

Rome Behaving Badly: Appian's Critique of Roman Imperialism During the Republic

Talk by Brian McGing, Trinity College Dublin



Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851), *The Decline of the Carthaginian Empire*, Photo © Tate, Gallery, London, CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0

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The 2nd century AD Greek historian, Appian of Alexandria, is usually thought of as ‘above all, an ardent admirer of Rome’ (*Oxford Classical Dictionary*). Although he says admiring things about the overall Roman imperial achievement, in his coverage of Rome’s conquests in the Republican period, Appian is at times directly and severely critical of Roman behaviour. Some of this he may get from his sources, but similar narrative patterns indicate that he had his own views on Rome’s often treacherous treatment of her enemies, and constructed his account accordingly. This paper will examine particularly Appian’s analysis of Roman diplomacy before the outbreak of the Third Punic War, the Third Macedonian War and the First Mithradatic war.