

340-350 – Siege of Syracuse

The siege of Syracuse was from 344 BCE to either 343 or 342 BCE. It was a part of a war between general Hicetas of Syracusan, the tyrant of Syracuse, Dionysius the second and general and statesmen of Corinth, Timoleon. The siege was recorded and described by two different ancient historians, Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch. However, both accounts have very big differences between them. Hicetas had power in Sicily, nevertheless Timoleon the Corinth general, with support from other Sicilian Greek cities, he emerged triumphant due to having the democratic regime reestablished in Syracuse.



Figure 1; Hicetas of Syracusan. (Image from; <http://www.twcenter.net/forums/showthread.php?565539-NPC-Syracuse>)

In 344 BCE, Timoleon departed from Corinth to Syracuse. He left with 700 mercenaries on seven ships (Diodorus Siculus. 1954). While on the way, Timoleon's excursion was merged with three more ships from Leucadia and Corcyra (Diodorus Siculus. 1954).

Though, it is also believed that the seven Corinthian ships were joined by two ships from Corcyra and one from Leucadia (Plutarch. 1918). Plutarch mentioned that there could be a total in 1,000 soldiers overall from the joining fleets.

During Timoleon's journey, he was said to have witnessed a cosmic sensation (Diodorus Siculus. 1954). This has been construed as a meteor shower (Bicknell, P. J. 1984).

Timoleon would have finished his passage in March of 344 BCE (Bicknell, P. J. 1984).

Figure 2; General and Statesmen, Timoleon of Corinth. (Image from; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timoleon>)



Hicetas sieged Syracuse, which was still under the control of Dionysius (Diodorus Siculus. 1954). Dionysius planned a surprise attack in order to defeat Hicetas. Despite the surprise attack, Hicetas managed to prevail over Dionysius (Diodorus Siculus. 1954). The army of Dionysius escaped after 3,000 of his mercenaries were massacred (Diodorus Siculus. 1954).

Once Timoleon had control over the city, he had both the citadel and the tyrant's palace on Ortygia demolished (Plutarch. 1918). When Hicetas heard of this, he fled to Leontini in 342 or 341 BCE (Diodorus Siculus. 1954). Timoleon then moved on to siege Leontini however failed, turning his head to siege Engyum instead. He

Timoleon besieged Leontini but broke off the siege when he failed to take it. Timoleon then besieged Engyum to overthrow the tyrant Leptines and restore democracy to that city (Diodorus Siculus. 1954). While Timoleon was not at Syracuse, Hicetas attempted to lay siege to the city with his entire army (Diodorus Siculus. 1954). He retreated after suffering heavy losses to his army and losing (Diodorus Siculus. 1954). This left Timoleon victor of the war.

Bibliography

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