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Beginnings & Endings

146 BCE as an Imperial Moment, from Polybius to Sallust

Sarah H. Davies

1. Introduction

In a single year – 146 BCE – Roman generals extinguished two cities, in separate arenas of the Mediterranean: Carthage in the west, and Corinth in the east. This pairing of destructions created a historiographical ripple effect, one that has since made its way into modern textbooks. As such, the events of 146, from antiquity to modernity, have stood as a key turning point in the timeline of the Republic: at once an emblem of Rome’s newly evolved imperialist position, and as a starting point for an altered period in internal development, one of moral decay and ruinous discord. This paper explores the earliest evolution of «146» as a perceived juncture in Roman history, as it developed from second-century BCE origins in the work of Polybius to first-century interpretations in the work of Sallust.

Almost any modern textbook on Roman history will correlate the year 146 BCE with the so-called «Sallust’s Theorem,» and thereby conjoin a single date with a particular historiographical perspective. «146» has thus become fully synonymous with the notion that the elimination of Carthage in particular, as a «rival for empire» (*aemula imperii*), removed a «fear of the enemy» (*metus hostilis*) and inaugurated a disastrous process of moral decay within Rome. This modern perspective, however, conceals a number of different complexities. To begin with, ancient historians would not have conceived of «146» as an abstract and absolute date. Instead, the evolution of «146» as an ancient chronological marker was one that worked within an ancient historiographical tradition, one that connected specific events, via relativizing sequences, with a particular didactic, exemplary, and/or otherwise interpretive significance.¹ «146» in this sense could serve a number of different purposes, depending on the historian and his views regarding the scope and aim of his history, the histories written

1. For more on ancient chronologies, see FEENEY 2008, 2009.

by other authors, and of history itself as a literary pursuit of «truths.»² As such, the events of 146 ultimately evolved as a recognizably “moralizing” reference point in the ancient tradition of history-making, one that also granted special attention to events of purportedly synchronic significance (as in the classic example of the “simultaneous” battles of Salamis and Himera).³ «Sallust’s Theorem» is thus only one of many interpretations of «146» as a meaningful juncture, one that focused in particular on the interconnected demises of Carthage and, shockingly, Rome. This paper argues that a deeper understanding of Sallust’s unique contribution (one that was highly influential, especially given modern perspectives) must ultimately be read as a response to earlier interpretations, with Polybius standing out as the pioneer, the first to evaluate the events surrounding 146 as a momentous marker.

The paper begins with a broad overview of the second-century contexts for Polybius and his subject: both the “destructions” themselves and the intellectual and historiographical environment. It then presents Polybius as a fundamental bridge between Greek and Roman approaches, in his vision of time and of history as universal, cyclical, and replete with invaluable moral and practical lessons. Significantly, Polybius conceptualized his world as one increasingly interwoven by the hand of Fate, as a tightening fabric in which the constant growth and decay of individual state-systems was converging upon the lifespan of a single city: Rome. And yet (as Polybius hints), Rome itself – this newly minted version of a «world-city» (*kosmopolis*) – although winner of an unprecedented, global position, was not immune from the ravages of time and Fortune. Polybius’ final presentation of the “synchronic” fall of Carthage and Corinth thus left a glorious, and yet ominous framework for Rome’s (and the world’s) future. And it is here, this paper asserts, that Sallust made his most significant contribution, in crafting a new codification for «146» as a perceived turning point and, in doing so, critiquing the very traditions of history itself as a genre.

It is thus crucial to view Sallust as building upon concepts established by Polybius, in his first insertion of the events of 146 into the

2. On this notion of history as a literary pursuit of «truths,» see the excellent discussion in FELDHERR 2009.

3. Hdt. 7.166.

ancient historiographical tradition. The fact that Polybius was not alone in subsequently positing «146» as a chronological and ideological marker is evident in remarks made by Sallust's contemporaries, and in what is known about the *Histories* of Posidonius. Posidonius here represents a useful link for understanding the ways in which Sallust answers the questions, possibilities, and ambiguities raised by Polybius' core interpretation of 146. For in this light, Sallust ultimately posits that Rome's achievement of world dominion – as exemplified by the elimination of Carthage in particular – had indeed tipped the moral-political scales. Sallust thus engages with and adds to other portrayals, answering with a definitive «yes!» the question looming at the end of Polybius' work: yes, the scales had indeed tipped, from balanced leadership abroad and channeled competition at home, to despotism abroad and deterioration at home. And even more significantly – for Sallust in particular – the very lines between «at home» and «abroad» (*domi militiaeque*) had become irreparably blurred, and with them, the very notion that history itself, as a genre, was capable of fulfilling its central promises. Sallust thus viewed his own era as locked within two timescales, now inextricably confused: that of a cyclical world history, and that of Rome as an individual state. Together, in Sallust's presentation, the two – both individual *polis* and broader *kosmos* – had as one sunk through a distorted lens into their twilight years of political and moral vigor.

It is from this perspective that the ambiguities so often noted in Sallust's work become clear. For Sallust portrays the Republic of his times as fraught with instability and civil conflict: problems of fatal impact that at once appear to be *inherent*, and yet are also described as by-products of *external* conditions. These two seemingly contradictory source-points can only be reconciled by understanding Sallust's work as a response to Polybius, and as a conjoined Roman-*kosmos* history. From this perspective, the moral fortitude that had once made Rome such a success along the path to becoming global hegemon had in turn circled back, to become the undoing of the entire system, both Roman and pan-Mediterranean – and had even damaged the project of history-writing itself. It is here, then, that 146 gained its lasting place in ancient and modern historiography: as an unparalleled moment of beginning and ending, and as a combination of state and personal timeframes that mapped outwards, onto a universal and moralizing

plane.

2. The Events of 146 BCE: Contemporary Contexts

As the fifty-year indemnity period – which had been set by the treaty ending the Second Punic War – neared its expiration-date, the Roman Senate sent a series of embassies to Carthage. These embassies were tasked with the mission of investigating an ongoing set of disputes between Carthage and Massinissa's Numidian kingdom. Such disputes had not been a major concern for Rome over the past fifty years, but beginning around 153/2 BCE, the level of interest appears to have changed.⁴ The Numidians, as usual, accused Carthage of breaking treaty prohibitions against military re-armament, and the latest Roman embassy – of which the illustrious Cato the Elder was a member – seems to have taken note this time. Later historical traditions have since made infamous the subsequent debates between Cato the Elder, who pressed for war, and Scipio Nasica, who urged his peers that a «just cause» (*iusta causa*) must first exist.⁵ For modern scholars, this Cato-Nasica debate has often been conflated with Sallust's later statements about *metus hostilis* – to the extent that many have sought to understand the very causes of the Third Punic War in terms of Roman “fears” (rational and/or irrational, economic and/or geopolitical).⁶ However, such interpretations represent an anachronistic misreading of the ancient sources: one that elides over historiographical developments from the second to the first centuries and fails to approach Sallust

4. For more on the Roman embassies to Carthage, 201-153 BCE, and the issues surrounding the Numidian-Carthaginian disputes, see WALSH 1965; ASTIN 1967, App. III; DESANGES 1995. The ancient sources are: Polyb. 31.21.1-8; Livy 34.62.1-18 (193 BCE embassy); 40.17.1-6 (182 BCE embassy); 42.23.1-24.10 (174/2 BCE embassy); and *Per.* 47b (157 BCE embassy); *Per.* 47c and possibly 48g (154 BCE embassy); and Appian (*Pun.* 68b-c). The sources for Cato's embassy in 153 BCE are Livy, *Per.* 48a-b; Plut. *Cato* 26-27; App. *Pun.* 69.

5. For the Cato-Nasica debate, see Livy *Epit.* 49; Zon. 9.26; Ampel. 19.11; discussion and reconstruction from the sources in ASTIN 1967, 276f.; cf. DE SANCTIS 1907 - 1964, *Storia*, iv.3, p. 23f.

6. Economic motivations: MOMMSEN 1913, 239; ROSTOVITZ 1926, 12, p. 21; and to some degree, ROMANELLI 1959, 31f., esp. p. 34; DE SANCTIS 1907 - 1964 IV.3.20-24; and BARONOWSKI 1995, 28-29. More recently, and from an archaeological standpoint: RAKOB 1984, 10; 1985, 502f.

as his own, unique voice regarding «146.» There is no evidence to suggest that *metus* was ever part of the Roman vocabulary (or tactical thinking) in going to war in the second century. Instead, the political thought and rhetorical shaping of the Cato-Nasica debate were both framed along Thucydidean lines of justice versus necessity: Nasica arguing for the former, and Cato the latter (and in the process, laying the groundwork for a Silver Age rhetorical resurgence, which itself became enshrined in the modern catchphrase, *Carthago delenda est!*).⁷

Ultimately, however, both arguments held their sway: the Senate delayed another two to three years; a *iusta causa* emerged as a Carthaginian faction broke treaty regulations and engaged in a battle against the Numidians; and a failed *deditio* led to a war fought to the utter (in Cato's terms, necessary) dissolution of Carthage.⁸ The city was physically annihilated, and only a few months later, Corinth apparently followed suit in the East. And it is at this point that a recognition of Sallust as a distinct (and non-contemporary) voice becomes necessary. For other sources indicate that equal, if not amplified, weight was given to the fall of Corinth. Polybius even pauses to comment upon this event as the most tragic of *all* disasters in Greek history,

7. Elements of the modern English slogan put into Latin, *Carthago delenda est* («Carthage must be destroyed»), only occur in indirect speech in the ancient sources, and only appear for the first time in Pliny (*NH* 15.18.74): *Cato ... cum clamaret omni senatu Carthaginem delendam...* («Cato... when he was exclaiming before all the Senate, that Carthage must be destroyed...»). Pliny is then followed by Florus (I.13.4): *Cato inexpressibili odio delendam esse Carthaginem, et cum de alio consuleretur, pronuntiabat.* («Cato, with an inexpressible hatred, was pronouncing that Carthage must be destroyed, even when he was making resolutions about another matter.») – as well as Aurelius Victor (*De Vir. Ill.* 47. 8): *Cato Carthaginem delendam censuit.* («Cato proposed that Carthage must be destroyed»). The Greek texts, on the other hand, possibly echoing the now lost account of Polybius, use the phrase: Καρχηδόνα μὴ εἶναι («Carthage is not to be/exist») – cf. Plut. 27.1; App. *Rom.* 10.10.69. In the latter passage, Appian also quotes Cato as asserting that Roman liberty would not be secure «until Carthage was removed»: πρὶν εἴξειν Καρχηδόνα. This last phrase possibly translates a Latin tradition, present in the text of Cicero, *De Sen.* 6.18 (= our earliest reference to Cato's speech, without using *delere* or a gerundive): *Karthagini male iam diu cogitanti bellum multo ante denuntio; de qua vereri non ante desinam, quam illam excisam esse cognovero.* («Since Carthage has now for a long time been plotting evil, I declare war in advance. Concerning this city, I will not cease to fear, until I know that it has been eliminated.»). See the discussion (and other early imperial Latin texts) in LITTLE 1934.

8. See the summary in ASTIN 1967.

since it was the only one brought upon the Greeks themselves, by means of their own folly. Archaeological evidence adds to the picture, indicating that the different “destructions” were attuned to the distinct circumstances and perceptions tied to each city. Carthage was burned and razed, as a long-standing nemesis, one that had failed in *deditio* and defied Rome in a three-year siege.⁹ Corinth, by contrast, escaped large-scale destruction and burning, and was instead subjected to systematic looting and formal abandonment.¹⁰ The Greek city, which did not have the same history of enmity with Rome (or a war debate on par with the Cato-Nasica drama) was «destroyed,» but in terms of cultural removal and appropriation and an end to its formal status as a *polis*. Different historiographical traditions could thus focus on the separate rhetorical, moral, and political implications of each calamity. The fact that Sallust chose to frame «146» in terms that focused predominantly on the elimination of Carthage (as *aemula imperii*) thus reflects a particular interpretation of a juncture with a set of known historiographical significances. In Sallust’s case, the perspective was

9. Carthage’s ancient citadel – “Byrsa” – contains a destruction layer some 2-3 meters thick, which consists of burned domestic items (pottery, figurines, cookware) and bones (both animal and human), mixed with rubble (cf. *Byrsa I-II* – esp. *II*, p. 15-18, with an overview of the area’s stratigraphy). In the southwest corner of this hill, late nineteenth-century excavations uncovered a Late Punic mass grave: an unlined burial pit, filled with several hundred skeletons, carefully aligned and stacked, about four to five skulls deep in two end-to-end rows. This «fosse commune» was excavated by Delattre in 1890, and it does not conform to any other example of Punic burial. See DELATTRE 1891; 1893, 114-118; 1896, 77-80; LANCEL 1988, 85-6 – and *Byrsa I*, p. 21, no.s 20-22; SOREN, BEN KHADER, and SLIM 1990. Distinct burn-layers were also discovered in the ruined remains of a Late Punic house on the lower southern slopes of Byrsa (= the Tunisian rescue excavations at Rue Astarté: CHELBI 1980 and CHELBI 1984), as well as in the military harbor (cf. HURST and STAGER 1978, 27-8). Across the entire city, all sites that were occupied during the Late Punic period – from Byrsa to Quartier Magon to Bir Massouda – were covered in a substantial layer that has been dubbed the «RBPS» («Römisch bewegte punische Schichten» = «Roman-moved Punic layers»).

10. The only signs of physical damage that could be connected to Mummian capture of the city are the removal of the South Stoa monuments (cf. BRONEER 1954, *Corinth* I.iv, 100) and the existence of debris layers in two buildings: in the Strategeion (cf. WILLIAMS 1978, 56), and in the North Stoa, which only contained a military store of sling bullets and large stone catapult balls (cf. SCRANTON 1951, 175). For an overview of the evidence of post-Mummian informal occupation, in which Corinth’s public buildings were left largely in disrepair, see WISEMAN 1979, 494-496; GEBHARD and DICKIE 2003, 266-270; MILLIS 2006.

one framed in terms of world power, *metus hostilis*, and a subsequent, universal confusion of the axes of virtue and vice, glory and history.

Therefore, despite the distinctions between Carthage and Corinth, what is most significant remains the fact that contemporary and later authors all perceived the destructions of the two cities (whether they were taken singly or as a doublet) as part of one significant, synchronic node in the historiographical timeline. The destructions were depicted using *Ilioupersis* motifs, which not only continued a long-standing tradition of viewing the fall of cities (*urbs capta*) via the lens of Troy,¹¹ but also connected this particular «146» synchronism to the very chronology of world history, of which the Trojan War marked the original starting-point (for Greek and Roman authors alike).¹² An excellent example is preserved in the poetic verse of Polystratos (roughly contemporary with Polybius). Here, «146» – via the fall of Corinth in particular – is monumentalized as an act of revenge, inflicted by the descendants of Aeneas upon the Achaians who had sacked Troy and burned the house of Priam. The scene is one of the bones of the Achaians being dumped unceremoniously into a pile, to be left un-mournd and robbed of their funerals:

Lucius has smote the great Achaian Acrocorinth, the Star of Hellas
/ And the twin shores of the Isthmus. / One heap of stones covers
the bones of those felled by the spear; / And the sons of Aeneas left
un-mournd by funeral rites the Achaians who burnt the house of
Priam.¹³

Such modes of reflection and interpretation upon the destructions of Corinth and Carthage in turn addressed other contemporary intellectual developments, which alternately celebrated Rome as pan-Hellenic champion and hegemon, the «common benefactors of all the Greeks»,¹⁴ and denigrated Rome as international tyrant and kingdom

11. On this *urbs capta* motif, see PAUL 1982; and ROSSI 2002.

12. Cf. FEENEY 2008, 2009.

13. *Anth. Graec.* 7.297.

14. This phrase – *koinoi euergetai* – was a new one, which modified the older, and quite prominent, Hellenistic title, *euergetēs/ euergetai*. To highlight the truly pan-Hellenic, international and “globalized” nature of this new phrase, the terms *pantōn* or *pantōn tōn Hellenōn* were sometimes added. See ERSKINE 1994, esp. p. 76f.

doomed for disaster.¹⁵ At the same time, such perspectives dovetailed with increasingly prevalent “Hellenistic” and Stoic concepts of world-citizenship (*kosmopolites*) – the notion that the international, ostensibly pan-Hellenic, stage was becoming ever “globalized”: an interconnected, unified whole, with Rome, an unprecedented «pan-Hellenic» power to be sure, at its epicenter.¹⁶ Polybius survives as the ultimate voice on this matter, one that also impacted first-century intellectuals. In order to understand Polybius’ influential reading of «146,» however, it is first necessary to explore his particular historiographical approaches, and his views regarding the interrelationships of time, space, and morality.

3. Polybian Perspectives

... who among those who reasonably find fault with Fortune for her conduct of affairs, will not be reconciled to her when he learns how she afterwards made them pay the due penalty, and how she exhibited to their successors as a warning for their edification the exemplary chastisement she inflicted on these princes?¹⁷

For Polybius, time continues to roll out on a wheel turned by the great hand of *Tyche* (Fortune), its cyclical rhythms operating on a moral-political plane. As such, every political entity – every *politeia* – represents a living collective that experiences a fated life cycle, with a set series of growths and decays. Polybius labels this eternal cycle

15. Eastern apocalyptic traditions first began to be directed toward Rome during the second century BCE (as well as later, during the Mithridatic wars). Examples include *PHamb.* 129 – the so-called Hannibal Papyrus – which postured as a letter from Hannibal to Athens, and alluded to the possibility of breaking the «weak lance» of Roman power; and the prophetic warnings of Rome’s demise, attributed to Antisthenes the Peripatetic (dated by some scholars to the Antiochene war) – quoted by Phlegon of Tralles, *Mirabilia* III. For more discussion, see GAUGER 1980; GRUEN 1984, 327-8; FERRARY 1988, 238f.

16. See KONSTAN 2009; RICHTER 2011. For the Cynic Diogenes characterizing himself as *kosmopolites*, see GOULET-CAZÉ 2000, 329. On the Stoic Zeno’s similar thoughts, cf. Plut. *De fort. Alex.* 329a-b: «...the much admired Republic of Zeno... may be summed up in this one main principle, that... we should consider all men to be of one community and one polis, and that we should have a common life and an order (*kosmos*) common to us all, even as a herd that feeds together and shares the pasturage of a common field...» (transl. BABBITT 1936).

17. Polyb. 15.20.5. All translations of Polybius are from PATON 1922-1927.

anacyclosis, and in doing so, engages in an intellectual discussion of *politeiai* first introduced by Aristotle.¹⁸ In Polybius' presentation, order first evolves out of chaos in the form of monarchy, which formalizes into kingship (*basileia*), but degrades into tyranny. The ousting of a tyrant then brings about an aristocracy, which disintegrates into oligarchy. Oligarchs are in turn fated to be overthrown and replaced by democracy, which decays into what Polybius views as the most disastrous type of *politeia*: mob-rule (ochlocracy). Mob-rule stands only a few ominous steps away from a return to utter chaos, to the end of one political entity (be it a *polis*, *koinon*, or kingdom), and its replacement by a new order, a new *monarchie*.

Polybius thus follows Greek historiographical tradition (established by Thucydides in particular), by framing his theory of political life cycles in deeply moral(izing) terms. In this light, the health of the collective body – the *politeia* – is directly connected with the virtues and/vices of the ruling individual or class. In Polybius' eyes, leading politicians (especially aristocrats, the “best men”) were crucial gears running the engine of state in international history. Throughout his *Histories*, therefore, Polybius focuses on the ethics of leading statesmen, politicians and diplomats of states both great and small – who through unmanaged passions, self-serving naiveté, or moral weakness could catapult their states into decline or disaster, or via their virtue, discipline, and honor, bring it to health, resilience, dignity in defeat, and glory in victory.¹⁹ The weight carried upon the shoulders of these leaders, according to Polybius, was a heavy one, for their actions held implications not only for their own hometowns, but also – and in his lifetime even more apparently so – for the grander schemes of world history.

It is at this juncture that Polybius makes his unique contribution to ancient historiography, for he interconnects the human life cycle of individual statesmen and their ethical growth or decay, not only

18. Polyb. 6.5.4-6.9.10. On the intersecting subjects of Polybius, types of *politeiai*, and theories of *anacyclosis*, see WALBANK 1943; BRINK and WALBANK 1954; COLE 1964 (with particular attention to the development of Polybius' own approach to *anacyclosis*); and PODES 1991. For the Aristotelian origins of Polybius' analysis of *politeiai*, see BATES 2003; BIONDI 2007.

19. ECKSTEIN 1995.

with the unique time “clocks” of individual states but also with the contemporaneous, differing paces and stages of development (or disintegration) of all states across the Mediterranean world. Polybius’ historical space and time extend in interwoven layers across a vast geography and with deep chronological roots, and yet, in Polybius’ formulation, they were being spun with an increasingly centrifugal direction, in a phenomenon like never before witnessed. Polybius affirms his strong belief that the events he has been fortunate enough to witness during his lifetime provide the ultimate occasion for developing a political history of universal significance.²⁰ For during his lifetime, Polybius states that the world had experienced the unprecedented rise of a great *archē*, within the rapid span of only fifty-three years. This *archē* had gathered the *oikoumenē* in a newly interconnected manner, in a *symplokē*, an unparalleled weaving-together of the politics in Africa and Asia, Italy, Macedon and Greece. These groundbreaking developments, in Polybius’ estimation, granted him the opportunity to explore exactly *how* exceptional world powers come into being, and to offer instructive examples of both good and bad behavior, to clarify how lesser powers are to deal with a rising star of staggeringly epic scale:

For what gives my work its peculiar quality, and what is most remarkable in the present age, is this. Fortune has guided almost all the affairs of the world in one direction and has forced them to incline towards one and the same end; a historian should likewise bring before his readers under one synoptic view the operations by which she has accomplished her general purpose... He indeed who believes that by studying isolated histories he can acquire a fairly just view of history as a whole, is, as it seems to me, much in the case of one, who, after having looked at the dis severed limbs of an animal once alive and beautiful, fancies he has been as good as an eyewitness of the creature itself in all its action and grace.²¹

Polybius’ project thus sought to be a world-history, as an organic whole – *sōmatoeidēs*.²² In modification of the contemporary theory regarding cyclical history, Polybius perceived his own times to be at a

20. Polyb. 1.1-2.

21. Polyb. 1.4. See WALBANK 1974.

22. Polyb. 1.3.4; cf. 14.12.5.

culminating point, a moment in which global power had moved from the decline of a fractured, multitudinous world system to the rise of an integrated world order.²³ For Polybius, this marked a special moment for study, a moment in which the historian could perform a first-hand analysis of the intersections between conscious actions taken by statesmen and the intervening elements introduced by Fortune in the life cycles of *politeiai*. And at the same time, the historian could write a truly «pragmatic» (*pragmatikē*) and «demonstrative» (*apodeiktikē*) history, a history that not only pulled together a vast set of geographic, temporal, and moral spaces into a single, coherent narrative, but one that could also function as a manual for current and even future statesmen.²⁴ In this light, the past and future for Polybius were focused upon an immediate present of momentous import.

And in presenting this universal, practical, and “present” history, Polybius takes two additional steps forward: first, he reveals for his reader the inner moral workings that brought about this unprecedented new world order; and second, he imparts a lingering sense that this world order – as with all orders on all scales – is bound to change and decline. Rome’s meteoric rise to power, then, is first explained as the product of a healthy *politeia*, in which the powers of the singular, monarchic leading-figure, the «best men,» and the *demos* had come to share control of the *polis* to an unusual extent.²⁵ Important in this process, in Polybius’ estimation, was that the balance had resulted out of a competitive response and recovery, by the Roman state and its various constituents, to each stage in *anacyclosis*, with each moment

23. Polyb. 1.2. This is a view that also fits within the intellectual milieu of the second century, among Hellenistic rhetoricians, philosophers, and historians – HORDEN and PURCELL 2000; DAVIES 2002; INGLIS and ROBERTSON 2004, 40-42, on globalizing Hellenistic historiography and Polybius; and PERNOT 2005, on Hellenistic globalization in rhetorical styling. See also HARRIS 2005; MALKIN 2005; MALKIN, CONSTANTAKOPOULOU, and PANAGOPOULOU 2009. For the evolving notion that an individual could be a «world citizen» (*kosmopolites*), see GOULET-CAZÉ 2000, 329; KONSTAN 2009; RICHTER 2011.

24. Polyb. 9.2. *Apodeiktike historia*: Polyb. 2.37.3; cf. WALBANK 1972, 55-58. For Polybius’ repeated emphasis on utility, see 1.4.11; 7.7.8; 9.2.6; 11.19a.1-3; 15.36.3; 31.30.1. Polybius uses the phrase, *oude... autes heneka tes epistemes*, to describe his history at 3.4.8. On writing a manual for statesmen, see 3.7.5; 6.53.6-54.3-4; 9.9.9-10; 10.21.3-22.4; 11.10.1; 16.28.9; 38.2.

25. Polybius’ discussion in Book VI: see WALBANK 1943; BRINK and WALBANK 1954; COLE 1964; DEROW 1979; LINTOTT 1999, 16f.; MILLAR 2002, 23f.; CHAMPION 2004.

of crisis and potential degradation leading only to further growth and improvement.²⁶ The truly unique success of Rome was thus the result of a balanced interplay between internal *politeia*, cultural ethics, and external mastery or rule (*hegemonia/ epikrateia/ despoteia*) over others.²⁷ Unlike Sparta (another “mixed” *politeia*), Rome was able to thrive as an expansive, outward-looking state,²⁸ and unlike Carthage (also “mixed”), Rome had evolved traditions to devalue personal gain and honor citizen-soldier-statesmen service.²⁹

Polybius thus assembled an explanatory model for Rome’s rapid rise to a new form of worldwide hegemony, viewing this rise as the result of a uniquely evolved *politeia*. In his view, the Roman *politeia* had over time and through hardship become adapted to, rather than brought down by, a policy of conquest. This evolution had taken place because specific social and legislative institutions had been developed that encouraged the pursuit of individual personal honor (e.g., funeral orations) and punished instances of greed (e.g., legislation against bribery).³⁰ Such a system, according to Polybius, had reached its acme around the time of Cannae, a pivotal moment of darkest defeat, from which Rome was able to recover with redoubled, even exponential, energy. And yet this highpoint was at the same time the beginning of an end for Rome’s rival Carthage, whose *politeia* had begun to tip toward an excessive will of the *demos* and the perils of ochlocracy that lurked not far behind.³¹ Roman success was thus not only the product of that state’s own growing internal strengths; it was also the product of the failings of others, and the severe lack of moral fortitude and virtue among its leading statesmen. It is for this reason that Polybius repeatedly emphasizes the importance of noble, rational,

26. Polyb. 6.10.13; 6.18.

27. On the latter, see for example Polyb. 6.50 (esp. 6.50.3).

28. Polyb. 6.48-50. For Polybius’ opinion regarding Sparta’s decline into tyranny, see 2.47.3 (on Cleomenes) and 4.81.12 (on both Cleomenes and Nabis).

29. See Polyb. 6.51-52 and 6.56.1-5. Note also the criteria Polybius outlines for his selection of Sparta and Carthage as comparative examples (6.43-47): Thebes was too short-lived as a hegemon; Athens was too heavily weighted toward its *demos*, which «always more or less resembles a ship without a commander»; Crete’s *koinon* was too morally corrupt and plagued by civil war; and Plato’s ideal *Politeia* was too unrealistic.

30. Polyb. 6.48-56.

31. Cf. Polyb. 6.57; 5.7.

and resolute leadership in smaller, weaker states.³² Having witnessed the travails of his native Achaia and the triumphs of Rome, Polybius remains convinced that the inability of states across the Mediterranean world, to adequately identify and combat *anacyclosis*, had fed into an ever-tightening whirlpool, draining into the upward trajectory of one *politeia*, a world-*polis* (*kosmopolis*): Rome.

Polybius thus expresses an extreme distaste for what he perceived to be a worrying trend of his time: an excessive and shameful obsequiousness on the part of Hellenistic leadership towards the Romans.³³ In Polybius' opinion, such behavior by the weaker party would only encourage tyrannical behavior in the stronger (Rome), whereas dignity would encourage restraint. And it is at this juncture that Polybius' second "step forward" comes into play. For the ability to integrate a policy of international conquest while maintaining or even strengthening the balance of powers and morals within the *polis* was a cornerstone in Polybius' political philosophy. The *politeia* could help produce stronger, more honorable and morally durable leaders, but it could also decay, and only the most steadfast statesmen could help delay disaster. If no *politeia* was wholly immune from the ravages of time, growth and decay, then, what were the implications for Rome as a newly derived international «state,» an individual *politeia* in governance over the rest of the *oikoumenē*?

4. Polybius & 146 BCE

When Carthage and Corinth were each captured in 146, Polybius was in the midst of writing his *Histories*, and he made an immediate amendment in his plan for its scope, extending its span from 167 to 146 BCE.

32. ECKSTEIN 1995 has analyzed this Polybian theme in some detail. To summarize: Polybius frequently uses *exempla* to teach a vitally important task for small-state leaders: to maintain honor and their state's individual autonomies (to the greatest extent possible), for as long as they can, while avoiding the ruin of their city, at the hands of internal mob-rule and/or larger states after separate agendas. See also BARONOWSKI 2011, 124f., who sees a development in Polybius' thinking on this subject over time, evolving from slight criticism for misguided military opposition to Rome to strong censure for small state leaders initiating foolishly disastrous wars against Rome.

33. Polyb. 24.10.11-13.

In explaining his motives for making this extension, Polybius indicates that the events of 146 BCE mark *the* quintessential point for exploring the *consequences* of a meteoric rise to world *archē*, and providing an instructive assessment thereof.³⁴ The reasons for this viewpoint are made evident in Polybius' treatment of the events of 167 – the original endpoint that anticipates 146. Following Aemilius Paullus' victory over Perseus at Pydna, Paullus is described presenting the captured king to his men. He speaks to the gathered troops, urging them,

[to] never boast unduly of achievements and never be overbearing and merciless in their conduct to anyone, in fact never place any reliance on present prosperity. «It is chiefly», he said, «at those moments when we ourselves or our country are most successful that we should reflect on the opposite extremity of Fortune; for only thus, and then with difficulty, shall we prove moderate in the season of prosperity. The difference», he said, «between foolish and wise men lies in this, that the former are schooled by their own misfortunes and the latter by those of others».³⁵

Paullus continues, reminding the men of Demetrius of Phaleron's famous teachings regarding the mutability of Fortune: that the goddess had earlier transformed the Persians from «masters of almost the whole world» into a «perished» people. In addition, within the space of only fifty years, Fortune had transferred – although only on a lending basis – the blessings of wealth and power from the Persians to the hitherto unknown Macedonians.³⁶ The implications are clear: Macedon's final day had come in 167, and a transfer was being made into the hands of Rome (again, within a span of about fifty years). Polybius pauses to comment upon this speech and Demetrius' «maxim,» with the following words:

Surely Demetrius, as if by the mouth of some god, uttered these prophetic words... This utterance of his seems to me to have been more divine than that of a mere man. For nearly a hundred and fifty years ago, he uttered the truth about what was to happen afterwards...

34. Initial plan of the *Histories*: Polyb. 1.1.5, 1.3, and 3.3. Extension to 146 BCE: 3.4.

35. Polyb. 29.20

36. Polyb. 29.21

The words will echo, reappearing in the context of 146. In the meantime, Polybius urges his readers to consider the intervening period as an opportunity to ponder the following truism:

[that] judgments regarding either the conquerors or the conquered ... are by no means final — what is thought to be the greatest success [has] brought the greatest calamities on many, if they do not make proper use of it, and the most dreadful catastrophes often turning out to the advantage of those who support them bravely...³⁷

Here Polybius gives voice to a concept lying at the very heart of his *Histories*: that the hand of Fortune vacillates, from granting success and conquest, to imparting calamity and defeat. Only the honor and virtue of leading statesmen can help a *polis* ride this tide, either by «making proper use» of conquest or by bravely enduring the setbacks of failure. It is telling, then, that Polybius characterizes the period following Rome's defeat of Macedon in 167 as one of unrest and disturbance (*tarachē kai kinesis*), in which not only the moral fibers of the ruled, but also those of the rulers, were coming unraveled.³⁸ The world had transformed into a new and unprecedented environment, one locked onto a common center and ruled by a single, all-encompassing power. And yet this unification was characterized by disruption, perhaps because the burden of «making proper use» of such an immense achievement went beyond even the unique strengths of the Roman *politeia*.

For Rome, then, the question lingered: had this unparalleled international powerhouse overreached its limits, in the rickety balance between expansion, a healthy *politeia*, and ethical statesmanship? Was Rome becoming a pan-Mediterranean hegemon or quickly devolving into a «despot» (*despotēs*), under whose shadow the *oikoumenē* was suffering unprecedented strife and turmoil? Was universal power fated to be short-lived? These were questions hanging in the air for both Polybius and his readership. In second-century thinking, Rome's international hegemony could herald an as-yet dreamed-of great *cosmopolis*, or the nightmarish pitfalls of a world-tyranny, and/or the chaos of a leadership in decay. Polybius seemingly leaves all of these possibilities

37. Polyb. 3.4.1f.

38. See Polyb. 3.4, esp. 3.4.5 (for mention of 168-146 BCE as a time of *kinēsis*) and 3.4.12.

open and undetermined upon the conclusion of the *Histories*, at 146.

On the surface, Polybius appears to be equivocal in his treatment of the issue, and even in his discussion of «146,» the message could be subtle. For on the one hand, Polybius, in the course of the *Histories*, seems to express excitement at the potential benefits of Rome becoming a new world power. By reserving his highest praises for its uniquely vibrant *politeia*, Polybius sets up a possible scenario in which Rome could offer a new opportunity for unifying the Hellenistic *oikoumenē*, one plagued by foibles and shortcomings.³⁹ Polybius almost audibly gasps in awe at the whirlwind speed at which Rome achieves world dominion,⁴⁰ overstepping all the failings of the Greek-speaking world, its ignoble leadership,⁴¹ and ochlocratic tendencies.⁴² Taken as a whole, these clues imply that, for Polybius, Rome was quickly becoming a new «great-king» for the world, and one unlike any other in history. This phenomenon was made possible by Rome's unique cultural position in the *oikoumenē*, its distinctive *politeia*, and its lack of a single, corruptible king (as in Aristotle's most devastating critique of monarchy, referenced elsewhere in Polybius' text).⁴³ As a kingly-*polis*/republic, Rome could thus bring about a natural-order unity to the Mediterranean world. That Polybius believed this thesis is evident in his use of such terms for Roman dominion as *somatoeides* and *symplokē*. It was perhaps a utopic vision and an alluring dream, with visions of

39. Polyb. 6.18; 6.42; 5.56.

40. Polyb. 1.1.5; 6.2.2-3.

41. Cf. Polyb. 3.16.4 and 3.19.9 (on Demetrius of Pharos); 5.34.10 and 5.87.3 (on Ptolemy IV); 13.3-5, 15.20-24, 16.1.2, and 25.3.9 (on Philip V); 15.25 and 34 (on Agathocles of Alexandria); 18.55.7-9 (on the Ptolemaic official, Polycrates, and Ptolemy of Megalopolis); 20.8 (on Antiochus III); 21.1. (on the demagogue Molpagoras); 26.14-16 (on Alexander of Isus); 29.8-9 and 29.17-18 (on Eumenes and Perseus); 30.8-9 (on Rhodian statesmen, Deinon and Polyaratus); 33.5 (on Archias, Ptolemaic governor of Cyprus); 36.15 (on Prusias II of Bithynia); 39.7.7 (on Ptolemy VI). For comprehensive statements of disgust with "Greeks" taken as a whole, see 6.56.13-15; 36.17.7; 18.34.7. See also McGING 2010, 149f.

42. E.g. Polyb. 4.17f. (fall of Cynaetha, 220s BCE); 7.10f. (Messene, 215 BCE); 13.6.2 and 16.13.1-2 (Spartan tyrant Nabis rising to power by winning favor with the *plēthos*); 15.21 (revolution and fall of Cius, 203-2 BCE); 15.25f. (mob at Alexandria upon the overthrow of Agathocles, 200 BCE); 18.43.8 and 20.6-7 (Boeotians, 190s BCE); 38.11-12 (Achaians at Corinth, 147-6 BCE).

43. Cf. Aristotle, *Pol.* 3.16-17.

the *oikoumenē* coming into its own as a complete empire. And yet, it was the dream only kick-started by Alexander: that the whole world could become a unified civilization for the ages, governed in noble, even godlike beneficence, without strife or lawlessness.

However, such ideas cut in more than one direction. As much as they could herald Rome as a new pan-Hellenic savior, they could also warn of Rome as a dark cloud looming in the west.⁴⁴ For in following the belief that Rome could fulfill (perhaps too thoroughly) the celebrated, «freedom for the Greeks», mantra, it stood to reason that Rome could then eliminate all kings in the *oikoumenē*. And this was something that not all Hellenistic Greeks would have applauded or have found reassuring. At least two second-century enemies of Rome (albeit kings themselves) voice such thoughts in Polybius' *Histories* – as a means of rallying popular support.⁴⁵ In addition, the fragments of Book 31 move from arena to arena, and yet they impart the same impression of increasing rather than decreasing *tarachē kai kinesis* in 167-146 BCE. Rome had become the sole moderator of every international issue, and yet, across the Mediterranean, the less-than-honorable were gaining the most success in weaker/weakened states, and Rome was not behaving very honorably in dealing with new difficulties and responsibilities.⁴⁶ Polybius comes to the following conclusion:

44. For the latter characterization of Rome – see the speech of Lyciscus, Acarnanian envoy, in 217 BCE, as written by Polybius at 9.37.10: «they [the Aetolians] have, without knowing it, invoked such a cloud from the west as may, perhaps, at first only cast its shadow on Macedonia, but in time will be the cause of great evil to all Greece».

45. (1) Polyb. 21.11.2-11 (Prusias, possibly at the instigation of Antiochus III, fearing that the Romans intended to eliminate all kings in Asia... requiring the Scipios to launch a letter-writing PR campaign); and (2) Polyb. 29.4.9-10 (Perseus using the same fears to court Antiochus IV as a potential ally). See also *1 Macc.* 8:11-13 (associating Rome's removal of kings with fear of the city's very name); and *Orac. Sib.* 3.175-179 (late second century BCE, pronouncing that the power from the west would rule over much of the earth, bring down many, and instill fear in all kings thereafter). Similar sentiments among Rome's opponents reappear later, in Pompeius Trogus (Justin, 38.6.7 – placed in a speech of Mithridates) and in Sallust (*Bell. Jug.* 81.11, in the words of Jugurtha).

46. To summarize, we are presented with the following examples: (1) King Eumenes – Polybius characterizes Roman treatment of him as unfairly harsh (31.6.6); (2) Seleucid prince Demetrius being kept hostage in Rome, and being denied his kingdom in favor of a nine-year old boy (Polybius takes this opportunity to remark on

For many decisions of the Romans are now of this kind: availing themselves of the mistakes of others, they effectively increase and build up their own power, at the same time doing a favor and appearing to confer a benefit on the offenders.⁴⁷

This is a truly negative assessment of international standards and international elite morality (with the two running hand-in-hand for Polybius), not only on the side of Rome as Mediterranean arbiter, but also on the side of lesser powers, who were seen to be making egregious errors in judgment. Even worse, Polybius' convictions regarding *anacyclosis* dictated that *all* political systems – no matter how well crafted and evolved – eventually degrade from within.⁴⁸ He provides ominous warnings, suggesting that Rome as an international *archē* could be on the edge of tyranny, moving from *hegemonia* to *despoteia* and worse.⁴⁹ At 3.4.5, he notes that those who achieve great success often do not make proper use of it, while at 15.24, he remarks upon the evils of great power, once attained. At 9.10, upon the Roman sack of Syracuse, Polybius discusses the internal decay that can result for a victor who develops a taste for luxury and expensive treasures (a clear mirroring of Cato's rhetoric at the time).⁵⁰ Polybius states outright that he does not think Rome is immune from decay. Despite the possibility that disaster could be forestalled, the final descent would ultimately come, and could in fact be predicted.⁵¹ And at certain junctures of the *Histories*, Polybius provides clues to an internal weakness spreading within Rome, and to possible points for failure in the Roman system, especially in the moral fiber of the nobility and its younger gener-

Rome's preference for expediency, *to sympheron*, over justice, *to dikaion* – 31.11.11); (3) a renewed alliance with Cappadocia and its new king Ariarathes, who disputes with the Galatians – Roman legates judge in his favor, but rebuke his offers of guidance in other eastern affairs; (4) Calynda in Caria being ceded to Rhodes, by approval of the Senate, after Calynda had revolted from Caunus and had simply sought Rhodian aid; and (5) in Egypt, the kingdom being partitioned by Rome between brothers, but Rome reneging on the original terms, favoring the younger brother, Ptolemy Physcon (a character strongly disliked by Polybius) – 31.18.14. See also ECKSTEIN 1995, 104-5.

47. Polyb. 31.10.7.

48. Polyb. 6.9.12-14.

49. See also SHIMRON 1979.

50. Polyb. 3.4.5.

51. Polyb. 6.57.

ations.⁵² The fact that Rome's old-guard preference for honor over wealth was showing signs of reversal matches similar such descents experienced by other states in Polybius' analysis. And all of them ultimately fell victim to ochlocracy, the fatal consequence of moral decay among leading politicians.⁵³

Polybius thus framed the international situation of 167-146 BCE with a burning question, asking,

...whether those now living should shun Roman domination or do the reverse, and whether those in the future should consider the Romans' government worthy of praise and emulation, or of blame...⁵⁴

At the heart of Polybius' equivocation, then, there were two alternate possibilities for Rome and the Mediterranean world. On the one hand, Roman superiority and growth continued to represent an ever-encountered phenomenon in the Greek world. And on the other, there hovered the very distinct possibility that Rome could be on the decline, having reached its acme and having lost its capacity to counteract the forces of internal decay that accompany success. As Polybius constructs it – and as many of his contemporaries would have seen it as well – the Hellenistic *oikoumenē* hung in the balance, awaiting that tipping-point at which Rome would have become the greatest power in all of history. At what stage this great success would also become

52. Cf. Polyb. 8.27 (on the debauchery of M. Livius, commander at Tarentum); 9.10 (criticizing an improper taking of spoils at Syracuse); lengthy discussion at 31.25.2-7 (distinguishing young Scipio Aemilianus from the rest of his generation); 35.3-4 (on the treachery and cowardice of M. Cl. Marcellus); 36.14 (on the ridiculously incompetent magistrates sent to Bithynia). Polybius also notes that C. Flaminius' land-distribution proposal of 232 BCE was a first step in the «moral degradation of the Roman *demos*» (2.21.8). Compare these observations with the cautionary words that Polybius attributes to the Roman hero Paullus (29.20.1ff.): «It is chiefly...at those moments when we ourselves or our country are most successful that we should reflect on the opposite extremity of Fortune; for only thus, and then with difficulty, shall we prove moderate in the season of prosperity. The difference...between foolish and wise men lies in this, that the former are schooled by their own misfortunes, and the latter by those of others.» These sentiments were later echoed in Scipio Aemilianus' reaction to the fall of Carthage – 38.21.1-3; cf. App. *Lib.* 132 (= Polyb. 38.22).

53. On Carthage: cf. Polyb. 36.7.3-5; on Corinth: cf. 38.11.9-11; 38.12.4-5.

54. Polyb. 3.4.7 – a comment made in response to the Senate's adroit handling of a dispute within the Ptolemaic royal line, 163 BCE.

a “tripping”-point for Rome was something that only the future could really determine.

In this context, Polybius’ treatment of Scipio’s final victory over Carthage – although tantalizingly fragmentary – strikes a profound final note.⁵⁵ As the once-great city of Carthage burned, Polybius and Scipio stand on a hilltop overlooking the scene, and Polybius ponders out loud: τούτου καλλιον...; – «What is more glorious than this?» In Büttner-Wobst’s restoration of the passage (made by comparison with Diodoros), Scipio replies, with a reference to the saying of «the poet» – presumably Homer (τοῦτ’εἶρηται παρὰ [τῶ ποιητῆ]).⁵⁶ Diodorus and Appian⁵⁷ quote an exact Homeric passage in their descriptions of the scene: namely, a line from Hektor’s departing speech to Andromache in the *Iliad*,⁵⁸ in which the hero pronounces the inevitability of Troy’s final demise. In connecting his depiction of Carthage’s fall with the well-known poetic/tragic *Ilioupersis* motif, Polybius thus frames the conclusion of his pragmatic and didactic history within the broader framework of pan-Hellenic time, from the very beginning of the rise-and-fall of great powers.⁵⁹ Polybius thereby moves his own work beyond the elegiac gloom of contemporary, poetic motifs (as exemplified by Polystratos) in order to craft a *truly* tragic history, one with a moralizing and practical lesson and purpose.

As Polybius’ text resumes, Scipio then takes Polybius’ hand, in a rare moment of high drama. Polybius digresses with effusive praise for Scipio’s nobility of character, signaling for his readers an event of momentous impact – a scene of noble emotion (*eupatheia*), with Scipio representing a genuine heroic *exemplum*, a victor displaying a wondrous magnanimity of spirit.⁶⁰ Scipio stood as a final beacon, «a

55. Polyb. 38.21.1-3.

56. Diodorus 32.24.

57. Appian, *Pun.* 132.

58. *Iliad* 6.448f.

59. E.g., Apollodorus of Athens, in his *Chronica* (dedicated to King Attalos II Philadelphus, possibly 144/3 BCE) may have done just this, with the work’s four books (written in iambic verse) beginning with the fall of Troy, stopping half-way through with the death of Alexander, and concluding with Apollodorus’ own time, possibly 146 BCE – cf. *FGrH* 239ff.; and PFEIFFER 1968, 253f.

60. Aristotle/Stoics on *eupatheia* – see KONSTAN 2007, esp. ch. 4. Polybius provides an extended digression in praise of Scipio’s virtues at 31.24.2-31.30.

great and perfect man – a man, in short, worthy to be remembered.»⁶¹ For unlike his peers – the young nobility at Rome at the time (not to mention the degraded Greeks) – Scipio possessed an ancient dignity and virtue. And this virtue represented a final hope for the future of Roman greatness as a world power. Interestingly, in Polybius' estimation, what was most admirable about Scipio was his ability to access, in that moment of triumph, a stronger core of humility, in realizing that his own city was at the same time getting closer to its own inevitable demise.⁶² As such, the scene at Carthage mirrors other epiphanies of Fortune in Polybius – moments at which the wheel of Tyche is witnessed turning before mortal eyes. By contrast, however, all earlier examples had been epiphanies experienced by the defeated: Antiochus, Achaeus, or Perseus, with the latter reciting to Aemilius Paullus (Scipio's father) the famed maxim of Demetrius of Phaleron.⁶³ Uniquely, then, in «146,» the scenario is reversed: the victor speaks as if defeated, and the hand of Fate tips the scales.

The climactic scene therefore embodies Polybius' final assessment of his times and of the significance of «146» as a temporal-moral boundary. The triumphant Roman pities the defeated and humbly acknowledges that his own city too will crumble – perhaps, oddly, by virtue of his own great success. It is the ultimate fulcrum-point in the cycles of world history: a moment of both triumph and tragedy, with the future that it held for Rome as the ruler, and for other states as the ruled, hanging precariously in the balance. The narrative serves as an implicit warning to Romans, lest they hasten their eventual fate like the Carthaginians had done.⁶⁴ But this is not to say that the *Histories* is an account without hope. In the act of writing, Polybius intended to make a change, potentially on both ends of the spectrum: ideally informing leading men of all states, and thereby allowing Rome to step more fully and responsibly into the role of world hegemon, and enabling lesser states to recover, rebound, and achieve nobility and status once again (if not more). «146» for Polybius thus stood as a

61. Polyb. 38.21.3: ἀνδρός ἐστι μεγάλου καὶ τελείου καὶ συλλήβδην ἀξίου μνήμης.

62. Buttner-Wobst/Loeb, Polyb. 31.22-30.

63. Polyb. 8.20.9.

64. See the latest discussion in BARONOWSKI 2011, Ch. 9.

world-changing cue: to Rome that it be mindful of potential decay and cultivate leaders like Scipio, who could continue to chart an honorable, hegemonic course; and to lesser states to simply get their act together. Was «146» really the beginning of a new beginning, or the beginning of an end? These questions were to haunt generations to come.

5. From Polybius to Sallust

From the second to the first century, Polybius and the questions he had raised continued to have impact, and «146» remained a synchronic juncture of historiographical significance. Indeed, by the first half of the first-century, the destructions of Carthage and Corinth had achieved legendary status.⁶⁵ Sallust's contemporaries, including Cicero, testify to this well. For Cicero, both Scipio and Mummius stood as shining exemplars of the "former" Roman virtues, of *fides*, *mansuetudo*, *aequitas*, and *humanitas*.⁶⁶ Like Sallust (and perhaps because Sallust was cross-referencing his contemporary), Cicero labeled Carthage as Rome's *aemula imperii*, and he presented the pair of cities, Carthage and Corinth, as the *insignia et infulae imperii*.⁶⁷ The two are described as «eyes of the maritime face», a rare pair capable of sustaining «the burden and reputation of world-empire».⁶⁸ Cicero also breathed new life into earlier Hellenistic themes of tragic reversal, romanticizing the elegiac gloom and emptiness of once-great cities.⁶⁹ The imagery of tragic ruins at Corinth was even adapted to the genre of consolation-letter by Servius Sulpicius, in an example written to Cicero.⁷⁰ In the same period, Diodoros, perhaps echoing Servius, noted that travelers passing by Corinth's ruined prosperity could not refrain from shedding

65. For a general discussion of the evolved «rhetoric of destruction», see PURCELL 1995.

66. E.g. Cic. 2 *Verr.* 4; *Pro Mur.* 58, 66; *De Off.* 1.108; *Vir.ill.* 60.3; *De Orat.* 2.154; *Verr.* 2.2.86.

67. Cic. *Leg.Agr.* 1.5-6. See also Strabo 17.3.5 (832); Velleius 1.12.5-6; Appian 51. The topic is taken up by later authors – cf. Livy, *Per.* 52; Strabo 8.23; Dio fr.76 (regarding Mummius).

68. Cic. *ND* 3.91; *Leg.Agr.* 2.87.

69. Cic. *Leg.Agr.* 1.2.5; 2.51; 2.87: *Corinthi vestigium vix relictum est*; cf. Appian *Pun.* 135-6; also Plut. *Mar.* 40, on the imagery of Gaius Marius «amid the ruins of Carthage».

70. Cic. *Fam.* 4.5.4.

a tear, even long after the destruction. With even greater emotion, he declared that the horror of Corinth's demise was made all the worse, in that it left Greeks behind to look at the remains.⁷¹ Taken as a whole, these subsequent, first-century views of «146» all looked back with an air of nostalgia at a moment of grand transformation, one that heralded Rome's position as world hegemon. If they were to admonish contemporary Rome – as only in the case of Cicero, in his reference to ancient virtues – they only did so with a constructive hope, of seeking to improve present behaviors via the *exempla* and lessons of the past. Sallust, by stark contrast, was to take an utterly deconstructive and critical approach.

The roots of this negative perspective, which Sallust deploys in implied answer to the questions first raised by Polybius' account, can be better understood when considered alongside the earlier work of Posidonius.⁷² Posidonius began his *Histories* with 146 BCE – Polybius' endpoint – and ends with Sulla, an important fulcrum-point for Sallust (and Cicero).⁷³ Posidonius also seems to have built upon what is only hinted at in Polybius' *Histories*, confirming that pan-Mediterranean hegemony had indeed resulted in truly negative results: in degraded ethics, for both ruler and ruled. And on this subject, Sallust only amplified the pessimism even further. Whether or not Posidonius was a direct one-to-one influence on Sallust remains unverifiable – what matters, however, is the progression in historiographical thinking, from Polybius to Posidonius, as Greeks in the second century, to Sallust in the first century. All of these intellectuals viewed «146» as a meaningful marker for reading Roman imperialism, and yet they did so, especially in the case of Sallust, with increasing cynicism.

Unfortunately, only scattered fragments remain of Posidonius' *Histories*, preserved as quotations from later authors. But an analysis of these fragments reveals a pattern in Posidonius' views. The first fragment comes from Posidonius' account of Athenion, the philosopher-tyrant of Athens (88-86 BCE). In a speech attributed to Athenion, Posidonius has the demagogue criticize the degraded rule of Rome, urging

71. Diod. 32. 27, and 32.36-37, respectively.

72. For discussion of Posidonius as an intermediary between Polybius and Sallust, see WALBANK 1957, 744; GRUEN 1984, 343f.; WOOD 1995, 176.

73. LONG 1986, 218.

the Athenians: «Don't put up with the anarchy which the Roman Senate has deliberately prolonged for us until it makes a decision as to how we must be governed...»⁷⁴ Ironically, however, these words are spoken just prior to Athenion's brutal reign of terror. The conclusion to be drawn here, then, is one only prefaced by Polybius' exploration of *tarachē kai kinesis*: Roman *archē*, in extending across the entire Mediterranean, had reached a point at which not only the *politeia* of Rome but also its world-*politeia* and its constituent parts were crumbling. Such decline was ultimately manifest in a confusion of right and wrong, of correct political action, and of the boundaries between internal and external affairs. In other words, Athenion, in speaking out against the wrongful practices and malicious intentions of the Roman Senate, was as much a figure causing civil strife (*stasis*) within the Roman *archē* as he was within the Athenian *polis*. And although his revolution brought horrific results for Athens, the tragedy is as much one of Roman failings, as evinced by the reactions to the crisis by Orbius, the Roman commander then stationed at Delos. For his men «fell upon the Athenians and their allied contingents in a drunken sleep, cut down 600 of them like sheep, and took about 400 prisoners as well...»⁷⁵ The end-result was thus an utter upending of the Aristotelian ideal of philosopher-kingship, both on the part of Athenion *and* of Rome. This ideal seems to have been an important subject for Posidonius, as seen in the following fragment, in which he explores the notion of a Golden Age paradigm of beneficent philosopher-kings:

sovereignty was in the power of wise men (*sapientes*). They held men's hands in check, protected the weak from the strong, persuaded and dissuaded... It was their wisdom that saw for their people's needs, their courage that warded off danger, their beneficence that advanced and distinguished their subjects. For them, command was a duty, not an attribute of power... [There was no] cause for wrongdoing, since a good commander implies a good subject... But when kingship turned to tyranny through the inroads of vice, there began to be need of laws, but these too at first wise men (*sapientes*) brought forward...⁷⁶

74. Quoted by Athenaeus V.211d-215b = KIDD 1999 no. 253.

75. KIDD 1999 no. 253.

76. Quoted by Seneca, *Epis.* 90.5-6 = KIDD 1999 no. 282. For more on the distinction between Seneca and Posidonius, in light of this passage, see TUTRONE, in this volume.

Once again, there is a strong conviction that a utopian, now distant past once existed, in which the moral strength of the rulers extended to the ruled (and vice versa), and *archē* was the valuable duty of the wise. Such “natural” kingship, furthermore, deployed rhetoric («persuading and dissuading») in a manner that was ostensibly true and honorable. At this juncture, Posidonius appears to have added to the Polybian paradigm, by associating rhetoric with the moral strengths (rather than simply the weaknesses) of the *politeia*. Sallust was to return to this concept and explore its implications even further. In the meantime, Posidonius also continued the Polybian conviction that no political order could be everlasting. In the fragment above, time again brings decomposition, with leadership degrading into tyranny, and with laws (*praecepta*) needed in order to attempt, at least, to hold vice at bay. Such laws, however, were doomed to failure, since Posidonius (like Polybius and later Sallust), considered the infiltration of vice into the ruling class as pre-determinative, ultimately dispersing like an insidious virus, despite all stop-gaps, and undoing the entire system from within. That Posidonius applied this moral reading of political de-evolution to Rome is indicated by the following fragment, in which the very early days of Rome are extolled for their superlative virtues – presumably now only a distant memory:

Their [the Romans’] ancestral habit... was hardihood, plain living and simple and uncomplicated use of material possessions in general, and moreover a remarkable piety with regard to divinity, and justice and great care to avoid sinning against any man, together with the practice of agriculture...⁷⁷

Yet another fragment provides evidence of *how* Posidonius sees degradation taking place. Here, Posidonius discusses the psychology of evil, noting that,

vice [does not come] in afterwards to human beings from outside, without a root of its own in our minds, starting from which it sprouts and grows big, but the very opposite. Yes, there is a seed even of evil in our own selves; and we all need not so much to avoid the wicked as to pursue those who will prune away and prevent the growth of

77. Quoted by Athenaeus VI.274a = KIDD 1999 no. 266.

evil...⁷⁸

Vice, in Posidonius' formulation, was thus universally present – and by extension, forever the unending of any *politeia*, as its leaders fell victim to its inner urges. What is most interesting about Posidonius' explanation, however, is the manner in which he sees such inner vice “sprouting” from its internal seed. It is by contact with the wicked and in the absence of other virtuous men to «prune away» evil that the seed takes root. This formulation raises an even more ominous question, when it is extended from the individual citizen to the state at large, and from the state at large to Rome in particular. Was the doom of Rome to be understood as the tragic result of coming into contact with a vast range of *politeiai* in a state of decline – whose very decline (according to Polybius) had been the very cause of Rome's immense success? Was this, then, the root cause of Rome's undoing: an accession to unprecedented world power, as accomplished in full in 146 BCE? No clear answer remains (in what survives, at least) of Posidonius' writings. Instead, an answer (and a unique one, perhaps) appears in the writings of Sallust.

6. Sallust & 146 BCE: Time, Space, & Morality

Sallust's «Theorem» regarding 146 BCE is a well-known basis of his writings and his approach to history. His words from the prologue of the *Bellum Catilinae* summarize this perspective:

... when our country had grown great through toil and the practice of justice... when Carthage, the rival of Rome's sway, had perished root and branch, and all seas and lands were open, then Fortune began to grow cruel and to bring confusion into all our affairs... the disease had spread like a deadly plague, the state was changed and a government second to none in equity and excellence became cruel and intolerable.⁷⁹

Like Posidonius, Sallust responds to the Polybian framework. He employs a perspective that views “Rome” as «the world,» and the world

78. Quoted by Galen, *De Sequela* 819-820 = KIDD 1999 no. 35.

79. *Bell. Cat.* 10. All translations of Sallust are from ROLFE 1931.

as Rome, and at the same time, he interprets «146» (and the elimination of Carthage as *aemula imperii* in particular) as a significant temporal and moral boundary. Like Polybius, and yet with a distinctly Romano-centric perspective, Sallust writes a form of universal history, one that is grounded upon a broad-based moral-political understanding of time and Fate. Sallust characterizes Fortune as cruel, bringing disaster to those who have just attained the heights of glory and success. And yet, he goes another step further and views universal history through a new lens: one that presupposes world history as *Roman* history, and Roman history as being in the process of decline. In this way, Sallust begins with two concepts that were merely ominous endpoints for Polybius, and he continues the thinking apparent in the fragments of Posidonius. On the one hand, Sallust confirms and builds upon the Polybian hypothesis that the life cycles of various *politeiai* around the Mediterranean had converged upon that of a single power (Rome). On the other hand, Sallust verifies and adds to what Polybius had only implied ambiguously: that the destruction of Carthage did indeed mark a potential turning point for Rome. And all the while, Sallust imparts an even darker view of Mediterranean events, as they unfold in the wake of Rome's great triumph: one that ultimately deconstructs the writing of history itself. For the natural degradation, of a single *politeia* into its degenerate form, was no longer a small-scale problem. Instead, it spelled an utter crisis for a world-*polis*, one within which the usual forces of *stasis*, confusion, and disease were exponentially greater, with the implications being even more dire and unprecedented.

The fact that Sallust conceived of such an inextricable world-*polis* is particularly evident in the subtle ways in which he responds to the Roman annalistic tradition, in proceeding back-and-forth in his narrative, between Rome and «abroad»: *domi militiaeque*. Sallust thus makes a nod to the standard historiographical practice, and yet his apparent dualism quickly becomes complicated and breaks down. Supposed «foreigners,» as ostensible enemies and allies, are instead seen acting as internal protagonists and active participants within Roman civic affairs – and vice versa. The Allobroges disclose the Catilinarian conspiracy; Catiline becomes an external enemy; the Numidians and Marius become the means for each other's political ambitions; Lusitanians and the Mauri form the backbone of Sertorius' Roman(?) or anti-Roman(?) army; and Spartacus' slave revolt comprises a cross-

section of all known peoples.⁸⁰ The *Bellum Catilinae* ends with a scene like none other in ancient historiography, in terms of its upending of all apparent truisms. Catiline makes a heroically “Roman” stand against Rome, with his rebel rag-tag army displaying the very best traditional examples of “Roman” *virtus*. Furthermore, after the battle, the victors, clearing the field of bodies, display a seemingly standard mixture of sadness and joy that soon devolves into troubling focus.⁸¹ For the men do not feel sadness at having fought in a civil conflict against fellow Romans, and they do not feel joy over their victory over rebels. Instead, they feel sadness at seeing the faces of their dead friends and/or relatives, and feel joy over the faces of their personal and political enemies. The very outlines of the *res publica* have crumbled: its very definition has been “privatized” and cheapened, and the original sources of civil conflict have not been resolved in victory. The deeper one digs into the narrative, the more topsy-turvy the world presented by Sallust becomes: Roman and foreign, public and private, virtue and vice are no longer fungible categories with any real meaning.

Sallust thus adds his own twist to paradigms first established by Polybius, and he does so in a way that explores the new world “order” with a deeply psychological, disturbing, and disruptively «Romanocentric» focus. It is in this light that the psychological force of *metus hostilis* comes to the fore in Sallust’s monographs.⁸² The concept is introduced via a quick dissection of the individual human being, placed within the prologue of both monographs. Sallust sets up his analysis in an outwardly clichéd manner, stating that humans are set apart from the animal kingdom by the capacity of their minds, which in turn act as the rational helmsmen of the body. As Sallust then explains – again in platitudes – the key feature of such control is the rational command of emotive and passionate urges, which are pulled away from vice and directed toward true glory, virtuous deeds, and celebrated service to the state.⁸³ Sallust notes, however, that problems arise when distinctions in the mind become blurred – when external reference

80. See ONIGA 1995, 9-10; RIGGSBY 2009, 161.

81. As BATSTONE 2009 has noted, this is a very postmodern picture painted by Sallust. See also SEIDER, in this volume.

82. WOOD 1995; KAPUST 2008, 364f.

83. See the discussion in EARL 1966, 11f.

points are removed – and this is precisely the nature of the post-146 world of Sallust and his subjects! In these instances, when external reference points are absent, human rationality becomes not a rational tool of distinct and glorious output, but a dangerous liability. In the absence of discretely “true” categories, the mind begins to rationalize poor decisions for vice and/or the pleasures of the body, and it redefines such vice as glory and virtue (and vice versa). The fact that Sallust begins both of his monographs with this rather clichéd psychological analysis is thus highly important. For what might, at first glance, appear to be a rote reiteration of Platonic thought regarding the mind-body dynamic, simply pasted onto Thucydidean thought regarding moral redefinition, is in reality subversively doing something more subtle and deconstructive. For in combining these two standard formulas, Sallust ultimately presents his reader with a new proposition: that the mind-body dynamic does not merely apply to the individual human or to the *polis* as a body politic. It telescopes even further, onto a world-*polis*, within which the forces of competition and human conflict have no outlet but inward. It then reflects back, hampering the historian’s ability to interpret events and/or distinguish virtue and vice for his readers. Sallust thus prefaces his works with his concluding vision – that humankind is no longer a theoretical universal, but *is* a collective «citizenry,» residing in a single, global *politeia*. The inner psychology and moral health of the individual, and of all its problems – when lived within this greater “individual” that is the world-*polis* – are thus magnified a thousand-fold and imploded, as never before in history, and with disruptive results for the project of writing history, as anything other than a self-unraveling process.

Scholars have long been perplexed with, and even dismissive of Sallust as an historian for his seemingly contrite, even contradictory juxtaposition of clichés, and for his attribution of evil to both internal and external source-points as somehow primary. But when viewed as a response to earlier historiographical perspectives – especially that of Polybius – in understanding «146» as a juncture of particular significance, the seeming problems in Sallust gain clarity. In this light, Sallust can be seen to actively problematize and explore the ramifications of a scenario only introduced by Polybius: that one city – Rome – could become the all-powerful *politeia* of an interconnected world. And in Sallust’s experience, it is a deeply disturbing world, one that blurs all

boundaries and even makes Polybius' clear-eyed vision of pragmatic history itself an utter farce.

With Rome as the new *kosmopolis*, all truisms of virtue have, for Sallust, come to hold very dire implications. Processes that had once – at least in historical imagination – brought about easy growth and triumph for individuals and for states had become severely warped. The seemingly banal account of an inexorable progression of vice – from relatively minor abuses of *dignitas* and *libertas*, to ill-defined and unwitting crusades for glory, to blind *ambitio*, avarice, and tragic self-destruction⁸⁴ – was in this new light, apocalyptic in significance. For the existence of so-called “healthy” conditions was a red herring and was out of range for the historian: there was no truly external point of reference to create a target for the inner (and inescapable) urges toward honor, glory, and reward. Plato's famed Ring of Gyges analogy, in which an individual readily commits a crime if he is assured of not being seen or caught, was nothing more than a fallacy: for what defined “crime” was itself invisible and irretrievable.

The victory over Carthage, Rome's competitor for dominion (*aemula imperii*), was thus no longer a *potential* tipping-point, as in Polybius' *Histories*. It was the long-gone marker that delineated a sharp division between Romes. Ultimately, the elimination of any real challenge, as well as the achievement of an undisputed, worldwide *imperium*, meant that the once stable and recognizable dynamic between *politeiai* had rapidly degraded into universal confusion. One *politeia* – and one *politeia* alone – had spiraled completely out of control and comprehension.⁸⁵ Fear of an enemy (*metus hostilis*) was now a pervasive, self-destructive force, and the notion that it ever maintained a healthy balance either within individuals or the body politic was perhaps a legendary unicorn, a figment of the historical mind. The natural tensions between individuals, groups, and states – which had perhaps once existed as categories either internal or external to Rome – had now unraveled into unhealthy civil strife, between Romans, between

84. EARL 1966; MCGUSHIN 1977, 74-75.

85. As Sallust states, in Rome's past, the «hardest struggle for glory was with one another, each man strove to be first and to strike down the foe...» (*Bell. Cat.* 7.6), and «citizen vied with citizen for the prize of merit.» (*Bell. Cat.* 9.2). See FONTANA 2003, 889; KAPUST 2011, 43f.

«others,» and even worse, in a blurring of Romans-and-others. On an individual level, the mind-body relationship had become unstable, redefining wickedness as virtue, and the perversion had overtaken the entire Mediterranean, as a singular *politeia*. The lines between ruler and ruled, good and bad, and Roman and non-Roman were no longer distinct. From such a standpoint, even the notion that the “present” historian could look into any past with any clarity or understanding was itself alarmingly undermined.

Sallust develops this dark vision in both of his monographs, and they form bookends for each other: first the *Bellum Catilinae* – as an exploration of a more recent, outwardly “civil” strife framed as though a foreign war – and then the *Bellum Jugurthinum* – as an account of an earlier, outwardly “foreign” war framed as civil strife. Both accounts, written in reverse chronological and civic-foreign order, make manifest the tragically damaged and blurred realities of a world-turned-Roman, a world in which only one *archē* operated.⁸⁶ Within this decomposing world-*polis*, Sallust’s historiographical logic – itself called into question – would dictate that an outlet, an outsider-witness would be needed, in order to dampen the natural tendencies toward rivalry, laxity, and immoderation. And yet, as Sallust indicates, by virtue of the very structuring of his monographs, such red-herring stopgaps were nowhere in sight. As such, Sallust provides further commentary regarding the act of writing history and the role of the historian. The inactivity of writing (as Sallust states, again deploying clichéd language) seemingly becomes the new service of greatest import to the state – rather than military and/or political service. The figure of the historian ostensibly steps in as the new external reference point, the new “challenger” to keep Rome (or any state or individual, for that matter) in line. It is for this reason that Sallust assumes a universalizing and yet Romano-centric voice in addressing his audience. He engages fully with, while burrowing into the historiographical tradition of «pragmatic» history (as practiced earlier by Polybius and founded by Thucydides), and he seemingly follows the dictum that the historian should ideally be a political actor and witness to the events he describes. In truly universalizing fashion, Sallust directs his didacticism toward mankind writ large,

86. See also the discussion in PAPAIOANNOU, in this volume.

in statements about the nature of mankind in his prologues.⁸⁷ Yet at the same time, he addresses a Latin-speaking Roman “us” in particular, presenting a global view that ultimately conflates Romano-centrism with the entire Mediterranean world (e.g., «Africa is bounded on the west by the strait between our sea (*nostris maris*) and the Ocean...»⁸⁸). However, despite all this, Sallust adds a deeply ironic twist, indicating that the historian himself cannot necessarily be trusted as an infallible external reference. Therefore, in performing apodeictic history, Sallust, himself a member of the world/Roman citizenry of the first century, cannot ever be truly external – and, as Sallust even admits, he is not exactly an individual beyond all moral reproach.⁸⁹ In the very act of writing his history, Sallust upends the baseline notion that history’s purpose is to bring glory to the virtuous and teach practical moral lessons. For this reason, in his presentation of a world-historical sequence, Sallust crafts a narrative that runs in broad strokes, from Persia to the Athenians to the Lacedaimonians, and remains absent of individual *exempla* until the very recent past. And it is within this recent past – of which, true to the ancient historiographical standard, Sallust is a witness and an apodeictic “journalist” – that individual men appear as case studies. And yet these men are *exempla* (neither in the positive nor the negative) like Catiline and Jugurtha, who are

87. For example: «All our power... lies in both mind and body; we employ the mind to rule, the body rather to serve; the one we have in common with the Gods, the other with the brutes.» (*Bell. Cat.* 1.2); «the span of life which we enjoy is short, we may make the memory of our lives as long as possible.» (*Bell. Cat.* 1.3); «For just as mankind is made up of body and soul, so all our acts and pursuits partake of the nature either of the body or of the mind... » (*Bell. Iug.* 2).

88. *Bell. Iug.* 17.4. Examples of Sallust deploying a Romano-centric “us” include (among others): «the occasion has arisen to speak of the morals of our country... and give a brief account of the institutions of our forefathers in peace and in war, how they governed the commonwealth, how great it was when they bequeathed it to us...» (*Bell. Cat.* 5.9); «when our country had grown great through toil and the practice of justice...» (*Bell. Cat.* 10.1); «Sulla... allowed [the army] a luxury and license foreign to the manners of our forefathers...» (*Bell. Cat.* 11.5); «greater profit will accrue to our country from my inactivity than from others’ activity...» (*Bell. Iug.* 4.4); «my sorrow and indignation at the morals of our country...» (*Bell. Iug.* 4.9); «... Massinissa was ever our true and loyal friend...» (*Bell. Iug.* 5.5); «he [Jugurtha] became very popular with our soldiers and a great terror to the Numantians...» (*Bell. Iug.* 7.4); «In Numidia and in our army peace reigned» (*Bell. Iug.* 29.7).

89. *Bell. Cat.* 4.4; cf. BATSTONE 2009, 31-32.

«especially memorable», but for the «unprecedented nature of crime and its danger».⁹⁰

Sallust thus brings contradiction and confusion to the surface, by first appearing to set up a clear, even patently obvious and trite formulation, and then by proceeding to undermine and even reverse it. Such a topsy-turvy approach is intentional, and what it accomplishes is perhaps the most honest exploration of the issues existing within a political system of unprecedented scale and place on the world-timeline. Kapust has used the term «redescription» to refer to this phenomenon in Sallust – one that Kapust uses to refer to the upending of virtue and vice, but one that applies across the board in Sallust’s work. In the *Bellum Catilinae*, then, Catiline is at once hero and villain, and Roman and non-Roman in his behaviors, equally memorable for his crime and for his heroic moments (as when he urges his compatriots to die in the name of virtue rather than languish in a miserable and dishonest existence).⁹¹ Likewise, in the *Bellum Jugurthinum*, Sallust highlights the exemplary virtues and great potential of Jugurtha’s non-Roman *ingenium*, and yet, Jugurtha stands as the purported villain at the center of the monograph – a foreign ally turned «internal,» civil enemy.⁹² The overall effect is thus a blurring of the lines delimiting a noble *ingenium*, as potentially inherent in any one of the categories of Roman, non-Roman, aristocrat, *novus homo*, or humankind in general. Instead, in a world without boundaries, a world encircled by a single, Roman *politeia*, the *ingenium* of an individual is equally confused, equally susceptible to the broader disintegration of virtue. And for both Catiline and Jugurtha, a shift in *ingenium* – from ostensibly noble, pro-Roman heroes, to confusedly «noble,» anti-Roman “villains” – occurs jarringly fast, and even, in retrospect, without a shift at all.

Sallust perhaps best crafts a sense of bewilderment in his treatment of the debate over Catiline’s punishment. In a pair of deliberative speeches given by Caesar and Cato the Younger, Sallust paints this lack of clarity in boldly mixed colors. Caesar’s speech, ostensibly framed in defense of the honorable, ultimately shifts to become an argument for the advantageous. And in doing so, it echoes some of

90. BATSTONE 2009, 31-32.

91. *Bell. Cat.* 20.9.

92. *Bell. Jug.* 22.2

the words inserted earlier by Sallust, in his role as the problematic historian/narrator. Sallust's voice thus merges with that of Caesar's to urge his fellow Romans to not be moved by excessive emotion and to instead act in a traditional, lenient manner that would preserve dignity. Cato's speech then proceeds to tip the narrative in the opposite direction. Ostensibly speaking in defense of advantage, Cato ultimately shifts to the honorable, and yet again echoes elements of Sallust's own narrative, from yet another section of the monograph. In the latter passage, Sallust, as historian/narrator, had warned against the dangers of allowing avarice and vice to survive and thrive, and of conceding to a redefinition of «the good» in society, while writing in favor of vigorous action against foreign foes. In the confused world of post-«146» Roman *arche*, no direction was known, either up or down: all concepts and norms – even labels of who was “foe” – were wrapped in contradiction and ambiguity.

In the wake of the *Bellum Catilinae* speeches – and the vote in favor of Cato – Sallust steps back to assess the situation, with yet another problematic echo of words written earlier in the monograph. This time, he returns to his earlier, abridged version of Rome's ancient past, concluding with an odd non-ending, stating simply that «the eminent merit of a few citizens» had brought about «Rome's distinguished deeds». With this strangely clichéd response to an otherwise doubtful and conflicted resolution to civil strife, it is almost as if Sallust has missed the point. And yet such troubling disorientation feeds directly into Sallust's main argument. Sallust does not simply describe the levels of confusion in his world: he also embodies and causes the reader to experience them. The distant past of an ideal Rome is thus telescoped into a multi-layered «present,» a time that exists within Sallust's experience as well as in the text of his “lived” history. And this telescoping of time is reflected in the blurriness with which moral definitions are presented and understood: the debate between Caesar and Cato is not at all clear in distinguishing any “truly” honorable path, and it is directed against a “foe” that was himself a Roman citizen.⁹³ Furthermore, as Batstone has noted, illusions of historical truth in Sal-

93. See the stance taken by BATSTONE 1988; CONNOLLY 2009, 186-187 – as opposed to the more optimistic reading in KAPUST 2011.

lust's work repeatedly slip into the realm of literary «fiction,» thereby calling into question the very feasibility, of either ascertaining truth or of providing an accurate history. The farce that becomes the legal inquiry into Crassus' potential involvement in the conspiracy thus represents a microcosm of the farce that is the Roman/world *politeia* and the writing of Sallust's own apodeictic history.

It is thus through Sallust's uniquely universalizing, psychological/moral, and introspective framework that the historian adds his own interpretation regarding the long scope of Roman history. Like many other intellectuals writing during the third through first centuries BCE, Sallust is all too ready to highlight the utopian features of a Roman *politeia*, as it once existed in a distant past. He deploys the standard language, speaking of a «golden age» of Rome, and yet he does so in ways that make this past even more mythic, residing in a far-off and even unreal time and place.⁹⁴ Disastrous decline resides in the recent past, and it finds a real and true, set time and place (146 BCE, Carthage), and an exceedingly rapid rate of progression (brought to extreme amplitude during the dictatorship of Sulla). What had created the immense distance between the current, lived experience of Rome and the experience of «ancient» Rome was thus an immense *moral* gap. It is for this reason that Sallust presents his reader with such a jarring version of Roman history in summary, jumping from Trojan newcomers, to wars against envious enemies, to kings, to a liberated republic, to wars, expansion, and nobility, and ending with Carthage's destruction. Sallust thus alternates between collapsing and stretching time and geographic space, pushing and pulling his narrative to fit across the moral/psychological narrative framework. And unlike any other writer before him, Sallust presents a picture of Roman history that is at once overly simplistic and two-dimensional, while also deeply reflective and emblematic of what he sees as a vast moral rift. In this sense, Sallust provides a historiographical version of Posidonius' aphorisms regarding time and morality. On the one hand, time becomes the substrate upon which immorality imperceptibly becomes redefined

94. For later intellectual developments, especially in Stoic thought, regarding the mythical golden age, see TUTRONE, in this volume. For a discussion of Sallust's idealized version of early Rome as a contrast with other accounts, see SEIDER, also in this volume.

as morality: «...what is practiced, familiarized, or prolonged either doesn't disturb us at all... or only to a very limited extent.»⁹⁵ And on the other hand, morals serve to condense or expand the progression of time: therefore, for a virtuous man, «a single day...spreads further than the longest lifetime for the unskilled.»⁹⁶ The idyllic past of Rome thus consists of eons and eons of time, impossible for Sallust to capture beyond the broadest of brushstrokes and moral event-horizons («146» being the last of great impact). And at the same time, this past is worlds away from the immediate, crushing “present” – its details evident in fine detail, but its moral definitions beyond all recovery, in the wake of time's utter erasure. Polybius' warnings had come only too true, to the extent that even history itself could no longer provide the easy answers and straightforward lessons regarding virtue and vice.

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95. Posidonius is here quoted by Galen, *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, IV.416-427 = KIDD 1999 no. 165.

96. Posidonius is here quoted by Seneca, *Epis.* 78.28 = KIDD 1999 no. 179.

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