Spolia as Exempla / Exempla as Spolia: two case studies on historical (dis)continuity and morality

Pieper, C.H.; Jong, I.J.F. de; Versluys, M.J.

CHAPTER 4

Spolia as Exempla / Exempla as Spolia: Two Case Studies on Historical (Dis)Continuity and Morality

Christoph Pieper

In the last decades, interest in spolia has grown considerably, and not only in the field of archaeology. This has to do with their fascinating position in between the fields of politics, religion and aesthetics: in the ancient world, spolia could be museal objects exposed for their beauty, luxuriousness or age, which rendered them conspicuous to all viewers and attributed a kind of cultural authority to them. At the same time, spolia won during or after military combat were often used to showcase the glory of the city's (or the state's, or the Empire's) military and political achievements, power and influence, or that of one particular general; as such, the objects also carried weighty political authority. The third, religious layer was added through the space where the most conspicuous objects from such war booty were usually kept: they were dedicated in a temple and displayed there. This meant that they were given to the realm of the gods and thereby also received a religious aura themselves: they symbolized the bond of protection between the gods and the city, state or Empire.[1] In all three cases, the receiving culture tended to evaluate such spolia in positive terms.

But this only holds for the strictest definition of spolia as war booty. If, however, we define spolia in the modern sense of the word as objects that have been removed from a previous context and have been reinstalled in a new one, they are ubiquitous. In modern languages the term 'spolia' often refers specifically to spolia architecture like the famous eleventh-century Casa dei Crescenzi in Rome, a building that has been constructed by using and displaying fragments of ancient buildings within the new structure.[2] Reused building materials are a common feature in (and beyond) the ancient world, often for merely practical reasons, but sometimes also for highly ideological/political ones. As Esch has

1 It is important that spolia were disposed in temples, see Rutledge 2012: 35–38. The first *spolia opima* even defined the confines of the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius, cf. Liv. 1.10.5: *simul cum dono designavit templo Iovis fines* ('by offering his votive gift he defined the bounderies of the temple of Jupiter').

2 Cf. Esch 2011: 14–15. On the Casa dei Crescenzi, see Barbanera and Pergola 1997.

stated, 'reuse transforms the ancient piece from an antiquarian object into an historical one, which must therefore be understood historically'.[3]

This sense of architectural spolia is of course not the original meaning of the Latin word.[4] In the first instance, *spolia* indeed refers to war booty, i.e. objects that were taken from the enemy either during a battle (armour or military signs like coats of arms) or after the victory during the plundering of the conquered city (*OLD* s.v. 2). Yet already in antiquity, the term was also applied to taking away luxurious goods and artworks from a dependent city and carrying them to Rome (*OLD* s.v. 3) and accordingly to robbing in a more general way.[5] Gaius Verres is probably the best-known example of a Roman governor who spoliated the province for which he was responsible (Sicily) in order to fulfil his personal desire for luxury – at least this is the image we receive from the invective speeches that Cicero held (or wrote) for the trial against him in 70 BCE (more on which below).[6] It is obvious that with this altered meaning the evaluation of spolia also changes: moral discourse in antiquity often condemned plundering for personal reasons. This means that the question of whether objects coming to Rome from other places in the world were evaluated positively or negatively, depended on the use of the objects, but also on the narrative or discursive frame in which they were discussed.[7] In the following I will discuss two case studies from Latin literature in which the authors play with the ambivalent meaning of the term that can refer both to very positive (like the dedication of the prestigious *spolia opima*) and very negative things (like Verres' robberies in Sicily). I suggest that this ambiguity has made spolia an especially appealing literary topos that could be used to negotiate questions of collective or personal ethics.

The first part of my chapter is about spolia in historiographical narrative that are used as an exemplum. I will demonstrate this especially with regard

3 Esch 2011: 17.

4 In order to grasp the different layers of spolia, the recent edited volume by Loar, MacDonald and Padilla Peralta 2018 introduces the term 'cargo': moving objects, concepts, cultural traditions and even people like slaves, which all invite questions about (multiple) identities and cultural agency in the Roman Empire.

5 The *OLD* gives as first occurrence of this meaning a passage from Cicero's early speech *Pro Sexto Roscio Amerino* (par. 145), where Cicero speaks with the voice of his client and addresses the man who according to his version is the real instigator of the murder of his father Roscius: Sulla's freedman Chrysogonus. It is interesting that the context of the speech is the Sullan proscriptions that followed the Civil War of the 80s BCE, which makes the transition from military to non-military use of the word palpable.

6 On Verres' spolia within the context of 'art as plunder' see the impressive monograph by Miles 2008.

7 Cf. Rutledge 2012: 42–43.

to Livy's treatment of Marcellus' Syracusan spolia (on which see also Van de Velde in this volume). I will argue that in his narrative questions of agency and morality are closely intertwined. Through a debate in the senate between Sicilian ambassadors and Marcellus, the reader is invited to consider the tension arising from the double nature of spolia, which (still) participate in the context from which they have been taken and (already) have a new function in the context to which they have been brought. Livy's treatment of Marcellus is heavily indebted to exemplary discourse. This is obviously in line with the general shape of his work, which is constructed around important exemplary figures of the past that teach his readers the moral lesson the historian wants to convey.[8] As Rebecca Langlands has shown in her recent monograph, exempla were meant to teach not a single virtue, but morality, or rather the capacity to think in moral parameters, which in turn has the aim of confirming the feeling of Roman-ness. One could say that becoming Roman meant to put on the mask of past exemplary figures regularly. This kind of diachronic masquerade, the mental reperforming or renegotiating of the deeds of the ancestors, served to incorporate their value system into one's own life.[9]

In the second part of the chapter I then move on to the aspect of exempla as literary spolia. I will thereby apply a meta-literary meaning to the word spolia. Starting from Esch's observation of spolia transforming an antiquarian object into a historical one, I will look at an instance of a literary-historical exemplum about spolia and read it as a textual spolium itself, in that it is taken from a certain narrative context into a new one. Ayelet Haimson Lushkov has made an interesting suggestion with regard to applying the word spolia to processes of textualization, in her case Livy's use of source quotations and intertextual links in his *Ab urbe condita*: '… spoliation offers a useful heuristic for thinking about a text that is overtly interested in the tension between the new and the old, indeed in the ways in which the old might be appropriated and made relevant to the here and now'.[10] According to her, stories about spolia offer an especially interesting case, as in these the content and the making of the text

8 As is famously expressed in the preface to the work (Liv. *Praef.* 10): *hoc illud est praecipue in cognitione rerum salubre ac frugiferum, omnis te exempli documenta in inlustri posita monumento intueri; inde tibi tuaeque rei publicae quod imitere capias, inde foedum inceptu foedum exitu quod uites.* ('This is what is truly beneficial and fruitful in the understanding of the events from the past: to see documentation of all kinds of exempla integrated into a shining literary monument; from there you can take what you should imitate for the sake of yourself and your state, and what you should avoid as they are disastrous in their beginning and disastrous in their end.') Cf. on exemplarity in Livy Chaplin 2000.

9 Langlands 2018, and cf. Roller 2018; Jansen 2022, ch. 2 and 3.

10 Haimson Lushkov 2018: 31–36; quotation 36.

mirror each other in a meta-literary way. The function of such processes of re-used texts is thereby not unsimilar to the moral didactic which Langlands attributes to exemplary discourse. I apply Haimson Lushkov's suggestion to Cicero's treatment of Dionysius' spoliation of Greek temples, which he narrates as an exemplum in his philosophical treatise *De natura deorum*. Just as objects that are transported from an original context to a new one, are thereby integrated into this new context and will often change their meaning or even their agency – a process which has been called 'appropriation' –[11] exempla in texts also come from other contexts, from which they are decontextualized and reinserted ('incorporated' in the terminology used by Versluys in his chapter in this volume) into a new argumentative or narrative structure. In Cicero's case, the exempla about Dionysius' spolia are no longer part of a historical narrative, but have been cut out of it and are pasted into a new context to function as textual ornament,[12] as persuasive element, and as a moral vignette (the step of 'transformation'). I will argue that one could define exempla as textual representations of material spolia, which might even serve a similar moralizing aim as the literary discourse about spolia of war and other kinds of plundered artwork.

Thinking of exempla in analogy with material spolia is an interesting thought experiment for several reasons: it reminds us that both material and textual spolia are part of the same emulative Roman culture that appropriates cultural 'cargo' from its own past, but also from other cultural contexts and turns it into cornerstones of its own cultural fashioning. While certain elements of their meaning remain stable during this process, the spolia change their cultural meaning and dynamics according to the context in which they

11 See the chapter by Versluys in this volume. It is well known that Rome's fascination with Greek culture was triggered both through literary and material 'cargo' that came to the capital, and the same is true for Egypt and other countries. All these imports changed both the Roman landscape and the Roman way of thinking and writing. Literature on this aspect is vast; for the Greek anchors of early Roman literature, see now the authoritative study by Feeney 2016; similarly influential has been Wallace-Hadrill 2008 for the domain of material culture. Pitts and Versluys 2014 discuss aspects of cultural globalization in the Roman world. Loar, MacDonald and Padillo Peralta 2018 are a thought-provoking collection of studies on the theme (in which, for instance, Dufallo offers an intriguing study of Plautus from the angle of the appropriation of material and textual artworks).

12 Just as with the objects, exempla as literary spolia can thereby be ideologically loaded and at the same time be conceived of as ornament – suffice to think of the rhetorical handbooks where exempla are treated under the heading of *exornatio* (e.g. in *Rhet. Her.* 4.62). Rhetorical treatises regularly discuss the question of what kind of exempla are ideal (cf. Klein 1996): is it better to make them yourself, as the *Rhetor ad Herennium* suggests (4.1–10), or is it the task of the orator to sample them from existent literature, as Cicero in *De oratore* 1.19 and Quintilian in *Institutio oratoria* 12.4 argue?

are integrated. In particular, exempla viewed as textual spolia can therefore invite us to ask questions that are important for spolia in general: what is their 'original' meaning, or better, is there an 'original' meaning at all? In other words: where is their original (topographical or textual) setting? And how does the appropriation work in terms of cultural fashioning? I do not mean by this that I want to overemphasize the parallels. There are important differences between material and textual spolia. One of the most crucial seems to me that reusing a textual element as an exemplum does not remove it from its previous textual basis. It might, however, change the reader's reaction to that source and thereby attribute a new meaning to the previous context. For this reason textual exempla are moved around much more freely and regularly, and often without any moral debate concerning this procedure.

1 Livy, Marcellus, and (Augustan) Rome

I start with a famous moment in Roman history. In 212 BCE, Marcus Claudius Marcellus conquered Syracuse after a siege of two years and plundered it. The huge number of fine Greek artworks that he brought to Rome and partly exhibited in the temple of Honos and Virtus were conspicuous, as they were the first substantial spolia of Greek art in the city.[13] It is noteworthy that already before the events at Syracuse Marcellus is closely associated with spolia: in 222 he had killed the Insubrian king Viridomarus in battle and taken his precious armour, which therefore qualified as *spolia opima*. Marcellus was only the third Roman in the historical record to be able to dedicate the *spolia opima* to Jupiter Feretrius – an honourable deed with which he imitated the exemplary military virtue of Rome's first king Romulus and of Cossus, the victor of Lars Tolumnius, king of Veii, and thereby inserted himself into this series of men with exemplary status.[14] The fact that the armour was made of gold and silver, painted in

13 Cf. Livy 25.40.2: *ceterum inde primum initium mirandi Graecarum artium opera licentiaeque hinc sacra profanaque omnia uulgo spoliandi factum est* ('this was the first beginning of marvelling at Greek artworks and of habitually taking away all holy and profane objects'), on which see below. Cf. Miles 2008: 61–68, and Flower 2003: 41–45 for a concise overview of the ancient sources, and see Allan in this volume on Polybius' discussion of the events. On the debate as to whether they prelude the 'Hellenization' of Roman culture, see McDonnell 2006. On Marcellus in Livy, see also Carawan 1984–1985.

14 We do not have Livy's treatment of the event, only the reference to it in the summary (*periocha*) of book 20: *M. Claudius Marcellus cos. occiso Gallorum Insubrium duce, Vertomaro, opima spolia rettulit* ('The consul M. Claudius Marcellus brought home the *spolia opima* after having killed the leader of the Insubrian Gauls, Vertomarus'). On Marcellus and the *spolia opima*, cf. Rutledge 2012: 125–126. Flower 2000 suggests that Marcellus invented the

different colours and embroidered with luxurious textile (πανοπλία ἐν ἀργύρῳ καὶ χρυσῷ καὶ βαφαῖς καὶ πᾶσι ποικίλμασιν, Plu. *Marc.* 7.1) had no effect on the Romans' evaluation of Marcellus' exemplary deed. The luxurious Syracusan spolia on the other hand will turn out to be less favourable for his renown: in Livy's view they mark the beginning of Rome's fascination for luxury. Even if in both cases we are dealing with military spolia, Marcellus' career shows the increasing need to negotiate the moral acceptability of such spolia, especially if they are very luxurious: on the one hand they increase Rome's renown (and that of the triumphant general), but on the other hand they trigger a much more ambiguous *desire* for more spolia in the sense of luxury goods.

Livy gives the Syracusan spolia huge emphasis. The reference to them is separated from the main story of the sack of the city through an intermediate narrative and is one of the last things mentioned in book 25, thus forming the closure of the first pentad dealing with the Second Punic Wars. In book 26, Livy returns to the topic. Two years after the sack, when Marcellus is consul and receives Sicily as his proconsular province, the Sicilians protest in Rome, as the memory of the sack is still too fresh for them. They manage to arouse his fellow senators' envy at Marcellus' capturing of the city and finally achieve that the senate debates about a possible redistribution of the provinces in order not to harm the feelings of the Sicilians. Livy's rendering of the debate is instructive as it shows the narrative and moral potential of spolia in literary texts. As often, he uses pairs of speeches to show the complexity of political and moral issues at hand and thereby invites the reader to participate actively in the evaluation.[15] In our case he sharply contrasts different takes on how one should evaluate the spoliation of cities: are they a sign of egoistic greed and excessive brutality or are they sanctioned by the laws of war and actually constitute an altruistic service to one's own city?

The Sicilian ambassadors obviously advocate the first position. They accuse Marcellus of inappropriate harshness when capturing their city; they assert both their own and their previous tyrant Hiero's loyalty to Rome and blame a clique of a few tyrannical people in the city for actions directed against Roman interests. According to them, Marcellus, instead of collaborating with the pro-Roman majority, had not been interested in peace, but had been keen on

tradition of the *spolia opima*. For the positive commemoration of his victory and spoliation cf. Verg. *A.* 6.855–856 (*aspice, ut insignis spoliis Marcellus opimis | ingreditur victorque viros* ***supereminet omnis****,* 'see how Marcellus, distinguished by the *spolia opima*, moves forward and as winner stands out above all men').

15 Cf. Pausch 2011: 205: 'Einerseits verdeutlichen sie [pairs of speech in Livy, CP] dem Leser, dass die Interpretation vergangener Ereignisse nur standpunkts- oder personengebunden erfolgen kann und laden ihn ein, an dem Prozess der Meinungsbildung zu partizipieren.'

destroying and plundering the city. The effect of the Roman sack is depicted in pathos-laden terms: 'Apart from broken and plundered temples of the gods – the [statues of the] gods themselves and their ornaments were carried away – nothing was left in Syracuse. Personal belongings were similarly taken away from many people in such a way that they could not even nurture themselves and their families on the bare ground from the leftovers of their stolen property' (*praeter … refracta ac spoliata deum delubra dis ipsis ornamentisque eorum ablatis nihil relictum Syracusis esse. bona quoque multis adempta ita ut ne nudo quidem solo reliquiis direptae fortunae alere sese ac suos possent*, 26.30.9–10).[16] What interests me here is not the invoking of *misericordia*, but the swift transition from spolia taken from the temples of the gods to the plundering of the personal belongings of most inhabitants of the city. This swiftness invites the reader to interpret the even greater wickedness of Roman soldiers plundering private houses and showing no mercy towards their former allies as a logical consequence of Marcellus' decision to plunder the temples.

Marcellus' answer is prompt, yet he is fair enough to give it in the presence of the ambassadors.[17] According to him, the Syracusans had defected from the Roman cause; no citizen was willing to cooperate with him, even though he made several attempts to come to a peaceful solution. Therefore he had to punish the disloyal city. The spoliation was part of this act of revenge. Marcellus relies on two arguments: the *ius belli* formally entitled him to sack the city, and his actions were an adequate retribution for the behaviour of its inhabitants.[18] Also with regard to the spolia his arguments are completely opposed to those of the Sicilian ambassadors. Whereas they had argued from their Syracusan angle, Marcellus' answer takes on a Roman perspective: 'If I, conscript fathers, would have refused the spoliation of Syracuse, I could never embellish Rome with Syracuse's spolia' (*ego, patres conscripti, Syracusas spoliatas si negaturus essem, nunquam spoliis earum urbem Romam exornarem*, 26.31.9). For Marcellus, the objects were no longer Syracusan but had already become Roman, and Rome's splendour is in the interest of the state.[19] Therefore, he did not act for egoistic reasons, but followed the interest of the state.

16 All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

17 Carawan 1984–1985: 138 ascribes fairness and constraint to Marcellus in the confrontation with the Sicilian ambassadors.

18 Cf. 26.31.2: *quidquid in hostibus feci* ***ius belli*** *defendit* ('Whatever I did to the enemies is defended by the law of war') ~ 26.31.9: *quae autem singulis uictor aut ademi aut dedi, cum* ***belli iure*** *tum ex* ***cuiusque merito*** *satis scio me fecisse* ('What I did as winner to every single man [of the enemy], I know well enough that I did it on the basis of the law of war and of everyone's merits.').

19 Cf. McDonnell 2006: 82 on the popularity of his exhibition of the objects in public space; on p. 83 he suggests that, ironically, Marcellus' model for his act was probably the art-loving Syracusan court of Hiero.

The majority of the senators, however, driven by *invidia Marcelli*, think that his conquest was too harsh; their spokesman is T. Manlius Torquatus, who voices the opinion that Marcellus should have spared the city because Rome will need it as an ally in the future (it is called the *horreum atque aerarium populi Romani*, 'storehouse and treasurehouse of the Roman people') and because it had been loyal in the past. When turning to the spolia he, like the ambassadors, recurs to pathos as well: Hiero, the former ally of Rome, would be shocked if he came back to life and saw his native city spoliated but Rome filled with Syracusan artworks: 'If Hiero, the most loyal ally of the Roman Empire, would arise from the dead, with what attitude could one show him either Syracuse or Rome? For as soon as he would have viewed his fatherland half-demolished and plundered, entering Rome he would see in the forecourt of the city, almost at the door, the spolia of his fatherland' (*si ab inferis exsistat rex Hiero fidissimus imperii Romani cultor, quo ore aut Syracusas aut Romam ei ostendi posse, cum, ubi semirutam ac spoliatam patriam respexerit, ingrediens Romam in uestibulo urbis, prope in porta, spolia patriae suae uisurus sit?* 26.32.4). Torquatus does not subscribe to Marcellus' view that through the events the spolia have become Roman, but labels them as Syracusan (*spolia patriae*) – this is where they came from, and this is where they belong, even if they are now located in Rome.

Contrary to what a modern reader might expect, however, Torquatus does not argue for the repatriation of the spolia back to Sicily. He silently seems to agree that since they are already there, they had better remain in Rome. The stress on their Syracusan origin does not serve a cultural-political aim, but is used in order to attack the morality of his colleague, the Roman commander Marcellus. This seems a general observation: as Rutledge has shown, rarely do we find references to actual repatriation of spolia in our ancient sources.[20] Scipio Aemilianus, who returns the Sicilian spolia from Carthage to Sicily instead of taking them to Rome, is an exception.[21] In the case of Marcellus and the Sicilians, the spolia are narrative elements that test the morality of the people involved in the narrative. Livy shows this by highlighting their fascinating double characteristic as belonging both to the world of 'the other' and the world of oneself.

At the end of this fierce debate about Marcellus' behaviour, however, Livy surprisingly adds a scene of reconciliation. The senate passes Marcellus' *acta* without blaming him (obviously, the public debate was considered harmful enough for his reputation to serve as a reprimand), and the Sicilian ambassadors

20 Rutledge 2012: 52–53, who also discusses the example of Scipio Aemilianus.

21 Cf. Miles 2008: 95–99, according to whom Scipio's deed shows 'a thoughtful, far-reaching view of historical interconnections'. On spolia of a second degree, see below.

are assured of the support of the Roman senate for the restoration of their city. Marcellus' acquittal is staged in public when the Sicilian ambassadors kneel in front of him and ask him to forgive them their harsh words and to accept them under his patronage.[22] One might read this end of the scene symbolically: by bowing in front of him, the Sicilians forgive Marcellus for spoliating Syracuse and thereby sanction the Romanization of their objects. As a compensation, the Romans will help them to adorn their own city with new objects. This adds an interesting glimpse at another aspect: spolia leave a visible lacuna in their original setting, which either has to be left empty as a memorial or has to be refilled with substitutes. For the moment things seem solved – but Livy's readers know that Marcellus' plundering of Syracuse has introduced *luxuria* in Rome. Romanizing the Syracusan spolia changes Roman-ness itself: the arrival of luxury goods from another cultural surrounding will shape Rome's cityscape and its collective morals in a considerable way.[23]

2 Spolia as Exempla of (Im)Morality

The fact that Livy returns to the Syracusan objects in book 26 during his account of the events two years after the sack of the city shows its importance for his conception of Rome's history.[24] In his view, the Syracusan spolia are more than objects moved from one place to another – in fact, as Margaret Miles has observed, the actual objects seem of little relevance, for he does not specify what the booty consisted of.[25] Instead of treating them as individual objects, Livy uses them collectively as an exemplum from the past. Therefore he attributes a kind of collective agency to them, as he has already expressed in book 25: 'This was the first beginning of marvelling at Greek artworks and

22 For the scene cf. Jaeger 2003: 230. Plu. *Marc.* 23 also includes the moment in his *Life of Marcellus*, for which see the brief remarks by Rives 1993: 33.

23 Cf. the Introduction to this volume on Moatti 1997 and her idea about Roman identity as being shaped by cultural contacts with others. Cf. Carawan 1984–1985: 137 for the specific Livian perspective: 'For Polybius the plunder of Syracuse undermined Roman authority; for Livy it weakened Roman character'.

24 On the noteworthy position of Marcellus' spolia at the end of book 25 – the passage being separated from the capture of Syracuse by the narrative of Marcius' events in Spain of the same year – cf. Jaeger 1997: 124–131.

25 Miles 2008: 64: also other ancient authors did not care much 'about exactly what was taken'. Cf. Gros 1979: 87 and Palombi 1996: 31, who notes that we only know the identity of one object of the treasury, a *planetarium* allegedly constructed by Archimedes. McDonnell 2006: 71 stresses that ancient authors agree in highlighting the amount and fine quality of the objects.

of habitually taking away all holy and profane objects' (*inde primum initium mirandi Graecarum artium opera licentiaeque hinc sacra profanaque omnia uulgo spoliandi factum*, 25.40.2).[26] In other words, the objects that have been taken as regular and legitimate war booty (*spolia … parta belli iure*, ibid.) incite the Romans to look for Greek artworks more broadly. The expression *uulgo spoliare* used by Livy no longer refers to booty alone, but invites associations with other ways of acquiring these objects: through trade, but also, as Livy's readers knew too well from Rome's recent history, through plundering the provinces during one's governorship or other illegal actions. Spolia therefore will no longer be confined to a distinctly military context, but will become a general feature in Rome (*uulgo*).

Livy's perspective on Marcellus and the consequences of him bringing Syracuse's spolia to Rome seems partially anachronistic. He connects the Syracusan spolia to a theme that was widely discussed in the first century BCE: when did the decline of political morals in Rome, which had brought the Republic into a deep crisis and finally caused its factual end, actually begin? One generation before Livy, Sallust had famously argued that the total destruction of Carthage after the Third Punic War was the seed of Rome's inclination to luxury and greed.[27] Livy's comment on Marcellus' spolia corrects this popular view and predates the beginning by about 75 years to the Second Punic War.[28] The general himself, virtuous in all his previous actions, gives the bad example and thereby testifies to the contagiousness of moral decline when it comes to spoliation: 'After the conquest of Syracuse, although Marcellus had settled the other affairs in Sicily with such faithfulness and integrity that he did not only increase his own renown but also the dignity of the Roman people, he shipped the ornaments of the city, the statues and paintings of which Syracuse was full, to Rome' (*Marcellus captis Syracusis, cum cetera in Sicilia*

26 For modern approaches towards the agency of objects and the construction of collective identity see the overview in Rutledge 2012: 16–18 and the chapter by Versluys in this volume. Esch 2011: 19 underlines the agency of spolia as such. For the Livian passage see also Jaeger 1997: 130, who, however, leaves the agency totally with Marcellus: 'In bringing the spoils of Syracuse to Rome, Marcellus actually brings the act of despoiling to Rome'. For another 'beginning' in the context of spolia, see Livy 39.6 and the chapter by Van Gils and Henzel in this volume.

27 Cf. Sal. *Cat.* 10.3. Sallust's idea remained attractive also in Imperial times, e.g. in the work of Velleius Paterculus. Gruen 1992: 98 has noted that Livy's evaluation is anachronistic, but see McDonnell 2006: 78 for nuances. Cf. also Miles 2008: 83–87 (on Polybius) and 90–91 (on Sallust); Flower 2003: 47–48.

28 Livy thereby sides with an earlier annalistic tradition and with Polybius, who noticed elements of moral decline already at the beginning of the second century BCE; cf. McGushin 1995: 61 *ad* Sal. *Cat.* 10.1.

tanta fide atque integritate composuisset ut non modo suam gloriam sed etiam maiestatem populi Romani augeret, ornamenta urbis, signa tabulasque quibus abundabant Syracusae, Romam deuexit, 25.40.1). The adversative *cum* effectively marks the turning point in Marcellus' moral excellence, caused by the objects themselves: the beautiful artworks induce him to behave with less *fides* and *integritas* than before.[29]

This does not mean that Marcellus' ethos is completely turned upside down; he still remains a rather positive figure, as the reconciliation scene in 26.32 suggests (see above).[30] The fact that he dedicates the spolia to the gods and does not keep them for himself distinguishes him from first-century BCE spoliators, who according to Livy learned from him the spoliation of luxury goods. The temple he specifically vows for the objects not only pays due tribute to the gods, but also gives the city a new touristic highlight and embellishment. Yet the same spot also testifies to Rome's later moral decline, for the artworks in Marcellus' temple were robbed during Rome's Civil Wars from the very temple before Livy wrote his account:[31] '[this license to take away] which then finally turned itself against the Roman gods, i.e. the very temple which was decorated so wonderfully by Marcellus. The temples dedicated by Marcellus at the Porta Capena used to be visited by foreigners because of the excellent embellishment of this kind, of which only a small part is still visible' ([*licentia spoliandi*] *quae postremo in Romanos deos, templum id ipsum primum quod a Marcello eximie ornatum est, uertit. uisebantur*[32] *enim ab externis ad portam Capenam dedicata a M. Marcello templa propter excellentia eius generis ornamenta, quorum perexigua pars comparet*, 25.40.2–3).[33] The plundering of Marcellus' temple is not his fault, of course, yet Livy's text *suggests* his responsibility, as he was the instigator of the kind of license that later almost destroyed Rome itself.[34] It is almost ironical in this context that Marcellus' temple was dedicated to Honos and Virtus. In the third century BCE, *virtus* mostly referred to military excellence and therefore was a fitting deity to dedicate the spolia to.[35] In Livy's

29 Cf. Jaeger 1997: 128. Cf. also Mensching 1996: 260–261.

30 On the careful balance of praise and blame, see Carawan 1984–1985: 136.

31 Cf. Palombi 1996: 31 on this removal.

32 Regarding the use of the imperfect *uisebantur* Jaeger 1997: 131 rightly stresses that for Livy's readers, the objects were no longer visible; they could only be seen with the inner eye when reading Livy's text.

33 For this temple and the displayed spolia see also the contribution by Van de Velde to this volume.

34 Mensching 1996: 262 calls the passage 'ironisch oder auch hämisch' – the latter, however, is too strong in my view.

35 Cf. Palombi 1996: 31: 'personificazioni divine della virtù e dell'onore militare'. Gros 1979: 105 notes that Marcellus' 'exaltation ostentatoire des qualités non dynastiques et la

days, however, *virtus* had become a much broader ethical concept in philosophical treatises,[36] and it had been further upgraded by the *clupeus virtutis*, which Octavian received in 27 BCE together with his honorary title Augustus.[37] *Virtus* was thus connected to Augustus' programme of restoring the Republic. Reading Livy's narrative with this contemporary parallel in mind, contemporary readers could interpret Marcellus' dedication of the Syracusan spolia to Virtus as an attempt to neutralise both booty and his own person, that is as an act of safeguarding his own positive exemplarity for future generations. The decision about how successful this attempt was, however, remains with the individual reader.[38]

To summarize the Livian version of Marcellus' spolia, we see that it is closely connected to exemplary discourse, which in its turn, as Roller has shown, is closely linked to imitation.[39] It is therefore no accident that both moments in Marcellus' career related to spolia are connected to imitation, as well: a good one in the case of the *spolia opima*, where he imitates Romulus and Cossus when dedicating the armour to Jupiter Feretrius,[40] and a bad one in the case of Syracuse, where he does not imitate anyone, but is represented as a kind of πρῶτος εὑρετής of taking away precious goods, a behaviour that others will imitate in the future. Livy applies a nuanced moral layer with several agents to this exemplum: (1) the objects themselves change Roman morals and change the shape of the city; (2) the general Marcellus changes his character traits when dealing with the objects: his moral excellence is questioned, even though he tries to whitewash himself through publicly dedicating the spolia to Honos and Virtus; (3) the historiographer Livy when narrating the events elaborates the moral ambiguities surrounding the spoliation of Syracuse; (4) the readers

revendication d'une sorte de primat de valeur personnelle' could not remain unnoticed by the other members of the Roman elite.

36 On *virtus* translating both Greek ἀνδρεία and ἀρετή cf. McDonnell 2003.

37 On the *clupeus virtutis* see Galinsky 1996: 80–90 (on the shifting of the meaning of *virtus* in the first century BCE ibid.: 84) and Welch 2019.

38 This nicely ties in with the ambiguity of the debate in book 26 (see above), where Marcellus is first blamed by the Sicilians and the senators and is then forgiven. For different ancient evaluations, cf. Miles 2008: 83–89.

39 Cf. Roller 2018: 8 and *passim*. Imitation of a potentially exemplary deed is the last and necessary seal on its exemplarity in Roller's model, that consists of four steps: action, evaluation, commemoration and norm setting (5–8).

40 The theme of imitation is also taken up by Valerius Maximus in his section on the *spolia opima*, which he treats under the heading of *fortitudo* (3.2.3–6): Cossus receives glory 'because he was able to imitate Romulus' (*quod imitari Romulum valuit*, 3.2.4); Manlius Torquatus' and Valerius Corvinus' equally brave deeds do not qualify as *spolia opima* because their imitation is not perfect (*sub aliis auspiciis rem gesserant*, 3.2.6).

are invited to engage actively with the different evaluations and to form their own judgment.

We see the narrative potential of the story: in the words of the Introduction to this volume, spolia narratives can be 'warning exempla for the present'. I would add that they can do more than warning: by turning Syracuse's spolia into an exemplum, Livy uses their ambiguity for the moral education of his readers. Rebecca Langlands has argued that this is what exempla ultimately do: they do not primarily teach a specific virtue. Instead, readers who are facing exemplary narratives more often are trained in questioning ethical standards as such and in reflecting on what it means to be virtuous and Roman.[41] It is in this way that, in the words of Ayelet Haimson Lushkov, the spolia in Livy's text 'become absorbed in the Roman cityscape and, more crucially, in the Roman psyche'.[42]

3 Cicero, Dionysius, and Verres

Towards the end of book 3 of Cicero's *De natura deorum*, Cotta, who represents Academic scepticism in the dialogue, argues against the Stoic belief (defended by its representative Balbus in book 2) that the gods care for humans and bestow rewards or punishments on people depending on what they have done. At the end of his argument he adduces a series of exempla that must prove the erroneousness of Balbus' arguments.[43] The series starts with a group of Romans, first some heroes of the First and Second Punic Wars, who all suffered a cruel fate despite their political and moral excellence (the Scipios, Fabius Maximus, Marcellus, Aemilius Paulus, and Regulus), and then historical figures connected to the Social and Civil War of the 80s and its aftermath (P. Rutilius, Drusus, Scaevola, and Catulus, *De natura deorum* 3.80). After this impressive catalogue, Cicero turns to exempla of bad men who did *not* suffer any strokes of fate as a punishment for their behaviour. He again mentions two exempla from the Civil War, Marius and Cinna, and additionally brings up Varius, who has been punished in a trial, but only after having slaughtered honourable

41 Cf. Langlands 2018: *passim*; on exempla and Roman identity formation esp. 166–186; on p. 334 she defines the crucial effect of education via exempla: they 'evoke a network of ethical issues and ideas with which Romans themselves would have been familiar'.

42 Haimson Lushkov 2018: 45. Cf. V. Max. 2.5, who notes the lack of a triumph for Marcellus after his victory in Sicily; he calls Marcellus (together with Scipio) 'a name which is equal to an eternal triumph' (*ipsa nomina instar aeterni triumphi*).

43 Without further argument Kleywegt 1961: 214 supposes that Cicero might have assembled these exempla long ago.

Roman citizens, whereas it would have been better if the gods had killed him before he could even have committed these deeds (3.81).

As a kind of appendix, Cicero adds one final exemplum about Dionysius I of Syracuse. It is by far the most elaborate one – actually it is not a single one, but consists of several exempla. It deals with the tyrant robbing several treasures of Greek sanctuaries and bringing the objects to Sicily, while constantly mocking the gods for their lack of care, as they do not punish him. A second step of his shameful behaviour is that he profanes other sacred objects by selling them on fora (Cicero labels it quite explicitly as an act of profaning: ***de fanis** in forum proferre*, 3.84). Afterwards, he forces those who have bought the objects to bring them back to the temples and rededicate them, but without giving the buyers their money back. Cicero sees in this the summit of immoral behaviour and impiety ('he thus added injustice towards men to his impiety towards the gods', *ita ad impietatem in deos in homines adiunxit iniuriam*, 3.84) and wonders why Dionysius has not been hit by Jupiter's thunder bolts, but rather died peacefully, was buried and could pass on his reign to his son.

4 Appropriating Textual Spolia

It was not Cicero who created the negative exempla of Dionysius,[44] to which he recurred often in his works.[45] Already ps.-Aristotle's *Oeconomica* and *De mirabilibus auscultationibus* invoked him as an example for pretty much the same behaviour that we see in the Ciceronian passage.[46] The passage at hand, in which Dionysius utters several unethical, yet witty sayings could also have been part of a Hellenistic collection of *Apophthegmata regum*. If we want to describe Cicero's literary procedure with the terminology of spoliation (as suggested in my introduction), one could say that Cicero regularly uses textual spolia of a second degree: the 'original' historical narrative has already been reduced to juicy anecdotes before him, so that Cicero can simply incorporate them into his own treatise. This reuse, however, always involves appropriation, as is also the case in the Dionysian exemplum. Olof Gigon and Laila Straume-Zimmermann have pointed out the speaking omission in Cicero's version of a fact that is mentioned in other sources: Dionysius obviously stole

44 Gigon and Straume-Zimmermann 1996: 577 assume with certainty that the source was Timaeus of Tauromenium (ca. mid-fourth to mid-third *c.* BCE).

45 Cf. Verbaal 2006 on his presence in the *Tusculanae disputationes*; other texts in which he appears are the *Verrines* (as foil for Verres' behavior, e.g. 2.4.145–146), *Div.* 1.39 and *Rep.* 3.43.

46 Cf. Arist. *Oec.* 2.41 (1353b20–38); *De mirabilibus auscultationibus* 96 (838a15–26).

the objects and sold them because he urgently needed the money for his expensive warfare.[47] By not mentioning this, Cicero reduces the tyrant's political action to purely egoistic and unmotivated vice, since it is such an attitude that the specific context of *De natura deorum* requires.

Cicero's reuse of textual material previously shaped by other authors for similar exemplary purposes is mirrored in the content of one Dionysian exemplum. It contains a reference to the fact that objects could be spoliated more than once.[48] Cicero's Cotta stresses that the spolia which Dionysius takes away from Olympia have already been spolia before: 'When he had led his fleet to the Peloponnese and arrived at the shrine of the Olympian Jupiter, he took from the god the golden, heavy cloak with which the tyrant Gelon had ornamented Jupiter from his Carthaginian spoils' (*qui cum ad Peloponnesum classem appulisset et in fanum uenisset Iouis Olympii, aureum ei detraxit amiculum grandi pondere, quo Iovem ornarat e manubus Carthaginiensium tyrannus Gelo*, 3.83). The text reminds the reader that Dionysius was not the first person to move the object. About one century before him the Syracusan tyrant Gelon, probably after the Battle of Himera in 480 BCE, had taken the golden cloak as booty from the Carthaginians and dedicated it to the Olympian god as a way of thanksgiving. When Dionysius steals it from the temple, he turns Carthaginian objects into spolia of a second degree: they were probably first somewhere in Sicily within a Carthaginian context; then they were moved to Greece by a Sicilian tyrant who had defeated the Carthaginians (*first spoliation*); now they are brought back to Sicily by another Sicilian tyrant, who however does not win them in battle, but simply steals them out of greed (*second spoliation*). A reader who realizes the difference between Gelon's and Dionysius' behaviour will see more sharply the latter's moral failure.

Cicero's remark shows his awareness that artefacts often do not only have a past, but also a plupast, which might complicate the alleged dichotomy of foreign and domestic, of original and after-spoliation setting. One can thus see that several time frames overlap and are intertwined in material spolia and, one can add, in textual spolia (i.e., exempla) as well. The prehistory of the objects can thereby enlarge the moral message of the exemplum. In this context it is important to note that within the mirroring exemplum the evaluation of the textual and the content level is diametrically opposed: Cicero's Cotta, as spokesman of the philosophical school which Cicero favoured and as revered host of the dialogue, has a huge moral and philosophical authority

47 Gigon and Straume-Zimmermann 1996: 577.

48 On re-spoliation cf. Biggs 2018, who, however, discusses re-spoliation within Rome, i.e. the ideological reuse of Republican spolia and trophies by Augustus.

(even if at the end of book 3 Cicero declares himself to be more convinced by Balbus' Stoic arguments), whereas Dionysius' deeds testify to his utmost impiety. He does not even respect a religious votive gift of one of his own predecessors, thereby showing a dangerous lack of respect towards the gods: as a punishment Jupiter could not only destroy Dionysius, but also turn his protection away from Syracuse. In Dionysius' behaviour, personal contempt for the divine becomes irresponsibility towards his citizens, and this has potential consequences for more people than himself alone. It is obvious that his robbery morally disqualifies him not only as a person, but also as ruler.

5 Appropriating Dionysius' Exempla

The exempla about Dionysius which function as textual spolia fit Cicero's philosophical project of the years 46 to 44 BCE more in general. His treatises are a huge project of adaptation of Greek philosophy to a Roman audience,[49] especially to a contemporary political reality in which Caesar had the position of a *dictator perpetuus*. I think that also in the case of Dionysius there are elements that invite the readers to consider Dionysius not as a figure of a distant Greek past, but as a highly relevant figure for Rome – in other words, to consider him no longer as part of the giving culture, but as shaping the receiving one. The exemplum has thereby reached the stage of 'transformation'.[50]

Dionysius is introduced in the third book of *De natura deorum* as the tyrant of 'the richest and most happy city' (*tyrannus … fuit opulentissumae et beatissumae ciuitatis*, 3.82). The superlatives with regard to Syracuse refer back to Cicero's first philosophical work, *De re publica*, in which he had mentioned Dionysius as the ruler of the *urbs omnium pulcherrima*, 'the most beautiful of all cities' (*Rep*. 3.43). The reason for doing so, however, is not to praise Syracuse's undeniable beauty, but to warn that tyranny destroys even the most splendid cities: 'Thus where a tyrant is, there is no defective state, as I said yesterday, but, as logic forces us to speak frankly: there is no state at all' (*ergo ubi tyrannus est, ibi non uitiosam, ut heri dicebam, sed, ut nunc ratio cogit,*

49 Often in his prefaces he explicitly reflects on this aspect by asking the question of why it is useful to write about philosophy in Latin; cf. Baraz 2012: 44–95. Cf. Woolf 2015: 64–66 on the relation between politics and philosophy more generally.

50 For a similar approach to Dionysius in the *Tusculanae disputationes* see Verbaal 2006: he interprets Dionysius' presence in the *Tusculanae disputationes* in the light of Cicero's own days in a rather concrete way: Dionysius (who is presented not only negatively, but ambiguously in the *Tusculanae disputationes*) represents the prototype Caesar, against whom Cicero positions himself as a Republican alternative.

dicendum est plane nullam esse rem publicam, ibid.). This is obviously directed at Cicero's fellow Romans: do not allow Caesar and Pompey to form a tyrannical regime, as it would annihilate our *pulcherrima urbs* Rome.[51] *De natura deorum* was written in 45/44, after the Civil War between Caesar and Pompey. The dramatic date of the dialogue in Cotta's house, however, is not during this period, but in the mid-70s BCE and thus a few years after the end of the Civil War between Marius and Sulla. It is also situated after Sulla's abdication from his dictatorship, whereas the dictator Caesar obviously does not consider giving back his office of *dictator* and restoring the full freedom of the Republic. The reused exemplary figure of Dionysius enhances the urgency of Cicero's warning against a destruction of Rome's status as a splendid Republican state.

In order to achieve this, Cicero invites his readers to think in terms of temporal fluidity and chronological permeability. The exempla from the past help the reader to fully grasp the multilayered chronology, in that exempla usually negotiate 'past and present alike' and thus form 'continuity between two [or even more, CP] time frames'.[52] Dionysius is an especially attractive choice for this. His are the longest and most detailed exempla of the whole passage.[53] The preceding first Roman group of exempla centres around heroes of the Punic Wars who suffer unequal fate from foreign enemies. The second group is much more closely related to the dramatic date of the dialogue; they all suffer death or exile due to the civic tensions of the late 90s and 80s,[54] which means that

51 On the theme of crisis and leadership in *De re publica*, see now Schofield 2021: 83–90 (esp. 85 on the 'gulf between current reality and the historical paradigm' of Scipio Aemilianus) and Woolf 2015: 95–99.

52 Kraus 2005: 186, quoting Chaplin 2000: 201. I add that the whole setting of *De natura deorum* is a play with chronology. Cotta, the host of the discussion and spokesman for Cicero's own Academic scepticism, is the same person who has allegedly told Cicero about the debate of his earlier *De oratore* – a dialogue in which Cotta represented one of the younger generation compared to the main speakers Crassus and Antonius. (I mention only in passing that the second group of *exempla domestica* in our passage is closely connected to the setting of *De oratore*, as well, which is situated in 91 BCE, shortly before the outbreak of the Social War.) In *De natura deorum*, it is Cicero himself who stands for this young generation – he says that he is present in the house of Cotta, but only as attentive listener. When he writes *De natura deorum* for Brutus, Cicero has grown into the role of teacher, while Brutus listens.

53 This structure reminds us of Valerius Maximus' organization of his exempla into two categories: *interna* and *externa*.

54 P. Rutilius Rufus (*RE* 33) was exiled in 92 BCE by a jury under the influence of Marius (thus Cass. Dio fr. 97.3; cf. W. Kierdorf in *DNP* s.v. Rutilius I 3); tribune Livius Drusus (*RE* 18) was killed in his house, probably for his social engagement, in 91 BCE; Q. Mucius Scaevola Pontifex (*RE* 22) was killed in 82 BCE during the Civil War; Q. Lutatius Catulus (*RE* 7) killed himself in 87 BCE in order to avoid execution through Cinna.

no foreign enemy, but Marius, Cinna (and Sulla, whose name is not mentioned, but can easily be supplemented) are responsible for what they have suffered.[55] In other words: the exempla become more internal and more contemporary. I think that this focus will invite the readers of the following Dionysius-passage to connect it to recent Roman history as well. The missing *exempla recentiora* on the Greek side confer additional urgency to the readers to consider in which way the past example can be applied to their own time.

Dionysius' behaviour might bring up the memory of a specific Roman whose appetite for plundered art was famous: Verres. Like Dionysius, Verres is an archetype of a bad spoliator. He not only robs objects from sacred places, but is not even interested in exhibiting the spolia in order to adorn his own city (as Marcellus had done with the Syracusan spolia, thus turning them to public use). Instead, both Cicero's Verres and Cicero's Dionysius want to possess the objects purely because of their egoistical malicious greed.[56] Chronology helps the reader to make this connection: Cotta's fictional discourse is pronounced only a few years before Verres became the horrendous governor of Sicily and before Cicero would accuse him. Cicero in his *Verrines* had suggested the connection between Dionysius' and Verres' immorality, e.g. in the following passage: 'After a long period of time there was active a second – not Dionysius or Phaleris (for this island has endured many cruel tyrants), but a kind of new monster of that ancient brutality that is said to have existed in these regions' (*uersabatur in Sicilia longo interuallo alter non Dionysius ille nec Phalaris – tulit enim illa quondam insula multos et crudelis tyrannos – sed quoddam nouum monstrum ex uetere illa inmanitate quae in isdem locis uersata esse dicitur*, 2.5.145–146).[57] Verres is worse than the Sicilian tyrants and even worse than monsters like Scylla, Charybdis and the Cyclopes that inhabited the island in a mythical past.[58] If we consider this link and see Verres as a more horrendous Dionysius *redivivus*, then the urgency to appropriate the Dionysian exemplum in *De natura deorum* becomes even greater. Verres is an extreme example of a Roman politician who makes his personal avarice and ambition the guideline

55 Cf. Gigon and Straume-Zimmermann 1996: 575: already Scipio (Aemilianus) is suffering ill fate from his fellow-Romans; the exempla of the 90s/80s are 'Zeugnis der völligen Auflösung der politisch-magistralen Ordnung'.

56 Cf. Köster 2017: 157 on Verres; Wardle 1998: 128 on Cicero's 'deliberate misrepresentation' of Dionysius' goals (i.e., getting money for his warfare).

57 Cf. Frazel 2009: 163 on this passage and Cicero's 'unambiguously associating Verres with earlier Sicilian tyrants', especially Dionysius.

58 On Cicero's construction of Verres' highly negative psychology, cf. Citroni Marchetti 1986: 116–122; on Verres as typical tyrant (as one could find him in declamation) Frazel 2009: 166–173.

of his political action and whose moral depravity thereby threatens the functioning of the state. We have seen earlier that this moral decline, which according to many Roman historians of the late first century BCE would eventually lead to the Civil Wars and the end of the Roman Republic, was connected to Sicily and spolia. Dionysius' exempla are in a way a prelude to this Roman development and predate this typical moral narrative by yet another 150 years. Through its safe temporal distance it enables the readers to come to a moral evaluation not only of the past, but via the past of their own political situation and the dangers which threaten the Republic.

Cicero would not be Cicero if he would not come up with the hope for salvation; it is offered (as so often) by his own achievements. At the end of the Dionysian exempla Cotta adds a general reflection: does his own discourse lend authority to misbehaviour (*oratio uidetur enim auctoritatem afferre peccandi*, 3.85)? Cotta's argumentation has shown that the gods cannot protect humans from such immoral behaviour, or rather: they cannot do without humans taking their own moral responsibility. He therefore ends the exempla with the following sentence: 'There is absolutely no divine control of the world which reaches out towards men if in it there is no distinction between good and bad' (*mundi diuina in homines moderatio profecto nulla est, si in ea discrimen nullum est bonorum et malorum*, ibid.). The *discrimen bonorum et malorum* is a rather overt self-advertisement for Cicero's own treatise *De finibus bonorum et malorum*, written only half a year earlier than *De natura deorum*. In other words: humans themselves must defend morality, and in order to do so, they must be competent in dealing with ethical questions. Cicero as Rome's most prolific philosophical author of these years is the perfect guide for them. Again, as so often, we see him stressing how eminently timely and political his philosophical project is – it serves the interests of the state and wants to prevent the wonderful Republic of Rome from being annihilated.[59]

That this conclusive remark is Cicero's very personal appropriation of the Dionysian exempla becomes even clearer if we look at the version of the anecdotes in Valerius Maximus. The Tiberian writer is the next author we know of to have reused the Dionysian material;[60] more specifically he has used the Ciceronian version of it (his text is a very close paraphrase of Cicero's passage), but with the exception of the evaluation.[61] For differently from Cicero's tyrant, Valerius' Dionysius is punished for his deeds, albeit only after his death:

59 On Cicero's political interests when writing his philosophical treatises, cf. Nicgorski 2016; Zarecki 2014: *passim*; Baraz 2012: *passim*; Steel 2005: 70–82.

60 Still later versions include: Ael. *VH* 1.20; Polyaen. 5.2.19; Arnob. *Adv. nat.* 6.19.1 and 21.1–4.

61 Cf. Wardle 1998: 128–131.

'Through the shameful behaviour of his son he as a dead person received the punishment which he had escaped during his life. Divine anger proceeds slowly to take its revenge and compensates for this slowness with the severity of the punishment' (*dedecore enim filii mortuus poenas pependit, quas uiuus effugerat: lento enim gradu ad uindictam sui diuina procedit ira tarditatemque supplicii grauitate pensat*, 1.1.*ext*.3). Such a conclusion would not be fitting in the argumentative context of *De natura deorum* and would also not give Cicero the chance for self-promoting his philosophical project.

To briefly sum up, Dionysius' exempla in *De natura deorum* function on different levels: they remind the readers that material and textual spolia are always fluctuating and have not only a present and a past, but often also a plupast. This chronological depth then invites them to read through the diachronic axes of the text and apply the past to their own presence. Finally, the evaluation of the exempla helps Cicero the author to construct his own moral and political authority.

6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed two passages in which spolia are closely connected to questions of political and personal morality. Both narratives are situated in Sicily, a place where the moral discourse about spolia in Latin literature seems to concentrate. Through his plundering of Syracuse, Marcellus first inspired the Romans to desire luxurious Greek-style artefacts and paved the way for later spoliators like Verres, the arch-example of a greedy and mischievous governor. But as the Dionysius-story shows, the connection between Sicily, spolia and morality does not start with the Roman presence on the island, but goes back to the time of the great Greek tyrants. Dionysius in Cicero is presented as a predecessor of Verres in the sense that he profanes temple treasuries for his own egoistic greed, thereby neglecting the originally divine aspect of spolia, directed at public welfare and protection.

However, the literary discourse about spolia is both more subtle and more open than this summary suggests. Livy's version of Marcellus' spolia and Cicero's exempla about Dionysius pose intriguing questions about the actual nature of spolia: are they foreign or do they rightfully belong to one's own culture? Under which conditions is it acceptable or even virtuous to spoliate? As Versluys in his chapter has argued, successful spoliation must not stop with taking away the objects, but has to integrate them into the new context. This incorporation and transformation gives them new meaning and often also new agency as they become representatives of, for instance, military success

and divine goodwill, thereby aggrandizing the renown and authority of the spoliating culture. While Dionysius shows no interest in this aspect, Marcellus does; his Syracusan spolia therefore are not bad per se; they bear, however, the seed of future moral degeneration in them, because future Romans will start to neglect the communal aspect of spoliation in their contest for personal glory and luxury. Still, even the bad examples of Dionysius' and Verres' shameless greed can be useful for Roman society: turned into literary exempla, which on a textual level function in a similar way as material spolia, they can invite the readers to think about the stories in terms of historical continuity and discontinuity. Every object and every text is a potential future spolium and can thereby change its meaning in new contexts. What guarantees stability are not the objects that constitute Rome's glory in the first century BCE, but a shared idea of morality that has to be negotiated afresh in every generation, also with the help of stories about spolia.[62]

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