

Account of the Bacchanalia by Livy

Evan T. Sage, trans., *Livy* (London: Heinemann, 1919), 39.1-19 (English only).
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BOOK XXXIX

I. WHILE these things were going on at Rome, if B.C. 187 indeed they did happen that year,¹ both consuls were waging war against the Ligurians.² This enemy was born, as it were, to keep alive the military discipline of the Romans during the intervals between their great wars; nor did any province do more to put an edge to the soldier's courage. For Asia, on account of the pleasantness of its cities and the abundance of its treasures of land and sea and the feebleness of the enemy and the wealth of its kings, made armies richer rather than braver. Especially under the command of Gnaeus Manlius was discipline slackly and indifferently enforced;³ and so a somewhat more difficult advance in Thrace and a rather more effective enemy had taught them a lesson with great slaughter. Among the Ligurians there was everything to keep an army alert—hilly and rough ground, which was difficult both for the men themselves to occupy and to dislodge the enemy who had already occupied it, and roads difficult, narrow, dangerous by reason of ambushades; an enemy lightly equipped, mobile and unexpected in his movements, who permitted no time or place whatever to be quiet or

vi. 5 and vii. 3 below. Its presence here, in contrast with its absence from the preceding Book, may indicate a change of source.

safe; the besieging of fortified points was necessary B.C. 187 and at the same time toilsome and dangerous; the district was poor, which constrained the soldiers to simple living and offered them little plunder. Accordingly, no civilian camp-follower went along, no long train of pack-animals stretched out the column. There was nothing except arms and men who placed all their trust in their arms. Nor was there ever wanting either the occasion or the cause for war with them, because on account of their poverty at home they were constantly raiding their neighbours' lands. And yet the fighting never brought about the final settlement of a campaign.¹

II. The consul Gaius Flaminius, having fought several successful battles with the Ligurian Friniates² on their own soil, received the tribe in surrender and disarmed them. When they were reproved because they did not surrender the arms in good faith, they abandoned their villages and fled to the Auginus mountain. The consul followed in haste. But they scattered again, the largest part being unarmed, and fled at full speed through pathless country and over steep cliffs where the enemy could not pursue. So they departed across the Apennines. Those who remained in camp were surrounded and captured. Thence the legions were led across the Apennines. There the enemy defended themselves for a while by virtue of the height of the mountain which they had occupied, but presently yielded in surrender. At this time the arms were sought out with greater diligence, and all were taken from them. The war was then transferred to the Ligurian Apuani,³ who all the country between Pisa and Bologna was an ambitious undertaking.

had raided the lands of Pisa and Bologna to such B.C. 187 effect that they could not be cultivated. Having subdued them too, the consul granted peace to their neighbours. And, because he had brought it to pass that the province was free from war, that he might not leave his army idle, he built a road from Bologna to Arezzo.¹ The other consul, Marcus Aemilius, burned and ravaged the farms and villages of the Ligurians which were in the plains or valleys, the people themselves holding the two mountains Ballista and Suismontium. Then, attacking the men who were on the mountains, he first wore them out with small skirmishes, then forced them to come down to face his battle-line and defeated them in a regular battle, in the course of which he vowed a temple to Diana.² Having subdued all the tribes on this side of the Apennines, Aemilius then attacked those beyond the mountains—among whom there were those Ligurian Friniates also whom Gaius Flaminius had not visited—and subdued them all, took away their arms and transferred the population from the hills to the plains. Leaving the Ligurians pacified, he led his army into Gallic territory, and built a road from Placentia to Ariminum, in order to make a junction with the Via Flaminia. In the final encounter in which he engaged the Ligurians in a pitched battle, he vowed a temple to Juno Regina. Such were the events of that year among the Ligurians.

III. In Gaul the praetor Marcus Furius, seeking in peace the appearance of war, had disarmed the an appropriation for games in connection with the dedication of temples to Diana and Juno Regina (sect. 11 below). Both were near the Circus Flaminius.

Cenomani,¹ who had given no provocation: they in consequence laid a complaint about this before the senate at Rome, and were referred to the consul Aemilius, whom the senate had authorized to investigate and decide, and after engaging in great contention with the praetor won their case. The praetor was ordered to restore their arms to the Cenomani and to leave the province. B.C. 187

Then ambassadors from the allies of the Latin confederacy, who had assembled from all Latium in great numbers from every side, were granted an audience by the senate. When they complained that a great number of their citizens had migrated to Rome and had been assessed there,² Quintus Terentius Culleo the praetor was instructed to search them out, and, on receiving from the allies proof that any person or the father of such person³ had been assessed among the allies in the censorship of Gaius Claudius and Marcus Livius⁴ or after that censorship, to compel such persons to return to the places where they had been registered. As a consequence of this investigation twelve thousand of the Latins returned home, for even at that time a multitude of aliens was burdening the city.

IV. Before the consuls returned to Rome, the proconsul Marcus Fulvius returned from Aetolia; and when the senate, in the temple of Apollo, had heard him describe his exploits in Aetolia and Cephallania, he asked the Fathers, if they deemed it proper, by

³ Since only heads of families were listed, the omission of this provision would have opened the door to persons who moved to Rome in the lifetimes of their fathers.

⁴ They were censors in 204 B.C. The date chosen was probably arbitrary and the result of compromise.

reason of his successful and fortunate conduct of the business of the state, both to order that honour should be paid to the immortal gods and to decree a triumph to him. Marcus Aburius, tribune of the people, announced that, if any decree on that subject were passed prior to the arrival of Marcus Aemilius, he would veto it: Aemilius, he said, wished to speak against it, and on his departure to his province had given instructions to him, the tribune, that this whole discussion should be reserved for his return. Fulvius, he said, was suffering the loss of time only: even with the consul present the senate would decree what he wished. Then Fulvius replied: if either the quarrel between him and Marcus Aemilius was unknown to men, or if it was unknown with what uncontrollable and almost tyrannical passion Aemilius carried on the feud, even then it would have been unendurable that the absent consul should both stand in the way of the honour due to the immortal gods and delay an earned and merited triumph, and that a general after a brilliant campaign and a victorious army with its booty and prisoners should stand before the gates until it suited the fancy of a consul (who stayed away for just that reason) to return to Rome. But as a matter of fact, he went on, since his quarrel with the consul was very well known, what justice could be expected from a man who had deposited in the treasury a decree of the senate passed stealthily and in a poorly attended meeting, to the effect that Ambracia did not appear to have been taken by force, although it had been besieged with a mound and sheds, where other works were built anew when the first were burned, where the battle had raged

around the walls for fifteen days, above and below B.C. 187
 the ground, where from daylight, after the soldiers had already scaled the walls, until nightfall the battle had been maintained with uncertain issue, and where more than three thousand of the enemy had perished? Then, too, as to the plundering of the temples of the immortal gods in the captured city, what kind of insult was it that he had turned the booty over to the pontiffs? ¹ Unless it had been lawful to adorn the City with the trophies of Syracuse and other captured towns, but that in the case of captured Ambracia alone the law of war did not hold good! He begged the conscript Fathers and he requested of the tribune that they should not permit him to be made a laughing-stock by this most insolent personal enemy.

V. Everybody from all sides began to address the tribune, some with entreaties, some with reproaches. The argument of his colleague Tiberius Gracchus impressed him most. He said that it was not a good precedent to follow up even one's own contentions while holding a magistracy; but it was disgraceful for a tribune of the people to take sides in the contentions of others, and unworthy of the authority of that college and of its sacred laws. Each man, he said, in accordance with his own judgment should both hate or love men and approve or disapprove measures, should not depend upon another's expression and nod or be led this way or that under the pressure of another's will, nor should a tribune of the people be a second ² to an angry consul; he should not remember any commission which Marcus Aemilius had privately ³ entrusted to him, and forget the office of tribune which had been

entrusted to him by the Roman people, and entrusted B.C. 187 for the purpose of rendering assistance to and protecting the liberty of private citizens, not of bolstering up the consular authority. Aburius, he said, did not even see that the result would be that tradition and posterity would have the story how in the same college one of two tribunes of the people had laid aside his own enmities for the sake of the state, the other had assumed and carried on those of another because they had been entrusted to him.¹ When the tribune, overcome by this criticism, had left the temple, on the motion of Servius Sulpicius the praetor the triumph was voted to Marcus Fulvius. When he had thanked the conscript Fathers, he went on to say that he had vowed the Great Games to Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the day when he had captured Ambracia, that for this purpose a hundred pounds of gold had been contributed by the cities; ² he requested that, from this money which he had planned to display in his triumph and then deposit in the treasury, this particular sum should, by their order, be kept separate. The senate ordered the college of pontiffs to be consulted whether it was necessary to spend this entire sum on the games. When the pontiffs had replied that from the point of view of religion it was immaterial how much should be spent on the games, the senate granted permission to Fulvius for whatever amount he should spend, provided that he did not exceed a total of eighty thousand sesterces.³ He had decided to triumph in the month of January; but when he had heard that the consul Marcus Aemilius, having received a letter from Marcus Aburius about the withdrawal of the veto, was himself coming to Rome

to hinder the triumph, but had been detained on the way by illness, he advanced the date, lest he have more strife in the triumph than in the war. He triumphed the tenth day before the Kalends of January over the Aetolians and over Cephallania. Golden crowns of one hundred and twelve pounds¹ in weight were carried before his car; he displayed also eighty-three thousand pounds of silver, two hundred and forty-three pounds of gold, one hundred and eighteen thousand Attic four-drachma pieces, twelve thousand three hundred and twenty-two coins called "Philippei,"² bronze statues to the number of seven hundred and eighty-five and two hundred and thirty of marble, weapons, javelins and other spoils taken from the enemy, in great quantities, besides catapults, ballistae and every variety of artillery; there marched also generals, whether Aetolians and Cephallanians or commanders of the king left there by Antiochus, to the number of twenty-seven. On that day, before he rode into the City, in the Circus Flaminius,³ he presented many tribunes, prefects, cavalymen and centurions, Romans and allies, with military decorations.⁴ To the soldiers, out of the booty, he gave twenty-five *denarii* each, twice that amount to each centurion, and thrice to each cavalryman.

VI. The time for the consular elections was now at hand; for these, since Marcus Aemilius, to whom

² Cf. XXXVII. lix. 4 and the note.

³ This circus was probably the only enclosure of suitable size which lay outside the *pomerium*.

⁴ The generosity of Fulvius in this respect was severely criticized by Cato (Gellius V. vi. 24-25, where a fragment of a speech is preserved).

this responsibility had fallen by lot, was unable to come, Gaius Flaminius came to Rome. He announced the choice of Spurius Postumius Albinus and Quintus Marcius Philippus as consuls. Then the praetors were elected, Titus Maenius, Publius Cornelius Sulla, Gaius Calpurnius Piso, Marcus Licinius Lucullus, Gaius Aurelius Scaurus, Lucius Quinctius Crispinus.¹ B.C. 187

At the end of the year, when the new magistrates had already been elected, on the third day before the Nones of March, Gnaeus Manlius Volso triumphed over the Gauls who inhabit Asia. His purpose in delaying so long to celebrate his triumph was to avoid pleading his cause under the Petillian law before the praetor Quintus Terentius Culleo and being himself consumed in the flames of another's trial, in which Lucius Scipio had been condemned,² seeing that the jurors were far more hostile to him than to Scipio because it was rumoured that he, when he succeeded Scipio, had ruined the military discipline, strictly maintained by his predecessor, by permitting every kind of licence. Nor was this only a matter of unfavourable report of what was said to have happened in the province, far from their eyes, but still more of what was apparent every day among his soldiers. For the beginnings of foreign luxury were introduced into the City by the army from Asia. They for the first time imported into Rome couches of bronze, valuable robes for coverlets, tapestries and other products of the loom, and what at that time was considered luxurious furniture—tables with one

the Ides (when a new praetor would succeed Culleo) a trial could not be completed. See the notes to XXXVIII. liv. 3; 7; lviii. 12 above.

pedestal and sideboards.¹ Then female players of the lute and the harp and other festal delights of entertainments² were made adjuncts to banquets; the banquets themselves, moreover, began to be planned with both greater care and greater expense. At that time the cook, to the ancient Romans the most worthless of slaves, both in their judgment of values and in the use they made of him, began to have value, and what had been merely a necessary service came to be regarded as an art. Yet those things which were then looked upon as remarkable were hardly even the germs of the luxury to come.

VII. In his triumph Gnaeus Manlius carried two hundred and twelve golden crowns, two hundred and twenty thousand pounds of silver, two thousand one hundred and three pounds of gold, of Attic four-drachma pieces one hundred and twenty-seven thousand, of *cistophori*³ two hundred and fifty thousand, of gold *Philippei* sixteen thousand three hundred and twenty; there were also arms and many Gallic spoils transported in carts, and fifty-two leaders of the enemy led before his car. To the soldiers he gave forty-two *denarii* each, twice that amount to each centurion and thrice to each cavalryman, and he gave them also double pay;⁴ many of all ranks, presented with military decorations, followed his car. Such songs were sung by the soldiers about their commander that it was easily seen that they were sung about an indulgent leader who sought popularity, and that the triumph was

³ Cf. XXXVII. xlvi. 3.

⁴ The grammar of the sentence is peculiar and there is corruption in the text. I have given what seems to be the most reasonable translation.

marked more by the applause of the military than B.C. 187 of the civil population. But the friends of Manlius were able to curry favour with the people as well; at their instance a decree of the senate was passed that, with regard to the tax¹ which had been paid by the people into the treasury, whatever portion of this was in arrears should be paid out of the money which had been carried in the triumph. The city quaestors, displaying fidelity and diligence, paid twenty-five and one-half *asses* each per thousand *asses*.²

About the same time two tribunes of the soldiers arrived from the two Spains, bringing dispatches from Gaius Atinius and Lucius Manlius, who were holding those provinces.³ From these letters it was learned that the Celtiberians and Lusitanians were in arms and were ravaging the lands of the allies. The decision regarding the whole question was left to the new magistrates by the senate.

At the Roman Games that year, which Publius Cornelius Cethegus and Aulus Postumius Albinus gave, a badly-fixed mast⁴ in the Circus fell on the statue of Pollentia and shattered it. The Fathers, disturbed by this omen, voted, first, that one day should be added to the Games, and, second, that two statues should be set up in place of one and the new one gilded. The Plebeian Games too were repeated, to the extent of one day, by the plebeian aediles Gaius Sempronius Blaesus and Marcus Furius Luscus.

³ Cf. XXXVIII. xxxv. 10 above for their assignment.

⁴ Probably this was a permanent mast set up on the *spina*; less probably it was one of the spars which supported the awnings.

VIII. The following year diverted the consuls Spurius Postumius Albinus and Quintus Marcius Philippus from the army and the administration of wars and provinces to the suppression of an internal conspiracy. The praetors drew lots for their provinces, Titus Maenius receiving the city jurisdiction, Marcus Licinius Lucullus that between citizens and aliens, Gaius Aurelius Scaurus Sardinia, Publius Cornelius Sulla Sicily, Lucius Quinctius Crispinus Nearer Spain, Gaius Calpurnius Piso Farther Spain. To both consuls the investigation of secret conspiracies was decreed. A nameless Greek came first to Etruria, possessed of none of those many arts which the Greek people, supreme as it is in learning, brought to us in numbers for the cultivation of mind and body, but a dabbler in sacrifices and a fortune-teller; nor was he one who, by frankly disclosing his creed and publicly proclaiming both his profession and his system, filled minds with error, but a priest of secret rites performed by night.¹ There were initiatory rites which at first were imparted to a few, then began to be generally known among men and women. To the religious element in them were added the delights of wine and feasts, that the minds of a larger number might be attracted. When wine had inflamed their minds, and night and the mingling of males with females, youth with age, had destroyed every sentiment of modesty, all varieties of corruption first began to be practised, since each one had at hand the pleasure answering to that to which his nature was more inclined. There was not one form of vice alone, the promiscuous matings of free men and women, but perjured witnesses, forged seals and wills and evidence, all issued from this same

workshop: likewise poisonings and murders of kindred, so that at times not even the bodies were found for burial. Much was ventured by craft, more by violence. This violence was concealed because amid the howlings and the crash of drums and cymbals no cry of the sufferers could be heard as the debauchery and murders proceeded. B.C. 186

IX. The destructive power of this evil spread from Etruria to Rome like the contagion of a pestilence. At first the size of the City, with abundant room and tolerance for such evils, concealed it: at length information came to the consul Postumius in about this manner. Publius Aebutius, whose father had performed his military service with a horse supplied by the state,¹ was left a ward, and later, on the death of his guardians, was brought under the tutelage of his mother Duronia and his stepfather Titus Sempronius Rutilus. His mother was devoted to her husband, and his stepfather, who had so administered his guardianship that he could not render an accounting,² desired that the ward should either be done away with or be made dependent upon them by some tie. The one method of corrupting him was through the Bacchanalia. The mother addressed the young man: while he was sick, she said, she had vowed for him that as soon as he had recovered she would initiate him into the Bacchic rites; being compelled, by the kindness of the gods, to pay her vow,³ she wished to fulfil it. For ten days, she continued, he must practise continence: on the tenth day she would conduct him to the banquet and then, after ritual purification,⁴ to the shrine. There was a well-

⁴ Paulus Diaconus (p. 248) defines *pure lautum* as *aqua pura lautum*.

known courtesan, a freedwoman named Hispala B.C. 186 Faecenia, not worthy ¹ of the occupation to which, while still a mere slave, she had accustomed herself, and even after she had been manumitted she maintained herself in the same way. Between her and Aebutius, since they were neighbours, an intimacy developed, not at all damaging either to the young man's fortune or to his reputation; for he had been loved and sought out without any effort on his part, and, since his own relatives made provision for all his needs on a very small scale, he was maintained by the generosity of the courtesan. More than that, she had gone so far, under the influence of their intimacy, that, after the death of her patron, since she was under the legal control of no one, having petitioned the tribunes and the praetor for a guardian, when she made her will she had instituted Aebutius as her sole heir.²

X. Since there were these bonds of affection between them, and neither had any secrets from the other, the young man jestingly told her not to be surprised if he were away from her for several nights: as a matter of religious duty, he said, to free himself from a vow made for the sake of his health, he intended to be initiated in the Bacchic rites. When the woman heard this she exclaimed in great distress, "The gods forbid!" She said that it would be much better both for him and for her to die rather than do that; and she called down curses and vengeance upon the heads of those persons who had given him this counsel. Wondering both at her language and at her so manifest distress, the young man bade her spare her curses: it was his mother, he said, with the approval of his stepfather, who had ordered it.

“Your stepfather, then,” she replied, “is making B.C. 186 haste—for perhaps it is not right to accuse your mother—to destroy in this way your virtue, your reputation and your life.” As he marvelled the more and asked her what she meant, beseeching gods and goddesses for peace and forgiveness if, compelled by her love for him, she had declared what should be concealed, she told him that while she was a slave she had attended her mistress to that shrine, but that as a free woman she had never visited it. She knew, she said, that it was the factory of all sorts of corruptions; and it was known that for two years now no one had been initiated who had passed the age of twenty years. As each was introduced, he became a sort of victim for the priests. They, she continued, would lead him to a place which would ring with howls and the song of a choir and the beating of cymbals and drums, that the voice of the sufferer, when his virtue was violently attacked, might not be heard. Then she begged and besought him to put an end to this matter in any way he could and not to plunge into a situation where all disgraceful practices would have first to be endured and then performed. Nor would she let him go until the young man gave her his promise that he would have nothing to do with those mysteries.

XI. When he came home and his mother began to tell him what he had to do that day and on the following days in connection with the rites, he informed her that he would do none of them and that it was not his intention to be initiated. His stepfather was present at the interview. Straightway the woman exclaimed that he could not do without his mistress *Hispala* for ten nights; infected with the

enchancements and poisons of that vampire, he had no respect for his mother or his stepfather or yet the gods. Berating him thus, his mother on one side, his stepfather with four slaves on the other, drove him from the house. The young man thereupon went to his aunt Aebutia and explained to her the reason why his mother had driven him out, and on her recommendation the following day reported the affair to the consul Postumius with no witnesses present. The consul sent him away with instructions to return the third day; he himself asked his mother-in-law Sulpicia, a woman of high character, whether she was acquainted with an elderly woman, Aebutia, from the Aventine. When she replied that she knew that she was a virtuous woman of the old style, he said that he felt the need of an interview with her: Sulpicia should send her a message to come. Aebutia, summoned by Sulpicia, came, and a little later the consul, as if he had come in by chance, brought in an allusion to Aebutius, the son of her brother. Tears flowed from the woman's eyes, and she began to bewail the fate of the young man who was robbed of his estate by those who should least of all have treated him thus, and who was then at her house, driven from home by his mother because the virtuous youth—might the gods be gracious¹—refused to be initiated into rites which, if reports were to be believed, were full of lewdness.

XII. The consul, thinking that he had learned enough about Aebutius to trust his story, sent Aebutia away and asked his mother-in-law to summon to her Hispala, also from the Aventine, a freed-woman and no stranger in the neighbourhood: he wished to ask her also certain questions. Hispala,

alarmed by her message, because without knowing B.C. 186
the reason she was summoned to so important and respected a woman, when she saw the lictors in the vestibule and the consul's retinue and the consul himself, almost swooned. Conducting her into the inner part of the house, with his mother-in-law present, the consul told her that if she could bring herself to tell the truth she had no cause to feel alarmed; she would receive a pledge either from Sulpicia, a woman of such standing, or from himself; she should state to them what rites were usually performed in the nocturnal orgies at the Bacchanalia in the grove of Stimula.¹ When she heard this, such fear and trembling seized the woman in all her limbs that for a long time she could not open her mouth. Being at length restored, she said that when quite young and a slave she had been initiated with her mistress; that for many years after her manumission she had known nothing of what went on there. Then the consul praised her on this ground, that she had not denied that she had been initiated; but she was to tell, under the same pledge, the rest as well. When she insisted that she knew nothing more, he told her that she would not receive the same forgiveness or consideration if she were convicted by the evidence of someone else as if she had confessed of her own accord; the man, he added, who had heard it from her had told him the whole story.

XIII. The woman, thinking without a doubt, as was indeed the fact, that Aebutius had revealed the secret, threw herself at the feet of Sulpicia, and at first began to plead with her not to try to turn the chatter of a freedwoman with her lover into something that was not merely serious but even fatal:

she had spoken thus for the purpose of frightening him, not because she knew anything. At this point Postumius, inflamed with wrath, said that she believed even then that she was jesting with her lover Aebutius, and not speaking in the house of a most respectable matron and in the presence of a consul. Sulpicia too lifted up the terror-stricken woman, and at the same time encouraged her and mollified the anger of her son-in-law. At length regaining her self-control, and complaining much of the treachery of Aebutius, who had returned such gratitude to one who deserved so well of him, she declared that she feared greatly the wrath of the gods whose hidden mysteries she was to reveal, but far more the wrath of the men who would, if she informed against them, with their own hands tear her limb from limb. Accordingly she begged Sulpicia and the consul that they would banish her somewhere outside Italy, where she could pass the rest of her life in safety. The consul bade her be of good cheer and assured her that it would be his responsibility to see that she could safely live in Rome. Then Hispala set forth the origin of the mysteries. At first, she said, it was a ritual for women,¹ and it was the custom that no man should be admitted to it. There had been three days appointed each year on which they held initiations into the Bacchic rites by day; it was the rule to choose the matrons in turn as priestesses. Paculla Annia, a Campanian, she said, when priestess, had changed all this; for she had been the first to initiate men, her sons, Minius and Herennius Cerinius; she had held the rites by night and not by day, and instead of a mere three days a year she had established five days of initiation in every month.

From the time that the ritès were performed in common, men mingling with women and the freedom of darkness added, no form of crime, no sort of wrongdoing, was left untried. There were more lustful practices among men with one another than among women. If any of them were disinclined to endure abuse or reluctant to commit crime, they were sacrificed as victims. To consider nothing wrong, she continued, was the highest form of religious devotion among them. Men, as if insane, with fanatical tossings of their bodies, would utter prophecies. Matrons in the dress of Bacchantes, with dishevelled hair and carrying blazing torches, would run down to the Tiber, and plunging their torches in the water (because they contained live sulphur mixed with calcium) would bring them out still burning.¹ Men were alleged to have been carried off by the gods who had been bound to a machine and borne away out of sight to hidden caves: they were those who had refused either to conspire or to join in the crimes or to suffer abuse. Their number, she said, was very great, almost constituting a second state; among them were certain men and women of high rank. Within the last two years it had been ordained that no one beyond the age of twenty years should be initiated: such ages could be involved in error and also were ready to permit abuse.

XIV. Having finished her testimony, again falling at their feet, she repeated the same prayers that they should banish her. The consul asked his mother-in-law to vacate some part of the house into

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which Hispala might move. An apartment above the house¹ was assigned to her, the stairs leading to the street being closed up and an approach to the house arranged. All the household goods of Faecenia were at once moved and her slaves summoned, and Aebutius was directed to move to the house of a client of the consul.

When both witnesses were thus available, Postumius laid the matter before the senate, everything being set forth in detail; first what had been reported, then what he had himself discovered. Great panic seized the Fathers, both on the public account, lest these conspiracies and gatherings by night might produce something of hidden treachery or danger, and privately, each for himself, lest some relative might be involved in the mischief. The senate, moreover, decreed that the consul should be thanked because he had investigated the affair both with great industry and without creating any confusion. Then the investigation of the Bacchanals and their nocturnal orgies they referred to the consuls, not as a part of their regular duties; they directed the consuls to see to it that the witnesses Aebutius and Faecenia did not suffer harm and to attract other informers by rewards; the priests of these rites, whether men or women, should be sought out, not only at Rome but through all the villages and communities, that they might be at the disposal of the consuls; that it should be proclaimed in addition in the city of Rome and that edicts should be sent through all Italy, that no one who had been initiated in the Bacchic rites should presume to assemble or come together for the purpose of celebrating those rites or to perform any such ritual. Before all, it

was decreed that an inquiry should be conducted B.C. 186 regarding those persons who had come together or conspired for the commission of any immorality or crime. Such was the decree of the senate. The consuls ordered the curule aediles to search out all the priests of this cult and to keep them under surveillance, in free custody for the investigation; the plebeian aediles were to see to it that no celebration of the rites should be held in secret. The task was entrusted to the *triumviri capitales*¹ of placing guards through the City, of seeing that no night meetings were held, and of making provision against fire; as assistants to the *triumviri*, the *quinqueviri uls cis Tiberim*² were to stand guard each over the buildings of his own district.

XV. When the magistrates had been dispatched to these posts, the consuls mounted the Rostra and called an informal meeting³ of the people, and, when the consul had finished the regular formula of prayer which magistrates are accustomed to pronounce before they address the people, he thus began: "Never for any assembly, citizens, has this formal prayer to the gods been not only so suitable but even so necessary, a prayer which reminds us that these are the gods whom our forefathers had appointed to be worshipped, to be venerated, to receive our prayers, not those gods who would drive our enthralled minds with vile and alien rites, as by the scourges of the Furies, to every crime and every lust. For my part, I do not discover what I should refrain from telling or how far I should speak out. If you

³ Cf. XXXI. vii. 1 and the note. This meeting was called simply to hear the news about the conspiracy and the measures taken to suppress it.

are left ignorant of anything, I fear that I shall leave room for carelessness; if I lay bare everything, that I shall scatter abroad an excess of terror. Whatever I shall have said, be sure that my words are less than the dreadful and the gravity of the situation: to take sufficient precautions will be our task. As to the Bacchanalia, I am assured that you have learned that they have long been celebrated all over Italy and now even within the City in many places, and that you have learned this not only from rumour but also from their din and cries at night, which echo throughout the City, but I feel sure that you do not know what this thing is: some believe that it is a form of worship of the gods, others that it is an allowable play and pastime, and, whatever it is, that it concerns only a few. As regards their number, if I shall say that there are many thousands of them, it cannot but be that you are terrified, unless I shall at once add to that who and of what sort they are. First, then, a great part of them are women, and they are the source of this mischief; then there are men very like the women, debauched and debauchers, fanatical, with senses dulled by wakefulness, wine, noise and shouts at night. The conspiracy thus far has no strength, but it has an immense source of strength in that they grow more numerous day by day. Your ancestors did not wish that even you should assemble casually and without reason, except when the standard was displayed on the citadel and the army was assembled for an election,¹ or the tribunes had announced a meeting of the plebeians,² or some of the magistrates had called you to an informal gathering; and wherever there was a crowd collected they thought that there should also be a

legal leader of the crowd. Of what sort do you think are, first, gatherings held by night, second, meetings of men and women in common? ^{B.C. 186} 1 If you knew at what ages males were initiated, you would feel not only pity for them but also shame. Do you think, citizens, that youths initiated by this oath should be made soldiers? That arms should be entrusted to men mustered from this foul shrine? Will men covered with the signs of their own debauchery and that of others fight to the death on behalf of the chastity of your wives and children?

XVI. “ Yet it would be less serious if their wrongdoing had merely made them effeminate—that was in great measure their personal dishonour—and if they had kept their hands from crime and their thoughts from evil designs: never has there been so much evil in the state nor affecting so many people in so many ways. Whatever villainy there has been in recent years due to lust, whatever to fraud, whatever to crime, I tell you, has arisen from this one cult. Not yet have they revealed all the crimes to which they have conspired. Their impious compact still limits itself to private crimes, since as yet it does not have strength enough to crush the state. Daily the evil grows and creeps abroad. It is already too great to be purely a private matter: its objective is the control of the state. Unless you are on guard betimes, citizens, as we hold this meeting in the day-time, summoned by a consul, in accordance with law, so there can be one held at night. Now, as single individuals, they stand in fear of you, gathered here all together in this assembly: presently, when you have scattered to your homes and farms, they will have come together and they will take measures

for their own safety and at the same time for your destruction: then you, as isolated individuals, will have to fear them as a united body. Therefore each one of you should hope that all your friends have been endowed with sound minds. If lust, if madness has carried off anyone into that whirlpool, let each consider that such a person belongs, not to himself, but to those with whom he has conspired to every wickedness and wrong. I am not free of anxiety lest some even of you, citizens, may go astray through error. Nothing is more deceptive in appearance than a false religion. When the authority of the gods is put forward as a defence for crime, there steals upon the mind a fear lest in punishing human misdeeds we may violate something of divine law which became mixed up with them. From this scruple innumerable edicts of the pontiffs, decrees of the senate, and finally responses of the *haruspices* free you. How often, in the times of our fathers and our grandfathers, has the task been assigned to the magistrates of forbidding the introduction of foreign cults, of excluding dabblers in sacrifices and fortune-tellers from the Forum, the Circus, and the City, of searching out and burning books of prophecies, and of annulling every system of sacrifice except that performed in the Roman way. For men wisest in all divine and human law used to judge that nothing was so potent in destroying religion as where sacrifices were performed, not by native, but by foreign, ritual. I have thought that this warning should be given you, that no religious fear may disturb your minds when you see us suppressing the Bacchanalia and breaking up these nightly meetings. All these things, if the

gods are favourable and willing, we shall do; they, B.C. 186 because they were indignant that their own divinity was being polluted by acts of crime and lust, have dragged these matters from darkness into the light, nor have they willed that they should be discovered in order that they might be unpunished, but that they might be coerced and suppressed. The senate has entrusted the investigation of this affair, by extraordinary assignment, to my colleague and myself. We shall zealously carry through what has to be done by ourselves; the responsibility of keeping watch through the City we have entrusted to the minor magistrates. For you too it is proper, whatever duties are assigned you, in whatever place each one is posted, to obey zealously and to see to it that no danger or confusion may arise from the treachery of criminals."

XVII. Then they ordered the decrees of the senate to be read and announced the reward to be paid the informer if anyone had brought any person before them or had reported the name of anyone who was absent. If anyone was named and had escaped, for him they would designate a fixed day, and, if he did not respond when summoned on that day, he would be condemned in his absence. If anyone was named of those who were at that time outside the land of Italy, they would fix a more elastic date if he wished to come to plead his cause. They next proclaimed that no one should venture to sell or buy anything for the purpose of flight; that no one should harbour, conceal, or in any wise aid the fugitives.

When the meeting was dismissed there was great panic in the whole City, nor was this confined only to the walls or the boundaries of Rome; but gradually

through all Italy, as letters were received from their friends concerning the decree of the senate, concerning the assembly and the edict of the consuls, the terror began to spread. Many during the night after the day when the revelation was made in the meeting were caught trying to escape and brought back by the guards whom the *triumviri* had posted at the gates: the names of many were reported. Certain of these, men and women, committed suicide. In the conspiracy, it was said, more than seven thousand men and women were involved. But the heads of the conspiracy, it was clear, were Marcus and Gaius Atinius of the Roman *plebs*, and the Faliscan Lucius Opicernius and the Campanian Minius Cerrinius: they were the source of all wickedness and wrongdoing, the story went, and they were the supreme priests and the founders of the cult. It was seen to that at the first opportunity they were arrested. They were brought before the consuls, confessed, and asked for no delay in standing trial.

XVIII. But so numerous were the persons who had fled from the City that, since in many instances legal proceedings and causes were falling through,¹ the praetors Titus Maenius and Marcus Licinius were compelled, through the intervention of the senate, to adjourn court for thirty days, until the investigations should be finished by the consuls. The same depopulation, because at Rome men whose names had been given in did not respond or were not found, compelled the consuls to make the rounds of the villages and there investigate and conduct trials. Those who had merely been initiated and had made their prayers in accordance with the ritual formula,

the priest dictating the words, in which the wicked conspiracy to all vice and lust was contained, but had committed none of the acts to which they were bound by the oath against either themselves or others, they left in chains; upon those who had permitted themselves to be defiled by debauchery or murder, who had polluted themselves by false testimony, forged seals, substitution of wills or other frauds, they inflicted capital punishment. More were killed than were thrown into prison. There was a large number of men and women in both classes. Convicted women were turned over to their relatives or to those who had authority over them, that they might be punished in private:¹ if there was no suitable person to exact it, the penalty was inflicted by the state. Then the task was entrusted to the consuls of destroying all forms of Bacchic worship, first at Rome and then throughout Italy, except in cases where an ancient altar or image had been consecrated.² For the future it was then provided by decree of the senate that there should be no Bacchanalia in Rome or Italy. If any person considered such worship to be ordained by tradition or to be necessary, and believed that he could not omit it without sin and atonement, he was to make a declaration before the city praetor, and the latter would consult the senate. If permission were granted to him, at a meeting where not fewer than one hundred were in attendance, he should offer the sacrifice, provided that not more than five people should take part in the rite, and that there the abuse of the Bacchus worship and were free from its bad features. In any case the Romans were inclined to respect venerable age.

should be no common purse or master of sacrifices or priest.¹ B.C. 186

XIX. Then another decree of the senate, allied to this, was passed on the motion of the consul Quintus Marcius, that the entire question of those whose services as informers the consuls had enjoyed should be referred to the senate when Spurius Postumius should have returned to Rome after completing the investigations. Minius Cerrinius the Campanian they voted should be sent to Ardea for imprisonment, advance notice being given to the magistrates of the Ardeans that they should keep especially close guard over him, not only to prevent his escape but also to allow him no opportunity to commit suicide.² Spurius Postumius returned to Rome a considerable time later: on his motion with reference to the rewards for Publius Aebutius and Hispala Faecenia, because it was through their information that the Bacchanalia had been discovered, a decree of the senate was passed that to each of them one hundred thousand *asses*³ should be paid by the city quaestors out of the treasury; and that the consuls should take up with the tribunes of the people the matter of their presenting to the assembly at the earliest possible moment proposals that Publius Aebutius should be rated as having performed his military service,⁴ that he should not serve in the

³ This was the sum required for assignment to the first census-class.

⁴ The proposal to exempt Aebutius from his military obligations is genuine, so far as one can see, but nevertheless odd at this period, when military service was still a recognized part of the citizen's duty. It cannot be determined whether the exemption carried with it immediate eligibility to office, since Aebutius had no political ambitions.

army except by his own act, that the censor should not assign him a public horse without his consent;¹ that Hispala Faecenia should have the rights of bestowing and alienating property,² of marriage outside her *gens*,³ and choice of a *tutor* just as if her husband had given it to her by his will;⁴ that she should be permitted to marry a man of free birth, nor should any fraud or disgrace on this account attach to a man who should have married her; that the consuls and praetors who were at this time in office and those who should follow them should have a care that no injury should be done to this woman and that she should be secure. The senate, they were to say, wished and judged it proper that this should be done. All these motions were presented to the assembly and passed in accordance with the decree of the senate; with respect to the impunity and rewards of the rest of the informers discretion was left to the consuls.

XX. And by this time Quintus Marcius, having completed the investigation in his district, was preparing to set out against the Ligurians, who composed his province, having received three thousand Roman infantry and one hundred and fifty cavalry and five thousand infantry and two hundred cavalry of the allies of the Latin confederacy as reinforcements. The same province and the same numbers

³ The conditions surrounding *gentis enuptio* are only vaguely known. It is clear, however, that Faecenia is to have the maximum of privilege allowed to women.

⁴ A wife *in manu* might be granted this privilege by her husband's will. By the bestowal of these four rights Faecenia acquired a legal status at least not inferior to that of free women generally.