

Imperial Greek Narrative and Greek and Roman Ideas of Fairness

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1. Camillus to the Faliscan traitor Livy 5.27 (trans Roberts)

sunt et belli, sicut pacis, iura, iusteque ea non minus quam fortiter didicimus gerere.

“There are rights of war as there are rights of peace, and we have learnt to wage our wars with justice no less than with courage.”

2. The importance of loot

2a. Polybius 2.26.5 (trans Paton)

οἷς Ἀνηροέστης ὁ βασιλεὺς γνώμην εἰσέφερε λέγων ὅτι δεῖ **τοσαύτης λείας** ἐγκρατεῖς γεγονότας...

And then King Aneroestes suggested to them [the Gauls] saying that because they had come into control of so much loot...

2b. Livy 10.17 (trans. Roberts)

[17] ... *tantusque ardor militum fuit et caritate ducis et spe maioris quam ex agrestibus populationibus praedae ut uno die vi atque armis urbem caperent. Ibi duo milia Samnitium et centum pugnantes circumventi captique et alia praeda ingens capta est. Quae ne impedimentis gravibus agmen oneraret, convocari milites Decius iubet. "Hacine" inquit "victoria sola aut hac praeda contenti estis futuri? voltis vos pro virtute spes gerere? Omnes Samnitium urbes fortunaeque in urbibus relictas vestrae sunt, quando legiones eorum tot proeliis fusas postremo finibus expulstis. Vendite ista et inlicite lucro mercatorem ut sequatur agmen; ego subinde suggeram quae vendatis. Ad Romuleam urbem hinc eamus, ubi vos labor haud maior, praeda maior manet."*

Diuendita praeda ultro adhortantes imperatorem ad Romuleam pergunt. Ibi quoque sine opere, sine tormentis, simul admota sunt signa, nulla vi deterriti a muris, qua cuique proximum fuit, scalis raptim admotis in moenia evasere. Captum oppidum ac direptum est; ad duo milia et trecenti occisi et sex milia hominum capta, et miles ingenti praeda potitus, quam vendere sicut priorem coactus; Ferentinum inde, quamquam nihil quietis dabatur, tamen summa alacritate est ductus. Ceterum ibi plus laboris ac periculi fuit: et defensa summa vi moenia sunt et locus erat munimento naturaque tutus; sed evicit omnia adsuetus praedae miles. Ad tria milia hostium circa muros caesa; praeda militis fuit.

Such was the eagerness of the soldiers, due partly to the affection they felt for their commander and partly to **the expectation of a larger amount of plunder than they were securing in the country districts**, that they stormed and captured the city in a single day. Two thousand one hundred combatants were cut off and made prisoners and **an enormous quantity of plunder was seized**. To avoid loading the army with a lot of heavy baggage Decius called his men together and addressed them thus: "Are you going to content yourselves with this one victory and this spoil? Raise your hopes and expectations to the height of your courage. All the cities of the Samnites and all the wealth left in them are yours now that their legions, routed in so many battles, have at last been driven by you beyond their frontiers. Sell what you now hold and attract traders by the hope of profit to follow our armies; I shall frequently supply you with things for sale. Let us go on to the city of Romulea where still **greater spoil awaits you** but not greater exertions." **The booty was then sold** and the men, urging on their commander, marched to Romulea. Here, too, no siege works were constructed, no artillery employed, the moment the standards were brought up to the walls no resistance on the part of the defenders could keep the men back; they planted their scaling-ladders just where they happened to be, and swarmed on to the walls. The town was taken and sacked, 2300 were killed, 6000 taken prisoners, **and a vast amount of plunder secured, which the troops, as before, were obliged to dispose of to the traders**. The next place to be attacked was Ferentinum, and though no rest was allowed the men, they marched thither in the highest spirits. Here, however, they had more trouble and more risk. The position had been made as strong as possible by nature and by art, and the walls

were defended with the utmost energy, but **a soldiery habituated to plunder overcame all obstacles**. As many as 3000 of the enemy were killed round the walls; the **plunder was given to the troops**.

2c. Polybius 9.10.3, 11-13 (trans Paton)

[3] πότερα δ' ὀρθῶς τοῦτο καὶ συμφερόντως αὐτοῖς ἔπραξαν ἢ τάναντία, πολὺς ἂν εἴη λόγος, πλείων γε μὴν εἰς τὸ μὴ δεόντως σφίσι πεπραχθαι μὴδ' ἀκμὴν νῦν πράττεσθαι τοῦτο τοῦργον...

[3] As to whether in doing so they acted rightly and in their own interest or the reverse, there is much to be said on both sides, but the more weighty arguments are in favour of their conduct having been wrong then and still being wrong.

[11] There were indeed perhaps good reasons for appropriating all the gold and silver: for it was impossible for them to aim at a world empire without weakening the resources of other peoples and strengthening their own. [12] But it was possible for them to leave everything which did not contribute to such strength, together with the envy attached to its possession, in its original place, and to add to the glory of their native city by adorning it not with paintings and reliefs but with dignity and magnanimity. [13] At any rate these remarks will serve to teach all those who succeed to empire, that they should not strip cities under the idea that the misfortunes of others are an ornament to their own country.

3. Deceit and Ambush

3a. Polybius 36.9.9, (trans. Paton) cf. Livy 42.47

ἔτεροι δὲ καθόλου μὲν πολιτικὸν εἶναι τὸ Ῥωμαϊκὸν ἔθνος ἔφασαν καὶ τοῦτ' ἴδιον εἶναι καὶ ἐπὶ τούτῳ σεμνύνεσθαι τοὺς Ῥωμαίους, ἐπὶ τῷ καὶ τοὺς πολέμους ἀπλῶς καὶ γενναίως πολεμεῖν, μὴ νυκτεριναῖς ἐπιθέσεισι χρωμένους μὴδ' ἐνέδραις, πᾶν δὲ τὸ δι' ἀπάτης καὶ δόλου γινόμενον ἀποδοκιμάζοντας, μόνους δὲ τοὺς ἐκ προδήλου καὶ κατὰ πρόσωπον κινδύνους ὑπολαμβάνοντας αὐτοῖς καθήκειν.

Others said that the Romans were, generally speaking, a civilized people, and that their peculiar merit on which they prided themselves was that they conducted their wars in a simple and noble manner, employing neither night attacks nor ambushes, disapproving of every kind of deceit and fraud, and considering that nothing but direct and open attacks were legitimate for them.

(Cf. Polybius 7.15 and 29.7 for the Hellenistic states' reliance on trickery and deceitful tactics.)

3b. Ambushes in Livy

- Plotted by non-Romans: 1.5, 9.31, 21.53-55, 21.61, 22.41, 23.1, 27.2, 27.12, 27.16, 27.26, 31.26, 31.36, 35.29, 38.9 43.23
- Avoided by Romans 10.4, 22.17-18, 22.41, 27.2
- Romans ambushed: 2.50, 2.63, 5.18, 6.30, 7.6, 8.35 21.25, 21.34, 22.31, 27.27, 28.22
- Romans ambushing: 1.14, 2.11, 2.50-51, 27.41, 37.13

3c. Dio 11.12 (Zonaras 8.12) (trans. Cary)

Ἐκεῖθεν δ' ἐπὶ Καμάριναν ἀπερὶσκεπτως γενόμενοι ἐς χωρία προλελοχισμένα ἐνέπεσον· καὶ πανσυδὶ ἂν ἐφθάρησαν, εἰ μὴ Μάρκος Καλπούρνιος χιλιαρχῶν σοφίᾳ μετήλθε τὸ δυστύχημα.

Thence they proceeded heedlessly against Camarina and came into a region where an ambush had already been set; and they would have been utterly destroyed, had not Marcus Calpurnius, a military tribune, retrieved the disaster by his cleverness.

4. Plutarch, Pyrrhus, 26.11 (trans Perrin)

ἐγκαλούντων δὲ τῶν πρέσβεων, ὅτι μὴ καταγγείλας πόλεμον ἐξενήνοχε πρὸς αὐτούς, 'ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὑμᾶς,' ἔφη: 'τοὺς Σπαρτιάτας ἴσμεν ὅτι ἂν μέλλητε ποιεῖν ἐτέροις προλέγοντας'

when the Spartan ambassadors upbraided him for making war upon them without previous declaration, he said: "Yet we know that you Spartans also do not tell others beforehand what you are going to do."

5. Polybius 13.3.6 (trans Paton)

νῦν δὲ καὶ φαύλου φασὶν εἶναι στρατηγῶ τὸ προφανῶς τι πράττειν τῶν πολεμικῶν.

But at the present they say it is a sign of poor generalship to do anything openly in war.

6. Plutarch, *Pyrrhus* 21.3 (trans. Perrin)

οὐδὲ γὰρ ταῦτα σὴ χάριτι μὴνύομεν, ἀλλ' ὅπως μὴ τὸ σὸν πάθος ἡμῖν διαβολὴν ἐνέγκῃ καὶ δόλῳ δόξωμεν, ὡς ἀρετῆ μὴ δυνάμενοι, κατεργάσασθαι τὸν πόλεμον.'

“men may not say of us that we brought the war to an end by treachery because we were unable to do so by valour.”

7. Plutarch *Flamininus* 11.2-3 (trans. Perrin)

...σπανιώτατον δὲ τῶν ἄλλων ἀγαθῶν ὁ δίκαιος. οἱ γὰρ Ἀγησίλαοι καὶ Λύσανδροι καὶ οἱ Νικίαι καὶ οἱ Ἀλκιβιάδαι πολέμους μὲν εὖ διέπειν καὶ μάχας νικᾶν κατὰ τε γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν ἄρχοντες ἠπίσταντο, χρῆσθαι δὲ πρὸς χάριν εὐγενῆ καὶ τὸ καλὸν οἷς κατῶρθον οὐκ ἔγνωσαν,

...the rarest of all blessings is the just man. For men like Agesilaüs, or Lysander, or Nicias, or Alcibiades could indeed conduct wars well, and understood how to be victorious commanders in battles by land and sea, but they would not use their successes so as to win legitimate favour and promote the right.

8. Piracy

8a. Strabo 5.5.2 (trans Hamilton)

οὐ γὰρ ἂν χώραν εὐδαίμονα ἀφέντες τῇ θαλάττῃ κατὰ ληστείαν ἐπέθεντο

Otherwise they would never have abandoned a fertile country for a life of piracy on the sea...

8b. Strabo, 1.3.2 (trans mine)

ἐπὶ ληστείαν τραπέσθαι διὰ τὰς ἀπορίας

...they turned to piracy because of their poverty...

8c. Appian, *Iberian Wars*, 100 (trans mine)

ἐλήστευον δ' ἐξ ἀπορίας οὗτοι

“And they practiced banditry on account of their poverty.”

9a. Florus 2.25.10 (trans mine)

Delmatae plerumque sub silvis agebant; unde in latrocinia promptissimi.

The Dalmatians mostly lived in the forests, from which they often engaged in banditry.

9b. Florus 1.7.4

Galli Senones, gens natura ferox, moribus incondita... ut plane nata ad hominum interitum, urbium stragem videretur.

The Gallic Senones, a people fierce by nature and with unfinished institutions...they plainly seemed born for the death of men and the destruction of cities.

9c. Florus 1.29.4

Tuti locis et fuga, durum atque velox genus, ex occasione latrocinia magis quam bella faciebant...Fulvius latebras eorum ignibus saepsit...

Safe in their position and boltholes, they (the Ligurians), a hard and quick race, made banditry rather war, when they could...Fulvius surrounded their lairs with fire...

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