

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00097-1 - Timaeus of Tauromenium and Hellenistic Historiography

Christopher A. Baron

Excerpt

[More information](#)

CHAPTER I

How to study a fragmentary historian

Between Xenophon's *Hellenica* in the fourth century BC and the *Jewish Wars* of Josephus in the first century AD no Greek historical work survives complete. From this period the only lengthy extant pieces of continuous historical prose narrative belong to Polybius, Diodorus, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus.¹ This gap in our knowledge of Greek historical writing did not result from a decline in its production. Felix Jacoby's collection of fragments of the Greek historians includes hundreds of authors from the Hellenistic age. Many are little more than names to us. We may know their city of origin, the title of their work(s) and the number of books each contained, and the approximate time at which they lived – or we may know none of these things. In most cases we have at least one “fragment” of their work, preserved in a later, surviving text and consisting of a quotation, paraphrase, or mere statement that they included a certain fact, figure, event, or scene in their history. In a few rare instances we have evidence on stone or papyrus, more direct but still lacking its original context.

Consider the example of Philippus of Pergamum. We would not even know his name were it not for an inscription on a statue base from Epidaurus, first published in 1874, which appears to preserve the opening lines of his history.

Ἐγὼ παντοίων πάθεων καὶ ξυνεχέος ἀλληλοφονίης ἀνά τε τὴν Ἀσίην καὶ τὴν Εὐρώπην καὶ τὰ Λιβύων ἔθνη καὶ νησιωτέων πόλιας καθ' ἡμέας γεγενημένων ὅσῃ χειρὶ τὴν περὶ τῶν καινῶν πρήξεων ἱστορίην ἐξήνεγκα ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας, ὅκως καὶ δι' ἡμέων μανθάνοντες, ὀκόσα δημοκοπή καὶ κερδέων ἀ[μετρῆσῃ] καὶ στάσις ἐμφύλιοι καὶ πιστίων καταλύσις γεννῶσιν κακὰ, παρα[τη]ρήσει παθέων ἀλλοτρῶν ἀπενθή[τους] ποιέωνται τὸς τοῦ βίου διορθώσις.

¹ Strasburger (1977) provides an overview of the “ruins of Greek historiography.” Other useful treatments include Cuypers (2010) 318–23; Oliver (2006); Marincola (2001) 105–12, with further bibliography; Brunt (1980a); Préaux (1975–6); Brown (1973). Valuable essays in Schepens and Bollansée (2005) and Verdin *et al.* (1990).

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00097-1 - Timaeus of Tauromenium and Hellenistic Historiography

Christopher A. Baron

Excerpt

[More information](#)

I – since all conceivable calamities and continuous mutual slaughter have occurred in our time throughout Asia and Europe and the peoples of Africa and the cities of islanders – with my pious hand delivered the history of recent affairs to the Greeks, so that, having learned also from me how many evils arise from courting the mob and [excessive] greed and kindred strife and the breaking of trust, by observation of the calamities of others they may correct their way of life without grief.²

Philippus' history most probably treated the Roman civil wars of the 40s BC as they played out in the eastern Mediterranean, although this conclusion is based solely on letter forms and educated guesses about which "calamities and continuous mutual slaughter" his preface references.³ Not a single mention of Philippus or his work appears in the surviving literary tradition, including scholia, lexica, and Byzantine compilations. Considering that he wrote about famous and world-changing events, it is fair to ask why his history disappeared. The assumption for many years in classical scholarship was that the works of the Hellenistic historians did not survive because they did not deserve to.⁴ The traditional picture of Greek historical writing had Thucydides at one end on a high peak (with Herodotus accommodated in various ways – sometimes on the upslope just below Thucydides, sometimes on a completely different mountain range). Then, Greek historical writing slid down a treacherous slope for the rest of its days, pulled by the influence of rhetoric and tragedy, never to reach its former dazzling heights. Some had it descending into the dark valley of Hellenistic historiography but climbing out, if only for a moment, on the shoulders of Polybius.⁵ This judgment, however, ignores the fact that nearly *everything* written by ancient historians has disappeared: Hermann Strasburger estimated that only one-fortieth (2.5 percent) of all the historical work produced in classical antiquity survives in modern times.⁶ Works perished for many reasons beyond their (perceived) quality. Even Herodotus, Thucydides, and

² *FGrHist* 95 F 1 = *JG* IV.1² 687. On the Ionic dialect and poetic language, see Goukowsky (1995) 40–1. Jacoby prints ποιέονται by mistake.

³ Goukowsky (1995) 39; Chaniotis (1988) 314–17. Jacoby (followed by Marincola [1997] 51) accepted Kaibel's date of late second/early third century AD, but see the comments of Foucart (1878) 217–18 on the letter forms.

⁴ E.g. Cawkwell (1989) 245 concluded his review of Pearson (1987) by noting that "[n]ot all losses of ancient literature are inconsolable."

⁵ Although not always stated in such stark terms, this schema continued to inform most presentations of ancient Greek historiography until the late twentieth century: see e.g. Meister (1990) 80; Connor (1985) 459–70; Fornara (1983) 64–7; Brown (1973) 139; Walsh (1961) 27–8; Jacoby (1956) 36; Barber (1935) 159; Bury (1908) 150. For the problems with such a view, see Cuypers (2010) 322–3; Marincola (2007a) I.6–7 and (2003) 285–8; Schepens (2006) 161–71 and (2005) 146 n. 11; Humphreys (1997) 207–13; S. Hornblower (1994a) 21; Vattuone (1994) 3–9; Gabba (1981) 50; Brunt (1980a) 336–9; Strasburger (1977).

⁶ Strasburger (1977) 175–81. Cf. Schepens (2001) 7–10.

Xenophon were valued in the ancient world not as great historians but as great literary stylists – that is why they became “classics.”⁷ As Guido Schepens has stated, it is a methodological error to assume that lost works were “intrinsically inferior in quality or of minor importance.”⁸

The sole surviving fragment of Philippus illustrates three factors which worked against Hellenistic historians.⁹ First, they fell victim to the fashion for Atticizing that dominated Greek literature under the Roman Empire. Hellenistic Greek, with its intricate stylistic features and, some would say, long-windedness, was already coming under attack in the late first century BC. Thus Dionysius claims that while the oldest writers paid special attention to composition and produced “works of beauty,” later authors completely neglected it. “As a result,” he writes, “they left behind them the sort of works that no one can bear to follow through to the end.” All the authors he then lists as examples are Hellenistic historians.¹⁰ Secondly, a fate similar to that of Hellenistic prose befell the history of the Greeks in that period. Under Roman rule, interest in the Greek past centered on the classical age, Alexander, and to a lesser extent the Roman conquest of the Greek world. Although Philippus dealt with the final battles of the Roman Republic, from his introduction it appears that he focused on the eastern Mediterranean, that is, the old Greek world. The chances of such a work’s being read, let alone copied, in the Roman imperial era were small (a development encouraged, ironically, by the very destruction Philippus chose to record).¹¹ Finally, the works of many Hellenistic historians were superseded by later authors. Just as Livy’s achievement led to the loss of the Roman annalists, and Diodorus’ creation of a world-encompassing *Library of History* made the more detailed books in that library dispensable, in a later age there was no reason to consult Philippus directly if one could read an abridged version of the same events in Appian.¹²

⁷ Strasburger (1977) 183–7.

⁸ Schepens (2006) 168; cf. Knoepfler (2001) 25. The remark of Csapo (2000) 117 on Athenian comedy also applies, I believe, to Greek historiography: “The canon does not exist because of the unquestionable superiority of its preferred authors; rather, the superiority appears unquestionable thanks to the canon.”

⁹ Cf. Schepens (1997) 145–6. ¹⁰ Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 4. Cf. Cuypers (2010) 317.

¹¹ Cf. Knoepfler (2001) 43–4: the historical works of Duris and Hieronymus disappeared not only for stylistic reasons, but also because they concerned a period which was no longer of interest by the second century AD, “too complicated and too distant.” Plutarch’s selection of Greek subjects for his parallel lives, Arrian’s choice of historical topics, and Pausanias’ description of Greece all reflect the same phenomenon; on the last, see Hutton (2010).

¹² Goukowsky (1995) 43–52 seeks traces of Philippus’ influence in Appian and, intriguingly, the fragmentary books of Diodorus.

Whatever circumstances led to the preservation of the opening of his work on stone, Philippus shares with all fragmentary historians one basic feature: lack of context. By this I mean not the context in which we find the fragment; Philippus is unusual in this respect, since the vast majority of Greek historical “fragments” are not physical pieces broken off from the original work (papyrus scraps, palimpsests, or inscriptions), but rather citations and paraphrases – less often direct quotations – by later writers.¹³ They are removed from their original context and come to us in a mediated form, cited by ancient authors and scholars who had a different concept and a different methodology (if such a grand term even applies) when it came to referencing the work of a predecessor.¹⁴ Thus we must study these surviving authors’ tendencies, goals, and style in order to assess the value of the information they preserve concerning a lost historian. Although taking into account the preserving author is sometimes breezily dismissed as common sense, scholars continue to demonstrate the various and subtle ways in which distortion can occur.¹⁵ Furthermore, collections of fragments, by their very nature, obscure this distorting effect: they attempt to organize and clarify what is, in fact, a very messy and murky mass of material. Schepens has introduced the useful term “cover-text” to describe the texts from which we draw out the fragments of lost historians. The multiple senses of “cover” (to protect, but also to obscure) neatly convey the functions performed by the preserving author.¹⁶

But the cover-text is only one part of the context we desire. We still lack knowledge of the original context in which the notice appeared. Direct quotations are not all that common (again, Philippus is unusual here), and even when authors claim to be quoting verbatim, recent studies have shown that exactness does not always follow; furthermore, passages are readily taken out of context by the quoting author.¹⁷ Often we are not given specific book numbers or narrative situations. In cases where enough evidence survives, scholars have been able to determine (with varying degrees of certainty) the basic outline of lost works and to arrange fragments to match it.¹⁸ But even then we do not know the specific context of a given fragment. Why did the historian include this information? What comment

¹³ Lenfant (1999) 105; Flower (1994) 1; Brunt (1980b) 477. ¹⁴ Vattuone (1991) 11–13.

¹⁵ Beginning with the seminal article of Brunt (1980b); see Gorman and Gorman (2010) and (2007), Baron (2009), Lenfant (2007) and (1999), Pelling (2000b), Thompson (1985); Clarke (1999) on Posidonius, and Flower (1994) on Theopompus deal with the issue throughout. Cf. Most (2010) 376.

¹⁶ Schepens (1997) 166 n. 66.

¹⁷ Baron (2011); Gorman and Gorman (2010) and (2007); Lenfant (2007); Payen (2004) 114–19; Pelling (2000b); Humphreys (1997) 210; Strasburger (1977) 189–90.

¹⁸ See Clarke (1999) 157–64, however, for important cautions on this front.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00097-1 - Timaeus of Tauromenium and Hellenistic Historiography

Christopher A. Baron

Excerpt

[More information](#)*How to study a fragmentary historian*

5

or interpretation (if any) did he provide? Was it presented as fact, eyewitness report, one variant among several, or rumor? Did the historian insist upon, encourage, or discourage the reader's belief in the story? And, perhaps the trickiest question of all, is this fragment in any way representative of the entire work? For surviving historical works, which present their own problems of interpretation, we do not try to answer these questions using only small, randomly selected passages; but when we study authors whose many-volumed histories have been reduced to a few pages' worth of scattered references, we must.

What I hope to show in this book is that both the nature of the evidence and modern assumptions about historical writing in the Hellenistic period have skewed our treatment and judgment of lost historians. Once again, Philippus provides a useful example, although we have only his preface (or part of it). The long sentence is framed by *παθέων*, "calamities" or "sufferings." Was Philippus then a "tragic" historian, who filled his work with crying, disheveled women being dragged away from captured cities? In this way Polybius accuses Phylarchus of portraying the horrors of the sack of Mantinea in vivid detail in order to astonish his readers as a tragic poet would do.¹⁹ Some scholars have been struck by the moralizing tone of Philippus' opening and its rhetorical flourish, in which case he could be assigned to the Isocratean school of "rhetorical" historians, whose supposed goal was not to relate the past accurately, but to present historical *exempla* for moral instruction in as pleasant-sounding a form as possible.²⁰ Most recently, Angelos Chaniotis has emphasized the didactic and pragmatic approach evident in the second half of the sentence and compared Philippus to both Polybius and Thucydides.²¹ As will become clear in the course of this book, I find these designations – tragic, rhetorical, pragmatic – unhelpful, if not damaging, in the study of Hellenistic historiography. They are all based ultimately on taking at face value Polybius' polemical attacks on his predecessors, combined with transposing outdated modern notions of history writing as an objective science onto the ancient world.²²

We often read that Polybius' didactic purpose was the exception to the rule among Hellenistic historians; that while other authors wrote in order to

¹⁹ Polyb. 2.56.6–10. See Schepens (2005).

²⁰ Foucart (1878) 218; Jacoby, IC 299 describes Philippus' prose as "phrasenhaften." Pownall (2004) stresses the moralizing concerns of fourth-century historians. Flower (1994) 42–52 shows that Isocrates did not have the influence on historical writing normally attributed to him.

²¹ Chaniotis (2005) 167 (Polybius) and 241 (Thucydides). Chaniotis does not, however, rely on the notion of a "pragmatic" genre.

²² Cf. Humphreys (1997) 210–14 on similar instances of modern scholars importing "alien perspectives" into the Greek past.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00097-1 - Timaeus of Tauromenium and Hellenistic Historiography

Christopher A. Baron

Excerpt

[More information](#)

entertain, to elicit an emotional response, or to show off their rhetorical skills, Polybius aimed only to instruct; and that Polybius alone attempted to carry the torch of sober, objective historiography which Thucydides had lit. Admittedly, such a view is less common today than thirty years ago, both in its judgment of Polybius' relationship to Hellenistic historiography and in its evaluation of Thucydides. But one finds it in standard works of the late twentieth century, and its effect on our view of Hellenistic historical writing has not yet been compensated for.²³ Polybius does indeed stand out from the Hellenistic historians, but largely by default, since his work (a small part of it, in fact) survives through direct manuscript tradition. As a result, scholars for a long time judged lost historians by the Polybian standard: if more historians had written like Polybius, the thinking went, their works would have survived.²⁴ Such an attitude ignores the realities of manuscript survival. Polybius' text did not survive to the extent it did because it was considered the standard for historical writing; it survived because its subject matter, the rise of Rome to superpower status, remained of interest to readers in antiquity.²⁵ This is not to say that Polybius did his job poorly. But his work was not copied and recopied because it was deemed an exemplar of good historical writing, and thus we should not assume that its survival indicates a higher quality than the many lost works. Conversely, we should not assume that the quality of the efforts of lost historians played the primary role, if any, in the disappearance of their works.²⁶

We cannot go much further with Philippus and his one surviving fragment. But for a number of Hellenistic historians, enough information has survived to allow us to say more. This book is mostly about Timaeus of Tauromenium, a lost historian for whom we have a good deal of evidence.²⁷ The most recent book-length treatment of Timaeus in English, by Truesdell Brown in 1958, is outdated, not because of new evidence but as

²³ As in other areas of thought, the shift began in the years around 1980. Cf. Loraux (1980) and, more succinctly, Gabba (1981) 50 (citing Wiseman [1979]): "Thucydides and Polybius, precisely because their historical method is close to our own, are regarded as paradigms against which to judge ancient historical writing – quite wrongly. In fact they are untypical and exceptional." See Dewald (2005) 7–15; Shrimpton (1999); Fowler (1996) 68–9; Percival (1990). Marincola (2011) collects a number of important essays, including Loraux (translated into English) and Gabba. On Thucydides, see Marincola (2001) 61–2.

²⁴ Encouraged by Polybius' self-serving criticism of other historians: see Chapter 4 and Baron (2009) for his attack on Timaeus; for his polemic in general, Walbank (2005) and (1962).

²⁵ Cf. Clarke (2008) 176, on local history. Gabba (1981) 51 points to the importance of creating a continuous coverage of Greek history in the formation of a canon of historians.

²⁶ Schepens (1997) 145. On the importance of the Hellenistic historians, see Finley (1975) 84.

²⁷ Timaeus = *FGrHist* 566, to whom citations of fragments without an *FGrHist* or *BNJ* designation refer. See Vattuone (2002b) 226–32 for a thorough bibliographical essay.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00097-1 - Timaeus of Tauromenium and Hellenistic Historiography

Christopher A. Baron

Excerpt

[More information](#)*How to study a fragmentary historian*

7

a result of new approaches to and theories about the writing of history in both the ancient and modern worlds as well as increased recognition of the pitfalls we face in handling fragments.²⁸ Timaeus is one of the most important lost Greek historians, not only because his *Histories* became the authoritative work on the Greeks in the western Mediterranean, but also because of his research into chronology and his influence on Roman historiography. With the recent translation of his fragments by Craig Champion as part of the *Brill's New Jacoby* project, we may expect that Timaeus will begin to receive more attention.²⁹

But, beyond a fresh and up-to-date treatment of Timaeus, I intend to contribute to the study of post-classical Greek historiography in two ways. First, in order to study the fragments, we must start from a sound methodological basis. As I noted above, scholars recognize the issues surrounding the study of fragments, but that recognition does not always translate into practice, nor does the nature of our fragment collections themselves assist us in this respect.³⁰ We can only attempt to reach larger conclusions about major historians or historical writing in general when we have fully accounted for the distortion of the cover-text and attempted to re-contextualize the fragments (in the terminology of Riccardo Vattuone, with a slightly different emphasis – see below). For Timaeus, this means moving outside the polemical Polybian framework in which much of the evidence is preserved. But I will also show that our view of Timaeus is skewed by non-polemical sources and even by the process of fragment collection itself. A detailed study of this distorting effect on Timaeus' work will prove useful for fragmentary historians in general.

Secondly, through my examination of Timaeus I hope to convey a broader impression of the major lines of Hellenistic historiography. By utilizing a more flexible notion of genre, we can further escape the Polybian framework imposed on the evidence, since he critiques historians solely on the basis of the writing of contemporary history and a largely Thucydidean conception of it. In place of the traditional designations mentioned earlier, I follow Strasburger and others in suggesting

²⁸ Important re-evaluations of ancient historiography include Marincola (2001), Humphreys (1997), S. Hornblower (1994a), Verdin *et al.* (1990), Woodman (1988), Wiseman (1979). On fragments, see n. 15 above.

²⁹ He already features prominently in three notable works dealing with ancient chronology and notions of time: Clarke (2008), Christesen (2007), and Feeney (2007).

³⁰ Key discussions of the problems facing the study of lost historical works include Yarrow (2006) 103–22; Schepens and Bollansée (2005); Pelling (2000b); Clarke (1999) 130–9; Lenfant (1999); Most (1997); Flower (1994); Lens (1992); Vattuone (1991) 11–15; Ambaglio (1990); Thompson (1985); Brunt (1980b); Strasburger (1977).

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00097-1 - Timaeus of Tauromenium and Hellenistic Historiography

Christopher A. Baron

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Thucydidean and Herodotean traditions of historical writing; but I insist on using these only as guidelines to help us interpret the material, not as rigid categories to be forced upon the evidence.³¹ In the course of the book I will briefly touch upon a handful of other important Hellenistic historians, either where their works or interests intersect with those of Timaeus, or where my findings for his fragments seem encouraging for a brief examination of a similar issue in another historian. But a history of Hellenistic historiography remains to be written, a situation which has not changed since Oswyn Murray made the same observation over forty years ago.³²

Many of my findings are negative, demonstrating through a careful reading of the fragments in their proper context the things we cannot say about Timaeus. This is necessary in order to strip away the accumulation of assumptions built up over years of study which failed to take full account of the problems inherent in the evidence. At the same time, I hope to show that two features of Timaeus' historical writing which do shine through clearly and confidently are not products of a poor historian or flawed character; rather, they reveal him at work as an ancient Greek historian and part of the mainstream tradition of Greek historiography. Furthermore, they provide a more fruitful explanatory context for the study of his fragments.

The first is his magnification of the achievements of the western Greeks. Timaeus was a proud native of Sicily, exiled by a tyrant he considered responsible for the island's troubles, writing his work in a city (Athens) which saw itself as the focal point and zenith of Greek history. Even through the fragmentary nature of the evidence we can see his efforts to glorify his homeland, often at the expense of the mainland Greeks. For this, Polybius chastised him, attempting in the process to dismiss Greek history in Sicily as a tempest in a teapot.³³ This western bias has often been noted. What I will add is a demonstration that a number of fragments and features evident in them are best understood when considered in the light of this project.

The second characteristic I will highlight is Timaeus' penchant for scholarly debate and excessive polemic, for which he was so well known in the ancient world that he received the nickname "Epitimaeus" (Fault-finder).³⁴ This aspect of his fragments has often been interpreted in personal terms, as if it resulted from his bitterness and isolation as an exile. But when

³¹ Pownall (2004) 110 argues for Xenophon's influence on subsequent historiography.

³² Murray (1968) 221.

³³ Polyb. 12.23.7 = F 119a (καθόπερ ἐν ὀξυβόρφῳ, literally "as if in a saucer").

³⁴ Diod. Sic. 5.1.3 = T 11; Strabo 14.1.22 = T 27; Ath. 6.272b = T 16. See Chapter 3, p. 52.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00097-1 - Timaeus of Tauromenium and Hellenistic Historiography

Christopher A. Baron

Excerpt

[More information](#)*The perils of fragment collections*

9

viewed in the context of the intellectual environment of his time, especially at Athens, his concern for correcting predecessors and attacking contemporaries marks Timaeus as a typical early Hellenistic intellectual. He was exceptional for the excessive number of such attacks and his harsh treatment of the tyrant Agathocles, and he was remembered especially for both. But, in general, his engagement in polemic places him firmly in the mainstream of Greek historical writing and Hellenistic scholarship.

THE PERILS OF FRAGMENT COLLECTIONS

We can make little progress until we have confronted the true nature of the evidence. This may not fully strike us until we sit down to work with Jacoby's *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. To those interested in the development of Greek historiography, these volumes are a treasure trove – and a minefield.³⁵ In my own experience, as I began work on Timaeus by reading through the testimonia and fragments Jacoby compiled for him, it was the ellipses in the Polybian material – the product of editorial decisions on Jacoby's part – that piqued my interest more than anything else. I tracked down the original Polybian passages to fill in the gaps, and sometimes these led to viewing Timaeus in a new light. In other words, the context in which the reference to Timaeus is originally found can and should help to determine our conclusions about his work.³⁶ For example, Jacoby's F 7, in which Polybius criticizes Timaeus for misrepresenting Ephorus' comparison of history and oratory, omits the immediately following sections containing Polybius' own observations on the proper way to do history. As a result, we lose an important part of the context of the polemic. It is not solely a matter of Timaeus arguing with Ephorus; Polybius' own views must be taken into account if we will understand the passage correctly.³⁷ As with many issues, Jacoby recognized, in his commentary, the problems involved in selecting passages from Polybius' Book 12 to include in a publication of Timaeus' fragments.³⁸ His own concerns make it all the

³⁵ Cf. Clarke (2008) 174–5; Luraghi (2001) 5–6; Schepens (1997); Flower (1994) 6; Vattuone (1991) 11–15. Jacoby's 1909 paper introducing the project is still necessary reading for anyone using *FGrHist*; it is reprinted in Jacoby (1956) 16–64 and Ampolo (2006) 299–344.

³⁶ Cf. Vattuone (1991) 11 n. 14. Flower (1994) 6–8 comments in the same vein regarding Theopompus. Bowersock (1997), investigating historians of pre-Islamic Arabia, reveals the limitations of relying solely on Jacoby's collection rather than consulting directly the source of the fragments: see his strong concluding statement at 185. C. Osborne (1987) demonstrated the need for the same approach to the pre-Socratic philosophers; cf. Chitwood (2004) 5.

³⁷ Polyb. 12.28.8–28a.3. See Vattuone (1991) 24 and (2002b) 191–2. ³⁸ E.g. Jacoby, IIIb 546, on T 19.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00097-1 - Timaeus of Tauromenium and Hellenistic Historiography

Christopher A. Baron

Excerpt

[More information](#)

more imperative that scholars complement their use of his collection with the cover-texts which preserve the evidence.

Beyond that, when we read Polybius himself we must realize that what we know as Book 12 has been compiled from various collections of excerpts made in Constantinople in the tenth century AD. From these remains it appears that what Polybius originally wrote consisted in part of excerpts or paraphrases of Timaeus, whom he criticizes at length for peevishly picking apart the works of *his* predecessors; and presumably Timaeus did so by citing or quoting from their works. So *FGrHist* entails not so much a collection of “fragments” of Timaeus as the last link in a chain of excerpts stretching over 2,300 years: Jacoby’s selection of passages from modern editors’ collations of the *Excerpta antiqua* of Polybius’ critique of Timaeus’ treatment of his forerunners’ work! Whatever we think of the scholarly acumen of the various participants in this process, it cannot inspire confidence in our ability to discover Timaeus’ original work, and our methodology for dealing with these layers of fragmentation will go a long way in determining the validity of our conclusions.

Jacoby’s volumes, published between 1923 and 1958, remain an indispensable tool for the study of Greek historical writing, and they are now available in two electronic formats.³⁹ In 2005–6 Brill converted the collection into a CD-ROM and then online version including Jacoby’s texts, commentary, notes, and apparatus criticus (I will refer to this as the “online *FGrHist*”). In 2007 the *Brill’s New Jacoby (BNJ)* project began to make the lost Greek historians accessible to a wider audience by publishing English translations alongside Jacoby’s fragments. Translators for *BNJ* provide their own new commentary on individual fragments, along with a biographical essay and a select bibliography for their author. As of February 2012, over seven hundred authors have been completed. Timaeus was one of the first major historians to appear, with commentary and translation by Craig Champion published online in late 2010.⁴⁰

One of the challenges of *BNJ* will be to ensure that certain features of Jacoby’s collection, in terms of both format and content, are not lost in its translation to the internet. Jacoby himself was aware of the problems surrounding fragments (and very familiar with cover-texts), but for reasons

³⁹ Jacoby’s original project also continues, with several fascicles of volume IV (Biography and Antiquarian Literature) published in print: see Schepens (1998). The remaining portions of volume IV have begun to appear online as part of *BNJ*, and volume V (Geography) will do so as well, under the editorship of H.-J. Gehrke.

⁴⁰ *Brill’s New Jacoby*. Editor in Chief Ian Worthington. Brill Online. See the preliminary review by Lenfant (2009).