Truth and Historiographical Aims in Polybius' Histories

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Abstract

Thesis Title: **Truth and Historiographical Aims in Polybius' *Histories***

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This work looks at the textual exegesis of the passages in which Polybius writes about truth as seen in a historiographical milieu and in relation to what Polybius claims to be the proper way of writing history. The main scholarly contribution and originality of this dissertation are to provide a comprehensive analysis of this concept, since the notion of truth in Polybius' work has not been yet extensively examined, and at the same time to 'test' Polybius' assessments and check whether he actually stuck to his claims.

The linguistic analysis of the Polybian terminology and the close look at his style and narrative technique illustrate how he employs diverse narrative and oratorical devices, how he mixes references to history, philosophy, tragedy, and rhetoric to invent new words and concepts (which have been defined as Polybian neologisms), and how he plays on different levels with his readers (a special kind of readers, the 'lovers of learning'). Also, this work shows Polybius' anxiety to give an overall view of the events, which is feasible only by applying the rules and techniques required by universal history. The thematic approach to truth has gone hand in hand with the focus on Polybius' attitude towards historiographical methodology in relation with his predecessors, and the dissertation also delineates different types of non-truths or anti-truths in Polybius' view, thus 'how not to write a (false) account of events'. Indeed, in most cases Polybius' methodology lies in the shadow of the critiques to his predecessors.

My work not only reconstructs the image Polybius has of truth, but also advocates a new understanding of the figure of the historian, who is characterized by the newly-created Polybian concept of assuming the proper *ethos* when one undertakes the crucial task of writing history.

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Abbreviations

DK: H.von Diels and W.von Kranz (edd.), *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Hildesheim, 1934-.

FGrHist: F. Jacoby (ed.), *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, Berlin, then Leiden, 1923-64.

GE: F. Montanari (ed.), *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, Leiden, 2015.

LSJ: H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones (edd.), *A Greek-English Lexicon, With a Revised Supplement*, Oxford 1996.

POxy.: *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, London 1898–.

Introduction

"And yet I often think it odd that it should be so dull
for a great deal of it must be invention".
Catherine Morland talking about history
(Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, chapter 14)

The problem of truth has constituted a long-standing Gordian knot both in philosophy and ancient historiography. It is, then, not surprising if the concept of truth plays a crucial role in Polybius as well. Indeed, not only does he insert himself in this historiographical tradition, but his work is also sprinkled with and full of references to truth. While writing this thesis, I have been mostly interested in how the author uses certain terms, and I have tried to analyse those words to understand what he wanted to communicate to his readers, the message he aimed at giving them. Jane Austen in *Northanger Abbey* makes Catherine Morland say about history that 'a great deal of it must be invention'. However, she adds, it is invention which delights most, and in my analysis of the value of truth in Polybius, I have indeed been especially interested in the concurrent presence of references to truth, lies and fiction, and in the use of persuasive language and writing techniques.

In a passage of the *Histories* (12.5.4), Polybius, when considering the topic of the foundation of Lokroi Epizephyrioi, states that the tradition on the foundation as it is handed down by Aristotle is *truer* than the version given by Timaeus. The presence of the comparative adjective has driven me to ask myself a question: what value, then, does truth have for Polybius in light of his historiographical methodology? Did Polybius have the idea that truth was not absolute, but relative? Therefore, I thought that the best way to explain this concept was to outline a path traced by using the methodological passages

present in the *Histories* where Polybius refers to the concept of truth to clarify whether he conceived truth as having different meanings or different *facies*.

For this thesis, I have chosen a particular style which tries to offer a *mimesis* of Polybius' style to give the reader the same impression as the Polybian reader would have had: I try to resemble the apodeictic and demonstrative style Polybius employs, especially his peculiarity of gradually revealing his reflections and historiographical techniques. As he himself declares, he will *lead* his reader to true knowledge, step by step.

Before starting the discussion on Polybius' remarks, in the first chapter I have considered it appropriate to analyse the etymology of the Greek term for truth, *aletheia*, and to proceed with a rapid historical excursus on the concept of truth in philosophy and ancient historiography which might help to understand the Polybian remarks, since he surely had present his predecessors and, as we shall see, he knew philosophy quite well. I shall also show how he reworked some of the philosophical concepts to create and shape his own philosophy of history. The excursus, of course, is not exhaustive and for the thesis I have only dealt with philosophers and historians whom I believed were the most significant in relation to Polybius and to the topic of the thesis, and, especially, with whom Polybius seemed to engage in his historiographical discussions.

The second chapter shows that one of the main points of Polybius' criticism against his predecessors is linked to the fact that they have written histories *kata meros* and thus are not universal, as is the one he is writing; this is also connected to his claim that he is living under an empire which facilitates a new, better and more complete way of writing history. The main goal of all these Polybian remarks is always to elucidate how to write a true historical account, and what the historian should avoid in order to adhere to truth.

The third and fourth chapters examine the steps that, according to Polybius, can lead to the historical 'absolute' truth: truth is the feature of history; without it there simply is no history. The thematic approach to truth in these two chapters, which also delineate different types of non-truths or anti-truths in Polybius' view, cannot but go hand in hand with the focus on Polybius' attitude towards historiographical methodology in relation with his predecessors. Indeed, in most cases Polybius' methodology lies in the shadow of the critiques to his predecessors, and this attitude will reach its peak in Polybius' attacks against Timaeus, to which I have devoted the fourth and final chapter, in an attempt to follow Polybius' strategy who devoted an entire book, the twelfth, to his critiques against Timaeus.

With a felicitous expression, Vercruysse underlines that Polybius stipulates a sort of contract with his readers who know what to expect from him.[1] Will Polybius have fulfilled the contract?

[1] Vercruysse 1990: 20.

Chapter 1

The different *Facies* of Truth

In a famed passage from *De Pythiae Oraculis*, Plutarch, speaking about the genre of history, affirms that, at some point, history abandoned versification as if it were dismounting from a chariot and proceeding on foot, and, above all, truth was separated from the fabulous.[2] Thus, truth is the essence of history. Plutarch's statement surely reflects the discussions of previous and contemporary historians on the nature of history and its relation to truth. Indeed, one of the very first historians, Hecataeus of Miletus vindicated his work's truthfulness,[3] Herodotus staked his claim for putting efforts into research (*praefatio*), and Thucydides underlined the importance of researching and finding truth (1.21).[4] It is, then, not surprising if truth plays a crucial role in Polybius as well. Indeed, not only does he insert himself in this historiographical tradition, but his work is also sprinkled and full of references to truth.

This chapter will highlight and give a sense of the main streams of the philosophical and historiographical debate on truth and of the elements of such a debate, first through the examination of the remarks on the etymology of truth by ancient grammarians, second through a reflection on the discussions of the main ancient philosophers on truth, and finally through an excursus on the historiographical debate before Polybius, an excursus ending with a Polybian passage where truth is defined the greatest god of all. Resembling Polybius' way of writing, I have started with a chapter which might look slightly detached from a thesis dealing with the Polybian remarks on

[2] 406e: συναπολυομένου κατέβη μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν μέτρων ὥσπερ ὀχημάτων ἡ ἱστορία καὶ τῷ πεζῷ μάλιστα τοῦ μυθώδους ἀπεκρίθη τὸ ἀληθές.
[3] *FGrHist* 1 F 1 a.
[4] On this passage, see Canfora 1977a: 455-461 and Id. 1981: 211-220.

truth, but in the course of the thesis it will appear clear that this introduction was indeed needed to explain some of the Polybian assessments. Thus, this chapter will help to identify the main themes of the debate on the nature of truth: it always hides itself, and getting to it is a difficult task for the philosopher/historian, who has to be capable of researching and describing it.

1. Etymology of Truth between ancient and modern scholars

In antiquity, the etymology of truth seems to be associated with two concepts, its connection with justice and its opposition to forgetfulness.

The lexicographer Hesychius[5] explained ἀληθέα as "not false and what is not forgotten (concealed)" (ἀψευδῆ καὶ τὰ <μὴ> ἐπιλανθανόμενα) and ἀληθής as "lawful things or just man. Or else the one who is unforgetting/reminding,[6] in accordance with the negation of forgetfulness" (δικαία ἢ δίκαιος. ἢ μνήμων, κατὰ στέρησιν τῆς λήθης).

[5] He was an Alexandrian scholar who lived in the 5th or 6th century AD. His lexicon was alphabetically arranged and contained glosses which referred to different authors and literary genres. As he himself states in the *Epistula ad Eulogium*, which introduces the work, his main source was the Greek grammarian Diogenianus of Heraclea, who lived in the second century AD, with additions from Aristarchus of Samothrace (3rd-2nd century BC), Apion (1st century BC), and Heliodorus, the Alexandrian scholar who prepared an edition of Aristophanes' comedies (1st century AD). See Rocconi 2004, in *LGGA*, *s.v. Heliodorus*; Montanari 2006, in *DNP*, *s.v. Apion*; Montanari 2006, in *DNP*, *s.v. Aristarchos* [4]; Valente 2012, in *LGGA*, *s.v. Hesychius*.

[6] The adjective μνήμων might have both an active or a causative value, thus someone who remembers things, mindful, or someone who makes others remember things, thus 'reminding'. See LSJ, *s.v.*

In the fifth century AD, the grammarian Orion,[7] quoted in the mid-ninth century AD by the author of the *Etymologicum Genuinum*,[8] defined Ἀληθές as something which does not sink into the oblivion of the justice, τὸ μὴ λήθῃ ὑποπῖπτον τοῦ δικαίου – or, if one takes the genitive as a partitive, 'that part of the just which does not sink into oblivion'. At this point, it is also interesting to underline that Lucian (*Quomodo Historia Conscribenda Sit* 39) had defined the impartial historian as δίκαιος συγγραφεύς, thus linking history and justice while highlighting the importance of truth in history.[9]

In the second half of the 11th century AD, a similar explanation of Ἀληθές, was given by the *Etymologicum Gudianum*, with the addition of a clear statement on its etymology, from 'forgetfulness' or from the verb 'conceal' (Ἀληθές· παρὰ τὸ λήθη· τὸ μὴ λήθῃ τοῦ δικαίου ὑποπίπτον[τος], and Ἀληθές· παρὰ τὸ λήθω· τὸ μὴ λήθῃ τοῦ δικαίου ὑποπίπτον). Finally, in the mid-12th century AD, the *Etymologicum Magnum* underlined that Ἀληθές was the opposite of lie, and re-stated the link with non-forgetfulness and/or non-concealment and justice (τὸ μὴ λήθῃ ὑποπίπτον τοῦ δικαίου· τὸ ἐναντίον τῷ ψεύδει).

Thus, far from being a statement defining what is truth, the etymology of the term as given by ancient lexicographers underlines what truth is not, namely something which is not concealed. Indeed, the adjective ἀληθής (and consequently the abstract noun ἀλήθεια) is presented as having been formed by the root of the verb λανθάνω, 'escape notice, remain unknown or hidden, to forget', preceded by the privative ἀ-. Hence,

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[7] In all probability, he was from Egyptian Thebes (*Suda* ω 188), and he worked as a teacher in Alexandria (Marinus, *Vita Procli*), in Cappadocia, and in Constantinople. Among his works, there was an etymological one entitled Περὶ ἐτυμολογίας, Περὶ ἐτυμολογιῶν, or Ἐτυμολογίαι. He mostly gleaned the material from Soranus, Herodianus, Heraclides Ponticus the Lesser, Philoxenus, and Helladius. See Ippolito 2008, in *LGGA*, *s.v. Orion*.

[8] According to the tradition, Photius wrote it. See Tosi 2006, in *DNP*, *s.v. Etymologica*.

[9] On the link between truth and justice, see, for example, Vourveris 1954: 179-213, who shows how history in Plato is the instrument to arouse the sense of truth and justice, and Hommel 1969: 159-186, who sees the correspondence of ἀλήθεια and δικαιοσύνη in poetry as derived from the field of justice.

ἀλήθεια is not only intended as truth, namely an account of true events, but also as something which is 'unveiled',[10] a narration made without hiding anything.

Modern scholars do not object to this etymology. Luther, explaining the *Privativbildung* (privative construction) of the Greek word for truth,[11] considers the notion of *Unverborgenheit* ("un-concealment") as fundamental, and stresses that ἀληθέα εἰπεῖν bears the meaning of 'report something, communicate, etc., so that nothing is hidden and covered'.[12] Jens, in his comparative study of the concept of truth in the *Iliad* and in the *Odyssey*, in Hesiod, in Lyric poets, in Parmenides, in historians, and in tragic poets, suggests *Unverborgenheit* as translation of ἀλήθεια.[13] Mette states that the term ἀληθείη in Homer is almost always associated with a verb of saying: 'to tell the truth so that the object of the statement remains "not hidden"'.[14]

Pokorny, while explaining the Indo-European *lā-* ('to be concealed, to be covered), links it to ἀληθής, λανθάνω, λήθω, λήθη, and the Latin *lateo*, which in turn is probably connected with the Old Indian *rātrī* (night).[15] Frisk thinks that ἀληθής might be a compound of privative ἀ- and *λῆθος or λήθη and, also, that a direct link with the Homeric λήθω is likely; thus, its real meaning would be 'who is not hidden; manifest'.[16]

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[10] This expression is a loan from the German philosopher Martin Heidegger, who discussed the philosophical value of truth and its etymology in *Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit* (1947), and *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1954), where an article entitled *Aletheia* is also present.

[11] He defines the *Grundbedeutung* ('basic meaning') of ἀληθείη underlining that "ἀλήθεια goes back to a nominal -s stem: concealment, behind obscurity (Verdecktheit zurück), whence we may interpret the privative construction as un-concealment" (Luther 1954: 35).

[12] "etwas berichten, mitteilen usw. so, dass nichts verborgen und verhüllt wird" (Luther 1935: 26).

[13] Jens 1951: 240-246.

[14] "die Wahrheit sagen, so dass der Gegenstand der Äußerung 'nicht verborgen' bleibt" (Mette 1955, vol. 1, *s.v.*).

[15] Pokorny 1959: 651 and 853.

[16] "Eigentliche Bedeutung somit 'wer nicht verborgen ist, offenbar'" (Frisk 1960, *s.v.*).

Chantraine gives a similar etymology.[17] Heitsch analyses the value of ἀλήθεια with regard to its negative composition (ἀ–λήθεια) again, underlines the polysemy of the term, and links it both to *Unverborgenheit* and *Unvergessenheit* (un-forgotten-ness).[18] Thus, truth is unveiled, discovered, but also 'not-forgotten', something that one should not leave out.

Bultmann believes that "etymologically ἀλήθεια means nonconcealment", it is something seen, disclosed, expressed, and not falsified. As such, it is 'the real state of affairs'. Moreover, he underlines that in Hellenism truth might be likened to "what is divine or eternal", and thus "*aletheia* comes into relation with *dynamis* (power) and then with the *gnosis* (knowledge) that it mediates and the *zoe* (life) and *phos* (light) that it gives. Similar connections are made with *pneuma* (spirit) and *nous* (mind) insofar as these concepts describe the divine sphere".[19]

Krischer sticks with the interpretation of truth as *Unverborgenheit*, but highlights the subjectivity of the person writing, as "ἀληθείη is the report that presents the things as the speaker has experienced, without leaving something unnoticed".[20] Starr tries to demonstrate that the nature and evolution of the concept of truth are connected with definite psychological habits, and holds that there is not a 'theoretical distinction between lie and error in the meaning of the word *pseudos*'.[21] Levet underlines that the verb λανθάνω means 'I go unnoticed; I am covered with a night veil', and the verb

[17] Chantraine 1968, *s.v.* λανθάνω.
[18] See Heitsch 1962: 24-33; cf. Id. 1963: 36-52, and Id. 1968: 23-36.
[19] Bultmann 1964: 238-239.
[20] "Die ἀληθείη ist der Bericht, der die Dinge darstellt, wie sie der Sprechende erlebt hat, ohne daß dabei etwas unbemerkt bleibt" (Krischer 1965: 167).
[21] Starr 1968: 350.

λανθάνομαι is translated 'I let myself be covered by a night veil; I suffer - in me - the invasion of a night veil, therefore I forget'.[22]

It is clear, then, that truth is linked with perception, as Mugler had already highlighted, when he showed that for the Greeks the vital and key element was the light and not the air, and that to die meant to stop seeing the light more than to stop breathing.[23]

2. The Philosophers

The theme of truth – and the problem of finding it – was one of the *leitmotive* of Greek philosophical thought before Polybius: the search for and the definition of ἀλήθεια are inseparably connected with the methodology and the possibility of reaching sure knowledge. Broadly speaking, as we shall see, truth seems to be what corresponds to the reality of facts and of the world, thus it also represents the antithesis of appearance. However, truth is not only linked to *the being* in itself, but also to the way of expressing this *being*, that is to say speech, and in this sense false speech and error are its opposite. Therefore, for philosophers, the problem of truth comes to assume a logical as well as an ontological value. Indeed, the speech which conforms to the functions of thought and to the ways of acting (= knowing) is true (logical aspect), and at the same time truth is a feature of reality and subsists by itself, regardless of thought (ontological aspect). Thus, truth is true speech which reproduces the reality of things.

The exponents of the Milesian school, when they were questioning about the ἀρχή, which was the prime origin of all things, were in a way seeking a sort of truth, φύσις, which might justify the multiplicity of reality. Nevertheless, Thales, Anaximenes,

[22] "Je me laisse en moi couvrir d'un voile de nuit; je subis - en moi – l'invasion d'un voile de nuit donc j'oublie" (Levet 1976: 14-15).
[23] Mugler 1960: 42-72.

and Anaximander were more interested in the origin of the entities than in their nature in itself, whereas the first in-depth analysis of the question comes with the philosophical discussion of Heraclitus and Parmenides.

Heraclitus uses the term λόγος to indicate the universal, necessary, one and only origin. The λόγος constitutes the *ratio essendi* of reality, it shapes its structure. The "sleepers", however, do not "see" the truth because they are linked to the particular and the perceivable. On the contrary, the philosopher is the one who knows the true reality, discovers its hidden soul – that which "always exists" – and the presence of truth even in the mutation of things.[24]

Though in a different philosophical context, Parmenides also seeks a logical and non-material origin, a common interpreter of reality, of thought, and of language.[25] In the proem of the philosophical poem *On the Nature* (Περὶ φύσεως), he imagines being transported – on a chariot pulled by fiery mares, accompanied by the daughters of the Sun – in the presence of a Goddess,[26] who reveals to him how to learn both the 'unshaken (ἀτρεμές) heart of the well-rounded (εὐκυκλέος) truth'[27] and the 'opinions of the mortals, in which there is no πίστις ἀληθής'.[28] Truth transcends the perceivable multiplicity from which the multiplicity of opinions derives, truth is perfect, without

[24] B 1 DK 12; B 17 DK 12; B 19 DK 12; B 34 DK 12. On the concept of truth in Heraclitus, see Luther 1958: 98-103; Pecchioli 1981: 79-108; O'Meara 2004: 11-17.
[25] On truth in Parmenides, see Luther 1958: 84-97; Thanassas 2005: 270-289, who underlines the complementarity of *aletheia* and *doxa*; Szaif 2006: 1-9.
[26] In the course of the poem, this goddess will be named as Δίκη (B 1 DK 18; B 8 DK 18), but also Θέμις (B 1 DK 18), Ἀληθείη (B 1 DK 18; B 2 DK 18), Ἀνάγκη (B 8 DK 18; B 10 DK 18), Μοῖρα (B 1 DK 18; B 8 DK 18), Πειθώ (B 1 DK 18; B 8 DK 18). See Untersteiner 1958: LXVIII-LXIX. On these lines, see also Bormann 1971: 56-70 and Gallop 1984: 6-7.
[27] On the problematic tradition of this verse, where diverse adjectives are transmitted by the codices in place of εὐκυκλέος (εὐπειθέος, εὐφεγγέος), but also of ἀτρεμές (ἀτρεκές), see Passa 2009: 51-57.
[28] B 1 DK 18.

contradictions or faults, it is what it is and what cannot-not-be.[29] But it reveals itself only to those who can grasp it: indeed, the philosopher has already the 'predisposition' to learn and apprehend the truth, as Parmenides makes clear when he states that the mares led him throughout a path which 'tells many things', which belongs to the *daimon*, and leads the man 'who knows' (εἰδότα) to many places.[30] On the contrary, there is no legitimate credibility in the opinions of the mere mortals,[31] because they are blind and deaf (κωφοὶ ὁμῶς τυφλοί), they do not know how to think (ἄκριτα), and, consequently, they confuse *being* and *non-being*.[32]

Parmenides walks along a road which eventually leads him to *physis*. His path starts from the perceptions of the mortals, from physical things, from places, and passes through *Dike*, up to *Aletheia*. Therefore, the final point, or even better destination of this journey, seems to be *physis* and *Aletheia* at the same time, thus the latter appears to be identified with *physis*. The nature of this element is 'being the whole', but this entirety must be reached through 'the partial' or through partial elements.[33]

Both the λόγος of Heraclitus and the *Being* of Parmenides cannot be grasped through the senses, but only by means of the intellect: they represent the metaphysical truth whose access is granted to a few wise men, and at the same time highlight the importance of the whole. The difference between Parmenides and Heraclitus is how to grasp this one and eternal truth: rejecting the multiplicity and looking at the one and the immutable that transcends the aforementioned multiplicity or seizing the one and the immutable by means of a path through multiplicity and becoming. The Parmenidean

[29] B 2 DK 18.
[30] B 1 DK 18: ἵπποι ταί με φέρουσιν, ὅσον τ' ἐπὶ θυμὸς ἱκάνοι, / πέμπον, ἐπεί μ' ἐς ὁδὸν βῆσαν πολύφημον ἄγουσαι / δαίμονες, ἣ κατὰ πάντ' ἄστη φέρει εἰδότα φῶτα. On this, see Untersteiner 1958: lx-lxiii and Eggers Lan 1960: 376-379.
[31] B 1 DK 18.
[32] B 6 DK 18.
[33] See Untersteiner 1958: lxxviii-lxxxii.

research gives the intellect the task of exposing the absoluteness of truth, but also of overcoming the world of appearance, the world of δόξα. The philosopher, therefore, should know and investigate everything, not only the truth but also the opinions. Thus, there are only two possibilities, being and non-being, the latter totally devalued of any credibility: it coincides with the domain of the senses, which are so uncertain and always subject to inaccuracy and error that make people believe that things 'are' and – at the same time – 'are not'.[34]

Before dealing with the more articulated reflections of Plato and Aristotle, a quick excursus on the thought of the Sophists and of Socrates appears necessary.

One of the most eminent representatives of ancient sophistry is Protagoras, who wrote the *Antilogiae* and *The Demolishing Speeches* (which was also cited with the title *On Truth*).[35] In his most famous statement, "man is the measure of all things",[36] he maintains that all things, namely 'the being' and 'the truth', are relative to man: from this it follows that all opinions are true, falling thus into subjectivism and gnoseological relativism.

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[34] Giovanni Reale (1982: 127-128) has proposed another interpretation: he argues that traditionally the thought of Parmenides has been regarded as stiffened in a position of absolute negativity towards the δόξα, though some fragments show that Parmenides, while denying any validity to the fallacious opinion of mortals, was nevertheless not at all opposed to granting some plausibility to the "appearances" when appropriately appreciated and, therefore, to recognizing some validity to the senses. Reale adds that, if so, one must conclude that Parmenides, besides the Truth and the fallacious Opinion of mortals, recognized the possibility and the lawfulness of a certain type of examination which aimed at trying to account for phenomena and appearances without going against the great principle, namely without having to admit that the being and the non-being coexist.

[35] On Protagoras, see Guthrie 1971: 63-68, 181-192, 234-235, 262-269; Natali 1992: 2-10; Untersteiner 2008: 1-114; and Whitmarsh 2015: 88-89.

[36] B 1 DK 74: πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἄνθρωπον εἶναι, τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἔστι, τῶν δὲ μὴ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν (Plato, *Theaet*. 151E-152A). For a discussion on the meaning of χρημάτων see Untersteiner 2008: 115-137.

Gorgias brings the statements of the Sophists to the extreme consequences. Indeed, though the purpose of the demonstration is disputed, it is still worthy to reflect upon his reasoning, when he declares that 'the being' is not (i.e. nothing exists), and even though it existed, it would not be thinkable, and even if it were thinkable, it would not be expressible (words are different from things). All what remains is to say: the only truth is the one of rhetoric, which produces persuasive speeches.[37]

As for Socrates, knowledge becomes essential to achieve good: virtue cannot be achieved unless one knows what it consists of. The search for truth is endless, "a life without inquiry is not worth living",[38] one must always be aware of "knowing that one does not know": Socrates only helps others to 'give birth' to the truth, in the awareness of not possessing it. The ἀλήθεια cannot be described nor can one philosophize on the truth through writing. Writings can communicate a doctrine, but not stimulate research. This principle is stated in a passage from Plato's *Phaedrus* (275a-b), from the words that the Egyptian king Thamus addresses to Theuth, the inventor of writing:

> σοφίας δὲ τοῖς μαθηταῖς δόξαν, οὐκ ἀλήθειαν πορίζεις· πολυήκοοι γάρ σοι γενόμενοι ἄνευ διδαχῆς πολυγνώμονες εἶναι δόξουσιν, ἀγνώμονες ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλῆθος ὄντες, καὶ χαλεποὶ συνεῖναι, δοξόσοφοι γεγονότες ἀντὶ σοφῶν.
>
> You provide students with the appearance of knowledge and not with truth: indeed, having become much-learned because of you without any teaching, they will believe themselves to be very wise, though being fundamentally ignorant, and they are troublesome in relation with [others], because they pretend to be wise instead of really being wise.

Therefore, through writing, it is not possible to communicate the truth to the students, because – having the possibility of receiving knowledge without the teacher's oral teaching – they will have the presumption to be wise, but they will not really know anything, since the proper way of learning is only what derives from the dialogue: it will,

[37] On Gorgias, see Guthrie 1971: 192-200, 269-274; Mazzara 1983: 130-140 and Id. 1997: 277-300; Untersteiner 2008: 159-306.
[38] Plato, *Apol.* 38 a: ὁ δὲ ἀνεξέταστος βίος οὐ βιωτὸς ἀνθρώπῳ.

therefore, be a pain to discuss with them, stuffed as they are of opinions instead of truth. Writing is compared by Socrates to painting: written words are like painted images that at first sight face us as if they are living, but then, if we ask them questions, they remain in a majestic silence.[39]

The Socratic maieutics is consecrated by Plato in the *Meno*, the Socratic dialogue where the philosopher knows, has learned the truth and guides even the most ignorant through research. The Socratic question "what is it?" initiates the search for something eternal, universal and immutable that, in Plato's philosophy, are the *Ideas*, the object of reason.[40] Plato – taking up the Parmenidean difference between the way of truth and that of opinion, and distinguishing two realities (the ideas and the perceivable realities) to which two gnoseological lines correspond (the famous "doctrine of the line"), the science proper (ἐπιστήμη) and the opinion (δόξα) – holds that knowing does not mean to start from the "non-being" (the non-being is not, and cannot be thought), but rather "to remember" what, with the "fall" into the body, had been forgotten. Man does not already possess the *whole* truth, the truth in its entirety (otherwise he would not seek it), but at the same time he does not *completely* ignore it (in this case research would not be possible): indeed, he carries it as a "memory", as the original heritage of the mind.[41]

One does not start either from the all-unfolded truth or from total ignorance, but from a sort of pre-knowledge from which we must 'Socratically pull out' the knowledge

[39] On Socrates, see for example Adorno 1970; Guthrie 1971; and Burnet 1994.
[40] On Plato, see for example Hall 1964: 66-71, who discusses the difference between 'right opinion' (Ὀρθή δόξα) and 'true knowledge' (εὐδοξία); Napolitano-Valditara 1991: 197-220, who underlines the importance of the priority the Socratic question is given in the *Meno*; Petrucci 2011: 229-262, who deals with the difference between opinion and knowledge; Wolfsdorf 2012: 57-75, who examines Plato's epistemology; El Murr 2013: 151-171, who analyses the path from opinion to true knowledge; Schwab 2015:1-36, who discusses the value of ἐπιστήμη as a synoptic grasp. More generally, see Meattini 1984; Melling 1987; Gaiser 1988; and Isnardi Parente 1996.
[41] On the concept of *anamnesis*, see González 2007: 275-301.

and the true truth. Knowledge is, therefore, a process, a journey that involves different stages (degrees) which elevate man from perception to absolute knowledge. The first degree of perceivable knowledge is imagination, εἰκασία (knowledge of images = shadows of reality); the second is belief, πίστις (knowledge of perceivable reality). The first degree of rational knowledge is the mediated knowledge of ideas, or mathematical knowledge, the discursive reason (διάνοια), which proceeds by reasoning of mathematical nature, in which the validity of the result depends on the premises;[42] the second degree is the immediate, intuitive, synoptic knowledge of ideas, intellection (νόησις) or intellect (νοῦς): it is the νόησις that grasps the truth immediately, without logical or argumentative passages, an unconditional, certain and absolute truth, represented by the world of ideas. The truth, therefore, is 'beyond' the sensible world, it is eternal, immutable, it does not change with the changing of things and events. The only tool capable of grasping it is philosophy, because only philosophy (the love for knowledge) captures the absolute and non-hypothetical principle, unlike mathematics, whose truths are not absolute because they are conditioned by the truth of the hypotheses. Plato describes this theoretical path in the allegory of the cave where he imagines slaves chained in an underground cave and forced to look only in front of themselves.[43]

The world of the cave represents the perceivable world; the shadows of the objects projected by the fire onto the wall correspond to the moment of imagination (εἰκασία). The men who are bound do not think that the shadows seen on the wall derive from real objects, absorbed as they are in the images they see in the background; this is also the moment which Plato calls of unconsciousness. When a prisoner manages to break

[42] On mathematical models and their being isomorphic with the physical world, see Mueller 1992: 170-199.
[43] Plato, *Rep.* 514a-517a. On the allegory, see, for example, Bormann 1961: 1-14; Lier 1971: 209-216; Sze 1977: 127-138; Tanner 1970: 81-91; Lizano-Ordovás 1995: 378-397; Brunschwig 2004: 145-177; Schofield 2007: 216-231; De Blasi 2008: 445-458.

free and can turn his head, at the beginning he is unable to see those objects whose shadows he had seen before; then he remains doubtful and considers the shadows he saw earlier truer than the real objects he can now see; a certain faith is needed to recognize that the objects that pass by over the wall are real and concrete; this is the moment of belief (πίστις). The third moment is the one concerning the Dianoetic thought, διάνοια: the mathematical entities in the allegory are represented by the images reflected in the water up to the stars and to the celestial bodies that can be contemplated at night. Finally, the last moment, that of intellection (νόησις): it is possible to directly contemplate the sun as it really is. Thus, for Plato, truth can only be reached gradually. No passage can be overlooked, otherwise we would find ourselves in the same condition as the slave who has just emerged from the cave: facing an intense glow, unaccustomed to the truth, we would not be able to investigate it perfectly.

In Aristotle, the first complete formulation of the doctrine of truth as a correspondence between thought and things seems to appear:[44]

> τὸ μὲν γὰρ λέγειν τὸ ὂν μὴ εἶναι ἢ τὸ μὴ ὂν εἶναι ψεῦδος, τὸ δὲ τὸ ὂν εἶναι καὶ τὸ μὴ ὂν μὴ εἶναι ἀληθές, ὥστε καὶ ὁ λέγων εἶναι ἢ μὴ ἀληθεύσει ἢ ψεύσεται.
>
> Indeed, it is false to say that the being is not or that the non-being is, whereas it is true to say that the being is and that the non-being is not, so that even he who affirms that a thing is or that a thing is not, will tell the truth or will lie (*Met.* 1011b).
>
> οὐ γάρ ἐστι τὸ ψεῦδος καὶ τὸ ἀληθὲς ἐν τοῖς πράγμασιν, οἷον τὸ μὲν ἀγαθὸν ἀληθὲς τὸ δὲ κακὸν εὐθὺς ψεῦδος, ἀλλ' ἐν διανοίᾳ, περὶ δὲ τὰ ἁπλᾶ καὶ τὰ τί ἐστιν οὐδ' ἐν διανοίᾳ.
>
> The false and the true do not exist in things, in the sense that the good is straightway true and the evil is immediately false, but they exist in thought, indeed for what concerns simple things and the things that are, [the true and the false] do not [find existence] even in thought (*Met.* 1027b).

[44] On truth in Aristotle, see, among the others: Block 1961: 1-9; Bos 1993: 425-454; Negro 1997: 335-357; Pritzl 1999: 177-201; Fiorentino 2001: 257-302; Weidemann 2005: 345-357; Long 2011; Crivelli 2015: 167-225; Fermani 2016: 59-71; Lucchetta 2016: 72-96.

Being-as-true does not concern reality as much as thought, and is realized in true judgment (while its opposite lies in false judgment).[45] Aristotle seems to believe that truth is present only in connection (if I say 'book', I say neither the true nor the false, but if I say 'this is a book', then I say the true or the false); elsewhere (*Met.* 1042a) he seems to admit that the true and the false are also found in simple entities: if one grasps and understands them, then they find themselves in the true, if they do not grasp their essence, they are in the false. This logical essence of Truth must coincide, even though it is the truth in thought, with the real being. The truth is such only if it is logical.

Truth and falsehood, therefore, concern only the assessment in which anything regarding something is affirmed or denied, and as such they do not exist in things, but in thought. The simple units and the essences, however, can be immediately perceived: to seize them is already to state their truth. In Aristotle's mind, true and false are not attributes of the being, but of thought and language. Only the apophantic (declarative) proposition is true or false: the true and the false do not concern either isolated terms or non-declarative propositions (such as prayers, exhortations, etc.).

According to Aristotle, the truth is attainable, but the difficulty lies in understanding it adequately. The possibilities of error reside in our intellect (which often fails to grasp the evidence of truth) and not in objective reality:

> Ἡ περὶ τῆς ἀληθείας θεωρία τῇ μὲν χαλεπὴ τῇ δὲ ῥᾳδία. σημεῖον δὲ τὸ μήτ'ἀξίως μηδένα δύνασθαι θιγεῖν αὐτῆς μήτε πάντας ἀποτυγχάνειν […] ὥστ' εἴπερ ἔοικεν ἔχειν καθάπερ τυγχάνομεν παροιμιαζόμενοι, τίς ἂν θύρας ἁμάρτοι; ταύτῃ μὲν ἂν εἴη ῥᾳδία, τὸ δ' ὅλον τι ἔχειν καὶ μέρος μὴ δύνασθαι δηλοῖ τὸ χαλεπὸν αὐτῆς.

[45] On this see Pearson 2005: 201-231.

> The study of truth is difficult on one level, easy on another. Proof of this is the fact that no one can apprehend it properly and, at the same time, no one is completely extraneous to it [...] to the point that, as it seems that truth is like that proverbial door which no one can miss, in this sense it can be easily reached; but the fact that we, although possessing an overall view of it, are not able to know it in its parts, clearly indicates how difficult it is (*Met.* 993a-b).

Truth, therefore, may seem easily reachable, because everyone can say something right around it, but it is difficult to understand it properly. The cause of this difficulty is not to be found in objective reality, but in our intellect that fails to grasp the evidence:

> ὥσπερ γὰρ τὰ τῶν νυκτερίδων ὄμματα πρὸς τὸ φέγγος ἔχει τὸ μεθ'ἡμέραν, οὕτω καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας ψυχῆς ὁ νοῦς πρὸς τὰ τῇ φύσει φανερώτατα πάντων.
>
> Indeed, just as the eyes of the bats behave in front of the light of day, so the intellectual part of our soul behaves in front of the things which, by nature, are of the highest evidence (*Met.* 993b).

Knowledge of the truth is just a theoretical activity which has no connection to the practical activity in which things are considered only with reference to specific purposes and circumstances. Philosophy is the science of truth; it questions itself on the causes, and it identifies the eternal principles, supremely true, since it is the cause of the existence of all other things.

According to Aristotle, therefore, it cannot be said that terms or concepts taken by themselves – such as 'man', 'he runs', 'he wins' – are either true or false, since true or false is just some sort of combination or synthesis of them. This means that truth or falsehood are born only with the proposition or with the assessment. Hence, the two fundamental theorems of the Stagirite concerning the truth are:

1) truth is *in* thought or discourse, not in the being or in things (*Met.* 1027b);
2) the *measure* of truth is the being or the thing, not thought or discourse. In fact, one thing is not white because one truthfully maintains that it is such; but it is truthfully asserted that it is such, because it is really white (*Met.* 1051b).

In other words, according to Aristotle's line of reasoning, the truth consists in joining what is really joined and in separating what is really disjointed; falsehood consists in joining what is not really conjoined and in separating what is not really separated.

3. The Historians

3.1: Polybius' predecessors

The concept and the value of truth played a role of capital importance when, in the Hellenistic age, the classification of the genre of historiography was carried out for the first time. The first divisions were, in fact, defined not by genre but by considering the historiographical content. The grammarians, drawing their concepts from the already existing historical works, distinguished history in relation to the degrees of truth that the historical accounts expressed.

Asclepiades from Myrlea (later Apamea) in Bithynia, who lived between the 2nd and 1st century BC,[46] in the work entitled Περὶ γραμματικῆς, divided the historical material into three parts, *true history* (which he explained as history concerned with action), *false history* (which he explained as history regarding fictions and myths), and *history as true* (which he explained as the history of comedy and mimes).[47] Mario Pani rightly reflects that the sphere of likelihood (and therefore of *mimesis*) is not considered proper history, and only truth is connected to historiography, since the grammarians clearly distinguished truth from invention.[48]

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[46] See Pagani 2015, in *LGGA*, *s.v. Asclepiades* [2].

[47] Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.* 1.252: Ἀσκληπιάδης δὲ ἐν τῷ Περὶ γραμματικῆς τρία φήσας εἶναι τὰ πρῶτα τῆς γραμματικῆς μέρη, [ἀνάγνωσιν ἐντριβῆ καὶ κατὰ προσῳδίαν,] τεχνικὸν ἱστορικὸν γραμματικόν, ὅπερ ἀμφοτέρων ἐφάπτεται, φημὶ δὲ τοῦ ἱστορικοῦ καὶ τοῦ τεχνικοῦ, τριχῇ ὑποδιαιρεῖται τὸ ἱστορικόν· τῆς γὰρ ἱστορίας τὴν μέν τινα ἀληθῆ εἶναί φησι τὴν δὲ ψευδῆ τὴν δὲ ὡς ἀληθῆ, καὶ ἀληθῆ μὲν τὴν πρακτικήν, ψευδῆ δὲ τὴν περὶ πλάσματα καὶ μύθους, ὡς ἀληθῆ δὲ οἷά ἐστιν ἡ κωμῳδία καὶ οἱ μῖμοι.

[48] Pani 2001: 25 ("Il campo del verosimile e quindi della μίμησις non è quello considerato proprio della vera storia: l'idea di verità collegata alla storiografia è ben profonda nella

The division of Asclepiades is handed down by Sextus Empiricus (2nd/3rd century CE) who resumes it by dividing the historical works between ἱστορία, μῦθος, and πλάσμα: ἱστορία is the history proper, the exposition of true things and of what happened, such as the fact that Alexander died poisoned by traitors in Babylon; πλάσμα is the narration of events that did not happen but that are said to be similar to those really happened, such as hypothetical situations in comedies and mimes; μῦθος is the exposition of events that never happened and are false.[49]

The reference to history's extraneousness to *mimesis* recalls the assessment Aristotle gave regarding history, and transfers the debate onto the historian's work, onto the problem of history, and onto its 'presumed' incontestable truth as far as Aristotle is concerned:

> Φανερὸν δὲ ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων καὶ ὅτι οὐ τὸ τὰ γενόμενα λέγειν, τοῦτο ποιητοῦ ἔργον ἐστίν, ἀλλ' οἷα ἂν γένοιτο καὶ τὰ δυνατὰ κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον. ὁ γὰρ ἱστορικὸς καὶ ὁ ποιητὴς οὐ τῷ ἢ ἔμμετρα λέγειν ἢ ἄμετρα διαφέρουσιν (εἴη γὰρ ἂν τὰ Ἡροδότου εἰς μέτρα τεθῆναι καὶ οὐδὲν ἧττον ἂν εἴη ἱστορία τις μετὰ μέτρου ἢ ἄνευ μέτρων)· ἀλλὰ τούτῳ διαφέρει, τῷ τὸν μὲν τὰ γενόμενα λέγειν, τὸν δὲ οἷα ἂν γένοιτο. διὸ καὶ φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον ποίησις ἱστορίας ἐστίν· ἡ μὲν γὰρ ποίησις μᾶλλον τὰ καθόλου, ἡ δ' ἱστορία τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον λέγει. ἔστιν δὲ καθόλου μέν, τῷ ποίῳ τὰ ποῖα ἄττα συμβαίνει λέγειν ἢ πράττειν κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον, οὗ στοχάζεται ἡ ποίησις ὀνόματα ἐπιτιθεμένη· τὸ δὲ καθ' ἕκαστον, τί Ἀλκιβιάδης ἔπραξεν ἢ τί ἔπαθεν.

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coscienza antica, anche nelle trattazioni dei grammatici. […] Con la loro stessa classificazione i grammatici evidentemente postulavano criteri con cui distinguere la verità e l'invenzione").

[49] Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.* 1.263-265: Πρὸς τούτοις ἐπεὶ τῶν ἱστορουμένων τὸ μέν ἐστιν ἱστορία τὸ δὲ μῦθος τὸ δὲ πλάσμα, ὧν ἡ μὲν ἱστορία ἀληθῶν τινῶν ἐστι καὶ γεγονότων ἔκθεσις, ὡς ὅτι Ἀλέξανδρος ἐν Βαβυλῶνι δι' ἐπιβούλων φαρμακευθεὶς ἐτελεύτα, πλάσμα δὲ πραγμάτων μὴ γενομένων μὲν ὁμοίως δὲ τοῖς γενομένοις λεγομένων, ὡς αἱ κωμικαὶ ὑποθέσεις καὶ οἱ μῖμοι, μῦθος δὲ πραγμάτων ἀγενήτων καὶ ψευδῶν ἔκθεσις, ὡς ὅτι τὸ μὲν τῶν φαλαγγίων καὶ ὄφεων γένος Τιτήνων ἐνέπουσιν ἀφ' αἵματος ἐζωγονῆσθαι, τὸν δὲ Πήγασον λαιμοτομηθείσης τῆς Γοργόνος ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἐκθορεῖν, καὶ οἱ μὲν Διομήδους ἑταῖροι εἰς θαλασσίους μετέβαλον ὄρνις, ὁ δὲ Ὀδυσσεὺς εἰς ἵππον, ἡ δὲ Ἑκάβη εἰς κύνα, - τοιαύτης δὲ οὔσης <τῆς> τῶν ἱστοριῶν διαφορᾶς, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἔστι τέχνη τις περὶ τὰ ψευδῆ καὶ ἀνύπαρκτα, ψευδῆ δέ ἐστι καὶ ἀνύπαρκτα τὰ περὶ τοὺς μύθους καὶ τὰ πλάσματα, περὶ ἃ μάλιστα τοῦ ἱστορικοῦ μέρους ἡ γραμματικὴ καταγίνεται, οὐκ ἂν εἴη τις τέχνη περὶ τὸ ἱστορικὸν μέρος <τῆς> γραμματικῆς.

> Therefore, from what has been said it is clear that it is not the poet's task to tell the things that really happened, but his task is to narrate what could happen, the possible events according to likelihood or necessity. Indeed, the historian and the poet do not differ only in the fact that one writes in verse, the other in prose (indeed, if one transfers the work of Herodotus into verse, nonetheless it would still be a historical work whether written in verse or in prose); on the contrary, they differ in this, in the fact that one tells the events that really happened, the other those that could happen. For this reason, poetry is more philosophical and more serious than history: for poetry rather has as its object the general, whereas history narrates the particular. The general, therefore, consists in letting a person with certain characteristics say or do certain things that conform to likelihood or necessity, to which poetry aims when attributes names to the characters; the particular, instead, consists in what Alcibiades has done or suffered (*Poet.* 1451a-b).

From this passage the apparent downgrading of history with respect to poetry emerges: apparent because Aristotle, as Walbank states, emphasizes that poetry puts the accent ("more concerned") on the universal, history on the particular.[50] But as far as the investigation on historiographical truth is concerned, it is important to analyse the passage from the point of view of *mimesis* and of the extraneousness of history to this category of poetry. One has to first clarify what the philosopher means by *mimesis*: it is generally translated as 'imitation', but Gomme renders it as 'representation',[51] and Von Fritz seems to deepen the concept when he asserts that *mimesis* can be defined "as a concentrated representation" of what in real life "is much less concentrated". The "universality of the tragedy", therefore, appears to consist in representing what in real life is an "extreme possibility".[52] Walbank, instead, reflects on the fact that if *mimesis* might be intended as a *concentrated representation*, nevertheless it is not a concentrated representation of extreme events: "in short, the special tragic form of *mimesis* consists of putting people on the stage".[53]

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[50] Walbank 1960: 217.
[51] Gomme 1954: 53-63.
[52] Von Fritz 1958: 120-130. On Aristotelian *mimesis*, see also Halliwell 2002: 151-206.
[53] Walbank 1960: 219.

Secondly, it is important to analyse Aristotle's point of view. He intends to emphasize that the historian has the duty to faithfully report the events that actually happened and, therefore, to remain in the field of the particular; on the other hand, the poet, by analysing the potential reality, loads the events with a universal meaning in view of an ethics which is generally valuable. Poetry gives an account of events in accord with verisimilitude to provide readers with a general teaching, valid for all, whereas from history, which is an account of the *particular*, namely an account of a particular event, one might also draw teachings, but such teachings might be defined as 'circumscribed' to that particular event and not to the nature of men in general.

The importance of the Aristotelian remarks in relation with the historians lies in the fact that he makes explicit what the historians were trying to achieve, namely to draw a demarcation line between poetry (the account of the probable) and history (the account of the reality). In the light of these remarks, it is not surprising, then, that the first criterion one finds declared by a Greek historian is the search for truth. The tendency towards truth seems to have been inaugurated by Hecataeus of Miletus (*FGrHist* 1 F1a), who, in the preamble to his *Genealogies*, wrote:

> Ἑκαταῖος Μιλήσιος ὧδε μυθεῖται· τάδε γράφω, ὥς μοι δοκεῖ ἀληθέα εἶναι· οἱ γὰρ Ἑλλήνων λόγοι πολλοί τε καὶ γελοῖοι, ὡς ἐμοὶ φαίνονται, εἰσίν.
>
> Hecataeus the Milesian thus speaks: I write these things, as they seem to me to be true; indeed, the accounts of the Greeks are many and ridiculous, as they appear to me.

Thus, the need to write accounts according to truth is claimed in a programmatic way. Hecataeus takes a very critical attitude towards his predecessors who were not proper

historians.[54] By criticising "the *whole* of Greek mythic tradition",[55] Hecataeus is aware that he is walking along a new path, taking on a new genre which distances itself from the tradition written in verse, recited from memory by the bards. However, in this passage, the criterion of truth is not yet completely impartial, as it is subject to the subjectivity of the writer. Hecataeus is aware that he is not able to reach a complete and totally truthful view of the past, but still intends to give such accounts some order and to subject them to a critical examination by inserting them into a historical account (as opposed to poetry). One has to give Hecataeus credit for his awareness of partiality and subjectivity, when he declares that he wants to narrate the truth ὥς μοι δοκεῖ.[56]

Canfora analyses this statement from another point of view: he asserts that 'so Hecataeus speaks' followed by the 'as it seems to me' has a clear polemical meaning and is a sort of freeing, given that it contrasts with the great historical epigraphs of the kings in the name of subjectivity and multiplicity of judgment.[57] Canfora adds that the formula 'according to what seems to me' is the slogan of the individual released from the chains

[54] Jacoby *FGrHist* 1 F 1 *Kommentar* refers to Hesiod's *Theogony* 24-28, where the Muses guarantee the truth if they wish. For the hypothesis that Hecataeus was indeed referring to Hesiod, see also Pearson 1939: 98; Bertelli 2001: 81-82; and Fowler 2001: 101-103. Moreover, Bertelli 2001: 80-81 sees a deliberate reference to Homer in the phrase ὧδε μυθεῖται "whose *only* precedent is the Homeric ὣδε δὲ μυθέομαι" (80). Corcella 1996: 295-301 acutely observes that the third-person introductory formula Ἑκαταῖος Μιλήσιος ὧδε μυθεῖται, followed by the first-person statement τάδε γράφω, can be traced back to the Persian sphere, since it was typical of the beginning of a public proclamation in a public assembly. He adds that Hecataeus, being a subject of the Persian empire, was indeed familiar with the official forms of communication in the Achaemenid world which he recalled (Corcella 1996: 300: "suddito dell'impero persiano, egli doveva infatti aver familiarità con le forme di comunicazione ufficiale del mondo achemenide e le riprende").

[55] Bertelli 2001: 81.

[56] Cf. Bertelli 2001: 81, who observes that Hecataeus replaces "the 'objectivity' of oral tradition, symbolized by the Muses" with "the personal judgement *of the author* thereby being the only truth standard".

[57] Canfora 1979: 351-419.

of tradition and authority, which is basically the historical truth in Eastern monarchies, where the power is also history and history is only what the king says.[58]

Anyway, whether this was a polemical statement against the Persian monarchy, as Canfora states, or merely implies familiarity with the Persian inscriptions, as underlined by Corcella,[59] the importance of this passage does indeed lie on the claim for historical truth, which is however subjective or, better, subject to the historian.

If for Hecataeus it is the historian who seems to be the instrument through which one can grasp truth, in Herodotus' mind sight and observation are essential instruments to reach truth: *opsis* is crucial when one describes places, but it is also a tool to investigate the past and the future.[60] As Corcella has underlined, '*opsis* allows observation of pieces of evidence that hand down a narrative of the past to the time of Herodotus (*es eme*) and thus allow the *logoi* to be verified'.[61] This might also be the reason why Herodotus presents his work as the display of his own research (ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις),[62] although 'an explicit claim to be writing the truth or truthfully' is absent in Herodotus as well as in Thucydides and Xenophon, as Marincola observes:[63]

> Ἡροδότου Ἁλικαρνησσέος ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις ἥδε, ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεᾶ γένηται, τά τε ἄλλα καὶ <δὴ καὶ> δι' ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι.

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[58] Canfora 1989: 235: "«Secondo quel che pare a me» è la parola d'ordine dell'individuo svincolato dalle catene della tradizione e dell'autorità: autorità che, nelle monarchie orientali, si estende anche alla 'verità storica'. Lì il potere è anche formalmente l'unico 'storico': «Così parla Dario» nella famosa iscrizione di Bisutun, che narra le imprese di Dario. [...] Di conseguenza, storia è solo ciò che Dario dice".
[59] Corcella 1996: 300.
[60] On this topic, see Corcella 2013: 44-77, and footnote 3 for the relevant bibliography.
[61] Corcella 2013: 47.
[62] On this, see Bakker 2002: 3-32.
[63] Marincola 2004: 14-17.

> This is the exposition of the research results of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, so that neither the events performed by men fall into oblivion, nor the deeds,[64] both great and marvellous, those shown by Greeks and those shown by barbarians, are left without renown, and all the other things, and the reason why they waged war against each other.

More than truth in itself, then, the importance of Herodotus lies in his 'generosity', in his doing research (ἱστορίης) and making it available to others (ἀπόδεξις). The term ἀπόδεξις, though, does not yet possess the methodological value which will assume in Polybius' work, but rather the pure meaning of 'exposition': as Pédech underlines, Herodotus' critique, interpretation, and discussions on contrasting points cannot be regarded as the first signs of a 'demonstrative history'.[65] Through the employment of this term, therefore, Herodotus means not only that his *Histories* are the result of his research, but also that from time to time he will account for the examination of such research, and that this examination is especially expressed through the mention and the comparison of different sources, whether or not accompanied by the criticism of the historian.[66] This historiographical methodology denotes the objectivity and the great narrative honesty of Herodotus, who takes into due account the principle of *audiatur et altera pars*.

On the other hand, Thucydides, apart from the *Archaeology* and his methodological chapter, no longer returns to an explanation of his historiographical method. Unlike Herodotus, Thucydides does not follow the principle of *relata refero*, but he chooses the version of the events which, according to his critical assessment, corresponds to the truth. Such methodology, however, has its limitation in the fact that the reader cannot personally examine the various versions.

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[64] On the meaning of *erga* in Herodotus, see Monti-Skufca 2020, *s.v.*
[65] Pédech 1964: 47.
[66] Vercruysse 1990: 17. On this theme, see also Cartledge-Greenwood 2002: 351-371; and Ellis 2017: 104-129.

Worthy of note are the statements in 1.20.3 and 22.2-3 of the *Peloponnesian War*. These passages are part of the introduction which is generally called *Archaeology*, that is 'archaic history', in which Thucydides retraces all Greek history from the first appearance of the nomadic populations up to the eve of the conflict, focusing his account on the growth of material forces and concluding that the current war is the most important of all those that occurred in the past:

> [20.3] οὕτως ἀταλαίπωρος τοῖς πολλοῖς ἡ ζήτησις τῆς ἀληθείας, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἑτοῖμα μᾶλλον τρέπονται. […] [22.2] τὰ δ'ἔργα τῶν πραχθέντων ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ παρατυχόντος πυνθανόμενος ἠξίωσα γράφειν, οὐδ' ὡς ἐμοὶ ἐδόκει, ἀλλ' οἷς τε αὐτὸς παρῆν καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσον δυνατὸν ἀκριβείᾳ περὶ ἑκάστου ἐπεξελθών. [3] ἐπιπόνως δὲ ηὑρίσκετο, διότι οἱ παρόντες τοῖς ἔργοις ἑκάστοις οὐ ταὐτὰ περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἔλεγον, ἀλλ' ὡς ἑκατέρων τις εὐνοίας ἢ μνήμης ἔχοι.
>
> [20.3] Here is how most people take the search for the truth lightly and prefer to go to the first accessible information. […] [22.2] As for the facts – which constitute the other category of events relative to the war – I did not think I had to write them by drawing on the first I came across, nor as it seemed to me, but that I had to examine as closely as possible both the events at which I was present and those I learned about from others. [3] Finding the facts was toilsome, since those who were present at each event did not give the same version of the same events, but one was in favour of one of the two parties or had memory of one of the two parties.

One, therefore, learns that the search for truth is difficult and one cannot proceed without effort (ἀταλαίπωρος). Thucydides repeatedly states that his historical reconstruction is based on clues (τεκμηρίων and σημείων in 1.21.1), but, as Canfora states, the key word in this context is not clues, but rather the verb 'to find'.[67] Firstly, according to Canfora, it is significant that the verb εὑρίσκω appears as the conclusion of a path defined with a term that indicates its inevitable assumption, that is ζήτησις: in this way the two terms connect each other to indicate the cognitive process of historical research.[68] Secondly, the verb 'to find' is important because Thucydides thus poses the problem of historical

[67] Canfora 1981: 211-220.
[68] Canfora 1977a: 455-461.

knowledge, of 'historical comprehension':[69] he distinguishes between the fact intended in itself and its historical understanding; the fact can be *found* and therefore comprehended, whereas the fact in itself is "unknowable or not fully knowable, or rather not the bearer of knowledge".[70] Canfora continues and states that it is precisely for this reason that Thucydides does not employ the Herodotean word ἱστορέω, which would indicate the *blind* search for truth, "research which does not find facts but accumulates them".[71]

The importance of Thucydides' step consists in the fact that he is the first to identify the issue of how to find truth, and in this way the search for historical truth assumes a logical value. Furthermore, he is aware of the presence of several cognitive levels delineated by the antithesis between opinion and truth: "there is already a mature reflection on the distance between 'narrator' and historical facts [...], on the categories of 'thinking' history".[72] Thucydides, therefore, selects the historical facts based on his own objectivity, since it is difficult to find the truth given that there are different versions of the same event. It is even more complicated to narrate the remote past, as there are no particularly reliable versions which might also comply with truth, but only fuzzy memories.

Xenophon is even more sparing with methodological passages in his writings, and none of them discusses the role of truth in history.

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[69] Canfora 1981: 213.
[70] Canfora 1981: 214: "inconoscibile o non compiutamente conoscibile, o meglio non portatore di conoscenza, è il fatto in sé e per sé: *individuum est ineffabile*".
[71] Canfora 1981: 214.
[72] Canfora 1989: 269: "vi è già una riflessione matura sulla distanza tra 'io narrante' e fatti storici […], sulle categorie del 'pensare' la storia".

Ephorus, a student of Isocrates (*FGrHist* 70 T 1) and a contemporary of Theopompus (*FGrHist* 70 T 3),[73] returns to the difficulty of narrating past events emphasizing the importance of truth and of the completeness of information:

> περὶ μὲν γὰρ τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς γεγενημένων *φησί* τοὺς ἀκριβέστατα λέγοντας πιστοτάτους ἡγούμεθα, περὶ δὲ τῶν παλαιῶν τοὺς οὕτω διεξιόντας ἀπιθανωτάτους εἶναι νομίζομεν, ὑπολαμβάνοντες οὔτε τὰς πράξεις ἁπάσας οὔτε τῶν λόγων τοὺς πλείστους εἰκὸς εἶναι μνημονεύεσθαι διὰ τοσούτων.
>
> As far as contemporary events are concerned, *he says*, we consider those who report them with the greatest accuracy the most reliable writers, while as for the facts dating back to a remote past, we deem that the less reliable writers are precisely those who report them in great detail, because we assume that neither all of the events nor the majority of the speeches are likely to be remembered to such an extent[74] (*FGrHist* 70 F 9).

In the preamble to the *Histories*, as one infers from the lexicographer Harpocration who quotes the passage to explain the lemma ἀρχαίως,[75] Ephorus asserts that the legends of the past were not a matter of history because their 'truths' were not verifiable or ascertainable.

Bruno Sunseri underlines the importance of Harpocration quoting this fragment under the lemma ἀρχαίως, as an explanation to a passage from the *Panegyric* of Isocrates and sees it as an alternative interpretation of Ephorus (Ἔφορος δέ) to the one of those

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[73] For a discussion on the chronology and the information about Ephorus' life, see Bruno Sunseri 1997: 143-167 and, especially, Parmeggiani 2011: 9-40.

[74] Parmeggiani 2011: 99, gives two possible translations for διὰ τοσούτων, "after so much time had passed" ("dopo tanto tempo trascorso") and "in such a detailed way" ("in modo così dettagliato").

[75] Harpocration, *Lexicon on Ten Attic Orators*: ἀρχαίως· Ἰσοκράτης Πανηγυρικῶι «τά τε παλαιὰ καινῶς διελθεῖν καὶ περὶ τῶν νεωστὶ γενομένων ἀρχαίως εἰπεῖν». ἔνιοι μέν φασι σημαίνειν ἀρχαιοτρόπως, τουτέστιν ἀρχαιοτέροις ὀνόμασι χρῆσθαι. Ἔφορος δ' ἐν τῆι ᾱ τῶν Ἱστοριῶν τρόπον τινὰ ἐξηγήσατο, <ἐν ᾧι> φησὶ περὶ τῶν ἀρχαίων πραγμάτων τοὺς νεωτέρους διεξέρχεσθαι (ἀρχαίως: Isocrates in the *Panegyricus:* 'Ancient things are told as if they had happened recently, and with regards to things that have just happened, they are discussed as if they had happened in ancient times'. Some say that it means in an antiquated manner, i.e. to use obsolete words. But Ephorus in Book 1 of his *Histories* explained the term in a certain way, where he speaks of more recent writers who have narrated ancient events in detail).

who believed that Isocrates referred to style.[76] According to her, the problem posed by Isocrates concerned the reliability of the narrative regarding the past or rather the possibility that a narrative of the past could be trusted, and according to Ephorus, it was the precision of the narration that decided the value of the account.[77] Thus, Ephorus is aware of the difficulties of reconstructing the past. Canfora claims that Ephorus has treasured the Thucydidean technique, since it is Thucydides who states that it is difficult to "find the facts for the long time spent" (1.22).[78] However, while Thucydides is aware of not being able to establish a correct relationship with the past and, therefore, he dissociates himself considering the myth as "an hint of something that has happened but that he is unable to apprehend",[79] Ephorus with "a substantial misunderstanding of the sense of the Thucydidean *archaeology*"[80] does not take into account Thucydides' *discovery* according to which the myth is "history in its own way", but "dilates the *spatium historicum*" when he begins his history with the return of the Heraclids, thus transforming the myth into history.[81]

Nevertheless, one has to admit that the importance of Ephorus lies in recognizing that many historians expanded their subject with accounts devoid of truth, and this had happened above all for events of the remote past, for which complete and precise knowledge was not possible.

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[76] Bruno Sunseri 1997: 143-167.
[77] Bruno Sunseri 1997: 156: "Il problema che Isocrate si era posto e che era abbastanza presente ad Eforo non era formale ma sostanziale e riguardava l'attendibilità della narrazione inerente il passato o meglio la possibilità che una narrazione del passato potesse essere attendibile. Non era dunque il criterio dello stile, secondo Eforo, a decidere del valore della ἱστορία, ma la sua precisione".
[78] Canfora 1991: 5-19. See also Parmeggiani 2011: 110-111.
[79] Bruno Sunseri 1997: 157: "indizio di qualcosa che c'è stato ma che non riesce a conoscere".
[80] Canfora 1991: 7: "con un sostanziale fraintendimento del senso dell'*archaiologia* tucididea".
[81] Canfora 1991: 7-8. See *contra* Luraghi 2014: 133-151.

3.2: Polybius the 'Priest' of Truth

Polybius' work is a mine of methodological observations. He addresses the problem of the sincerity of historical information both because he himself is a historian, and because according to him the truth is a distinctive and essential characteristic of history. According to Polybius, history is not useful if it is not true. Indeed, in book 13, Polybius appears rather sure about the significance of ἀλήθεια and its weight, linking a superlative adjective to it. The passage is not specifically methodological, since he is commenting on an event, but the importance given to the truth here and the terms in which Polybius describes it let one understand that this statement might be extended to a historiographical setting.

In this fairly fragmentary part of the *Histories*, Polybius is writing about Philip's treachery towards the Rhodians: since they waged war against the Cretans, over whom Philip was προστάτης,[82] the Macedonian king decided to punish them; he, then, supported the Cretans and sent a certain Heracleides from Tarentum to Rhodes in order to deceive them and try to destroy their fleet.[83] Thus, Polybius provides this reflection on truth (13.5.4-6):

> [4] Καί μοι δοκεῖ μεγίστην θεὸν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἡ φύσις ἀποδεῖξαι τὴν ἀλήθειαν καὶ μεγίστην αὐτῇ προσθεῖναι δύναμιν. [5] πάντων γοῦν αὐτὴν καταγωνιζομένων, ἐνίοτε καὶ πασῶν τῶν πιθανοτήτων μετὰ τοῦ ψεύδους ταττομένων, οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως αὐτὴ δι'αὑτῆς εἰς τὰς ψυχὰς εἰσδύεται τῶν ἀνθρώπων, [6] καὶ ποτὲ μὲν παραχρῆμα δείκνυσι τὴν αὑτῆς δύναμιν, ποτὲ δὲ καὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἐπισκοτισθεῖσα, τέλος αὐτὴ δι'ἑαυτῆς ἐπικρατεῖ καὶ καταγωνίζεται τὸ ψεῦδος, ὡς συνέβη γενέσθαι περὶ τὸν Ἡρακλείδην τὸν παρὰ τοῦ Φιλίππου τοῦ βασιλέως εἰς Ῥόδον ἀφικόμενον.[84]

[82] 7.11.9.
[83] On this episode and on Heracleides, see Walbank 1967: 415-419.
[84] This last sentence, from ὡς συνέβη γενέσθαι, is present only in the *Codex Vaticanum*. See Mai-Lucht 1830: 38.

> [4] But, it seems to me that nature has demonstrated that truth is the greatest deity to men and that it [nature] has endowed it with the greatest power. [5] Indeed, even when everybody fights against the truth and sometimes all the probabilities are lined up on the side of lies, I do not know how the truth seeps into the minds of men by itself, [6] and at one time it immediately shows its power, at another time, after having remained in the shade for a long time, it finally prevails with its own strength and defeats the lie, as happened in the case of Heracleides, to one who was sent to Rhodes by the king Philip.

Truth is compared to a god and, more precisely, nature itself has demonstrated that it is the greatest divinity[85] and has given it the greatest δύναμις. The first clue that Polybius is also speaking in historiographical terms is the use of the verb ἀποδείκνυμι, which immediately recalls his apodeictic way of writing history.[86] Furthermore, the remark of a later author, Diodorus (1.2.2), seems to confirm this hypothesis, since he described history as the 'priestess of truth' (τὴν προφῆτιν τῆς ἀληθείας ἱστορίαν),[87] perhaps alluding to the Polybian passage.[88]

The open declaration that truth is the greatest god seems an affront to the sovereign of the gods, Zeus – especially with Polybius using the word θεός to define it, a word which can be both feminine and masculine (with the feminine adjective μεγίστην justified by the gender of ἀλήθεια) – who, as such, should be the greatest god:[89] in fact,

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[85] To my knowledge, there are no precedents for such an abstraction. Also, the verb εἰσδύνω/εἰσδύω is an action that could be ascribed to a deity.

[86] On this particular style and method, see Pédech 1964: 43-53; Petzold 1969: 3-20; and Musti 2010: 203-210.

[87] See Marincola 2004: 7; 14.

[88] On Diodorus 'influenced' by Polybius, see Bianchetti 2005: 127-153; Achilli 2012: 1-20; and Rood 2004:158.

[89] Even the term ἐπισκοτισθεῖσα, a participle referred to the truth which sometimes shows its power immediately, sometimes after it has remained in obscurity for a long time, and which in the form of ἐπισκοτίζω, appears in Polybius only in this passage (the variant ἐπισκοτέω appears ten other times: 1.48.8; 2.39.12; 3.31.7; 9.23.5; 9.37.10; 12.7.1; 12.15.10; 12.25d.7; 16.10.4; 24.4.1. See Mauersberger 2003, 1.2, *s.v.*), seems to recall Zeus: inasmuch as the denominative verb (from σκότος) shares its root with Σκοτίτας, an epithet of the Zeus venerated in a Laconian district bearing the same name, which Polybius knew and mentioned (16.37.3-4): ἐν τοῖς περὶ τὸν Σκοτίταν προσαγορευομένοις τόποις, ὅς ἐστι μεταξὺ τῆς Τεγέας καὶ τῆς Λακεδαίμονος. Pausanias, 3.10.6, trying to explain the name of the district, writes that it is linked with the presence there of the sanctuary of Zeus Scotitas. Chantraine, *s.v.* σκότος, gives three main reasons for this

by comparing truth to the greatest god for human beings, Polybius was indirectly stating that Zeus was not as great as they thought.[90] In doing so, the historian is challenging him and he is being tainted with the crime of lese-majesty, acting like Prometheus who had disputed Zeus.

In this light, the verb ἐπικρατεῖ in the phrase τέλος αὐτὴ δι'ἑαυτῆς ἐπικρατεῖ καὶ καταγωνίζεται τὸ ψεῦδος, especially when closely following the evocative ἐπισκοτισθεῖσα,[91] might probably allude to the essence of Zeus' power: he is the lord of the gods and he is endowed with power. In Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, for example, Kratos, together with Bia[92] and Hephaestus, is sent by Zeus to chain Prometheus.[93] Kratos and Bia appear as attendants of Zeus, thus, one might imagine that the link Zeus/Kratos was well know at the time.[94] In the case of the Polybian passage, truth does not appear to be a tyrant, like the Zeus in the *Prometheus Bound*: so, one would assume that Polybius is re-elaborating this notion and the link godlike nature/truth on the basis of a more

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epithet: Zeus seen as the bringer of dark clouds, or from the shady oak-forest surrounding the shrine in the district, or (the most probable hypothesis in his opinion) as a god of the underworld. See also Frisk, *s.v.* σκότος.

[90] Indeed, as Pédech 1965: 42-58 has shown, Polybius brings into question Olympian gods and their role. Of course, he is not atheist, but he believes in a superior entity, which calls, in a generic way, τὸ θεῖον and οἱ θεοί, whereas, the common gods are just powerful men and/or people who came up with inventions, who were subsequently elevated to divine ranks.

[91] See *supra*, footnote 89.

[92] The close link between Zeus on the one side, and Kratos and Bia on the other side, was not completely new to a Greek audience, even because Hesiod, *Theogony* 385-388, had already described it.

[93] Modern scholars have been debating over its authenticity, but this does not seem to have been an issue among ancient scholars, since the *Prometheus Bound* has been always transmitted in the Aeschylean *corpus* by the ancient tradition. For the modern discussion, see Griffith 1977, who thinks that it is spurious, and Pattoni 1987, who gives an overview of the *status quaestionis* (15-32), and deems the tragedy authentic. More recently, Marzullo 1995: 49-58, has taken position against the genuineness, whereas Podlecki 2005: 41-68, is inclined towards its authenticity.

[94] On this topic, see Vernant 1971: 29-76; Albini 1985: 414-418; Dolfi 1988: 25-38; Scott 1993: 249-259.

developed concept, to render truth the greatest of all.[95] In addition, the protagonist of the play, Prometheus, is the man who has the capacity to see beyond the reality, and it has been demonstrated that sight and knowledge play a very important role in the *Prometheus Bound*, but neither Zeus nor Prometheus have complete sight.[96]

The inspirational role played by Aeschylus and the suggestion that Polybius' language was inspired by him might not appear as a newfangled idea if supported by the fact that, for example, Polybius employs the adjective ἀδήριτος, used by Aeschylus, to describe more solemnly the Roman hegemony:[97] interestingly, before Polybius, who employs it several times (9 occurrences),[98] it was used once by Homer, and once by Aeschylus.[99]

Thus, following this line of reasoning, the greatest god of all is truth, not Zeus, since he does not have a complete view. On the contrary, both truth and its 'executor', the universal historian, are complete, their vision of events is total and perfect (as it will be showed in chapter 2 of this thesis). In this respect, Polybius, as 'priest of truth', appears to be the new Prometheus, who leads men throughout the quest for truth, but he also embodies some of Zeus' features, especially his power: he might, then, be defined as the sum of the best qualities of both Zeus and Prometheus, since in his work he is mostly employing autopsy, which is something that both characters had, but in an insufficient and unsatisfactory way.

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[95] It should be said that the perception of Zeus evolves over time, even in Aeschylus himself (see, for example, Grube 1970: 43-51 and Jarkho 1971: 785-800): in the *Oresteia*, for example, a new political order is instituted (Kontoleon 1965-1966: 317-363) and there is a sort of reconciliation of the poet with Zeus, who is now characterized by both omnipotence and justice (Lloyd-Jones 1956: 67 and Grube 1970: 50-51).
[96] Larmour 1992: 28-37, and, in particular, 31-33.
[97] Zecchini 2013: 93-98. See also de Foucault 1972: 37-40, where he lists all the terms belonging to the tragic vocabulary and used by Polybius.
[98] 1.2.4; 1.20.13; 3.3.5; 4.74.3; 6.57.5; 10.36.3; 12.16.7; 15.10.2; 31.25.6.
[99] *Iliad* 17.42; Aeschylus, *Prometheus bound* 105.

As truth is the greatest god, it must have the greatest power: in fact, Polybius reflects upon the fact that nature has handed μεγίστην δύναμιν over to ἀλήθεια. The term δύναμις, which again can be identified with the supremacy of a god, not only means 'power, strength', but also 'authority',[100] a crucial concept in historiography. In Polybius, it has also the meaning of 'talent, inclination, competence, sagacity'[101], whereas neither in Herodotus nor in Thucydides does the word have a connotation associated with the historian's work.

Moreover, truth expresses all its δύναμις while fighting against its foes: although everybody is contending against it and all the plausible topics are marshalled on the side of the lie, truth is victorious and conquers falsehood by a struggle.[102] The battle between truth and untruth is a clash of titans. Besides, there seems to be an allusion to Zeus again: as he had to fight against the Titans to assert his supremacy and obtain the power, so acts truth. Furthermore, this is not the only explanation that one can give, since the term ταττομένων, apart from the military metaphor, could be interpreted as a word linked with the historian's work again. Indeed, the verb also means 'to place in a certain order' and it is associated with the organization of a speech or a written text.[103] In addition, Polybius

[100] See LSJ, *s.v.*
[101] Schweighäuser 1822, *s.v.*, translates the expression δύναμιν ἐν τῇ πραγματείᾳ in 2.56.5 'ars et solertia in scribenda historia'. Cf. Mauersberger 2003, *s.v.*
[102] For the image of truth winning in time, see also: Bacchylides 13.204-207; Pindar, *Ol.* 10.50-53. Aeschines, *Tim.* 84, underlines that truth is so strong that conquers all the human calculations: ἀλλ'οὕτως ἰσχυρόν ἐστιν ἡ ἀλήθεια ὥστε πάντων ἐπικρατεῖ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων λογισμῶν. Though Aeschines had used the same verb as Polybius' ἐπικρατεῖ, which might undermine my speculation regarding Zeus, nevertheless it is at least thought-provoking, as I have already underlined, that the verb is placed close to an adjective (ἐπισκοτισθεῖσα) which might recall one of Zeus' epithets (Σκοτίτας). See *supra*, footnote 89. Moreover, while in Aeschines the concept of overcoming is in a way circumscribed and limited to "human calculations", in Polybius the concept holds an absolute value. At a later time, Cicero, *Cael.* 63, will endow truth with great strength as well: *O magnam vim veritatis, quae contra hominum ingenia, calliditatem, sollertiam contraque fictas omnium insidias facile se per se ipsa defendat!*
[103] Cf. LSJ, *s.v.*

uses quite often the term σύνταξις to describe the historian's piece of work,[104] a word which also appears as one of his peculiarities, since its use is almost absent in previous historians.[105]

Therefore, the historian has the hard task of 'putting events together', arranging them and searching for truth, which is not easy to find, because – as Polybius himself declares – sometimes it immediately shows its power (παραχρῆμα δείκνυσι τὴν αὐτῆς δύναμιν), sometimes after it has remained in obscurity for a long time (πολὺν χρόνον ἐπισκοτισθεῖσα). This contrast between revealing and concealing itself seems to imply its own etymology which portrays truth as something unconcealed or which gradually discloses itself.[106] Indeed, both δείκνυμι, an implicit reference again to the Polybian historical method, and ἐπισκοτίζω, which underlines instead the difficulty in getting at truth, appear to be tied by a *fil rouge*, the idea of a 'veiling/unveiling'[107] truth: while giving itself to the historian, at the same time truth escapes from him. Thus, he finds himself forced to pursue it with great efforts.

This philosophical description of truth leads the reader to another level of discussion, as the search for truth is a central topic in philosophy: the philosopher, just

[104] See Schweighäuser 1822, *s.v.*, who gives the meaning of 'compositio, expositio, liber, historia'. See also Mauersberger 2002, *s.v.*

[105] It does not appear at all in Herodotus; in Thucydides only once (6.42.1), but in a military sense; in Xenophon four times and, again, in a military context (*Hell.* 5.2.37; 7.5.22; *Cyr.* 2.4.1; 8.1.14). In Polybius, the word appears fifty-six times. After him, there is a remarkable number of occurrences only in Diodorus (thirty-nine times) with some of them having the acceptation of 'historical composition'. This is fascinating, if one reflects upon the fact that Diodorus is "the historian whose narrative manner is closest to Polybius": see Rood 2004: 158, and footnotes 13 and 28.

[106] See *supra*, section 1.

[107] I borrow this definition from the philosopher Martin Heidegger, who described truth as 'Unverborgenheit' and 'Erschlossenheit'. See *supra*, footnote 10.

like Prometheus (a figure dear to the philosophical discussion)[108], had the duty to find truth and to show it to other men.

What is more, as we have seen, a Presocratic philosopher had already linked the concept of divinity with truth: Parmenides, in the first lines of his philosophical poem *On the Nature*, Περὶ φύσεως, is guided and invited to learn both the 'unshaken (ἀτρεμές) heart of the well-rounded (εὐκυκλέος) truth' and the 'opinions of the mortals, in which there is no πίστις ἀληθής'.[109] Who leads Parmenides, as we have seen, is an unnamed goddess, revealing herself as Δίκη, but also Θέμις, and even Ἀληθείη in the course of the poem.[110] The importance of this fragment lies in the presence of a divinity who is both ἀλήθεια and δίκη, and on the separation between the well-rounded truth (the real one) and the non-true πίστις. The latter recalls the πιθανότητες, with which it shares the root,[111] used by Polybius to describe one of the antagonists of truth which are all marshalled on the side of lie (πασῶν τῶν πιθανοτήτων μετὰ τοῦ ψεύδους ταττομένων), namely a sort of non-true πίστις: the οὐκ […] πίστις ἀληθής of Parmenides could reasonably be compared with the πιθανότητες drawn up on the side of falsehood. Finally, the divinity represented as both ἀλήθεια and δίκη is considerably striking, since the word δίκη is related to the verb δείκνυμι and, consequently, evokes the apodeictic history as well as the passage here commented, since Polybius states that at the end truth 'shows its power' (δείκνυσι τὴν αὑτῆς δύναμιν) and wins.[112]

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[108] See, for example, Johnson 1962: 9-17; Kélessidou 1993: 79-87; Ferrarin 2000-2001: 289-319.
[109] B 1 DK 18. On this, see also *supra* section 2.
[110] See Untersteiner 1958: LXVIII-LXIX. On these lines, see also Bormann 1971: 56-70 and Gallop 1984: 6-7.
[111] Both derive from πείθομαι: see Chantraine 1968-, *s.v.*
[112] It is fascinating that the *Etymologicum Magnum* describes the goddess Δίκη as she who 'seeks for truth': ἡ ζητοῦσα τὸ ἀληθές.

Finally, it has been highlighted that Parmenides' journey in search for truth is "an ascent transporting him from darkness to light",[113] which is the same image as the Polybian one, with the opposition between dark and light underlined by the opposition between the verbs ἐπισκοτίζω and δείκνυμι. If we come back for a moment to the quirk image of a deity which is even greater that Zeus, we might read the Polybian journey also as an ascent – to use the same words – from the deceit of the Olympian gods, namely the Zeus who brings darkness and, probably, covers truth (because he does not have complete sight and knowledge), to the bright greatest and most real goddess Truth.

Anyhow, in all probability, Polybius had a certain knowledge of Presocratics,[114] he was keeping Parmenides' discussion in mind and, perhaps, drew his inspiration from it. In any case, it is clear that he knows philosophy and he even employs a certain number of philosophical terms.[115] Thus, it is not surprising that he knew Parmenides and tried to re-elaborate the passage and to capitalize upon it: Polybius plays with his reader on multiple layers, the well-known field of tragedy, his being the new Prometheus, and his being the guiding light towards truth.

[113] Palmer 2009: 52, who adds that it can be also interpreted "as a journey from error to enlightenment". See also Fränkel 1930: 153-192 and Deichgräber 1959.
[114] See *infra*, chapter 2, section 1.
[115] See de Foucault 1972: 44-51.

Chapter 2

Histories κατὰ μέρος and universal history

This chapter will analyse the passages in which Polybius' criticism is levelled at histories *kata meros* and their relation to truth. As Polybius starts with the critique of historical monographs in the preamble of his work, so I shall start with commenting on Polybius' remarks regarding histories *kata meros* as opposed to his own universal history.

If a work lacking truth cannot be defined as history, a truthful historical work cannot but be universal history: that, at least, is the claim Polybius lays out in 1.4.7-11. Indeed, as already noted by Meister, the aims of Polybius' historiography, the identification of the truth, and the search for causes 'can only be reached through a universal historical analysis'.[116] This is the reason why Polybius, as he himself declares, will begin his work with the events of the 140th Olympiad (220/219 B.C.): indeed, while previously events were 'scattered' (σποράδας), from the 140th Olympiad history became organic (σωματοειδῆ), and the events of Italy and Africa intertwined (συμπλέκεσθαι) with those of Asia and Greece (1.3.3-4). Polybius further suggests that this process of unification was prompted by the fact that every action was directed towards Rome, which allowed and required historians to narrate the events in a unified and universal way in order to give an overall view of them and their development, whereas histories *kata meros* could stress the importance only of some and partial aspects of history (*ibid.*). Polybius expresses this concept by picking up on the Hellenistic concept of history as a body,[117] a concept which he reworks by using, for the first time in a historiographical

[116] Meister 1992: 190.
[117] Walbank 1957: 43-44.

context, the adjective σωματοειδής[118] to state that history is not always an organic body, but the body-like structure of history is favoured by certain events or historical junctures, and also by the historian's capability to choose the right way and form to narrate such events and to put together the scattered limbs of the body of history.

Nevertheless, if it is true that universal history was only made possible after 220 B.C., when all events became interconnected thanks to the conquests and the presence of Rome, a process which Polybius defines as the *symploke* (1.4.11),[119] it is also true that the terms used by Polybius to criticize his predecessors in relation to histories *kata meros* are far more reproachful than one would expect in the case of forgivable mistakes,[120] as one might think in the case of historians writing a history *kata meros* at a time when universal history could not yet come into existence given that Rome did not yet have her empire. Thus, the *fil rouge* of this discussion seems to be Polybius' polemic with his predecessors,[121] a polemic that is encapsulated in the very Thucydidean statement[122] that his own topic is greater than others.[123]

This chapter will also give proof of a particular aspect of Polybius' narrative technique, namely the ability to disseminate in his work hints that his reader has to grasp.

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[118] Before Polybius, the adjective occurs in Plato (*Phaedo* 81b-c-e; 83d; 86a; *Politicus* 273b; *Timaeus* 31 b; 36d; *Respublica* 532d), Aristotle (*Problemata* 936b), Ephorus (*FGrHist* 70 F 31b, referring to a god), the historian Anaximenes (*Ars Rhetorica* 31.3; 36.16).

[119] On the concept of *symploke*, see Walbank 1975: 197-212.

[120] On this topic, see *infra* chapter 3, section 4.

[121] On historians polemicizing with their predecessors, see, for example, Mazzarino 1966, vol.1: 130-141; Canfora 1972: 73-78; Marincola 1997: 218-236; and Pani 2001: 95-102.

[122] In his preface and in 1.23, Thucydides shows the reasons why his subject matter is bigger and worthier of a historical account (ἀξιολογώτατον) than others: in particular, both states were at the *acme* (peak) of their power (ἀκμάζοντές τε ἦσαν ἐς αὐτὸν ἀμφότεροι παρασκευῇ τῇ πάσῃ). He also adds that he does not deem the previous events big either in relation to the wars or to any other matter (οὐ μεγάλα νομίζω γενέσθαι οὔτε κατὰ τοὺς πολέμους οὔτε ἐς τὰ ἄλλα). Cf. Walbank 1957: 64. On the closeness of Polybius' account of the First Punic War to Thucydides, especially to his preamble, see Rood 2012: 53-61. See also *infra*, p. 55.

[123] On this claim, a characteristic one of ancient historians, see Marincola 1997: 34-43.

The work is a sort of treasure hunt, and the reader has to follow Polybius and to be able to gather and put together the clues given throughout the work. This mode of reading is in keeping with Polybius' own statement that he *leads* the reader to true knowledge.[124]

In line with Polybius' claim that he will guide his reader through his reasoning, this chapter will show how, as he progresses, he recalls concepts expressed earlier in his work while also adding new details each time. The passages are linked to each other by the concepts of exaggeration, distance, sight and light, and the reader will discover little by little that these passages are actually related to the critique against histories *kata meros*. That is, Polybius does not clearly state at the beginning that he is dealing with histories *kata meros*, but he uses a very specific language which evokes that particular way of writing history.

[124] See 3.36.5 (εἰς ἀληθινὰς καὶ γνωρίμους ἐννοίας ἄγειν τοὺς ἀκούοντας). Cf. 3.37.1-2 (εἰς ἐπίστασιν ἀγαγεῖν τοὺς ἀκούοντας); 5.21.9 (μόνως γὰρ οὕτως δυνατὸν εἰς ἔννοιαν ἀγαγεῖν τῶν ἀγνοουμένων τοὺς ἀκούοντας); 6.26.11 (τοὺς ἀκούοντας εἰς ἔννοιαν ἀγαγεῖν).

1. Polybius the philosopher of (universal) history

Polybius opens his *Histories* in a very unusual way, as he starts with an omission: he will not praise the utility and the importance of history, since virtually every single historian has already well stressed this concept and he does not want to be repetitive.[125] Also, he does not proclaim immediately his work's topic,[126] but he first states that his account will in any case attract readers due to the events' greatness and exceptionality (his 'subject of investigation', θεώρημα, is defined as παράδοξον καὶ μέγα),[127] a declaration of intent perfectly placed into a historiographical milieu.[128] On the contrary, he is interested in drawing a clear-cut demarcation line between different methods and approaches of doing and writing history, with regard to the topic's choice: in fact, there are histories dealing with only one topic, one war or one character, which he defines as histories κατὰ μέρος, 'by single topic', and 'universal' history, a kind of history that none of his contemporaries has ever written. Although historians have the opportunity to decide what kind of history they prefer to write, nevertheless Polybius suggests that if one writes κατὰ μέρος, he will have only a partial knowledge of the events (1.4.7-10):

[125] On these remarks, especially on 1.1.2, see Parmeggiani 2014: 180-188.
[126] Cf. Miltsios 2013: 7, who underlines that Polybius, by not indicating his identity and the subject of his work at the very beginning, 'deviates from the regular practice' of ancient historians.
[127] For a discussion on the meaning of *paradoxon theorema*, see Maier 2018: 55-74, who sees the expression "as a perfect characterization of how Polybius perceived history" (72), given that it is an attempt to explain the events which at the same time cannot be systemised.
[128] On the ancient historians' claim to their subject's greatness, see Marincola 1997: 34-43.

> [7] καθόλου μὲν γὰρ ἔμοιγε δοκοῦσιν οἱ πεπεισμένοι διὰ τῆς κατὰ μέρος ἱστορίας μετρίως συνόψεσθαι τὰ ὅλα παραπλήσιόν τι πάσχειν, ὡς ἂν εἴ τινες ἐμψύχου καὶ καλοῦ σώματος γεγονότος διερριμμένα τὰ μέρη θεώμενοι νομίζοιεν ἱκανῶς αὐτόπται γίνεσθαι τῆς ἐνεργείας αὐτοῦ τοῦ ζῴου καὶ καλλονῆς. [8] εἰ γάρ τις αὐτίκα μάλα συνθεὶς καὶ τέλειον αὖθις ἀπεργασάμενος τὸ ζῷον τῷ τ' εἴδει καὶ τῇ τῆς ψυχῆς εὐπρεπείᾳ κἄπειτα πάλιν ἐπιδεικνύοι τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἐκείνοις, ταχέως ἂν οἶμαι πάντας αὐτοὺς ὁμολογήσειν διότι καὶ λίαν πολύ τι τῆς ἀληθείας ἀπελείποντο πρόσθεν καὶ παραπλήσιοι τοῖς ὀνειρώττουσιν ἦσαν. [9] ἔννοιαν μὲν γὰρ λαβεῖν ἀπὸ μέρους τῶν ὅλων δυνατόν, ἐπιστήμην δὲ καὶ γνώμην ἀτρεκῆ σχεῖν ἀδύνατον. [10] διὸ παντελῶς βραχύ τι νομιστέον συμβάλλεσθαι τὴν κατὰ μέρος ἱστορίαν πρὸς τὴν τῶν ὅλων ἐμπειρίαν καὶ πίστιν.
>
> [7] In general, it seems to me that those who believe that they sufficiently comprehend the whole by means of histories *kata meros* are in the same situation as people who, looking at the dismembered limbs of a body that had been full of life and beautiful, deem themselves to have adequately been eyewitnesses of the creature's energy and beauty. [8] Indeed, if someone could straightaway put the creature back together, give it its perfected form in both its shape and the beauty of life, and then show it again to those people, I think that all of them would quickly agree that they had been very far from the truth and similar to people who dream. [9] For it is possible to get a sense of the whole from a part, but impossible to acquire knowledge and accurate understanding. [10] Therefore, one must generally consider that history *kata meros* contributes only a little to the knowledge and trustworthiness of the whole.

In this methodological and historiographical discussion, what leaps out at the reader is clearly the reference to the truth: historians who write what might be described as history *kata meros* are extremely far from truth and similar to dreamers (1.4.8: λίαν πολύ τι τῆς ἀληθείας ἀπελείποντο πρόσθεν καὶ παραπλήσιοι τοῖς ὀνειρώττουσιν ἦσαν). One might reflect upon the fact that the assessment must have a certain significance if Polybius nestles it into a crucial theoretical exposition on the importance of history at the beginning of his work, in a passage studded with philosophical terminology, which especially evokes two ancient philosophers as I shall show. Indeed, the opposition of dream and sleep to truth is a key concept in one of the Presocratics, Heraclitus,[129] whose

[129] Herodotus had already been inspired by Heraclitus, as has been recently shown by Darbo-Peschanski 2013: 87-91.

work Polybius knew, in some form at least:[130] those who are awake live in a common universe (world-order), whereas those who sleep turn themselves away from it (ἀποστρέφεσθαι) to their private sphere.[131] Furthermore, according to Heraclitus' thought, people who live in their own worlds (the asleep ones) are far from truth, since the *logos*, who is the judge of truth, is common and divine. On the contrary, the *logos* of the asleep is untrustworthy, ἄπιστος, coming solely from their αἴσθησις, perception.[132] Besides, they do not recognize the difference between truth (the real knowledge) and perceptions or opinions, which are deceitful,[133] because they are not able to understand

[130] This is demonstrated by his reference to the philosopher in two points of the *Histories* we now have (4.40.3; 12.27.1), where the historian is reflecting upon historical methodologies and on what might be the most useful to historical truth. The two citations might seem proverbial, but I believe this is linked to Heraclitus' peculiar style. He was nicknamed *the Obscure* (ὁ σκοτεινός), as we learn from Strabo 14.1.25 and Suda, *s.v.*, among the others, a nickname which seems to provide a description of the riddling character of his work. Indeed, Plato, *Tht.* 180a, defines the utterings of the Heracliteans as "enigmatic little phrases", ῥηματίσκια αἰνιγματώδη. As Diogenes Laertius (9.15) affirms, many wrote commentaries on his work, and mentions Antisthenes and Heraclides Ponticus, Kleanthes, the Stoic Sphairos, Pausanias the Heraclitean, Nicomedes and Dionysius. Thus, one can reasonably infer that Polybius had access to the work of Heraclitus in some way, whether through the commentaries on the philosopher's work or through the mentions of other philosophers like Plato or Aristotle or even through anthologies collecting Heraclitus' most important reflections. On the problem of the transmission of Heraclitus' work and in which form Plato, Aristotle and later philosophers and authors had access to it, see Fronterotta 2013: xlii-xlvi. Gadamer 1999: 214 reflects that "where things proceed concisely, concentrated, paradoxically, here we have Heraclitus" and that word-play is characteristic of Heraclitus' style. See also Cavalli 1982: 29-47, who underlines Heraclitus' enigmatic and oracular style, and Rankin 1994: 71-79.

[131] B 89 DK 12: τοῖς ἐγρηγορόσιν ἕνα καὶ κοινὸν κόσμον εἶναι, τῶν δὲ κοιμωμένων ἕκαστον εἰς ἴδιον ἀποστρέφεσθαι.

[132] A 16 DK 12, where Sextus Empiricus summarizes and explains Heraclitus: τὴν μὲν αἴσθησιν […] ἄπιστον εἶναι […], τὸν δὲ λόγον ὑποτίθεται κριτήριον. […] τὸν δὲ λόγον κριτὴν τῆς ἀληθείας ἀποφαίνεται οὐ τὸν ὁποιονδήποτε, ἀλλὰ τὸν κοινὸν καὶ θεῖον. On the role of dream and sleep in Heraclitus, see Brillante 1986: 10-25. On the fact that Heraclitus' deity has a sole epistemological function, see Calenda 2011: 125-129. Drozdek 2001: 37-56, states that God and *Logos* are the same in Heraclitus' philosophy.

[133] In B 46 DK 12 'opinion' (οἴησις) is compared to epilepsy (ἱερὰ νόσος), perhaps in the sense that, like the 'sacred disease', it is linked with an evil possession, and in B 56 DK 12 Heraclitus states that men deceive themselves by the means of the knowledge of evident things (ἐξηπάτηνται […] οἱ ἄνθρωποι πρὸς τὴν γνῶσιν τῶν φανερῶν). Diano and

(ἀξύνετοι) and, although they hear, they are like deaf people.[134] In addition, 'learning many things does not teach one how to possess intellect' (πολυμαθίη νόον ἔχειν οὐ διδάσκει):[135] indeed, 'Pythagoras extensively practised scientific research (ἱστορίην ἤσκησεν), more than all the other men, and, having made a selection of such writings, built his own wisdom, which was much learning (πολυμαθίην) and fraudulent artifice (κακοτεχνίην)'.[136]

Polybius seems to echo even these last two statements when he observes that it is utterly unlikely that someone could apprehend (κατανενοηκέναι) the shape of the entire inhabited world, its whole setting, and arrangement having visited each of the most notable cities one by one or having gazed at them drawn separately (1.4.6): historians writing works *kata meros* are like such people who have knowledge of many things disjointedly, but they do not 'reach the intellect', to speak in philosophical terms.[137] All the more so as he explains his assessment with another simile, since his point is not only that separate knowledge of each single part does not allow historians to know the events in its complex entirety, but also that this kind of learning is deceitful because it only provides perception: indeed, they are in a situation equal to those people who, looking at

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Serra 1980: 161, think that Heraclitus used the analogy with epilepsy to underline that 'opinion' was the most serious disease by which men could be affected.

[134] B 34 DK 12.

[135] B 40 DK 12. Marincola 1997: 65, understands νόον ἔχειν as 'wisdom'; Graham 2008: 176-177, translates the phrase as 'understanding' and comments that 'people are like sleepwalkers who hear and see but do not comprehend. They seem to have experiences without becoming experienced'.

[136] B 129 DK 12. My own translation adapted from Marcovich 1967 and Reale 2006. The fragment's authenticity was brought into question by Diels 1912, vol. 1: 104, and the fragment was inserted among the spurious ones. More recently, the tendency is to consider it authentic: see, for example, Marcovich 1967: 68-70, and Diano-Serra 1980: 176-177, with a discussion on previous literature.

[137] He will come back to this point later in his work: in 3.32, he draws attention to the point of view of readers, who cannot have complete and exact knowledge of the events if they try to understand them by reading many books on different topics, instead of just one book of universal history.

the scattered parts of a body which was beautiful and full of life before, deem themselves to be adequate eyewitnesses (αὐτόπται) of its vitality and beauty.

Moreover, if one wants to speculate, another appealing closeness with Heraclitus might be the verb ἀπολείπω used by Polybius in the middle form which emphasizes the idea of moving away, as the Heraclitean ἀποστρέφεσθαι (B 89 DK 12) is employed to describe those who are asleep turning themselves away from the *logos* (= truth). Indeed, in this context, both verbs express the idea of moving away from truth, an idea stressed by the usage of verbs constructed with the prefix ἀπό.

Finally, it is interesting to stress how Sextus Empiricus explains Heraclitus' thought:[138] the philosopher believed that men have two instruments available to reach knowledge of the truth, the *logos* based on perception (αἴσθησις) and the real *logos*, of which the former is ἄπιστος, untrustworthy, whereas the latter is the κριτήριον, the means of judging. Although Sextus is later than Polybius, this dichotomy seems to resemble what Polybius says about the two kinds of history, so one might speculate on the impact of Heraclitus' whole work on readers who had not just fragments at their disposal: similarly, Polybius states that historians can choose between two approaches, history *kata meros* (κατὰ μέρος) and universal history. The first, described as partial knowledge, looks as though it is based on what Heraclitus defines as perception (αἴσθησις) – if one reflects upon the Polybian simile of the (definitely wrong) perception given by the observation of dismembered limbs to gather the vitality of a body –, whereas universal history appears to correspond to the Heraclitean *logos*, which is the only one that can provide whole and real knowledge, just as the Polybian universal history. Indeed, Polybius describes historians writing *kata meros* as people who have a mere perception of the events: they are able to see the events, but not in their entirety, just as those looking at scattered limbs

[138] A 16 DK 12 = *Adv. Math.* 7.126.

have the presumption to understand even the liveliness the body had before; such historians are dreamers in the Polybian discussion. Consequently, the Heraclitean *logos* – which is opposed to the *logos* of those asleep, does not come from perception, and is the judge of truth – might reasonably be associated with the Polybian universal history.

However, the Polybian passage slightly differs from Heraclitus, as the historian adds a detail which is missing in the philosopher's fragments: Polybius' 'people who dream' become aware of their status, whereas Heraclitus' 'asleep and dreamers' do not see any change or awareness in their miserable condition. Thus, the added value in Polybius' reflections is this realization, which occurs with the help of someone else who shows (ἐπιδεικνύοι) them that looking separately at limbs is not the same as looking at an entire body full of living energy. Such a gain in consciousness is not a completely new concept, but it is found in Plato's allegory of the cave (*Rep.* 514 a-517 a), which links the Polybian passage to this philosopher as well. The men in the cave have the sole opportunity to see the shadows of real things projected onto the wall which they face – as they are chained and unable to move – and they think that such shadows represent reality; but, then, one of them succeeds in freeing himself, he leaves the dark cave and goes outside in the sunlight. Once there, he realizes that what he was watching before were not true objects, but mere images of them, which did not reflect the essence of the real ones. In the cave, where there is no light, truth is concealed, it is in darkness, whereas once the man liberates himself from misleading opinions by going outside in the light, truth reveals itself. As in Plato,[139] sight in Polybius is not utterly trustworthy. Indeed, people who look at dead limbs separately are still eyewitnesses, αὐτόπται, but not at all adequate, ἱκανῶς (1.4.7).

[139] See Tanner 1970: 88-90 and Sze 1977: 130.

The affinity with Plato's allegory of the cave adds another piece to the puzzling question of the Polybian truth. In that passage, the philosopher makes Socrates say that the prisoner, once free, will still believe that the images are 'truer', ἀληθέστερα,[140] than what he is trying to (but cannot) see, since he is still in the cave and blinded by the light of the fire. This is yet at the level of perception, since the man is still in the cave, where truth is hidden.

The association with Plato is even strengthened by the verb ὀνειρώσσω. This verb is completely absent until the middle of the fifth century, appearing for the first time in Hippocrates, followed by Plato, Aristotle, and then Polybius. It was used not very often before Polybius, since the vast majority of the 259 occurrences in the TLG is found in later writers.[141] Despite the general scarcity of the term in earlier writers, the author who employed it most frequently is Plato (8 times),[142] followed by Polybius (4 times)[143] and Aristotle (4 times).[144]

Therefore, this verb, together with the concept it carries and the Polybian discussion, might be regarded as a joining link, since the passage is also characterized by a strong Aristotelian presence. Indeed, the terms ἐνέργεια, ζῷον, and ἐμπειρία immediately bring to mind Aristotle,[145] and the fact that, in a passage where Polybius is reflecting on the genre of history, philosophical terms and allusions to Aristotle are embedded is thought-provoking. All the more so, as Aristotle had reflected upon history

[140] Heidegger translated it as *unverborgener*, 'more unconcealed' (1988: 32). See also Gonzales 2008: 85.
[141] Indeed, there are only 19 occurrences (out of the total of 259) before Polybius.
[142] *Cratylus* 439 c; *Theaetetus* 158 b, *bis*; *Rep.* 476 c, *bis*; 533 b; *Leges* 656 b; 800 a.
[143] 1.4.8; 5.108.5; 12.12b.1; 18.15.13.
[144] *De divinatione per somnum* 463 b; *De generatione et corruptione* 335 b; *Problemata* 957 a; *De somno et vigilia* 453 b.
[145] See Walbank 1957: 45, for ζῷον; for ἐνέργεια, see Roveri 1964: 75-76. On Aristotle and ἐμπειρία, see Butler 2003: 329-350 and LaBarge 2006: 23-44.

and poetry, relegating the former to a minor role (*Poet.* 1451 b):[146] according to him, poetry is more philosophical and more serious than history, since it deals with general or universal truths, τὰ καθόλου, whereas history considers particulars or truths valid by themselves, τὰ καθ'ἕκαστον. In discussing this dichotomy, Aristotle applies terms, which are always antonyms in his philosophical debate, to history and poetry: in fact, τὸ καθόλου is generally opposed to τὸ καθ'ἕκαστον or, more interestingly for this analysis, to τὸ κατὰ μέρος.[147] Polybius flips the terminology over, assigning the positive one to history, although to a particular kind of history (the universal one), whereas the negative one, τὸ κατὰ μέρος, describes monographic history, which, in Polybius' mind, is not useful and gives a distorted and incomplete view of the whole. Polybius seems to be trying to reverse Aristotle's negative assessment:[148] only a certain kind of history is inferior to tragedy, the one κατὰ μέρος, not universal history, which is the one and only possible way of writing a true historical account.

Consequently, it appears clear that the 'true truth' is only at the root of universal history. In the light of this, the passage is perfectly inserted into the debate with the preceding historians of course, even more so as it belongs to the beginning of the work, thus to a prefatory phase at a stage of declaration of intent, as already stressed at the beginning of this section. In effect, Polybius, by stating that universal history is the best way of writing history, is also underlining that his history is better than others' works, since he is the first to write such a type of history. Indeed, not only does he list previous

[146] See also *supra*, chapter 1, section 3.
[147] See LSJ, *s.v.* καθόλου.
[148] Cf. Zucchelli 1985: 303, who argues that Polybius underlines the universal character of his history to give an answer to Aristotle's bad judgement on history. See also Díaz-Tejera 1978: 44-46, who shows the textual closeness between Aristotle and Polybius: when the historian affirms that τὸ κατὰ μέρος does not give ἐπιστήμη, he is, in Díaz-Tejera' opinion, referring to Aristotle, *Met.* 1086 b, ἄνευ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ καθόλου οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπιστήμην λαβεῖν.

topics and try to demonstrate that his subject matter is 'exceptionally great', παράδοξον καὶ μέγα (1.2.1), but he also seems to allude to both Herodotus and Thucydides when, shortly before the similes of the world and of the body, he uses the terms τὸ θαυμάσιον and ὠφελιμώτατον, and the expressions εἰργάσατ' ἔργον and ἠγωνίσατ' ἀγώνισμα (1.4.1-5).[149]

A final remark concerns the expression τῆς ἀληθείας ἀπελείποντο (1.4.8). The nexus hardly occurs in Greek texts: apart from later authors, it appears once in Herodotus, πολλὸν τῆς ἀληθείης ἀπολελειμμένοι (2.106),[150] and twice in Polybius.[151] Due to its rarity, one could infer that it might have significant importance. Indeed, in the other passage where he employs the nexus, Polybius is reprimanding Timaeus, and uses the same Herodotean expression, but with the superlative degree of πολλόν: Τίμαιος πλεῖστον ἀπολείπεσθαί μοι δοκεῖ τῆς ἀληθείας. Polybius' criticism against Timaeus is entirely historiographical. Thus, the verb ἀπολείπω appears to be a keyword in the analysed passage, as it highlights that Polybius – alluding to both Heraclitus, as we have seen, and historiography – is playing on two parallel levels, philosophy and history. As his history is universal, since it gathers and puts together different parts, in the same way

[149] Such terms are important since they recall both Herodotus' preface and Thucydides' methodological passage (1.22-23): more specifically, the declared subject of Herodotus' work are the great and marvelous deeds, ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, of both the Greeks and the barbarians (1.p); Thucydides uses the term ἔργα again, and highlights history's utility (ὠφέλιμα), since it is a possession for evermore and not a contest (ἀγώνισμα) composed for a momentary performance (1.22.4). On the Polybian allusions to the Thucydidean κτῆμα ἐς αἰεὶ, see Nicolai 1995: 17-26. More recently, Rawlings 2016: 113-115, has supported his interpretation of Thuc. 1.22.4 looking at three Polybian passages (3.31.11-12; 9.1-2; and 38.4.5-8) and has hypothesised that Polybius was indeed interpreting Thucydides' assessments. On the relationship between Thucydides and Polybius, see also Luschnat 1970: 1294-1296, Lehmann 1974: 165-170; and Rood 2012: 50-67.

[150] He is writing about two statues of an unknown man in Ionia: some of the people looking at them infer that it is the image of Memnon, but 'they are very far from truth'.

[151] 1.4.8; 12.4d.1.

his philosophy of history is universal and puts together different philosophies from diverse philosophers to get to his own philosophy, and to give an overall view.

Hence, in his methodological discussions, Polybius appears to have the ability to engage with a vast amount of preceding literature and research, both philosophical and historical, and his reader is expected to be endowed with the same capability. Universal history allows an overall view, so his reader has to possess such wide and ample understanding to be able to grasp Polybius' philosophy of history and idea of truth.

2. Polybius under provocation

The centrality of truth in history is reaffirmed soon after the preamble of the *Histories*, where Polybius announces his forthcoming correction of the previous tradition on the First Punic War embodied by the historians Philinus of Agrigentum and Fabius Pictor (1.14.1-2). In declaring the starting point of his work, the 140th Olympiad (1.3.1), Polybius has also announced that he will sketch out the previous events to allow his readers a whole understanding of the account, and that his summary will start from the 129th Olympiad, where Timaeus' history has ended (1.5.1).

But, before criticizing the afore-mentioned historians, Polybius shows another difference and quasi-superiority over his precursors, which is represented by his way of writing history, a concept brought to the fore by the juxtaposition of the words ἐξαριθμεῖσθαι and ἱστορεῖν:

> [6] Τὸ μὲν οὖν ἐξαριθμεῖσθαι τὰ κατὰ μέρος ὑπὲρ τῶν προειρημένων πράξεων οὐδὲν οὔθ' ἡμῖν ἀναγκαῖον οὔτε τοῖς ἀκούουσι χρήσιμον. [7] οὐ γὰρ ἱστορεῖν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν προτιθέμεθα, μνησθῆναι δὲ κεφαλαιωδῶς προαιρούμεθα χάριν τῆς προκατασκευῆς τῶν μελλουσῶν ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἱστορεῖσθαι πράξεων.

> [6] Indeed, it is both unnecessary for me and useless to the readers to itemize in detail every single event of the above-mentioned. [7] For, I did not propose to myself to write a history of them, but I prefer to recall them summarily so as to provide an introduction to the facts which will be the object of my own history (1.13.6-7).

The technical verb ἱστορέω occurs twice and Polybius seems to underline that history is not just a detailed list of events, but it does also mean discussion, research, and conscious choice of the topics to relate – a concept which shows closeness to Thucydides[152]– and also to choose in what detail or length such events should be narrated.

Nonetheless, it is not clear from this passage which role the action of ἐξαριθμεῖσθαι τὰ κατὰ μέρος plays, whether it is opposed to the technical verb ἱστορέω, as the Polybian reader would expect after the criticism of histories *kata meros* in 1.4.6-11, or it represents a feature of history-writing.

If one looks at the other occurrences of ἐξαριθμέω in Polybius, he might infer that the verb does not carry a positive meaning. In general, it scarcely appears in historians preceding Polybius: it is found seven times in Herodotus,[153] with the meaning of "count on",[154] and is utterly absent from Thucydides and Xenophon. Polybius uses it seventeen times, and he is the first historian to employ it with a historiographical sense. Indeed, nearly half of the occurrences in his *Histories*, precisely eight, are found in a historiographical context: apart from this passage, the verb is used in 1.57.3 in relation to the pointlessness of writing history by the means of a simple list of events; in 2.56.10 and 2.61.3, Polybius inserts it in his polemic against Phylarchus; in 9.2.1, the term is associated with historians who have dealt with genealogies, myths, and foundation stories, and it is opposed to his own *pragmatike historia*; in 12.20.3, when Polybius

[152] On the importance of the choice of the topic and on the concept of *axiologa* in Thucydides, see Canfora 1972: 73-78; Id. 1977a: 457-461; Id. 1979: 369-372.
[153] 2.143; 4.87; 7.59; 7.60 (bis); 7.81; 7.185.
[154] Powell 1938, *s.v.*

underlines the difficulty in itemizing what made it hard to carry out the manoeuvre of Alexander's army in Cilicia as described by Callisthenes (the official historian of Alexander's expedition against the Persian empire), and decides to give just an example without listing every single reason, he is actually making a historiographical point, apart from criticizing another historian; in 12.25a.5, the verb is again employed to criticize another historian, Timaeus this time; lastly, in 16.29.3, it is again linked to uselessness.[155]

Thus, although, in this specific case, τὰ κατὰ μέρος does not refer to histories *kata meros* as opposed to universal history, but to a particular style of recounting events,[156] even so it might hold a negative meaning as well, since ἐξαριθμέω together with κατὰ μέρος are procedures not expected in the Polybian realm of history as understood in its strictest sense. As he will point out later in his work, the historian should provide his readers with a selection of events, since they could lose the general and articulate vision of the entire narrative, which will then become useless.[157] In fact, in 3.57.4-5, writing

[155] Cf. Mauersberger 2003, *s.v.* ἐξαριθμέομαι, who associates these passages with a historiographical background, and gives them the meaning of 'to list', apart from 12.25a.5, which he translates 'to deal with', and 9.2.1 and 16.29.3, intended as 'to be exhaustive'. As for the other occurrences, which are not part of this historiographical milieu, the verb is mostly used in the sense of 'enumerate': in 5.90.3, it is referred to the impossibility of listing all the cities and kings sending donations to the Rhodians after an earthquake probably occurred in 227 (see Walbank 1957: 616-617); in 6.17.2, it is mentioned in relation to the contracts given out by the censors for the construction and repair of public buildings; in 8.37.1, it is used with the meaning of 'count'; in 11.31.3, the verb is referred to Scipio, who was enumerating all the battles they had fought against the Spaniards and the Carthaginians; interestingly, in 15.11.5, the term is employed to indicate an order given by Hannibal to his commanders, namely to enumerate all the sufferings their wives and children would encounter if the result of the battle was negative: this particular statement might relate the passage to the events generally related by writers of tragedies; in 15.12.9, means 'to give a list' and it indicates the list given by Polybius of the Carthaginian mercenaries; in 18.6.5, Philip V makes a list of the favours received by the Achaeans from Antigonus and himself; in 18.14.5, the verb is referred to a list made by Demosthenes of the people who joined Philip II; lastly, 29.24.16 regards the impossibility of enumerating all the benefits the Achaeans had received from the kingdom of Egypt.

[156] Cf. Fontana (forthcoming): 11-14.

[157] See, for example, 1.56.11-57.4; 3.57.4-9; 7.15.1; 9.29.1; 12.25g.3-4; 12.28a.8; 29.12.2-9.

about geographical information and describing what would be the proper narration of events, Polybius will highlight that it is important to give a cohesive account, without scattering the events throughout the historical work:

> [4] ἡμεῖς δ' οὐχὶ νομίζοντες ἀλλότριον εἶναι τοῦτο τὸ μέρος τῆς ἱστορίας, διὰ τοῦτο παρελείπομεν, ἀλλὰ πρῶτον μὲν οὐ βουλόμενοι παρ' ἕκαστα διασπᾶν τὴν διήγησιν οὐδ' ἀποπλανᾶν ἀπὸ τῆς πραγματικῆς ὑποθέσεως τοὺς φιληκοοῦντας, [5] δεύτερον δὲ κρίνοντες οὐ διερριμμένην οὐδ' ἐν παρέργῳ ποιήσασθαι τὴν περὶ αὐτῶν μνήμην, ἀλλὰ κατ' ἰδίαν καὶ τόπον καὶ καιρὸν ἀπονείμαντες τῷ μέρει τούτῳ, καθ' ὅσον οἷοί τ' ἐσμέν, τὴν ἀλήθειαν περὶ αὐτῶν ἐξηγήσασθαι.
>
> [4] Indeed, I have left this out not because I deem this part extraneous to history, but firstly because I do not wish to render the entire narration fragmentary when giving a detailed account nor to lead the readers astray from the proper historical subject, [5] secondly because I think it is opportune not to scatter them [all over the historical account] nor to mention them incidentally, but, having assigned to this part its own proper place and time, to relate the truth about them, as far as I can.

Polybius goes on to admit that not all readers are the same, and that some will insistently demand a detailed (κατὰ μέρος) account of these subjects at any rate. But he compares such readers with gluttonous banqueters who, tasting all the dishes on the table, neither really enjoy the food at the moment nor, for the future, reap the benefits from nourishment and assimilation; in the same way, those readers who read in such a way do not enjoy present amusement nor utility in the future (3.57.7-9).[158]

This last remark in particular seems to evoke what Polybius had already expressed in the proemial passage previously examined (1.4.7-11).[159] There, another simile describes the lack of overall understanding of the events if the implemented procedure has in view a history and an account κατὰ μέρος: it is impossible, Polybius writes, to understand the liveliness of a body from its scattered limbs. In addition, slightly before

[158] Lucian, *Hist. Conscr.* 20 and 56, will use a similar comparison when he discusses the ineptitude of some historians in choosing what to narrate and, as a consequence, in providing their readers with a clear account.
[159] See *supra*, section 1.

this simile, he touches on a geographical point, when he states that one cannot infer the form of the entire world by limiting himself to visiting the most famous cities one by one (1.4.6), and, once again, he makes this point in order to show the difference between *kata meros* and universal history. Therefore, this passage of book 3 seems to clarify that the juxtaposition of ἱστορέω and ἐξαριθμεῖσθαι τὰ κατὰ μέρος is actually an opposition.

Hence, in 3.57 Polybius seems to link the ideas he has already expressed separately in the first book: he begins with the difference between *kata meros* and universal history, then specifies and becomes more precise by evoking the idea of the historian's choice,[160] which has been already adumbrated in the proemial passage (1.4.7-11), and by rendering the importance of the selection of the appropriate topic and procedure more explicit, a concept already touched in 1.13.6-13. Thus, in 3.57, he recalls both passages and connects the concepts of right procedure and history, of the wrong way of writing a detailed account, of geography, and of the loss of an overall view that results from an erroneous choice by the historian. Also, yet again, the one and only possible history which abides by truth seems to be envisaged by Polybius as universal history as opposed to a treatment κατὰ μέρος. The main point of the discussion is once again the duty of the historian to provide his readers with a truthful overall view of history, a view mainly brought by the events the historian decides to narrate. But, to build this global vista, there is need of a capable historian, who knows how to do his job, and who knows when, where, and in what measure he should give a certain account.[161]

Nevertheless, there might be cases when the historian will need to give precise details for the sake of clarity or to correct his predecessors. Indeed, in the very same

[160] Indeed, he will often point out that the historian should provide his readers with a selection of events, since they could lose the general and articulate vision of the entire narrative, which will then become useless. See, for example, 1.56.11-57.4; 7.15.1; 9.29.1; 12.25g.3-4; 12.28a.8; 29.12.2-9.
[161] On the historian's expertise, see *infra*, chapter 3, sections 2.1 and 2.2.

passage 1.13, after the opposition of ἐξαριθμεῖσθαι to ἱστορεῖν, Polybius declares (1.13.10-13):

> [10] βραχὺ δ' ἐπιμελέστερον πειρασόμεθα διελθεῖν ὑπὲρ τοῦ πρώτου συστάντος πολέμου Ῥωμαίοις καὶ Καρχηδονίοις περὶ Σικελίας. [11] οὔτε γὰρ πολυχρονιώτερον τούτου πόλεμον εὑρεῖν ῥᾴδιον οὔτε παρασκευὰς ὁλοσχερεστέρας οὔτε συνεχεστέρας πράξεις οὔτε πλείους ἀγῶνας οὔτε περιπετείας μείζους τῶν ἐν τῷ προειρημένῳ πολέμῳ συμβάντων ἑκατέροις. [12] αὐτά τε τὰ πολιτεύματα κατ' ἐκείνους τοὺς καιροὺς ἀκμὴν ἀκέραια μὲν ἦν τοῖς ἐθισμοῖς, μέτρια δὲ ταῖς τύχαις, πάρισα δὲ ταῖς δυνάμεσιν. [13] διὸ καὶ τοῖς βουλομένοις καλῶς συνθεάσασθαι τὴν ἑκατέρου τοῦ πολιτεύματος ἰδιότητα καὶ δύναμιν οὐχ οὕτως ἐκ τῶν ἐπιγενομένων πολέμων ὡς ἐκ τούτου ποιητέον τὴν σύγκρισιν.
>
> [10] I shall try to go into a bit more detail for the account of the first war regarding Sicily arisen between the Romans and the Carthaginians. [11] Indeed, it is not easy to find a war which lasted longer than this, nor a more complete deployment of forces, more continuous actions, more battles, greater sudden reversals for both sides than in the events of the above-mentioned war. [12] Moreover, at that time, the states themselves were at the top of their incorruptibility as far as their customs are concerned, moderate in their fortunes, and equal in strength. [13] Therefore, those who want to examine together the peculiarity and the strength of each of the two states should make a comparison with this war rather than with the subsequent ones.

A sign that Polybius intends to concentrate on a particular aspect of the historiographical technique and writing is represented by the word συνθεάσασθαι: this concept of seeing the events together and of having an overall view of them, has been already stressed in the proemial passage of the *Histories* (1.4.6-11), where the historian underlines that universal history will better serve readers who prefer to have a complete idea of the events. There, Polybius makes a strong case against histories κατὰ μέρος, which are opposed to his universal history and are less useful because they provide only a partial view of the events. Moreover, in that passage, words related to the semantic sphere of sight are recurrent, and, more specifically, for universal history Polybius adopts the compounds σύνοψιν (1.4.1) and συνιδεῖν (1.4.6), which the συνθεάσασθαι of the passage commented in this section strongly recalls. Thus, from this first statement, one might gather that Polybius' main point in this discussion will still be the criticism of histories

kata meros which do not offer a complete and truthful view of the events, especially at his time when historians have finally the possibility to write universal history due to the interconnection (*symploke*) of events allowed now by Rome's conquests.[162]

Furthermore, in almost two chapters (1.13-14), which can be defined as the preface of the preface – given that they function as a sort of preamble to the prefatory books of the entire work –, two key historiographical elements make their appearance: the statement, in a very Thucydidean style,[163] that the topic is greater than others,[164] and the polemic with his predecessors.[165] However, what Polybius is describing as greater is not the main topic of his history, but just part of the introduction which is necessary to explain the real subject. Indeed, the First Punic War is not his *Histories*' subject matter, strictly speaking. Thus, his work might appear even greater than his predecessors' works, since he is using it just as a basis for his work, a subject that others might have chosen as principal matter of their histories. Polybius implies that his history will be far greater than those of earlier historians.

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[162] 1.4.11. Also interesting is Polybius' remark in 1.3.3-4, when he underlines that the events were previously 'scattered' (σποράδας), but from the 140th Olympiad (220 BC) history became organic (σωματοειδῆ), and the events of Italy and Africa became intertwined (συμπλέκεσθαί) with those of Asia and Greece. On the concept of *symploke*, see Walbank 1975: 197-212.

[163] See *supra*, p. 39, footnote 122.

[164] On this claim, a characteristic one of ancient historians, see Marincola 1997: 34-43.

[165] On historians polemizing with their predecessors, see, for example, Mazzarino 1966, vol.1: 130-141; Canfora 1972: 73-78; Marincola 1997: 218-236; and Pani 2001: 95-102.

3. The 'tragedy' of writing histories *kata meros*: Polybius against Phylarchus

If in book 1 Polybius' remarks serve the needs of introducing a correction of previous tradition, in the second book Polybius attacks another historian who wrote a work characterized by a complete lie (2.56-63). Although Polybius sets his work in relation to a number of different genres, such as philosophy or oratory, his purpose is still historiographical: his chief aim is to write history, and in particular universal history, whose key feature is truth. Thus, a writer who does not abide by the truth cannot be called a 'historian'. The charge of not abiding by the truth occurs often in his polemic against earlier historians, as we have already seen, and the next one whom Polybius accuses of this 'crime' is Phylarchus (2.56-63).

In this part of the *Histories*, the reader will find some of the key elements already present in the above-mentioned passage 1.13, such as the opposition of truth and falsehood, the usage of the verb ἐξαριθμέω – which will link this passage to the condemnation of writing κατὰ μέρος –, and the importance of sight.

Polybius' attack on Phylarchus is well-known, since it has allowed some modern scholars to hypothesize the presence of a particular type of history known as 'tragic history'.[166] However, although Polybius mentions tragedy, as we shall see, his focus is nevertheless on historiography, and his polemic is conducted on historiographical principles.[167] In fact, he starts by referring to truth, and then criticizes Phylarchus for his methodology (2.56.1-3):

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[166] For a discussion of 'tragic history' and the origin of this terminology, see Ullman 1942: 25-53; Walbank 1960: 216-234; Zucchelli 1985: 297-309; Marincola 2003: 293-315, and footnote 33 with previous bibliography; Id. 2010: 445-460; Id. 2013: 73-90, and footnote 1 with previous bibliography.

[167] Cf. Schepens 2005: 145-146, according to whom Polybius wants to demonstrate that Phylarchus' idea of historical writing is wrong and his critique "is a concern with serious historical method"; Eckstein 2013: 316; Marincola 2013: 74 and 86-90, shows the

> [1] Ἐπεὶ δὲ τῶν κατὰ τοὺς αὐτοὺς καιροὺς Ἀράτῳ γεγραφότων παρ' ἐνίοις ἀποδοχῆς ἀξιοῦται Φύλαρχος, ἐν πολλοῖς ἀντιδοξῶν καὶ τἀναντία γράφων αὐτῷ, [2] χρήσιμον ἂν εἴη, μᾶλλον δ' ἀναγκαῖον ἡμῖν, Ἀράτῳ προῃρημένοις κατακολουθεῖν περὶ τῶν Κλεομενικῶν, μὴ παραλιπεῖν ἄσκεπτον τοῦτο τὸ μέρος, ἵνα μὴ τὸ ψεῦδος ἐν τοῖς συγγράμμασιν ἰσοδυναμοῦν ἀπολείπωμεν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν. [3] Καθόλου μὲν οὖν ὁ συγγραφεὺς οὗτος πολλὰ παρ' ὅλην τὴν πραγματείαν εἰκῇ καὶ ὡς ἔτυχεν εἴρηκεν.
>
> [1] Since, among the authors contemporary to Aratus, Phylarchus, who is of a contrary opinion and writes accounts opposite to Aratus' version in many circumstances, is deemed worthy of favour by some, [2] it might be useful, or better necessary as far as I am concerned, since I am following Aratus in his preferred version about the Cleomenic War, not to leave unconsidered this point here, so as not to allow falsehood to have the same strength as truth in historical works. [3] Indeed, in general, this historian here has said many things at random and as he happened to write them over the course of the whole work.

It appears clear that the cornerstone of his argument is the fact that Phylarchus did not comply with truth,[168] and Polybius is covertly accusing him of telling lies.

A corollary of Polybius' critique of Phylarchus is that historical works should not be characterized by the presence of falsehood: the historian should not assign equal power to both falsehood and truth. The use of the word ἰσοδυναμοῦν catches the attention, since, as we have seen, Polybius links a similar concept to truth in 13.5.4-6: this passage highlights the godlike feature of truth and underlines that it has the greatest δύναμις, a term which Polybius also connects with the historian's work. As 'priest of truth', Polybius cannot allow that lies are given the same authority as truth. In addition, it is interesting to underline that, in this passage of book 2, the verb is not constructed with the dative of the object to which the subject is equal, but with πρός followed by the accusative.[169] This construction suggests that the sense of Polybius' statement is that lies

necessity of interpreting the passage in the wider context of the debate in the antiquity about different genres.

[168] See Marincola 2013: 74 and 90, who points out that Polybius' remarks about historians writing 'tragically' refer to the "truth or falsity of their accounts".

[169] The verb is not common at all, and, before Polybius, is employed by Eudemus of Rhodes, a student of Aristotle (F 15 Wehrli), by Theophrastus (F 89.7 Wimmer), by Berossus of Babylonia (*FGrHist* 680 F 1b), and the stoic Chrysippus (F 247 Arnim

should not have the same strength not just "in comparison with", but also "in opposition with" truth.

The description of falsehood and truth as antagonistic concepts and the recourse to the word δύναμις are even more interesting when examined within the context of the whole passage. A few paragraphs later, Polybius restates the chief role of truth in history by opposing its aims to those of tragedy (2.56.11-12):

> [11] τὸ γὰρ τέλος ἱστορίας καὶ τραγῳδίας οὐ ταὐτόν, ἀλλὰ τοὐναντίον. ἐκεῖ μὲν γὰρ δεῖ διὰ τῶν πιθανωτάτων λόγων ἐκπλῆξαι καὶ ψυχαγωγῆσαι κατὰ τὸ παρὸν τοὺς ἀκούοντας, ἐνθάδε δὲ διὰ τῶν ἀληθινῶν ἔργων καὶ λόγων εἰς τὸν πάντα χρόνον διδάξαι καὶ πεῖσαι τοὺς φιλομαθοῦντας, [12] ἐπειδήπερ ἐν ἐκείνοις μὲν ἡγεῖται τὸ πιθανόν, κἂν ᾖ ψεῦδος, διὰ τὴν ἀπάτην τῶν θεωμένων, ἐν δὲ τούτοις τἀληθὲς διὰ τὴν ὠφέλειαν τῶν φιλομαθούντων.
>
> [11] For the purposes of history and tragedy are not the same, but the opposite. Indeed, in the latter it is necessary to astound the listeners by the means of the most credible accounts and to attract their souls instantly, in the former (it is necessary) to instruct and persuade forever the lovers of learning by the means of truthful actions and speeches, [12] since in the latter [tragedy] the leading principle is plausibility, even though it involves falsehood, for the sake of the deception of spectators, whereas in the former [history] (the leading principle is) truth for the sake of the utility to the lovers of learning.

The mention of τὸ πιθανόν once more leads us to think of 13.5.4-6, where the πιθανότητες are all marshalled on the side of falsehood against truth. One might easily infer that the reader, as soon as he goes on to book 13, will remember that such πιθανότητες, opposed to truth, are nothing more than lies and that they do not belong to history, which is the reason why they side with falsehood and not truth.

These two passages on truth from books 2 and 13 appear to be strongly connected: Phylarchus is not an authority, since his accounts are not true, but the opposite; consequently, he is not a proper historian. In Polybius' mind, Aratus might deserve to be called a historian, but Phylarchus definitely does not. One of the reasons why the latter

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[*Fragmenta logica et physica*], FF 12 and 30 Arnim [*Fragmenta Moralia*]). In Polybius, it occurs three times: 2.56.2, 11.1a.4, and 20.9.12.

is not to be preferred concerns the fact that he had contrary opinions and wrote accounts opposed to those of Aratus, ἀντιδοξῶν καὶ τἀναντία γράφων αὐτῷ (2.56.1). Fascinatingly, the term τοὐναντίον is used again later in the passage, when Polybius mentions τὸ πιθανόν and underlines that the scopes of history and tragedy are not the same, but the reverse, τὸ γὰρ τέλος ἱστορίας καὶ τραγῳδίας οὐ ταὐτόν, ἀλλὰ τοὐναντίον (2.56.11). So, if Phylarchus appears to be associated with tragedy, Aratus might perhaps seem to be linked with history. Nonetheless, although Polybius evokes the well-known Aristotelian distinction between history and tragedy (*Poet.* 1451b), his criticism is still of a historiographical nature. Furthermore, he does not mention a particular kind of history linked with tragedy, namely 'tragic history',[170] but he just states that elements typical of tragedy must not be present in history, since they are different genres with diverse aims. Clearly Polybius is conscious of Aristotle's discussion and, in a way, he engages with it, but this is not the sole or main purpose of his polemic here.

This idea seems to be confirmed by one further internal allusion. The verb ἀπολείπω is used alongside the term ἀλήθεια in another crucial passage at the beginning of book 1, where Polybius draws a clear demarcation line between universal and *kata meros* history (1.4.6-11). Here the verb is in the active form and ἀλήθεια is not directly related to it, but it is part of an infinitive clause and depends upon the verb ἰσοδυναμέω. Even so, one should not underestimate the visual and aural impact of the closeness of the two terms (as we have seen, the nexus only appears two other times in the *Histories*).[171] In the light of this consonance, then, it might be possible to speculate on the fact that Polybius is suggesting a link to what he writes in book 1 about histories *kata meros*. What

[170] Cf. Marincola 2003: 298-299, who affirms that we do not actually know of any tragic historian or work of tragic history, but the historians are, more generally, charged with writing in a tragic way.
[171] See *supra*, section 1.

is more, as has been highlighted, in that excerpt the Aristotelian debate about tragedy and history is also present, with Polybius overturning Aristotle's image of a tragedy which is universal and assigning it to the peculiar kind of history defined as 'universal'. Thus, it could be inferred that another reason (probably the most important one) why Phylarchus' history is not true and is not a proper history is that it is not universal.

Moreover, Polybius makes this concept clearer by means of several remarks about Phylarchus' work. First, the concept of usefulness (together with the importance of the historian's choice), already present in the criticism against Philinus and Fabius, recurs when Polybius underlines that Phylarchus wished to show the cruelty of Antigonus and the Macedonians (2.56.6), a useless thing to do in history (2.56.9), whereas Polybius sees the necessity for himself to judge rightly, διευκρινεῖν, such events (2.56.4). Second, Polybius recalls the importance of reporting the events adequately: in 2.56.10, he states that the task of history is to remember, to make mention (μνημονεύειν) of actions and words wholly according to truth, even though they happen to be very modest; in proper history there is no space for 'exaggeration' (αὔξησις), with which Phylarchus is charged by Polybius in 2.61.1.[172] Lastly, the mention of τερατεία, which appears twice as a peculiarity of Phylarchus style (2.58.12; 2.59.3), is associated with a reference to writing in tragic style as opposed to historical writing.

Another comment which appears to link this passage to the previously examined one (1.13) is the verb ἐξαριθμέω occurring twice in the case of Phylarchus (2.56.10 and 2.61.3). Indeed, into this defence of history Polybius also slips what appears to be one of its non-features, namely the simple enumeration of events, since he states that the

[172] This negative concept of exaggeration is also present in other parts of the *Histories*, for example in 12.28.10, 15.34.1, and 15.35.1, where Polybius employs the expression ὁ ἐπιμετρῶν λόγος, or in 15.36.1, where he uses τὸν μετ'αὐξήσεως λόγον. See Walbank 1967: 41.

historian should not just list the circumstances related to the existing state of affairs (τὰ παρεπόμενα τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις ἐξαριθμεῖσθαι), like authors of tragedies (2.56.10). Moreover, Phylarchus did not explain the cause or the way in which the events occurred (2.56.13), two of the essential characteristics of history that make it useful for the future. Again, Polybius makes a historiographical point: by placing the mention of tragedy soon after the word ἐξαριθμεῖσθαι – where, on the contrary, his readers are probably expecting the reference to writing κατὰ μέρος, since, in 1.13-14, the discussion on this action was part of a historiographical debate –, he is underlining that history, unlike tragedy, is not just an index of events, but a reflection upon them, with analysis of their causes and consequences. All the more so as, in 3.32.6-10, he will clearly state and specify that it is impossible to understand causes and consequences of an event from histories *kata meros*, but only universal history allows this kind of comprehension. Furthermore, exaggeration is not at all an attribute of history, as Thucydides had already pointed out.[173]

The conclusion of Polybius' analysis is that Phylarchus is a bad historian, or even better, he is not a proper historian since he lacks the key characteristics of the subject, and these are not the only historiographical elements missing in his account. He is the perfect example of what a historian should not be, and the accusations against him show what makes a historical account untrue: he neglects the examination and explanation of causes and outcomes, as we have seen, but he is also lacking in intelligence and expertise.[174] Indeed, he deprived his account of the consequences and of peculiar features of history (τὸ δ'ἀκόλουθον καὶ τὸ τῆς ἱστορίας ἴδιον ἀφεῖλεν), namely the praise and the mention of noteworthy choices regarding a course of action (2.61.6). According to Polybius, Phylarchus is confused about what should be recounted in history, since he

[173] Zucchelli 1985: 307-308; Marincola 2003: 300; Id. 2013: 77.
[174] 2.58.13; 2.62.2; 2.63.5.

seems to deem that writers should highlight unlawful actions, as if the enumeration of guilty deeds, τὸ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἐξαριθμεῖσθαι, belongs to history more than the display and approval of noble and just acts (2.61.2-3).[175] Again, the verb ἐξαριθμέω makes its appearance here, a term which gives the idea of itemizing without discernment and selection – indeed, Phylarchus has said things at random and as he happened to write them, εἰκῇ καὶ ὡς ἔτυχεν εἴρηκεν.

In this sense, the only possible kind of history is the universal one, because writers of histories *kata meros* are liable to include falsehoods,[176] which is what Polybius adumbrates in his distinction between history's leading principle, truth for the sake of students' utility (τἀληθὲς διὰ τὴν ὠφέλειαν τῶν φιλομαθούντων), and tragedy's leading principle, the probable, although false, for the sake of spectators' deceit (τὸ πιθανόν, κἂν ᾖ ψεῦδος, διὰ τὴν ἀπάτην τῶν θεωμένων).[177]

In the light of this analysis, it appears clear that Polybius' point is not tragedy in itself, but the exaggeration to which tragic accounts within history lead. Consequently, although the assessment of Aristotle's claim cannot be negated, nonetheless it represents no more than a corollary to the Polybian discussion.[178] Furthermore, if there is something about which Polybius agrees with Aristotle, this is the impossibility of having true knowledge from an account's particularity, as we have seen. However, according to the

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[175] The verb ἐπισημαίνω in its middle form might be translated as 'applaud, signify approval' (see LSJ and Mauersberger 2003 *s.v.*), and underlines the action of indicating something or someone to distinguish it from any other person or thing. Schweighäuser 1822 *s.v.* translates the word with a periphrasis, *prae ceteris notare, et scripto insignire*, thus giving the idea that the verb embraces both the action of making others note the deeds or events and the action of marking/making known them by the means of his writing. Before Polybius, who uses the verb 33 times, there are scarce occurrences of the verb, apart from 5 in Plato, 24 in Hippocrates, and 26 in Aristotle.

[176] Cf. 3.47.6, where Polybius will write that such historians are 'forced' (ἀναγκάζονται) to lie.

[177] 2.56.12.

[178] Cf. Marincola 2013: 86.

philosopher, history always regards the detail and the particular, whereas Polybius comes up with a way of writing history which is universal, τὸ καθόλου, like the Aristotelian tragedy, but even better than it, since tragedy is nevertheless tied up with the probable, whereas history is linked with truth and reality. Still, the best history has to be universal, not *kata meros* (which in Polybius' mind appears to be a detailed and particular account, and as such exaggerated as well), otherwise Aristotle would be right in 'despising' history, because this particular kind of history deals with the detail and the particular.

There is no doubt, then, that Polybius knew Aristotle's discussion of history and tragedy and that he subtly refers to it in order to attach greater importance to the genre he was cultivating himself, that is to say history.[179] Yet his starting point seems to be another one, related to his peculiar way of describing his philosophy of history: thus, he will use philosophical language and theories to express historiographical concepts, as we have already seen in the previously examined passages.

The first example of this peculiar way of dealing with historiographical discussion is represented by the reference to the spectators' deception, ἀπάτη, which is not Aristotelian at all, but it goes back to Plato[180], and Polybius' allegations about exaggeration, which, again, are not present among the elements of tragedy listed by Aristotle.[181] Furthermore, τερατεία is not a concept found in Aristotle, rather the philosopher sees it as a problem in tragedy.[182] In addition, according to Plato, poets are

[179] It is thought-provoking that Aristotle was using πιθανόν and δύναμις in association with tragedy (Walbank 1957: 262), whereas, in 13.5.4-6, Polybius states that it is history to have the μεγίστη δύναμις.
[180] On deception and lie connected with poetry in Plato, see Plebe 1960: 761-788. See also Zucchelli 1985: 305-306, who links the concept to Gorgias, and Marincola 2010: 457 and footnote 35, who states that "Aristotle does not emphasize the falsehood or deception of tragedy".
[181] Foulon 2008: 694.
[182] Marincola 2010: 453-454. In addition, Pédech 1989: 456 and footnote 19, underlines that while Polybius in 2.56.11-13 reproaches Phylarchus for having tried to raise anger and pity, such feelings are not present in the Aristotelian description of tragedy.

similar to painters who render things slight as regards truth (φαῦλα ποιεῖν πρὸς ἀλήθειαν) and cause people to have false beliefs.[183] For Plato, tragic poetry is a deformation of reality, that is of truth, and the poetic *mimemata* are three degrees away from truth:[184] the poetic imitation is not adequate also because generally what is imitated is not actually real.[185] This last assessment cannot but recall Polybius' remark at the beginning of book 1 about writers of histories *kata meros* who, like people who look at dismembered limbs of a body without getting the idea of its past liveliness, hold not the actual and complete truth, but an image of it (1.4.7-9), which – in Platonic terms – is basically like falsehood.

The second example is taken from 2.56.11, where Polybius underlines that history and tragedy have opposite aims, since tragedy needs to amaze (ἐκπλῆξαι) those who listen to it, the 'casual readers',[186] τοὺς ἀκούοντας, by the means of the most probable accounts (διὰ τῶν πιθανωτάτων λόγων), whereas history needs to teach and persuade forever those fond of learning, the 'serious students',[187] τοὺς φιλομαθοῦντας. Interestingly, it was Plato who determined the difference between the philosophers, the 'lovers of learning' who might be associated with the Polybian 'serious students', and those fond of hearing and of seeing, φιλήκοοι καὶ φιλοθεάμονες. What is more, the figure of the φιλοθεάμονες was actually invented by Plato.[188] It appears clear, then, that Polybius took inspiration from Plato, not only with regard to the idea of serious students as opposed to φιλήκοοι, but also, and more importantly, with regard to the Platonic definition of such figures as 'dreaming' men as opposed to the awake,[189] a concept found,

[183] *Rep.* 605 a. See Belfiore 1983: 40 and 44-46, where she shows that in Plato's mind poetry presents just *eidola aretes*.
[184] *Rep.* 596 c-598 b. See Palumbo 2013: 64.
[185] Salkever 1986: 278.
[186] Walbank 1957: 262.
[187] Walbank 1957: 262.
[188] Palumbo 2013: 67-68.
[189] *Rep*. 476 b-d. Cf. Palumbo 2013: 68.

as we have seen, in Polybius' accusation against the authors of histories *kata meros*.[190] Besides, the verb used by Plato in this passage of the *Republic*, ὀνειρώσσω, is the same as the one employed by Polybius in the above-mentioned passage on the opposition between universal history and histories *kata meros* (1.4.8): in describing the difference between the philosophers and the lovers of hearing and seeing, Plato makes Socrates explain that the latter are not able to see the beauty in itself and to appreciate its nature, although they can recognize the beauty of things, colours, voices, figures. Such people dream (ὀνειρώττειν), whereas philosophers are awake, as they are able to see both beauty in itself and the things participating in it, and also to realize that the two concepts are different. This image is evoked by Polybius' distinction between authors of histories *kata meros*, described as people who dream, and authors of universal history, the awake ones, if one follows this opposition. Furthermore, the former do not know the real truth, but only an image of it, since – to speak in Platonic terms – they are able to see only the things which participate in it, but not truth in itself and in its entirety.[191]

The last example of the Polybian approach to the discussion of historiographical matters regards Polybius' statement about Phylarchus' blindness:

> ὧν οὐδεμίαν ἐποιήσατο μνήμην Φύλαρχος, τυφλώττων, ὥς γ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, περὶ τὰ κάλλιστα καὶ μάλιστα συγγραφεῖ καθήκοντα τῶν ἔργων.
>
> But Phylarchus did not mention any of such things, because he is blind, at least so it seems to me, regarding the most beautiful actions and those which mostly suit a historical work (2.61.11-12).

[190] 1.4.8. See *supra*, section 1.

[191] Polybius will again refer to this Platonic distinction in 7.7.6-8, where once more he will criticize writers of histories *kata meros* because, since their topics are limited and narrow, they are compelled to render small events great. He also complains that their histories, though *kata meros*, would have been more useful if they had chosen different protagonists, such as Hiero II and Gelo II, who were good rulers: such accounts would have been more pleasant to those fond of hearing (τοῖς φιληκόοις) and more useful to those fond of learning (τοῖς φιλομαθοῦσι). I shall analyse this passage later in the chapter.

The key point here is that Phylarchus is not just blind, he is blind in relation to what pertains to history. In addition, the reference to the absence of sight might relate, yet again, this passage to the critique against histories *kata meros* in 1.4 and 1.13-14. In both passages, as it has been stressed, great importance is attached to the sense of sight, not only in relation to the simile about history without truth as a living being without eyes (1.14.6),[192] but also in relation to the idea of the urgency to have an overall view of the events, which only universal history can offer. Thus, Phylarchus is not at all a proper historian, because he lacks this particular sense, this overall view, which might link the Polybian statement to the opposition *kata meros*/universal history. What is more, one might reflect upon the fact that if someone is blind, this means that he does not see the light, which in Polybius' reasoning is truth, as we have seen in the commentary on 1.4.7-10, where the opposition light and darkness appears more clearly,[193] and on 13.5.4-6, where the image of the journey from darkness to light will occur.[194] In the passage of book 1, Polybius will reveal that truth has to be discovered, just as Plato's truth, from whom Polybius draws inspiration, and that the reader needs to be guided during the journey towards truth: this guide, in his mind, is the historian, as he states, for example, in 1.15.13.[195]

This exegesis reveals that Polybius sets various passages in dialogue with each other, spreading his work with internal allusions to let his reader gather all the relevant

[192] On the quasi-identification of sight and truth, see Roveri 1964: 60-62, who underlines that sight is "the first condition" of the historical verification, which acquires truth through sight. On the link between 'visuality and truth', see Wiater 2017: 205-209. More generally, on sight in Polybius, see Davidson 1991: 10-24.
[193] See *supra* section 1.
[194] See *supra* chapter 1, section 3.
[195] ἡμεῖς δ' ἐπειδὴ τοὺς ἁρμόζοντας πεποιήμεθα λόγους ὑπὲρ τῆς παρεκβάσεως, ἐπανελθόντες ἐπὶ τὰς πράξεις πειρασόμεθα προστιθέντες ἀεὶ τὸν ἑξῆς λόγον εἰς ἀληθινὰς ἐννοίας ἄγειν διὰ βραχέων τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας ὑπὲρ τοῦ προειρημένου πολέμου.

information, as we have seen in the criticism against Phylarchus, where he ties together passages from book 1, 2, and 13.

In the light of these reflections, it might be inferred that Polybius' preliminary topic appears to be not the need to reply to Aristotle's critique, but Plato's criticism against poetry, especially tragic poetry,[196] to which Aristotle was responding.[197] As a result, he probably inserts himself into this tradition,[198] resuming Plato's ideas on poetry and tragedy,[199] and applying them to a certain kind of historiography, that is to say histories *kata meros*.

An additional remark might be considered as further evidence that Polybius does not regard Phylarchus as a follower of Aristotle. According to Polybius, Phylarchus has inserted not only a whole falsehood in his account, but also an unlikely falsehood just for the sake of sensationalism (2.58.12-13). It has been already showed that the concept of πιθανόν belongs to tragedy. Moreover, according to Aristotle, in tragedy the probable is powerful (1451b: πιθανόν ἐστι τὸ δυνατόν). Thus, the fact that Phylarchus has invented a ψεῦδος ἀπίθανον and has made use of τερατεία – another feature rejected by Aristotle, as we have seen – demonstrates that Polybius is not criticizing the philosopher or tragedy in itself, but that he mentions tragedy only as opposed to history and is just defending his own genre, of which Phylarchus is said to be a leading figure.[200] As a consequence,

[196] Belfiore 1983: 44, underlines that "Plato's main concern is with *tragic* poetry".
[197] On the idea of an Aristotelian response to Plato in matter of tragedy, see Ničev 1964: 229-252, who illustrates that a consistent part of the *Poetics* is a critique against Plato; Zucchelli 1985: 303; Salkever 1986: 274-303; Donini 2004: 43-52.
[198] Marincola 2013: 90, states that the critique against Phylarchus should not be examined as a reference to Aristotle, but as a "contribution to the ongoing debate" regarding different genres.
[199] Marincola 2010: 457, stresses the importance of deception in Polybius' remarks and the fact that "It is the whole tradition of poetry as «deceit», beginning with Gorgias (or indeed even Hesiod) and culminating in Plato, that seems to animate Polybius here".
[200] 2.56.1.

Phylarchus is neither a historian nor a good liar, since no one would be persuaded by his improbable mendacities.

As a result, one might argue that, if Polybius uses terms conceptually connected with tragedy, the reason lies in the fact that he places Phylarchus at the same level as poets, and he charges him with what Plato was accusing poets, but his main point is still historiographical. He needs to demolish Phylarchus' historiographical dimension, since he is one of his rivals. This may be the reason why he uses the verb εἰσάγω, 'to bring a play on the stage'[201] to describe Phylarchus' work (2.56.7): Polybius has to downplay him, namely to eliminate everything historical Phylarchus has. Consequently, he associates him with the tragic poets of Plato, reaffirming, at the same time and as a corollary, the superiority of history over tragedy.

4. Universal history and 'true' knowledge

The hypothesis that the object of Polybius' criticism against Phylarchus was mainly history *kata meros* rather than 'tragic' history might find confirmation in 3.32.10, where the former is openly discussing about the difference between *kata meros* and universal history:

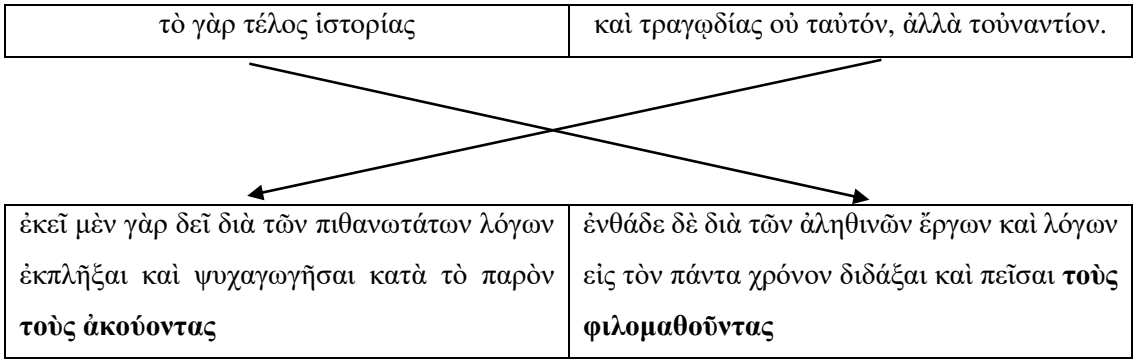
> ὅσῳ διαφέρει τὸ μαθεῖν τοῦ μόνον ἀκοῦσαι, τοσούτῳ καὶ τὴν ἡμετέραν ἱστορίαν ὑπολαμβάνω διαφέρειν τῶν ἐπὶ μέρους συντάξεων.
>
> The difference between my kind of history and histories *kata meros*, I suppose, is as great as the one between learning and hearing alone.

Here, Polybius underlines the difference between *kata meros* and universal histories with respect to their aims, which appear to involve the readers of such histories as well: indeed, the actions of learning and hearing require a deliverer and a receiver. Almost the very

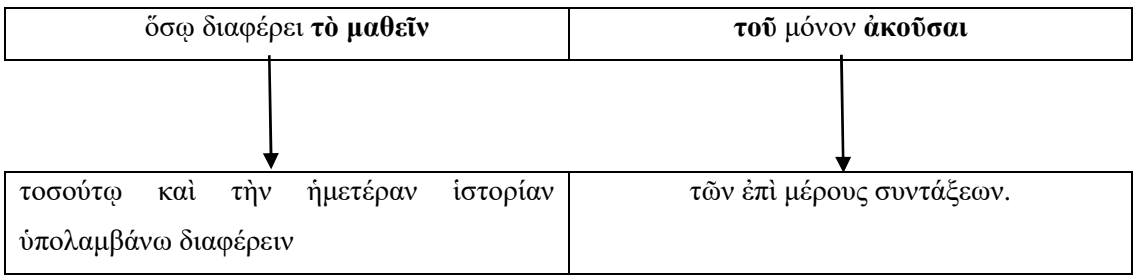
[201] Cf. Walbank 1957: 261.

same contrast had been already employed in 2.56.11, as it has been showed in the previous section, where Polybius had drawn a clear-cut demarcation line between τοὺς ἀκούοντας and τοὺς φιλομαθοῦντας, with the former being the users of tragedy and the latter the users of history, especially of a certain kind of history, the universal one. Both remarks come at the end of an argumentation as a conclusive explanation of his reasoning. Thus, by changing only one of the terms for comparison (τῶν ἐπὶ μέρους συντάξεων instead of τραγῳδίας), and by defining the other one more precisely (τὴν ἡμετέραν ἱστορίαν, which of course means 'universal history' instead of the more generic ἱστορίας), Polybius is again giving hints to his readers in order to decipher his message: indeed, as he often underlines, the reader needs to be guided throughout the particular and complicated matter that is historiography.[202]

2.56.11:



3.32.10:



[202] See *supra*, Introduction.

In this particular case of book 3, the clue is given by the usage of two terms recalling those used in the passage of book 2 (see the above diagram): in fact, he makes use of the same verb, ἀκούω, as for the first term for comparison, and of two very similar verbs – which share the root –, φιλομαθέω in book 2 and μανθάνω in book 3, as for the second term for comparison. In both cases, these verbs are substantivized, but in different moods, participle in book 2, infinitive in book 3. Furthermore, in book 3 he does not fully explain what the difference between learning and hearing means, probably because he does not need to do so any more, as he has already explained this concept in the previous book, and his readers are now fully aware of the distinction.[203] Lastly, he also changes his rhetorical devices: in book 2 he ends with the reference to learning and hearing, while in book 3 he starts with it; moreover, he transforms the chiasmus of book 2 into a parallelism in book 3: in fact, in book 2 he says that the scope of history and tragedy is opposite, and, then, he writes first about the simple listeners, who are related to tragedy, and last about the 'lovers of learning', who are related to history; in book 3, he puts learning first and hearing second, and, in the second part of the simile, he puts universal history first and history *kata meros* second.

This playing with chiasm and parallelism, which means playing with the disposition and placing of the words, also seems to mirror another kind of position, namely the distance between universal and *kata meros* history, a concept which evokes what Polybius has already said about authors of histories *kata meros* in 1.4.7-10. The verb διαφέρω, in the above passage of book 3, with its preposition διά, gives the idea of distinction,[204] thus the idea that *kata meros* and universal history occupy a different position, and, indeed, in 1.4.7-10, they are also in a different position with respect to

[203] The comment in book 2 takes 9 lines in the Teubner edition, whereas in book 3 only 3 lines.
[204] For the value of διά, see Chantraine 1968: 275.

truth, since the authors of histories *kata meros* are extremely far from truth, λίαν πολύ τι τῆς ἀληθείας ἀπελείποντο, with the preposition ἀπό giving the idea of separation or moving away. Lastly, in the passage about Phylarchus in 2.56.11, there seems to be a certain distance between history and tragedy as well, since the ἐναντίος used to describe their scope is an adjective of quality as well as an adjective indicating the place or the position. Thus, the brief remark of book 3 seems a sort of hub of book 1 and book 2, bringing together concepts previously expressed. All the more so as, in the same passage in book 3, Polybius resumes what he has said in 1.4.7-9 about the lack of an overall view in histories *kata meros* (3.32.8-9):

> [8] ταῦτα δὴ πάντα διὰ μὲν τῶν γραφόντων καθόλου δυνατὸν ἐπιγνῶναι καὶ μαθεῖν, διὰ δὲ τῶν τοὺς πολέμους αὐτούς, οἷον (τὸν) Περσικὸν ἢ τὸν Φιλιππικόν, ἀδύνατον, [9] εἰ μὴ καὶ τὰς παρατάξεις τις ἀναγινώσκων αὐτὰς ἐξ ὧν ἐκεῖνοι γράφουσιν ὑπολαμβάνει σαφῶς ἐπεγνωκέναι καὶ τὴν τοῦ πολέμου τοῦ σύμπαντος οἰκονομίαν καὶ διάθεσιν.
>
> [8] Indeed, it is possible to comprehend and learn all these events through the works of those writing universal history, whereas it is impossible to do so through those who wrote just on those particular wars, such as the war with Perseus or that with Philip, [9] unless someone, reading about the battles themselves on which such historians write, assumes that they have clearly understood also the arrangement and the progress of the whole war.

While in 1.4.7-9 he has used two similes, one from a geographical standpoint (one is not able to understand the entire world just looking at some cities), and the other from a physical perspective (one cannot infer the liveliness of a body just looking at its scattered limbs), here he is more specific: he still gives an example of how histories *kata meros* are incomplete, but his explanation is entirely related to the writing of history; in this case, his example is a practical one. Indeed, he needs to be practical, as all the chapter is a series of practicalities about the difference between *kata meros* and universal history.

First of all, according to Polybius, those who believe that his history is hard to come by and hard to read (δύσκτητον […] καὶ δυς(ανά)γνωστον) due to the mass and the extension of its books are wrong (διὰ τὸ πλῆθος καὶ τὸ μέγεθος τῶν βύβλων ἀγνοεῖν),

since it is easier to read 40 books reporting events linked to one another than reading different books on different topics. Second, he adds, such histories are even many times larger than (πολλαπλασίους) his history, and there is nothing sure in them: in fact, the majority of the writers does not give the same account on the same events; they pass over τὰς καταλλήλους τῶν πράξεων (the events which are related to one another)[205], which have to be observed together and compared by juxtaposition, since the examination of the events becomes of another sort when compared to an opinion based on separate and disjoined parts;[206] lastly, they are not at all able to touch upon the most important events (τῶν δὲ κυριωτάτων μηδὲ ψαύειν αὐτοὺς δύνασθαι τὸ παράπαν).

Thus, what Polybius is doing in this chapter is to re-state some important points of his discussion which are scattered in the first two books. Moreover, the placement of this chapter is particularly pronounced because book 3 is actually the book where the main narrative of the object of the *Histories* starts, whereas the first two books give the account of the introductory events.

The first point, which is mainly about the importance of an overall view, has been already highlighted by Polybius in the first book, in 1.4.6-7, where with two similes, as it has been underlined, he explains the concept, and in 1.14.6, when he again uses a physical simile, stating that history without truth is like a living creature without eyes. This last remark is thought-provoking, as it appears to be linked to the concept of overall view given by the sole universal history, as he also emphasizes in 1.4.1: διὰ τῆς ἱστορίας

[205] LSJ translate the adjective κατάλληλος 'one after another, in succession', but also 'set over against one another' or 'parallel'. Walbank 1957: 562 translates the same adjective in 5.31.5 'events occurring simultaneously' and refers the translation to this passage as well. Mohm 1977: 82 also understands the adjective as 'at the same time' ("gleichzeitig"). Cf. Schweighäuser 1822, *s.v.* ("*de tempore, i.q.* σύγχρονος"), and Mauersberger 2006, *s.v.* ("gleichzeitig").

[206] 3.32.5: ὧν ἐκ παραθέσεως συνθεωρουμένων καὶ συγκρινομένων ἀλλοιοτέρας ἕκαστα τυγχάνει δοκιμασίας τῆς κατὰ μέρος διαλήψεως.

ὑπὸ μίαν σύνοψιν ἀγαγεῖν. Moreover, he charges Phylarchus with the accusation of being blind (2.61.12: τυφλώττων), which, in other words, means to lack sight, like the useless living creature of 1.14.6. So, if a historical account does not offer an overall view of the events, it is lacking in sight and, consequently, in truth. The second point, the fact that histories *kata meros* do not have the same versions of the events, might be traced in what Polybius says about Philinus and Fabius in book 1, when he let infer that such historians contradict one another as Philinus was always praising the Carthaginians and Fabius the Romans (1.14.3), as well as in book 2, when he says that Phylarchus is often ἀντιδοξῶν and writes accounts in contradiction to those of Aratus (2.56.1); in addition, in 3.26.3, he explicitly affirms that Philinus 'boldly wrote things contrary' (ἐθάρρησε γράψαι τἀναντία) to the pieces of information contained in the pacts with the Carthaginians. The last point seems to adumbrate the concept of the importance of the historian's choice of the topic or events to narrate,[207] and – above all – how these events should be narrated, namely without a simple enumeration, which has been encountered in the passage about Philinus and Fabius again, and which also comes back in the critique against Phylarchus.

But the reader's journey does not stop here, it continues undeterred.

[207] On the concept of *Selektionsprinzip*, see Petzold 1969: 135-149. See also Tuci 2010: 59-116.

5. The 'tragedy' of writing histories *kata meros* – part two: Polybius against the historians of Hannibal

If true knowledge comes solely from universal history, since it alone gives the overall view associated with truth and a unified version of the account of the events (and also the sole version of it), consequently non-universal historians will write false and contradictory accounts, as can be inferred from the passages previously examined. Thus, when Polybius' readers read – no more than 15 chapters later – that some historians have given a false account of the events and have written contradictory things (3.47.6), they cannot but recall the previous passages:

> Ἔνιοι δὲ τῶν γεγραφότων περὶ τῆς ὑπερβολῆς ταύτης, βουλόμενοι τοὺς ἀναγινώσκοντας ἐκπλήττειν τῇ περὶ τῶν προειρημένων τόπων παραδοξολογίᾳ, λανθάνουσιν ἐμπίπτοντες εἰς δύο τὰ πάσης ἱστορίας ἀλλοτριώτατα· καὶ γὰρ ψευδολογεῖν καὶ μαχόμενα γράφειν αὐτοῖς ἀναγκάζονται.
>
> Some of those who have written about this crossing [over the mountains], wishing to amaze the readers with a tale on the marvel of the above-mentioned places, do not realize that they fall into two of the most alien things to history: indeed, they are compelled to recount false tales and to write accounts which are in contradiction among themselves.

Polybius' assessment refers to certain unnamed historians, whom at the beginning of the book (3.6.1) he describes as Ἔνιοι δὲ τῶν συγγεγραφότων τὰς κατ' Ἀννίβαν πράξεις, "some of those who have written about the deeds concerning Hannibal".[208] Among such deeds there was Hannibal's crossing of the Alps in 218 B.C., which must have been such an extraordinary deed if it had caught attention of those historians. Polybius tries to diminish its marvelousness, assigning it the character of an action of ordinary

[208] Arnold 1939: 18, Mazzarino 1947: 105 and 115, and Pédech 1964: 180, believed that Polybius was referring to Chaireas (*FGrHist* 177) and Sosylos (*FGrHist* 176), while Hesselbarth 1889: 13, Meyer 1924: 374, vol. 2, and Meister 1975: 152-159 thought of Silenos (*FGrHist* 175).

administration: there is nothing special in Hannibal's actions, but the main point is the intention of his 'court historians' to grab their readers' interest.

Our historian sprinkles his remarks with words acting as indicators of a deeper and larger discussion that started in book 1 and continued in books 2 and 3. Immediately, Polybius' reader understands that the crux of the matter does not solely regard such historians taken by themselves. Indeed, he starts his assessments by placing the generic term for readers ἀναγινώσκοντας next to the word ἐκπλήττειν: the readers of 'Hannibal's historians' are common ones, they belong to a lower level than that of Polybius' readers, the 'lovers of learning'.[209] This statement together with the willingness of these authors to shock their readers cannot but recall what has been underlined in 2.56.11, where the generic term for spectators (and/or readers) and the verb ἐκπλήσσω have been linked: we have already analysed this passage about the opposite aims of history and tragedy, where the role of tragedy is to amaze spectators, ἐκπλῆξαι […] τοὺς ἀκούοντας.[210] Thus, a shrewd reader immediately reconnects this passage with the previous one, and infers that, here, an important point will be, yet again, the opposition between the Polybian way of writing history and other kinds of histories.

The concept of ἀλλοτριώτατα (the actions of lying and writing contradictory accounts as consequences of the anxiety to astound the reader) is highlighted by the term λανθάνουσιν. Of course, the verb λανθάνω bears the meaning of "not realize that", but it also holds the power of a brilliant suggestion, a nice allusion to truth, ἀλήθεια, which is probably formed from the root of λανθάνω preceded by the privative α ('unforgotten, unconcealed'), at least according to ancient etymologists as we have seen.[211] Moreover,

[209] 2.56.11-12. See *supra* section 3.
[210] We will learn later in the book, after 10 chapters, that the term παραδοξολογίᾳ is not positive as well: in fact, in 3.58.9 it will be associated with τερατείας and opposed to truth.
[211] See *supra*, chapter 1, section 1.

since the verb also means (in the middle and passive) 'to forget', the suggestion might be even stronger, as the role of history is the reverse of it, its task is 'to remember', an idea already underlined in 2.56.10, where the verb μνημονεύω is associated with both history and truth, and opposed to a synonym of the verb ἐκπλήσσω (used here in 3.47.6), namely the verb ἐπιπλήσσω, which Casaubon anyway emendated in the form ἐκπλήττειν (with which Walbank agreed):[212] the historian's duty, he states, is to remember the actions and the speeches according to truth, and not to amaze his readers.[213] All the more so as the word game remember/forget paralleled by history/non-history and truth/untruth is actually made explicit in this passage by the recourse to the term ψευδολογεῖν, one of the two ἀλλοτριώτατα. Here Polybius takes a step forward and adds an additional detail for the readers to his line of reasoning.

In addition, the idea of contradiction (μαχόμενα γράφειν αὐτοῖς) contained in the second of the two aspects which are the most alien to history recalls the assessments contained both in the first[214] and in the second book.[215] Nevertheless, the passage here examined slightly differs from the others: if in the excerpts of the first two books the matter about contradictions is between different historians, here Polybius takes a step forward to affirm that Hannibal's historians contradict themselves. Thus, they might appear even worse than the historians mentioned before, as they write accounts which are contradictory in the same historical work: if there has been a climax, for sure it is a negative one.

Furthermore, some attention should be devoted to the expression τὰ πάσης ἱστορίας ἀλλοτριώτατα: both falsehood and contradictory statements have nothing to do

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[212] Walbank 1957: 261.
[213] δεῖ τοιγαροῦν οὐκ ἐπιπλήττειν τὸν συγγραφέα […], καθάπερ οἱ τραγῳδιογράφοι, τῶν δὲ πραχθέντων καὶ ῥηθέντων κατ' ἀλήθειαν αὐτῶν μνημονεύειν πάμπαν.
[214] About Philinus and Fabius: 1.14.3; cf. 3.26.3.
[215] About Phylarchus: 2.56.1.

with history, they are the most alien to it, they do not belong to the realm of history. In this case, the idea of distance and distinction between history and falsehood – already found in 1.4.8 about *kata meros* and universal history, in 1.14.3 and 3.26.3 about Philinus and Fabius, in 2.56.1 about Phylarchus, and in 3.32.10 about the difference between *kata meros* and universal history yet again – is bolstered and better explained: now the concept of falsehood is elucidated as something which does not pertain to history at all. If in the previous passages there may still be a glimmer of hope that the distance could be shortened, here the two separate paths of history and falsehood are described as being parallel in the sense that they will never intersect. Indeed, as Polybius specifies at the end of the chapter, the ἀλλοτριώτατα are ἁμαρτήματα,[216] thus an infringement of the laws of history, even a desecration,[217] if one thinks about the passage in 13.5.4-6, where truth is represented as the most powerful deity, as we have seen.[218]

The last point to raise about 3.47.6 is related to the idea of compulsion expressed by the term ἀναγκάζονται. Polybius seems to affirm that, since they decided to amaze their readers, they are now forced by their choice and they cannot overcome its consequences: they are compelled to lie and contradict themselves. They are no more the masters of their own work, they are bound to lie, whereas, in history, truth has the greatest power of all, as is clear from 13.5.4-6, and the historian is its instrument. Even though the lie is not their fault, technically speaking, their guilt is nevertheless their choice to wish to astound their readers.

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[216] 3.47.9: ὁμολογουμένως ἐκ τούτων εἰς ἑκάτερον τῶν προειρημένων ἁμαρτημάτων ἐμπίπτουσι.

[217] Cf. Mauersberger 2000, *s.v.*, where the term is intended as "Fehler, Verstoß, Sünde" ('error, violation, sin') or "Frevel" ('sacrilege'). He also explains the translation 'Sünde' connecting it with ψεῦδος and quoting 12.11.8, where Polybius is reporting a statement by Timaeus: Τίμαιός φησι μέγιστον ἁμάρτημα περὶ τὴν ἱστορίαν εἶναι τὸ ψεῦδος.

[218] See *supra*, chapter 1, section 3.

The allusion, made by Polybius at the beginning of the discussion, to the relationship between tragedy and a certain way of writing history, contained in the juxtaposition of the concepts of the reader's astonishment and of 'simple readers' is made clearer in the two paragraphs which follow the passage at 3.47.6:

> [7] ἅμα μὲν γὰρ τὸν Ἀννίβαν ἀμίμητόν τινα παρεισάγοντες στρατηγὸν καὶ τόλμῃ καὶ προνοίᾳ τοῦτον ὁμολογουμένως ἀποδεικνύουσιν ἡμῖν ἀλογιστότατον, [8] ἅμα δὲ καταστροφὴν οὐ δυνάμενοι λαμβάνειν οὐδ' ἔξοδον τοῦ ψεύδους θεοὺς καὶ θεῶν παῖδας εἰς πραγματικὴν ἱστορίαν παρεισάγουσιν.
>
> [7] Indeed, while they introduce [on the stage] Hannibal as an inimitable commander both in courage and in foresight, admittedly, they also show him to us as the most inconsiderate of all, and, at the same time, [8] since they are not able to come to a conclusion nor to a way out regarding their lie, they introduce [on the stage] gods and gods' sons in what should be factual history.[219]

The verb παρεισάγω, which seems to frame Polybius' remarks as it appears almost at the beginning of paragraph 7 and at the end of paragraph 8, strongly recalls the εἰσάγω used in the case of Phylarchus (2.56.7), who – as we have seen – was bringing a tragedy on the stage. Interestingly, Polybius inserts two words semantically and technically pertaining to the sphere of tragedy within the above-mentioned frame created by παρεισάγοντες and παρεισάγουσιν: καταστροφὴν, which indicates the denouement,[220] one of the characteristics of a play, and ἔξοδον, which is used to define the end of a tragedy.[221]

Polybius, then, implies that such writers are no more proper historians than Phylarchus, Philinus or Fabius. He then proceeds to declare this openly at 3.48.6, where his assessment leaves no shadow of a doubt: they did not act as historians, οὐχ

[219] 3.47.7-8.
[220] Walbank 1957: 382.
[221] LSJ, *s.v.*

ἱστορήσαντες.[222] Although, in this case, the technical verb is not referred to history in itself, but Polybius is affirming that such historians, who described the territory as isolated and hard to cross, did not inquire into the fact that the Celts living along the Rhone had actually crossed the Alps before Hannibal (3.48.6), it is nonetheless meaningful that the verb indicating the work of the historian is used here. Moreover, one might reflect upon the fact that such historians did not analyse topics related to the Celts probably because this matter was not part of their monograph's topic, strictly speaking. Therefore, as far as one might understand from Polybius' phrasing, such writers, who did not examine or inquire into the facts, do not deserve to be called historians.

What is more, Polybius piles it on by accentuating that they do not know (οὐκ εἰδότες) that there is a number of tribes living in the Alps, and that they ignore (ἀγνοοῦντες) everything he has explained before (3.48.7). No wonder that such writers are ignorant in Polybius' mind: as their readers are not 'lovers of learning', inevitably writers who address such an audience are not 'learned'. Besides, before them, Phylarchus had been accused of ἄγνοια twice.[223] Lastly, the use of οἶδα to indicate that such historians were unaware of the tribes living in the region of the Alps is equally evocative: indeed, as the verb is formed from the same root of ὁράω, and, in this specific passage about geography, the idea of seeing behind the verb is equally applicable, what emerges is another closeness to Phylarchus, since Hannibal's historians are equally blind. Even more so as Polybius underlines at the end of the chapter (3.48.12):

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[222] 3.48.6-7: οὐχ ἱστορήσαντες γὰρ ὅτι συμβαίνει τοὺς Κελτοὺς τοὺς παρὰ τὸν Ῥοδανὸν ποταμὸν οἰκοῦντας οὐχ ἅπαξ οὐδὲ δὶς πρὸ τῆς Ἀννίβου παρουσίας, οὐδὲ μὴν πάλαι προσφάτως δέ, μεγάλοις στρατοπέδοις ὑπερβάντας τὰς Ἄλπεις παρατετάχθαι μὲν Ῥωμαίοις, συνηγωνίσθαι δὲ Κελτοῖς τοῖς τὰ περὶ τὸν Πάδον πεδία κατοικοῦσι, καθάπερ ἡμεῖς ἐν τοῖς πρὸ τούτων ἐδηλώσαμεν, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις οὐκ εἰδότες ὅτι πλεῖστον ἀνθρώπων φῦλον κατ' αὐτὰς οἰκεῖν συμβαίνει τὰς Ἄλπεις, ἀλλ' ἀγνοοῦντες ἕκαστα τῶν εἰρημένων ἥρω τινά φασιν ἐπιφανέντα συνυποδεῖξαι τὰς ὁδοὺς αὐτοῖς.
[223] 2.58.13 and 2.62.2.

> ἡμεῖς δὲ περὶ τούτων εὐθαρσῶς ἀποφαινόμεθα διὰ τὸ περὶ τῶν πράξεων παρ᾽αὐτῶν ἱστορηκέναι τῶν παρατετευχότων τοῖς καιροῖς, τοὺς δὲ τόπους κατωπτευκέναι καὶ τῇ διὰ τῶν Ἄλπεων αὐτοὶ κεχρῆσθαι πορείᾳ γνώσεως ἕνεκα καὶ θέας.
>
> On these topics, I boldly show off because I have inquired about the actions from men present on that occasion, because I myself have closely observed the places, and because I myself have made the journey throughout the Alps to learn and to see.

Thus, while the afore-mentioned writers are not proper historians, they are ignorant and blind, he performs the right procedure of inquiry, he knows how to write history (ἱστορηκέναι), he is able to see (κατωπτευκέναι, θέας) and he is learned (γνώσεως). Again, he is drawing a clear-cut demarcation line between his own way of writing history and others' ways of doing so.[224] Moreover, such a tiny topic, as the Celts crossing the Alps might be, could also be regarded as a work *kata meros* and be put in relation to Polybius' assessments relative to the *kata meros* theme at the beginning of his work, where he alludes to past paradigms such as the Persian Wars or the Peloponnesian War.[225]

Hence, after he has disseminated his clues by using ἀναγινώσκοντας ἐκπλήττειν, τὰ πάσης ἱστορίας ἀλλοτριώτατα, ψευδολογεῖν, μαχόμενα γράφειν, παρεισάγοντες and παρεισάγουσιν, καταστροφήν, and ἔξοδον τοῦ ψεύδους, and he has made his reader aware of what is happening and what his point is, finally he specifies (3.48.8-9):

> [8] ἐξ ὧν εἰκότως ἐμπίπτουσιν εἰς τὸ παραπλήσιον τοῖς τραγῳδιογράφοις. καὶ γὰρ ἐκείνοις πᾶσιν αἱ καταστροφαὶ τῶν δραμάτων προσδέονται θεοῦ καὶ μηχανῆς διὰ τὸ τὰς πρώτας ὑποθέσεις ψευδεῖς καὶ παραλόγους λαμβάνειν, [9] τούς τε συγγραφέας ἀνάγκη τὸ παραπλήσιον πάσχειν καὶ ποιεῖν ἥρωάς τε καὶ θεοὺς ἐπιφαινομένους, ἐπειδὰν τὰς ἀρχὰς ἀπιθάνους καὶ ψευδεῖς ὑποστήσωνται.

[224] Also, such historians do not know how to use the 'demonstration', since they do not show truth or real facts, as Polybius' *apodeiktike historia* does, but, as we have seen, they show their protagonist as "the most inconsiderate of all" (3.47.7: ἀποδεικνύουσιν ἡμῖν ἀλογιστότατον). Thus, their procedure is completely wrong, in Polybius' mind.
[225] 1.2.1-7.

> [8] For this, as was to be expected, they run into something similar to the writers of tragedies. Indeed, all of them, to end their dramas, need a *deus ex machina*, because they choose false and unreasonable premises, [9] and such writers are forced to experience the same issue and to make heroes and gods appear, since they have conceived unlikely and false beginnings.

In a sort of ring composition, Polybius picks up the terminology he has used at the beginning of the discussion. In fact, he refers again to the denouement (αἱ καταστροφαί), but this time he clearly relates them to the writers of tragedies, as well as to the employment of a *deus ex machina*. Thus, basically, he is clarifying that what he has said before about Hannibal's historians was actually connected to a certain way of writing history, the way of Phylarchus, Philinus or Fabius. Even more so as he parallels such historians with writers of tragedies, and he reaffirms the concept of compulsion by recalling once again falsehood and the ἐπιφάνεια of heroes and gods (ἐπιφαινομένους). Furthermore, and more importantly, he mentions again the concept of unlikeliness, which – as we have seen – was already present in the critique against Phylarchus (2.58.13) and was a characteristic not envisaged in tragedy, at least according to Aristotle. Interestingly, in both passages falsehood and unlikeliness are placed close to one another: in 2.58.13, Phylarchus had invented an unlikely falsehood (τὸ ψεῦδος ἀπίθανον), here such historians came up with unlikely and false premises (3.48.9: τὰς ἀρχὰς ἀπιθάνους καὶ ψευδεῖς).

Thus, this is the last hint with which Polybius provides his readers: apart from the simile of the writers of tragedies, he inserts another clue, namely the adjective ἀπίθανος, which strongly links the passage not to a generic polemic on the difference between history and tragedy, but to that particular passage regarding the critique against Phylarchus, where one of the main points was to criticize his way of writing history, a

way *kata meros*. One might easily infer that even the historians at hand wrote histories *kata meros*,[226] in all probability works on Hannibal's expedition.

Polybius' narrative technique is again the incarnation of what he has already written regarding the fact that the historian has to guide his readers. Thus, he starts by providing them with hints alluding to tragedy, but also to the fact that the historians he is dealing with are not proper historians, that they are blind and ignorant. Then, – coup de theatre! – he expressly mentions the writers of tragedies, when his readers have already inferred everything. Finally, he repeats and reinforces the language he has previously used.

6. The tragic accounts on the death of Hieronymus

In the passages previously examined, Polybius did not put in direct connection histories *kata meros* and tragic accounts, at least not in a completely overt way, as we have seen. He did give clues, he created a sort of itinerary, and he has held his readers' hands during this path. In book 7, the metaphorical route seems to come to an end, as Polybius will explicitly and openly link tragic accounts and histories *kata meros* (7.7.1-2).

> [1] *Ὅτι τινὲς τῶν λογογράφων τῶν ὑπὲρ τῆς καταστροφῆς τοῦ Ἱερωνύμου γεγραφότων* πολύν τινα πεποίηνται λόγον καὶ πολλὴν τινα διατέθεινται τερατείαν, ἐξηγούμενοι μὲν τὰ πρὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς αὐτοῖς[227] γενόμενα σημεῖα καὶ τὰς ἀτυχίας τὰς Συρακοσίων, [2] τραγῳδοῦντες δὲ τὴν ὠμότητα τῶν τρόπων καὶ τὴν ἀσέβειαν τῶν πράξεων, ἐπὶ δὲ πᾶσι τὸ παράλογον καὶ τὸ δεινὸν τῶν περὶ τὴν καταστροφὴν αὐτοῦ συμβάντων, ὥστε μήτε Φάλαριν μήτ' Ἀπολλόδωρον μήτ' ἄλλον μηδένα γεγονέναι τύραννον ἐκείνου πικρότερον.

[226] Cf. Mazzarino 1947: 105 and 175 with footnote 115, and Id. 1966: 148, vol. 2.
[227] Schweighäuser 1789-95 proposes the emendation of αὐτοῖς in αὐτοῦ (thus, referred to Hieronymus).

> [1] *(Polybius writes) that some of the writers who have written about the end of the life of Hieronymus* have rendered their account long and have distributed many marvels [in it], relating in full the prodigies that occurred to them [*scilicet* the Syracusans] before his reign, and the misfortunes of the Syracusans, [2] writing tragedies on the cruelty of his character and the impiety of his actions, and furthermore on the absurdity and the atrociousness of the accidents regarding his death, to the point that neither Phalaris nor Apollodorus nor any other tyrant would have been more spiteful than him.

This is the first part of Polybius' discussion as it remains, so one cannot infer whether his criticism started before. If one has to judge from this fragment only, the impression is that Polybius is more direct than in the previous passages. Not only does he immediately mention both the τερατεία and the writing in tragic style, but he also dismisses the simile used in the previous passages ('like writers of tragedies'),[228] to make way for the verb τραγῳδέω: now such writers do not just behave like tragic writers, they are writers of tragedies.

A piece of evidence for this last remark might be the fact that Polybius, in 2.17.6, had already employed almost the same sentence as in 7.7.1 to talk about tragic poets (οἱ τραγῳδιογράφοι πολύν τινα πεποίηνται λόγον καὶ πολλὴν διατέθεινται τερατείαν).[229] Although in that passage Polybius was making a general remark on writers of tragedies, it is nevertheless thought-provoking that he applied the same description to writers who should be regarded as historians. All the more so as in book 2 (56-63) he places the well-known criticism against Phylarchus and his tragic writing as well. Thus, the reader immediately understands that there will be a sort of *fil rouge* linking this passage of book 7 and the previous passages about writers who wrote like τραγῳδιογράφοι, such as Phylarchus[230] and the anonymous Hannibal's historians.

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[228] 2.56.10; 3.48.8. For an interesting discussion on the link between tragedy and monographic histories in Cicero, see Ullman 1942: 44-53.
[229] See Walbank 1967: 39.
[230] Eckstein 2013: 328-329 shows that the two passages are linked by the criticism of exaggeration for sensational effect, and that Polybius makes the same historiographical remarks as in his critique of Phylarchus. He also argues that, in the case of the passage

Indeed, the mention of τερατεία associates this passage with the section about Phylarchus[231], where the term appears twice as a peculiarity of his work (2.58.12; 2.59.3) together with the reference to the writing in tragic style. Moreover, the word καταστροφήν, although in this case it is not employed with the technical meaning related to tragedy but only with the sense of 'death', is still a suggestive term to use in this context: the reader will soon recall the remarks in 3.47.7-8 about Hannibal's historians who were not able to come to a conclusion or a way out regarding their lie (καταστροφὴν οὐ δυνάμενοι λαμβάνειν οὐδ' ἔξοδον τοῦ ψεύδους) and acted as writers of tragedies.

But it is no more appropriate to leave just hints, now it is time to fulfil readers' expectations and be more explicit. So, finally Polybius clearly explains which kind of writers are the historians who wrote about the death of Hieronymus (7.7.6-8):

> [6] ἀλλά μοι δοκοῦσιν οἱ τὰς ἐπὶ μέρους γράφοντες πράξεις, ἐπειδὰν ὑποθέσεις εὐπεριλήπτους ὑποστήσωνται καὶ στενάς, πτωχεύοντες πραγμάτων ἀναγκάζεσθαι τὰ μικρὰ μεγάλα ποιεῖν καὶ περὶ τῶν μηδὲ μνήμης ἀξίων πολλούς τινας διατίθεσθαι λόγους. ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ δι' ἀκρισίαν εἰς τὸ παραπλήσιον τούτοις ἐμπίπτουσιν. [7] ὅσῳ γὰρ ἄν τις εὐλογώτερον καὶ περὶ ταῦτα τὸν ἀναπληροῦντα τὰς βύβλους καὶ τὸν ἐπιμετροῦντα λόγον τῆς διηγήσεως εἰς Ἱέρωνα καὶ Γέλωνα διάθοιτο, παρεὶς Ἱερώνυμον. [8] καὶ γὰρ τοῖς φιληκόοις ἡδίων οὗτος καὶ τοῖς φιλομαθοῦσι τῷ παντὶ χρησιμώτερος.
>
> [6] But it seems to me that those who write accounts in a *kata meros* way, whenever they undertake the account of a circumscribed and narrow subject, being badly off for facts, are compelled to render small things great and to sprinkle them with many accounts not worthy of memory. Some of them fall into a similar mistake also due to lack of judgement. [7] Indeed, how much more reasonable it would be if someone, even concerning such topics, would allocate to Hiero and Gelo the account which fills up books and the superfluous additions to the narrative, while omitting Hieronymus! [8] For, such an account would be more pleasant to those fond of hearing and even more useful in every way to those fond of learning.

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in book 7, Polybius' charge of exaggeration is not caused in any way by political bias, since he (or Achaea) was not connected with Hieronymus nor with Hiero or Gelo, so his assessments are not affected by "pro-Roman bias", but his thinking is "primarily historiographical" and "the same (and even in the same order)" as in the Phylarchus' passage. Marincola 2013: 78-79, underlines that the "tragic portrayal" of the protagonist in Hieronymus' historians is the same as that of Phylarchus, and it is "(again) closely linked with a lack of truthfulness and accuracy".

[231] Cf. Eckstein 2013: 328.

At long last, Polybius calls by name the kind of writers he was associating with tragic writers: they are the historians κατὰ μέρος. Moreover, he once again uses concepts already mentioned in previous passages, the ones examined in this chapter: so, the reader is now completely sure that Polybius was reflecting upon the same sort of problems encountered by a particular kind of 'historians'. Indeed, the idea of compulsion had been already employed in the critique against the historians of Hannibal (3.47.6: καὶ γὰρ ψευδολογεῖν καὶ μαχόμενα γράφειν αὐτοῖς ἀναγκάζονται): if those historians where forced to insert gods and to lie because they could not find a way out for their accounts, here historians of the same sort are compelled to render great events which are in fact small,[232] and to treat topics not worthy of mention. In this respect, to lengthen the narrative, to add marvels, gods or lies to historical accounts seem to be the same side of the coin, they go hand in hand, the one exists because of the other: as these historians do not have enough material for their histories, they are forced to add details which are either useless to the narrative or completely false.

Furthermore, his critical statement about the excessive length of the narrative (τὸν ἐπιμετροῦντα λόγον τῆς διηγήσεως) used to fill up their books reminds the reader of the 'exaggerations' (μετ'αὐξήσεως) with which Phylarchus is charged by Polybius in 2.61.1. What is more, when someone performs like Phylarchus and exaggerates his account, in a way he is also behaving like the historians in this passage and making small things great, as we read in 7.7.6.[233]

[232] Polybius does not seem to have the same sense as Herodotus who is aware that cities which were great in the past might have become small at his time and vice versa (although there are of course differences between describing events and describing cities), thus he will write about both great and small cities (1.5.3-4).
[233] Cf. van der Stockt 2005: 300, who recalls Demetrius' explanation of the verb ἐπιτραγῳδέω as 'making small things big' (*De Eloc.* 122).

The importance of the passage in book 7 seems to be highlighted not only by the usage of εὐπεριλήπτους, *hapax legomenon* in Polybius and which, before him, was only employed by Aristoxenus in the 4th century,[234] but also by the three nexuses ὑποθέσεις στενάς, πτωχεύοντες πραγμάτων, and ἀναπληροῦντα τὰς βύβλους, which are *hapax legomena* in extant Greek literature;[235] moreover, the phrase τὸν ἐπιμετροῦντα λόγον is employed only by Polybius.[236] The phrases in themselves are already interesting, but even more is their frequency. Indeed, the presence of five expressions which can be better defined as Polybian neologisms, in just two paragraphs of a small chapter (7.7.6-7) sheds light on how carefully Polybius thought about this passage: he has thoroughly chosen the expressions to use in order to explain his point of view and to leave his readers with an unforgettable description.

Thus, this passage seems to occupy a significant place in Polybius' work and historiographical discussion with the additional aim of deserving memory, unlike some deeds described by the criticized historians. Apropos of this last remark, it is interesting that the assessment in 7.7.6 about the description of deeds unworthy of memory recalls the comment in 2.56.10 about the task of history, which is to remember, to make mention (μνημονεύειν) of actions and words wholly according to truth, even though they happen to be very modest. This concept also refers to the importance of the historian's choice, which has been previously mentioned by Polybius as we have seen.[237]

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[234] Aristoxenus Mus., *Elementa Rhytmica (lib.2)* 22 (Pighi).

[235] This fragment of book 7 is quoted by two different sources: Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *De Virtutibus et Vitiis*, vol. 2.103; *Suda*, *s.v.* Ἱερώνυμος, where there is not mention of Polybius, but the lexicographer reports just the passage to explain the entry on Hieronymus.

[236] The nexus occurs 5 times: in 7.7.7; in 12.28.10, where it does not carry a negative meaning as it is used to praise Ephorus, who had been criticized by Timaeus; in 15.34.1 and 15.35.1 (see *infra* section 7); finally, in 33.21.1, where Polybius is speaking about his own mistake in confuting and writing too much about what is clearly false. On how the ἐπιμετρῶν λόγος might be intended, see Bollansée 2005: 246.

[237] See, for example, 1.13.6-7; 2.56.6; 2.59.9; 3.47.6; 3.57.4-5.

Nevertheless, even as he puts together ideas already expressed in a scattered way, Polybius introduces a new charge, as the historians in 7.7.6 are accused of ἀκρισία, they are incapable of judgement, once again because of their choice, since they did not decide to describe a good tyrant, whose story would have been more useful to those eager to learn, but they narrated the story of a cruel and evil tyrant. The same indictment is covertly brought against Phylarchus, who – according to Polybius – meant to show the cruelty of Antigonus and the Macedonians (2.56.6), a useless thing to do in history,[238] whereas Polybius sees the necessity for himself to judge rightly, διευκρινεῖν, such events (2.56.4). The bad behaviour of such historians guilty of ἀκρισία seems to recall the διευκρινεῖν of Polybius in 2.56.4, the virtuous behaviour of a proper historian: the two conducts are contrasting in the same way as such historians are in contrast with Polybius' philosophy of history.

Lastly, Polybius recalls the difference between τοῖς φιληκόοις, the 'casual readers',[239] and τοῖς φιλομαθοῦσι, the 'serious students',[240] a distinction already present in the critique against Phylarchus (2.56.11) and in his discussion about the difference between *kata meros* and universal history (3.32.10), as we have seen. In the fragment of book 7, Polybius tries to reconcile the two, as he seems to state that if one wants to benefit somehow from such sorts of histories, at least he should choose another subject so that he could delight his 'mediocre' readers, and – at the same time – be somewhat useful to Polybius' readers, lovers of learning. Nonetheless, the demarcation line is still clear, as the φιλήκοος remains linked just to the pleasure of hearing whereas the φιλομαθής is connected with the concept of utility, one of the main features of proper history.

[238] Cf. 2.56.9.
[239] Walbank 1957: 262.
[240] Walbank 1957: 262.

Thus, in this passage Polybius boosts the interdependence between histories *kata meros* and elements of tragedy to which he had previously alluded many times. Here, he adds the explicit mention of the writers of histories *kata meros*. His narrative technique appears clear: faithful to his own peculiar style, he spreads the pieces of the puzzle all over his work, and, as a treasure hunt, the reader has to piece together the jigsaw to have the 'universal' idea of his philosophy of history.

7. Works *kata meros* on Agathocles

In book 15, Polybius gives an account of the fall into disgrace and the death of another extremely powerful man, who enjoyed a sort of personal power, like Hieronymus' tyranny. Agathocles[241] (not to be confused with the better-known Sicilian tyrant) had probably been – together with Sosibius – the most influential man at the court of Ptolemy IV Philopator,[242] and also his lover and '*concubine*'.[243] When the king died, Agathocles and Sosibius killed his widow and sister, Arsinoe III, and proclaimed themselves protectors (ἐπίτροποι) of the child who was the legitimate heir to the throne (Pol. 15.25.5). Agathocles was already the object of the Alexandrians' hate, because of the murder of the queen, but then both soldiers and citizens started detesting him and his relatives even more because of their bad behaviour, and following Tlepolemus' revolt, he was killed by the furious crowd.

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[241] *Prosopographia Ptolemaica* vol. 6, no. 14576.
[242] On this, see Huss 1976: 242-253.
[243] Polybius 14.11.1 defines him as ἑταῖρος; he adds (15.25.31-32) that, when he was a boy, he was the 'cupbearer', οἰνοχόος; according to an anonymous scholiast of Aristophanes (*Scholia Aristophan. Thesmoph.* 1059) he was Ptolemy's lover, ἐρώμενος; Justin 30.2.1-3 writes that Ptolemy IV had a sexual relationship with both Agathocles and his sister Agathocleia, a courtesan; see also Porphyry *FGrHist* 260 F 45, where he is described as *concubinus*.

At the end of this narration, at least according to how it has come to us via the excerptor, Polybius adds a historiographical and critical excursus against writers whom he does not call by name, but just by the topic they treated, namely the downfall of Agathocles (15.34.1-2):

> [1] ἐγὼ δ' οὐκ ἀγνοῶ μὲν τὰς τερατείας καὶ διασκευάς, αἷς κέχρηνται πρὸς ἔκπληξιν τῶν ἀκουόντων ἔνιοι τῶν γεγραφότων τὰς πράξεις ταύτας, πλείω τὸν ἐπιμετροῦντα λόγον διατιθέμενοι τοῦ συνέχοντος τὰ πράγματα καὶ κυρίου, [2] τινὲς μὲν ἐπὶ τὴν τύχην ἀναφέροντες τὰ γεγονότα καὶ τιθέντες ὑπὸ τὴν ὄψιν τὸ ταύτης ἀβέβαιον καὶ δυσφύλακτον, οἱ δὲ τὸ παράδοξον τῶν συμβεβηκότων ὑπὸ λόγον ἄγοντες, πειρώμενοι τοῖς γεγονόσιν αἰτίας καὶ πιθανότητας ὑποτάττειν.
>
> [1] I am not unaware of the sensational descriptions and theatrical performances that some of the authors who treated such events have employed to amaze their readers, by composing an even more magnified account than the actual content of the events; [2] some writers attribute all to Fortune, and put her instability and men's incapacity of evading her before the eyes, while others submit to reason the strangeness of all that happened, attempting to append causes and persuasive motivations to the events.

The first interesting detail to note is that Polybius adds these comments at the end of his historical account, just as he had done in the case of Hieronymus' historians, who were described as writers of tragedies (7.7: τραγῳδοῦντες). Thus, one might infer that even the precise position of this historiographical comment at the end of the story would have sounded familiar to his readers, all the more so as Polybius had used the word καταστροφῆς to indicate Agathocles' death (15.33.6), a term characteristic of a tragic play – as it has been shown –[244] and already employed in relation to historians writing on Hannibal [245] and on Hieronymus' death.[246]

In addition, at the very beginning of his remarks, Polybius uses terminology – starting from τερατεία, and continuing with the mention of ἔκπληξις and ἀκούοντες, the spectators of tragedy – which belongs to tragic accounts and of which he had widely

[244] See *supra* section 5.
[245] 3.47.6; 3.48.8.
[246] 7.7.2.

availed himself before, when he criticized historians writing *kata meros*.[247] What is more, the expression τὸν ἐπιμετροῦντα λόγον accompanied by the verb διατίθημι had already appeared in the critique of Hieronymus' historians (7.7.7-8); as we have seen, this phrase is employed only by Polybius.[248] Besides, in 15.34.2, the word παράδοξον might recall the negative concept of παραδοξολογία which, in 3.58.9, was associated with τερατεία and opposed to truth. Lastly, the mention of πιθανότητας cannot but recall the critique against Phylarchus (2.56.11-12), where they are linked to tragedy, and, above all, might evoke 13.5.5, where they, allied with falsehood, are all marshalled against truth (πασῶν τῶν πιθανοτήτων μετὰ τοῦ ψεύδους ταττομένων): remarkably, in the passage commented in this section, the πιθανότητες are the direct object of ὑποτάττειν, a compound of the τάσσω used in 13.5.5. Thus, though the two verbs are used in different contexts and with slightly different meanings, one should not underestimate the power of the resonance of the word.

Nevertheless, Polybius adds something new to the passage, to avoid simply repeating and in an attempt to better explain the concepts expressed before: next to known terms, he inserts the word διασκευάς, which I have translated 'theatrical performances'. In actual fact, the term διασκευή means 'construction, equipment' or 'rhetorical elaboration', but it might also mean 'theatrical performance'. Though the latter meaning is found in an explicit context in Dio Chrysostom 32.94 where it is used together with comedies (ἐν ταῖς κωμῳδίαις καὶ διασκευαῖς),[249] this translation seems to be the most

[247] 2.17.6; 2.56.11; 3.47.6; 3.32.10; 3.58.9; 7.7.1-2. Cf. Bollansée 2005: 238, who underlines that Polybius, while criticizing the historians of Agathocles of Samus, was indeed referring to monographic histories.
[248] See *supra* section 6.
[249] In LSJ *s.v.*, the word in the Polybian passage is translated 'set phrases'. Schweighäuser 1822, *s.v.* gives it the meaning '*ornatus orationis, adparatus verborum*'. See also Mauersberger 2003, *s.v.*, who translates it as 'Aufmachung' or 'Ausmalung (in d. geschichtl. Darstellung)'.

appropriate since the term is inserted among words previously mentioned and belonging to tragedy. Interpreted in this way, it brings the reader immediately back to the discussion on histories *kata meros* and their similarities to tragic plays.

At this point, anybody understands that such historians were not at all proper historians, but they were authors of histories *kata meros*: after the previous discussions on the difference between history and tragedy, universal and *kata meros* history, and on the πιθανότητες belonging to tragedy (which is opposed to history) and being themselves enemies of truth, it is now clear to the reader that Agathocles' historians did not abide by truth.

Polybius implies clearly at the beginning that he is himself different from the historians he attacks. Indeed, to underline that he actually knows about sensational events and theatrical performances used by other historians, he uses the verb ἀγνοέω preceded by the negation: thus, he is aware of them, he just does not want to use them in his historical work, as he strongly believes that they fit in with another genre. What is important to highlight is that the verb recalls terms used to describe other historians' ignorance, such as Phylarchus or Hannibal's historians,[250] but is referred to Polybius himself and modified by the negative.

Thus, negative concepts can be changed into positive ones, depending to whom or which they are applied. In the same way, positive concepts are not always so: undoubtedly, the concept of sight (15.34.2: ὑπὸ τὴν ὄψιν) does not enjoy here the always good power mentioned in previous passages. In effect, Polybius had given his readers a hint at the beginning of his work, when, while explaining the differences between universal history and history *kata meros*, he highlighted the importance of gazing at the

[250] In 2.58.13 and 2.62.2, he accuses Phylarchus of ἄγνοια; in 3.48.7, Hannibal's historians are described as ἀγνοοῦντες.

events in the right way, and not just as people who look at dismembered limbs in order to describe the liveliness of a creature (1.4.7-10). Thus, sight becomes useful when properly employed and it depends on how a historian looks at events and on how he directs his readers to look at events: so, if Phylarchus is blind (2.61.12) as well as Hannibal's historians (3.48.7),[251] the readers of the historians of Agathocles have put before their eyes the wrong view of events, and presumably this happens because the historians in question, although they possess the sense of sight, nevertheless they use it in the wrong way giving their readers a distorted picture of the events as well, just as the aforementioned writers of histories *kata meros* in the preamble (1.4.7-10).[252]

In this light, one might infer that Polybius is giving another clue: it seems that ideas or concepts are not absolutely right or wrong, but their quality depends on various factors. Indeed, after he has re-stated the importance of giving an account which would also educate and teach his readers[253] and underlined the importance of narrating events worthy of being recorded[254], he affirms (15.36.1-2):

> [1] Διὰ δὴ ταύτας τὰς αἰτίας τὸν μετ' αὐξήσεως λόγον ἀπεδοκιμάσαμεν ὑπὲρ Ἀγαθοκλέους, [2] οὐχ ἥκιστα δὲ καὶ διὰ τὸ πάσας τὰς ἐκπληκτικὰς περιπετείας μίαν ἔχειν φαντασίαν τὴν πρώτην ἀξίαν ἐπιστάσεως, τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν οὐ μόνον ἀνωφελῆ γίνεσθαι τὴν ἀκρόασιν καὶ θέαν αὐτῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ μετά τινος ὀχλήσεως ἐπιτελεῖσθαι τὴν ἐνέργειαν τῶν τοιούτων.
>
> [1] For these reasons I rejected as unworthy an account of Agathocles made by aid of amplification, [2] not least because all sensational unforeseen circumstances are worthy of attention only when first presented to our view, whereas afterwards not only do the hearing and seeing of them become useless, but the vivid representation of such things also goes along with a certain annoyance.

[251] See *supra*, sections 3 and 5.
[252] See *supra*, section 1. On the concept of sight as subject to the historian, see also *infra*, chapter 3, section 2 and chapter 4, section 1.
[253] 15.35.7: προστιθέναι τὸν ἐπεκδιδάσκοντα λόγον […] ἁρμόζει.
[254] 15.35.1-7.

First and foremost, Polybius stresses that he has made a considered choice: not only does he have full agency on his account, but he also meditates on it. Indeed, the verb ἀποδοκιμάζω does not simply mean 'to reject', but it carries the concept of 'careful examination' with it: acting as a judge – as the word belongs to the legal sphere – he has scrutinized this topic and come to the conclusion that it is not worthy of a historical account.

Nonetheless, this type of account is not absolutely unworthy, it is just at this precise moment, according to Polybius, that it is useless. Thus, readers gradually learn that even 'pleasure' is not utterly negative, but it depends on when and how this technique is used, namely no more than once. Indeed, since the ἔκπληξις of the readers (already mentioned in 15.34.1 and recalled in 15.36.2 by the characterization of περιπετείας as ἐκπληκτικὰς) does not properly belong to history, but it is one of the peculiarities of tragedy, such a way of writing should be used with extreme moderation, as it does not supply an overall view, but just a simple view. In fact, Polybius uses the word θέαν, whereas for his own universal history he had used the compound words σύνοψιν (1.4.1), συνιδεῖν (1.4.6), and συνθεάσασθαι (1.13.13). Moreover, simple sight is associated with simple hearing, ἀκρόασις, a Thucydidean term,[255] which belongs to histories *kata meros* as opposed to the teaching one can get from universal history.[256]

In the light of these remarks, Polybius' readers are now educated to understand the comment which immediately follows these statements (15.36.3):

> δυεῖν (γὰρ) ὑπαρχόντων τελῶν, ὠφελείας καὶ τέρψεως, πρὸς ἃ δεῖ τὴν ἀναφορὰν ποιεῖσθαι τοὺς διὰ τῆς ἀκοῆς ἢ διὰ τῆς ὁράσεως βουλομένους τι πολυπραγμονεῖν, καὶ μάλιστα τῷ τῆς ἱστορίας γένει τούτου καθήκοντος, ἀμφοτέρων τούτων ὁ πλεονασμὸς ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐκπληκτικῶν συμπτωμάτων ἐκτὸς πίπτει.

[255] Thuc. 1.22.4.
[256] As Polybius states in 3.32.10, already commented in section 3 of this chapter.

> For since there are two purposes, utility and delight, to which those who wish to inquire closely into any subject either by the use of their ears or their eyes should refer, and since this is especially proper to the genre of history, the excess about astounding episodes falls beyond both of these scopes [*scilicet* utility and delight].

So, it is not completely wrong to aim at readers' delight, but this must go together with usefulness,[257] and – in a sense – delight has to be husbanded,[258] as exaggeration is not ideal: from this, one might infer that only a capable and skilful historian can reach such a level of measuring and, more precisely, only the universal historian, who is the one and only who can employ an overall view.

But then, how is it possible to write a useful and delightful account? According to Polybius, this is possible only when the historian writes something new and he is not repetitive, as talking at length of an event similar to other ones which have been already narrated, is more typical of tragedy than history,[259] so not proper to universal history. Indeed, he concludes (15.36.10-11):

> [10] διὸ καὶ λανθάνουσι πλείω τοῦ καθήκοντος διατιθέμενοι λόγον ὑπὲρ τῶν μήτε καινῶν ὄντων διὰ τὸ καὶ ἑτέροις πρότερον εἰρῆσθαι μήτ'ὠφελεῖν μήτε τέρπειν δυναμένων. [11] περὶ μὲν οὖν τούτων ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον ἡμῖν εἰρήσθω.
>
> [10] Consequently, they do not even realize that they devote too much space to matters which neither are novel, others having spoken of them before, nor are able to benefit or to please us. [11] I have now said enough on this subject.

Thus, it appears clear that Polybius is referring to historians writing histories *kata meros* here, and, in this case metaphorically through the use of λανθάνουσι, he is depicting them as writers who do not know how to use their sight, as they linger on useless accounts.[260]

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[257] The importance of utility had been already underlined in the critiques against Philinus and Fabius (1.14.6), and in those against Phylarchus (2.56.12). On the co-presence of profit and pleasure, see Walbank 1990: 253-266; see also D'Huys 1990: 267-288.
[258] Cf. Bollansée 2005: 249.
[259] 15.36.7: ὁ δὲ τῆς ἐκτὸς τούτων συμφορᾶς πλεονασμὸς οἰκειότερόν ἐστι τραγῳδίας ἤπερ ἱστορίας.
[260] Sacks 1981: 215, rightly comments that "Polybius in fact is accusing historians of not adapting themselves to the new type of universal history, defined as an organic and synthetic whole".

Finally, by employing λανθάνουσι (as he already did with Hannibal's historians in 3.47.6), which shares its root with ἀλήθεια but is opposed to it, Polybius seems to declare that they, qua historians of histories *kata meros*, do not possess truth, as they will always be missing a detail in their partial view of the events; also, they will never have the greatest power truth has (13.5.4: μεγίστην […] δύναμιν)[261] as their accounts do not have such strength (δυναμένων preceded by the negation).

Finally, though this latter passage seems not to be solely devoted to the critique against the histories *kata meros*, nonetheless the references and the evocative language used by Polybius, which I have examined, such as the usage of the expression τὸν ἐπιμετροῦντα λόγον accompanied by the verb διατίθημι, lead us to believe that Polybius' main criticism against such writers is that they focused their attention on only one topic or character, thus *kata meros*. Polybius, as I have already said, needs to undermine the authority of his predecessors by pointing out to their mistakes, and the easiest way to criticise them is when they did not write a universal history, Polybius' cheval de bataille: when this happens, every single mistake will be unmasked and ascribed to the fact that the historian wrote *kata meros* and not a universal history.

[261] See *supra*, chapter 1, section 3.

Chapter 3

Quomodo historia conscribenda sit

(secundum Polybium)

atque veritas invenienda sit

This chapter will analyse how a historian should write history and find truth according to Polybius. It will discuss the main points of the Polybian philosophy of history and historiographical procedure. The first important step is the disposition a historian should assume when writing history, more simply he should not be biased in any way. Moreover, the historian needs to be an expert on his own topic and should know how to do his job well. At the same time, this chapter will discuss Polybius' views about how not to write history, that is, when a historian assumes the wrong disposition and performs the wrong procedures, such as deliberate lies, omissions, and mistakes. The main themes examined will be the concept of *empeiria* as opposed to the *agnoia* of some historians, the historian's disposition, the geographical competence, and the ability to choose what to write and what to omit.

All such themes will be covered by Polybius mainly through the criticism of his predecessors. This procedure, which is a way of validating his own work and method, is not new in Greek historiography. John Marincola underlines the importance for ancient historians of defining themselves 'by contrast with a perceived or actual predecessor'.[262] Mario Pani, speaking of the 'misery of historiography', underlines that the harsh (and often very harsh) criticism of the historians against their colleagues (in terms of differences in their method as a whole rather than in relation to their different versions of the past) is a rather widespread aspect of their bitter reflections on

[262] Marincola 1997: 219.

historiography. Pani adds that, apart from the obvious desire to make room for one's own historiographical work compared to the others, there are authentic motivations even though criticism is often dictated by a different political position or by rivalry and personal ill-will.[263]

Polemic among historians is in fact one of the characteristic features of Greek historiography.[264] One of the first Greek historians, Hecataeus, attacks his predecessors criticizing their 'ridiculous stories'.[265] Thucydides is annoyed with the 'logographers' because they do not critically screen their sources and have as their goal 'a piece of ephemeral skill' rather than 'a perennial acquisition'.[266] Herodotus is criticised by Ctesias who calls him a liar and defines him as λογοποιός, 'creator of stories'.[267] Ephorus criticised historians who gave very detailed accounts of the ancient times, as it was not possible to know them perfectly.[268] Timaeus was so critical of his predecessors that he earned the epithet of Ἐπιτίμαιος (detractor).[269] Polybius informs us that Timaeus had criticised Theopompus and Ephorus,[270] Democharesof Athens,[271] Theophrastus,[272] Callisthenes[273] and other historians whose names are not reported by Polybius.[274]

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[263] Pani 2001: 95-96: "In prima linea, come atteggiamento più diffuso di riflessione amara sulla storiografia, troviamo la critica, spesso molto aspra, degli storici stessi contro gli storici loro precedenti (non, si intende, le divergenze di merito su alcune versioni, quanto quelle sul loro metodo nel complesso). A parte il desiderio evidentemente di fare spazio alla propria opera storiografica rispetto alle altre, giustificando così il proprio duro lavoro, vi sono […] motivazioni autentiche".

[264] See, for example, Fairweather 1974: 247-249, Owen 1983: 15, Marincola 1997: 225-236 and Pani 2001: 95-102. More generally, on polemic in Hellenistic literature, see Isnardi 1953: 103-106, Brown 1958: 91, and Pearson 1987: 38.

[265] *FGrHist* 1 F 1a.

[266] Thuc. 1.20-22.

[267] *FGrHist* 688 T 8.

[268] *FGrHist* 70 F 9.

[269] *FGrHist* 566 T 11 (= Diod. 5.1.3): διὰ τὰς ἀκαίρους καὶ μακρὰς ἐπιτιμήσεις εὐλόγως διαβάλλεται, καὶ διὰ τὴν ὑπερβολὴν τῆς ἐπιτιμήσεως Ἐπιτίμαιος ὑπό τινων ὠνομάσθη. Cf. *FGrHist* 566 T 1, which specifies that the Athenians were who called Timaeus with that epithet, T 16, where we learn that it was Istros the Callimachean to call Timaeus *epitimaios* in his treatise against him, and T 27.

[270] 12.4a.1-2; 12.23.1; 12.28.9-12.

However, the author who uses a systematic criticism of his predecessors more than anyone else is Polybius.[275] Margherita Isnardi reflects that the image of the historical truth, as Polybius conceives it, is in turn highlighted by the contrast with the criticised authors.[276] Guido Schepens asserts that, in the tradition of controversy, Polybius follows a new path for two reasons: first, he extends its critique to historians of the past, whose subject does not directly concern his historical work; secondly, he inserts a digression in his *Histories* in the form of an entire book, solely devoted to the refutation of Timaeus.[277] John Marincola underlines that 'the extended refutation of Timaeus is the most distinctive piece of historiographical polemic to have been survived from antiquity'.[278] Indeed, as in the case of 12.11.8, Polybius appropriates for himself Timaeus' conception of the importance of truth, and at the same time he starts criticising Timaeus (12.12), so that it happens that the reader gets lost in this discussion and, probably, it is no more clear to them that that particular concept was firstly spelled out by Timaeus.

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[271] 12.12.3; 12.15.4; 12.23.8.
[272] 12.23.8.
[273] 12.12b.2; 12.23.
[274] 12.7.4; 12.8.1; 12.11.8; 12.12.1-2. On Timaeus criticising his predecessors, see Meister 1975: 10-27, and, more recently, Baron 2013: 113-137. On the critics against Timaeus, see Brown 1958: 91-106.
[275] Cf. Pani 2001: 97, who defines Polybius' criticism as 'the most prolonged and systematic critique which has been preserved by the tradition' ('la critica più prolungata e sistematica, nella tradizione conservata, alla storiografia precedente, in particolare a quella ellenistica').
[276] Isnardi 1955: 106.
[277] Schepens 1990: 39-41.
[278] Marincola 1997: 230-231.

1. The historian's disposition: *sine ira et studio*

If, at least at Polybius' time, a proper history depends upon the choice of its genre, *kata meros* or universal, with the latter being the only possible one to give a true account of the events, whether a historian is considered a proper one also depends on the way in which he deals with partisanship.

Although he fights detailed accounts full of particulars, Polybius also acknowledges that the universal historian may need to recount slightly more carefully (1.13.10: βραχὺ δ' ἐπιμελέστερον […] διελθεῖν) some events – in his case the First Punic War – to correct the previous tradition for the sake of truth. After declaring that the reason for a more exhaustive examination of this war lies in its greatness and in the power of the involved states, he adds (1.14.1-2):

> [1] Οὐχ ἧττον δὲ τῶν προειρημένων παρωξύνθην ἐπιστῆσαι τούτῳ τῷ πολέμῳ καὶ διὰ τὸ τοὺς ἐμπειρότατα δοκοῦντας γράφειν ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ, Φιλῖνον καὶ Φάβιον, μὴ δεόντως ἡμῖν ἀπηγγελκέναι τὴν ἀλήθειαν. [2] ἐκόντας μὲν οὖν ἐψεῦσθαι τοὺς ἄνδρας οὐχ ὑπολαμβάνω, στοχαζόμενος ἐκ τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς αἱρέσεως αὐτῶν· δοκοῦσι δέ μοι πεπονθέναι τι παραπλήσιον τοῖς ἐρῶσι.
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> [1] But, no less than by the above-mentioned matters, I have been provoked to turn my attention to this war even by the fact that those who seem to have written about it in the most skilful way, Philinus and Fabius, did not relate the truth to us as they should have done. [2] Certainly, as far as I can guess from their life and inclination, I am not assuming that these men lied on purpose; but they seem to me to have experienced something similar to the lovers.

The necessity of discussing a point he claims not to have been planning to deeply explore (1.13) is suggested by the use of the verb παροξύνω, which introduces a further reason, and probably the main reason (as the introductory expression οὐχ ἧττον might suggest), for the treatment of this war: in other words, this is not exactly his choice, he found himself practically forced to discuss the topic as a matter of urgency (the verb

also has the idea of being goaded or prodded),[279] almost a moral obligation to tell the truth and to remedy other historians' mistakes and lies.[280] Furthermore, this verb might also be employed in a military sense with the meaning of 'incite to war', as attested by Isocrates,[281] which will link this passage and the pressure to re-write the account sticking to truth to the previously examined passage in 13.5.4-6.[282] There, Polybius' reader will again find a military terminology, a stronger link this time, in the image of the plausible topics all marshalled on the side of falsehood, which, eventually, is conquered by truth.

More to the point, Polybius claims to have been provoked not by unknown or non-famous individuals, but by men who were thought to have written most skilfully and in the most experienced way on that war. In a certain sense, he is offended by the fact that the *communis opinio* granted Philinus and Fabius the honour to be called historians, even experts in the First Punic War, whilst they did not report (ἀπηγγελκέναι) the truth pursuant to what this peculiar subject that is history would require. Therefore, he needs to turn both his own attention and his readers' attention to this war:[283] by spotting others' faults and falsehoods, he is guiding his readers to understand and learn how to read a historical account, how to gather hints, and how to grasp their meaning. Indeed, in 1.15.13, he declares that he will try to lead the readers

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[279] See, for example, the entry in LSJ. Schweighäuser 1822, *s.v.* translates '*inductus sum*', whereas elsewhere, in 4.7.5, he intends it as 'irritated' or 'annoyed' (*his de caussis irritati*). Mauersberger 1998, *s.v.*, suggests 'incite, whip up, urge', but also, in the passive form, 'indignant', for which translation he indicates three passages: 3.112.4; 4.7.5; 4.7.8.

[280] Cf. Isnardi 1953: 102-110. On the importance of a 'historiographical ethics' in Polybius, see also Pinzone 1983: 149-170.

[281] *Philippus* 3: παρώξυνον ἐπὶ τὸν πόλεμον; 101: παροξυνθείη πολεμεῖν; *Archidamus* 110: παροξυνθῆναι πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον.

[282] See *supra* chapter 1, section 3.

[283] Walbank 1957: 64, comments that the word can be translated either 'to direct (readers') attention to' or 'to pay attention to'.

to true judgements about the war (εἰς ἀληθινὰς ἐννοίας ἄγειν […] τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας ὑπὲρ τοῦ προειρημένου πολέμου).

Moreover, in 3.9.1-5, Polybius will clearly state that the reason why he mentioned Fabius and his writings is to suggest that those who take up his books should look at the facts not at its title: inasmuch as, some readers pay attention not to what is written, but to the person writing it, and, especially in the case of Fabius, they tend to trust him since he was contemporary to the events and a member of the Roman senate. Polybius, by contrast, holds that, although the reliability of a historian is important, readers should not judge him *a priori*, but they should scrutinize him by examining the account itself. Of course, one might infer that his readers will receive Polybius' aid by means of the Polybian 'demonstrations' of the truthfulness or falsehood of the accounts.

In the case of Philinus and Fabius, Polybius does not clearly affirm that they lied: he himself comments that he does not interpret (ὑπολαμβάνω)[284] their behaviour as if they lied on purpose, as far as he can infer (στοχαζόμενος)[285] from their life and inclination. Thus, his assessment here does not concern truth or falsehood, but the way in which the story is related, that is, its adequacy or inadequacy: according to Polybius, both historians did not relate the truth as they ought to have done, but the main point here is about undeliberate patriotic bias rather than intentional lie. While Philinus and Fabius were acting as 'lovers' by favouring their fatherlands in their accounts, Polybius does not act as a 'lover' blinded by love: Shakespeare later wrote "love is blind and lovers cannot see / The pretty follies that themselves commit",[286] and this is what happened to Philinus and Fabius, at least from what one might gather from Polybius'

[284] See Schweighäuser 1822, *s.v.*, who interprets as '*putare*', and Mauersberger 2004, *s.v.* who translates 'to believe, to assume'.
[285] Schweighäuser 1822, *s.v.* translates '*colligere aliquid ex aliqua re*', and Mauersberger 2002, *s.v.*, intends "e. Ziel zu zu erkennen suchen" ('to look for some mark to recognize').
[286] *The Merchant of Venice*, Act 2, Scene 6.

words. Before Shakespeare and Polybius, Plato and Theocritus had expressed a similar concept, the former explicitly speaking of the blindness peculiar to the lover,[287] and the latter linking Love/Eros to blindness, when in *Idyll* 10.19-20 he states that Plutus is not the only one to be blind, but the thoughtless Eros is also blind (τυφλὸς δ'οὐκ αὐτὸς ὁ Πλοῦτος, / ἀλλὰ καὶ ὠφρόντιστος Ἔρως).[288] Moreover, Polybius himself will build a connection between Philinus and Fabius' love and their blindness, when he will conclude that history without truth was similar to a living being without eyes.[289]

Thus, the main issue is represented by their (wrong) approach to the subject. Their life and inclination make them not 'pure' historians – to borrow a terminology which Polybius uses in another context –,[290] but a sort of half-historians, since they behaved like lovers of their countries, and as such their accounts might be defined as almost true: in fact, Philinus is constantly well-disposed towards the Carthaginians, whom he describes as always acting with sagacity, virtue, and manliness, while the Romans were acting in the opposite way; on the contrary, Fabius depicts the Romans behaving well, and the Carthaginians badly (1.14.3). Synthetically, both are affected by partiality towards their fatherlands. In their case, the truth is not a unique essence, but partial. In other cases, such as in the case of Polybius' remarks on the Aristotelian version of the foundation of Lokroi (12.5.4-6), Polybius will underline more clearly that the philosopher is closer to truth than Timaeus,[291] while here his reference to the degree of closeness to truth is subtler and more veiled. The cause might be that Philinus and Fabius are the objects of Polybius' criticism, whereas Aristotle needs to be put in a

[287] *Leg.* 731 e.
[288] As underlined by Gow 1952: 198, vol.2, the representation of the god Eros as blind is 'highly unusual in antiquity'. See also Gilbert 1970: 304-305.
[289] 1.14.6. On this and on the connection between truth and eyes, see *infra*, in this section.
[290] 38.4.8. See *infra* section 2.1 in this chapter.
[291] See *infra*, chapter 4, section 2.

positive light as opposed to Timaeus who is the subject of the critiques. Thus, if Aristotle's version will be defined as 'truer' than Timaeus' one, the accounts of Philinus and Fabius seem to be described as 'less true' than his own history. Furthermore, the difference is highlighted by the fact that, in the passage examined in this section, the reference to 'reporting the truth' is preceded by the negative, but then attenuated by the adverb δεόντως which renders the negation relative and not absolute (they did *not* relate the truth *in the appropriate way*), while in the passage of book 12 the comparative adjective is employed just in a positive way (Aristotle's version is *truer* than the one of Timaeus).

Hence, if Philinus and Fabius' methodologies are not adequate for a true historical account, one wonders what is the right way to supply readers with complete and non-partial truth. One of the key points might be inferred from what Polybius writes slightly before this passage, a point already examined, where – using the expression ἐξαριθμεῖσθαι τὰ κατὰ μέρος – he warns against itemizing events:[292] history is not just an arid and useless list of actions, but a capable historian has the task to discuss the events with a critical eye and to explain, interpret, and lead the way to truth (τὴν ἀλήθειαν περὶ αὐτῶν ἐξηγήσασθαι).[293] All the more so as the terms referring to interpretation and inference are actually applied by Polybius to himself and to his research method in this passage (1.14.2): ὑπολαμβάνω and στοχαζόμενος.

Another point for an appropriate way of writing a true history is described by the verb ἀπαγγέλλω followed by the simile of the lovers: if it is true that the historian should discuss the events, he should also report them without bias. Like the report of a

[292] 1.13.6. On this passage, see *supra*, chapter 2, section 2.
[293] 3.57.5.

messenger,[294] history should give the account of the cold facts, and the historian should not take a stand in favour or against any given fact or person, nor let himself be influenced by anything. Nonetheless, after his objective report, he can and should critically discuss the facts, and even correct his sources wherever there is the need to do so.

Thus, it might happen that the historian will find himself writing about praiseworthy actions performed by his enemies, and blameworthy actions performed by his friends (1.14.5-8):

> [5] ὅταν δὲ τὸ τῆς ἱστορίας ἦθος ἀναλαμβάνῃ τις, ἐπιλαθέσθαι χρὴ πάντων τῶν τοιούτων καὶ πολλάκις μὲν εὐλογεῖν καὶ κοσμεῖν τοῖς μεγίστοις ἐπαίνοις τοὺς ἐχθρούς, ὅταν αἱ πράξεις ἀπαιτῶσι τοῦτο, πολλάκις δ'ἐλέγχειν καὶ ψέγειν ἐπονειδίστως τοὺς ἀναγκαιοτάτους, ὅταν αἱ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων ἁμαρτίαι τοῦθ'ὑποδεικνύωσιν. [6] ὥσπερ γὰρ ζῴου τῶν ὄψεων ἀφαιρεθεισῶν ἀχρειοῦται τὸ ὅλον, οὕτως ἐξ ἱστορίας ἀναιρεθείσης τῆς ἀληθείας τὸ καταλειπόμενον αὐτῆς ἀνωφελὲς γίνεται διήγημα. [7] διόπερ οὔτε τῶν φίλων κατηγορεῖν οὔτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἐπαινεῖν ὀκνητέον, οὔτε δὲ τοὺς αὐτοὺς ψέγειν, ποτὲ δ'ἐγκωμιάζειν εὐλαβητέον, ἐπειδὴ τοὺς ἐν πράγμασιν ἀναστρεφομένους οὔτ'εὐστοχεῖν αἰεὶ δυνατὸν οὔθ'ἁμαρτάνειν συνεχῶς εἰκός. [8] ἀποστάντας οὖν τῶν πραττόντων αὐτοῖς τοῖς πραττομένοις ἐφαρμοστέον τὰς πρεπούσας ἀποφάσεις καὶ διαλήψεις ἐν τοῖς ὑπομνήμασιν.
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> [5] But when someone assumes the disposition which is peculiar to history, he needs to forget everything of the sort, and often, if their actions demand this, speak well of his enemies and honour them with the highest praises, while confuting and even harshly reproaching his closest friends, whenever the errors of their conduct show this. [6] Just as a living being is rendered useless in its entirety if one takes away the eyes from it, in the same way, if truth is removed from history, what is left of it becomes a useless tale. [7] Therefore, one should not hesitate to accuse his friends and to praise his enemies, nor should one be beware of sometimes praising and sometimes blaming the same people, since it is neither possible that men in the actual business of life should always be in the right, nor is it probable that they should be always mistaken. [8] As a matter of fact, in historical commentaries,[295] one must adapt the appropriate statements and the judgements to the actions themselves despite the person who performed such acts.

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[294] Indeed, the term might also be used in a military sense with the meaning of 'bring tidings, report': see LSJ, *s.v.*

[295] See Schweighäuser 1822, *s.v.*, who translates as "*commentarii historici*", and Mauersberger 2004, *s.v.*, who intends it as 'Geschichtswerk' or 'Geschichte'.

The first phrase immediately catches the reader's attention. Indeed, the expression ὅταν δὲ τὸ τῆς ἱστορίας ἦθος ἀναλαμβάνῃ τις appears to be a Polybian neologism, since – to my knowledge – it does not occur in the Greek texts we have at our disposal.[296] I have translated it as 'when someone assumes the disposition which is peculiar to history', and it can be literally translated as 'when one assumes the *ethos* of history'.[297] This particular procedure might be regarded and explained as being similar to the 'Stanislavski method' used by professional actors: just as they have to enter the character's soul and world by putting themselves in the place of the character, so does the historian need to enter history's proper character.

Also, in this passage the concept of non-hesitation appears interesting, a concept which Polybius will recall in the passage about the foundation of Lokroi (12.5.4-6), which has already been linked to this passage, and he will apply this action – which, here, is just a general suggestion to those who write history – to himself, as he will be the one who did not hesitate to side with the Aristotelian version of the foundation although it was unfavourable to the inhabitants of Lokroi of whom he was a benefactor.

Moreover, while stressing the urgency of abiding by truth, of discussing, and of reflecting upon events and actions, Polybius also highlights that the truth of a historical account is not complete if the historian performs only one of the procedures, since history needs all the parts of the process, and it becomes useless if even one part is removed.[298] Finally, Polybius' remarks on the importance of truth in 1.14.6 are

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[296] The expression "to assume the *ethos* of history" only appears in Pol. 1.14.5 (ὅταν δὲ τὸ τῆς ἱστορίας ἦθος ἀναλαμβάνῃ τις), and the nexus formed by the noun ἦθος and the adjective ἱστορικός only appears in Pol. 38.4.1.

[297] Schweighäuser 1822, *s.v.* ἦθος translates it as "*historici personam suscipere*", whereas Mauersberger 2006, *s.v.* ἦθος, explains the phrase "d.h. sich speziell als Historiker betätigen" (i.e. specialize as a historian), which – I believe – does not quite explain the sense Polybius is giving to this particular expression.

[298] The noun διήγημα used by Polybius to express this concept, which I have translated as 'tale', is rarely attested before Polybius: Stesichorus F 40 Page; Stesimbrotus

carefully set in a chiastic construction, so that the living being (ζῴου) corresponds to history (ἱστορίας), and truth (τῆς ἀληθείας) is connected to the eyes (τῶν ὄψεων) of the living being, which leads the reader to recall the proemial passage where true history is actually compared to a lively living being (1.4.7). Furthermore, the reference to the eyes linked to the concept of truth might remind the reader not only of the insistence on sight in the same passage, but also of the opposition dark/light – as a living being without eyes cannot see the light/truth – which will occur again later in the work (13.5.4-6).[299]

To sum up, the true truth cannot be a partial truth, but it should be reached throughout each single step. Indeed, a partial truth is also a partial lie, as one might infer from the Polybian words: Philinus and Fabius are not extremely far from truth, like the 'people who dream' of 1.4.8, the authors of histories κατὰ μέρος, but their works are not completely true first of all because of their partiality and also, as we can gather from Polybius' statements, because they did not discuss nor comment on the events. Truth needs to be discussed and demonstrated, this is the reason why he does not just itemize the First Punic War, but he discusses it to correct what previous

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FGrHist 107 F 1; Pseudo-Hippocrates, περὶ διαφορᾶς τροφῶν πρὸς Πτολεμαῖον 483 (Delatte); Demosthenes, *Oratio* 13 F 1 (Baiter-Sauppe); Pseudo-Aeschines, *Epist.* 4.5; Ephorus, *FGrHist* 70 F 13; Pytheas Perieg., F 5 (Mette); Epicurus, F 9 (Arrighetti); Phoenicides F 4.15; and Erasistratus, F 26 (Garofalo). Also, three of Palaephatus' accounts are defined 'tale' (διήγημα): *De incredibilibus* 46, 47 and 49. In Polybius, it occurs four times: 1.14.6; 4.39.11; 12.12.3; 12.28a.7. More interestingly, in 12.12.3, he will use nearly the same expression as in 1.14.6 in relation to a historiographical critique against a different historian, Timaeus: καθάπερ ἐμψύχου σώματος τῶν ὄψεων ἐξαιρεθεισῶν ἀχρειοῦται τὸ ὅλον, οὕτως ἐξ ἱστορίας ἐὰν ἄρῃς τὴν ἀλήθειαν, τὸ καταλειπόμενον αὐτῆς ἀνωφελὲς γίνεται διήγημα.

[299] See *supra*, chapter 1, section 3. Cf. 2.61.11-12, where Phylarchus is blind in relation to what pertains to history: see *supra*, pp. 66-67.

historians had done or said wrongly, and, nonetheless, he collated the accounts of the two historians in order to build his own version.[300]

Thus, partisanship does not seem to be a 'forgivable sin' in history, because it prevents both historians and readers from finding truth. On the contrary, historical reports need total objectivity from the author, who is required to cut himself off from any feeling or hostility, and this behaviour is one of the main features of a proper historian. Polybius comes back to this concept in book 10, where he clearly stresses the difference between history and other genres, such as the encomium, while he is girding himself up for the account of the Greek events of the year 210 B.C., when Philopoemen comes back in Achaia, after having fought at Sellasia in 222 B.C.[301] and having been a mercenary for roughly ten years in Crete.[302] In the autumn of 210 B.C., Philopoemen is appointed *hipparchos* by the Achaean League.[303]

Polybius explains the reason why, given that he has narrated the first deeds of Philopoemen, he will not treat the nature and education of this man as he did with other protagonists of his work (10.21.5-8):

> [5] εἰ μὲν οὖν μὴ κατ'ἰδίαν ἐπεποιήμεθα τὴν περὶ αὐτοῦ σύνταξιν, ἐν ᾗ διεσαφοῦμεν καὶ τίς ἦν καὶ τίνων καὶ τίσιν ἀγωγαῖς ἐχρήσατο νέος ὤν, ἀναγκαῖον ἦν ὑπὲρ ἑκάστου τῶν προειρημένων φέρειν ἀπολογισμόν· [6] ἐπεὶ δὲ πρότερον ἐν τρισὶ βυβλίοις ἐκτὸς ταύτης τῆς συντάξεως τὸν ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πεποιήμεθα λόγον, τήν τε παιδικὴν ἀγωγὴν διασαφοῦντες καὶ τὰς ἐπιφανεστάτας πράξεις, [7] δῆλον ὡς ἐν τῇ νῦν ἐξηγήσει πρέπον ἂν εἴη τῆς μὲν νεωτερικῆς ἀγωγῆς καὶ τῶν νεωτερικῶν ζήλων κατὰ μέρος ἀφελεῖν, τοῖς δὲ κατὰ τὴν ἀκμὴν αὐτοῦ κεφαλαιωδῶς ἐκεῖ δεδηλωμένοις ἔργοις προσθεῖναι καὶ κατὰ μέρος, ἵνα τὸ πρέπον ἑκατέρᾳ τῶν συντάξεων τηρῶμεν. [8] ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ὁ τόπος, ὑπάρχων ἐγκωμιαστικός, ἀπῄτει

[300] Sisto 1931: 176-202, shows that Polybius followed Philinus for the account of the most glorious facts about Carthage, and Fabius for those about Rome. See also Walbank 1945: 1-18, Mioni 1949: 120-121, and Scuderi 2002: 276. See *contra* Pédech 1952: 246-266.
[301] 2.67.4-8.
[302] See Plut. *Phil.* 7.1-2; Paus. 8.49.7.
[303] 10.22.6: κατασταθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀχαιῶν ἱππάρχης.

> τὸν κεφαλαιώδη καὶ μετ' αὐξήσεως τῶν πράξεων ἀπολογισμόν, οὕτως ὁ τῆς ἱστορίας, κοινὸς ὢν ἐπαίνου καὶ ψόγου, ζητεῖ τὸν ἀληθῆ καὶ τὸν μετ' ἀποδείξεως καὶ τῶν ἑκάστοις παρεπομένων συλλογισμῶν.
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> [5] Now had I not written a separate work about Philopoemen, in which I have shown plainly who he was, from which family he came, and with which systems of education he was provided when he was young, it would have been necessary to offer an account of each of the aforementioned topics; [6] but, since I have formerly written – beyond this work – an account on him in three books, illustrating his training as a boy and his most famous actions, [7] it is evident that in the present narrative it might be fitting to abridge the details[304] of his juvenile training and the ambitions of his youth, but to add details to the summary account I there gave of the achievements of his riper years, in order that I preserve the peculiar characteristics of each of the two works. [8] Indeed, as the former work, being in the form of an encomium, demanded a summary account but at the same time an amplification of his actions, so the present history, providing for both praise and blame, demands a true account supplied with both demonstrations and assessments accompanying each reported event.[305]

In this passage, Polybius clearly defines one of the features of history, which marks its being different from other genres, such as the encomium. As already stressed in his critique to Philinus and Fabius, a true historical work requires both praise and blame.

But he does not simply repeat the concept, he improves and clarifies his idea: while in the critique against Philinus and Fabius the criticism is much more focused on personal relations and Polybius expresses the concept of the concurrent presence of praise and blame, though he does not specify which is the ratio between the two, here with the use of the adjective κοινός, he seems to add that both should be present in equal measure. This exegesis becomes even more attractive if one reflects upon the fact that κοινός might also mean 'impartial' or 'neutral',[306] a concept already highlighted by Polybius when, in the criticism against Philinus and Fabius, he was stressing the necessity for the historian to be impartial (1.14-15).

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[304] I borrow Walbank's translation of the expression κατὰ μέρος ἀφελεῖν: Walbank 1967, vol. 2: 223.
[305] Whereas Walbank 1967, vol. 2: 223, translates this last sentence: "an account supported by reasoning and the considerations accompanying each action".
[306] Thucydides (3.53 and 68) had already used the word in this sense. See LSJ *s.v.*

Also, the semantic field of legal terminology returns with the image of the historian as a judge, as Polybius himself underlines by using the expression μετ' ἀποδείξεως (10.21.8):[307] the historian has the duty to be impartial just like a 'dikast',[308] to give fair assessments, and to bring proofs, since his history is demonstrative, 'apodeictic'.[309]

Nevertheless, according to Polybius, impartiality is not equal to inertia, it does not mean that one does not take a stand. Instead, the historian finds proofs (μετ'ἀποδείξεως), assesses and reflects (καὶ τῶν ἑκάστοις παρεπομένων συλλογισμῶν),[310] and, when necessary, praises his enemies and criticised his friends.[311] The historian's job is an active work, because he has to actively search and find truth (ζητεῖ τὸν ἀληθῆ), as well as actively bring proofs, demonstrate and check his sources throughout assessment (συλλογισμῶν), a way of writing which was already adumbrated in 1.13-14 and in the criticism against Phylarchus (2.56.10-13), when he was criticizing the action of itemizing events without any critical discussion.[312]

The dynamicity of research and history writing is underlined by Polybius' usage of first-person verbs with an active meaning, ἐπεποιήμεθα (10.21.5 and 6), διεσαφοῦμεν (10.21.5), τηρῶμεν (10.21.7), which draw attention to the historian's action. Furthermore, the verb διασαφέω – used twice in this passage (10.21.5 and 6) – appears to strengthen the concept of being pro-active, as it expresses the idea of 'make something clearer', and it seems to be similar to the concept of discovering truth. Indeed, the procedure of 'render clear' evoked by this verb seems to give the idea of the

[307] See also 2.56.4 (*supra* pp. 60 and 86-87), where Polybius stresses that it is necessary for him to judge rightly the events.
[308] I borrow an expression used by Farrington 2015: 40.
[309] On this, see *supra* p. 30, footnote 86.
[310] 10.21.8.
[311] 1.14.5-7. Cf. 10.21.8: κοινὸς ὢν ἐπαίνου καὶ ψόγου.
[312] See *supra*, pp. 50 and 60-61.

action of unveiling, an action happening throughout a precise path (a clue held by the verb being composed with διά), which might recall the action of unveiling the truth, as probably contained in the etymology assigned to ἀλήθεια by ancient grammarians. All the more so as διασαφέω also suggests the opposition dark/light which Polybius will later re-use in 13.5.4-6, in a passage already examined:[313] he illuminates, he illustrates, he is the lighthouse of truth.

In addition, the denominative verb formed from σαφής belongs to the same etymological family as ἀσάφεια,[314] obscurity, so the contrast between dark and light is even more present. What is more, Hesychius explains the word σαφήτωρ as "truthful seer, one who brings information [or, even better, makes know something], interpreter", μάντις ἀληθὴς, μηνυτής, ἑρμηνεύς, a definition that one might easily attach to the Polybian historian. Though Hesychius is much later, his explanation is still relevant to Polybius, because he was of course reflecting and drawing on the usage of the term in the Greek language and literature.

Thus, the historian's persona is always present, but he is objective, as impartial as a judge. His role requires him to see things in the right way, and he underlines this: since he sees well the events, he makes them clear to his readers; but to do so, he has to find and follow truth. As an objective interpreter of events, a seer and priest of truth,[315] and someone who has the duty to correctly inform his readers, the Polybian historian needs to actively decide when to use praise and when to use blame, but he does so without sentimentalism and without being dragged by his feelings and beliefs.

Furthermore, the word τηρῶμεν seems to suggest that, as a sort of consequence of his role as a judge, he also acts as guarantor of the historical genre, as he is the one

[313] See *supra* chapter 1, section 3.
[314] See Chantraine 1968 *s.v.* σάφα.
[315] See *supra* chapter 1, section 3.

who ‘watches for’ or ‘takes care of’ the peculiarities of history, but at the same time he guards the rules under which history should be written. Thus, he is the champion of true history because he respects and preserves its peculiarities as opposed to all other genres, the encomiastic one in this case.[316]

In this light, it might be interesting to underline that other remarks seem to recall the opposition to histories *kata meros*, as Polybius employs the terms κατὰ μέρος, κεφαλαιωδῶς, and the expression μετ’ αὐξήσεως.[317] Of course, the heart of the matter is another one, but it seems that the polemic against histories κατὰ μέρος might be veiled as well. If so, another nuance is introduced: the difference here lies not only in the detailed or non-detailed account,[318] but also in the presence or absence of the demonstration of what the historian is writing.[319] When writing a historical account, one has to justify, to demonstrate his statements. It is an analytical procedure and way of working, researching, and writing. Thus, with good reason, his *Life of Philopoemen*,

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[316] Lucian, *Hist. Conscr.* 7, will express a similar thought, when he will underline that the difference between history and encomium is not as narrow as the isthmus (οὐ στενῷ τῷ ἰσθμῷ), but it is as huge as if there were a big wall in between them (τι μέγα τεῖχος ἐν μέσῳ ἐστὶν αὐτῶν): indeed, those writing encomia are not interested in the record of events, but only in the praise of the protagonists of their works, they praise their friends and slander their enemies – which seems to mirror Polybius’ assessments on Fabius and Philinus in 1.14.3 –, and they do not care about lying, whereas history cannot stand even the smallest lie. Thus, from Lucian’s words, it seems that what distinguishes history from encomium is mainly truth, together with a measured use of both praise and blame. Walbank 1967, vol. 2: 223, stresses this concept and recalls another Polybian passage, 12.28a.1, where there is ‘a clear line between history and encomium on the question of truth’. See *contra* Farrington 2011: 330-331, who reflects upon the fact that it would be strange for Polybius to acknowledge that his earlier work on Philopoemen was ‘to any degree whatsoever, fabricated’.

[317] According to Petzold 1969: 17, the difference between an account κεφαλαιωδῶς and an account written μετ’ ἀποδείξεως lies in their detailed/non-detailed presentation (‘ausführliche Darstellung’), and not in the presence or absence of scientific proofs (‘wissenschaftlichen Nachweis’). He also underlines that Polybius, in the construction of the passage, employs a chiasmus, so that μετ’ αὐξήσεως is connected to ἀληθῆ, and κεφαλαιώδη is opposed to μετ’ ἀποδείξεως. On the negative concept of exaggeration, see *supra*, p. 60 and footnote 172.

[318] Cf. Petzold 1969: 17.

[319] See *contra* Petzold 1969: 17.

an encomium (as Polybius defines it),[320] might be numbered among the so-called works κατὰ μέρος requiring an account of useless details, at least with regards to the lessons one should learn from history: so, in a historical account it does not matter at all to describe the details of a character's youth, but to give the account of his deeds once he has reached his ἀκμή, when he might be politically and militarily influential. In this case the historian is even allowed to write some particulars κατὰ μέρος (10.21.7).[321] But, again, important here is the historian's experience and bravura in understanding the features of the genre and in choosing what to tell and how to write it, not to permit an unbalanced account of the events in terms of praise and blame (10.21.8: κοινὸς ὢν ἐπαίνου καὶ ψόγου).

[320] For a discussion on Polybius' comment on his work about Philopoemen, with some of the previous bibliography, see Farrington 2011: 325-327.

[321] Indeed, I would translate the καί in the phrase τοῖς δὲ κατὰ τὴν ἀκμὴν αὐτοῦ κεφαλαιωδῶς ἐκεῖ δεδηλωμένοις ἔργοις προσθεῖναι καὶ κατὰ μέρος as 'even in a detailed way', so that the entire sentence would read '(it might be fitting) to make additions, even detailed, to the account of the deeds of his riper years which were there explained in a brief summary'.

2.1. The historian's expertise

The distinction of the historiographical genre from other genres on the basis of adherence to the principle of truth without any bias, and the affirmation of the superiority of history over other genres are the themes of another passage from the Polybian *Histories* (38.4.1-8). The excursus is inserted almost at the end of Polybius' work, in the proemial passage of book 38, a fragmentary book which contains the events of 147/6 BC, the Achaean War, on which Polybius states that no disaster can stand comparison with what the Greeks suffered during this war, and the Third Punic War with the fall of Carthage. Polybius' comments clearly reveal his disapproval of the Achaean politics, and his harsh sentiments are reflected in the studied and conscious use of a rhetorical way of expression,[322] a style that also has repercussions in the 'apology' of its tones, contained in this passage (38.4.1-8):

> [1] Ὑπὲρ ὧν οὐ δεήσει θαυμάζειν ἐὰν παρεκβαίνοντες τὸ τῆς ἱστορικῆς διηγήσεως ἦθος ἐπιδεικτικωτέραν καὶ φιλοτιμοτέραν φαινώμεθα ποιούμενοι περὶ αὐτῶν τὴν ἀπαγγελίαν. [2] καίτοι τινὲς ἴσως ἐπιτιμήσουσιν ἡμῖν ὡς φιλαπεχθῶς ποιουμένοις τὴν γραφήν, οἷς καθῆκον ἦν μάλιστα πάντων περιστέλλειν τὰς τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἁμαρτίας. [3] ἐγὼ δ' οὔτε φίλον οὐδέποτ' ἂν ὑπολαμβάνω γνήσιον νομισθῆναι παρὰ τοῖς ὀρθῶς φρονοῦσι τὸν δεδιότα καὶ φοβούμενον τοὺς μετὰ παρρησίας λόγους, [4] καὶ μὴν οὐδὲ πολίτην ἀγαθὸν τὸν ἐγκαταλείποντα τὴν ἀλήθειαν διὰ τὴν ἐσομένην ὑπ' ἐνίων προσκοπὴν παρ' αὐτὸν τὸν καιρόν· [5] συγγραφέα δὲ κοινῶν πράξεων οὐδ' ὅλως ἀποδεκτέον τὸν ἄλλο τι περὶ πλείονος ποιούμενον τῆς ἀληθείας. [6] ὅσῳ γὰρ εἰς πλείους διατείνει καὶ ἐπὶ πλείω χρόνον ἡ (διὰ) τῶν ὑπομνημάτων παράδοσις τῶν πρὸς καιρὸν λεγομένων, τοσούτῳ χρὴ μᾶλλον καὶ τὸν γράφοντα περὶ πλείστου ποιεῖσθαι τὴν ἀλήθειαν καὶ τοὺς ἀκούοντας ἀποδέχεσθαι τὴν τοιαύτην αἵρεσιν. [7] κατὰ μὲν γὰρ τοὺς τῶν περιστάσεων καιροὺς καθήκει βοηθεῖν τοὺς Ἕλληνας ὄντας τοῖς Ἕλλησι κατὰ πάντα τρόπον, τὰ μὲν ἀμύνοντας, τὰ δὲ περιστέλλοντας, τὰ δὲ παραιτουμένους τὴν τῶν κρατούντων ὀργήν· ὅπερ ἡμεῖς ἐπ' αὐτῶν τῶν πραγμάτων ἐποιήσαμεν ἀληθινῶς· [8] τὴν (δ') ὑπὲρ τῶν γεγονότων τοῖς ἐπιγινομένοις διὰ τῶν ὑπομνημάτων παράδοσιν ἀμιγῆ παντὸς ψεύδους ἀπολείπεσθαι χάριν τοῦ μὴ ταῖς ἀκοαῖς τέρπεσθαι κατὰ τὸ παρὸν τοὺς ἀναγινώσκοντας, ἀλλὰ ταῖς ψυχαῖς διορθοῦσθαι πρὸς τὸ μὴ πλεονάκις ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς διασφάλλεσθαι.

[322] Walbank 1979: 685.

> [1] Regarding this, it will be needless to marvel in case I might appear to offer a narrative on such events too declamatory and too zealous, and to transgress the character proper to historical narrative. [2] And yet, some will perhaps rebuke me for writing in a quarrelsome tone, since it was my duty, more than anyone else, to conceal the faults of the Greeks. [3] But I think that a man who is timorous and afraid of words spoken with frankness should not be regarded as a sincere friend by those who think rightly, [4] nor a man who omits truth fearing the hostility from some which, in that particular occasion, will arise [should be regarded] as a good citizen; [5] and a writer of political history who holds something else in higher regard than truth should absolutely not receive any approval. [6] Indeed, the more the exposition through historical records extends to a wider audience and for a longer period of time than speeches pronounced for a particular circumstance, the more so it is necessary both that the writer holds truth in the highest esteem and that the readers approve such a choice. [7] For in crisis situations, it is the duty of those who are Greeks to help the Greeks in every way, by defending them, by concealing their faults, and by trying to avert the anger of the rulers: this is what I myself actually did in the case of the concrete facts themselves; [8] on the contrary, the exposition through historical records about the events meant for posterity should be left free from every kind of falsehood, so that the readers should not receive a momentary pleasure in their ears, but rather be corrected in their minds so as not to fail in the same situations several times.

The importance of this passage is amplified by its being placed both in what appears to be the introductory part of a book and almost at the end of the work, where conclusive historiographical remarks might be added. The key word of this passage is undoubtedly ἀλήθεια which occurs thrice in polyptoton (38.4.4-6). With an ascending climax he explains the importance of the role of truth in interpersonal, political, and historical relations. The historian has the most critical task, since history aims to reach a very large audience that is not only part of that particular historical moment, of that place or of that political sphere, it aims at posterity that must draw lessons for life and not an ephemeral pleasure.

In order to perform this task at the highest possible level, Polybius points out to what seems to emerge as one of the most important historiographical features: the historian should be capable and have a wide range of competences, with most of them being ‘practical’ (such as knowledge of military techniques or geography, as we shall

see later in this section). But his competence also seems to spring from something which is less tangible, the historian's *ethos*, a concept Polybius alludes to when, at the very beginning of the passage, he mentions τὸ τῆς ἱστορικῆς διηγήσεως ἦθος which he might apparently violate with his tone. Consequently, the subtle message the reader might gather is that a historian is competent when he assumes the mental and moral disposition which is consonant with history. As we have seen, Polybius had already used a similar terminology in 1.14.5, where he criticises Fabius and Philinus for being too favourable towards their fellow citizens and too harsh towards their enemies. Here, in 38.4 – at the end of his work – Polybius is speaking about himself, explaining that he had followed his own recommendation because he is reprimanding his fellow citizens and showing their mistakes: thus, he has completely adopted the *ethos* of history.

Therefore, he differs from Philinus and Fabius who 'wronged' the historical narrative because they were 'in love' with their fatherlands (1.14.2). If one puts together these remarks, one can infer that Polybius claims to be objective, as he does not hide anything, not even the mistakes of his fellow citizens. Thus, if one follows this line of reasoning, he might come to the conclusion that Polybius is not blind, he sees – thus tells the truth – very clearly and he indeed cannot conceal anything because truth is the opposite, truth means 'unveiling' and 'un-concealing' facts and events.[323]

In this light, one might reflect upon the fact that this behaviour requires courage: the historian should not be afraid of showing the truth, and Polybius indeed employs the terms δεδιότα and φοβούμενον (38.4.3) to underline this concept. It might be deduced that, when someone assumes the task of writing history and the *ethos* of a historian, the code of silence shows cowardice and is as sinful as reporting lies. Indeed, as he had already explained in his criticism of Fabius and Philinus, when a writer

[323] See *supra*, chapter 1, section 1.

assumes the mental disposition of writing history, "he should not hesitate to accuse his friends and to praise his enemies, nor should be beware of sometimes praising and sometimes blaming the same people".[324] Moreover, he himself had somewhat declared that he was not afraid of telling the truth, when, apropos of his account on the foundation of Lokroi Epizephyrioi, he had stated that he did not hesitate to give an account which was truthful but not favourable to the Locrians, whom he had even helped in some occasions (12.5.4-6).[325]

A small note in the margin of this passage seems to be the verb used by Polybius to indicate the 'violation' of the ethos of history, παρεκβαίνω: in this case, its meaning is not 'to make a digression', which seems to be a common one in Polybius,[326] but rather 'to break away from', which might recall the semantic field of physical separation from truth, a concept already stressed by Polybius.[327] Polybius might appear to break away from the ethos of history just as his predecessors were far from truth, but he actually does not. On the contrary, he knows how to do his job, he does not violate the main feature of history, but he complies with it. Indeed, in the critique against Philinus and Fabius (1.14.7-8) he had already stressed that a historian might have the need to reproach his friends and praise his enemies, and this is what he claims he is doing in this passage.

Thus, Polybius' violation of the proper character of history is just alleged (he might *seem* to break away from the ethos of history), since he keeps himself faithful to its ethos: his moves are nevertheless performed with complete awareness of the facts,

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[324] 1.14.7: διόπερ οὔτε τῶν φίλων κατηγορεῖν οὔτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἐπαινεῖν ὀκνητέον, οὔτε δὲ τοὺς αὐτοὺς ψέγειν, ποτὲ δ' ἐγκωμιάζειν εὐλαβητέον.
[325] See *infra*, chapter 4, section 2.
[326] See Schweighäuser 1822 and Mauersberger 1998, *s.vv.*
[327] See, for example, 1.4.7-10 and 3.32.10. Mauersberger 1998, *s.v.*, for example, translates παρεκβαίνω in 38.4.1 (παρεκβαίνοντες τὸ τῆς ἱστορικῆς διηγήσεως ἦθος) as 'über etw. hinausgehen, etw. *mißachten*, *vernachlässigen*' (to go beyond sth., disregard sth., neglect sth).

as he is conscious of the features a historical work should provide for and knows that he *might appear* to transgress them. A key term to understand Polybius' line of reasoning might be considered the word φιλοτιμοτέραν to describe his narrative: the general meaning of this adjective would be 'ambitious', but I have translated it as 'too zealous' in line with the most common meaning it has in Polybius, an accurate and diligent work performed with zeal.[328] As a consequence, he does not violate the proper character of history, namely its *ethos*, but he fully adheres to the dictates of historiography: he would "have had to conceal the errors of the Greeks", but, on the contrary, he does assume the proper attitude of a diligent historian who always narrates the true facts.

Hence, truth also has an ethical value, a concept already shown in its etymology, at least as it is given by ancient etymologists, who connected truth to the concept of justice, as we have already seen: truth is something which does not 'fall into oblivion of justice'.[329] To be faithful to this moral value of history writing, Polybius' main concern consists in ascertaining the truth, and the search for truth and the criticism of lies, therefore, are not just part of the historical technique, but are mainly seen in relation to ethics.[330] Margherita Isnardi rightly affirms that *techne* and *ethos* are at the base of the Polybian historiographical procedure, where "it is the *ethos* that creates the *techne*; the rule springs from the action".[331] In the light of this, one could deduce that truth necessarily and naturally flows from the synthesis between *ethos* and *techne*, of which *ethos* (= truth) constitutes the essential value.

Furthermore, this peculiar characteristic of *ethos* which creates *techne* appears to be in opposition with the Aristotelian concept of *ethos* as shown in the *Poetics*: while

[328] See Schweighäuser 1822, *s.v.*, Walbank 1979: 689, and Mauersberger 2004, *s.v.*
[329] See *supra*, chapter 1, section 1.
[330] Cf. Isnardi 1953: 104.
[331] Isnardi 1953: 106-107.

in the latter *ethos* is the object of the representation on a par with passions or actions[332] and *ethos* is subordinated to the account of the facts,[333] from the Polybian perspective it is the historical account which has to be subordinated to the *ethos* of history. Thus, one can deduce the presence of another subtle reference and opposition to Aristotle's thought in this passage as in the passage regarding Phylarchus.[334]

The topic of 'moral history' in Polybius has been much discussed[335] especially in relation to the fact that Polybius seems to write his historical work to teach moral lessons to the posterity.[336] However, to my knowledge, the ethical worth of the historian's work – which Polybius appears to assign to the act of writing history – has not been grasped, or at least highlighted. Indeed, in light of the remarks in 1.14.5 and 38.4, it seems clear that also the process of writing is something ethical, and this appears to be a completely new concept in ancient historiography, an idea which Polybius expresses through the usage of what can be defined as 'historiographical neologisms'. From Polybius' point of view, it is the historian's work in itself which has moral worth, apart from providing readers with examples of moral history. A corollary to this reflection is that, in this case, the historian and the politician seem to be placed at the same level: if historiography is an ethical procedure, consequently the historical account will become ethical as well, and it will teach morally useful lessons.

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[332] *Poet.* 1.1227a. See Woerther 2005: 94.
[333] Woerther 2005: 94-95.
[334] 2.56-63. See *supra*, chapter 2, section 2.
[335] See, for example, the monographic work written by Arthur Eckstein in 1995.
[336] Eckstein 1995: 28 and 56 shows Polybius' celebration of what the scholar calls 'Aristocratic Ethos', in relation to both risky events and circumstances where honor and/or wealth were involved; Hau 2016: 23 defines Polybius as being "obviously, explicitly and unashamedly a moral-didactic historian", in a chapter mainly concerned with Polybius' "moral-didactic techniques" (40-42) and "moral lessons" (42-71); Gibson 2018: 89-99, underlines that the epideictic character of Polybius' work contains an ethical connotation as well, given that Polybius appears to be "a bestower of praise or blame" (75).

The upshot of these reflections is that one is unable to give a truthful account if they are trying to help or favour their friends. It follows that if a historian is always in favour of his friends or fellow citizens, it means that he is lying in a certain way, whether he omits their mistakes or presents the events in a way differing from an objective account. But, according to the Polybian axiom, history should be devoid of every kind of lies (38.4.8). The construction of the sentence τὴν (δ') ὑπὲρ τῶν γεγονότων τοῖς ἐπιγινομένοις διὰ τῶν ὑπομνημάτων παράδοσιν ἀμιγῆ παντὸς ψεύδους ἀπολείπεσθαι which expresses this important concept is studied and polished. It starts with τὴν παράδοσιν the object – or the subject (?) depending on how one interprets the voice of ἀπολείπεσθαι, whether middle with the meaning of "to leave to posterity" or passive – which encapsulates three expressions in attributive position defining the topic of the exposition (ὑπὲρ τῶν γεγονότων), the audience (τοῖς ἐπιγινομένοις) and the medium by which the tradition is handed down (διὰ τῶν ὑπομνημάτων), the verb is at the end (ἀπολείπεσθαι), and in the middle of the sentence there are the most important words (ἀμιγῆ and the nexus παντὸς ψεύδους). In addition, the statement, as if it were not enough historiographical, becomes even more interesting as it is followed by the re-elaboration of the Thucydidean concept of history being an everlasting teaching rather than a temporary pleasure for the ears. Furthermore, as we have seen, Polybius had used the verb ἀπολείπεσθαι in a negative sense accompanied by the word ἀλήθεια in the critique against histories *kata meros* which were far from truth, and in the critique against Timaeus,[337] whereas he is now using it in a positive sense to describe how proper history should be far from every lie. Hence, the reuse of the verb together with ψεῦδος, thus the opposite of ἀλήθεια, renders the sentence suitable to describe how a good historical work should be.

[337] 1.4.8 and 12.4d.1. For a discussion on the importance of this nexus, see *supra*, chapter 2 section 1.

Finally, but not less importantly, Polybius embellishes the phrase with two other historiographical neologisms, παράδοσιν and ἀμιγῆ (38.4.8), with which he expresses the concept that a historical account must not be 'contaminated' by lies. I define them as 'historiographical neologisms' because both appear to have a particular meaning in a historiographical context which Polybius seems to 'invent'. Indeed, the term παράδοσις rarely occurs before him and it does not have a historiographical nuance,[338] apart from Plato (*Laws* 803a) and Aristotle (*Sophistici Elenchi* 184b) where it means 'transmission', thus a meaning which might be associated with a historical report. The adjective ἀμιγής occurs in Polybius only in this passage; before him, all occurrences appear in philosophers with the meaning of 'unmixed, pure'.[339] Thus, it might be the case that Polybius, drawing once again from the philosophical language, deliberately gives a new connotation to already existing but very peculiar words in order to formulate new historiographical concepts and explain his own philosophy of history.

[338] Thuc. 1.9.4 and 3.53.1; Isocr. 17.16; Plato, *Leg.* 915 d; Philistus *FGrHist* 556 F 53; Dem. *In Timocratem* 80; Dicaearchus F 89 Wehrli; Arist. *Pol.* 1309 a, FF 119 and 437 Rose; Heraclides Ponticus F 91 Wehrli; Theophr. F 97.4 Wimmer; Epicurus F 20.2 (Arrighetti); Andriscus *FGrHist* 500 F 3; Erasistratus FF 152 and 279 (Garofalo); Chrysippus FF 42 and 173 (von Arnim); Critodemus 5,2 113 and 8,3 102; Phylarchus *FGrHist* 81 F 56; Eratosth. [*Cat.*] 1.22.

[339] Plat. *Pol.* 265e and *Menex.* 245d; Arist. *De an.* 405a, 429a, 430a, *Eth. Nic.* 1173a, *Hist. an.* 638a, [*Mag. mor.*] 2.7.3, *Metaph.* 989b, *Ph.* 256b, [*Pr.*] 907a and 929a, *De spiritu* 483b, *Top.* 119a; Xenocrates F 225 (Parente); Speusippus F 81a (Tarán); Theophr. *Sens.* 67, 73, 76, *De igne* F 50, *Caus. Pl.* 6.8.5, 6.17.1; Chrysippus F 1103 (von Arnim).

2.2.The historian's 'practical' *empeiria*

As we have seen, Polybius thinks that the historian should be well-versed in the craft of history-writing, an ethos which, at the same time, will produce the historian's practical *empeiria*, especially in matter of geography and war. He continues to focus on *empeiria* and ethos in a passage in Book 16, where some inabilities of certain historians seem to derive from their historical ethos and from their disposition to history-writing rather than just from their ignorance (16.14.1-4):[340]

> [1] *Ὅτι φησὶ Πολύβιος* ἐπεὶ δέ τινες τῶν τὰς κατὰ μέρος γραφόντων πράξεις γεγράφασι καὶ περὶ τούτων τῶν καιρῶν, ἐν οἷς τά τε κατὰ Μεσσηνίους καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὰς προειρημένας ναυμαχίας συνετελέσθη, βούλομαι βραχέα περὶ αὐτῶν διαλεχθῆναι. [2] ποιήσομαι δ' οὐ πρὸς ἅπαντας, ἀλλ' ὅσους ὑπολαμβάνω μνήμης ἀξίους εἶναι καὶ διαστολῆς· εἰσὶ δ' οὗτοι Ζήνων καὶ Ἀντισθένης οἱ Ῥόδιοι. [3] τούτους δ' ἀξίους εἶναι κρίνω διὰ πλείους αἰτίας. καὶ γὰρ κατὰ τοὺς καιροὺς γεγόνασι καὶ προσέτι πεπολίτευνται καὶ καθόλου πεποίηνται τὴν πραγματείαν οὐκ ὠφελείας χάριν, ἀλλὰ δόξης καὶ τοῦ καθήκοντος ἀνδράσι πολιτικοῖς. [4] τῷ δὲ τὰς αὐτὰς γράφειν ἡμῖν πράξεις ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι μὴ παρασιωπᾶν, ἵνα μὴ τῷ τῆς πατρίδος ὀνόματι καὶ τῷ δοκεῖν οἰκειοτάτας εἶναι Ῥοδίοις τὰς κατὰ θάλατταν πράξεις, ἡμῶν ἀντιδοξούντων πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἐνίοτε, μᾶλλον ἐπακολουθήσωσιν ἐκείνοις ἥπερ ἡμῖν οἱ φιλομαθοῦντες.

[340] The historians who are the subjects of Polybius' criticism are the Rhodians Zeno (*FGrHist* 523) and Antisthenes (*FGrHist* 508). To be precise, Polybius announces a separate discussion on them, but he then seems to only address his remarks to Zeno. Little is known about the life of Antisthenes (slightly older than Zeno, see Champion 2008, *BNJ* 523 T1) who, according to Jacoby, was probably a priest of Helios and the son of Architimus (*Kommentar*, vol. 3b, 1955: 427 and footnote 5). Regarding Zeno, apart from Polybius who defines him as a historian *kata meros*, Diodorus Siculus reports that he wrote about Rhodian antiquities (T2) and Diogenes Laertius that he wrote a local history (T1). On Antisthenes, see Schwartz 1894: 2537-2538; Ullrich 1898: 5-10 and 16-17; Walbank 1967, II: 518; Meister 1975: 173-178; Lenfant 2005: 183-204; and Champion 2007a. On Zeno, see Ullrich 1898: 10-15; Mazzarino 1966, II: 133-134 and 194-195; Walbank 1967, II: 517-518; Abel 1972: 138-140; Meister 1975: 173-178; Lehmann 1988: 1-17; Funke 1994: 255-62; Wiemer 2001: 19-27 and 207-262; Lenfant 2005: 183-204; Champion 2008; and again Wiemer 2013: 279-306.

> [1] *Polybius says that* since some of the authors of histories *kata meros* have also described the events of this period, comprising the attempt on Messene and the aforementioned sea battles [*scilicet* the battles of Chios and Lade], I mean to hold a brief discussion about them. [2] I shall do so not directing my comments at all of them, but at those only whom I consider worthy of mention and of a separate discussion. These are Zeno and Antisthenes, the Rhodians. [3] I consider them worthy for several reasons. For not only were they contemporary with those events, but they also took part in political life, and in general they did not compose their works for the sake of gain but for renown and for what is proper to men in public life. [4] Since they have written about the same events as I have, it is necessary that I do not pass them over in silence, lest serious students, in cases where I hold the opposite opinion to them, follow them rather than me, because of their country's renown and the Rhodians' reputation for being most familiar with naval matters.

Above all, it appears clear that one of the prerequisites of Polybius' digression is the fact that such historians were authors of works κατὰ μέρος, thus they took the wrong approach to history-writing, at least according to the Polybian idea of historiography. Then, if their approach is wrong, one can infer that their works would not be able to follow the canons proper to history, since it is the *ethos* which shapes the *techne*, as we have seen. Nevertheless, at this point of the *Histories*, almost half-way towards the end, Polybius does not seem to feel anymore the need to attack historians writing histories *kata meros per se*,[341] as he is slowly moving towards another topic (the ethos of the historian and history-writing), which he will fully develop at the end of his work, as we have seen (38.4).[342]

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[341] Even though it is clear that the polemic is still under surface, not only because he explicitly mentions them (16.14.1), but also because his intention is to make a specific type of readers, οἱ φιλομαθοῦντες – a term used by Polybius to define the readers of universal history, thus his own readers (2.56.11; 7.7.8) – aware of the 'danger', they might encounter if they follow such historians writing *kata meros* rather than him.

[342] Indeed, he states that he will discuss only Zeno and Antisthenes, worthy of mention because they were involved in politics and contemporary with the events they were describing (16.14.3-4), making almost the very same remark as the one he used in the justification of the digression on Fabius and Philinus (1.14 and 3.9). In both cases (Fabius/Philinus and Zeno/Antisthenes) Polybius fears that readers might be deceived by the fact that these authors were statesmen, and assume that they are trustworthy, so he feels the need to make his readers aware of their partiality and mistakes (1.14.2; 1.15.12-13; 3.9.3-5; 16.14.4).

That the ethos of the historian is in question here and that being zealous is the key to *empeiria* is clear from a later comment in the same passage (16.14.6-8), where Polybius resumes the discussion on the historian's disposition and admits that it is indeed possible to be slightly partial, but the historian should never do this at the expense of truth:

> [6] ἐγὼ δὲ διότι μὲν δεῖ ῥοπὰς διδόναι ταῖς αὐτῶν πατρίσι τοὺς συγγραφέας, συγχωρήσαιμ' ἄν, οὐ μὴν τὰς ἐναντίας τοῖς συμβεβηκόσιν ἀποφάσεις ποιεῖσθαι περὶ αὐτῶν. [7] ἱκανὰ γὰρ τὰ κατ' ἄγνοιαν γινόμενα τοῖς γράφουσιν, ἃ διαφυγεῖν ἄνθρωπον δυσχερές· [8] ἐὰν δὲ κατὰ προαίρεσιν ψευδογραφῶμεν ἢ πατρίδος ἕνεκεν ἢ φίλων ἢ χάριτος, τί διοίσομεν τῶν ἀπὸ τούτου τὸν βίον ποριζομένων;
>
> [6] I might even grant that it is necessary that historians give a certain weight to their fatherland, but not that they make statements about it that are opposite to what really happened. [7] For enough are the mistakes made by writers out of ignorance, which are difficult for a man to avoid; [8] if we then deliberately write false accounts either for national pride or for our friends or for favour, how will we differ from those who gain their living from such a behaviour?

Thus, the problem seems to be once again the assumption of the ethos appropriate to history: without this procedure historians will fall into mistakes which will be opposite to the reality, thus opposite to truth.[343]

On a not marginal note regarding the language, the employment of ἐναντίος returns, an important word in relation to the Polybian critiques against historians writing *kata meros* regarding the distance between *kata meros* and universal histories in terms of kinds of readers and, especially, lies and truth, where lies characterize the former types of histories, truth the latter. Moreover, another point already discussed in the criticism of histories *kata meros*, namely the fact that such historians are excessive

[343] Polybius had already made clear that truth in history is directly proportional to the historian's expertise in geography in 12.3.2 and 6: when highlighting Timaeus' mistakes on his description of Lybia, not only does Polybius underline that the Sicilian writer was anything but a historian (ἀνιστόρητον [12.3.2]; περὶ ὧν οὐδὲν ἱστορήσας Τίμαιος [12.3.6]), but he also states that "he gives information opposite to what is in accordance with truth", τἀναντία τοῖς κατ' ἀλήθειαν ὑπάρχουσιν ἐξηγεῖται (12.3.6).

in their accounts, might be surreptitiously present when Polybius states that ‘a certain weight’ might be given to one’s own fatherland (16.14.6), thus implying that such historians should not exaggerate with their patriotism. Finally, it is evident that reality is not only a unique feature of universal histories alone, but is also equivalent to truth, as elucidated by the usage of the term ψευδογραφῶμεν.

Polybius seems to better explain his line of reasoning in an immediately following passage, where he comments on the geographical and military ignorance of Zeno (16.17.9-18.3):

> [17.9] τί τις οὖν εἰκότως ἂν Ζήνωνι μέμψαιτο; διότι τὸ πλεῖον οὐ περὶ τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων ζήτησιν οὐδὲ περὶ τὸν χειρισμὸν τῆς ὑποθέσεως, ἀλλὰ περὶ τὴν τῆς λέξεως κατασκευὴν ἐσπούδακε, καὶ δῆλός ἐστι πολλάκις ἐπὶ τούτῳ σεμνυνόμενος, καθάπερ καὶ πλείους ἕτεροι τῶν ἐπιφανῶν συγγραφέων; [10] ἐγὼ δὲ φημὶ μὲν δεῖν πρόνοιαν ποιεῖσθαι καὶ σπουδάζειν ὑπὲρ τοῦ δεόντως ἐξαγγέλλειν τὰς πράξεις – δῆλον γὰρ ὡς οὐ μικρά, μεγάλα δὲ συμβάλλεται τοῦτο πρὸς τὴν ἱστορίαν – οὐ μὴν ἡγεμονικώτατόν γε καὶ πρῶτον αὐτὸ παρὰ τοῖς μετρίοις ἀνδράσι τίθεσθαι· [11] πολλοῦ γε δεῖν· ἄλλα γὰρ ἂν εἴη καλλίω μέρη τῆς ἱστορίας, ἐφ’ οἷς ἂν μᾶλλον σεμνυνθείη πολιτικὸς ἀνήρ.
> [18.1] Ὃ δὲ λέγειν βούλομαι, γένοιτ’ ἂν οὕτω μάλιστα καταφανές. [2] ἐξηγούμενος γὰρ ὁ προειρημένος συγγραφεὺς τήν τε Γάζης πολιορκίαν καὶ τὴν γενομένην παράταξιν Ἀντιόχου πρὸς Σκόπαν ἐν Κοίλῃ Συρίᾳ περὶ τὸ Πάνιον, περὶ μὲν τὴν τῆς λέξεως κατασκευὴν δῆλός ἐστιν ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον ἐσπουδακὼς ὡς ὑπερβολὴν τερατείας μὴ καταλιπεῖν τοῖς τὰς ἐπιδεικτικὰς καὶ πρὸς ἔκπληξιν τῶν πολλῶν συντάξεις ποιουμένοις, [3] τῶν γε μὴν πραγμάτων ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον ὠλιγώρηκεν ὥστε πάλιν ἀνυπέρβλητον εἶναι τὴν εὐχέρειαν καὶ τὴν ἀπειρίαν τοῦ συγγραφέως.
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> [17.9] Then, for what might one reasonably blame Zeno? Because he cared more neither about inquiry of the events nor about the treatment of the subject, but rather about stylistic elaboration, and he shows that he often takes pride in this, exactly as many other renowned historians do? [10] Now I admit that it is necessary to give thought to and take care of reporting events in an appropriate way – for it is evident that this makes not a small but a large contribution to history – but in no way should this aspect be considered the most dominant and the first among moderate men. [11] Far from it. Other indeed, and more beautiful [than the aforementioned], should be the parts of history which a man experienced in politics would rather take pride in.
> [18.1] What I want to say might be made especially clear in this way. [2] Indeed, the aforementioned writer, in narrating the siege of Gaza and the battle between Antiochus and Scopas which took place at Panion in Coele-Syria, has clearly cared about stylistic elaboration to such an extent that he

> has left no possibility of surpassing his sensationalism even to those who create display compositions aimed at the astonishment of the multitude, [3] whereas he was so little concerned about the real events that the negligence and the inexperience of this historian are likewise unsurpassable.

Thus, Zeno's *apeiria* appears to be the direct consequence of the kind of *ethos* he has chosen for his history: paying attention to stylistic refinement is inversely proportional to historical research, the more one cares about style the more one will be negligent in giving a truthful account of events. Indeed, one of the key concepts here seems to be that conscientious historians are characterized by moderation, whereas bad historians do not know how to use writing devices and fall into excess and exaggeration. This is perfectly clarified by Polybius by means of the employment of terms such as τερατείας and ἔκπληξιν, already used in his criticism of Phylarchus.[344]

Thus, there seems to be a *fil rouge* connecting the following concepts in sequence: some historians have made mistakes and shown their inexperience because they made use of τερατεία and ἔκπληξις, and they employed such devices because they had only attached importance to the style, a preoccupation derived from the *ethos* they had assumed, the *ethos* of a historian writing *kata meros*. This chain of consequences is also valid the other way round: the assumption of the *ethos* of a historian writing *kata meros*, after the same metaphorical route, will cause one to end up being ignorant and writing falsities.

In addition, this passage is embellished with a nexus which appears to be another Polybian neologism, περὶ τὴν τῆς λέξεως κατασκευήν, which has been translated as 'stylistic elaboration'. Indeed, while the word κατασκευή alone is widely used in Polybius and in other previous and following writers, it is Polybius who uses it for the first time in connection with λέξις, and in this passage only (16.17.9 and

[344] Cf. Walbank 1967, II: 523.

16.18.2).[345] Furthermore, κατασκευή might be also translated as 'trick' or 'artifice',[346] an interesting meaning in the context of this passage: in fact, the word carries the idea of 'deceit', a semantic sphere which Polybius had already touched upon in his critique against Phylarchus and histories *kata meros* when using the word ἀπάτη loaned from Plato.[347] Thus, just as Phylarchus, Zeno is 'plotting' against (κατά) his readers since, being only preoccupied with the tricks of the style, he presents them with a distorted, if not false, history studded with faults and mistakes.

3. How *not* to write history: omissions

In the light of the Polybian words and passages examined in the previous sections, part of the skill of the historian lies in his being impartial, as we have seen, in order to be able to give an accurate account of the events. In addition, he should not hold back, even though the topic is hard, but he should be capable to give at least a 'shared view' (3.21.9-10):

> [9] ἡμῖν δ' ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι δοκεῖ τὸ μὴ παραλιπεῖν ἄσκεπτον τοῦτο τὸ μέρος, ἵνα μήθ' οἷς καθήκει καὶ διαφέρει τὸ σαφῶς εἰδέναι τὴν ἐν τούτοις ἀκρίβειαν, παραπαίωσι τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τοῖς ἀναγκαιοτάτοις διαβουλίοις, [10] μήθ'οἱ φιλομαθοῦντες περὶ τούτων ἀστοχῶσι, συμπλανώμενοι ταῖς ἀγνοίαις καὶ φιλοτιμίαις τῶν συγγραφέων, ἀλλ' ᾗ τις ὁμολογουμένη θεωρία τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς ὑπαρξάντων δικαίων Ῥωμαίοις καὶ Καρχηδονίοις πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἕως εἰς τοὺς καθ' ἡμᾶς καιρούς.

[345] After Polybius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus uses a similar nexus in the meaning of 'artistry of the style' (*De Isocrate* 13; *De Thucydide* 27), 'adornments of the style' (*De Demosthenis Dictione* 14; 24; 44). Moreover, the verb κατασκευάζω is used, for example, by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *De Isaeo* 7.2 (κατεσκεύασται τὸ δοκοῦν εἶναι ἀφελές) and Strabo 1.2.6 (λόγος κατεσκευασμένος) with the meaning of 'to elaborate'. See LSJ and GE, *s.v.*

[346] See LSJ and GE, *s.v.*

[347] See *supra* chapter 2 section 2.

> [9] It seems to me that it is compulsory not to leave this part without careful examination, so that those to whom knowing with certainty the exact course of these events concerns and matters do not deviate from the truth in matters of the most unavoidable decisions, [10] nor are serious students, led completely astray by the instances of ignorance and ambition of historians, deceived with regard to these events, but let there be an agreed viewpoint of the existing juridical obligations for the Romans and the Carthaginians towards each other from the beginning up to our days.

These remarks are a sort of justification of Polybius' survey of all the treaties between Rome and Carthage, which were hitting the headlines in the period before the Third Punic War.[348] A few chapters later, Polybius will underline that the treaties were not objects in the public domain,[349] thus one might understand the necessity for him to make a digression. If one gives credit to Mommsen who suggested that it was probably Cato who sparked interest in such treaties,[350] which were only known to an inner circle as one might gather from Polybius' remarks (3.26.2), one can infer that Polybius' intention is a purely historiographical one, namely to discuss a tradition and the sources for such a tradition, and to give a proper account of it.[351] Once again, as in the case of

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[348] See Walbank 1957: 336, who underlines that, after Mommsen's discussion on the treaties (1859: 320-325), it has become the *vulgata* to assign the new-born interest in them to the years around 152 B.C.

[349] 3.26.2: τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ οὐ θαυμαστόν, ἐπεὶ καθ'ἡμᾶς ἔτι καὶ Ῥωμαίων καὶ Καρχηδονίων οἱ πρεσβύτατοι καὶ μάλιστα δοκοῦντες περὶ τὰ κοινὰ σπουδάζειν ἠγνόουν. Polybius here is referring to Rome's third pact with Carthage (3.25), agreed at the time of Pyrrhus' passage in Italy, around 279/8 B.C. (cf. Diod. 22.7.5, Livy *Per.* 13, and Just. 18.2.1), which preserved the clauses of the previous treaties, and added some new ones aimed at protecting both in case of peace with Pyrrhus. On this treaty, see Nenci 1958: 263-299. For a general discussion with bibliography on it and on the so-called treaty of Philinus, see Walbank 1957: 349-355. On the first (Pol. 3.22.8-9) and second treaty (Pol. 3.24.8-10), see for example, Mazzarino 1947: 78, who thinks they were mere commercial treaties, and Maffi 2006: 287-296, who gives a linguistic examination of some of the clauses. For a more detailed discussion of the Philinus' treaty, see Eckstein 2010: 406-426, who argues that Polybius is right in denying the existence of the treaty. See also Schachermeyr 1930: 350-380; David 1946: 231-250; Aymard 1957: 277-293; Léveque 1957: 409-418; Hoyos 1985: 92-109; Weber 2004: 239-244; Serrati 2006: 113-134; and Richardson 2008: 84-94.

[350] Mommsen 1859: 322-323.

[351] Walbank 1957: 336-337 states that Polybius elaborated the information given by Cato – which was "translated and passed about in senatorial circles" – and added the

Philinus and Fabius or Phylarchus, Polybius' choice is 'forced' (ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι) by the conduct of those who came before him, whether they were historians or politicians like Cato.[352]

Given the historiographical nature of the premises, a remark on truth in this passage seems inevitable. In addition, if Polybius appears compelled to make this digression, at the same time it is clear that only his own expertise can lead him to understand that it is necessary to do so: indeed, the formulation of the sentence, with the subjectivity of 'it seems to me' (ἡμῖν δ' ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι δοκεῖ) highlights the historian's (right) perception. Thus, the subjective remark adds an important detail: the realization that it is necessary to provide readers with a clear (evoked by the term σαφῶς) account on these treaties does not belong to every historian, but only to the expert historian who is capable and able to understand this need. In this case, it is only proper to Polybius.[353]

As a consequence, it is only up to him – the proper historian – to make this part clear to the readers, especially because the treaties were not known to many (3.26.2), there was a disagreement about their terms between Romans and Carthaginians (3.21), and other historians were incompetent (3.21.10: ταῖς ἀγνοίαις καὶ φιλοτιμίαις). As we have already seen in the polemic remarks against Phylarchus,[354] history is not just a list

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details of the treaties. According to Walbank, Polybius' intention was to spread this information to a "wider public (especially Greeks)".

[352] Pédech 1964: 187 asserts that the polemic against Chaereas and Sosylus is a sort of introduction to the Polybian discussion on the treaties. I might add that it is probably this polemic which triggers the Polybian need to give the right version – his own version – of the Roman-Carthaginian treaties.

[353] Another historian had used this weapon of subjectivity, but with a completely different aim: Hecataeus of Miletus, in the preamble to his historical work (*FGrHist* 1 F 1), had declared: "I write these things, as they seem to me to be true", τάδε γράφω, ὥς μοι δοκεῖ ἀληθέα εἶναι. But his intention was completely different from Polybius' one, since Hecataeus was underlining the subjectivity of the historian as opposed to the inscriptions of the Great Kings, as it has been shown (see *supra*, chapter 1, section 3).

[354] See *supra*, chapter 2, section 2.

and a raw account of events, but the historian has to reflect upon them, they need to be discussed and examined, when necessary. And indeed, this appears clear also from this passage, since Polybius uses the term ἄσκεπτον preceded by a nexus (μὴ παραλιπεῖν) which functions as a negation, thus giving the idea of an attentive analysis. All the more so as he had already used the very same expression τὸ μὴ παραλιπεῖν ἄσκεπτον τοῦτο τὸ μέρος to introduce his critique against Phylarchus (2.56.2) followed by a purpose clause as well as in the passage of book 3 on which I am commenting in this part of the section (3.21.9). One might, then, infer that Polybius had the firm intention to create a link between the two passages, at least regarding the role and task of the historian, especially because the word ἄσκεπτος occurs only twice in Polybius, in the two just mentioned passages.[355]

However, this is not the only allusion to Phylarchus. Polybius had accused Phylarchus of ἀσκεψία (2.63.5), which is not only the opposite of what he himself is performing, but is also a *hapax*, thus another Polybian neologism especially created to criticize a previous historian and a previous tradition on grounds that bring together the concepts of sight and competence: Phylarchus is blind (2.61.12), as it has already been seen,[356] but he is also ignorant and incompetent, being accused of ἀπειρία and ἄγνοια.[357] Both points reappear in 3.21.9-10. Furthermore, the passage is permeated with words belonging to the sphere of the sense of sight (ἄσκεπτον, τὸ σαφῶς εἰδέναι, θεωρία), and Polybius puts his readers on their guard against writers who could led them astray by means of their ignorance and ambition. Also, the concept of deception

[355] The adjective ἄσκεπτος does not occur very often in Greek texts. Before Polybius, there are only 10 occurrences, but the term is never employed in a historiographical context: Ar. *Eccl.* 258; Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.19; Plato, *Euthyd.* 282 c, *Resp.* 4.438 a, *Tht.* 184 a; Arist. *APo.* 89 b, *Pol.* 1274 a; Ephippus Com., *Nau* F 1 (Meineke); Aratus, *Phaen.* 1.1134 (Martin); Clearchus F 63 (Wehrli).
[356] See *supra*, chapter 2, section 2.
[357] 2.58.13; 2.62.2.

and the peculiar definition of Polybius' own readers as 'serious students', were already present in the critique against Phylarchus (2.56.12) and make their triumphal return here. In the light of this, the term φιλοτιμία in this passage, associated with ignorance (3.21.10), might be translated more precisely as 'ostentation',[358] especially the ostentation of stylistic manner, as it might be the style of Phylarchus, though one has to admit that the criticism in book 3 might be referred to any other historian, not just Phylarchus. Nevertheless, the allusions are there, and it seems appealing to draw such a connection.

Two other terms need to be discussed, συμπλανώμενοι and ἀστοχῶσι. I have translated the first one as 'led astray', building on the meaning of the verb πλανάω 'to make wander, to stray, to lead astray', and taking into account the middle/passive form:[359] Polybius seems to express the idea of confusion, of a reader who might find himself wandering in vain, taken around and strayed from the straight and narrow in order to be deceived. As a consequence, the serious students are prevented from reflecting, understanding, inferring what is happening: the verb ἀστοχέω, being constructed with the privative alpha preceding a term belonging to the semantic field of στοχάζομαι ('to consider, to conjecture, to infer, to explore'),[360] clearly shows the concept behind it, namely that not only are these students deceived,[361] but, given that ignorant historians make them wander in vain throughout the meanders of difficult topics, they are also deprived of their capacity to understand and reflect upon such events.

[358] As attested, for example, in Hdt. 3.53.4; Gal. 6.415; Lys. 33.2.
[359] See LSJ and GE, *s.v.*
[360] See Chantraine, *s.v.* στόχος.
[361] As it also happens in the case of Phylarchus (2.65.12). See *supra*, chapter 2, section 2 (pp. 63-64).

A corollary to these remarks might be the definition of the historian as a leader, in the sense of him leading his reader, as Polybius underlines in his work: in the light of these last remarks, one might infer that only a historian who is skilful, expert, and knows how to do his job can be capable of leading his reader to a truthful account of events. Moreover, between the lines one can read the role of the historian who makes his reader see the truth, given the aforementioned recurrence of terms related to the concept of seeing. Just as the wise man of Plato's cave, the Polybian historian makes his readers see and shows them the truth, which also corresponds to the light outside the cave, as we have seen.[362] And this is also given by the capacity of the historian to decide when events should not be omitted, as it is clear from the assessments in 3.21.9-10: Polybius has got the ability to clearly understand the necessity of discussing the Roman-Carthaginian treaties and of not omitting them from his historical account.

These last remarks are made clearer later in the *Histories*, when Polybius tries to clarify, especially before a Roman audience, his choices in terms of presence or absence of certain key themes or events from his work (6.11.3-8):

> [3] οὐκ ἀγνοῶ δὲ διότι τοῖς ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς πολιτείας ὁρμωμένοις ἐλλιπεστέραν φανησόμεθα ποιεῖσθαι τὴν ἐξήγησιν, ἔνια παραλιπόντες τῶν κατὰ μέρος· [4] πᾶν γὰρ ἐπιγινώσκοντες καὶ παντὸς πεῖραν εἰληφότες διὰ τὴν ἐκ παίδων τοῖς ἔθεσι καὶ νομίμοις συντροφίαν οὐ τὸ λεγόμενον θαυμάσουσιν ἀλλὰ τὸ παραλειπόμενον ἐπιζητήσουσιν, [5] οὐδὲ κατὰ πρόθεσιν ὑπολήψονται τὸν γράφοντα παραλιπεῖν τὰς μικρὰς διαφοράς, ἀλλὰ κατ' ἄγνοιαν παρασιωπᾶν τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰ συνέχοντα τῶν πραγμάτων. [6] καὶ ῥηθέντα μὲν οὐκ ἂν ἐθαύμαζον ὡς ὄντα μικρὰ καὶ πάρεργα, παραλειπόμενα δ' ἐπιζητοῦσιν ὡς ἀναγκαῖα, βουλόμενοι δοκεῖν αὐτοὶ πλέον εἰδέναι τῶν συγγραφέων. [7] δεῖ δὲ τὸν ἀγαθὸν κριτὴν οὐκ ἐκ τῶν παραλειπομένων δοκιμάζειν τοὺς γράφοντας, ἀλλ'ἐκ τῶν λεγομένων, [8] κἂν μὲν ἐν τούτοις τι λαμβάνῃ ψεῦδος, εἰδέναι διότι κἀκεῖνα παραλείπεται δι'ἄγνοιαν, ἐὰν δὲ πᾶν τὸ λεγόμενον ἀληθὲς ᾖ, συγχωρεῖν διότι κἀκεῖνα παρασιωπᾶται κατὰ κρίσιν, οὐ κατ' ἄγνοιαν.

[362] See *supra*, chapter 2, section 1.

> [3] I am not ignorant of the fact that, having left aside some details, I shall appear to write a rather defective explanation to those who have been born and raised in conformity with this constitution; [4] for as they have complete knowledge of it and practical acquaintance with all its parts, having been brought up by means of the familiarity with these customs and institutions from childhood, they will not marvel at what is said but they will demand what has been left out, [5] nor they will think that the writer has omitted small peculiarities on purpose, but that he passed the origins and the most important questions over in silence out of ignorance. [6] Better still, they would not marvel at the things I say as if they were of small importance and secondary, and they would demand what has been left aside as if they were indispensable, because they themselves want to seem to know more than the historians. [7] But a good examiner should not judge writers from what is omitted, but from what is said, [8] and if he happens to find any falsehood in this, he should know that also the rest has been left aside out of ignorance, whereas if all of what is said is true, then he should agree that also the rest has been passed over in silence out of considered choice, not because of ignorance.

In this fragmentary part of the *Histories*, which introduces the description of the Roman constitution with its division of powers, Polybius returns to the topic of omissions. If in the previously analysed passage (3.21.9-10) he chooses not to omit a detail, here he makes the opposite choice, he purposefully chooses to omit some details. The cornerstone of the argument is not the act of omitting in itself, but omissions linked to the choice of the historian, namely the choice of when omitting is appropriate and when it is not.

In this case, I believe that Polybius is perfectly aware that his audience is a mixed one, both Roman and Greek, so he feels the need to explain the reason of certain omissions to his Roman readers regarding their constitution, probably in a way to make them aware that he is addressing two audiences, thus he needs to be understood by both, and cannot give certain details of the Roman constitution only known to a Roman audience. In addition, I believe that Polybius' remarks here are anyway general historiographical remarks which are universally valid, so it does not really matter that he is specifically referring to the Romans in this passage.

To express these important historiographical concepts Polybius uses the verb παρασιωπάω which appears to be another of his distinctive neologisms, especially created to express a peculiar thought.[363] Indeed, the first occurrence of this verb is found in book 2 of Polybius' *Histories* (2.13.7), who uses it a total of 18 times (apart from F 108, which is attributed to Polybius by modern scholars), of which 9 have a historiographical nuance: 6.11.5 and 6.11.8 pertain to the passage I am commenting, and it is interesting that the verb occurs twice; in 10.21.3, the verb seems to have a historiographical meaning, since Polybius underlines the importance of not passing over in silence the education and ambitions of the protagonists of the events they are recounting; in 10.27.7, it carries a historiographical nuance, since Polybius reflects on the fact that both the description and the silence over the royal palace in Media might be embarrassing for the historian, given the exceptionality of the construction which might drive some to an excessive account; in 12.10.9, Polybius is arguing that Timaeus would have not passed over in silence a written document or a commemorative stele, should he find it; in 12.25b.4, the meaning of the verb is again related to history writing, as Polybius reflects on the fact that speeches and their causes should not be passed over in silence; in 16.14.4, Polybius underlines that it is necessary not to pass over in silence some events, because he needs to correct Zeno and Antisthenes; in 20.11.1, his remark is still historiographical, because he affirms that it is worthy not to pass over in silence what happened to Nicander, ambassador of the Aetolians; in 29.5.2, the historiographical meaning is given by the Polybian reflection whether he should

[363] The verb constructed with παρά seems to give the idea of the relationship with the opinion or judgement of someone, if one thinks about παρά together with a proper personal name with the meaning of "according to", for example παρ' Ἐφόρῳ (Pol. 9.2.4), or about the expression παρ' ἐμοί meaning "in my judgment, in my view" (Hdt. 1.32.9). Moreover, παρά might also have the nuance of 'on the basis of, in consequence of'. See GE, *s.v.* Thus, the meaning of the Polybian neologism might be 'to pass over in silence on the basis of my judgement', also given the fact that, in 6.11.8, it is modified by the nexus κατὰ κρίσιν.

have passed over in silence the plot designed by Perseus and Eumenes II or written about it to explain the events.[364]

Of course, what follows from this assumption is that he – Polybius – is the able historian who has the expertise to choose and to know when and what he should omit. The hint is given by the way in which Polybius begins the sentence in 6.11.3: οὐκ ἀγνοῶ, 'I am not ignorant', technically a litotes, but one might even consider it as an upended euphemism. In a passage where one of the leading principles is indeed the dichotomy between ignorance and decision-making, it is interesting that Polybius starts declaring his non-ignorance. Moreover, if on the one side there is ἄγνοια, the ignorance, on the other side one finds πρόθεσις – translated as 'purpose', but carrying the sense of something already decided, set or established before the action, something that he already intended to do before starting to write –[365] which eventually becomes κρίσις, 'choice with discernment'. The concept of choice, in terms of bad versus good choice, has already been analysed,[366] but here it is a matter of ignorance versus (good) choice. In addition, κρίσις might indicate not only the author's choice, but also his capacity for interpretation and/or judgement, his ability to distinguish useful omissions from damaging omissions, to estimate their value.

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[364] The remaining nine are: 2.13.7, where the verb does not have a historiographical connotation, as it describes the fact that the Romans, at the time of the Ebro treaty, passed over in silence some details regarding Iberia; 3.15.11, where it is Hannibal who is passing over in silence his real reasons for not respecting the Ebro treaty; 3.21.1, when the Carthaginians do not mention the Ebro treaty during the visit of Roman ambassadors; 9.35.7, where the Aetolians are charged with passing over in silence their bad actions; 22.4.17, where the verb is referred to the fact that the senate remained silent regarding the charge of impiety against the Boeotian Zeuxippus; 22.10.11 refers the verb to Quintus Caecilius Metellus remaining silent; 24.10.7, where the senate passes over in silence all the names of the ambassadors, apart from Callicrates; in 30.3.4, Attalus omits some details to the senate; in 30.23.4, the senate does not mention the *philia* with the Rhodians.

[365] See LSJ and GE, *s.v.* The word is completely absent from Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon. Before Polybius, who uses it 147 times, the one who employs it most is Aristotle (13 times).

[366] See *supra* chapter 2 section 2, and chapter 2 sections 1 to 4, *passim*.

This behaviour, though, is not aimed at showing off, as one might gather from Polybius' words: his choices are made to benefit the readers. Indeed, if he omits details which can be 'too detailed', he does so in order to give clarity, to provide his readers with a clear view, to use the same words as in 3.21.9-10. In this case, the omissions do not obscure the events, on the contrary they are useful to shed light on the events, they help to explain them better. Thus, the task of the historian is to understand what are the useless details that should be avoided not to create confusion in the reader, also because, as he has already underlined,[367] history is not just a list of events and details, but a pondered reflection upon them.

If the theme of the first part of the passage (6.11.3-6) seems to be omissions in relation to the opposition ignorance/considerate choice, the second part (6.11.7-8) is characterized by the leitmotiv of good judgement, which is also double-folded, because it is valid for both the historian and his readers. Of course, if his own history is demonstrative and he acts as the lawyer who brings proofs to support his statements,[368] the Polybian reader will act as a judge (κριτήν). Obviously, the readers whom he intends to address are the intelligent ones and the 'serious students' he has mentioned in other points of his work. Thus, he supplies them with a sort of handbook on historiography and on how to understand the historian's work. What is more, he gives them indications and hints (given the apodictic nature of his history) to let them comprehend and spot other historians' mistakes and deceit. In 3.21.10 he warned his readers about the risk of being deceived by the ignorance and ostentation of the historians (ταῖς ἀγνοίαις καὶ φιλοτιμίαις τῶν συγγραφέων), in 6.11.7-8 he offers a solution, but only after three books: truth. Indeed, he suggests to them to look for elements of truth: if one does so, he will understand whether a writer is a valid and

[367] See *supra* chapter 2 sections 2 and 3.
[368] See *supra* chapter 1 section 3.

trustworthy historian; also, Polybius gives his readers the means to understand when they should not fear omissions.

As a matter of fact, in this second part, the key terms are κριτήν (judge, interpreter), δοκιμάζειν (to judge, but also to examine, or to consider capable) and κατὰ κρίσιν (choice, capacity of discernment, judgement, interpretation),[369] all belonging to the semantic sphere of words expressing legal concepts,[370] but also to the semantic fields of examination, scrutinizing, and thinking. Such concepts are nevertheless functional to the opposition ignorance/discernment, or better thinking/non-thinking of the first part (6.11.3-6). Indeed, the opposition does also concern and pertain to the readers, who are the core of this second part. The apt historian will also have intelligent readers who will understand the historian's choice of omitting superfluous details, the clever historian will not have envious readers who are conceited[371] and ready to point at omissions for the sheer pleasure of showing the failures of the historian (6.11.9).

In conclusion, the idea the reader gets is still strictly connected with truth: in fact, the conclusion of the remarks is that falsehood is always associated with ignorance, whereas truth is always associated with reflection, good judgement, and deep thinking.[372] It follows that useful omissions derive from the historian's expertise and his capability to judge and assess the events or topic he is narrating.

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[369] See LSJ and GE, *s.vv.*

[370] Not to mention the fact that the majority of the occurrences of the verb παραλείπω before Polybius – who uses it 47 times – are actually found in orators: 44 occurrences in Isocrates, 15 in Lysias, 66 in Demosthenes, 16 in Aeschines. Among the historians, Herodotus has no occurrences, Thucydides only 4, Xenophon 20. As for the philosophers, 35 occurrences in Plato, 24 in Aristotle.

[371] 6.11.6: βουλόμενοι δοκεῖν αὐτοὶ πλέον εἰδέναι τῶν συγγραφέων.

[372] See 6.11.8 where ψεῦδος is linked to ἄγνοιαν, and ἀληθὲς is connected to κατὰ κρίσιν.

4. Forgivable omissions and mistakes

Not all omissions are related to the historian's ignorance, of course, or at least not in the common meaning of ignorant as 'uneducated'. Indeed, one might gather that according to Polybius some historians were ignorant in the sense that they 'ignored' – as an Italian comedian and theatre director would say[373] – some key details.

After the account of Hannibal's crossing of the Ebro, the Pyrenees, the Rhone, and the Alps, Polybius explains the reasons why he did not dwell on the description of such places (3.58.1-4):

> [1] Διότι μὲν οὖν, εἰ καί τι τῶν τῆς ἱστορίας μερῶν ἄλλο, καὶ τοῦτο προσδεῖ λόγου καὶ διορθώσεως ἀληθινωτέρας, προφανὲς ἐκ πολλῶν μάλιστα δ' ἐκ τούτων. [2] σχεδὸν γὰρ πάντων, εἰ δὲ μή γε, τῶν πλείστων συγγραφέων πεπειραμένων μὲν ἐξηγεῖσθαι τὰς ἰδιότητας καὶ θέσεις τῶν περὶ τὰς ἐσχατιὰς τόπων τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς οἰκουμένης, ἐν πολλοῖς δὲ τῶν πλείστων διημαρτηκότων, [3] παραλείπειν μὲν οὐδαμῶς καθήκει, ῥητέον δέ τι πρὸς αὐτοὺς οὐκ ἐκ παρέργου καὶ διερριμμένως ἀλλ' ἐξ ἐπιστάσεως, [4] καὶ ῥητέον οὐκ ἐπιτιμῶντας οὐδ' ἐπιπλήττοντας, ἐπαινοῦντας δὲ μᾶλλον καὶ διορθουμένους τὴν ἄγνοιαν αὐτῶν, γινώσκοντας ὅτι κἀκεῖνοι τῶν νῦν καιρῶν ἐπιλαβόμενοι πολλὰ τῶν αὐτοῖς εἰρημένων εἰς διόρθωσιν ἂν καὶ μετάθεσιν ἤγαγον.
>
> [1] Therefore, that indeed this section, more than any other part of the history, still lacks an account and a correction closer to the reality is evident from many facts, and above all from the following. [2] Indeed, since almost all or at least the majority of writers have attempted to describe the characteristics and the positions of the places in the most remote parts of the world known by us, and since most of them were mistaken on many points, [3] it is not at all appropriate to spare [this kind of geographical description], but it is necessary to mention it not incidentally and in disorder but giving due attention to it, [4] and one must speak neither blaming nor reproaching them, but rather showing appreciation and correcting their ignorance, knowing that they too, if they could grasp current opportunities, would bring many of their own statements under correction and modification.

[373] Giovanni Storti as the tram controller in *Tre Uomini e Una Gamba*, directed by Massimo Venier, Aldo Baglio, Giovanni Storti and Giacomo Poretti, 1997.

Thus, starting from the conviction of having to correct previous colleagues for their geographical knowledge, Polybius immediately specifies that a corrective account will only give a knowledge closer to how these places really are. Indeed, he uses the comparative of the adjective ἀληθινός, which in this case might have the meaning of 'real' rather than 'truthful'.

Nevertheless, descriptions of places which are closer to reality still appear to depend upon the historian's approach. Indeed, Polybius' statements in the preceding chapter seem to criticize the long geographical descriptions over which writers quarrel.[374] As he underlines with the adverb διερριμμένως, another of his peculiar neologisms, the risk is to end up with a scattered and not uniform narration. Again, it is the historian who has to decide when and where a certain account or description fits his idea of a coherent historical work.

In addition, the concept of scattering together with the reflection upon the fact that such authors, had they lived at Polybius' time, would have changed their mind regarding their own geographical descriptions, recalls the remarks in the preamble of the *Histories*, where Polybius underlines that looking at scattered limbs (διερριμμένα τὰ μέρη) of a dead body is not the same as looking at the alive body, full of lively energy.[375] Nonetheless, the observations in the two passages differ from each other as well. If in the proemial passage there is a sort of third party helping and showing them how the body was before dying and before its limbs were scattered, and such writers and their readers realize how different the living body was, but they do not seem to change their minds, in this passage of book 3 the very same writers would change their

[374] 3.57.3: ὑπὲρ ὧν οἱ συγγραφεῖς ἀμφισβητοῦντες πρὸς ἀλλήλους τὸν πλεῖστον διατίθενται λόγον. Walbank 1957: 394, thinks that Polybius had in mind Dicaearchus, Eratosthenes, and Pytheas; Bianchetti 2005a: 264-265, hypothesizes that the geographer Pytheas is behind this passage and that Polybius is criticizing more than justifying his involuntary mistakes.
[375] 1.4.7-8.

minds after an involuntary mistake. The authors of this passage appear to be intelligent, because – had they lived at the same time as Polybius – they would not have been mistaken, whereas in the proemial passage those who look at the scattered limbs still need someone to lead them, they do not understand their mistakes by themselves (1.4.8: εἰ γάρ τις αὐτίκα μάλα συνθεὶς καὶ τέλειον αὖθις ἀπεργασάμενος τὸ ζῷον τῷ τ'εἴδει καὶ τῇ τῆς ψυχῆς εὐπρεπείᾳ κἄπειτα πάλιν ἐπιδεικνύοι τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἐκείνοις). Thus, one might infer that there are two kinds of ignorance: voluntary when they are ignorant because they are uneducated and they lack knowledge of something which did exist at their time; involuntary when they are ignorant because they ignore something which was not yet available at their time. Such a difference also seems to be highlighted by the different usage of the concepts of past and present: if in the proemial passage the gaining consciousness is performed by looking at the past – indeed Polybius' example is given by the hypothesis that someone would recompose the body and bring it to life again –, the example of this passage looks towards their future – if the writers could come from the past into the present (= their future), they would certainly change their assessments.

Finally, another hint that Polybius does not consider such writers as inexperienced historians might be the terminology used to describe their change of mind: εἰς διόρθωσιν ἂν καὶ μετάθεσιν ἤγαγον. Indeed, the verb ἄγω constructed with εἰς and the accusatives of δίκην, δικαστήριον, κρίσιν or other terms belonging to the same semantic sphere might have the juridical connotation of 'bring to court, bring to trial'.[376] Moreover, in Polybius the verb διορθόω in the middle form carries a juridical value.[377] Finally, the noun διόρθωσις has a moral connotation, since it might also

[376] *LSJ* and *GE*, *s.v.*
[377] See Schweighäuser 1822, *s.v.*: '*delictum alicuius castigare*'.

indicate a correction of a behaviour or attitude.[378] This compresence of ethical and juridical sphere is not extraneous to the Polybian philosophy of history, since the Polybian historian, as we have seen, is qualified by ethos and at the same time appears as a judge who assesses his sources. Thus, such writers seem to be similar to Polybius in the sense that they act as judges of their works as well as Polybius: in bringing their assessments under correction at the same time they will put them under scrutiny.

Thus, Polybius justifies such authors because it was not their fault to have missed two of the most important steps related to historical research (3.58.8-9):

> [8] δυσχερὲς μὲν γὰρ ἐπὶ πλέον τινῶν αὐτόπτην γενέσθαι διὰ τὸ τοὺς μὲν ἐκβεβαρβαρῶσθαι τοὺς δ' ἐρήμους εἶναι τόπους, ἔτι δὲ χαλεπώτερον τὸ περὶ τῶν ὁραθέντων διὰ λόγου τι γνῶναι καὶ μαθεῖν διὰ τὸ τῆς φωνῆς ἐξηλλαγμένον. [9] ἐὰν δὲ καὶ γνῷ τις, ἔτι τῶν πρὸ τοῦ δυσχερέστερον τὸ τῶν ἑωρακότων τινὰ μετρίῳ χρῆσθαι τρόπῳ καὶ καταφρονήσαντα τῆς παραδοξολογίας καὶ τερατείας ἑαυτοῦ χάριν προτιμῆσαι τὴν ἀλήθειαν καὶ μηδὲν τῶν πάρεξ ὄντων ἡμῖν ἀναγγεῖλαι.
>
> [8] For it was difficult to be eyewitness of more than a few things, owing to some places being under the control of foreigners and others desolate, and it was still more difficult to come to know and learn about some of the seen things through speech because of the difference of the language. [9] Then, even if one would have been able to grasp such knowledge, still it was even more difficult than before that someone of those who had seen [such things] would employ a measured tone and, showing contempt for the account of marvels and for the recounting of unbelievable things, would prefer truth for its own sake and would report us nothing beyond what it really is.

Thus, Polybius is indeed justifying these authors by explaining that their limits of information derive from the time and conditions in which they were living, a less harsh assessment than his critiques against historians writing *kata meros*, which (one has to admit) appears to be a similar condition, given that Polybius declares that only at his time, due to the Roman conquests, is a proper universal history possible.

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[378] See Schweighäuser 1822, *s.v.* who translates as '*correctio, emendatio erratorum suorum*' (and specifies the topic to which this particular translation refers: '*de ingenio et moribus et vitae actione*') and Mauersberger 2003, *s.v.* who renders as 'education, improvement, correction' ('Bildung, Besserung, Verbesserung, Berichtigung').

There seems to be something more than a mere explanation, though, when Polybius underlines that one should pay attention to how the facts are related, because sources of information might add details which do not pertain to a true account. For Polybius, the eyes are more trustworthy than the ears, as he will explicitly write later, mentioning Heraclitus: ἀληθινωτέρας δ'οὔσης οὐ μικρῷ τῆς ὁράσεως κατὰ τὸν Ἡράκλειτον - ὀφθαλμοὶ γὰρ τῶν ὤτων ἀκριβέστεροι μάρτυρες.[379] Nevertheless, a sort of ambiguity springs from this statement as well, because if it is true that seeing is better than hearing, it is also true that the eyes are closer to the reality, but only in relation to the ears, not in an absolute way (even though they are by far, οὐ μικρῷ, closer to the reality than the ears). Thus they are not *the most* trustworthy.

There are two different parallel discussions here: such authors were unlucky because it was not available to them an instrument, the eyes, which is *relatively* trustworthy, namely in relation to the ears. Unfortunately, the writers of the Polybian discussion have at their disposal only hearing, which is a problematic instrument: indeed, as is clear from Polybius' words, the historian should have the capacity and the expertise to use this instrument, because witnesses are not all the same and some of them might embellish their account. Thus, only an expert historian is able to take advantage of hearsay, because he knows how to do historical research. A concept which seems to be adumbrated in a Heraclitean fragment, where the philosopher affirms that "bad witnesses are the eyes and ears for men, if they have barbarian souls".[380] Thus, it

[379] "Since sight is closer to the reality – and not a bit – than hearing according to Heraclitus – indeed the eyes are witnesses more scrupulous than ears" (12.27.1). This concept had been already mentioned by Herodotus 1.8.2, in the opposite way: ὦτα γὰρ τυγχάνει ἀνθρώποισι ἐόντα ἀπιστότερα ὀφθαλμῶ, "indeed for the men, as it happens, the ears are more untrustworthy than the eyes". Cf. Lucian, *Quomodo Historia Conscribenda Sit* 29. As Marincola 2017: 548 n. 108 underlines, this "is one of the oldest historiographical tropes".

[380] B 107 DK 12: κακοὶ μάρτυρες ἀνθρώποισιν ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ ὦτα βαρβάρους ψυχὰς ἐχόντων.

is important to have the skill to 'interpret' the sources at one's disposal. As will be examined later in this thesis, hearing and sight are useful only if scrutinized by the expert historian, because they are not objective sources.[381]

Polybius concludes that at his own time the historian's job is easier than in the past, not only for the reasons he has just explained, including the fact that the places are more accessible, but also because

> ἀπολελυμένων δὲ καὶ τῶν πρακτικῶν ἀνδρῶν τῆς περὶ τὰς πολεμικὰς καὶ πολιτικὰς πράξεις φιλοτιμίας, ἐκ δὲ τούτων πολλὰς καὶ μεγάλας ἀφορμὰς εἰληφότων εἰς τὸ πολυπραγμονεῖν καὶ φιλομαθεῖν περὶ τῶν προειρημένων.
>
> Active men are relieved from the ambition of military or political deeds, and from this situation they have seized many and important opportunities to investigate and to love learning about the aforementioned topics (3.59.4).

The historian, then, can rely on helpers or better witnesses. Polybius is talking about people who before the Roman conquests might have devoted themselves to internal Greek politics. Nevertheless, it is not completely clear who such active men are: [382] they might be historians like Polybius, they might be the oral sources the historian might use, they might be experts who help the historian. From Polybius' words one might gather that these men are men of action and they are full of curiosity, they do not keep still. Consequently, they do not look like the 'asleep' people of Heraclitus nor like

[381] With regard to this interpretation, it is interesting to note that Canfora 1999: 18 thinks that the passage of Polybius (12.27.1) should be corrected in line with B 107 DK 12.

[382] Walbank 1957: 393 identifies such men with "Greeks as free from the burden of military and political careers". Pédech 1964: 91-92 discusses the variety of the nuances the noun ἀφορμή has in Polybius ranging from 'way of action' (*moyen d'action*), which includes the natural talent of a person as well as the material resources of a country, a base for negotiation or for military operations, to 'opportunity' and 'occasion'.

people who keep themselves informed only by means of books (like Timaeus).[383] On the contrary, such active men have thirst for knowledge.[384]

Finally, a hint regarding who they are might indeed be the very same adjective Polybius uses to define them, πρακτικός. Plato uses the adjective in opposition to φιλοθεάμων,[385] which cannot but recall the Polybian discussion on histories *kata meros* and universal history together with their diverse kinds of readers, with histories *kata meros* having 'casual readers' (τοὺς ἀκούοντας) and universal history having the 'serious students' (τοὺς φιλομαθοῦντας).[386] As has been shown,[387] Polybius took inspiration from Plato when drawing this difference. Thus, in this case, the active men, those opposed to the 'casual readers' and 'lovers of hearing and watching', appear to be both 'informers' (they are committed to researching things) and 'informed' (as Polybius' readers opposed to the lovers of hearing and watching).

5. How *not* to write history: unforgivable mistakes and deliberate lies

If active men turned their attention to inquiry and historical matters, there are still historians who are not active men, which, according to Polybius, constitutes a sin against history and leads such historians to commit mistakes. After having underlined and discussed (12.26d.2) that, in Timaeus' work the political aspect of history is set aside with respect to the accounts on colonisations, foundations, and kinship, Polybius states (12.27a.1-4):

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[383] See *supra* chapter 1, section 1 for the 'asleep'; see *infra* for the critiques against Timaeus.
[384] The term φιλομαθεῖν used by Polybius seems, in this case, to carry a meaning similar to the nuance Pani 2001: 63 gives to the verb φιλοσοφέω as appears in Hdt. 1.30.2: indeed, according to Pani, it indicates 'the desire to know by means of travels'.
[385] *Rep.* 476a. Cf. *GE*, *s.v.*
[386] 2.56.11.
[387] See *supra* chapter 2, sections 2 and 3.

> [1] Λοιπὸν δὲ τὸ πραγματικὸν αὐτῷ μέρος τῆς ἱστορίας ἐκ πάντων σύγκειται τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων, ὧν τὰ πλεῖστα διεληλύθαμεν· [2] τὴν δ' αἰτίαν τῆς ἁμαρτίας νῦν ἐροῦμεν, ἥτις οὐκ ἔνδοξος μὲν φανεῖται τοῖς πλείστοις, ἀληθινωτάτη δ'εὑρεθήσεται τῶν Τιμαίου κατηγορημάτων. [3] δοκεῖ μὲν γὰρ καὶ τὴν ἐμπειρικὴν περὶ ἕκαστα δύναμιν καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ τῆς πολυπραγμοσύνης ἕξιν παρεσκευάσθαι καὶ συλλήβδην φιλοπόνως προσεληλυθέναι πρὸς τὸ γράφειν τὴν ἱστορίαν, [4] ἐν ἐνίοις δ' οὐδεὶς οὔτ' ἀπειρότερος οὔτ' ἀφιλοπονώτερος φαίνεται γεγονέναι τῶν ἐπ' ὀνόματος συγγραφέων.
>
> [1] After all, the political aspect of his history is made up of every sort of mistake, most of which we have gone through; [2] we shall now expound the cause of the failing, a cause which seems unlikely to most people, but which will be found to be the truest of the accusations against Timaeus. [3] He gives the impression of having been provided with the empirical capacity for the details and the ability in inquiry, and in short to have approached the writing of history with diligence, [4] but in some matters no historian of renown appears to have been more inexperienced and more unfriendly-to-effort [than Timaeus].

If Dante Alighieri had followed Polybius' line of reasoning, one would find poor Timaeus among the *ignavi* (Uncommitted) in the vestibule of Hell.[388] The sin of Timaeus, in this case, regards his research techniques, as he did not perform all the procedures, but only the easiest and less painful ones: indeed, he took his information only from reading books without any other kind of inquiry, such as autopsy or interviews of witnesses.[389]

These remarks come almost at the end of what remains of book 12, a book entirely devoted, to judge from what is available, to critiques of the historian of Tauromenium. Here, Polybius' aim (so does he declare) is to find and explain the αἰτία of Timaeus' mistakes, which he has already commented on in the preceding passages. In this chapter and in the following ones, Polybius seems to draw a sort of conclusion regarding the discussion of Timaeus' faults.

Moreover, these remarks seem to be conceptually linked to the previously discussed passage (3.59.4): if there Polybius praises the 'active men', here he charges

[388] Dante Alighieri, *Comedìa, Inferno* 22-69.
[389] 12.27.2-6.

Timaeus with being lazy, the opposite of those virtuous men. Furthermore, he strengthens his statement by coming up with another of his neologisms, the adjective ἀφιλόπονος constructed by prefixing the privative alpha to φιλόπονος, an adjective which in poetry appears for the first time in Sophocles' *Ajax* 879,[390] where the chorus uses the adjective to modify the seamen busy in their sleepless hunts.[391] In prose, it is interesting that it is the adjective used to connote the hardworking animal par excellence, the ant (as opposed to the cicada) in the famous fable by Aesopus.[392]

The neologism is the cherry on top of this discussion, where leitmotive dear to Polybius recur, namely the theme of the historian's expertise, evoked by the terms ἐμπειρικήν and ἀπειρότερος, and the importance of the inquiry. Moreover, he highlights the issue of the historian's effort and the labour of writing history, a theme especially trendy among Hellenistic historians,[393] and in relation to which Polybius probably occupies a special and preeminent place,[394] since it seems that before him only Theopompus[395] and Timaeus[396] had mentioned it.[397] Thus, once again, the reader gathers that writing history is not a job for all and that it is a very difficult and painful task. A corollary to this discussion seems to be the idea of truth related to the historian's labours, since it is especially the finding of truth which requires efforts.

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[390] τίς ἂν φιλοπόνων / ἁλιαδᾶν ἔχων ἀύπνους ἄγρας.
[391] Also, the connection in this Sophoclean passage between the adjective for being 'friendly-to-effort' and the idea of being sleepless (or, better, awake) is interesting with regard to the Polybian neologism, since the 'unfriendly-to-effort' Timaeus might reasonably be associated with someone who is not awake, thus with the asleep and dreaming people criticized in Polybius' preamble (1.4.8).
[392] Aesopus, *Fable* 2 (*The Ant and the Cicada*).
[393] Indeed, according to Marincola 1997: 148, Herodotus 3.115.2 contains only an allusion and Thucydides 1.22.3 mentions it only in relation to the difficulty of providing the readers with an account deriving from different versions of the same story.
[394] Marincola 1997: 151 underlines that this idea was 'first clearly expressed by Polybius'.
[395] *FGrHist* 115 T 20a.
[396] *FGrHist* 566 F 7.
[397] On the historian's efforts, see Marincola 1997: 148-158 and Pani 2001: 43-44.

Yet Polybius seems to go beyond a simple historiographical point, as the discussion here appears to be at a higher level, at a level which I would define as 'historiography of historiography'. Indeed, here he is not discussing how to relate a certain fact, but he opens a methodological discussion on the methodology of his colleague. Such reflections are more elevated thoughts than simple historiographical remarks. If the first level of historiographical discussion might involve a reflection on how to find causes and historical facts, and on the historical methodology to find such causes and facts, and the second level might be to criticize previous historians for their mistakes and to correct them, to discuss the causes out of which a certain historian committed methodological errors constitutes a completely different and elevated level. In the light of this, one might gather that, according to Polybius, not only does the proper historian and historiographer discuss the causes of the facts, but he also enquires into the causes of methodology.

Thus, the interesting element here is the fact that Polybius does search for the reason why Timaeus has committed such mistakes. Other historians do not look into the cause of their predecessors' errors when they criticize them: when Hecataeus, for example, declares that the accounts of the Greeks are numerous and ridiculous,[398] in the end he does not investigate the reason why the Greeks had written in such a way (so far as we know from the very fragmentary remains), whereas Polybius 'troubles himself' to look into this and to find an explanation to the mistakes and to the behaviour of his predecessor.

This procedure appears as a sort of reinforcement of the historiographical method, of the historian's role, and of what I have previously defined as the historian's

[398] *FGrHist* 1 F 1a.

ethic.[399] Inasmuch as Polybius has assumed the ethos of writing history, inevitably he has a sort of professional distortion, he *must* search for causes in every aspect, not only regarding historical facts, but also – and especially, I would add – the causes of a wrong methodology. Hence, the criticism of an erroneous method does not suffice, since the Polybian historian has also the task of offering solutions and corrections, just as Polybius does, for example, in geographical discussions as we have seen (3.57-58).[400] Indeed, by the means of his διόρθωσις, which might also have moral implications,[401] not only does Polybius correct and offers solutions, but he also fixes mistakes. And, how does he fix them? By resorting to truth, of course. Moreover, this quest for causes seems to be double-folded: if fixing errors is only possible once the historian has established that there is actually a reason behind them, finding the cause is also helpful in demonstrating that the predecessor did indeed commit mistakes, and that this is not just a result of the harsh critiques of Polybius. Indeed, searching for causes is not just useful to find the truth in facts, but also to demonstrate – by explaining why the predecessor did commit that particular error – that a certain mistake is real.

In conclusion, if the historian limits himself to one aspect of the historical research, in this case the reading of written sources, because he is lazy, this constitutes a voluntary mistake and a deliberate lie at the same time. Timaeus had the chance and the possibilities to perform all the required procedures, but he deliberately refused to do so, thus he consciously made mistakes.

[399] See *supra*, sections 1 and 2.
[400] See *supra*, section 4.
[401] See Schweighäuser 1822 and Mauersberger 2003, *s.vv.* See *supra*, section 4.

Yet Timaeus himself had emphasized the importance of truth in history, and Polybius seems to recognize the merit of this statement, which he makes his own and, at the same time, disregards the validity of the work of Timaeus:

> Τίμαιός φησι μέγιστον ἁμάρτημα περὶ τὴν ἱστορίαν εἶναι τὸ ψεῦδος· διὸ καὶ παραινεῖ τούτοις, οὓς ἂν ἐξελέγξῃ διεψευσμένους ἐν τοῖς συγγράμμασιν, ἕτερόν τι ζητεῖν ὄνομα τοῖς βυβλίοις, πάντα δὲ μᾶλλον ἢ καλεῖν ἱστορίαν.
>
> Timaeus says that the greatest fault in relation to history is falsehood: therefore, he even recommends those whom he proves to have lied throughout in their works to look for another name for their books, to call them anything but history (*FGrHist* 566 F 151 *apud* Pol. 12.11.8).

Polybius will recall the language employed by Timaeus and it will use it against him: indeed, ἁμάρτημα will characterize Timaeus' historical work in 12.27a.1, the passage we have just seen.

Polybius, then, continues reporting Timaeus' thought and commenting on it (12.12.1-7):

> [1] Καθάπερ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῶν κανόνων, κἂν ἐλάττων ᾖ τῷ μήκει κἂν τῷ πλάτει ταπεινότερος, μετέχῃ δὲ τῆς τοῦ κανόνος ἰδιότητος, κανόνα φησὶ δεῖν προσαγορεύειν ὅμως, ὅταν (δὲ) τῆς εὐθείας καὶ τῆς πρὸς ταύτην οἰκειότητος ἐκπέσῃ, πάντα μᾶλλον δεῖν ἢ κανόνα καλεῖν, [2] τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ τῶν συγγραμμάτων ὅσα μὲν ἂν ἢ κατὰ τὴν λέξιν ἢ κατὰ τὸν χειρισμὸν ἢ κατ' ἄλλο τι διαμαρτάνηται τῶν ἰδίων μερῶν, ἀντέχηται δὲ τῆς ἀληθείας, προσίεσθαί φησι τὸ τῆς ἱστορίας ὄνομα τὰς βύβλους, ὅταν δὲ ταύτης παραπέσῃ, μηκέτι καλεῖσθαι δεῖν ἱστορίαν. [3] ἐγὼ δὲ διότι μὲν ἡγεῖσθαι δεῖ τῶν τοιούτων συγγραμμάτων τὴν ἀλήθειαν ὁμολογῶ, καὶ κατὰ τὴν πραγματείαν αὐτός που κέχρημαι λέγων οὕτως, ὅτι, καθάπερ ἐμψύχου σώματος τῶν ὄψεων ἐξαιρεθεισῶν ἀχρειοῦται τὸ ὅλον, οὕτως ἐξ ἱστορίας ἐὰν ἄρῃς τὴν ἀλήθειαν, τὸ καταλειπόμενον αὐτῆς ἀνωφελὲς γίνεται διήγημα. [4] Δύο μέντοι τρόπους ἔφαμεν εἶναι ψεύδους, ἕνα μὲν τὸν κατ' ἄγνοιαν, ἕτερον δὲ τὸν κατὰ προαίρεσιν, [5] καὶ τούτων δεῖν τοῖς μὲν κατ'ἄγνοιαν παραπαίουσι τῆς ἀληθείας διδόναι συγγνώμην, τοῖς δὲ κατὰ προαίρεσιν ἀκαταλλάκτως ἔχειν. [6] Τούτων δ'ἡμῖν ὁμολογουμένων, αὐτοῦ τούτου τοῦ ψεύδους μεγάλην ὑπολαμβάνω διαφορὰν εἶναι τοῦ κατ' ἄγνοιαν γινομένου καὶ τοῦ κατὰ προαίρεσιν, καὶ τὸ μὲν ἐπιδέχεσθαι συγγνώμην καὶ διόρθωσιν εὐμενικήν, τὸ δ' ἀπαραιτήτου δικαίως ἂν τυγχάνειν κατηγορίας· [7] ᾧ γένει μάλιστ' ἂν εὕροι τις ἔνοχον αὐτὸν ὄντα τὸν Τίμαιον.

> [1] Indeed, he [Timaeus] says that, just as in the case of carpenter's rulers, even though one is shorter in length and narrower in width, but possesses the specific quality of a ruler, one must still call it a ruler, but in case it lacks the straightness and the range of characteristics akin to this, it should be called anything but a ruler, [2] in the same way also those writings which, though they are faulty in style or in treatment or in any other feature, nevertheless cling to the truth, such books – he [Timaeus] says – receive the name of history, but whenever they deviate from it, they must no longer be called history.[402] [3] As for me, I quite agree that truth must be the leading principle in works of this sort, and somewhere in the course of this work I myself have resorted to this way of saying:[403] just as in the case when once the eyes are removed from a living creature then the whole [of it] becomes useless, so too if you take truth away from history, what is left of it is a useless narrative. [4] We have also said that there are two types of falsehood, one out of ignorance, the other out of deliberate choice, [5] and among these one must grant pardon to those who deviate from the truth out of ignorance, but be irreconcilable towards those who did it out of deliberate choice. [6] This point being agreed among us, regarding this very lie I suppose that there is a great difference between the lie that results from ignorance and the one out of deliberate choice, and that the one should receive pardon and kindly correction, whereas the other should rightly obtain unmerciful accusation; [7] and to this category [of lies] one would especially find Timaeus himself being liable.

The passage shows Polybius' appropriation of a statement by Timaeus. Indeed, he declares himself in full agreement with Timaeus' remarks. Here, the key term ἀλήθεια occurs four times. As in the case of a ruler the fundamental characteristic which makes it possible to distinguish it from other carpenter's tools is the straight line, so in the case of history this instrument is the truth. A piece of written work does not deserve the name of 'history' if it does not adhere to the truth, while it may merit this definition even if it has flaws in style, in the exposition of the facts or in other parts but totally complies with the truth.

A first aspect of this passage to be noticed is the sort of dichotomy between Timaeus' assessments, as they are reported by Polybius, and Polybius' statements. Indeed, though they seem to express a similar idea, there is still a difference in their

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[402] *FGrHist* 566 F 151.

[403] For the expression κέχρημαι λέγων οὕτως, I have borrowed the Italian translation ("sono ricorso a questo modo di dire") by Maurizio Sonnino in Nicolai 1998, vol.3.

reflections. Timaeus appears to be more radical, his idea of truth seems to be absolute (truth is either present or absent, there is no middle ground), whereas Polybius appears more indulgent. Of course, he will never be indulgent with Timaeus,[404] but in this case he declares that there are certain lies which can be forgiven. In addition, while Timaeus, when he states that a work does not deserve the name of history whenever it deviates from truth, seems to underline that even the smallest lie stains an entire written work and prevent it from being history, Polybius appears to make some concessions. Indeed, he describes truth as the 'leading principle', but not as the one and only principle of historical works, at least not in this passage.

One wonders whether Polybius might also have in mind a particular kind of reader, that is, well-educated readers who are vaccinated against a certain kind of lie, the ones κατ'ἄγνοιαν, can recognize them, and have got the antibodies to perform this action. If one follows this line of reasoning, one might reflect that perhaps, for Polybius, it is not so worrisome that a work has this type of lies, also because it was not certainly the intention of the writer to write such falsehoods. The corollary might be that such writers were not trying to deceive their readers, they just did not know. On the contrary, Timaeus is definitely harsher and sharper than Polybius in judging lies in historical accounts. Moreover, the latter limits himself to agreeing with Timaeus' observations and to criticising his colleague on the practical-compositional level of his work[405] without providing any exegesis of the words of his colleague. And this lack appears even clearer if one contrasts the passage at the beginning of this section showing the keen attitude of Polybius towards the search for the reasons why Timaeus

[404] See, for example, 12.7.1 where he accuses Timaeus of deliberate lies. The corollary of Polybius' accusations is that Timaeus tells lies being well aware of his faults, he lies not because he is inexpert, but because he is blinded by his negative or positive tendency towards an event or a person.
[405] See his remarks at the end of the passage, at 12.12.7.

committed (clearly unforgivable) mistakes.[406] Actually, Timaeus poses an important historiographical issue, which matters to Polybius as well: the place of truth in history and its relation to style, division of the topic, and/or different treatment of the events. With a felicitous expression, Riccardo Vattuone reflects on the fact that the image of the ruler recalls the figure of the historian as οἰκοδομικός, architect.[407] The κανών is the tool of the builders who know how to do their job well:[408] being utensil of a carpenter, only the expert craftsman will know how to use it in a suitable manner having a specific ability. Truth, in this sense, assumes the role of the ruler in recognizing the technical status of history.[409] To this, it might be added another reflection of Riccardo Vattuone: the κανών is the criterion for distinguishing what is ὀρθός from what declines, and that the "solid art" of the architect establishes the widespread metaphor of the true discourse qua ὀρθός.[410]

Polybius is different: truth is the leading principle, but the most important attitude for the historian is to assume the ethos of history, since, as we have seen,[411] truth will then follow. It is in this particular nuance that Polybius differs from Timaeus. Indeed, the verb ἡγέομαι can also be interpreted as 'to lead', thus as 'truth is the

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[406] 12.27a.1-4.
[407] Vattuone 1991: 31 recalls Plat. *Rep.* 438d.1-3, where the philosopher reflects on the qualities the names mirror and states that the science of the home builder is called οἰκοδομική when it is distinguished from the others: οὐκ ἐπειδὴ οἰκίας ἐργασίας ἐπιστήμη ἐγένετο, διήνεγκε τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιστημῶν, ὥστε οἰκοδομικὴ κληθῆναι.
[408] It is Walbank 1967: 350 who translates it as 'carpenter's rule'; in *Il.* 8.193, 13.407, and 23.761 means 'measure' (cf. Aristophanes, *Av.* 1004); it belongs to carpentry in other authors, such as Euripides, *Trojan Women* 6 and Plato, *Phileb.* 56 b. Tatarkiewicz 1970: 49-69, shows that the κανών is proper to the plastic arts, and it is the equivalent of the *nomos* in music.
[409] See Vattuone 1991: 34.
[410] Vattuone 1991: 31-34. Cf. Id. 2005: 110-113. On this passage, see also Meister 1975: 53-55 and Mohm 1977: 92-95.
[411] See *supra*, section 1 of this chapter.

concept which leads history', just as the Parmenidean goddess who leads the philosopher along the path to be followed.[412]

In the light of this, the Polybian remarks at the end of the passage, where he states that lies κατ' ἄγνοιαν should receive 'pardon and kindly correction' (συγγνώμην καὶ διόρθωσιν εὐμενικήν),[413] appear clearer to the reader. To me, the key term in the Polybian phrase is the word διόρθωσις: Polybius agrees with Timaeus that truth is the canon, the carpenter's rule, but he also seems to believe that some lies (non-truths/non-rulers) can indeed be re-straightened; in Polybius' mind, if the ruler is bent only a little, then its straightness can be brought back (= lies κατ' ἄγνοιαν), but should it form an angle of ninety degrees (= lies κατὰ προαίρεσιν), then nothing can be done anymore.

By doing so, Polybius is once again trying to undermine the historiographical dimension of the remarks of his colleague, not only by skimming over them, but also by reusing and reworking them at the very start of his own remarks and then by adding details which characterize Polybius' historiographical reflections. Another example of his techniques might be the construction of the passage: in fact, while in the fragment of Timaeus the word ἀλήθεια appears only once, though the passage is all about it, in the fragment of Polybius the word occurs thrice, thus quasi-showing a superiority of the importance of the concept in Polybius rather than Timaeus. *Repetita iuvant*!

Moreover, the fact that in this fragment the stakes are much higher is clear from the references of Polybius to ideas he had already expressed and to historiographical discussions which he had already carried out in previous passages. Indeed, he repeats the simile he had employed in 1.14.6, stating that if a living organism is deprived of the eyes, it is useless, so is history if one deprives it of truth. However, the terms Polybius

[412] See *supra*, chapter 1, section 3.
[413] 12.12.6.

uses here in 12.12.3 are slightly different from the ones in the first book. If there he writes:

> ὥσπερ γὰρ ζῴου τῶν ὄψεων ἀφαιρεθεισῶν ἀχρειοῦται τὸ ὅλον, οὕτως ἐξ ἱστορίας ἀναιρεθείσης τῆς ἀληθείας τὸ καταλειπόμενον αὐτῆς ἀνωφελὲς γίνεται διήγημα (1.14.6),

here he states that:

> καθάπερ ἐμψύχου σώματος τῶν ὄψεων ἐξαιρεθεισῶν ἀχρειοῦται τὸ ὅλον, οὕτως ἐξ ἱστορίας ἐὰν ἄρῃς τὴν ἀλήθειαν, τὸ καταλειπόμενον αὐτῆς ἀνωφελὲς γίνεται διήγημα (12.12.3).

Of course, most of the differences between the two passages appear insignificant and derisory, such as ἀφαιρεθεισῶν / ἐξαιρεθεισῶν or ἀναιρεθείσης / ἐὰν ἄρῃς, but I would like to disagree with Walbank when he underlines that the passage in book 12 is replicated 'with unessential variation in the wording'.[414] Inasmuch as I think that there is a very important variation between the ζῴου of 1.14.6 and the ἐμψύχου σώματος of 12.12.3, and not just because the one means 'living creature' and the other 'animate body', which might basically be the same, or because Polybius uses only the noun in book 1 and a noun modified by an adjective in book 12, but for the particular adjective he employs, ἔμψυχος. Indeed, Polybius had already availed himself of this adjective in another simile while describing a crucial historiographical concept: when writing about the importance of universal history as opposed to histories *kata meros*, he underlined that learning from histories *kata meros* is like looking at the dismembered limbs of a body which, before dying, was full of life and beautiful, ἐμψύχου καὶ καλοῦ σώματος

[414] Walbank 1967: 351.

and being convinced to have a clear idea of its energy and vitality.[415] Moreover, the adjective is used by Polybius only 4 times, thus it must be of some importance.[416]

Therefore, Polybius seems to stretch out the discourse as far as his own way of writing history. Here the point is not that Timaeus' history is considered *kata meros*, thus in opposition with the Polybian universal history, but that Polybius' way of writing history, whichever it is, has better implications than Timaeus' one in terms of judging others' works and being capable of understanding when lies do not damage the entire history. If one reflects upon this passage together with the passage where Timaeus is accused of laziness,[417] one might easily realize that Polybius is stating that Timaeus has chosen the easiest and fastest road in this case: Timaeus is lazy, thus he does not want to waste his time checking which mistake or lie is not dangerous, on the contrary he finds it easier to just dismiss any account which contains every kind of lie.

Lastly, when Polybius agrees on Timaeus' statement, what perhaps seems to catch his attention and interest is the fact that, being the rule also a tool for measuring, it also takes something's measurements, just as in the case of truth which might be regarded as the instrument to measure history. Indeed, as we have seen, Polybius criticizes accounts which are too long (τὸν ἐπιμετροῦντα λόγον),[418] when historians lengthen them because they do not have enough to say, an attitude which also leads to exaggeration.[419] Thus, truth appears to be the measure of all things and, during the composition of a historical work, helps not to lengthen and exaggerate the account.

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[415] 1.4.7. Strangely enough, in their comments on Pol. 12.12, Walbank 1967: 350-351, Meister 1975: 53-55, and Mohm 1977: 92-95 do not refer at all to this passage, but they just recall 1.14.6.
[416] Apart from 1.4.7 and 12.12.3, the adjective occurs in 6.47.10 and 10.21.4, where it qualifies men as 'animate' beings.
[417] 12.27a.1-4.
[418] 7.7.7; 12.28.10; 15.34.1 and 15.35.1; 33.21.1. On this, see Pédech 1964: 408-410.
[419] See *supra* chapter 2, sections 4 and 5.

6. The speeches

The theme of lies in close connection to omissions and opposed to historical truth reappears in the Polybian digression on the speeches which takes place at 12.25a, where one of the main points at stake is the issue of the selection and choice of speeches.

In 1580 Michel de Montaigne stated that only excellent historians have the right to select what is worthy of being known; failing that, simple historians are to be preferred, those who honestly record everything that comes to their knowledge. He adds that most historians, however, are not simple or excellent, but they do claim with presumption the right to choose what they themselves consider worthy of being known, depriving us of pieces of news that may be important, whereas it would be fairer to let the readers judge.[420] Later on, Positivist intellectuals believed that witnesses and, therefore, historians would undermine the integrity of the objective truth – which was the qualifying factor and peculiar characteristic of history – with their personal contribution.

In 1953, Febvre argued that history in its entirety is a choice, and it is such because chance has destroyed certain accounts and saved other vestiges of the past. Moreover, he adds, when there is an abundance of documents, men tend to shorten, simplify, put emphasis on some points and not mention others. According to Febvre, the historian creates his material or, better, recreates it: the historian does not move randomly wandering through the past 'like a ragman hunting for old things', but, given that 'to elaborate a fact means to build it', he does start with a precise design in mind,

[420] Michel de Montaigne, *Essais* ii.x (in Enrico 1986: 96-97).

with a problem to be solved, with a working hypothesis to be verified.[421] Thus, among Positivists, the historian is similar to a man of science and he does not move by chance, but starts from his own hypothesis that he needs to verify. In short, he poses problems to which he tries to respond by elaborating the facts.

Marrou seems to be in the same vein as Febvre, since he is of the idea that history is what the historian manages to possess among the events of the past, which – being examined through the historian's tools of knowledge – has undergone such a profound reworking, such an alteration as to appear entirely changed and to become ontologically a whole other thing. Thus, according to Marrou, history will be what the historian has been able to elaborate, especially because the historian does not impersonate a 'necromancer' who tries to recall the ghost or soul of the past (impossible to know through direct experience), instead he knows history only through the traces that history itself has left and which he succeeds in making an exegesis of it.[422]

Despite the claims of method, therefore, the historian is almost *forced* by his culture, his inclinations, the witnesses he listens to, the sources he is able to consult, the documents he tries to interpret, and the concrete impossibility of being present at all the events, to consciously or unconsciously choose what to narrate. Nonetheless, it has also been seen that Polybius urges historians to make efforts when they assume the disposition proper to the writing of history and to get rid of all these kinds of *influences*.

Moreover, in the following passage, Polybius, with a variation on the theme, reiterates that in a historical work in which some lies are found, it will automatically follow that all other events will not be told truthfully. Of course, drawing from what

[421] Febvre 1976: 73-74.
[422] Marrou 1979: chapter 2, *passim*.

Polybius has previously written about forgivable and unforgivable lies,[423] and also from his comment at the beginning of this passage when he mentions lies κατὰ προαίρεσιν, the reader understands that here he is clearly referring to deliberate lies and omissions, and not to every kind of lie and/or omission (12.25a.1-5):

> [1] *Ὅτι περὶ Τιμαίου φησὶν ὁ Πολύβιος ὁ Μεγαλοπολίτης*· Καθάπερ γὰρ ἐκ τῶν παροιμιῶν ἱκανὸν εἶναί φασι σταλαγμὸν ἕνα τοῦ μεγίστου τεύχους εἰς τὸ γνῶναι τὸ πᾶν ἔγχυμα, τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ περὶ τῶν ὑποκειμένων χρὴ διαλαμβάνειν· [2] ἐπειδὰν γὰρ ἓν ἢ δεύτερον εὑρεθῇ ψεῦδος ἐν τοῖς συγγράμμασι, καὶ τοῦτο γεγονὸς ᾖ κατὰ προαίρεσιν, δῆλον ὡς οὐδὲν ἂν ἔτι βέβαιον οὐδ' ἀσφαλὲς γένοιτο τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ τοιούτου συγγραφέως λεγομένων. [3] ἵνα δὲ καὶ τοὺς φιλοτιμότερον διακειμένους μεταπείσωμεν, ῥητέον ἂν εἴη περὶ τῆς αἱρέσεως αὐτοῦ καὶ μελέτης τῆς κατὰ τὰς δημηγορίας καὶ τὰς παρακλήσεις, ἔτι δὲ τοὺς πρεσβευτικοὺς λόγους, καὶ συλλήβδην πᾶν (τὸ) τοιοῦτο γένος, ἃ σχεδὸν ὡς εἰ κεφάλαια τῶν πράξεών ἐστι καὶ συνέχει τὴν ὅλην ἱστορίαν· [4] διότι γὰρ ταῦτα παρ' ἀλήθειαν ἐν τοῖς ὑπομνήμασι κατατέταχε Τίμαιος, καὶ τοῦτο πεποίηκε κατὰ πρόθεσιν, τίς οὐ παρακολουθεῖ τῶν ἀνεγνωκότων; [5] οὐ γὰρ τὰ ῥηθέντα γέγραφεν, οὐδ'ὡς ἐρρήθη κατ'ἀλήθειαν, ἀλλὰ προθέμενος ὡς δεῖ ῥηθῆναι, πάντας ἐξαριθμεῖται τοὺς ῥηθέντας λόγους καὶ τὰ παρεπόμενα τοῖς πράγμασιν οὕτως ὡς ἂν εἴ τις ἐν διατριβῇ πρὸς ὑπόθεσιν ἐπιχειροίη *** ὥσπερ ἀπόδειξιν τῆς ἑαυτοῦ δυνάμεως ποιούμενος, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐξήγησιν τῶν κατ' ἀλήθειαν εἰρημένων.
>
> [1] *Polybius of Megalopolis says about Timaeus*: Just as according to the proverbs people say that only one drop of the biggest vessel would be enough to know all the content, it is necessary to define this way of writing also on the basis of this principle: [2] indeed, whenever one or two lies are found in writings, at least in case this occurs out of a deliberate choice, it is clear that there can be nothing certain or trustworthy any longer in what is said by such a historian. [3] But, in order to persuade even those who are rather generously disposed towards Timaeus into changing their opinion, one should speak about his choice and his rhetorical exercise regarding public discourses and exhortations, and further the speeches of ambassadors, and in short all that genre which roughly constitutes the cornerstone of the actions and which holds together the whole history. [4] Indeed, which reader is not aware that Timaeus, in his historical works, has recorded these speeches going beyond the truth, and that he did it intentionally? [5] In fact, he has not written what was said, nor as they were said as much as according to truth,[424] but instead, having established how

[423] 3.58-59; 12.7.6; 12.12.2-5; 12.23.8; 12.26d; 12.27a.1-2. See *supra*, sections 4 and 5.
[424] An interesting interpretation of this dichotomy, as it appears in Polybius, was given by Welzhofer 1880: 540-541, who translated τὰ ῥηθέντα as 'what was actually said' (das wirklich gesprochene) and ὡς ἐρρήθη κατ' ἀλήθειαν as 'in the form in which it was truly said' (in der form […] wie es in wahrheit gesprochen worden). Walbank 1967: 385-386, translates 'what was said, nor the real sense of what was said (i.e.

> they should have been said, he enumerates all the uttered speeches and all the effects following such matters, just as if he were someone at a rhetorical school about to argue on a topic ***[425] as if he were making a display of his own ability, but not [giving] an explanation of what was said with respect to truth.

Thus Polybius confirms what he has previously written about forgivable mistakes:[426] as we have seen, mistakes committed out of ignorance and without premeditation are deemed excusable. The reference to the deliberate choice is preceded and modified by the conjunction καί, which I have taken as carrying a limiting nuance (καὶ τοῦτο γεγονὸς ᾗ κατὰ προαίρεσιν),[427] in the sense that lies stain a historical work only when they are deliberate.[428] Moreover, the leitmotiv of the historian's choice is evoked by such terms as προαίρεσιν, αἱρέσεως, and κατὰ πρόθεσιν. Clearly, Timaeus, just as other predecessors of Polybius, has made the wrong choice.[429]

However, the major criticism levelled at Timaeus is that he did not make a choice at all when he preferred to list all possible speeches and their consequences without discussing them. The term Polybius employs, ἐξαριθμεῖται, is always used in a negative sense, as we have seen, and it represents the opposite of the required

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neither a transcript nor an accurate résumé of the actual speech)'. Wiater 2014: 135 proposes the following interpretation: 'For not the things that were spoken has Timaeus recorded and how it was really spoken'. Lastly, Marincola 2017: 96 translates as 'what was said nor the true sense of what was said'.

[425] Buettner-Wobst suggests two integrations: διεξοδικοὺς ("in full detail") or μειρακιώδεις λέγειν λόγους ("to deliver puerile speeches"). Walbank 1967: 386 reflects on the fact that the verb ἐπιχειρέω may be used absolutely in this context, given that it is found in Plato and Aristotle with the meaning of 'attempt to prove, argue dialectically'.

[426] 3.58-59; 12.7.6; 12.12.4-6; 16.14.7-8; 16.20.8-9; 29.12.12. See *supra*, section 4.

[427] This usage is attested in *Odyssey* 1.58. See *GE*, *s.v.*

[428] Maurizio Sonnino in Nicolai 1998, vol.3, interprets it as having the intensifying value of *the more so as* ("tanto più, poi, nel caso che tali menzogne siano del tutto intenzionali"). But this interpretation would lead to understand the passage in a different way: the fact that the mistakes are sometimes voluntary is *only* considered an aggravating factor, the main assumption seems to be referred to lies, whether they are caused by choice or by ignorance; in this case, Polybius would appear closer to the Timaeus of the simile of the carpenter's rule than to himself in the very same passage (12.12).

[429] On this topic, see *supra*, chapter 2, *passim*.

procedure in a historical work, as it is clear from 1.13.6-7 and 3.57.7-9, where ἐξαριθμεῖσθαι is regarded as the opposite of ἱστορέω.[430] Thus, what one apprehends from this passage, is that a proper historian should discuss and examine not just the events, but also the speeches. Indeed, Timaeus left aside the most important part, the explanation (οὐκ ἐξήγησιν) of the speeches which were spoken. In the light of the Polybian reflections on such historians who were just itemizing events, one could infer that here Polybius is explaining a similar procedure: just like those historians, Timaeus does not know how to reflect upon what he relates, so he just lists them and he invents other speeches, probably because he does not have enough material, exactly like the historians who add sensational accounts to their histories.[431]

Another important element of this passage is that Polybius does not simply write of speeches in general, but he distinguishes three kind of speeches, public discourses, exhortations, and speeches by ambassadors, almost as if to emphasize that there is also a difference in style which has to be taken into account when dealing with speeches in a historical work. In this light, one could reflect upon the fact that Polybius seems to affirm between the lines that an important criterion to observe when reporting words spoken by others is not only to write what was actually said, but also to render the speech in the same tenor and vehemence as it was pronounced. Indeed, this concept is made clear in the chapter following the one just discussed (12.25b.1-4):

[430] See *supra*, chapter 2, sections 1 and 2.
[431] On such historians and the concept of inflating their material, see *supra*, chapter 2, *passim*.

> [1] Ὅτι τῆς ἱστορίας ἰδίωμα τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τὸ πρῶτον μὲν αὐτοὺς τοὺς κατ' ἀλήθειαν εἰρημένους, οἵοί ποτ' ἂν ὦσι, γνῶναι λόγους, δεύτερον τὴν αἰτίαν πυνθάνεσθαι, παρ' ἣν ἢ διέπεσεν ἢ κατωρθώθη τὸ πραχθὲν ἢ ῥηθέν· [2] ἐπεὶ ψιλῶς λεγόμενον αὐτὸ τὸ γεγονὸς ψυχαγωγεῖ μέν, ὠφελεῖ δ' οὐδέν· προστεθείσης δὲ τῆς αἰτίας ἔγκαρπος ἡ τῆς ἱστορίας γίνεται χρῆσις. [3] ἐκ γὰρ τῶν ὁμοίων ἐπὶ τοὺς οἰκείους μεταφερομένων καιροὺς ἀφορμαὶ γίνονται καὶ προλήψεις εἰς τὸ προϊδέσθαι τὸ μέλλον, καὶ ποτὲ μὲν εὐλαβηθῆναι, ποτὲ δὲ μιμούμενον τὰ προγεγονότα θαρραλεώτερον ἐγχειρεῖν τοῖς ἐπιφερομένοις· [4] ὁ δὲ καὶ τοὺς ῥηθέντας λόγους καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν παρασιωπῶν, ψευδῆ δ'ἀντὶ τούτων ἐπιχειρήματα καὶ διεξοδικοὺς λέγων λόγους, ἀναιρεῖ τὸ τῆς ἱστορίας ἴδιον· ὃ μάλιστα ποιεῖ Τίμαιος· καὶ διότι τούτου τοῦ γένους ἐστὶ πλήρη τὰ βυβλία παρ' αὐτῷ, πάντες γινώσκομεν.
>
> [1] A unique feature of history is the following, that first one must learn the speeches in the exact way in which they were spoken according to truth, such as they were, second one must inquire about the reason why what was done or said either failed or succeeded: [2] indeed, the event merely reported in itself attracts the minds, but it is of no use; on the contrary, when the reason is added, the use of history becomes fruitful. [3] For, if one transfers similar circumstances to their own times, such circumstances become opportunities and notions acquired beforehand to foresee the future, and sometimes to be cautious and at other times, in imitating what already happened, to undertake what impends more courageously; [4] but, the one who passes over in silence the speeches which were spoken and the cause, and – in place of these – reports false argumentations and fully detailed speeches just destroys the peculiarity of history. And this is what Timaeus especially does; and we all know that his books are full of a thing of this sort.

According to Polybius, each speech requires a particular and specific stylistic form which does not always coincide with the style of the historian, and Timaeus did not stick to any of such procedures. This very same criticism will be addressed to Thucydides by Dionysius of Halicarnassus,[432] who wrote that the Athenian historian couched different speeches given by different historical figures in the same terms, and one wonders if there were already the seeds of this controversy in Polybius, hints which Dionysius will then grasp.

Thus, from 12.25a and 25b, it is clear not only that Timaeus – according to Polybius of course – lied by inventing speeches, but also that he was not intelligent

[432] Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 3.19-20.

enough to tailor each speech to each speaker. On the contrary, he performed a useless task, by listing every possible topic after he imagined how they were uttered (προθέμενος ὡς δεῖ ῥηθῆναι). It is in this last remark that one might see a semantic link with what Thucydides had written regarding speeches (1.22.1):

> Καὶ ὅσα μὲν λόγῳ εἶπον ἕκαστοι ἢ μέλλοντες πολεμήσειν ἢ ἐν αὐτῷ ἤδη ὄντες, χαλεπὸν τὴν ἀκρίβειαν αὐτὴν τῶν λεχθέντων διαμνημονεῦσαι ἦν ἐμοί τε ὧν αὐτὸς ἤκουσα καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοθέν ποθεν ἐμοὶ ἀπαγγέλλουσιν· ὡς δ' ἂν ἐδόκουν ἐμοὶ ἕκαστοι περὶ τῶν αἰεὶ παρόντων τὰ δέοντα μάλιστ' εἰπεῖν, ἐχομένῳ ὅτι ἐγγύτατα τῆς ξυμπάσης γνώμης τῶν ἀληθῶς λεχθέντων, οὕτως εἴρηται.
>
> And as for all the things which each said in speech either when they were about to make war or when they were already in it, it was difficult to remember with precision exactly what was said, both for me, regarding the things I myself heard, and for those reporting to me at one time or another from elsewhere. I have written the speeches as I thought that each would say especially what was necessary for the given occasion, holding as closely as possible to the general purport of what was truly said.[433]

The Polybian ὡς δεῖ ῥηθῆναι does seem to recall the Thucydidean τὰ δέοντα,[434] though Polybius never mentions Thucydides. Canfora and Vattuone argue that, probably, Polybius' criticism was more against his immediate predecessors than against Thucydides, and this is why Polybius does not need to mention him;[435] Nicolai by contrast interestingly suggests that Polybius was offering an interpretation of the

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[433] This translation is taken from Marincola 2017.

[434] On the Thucydidean τὰ δέοντα and its explanation applying the later Aristotelian remarks in *Rhet*. 1368 a 1, see Porciani 1999: 117-118. For a summary of the modern discussion on the historiographical method of Thucydides, see Vattuone 1978: 33-39. See also Rokeah 1982: 386-401 and Plant 1988: 201-202, who seem to resume Vattuone's position. More recent contributions on this aspect of Thucydides' methodology are those of Bonelli 2003: 155-164; Vössing 2005: 210-125; Porciani 2007: 328-335; Schütrumpf 2011: 229-256; and Rodríguez Alfageme 2016: 49-60.

[435] Canfora 1977: 325 underlines that Polybius mentions his predecessors only starting from the generation of Theopompus, because before such historians there are historians regarded as 'models' and 'canons'. Vattuone 1991: 240-241 n. 13 and 242 n. 22, points out that Polybius is criticising the 'inopportune expansion' (*inopportuna dilatazione*) of the idea of τὰ δέοντα occurred after Thucydides. Cf. Pédech 1961: 124-125, who hypothesises that one of such historians might have been Agatharchides. On the contrary, Walbank 1965: 11, does not believe that Polybius was directly referring to these predecessors, but that he does not refers to Thucydides by name because he did not want to appear directly criticising Thucydides.

Thucydidean assessments and trying to bring back the authentic Thucydidean reflections on how to relate speeches in history.[436]

The point of the relationship with Thucydides, though, seems to be not as important as truth, which is indeed the cornerstone of Polybius' reflections. The pivotal role is still played by truth. But, how does Polybius explain this close relationship between ἀλήθεια and speeches? A detailed account regarding the procedures followed in the composition of the speeches can be found in 12.25i. Polybius is criticizing Timaeus for his extreme dedication to the study of the books, more than to any other part of the historical research, and states that one must not only read previous historians, but be expert in politics, military affairs and all other aspects of life: to be able to write history, one must also live it. It is useless and unnecessary to enumerate everything that has been read, because the investigations carried out on the books occupy only the third place of the characteristic inquisitive work of the historian:

> [2] ἐξ ὧν πᾶς ἂν εἰκότως συγκατάθοιτο τρίτον εἶναι μέρος τῆς ἱστορίας καὶ τρίτην ἔχειν τάξιν τὴν ἐκ τῶν ὑπομνημάτων πολυπραγμοσύνην. [3] ὡς δ'ἀληθές ἐστι τὸ νυνὶ λεγόμενον καὶ ἐκφανέστατον γένοιτ' ἂν ἐπί τε τῶν συμβουλευτικῶν καὶ παρακλητικῶν, ἔτι δὲ πρεσβευτικῶν λόγων, οἷς κέχρηται Τίμαιος. [4] ὀλίγοι μὲν γὰρ καιροὶ πάντας ἐπιδέχονται διαθέσθαι τοὺς ἐνόντας λόγους, οἱ δὲ πλεῖστοι βραχεῖς [καί] τινας τῶν ὑπόντων, καὶ τούτων τινὰς μὲν οἱ νῦν, ἄλλους δ'οἱ προγεγονότες, καὶ τινὰς μὲν Αἰτωλοὶ προσίενται, τινὰς δὲ Πελοποννήσιοι, τινὰς δ' Ἀθηναῖοι. [5] καὶ τὸ μὲν ματαίως καὶ ἀκαίρως [καὶ] πρὸς πάντα πάντας διεξιέναι τοὺς ἐνόντας λόγους, ὃ ποιεῖ Τίμαιος πρὸς πᾶσαν ὑπόθεσιν εὑρεσιλογῶν, τελέως ἀνάληθες καὶ μειρακιῶδες καὶ διατριβικόν—ἅμα καὶ πολλοῖς ἀποτυχίας αἴτιον ἤδη τοῦτο γέγονε καὶ καταφρονήσεως—τὸ δὲ τοὺς ἁρμόζοντας καὶ καιρίους ἀεὶ λαμβάνειν, τοῦτ'ἀναγκαῖον. [6] ἀστάτου δὲ τῆς χρείας οὔσης καὶ πόσοις καὶ ποίοις τῶν ἐνόντων χρηστέον, ἀλλοιοτέρου τινὸς δεῖ ζήλου καὶ παραγγέλματος, εἰ μέλλομεν μὴ βλάπτειν, ἀλλ'ὠφελεῖν τοὺς ἀναγινώσκοντας. [7] ἔστι μὲν οὖν ὁ καιρὸς ἐν πᾶσι δυσπαράγγελτος, οὐ μὴν ἀδύνατος εἰς ὑπόνοιαν ἀχθῆναι διὰ τῶν ἐκ τῆς αὐτοπαθείας καὶ τριβῆς θεωρημάτων· ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ παρόντος μάλιστ'ἂν ὑπονοηθείη τὸ λεγόμενον ἐκ τούτων. [8] εἰ γὰρ οἱ συγγραφεῖς ὑποδείξαντες τοὺς καιροὺς καὶ τὰς ὁρμὰς καὶ διαθέσεις τῶν βουλευομένων, κἄπειτα τοὺς κατ' ἀλήθειαν ῥηθέντας λόγους ἐκθέντες διασαφήσαιεν ἡμῖν τὰς αἰτίας, δι'ἃς ἢ κατευστοχῆσαι συνέβη τοὺς εἰπόντας ἢ διαπεσεῖν, γένοιτ'ἄν τις ἔννοια τοῦ πράγματος

[436] Nicolai 1999: 281-301.

ἀληθινή, καὶ δυναίμεθ’ἂν ἅμα μὲν διακρίνοντες, ἅμα δὲ μεταφέροντες ἐπὶ τὰ παραπλήσια κατευστοχεῖν ἀεὶ τῶν προκειμένων. [9] ἀλλ’ἔστιν, οἶμαι, τὸ μὲν αἰτιολογεῖν δυσχερές, τὸ δὲ ῥησικοπεῖν (ἐν) τοῖς βυβλίοις ῥᾴδιον, καὶ τὸ μὲν ὀλίγα καιρίως εἰπεῖν καὶ τούτου παραγγελίαν εὑρεῖν ὀλίγοις ἐφικτόν, τὸ δὲ πολλὰ διαθέσθαι καὶ ματαίως τῶν ἐν μέσῳ κειμένων καὶ κοινόν.

[2] Based on this, everyone would probably agree that the inquiry carried out studying books constitutes a third part of history and even it occupies the third place. [3] And the fact that what has just been affirmed is true could become most evident from the deliberative speeches, the exhortative ones and those of the ambassadors, to which Timaeus has resorted. [4] Indeed, few occasions allow [the speaker or the historian] to expound all the possible arguments, while the majority of such occasions allow [to expound] briefly some of those available, and among these argumentations men of today welcome some, the earlier generation others, the Aetolians some others, the Peloponnesians others, the Athenians some others. [5] And to go through all possible arguments in a useless and inappropriate way on every occasion, as Timaeus does when he tries to come up with arguments on every subject, is completely against the truth, puerile and pedantic – and at the same time this has been the reason of failure and contempt for many–, instead it is necessary to always choose the right and appropriate arguments. [6] However, since the employment of this has not been established with certainty regarding how many of the possible arguments and of what kind one should use, we need a rather different kind of zeal and procedure, if we do not want to harm but benefit the readers. [7] Indeed, it is always difficult to determine what the occasion requires in any case, but it is not impossible to be led to a sense of it through precepts based on personal experience and practice. In this particular case, one might get an idea of what has been said from the following. [8] If historians, once they have indicated the occasions, the intentions and the attitudes of those deliberating, after the presentation of the speeches which were truly pronounced, clarified to us the reasons why the speakers happened either to be quite successful or to fail, there would be a realistic conception of the fact, and partly by discerning, partly by relating them to similar circumstances, we would always be able to succeed in the situations that arise before us. [9] But it is difficult, I think, to identify causes, whereas to sell words in books is easy, and to pronounce a few sentences in an appropriate manner and to find out the rule for doing this can be reached only by few, while expounding many arguments even in a useless way is something which is available to all and is ordinary.

In this passage, some of the major Polybian themes occur: the importance of explaining the causes, the usefulness of truth, the historian’s expertise (not everyone is capable of choosing the right speeches and words). Moreover, truth appears to be important also (or especially) because it is useful, at least this is what one gathers reading Polybius’

assessments regarding the utility of reporting truthful speeches or speeches which are closer to the true reality.

Polybius' criticism of the speeches of Timaeus requires careful exegesis. In interpreting it, one needs to consider three main important points:

1. Polybius starts by explicitly criticising Timaeus regarding his employment of books to inform himself and to perform historical research. When one finds expressions like τοὺς ἐνόντας λόγους, one should interpret them as 'possible arguments' not only in the sense of orations that the writer can introduce by referring to his experience, to similar situations or to his imagination, but also in the meaning of speeches already present in previous historical works which Timaeus was reading.
2. Polybius does not immediately show his position regarding the topic, but one comes to decipher his point of view *lento gradu*. Since it is impossible to faithfully reproduce, word by word, the speeches uttered, it was equally impossible for Polybius to criticise the statements reported by Timaeus on the level of truth: the historian of Megalopolis, therefore, starts from the demonstration of the "improbability" of such speeches.
3. Both Polybius and (most likely) Timaeus recognize the usefulness of speeches in history for the politician.

The importance of this passage might also be inferred from the fact that Polybius employs two others of his peculiar neologisms: the verb εὑρησιλογέω (which has been translated as "to try to come up with arguments")[437] and the adjective δυσπαράγγελτος ("difficult to determine", but also "difficult to relate").

[437] Schweighäuser 1822, *s.v.* translates '*confabulari*' or '*multa verba facere*'; Mauersberger 2003, *s.v.*, translates 'Argumente frei erfinden'. There are no occurrences

The first term seems to show that Polybius' critique is perhaps orchestrated in a rather clever way, if one thinks that εὑρησιλογέω, apart from the meaning of 'to look for argumentations', might involve an acceptation of rhetorical afflatus, given that it is linked to the verb εὑρίσκω (which might also mean 'to invent') whose Latin correspondence is *invenio*, from which *inventio* is formed.[438] While the verb εὑρίσκω alone might indicate a positive concept, when – for example – one searches for truth or for facts, consequently underlining the efforts of the research, as Polybius highlights,[439] the newly created verb does not seem to carry a positive meaning at all. The second term is a *hapax legomenon* and it does seem to express the exactly opposite concept of the one expressed by εὑρησιλογέω: indeed, while trying to find all possible argumentations is wrong, useless, and easy (something that everyone can do, ἐν μέσῳ … καὶ κοινόν), to make a selection of the most useful argumentations required by that particular occasion is difficult, it might only be attained if the historian has gained enough experience (ἐκ τῆς αὐτοπαθείας καὶ τριβῆς), and – if one follows Polybius' line of reasoning – it requires many efforts.

The passage has been variously interpreted. Gomme affirms that Polybius "implies, in the manner of Dionysius, that it is the historian's duty to *choose* arguments suitable to the speaker and the occasion (25i, 4-8), and censures Timaeus for piling up in one speech all possible arguments, whether or not they were likely to have been used on the given occasion".[440] Polybius, in fact, in paragraphs 4 and 5 states that the occasions in which a historian can list all the possible arguments are very rare and therefore it is the task of the writer of a historical work to choose the topics suitable for

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of the verb before Polybius. There is only one occurrence of the noun εὑρησιλογία before Polybius, in Theophrastus, *Physicorum Opiniones* 12.

[438] Cf. εὕρεσις, 'invention'.

[439] See, for example, 3.58-59 and 12.27a.1-4. See *supra* sections 4 and 5.

[440] Gomme 1956: 522-523.

the particular occasion described. Gomme continues by stating that here Polybius invites those who are going to compose a historical work to carefully choose the topics among all those possible, even if they are written speeches *suapte manu*. Polybius, therefore, is charged by Gomme with being a historian who has no qualms about inserting false speeches and betraying what he himself points out to be the cornerstone of history: truth.

Gomme's reflections did not find much acceptance among scholars. Indeed, Balsdon tried to confute this interpretation by asserting that τοὺς ἁρμόζοντας καὶ καιρίους of paragraph 5 referred to τοὺς κατ' ἀλήθειαν ῥηθέντας λόγους of paragraph 8: Polybius, therefore, advises historians to report the words actually pronounced and not those which they supposed to be suitable for the situation.[441] This hypothesis, however, contrasts in part with the statements contained in paragraph 6, where the historian of Megalopolis actually suggests to his colleagues to choose among the possible arguments and therefore 'betrays' what is the task of the historian, that is to report *every* truthful testimony.

The uncomfortable topic of the choice is also present in Walbank's discussion.[442] In his commentary on the passage he tries to justify Polybius by hypothesising that he was talking about both the historian and the politician. He, then, paraphrases the passage:

[441] Balsdon 1953: 158-159.
[442] Walbank 1967: 397.

> 4. Few occasions (in real life) *allow the speaker to set out all possible arguments*; the ones chosen depend on the speaker, where he and his audience lived and to what people they belonged (or belong). 5. *A statesman must in fact be selective* and not recite every possible argument (as Timaeus makes his speakers do): otherwise he may well fail in his object. 6. Since there is no fixed rule as regards which and how many of the possible arguments *a statesman should employ, we (sc. the historians)* must use quite a special degree of attention and clear principles (i.e. in reporting speeches) if we are to benefit and not harm *our readers (i.e. the statesmen)*. 7. The right argument *(i.e. for a statesman to use on a specific occasion)* is a matter hard to convey by precept, but not impossible to ascertain if he reasons from practical experience (and this experience can be conveyed in the speeches included in histories). The matter can best be expressed thus: 8. if writers will indicate first the historical context, then what was actually said, and finally why the speaker succeeded or failed, we (i.e. the statesmen who read the histories) shall be able to apply the lesson to other circumstances and cope successfully with whatever arises.[443]

According to Walbank, therefore, it is not the historian who has to select the appropriate topics for a given situation, but the man dealing with politics: thus, Walbank seems to affirm that, by means of this passage, Polybius advises the politician on how to choose his arguments and does not assert that the historian must invent the speeches that he reports. Even this hypothesis, though, is not devoid of contradictions, as far as I am concerned. First, Polybius states in paragraph 4 that it is impossible for the writer of history to record all the possible arguments, above all because some are suitable for the present, others for the past, others for the background of the various peoples that the author must know and comply with. Walbank claims that the assessment is directed at the politician, whose choice is dictated by the listeners and their *Weltanschauung*.

Musti, however, has stressed that it does not make sense for a politician to write speeches about the past (see the reference to οἱ προγεγονότες): thus, it must be the historian who is the subject of the statement. In paragraphs 5-6, Polybius reiterates that it is not possible to insert all the possible arguments (among other things this has been

[443] Walbank 1967: 397.

the cause of failure for many politicians), a useless procedure, but it is advisable to examine and choose the most suitable one. The problem, the historian continues, is that there is no fixed canon for the choice of topics: therefore, a considerable degree of intelligence and culture is necessary.[444]

On the contrary, Walbank, as we have seen, argues that these statements are addressed to politicians, not historians: it is the statesman who must be selective, while the second statement of paragraph 6 refers to historians.[445]

However, from the Greek text it seems clear that Polybius' comments here are entirely directed to the historians: the reference to politicians is only present in paragraph 5 and parenthetically, where the author of the *Histories* is criticizing the proceedings of his colleague Timaeus, openly quoted; the use of λαμβάνειν recalls the characteristic tasks of the historian who must examine, choose and draw on the materials present in the various historical sources or in the documents. What is more, in paragraph 6, which is semantically and grammatically linked to 5 through the absolute genitive with adversative-causal value ἀστάτου δὲ τῆς χρείας οὔσης, there is explicit reference to readers, τοὺς ἀναγινώσκοντας, not to listeners of statemen's speeches. Of course, there might be statemen among the readers, but one cannot say that all the readers are statemen.

At paragraph 7, Polybius refers once again to those who write history, not to those who practice political activity, as assumed by Walbank. The author of the *Histories* highlights the difficulty inherent in the choice of suitable arguments, a selection that can be facilitated by personal culture and experience: we find here the clear reference to the expertise gained via experience (αὐτοπάθεια),[446] which, according

[444] Musti 1972: 1114-1181.
[445] Walbank 1967: 397.
[446] Cf. Walbank 1967: 398.

to Polybius, is one of the fundamental requirements of those who compose a historical work. As for paragraphs 8 and 9, Walbank's paraphrase does not differ from what the Polybian text says.

On the other hand, Sacks criticizes Walbank's exegesis of paragraphs 8 and 9 and asserts:

> Walbank did not summarize 25i.9, but it must concern the historians who records speeches: the need to establish causes (τὸ μὲν αἰτιολογεῖν) refers to the historical analysis at the beginning of 25i.8, which concerns, as everyone acknowledges, the historian, and not the statesman. Moreover, as sentence 8 contains a condition, the beginning of 9, ἀλλ' ἔστιν, negates that condition expressed in the protasis and eliminates the possible realization of the action proposed in the apodosis. As the historian is the subject of the protasis, there can be no doubt that the historian must also be the subject of 9.[447]

Despite the criticism of Sacks, the paraphrase of Walbank is punctual and respects the Polybian text on that point, as we have seen. Polybius, in fact, in the protasis explicitly mentions the historians who have the duty to identify the causes as well as report truthful speeches; in the apodosis, he expresses the concept of utility that would derive from this correct attitude for politicians: here the historian expresses the fundamental concept of history as a 'forever gain' or, as Cicero will later stress,[448] as *magistra vitae*.

At paragraph 9, in line with what he has stated in the previous paragraphs, Polybius underlines the difficulty (but not the impossibility) of the historiographical work and of the search for causes: therefore, this statement does not contrast with the previous conditional.

With regard to the statement of paragraph 9 on the importance of the search for causes, Pédech states that Polybius' novelty is to have detached the speeches from the genre of oratory and to have connected it both to his etiological theory and to his

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[447] Sacks 1981: 83.

[448] Cicero, *De Oratore* 2.36: *Historia vero testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae, nuntia vetustatis*.

psychological conception of history. Hence, he includes also the speeches in his analysis of the causes.[449]

Polybius, therefore, gives indications regarding the way in which it is necessary to insert and give a written account of the speeches in a historical work: once again, he provides his readers with a procedure. He insists that the historian, in the first place, has the task of choosing suitable subjects for the occasion. The second aim is to identify the causes and consequences of the narrative build-up. The historian, however, always has the duty to respect the truth. In this chapter there is no 'spontaneous confession' of having invented the speeches, instead Polybius underlines that the choice always falls in the "speeches really pronounced" (12.25i.8: τοὺς κατ' ἀλήθειαν ῥηθέντας λόγους), a concept already clarified slightly before, in 12.25a-25b, where the preposition-noun nexus κατ' ἀλήθειαν is highlighted as well (12.25a.5), and it is closely related to the term indicating the speeches.

Polybius criticises Timaeus not only on the level of truth, but also on that of verisimilitude: the Sicilian historian not only did not report the *ipsissima verba*, but neither did he give the general sense of the speeches, but rather he inserted invented speeches which were even implausible.[450] This does not mean that Polybius suggests the employment of invented but plausible speeches, but rather these remarks are only the second point of criticism against Timaeus. In the Polybian *Histories* the clear distinction between truth-based speeches (even though re-elaborated by the author) and

[449] Pédech 1964: 259: "L'originalité de Polybe est d'avoir dégagé le discours de la technique oratoire et de l'avoir rattaché d'une part à sa théorie étiologique, de l'autre è sa conception psychologique de l'histoire. […] Il est donc légitime de comprendre les discours des *Histoires* dans une étude de la causalité". See *contra* Wiater 2010: 71-79.

[450] In these passages, it seems to appear the leading idea that the truth comes gradually and with difficulty. Furthermore, not all historians manage to *reveal* the full and complete truth, but many of such historians remain stuck only at the first steps. Timaeus, with regard to the speeches, seems, in Polybius' opinion, not to have even reached the first stage to get to the truth. On this topic and on the degrees of truth, see *infra*, chapter 4.

freely composed speeches based only on hypotheses is constantly present. The historian, therefore, must always be on the ground of truth.

Nevertheless, the Polybian affirmation that the historian should make a choice and not insert everything without distinction (even though the choice lies on grounds of truthful arguments or speeches) is slightly striking. And he will reaffirm this concept even more clearly in book 36. The passage concerns the years 150/149 BC of the Third Punic War. The fragment starts with Polybius saying that many will wonder why he, speaking of a topic of so great importance, did not choose to make use of the rhetorical art and report each of the speeches, as many of his colleagues do when they cite all the speeches of the parties involved. Polybius answers this hypothetical question by stating that he does not disdain this way of proceeding, though he does not always adopt it, but only when it is appropriate to the situation (36.1.6-7):

> [6] ἀλλ'οὔτε τοῖς πολιτικοῖς ἀνδράσιν οἶμαι πρέπειν πρὸς πᾶν τὸ προτεθὲν διαβούλιον εὐρησιλογεῖν καὶ διεξοδικοῖς χρῆσθαι λόγοις, ἀλλ'ἀεὶ τοῖς ἁρμόζουσι πρὸς τὸν ὑποκείμενον καιρόν, [7] οὔτε τοῖς ἱστοριογράφοις ἐμμελετᾶν τοῖς ἀκούουσιν οὐδ'ἐναποδείκνυσθαι τὴν αὑτῶν δύναμιν, ἀλλὰ (τὰ) κατ' ἀλήθειαν ῥηθέντα (καθ') ὅσον οἷόν τε πολυπραγμονήσαντας διασαφεῖν, καὶ τούτων τὰ καιριώτατα καὶ πραγματικώτατα.
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> [6] But I believe that neither is it fitting to political men to come up with arguments for every kind of debate which might be brought forward and to make use of detailed speeches, but rather to always avail themselves of arguments appropriate to the current situation, [7] nor [it is fitting] to historians to give a lecture to their readers or to show off their own ability, but rather they should make clear what was truly spoken, after having inquired closely into that as far as it is possible, and even of these remarks only the most important and the ones which are most related to the facts.

Here Polybius seems to summarize what he has written in book 12 regarding Timaeus' wrong approach to speeches in history.[451] Indeed, the phrase indicating the kind of speeches to be related, τὰ κατ' ἀλήθειαν ῥηθέντα, acts as a joining link since, though

[451] 12.25a-25b; 12.25i.

with small *variationes*,[452] it is present in all the three passages previously examined in this section (25a, 25b, and 25i). Moreover, the other four expressions recalling book 12 are exactly split between 25a-b and 25i: the term εὑρησιλογεῖν recalls the εὑρεσιλογῶν of 12.25i.5 referred to Timaeus, then διεξοδικοῖς λόγοις recalls the διεξοδικοὺς λόγους of 12.25b.4; there follows the expression ἐναποδείκνυσθαι τὴν αὑτῶν δύναμιν, which recalls the ἀπόδειξιν τῆς ἑαυτοῦ δυνάμεως of 12.25a.5; finally the term διασαφεῖν brings the reader back to the διασαφήσαιεν of 12.25i.8. Furthermore, Polybius recalls these passages in a sort of chiasmic position, since the pattern one gets is 25i-25b-a-25i, if the *excerpta* preserve the same arrangement as it was thought by Polybius of course.[453]

Finally, from the Polybian words, what seems to transpire is the idea that the historian must indeed *collect* all the speeches that could be of some utility and later decide which and how many speeches are to be inserted, only based on his own experience, since there is no fixed rule. He therefore refrained from reporting all the speeches, but only transcribed (through the *oratio recta* or the *oratio obliqua*)[454] those which he considered suitable to the situation or important to shed light on a certain event. This, however, is one of the major limitations of Polybius' reasoning, since this procedure does not give a complete and impartial view of the events through the words actually spoken: if history is subjected to a subjective criterion, even if only one, which, in this circumstance, is the choice of the speeches, then it is transferred in a context of partiality.

[452] 12.25a.5: ὡς ἐρρήθη κατ' ἀλήθειαν and τῶν κατ' ἀλήθειαν εἰρημένων; 12.25b.1: τοὺς κατ' ἀλήθειαν εἰρημένους; 12.25i.8: τοὺς κατ' ἀλήθειαν ῥηθέντας λόγους.
[453] On the structure of book 12, see Pédech 1961: IX-XXXV and Sacks 1981: 66-79.
[454] On *oratio recta* and *oratio obliqua* in Polybius, see Usher 2009: 487-514.

Chapter 4

In the shadow of Timaeus:

Truth, truths, and *gradus Veritatis*

In the passages examined in the previous chapters, it has been seen how Polybius explains his methodology not through methodological chapters or in the preamble of his work, but through the criticism of his predecessors, especially Timaeus.

But why does Polybius reserve so much space for the criticism of Timaeus? Various explanations have been offered for why Polybius' main target was Timaeus. Walbank maintains that Polybius harboured a profound antipathy towards Timaeus, both because he saw him as a fearsome antagonist and because he felt a strong resentment following the importance that Timaeus had reserved to Magna Graecia.[455] Paul Pédech reflects on 12.26d, where Polybius explains how Timaeus gained his fame through detailed accounts on colonisations, foundations, and kinships, and states that Polybius mocks Timaeus' pretensions to ἀληθινολογία, his constant desire to proclaim the truth and to denounce the false, and his passion to persuade by demonstration (μετ' ἀποδείξεως).[456] Kenneth Sacks believes that Polybius, when he wrote book 12, had the clear intention of describing the historian's task and that the criticism of Timaeus was not as important as describing his own methodology.[457]

While underlining that Polybius has a didactic intention so that, as soon as he spots mistakes, he intends to give a lesson in historical method, Vercruysse claims that there is a hidden reason, which is present between the lines but which Polybius himself

[455] Walbank 1962: 5-12.
[456] Pédech 1964: 50.
[457] Sacks 1981: 66-78.

does not mention: he knows well that whoever discovers the mistakes of others shows that he knows his job well, but he does not openly declare it because that is exactly what he himself reproaches Timaeus for acquiring, that is, a reputation at the expense of the censored authors.[458] Thus, Vercruysse adds, Polybius, with the intention of giving the impression that he is indeed worthy of faith, does not offer assurance that he tells the truth, but he does it 'in a less direct but more effective way':[459] feeling the sensation of finding himself in a sort of 'agonal situation',[460] Polybius tries to *convince* his readers[461] as if they were the jury in a court, also adopting the rhetorical figures that lawyers usually use in their speeches, such as metaphors, similarities, antitheses. Marincola sees two main reasons why Polybius attacks Timaeus: the latter had lied deliberately; since Timaeus himself had been 'a prodigious and wide-ranging polemicist', he deserved the same treatment.[462]

It seems then clear that Polybius uses the criticism of historians to *prove* his statements and his historical interpretation. It is, above all, its apodeictic method that requires it: by placing under investigation others' mistakes, at the same time he has the opportunity to highlight what a historian must not do and enucleate the canons of the *right* historiographical method.

[458] Vercruysse 1990: 29.
[459] Vercruysse 1990: 31.
[460] Vercruysse 1990: 31: 'dans une situation agonale'.
[461] See Pédech 1964: 355 ("L'historien doit faire partager sa conviction au lecteur de la même manière qu'elle s'est formée en lui") and Vercruysse 1990: 31 ("A notre avis l'intention générale est de convaincre les lecteurs").
[462] Marincola 1997: 231-232.

1. *Gradus Veritatis*: the steps to reach the true truth

An excellent example of Polybius' use of rhetorical figures to convince his readers is constituted by a passage from the criticism of Timaeus (12.25h.1-3):

> [1] Ὅτι Τίμαιός φησιν ἐν τῇ τριακοστῇ καὶ τετάρτῃ βύβλῳ 'πεντήκοντα συνεχῶς ἔτη διατρίψας Ἀθήνησι ξενιτεύων καὶ πάσης ὁμολογουμένως ἄπειρος [ἐγένετο] πολεμικῆς χρείας, ἔτι δὲ καὶ τῆς τῶν τόπων θέας'. [2] λοιπὸν ὅταν εἴς τι τῶν μερῶν τούτων ἐμπέσῃ κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν, πολλὰ μὲν ἀγνοεῖ καὶ ψεύδεται· κἄν ποτε δὲ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐπιψαύσῃ, παραπλήσιός ἐστι τοῖς ζωγράφοις τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν (ἀνασεσ)αγμένων θυλάκων ποιουμένοις τὰς ὑπογραφάς· [3] καὶ γὰρ ἐπ' ἐκείνων ἡ μὲν ἐκτὸς ἐνίοτε γραμμὴ σῴζεται, τὸ δὲ τῆς ἐμφάσεως καὶ τῆς ἐνεργείας τῶν ἀληθινῶν ζῴων ἄπεστιν, ὅπερ ἴδιον ὑπάρχει τῆς ζωγραφικῆς τέχνης. τὸ δ' αὐτὸ συμβαίνει καὶ περὶ Τίμαιον καὶ καθόλου τοὺς ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς βυβλιακῆς ἕξεως ὁρμωμένους.
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> [1] Timaeus says in his Book 34 'having lived abroad and spent fifty years at Athens without interruption' he was 'admittedly inexperienced both in every kind of military operation and besides in the observation of the places'. [2] It remains that whenever, in the course of his history, he falls into one of these parts, he is ignorant of many things and he tells many lies; and if he ever does touch on the truth, he is similar to those painters who draw sketches taking as models stuffed dummies: [3] indeed, in those cases sometimes the outward outline might even be preserved, but what belongs to the expressiveness and energy of the real living creatures is missing, that very one which is characteristic of the art of painting. The same thing happens to Timaeus and, in general, to those historians who base themselves on the same bookish habit.

Historians who only use written sources for their historiographical research work are treated as third-class painters. The persuasive technique of Polybius is expressed with a catchy simile, since he knows well that the figures of speech remain etched in the mind of the public.

The concept Polybius seems to underline is that if historians fail to follow not only truth but also the right procedure when writing history, they will inevitably be led to ignorance and falsehood (πολλὰ μὲν ἀγνοεῖ καὶ ψεύδεται), as he has already underlined in the case of authors of historical works *kata meros* who, not having enough subject

matter, are driven to tell lies[463] or 'to render small things great and to sprinkle them with many accounts not worthy of memory'.[464] This reference might appear even more suggestive if one reflects upon two terms used by Polybius later in the passage, ἐνεργείας connected to ζῴων.[465] Indeed, Polybius had already used such terms in his proemial passage regarding histories *kata meros*: from the already examined Polybian simile,[466] one can infer that, according to Polybius, authors of histories *kata meros*, just like people looking at the dismembered limbs of a body, will never have an adequate view of the energy of historical events (= body).[467] Finally, a further connection of this passage with the proemial one might be considered the idea of drawing/painting: just as it is not ideal to be a painter who does not look at living creatures but at stuffed dummies, so, as Polybius declares at the beginning of his work, it is not the right procedure to try to get an idea of the entire inhabited world looking at cities drawn separately.[468] Thus, in both passages emerges a sort of negative idea of the action of looking at something which is not real and living but at an artificially sketched work, just like the cities on a map (1.4.6) or the stuffed dummies (12.25h.2-3).

The importance of this passage is also underlined by the usage of the word ζωγράφος. Polybius uses it only thrice in his work as we have it now, thus it must have

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[463] 3.47.6: καὶ γὰρ ψευδολογεῖν καὶ μαχόμενα γράφειν αὐτοῖς ἀναγκάζονται.
[464] 7.7.6: ἀναγκάζεσθαι τὰ μικρὰ μεγάλα ποιεῖν καὶ περὶ τῶν μηδὲ μνήμης ἀξίων πολλούς τινας διατίθεσθαι λόγους.
[465] Walbank 1967: 396 clarifies that ζῷον might also refer to human being and that its use might 'denote any figure in a work of art, not only an animal and not necessarily even a living creature' which suggests that Polybius is using it with the general meaning of 'the living subject of a painting'.
[466] See *supra* chapter 2, section 1.
[467] 1.4.7-8: ὡς ἂν εἴ τινες ἐμψύχου καὶ καλοῦ σώματος γεγονότος διερριμμένα τὰ μέρη θεώμενοι νομίζοιεν ἱκανῶς αὐτόπται γίνεσθαι τῆς ἐνεργείας αὐτοῦ τοῦ ζῴου καὶ καλλονῆς.
[468] 1.4.6: ὅπερ ἐκ μὲν τῶν κατὰ μέρος γραφόντων τὰς ἱστορίας οὐχ οἷόν τε συνιδεῖν, εἰ μὴ καὶ τὰς ἐπιφανεστάτας πόλεις τις κατὰ μίαν ἑκάστην ἐπελθὼν ἢ καὶ νὴ Δία γεγραμμένας χωρὶς ἀλλήλων θεασάμενος εὐθέως ὑπολαμβάνει κατανενοηκέναι καὶ τὸ τῆς ὅλης οἰκουμένης σχῆμα καὶ τὴν σύμπασαν αὐτῆς θέσιν καὶ τάξιν.

some sort of significance when used: the word occurs twice in an earlier passage (12.25e) and once in 12.25h, where it also appears the adjective ζωγραφικός, used only here in Polybius.[469] In 12.25e.7, Polybius had already compared the bookish historian to painters, though in a slightly different situation:

> τό γε μὴν ἀπ' αὐτῆς ταύτης (τῆς) δυνάμεως ὁρμηθέντα πεπεῖσθαι γράφειν τὰς ἐπιγινομένας πράξεις καλῶς, ὃ πέπεισται Τίμαιος, τελέως εὔηθες καὶ παραπλήσιον ὡς ἂν εἴ τις τὰ τῶν ἀρχαίων ζωγράφων ἔργα θεασάμενος ἱκανὸς οἴοιτο ζωγράφος εἶναι καὶ προστάτης τῆς τέχνης.
>
> However, being convinced that those who take their cue from this research ability are able to describe well subsequent events, as Timaeus believed, is completely silly and similar to the following case, as if someone, having contemplated the works of painters of the past, believed to be a skilled painter and a master of the art.

In this case, the bad painters in question look exclusively at their predecessors to train themselves and have the presumption of knowing the art of painting, just as Timaeus looking only at his predecessors' work presumes to know how to write history. Nevertheless, if the similes are different but with the same protagonists (Timaeus and painters), the triggering factor is the same, namely the fact that Timaeus' knowledge and research are based exclusively on the reading of books.

But there seems to be even more, since this passage, just like 12.25h, might once again evoke the proemial passage. In Polybius, the juxtaposition of the verb θεάομαι and the adjective ἱκανός occurs in 12.25e.7, and the only one parallel appears in the proemial passage 1.4.7, where the expression occurs with the verb θεάομαι modified by the adverb ἱκανῶς (διερριμμένα τὰ μέρη θεώμενοι νομίζοιεν ἱκανῶς αὐτόπται). In both passages, Polybius criticises the way in which the protagonists of the action look at things. It is not the act of looking in itself to be wrong, but how such people look at the objects of their examination. Moreover, in both passages, such people have the firm belief that they are

[469] Before Polybius the adjective is used once by Xenophon, *Symposium* 4.21.5 and once by Plato, *Theaetetus* 145a.

adequate for their job, but this is a false belief provoked by observing something in the wrong way.

A corollary to this statement, given Polybius' obsession with the historian's ability and expertise, might be that one has to be an expert in the matter to be able to *see* in the *right* way and not to get the wrong impression. Otherwise, what is seen might be deceitful, as it is wrong. The idea of deceit has been already found in Polybius' critiques of Phylarchus and has been connected to Plato,[470] but this element reappears in Polybius' attack against Timaeus. Moreover, in the part where Plato reflects on poets' deceit of their spectators, he uses a metaphor which involves painters and their being inadequate to represent the truth of reality: he underlines that poets are similar to painters who render their works inferior to truth (φαῦλα ποιεῖν πρὸς ἀλήθειαν) and cause people to have false beliefs and to be unable to distinguish the greater from the less.[471] This inability to represent reality and truth is then peculiar to writers of histories *kata meros* whom Polybius charges with the accusation of making some events bigger and not offering an adequate representation of some other events.

Thus, one might gather that Plato's simile acts as a key element, a sort of hub connecting the two passages of book 12 (25e and 25h) to the proemial passage (1.4.6-7) and the critique against Phylarchus (2.56), and from this one might also draw the following considerations. If authors of histories *kata meros* are inferior to Polybius and to authors of universal history because just like the painters they render small things big and big things small, and they give a distorted and falsified image of the reality (like the poets accused by Plato and compared to the painters), Timaeus, at least according to Polybius, is at an even more lowly level, because he tries to shape his historical work

[470] See *supra*, chapter 2, section 2.
[471] Plato, *Rep.* 605a-c. On the interpretation of this passage, see Gastaldi 2013: 60-64.

looking at what others have represented. Indeed, Timaeus is not similar to the painter who only gives a falsified image of the reality because he does not succeed in rendering a truthful image, despite the fact that he seeks to copy reality. On the contrary, Timaeus is more similar to those painters who look at paintings of their colleagues, which means that they have distorted images of already distorted images. Indeed, Timaeus is similar to the painter who tried to copy not the living beings, but the dummy which is already a not-so-perfect copy of the living being. Lastly, one can infer that his knowledge is even more falsified by the fact that Timaeus was probably looking at works *kata meros* of his colleagues.

Moreover, according to Plato, imitative works (in this case he refers to poetry and to the criticism we have already seen)[472] may cause severe damage (λώβη)[473] to some of the listeners because most of them do not have the antidote (φάρμακον) to *mimesis*, in the sense that they do not really know what *mimesis* is, and they confuse it with reality.[474] Indeed, only the person who is the 'most expert' (ἐμπειρότατον)[475] will be able to deal with this kind of source, whereas the one who just imitates things 'does not have either knowledge or correct opinions about the beauty or flaws of the objects they imitate'.[476]

Thus, Polybius' intention is to demonstrate (by means of a selective reworking of Platonic aesthetics) that it is not enough to draw on the works of the past: no matter how much they may be worthy of faith, they will never be able to give readers back the true truth of the facts, because each work is characterized by style, tendencies, the cultural substratum of the author, all elements which act like a filter. Truth, therefore, is returned

[472] See *supra*, chapter 2, section 2.
[473] I borrow the terminology uses by Gastaldi 2013: 49.
[474] See Gastaldi 2013: 49-55.
[475] Plato, *Rep.* 601d.
[476] Plato, *Rep.* 602a. See Gastaldi 2013: 60-61.

to readers not as it is, but filtered and, consequently, it loses its strength and its liveliness (τὸ δὲ τῆς ἐμφάσεως καὶ τῆς ἐνεργείας τῶν ἀληθινῶν ζῴων).[477]

Of course, even though a historian would go a step further and avail himself of autopsy, another important part of the historiographical research, nevertheless, as we have already briefly seen,[478] he should possess the right expertise in order to see things as they are (12.4c.1-4d.4):

> [4c.1] ὁ δὲ Τίμαιος περὶ τοῦτο τὸ μέρος τῆς ἀλογίας οὐ μόνον ἀπειρίαν, ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον ὀψιμαθίαν δοκεῖ μοι πολλὴν ἐπιφαίνειν, ὅς γε, διότι θύουσιν ἵππον, εὐθέως ὑπέλαβε τοῦτο ποιεῖν αὐτοὺς διὰ τὸ τὴν Τροίαν ἀφ' ἵππου δοκεῖν ἑαλωκέναι. [2] Πλὴν ὅτι γε κακῶς ἱστόρηκε καὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν Λιβύην καὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν Σαρδόνα, καὶ μάλιστα τὰ κατὰ τὴν Ἰταλίαν, ἐκ τούτων ἐστὶ συμφανές, [3] καὶ καθόλου διότι τὸ περὶ τὰς ἀνακρίσεις μέρος ἐπισέσυρται παρ' αὐτῷ τελέως· ὅπερ ἐστὶ κυριώτατον τῆς ἱστορίας. [4] ἐπειδὴ γὰρ αἱ μὲν πράξεις ἅμα πολλαχῇ συντελοῦνται, παρεῖναι δὲ τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν πλείοσι τόποις κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν καιρὸν ἀδύνατον, ὁμοίως γε μὴν οὐδ' αὐτόπτην γενέσθαι πάντων τῶν κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην τόπων καὶ τῶν ἐν τοῖς τόποις ἰδιωμάτων τὸν ἕνα δυνατόν, [5] καταλείπεται πυνθάνεσθαι μὲν ὡς παρὰ πλείστων, πιστεύειν δὲ τοῖς ἀξίοις πίστεως, κριτὴν δ' εἶναι τῶν προσπιπτόντων μὴ κακόν.
> [4d.1] Ἐν ᾧ γένει μεγίστην ἐπίφασιν ἕλκων Τίμαιος πλεῖστον ἀπολείπεσθαί μοι δοκεῖ τῆς ἀληθείας· [2] τοσοῦτο γὰρ ἀπέχει τοῦ δι' ἑτέρων ἀκριβῶς τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐξετάζειν ὡς οὐδὲ τούτων ὧν αὐτόπτης γέγονε καὶ ἐφ' οὓς αὐτὸς ἥκει τόπους, οὐδὲ περὶ τούτων οὐδὲν ὑγιὲς ἡμῖν ἐξηγεῖται. [3] τοῦτο δ' ἔσται δῆλον, ἐὰν ἐν τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Σικελίαν δείξωμεν αὐτὸν ἀγνοοῦντα περὶ ὧν ἀποφαίνεται· [4] σχεδὸν γὰρ οὐ πολλῶν ἔτι προσδεήσει λόγων ὑπέρ γε τῆς ψευδολογίας, ἐὰν ἐν οἷς ἔφυ καὶ ἐτράφη τόποις, καὶ τούτων ἐν τοῖς ἐπιφανεστάτοις [ἐν τούτοις] ἀγνοῶν εὑρεθῇ καὶ παραπαίων τῆς ἀληθείας.
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> [4c.1] Regarding this matter, Timaeus seems to me to show not only inexperience derived from lack of thinking, but even more a great deal of slowness in learning, since, when they [the Romans] sacrifice a horse, he has immediately supposed that they do this because Troy, as it seems, was captured by a horse. [2] Besides, from this it is clear that he has badly carried out research on matters about Libya, and Sardinia, and especially Italy, [3] and that in general the part relative to enquiries has been completely mangled by him: and this very one is the most important part of historical research. [4] For since events occur at the same time in many places, and it is impossible that the very same person is present in many places at the same moment, and likewise that a single man is eyewitness of all the places in the inhabited world and the peculiarities in these places, [5] what remains is to inquire from

[477] 12.25h.3.
[478] See *supra*, previous section and chapter 3, section 2.

> as many people as possible, to trust those who are worthy of trust, and to be not a bad judge of the things which have been heard.
> [4d.1] And in this kind of enquiry, Timaeus, while taking up a great deal of showing off, seems to me to go excessively away far from truth: [2] indeed, he is so far from scrupulously investigating the truth through others that not even of those events of which he has been an eyewitness and those places to which he himself had gone, not even regarding such things he tells us anything correct. [3] This will be clear, if in the topics regarding Sicily, we prove that he is ignorant about the accounts he produces: [4] indeed, probably there will be no longer need of many further words about his falsehood, should he be revealed as being ignorant and deviating from truth with respect to the places where he was born and raised, even with respect to the most famous of such places.

It is interesting to observe how, between the lines, Polybius points out that the target of his criticism is actually a *bad historian*. Indeed, he writes κακῶς ἱστόρηκε, which might be understood on two levels. The first, more superficial, level is that of literal translation, with which Polybius wants to signal that Timaeus has conducted bad historical research: in this case, the verb ἱστορέω is used in its characteristic meaning of 'to inquire'. The second and more careful reading of this passage could lead to another, metaphorical, not explicit level: Polybius wants his readers to understand that Timaeus is a historian who does not know how to do his job well, he does not deserve this name. In this case the verb ἱστορέω indicates the historiographical work, the search for historical truth, and the adverb κακῶς highlights that Timaeus did not respect this criterion.

Using an image taken from football, one can say that Polybius goes studs up on Timaeus. Not only is Timaeus ignorant and incapable of thinking, but he also gets to things with a certain delay. By means of the refined and rare word ὀψιμαθία,[479] probably

[479] Only 15 occurrences in the TLG, of which 3 before Polybius: Hippocrates, *Praeceptiones* 13; Aristoxenus F 39 (Wehrli); Theophrastus, *Characters* 27.1. The verb ὀψιμαθέω does not occur in Polybius (in the TLG there are 23 occurrences) as well as the adverb ὀψιμαθῶς (only one occurrence, Galenus, *De differentia pulsuum libri iv*, 8.601 Kühn). Walbank 1967: 328, drawing on Theophrastus description of the ὀψιμαθής (*Char.* 27) as someone who 'displays excessive zeal in inappropriate activities', interprets the abstract noun ὀψιμαθία as 'pedantic irrelevance'.

inspired by Timaeus himself,[480] Polybius describes his colleague and brings into question his learning abilities.[481] Timaeus, as Polybius will declare later on,[482] is lazy, and it is probably his laziness which drives him to slowness, if one follows Polybius' line of reasoning. One might also infer that, in Polybius' mind, Timaeus cannot solve the problem of his ignorance not only because he lacks the capability of reflecting on events, but also because he lacks learning speed and performs actions which are now inappropriate to his years.[483] Timaeus' brain, as the usage of ὀψιμαθία might suggest, also seems to be similar to the brain of elders, if one gives credit to Theophrastus who reports that men who turn sixty might be affected by ὀψιμαθία.[484] Moreover, the concept of ὀψιμαθία, "learning the truth too late",[485] seems to retain a tragic flavour as well, since it has been shown that human ὀψιμαθία is indeed a pattern present in tragedy.[486] Once again, Polybius reworks meanings, connects concepts, and assigns new meanings to them. Thus, though ὀψιμαθία is typical of the tragic character and not of the writer (so not really like dementia), nevertheless one can speculate that Polybius – as he also adumbrates when he compares Timaeus to a certain kind of painters in the passages which have been analysed at the beginning of this section –[487] is accusing Timaeus of being a sort of tragic writer, the tragic writer of historiography, thus with all the defects of a historian writing *kata meros*.

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[480] The adjective ὀψιμαθής (which has a wider usage with 98 occurrences in the TLG, but only 8 before Polybius) occurs only once in Polybius (12.8.4), who actually seems to report Timaeus' words in this case.
[481] Mauersberger 2006, *s.v.* translates it as 'pomposity with later acquired knowledge' (*Wichtigtuerei mit spät erworbenem Wissen*).
[482] 12.27a.4. See *supra*, chapter 3, section 6.
[483] Cf. Diggle 2004: 477-478.
[484] Theophrastus, *Characters* 27.1-2: ὁ δὲ ὀψιμαθὴς τοιοῦτός τις, οἷος ῥήσεις μανθάνειν ἑξήκοντα ἔτη γεγονὼς καὶ ταύτας λέγων παρὰ πότον ἐπιλανθάνεσθαι.
[485] For this translation see Davies 2007: 17, who reflects on the comic usage of this concept in Aristophanes' *Clouds*.
[486] See Rutherford 1982: 147-150, and footnote 21 (for some bibliography on the topic).
[487] 12.25e.7 and 12.25h.2-3.

To these remarks, one should add that this passage seems to be the compendium of Polybius' previous accusations against historians writing *kata meros*. The charge of ἀλογία, lack of thinking, with associations of irrationality and/or improbability, is the same as the one Phylarchus faces in 2.63.5, where Polybius makes him guilty of this crime together with ἀσκεψία, the incapacity of reflecting on the events, a Polybian neologism as we have seen.[488] The reference to the part related to enquiries, τὸ περὶ τὰς ἀνακρίσεις μέρος (12.4c.3), which has been neglected by Timaeus, recalls the concept of the historian as good judge of what has been heard, underlined later at 12.4c.5 (κριτὴν δ'εἶναι τῶν προσπιπτόντων μὴ κακόν), and seems to allude to passages which are related to the Polybian criticism of historians writing *kata meros* works: in 2.56.4, while criticising Phylarchus, Polybius stresses the necessity for the historian to judge the events rightly (ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστιν ἡμῖν διευκρινεῖν), and in 7.7.6, Polybius laments the ἀκρισία, the lack of judgement, of the historians who wrote about the death of Hieronymus. The ἄγνοια of historians writing *kata meros*, evoked by the terms ἀγνοοῦντα (12.4d.3) and ἀγνοῶν (12.4d.4), referred to Timaeus of course, has been discussed by Polybius in 2.58.13 and 2.62.2, the passages relative to Phylarchus, and in 3.38.7, where he gets angry with the so-called historians of Hannibal. Moreover, the term ψευδολογία (12.4d.4) recalls the verb ψευδολογέω used to attack, once again, the historians of Hannibal (3.47.6).[489] But, the strongest reference to the critique of historians writing *kata meros* is the expression Τίμαιος πλεῖστον ἀπολείπεσθαί μοι δοκεῖ τῆς ἀληθείας, since it refers to the proemial passage 1.4.8, where Polybius is indeed criticising histories *kata meros*

[488] See *supra*, chapter 3, section 3.
[489] The verb ψευδολογέω occurs only once in Polybius, and the noun ψευδολογία thrice, in 4.42.7, where Polybius is criticizing the sailors, in 12.4d.4, and in 33.21.1, where he underlines his action of confuting a false account.

(λίαν πολύ τι τῆς ἀληθείας ἀπελείποντο).[490] Moreover, as we have seen, Polybius uses the same expression used by Herodotus in 2.106 (πολλὸν τῆς ἀληθείης ἀπολελειμμένοι), which is the only one occurrence preceding the two in Polybius, but with the superlative degree of πολλόν. Finally, Polybius comes back on the theme of the correct view of the events only if one is an expert and possesses ἐμπειρία, when he underlines that, on the contrary, Timaeus is affected by ἀπειρία (12.4c.1). Thus, the reader might easily infer that Polybius is underlining that Timaeus will never be able to see the truth.

Another noteworthy concept is expressed when Polybius emphasizes that Timaeus has neglected the phase of personal investigations (12.4c.3). We learn, therefore, that the research and the work of the historian consist of various phases, of which the most important seems to be the one related with personal enquiries.

So, what are the other phases?

Polybius accurately describes, using once again the rhetorical expedient of the simile, the three branches of historical science in 12.25d-25e,[491] where he states that history and medicine are similar, because they are both distinct in three branches. In medicine, for example, one can distinguish:

1. A theoretical branch (ἑνὸς μὲν μέρους αὐτῆς ὑπάρχοντος λογικοῦ), which had its beginnings in Alexandria.
2. A dietetic branch (τοῦ δ' ἑξῆς διαιτητικοῦ), which deals with the control of food.
3. A surgical and pharmacological branch (τοῦ δὲ τρίτου χειρουργικοῦ καὶ φαρμακευτικοῦ), which acts through surgical interventions and drug administration.

Doctors who belong to the first category are often preferred: they do their training on books, but if they are led back to reality and are entrusted with sick people, their

[490] For the discussion on the expression τῆς ἀληθείας ἀπελείποντο, see *supra*, chapter 2, section 1.
[491] On this passage, see Zangara 2007: 122-129.

experience is equal to those who have never studied medicine. Despite this, the persuasive capacity of the discourse of such theoretical doctors often prevails over proof of facts, τῆς τοῦ λόγου πιθανότητος καταγωνιζομένης πολλάκις τὴν ἐπ᾽ αὐτῶν τῶν ἔργων δοκιμασίαν (12.25d.6).[492] Once again, Polybius is leaving the reader a hint, since the mention of the 'persuasive capacity' (πιθανότης) cannot but recall the πιθανότητες all marshalled on the side of falsehood in 13.5.4 (πασῶν τῶν πιθανοτήτων μετὰ τοῦ ψεύδους ταττομένων).[493]

Polybius, then, continues (12.25e.1):

> τὸν αὐτὸν δὴ τρόπον καὶ τῆς πραγματικῆς ἱστορίας ὑπαρχούσης τριμεροῦς, τῶν δὲ μερῶν αὐτῆς ἑνὸς μὲν ὄντος τοῦ περὶ τὴν ἐν τοῖς ὑπομνήμασι πολυπραγμοσύνην καὶ τὴν παράθεσιν τῆς ἐκ τούτων ὕλης, ἑτέρου δὲ τοῦ περὶ τὴν θέαν τῶν πόλεων καὶ τῶν τόπων περί τε ποταμῶν καὶ λιμένων καὶ καθόλου τῶν κατὰ γῆν καὶ κατὰ θάλατταν ἰδιωμάτων καὶ διαστημάτων, τρίτου δὲ τοῦ περὶ τὰς πράξεις τὰς πολιτικάς.
>
> In the same way, also political history possesses three parts, of which the first has to do with being familiar with the written sources and the comparison of the material derived from them, the second has to do with direct observation of cities and places, rivers and harbours, and in general the peculiarities and the distances both through land and sea, the third has to do with political activities.

Thus, the historical research is formed by three parts, but many historians, and among them certainly Timaeus, can be compared to the theoretical physicians: indeed, drawing only on history books, they completed only one of the phases of historical research (12.25e.4).[494] But, in order to reach the complete truth and to fully understand the

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[492] Walbank 1967: 388 observes: "the threefold division of medicine is traditional, but P's division differs from that in Celsus, *Proem.* 9 (*in tres partes medicina diducta est, ut una esset quae uictu, altera quae medicamentis, tertia quae manu mederetur. Primam* διαιτητικήν *secundam* φαρμακευτικήν *tertiam* χειρουργίαν *Graeci nominarunt*). Polybius compresses *pharmaceutice* and *cheirourgia* into one and adds the λογικοί, who are to provide the parallel with Timaeus (cf. 25 e 4); but the division is not necessarily his own, and he may well be drawing on some handbook of medicine from the third or second century".

[493] See *supra*, chapter 1, section 3.

[494] Cf. 12.25h and 12.25g.

dynamics of history, one must instead resort to all three phases, which also appear as a sort of degrees, because, as Polybius underlines, not all phases have the same importance, some are more important than others (12.27.1-3):

> [1] δυεῖν γὰρ ὄντων κατὰ φύσιν ὡς ἂν εἴ τινων ὀργάνων ἡμῖν, οἷς πάντα πυνθανόμεθα καὶ πολυπραγμονοῦμεν [ἀκοῆς καὶ ὁράσεως], ἀληθινωτέρας δ'οὔσης οὐ μικρῷ τῆς ὁράσεως κατὰ τὸν Ἡράκλειτον - ὀφθαλμοὶ γὰρ τῶν ὤτων ἀκριβέστεροι μάρτυρες – [2] τούτων Τίμαιος τὴν ἡδίω μέν, ἧττω δὲ τῶν ὁδῶν ὥρμησε πρὸς τὸ πολυπραγμονεῖν. [3] τῶν μὲν γὰρ διὰ τῆς ὁράσεως εἰς τέλος ἀπέστη, τῶν δὲ διὰ τῆς ἀκοῆς ἀντεποιήσατο.
>
> [1] For by nature we possess two instruments, as it were, sight and hearing, with which we inquire about and investigate everything, and although sight is closer to the reality not by a little as Heraclitus says – for eyes are more accurate witnesses than ears –, [2] nevertheless of these paths of inquiry, Timaeus took the more pleasurable but the less important. [3] Indeed, he completely shrank from what is deduced from sight, and he pursued only what is apprehended through hearing.

The recourse to the term ἀληθινωτέρας clearly suggests that Polybius has in mind the fact that there are degrees of truth, but above all it underlines that sight is not the most truthful instrument of all, but it is 'just' a more reliable instrument in comparison with hearing, and in any case – as it has already be seen – [495] the historian must be an expert to truthfully interpret what one sees and give a true account of the events. Of course, the motif of autopsy is an important one in terms of historiography, "namely the need to see with one's own eyes as a guarantee of the historical reality of what comes to be known",[496] and it underlines the powerful imposition of the persona of the historian, which brings with it the fact that autopsy is in a way subordinated to the historian's subjectivity, as Nenci has suggested.[497] The innovation of Polybius with respect to its predecessors is precisely this, the fact of having understood the subjective character of the autopsy: therefore, just as doctors need not only the direct observation of the patient

[495] See *supra*, chapter 3, section 2.
[496] Nenci 1955: 15-16: "l'esigenza, cioè, di vedere con i propri occhi come garanzia della realtà storica di quanto viene conosciuto".
[497] Nenci 1955: 15-16.

and of the symptoms, but also their experience, so only an expert historian will be able to best interpret the actions, the facts, the reality of which he will be a direct witness and, consequently, he will be able to faithfully and objectively report them.

Thus, what seems to emerge is that the scrupulous historian must proceed through all the phases of the historical research, step by step, and he should not neglect any of them. Only in this way will he be able to get to the true truth. Furthermore, truth does not seem to have a fixed image, but it appears as a flexible entity which might even be characterized by degrees, and, thus, measurable in a certain sense, as we have seen in Plato's allegory of the cave, when the images pertaining to the sphere of perception are defined as ἀληθέστερα, 'truer'.[498]

2. The staunch advocate of truth

A notable example of the idea that the historian has to perform all the procedures to reach the 'true truth' and that there might be something similar to the concept of degrees of truth can be also found in another passage from book 12 where, as part of his harsh polemic against the historian Timaeus, Polybius takes a strong position on the different accounts about the foundation of Lokroi Epizephyrioi (12.5.3-6). The passage can also be understood as a sort of confirmation of the historical method of Timaeus (from the point of view of Polybius of course) and concerns the story of Lokroi Epizephyrioi in which Timaeus argued with Aristotle regarding the origins of this colony of Magna Graecia. Aristotle, probably in one of the 158 *Constitutions*,[499] claimed that the colony was founded by slaves from Lokroi (in Greece) who had joined the women of

[498] See *supra*, chapter 2, section 1. See also Repellini 2013: 173, who underlines that in the allegory of the cave Plato shows the presence of degrees of truth.
[499] Walbank 1962: 6; Champion 2010, *BNJ* 566 F 11a, *Commentary*.

the nobility while their husbands fought in the Messenian war. Timaeus, on the other hand, in the ninth book of his *Histories* (*FGrHist* 566 F 11) refuted Aristotle's thesis by asserting that:

- the Locrians of Greece were not allowed to own slaves at that time (Pol. *Hist.* 12.6);
- Lokroi Epizephyrioi, like the motherland, was on friendly terms with Sparta and hostile to Athens: if the founders of Lokroi in Magna Grecia had been slaves, it would have been unlikely that they would maintain the same alliances as their masters (Pol. *Hist.* 12.6a);
- it is unacceptable that the Locrian noblewomen lived with their slaves and that their husbands did not have the opportunity to return home, since the Spartans themselves sent home the young Lacedaemonians, not bound by the bond of military oath (Pol. *Hist.* 12.6b);
- Timaeus' thesis was also confirmed by documentary evidence, as he personally saw a treaty between the Greek Lokroi and Lokroi Epizephyrioi which began with the terms ὡς γονεῦσι πρὸς τέκνα ("as is fitting for fathers towards their children"),[500] clearly indicating a relationship of equality and not, on the contrary, between masters and slaves (Pol. *Hist.* 12.9).

Polybius, on the other hand, criticises Timaeus' claims: "First of all, one would be in confusion as to which of the Locrians he turned up and carried out these investigations" (12.10.1). Polybius, therefore, casts doubt on the ability of Timaeus to conduct historiographical research: he does not specify which Locris (since there were two different regions called Locris in Greece, Opuntian Locris located to the north-east of

[500] This document is thought to be a later forgery: see, for example, Brown 1958: 48; Walbank 1967: 345; and Musti 1977: 145-146, who dates the treaty to the 4th century B.C.

Phocis, and Ozolian Locris located to the south-west of Phocis),[501] nor does he explain who were the magistrates who showed the written text,[502] an unusual attitude for a historian who is very precise in the chronologies and in the written documentation.[503]

It is in the light of these reflections that Polybius does not believe at all that Timaeus is trustworthy and this is the reason why, at the beginning of the discussion on the foundation of Lokroi, he states (12.5.3-6):

> [3] διόπερ ὀφείλω μᾶλλον εὐλογεῖν Λοκροὺς ἢ τοὐναντίον. [4] ἀλλ' ὅμως οὐκ ὤκνησα καὶ λέγειν καὶ γράφειν ὅτι τὴν ὑπ' Ἀριστοτέλους παραδιδομένην ἱστορίαν περὶ τῆς ἀποικίας ἀληθινωτέραν εἶναι συμβαίνει τῆς ὑπὸ Τιμαίου λεγομένης. [5] σύνοιδα γὰρ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὁμολογοῦσιν ὅτι παραδόσιμος αὐτοῖς ἐστιν αὕτη περὶ τῆς ἀποικίας ἡ φήμη παρὰ πατέρων, ἣν Ἀριστοτέλης εἴρηκεν, οὐ Τίμαιος. [6] καὶ τούτων γε τοιαύτας ἔφερον ἀποδείξεις.
>
> [3] And so I ought much more to speak well of the Locrians than the opposite. [4] Nevertheless, I did not hesitate both to declare and to write that the history of the foundation of the city transmitted by Aristotle happens to be truer than the one told by Timaeus. [5] Indeed, I know very well (and the people there agree)[504] that the traditional account on the colony handed down to them by their fathers is the one which Aristotle, not Timaeus, told. [6] And of this, they were adducing such proofs.

Thus, despite the fact that Aristotle's story was somewhat unfavourable to the inhabitants of Lokroi, Polybius was not afraid of reporting the account which looked rather truthful.

To justify his complete and utter impartiality in favouring Aristotle rather than Timaeus, a few lines before he underlines that he had been in the city many times; he also acted as a benefactor in their regards, by pleading their case with the Romans, since the Locrians were not in the position to send auxiliary troops to Iberia and Dalmatia. In

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[501] On this topic, see Luraghi 1991: 143-159.
[502] 12.10.5-6.
[503] 12.10.4: καίτοι διότι τοῦτ' ἴδιόν ἐστι Τιμαίου καὶ ταύτῃ παρημίλληται τοὺς ἄλλους συγγραφέας καὶ καθόλου τῇδέ πῃ τῆς ἀποδοχῆς *** - λέγω δὲ κατὰ τὴν ἐν τοῖς χρόνοις καὶ ταῖς ἀναγραφαῖς ἐπίφασιν τῆς ἀκριβείας καὶ τὴν περὶ τοῦτο τὸ μέρος ἐπιμέλειαν - δοκῶ, πάντες γινώσκομεν.
[504] They should be the Locrians of the metropolis, "the metropolitan Locrians in Greece": see the Loeb edition of the *Histories*, translated by Paton, revised by Walbank and Habicht, p. 357.

return for being freed from "misery, risk and a considerable expenditure" (καὶ κακοπαθείας καὶ κινδύνου καὶ δαπάνης ἱκανῆς τινος ἀπολυθέντες), they granted him every kind of honour and privilege. Thus, in his line of reasoning, this is not a biased opinion against Timaeus, who had indeed a more positive account of the story, and his historical research. In Polybius' logic, the choice of a version less favourable to the Locrians – thus not intended to praise a people whose patron he had even been – demonstrates that he is writing for the sake of truth, even more so as "praise was usually regarded as incompatible with truth".[505]

In addition to the critique against Timaeus, who, once again, is branded as a liar, and to the Polybian stance in favour of Aristotle, in this passage there is a significant statement which gives rise to a reflection: Polybius says that the Aristotelian narrative is ἀληθινωτέραν compared to the one of Timaeus. Indeed, noteworthy is the use of the comparative. The first question one should ask is why Polybius is addressing the issue of the two versions in such a way, why he uses the comparative ἀληθινωτέραν, what the adjective's degree means and why he is not using its grade zero, the simple ἀληθινός. What does Polybius want us to understand in this passage? Does he want to show us that there are various levels, *gradus veritatis*? Or, according to what we have seen, are there different degrees that the historian has to go through in order to reach the true truth, since the adjective could be better translated as 'closer to reality than'?

Mario Pani, arguing that ancient historians had the consciousness of history as a literary genre in its own right, states that the historian's task was "to research and find the external truth and to reflect it".[506] The truth, therefore, is one and transcends the protagonists or those who write history; there are, however, "plural truths" (to borrow

[505] Woodman 1988: 43. More generally, on hostility, bias, truth and impartiality, see Woodman 1988: 40-47; 73-74; 82-83.
[506] Pani 2004: 348: "ricercare e trovare la verità esterna e rispecchiarla".

the effective terminology used by Mario Pani) which could be defined as immanent to the historian, subjective truths that constitute the limit of the writer of history because they are influenced by personal factors, such as partisanship, ill will, the limits of information or the inability to attend all events.

At this point, it is important to notice how Polybius presents the topic and how self-referential this presentation is. In fact, he does not simply state that Aristotle's version is truer than Timaeus' one, but he introduces the idea of hesitation with the verb ὀκνέω preceded by the negative:[507] he, the historian, had the courage to say and write his thoughts as a scrupulous historian would do.[508] However, the history related by others is not *his* truth: therefore, from Polybius' words, it can be inferred that it is not on purpose, but maybe a sort of coincidence (συμβαίνει)[509] that the history given, handed down or even taught (παραδιδομένην ἱστορίαν)[510] by Aristotle is truer than that told (λεγομένης) by Timaeus. In this passage, Aristotle appears as the teacher who hands down a tradition, whereas Timaeus is just a storyteller or – even worse – a fabulist;[511] but he himself, Polybius, is performing all of these actions: he is transmitting a tradition, and he testifies it by speaking and writing (καὶ λέγειν καὶ γράφειν). Even more so, since he knows what

[507] Schweighäuser 1822, *s.v.*, translates 'non dubitandum, non verendum', and Mauersberger 2006 *s.v.* renders the verb as 'fear' (*fürchten*), but also as 'hesitate' (*zögern, Bedenken tragen*).
[508] He uses this verb two other times in the negative form and in association with his role: in 16.20.5, writing about the incompetence of Zenon from Rhodes in matter of geography, he states that he did not hesitate to write to him personally and to point out his big mistakes; in 18.55.9, he declares about Polycrates and other characters that he will not hesitate, at the right time, to show plainly their indecent actions. To my knowledge, there is no such use in previous historians.
[509] The term seems to attenuate the value of the assertion.
[510] The expression could also be interpreted as "the traditional story", "the history of the foundation according to the tradition". Cf., for example, μηδένα νομίζειν ἄλλον θεὸν ἢ τοὺς παραδεδομένους, "the traditional gods" (Dinarchus 1.94). See LSJ, *s.v.*
[511] The verb λέγειν does not seem to have a different meaning than just 'tell', without any implication on writing history. See Schweighäuser 1822, *s.v.* and Mauersberger 2006 *s.v.*

he is doing, he is conscious about his role, whereas Aristotle, or even better, Aristotle's tradition just "happens to be the truer one".

Indeed, the second part of this passage is introduced by σύνοιδα: not only does he know this, he knows it extremely well. The verb does not simply mean "to know", but it is its intensifier. In addition, it also belongs to the legal sphere,[512] since it is often translated as "to know that something is true", "to know something about a person as a potential witness" or "to bear witness".[513] This shade is not surprising, as the verb is formed with one of the roots of ὁράω, and one is supposed to see something to be a witness. More to the point, another nuance of its meaning is remarkable, since it bears the sense of 'to be fully conscious' and 'share the knowledge with someone'.[514] Thus, here Polybius might be introducing himself as an historian acting with full consciousness. He has just mentioned the technical term ἱστορία,[515] connecting it to Aristotle, a few lines before, a word which, again, shares its root with ὁράω and, consequently, with the σύνοιδα discussed here:[516] so, to do his job well, the historian must be the witness of the events, he must see the actions he is describing. In fact, he – Polybius – had done so, since – as he declares – he had been many times in the city of the Locrians.

Furthermore, he appears to have checked all the different traditions of the story, when he describes the Locrians as ὁμολογοῦσιν: Herodotus, for example, uses this verb,

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[512] Polybius often used legal terminology to describe his historical method, as ἀνακρίνω / ἀνάκρισις, βασανίζω / βάσανος, ἐλέγχω / ἔλεγχος, ἐξετάζω. See Mauersberger 2000, 1.1, *s.vv.*; Id. 2003, 1.2, *s.vv.*; Vercruysse 1990: 36 and footnote 120. See also Farrington 2015: 40, who argues that Polybius acts both as a dikast and as an orator.
[513] See LSJ, *s.v.*
[514] Cf. Chantraine 1974: III.779.
[515] In Polybius, the word reflects a certain awareness of genres, it is related to the genre of history, and it is used to describe the historian's work. See Schweighäuser 1822 and Mauersberger 2006 *ss.vv.* Moreover, from 34.4 it is clear that Polybius was mindful of the specific genre, since he states that history should aim at truth (τῆς μὲν οὖν ἱστορίας ἀλήθειαν εἶναι τέλος), whereas poetry should not be assessed according to historical truth. See also 10.21.5-8, in which he separates the genre of the encomium from history.
[516] Chantraine 1974: III.779. On the meaning of ἱστορία, see also Keuck 1934.

when he is giving the account of different traditions and wants to underline that people agree on that particular account.[517] However, this word also belongs to the semantic field of legal terminology again, as it could mean "to admit" or, even better, "to confess": if one follows Polybius' argument that the truer version of Aristotle was also the less favourable to the Locrians, it is not unforeseen that they 'confess, admit' a story which puts them in a bad light. Nonetheless, unexpectedly, Polybius assigns the role of storyteller to Aristotle now (εἴρηκεν), but I think that this might be explained by the fact that the direct object of the verb is the relative pronoun referred to φήμη, which in this case is not the rumour, but the story known by oral tradition,[518] thus 'told' and not 'written'. Anyhow, such confusion and mixing of the terms cast doubt among his readers.

This two-faced passage, a display of both historical and oratorical technique, ends with another polysemous expression, ἔφερον ἀποδείξεις. In the standard translations,[519] this phrase is interpreted as Polybius saying that the Locrians used to provide the proofs about which he is going to talk in the subsequent lines.[520] Of course, this is a coherent translation and the Locrians appear to be the logical subject of the sentence, but another translation is nevertheless possible: the imperfect ἔφερον can also be a first-person singular ("and I was providing such proofs of these accounts"). The issue with this interpretation is the tense of the verb,[521] since one might ask when in the past Polybius was talking and proving this. However, the difficulty can be solved if one reflects upon what he has written a few lines before, in 12.5.4, introducing this topic: he did not hesitate both to speak and to write in favour of Aristotle's version, so, perhaps, he had proved

[517] See, for example, 1.23; 1.171; 2.4; 4.154.
[518] Cf. Schweighäuser 1822 and Mauersberger 2004, *ss.vv.*
[519] See, for example, the translations of Paton, Pédech and Sonnino.
[520] καὶ τούτων γε τοιαύτας ἔφερον ἀποδείξεις: "And they used to provide such proofs of these accounts".
[521] In Polybius the imperfect is almost often durative, especially in relationship with the *verba dicendi*. See de Foucault 1972: 129-132.

even before why he preferred the philosopher's account. Anyway, I would suspect that here Polybius is intentionally ambiguous.

In addition, the use of the word ἀπόδειξις is thought provoking, as it assumes diverse meanings: it belongs to the legal sphere, as we have seen, with the meaning of 'proof', but it is also translated as 'demonstration' and 'display'. Thus, Polybius is playing the role of the orator in attacking Timaeus and he needs to demonstrate that he is right, to provide proofs and to plead his case against him. At the same time, he is a historian, and this behaviour is part of his 'apodeictic', demonstrative style:[522] Polybius often insists on the necessity for an historian to provide proofs of his accounts[523] and he invokes his sources as witnesses, but he has to demonstrate that they are credible.[524] Also, the mention of ἀπόδειξις together with ἱστορία cannot but evoke Herodotus' preamble to his *Histories*: Ἡροδότου Θουρίου ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις ἥδε. "This is the display of the historical research of Herodotus from Thurii". In the same methodological way, Polybius is displaying the results of his own historical research about the foundation of Lokroi Epizephyrioi having dug into the different traditions of the city's history.

It is surprising though that the nexus φέρω/ἀπόδειξις is scarcely present in previous historians. It is utterly absent in Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon.[525] After Polybius, Diodorus Siculus uses it, probably because he was looking at Polybius' way of

[522] See *supra*, chapter 1, section 3, footnote 79.
[523] See, for example, 4.40.1-3; 7.13.2; 31.30.2.
[524] Cf. Vercruysse 1990: 21.
[525] As for the abstract term ἀπόδειξις, Herodotus has six occurrences (1.p; 1.207; 2.101; 2.148; 7.50; 8.101), with the meaning ranging from 'display' and 'achievement' to 'demonstration', 'proof', and 'evidence'; it is attested twice in Thucydides (1.97.2; 2.13.9), bearing the meaning of 'explanation' and 'demonstration'; finally, the term is present twice in Xenophon (in *Cyr.* 8.6.15 in the sense of 'review, check', and in *Mem.* 4.6.13 with the significance of 'proof'). Even when the abstract word is used with the meaning of proof, there is no direct action of the historian in bringing such evidence.

writing history.[526] Interestingly, those two words together were employed nine times by Aristotle, compared to only two occurrences in Polybius: the philosopher generally used this expression when he was demonstrating an argument, and, fascinatingly, in the *Rhetoric*, where there is a concentration of this usage in only one passage (three out of nine), Aristotle is describing the epideictic style and speeches.[527] Besides, both Polybian passages, this one and 12.25k, are in a context where the historian is arguing against Timaeus. What is more, this terminology is also used in two of the remaining fragments of Timaeus, although, in this case, it is hard to separate Timaeus' voice from Diodorus who transmits the fragment, especially because he, as I have said,[528] was 'imitating' Polybius' style. In *FGrHist* 566 F 85, Timaeus was writing about the Argonauts and the route they followed after stealing the fleece, and, in the middle of the fragment, one reads 'and they bring proofs of this' (ἀποδείξεις δὲ τούτων φέρουσι): it is not specified to whom the third person refers, presumably 'the writers'[529], although Diodorus mentions Timaeus alone. The second fragment, *FGrHist* 566 F 38, deserves equal attention, as Diodorus is commenting on Timaeus' way of writing history (a statement based on Timaeus' words?):

> Τίμαιος δὲ τὴν ἄγνοιαν τούτου τοῦ συγγραφέως ἐλέγξας, ἀκριβῶς ἀποφαίνεται τούτους αὐτόχθονας εἶναι· πολλὰς δ᾽αὐτοῦ φέροντος ἀποδείξεις τῆς τούτων ἀρχαιότητος, οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον ἡγούμεθα περὶ τούτων διεξιέναι.

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[526] Cf. Rood 2004: 158. On Polybius' influence upon Diodorus, see, also, Bianchetti 2005: 127-153 and Achilli 2012: 1-20. Diodorus uses this expression ten times: 1.25.4; 1.28.4; 1.29.1; 1.29.6; 1.96.3; 2.31.6; 3.74.6; 4.56.4; 5.6.1; 19.56.1. This usage might have been part of Diodorus' style inspired by Polybius, but it is difficult to understand where Diodorus was writing by himself and where he was reporting the words of another historian.

[527] *APo.* 74b (Bekker); 77a; 79a; *Metaph.* 1005a; 1087b; *Ph.* 252a; *Rh.* 1417b (three times).

[528] See *supra*, chapter 1, section 3.

[529] This is the translation given by Champion in *BNJ*.

> Timaeus brought convincing proofs of this historian's [Philistus] ignorance, accurately showing that they were indigenous; and since he adduces many proofs of their antiquity, there is no need to go through them.

Timaeus was harshly quarrelling with Philistus over the colonization of a city (περὶ δὲ τῶν κατοικησάντων ἐν αὐτῇι πρώτων Σικανῶν, writes Diodorus), the very same matter on which Polybius is disagreeing with him.

Thus, whether these two fragments preserve Timaeus' own words or he had his work described by these words, they still might be of some importance if seen as a part of the entire framework. Indeed, since there is no trace of the two words together in previous historians, but there is enough presence in Aristotle especially, and, probably, in Timaeus/Diodorus, one might speculate that Polybius was playing with words. First of all, he appears to put together two concepts, the 'inquiry' of Herodotus and his own 'demonstrative technique': once more, his action seems active, deliberate and conscious. He is again working on two different levels, as the verb is two-pronged, being interpreted as a first-person singular or a third-person plural: reversing what Timaeus declared, he is dropping the subtle hint that he, Polybius, was bringing the counter-proofs of what Timaeus wrote; taking it as third person, since Aristotle used also this expression, Polybius' suggestion would be that he was mimicking the philosopher's style, his account being the truer one.

But, if truth is a unique essence, as one would imagine, one does not infer this from the passage above, since it transmits uncertainty instead. The definition of its entity seems to escape: in fact, Polybius appears to go in a certain direction when he clearly separates Aristotle's act of writing from Timaeus' act of telling stories, but soon afterwards he weakens this strong opposition between writing and telling, and he assigns the action of telling stories also to Aristotle who in this case represents the 'truer truth'.

Polybius' hesitation might be explained in this case by his firm belief that it is almost impossible to write non-contemporary history due to the lack of autopsy and inquiry, the most important parts of the historian's work[530]; consequently, if he chooses this path, he will need 'to write hearsay from hearsay' (ὡς ἀκοὴν ἐξ ἀκοῆς γράφειν).[531] Moreover, Polybius makes a statement especially on writing about foundations of colonies and cities (which is the main theme of the fragment we are discussing here): in this particular case, the historian has two possibilities, to tell the story of another pretending that it is his own story (which is the most dishonourable action of all) or to find a previous account with which he agrees, and that was treated and transmitted sufficiently well.[532] Although the historian must avoid this, sometimes he will need to deal with previous events to explain contemporary events:[533] in this case, 'the prohibition on non-contemporary history could be ignored when the author believed he had superior information'.[534] This might be the case with the passage above: Polybius judges Aristotle's account as one of a higher standard, but he is still tied up with his conviction that it is difficult, if not even unmanageable, to write non-contemporary history. Hence, he could have had to weaken his statement on the truer account, since he did not employ the proper instruments of history. But, if the imperfect ἔφερον is taken as a first person, then one finds oneself facing Polybius' intervention in the account of another writer: since he thought that Aristotle's story was better, he tries to 'help' him and intervenes in the historiographical process. This could be the explanation of the gradual weakening of the opposition which appears not so strong anymore.

[530] 12.25g.1-28a.10.
[531] 4.2.1-3. See Walbank 1957: 450 and Marincola 1997: 98.
[532] 9.2.1-3.
[533] 1.12.8-9; 3.7.4-7.
[534] Marincola 1997: 99.

Polybius seems to lead his reader to the following phase of this account: of course Aristotle's version is truer, but it is not the truest one, since he related a story, but he did not research deeply into it. Thus, it needs to be completed with another phase of the historical research, which is the inquiry: Polybius intervenes and provides evidence for Aristotle's account. Furthermore, Aristotle is not a politician, which is the quality that shapes the perfect historian, according to Polybius (12.25e). The historian should be a good judge of the events and of the different versions (12.4c.4-5), but to do so he needs to be involved in politics, as we have seen:[535] the account of political or military episodes is useless if the historian did not experience politics or war (12.25g). Indeed, the inexperienced in such matters is not able to ask witnesses the right questions, and he does not understand what is happening even in the case he is present (12.28a-9-10).

Thus, Aristotle is not a historian *tout court* in Polybius' opinion, so he cannot manage a history *stricto sensu*, though he is closer to it than Timaeus.[536] It might be stated that here the 'highly intrusive explicator'[537] and the 'intrusiveness of the Polybian narrator'[538] find one of their greatest expressions. I also believe that the main point here is perhaps that, being diverse truths and various degrees of truth – at least according to Polybius –, the most crucial features become the person who deals with truth, how he gets to it, and how he manages it.

Furthermore, Polybius, still within the dispute over the origins of Lokroi, reports the hypothetical reflection of those who will read what he wrote about Timaeus, about his work, and about the tasks of the historian (12.7.4):

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[535] See *supra*, section 1 of this chapter.
[536] Of course, the imperfect could be a third-person plural, as we have seen, but it is nevertheless true that Aristotle appears to be unable to 'defend' himself, and he still needs someone else to bring proofs of his account's truth on his behalf.
[537] Marincola 1997: 10.
[538] Rood 2004: 150.

> ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἀμφότεροι κατὰ τὸν εἰκότα λόγον πεποίηνται τὴν ἐπιχείρησιν, καὶ διότι πλείους εἰσὶ πιθανότητες ἐν τῇ κατ' Ἀριστοτέλην ἱστορίᾳ, δοκῶ, πᾶς ἄν τις ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων ὁμολογήσειεν· ἀληθὲς μέντοι γε καὶ καθάπαξ διαστεῖλαι περί τινος οὐδὲν ἔστιν ἐν τούτοις.
>
> Everyone, I believe, would agree on the basis of what has been said that both [Timaeus and Aristotle] have conceived their dialectical reasoning according to plausible story-telling, and that there are more elements of credibility in Aristotle's account; however, in such topics there is nothing about which one can distinguish something true once for all.

Based on this statement, scholars have hypothesised that this was Polybius' line of reasoning, namely that neither Aristotle nor Timaeus told the truth, but they were based on plausible elements: on the basis of these seeds of truth, Aristotle's story appeared to Polybius more credible, but not more truthful than Timaeus' one.

Walbank, indeed, claims that the arguments of both Aristotle and Timaeus are based on likelihood.[539] According to Pédech, in Polybius' mind the verisimilitude is nothing but the complement and the substitute element of the truth, since also likelihood belongs to the category of Logic and is the result of rational data. Therefore, Pédech adds, since the events develop rationally, through a logical link between causes and consequences, it is the duty of the historian to verify the coherence of a piece of information, to evaluate whether the different parts have a logical connection and whether the results of an action do not contradict the premises: for Polybius, in fact, "reasoning is an effective tool of criticism".[540] Polybius, Pédech continues, goes further: he maintains that if a historian finds that a piece of information contradicts the logical link or modifies the natural order, he can rectify it and restore truth based on likelihood.[541]

However, I believe that the statement at 12.7 is clear: Polybius is not reporting his own ideas, but only what the readers might think; equally doubtless is what he states

[539] Walbank 1962: 7.
[540] Pédech 1964: 391: "le raisonnement est un outil effective de critique".
[541] Pédech 1964: 389-391.

in 12.5, that Aristotle is closer to the truth/reality than Timaeus. Therefore, one could affirm that Polybius' statements regarding the historical method go in one direction only, that is towards the duty that the writer of history has to always adhere to the truth. Pédech's hypothesis, on the other hand, might be valid if one transfers it to the level of Polybius' implementation of the canons established by him, since Polybius has maybe not always stuck to the truth, but, as Pédech says, "he can rectify it and restore the truth according to the likelihood".[542]

Thus, in Polybius' philosophy of history, is truth unique or are there different *gradus veritatis*? The image that Polybius has of the truth, I believe, is that of a unique essence but which at the same time is formed by various parts that he makes correspond to the phases of historical science. Truth is not something that is given immediately and completely, but the historian reaches it throughout a long and hard path, punctuated by various difficulties: going back to the etymology of ἀλήθεια, it seems that even for Polybius it is an entity that one succeeds to *unveil* slowly, step by step. Thus, the Platonic doctrine is transposed to historical truth: just as the slave enclosed in the cave is slowly educated to absolute truth, so the historian comes to "possess" the historical truth after different passages. There are, therefore, *gradus veritatis* that are made explicit in the phases described by Polybius, which however still lead to the one and only unique truth. In this sense, the story of Aristotle is closer to truth than that of Timaeus: the philosopher had adhered much more to the historiographical procedure, even though he had not completed all the steps of historiographical research, while the historian Timaeus, in the opinion of Polybius, touched only the first step, that is that of the "bookish acquisitions".

Thus, the partial and plural truths (which seems also to be influenced by different sorts of thigs, from bias or blame to the author's background), though they are essential

[542] Pédech 1964: 391: "il peut la rectifier et rétablir la vérité selon la vraisemblance".

to reach the true truth and are part of the preliminary historiographical research and path, they can only participate in the historiographical procedure and science if they are thought to be part of it, but they cannot exist by themselves. They appear only as a component of an obligatory route to reach the transcendent truth, since Polybius repeatedly returns to support the historian's need to narrate events without praising friends too much and blaming enemies, but with total objectivity, without deliberately lying.

Conclusions

The path through the Polybian methodological passages ends here as well as the treasure hunt. This work has shown, I hope, how elaborated the idea Polybius' has of truth is. The Polybian truth is unique and he believed that it transcended the protagonists and/or the historians. Nevertheless, there are 'plural' truths, which might be defined as 'immanent', subjective truths influenced by personal factors, such as bias, limits of information or the impossibility of being present at every single event.[543] Also, I hope that I have shed light on the image Polybius has of historical truth: an image of a unique essence, but at the same time formed by diverse parts that coincide with the different phases of historical research. In line with its etymology, ἀλήθεια does not give itself immediately and completely to the historian, but only slowly unveils itself; and the historian 'conquers' it only after long and difficult research. So, it may be the case that for Polybius there are *gradus veritatis* which nevertheless can lead the 'Polybian' historian to the one and only, unique, absolute truth. Thus, the proper historian needs to go through all such partial truths, the different steps or elements of the historical research, to be able to find the one and only 'true truth'. He cannot leave out any of such steps, he needs to perform all the relevant procedures, otherwise history will be incomplete and untrue.

Polybius highlights the importance of universal history as opposed to history *kata meros* and introduces truth as the most important feature of universal history, which, in his mind, is the best way of writing a historical account. Truth appears to embrace the whole, therefore it is only a characteristic of universal history, but not of histories *kata meros*.

[543] Cf. Pani 2004: 348.

The first chapter has served both as an introduction but also as an explanation of Polybius' language techniques and line of reasoning. In addition, it has shown how he refers to previous philosophers and historians, he re-uses and re-works their assessments, he invents new concepts, phrases, or words (what I have called Polybian historiographical neologisms) to create and shape a new philosophy of history. The historian has appeared to be a sort of privileged intermediary between truth and history and to act as a go-between. As we have seen, the historian is the priest of truth. Nevertheless, only a certain kind of historian can access truth, the historian who writes universal history, as chapter two has highlighted. Without universal history, one will never get an overall view of the events, their causes, their consequences, and especially their interconnection. Thus, he will not be able to reach the 'true truth', but only a partial knowledge of the events.

Moreover, the Polybian historian must have very specific characteristics and a certain approach to the matter. First and foremost, he should be able to understand which ethos he has to assume in order to undertake the difficult task of writing history. In other words, he needs to enter the 'character' of the historian, and to do so he needs to set aside his bias towards his fatherland, friends and enemies. Polybius has also shown us the figure of the historian as leader, not only because he clearly says that the historian has to *lead* his readers to the truth, but also because of his particular style, since he disseminates his work of hints, which are similar to the pieces of a jigsaw that the reader will put together under the guide of the historian to understand his philosophy of history. He also has his own readers, a special kind of reader who is keen on learning and not on receiving pleasure from reading history. Only this type of readers will follow Polybius' reasoning and will be able to understand and enjoy Polybius' history.

From his being a leader and someone with the ethos proper to history everything else will automatically spring: the Polybian historian is endowed with experience and

competence which render him able to understand which facts to relate and which not, how to report speeches, how not to write history. The Polybian historian is also capable of understanding that he cannot reach truth all at once, but that he has to go through the specific procedure before getting to the one and only truth. He knows well that there are several degrees of truth and one can reach the 'true truth' only by means of a mandatory path.

This, at least, is what Polybius claims in his work. Whether or not he sticks to his prescriptions and ideas, that is a horse of a different colour. Judging from Posidonius and Strabo's assessments,[544] we might infer that he did not, but we have to give him the credit of having created the philosophy of universal history.

[544] Strabo (3.4.13), commenting on a statement by Polybius (25.1), does not seem to agree that Polybius actually complied with his own historiographical principles. When dealing with the deeds of Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, husband of Cornelia (daughter of Scipio) and father of the famous tribunes, who in 180/179 BC intervened as a propraetor in Hispania Citerior to counter the advance of the Celtiberians, who were pushing towards the plains to create new settlements (Livy 40.44.4-5 and 40.47.1-50.5; Diod. 29.26; Plut. *Tiberius Gracchus* 5.3; App. *Hisp*. 43; Flor. 1.33.9; Oros. 4.20.32.), Polybius states that Tiberius Gracchus destroyed three hundred *poleis* of the Celtiberians. Strabo, reporting a comment of Posidonius of Apameia, a Stoic philosopher who lived between the 2nd and 1st century BC and author of a historical work in 52 books, writes: Πολυβίου δ'εἰπόντος τριακοσίας αὐτῶν καταλῦσαι πόλεις Τιβέριον Γράκχον, κωμῳδῶν φησι τοῦτο τῷ Γράκχῳ χαρίσασθαι τὸν ἄνδρα, τοὺς πύργους καλοῦντα πόλεις, ὥσπερ ἐν ταῖς θριαμβικαῖς πομπαῖς. καὶ ἴσως οὐκ ἄπιστον τοῦτο λέγει· καὶ γὰρ οἱ στρατηγοὶ καὶ οἱ συγγραφεῖς ῥᾳδίως ἐπὶ τοῦτο φέρονται τὸ ψεῦσμα καλλωπίζοντες τὰς πράξεις. Strabo, therefore, doubts the sincerity of Polybius and associates him with a general who embellishes his enterprises by boasting. Thus, according to Poseidonius and Strabo, Polybius has done nothing but enlarge elements that, in reality, were inferior in importance, and he has done so to please somebody, thus performing the exact opposite of the *prescriptions* for writing history with which he has bothered his readers all over his historical work.

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