

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

BOOK VII

CAPUA AND PETELIA

1. THE people of Capua, in Campania, becoming wealthy through the fertility of their soil, degenerated into luxury and extravagance surpassing even the common report about Croton and Sybaris. Being then unable to support their burden of prosperity they called in Hannibal; and were accordingly treated with great severity by Rome. But the people of Petelia maintained their loyalty to Rome and held out so obstinately, when besieged by Hannibal, that after having eaten all the leather in the town, and the bark of all the trees in it, and having stood the siege for eleven months, as no one came to their relief, they surrendered with the entire approval of the Romans. . . . But Capua by its influence drew over the other cities to the Carthaginians. . . .

Capua and Petelia, the contrast of their fortunes.

HIERONYMUS OF SYRACUSE

2. After the plot against Hieronymus, King of Syracuse, Thraso having departed, Zoippus and Andranodorus persuaded Hieronymus to lose no time in sending ambassadors to Hannibal. He accordingly selected Polycleitus of Cyrene and Philodemus of Argos for the purpose, and sent them into Italy, with a commission to discuss the subject of an alliance with the Carthaginians; and at the same time he sent his brothers to Alexandria. Hannibal received Polycleitus and Philodemus with warmth; held out great prospects to the young king; and sent the ambassadors back without delay, accompanied by

Hieronymus succeeded his grandfather Hiero II. in B.C. 216. Under the influence of his uncles, Zoippus and Andranodorus, members of the Council of 15 established by Hiero, Hieronymus opens communications with Hannibal.

the commander of his triremes, a Carthaginian also named Hannibal, and the Syracusan Hippocrates and his younger brother Epicydes. These men had been for some time serving in Hannibal's army, being domiciled at Carthage, owing to their grandfather having been banished from Syracuse because he was believed to have assassinated Agatharchus, one of the sons of Agathocles. On the arrival of these commissioners at Syracuse, Polycleitus and his colleague reported the result of their embassy, and the Carthaginian delivered the message given by Hannibal: whereupon the king

without hesitation expressed his willingness to make a treaty with the Carthaginians; and, begging the Hannibal who had come to him to go with all speed to Carthage, promised that he also would send commissioners from his own court, to settle matters with the Carthaginians.

3. Meanwhile intelligence of this transaction had reached the Roman praetor at Lilybaeum, who immediately despatched legates to Hieronymus, to renew the treaty which had been made with his ancestors. Being thoroughly annoyed with this embassy, Hieronymus said that "He was sorry for the Romans that they had come to such utter and shameful grief¹ in the battles in Italy at the hands of the Carthaginians." The legates were overpowered by the rudeness of the answer: still they proceeded to ask him, "Who said such things about them?" Whereupon the king pointed to the Carthaginian envoys who were there, and said, "You had better convict them, if they have really been telling me lies?" The Roman legates answered that it was not their habit to take the word of enemies: and advised him to do nothing in violation of the existing treaty; for that would be at once equitable and the best thing for himself. To this the king answered that he would take time to consider of it, and tell them his decision another time; but he proceeded to ask them, "How it came about that before his grandfather's death a squadron of fifty Roman ships had sailed as far as Pachynus and then gone back again." The fact was that a short

¹ *κακοί κακῶς*, a phrase at once insulting and vulgar.

time ago the Romans had heard that Hiero was dead; and being much alarmed lest people in Syracuse, despising the youth of the grandson whom he left, should stir up a revolution, they had made this cruise with the intention of being ready there to assist his youthful weakness, and to help in maintaining his authority; but being informed that his grandfather was still alive, they sailed back again. When the ambassadors had stated these facts, the young king answered again, "Then please to allow me too now, O Romans, to maintain my authority by 'sailing back' to see what I can get from Carthage." The Roman legates perceiving the warmth with which the king was engaging in his policy, said nothing at the time; but returned and informed the praetor who had sent them of what had been said. From that time forward, therefore, the Romans kept a careful watch upon him as an enemy.

4. Hieronymus on his part selected Agatharchus, Onesimus, and Hipposthenes to send with Hannibal to Carthage, with instructions to make an alliance on the following terms: "The Carthaginians to assist him with land and sea forces, in expelling the Romans from Sicily, and then divide the island with him; so as to have the river Himera, which divides Sicily almost exactly in half, as the boundary between the two provinces." The commissioners arrived in Carthage: and finding, on coming to a conference, that the Carthaginians were prepared to meet them in every point, they completed the arrangement. Meanwhile Hippocrates got the young Hieronymus entirely into his hands: and at first fired his imagination by telling him of Hannibal's marches and pitched battles in Italy; and afterwards by repeating to him that no one had a better right to the government of all Siciliots than he; in the first place as the son of Nereis daughter of Pyrrhus, the only man whom all Siciliots alike had accepted deliberately and with full assent as their leader and king; and in the second place in virtue of his grandfather Hiero's sovereign rights. At last he and his brother so won upon the young man by their conversation, that he would attend to no one else at all: partly from the natural feebleness of his character, but still more from the ambitious feelings

The treaty with
Carthage.

which they had excited in him. And therefore, just when Agatharchus and his colleagues were completing the business on which they had been sent in Carthage, he sent fresh ambassadors, saying that all Sicily belonged to him; and demanding that the Carthaginians should help him to recover Sicily: while he promised that he would assist the Carthaginians in their Italian campaign. Though the Carthaginians now saw perfectly well the whole extent of the young man's fickleness and infatuation: yet thinking it to be in manifold ways to their interests not to let Sicilian affairs out of their hands, they assented to his demands; and having already prepared ships and men, they set about arranging for the transport of their forces into Sicily.

5. When they heard of this, the Romans sent legates to him again, protesting against his violation of the treaty made with his forefathers. Hieronymus thereupon summoned a meeting of his council and consulted them as to what he was to do. The native members of it kept silent, because they feared the folly of their ruler. Aristomachus of Corinth, Damippus of Sparta, Autonus of Thessaly advised that he should abide by the treaty with Rome. Andranodorus alone urged that he should not let the opportunity slip; and affirmed that the present was the only chance of establishing his rule over Sicily. After the delivery of this speech, the king asked Hippocrates and his brother what they thought, and upon their answering, "The same as Andranodorus," the deliberation was concluded in that sense. Thus, then, war with Rome had been decided upon: but while the king was anxious to be thought to have given an adroit answer to the ambassadors, he committed himself to such an utter absurdity as to make it certain that he would not only fail to conciliate the Romans, but would inevitably offend them violently. For he said that he would abide by the treaty, firstly, if the Romans would repay all the gold they had received from his grandfather Hiero; and secondly, if they would return the corn and other presents which they had received from him from the first day of their intercourse with him; and thirdly, if they would

The king's pretensions rise, and a new arrangement is made with Carthage.

The Romans again remonstrate. Another scene at the Council.

acknowledge all Sicily east of the Himera to be Syracusan territory. At these propositions of course the ambassadors and council separated; and from that time forth Hieronymus began pushing on his preparations for war with energy: collected and armed his forces, and got ready the other necessary provisions. . . .

War with Rome
decided upon.

6. The city of Leontini taken as a whole faces north, and is divided in half by a valley of level ground, in which are the state buildings, the court-houses, and market-place. Along each side of this valley run hills with steep banks all the way; the flat tops of which, reached after crossing their brows, are covered with houses and temples. The city has two gates, one on the southern extremity of this valley leading to Syracuse, the other at the northern leading on to the "Leontine plains," and the arable district. Close under the westernmost of the steep cliffs runs a river called Lissus; parallel to which are built continuous rows of houses, in great numbers, close under the cliff, between which and the river runs the road I have mentioned. . . .

Description of
Leontini, where
Hieronymus was
murdered.
See Livy, 24, 7.

7. Some of the historians who have described the fall of Hieronymus have written at great length and in terms of mysterious solemnity. They tell us of prodigies preceding his coming to the throne, and of the misfortunes of Syracuse. They describe in dramatic language the cruelty of his character and the impiety of his actions; and crown all with the sudden and terrible nature of the circumstances attending his fall. One would think from their description that neither Phalaris, nor Apollodorus, nor any other tyrant was ever fiercer than he. Yet he was a mere boy when he succeeded to power, and only lived thirteen months after. In this space of time it is possible that one or two men may have been put to the rack, or certain of his friends, or other Syracusan citizens, put to death; but it is improbable that his tyranny could have been extravagantly wicked, or his impiety outrageous. It must be confessed that he was reckless and unscrupulous in disposition; still we cannot compare him with either of the tyrants I have named. The fact is that those who write the histories of particular episodes,

Fall of Hierony-
mus, B. C. 214.

having undertaken limited and narrow themes, appear to me to be compelled from poverty of matter to exaggerate insignificant incidents, and to speak at inordinate length on subjects that scarcely deserve to be recorded at all. There are some, too, who fall into a similar mistake from mere want of judgment. With how much more reason might the space employed on these descriptions,—which they use merely to fill up and spin out their books,—have been devoted to Hiero and Gelo, without mentioning Hieronymus at all! It would have given greater pleasure to readers and more instruction to students.

8. For, in the first place, Hiero gained the sovereignty of Syracuse and her allies by his own unaided abilities without inheriting wealth, or reputation, or any other advantage of fortune. And, in the second place, was established king of Syracuse without putting to death, banishing, or harassing any one of the citizens,—which is the most astonishing circumstance of all. And what is quite as surprising as the innocence of his acquisition of power is the fact that it did not change his character. For during a reign of fifty-four years he preserved peace for the country, maintained his own power free from all hostile plots, and entirely escaped the envy which generally follows greatness; for though he tried on several occasions to lay down his power, he was prevented by the common remonstrances of the citizens. And having shown himself most beneficent to the Greeks, and most anxious to earn their good opinion, he left behind him not merely a great personal reputation but also a universal feeling of goodwill towards the Syracusans. Again, though he passed his life in the midst of the greatest wealth, luxury, and abundance, he survived for more than ninety years, in full possession of his senses and with all parts of his body unimpaired; which, to my mind, is a decisive proof of a well-spent life. . . .

Gelo, his son, in a life of more than fifty years regarded it as the most honourable object of ambition to obey his father, and to regard neither wealth, nor sovereign power, nor anything else as of higher value than love and loyalty to his parents. . . .

Gelo, son of Hiero II., associated with his father in the kingdom, B.C. 216. See 5, 88, Livy, 23, 30.

TREATY BETWEEN HANNIBAL AND KING PHILIP V.
OF MACEDON

9. This is a sworn treaty made between Hannibal, Mago, Barmocarus, and such members of the Carthaginian Gerusia as were present, and all Carthaginians serving in his army, on the one part; and Xenophanes, son of Cleomachus of Athens, sent to us by King Philip, as his ambassador, on behalf of himself, the Macedonians, and their allies, on the other part.

Preamble of a treaty made between Philip and Hannibal, by envoys sent after the battle of Cannae.

Ratified subsequently to March 13, B. C. 215.

See Livy, 23, 33-39. Ante 3, 2.

Gods by whom the oath is taken on either side.

The oath is taken in the presence of Zeus, Here, and Apollo: of the god of the Carthaginians, Hercules, and Iolau: of Ares, Triton, Poseidon: of the gods that accompany the army, and of the sun, moon, and earth: of rivers, harbours, waters: of all the gods who rule Carthage: of all the gods who rule Macedonia and the rest of Greece: of all the gods of war that are witnesses to this oath.

Hannibal, general, and all the Carthaginian senators with him, and all Carthaginians serving in his army, subject to our mutual consent, proposes to make this sworn treaty of friendship and honourable good-will. Let us be friends, close allies, and brethren, on the conditions herein following:—

Declaration on the part of Hannibal of the objects of the treaty.

(1) Let the Carthaginians, as supreme, their chief general and those serving with him, all members of the Carthaginian dominion living under the same laws, as well as the people of Utica, and the cities and tribes subject to Carthage, and their soldiers and allies, and all cities and tribes in Italy, Celt-land, and Liguria, with whom we have a compact of friendship, and with whomsoever in this country we may hereafter form such compact, be supported by King Philip and the Macedonians, and all other Greeks in alliance with them.

1st article sworn to by Philip's representative.

(2) On their parts also King Philip and the Macedonians, and such other Greeks as are his allies, shall be supported and protected by the Carthaginians

1st article sworn to by Hannibal

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