278 Poverty (*Paupertas*)

Poverty ought to be chosen because of three things. First, because of the approbation of Christ who not only chose it by word but by work. But according to the Philosopher in *Tempore*,[[1]](#endnote-1) that the wise man chooses that which rather should be chosen. Wherefore although before the coming of Christ poverty was contemptible and odious, afterward then it was praiseworthy. Wherefore also Christ frequently did not have lodgings, Mark 11[:11]: “Having viewed all things round about, when now the eventide was come, he went out to Bethania.”

Second, it is to be chosen because of security, Isai. 14[:30]: “The poor shall rest with confidence.” But on the other hand, concerning the rich that is said in Job [15:21]: “The sound of dread is always in their ears.” Therefore, the poor are secure in their life, because their court cases are not moved, nor are they fearful of thieves, but the rich must put up with these things. In which figure Cain who is interpreted as possession had a trembling head. Wherefore the poet:[[2]](#endnote-2) A traveler who is empty-handed can sing in the mugger’s face.

¶ Again, the poor are quiet in mind because they are not lacerated by the thorns of the rich.

Third, poverty is to be chosen because of the excellent remuneration. For poverty in reward is equated to martyrdom. Wherefore Bernard,[[3]](#endnote-3) truly a kind of martyrdom is voluntary poverty. For what is graver than to be hungry between feasts.

¶ It is narrated in some *Historia*,[[4]](#endnote-4) that the Romans who were accustomed to deify their magnificent men, did not want to receive the example (of Christ) among the number of the gods. Because of the poverty which he preached which naturally is odious to men, he had few followers but because of this the faithful did not fear. Because there is not a Saracen so perverse but that he feeds his slave, so much the more from Christ who said [Matt. 7:31]: “Be not solicitous therefore, saying, What shall we eat,” etc. Wherefore also saint Serapion,[[5]](#endnote-5) to a certain one inquiring why he was poor, responded, Because the Gospel has spoiled me. Because also again he meditated, according to that [1 Kings 2:7]: “The Lord makes poor and makes rich.” For just as a poor scholar is accustomed to being deficient in common things, to repatriate the pilgrim with deficient expenses he makes large diets. Also, the falcon famished eagerly flies to the prey, so the poor go to heaven.

¶ The example of the prodigal son.

Again, God is more solicitous over the state of the poor than the rich, according to that of the Psal. [39:18]: “But I am a beggar and poor: the Lord is careful for me.” So, parents having many children are more solicitous of the one of them if he is sick than for the rest who are healthy. And those things which God provided to the poor are not transitory but perpetual, Tob. 4[:23]: “We lead indeed a poor life, but we shall have many good things if we fear God.”

¶ The example[[6]](#endnote-6) of the falcon and the hen, of whom the falcon was useful only in life, namely not in death. On the other hand, the hen namely was useful in life and in death. The example[[7]](#endnote-7) of the rich man and Lazarus, because of the previous example Christ said in Matt. 5[:3]: “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” The reason for this is because the father having wed does not gives his movables to his heir, but to other children who preserve the inheritance for him. Wherefore also Abraham gave a few things to the children of the concubines, but to Isaac his heir he gave all that he possessed, Gen. 25[:33]. Augustine,[[8]](#endnote-8) the rich and the poor are two contraries to each other. But again, they are necessary to each other. Because no one should be wanting, if they support each other; and no one should labor, if they both help each other. Each was made because of the other. The rich because of the poor, and the poor because of the rich. For it follows that the kingdom of heaven is for the poor and it is justified that the rich love that from the poor. Therefore, according to Chrysostom, homily 12, in *Imperfecto*,[[9]](#endnote-9) the goods of the rich profit the support of the poor in this world, as the prayer of the poor profits the rich in the next world. Just as the unfruitful elm gives moisture and support to the vine, and the vine profits itself and the elm with fruit. Therefore, significantly it is said, Prov. 14[:31]: “He that has pity on the poor,” honors him.

¶ It is a difficult thing to try to paint the matter of poverty in rosy hues to those not listening. Wherefore Seneca, *De remediis fortuitorum*,[[10]](#endnote-10) poverty to you is a heavy matter. Rather for you to be poor, the vice is not in poverty, but in being poor, certainly those things are released to be joyful and safe. Wherefore Augustine, in his fifth *Epistola*,[[11]](#endnote-11) poverty is more lamented, than to have lost Roman opulence? For in poverty the integrity of their customs is preserved; by opulence dire wickedness corrupts not walls, but the mind of men. Wherefore Seneca, *Epistula* 17,[[12]](#endnote-12) if you wish to have leisure for your mind, either be a poor man or resemble a poor man.

¶ Again, Bernard,[[13]](#endnote-13) if your ministry prohibits you to be poor, let your ministration commend the love of the poor.

¶ Because of this humility and utility of poverty, someone said,[[14]](#endnote-14) that poverty is the price set for heaven, that the poor properly pay for the kingdom of heaven, Matt. 19[:29]: “Every one that has left house,” etc.

Again, it is preparatory for heaven toward which the poor are changed. Just as it is figured, Luke 14[:16]: “A certain man made a great supper,” etc. Where afterwards three kinds of men excused themselves, the poor were led in and the lame were introduced.

¶ Third, poverty is the ground of heaven on which the poor are gathered, Matt. 19[:27-28]: You who have left “all things,” and it follows, “you also shall sit on seats.” In praise of poverty Bernard says in *Sermone de adventu*,[[15]](#endnote-15) sons of Adam, a race of avaricious ones, an ambitious people, listen. What profits you with riches and temporal glory, your gold and silver. The lands are red and white, which only error reputes precious. Finally, if these things are yours, take them with you. But the Psal. [48:18] says this, “For when he shall die, he shall take nothing away.” Wherefore,[[16]](#endnote-16) Chrysostom in *Imperfecto*, homily 3,[[17]](#endnote-17) upon that [Matt. 2:11]: “And entering into the house.” We see how glorious the person the magi found. Behold the king, as if humbled, meditating on another earth, if there is sought in the land of King Lynus a palace, chamber, and room. Behold he lies in the crib, if you seek comity and familiarity. Behold the cow and the ass if you seek the table and kitchen. Behold the food of milk if you seek clothes and ornaments. Behold the lap of the mother if you seek servants. Behold the snowy foot of the mother. Therefore, concerning this that can be said, Psal. [48:3]: “Both rich and poor together,” that is, God and man. Wherefore Anselm in the book *De sacramentis*,[[18]](#endnote-18) who could be found on earth poorer than Christ. Who coming, did not have a place of his own to be born. Nor born where he might be placed. Nor passing through the world where he might recline his head. Nor passing from the world whence he might cover his nakedness.

¶ Concerning the poverty of the philosophers,[[19]](#endnote-19) Valerius narrates, book 4, c. 3,[[20]](#endnote-20) and book 8,[[21]](#endnote-21) concerning Anaxagoras,[[22]](#endnote-22) who after a long journey returning home, when he saw that his possessions had been scattered, he said, Unless these things had perished, I would not have been safe. And Diogenes narrates how he used a double cloak against the cold, a bag for his cellar, a stick for his support. How he made his chalice when he saw a boy drink water from his concave hand. How dying he ordered that he be thrown out unburied. How he used a round cask against the cold and against the heat.

¶ Morally,[[23]](#endnote-23) this Diogenes is the faithful poor man, Psal. [78:8]: “We are become exceeding poor.” The cask that can be turned around is the present life, which is made joyful by wine then sad, Job [14:2]: “Never continues in the same state.” If therefore to us in this turning cask would come Alexander, that is, the pomp of the world, seeking whether we would wish to have anything from him, let us seek that he steps back from the sun and not impede its light.”[[24]](#endnote-24) According to that of the Psal. [15:8]: “I set the Lord always in my sight.”

¶ Certainly,[[25]](#endnote-25) the philosophers do not consider the goods of the world to be theirs. Therefore, they do not seek those things, nor do they sorrow from those things lost. Wherefore Seneca narrates,[[26]](#endnote-26) that Stilbon, a philosopher, after the capture and overthrow of his city was asked whether he missed anything. He responded, Nothing, for almost all my things are with me. And then he had lost his children with his ample patrimony. For the enemy Demetrius had taken his children, but his true goods he judged to be wisdom and my poverty. The true goods which the enemy could not lay his hand on.

Even[[27]](#endnote-27) the *Policraticus* book 4,[[28]](#endnote-28) narrates when Alexander decided to besiege the people of the Bragmani. They responded, What would be enough for a man, for whom the whole world is insufficient. We have no riches, for which you would attack us for cupidity. Our food is for us riches, for worship and for gold, etc. As it is said there.

Again,[[29]](#endnote-29) Valerius narrates, book 4, c. 3,[[30]](#endnote-30) concerning Fabricius a Roman leader, who said that he made his riches not by possessing much, but by desiring few things.

1. Aristotle, cf. Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus:* But in the world, at one time men shun death as the greatest of all evils, and at another time choose it as a respite from the evils in life. The wise man does not deprecate life nor does he fear the cessation of life. The thought of life is no offense to him, nor is the cessation of life regarded as an evil. And even as men choose of food not merely and simply the larger portion, but the more pleasant, so the wise seek to enjoy the time which is most pleasant and not merely that which is longest. And he who admonishes the young to live well and the old to make a good end speaks foolishly, not merely because of the desirability of life, but because the same exercise at once teaches to live well and to die well.

<http://www.epicurus.net/en/menoeceus.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. Juvenal, *Satires* 10.22 (LCL 91:368-369): cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator.

A traveller who is empty-handed can sing in the mugger’s face. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Bernard, *Sermones de sanctis* 1.15 (PL 183:426): Quid mirabilius, aut quod martyrium gravius est, quam inter epulas esurire, inter vestes multas et pretiosas algere, paupertate premi inter divitias, quas offert mundus, quas ostentat malignus, quas desiderat noster ipse appetitus? [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. *Historia*, Cf. *Fasciculus morum* 4.3 (p. 324-325): Revera modo consimili accidit inter modernos maiores. Quando enim iustificare et quasi deificare seipsos volunt, ponunt quoddam ydolum coram oculis mundanorum ad faciendum illis signum silencii, ut scilicet nullus audet eorum voluntati contradicere set quod dissimulentur eorum errores, per quod veritas taceatur. Et si queras quod est istud ydolum, revera timor mundanus est quo timent, si loquerentur veritatem, perdere bona temporalia. It ideo iuxta Psalmistam: “Non est in ore eorum veritas.”

Something similar happens among the more powerful citizens today. For when they want to justify themselves and make themselves into gods, they place an idol before the eyes of worldlings to give them a signal of silence, that is, that none of them may dare to contradict their will but rather that their failings should be covered up; and by this the truth is hidden. If you want to know what this idol is: it is worldly fear, which makes them afraid that, if they were to speak the truth, they would lose their temporal goods. Therefore, after the Psalmist, “there is no truth in their mouth.” [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Serapion, cf. Jacques Nouet, *La Devotion Vers Nostre Seigneur Jesus-Christ* Jesus le Saint des Saints 3 (Muguet, 1681), (3:367): C’est ce qui porta un saint Anachorete, à vendre le Livre de l’Evangile qui luy restoit encore, aprés avoir donné aux pauvres jusques à ses propres habits: Et comme on luy demandoit qui l’avoit ainsi dépouillé, il répondit fort à propos: *Evangelium me spoliavit,* c’est l’Evangile qui m’a volé & mis a nud.

[La Devotion Vers Nostre Seigneur Jesus-Christ - Google Books](https://www.google.com/books/edition/La_Devotion_Vers_Nostre_Seigneur_Jesus_C/dY1AAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&bsq=Evangelius%20me%20spoliavit) [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Cf. *Fasciculus morum* 4.12 (p. 392): Circa autem mala que eveniunt contemptoribus voluntarie paupertatis est sciendum quod ita contingit in fine de avaro divite et volutario paupere sicut de gallina et falcone. Falco autem in vita in pugno portatur, in pertica collocatur, de carne recenti reficitur. Set gallina in locis vilissimis sicut in fovea et sterquilinio et huiusmodi querit refectionem, in tugurrio locatur. Et tamen mortuo falcone in foveam proicitur, et gallina assata coram rege et magnatibus in aulam defertur. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Cf. *Fasciculus morum* 4.12 (p. 392): Exemplum Luce 16 de divite epulone et Lazaro pauperrimo. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Augustine, *Sermones* 367.3.3 (PL 39:1651): Ad eleemosynam exhortatur. Dives et pauper duo sibi sunt contraria: sed iterum duo sibi sunt necessaria. Nullus indigeret, si se invicem supportarent; et nemo laboraret, si se ambo juvarent. Dives propter pauperem factus est, et pauper propter divitem factus est. Pauperis est orare, et divitis erogare; Dei est pro parvis magna pensare. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. (Pseudo-)Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum* hom. 12 ex cap. 5.41 (PG 56:701): Nam pauper in sanctitate melior est, quam tu in rebus saecularibus. Tuae res proficiant ad illius sustentationem in hoc saeculo, ut et illius sanctitas proficiat ad tuam sustanationem in illo: sicut ulmus infructuosa dat homorem viti, et vitis pro se et pro ulmo profert fructum. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Seneca, *De remediis fortuitorum*, ed. Ralph Graham Palmer Institue of Elizabethan Studies, 1953, p. 46): *Sensus.* Paupertas mihi grauis est. *Ratio.* Imo tu grauior paupertati, non enim in

paupertate vicium est, sed in paupere, illa autem expedita est hillaris tuta. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Augustine, *Epistola* 138.3.16 (PL 33:532): plus dolendum viderunt paupertatem, quam opulentiam periisse Romanam? In illa enim morum integritas servabatur; per hanc autem non muros urbis, sed mentes ipsius civitatis dira nequitia omni hoste pejor irrupit. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Seneca, *Epistle 17*.5 (LCL 75:110-111): si vis vacare animo, aut pauper sis oportet aut pauperi similis.

If you wish to have leisure for your mind, either be a poor man, or resemble a poor man. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Bernard, *Epistola* 100 Ad episcopum quemdam (PL 182:235): si quem ministerium prohibet esse pauperem, administratio probet pauperum amatorem. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Cf. Bonaventure, *De consiliis evangelicis* 3 *Opera omnia*, ed. A. C. Peltier (Paris: Ludovicus Vives, 1866; 8:287): Primo igitur paupertas est coeleste pretium, quo a pauperibus emitur coelum, sicut dicit Augustinus [de ver. Dom. serm. 28]: “Regnum, inquit, coelorum paupertate emitur.” Et nota quod regnum coelorum jure emptionis convenit pauperibus, quia ipsi proprie solvunt pretium, quod taxavit Christus diciens, *Omnis qui reliquerit domum aut agros*, etc. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Bernard, *Sermones de tempore*, In adventu Domini 4.1 (PL 183:47): Filii Adam, genus avarum et ambitiosum, audite. Quid vobis cum terrenis divitiis et gloria temporali, quae nec verae, nec vestrae sunt? Aurum et argentum. Nonne terra est rubra et alba, quam solus hominum error facit, aut magis reputat pretiosam? Denique si vestra sunt haec, tollite ea vobiscum. Sed homo, cum interierit, non sumet omnia, neque descendet cum eo gloria ejus. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Cf. *Fasciculus morum* 4.12 (p. 386): Quod bene ostendit Crisostomus super Matheum in *Inperfecto*, omelia 3, super illud “Cum intrantes domum invenerunt,” etc.: “Videamus, inquit, quid gloriosum magi viderunt,” etc. Nota in auctoritate, Ecce ergo regem degradatum et de regno quasi depositum et mendicantem in terra aliena. ... Si enim queris palacium istius regis in terris, si thalamum, si solium, vide quia iacet in presepio. Si queris comitivam et familiam, ecce bovem et asinum. Si mensam, ecce lactis poculum. Si vestes et ornamenta, ecce matris gremiumSi ministrallos, ecce pauperrima mater illum foventem et iocundantem. Et ideo de eo bene dici potest illud Psalmi: “Simul in unum dives et pauper,” scilicet Deus et homo. Do quo Ancelmus *De sacramentis* ait quod ita pauper fuit in terris quod veniens non habuit ubi nasceretur, nec natus propter boni inopiam ubi poneretur, nec transiens per mundum ubi capud suum reclinaret, nec transiens de mundo unde nuditatem suam tegere..... [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. (Pseudo-)Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum*, Homilia 2 ex cap. 2.11 (PG 56:641-642): *Et intrantes domus, viderunt puerum et matrem ejus.* Viceamus quid tale gloriosum videntes in puero gavisi sunt, qui regem quarentes tanti itineris susceperunt laborem? Numquid viderunt palatium marmoribus splendidum? numquid matrem ejus diademate corontam, aut in lecto aureo recumbentem? numquid puerum auro et purpura involutum? numquid aulam regiam diversis populs personantem? Sed quid? Pandochium tenebrosum et sordidum, et magis animlibus quam hominibus aptum: in quo nemo contentus erat secedere, nisi itineris necessitate coactus. Matrem ejus vix tunicam unam habentem, non ad ornamentum corporis, sed ad tegumentum nuditatis proficientem, quam habere poterat uxor carpentarii, et haec in peregre constitua. … [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Anselm, *De sacramentorum diversitate* 3 (PL 158:554): Pauper vero ita fuit, ut veniens in mundum, non in sua sed in aliena domo nasceretur: et natus, propter inopiam loci in praesepio brutorum animalium poneretur: et vivens in mundo non haberet ubi caput suum reclinaret (Psal. XXI, 7; Luc. IX, 58); nec moriens, unde nuditatem suam tegeret; [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Cf. *Fasciculus morum* 4.12 (p. 390): Unde narrat Valerius de eo libro 4, capitulo 3, .... [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Valerius Maximus, cf. Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum* 2.14 (PL 23:298): Hujus Diogenes ille famosissimus sectator fuit, potentior rege Alexandro et naturae victor humanae. Nam cum discipulorum Antisthenes nullum reciperet, et perseverantem Diogenem removere non posset, novissime clava [Col.0304C] minatus est [Al. minitatus], nisi abiret. Cui ille subjecisse dicitur caput, atque dixisse: Nullus tam durus baculus erit, qui me a tuo possit obsequio separare. Refert Satyrus, qui illustrium virorum scribit historias, quod Diogenes palliolo duplici usus sit propter frigus: peram pro cellario habuerit: secumque portarit clavam ob corpusculi fragilitatem, qua jam senex membra sustentare solitus erat, et ἡμερόβιος vulgo appellatus sit, in praesentem horam [Col.0305A] poscens a quolibet, et accipiens cibum. Habitavit [Al. habitabat] autem in portarum vestibulis et porticibus civitatum. Cumque se contorqueret in dolio, volubilem se habere domum jocabatur, et se cum temporibus immutantem. Frigore enim os dolii vertebat in meridiem; aestate ad septentrionem, et utcumque sol se inclinaverat, Diogenis simul praetorium vertebatur. Quodam vero tempore habens ad potandum caucum ligneum, vidit puerum manu concava bibere, et elisisse illud fertur ad terram, dicens: Nesciebam quod et natura haberet poculum. Virtutem ejus et continentiam mors quoque indicat. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 8 ext. 3 (LCL 493:234-235): Quali porro studio Anaxagoran flagrasse credimus? qui cum e diutina peregrinatione patriam repetisset, possessionesque desertas vidisset, ‘non essem’ inquit ‘ego salvus, nisi istae perissent.’ vocem petitae sapientiae compotem! nam si praediorum potius quam ingenii culturae vacasset, dominus rei familiaris intra penates mansisset, non tantus Anaxagoras ad eos redisset.

With what enthusiasm moreover do we suppose Anaxagoras burned! Returning to his country after a long absence abroad and seeing that his holdings had been deserted, he said, “I should not be alive if these had not perished.”19 A saying possessed of the wisdom he sought. For if he had spent his time cultivating his estates rather than his mind, he would have stayed among his household gods master of his property and would not have come back to them the great Anaxagoras. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Cf. *Fasciculus morum* 4.12 (p. 388): De Anaxagaro autem narratur in *Vitas phbilosophorum*, et accipitur a Valerio libro 8, quod cum ex diutina peregrinacione patriam repetisset possessionesque desertas vidisset, “Non essem, inquit, salvus nisi ista perissent.” De Dyhogene philosopho ecaim narratur a Satyro historiografo quod ipse pallkio dupplici usus est propter frigus, peram pro cellaria habuit, secum portavit, clavam eciam gerebat ad copusculi fragilitatem qua iam senex membra sustentare solitus erat. ... Quodam autem tempore cum in usu potandi calicem ligneum gereret et vidixxet pauperem manu concava bibere, calicem elisit in terra et fregit dicens: “Quamdiu homo stultus sarcinas habuit supervacuas! Nescirem quod natura haberet poculum.” [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Cf. *Fasciculus morum* 4.12 (p. 390): Per illum Dyogenem quilibet nostrum intelligi potest, quia iuxta Psalmistam “pauperes facti sumus.” Vita presens est quasi dolium in quo manemus. Nam sicut dolium est versatile de loco ad locum, sic vita presens de status ad statum. ... Si ergo Alexander, idest mundus, venit querent si aliqua voluerimus ab eo nobis prestari et suas divicias et vanitates ostendat, hoc solum ab eo petere debemus quod non stet nec ponat obstaculum temporalium momentaniorum inter nos et Christum, per quod ab eo seperari possemus, dicenteds cum Psalmista: “Providebam Dominum in conspectu meo semper.” [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Cf. Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 4.ext. 4a (LCL 492: 382-385): Alexander vero, cognomen invicti adsecutus, continentiam Diogenis cynici vincere non potuit. ad quem cum in sole sedentem accessisset, hortareturque ut si qua praestari sibi vellet indicaret, quemadmodum erat in crepidine collocatus, sordidae appellationis sed robustae vir constantiae ‘mox’ inquit ‘de ceteris, interim velim a sole mihi non obstes.’

Alexander had won the surname “undefeated” but he could not defeat the continence of Diogenes the Cynic. Alexander approached him as he sat in the sun and asked him, if there was anything he wanted, to name it. Just as he was, sitting on a step, a man of mean title but robust resolution, he answered, “Other things later, meanwhile I would thank you not to stand between me and the sun.” [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Cf. *Fasciculus morum* 4.12 (p. 390): Philosophi enim non reputabant bona mundi esse sua, et ideo nec ea appetebant nec de amissione dolebant. Unde prout narrat Seneca Stibon philosophus interrogatus nunquid aliquid perdidisset, “Nichil, inquit. Omnia mea mecum sunt.” Et tamen patrimonium suum in predam cessarat et filios hostis Demetrius rapuerat. Habebat enim, ut dixit, secum vera bona, puta sapienciam et paupertatem, in quibus non est manus iniectio. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Seneca, *De constantia* On Firmness 5.6 (LCL 214: 62-63): Ab hoc Stilbon philosophus interrogatus, num aliquid perdidisset: “Nihil,” inquit, “omnia mea mecum sunt.” Atqui et patrimonium eius in praedam cesserat et filias rapuerat hostis et patria in alienam dicionem pervenerat et ipsum rex circumfusus victoris exercitus armis ex superiore loco rogitabat. At ille victoriam illi excussit et se urbe capta non invictum tantum sed indemnem esse testatus est. Habebat enim vera secum bona, in quae non est manus iniectio, at quae dissipata et direpta ferebantur, non iudicabat sua sed adventicia et nutum fortunae sequentia. Ideo ut non propria dilexerat; omnium enim extrinsecus adfluentium lubrica et incerta possessio est.

When Demetrius, the one who had the appellation of Poliorcetes, had captured Megara, he questioned Stilbo, a philosopher, to find out whether he had lost anything, and his answer was, “Nothing; I have all that is mine with me.” Yet his estate had been given up to plunder, his daughters had been outraged by the enemy, his native city had passed under foreign sway, and the man himself was being questioned by a king on his throne, ensconced amid the arms of his victorious army. But he wrested the victory from the conqueror, and bore witness that, though his city had been captured, he himself was not only unconquered but unharmed. For he had with him his true possessions, upon which no hand can be laid, while the property that was being scattered and pillaged and plundered he counted not his own, but the adventitious things that follow the beck of Fortune. Therefore he had esteemed them as not really his own; for all that flows to us from without is a slippery and insecure possession. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Cf. *Fasciculus morum* 4.12 (p. 390): Narrat Policraticus libro 4 quo cum Alexander Magnus gentem Bragmannorum debellare proposuisset, responderunt: “Quid erit homini satis cui totus non sufficit mundus? Divicias enim non habemus quarum cupiditate nos debease expugnare: Omnia bona nobis communia sunt. Exca est nobis pro diviciis; pro cultibus et auro, vilis et rara vestis. .... [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus* 4.11 (PL 199:534): Fertur enim quod cum magnus Alexander ultimum littus Oceani perlustraret, Brachmanorum insulam debellare parabat. Ad quem illi in his verbis epistolam miserunt: «Audivimus, invictissime rex, praelia tua, et felicitatem victoriae ubique subsecutam. Sed quid erit hujusmodi satis, cui totus non sufficit orbis? Divitias non habemus, quarum cupiditate nos debeas expugnare, omnium bona omnibus communia sunt. Esca est nobis pro divitiis, pro cultibus et auro, vilis et rara vestis. … [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Cf. *Fasciculus morum* 4.12 (p. 392): Narrat eciam Valerius libro 4, capitulo 3, de Fabricio, qui dixit quod illum locupletem faciebant non multa possidere set modica desiderare. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Valerius Maximus, Memorable Doings and Sayings 4.6a (LCL 492: 372-373): Idem sensit Fabricius Luscinus, honoribus et auctoritate omni civitate temporibus suis maior, censu par unicuique pauperrimo, qui a Samnitibus, quos universos in clientela habebat, decem milia aeris et quinque pondo argenti, totidem servos sibi missos in Samnium remisit, continentiae suae beneficio sine pecunia praedives, sine usu familiae abunde comitatus, quia locupletem illum faciebat non multa possidere sed modica desiderare. ergo domus eius quemadmodum aere et argento et mancipiis Samnitium vacua, ita gloria ex iis parta referta fuit. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)