

POLYBIUS' DEATH NOTICES

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WITH HIS PORTRAYAL OF CROESUS, Herodotus, father of history, initiated an interest in exemplary figures which was to continue throughout classical historiography.¹ By the fourth century such characterisation, stressing models to be followed or fates to be avoided, had become one of the most important requirements of an historian. The trend, noticeable in Xenophon's strong emphasis on moral evaluation,² is even more marked in his successors.³ Theopompus' portrait of Philip (*FGrHist* 115 F 225 = Pol. 8.9) and Timaeus' treatment of Agathocles, tyrant of Syracuse (*FGrHist* 566 F 124 = Pol. 12.15, 15.35) were notorious examples of the vogue. Indeed appropriate character portraits seem to have come to be expected of an historian—so much so that Dionysius of Halicarnassus, praising Thucydides' concern for the truth and his unbiased evaluation of great men, states that the historian's ability is shown by the way he passes due judgement on Nicias, Alcibiades, and Demosthenes (*De Thuc.* 8). In fact, Thucydides never specifically judges Demosthenes; but it is indicative that Dionysius presumably thought that he ought to have done so and thus erred through his preconception of what historical writing should be.

Given this Hellenistic interest in the evaluation of great men, it is no surprise that the greatest of the historians of this period should frequently pass judgement on his characters. Throughout his work, one can see Polybius' strong belief in the educational value of history with resulting moral and political benefit.⁴ Since knowledge of past deeds is self-evidently a corrective guide (διόρθωσις) to conduct in the present (1.1.1),⁵ one may claim

I wish to thank the two anonymous referees of *Phoenix* for valuable assistance in improving this paper. F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius* (Oxford 1957–79), will be cited either as Walbank, *Commentary* or by author's name alone.

¹It should, however, be noted that the extent to which this portrait of Croesus is to be taken as a didactic model is open to question: H.-P. Stahl, "Learning Through Suffering? Croesus' Conversations in the History of Herodotus," *YCS* 24 (1975) 1–36.

²H. R. Breitenbach, *Historiographische Anschauungsformen Xenophons* (Freiburg 1950) 29–104.

³See C. W. Fornara, *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1983) 108–109.

⁴Such beliefs have by no means vanished today—for instance, Z. Yavetz describes German teachers' shocked reaction to Strasburger's "assassination" of Caesar in 1953 (*Julius Caesar and his Public Image* [London 1983] 11). Presumably the teachers' concern was not merely with the moral suitability of Caesar but was also influenced by the memory of political events in Germany.

⁵For the educative value of history in Polybius, see especially S. Mohm, *Untersuchungen zu den historiographischen Anschauungen des Polybius* (diss., Saarbrücken 1977) 183–229 ("Die Formen der Belehrung").

that the special virtue of history is its praise and positive recall of noteworthy conduct (2.61.6). To Polybius, then, it is surprising that the narrators of foundation histories (κτίσεις) should give precise descriptions of how various cities were instituted, while ignoring the education and the goals of those men who had overall command of the projects. Since men desire to emulate animate human beings rather than inanimate constructions, so too narrative which concentrates on the former will be more effective in the reader's improvement (ἐπανόρθωσις, 10.21.3–4). The Romans, in Polybius' view, had appreciated the role of exemplars and, for instance, by establishing the custom of funeral orations had encouraged their youth to emulate the deeds of their ancestors (6.53). As a result, their young men were braver and, ultimately, more successful in war than those of Carthage (6.52.10). Hence, because of their superior social organisation, the Romans became the first race to rule the whole *oikoumene* (1.2.7).

As a result of this belief in the didactic value of individual lives, Polybius frequently offers brief career summaries which feature moral and social judgements at the deaths of leading political figures. These death notices seem particularly worth investigating because their appeal to the Byzantine excerpters has led to their enjoying an apparently high survival rate in the fragmentary books of Polybius.⁶ Thus they can be used to reveal specific exemplary trends in the historian's thought, while indicating the limitations of his historical outlook.

Only a select group of historical figures earn such evaluations. This is deliberate policy. Polybius indicates that while he is perfectly happy to retard his narrative for discussion of matters which he thinks important (22.3.7; fr. 67), especially when it is appropriate to the glory of the deceased and the encouragement of posterity to fine deeds (23.14.12), he considers it a waste of ink to devote an obituary to someone like Agathocles, the advisor of Ptolemy Philopator. Better to consider Agathocles of Syracuse instead (15.35.1), especially as he had a long and successful career which won the admiration of Scipio Africanus (15.36.6). The Egyptian, on the other hand, did not have courage in war, outstanding ability, enviable success in handling affairs, or even a courtier's native cunning and exceptional skill in mischief-making (15.33.3–4). Thus it would appear that to earn extensive treatment even villains must be impressive in their evil. Furthermore, there is a moral objection to the ready portrayal of evil Polybius perceived in his predecessors' writings: he objects that sensationalist accounts of characters such as Agathocles will not rouse the audience to emulation, and, while earning some initial interest, will finally only produce a feeling of disgust (15.36).⁷

⁶The collection of Constantinian excerpts *De virtutibus et vitiis* (P) is particularly useful in preserving obituaries—e.g., 7.7–8 (Hieronymus, Hiero, and Gelo); 23.12–14 (Philopoemen, Hannibal, Scipio); 32.8 (Eumenes); 36.15 (Prusias); 36.16 (Masinissa).

⁷Cf. K. Sacks, *Polybius on the Writing of History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1981) 164–165.

So for Polybius writing history is a serious business and the historian must respond with due gravity and concern for the well-being of his audience.⁸ It is to be regretted that Theopompus, who claims to have written his *Philippica* because of the extraordinary nature of Philip, son of Amyntas, portrays the king as a womaniser, mischievous towards friends and allies, treacherous to foreign states, and a drunkard (8.9.2–4, *FGrHist* 115 F 27).⁹ Worse still is Timaeus' account of Demochares which suggests practices surpassing the stock-in-trade of the pornographers. To Polybius, this merely reveals his predecessor's obscenity (αἰσχρολογία) and complete indecency (ἡ ὅλη ἀναίσχυντία: 12.13.1–3 = *FGrHist* 566 F 35). Propriety is a necessity for the historian, to be considered even when dealing with the outrageous. So after a long description of the tasteless musical contest staged at Lucius Anicius' triumph, Polybius refrains from telling about the travesty inflicted on the tragic actors, in order, he says, not to seem to be mocking his readers (30.22.12). It is rather more difficult for the historian to content himself with a *praeteritio* when he happens upon Antiochus IV of Syria, a king who showed insufficient regard for his high office by conversing with craftsmen, gatecrashing symposia, bestowing gifts ranging from large sums of money to knucklebones, and mixing with his subjects at the public baths. Because of such deeds, Polybius dryly notes, the king would be rightly titled not Epiphanes, but Epimanes (26.1.1).¹⁰

Polybius, then, will only deal with examples which meet his strict standards of propriety and, following his tenets on moral and political improvement, he tends not to dwell on those whose bad ends are merely a due consummation of their lives. Dicaearchus, the Aetolian, when sent out into the Aegean as a freebooter by Philip, had worshipped as divinities Lawlessness (Παρανομία) and Impiety (Ἄσεβεια, 18.54.10). His death by torture for taking part in a conspiracy against Ptolemy Epiphanes was only fitting punishment due on behalf of all Greeks. Indeed the gods too had their revenge—having directed his life contrary to nature, Dicaearchus met a suitably unnatural fate (18.54.7–11). Polybius can in this manner give vent to his hatred of all Aetolians and simultaneously warn his readers against such conduct.¹¹ Vicarious revenge is also noticeable in his treatment of other villains. Hermeias, the advisor of Antiochus, assassinated by his fellow

⁸See especially, M. Isnardi, "Τέχνη ε ἥθος nella metodologia storiografica di Polibio," *Studi Classici e Orientali* 3 (1955) 102–110, on the moral integrity essential for the true historian in Polybius' opinion.

⁹G. Shrimpton, "Theopompus' Treatment of Philip in the *Philippica*," *Phoenix* 31 (1977) 123–144, argues that Theopompus' irony in his treatment of Philip has been misunderstood—but Polybius would not, one suspects, be any more charitable to irony, the mark of the man who is insufficiently σπουδαῖος (cf. *SVF* 3.161.4 = Stob. 108.5 W).

¹⁰One wonders what Polybius would have made of Antiochus Cyzicus' skill at juggling (Diod. 34/35.34).

¹¹Cf. Xenophon's portrait of Menon the Thessalian (*Anab.* 2.6.21–29), a troublemaker throughout his career, who was not executed with the other generals by Artaxerxes as this

courtiers, suffered a punishment which could in no way match his deeds (5.56.13). Apelles, the baneful influence on Philip, commits suicide when his treason has been found out—a thoroughly deserved end, since he suffered what he had intended to inflict on his colleagues (4.87.11). Such are the rewards of greed, stupidity (πλεονεξία, ἀφροσύνη, 4.87.11), and reckless intrigue (ἀσελγεία, 5.28.9) against Polybius' hero, Aratus. The Egyptian official Deinon, by failing to prevent the murder of Arsinoe, could be held responsible for all the troubles in the court which followed. But Nemesis gave him a fitting end (15.26a.2): when Agathocles learnt that Deinon was having afterthoughts, he had him killed, the "justest of his crimes."¹² Archias, governor of Cyprus, can also be used to illustrate a piece of proverbial wisdom.¹³ He attempted to betray the island to Demetrius of Syria for five hundred talents, but when discovered had no recourse except to hang himself by his curtain rope. Tyche should not be blamed for this; rather, this shows that "empty heads devise vain schemes" (33.5.3). Scopas the Aetolian had "delivered his life over to money" (13.2.5): after losing office in Aetolia, he had tried to recoup his fortunes in Egypt, but perished plotting against Ptolemy Epiphanes (18.54.6). He not only offers a warning to the reader against the destructive vice of avarice (13.2.2), so prevalent among the Aetolians in Polybius' opinion (e.g., 4.3.1), but also shows how few men are capable of carrying out a daring scheme. Unlike Cleomenes of Sparta, who had preferred to risk a glorious death rather than cling to hope when his plans were found out, Scopas showed himself incapable of action when his conspiracy was detected (18.53.1–6). Orophernes of Cappadocia is another example of a person overcome by greed, who has spent his life on money (32.11.1).¹⁴ He duly lost his kingdom and his life as a consequence.

In all these cases, men are responsible for the outcome of their own actions. There is no point, Polybius states, in attributing what happens to a fickle and inescapable Tyche, as some writers had done with Agathocles, the guardian of Ptolemy Epiphanes (15.34.2).¹⁵ While Sosibius, his predecessor as force behind the throne, by his own sharp-wittedness had managed to

seemed too quick a death. Instead he was tortured for a year till he met a most wretched end (2.6.29).

¹²Polybius repeats this theme elsewhere: 4.87.7 and *Suda* 4.577.12, which must be a fragment of Polybius (M. L. West, "Two Unnoticed Fragments of Polybius," *CR* 23 [1973] 9–10).

¹³On Polybius' use of proverbs, see K. Ziegler, "Polybius," *RE* 21.1 (1900) especially 1552–1555, "Allgemeine Reflexionen," who concludes that while Polybius' moralistic treatment is often not original but based on older literary or oral ideas, he always reshapes these beliefs for his own purposes.

¹⁴τὸ πνεῦμα προσέθηκ' αὐτῷ χρήμασιν—a play on προστίθημι χρήματα, "spend money" as in Demosth. 18.239 (*LSJ* s.v. προστίθημι A.I.2)?

¹⁵Cf. 36.17: only in truly irrational cases should the cause of events be attributed to Tyche and Heimarmene. For a summary of Polybius' views on Tyche, see Walbank 1.16–26; cf. also A. Roveri, "Tyche in Polibio," *Convivium* 24 (1956) 275–293.

hold power over a long and baneful period (15.25.1; 15.34.3–4), Agathocles by his cowardice and indolence lost control of affairs, his life, and his reputation as well (15.34.6). Nor does chance deserve to be blamed for the end of Demetrius of Pharos—his death in a surprise attack on Messene was in line with the rest of his life, where boldness was combined with unreasoning daring and a total lack of judgement (3.19.9–10).

In such manner Polybius is able to make brief, didactic comment on the end of the villains, without romanticising their careers or introducing external elements. In those cases where Tyche does make her presence felt, it is usually a case of men's sins and errors catching up with them. So, as we have seen, a due fate befell Hermeias, Apelles, and Scopas. The lesson is that, in general, one should attempt to limit the risk from chance events (1.1.2). It should always be borne in mind that rational calculation will not by itself protect us against the actions of others, but one should try to reduce the consequences of mischance. This lesson Achaëus learnt to his cost (8.21.10), when he rebelled against Antiochus the Great. His fate offers two important lessons: not to trust one's fellow men too readily (since he was betrayed by those whom he expected to rescue him); and since circumstances may change, not to be overconfident in success (since his prosperity led him to declare himself king and brought about his eventual downfall). Again while Fortune may seem to be responsible for turning legislators' ideas and decrees against themselves, the real blame must lie with their own failure to remember the human condition. When the Achaean politician Callicrates died, his portraits were replaced by the ones of his rival Lycortas, which had previously been removed on Callicrates' lead. Here one may speak of Tyche's involvement—but only to the degree that Callicrates, by the example he had set, had brought this fate on himself (36.13.12).¹⁶

In these examples, it has been possible to form a Herodotean judgment on the subject from his end. But Polybius also knows that, irrationally, some of the evildoers may be redeemed by a glorious end. Lyciscus the Aetolian was a man of meddlesome and trouble-making nature, but, undeservedly for a villain, he died nobly (32.4.1–3). While this heroic death seems to suggest the overriding influence of Chance, rather than a beneficent Fortune, in the historical process, the exception to the normal deserved end of the bad highlights the normal regularity of Polybius' treatment of historical figures: the conclusion should correspond to the general tone of the career assessed. Lyciscus' evil nature is the cause of his violent death—it is simply unexpected that he should meet his end so well.

Indeed, the general consistency of Polybius' position on the fate of evildoers can be made clear by a consideration of three passages in Diodorus Siculus which show a different treatment of Fortune. In the war against the

¹⁶Contrast with this the more common Hellenistic depiction of an avenging Tyche—as when Perilaos, who built the bull of Phalaris, is its first victim (Diod. 32.25).

mercenaries, the Carthaginian general Hamilcar defeated and crucified his adversary Spondius; but later the rebel leader Mathos had the opportunity to nail the captured Carthaginian leader, Hannibal, to the same cross. According to Diodorus, Fortune seemed to be deliberately giving alternate victories and defeats to these offenders against human nature (Diod. 25.5.2). This is a portrait of a morally dominant Fortune, such as can also be seen in the explanation Diodorus gives for the downfall of Antigonos I: not content with Fortune's gifts, he had unjustly tried to conquer the kingdom of the other *diadochoi* as well, losing kingdom and life as a result (Diod. 21.1.1). Finally, Diodorus offers a vivid picture of Agathocles, tyrant of Syracuse, dying a singularly horrible death from poison. Because of the numerous different murders for which he was responsible in his reign and his impiety towards the gods as well, his manner of death fitted his lawless life (Diod. 21.16.4). Polybius himself records the deaths of Spondius and Hannibal, and remarks that Fortune seemed deliberately for purposes of comparison (ὥσπερ ἐπιτήδης ἐκ παραθέσεως) to give each the chance to inflict excessive punishment on the other. While Polybius portrays Fortune here as cruel,¹⁷ human responsibility is not reduced—only people who were willing to inflict such atrocities would have responded as they did. Again, if we compare Diodorus' account of Agathocles' end with Polybius' portrayal of the death of Dicaearchus, it is clear that both historians take pleasure in the due punishment of the offender; but whereas in Diodorus the act must be attributed to the moral interest of the divine and the irrational, that is, to all we would consider as Providence, in Polybius the individual nature of the guilty party is in itself sufficient *underlying* cause for the events which bring about his downfall. As a result, despite all his Achaean bias, Polybius' psychological depiction can be accepted as an explanation based on historical causation, while Diodorus' treatment, relying on the irrational for interpreting human events, fails as an investigative method on historical, though not necessarily on moral, terms.¹⁸

There could hardly be a greater contrast to the self-serving actions of the villainous Greek leaders who have just been under discussion than that offered by the socially-oriented deeds of Polybius' Romans. It is Roman public morality which underpins the methods and the governmental system

¹⁷See Walbank 1.19, lines 25–26 and his note on 1.86.7. Note that Polybius qualifies Tyche's intervention with ὥσπερ—he will not declare that this *need* be the work of an avenging Providence.

¹⁸This is not to say that Polybius is wholly consistent in his treatment of cause and effect—as Walbank, 1.17–18, notes, Polybius' whole view of causation tends in itself to encourage the role of Tyche as a secondary cause. Moreover, it is no accident that Tyche's role is downplayed in the cases of those whom Polybius wishes to condemn—while the death of Philopoemen, the Achaean hero, is attributed to a malicious Tyche (23.12.3).

by which Rome achieved world domination (1.1.5). In contrast to the Greek states described in Book 6, Rome possesses an innate balance of virtues which have ensured her success (6.18; 6.52). Perhaps because of the military interests of Polybius, but also because of the value placed on it by Roman society, the virtue which is most prominent is courage (31.29.1). The aim—and achievement—of a Roman education was to produce men ready to endure anything to obtain a reputation for courage (6.52.11). So, to pick the most striking example, Horatius Cocles, after defending the bridge, threw himself into the Tiber and perished, choosing future glory over life in the present (6.55.3).¹⁹

Given this emphasis on valour, it is perhaps not surprising that many of the notices for Romans comment on their courageous ends. Aemilius Paulus, the consul who fell at Cannae, was a man who served his country throughout his life and, more than anyone else in that conflict, at his end (3.116.11). The consulars Marcus Atilius and Gnaeus Servilius also perished there, good men and worthy of Rome in the battle (3.116.11).²⁰ The traditional emphasis on showing oneself courageous, as an ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός,²¹ does not, however, blind Polybius to the dangers inherent in such glory-seeking. When Marcellus got himself killed reconnoitring the enemy's position, he acted like a simpleton, not a general (10.32.7). Scipio Africanus, on the contrary, after showing his bravery while still in the ranks by rescuing his father at the Ticinus, avoided unnecessary risks in his later positions of command (10.3.7). Aemilianus, too, set about obtaining a reputation for valour as a young man (cf. 31.29.9); his later conduct in challenging a Spanish chief to single combat showed dangerous rashness (35.5.1), but by the time of the African campaign, he too had learned when to show restraint (36.8.4–5).

But while there are times when a good general must know when to yield (like Hamilcar Barca after the defeat at the Aegates Islands, 1.62.3), there are other times when it serves no purpose for him to preserve his life. Hasdrubal at the Metaurus earns special mention as worthy of respect and emulation

¹⁹Cf. 6.39.1–11 and Walbank's notes for the regular rewards for valour in the Roman army.

²⁰In fact M. Atilius appears to have survived to be censor in 214 (Livy 24.11.6).

²¹The formula is common in Hellenistic inscriptions, as is noted by A. Schulte, *De ratione quae intercedit inter Polybium et tabulas publicas* (diss., Halle 1909). One may compare the death notice for Margus of Caryneia (2.10.5) and the more extensive notice for the Rhodian admiral, Theophiliscus (16.9.2), who had committed the Rhodians to the battle of Chios and thus forced Attalus to cease delaying his entry into the war. Hence he was duly honoured by the Rhodians after death in such a way as to encourage not only the living but also future generations to seize the opportunity to benefit their country (16.9.5). It would be interesting if we could show that Polybius derived his account from an inscription, but the theme of the ἀνὴρ γενόμενος ἀγαθός is, as Schulte notes, as old as Tyrtaeus 20, occurs frequently in the history of Herodotus (e.g., 9.75 on the death of the Athenian general Sophanes at Drabescus), and is frequent in Attic funeral orations (N. Loraux, *L'Invention d'Athènes* [Paris 1981] 99).

(11.2.1–4). He had shown himself a fine leader in avoiding risks in the past, but, when faced by a hopeless situation, did all he could personally to try to achieve victory or at least die in a manner worthy of his previous career (11.2.9–10). His end offers a model for public leaders, who should not dash the hopes of those who have put their trust in them by rash actions (as did Marcellus) and, especially, should not make their downfall disgraceful and shameful by clinging to life (11.2.11). Here Polybius is surely contrasting the courageous deaths of Carthaginians and Romans in the Second Punic War with the lack of decision shown by Greek leaders after Pydna.²² In particular, Perseus' clinging to life after the battle would gain him no credit from the historian who expects his monarchs to risk all and be prepared to perish nobly.²³

Apart from those who die in battle and thus illustrate Polybius' ideas on the proper conduct for a fighter, few Romans are given death notices. Possibly this is because Roman actions were seen by him as the result of a communal rather than an individual effort. But it seems more likely that Polybius had difficulty in assessing internal Roman politics.²⁴ The death of Aemilius Paullus, conqueror of Perseus, is used as an opportunity to comment on the former's striking lack of avarice, in which he rivalled an Aristides or an Epaminondas (31.22.6–7), but the purpose here is not so much to review Paullus' career as to offer the opportunity for a digression on Scipio Aemilianus (31.23.1). Although the portraits of these two might be taken as illustrating the incorruptibility of at least some Romans, in contrast to Greek practices (18.34.7; 18.35.2; cf. 31.25.9), the intention is probably not the moral education of the reader. Some aspects of Polybius' account suggest that he could be offering Aemilianus as a model case of a carefully planned career in Roman politics (under the tutorship of Polybius himself). But the real purpose is plainly stated—to lay the foundations for the tale of Aemilianus' achievements in the books to follow (cf. 36.8.6).

So too Polybius' summary of Africanus' ability as a leader (23.14) fails to satisfy or adequately set the great man in his political milieu. In part, this

²²30.6–9, especially 30.6.4 with Walbank's note on the text. Cf. Polybius' words on the politicians of Greece and Carthage of his time (28.8.14) and his portrayal of Hasdrubal's cowardice in 38.20. Also fr. 164.

²³Perseus had decided to conquer or die at Pydna, but in battle his courage failed him (29.12.3); cf. his pathetic desire to live in prison in Alba (Diod. 31.9), and contrast Cleomenes of Sparta who resolved to die nobly and win the admiration of posterity (5.38.9) and in this way showed himself a natural leader and king (5.39.6).

²⁴See, for instance, A. Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom: the Limits of Hellenism* (Cambridge 1975) 41–49, on Polybius' inability to understand the Roman state; it is indicative that Polybius stresses the civic nature of the *laudationes funebres*, while ignoring their importance for the internal rivalry within the ruling elite (M. I. Finley, *Politics in the Ancient World* [Cambridge 1983] 95).

may be due to the context in which he considers his career. In 183 B.C., the Achaean leader, Philopoemen, was taken prisoner by the Messenians and poisoned in captivity; that Hannibal and Scipio met their ends in the same year excites Polybius to comment on the careers of all three.²⁵ In particular, he sees them as illustrating the conduct appropriate to leaders in the three main types of social organisations: democracy, aristocracy, and (virtual) monarchy.²⁶ Philopoemen spent forty years in pursuit of glory in democracy, yet avoided popular hostility, although he generally spoke what he believed rather than to please the crowd (23.12.8–9). Hannibal in seventeen years on campaign abroad so won the confidence of his foreign troops that despite their different customs and languages they remained a united force and none of his allies ever plotted against him or deserted (23.12.2). Finally Scipio, seeking honour and glory like the other two, but in an aristocracy, gained the goodwill of the people and the trust of the Senate. The first is illustrated by the way he broke up a proposed trial in the public assembly by claiming that no one should listen to the accusers, since it was due to Scipio that they even had the chance of speaking there. Then, in the Senate, when the quaestor in charge of the treasury refused to unlock it that day, Scipio boldly took the keys and responsibility for the opening upon himself. When later he was asked to account for the funds he received from Antiochus, he denied that there was any need to offer a statement. On being pressed, he had the books produced, then tore them up, proclaiming the injustice of his having to account for the money from Antiochus when the senate no longer remembered who had won 15,000 talents of indemnity from Antiochus and control over not merely Asia, but Africa and Spain as well (23.14.1–12). The message appears to be that natural leadership qualities will shine through in a politician who steers an independent course—be it in Hannibal's daring, unexpected attacks on the Romans with his ragtag army (23.13.2), Philopoemen's frankness in Achaean politics, or Scipio's boldness when opposed in Rome. But is this satisfactory? In particular, Scipio's activities at best delayed and perhaps exacerbated the attacks on himself and his brother Lucius.²⁷ Nor is the downfall of these men adequately explained. Philopoe-

²⁵See Walbank's note on 23.12.1–14.12 for the problems involved with the synchronism here.

²⁶23.12.8 (Philopoemen): φιλοδοξήσας ἐν δημοκρατικῷ καὶ πολυειδεῖ πολιτεύματι; 23.14.1 (Scipio): φιλοδοξήσας ἐν ἀριστοκρατικῷ πολιτεύματι; 23.13.1 (Hannibal): τῇ φύσει τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον ἡγεμονικόν, a description which can be compared with that of Cleomenes (5.39.6: ἡγεμονικός καὶ βασιλικός τῇ φύσει). While Carthage itself was considered by Polybius to have had a mixed constitution (6.51) and so not to have been greatly dissimilar to Rome as predominantly an aristocracy, Hannibal's position as general *abroad* was equivalent to that of an autocratic ruler.

²⁷See Walbank's note on 23.14.4—when Scipio left the comitia, he appears to have conceded defeat and to have withdrawn to exile at Liternum.

men fell victim to Fortune at last (23.12.3),²⁸ Polybius tells us, but there is nothing to suggest that she is responsible for the downfall of the other two.²⁹

A comparison with Diodorus Siculus (29.18–27) suggests that the excerpters of Polybius may have considerably abbreviated the original text,³⁰ particularly the portrayal of Hannibal (= Diod. 29.19). It is, however, highly debatable whether Diodorus, himself only fragmentary at this point, offers any real elucidation of Polybius. While it may seem that Diodorus preserves themes no longer extant in our present text of Polybius, it is more likely that substantial variations are instead due to Diodorus' expanding the account he had before him.³¹ The statement in Diodorus that Scipio, because of the greatness of his deeds, appears too influential for the dignity of his country (Diod. 29.21) might appear to be an explanation of Scipio's downfall. But in Diodorus this is used to introduce the anecdotes of Scipio's influence when on trial in the assembly, his opening of the treasury, and his behaviour when called to account in the Senate. Since these anecdotes are for Polybius illustrative of Scipio's ability to maintain the goodwill of his fellow-citizens (23.14.1), it may be presumed that Polybius did not attribute Scipio's downfall to his immense prestige in Rome (which should be an idea developed by Diodorus), but left his loss of power unexplained.

Polybius seems much happier assessing the Hellenistic monarchs of his day. Possibly this is because there existed a well-defined set of royal attributes familiar to Greek readers which the historian could apply, attributes which he found missing or difficult to use when evaluating Roman leaders.³² Certainly Polybius' death notices for Hiero of Syracuse (7.8), Attalus of Pergamum (18.41), and the Numidian king, Masinissa (36.15), offer a richness of detail which is lacking in his Roman or Carthaginian portraits.

Polybius' account of Hiero's career will make his expectations in a ruler clearer. Hiero gained power over the Syracusans and their allies by industry

²⁸Cf. Diod. 29.18, probably based on a Polybian account of honours paid to the dead hero (cf. 8.12.7 on Aratus' honours at death from the Achaeans, grateful for his services), but with Diodoran, non-Polybian, emphasis on a rewarding Providence.

²⁹Livy 39.52.7–9 unites all three by the theme of a lonely death away from their homelands—but that seems more likely to be a rhetorical expansion by the Roman historian or based on an earlier source (Rutilius, named in 39.52.1?), rather than adapted from any lost section of Polybius' account.

³⁰Sources here are *De virt. et vit.* [P] for 12.7–12; 13.2; 14.1–4; *De sent.* [M] for 12.3–6; 13.5–11; and *Suda* for 13.1–2; 14.1–4.

³¹Diodorus' interest in the evaluation of the great dead is a notable feature of his work—cf. 11.46.1 on his intention to increase the fame of the good and censure the bad (with reference to Pausanias), 10.21 (Lucretia), 11.23.4 (Gelon, Pausanias, Themistocles), 15.81 (Pelopidas), etc.

³²There was, of course, a Roman system of evaluation which was applied in the *laudationes funebres* (see W. Kierdorf, *Laudatio funebris* [Meisenheim-am-Glan 1980]) and of which Polybius was aware (6.53.1–54.3). But the form of the speeches may have appeared too detailed (in accounts of offices held) and too Roman in the emphasis on social virtues for use in a work aimed primarily at a Greek audience.

alone—not because of wealth, reputation, or any gift of Fortune (7.8.1).³³ He did not kill, banish, or harm in any way any citizen, yet he was able to become king of Syracuse through his own efforts, and, even more unusual, to maintain his rule in this way for fifty-four years.³⁴ He kept his country at peace externally, and internally did not need to worry about rivalry or plots against his person. In fact, although he often wanted to give up his power, he was prevented by the concerted opposition of the grateful citizens of Syracuse. He showed himself desirous of conferring benefits in order to win a high reputation from the Greeks,³⁵ and this also produced general goodwill towards the people of Syracuse. Most surprisingly, though he lived amidst extravagance, he maintained a sober lifestyle which is evidenced by his continuing to be in full possession of his faculties till over ninety. In general, one can see from this Polybius' concept of the ideal ruler: he should be a self-made man, proving his right to the throne; he should treat his subjects well and give no grounds for domestic conspiracies; he should seek peace externally, in particular showing himself a benefactor of civilised Greek states; and, in general, he should hold out against the constant threat of corruption from power. On such grounds Hiero's son, Gelo, wins praise for rejecting the temptations of power and wealth and maintaining his affection and loyalty towards his parents (7.8.9), while his son, Hieronymus, in his short reign, shows the beginning of the corruption which would lead to the downfall of Syracuse at Roman hands (7.7). The latter's reign has drawn more attention from writers because of its sensational nature, but, Polybius declares, the reigns of his grandfather and father offer more pleasant and instructive material for the interested reader (7.7.6–8). Undoubtedly Polybius is not happy with the sensationalist treatment of Hieronymus' reign by the monographers on such theoretical grounds as we have seen applied in the evaluation of Agathocles the Egyptian;³⁶ but one feels that here, as elsewhere, political considerations play a large role in forming Polybius' judgement. While Hieronymus formed a disastrous alliance with Carthage against Rome, Hiero early in his reign placed himself under Roman protection and, by aiding his new allies in times of need, maintained his rule over Syracuse

³³In fact he may have begun his career with substantial resources—Walbank *ad loc.*

³⁴7.8.4: ἔτη γὰρ πεντήκοντα καὶ τέτταρα βασιλεύσας, a statement which raises various difficulties. After the previous account of how Hiero became king by his own efforts (βασιλεὺς κατέστη δι' αὐτοῦ), one is tempted to take βασιλεύσας literally, beginning Hiero's reign immediately after the battle of the Longanus in 269 B.C. (so K.-E. Petzold, *Studien zur Methode des Polybios* [Munich 1969] 153). But the more general use of βασιλεύσας to indicate the length of time the ruler held power in his land in 18.41.8 makes this very uncertain.

³⁵7.8.6, εὐεργετικώτατος and φιλοδοξότατος can almost be translated as "publicly spirited," but with the emphasis on reciprocal acclaim which is missing in our modern conception. See C. Préaux, *Le monde hellénistique* (Paris 1978) 1.181–294, "Le Roi," for Hellenistic concepts of kingship; also P. Veyne, *Le pain et le cirque* (Paris 1976) 228–230 ("Les dons des rois").

³⁶Sacks (above, n. 7) 140–177, "Tragic History," esp. 163–164.

unthreatened, treating the Greeks in such a way as to win glory and crowns of honour (1.16.10). Since an evaluation of Roman rule is a prime concern of Polybius' (cf. 3.4), an evaluation which is in the main positive,³⁷ it is not surprising that Polybius should regard highly those who worked with Rome to their advantage and censure those who opposed Roman expansion and brought ruin on themselves. Hiero showed both the traditional virtue of philhellenism and the more modern diplomatic virtue of cooperation with Rome,³⁸ while his grandson's reign is too short for performing major acts of kindness and regrettable in its foreign policy.

A similar pattern emerges in Polybius' treatment of the Attalids. Attalus I at the beginning of his career had no external advantage other than money (18.41.2),³⁹ which can be ruinous if not used with forethought and enterprise. Yet he showed his true nobility by refraining from temptation and using his wealth to gain a kingship, the greatest and the finest of possessions (18.41.5). This he achieved not only by showering favours on his supporters, but by kingly deeds in war, defeating the Gauls. The rest of his reign conforms to this glorious start: he ruled for forty-four years,⁴⁰ showing himself to be a respectable, even devoted father and husband, and trustworthy to allies and courtiers (18.41.8–9).⁴¹ He died engaged in the most glorious of activities, striving for the liberty of the Greeks, and left four adult sons and the administration so well arranged that the kingdom could pass without dispute to his grandchildren. We see here the ideal Hellenistic king, who gains the title by his own effort, confirmed by military victory; shows restraint when in a position of absolute power (contrast the impious feuds within the various Macedonian families); is trustworthy in domestic and external affairs (again contrast the Macedonian courts); and concerns himself with a peaceful succession.⁴² Combined with this is a more ancient view of human prosperity—like Tellus the Athenian, Attalus led a full life,

³⁷F. W. Walbank, "Polybius between Greece and Rome," in *Polybe* (Vandoeuvres-Geneva 1973) 1–31.

³⁸Walbank suggests (on 1.16.10) that this praise goes back to Fabius Pictor's account of the First Punic War. While that is possible, the theme of philhellenism seems Polybian and the favourable portrait of Hiero's relations with Rome fits well with Polybius' views on the subject.

³⁹In fact Attalus came from a line of Pergamene despots—E. V. Hansen, *The Attalids of Pergamon*² (Ithaca, N.Y. 1971) 14–25.

⁴⁰18.41.8: though this seems to be calculated from Attalus' taking power in Pergamum (241 B.C.), not from his proclamation as king, which would have followed his victory over the Galatians at the battle of the Kaikos (ca 238–235 B.C.)—R. E. Allen, *The Attalid Kingdom* (Oxford 1983) 34.

⁴¹The φίλοι here are probably not "friends" (so Paton's Loeb translation), but "courtiers."

⁴²Cf. Polybius' approving portrait of the pro-Achaean Antigonos of Macedon, who showed himself a fine ruler in life and also at his death made splendid arrangements for the future in all respects (4.87.7). The reverse of this is the struggle between Perseus and Demetrias at the end of Philip V's reign (Livy 40.23–24). Interestingly, Polybius has Philip cite Eumenes and Attalus as an example of fraternal harmony for his sons to emulate (23.11.6).

left his children and city prosperous, and died a glorious death in a war where his country was successful.⁴³ This combination of historiographical tradition and contemporary values would be notable in itself, but a third strand is added, that of Polybian analysis. The interest in the correct social use of wealth is hardly original with Polybius,⁴⁴ but he has adapted this to his didactic purposes in history. Attalus thus also exemplifies the correct use of money, just as Archias and Scopas have appeared as warning exemplars of its misuse.⁴⁵

Attalus' son, Eumenes, too shows what a king should be. Once more the theme of earning one's right to rule is to the fore—Attalus is portrayed as an industrious and able king, enlarging his realm (32.8.4), though in reality the expansion of Pergamum should be considered the result of Roman efforts in breaking the power of the Macedonian kingdoms and as the result of Roman benefactions, particularly after the war with Antiochus (21.18–24, 45). Externally, Eumenes won considerable repute from his extensive donations to Greek cities and individuals—yet here too one must realise that his motives were not completely altruistic. He needed display to legitimise his kingdom, particularly taking advantage of his impoverished rivals.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the Pergamene kingdom earned especial regard from the Greeks after the war with Perseus when it became apparent that Rome had withdrawn her support for her ally; thus Eumenes could appear as a champion of Hellenic interests against encroaching Roman power.⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, Polybius excludes this from his notice. Finally, Eumenes did manage to maintain the

⁴³Hdt. 1.30.4–5. Herodotus also adds that the Athenians buried Tellus at public expense and with great honours where he fell. Such honours were probably mentioned by Polybius but omitted by the excerpter (P) as not relevant to virtues and vices. Polybius, relating the funeral of Aratus the Elder, declares that he was given sacrifices and heroic honours and everything which makes a man's memory immortal, so that if there is any awareness among the departed, he can take pride in the gratitude of the Achaeans and his labours and perils in life (8.12.8). According to Diod. 29.18 (from Polybius), Philopoemen too received honours such as those given to the gods in compensation for the misfortunes which occurred at his death. There were honours voted in common by the Achaeans, while his native city set up an altar and an annual sacrifice, and instituted praises of his virtue and hymns to be sung by the city's youth. This account is apparently based on the Megalopolitan decree setting up these honours (*Syll.*³ 624); presumably a similar source is the origin of Polybius' list of Aratus' honours.

⁴⁴Cf. Arist. *Pol.* 5.10.9 on the difference between a king and a tyrant—the tyrant grasps at money, the king at honour. This whole section of Aristotle is suggestive for the origins of Polybius' views on kingship.

⁴⁵Cf. also 28.8.9 ("love of money is the hanging-peg for evil") and 29.9 on Perseus' and Eumenes' blindness through avarice.

⁴⁶Cf. 5.90.5–6 where Polybius contrasts the generosity shown by the Hellenistic rulers after the Rhodian earthquake of 224 B.C. with the stinginess of modern kings and the extravagance of the honours bestowed on them in return. For examples of Eumenes' beneficence, see *OGIS* 297 and 301.

⁴⁷M. M. Austin, *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest* (Cambridge 1981) 331; cf. *Pol.* 31.6.6.

security of his dynasty by keeping the support of his three brothers. This is perhaps best illustrated by Polybius' account of Attalus' fraternal concern for the restoration of Eumenes' honours in the Peloponnese in 170 B.C., a regard which was institutionalised by Attalus' later adoption of the epithet Philadelphus.⁴⁸ Yet this brotherly affection was sorely tested by Roman intrigue when leading senators tried to persuade Attalus to claim a separate kingdom for himself (30.1–3). Internal harmony was preserved when it was pointed out to him that to ruin Eumenes would be to ruin himself, while concord enabled Attalus to inherit the kingdom intact. But after his death palace conflict broke out. The reign of Attalus III, Diodorus tells us, was cruel and bloodthirsty, with the murder of his advisors leading all his subjects to hope for revolution (Diod. 34/35.3). The succession may have passed peacefully through two generations after Attalus, but only just.

The last of the Attalids to receive a personal notice is Apollonis, wife of Attalus I and mother of Eumenes and Attalus II. The context of the passage is unclear (see Walbank 3.13), but the intention of summarising Apollonis' whole life is obvious. She deserves particular notice because, having risen from private status to that of queen, she maintained a citizen's sensible restraint and goodness, rather than aiming for power through dubious methods of persuasion (22.20.1–2). Furthermore Apollonis is the model queen mother: giving birth to four sons, she kept their goodwill and love until her death (cf. *OGIS* 307 and 308). This is illustrated by the account of a visit of Attalus and another of her sons to Cyzicus—the two on arrival escorted their mother around the temples throughout the city, accompanied by their entire retinue. While the initial account of Apollonis' virtues makes use of official Pergamene inscriptions, Polybius draws on the historiographic tradition for his conclusion to this exemplary tale of maternal and filial devotion—at the sight, the spectators of this procession were led to recall Cleobis and Biton. What advantage the latter pair had in the zeal of their devotion was matched by the glory of the Pergamene brothers' royal station. If prosperity is measured by the end, then both Attalus and his wife, by maintaining private virtues while serving their subjects, achieve a Herodotean *eudaimonia* such as eluded king Croesus.

The final model of royal excellence is Masinissa, king of Numidia. He is to be considered the best and most blessed of kings in Polybius' lifetime, since he ruled for more than sixty years, reaching a most advanced age in the finest of health (36.16.1–2). A king should appear regal and Masinissa, with his innate strength (36.16.3), certainly qualifies: he could stand, sit, or ride a horse day and night without ill effect, and when he died at ninety, his virility was attested by his leaving a four-year-old son. In addition, he took thought for his dynasty, keeping his ten children on affectionate terms so that no

⁴⁸27.18.1–3 with Walbank's notes *ad loc.*; 28.7.

domestic feuds harmed his kingdom (36.16.6). Finally, he was the first to show that Numidia, previously thought infertile, was capable of bearing domestic crops, and left each son an estate offering all sorts of produce. Such an extension of civilisation is to Polybius the greatest and most godlike of Masinissa's deeds (36.16.7). Pure bodily strength could be possessed by a barbarian, but in his concern for an orderly succession and especially in increasing the prosperity of his kingdom, he shows himself a true Hellenistic monarch.⁴⁹

By contrast, Prusias of Bithynia fits the pattern for a barbarian tyrant. Although he was quite capable in scheming, he was only half a man in appearance and degenerate and womanlike when it came to war (36.15.1). For, in addition to his cowardice, he avoided hardships and was generally effeminate in spirit and body throughout his life. Lacking any interest in education and philosophy and their teachings, he had no idea of what is fine in life (36.15.5), but being accordingly unrestrained in his physical desires, he lived the life of a Sardanapallus night and day. It is not surprising that the warlike Bithynians leapt at the first chance of rebelling. It is perhaps appropriate that a despot so lacking in saving graces should be treacherously murdered, a suppliant at the altar of Zeus, by his own son Nicomedes, with the full support of the Bithynians.⁵⁰

Less appalling, but nevertheless salutary, is the career of Ptolemy Philometor. While some felt that he was worthy of great praise and remembrance, to others he seemed quite the opposite. He was merciful and good in marked contrast to his predecessors (39.7.3), neither executing his courtiers nor even punishing his brother for his revolt and conspiracies against him when he had opportunities to do so. But success and good fortune caused him to relax his spirit and he slipped into Egyptian indolence (39.7.7). Thus he met with disaster in battle with the Syrian king, apparently violating Polybius' advice on generalship—although the Egyptians were victorious, Ptolemy was thrown from his horse and died soon after (Livy *Ep.* 52). Ptolemy's grandfather, Philopator, also shows this typically "Egyptian" fault. After totally unexpectedly recovering Coele-Syria, he was glad to make peace with Antiochus because of his customary indolence and the depravity of his lifestyle (5.87.3). As Polybius notes in a famous passage, Egypt is a country which has a baneful effect on people (34.14).

⁴⁹For Masinissa's arrangement of the succession on the basis of Hellenistic power-sharing, contrary to Numidian custom, see Walbank on 36.16.10. The king's philhellenism can be seen in his entries in the Panathenian games, his donations at Delphi, and his support for Nicomedes II in recovering the Bithynian throne in 149 (F. Durrbach, *Choix d'inscriptions de Délos* [Paris 1921, Hildesheim 1976] 91–92; 158–159).

⁵⁰App. *Mithr.* 7; Diod. 32.21. Antiochus Epiphanes too meets an appropriate end, dying smitten by madness brought on by the gods as punishment for his trying to raid the temple of Artemis in Elymais (31.9).

When significant historical figures died, Polybius was at liberty simply to record their ends and continue with the narrative. On occasion he appears to have done just that—there is no sign of a death notice for Philip or for his son Perseus.⁵¹ But usually Polybius feels obliged to pause: just as the deaths of important men are marked by public funerals and memorial inscriptions, so too the historian must indicate his respect for the dead. It would be possible just to record public grief, as he does at the death of Aemilius Paullus (31.22–30.4), or to record and summarise the words of the monuments.⁵² But to Polybius, although history is a memorial to recall the deeds of the dead and encourage future generations,⁵³ his work has a more general educational nature. He feels able to comment on warning exemplars and oppose the common practice of Hellenistic historians of recording sensational downfalls in detail as the workings of Tyche.⁵⁴ He can also indulge his interest in military affairs by expounding the correct conduct of a general on campaign and, especially, when faced by defeat, and draw parallels which his politically-minded readers should take to heart.⁵⁵

Most extensive and in many ways, most satisfactory, are his notices for the Hellenistic kings of his age. Whatever the sources which Polybius may have drawn on, a confused and mainly insoluble problem,⁵⁶ his treatments have a homogeneous flavour which must be the historian's own. Polybius, although reliant on earlier writers on governmental forms for his ideas, has a personal interest in incorporating political theory into historical writing. Kingship seems to have particularly attracted his interest⁵⁷ and his notices for prominent monarchs are correspondingly detailed. By linking political theory with older Greek ethical views on prosperity, Polybius here achieves a mixture which both preserves the traditions of Greek thought for the

⁵¹25.3.9–10 on Philip's last actions probably derives from a comparison between him and his son (Walbank, *Commentary* 3.21); Livy, who gladly borrows from Polybius' obituaries (e.g., for Attalus [33.21] and Masinissa [*Per.* 50]), offers no comment in his account of Philip's death (40.54–57.1).

⁵²Inscriptional material, perhaps indirectly used, seems to lie behind Polybius' assessment of Apollonis (Walbank *ad* 22.20.1–8) and might influence his depictions of the other Attalids as well.

⁵³Cf. 16.9.5 on the Rhodian tribute to Theophiliscus, with Polybius' comments in 18.41.1; 22.20.1; 23.14.12; and 36.16.9.

⁵⁴On this topic, cf. the conclusions of K. Meister, *Historische Kritik bei Polybius* (Wiesbaden 1975) 191–192.

⁵⁵Especially 11.2 and 30.6.

⁵⁶For a general treatment of Polybius' sources, which include public archives and numerous local historians as well as oral accounts, see Walbank, *Commentary* 1.26–35.

⁵⁷See 6.6–7 on the development of true kingship and its downfall, and on kingship in Polybius in general, K.-W. Welwei, *Könige und Königtum im Urteil des Polybius* (diss., Cologne 1963), especially 123–184 ("Das Herrscherbild des Polybius").

pleasure of his readers and should be of practical advantage to many of them as well.⁵⁸

Yet reservations must also be expressed. Polybius' portraits of the kings are often more carefully crafted to fit the theory than accurate in respect of the historical events.⁵⁹ His warning examples too are as often used to settle old scores as they are to instruct. But most worrisome is his inability finally to offer a model of the Roman statesman. Perhaps Polybius viewed Rome as, in essence, another Hellenistic kingdom with whom the Greeks would have to live.⁶⁰ But even if Rome had appeared as a benefactor of Greeks at the Isthmian Games of 196 B.C. (18.46.14–15),⁶¹ few in the Hellenic world could be under any illusions of Rome's altruism after the destruction of Corinth. And, even if Rome was in external affairs a type of kingdom, her leaders were not by any stretch of the imagination Hellenistic kings. Rome, then, remains the great unknown about which all revolves, despite Polybius' attempts to reveal her culture and values to his readers. For Greece, there is now, unhappily, no political future. Yet whatever Polybius' failings in his attempts to explain the reasons for the evils of his lifetime, it gives some pleasure to note that the grateful cities of Achaëa marked the passing of that last great Greek historian of antiquity with the dedication to him of the finest of honours⁶²—Polybius would have appreciated the memorial.

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⁵⁸See above 418–420 for Polybius' use of Herodotus and official Hellenistic propaganda in his portraits of Attalus and Apollonis.

⁵⁹See the reservations expressed about Polybius' portrayal of Eumenes (above, 419)

⁶⁰Cf. J. S. Richardson, "Polybius' View of the Roman Empire," *PBSR* 47 (1979) 1–11.

⁶¹See now, E. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1984), especially Chapter 4 (132–157), "Slogans and Propaganda: the 'Freedom of the Greeks'."

⁶²39.5.4 with Walbank's note on the posthumous editor's contribution here.