

Hellenic Romans and Barbaric Macedonians: Polybius on Hellenism and Changing Hegemonic Powers

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Abstract: This article explores the relationship between the Greeks, Macedonians and Romans through the prism of Polybius of Megalopolis and his Histories in the second century BC. It throws light on how a Greek might control and construct the image of larger powers to explain political change and assert or deny them political and cultural legitimacy, while at the same time proclaiming the continued importance of Hellenic culture. It investigates Polybius' construction and use of Hellenism in his Histories and demonstrates how he deliberately interchanged the trajectories of Macedon and Rome to offer an ideological explanation for Rome's rise and Macedon's fall, to assert that the preservation of the Greeks lay with Rome not Macedon, to protect the standing of the Achaean League, and to emphasise the importance of Hellenic virtues for success on the domestic and international scenes.

Ideas about what it was to be Greek, non-Greek, and barbarian were most closely fought over, negotiated and defined during periods of high pressure and large-scale political-social transformation, for instance, during the Persian Wars in the fifth century BC and the rise of Macedon in the fourth.¹ The second century also saw the Greeks confronted with a similar period of upheaval and transformation following the rise of Rome in the Greek East and the defeat of the Hellenistic kingdoms. The political dynamics of the Mediterranean were altered irrevocably. Where once the Greek peoples were subject to Macedonian hegemony (whose Greekness was contested by some, although not themselves), now they were subject to a distinctly non-Greek one. A shift in how the Greeks conceived of the larger powers therefore needed to occur if they were to understand why Rome was successful over Greco-Macedonian forces, to accept these changes, and to salvage any sense of pride in their own 'Greek' culture while under non-Greek rule.

Polybius of Megalopolis, our only substantial historical source for the third and second centuries BC, illustrates one way in which such a reassessment and restructuring of larger powers could occur: beyond the more straightforward political and military reasons given in his *Histories*, this article argues that Polybius also rationalises the transition of hegemonic power in Greece from Macedon to Rome in ideological terms, by shaping their depictions through the cultural politics of Hellenism and barbarism. While this cultural dimension is only voiced implicitly (Polybius is far more interested in politics than culture), designations of Greekness and barbarity are frequent in the *Histories*. Moreover his report of a series of speeches stating and debating the Greekness and barbarity of the Aitolians, Macedonians and Romans leading up to

¹ For Hellenism and barbarism, see Hall (1989), Coleman & Waltz (1997), Harrison (2002) and Mitchell (2007).

and during the First and Second Macedonian War (5.104; 9.28-39; 11.4-9; 18.4.8-5.8), indicates that culture was still an underlying issue in the Greek world in the second century BC and part of the way in which the Greeks framed the larger powers.² Polybius does not offer a clear answer to these debates about culture, and may even be questioning the usefulness of ‘Greekness’ and ‘barbarity’ as concepts in the new world and urging the reader to do the same. Yet, as a Greek speaking to Greeks (and also Romans; cf. Plb. 6.11.3-8) just after Rome’s conquest his portrayal of the Romans and the Macedonian king also cannot be completely separated from this cultural dimension, and this article shows that he in fact uses it implicitly to create an explanation for the changing positions of Macedon and Rome. He constructs a narrative which encourages the readers to be involved in considering the cultural implications of the events of the third and second century BC and to reassess the Greekness and barbarity of the Macedonian king and Romans. This article therefore feeds into broader discussions about Hellenism and barbarism in the mid-Hellenistic period, the relationship between ancient Greece, Macedon and Rome, cultural politics and the language that Greeks used in describing hegemonic powers, and Hellenism, while also contributing to literary analyses of Polybius’ *Histories* and the way that he structured his narrative to put forward, and urge the reader to follow, his own interpretation of events.³

Curiously, the ideological shifting of these two hegemonic states in Polybius has not yet received scholarly attention. The aim here, therefore, is to explore this shift, how it is achieved and the implications it has not only for Polybius’ narrative and his construction of the world, but also for the way that subordinated peoples might construct and control the image of larger, dominant ones to define their position in the world, assert the importance of their culture, and speak to power. It will investigate how political change might be explained through ideological means alongside military, moral and practical ones. In order to do this, we will first examine Polybius’ conception of Hellenism and the Hellenic-barbaric scale and then consider where he placed Rome and Macedonia in an ideological sense, and how their positions changed in the course of his narrative. While there has been considerable study of Polybius’ use of cultural politics in describing and interpreting Rome, this is not the case with his account of Macedon and its penultimate king, Philip V.⁴ This leaves a significant player in his *Histories*, and one crucial to the history and development of the Greek world and eastern Mediterranean, unexplored.

Moreover, this article wishes to push Craige Champion’s argument that there were strong and consistent ‘lexical convergences’ in Polybius’ descriptions of political degeneration and

² For these speeches, see Deininger (1973); Champion (1997) and (2000) esp. 429-41 and (2004) 193-203.

³ For the literary analysis of Polybius’ work see, for example, Davidson (1991), Miltsios (2009) and (2013), and section two of Miltsios & Tamiolaki (2018).

⁴ For Polybius’ use of cultural politics, see Champion (2000), (2004) and (2018); Erskine (2013); and Moreno Leoni (2014). For Philip V of Macedon, Walbank (1940/60) still remains the only comprehensive historical monograph, by D’Agostini (2019) now offers a valuable reassessment of his early years and Antigonid kingship in the middle Hellenistic period, and Kleu (2015) for Philip’s sea policy. Hammond (1989) and King (2018) are good for the wider Macedonian context.

barbarism further.⁵ In his discussion, Champion focused primarily on Polybius' description of the deviant form of ochlocracy, and identified seven traits which were used to describe both the mob and barbarism: injustice, ἀδικία, graspingness and false pretension, ἀλαζονεία, greed, πλεονεξία, irrationality or lack of reasoning, ἀλογία, lawlessness, παρανομία, and becoming beastlike/displaying animal savagery ἀποθηρέομαι/θηριώδης. This article agrees with this connection, but argues that the same semantic connection with barbarism can also be seen in the two other deviated forms of government, oligarchy and tyranny. And this is especially the case with the latter. Polybius' descriptions and discussions of tyranny and tyrants (which are more frequent than oligarchy and oligarchs in the *Histories*), concentrate heavily on the same seven traits seen in ochlocracy and barbarism and are demonstrated never more so than in his description of one of the greatest tyrants in the *Histories*: Philip V of Macedon.

Finally, it has often been forgotten or overlooked that Polybius' discussion of the cycle of *politeia* in Book 6 not only intersects with and explains Rome's narrative of political and cultural development, but also intersects and explains the trajectory of other polities too. This is certainly the case with Macedon: the constitutional change from kingship into tyranny outlined in book 6 intersects Philip V's transition from a king to a tyrant. As we will see, the discussion which helps define the political and cultural position of the Romans in Polybius' *Histories*, therefore, also helps to define that of Macedon.

Such a study will not only reveal a crucial and as yet unexplored literary construction in Polybius' *Histories* which slowly exchanges Macedon and Rome in the political and ideological nexus of the Greek world and justifies such a shift in cultural-political terms. It will also highlight how the concepts of Hellenism and barbarism were problematized and adapted by Polybius and offer us insights into how a subordinate individual might address the sensitivities and traditions of his own people and encourage them to a new way of looking at the world, while also speaking to power and urging the continued relevance and importance of his own culture to his superiors. This was the beginning of a conversation about Greek culture and its place within a world dominated by Romans that would occupy elites and intellectuals for centuries.

1) The State of the Field: cultural politics in Polybius

Polybius' use of cultural politics in his portrayal of Rome was first outlined and analysed by Craige Champion in his 2004 book *Cultural Politics in Polybius' Histories*. Champion persuasively argued that the Greek historian implemented a narrative strategy that oscillates between a "cultural politics of assimilation" that shifts the Romans into the Hellenic cultural commune, and a "cultural politics of alienation" that distances them from it and aligns them more closely with the negative side of a Greek/barbarian spectrum.⁶ Polybius' strategy of assimilation, Champion argues, was primarily aimed at the Roman elite, while that of alienation

⁵ Champion (2004) 69, 89-90, 241-244.

⁶ For more explicit assimilation of the Romans into the Greek community in the first century BC, see Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. Rom.* 1.5, and in the first-second centuries AD, Plutarch's *Roman Questions*. See also Preston (2001) and Wiater (2011).

was primarily aimed at his Greek audience, since the latter were still hostile to the Romans, considered them barbarians for their brutality and strange customs, and would have preferred a more defiant stance.⁷ Yet while the Romans are frequently assimilated, they are never represented as Greek and the discourse of alienation and difference wins out in the end.

In 2000, Andrew Erskine successfully argued how the Romans “appear both as different from Greeks and as different from the typical barbarian”, a separate category of people.⁸ Champion subsequently outlined how the Romans occupy a position of cultural indeterminacy or ambiguity, as sometimes they may be seen as “honorary Greeks”, and at others barbarians.⁹ They are called *barbaroi* on a number of occasions in Polybius’ work (Plb. 9.37.6-7, cf. 38.5; 11.5.7; 18.22.8; implied at 5.104; cf. Livy 31.29.15), although on only one occasion does it come from the historian’s own, and not a historical agent’s, mouth (12.4b).¹⁰ They exhibit some barbaric qualities, particularly in the early books of his work, e.g. the practice of decapitation (1.7.12), savagery after capturing a city (e.g. New Carthage: 10.15.4-5), shouting and banging of shields in battle (1.34.2, 15.12.8), the bizarre practice of women sweeping the floors of temples with their hair in times of crisis (9.6.3-4), and they are superstitious (6.56.6-14).¹¹ But they also exhibit some distinctly unbarbaric, ‘civilised’ characteristics: rationality, order and efficiency (e.g. in their set up of camp, 6.26.10-6.32, 6.41-3, and in their plundering of a city, 10.15.7-10, 16.2-9), and the primacy of the state and self-sacrifice (e.g. army discipline, 6.37, and the examples of bravery and sacrifice encouraged in Roman funerals and the story of Horatius Cocles, 6.53-5). Even in this ‘alternative’ category, the Romans could shift towards the Hellenic or barbaric end of the spectrum depending on the situation, the individual characters of the Roman commanders, and who they were described with or against.

Erskine’s and Champion’s conclusions about the Romans’ cultural ambiguity in Polybius’ work, and his use of varying strategies of assimilation and alienation are convincing. However, there is another dimension to this positioning of Rome which has not yet been explored and is the focus of this article: what happens to the opposing hegemonic power of sometimes Greek, sometimes non-Greek Macedon.¹² While Champion and later Gruen pointed out the negative

⁷ For the hostile attitude of the Greeks towards the Romans in Polybius’ work see the reported speeches by Agelaus in 217 (Plb. 5.104); Chlaeneas and Lyciscus in 210 (9.28-39); [Thrasycrates] in 207 (11.4-6); and a Macedonian messenger in the battle of Cynoscephalae in 198 (18.22.8). The Aetolian speech in 195 BCE, which only survives in Livy (34.23.5-11), also indicates a host of varying views amongst the Greeks. We might note Polybius’ own description of the Romans as barbarians in book 12 when he disputes Timaeus’ linking of the Romans to the Homeric tradition as refugees from Troy and argues that their custom of sacrificing horses is nearly universal among barbarians (12.4b).

⁸ Cf. Erskine (2000) and (2013), esp. p. 124.

⁹ Cf. Champion (2000) 426-7 and Champion (2004) 47-57; and 193-203 for the Romans as barbarians.

¹⁰ Cf. Erskine (2000) 171-172 and Gruen (2018) 15-16.

¹¹ For Roman brutality, see also Eckstein (1976) 131-42 and Harris (1979) 50-53.

¹² Disputes about the Macedonian kings’ ‘Greekness’ had raged on without consensus from the fifth century onwards and primarily depended on local politics and expediency. For the Macedonians as legitimate Greeks, see Herodotus 1.56; 5.20; 8.43, 137-39. There is also the story of Alexander I’s acceptance into the Olympic Games by the *Hellanodicae* in c. 500 BC (Hdt.5.22), however, the historicity of this victory is doubtful: see Borza (1990) who sees this as Macedonian propaganda. For the Macedonian people as barbarians, see Thrasymachus DK 85 B 2 and

portrayal of the enemies of Rome (and the Greeks) in Polybius' work, neither factored Macedon into their discussion.¹³ One of the reasons for this may have been that Macedon is a problematic case in discussions of cultural politics. Since the fourth century, the Macedonian kings had variously been long-term allies/benefactors and also long-term enemies of the Greeks, as is outlined in the speeches reported by Polybius at Sparta (9.28-39) and Aetolia (11.4-9), and they were even considered Greek by some at the end of the third century (cf. 9.37.7: Ἀχαιοὺς καὶ Μακεδόνας ὁμοφύλους). Moreover, in the course of the *Histories* they must start off as allies of the Greeks in the Hellenic alliance and enemies of Rome, and end as enemies of all Greeks and the Romans combined. Alongside the changes in Rome, therefore, some explanation for Macedon's starting and ending position needed to be given.

Furthermore, in conjunction with the historical-political explanation for this transition in power, there is another important aim in Polybius' work which rather encourages the Greeks to assimilate Rome into their community: his bid to justify the abandonment of the Macedonian alliance by the Achaean League in 198 BC, even before the final battle at Cynoscephalae in 197 BC, which no doubt turned the tide of the war.¹⁴ It is noteworthy that Dyme, Megalopolis, and Argos had separated themselves from the League before the vote to decide on whether or not to defect from this old alliance (Livy 32.22.8-12) and, even though this decision had been advocated and made under the aegis of the Achaean leader, Aristaenus, a rival of Polybius' mentor and hero, Philopoemen, and his own father, Lycortas, Polybius felt that he had to defend this exchange of friendship and alliance at 18.13.4-10:¹⁵

δῆλον γὰρ ὡς οὔτε τοὺς ἐξ ἀκεραίου συντιθεμένους τῶν ἀνδρῶν πρὸς τινὰς βασιλεῖς ἢ δυνάστας κοινωνίαν πραγμάτων εὐθέως προδότας νομιστέον, οὔτε τοὺς κατὰ τὰς περιστάσεις μετατιθέντας τὰς αὐτῶν πατρίδας ἀπὸ τινῶν ὑποκειμένων πρὸς ἑτέρας φιλίας καὶ συμμαχίας, οὐδὲ τούτους. [6] πολλοῦ γε δεῖν: ἐπεὶ τοι γὰρ πολλὰκις οἱ τοιοῦτοι τῶν μεγίστων ἀγαθῶν γεγονάσιν αἴτιοι ταῖς ἰδίαις πατρίσιν. ἵνα δὲ μὴ πόρρωθεν τὰ παραδείγματα φέρωμεν, ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν ἐνεστώτων ῥαδίως ἔσται τὸ λεγόμενον κατανοεῖν. εἰ γὰρ μὴ σὺν καιρῷ τότε μετέρριψε τοὺς Ἀχαιοὺς Ἀρίσταινος ἀπὸ τῆς Φιλίππου συμμαχίας πρὸς τὴν Ῥωμαίων, φανερῶς ἄρδην ἀπολώλει τὸ ἔθνος. νῦν δὲ χωρὶς τῆς παρ' αὐτὸν τὸν καιρὸν ἀσφαλείας ἐκάστοις περιγενομένης, αὐξήσεως τῶν Ἀχαιῶν ὁμολογουμένως ὁ προειρημένος ἀνὴρ κάκεῖνο τὸ διαβούλιον αἴτιος ἐδόκει γεγονέναι: διὸ καὶ πάντες αὐτὸν οὐχ ὡς προδότην, ἀλλ' ὡς εὐεργέτην καὶ σωτῆρα τῆς χώρας ἐτίμων.

Thuc. 2.80.5-7; 4.124.1. Thucydides and Isocrates also distinguish between the Greekness of the Macedonian kings and the barbarity of the Macedonian people: Thuc. 99.3; Isocrates 5.32, 105-12 and Speusippus' *Letter to Philip*. Philip was also admitted to the Delphic Amphictyony (Diod. 16.60.1; Dem. 19.325; Paus. 10.3.2) and organised the Pythian Games of 346 (Diod. 16.60-2-5; Dem. 9.36), a role which only a Greek could hold. For the Macedonian kings as barbarians, see Demosthenes 9.31; 3.24; (and as below the status of a barbarian) 10.31-34. Aeschines saw Philip II as a barbarian before his embassy to Pella in 346, but a thorough Greek devoted to Athens on returning (D. 19.305, 203).

¹³ See Gruen (2018).

¹⁴ For Achaean League's defection, see Aymard (1938) 1-102; Walbank (2002) 95-99; Deininger (1971) 42-46; Gruen (1984) 444-446; and Pfeilschifter (2005) 184-203, esp. 186-90.

¹⁵ For Philopoemen, see Errington (1969), O'Neal (1994) and Anderson (1967). For Polybius' connection with and admiration for him, see Plb. 2.40.2; 21.32c; 22.19; 23.12; 24.9.1-10.5; 39.3.3-11; Plut. *Philop.* 21; Errington (1969), Foulon (1993), and Pédech (1951). For Polybius on Aristaenus and traitors, see Eckstein (1987) and Golan (1996).

For it is evident that we must not immediately consider those men who, of their own freewill, engage in common action with certain kings and princes as traitors, nor those who, according to the circumstances, turn their countries away from existing relationships to other friendships and alliances.¹⁶ Far from it. For such men have often been responsible for conferring the greatest benefits on their own country. So that I do not speak about examples from long ago, we can easily observe what is being said from the present circumstances. For if Aristaenus had not in good time brought the Achaeans over from their alliance with Philip to the Romans, it is clear that the whole league would have been utterly destroyed. And now, apart from the resulting safety of each member of the League at this time, this man and his counsel were universally acknowledged to be responsible for the increase of Achaean power. So that everyone honoured him, not as a traitor, but as a benefactor and saviour of his country.¹⁷

Even before this, Thrasycrates in book 11 expressed the view that the Aetolians were traitors for allying themselves with the Romans since they were barbarians, and making war against the rest of the Greeks (11.4.10-5.9). Some Greeks therefore no doubt saw this defection by the League as a betrayal of Greek culture and as bad an act as siding with the ‘barbaric’ Persians in the fifth century.¹⁸ What was at stake, therefore, was the standing of the Achaean League, but also, crucially, the standing of Polybius himself as a former leading figure of the League. He therefore needed to show that the Achaeans still embodied Greek excellence and represented freedom, autonomy and justice despite being attached to a non-Greek hegemonic power. And he did this by showing that this new dominant power, Rome, was now more Greek in behaviour than the previous one, Macedon.

2) Hellenism and barbarism in Polybius

Ideas about Greekness and barbarism or non-Greekness had been embedded within elite Greek thought and identity since at least the sixth century BC, were sharpened in the fifth with the Persian Wars, and reformulated numerous times in the following decades with the Peloponnesian War, rise of Macedon and spread of Hellenic culture from the Nile to the Indus following the death of Alexander the Great.¹⁹ From their conception, these notions were diverse, fluid and multivarious. We are most familiar with the Athenian version of Hellenism due to the abundance of surviving evidence from this city, tightly bound with the abolition of tyranny in the late sixth century, and victory over the Persians and empire in the fifth century, although the difference

¹⁶ Cf. Walbank (1957-1979) 3.565.

¹⁷ I use Theodoros Büttner-Wobst’s edition of Polybius’ *Histories* for the Greek text. All translations are my own.

¹⁸ For Greek resistance to Rome between 217 and 86, see Deininger (1971). Thoughts about the Persian Wars were still clearly in the air, as Alcaeus of Messene even plays on this imagery, if in the opposite direction, in depicting Philip V as another Xerxes invading Greece (Anth. Pal. 5: Ἄγαγε καὶ Χέρξης Πέρσων στρατόν Ἑλλάδος ἐς γᾶν, καὶ Τίτος εὐρείας ἄγαγ’ ἀπ’ Ἰταλίας...). For Alcaeus of Messene’s epigrams about Philip V, see Walbank (1943).

¹⁹ There is a vast body of literature on this topic. For the emergence and development of the Hellenic community, see Hall (1989); Harrison (2002) 3-4; Nippel (2002); Mitchell (2007), esp. 39-76; Champion (2004) 31-40. For the development of Hellenic identity and culture over time, see Browning (2002).

between Greek and ‘other’, was universally recognised and fostered by the Panhellenic sanctuaries and kinship diplomacy.²⁰

In its most basic form, Hellenism was constructed around common descent (real or imagined), common language, religious institutions and observances, and a common way of life highly concerned with political freedom and autonomy (Hdt. 1.57.2-3, 8.144; Thuc. 2.68.5). Barbarism represented the opposite: foreignness, non-Greek language, and non-Greek religious and social customs (Hdt. 1.57.2-3: βάρβαρος γλῶσσα; cf. Thuc. 1.6.1).²¹ Non-Greek peoples were often conceived as a homogeneous group speaking unintelligible languages,²² but more specific stereotypes were also attached to them: for instance, the Persians were frequently connected with wealth, luxury, softness of character and body, tyrannical rule and slavery (e.g. Aesch. *Pers.* 226-46, Hdt. 9.122.3, Aristoph. *Acharn.* 80-3, Arist. *Pol.* 1285a14-22, Xen. *Hell.* 4.1.29-39); the Egyptians were savage, corrupt and covetous (Pl. *Resp.* 436a; Plb. 15.33.10-11), the Carthaginians practiced human sacrifice, were jealous and strove for domination (Diod. 20.14.4-7; Plut. *Mor.* 171c-d; Plb. 9.11.2-3), Gauls were drunkards, passionate, and irrational (Diod. 5.26; Cic. *Pro Front. passim*), and Thracians were childlike, ferocious and corrupt (Pl. *Resp.* 435e; Arist. [*Pr.*] 911a2-4).²³

The apparent dichotomy between Greek and barbarian was not, however, and never would be, a straightforward one. Even in Athens where evidence for these notions is clearest, there are difficulties: while the Persian Wars had heightened the contrast between eastern luxury and Greek simplicity, despotism and democracy, and created a sense of Greek superiority (see especially Aeschylus *Persians* 472), a few decades later this distinction had weakened. Herodotus’ *Histories* expresses less concern for the cultural separation between Greeks and barbarians and is far more sophisticated in drawing out differences between them,²⁴ and Euripides problematises this Greek-barbarian polarity, describing some Greeks as barbaric and some barbarians as noble: for instance his *Andromache*, performed during the Peloponnesian War, neatly turns the Spartans into barbarians.²⁵ In a similar vein, Thucydides considered these notions to be relative and thought it possible to be more or less ‘Greek’, or more or less ‘barbarian’ (1.5.3-6.2 (Aetolians), 3.9.4.4-5 (Eurytians); cf. Eur. *Phoen.* 133-40). In the fourth century, Xenophon used Persia as a model of ideal monarchy in his *Cyropaedia* but also presented the Persians with negative barbarian stereotypes in his *Agesilaus*.²⁶ Isocrates likewise adjusted the criteria for inclusion into this community: “the name of the Greeks suggests no longer a race (*genos*) but an intelligence, and that to be called “Greeks” is given rather to those

²⁰ See Mitchell (2015) and Scott (2010).

²¹ Cf. Browning (2002) 259; Mitchell (2007) 19-23.

²² For a homogeneous group, see Aesch. *Pers.* 434; Soph. fr. 587; Eur. *And.* 173. For barbarian speech, see e.g. *Il.* 4.427-38; Soph. *Aj.* 1262-3; Ar. Fr. 81 KA; Xen. *Anab.* 1.8.1; Pl. *Th.* 163b; Diod. 5.6.5; Arr. *Anab.* 3.6.6

²³ For Greek ethnographic writing, see Skinner (2012). There was also the view that collective characteristics were connected to and determined by climate and physical environment: see Hdt. 1.142; 3.106; 9.122; Hp. *Aër*, 16 and 24; Arist. *Pol.* 1327b23-33; 1285a19-22; and Plb. 4.21.1-3. Cf. Champion (2004) 76-80.

²⁴ For the complexity of Herodotus’ views on the Greeks and Persians, see Hartog (1988) and Pelling (1997).

²⁵ See Hall (1989) Ch. 5 for barbaric Greeks and noble barbarians.

²⁶ Harrison (2002) 4; Browning (2002).

who share in our culture than to those who share a common nature” (*Panegyricus* 50).²⁷ Moreover, peoples and cities which had not previously been considered ‘Greek’ could become Greek through ancestral and kinship ties (note for instance the Macedonians and the Molossians in the later fifth century, and the city of Aspendus in the fourth).²⁸ As with all ideological concepts, this dichotomy was far from lucid or stable. Rather than a simple and permanent binary culturally separating certain peoples from the Hellenic commune, what emerged was a continuum between Greek and non-Greek which could be adapted and redefined according to the needs of individual poleis and changing political circumstances.

While there was still the same emphasis on similarity and difference in defining Hellenism and barbarism in the second century BC, and barbarity still held negative connotations, these concepts had inevitably evolved from their earlier formulations, shifting away from ethnicity and focusing more on the characteristics and qualities of a people. The conquests of Alexander and the emergence of new Macedonian monarchies in the fourth and third centuries had spread Greek culture, language and education across the Mediterranean, Africa and Asia, and Greeks and non-Greeks had come into increasing contact, gradually affecting the traditional attitudes towards Hellenism and barbarism.²⁹ In the third century BC, while there was still a general distinction made between Greek and barbarian, as is evident in the complaint of a non-Greek on a papyrus from Egypt about not receiving pay because he was a ‘barbarian’ and not able ‘to speak or act like a Greek’ (ἐλληνίζειν),³⁰ certain members of the elite continued to question this dichotomy and found new ways of expressing difference between peoples. Eratosthenes of Cyrene, for instance, dissatisfied with the straight division between Greek and barbarian, asserted that: “it would be better to make such divisions according to good qualities and bad qualities; for not only are many of the Greeks bad, but many of the barbarians are refined...” (Strabo 1.4.9: βέλτιον εἶναι φησιν ἀρετῇ καὶ κακίᾳ διαμεῖν ταῦτα. πολλοὺς γὰρ καὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων εἶναι κακοὺς καὶ τῶν βαρβάρων ἀστείους). In the second century, these notions still hold sway and are used to confront the changes to the Greek cultural and political scene following the rise of Rome. They resonate implicitly, and at times explicitly, throughout Polybius’ *Histories* in describing both Greeks and non-Greeks (the Greeks, Greek or non-Greek practice, as well as the term *barbaros* and its associated forms, appear frequently in his work). For Polybius, like Eratosthenes, these terms indicate the ‘good’ or ‘civilised’ nature, rather than

²⁷ See Browning (2002) 260; Champion (2004) 31-36.

²⁸ Macedonian claims to Hellenic cultural legitimacy were first expressed by Argead king Amyntas I at the beginning of the fifth century and continued throughout the Classical and Hellenistic periods. See fn. 9 for references and Boza (1982), Hammond (1988) 16-21, and Mitchell (2007) 204-205. For the Molossian claims to Hellenism through a mythical genealogical connection to Achilles, see Pi, *Nem.* 4.51-3, 7.38-40 and *Paeon* 6.98-121; cf. Eur. *Androm.* 1243-6; Plut. *Pyrrh.* 1; and Mitchell (2007) 205-206. For Aspendus, see Curty no. 3; Strabo 14.4.2; Arrian, *Anab.* 1.26.2-3, 26.5-27.4; and Mitchell (2007) 203. For Greek ethnicity, see Malkin (2001). For kinship myths and diplomacy, see Jones (1999) and Patterson (2010).

²⁹ There is a vast amount of literature on the spread of Hellenic culture in the Hellenistic period, see for instance, Van Nuffelen (2009); Moyer (2011); Geiger (2014); and Chrubasik & King (2017).

³⁰ P. Col. 66 = Austin no. 307; c. 256-255 BC.

the ethnicity, of a people,³¹ and offer explanations for the success or failure of a state on the domestic and international scene. In order to ascertain how he used them to depict the changing powers of Rome and Macedon, we must first examine Polybius' construction of these notions in more detail.

For Polybius, many of the qualities signifying 'Hellenic/civilised' or 'barbaric/uncivilised' status remained the same: shared culture and descent were still basic indicators, but there were also a number of characteristics which he thought defined these fields. Like many historians, he never gives a comprehensive list of what he thinks these are since this is not the purpose of his work. However, these qualities become evident through his descriptions of those who represent, in his opinion, the height of 'Hellenic' excellence and those who represent the barbarian. Hellenic qualities are most clearly found in Polybius' own people, the Achaeans (2.38.6-55), and include: reason (λογισμός), justice and duty (δικαία), courage (ἀνδρεία), showing a concern for the law, order, equality and freedom, and therefore putting the state before the individual.³² Barbaric qualities are often assigned to the Gauls, Illyrians, Thracians, and mercenaries (who often comprise a mixture of barbaric peoples and are described as particularly turbulent for their tendency towards indiscipline, greed and changeable loyalty).³³ These barbaric qualities include: irrationality (ἀλογιστία), excessive passion (θυμός), savagery (ὠμός), licentiousness (ἀσέλγεια), lawlessness (παρανομία), greed (πλεονεξία), and the primacy of the individual over the state.³⁴ Barbaric peoples are ruled by *thumos* and are sometimes described as turning into 'wild beasts' (ἀποθηριοῦσθαι) or worse than animals in their madness, savagery and ferocity (Plb. 1.67.6, cf. 1.81.5-11; cf. Livy 42.59.2), are typically associated with a lack of education and with drunkenness, and are sources of fear. They are considered a threat to orderly and free society (2.35.1-10): note the Gallic invasions of Italy (2.14-35), the Gallic attack on Delphi in 279 (2.35), the Thracian and Gallic invasions of Byzantine (4.38, 45-46), and the frequent attacks of the Dardanians on Macedonia (cf. 4.66; 5.97).³⁵

³¹ Cf. Schmitt (1957/8) 38-48; Walbank (1957-1979) 2.176; Musti (1974) 131; Erskine (2000) 172; and Gruen (2018). For a list of all the occurrences of *barbaros* and its cognates in Polybius, see Champion (2004) 245-253.

³² For these 'Hellenic' qualities in Polybius, see Champion (2004) 68-9, 122-129, and 255-259 for *logismos* in Polybius.

³³ For Polybius' concern for the destabilising impact of mercenaries on society, see Eckstein (1995) 135-129. For his depiction of mercenaries during the war against Carthage, see also Roveri (1964) 122-24.

³⁴ For the barbarian category in Polybius' thought and their characteristics and threat to society, see Eckstein (1995) 119-125; Erskine (2000) 168-169; and Champion (2004) 67-9, 70-75.

³⁵ For threats to the social order in the *Histories*, see Eckstein (1995) 118-160. Freedom and slavery, as well as tyranny, continue to be important for cultural status. The paragon of Hellenic culture and virtue, the Achaean League, is described as a democratic confederation (although, note, not the radical democracy of Athens) constantly fighting for freedom, equality, humanity and democratic rule, and against tyranny in the Peloponnese in the 230s (2.38.6 – 44.6). The label of 'tyrant', moreover, was still used as a slur against monarchs to distance them from mainstream Greek political culture. This is clear in Polybius' description of Cleomenes III of Sparta: he is a 'king' in a neutral setting (2.45.2; 4.1.6; 5.9.8) and when he is acting nobly with courage and reason in Egypt against the machinations of the courtier Sosibius (5.35-39), but a 'tyrant' when he changed the Spartan constitution into a 'tyranny', and joined the war with the Aetolians against the Achaean League (2.45.2-70.3; 4.81.12-14). The later 'tyrant' of Sparta, Nabis, also points out the changing uses of 'king' and 'tyrant' in his interview with the Roman commander T. Quinctus Flamininus (Livy 34.31.11-13; see also Flamininus' answer, 34.32.1-4).

As was evident in fifth century authors, Polybius also conceived of a continuum between the two positions. The Achaeans, as outlined above, tend to represent the height of Greek excellence in his work and the Gauls, Illyrians and Thracians the height of barbarity. The Aetolians continue to be presented as ‘less’ Greek than others, and the Spartans and Cretans as “‘a sort of internal Greek ‘Other’”,³⁶ but the Cynaethans, and Boeotians are also added to this list by Polybius. While these peoples are not barbarians, they are said to behave in a less Greek and more ‘non-Greek’ or ‘barbaric’ manner, exhibiting greed, faithlessness and treachery, savagery and cruelty, lawlessness and tyrannical behaviour. They occupy a more confusing middle ground.³⁷ The Romans also inhabit a messy middle position in Polybius’ *Histories* since they display some traits atypical of the barbarian (reason, bravery, discipline, moderation and self-sacrifice for the state) and some which are typical of them (brutality, strange customs and superstition).³⁸ There is a distinct lack of clarity, however, in just where the Romans lie in the space between Greek and barbarian and how they should be conceived, since they shift in the course of his work.³⁹ This is also the case for the Macedonian king, as we will see below.

Champion has argued that the Romans sometimes appear as ‘honorary Greeks’, and sometimes as more straightforward barbarians. However, the first term, ‘honorary Greeks’, may be too positive, since the Romans are never once called ‘Greeks’ in Polybius’ work, not even by a historical agent, while they are called ‘barbarians’ on a number of occasions. They would later sometimes represent a third, separate, but still positive, category from the first century BC (see Philo, *De vita contemplativa* 48; Plut. *De fortuna Romanorum* 324B; Cicero *De finibus* 2.49 and *De divination* 1.84).⁴⁰ There is not enough clarity in Polybius’ work, however, to assert whether

³⁶ Cf. Pelling (1997) 54-55.

³⁷ The Aetolians are greedy, lustful for plunder and aggrandisement, reckless, the long-term enemy of the exemplary Achaeans (e.g. Plb. 2.43.9-10, 45.1, 46.3, 47.4, 49.3; 4.3.1-4, 5.5 etc.), and beasts (4.3.1) and non-Greeks (Philip V in 198 BC: 18.5.8; Livy 32.34.4n.) for raiding friends and enemies indiscriminately. Any people attached to the Aetolians are similarly tainted in Polybius’ eyes; cf. the Spartans in the Cleomenean War in 229-222 (2.45.2-70.3) and Social War in 220-217 BC (4.26-36, 57-87; 5.1-30, 91-105), and the Cynaethans (4.17.3-21.11) and Boeotians (20.5.1). For Polybius’ Aetolians, see Sacks (1975), Champion (2004) 129-135, and Champion (2007). The Spartans, while very successful under their mixed Lyncurgan constitution (6.3.7, 10.1-14), are negatively affected by the transformation of their state into a ‘tyranny’ in the reign of Cleomenes III – a description encouraged by this king’s aim to conquer the Peloponnese and Achaean League (Plb. 2.47.3; note also 23.11.5 and cf. Livy (P) 34.31-32, 35, 36-37). The Cynaethans, demonstrate ‘savagery’ (ἀγριότητος), cruelty (ὀμότητι) and lawlessness (παρανομίᾳ) since they have abandoned the tempering practice of music and are subsequently wrought with civil strife (4.19.13-21.8). The Boeotians have declined politically and socially since they detached themselves from the Achaeans, attached themselves to the Aetolians, allowed wealth and luxury to infiltrate their society, and stopped administering justice (20.4-7). For Polybius’ Boeotians, see Feyel (1942); McGing (2010) 192-93; and Müller (2013). While the Cretans have a political system similar to the traditional Spartan constitution, they are greedy, “the only people in the world in whose eyes no gain is disgraceful” (ὥστε παρὰ μόνοις Κρηταιέσσι τῶν ἀπάντων ἀνθρώπων μηδὲν αἰσχρὸν νομίζεσθαι κέρδος.), treacherous, unjust (δολιώτερα... ἀδικωτέρας), and constantly suffer from internal strife (6.46.1-47.6).

³⁸ The Carthaginians too may have featured in this alternative category, particularly before their confrontation with Rome, since Polybius states that their *politeia* was once of a similar excellence to that of the Romans but had declined before the Punic Wars (6.51).

³⁹ For this ambiguity in Roman identity and ethnographic writing, see Dench (1995) and (2005).

⁴⁰ For this third category, see Browning (2002) 262-3.

or not this notion had already been considered or established in some circles in the mid- to late-second century. As one of the first Greeks to interpret Roman culture and politics after their conquest of the East, Polybius was clearly grappling with the problem of fitting the Romans into traditional ideas about Hellenic and barbarian status which were no longer adequate for defining the world. Erskine may be closer to the mark in asserting that they appear as alien and a different kind of barbarian in Polybius' work, although this may suggest too strongly that this third category was starting to emerge. Moreover, a case can be made for seeing them as 'civilised' or 'Hellenic barbarians' in Polybius. Their broadly positive position as a people in the *Histories* comes down to the excellence of their *politeia*, customs and characteristics (see below); a view which falls in line with that expressed by Eratosthenes, who also asserted that the Romans (and Carthaginians) were refined barbarians, because of their government (Strabo 1.4.9).

But their cultural position, like that of Macedon, is also inexorably connected with their relationship with the Greeks, and specifically to the Achaean League.⁴¹ Since the Achaeans were seen by Polybius as the very best of the Greeks in the third and early second centuries BC, associating with them, working to promote their interests and exhibiting similar qualities, would draw a community closer to them and also the good qualities of Hellenism. On the other hand, Erskine has shown how they also appear as barbarians when opposed to the Greeks, and exhibit Greek-like qualities when they are militarily successful against other 'barbarians', for instance the Gauls and Carthaginians.⁴² Their connection with the Greeks and their fight against more 'traditional' barbarians, therefore, has a big role to play in their cultural standing in the *Histories*.

If Eratosthenes and Polybius are anything to go by, it seems, at least in certain elite Greek circles, that the cultural position of Mediterranean peoples in the Hellenistic period was becoming more and more dependent on their political and social condition and situation and less about their ethnicity and language. Certainly for Polybius political typology and the social environment surrounding it were the most important factors in determining the status and character of a people.⁴³ Hellenic/civilised and barbaric/uncivilised features became associated with a range of constitutional types beyond democracy and tyranny and more explicitly tied to the 'health' of the political, institutional, military and social structures of the state. For Polybius, the Hellenic or barbaric quality of a people was to a large degree determined by their politico-social context, their *politeia*, the type of social, educational and religious institutions this brought about and the kind of characteristics it encouraged in its citizens (reason, justice, duty, courage, lawfulness, freedom, etc.).⁴⁴ This connection is established in book 6 of his *Histories*, where he identifies six types of *politeiai* and divides them into three 'good' and three 'bad' forms (along similar lines to Aristotle *Pol.* 1279a16, 1279a32-1279b4, 1287b36, 1310b40): kingship,

⁴¹ Often, Polybius' 'Greeks' are the Achaeans and their allies. See Walbank (1957-79) II.58 and Nicholson (2018b) 249-252.

⁴² See also Erskine (2000) 173-174.

⁴³ Cf. Champion (2004) 67-9, 83-90.

⁴⁴ See Champion (2004) 75-84, Erskine (2013) 233-35 and Champion (2013) for Polybius' definition of *politeia* as more than just the political constitution of a state, but also its military apparatus, social customs and culture, and position in the international world. In this Polybius is in agreement with other Greek writers such as Xenophon,

aristocracy, and democracy represent the ‘good’ *politeiai*, as each ruling body governs for the sake and interests of the whole. These encourage the civilised or Hellenic qualities of reason, justice, duty, courage, lawfulness, order, equality and freedom in its people. Tyranny, oligarchy and ochlocracy, on the other hand, represent the ‘bad’ as the ruling bodies govern for the sake and interest of themselves.⁴⁵ These three negative types of *politeia* inspire the qualities of irrationality, passion, savagery, licentiousness, unlawfulness, greed, selfishness and lack of restraint – qualities exhibited by Polybius’ barbarians. As was mentioned earlier, Champion noted a lexical convergence in Polybius’ descriptions of political degeneration and barbarian peoples, and while he focuses primarily on the close semantic parallel between Polybian ochlocracy and Polybian barbarology, these same features (injustice, grasping, hubris, greed, lack of reason, lawlessness and bestial behaviour, and the dominance of *thumos*, passion) feature prominently in the constitutions of oligarchy and tyranny as well (cf. Plb. 6.7-8).⁴⁶ In Polybius’ mind, therefore, the tyrannical, oligarchic and ochlocratic constitutions tended towards barbarism and their good counterparts towards Hellenism.

But there was also movement in this scheme. For Polybius, it was possible to become more Greek as one could become more barbarian, as indicated by his description of the decline of the Spartans, Cynaethans, Boeotians, and Carthaginians, and the political ascendancy of the Achaean League and the Romans. All states, he theorised, revolved naturally, inevitably and sequentially through the six types of *politeiai* (Plb. 6.3-10) in a cycle (*anacyclosis*): moving from kingship to tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, democracy and ochlocracy (mob rule), before returning to kingship.⁴⁷ Theoretically, therefore, over the course of its life a state would oscillate between the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ forms, between Hellenism and barbarism, in cycling through this process.⁴⁸ In practice, the changing of political types did not always conform to this scheme, and even in the narrative section of his *Histories* this is evident (for instance, the Achaean League turned from a tyranny into a democracy, skipping aristocracy and oligarchy; 2.41.4-5). Moreover, a key failing of the scheme is that the mixed constitution is not part of Polybius’ constitutional cycle and his archaeology of Rome, which may have documented the establishment of this mixed *politeia*, no longer survives to us. It is therefore difficult to determine how he thought a mixed constitution would develop and evolve. In Sparta’s case, Polybius states that it was introduced artificially by Lycurgus, suggesting a change from

Plato and Aristotle.

⁴⁵ The main difference between Aristotle and Polybius here, is that for Aristotle ‘democracy’ represents the bad form of mass rule and ‘polity’ represents the good. While the terms of different, however, there is little difference in their nature. For Polybius’ debt to Aristotle here, see Pocock (1975) 66-80, and Nippel (1994) 7-10. Cf. Nelson (2004) 3-4 for the problems of this association.

⁴⁶ For tyranny, see discussion below pp. 19-20. For oligarchy, see Plb. 6.8.4-6: ...ὁρμήσαντες οἱ μὲν ἐπὶ πλεονεξίαν καὶ φιλαργυρίαν ἄδικον, οἱ δ’ ἐπὶ μέθας καὶ τὰς ἅμα ταύταις ἀπλήστους εὐωχίας, οἱ δ’ ἐπὶ τὰς τῶν γυναικῶν ὕβρεις καὶ παιδῶν ἀρπαγὰς, μετέστησαν μὲν τὴν ἀριστοκρατίαν εἰς ὀλιγαρχίαν...

⁴⁷ Polybius’ *anacyclosis politeion* has a vast body of scholarship. See, for instance, Walbank (1957-79) 635-746; Pédech (1964) 303-330; Trompf (1979) 1-115; Alonso-Núñez (1986); Lintott (1999) 16-26, 214-20; Champion (2004) 67-99; and Seager (2013). Polybius knew and was influenced by Plato’s discussions of constitutions since he notes how Plato’s descriptions of each type of government are lengthier but also more difficult to access (6.5.1-2).

monarchy to mixed government and then back to monarchy/tyranny (2.47.3; 6.3.8, 10.11; 23.11.5).⁴⁹ In Rome's case, it evolved naturally out of whatever had preceded it (6.10.13-14), possibly aristocracy, and judging from the experience of Carthage in which the multitude have too much power (6.51.6-8), will also descend into mob rule in due course (cf. 6.57).⁵⁰ Yet what is important here is Polybius' perception that change was inevitable, that states went through good and bad forms, through stages of Hellenism and barbarism, that changing institutions changed the character of a state, its people, and its overall success in domestic and international settings, and that there were general rules for how this happened. While it is difficult to ascertain where and how far each state may have been placed and shifted in Polybius' own ideological conception of them, within the course of his *Histories* (118 years) it is at least possible to observe a distinct change in the way that the Macedonian king and the Romans are described.

3) The Romans (264-200 BC): Barbarians to Hellenes

Polybius' use of cultural politics in describing the Romans in his *Histories* has already received fruitful attention from Erskine and Champion as outlined above, so it is unnecessary to go into a lengthy discussion of it here. However, an overview of the Roman trajectory in Hellenic-barbaric terms is necessary for an understanding of the complementary portrait of Philip V. Macedon was not only one of the key antagonists in the story of the Romans' conquest of the eastern Mediterranean, but it also had a long running relationship with the Greek mainland and had had a close relationship with the Achaean League since the mid-third century. In order for Rome to rise, Philip had to fall.

As Champion has shown, while Polybius distanced the Romans from the Greek community by implicitly recalling their barbarian status at various points in his narrative (cf. 5.104; 9.9.37.6-7, 38.5; 11.5.7; 12.4b; Livy (P) 31.29.15), he also consistently assimilated them into the Hellenic community by drawing out the brilliance of aristocratic Roman values, many of which were consistent with 'Hellenic' ideals.⁵¹ They esteemed and cultivated reasoned, ordered, brave, persistent, frugal, and self-sacrificing behaviour. And it was Rome's brilliant *politeia* that produced such characteristics in its people and lay the foundations for its success, internally and externally. The constitution's mixed form made it more stable and impervious to change and its current compilation of the three 'good' forms of governance (kingship, aristocracy and democracy) created a state working for the interests of all its citizens and able to check the power of any one individual or group. According to Polybius, it was because of their *politeia*, good governance, and cultivation of admirable characteristics that the Romans succeeded in

⁴⁸ For this oscillation between Hellenism and barbarism, see Champion (2004) 6, 58-59, 68.

⁴⁹ It is important to note here that Polybius describes the changed Spartan constitution as a tyranny when he is frustrated with Cleomenes III for fighting against the Achaean League (2.47.3) and with Nabis for betraying Argos and bringing about the end of the Spartan kingship (23.11.5), and a monarchy when discussing Sparta in more neutral terms.

⁵⁰ McGing (2010) 179-80, 186-89.

⁵¹ See Champion (2004) Ch. 3, 67-99 for Rome's association with Hellenism in Polybius.

conquering the whole Mediterranean in the third and second centuries BC.⁵²

It is during the Hannibalic War at the end of the third century, however, that Polybius sees the Roman constitution at its best (Plb. 6.11.1-2). Before this point, in the earlier wars against the Carthaginians, Gauls, and Illyrians (peoples considered barbarous by Polybius) the Romans had developed and demonstrated their rationality, discipline, and moderation in the face of the unrestrained passion, treachery, unpredictability and greed of their enemies.⁵³ They had been tested by the violence and irrationality of barbaric forces and won, and could, therefore, be seen in more Hellenic terms than barbaric ones.⁵⁴ It was during the Hannibalic war that this Hellenic quality reached its peak: the Romans suffered a catastrophic defeat at the battle of Cannae in 216, yet their reason, discipline, courage, and perseverance, Polybius asserts, enabled them to overcome this disaster, win the war in 201, and ultimately obtain universal dominance (Plb. 3.118.5-10).

Yet, in this cultural spectrum, does the Romans' mixed constitution in the third and second centuries BC, comprising all three good/Hellenic forms of government in correct alignment, represent the ultimate expression of Hellenic excellence? It was considered even greater than Sparta's mixed constitution by Polybius for its capacity for conquest and imperial rule (6.50.1-6). The answer is not a clear one, however, as it is uncertain how we should view the mixed constitution in cultural terms. It is evident that it could produce states and peoples with both Hellenic and barbaric qualities, as the Romans and Spartans are said to exhibit exemplary Hellenic qualities because of it and the Carthaginians barbaric ones (impulsiveness, greed and savagery).⁵⁵ But nowhere does Polybius explicitly say that the Romans are Greek because of this exemplary mixed constitution, only that they were drawn closer to the Greek community and appear more Hellenic because of the good conditions created by it. While there is a close correlation between constitutional quality and Hellenic/barbarian culture in Polybius' work, therefore, this reveals that there was still not an exact equivalence between them and. Polybius was still working out the new cultural and ideological shape of the world. Yet, the Roman mixed constitution was also, in Polybius' mind, the best type of *politeia* for leadership and balanced governance, imperial power, offsetting degeneration and weathering change, and for producing good, Hellenic characteristics in its citizens. Therefore, it could be the ultimate expression of Hellenic excellence if we see Hellenism as more about political and social condition and situation rather than their ethnicity and language

By his connection of good governance and society with Hellenism and success, however, Polybius implicitly positions the Romans on the positive side of the Hellenic-barbarian

⁵² It could be compared with the excellence of the mixed Spartan regime established by Lycurgus, which also enjoyed long-term stability, produced order, bravery, efficiency, concord and self-sacrifice in its citizens (6.3.5-8, 10.1-14, 48.1-50.6), and the same with the Carthaginian (6.51.1-52.6).

⁵³ See, for instance, Plb. 1.6.4-8, 17.11-12, 38.5-6, 59.2-7, 64.6; 2.11.5-12.6, 18.1-22.1; 3.51.2-11; and Champion (2004) 100-122.

⁵⁴ Cf. Champion (2004) 105-122.

⁵⁵ For Hannibal's greed and savagery, see Polybius' defence of his character at Plb. 9.22.8-26.11. Cf. Champion (2004) 102-104, 117-121 for Polybius' portrait of the Carthaginians on the negative side of the Hellenic/barbarian spectrum.

framework at the end of the third century BC. This is reinforced even further by the corresponding rise and fall of the Achaean League, which parallels that of Rome thematically and chronologically.⁵⁶ In books 1-5, which record the years between 264 and 216, both states are shown to come to the height of their excellence and are successful in expanding their power (Rome through Italy and Illyria, and the Achaean League nearly the whole Peloponnese) because of their good governance and conduct.⁵⁷ By paralleling the Roman rise with that of the ‘exemplary’ Achaean League, the Romans are implicitly drawn into a relationship with Hellenic excellence. This is confirmed and supported by the fact that the Achaean League decide to defect to Rome in 198 BC.

However, both Rome and Achaia slowly start to decline after 201: a date that marks both the end of the Hannibalic War and Philopoemen’s temporary absence from Achaean politics (Livy 31.25.3).⁵⁸ This deterioration increases apace after the fall of Perseus and Macedonia in 168, due to the influx of wealth, luxury and ambition in Rome (cf. Plb. 31.25.2-7),⁵⁹ and the Achaean transition into treacherous and demagogic leadership following the deportation of over 1000 Achaeans (including Polybius) and the rise of Callicrates (Plb. 24.8.6-10.15; 29.23-25.1; 30.13.4-11, 29.1-7, 32.12), and then Critolaus and Diaeus (38.10.8-13, 11.3-11, 12.7-13.8, 14.3, 15.1-16.12, 17.1-18.12). This decline plays a key part in shaping the later portion of his *Histories* and proceeds in accordance with the political theory laid out in book 6, following a general narrative pattern of increasing political and social degeneration, as self-interest, irrationality, and passion begin to proliferate in Mediterranean society.⁶⁰

What is of particular importance for this study, however, is the fact that the Roman rise and peak in good government, society and conduct at the end of the third and beginning of the second centuries BC (as well as the association with the Achaean League) bears a reverse correlation with the key points in Philip’s life and development in the *Histories*. Champion’s monograph mentions how the enemies of Rome (and the Achaean League) are portrayed by Polybius as displaying barbaric characteristics both politically and socially and as occupying various positions along the barbarian scale. Yet what remains to be shown is how this works in practice, especially for the ‘semi-Greek’ state of Macedon.

4) Philip V of Macedon (221-198 BC): Hellene to Barbarian

In addressing cultural politics and Macedon in Polybius’ work, we must focus on the individual rather than the collective. The state of Macedon was seen by Greek writers from the fifth and

⁵⁶ The parallel rise in Achaia and Rome is outlined by Champion (2004) 100-143 and strengthened in Champion (2013) 127-8.

⁵⁷ The League is successful in expanding its power and influence to encompass nearly the whole Peloponnese at the end of the third century and early second century (cf. Plb. 2.37.9-44.6; 24.10.10) and to strengthen its military capacity to such an extent it no longer needs Macedonian aid in 207 against Aetolia and Sparta (see Plb 11.8.1-10.9 for Philopoemen’s training of the Achaean troops and Livy 31.25.2-11 for the Achaean refusal of Macedonian troops).

⁵⁸ For Roman and Achaean decline, see Champion (2004) 144-169.

⁵⁹ For the issue of wealth and its temptations in Polybius, see Eckstein (1995) 70-82.

⁶⁰ For Polybius and decline, see Walbank (2002) 193-211.

fourth centuries onwards as simultaneously comprising and being represented by the king and little is said about the Macedonian people. Polybius is no different in this regard. In fact, as one of his purposes was to educate future leaders (1.1.1), he would have had a greater tendency to focus on the governing body of the state (in this instance, the monarch, *philoï* and nobility) rather than the masses, for which he holds little esteem or interest.⁶¹ He takes a similar view to Isocrates (*Areop.* 13-14) in asserting that it is the type of *politeia* of a state that is important for its success or failure domestically and internationally (Plb. 6.2). However, he goes further in claiming that in states where strong individuals are in power, any changes in the disposition of these leading individuals may result in a change in the character of their respective constitutions and people (9.23.6-9). As a monarch, therefore, Philip V's character, leadership and conduct determined the condition of Macedon's *politeia* in the third and second centuries BC and its success domestically and internationally (9.23.9; cf. Plb. 7.11; 15.20.5-8).

Philip V of Macedon, Darling of the Greeks (221-217 BC)

Six years after his succession to the throne, at the conclusion of the Social War against the Aetolians in 217, the Macedonian king is urged by Agelaus, a representative of Aetolia, to be a benevolent hegemon and lead the Greeks on a Panhellenic venture to ward off the new barbarian threat in the West (Plb. 5.104-5):⁶²

Διόπερ ἡξίου πάντας μὲν φυλάξασθαι τὸν παῖρόν, μάλιστα δὲ Φίλιππον. εἶναι δὲ φυλακὴν, ἐὰν ἀφέμενος τοῦ καταφθεῖρειν τοὺς Ἕλληνας καὶ ποιεῖν εὐχειρώτους τοῖς ἐπιβαλλομένοις κατὰ τοῦναντίον ὡς ὑπὲρ ἰδίου Σώματος βουλευήται, καὶ καθόλου πάντων τῶν τῆς Ἑλλάδος μερῶν ὡς οἰκείων καὶ προσηκόντων αὐτῷ ποιῆται πρόνοιαν... Therefore, he asked everyone to guard against the crisis, and especially Philip to be a watch against it. If he would give up exhausting the Greeks and making them vulnerable to attackers, and instead consider them part of his own body, and in general reckon all parts of Greece as his own possessions and property...

Having successfully established his rule, protected his allies and concluded the Social War (220-

⁶¹ The Macedonian elite were also the individuals who worked most closely with the Greeks, just as the Senate did in Rome; note the involvement of Philip's commanders and *philoï*, Taurion, Apelles, Leontius, and Megaleas in Peloponnesian affairs at 4.10, 19, 24, 76, 82, 84-87 and 5.1-2, 7, 14-16, 26-27. It is possible that Polybius is talking about the Macedonians as a group, both elite and masses, when he records that the Macedonians cursed Philip for his transmigration policy in the 180s (23.10.4-7). However, the exact makeup of this group is uncertain, and it could relate to those noble Macedonians whom Philip subsequently executes (23.10.8-11).

⁶² The Panhellenic sentiment in this speech bears a strong resemblance to that given by Isocrates to Philip II in his *Letter to Philip*. Because of this, it is difficult to determine whether the Panhellenism in it was a genuine historical feature of Agelaus' speech and the conference at the time or brought out by Polybius to emphasise the perceived threat of Rome and the beginning of the *sympleke*. Deininger (1973) believed it ran counter to the historian's generally hostile attitude towards the Aetolians and was therefore historical (see also Gruen (1984) 324 fn. 34 for this view). Mørkholm (1967) and (1974), however, saw the notion as anachronistic and as a fabrication. Champion (1997) falls in between and more convincingly suggests that Polybius selected and embellished a tradition from Agelaus' speech that advanced his theory of the *sympleke*.

217), the young Macedonian king is entrusted with the task of leading and protecting the Greeks.⁶³ Throughout these first six years, Polybius tells us that Philip had won admiration for his correctness of conduct towards the Greeks in dealing with the affairs of the Symmarchy and Spartan unrest, and had acted in a manner considered beyond his years during the war with Aetolia (4.82.1: κατά...τὴν λοιπὴν ἀναστροφὴν καὶ τὰς πράξεις τεθραυσμένους ὑπὲρ τὴν ἡλικίαν). He has shown reason, justice, mildness, magnanimity, diligence, daring, speed, efficiency and military prowess, quick intelligence and memory, and personal charm (Plb. 4.77: ...ἀγχίνοια καὶ μνήμη καὶ χάρις...).⁶⁴ Moreover, for these early years the young king has been heeding the advice of Aratus of Sicyon – the leader of the Achaean league who had brought about its rise to greatness (2.43.3-10; 5.12.5-8; 7.12-14). Under his tutelage, therefore, Philip followed the path of Hellenism respecting the autonomy and community of his Greek allies (cf. 4.22-24, 76, 85). This Hellenic status is emphasised in a summary of his career in book 7 as Philip is labelled the *eromenos* ('darling' or 'beloved') of the Greeks (Plb. 7.11.8; cf. Plut. *Arat.* 49-5).⁶⁵ While he is never explicitly called 'Greek', the acknowledgement of his benefactions to the Greeks, his exhibition of qualities prized among the Greek elite, his association with Aratus and the Achaean League, and this title all effectively assimilate the Macedonian king into the Hellenic community.⁶⁶

This Hellenic association continues throughout Book 5, covering the years 218-216, as the king consistently listens to and follows the advice of Aratus (2.38.6-45.7, esp. 2.40.2 and 43.3-10). Yet, there is also a gradual shift in the king's conduct which starts to cause his position in Greece to change. At the end of 219, Philip's loyalty to Aratus waivers when a Macedonian adviser successfully persuades him to temporarily promote and support Aratus' political rival for the generalship of the League (Plb. 4.82). A more serious but still short-lived deviation happens in 218, when Philip, according to our historian, listens to the advice of the Illyrian chief, Demetrius of Pharos, and devastates the religious property of the Aetolian centre of Thermus (Plb. 5.11-12.4), a deed which only a raging passion and mind could commit (5.11.4: τρόπου καὶ θυμοῦ λυττῶντος ἔργον). In other words, an act of excessive passion and that of an unrestrained barbarian. The polarisation of the two advisers, Greek and Illyrian, here may also be seen as an implicit parallel of the Hellenic-barbaric continuum.⁶⁷ For Polybius, Demetrius represents the collective characteristics of the Illyrians, whom he considered to be a barbaric people (see above); Aratus conversely represents the Achaeans as a Greek people at the height of their Hellenic virtue. Despite these glitches Philip is still closely associated with Aratus and Hellenism for four more years.

⁶³ For benefaction and the expectation that Hellenistic kings perform as benefactors, see Gauthier (1985), Bringman (1993) and Ma (2003) 179-83.

⁶⁴ For Philip's reputation for speed, see McGing (2010) 100-116 and (2013) 189-191, 195-6.

⁶⁵ For this term and Polybius' use of it to describe Philip V, see Nicholson (2018a).

⁶⁶ Cf. Xen. *Cyropaedia* for another ironic story of a non-Greek (Cyrus) displaying Greek virtues, before becoming more 'Persian' and oriental after the taking of Babylon.

⁶⁷ See page 9 for the Illyrians as *barbaroi* in Polybius. For this episode, see Grainger (1999) 16, 208, 277, 284-6 and Nicholson (2018b).

Kingship & Tyranny: Book 6

All this has happened in books 4 and 5. We now come to Polybius' famous interlude where he imparts his political theory of constitutions and explains how it was because of Rome's mixed constitution that it was able to come back from the brink of destruction and conquer the Mediterranean. Polybius' description of kingship and tyranny have distinct parallels with his understanding of Hellenic and barbaric characteristics, but also crucially with the arc of the king's life and career.

Polybius outlines kingship, in accordance with Greek thought from the fourth century, as the rule of one man willingly accepted by their subjects and characterised by the use of reason, duty and justice (Plb. 6.4.2; a reiteration of a point earlier in Philip's story, when he attacked Thermus; 5.11.6), and comes about through training and the correction of defects (6.4.7: *μετὰ κατασκευῆς καὶ διορθώσεως*).⁶⁸ These qualities prove advantageous to the community and therefore also for the person who exhibits them since their authority is accepted and maintained (Plb. 6.6-12; cf. 5.10.9-11 and 7.11.11). Kings are also expected to fortify their lands and acquire new territory, but not for the sake of their own power and interests. These are to be accomplished for the sake of the wider community: for the protection of their subjects and allies, and for the provision of resources (6.7.4: *τὸ μὲν τῆς ἀσφαλείας χάριν, τὸ δὲ τῆς δαυιλείας τῶν ἐπιτηδείων τοῖς ὑποτεταγμένοις*). It relates to the Hellenic qualities of order, social responsibility and self-sacrifice. Finally, kings should live like everyone else (i.e. the nobility) and not distinguish themselves from their people by superior dress, food or drink; in doing this a true king would remove himself from criticism and jealousy (6.7.5).

Before the interruption of book 6, despite a couple of hiccups along the way, Philip has consistently been described as devoted to the propagation of these good 'Hellenic' qualities. In thinking of the wider community, he captured and fortified strategic locations upon his allies' request (for instance, the fortresses of Ambracus and Oeneadae in Ambracia; 4.61-66). He moved the Social War into Aetolia and its waters in 218 to protect his Acarnanian and Epirote allies, as well as those in the Peloponnese, from having their territory overrun by Aetolian raiding parties (5.2.1-3). The acquisition of booty during the attack on Thermus helped to pay and supply the military forces of the Symmarchy.⁶⁹ Finally, the subsequent swift attack on Sparta in 218 removed the threat of invasion from the south and established the security of all the members of the alliance (5.18-24). While there was always a degree of restricted access to the king at the Macedonian court, there is no mention of Philip distinguishing himself from his Macedonian or Greek associates in his dress, meals or love affairs.⁷⁰ Finally, in the review of

⁶⁸ Polybius' ideas regarding kingship go back to traditions formed in the fourth century BC and were commonplace in the Hellenistic period; see, for instance, Isocrates *Nicocles*, Xenophon, *Agésilas*, *Cyropaedia* and *Hiero*, and Arist. *Pol.* 1284a-1315b. For Hellenistic views on kingship, see also Archytas, Diotogenes, Sthenidas and Ecphantus, *On Kingship* (Stobaeus, *Anthologia*, 4, 1, 132, 135-38; 4, 5, 61; 4, 7, 61-66). Cf. Walbank (1984), Bringman (1993), Billows (1995) 56-80, and Ma (2003).

⁶⁹ For the practical benefits of this venture, see Nicholson (2018b).

⁷⁰ On the Macedonian courts, Ma (2011); Strootman (2013) and (2014); and Carney (2015).

these years in book 7, our historian states that because of his reasonable, just, and generous community-friendly conduct, Philip's governance was willingly accepted not only by his Greek allies in the Symmachy but also by his own people (Plb. 7.11.4-7). Therefore, he very much fits the description of a good Hellenic king in these early years.

In talking about the transition from kingship to tyranny in book 6, Polybius states that it often occurs when the office has been passed down by hereditary succession and the successors, finding themselves fully secure in their position, begin giving way to their desires (Plb. 6.7.6-7: ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις ἐπόμενοι διὰ τὴν περιουσίαν...).⁷¹ Monarchs start to believe that they should be differentiated from their subjects by their dress and meals, and should be met with no opposition in their pursuit of sexual pleasure (6.7.7: παρὰ τῶν μὴ προσηκόντων). These unrestrained and selfish actions cause offense, envy, and hatred, and turn the subjects against the ruler and revolt (6.7.8). They become, in other words, grasping and driven by passion.

In book 2, in accordance with the traditional Greek view of tyranny, Polybius also considered the very word 'tyrant' to denote the height of impiety and every injustice and lawlessness towards human beings (2.59.6: αὐτὸ γὰρ τοῦνομα περιέχει τὴν ἀσεβεστάτην ἔμφασιν καὶ πάσας περιείληφε τὰς ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀδικίας καὶ παρανομίας). They subvert the Hellenic principles of freedom, autonomy and equality as demonstrated by the Peloponnesian tyrants installed by the Macedonian kings before the rise of the Achaean League (Plb. 2.41-44; 9.29.5). They are perpetual enemies of the champions of liberty (8.35.6: πᾶς τύραννος πολεμωτάτους αὐτῷ νομίζει τοὺς τῆς ἐλευθερίας προεστῶτας; cf. Machanidas at 11.10.9 and Nabis at 13.6.2). Slayers of a traitor or tyrant, Polybius claims, are everywhere met with honour and distinction (2.56.15: ἀποκτείνοντας... ὁ δὲ τὸν προδότην ἢ τύραννον τιμῶν καὶ προεδρείας τυγχάνει παρὰ πᾶσιν; cf. 2.60.2) – an old sentiment which parallels the resistance and fight against the barbarian. In Book 5, again while discussing Philip's behaviour at Thermus, Polybius claims, as had been the case for centuries, that a tyrant rules using fear and force and is hated by his subjects and hates them in return (Plb. 5.11.5-6: τυράννου μὲν γὰρ ἔργον ἐστὶ τὸ κακῶς ποιοῦντα τῷ φόβῳ δεσπάζειν ἀκουσίῳ).⁷² We might also note the refusal of the Cyreneans, in book 31, to submit willingly to Ptolemy VII whose government and whole disposition they considered to be tyrannical (31.18.14: ἀλλὰ τυραννικὴν οὖσαν τὴν ἀρχὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν ὄλην αἴρεσιν).

Alongside convergences with ochlocracy and the masses as Champion pointed out in 2004, therefore, Polybius' barbarism also has strong parallels with tyranny and tyrants, since they are said to exhibit the same characteristics of injustice, graspingness, impiety, greed, irrationality, and lawlessness. This is also brought out in the Thermus episode when Polybius

⁷¹ This is an important innovation in Greek political thought. Concern about hereditary succession goes back to Herodotus, cf. 5.92, and Aristotle, cf. *Pol.* 1286b22, 1312b17 and 1313a10; however, Polybius' assertion that tyranny emerges from kingship and not from any other constitution (i.e. democracy or oligarchy) and most often from hereditary succession is an innovation (cf. Arist. 1316a17-1316a25).

⁷² For these *topoi* regarding tyranny, see for instance Hdt. 3.80; 5.92; Thuc. 1.13,1, 17; Eur. *Supp.* 399-449; Plato *Rep.* 8.566e-67a, 9.573c-80c; Xen. *Hieron* 1.11-12,15 and *Cyropaedia* 1.3.18; Aristotle *Pol.* 1279b4-7, 16-17, 1295a1-1295a24, 1310a39-b14, 1310b40-1311a22, 1313a34-1316b27; Lewis (2006), (2009); and Mitchell (2013).

claims that Philip's impious destruction of religious property, his savagery and lawlessness (5.11.2: ἀσέλγειαν καὶ παρανομίαν), were the result of excessive passion (Plb. 5.11.1; 5.11.4: τρόπου καὶ θυμοῦ λυττῶντος ἔργον) and inspired by his Illyrian (barbarian) adviser Demetrius of Pharos. Philip's tyranny is brought on by barbarian influence. Yet, Polybius' ochlocracy may well be worse and more barbaric or closer to barbarism than tyranny as Champion argued, since the chaotic, bestial behaviour of barbarians is not so prevalent in Polybius' description of tyrants. Despite this, however, it is possible for a ruler to go beyond tyranny, as we will see with Philip V, and into the depths of barbaric *thumos* as he exhibits animalistic behaviour and falls into madness.

Beyond Tyranny and into Animalistic Behaviour and Madness (216-200 BC)

Despite his charge of impiety and savagery at Thermus, Book 5 was not the place that Polybius says the king underwent his turn for the worse. Thermus was only a taste, a momentary lapse in Hellenic, kingly behaviour inspired by a barbarian Illyrian adviser. Philip's change was deliberately delayed until book 7 so that it would come after Polybius' important discussion of constitutions in the previous book. It begins when he encourages violent uprisings in Messene, an allied Greek city and part of the Achaean League, and nearly installs a garrison on its citadel in 215 BC (Plb. 7.10-14) – nearly, therefore, depriving a Greek city connected with the excellence of the Achaean League, of its civic autonomy and liberty.⁷³ As at Thermus, Polybius claims this lapse occurred because Philip had strayed from the guidance of the Hellenic Aratus and followed that of Demetrius of Pharos. Since the report of Rome's defeat at Trasimene in 217, Demetrius had insinuated himself into the king's good graces and stoked his ambitions for universal dominion (Plb. 5.108.5-7). The attempt on Messene in 215 was instigated for Macedonian interests, to secure the Greek south before conquest and expansion northwards, and it contravened the interests of the wider community of his Greek allies in the Symmachy and worked against the Hellenic ideals of freedom and autonomy. Philip was ready to break faith with the Messenians (7.12.8: παρασπονδεῖν), to commit great impiety (7.13.6: τῶν μεγίστων ἀσεβημάτων), and he developed, Polybius states, a taste for human blood, slaughter and treachery. He was not a man who had turned into a wolf, but a king who has turned into a cruel tyrant (7.13.7-8: οὐ λύκος ἐξ ἀνθρώπου κατὰ τὸν Ἀρκαδικὸν μῦθον, ὡς φησιν ὁ Πλάτων, ἀλλὰ τύραννος ἐκ βασιλέως ἀπέβη πικρός).⁷⁴

While Aratus is able to halt Philip's complete change of conduct towards the Greeks at this point by reminding him of the ill-will this will arouse in his allies, i.e. the Achaean League, his influence is not strong enough to last more than a year. Philip comes back in 214 BC and garrisons the city (Plb.8.8). Here, he is an enemy acting out of passion, rather than reason, (8.8.1: δυσμενικῶς, θυμῷ τὸ πλεῖον ἢ λογισμῷ χρώμενος), committing impious and unlawful acts (8.8.4: ἀσέβειαν... καὶ παρανομίαν). The Aetolian ambassador, Chlaeneas, later adds cruelty, faithlessness, and betrayal to the list (9.30.1-2 ἀσέβειας... ὀμότητης... ἀθεσία καὶ

⁷³ For Greek freedom and autonomy in this period, see Dmitriev (2011).

⁷⁴ Cf. Plato, *Republic* 8.565d-566a.

παρασπόνδης...). By this deed, Philip has fully turned away from Aratus and his teaching and influence. By focusing his attention on conquest in such a way as to side-line his Greek allies, Polybius asserts that Philip deviated from good leadership based on the Hellenic values of magnanimity, goodwill and communal interest. Instead he aligns himself with tyrannical leadership and the more barbaric qualities of unbridled passion and irrationality.

Following this capture of Messene, Philip would present a threat to Greek freedom and autonomy in his pursuit of power and expansion in Polybius' narrative for the next 17 years (214-197 BC). Almost all the descriptors attached to Philip and his actions from now on are those negatively connected with tyranny and even barbarism: injustice, graspingness, greed, irrationality, lawlessness and beastlike behaviour. A few examples from across these years will prove illustrative.

In 213, the king is guilty of further great violence (τὴν μεγίστην ἀσέλγειαν) towards friends, and symbolically kills off his Hellenic influence, as he poisons Aratus (8.12.1-6). In 209, his violence and lawlessness (ἀσέλγειαν...καὶ παρανομίαν) are reinforced by his pursuit of unmarried and married women (10.26.2-4). In a second attack on Thermus in 208 Philip again succumbs to passion (χρώμενος τῷ θυμῷ), destroying all that remains of the sanctuary; such impiety against the gods while angry at men is, Polybius asserts, a sign of all irrationality (11.7.3: τὸ γὰρ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὀργιζόμενον εἰς τὸ θεῖον ἀσεβεῖν τῆς πάσης ἀλογιστίας ἐστὶ σημεῖον). In 203, Philip and Antiochus III, having agreed to distribute Ptolemaic possessions between them upon the succession of an infant Ptolemy V, are described as acting worse than tyrants who offer paltry pretexts for shameful acts.⁷⁵ They offer no reason at all for their conduct and behave with a lack of restraint and in a beastly manner (15.20.3: ἀνέδην καὶ θηριωδῶς). Polybius angrily exclaims that this treaty only reveals the kings' impiety towards the gods, cruelty towards men, and unbounded greed (15.20.4: τῆς πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς ἀσεβείας καὶ τῆς πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ὀμότητος, ἔτι δὲ τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης πλεονεξίας τῶν προειρημένων βασιλέων). Greed and beastlike behaviour are new in Philip's already long arsenal of crimes and only emphasise his barbarity at the height of his power. The king exhibits further cruelty and impiety towards Greeks (ὑπὲρ τῆς εἰς τοὺς φίλους ὀμότητος... παρὰ πᾶσι τοῖς Ἑλλησι τὴν ἐπ' ἀσεβείᾳ δόξαν) in helping his kinsmen Prusias I of Bithynia capture the island of Kios, an Aetolian ally, while at peace with the Aetolians (15.22-23). Finally, he exhibits madness (τὸ μανιώδη) and is blind to reason (σκοτούμενοι καὶ παραλογιζόμενοι τοῖς λογισμοῖς), that bastion of Polybius' Hellenism, after the battle of Lade in 201, when he fails to continue with what Polybius considered to be his original plan of sailing against Alexandria (16.10.1-4).⁷⁶

Polybius had stated in Book 6 that accomplished or perfect men (ἀνδρὸς τελείου) are measured according to how honourably and nobly they cope with reversals of fortune (Plb. 6.2.5-7: μεταβολὰς τῆς τύχης μεγαλοψύχως δύνασθαι καὶ γενναίως ὑποφέρειν). During this period of success, according to Polybius' schema, Philip has failed this test by giving in to excessive and

⁷⁵ For the historicity of this pact and the reaction it caused in Rome and the Greek East, see Eckstein (2005) and (2008) 121-230.

⁷⁶ See also Polybius' comments on Aratus' deficiencies in military field operations for a similar view on the

irrational behaviour and by insulting his own natural good character in doing so (cf. Plb. 7.11; 10.26.7-8).⁷⁷ He loses his reason in the wake of success, and thereby loses a vital part of what it means to be Hellenic.

5) Philip V of Macedonia in 200 BC: a barbarian?

One cautionary note should be highlighted. Although Polybius frequently refers to Philip as a tyrant in the *Histories*, he never (at least in the surviving text) explicitly calls him a barbarian or describes his actions as barbaric, despite claiming that the king went beyond the actions of a tyrant and the many descriptors used that are connected with barbarity: injustice, irrationality, greed, self-interest, lack of restraint and beastlike behaviour and, of course, posing a threat to Hellenic culture. Even in Polybius' final comments on the king's life there is no such label or description, only his licentiousness regarding women and drink (25.3.7: τὴν...ἀσέλγειαν τὴν τε περὶ τὰς γυναῖκας καὶ περὶ τοὺς πότους) and his extreme deceitfulness and unlawfulness (25.3.9: ἀπιστότατος καὶ παρανομώτατος). The closest we get to this is in an Athenian speech to the Aetolians in 200 BC urging them to go to war against Philip. Unfortunately, Polybius' version in book 17 is lost and we only have Livy's account, based on Polybius', to fill in the gap:

...verum enim vero id se queri, quod is, qui Romanos alienigenas et barbaros vocet, adeo omnia simul divina humanaque iura polluerit, ut priore populatione cum infernis deis, secunda cum superis bellum nefarium gesserit.

“...what they [the Athenians] were complaining about was that the man who was calling the Romans ‘foreigners’ and ‘barbarians’ had so desecrated all human and divine laws as to wage an impious war against the gods of the underworld on his first expedition [his destruction of Athenian tombs], and against the gods in heaven above on his second [his destruction of Attic shrines].” (Livy 31.30.4)

While we must be wary of placing too much emphasis on this Livian passage, it does display a similar method of voicing barbarity through speech as we saw in the Greek claims of Roman barbarity, and the idea if not the words likely derive from Polybius. Furthermore, each of the speeches describing the Romans as barbarians has the Macedonian king in the opposite position: in 217 at Naupactus (5.104-5), in 210 at Sparta (9.28-39), in 207 at an Aetolian assembly (11.4-6). And even without the addition of the Athenians' speech in 200, this surviving sequence of speeches in Polybius sees a gradual shift in the attitude towards Rome and Macedon. With the Athenians' speech, it suggests that this shift is continuing. The Achaeans' decision to defect in 197 BC contributes to this reversal of opinion and attitude (Livy 32.20-22). The views expressed in these speeches may not have represented the reality of public opinion of all Greeks, yet Polybius' inclusion of them in the narrative suggests that he wished to give the general

inconsistency of men's conduct and competence (Plb. 4.8.7-8). For tyrants going mad, see Ogden (1997).

⁷⁷ Polybius believed that Philip was naturally disposed to kingly excellence and Hellenic qualities and only deviated from them due to age and external pressures (10.26.7-8). See Hau (2016) 48-55 for Polybius' comments on the ability to handle the vicissitudes of fortune, and particularly success or failure in military situations.

impression that the Romans were moving closer to the Greeks culturally, while the Macedonian king was moving further away.

His reluctance or refusal to term the king a barbarian reflects a similar reluctance to call the Romans barbarians in Polybius' work. There are places where Philip is clearly drawn close to the Greek commune (at the beginning of his reign) – although the king is never called a Greek, just the *eromenos* of the Greeks. There are also places where Philip is clearly alienated from the Greeks – in fact this is a large part of Polybius' overall description of the Macedonian. This assimilation and alienation depend on whether the king is working for or against the interests of the Greeks (like the Roman depiction). The lack of Greek or barbarian labels for Philip similarly forces him into a position of cultural ambiguity, and one even fuzzier than that of the Romans.

This ambiguity may be explained by considering the political and ideological position of the Macedonian-Antigonid kings in the Greek world. For some Greeks, even before Philip II and Alexander, the kings of Macedon were distanced from barbarian status by their connection with the Greeks, their claims to Argive ancestry, and their promotion of Hellenic culture.⁷⁸ Throughout the Hellenistic period, the Macedonian kings had developed their rule alongside the Greeks and even established a common language of negotiation and benefaction. As benefactors, the kings were explicitly honoured by the Greek cities: the Achaeans held a festival in honour of Antigonus Doseon and changed the name of the city of Mantinea to Antigoneia after its capture (28.19.3; 30.29.3; cf. Plb. 2.70.5; Plut. *Arat.* 45.1-6), the Athenians had tribes and festivals named after the Antigonids (Livy 31.44), the Argives considered them to have Argive descent and included the Antigonid king's name after the gods' in the opening of their assemblies (Livy 32.25). The Romans, in contrast, were less familiar to the Greeks,⁷⁹ and both sides experienced difficulties in understanding how to approach and interact with each other diplomatically – the most obvious example being the Aetolian misunderstanding of what offering *deditio in fidem* meant, a Roman gesture considered neither 'just' nor 'Greek' (Plb. 20.10.6: οὔτε δίκαιον... οὔθ' Ἑλληνικόν and Livy 36.28.4-6: *quae moris Graecorum non sint* (Phainias) and *more Romano* (Glabrio)).⁸⁰ Moreover, alongside his savagery and ruthlessness, Philip had also demonstrated reason and efficiency in his actions and could not therefore be a true barbarian as these qualities were diametrically opposed to such a status.

Polybius may also have felt that he could not openly call Philip a barbarian without receiving censure from some of his Greek audience and that it was better to let them come to this conclusion themselves. Many Greeks were closely attached to the Macedonian kings and would have considered such a claim a betrayal of Macedon's previous acts of goodwill, generosity and protection (note Plb. 9.28-31; 11.4-6). The decision made by the Achaean League, Philip's most significant Greek ally, to defect to Rome in 197 was controversial – the majority seems rather to have favoured Philip's cause (App. *Mac.* 8), and Argos, Dyme and Megalopolis defected from

⁷⁸ Cf. fn. 12.

⁷⁹ The nature of early contacts between Greece and Rome is controversial; see Gruen (1984) 62-63 for a survey of the evidence and scholarship. Cf. Eckstein (2008) 1-76 for the years 264-217 BC.

⁸⁰ For the full episode, see Plb. 20.10 and Livy 36.28. See also Eckstein (1995) and Moreno-Leoni (2014) for *deditio in fidem* and the Aetolian misunderstanding of the concept.

the League immediately following the decision. Moreover, calling a Hellenistic king a tyrant was one thing – a slur against a political opponent or oppressor. Calling a Hellenistic king a barbarian was an entirely different matter: it would go one step further and remove them from a Greek cultural context, ignoring their long-standing contributions to Hellenic society as well as ignoring the fact that the Greeks had lived under their influence for generations. Such a claim would also have suggested that Polybius was more in favour of Rome than would have been acceptable to many Greeks at the time. Therefore, as Polybius refrains from openly labelling the Romans barbarians for diplomatic reasons, so too does he refrain from labelling the Macedonian king one. This caution, on both the Roman and Macedonian front, reveals the delicate situation that Polybius found himself in, navigating between the Romans and the old loyalties and sentiments of the Greek, or perhaps more specifically Achaean, world.

Moreover, despite the fact that Polybius never explicitly calls Philip a barbarian, the accumulation and frequency of negative descriptions culminating in lack of restraint, beastlike behaviour and madness sets up the narrative in such a way as to lead a Greek reader to this conclusion. His description of the king's conduct has clearly and steadily been worsening since 215, and by 200 the king had instilled so much fear in the Greeks and threatens Hellenic liberty to such an extent that they send requests with increasing frequency to Rome, now the seemingly safer more Hellenic option, to intercede on their behalf (Plb. 21.25.2; 22.1-2, 6.1-6, 11.2; 23.1-2). The readers, therefore, are guided to this conclusion from the information supplied in his narrative.

Furthermore, that the readers should come to this conclusion is not altogether unreasonable if we consider that the portrayal of Philip and the Macedonians as barbarians was not altogether new. A half century earlier the poet, Alcaeus of Messene, for instance, plays on the imagery of the Persian Wars in an epigram pertaining to the Second Macedonian War, portraying Philip V as another Xerxes invading Greece (*Anth. Pal.* 5: Ἄγαγε καὶ Χέρξης Πέρσων στρατόν Ἑλλάδος ἐς γᾶν...). The Lesser Attalid Dedication on the Athenian acropolis, a gift from Attalus I of Pergamon which was likely dedicated upon his alliance with the Athenians and Romans in 200 BC against Philip, also equates the Macedonians with giants (Paus. 1.25.2), a theme which appears again in the Great Altar of the 160s as one of the giants has a Macedonian starburst on its shield.⁸¹ Polybius' implication that Philip was barbaric, therefore, was not entirely unprecedented in the Greek world, but he had to suggest such a status with caution in his *Histories* especially in light of the past relationship between the Achaean League and Macedon.

Finally, by implicitly aligning Philip's actions with those of a barbarian, Polybius was able to give additional weight to his explanation of why it was necessary and appropriate for the Achaeans to defect from their alliance with him. Philip had, in a sense, swapped places with the

⁸¹ Cf. Stewart (2000) 40 for anti-Macedonian imagery on the Great Altar and (2004) 218-36 for the Lesser Attalid Dedication. See also Crawley Quinn (2013) 347-48 for this anti-Macedonian propaganda by the Attalids. Crawley Quinn justifiably saw Polybius repeating this imagery a half century later, although then claims that the historian no longer needed to define the Macedonians as barbarians as they were now firmly under Roman control. This, however, does not appreciate Polybius' documentation of shifting Greek opinion and politics, nor his subtle use of cultural politics which changes the ideological positions of Macedon and Rome in the *Histories*.

Romans: he started off as close to a Hellenic king as a Macedonian king could be, as the *eromenos* of the Greeks, protector of Hellenism against barbarians in the West. He then steadily shifted towards tyrannical and barbaric conduct, being influenced by barbarians and unable to handle success in a reasonable and moderate fashion. The Romans, in contrast, had started off as barbarians in Greek thought and gradually shifted towards Hellenism in Polybius' narrative. In the decisive conflict between Philip and Rome in the Second Macedonian War (200-197 BC), the Romans are only at the very beginning of their descent, while Philip has already fallen (cf. 18.35).

6) The War against the Barbarian

Polybius' commentary on the king's actions clearly showcases increasing signs of tyrannical and barbaric behaviour so that what happens next is not surprising. In the following book of the *Histories*, book 17, which is unfortunately lost but can be tentatively recovered from Livy, the Romans declare war on Philip, and the Epirotes and Achaean League defect to Rome in 198 BC (Livy 32.14, 19-25).⁸² This decision to leave the alliance with Macedon was primarily motivated by fear: on the one hand, fear that Philip would not be able to stand up to the might of Rome, but also, on the other, fear of the Macedonian king's own increasing aggression in Greece (32.21.7-36). Philip became something to be fought against, a threat to Hellenic freedom – he now represented the opposite of what he had done 20 years before. At the same time, according to Polybius, the Achaean League has reached the peak of its constitutional excellence under the leadership of Philopoemen and Lycortas (2.40.2), and the disintegration of the relationship with Macedon is explained by this difference. The Achaean defection becomes a symbolic fight for Hellenism rather than a betrayal of it.

In Polybius' account of the Second Macedonian War, Rome, represented by T. Quinctius Flaminius, and the Achaean League represent good-governance and Hellenism, Philip represents the irrational and selfish state of tyrannical bad governance and barbarism.⁸³ In this fight between liberty and tyranny, between Hellenism and barbarism, for the Greeks there could/should only be one outcome: the defeat of barbarian Macedon and the victory of Hellene-protecting Rome.⁸⁴ This swap in position began in 200 BC with Rome's ultimatum to Philip to leave the Greek peoples free (Plb. 16.27.1-5, 34.1-7, 18.1.13-14; Livy 31.8.3-4, 14-15, 18) and escalates when Flaminius consults the Greeks and allows them to make demands at the conference of Nicaea before Cynoscephalae (Plb. 18.2-3).⁸⁵ Polybius, at this point, also portrays

⁸² Briscoe (1973) 192, 200-215; see also pp. 1-3 for Livy's use of Polybius for this period.

⁸³ Note in Alcaeus of Messene's epigram (*Anth. Pal.* 5) representing Philip V as another Xerxes, Flaminius appears as the liberator of the Greeks (“ἄγαγε καὶ Ξέρξης Πέρσαν στρατὸν Ἑλλάδος ἐς γᾶν, καὶ Τίτος εὐρείας ἄγαγ’ ἀπ’ Ἰταλίας; ἀλλ’ ὁ μὲν Εὐρώπῃ δοῦλον ζυγὸν αὐχένι θήσων ἦλθεν, ὁ δ’ ἀμπαύσων Ἑλλάδα δουλοσύνας”).

⁸⁴ For this sentiment, see Eur. *IA* 1400-1401: “it is right that Greeks should rule barbarians, mother, but not that barbarians should rule Greeks. For they are slaves, Greeks are free”; and also Arist. *Pol.* 1252b6-9, 1254b15-1255b15. For barbarians as the natural enemy of the Greeks and the idea of barbarian war, see Mitchell (2007) 128-138, 169-202.

⁸⁵ For the conference of Nicaea, see Walbank (1940/60) 159-163 and (1957-79) II.548-64. For the confrontation of Philip and Flaminius in this period, see Pfeilschifter (2005) 91-111.

Flamininus positively, despite his deception of Philip in suggesting that peace was still an option (18.10-11). The Roman appears in isolation as no other Roman consultants are mentioned, although an earlier passage indicates Appius Claudius Nero had accompanied him (cf. 18.8.6). Flamininus stands alone as a protector of Greek freedom – and he is said to exhibit the good qualities of foresight (προνοίας), sagacity (ἀγχίνους), managing public and private affairs with skill and good sense despite not being more than thirty (18.12: ...εὐστόχως ἐχειρίζε καὶ νουνεχῶς οὐ μόνον τὰς κοινὰς ἐπιβολάς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς κατ' ἰδίαν ἐντεύξεις, ὥσθ' ὑπερβολὴν μὴ καταλιπεῖν. καίτοι γε [καὶ] νέος ἦν κομιδῆ· πλείω γὰρ τῶν τριάκοντ' ἐτῶν οὐκ εἶχε...)⁸⁶ Chance had nothing to do with his success (18.12.2). As a solitary Roman leader demonstrating excellent leadership and representing the interests of the Greeks, Polybius' Flamininus challenges the Macedonian king, once the 'darling' of the Greeks, for the position of their saviour.

The decisive battle between the Macedonians and Romans is confused by darkness, mist and hills, and the advantage changes sides a number of times (18.18-27; Livy 33.6-10).⁸⁷ The episode presents the two generals, Philip and Flamininus, in isolation again and in the same dichotomy of rationality vs. irrationality, as has been developing over the course of the narrative. In every instance Flamininus is said to move with care and control, Philip with impulsiveness. Disaster for Macedon finally comes when Philip is compelled to go to the assistance of his mercenaries on the right wing and decide the whole battle, Polybius proclaims, on the spur of the moment before his centre and left are fully drawn up (18.23-24; Livy 33.8). Yet even then the Roman left-wing is in critical danger until a tribune from the victorious right-wing wheels round behind the Macedonians and routs them (18.25-26; Livy 33.9-10). The whole episode is plagued with uncertainty, and victory comes about only through the chance actions of an unknown tribune at the end. Polybius' voice, so prominent in the majority of the text, is also absent, creating a narrative free from comment and full of suspense. The closeness of the victory not only reflects the historical reality, but also the closeness of the ideological space that the Macedonians and Romans occupy. Neither are fully barbarian or fully Greek, and it is over the shades of grey that they are fighting.

Despite the outcome of the battle, the transition of Macedon into a barbaric space and the Romans into a Greek one is still disputed even in the narrative as the Greeks (particularly the Aetolians) suspect that the Romans will only replace Philip as masters of Greece and not preserve Hellenic freedom (18.45.1-46.3). This finally changes with Flamininus' unexpected announcement at the Isthmian Games in 196 BC that all the Greek cities, even the disputed

⁸⁶ Before his consulship, Flamininus had only held the quaestorship (Livy 32.7.8-9). He had also served as military tribune (Plut. *Flam.* 1.3), pro-praetor in 205 and 204 (Livy 29.13.6; Plut. *Flam.* 1.4) and served on two commissions in Samnium and Apulia in 201/0 (Livy 21.4.1-3) and Venusia in 200 (Livy 31.49.6). On Flamininus and his career, see Walbank (1957-79) II.559-60; Eckstein (1976); Champion (2004) 213-4.

⁸⁷ For the battle of Cynoscephalae, see Walbank (1940/60) 167-72 for a narrative and (1957-79) II.272-81 for Polybius' access to Aetolian and Macedonian sources for this event; Hammond (1988) 60-76 demonstrates Polybius' accuracy in describing the geography of the site of the battle; Eckstein (1995) 183-192 points out how Polybius has tailored this battle and his description of Philip's and Flamininus' actions to highlight good and bad generalship; while following Polybius' overall narrative here, Livy produces a much more evenly matched fight between the two commanders to enhance the drama and desperation of the battle.

‘fetters’ of Greece (Chalcis, Corinth and Demetrias), are to be free (18.46.7-15).⁸⁸ While the Roman commissioners had been reluctant to release these strategic locations, Flamininus had prevailed and persuaded them of the necessity of fulfilling this hope to gain the goodwill of the Greeks (18.45.8-12). During the announcement, the Roman is even proclaimed a saviour of the Greeks (18.46.12: σωτήρα προσφωνῆσαι βουλόμενοι; cf. Livy 34.50.9: *servatorem liberatoremque acclamantibus*; and Alcaeus of Messene, *Anth. Pal.* 16.5), and not just from Macedonian but also Roman interference. This beneficent policy represents the excellence of Rome at the height of its constitutional peak.⁸⁹ This outcome validates the Achaean decision to leave Philip and finalises the exchange of the Macedonian and Roman positions politically and ideologically. It can therefore be argued that the Achaeans showed foresight and reason in this decision to leave. Philip had failed the Greeks by accepting the role of leading and protecting them against a ‘barbarian’ invasion in 217 BC and then turning into the very threat they feared. The Romans had also accepted the role of protector of Hellenism in 200 BC against Philip’s threat to Greek liberty, but under the insightful and reasoned influence of Flamininus they had fulfilled this promise by defeating this tyrant/barbarian and allowing the Greeks to remain free from interference.

7) Conclusion and Wider Implications

Polybius’ *Histories* is more than just a historical and diplomatic text.⁹⁰ It is also a document of ideological redefinition, and the first recorded (and possibly earliest) struggle of a Greek coming to terms with Rome’s supremacy.⁹¹ When we use his text as a source, this extra dimension must not be ignored since it is part of the very foundation of his work. The *Histories* are the voice of a politically experienced survivor of world change trying to figure out and take control of where he and his people now fit into a world dominated by Rome. Because of this, we cannot read his work without recognising that his whole construction of the rise of Rome and defeat of Macedon is framed by an ideological and cultural backdrop deeply rooted in elite Greek thought.

The *Histories* are also evidence of a Greek reassessing what it means to be ‘Greek’ and ‘barbarian’ following political, cultural and ideological crisis and large-scale change. While there is not a complete correlation between constitutional quality and cultural definition, Polybius

⁸⁸ Polybius says this was Philip V’s own expression for the three cities of Chalcis, Demetrias and Corinth (18.11.5: πέδας Ἑλληνικάς; Plut. *Arat.* 16.5: πέδας τῆς Ἑλλάδος; cf. Livy 32.37.4: *compedes Graeciae*). Macedonian control of these three cities impinged on Greek freedom as the occupation of Corinth allowed control of the Peloponnese, that of Chalcis control of Locris, Boeotia and Phocis, and that of Demetrias, Thessaly, Magnesia and the entrance into Macedonia (18.11.5-7).

⁸⁹ This title implies divine honours (cf. Plut. *Dem.* 10.4; *Flam.* 16.3; Diod. 20.46.2, 100.3; Paus. 1.8.6; *Syll.* 390, I.27) and is epigraphically attested in relation to Flamininus: *Syll.* 592 (Gythion), *Année épig.* (1929) 24 f., no.99; Bouquet *BCH* (1964) 607-9 (Achaean dedication by Aristainos); Daux *BCH* (1964) 569-76 (Titeia at Argos, 195 BC); Mastrokostas *REA* (1964) 309 f. (Thessaly).

⁹⁰ Cf. Thornton (2013) for the *Histories* as a diplomatic document representing ‘the diplomacy of the defeated’.

⁹¹ Cf. Hendersen (2001). For later attempts by Greeks, e.g. Pausanias, Plutarch and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, to come to terms with Rome and Roman imperialism, see Goldhill (2001) and Schmitt & Wiater (2011) for Greek identity in the first century BCE.

redefines Hellenism by connecting it more explicitly with political typology than ever before. Hellenic characteristics (reason, bravery, moderation, justice, liberty, and self-sacrifice) are produced by the positive forms of kingship, aristocracy and democracy; barbaric/uncivilised ones (irrationality, cowardice, greed, lawlessness, slavery, and self-interest) by the negative forms of tyranny, oligarchy and ochlocracy. Hellenism is connected with good government, 'civilisation', education, and reason and can therefore be exhibited in peoples usually viewed as non-Greeks by the Greek community; the same also applies to barbarity and traditionally Greek peoples. In writing a 'universal' history which touches on all areas of the *oikoumene*, Polybius implicitly claims his version of Hellenism to be the one to define the new world. All peoples are measured according to his revised criteria. He becomes not just a historian and political/military aide, but also a definer of cultures.

Based on this framework, Polybius is able to control and construct the image of the larger powers who ruled over him. And in this he is speaking to both the Greeks and the Romans. His ideological positioning of Rome and Macedon asserts and denies respectively the political legitimacy of these two larger powers through a Hellenic framework. The use of such a framework not only offered his Greek audience a way to understand the Romans but also urged them to tolerate if not agree with Roman authority for the time being (Polybius considered resistance after the Third Macedonian War futile and insane: e.g. 36.17.12-15; 38.3.8-13, 11.6, 13.8, 18.7-12). At the same time, Polybius acknowledged his Roman audience in this ideological positioning: despite Greek ambivalence towards Rome and even open support of Perseus during the Third Macedonian War, the Romans are portrayed as superior to the Macedonians politically and militarily and to rightly hold the top position in the Mediterranean. As one of the 1000 Greeks who were detained in Rome following this war for suspect allegiances, it would have been unwise for Polybius to deny that the Romans were the rightful victors, but also impractical given the fact that the Romans had defeated Macedon on numerous occasions.

Polybius therefore drew the Greeks and Romans closer together by reconfiguring Roman cultural standing in Hellenic terms. This would initiate a conversation about the Romans' 'Greekness' that would occupy Greeks and Romans for centuries to come. While some would take the next step and openly call the Romans Greeks (e.g. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. Rom.* Book 1), others would problematize this similarity, or situate them in a separate third category (e.g. Philo, *De vita contemplative* 48; Plut. *De fortuna Romanorum* 324B; Cicero, *De finibus* 2.49 and *De divination* 1.84).⁹² In a similar way, Polybius' portrait of Philip V as an excessive and mad tyrant associating more and more with barbarians also feeds into the old question of the 'Greekness' of the Macedonian kings. While disagreements regarding the 'Hellenicity' of the kings had quietened down since the Classical period, it seems that Polybius felt it acceptable to bring this issue up once again and, although not explicit, sets up his narrative to suggest a negative answer, dissociating the last two Antigonid kings from the Hellenic community.

⁹² Cf. Browning (2002) 262-263.

By questioning the place of Rome and Macedon in Greek terms, Polybius implicitly proclaims the continued relevance and importance of Hellenism. It is through the cultivation and demonstration of civilising 'Hellenic' characteristics (reason, bravery, moderation, etc.) that the Romans were able to succeed in defeating the Macedonian king. By contrast, Macedon failed because Philip deviated from them. This message contributes to the didactic and diplomatic functions of the *Histories* as a document educating (future) leaders and speaking to power as well as to fellow subordinated individuals. It urges the Greek elite to reassess their situation under Rome, the condition of their respective *politeiai*, and how they might consciously aim to cultivate Hellenic qualities (cf. Plb. 4.21.10-12). To the Romans, it shows respect for their power and achievements and a practical awareness of the Greeks' position in this wider world. Yet, while Polybius' description may at times praise the Romans as brilliant empire builders and saviours, it also warns and exhorts them to preserve their exemplary civilising *politeia*, customs and behaviour which brought them their success in the first place. Philip's fall from grace, from Hellenic kingship to barbaric tyranny, becomes an example of what will happen if they let their state and character deviate from its positive form. They will become a barbaric state (again) and lose the power they have gained.

This study has revealed and explored a key narrative strategy in Polybius' explanation of Rome's rise and Macedon's fall. While Hellenism creates a framework for defining peoples, at the same time it creates an additional causal dimension in explaining the changing power structure and political situation. In Hellenic thought, the natural order required that the barbarian always be fought off and defeated. Polybius plays on this ideological necessity by making the state of Macedon more barbaric and that of Rome more Hellenic. This scheme creates an internal logic to the development of his narrative, particularly for his Greek audience, as Hellenic Rome defeats barbaric Macedon. The rise of Rome, therefore, becomes the only right way for events to play out in ideological terms as well as political and military ones. This structuring, however, means that we must be careful not to take Polybius' depiction of an increasingly tyrannical and barbaric Philip and an increasingly Hellenic Rome at face-value, since these characteristics will have been enhanced to fit a story where the loser is the barbarian and the victor attached to the Hellenic community. This not only masks the intricacies of the interactions between the Greeks, Macedon and Rome in the third and second centuries, but also creates an unrealistic impression of simplicity and inevitability. For this reason, we cannot completely rely on Polybius' portrait of Philip or the Romans in this period for historical accuracy. We do not have a history of Macedon in the third and second centuries in a true sense (as we do not of the sixth-fourth centuries BC), but rather the history of the relationship between the Greeks and the Macedonian kings from the Greek perspective. Equally, Polybius' history of the rise of Rome is about the Greek world, and the relationship between the Greeks and the Romans from the Greek perspective.

Repositioning these two powers also played into a personal aim for Polybius: protecting the standing of the Achaean League by justifying its decision to leave its alliance with Macedon in 198 BC and side with Rome. What may have been considered a betrayal of Macedon and the Greeks is recast as an attempt to preserve Greek culture from a barbaric threat. Polybius is able

to suggest that the Achaeans' strong adherence to and embodiment of Hellenic qualities forced them to change allegiance, since Philip no longer represented or protected Greek interests, but Rome did. The decision was a hard one but proved prudent in the end. This equally defends Polybius' own claims to 'Greekness' as an Achaean elite, since his stance may have been suspect to some Greeks in the mid-second century after his seventeen-year internment in Rome, his attachment to the Scipios, and settlement of Peloponnesian cities under Roman rule after the Achaean War (for evidence of suspicion towards Roman sympathisers leading up to and during the Achaean War in 146 BC, see 38.12.3-5).⁹³ By suggesting that this choice was the right one (even if not an ideal one), his authority as a Greek author and historian speaking to the Greek elite is also implicitly corroborated. While he was writing about Rome and showed admiration for its *politeia*, he could still be trusted not to encourage or force the Greeks down the path of the barbarian since he was instead upholding and protecting Hellenic culture.

This last point only emphasises how closely this reworking of Hellenism, and the Macedonian and Roman attachment to it, was based on the personal and privileged experience of Polybius. This interpretation may not have been considered or accepted by other Greeks, particularly by those who had remained attached and loyal to Macedon until the end or those who had less experience of the Romans and their way of life. While Polybius' *Histories* are a very specific example of how a Greek dealt with the emergence of Roman power in the Greek East, they can, however, also tell us a lot about the flexibility and fluidity of Hellenism, the use of cultural politics to assert or deny legitimacy of peoples and certain modes of behaviour, and the delicate relationship between the Greeks and the Romans in the second century BC.

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⁹³ For Polybius' connection to the Scipios and particularly Scipio Aemilianus, see Plb. 31.23.1-25.1; 38.14.3, 19.1, 21.1-22.3 and Sommer (2013).

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