

## BOOK REVIEW

*Between Thucydides and Polybius: The Golden Age of Greek Historiography*. Edited by GIOVANNI PARMEGGIANI. Washington, D.C.: Harvard University's Center for Hellenic Studies, 2014. Pp. vii + 328. Paper, \$24.95. ISBN 978-0-674-42834-8.

This collection arises from two conferences held at Harvard and Bologna in 2007. It includes essays by a number of preeminent scholars in the field of Greek historiography. The pre-colon title is somewhat misleading (whatever one thinks of the “Golden Age” tag, this claim is not pressed beyond the editor’s introduction). The overwhelming focus of the volume is on the fourth century BCE, especially Theopompus, Xenophon, and Ephorus. Only one essay touches on the third century (Rosalind Thomas), and there is no discussion of the major historians of that era (Duris, Timaeus, Phylarchus); only two essays deal with Polybius (Riccardo Vattuone, John Tully). Nevertheless, anyone interested in Greek historical writing of any period will find much food for thought throughout the volume.

Three themes stand out across the individual pieces: the necessity of leaving aside our own notions of history when we evaluate Greek historiography; the importance of considering the original context of the fragments which survive from lost works; and the fact that Greek historians were not slaves to generic constraints or the models provided by their predecessors, rather they viewed the past through the lens of the present.

Riccardo Vattuone argues that we can witness in Theopompus the birth of historical writing as a genre through the development of specific technical skills, aimed at gaining a clearer understanding of historical motivation. This does not involve rejecting the methods of Herodotus and Thucydides, as some have argued, but attempting to “assimilate” them to the conditions of the new, Macedonian-dominated world. John Marincola attacks roughly the same issue from a different angle, examining Isocrates’ place in fourth-century discussions of the nature of history, not through his supposed effect on writers of history, but via his own statements on the subject. While Isocrates makes it clear that he himself was not a historian, it is also obvious that the past – and the way it is used – has tremendous importance for his own thought and work.

The question of genre continues in Roberto Nicolai's treatment of Xenophon in parallel with Isocrates, in which he argues that Xenophon does not cross generic boundaries so much as he emphasizes a theme (*paideia* and politics) in a variety of forms. We can best engage with his work by putting aside our own notions of what history is or should be. Cinzia Bearzot concludes from Xenophon's use of documents in the *Hellenica* that he is less interested in them than his predecessors or successors; she gathers relevant passages containing treaties, letters, and decrees, and highlights a noteworthy lack of verbatim oracular responses.

The next three essays tackle Ephorus, arguably the most important Greek historian not to survive from antiquity. Parmeggiani re-examines one of his longest fragments (F 196), on the causes of the Peloponnesian War, to argue that even through the filter of the preserving author (Diodorus Siculus) we can see an attempt to gain a coherent picture of those causes, which include both Pericles personally and the Athenian political context.

Nino Luraghi reviews the evidence for the development of the story surrounding the division of the Peloponnese by the Heracleidae, and its importance for fourth-century Greek politics, in order to better understand Ephorus' decision to begin his work with that event. John Tully broadens the focus, in a long but worthwhile piece, and argues that Ephorus did not create the genre of "Universal History"; rather, like other Greek historians, he responded to the work of his predecessors and evaluated the past in terms of his contemporary political situation. Tully offers a sensitive treatment of Polybius' statements on this topic, and if he is correct, there was less of a rupture between the historiography of Herodotus and Thucydides and that of the fourth century than is commonly thought.

Dominique Lenfant provides an overview of histories of Persia written in the fourth century (Ctesias, Dinon, and Heracleides of Cyme) followed by a comparison with their predecessors in the fifth century, notably Herodotus. Christopher Tuplin investigates whether there existed any historical discourse in Greek before 334 that highlighted in a general way the potential vulnerability of the Persian Empire (his answer is "No"). This engaging essay is also valuable for touching upon events all over the fourth-century Greek and Persian world.

Rosalind Thomas examines the nature of local (or, as she prefers, polis) history in the fourth and third centuries via three case studies: Delos, Ephesus, and Miletus. She emphasizes the importance of contemporary conditions rather than the development of a "genre." Local details or foundation stories, such as the fragments mainly preserve, are not necessarily erudite or antiquarian exercises from the viewpoint of citizens of the polis; they may represent a sort of "community-

building.” Sarah Ferrario shows how individuals in the fourth century employed the “tools of memory” to create their own historical significance, again through three case studies (Athenians, Spartans, and Thebans). Finally, Lucio Bertelli explores the concept of *historia* in Aristotle, moving beyond the (in)famous definition of history in the *Poetics* to reveal its role as a valid research method and an attitude toward the importance of observation in some ways similar to that of Thucydides.

The large gap in time between the conference and publication means that some important recent work has not been incorporated—including, in Luraghi’s and Tully’s essays, Parmeggiani’s own massive book on Ephorus and Victor Parker’s commentary in *Brill’s New Jacoby*.<sup>1</sup> There is little cited in the bibliographies (individual to each essay) later than 2011. The book contains an Index Locorum and Subject (and Name) Index.

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<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Parmeggiani, *Eforo di Cuma. Studi di storiografia greca* (Bologna: Pàtron Editore, 2011); Victor Parker, “Ephoros (70),” *Brill’s New Jacoby*, ed. Ian Worthington, Brill Online (appeared in 2012).