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Preface

I HAVE NO DOUBT, Atticus,¹ but that many would consider this kind of writing unimportant and unworthy of the public image of great men. For here they will learn who taught Epaminondas music, and that among his finest accomplishments were dancing and playing the flute. But there will always be some who, ignorant of Greek literature, think nothing is proper unless it is consistent with their own mores. If these could only understand that what is honorable in one land is often disgraceful in another, and that all manners must be judged in the light of national customs, they would not be surprised that in our description of Greek character we carefully consider local practices and conventions. When Cimon, a noble Athenian, married his own half-sister, he followed a custom respected by all. This is thought immoral among Romans. In Greece a youth was considered fortunate to have many male lovers, and noble widows even at Sparta could be enticed onto the stage² for a price. While all Greece honored an Olympic victor and held it a privilege to be able to appear on the stage, Romans felt all these things to be demeaning and at variance with an upright life. On the other hand many customs which Romans consider proper, Greeks would find unbecoming. What Roman would not bring his wife to a banquet? What wife would not enter a gathering of her husband's friends and mingle with the guests? Not so in Greece, where

1. Nepos discusses the life and deeds of Atticus at the end of this series of biographies.

2. stage: I read *scaenam* in the text rather than *cenam* or *moecum* as do some editors.

Cornelius Nepos

no woman was admitted to a banquet unless given by relatives. Nor did a wife leave her own suite, to which no male was allowed entrance unless he was a relative.

The great mass of material I have to relate and my haste to tell what I have begun, keep me from continuing in this vein. We will go, therefore, to our proposed subject and set forth the lives of famous generals.



Miltiades (550-489 B.C.)

1. At a time when the Athenian Miltiades, son of Cimon, was at the height of popularity both for his unassuming behavior and because of his great family name, the Athenians decided to send colonists to the Chersonesus.¹ The citizens of Athens had high hopes for the mature Miltiades and felt that he would continue to be the same man they had earlier grown to respect. As the number of men seeking to join the expedition to the Chersonesus grew, the question of who would lead became very important. Certain men were chosen to go to Delphi and consult Apollo about the selection of a leader. The whole issue was one of some gravity since the leader must also be a qualified general, capable of seizing the Chersonesus from the Thracians, who held it at that time. The oracle at Delphi instructed the delegation to name Miltiades commander, and implied if they did so, the expedition would succeed. Miltiades was duly given command and immediately set sail with a chosen band of followers for the Chersonesus. When he drew

1. The Chersonesus is the peninsula lying on the European side of the Dardanelles. Nepos here is guilty of confusing two men both named Miltiades. It was Miltiades the elder, the son of Cypselus and the uncle of Miltiades the younger, who first settled the Chersonesus with Athenians. Miltiades the younger (the son of Cimon, brother of Miltiades the elder) later took control of the Chersonesus, became involved with Darius, and then led the Greeks to victory at Marathon; see further N.G.L. Hammond, "The Philaids and the Chersonesus," *Classical Quarterly* 6 (1956) 113-129.

near to the island of Lemnos, he decided to try to bring it also under the sway of Athenian power, and so demanded that the inhabitants surrender. They, in turn, literally laughed in his face and informed him they would surrender only if he could land on Lemnos in the face of the strong north wind. The wind (called *aquilo*) rises in the north and drives away all ships sailing from Athens in the south. Realizing that he had no time to force the issue, Miltiades resumed his course and arrived at the Chersonesus.

2. After only a short time Miltiades routed the barbarians, and having gained control over the whole area, fortified suitable places with camps. He assigned land to the colonists and by frequent raids into Thracian territory made them wealthy. Both skill and luck were on his side. With the help of his soldiers he conquered the enemy and with fine impartiality arranged government affairs. For himself he determined to remain in the Chersonesus, where he was accorded royal honors but without having the title of king. The basis for his power was the support of his soldiers and the reputation for unbiased rule. Nor did he forget his obligations to Athens, who had sent him to the Chersonesus. Both the citizens of Athens and the colonists who had gone out with him supported him for the office of perpetual dictator. Once affairs were settled in the Chersonesus, he returned to Lemnos, and holding the inhabitants of that island to their agreement, demanded that they surrender to him. For they had said that if he could come from home and arrive at Lemnos with the aid of the north wind, they would surrender. Now he considered the Chersonesus, which was north of Lemnos, home. The Carians then occupying Lemnos had not expected such a turn of events and decided to honor their past promise and not resist. They would, however, leave the island. With the same amazing fortune he brought many other islands of the Cyclades² group under Athenian hegemony.

3. At that very moment Darius, king of the Persians, was moving his army out of Asia, into Europe, and attacking the Scythians. He built a troop bridge across the river Ister and placed certain Ionian and Aeolian leaders, who were with him and who owed their political power to him, in charge of guarding the bridge. Darius reasoned that the easiest way to

2. Lemnos is not in the Cyclades, a group of islands which surround Delos, but is located much further north.

control the Greeks living in Asia was to hand over the sovereignty of the cities to his own friends who would be dependent solely on him for military support. If he should happen to be killed, there would be no haven of safety anywhere for the puppet rulers. One of these rulers to whom the defense of the bridge had been entrusted was Miltiades. Now when many messengers had come and informed Miltiades that Darius was meeting with stubborn resistance from the Scythians, Miltiades pleaded with those Asianic Greeks guarding the bridge not to let pass this god-sent opportunity of freeing Greece from the threat of Darius: if Darius and all the troops with him were to die, not only all Greece but even those Greeks living in Asia would be free of Persian domination. Miltiades claimed this dream could be easily realized: if the bridge would be destroyed the king would have no escape route and no supply route, and so would die either at the hands of the enemy or from starvation. Although most of the Asianic rulers agreed with Miltiades, Hestiaeus of Miletus objected on these grounds: such actions would benefit only the people and not the rulers who owed their positions of power to Darius; if he died, they, the rulers, would be driven from office by the citizens and forced to pay terrible penalties. Therefore he voted against the plan of Miltiades and added that he felt nothing was more to their own advantage than keeping Darius in power. Throughout the debate Miltiades noted that many had changed their minds and decided to follow Hestiaeus. He then thought it best to leave the Chersonesus and return to Athens, for with so many aware of his feelings toward Darius he was sure the Persian king would learn of his treason sooner or later.

Even if the motion of Miltiades was not accepted by the other Asianic Greeks, it is, nevertheless, worthy of praise, for it shows Miltiades more a friend to liberty than a slave to personal power.

4. On Darius' return from Europe his friends encouraged him to bring Greece under his sway. Darius considered the advice practicable and placed Datis and Artaphernes in command of a fleet of five hundred ships and an army of 200,000 foot and 10,000 horse. As a pretext for the invasion Darius cited the aid given the Ionian Greeks by the Athenians in the seizure of the city of Sardis and the massacre of the Persian garrison. The new commanders landed on Euboea, quickly captured the main city, Eretria, and sent all its inhabitants to Darius in Asia. From Eretria the Persian commanders led their troops into Attica and stationed them in the plain of Marathon about ten miles from

Athens. The Athenians, terrified by the proximity of the Persian army, quickly dispatched the runner Phidippus to Sparta to seek immediate aid. Meanwhile at home the Athenians appointed ten leaders, one of whom was Miltiades. But strife quickly broke out among the leaders over the question of whether they should defend themselves behind the city walls or go out and meet the enemy in the field. Miltiades urged as a first order of business that a fortified camp be set up. This, he said, would accomplish two things: the citizens of Athens would take heart when they saw preparations being made in their defense, and the enemy would be discouraged if they saw that the Athenians dared oppose them with such meager forces.

5. With Athens in such dire straits no city except for Plataea sent help. The one thousand man contingent from Plataea and nine thousand of Athens' finest were eager for battle, and with their support Miltiades convinced the Athenians to send troops out of the city and camp in a suitable location. On the very next day Miltiades drew up the army in battle formation at the foot of the mountains, in a place which afforded greatest protection from the rear. Miltiades reasoned that because of the number of trees in the area and with the heights at his rear, he would be protected from encirclement and shielded from the maximum effect of the Persian cavalry. Even though the Persian commander, Datis, saw the advantages of the Greek position, he nevertheless was confident in the strength of his army, and was also desirous to attack before the Spartans could send help. Datis began the battle with 100,000 foot and 10,000 horse. The Athenians, though outnumbered ten to one, attacked with such force that the Persians broke, retreated past their own camp, and fled toward the troop ships. The battle of Marathon is a great monument to valor; never have so few performed so well in the face of so many.

6. In order to illustrate that human nature is really the same among all people, I do not think it out of place to tell what reward Miltiades received. Honors paid to Romans in former years were infrequent and of no intrinsic value, and because of this they were much sought after. Now they are extravagant and common. We find that this same thing happened in Athens. The honor accorded Miltiades, savior of Athens and all Greece, was a portrait of himself in the Stoa Poikile, leading the other Greek commanders and his troops into the battle of Marathon. This same people, once it had acquired greater power and was

corrupted by the frequent gifts of government officials, gave three hundred statues to Demetrius of Phalerum.

7. After the battle of Marathon the Athenians gave Miltiades a fleet of seventy warships that he might punish those islands which aided the Persians. With this force he intimidated many to return to their position as Athenian satellites; some islands, however, he was obliged to attack. The island of Paros, proud of its wealth and power, refused to join the Athenian camp and consequently came under attack from Miltiades. He put the capitol under siege, cut off all its commerce, and came up right under the walls with his siege towers and protected troops. Just as he was about to deliver the *coup de grâce* to the city, an unexplained fire far off on the mainland was sighted by both the attackers and the besieged. Both thought it to be a signal from the fleet of Darius. The men of Paros believed it a warning signal from Darius not to surrender, while Miltiades judged it an attack signal from Darius. Miltiades burned his siege works and returned with his seventy ships to a hostile Athens. He was accused of treason, of neglect of duty in not taking Paros, and of accepting bribes from Darius. Because of wounds received in the siege Miltiades was unable to defend himself in person in court. His brother, Stesagoras, tried to make a defense but lost. Miltiades was spared a death sentence and fined fifty talents, the cost spent on the fleet. When he was found unable to pay the fine, he was thrown into prison and died there.

8. Underneath these official charges against Miltiades lay the real reason for his conviction and imprisonment: because of the recent dictatorship of Pisistratus, the Athenians had become suspicious of prolonged power in the hands of any one man. Miltiades, who had held military and civilian authority for some time, was considered too influential, a man drawn by acclimation for power to still more power, a citizen unaccustomed to private life. For many years he had held sole control of the Chersonesus and had been called a king, albeit a just one. He obtained control by persuasion and kept it by virtue. But in a state accustomed to liberty, a man with perpetual power is always called a dictator. Miltiades held all his fellowmen in the highest regard, and even the most humble could gain an audience. He commanded the greatest respect among all Greeks; he had a famous name; he had the respect of the troops. Nevertheless, the people preferred that this innocent man be punished rather than that they live in fear.



Themistocles (528-462 B.C.)

1. The virtues emergent in the adult life of the Athenian Themistocles, son of Neocles, more than atoned for the sins of his youth. None surpassed him in good deeds and few were his equal. His father, Neocles, was a nobleman, and his mother came from the district of Attica known as Acharnae.¹ Strong objections to his young son's profligacy and neglect of estate, led Neocles to disinherit him. This was just the prod Themistocles needed. Such a disgrace would have broken a lesser man, but it spurred Themistocles to redeem himself. He entered Athenian politics and diligently applied himself to the welfare of his friends and his own good name. Often he pleaded cases in court or addressed the popular assembly, and played a part in many major political decisions. He was quick to analyze the situation, present it to the assembly, and suggest the means and remedies. As Thucydides says, he correctly judged the present state and cleverly conjectured about the future. The reputation of such a man grows quickly.

2. His first step in the management of the affairs of state was in regard to the war with Corcyra. Themistocles was named commander and in that capacity built up the war potential of the people, not only for the present conflict but also for the future. It had become the practice at Athens that the public money derived from the operations of the mines² be doled out yearly and lost in terms of the public good.

1. I read *Acharnanum* for *Acarnanam*.

2. Located at Laurium in Attica.

Themistocles proposed that this money be used to build a fleet of one hundred ships. His motion carried, and the new fleet quickly broke the back of the Corcyraean forces and cleared the sea of pirates. With the same fleet Themistocles made the Athenians wealthy and experienced in naval warfare. The Persian war later showed just how important this experience was for the safety of Greece.

The Persian king, Xerxes, brought his war machine of one thousand two hundred long boats, two thousand supply boats, 700,000 foot, and 400,000 horse, to Europe. An expeditionary force of this size had never been seen before. When the report of the invasion reached Greece, and it was learned that the Athenians were to be singled out for destruction because of their victory at Marathon, the Athenians consulted the oracle at Delphi as to their future course. The oracle advised them to defend themselves behind wooden walls. When no one seemed able to explain satisfactorily the meaning of the oracle, Themistocles stepped forward and suggested it meant that they should seek protection behind the wooden walls of ships. The cool judgment of Themistocles again prevailed, and the Athenians added one hundred triremes to the fleet. All the movable property was conveyed to the island of Salamis or to Troezen in the Argolid. A few priests and some elderly citizens were given charge of the citadel and its sacred objects; the rest of Athens was abandoned to the enemy.

3. The plan of Themistocles did not please all the Greeks, and many decided to fight on land. The Spartan king, Leonidas, together with a select troop were sent north to seize the pass at Thermopylae and halt the advance of the Persians. The mass of the Persian army had too much momentum to be stopped, and all the Spartans perished. The combined Greek fleet of three hundred (two hundred were Athenian) ships challenged the enemy fleet first off Artemisium between Euboea and the mainland. Themistocles kept his contingent in the straits so that it could not be surrounded by the superior numbers of the Persians. Even though the fight off Artemisium ended in a draw, the Greek fleet could not remain, because of the danger that part of the enemy fleet might slip around Euboea and trap them. Therefore they left Artemisium and dropped anchor at Salamis across the straits from Athens.

4. After Thermopylae Xerxes entered Athens, killed those priests holding the citadel, and put the city to the torch, while Athenian

sailors, terrified by the flames, begged permission to return home and make a defense from the walls of their houses. Themistocles opposed them and argued that united they were a match for the Persians, but individually they would surely die. He made a positive statement to the same effect before Eurybiades, king of Sparta and supreme allied commander. When Themistocles saw that Eurybiades was not at all convinced by such arguments, he sent his most faithful servant by night to Xerxes to tell him that the Greeks were in a state of almost total collapse, and that if the Greeks should escape, he would finish the war only by a protracted struggle against individuals. If, however, he were to attack immediately, he could destroy all in one swoop. The intent of Themistocles' action was to force all the Greeks to fight, willingly or not. Xerxes suspected nothing, and on the next day joined battle from such an unfavorable position in the straits that most of his ships could not be deployed. The result was total defeat, wrought by the skill of Themistocles, not the might of Greek arms.

5. Even though Xerxes had mismanaged the war up to that point, he still had reserve strength enough to defeat his enemy. Again he was driven back by a feint. Fearing that Xerxes might not give up but persist in his efforts to take Greece, Themistocles informed him that his bridge across the Hellespont was to be destroyed and along with it his return route home. Xerxes was easily deceived and raced home in less than thirty days, whereas the journey to Greece had taken six months. To Xerxes Themistocles appeared a friend and trustworthy informant. The skill of one man had saved Greece, and Asia bowed to Europe. This was the second victory comparable to Marathon: as at Salamis the greatest of fleets was conquered by the smallest.

6. Themistocles became first in war and first in peace. Although Athens had a serviceable (not large, not deep) harbor at Phalerum, Themistocles convinced them to build a triple port at the Piraeus and set walls about it. The Piraeus came to rival Athens in beauty and surpass it in usefulness. Then at personal risk Themistocles had the city walls at Athens rebuilt. Because of the inroads made by the Persians, the Spartans felt they had a reason why no city outside the Peloponnesus should be fortified: if a fortified city fell to the Persians, it would make a strong base of operations. Therefore, the Spartans tried to keep Athens from rebuilding her walls. This was a mere pretense on

the part of the Spartans to conceal their real reason: fear. By victories at Marathon and Salamis, Athens had acquired so much prestige and importance that the Spartans realized a struggle with Athens over the hegemony of Greece was imminent, and they wanted Athens as weak as possible. As soon as the Spartans heard of the work on the walls around Athens, they sent an official delegation to try to stop construction. While the Spartan envoys were in Athens, all building was halted, and the Athenians promised to send a return delegation to Sparta to resolve the problem. Themistocles appointed himself sole member of the Athenian delegation to go to Sparta; the remaining members were instructed to stay in Athens until the walls were almost completed. Meanwhile all men, slave and free, were set to work at the walls and to gather building supplies from all sources, temples, private houses, and public buildings. Thus it happens that the walls are made up of materials from shrines and sepulchres.

7. When Themistocles arrived in Sparta he did not go immediately to the government officials, but rather used delaying tactics, and said he could do nothing until the other members of the delegation arrived. The Spartans were beginning to complain that construction on the walls had resumed and that they suspected deception, when the remainder of the Athenian delegation arrived. As soon as Themistocles was assured the walls were up, he went to the Spartan ephors,³ who held the power in the city, and declared that the allegations about the walls were false. To settle the matter he told them to send the best and most noble Spartans, in whom they placed absolute trust, to see for themselves. Meanwhile he would remain in Sparta as a hostage. Themistocles ordered his delegation to accompany the three Spartan nobles to Athens, and not to release them until he was safely back in Athens. Themistocles delayed again until he thought the delegation had arrived in Athens. Then he approached the Spartan officials and openly admitted that by his order the Athenians had set walls about the shrines of the public and national gods in order to defend more easily against the enemy. Furthermore, it was their right to do this and in fact was a national service. For Athens was a bulwark against the barbarian hordes. Recent history showed that Athens had wrecked two fleets of the enemy. But for their part the Spartans had acted unjustly, looking

3. At Sparta five ephors were elected annually to administer the affairs of state, having both executive and judicial powers.

to make Sparta powerful rather than Greece. If they wished to retrieve the delegation sent to Athens, they had to release him.

8. Not even the great Themistocles managed to escape the hatred of his fellow citizens. The same fear which had condemned Miltiades, now led to the ostracism⁴ of Themistocles, who left Athens and took up a very comfortable living in Argos. Then the Spartans, known for long memories, sent ambassadors to Athens accusing him in absentia of collusion with Xerxes to conquer Greece. When Themistocles learned that he had been convicted of treason, he left Argos, judging it unsafe, and went to Corcyra. After some time he became aware Corcyraean leaders were afraid of a combined attack by the Athenians and Spartans because of his presence there, so he moved on to the land of the Molossi whose king, Admetus, was a personal friend. The king was gone when Themistocles arrived, so in order to make himself sacrosanct he seized the young daughter of Admetus and took refuge in one of the most holy temples. Nor did he come out before Admetus promised to protect him. The pressure brought on Admetus by the Athenians and Spartans forced him to advise Themistocles to seek refuge further from Greece. Admetus ordered armed men to escort him to Pydna, his new place of exile. While on board ship incognito, Themistocles was caught in a storm and carried almost to Naxos, where an Athenian army happened to be. If the ship were to put into the harbor at Naxos, the situation would be so extreme that suicide would be the only escape. Themistocles was forced to reveal his identity to the ship's captain and bribe him not to dock at Naxos. The captain was overcome with pity for the great Themistocles and kept his ship at anchor day and night, giving no one shore leave. Then he sailed to Ephesus and set Themistocles ashore; his efforts and discretion were well rewarded.

9. While I am aware that many historians have said that Themistocles went to Asia while Xerxes was still alive, I would rather believe Thucydides, who was closer in time to Themistocles than any other

4. Under the reforms of Cleisthenes (507 B.C.) there was a provision which allowed the assembled citizens of Athens, at least 6,000 voting, to exile anyone considered dangerous to the state. Each citizen inscribed the name of the man he wished exiled on a potsherd (*ostrakon* in Greek); the one receiving the most votes was forced to leave Athens for ten years. No loss of property was involved.

historian and was a fellow Athenian. Thucydides reports that Themistocles wrote the following letter to Artaxerxes: "I, Themistocles, come to you as the man who brought many troubles to your home, while I made war on your father and defended my country. But I also did your father a great favor, when he was in danger after the battle of Salamis. I informed him that the Greeks were planning to destroy his bridge over the Hellespont and cut off his escape route. Now I am hunted by all Greece and ask your help. If I receive it, I promise to fight as well with you as I did earlier against your father. One small condition is attached: that you allow me one year to settle my affairs and then grant me an audience."

10. Artaxerxes admired the character of Themistocles and was anxious to have him as an advisor. Throughout the allotted year Themistocles studied the Persian language, so that when it came time for his audience with the king, he spoke better Persian than those who had been born in Persia. Themistocles promised many things to the king, but one stipulation was especially pleasing: he promised to subdue Greece and bring it into the Persian empire. Artaxerxes was taken with Themistocles and settled him in Magnesia, which city was then given to Themistocles (as the king said) that he might have bread. Themistocles netted fifty talents a year from the region. The king also gave him Lampsacus that he might have wine and Myus that he might have meat.

Two monuments to Themistocles survive: a sepulchre near Athens in which he was buried, and statues in the forum at Magnesia. Many historians have given various versions of how Themistocles died, but again I will follow Thucydides, who says that he died of some disease at Magnesia. Thucydides adds, however, that there were rumors that he took poison because he was despondent over his inability to subjugate Greece as he had promised. Thucydides is also my source for reporting that the bones of Themistocles were buried secretly in Attica by friends, since the law did not allow the burial of a traitor.

Ω



Aristides

(520-468 B.C.)

1. Aristides, son of Lysimachus, was a compatriot and contemporary of Themistocles and vied with him for political honors. In the contest between them it became clear that the power of speech won out over unselfishness and integrity, and although Aristides alone in the history of man was given the official name of "the Just," Themistocles overthrew him and caused him to be ostracized for ten years. When Aristides realized that the mass of people voting on the proposal of his ostracism were in a frenzy and unable to be controlled, he retreated somewhat, where he noticed a man voting for ostracism. Aristides is said to have asked that man why he was casting his ballot against him and what offense he had done that he should be worthy of this punishment. The man answered that he did not know Aristides but that he could never like anyone who strove to rise above the rest and be called "the Just." Aristides was not ostracized for the full ten-year term, but was recalled home after six years, when Xerxes invaded Greece.

2. Aristides was present at the naval victory in the straits of Salamis, although he was still under sentence of ostracism. Having won a reprieve of his sentence, he was given command of the Athenian wing at the battle of Plataea, in which Mardonius and the Persian army were destroyed. While no one deed other than this one command are noted in the war annals,¹ many records of his justice, fairness, and

1. Aristides was one of the generals of the victorious Athenians at Marathon.



Alcibiades
(450-404 B.C.)

1. The Athenian Alcibiades, son of Clinias, seems to have been born the play-thing of nature. All historians agree that at his best no one was better, but at his worst no man was more evil. During the time Athens was supreme in the Greek world, he was born to a noble family and then grew into the most handsome man of his day. He had a great ability for drawing up military plans and was a first rate commander both on land and sea. After prolonged study he became a convincing speaker and was easily capable of moving the people and the legislature. Born to wealth, he could be hardworking, patient, generous, distinguished in public and in private. He was affable and a true child of expediency. When he relaxed or when no pressing matter took his attention, he grew so extravagant, reckless, lecherous, and immodest that the people around him could not help but wonder at the split personality and dichotomous nature.

2. Alcibiades was brought up in the house of Pericles, who some say was his step-father, and schooled at the feet of Socrates. Hipponicus, the wealthiest of all the Greeks, was his father-in-law. If Alcibiades himself had planned his birth and station in life, he could not have found better surroundings or relatives with more money and prestige. In his youth he had many male lovers, among whom was Socrates. Plato records a story in his *Symposium* where he has Alcibiades say that he spent the night with Socrates and arose in the morning as he would have from his own father's bed. As a young man he continued to have male lovers, some of whom he treated ill but many with affection and kindness. I would relate some instances of these, had I not more important things to set down.

3. On the advice and urging of Alcibiades, the Athenians declared war on Syracuse. Alcibiades was named commander-in-chief, and Nicias and Lamachus were sent along as his lieutenants. While preparations were being made and before the fleet had set sail, a scandal broke out in Athens when at night all the statues of Hermes except one before the house of Andocides (later called the Hermes of Andocides) were defaced. Many thought it a large, well organized conspiracy directed at the state, and became afraid of a sudden attempt to destroy their liberty. Suspicion fell immediately on Alcibiades because he was considered the most powerful private citizen, who had won over many friends by his generous gifts and help in settling legal matters. Whenever he appeared in public, everyone recognized him and many stared. No one was quite his equal. The people had both the greatest hope in him and fear of him, because he was capable of doing both the highest good and lowest evil. Damaging rumors circulated that he had celebrated the Eleusinian mysteries in his own house (forbidden according to Athenian custom), and under the cover of these celebrations had plotted against the state.

4. In the assembly Alcibiades was accused by his enemies of sacrilege. Even though the commencement of the military operations in Sicily was approaching, Alcibiades did not wish to leave Athens and be tried in absentia. Because he knew too well the fickle nature of the Athenians, he asked to be tried immediately, if at all. But his enemies recognized the power of his popularity and decided to wait until he had departed before bringing formal charges. When they were confident that he had arrived in Sicily, they obtained an indictment against him on a charge of sacrilege, and sent a messenger to Sicily to instruct him to return home and present himself in court for trial. Although he was in the process of setting up a good provincial government, he obeyed the summons and boarded the ship which had been sent to convey him home. After the ship had put into the harbor at Thurii in southern Italy, Alcibiades collected his thoughts and determined that, in view of the fickleness of the mob and their hatred of aristocrats, it would be the best thing to avoid the imminent storm in Athens. He escaped from his guards and traveled first to Elis, then to Thebes. When he learned that he had been condemned to death in absentia, his property confiscated, the Eumolpidae priests¹ forced to curse him, and that the

1. The Eumolpidae were the priests in attendance at the Eleusinian Mysteries.

curse had been set in a stone monument to be preserved for all time, he fled to Sparta. At Sparta Alcibiades often said that he was not fighting Athens, but only personal enemies, because they were also enemies of Athens. He accused them of exiling him merely to further their own aims and not the good of Athens. On his advice the Spartans made a pact with the Persians and fortified the city of Decelea in Attica just north of Athens. This latter maneuver effectively placed Athens in a perpetual state of siege. Alcibiades also effected a truce between Ionia and Sparta, enticing Ionia to desert Athens. Employing the strategy of Alcibiades Sparta quickly gained the upper hand in the Peloponnesian war.

5. The successes of Alcibiades made him more an object of fear than of veneration. Recognizing his outstanding abilities, the leaders at Sparta were afraid that he might have a change of heart, desert them, and return to Athens. In view of this they determined to assassinate him. Alcibiades was too astute, however, to be trapped by the Spartans, especially since he was continually on his guard. Before the Spartans could act, he fled to Tissaphernes, a satrap of the Persian king, Darius. From his vantage point in Asia as friend of Tissaphernes, he could see how much the situation in Athens had deteriorated and how strong Sparta had grown. He therefore made overtures for his return to Greece to Pisander, commander of the Greek army on Samos. Pisander was well disposed to Alcibiades, because he shared Alcibiades' aristocratic leanings and fear of democracy. But after negotiations with Pisander failed, Alcibiades came to an agreement with Thrasybulus, son of Lycus, and was appointed a commander of the army on Samos. Then by a vote of the Athenian people at the urging of Theramenes, he was given his civil rights and named general with Thrasybulus and Theramenes. The return of Alcibiades so shook the confidence of the victorious Spartans that they sued for peace. In five land battles and three naval engagements, in which two hundred triremes fell to the Athenians, the men of Athens gained the advantage. The Athenian commanders recovered Ionia, the Hellespont, and many Greek cities lying on the coast of Asia. Although some cities like Byzantium were taken by storm, many cities were brought into the Athenian sphere by negotiations and a show of clemency. With the war spoils of many great victories the commanders increased the pay of the soldiers and returned home.

6. Almost the entire population of Athens went to the port city of Piraeus in hope of welcoming Alcibiades home. They had come to see only him, as if the other two commanders had done nothing. The people credited him with the recent victories and blamed themselves for the earlier loss of Sicily and for Spartan victories, because they had expelled him. Such reasoning was based on the fact that after the return of Alcibiades, the Athenians became invincible on land and sea. Although Theramenes and Thrasybulus were also at the Piraeus, the people flocked around Alcibiades and presented him with gold and bronze crowns, an action unprecedented in Athenian history. Such crowns had always been reserved for Olympic victors. With tears streaming down his face over the release of tensions from past animosity, he accepted the good wishes of his fellow Athenians. In an assembly called later Alcibiades spoke with such emotion that all regretted his expulsion and pledged themselves to be enemies of those who had exiled him. They acted as though they were not the same people who had condemned him for sacrilege. His confiscated property was returned, and the Eumolpidae priests were forced to rescind their curse and see to it that the monuments displaying the curse were thrown into the sea.

7. The charismatic spell of Alcibiades did not last long. Because his performance in besieging Cyme in Asia was less than spectacular, he again fell into displeasure. After the above honors had been conferred on him, he had been appointed commander-in-chief at home and abroad, and was given Thrasybulus and Adimantus as lieutenants for the naval expedition to Asia. Since the Athenians thought he could work any miracle he set his mind to, they considered even a small failure an act of negligence. So it happened that they accused him of treason with the Persian king because he failed to crush Cyme. Personally, I think that his reputation for genius and virtue was the cause of his downfall, for he became hated no less than earlier he was loved. Many people were afraid that his continued successes would lead him to try for the dictatorship. For all of these reasons the leaders of Athens removed him from command and appointed another general.² Alcibiades decided not to return home, but instead settled in Pactye, where he fortified three camps, Orni, Bizanthe, and Neontichus. With a local levy of troops he became the first man of any Greek state to

2. Conon.

invade that part of Thrace. Rather than make war on other Greeks, he considered it more glorious to enrich himself with the plunder of barbarian states. His reputation and wealth increased apace until he was able to contract many treaties with rulers in Thrace.

8. Despite the hatred of many Athenians, Alcibiades remained a loyal subject of Athens and attempted to bring her aid in the struggle against Sparta. At this time (406 B.C.) Philocles, the Athenian commander, was deploying his fleet in the Dardanelles at the mouth of the Aegospotami in preparation for battle with the Spartan commander, Lysander, who was operating in the same area. Lysander was in no hurry to force battle, because he knew that, while the Spartan army was well supplied, the Athenians were suffering serious shortages and had few supplies besides their arms and ships. Once he had analyzed the situation, Alcibiades made an appearance before the Athenian army, to which he announced that, if they wished, he would force Lysander to fight immediately or to sue for peace. He explained that the Spartans did not wish to fight a naval battle because of their superiority on land. It would, however, be easy for him to bring Seuthes, king of the Thracians, onto the scene to drive the Spartans out. Once Seuthes had defeated the Spartan army, Lysander would be forced to fight on the sea or conclude the war. Although Philocles knew that Alcibiades had advised well, he refused to follow his suggestions out of fear of being overshadowed by the more colorful Alcibiades. Furthermore, while any credit for success would surely go to Alcibiades, the blame for failure would rest on his own shoulders. Alcibiades did not force the issue, but as he retired he added a small piece of advice: "Since you do not care to fight to win, I urge that you keep the sailors' camp far from the camp of the enemy, lest the lack of discipline among the Athenian sailors give Lysander an opportunity to attack your troops." The sound advice fell on deaf ears, for when Lysander learned that the body of the Athenian troops had gone ashore to forage and had left the ships with only skeleton crews, he attacked and put an end to the war in one battle.

9. With his sworn enemies, the Spartans, in control of Greece, Alcibiades thought it best to seek safety in a foreign land, and decided to hide in eastern Thrace north of the Propontis, a desolate land capable of swallowing a man. The Thracians, however, learned of his vast wealth, set a trap, and robbed him. He escaped with his life, and,

realizing that no place near Greece was safe because of the power of the Spartans, fled to Pharnabazus in Asia. The personality of Alcibiades totally captivated the Asianic ruler, who invited him to join his inner circle, and gave him Grynium, a city in Phrygia, from which Alcibiades realized a yearly income of fifty talents. The thought of Sparta treating Athens like a slave did not allow Alcibiades to endure long the present arrangement. With his whole mind and body he turned to plans for freeing Greece. The cornerstone of the plan would be the Persian king, with whose aid he would attack Sparta. Alcibiades was confident that if he could only gain an audience with the Persian king, he could convince him of his friendship. It had come to the attention of Alcibiades that Cyrus, the king's brother, was plotting with the Spartans to make war on the king. Alcibiades was sure that the king would amply reward him when informed of Cyrus' treason.

10. While Alcibiades was seeking a safe conduct pass from Pharnabazus to see the king, Critias and others of the Thirty Tyrants at Athens sent messengers to Lysander in Asia to inform the Spartan that, unless he killed Alcibiades, none of the specifications of the previous Spartan-Athenian peace treaty would be valid. If Lysander wished his arrangements to be approved, he was told he must dispose of Alcibiades. Lysander was stunned by the turn of events and decided to deal directly with Pharnabazus. The Spartan delivered an ultimatum to Pharnabazus: bring in Alcibiades dead or alive, or the secret negotiations with the Persians would be ended. Political expediency demanded that Pharnabazus continue to receive Spartan help and violate his friendship with Alcibiades. He therefore dispatched Susamithres and Bagaesus to assassinate Alcibiades, who was still in Phrygia making preparations to see the king. Secretly they came to the place where Alcibiades was staying and let out a contract to kill him. The natives, not daring to attack him face to face and not trusting themselves in hand to hand combat, piled wood around his house and tried to burn him to death. Aroused by the sound of flames he snatched the sword of his faithful Arcadian comrade (his own sword had been removed), and throwing what clothes he had into the fire before himself, ordered his comrade to follow. When the barbarians saw that he had escaped, they stood off a safe distance and killed him with darts. After they had cut off his head and sent it to Pharnabazus, Alcibiades' mistress covered his corpse with her own clothes and cremated him in the fires of his house, fires meant to kill him. In such a manner Alcibiades met his end at the age of forty.

11. Most historians malign Alcibiades. I, however, follow three serious historians who do not: Thucydides, his contemporary, Theopompus, born a little later, and Timaeus. Although the latter two seldom have a kind word for anyone, they both agree in praising him. Permit me to add just a few more notes from them about Alcibiades. He was born at Athens, the most magnificent city of the time, and still managed to surpass all men in sumptuous living and grandeur. After he had been exiled and had taken residence in Thebes, he devoted himself so entirely to the propensities of those people, that he excelled all in the manly arts. (Boeotians attached much more importance to physical fitness than quickness of the mind.) For his stay among the Spartans, who place utmost stress on physical endurance, he practiced such physical austerity that he outdid the Spartans in frugality of both food and clothes. While he lived among the Thracians, who are given over to excessive drinking and licentiousness, he surpassed them in their own national customs. The Persians, who are noted for their hunting and luxurious living, were forced to admire his hunting ability and style of living. Because of such things, he was held in the highest respect wherever he went.

But enough of this. I must go on to others.

Ω



On Kings

1. Except for the kings in Greece this has been almost a complete list of noteworthy Greek leaders. I do not want to write of the kings, because they have been treated elsewhere and are not many in number. The Spartan Agesilaus was king in name only, as were the other Spartan kings.

Of those who had real despotic power I think Cyrus and Darius, son of Hystaspes, both Persians, excelled all others. Both ascended the throne by merit; Cyrus fell in battle with the Massagetae, and Darius died peacefully in old age. I suppose I should mention three other Persians: Xerxes and the two Artaxerxes, Macrochir and Mnemon. Xerxes is best known for raising the greatest land and sea forces ever seen and leading them against Greece. In addition to possessing a stout and handsome body Macrochir displayed great personal bravery on the battlefield. Mnemon was famous for filial piety and a sense of right and wrong. Though his mother had poisoned his wife, he restrained himself and refused to repay her in kind. Both Artaxerxes died after disease and illness, while Xerxes met his end on the battlefield at the hands of Artabanus, one of the Persian governors.

2. Macedonia produced two outstanding leaders: Philip, the son of Amyntas, and Alexander the Great. Alexander fell victim to a fever in Babylon, and Philip was murdered by Pausanias at Aegae near the theatre on his way to see the games. Epirus had one great leader, Pyrrhus, who fought against the Romans and was killed by a missile as he besieged the city of Argos in the Peloponnesus.¹ Dionysius the Elder

1. In his *Life of Pyrrhus* Plutarch records that an old woman killed Pyrrhus with a roof tile, when she saw him attack her son.

of Sicily, a brave and clever general, was neither wanton nor greedy (uncommon in an absolute ruler), but, because of his desire for absolute control, became cruel. Anyone who dared stand in his way or was suspected of doing so, was eliminated. He built his kingdom skillfully and held it through amazingly good fortune. At the height of his power and having passed the age of sixty, he died. Throughout his long life he never had to bury one of his children or grandchildren, though he had many children from his three wives and from his children, many grandchildren.

3. Among Alexander's generals and friends were many who carved kingdoms out of his empire: Antigonus and his son Demetrius, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy. Antigonus attacked the combined forces of Seleucus and Lysimachus and in doing so lost his life. After the alliance of Seleucus and Lysimachus had been dissolved, Seleucus killed Lysimachus in battle. Demetrius gave his daughter in marriage to Seleucus, but these family ties were not strong enough to prevent an intra-family war, in which the father-in-law was captured and imprisoned by the son-in-law. Demetrius became ill in prison and died there. Not much later Seleucus was murdered by Ptolemy Ceraunus, whom he had taken into his house after his father had exiled him from Alexandria and sent him away penniless and defenseless. After Ptolemy had given over his kingdom to his own son and gone into retirement, he was murdered by him.

Enough of these rulers. I must now pass on to the two greatest leaders ever to come from Africa, Hamilcar and Hannibal.

Ω



Hamilcar (d. 228 B.C.)

1. The Carthaginian, Hamilcar Barca, son of Hannibal, though still a young man, took command of the army in Sicily toward the end of the First Punic War. With Hamilcar's promotion to supreme commander, the tide which had been running against the Carthaginians was halted. He refused to yield any ground or give the enemy an opportunity to strike at him. Whenever the chance arose, he struck at the enemy and always withdrew with the advantage. While all other Carthaginian commanders were retreating before the Romans, he alone withstood them, and defended Eryx so well that the whole area seemed to be at peace. While this took place at Eryx, D. Lutatius, the Roman Consul, defeated the Carthaginian fleet near the Aegates Islands off Sicily. The defeated nation decided to sue for peace and placed Hamilcar in charge of the details of the treaty. Though he himself was eager to fight on, he decided to seek peace terms because he saw Carthage bankrupt, exhausted from many years of fighting, and unable to continue. The thought always remained, however, in the back of his mind that, if Carthage would recover only some of her strength, he would again attack Rome and decide the issue once and for all on the field of battle. Hamilcar refused to surrender unconditionally, to retreat with all his men from Eryx, and retire from Sicily, as Catulus demanded. He swore he would sooner die than suffer Catulus' ignominious peace terms: surrender of all arms. Arms, after all, were intended to kill the enemy. Catulus finally yielded to the stubborn Hamilcar.

2. But when Hamilcar returned to Carthage, he found it entirely different from what he had hoped. The long years of foreign wars had

caused such civil strife to break out that Carthage fought for her very life. In the first place, 20,000 mercenary veterans of the First Punic War had revolted, won over the rest of Africa, and were attacking Carthage itself. The situation became so desperate that Carthage asked and received aid from Rome, and in the eleventh hour once again made Hamilcar commander-in-chief. He not only lifted the siege from Carthage but attacked the 100,000 plus enemy troops and encircled them. Once trapped, more enemy soldiers died of starvation than by Hamilcar's sword. All of the cities, including Utica and Hippo, the strongest in Africa, which had defected from Carthage, were returned to her as satellite states. Nor was he satisfied with the state of affairs; he actually extended the old boundaries of Carthaginian influence and brought about a *Pax Carthagensis*.

3. Once affairs had been settled in Africa to his satisfaction, he turned with unabated hatred toward the Romans. That he might the more easily find a pretext for war, he had himself appointed commander of an expeditionary force to Spain. Hannibal, his nine year old son, accompanied him on the journey along with Hasdrubal, who, it was rumored, was Hamilcar's fair-haired boy-love. But I do not put much stock in that story. The prefect of public morals heard the rumor and forbade Hamilcar to associate with the youth. Hamilcar countered the prefect's order by giving his daughter in marriage to Hasdrubal. No law could separate a father-in-law from his son-in-law. I make mention of Hasdrubal, because after the death of Hamilcar, he took command of the army and acquitted himself admirably. He also made bribery part of the standard operating procedure of a Carthaginian general. After his death, Hannibal took command of the army.

4. But back to Hamilcar. After bringing his army by sea to Spain, he met with success after success: he defeated the greatest and most warlike nations in Spain, and with such spoils as horses, army, and slaves, made Africa rich. Nine years after he had set foot in Spain he prepared to turn his war machine against the Romans, but was killed in a battle against the Vettones, before he could set his plans into motion. The cause of the Second Punic War can be laid directly to Hamilcar's excessive hatred of Rome. By instilling this same hatred in Hannibal he put the youth in such a frame of mind that he would rather die than not make an attempt to crush Rome.



Hannibal (247-182 B.C.)

1. Hannibal was born at Carthage, the son of General Hamilcar. Most people agree that as Roman arms are superior to all others in strength so Hannibal was superior to all other generals in strategy. He defeated every Roman army ever to oppose him in Italy and would have overrun the entire Italian peninsula by himself, had it not been for the alienation and spite of politicians in Carthage. Hamilcar had left his son a legacy of such bitterness toward Rome that even though exiled from Carthage and forced to seek foreign help, he relentlessly worked against the interests of Rome.

2. Far away at the court of King Philip V and later with King Antiochus, who was the strongest ruler in the East, Hannibal sowed seeds of hate toward Rome and so aroused Antiochus that he made preparations to move his army from the Persian Gulf toward Italy. Roman legates were sent to King Philip to learn Hannibal's intentions and to try by all means to make the king suspicious of Hannibal, and further to make him believe they had successfully bribed Hannibal to switch allegiances. When Hannibal learned he had lost King Philip's confidence and consequently was excluded from his councils, he fled at the first opportunity to Antiochus, where he explained his innate implacability toward Rome: "When I was only nine years old," he said, "my father, Hamilcar, asked me if I would like to accompany him to Spain. At that time he was performing certain sacrifices to Jupiter Optimus Maximus prior to leaving Carthage. I, of course, readily accepted and, in fact, pressured him into reassuring me that he would

not change his mind. He replied in this way: 'I will take you along, if you promise to do what I ask.' Leading me to the sacrificial altar he placed my hands on it and ordered me to pledge that I would never befriend the Romans. Up to this very day I have kept that oath to my father, and there is no reason to believe I will not do the same in the future. Therefore, King Antiochus, if you are planning to make an alliance with Rome, you would do well to hide it from me. On the other hand, if you are making preparations for war with Rome, you would be well advised to appoint me commander-in-chief of the army."

3. At the age of nine, as I said before, he set out for Spain with his father. After Hamilcar's death Hasdrubal took command of the army and Hannibal the cavalry. But Hasdrubal was soon killed, and the army, with the approval of the government at Carthage, appointed Hannibal, not yet 25, supreme commander. During the next three years he pacified the many Spanish tribes and even took Saguntum, a protectorate of Rome, by storm. He then raised three field armies, sending one to Africa, leaving another in Spain with his brother Hasdrubal, and leading the last across the Pyrenees toward Italy. All of the peoples along the route of march were brought under Carthaginian control in order to remove any chance of guerrilla action behind the lines. Finally he led his troops across the Alps, which separate Gaul from Italy, and crushed all the Alpine tribes who dared oppose him. No one besides Hercules had ever before led an army across the Alps (from this they are called the Greek Alps). Once he had cleared the area of potential threats, set guards on the roads, and constructed roadways which were able to carry elephants on them as easily as men walked them earlier, he led his troops south into Italy.

4. Along the Rhone he met and defeated P. Cornelius Scipio, the consul. Scipio was defeated a second time by him near the Po river at Clastidium and wounded, and a third time defeated and routed with Tiberius Longus at the river Trebia. On his way through Liguria and the Apennines Hannibal contracted an infection and lost the use of his right eye. Though he was still ill and had to be carried about, he managed to set a trap and destroy the army of C. Flaminius at Lake Trasimenus and shortly thereafter an elite corps of men with their commander C. Centenius. On his march south he was met at Cannae (216 B.C.) by the two Roman consuls, C. Terentius and L. Aemilius Paulus, whom he quickly out-maneuvered and defeated, killing Paulus and several others

of consular rank like Gnaeus Servilius Geminus, the consul for the past year.

5. After Cannae there was no Roman army to oppose Hannibal, who marched toward Rome and camped on the hills just outside the city. For some reason Hannibal quickly withdrew from the vicinity of Rome and would have marched for Capua had Q. Fabius Maximus, newly appointed dictator, not set his army across Hannibal's path in the district of Falernum. Though he was trapped in a narrow defile, Hannibal tricked the very skillful Fabius and successfully extricated his whole army by night: at dusk he had torches, tied to the horns of oxen, set afire; these oxen were then sent stampeding toward the Roman camp. The sight of the fire and the charging oxen so terrified the Romans that none dared venture beyond the ramparts of the camp. Immediately upon that victory Hannibal enticed M. Minucius Rufus, master of the horse and co-equal with Fabius, into battle and destroyed his army. Meanwhile one of Hannibal's lieutenants in Lucania ambushed Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, who was in his second consulship, and wiped out his army; he dealt the same blow to M. Claudius Marcellus, serving his fifth consulship, near Venusia. Because it would be tedious to run through all of Hannibal's victories, let me say one thing, from which everyone can understand how great a man he was: while Hannibal was in Italy, no one could stand up to him on the battlefield, and after Cannae no one camped in the same plain with him.

6. Undefeated he was recalled home to defend his country against P. Cornelius Scipio, the son of the man he had defeated three times, along the Rhone, along the Po, and along the Trebia. Realizing that the resources of his country were severely strained, he decided to scale down the war that he might attack later with renewed vigor. To attain those ends he arranged a conference with Scipio, but they could not agree on terms. A few days later the two leaders met on the battlefield near Zama and, what is almost impossible to believe, Hannibal was defeated (202 B.C.). In two days and nights he retreated 300 miles to Hadrumentum. In the retreat his Numidian allies planned to assassinate him, but in turn were themselves killed. Hannibal escaped their plot, gathered up the remnants of his army, and in a few days had put together a sizable fighting force.

7. All these preparations for counterattack were cut short, when it was announced that the government in Carthage had signed a peace treaty with Rome. Sometime later while Hannibal and his brother Mago were still in command of the army in Africa (in the consulship of P. Sulpicius and C. Aurelius), Carthaginian ambassadors were sent to Rome to negotiate a new treaty: they were to thank the Roman Senate and People for the peace between their countries, present a golden crown, and ask that the Carthaginian hostages be moved to Fregellae and the prisoners of war be returned. All the Carthaginian requests were granted except for the return of the prisoners. The reason given for the refusal was that Hannibal, who had started the war and was Rome's sworn enemy, aided by his brother Mago, was in command of the Carthaginian army. Once the Roman objection was known, the Carthaginians recalled Hannibal and Mago, and appointed Hannibal king, twenty-two years after his elevation to praetor (at Carthage two kings and at Rome two consuls were chosen annually as supreme magistrates). Hannibal attacked domestic problems with the same vigor he displayed in the front line, and set up a new tax structure in such a way that war reparations were paid to Rome according to treaty and surplus funds returned to the treasury. The following year, in the consulship of M. Claudius and L. Furius, Roman ambassadors, who Hannibal thought were sent to demand his surrender to Rome, arrived in Carthage. Before the senate could be convened Hannibal boarded ship and fled to Antiochus in Syria. The Carthaginian officials immediately sent two ships to stop him if possible; in addition they confiscated his property, demolished his house, and sent him to permanent exile.

8. Three years after fleeing Carthage (in the consulship of L. Cornelius and Q. Minucius) he returned with five ships to Africa and landed near Cyrene. The purpose of this journey was to stir Carthage to an alliance with Antiochus, who was now eager to attack Rome. When the Carthaginians learned that Mago had joined Hannibal, they also confiscated his property and condemned him to permanent exile. The brothers soon gave up hope of rousing the Carthaginians, and Hannibal sailed back to Antiochus' court. There are two stories about the death of Mago: one group said he died in a ship wreck, and another that his own servants murdered him. Had Antiochus followed Hannibal's war strategy as closely as he followed his advice about entering the war, he might have fought the decisive battle along the Tiber instead of at

Thermopylae (191 B.C.). Though Hannibal saw Antiochus mismanage many enterprises, he never deserted his cause. As commander of a small fleet, ordered to sail from Syria to Asia, he joined battle with a fleet from Rhodes in the Pamphylian Sea. The fleet of Antiochus was beaten, but Hannibal's squadron was victorious in its own sector.

9. After Antiochus had been defeated by the Romans at Magnesia (190 B.C.), Hannibal fearing that Antiochus would hand him over to the victors fled to Gortyn in Crete to make plans for the future. Hannibal knew well the power of Cretan greed and also knew it was public knowledge he carried a large sum of cash with him. This forced him to devise a plan whereby he could outwit the Cretans: after filling several jugs with lead, he covered them over with gold and silver coins. These he placed in the local treasury in a temple of Diana and pretended to trust local officials to guard them. While the officials were taken in by this stratagem, Hannibal hid the bulk of his money in bronze statues he had with him, and set them out in the courtyard of his house. The people of Gortyn with great care protected the money, more from Hannibal than would-be thieves, lest he try to escape with the cash while they were not watching.

10. Such a scheme successfully outwitted the Cretans and allowed Hannibal to travel to King Prusias in Pontus. Again he stirred up such feelings of hatred toward Rome that Prusias prepared for war. Because Hannibal could see that Prusias had neither powerful armies nor industries, he made alliances with surrounding, warlike nations, except Pergamum and its king, Eumenes, a powerful leader on land and sea and a friend of Rome. Easily and quickly Hannibal transferred his intense animosity to Eumenes, whom he attacked in the hope of somehow weakening the position of Rome. The strength of Eumenes' army and navy gave Hannibal no choice but to try to eliminate his enemy in the up-coming naval battle by foul play. He ordered that as many poisonous snakes as possible be collected and placed in clay jugs. Later at a briefing session for all the ships' captains, he explained the battle-plan: all ships were to concentrate on the flagship carrying Eumenes; only defensive measures, made comparatively safe because of the snakes, should be carried out against the rest of the Pergamese fleet; he would let them know in advance what ship carried Eumenes; finally, he promised lavish gifts to the man or men responsible for the capture or death of Eumenes.

11. After Hannibal's speech the fleets of both sides took up stations. That he might point out clearly which ship was Eumenes' before the battle started, Hannibal sent a herald with a white flag and letter toward the enemy fleet. When the herald approached the ships and indicated he had a message for Eumenes, the enemy sailors, suspecting nothing, quickly directed him to Eumenes' ship. Once he had marked Eumenes' ship, the herald withdrew to his own side. Though Eumenes found nothing in the letter but insults and did not fully understand the situation, nevertheless, he ordered an immediate attack. In accordance with Hannibal's plan the whole Bithynian fleet made a dash for Eumenes' ship. Eumenes saw through the attack and fled ashore where he was protected by strong land forces, placed there to cover such contingencies. The Pergamese fleet, pressing Hannibal's ships hard on every side, quickly became the target for the snake-jars prepared earlier. At first the Pergamese sailors thought it a joke, but once their ships were seething with snakes, they became terrified and at a loss for direction. Soon, however, they wheeled about and headed for the docks. This was not the only time Hannibal defeated his enemies with clever strategies; he performed the same magic with his infantry on many occasions.

12. About this same time at Rome several members of Prusias' delegation were dining at the house of T. Quintius Flamininus, when the subject of Hannibal was brought up. The ambassadors informed Flamininus, who in turn notified the Senate, that Hannibal completely dominated Prusias. The Senate in turn ordered its own delegation, headed by Flamininus, to approach Prusias and ask him to surrender Hannibal. Since Prusias was in no position to refuse the Roman demand, he assented, but on one condition: in order that he not be accused of betraying a friend, the Romans themselves would have to capture Hannibal. It was not hard to find Hannibal, for he had rebuilt a nearby fortification, given him by Prusias. In many locations in this fort Hannibal had added escape doors, fearing that one day he might be trapped. Roman troops surrounded the fort, but were spotted by a young guard, who informed Hannibal that more armed men than usual were about the stronghold. The guard, told to check whether all the exits were blocked or not and report back, confirmed Hannibal's worst fears: it could not have happened by chance. Rather than surrender to their tender mercy, and considering his honor as a soldier, he swallowed the poison that was his ever present companion.

13. In view of his difficult life and the dangers to which he was exposed, it is hard to believe that Hannibal survived into his seventieth year. The exact date of his death is a matter of some controversy: in his *Annals* Atticus records Hannibal's death in the consulship of M. Claudius Marcellus and Q. Fabius Labeo (183 B.C.); Polybius during the consulship of L. Aemilius Paulus and Gnaeus Baebius Tamphilus (182 B.C.); Sulpicius Blitho during the consulship of P. Cornelius Cethegus and M. Baebius Tamphilus (181 B.C.). Though engaged in almost perpetual wars, Hannibal found time for writing. Some of his works written in Greek, notably that volume addressed to the people of Rhodes concerning the exploits of Gnaeus Manlius Volso in Asia, are extant today. Many historians have written about Hannibal, but two I consider very reliable because they were contemporaries and actually shared the war years with him: Silenus and Sosylus of Sparta. Sosylus taught Hannibal Greek.

Now I must put an end to this discussion of foreign generals and move on to a description of Roman, that when I am finished it might be easier to compare the foreigners with the Romans and determine which side produced the better.

Cato was trying to prolong his own governorship in Spain, and asked that he be removed. Though he was the senate leader, Scipio could not force the senate to give him Cato's position. In those bygone days the senate was ruled by law and order not coercion. Scipio then became so enraged that he refused to perform any more public duties. As censor with his friend Flaccus (184 B.C.) Cato carefully inspected the whole system of nobility and rank, and came down hard on the incipient forms of luxury which were springing up even at that early date. Throughout the eighty-five years of his life he did not hesitate to sponsor unpopular legislation, when it was for the good of the state. Politicians and others attacked him, some personally, but his reputation never ceased to grow.

3. Cato approached everything with vigor: he was a knowledgeable farmer, first-rate lawyer, fine general, skilled orator, and friend of literature. He did not apply himself seriously to literature until he was an old man, but when he began to study, nothing in the field of Greco-Roman history eluded him. As a young man he wrote speeches, and in later life wrote a seven volume history: Bk. 1 covered the Roman regal period; Bks. 2-3 dealt with the origins of each of the Italian cities (from this the whole work seems to have been called *On the Origins*); Bk. 4 the First Punic War; Bk. 5 the Second Punic War. These periods were covered cursorily, as were the remaining wars up to the praetorship of Sulpicius Galba, who plundered Lusitania. In describing these later wars he omitted the names of the generals, but decided to include many interesting events from Italian and Spanish history. While the *Origins* displays much hard work and effort, it is lacking in style.

If anyone should desire to know more about the life of Cato, I would like to refer him to my *Life of Cato* which I wrote at the request of T. Pomponius Atticus.

Ω



Atticus (109-32 B.C.)

1. Titus Atticus was a member of the equestrian family named Pomponia, whose history goes back many generations. His father, being a practical man, wealthy for those days, and interested in literature, saw to it that the lad studied writing and philosophy. Not only was Atticus found easy to teach but also to possess a fine speaking style, which easily outclassed that of his noble fellow students. Atticus' classmates, among whom were L. Torquatus, C. Marius Jr., and Marcus Cicero, respected his genius and were inspired by him to work harder. Later these same classmates were attracted to Atticus because of the warmth of his friendship.

2. As a young man, now bereft of his father, Atticus was embroiled in partisan politics which became deadly serious with the murder of the tribune P. Sulpicius, whose brother, Servius, was married to Atticus' cousin, Anicia. After the death of Sulpicius, Cinna kept the city in such a state of turmoil that Atticus, rather than choose sides between Cinna and Sulla and thereby offend many people, wisely decided to pursue higher education in Athens. Though somewhat pressed and far from home, he generously aided the younger Marius, who had been declared a public enemy and was on the run. Like a good Roman he carefully oversaw his property, and to keep his estate intact sent the bulk of his fortune to Athens. To the Athenians he became a truly welcome visitor, interested though a youth in the affairs of Athens, and willing to aid even the public treasury. When Athens found it necessary to borrow money but could not obtain suitable interest rates, Atticus time and

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time again loaned it the money, interest free and with stipulated time payments. Such conditions of repayment endeared Atticus to the whole city because his sound fiscal policy kept the municipal debt from growing and his interest free loan gave them a breathing space to repay. The men of Athens received another kind of aid from him: each was given six measures (Greek term is "medimnus") of wheat.

3. Though a nobleman, who never forgot his station for a moment, Atticus had many dealings with the common people. The city in turn gave him all possible honors and asked him to become an Athenian citizen. This last and highest honor he declined because it was generally felt that Roman citizenship was exclusive. While in Athens, he allowed no statue to be erected to him; it was a different story when he was gone. Within many sacred precincts statues were set up to him and Pilia,¹ for the people saw him as their patron and savior. Atticus was judged fortunate on two accounts: he was born and had his home in Rome, the master of the Mediterranean world; then wisely he chose Athens, ancient and enlightened above all others, to be his second home.

4. On his way home from Asia, Sulla stopped over in Athens and was so taken by the good manners and keen intellect of Atticus that he attached him to his retinue. Atticus spoke Greek like a native, and the polished style of his Latin made it clear he had not learned it from a book. Reading aloud from Greek and Latin poets was Atticus' forte. Sulla tried to induce him to return with him to Rome but was gently rebuffed: "I cannot go home and fight with you against my old friends; to avoid such strife was the reason I left Rome in the first place." Sulla admired his integrity and ordered all the gifts given him by Athenians to be taken to Atticus' house.

In the meantime Atticus religiously attended to the affairs of his family estates, and at the same time devoted many hours each day to literature and the improvement of the city of Athens. He also kept an eye on Roman politics and aided his friends in Roman elections, showing up in Rome when important matters were before the legislature. When Cicero fell from favor and all others deserted the great orator, Atticus came to his rescue with 250,000 sesterces. Several years later when Rome was at last free of civil war, he returned home (I think

1. wife of Atticus.

it was in the consulship of L. Cotta and L. Torquatus).² As Atticus departed from Athens, most of the people, with tears in their eyes from a terrible sense of loss, came to bid farewell.

5. Atticus had a rich uncle by the name of Q. Caecilius, who was a member of the equestrian order, a friend of L. Lucullus, and a very ill-tempered man. But Atticus, alone of all the relatives, learned to humor the old man and remained in his good graces right up to the time he wrote his will, in which he adopted Atticus and left him three-fourths of his entire estate. The reward for his patience and good manners amounted to 10,000,000 sesterces. Ever since school Cicero had been much closer to Atticus than to his own brother Quintus, for the two men of letters had more in common than the two brothers. Later Cicero arranged for the marriage of his brother to Atticus' sister. Atticus was also on the friendliest terms with Hortensius, who after Cicero was the greatest orator of the day. One normally would have expected jealousies to arise among such men, but Atticus provided the stabilizing influence needed to keep the three good friends.

6. By keeping aloof from party struggles Atticus seemed always to favor the best causes, generally those of the aristocrats. He refused to join in inter-party quarrels because he said their participants were like an unruly mob incapable of controlling their own actions. Because of his generosity and good name, he could have sought public office, but since no one obeyed the old election laws or carried elections according to age-old customs, but bribed his way to victory, Atticus abstained from the public arena. Furthermore, an uncorrupted statesman ran too many personal risks. Next I would like to list a few of his public virtues: he never submitted bids on confiscated property or government contracts or offered surety for such contracts; not once did he ever sue a man over property rights or bring legal actions against anyone; he accepted posts under provincial administrators, but remained in Rome and refused to take part in the general exploitation and open theft of provincial treasures. When offered the job of legate in Asia under his brother-in-law, Quintus, he declined, saying it would be unseemly for him to take the position of a praetor's lieutenant after he had turned down the offer of the praetorship. Such actions allowed him to remain

2. A good example of Nepos' lack of interest in precise dates. Had he so desired, he could have confirmed the date by asking Atticus.

uncompromised and lead a peaceful life above suspicion. And so it happened that all men knew that favors from Atticus came from the heart, and not from fear or hope of gain.

7. When he was sixty, civil war broke out between Pompey and Caesar. Citing old age as an excuse, Atticus refused to leave Rome, but did give money and assistance to friends who fled the city on their way to Pompey, who happened to be a personal friend. Because Atticus had never taken favors, offices, or money as others had done from Pompey, he could gracefully refuse to support openly Pompey's cause. Many men indebted to Pompey went to his camp unwillingly, while others, also deeply indebted to Pompey, turned their back on him and remained in Rome. Atticus' neutrality brought rich rewards later, when Caesar defeated Pompey and did not confiscate Atticus' property, as he did the property of many of Pompey's supporters. Atticus' old habits of avoiding party politics again saved him from troubles and in addition won the release of his nephew and Quintus, whom Caesar had captured in Pompey's camp.

8. After the death of Caesar, Rome appeared to be in the power of his assassins, Brutus³ and Cassius. Though a young man, Brutus preferred the company of the elderly Atticus, listening to his counsel and inviting him frequently to his house. During this time someone thought it would be most useful if funds were raised to aid the assassins: the whole amount could be realized if just the leading knights would contribute. C. Flavius, a friend of Brutus, called on Atticus and asked him to be the first to pledge funds. Atticus replied that help would always be given to friends, but only for causes above party politics and surely not the kind he had in mind; if Brutus wished any help from him, he could have it, but in regard to this scheme he would refuse to give Brutus counsel or join in with others to support him. The refusal of Atticus to give money to this committee spelled its immediate doom. Later when Brutus and Cassius fled to the provinces given them by some consular whim,⁴ and were in despair in the face of Mark Antony's rising power, Atticus gave Brutus 100,000 sesterces as a gift, money he had refused to give earlier when Brutus was in power. Later he sent Brutus 300,000 sesterces in Epirus. Atticus did not cower

3. Nepos actually mentions both Brutuses, Marcus and Decimus.

4. In *Atticus* 8.5 I delete *destituta tutela* from the text.

before Antony when he became ruler in Rome or desert Brutus when in exile.

9. After Antony had defeated Brutus and Cassius at Philippi, he became entangled in a battle at Mutina. Throughout the latter battle Atticus conducted himself very prudently – but prudently is not the half of it. Rather I should say he acted as though guided by heaven, keeping an even temper at all times. In consequence of his actions at Mutina Antony was declared outlawed, forced to flee Italy, and given no hope of possible pardon. Antony's personal enemies, who were many and mighty, and his political opponents joined forces in attacking him in hope of gaining some advantage: they moved against his friends, tried to wrest all property from his wife, Fulvia, and even made plans to murder his children. Though Atticus had been a friend of many of Antony's enemies, Cicero and Brutus to be sure, he not only refused to help them destroy Antony, but as far as he was able, helped Antony's friends flee Rome and gave them shelter and cash. Atticus became a second father to P. Volumnius, and a gallant gentleman to Fulvia. Antony's enemies hounded Fulvia day and night, threatening her life and bringing criminal suits against her. Consistently Atticus intervened and appeared with her in court to answer all charges. One example of his help: in more happy days Fulvia had bought an estate with the understanding of payment by a certain date. When she could not raise the money because of Antony's banishment, Atticus loaned her the funds interest free and without specified time payments. It was better he said to be a gentleman, a friend to those in need, than an opportunist. No one suspected a base motive, and no one, including Atticus, could have known that Antony would return to power. Though some of the aristocrats felt compelled to criticize him for protecting the "other" element of Roman society, he observed that his conscience was a better guide than advice resting in vested interests.

10. When fickle fate returned Antony to power in Italy, most men thought that Atticus, because of his friendship for Cicero and Brutus, would fall victim to Antony's revenge. Atticus too feared a general pogrom and quit the Forum at the approach of Antony and his men, and sought refuge together with Q. Gellius Canus in the house of P. Volumnius, who (as I said above) had earlier been aided by Atticus. Fortunes changed so quickly during this time that it became almost impossible to keep track who was in power and who out. The ability of

Atticus to get along with people is ably demonstrated in his relationship with Canus, whom he knew in school, associated with throughout his life, and was on the best of terms at his death. Antony's hatred of Cicero and his friends led to their proscription, a mass murder which had much popular support. But Atticus was spared and because of him Canus also, for Antony remembered past favors. In fact, Antony himself wrote Atticus urging him to allay his fears and come to him at once, and lest some unforeseen danger befall him that night, sent a guard for his protection. Atticus thus proved capable of saving not only himself, but also his dearest friend, a man whose fate was closely tied to his. If we honor the captain of a ship for preserving his crew and vessel on a storm-tossed sea, why should we not also honor the man whose ability and foresight have guided his path successfully through the snares and pit-falls of the political jungle?

11. Once Atticus was free of all personal danger, he devoted himself entirely to assisting people in need, especially those men who were proscribed by Antony and hounded by bounty hunters. Atticus' agents in Epirus were instructed to help all proscribed citizens and allow them to reside on his estates as long as they desired. After the death of Brutus and Cassius at Philippi, he continued to support those declared state enemies like L. Julius Mocilla, Mocilla's son, and Aulus Torquatus, and even had provisions moved from Epirus to Samothrace to them. I have no inclination to enumerate all of his acts of kindness. Let me emphasize, however, that his good deeds were done without thought of repayment of any kind, to benefit not the prosperous but the oppressed. Servilia, the mother of Brutus, found Atticus as willing to help her after her son died as before. His generosity was always inoffensive and his very nature inclined toward avoiding injury. Even just grievances were forgotten, never pressed. While he remembered for all time favors done for him, those given by him were freely performed. There is a verse which I think applies very nicely to Atticus:

"The habits of the youth are the distinctions of the man."

By carefully molding his own character he tried to avoid a defect of personality which would harm him in later life.

12. I suppose Atticus' reputation for integrity was partially responsible for leading M. Vipsanius Agrippa, a close friend of the young

Augustus,⁵ to marry his daughter. Agrippa's position of power in the state permitted him to choose any wife, but he desired the closest relationship with Atticus and consequently selected his daughter, a noble young lady of the equestrian order. To be perfectly honest I should add that Antony pushed the wedding. Atticus did not later use his position of influence to acquire wealth. The fact is that he exerted influence only to help friends out of trouble or embarrassing situations. Such actions were unheard of at this time in Rome. Then there is the case of L. Saufeius, a Roman knight, who had been drawn to Athens to study and who had lived with Atticus while there. Because he had valuable estates in Italy he was naturally placed on the proscription list. Again Atticus moved quickly to rescue a friend and save his property from government confiscation. The help given L. Julius Calidus when his name appeared on the proscription list is also worthy of mention. Calidus was, I think, the best living poet after the death of Lucretius and Catullus, and in addition a truly great and learned man. Because of Calidus' vast holdings in Africa P. Volumnius, chief engineer of Antony, ordered him to be proscribed. Though Calidus was absent from Rome at that time, Atticus saw to it that he became exempt from proscription. The extent of Atticus' concern is shown by this last action in which he came to the assistance of a man who was not present to defend himself.

13. In all this I do not want to stress his civic accomplishments to the neglect of his domestic qualities. Atticus was a wealthy man who enjoyed the best of everything but would neither buy or build just for show. The old house of Tamphilus on the Quirinal, left to him by his uncle, became his permanent home. The woods and pleasant surroundings gave the old and unpretentious house a rare grace. Over the years a few changes were necessitated because of fear of structural failure. To judge by their appearances the household slaves were about average, but because of their scholarly abilities, reading and copying, they were easily among the best. Every footman could read and write, the handymen about the house were the finest, and all the slaves were born and educated on the estate. All of this indicates a thoughtful and concerned master. His moderation and diligence was illustrated by his contempt for fads and showy merchandise and by his desire to make do

5. Nepos' text reads *Caesar*; he means the young Octavian, better known to all as Augustus.

rather than buy new. Refined not pompous, conservative not extravagant, he displayed taste not the signs of money. Even his furniture was sparse and uncluttered. It may seem a small thing to many people, but I would like to note that though he was wealthy and put on quite splendid feasts for men of all stations, he never spent more than 3,000 sesterces a month from petty cash for household matters. This is not mere hearsay, for I have dined often with him and know it first hand.

14. The only entertainment which Atticus provided at parties, and which I think to be the best possible, was readings. These were part of every feast and were planned by Atticus to please the intellect as well as the taste buds of guests whose dispositions were close to his. Whenever his personal fortune was enlarged, like the 2,000,000 sesterces his father left him or when it grew by 10,000,000, he in no way changed his daily habits. The moderation of his early life stayed with him until the end. He had no gardens, no suburban or seaside villas, and no rural estates in Italy except at Arretinum and Nomentum. All his income was realized from estates in Epirus and property in Rome. I can safely say that he measured the value of money not by its quantity but by the way it was used.

15. Atticus detested lying and dissimulation; his friendliness was always tempered with some restraint and his seriousness with a little laughter. Because of this it developed that his friends both loved and respected him. He never agreed to do favors unless he could fulfill them, for he considered it thoughtless and cruel to make impossible promises. Once undertaken, all tasks for others were treated as though they were his own and deserving of tireless effort. In all such matters he constantly considered his own reputation, which he held dear. Because he did not enter public service we should not think him lazy. He had chosen other worthwhile work: he handled the affairs of the Ciceros, Marcus Cato, Hortensius, Aulus Torquatus, and many other knights.

16. I can offer no better proof of Atticus' even disposition than that the elderly Sulla enjoyed his youthful friendship and the elderly Atticus was on the best terms with the young Brutus. Added to this, his contemporaries, Hortensius and Cicero, held his friendship dear. In fact Cicero loved Atticus more than his own brother, as you can see from his frequent mention of Atticus in his literary works. Atticus was also the recipient of sixteen books of publishable letters from Cicero which

cover the period from his consulship to his death. Should you choose to read these letters, you would receive a virtually connected history, including discussions of the aims and goals of leaders, their faults, and finally the ups and downs of the republic. The wisdom displayed by Cicero in these letters has proved to be almost divine, for he clearly foresaw the events of his own time and predicted things which we are now seeing develop.

17. Is it really necessary to comment on Atticus' relationship to his family? At the funeral of his mother who was ninety (he was sixty-seven) I heard him remark with pride that it had never been necessary for him to apologize to his mother and that he had never quarreled with his sister, who was almost his age. This confession told me that either there had never been strife in that family or that Atticus displayed unparalleled gentleness toward all those whom it was expected he love. Atticus had not been born thinking this way but had schooled himself to adopt such precepts as the leading philosophers expounded, not merely for show but for spiritual guidance.

18. Atticus stood in awe and reverence of ancient customs and became an antiquarian of such great knowledge that his volume on magistrates abounds in Roman lore. In it are recorded every law, peace treaty, war, and notable action of Rome, and woven together with all this (a most difficult task) is a complete history of Roman families, from which we can trace back and plot the family trees of famous men. At the request of certain people he made complete family trees, noting all family ties, offices held and dates. He did this for the Junian family at the bidding of Brutus, for the family of the Marcelli at the request of C. Claudius Marcellus. Cornelius Scipio and Fabius Maximus asked him to do the same thing for the Aemilii and Fabii respectively. Such records are very important to families who wish to keep the famous deeds of their ancestors ever before their eyes. Atticus put his hand even to poetry (I think to fulfill certain secret desires), which amounted really to political verses extolling the great deeds of famous Romans. Each poem, called an *elogium*, consisting of four or five lines listing the man's accomplishments, was inscribed on the base of the individual's statue. It is hard to believe that he could cram so many facts into so small a space. For his friend Cicero he wrote a book in Greek describing the marvelous way Cicero directed the nation during his consulship (63 B.C.).

19. These first eighteen chapters were written by me while Atticus was still alive. But since he is no longer with us, I will take it upon myself to continue a discussion of his life and, as far as I am able, show the reader what is meant by the saying, "the habits of a man determine his entire future." Atticus was content to remain in the equestrian order, but it so happened that his family married into the imperial family. Before this he had attracted the emperor's attention by the style and grace of his living. This same elegance had also led to friendship with other less wealthy knights. Some of the fame and fortune of the emperor spilled over onto the family of Atticus. From the union of Atticus' daughter and Agrippa was born a granddaughter whom at the age of one the emperor betrothed to Tiberius Claudius Nero, his stepson and the son of Drusilla. This betrothal tied the family of Atticus very closely to that of the emperor.

20. Even before Augustus was related by marriage to Atticus, he sent letters to him from various places in the empire, informing him of his own actions, especially what he was reading, where he was staying and for how long. When Augustus was in Rome but did not have time to see Atticus as frequently as he desired because of pressing empire business, he would write to Atticus asking him about some point of ancient lore, or a difficult passage in a poem, and was not above fooling him into writing a long explanation on nothing at all. It was Atticus who asked Augustus to repair the temple of Jupiter Feretrius on the Capitoline, built originally by Romulus. Mark Antony also wrote to Atticus informing him of what far-off land he was visiting and what he was doing. While it is very difficult to understand how Atticus could hold the friendship and good will of both Augustus and Antony, it does reflect an outstanding personality. Antony and Augustus were vying for power and control of the whole world, and the rivalry between them makes it almost impossible to see how both could be friends of the same man.

21. For seventy-seven years Atticus lived gracefully and with the best reputation, acquiring along the way many legacies which were left him merely because he was a good man. His health was so perfect that in the last thirty years he had not required any medicine. But then he became ill. The doctors and he were not alarmed at all, but thought it a case of tenesmus, for which swift and simple remedies were prescribed. There was no distress (except for the cure) for three months, when

suddenly pains struck his lower bowels, and toward the end of his life a cancerous ulcer perforated his abdomen. Before this happened and when he realized that the pain and fever were worsening, he sent for his son-in-law Agrippa, L. Cornelius Balbus, and Sextus Peducaeus. When they entered his room, he rose in bed and spoke: "You all are my witnesses that I have tried every means to preserve my health, and on that there can be no argument. I am satisfied that there is nothing more I can do for my illness, and so I have reached a decision. I want you to know that I do not mean to continue to feed my illness, for the food I eat merely prolongs my life, increasing my pain without hope of cure. First of all I ask that you approve of my plan and then that you do not try to dissuade me."

22. As he spoke this his voice and expressions were so controlled that he seemed to be talking of going not from life to the hereafter but from one house to another. Tears formed in Agrippa's eyes, he kissed Atticus, and pleaded with him not to rush what nature would take in due course. There was still a chance he could live for some time, and he should try to preserve his life for his relatives as well as himself. Atticus' stern silence forced Agrippa to silence. After two days of fasting the fever lessened, and the sickness seemed less oppressive. Atticus never altered his determination, and after the fifth day, that is the thirty-first of March, in the consulship of Gnaeus Domitius and C. Sosius, he died (32 B.C.). His bier was a simple litter, and he was buried without much pomp, just as he had requested. Most of the aristocrats were there, and many of the commoners put in appearances. At the fifth mile stone along the Appian Way he was buried in the sepulchre of his uncle Q. Caecilius.

CORNELIUS NEPOS

Lives of Famous Men
(de viris illustribus)

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Translated together with an introduction by
Gareth Schmeling

