Aristoula Georgiadou
Plutarch's *Pelopidas*

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A Historical and Philological Commentary

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Preface

This Commentary on the *Life of Pelopidas* originates with my doctoral dissertation of which it is a completely revised and expanded version. My aim has been to present and assess the information available on this *Life* and, where possible, to resolve its outstanding problems. In some cases, however, where I feel that the evidence does not allow for certainty, I follow Wittgenstein's precept "Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen".

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To Anabella I. Nefele who has become a source of immeasurable happiness. My sweetest debt goes to Stratis Gallopoulos of the University of Patras for all the grants and fellowships he has awarded me throughout the years. It is to him that this book is dedicated.

> . . . ἀτὰρ σύ μοί ἔσσι πατὴρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ
> ἠδὲ κασίγνητος, σὺ δέ μοι θαλερὸς παρακοίτης.

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Introduction
1. Plutarch
[a] Life

Plutarch was born c.45 AD in Chaeronea, a small town in Boiotia in Central Greece. The plain near the town was associated with two major battles: the defeat of the Thebans and the Athenians by Philip II in 338 BC, evoked by the biographer in the *Pelopidas* in his digression on the Sacred Band (18.7; cf. *Alex.* 9.2-4, *Dem.* 19-20.2, *Thes.* 27.8, *Cam.* 19.8), and Sulla's victory over the Pontic king Mithridates in 86 BC (*Su.* 15-19). The affluence of Plutarch's distinguished family gave him the opportunity to attain a high degree of learning by pursuing his studies at Athens, which was still a prominent cultural center in the Graeco-Roman world. There he must have attended classes in rhetoric, although he mentions nothing about his rhetorical training, probably because of the traditional contempt the Platonists showed to this discipline.[1] He became the student of the Egyptian Academic philosopher Ammonios c.66/7 AD, and no doubt Plutarch owes to him his allegiance to Platonism and, at least in part, his own profound interest in religious matters.[2] Plutarch travelled widely in Greece, Egypt, Italy, and Rome on

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[1] On Plutarch and rhetoric, see R. Jeuckens, *Plutarch von Chaeronea und die Rhetorik* (Strassburg 1907), F. Krauss, *Die Rhetorischen Schriften Plutarchs und ihre Stellung im plutarchischen Schriftenkorpus*, Diss. Munich 1912, Ziegler, 1964: cols. 291-301, J.R. Hamilton, 1969: xxi-xxiii, G.W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford 1969) 110-112, C.P. Jones, 1971: 14-16, 67-71, Wardman, 1974: 221-244, G.W.M. Harrison, "Rhetoric, Writing and Plutarch", *Ancient Society* 18 (1987) 271-279, Stadter, 1987: 251-269, esp. 251-252, Flacelière and Irigoin, 1987: ccvi-ccx.

[2] On Plutarch's philosophy and religion, see R.M. Jones, 1916 [1980], Latzarus, 1920 [1987], Soury, 1942, Flacelière, 1959: 197-215, Barrow, 1969: 72-118, Ziegler, 1964: cols. 301-308, Babut, 1969, id. 1994: 77-102, Russell, 1973: 63-83, Dillon, 1977: 184-230, Brenk, 1977, id. 1987: 248-349, Donini, 1986b: 203-226, U. Bianchi, "Plutarch und der Dualismus", *ANRW* 2.36.1 (1987) 350-365, Froidefond, 1987: 184-233, Gallo, 1988, Valgiglio, 1988, Hershbell, 1992a: 3336-3352, id. 1992b: 3353-3383, Valdés, 1994, Opsomer, 1996: 165-194. On Ammonios, see C.P. Jones, 1966b: 205-213, id. 1971: 16-19, Dillon, 1977: 189-192, Donini, 1986a: 97-110, Brenk, 1987: 257-260, Aalders and De Blois, 1992: 3384-3404.

political missions but also as a lecturer,[3] and yet, notwithstanding the constraints that the limited library resources in Chaeronea imposed on his work (*Dem.* 2.2, *De E ap. Delph.* 384E), he remained faithful to his native town. He became an honorary Athenian citizen and was enrolled in the tribe Leontis (*Quaest. conv.* 628A); he also received Roman citizenship probably through his friend L. Mestrius Florus. Among the various offices which he held (J.R. Hamilton, 1969: xv-xvii, C.P. Jones, 1971: 25-28), especially significant was his long tenure as priest at the temple of Apollo at Delphi, an office which appears to have had a considerable impact on his literary activity (cf. *De E Delph.*, *De Pyth. orac.*, *De def. orac.*).[4] In fact, both "Delphi and Chaeronea were to be", in C.P. Jones' words "the twin poles of Plutarch's adult life" (1971: 4; for the various stages of Plutarch's career, *ib.* 13-38).

[b] The Biographies

The bulk of Plutarch's literary output was most likely produced in the later period of his career, after 96 AD, during the reigns of the emperors Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian.[5] Previously his travels would have allowed him the opportunity to collect abundant material for his diverse writings. Later, far less burdened with public duties and travelling, he had more freedom to devote his leisure time to the composition of essays and dialogues (*Moralia*)[6]—which cover a wide range of topics from philosophy to religion, and from ethics to rhetoric and mathematics—and the *Parallel Lives*.[7] As a prominent citizen of the Roman empire enjoying a wide circle of influential Greek and Roman friends (C.P. Jones, 1971: 39-64,

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[3] On Plutarch's travels, see Barrow, 1969: 36-50, C.P. Jones, 1971: 15-16, 20-27, Buckler, 1992: 4799-4829.

[4] On Plutarch's priesthood at Delphi, see Soury, 1941: 50-69, Flacelière, 1943: 72-111, C.P. Jones, 1971: 26, Brenk, 1987: 330-336.

[5] On the dating of Plutarch's works, see Stoltz, 1929, Ziegler, 1964: cols. 71-82, 262-268, C.P. Jones, 1966a [1995] 61-74, id. 1971: 28-38, 135-137, JR. Hamilton, 1969: xxxiv-xxxvii, Pelling, 1979 [1995] 80-81, Brenk, 1987: 255-256.

[6] For a survey of his essays, see Russell, 1973: 63-99, C.P. Jones, 1971: 67-71, 110-121, Flacelière and Irigoin, 1987: vii-cccii.

[7] For general introductions to Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, see Wilamowitz, 1926 [1967, 1995] 247-279, Flacelière, 1957: xix-xxvi, Ziegler, 1964: cols. 257-277, Russell, 1966 [1995] 139-154, id. 1973: 101-116, Gossage, 1967: 45-77, Barrow, 1969: 51-65, C.P. Jones, 1971: 81-109, Wardman, 1974, Schneeweiss, 1985, Barigazzi, 1994: 287-301, and most recently, Scardigli, 1995: 1-46.

Ziegler, 1964: cols. 30-60, Puech, 1992: 4831-4893), he was in a particularly favorable position to witness and express through his literary work the merging of the Greek and Roman cultures. The arrangement, for instance, of most of these *Lives* in pairs,—the biography of a Greek statesman or general followed by that of his Roman counterpart—, together with the concluding formal comparison (*synkrisis*) of the two protagonists' various qualities that usually accompanies each pair, typifies the fusion of cultures.[8] His essays are also affected by this amalgamatory tendency (cf. *Praec. ger. reip.*, *Aet. Rom. et Gr.*).

Plutarch's extant biographical works include twenty-two sets of *Parallel Lives*—if we count the set of the biographies of *Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus/Agis IV and Cleomenes III* as one pair—, two single *Lives* of *Aratos* and *Artaxerxes II*, and the *Lives of Galba* and *Otho*, which belong, in all likelihood, to a series of *Lives of the Caesars*. The *Lives of the Ten Orators*, a valuable source of information on the Attic orators from Antiphon to Deinarchos, is generally considered spurious. A list of some 227 titles of Plutarch's works—not all of which are genuine—is provided by the so-called 'Lamprias Catalogue'.[9] This inventory is included in some of the medieval manuscripts of Plutarch's writings and immediately invites comparison with his extant works. Clearly time and the vicissitudes of fortune appear to have favored the survival of his biographies and were less kind to his treatises. Sixteen out of sixty-six *Lives* are lost, while only seventy-eight treatises survive out of one hundred and eighty-six.

Plutarch's imperial biographies running from Augustus to Vitellius (Nos. 26, 27, 29-33 in the 'Lamprias Catalogue') appear—if we can judge on the basis of those of Galba and Otho, which alone exist—to have formed a series of interdependent annalistic narrations; the two *Lives* in question, despite their sketchy character, present some interesting similarities with the *Parallel Lives*, so far as their overall structure and the attitude of the biographer are concerned: the programmatic statement at the beginning of the *Galba* with the characteristic disclaimer of narrating events in a formal historical fashion, the synkritistic technique,

[8] For a discussion of Plutarch's moral and political purposes in the *Lives*, see C.P. Jones, 1971: 103-109, Valgiglio, 1992: 4026-4028, 4046-4051.

[9] On the 'Lamprias Catalogue', see Ziegler, 1964: cols. 60-66, Barrow, 1967: 193-194, Sandbach, 1969: 3-7, Irigoin, 1987: ccxxviii-ccxxix, ccciii-cccxviii.

the subject-matter and their pervading moralizing tone clearly reflect some of the typical features of the *Parallel Lives*.[10] The composition of the *Lives of the Caesars* is assigned to the period before Domitian's death in 96 AD (Jones, 1966a: 71, id. 1971: 72-73) or to the brief reign of Nerva (96-98AD; Syme, 1980: 104-128, esp. 108-110, Geiger, 1981: 86-87).

Plutarch owes his reputation and his popularity chiefly to his *Parallel Lives*. The idea of drawing parallels certainly does not originate with Plutarch but is tightly linked with his rhetorical training and wide-ranging reading. It is a distinct structural component of Valerius Maximus' collection of *exempla*, which Plutarch must have known and used.[11] In addition, the concept of confronting and comparing outstanding public figures in Greece with those in Rome, as well as the general framework and arrangement of the biographies, may owe a great deal to Nepos' series in his *de viris illustribus*. In fact, Plutarch's acquaintance with his writings is confirmed by the use he made of this work in some of the Roman biographies (*Marc.* 30.5, *synkr. Pel./Marc.* 31(1).8, *Luc.* 43.2, *TiGr.* 21.3; on his use of Nepos, see Scardigli, 1995: 21). Nepos' book on Foreign Generals, which consists of twenty-two *Lives*, indicates at the end that it was to be followed by a book on Roman Generals (*Hann.* 13.4). It is likely that Nepos' comparisons of Greek and Roman generals were on the basis of groups, and not of individuals as favored by Plutarch, and that the former's book on the Greek subjects would precede its Roman counterpart.[12] Plutarch's originality seems to lie, as Geiger says (1988: 249-250), in the scale of his biographies—book-length pairs of *Lives* as opposed to Nepos' brief sketches—which allowed more space to character-development. We should note that the method of setting Greeks and Romans side by side was practised also by

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[10] For an introduction to the *Lives of the Caesars*, see C.P. Jones, 1971: 72-80, Syme, 1980: 104-128; for a study of features common to this series and the *Parallel Lives*, see Georgiadou, 1988: 349-356; on the proems of the *Caesars*, see Stadter, 1988: 294-295.

[11] See Gossage, 1967: 60, Russell, 1973: 109. Cicero's works, most of which Plutarch appears to have known, could have inspired him for some of his comparisons; see further Scardigli, 1995: 20 and n. 140.

[12] See Gossage, 1967: 75n. 48, Geiger, 1981 [1995] 96. For a survey of Plutarch's indebtedness to the Peripatos for his comparative technique and to Roman models for his contrasts, see Scardigli, 1995: 7-12.

a near contemporary of Nepos, the polymath Varro, in his *Hebdomades* or *Imagines*. This was an illustrated collection of 700 portraits of prominent men of Greece and Rome each followed by an appended epigram. Plutarch shows familiarity with Varro's work (Helmbold and O'Neil, 1959: 74) and it is not unlikely that the polymath's layout of portraits in the *Imagines* may have played some part in the literary format of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*.

Of the 24 Greek heroes of the *Parallel Lives*—including the lost *Epameinondas*—, ten are furnished by the history of Athens—Theseus, Solon, Themistokles, Aristides, Kimon, Perikles, Nikias, Alkibiades, Demosthenes, Phokion—, five are Spartans—Lykourgos, Lysander, Agesilaos, Agis IV and Kleomenes III—, two are Thebans—Epameinondas and Pelopidas—, and, as for the two liberators of Syracuse, Timoleon and Dion, the former is Corinthian and the latter Syracusan; the remaining heroes of the series are derived, with the exception of the Macedonian King Alexander, from the Hellenistic period, and include the liberators of Syracuse Dion and Timoleon, the Diadochi Eumenes of Cardia, Demetrios Poliorketes, and Pyrrhos of Epiros, and, finally, 'the last of the Greeks', Philopoemen of Megalopolis.

The bulk of the subjects of Plutarch's Greek *Lives* of the Classical period are also included in Nepos' list of heroes, and it is therefore tempting to see here an indication of Nepos' impact on Plutarch's choice of at least some of his Greek characters.[13] Plutarch's Roman subjects—all 24 possibly including Scipio Aemilianus (see **[1c]**) are exclusively selected from the early history of Rome down to the end of the Republic.[14] A few fragments which have been securely assigned to Nepos' *Lives* of Marcellus, Lucullus and Scipio Aemilianus, and were most likely included in his book on Roman generals, suggest that Nepos' influence on Plutarch may have extended beyond the latter's selection of the Greek subjects, since Plutarch himself also composed biographies of these individuals (Geiger, 1981 [1995] 92-99, id. 1985: 104-106).

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[13] For recent general Introductions and bibliographical surveys of Plutarch's Greek *Lives*, see B. Bucher-Isler, 1972, Scardigli, 1986: 7-41, ead. 1995: 2-18, 32-46, Podlecki and Duane, 1992: 4053-4127.

[14] For recent surveys of Plutarch's Roman *Lives*, see Scardigli, 1986: 42-59, ead. 1995: 18-24, 32-46, Titchener, 1992: 4128-4153.

Not all the *Lives* appear to have been part of Plutarch's original plan, but were added to the series progressively. On his own admission, he expanded the series because of the delight he derived from it (*Aem.* 1.1). Analyzing the frequency of Plutarch's references to subjects from the Classical and Hellenistic Age in the *Moralia*—those from the classical period far exceeding the Hellenistic—Geiger has proposed that the biographies of Greeks from the latter period were probably added at a later stage.[15]

[c] The Lost *Epameinondas/Scipio* Pair

A most regrettable loss in the entire corpus of Plutarch is the *Epameinondas/Scipio Pair*, which appears to have been the opening set of biographies in the series of the *Parallel Lives*—No. 7 in the 'Lamprias Catalogue'. Because of its leading position among the *Lives* it might have contained a programmatic statement applying to the entire series; as such, it would give us a deeper insight into Plutarch's biographical scheme and the motivations and expectations that lay behind it which we must now piece together from the scattered comments which we find in the opening chapters of a number of *Lives* (*Alex.* 1.2, *Kim.* 2.4-5, *Tim.* 1.5, *Per.* 1-2.4, *Nik.* 1.5, *Demetr.* 1.3-6). Moreover, given Plutarch's numerous references to Epameinondas in the extant *Lives* and the *Moralia*, where he makes no effort to hide his unbounded admiration for the Theban's combination of political activity and interest in philosophy, one might expect to trace in the *Epameinondas*, more than in the *Pelopidas*, the degree to which the biographer's local patriotism and admiration for his Boiotian compatriot might have interfered with the selection and shaping of the available source-material; we could have, therefore, obtained some control of Plutarch's choice of material and his use of sources in the composition of the Theban biographies. And, last but not least, the *Epameinondas* could have shed more light on the attitudes and viewpoints of his principal authorities whose extensive writings on the period in question have unfortunately not survived. In its absence, our understanding and assessment of the above features is confined almost exclusively to the extant *Pelopidas*. Of course, to assume that material lost to us could have contained all the information we desire and that the bio-

[15] On Nepos' possible impact on Plutarch in the selection of his characters, see Geiger, 1981 [1995] 92, 95-99, id. 1985: 104-108, id. 1988: 245-256, Valgiglio, 1992: 4028-4030.

grapher would have given us a deeper insight into his scheme than what he offers at *Alex.* 1.2 may be an illusion.

Various attempts to reconstruct the *Epameinondas* through other ancient sources which supposedly drew on Plutarch's lost biography, have yielded interesting, yet somewhat speculative results.[16] Wilamowitz, followed by several other scholars, was the first to advance the view that Pausanias 9.13.1-15.6 represents an epitome of the lost *Life*. This has been contested by Tuplin who stresses the difficulties in establishing a direct connection between the two writers.[17]

Finally, the identification of Epameinondas' Roman counterpart, Scipio, has been a matter of an ongoing dispute, and has divided scholarly opinion between P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus Maior (236-184 BC) and P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Numantinus (185/4-129 BC), who is known simply as Scipio Minor. The 'Lamprias Catalogue' lists a *Life of Scipio Africanus* (No. 28) separately from the *Epameinondas/Scipio* Pair (No. 7). Peper (1912: 129-131) and Ziegler (1964: cols. 258-259) favored the selection of the elder Africanus as Epameinondas' Roman counterpart in the lost Pair; Ziegler based his arguments on quotations from certain of the *Lives* and on two incidents, which he considered to be appropriate points of contact between them, the battles of Leuktra and Zama, and the trials in which both heroes were involved (cf. also Sandbach, *Loeb Moralia*, vol. 15, 1969: 74-78, Scardigli, 1986: 20). Peper and Ziegler are countered by Wilamowitz (1926: 260) and Herbert (1957: 83-88; cf. Stadter, 1989: xxviii n. 12), who, comparing the credentials of the two Scipios and also those of Epameinondas and Scipio Aemilianus arrived at the conclusion that Aemilianus' 'scholar-statesman' type of personality would be the more likely choice for the Roman hero in the first pair of the *Parallel Lives*. Geiger (1981: 87n. 6) points out that the *Life* known in the 'Lamprias Catalogue' (No. 28) as *Scipio Africanus*—i.e, not the parallel to Epameinondas—must have been written prior to the inception of the *Parallel Lives*, "since it is inconceivable

[16] For systematic reconstructions of Epameinondas' career, see L. Pomtow, *Das Leben des Epaminondas, sein Charakter und seine Politik* (Berlin 1870), Vischer, 1877, Swoboda, 1900, Peper, 1912, Carrata Thomes, 1952, Fortina, 1958, Shrimpton, 1970, Bengtson, 1983.

[17] Tuplin, 1984: 346-358; for a detailed bibliography on this issue, see *ib.* 346n. 1. On Pausanias' dependence on local Boiotian sources in this section, see Fuscagni, 1975: 45-46 and n. 53, Sordi, 1989: 125-126.

that no room would have been found in the *Parallel Lives* for both Scipios". The question thus is not which Scipio could best be paired with the great Theban, but which of the two could have triggered the philosopher-biographer's interest independently, and before the *Parallel Lives*. The same arguments adduced by the supporters of Scipio Aemilianus—the kind of 'scholar-statesman' Plutarch so much appreciates in the person of Epameinondas—are then better applied to the case for an individual *Life*; the Scipio paired with Epameinondas must therefore, in all probability, have been Africanus, not Aemilianus.

[d] Plutarch and Thebes[18]

It is only natural to assume that Plutarch's admiration for the architects of the Theban hegemony, Pelopidas and Epameinondas, would also extend to the Thebans in general. Certain restricting factors are, however, at play here. As has been observed, the loss of the *Epameinondas* greatly limits the material from which to form a coherent picture of Plutarch's views about the Theban people. In the *Pelopidas*, his occasional remarks about the Thebans do not, in any way, betray any excessive bias towards them comparable to Xenophon's transparent pro-Spartan fervor. Plutarch applauds them for their military training and prowess (15.4-7, 17.13, 18.7, 19.3-5), the confidence they inspired in their allies in times of danger (24.5-8), their sense of justice (26.5), their hatred for tyranny and the panhellenic spirit of their external policy (31.6). Interestingly enough, his laudatory comments on the Thebans' valor are not made in isolation from the role played by either Pelopidas, or Epameinondas, or both. In fact, they are meant to be understood merely as the result of the two Thebans' military and political virtues.

But Plutarch is not uncritical of the Theban people. He speaks disapprovingly of their unpleasant reception of Pelopidas and Epameinondas, after the two men's first expedition to the Peloponnese, and of their envy, which was increasing as the two grew in reputation (25.1). He also refers, in a rather disparaging manner (29.1), to their failed mission to liberate Pelopidas from the hands of the tyrant Alexander. Moreover, he would have known Ephoros' criticism of the Thebans' lack of culture and disregard for learning which the historian considered as the main

[18] I thank Prof. J. Buckler for having generously shared with me his extensive notes on the views of Plutarch, Xenophon and Diodoros regarding Thebes from 382 to 362; a short version of these notes is included in Appendix 2, 1980a: 263-272.

causes of the Thebans' loss of hegemony in Greece (Diod. 15.39.2, 88.4, Str. 9.2.2). Only Epameinondas, according to Ephoros, stood out among the Thebans as a leader who combined both intellectual and military virtues and Plutarch's lavish remarks about the Theban's philosophical pursuits seem to bolster this view. He clearly resented the fact that the Theban people suffered under ill-repute and were criticized for their meager achievement in the intellectual sphere,[19] and that Pelopidas was not exempt from such a criticism; rather than tarnish the latter's image, however, he tactfully refrains from expounding his views on this issue and shifts the emphasis to the other virtues and qualities of the Thebans. Only once does he draw attention to their superstitious belief in demons who take delight in human sacrificies, thus allowing the reader to detect their lack of intellectual sophistication and rationalization, but even then he does so obliquely and does not elaborate on the matter (21.2-3).

2. The *Life of Pelopidas*

[a] Scope and Methods

The *Pelopidas*, parallel to the *Marcellus*, is Plutarch's only extant Theban biography after the loss of the *Life of Epameinondas* [**1c**]. This *Life*, despite the limited scope and purpose expected from a work of biographical nature, constitutes one of the three major literary sources for the history of the Theban hegemony; the other two are Xenophon's *Hellenika* (6.3.1-7.5.27) and Diodoros' *Bibliotheke* (15.50.4-15.88.4), on the scope and worth of which see Buckler, 1980a: 263-272.

Plutarch's *Pelopidas* is also particularly valuable for the historian because it preserves the most extensive account of the career of one of the principal architects of the Theban hegemony.[20] It fills some of the gaps left by Xenophon in his *Hellenika*, whose extreme bias in favor of Sparta and unsympathetic attitude towards Thebes pervade his entire account of the events in this period. In his reluctance to acknowledge the two Thebans' achievements, and especially those of Pelopidas, he blatantly

[19] For a full discussion of the literary tradition on the proverbial Boiotian μισολογία, see Roberts (1895); for Plutarch's polemic against the opprobrious epithets applied to the Thebans for their lack of intellectual sophistication, see *De gen.* 575D, *De Herod. malign.* 864 D.

[20] Wilamowitz (1926 [1995] 60n. 22) rather unfairly attributes Pelopidas' inclusion in the corpus of Plutarch's *Lives* merely to his Boiotian origin and claims that the Theban does not really fit the company. For earlier discussions of the *Life of Pelopidas*, see Vater, 1842, Queck, 1876, Bersanetti, 1949: 43-101.

suppresses events that were humiliating to the Spartans or readily omits victories of the Thebans.[21] He omits all mention of Pelopidas and his past military exploits until 367, when the Theban was sent as an ambassador to the Persian court (7.1.33-37). It is clearly no coincidence that he picked this incident to introduce Pelopidas, since despite the latter's diplomatic success at Sousa the Thebans did not succeed, Xenophon remarks, in convincing the other Greeks to accept the peace or gain the leadership in Greece (7.1.40).

Diodoros' description of the events in central and northern Greece from 371 to 362 (Bk. XV) is the most complete account we possess from this period. He lacks Xenophon's biases and is eager to allot praise both to Spartan and to Theban generals. Owing to the wide scope of his work he is forced to treat most events in a sketchy manner conducive to chronological confusion. In his account of the Theban hegemony he concentrates largely on the achievements of Epameinondas, whom he lauds above all other men. Despite the lack of depth in his work, Diodoros is especially useful because he supplements Xenophon's *Hellenika* and gives due credit to the achievements of Pelopidas and Epameinondas.

By his own admission, Plutarch does not seek to provide a comprehensive account of various historical periods (*Alex.* 1.2), but is mainly concerned with the character of men who affected the course of events in their own lifetime. Consequently, not all important events of the period in question are included in the *Life*, while certain incidents which are more closely connected with Epameinondas than with Pelopidas will doubtless have been treated in the lost *Epameinondas* (cf. *Ages.* 28.6). In addition, a number of episodes in Theban history which took place in the last decade of Agesilaos' reign in Sparta and brought about the decline of the Spartan hegemony in Greece, such as the Battle of Leuktra, Epameinondas' first invasion of the Peloponnese and the refounding of Messene, are dealt with from a different angle in the *Agesilaos* (28-29.1, 31-32, 34.1-2) and therefore complement the accounts given in the *Pelopidas*.

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[21] On Xenophon's silences and distortions, see Cawkwell, 1972: 255-257, id. 1973: 56-57, Westlake, 1975: 23-40, Buckler, 1980a: 263-268, Fernández, 1984: 41-70, Proietti, 1987, Lévy, 1990: 125-157, Riedinger, 1991: 41-60, Dillery, 1995: 195-230; for a more moderate approach, see Higgins, 1977: 174-175, Gray, 1989: 69, Wickersham, 1994: 86-90.

To determine and illustrate Pelopidas' character Plutarch sketches the notable deeds in which he faced danger and adversity and achieved prosperity and glory. He also frequently uses anecdotes and sayings for the same moralizing purpose. He is willing even to suppress certain incidents or aspects of Pelopidas' character that would suggest a different evaluation of his ethos [**2d**]. In brief, he appears at times to be shaping his narrative so as to throw into relief only those aspects of his hero's career which will best reconfirm the virtues outlined in the proemium or in the formal *synkrisis*. Failing to look for larger historical causes and motives in Pelopidas' acts, he simply sees and interprets them as a result of his virtue. And yet, despite his tendency to present Pelopidas in as favorable a light as possible, Plutarch provides a valuable supplement and corrective to Xenophon's account and, as Buckler points out (1980a: 272), gives "the fullest account of the careers of Epameinondas and Pelopidas".

Local patriotism[22] and forthright admiration for Epameinondas' education and, in particular, his philosophical training must have prompted Plutarch to give him a leading position in his biographical series. Pelopidas, on the other hand, lacked his friend's proper education and philosophical inclinations (4.1), but is greatly commended by Plutarch for his harmonious cooperation with Epameinondas throughout his career (4.2-4). Plutarch is fully aware of the precarious position of the Greek magistrates in his own time, who, subject to the authority of the Roman governors, are often embroiled in unnecessary quarrelling; in the *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae*, a political treatise composed roughly during the period of the composition of the *Parallel Lives* (C.P. Jones, 1966a [1995] 72), he gives practical advice to future politicians. Although he draws his Greek examples chiefly from the politicians of the 5th and 4th centuries BC,[23] his suggestions are made with a view to his own time (cf. 805A-B, 814C-815A, D, 824E-825A; see also Pelling, 1995: 205-220, esp. 215-217). He strongly disapproves of the disgrace-

[22] A number of non-extant biographies of mythological and literary subjects who are Boiotian in origin, such as Herakles, Hesiod, Pindar and Krates, Nos. 34, 35, 36, 37 in the 'Lamprias Catalogue', respectively, and the extant treatise *De Herodoti malignitate* attest to Plutarch's desire to bring Boiotia to the fore; on Plutarch's local chauvinism, see Aalders, 1982: 14-15.

[23] On Plutarch's tendency to use models of the past rather than of his own period, see Wardman, 1974: 20-21.

ful rivalry among the Greeks of the ruling class and urges them to strive for friendship and concord, which he regards as the most elevated form of the art of politics (824C-D).[24] In the *Pelopidas*, the theme of concord or envy among politicians has a central place in the Introduction (ch. 4); it informs the entire *Life* and is also used to stress continuity with the *Marcellus* [**2d**].[25] The political terminology is the same used in the *Praecepta*, and Plutarch's examples are, likewise, not of contemporary political leaders, but of statesmen from classical Athens who were given to enmity and envy. He juxtaposes them to the two Thebans, who emerge as the ideal model of collaborative leadership (4.3). The *Pelopidas* is as close to a political treatise as a Plutarchean biography can be. Though it does not contain any explicit political messages or guidance for the preservation of unity and concord in the ruling class whose spokesman he is, the entire career of Pelopidas, inextricably bound up for the most part with that of Epameinondas', is one of the best examples illustrating Plutarch's political lessons in the *Praecepta*.

Plutarch has very little to say about Pelopidas' early life. The lack of personal details about his family, his childhood and upbringing, private life, or physical appearance in the introductory chapters,[26] in conjunction with the unusual number of *chreiai* in the proemium (1-2.8) and the significant amount of space devoted to digressions (16.5-8, 18-19, 34) and to unnecessary amplification (1-2.9, 8.7-8, 21-22, 28.5-10, 29.6-11, 30.9-12, 35.6-12), may indicate that Plutarch did not make use of biographical sources, but had to rely on historians who would have little or nothing to say about Pelopidas' early life. We cannot be certain that Plutarch knew of a *Life* of Pelopidas—other than that of Nepos—that

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[24] On Plutarch's concern for the political issues of his time, see C.P. Jones, 1971: 110-121, Aalders, 1982: 48-60, Caiazza, 1993: 7-23. He is criticized for failing to weigh his judgements of characters against the moral norms and expectations of the societies in which they lived: Bucher-Isler, 1972: 73-74, A. Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius: The Scholar and his Caesars* (New Haven, London 1983) 108; for a more moderate opinion, see Pelling, 1995: 205-220, esp. 211-213.

[25] Other themes providing a link between the two *Lives* are: the tyranny (Alexander of Pherai, Dionysios of Sicily), the political envy (*Pel.* 25.1, *Marc.* 22.1), the trials (*Pel.* 25.3-5, *Marc.* 23, 27), superstitious beliefs and omens (*Pel.* 21, 31.4, *Marc.* 3.6-7, 5.5-7, 6.11-12, 20.9, 28.3), people buried alive (*Pel.* 29.6, *Marc.* 3.6).

[26] Cf. for instance the *Lives* of Fabius Maximus, Camillus, Coriolanus, Crassus, Antony, as well as Pelling's comments on the occasional absence of biographical sources (1979: 85, id. 1988b: 30).

had also been used by the Roman biographer, whom he names as a source in the *Marcellus* (*Marc.* 30.5, *synkr. Pel./Marc.* (31(1).8), since Nepos himself points to the historical and not biographical nature of his sources in his *Pelopidas* [**2f**]. It has been argued, however, probably with too much strictness, that no political biographies were composed before Nepos, but only *Lives* of philosophers, poets and other intellectuals,[27] and probably Pelopidas, whose career was, to a great extent, military, would not qualify for such a biography. There is no evidence of such a work in the period between Nepos and Plutarch. We only know of a certain Xenophon of Athens who is credited by Diogenes Laertios (2.59 [*FGrH* 111T1]) with a biography of Epameinondas and Pelopidas, but nothing is known about the content or dating of this work other than its description as a βίος. The absence of the biographical flavor from the *Pelopidas* and the occasional loose linking of episodes make it read like a historical narrative whose author is at pains to tailor it to the needs of a biography.[28]

Plutarch, like Nepos, had apparently a difficult time collecting material pertaining exclusively to Pelopidas, since his career was interwined with that of Epameinondas. Pelopidas is presented as acting on his own, without being overshadowed by the genius of his Theban friend, only on four occasions: in the preparation of the coup against the Theban oligarchs which led eventually to the liberation of the Kadmeia (5-13), at the battle of Tegyra (16-17), in the expeditions to Thessaly against the tyrant Alexander of Pherai (26-28, 31-32) and in the embassy to Sousa (30). In all four incidents Plutarch goes out of his way to stress either the personal nature of Pelopidas' success or Epameinondas' dissociation from his friend's exploits (5.4, 13.7, 16.1, 26.1, 30.1-2, 13). The abundance of passages of a moralizing character in the *Pelopidas* is re-

[27] See Geiger, 1985: 30-116, criticized by Moles, 1989: 229-233, and Scardigli, 1995: 17-18.

[28] Plutarch's Greek *Lives* have been criticized as occupying "a fluid and intermediate position in the history of biography", because they "approximate more closely to the work of a historian than to the more straightforward biographical forms": Scardigli, 1995: 17; see further, Valdés, "Approximación a la *Vida de Cimon* de Plutarco", in *Unidad y Pluralidad en el mundo antiguo* (Madrid 1981) 317-324, esp. 320, A. Dihle, *Die Entstehung der historischen Biographie*, Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, 1986, vol. 3 (Heidelberg 1987) 19, A. La Penna, *Plutarco: vite parallele, Cesare* (Milan 1987) 28.

markable, and although Plutarch generally tends to incorporate material in the biographies which lends itself to moralistic judgments, his reliance on such tendentious material in the Theban biography seems to have been dictated mostly by the inadequacy of his sources.

[b] Chronology

Plutarch is hardly ever in the habit of referring explicitly to the order of the biographies and the dates at which he composed and published them (cf. *Su.* 21.8). As a result, the reconstruction of their relative chronology is based on cross-references,[29]—although they appear occasionally to contradict each other—, and on other indirect indications in the *Lives*. Once the general period of the composition of the *Lives* has been established [**1b**], it remains to determine the approximative sequence of publication. The *Pelopidas/Marcellus* is, of course, not the only Pair which has endured various permutations within the general scheme of the *Parallel Lives*. Mewaldt (1907: 564-578, esp. 575), in his sequential arrangement of Plutarch's first four books, places it second immediately after the missing Pair *Epameinondas/Scipio*, to which he assigns the first place in the biographical series, with Solon/Publicola and Kimon/Lucullus coming third and fourth, respectively. His proposed order differs radically from Michaelis', who maintains that the *Pelopidas/Marcellus* constituted pair seven.[30] Theander (1958: 18-19), being in agreement with Michaelis and Stoltz (1929: 46-47), argues that the *Pelopidas/Marcellus,* which he assigns to ninth place, was written about the same time as the *Perikles/Fabius Maximus*, on the grounds that the two Roman generals were coeval. Theander's argument has been countered by Van der Valk (1982: 302n. 8) and Ziegler (1964: col. 265), who firmly support the chronological proximity of the two Theban *Lives* on the grounds of their related subject-matter. C.P. Jones, whose suggested order of the *Parallel Lives* has won a fairly wide acceptance, proposes a few modifications on Mewaldt's chronological arrangement and

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[29] On the reliability of the cross-references as a criterion for establishing the sequence of the *Lives*, see Mewaldt, 1907; Stoltz, 1929, disagrees, as do C.P. Jones, 1966a [1995] 66-68, J.R. Hamilton, 1969: xxxiv-xxxvii and Pelling, 1979 [1995] 80-82; on the use of citations as a means of determining the sequence of the *Lives* and the limitations of this methodology, see Frazier, 1988: 297-309.

[30] Michaelis, 1875: 20-47: (1) Epameinondas/Scipio, (2) Sertorius/Eumenes, (3) Kimon/Lucullus, (4) Lysander/Sulla, (5) Demosthenes/Sulla, (6) Agis-Kleomenes/Gracchi, (7) Pelopidas/Marcellus.

offers the second, third and fourth places to *Kimon/Lucullus*, *Pelopidas/Marcellus*, and either *Sertorius/Eumenes* or *Philopoemen/ Flamininus*; he leaves the specific order of each pair undetermined.[31] Using the double reference to the completed *Life of Marcellus* in the *Fabius Maximus* (19.2, 22.8), C.P. Jones demonstrates that the composition of the *Pelopidas/Marcellus* was undoubtedly prior to that of the *Perikles/Fabius Maximus*. Finally, Van der Valk, in his defense of the proximity of the two Theban *Lives* draws attention to Plutarch's methodology in writing the biographies (1982: 302); he claims that the biographer was clearly more interested in the two Thebans than in Marcellus or Fabius Maximus, and so the order of the first two pairs, at least, must have been dictated by his personal taste; he suggests, therefore, that Plutarch followed "a definite line of thought" while composing his *Lives*, according to which he could pass more naturally from the writing of the *Life of Epameinondas* directly to that of the other great Theban, Pelopidas. It is reasonable to suppose that the two Theban *Lives* were composed within a short time of each other, since they would involve research and source material of a very similar type. The assumption that they were both written at the same time has, of course, no real bearing on their respective dates of publication.

[c] Sources for the *Pelopidas*[32]

Kallisthenes and Ephoros

Plutarch is noticeably reluctant to identify his sources for the *Pelopidas*,[33] while he is clearly more generous in that respect in the Theban's Roman counterpart, the *Marcellus*, where he cites by name seven different authorities. Only once do we get a glimpse of the kind of material which he appears to have consulted in the composition of the *Life*: in 17.4 he mentions the historians Ephoros, Kallisthenes and

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[31] C.P. Jones, 1966a [1995] 68; see also J.R. Hamilton, 1969: xxxiv-xxxvii, and Stadter, 1989: xxvii-xxix, who agree, in general, with Jones' scheme. For a brief survey of the relative chronology of the *Lives*, see Podlecki and Duane, 1992: 4064-4065.

[32] For a more extensive discussion of Plutarch's possible use of Kallisthenes and Ephoros in the *Pelopidas*, see Georgiadou, in *Boeotia Antiqua*.

[33] This practice is not uncommon; cf. the *Coriolanus* and the *Sertorius*; on this issue, see C.P. Jones, 1971: 84-85, P. Desideri, "I documenti di Plutarco", *ANRW* 2.33.6 (1992) 4538-4539.

Polybios for their diverging views on the size of the Spartan *mora*.[34] Of the three named authorities only the first two are believed to have dealt systematically with the period of the Theban hegemony. In fact, Ephoros and Kallisthenes were very likely the most authoritative concerning Thebes in the late fourth century,[35] and it is reasonable to suppose that either historian, or both, could have provided the basis of Plutarch's narrative in the *Pelopidas*, and also probably in the lost *Epameinondas*. Xenophon was among Plutarch's sources for another fourth century *Life*, the *Agesilaos*, but there is no indication that the biographer drew on him for the *Pelopidas*, since the historian systematically avoided associating the Theban hero with any of the major events of the Theban hegemony [**2a**]. Nothing is known about the work of the Boiotian historians Dionysodoros and Anaxis referred to once by Diodoros as having concluded their narrative of Greek history in 361/0 (15.95.4).

Ephoros of Kyme, a fourth century historian, wrote a *Universal History* in 29 books starting with the Return of the Heracleidae and ending with the siege of Perinthos in 341. It is generally agreed that Books XX-XXV covered the period of the collapse of the Spartan hegemony, which started with the Spartan seizure of Mantinea in 385, and included the gradual increase of the power of Thebes, the Theban invasions of the Peloponnese and ended with Epameinondas' death at Mantinea in 362.[36] The fact that Ephoros dedicated one fifth of his entire work to record events which span a limited period of twenty-three years should be of no surprise to us, since he was dealing at that point with events of his own lifetime. Apart from the extant fragments, much of the information concerning Ephoros' *Universal History* comes from the epitome of it made by Diodoros. The latter, wrote in the first century BC and composed his *Bibliotheke*, a world history, in forty books. He compiled Book XV of his work almost entirely from Ephoros' account of the Theban

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[34] On his tendency to cite sources when he introduces variant views, see Ziegler, 1964: col. 274.

[35] Shrimpton argues (1970: 28-46, id. 1971: 316-317) that a Boiotian point of view first emerged and gained ground with the publication of Ephoros' *Histories* and Kallisthenes' *Hellenika*; see also Alonso-Núnez (1990: 173-192) for the development of the notion of universal historiography in the fourth century BC.

[36] On Ephoros, see *FGrH* 70, Schwartz, *RE* 6.1, 1907: cols. 1-16, R. Laqueur, "Ephoros", *Hermes* 46 (1911) 161-206 and 321-354, Barber, 1935: 36-37, Wickersham, 1994: 119-177.

supremacy,[37] thus covering in one book, by way of abridgement, the years from the King's Peace in 387/6 to 361/0 (Barber, 1935: 34-38).

Kallisthenes of Olynthos, historian and philosopher (*Alex.* 52.3) of the fourth century BC, wrote his *Hellenika* in ten books starting with the Peace of Antalkidas in 387/6 and ending with Philomelos' seizure of the temple at Delphi in 356. Polybios finds a place for Kallisthenes in the canon of the λογιώτατοι τῶν ἀρχαίων συγγραφέων together with Xenophon, Ephoros and Plato (6.45).[38]

Plutarch's familiarity with the works of Ephoros and Kallisthenes is well attested, and to judge from the way in which he occasionally compares the one with the other, it is obvious that he had read them both.[39] Throughout the *Lives* and the *Moralia* he cites Ephoros at least fifteen times as his source[40] and Kallisthenes at least fourteen times, if we exclude all the other instances in which he refers to them indirectly. The frequency of his references to them does not, of course, prove that he consulted either of these two historians directly in the *Life*, nor does it

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[37] On Diodoros' extensive borrowing from Ephoros for Books XI-XVI, see C.A. Volquardsen, *Untersuchungen über die Quellen der griechischen und sizilischen Geschichten bei Diodor, Buch XI bis XVI* (Kiel 1868), Hammond, 1937: 84-85, Herbert, 1954: 37-38, 41-42, Drews, 1962: 390, C.I. Reid, *Diodorus and his Sources*, Ph.D. diss. Harvard University 1969, Sordi, 1969: xii, Buckler, 1980a: 268, Andrewes, 1985: 189, Sacks, 1990: 13, Munn, 1993: 133; for a more reserved approach, see Frost, 1980: 32, M. Casevitz, *Diodore de Sicile: Bibliothèque Historique, Livre XII* (Paris 1972) xiii-xv.

[38] On Kallisthenes, see *FGrH* 124, Schwartz, 1900: 106-130, Kroll, *RE* 10, 1917: cols. 1674-1726, A. Schaefer, 1930: 21-33, Pearson, 1960: 22-49, Shrimpton, 1970: 35-46, Pédech, 1984: 15-69. How widely known Kallisthenes was is illustrated by a fragment published by G. Manganaro, "Una biblioteca storica nel ginnasio di Tauromenion", *La Parola del Passato* 29 (1974) 389-409, esp. 391 and 394.

[39] I see no reason to doubt that a widely-travelled and widely-read person like Plutarch should not have read these authors and others in the original himself. Plutarch's ample use of Ephoros in *Mul. virt.* has been demonstrated by Stadter: 1965: 37-38, 59-68, 127-128; cf. also Theander, 1951: 62-63.

[40] As an indication of Plutarch's familiarity with Ephoros, note his joke about a friend who had read some Ephoros and was always holding forth about Leuktra, and so got the nickname "Epameinondas" (*De garr.* 514C [*FGrH* 70F213]). Clearly reading Ephoros meant learning a lot about Epameinondas, and no doubt about Pelopidas as well.

imply that he preferred Ephoros to Kallisthenes.[41] A parallel examination of the *Pelopidas* and the corresponding sections in Diodoros' Bk. XV reveals significant similarities, but also some noteworthy differences between the two narratives. It would be tempting to attribute the existing coincidences to Plutarch's systematic consultation of Ephoros, were it not for certain discrepancies, mainly of an argumentative nature, which, as Westlake observes (1939: 17), are "too frequent and too wide to admit of this explanation".

The task of determining Plutarch's sources in the *Pelopidas* becomes more complicated both because of the loss of the *Epameinondas* **[1c]** and because Ephoros may well have used Kallisthenes especially for the last three decades of his history.[42] This suggestion, now commonly accepted by scholars, raises considerable problems for a satisfactory assessment of either historian's work on its own merits. In view of the complexity of the process of transmission from the original source to Diodoros, and in the absence of any extensive fragments from Kallisthenes' *Hellenika*, or from Ephoros' history other than Diodoros' abridgement of it, it is difficult, if not impossible, to reconstruct with any certainty their attitude towards Thebes and its protagonists during the period of history in question,[43] or to trace distinguishing features of their historical narrative in the *Life*;[44] likewise, to decide which of the compressed sections in Diodoros'

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[41] On Plutarch's use of sources, see J.R. Hamilton, 1969: xliii-xlix, Pelling, 1988b: 31-36, Stadter, 1989: xliv-li, Desideri, 1992: 4536-4567, Buckler, 1995: 43-58.

[42] Eusebius quotes a statement by Porphyry in which Ephoros is accused of copying from Kallisthenes, Daimachos and Anaximenes (Porph. ap. Euseb. *Praep. Ev.* 10.3, 464 B [*FGrH* 70T17]); on Ephoros' plagiarism, see Barber, 1935: 131-133, Momigliano, 1935a: 110-111, Westlake, 1939: 18, Carrata Thomes, 1952: 10-11, Herbert, 1954: 107. Very little is known of the work of Daimachos and Anaximenes; cf. Diod. 15.89.3 [*FGrH* 72T14], Aristeid. 26.51 (vol. II, 105 Keil) [*FGrH* 72F21, *FGrH* 65F1-4].

[43] On Ephoros' attitude towards the Thebans, see Accame, 1936: 343-355, Wickersham, 1994: 158-160.

[44] There is, in fact, more evidence of Ephoros' attitude towards the Theban hegemony and its protagonists, especially towards Epameinondas, than of Kallisthenes'; see Momigliano, 1935a: 114-117, id., 1935b: 192-199, Accame, 1936: 343-344. Besides Diodoros' epitome, Ephoros' views are partly reflected in Nepos' *Epameinondas* (Bradley, 1968: 138-140, 142, 146-147) and *Pelopidas* (id. 151-152), in Strabo 9.2.2, in Justin 6.7-8; on Kallisthenes' pro-Theban attitude, see Kroll, *RE* 10, 1917: cols. 1696-7; cf. Pédech (1984: 28-30), who objects to this view.

Bk XV is genuinely Ephorean, and which has been contaminated by borrowings from Kallisthenes or may even reflect Diodoros' own views remains to a large extent an object of speculation.[45] If Shrimpton (1970: 36-39) is right in maintaining that Kallisthenes centered his account of the Theban hegemony around the figure of Pelopidas, and Ephoros around Epameinondas, we could assign Diodoros' specific references to Pelopidas' exploits to the Ephoros/Kallisthenes tradition, and regard the rest of the account of the Theban hegemony as genuinely deriving from Ephoros. Yet, although this hypothesis can adequately explain certain narrative inconsistencies in Diodoros' account, it cannot be used as the only criterion for discerning Kallisthenes' traces in Ephoros' work. To avoid further complication and confusion, Diodoros' narrative of the events in Greece in Bk. XV will be generally assumed for our purposes to represent the Ephorean tradition, unless striking discrepancies between passages in his account strongly argue for a change of source.[46] Moreover, besides the errors which usually occur in incorporating a detailed exposition, we should allow for some creativity in Diodoros' abridgement, and not regard his work as a simplistic copy of Ephoros' history.[47] Similarly, it would be wrong to view Plutarch's *Pelopidas* as a servile imitation and reproduction of any of his alleged sources. As Scardigli points out (1995: 26 andn. 182), he was "more than a mere collector of secondary material".

In spite of the lack of conclusive evidence, scholars generally agree that Kallisthenes, and not Ephoros,[48] must have been Plutarch's principal

[45] On Diodoros' sources, see Reid, 1969.

[46] For instance, the detailed presentation and emphasis in the section containing the eulogy of Pelopidas (15.81.1-4) are quite different from the rest of the narrative and can argue for a change of source. Unfortunately, Diodoros shows no awareness of Ephoros' borrowings from Kallisthenes, nor does he provide variant views of the two historians.

[47] On Diodoros' use of his sources, see Hammond, 1937: 79-91, Drews, 1962: 383-392, id. 1963: 244-255, Andrewes, 1985: 189-197, Gray, 1987: 72-89, Wickersham, 1994: 165-173.

[48] Ephoros as Plutarch's main or additional source has been favored by: Queck (1876: 22-25; he finds traces of Ephoros in chs. 26-35), A.H.L. Heeren (*De fontibus et auctoritate vitarum parallelarum Plutarchi commentationes quattuor* [Göttingen 1820] 50; he suggests Ephoros, who in turn draws from Anaxis and Dionysodoros), G.R. Sievers (*Geschichte Griechenlands vom Ende des peloponnesischen Krieges bis zur Schlacht bei Mantineia* [Kiel 1840] 171-172n. 20), Haug (1854: 58-60; he remains undecided among Ephoros, Kallisthenes, Anaxis and Dionysodoros), Christ