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Etymology as a Teaching Tool for Learning Geography: Eustathius of Thessalonike's *Parekbolai* on Dionysius Periegetes

Abstract: Eustathios of Thessalonike wrote several commentaries (*parekbolai*) on ancient authors, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Pindar (now lost), perhaps Oppian, Aristophanes (some fragments survive) and Dionysius of Alexandria's *Periegesis*. Unlike the Homeric *Parekbolai*, those on the *Periegesis* has been the subject of little study, not only as a scientific work by classical philologists, but also as a literary work by Byzantinists. In this regard, this chapter delves into the didactic methodology and etymological approach of Eustathios in his *Parekbolai* on the *Periegesis*, analyzing the role of etymology in the teaching of geography and focusing on the places, geographical features, and peoples of the *oikoumenē* described in the *Periegesis*. The chapter also examines the ways in which Eustathios uses, rewrites, and adapts his sources to elucidate the etymology of the terms he discusses, and the ways in which he extends etymologies with his own remarks.

For my mother

1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore the didactic methodology and etymological approach of Eustathius of Thessalonike, one of the most eminent Byzantine scholar-teachers, in his *Parekbolai* on the *Periegesis* of Dionysius of Alexandria, as well as the role of etymology as a tool for teaching geography. Eustathius' *Parekbolai* on the *Periegesis* have thus far received less notice in this respect than his *Parekbolai* on the Homeric poems; indeed, the only research carried out on the use of etymology by Eustathius in these *Parekbolai* has been that of Paola

This chapter was supported by contributions from the Ministry of Economics and Competitiveness of Spain (Project "The Byzantine Author (III)", PID2019-105102GB-I00), and from "El mundo según Homero: de Dionisio Periegeta a Eustacio de Tesalónica", Fundación Logos del BBVA, no. 064/2020. I thank I. Pérez Martín for her critical reading, D. Murphy for the English revision and the editors of this volume for their recommendations.

Cassella, who wrote a succinct paper regarding the etymological issues in Eustathius,¹ a study that constitutes an interesting and useful starting point for a deeper exploration of this topic. Previously, Phaedon I. Koukoules had examined Eustathius' role as etymologist by focusing on the vernacular Greek words analyzed in the *Parekbolai*, providing a brief glossary of vernacular terms in which he questioned some of Eustathius' etymologies and discussed them from a contemporary linguistic point of view.² More recently, Georgia E. Kolovou has devoted a study to the etymological remarks in Eustathius' commentary on the *Iliad* Book 6,³ which informs us, in general terms, of the nature and role of etymology in his *Parekbolai* on the *Iliad*. In this light, I will examine the ways in which a Byzantine scholar-teacher like Eustathius made use of etymology for his exegetical purposes, without overlooking the general role and context of his commentary, which is closely linked to his *Parekbolai* on Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

2 Dionysius' *Periegesis*

The *Periegesis* (or *Description of the Known World*) of Dionysius of Alexandria⁴ is a didactic poem in 1,187 hexameters.⁵ The work (2nd c. CE) is a description of the known world at the time, ranging from Western Europe and North Africa (Europe, Libya) to the East (Asia) and containing geographical and ethnographical descriptions, together with many literary and mythological references. The *Periegesis* can thus be placed within the Greek periegetical tradition, whereas its language and meter, proper to ancient didactic poetry, echo the Homeric tradition in the use of hexameter and Homeric language.

1 Cassella 2013, 139–143.

2 Koukoules 1953, 86–131.

3 Kolovou 2017, 111–127.

4 The main studies of Dionysius' *Periegesis* were carried out by C. Jacob: see especially Jacob 1981, 21–97; 1984, 215–239; 1985, 83–107; 1990; 1991.

5 The most recent edition, based on the oldest preserved manuscript (Par. suppl. gr. 388), is by Lightfoot 2014. Previously, Tsavari 1990b published an edition which was largely criticized. Critical contributions which aimed to improve Tsavari's edition are by Counillon 1991, 365–371, West 1992, 568–569, and Reeve 1994, 209–220.

Dionysius' *Periegesis* was a well-known text that was widely read and copied in antiquity and in Byzantium.⁶ By virtue of its content, which was able to satisfy the curiosity of the Byzantines regarding the *oikoumenē*, and its brevity in comparison with Strabo or Ptolemy, the poem would become one of the most copied and read geographical works in Byzantium, and, along with Strabo, a major reference work on geography.⁷

The archaic vocabulary of the *Periegesis*, its mannered and concise style and its wealth of toponyms and mythological references required an exegesis to make it more accessible to the reader. Indeed, *scholia vetera*, the chronology of which is uncertain,⁸ are preserved along with the poem in many of the manuscripts. These *scholia* are helpful as they contain references to unknown authors and clarify and expand upon Dionysius' poem, especially with regard to geography and mythology.⁹ This material was enriched by a paraphrase in prose written in *koiné*,¹⁰ perhaps dating from the Byzantine period.¹¹ Later, in the 12th century, this anonymous exegetical material would be consulted by the μαῖστωρ τῶν ῥητόρων ("senior teacher of rhetoricians") and renowned court orator during the reign of Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180),¹² Eustathius of Thessalonike, when he composed

6 Further proof of this popularity are the Latin versions of the work by Avienus (4th c. CE) and Priscian (6th c. CE), edited by Van de Woestijne (ed.) 1961 and 1953 respectively. Moreover, the poem is preserved in approximately 150 manuscripts: see Tsavari 1990a and again Counillon 1991, 365–371 on its complex transmission.

7 On the context of the transmission of the *Periegesis* in Byzantium, see Pérez Martín-Cruz Andreotti 2020, 231–260, esp. 240–241, and Pérez Martín 2022, 195–213, esp. 195–196.

8 Müller (ed.) 1861, 2.427–457, and Ludwich (ed.) 1885, 2.575–587.

9 The manuscript Par. suppl. gr. 36 (16th c.) contains *scholia* on the *Periegesis* attributed to a certain Demetrius of Lampsacus (Müller 2 [ed.] 1861, xxxi). These *scholia* are in fact forgeries by the mid-sixteenth scribe Konstantinos Palaiokappa: Diller 1936, 124–129, esp. 127–129.

10 Another paraphrase in prose and *koiné* is attributed to the 13th-century scholar Nicephorus Blemmides; this is a forgery by the 16th-century book merchant Antonius Episcopoulos, as demonstrated by Diller (1936, 124–127). On the edition, see Müller (ed.) 1861, 2.458–468.

11 See Tsavari 1900a, 58–61, who suggested with some reservations that the paraphrase might have been composed between the 10th and 11th centuries. By contrast, after Tsavari's study, Counillon (1991, 370), simply declared that "seule une étude précise de la tradition manuscrite des scholies et de la paraphrase pourrait permettre de déterminer précisément comment s'est construite la paraphrase, si elle a été composée de façon indépendante puis intégrée, ou s'est élaborée au fil des éditions successives entre le x^e et le xii^e siècle." On the edition, see Müller (ed.) 1861, 2.409–425, and Ludwich (ed.) 1885, 2.556–574.

12 He composed an epitaph for Manuel I Komnenos: see Bourbouhakis (ed.) 2017.

his own commentary, the so-called *Parekbolai*,¹³ on Dionysius' *Periegesis*,¹⁴ a contribution which in recent years has been receiving wider attention.¹⁵

3 Eustathius' *Parekbolai* on Dionysius' *Periegesis*

Analogous to the *Parekbolai* on the Homeric poems,¹⁶ the *Parekbolai* on the *Periegesis* are a selection and compilation of extracts from ancient sources as well as Eustathius' own works, supplemented with critical and personal remarks on many topics not always related to Dionysius' poem.¹⁷ They serve to clarify and delve deeper into the

13 I am aware that in modern Byzantine scholarship the title *Parekbolai* for Eustathius' works is not easy to translate, since his *Parekbolai* are founded on his selection and quoting of ancient works, which he then enriched with innumerable critical remarks. In this respect, Kolovou (2017, 112–113), suggests that a transliteration of the word may be better than a translation. Nevertheless, I will be using both “commentary” and *parekbolai* for stylistic variation. On this issue, see also Cullhed 2016, 3 (n. 15).

14 The most recent edition of the *Parekbolai* to the *Periegesis* dates from the 19th c., Müller (ed.) 1861, 2.201–407, which was published after that of Bernhardt (ed.) 1828, 67–316. Müller did not collate all the manuscripts. The first approach to the study of the textual tradition of the *Parekbolai* on Dionysius is by Diller 1975, 181–207, who examined and partially collated some manuscripts of Eustathius' commentary on Dionysius, given that the *Parekbolai* are relevant to the history of Strabo's *Geography*.

15 See, for instance, Pérez Martín 2022, 195–213, on Eustathius' teaching of the *Periegesis* in school. Moreover, the Spanish Project “El mundo según Homero: de Dionisio Periegeta a Eustacio de Tesalónica,” funded by the Fundación Logos del BBVA, has mapped the world according to Dionysius' poem and Eustathius' commentary: <https://elvuelodehermes.github.io/> (last accessed on August 2024). In the framework of this project, I. Pérez Martín, in collaboration with C. García Bueno and myself, has undertaken a critical edition and study of the manuscript transmission of the work, a long-standing *desideratum* as the most recent edition dates back to the 19th c. (see above n. 14).

16 Eustathius' *Parekbolai* on Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were edited by Van der Valk (ed.), 1971–1987, and Stallbaum (ed.) 1825–1826, respectively. More recently, Cullhed 2016 has edited and translated into English the commentary on rhapsodies A and B of *Odyssey*. For a general view of his activity, see several of the essays included in the volume edited by Pontani, Katsaros and Sarris 2017. For his commentary on the Homeric poems, see the recent monograph by Van den Berg 2022, devoted to the composition of the *Iliad*, and Cullhed 2016, especially 1–33, on the *Odyssey*.

17 Eustathius also devoted *Parekbolai* to Pindar (only the proem survives), Aristophanes (a few fragments are preserved), and perhaps to Oppian (lost), as well as composed an exegesis on the *Iambic Pentecostal Canon*. On his commentary on Pindar, see Kambylis (ed.) 1991, and Negri 2000 with an Italian translation; for Aristophanes see Koster-Holwerda 1 (ed.) 1954, 136–156; 1955, 196–206, and Holwerda (ed.) 1960, 323–326; on Oppian's see Dyck 1982, 153–154, and for his exegesis on the *Iambic Pentecostal Canon*, see Cesaretti-Ronchey (ed.) 2014, Cesaretti 2017, 167–179, and Agapitos 2022, 41–60, esp. 53–54. On the traditional chronology of his exegetical production, see Pontani 2000,

meaning of the verses in the *Periegesis*, but Eustathius focuses especially on the origins, etiology and meanings of the toponyms, geographical features and ethnonyms that appear throughout the poem.

The general goal of Eustathius' *Parekbolai* in the educational sphere¹⁸ was to provide students with a polymathic training and a deep knowledge of the Greek language for rhetorical purposes. They were intended to become “professional writers” and orators in order to “exalter les divers membres de la famille impériale et leurs exploits, en diverses circonstances.”¹⁹ Learning the origins of words played a key role in this training. Eustathius' own awareness of this is confirmed by one of his pupils, Michael Choniates, who claimed that Eustathius was keen on introducing him to several linguistic issues, such as the origin of nouns.²⁰ In keeping with this general goal, the *Parekbolai* are replete with remarks in which Eustathius explains to his student and the addressee of the work,²¹ John Doukas Kamateros,²² the origins of certain names and the numerous compositional mechanisms found in the poem. However, as he also declares in the prefatory letter of the work, which constitutes a genuine “declaration of intent,” he addresses his *Parekbolai* to a wider audience as well,²³ ranging from beginners²⁴ and curious²⁵ readers to zealous admirers of Dionysius.²⁶ All of these readers will benefit from Eustathius' commentary, as it provides the knowledge needed for a full understanding of the poem. In fact, given the requirements of verse and the brevity of the *Periegesis*, the reader's knowledge of

14 (n. 11). However, it is difficult to establish the chronology of his *Parekbolai* on Homer and Dionysius, since he worked continuously on them over the years, revising and expanding the texts: see Cullhed (ed.) 2016, 5–6.

18 On education and scholarship in the Komnenian period, see Magdalino 1993, especially 335–356 on Eustathius' work, Kaldellis 2009, 1–43, Nesseris 2014, especially vol. 1, 91–104 and vol. 2, 162–187 on Eustathius, and more recently Agapitos 2022, 41–60.

19 Loukaki 2015, 249–250.

20 Koukoules 1953, 86, and Kolovou 2017, 115.

21 The prefatory letter of the work (especially Eust. *On D.P.*, epist. 69–70), and the headings preserved in the manuscripts (two versions are transmitted), inform us that the *Parekbolai* on the *Periegesis* were commissioned by John Doukas Kamateros. For a transcription of the headings, see Diller 1975, 182.

22 An aristocrat and the son of Andronikos Kamateros, a senior official under the Emperor Manuel I Komnenos. On the interest in geography and the acquaintance with this discipline shown by the Kamateros family, see Pérez Martín 2022, 203–204.

23 Eustathius employs several words to allude to the audience of his *Parekbolai* on Dionysius: see Pérez Martín 2022, 201 (n. 32). On the audience of Eustathius' *Parekbolai* on the Homeric poems, see Pizzone 2016, 225–244.

24 Eust. *On D.P.*, epist. 133. (I will always quote Müller's edition on the *TLG*).

25 Eust. *On D.P.*, epist. 163.

26 Eust. *On D.P.*, epist. 80–82.

the origin of the peoples and toponyms mentioned in the poem is limited. Therefore, he does not hesitate to amplify these aspects to satisfy his audience's curiosity²⁷ by employing etymology as an essential tool. Nor does he neglect the work's geographical and cultural dimensions, supplementing these with the numerous geographical, historical, ethnographical, and even mythological remarks which are intertwined in each *parekbolē*. This methodology is connected to the utility of the *Periegesis* and his *Parekbolai*: as Eustathius himself declares, studying geography is not only useful for living, but also an essential tool for soldiers, emperors, etc.,²⁸ and thus for the administrative practices of court dignitaries.²⁹

4 Eustathius' etymological remarks on Dionysius' *Periegesis*

According to Paola Cassella,³⁰ Eustathius presents three types of explanations to clarify the origin of the terms discussed in his *Parekbolai* on the *Periegesis*: the first explores the origin of a term by virtue of a myth or different traditions of a myth; the second combines etymology and grammar; the third is strictly grammatical. However, remarks regarding mythology are constantly present in all three types, and there is no doubt that our scholar very often intertwines both grammar (that is, lexicology, etymology, semantics, and orthography) and mythology to elucidate the origins of terms. On this basis, I will focus especially on the second type of method employed by Eustathius to show how he makes use of etymology for didactic purposes. Furthermore, I will examine how he uses, rewrites, adapts or expands etymologies from his sources, as well as his way of presenting and explaining his etymological remarks.³¹

27 Eust. *On D.P.*, epist. 152–156.

28 Eust. *On D.P.*, epist. 477–482.

29 According to Angelov 2013, “one may call [this kind of geographical thought] academic geography”, although Eustathios seems to be aware that his contribution will also be useful for the administrative training of court members (“political geography” again in the words of Angelov). Available on-line: <https://chs.harvard.edu/chapter/2-asia-and-europe-commonly-called-east-and-west-constantinople-and-geographical-imagination-in-byzantium-dimiter-angelov/> (last accessed 30 September 2022).

30 Cassella 2013, 139–141.

31 For this, I have consulted the volume by Koukoules 1953, and the glossary by Fenoglio 2012 on the grammatical terms employed by Eustathios in his *Parekbolai* on the *Odyssey*.

The word “etymology” and its derivatives appear at least 20 times in his commentary, from which we can infer that this linguistic tool plays a key role in his exegesis. Etymology, however, does not seem to be merely a linguistic tool for explaining the poem, but also a way to satisfy the curiosity of Eustathius’ audience as a hermeneutic tool.³²

Τὸν δὲ ἐσπέριον ἄνεμον καὶ ζέφυρον καλεῖσθαι φησιν, ἐρεθίζων οἶον ἡμᾶς εἰς ἐτυμολογίας ἀνεύρεσιν.

Eust. *On D.P.* 400. 4–6

The west wind is also called “zephyr”, he says, arousing our curiosity so to speak in order to search its etymology.³³

In his *Parekbolai* on Homer, especially on the *Iliad*, Eustathius deals with etymologies through expressions as εἰς τὴν πρώτην ἐτυμολογίαν, or παλαιὰν τόλμαν ἐτυμολογίας, or ἡ κοινὴ ἐτυμολογία, etc.³⁴ We do not find these expressions in his commentary on the *Periegesis*, where etymology seems to be approached in a less systematic manner. However, this does not mean that this linguistic tool is less relevant here. In fact, in the prefatory letter, Eustathius himself declares that the explanation of the origins of the toponyms and peoples mentioned by Dionysius is a way of learning geography. Given that Dionysius just meant to offer a general view of the *oikoumenē* and its peoples, Eustathius’, as an *exegete*, engages himself in explaining them.³⁵ Therefore etymology constitutes the core of every *parekbolē* and a starting point for further remarks that enrich Dionysius’ geographical account.

To clarify the etymology of terms, Eustathius consulted a wide range of sources, which are sometimes difficult to identify. These include lexicographical works, *scholia vetera*, the Byzantine paraphrase and geographical/historical works that provide the etymology of a given place or people, as well as literary sources that further clarify the origins and meanings of a term. As we might imagine, he does not mention these sources in a consistent manner, and when he does so, especially with regard to the literary sources, he often employs a sort of “nickname”, such as ὁ Γεωγράφος (Strabo), ὁ Ποιητής (Homer), ὁ Περιηγητής (Dionysius), ὁ Κωμικός (Aristophanes) and so on. Among the lexicographical sources he mentions explicitly we find Pausanias,³⁶ Aelius

³² Eust. *On D.P.*, epist. 80–82.

³³ All extracts are my translation.

³⁴ Kolovou 2017, 117.

³⁵ Eust. *On D.P.*, epist. 146–156.

³⁶ Πausανίας δὲ, οὗ τὸ Ἀττικὸν λεξικόν (Eust. *On D.P.* 525.39–40).

Dionysius,³⁷ Herodian³⁸ and Stephen of Byzantium.³⁹ Most of these sources are also used for his *Parekbolai* on Homer.⁴⁰ They and others not directly mentioned allow Eustathius to postulate the various etymological origins of a given term according to one or more sources, to discuss them, and then to give his own opinion or even his doubts as to its origin. In general, it would be reasonable to state that the scholar adopts what amounts to a critical point of view. We find good examples of this methodology in the frequent use of the verb δοκέω ('to seem') and the adverb ἴσως ('perhaps'). Such words allow Eustathius to declare his doubts regarding the etymology of a word and even on the linguistic mechanism behind an etymological connection.

Αἴτιον δέ φασι τοῦ πάθους τούτου πνεῦμα ὑπόγειον, ποτὲ μὲν ἐπιόν, ποτὲ δὲ ἀπὸν καὶ ὑπονοστοῦν, ὅτε τὸ ὕδωρ ἀνωθούμενον, εἶτα συγκαταδύνον ποιεῖ τὴν ἄμπωτιν, ἥτις, ὡς τὴν ἐρρέθη, ἐκ τῆς ἀναπόσεως κέκληται, ὡσπερ αὐτὸν ἐκ τοῦ ἐναντίου ἢ πλημμύρα ὠνόμασται, ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ πλῶ πλῆρω τὸ ἀναπληρῶ, ἐξ οὗ καὶ ἡ πλήμη παρὰ τῷ Γεωγράφῳ,⁴¹ ἀφ' ἧς ἡ πλημμύρα παρήχθαι δοκεῖ κατὰ παρωνυμίαν τινά.

Ὁπ πλημμύρα (Eust. *On D.P.* 198.32–38)

They say that the cause of this phenomenon is a current of subterranean air, which sometimes emerges, and other times recedes and fades away, pushed upwards and then downwards, causing a reflux (ἀμπωτιν), whose name, as said before, comes from 'absorption' (ἀναπόσεως). At the same time, 'high tide' (πλημμύρα) is named thus for the opposite action, from *plō plēsō* ('overflow'), from which also comes *plēmē* ('flood-tide') in the Geographer, **and from which seems to come *plēmmyra* ('high tide') through a kind of paronymy.**

This is a personal etymological observation by Eustathius. By presenting a "descriptive etymology," he tries here to elucidate the origin of *πλήμυρα* ('high tide'), clearly derived from *πλήμη* ('flood-tide'), which shares the same root with *πίμπλημι* (to fill'), and *ἀναπληρῶ* ('to fill up'). His doubts concern the linguistic mechanism used to explain the link between the words, that is, by a sort of paronymy (κατὰ

37 Αἴλιος δὲ Διονύσιος ἐν τοῖς περὶ Ἀττικῶν λέξεων (Eust. *On D.P.* 912.67–68).

38 Ἡρωδιανός (Eust. *On D.P.* 215.2; 566.23; 1140.2); Ἡρωδιανός ἐν τῇ καθόλου προσωδία (Eust. *On D.P.* 457.23, 504.15, 533.3); Ἡρωδιανός ἐν τῷ Περὶ παθῶν (Eust. *On D.P.* 859.7).

39 Ὅ τὰ Ἐθνικά γράψας (Eust. *On D.P.* 11.26; 66.9; 305.5; 310.14; 530.46; 694.2; 927.24; 954.5); ὁ παρὰ τῷ γράψαντι τὰ Ἐθνικά (Eust. *On D.P.* 38.14); κατὰ τὸν τὰ Ἐθνικά γράψαντα (Eust. *On D.P.* 78.7; 815.31); ὁ γράψας τὰ Ἐθνικά (Eust. *On D.P.* 260.16; 787.12); κατὰ τὸν γράψαντα τὰ Ἐθνικά (Eust. *On D.P.* 513.31); ἐν τοῖς Ἐθνικοῖς (Eust. *On D.P.* 524.4; 859.9); οἱ τὰ Ἐθνικά γράψαντες (Eust. *On D.P.* 625.10); Ὅ δὲ τῶν Ἐθνικῶν ἀναγραφεὺς (Eust. *On D.P.* 954.25).

40 Kolovou 2017, 116.

41 Str. 3.35.20 (Lasserre ed.).

παρωνυμῖαν τινά).⁴² On other occasions, he instead questions the etymology provided by the source consulted.

Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ Νάξος, λεγομένη οὕτως ἀπὸ Νάξου Καρῶν ἡγεμόνος· ἢ παρὰ τὸ νάξαι, ὃ ἔστι θῦσαι, διὰ θυσίας ἴσως ἐξαιρέτους τινὰς ἐκεῖ γινομένης.⁴³

On the island of Naxos (Eust. *On D.P.* 525.82–84)

But also Naxos, named thus for Naxos, the leader of the Carians, or for *naxai*, which means ‘to sacrifice’, **perhaps for certain exceptional sacrifices that are practiced there.**

The adverb ἴσως (‘perhaps’) here informs us that Eustathius is not convinced of the etymological origin of the toponym Naxos as provided by his source, the *Ethnika* of Stephen of Byzantium. In other instances, however, he fully agrees with his sources and even shows a predilection for some (especially Homer and Strabo) over others.

Ἐκεῖ δέ πού φασιν⁴⁴ εἶναι καὶ τὸ Ἀλήιον πεδῖον, οὗ καὶ Ὅμηρος μέμνηται,⁴⁵ ἐν ᾧ μετὰ τὴν κατάπτωσιν, ὡς ἔρρέθη, ἐπλανᾶτο Βελλεροφόντης [...] ὄθεν καὶ μονώτην εἴλετο βίον, ἀνθρώπων ἀπάνευθε περὶ τὸ πεδῖον ἀλώμενος, ἤγουν πλανώμενος, ὅπερ ἐκ τῆς τοιαύτης αὐτοῦ ἄλης, ὃ ἔστι πλάνης, ἐτυμολογηθὲν, ὡς καὶ Ὅμηρῳ φαίνεται δοκεῖν,⁴⁶ ἐκκλήθη Ἀλήιον· ἢ ἀπὸ τινος πόλεως καλουμένης Ἄλης, ὡς τινες λέγουσιν, ἢ παρὰ τὸ στερεῖσθαι λήϊων.

On the plain of Aleion (Eust. *On D.P.* 867.53–62)

It is said that somewhere in that region one finds the plain of Aleion, **which Homer also mentions**, and in which, after his fall, as said before, Bellerophon wandered [...] And so he chose a solitary life, apart from human beings, wandering (*alōmenos*), that is to say, errant (*planōmenos*) upon the plain (*Aleion*), whose etymology is *alē*, *planē* (‘wandering’), **as Homer seems also to have believed; or for a certain city called Alē, according to some, or because it lacked arable soil (lēia).**

We see here that the implicit homerical etymology presented by Eustathius is the main and most authoritative source for explaining the etymology of the plain of Aleion (in Cilicia), apart from other sources that are not mentioned directly.⁴⁷ In fact, Eustathius supposes that Homer had accepted this etymology due to the link between the origin of the name and the myth. In the second etymology, the word is

⁴² On the meanings of this term in ancient Greek scholarship, see Dickey 2007, 253. On its use in Eustathius’ *Parekbolai* on *Odyssey*, see Fenoglio 2012, 233.

⁴³ Steph. Byz. 3.362.7–9. (Billerbeck ed.). Billerbeck edited βῦσαι, whereas Meineke edited θῦσαι.

⁴⁴ Str. 14.5.21 (Jones ed.).

⁴⁵ *Il.* 6.201 (Allen ed.).

⁴⁶ *Il.* 6.201–202 (Allen ed.).

⁴⁷ Probably *Etymologicum magnum* 62.20–37 (Gaisford ed.), which also mentions the homerical etymology.

related with a certain city called Ἄλη. Although Eustathius attributes this etymology to certain authors, it is not found in any preserved source. He presents an additional etymology of the word based on a phonetic similarity between the toponym Ἀλήιον and the adjective λήϊον with alpha privative; that is, through a paronomasia. In this case, Eustathius probably consulted the *Etymologicum Magnum*, where the homeric Ἀλήϊος⁴⁸ provides a similar definition.⁴⁹ We find here still further remarks that expand the etymology by means of a synonymous expression (ἦγουν πλανώμενος, ὃ ἔστι πλάνης), which serves to shed light on Dionysius' poem.

On other occasions, Eustathius elucidates the etymologies of a toponym by presenting only one source to which he attributes complete reliability.

Αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ Ῥήγιον οὕτω καλεῖται ἢ παρὰ τὴν ῥήξιν, ὡς ἀπορραγείσης τῆς Σικελίας ἐκ τῆς ἐκεῖσε ἠπειροῦ ὑπὸ σεισμοῦ,⁵⁰ ὡς καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐξῆς ῥηθῆσεται: [...] ἢ Ῥήγιον εἴρηται ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις βασιλείον, ῥῆγες γὰρ καὶ ῥέγες οἱ βασιλεῖς, τῶν Σαυνιτῶν οὕτω καλεσάντων αὐτὸ δι' ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς πόλεως.⁵¹

On Reggio Calabria (Eust. *On D.P.* 340.15–25)

This name of Regio is explained thus, **either from 'fracture' (rēxis)**, as Sicily was broken off from the mainland by an earthquake, as will be explained later [...] **or because Regio is used in the sense of 'royal'**, as kings are *rēges* and *reges*, and the city is called thus by the Samnites for its fame.

Here the only source is Strabo's *Geography*. Eustathius expands on his source by pointing out the Greek and Latin words that explain the etymology suggested by his source (ἢ παρὰ τὴν ῥήξιν, ῥῆγες and ῥέγες). This extract shows that Eustathius was probably acquainted with Latin. In fact, this is also evidenced from his allusion to a certain Latin lexicon.⁵² In fact, he does not hesitate to provide the etymologies of Latin toponyms and their meanings. An instance is to be found in the origin and history of the name of the river Orontes (in Western Asia).⁵³ As "the Geographer" claims, it was once called Typhon due to the myth,⁵⁴ but "others say that the Caesar Tiberius changed its name Draco to Orontes, which in Latin means 'oriental'."⁵⁵

48 *Il.* 9.125, 267 (Allen ed.).

49 *Etymologicum Magnum* 62,20–24 (Gaisford ed.).

50 *Str.* 6.135.16–20 (Lasserre ed.).

51 *Str.* 6.136.15–20 (Lasserre ed.).

52 Eust. *On D.P.*, 384.30–31.

53 Eust. *On D.P.*, 919.8–20.

54 *Str.* 16.2.7. (Jones ed.).

55 Ἄλλοι δὲ φασιν ὅτι ὁ Καῖσαρ Τιβέριος ἐκ Δράκοντος αὐτὸν Ὀρόντην μετωνόμασεν, ὃ σημαίνει Ῥωμαῖστί τὸν ἀνατολικόν. Eustathius quotes word for word the *Chronicle* of John Malalas (Io. Mal. 919.18–20 [Dindorf ed.]), but this etymology must have been transmitted by a lost older source.

Here we find an implicit etymology of the word Orontes, connected with the Latin verb *orior* ('to rise'). Similarly, when he addresses the etymology of the Campanian city of Καπύη (Capua), he offers two etymological explanations: on one hand the Latin origin of the word provided by Strabo, and on the other the mythological one.

[...] ἐν μεσογείῳ ἐστὶν ἡ Καπύη, κεφαλὴ τῶ ὄντι, ὡς φησὶν ὁ Γεωγράφος,⁵⁶ κατὰ τὴν ἐτυμότητα τοῦ ὀνόματος γλῶττη Λατίνων, καίτοι τινὲς⁵⁷ ἀπὸ Κάπυος τοῦ Τρωῶς αὐτὴν καλεῖσθαι ἠθέλησαν.
On Capua (Eust. *On D.P.*, 357.12–16)

[...] Capua is in the inland, which means 'head' according to the etymology of the name in the language of the Latins, as the Geographer says, although some called it thus for the Trojan Capys.

Eustathius' critical treatment of etymologies is also evident with regard to the Greek or foreign origin of a word. In fact, throughout his exegesis, he makes a distinction between Greek and non-Greek words, which allows him to delimit his etymological inquiries. One of the most relevant reflections in this sense concerns the river Nile, called Siris by the Ethiopians; in Eustathius' opinion, it is not necessary to search for a Greek etymology for either the African or the Italian Siris (located in Sicily).

Τὸ δὲ Σῖρις οἱ μὲν βάρβαρόν φασιν εἶναι ὄνομα, ἦτοι Αἰθιοπικὸν κατὰ τὸν Διονύσιον· διὸ οὐδὲ χρῆναι λέγουσι ζητεῖν Ἑλληνικὴν ἐτυμολογίαν αὐτοῦ, οὐδὲ τῆς Ἰταλικῆς Σίριδος·
On Siris (Eust. *On D.P.*, 222.11–14)

Of Siris some say that it is a foreign name, that is, "Ethiopic" according to Dionysius, and so it is not necessary to search for a Greek origin, either for it or for the Italian Siris.

Eustathius here follows Dionysius' verse⁵⁸ and sources such as Herodian⁵⁹ and Stephen of Byzantium⁶⁰ in reference to the non-Greek name of the Nile. His concerns about clarifying the terms of the *Periegesis* also become apparent in his providing its Greek toponym or meanings. We find several examples of this: the Pillars of Hercules (in the Strait of Gibraltar), for which Eustathius gives both the original and Greek names;⁶¹ the river Istros (the Danube), once called Matoas, which, as his sources clarify, means 'slime' in Greek;⁶² the Persian city of Pasargadae, which, as

⁵⁶ Str. 5.115.15–16 (Lasserre ed).

⁵⁷ Dion.Hal. 1.73.3.7 (Jacoby ed.).

⁵⁸ *D.P.* 223–224 (Lightfoot ed.).

⁵⁹ Herod., *De prosod. cath.*, 3.1.99.5–7 (Lentz ed.).

⁶⁰ Steph. Byz. 4.228.4–5 (Billerbeck ed.).

⁶¹ Eust. *On D.P.* 64.5–6. The source is *Schol. vet. in D.P.* 64.11–15 (Müller ed).

⁶² Eust. *On D.P.* 289.34–35. Eustathius' source is Herod., *De prosod. cath.* 3.1.52.28–29 (Lentz ed.).

he points out, in Greek means “Persian encampment,”⁶³ and the river Silis (Tanaïs in Greek, the current river Don), whose etymology, based on a paronomasia, is drawn from the Byzantine paraphrase of the poem.

Ἰστέον δὲ ὅτι ὁ ποταμὸς οὗτος διὰ τὸ τεταμένως ρεῖν⁶⁴ Τάναϊς Ἑλληνιστὶ καλούμενος, Σίλις, ὡς φασὶ τινες,⁶⁵ παρὰ τοῖς παροικοῦσι βαρβάροις ὠνόμασται. Ὅτι δὲ καὶ ἄλλοι ποταμοὶ ἐν βαρβάροις ῥέοντες ὁμῶς ἐξελληνίζονται τῇ κλήσει δῆλον...

On the river Tanaïs (Eust. *On D.P.* 14.21–23)

And you should know that **this river, which in Greek is called Tanaïs because it flows intensely (*tetamenōs*), is called Silis**, according to some for the barbarians that live along its banks; and it is evident that other rivers, although they flow through barbarian lands, have hellenized their names...

These kinds of interventions may be interpreted as linguistic bridges built to close the gaps created by geographical distance. This is not only a matter of physical distance as perceived by the Byzantine reader, but also an inherent feature of the *Periegesis*: the further the poem moves away from the Mediterranean, especially from the area of Alexandria, the fewer ethnonyms, toponyms and geographical features are mentioned, with less (and more fictitious) information provided. Eustathius thus endeavors to add supplementary data not contained in the poem as long as his sources allow him to do so. He is also concerned with building bridges between the time of the poem and his own age, and for this he often includes contemporary remarks to make the *Periegesis* more immediate for his audience. Such interventions are typically introduced by words such as ἡμεῖς, the verb φημί and adverbs such as τότε, πρότερον, νῦν and ὕστερον. In effect, these words allow Eustathius to “update” the information in the *Periegesis* by providing the current (and sometimes the vernacular) names of places, peoples and geographical features used by the Byzantines, or to link the origin of any idiomatic expressions or proverbs with a commented-upon term.⁶⁶ This is well justified if we consider the utility of the *Periegesis* for the administrative training of future Byzantine dignitaries.⁶⁷ Relevant instances of the first procedure are to be found in his remarks on Venice,⁶⁸ on the

⁶³ The source is Herod., *De prosod. cath.*, 3,1.66.27–3,1.67.1 (Lentz ed.).

⁶⁴ Paraphrase of *D.P.* 14.2–3 (Ludwich ed.).

⁶⁵ *Schol. vet. in D.P.* 14.4–5 (Müller ed.).

⁶⁶ For an approach to Eustathius' explanations of proverbs and their sources, see Tosi 2017, 229–241.

⁶⁷ See above p. § and n. 29.

⁶⁸ Eust. *On D.P.* 378.24–26. Βενετία is the most widely used form in Greek, as shown by Eustathius' geographical and lexicographical sources; for instance: Herod., *De prosod. cath.*, 3,1.302.6 (Lentz ed.), and Steph. Byz. 4.346.4 (Billerbeck ed.). However, he also employed Ἐβεντία according to Arrianus (Eust. *On D.P.* 378, 5 and 24).

Colchian people called the Macrones,⁶⁹ on the Cilician Solos,⁷⁰ etc. Regarding the second practice (the explanation of an idiomatic expression or proverb and its origin), we find an interesting example when Eustathius mentions the river Nile, which floods in the “heat of the dog-days” (κυνοκαύματα), an expression used in vernacular Greek, as Eustathios points out (τὰ παρ’ ἡμῖν κατὰ τὴν καθωμιλημένην γλώτταν λεγόμενα κυνοκαύματα).⁷¹ In other instances, a reference to a vernacular word is used to expand an etymology, as when Eustathius speaks of the etymology of Gadira (Cádiz), drawn from Stephen of Byzantium.

Τὰ Γάδαιρα δὲ νῆσος πλησίον τοῦ ὠκεανοῦ περιμήκης κατὰ τοὺς παλαιούς, ὡς οἶα ταινία,⁷² τουτέστι καθάπερ ὑφάσματος τμήμα στενὸν καὶ μεμηκυσμένον, ὅπερ ἡμεῖς φασκίαν φαμέν. Λέγεται δὲ καὶ ἡ Γάδαιρα θηλυκῶς.⁷³ Καλεῖται δὲ οὕτως οἰοῦναι γῆς δειρά, ὃ ἔστι τράχηλος...

On Gadira (Eust. *On D.P.* 64.14–19)

Gadira is a long island near the Ocean which, according to the ancients, has the form of a strip, that is to say, is like a long, narrow piece of cloth, what we call a ribbon. Gadira is also a singular feminine noun. It is called thus as it were *gēs deira*, that is to say, ‘neck of land’...

Here the scholar expands upon the etymology of Gadira (καλεῖται δὲ οὕτως οἰοῦναι γῆς δειρά) with a synonymous expression of his own (ὃ ἔστι τράχηλος), a grammatical remark (ἡ Γάδαιρα θηλυκῶς) extracted from the *Ethnika*, and a definition of the word ταινία in relation to the shape of Gadira. In fact, ταινία refers to a sort of narrow band (τουτέστι καθάπερ ὑφάσματος τμήμα στενὸν καὶ μεμηκυσμένον), or rather, what the Byzantines commonly called φασκία, a Latin loanword widely used in the Greek of Eustathius’ time.⁷⁴

His etymological examination also regards word change and word composition. Eustathius seeks to clarify the composition processes and the linguistic mechanisms behind a word, as these allow him to explain and justify its origin and meaning. Indeed, grammatical remarks are recurrent in the *Parekbolai*. These are highly relevant linguistic tools for elucidating the etymology of the terms used. Eustathius’ remark on the origin of the noun παλάτιον (‘palace’), in reference to the Pelasgians and the Palatine hill, clearly shows these concerns.

⁶⁹ Eust. *On D.P.* 765.1–4. The source is partially Steph. Byz. 3.256.5–7 (Billerbeck ed.).

⁷⁰ Eust. *On D.P.* 875.24–25. The source is Steph. Byz. 4.208.12–18 (Billerbeck ed.).

⁷¹ Eust. *On D.P.* 222.16–19. The source is partially the *scholia vetera* 223.1–3 (Müller ed.).

⁷² Steph. Byz., 1.394.9–10 (Billerbeck ed.).

⁷³ Steph. Byz., 1.394.11 (Billerbeck ed.).

⁷⁴ Eustathios himself informs us that the word φασκία is more common in his time than ταινία: Eust. on *Il.* 13.714 = 1.717,27–30 (Van der Valk ed.). On this, see also the *Etymologicum Magnum* 749.44 on ταινία (Gaisford ed.).

[...] τῷ Πανὶ νεῶν ἰδρύσας καὶ λόφον ὄχυρωσάμενος, ὃν Παλλάντιον ὠνόμασεν ἀπὸ τοῦ υἱοῦ Πάλλαντος [...] ὄθεν καὶ νῦν οἱ Λατῖνοι τοὺς βασιλεῖς πρέποντας τόπους οὕτω καλοῦσι παλάτια, καθ' ἀφαίρεσιν ἀμεταβόλων τοῦ τε λ καὶ τοῦ ν.⁷⁵

On *Palátion* (Eust. *On D.P.* 347.21–26)

[...] <Evander> erected a temple in honor of Pan, fortified a hillock that he named Pallantium for his son Pallante [...] from which the Latins now also refer to royal dwellings as *palatia*, by apheresis of the liquid l and n.

The etymology of this word, for which Eustathius has consulted the *scholia vetera* on the *Periegesis*, can be traced back directly to the myth of Pallas (the son of Evander). Eustathius expands here on his source by specifying the phonetic mechanism behind the current term παλάτια: it is not just a corruption or alteration (παραφθορά), but specifically an apheresis.

Another example of Eustathius' concern with linguistic issues, in this case with word composition, is to be found in verse 933 of the *Periegesis*, which alludes to the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, called Μέσσην ποταμῶν.

Τὸ δὲ μέσον τούτων διάστημα Μέσσην, φησί, καλοῦσι ποταμῶν, ὃ ἔστι Μεσοποταμίαν· ὡς καὶ τὴν ἀκρόπολιν διαλελυμένως ἢ ποιήσας ἄκρην πόλιν φησί, καὶ τὴν Λευκόπετραν Λευκὴν πέτραν, καὶ τὴν Νεάπολιν Νέαν πόλιν.

On Mesopotamia (Eust. *On D.P.* 976.12–16)

The area between them, he says, is called “the middle of the rivers”, that is to say, Mesopotamia, in the same way that the poetic tongue can separate *acropolis* into *akrē polis* (‘high city’), Leukopetra into *Leukē petra* (‘white stone’), and Neapolis into *Nea polis* (‘new city’).

This remark on Mesopotamia gives Eustathius the opportunity to analyze the διάλυσις (διαλελυμένως here), that is, the resolution of a compound into its original components.⁷⁶ This term is also found in the *scholia vetera* on Homer's *Iliad* (one of the main sources of Eustathius' *Parekbolai* on that work)⁷⁷ and, with a similar clarification, in his commentary on the *Iliad*.⁷⁸ Indeed, in both commentaries, Eustathius examines the διάλυσις with the same method, that is, by expanding on his remark with further examples for a more immediate understanding of this morphological phenomenon.

⁷⁵ *Schol. vet.* in *D.P.* 348.1–19 (Müller ed.).

⁷⁶ On this term in Ancient Greek scholarship, see Dickey 2007, 231–232. On its use in Eustathius' *Parekbolai* on the *Odyssey*, see Fenoglio 2012, 233.

⁷⁷ *Schol. vet.* in *Il.* 6.88b.1, (Erbse ed.).

⁷⁸ Eust. *on Il.* 2.250.12–15 (Van der Valk ed.).

Eustathius' attention to the components of a word becomes also evident in the morphological analysis that enables him to explore etymology and meanings. We find several instances of this procedure, such as his remark on the expression νήχυτος κόλπος (v.126), which is composed by the prefix νη, a prefix that denotes here an augmentative rather than privative meaning.⁷⁹

Ὅτι ὡσπερ τὸ α ποτὲ μὲν στερεῖ, ποτὲ δὲ ἐπιτείνει, οὕτω τὸ νη. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ νηλεῖς ἐλέου δηλοῖ στερῆσιν, τὸ δὲ νήχυτος κόλπος δαψίλειαν χύματος.

On νήχυτος κόλπος (Eust. *On D.P.* 126.1–4)

Just as the prefix *α-* sometimes means privation and other times intensity, so also with the prefix *νη-*. While on the one hand *nēleēs* ('pitiless'), from 'pity', indicates privation, on the other, *nēkhytos kolpos* ('deep gulf') means "of abundant volume."

Similarly, the ethnonym Ἄραψ enables him to present his own interpretation of an orthographic issue connected with the origin of the word.

[...] εἰ καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις τόποις πολλὰ τῶν ἀντιγράφων πολὺν τὸν ῥοῖζον ἐκ τῆς τοῦ ἀμεταβόλου ἐξηχοῦσι διπλώσεως [...] Βούλονται γὰρ πολλοὶ ἀναδιπλοῦν τὸ ρ, ὡς ἀπὸ τῆς α στερήσεως καὶ τοῦ ῥάπτω ῥάψω, κἀντεῦθεν τὴν τῶν Ἀράβων κλησὶν οἶον συρράπτουσιν, ὡς μὴ ῥαπτομένων ἱμάτια, περιτυλισσομένων δὲ ὑφάσματα· καὶ διὰ τοῦτο κατ' ἀνάγκην φασὶν ἐν τῷ Ἄραψ κεῖσθαι τὸν τοῦ ρ διπλασιασμὸν, ὡς καὶ ἐν τῷ ἄρρηκτος καὶ ἄρρητος καὶ ἀρραγῆς καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὁμοίοις.

On the Arabians (Eust. *On D.P.* 927.10–20)

[...] although in other passages many copies reflect a more vibrant sound for the duplication of the liquid consonant [...] In effect, many double the rho, as when the alpha privative is added to *raptō*, *rapsō*. Thus, they write the name of the Arabians as in *syrraptousin* ('sew together'), as they do not sew their clothes but instead wrap themselves in cloth. For this reason, they say that *Araps* should be written with a doubling of the rho, as in *arrēktos* ('unshakable'), *arrētos* ('ineffable'), *arragēs* ('unbreakable') and other similar cases.

Eustathius informs us here of a common orthographical mistake that is found in most of the manuscripts, where the ethnonym occurs with the gemination of the rho (*Ἄραψ instead of Ἄραψ). According to him, this arises from the morphological interpretation that explains the etymology and meaning of the ethnonym. Some interpret the word as being composed of an alpha privative and the verb ῥάπτω ('to sew'). Arabs, then, are "those who do not sew their clothes" (ὡς μὴ ῥαπτομένων ἱμάτια). Such an interpretation might justify the necessary gemination of the rho, by analogy to words like ἄρρηκτος, ἄρρητος, ἀρραγῆς, etc.

⁷⁹ See, for example, his remarks on νήδυμος ὕπνος (*Il.* 2.2), to which he seems to refer by heart as the κόλπος νήχυτος in vv. 125–126 of the *Periegesis* by means of πόντος νήχυτος (Eust. *on Il.* 1.252.16–19, Van der Valk ed.).

5 Conclusions

Let us summarize the etymological labor of Eustathius on Dionysius' *Periegesis*: he follows the ancient tradition of accepting several etymologies for one word and expanding them with synonymous sentences and words. In fact, his etymological inquiry is founded on ancient tradition. In this light, he employs a wide range of ancient sources in combination with a critical approach, which allows him to rely on sources that he seems to consider more reputable (as with Πήγιον) and express his doubts about the etymological origin, linguistic mechanisms and composition processes that explain and justify the etymology of a given word (as in the example given of Νάξος and πλημμύρα).

His critical approach is also evident from the fact that he uses the distinction between Greek and non-Greek origins of words with the aim of delimiting his etymological inquiries, as in the instance of the river Nile. Moreover, as we have seen, he does not hesitate to consider both Greek and Latin stems for an etymology (as with Πήγιον), and to provide the etymology and meaning of Latin words (as with Καπύη and the river Ὀρόντης).

Like other scholars before him and within the framework of his rhetorical teaching, his etymological approach also provides grammatical explanations, as well as the examination of the mechanisms that explain the origin and meaning of a given term (as with κόλπος νήχυτος, and παλάτιον and Ἄραψ).

Sometimes Eustathius contributes his own personal etymologies (as with πλήμυρα), although most are taken from the ancient sources consulted. His contribution also consists in the expansion of the etymologies by opening some windows into his own contemporaneity in order to “update” the *Periegesis* for the Byzantine reader. In fact, Eustathius often presents the current Byzantine name of places and peoples and employs vernacular words when explains a given etymology (as for example, with the shape of Γάδειρα resembling a φάσκια).

Finally, the ethnographic and geographic character of the *Periegesis* is certainly a particular and fruitful context for developing an etymological and grammatical inquiry, which Eustathius uses and adapts for teaching purposes in his *parekbolai* on the poem. In fact, in explaining its language and commenting on the origin and history of the toponymies, ethnonyms and geographical features of the *Periegesis*, Eustathius displays a valuable and practical knowledge not only to the curious Byzantine audience and scholars, but also to the future dignitaries of the court.

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