



History and Biography in Diodorus Siculus

GOOD STATESMEN AND STATE REVENUE

Diodorus Siculus

- ▶ From Agrigorgium in Sicily
- ▶ Wrote his work: c60-c30BCE
- ▶ c40 books from the beginnings of mankind to his own times
- ▶ Includes mythology
- ▶ Primary surviving example of UNIVERSAL HISTORY
- ▶ Hellene in the Roman world of the late Hellenistic period



Diodorus on History and Leadership

- 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. D.S. 1.1.5

The ultimate leader: Epaminondas of Thebes

- ▶ All the same, if you should compare the qualities of these with the generalship and reputation of Epameinondas, you would find the qualities possessed by Epameinondas far superior. For in each of the others you would discover but one particular superiority as a claim to fame; in him, however, all qualities combined. For in strength of body and eloquence of speech, furthermore in elevation of mind, **contempt of lucre**, fairness, and, most of all, in courage and shrewdness in the art of war, he far surpassed them all. D.S. 15.88.3
- ▶ ἄλλ' ὅμως εἴ τις συγκρίναι τὰς τούτων ἀρετὰς τῇ Ἐπαμεινώνδου στρατηγίᾳ τε καὶ δόξῃ, πολὺ ἂν προέχουσαν εὖροι τὴν περὶ τὸν Ἐπαμεινώνδαν ἀρετὴν. παρὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐκάστω τῶν ἄλλων ἓν ἂν εὖροι προτέρημα τῆς δόξης, παρὰ δὲ τούτῳ πάσας τὰς ἀρετὰς ἡθροισμένας. καὶ γὰρ ῥώμη σώματος καὶ λόγου δεινότητι, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις ψυχῆς λαμπρότητι καὶ μισαργυρίᾳ καὶ ἐπιεικείᾳ, καὶ τὸ μέγιστον, ἀνδρεία καὶ στρατηγικῇ συνέσει πολὺ διήνεγκε πάντων.

Words and their meaning

- ▶ Filargyros: avarice, love of money for its own sake
- ▶ Afilargyria: lack of avarice. A Diodoran word – only used once in any other text before Diodorus (that survives). Diodorus uses it for good leaders: Aemilius Paulus, Pittacus, etc.
- ▶ Misargyria: hatred of money. Only used for Epaminondas – the ultimate word, for the ultimate statesman.

Afilargyria and the good statesman

Aemilius Paulus

- ▶ Hence it seemed to many that in **freedom from avarice** he had outdone even those who were the marvel of Greece in this respect, Aristeides and Epaminondas. For they had refused gifts whenever the offer was made in the interest of the donors, but he, with full power to take as much as he wanted, had coveted nothing.
D.S. 31.26.2

Julius Caesar

- ▶ To sum up, this was a man who by his nobility, his power as an orator, his leadership in war, and his **indifference to money** is entitled to receive our approval, and to be accorded praise by history for his generous behaviour. For in the magnitude of his deeds he surpassed all earlier Romans. D. S. 32.27.3

Filargyria and the bad statesman

Hieron

- ▶ Thus Gelon, being beloved by all because of his mild rule, lived in uninterrupted peace until his death. But Hieron, the next oldest among the brothers,² who succeeded to the throne, did not rule over his subjects in the same manner; for he was **avaricious** and violent and, speaking generally, an utter stranger to sincerity and nobility of character. D.S. 11.67.3-4

Perseus

- ▶ Indeed, his failure to forget profit and the desire for gain, even when the outlook was desperate, can only be regarded as the conduct of a man completely out of his senses. It is not surprising, then, that the Macedonians were defeated by the Romans, but only that with such a leader they held out for four years. D.S. 30.21.2

Afilargyria and state revenue

Sitalces

- ▶ In the same period Sitalces, the king of the Thracians, had succeeded to the kingship of a small land indeed but nonetheless by his personal courage and wisdom he greatly increased his dominion, equitably governing his subjects, playing the part of a brave soldier in battle and of a skilful general, **and furthermore giving close attention to his revenues.** In the end he attained to such power that he ruled over more extensive territory than had any who had preceded him on the throne of Thrace. D.S. 12.50.1

Philip II

- ▶ And because from these **mines he had soon amassed a fortune, with the abundance of money he raised the Macedonian kingdom higher and higher to a greatly superior position,** for with the gold coins which he struck, which came to be known from his name as Philippeioi, he organized a large force of mercenaries, and **by using these coins for bribes induced many Greeks to become betrayers of their native lands.** D.S. 16.8.6-7

Bad statesmen and state revenue

- ▶ The gods were wroth; for the later kings were not ruling after the manner of Battus, the first king. For Battus had contented himself with the appellation alone of king, and had been an equitable ruler, friendly to the people, maintaining the while—the most important thing—the honours due to the gods. But the rule of the later kings had taken on more and more the character of tyranny, **and they had appropriated to themselves the public revenues** and had neglected reverence toward the deity. D.S. 8.30.1

Historiography or something else?

The problem of Diodorus

- ▶ Quellenforschung in Diodorus
- ▶ Examples across the work
 - ▶ Cannot be influence from a single source
- ▶ Can we see it as influence from the genre as a whole?
 - ▶ Leadership is a major issue in historiography
- ▶ Fundamental loss of Hellenistic historiography

Previous Historians on revenue and leadership

- ▶ Herodotus: No connection
- ▶ Thucydides: no connection
- ▶ Xenophon: 1 mention in the Hellenica, and nothing else
- ▶ Polybius: a lot of mentions, but no connection between characterisation of statesmen and attitude to money/avarice

Some interesting problems

Xenophon

- ▶ Very interested in revenues and the economy: see *Poroi*, and *Memorabilia*
- ▶ Does connect money/revenue and leadership: *Hiero*, *Kyropaideia*, *Anabasis*
- ▶ BUT not in the *Hellenica* – WHY?

Plutarch

- ▶ Much more like Diodorus – revenue and money clearly connected to characterisation of statesmen
- ▶ BUT he is a BIOGRAPHER not a historian