

## ΠΛΟΥΤΑΡΧΟΥ ΒΙΟΙ ΠΑΡΑΛΛΗΛΟΙ

Βίος Λυσάνδρου. Κεφ.19

...

[5] ἔστι δὲ ἡ σκυτάλη τοιοῦτον. ἐπὶ ἐκπέμπωσι ναύαρχον ἢ στρατηγὸν οἱ ἔφοροι, ξύλα δύο στρογγύλα μῆκος καὶ πάχος ἀκριβῶς ἀπισώσαντες, ὥστε ταῖς τομαῖς ἐφαρμόζειν πρὸς ἄλληλα, τὸ μὲν αὐτοὶ φυλάττουσι, θάτερον δὲ τῷ πεμπομένῳ διδόασιν. ταῦτα δὲ τὰ ξύλα σκυτάλας καλοῦσιν. [6] ὅταν οὖν ἀπόρρητόν τι καὶ μέγα φράσαι βουληθῶσι, βιβλίον ὥσπερ ἰμάντα μακρὸν καὶ στενὸν ποιῶντες περιελίττουσι τὴν παρ' αὐτοῖς σκυτάλην, οὐδὲν διάλειμμα ποιῶντες, ἀλλὰ πανταχόθεν κύκλῳ τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτῆς τῷ βιβλίῳ καταλαμβάνοντες. τοῦτο δὲ ποιήσαντες ἂ βούλονται καταγράψουσιν εἰς τὸ βιβλίον, ὥσπερ ἐστὶ τῆς σκυτάλης περικείμενον· ὅταν δὲ γράψωσιν, ἀφελόντες τὸ βιβλίον ἄνευ τοῦ ξύλου πρὸς τὸν στρατηγὸν ἀποστέλλουσι. [7] δεξιόμενος δὲ ἐκεῖνος ἄλλως μὲν οὐδὲν ἀναλέξασθαι δύναται τῶν γραμμάτων συναφὴν οὐκ ἔχόντων, ἀλλὰ διεσπασμένων, τὴν δὲ παρ' αὐτῷ σκυτάλην λαβὼν τὸ τμήμα τοῦ βιβλίου περὶ αὐτὴν περιέτεινεν, ὥστε, τῆς ἑλικῆς εἰς τάξιν ὁμοίως ἀποκαθισταμένης, ἐπιβάλλοντα τοῖς πρώτοις τὰ δεύτερα, κύκλῳ τὴν ὄψιν ἐπάγειν τὸ συνεχὲς ἀνευρίσκουσιν. καλεῖται δὲ ὁμωνύμως τῷ ξύλῳ σκυτάλη τὸ βιβλίον, ὡς τῷ μετροῦντι τὸ μετρούμενον.

Plutarch, Parallel Lives

Lysander, Chapter 19.

...

5 The dispatch-scroll is of the following character. When the ephors send out an admiral or a general, they make two round pieces of wood exactly alike in length and thickness, so that each corresponds to the other in its dimensions, and keep one themselves, while they give the other to their envoy. These pieces of wood they call "scytalae." 6 Whenever, then, they wish to send some secret and important message, they make a scroll of parchment long and narrow, like a leathern strap, and wind it round their "scytale," leaving no vacant space thereon, but covering its surface all round with the parchment. After doing this, they write what they wish on the parchment, just as it lies wrapped about the "scytale"; and when they have written their message, they take the parchment off, and send it, without the piece of wood, to the commander. 7 He, when he has received it, cannot other get any meaning of it, — since the letters have no connection, but are disarranged, — unless he takes his own "scytale" and winds the strip of parchment about it, so that, when its spiral course is restored perfectly, and that which follows is joined to that which precedes, he reads around the staff, and so discovers the continuity of the message. And the parchment, like the staff, is called "scytale," as the thing measured bears the name of the measure.