

Source: The Histories of Polybius V2 by Polybius □
(translated by Evelyn S. Shuckburgh 1889)

BOOK XIII

THE AETOLIANS

1. FROM the unbroken continuity of their wars, and the extravagance of their daily lives, the Aetolians became involved in debt, not only without others noticing it, but without being sensible of it themselves. Being therefore naturally disposed to a change in their constitution, they elected Dorimachus and Scopas to draw out a code of laws, because they saw that they were not only innovators by disposition, but were themselves deeply involved in private debt. These men accordingly were admitted to the office and drew up the laws. . . .

Straitened
finances in Ae-
tolia cause a
revolution,
B.C. 204.

When they produced them they were opposed by Alexander of Aetolia, who tried to show by many instances that innovation was a dangerous growth which could not be checked, and invariably ended by inflicting grave evils upon those who fostered it. He urged them therefore not to look solely to the exigencies of the hour, and the relief from their existing contracts, but to the future also. For it was a strange inconsistency to be ready to forfeit their very lives in war to preserve their children, and yet in their deliberations to be entirely careless of the future. . . .

2. Having failed to obtain the office, for the sake of which he had had the boldness to draw up these laws, Scopas turned his hopes to Alexandria, in the expectation of finding means there of restoring his broken fortunes, and satisfying to a fuller extent his grasping spirit. He little knew that it is impossible to assuage the ever-rising desires of the soul without correcting this passion by reason, any more than it is to stay or quench

Scopas goes to
Egypt. See 16,
18-19; 18, 53.

the thirst of the dropsical body by supplying it with drink, without radically restoring its healthy condition. Scopas, indeed, is a conspicuous example of this truth ; for though on his arrival at Alexandria, in addition to his military pay, which he possessed independently as commander-in-chief, the king assigned him ten minae a day, and one mina a day to those next him in rank, still he was not satisfied ; but continued to demand more, until he disgusted his paymasters by his cupidity, and lost his life and his gold together.

PHILIP'S TREACHEROUS CONDUCT, B.C. 204

3. Philip now entered upon a course of treachery which no one would venture to say was worthy of a king ; but which some would defend on the ground of its necessity in the conduct of public affairs, owing to the prevailing bad faith of the time. For the ancients, so far from using a fraudulent policy towards their friends, were scrupulous even as to using it to conquer their enemies ; because they did not regard a success as either glorious or secure, which was not obtained by such a victory in the open field as served to break the confidence of their enemies. They therefore came to a mutual understanding not to use hidden weapons against each other, nor such as could be projected from a distance ; and held the opinion that the only genuine decision was that arrived at by a battle fought at close quarters, foot to foot with the enemy. It was for this reason also that it was their custom mutually to proclaim their wars, and give notice of battles, naming time and place at which they meant to be in order of battle. But nowadays people say that it is the mark of an inferior general to perform any operation of war openly. Some slight trace, indeed, of the old-fashioned morality still lingers among the Romans ; for they do proclaim their wars, and make sparing use of ambuscades, and fight their battles hand to hand and foot to foot. So much for the unnecessary amount of artifice which it is the fashion for commanders in our days to employ both in politics and war.

4. Philip gave Heracleides a kind of problem to work out,—how to circumvent and destroy the Rhodian fleet. At the

same time he sent envoys to Crete to excite and provoke them to go to war with the Rhodians. Heracleides, Philip employs
 who was a born traitor, looked upon the com- Heracleides
 mission as the very thing to suit his plans; and of Tarentum,
 after revolving various methods in his mind, presently started and sailed to Rhodes. He was by origin a Tarentine, of a low family of mechanics, and he had many qualities which fitted him for bold and unscrupulous undertakings. His boyhood had been stained by notorious immorality; he had great acuteness and a retentive memory; in the presence of the vulgar no one could be more bullying and audacious; to those in high position no one more insinuating and servile. He had been originally banished from his native city from a suspicion of being engaged in an intrigue to hand over Tarentum to the Romans: not that he had any political influence, but being an architect, and employed in some repairs of the walls, he got possession of the keys of the gate on the landward side of the town. He thereupon fled for his life to the Romans. From them, being detected in making communications by letters and messages with Tarentum and Hannibal, he again fled for fear of consequences to Philip. With him he obtained so much credit and influence that he eventually was the most powerful element in the overthrow of that great monarchy.

5. The Prytanies of Rhodes were now distrustful of Philip, owing to his treacherous policy in Crete,¹ and they began to suspect that Heracleides was his agent. . . .

But Heracleides came before them and explained the reasons which had caused him to fly from Philip. . . .

The false pretences of Heracleides at Rhodes.

Philip was anxious above everything that the Rhodians should not discover his purpose in these transactions; whereby he succeeded in freeing Heracleides from suspicion. . . .

Nature, as it seems to me, has ordained that Truth should be a most mighty goddess among men, and has endowed her with extraordinary power. At least, I notice that though at times everything combines to

Magna est veritas.

¹ The Rhodians had proclaimed war against the Cretan pirates. Philip had secretly commissioned one of his agents, the Aetolian Dicaearchus, to aid the Cretans. Diodor. fr. xxviii.

crush her, and every kind of specious argument is on the side of falsehood, she somehow or another insinuates herself by her own intrinsic virtue into the souls of men. Sometimes she displays her power at once; and sometimes, though obscured for a length of time, she at last prevails and overpowers falsehood. Such was the case with Heracleides when he came from king Philip to Rhodes.¹ . . .

Damocles, who was sent with Pythio as a spy upon the Romans, was a person of ability, and possessed of many endowments fitting him for the conduct of affairs. . . .

NABIS, TYRANT OF SPARTA, B.C. 207-192

6. Nabis, tyrant of Sparta, being now in the third year of his reign, ventured upon no undertaking of importance, owing to the recent defeat of Machanidas by the Achaeans; but employed himself in laying the foundations of a long and grinding tyranny. He destroyed the last remains of the old Spartan nobles; drove into banishment all men eminent for wealth or ancestral glory; and distributed their property and wives among the chief men of those who remained, or among his own mercenary soldiers. These last were composed of murderers, housebreakers, foot-pads, and burglars. For this was, generally speaking, the class of men which he collected out of all parts of the world, whose own country was closed to them owing to their crimes and felonies. As he put himself forward as the patron and king of such wretches, and employed them as attendants and body-guards, there is evidently no cause for surprise that his impious character and reign should have been long remembered. For, besides this, he was not content with driving the citizens into banishment, but took care no place should be secure, and no refuge safe for the exiles. Some he caused to be pursued and killed on the road, while others he dragged from their place of retreat and murdered. Finally, in the cities where they were living, he hired the houses next door to these banished men,

¹ Heracleides having gained credence at Rhodes by pretending to betray Philip's intrigue with the Cretans, waited for an opportunity, and, setting fire to their arsenal, escaped in a boat. Polyæn. 5, 17, 2.

wherever they might be, by means of agents who were not suspected ; and then sent Cretans into these houses, who made breaches in the party walls, and through them, or through such windows as already existed, shot down the exiles as they stood or lay down in their own houses ; so that there was no place of retreat, and no moment of security for the unfortunate Lacedaemonians.

7. When he had by these means put the greater number of them out of the way, he next had constructed a kind of machine, if machine it may be called, Nabis's wife. which was the figure of a woman, clothed in costly garments, and made to resemble with extraordinary fidelity the wife of Nabis. Whenever then he summoned one of the citizens with a view of getting some money from him, he used first to employ a number of arguments politely expressed, pointing out the danger in which the city stood from the threatening attitude of the Achaeans, and explaining what a number of mercenaries he had to support for their security, and the expenses which fell upon him for the maintenance of the national religion and the needs of the State. If the listeners gave in he was satisfied ; but if they ever refused to comply with his demand, he would say, "Perhaps I cannot persuade you, but I think this lady Apéga will succeed in doing so." Apéga was the name of his wife. Immediately on his saying these words, the figure I have described was brought in. As soon as the man offered his hand to the supposed lady to raise her from her seat, the figure threw its arms round him and began drawing him by degrees towards its breasts. Now its arms, hands, and breasts were full of iron spikes under its clothes. When the tyrant pressed his hands on the back of the figure, and then by means of the works dragged the man by degrees closer and closer to its breasts, he forced him under this torture to say anything. A good number of men who refused his demands he destroyed in this way.¹

8. The rest of his conduct was on a par with this beginning. He made common cause with the Cretan pirates, The beginning of and kept temple-breakers, highway-robbers, and the war between

¹ The text of these last sentences is so corrupt that it is impossible to be sure of having rightly represented the meaning of Polybius.

Nabis and the Achaeans. murderers all over the Peloponnese ; and as he shared in the profits of their nefarious trades, he allowed them to use Sparta as their base of operations. Moreover, about this time some visitors from Boeotia, who happened to be staying at Lacedaemon, enticed one of his grooms to make off with them, taking a certain white horse which was considered the finest in the royal stud. They were pursued by a party sent by Nabis as far as Megalopolis, where the tyrants found the horse and groom, and took them off without any one interfering. But they then laid hands on the Boeotians, who at first demanded to be taken before the magistrate ; but as no attention was paid to the demand, one of them shouted out "Help !" Upon a crowd of the people of the place collecting and protesting that the men should be taken before the magistrate, Nabis's party were obliged to let them go and retire. Nabis, however, had been long looking out for a ground of complaint and a reasonable pretext for a quarrel, and having seized on this one, he harried the cattle belonging to Proagoras and some others ; which was a commencement of the war.¹ . . .

ANTIOCHUS IN ARABIA, B.C. 205-204

9. Labae, like Sabae, is a city of Chattenia, which is a territory of the Gerraei. . . . In other respects, Chattenia is a rugged country, but the wealth of the Gerraei who inhabit it has adorned it with villages and towers. It lies along the Arabian Sea, and Antiochus gave orders to spare it. . . .

In a letter to Antiochus the Gerraei demanded that he should not destroy what the gods had given them—perpetual peace and freedom ; and this letter having been interpreted to him he granted the request. . . .

Their freedom having been confirmed to the Gerraei, they presented King Antiochus at once with five hundred talents of silver, one thousand of frankincense, and two hundred of oil of cinnamon, called stacte, all of them spices of the country on the Arabian Sea. He then sailed to the island of Tylos, and thence to Seleucia. . . .

¹ These raids on the territory of Megalopolis, however, did not lead to open war till B.C. 202. See 16, 16.

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



The Complete Text can be found on our CD:
Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature
which can be purchased on our Website :
www.Brainfly.net

or

by sending **\$64.95** in check or money order to :
Brainfly Inc.
5100 Garfield Ave. #46
Sacramento CA 95841-3839

TEACHER'S DISCOUNT:

If you are a **TEACHER** you can take advantage of our teacher's discount. Click on **Teachers Discount** on our website (www.Brainfly.net) or **Send us \$55.95** and we will send you a full copy of *Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature* **AND** our *5000 Classics CD (a collection of over 5000 classic works of literature in electronic format (.txt))* plus our *Wholesale price list*.

If you have any suggestions such as books you would like to see added to the collection or if you would like our wholesale prices list please send us an email to:

webcomments@brainfly.net