

REVIEW–DISCUSSION

EPHORUS OF CYME

Giovanni Parmeggiani, *Eforo di Cuma: Studi di storiografia greca*. Studi di Storia 14. Pp. 805. Bologna: Pàtron Editore, 2011. €66.00. ISBN 978-88-555-3110-8.

We have been waiting for a new monograph on Ephorus since the appearance of G. L. Barber's concise *The Historian Ephorus* (Cambridge, 1935). Although there has been no lack of studies of narrower scope, several participants in the Salerno conference on Ephorus (*Eforo di Cuma nella storia della storiografia greca*; the proceedings unfortunately remain unpublished) lamented the lack of a recent monograph-length study of a historian who has been the object of inveterate prejudices in need of scrutiny. G. Parmeggiani has now presented us with a volume of 733 dense pages (excluding bibliography, appendices, and indexes!) with voluminous notes, the result of many years of reflection and analysis, and preceded by various preparatory essays. It is a contribution of great diligence, conducted with a wealth of competence, acute intelligence, and a lively capacity for penetrating thought; a courageous contribution, that neither hides behind erudite certainties, nor hesitates before formulating bold hypotheses against authoritative and consolidated opinions; a work, then, that makes a real contribution to scholarly debate, even though, as happens in such instances, one might not share the author's view on every point.

P. starts from the observation that Ephorus has been the victim of unfounded criticisms: considered by many to be inferior to the 'great historiographers' of the fifth century, he has been accused of being a mere compiler of the texts of previous authors, and a moralist of rhetorical training, interested in the ideological use of the past. Convinced of the uncharitable nature of such opinions, P. sets out to refute them by means of a new analysis of the *testimonia* and fragments, which sets out to correct the distortions introduced by ancient testimonies, and re-evaluates Jacoby's criteria in selecting the text (which can, from time to time, seriously prejudice the reader, as has been shown by numerous recent studies produced in the context of the *continuatio* of *FGrHist*).

The first part of the volume (Chapters I–IV) confronts the methodological question. Chapter I ('Sulle testimonianze di Eforo', pp. 27–79) analyzes

the *testimonia*, returning to the original context to demonstrate how Jacoby's selection sometimes generalised what were originally specific judgments (such as that of 'inconsistency' in T 15, from Strabo). This analysis also provides the opportunity to re-evaluate the concept of rhetorical historiography, and the presumed debt of Ephorus (and Theopompus) to Isocrates. If rhetorical historiography replaces an interest in truth with stylistic concerns, and autopsy with bibliophilia (with consequent political and military incompetence), if it extends the *spatium historicum* for the purposes of propaganda and privileges the moral education of the reader, if it plagiarises and manipulates other historians, and esteems historical causation lightly—none of these allegations, according to P., can be levelled against Ephorus. The comparison between T 22 and F 9 proves Ephorus' interest in *alêtheia*, just as a contextualised reading of T 13, 14 a–b and 16 brings out his self-representation as a truthful historian; an interest in the history of origins, present also in Thucydides, cannot *per se* be considered anti-methodological; the accusation of incompetence generalises a judgement of limited scope by Polybius; the accusation of plagiarism derives from a controversial passage in Porphyry; the moralistic goal, absent from the fragments, has been deduced from an undeserved comparison with Diodorus; in sum, as emerges from F 196, Ephorus seems to have been very sensitive to the subject of causation. P.'s critique is very tight and highlights a series of problems that have had a great deal of importance in the evaluation of Ephorus: an incorrect conception of the relationship between fifth-century and fourth-century historiography, the de-contextualised reading of the fragments, the generalisation of subject-specific judgments, the inaccurate identification of Ephorus with Diodorus, and the transference of stylistic judgments to the realm of methodology. P., therefore, offers a frank re-evaluation of Ephorus, which overcomes unfounded prejudices, although some statements (e.g. Ephorus' superiority to Thucydides in terms of aetiology) seem difficult to document on the basis of what survives.

Chapter II ('La dimensione proemiale', pp. 81–97) studies Ephorus' proems and tries to reconstruct the general proem, maintaining, on the basis of FF 7–9, its strong methodological aspect; traces of 'prooemial thought' are then identified in other testimonies and fragments in the course of Chapter IV (*Proemio generale e pensiero proemiale*, pp. 147–153). The general proem was, it seems, centred on the universal nature of the work and its superiority over those of his predecessors, on the proposition of *aletheia* as object of historical discourse, on the refutation of *mythos*, on the polemic involved in the reconstruction of the remote past, and on the dedication required by the research (*philoponia*). The reconstruction, subtle but convincing, offers a decidedly 'Thucydidean' Ephorus, to be compared not with Diodorus, but rather with Polybius and Thucydides himself.

Chapter III (‘Teoria del discorso storiografico’, pp. 99–146) discusses some principles laid out by Ephorus in the ‘methodological’ fragments: a diffidence towards detailed narratives of the tales told of the remote past and a refusal to treat the ancient in the light of the present (F 9); the problem of the historical framework in general (Greeks and barbarians: F 109); the themes of autopsy, which is not in fact rejected, and the use of primary sources (F 110); the relationship between historiography and epideictic oratory (F 111); and the distance between historiographical *lexis* and rhetorical *lexis* (F 8). From all this P. reconstructs an articulate and coherent historiographical theory, that represents a development from Thucydides and prepares the way for Polybius.

Methodological problems are taken up again in the third part, after a central section dedicated to the reconstruction of the contents of the work, to which we shall return.

Chapter IX (‘Prassi del discorso storiografico’, pp. 627–707), studies Ephorus’ relationship with his sources of information: written sources of different types, oral testimonies, and autopsy (FF 9 and 110). A complex polemic on the reconstruction of the past, a critique of myth and local traditions, and the use of alternative sources such as poetry and documentary material permit us to attribute to the historian a constant (rather than occasional) critical attitude (F 31). Ephorus’ work thus takes shape as one of authentic research, which implements a self-conscious attempt to surpass previous historiography in its critical approach, by means of the application of a reliable *technê historikê*.

Chapter X (‘Eforo storico universale’, pp. 709–730) returns to the question of the universal character of the *Histories*. Ephorus began from a perspective characteristic of fourth-century view-points, according to which only the analysis of the widest possible evidentiary base could permit complete and correct knowledge. He therefore offered a panoramic vista, including not only the motherland but also the West. In comparison to Polybius, he also offered a greater diachronic depth. The material was organised around the theme of the Spartan crisis, whose distant causes and consequences were considered from a strongly innovative perspective.

Finally, the conclusion (pp. 731–733) underlines the need to re-evaluate an author who was a professional historian of the highest level, placed in a context—that of fourth-century historiography—which shows the signs not of decadence but of full maturity.

P.’s reconstruction of Ephorus’ method seems decidedly convincing, based as it is on an attentive analysis of the contents of Ephorus’ fragments; and if the impassioned claims about the value of Ephorus’ method seems here and there to be exaggerated (p. 146: Ephorus is ‘the authentic keystone in the history of the historiographical method from Thucydides to Poly-

bious'), above all because of the difficulty of adequately evaluating a fragmentary historian, I think that one can nevertheless consider the old vision of Ephorus as a second-rate historian, because of his methodological inadequacies, sufficiently and opportunely refuted.

The second part of the volume (Chs. V–VIII) confronts a prickly issue, the reconstruction of the structure and content of Ephorus' *Histories*.

Chapter V ('Ephor. *Histor.* I–X', pp. 155–347) first considers the *oikonomia* of the *Histories*, and discusses the significance of the expression *kata genos* (T 11), used by Diodorus in the context of Ephorus' organisation of his material. Convinced that T 11 only refers to the congruence between the narrative aim and the actual treatment, P. advances the hypothesis that Ephorus did not organise the material geographically or thematically, but chronologically, as the fragments themselves seem to testify (excepting books XXVIII–XXIX), and that he showed himself particularly sensitive to the interaction between events in their wider context.

After this P. deals with the reconstruction of Books I–X, confronting traditional reconstructions, influenced by the thematic-geographical interpretation of *kata genos*, with new theories of the disposition of the subject-matter. The narrative considered, first of all, the return of the Heraclids and its consequences (I–III), to then pass onto the definition of the *oikoumenê* (Europe, Asia, Africa) in relation to the Greeks, with geo-ethnographic interests, and with an eye for the constitutional matters that anticipated Polybius VI (IV–V); after this the historical narrative resumes, with post-Lycurgan Sparta (VI), Sicilian archaeology (VII), the oriental monarchies, Greek legislation, and the Greco-Persian Wars until Marathon (VIII–IX), and finally the war against Xerxes (X).

However, the interpretation that underpins the reconstruction does not fail to raise some doubts.

On the one hand, one senses a desire to draw too much from the analysis of the fragments, which are often rather meager. On pp. 294–295, for example, is the analysis of F 137, which deals with the foundation of Naxos and Megara Hyblaea by the Athenian *oikistês*, Theocles, leading Chalcidic and Megaran colonists, since the Athenians had decided not to support their expedition. The fragment, which assigns an Athenian *oikist* to the two oldest Sicilian colonies, seems to reflect a pro-Athenian version, which serves, on the Athenian side, to claim a protectorate over the Ionic parts of Sicily (and not only these). The claim that this is an 'ironic' comment upon the Athenians, that they had lost the opportunity to colonise Sicily only to then to attempt in vain to get control of it in the fifth-century, and that it points to a 'penetrating and critical vision and criticism of the relationship between Athens and Sicily', does not seem to me demonstrable. Moreover, we must observe that the spectre of Diodorus, rejected by the confident claim of the

mutual independence of Ephorus and Diodorus in Chapter VI ('Limiti e possibilità di impiego della Biblioteca storica di Diodoro per l'identificazione dei contenuti delle Storie di Eforo', pp. 349–94), reappears in the attempt to 'guess' (as P. says) Ephorus through Diodorus (and other secondary sources).

Take an example in connexion with the ninth book, which treated the Pentekontaetia, discussed in Chapter VII ('Ephor. *Histor.* XI–XX', pp. 395–535). It is P.'s conviction that Ephorus regarded the Persian Wars as a cycle that ended not in 478, but in 449 with the peace of Callias, and that he therefore put forward an innovative arrangement of the events, compared to Thucydides, just as he put forward a global vision of the relationship between Greeks and barbarians that included the events of the west, thereby distinguishing himself from the Herodotean perspective. Whilst the latter view of Ephorus is supported by the analysis of F 180, the second does not seem to me to be capable of adequate demonstration. P. begins with F 196 (which derives from Diodorus, is not a true citation, and creates no small number of interpretative problems), in which, in a Periclean speech about the build-up of the Peloponnesian War, there is an allusion to a 'peace of long duration' that is identified with the peace of Callias (but the identification is far from being certain); on this premise, the thread of Ephorus' narrative is recovered by recourse to Diodorus, and thus the reconstruction, suggestive though it is, remains conjectural. The same can be said elsewhere: for instance, Ephorus' vision of the period following 478 (F 191, uncertain and placed by Jacoby amongst the fragments on the basis of the comparison with Diodorus), of his judgement on the Delio-Attic league (F 191/Diodorus), and on Cimon (F 64/Diodorus).

Doubts continue to arise as we move forward through P.'s tentative reconstruction. Books XII–XIII still treat the Pentekontaetia and, in particular, pose the problem of the causes of the Peloponnesian War. At the centre of the discussion is F 196, in which we see the problems of the relationship between leader and allies, the Periclean management of Athenian finances, and the strange mechanisms of democracy; however, one senses a desire to extract rather more from the fragment than it offers up. It remains unclear what basis there is for the assertion that Ephorus, unlike Thucydides, considered the turning point of 462/1 to be significant, since the turning point in question (which is, by the way, very clear in Thuc. I. 102) is not present in the fragments, but in Diodorus XI 64; or on what basis we can talk of Ephorus' aetiological system as an alternative to that of Thucydides, and as more complete, when traces of it are so meagre; or, again, how one can affirm that Cimon was an essential point of reference for Ephorus, on the basis of only F 64 and the account of Diodorus? We are dealing with suggestions which are as interesting as they are impossible to prove, all the more if one

starts by looking for the themes which Diodorus ‘might have adopted’ from Ephorus (p. 463).

Books XIV–X talked of the Peloponnesian War, from the Archidamian War (F 197) to the Deceleian War (F 67). In the light of the Theocles episode, discussed above, P. maintains that the Sicilian expedition must have assumed the proportions of a ‘huge scoff’; but in reality we have no-one other than Diodorus to reconstruct Ephorus on this point. Other statements seem unverifiable: first it is questioned whether it is possible to suppose that Ephorus did not talk about the relationship between Callicratidas and Cyrus, then it is stated that ‘he certainly talked’ about it (p. 476); but Ephorus’ portrait of Callicratidas is deduced in its entirety from Diodorus, given that F 71, from which the discussion begins, talks in reality of Dercylidas. As for the events of the trial of Arginusae, there is no way to confirm that Diodorus’ reconstruction of it derives from Ephorus and that in the latter’s account the trial represented a critical point, just as there is no way to deduce Ephorus’ judgement on Theramenes, who never appears in the fragments of Ephorus. The tendency to ‘slip’ from the fragments to Diodorus remains a weakness of P.’s reconstruction.

Book XVI was concerned both with Sicily and the motherland and drew a comparison between the Spartan and the Athenian hegemony. Books XVII–XX probably began with 403/2, the year which for Ephorus constituted the true end of the Deceleian War; this signalled the beginning of a new epoch in Greek history, the account of which extended through 394/3 (Cnidos: XVIII), to 387/6 (the King’s Peace: XIX) and finally to 379/8 (the liberation of the Cadmea: XX). P. reconstructs an Ephorus of broader and deeper vision than Xenophon, but this portrait, it seems, cannot always be documented in its particulars: if the analysis of F 70 (on the end of Alcibiades and his plans which perhaps anticipated the politics of Conon), seems fairly convincing, it seems nevertheless difficult to assert (p. 524) that Ephorus, convinced of the inevitability of a return to Persian rule, presented Thrasybulus’ initiatives as unrealistic.

In Chapter VIII (‘Ephor. *Histor.* XXI–XXX’, pp. 537–625) P. reconstructs the period following 379, centred on the crisis of Sparta and the hegemony of Thebes. With book XXI he began a narrative thread that led to Leuctra, and highlighted the analogy between the events of 403 and 379 (the liberation of Athens and Thebes) and the relationship between the liberation of the Cadmea and Leuctra (XXI–XXII); this thread is substantially reconstructed from Diodorus and sources other than Xenophon, by recourse to weak arguments (‘similar arguments can be easily imagined in the narrative report of a historian like Ephorus’, p. 545). There then followed the period 371–362 (XXIII–XXIV), on Leuctra and its consequences (F 213); here too, much use is made of sources other than Xenophon to reconstruct Ephorus,

since the fragments offer very little reliable evidence. The belief that Epaminondas was an additional cause of the Spartan crisis, alongside the implosion of the Spartan system, constitutes a very interesting aetiological portrait, and equally interesting is P.'s reconstruction of a 'western' perspective in Ephorus, which was bound to stress Greek weakness. But I am not sure that such a background can be securely reconstructed. One senses, moreover, a lack of reflection on the role of Callisthenes, if not for Ephorus (P. maintains that he is unable to define the relationship between the two authors with certainty), at least for the secondary sources. Finally, books XXVI–XXX take the narrative until 341/40: the reconstruction of the relationship of the work with book XXX, the work of Demophilus, proves to be convincing. Very interesting, too, is the scrutiny of Ephorus' judgement on Philip, contrasted with that of Isocrates: but the reasoning, which starts from F 34 on Heracles, is ultimately even too subtle.

To sum up, the section dedicated to the reconstruction of the work turns out to be highly conjectural and has a modest level of 'probability' in the technical sense. P.'s critical acumen, the complexity and the subtlety of his reasoning, and his interpretative originality will be greatly appreciated, but one is left with a sense of moving on very uncertain ground.

One can thus conclude that this contribution, ever stimulating and strikingly original, is very convincing in its reconstruction of Ephorus' method, based as it is on a rigorous analysis of the fragments, but less so in its reconstruction of the content of the work, which is conducted in a methodologically more adventurous fashion (P. himself, in many cases, admits that the fragments are so scarce as to render the reconstruction difficult, and talks of 'intuition' more than of reconstruction of Ephorus' work).

The task is hindered by a fatiguing manner of expression (often one must re-read a number of times to follow the reasoning), and a language rich in archaic terminology ('principiare', 'profferire'), and in heavy anglicisms ('seminale' for 'fondamentale', 'confidente' for 'relativamente sicuro'): this is likely to limit the impact of this volume amongst non-Italian readers, which is to be regretted, given the diligence of study and reflection lavished upon it.

Notwithstanding the bulk of secondary literature in twenty or so pages of bibliography, the range of the research makes some gaps inevitable: to name but a few, as far as the Italian bibliography goes, some of my positions on Theramenes are discussed without reference to my volume *Lisia e la tradizione su Teramene* (Milan, 1997); on the trial of Arginusae there is no mention of M. Sordi, 'Teramene e il processo delle Arginuse', in *La dynasteia in Occidente. Studi su Dionigi I* (Padua, 1992) 3–8 (= 1981); nor on the speech of Theodorus of Syracuse, the article of G. Vanotti, 'I discorsi siracusani di Diodoro', *RIL* 124 (1990) 3–19. In reconstructing the development of Ephorus' narrative

from 478, P. lays claim to originality in hypothesising that Ephorus presented Themistocles as unjustly accused by a group of both Spartans and Athenians; it is curious that he does not cite M. Sordi, 'Atene e Sparta dalle guerre persiane al 462/1 a. C.', *Aevum* 50 (1976) 25–41, who gives the same interpretation of this period. I should add that, in a volume of such range and with such copious notes, the use of *op. cit.* and *art. cit.*, even in the case of authors cited several times, creates no small difficulty for the reader.

But I do not intend to conclude with *mega biblion, mega kakon*. Despite the reservations I have thought it necessary to express about some parts, many will be able to make highly profitable use of this book, stimulating and rich in original ideas as it is. Beyond all other considerations, it is a contribution that has the merit of opening up the debate on many fronts by problematising the *communis opinio*, and it will have to be taken into account by all future studies on Ephorus.

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano

CINZIA BEARZOT
cinzia.bearzot@unicatt.it

Translated by B. A. Ellis