

Projekttitel: eManual Alte Geschichte
Modul [optional]:
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Text Übersetzung:

(Alfred C. Schlesinger / Evelyn S. Shuckburgh)

[5] It was evident that the key to Egypt was in Antiochus' hands, so that he could reinvade it when he wished. The upshot of a civil war between the brothers would be that the winner, worn out by the struggle, would be no match for Antiochus. [6] This wise reasoning by the elder brother was gratefully accepted by the younger brother and his associates; the sister gave much assistance not only by her advice, but by her entreaties. [7] Accordingly, peace was made by general agreement [...]

[8] It would have been in order for Antiochus to rejoice at this conclusion had he led his army into Egypt for the purpose of restoring Ptolemy —the specious plea that he had employed in statements to all the states of Asia and Greece either when he received embassies or sent out messages. But he was so incensed that he prepared for war against the two brothers with much more urgency and bitterness than against the one. [9] He immediately sent a fleet to Cyprus; and in early spring he himself advanced with his army into Hollow Syria on his way to Egypt. [10] Near Rhinocolura envoys from Ptolemy met him, offering thanks for his assistance in recovering Ptolemy's ancestral throne and requesting that he should not undo his act of kindness and rather say what he wanted done than shift from ally to enemy and act by force of arms. Antiochus replied that he would recall his fleet and lead back his army on no other terms than the cession to him of all Cyprus, Pelusium, and the region which lies around the Pelusian mouth of the Nile. [11] He also named a day before which he must receive the report of the execution of his terms.

When Antiochus had advanced to attack Ptolemy in order to possess himself of Pelusium, he was met by the Roman commander Gaius Popilius Laenas. Upon the king greeting him from some distance, and holding out his right hand to him, Popilius answered by holding out the tablets which contained the decree of the Senate, and bade Antiochus read that first: not thinking it right, I suppose, to give the usual sign of friendship until he knew the mind of the recipient, whether he were to be regarded as a friend or foe. On the king, after reading the despatch, saying that he desired to consult with his friends on the situation, Popilius did a thing which was looked upon as exceedingly overbearing and insolent. Happening to have a vine stick in his hand, he drew a circle round Antiochus with it, and ordered him to give his answer to the letter before he stepped out of that circumference. The king was taken aback by this haughty proceeding. After a brief interval of embarrassed silence, he replied that he would do whatever the Romans demanded. Then Popilius and his colleagues shook him by the hand, and one and all greeted him with warmth. The contents of the despatch was an order to put an end to the war with Ptolemy at once. Accordingly, a stated number of days was allowed him, within which he withdrew his army into Syria, in high dudgeon indeed, and groaning in spirit, but yielding to the necessities of the time. Popilius and his colleagues then restored order in Alexandria; and after exhorting the two kings to maintain peaceful relations with each other and charging them at the same time to send Polyaratus to Rome, they took ship and sailed towards Cyprus, with the intention of promptly ejecting from the island the forces that were also gathered there. When they arrived, they found that Ptolemy's generals had already sustained a defeat, and that the whole island was in a state of excitement. They promptly caused the invading army to evacuate the country and remained there to keep watch until the forces had sailed away for Syria. Thus did the Romans save the kingdom of Ptolemy, when it was all but sinking under its disasters.