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CORNELIUS NEPOS. SOME FURTHER NOTES.

IN an article published in the last volume of this *Journal*, Mr. How discusses the problems of the Parian expedition of Miltiades and the Battle of Marathon, in the light of recent views. The version given by Nepos of these events I subjected to an analysis in an article published just before the war¹ and I came to certain conclusions in regard to the sources used by the Roman historian. Mr. How agrees with me in accepting the general view that Ephorus is the chief inspiration of Nepos. He refuses, however, to credit Ephorus with any more special knowledge than that which a student of Herodotus might acquire. Ephorus is, in fact, the rationaliser, and a poor one at that, of Herodotus.

The problem raised by Mr. How is whether we are going to accept the account Herodotus gives of Marathon and Paros or the rationalised version of Ephorus. Without hesitation Mr. How accepts Herodotus and rejects Ephorus root and branch. Here I must associate myself entirely with Mr. How in his appreciation of Herodotus but cannot help retaining a preference for some of the elements of the Ephorus-Nepos version of events at Lemnos, Marathon and Paros. Herodotus, it goes without saying, is vastly the better historian as a rule, but his account of this period of history lacks exactly that discrimination and rationalism which he applies elsewhere with such success. Because Ephorus is a rationalist he need not be condemned then and there. To be a rationalist in the fourth century B.C. meant, amongst other things, that one made errors and that one interpreted early history in the terms of later. That Ephorus did this is, alas, only too obvious. But the rationalist of those times had the advantage of being able to examine evidence of authorities which have since perished. In the process many scraps of evidence from such authorities were kept, and the preservation of the rationalist version implies the possibility of the survival of fragments of records which have otherwise perished. I can make myself clear by referring to a few points in the Ephorus-Nepos account of Marathon, Lemnos and Paros. My own view is *au fond* entirely in agreement with that of Mr. How, but in his determination to dispose of Ephorus he has swept away everything which that historian might have bequeathed to us.

Marathon, perhaps the most important battle in antiquity, is the least accurately described. So to-day the modern counterpart of Marathon—the

¹ *Klio*, 1914, pp. 69-90.

battle of the Marne—still remains wrapped in obscurity; as far as I know, there is no complete and accurate account of it. The problem of the cavalry at Marathon, as explained in modern theories, finds a parallel in the sudden decision of Von Kluck to change his direction. The cause of obscurity in each case is much the same; the importance of the result overshadows the events that led up to it. To press the analogy still further, a modern rationalist, writing a history of the Marne, would examine all the numerous theories, even that which attributed Von Kluck's turning to his fear of Russian troops landed at the Channel ports. The modern rationalist, particularly if he were French and not a high military official, would present us with a neat version of the battle with the edges well rounded off. But here and there in the account there would be scraps of new and perhaps startling information. So too Ephorus. In the case of Marathon I take as such scraps (1) the story that the Greek position was *in radicibus montium*; (2) the 'nova ars,' by which something approximating to barbed wire supplied the Greek lack of cavalry; (3) the use of their favourable position to prevent enfilade—or in the words of Nepos '*ut montium tegerentur altitudine*.'

The first I accept as good information, whatever its source, because it is entirely confirmed by the evidence of the battlefield. There within easy range of the Soros is a mountain spur (Mt. Agrieliiki) between the end of which and the sea—a very narrow space—the Persians would have to pass. Deployed at its foot the Greeks would be masters of the strategy. Safe against encirclement they could strike the Persians on the flank if they attempted to march on Athens, just as Maunoury launched his army at Von Kluck when that general was marching on Paris. The actual beginning of the battle was brought about, I imagine, by the very movement the Greeks had anticipated. A charge from the mountain spur on to the flanks of the Persians would bring about the conflict exactly at the Soros.

The second and third points rest on their own merits. Troops entrenched traditionally employ obstacles. The men of Marathon were none the less heroes if they did so too. They also protect their flanks; if not, they are unworthy of their weapons.

So much for the rationalism of the story. At least it makes the battle a reality. The presence or otherwise of the cavalry is of less importance if the battle proves to be a counterpart of the Marne. All arms, even cavalry, can be destroyed by infantry if caught in the flank. The Persian may well have been fool enough to imagine that his numbers entitled him to treat the Greeks as a 'contained force' and march straight on Athens. If Von Bülow could commit the crowning folly of sending his formations across the front of a great but despised Allied army, it is not unreasonable to press the analogy in the case of Hippias or the Persian leader.

Nothing sufficient to justify this amount of reconstruction is to be found in Herodotus and this much can be said in support of Ephorus, that the three points quoted above are perfectly legitimate information and do not have the appearance of being the product of his inner consciousness.

Mr. How, on the other hand, still adheres to the theory (p. 53) that the battle was precipitated by the division of the Persian forces, a view that relies for its cogency upon the authority of Suidas. I must confess myself to a preference for the outline which is suggested by Ephorus who, if no better, is at least as good evidence as Suidas, and whose view has the additional advantage of agreeing with the lie of the ground.

In regard to the numbers of the Persian army I should be surprised to find the figure given in Nepos of 200,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry in any rationalist account of the battle. I have visited the field of Marathon twice since the war and feel little hesitation in declaring that the ground available for the battle could barely contain more than five divisions of the British type (20,000 strong each) drawn up in parade order. Even then there would be but little room for manœuvre. This shows that Ephorus was not such a skilful rationalist as one might believe and that he drew from sources which were at times incorrect as well as correct. In view of the statement of Polybius that Ephorus knew nothing about land warfare² it seems still less likely that he has given us a merely rationalist account of the battle. Had he done so it might well have been unintelligible! As it is, the intelligibility of the account is derived from the new sources from which he drew.

In regard to the Lemnian expedition the Nepos-Ephorus account is again purely rationalist in appearance. I have already dealt with this in my paper referred to above. The divergence in this case between the accounts of Nepos and Herodotus is not great, but what difference there is is marked. In Nepos it is all described in a rationalistic way as part of a policy and not as the wild raid that Herodotus makes it out to be. Mr. How would, I imagine, condemn it as useless and unconvincing rationalism. Fortunately there is in existence an inscription from Lemnos, found in 1910,³ which the finders, MM. Picard and Reinach, attribute to the time of Miltiades. The inscription sets forth a list of Athenian klerouchs and seems to justify the view that the visit of Miltiades either in the first or second instance was part of an official Athenian policy⁴ as described in the Nepos-Ephorus account. Here again we find the rationalism of Ephorus supported by fact. At Marathon it was the facts of nature, here it is the facts of archaeology.

There remains the Parian episode. Mr. How admits (p. 59) that Ephorus 'gives what is on the face of it the more probable story,' but he again considers it as an inference from the account of Herodotus. This may well be so, but it may equally be, as I suggested, that it is an inference from evidence other than that of Herodotus. 'Here, as elsewhere,' says Mr. How (p. 60), 'Ephorus gives us little more than a plausible but shallow attempt to rationalize the biased and defective tradition preserved in Herodotus.' All of

² xii. 25.

³ *B.C.H.* 1912, p. 330.

⁴ The advantages of the policy of holding the Dardanelles were made obvious to Athens by the exploits of Histiaeus and the Lesbians

at Byzantium (*Hdt.* vi. 5). The coin types of the Gallipoli peninsula of the time of Miltiades support the view that he was acting on authority from Athens.

this may be only too true and we can well picture the luckless Ephorus racking his brains over his Herodotus and hoping for light to dawn in his inner rationalistic consciousness. But, as I suggested above and as the accounts of Marathon and Lemnos seem to suggest, Ephorus had *something* besides Herodotus.⁵ What that something was I suggested very tentatively in my paper. It was there proposed that some independent writer preserved in the time of Ephorus gave an account of the Persian Wars and based his account upon Philaid memoirs. The name of Dionysius of Miletus was suggested as a mere conjecture.⁶ Fortunately for myself I left it in the realm of conjecture because Mr. How's strictures upon the probability of the writer being Dionysius are very convincing. Mr. How has further contributed an important addition to the discussion by showing how Herodotus himself drew from Philaid traditions. But the fact that he drew from Philaid sources as long as they did not conflict with his Alcmaeonid descriptions makes it the more probable that Philaid stories, at any rate, in his time were to be had for the asking; and some such stories, I take it, fell later into the hands of Ephorus whose account, as given in Nepos, cannot, with all its faults, be dismissed as rationalistic moonshine. Its facts at times fit with a most disconcerting exactness into the facts as we know them from other sources.

S. CASSON.

⁵ The Scholiast on Pindar suggests that Ephorus followed Pindar in his account of

Gelo of Syracuse: *F.G.H.* i. p. 264.

⁶ See p. 87 of my article.