

NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

HANNIBAL'S SPANISH FLOCKS? (LIVY 21. 43. 8)

Satis adhuc in vastis Lusitaniae Celtiberiaeque montibus pecora consecrando nullum emolumentum tot laborum periculorumque vestrorum vidistis; tempus est iam opulenta vos ac ditia stipendia facere et magna operae pretia mereri, tantum itineris per tot montes fluminaque et tot armatas gentes emensos. [Livy 21. 43. 8–9]

So Hannibal to his soldiers after crossing the Alps. Livy's Hannibal begins as had Polybius' ("There's no turning back, no escape by sea, you must fight"), but then almost immediately bases his adhortation on two points (whether Livy's or his source's, we cannot know), the soldiers' previous exploits and distinctions, the present opportunity for rich rewards.¹

But the phrase *pecora consecrando*, though it appears never to have been questioned, cannot be right. (1) *Consectari* means either to pursue, usually with hostile intent, or to strive after (see *TLL* s.v., 4:385. 44–386. 61), neither of which meanings is at all appropriate or possible for herding, or following, flocks; hence a few commentators have felt compelled to offer an unsupported paraphrase, "rounding up." (2) No one appears to have noted the actual absurdity of the phrase. Did the Carthaginians spend those twenty years in Spain tending flocks? What are the labors and dangers of the shepherd's life? (3) No one has observed that the phrase is both lacking in style and contrary to the required sense: in the rhetorically inflated context (*in vastis . . . montibus*, followed by the homoeoptota of the genitive plurals *tot laborum periculorumque vestrorum*), the idea of shepherding is a flat anticlimax, and as such is a disparaging, and ridiculous, contrast to the soldiers' long and dangerous struggles.

Livy wrote *decora consecrando*. Hannibal praises his troops ("You have pursued and won distinction, military decorations . . .") and now offers them wealth (" . . . but for your great and dangerous achievements as yet you have seen no material rewards. Now it is time to . . .").²

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1. Compare, three sentences following, Hannibal's praise, "ut viginti annorum militiam vestram cum illa virtute, cum illa fortuna taceam, ab Herculis columnis, ab Oceano terminisque ultimis terrarum per tot ferocissimos Hispaniae et Galliae populos vincentes huc pervenistis" (21. 43. 13); and his words at the end of this section of the speech, ". . . nemo est vestrum . . . cui non idem ego virtutis spectator ac testis notata temporibus locisque referre sua possim decora" (43. 17). Throughout he emphasizes the wealth to be won in Italy.

2. *Pecora* (already in the fifth-century Puteanus) may have been due to a misreading (P for D) of a capital exemplar, together with the scribe's association of Spain, mountains, "following after" (*consectari* is not a common word), and then flocks. For the sense and propriety of *decora*, see 21. 43. 17 (cited n. 1).