

# Polybius' reappearance in Western Europe

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IX

ARNALDO MOMIGLIANO

Polybius' Reappearance  
in Western Europe



## POLYBIUS' REAPPEARANCE IN WESTERN EUROPE

### I

Polybius arrived twice in Italy, the first time in 167 B.C., the second time at an uncertain date about A.D. 1415. In both cases he had some difficulty in establishing his credentials. He was born too late to be a classic, too early to be a classicist. Furthermore, he had committed the unpardonable sin of having underrated Sparta and Athens, the two pillars of classicism. There was also the suspicion, never definitely dispelled, that he was something of a bore. Only Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Comp.* 30) was courageous enough to list him among the authors one does not read to the end, but the silence of Quintilian was even more deadly. Yet Cato the Elder respected him; Sempronius Asellio learnt from him what pragmatic history was about; Varro, Nepos and Cicero—that is, the greatest authorities of the Caesarian age—recognized his worth. Livy praised and plundered him. Pliny the Elder quoted him twelve times on geographic matters, and presented him as a great traveller (*Nat.* V 9). Ammianus Marcellinus shows that Julian the Apostate was acquainted with Polybius (xxiv 2, 16) and St. Jerome repeated Porphyry's opinion that Polybius was one of the authors necessary for the understanding of the last part of the Book of Daniel (*In Dan.*, in *PL* xxv 494 A), and Orosius quoted him twice, once very prominently (*Hist.* iv 20, 6; v 3, 3).

For the reputation of Polybius in the Renaissance not all these testimonials were of equal value. Cicero's praise in *De republica* was wasted on an age *de libris quidem rei publicae iam desperans*, to repeat Petrarch's words (*Sen.* 16, 1). This, however, made the same Cicero's definition of Polybius as



*bonus auctor in primis* in *De officiis* (III 32, 113) all the more valuable. Again, the reference to Polybius in Livy XLV 44, 19, became known only in 1527, but since Petrarch had put together Livy's first, third and fourth decades in the present cod. Harleianus 2493—that is by A.D. 1329—humanists were aware that for Livy Polybius was *haudquaquam spernendus auctor* (xxx 45, 5); *non incertum auctorem cum omnium Romanarum rerum tum praecipue in Graecia gestarum* (xxxiii 10, 10). With the spread of Plutarch in the Quattrocento nothing could be more impressive than the knowledge that Brutus had been hard at work on an epitome of Polybius on the eve of the battle of Pharsalus: ἄχρι τῆς ἐσπέρας ἔγραφε συντάττων ἐπιτομὴν Πολυβίου (*Brut.* 4, 8). The rediscovery of Pausanias added new elements to Polybius' posthumous glory. But we must remember that, if the *editio princeps* of Pausanias by Marcus Masurus goes back to 1516, what counts are the two Latin translations by Romulus Amasaeus and Abramus Loescher which appeared respectively in 1547 and 1550. Scholars of the second part of the sixteenth century could not fail to be touched by the decree of the Megalopolitans which praised their fellow-citizen Polybius as one who "roamed over every land and sea, became an ally of the Romans, and stayed their wrath against the Greeks". Indeed (Pausanias went on to report) "whenever the Romans obeyed the advice of Polybius things went well with them, but whenever they would not listen to his instructions they made mistakes" (VIII 30, 8-9). From Pausanias scholars learnt furthermore that in the temple of the Despoina near Arakesion an inscription roundly declared that "Greece would not have fallen at all, if she had obeyed Polybius in everything, and when she met disaster, her only help came from him" (VIII 37, 2). Here one found a historian *magister vitae*.

I am not aware of any quotation of Polybius in the Latin writers of Antiquity after St. Jerome and Orosius. When

Petrarch wrote his letter to Livy he asked him to convey his greetings to "Polybius and Quintus Claudius and Valerius Antias and all those whose glory thine own greater light has dimmed" (*Fam.* xxiv 8): he had in mind Orosius, *Hist.* V 3, 3, where Polybius is found together with Claudius and Antias. To Petrarch all these gentlemen were mere names. What, so far, remains obscure is the extent of the knowledge and reputation of Polybius in his own Greek world between the fifth and the fifteenth centuries. This obscurity also conditions our appreciation of the re-appearance of Polybius in the West at the beginning of the fifteenth century<sup>1</sup>.

Leaving Zosimus aside, I am insufficiently informed about what Polybius meant to Byzantine historians. Imitations of individual passages have been identified in Procopius and Agathias<sup>2</sup>. It would be surprising if Procopius' notion of Tyche and his emphasis on the technical factors in warfare had not been affected by Polybius. He may have thought of the comparison between the Macedonian phalanx and the Roman legion in Polybius xviii 28 ff. when in the prooemium to the *Persian War* he compared the bowmen of his time with the archers of the past: but I do not find Polybius' influence self-evident. The stylistic models of Procopius

<sup>1</sup> For general information J. MICHAUD, *Biographie Universelle*, nouvelle éd. (Paris-Leipzig n.d. 33), 662-73; K. ZIEGLER in *RE* s.v. Polybios (XXI 2, 1952, 1572-1578). The bibliography (pp. 179-83) of J. M. MOORE, *The Manuscript Tradition of Polybius* (Cambridge 1965), is here generally presupposed. See also by J. M. MOORE, *GRBS* 12 (1971), 411-50. The introductions by J. SCHWEIGHÄUSER and Th. BÜTTNER-WOBST to their editions are of course indispensable. A summary of the information in P. PÉDECH, *Polybe, Histoires, Livre I* (Paris 1969), Introduction; but see the review by J. M. MOORE, *Gnomon* 44 (1972), 545. Of basic importance P. BURKE, A Survey of the Popularity of Ancient Historians 1450-1470, *H&T* 5 (1966), 135-52, whereas A. M. WOODWARD, Greek History at the Renaissance, *JHS* 63 (1943), 1-14, is of little help for Polybius.

<sup>2</sup> B. RUBIN, *RE* s.v. Prokopios (XXIII 1, 1957, col. 332, 351 and elsewhere); A. CAMERON, *Agathias* (Oxford 1970), 147.

and Agathias are Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Diodorus, Arrian, and even Appian, but not Polybius. Photius, strangely enough, took no notice of Polybius. In the tenth century Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus redistributed Polybius' history among his collections of excerpts—that is, he reduced the history to the function of *exempla*. Somebody else, not later than the tenth century, made excerpts of a less systematic nature from Books I-XVI and XVIII: which we now call the *Excerpta antiqua*. Book XVII may already by then have been lost. It is pleasant to remember that Casaubon did not think it impossible that the *Excerpta antiqua* went back to the epitome of Polybius by Brutus! The influence of Polybius has been noticed in the biographies of Theophanes continuatus, in Anna Comnena, in Byzantine treatises on fortifications and, no doubt, in many other places<sup>1</sup>. In the late eleventh century Xiphilinus preferred Polybius to Dio Cassius because he was less inclined to report portents (LI, p. 506 Boiss.). Xiphilinus obviously knew what sort of historian Polybius was. Polybius' status in the history of Byzantine thought—and especially in Byzantine historiography—still needs to be clarified by an expert.

To all appearances, Polybius was not one of the Greek authors most prominently exhibited by Byzantine scholars when they came to the West either as ambassadors or as refugees, or both. The first Byzantine scholar to produce an edition and translation of Polybius (a partial text of Book VI), Janus Lascaris in 1529, did so in response to the increasing interest by Italian scholars and politicians in this author. How the Mss. of Polybius reached Italy is only partially known. John M. Moore has done much in recent years to re-classify *The Manuscript Tradition of Polybius* (Cam-

<sup>1</sup> R. J. H. JENKINS, *DOP* 8 (1954), 11-30; A. TOYNBEE, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World* (London 1973), 306.

bridge 1965) but we need a Billanovich to tell the true story of Polybius' reception. The most important codex for Books I-V, A, *Vaticanus Gr.* 124—written in A.D. 947 by Ephraim the Monk—was almost certainly in the Vatican Library in 1455 under Pope Nicholas V<sup>1</sup>. Moore believes that B—*Londiniensis*, *Mus. Brit.*, *Add. Ms.* 11728—was directly copied from A. If so, there are some interesting inferences to be made for both B and A. B was copied by a monk, Stephanus, in the monastery of John the Baptist in Constantinople in 1416: the same Ms. was in the Badia of the Benedictines in Florence by 1437; and it came to the Badia from the library of Antonio Corbinelli<sup>2</sup>, who had died in 1425. It follows that A was still in Constantinople in 1416, and that B reached Florence between 1416 and 1425. Indeed B was transferred to Siena in 1435, when Antonius Athenaeus made a copy of it for Francesco Filelfo, the present *Mediceus Laurentianus Plut.* 69, 9, or B<sub>3</sub>. From B<sub>3</sub> descended B<sub>4</sub> and B<sub>5</sub>, both now in the Marciana, one as *Marcianus Gr.* 371, the other as *Marcianus Gr.* 369, both belonging to the library of Cardinal Bessarion: the subscription of B<sub>5</sub> makes it clear that it was copied at Bessarion's command, and this is also probable for B<sub>4</sub>. The name of Filelfo is particularly interesting. He had been trying hard to get hold of manuscripts of Polybius. In a letter of 1428 to Traversari, after his return from Constantinople, he said that he had (or was expecting) a Ms. of Polybius<sup>3</sup>. But Filelfo, not to speak of Bessarion,

<sup>1</sup> R. DEVRESSE, *Le fonds grec de la Bibliothèque Vaticane* (Città del Vaticano 1965), 39. In general R. SABBADINI, *Le scoperte dei codici latini e greci ne' secoli XIV e XV* (Firenze 1905; reprint 1967), 43-71.

<sup>2</sup> R. BLUM, *La Biblioteca della Badia Fiorentina e i codici di Antonio Corbinelli* (Città del Vaticano 1951), 44; L. MARTINEZ, *The Social World of the Florentine Humanists* (London 1963), 319-20.

<sup>3</sup> A. Traversari, *Epist.* XXIV 32 (II, 1024 ed. L. Mehus). J. M. MOORE, *The Manuscript Tradition of Polybius*, 13, is not quite correct in the interpretation of this letter. Cf. G. VOIGT, *Die Wiederbelebung des classischen Altertums I*<sup>3</sup> (Berlin 1893), 348-65.



had apparently begun to take an interest in Polybius only when his reputation had already been solidly re-established in Florence.

The location of Polybius' rediscovery is not in any doubt: Florence. The discoverer does not seem to be in doubt either: Leonardo Bruni Aretino. The date was about 1418-9—when Bruni wrote his history of the first Punic War and of the subsequent Illyrian and Gallic Wars, a free translation from Polybius I-II 35.

J. E. Sandys—a name one always utters with respect—thought he had found some evidence that about 1403 Pier Paolo Vergerio had chosen Polybius as an example of a Greek historian who knew Roman history better than the Romans (or at least than the Italians) themselves<sup>1</sup>. But Vergerio's speech *De ingenuis moribus* has no definite allusion to Polybius and may allude, for instance, to Plutarch: *Et est eo deventum ut Latinae quoque historiae et cognitionem et fidem a Graecis auctoribus exigamus*<sup>2</sup>. The name of Vergerio may be left out of our story. We still do not yet know where and how Bruni found a manuscript of Polybius with an account of the first Punic and of the Illyrian and Gallic Wars. I am not aware of any evidence suggesting that when his teacher Manuel Chrysoloras came to Florence in 1397 he brought with him a manuscript of Polybius<sup>3</sup>. We can, however, be sure that about 1418 there was nothing Leonardo Bruni needed except a manuscript to enable him to appreciate the importance of Polybius as a historian. The present *Londinensis* 11728 may already have been in Florence at that time.

<sup>1</sup> J. E. SANDYS, *A History of Classical Scholarship* II (Cambridge 1908), 49.

<sup>2</sup> *De ingenuis moribus et liberalibus studiis adulescentiae libellus*, ed. A. GNESOTTO, *Atti Accad. Padova* N.S. 34 (1917-18), 121. Cf. the prudent note by E. GARIN, *L'educazione umanistica in Italia* (Bari 1949), 78.

<sup>3</sup> G. CAMMELLI, *Manuele Crisolora. I dotti bizantini e le origini dell'umanesimo* I (Firenze 1941).

Bruni himself tells us in his *Commentaria rerum suo tempore gestarum* how at the turn of the century the war between Giangaleazzo Visconti and Florence had represented a revolution in the intellectual life of Italy—the rediscovery of Greek language and literature: *Litterae per huius belli intercapedines mirabile quantum per Italiam increvere, accedente tunc primum cognitione litterarum graecarum quae septingentis iam annis apud nostros homines desierant esse in usu. Rettulit autem graecam disciplinam ad nos Chrysoloras, Byzantius vir domi nobilis ac litterarum Graecarum peritissimus*<sup>1</sup>. Hans Baron's admirable work on Leonardo Bruni and his time can be said to be an extensive commentary on this theme formulated by Bruni himself<sup>2</sup>. The young man, who, about 1403, had modelled his *Laudatio Florentinae Urbis* on Aristides' *Panathenaicus*, was a mature statesman and historian fifteen years later<sup>3</sup>. He had come back to Florence in 1415 after long and disappointing service in the papal Curia. He was more than ever certain that Florence belonged to the line of direct descent from the ancient republics of Greece and Rome. He had started the *Historiae Florentini populi*. More or less together with the *Commentaria tria de Primo Bello Punico* he wrote in 1419 the preface to the new Statute of the *Parte Guelfa* in which he reasserted the idea of republican liberty. Even more significantly he composed in 1421 the pamphlet *De militia*. It is the merit of the edition and commentary by C. C. Bayley in 1961 to have revived interest in this little

<sup>1</sup> MURATORI, *RIS* XIX, 920 = MURATORI-CARDUCCI XIX 3, 431 = H. BARON, *Leonardo Bruni Aretino, Humanistisch-philosophische Schriften* (Leipzig 1928), 125 n. Here, p. 122, the Prooemium to *Commentaria primi belli punici* (for its date, p. 167). On p. 104, the preface to Plutarch. The text of the *Commentaria* was printed in Brescia, 1498.

<sup>2</sup> *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (revised edition, Princeton 1966 — 1st ed. 1955 to be compared). For further discussion see N. S. STRUEVER, *The Language of History in the Renaissance* (Princeton 1970), 101-43 and bibliography quoted.

<sup>3</sup> H. BARON, *From Petrarch to Leonardo Bruni* (Chicago 1968), 151-71, 232-63.

work. Criticisms of this edition have not always been fair<sup>1</sup>. Professor Bayley did understand that *militia*, *miles* meant to Bruni "cavalry, knight". He did not interpret the pamphlet as an attack against mercenaries on behalf of civic armies—as if Bruni were Machiavelli. Bruni of course intended to glorify the equestrian order and to trace it back to ancient—and therefore honourable—origins. In such a context the Polybius Bruni knew could be of little use, since Bruni was certainly not acquainted with Book VI. Yet it is not an accident that the man who discovered Polybius as a historian was also especially interested in military problems. In various forms and situations the combination of admiration for Polybius as a historian and the interest in military problems was to remain characteristic of the whole debate on Polybius from Machiavelli to Justus Lipsius and Casaubon, not to mention the later Montesquieu.

Contemporaries sensed that Bruni was producing something important in his *Commentaria de Primo Bello Punico*. While he was still writing it in or about 1419, Ambrogio Traversari wrote to Francesco Barbaro: *Leonardus Arretinus commentaria scribere de primo bello poenico ex Polybio coepit, opus, ut audio, egregium; nam ipse non vidi*<sup>2</sup>. We must bear in mind that Bruni did not intend his work as a simple translation of Books I-II 35 by Polybius. He intended to write history, more precisely that history of the first Punic War and of the Gallic War 225-222 B.C. which was missing in Livy. It must have given Bruni and his Florentine readers enormous pleasure to end with the occupation and humiliation of Milan by the Romans. Bruni paraphrased and freely supplemented his Polybius to make him look like Livy. The Sallustian

<sup>1</sup> P. O. KRISTELLER, *Canadian Historical Review* 44 (1963), 66-70; S. BERTELLI, *RSI* 76 (1964), 834-6; H. M. GOLDBRUNNER, *Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven* 46 (1966), 478-87.

<sup>2</sup> A. Traversari, *Epist.* VI 14 (II, 292 Mehus). Cf. B. REYNOLDS, *BibH&R* 16 (1954), 108-18.

component in Bruni's historical style which Antonio La Penna so acutely recognized in Bruni's *Historiae Florentini populi* and elsewhere does not seem to figure—at least to my untutored eye—in the history of the Punic War<sup>1</sup>. Bruni's success in Livianizing Polybius may be indicated by a story we owe to Gianni Gervasoni (he published it in 1925). According to this story in 1783 Lorenzo Mascheroni, "insigne matematico, leggiadro poeta e ottimo cittadino" (as Vincenzo Monti later defined him), thought he had discovered in an old Ms. Livy's account of the first Punic War. After having transcribed the greater part of the Ms. he revealed its contents to his fellow-citizen of Bergamo, the learned Canonico Conte Camillo Agliardi. Agliardi immediately recognized the nature of the text: Leonardo Bruni's *De Primo Bello Punico*, of course. Mascheroni turned to his Muse for consolation:

Mio venerato Monsignor Canonico,  
 Affè, m'avete fatto il bel servizio  
 Da farmi per un anno malinconico.  
 Che v'è venuto in cor di darmi indizio  
 Di quel volume, ch'io non voglio dire,  
 Che allegro io mi copiava a precipizio?<sup>2</sup>

Two points are relevant in Bruni's historical method. First of all he thought that there were only two ways of writing history: one was to observe and recount contemporary facts, the other to discover new sources and to present their accounts in one's own appropriate language. As he wrote

<sup>1</sup> A. LA PENNA, *Arcadia* I (1966), 255-76.

<sup>2</sup> The article, originally printed in *La Rivista di Bergamo* 1925, is reprinted in G. GERVASONI, *Studi e ricerche sui filologi e la filologia classica tra il 700 e l'800 in Italia* (Bergamo 1929), 16-25, and is mentioned by B. L. ULLMAN, *Studies in the Italian Renaissance* (Roma 1955), 73 n. Cf. in general D. J. WILCOX, *The Development of Florentine Humanist Historiography* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), 36-7.



in his preface to his translation of Plutarch's life of Marc Antony—perhaps before 1405—: *In historia vero, in qua nulla est inventio, non video equidem, quid intersit, an ut facta, an ut ab alio dicta, scribas. In utroque enim par labor est, aut etiam maior in secundo.* In perfect accord with these principles, he went on producing, as his own histories, what we would treat as translations or paraphrases of ancient texts: his *Commentaria rerum graecarum* of 1439 are a paraphrase of Xenophon's *Hellenica*, and the *De bello Italico adversus Gothicos libri IV* of 1441, his last big work, are almost undiluted Procopius. He never concealed his sources: Polybius is mentioned specifically in the introduction to his history of the Punic War. But he thought he had done the day's work if he put his sources into his own prose. At the same time (and this is my second point) he was well aware that ancient writers contradicted each other because they followed different sources. He thought he was imitating the ancients in so far as the ancients themselves blindly followed their sources; he knew that this situation created difficulties, but as far as I am aware he never formulated any general principle about the solution of such difficulties. He came very near to the root of the problem in a letter to Cardinal Colonna who had asked questions about a contradiction between Livy and Polybius concerning *de legione illa quae Regium occupavit*: the references must be Polybius 1 7 *versus* Livy xxviii 28,2 and xxxi 31,6. Bruni admits of course the existence of this contradiction between ancient authorities and appeals to the authority of Polybius as justification for the version he had preferred: *ego igitur in commentariis illis, quos tu legisti, Polybium Megalopolitanum secutus sum magnum profecto virum, et scriptorem egregium, ac summae apud Graecos auctoritatis*<sup>1</sup>. Having translated Polybius' Book 1, Bruni knew what Polybius thought about the bias of Fabius Pictor and Philinus. In fact he

<sup>1</sup> L. Bruni, *Epist.* IX 6 (II, 150-2 ed. L. Mehus).

deduced rather perversely from his author that Livy had followed Fabius Pictor, but Polybius had preferred Philinus as his source. If he, Bruni, had followed Polybius, and therefore by implication Philinus, the explanation was simple: Livy's account was lost, *cuius libri si extarent, nihil opus erat novo labore*<sup>1</sup>.

This mixture of uncritical repetition of ancient sources and of very critical awareness that the ancient authorities themselves were conditioned by their own sources is the real beginning of historical criticism. Thus Bruni had discovered a missing chapter of Republican Roman history and had suddenly presented Polybius as an authority on Republican Roman. This was very little compared to what he gave his contemporaries with his translation of Aristotle's *Politics*. From Aristotle he derived the interpretation of the Florentine constitution as a mixed constitution, which he was able to present in Greek to his Greek friends about 1438 in his wonderfully fresh pamphlet *Περὶ τῆς τῶν Φλωρεντίνων πολιτείας*<sup>2</sup>. But the link between Polybius and Aristotle was to become clear later with the rediscovery of Book VI. In 1437 Sicco Polenton had concluded in Padua the second edition of his *Scriptorum Illustrium Latinae Linguae libri XVIII*. There (but not in the first draft of 1426 which is preserved in *Cod. Ricc.* 121), Polybius is taken for granted as the authority for the first Punic War. He is also specifically mentioned as one of the Greek authors whom the Italians have lately made accessible: *Illud autem iam est horum beneficio, industria, opera factitatum quod Plutarchum, quod Polybium, quod Basilium, quod Ptolomaeum, quod*

<sup>1</sup> *Commentaria primi belli punici*, Brixiae 1498. P. O. Kristeller tells me that he has found in a Ms. of the Biblioteca Nacional of Madrid (Ms. 8822 cart. s. XV 93 fols.) what looks like a Spanish translation of a lost (?) Italian translation of the first book of Polybius by P. C. Decembrio (perhaps based on the Latin translation by L. Bruni).

<sup>2</sup> Ed. C. F. NEUMANN, Frankfurt 1822; L. W. HASPER, Leipzig 1861.

*alios plures ne singulos nominem, Graecos ac doctos scriptores, quos Latini homines ignorarent, traductos a Graeco latinas in litteras ac cognitos habeamus*<sup>1</sup>. Bruni had started his Greek studies with a translation of Basilus. Plutarch and Polybius were his authors. The allusion of Sicco Polenton to him is obvious: Ptolemy had been translated by one of Bruni's fellow students under Chrysoloras, Giacomo da Scarparia.

The new status of Polybius was recognized by Pope Nicholas V, about 1450, when Polybius was included among the Greek historians to be translated into Latin. Niccolò Perotti, who was chosen for the translation, was in the service of Bessarion, and there can be little doubt that his name was suggested by Bessarion and that he used one of the manuscripts owned by his protector. As *Marcianus Graecus* 369 was written later in 1470, *Marcianus* 371 is a strong candidate for identification with the codex used by Perotti<sup>2</sup>. But as one of his letters to the Pope's librarian Giovanni Tortelli shows, he found it a difficult Ms. to work on and asked to see *Polybium summi pontificis qui olim d. episcopi Coronensis fuit*. The allusion, as so much else concerning Perotti, was clarified by Cardinal Mercati, who recognized in it Ms. *Vat. Gr.* 1005 of the fourteenth century originally owned by Cristoforo Garatone, Bishop of Corone, who died in 1448<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Sicconis Polentoni Scriptorum Illustrorum Latinae Linguae libri XVIII*, ed. B. L. ULLMAN (Roma 1928), Book II, p. 58; Book V, p. 163. S. TIMPANARO kindly read for me the corresponding sections of the earlier draft (1426) in the *Cod. Riccardianus* 121 which once belonged to Pietro Crinito. They do not contain any allusion to Polybius, who seems therefore to have come to the notice of Polenton between 1426 and 1437.

<sup>2</sup> T. GASPARRINI LEPORACE and E. MIONI, *Cento Codici Bessarionei* (Venezia 1968), gives the literature (cf. p. 127 n. 338).

<sup>3</sup> G. MERCATI, *Per la cronologia della vita e degli scritti di Niccolò Perotti* (Roma 1925), 144 (correcting R. CESSI, *Giorn. St. Lett. It.* 60 (1912), 77). *Id.*, *Scritti d'Isidoro il Cardinal Ruteno e codici a lui appartenuti* (Roma 1926), 110. On *Vatic. Gr.* 1005 cf. also A. DIAZ TEJERA, *Emerita* 36 (1968), 121-47, and the art. by J. M. Moore quoted in n. 1, p. 349.

Perotti finished the translation of Book v, the last available to him, in the summer of 1454. Besides "interim" rewards, he received five hundred golden "ducati", for which he expressed gratitude in an epigram. In the next century the translation was found to be incompetent and it was finally denounced by Casaubon in words which ruined Perotti's reputation. But for the rest of the fifteenth century—and indeed even in the sixteenth century—Perotti's translation was the vehicle by means of which Polybius circulated in Europe. Unlike Bruni, Perotti did not believe that Polybius was useful only where Livy was missing. A passage of one of his letters to Tortelli contradicts Bruni's opinion: *Scribit etiam in eodem libro [III] secundum bellum punicum usque ad pugnam Cannensem, quod et si scribatur a Tito Livio nostro, tamen, mihi crede, non penitebit etiam hunc legisse, nam et gravius fortasse scribit, et lectione eius intelliguntur apertissime multa, quae apud Livium aut nullo modo aut vix intelligebantur*<sup>1</sup>.

What the almost simultaneous translation of the greatest Greek historians under Pope Nicholas V meant to European historiography is a point beyond our terms of reference today. We are still left with the curiosity to know what was happening to the rest of the preserved text of Polybius while the first five books were circulating in Latin. Hans Baron has repeatedly stated that when Leonardo Bruni in one of his letters (8, 4) distinguishes between panegyric and history—*aliud est enim historia, aliud laudatio*—he follows Polybius x 21, 8 who opposes *encomium* to history. This would imply knowledge of the *Excerpta antiqua* and make it necessary to ask why Bruni seems to be unaware of Book vi with its discussion of the Roman constitution. But the distinction between *encomium* and history is in Cicero. It may have been reinforced by the teaching of Chrysoloras, with or without any specific reference to Polybius. I should like,

<sup>1</sup> G. MERCATI, *Per la cronologia della vita e degli scritti di Niccolò Perotti*, 23.



however, to leave the question open, because we know at present too little about the circulation of the materials contained in the *Excerpta antiqua* <sup>1</sup>.

What is now the main Ms. for the *Excerpta*, F, *Vat. Urbinas Gr.* 102 of the tenth or eleventh century, was in the library of Urbino at least from 1482 onwards. Copies circulated in Italy during the early sixteenth century. More precisely, F<sub>2</sub>, *Vaticanus Gr.* 1647, which was derived from F, belonged to Andrea Navagero at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The first clear sign of acquaintance with the excerpts of Book VI was discovered not long ago by Carlo Dionisotti in one of those obvious printed texts to which few turn. Bernardo Rucellai who died in 1514 refers to Polybius' sixth Book in his *Liber de urbe Roma* first printed in Florence in the XVIII century <sup>2</sup>. We know in fact that the *Liber de urbe Roma* was written before 1505 because it is mentioned in the *De honesta disciplina* by Pietro Crinito who died in 1505 <sup>3</sup>. Rucellai wrote: *Me certe haud poenitet Polybii Megalopolitani sententiae esse, quippe qui romanam non modo praecellere ceteras omnes respublicas adserit, sed nihil eo rerum ordine excogitari posse perfectius... Qui si Polybii sextum volumen recte interpretati sint, profecto longe aliter ac senserant de romana gravitate iudicabunt.*

<sup>1</sup> H. BARON, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*, 508 n. 14; *id.*, *From Petrarch to L. Bruni*, 153 n. 5. L. Bruni, *Epist.* VIII 4 (II, 112 Mehus) may simply have Cic. *Att.* I 19, 10 in mind: *quamquam non ἐγκωμιαστικά sunt haec sed ιστορικά quae scribimus*, as suggested by B. L. ULLMAN, *Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 331 n. 41. On the allusion to Polybius in G. Manetti's *Oratio funebris* for L. Bruni see the text in H. W. WITTSCHIER, *Giannozzo Manetti. Das Corpus der Orationes* (Köln-Graz 1968), 76.

<sup>2</sup> C. DIONISOTTI, *RSI* 83 (1971), 254, with reference to B. Rucellai, *Liber de urbe Roma* (Firenze 1770), 164-5. Cf. F. GILBERT, *JWI* 12 (1949), 109 n. 1; 113 n. 4.

<sup>3</sup> IV 9, ed. C. Angeleri (Roma 1955), 131. Demetrius Chalcondylas borrowed Polybius from the library of Lorenzo de' Medici between 1489 and 1491: M. DEL PIAZZO, *Protocolli del Carteggio di Lorenzo il Magnifico* (Firenze 1956), 448.

Thus in the first years of the sixteenth century Polybius' Book VI was discussed in Florence though no formal Latin translation of it was as yet in circulation. Machiavelli did not have to go far to learn about the cycle of the constitutions. There is no need to suppose that he had to wait for Janus Lascaris or anybody else to come to Florence to translate for him the Greek he was unable to read. The substance of Book VI had been known in Florence for several years when, to all appearances in 1513, he started writing his *Discorsi*<sup>1</sup>. Seldom has so much ingenuity been misused as in J. H. Hexter's paper *Seysssel, Machiavelli and Polybius VI: the mystery of the missing translation* (*Studies in the Renaissance* 3 (1956), 75-96). What remains memorable is that Machiavelli was the first to appreciate Polybius as a political thinker. Machiavelli also availed himself of Polybius in the *Arte della Guerra* about 1520 and was certainly confirmed by him in his admiration for the Roman military model, but his actual use of Polybius' texts (never explicitly quoted) is very restricted<sup>2</sup>.

As we have seen, it was in Florence that Polybius was rediscovered, first by Leonardo Bruni as a historian, then by Machiavelli and his contemporaries as a political thinker. It was probably also in Florence that Polybius was first studied philologically. Politian not only made extracts from Polybius (which are preserved in the famous Ms. of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms.gr.3069, and perhaps in the Turin Ms. I, III, 13<sup>1-2</sup>); he also used Polybius critically in his *Miscellaneorum Centuria Secunda* recently published by Vittore Branca and Manlio Pastore Stocchi. At no. 38 of the new *Centuria* Politian discusses the meaning of *Cator-*

<sup>1</sup> F. CHABOD, *Scritti su Machiavelli* (Torino 1964), 32, with bibl.; G. SASSO, *Giorn. St. Lett. Ital.* 134 (1957), 482-534; 135 (1958), 215-59; and *Studi su Machiavelli* (Napoli 1967), 161-280; G. PROCACCI, *Niccolò Machiavelli* (Torino 1969).

<sup>2</sup> L. A. BURD, *RAL* 5, 4 (1896), 187-261.

*thoma* and leaves an empty space to be filled by quotations of the relevant Greek texts. In the margin he adds: *ex Thucydide aliquid et Polybio*. He intended to turn to Thucydides and Polybius for examples. Κατόρθωμα is not a word used by Thucydides, but is used by Polybius. The excellent editors have failed to notice, if I am not mistaken, that Polybius did not appear in Politian's *Centuria Prima*. His appearance in the second *Centuria* is therefore an event. But we must remember that Polybius was by then read in some universities. Rudolphus Agricola may have become acquainted with Polybius in Ferrara about 1475<sup>1</sup>.

## II

After Machiavelli translations of the military chapters of Book VI multiply. There are at least four between 1525 and 1550. One was made by Machiavelli's admirer and disciple, Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, an exile from Florence. From 1537 to 1548, he served the Duke of Ferrara, Ercole II, who was not interested in republics, but was very ready to improve his army. For him Cavalcanti translated from Polybius a *Discorso circa la milizia romana* in 1539. In the following year Cavalcanti translated from Polybius XVIII 28-33, *La comparazione tra l'armadura e l'ordinanza de' Romani e de' Macedoni*. Finally, he wrote a dissertation on the Roman Camp, *Calcolo sulla castrametazione*, which was printed, to-

<sup>1</sup> On Politian, I. MAÏER, *Les Manuscrits d'Ange Politien* (Genève 1965), 228, 311. For Agricola's study of Polybius in Ferrara, the hypothetical statement by W. H. WOODWARD, *Studies in Education* (1906, reprint 1965), 89, becomes a fact in E. GARIN, *Ritratti di Umanisti* (Firenze 1967), 73. But Agricola knew Polybius. Cfr. Ph. Melanchthon, *Opera* XI (Halis Saxonum 1843), 445: *Contexuit igitur Rudolphus eruditissimam epitomem ex Bibliis et Herodoto... ex Thucydide et Xenophonte, de Philippo et Alexandro et successoribus ex Diodoro et Polybio*. On the authorship of this passage on Agricola, F. von BEZOLD, *R. Agricola* (München 1884), 18.

gether with the *Comparazione*, in 1552 in a collection of pamphlets *Del modo dell'accampare*. Later, perhaps when he was old and poor in Padua about 1560, Cavalcanti went back to Polybius in the context of his *Trattati sopra gli ottimi reggimenti delle repubbliche antiche e moderne*. Here he used Polybius to support Aristotle on the mixed constitution, though he remarked drily that Polybius did not know Aristotle's *Politics* "perchè nei tempi di Polibio, i libri di Aristotele non erano ancora stati trovati, nè i Romani ne potevano aver notizia". Cavalcanti had obtained a complete transcription of the *Excerpta antiqua* of the *Cod. Urbinas* 102. His letters, which were made accessible by Mrs. Christina Roaf in 1967, contain many details, new to me, about plans to publish the *Excerpta antiqua* in Italy. In a letter of 1540 to Pier Vettori he speaks of a projected publication by Paolo Manuzio. He also explains by implication why he did not go on with the complete translation of the *Excerpta* which he had promised. "Giorgio greco", that is, Giorgio Balsamone who used to check Cavalcanti's translations of Polybius word by word, died about that time<sup>1</sup>. Certainly no one was in any hurry to print the Greek text of Polybius. Aldus Manutius significantly did not handle him. When in 1529 Janus Lascaris at last edited in Venice a fragment of Book VI, the Latin preceded the Greek and the publisher Joannes Antonius de Sabio felt obliged to explain: *Graeco libro ut omnia conferri possint adiuncto*.

<sup>1</sup> B. Cavalcanti, *Trattati sopra gli ottimi reggimenti delle repubbliche antiche e moderne* (ed. Classici Italiani, Milano 1805), 55-6; *id.*, *Lettere edite e inedite*, ed. Christina Roaf (Bologna 1967), especially 91-112 (and Index *s.v.* Polibio). Cf. R. VON ALBERTINI, *Das florentinische Staatsbewusstsein im Übergang von der Republik zum Prinzipat* (Bern 1955), 172-8. A useful survey for what follows in B. REYNOLDS, *Shifting Currents in Historical Criticism*, *JHI* 14 (1953), 471-92. The imposing collection of material in R. LANDFESTER, *Historia Magistra Vitae* (Genève 1972), to which we refer for further bibl., is too systematic for our purpose. Cf. W. L. GUNDERSHEIMER, *Studi Francesi* 42 (1970), 462-7.



Meanwhile, in accordance with the general trend, Polybius was being edited in Greek outside Italy. The text of Books 1-v was first published at Haguenau in 1530 by Vincentius Opsopaeus (Heidnecker) who used a Ms. sent to him by Jacobus Ottonis Aetzelius of Nuremberg. The Ms. was the present *Monacensis Gr.* 157 (C), a fourteenth-century Ms. brought from Constantinople after 1453 which for a while was in the library of Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary. Later, in 1577, we find this Ms. in the hands of Joachim Camerarius who gave it as a present to Albrecht V of Bavaria—hence its present location in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek. Opsopaeus' introduction is important for its eulogy of Aldo Manuzio, its attack on the Thomist theologians and its high appreciation of Polybius himself (*historiae tam graecae quam latinae facile principatum obtinens, si omnia eius scripta ad memoriam nostram salva pervenissent*). In 1549 Johannes Hervagius published in Basle the *editio princeps* of the *Excerpta antiqua*. The text of the *Excerpta antiqua* came from a Ms. in the possession of Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza which was later burned in the fire of the Escorial in 1671. The translation into Latin was by Wolfgang Musculus.

Translations into modern languages were meanwhile in demand: L. Maigret published a French translation of Books 1-v in 1545 (?) and of Book VI in 1546 (?). The Italian translation by L. Domenichi, notoriously incompetent, belongs to the same year, 1546. The English came a bad third in 1568 with a meagre translation of Book 1 by Christopher Watson of St. John's College, Cambridge. The arrival of Polybius in England was, however, celebrated in a poem by R. W. which ends thus:

Then Vertue learne  
That thou mayst earne  
Such glorie for to have

As Momus sect  
 can not reject  
 When thou arte closde in grave.

In 1574 Guil. Xylander published his German translation which Casaubon considered good. In 1582 Fulvio Orsini published in Antwerp the Polybius contained in the *Excerpta de legationibus* on a Ms. sent to him by the great Antonius Augustinus, Bishop of Tarragona, the present U, now split between *Vat. Gr.* 1418 and *Neapolitanus Gr.* III, B, 15, which is a copy by Andreas Darmarius of a lost Ms. of the Escorial<sup>1</sup>. Another edition of the *Eclogae legationum* by D. Hoeschel was published in Augsburg in 1603. They were the texts which paved the way for Casaubon's Paris edition of 1609. Casaubon, however, benefited from the acquaintance with other Mss. and especially from the readings communicated to him by Andreas Schottus from a Ms. in his possession of the *Excerpta de legationibus*, the present *Bruxellensis* 11301/16.

The removal of the centre of the classical scene to France, Germany and the Low Countries only served to increase the interest in Polybius as a historian and as a theoretician of political and military organization. The humanistic national history which the Italians had diffused throughout Europe (Polydorus Virgilius, Paulus Aemilius, etc.) was beginning to lose favour. History was becoming the repository of prudence and wisdom in an age of religious conflicts and political absolutism. *Historia si adsit ex pueris facit senes: sin absit, ex senibus pueros.* These words by Juan Luis Vives, *De tradendis disciplinis* (*Opera* I, 1555, 505) are echoed in endless variations by all sixteenth-century writers on history and the art of history writing. Prudence, direct experience, travels, geography, technical expertise and a general respect

<sup>1</sup> P. de NOLHAC, *La Bibliothèque de Fulvio Orsini* (Paris 1887), 46-8; but notice the sceptical remarks by T. S. BROWN, *AJPb* 89 (1968), 112.

for truth were the virtues required of the historian; and Polybius seemed to have all of them. He lacked style, but translation into Latin would improve him. About 1550 Benedetto Varchi declared in the "Proemio" to the *Storia Fiorentina*: "Polibio, il quale de' Greci avemo preso a dover imitare, siccome Cornelio Tacito fra' Latini." In 1552 Roger Ascham rather improbably associated Polybius with Commynes in his praise: they "have done the duties of wise and worthy writers". In 1566 Bodin thought that Paolo Giovio could not compete with Polybius in direct experience of military and political affairs: *ille (Polybius) in sua republica princeps, hic (Giovio) privatus*<sup>1</sup>.

Francescus Balduinus saw in Polybius the ideal combination of the historian and of the lawyer: *immo vero Polybius, cum fieret historicus, factus etiam iurisconsultus est*. Not by chance had Marcus Brutus—*et qualis quantusque vir*—chosen to read him before the battle of Pharsalus<sup>2</sup>. Francesco Patrizi and many others repeated with Polybius that the eye is better than the ear as a historical organ<sup>3</sup>. Uberto Folietta in his *De similitudine normae Polybianae* could play with the sophistic question: if Polybius is right in asserting that the true historian tells only the truth, why is it possible to have good stories (such as Homer's account of the Trojan war) which are not entirely true? What is the difference, if any, between *historicus verax* and *historicus verus*?<sup>4</sup> Patrizi was

<sup>1</sup> *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* in *Artis Historicae Penus* I (Basileae 1579), 53. Cf. G. COTRONEO, *GCFI* 44 (1965), 504-26. For R. Ascham, *A Report and Discourse... of the affaires and state of Germany*, see *English Works*, ed. W. A. WRIGHT (Cambridge 1904; reprint 1970), 126.

<sup>2</sup> *De institutione historiae universae et eius cum iurisprudencia coniunctione* (1561) in *Artis Historicae Penus* I, 690-1.

<sup>3</sup> *Della Historia Diece Dialoghi* (Venezia 1560), Book II, p. 60, in E. KESSLER, *Theoretiker humanistischer Geschichtsschreibung* (München 1971).

<sup>4</sup> Uberti Folietae *De similitudine normae Polybianae* (1574), 106-15, in E. KESSLER, *op. cit.* On its importance F. VON BEZOLD, *Aus Mittelalter und Renaissance* (München und Berlin 1918), 374.

indeed inclined to believe that Polybius had crossed the border between history and philosophy, but had to allow one of the speakers in his *Della Historia Diece Dialoghi* (1560) to interrupt him: "E io vorrei... che tutti gli historici fossero così misti di filosofo et d'historico, come si è Polibio".

One of the reasons why Polybius became so authoritative was that he offered the best alternative to the obsession with Tacitus which was typical of the intellectual climate about 1585, especially in Italy and Spain. In more than one sense, Tacitus had become irresistible. He offered exactly that mixture of Machiavellianism, moralism, epigrammatic acuteness and pathos which the age liked. But the cooler minds turned to Polybius with relief, as he obviously knew more about war and politics and spoke about a better historical period. Justus Lipsius, the greatest student of Tacitus—but never a vulgar "Tacitista"—was the most exacting interpreter of Polybius as a military historian.

Interest in Polybius as a military historian is noticeable everywhere in the sixteenth century. For instance, Guillaume du Bellay, lieutenant de Roy à Turin, prepared a volume of *Instructions sur le faict de la guerre extraictes des livres de Polybe, Frontin, Vegèce, Cornaxan, Machiavel et plusieurs autres bons autheurs* which appeared posthumously in Paris in 1549, if they were his. His concern was the creation of a national militia to replace mercenaries. But in 1594 Lipsius recognized only one real predecessor to his *De militia Romana libri quinque. Commentarius ad Polybium*, namely *La militia Romana di Polibio di Tito Livio e di Dionigi Alicarnaseo* by Francesco Patrizi, 1583. The acknowledgement is significant. Patrizi, as we have seen, was not a blind admirer of Polybius. Even in his *La militia Romana* he shares the reservations expressed by Dionysius of Halicarnassus about Polybius. Yet Patrizi—an ignorant man in comparison with the massive erudition of Lipsius—may truly be described as Lipsius' predecessor because he believed that Polybius could



provide a decisive contribution to the improvement of military organization, both in technique and in morale. In his dedication to Alfonso II d'Este Patrizi states that Roman military institutions were the only ones which could cope with the Turks; they would not be essentially affected by the "nuova inventione della artiglieria". The mention of the artillery was especially necessary in addressing a duke of Ferrara, since the Estensi had pioneered the use of the new weapon.

Lipsius was not concerned with the rise of national militias. He observes that they are unsuitable for monarchic states and that even a republic like Venice does not use its own citizens as soldiers. But the Turks show that a careful system of recruitment is required: *quid Turca in Ianizaris suis faciat non est ignotum* (ed. 1630, p. 356). The Romans have something to teach about recruitment, too, but it is in battle order and military discipline that they are the best masters. Roman superiority in battle order is clear: *abite Turcae cum Ianizaris vestris, qui imaginem aliquam usurpatis militiae priscae sed falsam* (p. 361). Even the Scythians were better disciplined than modern armies. In the Roman camp *iustitia, castitas, innocentia habitabat, et nusquam violenti aut feroces nisi in hostem erant* (p. 363).

It is not necessary to illustrate here the enormous success of the military commentary on Polybius prepared by Lipsius<sup>1</sup>. Though he published it as a professor in the Catholic University of Louvain, after having run away from the Protestant University of Leiden, his work was used as a

<sup>1</sup> W. HAHLOWEG, *Die Heeresreform der Oranier und die Antike* (Berlin 1941) and the excellent series of papers by G. OESTREICH, now collected in *Geist und Gestalt des frühmodernen Staates* (Berlin 1969). W. HAHLOWEG has now published, in *Die Heeresreform der Oranier* (Wiesbaden 1973), 'Das Kriegsbuch des Grafen Johann von Nassau-Siegen' (1561-1623), which is of exceptional importance for the reputation of Polybius. I owe its knowledge to the generosity of Professor Oestreich.

military handbook by the Protestants even more than by the Catholics. He was the spiritual and technical guide behind the military reforms of Maurice of Orange, who had been his pupil in Leiden. Wilhelm Ludwig of Nassau was equally an admirer of Lipsius. One of the problems these military reformers had to face was the creation of an educated class of officers who would be able to lead and control their troops. Lipsius provided not only technical principles derived from Polybius, but also moral principles derived from stoic philosophy. The notion that the Romans of the Republic, having been victorious for so long, held the secrets of military success, was so deep-rooted and widespread that Claudius Salmasius' *De re militari Romanorum*, written originally for Prince Frederick Henry of Orange, was left unpublished on purpose until 1657<sup>1</sup>. Wilhelm Ludwig of Nassau made a thorough study of Polybius' account of the battle of Cannae. He recognized that Perotti's translation of that section of Polybius was unreliable and had another translation made by Volrat von Plessen<sup>2</sup>.

Approved as a pragmatic historian of the highest competence by Bodin, presented to the ruling classes as an authority on war by Lipsius, Polybius was read and studied about 1600 as perhaps never before or after. His difficult and unclassical language was no longer an obstacle to Western readers who had attained new levels of knowledge of Greek and were particularly interested (as were Salmasius and Grotius) in Late Greek. Casaubon never published the monumental commentary he had planned, but his edition and translation of 1609 offered the best guide to interpretation and was a pleasure to the eye. In the introduction

<sup>1</sup> This is stated by G. OESTREICH, *Geist und Gestalt*, 68 — without quoting the evidence. For the general background, M. ROBERTS, *The Military Revolution 1560-1660* (Belfast 1957, Inaug. Lecture).

<sup>2</sup> W. HAHLEWEG, *Die Heeresreform der Oranier* (1973), 340.

he summarized all the contemporary motives for admiring Polybius. He extolled his mastery of the military and diplomatic arts and his ability to understand the causes of events; he maintained that he was a religious man and even praised his style; he compared him advantageously with Thucydides, Xenophon, Sallust, Livy, etc., and finished by preferring him to Tacitus: *quid enim principi, praesertim iuveni, lectione illorum Annalium esse queat perniciosius?*

Casaubon may well have contributed to the popularity of Polybius in England when he moved to London in 1610. But William Camden needed little encouragement from Casaubon to take Polybius as his mentor for the *Annales rerum Anglicarum et Hibernicarum regnante Elizabetha* (1615)<sup>1</sup>.

The abundant erudite work of the seventeenth century on and around Polybius (such as the edition of the *Excerpta Peiresciana* by H. Valesius, 1634, and the commentary by Jacobus Gronovius, 1670) was supported by this warm feeling for the master of historical pragmatism. In 1615 H. Grotius included Plutarch and Polybius in his plan of studies, but left Thucydides out of it<sup>2</sup>. Gerardus Ioannes Vossius expressed common opinion in making Polybius the central figure of his *Ars historica* (1623) and in praising him in *De historicis graecis* (2nd ed., 1651): *civilem prudentiam si spectes et scientiam militarem nulli fuerit secundus* (p. 124).

<sup>1</sup> H. TREVOR-ROPER, *Queen Elizabeth's First Historian. W. Camden* (London 1971, Neale Lecture), 21. On Milton, J. A. BRYANT, *Phil. Quart.* 29 (1950), 21-7. Polybius' Latin translation had reached England in the fifteenth century: R. WEISS, *Humanism in England*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1957), 152.

<sup>2</sup> H. Grotii et aliorum *De omni genere studiorum recte instituendo dissertationes* (Lugduni Batavorum 1637), 11. True enough, Polybius and Plutarch are placed among "politici". Grotius avoids giving detailed advice on historians, though he encourages the reader to start with modern historians *ac paulatim deinde in remotiora eniti*. Grotius was convinced that Polybius was the stylistic model of St. Luke: *utitur ita saepe Polybius quem sequi amat Lucas* (on Acts 17, 18, *Opera omnia theologica* II (Amstelaedami 1679), 630 b 60). Cf. also his note on Acts 11, 26 (II, 609 b 5-6): *Polybius non semel usurpat, scriptor Lucae (sic) lectus*.

Casaubon's influence is easily recognized in later compilations. For instance, John Dryden composed a "character" of Polybius which appeared as a preface to the translation of Polybius by Sir H. S[hears] in 1693. Dryden, like Casaubon, is still concerned with the question whether Polybius or Tacitus is the better historian. He has, however, some curious notions of his own, not necessarily inspired by better scholarship. He believes that Constantine the Great collected the "negotiations" of Polybius as an ambassador. As he assumes Constantine the Great to have been English, he can conclude: "I congratulate my country, that a prince of our extraction (as was Constantine) has the honour of obliging the Christian World by these remainders of our great historian."

But if one had to follow seriously the course of Polybius' reputation during the seventeenth century, one would probably have to account for a change of emphasis in his fame. This change ultimately emerged very clearly in England in the early eighteenth century. It was now Polybius' picture of the mixed government which attracted attention. The balance of power in England was compared with the balance of power in Rome. As England was also a state where religion was controlled by the civil power, any reference in Polybius—or indeed in any other writer—to the place of religion in Rome was treated with interest. Even the debate on early parliaments involved Polybius. This makes a very different story, which I hope to tell elsewhere.

I shall conclude by summarizing the story I have been able to put together for today. Polybius was rediscovered in Florence as a historian of the first Punic War by Leonardo Bruni about 1420. Though he had been translated into Latin by the middle of the fifteenth century, his reputation as a historian and as a political thinker does not seem to have been widely diffused. It was in republican Florence, too, that the importance of his Book VI was recognized for



the first time by Machiavelli and others at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Even the first philological work on him seems to have been done in Florence, by Politian. The idea of printing the Greek text does not appear to have interested the Italians until it was too late. The publication of Polybius in Germany coincided with the opening of a new stage in Greek studies—and with the new didactic and pragmatic mood of European historiography. Polybius' reputation soared rapidly in the second part of the sixteenth century. His fame was based on his expertise as a military and diplomatic historian. The Dutch republicans took his lessons to heart, though paradoxically the lesson was spelled out by Justus Lipsius after he had preferred Catholicism and monarchy to Protestantism and republic. Finally, Polybius and his Protestant editor, Casaubon, took refuge in England, and the Dutch had a better reason for remaining faithful to both.

Having enjoyed the posthumous company of Casaubon so many times—among his books and manuscripts in Bodley's Library and in the British Museum—I salute his memory from Geneva, where he was a citizen and a professor.

*(Une brève discussion a suivi l'exposé de M. Momigliano. Ceux qui y ont participé ont estimé qu'il ne se justifiait pas de la publier.)*