

Guido Schepens / Jan Bollansée (ed.): The Shadow of Polybios. Intertextuality as a Research Tool in Greek Historiography. Proceedings of the International Colloquium, Leuven, 21-22 September 2001 (= *Studia Hellenistica*; 42), Leuven: Peeters 2005, XIV + 345 S., ISBN 90-429-1658-3, EUR 65,00

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This volume of *Studia Hellenistica* collects proceedings of an international colloquium held at Leuven in 2001. The objective of the conference was to explore fragmentary Greek authors, for whom Polybios provides the great bulk of the evidence. The title of the volume, "The Shadow of Polybios", is a play on a phrase Justus Lipsius used in the late sixteenth century in describing the project of producing scientific, critical texts and commentaries for all of the ancient Greek and Roman historians. Lipsius wrote that this project would be a *Fax Historica*, or "Torch-light of ancient historiography". The notion of the "shadow of Polybios", in contradistinction, problematizes the triumphal optimism and confidence of Lipsius. Essays in this volume consider the limitations and great potential for distortion imposed by Polybios's text in attempting to recover fragmentary Greek historians, for whom his *Histories* provides our primary lens for analysis. In attempting to know something about writers such as Timaios, Philinos, Phylarkhos, and Zeno of Rhodes, we must engage in exercises of Polybian intertextuality, because their works are filtered through the assessments, colorings, and criticisms of Polybios. These papers aim to present a systematic survey of Polybios's criticisms of earlier and contemporaneous historians, and to assess and evaluate the impact Polybios's judgments have had on subsequent historiography. In a certain sense, students of Hellenistic historiography are prisoners of Polybios, since he often is a solitary beacon of light for the *Trümmerfeld* that is ancient Greek historiography in this period. But the refraction of that light presents interpretative challenges. Using Polybios in order to make generalizing statements about Hellenistic history writing is fraught with difficulties, since Polybios himself is selective, caustic and unforgiving in his criticism, and highly polemicizing. And so if we are to think of Polybios as a mirror of earlier Greek historians who have come down to us in meager fragments, we should think of him as a distorting mirror, at best.

With these considerations in mind, these essays are informed by the 'cover-text analysis' method. This is to say that the essays attend to the multiple functions performed by texts containing fragments in the very process of transmitting their fragments. The 'cover-text' (in the present case, Polybios) performs three basic functions. First, it *preserves*

passages taken from otherwise lost works; second, it *conceals* the original, by paraphrase or stylistic changes or simply by failing to signal where a fragment begins and ends; and third, it *encloses* the original text, separating it from its original context. The impact of the 'cover text' upon the original can be profound, and it carries great potential for distorted interpretations of the original author's understanding and intention. All of the essays consider the ways in which Polybios has shaped the writings of his predecessors and contemporaries, and in the cases of individual authors how he has 'cast his shadow over them by twisting, turning and distorting them according to his personal views and/or prejudices' (x).

The collection opens with an essay by the dean of Polybian studies, F.W. Walbank ("The Two-Way Shadow: Polybios Among the Fragments"). Walbank reminds us that although Polybios is the primary source for several important earlier Greek historians, his work is itself in a fragmentary condition (only Books 1-5 survive entirely intact). As a result, Polybios's own text reflects the predilections of his excerptors and the chances of textual transmission. Therefore, it is actually not only the case that Polybios is a 'cover-text' for some of his predecessors and contemporaries, but also that the text of Polybios's *Histories* as we have it is a 'cover-text' for Polybios. This is the 'two-way shadow' cast by Polybios, and the basic problematic at the heart of the various essays. In particular cases the difficulty may go even further. For example, Walbank discusses two passages from Athenaios (6.264c, 6.272a-b), standing in Büttner-Wobst's text of Polybios as 12.6.7, that may not be from Polybios at all, but rather stand as examples of Athenaios misrepresenting Polybios in a discussion of Timaios (cf. Diod. 29.33, which has the word *khre kopia*, otherwise unattested before the first century BC, but listed as the Polybian fragment B-W 237).

The use of Polybios, then, must be understood as a delicate exercise in intertextuality, with a high degree of uncertainty, and not as a transparent reflection of lost Greek historical writings. Individual essays in this collection treat Ephoros, Theopompos, Kallisthenes, Timaios, Aratos, Phylarkhos, historians of Agathokles, the Rhodian historians Zeno and Antisthenes, Fabius Pictor and Philinos, the criticism of Sosylos, historians of Agathokles of Samos, Pytheas, and problems of recovering Timaios not only through the Polybian lens, but also through the additional 'cover-text' of Plutarch. Of particular interest are authors who exercised Polybios's Akhaian political biases (e.g., Phylarkhos), evoked his historiographical strictures (e.g., Zeno and Antisthenes), and those who challenged his claims as the historian of Rome and the west (Pictor, Philinos, and, above all, Timaios). On this last group, mention should be made of the important recent work, *Storici greci d'occidente*, edited by R. Vattuone; and, generally, of the monumental project of I. Worthington's new English language edition of Jacoby's *FGrH* (forthcoming with Brill).

"The Shadow of Polybios" is an important collection of recent scholarly work on Polybios and some of his fragmentary predecessors and

contemporaries, which will become essential reading for students of ancient Greek historiography.

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