

Antony as an Ordinary Soldier in Plutarch's *Life*

(1) Plutarch, *Aem.* 1: Plutarch's Purpose

Ἐμοὶ τῆς τῶν βίων ἄψασθαι μὲν γραφῆς συνέβη δι' ἑτέρους, ἐπιμένειν δὲ καὶ φιλοχωρεῖν ἤδη καὶ δι' ἑμαυτόν, ὥσπερ ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ τῇ ἱστορίᾳ πειρώμενον ἀμῶς γέ πως κοσμεῖν καὶ ἀφομοιοῦν πρὸς τὰς ἐκείνων ἀρετὰς τὸν βίον. οὐδὲν γὰρ ἀλλ' ἢ συνδιστάσκει καὶ συμβιώνει τὸ γινόμενον ἔοικεν, ὅταν ὥσπερ ἐπιξενούμενον ἕκαστον αὐτῶν ἐν μέρει διὰ τῆς ἱστορίας ὑποδεχόμενοι καὶ παραλαμβάνοντες ἀναθεωρῶμεν ὅσσοις ἔην οἷός τε, τὰ κυριώτατα καὶ κάλλιστα πρὸς γνῶσιν ἀπὸ τῶν πράξεων λαμβάνοντες.

φεῦ φεῦ, τί τούτου χάριμα μεῖζον ἂν λάβοις

<καὶ> πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν ἡθῶν ἐνεργότερον;

“Although I originally took up the writing of Lives for others, I find that the task has grown on me and I continue with it for my own sake too, in the sense that I treat history as a kind of mirror and try to find a way to arrange my life and assimilate it to the virtues of my subjects. The experience is like nothing so much as spending time in their company and living with them: I receive and welcome each of them in turn as my guest, so to speak, observe his ‘stature and his qualities’, and choose from his achievements those which it is particularly important and valuable to know.

‘And oh, what greater delight could one find than this?’

And could one find a more effective means of moral improvement either?”

(2) Sallust *Jug.* 44

Sed ubi in Africam venit, exercitus [ei] traditus a Sp. Albino proconsule iners inbellis, neque periculi neque laboris patiens, lingua quam manu promptior, praedator ex sociis et ipse praeda hostium, sine imperio et modestia habitus.

“But when he came into Africa, the army he (Metellus) received from Sp. Albinus, the proconsul, was lazy and cowardly, unable to endure danger or labor, more glim than capable, predatory with our allies and itself preyed upon by our enemies, restrained neither by authority nor by shame. “

(3) Sallust, *Jug.* 88

Sed Marius impigre prudenterque suorum et hostium res pariter attendere: cognoscere, quid boni utrisque aut contra esset, explorare itinera regum, consilia et insidias eorum antevenire, nihil apud se remissum neque apud illos tutum pati.

“Marius, on the other hand, attended to the situation of his own men and that of the enemy with equal energy and prudence. He understood what the advantages and disadvantages were on both sides, he scouted out the kings’ movements, he pre-empted their plans and traps and he allowed no relaxation in his own army and no safety in theirs.”

(4) Plutarch, *Ant* 17

ἀλλὰ φύσει παρὰ τὰς κακοπραγίας ἐγένετο βέλτιστος ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ δυστυχῶν ὁμοιότατος ἦν ἀγαθῶ,

“But it was his (Antony’s) nature to excel in difficult situations, and he never got closer to being a good man than when fortune was against him.”

Select Bibliography

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Translations include mild emendations.

