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ABSTRACT

An Examination of the Sources of Plutarch's Lives of Nicias and Lysander.

Source-criticism of the Lives of Nicias and Lysander makes it clear that Plutarch did not adopt any uniform method in the compilation of his Lives, nor was he wholly dependent upon late and worthless sources. Each Life constituted a separate problem, requiring separate examination.

For the Nicias, in his description of the Sicilian Expedition, he made use of Timaeus' History of Sicily, thereby incorporating Thucydides and the eye-witness record of Philistus, which formed the basis of Timaeus' account; in his description of the character of Nicias and his early military career, Plutarch mainly had recourse to Book X of the Philippica of Theopompus. Thus, two historians supplied the biographer with the information in anecdotal form which he required for his appreciation of the character of his hero. The result is a fair picture of Nicias, little different from what extant writers have recorded about him.

Plutarch's approach to the Lysander was different. He was aware of two traditions - one complimentary, the other wholly derogatory. The greater part of the narrative of the Lysander is encomiastic and based upon the Hellenica of Theopompus, which covered the short period of Greek history monopolised by the achievements of Lysander, and was indebted to the Hellenica of

Xenophon. But a small section of the Lysander was based upon a ' Hostile Source ', which was also used by Nepos. This source, apparently a Hellenistic biography, adapted and distorted the historical facts of Ephorus, making use of the political pamphlets of Pausanias the Younger, king of Sparta, exiled in 395 B.C. The result is a curiously contradictory Life, which preserves the conflicting estimate of Lysander current in the century after his demise.

In addition, both Lives contain Plutarch's reflexions upon his material and his sources, or digressions of a topographical and archaeological nature, supplemented by apophthegms noted down by the biographer in earlier reading.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE SOURCES OF PLUTARCH'S
LIVES OF NICIAS & LYSANDER.

Thesis submitted to the University of Durham
by the Rev. H. M. Luft, M.A., for the degree
of M. Litt.

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PARTS 1 AND 11

General Introduction.

Plutarch's Life of Nicias.

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE SOURCES OF PLUTARCH'S

LIVES OF NICIAS & LYRANDER.

PART 1.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

A careful examination of the sources of Plutarch's Lives of Nicias and Lysander will save the student from the error, common enough, of attempting to prove that Plutarch followed a single line of composition in all his Lives. There is always a natural tendency on the part of scholars to assume that, when they have proved that a particular writer in the ancient world followed a certain method of composition in one of his works, the same method of composition was invariably followed in the other works of the same author. A theory of this type may hold good in the case of Nepos, the Roman biographer, who apparently made extensive, if not exclusive, use of the countless examples of biographical literature¹ of the Hellenistic Age for his Greek Lives, rarely, if ever, having recourse for himself to Thucydides, Xenophon,² Plato, Theopompus, Timaeus, Silenus or Sosylus, although he quotes them. But it would be foolish to assume that the

¹ of. Nepos, Epam., IV, 6; here, of course, Nepos is referring to ' scriptores ' of every kind.

² Although Nepos expresses his admiration for the Xenophontic Life of Agesilaus (Nepos, Ages., I), he probably did not use it directly, and it is perhaps an exaggeration to claim that he modelled his Life of Atticus upon the Agesilaus of Xenophon.

gifted and versatile Plutarch either adopted the methods of his Latin predecessor, or, having adopted one method in one biography, proceeded to follow in slavish manner the same method in all his biographies.

The theory of Eduard Meyer¹, adopted and developed by Uxkull-Gyllenband², that Plutarch rarely made use of primary historical authorities for his biographies, but was indebted to Hellenistic biographers whose works have not survived, may in certain circumstances and for certain Lives be accepted as true. But it is, of course, wrong to assume that because one can prove the use of one Hellenistic biographer in one Life that such a theory is an all-inclusive one. It is certain that Plutarch was not a mere copyist, tied to a single and probably inaccurate authority.

On the other hand, the older theory - that for each separate Life he made extensive use of all the books available in his limited library at Chaeronea, of the deficiencies of which he himself bitterly complains³ - is probably to impute to Plutarch a modern method of scientific research⁴ with which he was quite unfamiliar and which he would find quite useless

¹ Forschungen zur alten Geschichte, II, pp 1 ff., 1899

² Plutarch und die griechische Biographie, Stuttgart, 1927

³ Demosthenes, II, 1: De EI apud Delphos, 1.

⁴ cf. H.A.Holden, Plutarch's Life of Nicias, Cambridge, 1887;
N.J.Barbu, les biographies de Plutarque, Strass., 1933;
A.W.Gomme, Historical Commentary on Thucydides, p. 81, Vol.,1:
" Plutarch is far too individual a writer, and too good an artist, ever to have copied a single author for a Life ".

for his purpose. The employment of primary authorities side by side was a method rarely used even by historians in the ancient world. If Plutarch had professed to be a historian (which he certainly did not, himself disavowing the " collecting of useless materials of research " ¹), he would no more have adopted a scientific method in his collection of facts for his Lives than his contemporaries or predecessors did. With but few exceptions history was not treated by classical writers as an end in itself, an attempt to understand the past and the present, and thereby prognosticate the future, by a scientific investigation of the facts. After the remarkable experiment of Thucydides, whose standards proved too exacting for his successors, history rapidly became what Cicero calls a " branch of the art of rhetoric " ², and ancient historians principally aimed at some form of moral instruction or entertainment, whether self-entertainment by displaying their literary powers, or public entertainment by denunciation or eulogy or the transmission of interesting or scandalous anecdotes. " Duris of Samos ", says W. W. Tarn, ³ " aimed at making history interesting by dramatising characters and motives, and by using the accessories of the theatre ". Duris was no exception to any rule, and although

¹ Nicias, 1, 5: cf. also, Alexander, 1, 2.

² " Opus unum oratorium maxime ", Cicero, De Leg., 1, 2, 5.

³ Tarn & Griffith, Hellenistic Civilization, 3rd Ed., 1952, p. 283: *ἐπιτραγῶσαι*, says Plutarch, Pericles, XXVIII, 2.

his methods may have been novel, the general principles along which he worked must be assumed to have actuated that great succession of writers of history from the days of Xenophon to the times of Tacitus.

In his introduction to the Life of Alexander¹, Plutarch tells us that he is not out to emulate the historian. His Lives are short ethical sketches of the characters of the great men of the Greeks and the Romans. They are the complement of his Moral Works - what we today would call 'psychological sketches', written for the moral enlightenment of the reader. Moral enlightenment, then, is the purpose which constantly animated the great biographer; this is the real secret of his biography. He is writing to instruct his readers, to inform them, to give them examples and warnings from the past which may enable them to 'abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good'. His central interest was in helping people to lead good lives, for he lived in an age when the urgent need for a moral culture and reform of character, for a guiding force in conduct, was profoundly felt by all great serious minds. This need for moral reform one can detect in many of the writers of the Flavian period, in Quintilian, in Tacitus² and in Juvenal. Even Curtius³ throughout his account of India is constantly harping upon the vices and luxury of its inhabitants. Hardly a page of

¹ Alexander, 1, 2: οὐτε γὰρ ἱστορίας γράφωμεν, ἀλλὰ βίους.....

² Germania, XLIX, 3: " Nemo enim illic vitia ridet, nec corrumpere et corrumpi saeculum vocatur ".

³ cf., VIII, 9, 19; VIII, 9, 23 & 29.

the Elder Pliny's ' Natural History ', as scientific a work as the age can show, is without its moralising. But Plutarch probably felt this need for moral reform even more acutely than his contemporaries, and he tried to satisfy it in his Lives as well as in his Moralia.

" It was for the sake of others, " he reminds his readers,² " that I first commenced writing biographies, but I find myself proceeding and attaching myself to it for my own - the virtues of these great men serving me as a sort of looking-glass in which I may see how to adjust and adorn my own life..... and select from their actions all that is noblest and worthiest to know What more effective means to one's moral improvement ? " Again, he writes,³ " Virtuous action straightway so disposes a man that he no sooner admires the works of virtue than he strives to emulate those who wrought them For such reasons I have decided to persevere in my writing of Lives ".

It seems obvious that Plutarch's aim was not to describe in full a man's career nor to give him a place in history, not to deal with the great movements of history or the possible effects of a man's deeds upon subsequent events; for that is the task of the historian.⁴ As his principal interest was character and moral conduct, he was solely concerned with a man's deeds as they showed up his character,⁵ and he depicted character with

¹ cf. XlIII, 3, 25; XVll, 24, 220. ² Aemilius, 1, 1

³ Pericles, ll, 4 - 5

⁴ Fabius, XVl, 6: οἱ τὰς διεξοδικὰς γράψαντες ἱστορίας.

⁵ cf., Demosthenes, XI, 7: τὸ ἥθος ἀπὸ τῶν πράξεων; Cato Maior, VII, 3; Pompey, VIII, 7: μάλιστα δηλοῦνται τὸ ἥθος ἔργων; Galba, ll, 1: τὰ γὰρ οὖν καθ' ἕκαστα τῶν γενομένων ἀπαγγέλλειν ἀκριβῶς τῆς πραγματικῆς ἱστορίας, ἔστιν.

an ultimate ethical object, that his readers, and he himself also, might find the examples of great figures of the past an incentive to live and act well themselves. It would be wrong to suggest that Plutarch was unique in this disclosing an affinity between ethics and biography, for throughout the centuries biographers have conceived it a " proper part of their function to attach to the life of a good man the value of a lesson in human conduct. This moralistic and edificatory purpose is discernible in Nepos, Plutarch and in the countless lives of the Christian saints " .¹

Now the very fact that Plutarch's Lives are moral sketches makes the research into their sources both interesting and at the same time most difficult. For each separate Life places before its author, when he is thinking in terms of available authorities, a double question - ' Who is likely to be my best, that is, most suitable authority ? ', and ' Shall I be able here in Chaeronea to lay my hand upon such an authority ? ' Therefore, Plutarch's choice of authorities must have been dictated partly by the limitations of his library, but to a much greater extent by his conception of the function of biography. The modern biographer will be anxious to consult the earliest and most authoritative work. Plutarch may not have had such a work available;² and even if he

¹ D.R.Stuart, Epochs of Greek and Roman Biography, U.S.A., 1928, p. 121.

² This is unlikely, for he probably exaggerated the deficiencies of his library, and would almost certainly have copies of Herodotus, Thucydides, Ephorus, Theopompus and such standard historians, as well as an abundant supply of philosophical and peripatetic works.

had available the earliest and most authoritative work, he would not necessarily make use of it, unless it fulfilled the ethical and biographical requirements which we must assume that he laid down for himself. One example will suffice, which is most relevant to our study of the Life of Nicias. One might imagine today that Thucydides would be the best authority for a biography of Nicias. But we cannot feel at all certain that Plutarch would share our modern partiality for the great scientific historian of the Peloponnesian War. On the contrary, it is most likely that Plutarch would be unwilling to use Thucydides at first hand, for the following reasons. In the first place, even for the Greek Plutarch Thucydides was a most difficult author to read. Again, Thucydides did not supply the necessary information for a biography of Nicias in the convenient form or on the convenient scale which Plutarch required. The scientific historian who has captured the imagination and won the respect of modern scholars,¹ was singularly lacking in those anecdotes of human and personal interest which would make an appeal to a writer of Plutarch's nature and avowed intention; for Thucydides - despite his keen sense of personality² shown in his long excursus on Themistocles and Pausanias the First, and his short appreciations of Pericles, Nicias, Cleon, Alcibiades and Brasidas - rigorously

¹ Cicero and his contemporaries preferred to use Theopompus and Ephorus for Greek history, rather than Xenophon or Thucydides.

² cf. A.W.Gomme, Historical Commentary on Thucydides, Vol. 1, Oxford, 1945, p. 26

excluded from his work all biographical detail as being irrelevant and unimportant in the midst of great political events. Again, what would be the point of Plutarch scouring Thucydides for his information about the facts of history if such facts were conveniently summarised by some other author, who - to the uncritical biographer - was a more suitable authority? As will be noted later in greater detail, if Plutarch did indeed use Thucydides at first hand for the historical facts relevant to a life of Nicias, then one chapter alone of the Life of Nicias would have required a most careful examination of almost four books of Thucydides for historical data which are most briefly summarised by Plutarch.

This is not to suggest that Plutarch was not a careful and scholarly writer. But we must not expect the historical method to be adopted for the writing of character studies, whose purpose is ethical. Plutarch would naturally consult those writers - historians, philosophers and biographers - who offered him the sort of material, the interesting comparisons, the racy anecdotes, the unusual and surprising stories, which would enable him to appreciate the *τρόποι* and *ῥῆσες* of his characters. For he is constantly reminding his readers that " it is not necessarily in the famous action that a man's excellence or failure is revealed. But some little thing - a word or a jest - may often show character better than a battle with its ten thousand

¹ Plutarch, Nicias, VI, would imply a careful selection of facts from Thucydides I, 63 to IV, 133.

slain ".

The Lives of Plutarch are ' Bioi ' in the Peripatetic sense, in which the man is the main interest, " his being, not his deeds ", as Wilamowitz² says; and therefore Plutarch supplied Shakespeare with character as well as the 'stoff' of tragedy. When occasion demanded, the biographer would be bound to use the information which he could find readyⁱⁱ available in the Hellenistic biographers. But if he found this information scant, or superficial, or scandalously at variance with the more standard, if prosaic, historical accounts, it is not unreasonable to assume that he would supplement his primary Hellenistic authority with, and correct it by reference to, an historian. On the other hand, he may at times have been able to find all that he wanted for a particular Life in a Fifth or Fourth Century writer, whose work was at hand for him.

In his Lives Plutarch quotes no less than two hundred and fifty authors, of whom about eighty are historians known to us only by their names or fragments.³ Ion of Chios and Stesimbrotus of Thasos rub shoulders with Phanodemus the ATThidographer and Callisthenes the historian; on one page we find Pasiphon of Eretria and Demetrius of Phalerum, Idomeneus of Lampsacus and Aratus of Sicyon; on another we are given

¹ Alexander, 1, 2

² U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, die griechische Literatur, 3rd Ed., 1924, p. 242

³ cf. K. Ziegler, Plutarchos von Chaironeia, Stuttgart, 1949, pp 273 - 288

quotations from Craterus or Phantias, Antisthenes or Aristoxenus, Neanthes or Phylarchus, Charon of Lampsacus or Duris of Samos; and it is never hard to find in the Lives the names of Plato the philosopher and Plato the comedian, Theopompus Historicus and Theopompus Comicus, Dicaearchus and Philochorus, Theophrastus and Ephorus. It would be stupid to assume that Plutarch had available or had read all these authorities, but surely it is equally stupid to deny him the use at first hand of some of these authors ?

Of course, it is not possible to date with accuracy the composition of the Lives, nor to say definitely whether or not they followed the composition of the Moral Works. But - so far as can be judged - the Lives were composed towards the end of Plutarch's own life, possibly during his last five years.¹ They were certainly written at Chaeronea,² and were no doubt the result of much earlier study and of notes made perhaps during his stay in Rome, when much greater library facilities were available to him, for Plutarch must have had in mind for many years the compilation of Parallel Lives. We know that he collected and arranged anecdotes for his Moral Works,³ and we may assume him to have done the same for his Lives. Thus, despite

¹ cf., Sulla, XXI, 5, where Plutarch refers to the battle of Orchomenus (85 B.C.) as having taken place about two hundred years before he was writing; the Life of Sulla, at any rate, must have been written shortly before 115 A.D.

² Demosthenes, II, 2

³ cf. De Cohib. Ira, LX, 457 D; De Tranq., 1, 464 F.

the absence of books available for such a purpose in his small home town, and despite also the lack of leisure in Chaeronea for reading during his later years,¹ he was familiar by means of the notes of a life-time's study, and to a much lesser extent through his memory,² with the authorities whom he would choose to employ.

Plutarch shows little desire, and probably had little ability, to assess the value of his authorities. This does not mean that he does not often criticise the works from which he quotes, or express his scepticism at the findings of some of his sources. Many of his Lives are made the more interesting for the modern reader by the incidental criticism which is directed against the little-known authorities to whom Plutarch is indebted. For he is quite prepared to criticise Theopompus³ or Timaeus⁴, Duris of Samos⁵ or Andocides⁶, Idomeneus of Lampsacus,⁷ Craterus,⁸ Daimachus,⁹ Phylarchus¹⁰ and many other writers; and we are left to wonder whether such criticism is his own or whether he found it in the sources which may have quoted many of his authorities, and to suspect that his reasons for criticism are not that he has found an unreliable authority, but rather that his authority disagrees with a preconceived idea of Plutarch's.

¹cf. Praec. Rei. Ger., XV & XVII; An Seni Ger., IV; Sympos., II, 10, 1: V, 2, 3: VI, 8, 1.

²cf. Demosthenes, XXXI, 7: ἐξ ἂν ἡραὶ ἀργυρώκαμεν ἢ διακονήκαμεν.
& Pericles, XXIV, 12: τῶντα μὲν ἐπιθέματα τῆ βίῃ.

³Lysander, XXX ⁴Nicias, 1 ⁵Pericles, XXVIII: Alcib., XXXII: Demosthenes, XXIII
⁶Themis., XXXII ⁷Pericles, X: Demosthenes, XV & XXIII
⁸Aristides, XXVI ⁹Lysander, XII ¹⁰Themistocles, XXXII

At times he is fair enough to allow his readers to decide for themselves which particular version of an incident they will accept.¹ Yet he puts good and bad authorities together without any attempt at discrimination,² and quotes with as much assurance from writers of little importance and third hand authorities as he does from trustworthy or contemporary sources. Even when he rejects the authority of a particular writer, it is not because he has adopted the modern, scientific method of refusing the late and worthless source for the ultimate and trustworthy authority; rather is it because he prefers to make use of a source which may offer him the sort of material which he will find useful for his biography or which is consistent with his own preconceived picture of his hero or villain. Two good examples of this sort of preference shown by Plutarch are found in his Life of Pericles. He criticises Idomeneus of Lampsacus³ for accusing Pericles of arranging the assassination of Ephialtes, and rejects his authority, not because Idomeneus is a late and quite unreliable writer for the period of Pericles, but merely because his accusation is inconsistent with Plutarch's own estimate of the noble character of Pericles. Again, Plutarch

¹ cf. Nicias, XXVIII, 5; Demosthenes, XV, 6: ταῦτι μὲν ἂν ἕτεροι διακρινέσθαι γάλλον.

² cf. Pericles, XXVIII, 2, where Ephorus is ranged side by side with Thucydides; Nicias, XLIX, 6, where Philistus, the 'eye-witness', is an even more valuable authority than Thucydides. cf. also, Themis, XXVII, 1, and Alexander, XLVI, 1 - 2: Ἐταῦθα δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀφικέσθαι τὴν Ἀραξὸν οἱ πολλοὶ λέγουσι, ἔν τε καὶ κλειτάρχος ἔστι καὶ Πολύμαχος καὶ Ὀργεῖκρατος καὶ Ἀντιγόνης καὶ Ἴστρος κ.τ.λ.

³ Pericles, X, 7

refuses to accept the evidence of Stesimbrotus of Thasos,¹ albeit a contemporary, solely because it does not agree with Plutarch's own conception of Pericles. It is quite false to suggest that Plutarch always preferred to use the earliest writers or the most scholarly writers or the most standard writers; and to suggest that is to impute to Plutarch modern methods of scholarship with which he was quite unfamiliar.² For in Plutarch's opinion apparently the Athenian comic poets³ were as authoritative in their estimate of character and in their recording of facts as were philosophical writers or historians. He was prepared to accept the statements of political pamphleteers or of political comedy at their face value, and to place them parallel with the words of Thucydides, probably because he failed to understand the real nature of Athenian political comedy.

Now it seems a priori obvious that Plutarch will be more interested in the writings and writers of the Fourth and Third Centuries B.C., than in those of the Fifth Century. "It is generally recognised," says C. N. Cochrane,⁴ "that the scientific outlook on the world, characteristic of the Fifth Century, B.C.,

¹ Pericles, XLIII, 16

² J. Carcopino falls into this trap (*L'ostracisme Athénien*, 2nd Ed., Paris, 1935, p. 220): " Le discours du pseudo-Andocide est la plus ancienne des sources auxquelles Plutarque soit remonté dans la question du dernier ostracisme: elle est plus ancienne que Théophraste - plus ancienne que Théopompe et Ephore. Voilà pourquoi Plutarque a abandonné la version d' Ephore et de Théopompe, qu'il avait transcrite dans la vie de Nicias, pour suivre, dans la vie d'Alcibiade, celle que nous a conservée le pseudo-Andocide..."

³ cf. Pericles, XLIV, 9-10:XXX, 4; Nic., IV, 4-8:VIII, 3-4; Alcib., I, 4-8: XLIII, 2-9: XVI, 2-3: XX, 6-7.

⁴ *Thucy. & the Science of History*, Oxford, 1929, p. 138

was confronted with, and all but overwhelmed by, a powerful philosophic impulse equally characteristic of the Fourth ". This impulse was not without its influence upon historians, dramatists, writers of ' belles lettres ', and literary dilettanti of all sorts. At the same time, the vast disturbances which followed the breakdown of the Greek city-states and the unification and Hellenisation of the Greek world under Alexander the Great and his successors, turned the attention of writers either to partial narratives, local histories and the biographies of individuals, or else - under the influence of Isocrates - to cumbersome universal histories or ambitious and imaginative works. Just as the earlier historians, Herodotus and Thucydides, were mainly preoccupied with the doings and destinies of political communities, and were therefore comparatively indifferent to those of individuals, so the writers of the Fourth Century B.C. and later began to connect great events and achievements with the names of individuals; personal character and the motives of the actions of individuals were the objects of their interest and their study.

It is quite wrong to assume that biography of individuals is never to be found before the beginning of the Fourth Century; but it is nevertheless true that the writers of the Fourth and Third Centuries B.C., under the influence of rhetoric and philosophy, rediscovered the individual and extracted him from the midst of great political events.

Plutarch himself confesses that he is more attracted to an authority who is both *ἱστορικὸς* and *φιλόσοφος*¹; and, from what we can judge of Plutarch's own character, such a choice of authority is natural. For his object was, as Holden² expresses it, "not to ascertain historical truth in the interest of science, but to represent a picture of human virtue in the interest of ethical philosophy". As Plutarch was a 'believer', living at a time when the faith of his fathers was shaken to its very roots, when long-cherished standards were being abandoned, and when doubt and immorality were rampant, he must have lent a readier ear to those writers who attempted to assess history in terms of religion - or, at least, in terms of philosophy; and all historians who tried to use history as a warning and an example for the good life would gain his sympathetic ear and pen. It is noteworthy that often enough his authorities are philosophers rather than historians, and their works moral or philosophical essays, rather than political or historical treatises.³

But this is not to assume that Plutarch is almost entirely indebted to late and worthless sources⁴. Tarn is far too severe when, after tracing the development of rhetoric's insidious

¹ Lysander, XXV, 5

² Plutarch's Life of Nicias, Camb., 1887, Intro., p. XXXVllll.

³ A good example of this is found in the Aristides (1), where Demetrius of Phalerum, the philosopher Panaetius, and Idomeneus of Lampsacus, friend of Epicurus, are quoted one after the other to argue the wealth of Aristides; cf. also, Alexander, XLVI, 1.

⁴ In any case, he is probably referring to Ephorus or Theophrastus in the Lysander, XXV, 5.

influence upon the writing of history, he concludes by saying that, in the footsteps of the Hellenistic biographers, Satyrus, Hermippus and the rest, " Alexandria piled up masses of biographical material, but so uncritically that when later Plutarch took the material and from it produced great works of art, truth and falsehood had become hopelessly fused ".¹ Such a statement of Tarn must, of course, be based upon Eduard Meyer's assumption that Plutarch almost invariably used Hellenistic biographers as the basis for his Lives. To make a detailed examination of this theory lies outside the scope of this thesis, but it is necessary to recapitulate the main points of the argument.

Both Uxkull-Gyllenband² and Barbu³ are certainly examining Plutarch along the right lines when they postulate a careful study of the historical and biographical sources which he used, before attempting to assign to his Lives a place in the history of ancient biography. But both, one feels, overemphasise their own particular theory to the exclusion of any other. Uxkull-Gyllenband, from a study of the three Lives of Themistocles, Aristides and Cimon, assumes that Plutarch invariably drew upon the works of Hellenistic biographers of the Second and First Centuries B.C., who, inspired by the Scipionic circle, wrote in a simple, laudatory style factual accounts of the lives of great

¹ Hellenistic Civilization, 3rd Ed., 1952, p. 289
² Plutarch und die griech. Biog., Stuttgart, 1927, p. 110 et seq.
³ les biographies de Plutarque, Strass., 1934

men, which were based upon the works of Fourth Century writers. Such a theory is wildly speculative, for there is no evidence whatever even for the ~~the~~ existence of these ' Scipionic ' biographies.¹ On the other hand, in an almost fanatical attempt to prove false Meyer's general theory, Barbu denies outright the existence of political biography in the Hellenistic period, and paints - although not very convincingly - a picture of Plutarch as if he were a modern biographer, seriously applying himself to historical sources, and impartially examining variant traditions to arrive at a true estimate of the characters of his heroes.

The truth probably lies midway between these two writers. It is a pity that we know so little about the Hellenistic biographers of the Third Century, that " mendacissimum genus hominum ", as Dindorf described them. They were the natural heirs of the historians of the Fourth Century, who, tainted by rhetoric, " concluded that style was everything and substance nothing; what you said was immaterial, provided you said it according to rule and avoided hiatus ". Thus does Tarn² pass judgment upon the Isocratean historians, whose works unfortunately have not survived, so that our prejudice against them is probably inherited from writers like Polybius who had

¹ cf. the criticisms levied at this theory by Weizsäcker, *Unters. ü. Plutarchs Biog. Technik*, Berlin, 1931, p. 82; Barbu, *ibid.*, p. 28 et seq., ; Cary in *C.R.* XLIII, 1928, p. 30.

² *Hellenistic Civilization*, p. 281

very little good to say about any of their predecessors.

Isocrates himself was the great teacher who, directly or indirectly, was to have a profound influence upon the course of European prose for generations to come. His pupils, and the pupils of his pupils, Ephorus, Theopompus, Naucrates, Heracleides of Cyme, Theocritus of Chios, Cephisodorus, Daimachus of Plataea, Timaeus of Tauromenium, and many others, combined rhetoric with history and set the standard for the countless *λογογράφοι* who succeeded them. There was a strong ethical note in their writings, and an exaggerated emphasis in their style. Diodorus Siculus, who was almost entirely indebted to the Isocrateans, well expresses their point of view in his Preface to Book 1 - "History must be regarded as the guardian of the virtues of great men, as the witness to the wrongdoing of the wicked, and as the benefactress of the whole human race". Herein lies the weakness of these writers as historians, and their inevitable attractiveness to the Hellenistic biographers, and, of course, to Plutarch. The chief figures in their works were shining examples, painted in the most exaggerated colours, of what kings and generals and statesmen should be, or else awful warnings of that pride which is inevitably followed by a fall. From the times of Isocrates, "history was affected by a new passion for argument, for praise and blame, which had been foreign to earlier historians".²

Inevitably then these scions of the school of Isocrates influenced

¹cf. Cicero, De Orat., 11, 22, 94: "Isocrates magister rhetorum omnium, cuius e ludo, tamquam ex equo Troiano, meri principes exierunt".

²W. Jaeger, Paideia, Oxford, 1947, Vol. 111, p. 103

the Hellenistic writers, particularly the biographers, who were more likely to consult them as their authorities than Thucydides, or even Xenophon. The Peripatetic writers of the Third Century, heirs of Aristotle, abandoned philosophical research and devoted themselves to a presentation of ethics and history in a popular form. Biography was certainly not the only form which this presentation took, for the Peripatetics and their successors wrote treatises on all manner of subjects, historical sketches, dialogues, memoirs and the like. But it is with their biographical efforts that we are here concerned. From Aristoxenus of Tarentum, the " founder of literary biography ", to Hermippus of Smyrna, they poured out countless ' Bioi ', both factual and ethical, both of intellectuals (in whom they were naturally more interested) and also of men of action. There is, admittedly, less evidence of the latter, but certainly not no evidence, as Barbu would have us believe.

The *Bíoi Ἀριστοῦ* of Aristoxenus, that " longe doctissimus " ² of the Peripatetic biographers, was the precursor of a long list of Lives, notably those of writers and philosophers, by various members of the Peripatetic School.

¹ F. Leo, in *Gesch. der griech. Litt.*, ed. 6, II, 1, 71: quoted by D. R. Stuart, *Epochs of Greek and Roman Biography*, U.S.A., 1928, p. 130.

² Jerome, *De Vir. Illust.*, Prolog. ad Dext.; *Diog. Laert.*, 1, 11, 118; *F.H.G.*, II, 269 - 292.

Heracleides Ponticus, the Academic philosopher and writer, almost certainly produced biographical works¹, and apparently made use of dialogues of the Aristotelian form, for Cicero² says that in the 'De Re Publica' he too adopted the same method as Heracleides. Among his many works³, he may even have produced something on Pericles or the Athenian demagogues.⁴

Phaenias of Eresus, a pupil of Aristotle, who inherited the Peripatetic interest in literary and historical research, wrote what one can only term political biographies of Themistocles and the Tyrants of Sicily.⁵

Chamaeleon of Heraclea Pontica, a fellow-countryman of Heracleides and a friend of Theophrastus, in addition to a history of poetry, also apparently wrote a Life of Aeschylus.⁶

Among the later Peripatetics must be noticed the names of Duris of Samos, that historian of the novel methods, who also composed a work on painters, and Lives of Sophocles and Euripides;⁷ and Neanthes of Cyzicus, who as court historian wrote a history of Attalus the First,⁸ and whose work *περὶ ἑνδοξῶν ἄνδρῶν* dealt mainly with men of thought and literature.⁹

¹ cf: *περὶ τῶν τριῶν τετραβοποιῶν* , Diog. Laert., V, 88; F.H.G., 11, 197

² Ad Att., XIII, 19, 3

³ Plutarch calls him *ρυθμίστης καὶ πλοεργάτης* (Camillus, XXII, 3).

⁴ cf. Plutarch, Pericles, XXXV, 5; Diog. Laert. (V, 87) refers to a work, *περὶ τῆς ἑκκλήσεως* , and calls the writings of Heracleides *κάλυπτα καὶ ἄκριτα* .

⁵ F.H.G., 11, 293

⁶ Fr. in E.Köpke, 'De Cham. Heracl.', 1856

⁷ F.Gr.H., 11 A, 76

⁸ cf. Pausanias, 1, 6, 1.

⁹ F.H.G., 111, 2
F.Gr.H., 11, 84 & 171

There are two further names which are worthy of mention, those of Satyrus and Hermippus.

Satyrus of Callatis Pontica is most important, all the more so because his Life of Euripides, in dialogue form and mutilated condition, is the only extant Peripatetic biography which we possess.¹ In his great work, of *Bíoi*, or *Ἐπιγραφαὶ τῶν Βίων*, he seems to have dealt in a semi-popular manner with kings, statesmen, generals, orators, poets and philosophers. He is most frequently cited by Diogenes Laertius and Athenaeus, the latter giving at least a surface reference to a Life of Philip I. Although he was an uncritical and prolific writer, there is no need to assume with Barbu² that his works on men of action consisted merely of sensational anecdotes, recorded to pander to the low tastes of his readers.

Hermippus of Smyrna, a contemporary of Satyrus, was equally prolific.³ His work, 'On Magi', probably included sections devoted to lawgivers, sages, philosophers and orators, the 'Seven Wise Men', Lycurgus, Solon, Pythagoras and the like. He may also have written a Life of Euripides, for in the anonymous 'Vita Euripidis' he is cited as an authority for the story that Dionysius of Syracuse paid a talent for the poet's lyre and writing implements after his death. He was certainly versatile and seems to have written on celebrated men in all walks of life.

¹ F.H.G., III, 159 - 166; A.S.Hunt, P. Oxyr., IX, 1912, 1176.

² Barbu, Ibid. pp. 25 - 26.

³ F.H.G., III, 35 - 54.

Such a scant survey of the biographical works of the Peripatetics leaves us with the impression that political biographies may indeed have been written in Hellenistic times. Both Barbu and Uxkull-Gyllenband, from quite inadequate evidence, deny this - the former,² outright; the latter,³ by claiming that only the lives of intellectuals were composed by the Peripatetics, political biographies being the work of much later writers in the time of the Younger Scipio.

Plutarch was obviously familiar with these Hellenistic biographers,⁴ and had considerable knowledge of, and familiarity with, the works of the Fourth Century historians. But it is difficult to assume that he invariably preferred the biographers. Even the anecdote about the works of Euripides, quoted in the Life of Nicias,⁵ which we now find in the fragments of Satyrus' Life of Euripides, is no evidence that Plutarch made direct use of Satyrus, for Satyrus himself may have been indebted for the anecdote to

¹ Omitting such names as those of Dicaearchus of Messene, that 'great and prolific Peripatetic' (Cicero, De Offic., II, 16), F.H.G., II, 225 ff., F.Wehrli, Die Schule des Aristoteles, I, Basel, 1944; Demetrius of Phalerum, F.Gr.H., II B, 228, F.Wehrli, Ibid. IV, 1949, W.S.Ferguson, Hellenistic Athens, London, 1911, pp. 38-65; Clearchus of Soli, F.H.G., II, 302, F.Wehrli, Ibid., III, 1948; Hieronymus of Rhodes, fr. listed in PW, VIII, 1561; Sotion of Alexandria, fr. listed in PW, III A, 1235; Antigonus of Carystus, fr. under Wilam. Moellen., A.v. Kar., Berlin, 1881; and even Epicurus' friend, Idomeneus of Lampsacus, whose work on the Athenian demagogues must have dealt with political figures in at least as much length as the Digression on Demagogues in the Tenth Book of Theopompus' Philippica, F.H.G., II, 489-494,

² Barbu, Ibid. pp. 20 ff. ³ Uxkull-Gyllenband, Ibid. pp.109 ff.

⁴ cf. Barbu, Ibid. pp. 47-71; Paton, G.R., XXVII, 1913, pp. 131-2, quotes two examples of close verbal reminiscences between Satyrus' Life of Euripides and Plutarch's De Adul. et Am., 68 B, and Conjug. Prae., 141 B.

⁵ xxix, 3-4.

Timaeus, who seems to have been Plutarch's principal source for the latter half of the Life of Nicias. It is probably true to say that Plutarch himself varied his method and changed his approach for each separate Life. Sometimes we may assume that he used secondary biographies. Thus, the Life of Solon may be based on Hermippus, who was himself making use of the 'Atthis' of Androtion, as is suggested by E. H. Walker.¹ Similarly, the Life of Pericles may be of Peripatetic extraction, based ultimately on Stesimbrotus. It has been demonstrated by R. E. Smith² that the basis of the three Roman Lives, Titus, Paullus and Cato Maior, is in all cases a biographical work. But this, of course, is not surprising in the case of Plutarch's Roman Lives; for Plutarch's Latin was so poor,³ & his knowledge of Latin literature so very meagre, that he would be forced to accept the most easy and straightforward authority.⁴

Sometimes Plutarch must have reverted to historical writers, when their anecdotal style appealed to him and they supplied him with what he wanted in the way of illustrations of character. This may be true of the Life of Pelopidas, which was apparently based upon Callisthenes, a Fourth Century historian;⁵

¹ New Chapters in the Hist. of Greek Lit., Series 1, Oxford, 1921, 'Ath. Pol.', p. 141.

² C.Q., XXXIV, 1940, pp. 1 - 10.

³ Demosthenes, II, 1.

⁴ Although there were many histories of Rome written in Greek, not nearly as much had been written about great Romans as about great Greeks. Apparently, when he was forced to do so, P. even made use of Nepos (cf. Marcellus, XXX, 5; XXXI, 8; Lucullus, XLIII, 2).

⁵ cf. H.D. Westlake, C.Q., XXXIII, 1939, pp. 11 - 22.

and is hardly open to doubt in the case of the Life of Eumenes, in which he is making use of Hieronymus of Cardia's great work.¹ Similarly, in his Lives of Agis and Cleomenes he may be entirely indebted to Phylarchus, who continued Duris of Samos' History to the death of Cleomenes.

Sometimes, in the same Life, he supplemented his principal authority with material from a secondary source, as seems likely in his Life of Lysander, where his principal narrative source, an historian, seems to be supplemented with a great deal of material culled from a biographical source. It is perhaps true that the Life of Timoleon was based by Plutarch upon a biography (itself considerably indebted to Timaeus), and then supplemented with reference to the Sicilian History of Timaeus.²

On occasions, as seems probable in the Life of Nicias, he drew his material from two historians, taking up the second where the first ceased to be of value.

But as Plutarch was not, like Diodorus, a mere copyist, the task of identifying his sources is no easy one; and such a task becomes infinitely more complicated when one remembers that ancient writers had no sense of plagiarism, but freely pillaged the works of their predecessors, without giving credit to those to whom they might have been indebted for much of their material. We cannot assume that because Plutarch makes reference to a

¹ cf. W.W.Tarn & G.T.Griffith, Hellenistic Civilization, p. 283

² cf. H.D.Westlake, C.Q., XXXII, 1938, pp. 65-74

specified writer, he either possessed a copy of the works of such an author, or even had access to them. It is not very easy to take seriously the comment of A. W. Gomme, " when Plutarch says in the introduction of the Nicias that he will touch but lightly on events that have already been described by Thucydides and Philistus, that means, in an honest man, that he has read them both " . For this is, surely, to impute to the great biographer a moral sense wholly unknown to, and unappreciated by, classical writers, and solely characteristic of modern methods of scholarship. The phrase ' Philistus says ', or ' as Thucydides writes ', or ' Heracleides Ponticus refutes this allegation ', probably means no more than that Plutarch's authority, basing his account upon that of Philistus or Thucydides or Heracleides, quotes them to prove a point. In the same way, citations from the Athenian comic poets² do not prove, and may not even imply, that Plutarch was familiar in detail with all the works of Cratinus, Aristophanes, Eupolis, Pherecydes, Ameipsias, Plato Comicus and the like. Indeed, we have some slight evidence in his Life of Nicias³ that he had not read some of the Comedies from the lines of which he quotes. A suitable line of Eupolis, quoted perhaps by Theopompus in his

¹ A.W.Gomme, Ibid. Vol. 1, p. 75

² And they are legion; cf. Lives of Cimon, Pericles, Alcibiades and Nicias.

³ Chapters IV & VIII; these points will be brought out later in detail.

Digression on Demagogues (and the Theopompan anecdote and citation repeated verbatim by Idomeneus of Lampsacus in his work on the Athenian demagogues, and so incorporated later into a Hellenistic biography) would naturally appeal to Plutarch if he found it quoted by his authority, whoever that authority might be.

But, however difficult the task may be of resolving these sources, it is one which is full of interest and never fails to pay the student, as it leaves him amazed at the skill and dexterity with which Plutarch wove together his available authorities, rounded off and polished (' abrundet ') his Lives, and left to posterity, not a patchwork (for there is rarely any sign of that), but a highly finished piece of composition, a work of art which can compare favourably with any of the greatest productions of the ancient world.

PART 11. PLUTARCH'S LIFE OF NICIAS.Section 1. The Sicilian Expedition.

The Nicias is, perhaps, a most representative biography; it does not deal with a character towards whom later writers took up any controversial attitude, as is bound to be found in such biographies as those of Themistocles, Pericles, Alcibiades, Lysander, Timoleon or Demosthenes. For of the goodness and religious zeal, and indeed political integrity, of Nicias there was little doubt in the ancient world, as there was no doubt about his timidity, superstition and lack of determination.

The tone of Plutarch's Life of Nicias is fair; weaknesses are balanced against virtues; allowance is made for human frailty, and speaking generally, while the weakness of character typical of Nicias inevitably leads to his final destruction, the man himself is depicted as struggling in vain to rise above an atmosphere which is too strong for him, and to battle against forces, external to himself, evil men and evil days, which in the end destroy both him and themselves. There is, in the Life, more condemnation of Cleon and the unruly Athenian mob, of Gylippus and the boastful Spartans, than there is of Nicias himself. This fact in itself is of the utmost importance for source criticism. Inevitably,

¹ cf. Plato, Laches; Aristotle, Constitution of Athens, XXVIII, 5; Lysias, On the Property of the Brother of Nicias, 149, 2 et seq.:
 πολλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν αἰτίων τῷ πόλει γεγενημένος.

Plutarch's final picture of Nicias will be greatly indebted to the conception of Nicias found in his sources; and one of the most interesting facts about the Life of Nicias is that there is not any real picture given of the personality of Nicias. The general impression made upon the student by the Life is of two sources, of different but not conflicting outlook, whose main interest lay not in Nicias himself (although they must have had very much to relate about him) but in those who came into contact with Nicias both in Athens and in Sicily; who were describing the Athens of Cleon and the Sicily of Hermocrates, and dealt with Nicias only in so far as he had dealings with, or controversy against, those in whom their real interest lay.

Again, the biography falls naturally and without any difficulty into two divisions, after the introductory chapter - the divisions being chapters II to XI, and chapters XII to XXX. It is significant that the bulk of the Life is concerned with the Sicilian Expedition of Athens, which is examined in very considerable detail and with not a few incidents related which are quite irrelevant to a life of Nicias. The style of these two divisions is quite different, as is the method of their composition. The first section is chatty, anecdotal, full of citations from comic poets, with an odd quotation or two thrown in from Homer, Euripides and Callimachus. It is Isocratean in the broadest sense of the word, with just the suspicion of an attempt to avoid hiatus; it is

¹ cf. chapters XIV, 6 - 7; XVlll, 3; XIX, 4 - 6; XXlll, 2 - 6; XXIV, 2
XXIV, 6 - XXV, 1; XXVll, 8 - 9; XXIX; XXX.

antipathetic towards the radical element in Athenian politics and at the same time somewhat cynical of human greatness. Nicias is but the foil to show up the villainy, buffoonery and "disgusting boldness" of Cleon and Hyperbolus, or the stupidity, greed and suspicions of the Athenian populace.

In the second section we immediately notice a difference. The style of the narrative is changed. It has now become more continuous - an historical narrative, in chronological order, with few, if any, citations from philosophers or comic poets, or even anecdotes about Nicias himself. It is unbroken and bears all the marks of a single authority. Being more critical¹ of Nicias than is the first section, it is quite definitely pro-Sicilian, giving an attractive portrait of the Syracusan statesman, Hermocrates, as it seeks to vilify the character and depreciate the achievements of the Spartan Gylippus², as if there might be some danger lest posterity should attach greater glory to the latter than to the former. Furthermore, this section of the Life leaves one with the impression that much of the description given is that of an eyewitness, or, at any rate, of one who was a Sicilian and had available Sicilian evidence, incorporating it into his account. Finally, it shows a degree of interest in omens³, superstitions and matters of religion which is singularly absent from chapters 11 - XI.

¹ except in chapter XLV, 1, where Nicias opposes the expedition to Sicily, and chapter XVII, 1-3, where the good generalship of Nicias is - albeit reluctantly - admitted.

² cf. chapters XIX, 4-6, and XXVIII, 3-4; on three occasions when Timaeus is cited by Plutarch as his authority it is to pass on anecdotes which reflect unfavourably on the character of Gylippus. This seems to be done to enhance the reputation of Hermocrates.

³ For omens etc. cf. chapters 1, 2-3; XIII; XLV, 7; XVI, 7; XVII, 4; XXI, 2; XXV¹; XXVI, 6

The second section of the Life of Nicias - chapters XII - XXX - will be examined first, for it is possible to name the authority to whom Plutarch was indebted for his material in this section with very much more certainty than one can give when examining the sources of the first section.

Many writers in the ancient world either wrote narratives of, or made reference to the fateful Athenian expedition to Sicily ; but the two main historical sources for the Expedition are Thucydides and Diodorus Siculus.² Not a few scholars, including Holden,³ Busolt,⁴ Barbü⁵ and Gomme,⁶ have maintained the view that Plutarch used his Thucydides at first hand for his account of Nicias' expedition to Sicily. Such a theory, attractive and reasonable though it may appear at first sight, is not tenable in the face of cumulative evidence. One cannot, of course, deny that Plutarch made use of Thucydides, for he directly mentions him in many places⁷ as his

¹Thucydides VI - VII, 87 ²Diodorus XII, 84 - XIII, 33

³Plutarch's Life of Nicias, Cambridge, 1887; Holden supports his arguments by a reference to the numerous occasions on which Plutarch in the Moralia is found quoting the actual words of Thucydides, bringing forward to support his theory the authority of earlier writers, like Heeren, De Plutarchi Fontibus, 1820, and Poppe, Thucydides, 1823. But it is interesting to note that, even as early as 1869, Collmann (De Diodori Sic. Fontibus, 1869) and W.Fricke (Untersuchungen über die Quellen Plutarchs im Nikias und Alkibiades, 1869) were questioning whether Plutarch did in fact use Thucydides at first hand.

⁴Gr. Gesch. III. ⁵... les biographies de Plutarque, 1934

⁶Historical Commentary on Thucydides, Vol. 1

⁷Nicias, chapters IV, 1; XLX, 6; XX, 8; XXVIII, 5.

authority, and quotes almost verbatim from him.¹ But what can be shown, and is almost indisputable, is that Plutarch used his Thucydides indirectly and through the medium of another historian, who was himself using Thucydides at first hand (together with other authorities) and quoting from him. Reference has already been made to the almost immoral way² - to judge by modern standards - in which Greeks and Romans made use of the works of their predecessors. The Greeks, as Tarn³ reminds us, had no feeling about plagiarism, and Athenaeus himself pillages Plutarch and Lucian, as Macrobius did Gellius. Hellenistic and Roman writers freely borrowed from their predecessors without often referring to their sources (though one can hardly accuse Athenaeus of this, for he usually gives his references) and were not averse to using quotations in other historians as if they themselves had read the original work from which the quotation might have been taken.

Therefore, one must not assume that Plutarch, extensive and careful reader though he was, had made a careful study of all the books from which he quotes. The fact that he quotes Thucydides

¹ Nicias, chapters IV, 1; VII, 3 & 6; IX, 3-4; X, 4; XIV, 3; XVI, 1; XXII, 1.

² To quote one example, it is obvious that Herodotus made use of Hecataeus (e.g. II, 70 - 73 et alia), even when he does not mention him by name. Diels (Hermes XXII, p. 429) has shown that such a treatment of one writer by another did not in antiquity imply any literary dishonesty.

³ " To copy out a predecessor was a compliment " - Tarn & Griffith, Hellenistic Civilisation, 3rd Edition, 1952, p. 293.

must not be taken as evidence that he had Thucydides before him as he wrote. These words " before him " are the important words, for it would be ridiculous to suggest that Plutarch neither had a copy of Thucydides, nor, if he had, ever consulted it. But the real point is that Plutarch was not writing history, but biography, and if he could make use of Thucydides' historical background epitomised by some later writer, who added to his narrative plenty of those anecdotes which are completely lacking in Thucydides, he would be content with such an authority. On other grounds also, which have been mentioned, it is not likely a priori that Plutarch would have direct recourse to Thucydides; but it is reasonable to assume that a Fourth Century historian, who was basing his historical account upon that of Thucydides, and drawing largely upon the latter's work, might offer the biographer just the material which he wanted in a convenient form.

Now the actual authorities quoted by name in the section XII - XXX (if we exclude the epitaph of Euripides in chapter XVII, 4, and the references to Philochorus and Autocleides in chapter XXI, 8 & 9) are TIMAEUS, who is mentioned twice in chapter XIX, 5, and twice in chapter XXVIII, 4 & 5: THUCYDIDES, who is quoted as an authority in chapters XIX, 6 and XX, 8, and - to contradict Timaeus - in chapter XXVIII, 5: and PHILISTUS, who is also quoted with Thucydides in chapters XIX, 6 and XXVIII, 5, in the latter chapter to contradict a statement which is claimed to be taken from Timaeus.

¹ It is not unlikely that Plutarch may have read Thucydides, and even Philistus, on the Sicilian Expedition at some time in his life, and yet have made use of neither for his Nicias.

These three authorities are discussed at length by Plutarch in the first chapter of the Life of Nicias, a most important chapter. But chapter I frankly tells us nothing of HOW Plutarch used his authorities, whether he employed them all side by side (which - to say the least - would be most unusual, quite contrary to the methods generally adopted by the biographer, and inconsistent with his avowed intention to refer briefly to facts and events of history and not to accumulate the " findings of much research " ¹), or whether he was basing this section of his Life upon one or, at most, two of the available authorities, and quoting from the other or others as he found them in his principal authority. Chapter I merely tells us that Plutarch intends to give the opinions and state the facts as these three historians have done - and that he is going to run over the facts briefly and with no unnecessary detail. But of this much we may be certain. The long criticism of Timaeus in chapter I can hardly have been borrowed from another writer, while Plutarch must have found in Timaeus some boastful assertions that his account would excel those of Thucydides and Philistus. For indeed such boastful criticism of his illustrious predecessors was typical of that historian who, in the words of Plutarch, " abused Plato and Aristotle " ², and according to the testimony of Polybius, ³ levied accusations at Theopompus, Ephorus, Theophrastus, Callisthenes and others.

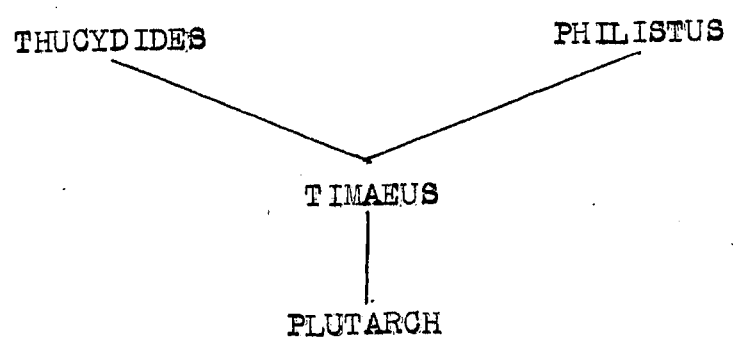
¹ Nicias 1, 5: οὐ τὴν ἀκρῆστον ἀπορίσσει ἱστορίαν : cf. Alex. 1, 2.

² Nicias 1, 4.

³ Polybius XII, 4 & 28

It may not even be fanciful to suggest that Plutarch's application of the epithet *ὀψιμαθής* to Timaeus¹ hoists with his own petard the critic who applied the term to Aristotle.²

Timaeus must have made extensive use of both Thucydides and Philistus for his History of Sicily. A careful examination of chapters XII to XXX of the Life of Nicias forces one to the conclusion that Plutarch used this work as his primary source. If then Plutarch is familiar with Thucydides and Philistus, and quotes from them, it may well be because his source Timaeus is quoting from them or making reference to them. Thus, a simple sketch of the framework upon which chapters XII - XXX are built would appear to be:



Was Timaeus (" ein Forscher und ein Darsteller ", as Wilamowitz³ calls him) the type of author to whom Plutarch would naturally have recourse ? Would the rhetorical historian offer the biographer those anecdotes which would further the appreciation of *Σκίθαις, ἡθός, γένος* ?

¹ Nicias I, 1.

² Polybius XII, 9

³ die griechische Literatur, 3rd Edition, 1924, p. 172.

Unfortunately for Timaeus, our principal knowledge of him must be derived from his great detractor, Polybius, who has no hesitation in accusing him - probably quite unjustly - of *ἐκείνιος ψευδογραφία*¹. This charge is carried on by Diodorus Siculus, who makes reference to his "wilful ignorance and falsification"².

Timaeus of Tauromenium (c. 356 - 260 B.C.), exiled for about fifty years from his native Sicily by the tyranny of Agathocles of Syracuse, lived in Athens, where, after learning rhetoric from a pupil of Isocrates, and having access to the works of earlier writers,³ he wrote a history of his own island in no little detail. Cicero⁴ bears witness both to his style and to his erudition, while Dionysius of Halicarnassus⁵ and Longinus⁶ make reference to his ability and learning. Even Polybius⁷, in the midst of censure, praises his inquiring mind and diligent habits of study. From his love of criticism (no doubt, a trait of the Isocrateans, of which Theopompus was also guilty⁸) he was called *Ἐπιτίμωνος* in the first instance by Istros of Alexandria, a not unattractive appellation which he could never lose.⁹ Polybius, who maintains that he

¹ Polybius XII, 7

² Diodorus XLIII, 90:

cf. also, Cicero, ad Div. IV, 24

³ Polybius XII, 25

⁴ Cicero, Brutus XCV: in the De Orat. II, 14, 58, he uses high praise and implies considerable superiority over Xenophon and Callisthenes - " Timaeus, quantum autem iudicare possum, longe eruditissimus, et rerum copia et sententiarum varietate abundantissimus, et ipsa compositione verborum non impolitus, magnam eloquentiam ad scribendum attulit, sed nullum usum forensem ".

⁵ Dion. Hal. II, 115, 25

⁶ Longinus IV, 1

⁷ Polybius XII, 26

⁸ cf. Grenfell & Hunt, Theop. fr. 27 & 247

⁹ Diodorus, V, 1; Strabo, 949 A; Athenaeus VI, 272 B

continues the History of Timaeus from 264 B.C., makes the most fantastic charges against him. His judgment was darkened by prejudice; he was obviously anxious to manifest that Sicily was more important than all the rest of Greece, " the events occurring in Sicily being so much more magnificent and more noble than those anywhere else in the world, the sagest of men distinguished for wisdom coming from Sicily, and the most capable and wonderful leaders being those from Syracuse²"; he copied Ephorus extensively³; he relied upon mastery of material alone, had a great ignorance of the places which he named and made frequent errors in his descriptions of battles⁴; his bias against Agathocles⁵ and his praise of Timoleon⁶ led him to the most exaggerated statements of fulsome flattery or unreasoning invective. But, for all this⁷, Timaeus was quite the sort of writer to appeal to Plutarch, who seems to quote him whenever he has occasion to deal with Sicilian history, and possibly made extensive use of him in his Lives of Dion and Timoleon⁸. Lengthy and voluminous recorder as he is⁹, he is excessively fond of anecdotes, of gossip (as Athenaeus bears witness), of quotations from poets, of the conventional administration of blame and praise, of comparisons and moralising, with an

¹ Polybius Xll, 7
⁴ Polybius Xll, 25

² Polybius Xll, 26
⁶ Polybius Xll, 23

³ Polybius Xll, 28
⁵ Polybius Vlll, 10

⁷ Polybius is certainly not always just, himself being overfond of criticism and levelling accusations at Phylarchus, Zeno, Antisthenes, Theopompus, Callisthenes and other writers whom he does not name.

⁸ cf. H.D. Westlake, G.Q. XXXll, 1938, pp 65 - 74

⁹ Suidas calls him " the old rag-woman " - γερασυλλεκτρία, διὰ τὸ τὰ τυχόντα ἀναγράφειν.

almost morbid interest in fables, marvels, omens, dreams, prodigies, superstitions and matters of religion.'

Not only can it be proved from a critical examination of chapters XII to XXX of the Life of Nicias that Timaeus is the primary source used by the biographer, but it may surely be possible to correct some of the more exaggerated criticisms of that historian made by Polybius, by demonstrating the fairness of the final portrait of Nicias which Plutarch was able to paint.

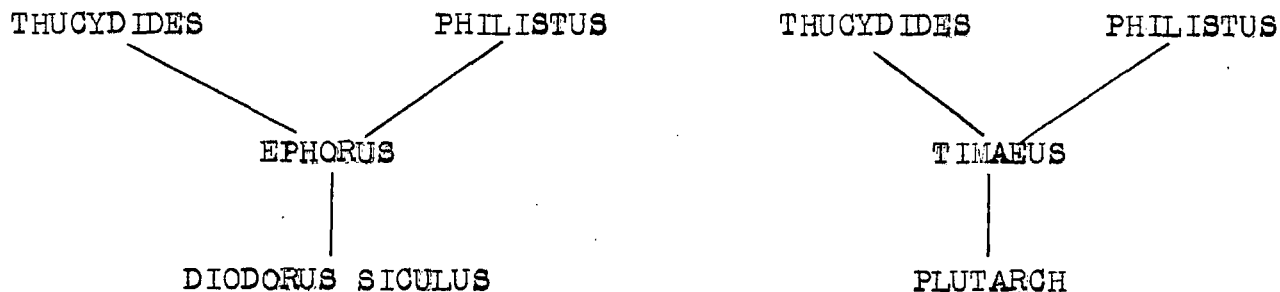
Now a comparison of the two accounts of the Sicilian Expedition given by Thucydides and Diodorus reveals a general similarity - a similarity so striking that it is impossible to resist the conclusion that either Diodorus made extensive use of Thucydides, or that Diodorus' source was basing his account upon that of Thucydides. The view generally accepted by scholars today is that Diodorus based his account of the Athenian expedition to Sicily upon that of Ephorus. Such is the opinion of G.L.Barber² and E.Schwartz³; and Barber also maintains that "Diodorus used Ephorus as an intermediary between himself and Philistus". Thus it seems likely that Ephorus, himself making use of Philistus and Thucydides, was slavishly copied by Diodorus; and the following simple framework of the sources of Diodorus XII, 84 - XIII, 33 may be compared with our assumed framework of the sources of the

¹ Polybius XII, 24: *ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἰδίαις ἀποφάσει ἑτυμῶν καὶ τεράτων καὶ μύθων ἐπιθάνων καὶ συλλήβδην Σεσιδαίμονος ἄγεννους καὶ τερατείαις γυναικώδους ἐστὶ πλήρης.*

² G.L.Barber, The Historian Ephorus, 1935, pp. 160-170.

³ Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, Real-Encyclopädie, sub "Diodorus" & "Ephorus"

Life of Nicias, chapters XII - XXX.



The use by Plutarch of Timaeus alone would thus account for:

- 1) Similarities between Thucydides, Diodorus and Plutarch:
- 2) Similarities between Diodorus and Plutarch in smaller details, which may be assumed to have come originally from Philistus and are therefore not found in Thucydides:
- 3) Additional facts given by Plutarch and found neither in Thucydides nor in Diodorus; these facts may either be culled from Philistus by Timaeus, and not passed on to Diodorus by Ephorus, or be the fruit of Timaeus' own research into matters which were of particular interest to him:
- 4) Apart from Plutarch's natural brevity, his use of Timaeus alone would account for the omission of certain few facts which are recorded by Thucydides and omitted by himself; he will not have found them in Timaeus, and as he was not using Thucydides at first hand, he could not include them in his account.
- 5) Finally, the use of one authority alone by Plutarch will explain, to a very great extent, the natural unity of the section, which certainly reads like the skilful synopsis of

historical narrative.

Those additional details given by Plutarch and found neither in Thucydides nor in Diodorus are of the greatest importance. As they lie outside Thucydides and Ephorus, they will give us the most certain clue to Plutarch's principal authority, and an examination of them seems to suggest that, without exception, they are taken from Timaeus' monumental History of Sicily.

The narrative proper of the Expedition to Sicily commences in chapter XLV. An examination will now be made of all the material peculiar to Plutarch within the chapters XLV - XXX, together with that material which is common to both Thucydides and Plutarch.

CHAPTER XLV

Nicias is here described as a man *χερστος και σωφρων* for having opposed the expedition to Sicily. These, we notice, are the only adjectives of praise applied to Nicias in the whole of the section, chapters XLV, - XXX;¹ and the praise is only applied to him for voting consistently against the sending of an expedition by Athens to the West. Timaeus, naturally enough, would be writing his history from a Sicilian viewpoint - the Athenians would be the enemy, and any opposition by an Athenian to an attack on Sicily would be counted to him for righteousness. It is obvious that we must expect a pro-Sicilian bias in the writings of Timaeus. Freedom from bias is well-nigh impossible even today in the writing of history, and Timaeus had a precedent set for him by his illustrious predecessor, Ephorus, who upon every conceivable occasion mentioned Gyne, the place of his birth, and attributed to Gyne the names of many of the great writers of the past. Not only in this chapter, but consistently throughout the whole of this section of the Life, the campaign is viewed through the eyes of the Syracusans.

While Plutarch gives a rather pathetic description of Nicias on board his ship,² he makes reference to the gradual diminishing of the fear and consternation with which the first sight of Nicias' forces had filled the Sicilians.³ Towards the end of the chapter⁴ he records the capture of a Syracusan ship, " with tablets

¹ although it must be admitted that both in chapter XVI, 3, & XVII, 3, credit is given to Nicias for acts of generalship, and for his near achievement of victory, despite his poor state of health.

² Nicias XLV, 2 *παιδος δίκην εἰς τῆς
νῆος ὀπίσω βλέποντα*

³ XLV, 4

⁴ XLV, 6-7

on board in which the Syracusans had recorded lists of their citizens by tribes ". This incident alarmed the Athenian soothsayers, who were disturbed lest this should be the only fulfilment of an oracle which had said that the Athenians should take all the Syracusans. " However, they say that in other circumstances this prophecy was fulfilled for the Athenians - at the time when Callippus the Athenian slew Dion and got possession of Syracuse. "

Now the introduction of an anecdote of this type would be most acceptable to a writer of the character of Timaeus, and quite consistent with that intimate detail about the conscription of Syracusan youths which he might find in Philistus, or with which he might himself be familiar. Furthermore, the reference to the ^{death of} Dion, which took place in 353 B.C. and was estimated to have fulfilled the oracle, could not have been recorded by Philistus who himself died three years earlier. It is most likely to have been recorded by Timaeus, to whom Dion was almost as dear as was Timoleon.

So much is peculiar to Plutarch. Paragraphs 3 & 4 a epitomise Thucydides (VI, 47 - 49); Plutarch's record of the proposals made by Lamachus and Alcibiades is identical with what is stated by Thucydides, if expressed briefly by Plutarch, but Plutarch puts the proposal of Lamachus before that of Alcibiades.

The description of the numbers of the ships and the proclamation by the Athenians to the people of Leontini² is very similar to the account of Thucydides (VI, 50), who gives greater

¹ cf. Plutarch, Dion, 54 - 57

² Nicias XIV, 5

detail.

CHAPTER XV

The whole of this chapter is peculiar to Plutarch, with the exception of the latter half of paragraph 3 and the first half of paragraph 4.

The chapter commences with a contrast between the impoverished Lamachus (so mean that he sent an account to the Athenian people for his boots and clothes) and the dignified and wealthy Nicias - a commonplace antithesis of a kind popular with all rhetoricians and rhetorical writers.

It is impossible, with any degree of certainty, to assign an authority to the following anecdote about Sophocles and the Council of war. Nicias may, as Holden suggests¹, have presided at a Council of war during the temporary absence of Pericles. It may even be that the original authority for the anecdote is Ion of Chios, the tragic poet of the mid-Fifth Century B.C., who wrote notes of the sayings and doings of prominent Athenians with whom he came into contact², even giving some of their physical traits³. We know that he wrote about Cimon, Pericles & Sophocles. Jacoby maintains that Plutarch drew largely upon Ion for his

¹ Holden, Plutarch's Life of Nicias, p. 99

² For his ὑπομνήματα cf. Athen. XIII, 603; schol. Arist. Peace 835; Pollux II, 88.

³ Plutarch's Cimon V, 3.

Life of Cimon,¹ though whether directly or indirectly he does not say; and we know from Athenaeus² that Ion met Sophocles in 440 B.C. in Chios, if not before at Athens.

But an interesting suggestion made by A.B. West³, if it is true, offers a Sicilian origin to this anecdote. West claims that " this episode is not at all appropriate where it stands in the midst of the story of the Sicilian expedition, and it would seem as though it had been taken from some Sicilian source and perhaps had been told originally of the other Sophocles who had tried to conquer the island nearly ten years before the fatal expedition. It would have been a simple matter for Plutarch ("Plutarch's authority ") to ascribe it to the poet. As this is the only intimation that the poet held the generalship during the Peloponnesian War, the authenticity of the story has been questioned. But applied to Sophocles the general, the story might very well be true. "

West's suggestion is, at least, a reasonable one ; we may have to blame Timaeus for a confusion of the two names.

The last sentence of the chapter⁴ gives us a most important clue and confirms for us the use of Timaeus by Plutarch in this biography. Both Thucydides and Diodorus mention that Nicias

¹G.O. XL1, 1947, 1 ff

²XIII, 603 E: " Ion says ἐν ταῖς Ἐπιδόρμιον that he met Sophocles in Chios "

³A.J.P., 1924.

⁴Nicias, XV, 4b: *ὅθεν λέγεται καὶ λαίβη τὴν ἑπαράν ἔτι κόρη ἐν τοῖς ἀρχαῖοις πρῶτον εἰς Πελοπόννησον κομισθῆναι.*

captured the fort of Hyccara, but Plutarch alone goes on to say that " Lais the courtesan was sold as a prisoner of war from this place, being still a girl, and brought into the Peloponnese ".

Plutarch here quotes no authority, but we know from Athenaeus' that this detail was to be found in the 13th Book of Timaeus' Histories. Athenaeus could not have copied this fact from Plutarch, since he names the book while Plutarch does not. This reference to the capture of Hyccara is repeated by Plutarch in his Life of Alcibiades²; and Pausanias³, who is perhaps indebted to Nicias for his information, also refers to Nicias' capture of Hyccara and the selling of Lais, though without reference to his authority.

Even the small portion of the chapter which is ultimately derived from Thucydides has some points of difference. Thucydides says that the Athenians, sailing along the coast of Sicily, captured Hyccara and enslaved its population; but, attacking the twon of Hybla, failed to win it, and thereby incurred the contempt of the Sicilians. Plutarch does not follow the Thucydidean order, for Thucydides places the capture of Hyccara first, and the attempt upon Hybla afterwards.⁴ Plutarch's description of Hybla as πολυχνίω κικρῶ is not found in Thucydides.

¹ X111, 589 A

² Alcibiades, XXXIX, 8

³ Pausanias II, 2 5

⁴ Thucydides VI, 62 - 63:

Ἐπειδὴ πρὸς τὴν Ὑβλαν ἐλθόντες καὶ παρέσαντες ἀχ εἶλον βίη, ἐν πλείον καταφρόνησαν (οἱ Συρακώσιοι).

CHAPTER XVI

This chapter appears to follow Thucydides closely, and almost the whole of the information here supplied is found in Thucydides.¹

The insulting challenge of the Syracusan cavalry is found in Thucydides.²

4 The trick played upon the Syracusans, though the agency of a man of Catana, to draw out their forces from the city, is given in greater detail by Thucydides.³ Plutarch, of course, ascribes this device to Nicias, Thucydides more generally to the Athenian generals. Plutarch omits the speech of Nicias before the battle,⁴ nor does he make mention of the thunder and rain during the battle.⁵

Plutarch and Thucydides⁶ agree that the Syracusan cavalry prevented the Athenians from pursuing the retreating enemy too far; but Plutarch alone goes on to say that Nicias "destroyed and cut down the bridges over the river, and thus gave Hermocrates opportunity to say to the Syracusans, as he encouraged them, that Nicias was foolish to make preparations for avoiding battle, for he had surely come for that purpose". This is not to be found in Hermocrates' speech in Thucydides.⁷

¹ V1, 63 - 77

² V1, 63

³ V1, 64 - 71; Diodorus XIII, 6, 2; cf. Polyænus 1, 40, 5

⁴ V1, 68

⁵ V1, 70

⁶ V1, 70

⁷ V1, 72

Plutarch says that Nicias did not slay many of the enemy;

Diodorus gives the Syracusan losses at 400, while Thucydides records 260 of the enemy slain, with the loss of 50 Athenians.

The comment of Plutarch (XVI, 3) that the successful engagement outside Syracuse was the " best generalship that Nicias displayed in Sicily ", is peculiar to Plutarch.

The election by the Syracusans of three generals with independent powers, instead of fifteen, is also found in Thucydides, who ascribes it to Hermocrates.¹

Thucydides refers² to a Syracusan guard sent to the Olympieum to protect the treasures there; but Plutarch is at pains to point out that Nicias deliberately delayed attacking the place through fear lest his own soldiers should be guilty of sacrilege and he himself be held responsible.

Plutarch and Thucydides³ agree that the Syracusans burnt the Athenian camp at Catana when the Athenian armament had moved away from the place.

Plutarch concludes his chapter with a moralising criticism of Nicias for his hesitation and caution, and a contrast between the Nicias in counsel and the Nicias in action.

¹ VI, 72

² VI, 70

³ VI, 75

CHAPTER XVII

This chapter, which contains some moderate praise for the generalship of Nicias, and allowance made for his illness, is very similar to Thucydides¹ and, to a lesser extent, to Diodorus.²

The speed of Nicias's approach from Naxos, his putting-in at Thapsus, the capture of Epipolæ, the slaughter of 300 of the enemy and the routing of their cavalry, are all found in Thucydides.

3 The building of a wall around Syracuse, the illness of Nicias and the unfinished state of the wall, are a very brief resumé of Thucydides³, who, however, refers to Nicias' nephritis in a much later chapter.⁴

But the last sentence of paragraph 3, which is peculiar to Plutarch, is no doubt a personal reflexion on the character of his hero. The chapter concludes with a quotation from Euripides, an epitaph on the fallen Athenians:

Οἶδε Συρακοσίων ὀκτὼν νίκαις ἔκπεσσαν
 "Arises, or in the end of the war" ⁵

and Plutarch adds that the Athenians were successful in their engagements with the Syracusans more than eight times, " until

¹ VI, 97 - 98

² XIII, 7

³ VI, 98 - 101

⁴ VII, 15

⁵ Bergk, P.L.G. li p. 265

the gods *ἑρως*, or Fortune', became hostile to the Athenians at the very pinnacle of their power ". We know from Polybius² that Timaeus was fond of poetical quotations, particularly a citation from Euripides, even putting quotations from Homer and Euripides into the mouth of Hermocrates at the Conference of Gela. The Syracusans were apparently fond of Euripides³; and this couplet, perhaps attributed by the Syracusans to Euripides, would satisfy a historian who was noted for his interest in the influence of the gods on historical events.

It is difficult to understand the allusion to eight Athenian victories over the Sicilians, for Plutarch himself only records five, while six major engagements only are described by Thucydides.

¹ Cicero, In Verr. II, 4, 119, refers to the existence of a Temple of *ἑρως* near Syracuse: Heitland (Class. Phil. XXIII, & C.R. VI, 1894, p. 123) argues convincingly that this temple, if it existed at all, was erected to commemorate the destruction of the Athenians, in which Fortune had played no inconsiderable part.

² XII, 26

³ Nicias, XXIX, 3 - 5

CHAPTER XVIII

In this lengthy chapter, the greater part of which must have come ultimately from Thucydides¹, there is one striking incident peculiar to Plutarch (paragraph 3), a single combat, unrelated by Thucydides or Diodorus, between Lamachus and a Syracusan whose name is given as Callicrates, the outcome being the death of both combatants. Timaeus may have found this detail in Philistus; the fight itself is told from a Sicilian viewpoint, particular mention being made of the skill and courage of Callicrates.

Thucydides simply records the fact of the death of Lamachus; as indeed does Diodorus², although he puts it after the arrival of Gylippus, and not before, as both Thucydides and Plutarch state. But neither historian mentions Lamachus' acceptance of a challenge to single combat.

The remainder of the chapter, with its information about the attack of the Syracusans upon the Athenian wall, the generalship of Nicias from his sick-bed³, the peace-feelers sent out to Nicias from Syracuse, the despair of Gylippus about the eventual saving of Sicily, the carelessness of the Athenians in failing to set a guard against the arrival of Gylippus - all this is a resumé of Thucydides, the only difference being that Plutarch attributes to

¹ VI, 101 - 104

² XIII, 8

³ For Nicias' skilful generalship in driving off the Syracusans by firing his timber, cf. Thucy. VI, 102 & Polyaeus 1, 39, 3; Polyaeus also records an anecdote - 1, 39, 2 - about Nicias ordering his men to plant *τεῖλα* in the path of the enemy's cavalry, naming the cavalry commander of the Syracusans as Ephantus.

Nicias personally responsibilities which in Thucydides are shared by the Athenian commanders generally.

The sentence (XVIII, 10): *καὶ στρατηγὸν ἔχειν ἄραχον δι' αἰτυχίαν καὶ φράνησιν*
 is peculiar to Plutarch.

CHAPTER XLX

Apart from chapter 1, this is the first chapter to mention Timaeus by name. He is quoted as saying (XLX, 5) that the Sicilians despised Gylippus; and again quoted as himself contradicting this statement by claiming that " as soon as Gylippus showed himself, for all the world like an owl among birds, many flocked to him with ready offers of military service ".

Plutarch is perhaps hardly fair to his authority, for there is little real antithesis between the two quotations; the man, Gylippus, the Sicilians learned to despise, but they naturally welcomed the assistance of the powerful Greek city-state, of which he was the representative.

A considerable part of this chapter (XLX, 4 - 6) is not to be found in Thucydides or in Diodorus. It is critical in the extreme of Gylippus; and such criticism of the Spartan who was responsible for the " whole achievement of victory ", according to the testimony of Thucydides and Philistus (" who was a Syracusan and an eyewitness of the events " - XLX, 6), is to be continued and elaborated each time Plutarch has occasion to mention the name of Gylippus.¹ According to Plutarch, this criticism of Gylippus is derived from Timaeus. Apparently, Timaeus quoted Thucydides and Philistus, poured scorn upon their tributes to Gylippus, and himself declared that Hermocrates alone was

¹ Yet cf. Plutarch, Lysander, XVII, 1, where Plutarch is certainly not using Timaeus as his source: ὁ μὲν δὲ Γυλιππος ἀνεχρὸν αὐτῷ καὶ ἄγονες ἔργον ἐπὶ Λακεδαιῶν τοῖς ἑμπροσθεν καὶ μεγάλως ἐευκαίμενος.

responsible for the Syracusan victory. This, at any rate, was the view of Polybius¹; and the author of the treatise *Περὶ Ὑψους*² tells us that, according to the History of Timaeus, the Athenians paid the penalty for the mutilation of the Hermae " principally through the agency of one man, Ἐπεροκράτης, τὸν Ἐπεκρινός ".

Thus, Plutarch says that Timaeus accused Gylippus of greed and penuriousness, and recorded the laughter of the Syracusans at his cloak and long hair.³

It may thus be significant that Plutarch omits to mention the surprise of the fort of Labdalon by Gylippus, which greatly facilitated the erection by the Syracusans of their counter-wall.⁴ On the other hand, W.E.Heitland⁵ depreciates the value of this fort, built by the Athenians both to keep a watch on the Syracusan post at Megara and to serve as a depot for baggage and military gear. He maintains that, before Gylippus took it, the stores had been removed to the Athenian central camp and the garrison reduced to a minimum.

Apart from these three paragraphs which have been examined, the chapter is based upon Thucydides,⁶ who also describes the arrival of Gongylus of Corinth, and Gylippus' offer to the Athenians of safe conduct if they would depart from Sicily.

¹ Xll, 26

² lv, 3

³ cf. also, chapter XXVlll, 4, where Timaeus is named as Plutarch's authority for a similar dishonourable picture of Gylippus.

⁴ Thucy. Vll, 3-4

⁵ J. Phil. XXlll, pp 56-57

⁶ Thucy. Vll, 2 - 15

Plutarch tells us that in the first clash with Gylippus the Athenians were successful, killing Gongylus the Corinthian; but Thucydides makes no further mention of Gongylus after noting his arrival¹. This is one of the smaller points which strengthens the view that Plutarch was not using Thucydides at first hand, together with Timaeus; for Plutarch would hardly be likely to go over to Timaeus for an unimportant detail such as this, in the middle of the narrative of Thucydides, and then go back again to Timaeus for the remainder of his paragraph.

Gylippus' defeat of the Athenians in a second engagement and the building by him of a counter-wall are found also in Thucydides²; but Plutarch's reference to the use made by Gylippus of the Athenian stones and timber to build his counter-wall postdates Thucydides, who places it before the two engagements.³

10 The encouragement of the Syracusans, the visits of Gylippus to the cities of Sicily, the despair of Nicias and his letter to Athens, asking to be relieved of his command, are described in detail by Thucydides⁴, and with no disagreement with Plutarch's account. But it is difficult ^{to see} why Plutarch - if he had his Thucydides before him as he wrote - did not see fit to epitomise Nicias' despatch to the Athenians⁵, with all the possibilities which it offered for the description of Nicias' character.

¹ VII, 2

² VII, 6

³ VII, 5

⁴ VII, 7 - 15

⁵ VII, 11 - 15

CHAPTER XX

There are four sentences in this chapter which are peculiar to Plutarch.

In the first (XX, 1) Plutarch records a previous intention of the Athenians to send reinforcements to Sicily and the jealousy which some of the leading Athenians at home felt towards the good success of Nicias.

In the second (XX, 4) excuses are offered by the Syracusans for the defeat of their fleet by the Athenians.

In the third (XX, 5 - 6) Plutarch describes how the ambitious rivalry of Nicias' new colleagues, Menander & Euthydemus, makes inevitable the disastrous sea battle which Nicias had so consistently opposed.

Lastly (XX, 8b) reference is made to the despair of Nicias " brought to grief by his colleagues ".

In his context, these statements are peculiar to Plutarch, although it is true that, in general terms, Thucydides refers to the failure of the Sicilian Expedition, because the popular leaders, instead of consulting for the interests of the Expedition, occupied themselves with intrigue for the leadership of the democracy, thus occasioning broils in the city itself.

But Plutarch does quite definitely state that, even before Nicias' despatch, the Athenians had intended to send out another

force and had been prevented by the jealousy which some of the citizens had felt towards the success of Nicias. He also gives a wretched picture of wrangling and rivalry between Nicias and the newly-appointed generals, Menander and Euthydemus, and describes the pressure brought to bear upon a reluctant Nicias by his war-eager colleagues. This is all completely absent from Thucydides; nor do we find in Thucydides the comment - obviously from a Syracusan source - that the Syracusans laid the blame for their previous defeats at sea upon their own disorder, and not upon any superior skill or strength displayed by the Athenian navy.

In certain respects Plutarch's account is very similar to that of Thucydides. The Athenian determination - after the arrival at Athens of the despatch from Nicias - to send Demosthenes in the spring, to commission Eurymedon immediately to sail with money for Nicias, and to appoint Menander and Euthydemus as Nicias' colleagues on the spot - all this we find in Thucydides¹.

Plutarch's brief record (XX, 3) of the Athenian naval victory and the loss of Plemmyrium to Gylippus, with its consequent disadvantages for Nicias, is a synopsis of Thucydides².

What Plutarch calls " τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν Ἀθηναίων, ὡς ἐλέγηκε ὁ ἄριστος Κορινθίος " (the scheme of Ariston the Corinthian) is related in full by Thucydides³; but Plutarch's very brief reference to this successful Syracusan manoeuvre, with a sort of title given to it, may almost be interpreted as a quotation found in his source.

¹ V11, 16

² V11, 22 - 24

³ V11, 35 - 41

In this naval engagement, one of the most serious which the Athenians had as yet fought, with disastrous consequences, Plutarch says that the Athenians πολλούς ἀπέβαλον . Thucydides' says that the Athenians lost seven ships, with many more damaged and their crews either killed or taken prisoner.

' V11, 41

CHAPTER XXI

This chapter, with its account of the arrival of Demosthenes and the night attack upon Epipolae, closely follows the Thucydidean account, and, where it diverges, it gives additional detail which could only have come from the pen of an eyewitness. The account of Diodorus' is strangely at variance, both in facts supplied and in those omitted.

2 Both Plutarch and Thucydides agree that Demosthenes brought with him 73 ships and 5000 hoplites; Plutarch adds that there were also 3000 light-armed troops, while Thucydides² merely states: *ἄκοντιστάς τε βαρβάρους καὶ Ἕλληνας οὐκ ὀλίγους*. Plutarch alone records the "gleam of the arms, the insignia of the triremes, the multitude of pipers and pilots and the spectacular display". Diodorus agrees about the numbers of the hoplites and seamen, but he gives the number of the ships as 310³.

6 Thucydides has nothing to say about any disagreement between Nicias and Demosthenes, merely stating that Demosthenes persuaded Nicias to agree to an attack upon Epipolae; Diodorus⁴ agrees with Thucydides. But Plutarch gives the impression that neither on this, nor on any other occasion, did Nicias desire offensive action. The pro-Athenian party in Syracuse is mentioned later by Thucydides⁵, after the failure of the attack upon Epipolae; but here Plutarch

¹ Xl11, 11

² Vll, 42

³ This may be due to textual corruption.

⁴ Xl11, 11

⁵ Vll, 48

gives us considerable detail about the secret communications between Nicias and the Syracusans, who were "weary of Gylippus"; and the biographer suggests that the "delays, postponements, and hairsplitting distinctions" of Nicias induced his fellow-generals to think Nicias a coward. It is perhaps significant that, in these paragraphs which are peculiar to Plutarch (XXI, 3 - 6), Plutarch stresses as one of the arguments used by the Syracusans to induce Nicias to remain in Sicily, delaying his attack upon the enemy, their contempt for Gylippus and weariness of his presence in Syracuse.²

11 Plutarch's account of the night attack upon Epipolae is certainly not taken from Thucydides, although there are certain similarities. Thucydides³ says that Nicias did not take part in the attack; although Plutarch does not actually say that Nicias took part, yet he implies that he was present, while Demosthenes was in command. Again, the part played by the Boeotians⁴ in the repulse of the Athenian forces is greatly exaggerated in the account of Plutarch.

Of the actual attack upon Epipolae, Diodorus⁵ gives no detail (apart from the rather surprising estimate of 10,000 infantry led by Demosthenes against the hill), makes no mention

¹ * Μελλήματα, διατριβαί, ἀκριβολογία ; both these words are εἰπεῖς λόγοντα.

² cf Nicias, XLX, 4 - 6; XXVlll, 3 - 4 ³Vll, 43-45

⁴ cf A.W.Gomme, Hist. Comm. on Thucy. Vol 1, p. 72: "He was glad to remind his hearers that it was the Boeotians who first stood their ground and broke the Athenian onslaught".

⁵ Xlll, 11

of the moon, and assigns to Hermocrates credit for the defeat of the Athenians. Thucydides, it is true, mentions that a moon was shining. But Plutarch alone describes how the moon was " low on the horizon, and was partially obscured by the numerous armed figures moving to and fro in her light the Athenians had the moon at their backs, so that they cast their shadows on their own men in front of them, and thus obscured their number and the brilliancy of their weapons while the reflection of the moon upon the shields of the enemy made them seem far more numerous than they really were, and more resplendent to the eye ".

Thucydides makes no mention of the numbers of the Athenian dead; Diodorus puts them at 2500', while Plutarch states that they amounted in all to 2000. Again, this mention by Plutarch of a specific number, which is absent in Thucydides, is significant, for it supplies us with further proof that Plutarch was not using Thucydides as his 'Grundquelle'.

Plutarch's description of the battle for Epipolae, and especially of the rout of the Athenian forces, is a fairly accurate resumé of Thucydides², with additional details - those of an eyewitness and a partisan of Syracuse. It is probably that Timaeus recorded the account of the attack upon Epipolae which he found in Philistus; he may not, in fact, have made use of Thucydides at all for this

¹ XLIII, 11

² VII, 44

cf. Plutarch, Nicias, XXI, 11:

with Thucy. VII, 45:

οἱ μὲν δὲ ἐκείνων, οἱ δ' ἐπὶ ἄλλήλων
 ἐπέθηκον, οἱ δὲ κατὰ τῶν κρημῶν
 ὄλισθαίνοντες. τοὺς δὲ ἀπὸ κενόθετους
 καὶ πλανωμένους ἡμέρας ἐπιγαγομένους οἱ
 ἰσπίδας καταλαβάνοντες δὲ ἄρθεσαν
 καὶ τῶν περιγαγομένων ὀλίγοι μὲν τῶν

ἀπέθανον δ' ὡς ὀλίγοι κούρων τε καὶ τῶν
 συμμάχων, ὅπλα μὲντοι ἄτι πλείω ἢ κατὰ
 τοὺς νεκρούς ἐλήθη. οἱ γὰρ κατὰ τῶν
 κρημῶν βίβασάντες ἄλλεσθαι φιλοὶ ἄνευ
 τῶν ἑσπίδων οἱ μὲν ἀπώλλυντο, οἱ δ'
 ἐσώθησαν.

description. Yet the framework seems to be that of Thucydides, and, in some instances, the vocabulary also. If it could be proved that this description is taken over in its entirety from Philistus by Timaeus, then we could judge something of the accuracy of the estimate of Philistus given by Quintilian and Cicero¹, and the truth of the statement of Theon², when he says that Philistus extensively copied Thucydides for his account of the Athenian Expedition to Sicily.

It is possible that Ephorus, who was the source of Diodorus, for brevity's sake omitted any details and gave the briefest account of the battle on Epipolae.

¹ De Orat. II, 13

² Progymnast. p. 63, 25, Spengel: τὸν Ἀττικὸν ὄλον πῶλλον ἐν ταῖς
Σικελικαῖς ἐκ τοῦ Θουκυδίδου μεταλήψατο.

CHAPTER XXII

This chapter also follows the account of Thucydides, although with certain deviations, the principal addition to the narrative being an aphorism attributed to Leon of Byzantium, with whom Nicias is compared unfavourably (XXII, 3). This Leon² was an historian and rhetorician, and may have made the remark which Plutarch puts into his mouth in 340 B.C., when Philip of Macedon was laying siege to Byzantium; he was probably put to death at the instigation of Philip in 338 B.C.³ Such a comparison as this may have been found by Plutarch in Timaeus, who was perhaps indebted for the quotation to Theopompus.⁴

2 The statement of Plutarch that Nicias accused Demosthenes of rashness, after the failure of the attack upon Epipolae, is not derived from Thucydides; and the Thucydidean⁵ account of the arguments used by Demosthenes for returning to Athens is very different from what we find in Plutarch.

In Thucydides we read that the generals saw that the Athenians were troubled by sickness occasioned by the place and the time of the year. Therefore, Demosthenes argued for sailing home for the following reasons:-

1. The attack on Epipolae had failed:
2. The seas were still open, and the Athenian fleet still

¹ F.Gr.H. II A, p.132

² cf. Plutarch, Phocion XLV,7: Praec. Rei. Ger. VIII, 804 A.

³ Or *Ἐλευθέρης* (Suidas, sub *Λέων*) ⁵ VII, 47

⁴ Philippica, Bks XLVII & XLVIII; cf. G.& H., fr. 211 & 216

superior to that of the enemy:

3. It was better for the Athenian forces to be at home to defend Athens:
4. There were no further reasons for spending Athenian money in Sicily.

In Plutarch, the arguments of Demosthenes are different:-

1. No other Athenian forces could now come to their assistance:
2. Even if the Athenians were now victorious in battle, they would have to change their base of operations:
3. For their place of encampment and the season of the year were causing sickness among their troops.

- 3 Plutarch's record of Nicias' reply to Demosthenes is identical with that found in Thucydides, although very condensed in Plutarch; and the same is true of Nicias' successful persuasion of Demosthenes to stay near Syracuse.

Nicias finally agrees to leave Syracuse for a new camp.

' Nicias XXII, 5 = Thucy. VII, 50 = Diodorus XIII, 12

CHAPTER XXIII

This chapter, which is wholly peculiar to Plutarch, except for the first paragraph and one sentence of paragraph 9, contains a long exposition on eclipses, with considerable digressions.

The first paragraph is identical with the accounts given by Thucydides¹ and Diodorus, and Plutarch uses almost the same words as Thucydides. Polybius² also, who may be dependent for his information upon Thucydides or even Timaeus (despite his hatred of the latter) refers to the eclipse in very similar words.³

But, apart from this paragraph, the whole of the chapter is peculiar to Plutarch, and may well be the fruit of his own research; for we know that it was the biographer's habit⁴ to desert his principal sources at appropriate points in his narrative, and include material culled from his wide reading.

¹ VII, 50: Ἐπειδὴ ἑτοῖρα ἦν ἡ σελήνη ἐκλείπει.

² IX, 19: κείτῃ τῆς σελήνης ἐκλειπῶσιν δεισιδαιμονίαι, ὡς τι δεινὸν προσγραινόμεναι, ἐπέσχε τὴν ἀναδυγῆν.

³ Nicias XXIII, 1: ὡς δὲ ἦν ἑτοῖρα ἐξέλιπον ἡ σελήνη δεισιδαιμονίαις ἐκπεπληγμένοις τὰ ταῦτα.

Diodorus, XIII, 12, also uses the word: δεισιδαιμονία : Plutarch summarises the eclipse & Nicias' fatal delay, in De Super. 169.

" The most extensive extracts from the work of Timaeus have come down to us through Polybius, Justinus & Diodorus. Polybius and Trogus never quote their sources literally, but always remould the tradition so as to adapt it to the style & purpose of their own works " - K.Von Fritz, Pythag. Pol. in S. Italy, 1940, p.34.

⁴ cf. digressions on local legends of Haliartus (Lys. XXVIII, 7-9), on oracle of Apollo Tegyraeus (Pelop. XVI, 5-8), on change of fortune experienced by Dionysius II (Timol. XLV - XV, 11), on fall of a meteorite (Lys. XII, 2 - 9).

On the other hand, the chapter contains several of the characteristics of Timaeus, who was intensely interested in omens, portents and signs; " men¹ thought the eclipse uncanny, a sign sent from God in advance of divers great calamities ". There is also reference made to the presence in Sicily of Stilbides (XXIII, 7), of whom we know mention was made by Philistus.²

It may not be too ^{ac}spectacular to suggest that for these paragraphs Plutarch was indebted to Timaeus. It is inconceivable that Timaeus, who seems to have had a great deal to say about portents and supernatural signs, would not have taken this opportunity in his narrative to digress at some length on the eclipse of the moon. Naturally enough, Plutarch would be interested in any interpretation of natural laws, which made them subordinate to the authority of divine principles; but so also would Timaeus.

Plutarch gives us here a most interesting survey of the progress of astronomical knowledge among the public at large, and the dangers attendant upon early scientific investigation at the hands of an ignorant and superstitious populace. He says that Anaxagoras was the first man who had the understanding and the courage to commit to writing an explanation of the phases of the moon. But his writings were cautiously received, for there was no tolerance then for natural philosophers and. *μετεωρολόγαι*³. They were accused of explaining away the divine and replacing it by " irrational causes, blind forces, and the sway of necessity "⁴.

¹ cf Polybius XII, 24. ² Schol. on Arist. Peace, 1031.

³ cf Arist. Clouds, 333, 360. ⁴ cf. Plut. Pericles XXXII, 2.

Therefore, Protagoras was exiled, Anaxagoras was with difficulty rescued from jail, and Socrates was put to death. It was only much later, through the great reputation of Plato, that the reproach was removed from astronomical studies and access to them opened up for all, just because Plato made natural law subject to the authority of divine principles.

Plato¹ gives us very much the same information as this, in his Laws, saying that the discovery that the planets do not move irregularly has now made it unnecessary to believe that astronomy is a dangerous and impious study.

Anaxagoras of Clazomenae (c. 500 - 428 B.C.), teacher and friend of Pericles, was said to have lived in Athens for thirty years; at some time he was apparently indicted on a charge of² atheism and fled to Lampsacus - but almost certainly not in 432 B.C., as Ephorus believed.³ A.E.Taylor⁴ has made it highly probable that he retired to Lampsacus nearly twenty years before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War.

Protagoras of Abdera (c. 490 - 422 B.C.), also a friend of Pericles, spent many of his adult years at Athens; but the story of his trial at Athens and exile, about 411 B.C., is inconsistent with the statements of Plato, and probably an invention or error of later writers. He left Athens perhaps in 430 B.C., for

¹ Laws 820-822

² Demet. of Phal. apud Diog. Laert. 11, 7

³ apud Diodorus XII, 38; Plut. Pericles XXXII, 2

⁴ C. Q. XL, 1917, p. 81

it was about that year that the decree of Diopseithes against atheistical teaching was passed.¹

What makes it possible that Plutarch may have taken over this information from Timaeus is the introduction (XXIII, 6) of an anecdote which was almost certainly to be found in Timaeus,² about Dion, friend of Plato and relative by marriage of the Elder and the Younger Dionysius of Syracuse.

The reference to the death of Stilbides,³ soothsayer and friend of Nicias, is not found in Thucydides or in Diodorus, although the latter does say that Nicias summoned soothsayers to interpret the eclipse; and the superstition of Nicias was well known and is well attested.⁴ According to the Scholiast on Aristophanes' Peace,⁵ Philistus said that Stilbides accompanied the expedition to Sicily. If we are right in assuming that Plutarch used Philistus through Timaeus, this is a further proof that this information about eclipses came from Timaeus, the primary source.

¹ cf. Plato, Theaet. 152: 167C - 168B: 171 - 172; Prot. ch. 1 - XVII, etc.; H. Diels, Vorsokr. II, 253 - 271.

² cf. Nicias, XLV, 7 and Dion, XXIV: in the latter chapter a long list of omens and prodigies is given by Plutarch as occurring just when Dion was embarking for Syracuse - an eclipse, a swarm of bees, a spear-carrying eagle, sweet sea-water & pigs without ears. Here Plutarch refers to Theopompus as his authority (G. & H. 302), but it is possible that Timaeus was the intermediary, for Timaeus seems to have been the principal source used by Plutarch for the Dion.

³ cf. F.H.G. 112: a fragment of Philochorus is supposed to have said that Stilbides died in Sicily before the fatal eclipse.

⁴ cf. Plato, Laches, 199 A: κή τῶν πάντων τῶν στρατηγῶν ἔρχαν, ἄλλὰ τὸν στρατηγὸν τῶν πάντων.

⁵ 1031

9 These paragraphs contain references to Philochorus and Autocleides, and a final scathing criticism of Nicias for his delay beyond the allotted three days.

Philochorus,¹ the learned historian and author of an Atthis in seventeen books, and also other books on oracles, divination and the like, was a younger contemporary of Timaeus at Athens. He held the office of *ἱεροεκόπος* about 306 B.C., and, like Timaeus, was interested in myths, festivals, ceremonies and cults. As Plutarch quotes from his works frequently in the Life of Theseus, it is not necessary to assume that this quotation is taken from Timaeus. Yet Timaeus may easily have been both a friend and a close associate of Philochorus, for the taking of Athens by Antigonos Gonatas in 262 B.C. (and the resultant execution of Philochorus) forced Timaeus also to leave the city which had for so long afforded him an hospitable retreat, and to return to Sicily.

Autocleides, of unknown date, was the Athenian author of a book on sacrificial ritual and tradition, which was often quoted by later writers.² The 'exegetes' himself is called Autocleides by Plutarch,³ but Anticleides by Athenaeus,⁴ but this may be due to a confusion made by Athenaeus between the 'exegetes' and the historian Anticleides.⁵

¹ Jacoby, Atthis, p. 409: F.Gr.H. III B, 328 (1 - 230)

² " Therefore, hardly published earlier than the 3rd Cent. B.C." - Jacoby, Atthis, p. 252, 69.

³ cf. Plut. Alex. XLVI, 1

⁴ 473 B-C

⁵ Author of *περὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου* (Diog. Laert. VIII, 11), *Νόστοι* (Athenaeus 157 F, 384 D, 466 C) and *Ἀγλιανά*.

The last sentence of the chapter - a criticism of Nicias for his ignorance of the moon and her eclipses - is not found in Thucydides or in Diodorus.

Diodorus¹ says that Nicias waited for three days before he withdrew. Plutarch and Thucydides² agree that he delayed for another full period of the moon,³ but Plutarch attributes the Athenian decision to remain at Syracuse more exclusively to Nicias than does Thucydides.

¹ XI 11, 12, 6:

τὰς εἰκοσήμενας τρεῖς ἡμέρας

² VII, 50:

τρεῖς ἐννέα ἡμέρας πέντε βάρη.

³ XXI 11, 9:

ἄλλην σελήνης ἀναμένον περίοδον.

CHAPTER XXIV and XXV

Into the framework of Thucydides¹ most briefly epitomised, Plutarch has inserted a detailed description of the challenging attitude of the men and boys of Syracuse, who taunt the encamped Athenians. Diodorus also refers to τὰ πειραγία of Syracuse, though in connection with the later sea fight in the Great Harbour.²

Plutarch selects one incident for special mention. A boy of noble parentage, Heracleides by name, who had driven his boat wall on before the rest in his desire to mock at the foe, was almost captured by the Athenians. But " the boy's uncle, Pollichus, concerned for his safety, rowed out to his defence with the ten triremes which were under his orders ". This precipitated a sea-fight between both navies, to which Diodorus devotes a long description; but Thucydides' account of the engagement is quite short (he agrees with Plutarch that Eurymedon was slain), and Plutarch refers to it in one brief sentence, as if his authority was more interested in the anecdote than in the naval battle.

Plutarch agrees with Thucydides that 110 triremes were manned by the Athenians before the final sea-fight in the harbour. But he omits any reference to the statesmanlike and encouraging speech of Nicias,⁴ instead representing Nicias as whining about not abandoning their fleet by retreating by land.

¹ Vll, 52

² Xlll, 14: Nicias, XXV, 2 - 4: it is possible that Plutarch or his source confused the one battle with the other.

³ Xlll, 13

⁴ Thucy. Vll, 61: Diodorus Xlll, 15

Thucydides informs us that the Athenians were forced to abandon the Heracleum; but Plutarch alone goes on to refer to the renewal by the Syracusans of their customary sacrifices there to Heracles, to the announcements of the Syracusan soothsayers (Chapter XXV, 1), and to Heracles' method of acting on the defensive.

These two sentences in Plutarch, the last in chapter XXIV, and the first in chapter XXV, are certainly taken from Timæus. We have the evidence of Polybius, who quotes Book XXI of Timæus, that the latter reckoned the help of Heracles the greatest contribution to the victory of the Syracusans. It may not be too fanciful to suggest that Timæus (whose etymological interpretations were always fantastic, according to his critics) saw an inevitable connection between the young Syracusan lad, Heracleides, and the recapture of the Heracleum. According to Polybius, the words which Timæus put into the mouth of Hermocrates at the Conference of Gela in 424 B.C. were: " Heracles had injured all those he fought with, under compulsion and by order, but he had done no evil to any man of his own free will ". It is quite clear that Plutarch is quoting these same words from Timæus when he describes the advice given to the Syracusans by their soothsayers, before the last sea-fight: " The sacrifices indicated a splendid victory for them if only they did not begin the fighting but acted on the defensive. Heracles also, they said, always won the day because he acted on the defensive and suffered himself

to be attacked first ".

Thucydides, of course, gives a very different version of the speech of Hermocrates at Gela.¹

The last fight in the Great Harbour of Syracuse, described also by Thucydides,² is told by Plutarch from a Syracusan angle; although at times it touches upon the Thucydidean narrative, it cannot be described as a synopsis of Thucydides. Both Thucydides and Plutarch describe the emotions of the spectators, but Plutarch devotes much of his chapter to an exposition of the tactics of Ariston the Corinthian.³ No doubt, this information ultimately came from Philistus to Plutarch, as did Diodorus' account (through Ephorus), for Diodorus adds further Syracusan detail peculiar to himself⁴ - the women of Syracuse watching the fight, the paean of the Athenian ships entering the fight, and the groans and cheers of the spectators.

Plutarch also says that the Athenians, in despair, did not even try to save their vessels. But Thucydides records⁵ that the Athenian soldiers on the land not only tried to save their galleys, but after the battle had 60 serviceable ships.

¹ IV, 59 - 64

² VII, 70 - 71

³ Nicias XXV, 4: this is peculiar to Plutarch.

⁴ XIII, 14

⁵ VII, 72

CHAPTER XXVI

In the first three paragraphs of this chapter, two short sentences alone can be termed peculiar to Plutarch. He says that *οἱ περὶ τὸν Γυλιππῶνα* saw that the Syracusans were given over to feasting and would be reluctant to attack the departing Athenian forces. But Thucydides' names Hermocrates as the one who approached the Syracusan authorities and urged them to occupy the passes before Nicias could reach them.²

Plutarch's description of the device of Hermocrates to prevent Nicias from departing that very night is identical with Thucydides; and when Plutarch describes the ambush laid by the Syracusans, he ~~flews~~^{follows} closely the account of Thucydides, except that - in the very middle of the narrative - he inserts one sentence which is not to be found in Thucydides, a detail characteristic of a writer using Syracusan sources.³

This paragraph is a very condensed account of Thucydides,⁴ with its description of the woeful departure of the Athenians, as if leaving their native land.

The remainder of the chapter is peculiar to Plutarch, except that the last few words are a skilful paraphrase of Thucydides.⁵

¹ V11, 73 ² cf also Polyaeus 1, 43, 2: Frontinus 2, 9,7

³ XXVI, 2: ἐν δὲ ταῖς θρακοῖς καὶ πεδιναῖς τοὺς ἱππεῖς ἔταξαν.

⁴ V11, 75

⁵ πρὸς τὰς ἐκ θαρῶν ἑλπίδας ταπεινότερον cf. Thucy. V11, 77

But - and this the reader will find most significant \ominus the lifelike description of the sufferings of Nicias, of his resolute behaviour and the miseries of his troops, told so graphically by Plutarch, is not from Thucydides; it bears little resemblance to the magnificent, day by day, account of Thucydides', epitomised by Ephorus.² Now in the first chapter of the Life of Nicias, Plutarch gives credit to Thucydides for his skilful description of the Sicilian disaster;³ yet, if Plutarch used Thucydides at first hand, it is strange that he did not make use of Thucydides' very fine narrative of the eight days; of course, it would be too long for any extensive quotation, but certainly parts of it would have offered him illustrations for the " appreciation of character and temperament ".

These paragraphs cannot be the biographer's own invention; no doubt, he is following the account of Timaeus,⁴ who " sought to rival what had been so excellently done by his predecessor ".

¹ VII, 78 - 85

D.S.,² XLIII, 16 - 18

³ Nicias I, 1: *πρωτικώτατος, ευρωδέτατος, ποικιλώτατος.*

⁴ Nicias I, 1: *ὅλως τις ὀφειθεὶς καὶ μετακλιθεὶς φρονήματος ἐν ταῖσι.*

CHAPTER XXVII

This chapter, which describes the capitulation of Demosthenes and Nicias, and the surrender of all their surviving forces, although in places it bears some relation to the narrative of Thucydides, cannot in any way be assumed to have come at first hand from Thucydides. The greater part of it must have come from Philistus, via Timæus.

Plutarch refers briefly to the " eight successive days " of retreat, described so minutely day by day by Thucydides.¹

All this information, about Demosthenes' attempted suicide when he was surrounded *περὶ τὴν Πολυξήλειον ἀλγὴν*, is peculiar to Plutarch. Pausanias,² mentioning a column erected in Athens to commemorate the dead of Sicily, writes that the names of the generals were inscribed, except Nicias, " and this is the reason why Nicias was passed over, and my account is identical with that of Philistus, who says that while Demosthenes made a truce for others and excluded himself, attempting to commit suicide when taken prisoner, Nicias voluntarily submitted to surrender ". Pausanias³ also informs us - perhaps on the authority of Philistus - that Callistratus, an Athenian hipparch, cut his way through the enemy at the Asinarus and led his troops safely to Catana; then he returned to Syracuse and slew five of the enemy in a gallant charge. Lysias partly confirms this,⁴ making mention of a few survivors from the general massacre, who were not taken prisoner.

¹ VII, 78 - 85

² I, 29, 11

³ VII, 16, 5

⁴ Pro Polystrato, 24

The naming of the " homestead of Polyzelus " obviously comes from a contemporary eyewitness familiar with the geography of Syracuse. Polyzelus was the brother of Gelo and Hiero, tyrants of Syracuse in the early Fifth century, who,² after fleeing from Syracuse as a result of the jealousy and hatred of Hiero, was finally reconciled to him by Simonides the poet. As Polyzelus was a popular man in Syracuse, he might be expected to possess a large estate outside the city.

Thucydides has nothing to say about any attempt at suicide by Demosthenes.

Plutarch and Thucydides³ agree that Nicias proposed a truce to Gylippus, which was refused; but Thucydides does not record the insults and abuse heaped upon Nicias by Gylippus and the Syracusans.

Plutarch and Thucydides⁴ agree about the arrival of the Athenians at Asinarus, and the butchery of the Athenians there; but Thucydides is silent about Nicias' piteous plea to Gylippus, Gylippus' reasons for sparing Nicias, or the fact that the commands of Gylippus made their way slowly down his line, so that few

¹ as the scene of the attempted suicide of Demosthenes.

² Diodorus XI, 48; cf. also Schol. Pindar, Olymp. I, 29 & 37

³ VII, 83; but Polyaeus (1, 39, 4) says that when Nicias was almost caught by Gylippus, he played a trick upon him, pretending to arrange a truce, thereby drawing off Gylippus' pursuit; then himself τῶν ἄκρυστέρων λαβόμενος πάλιν ἐπιλάμει

⁴ VII, 84

Athenians were in fact spared.

The descriptions of the collecting by the Syracusans of the Athenian prisoners and their armour (mentioned also by Diodorus¹), and the victorious return of the Syracusans to their city, are not found in Thucydides.

This last sentence of the chapter, Sicilian in its sympathies and laudatory in the extreme of the Sicilian Greeks, is peculiar to Plutarch: " They had brought to a successful end a struggle which was the most brilliant ever made by Hellenes against Hellenes, and had won the completest of victories by the most overwhelming and impetuous display of zeal and valour. "

These words are reminiscent of what Polybius² affirms to have been the characteristic bias of Timæus towards Sicily and Sicilian history; but it should be compared with Thucydides' estimate.³

¹ X111, 19

² X11, 26

³ VII, 87, 5: τῶν κρείσσει λαμπρότατον , says Thucydides briefly.

CHAPTER XXVIII

This important chapter, which describes the general assembly of the Syracusans and their allies which met to discuss the fate of their Athenian prisoners, contains a very great deal of material which is peculiar to Plutarch. It has nothing in common with Thucydides, and is only similar to Diodorus' record in a number of small points.

Thucydides' account is brief,¹ with no speeches; he says that Nicias and Demosthenes were put to death by the Syracusans, against the wishes of Gylippus, who wanted to take them back alive to Sparta.

Diodorus² records that Diocles, one of the Syracusan politicians, proposed the execution of the Athenian generals. Hermocrates advised leniency, but was shouted down. Nicolaus, an elder statesman, in a long speech which included praise of Nicias, supported Hermocrates. But Gylippus urged the execution of the Athenian generals, and his proposal was carried.

Plutarch³ tells us that Eurycles, the popular leader of the Syracusans, proposed the execution of the generals, and suggested the institution of a festival called the 'Asinaria'. Hermocrates advised lenient treatment of the Athenians, and a "noble use of victory", but was met with a tumult of disapproval. Gylippus demanded the generals as his prize, but the Syracusans,

¹ VII, 86² XIII, 19 - 33³ XXVIII, 1 - 6

" now grown insolent with their good fortune, abused him roundly ". Then there follow in Plutarch two anecdotes, to illustrate the avaricious character of Gylippus, ascribed to Timaeus; the first story concerns the dishonesty of Cleandridas, father of Gylippus, who was convicted of taking bribes and had to flee his country; the second illustrates the greed of Gylippus himself, who was banished in disgrace for stealing some of the monies entrusted to him by Lysander. According to Plutarch, Timaeus contradicted Thucydides and Philistus and claimed that Hermocrates urged the Athenian generals to kill themselves, while the debate was still in progress. Nicias and Demosthenes followed the advice of Hermocrates, and thus avoided public execution. The shield of Nicias, " a welded mosaic of gold and purple ", was still to be seen in a temple in Syracuse, in the biographer's day.

From this comparison of the three accounts we notice that Diodorus differs from Plutarch in everything except the statement that Hermocrates² pleaded against the death sentence and was shouted down;³ and that the rôle assigned to Gylippus in the Thucydides-

¹ Plutarch is perhaps suggesting that he prefers Timaeus' account of the suicide of Nicias and Demosthenes to Thucydides' brief description, 'They killed N. & D., *ἀκρωτος τῶν Γυλίππων*', which he found in Timaeus.

² Hermocrates' words in Plutarch: τῶν νικᾶν κρατῆτον ἔστι τὸ καλῶς χρῆσθαι τῇ νίκῃ. should be compared with Diodorus: καλλίον ἔστι τῶν νικᾶν τὸ τὴν νίκην ἐνεργεῖν ἀνθρωπίνως.

³ Plutarch says that EURYCLES was the principal Syracusan speaker, who proposed the punishment of the generals; Diodorus calls him DIOCLES. As Barber points out (The Historian Ephorus, p. 167), " Diodorus, XlI, 34,6, reintroduces Diocles in much the same words as were used of him when he first appeared in XlI, 19,4..... Diodorus' reintroduction of Diocles may be ascribed to a use of Timaeus, who was perhaps presenting him to his readers for the first time ". Probably, Diodorus, using Ephorus as his authority for the earlier chapters of Bk XlI, followed Ephorus' identification of Diocles

Timaeus-Plutarch tradition is exactly the opposite of that given by Diodorus. It is probable that all the information about Gylippus which we find in the account of Plutarch came from the work of Timaeus, whose object it was to place the Syracusans, and Hermocrates in particular, in the most favourable light. It has already been noted that when Plutarch mentions Gylippus, it is almost invariably to abuse him; and Plutarch himself admits that such abuse is to be found in Timaeus.¹ On the other hand, the references in Diodorus to Hermocrates are few and brief; and Thucydides², while he admits his courage and his skill, gives him but little credit for the deliverance of Syracuse. But Timaeus, as we know,³ reckoned that the whole victory could be attributed to Hermocrates, and not to Gylippus.

The magnanimous conduct of Hermocrates in giving Nicias and Demosthenes an opportunity to commit suicide⁴ would appeal to Timaeus' glorification of the man, and would certainly be recorded by him.

Both the anecdotes about Gylippus may with certainty be attributed to Timaeus, but it is possible to get behind Timaeus and postulate an ultimate Theopompan source. Plutarch says that

¹ cf. chapters XLX, 5-6: XXI, 5: XXVI, 1: XXVII, 4 & 6

² VI, 72, 2

³ Nicias, 1, 2; Longinus, *Ἐπιτύψεις*, IV, 3

⁴ Justin, IV, 5, also says that Demosthenes put an end to himself; although it would be no easy task to dogmatize about the sources of Justin, who himself made an epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Hist. Philippicae, we do find in Justin those moralizing tendencies of the Peripatetic fashion; Trogus may have made use of the 'History of Kings' of Timagenes of Alexandria, but he may ultimately be indebted to Timaeus for much of his material, in all those parts of his history which deal with Sicily.

he has told the story of Gylippus' greed with more detail in his Life of Lysander; in that Life he says that Gylippus was entrusted with the guardianship of Lysander's treasures and money, but he ripped open the sacks and extracted a great deal of money from each sack; then he sewed up the sacks, not being aware that in each sack there was a γραμματίδιον², indicating how much money it should contain. The extracted money he hid under the tiling of his house. The ephors, finding that the money in the sacks did not tally with the amount indicated in the γραμματίδιον, were perplexed until a servant of Gylippus informed against his master by giving a riddling explanation to the authorities, "many owls are sleeping under the tiles" - the owls being the stamp upon the Athenian coinage. Then, says Plutarch, "after adding a deed so disgraceful and ignoble as this to his previous great and brilliant achievements, Gylippus was forced to flee from Sparta".

Now in this Life of Nicias, Plutarch attributes this story to the authority of Timaeus, where it illustrates the φιλολογία and κλονηξία³ of Gylippus; but the account in the Nicias is very brief, although, curiously enough, Plutarch here says that Gylippus extracted thirty of the thousand talents, while in the Lysander he specifies no number of talents stolen. Also, in the Nicias

¹ XVI, 2 - 4

² σκευή , says Diodorus, XI, 11, 106, 9

³ In his Comparison, Timol. & Aemil. Paul, II, 4, he also refers to Timaeus as his authority for Gylippus' greed and love of money, although he does not there recount this same incident.

Gylippus is coupled with his father, Cleandridas, who was convicted of taking bribes and was forced to flee from Sparta.

In his Life of Pericles¹, after referring to the bribing of Cleandridas, Plutarch adds briefly that Gylippus, "after noble achievements, was caught in base practices and banished from Sparta in disgrace".

Diodorus², who also passes on this story about Gylippus, says that Gylippus extracted three hundred of the fifteen hundred silver talents sent home by Lysander, and sewed up the bags, not knowing that there was a *συντάλη* in each. More of the story he apparently does not know; but he adds that Gylippus escaped from Sparta and was condemned to death, referring also to the fate of his father. Diodorus gives us no authority for his anecdote, nor does Athenaeus³, whose account is very brief and who says that Gylippus starved himself to death.

Now it seems quite unreasonable to assume that Plutarch is indebted to Timaeus for his version of the anecdote in his Life of Lysander, merely because he refers the incident to Timaeus in his Life of Nicias. In any case⁴, he tells us in the Nicias that the Lysander has already been written and he has given a fuller account there of the same incident. In this Life of Nicias

¹ XI11, 4

² XI11, 106, 8 - 10: *ἄνδρες ἱκανοὶ τᾶλλα δοῦντες εἶναι, ταῦτα πρᾶξαντες τὸν ἄλλον βίον κατὰ τὴν κατὰ γυμνασίων.*

³ VI, 233 F - 234 A

⁴ XXVI111, 4

Plutarch does not refer to the " great and brilliant achievements of Gylippus " in Sicily, nor suggest that this was the only disgraceful act to spoil the record of the Spartan. No doubt, many contemporary writers were aware of Gylippus' dishonour. Diodorus may have found the incident in Ephorus (or, more likely, in Timaeus, for he was certainly using parts of Timaeus for this section of his work). On the other hand, it is not unreasonable to assume that Theopompus is the original source of the story. For it will be demonstrated later that the Hellenica of Theopompus supplied Plutarch with the greater part of his material for the Life of Lysander - that Theopompus gave Plutarch the information that Lysander went on to Thrace after the fall of Athens, and sent back Gylippus to Sparta with his money. In this case, Timaeus who probably made good use of Theopompus for his History of Sicily, and is assumed to have copied Ephorus also, may ² himself have taken the anecdote from Theopompus (or Ephorus), ignored the praise implied in both historians for Gylippus' achievements in Sicily (which, in any case, Timaeus did not recognise), and passed it on as a further illustration of the type of character which he was glad to paint of Gylippus.

¹ Lysander, XVll, 1

² Polybius, Xll, 28

The last sentence of this chapter (paragraph 6), with its description of the shield of Nicias,¹ may well be a comment made by Plutarch himself. It is possible that he made inquiries of travellers and learnt from them that a shield, reputed to be that of Nicias, could still be seen in Syracuse. But it is difficult to believe that the shield could have survived the vicissitudes of Sicilian fortune for over five centuries, and still be on show in Syracuse in Plutarch's day. Timaeus, of course, would have had ample opportunity to see the exhibit for himself, before Agathocles usurped the power at Syracuse in 317 B.C. On one of the rare occasions when Polybius² has a word to say in favour of Timaeus, it is to praise him for finding an inscription hidden away at the back of a temple.

¹cf. Pollux, Onomast., 1, 134: λέγεται δὲ καὶ Νικίας πορφύραν καὶ χρυσὸν
 κρίβας κορυφῆσαι τὴν ἄσπίδα.

²XII, 11

CHAPTER XXIX

The whole of this chapter, with the exception of the first half-sentence, is peculiar to Plutarch, although Diodorus also relates that " some Athenians, who had been well bred and instructed in several arts, were loosed from their fetters by the young men of Syracuse ". But Plutarch, after describing the branding of some of the Athenian prisoners, records two anecdotes (paragraphs 3 - 5) which illustrate the great love of the Sicilians for the choral hymns of Euripides, prefacing them with the words, " Some Athenians were saved for the sake of Euripides ".

The earliest extant authority which we have for the first anecdote is the considerable, although mutilated, fragment of Satyrus' Life of Euripides.² This fragment is interesting on other grounds, for it is the only extant portion of Hellenistic biography which we possess. Did Plutarch cull this anecdote directly from Satyrus? His knowledge of Peripatetic literature was obviously good.³ Had he read Satyrus' Life recently and remembered or noted down this anecdote? Or did he find the story in Timaeus, to whom Satyrus was also indebted?

¹ Plutarch agrees with Thucydides (VII, 87) that the daily ration for Athenian prisoners in the stone quarries was 2 *κότυλαι* of corn and one of water; Plutarch gives no number of survivors - Thucydides mentions 7000 at the fewest, Diodorus 7000 prisoners, with 18000 slain.

² G. & H. Oxyr. Pap. LX, 1176

³ cf. Barbu, les biographies de P., pp 47 - 71; Paton, C.R., XXVII, quotes two examples of close verbal reminiscences between Satyrus' Life of Euripides and Plutarch's De Adulatore et Amico, 68 B, and Conjug. Praecept. 141 B.

It is impossible to answer these questions with any degree of certainty. But three facts do at least suggest a Timaeian source. Euripides was very popular among writers of the Fourth century and later, who would be glad to find and record examples of the affection in which he was held by contemporary non-Athenian Greeks. Timaeus, we know, was very fond of Euripides, and a story of this type would naturally appeal to him, for it would satisfy his sense of divine justice to find that the people of Euripides who rejected the poet during his life-time, were notwithstanding saved by the popularity of the works of the same poet on more than one occasion.

Secondly, the account of Satyrus is very brief: " The story is that at the time of Nicias' expedition to Sicily, when numbers of Athenians were captured, many of them owed their release to the poems of Euripides - any who remembered some of his verses and taught them to the sons of those who had taken them captive; so great was the admiration of the whole of Sicily for Euripides ". Plutarch' story is more expanded and with further detail. One need not assume that Plutarch could not have expanded the more simple account of Satyrus; but, if Timaeus had in the first instance told the story, Satyrus would have had to condense it so as to fit it into the limits of his biographical dialogue; while Plutarch adds information (about the food and drink offered to the starving Athenians after the battle) which he could hardly have imagined, and would not have inserted unless he were using an authority other than Satyrus.

' cf. Plutarch, Lysander, XV, 4, where Plutarch says that the proposition of the Spartan allies to destroy the city of Athens and sell all the Athenians into slavery was finally rejected because of the influence of a chorus of Euripides.

Thirdly, the second anecdote recorded by Plutarch, about the Caunians who were refused refuge in the harbour of Syracuse until they ~~declared~~ declared that they knew some of the songs of Euripides, seems to suggest that both stories spring from a common Sicilian source (or are likely to have been found in a history of Sicily), the object of which was to ascribe greater culture to Sicily than to any other τῶν ἑκτὸς Ἑλλήνων !

' cf. Polybius, Xll, 26, where the historian alleges that Timaeus claimed a high degree of culture for his native Sicilians:
 τῶν δ' ἀνδρῶν σοφίᾳ διαγνηστότων σοφωτάτους τὰς ἐν Σικελίᾳ.

CHAPTER XXX

The whole of this short chapter is peculiar to Plutarch, consisting of one graphic incident, and concluding with the words: " So hard was it for the Athenians to believe that Nicias had suffered the fate which he had often foretold to them ".

It is quite impossible to identify the source of the anecdote about the stranger in the barber's shop at Athens, who first brought the tragic news to Athens, and suffered so hideously for doing so. It is hardly likely that the story is from any Athenian source - it is rather the type of tale to be recounted in the camp of the enemy, ascribing to their defeated foe a cruelty which even their consternation and confusion could hardly excuse.

There is no epilogue to the Life of Nicias; and it is strange that, if Plutarch used his Thucydides at first hand, he did not conclude his biography with a reference to Thucydides' post-mortem evaluation of the character of Nicias.¹

D.R.Stuart,² referring to Thucydides' appreciation of Nicias, says, " It would seem that, since the reputation of Nicias for uprightness of character was so high, Thucydides in this case intended to stress ethical valuation ".

Just the quotation, surely, for an ethical biographer !

¹ VII, 86.

Admittedly, there are similarities between Thucy. VII, 86 and Nicias, IX, 6, and perhaps XXVI, 6

² Epochs of Greek & Roman Biography, p. 37

From this examination of the passages contained in the Life of Nicias, chapters XLV - XXX, which are found in neither Thucydides nor Diodorus, it seems obvious that their peculiar characteristics are, from what we know of the great Sicilian historian, the characteristics of Timaeus. In every instance where there is some uncertainty as to the ultimate source, one may with some degree of probability postulate a Sicilian authority. The passages all follow a tradition written from a Sicilian point of view; the authority from whom they are taken either had access to contemporary writings, or was himself an eyewitness of the events. Again, they are hostile to Gylippus the Spartan, and complimentary to Hermocrates the Syracusan. They show very little personal interest in Nicias, and deal with him in the somewhat casual manner in which the defeated enemy general might be introduced in an historical narrative, except when Nicias acts in such a way that he calls for praise from the enemy, or when he shows an interest in matters of religion which also appeal to the source.¹ Finally, the passages seem to be interwoven into the framework of the biography in such a way as to imply that Plutarch either made a skilful synopsis of his own authority (who was himself making an equally skilful synopsis of earlier authorities and the findings of his own research), or made most strange use of three or more authorities side by side, selecting in an arbitrary manner first

¹ They contain references to omens, oracles, portents and current superstitions, in which both Timaeus and Philistus were interested: cf. Cicero, De Div. 1, 39.

one and then the other, contradicting one and showing preference for the other, and yet weaving the whole into a unity, which in its general aspect was consistently pro-Sicilian.

CHAPTERS XII and XIII

These chapters, which act as a prologue to the Sicilian Expedition, because they are not a part proper of the historical narrative, need separate consideration. There is much in them which is peculiar to Plutarch (particularly in the long series of omens which is recorded in chapter XIII), but nothing which contradicts the information supplied by Thucydides or the meagre references of Diodorus.

One can state with certainty that Plutarch's tone in these two chapters is against the expedition, and he piles up argument upon argument to show how foolish, how short-sighted, how contrary to all the warnings of heaven such an expedition was. Neither in Thucydides' nor in Diodorus² is there any hint of a superstitious connection between the mutilation of the Hermae and the recall of Alcibiades and failure of the expedition.³ Yet the chapters of Plutarch are full of this superstitious connection, and it has been pointed out before that Timaeus delighted to draw this sort of parallel. Tillyard, in his essay on ~~Timaeus~~ Agathocles⁴, quotes many examples of the way in which Timaeus illustrated his belief that sacrilege was visited by a direct blow from heaven, and that punishment by the gods for an unholy deed took such a shape as clearly to show for what crime it was inflicted.

Again, if one had no other indications of authority, one

¹ VI, 8 et seq. ² XII, 84 et seq. ³ Except, perhaps, VI, 27
⁴ Tillyard, Agathocles, pp. 14, 15, 68 - 73, 175, 204.

would be compelled to admit that both the style and the matter are reminiscent of the school of Isocrates. We know that Isocrates (apart from his " panhellenism ") reckoned that the possession of a navy and an overseas empire was detrimental to the best interests of Athens. This he illustrated in the " Peace " by reference to the Sicilian Expedition. Timaeus, a pupil of one of the pupils of Isocrates, and also a Sicilian with a natural bias against Athens, would readily take up the master's views, especially as they coincided with his own sense of patriotism.

One feels, also, that chapter XII contains almost incontrovertible evidence that Plutarch could not have used his Thucydides at first hand. It is noticeable that the only arguments to oppose the expedition which Plutarch puts into the mouth of Nicias¹ were an attack on Alcibiades for thus seeking to gratify his ambition and satisfy his greed, and a warning of grievous dangers involved in an expedition beyond the seas. But, in fact, the speeches of Nicias which are found in Thucydides² are full of most statesmanlike arguments against the expedition - the stupidity of engaging in a great war with Sicily with powerful enemies at home ready to pounce upon a defenceless city, the folly of seeking new subjects in foreign lands while old subjects near at hand were still in revolt, the impossibility of keeping Sicily under control, through lack of forces, even if the expedition were successful. Granted that Plutarch was more interested in personal relationships than in statesmanlike arguments ! But if Plutarch had been making

¹ Nicias, XII, 4 - 5

² VI, 23

use of Thucydides at first hand, he could hardly have omitted to mention the cogency of such arguments, and the evidence which they supply to paint one side of the picture of Nicias' character to which justice is not done in this biography. Timaeus, on the other hand, would not be interested in arguments of this sort, when he could point to the destruction of the Athenian forces as the inevitable consequence of a violation of the warnings of heaven.

It is, therefore, quite likely that Plutarch adapted from Timaeus almost the whole of these two chapters. Chapter XII is repeated, in very similar words, in the Life of Alcibiades. But one new idea is introduced into this chapter of the Life of Nicias: "The ἄποροι¹ feared accusations of trying to escape their contributions for the support of the navy, and so, despite their better judgment, held their peace".

On the testimony of Lysias¹, Nicias was compelled to go to Sicily against his will; and Plutarch says² that Nicias found his greatest opponent in the person of a certain Demostratus, who is not mentioned by Thucydides or Diodorus; but we know from Aristophanes³ that Demostratus incurred the later anger of the Athenians for his enthusiastic support of the expedition, and the same man seems to have been one of the principal objects of Attack in Eupolis' Ἀγροί⁴.

¹ "Confiscation of the Property of the Brother of Nicias", 2.

² Nicias XII, 6: ὁ βέλτιστος τῶν δεησαμένων ἐπὶ τὸν πόλεμον παρεβύνατο τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις.

³ Lysistrata, 391.

⁴ Kock, C.A.F. 1, 258 ff; Powell, New Ghs in Gk Lit., 3rd ser., 161-3

CHAPTER XIII

This chapter is full of information of an anecdotal nature, which is repeated in the Life of Alcibiades, but with two strange points of disagreement.

In this Life of Nicias (XIII, 3) Plutarch says that " no signs, not even the mutilation of the Hermae " could deter the Athenians from the expedition. In the Life of Alcibiades² he seems to contradict this, for there he says that the incident of the Hermae " confounded the hearts of many, even among those who usually set small store by such things ".

Again, in the Life of Nicias (XIII, 1) he says that Alcibiades " had other diviners in his private service, and from sundry oracles reputed ancient he cited one saying that great fame would be won by the Athenians in Sicily ". It is strange that a statement of this nature, which would be more appropriate in the Life of Alcibiades, is not mentioned there.³

One cannot with certainty refer to Timaeus as the authority for the whole series of omens and oracles recorded in this chapter, some of which are repeated in the Life of Alcibiades.⁴

¹ " The ultimate source is an Atthis ", says Jacoby, Atthis, p. 267.

² XVIII, 4

³ Plutarch tells us (Alcib., XIII, 9) that the Nicias was written before the Alcibiades; he may therefore have used with some brevity the relevant material for the Alcibiades which he had already used in the Nicias; it is possible that Plutarch is following a Hellenistic biographer for his Life of Alcibiades, supplementing him with material drawn from various sources, historical & biographical.

⁴ XVII & XVIII

- 2 Plutarch commences with a series of oracles, reputed to have been given to Alcibiades by certain diviners whom he had in his private service; these oracles were all apparently selected by Alcibiades and his friends because they suggested a successful outcome for the Sicilian Expedition. Alcibiades was delighted to receive envoys from the shrine of Ammon in the Libyan desert with an oracle¹ to say that the Athenians would capture all the Syracusans. This information is almost certainly from Timaeus.

The mutilation of all the Hermae in the city of Athens, except the Hermes of Andocides, was looked upon as a bad omen for the Expedition. The account given here by Plutarch does not differ from, nor contradict, the accounts of other writers.² Thucydides, who mentions " a certain man ",³ whose Hermes was not mutilated, does not name Andocides; but we have all the information about Andocides, including the name of his *φύλη*,⁴ given to us in the speech of Andocides; and it is clear that this information was in the first instance taken from Andocides and passed on to Plutarch by his authority.

There is no evidence as to the source from which the incident is taken, which Plutarch calls the " affair of the altar of the twelve gods "; Thucydides,⁵ Herodotus,⁶ Xenophon⁷ and Lycurgus⁸ mention this altar.

¹ This oracle has been discussed in Nicias, XLV, 7: cf. Dion, LIIV-LVII; Cimon, XVIII, 7; Lysander, XXV, 3 - 4.

² Andocides, De Myst. 62; Isoc., De Big. 3-4; Diodorus, XIII, 2; Nepos Alcib. III; Longinus, IV, 3; Philochorus, F.H.G., I, 402, III.

³ VI, 60. ⁴ De Myst. 62: *ὁ ἑρμῆς ... ὅν ἡ Αἰγῆς ἀναθήκεν.*

⁵ VI, 54. ⁶ II, 7: VI, 108. ⁷ Hipp., III, 2. ⁸ Cont. Leoc. 198.

- 6 Plutarch says that ravens alighted upon a gold Palladium, set up by the Athenians at Delphi out of the spoils of her victories in the Persian Wars, and pecked off the gold. Pausanias mentions that he saw in the enclosure at Delphi on a bronze palm tree a gold Palladium, dedicated by Athens to commemorate her victory by land and sea at Eurymedon. The association of this portent with Syracuse may, perhaps, suggest a Sicilian origin to the anecdote, and Plutarch makes the point that the Athenians claimed that this portent was an invention of the Delphians at the suggestion of the Syracusans.²

Another oracle ordered the Athenians to bring the priestess of Athena from Clazomenae³, in Ionia, to Athens, and when they fetched her, her name was *Ἥρακλεια*.

The conclusion drawn by Plutarch - or his source - from such omens as these, was that Athens should "keep the peace".

11 The concluding paragraphs of the chapter contain stories about Meton, Socrates and the festival of Adonis. The incidents about Meton and Socrates are repeated in the Life of Alcibiades, but in the Nicias much greater emphasis is laid upon the warning which these two men gave against the Expedition.

' X, 9

² According to H.W.Parke (Hist. of Delphic Oracle, 1939, p. 213), the description of ravens pecking off the golden dates may go back to a contemporary source, as " Plutarch also records the conjecture of Athenians that this story was an invention of Delphians at the instigation of the Syracusans ".

³ Plutarch says elsewhere (Moralia 433 B) that the instruction was to fetch the woman from Erythrae; Clazomenae here may perhaps be a slip.

This is particularly true in the case of Socrates. In his Life of Alcibiades¹ Plutarch says that Socrates had no hopes that any good would come to the city from the Expedition. In the Nicias, Socrates' *Σαφελόνιον* indicated (*ἐπιγύσει*) that the Expedition would make for the ruin of the city; " Socrates let this be known to his intimate friends, and the story had a wide circulation ".

The story of Meton,² the astronomer, is repeated in almost identical words in the Life of Alcibiades, the only difference being that in the Nicias Plutarch says that the son of Meton was to sail to Sicily in charge of a trireme³, but does not make it clear that Meton's son did not sail; while in the Alcibiades he indicates that Meton, by feigning madness, achieved his purpose.

0 - 11 The last paragraphs of the chapter, with their suggestion that the wailing of the women of Athens at the Adonis festival was interpreted by some as a bad portent for the Expedition, are repeated briefly in the Life of Alcibiades.⁴

¹ XVll, 5 - 6

² cf. Arist. Clouds 616: Birds 992 et seq.

³ Aelian, V. H., Xlll, 12, tells the same story.

⁴ XVlll, 3; cf. Arist. Lysis. 389 et seq.

Having examined those additional details which are found in Plutarch's Life of Nicias, chapters XII - XXX, but not recorded by Thucydides or Diodorus, and having demonstrated that we may reasonably assume them to have been taken by Plutarch from Timaeus' History of Sicily, we must proceed to compare the few passages which we find both in Plutarch and in Diodorus, but not in Thucydides. There are, in fact, only four short passages which, while not found in Thucydides, are in the text of Diodorus, and lead us to assume from their very nature that Plutarch's authority and that of Diodorus are both drawing upon one original source. This source seems to be Philistus, the Syracusan historian. Although these are not the only passages culled from Philistus by Timaeus and passed on to Plutarch, they are at any rate the only passages of Philistus which are identical in the Ephorus and in the Timaeus traditions.

- 1) Nicias, XXV, 2: Diodorus¹ also describes, in some detail, the great sea fight before Syracuse, and the tumultuous emotions of the spectators in the city itself.
- 2) Nicias, XXVII, 8: Diodorus² agrees with Plutarch that the captured suits of Athenian armour were hung along the banks of the river.
- 3) Nicias, XXVIII, 1 - 3: Diodorus³ describes the general assembly of the Syracusans after the defeat of the Athenians, giving the name of the popular leader of the Syracusans as Diocles (Eurycles, says Plutarch); he

¹ XI, 14

² XI, 19

³ XI, 19

also refers to the selling of the Athenians and their allies into slavery, while freemen and Sicilian Hellenes were cast into stone-quarries, and to the plea of Hermocrates for leniency (as has been noted, Plutarch and Diodorus give almost identical quotations from the speech of Hermocrates).

- 4) Nicias, XXIX, 2: Diodorus³ says that the young men of Syracuse freed a few Athenians who were well educated; Plutarch more specifically speaks of them being freed " for the sake of Euripides ".

We may assume that this information came from Philistus - in the case of Diodorus through Ephorus, and through Timaeus to Plutarch. It is unlikely that Plutarch would use at first hand the history of Philistus, for the following reasons:

- 1) Plutarch tells us that he has no desire to " amass useless materials of research " ⁴.
- 2) Philistus would supply the biographer with little fresh information about the character of Nicias which he could not have found in his primary source, the History of Timaeus.
- 3) Philistus was not the type of writer to whom Plutarch would naturally have recourse. ⁵ Although we know that he was not averse

¹ called *Λετοφία* by both Plutarch & Diodorus; *Λιβροφία* by Thucy. VII, 86.

² Nicias XXVIII, 3 ³ XLIII, 33 ⁴ Nicias I, 5

⁵ F.H.G, I, 185: Cicero, Ad Quint. Frat. II, 13, " Siculus ille capitalis, creber, acutus, brevis paene pusillus Thucydides "; De Orat. II, 13; Brutus, 17: Diodorus, XLV, 103; Dion. Hal. II, 131, 19.

to recording omens and oracles,¹ we have no evidence that his history was chatty or anecdotal. On the contrary, his narrative and his speeches were apparently dull, and one could not find in his pages those amusing stories and digressions which characterised his Isocratean contemporaries.² Philistus of Syracuse was not a pupil of Isocrates, although he is often confused with Philiscus of Miletus, because of a mistake on the part of Suidas, and a false interpretation of, or a false reading of, Philiscus for Philistus in Cicero.³ Being a supporter of the Hermocratean party, and Dionysius in particular, Philistus no doubt made a considerable contribution to the support for, and praise of, Hermocrates which we find in Timaeus. On the other hand, as a partisan of Dionysius and an opponent of Dion,⁴ he would naturally incur the disapproval of Timaeus.

It is, of course, impossible to specify with any degree of certainty all the information which came to Plutarch from Philistus through the medium of Timaeus.⁵ There are three passages

¹ Cicero, De Div. 1, 39 ² Theon, Progymn. 44, Spengel

³ De Orat., II, 23, 94; but in De Orat. II, 13, 57, Cicero clearly distinguishes between Philistus and the Isocratean.

⁴ Diodorus XVI, 16; Plutarch, Dion, XXXV

⁵ It has been assumed that Timaeus used both Thucydides & Philistus at first hand; this assumption need not be correct, for if Philistus merely transcribed the account of Thucydides, when describing the Sicilian Expedition (Theon, Progymn. 63, 25, Spengel), adding further details from his own research, then Timaeus might find the Thucydidean account superfluous. But it is possible that later writers exaggerated Philistus' imitation of Thucydides. Theon, a rhetorician, would be on the look out for similarity of style rather than content between the two historians. (cf. Gomme, Hist. Comm. on Thucy., Vol. 1, page 30, note 1)

of which we can be certain that they are from the works of Philistus, two of which are not mentioned by Diodorus; these passages contain mention of the name of Stilbides¹, the attempted suicide of Demosthenes², and the Philistus³ version of the execution of Nicias and Demosthenes, which is identical with that of Thucydides.

For the rest, we may assume that when Plutarch gives us some personal, contemporary anecdotes, told from the point of view of the Syracusans, he is passing on information which has been culled from Philistus by Timaeus. The latter would be willing enough to accept the factual evidence of Philistus, while disparaging his style, unless he had some particular reason for preferring a contradictory account.⁴

Thus it is possible that the following passages are ultimately from Philistus via Timaeus:- chapters XLV, 6 - 7; XLVIII, 3; XXI, 1 and 9 - 10; XLIV, 1b - 2; XXV, 2; XXVII, 2, 5, 6, 8; XLVIII, 1 - 3; XLIX, 2.

¹ Nicias, XLVIII, 7 - cf. Schol., Aristophanes, Peace, 1031

² Nicias, XXVII, 2 = Pausanias, 1, 29, 11

³ Nicias, XLVIII, 5 = Thucydides, VII, 86, 2

⁴ This may be so in the Plutarch-Timaeus account of the deaths of Nicias and Demosthenes - suicide, at the suggestion of Hermocrates.

In this section of the Life of Nicias there are many occasions, as has been pointed out, where Plutarch passes on information which is also found in Thucydides, but absent from Diodorus, and on the whole such information is found to be accurately transcribed. But all the evidence - from a close comparison between Thucydides and Plutarch - seems to suggest that Plutarch did not have Thucydides before him or use him at first hand, when he wrote his account of Nicias' part in the fatal Sicilian expedition.

There seems to be strength in the arguments that Thucydides did not offer to the biographer (as apparently Timaeus did) material about Nicias in a convenient form or on a convenient scale, that Thucydides was lacking in those anecdotes which would help Plutarch's readers to appreciate the character of Nicias. But, apart from this, the following points must be noted:-

- 1) On three occasions¹ Plutarch seems deliberately to change the order of Thucydides.
- 2) On three occasions Plutarch seems to contradict Thucydides; in Plutarch Demosthenes' arguments for sailing home² are different from those in Thucydides; Thucydides says that the Athenians did try to salvage some of their vessels, while Plutarch contradicts this;³ while giving a different version of the deaths of Nicias and Demosthenes, Plutarch is fair enough to state that he is passing on the version of Timaeus.⁴

¹ Nicias, XLV, 3; XV, 3-4; XIX, 8.

² Nicias, XXII, 1

³ XXV, 5

⁴ XXVIII, 5

3) Plutarch passes on specific numbers which are not found in Thucydides¹; this is most important, for Plutarch would have no reason for giving numbers unless his principal source passed them on to him. He would hardly be likely to turn to Timaeus or another source for numbers of the slain, which he did not find in Thucydides, and then turn back again to Thucydides for his narrative.

4) Plutarch seems to insert quite naturally into his narrative extra details (sometimes, just one sentence) which are not found in Thucydides²; these details do not break the narrative - for the most part they are quite insignificant facts, yet details which Plutarch could not have imagined or invented.

As has been shown, almost all the extraneous material supplied by Plutarch comes from Timaeus; and what is not Timaeian may be termed 'eidological', where Plutarch digresses to give an interesting anecdote to exemplify the character of his hero, or where he passes moralising comments on a particular situation. But all the instances quoted above are examples of where the narrative is quite unbroken and very similar to Thucydides, but with additional information, some geographical, some describing troop movements, some specifying numbers of ships or of the slain, which are not found in Thucydides.

¹ cf. Nicias, XXI, 1 and XXI, 11; in the latter reference Plutarch records the Athenian dead at Epipolae as 2000.

² cf. Nicias, XVI, 5: τοῦ δὲ ποταμοῦ διασθέρων καὶ ἀποκόπτων τὰς ψαφύρας.
 Nicias, XLX, 7: the death of Gongylus specifically mentioned.
 Nicias, XXI, 1: additional information about Athenian fleet:
 Nicias, XXVI, 2: ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἑξαλοῖς καὶ πεδινοῖς τοῖς ἑπταῖς ἔταξαν.
 Nicias, XXVII, 5-6: the abuse of Nicias by Gylippus.

It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that from chapter XII to the end of the biography, Plutarch made skilful use of a single historical authority, giving to his readers a pleasant resumé of the Sicilian History of Timaeus. However much Plutarch may have disliked and criticised Timaeus, he found his writings useful for more than one of his Lives, in much the same way as Polybius and Diodorus, although heartily detesting him, were glad enough to make use of the inquiring mind of Timaeus and his genuine abilities in research. For he was certainly a voluminous, if uncritical writer, who interlarded his pages with quotations and anecdotes, and himself consulted many authorities, both good and bad.

The portrait which Plutarch paints in these chapters is a fair sêtimate of a general, who, after all, from the standpoint of Timaeus, was the leader of a foreign army invading his home country. But it is not an improbable picture, or fantastic - in fact, it is remarkably moderate in its language. Whether such moderation is due to Plutarch's blue-pencil, or whether it was really to be found in Timaeus, we shall never know. But Plutarch could have done much worse than have recourse to Timaeus for his description of the part which Nicias played in the Sicilian Expedition. At any rate, he built his chapters upon the sound historical sense of Thucydides and the rather pedestrian and prosaic information of the eyewitness, Philistus, interpreted by one who must surely rank as one of the greatest of all romantic historians, despite his devaluation by later critics.

PART 11.PLUTARCH'S LIFE OF NICIAS.Section 2. The early military career of Nicias (11 - XI).

These chapters give us a very different portrait of the Athenian general and statesman. Here, at any rate, we find the sort of information which must have been dear to the hearts of the Peripatetic biographers of the Hellenistic period - anecdotes to illustrate personal character,¹ citations from the Athenian comic poets, references to, and quotations from, Euripides, Aristotle and Theophrastus, comparisons and contrasts, antipathetic allusions to Cleon and Hyperbolus, and rhetorical moralisings upon the folly, weaknesses and suspicions of the Athenian mob. But there are no scandalous or sensational anecdotes recorded about Nicias himself.

We have here, not a systematised and coordinated biography of Nicias, tracing his early life and education, his political triumphs and military victories in chronological order, but a patchwork, skilfully embroidered, of anecdotes loosely connected. Many of these anecdotes have more bearing upon the lives of Cleon, or Hyperbolus, or Alcibiades, than upon the life of Nicias. The latter, one might almost say, serves as the buttress between the shameless impudence of Cleon and the reckless daring of Alcibiades; for all his weaknesses, Nicias stands midway between the ἀπειρή of Pericles and the βωπολογία of Cleon.

¹ " Signs of the soul in men " (τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς σημεῖα), Plut. Alex., 1, 3.

The actual authorities to whom Plutarch refers in this section of his Life of Nicias offer us but few clues to his primary source or sources. After all, quotations from, or references to, Thucydides, Aristotle, Theophrastus, and the Athenian tragic and comic poets, may easily imply a Hellenistic biographer or an Isocratean historian; they may suggest Theopompus of Chios or Idomeneus of Lampsacus, Duris of Samos, Heracleides Ponticus or Hermippus of Smyrna, or indeed any of the peripatetic biographers of the third and second centuries B.C., whose works are no longer extant and of whose writings we know so very little. On the other hand, we might assume that Plutarch collected the material and anecdotes himself from widely scattered sources.

But it does seem a priori unlikely that Plutarch is indebted to a biographer for the information which he gives us in the early chapters of this Life. In the first place, if the assumption is correct that the historian Timaeus directly supplied the information for chapters XII - XXX, and if Plutarch based his earlier chapters upon peripatetic biography, then we must assume that he discarded his biographer at precisely that moment in his life of Nicias when Nicias' career became other than commonplace, when the possibility offered itself to elaborate upon spicy details and racy incidents in an Expedition that was never looked upon as other than disastrous from an Athenian viewpoint. Secondly, these early chapters are hardly biographical in the strict sense of the word. There is no 'epilogue', as might have been expected at the close of chapter XXX - but the reason for this is the Timaeian source in which Plutarch would not find any summing-up of the character

of Nicias. Nor do we find any ' prologue ' to introduce either chapters 1 or 11; instead, there is a sort of source-criticism in the first chapter, which leads on to a series of comparisons, in the second chapter, between the adult Nicias and his contemporaries. These ten chapters do not consistently lay emphasis upon Nicias, and many of the incidents which they record have but a very loose connection with him. Of course, most of what has to be said concerns Nicias in some way or another, but Plutarch's authority has no hesitation in blatantly digressing to dilate upon the mad vanity¹ or indecent demagogy² of Cleon and the shameful fate of Hyperbolus³, or to elaborate the schemes of the ambitious Alcibiades⁴. It would be wrong to assume that Hellenistic biographers never did digress (certainly Plutarch himself often does), but these chapters are more reminiscent of an historian, writing under the influence of rhetoric and cramming his pages with anti-radical attacks, than a factual biographer who is illustrating character from incidents⁵. They do not contain much of what D. R. Stuart⁶ calls " the themes essential to the biographer in any age - nationality, parentage, parents' walk in life, pursuits engaged in prior to entrance on career proper, education and teachers ". In the third place, it is perhaps unlikely that a biography, as such, of Nicias was available to Plutarch - or even to Nepos, who must have had in Rome a much wider circle of authorities to draw upon, if he desired to use them. There is surely some significance in the

¹ Nicias, VII, 7 ² VIII, 6 ³ XI, 3-8 ⁴ X, 3-9; XI, 1-5

⁵ There are no sayings of Nicias in the Apophthegmata.

⁶ Epochs of Gk & Roman Biography, p. 171

fact that Nepos omits to include a Life of Nicias in his biographies, although he gives us short accounts of Chabrias and Iphicrates. This may be due to the fact that no biography of Nicias did really exist, or that none was available to Nepos. If we are right in assuming that Nepos invariably used secondary biographies as his authorities, then he would be unlikely to resort to historical research to fill up any gaps in his series of Lives. But, of course, the argument from silence is not a conclusive one. If, however, there was a peripatetic silence about Nicias, it may be accounted for by the fact that the peripatetics were more interested in intellectuals than in soldiers, while Nicias was neither a great hero nor a great villain, neither a philosopher nor a tragedian, neither poet nor great statesman. We know that the peripatetics were interested in scandal and sensation (but not exclusively so, whatever impression Athenaeus may give us !); and if no biographies existed of Theramenes or Nicias or Thucydides, son of Melesias,² whom Aristotle³ considered to be the three most excellent Athenian citizens, it may have been because there was no scandal associated with them. D. R. Stuart⁴ has an amusing comment: " The old Adam that is in most of us turns instinctively a readier ear to the disparager who seeks to bring to light in biography the dross in the character of a man or woman than to the orthodox panegyrist " .

¹ Nepos was not a careful writer, and he was at pains to clear himself of the charge of writing history; yet it does seem evident that he had recourse to Ephorus for his Life of Pelopidas.

² But, according to Wade-Gery (J.H.S., 1932, Vol. 52, p. 221), the Vita Anon. Thucy. gives information about Thucydides, son of Melesias, which is ultimately from a 'Life', perhaps based upon Stesimbrotus: (Athenaeus, 589 D).

³ Constit. of Athens, XXVIII, 5

⁴ Ibid. p. 131

On the other hand, the peripatetic silence may be due to the fact that few personal traits could be ascertained about them which might illustrate their characters, or because they were not philosophers or thinkers, but men of action and political leaders.

As has been mentioned, there was little that was provocative or sensational about the life of Nicias, his sole vices apparently being an excessive timidity, a characteristic indecision and a superstitious fear of the gods. It does not seem likely that he was of aristocratic birth, for his son, Niceratus¹ (as good a democrat as his father), suffered death at the hands of the Thirty, as did Eucrates his brother. Lysias tells of the misfortunes of the family of Nicias, and at least suggests² that Nicias was a demagogue and consistently opposed to the oligarchic faction in Athens. If this was really so, then it is most likely that the historians of the late Fourth and the Third centuries B.C. gave him a place in their invariably biased treatment of the Athenian democratic leaders. The most likely of these writers for information about Nicias are Theopompus of Chios, Idomeneus of Lampsacus and, perhaps, Heracleides Ponticus.

Busolt³ suggests that the second chapter of Plutarch's Life of Nicias was taken in large part from Theopompus' Treatise on Demagogues, and that chapters LX - XI were also based upon Theopompus.

¹ cf. Diodorus, XLV, 5 *ἄνθρωπος πρὸς ἀπαντας ἐπιεικὴ καὶ φιλήθρων, πλείω δὲ καὶ δόξῃ εἶχε δὴν πρῶτον πάντων Ἀθηναίων.*

² Confisc. of the Prop. of the Brother of Nicias, 6: *Νικηράτος, ἀνεψίος ὦν ἔπος καὶ δὸς Νικίου, εὐνοῖς ὦν τῷ δρυτέρῳ πύργῳ, συλληφθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν τριάκοντα ἀπέθανεν, ὅτε γένετο ὅτε οὐκ οὐθ' ἤλικία δακτύλων ἀνάξιος εἶναι τῆς πολιτικῆς μετέωχεν. ... ἕλθε τὸ μῶστα ἐνομιζέτο τὸ ἀπέχεσθαι αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸ δρυτέρῳ πύργῳ εἶναι καὶ εἰς τοὺς ἡρωγῶνας καὶ αὐτῶν, ὥστε οὐκ εἶναι ποθ' ἕτερος ἐπιθυμῆσαι πολιτικῆς.*

³ Gr. Gesch. III, 2, 731 and 1259

Fricke¹ supposes Theopompus to have been Plutarch's source for the earlier chapters of the Nicias, as Ephorus was his source for the Alcibiades; and A. B. West² makes the point that Nicias was probably dealt with in Theopompus' Digression on Demagogues, because Pericles and his successor were considered as demagogues by later writers.³ It is, at any rate, interesting to note that the words *ὑπερυψηλῶς*⁴ and *ὑπερυψηλῶς* are used of Nicias by Plutarch in three of his chapters.⁴

Now this suggestion about a limited use by Plutarch of Theopompus is a reasonable one. Very frequently in his Lives and elsewhere⁵ Plutarch expresses his indebtedness to Theopompus, though whether directly or through the medium of a later writer, he does not say. From what we know of Theopompus, it is not unlikely that his digression on the Athenian demagogues in Book X of his Philippica offered quite the type of material, in anecdotal form, for which Plutarch was looking.

¹ Untersuchungen über die Quellen Plutarchs im Nik. und Alkib., p.14 et seq.

² Class. Phil., 1924, p. 136

³ cf. Aristotle, Const. Ath., XXVIII,2: Isoc., Antidosis, 234; Peace, 126.

⁴ II,4; III,1; IV,1.

⁵ Once in the Timoleon IV, the Dion XXIV, & the Alcib.,XXXII; twice in the Lysander, XVII & XXX, and three times in Themist.,XIX,XXV,XXXI; four times in Ages., X,XXXI,XXXII,XXXVI, and six times in Demosth., IV,XIII,XIV,XVIII,XXI,XXV.
cf. also, De Isid. et Osir., XLVII, 370 B-C,LXIX, 378 E; De Pyth. Orac.,XIX,403 E-F; Non Posse Suav., XI, 1093 C.; and there must be many places where Theopompus is the ultimate source, although he is not named - cf. early part of Life of Pericles; Demosth. XXV,1; Phocion, XXI, 2.

What were the characteristics of Theopompus ? Do we find any traces of these characteristics in the early chapters of the Life of Nicias ? Theopompus¹ himself was a controversial character, and few writers have been in agreement about his viewpoint; he seems to have been as great^a a mystery to writers who had all his works available as to modern scholars who are dependent upon a few collected fragments.

He was born in Chios in 378 B.C., and with his father was expelled from his native island. The young Theopompus travelled widely, reading extensively, learning rhetoric under Isocrates at Athens, and winning prizes for his ἐπιδείξεις². His principal works were a Hellenica in twelve books, which covered the seventeen years from 411/410, down to 395/394 B.C.,³ and were a continuation of Thucydides' great history, obviously implying both a respect for, and a knowledge of Thucydides; and a Philippica in fifty-eight books, a general history of the Greek world, which began under the year 360/359 B.C.,⁴ and contained many digressions,⁵ Book VIII being devoted to wonders, myths and fables, and part of Book X dealing with the demagogues at Athens, which was later published separately. It is this latter work which Plutarch would use, if he based his early chapters of the Life of Nicias upon a firsthand knowledge of Theopompus.

¹ The fragments are Grenfell & Hunt, Oxford, 1909, & F.Gr.H. II B. 115 et seq.; cf. Ed. Meyer, Theopomps Hellenika, 1909; G. Busolt, griech. Staatskunde, 1920; A. Momigliano, Riv. di Fil., N.S., LX, 1931, pp 230-242: 335-353; R. Laqueur, 'Theop.', RE, VA, 2176 ff, 1934; K. Von Fritz, 'The Hist. Theo.', A.H.R., pp 765-787, 1941.

² Gellius, N.A., X, 18; Vit. X Orat., 838 B; Quint., X, 1; Dion. Hal. ad P. VI.

³ Diodorus, XI, 11, 42, 5; XI, 11, 84, 7 ⁴ Diodorus, XVI, 3, 8

⁵ Dion. Hal. (Ad Pomp. VI): *ὅτι ... ἀναγκαῖαι ... ὅτι ἐν καιρῷ γινόμεναι, πῶς δὲ τὸ κακίστους ἐφείνωται.*

Of the historian himself, his critics give us the following information. Dionysius of Halicarnassus¹ refers to his clear, ornate and elegant style. Athenaeus,² although terming him *δυσχερῆστατος* attributes to him diligence and trustworthiness, calling him *φιλολήθης*³ " who has spent much money in a diligent search for historic facts ". Both Polybius⁴ and Nepos⁵ suggest that he was given to defamation, the former accusing him of an extravagance of language, coarse and unbecoming to the dignity of history. Cicero,⁶ also, claims that he was apt to overleap all bounds in the extravagance of his diction, and Suidas tells us that his master Isocrates remarked that he " needed the reins " - and in this respect he differed from his colleague Ephorus, who (vide Suidas) was " simple in character, and in the expression of what he had to say, supine and sluggish, with no tension. Theopompus was in character astringent and satirical, in diction abundant, fluent and impetuous, and very candid in his writings ".

Being an Isocratean, Theopompus naturally considered his rhetorical skill and style of the greatest importance, but at the same time he seems to have possessed the gift of quick characterisation, and his appeal to the peripatetic writers must have been considerable, for his fragments suggest that he wrote with vivid detail, with an eye to *παθος*, and a love of personalities and

¹ Ad Pomp. VI

² VI, 254 B

³ III, 85 A - B

⁴ VIII, 9 - 12

⁵ Alcibiades, XI

⁶ De Orat. III, 9, 36: Brutus LVI, 204: Ad Attic. VI, 1, 12.

anecdotes about historical characters.¹ He was interested in hidden motives², and seems to have been more critical than laudatory of historical characters. This perhaps is natural, for being endowed with a talent for invective and given an education more rhetorical than scientific, he was likely to see too often only the bad side and to censure for the mere love of doing so. But even this may be an unfair judgment of Theopompus, for we are dependent for the most part upon quotations made by Athenaeus and other writers who were interested in scandal. Gilbert Murray wants to make him a Cynic,³ saying, " There is a constant attempt (in Theopompus) to strip off the trappings of the general or statesman and exhibit the poor, frail human creature beneath "⁴. Dr Murray attributes this to the influence upon Theopompus of Antisthenes the Cynic;⁵ but it is probably an exaggeration, for the disillusion brought about by the age in which he lived, and the form of government under which he, an oligarch and an aristocrat, was compelled to live in Athens, would, no doubt, make him satirical in outlook.

Politically, he seems to have been quite violently anti-radical; and if at the best of times no lover of Athens, he⁶ certainly showed the greatest antipathy towards the Athenian

¹ cf. G. & H. fr. XX (Lysander), XXII (Agesilaus), XXXI (Cotys of Thrace), and also LXXXV, LXXXVI, LXXXIX, XC, CXXXV, etc.

² cf. Dion. Hal. Ad Pomp. VI: *πικροτής και τάνος, όταν επτερέψη τας πάθεις, μέγιστα δ' όταν ανεδείξη πάθειν ή στρατηγούς ποτηρά Βαυλιάρικα και ήράφας ή δίκας.*

³ " An historian, who took his view of life and public affairs from the Cynics ": Greek Studies, 1946, p. 165.

⁴ Ibid. p. 155

⁵ cf. Diog. Laert. Vita Antisthenis, VI, 1.

⁶ cf. fr. 148 G. & H., where he attempts to belittle the part played by Athens in repelling the Persian invasion.

demagogues'. At the same time, although his oligarchical sympathies would naturally lead him to favour Sparta, for - as Thucydides² points out - the Chians approximated most to the social and economic institutions of Sparta, he did not necessarily side with Sparta in the Peloponnesian War, for he has many severe things to say about the Spartan Constitution and about individual Spartans³; just as he has a sympathetic portrait to paint of the Athenian Cimon⁴. Inevitably, the teaching of his master Isocrates had some influence both upon his style and his conception of history (as Menander was not uninfluenced by the doctrine of ἀναρχία of his companion, Epicurus); and Isocrates invariably gives a sympathetic picture of Pericles, " a democrat, without being a radical "⁵.

¹ cf. Müller, F.H.G.: " fusius autem et sine dubio multa cum acerbitate exposuisse videtur de demagogis Eubulo, Callistrato, Cleone, Hyperbolo, aliis; ita ut Schol. Luc, fr. 102, hunc librum designare posset verbis: ἐν τῷ περὶ Δημαγωγῶν .

² VIII, 24, 4; VIII, 40, 2.

³ cf. inter alia, fr. 14, 233 G. & H.

⁴ fr. 89 G. & H.

⁵ Δημαγωγὸς ὡν ἄγαθός : cf. Peace, 126; Antidosis, 234; Isocrates himself was a conservative & reactionary who saw nothing but harm in the influence of the demagogues. He defended himself against the charge of being anti-democratic (Areopag. 56 et seq.), and yet would obviously support a monarchic form of government (Nicocles, 15 - 16). It is, of course, important to remember that Isocrates was a realist and saw the only hope of a united Greece in a common hatred of Persia (Panegy. 163 et seq.), with a strong leader to draw together the Greeks. Ideas of this type were bound to have some influence over Theopompus, who may have seen first in Lysander, and then in Philip of Macedon, a suitable embodiment of this ideal around which to write his history.

Because of the curious inconsistencies and apparent contradictions which are found in the surviving fragments of Theopompus, and also because the reputation which he held in antiquity indicated that he was an historian of rank, Theopompus has provoked the most widely conflicting estimates of his value as a historian, and indeed of his attitude to history. The least attractive estimate is that of Laqueur¹, who gives the impression that Theopompus was a more malignant predecessor of Tacitus, " an embittered moralist who was probably himself full of unworthy passions and rightly hated by his contemporaries ". Momigliano² attempts to explain his seeming inconsistencies by deriving them from two ideas taken over from Isocrates, his " Panhellenism " and his conception of the writing of history as a means of " Psychagogy ". Von Fritz makes a careful examination of all the relevant fragments, and starts from Theopompus' predilections (Sparta as a nation, and, as individuals, Cimon, Alcibiades, Lysander, Agesilaus, Antisthenes) and aversions (radical democracy and dissolute living), seeking to find in Theopompus a desire for a one-man rule, a sort of oligarchic government of austerity and simplicity.³

The Isocratean derived much of his material from Thucydides, Xenophon and Cratippus, and was obviously familiar with the works of Herodotus, Ctesias and Hellanicus (a political pamphleteer,

¹ PöW, RE, p. 2186

² Riv. di Fil., pp 335 - 353: ψυχολογία, cf. Dion. Hal. ad Pomp. VI.

³ " He was a man who not only dreamt of the good old times when there had been a strict order and a hierarchic society, but who had a very definite idea as to how and in what way only this dream of his could be made again to come true " - A.H.R., 46, 1941, p.778.

like Stesimbrotus of Thasos), whom he professed to surpass, and such contemporary writers as Theodectes and Naucrates.¹ Apparently, he did not scorn to accept at their face value the evidence which he found in the works of the Athenian comic poets,² and - like his colleague, Ephorus - was not averse to quoting from poets, especially Homer, and was fond of proverbial illustrations.³

Now, as Plutarch himself admits⁴ that he prefers an historian who is also a philosopher, while this gives him a wide scope and the almost unlimited choice of the Hellenistic age for his authorities, it makes it inevitable for us to look to the school of Isocrates in the first instance. A superficial survey of these early chapters of the Life of Nicias reveals the traces of what we know to have been the characteristics of Theopompus; yet, curiously enough, there are but two short passages⁵ which can be identified as Theopompan with absolute certainty, as will be demonstrated later. But the style of chapters II - XI is reminiscent of Theopompus; some of the satirical comments upon human affairs and the great men of the age are such as might have easily been found upon the lips of one who was living in an age of disillusion, and much of the anti-radical feeling and supercilious disregard for the people is typical of an aristocrat who did in

¹ fr. 27, G. & H.

² the schol. on Aristophanes bears witness to this: fr. 96 etc.

³ Fr. 68, 266, 269, G. & H.

⁴ Lysander, XXV, 5.

⁵ an anecdote about Cleon (VII, 7), and a description of Cleon's shameless oratorical methods (VIII, 6: this is also found, in very similar words, in Aristotle, Cons. of Athens, XXVIII, 5).

fact blame their democratic way of living for the debauchery and drunkenness of the Byzantines, and of the Chalcedonians.'

One is aware that no small portion of the material which makes up chapters II - XI is peculiar to Plutarch, and cannot be found in Thucydides, Xenophon, Plato or Aristotle, or any other extant writer. Yet, when Plutarch refers to any detail concerning Nicias' characteristics or habits, or tells any anecdote about him which is also to be found in other writers, such details or anecdotes are not in any substantial disagreement with the testimony of other authoritative writers.

It is then possible, from a critical examination of the early chapters of the Life of Nicias, to make a reasonable suggestion that Theopompus was Plutarch's ultimate authority. But such a suggestion is, after all, merely tentative and speculative; and, after the chapters have been examined in detail, it will be necessary to inquire whether Theopompus was used at first hand, or whether there is evidence that Plutarch used a later writer than Theopompus, who was himself passing on in his works the material which he found in the Isocratean.

' fr. 65, G. & H.: ἦν μὲν περὶ τῶν ἀπορίας τῆς πολιτείας ἔπειτα
ἐν ἐπιτηδείασι καὶ βίῳ βελτίονι διατέλουσιν ὄντες.

CHAPTER II

As has been observed, this chapter does not commence with the parentage, birth, social position, education and teachers of Nicias; but it quotes from the Aristotelian Constitution of Athens,¹ that " the three best citizens of Athens, men of hereditary goodwill and friendship for the people, were Nicias the son of Niceratus, Thucydides the son of Melesias, and Theramenes the son of Hagnon ".

Plutarch,² we notice, is not so concise as Aristotle, for he adds the names of their fathers and comments on the three men in such a way as to bring out points of difference as well as similarity.

He suggests the *δυσγένεια* of Theramenes, calls him a *ξένος* from Ceos, and applies to him the term *κόθορος*, with which Aristophanes³ and Xenophon⁴ have made us familiar.

Of Thucydides son of Melesias, Plutarch says that he often opposed Pericles *δηραγωγῶντι*, using the verb *ἀντιπολιτευέσθαι*, which we know was also employed about Thucydides by Theopompus.⁵

Plutarch also adds that Nicias was put forward (in 429 B.C.) as the champion of the " rich and notable ", to face the *βδελυρία*⁶ of Cleon.

¹ Constitution of Athens, XXVIII, 5
*δοκῶσι δὲ βέλτιστοι γεγονέναι τῶν Ἀθηναίων
 πολιτευομένων μετὰ τοὺς ἑρχαίους Νικίας καὶ
 Θεουκιδίδης καὶ Θεραμένης.*

² Nicias, II, 1
*τρῶς ἐγένοντο βέλτιστοι τῶν πολιτῶν
 καὶ πατρικῶν ἔχοντες εὐνοίαν καὶ φιλίαν
 πρὸς τὸν ἔθνον, Νικίας ὁ Νικηρέτης, καὶ
 Θεουκιδίδης ὁ Μελεσίω καὶ Θεραμένης ὁ
 Ἀγνώτος.*

³ Frogs, 467-470

⁴ Hellenica, 2, 3, 31

⁵ fr. 93, G. & H.

⁶ In the early chapters of the Nicias there is a superabundance of such words as *βδελυρία*, *βωρολοχία*, *πλεονεξία*; these nouns are frequently upon the lips of Aristophanes' characters, especially when they are referring to the demagogues - they may well have become favourites with Theopompus: cf. fr. 84, 90, 133, 153, 228, G. & H.

It is possible that Plutarch had a first hand knowledge of the Constitution of Athens; direct reference to the book is made in many of the Lives, and there are frequent occasions on which Aristotle is used, although he is not named. But these passages do not prove that Plutarch made immediate use of Aristotle for his biographies. For the founder of the School of the Peripatetics would naturally be extensively quoted both by his followers, and by those historians who, like Ephorus and Theopompus, combined history with a strong interest in philosophy and ethics. In any case, it is most unlikely that Plutarch would refer to Aristotle's works for a meagre quotation of this sort, and more reasonable to assume that the quotation, a careless paraphrase, was found in his authority.²

6 The latter half of the chapter contains a comparison between the influence of the demagogue Cleon over the people and the methods which he adopted to maintain that influence, and the secret

¹ Theseus XXV, 3; Solon XXV, 1; Themis. X, 6; Cimon X, 2; Peric., 1X, 2 & X, 8.

² It is possible that Aristotle was indebted to Theopompus for much of the material which he incorporated into his 'Constitution'; we have no evidence to prove the date of the publication of the Philippica (although Jacoby, Komm., p. 358, demonstrates that the first half of the book may have appeared as early as 340 B.C.), and Aristotle may have been familiar with Theopompus' excursus on the Athenian politicians. If that is so, then chapters XLIV and XXVI of the 'Constitution' (as Gomme suggests, Hist. Comm. on Thucy., Vol. 1, p.48) may give us a picture of the type of writing which must have been found in the Philippica. This, of course, would imply that Plutarch used the 'Constitution' at first hand, for it was probably published 328 - 325 B.C.

of Nicias' popularity. Plutarch says that Cleon gained his ascendancy over the people " γερωνταγωγῶν κἀναρπισθῆναι δίδως"; this quotation of an iambic trimeter from an unknown comic poet is repeated elsewhere by Plutarch; yet it is so like a line of Aristophanes' Knights² that it may well be a quotation from Aristophanes, passed on to Plutarch by his authority and carelessly transcribed.

The impudence of Cleon is then contrasted with the dignity and γορδοσείς of Nicias; Plutarch is here using a rare, and perhaps a late, Attic word. It is found only once in Plato,³ but was probably in common usage during Hellenistic times, for there are fragments of a play by Menander with this title.

The chapter concludes with a scathing comment, which could only be typical of a writer who had little time for democracy, and a low opinion of the common folk: " The mob fear men who scorn them, but exalt men who fear them. The multitude can have no greater honour shown them by their superiors than not to be despised ".

¹ Prae. Ger. Reipub. XLIII.

² 1099: the schol. says that the line is borrowed from the 'Peleus' of Sophocles, but the passage from Sophocles is given more fully by Clem. Alex. Strom. VI, 2, 19:

Πηλέα τὸν Αἰάκων ἀϊκάρῃς φόνῃ
 γερωνταγωγῶ κἀναρπισθῆναι πάλιν.
 πάλιν γὰρ ἀέθις παῖς ὁ γηρίακων ἄνθρωπος

Thus, Plutarch himself may be quoting from Sophocles, or from another writer of Old Comedy who parodied the line of Sophocles.

³ Phaedrus, 257 D: cf. Dion. Hal. 11, 22.

CHAPTER 111

2 Here again we have comparison and contrast. Plutarch says that Nicias stood midway between the *ἡφαιστή* of Pericles and the *βυροδοξία* of Cleon; he therefore attempted to win popularity with the people by displaying his wealth.

3 Plutarch thus refers to:

1) The dedicatory offerings of Nicias - a Palladium on the Acropolis, and a temple surrounded by choregic tripods in the precinct of Dionysus, both of which were still standing in the biographer's day. According to Plato,¹ both the Palladium and the temple were joint offerings of Nicias and his brothers. Plutarch may have had in mind these offerings of Nicias when he referred² to "ancient votive offerings" as the sources of some of his information; and when Plutarch is writing about Athens and her glorious artistic achievements, we need not hesitate to accept his word, for he was especially proud of the artistic and literary remains of the Athenians and would be glad to remind Roman readers of the greatness of Greek civilization. He speaks of memorials of Phocion and Demosthenes still extant in his day and uses touching words in his Life of Pericles to describe the freshness even in his day, after five hundred years, of the monumental work of Pheidias.³

¹Gorgias, 472 A

²Nicias, 1, 5

³cf. Lycurg. XVlll; Solon, XXV; Themistocles, XXll; Pericles, Xlll; Aristides, 1: XVll: XlX-XXl: XXVll; Cimon, XVl; Agesilaus, XlX:XXXV; Alexander, LXlX; Phocion, XVlll: XXll; Demosthenes, XXXl

2) The " Choregia " of Nicias, in the exhibition of which he was never defeated. Plutarch illustrates this with an anecdote about the freeing by Nicias of a popular slave of his who had captured the imagination of the people when he appeared in one of his master's choral exhibitions. It is quite impossible to ascribe this anecdote to an authority with any degree of certainty, yet it is not unlike the sort of incident which Theopompus might delight in recording; for Theopompus, despite his aristocratic tendencies, shows some interest in the slave classes (a trait of the Cynics) and condemns the Helot system of Sparta.²

One of his fragments³, which describes the liberality of Cimon, bears some resemblance to this story about Nicias.

3) Nicias' lavish outlays at Delos. The description of Nicias' innovations in the conduct of a festal embassy to Delos occupies the remainder of the chapter, which concludes with a description of the erection by Nicias of a bronze palm-tree and the consecration of a tract of land on Delos.

The last sentence of the chapter⁴ is a quite irrelevant digression, continuing the story of this palm-tree and its final destruction in a gale, when it " fell against the colossal statue of the god which the Naxians erected, and overturned it ".

¹ cf. Lysias, Property of the Brother of Nicias, VII: *μεγάλως δ' εὐφορίας εἰσετηνοχόει καὶ λελητοεργηκόει κάλλιστα.*

² fr. 14, G. & H.

³ fr. 89 G, G. & H.: according to Athenaeus XII, 533^bA-C, the anecdote about Cimon, repeated by Plutarch, Cimon, X, was to be found in Theopompus, Phil. X.

⁴ Nicias, III, 8

Athenaeus¹ says that the same Naxians who dedicated the large statue of Apollo at Delos also dedicated this bronze palm-tree.

The Thucydidean² account of the hallowing of Delos by the Athenians in 426 B.C., with its description of the chain forged by Polycrates of Samos to join Rhenea to Delos, makes no mention of Nicias, and is in no way the basis of Plutarch's account; nor is the brief record of Diodorus³, which follows Thucydides closely.

¹ XI, 502 B

² III, 104.

³ XI, 58

CHAPTER IV

Plutarch commences this chapter with a cynical explanation of Nicias' ostentation as being due partly to his desire for popularity, and partly to his reverent piety: " his *εὐσεβεία* was a corollary to his *αἰσβασία* ". To illustrate his religious zeal, superstition and great wealth, Plutarch quotes Thucydides, Pasiphon and four of the Athenian comic poets.

The quotation from Thucydides¹ is a commonplace one, and need not suggest that Plutarch himself made reference to the works of Thucydides for the two words which he quotes, for the superstitious fear of Nicias was well known and attested by contemporary writers.² But it is noticeable that, at this point, when some mention might have been made of Stilbides,³ Plutarch is content to remark that Nicias " kept a diviner at his house ". It seems quite obvious that his information about Stilbides came from Timaeus alone, and was not to be found in the authority whom he used for the first half of this Life.

The mention of the " Dialogues of Pasiphon " is a strong argument against Plutarch's use of Theopompus at first hand; unless we assume that Plutarch had available the works of such an obscure writer as Pasiphon - a most unlikely theory. This Pasiphon of

¹ VII, 50, 4: *θεοσεβῆς προσκεϊμένος* : it was perhaps more appropriate for Plutarch to use this quotation in its context, when he was describing the delay occasioned by the eclipse during the last stages of the Sicilian Expedition (cf. chapter XXIII, 1).

² cf. Plato, Laches, 199 A: Aristoph. Knights 112, 358 etc.

³ cf. chapter XXIII, 7

Erétria¹ (whose seven dialogues - Alcibiades, Aspasia, Axiochus, Callias, Miltiades, Rhinon and Telauges - are mentioned by Diogenes Laertius²) was a notorious imitator of the Socratic disciples, to whom he attributed his own compositions. He lived circa 300- 250 B.C., and was therefore later than Theopompus. But it is not impossible for his works to have been known to Idomeneus of Lampsacus, who himself also wrote a work *περὶ τῶν Σωματικών*³ and whom we shall have to consider later as a possible agent for the transmission to Plutarch of Theopompus' material.

3 Frequent mention is made by contemporary and later writers of the wealth of Nicias and his interests in the silver mines of Laurium. Thucydides gives us no information, but Xenophon affirms⁴ that Nicias employed an inspector of mines, and talks⁵ of him maintaining a thousand slaves there. Plato⁶ also refers to his wealth, as does Athenaeus⁷, who terms him *ὁ τῶν Ἑλλήνων βασιλεύς*. On the other hand, Lysias⁸ suggests that very little of his father's wealth was left at the death of his son, Niceratus.

These rather uncomplimentary paragraphs, which expose the weaknesses of Nicias and seek to explain his generosity towards both friends and foes, are summed up in the following words: " He gave to those who could work him harm no less than to those who deserved his favours, and in general his cowardice was a source of revenue to the base, as his liberality was to the good ".

¹ Usener, Epicurea, fr. 128-138: F.H.G. II, 489-494

² II, 61

³ Diog. Laert., II, 20

⁴ Mem., 2, 5, 2

⁵ De Vectig. IV, 14

⁶ Laches, 186 C

⁷ 272 C

⁸ On the Property of Alcib., 47

8

There follow four citations from representative poets of the Old Comedy, to illustrate the liberality and the timidity of Nicias.

The first two quotations lay emphasis upon the presence in Athens of *εὐκοφανταί*¹; Plutarch quotes from a comedy of unknown name by Telecleides,² who apparently attacked Pericles, and in this fragment had something to say about a public informer who had to be bribed by both Nicias and Charicles. Nicias and Charicles seems a strange combination, for Charicles was a partisan of the Thirty and, according to Andocides,³ Xenophon⁴ and Isocrates,⁵ dealt harshly with any opponents of the oligarchic revolution. No doubt, like many of the demagogues and of the Thirty Tyrants, his private life would not bear examination, and the transgressions of his early political career had to be covered up by the offering of bribes.

The second quotation is from a comedy of Eupolis,⁶ the 'Maricas', exhibited in 421 B.C.,⁷ in which the principal object of the poet's attack was Hyperbolus. Like Aristophanes, whom he closely rivalled and by whom he was accused of imitation,⁸ Eupolis' special aversion was the extreme democrats. In this fragment (and Plutarch⁹ does not seem to know that Hyperbolus is

¹ such a fact is, of course, well-attested; but it is interesting to quote a fragment of Theopompus (fr. 267, G. & H.): *πλήρεις εἶναι τῶν ἸΑθῆνας..... ψευδομαρτύρων καὶ εὐκοφαντῶν*

² Kock, C.A.F., 1, 219

³ 1, 101

⁴ Hellenica 2, 3, 2

⁵ XVI, 42

⁶ Kock, C.A.F., 1, 308

⁷ Schol. on Arist. Clouds, 553

⁸ Aristophanes, Clouds, 553-554

⁹ *ὁ δ' ἐπὶ Εὐπολίδος κωμωδούμενος ἐν τῷ Μαρκιάδῃ.*

the object of the poet's attack) the obscure reference to Nicias seems to imply that he was so retiring that, if one ever saw him in public, it was tantamount to receiving a bribe from him.

To illustrate the timidity of Nicias, two further citations are made by Plutarch, from the Knights of Aristophanes¹ and from an unnamed play of Phrynichus.²

Plutarch quite incorrectly refers the Aristophanes quotation to a blustering speech of Cleon; in fact, Cleon's adversary, the sausage-seller, delivers the threat. The last quotation is, no doubt, from the *Μονόροπος*³ of Phrynichus, which was exhibited in 415 B.C.; perhaps this fragment reminded the Athenians of the lack of courage and panic-stricken air of Nicias, and his diffidence and reluctance to support or undertake the expedition to Sicily.

As will be demonstrated, a fragment from Theopompus⁴ seems to imply a Theopompan background to chapter VIII of the Life of Nicias. Two quotations from Aristophanes are given in the middle of that chapter to illustrate the base and cowardly resigning by Nicias to Cleon of his command at Pylos. It is almost certain that Plutarch is ultimately indebted to Theopompus for the information recorded in chapter VIII, together with the quotations from Aristophanes. It is therefore not unreasonable to assume that the four citations from comic poets which we have examined were

¹ Line 358.

² Kock, G.A.F., 1, 385.

³ Quoted by Suidas.

⁴ fr. 94, G. & H.

found by Plutarch in his source, and transcribed without reference. At any rate, they seem to be the stock quotations likely to be found in any historical discursus which aimed at illustrating character by anecdote and citation; and Plutarch, careful student though he must have been, seems here not to have checked his references accurately enough. It is unlikely that Plutarch would make it his business to search through the plays of the Attic comedians for relevant quotations; but Theopompus drew largely upon Aristophanes and his contemporaries for material for the Tenth Book of his Philippica.¹ But, if Plutarch did not take over his quotations from Theopompus, he may have found them in some Alexandrine anthology.²

¹cf. fr. 93 - 98, G. & H., and the schol. on Aristophanes.

²cf. Tarn & Griffith, Hellenistic Civilisation, 3rd Edition, 1952, p. 292.

CHAPTER V

The whole of this chapter, which follows naturally upon Nicias' fear of informers, to which testimony was given by the Athenian comic poets in the previous chapter, is peculiar to Plutarch and passes on information about Nicias and his secretary, Hiero, which cannot be checked by reference to any other extant authority.

But a certain current of cynicism underlies the chapter. Nicias is described as being *συνεργός*, partly because of his fear of informers which kept him from public places and from social intercourse, but principally because he felt that an aloofness and an inaccessibility would add to his dignity and make him more respected in the city. Theramenes, in his defence before his execution, made reference to this exclusiveness of Nicias, actually going so far as to suggest that Nicias had never done anything *δηροτικόν*. But it has been pointed out that this was not the contemporary estimate of Nicias, for he was certainly a consistent heir of Pericles' political principles.

This public reticence of Nicias, claims Plutarch, was a rôle², in the playing of which he was entirely dependent upon an intimate member of his household, his secretary Hiero. Plutarch adds that this Hiero was the pretended son of Dionysius Chalcus, an elegaic poet whose verses were adversely criticised by Aristotle³,

¹ Xenophon, Hellenica, 2, 3, 39

² Nicias, V, 3: *συνεργωσάν*.

³ Rhet., 111, 2, 11

and whose name was given to him because he introduced bronze currency into Athens.¹ Plutarch's authority, through the words of Hiero, makes Nicias out to be very different from the usual run of public men who "not only make friends, but enrich themselves through their influence as public speakers, and then fare sumptuously and make a plaything² of the service of the city".

But the compliment to Nicias is a back-handed one; while it depreciates the sincerity of other political leaders in Athens, it implies that Nicias no less resorted to different, but equally effective, devices (more in keeping with his naturally retiring disposition) to maintain his position of leadership.

The whole chapter might easily have come from a Cynic diatribe - it is satire of a subtle kind. For to a good Cynic only virtue really mattered, but Plutarch's authority plainly points out that even the 'virtuous' reticence of Nicias was not disinterested, but was assumed and publicised so as to add to his chances of worldly success. By retiring in this way from the world, in fact he became more and more a slave of the world, and could apply to himself the words of Euripides:³

πρωτάτην γε τῷ βίῳ
τὸν ὄγκον⁴ ἔχομεν, τῷ τ' ὀλίγῳ δουλεύομεν.

¹ Athenaeus, XV, 669 D: cf. Diehl, Anth. Lyr. Graec., 1, 1, pp 88-90

² Nicias, V, 6: προσπαίξασαι τῇ πολιτείᾳ.

³ Iph. Aul., lines 445 f., where the MSS. have πρωτάτην γε, τὸν δῆρον
The MSS. of Plutarch have πρωτάτην δέ, τὸν ὄγκον

⁴ cf. Plutarch, Pericles, VII, 6, where the same word ὄγκος is used, and where the sincerity of Pericles is also doubted. Such a cynical casting of aspersions was typical of Theopompus (Dion. Hal. ad Pomp. VI, 7).

CHAPTER VI

There is a natural division of this chapter into two parts (VI, 1 - 2, and VI, 3 - 7).

2 1) Nicias is aware of the fate which befell certain prominent Athenians, who had incurred the suspicion, jealousy or anger of the mob. A list of such Athenians then follows - Pericles, Damon the musician, Antiphon of Rhamnus, and Paches, the victor of Lesbos.

This is a most curious, and even irrelevant combination, for Antiphon and Paches could hardly have given a warning to Nicias of the fate which might be in store for him if he incurred the suspicion of the populace. Nicias was dead before the Revolution of the Four Hundred and the execution of Antiphon, and Paches' trial in Athens after the capture of Mytilene in 427 B.C. was not that of an unsuccessful general. Similarly, the fining of Pericles and the ostracism of Damon could not have been warnings to Nicias " to evade commands which were likely to be long and laborious ", as Plutarch suggests.

It seems likely that Plutarch is here excerpting from his authority a part of what may well have been a recognised list, compiled by a writer who disliked radical democracy, of prominent Athenians whose actions incurred the anger of the populace. Such a list may have been very considerably larger and more detailed, with more emphasis upon 'liberal' politicians than upon generals; but, for the sake of brevity, only those citizens were included by Plutarch who were contemporaneous with Nicias.

A fragment of Theopompus¹ gives us a similar catalogue of distinguished Athenian generals, who preferred to end their lives abroad because of the hostility of the Athenian people. Iphicrates, Conon, Timotheus, Chares and Chabrias are included in this list. All of them, of course, are considerably later than Nicias, and the inclusion of their names in a biography of Nicias would be quite irrelevant, especially if Plutarch wished to illustrate Nicias' own awareness of the ingratitude of the mob towards their distinguished leaders. Apparently, this Theopompan quotation was to be found in Book XIII of the Philippica,² but it is not unlikely that similar catalogues were to be found also in the Digression on Demagogues (finding their way thence into Idomeneus' ' Treatise on Demagogues '). In his Life of Aristides,³ Plutarch says that such catalogues were in fact to be found in certain historians: " the other historians, without exception, who have given us accounts of the unjust treatment of their generals by the Athenian people, among other instances, dwell upon the banishment of Themistocles, the imprisonment of Miltiades, the fine imposed upon Pericles and the death of Paches, who upon receiving sentence, killed himself in the court-room at the foot of the tribunal ". It is interesting to compare this list with the catalogue found in the Life of Nicias; in the Aristides list

¹ fr. 103, G. & H.: ... διὰ τῶν Ἀθηναίων. Ἐπαιεὶ γὰρ εἶσι χαλεκοί.
cf. Nepos, Chabrias, 3, where the same list is given, but without reference to any authority.

² Athenaeus XII, 532

³ Plutarch, Aristides, XXVI, 5

those included are all generals, but in the Nicias list, the earlier generals (Aristides, Miltiades and Themistocles) are omitted, and two public figures are inserted, Damon and Antiphon, both of whom would be acceptable to an oligarch of the Fourth Century as being 'liberals', and therefore particularly subject to the enmity of the popular parties in Athens.

There is a certain amount of evidence here that Plutarch used his Theopompus at second hand, and that Idomeneus was the intermediary (and the same may be true of the Life of Aristides, which also reveals many of the traces of what we assume to have been the characteristics of Theopompus); but, as the case for the use by Plutarch of Idomeneus will be presented later, we need merely note at this stage that in the Life of Aristides¹, when Plutarch has mentioned the ostracism of Damon, "preceptor of Pericles, because he was looked upon as a man of superior parts and policy", he continues with the following words, "besides, Idomeneus tells us, that Aristides became archon.....", implying that his information about Damon came from Idomeneus. In both these passages, in the Aristides and in the Nicias, a good picture is given of this Damon (or Damonides), and the same is true of the references to him in Plato², the philosopher saying in the Laches³ that Damon was introduced to Nicias by Socrates.

¹ 1, 7 - 8

² Rep. III, 400 B & 424 C: Alcib. 118 C (if it is the same Damon), cf. Aristotle, Const. of Athens, XXVII, 4: *εὐφραδίστατος αὐτῷ Δημοκρίδου τῷ ὀρθῶν, ὅς ἐδοκίμη τῶν πολλῶν ἀπογγυτῆς εἶναι τῷ Περικλεῖ.*
Thucydides does not mention him.

³ Laches, 197 D

But Plutarch must have been using very different authorities from the Theopompus-Idomeneus tradition of the Nicias and the Aristides, when he has occasion to mention the ostracism of Damon in his Life of Pericles.¹ There we read that Damon was a 'consummate sophist', that he was a butt of the comic poets, and that he was ostracised for being a " great schemer and a friend of tyranny ".

The third name in the catalogue is that of Antiphon of Rhamnus, the Attic orator and *λογόγραφος*, whose praise is sung by Thucydides,² and who was executed in 411 B.C. for his part in the abortive Revolution of the Four Hundred.³ Although he was a contemporary of Nicias, he could hardly have been a warning to Nicias not to allow his ability to shine too clearly in public.

The fourth name in the list, that of Paches, is a strange addition, both here and in the catalogue given in the Aristides, where his suicide is compared with the banishment of Aristides and Themistocles, the imprisonment of Miltiades and the fining of Pericles. He was obviously a competent, though at the same time a ruthless general; but Thucydides⁴ does not comment adversely upon his treacherous execution of Hippias, the commander of the garrison

¹ IV, 1 - 3: *Δαμος ὡς σοφιστής*; as Plutarch later quotes a comic poet, we must assume him to be using the word 'sophist' in the insulting sense of the term, frequently employed by Aristophanes.

² VIII, 68: Thucydides also mentions that he incurred the envy of the people because of his brilliant eloquence.

³ cf. Theopompus, ff. 115, G. & H.: *ὅτι δ' εἰς τῶν τριάκοντα ἔπεσαν ἰσχυρῶς καὶ Θεόπομπος ἐν τῇ πεντακισκότητι τῶν Φιλισταίων.*

⁴ III, 34

at Notium.¹ Neither Thucydides nor Diodorus mention his fate. Yet his sole notoriety - the capture of Mytilene - cannot surely justify his inclusion in these lists, which place him in exalted company ! For his subsequent fate Plutarch is the sole authority, and we have no means of telling why he was arraigned before an Athenian court or what prompted him to kill himself. A successful commander had no need to fear *εἰδωλὸν*, unless perhaps he had been guilty of corruption in the conduct of his campaign. Little confidence, one feels, may be placed in the conjecture of Niebuhr² that his crime was the violation of two free women of Lesbos - the only evidence for this is a poem of Agathias³, composed circa 550 A.D.

If the account of the fate of Paches was found by Plutarch in Theopompus or Idomeneus, it is difficult to understand why they considered it more worthy of mention than, say, the execution of Pericles' son after Arginusae, except perhaps that it struck them as a most singular and foolish instance of ingratitude on the part of the Athenian people, and that, as Greeks of Asia Minor, they might admire the general who was able to capture Lesbos, as they lamented his undeserved death. It is, of course, not unlikely that some sort of monument, commemorating the capture of Mytilene by Paches, may have been set up in Lesbos in such a way that his

¹ Frontinus (Strat. IV, 7, 17) passes on a short anecdote about Paches, that he offered to spare a defeated foe if they would 'put away their steel'; but, when they had laid aside their arms, he ordered them all to be executed because they were wearing steel brooches. Polyaeus (III, 2) repeats Thucydides' record of Paches' cunning treachery at Notium,

² Lectures on Anc. History, trans. L. Schwitz, Vol. 2, p. 61.

³ Anth. Pal., VII, 614

name was constantly before the Ionians. Evelyn Abbot¹ has an interesting suggestion - he maintains that Cleon led the attack against Paches, for "Cleon probably had a grudge against Paches for his want of promptness in executing the first decree against Mytilene". We have no evidence for such an assertion, but, if it is true, it explains quite reasonably why the fate of Paches was considered intolerable by Theopompus - because Cleon was the accuser.

After these illustrations and examples of the base ingratitude of the Athenian populace, Plutarch suggests that Nicias avoided difficult and dangerous commands, and therefore - *ὡς εἰκός* - was for the most part successful in his campaigns; but he did not ascribe his success to his own ability, but to *τύχη*. It is difficult to believe that such an estimate of the character of Nicias could be based upon the evaluation of the successes of Nicias which is to be found in Thucydides. For Thucydides² describes Nicias as a general who "in military matters had been the most fortunate of his time, and longed for peace because he was desirous (having hitherto never been defeated) to carry his good fortune through, and to give both himself and the city rest from their troubles for the present; and for the future to leave a name that in all his time he had never made the state miscarry; which he thought might be done by standing out of

¹ History of Greece, III, pp. 174-175, note.

² V, 16, 1

danger, and by putting himself as little as he might into the hands of fortune; and to stand out of danger is the benefit of peace ".

2) The second part of this chapter presents us with a catalogue of the many reverses which Athens suffered during the military career of Nicias (432 - 424 B.C.), for which Nicias was in no way responsible; and finally, with a list of Nicias' own achievements in military matters from 427 to 424 B.C. The purpose of these lists was to illustrate the way in which Nicias avoided such types of command as did end disastrously, and chose only those positions which offered safety and seemed to presage a favourable conclusion. Both lists, curiously enough, are not in chronological order, although they have the support of Thucydides, except for two minor deviations.

The list of reverses contains:

- 1) The victory of the Chalcidians in Thrace over Athenian forces. In Plutarch's texts, there is a slight confusion between two incidents recorded by Thucydides; Callias was defeated and killed before Potidaea in 432 B.C.¹, while Xenophon was defeated and killed in Thrace in 429 B.C.² Obviously, *Καλλιάδου* is a mistake for *Καλλίου* .
- 2) The disastrous defeat in Aetolia of the forces under the

¹ Thucy. 1, 63 and II, 79

² cf. Diodorus XII, 37

command of Demosthenes, in 426 B.C.¹

- 3) The defeat of Hippocrates at Delium in 424 B.C.²
- 4) The responsibility of Pericles for the extreme virulence of the plague in 430 B.C., which was occasioned by the overcrowding of the city; Plutarch here repeats briefly the account which he has given in the Life of Pericles.³ Thucydides⁴ refers to the overcrowding of the city as considerably aggravating the ravages of the disease, and in his defence of the policy of Pericles,⁵ maintains that the popular accusations against Pericles were unjustified.

There follows a list of Nicias' successes on the battlefield, but here again they are not in chronological order:

- 1) The capture of Cythera in 424 B.C.⁶
- 2) The occupation of many cities in Thrace in 423 B.C.⁷
- 3) The blockade of Megara and capture of Minoa in 427 B.C.⁸
- 4) The capture of Nisaea in 424 B.C.⁹
- 5) The defeat of the Corinthians, with the death of their general, Lycophron, in 425 B.C.¹⁰
- 6) The ravaging of the coast of Laconia, capture of Thyrea, and bringing back to Athens of some Aeginetan prisoners in 424 B.C. "

¹ cf. Thucy., 111, 91-98: Diodorus XII, 60 ² Thucy., IV, 89-101

³ XXXIV, 3 ⁴ 11, 52 ⁵ 11, 64 ⁶ Thucy., IV, 53-55: Diog. Laert., I, 72

⁷ Thucy. IV, 129-133 ⁸ Thucy. 111, 51: possibly a reference to this in Arist. Birds, line 363

⁹ This, on the contrary, was the exploit of Demosthenes: Thucy. IV, 66-9

¹⁰ Thucy. IV, 42-44: cf. also, Polyaeus, I, 39, 1.

" Thucy. IV, 56 - 57

Into the middle of this rather brief list of Nicias' successes, Plutarch inserts a long excursus; he makes use of Nicias' victory over the Corinthians to illustrate his piety and religious scruples. It is interesting to compare Plutarch's account with that of Thucydides. Thucydides describes the defeat of the Corinthians and the loss of two hundred and twelve of their troops, including one of their generals, Lycophron; the erection by the Athenians of a trophy; the sudden arrival of a reserve force of Corinthians stationed at Cenchrea, strengthened by a body of old men from the city of Corinth; the withdrawal of the Athenians to their ships, (with their booty and the bodies of their dead, all except two whom they could not find,) because they imagined that a Peloponnesian force was upon them; the Athenian despatch of heralds, from their safe position on the " islands over on the other side ", to regain the bodies of the dead.

There is no suggestion whatever in this account of any personal interest of Nicias in the two bodies of the Athenian dead. Thucydides simply records that Nicias and his troops retired from the field of battle, thereby sacrificing their trophy, because they thought it expedient to give way to Corinthian troops, of whose number or quality they could not be certain. When they had retired and reached safety, they sent heralds to regain the two bodies. Plutarch, on the other hand, makes Nicias responsible for a " sudden halt of his armament " and a surrender of his victory solely because he had discovered that two of the dead bodies were missing.

' Nicias, VI, 5: *τὰ χεῖρα ἐν ἐσόλων ἑπιπέρας.*

Thus the Corinthian episode, instead of illustrating the way in which Nicias maintained his good fortune in battle by making safety his chief aim, is selected more particularly by Plutarch, or his authority, for its emphasis upon the religious scruples of the general, who was willing to abandon his victory and his glory for the sake of two unburied dead.

While the narrative itself is ultimately from Thucydides, the interpretation of the incident is peculiar to Plutarch, as is the account of Greek usage and tradition with reference to the erection of trophies. Plutarch does not mention, as Thucydides does, that the Athenians only lost fifty men to the Corinthian two hundred and twelve.

It is not easy to attribute to any certain authority the mass of information which, in very condensed form, is given in this chapter. It would be a wild exaggeration to suggest that, because a fragment of Theopompus contains a list of prominent Athenian generals of a later period who refused to be domiciled in Athens because of the attitude of the Athenian people towards their successful generals, therefore Theopompus must be the authority of Plutarch, both for the list which included the names of Pericles, Damon, Paches and Antiphon, and for the brief summaries of Athenian reverses and the successful engagements of Nicias during the Archidamian War. It may, of course, be true that the biographer scoured his Thucydides for this

information, and then transcribed it without attempting to follow any chronological order. But this is a most unlikely theory. A careful examination of a very long section of Thucydides¹ would have been necessary for all the historical information which Plutarch gives us here - the task of an historian rather than that of an ethical biographer who has disavowed the collecting of unnecessary historical material. Nor would Plutarch be able to find all this information in his Thucydides, who is certainly not the authority for Plutarch's references to Paches or Antiphon, and who never mentions Damon. It seems reasonable to assume that, although two paragraphs of the chapter are very close in language to Thucydides², Plutarch is indebted for his information to an historian who has already made the selections and prepared the lists. As has already been suggested, and indeed as Plutarch himself maintains in his Life of Aristides³, it would not have been difficult for him to find "historians who have given us accounts of the unjust treatment of their generals by the Athenian people".

This will not explain the tabulated lists of Athenian reverses and military successes of Nicias, which are confirmed by Thucydides, apart from two minor inaccuracies. The lists, we notice, are not complete, for there is no record in Plutarch

¹ Thucy., 1, 63 to 1V, 133

² Nicias, VI, 4b & 5 = Thucy. 1V, 44

³ XXVI, 5

of Nicias' successful invasion of Locris and Boeotia in 426 B.C., nor of his unsuccessful landing on the island of Melos.¹

In his brief summary of the history of Thucydides,² Plutarch makes mention of the capture of Cythera, the blockade of Megara, and the invasion of Corinth - deeds which illustrated the *ἀνδραγαθία* of Nicias. Lists of this type, enumerating the Athenian successes and reverses during the Archidamian War, and probably during the whole of the Peloponnesian War, could no doubt be found in the works of most of the Greek historians of the Fourth and Third Centuries B.C., whether they were summarising the Peloponnesian War or illustrating a later period of Greek history with reference to it.

We have some sort of clue to Plutarch's ultimate authority when we consider the political viewpoint of the chapter. Three points are quite clear:

1) The writer has no sympathy with, and little real understanding of, the radical democratic element whose influence was being felt in Athens at the time; this is made obvious in chapters VII and VIII, which follow on quite naturally and without any break in the sense or in the point of view expressed.

2) The writer tolerates Nicias, but has a low opinion of him, both as an individual and as a political and military figure; the reason for this is made plain in chapters VII and VIII, where

¹ Thucy. III, 91

² De Glor. Athen., I, 345 C

Nicias is only accepted as a tolerable representative of democracy because he is the opponent of the radical Cleon, and even then he is most severely strictured because through his cowardice he gave opportunity for advancement to Cleon and his party.

3) The writer is at pains to show that the successes of Nicias were due to Fortune, and an opportunist handling by Nicias of his commands, rather than to genuine ability. But this is surely not the opinion of Plutarch himself ! In the Comparison¹ between Nicias and Crassus, he suggests that a proof of the *ἐπιεικεία* of Nicias is seen in the fact that the Athenians never ceased to elect him to commands, because in the art of war he was *ἐπιεικότερος καὶ βέλτερος* . . . Moreover, Plutarch elsewhere² ascribes Nicias' achievements at Cythera, Megara and Corinth to his outstanding courage. But in this chapter of the Life of Nicias, no credit is given to Nicias for his undoubted skill in military tactics, however tempered it was by excessive caution; or to the engineering ability which he showed at Minoa.³

It seems clear that the political viewpoint expressed in this chapter is that of a reactionary, an oligarchic extremist; there is a similar sort of atmosphere about this chapter to that which has been noted in chapter II, and which will be noted again with increasing emphasis in chapters VII and VIII. For example,

¹ III, 5

² De Glor. Athen., 1, 345 C

³ cf. Thucy., III, 51: Arist. Birds, line 363

in this chapter Damon is portrayed as a martyr to mob rancour, but in the Life of Pericles¹ (where, at any rate in the earlier chapters, Plutarch is clearly using very different authorities) Damon, as the friend of tyrants, justly merits his fate.

If there were no other clues to our authority, we would be bound to assign the chapter to an historian of oligarchic sympathies, nor could we avoid the conclusion that the same traces of cynicism are to be noted here, as are apparent in chapter V.

¹ IV, 1 - 3

CHAPTERS VII and VIII

These chapters must be examined together, for there is no break in the sense. The description of the capture of the island of Sphacteria by Demosthenes and Cleon, which follows the account of Thucydides very closely, is used by Plutarch to illustrate the character of Cleon, and, rather in a secondary way, to show how the whole incident brought disrepute upon Nicias.

The first six paragraphs of chapter VII (with the exception of one short sentence in paragraph 2: οὐχ ἤκιστα διὰ Νικίαν· ἔχθρὸς γὰρ αὐτῷ, καὶ προθύμως ἐρῶν συμπράττοντι τοῖς Λακεδαιμονίοις) are a summary of the lengthy Thucydidean account - a very close summary, with identity of language and verbatim copying of whole sentences from Thucydides. There is no obvious discrepancy or disagreement with the record of Thucydides - so far as concerns fact. But it is clear that Plutarch, or his authority, wishes to suggest a reason for Cleon's refusal to accept a Lacedaemonian truce which is quite different from the reasons put forward by Thucydides. Plutarch says clearly that Cleon's principal reason for rejecting the Spartan overtures was to satisfy his own hatred for Nicias by influencing the Athenian assembly to reject a peace for which Nicias was eager. Thucydides,² on the other hand, tells us that Cleon's purpose was, or seemed to be, inspired by greed and ambition; but at the same time it was not

¹ IV, 3 - 23; 26 - 28

² IV, 21 & 22 : τοῖς δὲ πλεονεξίας ἐρῶντο.

lacking in cunning, for Cleon was shrewd enough to realise that to capture the garrison on Sphacteria first was the best asset for bargaining. He therefore persuaded the Assembly to make impossible counter-proposals - that Sparta should hand over to Athens the places which Athens had been forced to surrender in 446 - 445 B.C., Pegae, Nisaea and Troezen. Even then the Spartans were prepared to entertain the idea of deliberation upon, and discussion of, these terms, for they were ready to make sacrifices to gain their fellow-citizens who were shut up on the island. But Cleon obviously did not want peace; his insistence upon open negotiations with the Spartans put Sparta in an impossible position, and his conduct was such as to render successful negotiations almost hopeless. Although it is true that Thucydides does suggest that personal considerations played a greater part in Cleon's subsequent moves than his regard for the best interests of Athens, yet nowhere does the historian imply (for all his obvious detestation of the man) that Cleon was ever so without political ability, or even patriotism, as to reject off-hand a peace with Sparta merely to satisfy his own spite against Nicias.

It is very difficult for the modern reader to form a just estimate of Cleon. The demagogue is known to us almost entirely through Thucydides and Aristophanes, the former certainly not his friend, the latter his bitter enemy. In these two chapters Plutarch seems to have accepted the traditional portrait of Cleon, with which

cf. Thucy., IV, 27, 5: ἐχθρὸς αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπιτιμῶν.
 Nicias, VII, 2 : ἐχθρὸς γὰρ αὐτῷ αὐτῷ.

Aristophanes has made us familiar in his early comedies, from the Babylonians to the Peace;¹ this stereotyped picture of the demagogue was, in the main, acceptable to writers of the Fourth and Third Centuries B.C.²

As leader of the extreme radical party - a party which flourished in war - Cleon on principle would oppose any peace negotiations which would weaken his party's influence. Neither Thucydides, nor Aristophanes, nor Plutarch looked upon Nicias as the leader of a right-wing peace party. Nicias was a good democrat and a faithful promoter of the policy of his former leader, Pericles. Any peace, therefore, which demanded a sacrifice of the ideals of Pericles would be anathema to him. But the terms which Sparta offered to discuss after the blockade of Sphacteria would probably have proved acceptable to the party of Nicias.³ Thucydides⁴ himself almost suggests that the Spartan arguments were unanswerable, for he gives no official Athenian reply to them. But Cleon quite naturally opposed this peace; it did not offer to him personally, or to his party, anything more than a considerable loss of influence. But it is an over-simplification, to say the least, to suggest that Cleon opposed peace because he hated Nicias.

¹ cf. Knights, 45; 248 etc.; Peace, 651-656; 669 etc.

² cf. Theopompus, fr. 94 - 98, G. & H.

³ "The policy of Pericles had brought the Spartan spirit so low that at a single reverse they asked for peace. The logical conclusion of the Periclean strategy would be to make peace": F.E. Adcock, in C.A.H., Vol. VIII, 6, p. 234

⁴ IV, 21

In the same sentence of chapter VII, paragraph 2, Plutarch describes Nicias as (in the judgment of Cleon) " eagerly cooperating with the Spartans for peace ". Thucydides in no way bears this out; his account merely suggests that the majority of the Athenians were influenced by Cleon to reject the truce and later repented of their decision.¹

Chapter VII (paragraphs 2 - 6), which describes the resignation by Nicias of his command, and the " mad vanity " of Cleon, follows Thucydides so closely and in such identical words that, through whatever intermediaries, the historian alone supplied the information. But mention of the " mad vanity " of Cleon naturally leads Plutarch to record the anecdote with which he concludes his chapter. Although Plutarch does not attribute this story to any authority, we know that it was to be found in the tenth Book of the Philippica of Theopompus.² It does not interrupt the account of Cleon's good fortune at Pylos, but illustrates the way in which the peculiar characteristics of Cleon, his bold impudence and irresponsible and boastful assumption of command, were invariably treated by the Athenians as a huge joke.

Plutarch, who repeats this anecdote briefly elsewhere,³

¹ Philochorus confirms this, according to the Schol. on Arist., Peace, 665, stating that " when Cleon opposed the settlement, the assembly was split into two factions; the president put the question to the vote, and those who wished to fight carried the day ".

² The Schol. on Lucian, Tim. 30 (fr. 94, G. & H.), after a brief description of Cleon's lack of decorum in haranguing the assembly, continues: *Ὁραὸς ἦν καὶ αἴτιος ἕστε, καθὼς ἐπὶ τῷ παύσει ἴσσορεν, εὐεχθηθῆσαν Ἄσπραϊον παραλῆαν εἰς τὴν ἐκαλεσθεὶς στέφανον ἔχοντα καὶ ἀλλοῦσαι αἰτῶν ἀναβαλῆσθαι τὸν σὺλλογον (τυγχάνειν γὰρ αὐτὸν θύοντα καὶ γέροντος ἑστῆσαν φαίλοντα) καὶ διαλύει τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.*

³ Praec. Ger. Reip. 799 D

follows the Theopompan account very closely. He - or his source - omits to mention the reasons given by Thucydides for the relief and pleasure felt by the Athenians that Cleon had madly undertaken the command of the troops at Pylos.¹ Instead, we have the short comment that the Athenians " were already in the way of treating his mad vanity as a joke - and a pleasant one too ". Thucydides' sober criticism of Cleon is so embroidered as to give the picture of a wild jackanapes to whom his authority is delegated by the foolish Nicias. It may in part be due to Plutarch's account here that the idea, not warranted by a reading of Thucydides, has been accepted by some writers that the Athenians committed the incredible folly of forcing the command upon Cleon by way of a joke. For this, Nicias was apparently responsible, says Plutarch,² as he was also responsible for giving his enemy an opportunity to achieve so great a success, and for allowing the demagogue to gain such influence and such a reputation that he became uncontrollable. This is clearly brought out in chapter VIII, paragraph 2, wherein is illustrated the great discredit brought upon Nicias by his cowardly resignation of his command. Thucydides never suggests cowardice, except perhaps in Cleon's own charge against Nicias; at the worst, the historian implies

¹ " The sober-minded were not ill pleased, since they reckoned that they would gain one of two blessings - either to be rid of Cleon for the future, which they rather expected, or if they were deceived in that, at least to bring the Spartans under their power " Thucy., IV, 28, 5

² Nicias, VII, 5: τοῦ Νικίου ἀπεβούτων.

that Nicias, taunted and piqued by Cleon's insults, lost his temper and offered his command to his rival - an unstatesmanlike and dangerous act, of course, to hand over his military jurisdiction to one who apparently had no military experience; but then he knew, as most of the Athenians knew, that the talented Demosthenes was on the spot to assist and advise.

Thus, although Plutarch is dependent upon Thucydides for his facts relating to the capture of Sphacteria, and at times actually uses the vocabulary of Thucydides, his theories and suggestions, and interpretations of these facts, are not Thucydidean. If they are not his own, they must be culled from an authority who, while using Thucydides for the basis of his narrative, was at pains to paint an even worse picture of Cleon than he found in Thucydides, and to interpret Cleon's actions in the worst possible light, as he laid blame upon Nicias for giving encouragement to Cleon by his cowardice and stupidity.

The remainder of chapter VIII (paragraphs 2 - 6) is devoted to an exposition of this weakness of Nicias - which is illustrated by two citations from Aristophanes - and to the corresponding encouragement given to Cleon, whose subsequent behaviour exemplified the worst features of demagogy. None of this material is taken from Thucydides; it is ultimately from Aristophanes and - for the insolent behaviour noted in VIII, 5 - 6 -

¹ The very close similarity in language between especially Nicias VII, 3 - 6 and Thucy. IV, 27 & 28, forces one to the conclusion that either Plutarch's source, Theopompus, copied out Thucy. verbatim (and Plutarch similarly copied out his source), or that Plutarch did in fact take down his Thucydides & use him at first hand for this chapter. No doubt, Thucydides' graphic piece of writing about Cleon and Nicias in the Athenian assembly was known to Plutarch; he may therefore have made direct reference to Thucy. just for this incident, contrary to what seems to have been his usual practice.

from Aristotle¹ and Theopompus.² To Plutarch, the lessons of Pylos are twofold:

1) Nicias thereby exhibited himself as *εἰσπραγίας*, who had " voted himself " out of office.

2) Nicias allowed Cleon an opportunity to gain influence in the city, thereby himself bringing great harm to his city. While it is true that Nicias resigned his command, it is quite false to interpret Thucydides' account as implying cowardice on the part of Nicias, unless, of course, one is setting out to blacken the character of Nicias for allowing such a man as Cleon to gain power and reputation.

The word *εἰσπραγίας* is frequently found in the comedies of Aristophanes,³ who uses it of Cleonymus and of the city mob,⁴ but never applies the term to Nicias.

When one examines the two quotations from Aristophanes (who " again " mocks Nicias), one is struck by their irrelevance, for they do not, as Plutarch supposes, illustrate the lessons of Pylos. The first citation:

καὶ τὴν καὶ τὸν Δί' ἀχι νυστάξεν
ἔρα εἴτιν ἔφην, αὐδὲ μελλονικιάν γ' ἔτι.⁵

almost certainly refers to the dilatory conduct of Nicias at the commencement of the Sicilian Expedition,⁶ for the Birds was produced at the Dionysia in 414 B.C., and it is hardly likely that Nicias'

¹Constitution of Athens, XXVIII

²fr. 94, G. & H.

³Clouds, 353; Wasps, 17-19, 592; cf. also, Peace, 678; Birds, 289

⁴Peace, 1186

⁵Birds, 637-638

⁶cf. Thucy. VI, 8 - 25

resignation of his command in favour of Cleon in 425 B.C. would be remembered so long afterwards by Aristophanes, who had a preference for topical jokes. Nor indeed can the terms *νυστάζειν* and *φειλονομία* be applied to the conduct of Nicias at Pylos; he, at any rate, was eager enough to conclude peace then, and *φειλονομία* suggests the 'delay of victory', and would be applicable to his conduct in Sicily at the commencement of the Sicilian campaign, rather than *εἰς πάντα* at Pylos, as is suggested by Plutarch.

The " Farmers " of Aristophanes, which was produced some time between the years 425 and 422 B.C., seems to have closely resembled the " Peace " in its general purport; the quotation given here by Plutarch,

A. ἔθελον γαροφᾶν. B. εἴτα τίς σε κωλύει;
 A. ὄπισθ'· ἐπεὶ εἶδον χιθῶνας δραχμῶν,
 ἔδον γὰρ τῶν ἄρχῶν ἕφ' ἧτε. B. δεχόμεθα.
 διεχίλιαι γὰρ εἰσι οὐν ταῖς Νικίῳ

apparently comes

from the speech of a farmer who is anxious for war to end, so that he may return to his farm. The reference to Nicias implies that the general had to forfeit 1000 δραχμαί so as to be relieved of his command. In that respect, at least, it is relevant in this chapter, but it might more conveniently have been quoted by Plutarch in chapter IV, where the biographer is describing the wealth and munificence of Nicias, and the largesse which he was forced to pay to informers. In fact, the quotation from the " Knights " ², given in chapter IV, ³, is perhaps more relevant in the

¹ Kock, C.A.F., I, fr. 100

² Line 358

³ Nicias, IV, 7

circumstances of Nicias' resignation of his command at Pylos than in chapter IV. If these two quotations from Aristophanes were found by Plutarch in his Theopompus, then they have probably been extracted from a lengthy context which may also have dealt in considerable detail with Nicias' character and conduct at Pylos.

6 The last paragraph of chapter VIII supplies us with information which was to be found in the 'Constitution of Athens' of Aristotle, and in the Philippica of Theopompus. Although Plutarch names Aristotle as his authority for some of the information which is supplied in the second chapter of the Life of Nicias,¹ he gives us no indication that he is aware that this anecdote about Cleon's methods of demagogy was to be found in Aristotle or in Theopompus.

Unfortunately, the Scholiast on Lucian who quotes from Theopompus has left us but a small excerpt from Theopompus, and although he claims Theopompus as his authority for the anecdote about Cleon's dismissal of the Athenian assembly,² he quotes no authority for his description of Cleon's demagogic art, although one may assume it also to have come from Theopompus. The words of the Scholiast and the words of Aristotle are almost identical.³

¹ Nicias, II, 1

² Nicias, VII, 7

³ Aristotle, Cons. of Athens, XXVIII, 3

Theo. fr. 94, G. & H. Schol. Lucian, Tim. 30

Nicias, VIII, 6

καὶ πρῶτος ἐπὶ τῷ βήματι
ἀνέκραγε καὶ ἐλοιδορήσατο
καὶ περιζωδάρητος ἐδηρῶν γόργε

ὅς πρῶτος δηρηγορῶν
ἀνέκραγε ἐπὶ βήματος
καὶ ἐλοιδορήσατο, θραύς
ὡς καὶ οὕτως ὥστε.....

καὶ τὸν ἐπὶ τῷ βήματι
κόβρον ἀνάγει καὶ
πρῶτος ἐν τῷ δηρηγορῶν
ἀναγκαστῶν καὶ περι-
σπάσει τὸ ἴσχυριον καὶ
τὸν βήρον πατάξας.....

If what has been said in our examination of Plutarch's quotation from Aristotle in chapter 11 is true - that Plutarch's authority, or Plutarch himself, enlarged and expanded Aristotle's dictum about the three best Athenian citizens - then here also it may be true that Theopompus took over the quotation from Aristotle, and further enlarged it with an anecdote about Cleon's presumptuous behaviour in dismissing the Athenian assembly. Plutarch may thus have passed on to us much more of what Theopompus did in fact write than has the Scholiast on Lucian's Timon.

Plutarch refers to the obnoxious habit of Cleon of "throwing back his robes, beating his thigh and running about while speaking"; Aristotle, it is true, does use the word *περιβύβατος*², but so indeed may Theopompus in this passage, of which we have only a fragment.

In the last sentence of the chapter,³ Plutarch repeats the word *εὐχερῆς*⁴, with reference to Cleon's influence on demagogues of the future. The sentence itself expresses clearly the view, shared by Aristotle⁴ and Theopompus, that the immoral outlook of the demagogues and their open disregard for τὸ εὐρεῖον inevitably

¹ cf. also, Plutarch, Tib. Gracchus, 11, 2: καθάπερ Κλέωνα τὸν Ἀθηναίων ἱστῶσθαι λυδαί τε τὴν περιβολὴν καὶ τὸν εἴθερον ἀλογοῦναι πρῶτον τῶν δημηγορούντων.

² Which may mean, 'girding up his cloak', or 'with his apron on', i.e. his tanner's apron.

³ Nicias, VIII, 6: τὴν ὀλίγον ἔσθρον ἔλαττα τὰ πράγματα εὐχερῆσαν εὐχερῆσαν καὶ ὀλιγοῦσαν τῷ πρῶτοντος ἐνεποιήσε τοῖς πολιτικομένοις.
cf. Nicias, III, 2: τῆς Κλέωνος εὐχερῆσαν

⁴ Constit. of Athens, XXVIII, 1: τὰ κατὰ τὴν πολιτικὴν ἔν
τελευτήσαντος Περικλέους πολὺ χεῖρω.

led to the downfall of Athens - a gross oversimplification, but the sort of statement which one would expect to find expressed by an historian who had an oligarchic axe to grind.

reference to Theophrastus is but to contradict his statement about the ostracism of Hyperbolus, on the authority of οἱ κηφόρες . There are three quotations from poetry,¹ and a citation from Plato Comicus.²

On the whole, a very much more favourable picture is given of Nicias in these three chapters than in any other part of the Life. He is praised for his efforts to unite Athens and Sparta in friendship, and free the Greeks for all time from the evils of a fratricidal conflict. Alcibiades is made out to be the villain who influenced and inflamed the youth of the city to war; whereas, the 'vices' of Nicias (his wealth, his retiring disposition, his unsociability, his 'oligarchic' tendencies³) would only be accounted as vices in a society which was under the control of demagogues, for he would clearly be deemed a virtuous man in an oligarchy.

The institution of ostracism, in which Plutarch is obviously interested,⁴ is examined carefully and at length.

¹ Homer, in LX, 1; Euripides, in LX, 7; Callimachus, in XI, 3

² XI, 7

³ XI, 2

⁴ cf. Aristides, VII, 2; Alcibiades, XIII, 6 - 8

CHAPTER IX

- 2 These paragraphs are peculiar to Plutarch. They introduce Alcibiades to the reader for the first time in this Life, and give the sort of comparison between him and Nicias which must have been typical of rhetorical historians. Alcibiades, says Plutarch, was a *δημαγωγός*¹, but not *δρασίως ἄκρως* as Cleon; there was in him both good and bad, as Plutarch well illustrates by a line from Homer.² Being the sort of man he was, he furnished great causes for *νεσοπροσφοί* in Athens, and Plutarch depicts him as the 'éminence grise' who constantly thwarted Nicias' hopes of a lasting peace between Athens and Sparta. "Peace" is the keynote of chapters IX and X; a continuation of the useless struggle between the two chief cities of Greece was clearly an act of folly and lack of statesmanship. The well-to-do, the elderly and the farming community of Athens all desired peace,³ and Nicias is praised for giving them a lead. Alcibiades, on the other hand, influenced the youth of the city to continue the struggle, and for that reason and because he thereby made room for the most aggressive and mischievous men in the city to come to power, he is the subject of Plutarch's hostile criticism.

¹ For he was able to 'control the people' (*καταχρῆν ὄχλον*); part of the old Solonian ideal of political leadership in internal affairs: cf. Thucydides, VIII, 86, 5

² Odyssey, IV, 230: *Φέρματα πολλὰ γὰρ ἐσθλὰ περιγυμένα, πολλὰ δὲ δυσρά.*

³ IX, 5

4 These paragraphs are almost identical with Thucydides,¹ the only points of difference being Plutarch's omission of the name of Pleistoanax, the exiled king of Sparta, who was desirous of peace, and the use by Plutarch of the phrase, *Ειρήνη τῆς Ἑλλάδος*, which would have come strangely upon the lips of Thucydides.

Brasidas

The contrast between the excellence of ~~Νικίας~~ and the baseness of Cleon, and the reasons for Nicias' great longing for peace, are found in very similar words in Thucydides.² Aristophanes³ also bears witness to the responsibility of Cleon and Brasidas for the continuation of the struggle.

The accusation brought against Cleon of desiring war because it covered up his villainies and gave him opportunity for fresh iniquities, is to be found - if in slightly different words - in Thucydides, Aristophanes and Plutarch.⁴

These paragraphs, which describe in more detail Nicias' efforts for peace, and end with a panegyric on the blessings of peace, are not based upon Thucydides at all. Thucydides never suggests that Nicias had himself treated with kindness the Spartan prisoners who had been captured upon the island of Sphacteria.

¹ V, 16

² Thucydides, V, 16, 1 - 2:
Νικίας μὲν βαλόμενος . . . ἐπισώσασθαι τὴν εὐτυχίαν, καὶ ἐς τὸ αὐτὴν πάντα πεισθῆναι καὶ αὐτὸς κατὰ τοὺς φίλους πᾶνθαι καὶ τῶν πολλῶν χρόνῳ καταλιπεῖν ὄνομα ὡς αἰδῶν ὀφθαλμοὺς τὴν πόλιν διεστέλετο.

Plutarch, Nicias, LX, 4
ἔπραττεν εἰρῆνῃς . . . τοὺς ἄλλους Ἕλληνας ἀπαλλάξας μακρῶν καὶ λοιπῶν ὁμίλων, βάρβατον αἰῶν τὴν εὐτυχίαν ὄνομα πρὸς τὸν αἰῶνα χρόνον κατατίτο.

³ Peace, 269 - 284: cf. Peace, 645-648

⁴ Thucy., V, 16, 1:
ὁ δὲ (Κλ.) φανακόμενος ξουχίας καταφανέστερος νομίζων εἶναι κακῶν ἔργων καὶ ἀπειτότερος διαβάλλων

Arist., Knights, 803:
ἴνα . . . ὁ δῆμος εἰπὼ τῶν πολέμων καὶ τῆς εὐχίης εἰ πάντοτε μὴ καθορᾷ εἶναι.

Plut., Nic., LX, 3
ὁ πόλεμος τῶν μὲν ἀπέκρυπτε τὴν κακίαν . . . ἀδραστηρίων μεγάλων διαφορῶν πᾶρτιχε.

On the contrary, he tells us that Alcibiades, who was the Spartan 'proxenos' at Athens, had seen to it personally that the Spartan prisoners received fair treatment from the Athenians.²

Then Plutarch says that the well-to-do, the elderly and the farmers were, in any case, anxious for peace;³ the other citizens were brought over to Nicias' way of thinking. Nicias, as peace ambassador, was acceptable to the Spartans, who had confidence in him and respected his *ἐπιείκεια*. Both parties has tasted the blessings of peace during the temporary cessation of hostilities in 423 B.C., and, says Plutarch, they "yearned for that old life which was undefiled by war". There follows the quotation of a beautiful fragment of the 'Erechtheus' of Euripides (probably produced in 422 B.C.), which, because it extolled peace, was gladly heard by the people of Athens, and Plutarch says that the Athenians were frequently quoting the old proverb, " In peace time sleepers are wakened, not by the trumpet, but by the cock ".⁶

¹ V, 43

² As Plutarch admits, in the Life of Alcibiades, XLV, 1

³ This is confirmed by the so-called "Old Oligarch" (Ath. Pol., II, 14) if it was written circa 425 B.C.

⁴ cf. Thucydides, IV, 117 - 119 & V, 15 ⁵ Nauck, T.G.F., 2, p. 474
Stob., IV, 14, 4

⁶ It is interesting to note that the same proverb, in slightly different words, is quoted by Polybius (XII, 26) as being contained in one of the speeches of the Sicilian Hermocrates, according to the History of Timaeus: *ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς πολλοῖς βραχέως ἢ ἀλλοιῶδες, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἀρετὴν αὐτοῦ ὁρμητῆρος.*

The Athenians, Plutarch continues, condemned the popular belief, inspired by an oracle¹, that the war should last for twenty-seven years; and, in this spirit (οὕτω), they made peace, and " to this day, men call it ' The Peace of Nicias ' "².

There follows a most interesting comparison between Nicias and Pericles. Nicias is ἀνὴρ θεοφιλής, who gave his name to peace, the greatest and fairest of all blessings.³ Pericles, on the other hand, " for slight reasons was thought to have plunged the Greeks into great calamities ". Such an estimate of Pericles as warmonger and the man directly responsible for the Peloponnesian War (repeated in the Life of Alcibiades⁴) seems to be quite contrary to the estimate of the ability of Pericles which Plutarch gives us in the third chapter of this Life of Nicias.⁵

¹ To this oracle - the only one verified by events - Thucydides bears witness, in one of the few personal references which he makes: V, 26, 4.

² cf. Andocides, Peace, VIII: αὐτὸς τὴν εἰρήνην ἐπισημαίνουσα ἦν ἡρὶν Ν. κατηγορεύετο. Thucydides, V, 46, 4: αὐτίος δοκῶν εἶναι τῶν πρὸς Λακεδαιμονίους ἐπονδῶν.

³ cf. Thucydides, V, 16

⁴ XIV, 2: Ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλήσι λόγος ἦν ὡς Περικλέους μὲν συνάφαιτος αὐτοῖς πολέμων...

⁵ III, 1; except that in Nicias, LX, 9, Plutarch is using the verb ἐδόκει and may merely be referring to popular opinion, as he obviously is in Pericles, XXIX, 8: μένος ἔσχε τῶν πολέμων τὴν αἰτίαν; cf. also λέγεται in the Comparison between Pericles & Fabius, III, 1 and the phrase διὰ μικρὸν ἐπολεμήσατε, which Thucydides (I, 40, 4) puts into the mouth of Pericles - for this was just the accusation which was brought against Pericles by his enemies.

CHAPTER X

The articles of the Peace of Nicias, given in full detail by Thucydides, are passed over briefly by Plutarch, but he quotes the authority of Theophrastus¹ to refer to the buying up by Nicias of the lot which was to be cast to decide which of the two parties was to be the first to make restoration. This alleged act of bribery on the part of Nicias may be compared with an alleged act of bribery on the part of Pericles in the Life of Pericles,² where Theophrastus is also quoted by Plutarch as his authority.³

Thucydides makes no suggestion of bribery - he simply records⁴ that it fell to the Spartans by lot to make the first restitution.

Plutarch now makes reference to the unwillingness of the Corinthians and Boeotians to accept the peace terms to which Sparta had agreed. This is confirmed by Thucydides,⁵ as are the oaths taken and league concluded immediately afterwards by the Spartans and the Athenians.⁶

8 These paragraphs describe in considerable detail the trick played upon the Spartan ambassadors by Alcibiades; and in this description Plutarch also follows very closely the account of Thucydides,⁷ as he does when he refers to the same incident in the Life of Alcibiades.⁸ If anything, the account of Plutarch is more

¹ fr. 138, F. Wimmer

² XXIII, 2

³ A citation from Theophrastus in Aristides, XXV, 1-2, alleges that Aristides was not above encouraging his fellow-citizens to break their oaths to their allies; but Plutarch's use of Theophrastus and his familiarity with either the Νόμοι or the Πόλιται τὰ πρὸς τοὺς αἰσχροὺς will be examined in full under a later heading, with the ostracism of Hyperbolus.

⁴ V, 21

⁵ V, 17 & 22 & 25

⁶ V, 23

⁷ V, 39-48

⁸ XLV

graphic than that of Thucydides, paragraphs 5 and 6 of this chapter being a very considerable expansion of Thucydides.¹

Naturally, Plutarch is most interested in the reaction of Nicias to the trick of Alcibiades, and he, or his authority, elaborates the feelings of the Spartan ambassadors and of Nicias.² Similarly, praise is given to Nicias when he goes to Sparta as ambassador, where he achieves nothing,³ although highly respected.

The last paragraph of the chapter is also confirmed by Thucydides;⁴ Plutarch describes the election of Alcibiades as 'strategos', the alliance between Athens, Argos, Mantinea and Elis,⁵ and the sending of *Λγιστάς* to Pylos to ravage Laconia.⁶

¹ V, 45, 4

² Nicias, X, 6: τῷ Νικίᾳ φησὶν ἔχοντος εἰπεῖν, ἀλλ' ἔχει καὶ θαύματι πεπληγός.

³ Thucydides, V, 46, 4, records that at least he secured from Sparta a ratification and renewal of their former oaths.

⁴ Thucy. V, 52

⁵ Thucy. V, 47

⁶ But Thucydides, V, 56, says: ἐς Πύλον ἐκόρισαν τοὺς ἐκ Κρανίων εἰλωτας Ἀγίστασθε.

CHAPTER XI

This chapter deals in detail with the feud between Alcibiades and Nicias, and its eventual outcome in the ostracism of the demagogue Hyperbolus. Plutarch seems to have been greatly interested in the institution of ostracism; he makes reference to it in at least four of his Lives,¹ apart from casual references to ostracism of individuals other than his hero,² passing on no little information about the procedure adopted in the cases of ostracism, its duration, and so on. But in three of these Lives he does actually refer to the circumstances of the ostracism of Hyperbolus; and there is some evidence from the slightly conflicting versions in the Lives of Nicias³ and Alcibiades⁴ that he is using different sources for his information about ostracism in these two Lives. The first line of evidence is weak enough, for it is chronological, and one can rarely rely upon the chronology of Plutarch, for he will frequently digress to moralise upon the character of his hero, with historical illustrations which follow no time sequence. Still, in the Life of Alcibiades, Plutarch does seem to suggest that the ostracism of Hyperbolus⁵ took place before the campaign of Nicias

¹Aristides, VII, 2-8; Themis., XXII, 4-5; Nic., XI, 1-8; Alcib. XIII, 6-9.

²e.g. Damon, in Aristides, I, 7. ³XI, 1-8 ⁴XIII, 6

⁵When was Hyperbolus ostracised? Aristophanés (Peace, 679) suggests that he was in Athens in 420 B.C. Thucydides (VIII, 73, 1) says that he was killed at the time the Four Hundred were set up (i.e., 412-411 B.C., according to Arist. Const. of Athens, XXXII, 1); and Theopompus (fr. 98b, G.& H.) says he was ostracised for 6 years: ("Beaucoup ont cru qu'ἕξ ἔτη signifiait pour une durée de six ans, mais ce sens est inadmissible il vécut six ans ostracisé", Carcopino, pp. 194-5, L'ostracisme Athénien). If so, he was ostracised in 417 B.C.

in Argos in 418 B.C.; while the account in the Life of Nicias implies that it took place between the Argos campaign and the Sicilian Expedition, 418 - 415 B.C. The accounts of the ostracism of Hyperbolus in the Life of Aristides¹ and in the Life of Nicias are almost identical, but in the latter Life Plutarch goes into much greater detail, introducing the theory of Theophrastus that " Hyperbolus was ostracised when Phaeax, and not Nicias, was striving against Alcibiades ", only to reject it.

But in the Life of Alcibiades Plutarch makes it abundantly clear that he is following a source which accepted the view that there was a triple alliance (Nicias, Phaeax and Alcibiades) against Hyperbolus, and not the double alliance of which we read in the Lives of Aristides and Nicias. Although there are obvious similarities between Plutarch's accounts in his Lives of Nicias and Alcibiades (e.g. the misunderstanding of the real purpose of ostracism, the hostility towards, and contempt for, the demagogue, found in both Lives, and the citation from Plato Comicus about Hyperbolus) , yet there are equally obvious indications that Plutarch is following different authorities. In his Life of Alcibiades Plutarch gives a fairly full account and description of Phaeax, which is quite irrelevant unless he were somehow involved in an alliance against Hyperbolus. Although, in the Life of Alcibiades, Plutarch refers to the theory about Phaeax which he associates with the name of Theophrastus in the Life of Nicias,

yet the Alcibiades seems to suggest that there was some sort of agreement between Nicias and Phaeax, even before they came to a final agreement with Alcibiades. Phaeax, at any rate, seems to have been of the same political party as Nicias.¹

Apparently the Life of Nicias was written by Plutarch before the Life of Alcibiades;² Carcopino³ argues convincingly that much of Plutarch's Life of Alcibiades was taken from Andocides,⁴ pointing out very close parallels between the Alcibiades and the speech of Ps. Andocides.⁵ But in the Life of Nicias Plutarch

¹ This Phaeax, probably an acquaintance of Nicias, not sufficiently popular to be dangerous, was sent as Athenian ambassador to Italy and Sicily, 425-422 B.C. (Diog. Laert., II, 7, 63), where he tried to stir up anti-Syracusan feeling (Thucy., V, 4, 1-6); he was on trial for his life at least once (Ps. Andocides, IV, 35-36); his oratory is mentioned by Aristophanes (Knights, 1377 ff - he is described as too conversational to be a good orator; cf. Kock, C.A.F., I, p. 281, fr. 7 of Eupolis - *καλεῖν ἄριστος, ἔδουνατώτατος λέγειν* - but is this the Phaeax of Thucydides and Plutarch?).

² cf. Alcibiades, XI11, 9: *ἐν ἑτέροις μᾶλλον ἔργαται*, and Nicias, XI, 2: *ὡς μᾶλλον ἐν τοῖς περὶ ἐκείνου γραφομένοις δηλοῦται*. *δηλοῦται* may be understood as referring to the future, may be translated literally as a present tense, thereby implying that Plutarch was at work on the Life of Alcibiades while he was finishing off the Life of Nicias, or may be taken as an interpolation, as is suggested by Michaelis, *De Ordine Vitarum Plutarchi*, Berlin, 1875, p. 13; Holden, *Life of Nicias*, p. 87, says, "Michaelis rightly suspects the genuineness of this clause, which appears to him to be a marginal note that has found its way into the text".

³ *L'ostracisme Athénien*, 2nd edition, Paris, 1935, pp 211-216.

⁴ Ps. Andocides IV: cf. Plutarch, Alcibiades, XI11, 3

⁵ "le fait d'un sophiste du premier quart du 1^{ve} siècle"

Alcib., <u>VIII</u> , 3 - 4	and Ps. Andoc. <u>IV</u> , 13 - 14
XII	26
XIII	29
XVI, 4 - 5	17 - 20
XVI, 5	23

is following another tradition for his information about the ostracism of Hyperbolus, either because Pseudo-Andocides gave him practically no information for his Life of Nicias, or because he may not in any case have used Pseudo-Andocides at first hand for his Life of Alcibiades, or because - and this is most likely - he found it more satisfactory to pass on the account which was given by the source or sources which he was using for the earlier chapters of the Life of Nicias, especially if this source contained reference to the Phaeax-theory.

We shall have to inquire whether it is possible to prove that Plutarch made direct use of Theophrastus for some of the material which we find in chapters LX - XI of the Life of Nicias. He does refer to Theophrastus by name as his authority for the "buying up by Nicias of the lot"; he concludes chapter XI² with a passing reference to the Phaeax-Alcibiades theory, which he attributes to Theophrastus; but as Plutarch rejects this theory in favour of the views about the ostracism of Hyperbolus held by *οἱ ῥητορες*, this may even be taken as evidence that he did not use Theophrastus at all, and was only aware through his source of the opinions of Theophrastus about the circumstances of the ostracism of Hyperbolus. It would, of course, be ridiculous to suggest, and impossible to prove that Plutarch was not familiar with many of the multifarious writings of the successor of Aristotle to the presidency of the School of the Peripatetics. On the contrary,

¹ Nicias, X, 1

² Nicias, XI, 10

his reference in the Life of Sulla¹ to the seizure by Sulla of the library of Apellicon of Teos, and the later publications of the works of Aristotle and Theophrastus, might be taken to imply that Plutarch himself, when in Rome, had made himself familiar with these works of Aristotle and Theophrastus, taking from them much information of interest to himself and of use for his later writings.²

Among the many writings of Theophrastus, who was head of the Peripatetic School at Athens from 322 to 287 B.C. (and no doubt produced much material before he succeeded Aristotle³), the most likely works to contain information about the Peace of Nicias, the rivalry between Alcibiades and Nicias, and the ostracism of Hyperbolus, were either:

1) The Laws (*περὶ νόμων*), apparently a detailed investigation of constitutional law and an antiquarian account of the Attic State, although not confined to Athens;⁴

or 2) The Treatise *Πολιτικά τὰ πρὸς τοὺς κακούς* , which gave examples of classical occasions of political action *πρὸς τοὺς κακούς* .

Either of these two works may have dealt with the institution of ostracism in considerable detail; but, as Bloch⁵ remarks, Plutarch frequently gives us the sort of information, on the authority of Theophrastus, which was most likely to have been found in the *Πολιτικά* .

¹ XXVI, 1; cf. Strabo, XIII, 1, 54:

² cf. Plutarch, De Cohib. Ira, LX, 457D: De Tranq., I, 464 F.

³ Diog. Laert., V, 36, et seq.

⁴ Diog. Laert., V, 42 ff

⁵ Herbert Bloch, in "Athenian Studies, presented to W.S.Ferguson, p.358, note 1, remarks, " It seems more probable that Theophrastus referred to the political bargain between Alcibiades and Nicias or Phaeax in the *Πολιτικά τὰ πρὸς* --- because the antecedents of the ostracism of Hyperbolus are really a classical example of policy *πρὸς τοὺς κακούς* . It is noteworthy that Plutarch never quotes the *Νόμοι* - in Solon, XXXI, he follows Hermippus " .

Therefore the account of the ostracism of Hyperbolus as a result of the alliance between Phaeax and Alcibiades, attributed to Theophrastus, may not have been taken from the *Nóμοι* at all.¹

In his Life of Pericles, Plutarch refers to Theophrastus three times - for an alleged act of bribery of the Spartans by Pericles, to stave off the war and purchase time for preparation² (in the circumstances, the act of a farseeing statesman !), for the indictment and fining of Pericles³ (but here Theophrastus is coupled with Idomeneus of Lampsacus and Heracleides Ponticus), and for the description of an act of superstition on the part of Pericles as he lay sick of the plague⁴ (but Plutarch refers this to the *Ἡθικά* of Theophrastus). Also, in the Life of Aristides,⁵ Theophrastus is quoted as authority for the political expediency of Aristides.

But not one of the citations from Theophrastus found in Plutarch can be used to prove that Plutarch used the philosopher at first hand. It certainly seems apparent that Plutarch did not use him for the information in chapter XI of the Life of Nicias;⁶ for, although Plutarch was aware of the Theophrastan version of the ostracism of Hyperbolus, either directly or through the medium of his source, yet he rejects it, both in the Life of Nicias and in the Life of Alcibiades.

¹ Despite the Scholiast on Lucian's *Timon*, p. 142

² XXIII, 2

³ XXV, 5

⁴ XXXVIII, 2

⁵ XXV, 2

⁶ cf. Nicias, XI, 10: οἱ πλείονες αὐτῷ γεγράφεσιν.

Again, we know from Suidas¹ that Theophrastus claimed Theseus the first to have been ostracised at Athens. Plutarch is certainly not aware of this, for he tells us in this chapter² that Hipparchus ὁ Χολαργεύς, kinsman of the tyrant Peisistratus, was the first to be ostracised;³ and in his Life of Theseus he does not mention ostracism, although he deals at length⁴ with the exile of Theseus. It is, of course, possible that Plutarch was not at all familiar with the Νόμοι of Theophrastus, which no doubt gave considerable detail about the institution of ostracism, and may therein have referred to the legendary connection of Theseus with ostracism; on the other hand, Plutarch may have read the treatise Πολιτικά τὰ πρὸς τοὺς καιροὺς, which could not but mention - if briefly and with little detail - the ostracism of Hyperbolus. Thus, some of the information, both for these chapters (LX - XI) and for the above-quoted references in the Lives of Pericles and Aristides, may ultimately be from the political treatise of Theophrastus. This will not, however, explain Plutarch's refusal to follow the account of Theophrastus in his description of the ostracism of Hyperbolus, nor elucidate the names of οἱ πλεόντες. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to assume that Plutarch's authority for chapters LX - XI of the Life of Nicias gave, among

¹ Suidas: Ἀρχὴ σκυρία · ὀστρακισθῆναι πρῶτον Ἀθηῆνσι Θηδῆα ἱστορεῖ Θεόφραστος.

² Nicias, XI, 8

³ The truth of this is confirmed by Aristotle, Constit. of Athens, XXI. 4: καὶ πρῶτος ὀστρακισθῆναι Ἱππάρχου Χολαργεύς, δι' ὃν τὸν νόμον ἔθηκεν Κλεισθένης cf. Lycurg. in Leoc. 117; Diodorus, XI, 55, implies that Themistocles was the first to suffer this fate; Aelian, V.H., VIII, 24, names Cleisthenes as its first victim.

⁴ chapters XXXI - XXXIII

other accounts, the account of Theophrastus about Phaeax; but Plutarch himself preferred to reject it, because it seemed to him to be outweighed by other authorities, or because the alternative theory (that Hyperbolus was ostracised when Nicias and Alcibiades formed a temporary alliance against him) fitted in with his presuppositions about Nicias. For had Plutarch accepted the Theophrastan account, he would have had to omit from his Life of Nicias the political bargain made between Nicias and Alcibiades, with all its intrinsic moral and edificatory value.

It is also very difficult for us to assume that Theophrastus could have been responsible for the misapprehension of the nature and meaning of ostracism which is apparent whenever Plutarch has occasion to mention ostracism.¹ The expedient of ostracism, which (despite Pseudo-Andocides²) was practised for a time at Argos,³ at Miletus,⁴ at Megara,⁵ and at Syracuse⁶, was used to rescue the state from the dangers of tyranny from the early days of Athenian constitutional and political history. It inflicted banishment for ten years, without disgrace or loss of property or loss of civic rights. The new democracy under Cleisthenes feared lest

¹ cf. Aristides, VII, 2-8: Them., XXII, 4-5; Nic., XI, 1-8; Alc., XLIII, 6

² IV, 6 ³ Aristotle, Pol., V, 3, 1302B ⁴ Schol. Arist., Knights, 855

⁵ ¹ibid. ⁶ In 454 B.C., under the name of *περὶ ἀριστοκρατίας* (Diodorus, XI, 87, 6, who says that it was introduced to Syracuse in imitation of Athens); cf. also, Aristotle, Constit. of Athens, XXII, 4: XLVII, 5.

another popular leader might become too great and establish a tyranny.¹ It therefore resorted to this peculiar political device, which, although criticised by Aristotle,² is yet admitted by him to be an inevitable expedient in a democracy. In time, of course, ostracism tended to become an instrument of party warfare, to be used by a popular leader against his rivals.³

But the interpretation which Plutarch puts upon ostracism is very much more distorted. In all his references to ostracism, it is not a party instrument or an annual safeguard for democracy, but rather a spiteful device used by the mob to rid themselves of any statesman who was " an object of suspicion because of his great reputation, or an object of jealousy because of his great wealth ".⁴ Hence, it tended to be used against the aristocratic or the conservative or the wealthy element in the city - just that element which would win the approval of the historians of the Fourth Century B.C. and later, who hated radical democracy. Xanthippus, Aristides, Themistocles, Cimon and Thucydides, son of Melesias, would all fall into that category.⁵ Plutarch makes this point clear in his Life of Aristides:⁶ " ostracism was never inflicted on the meaner sort, but only upon persons of quality, whose grandeur and family pride made them obnoxious to the people ".

¹ " The ambition of individual statesmen might constitute a standing danger to the democracy " - E.M.Walker, p. 152, Vol. IV, C.A.H.

² Pol., III, 13, 1284A: V, 3, 1302B ³ From the ost. of Megacles, 486.

⁴ Nicias, XI, 1; cf. Pollux, VIII, 20: οὐχ ὡς καταγνωσθέντων ἀλλ' ὡς τῇ πολιτείᾳ βαρύτερον, δι' ἄρετῆς φθόνον μάλιστα ἢ διὰ κακίας φόνον.

⁵ cf. Cimon, XVII, 3 and Pericles, IX, 5, where ~~καταδικάσας~~ Plutarch idealises Cimon, who ' was ostracised because he was φιλολάων καὶ κισόδημος '.

⁶ 1, 2

Again, " Every man distinguished by birth, reputation or eloquence was liable to suffer by ostracism; since it fell even upon Damon because he was looked upon as a man of superior parts and policy ".¹ Plutarch implies that such men were accounted distinguished just because they had incurred the enmity and jealousy of the people and had suffered ostracism.

It seems obvious that Plutarch's source for chapter XI of the Life of Nicias looked upon ostracism as a dignified form of chastisement, which was degraded by its application to so unworthy a recipient as Hyperbolus. All who were ever ostracised, except the last Athenian to suffer such a fate, were worthy of the honour - in a sense, it showed them to be true citizens, with the interests of their city at heart. As Plutarch says,² the Athenians afterwards realised how unworthy Hyperbolus was to be treated in the same manner as some of the greatest of the Athens.³

Thus, we seem to find in Plutarch an accurate enough account of the facts relating to ostracism, its institution, its duration, its procedure, and the names of those who were made subject to it - but a quite inaccurate and wholly misleading representation of its meaning and nature. This would be accounted

¹ Aristides, 1, 7: cf. also, Nicias, VI, 1. ² Nicias, XI, 6.

³ *ibid*: διὰ φοχθηρίαν ἔπαθε τὰ τὰ τοῖς ἀρίστοις ; Plutarch also quotes a fragment of Plato Comicus, Kock, C.A.F., 1, fr. 187; the same idea is also to be found in a fragment of Philochorus: λόγος εἰς Ὑπερβόλου ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐξωστρακισθῶν ; F.Gr.H., III, fr. 32; Isocrates also (VIII, 75) contrasts Hyperbolus unfavourably with Aristides and Themistocles.

for, if we assumed that Plutarch did not take his account of ostracism at Athens from a writer like Theophrastus who might be expected to have understood its real purpose, but from a rhetorical historian who was treating ostracism as but another way in which the " good and true " were treated at Athens by the people.

Fricke¹ and Busolt² postulate a Theopompan source for chapters LX - XI of the Life of Nicias. Nor is it difficult to agree with their suggestion, without reading too much into the words of Plutarch. For Theopompus apparently had much to write about Hyperbolus in his Digression on the Athenian Demagogues,³ and could not have avoided comment upon his ostracism, and comparison of his exile with that of Aristides or Themistocles or Cimon.⁴ There is also the same political viewpoint present in these chapters as has been noticed in the earlier chapters of the Life of Nicias. Ostracism is interpreted as a device eagerly used by the people to satisfy their envy or their suspicion. The wealth, aristocratic way of life,⁵ and opposition to the wishes of the people, shown by Nicias, made him liable to this form of punishment, although he was the representative of the elderly who desired peace. The punishment, however, fell

¹ Untersuchungen über die Quellen des Plutarchos im Nikias und Alkibiades, Leipzig, 1869, p. 14 et seq.

² Griech. Gesch., III, 2, p. 1259

³ cf. fragments 97-98 a & b, G. & H. ⁴ cf., Isocrates, VIII, 75

⁵ Nicias, XI, 2: *μυδὲ δημοτικόν* ; cf. Xenophon, Hell., 2, 3, 39:
*συνλαβάνομεν Νικηράτην τὸν Νικίαν, καὶ Ἰθυσίον καὶ ὄσον πρώτος
 δημοτικόν ὅτε αὐτὸν ὅτε τῷ πατρὶ ἡράξαντος.*

upon the unworthy demagogue Hyperbolus, whose character is painted in the blackest colours.

The estimate of the character of Nicias found in the second paragraph of chapter XI is, on the whole, in fair agreement with what has been written of him in the earlier chapters of the biography. The picture of Nicias as the champion of the "elderly men who wanted peace" is consistent with the description of the peace-loving Nicias of chapter IX.

The proverb in hexameter verse,² with which Plutarch introduces his account of the rise to power of Hyperbolus, is apparently a favourite quotation of the biographer; he quotes it also in the *Moralia*,³ in the Comparison of Lysander and Sulla,⁴ and in the Life of Alexander.⁵

Plutarch's scornful description of the demagogue Hyperbolus, whose character he describes in a most stylish and attractive antithesis,⁶ is consistent with what all contemporary and later writers have to record about him. Thucydides⁷ calls him *μολυβδόχου ἄνθρωπος*; Plutarch describes him as *ὑπερβολος ὁ Περικουίδης* in his Lives of Nicias⁸ and Alcibiades,⁹ naming his 'deme', but not his father.¹⁰ Theopompus¹¹ names him as the son of Chremes, while

¹ Except, perhaps, for the sentence: *πολλὰ δὲ ἔδωκεν ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτῶν ἑπιτιμῶν, ἅρτι τῶν βλαβερῶν πρὸς τὸ εὐρύτερον, ἔπεμχθῆς ἦν*, XI, 2; for Plutarch has already said *ὡς δὲ ἔπεμχθῆς ἔγχευ αὐτῶν τὸ εὐρύτερον* in Nicias, II, 4.

² Attributed to the Alexandrine Callimachus. ³ De Frat. Amore, 479 A.

⁴ 1 ⁵ LIII, 5. ⁶ XI, 3 *ἄνθρωπος ἄπ' ὀδυσσεῖος τολεμῶν συνέκρουσ' ἄλλ' ἐπὶ τῶν τολεμῶν εἰς συνέκρουσιν προσέθευ*

⁷ VIII, 73, 3; and Plutarch was aware of this phrase, cf. Alcib. XIII, 4

⁸ XI, 3 ⁹ XIII, 4 ¹⁰ Aelian, V.H., XII, 43, says that no one could name the fathers of Hyperbolus, Cleophon or Demades, *καίτοι ἀριστῶν φησὶν ἄνθρωποι τῶν δήμων τῶν Ἀθηναίων.*

¹¹ fr. 97, G. & H.

Androtion terms him ¹ 'Αυτιφάνους'. Hyperbolus, the Lamp-maker, as Aristophanes ² calls him, was in the succession of demagogues which followed Pericles - no doubt, a direct pupil of Cleon; ³ and, although the Scholiast on Aristophanes ⁴ says that he was a 'strategos', this is probably untrue, for we have no other evidence of his undertaking a command. In addition to the attacks made upon him by Aristophanes, ⁵ as would be expected, he was also attacked by Cratinus, Eupolis, and Plato Comicus. ⁶ In addition, Hermippus inveighed against him, ⁷ and the 'Maricas' of Eupolis ⁸ must have been almost wholly devoted to a lampooning of Hyperbolus. Plutarch himself quotes the 'Maricas' of Eupolis in his Life of Nicias, ⁹ without apparently knowing which demagogue was the object of its attack. No contemporary writer has other than scorn or ridicule for Hyperbolus, and therefore it is not surprising to find a similar sort of picture given by the later writers of the Fourth Century B.C.

From what meagre information we have about Theopompus, culled from fragments taken for the most part from sensational and scandal-loving writers like Athenaeus, it is not impossible to recognise in these chapters of the Life of Nicias something of the viewpoint of the rhetorical historian; nor are these three chapters

¹ cf. schol. in Timon, 30 (Muller, fr. 48), and the first ostrakon of Hyperbolus which has been found: Shear, Hesperia, VI, 1939, p.246.

² Clouds, 1065. ³ Peace, 680-1. ⁴ Acharn., 846; Peace, 1319.

⁵ Acharn., 846; Knights, 1304-15; Clouds, 551, 558, 623, 876, 1065; Wasps, 1007; Peace, 681, 921, 1319; Thesm., 840-847; Frogs, 570; Plutus, 1037.

⁶ According to the Scholiast on Lucian's Timon, 30. ⁷ Arist., Clouds, 557

⁸ cf. Arist. Clouds, 553; Quintilian, Inst. Or., 1, 10, 18.

⁹ IV, 6.

inconsistent with what has previously been written by Plutarch about the character of Nicias in his Life. The emphasis is obviously upon peace, and in so far as Nicias is eager for peace, he is assigned greater virtue and consequently greater praise than have been previously allowed him. The three chapters are well illustrated by Citations from Homer, Euripides and Plato Comicus, by antitheses of a kind popular with all rhetorical writers, by comparisons and contrasts of Cleon and Brasidas, Nicias and Pericles, Cleon and Alcibiades, Alcibiades and Nicias. But whatever demerits may have been possessed by Pericles or Alcibiades or Nicias, obviously in character they rise superior to demagogues of the type of Cleon or Hyperbolus. As Pericles and Nicias have previously been termed *δυσπράγματοι*¹ by Plutarch, so the same term is applied to Alcibiades; and, as *δυσπράγματοι*, they would incur the disapproval of Theopompus, but clearly not to the same extent as their radical contemporaries, Cleon and Hyperbolus. Actually, Pericles would not easily fit into the conventional picture of a demagogue, because of his aristocratic background and conservative tendencies;² and the same is true of Alcibiades, and - to a lesser extent - of Nicias. One would not, therefore, expect to find unqualified praise or unqualified blame of these three men in such a writer as Theopompus; and a section of the

¹ Nicias, 11, 2 & 4

² Despite Plato (Gorgias, 515 E - 519 D: 526 B; Republic, VIII, 562 C), who doubted whether he had any real 'arete'.

Digression on Demagogues in Book X of the Philippica may easily have dealt with the more liberal-minded demagogues. The fragments of Theopompus do at least suggest this.

If then we are right in assuming that Plutarch used Theophrastus, but not at first hand, for some of the material which he passes on in chapters LX - XI of the Life of Nicias, then we must assume that Theopompus was indebted for some of his material to Theophrastus, and so passed it on to Plutarch - or that some later authority, such as Idomeneus of Lampsacus, incorporated both Theopompus and Theophrastus into his work.

Although it seems most likely, from this examination of chapters II - XI of the Life of Nicias, that Plutarch's ultimate source was the Philippica of Theopompus, it is necessary to explore the possibility that Plutarch did not use his Theopompus at first hand, but was familiar with the Digression on Demagogues only through the medium of Idomeneus' work on the Athenian demagogues.

There is a little evidence, which will be examined later, that Plutarch may not have made direct use of the Philippica (from which he apparently quotes freely), but knew the work only through a later writer; and that Plutarch's occasional references to Idomeneus of Lampsacus¹ may suggest that Idomeneus supplied the Theopompan material which is so lavishly used in many of Plutarch's Greek Lives.

This Idomeneus² was a politician and biographer of Lampsacus, who lived c. 325 - 270 B.C., and was a personal friend of the philosopher Epicurus.³ His works, so far as we know, were three-fold:

1) *Ἱστορία τῶν κατὰ Σφοδράκην.*⁴

2) *Περὶ τῶν Σωκρατικῶν*⁵, which were collectanea about

¹ Plutarch is almost the sole repository of the fragments of Idomeneus.

² F.H.G., II, 489-494; Usener, Epicurea, fr. 128-138.

³ Diog. Laert., X, 5, 22; Athenaeus, VII, 279 F.

⁴ cf. Suidas, sub Idomeneus.

⁵ Strabo, XI^{III}, 589; Diog. Laert., II, 23 & 25.

Socrates and his disciples, with particular reference to Aeschines Socraticus.¹

3) *Περί Αγαγώνων* , in at least two books, which dealt with rulers and statesmen, and must have been based to a very great extent upon Theopompus' Digression on Demagogues.² Apparently, this lengthy work of political biography dealt with at least the following characters in Greek history: The Peisistratids,³ Themistocles,⁴ Aristides,⁵ Pericles,⁶ Demosthenes,⁷ Aeschines the orator,⁸ Hypereides⁹ and Phocion.¹⁰

¹cf. Diog. Laert., II, 19: II, 20: II, 60: III, 36; Athenaeus, XIII, 611 E. This Aeschines Socraticus, to whom reference is made in three of these fragments of Idomeneus, is best known as the author of the Socratic Dialogues, one of which Plutarch mentions in his Life of Nicias (IV, 2), under the authorship of Pasiphon of Eretria, a notorious imitator of the Socratics (cf. Diog. Laert., II, 61).

²Athenaeus, XII, 532 F.

³Athenaeus, Ibid.

⁴Athenaeus, XII, 533 D and XIII, 576 C, attributes to Idomeneus the story that Themistocles yoked four courtesans together to a chariot and drove them in the morning through the Cerameicus. Plutarch certainly refers to the unrestrained and licentious conduct of Themistocles in his early youth, but does not quote this anecdote.

⁵There are 3 references in Plutarch's Life of Aristides (I, 8: IV, 4, and X, 9).

⁶Plutarch, Pericles, X, 7, and XXXV, 5 (in the former reference Plutarch says that Idomeneus has ' collected together these charges from some source or other ').

⁷Plutarch, Demosthenes, XV, 5 and XXIII, 4; Athenaeus, XIII, 592 F.

⁸Apoll., Vita Aeschylī, 247. ⁹Athenaeus, XIII, 590 D.

¹⁰Plutarch, Phocion, IV, 2.

These fragments from Idomeneus' work on the Athenian demagogues (two thirds of which are taken from Plutarch) tell us very little about Idomeneus as a writer. To judge from the few quotations in Athenaeus, he was merely a recorder of sensational anecdotes about public men, laying particular emphasis upon their sexual weaknesses. But the impossibility of getting a fair picture from Athenaeus is made quite clear in the case of Theopompus, for our estimate of the Isocratean would be low indeed if we had solely to rely upon Athenaeus.

Although Plutarch is critical of Idomeneus,¹ we may assume that, if he is quoting Idomeneus at first hand, he is likely to present us with a fairer estimate of the Epicurean. Actually, the sort of information which Idomeneus did apparently supply to Plutarch, through whatever intermediaries, makes it quite impossible for us to say more about him than that he seems to have shared the antipathy of Theopompus for the demagogues,² and was interested in any accusations brought against the Athenian political leaders of the Fifth Century and later B.C.³ No doubt, he borrowed extensively from Theopompus,⁴ and much of the material of Theopompus' Digression must have found its way into this work of Idomeneus.

¹ Pericles, X, 7.

² Ibid. X, 7.

³ Aristides, LV, 4; Pericles, XXXV, 5.

⁴ Athenaeus, XII, 532 F.

So far as concerns Plutarch's quotations from, and references to, Theopompus, one may suggest (but only in the most tentative manner) that, although Plutarch was familiar with the Hellenica of Theopompus at first hand, he may not have had available at Chaeronea a copy of the Philippica of Theopompus, and may therefore have relied upon Idomeneus for the material which was originally to be found in Book X of the Philippica. The following evidence, weak though it is, may perhaps suggest this.

- 1) On most of the occasions when Plutarch is referring to the work of Theopompus (and we may be sure that the Philippica, and not the Hellenica, is implied), the name of Theopompus is coupled with that of another authority, often Ephorus.²

¹ cf. Plutarch, Agesilaus, X, 10: XXXI, 4: XXXII, 14; Lysander, XXX, 2 = Athenaeus, XII, 543 B - C = Book X of the Hellenica; but the Life of Lysander is obviously based upon a first hand knowledge of the Hellenica of Theopompus, as will be demonstrated later.

² The following references are important:

- 1) Themistocles, XLX (G. & H., 85). Theopompus, quoted by Plutarch as an authority for the bribing of the Spartan ephors by Themistocles, is compared with the majority of Plutarch's other authorities.
- 2) Themistocles, XXV (G. & H., 86). Theopompus and Theophrastus are coupled together, with references to Thucydides and Stesimbrotus, in the same chapter.
- 3) Timoleon, IV (G. & H., 304 A). Theopompus is mentioned with Ephorus and Timaeus; it is likely that Plutarch was here following the account of Timaeus, who quoted from Ephorus and Theopompus.
- 4) Dion, XXIV (G. & H., 302). Theopompus is mentioned as the authority for the portents appearing to Dionysius; again, Timaeus may be quoting Theopompus in his account.
- 5) Alcibiades, XXXII. After referring to Duris of Samos for an anecdote about Alcibiades, Plutarch adds that Theopompus, Ephorus and Xenophon do not mention the incident.

- 2) On many occasions Plutarch does not name Theopompus at all, but is obviously using material drawn from the Philippica.¹

Both these lines of evidence, which are transparently weak, may suggest that Plutarch drew upon the Philippica at second hand, and through another authority.

- 3) The reference to the Dialogues of Pasiphon is a strong argument against the use of Theopompus at first hand, for Pasiphon (c. 300 - 250 B.C.) was later than Theopompus. Idomeneus, who wrote about the Athenian demagogues and about the Socratics, may have been familiar with the writings of Pasiphon.²

- 4) The laudatory references to Damon and Paches in the Life of Nicias³ are of a similar nature to the references to Damon and Paches in the Life of Aristides⁴; it seems likely that much of the information in the early part of the Aristides⁵ came from Idomeneus.⁶

¹ In Cimon, X, an anecdote illustrative of the generosity of Cimon is from Theopompus (cf. Athen., XII, 533 A - C, who refers it to Book X of the Philippica); the conduct of Cleon in Nicias, VII, 7 and VIII, 6, is described in the words of Theopompus (cf. G. & H., 94; Plutarch, Praec. Ger. Reip., 799 D, gives a similar description in brief, but without reference to authority).

² Diog. Laert., II, 61; Plut., Nicias, 1V, 2. ³ VI, 1.

⁴ 1, 7 - 8, and XXVI, 5. ⁵ cf. Aristides, 1, 8: 1V, 4: X, 9.

⁶ Whether directly or indirectly, we do not know; but the ref. to Idomeneus in Pericles, X, 7 and XXXV, 5, almost suggest a direct use: X, 7 ταῦτα γὰρ οἱ καὶ οἱ Ἰδμενεὺς συναγαγόντες ἕσπερ χολῆν τῆνδε; ἠραβεβλήκε; in Pericles, XXXV, 5, Idomeneus is mentioned with Theopompus and Heracleides Ponticus, and being posterior in date to the others he may have supplied to Plutarch material from the others. The Life of Demosthenes contains two ref. to Idomeneus (XV & XXI) and seven to Theopompus (1V, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XXI, XXV).

But the only real strength lies in the ^{third} ~~second~~ of these arguments, and that would be completely invalidated if one could prove that Plutarch had a copy of Pasiphon's Dialogues at Chaeronea. But it is, of course, possible that, in the wide reading of a life-time, Plutarch may have noted down the reference in Pasiphon to Nicias' superstition, quoted perhaps by some later writer, and extracted it from his common-place book for use in this Life.

More than this cannot be said or argued! The fact remains that, whether directly or indirectly (and probably it was directly), Theopompus ultimately supplied the material from which the early chapters of the Life of Nicias are woven, as Timaeus supplied the material for the later chapters.

The final portrait of Nicias in Plutarch's Life is not an unfair one; it is in almost every way consistent with what contemporary sources have to say about him. But Plutarch gives us very little identification of the real character of Nicias, which is perhaps natural, for - as has been suggested - Plutarch's two main sources are more interested in Nicias' contemporaries than in the Athenian general himself.

Although Timaeus must be considered a hostile source, the overall portraiture of Nicias in chapters XII - XXX is not unflattering when one considers that it is taken from the description of an enemy general invading Sicily with power and meeting his death in utter weakness. Timaeus is much more interested in defaming the character of the allied leader, Gylippus, and in glorifying that of Hermocrates, than to do more than pass on anecdotes about Nicias which also somehow involve Gylippus and Hermocrates. But it also seems likely that Timaeus had sufficient sense not to stray too far from the sober and somewhat impassioned account of Thucydides. It is quite impossible to give a detailed reconstruction of Timaeus' account of the Sicilian Expedition, but it does seem reasonable to assume that in Plutarch we have an epitome of those sections relevant to the life of Nicias; and that, whatever the opinions of Polybius about Timaeus, our loss is great in not having available today Timaeus' History of Sicily.

But even greater must be reckoned our loss of Theopompus⁸ Philippica, a truly monumental work which probably represented all the good and bad points of rhetorical historiography. Von Fritz has an interesting comment: " The historians of the Fourth Century unconsciously and unintentionally provide us with a kind of historical knowledge which we cannot so easily derive from the works of their more objective predecessors..... for their opinions are not likely to have been exclusively their own, but were probably to a greater or less degree representative of the sentiments of important sections of the Greek population ". Von Fritz does not indicate who these " important sections of the Greek population " were, nor indeed why the historians of the Fourth Century B.C. should not have passed on their own opinions to a reading public. But the dissatisfaction with public life prevalent in the Fourth Century and the great and renewed interest, at Athens particularly, in foreign powers and in great individuals, and of course the influence of Isocrates and the Schools of Plato and Aristotle, turned the attention of these historians towards the writing of readable treatises, romantic histories, memoirs and character studies, which would appeal to an educated audience. In his great work, Theopompus was grinding an oligarchic axe; he, and probably his readers too, had little time for radical democracy, seeing in it almost every evil that had combined to destroy Athens by a continuation of the fratricidal struggle which maintained the splitting-up of Greece into small city-states. But there is little in

¹ A.H.R., XLVI, 1941, The Historian Theopompus, p. 766.

Plutarch's estimate of the radical demagogues, taken over from Theopompus, which is not substantially corroborated by the more serious writings of Thucydides and the exaggerated pen-portraits of Aristophanes; and the picture of Nicias caught up in the whirlwind of political animosity - as successor to the policy of Pericles, avoiding extremes of right and left - attempting in vain to stem the flood which raged about him, and carried away by, rather than directing, the stream, is not too far from Thucydides' post-mortem evaluation of Nicias as being " the man who of all the Greeks of my time least deserved to be brought to so great a degree of misery " ¹.

¹ VII, 86.