

# The Siege of Nora: A Source Conflict

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IN THE SPRING of 319 B.C. Eumenes of Cardia was defeated by Antigonos I Monophthalmus on the plains of Cappadocia and retreated into the fortress of Nora, a small citadel in the northern part of the Taurus Mountains.<sup>1</sup> While there is general agreement in the sources concerning the course of events leading to Eumenes' entry into Nora, this is not the case with regard to his withdrawal from this site. A conflict exists in the sources despite the modern tendency to disregard it. Diodorus Siculus (18.50.1–2 and 53.5) states that Antigonos, who, after the death of the regent Antipater in 319, began to aspire to the supreme power, offered Eumenes an alliance and freedom in 318. In consequence, continues Diodorus, Eumenes swore an oath of loyalty to Antigonos and was released. This subordination remained in effect until Eumenes received letters from the new regent in Macedonia,

<sup>1</sup> The battle occurred very early in the spring; Antigonos had just left winter quarters in northern Phrygia with the express purpose of meeting Eumenes' forces (Diod. 18.40.1–2; cf. Arr. *Succ. FG rHist* 156 F 11 [43–44]). Eumenes' forces had themselves moved from winter quarters into Cappadocia prior to the battle (Diod. 18.40.1; Plut. *Eum.* 9.1). The entrance into Nora could not have occurred long after the defeat. Eumenes was retreating rapidly toward Armenia when he was overtaken (Diod. 18.41.1). The general chronology is based on Manni's and Errington's dating of Triparadeisos after May 320 (R. M. Errington, "From Babylon to Triparadeisos: 323–320 B.C.," *JHS* 72 [1972] 75–76). I do not ascribe, however, to Manni's (E. Manni, *Demetrio Poliorcete* [Roma 1951] 70–71) or Smith's (L. C. Smith, "The Chronology of Books XVIII–XX of Diodorus Siculus," *AJP* 82 [1961] 283–90) attempts to systematize Diodorus' errors in chronology. Manni's assumption that Diodorus' source related events with regard to a Macedonian calendar is demonstrably false. There is in all of Books XVIII–XX only one reference to a Macedonian month, and that occurs in the text of Polyperchon's 'Freedom for the Greeks Decree' (Diod. 18.56.6). Smith's hypothesis that Diodorus equated archon years with campaign years becomes untenable with the placing of Triparadeisos in 320 rather than in 321. From the evidence it appears clear that Diodorus' source dated events either with reference to the alternation of the seasons (Diod. 18.25.1, 40.1; 19.12.1, 15.6, 34.8, 37.1, 44.4, 46.1, 49.1, 56.5, 68.5, 69.2, 77.7, 80.5, 89.2) or to the rising or setting of fixed stars (Diod. 19.17.3, 18.2, 37.3, 56.5; 20.73.3, 74.1). The errors have resulted from Diodorus' difficulty in placing into Athenian archon years events which were dated by his source with reference to natural phenomena. There is no evidence for systematization; all such schemes invariably must deal with numerous discrepancies. As Whatley (N. Whatley, "On the Possibility of Reconstructing Marathon and Other Ancient Battles," *JHS* 84 [1964] 129) comments with respect to Herodotus, Diodorus appears to be "good or bad on no fixed system." In contrast to Herodotus it is doubtful that this can be considered "part of his charm."

Polyperchon, and from Olympias, offering an alliance against Antigonus and his European ally Cassander (Diod. 18.53.5, 57.3–4, 58.1–4, 59.1). Plutarch, the other major surviving source, in his biography of Eumenes relates that Eumenes changed the wording of the oath of loyalty proposed by Antigonus (Plut. *Eum.* 12.2; cf. Nepos, *Eum.* 5.7). According to Plutarch (*Eum.* 12.2–3) the initial oath required Eumenes to swear certain obligations to Antigonus, but in the preamble there was a brief reference to the ‘kings’. Eumenes changed the oath so that he swore allegiance to the ‘kings’ and queen-mother Olympias as well as to Antigonus. Allegiance to the ‘kings’ and Olympias was a far more amorphous pledge than one solely to Antigonus, especially since Antigonus was not the regent. The Macedonian commander sent with the original oath by Antigonus, who was not then present at the siege himself, found these changes agreeable and freed Eumenes. When Antigonus learned what had transpired, he immediately sent troops to renew the siege. But it was too late; Eumenes had escaped (Plut. *Eum.* 12.3).

The accounts, therefore, differ markedly. In Plutarch Eumenes’ cleverness allowed him to escape without compromising his principles. Diodorus, on the other hand, shows no knowledge of any change in the oath setting Eumenes free:

When the siege had lasted a year and hope of safety had been abandoned, there suddenly appeared an unexpected deliverance from his plight; for Antigonus, who was besieging him and bent on destroying him, changed his plan, invited him to share in his own undertakings, and after receiving an oath-bound pledge, freed him from the siege.<sup>2</sup>

The Greek allows no other reading than that Antigonus freed him. There is no mention of deceit.

In view of this inconsistency it is surprising to discover that modern scholarship accepts and amalgamates both accounts.<sup>3</sup> Diodorus’ failure to mention the alteration of the oath is represented as another example of his careless abridgement. While no one can argue that

<sup>2</sup> Diod. 18.53.5; also Diod. 19.44.2: “. . . On the previous occasion, after Eumenes had been spared by Antigonus at Nora in Phrygia, he had none the less supported the kings most wholeheartedly.” All translations are from the *Loeb Classical Library* editions.

<sup>3</sup> W. W. Tarn, “The Heritage of Alexander,” *CAH VI* (Cambridge 1953) 472; A. Vezin, *Eumenes von Kardia* (Münster 1907) 73; M. J. Fontana, *La lotte per la successione di Alessandro Magno dal 323 al 315* (Palermo 1960) 98; C. Wehrli, *Antigone et Démétrios* (Geneva 1968) 37–38: hereafter cited by authors’ names alone.

Diodorus was a meticulous craftsman, the evidence would indicate that carelessness is not an adequate explanation for this problem. There is greater disagreement between the two than merely the omission of a reference to a change in the oath. Plutarch and Diodorus list different causes for the renewal of hostilities between Eumenes and Antigonos. In Plutarch, Antigonos sends troops against Eumenes as soon as he hears of the changes made in the oath, while in Diodorus (18.58.4–59.1) Antigonos' hostility is not renewed until he learns that Eumenes has formed an alliance with his enemies. It is only then that Eumenes is forced to flee. Plutarch (*Eum.* 13.1) has Eumenes already in flight when the letters offering the alliance with Polyperchon reach him. This is a discrepancy not easily reconciled. According to Diodorus (18.58.4) after the receipt of the letters from Polyperchon and Olympias, Eumenes, "since he had always observed the most unwavering loyalty toward the 'kings', decided not to take orders from Antigonos." The sources are in general agreement that the letters did not arrive until after Eumenes' departure from Nora; the implication in Diodorus clearly is that there was a time after Eumenes' release and prior to his receipt of the letters when he had decided to follow Antigonos (Diod. 18.58.1; Plut. *Eum.* 13.1).

Plutarch's account, if accepted, would go far to enhance Eumenes' reputation as an Argead loyalist but would certainly diminish the claim for his intelligence. As Vezin has pointed out, it is very unlikely Eumenes had any knowledge of the power struggle soon to take place in Europe.<sup>4</sup> Antigonos was himself pleasantly surprised when Cassander came to him in the spring of 318 requesting an alliance.<sup>5</sup> While Eumenes probably knew of Antipater's death—such information would seep even into the confines of Nora—he could not have known of the coming struggle in Greece. Polyperchon saw its severity only after Cassander's flight and almost immediately sent his proposal of an alliance to Eumenes, which, as shown, arrived after the evacuation of Nora. Had Eumenes changed the oath he could escape Nora, but to what? Without foreknowledge of the coming struggle he could have foreseen only flight to another such fortress. He was still an enemy of the state, which so far as he knew meant the generals in Asia and the regent in Macedonia. To flee one step ahead of Antigonos without hope of support would have been folly. Fontana's argument that

<sup>4</sup> Vezin 72.

<sup>5</sup> Diod. 18.54.3; cf. Fontana 97–98, 102.

Eumenes changed the oath because he feared Antigonus when he had no further use of him has validity only if viable alternatives were available, and prior to the receipt of the letters from Polyperchon these alternatives simply did not exist.<sup>6</sup>

In a comparison of the conflicting passages account must also be taken of Diodorus' and Plutarch's respective sources. Even though it is not explicitly stated by Diodorus, it is generally acknowledged in modern scholarship that his history of the successors is derived from Hieronymus of Cardia.<sup>7</sup> There is no need here to extol in detail the virtues of Hieronymus; this has been done amply elsewhere.<sup>8</sup> Suffice it to say that he actively served in succession his fellow-countryman Eumenes, Antigonus and Demetrius; and his work, although surviving only in fragments, is generally believed to have been the most detailed and accurate account of this period. By contrast, the identification of Plutarch's sources has occasioned greater debate amongst scholars. Unlike Diodorus', Plutarch's methodology involved the incorporation of many sources in the writing of his biographies.<sup>9</sup> In fact, Plutarch himself makes reference in his *Life of Eumenes* (1.1) to the work of an historian other than Hieronymus, Duris of Samos. Duris has long been mentioned as one of Plutarch's major sources for this entire period, most recently and persuasively by M. J. Fontana.<sup>10</sup> Duris' reputation as an historian, however, unlike that of Hieronymus, has not received praise from scholars but rather condemnation. Duris was susceptible to fictionalizing history for dramatic effect—a tendency present in many Hellenistic historical writers and termed by

<sup>6</sup> Fontana (98) assumes he had such knowledge, but her own evidence would not so indicate.

<sup>7</sup> R. Drews, "Diodorus and his Sources," *AJP* 83 (1962) 384; R. M. Errington, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 72–75; Fontana 151–237; R. A. Hadley, "Hieronymus of Cardia and Early Seleucid Mythology," *Historia* 18 (1969) 144; F. Jacoby, "Hieronymos," *RE* 8 (1913) 1547, 1552–60; R. H. Simpson, "Abbreviation of Hieronymus in Diodorus," *AJP* 80 (1959) 370. It is commonly believed that Diodorus relied almost exclusively on one source for a given historical period, either slavishly copying this source (E. Schwartz, "Diodoros," *RE* 5 [1905] 663; W. von Christ, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* II [Munich 1920] 405), or while in the main following one source, periodically adding material to enhance it (R. Drews, *The Historiographical Objectives and Procedures of Diodorus Siculus* [diss. Johns Hopkins 1960] 92, 98, 102–09, 149; Drews, *AJP* 83 (1962) 385–91; Jacoby, *op.cit.* 1556).

<sup>8</sup> T. S. Brown, "Hieronymus of Cardia," *AHR* 52 (1946–47) 684–96; Jacoby, *op.cit.* [*supra* n.7] 1547, 1552–60.

<sup>9</sup> P. A. Stadter, *Plutarch's Historical Methods: An Analysis of the Mulierum Virtutes* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1965); C. Theander, *Plutarch und die Geschichte* (Lund 1951).

<sup>10</sup> Fontana 228–35.

modern scholars 'tragic' history.<sup>11</sup> Indicative of Duris' 'tragic' tendencies is the colorful fragment found in Plutarch's *Life of Eumenes* (1.1) attributing Eumenes' connection with the Macedonian royal house to his prowess in the gymnasium. In addition, elsewhere in Plutarch's narrative there are a number of passages not found in Diodorus and of a highly rhetorical nature which probably are derived from Duris. Most prominent are the scene of the dying Craterus (*Eum.* 7.4, 7–8) and Eumenes' final address to the Argyraspids (*Eum.* 17.3–5). While there is no explicit reference to Duris as Plutarch's source for his account of Eumenes' evacuation of Nora, the changing of the oath would have served Duris' purposes well. Eumenes was reputed to have been both loyal and clever, and what better demonstration could there be than this fabrication? It is quite possible that Eumenes later put forth the claim that he had not violated his oath to Antigonus since he was in his actions following the higher loyalty to the 'kings' (cf. *Diod.* 18.58.4). Eumenes certainly had a vested interest after Nora in convincing his subordinates that he could be trusted. Duris merely embellished this justification with the fiction of the changed oath.

Consequently, the evidence of the changed oath contained in Plutarch cannot be accurate. There was a time after Eumenes' release from Nora and before his receipt of the letters from Polyperchon when he had cast his lot with Antigonus. The length of time involved, however, is unclear. While Nepos is the only source giving a definite time for Eumenes' departure from Nora, the spring of 318, most scholars discount his testimony and instead rely on certain passages in Diodorus which, when taken together, might indicate his release in the summer.<sup>12</sup> Diodorus (18.53.5) states that the siege lasted a year. There need be no conflict with Nepos if Eumenes' retreat into Nora is dated in the spring of 319, a time which is certainly not excluded by the evidence.<sup>13</sup> The real difficulty arises with another passage in Diodorus. Diodorus 18.58.1 states: "When Archippus was archon of Athens (318/7) . . . Eumenes, just after he had made good his retreat from the fortress [Nora], received the letters that had been dispatched by Polyperchon." This passage puts Eumenes' release in the summer of

<sup>11</sup> F. W. Walbank, "Tragic History: A Reconsideration," *BullICS* 2 (1955) 4–14; "History and Tragedy," *Historia* 9 (1960) 216–34.

<sup>12</sup> *Nep. Eum.* 5.7; see Fontana (97–102) for the currently accepted view.

<sup>13</sup> See *supra* n.1; Diodorus (18.44.1) merely places it at 320/19.

318 just prior to the receipt of the letters. There are indications, however, that this passage may not be the best evidence with regard to the time of Eumenes' departure. The sentence itself is transitional, with Diodorus turning from activities in Europe to those in Asia; and under similar circumstances Diodorus has shown a tendency to foreshorten events. A good example of this occurs in his narrative of the causes of the Lamian War. "A short time before his death, Alexander decided to restore all the exiles in the Greek cities (18.8.2)." The 'short time' was almost one full year. There need then be no conflict between Nepos and Diodorus. Eumenes' release came in the late spring of 318.<sup>14</sup> As a consequence, when Eumenes received the letters from Polyperchon in the summer of 318, he had been serving Antigonus for almost three months.

That Eumenes would come to terms with Antigonus certainly should not appear surprising. Eumenes had earlier offered to surrender on similar conditions while the siege works were still being constructed in 319 (Diod. 18.41.6–7; Plut. *Eum.* 10.3). Later in the summer or early fall of 319 he had dispatched Hieronymus the historian to negotiate his surrender to Antipater.<sup>15</sup> For Eumenes to have sent such an embassy clearly indicates that he despaired of effecting his own release without outside assistance.<sup>16</sup> Even though Eumenes undoubtedly hoped to arouse the regent's fears of Antigonus, Eumenes had been reluctant in the past to enter into an agreement with Antipater because of their long-standing hostility (Plut. *Eum.* 3.4, 5.5). With the defeat of the other Perdiccans and finally with the death of Antipater himself in the fall of 319, the offer from Antigonus must have appeared a godsend.<sup>17</sup>

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK

July, 1977

<sup>14</sup> His release was not effected prior to spring, since Arrhidaeus, the satrap of Hellenistic Phrygia, had in the spring sent troops to relieve the siege (Diod. 18.52.4; cf. Just. 14.2.4). Antigonus was still in winter quarters when he heard of Arrhidaeus' attack on Cyzicus (Diod. 18.52.1).

<sup>15</sup> Diod. 18.42.1; Hieronymus was most likely sent out in the fall of 319, for Eumenes would not have readily negotiated unless he saw no alternatives. Eumenes certainly would not have sent such a mission until the fate of the other Perdiccans had been sealed by Antigonus, which occurred in the late summer or fall of 319 (Diod. 18.44–47, 52.1; Polyæn. 4.6.7).

<sup>16</sup> According to Nepos (*Eum.* 5.7) Eumenes had made several sallies on the besieging force, but their fortifications had proven too strong.

<sup>17</sup> Diodorus (18.53.5) certainly thought so.