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Text Übersetzung:

(Evelyn S. Shuckburgh)

[88] About the same period the earthquake occurred at Rhodes, which overthrew the great Colossus and the larger part of the walls and dockyards. But the adroit policy of the Rhodians converted this misfortune into an opportunity; and under their skilful management, instead of adding to their embarrassments, it became the means of restoring their prosperity. So decisive in human affairs, public or private, is the difference between incapacity and good sense, between idle indifference and a close attention to business. Good fortune only damages the one, while disaster is but a means of recovery to the other. This was illustrated by the manner in which the Rhodians turned the misfortune that befell them to account. They enhanced its magnitude and importance by the prominence which they gave it, and the serious tone in which they spoke of it, as well by the mouth of their ambassadors as in the intercourse of private life; and they created thus such an effect upon other states, and especially upon the feelings of the kings, that they were not only overwhelmed with presents, but made the donors feel actually obliged for their acceptance of them. Hiero and Gelo, for instance, presented them with seventy-five talents of silver, part at once, and the rest at a very short interval, as a contribution towards the expenses of the gymnasium; gave them for religious purposes some silver cauldrons and their stands, and some water vessels; and in addition to this ten talents for their sacrifices, and ten more to attract new citizens: their intention being that the whole present should amount to a hundred talents. Not only so, but they gave immunity from customs to Rhodian merchants coming to their ports; and presented them besides with fifty catapults of three cubits length. In spite too of these large gifts, they regarded themselves as under an obligation to the Rhodians; and accordingly erected statues in the Deigma or Mart of Rhodes, representing the community of Rhodes crowned by that of Syracuse.

[89] Then too Ptolemy offered them three hundred talents of silver; a million medimni of corn; ship timber for ten quinqueremes and ten triremes, consisting of forty thousand cubits of squared pine planking; a thousand talents of bronze coinage; three thousand talents of tow; three thousand pieces of sail cloth; three thousand talents for the repair of the Colossus; a hundred master builders with three hundred and fifty workmen, and fourteen talents yearly to pay their

wages. Besides this he gave twelve thousand medimni of corn for their public games and sacrifices, and twenty thousand medimni for victualling ten triremes. The greater part of these goods was delivered at once, as well as a third of the whole of the money named. In a similar spirit Antigonus offered ten thousand timbers, varying from sixteen to eight cubits in length, to be used as purlins; five thousand rafters seven cubits long; three thousand talents of iron; a thousand talents of pitch; a thousand amphorae of the same unboiled; and a hundred talents of silver besides. His queen, Chryseis, also gave a hundred thousand medimni of corn, and three thousand talents of lead. Again Seleucus, father of Antiochus, besides granting freedom from imports to Rhodians sailing to his dominions, and besides giving ten quinqueremes fully equipped, and two hundred thousand medimni of corn; gave also ten thousand cubits of timber, and a thousand talents of resin and hair.

[90] [...] My object in giving these details is twofold. I wished to exhibit the brilliant conduct of their public affairs by the Rhodians, for indeed they deserve both to be commended and imitated: and I wished also to point out the insignificance of the gifts bestowed by the kings of our own day, and received by nations and states; that these monarchs may not imagine that by the expenditure of four or five talents they are doing anything so very great, or expect to receive at the hands of the Greeks the honour enjoyed by former kings; and that states when they see before their eyes the magnitude of the presents formerly bestowed, may not, nowadays, in return for insignificant and paltry benefactions, blindly bestow their most ample and splendid honours; but may use that discrimination in apportioning their favours to desert, in which Greeks excel the rest of the world.