

Livy and Roman Virtue

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Keywords

res publica -- "public thing" / republic

fascēs

mos maiorum -- the ways of the majority / ways of the ancestors

libertas -- freedom within the bounds of law

virtus -- manly courage

pietas -- dutiful reverence

auctoritas -- authority; a quality that led others to defer to you voluntarily

iusticia -- justice, fairness, equity

clementia -- clemency

pudicitia -- modesty

castitas -- chastity

exemplum -- "something that was or could be copied; in Latin the word came to mean specifically a famous story or action or character that is held up as a specimen to others." (Kraus and Woodman, *Latin Historians*, 56)

Excerpts from Livy's *The Rise of Rome*:

1. "Nor is there any doubt that the same Brutus, who won so much glory in expelling Superbus, would have done a grievous wrong to the state if out of a premature desire for liberty he had wrested rule from one of the earlier kings...before they [Romans] had become united in spirit by commitment to wives and children and by love for the soil...The nation, not yet grown up, would have been torn apart by dissension." (2.1)
2. "...let him [the reader] follow in his mind how, as discipline broke down bit by bit, morality at first foundered; how it next subsided in ever greater collapse and then began to topple headlong in ruin – until the advent of our own age, in which we can endure neither our vices nor the remedies needed to cure them." (preface)

3. "Recently wealth has brought greed in its train, manifold amusements have led to people's obsession with ruining themselves and with consuming all else through excess and self-indulgence." (preface)
4. "...there has never been any state grander, purer, or richer in good examples, or one into which greed and luxury gained entrance so late..." (preface)
5. "The special and salutary benefit of the study of history is to behold evidence of every sort of behavior set forth as on a splendid memorial; from it you may select for yourself and for your country what to emulate, from it what to avoid..." (preface)
6. "Among the Roman youth there were several of high birth who had lived under the monarchy a more irresponsible and pleasure-seeking life...[and] missed the *license* that had once been theirs, and with everyone now enjoying equal rights they began to complain...that the freedom of others had brought subjection to themselves." (2.3)
7. "...all were painfully aware of Brutus' eyes and expression, for as he fulfilled his duty as a public official the natural feelings of a father could be read in his face." (2.5)
8. "Have a long life and hapless old age brought me to this, to see you in exile and an enemy of your own country as well? How could you bring yourself to lay waste the land in which you were born and brought up? However bitter and disaffected you felt on your way here, why did your anger not fall away as you crossed your country's boundaries? When the city itself stood before your eyes why did you not think to yourself 'Within these walls are hearth and home, my mother, wife, and children?'" (2.40)
9. "If in the whole city no finer, no grander dwelling could be built than the hut of our founder [Romulus], isn't it better to live in huts like shepherds and peasants amid our tutelary deities and the things sacred to us than to go *en masse* into exile [to Veii]? Our ancestors, who were refugees and shepherds, quickly built this city in a place where there was nothing except forests and marshes. Are we loath to rebuild the structures that have burned, which the Capitol and citadel remain untouched, while the temples of the gods still stand?" (5.53)
10. "All the time I was in exile, whenever I thought of my country, I beheld in my mind's eye everything that surrounds us here at this moment: the hills, the plains, the Tiber, the familiar earth and sky, which say my birth and upbringing. It is my fervent wish, citizens, that love for this place will so fill your hearts that you will remain where you are, and that you will not, if you do leave, be wracked by longing, homesick for your native soil. Gods and men chose this place to found a city for excellent reasons..." (5.54)

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