**From Roman to UnRoman**

*There were a number of ways you could become unRoman in a rather rapid manner. One was to be captured and enslaved; when that happened Roman law considered you dead, and only brought you back to life from a legal perspective once you were freed, which must have made things very interesting all round if you managed to get free at some point. We’re not looking at those cases, however, but at those of exiles and Romans, like Sertorius, who decided to toss aside their Romanness.*

**Exiles**

*Exiles, both enforced and self-willed, form an interesting subset of Romans. Romans who were legally exiled[[1]](#footnote-1) lost all their civic rites and ceased for all intents and purposes to be Roman in the eyes of the state. There seems to have been forms of exile that didn’t involve actual movement from Rome, but many exiles were forbidden to come within hundreds of miles of the city under penalty of death for them and any who aided them. Some were even exiled to specific (usually horrible) places as a special twist of the knife. A manly, traditional Roman was supposed to take this sort of thing in his stride and endure it with stoic grimness, or to kill himself if he could not manage that. Cicero was not such a man, and he had a total breakdown when his enemy Clodius managed to have him exiled in 57 BCE, as the following letter to his wife (Terentia), his daughter (Tullia; Tulliola is a diminutive), and son written as he was about to leave Italy shows:*

TO TERENTIA, TULLIOLA, AND YOUNG CICERO (AT ROME)  
BRUNDISIUM, 29 APRIL

Yes, I do write to you less often than I could because, though I am always wretched, yet when I write to you or read a letter from you, I am in such floods of tears that I cannot endure it. Oh, that I had clung less to life! I should at least never have known real sorrow, or not much of it, in my life. Yet if fortune has reserved for me any hope of recovering at any time any position again, I was not utterly wrong to do so: if these miseries are to be permanent, I only wish, my dear, to see you as soon as possible and to die in your arms, since neither gods, whom you have worshipped with such pure devotion, nor men, whom I have ever served, have made us any return... What a fall! What a disaster! What can I say? Should I ask you to come—a woman of weak health and broken spirit? Should I not ask you? Am I to be without you, then? I think the best course is this: if there is any hope of my restoration, stay to promote it and push the thing on: but if, as I fear, it proves hopeless, pray come to me by any means in your power.[[2]](#footnote-2) Be sure of this, that if I have you I shall not think myself wholly lost. But what is to become of my darling Tullia? You must see to that now: I can think of nothing. But certainly, however things turn out, we must do everything to promote that poor little girl's married happiness and reputation. Again, what is my boy Cicero to do? Let him, at any rate, be ever in my bosom and in my arms. I can't write more. A fit of weeping hinders me. I don't know how you have got on; whether you are left in possession of anything, or have been, as I fear, entirely plundered. Piso, as you say, I hope will always be our friend. As to the manumission of the slaves you need not be uneasy. To begin with, the promise made to yours was that you would treat them according as each severally deserved. So far Orpheus has behaved well, besides him no one very especially so. With the rest of the slaves the arrangement is that, if my property is forfeited,[[3]](#footnote-3) they should become my freedmen, supposing them to be able to maintain at law that status. But if my property remained in my ownership, they were to continue slaves, with the exception of a very few. But these are trifles. To return to your advice, that I should keep up my courage and not give up hope of recovering my position, I only wish that there were any good grounds for entertaining such a hope. As it is, when, alas ! shall I get a letter from you? Who will bring it me? I would have waited for it at Brundisium, but the sailors would not allow it, being unwilling to lose a favourable wind. For the rest, put as dignified a face on the matter as you can, my dear Terentia. Our life is over: we have had our day: it is not any fault of ours that has ruined us, but our virtue. I have made no false step, except in not losing my life when I lost my honours. But since our children preferred my living, let us bear every-thing else, however intolerable. And yet I, who encourage you, cannot encourage myself. I have sent that faithful fellow Clodius Philhetaerus home, because he was hampered with weakness of the eyes. Sallustius seems likely to outdo everybody in his attentions. Pescennius is exceedingly kind to me; and I have hopes that he will always be attentive to you. Sica had said that he would accompany me; but he has left Brundisium. Take the greatest possible care of your health, and believe me that I am more affected by your distress than my own. My dear Terentia, most faithful and best of wives, and my darling little daughter, and that last hope of my race, Cicero, good-bye!

29 April, from Brundisium.

#### Letters to his family 14.4

*Many people were horrified as his weeping and complete collapse, and – as with his best friend Atticus – wrote to him to be more stoic and Roman about the whole thing. Cicero, as you can see from his reply below, did not respond as they had hoped:*

TO ATTICUS (AT ROME) THESSALONICA, 17 JUNE

…However, as long as you all will have me hope, I shall obey you. For as to your very frequent and severe scoldings, and your saying that I am faint-hearted, I would ask you what misery is there so heavy as not to be included in my disfranchisement? Did anyone ever fall from such a high position, in so good a cause, with such endowments of genius, wisdom and popularity, with such powerful supports from all loyalists? Can I forget what I was, and not feel what I am? Of what honour, of what glory, of what children, of what means, of what a brother I am deprived? This last, indeed, to draw your attention to a new kind of disaster—though I valued him, and always had done so, more than myself—I have avoided seeing, lest I should behold his grief and mourning, or lest I-whom he had left in the highest prosperity-should obtrude myself upon him in a state of ruin and humiliation. I pass over the other particulars that are past bearing: for I am prevented by my tears. And here, let me ask, am I to be blamed for my grief, or for the unfortunate mistake of not retaining these advantages (and I could easily have done so, had not a plot for my destruction been hatched within my own walls), or at least of not losing them without losing my life at the same time?

#### Letters to Atticus 3.10

*For good measure He also wrote to his brother Quintus to weep at him too:*

TO HIS BROTHER QUINTUS (AT ROME), from THESSALONICA, AUGUST

I beg you, my dear brother, if you and all my family have been ruined by my single misfortune, not to attribute it to dishonesty and bad conduct on my part, rather than to shortsightedness and the wretched state I was in. I have committed no fault except in trusting those whom I believed to be bound by the most sacred obligation not to deceive me, or whom I thought to be even interested in not doing so. All my most intimate, nearest and dearest friends were either alarmed for themselves or jealous of me: the result was that all I lacked was good faith on the part of my friends and caution on my own. But if your own blameless character and the compassion of the world prove sufficient to preserve you at this juncture from molestation, you can, of course, observe whether any hope of restoration is left for me. For Pomponius, Sestius, and my son-in-law Piso have caused me as yet to stay at Thessalonica, forbidding me, on account of certain impending movements, to increase my distance. But in truth I am awaiting the result more on account of their letters than from any firm hope of my own. For what can I hope with an enemy possessed of the most formidable power, with my detractors masters of the state, with friends unfaithful, with numbers of people jealous?... [And so on and on]

#### Letters to his Brother 1.4

*It was not just men who were exiled. Augustus exiled his daughter and granddaughter, both called Julia, due to a range of offenses, all of which challenged his moral agenda:*

65 1 But at the height of [Augustus’] happiness and his confidence in his family and its training, Fortune proved fickle. He found the two Julias, his daughter and granddaughter, guilty of every form of vice, and banished them. He lost Gaius and Lucius within the span of eighteen months, for the former died in Lycia and the latter at Massilia. He then publicly adopted his third grandson Agrippa and at the same time his stepson Tiberius by a bill passed in the assembly of the curiae; but he soon disowned Agrippa because of his low tastes and violent temper, and sent him off to Surrentum. 2 He endured the death of his family with far more resignation than their misconduct. For he was not greatly broken by the fate of Gaius and Lucius, but he informed the senate of his daughter's fall through a letter read in his absence by a quaestor, and out of shame would meet no one for a long time, and even thought of putting her to death. At all events, when one of her confidantes, a freedwoman called Phoebe, hanged herself at about that same time, he said: "I would rather have been Phoebe's father." 3 After Julia was banished, he denied her the use of wine and every form of luxury, and would not allow any man, bond or free, to come near her without his permission, and then not without being informed of his stature, complexion, and even of any marks or scars upon his body. It was not until five years later that he moved her from the island to the mainland and treated her with somewhat less rigour. But he could not by any means be prevailed on to recall her, and when the Roman people several times interceded for her and urgently pressed their suit, he in open assembly called upon the gods to curse them with like daughters and like wives. 4 He would not allow the child born to his granddaughter Julia after her sentence to be recognized or reared. As Agrippa grew no more manageable, but on the contrary became madder from day to day, he transferred him to an island and set a guard of soldiers over him besides. He also provided by a decree of the senate that he should be confined there for all time, and at every mention of him and of the Julias he would sigh deeply and even cry out: "I wish never had married and I wish had died without offspring" and he never alluded to them except as his three boils and his three ulcers.

Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 65

*Cornelia, the mother of two famous Roman tribunes of the plebs in the late 2nd century BCE decided to exile herself from Rome after her sons were lynched by opposing factions in the senate. In doing so, she shows how exiling oneself, making oneself unRoman to some degree, could be effective.*

Cornelia is said to have endured these and all her misfortunes nobly and unselfishly, and to have said about the shrines where they were buried that their bodies had received worthy tombs. She herself spent her days in the area called Misenum and did not change her usual way of life. She had many friends and entertained her friends, and there were always Greeks and learned men in her company, and all the kings exchanged gifts with her. She particularly enjoyed discussing with visitors and friends the life and habits of her father Scipio Africanus, and she was most admirable because she did not grieve for her sons and talked to her audience without weeping about their sufferings and their accomplishments, as if she were telling stories to them about the ancient heroes of Rome. Some thought that she had lost her mind because she was old and had suffered so greatly, and that she had become insensible because of her misfortunes, but these people were themselves insensible of how much nobility and good birth and education can help people in times of sorrow, and that for all the attempts of virtue to prevent it, she may be overcome by fortune, but in her defeat she cannot be deprived of the power of rational endurance.

Plutarch, *Life of Gaius Gracchus 19.1-3*

*In contrast to Cornelia we have the Roman general and ex-consul Lucullus (118-c.57 BCE). Lucullus had a spectacular political and military career, only to be gradually pushed aside by new rising competitors, such as Pompey, went off to the countryside and started getting very interested in raising fish and living a lavish and enjoyable lifestyle in the south of Italy, rather than fighting for Roman values and acting as a Roman elite male was supposed to. He spent little time in Rome, and preferred his many villas near Naples, then a favourite spot for the Roman elite to spend their summers.*

38 1 After his divorce from Clodia, who was a immoral and base woman, he married Servilia, a sister of Cato,[[4]](#footnote-4) but this, too, was an unfortunate marriage. For it lacked none of the evils which Clodia had brought in her train except one, namely, the scandal about her brothers. In all other respects Servilia was equally vile and abandoned, and yet Lucullus forced himself to tolerate her, out of regard for Cato. At last, however, he divorced her. 2 The Senate had conceived wondrous hopes that in him it would find an opposer of the tyranny of Pompey and a champion of the aristocracy, with all the advantage of great glory and influence, but he quit and abandoned public affairs, either because he saw that they were already beyond proper control and diseased, or, as some say, because he had his fill of glory, and felt that the unfortunate result of his many struggles and toils entitled him to fall back upon a life of ease and luxury. 3 Some commend him for making such a change, and thereby escaping the unhappy lot of Marius,[[5]](#footnote-5) who, after his Cimbrian victories and the large and wonderful successes which were so famous, was unwilling to relax his efforts and enjoy the honours won, but with an insatiable desire for glory and power, old man that he was, fought with young men in the conduct of the state, and so drove headlong into terrible deeds, and sufferings still more terrible still. Cicero, say these, would have had a better old age if he had retreated from public life after the affair of Catiline, and Scipio, too, if he had taken a pause after adding Numantia to Carthage; 4 for a political cycle, too, has a sort of natural termination, and political no less than athletic contests are absurd, after the full vigour of life has departed. Crassus and Pompey, on the other hand, ridiculed Lucullus for giving himself up to pleasure and extravagance, as if a luxurious life were not even more unsuitable to men of his years than political and military activities.

39 1 And it is true that in the life of Lucullus, as in an ancient comedy, one reads in the first part of political measures and military commands, and in the latter part of drinking bouts, and banquets, and what might pass for mad parties, and torch-races, and all manner of frivolity. 2 For I must count as frivolity his costly buildings, his walkways and baths, and still more his paintings and statues (not to speak of his devotion to these arts), which he collected at enormous expense, pouring out into such channels the vast and splendid wealth which he accumulated from his campaigns.[[6]](#footnote-6) Even now, when luxury has increased so much, the gardens of Lucullus are counted among the most costly of the imperial gardens. 3 As for his works on the sea-shore and in the vicinity of Naples where he suspended hills over vast tunnels, girdled his residences with zones of sea and with streams for the breeding of fish, and built dwellings in the sea, — when Tubero the Stoic saw them, he called him Xerxes in a toga. 4 He had also country villas near Tusculum, with observatories, and extensive open banqueting halls and porticos. Pompey once visited these, and chided Lucullus because he had arranged his country residence in the best possible way for summer, but had made it uninhabitable in winter. Whereupon Lucullus burst out laughing and said: "Do you suppose, then, that I have less sense than cranes and storks, and do not change residences according to the seasons?" 5 A praetor was once making ambitious plans for a public spectacle, and asked him for some purple cloaks for the adornment of a chorus.[[7]](#footnote-7) Lucullus replied that he would investigate, and if he had any, would give them to him. The next day he asked the praetor how many he wanted, and on his replying that a hundred would be enough, told him take twice that number. The poet Flaccus alluded to this when he said that he did not regard a house as wealthy in which the treasures that were overlooked and unobserved were not more than those which met the eye.

40 1 The daily meals of Lucullus were such as the newly rich have. Not only with his dyed coverlets, beakers set with precious stones, and choruses and dramatic recitations, but also with his arrays of all sorts of meats and daintily prepared dishes, did he make himself the envy of the vulgar. 2 A saying of Pompey's, when he was ill, was certainly very popular. His physicians had prescribed a thrush for him to eat, and his servants said that a thrush could not be found anywhere in the summer season except where Lucullus kept them fattening. Pompey, however, would not allow them to get one from there, but bade them prepare something else that was easily to be had, remarking as he did so to his physician, "What! must a Pompey have died if a Lucullus were not luxurious?" 3 And Cato, who was a friend of his, and a relation by marriage, was nevertheless much offended by his life and habits. Once when a youthful senator had delivered a tedious and lengthy discourse, all out of season, on frugality and temperance, Cato rose and said; "Stop there! You get wealth like Crassus, you live like Lucullus, but you talk like Cato." Some, however, while they say that these words were actually uttered, do not say that they were spoken by Cato.

41 1 Moreover, that Lucullus took not only pleasure but pride in this way of living, is clear from the anecdotes recorded of him. It is said, for instance, that he entertained for many successive days some Greeks who had come up to Rome, and that they, with genuinely Greek scruples, were at last ashamed to accept his invitation, on the ground that he was incurring so much expense every day on their account; 2 whereupon Lucullus said to them with a smile, "Some of this expense, my Grecian friends, is indeed on your account; most of it, however, is on account of Lucullus." And once, when he was dining alone, and a modest repast of one course had been prepared for him, he was angry, and summoned the servant who had the matter in charge. The servant said that he did not suppose, since there were no guests, that he wanted anything very costly. "What are you saying?" said the master, "do you not know that to‑day Lucullus dines with Lucullus?" 3 While this matter was much talked of in the city, as was natural, Cicero and Pompey came up to him as he was idling in the forum. Cicero was one of his most intimate friends, and although the matter of the command of the army had led to some coolness between him and Pompey, still they were accustomed to frequent and friendly meetings and conversation with one another. 4 Accordingly, Cicero saluted him, and asked how he was disposed towards receiving a petition. "Most excellently well," said Lucullus, and invited them to make their petition. "We desire," said Cicero, "to dine with you to‑day just as you would have dined by yourself." Lucullus demurred to this, and begged the privilege of selecting a later day, but they refused to allow it, nor would they suffer him to confer with his servants, that he might not order any thing more provided than what was provided for himself. 5 Thus much, however, and no more, they did allow him at his request, namely, to tell one of his slaves in their presence that he would dine that day in the Apollo. Now this was the name of one of his costly apartments, and he thus outwitted the men without their knowing it. For each of his dining-rooms, as it seems, had a fixed allowance for the dinner served there, as well as its own special apparatus and equipment, so that his slaves, on hearing where he wished to dine, knew just how much the dinner was to cost, and what were to be its decorations and arrangements. Now the usual cost of a dinner in the Apollo was fifty thousand drachmas, and that was the sum laid out on the present occasion. 6 Pompey was amazed at the speed with which the banquet was prepared, notwithstanding it had cost so much. In these ways, then, Lucullus threw his money around, as though it were in very truth a barbarian prisoner-of‑war.

*Others chose to make themselves unRoman in more dramatic ways, and in ones that caused far, far more problems for the Roman state. One such was Quintus Sertorius, who in the first century BCE decided to embrace a role as a Spanish ruler after ending up on the losing side of a civil war in Rome between the generals Gaius Marius and Lucius Cornelius Sulla in the 80s BCE:*

2 1 Quintus Sertorius belonged to a family of some prominence in Nursia, a Sabine city. Having lost his father, he was reared properly by his mother, of whom he appears to have been excessively fond. His mother's name, we are told, was Rhea. As a result of his training he was sufficiently knowledgeable about legal procedure, and acquired some influence also at Rome from his eloquence, although he was only a youth; but his brilliant successes in war turned his ambition towards that…. 3 1 To begin with, he served under Caepio when the Cimbri and Teutones invaded Gaul, and after the Romans had been defeated and fled, though he lost his horse and had been wounded in the body he swam across the Rhone, shield and breastplate and all, against a strongly opposing current, so sturdy was his body and so hardened against hardships by training. 2 Then, when the same enemies were coming up with many thousands of men and dreadful threats, so that for a Roman even to hold his post at such a time and obey his general was a great feat, while Marius was in command Sertorius undertook to spy out the enemy. So, putting on Celtic dress and acquiring basic expressions in that language for any necessary conversation, he mingled with the barbarians, and after he saw and heard what was important, he came back to Marius. 3 At the time, then, he received a prize for courage; and since, during the rest of the campaign, he performed many deeds which showed both judgement and daring, he was promoted by his general to positions of honour and trust. After the war with the Cimbri and Teutones, he was sent out as military tribune by Didius the praetor to Spain, and spent the winter in Castulo, a city of the Celtiberians. 4 Here the soldiers shook off all discipline in the midst of plenty, and were drunk most of the time, so that the barbarians despised them. One night they sent for aid from their neighbours, the Oritanians, attacked the Romans in their quarters and began to kill them. But Sertorius slipped out with a few others, and assembled the soldiers who were making their escape, and surrounded the city. He found the gate by which the barbarians had stolen in, but did not repeat their mistake; instead, he set a guard there, and then, taking possession of all quarters of the city, slew all the men who were of age to bear arms. 5 Then, when the slaughter was ended, he ordered all his soldiers to lay aside their own armour and clothing, to array themselves in those of the Barbarians, and then to follow him to the city from which the men came who had fallen upon them in the night. Having thus deceived the Barbarians by means of the armour which they saw, he found the gate of the city open, and caught a multitude of men who supposed they were coming forth to meet a successful party of friends and fellow citizens. Therefore most of the inhabitants were slaughtered by the Romans at the gate; the rest surrendered and were sold into slavery.

*After many amazing military feats, Sertorius eventually returns to Rome to run for the tribuneship but loses thanks to opposition from Sulla*; *civil war breaks out in Rome and he eventually – being on the losing side – escapes back to Spain:*

3 After encountering grievous storms in mountainous regions, he was asked by the Barbarians to pay them tribute and purchase his passage. His companions were indignant, and considered it a terrible thing for a Roman pro-consul to render tribute to pestilent Barbarians; but Sertorius made light of what they thought a disgrace, and with the remark that he was purchasing time, than which nothing is more precious to a man bent on great achievements, he pacified the Barbarians with money, and then hurried on and took possession of Spain. 4 He found its peoples strong in numbers and in fighting men, and since the rapacity and insolence of the Roman officials sent thither from time to time had made them hostile to the empire in all its aspects, he tried to win them over, the chiefs by his personal intercourse with them, the masses by a remission of taxes. His greatest popularity, however, was won by ridding them of the necessity for furnishing quarters for soldiers; for he compelled his soldiers to build their winter-quarters in the suburbs of the cities, and he himself was first to pitch his tent there. 5 However, he did not rely wholly on the goodwill of the Barbarians, but he armed all the Roman settlers of the country who were of military age, and by undertaking the construction of all sorts of engines of war and the building of triremes, kept the cities well in hand, being mild in the affairs of peace, but showing himself formidable by the preparations which he made against his enemies.

7 1 When he learned that Sulla was master of Rome, and that the party of Marius and Carbo was on the way to ruin, he expected that an army with a commander would come at once to fight with him.[[8]](#footnote-8) He therefore sent Julius Salinator with six thousand men-at‑arms to bar the passage of the Pyrenees. And not long afterwards Caius Annius was sent out by Sulla, and seeing that Julius could not be assailed, he knew not what to do, and sat idly down at the base of the mountains. 2 But a certain Calpurnius, surnamed Lanarius, treacherously killed Julius, whose soldiers abandoned the heights of the Pyrenees; whereupon Annius crossed over and advanced with a large force, routing all opposition. Sertorius, not being able to cope with him, took refuge with three thousand men in New Carthage; there he embarked his forces, crossed the sea, and landed in the country of the Maurusii, in Africa. 3 But while his soldiers were getting water and were off their guard, the barbarians fell upon them, and after losing many men, Sertorius sailed back again to Spain. From this shore too he was repulsed, but after being joined by some Cilician pirate vessels he attacked the island of Pityussa, overpowered the guard which Annius had set there, and effected a landing. After a short time, however, Annius came with numerous ships and five thousand men-at‑arms, and with him Sertorius attempted to fight a decisive naval battle, although the vessels which he had were light and built for speed rather than for fighting. 4 But the sea ran high with a strong west wind, and the greater part of the vessels of Sertorius, owing to their lightness, were driven aslant upon the rocky shore, while he himself, with a few ships, excluded from the open sea by the storm, and from the land by the enemy, was tossed about for ten days in a battle with adverse waves and fierce surges, and with difficulty held his own.

8 1 But the wind subsided and he was borne along to certain scattered and waterless islands, where he spent the night; then, setting out from there, and passing through the strait of Cadiz, he kept the outer coast of Spain on the right and landed a little above the mouths of the river Baetis, which empties into the Atlantic sea and has given its name to the adjacent parts of Spain. 2 Here he fell in with some sailors who had recently come back from the Atlantic Islands. These are two in number, separated by a very narrow strait; they are ten thousand furlongs distant from Africa, and are called the Islands of the Blest. They enjoy moderate rains at long intervals, and winds which for the most part are soft and precipitate dews, so that the islands not only have a rich soil which is excellent for plowing and planting, but also produce a natural fruit that is plentiful and wholesome enough to feed, without toil or trouble, a leisured folk. 3 Moreover, a healthy air blows over the islands owing to the climate and the moderate changes in the seasons,. For the north and east winds which blow out from our part of the world plunge into fathomless space, and, owing to the distance, dissipate themselves and lose their power before they reach the islands; while the south and west winds that envelope the islands sometimes bring in their train soft and intermittent showers, but for the most part cool them with moist breezes and gently nourish the soil. Therefore a firm belief has made its way, even to the Barbarians, that here is the Elysian Field and the abode of the blessed, of which Homer sang.

9 1 When Sertorius heard this tale, he was seized with an amazing desire to dwell in the islands and live in quiet, freed from tyranny and wars that would never end. The Cilicians, however, who did not want peace or leisure, but wealth and spoils, when they were aware of his desire, sailed away to Africa, to restore Ascalis the son of Iphtha to the throne of Maurusia. 2 Nevertheless Sertorius did not despair, but resolved to go to the aid of those who were fighting against Ascalis, in order that his followers might get some fresh ground for hope and occasion for new enterprise, and so might remain together in spite of their difficulties. The Maurusians were glad to have him come, and he set himself to work, defeated Ascalis in battle, and laid siege to him. 3 Moreover, when Sulla sent out Paccianus with an army to give aid to Ascalis, Sertorius joined battle with Paccianus and slew him, won over his soldiers after their defeat,  and forced to a surrender the city of Tingis, into which Ascalis and his brethren had fled for refuge. In this city the Libyans say that [the mythical giant] Antaeus is buried; and Sertorius had his tomb dug open, the great size of which made him disbelieve the barbarians. But when he came upon the body and found it to be sixty cubits long, as they tell us, he was dumbfounded, and after performing a sacrifice filled up the tomb again, and joined in magnifying its traditions and honours. 4 Now, the people of Tingis have a myth that after the death of Antaeus, his wife, Tinga, consorted with Heracles, and that Sophax was the fruit of this union, who became king of the country and named a city which he founded after his mother; also that Sophax had a son, Diodorus, to whom many of the Libyan peoples became subject, since he had a Greek army composed of the Olbians and Mycenaeans who were settled in those parts by Heracles. 5 But this tale must be ascribed to a desire to gratify Juba, of all kings the most devoted to historical enquiry; for his ancestors are said to have been descendants of Sophax and Diodorus. So, Sertorius, having made himself master of the whole country, did no wrong to those who were his suppliants and put their trust in him, but restored to them both property and cities and government, receiving only what was right and fair in free gifts from them.

10 1 As he was deliberating whither to turn his efforts next, the Lusitanians sent ambassadors and invited him to be their leader. They were altogether lacking in a commander of great reputation and experience as they faced the terror of the Roman arms, and they entrusted themselves to him, and to him alone, when they learned about his character from those who had been with him. 2 And it is said that Sertorius was no easy victim either of pleasure or of fear, but that he was naturally brave in the face of danger, and bore prosperity with moderation; in straightforward fighting he was as bold as any commander of his time, while in all military activities demanding stealth and the power to seize an advantage in securing strong positions or in crossing rivers, where speed, deceit, and, if necessary, falsehood are required, he was an expert of the highest ability. 3 Moreover, while he was generous in rewarding deeds of courage, he used moderation in punishing transgressions. And yet, in the last part of his life, the savage and vindictive treatment which he bestowed upon his hostages would seem to show that his mildness was not natural to him, but was worn as a garment, from calculation, as necessity required…

11 1 However, at the time of which I speak he set out from Africa on the invitation of the Lusitanians. He proceeded to organize these at once, acting as their general with full powers, and he brought the neighbouring parts of Spain into subjection. Most of the people joined him of their own accord, owing chiefly to his mildness and efficiency; but sometimes he also betook himself to cunning devices of his own for deceiving and charming them. The chief one of these, certainly, was the device of the doe, which was as follows. 2 Spanus, a plebeian who lived in the country, came upon a doe which had newly yeaned and was trying to escape the hunters. The mother he could not overtake, but the fawn — and he was struck with its unusual colour, for it was entirely white — he pursued and caught. And since, as it chanced, Sertorius had taken up his quarters in that region, and gladly received everything in the way of game or produce that was brought him as a gift, and made kindly returns to those who did him such favours, Spanus brought the fawn and gave it to him. 3 Sertorius accepted it, and at the moment felt only the ordinary pleasure in a gift; but in time, after he had made the animal so tame and gentle that it obeyed his call, accompanied him on his walks, and did not mind the crowds and all the uproar of camp life, he gradually tried to give the doe a religious importance by declaring that she was a gift of Diana, and solemnly alleged that she revealed many hidden things to him, knowing that the Barbarians were naturally an easy prey to superstition. 4 He also added such devices as these. Whenever he had secret intelligence that the enemy had made an incursion into the territory which he commanded, or were trying to bring a city to revolt from him, he would pretend that the doe had conversed with him in his dreams, bidding him hold his forces in readiness. Again, when he got tidings of some victory won by his generals, he would hide the  p31 messenger, and bring forth the doe wearing garlands for the receipt of glad tidings, exhorting his men to be of good cheer and to sacrifice to the gods, assured that they were to learn of some good fortune.

12 1 By these devices he made the people tractable, and so found them more serviceable for all his plans; they believed that they were led, not by the mortal wisdom of a foreigner, but by a god. At the same time events also brought witness to this belief by reason of the extraordinary growth of the power of Sertorius. 2 For with the twenty-six hundred men whom he called Romans, and a motley band of seven hundred Libyans who crossed over into Lusitania with him, to whom he added four thousand Lusitanian targeteers and seven hundred horsemen, he waged war with four Roman generals, under whom were a hundred and twenty thousand footmen, six thousand horsemen, two thousand bowmen and slingers, and an untold number of cities, while he himself had at first only twenty all told. 3 But nevertheless, from so weak and slender a beginning, he not only subdued great nations and took many cities, but was also victorious over the generals sent against him: Cotta he defeated in a sea-fight in the straits near Mellaria; Fufidius, the governor of Baetica, he routed on the banks of the Baetis with the slaughter of two thousand Roman soldiers; Lucius Domitius, who was pro-consul of the other Spain, was defeated at the hands of his quaestor; 4 Thoranius, another of the commanders sent out by Metellus with an army, he slew; and on Metellus himself, the greatest Roman of the time and held in highest repute, he inflicted many defeats and reduced him to so great straits that Lucius Manlius came from Gallia Narbonensis to help him, and Pompey the Great was hurriedly dispatched from Rome with an army. 5 For Metellus was at his wits' end. He was carrying on war with a man of daring who evaded every kind of open fighting, and who made all manner of shifts and changes, owing to the light equipment and agility of his Iberian soldiers; whereas he himself had been trained in regular contests of heavy-armed troops, and was wont to command a ponderous and immobile phalanx, which, for repelling and overpowering an enemy at close quarters, was most excellently trained, but for climbing mountains, for dealing with the incessant pursuits and flights of men as light as the winds, and for enduring hunger and a life without fire or tent, as their enemies did, it was worthless.

13 1 Besides this, Metellus was now getting on in years, and was somewhat inclined also, by this time, to an easy and luxurious mode of life after his many and great contests; whereas his opponent, Sertorius, was full of mature vigour, and had a body which was wonderfully constituted for strength, speed, and plain living. 2 For in excessive drinking he would not indulge even in his hours of ease, and he was wont to endure great toils, long marches, and continuous wakefulness, content with meagre and indifferent food; moreover, since he was also wandering about or hunting when he had leisure for it, he obtained an acquaintance with every way of escape for a fugitive, or of surrounding an enemy under pursuit, in places both accessible and inaccessible. The result was, therefore, that Metellus, by being kept from fighting, suffered all the harm which visits men who are defeated; while Sertorius, by flying, had the advantages of men who pursue. 3 For he would cut off his opponent's supply of water and prevent his foraging; if the Romans advanced, he would get out of their way, and if they settled down in camp, he would harass them; if they besieged a place, he would come up and put them under siege in their turn by depriving them of supplies. At last the Roman soldiers were in despair, and when Sertorius challenged Metellus to single combat, they cried aloud and bade him fight, general with general, and Roman with Roman, and when he declined, they mocked at him. 4 But Metellus laughed at all this, and he was right; for a general, as Theophrastus says, should die the death of a general, not that of a common targeteer. Then, seeing that the Langobritae were giving no slight assistance to Sertorius, and that their city could easily be taken for lack of water (since they had but one well in the city, and the streams in the suburbs and along the walls would be in the power of any besieger), Metellus came out against the city, intending to complete the siege in two days, since there was no water there. On this account, too, he had given orders to his soldiers to take along provisions of only five days. 5 But Sertorius quickly came to the rescue and ordered two thousand skins to be filled with water, offering for each skin a considerable sum of money. Many Iberians and many Maurusians volunteered for the work, and after selecting men who were both sturdy and swift of foot, he sent them by a route through the mountains, with orders that when they had delivered the skins to the people in the city, they should secretly convey away the unserviceable mass of the population, in order that the water might suffice for the actual defenders of the city. When Metellus learned that this had been done, he was annoyed, since his soldiers had already consumed their provisions, and sent out Aquinus, at the head of six thousand men, to forage. But Sertorius learned of this and set an ambush of three thousand men in the road by which Aquinus was to return. These sallied forth from a shady ravine and attacked Aquinus in the rear, while Sertorius himself assailed him in front, routed him, slew some of his men, and took some of them prisoners. Aquinus, after losing both his armour and his horse, got back to Metellus, who then retired disgracefully, much flouted by the Iberians.

14 1 Because of these successes Sertorius was admired and loved by the barbarians, especially because by introducing Roman arms and formations and signals he did away with their frenzied and furious displays of courage, and converted their forces into an army instead of a huge band of bandits. 2 In addition, he used gold and silver without stint for the decoration of their helmets and the ornamentation of their shields, and by teaching them to wear flowered cloaks and tunics, and furnishing them with the means to do this, and sharing their love of beautiful array, he won the hearts of all. But most of all were they captivated by what he did with their boys. He collected together those of the highest birth from various peoples at Osca, a large city, and gave them teachers of Greek and Roman learning; thus in reality he made hostages of them, while ostensibly he was educating them, with the assurance that when they became men he would give them a share in administration and authority. 3 So the fathers were wonderfully pleased to see their sons, in purple-bordered togas, very decorously going to their schools, and Sertorius paying their fees for them, holding frequent examinations, distributing prizes to the deserving, and presenting them with the golden necklaces which the Romans call bulla. 4 It was the custom among the Iberians for those who were stationed about their leader to die with him if he fell, and the Barbarians in those parts call this a "consecration." Now, the other commanders had few such shield-bearers and companions, but Sertorius was attended by many thousands of men who had thus consecrated themselves to death. 5 And we are told that when his army had been defeated at a certain city and the enemy were pressing upon them, the Iberians, careless of themselves, rescued Sertorius, and taking him on their shoulders one after another, carried him to the walls, and only when their leader was in safety, did they betake themselves to flight, each man for himself.

*All things come to an end and Sertorius eventually endures a number of defeats; if you are interested in the full story, I recommend reading the entire life.* *But the above gives you some idea of how Romans could go rogue and become unRoman, and also the ways that they fantasized about what we might call the ‘Roman saviour complex’ whereby they, and only they, could make a foreign people into a proper fighting force against their Roman opponents – and how all people really, really wanted to become Roman if they could.*

1. Exile was a legal punishment, in the Republic the result of losing a court case. Some people just skipped out of town before they lost their case. Other people just left town for other reasons. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. According to Roman law only a Roman could be married to a Roman. Thus at this point Terentia and Cicero were no longer man and wife in the eyes of Roman law, as Cicero was no longer a Roman citizen. She was entitled – and should legally have – to take back her dowry and abandon him to his fate. He was not entitled in any moral or social sense to ask her run risks of this nature for him. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. To the state, which got the property of exiles. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Cato the Younger, who considered himself a champion of traditional Roman values like his great-grandfather, Cato the Elder. He wore an old fashioned skimpy toga and shouted a lot about morality, and was unbribeable. He had two sisters called Servilia; the older was the mother of Brutus and the mistress of Julius Caesar (who may have been Brutus’ father); the younger married Lucullus and apparently cheated on him a number of times. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The general and seven-time consul Gaius Marius (157-86 BCE) was from the same town as Cicero, and like him was a new man. Unlike him he was a military man, and not at all fond of the fancier trimmings [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Roman generals did very well out of campaigns against wealthy nations in the Republic, being able to scoop off huge amounts of wealth from the plunder as long as they were willing to face a court case or two on their way back. (And they would have enough money to bribe the jury in that, thanks to all the plunder.) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Purple was the most expensive dye possible in Rome, so the cost for 100 cloaks would be huge. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. As Sertorius had been a supporter of Marius. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)