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### **Sallust's Account of Corruption and Its Western Accomplices**

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#### **Abstract**

The axiom, 'it takes two to tango' may fittingly describe how corruption thrives. While demonstrably endemic in and seemingly generic to Africa, the ancient history of corruption depicts active participation of Western accomplices; collaborators, who perpetrated and advanced their political interests with the proceeds of sleaze. This article, using the Roman historian Sallust's *Bellum Jugurthinum* (The War with Jugurtha), employs interpretive approach to highlight how an African monarch was spurred on by corrupt leading Roman senator, who treated public assets as personal property, to recklessly pursue his political ambition. The article highlighted how Roman soldiers introduced the use of money in seeking power to Jugurtha and the stages of the former's duplicity in the prolonged African conflicts. With evidence to support Jugurtha's description of Rome in her corrupt state as 'urbem venalem et mature perituram, si emptorem invenerit' (a city for sale and doomed to speedy destruction if it finds a purchaser- Sallust, *Jugurthine War* 35.10), the conclusion is: the African ruler got in the Roman senate a viral school of bribery. Interestingly, the episode of corruption ended when the will of the corrupt Roman senators was thwarted. Therefore, mitigating corruption could begin from the West that hosts its influential accomplices.

**Key words:** Africa, Corruption, Sallust, Western Collaborators

### Introduction

Bribery and corruption has become pernicious in African nations, producing a new orientation which seemingly sets preponderantly unassailable thinking pattern for the people of the continent. The trend has made the democratic process of the people selecting their own representatives so much corrupt that the supposed power of the electorate really lies in the hands of corrupt oligarchic politicians who after “buying” the people’s votes become unaccountable agents of failed leadership, for example, concerning Nigeria, where corruption is always seen as the root of the nation’s woes. Achebe reasons on the resultant effect of corruption thus:

There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land, climate, water, air, or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to their responsibility, to the challenge of personal example, which is the hallmark of true leadership (Achebe, 1984, p. 1).

Roman history shows that corruption was prominent in the socio-political space of the ancient Western society during the Roman republic (Smith, 2012). Historically, Western experience in bribery and its disquieting effects could be seen as advanced and superseding Africa’s. While today, Africa and the Middle East countries are easily seen as most corrupt owing to factors such as ineffective legal and governmental systems as well as grinding poverty, the strong notion remains that the West introduced the corrosive nature of corruption to Africa. As it were, corruption may pass for a ‘Western export’ or a legacy of the colonial masters (Nduku and Tenamwenye, 2014). This article examined how Sallust’s *Bellum Iugurthinum* (The War with Jugurtha), beyond providing a picture of corruption that was inherent in the Roman politics serves, as well as presents an historical account of the Western accomplices of a corrupt African monarch in an ancient African society.

### Corruption in the Roman Republic

Before considering Sallust on the subject of corruption, it is important to give a brief attention to the story of corruption in the Roman republic. ‘Ancient writers ascribed Rome’s political difficulties during the last century of the Republic to failures of character, specifically to *ambition* [ambition], *avaritia* [greed], *luxuria* [extravagance], and *libido* [license] (Levick 1982, p. 53). The Roman republic expanded through a combination of conquest and alliance during its first two centuries to cover the area spanning the whole of central Italy and entire Italian peninsula. By the third century, her presence in North Africa and Spain was strong. After Rome defeated Carthage in 146BC, the Romans experienced more influx of wealth and money, becoming both

dominant and corrupting factor in politics (MacMullen, 1988). Then, bribery and corruption ran amuck and became a constant feature of the Roman political life.

This period marked the rise of Marcus Licinius Crassus (115-53 BC), a distinguished Roman politician and general. Plutarch's *Life of Crassus* presents how Crassus who belonged to the era of corruption amassed wealth that was unsurpassed by any other Roman in the recorded history. Plutarch described the corrupt nature of the member of the political alliance of Crassus, Caesar and Pompey, known as the First Triumvirate, as follows:

The Romans, it is true, say that the many virtues of Crassus were obscured by his sole vice of avarice; and it is likely that the one vice which became stronger than all the others in him weakened the rest. The chief proofs of his avarice are found in the way he got his property and in the amount of it. For at the outset he was possessed of not more than three hundred talents; then during his consulship he sacrificed the tenth of his goods to Hercules, feasted the people, gave every Roman out of his own means enough to live on for three months, and still, when he made a private inventory of his property before his Parthian expedition, he found that it had a value of seventy-one hundred talents. The greatest part of this, if one must tell the scandalous truth, he got together out of fire and war, making the public calamities his greatest source of revenue (Plutarch, *Life of Crassus*, 2.1).

The last century of the Republic witnessed the type of corruption exemplified by Crassus as 'the proceeds of taxes and the profits of their collection, and sometimes the illegitimate gains of provincial administration, all contributed to the enrichment of both the state and the individual citizens' (Hardford, 1963, p. 9). The political atmosphere of extravagance and corruption among the ruling class in Rome which was characterised by direct and indirect bribery of the electorates as well as amassing of wealth at the detriment of the poor is further depicted by some eight references to cases of bribery in Suetonius' *De Vita Caesarum* (The Lives of the Caesars).

The first mention is Julius Caesar's using bribe to 'save himself from Sulla's detectives' (Suetonius, *The Caesars*, 1.2) when he was politically haunted. In a calculated political attack, 'he also bribed a man to bring a charge of high treason against Gaius Rabirius who some years before had rendered conspicuous service to the senate in repressing the seditious designs of the tribune Lucius Saturninus' (Suetonius, *The Caesars*, 12.1). Next, bribery is connected to seeking a religious office of the state when Julius Caesar reportedly 'announced his candidacy for the office of pontifex maximus, resorting to the most lavish bribery' (Suetonius, *The Caesars*, 13.1). Strongly bent on checkmating Caesar's political interest, it was reported that 'Cato [a prominent senator] did not deny that bribery under such circumstances was for the good of the commonwealth'

(Suetonius, *The Caesars*, 19.1). In another instance, Julius Caesar went all out against the opposition when he ‘bribed an informer to declare that he had been egged on by certain men to murder Pompey, and to come out upon the rostra and name the guilty parties according to a prearranged plot’ (Suetonius, *The Caesars*, 20.5). To maintain his political position, ‘Caesar by a heavy bribe secured the support of the other consul, Aemilius Paulus, and of Gaius Curio, the most reckless of the tribunes’ (Suetonius, *The Caesars*, 29.1). Another evidence of the endemic nature of corruption in the Roman Republic is found in how far Julius Caesar would go in populating the senate’s seats: ‘he reinstated those who had been degraded by official action of the censors or found guilty of bribery by verdict of the jurors (Suetonius, *The Caesars* 41.1).

The Historian Sallust embarked on a political career and at a time served as a *novus homo* (‘new man’) in the Roman Senate where he had first-hand knowledge of the rot in the system. Concerning his experience in public, his view is expressed thus:

I myself, however, when a young man, was at first led by inclination, like most others, to engage in political affairs but in that pursuit many circumstances were unfavourable to me; for, instead of modesty, temperance, and integrity, there prevailed shamelessness, corruption, and rapacity. And although my mind, inexperienced in dishonest practices, detested these vices, yet, in the midst of so great corruption, my tender age was ensnared and infected by ambition; and, though I shrunk from the vicious principles of those around me, yet the same eagerness for honours, the same obloquy and jealousy, which disquieted others, disquieted myself (Sallust, *Conspiracy of Catiline*, 3. 5-9).

Sallust here notes the contagion of ‘shamelessness, corruption, and rapacity’ of great magnitude which made him almost a victim of the pernicious ‘ambition’ of a quid pro quo political atmosphere. This view points to the endemic nature of corruption in the late Roman Republic when the traditional *clientela* institution was accompanied by electoral bribery (Millar 1984).

### **Introducing Roman Use of Bribery to African Politics**

The above instances provided some pictures of the Roman corrupt political system at the time the events of the Jugurthine War, war unfolded. As Sallust recorded the happenings that would culminate in Africa’s becoming a Roman province in his account of the Jugurthine War, he quickly hinted on moral decline and the age of corruption, especially in the Roman rich upper classes. The immediate reference to moral decadence is implicit in the expression: ‘the first-time resistance was offered to the insolence of the nobles’ (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 5.1). With a theme of corruption, the historian depicts how the socio-political situation at Rome impacted on

the political milieu of Africa where crisis over succession to the Numidian throne was imminent.

An introduction to the friendship between the African kingdom of Numidia and Rome was provided by Masinissa's interactions during the second Punic war (218BC-201BC) when he forged a relationship with Publius Scipio, a Roman general. The African monarch did not only aid the Romans in finally getting relief from the devastating blows of Hannibal in Italy but also helped in the defeat of Carthage and the capture of Syphax. Masinissa gained the reputation of a trusted friend of the Romans with whose support he became the sole king of Numidia and gained control over former territories of Carthage. Masinissa remained faithful to the Roman course until his death and was succeeded by three sons: Micipsa, Mastanabal and Gulussa. The last two died of illness and left Micipsa as the sole ruler of Numidia.

Crisis over succession to the Numidian throne soon got his foundation laid when Micipsa adopted Jugurtha, a son of Mastanabal his late brother through a concubine, and raised him along with his sons in the palace. As Jugurtha grew up, he excelled in both physical and mental activities to the admiration of all Numidians, including Micipsa who initially saw Jugurtha's successful military exploits as glorious to his kingdom. However, as he grew older, when he thought of how small in age his children were in comparison with Jugurtha, Micipsa began to feel some serious disquiet about Jugurtha's steadily growing popularity. Micipsa did not only feel that his position as the king was threatened in his old age, but he also considered the future of his children as his successors insecure as long as Jugurtha lived.

While eliminating Jugurtha seemed a good idea, Micipsa could not ignore how the Numidians who greatly admired and endorsed Jugurtha would react to such a ploy. Hence, Micipsa schemed to use Jugurtha's strength against him by sending Jugurtha to Spain as part of the cavalry and infantry support for the Romans in the war against the Numantians. However, contrary to Micipsa's expectation that Jugurtha, either as a result of burning desire for a glorious military performance or as a sheer war victim would suffer his downfall, Sallust reports: 'by hard labour and attention to duty, at the same time by showing strict obedience and often courting dangers, he shortly acquired such a reputation that he became very popular with our soldiers and a great terror to the Numantians' (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 7. 3). By his outstanding military intelligence and performance, Jugurtha endeared himself to the Roman commander, Publius Scipio, and won the trust and friendship of many Romans. Therefore, Micipsa scheme to eliminate Jugurtha was inadvertently frustrated.

Sallust now suggested that it was at this point that Jugurtha got introduced to the deadly weapon of bribery that was already rife in the Roman socio-political sphere when he said:

At that time, there were a great many in our army, both new men and nobles, who cared more for riches than for virtue and self-respect; they were intriguers at home, influential with our allies, rather notorious than respected. These men fired Jugurtha's ambitious spirit by holding out hopes that if king Micipsa should die, he might gain the sole power in Numidia, since he himself stood first in merit while at Rome anything could be bought (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 8.1).

Sallust here indicated that there were corrupt files of 'new men and nobles' that would not limit their corrupting influence to Rome but also swayed their allies. 'They were intriguers at home' and were 'rather notorious than respected'. No clear indication of how desirous of 'sole power in Numidia' Jugurtha was before now but the Romans saw in the African prince all the qualities needed in a good ally who only needed to be initiated into the corrupt ranks. The Romans corrupt nature gave little or no consideration to any arrangements for succession by Micipsa; hence, they fanned Jugurtha's ambition by telling him 'he himself stood first in merit', thereby introducing him to the pattern of corruption 'at Rome' where 'anything could be bought'.

Scipio, well aware of the scandalous record of sleaze among his people and as if foreseeing danger for Jugurtha, 'privately advised the young man to cultivate the friendship of the Roman people at large rather than that of individual Roman citizens, and not to form the habit of bribery. It was dangerous, he said, to buy from a few what belonged to the many' (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 8.2). Here, through Scipio's mouth, Sallust can be seen as highlighting an element of corruption: gratifying a few by sacrificing the interest of the majority.

Clearly, Micipsa's sending Jugurtha to Spain rather than solving the succession dilemma as the king had anticipated created a more precarious situation in Numidia. The content of Scipio's letter of recommendation to Micipsa after the Numantian War could be understood as presenting the imminent crisis thus:

The valour of your Jugurtha in the Numantine war was most conspicuous; as I am sure you will be glad to learn. To us he is dear because of his services, and we shall use our best efforts to make him beloved also by the senate and people of Rome. As your friend, I congratulate you; in him you have a hero worthy of yourself and of his grandfather Masinissa (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 9. 2).

The Romans apparently did not share Micipsa's position on succession. 'The valour of ... Jugurtha in the Numantine war' was more of delight to 'the senate and people of Rome' than it was to Micipsa. From the Roman standpoint, Jugurtha, 'because of his services', should be Micipsa's heir apparent and would be made 'beloved also by the senate and people of Rome'. The Sallust's expression credited to Scipio, 'a hero worthy of yourself and of his grandfather Masinissa', suggests an instruction of "make him the

sole ruler of Numidia, just like yourself and Masinissa”. Even when apparently made with better intentions, Scipio’s advice against bribery would ironically complement the urging Jugurtha got from the Roman army at Spain that he should go for the sole rulership of Numidia. While Scipio believed that power could be obtained patiently and through legitimate means, the Roman friends of Jugurtha suggested turning to bribery when such path of honour would not work. With Jugurtha made more conscious of hoping for the Numidian throne, as it were, he had Scipio’s ‘plan A’ and the soldiers ‘plan B’.

### **A Seed of Vice Thriving in Africa**

It is noteworthy that, unlike Rome, Africa was at this time depicted as a flourishing land; hardly with any record close to the Romans’ in corrupt scheming for riches. Concerning the region, Sallust presents a generally admirable life thus:

the soil fertile in grain, and favourable to flocks and herds but unproductive of trees; and earth are niggardly of water. The natives are healthy, swift of foot, and of great endurance. They commonly die of old age, unless they fall victims to the steel or to wild beasts; for disease seldom gets the better of any of them (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 17. 5).

However, the political life of the people would henceforth be greatly altered by the Roman corrupt values. After the Numantian war, Micipsa who dearly valued his relationship with the Romans, outwitted by the turn of events, recognised the prominence of Jugurtha when he changed his position; yet, he exercised his right as a sovereign monarch by making Jugurtha a coheir of his two sons, Adherbal and Hiempsal, who were much younger. How delicately balanced the relationship of the three was became obvious as soon as Micipsa died. Trouble began when, Jugurtha, despised and taunted by Hiempsal, the youngest of the three, became fearful, resentful, angry and murderous. Since subtle ways of eliminating Hiempsal would not work fast, he resorted to a brazen attack. In what appeared to be his first use of ‘plan B’, when ‘B’ also stands for ‘bribery’, Jugurtha ‘loaded with promises and induced’ his intimate servant who owned the house where Hiempsal would pass the night on his journey to where sharing of the kingdom was to be done (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 12, p. 3). The dastardly act was perfected as Sallust relates:

The Numidian promptly carried out his instructions, and, as he had been directed, let in Jugurtha’s soldiers by night. They rushed into the house, scattered in search of the king, slew some of the household in their sleep and others as they offered resistance, ransacked all hiding-places, broke down doors, and filled the whole place with noise and confusion. Meanwhile, Hiempsal was found hiding in the cell of a maid-servant, where in his first terror, unacquainted as he was with the

premises he had taken refuge. The Numidians did as they were ordered, and brought his head to Jugurtha (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 12. 4, 5).

Jugurtha's heinous crime caused panic over Numidia and instilled fear in Adherbal. A civil war began as Numidians took sides, some with Jugurtha and others with Adherbal. Jugurtha in no time started gaining the upper hand and Adherbal, while still determined to offer resistance, sent some envoys to Rome to inform the senate of Jugurtha reign of terror. When the numerical strength of his troops failed him, Adherbal fled to a Roman province and from there to Rome.

Then, that bribery became the custom in both foreign relations and domestic policy making of the Romans is further illustrated by Sallust's next account of Jugurtha's action after murdering Hiempsal. He related:

Then Jugurtha, when he had carried out his plans and was in possession of all Numidia, having leisure to think over what he had done, began to be afraid of the people and to despair of escaping their anger except through the avarice of the Roman nobles and his own wealth. Accordingly, a few days later, he sent envoys to Rome with a great amount of gold and silver, directing them first to load his old friends with presents, and then to win new ones — in short, to make haste to accomplish by largess whatever they could (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 13. 5).

Jugurtha's action may appear as simply taking advantage of patron-client patronage relationship (clientela) in a moment of need. However, this could be better interpreted as using his knowledge of the Romans' propensity toward bribery to pursue a selfish end. He acted with the clear intention of getting favour by influencing or perverting the Roman senate's sense of judgment. The 'splendid generous gifts' did the job as it reached the hands of leading and influential members of the senate so that the hostile atmosphere changed and, 'induced in some cases by hope, in others by bribery, they went about to individual members of the senate and urged them not to take too severe measures against Jugurtha' (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 13. 8).

When Adherbal arrived at Rome, Jugurtha's 'deal' with the prominent senate members was as good as sealed. Adherbal reminded the Romans what loyalty required in the present circumstances when he said: 'Masinissa instructed us to attach ourselves to none save the Roman people and to contract no new leagues and alliances; he declared that in your friendship there would be for us all an ample protection' did little good (Sallust, *Bellum Jugurthinum*, 14.18). However, what follows this appeal suggests the rottenness of bribery among the Romans. He said:



My only fear is lest private friendship for Jugurtha, the true character of which is not, may lead some of your number astray; for I hear that his partisans are using every effort, and are soliciting and entreating each of you separately not to pass any judgment upon him in his absence without hearing (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 14. 19).

While the principle of *audi alteram partem* (listen to the other side) would be plausible, the motivation for its use by Jugurtha's 'partisans' was the bribe which made the influential men discountenance Adherbal's accusation as coming from a mere pretender. Sallust further sees bribe as the force at work when Adherbal and the emissaries of Jugurtha appeared before the senate, relating: 'After the king had finished speaking, the envoys of Jugurtha, who relied rather upon bribery than upon the justice of their cause, replied briefly' (Sallust, *Bellum Jugurthinum*, 15. 1). They claimed that Hiempsal died as a victim of his savagery in the hands of the Numidians while Adherbal fled to Rome for help after his unprovoked attack on Jugurtha failed.

#### **The Thorns of Sleaze**

The outcome of the house's consideration of the issue is a further indication of how far corruption had eaten deep into the Roman senate. Sallust related:

The partisans of the envoys, and a large number of other senators who had been corrupted by their influence, derided the words of Adherbal and lauded the virtues of Jugurtha; exerting their influence, their eloquence, in short, every possible means, they laboured as diligently in defence of the shameful crime of a foreigner as though they were striving to win honour (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 15. 2).

The Roman senate, according to Sallust's account, was at this time infiltrated by greed for 'power, fame, and riches' as well as Jugurtha's 'bribery, so notorious and so brazen', that 'gross corruption' had a stronghold in the house (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 15.2). The picture of how 'they laboured as diligently in defence of the shameful crime of a foreigner as though they were striving to win honour' would be most shocking to re-enact.

Corruption was so rife that the 'faction of the senate prevailed which rated money and favour higher than justice. Yet, it was voted that ten commissioners should divide Micipsa's former kingdom between Jugurtha and Adherbal' (Sallust, *Jugurthinum*, 16.1). The 'arbitration' commission headed by Lucius Opimius, one of those who opposed Jugurtha in the senate, seemed best for the assignment of restoring peace to Africa. Lucius Opimius was an incumbent consul and a prominent member of the senate who still basked in his recent leading role in the elimination of Gaius Gracchus and Marcus Fulvius Flaccus, the tribunes whose protest over their failed re-election bid in 121 BCE caused some unrest at Rome. However, despite his credentials, Opimius

and other members of the commission succumbed to bribery in the hands of the African monarch. Sallust again shows how corruption had corroded the Roman values, relating:

Although at Rome Opimius had been one of Jugurtha's opponents, the king received him with the greatest respect, and soon induced him, by many gifts and promises, to consider Jugurtha's advantage of more consequence than his own fair fame, his honour, and in short, than all personal considerations. Then adopting the same tactics with the other envoys, Jugurtha won over the greater number of them; only a few held their honour dearer than gold. When the division was made, the part of Numidia adjoining Mauretania, which was the more fertile and thickly populated, was assigned to Jugurtha; the other part, preferable in appearance rather than in reality, having more harbours and being provided with more buildings, fell to Adherbal (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 16. 3-5).

In what could be described as an ineffectual way of handling matters, the envoys, having been made partisan by the bribe, apportioned 'the more fertile and thickly populated part of Numidia to Jugurtha. The visit of the commission who left Africa after the sharing only emboldened Jugurtha to further his ambition since the issue of his murdering Hiempsal and viciously attacking Adherbal went unpunished. 'Jugurtha found, in spite of his secret fears, that he had gained the price of his crime, he felt convinced of the truth of what he had heard from his friends at Numantia, that 'at Rome anything could be bought' (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 20.1). Sallust now describes how Jugurtha was goaded on by his successful experiment in bribing the Romans:

Accordingly, he began to covet Adherbal's kingdom, spurred on besides by the promises of those whom he had shortly before loaded with presents. He himself was active and warlike, while his intended victim was quiet, peaceful, of a tranquil disposition, open to attack and rather inclined to fear than an object of fear. Therefore, when Jugurtha suddenly invaded Adherbal's territory with a large force, he took many prisoners, as well as cattle and other plunder, set fire to buildings, and raided several places with his cavalry (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 20. 1-3).

Cladded with potent weapons of bribery and war, Jugurtha's brutality no longer got any inhibition. His eyes were set on having sovereignty over the whole of Numidia and he would do all to draw Adherbal into an open battle. Adherbal suffered defeat in the war that ensued and desperately sought refuge at Cirta where he got some protection from many Roman settlers who rose in defence of the town against the besieging Jugurtha's army. News of the war reached Rome and the senate decided to send another

group of envoys to Africa with instructions that the warring factions should settle their differences peacefully. Despite the appearance of loyal cooperation with the Romans, Jugurtha renewed his efforts to capture Cirta as soon as he learnt that the envoys had left Africa, taking to bribery again and employing threats.

As the situation got dire for Adherbal, he made two of his trusted soldiers risk their lives to take a letter of desperate appeal to the Roman senate. Although Adherbal's letter elicited some sympathy in the senate, nevertheless, the motion that Jugurtha should be declared disobedient to the instruction of the envoys was resisted by his corrupt allies in the senate so that, as Sallust puts it, 'as happens in many instances, the public welfare was sacrificed to private interests' (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 25. 3). The senate managed to arrive at the decision of sending another high-power delegation headed by Marcus Scaurus to Africa. The presence of the leading Roman senators in the group at first instilled fear in Jugurtha as Sallust's account below shows:

When Jugurtha learned that men of distinction, whose influence at Rome was said to be powerful had come to oppose his attempt, he was at first greatly disturbed and began to waver between fear and greed. He dreaded the senate's wrath in case he disobeyed the envoys; at the same time his spirit, blinded by cupidity, urged him to consummate his crime. But in his greedy soul the worst counsel prevailed (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 25. 5-8).

Undeterred, Jugurtha pursued the course of sacking Cirta since the envoys feeble outlook made constituted no obstacle in his desperate mood. The situation got to a head when, acting reluctantly on the advice of the Italians at Cirta, Adherbal surrendered himself to Jugurtha who contrary to the expectation of the Italians, 'first tortured Adherbal to death and then made an indiscriminate massacre of all the adult Numidians and of traders whom he found with arms in their hands' (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 25. 5-8).

Nevertheless, even after Jugurtha carried out these cruel acts that was a major slight on the Roman authority, the grip of corruption on the Roman senate was so strong that 'those same tools of the king, by interrupting the discussions and wasting time, often through their personal influence, often by wrangling, tried to disguise the atrocity of the deed' (Sallust, *Bellum Jugurthinum*, 27. 1). But, Gaius Memmius, a tribune of the people, successfully roused the spirit of the Roman populace against the corrupt senate leadership so that 'the senate from consciousness of guilt began to fear the people' (Sallust, *Bellum Jugurthinum*, 27.3) and an army, under the command of Lucius Calpurnius Bestia, was sent to Numidia.

However, Jugurtha did not despair over the renewed effort against him since his confidence in the power of bribery never waned. Sallust relates:

When Jugurtha heard this unexpected news (for he had a firm conviction that at Rome anything could be bought) he sent his son, and with him two friends, as envoys to the senate, giving them the same directions that he had given those whom he sent after murdering Hiempsal, namely, to try the power of money on everybody (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 28.1).

It interesting to note here that corruption got more disciples in Africa as Jugurtha involved 'his son, and two friends' in the 'arts of bribery'. However, the senate seemed more resolute this time when Jugurtha's envoys were not only refused entrance into Rome, but were given ten days to leave Italy unless they had come to surrender Jugurtha and his kingdom. Granted it was a failed mission for the envoys, it hardly meant the end of the Roman leaders succumbing to bribery. Little did the Romans realise how unfit Calpurnius and one of his deputies, Scaurus, were for the crucial assignment. The latter, although well reputed for 'great endurance, a keen intellect, no little foresight, considerable military experience, and a stout heart in the face of dangers and plots' also had a record of greed (Sallust, *Bellum Jugurthinum*, 28. 4). As for Calpurnius, his initial activity befitted only a serious minded and purposeful general who in no time would terminate Jugurtha's rampage. Sallust relates the reversal of events, though:

when Jugurtha through his emissaries began to try the power of money upon Calpurnius and to point out the difficulty of the war which he was conducting, the consul's mind, demoralized as it was by avarice, was easily turned from its purpose. Moreover, he took Scaurus as an accomplice and tool in all his designs; for although at first, even after many of his own party had been seduced, Scaurus had vigorously opposed the king, a huge bribe had turned him from honour and virtue to criminality. (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 29. 1, 2).

After perfecting the sleaze deals that still left Jugurtha a free man, as if with no twinge of conscience, Calpurinus returned to Rome to conduct elections. Even when knowledge of the deeds of these corruption accomplices caused a great public indignation at Rome, influential senators at Rome would not thread the path of honour and uphold justice.

### **A Roman Campaign Against Corruption**

As the senators wavered in action, Gaius Memmius, a tribune of the people, who is described as 'a man of spirit who was hostile to the domination of the nobles' (*vir acer et infestus potentiae nobilitatis*) (Sallust, *Bellum Iugurthinum*, 30.2) intervened and roused the common people at Rome to anger and vengeance. As Sallust reports, in his speech, he drew attention to the dishonest leaders' profile of corruption and the ignobility of their actions, saying:

In former years, you were silently indignant that the treasury was pillaged, that kings and free peoples paid tribute to a few nobles, that those nobles possessed supreme glory and vast wealth. Yet they were not satisfied with having committed with impunity these great crimes, and so at last the laws, your sovereignty, and all things human and divine have been delivered to your enemies. And they who have done these things are neither ashamed nor sorry, but they walk in grandeur before your eyes, some flaunting their priesthoods and consulships, others their triumphs, just as if these were honours and not stolen goods (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 30. 9).

Memmius saw a situation of self-seeking top politicians shamelessly enriching themselves with ill-gotten plunders and now brazenly handing over the 'sovereignty' of the Roman state (*maiestas populi Romani*) to 'enemies' such as Jugurtha. The Plebeian of the people, summoning the will of the common Roman citizens against the corrupt men, evidently alluded to the First Servile War of 135–132 BC when, under the leadership of Eunus, a former slave who claimed to be a prophet, slaves rebelled against the Roman Republic. He reasoned:

Slaves bought with a price do not put up with unjust treatment from their masters; will you, Roman citizens born to power, endure slavery with patience? But who are they who have seized upon our country? Men stained with crime, with gory hands, of monstrous greed, guilty, yet at the same time full of pride, who have made honour, reputation, loyalty, in short everything honourable and dishonourable, a source of gain. Some of them are safeguarded by having slain tribunes of the commons, others by unjust prosecutions, many by having shed your blood. Thus, the more atrocious the conduct, the greater the safety. They have shifted fear from their crimes to your cowardice, united as they are by the same desires, the same hatred, the same fears. This among good men constitutes friendship; among the wicked it is faction. But if your love of freedom were as great as the thirst for tyranny which spurs them on, surely our country would not be torn asunder as it now is, and your favours would be bestowed on the most virtuous, not on the most reckless (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 31. 11-16).

Memmius saw the freedom of *populus Romanus* (the people of Rome) at stake in the atmosphere of corruption at its peak among nobles when he said 'your country has been offered for sale at home and abroad' (Sallust, *Bellum Jugurthinum*, 31.25). His speech got the desired effect as arrangement was made to bring Jugurtha to Rome with the assurance of his protection guaranteed in order to get evidence from him to prosecute Scaurus and others who were accused of bribery.

In the meantime, while arrangement was made for a praetor, Lucius Cassius to implement the decision, the remaining soldiers in who were left behind by Bestia in command of Numidia followed the path of their general, 'Some were induced by bribes to return his elephants to Jugurtha, others sold him his deserters, and a part plundered those who were at peace with us: so strong was the love of money which had attacked their minds like a pestilence' (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 32. 3-4).

After Jugurtha was persuaded to appear before the Roman senate, emboldened by his Roman supporters, he sought the backing of the common people with 'a heavy bribe' given to Gaius Baebius, a tribune of the people (Sallust, *Bellum Jugurthinum*, 33, p. 2). Yet the anti-oligarchical forces insisted on Jugurtha's revealing the identities of those who through their corrupt deed were accomplices to the monarch's crime if he would be shown any mercy that that was in the judicial power of the Assembly. However, Sallust reported how corruption once again won:

When Memmius had finished and Jugurtha was bidden to reply, Gaius Baebius, the tribune of the commons who, as I just said, had been bribed, thereupon bade the king hold his peace. And although the populace, who were gathered in assembly, were greatly excited and tried to intimidate the tribune by shouting, by angry looks, often by threatening gestures and all the other means which anger prompts, yet his impudence triumphed. Hence the people left the assembly after being made ridiculous, while Jugurtha, Bestia, and the others who were fearful of conviction, recovered their assurance (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 34. 1,2).

Jugurtha did not only frustrate the fight against corruption when the tribune of the people who was expected to represent their interest succumbed to bribery, but after perfecting the heinous crime of murdering, Massiva, a rival to the Numidian throne who was at that time, boasted of full knowledge of the Roman corrupt nature, saying: 'a city for sale and doomed to speedy destruction if it finds a purchaser' (Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 35.10).

### Conclusion

Sallust's account of the Jugurthine War discussed above illustrates the impact of the socio-political values of the Romans on Africa. In the Roman patronage (*clientela*) institution, it was culturally admissible, on the one hand, for patrons with superior wealth, power, or prestige to assist or render favours for their clients and, on the other hand, for clients to provide support for the course of their patrons. Both parties were expected to loyally defend the interest of each other. Such patronage relationship also existed by the late the republic between Rome and her overseas allies or conquered communities. The dealings between Rome and Africa in the case of Masinissa and Scipio Africanus may generally be seen in this light. However, the motive and the

circumstances of making out a gift may turn the offer into a bribe as the events concerning Jugurtha in this article well illustrate.

As indicated above, patronage towards the end of the Roman republic in its perverse form became electoral bribery that was often employed by prominent politicians whose greed for power, fame and riches became untamed with Roman expansion. Jugurtha particularly came in contact with this 'culture' when he fought alongside Roman soldiers in the Numantian War. The Romans fanned Jugurtha's political ambitions and told him he could get the support of Rome if employed bribery to secure the Numidian throne, thereby introducing the pernicious effect of corruption to Africa.

Clearly then, when Jugurtha gave out large amount of gold silver, elephants, cattle, horses and other African resources to the 'West', it was in no setting of *clientela*, since the benefactors included those with whom he had no previous personal relationship and were some of whom had hitherto opposed him in the senate. While Jugurtha could be labelled as corrupt in his use of the public resources to serve his selfish interest, he learnt the 'art' from the Romans who were adept at venality. Here is a historical case of corruption with its accomplices, not from a land of scarcity or poverty, but from the land where a few exploited what belonged to the many in their greed quest for power, fame and riches. Jugurtha's corrupt criminal activities ended when the will of the corrupt oligarch at Rome was thwarted. Similarly, Corruption in African societies could greatly diminish when African plunderers no longer have safe haven of treasuries for their loots in the West.

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