

Giants of the Past: Compressive History in the Duel of Scipio and Crixus in *Punica* 4

Allia, part II

I. Nec locus est Tyriis belli pugnaeve, sed omnem / Celticus implevit campum furor ...
 (*Pun.* 4.190-91).

“The Carthaginians had no room for fighting, because the furious Gauls filled the field.”¹

II. Ipse tumens atavi Brenni se stirpe ferebat / Crixus et in titulos Capitolia capta trahebat / Tarpeioque iugo demens et vertice sacro / pensantes aurum Celtas umbone gerebat
 (*Pun.* 4.150-53).

“Crixus himself, proud of his ancestry, claimed descent from Brennus, and the taking of the Capitol was one of his titles to fame. Poor fool! he displayed on his shield the Gauls weighing the gold on the sacred eminence of the Tarpeian hill.”

III.

A. [Crixus:] ‘nemone incensae captaeque superfuit urbi, / ut tibi, quas Brenni populus ferremus in arma, / narraret, dextras? disce en nunc!’ (*Pun.* 4.279-81)

“When Rome was taken and burnt, was no survivor left, to tell you the strength of arm that the tribe of Brennus showed in battle? Well, learn it now!”

B. [Scipio:] ‘ferre haec umbris proavoque memento, / quam procul occumbas Tarpeia sede, tibi que / haud licitum sacri Capitolia cernere montis’ (*Pun.* 4.286-88).

“Remember to tell the shades below and Brennus, your ancestor, how far from the Tarpeian temple you fell, and that *you* were not permitted to behold the sacred hill of the Capitol.”

A Spartacus Pre-play

IV. cornipedem alloquitur: ‘vulgum Martemque minorem / mox, Gargane; vocant superi ad maiora. videsne, / quantus eat Crixus? iam nunc tibi praemia pono / illum Sidonio fulgentem ardore tapeta, / barbaricum decus, et fulvis donabere frenis’ (*Pun.* 4.265-69)

“Scipio addressed his steed: ‘Garganus, leave till later the common herd of lesser foes; the gods summon us to greater things. Do you see the mighty Crixus coming? Even now I promise to reward you with yonder saddle-cloth, glittering with Tyrian purple – an adornment fit for the barbarian; and I shall give you the reins of gold.’”

V.

A. caeloque arcebit ab alto / cernere Gargani ferventia caedibus arva? (*Pun.* 9. 482-83)

“Or can he from his height in heaven avoid seeing the fields of Garganus reek with carnage?”

¹ All translations from Duff, lightly adapted.

B. dux sibi quisque viam rapito, cum spargere primis / incipiet radiis Gargana cacumina Phoebus (*Pun.* 9.33-34).

“Let each man be his own commander and rush to action as soon as the first rays of the sun are thrown on the summit of Mount Garganus.”

C. Καὶ τούτων ὑπὸ μὲν θατέρου Κρίξος, ἡγούμενος τρισμυρίων ἀνδρῶν, περὶ τὸ Γάργανον ὄρος ἠττάτο, καὶ δύο μέρη τοῦ στρατοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς συναπώλετο αὐτοῖς (*App. Civil Wars* 1.14.117).

“One of them [a Roman consul] overcame Crixus with 30,000 men near Mount Garganus, two-thirds of whom perished together with himself” (trans. Horace White).

On Phlegraean Fields, Again

VI.

A. quantus Phelgraeis Telluris alumnus in arvis / movit signa Mimas caelumque exterruit armis, / tantus semifero Crixus sub pectore murmur / torquet et horrisonis ululatibus erigit iras (*Pun.* 4.275-78).

“Like the Giant Mimas, the son of Earth, when he fought on the fields of Phlegra and terrified Heaven, so the gigantic Crixus sent forth a cry from his brutish breast and roused his fury with hideous yells.”

B. procumbit lata porrectus in arva ruina, / et percussa gemit tellus ingentibus armis (*Pun.* 4.294-95).

“Down he sank, stretching far over the field in his overthrow, and the earth groaned, smitten by his gigantic armor.”

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