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The Treaty of 376/5 BC – A New Interpretation*

ABSTRACT: The article addresses the issue of a peace treaty between Carthage and Dionysius I of Syracuse, related by Diodorus Siculus in his *Library of History* (15.17.5). While maintaining the identification of the Halycus river as the Platani, the article offers a new interpretation of the treaty, by arguing that it created a new category of territories in the western part of the island, leaving the Greek cities east of the Halycus river paying tribute to the Carthaginians until the arrival of Timoleon of Corinth.
Keywords: Carthage – Sicily – Syracuse – Dionysius I – Diodorus Siculus

The third peace treaty between Dionysius I and the Carthaginians, ending yet another of the tyrant's conflicts with that people, poses quite a few problems for modern scholars, who strive to make it compatible with the previous ones. This article will point out the main issues and challenges connected with this treaty, analyse its terms and their modern explanations, and propose a new interpretation, one that avoids explaining these problems by attributing them to the shortcomings of the source.

Firstly, the date and the historical background of the treaty will be discussed. Secondly, the terms and identity of the geographical features mentioned in its text will be presented. Next, after showing the various problems and interpretations present in the modern discourse, a solution to the dilemmas posed by this agreement will be put forward. Finally, the most important consequences of this new interpretation will be outlined.

The date and historical background of the treaty

Book 15 of Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheke Historike* is notorious for its surprisingly cursory treatment of Sicilian events. Setting aside the reason for this brevity, which may or may not be the author's fault, a historian has to face the grim reality of having to deal with a source that leaves a lot to be desired. The description of the third war between Dionysius I and the Carthaginians leaves little doubt that the conflict was a prolonged

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struggle which involved a number of encounters – and possibly sieges – both in Sicily and in Italy. And yet, Diodorus describes these events in mere three chapters (Diod. 15.15.1–17.5) – just four pages of the Teubner edition, under a single year (383/2). However, as stated before, Diodorus' description has led modern scholars to believe that the conflict continued for some years, well into the 370s.[1]

Most scholars tie the end of this war to information about Spartan ideas for cooperation with Dionysius. Under 374 BC (Diod. 15.46.2), Diodorus mentions the Spartan squadron sailing ostensibly to Sicily, but in fact heading for Corcyra. Xenophon informs us about Spartan envoys sent to Syracuse around this time to persuade Dionysius to take part in a common action against the strategically situated island (Xen. *Hell*. VI.2.4). However, there is no obvious reason for tying these pieces of information to the signing of the peace treaty in Sicily, and an offer of a joint operation against Corcyra would be especially surprising if we assume that the war in Sicily was still in progress. Therefore, it is reasonable to concur with Eduard Meyer and Brian Caven, who suggested that the peace treaty was probably signed in the winter of 376/5, which coincides with the end of the historical work by Hermeias of Methymna (Diod. 15.37.3).[2]

What seems to be quite clear from Diodorus' account of this war is who won. In spite of suffering a serious defeat at Cabala (Diod.15.15.3), the Carthaginians with their new leader, Himilco, managed to save the remaining forces and took their revenge in the battle of Cronium, where the Greeks suffered heavy casualties – 14,000 dead (among them Leptines, Dionysius' brother). This victory gave the Carthaginians the upper hand, but instead of advancing against Syracuse they offered peace on surprisingly lenient terms, earning Diodorus' praise for their "humane" behaviour (ἀνθρωπίνως, Diod. 15.17.5).

The terms of the treaty and the previous interpretations

Diodorus relates the terms as follows:

> (Diod. 15.17.5) ἀνθρωπίνως δὲ τὴν εὐημερίαν ἐνεγκόντες ἀπέστειλαν πρεσβευτάς, δόντες ἐξουσίαν τῷ Διονυσίῳ καταλύσασθαι τὸν πόλεμον. ἀσμένως δὲ τοῦ τυράννου προσδεξαμένου τοὺς λόγους ἐγένοντο διαλύσεις, ὥστ᾽ ἔχειν ἀμφοτέρους ὧν πρότερον ὑπῆρχον κύριοι: ἐξαίρετον[3] δ᾽ ἔλαβον οἱ Καρχηδόνιοι τὴν τῶν Σελινουντίων πόλιν τε καὶ χώραν καὶ τῆς Ἀκραγαντίνης μέχρι τοῦ Ἁλύκου καλουμένου ποταμοῦ. ἔτισε δὲ Διονύσιος τοῖς Καρχηδονίοις τάλαντα χίλια. καὶ τὰ μὲν κατὰ Σικελίαν ἐν τούτοις ἦν.

1 The most commonly accepted date is 374/3 BC – see Stroheker 1958: 134; Bondì 1980: 186; Huss 1985: 140; Scardigli 1991: 98; Consolo Langher 1997: 115; Braccesi, Millino 2000: 147; Anello 2008: 94; De Sensi Sestito 2008: 37; Bondì et al. 2009: 167; Miles 2010: 130. We may reasonably assume that the war continued at least until 379, when the Carthaginians resettled Hipponion, an Italiote city destroyed by Dionysius, and when the tyrant of Syracuse may have conquered Crotone (Dion. Hal. 20.7.3 claims that Rhegion and Crotone remained under Dionysius' rule for 12 years – see also De Sensi Sestito 2008: 34–36).

2 Meyer 1965: 160–161; Caven 1990: 188–190.

3 Caven 1990: 200 suggests that the use of the word ἐξαίρετον might indicate a special prize.

> The Carthaginians, bearing their victory as men should, dispatched ambassadors to Dionysius and gave him the opportunity to end the war. The tyrant gladly accepted the proposals, and peace was declared on the terms that both parties should hold what they previously possessed, the only exception being that the Carthaginians received both the city of the Selinuntians and its territory and that of Acragas as far as the river called Halycus. And Dionysius paid the Carthaginians one thousand talents.[4]

There are two main problems with the interpretation of this treaty. Firstly, is the river Halycus the same as the river Lycus mentioned in the treaty struck with Timoleon in 338? Secondly – and more importantly – to what previous treaty is Diodorus referring?

The river Halycus appears in the text of *Bibliotheke Historike* on two other occasions (Diod. 23.9.5 and 24.1.8). On the other hand, both surviving accounts of the treaty between the Carthaginians and Timoleon in 339/8 BC (Diod. 16.82.3 and Plut. *Tim*. 34.1) set the border between the two *epikrateias* on the river Lycus, at the mouth of which Heracleides Lembos places Heracleia Minoa (Heracl. Lemb. *Exc. Polit*. 59)[5]. On this basis the Lycus is identified as the modern Platani.[6] The question arises, however, whether the Lycus and the Halycus are but two names of a single river, or two different rivers altogether?

The Halycus and Lycus rivers are usually considered one and the same by modern scholars and identified as the modern river Platani. This identification goes back as far as the seventeenth century, when it was proposed by Philip Clüver,[7] and is still quite commonly accepted today.[8] However, this identification was challenged by Giovanni Uggeri and Linda Marie Günther (neé Hans), who suggested that while the Lycus is indeed to be identified with the modern Platani, the Halycus river is in fact the modern Salso, some 70 km to the east.[9] This, understandably, would have a large impact on the

4 Transl. Oldfather 1954: 369.

5 Heracleides' work is known only from fragments. One of the manuscript traditions gives the version "Κύκον" instead of "Λύκον" – see Dilts 1971: 34.

6 E. Manni's (2004: 114–115, *sv*. Λύκος) hypothesis that the Lycus was indeed a different river (to be identified with the Delia or the Fiume delle Arene), in spite of Heracleides' clear testimony, is based entirely on the assumption that Selinous had to be included in the peace treaty of 339/8, hence the river had to be located to the west of this city.

7 Clüver 1619 (*non vidi*), see De Vincenzo 2013: 24–25.

8 See. e. g. Mazzarino 2003: 70; Talbert 1974: 83–84; Sordi 1983: 75; Huss 1985: 166; Stylianou, 1998: 207; Consolo Langher 2000: 297; Fischer-Hansen, Nielsen, Ampolo 2004: 196–197; Anello 2008: 96; Hoyos 2010: 169–171; De Vido 2013: 139. This identification is considered certain also by Manni 2004: 107, *sv*. Ἅλυκος.

9 Uggeri 1968: 126–127; Hans 1982; Hans 1983: 122. Hans proposes an emendation of Diodorus' account in 15.17.5 from "Ἁλύκου" to "Λύκου". Recently this idea has been put forward once again, by De Vincenzo (2013: 25–26), who argues for different borders in the treaties of 376/5 (along the Salso) and 339/8 BC (along the Platani), which seriously influences his interpretation of the history of Sicily. Helas also argues for two different rivers (2011b: 178), although – apparently – she confuses them, claiming that the Lycus was the modern Salso and the Halycus the modern Platani, which is in clear contradiction with both the literary sources and Hans' interpretation, on which Helas bases her position. Ameling (2011: 53) mentions the border along the rivers Halycus and Himeras (perhaps with the Northern Himeras – the modern Fiume Grande or the Himera Settentrionale – in mind), but does not specify when the Himeras became a

interpretation of the Carthaginians' position and policy. Therefore, the identification of the river Halycus deserves a more in-depth discussion.

First, the proponents of the different rivers hypothesis ignore the fact that the modern Salso is mentioned by Diodorus under the name Himeras (Diod. 19.109.4–5).[10] This name is further confirmed by Polybius – according to him, during the second Punic War Hieronymus of Syracuse offered the Carthaginians a division of Sicily along the "river Himeras which divides the whole Sicily almost equally in half" (Ἱμέραν ποταμόν, ὃς μάλιστά πως δίχα διαιρεῖ τὴν ὅλην Σικελίαν, Plb. 7.4.2), which fits the Salso (about 35 kilometres east of Acragas).

The most important argument, put forward by Hans and De Vincenzo, is the account of Carthaginian fleet movements during the campaign of 249 (Diod. 24.1.6–8). According to Diodorus, the Carthaginian fleet under Carthalo caught the Roman convoy by surprise. The transport ships were said to seek shelter in Phintias, a harbour at the mouth of the Salso, while the warships escorting them faced the Carthaginians, losing 17 warships sunk and another 13 heavily damaged, as well as 50 transport ships. After this success, the Carthaginian fleet was said to have withdrawn to the mouth of the Halycus, to let the wounded rest (μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα οἱ Καρχηδόνιοι επὶ τὸν Ἅλυκον ποταμὸν παραγενόμενοι τοὺς τραυματίας ἀνέπαυσαν, Diod. 24.1.8). According to the proponents of the two rivers hypothesis, the Platani is too far from where the battle took place (approx. 70 km) to be considered a viable choice.[11] It seems, however, that it is far from impossible, especially since Diodorus talks about "rest" and not e. g. the provision of first aid. The Platani also seems a reasonable choice from the strategic point of view: soon another Roman fleet, under consul Iunius, approached Sicily with 36 new warships and reinforcements, quickly joining the survivors at Phintias, raising the total number of the Roman warships stationed there to 105 (Diod. 24.1.8–9). According to Polybius (Plb. 1.53.8), Cartalo heard about the consul's arrival from his scouts, which gave him ample time to prepare a withdrawal to the west. Thus, these arguments are not sufficient to claim that the Halycus was an ancient name for the modern Salso.

Although the last place in which Diodorus mentions the river Halycus (Diod. 23.9.5) does not give us any specific information about the river itself, the whole passage describes the Roman army's march westwards in 258 BC and mentions "Camicus, a fortress belonging to Acragas", which the Romans took by treachery, apparently before reaching the Halycus. De Vincenzo himself situates Camicus on the Platani.[12] Thus, taking into account the noticeable similarity of both names, it seems that the traditional interpretation is right, and the Lycus and the Halycus are indeed one and the same

border line. The Northern Himeras is in fact often considered a border on the northern coast of Sicily, but with hardly any support from the sources – see Crawley Quinn 2017.

10 Its characteristic feature is salty water (hence the modern name).

11 De Vincenzo 2013: 25.

12 See the map in De Vincenzo 2013: 9.

river – the modern Platani – which constituted the border of the territories passed to Carthage in the 376/5 treaty.[13]

Even more complicated is the issue of the previous agreements referred to by the peace treaty of 376/5. Diodorus supplies us with information on two treaties struck by the Carthaginians with Dionysius in 405 and 392 BC respectively. The treaty of 405 left the cities of Selinous, Himera, Acragas, Gela and Camarina paying tribute (*phoros*) to the Carthaginians, extending their sovereignty over the majority of the island. Diodorus relates that the terms of the treaty of 392 were more or less the same as before (ἦσαν δ᾽ αἱ συνθῆκαι τὰ μὲν ἄλλα παραπλήσιαι ταῖς πρότερον, 14.96.4), except Carthage acknowledged the Sicels as subjected to Dionysius' sphere of dominance. In this context the terms of the treaty of 376/5 are indeed surprising, since the only territorial gains they mention pertain to Selinous and a part of the territory of Acragas – the two western-most Greek *poleis* on the southern coast of Sicily, and the ones that – according to the previous agreements – were already subject to Carthage. This contradiction has prompted modern scholars to try and identify a probable opportunity at which the Greek cities would have had regained their freedom or fallen under Dionysius' power.

This discrepancy between the treaties of 392 and 376 prompted D. M. Lewis to state simply that "There is something seriously wrong" with the terms of the treaty.[14] Many authors, however, have attempted to solve this conundrum.[15] According to S. Mazzarino, the previous treaty (of 392 BC) was so imprecise that it was interpreted by both sides in a different way.[16] K. Meister claims that all the Greek *poleis* had been returned to Dionysius then.[17] C. R. Whittaker suggests that at least Gela and Camarina (for some reason excluding Acragas) regained freedom at some point before 383 BC.[18] Also according to S. F. Bondì, Gela, Camarina and part of the territory of Acragas were given up by Carthage only in this treaty.[19] M. Zahrnt believes that the terms of the treaties with Carthage had been misrepresented before Diodorus, perhaps by Philistus of Syracuse, in order to show the tyrants of Syracuse in a positive light.[20] B. Caven suggests that the previous state of affairs that the treaty refers to should be understood as before the war,

13 Thus Hans (1983: 70–71), according to whom it was Diodorus' mistake, and Rhodes (2006: 285). We ought to also note the interpretation of M. I. Guletta (2006), who suggested that the Lycus and the Halycus where the names of the two branches of the modern Platani. This hypothesis, based mainly on attempts to find a logical justification for the names in the features of the landscape and cultural motives, is not convincing in the light of a lack of tangible literary evidence.

14 Lewis 1994: 149.

15 It is perhaps surprising that no such attempt was made on the part of the Italian scholars interested in the development of the Carthaginian *epikrateia* (Anello 1986, Anello 1990–1991, De Vincenzo 2013). Nevertheless, from their work we can infer that they perceive the *epikrateia* as a homogeneous territory for which the treaty provided a geographical border – see e. g. De Vincenzo (2013: 23), who notes the discussion on the circumstances of Thermae's return under Carthaginian control after – according to some scholars – it was left out of the *epikrateia* in the treaty of 376/5 (which De Vincenzo dates to 374 BC).

16 Mazzarino 2003: 69–77.

17 Meister 1967: 97–98, similarly Hans 1983: 122; Braccesi, Millino 2000: 139.

18 Whittaker 1978: 72, similarly Miles 2010: 410 fn. 95.

19 Bondì (1980: 186), who dates this treaty to 374 BC.

20 Zahrnt 1988: 227–228.

but after the defection of cities previously subjected to Carthage, and that the treaty recognised Dionysius' sovereignty over the cities east of the Halycus river.[21]

The most elaborate hypothesis explaining the discrepancy between the treaty of 392 and 376/5 was proposed by M. Sordi.[22] She assumes that Diodorus' ultimate source is the work of Philistus of Syracuse, which, however, he knew solely through the distorting lenses of Ephorus of Cyme and, above all, Timaeus of Tauromenium, which in her opinion explains the sketchy account in the 15th book of the *Bibliotheke*.[23] Based on this assumption, Sordi proposes a new chronology and interpretation for the Carthaginians' second war against Dionysius I. The Italian scholar divides the whole conflict into two separate wars: 401–399/8 and 394–392 BC, the first of which, according to her, ended with a peace treaty signed on the terms very favourable for Dionysius, only to be obscured and distorted by Timaeus, who was notoriously hostile to tyrants, and who described it as an "agreed withdrawal" ("*fuga concordata*"). In Sordi's opinion it was this forgotten treaty of Dionysius I that removed the Greek cities from the Carthaginian sphere of influence and that formed a reference point for the treaty of 392.[24]

However, Sordi's arguments do not seem strong enough to prove this hypothesis. First of all, in Diodorus' account of the war in 397–392 BC there is nothing that would cast doubt on his version of events. Above all, it is worth noting that this "agreed withdrawal" is not an isolated example in Classical Greece: similar secret deals had been struck before, e. g. between the Athenian general Demosthenes and his Spartan counterpart, Menedaeus, after the former's victory at Olpae in 426 BC. Secondly, the Italian scholar's explanation rests mainly on the identification of Timaeus as Diodorus' main source. While this attribution is far from certain in general, it is particularly doubtful in this case, since there are reasons to believe that in his account of the events surrounding these negotiations Diodorus uses a different source.[25] Finally, Sordi's hypothesis is an elaborate construction built on several disputable assumptions and interpretations (e. g. that a Syracusan merchant could not have visited Phoenicia during the war between Carthage and Syracuse) and as such lacks the firm support of the sources.[26]

All these explanations are in varying degrees plausible, but all also share a common weakness: they raise further questions about the next treaty that we know the terms of, signed by the Carthaginians with Timoleon in 338 BC, after a disastrous defeat in the

21 Caven 1990: 200.

22 Sordi 1980.

23 This assumption is not very convincing. It is worth noting that Diodorus' account remains cursory even when we know that he had suitable sources at his disposal – cf. descriptions of Epaminondas' campaign in the Peloponnese in 367/6 BC in Diodorus (15.75.2) and in the fragment of Ephorus' work preserved by Stephanus of Byzantium (BNJ 70 F 84 = Steph. Byz. s. v. Δύμη). See also Parmeggiani 2011: 386–7.

24 Sordi 1980: 24–34. A similar interpretation was proposed earlier by Finley 1968: 82.

25 Compare the numbers of Carthaginian forces provided by Timaeus (Diod. XIV.54.5–6) with those used by Diodorus in his description of the plague that struck the Carthaginian camp (Diod. XIV.62.3, 76.2). Discussion of Diodorus' dependency on Timaeus – see Dudziński 2016b.

26 In spite of these weaknesses, Sordi's reconstruction of the events has been accepted by some Italian scholars – most notably P. Anello (Anello 2006: 95; Anello 2008: 92). Sordi herself also stood by this interpretation (2002: 493 note 2). For a more detailed discussion of the problems with Sordi's hypothesis see Zahrnt 1988: 219–223; Dudziński 2016a: 157–160 (in Polish).

Battle of the Crimissus River. Accepting either one of these interpretations of the fate of the Greek *poleis* before 376/5 BC, we are compelled to find a suitable opportunity for Carthage not only to lose control over some or all Greek cities before 376/5 BC, but also to regain it sometime afterwards. Most importantly, however, all these interpretations assume a mistake, an omission or a distortion on the part of Diodorus (or – as suggested B. Caven – his epitomiser[27]). I believe that before we resort to correcting our source, we should try to find an explanation compatible with its text.

An analysis of the treaty

The first observation regarding the various explanations of the treaty of 376/5 BC that we need to make is that modern scholars attempt to understand the terms of this treaty as conforming to the framework of reference established by the previous agreements, i. e. regulating the status of all the Greek *poleis* subjected to Carthage. These attempts, as we have seen, do not bring us any satisfactory conclusions, while compelling us to face significant problems. Therefore, it is perhaps worthwhile to take a step back and to return to the very letter of the treaties, as related by Diodorus.

In fact, although both in the treaty of 405 BC and the one of 376/5 BC the subjects of the key clauses are the Greek *poleis*, the terms pertaining to them are noticeably different. Therefore, trying to treat them as being essentially similar in nature is already a significant assumption in itself. While in the first treaty the subjection of the Greek cities (Selinous, Himera, Acragas, Gela and Camarina) was limited to the payment of the tribute (*phoros*) and the foregoing of the city walls, without any indication that Carthage influenced their internal politics (Diod. 13.114.1, 14.65.2), the terms of the treaty of 376/5 BC are markedly different: Carthage was to acquire (ἔλαβον) the *polis* of the Selinuntians and the territory of Acragas as far as the river Halycus (Diod. 15.17.5). The verb λαμβάνω suggests a relationship profoundly different from what we know about the previous treaties. Moreover, even if there could be doubt in the case of the *polis* of the Selinuntians,[28] there is no way this logic could be applied to the part of the territory of Acragas, where no community that could potentially pay tribute to the Carthaginians is indicated.

27 Caven 1990: 200.

28 It should be noted that the archaeological record too indicates a growing Carthaginian influence in Selinous, often described by modern scholars as the "Punicisation" of this city, which starts showing typically Carthaginian (or western Phoenician) urbanistic features (see e. g. Acquaro 1978: 147–148; Tusa Cutroni 1983: 40; Anello 1986: 169–170; Anello 1990–1991: 209; Bondì 1990–1991: 227; Holloway 1991: 156; Bondì et al. 2009: 170, 190–191), which might indicate an influx of Carthaginian settlers. However, we ought to remember that such a clean-cut distinction between "Punic" and "Greek", attractive as it is, seems oversimplified and there is evidence pointing to the city maintaining its mixed character – see e. g. Helas' findings (2011: 171–173) concerning the "Hellenisation of the civil architecture". Selinous is often identified with a RŠMLQRT mint (see Amadasi Guzzo 2000), although some scholars argue for Herakleia or suggest reading the inscription as a temple of Melqart – for a summary of different theories see Manfredi 1995: 115–117; Guzzetta 2008: 159–160.

Therefore, the importance of the treaty of 376/5 BC lies not only in the use of the geographical border instead of an ethno-political one to delineate the reach of the Carthaginian sphere in Sicily. An analysis of the treaty allows us to put forward the hypothesis that this change reflects a more profound and important one: that for the first time Carthage directly acquired a specific piece of territory on the island.[29]

If that was the case, the position of the other Greek *poleis* (Acragas, Himera,[30] Gela and Camarina) in this treaty demands closer attention. On the basis of the text of the treaties of 405 and 392 BC, as recorded by Diodorus, it would seem that they were still subjected to Carthage until the outbreak of the next war in 383 BC. According to Diodorus, the conflict broke out due to a number of cities that recognised Carthage's sovereignty (τὰς ὑπὸ Καρχηδονίους τεταγμένας πόλεις, Diod. 15.15.1) switching sides and joining Dionysius I. While it is unclear which cities in particular Diodorus had in mind, it seems that they could be either Greek *poleis*, or cities of the Sicans. Taking into account Dionysius' frequent use of the Siceliote identity, the former possibility seems more probable.[31] Therefore, although a certain degree of uncertainty remains, we might reasonably assume that the cause of war was an alliance between Dionysius I and the Greek *poleis* subjected to Carthage. In any case, the interpretation of the river Halycus as the border of the whole Carthaginian *epikrateia* would essentially mean that Carthage gave up sovereignty over Greek or Sicanian cities, which seems unlikely after a long and victorious conflict.

The solution to this problem seems to be – once again – to return to the literal meaning of Diodorus' text of the treaty. The historian from Agyrium informs his readers that both sides have kept their previous possessions and only after introduces the clause concerning the new territorial acquisition of the Carthaginians. Therefore, it seems that we can accept Diodorus' assertion that the previous status of Carthage's Greek tributaries remained the same and understand the information about the territorial changes as a new, separate condition, changing the *status quo* in favour of the victors.

The interpretation proposed above includes a new and important detail. For the first time literary sources provide us with information about Carthage possessing a territory in Sicily, the border of which was delineated by topographical objects. This suggests that a new area, more closely tied with Carthage, appeared in Sicily. At the same time, accepting the possibility that the tributary dependence of the Greek *poleis* in the Carthaginian sphere of influence (Acragas, Himera, possibly also Gela and Camarina) was maintained, allows us to reconcile the treaty of 376/5 BC with the previous agreements without assuming source corruption.

It is worth noting that this interpretation also works better in the context of the treaty between Carthage and Timoleon. As we have mentioned above, the Corinthian com-

29 Such a possibility has been accepted by some Italian scholars, e. g. Anello 1986: 169–174; Tusa 1990–1991: 166; De Vincenzo 2013: 20–21.

30 It is possible that the significance of Himera decreased considerably due to competition from the newly founded Carthaginian colony at Thermae (Diod. 13.79.8).

31 According to Hans (1983: 70), they were settlements of the Sicans, Elymians or Phoenicians.

mander was recognised as the liberator of Sicily and in Diodorus' version of the treaty of 339/8 BC, which – as we remember – set the border at the river Lycus, identified with the Halycus and the modern Platani, there is indeed a clause stating that "all the Greek cities shall be free" (τὰς μὲν Ἑλληνίδας πόλεις ἁπάσας ἐλευθέρας εἶναι, Diod. 16.82.3).[32] If, however, we interpret the treaty of 376/5 BC like most scholars do – as setting the border of the whole Carthaginian sphere along the river Halycus, a question arises: to what Greek cities east of that river Timoleon would return their freedom almost four decades later?[33]

The solution to this problem within the traditional interpretations of the treaty of 376/5 BC requires attributing to Carthage a new period of expansion (possibly a military one), unrecorded by surviving literary sources.[34] Although such an expansion is not impossible, especially given the cursory character of sources for the period of 376/5–339/8 BC, the consistent silences of Diodorus, Plutarch and Plato are difficult to ignore. The proposed interpretation of the treaty of 376/5 BC has the advantage of solving this problem, since it does not assume Carthage's early loss of the sovereignty over the Greek *poleis* east of the Halycus, which might have still paid a tribute to her. It was this sovereignty and – perhaps – this tribute from which Timoleon liberated the Greek cities.

The special status of the territory beyond the Halycus river is also suggested by the presence of the Carthaginian commander, Paralos, and his forces in the vicinity in 356 BC (Diod. 16.9.4–5; Plutarch calls him Synalus: Plut. *Dion* 25.5–6). This is the first instance in which we have clear information about the standing Carthaginian forces in Sicily.[35]

32 For more information on this treaty see De Vido 2011: 17–19; Micciché 2011.

33 Quite surprising in this context is Bondì's readiness to admit that Timoleon's success did not bring any real change of the *status quo* (Bondì et al. 2009: 167). This problem has also been noted by De Vincenzo (2013: 25), who tried to use this to support his hypothesis about the Halycus being the modern Salso rather than the Platani. Talbert (1974: 84–85) offered a different explanation, claiming that the freedom clause pertained also to the Greek cities west of the Lycus/Halycus, above all Selinous.

34 See e. g. Consolo Langher (1997: 174 note 33), who suggests that the Carthaginians extended their power over Acragas and Gela during the struggle for power in Syracuse between Dionysius II and Dion and his successors.

35 A case can be made for four earlier situations, which scholars tried to connect with the Carthaginian garrisons in Sicily. However, none of these arguments seems particularly convincing or relevant: (1) K. F. Stroheker suggested that the Carthaginian relief force sent in 410 to aid the Segesteans in their fight against Selinous constituted the Carthaginian garrison later on (Stroheker 1958: 49), but there is no evidence to substantiate this claim. (2) Diodorus says that in 405 the Carthaginian commander Himilco left the Campanian mercenaries as "guardians" (φυλακῆς, Diod. 14.8.5) in Sicily. These mercenaries arrived in Sicily during the Athenian expedition a decade earlier (Diod. 13.44.2) and offered their services to various actors ever since. In 410 they were hired by the Carthaginians to aid Segesta and took part in Hannibal's campaign a year later (Diod. 13.44.1), but stayed in Sicily after his departure. In 406 they were hired by the Acragantines (Diod. 13.85.4), but bribed by Himilco they deserted them and rejoined the Carthaginians (Diod. 13.88.5), fighting for them in the Battle of Gela (Diod. 13.110.5). Finally, they were recruited by Dionysius' envoys to rescue him during the great hoplite revolt in 404 (Diod. 14.8.5), a mere year after Himilco's departure. As we can see, this group operated in Sicily for quite some time and there was no reason for them to leave the island with the rest of the Carthaginian forces in 405. Quite the contrary, it seems that they resumed their previous activities. While their less than impressive track record in honouring the agreements to the end certainly does not exclude the possibility that they were indeed left in Sicily as a garrison, the fact that – judging from the lack of Carthaginian forces defending Motye and Segesta in 397 – after

Conclusions

As we have seen, an interpretation of the treaty of 376/5 BC is a complex issue. Given Diodorus' reputation as a compiler rather than a historian, it is hardly surprising that modern scholars resorted to blaming the ambiguities and supposed inconsistencies on his lack of skill and intelligence. However, it seems that in this specific case Diodorus may have provided us with a much better account than he is usually credited with.

On the basis of an analysis of the treaty, it seems plausible that the border on the Halycus river delineated only the territory directly acquired by Carthage, where later on we can find the standing Carthaginian forces. This conquest did not seem to have affected Carthage's relations with the Greek *poleis* east of this river – Acragas, Gela, Himera and Camarina – which continued to pay tribute, possibly until the time of Timoleon.

The main advantage of the proposed interpretation is that it does not require correcting the supposed mistakes or omissions in the text of Diodorus' *Bibliotheke*. Quite the contrary, it has been based on a literal reading of the source. As we have seen, this approach solves most, if not all, problems experienced by modern scholars.

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they abandoned their supposed post, they were never replaced, suggests that Himilco's decision to leave them behind should not be treated as creating a permanent military presence in the islands. (3) Diodorus' description of Mago, a Carthaginian commander in 393, who was "passing time" in the island (Μάγων ὁ τῶν Καρχηδονίων στρατηγὸς διέτριβε μὲν ἐν Σικελίᾳ, Diod. 14.90.2). This situation, however, occurred during the war between Carthage and Dionysius I, hence the presence of the Carthaginian commander may not indicate a constant military presence also during a peace time. (4) Diodorus asserts that in 368 Dionysius went to war against the unprepared Carthaginians and captured a few cities, but was unable to take Lilybaeum, because there were many troops in this city (Diod. 15.73.1–2). In this case, the question is whether the soldiers were Carthaginian and whether they were stationed in Lilybaeum beforehand or were sent there after the outbreak of hostilities. While there is little we can say about the probability of both options, we ought to note that it took place after the 376/375 treaty and therefore does not affect the presented argument. It is also worth noting that the word φρούριον – garrison – appears for the first time in the context of the Carthaginian presence in Sicily as late as the times of Agathocles (Diod. 19.102.8; both earlier occurrences pertain to the forts built by the Carthaginians during the siege of Syracuse in 396/395 – see Diod. 14.63.3, 72.3–4).

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