

## REVIEW

### KLAUS MEISTER'S WRITINGS ON GREEK HISTORIOGRAPHY

Klaus Meister, *Studien zur griechischen Geschichtsschreibung: von der Klassik bis zur Spätantike*. Palingenesia 121. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2020. Pp. 346. Hardback, €70.00. ISBN 978-3-515-12591-8.

**T**he volume under consideration is a collection of articles, chapters, and reviews by Klaus Meister which were previously published in other venues together with some original and previously unpublished works. They are organised by authors and themes, a very useful arrangement given the topic of the edited volume, i.e., Greek historiography. The volume consists of twenty-five chapters, a sort of round number, although it is left unsaid whether this was a deliberate choice of the author or an unintentional one. Given the composite origin of the work, it does not come as a surprise that the chapters do not have the same structure: indeed, some are divided into sections, while others do not present this division.

The volume starts with an article published in *Historia* in 1978 ('Stesimbrotos' Schrift über die athenischen Staatsmänner und ihre historische Bedeutung'). Since the volume aims to cover Greek Historiography from the Classical age, starting with Stesimbrotos' approach to Athenian political characters might make sense if the intent is to underline that Greek historiography indeed had a composite origin which was related to Ionia and had some links with the Homeric poems (Stesimbrotos was also an expert in interpreting epic poems). In addition, the discussion of Stesimbrotos' attitude towards the Athenians (against) and the Spartans (pro) is, once again, an interesting starting point for this volume which appears to shift away from an Athenocentric historiographical discussion. Moreover, it is also nice that, as a consequence of this beginning, the volume appears to have been conceived with a kind of ring-composition, starting and ending with references to the biographical genre.

Chapter 2 ('Die griechische Geschichtsschreibung, ein Überblick') offers a very short history of Greek historiography. It might have been more neatly connected with the rest of the volume if it came as Chapter 1. It is indeed a very brief and general overview of Greek historians from the Classical age to Roman imperial times, with brief remarks on the origins of Greek historiography.

Chapter 3 ('Herodot von Halikarnassos') is a reprint of the entry on Herodotus published in *Die Neue Pauly* in 1998. Hence, the chapter has retained the same structure as the entry and is divided into sections: 'Life', 'Structure of the Work', 'Birth of the Work', 'Sources and Historical Methodology', 'Tendenz and Credibility', 'Weltanschauung and Conception of History', 'Herodotus as Narrator of Anecdotes and Stories', 'Language and Style', 'Reception'. There is also an Appendix with a list of editions, German translations, commentaries, and major works.

Chapter 4 ('Thukydides von Athen') deals with Thucydides and is similar to Chapter 3, although it is not divided into sections. It was originally published in a volume entitled *Great Figures of Antiquity*, and offers a general introduction to Thucydides, with information on his life, work, the influence of other disciplines, historical methodology, and reception. An Appendix lists a German translation, commentaries, and a selection of general works on Thucydides.

Chapter 5 ('Thukydides versus Herodot: eine ambivalente Beziehung') is an original work not published previously. Meister takes as his starting point an article by Simon Hornblower, which discusses Herodotus' and Thucydides' mutual influence.<sup>1</sup> The main focus of the chapter, though, is the relationship between Herodotus and Thucydides, their similarities and differences, and especially Thucydides' reception of Herodotus. Meister starts by looking at the intertextual, thematic, and structural relationship between Herodotus and Thucydides. He analyses the role of Thucydides not only as historian criticising his colleague but also as continuator of Herodotus. Indeed, Meister shows that Thucydides adopts Herodotus' narrative techniques such as narrative displacement, forward leaps (i.e., references to later events), inferred motivation, and narrative patterning. The last part of the chapter concerns the differences between the two historians, and focuses on the methodological aspects of Thucydides' 'Archaeology' and on the so-called methodological chapters.

Chapter 6 ('Der Einfluss des Redners und Sophisten Antiphon auf Thukydides') is the German translation of an article written in Italian and published in 2006.<sup>2</sup> It nicely follows the previous chapter focused on historiography from a narratological point of view, since it deals with the influence of rhetoric and oratory, especially that of Antiphon of Rhamnus, on

<sup>1</sup> S. Hornblower, 'Thucydides' Awareness of Herodotus or Herodotus' Awareness of Thucydides?', in V. Fromentin, S. Gotteland, and P. Payen, edd., *Ombres de Thucydide: la réception de l'historien depuis l'Antiquité jusqu'au début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Pessac, 2010) 27–33, republished in S. Hornblower, *Thucydidean Themes* (Oxford, 2011) 277–86.

<sup>2</sup> K. Meister, 'L'influsso di Antifonte, retore e sofista, su Tucidide', *Quaderni di Storia* 64 (2006) 227–44. There is a typo on p. 81 of the volume, where 'di Antifonte' has become 'die Antiphonte'.

Thucydides. Meister hypothesises that Thucydides was a student of Antiphon and that the latter had indeed some influence on Thucydides' historical method. He analyses Thucydides' methodology in relation to the reconstruction of the past and, especially, the usage of *tekmēria* and *sēmeia*, which appear to be the basis of Antiphon's method as well. According to Meister, one can also see Antiphon's influence on the methodological chapter 1.22.

Chapter 7 ('Das Recht des Stärkeren bei Thukydides') shifts from a narratological and historiographical point of view to a historical and sociological standpoint. Indeed, the focus of the chapter is Thucydides' ideology about the 'right of the stronger' with an examination of the most important case studies: the Athenian speech at Sparta in 432 BC; Thucydides' assessment of Pericles (2.65.5–13); the Mytilenean debate; the subjugation of Mytilene; Sphacteria; the speech of Hermocrates at Gela; the Melian dialogue; and the Sicilian expedition.

Chapter 8 ('Hippias von Elis, ein verkannter Sophist und Antiquar') deals with the sophist and antiquarian Hippias of Elis. The chapter is well placed within the volume since earlier chapters have discussed Thucydides and his relationship with sophists. Moreover, Meister analyses the value of Hippias to many fields, but especially to the field of historical research.

Chapter 9 ('Die Fortsetzer des Thukydides: Xenophon, Theopomp, Kratippos (Die *Hellenika* von Oxyrhynchos)') discusses three different historians deemed as Thucydides' continuators as well as 'discontinuator' (151), namely Xenophon, Theopompus, and Cratippus (the alleged author of the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*). Chapter 10 ('Besprechung von Luciano Canfora, *Tucidide Continuato*, Padova 1970') appears as a sort of complement to the previous chapter since it is a review of Canfora's book, the subject of which is the supposed continuation of Thucydides' work by Xenophon.

Chapter 11 ('Philistos von Syrakus und die Tyrannis Dionysios' I') is another German translation of a paper written in Italian and published in an earlier edited volume.<sup>3</sup> The focus is on Philistus of Syracuse and his relationship with the tyranny of Dionysius I. The chapter is divided into three parts: a discussion on the life of Philistus in relation to the tyrant; an examination of the fragments and the issues related to the transmission of the fragments; and Philistus' assessment of Dionysius, which appears to be mainly positive.

Chapter 12 ('*Politeiai, Atthides* und die *Athenaion Politeia* des Aristoteles') analyses a different topic related to a different form of government, i.e., democracy. Meister aims at investigating the relationship between the *Athenaion Politeia*, a product of the School of Aristotle, and other works

<sup>3</sup> K. Meister, 'Filisto e la tirannide', in N. Bonacasa, L. Braccesi, and F. de Miro, edd., *La Sicilia dei due Dionisi: Progetto Akragas II. Atti della Settimana di studio (Agrigento, 24–28 febbraio 1999)* (Rome, 2002) 453–60.

circulating under the general title of *politeiai* as well as the relationship between the *Athenaion Politeia* and the *Atthides*, the local histories of Athens and Attica.

Chapter 13 ('Die Entdeckungsfahrt des Pytheas von Massalia und seine Schrift *Über den Ozean*') is an original work not published elsewhere. It is a very interesting chapter on the historical work of Pytheas of Massalia, in which Meister tries to give an answer to several questions about the historian and his work, especially concerning chronology, the itinerary followed by Pytheas, and the size of the work itself. It is unclear why the chapter is placed after that on the *Athenaion Politeia*, and the shift from Chapter 12 to 13 seems a bit abrupt.

Chapter 14 ('Das Bild Alexanders des Grossen in der Historiographie seiner Zeit') might be somewhat connected with the chapter on Pytheas since it deals with the so-called 'historians of Alexander', i.e., the historians contemporary with Alexander the Great. The chapter discusses only those historians whom Meister considers the most important (Callisthenes, Nearchus, Ptolemy, Aristobulus, and Cleitarchus) and those who, according to Meister, had the most lasting influence. The chapter seeks to examine the image of Alexander as it appears in these historians.

Chapter 15 ('Der sogenannte Philinosvertrag (Schmitt, *Staatsverträge* III Nr. 438)') completely changes the topic and investigates a much discussed issue within modern studies of Greek historiography, the so-called 'treaty of Philinus'. Polybius mentions it in his critique of Philinus' way of writing history but denies its existence. The chapter discusses the historicity of the treaty and the date when it could have been signed.

Chapter 16 ('The Role of Timaeus in Greek Historiography') is the only chapter which originally appeared in English. It is slightly odd to read a chapter in English especially when other chapters which were previously written in Italian have been translated into German for this collection. In any case, the chapter nicely follows the previous one because it deals with another historian and target of Polybius' criticism, namely Timaeus. The purpose of this chapter is to place Timaeus within Greek historiography and to analyse the role he played in innovations within the genre. Timaeus' main achievements, according to Meister, are the importance given to Sicilian history, especially when looking at it within the wider frame of Roman history; Timaeus' engagement with different historiographical genres; and the significance he attached to chronological research. Finally, Timaeus deserves a special place within Greek historiography because of his discussion of the genre of history and its crucial characteristics.

Chapter 17 ('Die sizilische Expedition der Athener bei Timaios') focuses on another aspect of Timaeus' historiography, his account of the Athenians' Sicilian expedition. Meister analyses the stylistic similarities of Timaeus' account with those of Thucydides and Philistus, as well as the differences between Timaeus and the accounts of Thucydides, Philistus, and Ephorus.

Chapter 18 ('Rezension von *De Samos à Rome: Personnalité et influence de Douris*. Sous la direction de V. Maas et M. Simon, 2015') moves the discussion to another fragmentary historian, Duris of Samos, who was more or less contemporary with Timaeus. It is a review of an edited book published in 2015<sup>4</sup> and offers an overview of the last scholarly trends in modern studies on Duris.

Chapter 19 ('Das Hannibalbild des Silenos von Kaleakte') looks at the image of Hannibal as it appears in Silenus. It is well placed after the discussions of Timaeus and Duris, since Silenus was one of the historians who, together with Sosylus, was in the camp of Hannibal (Nepos, *Hann.* 13.3). This means that his work offers us a point of view which is different from Timaeus'. According to Meister, Silenus' style was sensational, and his inclination was definitely pro-Carthaginian and in favour of Hannibal.

Chapter 20 ('Die synchronistische Darstellung des Polybios im Gegensatz zur Disposition des Ephoros und Theopomp') briefly deals with a particular aspect of Polybius' historiography, the organisation of his historical material. Meister analyses Polybius' synchronistic approach and his polemic against Ephorus' methodology of organising the material *kata genos* and Theopompus' 'disordered' arrangement (even though the latter tried to organise his material chronologically).

Chapter 21 ('Diodor von Sizilien, Verfasser einer antiken "Weltgeschichte"') examines the work of Diodorus Siculus seen as an 'ancient history of the world' and follows nicely after a chapter on Polybius. Indeed, Diodorus is 'the historian whose narrative manner is closest to Polybius'.<sup>5</sup> Meister shows that Diodorus did not just compose an epitome but that he thought about the style and the arrangement of the topics in order to offer his readers an enjoyable read and a clear understanding of the course of events from beginning to end without interruption (as he himself declares at 20.1).

Chapter 22 ('Agathokles bei Diodor: Quellenanalyse seines Berichtes und dessen Interpretation in der modernen Forschung') deals once again with Diodorus but from another standpoint, i.e., how he sketches the key figure of Agathocles. The chapter is divided into two parts: the first part gives an overview of Diodorus' techniques of representation; the second part discusses the interpretation of Diodorus' representation by modern scholars.

<sup>4</sup> V. Naas and M. Mahé-Simon, eds., *De Samos à Rome: Personnalité et influence de Douris* (Nanterre, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> T. Rood, 'Polybius', in I. J. F. De Jong, R. Nünlist, and A. M. Bowie, ed., *Narrators, Narratees, and Narratives in Ancient Greek literature. Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative 1* (Leiden, 2004) 147–64 (quote on 158). See also S. Bianchetti, 'La concezione dell'ecumene di Alessandro in Diodoro 17–18', in C. Bearzot and F. Landucci, ed., *Diodoro e l'altra Grecia: Macedonia, Occidente, Ellenismo nella Biblioteca storica. Atti del convegno (Milano, 15–16 gennaio 2004)* (Milan, 2005) 127–53, and I. Achilli, 'Diod. Sic. 20,43,7: Percorsi polibiani nella *Biblioteca Storica*', *Sileno* 38 (2012) 1–20.

Chapter 23 ('Griechische Geschichtsschreiber der Römischen Kaiserzeit: Flavius Josephus, Appian, Arrian, Cassius Dio') is a general introduction to four Greek historians who wrote under the Roman Empire.

Chapter 24 ('Autoren von Biographien im Hellenismus') starts with the famous statement in the *Life of Alexander* by Plutarch about the difference between writing history and writing a biography (*Alex.* 1). Meister reflects on the origins of biographical accounts and whether one can already see signs in the accounts of historians as early as Herodotus. He then argues that one should look to the Hellenistic period to find early traces of biographical accounts, and especially to historians like Neanthes of Cyzicus, Aristoxenus of Tarentum, or Dicaearchus of Messana. Meister's list of historians writing biographies before Plutarch is indeed valuable especially as a way of encouraging a broader discussion of the genre.

The final chapter of the volume, Chapter 25 ('Autobiographische Schriften im Hellenismus: *Hypomnemata* (*Memoiren, Erinnerungen*) und Tatenberichte'), is appropriately devoted to Hellenistic autobiographic works: memoirs and accounts of deeds. Meister deals with the genre of *hypomnemata*, and especially with its links to Hellenistic monarchies. Finally, he examines what he calls *Tatenberichte* (accounts of deeds). Meister uses this term to indicate reports, which sometimes appear in the form of letters, as is the case of Scipio Africanus' letter to Philip V (*FGrHist* 232 F 1) or of Scipio Nasica's letter to an unnamed king (*FGrHist* 233 F 1).

The volume ends with four additional sections. The first of these is particularly useful because Meister lists important publications that have appeared after the relevant reprinted chapter. The section is divided into twenty-five sub-sections, with each chapter being allocated its own section. The second additional section is the biography of the author, the third contains a complete list of his publications up to June 2019, and the fourth lists the original place of publication for those articles reprinted in the volume.

To sum up, the volume is definitely useful as it offers a selection of Meister's publications in one place. However, there are also some aspects which could have been improved. For example, given that the second chapter deals with the origins of Greek historiography and that the volume also contains new (i.e., previously unpublished) chapters, it would have been useful to start with historians earlier than Stesimbrotos. Such an approach would have better shaped the volume, covering all Greek historiography and not—in an odd way—the Classical age up to Late Antiquity.

Finally, some issues which are more serious. The volume lacks an introduction which would have been especially helpful in explaining the rationale of the choice of Meister's works and of their arrangement in the volume. Indeed, as I have already mentioned above, it is not clear why a general introduction to Greek Historiography (as Chapter 2 is) does not appear as Chapter 1, but after a chapter on Stesimbrotos. It is nevertheless interesting

that the first and last chapters somewhat deal with the relationship between politicians and history, and form a sort of ring composition. Lastly, the language of the volume. It looks as if the volume has been conceived for a German, or more broadly continental, audience as all chapters but one are in German. This aspect would have not been so odd if the chapters were reprinted as they were originally. However, a number of chapters were initially written in Italian, and it is not clear why Italian has been translated into German but English has not.

To conclude, readers will definitely find this a valuable volume for the study of Greek historiography. It is a shame that it does not cover more historians and that it has not been translated into English, as it would have reached a wider audience, especially students, and could have been easily placed among the fundamental readings in syllabi of Greek historiography undergraduate and graduate modules.

*University of Lincoln*

GIUSTINA MONTI  
gmonti@lincoln.ac.uk