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## Books as Plunder? A Reconsideration of Plutarch *Lucullus* 42

### A) Plutarch *Lucullus* 42

Σπουδῆς δ' ἄξια καὶ λόγου τὰ περὶ τῆν τῶν βιβλίων κατασκευήν. καὶ γὰρ πολλὰ καὶ γεγραμμένα καλῶς συνῆγεν, ἢ τε χρῆσις ἦν φιλοτιμοτέρα τῆς κτήσεως, ἀνειμένων πᾶσι τῶν βιβλιοθηκῶν, καὶ τῶν περὶ αὐτὰς περιπάτων καὶ σχολαστηρίων ἀκωλύτως ὑποδεχομένων τοὺς Ἕλληνας, ὥσπερ εἰς Μουσῶν τι καταγώγιον ἐκεῖσε φοιτῶντας... καὶ ὅλως ἐστία καὶ πρυτανεῖον Ἑλληνικὸν ὁ οἶκος ἦν αὐτοῦ τοῖς ἀφικνουμένοις εἰς Ῥώμην.

But worthy of respect and esteem are the circumstances concerning his provision of books. For in fact he gathered together many beautifully written books, and their use was more *philotimos* than their acquisition, since the libraries were open to all, and the surrounding porticoes and study rooms received without reservation the Greeks, visiting there as if it were some kind of Hotel of the Muses... And his house was basically a home and Greek *prytaneum* for those coming to Rome.

### B) Possible Examples of Books Taken as Plunder

- Aemilius Paulus takes the books of King Perseus of Macedon, at Pella (Plut. *Aem. Paul.* 28, Isid. *Orig.* 6.5)
- Rome sacks Carthage, takes books (Pliny *NH* 18.22)
- Sulla takes the books of Apellicon from Athens (Strabo 13.1.54, Plut. *Sulla* 26, Lucian *Adv. Ind.* 4)
- Lucullus after participation in the Third Mithridatic War (Plut. *Luc.* 42; Isid. *Orig.* 6.5)
- Pompey takes the books of Mithridates after completion of Third Mithridatic War (Pliny *NH* 25.7)

### C) Isidore *Origines* 6.5

Romae primus librorum copiam aduexit Aemilius Paulus, Perse Macedonum rege deuicto; deinde Lucullus e Pontica praeda.

In Rome, Aemilius Paulus first gathered together an abundance of books, when Perseus, king of the Macedonians, had been overthrown; next was Lucullus, from his Pontic plunder.

#### D) Plutarch *Lucullus* 41

λέγεται γὰρ Ἕλληνας ἀνθρώπους ἀναβάντας εἰς Ῥώμην ἐστιᾶν ἐπὶ πολλὰς ἡμέρας, τοὺς δ' ὄντως Ἑλληνικόν τι παθόντας, αἰσχύνεσθαι καὶ διωθεῖσθαι τὴν κλῆσιν, ὡς δι' αὐτοὺς καθ' ἡμέραν τοσοῦτων ἀναλισκομένων·

For it is said that when some Greeks came to Rome, he hosted them for many days, and that they, feeling something Greeks really would, began to be ashamed and to refuse his invitations, since such a great fortune was being spent on them every day.

#### E) Plutarch *Lucullus* 39

εἰς ταῦτα (*i.e.* the lifestyle expenditures) τῷ πλούτῳ ρύδην καταχρώμενος, ὃν ἠθοροῖκει πολὺν καὶ λαμπρὸν ἀπὸ τῶν στρατειῶν...

It was on these (*i.e.* the lifestyle expenditures) that he lavishly used up the wealth, of which he had acquired a magnificent abundance from his military campaigns...

#### F) Plutarch *Lucullus* 41-42 (the connection leading into passage A)

εἰς ταῦτα (*i.e.* the lifestyle expenditures) μὲν οὖν ὑβριστικῶς ἐχρῆτο τῷ πλούτῳ καθάπερ ὄντως αἰχμαλώτῳ καὶ βαρβάρῳ. Σπουδῆς δ' ἄξια καὶ λόγου τὰ περὶ τῶν βιβλίων κατασκευήν.

So in regard to these things (*i.e.* the lifestyle expenditures) he abused his wealth, as if it were actually a barbarian captive. But worthy of respect and esteem are the circumstances concerning his provision of books.

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