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## **The Influence of Panaetius on Polybius**

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## **RESEARCH METHODS AND RESULTS**

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### **I. Background of the research and raising the problems**

In the 2nd century B.C. the Roman Empire became the dominant power in the Mediterranean area. The growing number of subjected countries and first of all the conquest of Macedonia and Hellas brought considerable changes in regard to the culture of Rome, too. Scipio Aemilianus played an important role both in the military-political events and in the cultural revival. Two of the most outstanding Greek authors of the time, the philosopher Panaetius and the historian Polybius belonged to his circle. It is justified in many ways to suppose that they had a similar worldview and thought similarly about several ethical and political questions. This presumption is supported in the first instance by our knowledge of their lives. Both of them were citizens of Greek states deprived of their actual independence by Rome while they were still young (after the third Macedonian war). The families of them both played important political role in their homeland. Panaetius as well as Polybius spent many years in Rome beside Scipio Aemilianus. Besides, they were present as his companions at events that were significant in the history of the period. They both probably saw these events from a point of view that was not considerably different from Scipio's. So because of the similarity of their experiences, walk of life and acquaintanceship their political standpoint could more or less be akin about the most important political questions concerning Rome. The huge expansion of the Roman Empire was for both of them an experience which fundamentally changed their views

concerning their respective field of research. On account of the growth of Roman power, Polybius saw necessary to write universal history and to search the causes of the success of Rome. Panaetius also wrote, partly for this reason, a new ethical code in which he interpreted human being – after the ethical systems of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, which focused attention on the individual person – as part of a state community. Besides, the enlarged power of Rome must have played a part in Panaetius's rejecting the early Stoics' notions that seemed remote from everyday life or criticized the actual society and politics or the ones that exposed the Stoic school to attacks and made its teachings not acceptable in a wider circle (and first of all in Rome). It is also one of the analogies between them that while studying different fields of knowledge, they both wrote their chief works especially in order to educate the Greek élite, but neither of them lost sight of the fact that they would have Roman readers as well. The similarity of their ethical-political thinking seems probable also owing to the remarks made by the ancient authors. These inform us about their close acquaintance and frequent discussions.

In my dissertation I examine whether an analogy can be shown between the thinking of the two Greek authors in ethical and political questions, i.e. whether the notions of the renewed stoic philosophy can be found in Polybius's work. The question if the Panaetian notions have exercised influence on Polybius's work can be of primary importance with regard to the correct interpretation of the historian's work. If some descriptions of Polybius might be influenced by philosophical conceptions, we can reproduce a

trustworthy historical picture on the basis of his work only by reckoning with the distorting effects of those conceptions. The positive result of the study may assist the reconstruction of certain Panaetian thoughts. However, not only this „practical” advantage can be drawn from the clarification of this question. It is interesting in itself how philosophical thoughts shape the outlook of a historian: it instructs us on the historian, as well as on the wider influence and reception of these thoughts.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Rudolf Hirzel (*Untersuchungen zu Ciceros philosophischen Schriften I–III*. Leipzig 1877–1883) and Rudolf von Scala (*Die Studien des Polybios*. Stuttgart 1890) wrote the most detailed works about Polybius's knowledge of Philosophy and his relationship with Panaetius. Both of them came to the result that Polybius was greatly influenced by Panaetius's ethical system. The works written in the 20<sup>th</sup> century dealing with Polybius quote the views of Hirzel and von Scala, but they consider a large part of their views as untrustworthy. Additionally, they do not deal with the question systematically whether Panaetius had an influence on the historian. Concerning this question we can find only some hints in the comments on certain Polybian passages. The reason of this can be the fact that it is very difficult to say anything about this question with adequate certainty as there is a lot of uncertainty with regard to the ethical views of both authors first of all in consequence of the fragmentariness of their works.

## II. Research methods

The starting point of the research was the reconstruction of Panaetius's ethical views. Since not a single work of him survived, accordingly, we know his thoughts only via quotations of other authors (mostly of Cicero and above all from his *De officiis*). In addition, the identification of these fragments is always problematic when Panaetius's name does not occur in the text, so the Panaetian thought must be separated from the work containing the fragment. At the same time, the fragments conveying the name of the philosopher can also pose a problem, for their evidence is often not reliable. What is more, there is a fragment (the first) which is not illegible in many places. To identify the fragments, I chiefly used the work of Alesse: Panezio di Rodi. Testimonianze. Edizione, traduzione e commento a cura di F. Alesse. Bibliopolis 1997. Provided that the given passage is included also in van Straaten's collection (Panaetii Rhodii fragmenta. Collegit tertioque edidit M. van Straaten, Philosophia Antiqua 5, Leiden 1962), I indicated the fragment number given by him. While identifying the texts attributable to Panaetius, Dyck (Dyck, A. R.: A Commentary on Cicero, De officiis. Univ. of Michigan Pr. Ann Arbor 1999) and Lefèvre (Lefèvre, E.: Panaitios' und Ciceros Pflichtenlehre: vom philosophischen Traktat zum politischen Lehrbuch. Historia. Einzelschriften 150. Stuttgart 2001) often vindicated points of view different from those of Alesse and van Straaten. In certain places I followed their results.

Before studying the works of both authors, I propound the most important events of their lives, the standpoints about the time of origin of their works, and our knowledge about Polybius's philosophical learning. The depiction of the two authors' lives aims at determining the periods when their personal relationship appropriate for frequent discussions could be feasible. Setting forth the standpoints about the time of origin and publication of their works aims at determining in which part of Polybius's work is Panaetius's influence conceivable. The survey of Polybius's philosophical learning and the philosophical views appearing in his work was made in two ways. On the one hand, I surveyed the passages quoting ideas from different philosophers (by mentioning their names): my aim was to determine at least roughly to what extent Polybius may have known the quoted authors, and what opinion he had of their philosophical system. On the other hand, I present the standpoints about these questions. The aim of this chapter is to ascertain how deep Polybius's philosophical interest was, and in what fields it manifested.

I began the investigation of Polybius's work by selecting the texts worth analysing. Based on the *TLG (Thesaurus Linguae Graecae)* and the *Polybius Dictionary (Polybios-Lexikon, Band I–III. Berlin–Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin 1956–2002)*, the following Panaetian keywords occurring in Polybius's work appeared worth analysing: *μεγαλοψυχία* / *μεγαλόψυχος*, *πρέπον*, *ἔπαινος*, *ψυχή*, *σώφρων* / *σωφροσύνη*, *εὐκαιρία* together with various notions

representing emotions: *θυμός, ὀργίζεσθαι/ὀργή, λύπη, ἄλγος, ἀλγηδών, ἐπιθυμία/ἐπιθυμεῖν, ἡδονή, ὀργή.* However, while determining the topics to be examined, I took into consideration the subjects emerging in the literature as well as the Polybian<sup>1</sup> themes and passages obviously indicating stoic influence.

The first greater topic in studying the Polybian oeuvre has the title „Imperium iustum.” In this chapter I take up the theory formulating the criteria of just domination, which can be read in Cicero’s *De re publica*. The essence of the conception is the following: the rule of a state over another is righteous if their relationship also serves the interest of the subject country, and this is possible if the ruling state is (morally) superior, and makes the subjugated better, governs it more adequately as if it ruled itself. At first I bring forward arguments that this theory has to be ascribed to Panaetius. It happens so that the theory known from Cicero’s *De re publica* is being compared with the generally recognized fragments of Panaetius. I prove that the Panaetian views known from the fragments can be harmonized with the theory, what is more, it looks probable that it was Panaetius who phrased it. Thereafter I show by means of examining Polybian passages that the historian saw the relationship of Rome and the subject countries according to the conception of Panaetius. As the theory does not seem to be present

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<sup>1</sup> Critical edition: Polybius: *Historiae*. vols. 1–5 (hrsg. von L. Dindorff und T. Büttner-Wobst) Leipzig 1889–1905 (Bibliotheca Teubneriana)

(at any rate not coherently propounded) in the fragmentary work of Polybius, I demonstrate that the substantial elements of the theory (and the views standing for its basis) can be found in Polybius’s work.

The reason of the next investigation was that the virtue of *μεγαλοψυχία* (its meaning is roughly human greatness or greatness of mind) received a much more important role in the ethical system of Panaetius as it had in that of the early Stoics, and its content changed greatly, too, compared to the earlier notions of *μεγαλοψυχία*. At the same time, it was visible in Polybius’s work without thorough investigation that this word occurs far more often than in the non-philosophical literature prior to Polybius. It can be similarly noticed immediately that Polybius uses this notion not merely as the common parlance does, but also in the meaning proper so far only to the philosophical usage: the word means moderation in prosperity and adversity in the non-philosophical literature for the first time. In this chapter I seek to prove that the *μεγαλοψυχία* (or the *μεγαλόψυχος*: the person who is characterized by this virtue) has many times the same meaning in Polybius’s work as it was used by Panaetius, i.e. the two authors had similar views about human greatness. In order that the differences become visible between the various conceptions of *μεγαλοψυχία*, the main forms of the notion are presented from the earliest times to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. As for the study of Polybius’s work, I define the exact meaning of the word occurring in Polybius’s writing strikingly often (47 times) by the help of the context in each place. Accordingly, I had to determine the

connotations of this notion in the respective places, and I had to realize what other notions occur together with *μεγαλοψυχία*.

The next topic is the Panaetian conception of „becomingness” (*πρέπον*), according to which ethical good manifests to the spectator: virtue appeals to people, who will be to our advantage due to our virtues. The views pertaining here are Panaetius’s substantial innovations, so it could be hoped that it would be unambiguous whether the Polybian usage of *πρέπον* resembles that of Panaetius or not. So I first summarize the Panaetian conception of *πρέπον*, and then seek to determine if this topic is present in Polybius. I study the Polybian text striving to reveal the usage, meaning and connotations of the keywords (first of all *πρέπον* and *ἔπαινος*) of the Panaetian theory in the historian’s work. To this topic belongs the investigation of the virtue of temperance (because the *πρέπον* manifests chiefly in this virtue), and the inquiry of the view that right conduct depends on man’s individual nature and circumstances. Subsequently, I set forth the appearance of these conceptions in Polybius’s oeuvre.

The subject of the last examination is the representation of emotions in Polybius’s work. The reason of the examination was that it can be immediately noticed in Polybius work without thorough investigation that people led by emotions are always condemned, and emotions never play a positive role. So it seemed probable that the historian has a clear-cut and consistent picture of emotions, and that picture is different from everyday approach, and can be paralleled with the notion of some philosophical school. Ergo, in this case the

origin of examination was a striking feature of Polybius’s work. The aim of the examination was to answer the question whether Polybius’s approach is to be compared to the outlook of a philosopher or a philosophical school. Accordingly, in the first part of the chapter I review the teachings of the philosophical schools exerting influence in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. about emotions in order that their differences become visible. I briefly delineate the views of Plato, Aristotle, the Epicureans and the early Stoics about emotions, finally, I summarize Panaetius’s relevant views. In the second part of the chapter I study Polybius’s passages picturing emotions, and try to compare the particular elements of the Polybian description to the presented philosophical notions.

### III. Summary of the results

The reconstruction and interpretation of Panaetius's philosophy is one of the main results of the dissertation. I distinguished four basic elements of his ethical innovations: first ranking the external goods (the goods of fortune) among the real goods, then discerning two mental abilities instead of a homogeneous and rational soul, next redefining the virtues, ultimately the view that the moral good manifests to the senses. With the aid of the literature I develop these topics examining the sources in detail. In the chapter treating Panaetius's teachings I showed the relations of these views and explicated Panaetius's psychological innovations and his views concerning the external goods. In the chapter „*Imperium iustum*” I delineate the notion of justice, clarify the relations of justice to *μεγαλοψυχία*, and show the coincidence of moral good and real expediency. In the chapter dealing with the *μεγαλοψυχία* I demonstrated the essence of this virtue and its relation to external goods, emotions and justice. In the chapter devoted to the examination of *πρέπον* I reconstructed the relation of *καλόν* and *πρέπον*, the content of *σωφροσύνη*, the thoughts of man's four *πρόσωπον/persona*, and the views concerning *εὐταξία* and *εὐκαιρία*. Here I treat also the notion (belonging to this subject) according to which people's opinion has to be taken into consideration for the sake of self-knowledge, achieving virtue, and accomplishing great deeds. At last I show Panaetius's judgement on

emotions and the proper behavior towards them while comparing the Panaetian views to teachings of other philosophers and philosophical schools.

The chapters treating the life of Panaetius and Polybius as well as the origin of their works came to the result while examining the testimonies of the two authors that the personal discussions between Polybius and Panaetius can be assumed as early as in the 140s. In the middle of this decade Panaetius has already been a well-known philosopher, who had already elaborated his innovative thoughts, and probably had been writing his chief work. As for Polybius, although he has already been in his fifties, he is working on his opus more than two decades, so he has enough possibilities to enrich it with new thoughts. The chapter expounding Polybius's philosophical erudition had the result that the historian had known the teachings of Plato, the Academy and at least some Peripatetic philosophers at least in some topics, and the views and terms of the Stoics regularly appear in his work. This adequately attests his philosophical interest at the least in the fields of politics and practical ethics, i.e. exactly there, where Panaetius was active, too. Based on the statements of the introductory chapters, it looks probable that the Rhodian philosopher exerted influence on the ethical-political thinking of the historian of Megalopolis.

In the chapter „*Imperium iustum*” I proved first that the theory formulating the criteria of just domination has to be ascribed to Panaetius. In the second part of the chapter I show that the historian saw the relationship of Rome and the subject countries

according to the conception of Panaetius. Although the theory does not seem to be present (at any rate not coherently propounded) in the work of Polybius, I demonstrate that the substantial elements of the theory (and the views standing for its basis) can be found there. *Firstly*, he considers justice in several passages as an objective and absolute notion, which is designated by nature itself, and this justice coincides with expediency many times. Accordingly, there is real expediency, which is equally expedient for everybody, and differs from the seeming one. This thought is the basis of the Panaetian theory, it is the requirement of its formulation, since domination can be said just and expedient for both party only in case of accepting this thought. Besides, there is parallelism between the thinking of Polybius and Panaetius concerning the teaching that the circumstances have to be taken into consideration while judging about someone's behavior as well as concerning the conceptions of *μεγαλοψυχία*. *Secondly*, Polybius holds the Romans superior to other nations with regard to their laws, traditions, military abilities and all the virtues (but first of all justice). In this way, the thesis of the Panaetian theory comes true (regarding Rome) according to which the rule of a state over another is righteous if the ruling state is superior than the subjugated countries. *Lastly*, I prove that Polybius esteems Roman governance as expedient also for the subjects and therefore worth opting for and praising, because Rome makes the citizens of the subjugated countries more temperate, religious, ingenuous, and brings peace, order and rightfulness to their public life. So the other substantial element of the Panaetian theory

materializes according to which the righteous domination is expedient also to the subjects, since it makes them better and juster. Based on these statements, we can assess that Polybius saw the relationship of Rome and the subject countries according to the conception of Panaetius

The examination of the Polybian conception of *μεγαλοψυχία* showed in the first place that this word occurs far more often, and has a much more complex meaning in the historian's work than in the non-philosophical literature prior to Polybius. After that it was established that Polybius uses this notion not merely as the common parlance does, but also in the meaning proper so far only to the philosophical usage: the word means moderation in prosperity and adversity in the non-philosophical literature for the first time. From the review of the passages where the meaning of the notion seems complex it emerges that the Polybian conception of *μεγαλοψυχία* is closest to that of Panaetius. To begin with, it disagrees with the Aristotelian and early stoic notion insofar as in Polybius's work *μεγαλοψυχία* manifests in activity for benefit of the community. Furthermore, its essential feature is the subordination of passions and emotions to the intellect, and hence moderation, leniency and clemency towards the defeated enemy. Then, the aim of the *μεγαλόψυχος* is not glory or honour (*τιμῆ*), in fact he takes then (as all the external goods) as little, nevertheless he obtains them from the community, and so virtue entails expediency. At last, the *μεγαλόψυχος* contemns external goods, for they are (owing to the changes of fortune) transitory and unreliable (not for the reason that

they are worthless or insignificant). The presence of these elements makes the Polybian notion of *μεγαλοψυχία* akin to the Panaetian one.

It can be declared that there is parallelism between the Panaetian views of *πρέπον* and numerous descriptions of Polybius's work. *Firstly*, Polybius often demonstrates the effects of the virtuous or vicious deeds on people: he emphasizes that this effect can be of great advantage or detriment. *Secondly*, in the Polybian notion of temperance we can discover a lot of resemblance to the Panaetian conception. Temperance manifests in the harmony and collectedness of personality in Polybius's work, too. It requires the consideration of our individual abilities, circumstances, and social position. We must respect the right place and time as well as the proper order of our deeds. In case of its realization virtue triggers people's favour. *Thirdly*, a fundamental view of Panaetius that virtue manifests itself to the senses. We can see in several passages of Polybius that the notion of *πρέπον* means the outer appearance of ethical good, and the two notions belong together closely. *Fourthly*, beside coinciding with moral good, the *πρέπον* overlaps expediency, so it connects the two terms. This expediency may be on the one hand that we can realize virtue (the response of the people assists us with it). On the other hand, we gain honour, which is necessary for acquiring and retaining leading role. Both forms of expediency are present in Polybius's work. Based on these statements we can consider the conception of *πρέπον* as similar in Panaetius and Polybius's thinking.

The passages analyzed in the chapter *The demonstration of emotions in Polybius's work* exemplify that in those places where the historian says something more about the emotions, and mentions not only their appearance in someone, his approach can be best paralleled with the views of the Stoics or Panaetius. First I illustrated with Polybian passages that emotions are almost always measured negatively. The condemnation of emotions can be seen also in the fact that Polybius never deplores if someone has emotions to a lesser extent than he should have, and he never praises emotions. He entirely condemns emotions not only their excessiveness. In this regard he thinks similarly to the Stoics and differently from Plato, Aristotle, and Panaetius as well as in that respect that he considers the appearance of emotions to be equal with the unreasoned deed. It is also similar to the views of the Stoics that Polybius regards the emotions as false judgements (respectively as effects of them), and in some passages as vices, which can be corrected by right reasoning and by changing our thinking. In several passages the terms used for the description of emotions (*ὁρμή, καθήκον, ὁμολογούμενον*) are characteristic notions in the thinking of the Stoics or Panaetius. The connecting of the virtue of temperance (which determines the behaviour to the bodily desires) with the conceptions on *εὐκαιρία/εὐταξία*, or on *πρόσωπον*, or with emphasizing the advantages of the community, as well as the connecting of the control over emotions with *μεγαλοψυχία* make Polybius's description akin to Panaetius thinking. The same is valid for the view that in good or bad luck alike right behaviour is

moderation and restraint of emotions on account of contingency and transitoriness of the external goods. To sum up, we can assess that the Polybian representation of emotions can be less paralleled with the views of Plato, Aristotle or Epicurus than with the thoughts of the Stoics and Panaetius concerning this matter.

What this all amounts to is that Panaetius and Polybius thought similarly concerning the rightfulness of the Roman Empire, the content of the virtue of *μεγαλοψυχία* i.e. the meaning of human greatness as well as the substance of *σωφροσύνη* and partly the judgement on emotions. Besides, both of them thought that moral good manifests to the spectators and triggers people's approbation, and that right conduct depends on our individual abilities and social position as well as the right place and time of our deeds, lastly that external goods must be estimated as little because of their transitory and unreliable nature.

#### IV. Publications on the subject of the dissertation

##### Lectures

- 2006 Debrecen, VII. Magyar Ókortudományi Konferencia: *Panaitios és Polybios nézete Róma imperiumának igazságosságáról* [Panaetius and Polybius's Conceptions on the Roman Empire's Rightfulness]
- 2007 Piliscsaba: Filozófia és tudomány az ókorban – konferencia: *A megalopsükhia fogalma Polübiosznál* [The Notion of Megalopsychia in Polybius's Work]
- 2007 Piliscsaba, az Ókortudományi Társaság Piliscsabai Tagozatának felolvasó ülése: *Az érzelmek megjelenítése Polübiosznál* [The Demonstration of Emotions in Polybius's work]

##### Essays

- Imperium iustum: Panaitios' Theorie bei Polybios. *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 47, 2007, 175–184.
- The Notion of Megalopsychia in Polybius. in: *Cultus Deorum. Studia Religionum ad Historiam. vol. II. De Rebus Aetatis Graecorum et Romanorum in Memoriam István Tóth* 2008. 51–60.
- A Római birodalom igazságosságának elmélete Polübiosznál [The Theory of the Roman Empire's

Rightfulness in Polybius's work] *Antik Tanulmányok*  
2010 (forthcoming)

- Az érzelmek megjelenítése Polübiosznál [The  
Demonstration of Emotions in Polybius's work]  
(forthcoming)