

Agesilaus in Diodorus

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TO ANYONE WISHING to study the career of Agesilaus and to assess his achievements and qualities the presentation of him in the fourteenth and fifteenth books of Diodorus has only a minimal value. Other surviving accounts, notably those of Xenophon in his *Hellenica* and *Agesilaus* and of Plutarch in his *Agesilaus*, are far more detailed and, when allowance has been made for the prejudice of Xenophon in favour of his hero, far more satisfactory. The account in Diodorus has been almost ignored by modern scholarship, not without justification, and it is presumably for this reason that no scholar has, so far as I am aware, drawn attention to its flagrant inconsistencies. To a lesser extent the treatment of Spartan policy during the career of Agesilaus is also inconsistent. This inconsistency, though hardly conducive to confidence in the historical accuracy of the narrative, is of interest and value in throwing light upon the development of the literary tradition from which it is derived. There has long been widespread agreement among scholars that Diodorus is dependent for almost all his material on Greece and the East from his eleventh to his fifteenth book upon the history of Ephorus.¹ Accordingly, by examining the presentation of Agesilaus by Diodorus some contribution may be made towards elucidating the historical method of Ephorus and his use of sources. On this subject, despite the popularity of his work in antiquity, remarkably little is known.

I. The Fourteenth Book

The controversy at Sparta leading to the accession of Agesilaus, which many authors found absorbingly interesting, is ignored by Diodorus. He introduces Agesilaus as the commander appointed to conduct the war in Asia against the Persians and sent out in 396 with a substantial expeditionary force (14.79.1). His account of the open-

¹ Jacoby *ad FGGrHist* 70 (p.33) lists works supporting this conclusion, and no attempt seems to have been since made to disprove it. The most cogent presentation is still that of E. Schwartz, *RE* 6 (1907) 1-16 s.v. "Ephoros," which has been endorsed by successive discoveries of papyri containing parts of the *Hell. Oxy.*

ing offensive is confined to a couple of sentences. Agesilaus leads his army across the plain of the Cayster, ravaging country under Persian control until he reaches Cyme, whence he pillages Phrygia and adjoining areas for most of the summer before returning to Ephesus in the early autumn laden with plunder (79.3). The narrative of the next campaign is somewhat fuller, since it includes a report on a battle of some importance, but it remains starkly factual. Agesilaus, pillaging the country around Sipylus, is followed by Tissaphernes with a large army. Eventually not far from Sardis he lays an ambush, catches the Persians in disorder between two forces, inflicts heavy casualties upon them, and captures their camp. Tissaphernes withdraws to Sardis, while Agesilaus, deterred by unfavourable sacrifices from invading satrapies in the interior, returns to the coast (80.1–5). Diodorus creates the impression that by plodding on perseveringly and devastating large areas of enemy territory Agesilaus achieves some success in addition to his victory over Tissaphernes, but no attempt is made to define his aims, to assess the quality of his leadership, or to throw light upon his personality. A reference to the alarm felt by Tissaphernes at the boldness of the Spartans (80.5) is alone in striking a personal note.

Brief though the narrative of Diodorus is in dealing with these operations, it manifestly has much closer affinities with the account of the Oxyrhynchus historian, where decipherable (11f Bartoletti), than with that of Xenophon (*Hell.* 3.4.1–24). Diodorus reproduces factual information found only in the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*, notably the ambush laid by Agesilaus and the name of the officer in command of the ambushing force. Even more significant is the treatment of Agesilaus, who is credited by the Oxyrhynchus historian, as by Diodorus, with achievements of some value but is presented dispassionately and with none of the prejudiced hero worship so prominent in the *Hellenica* and *Agesilaus* of Xenophon. There is very widespread agreement among scholars that here, as elsewhere, the narrative of Diodorus is based, indirectly through Ephorus, upon that of the Oxyrhynchus historian.²

Diodorus does not mention the second offensive by Agesilaus in Asia, recorded in considerable detail by the Oxyrhynchus historian (22f), who again presents him somewhat coolly, referring to his fail-

² H. R. Breitenbach, *RE Suppl.* 12 (1970) 393, 413; in general, I. A. F. Bruce, *An Historical Commentary on the Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (Cambridge 1967) 4, 20f. Diodorus differs on a few points from the Oxyrhynchus historian, but C. Dugas, *BCH* 34 (1910) 61, 67f, has convincingly accounted for them, showing that they do not necessarily point to the use by Ephorus of any source other than the *Hell.Oxy*.

ures, suppressed by Xenophon, to capture fortified positions (21.5f, 22.3).³ Historically the Oxyrhynchus historian's account of these campaigns in Asia, which is reflected in that of Diodorus on the first of them, is more trustworthy than that of Xenophon. By devastating large areas under Persian control Agesilaus—though indirectly accomplishing the fall of Tissaphernes, the archenemy of the Greeks—brought no nearer the liberation of the Asiatic Greek cities,⁴ which was the primary aim of the Spartan offensive.

The truce concluded by Agesilaus with Tithraustes after the execution of Tissaphernes (80.8) had not expired when the Spartan government recalled him to Greece (83.1).⁵ His homeward march, in the course of which he defeated an army of Thracians, is dismissed by Diodorus in a couple of sentences (83.3f). The account of his victory at Coronea, where, according to other authorities, he displayed conspicuous gallantry (Xen. *Hell.* 4.3.15–20; Plut. *Ages.* 18), is as brief and unenthusiastic as that of his mission to Asia; some doubt seems to be implied whether the Spartans were really victorious. Diodorus shows a little interest in Agesilaus as an individual by noting that he sustained many wounds and was conveyed to Delphi for medical treatment (84.1f). Unfortunately the London papyrus of the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* breaks off before his return to Greece is reached, so that there is here no opportunity to compare its version with that of Diodorus.

In the only other reference to Agesilaus in the fourteenth book his name is evidently introduced in error for that of Agesipolis, the other Spartan king (97.5; cf. Xen. *Hell.* 4.7.3). While Diodorus includes some information on the opening stage of the protracted operations at the Isthmus during the Corinthian war (86), he ignores later developments there in which Agesilaus played a leading part (Xen. *Hell.*

³ E. Meyer, *Theopomps Hellenika* (Halle 1909) 60, suggests that the person highly praised in a severely mutilated passage of the *Hell.Oxy.* (14.2) might be Agesilaus. This hypothesis is unconvincing and does not appear to have received any support. If the Oxyrhynchus historian wished to include an evaluation of Agesilaus, the middle of the mission to Asia is hardly an appropriate point. More important, to claim that he did not misappropriate money would seem to anyone with the slightest knowledge of his career to be a ludicrous understatement. Nor would the assumption that he was a member τῶν δυναστευόντων be appropriate to a constitutionally elected Spartan king, who had a colleague: for in the fourth century at least, the term implies the exercise of irresponsible power or the status of a petty ruler.

⁴ V. D. Hanson, *Warfare and Agriculture in Classical Greece* (Pisa 1983) 150.

⁵ Diodorus makes no reference here to the somewhat absurd notion, mentioned in his next book (15.31.3) and more fully reported by others (Nepos *Ages.* 4.2f; Plut. *Ages.* 15.1–6), that Agesilaus might have conquered the Persian empire had he not unselfishly obeyed the order recalling him from Asia. The origin of this notion may be Xen. *Ages.* 1.36.

4.4.19–5.18). Nor does he mention the campaign conducted by Agesilaus in Acarnania (4.6.3–14; *cf.* 7.1).

The date at which the Oxyrhynchus historian ended his work cannot be established with certainty. Scholars have suggested that it could have ended either in 394 or 387/6.⁶ The latter is more probable,⁷ because the battle of Cnidus in 394 does not unmistakably mark the end of an epoch, whereas the King's Peace in 387/6 does. Furthermore, the account by Diodorus of a revolutionary outbreak in Rhodes in 391 (14.97.1–4, 99.4f) seems to me to reflect features of the Oxyrhynchus historian, who apparently had a special interest in Rhodes (15; 19f).⁸ If the Oxyrhynchus historian continued his work to 387/6, which is the point chosen by Diodorus for ending his fourteenth book, the lack of interest in Agesilaus shown by the latter in the years after his return from Asia may well reflect, through Ephorus, the presentation of him in the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*, as has been suggested for the period of his campaigns there. On the other hand, it is evident that Diodorus tends to be capricious in his selection of material for inclusion in his work, and throughout much of his fourteenth book he is preoccupied with recording in considerable detail the stirring events in his native Sicily.

II. The Fifteenth Book

1–22: Sparta and Agesilaus condemned (386/5–381/0)

On passing from the fourteenth to the fifteenth book the reader is confronted with a change of tone so drastic that, as will be suggested below (274), it can hardly be attributed to anything other than a change of main source at some stage in the development of the tradition. The narrative on Greece and the East, which in most of the fourteenth book is colourless and abstains almost wholly from expressions of opinion, favourable or unfavourable,⁹ becomes violently hostile to the Spartans, whose foreign policy is later seen to have been directed largely by Agesilaus. These strictures are introduced in the

⁶ *E.g.* Breitenbach (*supra* n.2: 402), who believes that it may have continued to the latter date.

⁷ So Bruce (*supra* n.2: 4) maintains, though his reasons are not entirely cogent: *cf.* G. L. Cawkwell, *CR* n.s. 18 (1968) 288f, in a review that seems to me to do less than justice to this valuable work. The reasons given above are in my view more convincing.

⁸ *MusHelv* 40 (1983) 239–50, where I have attempted to establish that the account of Diodorus is more trustworthy than that of Xenophon.

⁹ In 14.110.2–4 Diodorus does imply, though very mildly and only by reference to the uneasiness of other Greeks, that Sparta had by concluding the King's Peace betrayed the Asiatic Greeks.

proem, which maintains in remarkably trenchant terms that the Spartans were guilty of unjust and violent oppression in their treatment of other Greeks and that because of this ἀβουλία they permanently lost their hegemony (1.1–5). Spartan aggression after the King's Peace was censured as early as 380 by Isocrates (*Paneg.* 125–28), and with good reason, but nowhere more forcefully than here. The proem is, however, singularly ill-suited to be an introduction to the entire book, which covers a period ending at 361, because Diodorus, after completing less than a quarter of the whole (1–22), begins to adopt a much more sympathetic attitude towards Sparta.¹⁰

In three passages in the opening section of the book the term 'enslavement' is applied to the treatment of other Greeks by the Spartans (5.3, 9.5, 19.4). They are charged with having violated the terms of the King's Peace after less than two years: they took aggressive action first against weaker cities and then against stronger ones in the interest of their own supporters, who had been ousted from control and had become exiles as a result of the Peace. Their first victims were the Mantineans, whose valiant resistance against oppression is pointedly commended (5, 12.1).¹¹ They are also declared to have incurred unpopularity in Greece because they were considered to have betrayed the Asiatic Greeks to Persia (9.5). Later they are again accused of trying to regain their former hegemony by establishing control of some cities by persuasion and others by force through the restoration of exiles, thereby contravening the King's Peace (19.1). It is implied that the offensives against Olynthus and Phlius were undertaken in accordance with this policy (19.3).

There follows a passage which, whether true or false, is crucial to the present investigation: Diodorus declares categorically that the two Spartan kings were at loggerheads on foreign policy (19.4).¹² Agesipolis (who, he insists, was peaceful, just, and outstandingly intelligent) maintained that the Spartans should remain loyal to their oaths and not enslave the Greeks in violation of their treaty obligations;

¹⁰ An explanation of this curious phenomenon will be suggested below, 275.

¹¹ As C. Vial, *Diodore de Sicile* vol. XV (Paris 1977) 17 n.1, points out, the loyalty of Mantinea to the Spartans in the past is here unjustifiably overstated in order to make their repressive action appear as reprehensible as possible.

¹² H. Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia* (London 1979) 289, and W. G. Forrest, *History of Sparta*² (London 1980) 128, evidently have this passage in mind when referring to opposition against Agesilaus led by Agesipolis. Both, however, note that the latter, apparently without demur, accepted the command of expeditionary forces sent to subjugate Mantinea and Olynthus, and they are agreed in attaching little importance to this alleged opposition. Xenophon (*Hell.* 5.3.20) refers to him as the rival of Agesilaus only because of the normal rivalry between the two royal houses at Sparta.

that they had acquired a bad reputation through having betrayed the Asiatic Greek cities and through having usurped control of those in Greece despite having sworn to protect autonomy everywhere. Agesilaus, on the other hand, being naturally vigorous, φιλοπόλεμος ἦν καὶ τῆς τῶν Ἑλλήνων δυναστείας ἀντείχετο. This passage presupposes that Agesilaus, though not hitherto mentioned by name in this book, supported, and indeed was largely responsible for, the policy of Sparta since the King's Peace,¹³ which is seen to have evoked so much criticism.

Diodorus attributes the seizure of the Cadmea by Phoebidas to Spartan fears that Thebes might aspire to the hegemony of Greece (20.1). He asserts that secret orders were issued to Spartan leaders to seize the Cadmea if opportunity arose (20.2), and, although Agesilaus is not expressly named, the references to his character and aims in the preceding passage (19.4) certainly imply that he was implicated.¹⁴ Attention is drawn to the shocked reaction throughout Greece to this treacherous *coup* and to the hypocrisy of the Spartans in fining Phoebidas without withdrawing their garrison from Thebes (20.2).

22–35: Sparta more favourably presented, Agesilaus extolled (380/79–377/6)

In this portion of the book an unmistakable change of attitude towards the leading Greek powers begins to develop. Occasional references to Spartan injustice and oppression do occur (25.1, 28.2, 29.6), but this theme, hitherto so dominant, gives way to other factors. The aims and actions of Athens and later of Thebes receive more attention and those of Sparta considerably less.

After completing his account of the Olynthian war, Diodorus includes a statement in which he claims, with supporting argument, that the Spartans were now at the height of their power, dominating Greece by land and sea (23.3–5; cf. Xen. *Hell.* 5.3.27). He gives reasons why Thebes, Corinth, Argos, and Athens were not in a position to compete for the leadership, whereas the Spartans could maintain large trained forces from their abundant resources of manpower, so that even the Great King and Dionysius of Syracuse sought their friendship. Here it is their power that Diodorus finds impressive: he neither expresses nor implies any judgement on the methods whereby they acquired it.

¹³ Forrest (*supra* n.12: 128) justifiably maintains that Agesilaus “was in charge of the application of the Peace.”

¹⁴ Plutarch (*Ages.* 23.6f, 24.1f) categorically charges Agesilaus with complicity.

The next important statement by Diodorus on the Spartans is that in 377/6, because they felt their hegemony to be threatened after the liberation of the Cadmea and the formation of the Second Athenian Confederacy, they abandoned their policy of oppressive imperialism and sought to retain the loyalty of their allies through conciliatory measures (28.4, 31.1). This adoption of a fundamentally different policy is not attested elsewhere and, though not refutable, seems unlikely:¹⁵ the Spartans did not readily yield to external pressures and, though now under greater threat than hitherto, continued to dominate Greece until their disaster at Leuctra. It is tempting to account for Diodorus' new appraisal of the situation by adopting the reasonable hypothesis that Ephorus, turning from a source violently hostile to Sparta to one largely sympathetic, postulated a modification of Spartan policy in order to avoid glaring inconsistency.¹⁶ Significantly Diodorus next mentions the introduction by the Spartans of a new system regulating the military contributions of their allies (31.2)—a reform evidently designed to tighten rather than to relax their control.

There follows a glowing tribute to the qualities and past achievements of Agesilaus. This eulogy is indeed astonishing because of its discrepancy with the presentation of him hitherto, lukewarm at the end of the fourteenth book and damning at the beginning of the fifteenth. He is now credited with being renowned for bravery and strategic resourcefulness; he had throughout the earlier stages of his career been almost always victorious; he was admired especially for his successes against the Persians, in which he had won a battle against overwhelming odds, overrun most of Asia Minor outside the cities, and would have exposed virtually the whole Persian empire to extreme peril if he had not been recalled to Greece; he combined intelligence with energy and boldness, and engaged in daring enterprises (31.3f). The villain of a few pages earlier (19.4) has now been transformed into a hero. Admittedly the censure he received in the previous passage was related to his policy in instigating Spartan imperialism in opposition to the virtuous Agesipolis, whereas here it is his ability and accomplishments that are extolled; but even so the change of attitude is striking. No one reading the account of his campaigns in Asia in the fourteenth book would credit him with the degree of success attributed to him in this encomium.

¹⁵ There appears to be general agreement among modern scholars to ignore this notion.

¹⁶ The argument of Vial (*supra* n.11: xvi) that Diodorus becomes sympathetic to the Spartans for moral reasons after they lost the hegemony is unconvincing. The change of attitude begins at a much earlier stage.

Although his first invasion of Boeotia did not achieve a crushing victory, the account of Diodorus, which is relatively detailed, claims that his strategy was extremely shrewd. He was eager to fight a pitched battle in the plain, but, when the Thebans refused to abandon a fortified position in broken country on a long ridge, he did not persist in trying to dislodge them but turned his attention to unopposed devastation of the countryside. In reply to criticism by his staff, he retorted that he had achieved a success costing his forces nothing by having plundered enemy territory without committing them to a battle they might have lost. Diodorus declares that, whereas at the time he was believed to have gauged impending developments wisely, he was later credited with positively divine inspiration in view of the Spartan experiences at Leuctra and Mantinea (32.1–33.3).¹⁷ His second invasion of Boeotia is more briefly described. Diodorus acknowledges that he suffered a reverse that led to the withdrawal of the invading army and greatly heartened the Thebans (34.1f). Despite the eulogy of Agesilaus a few pages earlier (31.3f) no attempt is made here to gloss over his failure.

36–81: Agesilaus in obscurity (376/5–364/3)

Throughout a long section in the middle of the fifteenth book, though the main topic is the struggle between Sparta and Thebes for the hegemony of Greece, Agesilaus is largely ignored. At the outset he was incapacitated by illness (Xen. *Ages.* 5.4.58) and thereafter played an insignificant rôle. His only military command was of a punitive expedition against Tegea, which apparently accomplished little except devastation, and is reported very briefly by Diodorus (59.4). The narrative recording the struggle between Sparta and Thebes in this period does not show any marked bias for or against either. The rôle of Athens is given much prominence.

82–93: Agesilaus again extolled (363/2–362/1)

Although Agesilaus played no part in the battle of Mantinea,¹⁸ he was involved in the moves and countermoves preceding it. He receives high praise for his crucial share in foiling the attempt by Epaminondas to capture Sparta by a surprise attack after a forced march

¹⁷ The narrative shows that the argument used by Agesilaus to justify his strategy was unsound: he had issued a challenge to the enemy to settle the issue by fighting in the plain, which was refused (32.6).

¹⁸ He is not mentioned in any account of the engagement, and his absence may be inferred from a reference by Diodorus to a commander of the Spartans wounded or killed by Epaminondas (86.4).

from Arcadia (82.6):¹⁹ indeed his generalship is adjudged to have been more astute than that of his opponent (83.1). On the other hand, Diodorus maintains a few pages later that he was excelled by Epaminondas in ability and character: his name appears in a catalogue of Greek leaders, contemporaries and predecessors deemed to have been inferior to Epaminondas (88.1–4).²⁰

The account by Diodorus of the final episode in his career is uniformly eulogistic (92.2–93.6). Because other versions are more critical, its interpretation of his reactions to repeated crises during his service as a mercenary commander in Egypt requires careful examination. He was sent by Sparta at the behest of Tachos, the Egyptian king, who had revolted from Persia and desired his services because of his reputation for bravery and for military leadership and strategy (92.2). A feature prominent in this narrative is the contrast between the folly and cowardice of Tachos and the shrewdness and determination of Agesilaus. Tachos first overruled the advice of Agesilaus and insisted on leading his army in person in an offensive as far as Phoenicia. When his son Nectanebo challenged him for the throne, he fled in terror to Persia, where the Great King granted him both a pardon for his disloyalty and a command against his rebel son. Returning with Agesilaus to Egypt, he was confronted by a huge army assembled by Nectanebo. He was again panic-stricken and, rejecting the recommendation of Agesilaus to fight a pitched battle, took refuge in a large city. Here, when the situation became precarious, he once more lost heart. Agesilaus, however, by delivering an unexpected attack by night extricated the besieged army and then, skilfully exploiting a system of canals, won a crushing victory against overwhelming odds. Tachos thus regained the throne and Agesilaus, credited with sole responsibility for this happy outcome, was generously rewarded but died in the course of his homeward journey.

It is a shock to find that this colourful narrative is fundamentally unsound either through carelessness or, more probably, through deliberate distortion at some stage designed to shield Agesilaus from

¹⁹ In the text of Diodorus the Spartan king operating in Arcadia when Epaminondas made his forced march to Sparta is named Agis (82.6), whereas the general left to defend the city is Agesilaus (83.2). There was no Spartan king Agis in this period, as Diodorus must surely have known. As is clear from other sources, the name in the former passage should be Agesilaus and that in the latter Archidamus, the son of Agesilaus. C. Tuplin, *CQ* N.S. 39 (1979) 347–51 and 356f, is doubtless correct in attributing the errors to textual corruption.

²⁰ In the list of contemporary leaders Agesilaus is stated to have belonged to a somewhat earlier period, whereas Conon is not, though the latter was active before the end of the Decelean war. Diodorus is probably responsible for this inaccuracy.

any suspicion of having acted treacherously. Even Xenophon, in his frankly encomiastic *Agesilaus* (2.29–31), betrays an awareness of this suspicion and seeks to rebut it by arguing that, when Tachos fled in alarm to Sidon, Agesilaus was not in a position to withhold his support from one of two rival contestants for the Egyptian throne, whichever he thought preferable: if he were to support neither, his Greek mercenaries would not be paid or fed, and the eventual winner would be hostile towards them. Consequently, after making up his mind which of the two was favourable towards Greeks, he gave him military aid with beneficial results. The more detailed version of Plutarch (*Ages.* 36–40),²¹ which is substantially unfavourable towards Agesilaus, agrees with that of Xenophon that he did not, as Diodorus imagines, serve only under Tachos throughout his mission. When invited to join Nectanebo, he consulted the Spartan government and, after being ordered to act in what he considered to be the best interests of Sparta, changed sides. Plutarch condemns his decision as hypocritical treachery (37.10). Thereafter he supported Nectanebo against a rival claimant to the throne. His military operations against this claimant are closely parallel to those conducted, according to Diodorus, in the service of Tachos against Nectanebo, though the account of Plutarch is on a more generous scale. Agesilaus is stated to have at one stage become so exasperated by Nectanebo that only fear of incurring dishonour deterred him from accepting an invitation to change sides again (38.6). Plutarch does, however, credit him with the astute strategy that brought total victory.

There is no doubt that the tradition represented by Xenophon and Plutarch attributing to Agesilaus a switch of allegiance from Tachos to Nectanebo should be preferred to that of Diodorus, representing him as continuously loyal to the former.²²

III. Conclusion

The presentation of Agesilaus by Diodorus has been shown to exhibit a startlingly inconsistent pattern: first indifference, next censure, then eulogy, finally bias in his favour. It is barely credible that any author, dependent on purely factual reports on his career, can have formed a series of judgements so strangely conflicting. These tergiversations are so striking that they surely emanate not from changes of

²¹ Polyæn. *Strat.* 2.1.22 belongs to the same tradition.

²² H. W. Parke, *Greek Mercenary Soldiers* (Oxford 1933) 111f, accepts the version of Plutarch.

opinion by a single author but from changes of source involving conflicting verdicts on the achievements, ability, and character of Agesilaus. It must also be borne in mind that judgements on Sparta in the period of his career undergo some modifications, though to a much lesser extent. How can this curious phenomenon have arisen?

It might be argued that Diodorus was himself responsible. He might, contrary to the widely accepted view that he relied on Ephorus from his eleventh to his fifteenth book, have chosen, on reaching the end of his fourteenth book, to turn for some reason to other authorities representing points of view different from Ephorus' and irreconcilable with each other. It cannot be claimed that he was too intelligent to have failed to appreciate the resulting inconsistencies. On the other hand, the case for believing that his main source for a sequence of books ending with the fifteenth was the work of Ephorus is well-established.²³ This work was still available to him (probably its twentieth book) for the period with which he dealt at the beginning of his own fifteenth, and there seems to be no obvious reason why he should have chosen to desert it. He was not an assiduous researcher and tended to be conservative in his use of sources. He normally chose a standard work, presumably the one he considered most suitable for his purposes, to be his principal source and continued to derive almost all his material from it until he reached a point where it no longer supplied him with what he wanted, when he was compelled to make a change.²⁴ In the greater part of the fifteenth book covering the period ending with the battle of Mantinea (1-89) the narrative continues, as in the preceding books, to be entirely independent of the version by Xenophon in the *Hellenica*: in many passages it adopts a different interpretation of events and a different attitude towards cities and leading characters. It is true that there are not many links between passages in the fifteenth book and fragments of Ephorus relating to the period with which it deals,²⁵ but these fragments happen to be few and some of them very short.

If the inconsistencies in the narrative of Diodorus are not attributable to his use of different sources, they presumably occurred, perhaps in a less crude form, in the work of Ephorus. Since the latter can scarcely have changed his basic attitude towards Agesilaus several

²³ See *supra* n.1.

²⁴ N. G. L. Hammond, *CQ* 32 (1938) 149; J. Hornblower, *Hieronymus of Cardia* (Oxford 1981) 32.

²⁵ Cf. Vial (*supra* n.11) ix n.2. On the relations between Ephorus and Diodorus, C. A. Volquardsen, *Untersuchungen über die Quellen der griechischen und sicilischen Geschichten bei Diodor, Buch xi bis xvi* (Keil 1868) 51-66, is still valuable.

times while composing a small number of books, he must surely have reproduced divergent attitudes adopted by successive sources from which he derived his material. One instance is almost beyond doubt: the Oxyrhynchus historian and Diodorus present Agesilaus with a marked lack of enthusiasm, and this indifference was almost certainly transmitted from the former to the latter indirectly through Ephorus. Because the Oxyrhynchus historian does not appear to have continued his work beyond the King's Peace, Ephorus very probably had to find a new main source at that point on Greece and the East, and this source is reflected in the narrative of Diodorus in the opening section of his fifteenth book, with its vehement condemnation of Sparta and Agesilaus (1–22). To attempt to identify the sources of a work of which only scattered fragments have been preserved is necessarily a hazardous undertaking. In this instance, however, the *Hellenica* of Callisthenes²⁶ is the only attested work with any claim to consideration. Ephorus is accused of plagiarizing it (*FGrHist* 70T17),²⁷ and it began at the King's Peace, which is the starting point for Diodorus' fifteenth book. Modern scholars have concluded that Callisthenes adopted a hostile attitude towards Sparta largely on the ground that, as a servant of the Macedonian royal house and a mouthpiece of Macedonian propaganda, he must have presented the Spartans unsympathetically because they pertinaciously opposed Philip and Alexander.²⁸ Another, perhaps more cogent, argument in support of this view may be suggested: as an Olynthian, he is likely to have felt antipathy towards a power which in his own lifetime had reduced his native city to submission after a long and bitter struggle.²⁹ There is also some reason to believe that in his *Hellenica* he took a favourable view of the Thebans,³⁰ so that in his account of their conflict with the Spartans his attitude towards the latter may be thought to have been correspondingly unfavourable.

²⁶ L. Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great* (New York 1960) 29–33, provides an admirably cautious survey of this work.

²⁷ Daimachus and Anaximenes are also named in this accusation, but there does not appear to be any indication that Ephorus used the work of either for the period after the King's Peace. Anaximenes ended his universal history at the battle of Mantinea (*FGrHist* 72T14), but it began with myth and amounted to only twelve books. Although its scale doubtless increased in the concluding books, it can hardly have been sufficiently detailed on the fourth century to have been of much use to Ephorus at that stage.

²⁸ *FGrHist* 70T17; cf. Jacoby, *RE* 10.2 (1919) 1697, and *FGrHist* Iid (1930) 417; F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius* I (Oxford 1957) 476.

²⁹ He evidently remained a patriotic Olynthian even after Philip's destruction of the city, for his motive in accompanying Alexander to Asia is said to have been to secure its restoration (Plut. *Alex.* 53.1).

³⁰ I have maintained (*CQ* 33 [1939] 18–21) that, while this hypothesis has been accepted too readily as firmly established, it is at least probable. Pearson (*supra* n.26: 32) supports my cautious approach.

Ephorus thus seems likely to have derived his material for his twentieth book, which dealt with the aftermath of the King's Peace,³¹ from the *Hellenica* of Callisthenes, accepting and reproducing its condemnation of Spartan policy. He is known to have made some effort to construct each book around a central theme,³² and in this book the central theme was apparently the oppression practised by Sparta. An explanation may now be offered to account for the inappropriateness of the proem to the fifteenth book of Diodorus, to which attention was drawn above. This proem cannot be an original composition by Diodorus himself but must be based on the proem to the twentieth book of Ephorus,³³ which dealt only with the period immediately after the King's Peace, whereas the fifteenth book of Diodorus covered events to 361.

Diodorus' less censorious attitude towards Sparta in the narrative on the period from 380/79 onwards, and especially the remarkable encomium of Agesilaus (31.3f), might be held to indicate that Ephorus here abandoned the *Hellenica* of Callisthenes and turned to another main source or to a number of other sources. In some passages, however, Diodorus does continue to refer to Spartan oppression, as has already been noted (*supra* 267f). More important, there are three passages on events considerably after 380/79 in which Diodorus is in substantial agreement with Callisthenes, and in two cases Ephorus is known to have given a similar account.³⁴ On the other hand, on points of some substance the version of Ephorus is known to have disagreed with that of Callisthenes.³⁵

Accordingly Ephorus appears to have drawn his material for a period of some twenty years beginning in 380/79 from a variety of

³¹ As is seen from *FGrHist* 70F79 on the punishment of Mantinea.

³² Such is the most widely accepted interpretation of the phrase *κατὰ γένος* in T11, though others have been proposed.

³³ R. Laquer, *Hermes* 46 (1911) 161–206, gives reasons for believing that Diodorus commonly derived the substance of his proems from those of Ephorus. Jacoby (*FGrHist* IIc p.28) maintains that Diod. 15.1 represents an introduction to Ephorus' books twenty-one to twenty-five or to twenty-one only, but F79 (*supra* n.31) surely establishes that the appropriate book is the twentieth.

³⁴ These passages are: (1) on Nile floods that halted a Persian invasion of Egypt: Diod. 43.4; Callisthenes *FGrHist*124F12; (2) on an earthquake that destroyed two Achaean cities: Diod. 48f; Ephorus F212; Callisthenes FF19f; (3) on the history of Messenia, doubtless prompted by the restoration of Messene in 370: Diod. 66.2–6; Ephorus F216; Callisthenes FF23f.

³⁵ First, according to Ephorus (F210) the Spartan *mora* numbered five hundred men (Diod. 32.1, *cf.* 37.1, gives the same figure), but according to Callisthenes (F18) seven hundred. Second, Callisthenes (F26) is known to have given an account of the surprise attack on Sparta by Epaminondas, which is very probably (*cf.* Jacoby's note *ad loc.*) the source of the version of Polyb. 9.8.2–13, and differs considerably from that of Diod. 82f, based on Ephorus.

sources,³⁶ probably including the *Hellenica* of Callisthenes, though it ceased to be his main source. Because in the fifteenth book of Diodorus the middle section (36–81) contains a generous measure of information on Athens and Athenian leaders,³⁷ Ephorus could well have depended to a limited extent upon the *Atthis* of Androtion, which was published about 340³⁸ and was not merely a local chronicle of Attica but dealt with Athenian activities abroad, including military operations (*FGrHist* 324^{FF}47–49).³⁹

It is difficult to explain why Ephorus, as reflected in the fifteenth book of Diodorus, chose to adopt an increasingly favourable attitude towards Sparta and, far more remarkable, to shift abruptly from censure of Agesilaus to eulogy, finally producing a demonstrably prejudiced account of his service in Egypt. There appears to be no evidence on which even a tentative identification of his source or sources, at this later stage, could be based. No fourth-century author other than Xenophon is known to have presented Sparta and Agesilaus with almost unbroken approbation, and there is no reason to believe that Ephorus derived any material from Xenophon. Indeed on many episodes in the half century covered by the *Hellenica* of Xenophon the two historians are very widely believed to represent different traditions. Furthermore, as has already been noted, the narrative of Diodorus on the activities of Agesilaus in Egypt differs essentially from that of Xenophon in his *Agesilaus* and is much more biased. It should, however, be borne in mind that Ephorus is here dealing with events well within his own adult lifetime, so that he could, and doubtless did, in some cases depend on his own recollections or on oral evidence obtained from eyewitnesses. Polybius quotes a statement by him stressing the value of personal experience to a historian (F110), which implies that he did not invariably use written sources. Here his principal informant, or a majority of his informants, could well have favoured Sparta and have been sufficiently devoted to Agesilaus to have even suppressed the truth in order to absolve him from suspicion of having acted treacherously in Egypt.

The work of Ephorus remained for centuries the standard history of the Greek world and adjacent areas; it covered a period of more than

³⁶ Jacoby, *FGrHist* IIc p.31, suggests that on the fourth century Ephorus used a larger number of sources than on the fifth, but he does not adequately explain this suggestion.

³⁷ Cf. 38.3f (Callistratus), 44 (Iphicrates), 63.1f (praise of Athenian magnanimity in supporting Sparta), 69.1–4 (Chabrias).

³⁸ *FGrHist* IIIb Suppl. 1 (1954) p.103.

³⁹ There is a possible link between Androtion F51 and Ephorus F215 on the Arcadian *Eparitai*, but it could be fortuitous.

seven hundred years; a large number of fragments has been preserved;⁴⁰ it was extensively used by Diodorus. Paradoxically, however, its distinctive characteristics cannot be established with any confidence,⁴¹ and reliable evidence is lacking on which its quality might be assessed. In antiquity, though it was widely valued as a source of information, a majority of critics regarded it as pedestrian, lacking in originality and insight, even inaccurate.⁴² Most modern scholars, though giving Ephorus credit for having produced the first universal history, have concluded that he was little more than an indefatigable compiler, basing his work very largely upon material provided by predecessors in the same field and undertaking little independent investigation.

The foregoing examination of a single topic in the fourteenth and fifteenth books of Diodorus may be thought, if its conclusions have any validity, to have made a small contribution to the study of Ephorus and his historical method. In his treatment of this topic he betrays an astonishing degree of inconsistency, apparently through deriving his material from a number of authorities and incorporating the viewpoint of each without making sufficient effort to reconcile them. There is no means of determining whether his apparent treatment of his sources is in this instance typical or exceptional; but, even if exceptional, it is highly discreditable and damaging to his reputation. It suggests that the orthodox verdict of modern scholarship mentioned above, far from being too severe, may be too favourable.⁴³ His work seems to have provided a mass of factual information assiduously assembled from his authorities and interspersed with expressions of opinion that were virtually a reiteration of theirs.

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⁴⁰ Of the 236 fragments believed by Jacoby to be genuine almost all belong to the main historical work.

⁴¹ G. L. Barber, *Ephorus* (Cambridge 1935) 15. Important contributions on the subject have also been made by Jacoby, *FGrHist* IIc pp.30f; T. S. Brown, *The Greek Historians* (Lexington 1973) 107–15; G. Schepens in *Historiographia Antiqua* (Louvain 1977) 95–118; C. W. Fornara, *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Berkeley 1983) 42–46, 108–12.

⁴² As may be seen from the testimonia assembled by Jacoby and from some of the fragments.

⁴³ Schepens' defence of Ephorus (*supra* n.41) against the criticism of modern scholars, though containing valuable points, does not appear to be convincing, especially in view of the conclusions put forward above.