EXTRACTS FROM LIVY, WITH ENGLISH NOTES AND MAPS. PART III

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Extracts from Livy, with english notes and maps. Part III by H. Lee-Warner

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H. LEE-WARNER

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EXTRACTS FROM LIVY

WITH ENGLISH NOTES AND MAPS

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PABT III

THE MACEDONIAN WAR

Gxford

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

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The empire of Alexander the Great had reduced the East 'under the influence of Hellenic sway and Hellenic taste. Though divided, it had now lasted one hundred and forty-four years in the hands of his successors. Whilst Alexander was winning his battles in Asia, the duel for the leadership of Italy was being fought by the Romans and Samnites. We have seen that the year 266 s.c. found them masters of all Italy. In two years more the course of events made it necessary for them to pass from their hitherto merely Italian policy and develope a navy, which was sure to lead to a policy of more direct aggression. The baptism of fire through which Hannibal made the fertile provinces of Italy pass in the Second Punic War, was only a prelude to the entry of Rome into the contest for the leadership of the world. In spreading her power castward she found herself opposed not by one united empire, but by the scattered legions which Alexander had bequeathed to the marshals of his empire. Regum viribus reges oppugnare was an easy policy for a republic which had successfully wrestled in the second Punic War with the genius of Hannibal and the resources of Carthage. In the First Maccdonian War, Philip, then (213-205 B.C.) King of Macedonia, had acted with such laxness that the two powers can hardly be considered to have matched their forces at all; the Second had been but a flash in the pan. Eighteen years had since elapsed, during which Philip had shewn the greatest calmness and perseverance in building up his kingdom and preparing it for that conflict which sooner or later was sure to be necessary. . If he had displayed in his first war half the perseverance which he then shewed in preparing for this struggle which he was not destined to carry through, he would not have died (179 n.c.) despairing and broken-hearted. As it was, he left behind him vast resources and a kingdom on which all the patriots of Greece looked. with eager expectation as the representative of their nationality; he left behind him too a son Perseus, who, equally imperious, equally unscrupulous, was more steady and persevering than his father. All the countries east of the Adriatic, with the exception of the Attalid kingdom

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of Eumenes, looked upon this monarch as the champion of Greece. Hehimself was a son-in-law of Antiochus of Syria; his sister had matried Prusias, the King of Bithynia. The Rhodians were well affected towards him and secret goodwill might easily blossom out into open alliance, and so secure for his service the finest fleet in the Aegean. All Greece expected the speedy downfall of the Romans. Accustomed to the sudden falls of their own states, they naturally expected that the Romans had reached a point of glory beyond which the gods would hardly let them advance. And so it came to pass that they were most insolent at a time when the power of Rome was most able to crush them, just as most exasperation against the dominion of the French was manifested in Germany at a time when the French were most able and ready to revenge it. In vain did men like Eumenes of Pergamus, Charops of Epirus, Kallikrates of the Achaean league, warn their countrymen of their weakness. Every one was now agreed that the most detestable Macedonian hegemony was better than a government imposed by foreigners, however disinterested, which the Romans were not. The two nationalities were antagonistic; the feuds were smouldering; any spark might kindle the open flame. So much had Perseus' subtle plan brought about; he had placed all Greece in a state of eager expectance; he had amassed vast treasures; he had organised great forces. But when the decisive moment arrived for action, he failed; he shrank back from what he himself had taken in hand; he wanted the genius to let slip his forces, to use his means, to relax his grasp of his golden pieces. So it was that when in 172 Eumenes came to the senate with a list of his grievances against the national Greek party, and the senate suddenly resolved on war, Perseus had not the spirit to forget himself and assume the leadership of Greece. In 171 the Roman legions landed in Greece, and under Publius Licinius Crassus invaded Thessaly. Though Perseus was alone, he began the war with immense resources. Independently of his allies, he had a force of 40,000 foot. It is therefore not surprising that he should have led off with two victories, and does not argue any very great want of political foresight that he thought he could bring the great republic to terms. The iron rule of the Romans never to make terms except with the vanquished was not yet known to be applied to the states outside Italy. When therefore the Romans rejected all compromise and resolutely continued the war, the king was amazed. He had made his plans for a defensive war: and the Romans were waiting for him to assume the offensive.

The prospect of the outlay necessary for such an effort was too much for him. He waited near his base and left the Romans to storm the cities of Haliartus and Coronea, whose only offence was that they were loyal. So the campaign closed for the year 171 B.C., and the elections of the following year sent a very different man, Aulus Hostilius, to the command of their army. For a year the legionaries had to submit to the enforcement of stern discipline by a man of no great mark in the military world. The abuses in the army were corrected as far as could be done by a general who was constantly urging precept without example. Whole nations and cities were subjected to the grossest outrages to enrich the commander, whilst the common soldiers were punished severely for the least breach of discipline. Incompetence had been succeeded by selfishness; the man was still wanting to carry out the great republic's work. Eumenes and his Greek and Asiatic allies might well begin to think that Spartan harmosts and Macedonian marshals were better than Roman consuls, so long as neither possessed the gentleness of a Flamininus or the moral purity of a Fabricius. The political success of Rome in the East had been based on the general belief in her incorruptibility; when that failed, a corrupt Greek government might well be preferred by Greeks. That was not too great a strain on Greek patriotism.

The third year of the war had now come, and the Roman burgesses this time chose an enterprising man, who was evidently no great officer. Q. Marcius Philippus found the army in good condition, clamouring for some achievement. His march across Olympus by the pass of Lapathus was only successful because Perseus was so inert. What cared the King of Macedonia for Olympus so long as his money-bags were in Pydna or Pella? The result was that a Roman army occupied Olympus without a battle, and Zeus was taken captive by Jupiter. From that moment the Greek gods deserted Perseus and joined themselves to the Roman legions. Marcius Philippus had placed his army in a position where, in spite of Perseus, they must die or fight. With the mountains at their back, they could not expect to draw enough provisions for long through the pass of Tempe. They must move forward; and now that the time for action had obviously come, the Roman burgess-electors were sufficiently roused to send the right man. As always happened in the time of danger, all political interests gave way to military necessities. In that marvellously elastic constitution, the change from

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empire to republic was simply effected by the change of ministry at the beginning of the year. As soon as it was known that the choice of the burgesses had fallen on Lucius Aemilius Paulus, the son of the martyr of Cannae, it was obvious that a strong government was contemplated. Seldom was it that a man of so humble means was elected consul a second time. Seldom was it, it may be added, that a man of so humble means did not make himself the richer for his first consulship. But he was one of the few Romans of that age to whom one could not offer money, and, although he was a strict general of the old school, he was a man of such culture that his march through Greece was a tour of inspection of works of art.

What he was, however, and what he did, will best appear in the course of the following pages. If after his victory he abandoned the humane principles which had governed the earlier part of his life, he will not be the last person who has doubted in the weakness of old age the enthusiastic theories of his more hopeful manhood, and contradicted in action the less biassed judgment of a strong youth. The selfish hurry with which old age, not content to wait, tries to reap all the laurels of one victory in a short life is well known. Hence he acted cruelly, and in crushing Greece crushed what he loved best in Rome. A strong united Greece would have been the best guarantee for Rome of a higher development such as Paulus would have wished most. But the ancient world, it has been well said, knew nothing of a balance of power, and so every nation which attained internal unity strove to crush or weaken its neighbour. Otherwise the union of Greece under the northern kingdom of Macedonia might very well have been tried, as in our days, with the assistance of the railway and the telegraph, we have seen the practical Piedmontese infuse new vigour into the dukedom of Tuscany and the kingdom of Naples.

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