

## Timaeus' views on the Past\*

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### 1

The question I should like to try to answer in this paper is whether by the Hellenistic period there existed something that we could call a west Greek view of the past. There is no simple answer to this since, until one gets down as far as Diodorus, who was writing at the time of Julius Caesar, all the western Greek historians exist only in fragments; and indeed, after looking at the fragments,<sup>1</sup> I fairly soon reached the conclusion that any discussion of their views about the past would have to centre on Timaeus. For that there is a good reason. Apart from Timaeus, the attested fragments of authors such as Antiochus and Philistus, not to mention lesser figures like Athanis of Syracuse, Timonides of Leucas, Callias and Antander, the brothers of Agathocles, and Alcimus, are so meagre — indeed in some cases we have little more than their names — that they emerge as wholly shadowy personalities. Nor is it simply that the fragments are few in number. In addition there is a strong likelihood that often these writers are being quoted at second hand via Timaeus. Consequently, if the fragments seem to suggest that their authors were interested predominantly in the same kind of things as Timaeus, that may well be because he quoted material from them which happened to fall in with his own interests.

For Timaeus himself the situation is a little better, though by no means wholly satisfactory. Jacoby lists over a hundred and fifty attested fragments of the historian. Many come from Polybius, who consistently sets him in a

\* A paper read at a conference on the Attitudes to the Past in Hellenistic Historiography, held at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on 14–15.11.1988.

1 For the fragments of the historians of Sicily (with Magna Graecia) see Jacoby, *FGrH* 554–77; Timaeus is no. 566.

bad light, and about a score are from Athenaeus, who had decidedly specialised interests. So at the outset there is the problem of recovering Timaeus. About the possibility of doing this there have been two diametrically opposite views. In his monograph on Timaeus,<sup>2</sup> published in 1958, Truesdell Brown took the view that it was dangerous to go beyond the attested fragments; and that was also the judgement of Momigliano in a classic study, originally published in 1959, and reprinted seven years later in his *Terzo contributo*<sup>3</sup>, on the discovery of Rome in the *Histories* of Timaeus. But since then valuable work has been done by Klaus Meister<sup>4</sup> in analysing the chapters of Diodorus dealing with the west and identifying those sections which have drawn on Timaeus. And in 1987 Lionel Pearson published a new study of Timaeus<sup>5</sup> which, I believe, makes it substantially easier to ask the question with which I opened this paper and have a reasonable chance of finding an answer.

Much of Pearson's book is also taken up with analysing Diodorus along with Plutarch and other later writers. A particular problem with which he is concerned is one that I have already touched on, namely whether, when these later writers mention sources other than Timaeus in what we may call 'Timaeian' passages, these references reflect their own supplementary reading or are taken over as they stand from Timaeus himself. If, as seems likely, the second alternative is frequently (though not always) true one can of course be more optimistic about recovering Timaeian material from their works. To facilitate this process Pearson has adopted a principle enunciated by the German scholar Geffcken, to the effect that where we have a passage bearing the manifest stamp of Timaeus (as revealed in attested fragments) in at least two authors independently known to use Timaeus, Timaeus may be assumed to be the source; and this law is not, Pearson claims, invalidated by slightly

- 2 Truesdell S. Brown, *Timaeus of Tauromenium* (University of California Publications in History, Vol. 35), Berkeley-Los Angeles 1958.
- 3 A. D. Momigliano, "Atene nel III secolo A.C. a la scoperta di Roma nelle storie di Timeo di Tauromenio," *RSI* 71 (1959) 529-56 = *Terzo contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico* (Rome 1966) 1, 23-53; published in English, "Athens in the third century B.C. and the discovery of Rome in the histories of Timaeus," *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography* (Oxford-Middleton, Connecticut 1977) 37-66.
- 4 K. Meister, *Die sizilische Geschichte bei Diodor von den Anfängen bis zum Tod des Agathokles* (Diss. Erlangen), Munich 1967.
- 5 L. Pearson, *The Greek Historians of the West: Timaeus and his predecessors* (Philological Monographs of the American Philological Association, No. 35), Atlanta, Georgia 1987.

variant versions in those authors, since slight variations are something one would naturally expect to find. Geffcken's law is obviously *not* equivalent to a proof; but as a rule of thumb it helps things along substantially and extends the amount of material available for establishing Timaeus' views about the past.

Assuming, however, that we can make some sort of shot at reconstructing Timaeus along these lines, can we distinguish between his real views about the past and what one might crudely term the propagandist purpose of his history? To this question I suspect the answer is 'no'. A historian does not simply contemplate the past and apprehend it as something separate from himself. He interacts with it, thrusts his interpretation upon it and in a sense recreates it. Each historian gives us his *own* version of the past and he may be entirely convinced of the truth of what he has written although to the critic his version may seem patently slanted to support a thesis. How Timaeus saw the past is something to be discovered not simply from what he says about it but also from how he narrates past events. A good example of this is the account of the battle of Himera in Diodorus 11.20–26, which draws on Timaeus as its source.<sup>6</sup> In this passage, as Pearson has shown, Timaeus sets out to out-trump Herodotus' account of the Persian Wars in mainland Greece. Thus, instead of Herodotus' synchronism of Himera with the Greek victory at Salamis (7.166), Timaeus has substituted a synchronism with the Greek defeat at Thermopylae (11.24.1); and Himera is portrayed as so resounding a victory that 'not even a messenger, as the saying goes, reached Carthage to bring the news' (11.23.2). The result of the battle was to encourage the mainland Greeks in *their* coming battle with Xerxes, to serve as a good omen for their victory and to enable Gelon to offer them his assistance; and afterwards the Carthaginian prisoners were employed rebuilding the destroyed temples of Acragas — a boast not open to the Athenian victors of Salamis in relation to the defeated Persians. These contrasts are not specifically mentioned by Diodorus or, by implication, Timaeus: but they are incorporated within the narrative in such a way that no reader could miss them.

## 2

For his account of Himera Timaeus seems to have drawn largely on his patriotic imagination. But for much of his narrative he had of course sources

6 Cf. Meister *op.cit.* (n. 4 above), 42–3; Pearson *op.cit.* (n. 5 above), 20–26; *contra*, Brown *op.cit.* (n. 2 above).

to rely on, both earlier writers and — though this is more controversial — local traditions. I have already mentioned some earlier west Greek writers, but the only two of real importance were Antiochus and Philistus.<sup>7</sup> Antiochus had written both *Sicelica* and a shorter work *περὶ Ἰταλίας*. The fact that we have more fragments from the latter work led von Fritz<sup>8</sup> to attribute many of the Italian fragments to the *Sicelica*; but that was unnecessary, for the disproportion in the number of surviving fragments merely reflects the fact that Strabo, the source of many of them, devoted 70 sections of books 5 and 6 to Italy and only 12 to Sicily. Jacoby has made the important point<sup>9</sup> that *Sicelica*, whether written by Antiochus or his successors, constituted a form of history parallel, not with Greek *local history*, which usually concerned itself with separate cities, but with *Hellenica*, that is with mainland Greek history — but filling a western gap left unfilled by Herodotus. This is both true and important when we come to Timaeus, who clearly felt himself to be writing history of that kind.

Written sources could sometimes be supplemented from local traditions — though how extensive or reliable these were is debatable. We have to distinguish here between two kinds of tradition: first, local legends involving gods and heroes, which might be linked to a particular locality, but obviously did not correspond to any actual historical events; and secondly, traditions of early history, including the 'foundation stories' of the cities of Sicily and Magna Graecia. (Incidentally the latter, legends and foundation stories concerning Magna Graecia, were often included in works entitled *Sicelica*, since in early times there existed no geographical concept of Italy comparable to the clear geographical concept of Sicily.)<sup>10</sup> For both kinds of tradition the evidence is scanty. As Pearson points out, there is not likely to have been much or any cultural contact between the Greeks and their Sicel or Sican predecessors;<sup>11</sup> and if there was any, it is improbable that it elicited any traditions likely to reinforce Greek legends. In general, however, I suspect that Pearson is too sceptical about what may have been available elsewhere. A number of terracotta votive offerings representing Aeneas and Anchises, which were discovered at Veii, may suggest that the legend linking Italy with

7 *FGrH* 555 (Antiochus), 556 (Philistus).

8 K. von Fritz, *Die griechische Geschichtsschreibung I* (Berlin 1967): Text, 507–18; cf. F. W. Walbank, "The historians of Greek Sicily," *Kokalos* 14–15 (1968–1969) 479.

9 *FGrH* III B pp. 480–1.

10 Cf. Jacoby, *ibid.*

11 *Op.cit.* (n. 5 above) 55.

the Trojan War was known in Etruria by an early date.<sup>12</sup> Pearson argues that as a Greek import the objects can tell us nothing about local traditions. But imports have to take account of consumer preferences and I think one must assume that the terracottas meant something to those who dedicated them. The sacred objects which Timaeus records<sup>13</sup> as deposited in a temple at Lavinium may have been no more genuine Trojan relics than many sacred objects to be found in our cathedrals — the Turin shroud for example — are what they purport to be; but what matters is that they are evidence for the existence of a tradition which regarded them as Trojan. The strength of that tradition would be enhanced still more if it could be proved decisively that a building excavated at Lavinium was indeed, as is argued by several Italian archaeologists, the *heroon* of Aeneas.<sup>14</sup> However, it can, I admit, be argued that the situation in Etruria, Rome and Latium is different from that existing in Sicily and Magna Graecia. But I shall return shortly to the place occupied in Timaeus' *Histories* by Rome.

## 3

How and what a historian writes and how he views the past are questions that do not depend solely on his sources, his own prejudices and his interaction with the material which the sources provide. He is also deeply influenced by existing literary traditions about different categories of historiography, for example the different scope and expectations proper to history or biography. Timaeus, we must remember, spent fifty years working in libraries in Athens. The subject of his work was western Greece but he would have been surrounded on the shelves by mainstream writers and he must have been thoroughly familiar with their assumptions about different sorts of history and ways of writing it. In a well-known passage from the introduction to

- 12 Cf. A. D. Momigliano, *JRS* 53 (1963) 102 n. 37 for earlier bibliography. These terracottas were originally dated to the fifth century, but M. Torelli, *Lavinio e Roma* (Rome 1984) has recently argued for a date after 390, on the grounds that the tradition of such terracotta votive offerings in Central Italy does not go back earlier than the early fourth century.
- 13 *FGrH* 566 F 59 (Dion.Hal.1.67.4); cf. Pearson, *op.cit.* (n. 5 above) 86 (where 'Lanuvium' is a mistake for 'Lavinium').
- 14 See P. Sommella, "Heroon di Enea a Lavinium: recenti scavi a Pratica di Mare," *Rend.Acc.Pont.* 44 (1971-2) 47ff.

Book 9 of his *Histories*<sup>15</sup> Polybius enumerates three different kinds of history-writing which, though he does not say so, had traditionally been associated with a sequence of periods in Greek history.<sup>16</sup> The first of these historical genres he calls 'the genealogical kind'; the second history dealing with 'colonies, foundations of cities and kinship relations (συγγένεια)'; and the third history concerned with 'ἔθνη, cities and rulers'. Under ἔθνη he includes both tribal states and federal bodies; and in fact it is within this third category that Polybius' own work entirely falls. Polybius does not say, however, that a history had to be restricted to only one of these genres. In fact we know that sections of Ephorus' history dealt with colonies, foundations and the ties of kinship.<sup>17</sup> Since the beginning of the fifth century a branch of history had however arisen which was specifically devoted to bringing the contents of early Greek myth and legend into some kind of order. This 'genealogical kind of history', as Polybius here terms it, was the creation of Hecataeus of Miletus, who sorted out the myths and generations of the epic figures to produce a consistent picture and one that was broadly accepted by his successors. By the early fourth century the 'mythical' and the 'genealogical' were regarded as closely linked together, as they are in the fictional discourse given by Solon to the Egyptians in Plato's *Timaeus* (22 a). Already Herodotus had accepted the distinction which this implied between legendary and historical times; in 3.122, for instance, he differentiates between Polycrates' thalassocracy and that of Minos. Similarly, Ephorus, by beginning his universal history with the return of the Heracleidae,<sup>18</sup> established that 'event' as an epochal date for the beginning of real history.

Living and working in Athens, Timaeus will have been familiar with these periods and these categories; and Jacoby seems to have established that at the outset of his work he treated the mythical period. His western predecessors had already adopted the habit of beginning their works with the earliest times — unlike the great historians of mainland Greece, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon and, later, Polybius. Unfortunately the 'earliest times' were an age of myth and fantasy rather than of solid historical events. It is rather as if a serious history of Great Britain were to begin with the landing of Brut the Trojan at Totnes or a history of the United States were to open with a first

15 Plb. 9.1.4–5.

16 On this see S. Mohm, *Untersuchungen zu den historiographischen Anschauungen des Polybios* (Diss. Saarbrücken 1977) 27–8.

17 Cf. Plb. 39.1.3.

18 *FGrH* 70 T 8 = D.S.4.1.3.

chapter based on the contents of the Book of Mormon. Polybius' second and third types — or periods — of history fitted the western experience rather well, since foundation legends were an important part of the traditions of those colonial areas. But the first category, ὁ γενεαλογικὸς τρόπος, which appeals to the φιλήκοος, the reader who likes a good yarn, and deals with the mythical period, including all its fabulous elements, presented special problems — but also special opportunities.

## 4

One of the merits of Pearson's recent work is his convincing demonstration that Timaeus consciously set out to graft the rich mythology of mainland Greece onto the west. The effect — and perhaps, we may say, the purpose — of this was to stake out a prior Greek claim to large areas of Sicily, South Italy and other parts of the western Mediterranean where, in later centuries, the real Greek colonists would arrive to take up their inheritance. For Timaeus this was not a purely arbitrary procedure. It involved locating places mentioned in the *Odyssey* at specific sites and arguing from survivals of customs and religious rituals, from the supposed origins of still extant buildings and from far-fetched etymologies of place-names, which supposedly 'proved' their Greek character. Alternatively, vaguely situated legends could be firmly attached to some definite western locality — for example, the rape of Persephone, which was now set in the meadows below Enna, probably by Timaeus.<sup>19</sup> Similarly Demeter's gift of corn to the Sicilians<sup>20</sup> — before she gave it to the Athenians — established Sicily as the birthplace of agriculture and all that that implied for the future of civilization. The Argonauts were brought to Italy and the island of Elba;<sup>21</sup> Strabo and Diodorus justify this association with strange etymologies which are redolent of Timaeus.<sup>22</sup> Boeotians on the Balearic Islands,<sup>23</sup> the sons of Heracles in Sardinia<sup>24</sup> and Heracles himself at Gades<sup>25</sup> all contribute to the same picture. The list could be

19 D.S.5.1.3 = *FGrH* 566 F 164.

20 D.S.4.4.4 = *FGrH* 566 F 164.

21 D.S.4.56.3–7 = *FGrH* 566 F 85.

22 Cf. Pearson, *op.cit.* (n. 5 above) 63–4.

23 *FGrH* 566 F 66.

24 Cf. Pearson, *op.cit.* (n. 5 above) 66 n. 54, quoting J. Geffcken, *Timaios' Geographie des Westens* (Berlin 1892) 55–8.

25 *Mir.Ausc.* 88; Cf. Pearson, *op.cit.* (n. 5 above) 69.

extended. It is interesting to observe that we have a similar phenomenon in the care taken by the historians of Alexander to provide his expedition to India with forerunners in the myths involving Heracles and Dionysus.<sup>26</sup>

As I have already pointed out, it is difficult to discover how far Timaeus actually *believed* all these stories. Many of them contained a miraculous content which a rationalist author like Polybius would have dismissed with contempt. But, as we know, belief in miracles is an odd business. Credulity or incredulity can vary not only from generation to generation, but also from one individual to another. In his *Ecclesiastical History* Bede records miracle after miracle and obviously has no difficulty in believing in them all, and even today many people who refuse to believe that miracles occur in the modern world believe in the miracles recorded in the Old and New Testaments. How far Timaeus was committed to believing all the stories he retails is not easy to decide, since we have not access to his actual words and so are unable to judge the *tone* of his remarks. It may well be that, like Herodotus, he did not necessarily accept as true everything he recorded. But it is useful to be reminded by Pearson that in his account of the sixth century struggles between the cities of Magna Graecia Timaeus introduced the same kind of marvels and mythical elements that we find in his treatment of earlier centuries — either because he could not find records of a more factual kind or because he preferred a romantic anecdotal treatment.<sup>27</sup> But whatever his innermost beliefs on these matters, I think we must regard his treatment of the 'mythical period' in the west as an integral part of his view of the past.

When we come down to the fifth century and later times, the atmosphere changes. There seems no doubt that from then onwards Timaeus saw Sicilian history as a struggle for freedom — externally against the Carthaginians and internally against the rule of tyrants, the latter having frequently gained their position by leading the resistance to the foreign enemy. Timaeus' views on freedom can be deduced from his treatment of the leading figures in Sicilian and Southern Italian history during this period — from his hostility towards the tyrants (with the exception of Gelon, the victor of Himera) and his sympathetic view of Dion and Timoleon and, in the fifth century, Hermocrates, for whom, despite the ambiguities of his career, Timaeus clearly entertained warm feelings. Timaeus' hatred of tyrants partly, of course, reflects his own misfortune in having been expelled from Tauromenium by

26 Cf. Pearson, *op.cit.* (n. 5 above) 59 n. 22 for references to Tyre, the oasis of Ammon and Aornus.

27 Cf. Pearson, *op.cit.* (n. 5 above) 111.



Agathocles, just as his sympathy for Timoleon arises out of Timoleon's collaboration with Timaeus' father Andromachus and willingness to leave him in charge at Tauromenium.

## 5

So far I have said nothing about one aspect of Timaeus' work which is often regarded as highly important both for his historical significance and for his historical understanding: I mean, of course, his treatment of Rome. The trouble about this is that once again our paucity of firm evidence makes it very difficult to find out what Timaeus' considered attitude to Rome was. Writing well over a century before Polybius, he was far less advantageously placed than the Achaean historian for appreciating the role that Rome was to fill in the history of the western — and later the eastern — Mediterranean. But, if we could discover what he thought about Rome, it would clearly be relevant to his view of the past, since most historians are apt to interpret the past to some extent in the light of their apprehension of the present.

According to Polybius (1.5.1) Timaeus ended his history in 264, when the Romans first crossed over into Sicily. This is the point at which Polybius himself opened his introductory account of the events down to 220, before embarking upon his main narrative. The year 264, Laqueur remarked, is 'a splendid opening, but no conclusion'.<sup>28</sup> I am not so sure about that. If Timaeus wanted to end his work with a fateful moment and event which set a large question mark against the whole future of the west, 264 would be hard to beat. And why should one assume that every historian will want to end his work at a date which is nicely decisive and conclusive? The last words of Xenophon's *Hellenica* are surely a clear refutation of that assumption. Closing with the battle of Mantinea he writes: 'After that battle trouble and confusion (ἀκρίσια καὶ ταραχή) in Greece were even greater than before.'<sup>29</sup> Certainly by 264 it was clear that Rome was to play an important and probably decisive role, at any rate in Sicily — which was Timaeus' main concern. But this may well not have been true at the time when Timaeus was writing his early books — assuming, as I shall, that he wrote those first.

I have already mentioned Momigliano's essay on the discovery of Rome in Timaeus' *Histories*, in which he assigns a major role to Timaeus as the man

28 R. Laqueur, *RE* VI A, 1 (1936) col. 1082.

29 Xen. *Hell.* 7.5.27.

who first revealed the importance of Rome to the Greek world.<sup>30</sup> In his recent book Pearson is much more sceptical and plays down the role of Rome in Timaeus' work and in his vision of the past and present.<sup>31</sup> Rome, he thinks, figured in Timaeus' main work simply as one piece in the early Italian mosaic. Its foundation legends were recorded like those of many other cities: but in no way did it stand out. Let us consider the evidence.

First, there is the problem of the book on Pyrrhus. Discussing the ancient Roman custom of the sacrifice of the 'October horse', Polybius (12.4 b) refers to Timaeus' views as expressed in *Τὰ περὶ Πύρρον*, 'The events concerning Pyrrhus', as if this were a separate work, distinct from his main *Histories*. That that is so is confirmed by two later writers. One of these is Cicero who, in a letter to Lucceius (*Ad Fam.* 5.12.2), asking him to write a monograph on his (Cicero's) consulship, quotes various precedents of historians who have produced such separate works, mainly in fact on individual wars — Callisthenes on the *Phocicum bellum*, Timaeus on the *Pyrrhi (sc. bellum)* and Polybius on the *Numantinum (sc. bellum)*. Cicero clearly implies that his actions against the Catilinarian conspirators constituted another such *bellum*. Pearson<sup>32</sup> claims that we do not know which wars were described in Timaeus' monograph — those which he fought in Italy and Sicily or indeed his whole career. Dionysius (1.6.1), it is true, employs the phrase 'τοὺς ... πρὸς Πύρρον ... πολέμους', the wars against Pyrrhus, to describe the separate work (*ἰδίαν ... πραγματείαν*). But he does so in order to contrast those wars with *τὰ ... ἀρχαῖα τῶν ἱστοριῶν*, the ancient part of the *Histories*, which were recorded *ἐν ταῖς κοιναῖς ἱστορίαις*, in Timaeus' general history. In both cases it is Rome he is speaking about, Rome's early history and Rome's wars against Pyrrhus (*πρὸς Πύρρον*).

Why then does Dionysius speak of wars in the plural? Clearly the plural does not refer to a variety of wars fought *by* Pyrrhus, including his whole career and his struggles in Greece, Macedonia and Epirus, as Pearson envisages, when he translates 'the wars of Pyrrhus'. For the wars mentioned by Dionysius are fought by the Romans *against* Pyrrhus, not by Pyrrhus against all and sundry enemies. One might, I suppose, assume that the campaign in Sicily was included on the grounds that a war fought against Pyrrhus by Rome's Carthaginian allies was tantamount to a war fought against him by Rome. But that seems on the whole rather far-fetched. And

30 See above, n. 3.

31 *Op.cit.* (n. 5 above) 84–5.

32 *Ibid.* 255–6.

the use of the plural 'wars' excludes the notion that the Sicilian campaigns were included as forming *part* of the war between Pyrrhus and Rome. On the whole, then, the most likely explanation of Dionysius' plural 'wars' is that he is thinking of the Roman campaigns against Pyrrhus before he left for Sicily and the campaign which took place after his return to Italy as constituting two separate wars. It is more usual to regard them as two episodes in a single war, as Cicero does; but basically we are concerned here merely with a matter of terminology. Τὰ περὶ Πύρρου, on this hypothesis, was a monograph dealing with the war between Rome and Pyrrhus, what looking back at it from the Roman standpoint we usually call the Tarentine or Pyrrhic War. There is no good reason to regard it as a section of the main history. Indeed the combined evidence of Cicero and Dionysius is against that supposition. At this point I should perhaps add that Pyrrhus' war in Sicily will obviously have been treated in Timaeus' *Histories*. But our main surviving sources for that war — Plutarch's *Life of Pyrrhus*, Dionysius and Justin — do not appear to have used him directly and the best Pearson can do here is to pick out passages in those works which seem, if only indirectly, to echo Timaeus' sentiments.<sup>33</sup>

There is also a passage in Aulus Gellius (11.1.1 = *FGrH* 566 T 9 (c)) in which he speaks of 'historiae, quas oratione Graeca de rebus populi Romani (sc. Timaeus) composuit'. Jacoby, who by a slip attributes the phrase to Varro (whom Gellius mentions immediately afterwards), assumes that the reference is to Timaeus' work on Pyrrhus; and undoubtedly this monograph can more appropriately be said to be about the affairs of the Roman people than can his main history. We cannot however be sure of this. The context in which Gellius quotes this work and also that of Varro concerns the etymology of the word *Italia*, which Timaeus derived from "an ancient Greek word 'italoi' meaning 'oxen'" — Varro probably followed Timaeus in this — and such a context is clearly more appropriate to the early books of the *History* than it is to an account of the war against Pyrrhus. Indeed one assumes that Timaeus will have discussed precisely this kind of thing in his early books. Moreover, it would be rather odd to use *historiae* to describe Timaeus' monograph on the war between Rome and Pyrrhus, a word far more suited to the general history, for which he was better known. Nevertheless, I think we have to leave it open as to which of his works was described by Gellius as 'containing *res populi Romani*', while regarding the main history as slightly more probable.

33 *Ibid.* 256–9.

The same doubt hangs over an unquestionably significant statement made by Timaeus, namely that Rome was founded in the same year as Carthage, 38 years before the first Olympiad (Dion.Hal.1.74.1 = *FGrH* 566 F 60), that is, in 814. Incidentally, this is much earlier than the dates later put forward for the foundation of Rome. But in that it is not unique. Callias, Agathocles' brother, had a version which put it three generations after Aeneas;<sup>34</sup> and Ennius<sup>35</sup> dated it around 700 years before either his own time, which would make it about 900 B.C., or (if the relevant passage comes from a speech of Camillus, as Skutsch has indicated)<sup>36</sup> as early as 1100 B.C. The coincidence between the foundation of Rome and that of Carthage is very typical of Timaeus, who loved synchronisms. But it can hardly be purely arbitrary and must mean that he saw the two powers as somehow ranged against each other. Unfortunately we do not know *where* in Timaeus' works this synchronism occurred. It is clear from Dionysius<sup>37</sup> that Timaeus dealt with Rome twice — τὰ ἀρχαῖα in his general history, and 'the wars against Pyrrhus' in the separate monograph; and we do not know to which of the two the common foundation date is to be attributed.<sup>38</sup>

It might at first sight seem more likely that a foundation date — like the discussion of the etymology of the word 'Italia' — is more appropriate to the books dealing with the foundation of the Greek and Italian cities. But the monograph could equally well have included material dealing with the earlier history and customs of Carthage and Rome which (in the latter case at least) Timaeus had not thought sufficiently relevant to his main purpose to be included in his *Histories*. It is significant that our only fragment specifically attributed to the monograph concerns the Roman sacrifice of the 'October horse'<sup>39</sup> 'commemorating their disaster at Troy': one can see how that fitted in to the conflict with Pyrrhus, the descendant of Achilles. And since it was at the time of Pyrrhus that the Romans made their third treaty with Carthage (Plb. 3.25.1–5), Timaeus may well have drawn attention to a chronological

34 Dion.Hal.1.72.5 = *FGrH* 564 F 5.

35 Fg.501–2 Vahlen = *Ann.*4.5 Skutsch (*The Annals of Ennius* ed. O. Skutsch. Oxford 1985).

36 On this see Skutsch, *op.cit.* (n. 35 above), 315 n. 1. As he there explains, the suggestion was originally made by Unger (1880), developed by Holzapfel (1875), forgotten, and then suggested afresh by Soltau (1912), and refined by Norden (1915) and, independently, Klotz (1942).

37 Dion. Hal.1.6.1 = *FGrH* 566 T 9 b.

38 Cf. Momigliano, *Terzo contributo* (n. 3 above), 44–5.

39 Plb. 12.4 b = *FGrH* 566 F 36.

synchronism which he did not mention when dealing with τὰ ἀρχαῖα. There is a parallel in F 61 (from Pliny), which asserts that ‘Servius rex primus signavit aes; antea rudi usos Romae Timaeus tradit’; Momigliano has pointed out<sup>40</sup> that this passage is preceded by a statement that the Romans did not use silver coinage before the time of Pyrrhus and consequently that Timaeus probably dealt with the subject of Roman coinage in his monograph on Pyrrhus rather than in his general history. The same is likely to be true of the synchronism of the two foundation dates.

If that is so, we can, I think, draw the tentative conclusion that Timaeus grew increasingly aware of the importance of Rome and Carthage, despite his seclusion at Athens, cut off from first-hand experience of western developments. The fact that he chose to devote a monograph to the war of the Romans against Pyrrhus and probably included in it the synchronism of the foundation dates of Rome and Carthage indicates that he had some inkling of the coming struggle for power. And that would be confirmed by his decision to end his *Histories* in the year of the great question mark, 264, when the Romans first took their forces overseas into Sicily, the home of Timaeus.

## 6

If I may summarise my conclusions about Timaeus’ view of the past, the following points seem to emerge. First, Timaeus — and in this he may be following in the footsteps of earlier western historians — looked back to a western past which was comparable to that of mainland Greece and was indeed *equally Greek*. This could be demonstrated from the legends concerning the gods and heroes. Many of these had found their way to Sicily, Magna Graecia and the western Mediterranean generally. As a result the Greek colonists, when they set out to found daughter-cities in the west, came ashore in lands which were *naturaliter Graeca*, lands awaiting the arrival of their destined Hellenic heirs. Western Greece was another Hellas inhabited by men equally devoted to freedom and the struggle against the barbarians, whom they were on the whole more successful in crushing. It is this Greek world that Timaeus in his old age sees as threatened by the imminent struggle between the two barbarian powers, Rome and Carthage. Its forerunner is the Roman war with Pyrrhus, and by treating this in a separate monograph Timaeus may even have been confessing his inability to incorporate the issues which it raised within his main *History*.

40 *Terzo contributo* (n. 3 above), 45.

Jacoby's judgement on Timaeus strikes one as inconsistent. In his commentary on the fragments (*FGrH* III b p. 535) he describes him as 'banal, bourgeois and self-contradictory, a writer lacking a philosophy of history or sense of the world around him (*Weltanschauung*)'; yet on the very next page he characterises him as the man who saw the significance of Rome. So phrased, this second claim is not quite as substantially supported as either Jacoby or Momigliano maintains. For it was not simply Rome, but rather whichever of the two great barbarian powers should come out on top in their forthcoming struggle that Timaeus saw as putting the Greek world at risk. If we may believe Polybius, the same point was to be made by Agelaus of Naupactus at the conference of 217, when he made the famous comment about the 'cloud in the west'.<sup>41</sup> For Agelaus it was the Greeks of the mainland who were under threat, for Timaeus those of Sicily and the west. The view that Timaeus saw the significance of Rome has therefore to be qualified. But I hope also to have shown that Jacoby's first claim is dubious and that Timaeus had a clear picture of the past and of a pattern in history which both flattered and legitimised the Greeks of those western lands from which the misfortune of political exile for so many years excluded him.

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41 Plb. 5.104.10