

Much of our evidence for the *Sikelika* of the Hellenistic historian Timaeus of Tauromenion (FGrH 566) derives from Book 12 of Polybius' *History*, which formed a long digression devoted almost exclusively to criticism of Timaeus. In this paper I will argue that the "fragments" of Timaeus gathered from this source must be employed with extreme caution in forming a judgment on him as a historian; we must consider the context in which these fragments are preserved and not simply take Polybius' claims regarding his predecessor at face value.

Since P.A. Brunt's seminal article, "On Historical Fragments and Epitomes" (CQ 1980, 477-94), scholars have increasingly recognized that the study of ancient historians whose complete works have disappeared presents additional complications and pitfalls beyond the fragmentary state of the evidence. Recent years have seen books taking fresh looks at individual historians, including Timaeus (Vattuone 1991) and Theopompus (Flower 1994), as well as efforts to deal with the entire issue of fragments, such as the volume edited by Glenn Most on *Collecting Fragments/Fragmente Sammeln* (1997). The need for a sound methodology in dealing with fragmentary works is made more urgent by the continuing production of collections such as Jacoby's *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker*.

The polemical context in which fragments of Timaeus' work have been preserved has a profound impact on how we treat this evidence. Polybius uses Timaeus for a very specific purpose: to show how not to do history. Nor is his purpose simply the edification of the reader; in putting down Timaeus, Polybius elevates his own standing, especially among his Roman audience. Therefore we should not expect that he will provide us with an objective, balanced, or perhaps even a fair view of Timaeus' work. In fact, Polybius himself, both in Book 12 and elsewhere, has left evidence to show that Timaeus was a respected and successful historian, and, in certain areas, a careful and diligent researcher.

My paper will examine a handful of Timaeian fragments in order to show how Polybius' polemical purpose has distorted the evidence for Timaeus' historiography. For example, Polybius claims that Timaeus offered various "proofs" for the story that the Arethusa fountain on Ortygia (Syracuse) had its source in the Alpheios River in the Peloponnese, including a golden bowl that appeared in the fountain and was recognized as coming from Olympia (12.4d.5-8). But we know that the story of the cup, at least, goes back to early fifth century: Strabo quotes lines from Pindar (Nem. 1.1-2) and then adds that "Timaeus declares the same thing" (6.2.4). Without knowing the original context, we must question whether Timaeus actually stated his trust in this "proof."