

Description for the general public of the project

Relation between historiographical Theory and Praxis in Diodorus Siculus' "Library of History"

Diodorus Siculus (c.a. 90-30 BCE) was an author of *Library of history* – a work covering history of all of the known world since the mythical past until his own age. Of the original 40 books only 15 survived to our times. Modern scholars are highly critical of *Library's* value, treating it as merely a compilation of earlier works. In their view, Diodorus was a historian simply unintelligent and the necessity to base research on his information is most unfortunate – unpleasant circumstance, necessitated by the fact, that most of his sources were lost.

My project aims at a closer study of Diodorus' practice of work and the character of his work. I believe that this historian falls victim to the expectations of the modern scholars, who do not put enough emphasis on the unique task he set upon himself. In my project I will try to establish if Diodorus chose a coherent method of work and subsequently if he consistently tried to employ it in his work. If it was so, it would suggest that he planned and executed his work in an intelligent manner and we should give him more credit.

To this end, I will study Diodorus' own methodological remarks, scattered throughout the *Library of history*. These remarks often include information about the proper and improper ways of writing history. Next, I will find in his work the examples of situations where he faced these same dilemmas and analyse how he dealt with them himself. Did he actually try to follow the principles he outlined in practice? Or did he stray from them – and if yes, why? What was the role of these remarks in his work in the first place? Answering these questions will allow us to better understand what kind of historian and what kind of author Diodorus really was, and above anything else: was he consistent in his method of work.

Thus, my project may change the way we think about the author of the largest surviving Greek historical work, and the largest surviving piece of Hellenistic prose. A shift in our approach to Diodorus may have a significant bearing on our thinking about not only the genre of universal history, or even Greek historiography in general, but also on our knowledge of the ancient history. If Diodorus' account is treated as an important evidence, which should not be ignored, then it will necessitate rethinking of many historical interpretation. E.g. from Thucydides we learn about Pericles as a great statesman, who expertly led the Athenians during the early stage of unavoidable Peloponnesian War. But perhaps there is some truth in Diodorus' version, according to which the Athenian politician was deliberately pushing the Athens into the conflict with Sparta to avoid inquiries about him spending the public money? This and other issues will require some more attention, if we consider Diodorus a well-read and competent historian.