

Considerations of Treason and Patriotism in the Ancient World

A number of people in the Ancient World abandon their country for personal gain. Among them are Hippias, Miltiades, Alcibiades, Hannibal, Marc Antony, and Flavius Josephus. This paper will compare the political views of two representatives from this group. From the Greek world is Alcibiades, who in the late 5th century left Athens for the enemy states. From the Roman world is Flavius Josephus, a Jewish priest who gave information to the Romans during the Jewish revolt around 70 A.D. and thereafter became a Roman citizen and friend of the Flavian emperors. The paper will look at how their actions were seen as traitorous or patriotic by their own personal standards, by the standards of Classical authors, including their contemporaries, and by American standards. A newly published book by George McKenna, *The Puritan Origins of American Patriotism* (Yale 2007), provides useful insights into the American point of view. It challenges us to consider whether our concept of patriotism is fully applicable to the Ancient World, and the paper will also address this issue.