core; although there are certain poets who recount the myth that at the marriage of Pluto and Persephone Zeus gave the island as a wedding present to the bride. That the ancient inhabitants of Sicily, the Sicani, were indigenous, is stated by the best authorities among historians, and also that the goddesses we have mentioned made their first appearance on this island.[15]
>
> (Diodorus Siculus 5, 1, 3–4, trans. by G. H. Oldfather [Loeb])

Diodorus borrows the story of Demeter and Core from local tradition. The Sicilian tradition is founded upon transmission from one generation to the next in this island that is consecrated to both these goddesses. It tells of how Core was abducted by Pluto, who seized her not far from Henna, in a meadow constantly in flower and surrounded by rocks watered by clear springs, in the very centre of Sicily. There, in the company of Athena and Artemis, two goddesses who, like herself, had vowed to remain virgins, Core was picking flowers that continuously emitted a bewitching perfume. In another version that Diodorus cites, the place where Pluto forces Demeter's daughter to climb into his chariot, to be carried off to Hades, is quite different: it is close to the famous 'azure' spring of Cyane, not far from Syracuse. Setting off in search of her daughter, the goddess Demeter lit torches from the fire of Etna and travelled throughout the world, bestowing the gift of cereals upon all human beings who were willing to take her in. After the Sicilians, the Athenians were the first to receive this gift, as a reward for having offered Demeter a particularly generous welcome. To show their gratitude, the Athenians founded the Mysteries of Eleusis and consecrated many sacrifices to the goddess, meanwhile extending to their neighbours the favour of a gift that eventually covered the entire inhabited

[15] See below, section 1.2.2 (end) and 2 (beginning). The place of the history of the gods in his *Library of History* has been described by P. Borgeaud, 'La mythologie comme prélude à l'histoire', in *Diodore de Sicile. Mythologie des Grecs*, Paris, 1997, pp. ix–xxvii.

world with its produce. The Sicilians, the first to benefit from the cereal harvests, for their part decided to honour the daughter and the mother with separate celebrations: Core was honoured at the time when she returned to earth, at the moment when the wheat was ripening; and at the time when the seed was sown, Demeter was celebrated in a particularly lavish festival that lasted for ten days during which the participants imitated the old way of life (*ton archaion bion*).

Diodorus' summary, intent upon explaining the important religious honours that the Sicilians paid to the two goddesses and how the island was consecrated to the pair of them, is of such an aetiological nature that it makes no mention at all of either Demeter's wanderings as she searched for her daughter or how it was that Core came to return to live first among human beings, then among the gods. If we turn to the text in the *Library* that is attributed to Apollodorus, this authentic work of mythography tells us of the love that Pluto felt for Persephone and how the god of Hades was assisted by Zeus in his secret abduction of the girl. It tells of Demeter's arrival in Eleusis, of the hospitality offered her by King Celeus and how Iambe managed to bring laughter to the goddess in mourning for her daughter. It recounts the attempted immortalization of Demophoon, the young son of Celeus and Metanira, and how Triptolemus, the eldest son of the sovereigns of Eleusis, was presented with a chariot drawn by winged dragons that enabled the young hero to sow the entire world with seed; and finally how Zeus ordered Persephone's return and Pluto, through a ruse involving a pomegranate seed, managed to force his young wife to spend one third of the year in the depths of Hades, even though she lived among the gods for the rest of the year. The summary given in the post-Hellenistic *Library* in effect follows the version of the story developed in the archaic period in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, except in one respect: namely, that it introduces the famous episode relating to Triptolemus, which is attested in Attic iconography as well as by a number of texts. This episode, which is absent from the *Homeric Hymn*, turns the story of the rape of Persephone into a tale centred on Athens and an Eleusis that is now integrated into the territory of Attica. For it is as a specifically Athenian cultural hero that Triptolemus receives from Demeter the gift of cereal culture and thereby becomes a benefactor of the whole human race.[16]

[16] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Library* 1, 5, 1–3. Although Triptolemus is mentioned only briefly in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 153, where he is said to be one of the 'sovereigns of Eleusis', he plays a central role in the versions produced by the Attidographers (Pherecydes of Athens, *FGrHist.* 3 f. 53, Philochorus, *FGrHist.* 328 f. 104), the great writers of tragedy (Sophocles, frr. 596–617a Radt) and the