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The Unity
of Plutarch's Work

Edited by
Anastasios G. Nikolaidis

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The Unity of Plutarch's Work



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The Unity of Plutarch's Work

'Moralia' Themes in the 'Lives',
Features of the 'Lives' in the 'Moralia'

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Preface

The annual work on Plutarch registered in *L'Année Philologique* 2006 takes up more than 7 pages, which is a spectacular progress in comparison with the only 2 Plutarch pages twenty years ago. Such eruption of interest in the sage of Chaeroneia can hardly be accidental and is linked, most probably, to the scholarly activities of the International Plutarch Society following its foundation in 1985 (primarily through the triennial international congresses, the local Plutarch conferences in Italy, Spain, USA and Belgium, and, as of 2003, the *Ploutarchos*, the Society's own review). Especially the conferences have invigorated and vitalized Plutarchean studies in two directions: a) by removing Plutarch from the group of the so-called reference authors, and establishing that the Chaeronean is an important literary figure *per se*, whose work deserves to be studied and evaluated for its own merit; and b) by attracting to Plutarch scholars from various other areas who, exploring his writings from their particular perspectives, have shed more light on them, thus conducing to a fuller understanding of our author and his work.

The idea of organizing the IPS triennial Congress at Rethymno was first conceived in response to relevant hints (and encouragement) of several fellow-Plutarchists during the Madrid-Cuenca V International Congress in 1999. The idea took deep roots and so, before the following conference in Nijmegen, I officially informed the Society of my readiness to organize the VII International Congress in Crete. I also proposed its topic (the title of this volume), and on 15/5/2002 Aurelio Pérez Jiménez, President of the IPS at the time, let me know in a letter that the Society had accepted my proposals and, therefore, he formally authorized me to organize the VII International Congress at Rethymno.

The IPS Congress was eventually held at the campus of the University of Crete on 4–8 May 2005, and the present volume (with the exception of 6 papers that were not submitted or were published elsewhere) contains its considerably updated proceedings. The funding came from various sources to which the organizer is deeply grateful. In particular, however, I wish to acknowledge the financial support of the University of Crete, the Greek Ministry of Education, the National Bank of Greece, Motor Oil Hellas, S.A., and Dot Repro, S.A. Further, I am also grateful to the J.F. Costopoulos Foundation and the Educational Research Centre for kindly subsidizing the pub-

lication of the Congress *Acta*. Yet the present volume would have never been published without the generosity and expertise of the De Gruyter publishers.

Special thanks I also owe to Dr. Sabine Vogt, editor of Classical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, who took interest in the subject-matter of the present volume from the very beginning and kindly introduced me to the Millennium editors; and to Professor Dr. Peter Möllendorff, co-editor of the Millennium Studies, as well as to the reviewers of the series, who made useful suggestions to ameliorate the presentation of the contents of the volume. Finally, I would like to thank the colleague who wishes to remain anonymous for his spending endless hours on technically homogenizing the texts of 55 individual articles that were submitted in a frightful variety of fonts (especially Greek fonts), styles, sizes and spaces.

Rethymno, 12 February 2008

A. G. N.

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Introduction

Anastasios G. Nikolaidis

To speak of the unity of an author's work may, *prima facie*, sound as a truism. But when a literary artist occupies himself simultaneously with different kinds of literature (something not very unusual in antiquity), one may at least wonder about the nature of this variety. Does it consist of autonomous creations that represent the diverse abilities of a manifold intellect, or simply of multiform expressions of a rather uniform mind? Plutarch was not the only polymath and prolific writer in antiquity nor was he unique with respect to the multifariousness of his writings. Yet, whereas one can hardly find a *roter Faden* that runs through and holds together Aristotle's *Categories*, the *History of Animals* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*, for instance, or the *Roman Antiquities* and *On Literary Composition* of Dionysios of Halikarnassos, in Plutarch this connecting thread is always, more or less, discernible in almost all his works whether biographical or philosophical or theological or political or whatever. Whether Plutarch puts down sympotic reminiscences or discourses about Isis and Osiris or on how to study poetry, and whether he writes to compare Aristophanes with Menander or to give political or marital advice, the underlying factor in all these writings is unmistakably one and the same: a profound interest in people and ethical matters in general, and in man's moral character and human behaviour in particular. As Volkmann put it almost one and a half century ago, "Das Ethische ist das eigentliche Element in welchem sein Denken und Wollen sich bewegt" (vol. 1, p. 13).¹ And Hartman, some fifty years later, would deny the Plutarchean authorship of the *Greek Questions* on the grounds that this treatise was not concerned with ethical matters (pp. 137 and 139). These findings, however, do not entail that Plutarch was a crude moralist who stigmatized deeds and conducts, meted out prescriptions for correct ways of living or put forward ideal, and therefore unattainable, patterns of behaviour. On the contrary, his writings demonstrate that he was perfectly aware of the frailty of human nature, which he respectfully regarded as man's lot, in other words, as an inbred characteristic and unavoidable fact.²

1 Cf. also Gréard's contemporaneous statement: "la morale n' est pas seulement une des applications de son génie; c' est son génie même" (p. XII). Since then, no Plutarch scholar has ever failed to confirm, with various degrees of emphasis, P.'s preoccupation with morality.

2 Cf. *Kim.* 2.5, *Aem.* 34.7-8, *Kleom.* 16.8, and *Moralia* 474A, 481F, 964D-E.

Besides morality, one could also detect and bring up more factors that determine Plutarch's *œuvre*. Religion is one of them;³ the Hellenic *paideia*, which informs most of his writings and which he tries to impart to his readers, is another;⁴ but the unifying force of these factors is not as overwhelming as the moral one. Be that as it may, however important and overriding all the above factors are, Plutarch is neither a monotonous writer nor a dogmatic intellectual. His allegiance to Plato cannot be disputed,⁵ but, on the whole, Plutarch has no ideological fixations and his views and approaches (often of an eclectic nature) are more or less characterized by moderation, broadmindedness, common sense, and a peculiar practical spirit that yokes his theoretical considerations and principles to the realities of the every day life.

Nevertheless, the moral purpose that underlies and unifies Plutarch's literary production is always there. The very titles (let alone the contents) of many of his essays bear adequate witness to this moral purpose, which, after all, is what ultimately links Plutarch the essayist with Plutarch the biographer. For, thanks to the Peripatetics, the affinity between Ethics and biography had become conspicuous by his time, and Ethics, as has been acknowledged since long time ago, is "the branch of philosophy that fostered especially the study of individual lives as exemplars of its precepts."⁶ The genre of biography, therefore, perfectly suited Plutarch's personality and interests, for it satisfied his genuine predilection for ethical matters, and at the same time it served a valuable practical purpose: moral edification as well as self-cultivation and fulfilment by means of concrete historical examples.⁷

The ethical parameter aside, one can also perceive the unity of Plutarch's work through other indications. We already noted the commonsensical element of much of his thinking and the practical spirit underlying many of his evaluations and judgements. By applying common sense criteria, more or less, Plutarch assesses his heroes in the *Lives* and expounds his views in the *Moralia*; it is practical considerations that often mould his opinion about certain historical events, or shape the arguments, explanations and advice in his treatises;⁸ and it is the combination of both these factors that prompt his essays

3 For P.'s religious ideas see primarily Brenk, and more conveniently Flacelière, CLX-CC. See also García Valdés (ed.) and Oakesmith (not without value, despite its age).

4 Cf. Russell, 17.

5 For P.'s Platonism see Jones and cf. Dörrie.

6 Stuart, 121; cf. also Wardman, 94: "The *Lives* are in general a study of *areté* as it is active in the world".

7 Cf. Wright, 217: "Plutarch's purpose... was a moral one, to illustrate virtue by concrete examples". Cf. also Gossage, 49; and for P.'s moralism in the *Lives* see Pelling, 237-251.

8 Theseus' liaisons with women, for example, discredit the Athenian hero; but Romulus' rape of the Sabines is put down to his credit, because this act of violence was intended

on popular philosophy, his emphasis on the significance of minor virtues and vices (such as *πραότης*, *φιλανθρωπία*, *αοργησία*, and conversely *φιλονικία*, *φιλοπλουτία*, but also *αδολεσχία*, *δυσωπία*, *πολυπραγμοσύνη*),⁹ his practical advice on how to fulfil a noble purpose, accomplish a moral achievement, or on how to resist succumbing to passions and fight off shortcomings and weaknesses. By remaining throughout in touch with reality, Plutarch is both humane and practical.¹⁰

As a follower of Plato, Plutarch could not, of course, have been in sympathy with the materialistic systems of the Epicureans and the Stoics.¹¹ Yet the cornerstone of Plato's philosophy, the theory of Ideas, shines through its absence in Plutarch's extant writings, whereas his war against both the Stoa and the Garden is not so much waged at a theoretical level, but more often concerned with the absurdities (as he thought) and the negative practical consequences of their respective doctrines. In Plutarch's mind, the ethical absolutism of the Stoics, proclaiming that there are no small and big vices, that badness is one, and that, unless one is entirely virtuous, one is bad, in other words, recognizing no intermediate condition or any gradation between perfect virtue and utter wickedness, grossly violated common sense and was practically useless;¹² similarly, the Epicurean disparagement of political activity rendered one's qualifications useless to the community, since it deprived him of the opportunity to show his abilities and benefit his fellow-citizens and his country; further, the same discouragement prevented philosophy from refining politics through its educative influence.¹³ Yet, despite his vehement assaults on the Epicurean tenets, the practical Plutarch employs Epicurean arguments to combat superstition in his *Peri deisidaimonias*.

Another important parameter, emblematic of Plutarch's personality, is a deep humanity that pervades most of his writings. This also has long been recognized, and Hirzel (p. 26), devoting a whole chapter to Plutarch's

to benefit the whole Roman people (*Comp. Thes.- Rom.* 6). Cf. also the nature of his advice in *Mor.* 91A-92B, 140B, 142C, 470B-C etc. For more examples and discussion see Nikolaidis, 1991, 175-186. Cf. also Russell, 85.

- 9 Cf. also Johnson, 33, Russell, 135. And for the nature of P.'s advice on some of these minor virtues and vices see Ingenkamp. As a matter of fact, P. believed that a sharp distinction between minor and major Ethics was artificial, and that whoever was susceptible to such weaknesses as avidity, irascibility, meddlesomeness, excessive bashfulness or garrulity could never achieve ethical fulfilment. Hence the importance he attaches to denouncing those 'minor' foibles.
- 10 Cf. also Sandbach, 698.
- 11 For P.'s stance toward the Stoics, Babut's thorough study remains the standard work on the subject; for that toward the Epicureans cf. Boulogne; for P.'s attitude towards both cf. Hershbell's twin surveys.
- 12 Cf. Babbitt, 399.
- 13 On these issues cf. Wardman, 197-220, Adam, Barigazzi, Roskam, and Berner – Feldmeier – Heininger – Hirsch-Luipold.

“Philanthropie”, declares that nothing can express better “das Prinzip Plutarchischer Moral in Leben und Lehre...als eben die Philantropie.”¹⁴ It is because of this humanity that he frowns upon the Spartans’ habit to intoxicate the Helots by force in order to exemplify drunkenness to their youth (*Demetr.* 1.5); or upon the practice of *krypteia*, on account of which he regards Numa, who would allow slaves to dine with their masters during the *Saturnalia*, as far more Hellenic a lawgiver than Lykourgos (*Comp. Lyk.-Nu.* 1.10), the best (and Plutarch’s favourite hero), otherwise, Greek (*Comp. Ag./Kleom.-Gr.* 5.4 and *Lyk.* 31.3). It is the same humanity and kind-heartedness again that make him criticize the elder Cato’s attitude towards his aged slaves (*Cma.* 4.5 and all ch. 5) and disapprove of Demosthenes’ jubilation at the news of Philip’s death (*Demo.* 22.2–4). Being of an essentially kindly mind, Plutarch was not simply interested in people, but also ready to find good in them.¹⁵ This is why he does not only – and primarily – seek to advance the virtues of his worthies (cf. *Kim.* 2.5), but also tries to locate and bring forward the good qualities of his villains.¹⁶

Finally, his methods of work, whether composing a biography or an essay, are very similar, despite the different nature and conventions of these genres. The use of historical examples, the employment of poetical quotations (whether *per se* or adroitly embodied in his own text), comparative techniques, ways of material adaptation, tacit incorporation of oral information are only some of the authorial devices equally to be found in the *Lives* and the *Moralia*. Thus, Plutarch’s methods of work appear to confirm from yet another angle the unity of his *œuvre*.¹⁷

It is hoped that the contributions in this book will convincingly bear out its title. The subject-matter has been categorized in eight chapters corresponding to the following thematic units: Plutarch’s methods of work, *Moralia in Vitis*, Plutarch and politics, Plutarch and philosophy, Literary aspects of Plutarch’s *œuvre*, Women, *eros*, marriage, and parenthood in Plutarch, Plutarch in his

14 Cf. also Ziegler, 306/943: “Aus fast allen seinen Schriften strahlt die Menschlichkeit, die Nächstenliebe, die Herzengüte, die Versöhnlichkeit, die φιλανθρωπία (um seinen eigenen Lieblingsausdruck zu benützen), die er, wo immer sie ihm begegnete, gerühmt, seinen Lesern empfohlen hat und selbst zu üben sicherlich nicht müde geworden ist, nicht nur gegen seine Landsleute, sondern gegen alles, was Menschennalitz trägt, ja selbst gegen die Tiere...”. For P.’s notion of *philanthropia* in the *Lives* see Martin, and cf. also Johnson.

15 See *Mor.* 463C, and cf. his stance towards doubtful historical events in 855F. Cf. also Barrow, 147, Sandbach, 700, and Wardman, 189, 192–93.

16 For the good aspects of Demetrios’ character see *Demetr.* 2.3, 3.1, ch. 4, 6.4, 9.2, 17.1. For those of Antony see *Ant.* 3.10, 4.6–9, 6.5, 23.2 and, above all, 17.3–5. See also *Mor.* 485A, and cf. Russell, 135, and Wardman, 183.

17 For P.’s methods see Pelling’s articles in *JHS* 1979 and 1980, now conveniently together in id 2002, 1–44 and 91–115. Cf. also Nikolaidis 2005.

epistemological and socio-historical context. Each chapter is preceded by a synopsis summarizing the articles which comprise the chapter,¹⁸ while chapter one consists of only one article which, owing to its subject, serves as an appropriate prelude to the whole volume.

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18 These summaries are based on the abstracts of the authors themselves.

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1. The Formation of Plutarch's *Corpus*

Synopsis

In this introductory article **Joseph Geiger** asks an important question preliminary to the subject of the present book. Even before starting to consider the unity and concord of the *Lives* and of the so-called *Moralia*, we must ask ourselves how did it come about that Plutarch's *œuvre* became separated into two, seemingly distinct, parts? It is maintained that, though we are ill-informed about Plutarch's methods of work and the chronology of his writings, there is no reason to believe that they were significantly different for *Lives* and *Moralia* or that there was a strict chronological separation between the two. Nor had readers in antiquity restricted or centred their interest on one or other group of works; organisation such as the one we find in the Lamprias catalogue reflects only the convenience of librarians. It was only towards the end of the thirteenth century that the efforts of Maximus Planudes brought about a collection of the available non-biographical works, creating hereby a corpus of *Moralia*. However, when the works of Plutarch first appeared in the West at the very end of the fourteenth century, they arrived gradually and were copied, translated and, after the invention of printing, printed piecemeal. The Aldine edition of 1509 established anew a corpus of the *Moralia*, followed a few years later by that of the *Lives*, hereby bringing about the separation that persists to the present day. The main purpose of the present paper then is to investigate how Plutarch's scattered works in the fifteenth century came to form the *corpora* at the beginning of the sixteenth.

Lives and *Moralia*: How Were Put Asunder What Plutarch Hath Joined Together★

Joseph Geiger

The theme of the present conference unmistakably announces a guiding principle, inherent in the very founding and activities of this Society: Plutarch's works are of a piece, students of our author ought to view the *œuvre* as a whole, a logical consequence of adhering to the ideal of *klassische Altertumswissenschaft*. Yet every declaration of policy hides some criticism or polemics against a certain state of affairs. It is no secret, that many students of the *Lives* only take occasional recourse, when needed, to the *Moralia* and of course vice versa. Though this situation is but an outcome of the various interests of a rich assortment of scholars and of the fashion of specialisation, it is no doubt facilitated by the customary division of the works of Plutarch and by the long tradition of their study. In the present paper I shall attempt to survey one aspect of the history of Plutarch's reception, viz. the question of the genesis of the present division. My paper will be of two parts: the first will deal summarily with what happened from Plutarch's own day until the reappearance of his works in the West at the end of the fourteenth century. This shorter part will on the whole repeat some well-established facts. In the second part, dealing, in the main, with the fifteenth century, I shall try to uncover the roots of the present situation.

I

It hardly needs repeating that the chronology of Plutarch's works is one of their less well-known aspects, and that very little progress has been made in the almost forty years since the study of C.P. Jones and that not much advance can be expected in the future. It is one of the unambiguous outcomes of that survey that Plutarch worked on *Lives* and *Moralia* at the same time, though of course it is not known whether he did so *pari passu* or in a number of separate bursts of energy. Certainly the innumerable threads connecting the two

★ When composing this paper, Marianne Pade, *The Reception of Plutarch's Lives in Fifteenth Century Italy*, 2 vols., Copenhagen 2007, had not appeared yet; see now my review in *SCI* 27 (2008), 164–166.

corpora attest to the author's composing in proximity various works, often exploiting for them the very same source material. Nor do we possess evidence for a twofold division in Antiquity. It suffices to quote in this connexion Eunapius in his survey of writers on the history of philosophers (*VS* 454), where he calls Plutarch divine (*θειότατος*) and the charm and lyre of all philosophy (*ἡ φιλοσοφίας ἀπάσης ἀφροδίτη καὶ λύρα*) and later also divinely inspired (*θεσπέσιος*) and seems, at least in part, to explicate these epithets by the fact that 'Parallel Lives of the best men according to their deeds and achievements', are his 'most beautiful' (*κάλλιστον*) work. It is not so much the context of these remarks – Plutarch's failure to compose his own *Life* or that of his teacher Ammonius, which thus must be gathered from scattered references – that is of interest in the present context, as the seemingly natural assumption that the *Parallel Lives* were the most distinguished work of the 'philosopher'.

I shall only repeat in brief the relevant facts concerning the *Lamprias Catalogue*. It was composed in the third or fourth centuries and it seems to be agreed that it reflects the convenience of some librarian rather than a scholarly edition of the works.¹ Its positioning at the head the *Parallel Lives*, followed by the other, now mostly lost, biographical writings was but an expediency of organisation, and no attempt has been made to introduce any logical order in the remaining titles. Moreover, let it be said already here that the series of *Parallel Lives*² could and were often viewed as one work and that placing them together was but the self-evident conclusion from this fact. Probably not far removed in time from the *Catalogue of Lamprias* is the sophist Sopatros, excerpted by Photius (*cod.* 161). The excerpts made use of a fair number of the *Moralia* (including some lost and some spurious works) and *Lives*.³ It is of some interest that but for the *Life of Brutus*, for some reason mentioned together with that of Demetrius, Sopatros excerpted only the Greek *Lives* and ignored the Romans. The deplorable separation between *Parallels* still fashionable in some quarters looks back to a tradition at least as early as the fourth century.

There is no need here to repeat what is known about the textual tradition of the various works nor to assess the impact of the transition from roll to codex on its development and we may hurry on to the man whose work was decisive for the transmission of the works of Plutarch. The works other than the biographical ones were transmitted singly, or in small groups, until towards the end of the thirteenth century Maximus Planudes collected all that was available of these works, placing at the top a group of writings, named with

1 Treu; cf. Ziegler, 60–61.

2 Including almost always the *Lives* of Aratus, Artaxerxes, Galba and Otho.

3 It is a rare misjudgment of Hirzel, 82, to say that already at that time readers of the *Lives* and the *Moralia* were separated, and to mention Sopater as an example of the former.

only partially justifiable claim Ἡθικά.⁴ Thus the partition between the *Lives* and the other works came to be established, as the collection of Maximus Planudes included almost all that has survived from Antiquity.⁵

This is where the best-known part of the story of the transmission of Plutarch's works comes to its end, and this is where our main story begins. For in the beginning it was not the collection of Maximus Planudes that has reached the West, it was not this compilation that maintained the division of the works until it became permanent with the invention of printing. On the contrary, the spread of Plutarch's works in the West was slow and piecemeal. The renewed division between *Lives* and *Moralia* that came into being with the printed editions of the collected works and that lives on to the present day was the result of the reception of Plutarch's works in the fifteenth century. How did this division come about?

II

It is well known that Plutarch's works were unfamiliar in the West in the Middle Ages: Petrarch knew only the spurious *Institutio Traiani*.⁶ It was the early Renaissance that first showed its interest in the author and the imminent and eventual fall of Constantinople and the growing number of refugees reaching Italy that satisfied the demand. The story has been told more than once, though not with the present emphasis on the separate histories of the two divisions of Plutarch's text.

As we have learned many years ago from Philip Stadter, the Ambrosian MS of the *Moralia* had arrived in Italy already early in the fourteenth century, not long after its completion, and was in the possession of Pace of Ferrara of the pre-humanist circle of Padua (see Stadter). Yet it appears that Pace had no Greek, and that his ownership of the Planudean MS is only a prologue to the reception of Plutarch in the West. The ground was not ready to receive the entire corpus of the *Moralia* in one fell swoop. In fact it is only late in the fifteenth century that we have definite evidence that the MS has been read. But in the meantime the first real arrival of Plutarch in Italy took place.

4 Ziegler, 313–4 quotes the relevant bibliography.

5 For a summary of Planudes' work see Ziegler, 314–5: first Planudes collected all the available non-biographical writings: these 69 works are included in Ambros. 859 written in 1295; in July 1296 a second MS, Paris. 1671, was finished. It included the *Lives* and after them the same collection of the *Moralia*. The last effort was the luxury codex Paris. 1672, written in the beginning of the next century and containing nine more works of the *Moralia*, thus in fact fixing almost entirely what is now extant.

6 Weiss, 323; cf. Zucchelli.

This arrival was piecemeal and lasted over two generations. Albeit the role of the correspondence of Coluccio Salutati with Manuel Chrysoloras is acknowledged as giving the initial push to the diffusion of the works of Plutarch in Italy the differing aims of the two men should not be lost on us (see Berti). Chrysoloras wished to impart acquaintance with Greek language and literature, while Salutati, typically for the humanists, saw the works as important new sources for an improved familiarity with Antiquity, and was attracted to the opportunity of learning about Rome and the heroes of the Republic from Greek sources. On the whole, of course, it was the contents of the newly recovered works that mattered most for the West, and in our case, as Pfeiffer puts it⁷ ‘the Lives of Plutarch strongly appealed to the feeling of the Italian Renaissance for the individual, in particular those of the great Romans; and to a lesser degree his *Moralia* appealed to its concern for problems of moral philosophy’. (I would make here the reservation that, as will be seen presently, Pfeiffer’s words are valid for only a part of the *Moralia*). Add to this the sheer volume of the works of our author and one easily understands the piecemeal reception as well as the separation between *Lives* and *Moralia*.

Both *Lives* and *Moralia*, not differently from the rest of Greek literature, were studied for their intrinsic values, for the insights one could derive from the accumulated wisdom of Antiquity. A good way of appreciating the different attitudes to these two corpora is viewing the history of the translations and of the printed editions, both in the original and in translations into Latin and into the various vernaculars. Only thus do we appreciate the gradual reception of this bulky *œuvre* and its absorption into Western tradition. Single *Lives* and tractates of the *Moralia* were translated, occasionally joined into small groups. The diverse works were chosen for their particular appeal, more often than not assimilated to the (imagined) taste of an assortment of dedicatees or the preferences of the translator. Thus the first half of the fifteenth century brought about the translation into Latin of all the *Lives*, more or less one by one,⁸ and they were then printed in 1470, not very long after the art of printing had reached Italy. While particular *Lives* may have seemed more appropriate to certain dedicatees or to the political circumstances of a given translator,⁹ very soon the common usefulness of both their moralistic attitude and of the historical information contained in them was acknowledged. Thus collected editions of the *Lives* became the rule, although of course single *Lives*, or small groups of them, continued, and continue, to be printed. Another indicator of the reasons for the popularity of the *Lives* provide the various

7 Pfeiffer, 29.

8 See the comprehensive account of Giustiniani and cf. Pade 1998.

9 Some examples of this will be found in Celenza; Pade 1991; cf also Pade 1989; Botley, 16–20.

epitomes composed in the Quattrocento: it was the historical facts contained in the *Lives*, rather than their style, that was of interest.¹⁰ Yet another pointer by which the popularity of the *Lives* may be gauged cannot here be treated as it requires a separate study: Plutarch's *Lives* – but very seldom any of the *Moralia* – provided major themes for Renaissance art. Specifically one may mention in this context the impact of the 1470 Campano translation.¹¹

But this translation also bears important witness to the biographical, or shall we say historical, interest rather than to the literary attraction of our author. To the *Lives* translated by Filelfo, Tortelli, Lapo Birago, Acciajuoli, Guarino, Pasini, Barbaro, Leonardo Bruni and Leonardo Giustiniani there were added the *Lives of Hannibal, Scipio Africanus and Charlemagne* by Acciaiuoli as well as Isocrates' *Euagoras*, translated by Guarino, and Nepos' *Atticus*. To these the *Life of Plato* by Guarino and biography of Aristotle by Bruni were added, and the volume was rounded off with the *Life of Homer* ascribed to Herodotus and translated by P. Allius and finally, the *Life of Virgil*.

On the other hand the *Moralia* were – and are – a mixed bag. How to Educate Children, How to Derive Profit from One's Enemies, How to Maintain Good Health and a number of other subjects were obviously profitable, very soon enjoying great popularity. For example, between 1400 and 1530 there are 'seven extant Latin versions of Plutarch's *quomodo ab adulatore discernatur amicus*; at least seven of his *De utilitate quae habetur ex amicis*'. It is also easy to see that as long as *Mirrors for Princes* were in demand the apocryphal *Institutio Traiani* did not lose from its attractiveness. Other works were or were thought to be of a piece with the *Lives* as far as the historical information was concerned, among them the *Greek and Roman Questions*, the variously attributed *Sayings*, the *Fortune of Alexander* or the miscellaneous anecdotes contained in the *Parallela Minora*. On the contrary some of the treatises did not arouse any interest and remained the property of a few scholars conversant with Greek or were translated only rarely: so, understandably enough, perhaps, the technical philosophical works, but more surprisingly also the Delphic dialogues and other works of a religious character. One may instance the German translations of Plutarch up to 1550 as indicators of these trends.¹² Some of the *Lives* – including those of Scipio Africanus and Hannibal by Acciaiuoli erroneously attributed to Plutarch – were printed already in the

10 Resta, 58: Era necessario, pertanto, presentare ai lettori non parti più o meno ampie, ma tutta l'opera di Plutarco, in stile semplice e senza eleganti e fastidiosi orpelli, ordinatamente disposta, compendiata con misura ed opportunità, rispettando i fatti storici ma tralasciando le inutili prolissità.

11 Guerrini is the latest important contribution on the subject with an ample bibliography; for the impact of the 1470 Latin translation see the contribution of Marilena Caciorgna in that volume.

12 For what follows see Worstbrock, 117–125.

very first year of the sixteenth century (1501), and eventually the entire *Parallelae*, including *Aratus* and *Artaxerxes*, were available in German by 1541. The *Moralia* fared very differently: early in the century there were editions of *de liberis educandis* (1508), *mulierum virtutes* (ca. 1505), *de capienda ex inimicis utilitate* was translated twice (once from the Latin of Erasmus) in the second decade of the century, and there were also early translations of *quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur*, the *coniugalia praecepta* and the various *apophthegmata* collections; by 1535 a collection of the *Moralia* appeared comprising twenty-one tractates, including all those mentioned and some other ethical works, but also the *praecepta gerendae rei publicae*, *ad principem ineruditum*, *maxime cum principibus philosopho esse disserendum*, as well as the entire *quaestiones convivales* and from among the more technical philosophical works *an recte dictum sit latenter esse vivendum* and the *de sera numinis vindicta* from among the Delphic dialogues. It is easy to make up the list of the missing works and not much more difficult to account for the taste of the time.

Admittedly, this reception of Plutarch's works was typical for the German-speaking countries, as we have been reminded at our last conference (see Gemert), and one could indeed usefully compare this with the situation in France, where Montaigne debated with Jean Bodin the historical accuracy of the biographer (see Smith).

Returning to the Latin translations, one is now hardly startled to find that the first edition of the entire corpus of the *Moralia* was printed almost a century later than the corresponding *Lives*. If I am not mistaken, some of the works were first translated for this collection. These are the dates that are significant, not the eight years or so that elapsed between the printing of the Greek texts of the *Moralia* and of the *Lives*. These editions were aimed at scholars who could read Greek – and perhaps also at persons who wished to display original Greek works in their libraries. The scholarly editions are not the most significant indicators of the influence of Plutarch and of the attitudes to his *œuvre* as a whole.

It appears also, that the translators of *Vitae* and *Moralia* were often very different sets of people. Let me illustrate this by an example from a somewhat later period. Plutarch in Elizabethan England will evoke in everybody's mind Shakespeare's tragedies based on the *Lives* of Coriolan, Caesar and Antony. But Elizabethan England was not all stage-stricken: John Rainolds, Shakespeare's contemporary and President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, best known as the initiator of the King James Bible, published a tractate almost two hundred pages long, on 'The over-throw of Stage-Playes' fuming against that wicked activity and proving its sinfulness from both Scripture and the classics. That learned man also translated Plutarch's tractates *de utilitate ex inimicis capienda* and *de morbis animi et corporis*, (that is, *de tuenda sanitate*) both dedicated

to Elizabeth. I dare say that such a division between men interested in the two *corpora* of Plutarch's works was not entirely accidental.

Let me sum up: the *Moralia* is not a *corpus* in the same sense as the *Lives* are. While interest in the *Lives* was comprehensive, though of course some people had their favourites and, as mentioned, from early on the Greek and Roman *Lives* were often studied separately, some of the *Moralia* attracted some readers, others again others, while a great number of them were all but totally neglected. This, in turn, is not unconnected with the simple fact that while some of the *Moralia* have looser or stronger connexions with the *Lives*, other works share only the feature of a common author with perhaps common linguistic usages unconsciously applied and of course a common cultural background.

Thus, I guess that to a certain extent the success of the theme set by this conference, *The Unity of Plutarch's Work: Moralia Themes in the Lives, Features of the Lives in the Moralia*, may be in part subject to the lack of the unity of the *Moralia*: and in fact it is evident that while even here the interest in the various *Lives* is fairly evenly distributed, the *Moralia*, as always, remain a mixed bag, with a greatly varying attractiveness of the diverse tractates.

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2. Plutarch's Methods of Work

Synopsis

Beginning from different starting-points, discussing different works, asking different questions and focusing on different issues, the articles of this chapter illuminate Plutarch's methods and compositional techniques from various angles and perspectives. The chapter is divided into two sections: the articles of section **2a** focus on how Plutarch deals with other literary genres, while those of section **2b** discuss his authorial techniques at large.

2a: How Plutarch deals with other genres

José Antonio Fernández Delgado explores the problematic classification of some rhetorical elements in Plutarch. Among the frequent references to fables, he notes, and particularly but not only in the *Moralia*, some of them, at present classified as such, actually seem to correspond to other literary forms which, like these, became in time rhetorical *progymnasmata*: these can be *gnômae* or much more often *chreiai*. The aim of this paper is, first of all, to try to single out and define such forms individually, and to discount them from the list of Plutarchean fables; and then to explain the confusion, using the double basis of (a) the existing affinity among these elementary literary forms, and (b) their handling by the writer.

On the other hand, **Francisca Pordomingo Pardo** studies the intratextual dialogue in Plutarch's corpus, examining in particular his reuse of quotations from epigrams. She observes that from Plutarch's quotations from epigrams only a small number corresponds to epigrams that are also transmitted by the *Anthologia Palatina* and the *Anthologia Planudea*, while the largest number corresponds to epigrams transmitted by Plutarch, either alone or together with different ancient sources (rarely epigraphical). In her article the author will particularly deal with quotations from epigrams that are repeated more than once in Plutarch's *corpus*, in order to discover aspects of their contextual function in the different contexts they occur. At the same time, she examines the reception of the epigrammatic genre as well as the intertextual dialogue between the text containing the quote and the one quoted; and there is also discussion of the integrated and hidden quotations (paraphrases and allusions). This study could help not only in recuperating the form of the quoted epigram itself, but also in clarifying relationships (including the chronological ones) between works of *Moralia* and *Vitae* (by examining moreover the repetition of quotations which belong to other genres).

Philip Stadter discusses the function of anecdotes in three different works of Plutarch: *Lives*, *Political Precepts*, *Sayings of Kings and Commanders*. Anecdotes, he notes, are a fundamental feature of Plutarch's writing, and recently they have received a great deal of attention, since we have come to realize that they can furnish insight into Plutarch's, methods, audience, and purposes. The article attempts to refine some of the recent findings by an examination of a select group of anecdotes which recur in the works mentioned above. This circumstance offers an opportunity to probe the way the same anecdotes are used across several works, written in different genres, for different audiences, and for different purposes. Besides giving more understanding of the relation of the anecdotes to earlier notes or compilations, this examination reveals the different techniques employed by Plutarch.

It appears that no single version of an anecdote need give all the information Plutarch had available to him: we must piece together what he knew by considering all his versions. A proper analysis of Plutarch's technique requires close examination of all versions, not to establish priority, but to clarify the focus and import of each. The three works studied each have different audiences and goals, reflected in the manner in which the anecdotes are presented, or by omissions of certain items. For Plutarch anecdotes were discreet items which could be shifted from one category to another, permitting the formation of lists of anecdotes for different topics, or complex clusters which could be used in different contexts. The items of *Apophthegmata regum* are free of context, but are selected for their positive value as *exempla*. Those of the *Precepts* are set in a rich rhetorical, argumentative context, with interpretive comments, and may be either positive or negative. Finally, the anecdotes of the *Lives* develop the interpretive possibilities of context much further, introducing nuance and ambivalences closely related to major themes and outcomes of a given *Life*. They employ foreshadowing, authorial comment, historical background, and the contemporary context to create a multilayered tapestry of meaning.

Craig Cooper also notes the relationship between the *Lives* and the *Political Precepts* as well as the largely anecdotal nature of the common material, but he mainly focuses on the moral interplay between the *Præcepta* and the *Life of Demosthenes*. In some cases, he observes, the anecdotes, which are scattered across several *Lives*, are collected together in *Statecraft* (799d–800a) to illustrate a single theme, e.g. the easy-going nature of the Athenian assembly, as is gathered from its reaction to Cleon's request for an adjournment. In this particular section of the essay Plutarch seems to have collected together from several different sources a variety of anecdotes that he would later use for different ends in the *Lives*. Cleon's request in the *Life of Nicias* (9.5), for instance, says less about the character of the Athenian assembly than about Cleon's own buffoonery. In another section of *Statecraft*, (802e–804c), dealing with the statesman's oratory, Plutarch seems instead to have excerpted a single Peripatetic source on rhetoric, a large part of which he would later reproduce in his *Life of Demosthenes* (9–10). But again there are some differences in details and points of emphasis between the two accounts which suggest different, though perhaps related, uses being made of the same material by Plutarch. In the *Life* Plutarch supplements the Peripatetic source with material from a second Peripatetic source (Demetrius of Phalerum), which in part helps to shape the particular emphasis that is taken in the *Life* by Plutarch, who is constrained by the accepted biographical tradition to represent Demosthenes as practised rather than naturally gifted orator. The material from *Statecraft* helps to put a more positive spin on that tradition. Moreover, a reference in *Statecraft*

(815d) to recent troubles under Domitian may suggest that the essay was written soon after Domitian's death (A.D 96) and thus before Plutarch came to compose *Demosthenes-Cicero*, which is fifth in the series of *Parallel Lives*. If that is the case, we have an opportunity to see how Plutarch reuses material put together for a moral essay in a *Life*, or at the very least how the same material is adapted in different contexts.

Christophe Brechet observes that the frequency of references to Homer differs markedly between the two parts of Plutarch's corpus, with several hundred references in the *Moralia* as against a few dozen in the *Lives*. Yet, despite this difference in distribution, we may ascertain that the Homeric references follow a consistent, more or less, pattern: Plutarch associates, on the one hand, the Greeks and Alexander with the Achaeans and, on the other, the Romans with the Trojans, thus continuing the mythical genealogies. This use of Homer betrays no polemical intent, despite Plutarch's identification of the Trojans with the Barbarians. Yet his conception of a common culture shared by Greeks and Romans does not efface his sense of Hellenic identity. It appears that the use of Homer, the very source of Greek *paideia*, is a discreet reminder of the divide between Greeks and Romans: the Romans may not constitute the "Other", the barbarian, but they are, nevertheless, other.

Diotima Papadi, after observing that in Plutarch's *Moralia* tragic poetry plays an important role, not only for educational purposes (e.g. in *De audiendis poetis*), but also for literary, philosophical and rhetorical purposes, will try to show how tragedy and theatrical atmosphere are equally significant in the *Lives*, as the *Life of Pompey*, rich in tragic imagery and theatricality, distinctly manifests. Plutarch here creates theatrical tension and tragic patterns out of his non-theatrical material; thus theatricality and tragic texture, in all their forms and versions, are used to make a point of reference for life, not only for the life of Pompey but also for anyone's life, pointing to general characteristics of human attitude and passions.

Finally, **Peter Liddel** discusses Plutarch's use of inscriptions and proposes that our author's originality as an epigraphist lay in his employment of epigraphical evidence in the investigation of morality, politics, philosophy and sociology; and his deployment of inscriptions in scholarly polemic. It is observed that in both the *Lives* and *Moralia*, Plutarch alludes to, discusses and quotes a range of Greek and Latin epigraphical categories: honorary decrees, choregic tripod-bases and other dedications, *katalogoi*, grave monuments public and private, laws and decrees, magical inscriptions, graffiti, boundary stones, and even inscribed *thaumata*. Inscriptions in the *Lives* and *Moralia* play a variety of roles: they contribute to the reconstruction of or dramatization of history; they

reveal the level of fame, *philotimia*, and wealth of an individual; they create impressions of individual and community virtues to be emulated and vices to be avoided; they act as proofs in arguments or as evidence to substantiate an assertion; they provide insight into those characters who read them and react to them; they are instruments of magic, *hubris*, *nemesis* or other species of divine intervention; they provide a starting point for philosophical inquiry; a point of opening or closure for individual lives.

Although chiefly an 'armchair epigraphist', Plutarch declares that knowledge of epigraphical evidence is central to meticulous and even-handed biographical and historical research. And it is his belief that the epigraphist occupies a privileged position in the world of scholarship that validates his use of epigraphy as a weapon in scholarly controversies and in the reconstruction of Greek history and biography. This is because the evidence of epigraphy is, for Plutarch, a good measure of certain aspects of public morality. Dedications commemorating victories of Greeks over non-Greeks fulfil the moral potential of the epigraphic habit, whereas commemorations of victories of Greek states over other Greek states represent an abuse of the habit. With reference to the agonistic and competitive tendency of the epigraphic language of the ancient Greek world, this paper argues that Plutarch is a good 'reader' of ancient Greek inscriptions, and attempts to use them with insight in the reconstruction in particular of the workings of *philotimia* in the ancient Greek city.

On the Problematic Classification of Some Rhetorical Elements in Plutarch

José Antonio Fernández Delgado

0. That the fable is a difficult genre to define is clear in the very instability and ambivalence of the terminology used to designate it.* The name with which it has passed into posterity is not even from the original Greek: αἴνως is its archaic and poetic name, which also meant “proverb” and “riddle”; subsequently, λόγος “story” in general (often adjectivized Αἰσώπειος) and μῦθος “fictitious story”, preferentially (and thus also “myth”), as well as ἀπόλογος were its usual designations.¹ It can, indeed, become confused with all these literary forms of similar popular tradition and like structure, and also be confused with others,² of which we should highlight the ἀπόφθεγμα, in rhetorical terms known as χρεία,³ if we wish to complete the list of compositional elements which, together with the many literary quotations, confer on Plutarch’s scriptory technique its perhaps most characteristic note.⁴

However, the fact that the ancient collections of fables (Anonymous, Babrius, Phaedrus...) already included, together with the animal fables and others, some of these related forms, does not, in my opinion, authorize what has been done by some modern editors in the genre, who, like Perry⁵, add other similar ones taking them from authors such as Plutarch. This attitude has, in turn, dire consequences for a sensible judgement of the fable in the Chaeronean, taking into account that a bibliographic instrument as essential as the Helmbold-O’Neil repertory of Plutarch’s quotations (s.v. Aesop, Fabulae), for the fable is based precisely on Perry’s catalogue. Apart from the existence, from very early on, of collections of proverbs and of *chreiai* as well as of fables,

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1 Cf. Van Dijk; Adrados 1979, 18 et sq.; Josifovic, col. 15 et sq.

2 Cf. Adrados, *ibid.*, 52 et sq., 204 et sq.

3 Cf. Trouillet; Kindstrand; Hock & O’Neil, 49.

4 Cf. Gallo 9; Meriani.

5 Perry thus goes far beyond the limits of his own definition of the fable (p. IX). The same practice is adopted in the diverse translations of Aesop’s Fables, which take Perry’s collection as a basis.

and of the important presence in our author of all of these,⁶ the ancient progymnastic theory, whose influence in Plutarch has recently become a true object of study,⁷ made quite clear not only the points of affinity, but also the differences between these literary forms, at the same time as their rhetorical potential: four of them, the fable, the story, the *chreia* and the maxim, one after the other, became the first four *progymnasmata* of the series of fourteen that made up the educational cycle, and formed a particularly apt block for the deliberative type of rhetoric, the model of elaboration and the argumentative *topoi* being, nevertheless, practically the same in the theoretical development of the four exercises (cf. Kennedy and Reche Martínez). Thus, it is our intention to clarify, using Helmbold-O’Neil’s list of quotations from fables by Plutarch, taken from Perry’s edition, those manifestations of rhetorical-literary forms close to the fable which are not fables in the strict sense, nor even in the ancient sense, which is less restrictive than the modern concept of fable.⁸

1. One of these elements is, we have said, the proverb, so that quite often the moral (*epimythion* or *promythion*) of a fable is directly constituted by a maxim or a maxim-like phrase, and a usual practice of the *fabula* exercise consisted of proposing a moral to the students for them to compose a fable to suit it, or else proposing that they compose one or more possible morals for a particular fable.⁹

Thus, it may occur that the meaning of a proverb is explained by a fable that accompanies it, as in *Coniug. praec.*, 2 (139D), where the proverb Ὁ ἥλιος τὸν βορέαν ἐνίκησε “The sun vanquishes (gnomic aorist) Boreas” has juxtaposed to it, in summarised form, the content of fable 73 Chambry (46 P.), which serves to illustrate it, to wit, essentially: a man who was threatened with having his clothes torn off by the strong wind fastened them more strongly, whereas, when the heat of the sun ensued, he himself took them off because he was hot. In Plutarch this is applied to a woman, who resists if the man takes away luxury from her by force, but renounces it if he persuades her by reasoning.

Or, unlike this case, in which there is no way of being sure which of the two, the proverb or the fable, came first, it may be that a proverb, or in this

6 Demetrius of Phalerum, supposedly the first collectionist of Aesop’s fables, is also attributed with a collection of proverbs. Collections of *chreiai* for school teaching are supposed to have existed at least since the Hellenistic age. On the presence of one and the other in Plutarch, cf. Fernández Delgado 1991; Durán; Bellu 2005 b, 55 et sqs.

7 Besides the already traditional and abundant studies on the *syncrisis*, cf. among others Ramón Palerm; Beck 2000; 2003; Fernández Delgado 2000; 2005; 2005 b.; Pordomingo; Bellu 2005; 2005 b; Miguélez; Vicente Sánchez.

8 Cf. Adrados 1979, 32 et sq.

9 Cf. Theo, 74–75 Sp. The ancient writers of treatises came to consider the fable as an expanded proverb, cf. Josifovic, col. 35.

case rather a proverbial expression, both because of its form and because it is thus expressly said, has arisen from a fable. This is what happens with the proverbial expression ὄνος ἵππον μιμούμενος “An ass that imitates a horse”, which figures in Macarius’s collection of proverbs (VI 32)¹⁰ accompanied by the specification (*proverbium*) *natum ex fabula*. The fable from which it is said to have arisen is, without doubt, 128 Ch. (315 a P.), which is echoed, with variations, by Plutarch in *Sept. sap. conv.*, 4 (150A) (as well as Babrius 62). This is the story of a mule (not an ass) that boasted of being the daughter of a horse until, after having started to run, had to remember that she was also the daughter of an ass.

That the creation of a fable to explain a proverb is something usual is also testified to, in this same work by Plutarch, *Sept. sap. conv.*, 21 (164B), by Pittacus’s answer to Chersias when he asked the Sages for the meaning of their maxims Nothing in excess, Know thyself and Committing oneself brings misfortune. “And what need do you have”, said Pittacus, “for us to explain these phrases to you? It is some time since Aesop composed, it seems, a fable for each of them...”

However, in the next two cases, included by Perry with numbers 433 and 460 in his compilation, there is no record of it being a matter of fables. On the contrary, the first one, included by Plutarch in his *Aet. Gr.*, 54 (303A), is, as Plutarch’s classification suggests, an explanatory story, an *aition*, of Aphrodite’s name “of Dexicreon”, that the goddess received in Samos. According to him, this Dexicreon was a sailor who baptized the goddess with his name, because, on a trading journey to Cyprus, when he was going to load his boat, Aphrodite ordered him to fill it with water, which he later sold and made a lot of money from.¹¹

The second tale, included in Perry’s compilation as no. 460, is presented in Plutarch, *Vit. X orat.* (848A), which is its main testimonial, not as a fable, but rather, I believe, in the form of that other related rhetorical component that the authors of progymnasmatic theory classify as *chreia* with *dicta*.¹² The story

10 Leutsch & Schneidewin II, 193.

11 This case is also denied its nature as fable by Adrados 1979, despite his not very restricted conception of the same and the recognition that in the fable writers of the empire this conception was even broader, when he argues (56 et sq.): “Por este camino todos los αἴτια culturales y mitológicos, Calímaco y Ovidio casi enteros, entre otras mil cosas, serían fábulas” (“According to this, all the αἴτια, both cultural and mythological, almost all of Callimachus and Ovid, among thousands of other things, would be fables”).

12 Cf. Theo, 97 Sp... This interpretation should be endorsed by the fact that the story is attributed to a typical character of *chreiai* (an orator) and presents its final *dictum* in a somewhat witty and enthymematic way, cf. Hock & O’Neil, 4–7. The criterion of functionality is also important for Adrados (1979, 47) when trying to separate the concept of fable from that of other similar genres.

is put into the mouth of Demosthenes on an occasion when the Athenians prevented him from speaking and he said that he wanted to say something to them briefly, they were quiet and he told them that one day in summer, a young man hired an ass from the city to Megara and at midday, when the sun was at its highest, both the owner and the renter struggled to get into the shade, one arguing that he had hired out the ass, not its shade, the other that he had a right to the whole thing. The orator was about to leave when, being retained by the Athenians to end the story he said: “So, you want to listen to me about the shade of an ass, but not when I speak of serious things?”

However, the proverbial expression “the shade of an ass” to designate something without importance, and apart from Plutarch’s tale, is also recorded, among other cases, in Lucian (*Hermot.*, 71), Dio of Prusa (XXXIV 48) and even earlier, in Plato (*Phdr.* 260c) and, apart from being the title of a comedy by Archytus, also in Aristophanes (*Vesp.* 191), in which a *scholium* refers to the story of the hiring of the ass almost in the same terms as Plutarch, as an explanation of the saying. Thus, if on the one hand there is nothing to make us think that it should be catalogued as a fable, as it is by Perry, on the other hand, and in spite of the testimonial of the *scholium* to Aristophanes, we cannot be certain whether the proverbial expression came from the story, as is assumed in the case of the saying related to the testimonial cited 315 a P., or if on the contrary the latter is an explanatory *aition* of the former.¹³

2. No. 53 of the Perry collection comprises two of Plutarch’s adaptations in the form of *chreia* with *facta*, of which the second, *Apophth.* (174F), is an *amplificatio* (based on an addition of information on the protagonist, Scilurus, “king of the Scythes” and the rhetorical *duplicatio* of several terms) of the first, *Garr.*, 17 (511C), with respect to fab. 86 Ch. of Aesop.¹⁴ Unlike those, which in accordance with the characteristics of the genre, have a typical character of *chreia* as protagonist, a king from the 2nd to the 1st century B.C.,¹⁵ and which consist of a lesson without words, merely gestural, with the *apophthegma* being introduced in *Garr.* 17 as the response given by Heraclitus to his fellow citizens when they asked him his opinion on concord, in Aesop’s fable the protagonist is an anonymous peasant (of whom it is not said, as was the case in Plutarch, that he was about to die) whose sons (of whom it is not said either that there were eighty as in the Plutarchean version) were fighting among themselves, and who, not being able to persuade them by talk, decided to do it by way of

13 Lasso de la Vega, 133–135, suggests that this saying arose from another, *δνείρου σκιά* “the shade of a dream”. On the close relationship between the proverb and the fable and the possibilities of mutual generation, cf. also Adrados 1979, 218 et sq.

14 Which in turn comes in an iambic version in Babrius 47 and another later one in La Fontaine 418 “Le vieillard et ses enfants”. Cf. Fernández Delgado 2005 b.

15 Cf. Hock & O’Neil, 4–7.

example, although at the end of the demonstration, contradictorily, the message implied is also expressed by the father verbally. The gestural lesson, which is the essentially fixed part in the different versions of the story (and what underlies the well-known heraldic emblem of the bundle of arrows) consists of the father ordering his sons to break a bundle of darts (or sticks in the case of the fable), and when they see that this cannot be done he takes the darts out one by one and breaks them with ease, thus showing them the strength to be found in union as opposed to the weakness of discord. In this case, then, we can see more clearly than in others the derivation and change of attribution of both chreic incidences in Plutarch from Aesop's fable, which is not lacking a moral, the content of which is exactly that of the message of the *chreía*.

3. The series of cases that we shall examine below all have in common, first, that they lack any reference made by Plutarch to their supposedly fabulous nature, which is only considered as such by Perry, within the most well-known collections (Chambry, Hausrath); second, that they are presented in the form of *chreía*, even when other rhetorical elements can sometimes be identified within them.

3.1. We shall approach them in the same order in which Perry has numbered them, although we shall put before the cases of *Moralia* the only case belonging exclusively to *Vitae* (441 P.), where the fable is less abundant. This one takes place in the *Life of Themistocles* (18), of whom it is said that, when one of his generals bragged to him, comparing his own feats with his, Themistocles told him that, when a dispute arose between the day after and the holiday, and the former argued that it was full of work and fatigue, whereas in the latter everyone enjoyed what was prepared without doing anything, the holiday replied: what you say is true, but if I hadn't existed, you would not be here. And thus also, said Themistocles, if I had not existed before, where would you be now?

The story is introduced by Plutarch, as far as we can see, as a *chreía* with *dicta*, attributed to a character known as the protagonist of many others.¹⁶ But, apart from its use as an *exemplum* (another rhetorical component which in turn is easily confused with the *chreía*),¹⁷ it can constitute the story, a fable or not, from which, as in the case of 315 a P. and perhaps 460 P. quoted, has arisen the expression, perhaps proverbial, although not documented as such: ἑορτὴ καὶ ὑστεραία.¹⁸

16 Cf. M. Bellu, *passim*. It is a symbolic *chreía* in the form of example and of enthymem.

17 Cf. Guerrini; Aragüés Aldaz.

18 The attempted dispute between these two entities seems to respond to the type of debate or agonal confrontation, an antecedant of the theatrical agon itself, between natural phenomena, seasons, animals, plants, sexes.... frequent in popular Greek

3.2. No. 440 P. gives the story of someone who, seeing a slave who had escaped from him some time before, began to chase him; the slave took refuge in a mill and he said: what better place than here could I have wished to find you? And this is referred to by Plutarch, *Coniug. Praec.*, 41 (144A), as a dissuasive example for the woman who is suffering from jealousy and is getting ready for divorce, so that she may think about what attitude her rival would like to see her in rather than like that.

The chreic nature of the tale, and not only its application, is endorsed by another, this time, however, not included by Perry, which, although different in its details, contains the same message and conclusion, being put by Plutarch into the mouth of the Athenian leader Phocion on two occasions, which differ very little in their expression: in *Life of Phocion* (10.9) and in *Apophth.* (188A–B). According to this story, when the sycophant Aristogiton was in prison, condemned to death, and having asked to see Phocion, the latter said to his friends, who wanted to stop him from going: where could one have a more pleasant talk with Aristogiton? The only structural difference between the anecdote in which Phocion was involved and that of *Coniug. Praec.* 41 is the impersonal form of the latter, which could be interpreted as a trait of its possible making into a fable; Theon (96), however, on defining the *chreía*, points out that this could be attributed to a generic character, in this case to the owner of a fugitive slave.

3.3. A similar process of fable-making, in the sense of attribution to diverse protagonists, all indeed Spartans,¹⁹ and with some variations, is the only strictly fabulous trait that can be glimpsed in the saying numbered 450 P. and included by Plutarch in *Apophth. Lac.* “Agesilaos”, 56 (212 E) attributed to king Agesilaos, and in *Apophth. Lac.* “Lysandros”, 8 (229E) and *Apophth.*, 5 (190F) (as well as in *V. Lys.* XXII 3 and *Adulat.* (71E) attributed to General Lysandros: the attribution to different personages, however, was another phenomenon which a *chreía* could undergo.²⁰ Both apophthegmas possibly inspired by this, but without its satirical “pointe” (against the city of Megara), are also attributed by Plutarch in *Apophth. Lac.* “Agis Archidamou”, 13 (216A) to king Agis, son of Archidamos, in *Apophth. Lac.* “Ádela”, 3 (232D) to anonymous Spartans.

literature and also in Middle Eastern literature, one of the manifestations of which, a debate between winter and spring, has indeed come to form part of the corpus of Aesop's fables (346 Ch.); cf. Radermacher, 25 et sq.; Adrados 1979, 317 et sq.

19 According to the testimony of Hdt. VIII 61, Themistocles would also have been offended in the same way by the Corinthian Adimantus. Cf. Arist. Pol. III 13, 2 (1284a).

20 Cf. Hock & O'Neil, 42–46.

According to the most mentioned anecdote – undoubtedly a *chreía* with *dicta kata charientismón*,²¹ as is demonstrated by its classification among the *Apophthégmata*–, its protagonist (namely, Agesilaos) said to a Megarian who was boasting of his city: your words, my lad, do not have much strength. The most significant variation of the version attributed to Lysandros substitutes “much strength” (πολλῆς δυνάμεως) with “city” (πόλεως).

3.4. The passage of *Cap ex inim. ut.*, 2 (86E–F) included as no. 467 in Perry’s compilation does not contain either a fable or a *chreía* strictly speaking, but rather a literary quotation used as a *chreía*. This means that the quotation also belongs to that constellation of rhetorical-literary components structurally related and destined to carrying out similar functions, basically of an exemplary nature. As a *chreía*, the passage forms part of a simile, that of fire, which, together with sea water, both elements that are harmful in themselves but which provide great benefits, serves as a comparison for exhortation to know how to make use even of enemies. The same as in a *chreía* with *dicta* there is a circumstance, a protagonist with a good reputation and a saying by him, and the same as in a *chreía* with *dicta kata charientismón*, the way the protagonist handles the situation is really congenial. However, the circumstance has been extracted from a passage of the satirical drama *Prometheus Pyrkaios* by Aeschylus, in which the satyr sees fire for the first time and wants to kiss it; the protagonist is not a historical character but Prometheus; and the saying is the iambic trimeter “satyr, you’re going to cry for your beard”, which constitutes the fr. 207 N. of the work.²²

3.5. The story numbered as fable no. 468 in Perry’s collection fulfils, like the previous one, the function of a *chreía* with *dicta kata charientismón*. Put by Plutarch, *Sept. sap. conv.*, 14 (157A–B), into the mouth of one of the Seven Sages, Cleobulus, who in turn refers it to his no less wise daughter, Cleobuline, it is used as a simile of the lack of measurement of wealth among the common people, whose needs change according to circumstances. The story in itself, according to which the moon asked her mother to weave her a shirt and the mother asked how she was going to make it the right size if sometimes she saw her full, sometimes a half and sometimes a quarter, rather than a fable, the nature of which makes it difficult to reconcile with the absurdness of the petition and the mother of the moon, seems to suggest a type of tale or enigma – αἰνίγμα comes from αἶνος, the old name of the fable –

21 Cf. Theo, 97 Sp.

22 Τράγος γένειον ἄρα πενθήσεις σύ γε. On the use of literary passages handled as real *chreíai*, cf. the elaboration of the famous verse 1252 (ἄλλ’ οἱ φρονούντες εὖ κρατοῦσι πανταχοῦ) of the Sophoclean *Ajax* in the *Rhet. Marciana I* 602, 1–I 605, 18 Walz.

perhaps based on a riddle formulated in more ambiguous terms (e.g., what sometimes uses a full size, others a half size, and others a quarter size?).²³

3.6. Finally, no. 495 P., the same as the former case and another quoted at the beginning, comes from *Sept. sap. conv.*, 3 (149E) – a particularly appropriate framework, this of the *symposion*, for the deployment, and at the same time generic contamination of all these ingenious elements²⁴ – and, the same as the former, it can be classified as an amusing *chreía* of sayings, the ingenuity of which in this case, however, is not at the service of any teaching, but is consumed in itself, is a true joke.²⁵ Indeed, after asking the tyrant Periander his opinion concerning the prodigy born in his house, a being whose upper half was man and whose lower half was horse, Thales advised him not to use young stable boys or else to provide them with women (a reply which caused Periander to burst out laughing).

The justification of its inclusion in Perry's catalogue is based on the fact that Phaedrus has a fable (III 3) with this same plot. With the difference that: with a clear intention to make it a fable, instead of the tyrant of Corinth there is an anonymous peasant, the prodigy consists of *agnos humano capite*, the recommendation is directly to find wives for the shepherds and the one who gives the advice, instead of Thales, is Aesop himself. However, the fact that Aesop appears as protagonist of the saying could be an indication, but not at all a guarantee that the story existed as one of Aesop's fables.²⁶

4. The diverse cases analysed here thus show, indeed, the profound affinity existing between all these rhetorical-literary elements of a basically exemplary nature – the fable, the *chreía*, the proverb, the mythical-fictitious or enigmatic tale, the literary quotation itself... – which actually constitute the most visible and homogeneous component of Plutarchean style. Of all these, those that are most confused with the allusion to the fable are undoubtedly the three mentioned after this one, i. e. those that, apart from their traditional structural and terminological affinity with the fable, with it constitute precisely the block of the first four in the series of *progymnasmata* which served as an introduction to the study of rhetoric strictly speaking, sharing among them one similar type of elaboration and similar *topoi* of arguments. But, the very criteria used for differentiating between these four exercises by progymnasmatic theory, which shows great impact on Plutarch's preparation as a literary author, can serve as a pattern for a better classification of the corresponding literary forms, and, in

23 On the relationship between the riddle and the fable, cf. Adrados 1979, 216 et sq.

24 Cf. Adrados 1979, 220, 245 et sq., 261 et sq.; 1996.

25 In general, the *chreíai* with *dicta kata charientismón* are the remote forerunner of our current jokes, as is shown by many of the contents in *Philogelos*.

26 Other fables by Phaedrus are not considered as such by Adrados (1979, 56 et sq.). On the complex question of the sources of Phaedrus and the differentiation between inherited and added material, cf. Adrados 1983.

the cases examined here, to correct their unjustified cataloguing as manifestations of fables in most cases, both in Perry's edition of Aesop's fables and in Helmbold-O'Neil's repertory of Plutarchean quotations of fables.

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La reutilización de citas de epigramas: una manifestación del diálogo intratextual en el *corpus* plutarqueo*

Francisca Pordomingo Pardo

El tema de este congreso, «Plutarco en Plutarco», me ha brindado la oportunidad de desarrollar un aspecto que en un anterior trabajo (2004), «El epigrama en Plutarco», había quedado únicamente enunciado: la reutilización de citas de epigramas dentro de la misma obra o en dos obras del *corpus* plutarqueo, de los *Moralia* o de *Moralia* y *Vitae*, en aras de hallar similitudes, diferencias y razones para la cita del mismo epigrama.

La reutilización de una misma cita dentro del *corpus* plutarqueo, sobre todo de formas literarias breves, fácilmente citables y repetibles, que con frecuencia son remodeladas o expandidas, y que tienen un cierto carácter «sentencioso», es un fenómeno frecuente: *chreiai*, fábulas, *gnomai*, oráculos se repiten,¹ pero también se repiten breves pasajes de composiciones poéticas de más largo alcance.² Constituyen un stock «fijado» del que Plutarco se sirve, bien a partir de repertorios (colecciones, *hypomnemata*, suyos o de otros), bien usando de una buena memoria, sin excluir la lectura directa de autores, con un proceder

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1 Especialmente llamativa es la repetición de *chreiai* entre *Moralia* y *Vitae*: sobre dicha repetición en *Apophthegmata laconica* y las *Vitae* de Licurgo, Agesilao y Lisandro vid. una breve consideración en Santaniello, 13 y ss. Beck, se refiere a los distintos tratamientos, basados en el ejercicio escolar de *epekteinosis* de la *chreia*, de ciertos dichos en las *Vitae* de César, Augusto y Alejandro. Ramón, se refiere brevemente a la repetición de anécdotas y a su distinto tratamiento en *Moralia* y *Vitae*. Vid. también, en sendos Índices, las *chreiai* repetidas dentro del corpus de *Moralia* seleccionado y analizado por Mariangela Bellu. Para los proverbios y las fábulas vid. Fernández Delgado 1991 y 2005. Para los oráculos vid. Helmbold & O’Neil, s.v. «Oracula». La reiteración de citas de distintos géneros necesita ser investigada.

2 Una simple ojeada al «Índice dei paragrafi» de Cannatà Fera, pone en evidencia la frecuencia con que se repiten las citas del mismo pasaje pindárico: de 89 citas, 25 se repiten más de una vez; con relativa frecuencia hasta tres veces y en un caso, el fr. 57 Snell-Maehler, hasta cinco veces. Vid. las citas homéricas repetidas (literales, paráfrasis, compendios, alusiones...) en el corpus de *Moralia* (*Aud. poet.*; *Adulat.*; *Superst.*; *Aet. Rom.*; *Alex. fort. virt.*; *Pyth. or.*; *Tranq. an.*; *Garr.*; *Laud. ips.*; *Quaest. conv.*; *Amat.*; *Praec. ger. reip.*; *Plac. philos.*; *Fac. lun.*; *Soll. anim.*; *Suav. viv. Epic.*) analizado por Díaz Lavado.

característico de su formación escolar y retórica en la conformación de una obra literaria cuyo estilo «de mosaico» es rico y alusivo.³ La utilización y reutilización de epigramas o partes de epigramas parece obedecer en sus líneas generales a las mismas razones: versos sueltos o pares de versos (dísticos) epigramáticos parece que con una cierta frecuencia se habían convertido en *loci communes*, en dichos sentenciosos o frases hechas, que posiblemente circulaban formando parte de un acervo culturalmente rico. Pero quizá sea posible hallar también otras razones.

Hemos analizado el diálogo que se establece entre el texto citado y los textos citantes, observando la forma de la citación, la forma y función de la cita en los diferentes contextos, la fidelidad textual al «arquetipo» (incluida la extensión) cuando el texto del epigrama puede ser contrastado con el de otras fuentes (*Antología Palatina*, *Antología Planudea*, otras fuentes literarias), y teniendo también a la vista la «cronología» de las obras cuando con una cierta aproximación puede ser fijada,⁴ por lo que de significativo puede tener en el análisis. Se establece ahora un diálogo «a tres bandas», entre el texto citado y los textos citantes, y entre los textos citantes entre sí, es decir intertextual e intratextual al *corpus*, del que se pueden derivar conclusiones interesantes tanto para el género epigramático y su recepción en Plutarco, como para una mayor comprensión de los procedimientos de composición plutarqueos y para el esclarecimiento de relaciones entre las obras en las que las citas se insertan.

El número de citas de epigramas, literales y casi todas explícitas por lo que a la adscripción genérica se refiere, pero sin mencionar al autor del epigrama, se sitúa en torno a las 70,⁵ un número no alto si se tiene en cuenta la amplitud del *corpus* plutarqueo y también la riqueza del género epigramático, pero tampoco desdeñable. Del número señalado, una cifra menor (en torno a 23) corresponde a epigramas transmitidos también por las antologías *Palatina* y *Planudea*, mientras que la cifra más alta corresponde a epigramas que sólo Plutarco, o con otras fuentes antiguas, excepcionalmente epigráficas,⁶ transmite.⁷ Plutarco

3 Russell, 46: «...richness and allusiveness of his own «mosaic» style».

4 Cf. Jones 1966 y 1971, 135–137 «Chronological Table». Sólo para algunas de las obras aquí referidas puede ser fijada una cronología aproximada: al período retórico (c.60–65) pertenece el *de Alexandri Magni fortuna aut virtute*; las *Vidas Paralelas* entre c. 96 y c.120, es decir hacia la última parte de su vida; para el *De laude ips.* es posible fijar una cronología relativa: después del 100.

5 A la información proporcionada por Hembold-O'Neil 1959 (entradas «Anthologia Palatina», «Inscriptiones», «Simonides», «Callimachus», «Asclepiades») y por los «Índices» de las más importantes colecciones de epigramas (Hansen 1983 y 1989; Gow-Page 1965 y 1968; Page 1981) ha sido añadida la proporcionada por el TLG bajo las entradas ἐπίγραμμα, ἔλεγος, ἐπικήδειον (alguna de cuyas citas ha debido ser depurada). Estos repertorios no registran la cita integrada.

6 En *Coh. ira* 455 B, cita los versos 5–6 del epigrama de Calímaco AP XII 118 (un paraklausithyron), hallado en forma mutilada (comienzo de los vv. 1–3 y final de los

(junto con Ateneo y Pausanias) se sitúa entre los autores que más citas tiene de epigramas no recogidos en las antologías *Palatina* y *Planudea*. Por su tipología predominan los sepulcrales y los votivos, mientras que son muy pocos los ejemplos de otros tipos que tienen en la época helenística sus mejores cultivadores (eróticos, simposíacos, ecrásticos, de homenaje a personajes célebres, etc.).

El hecho de que los epigramas reutilizados pertenezcan fundamentalmente a los tipos sepulcral y votivo abunda en la idea de que no le interesó o le interesó poco el epigrama literario, conclusión a la que llegamos en nuestro anterior trabajo. El hecho de que lo que usualmente se repite, como vamos a mostrar, sea sólo parte del epigrama y que el nombre del autor en general sea silenciado abunda en la idea de que se trata de versos que entraron a formar parte del acervo popular gnómico; de hecho asistimos a una recategorización genérica en bastantes citas de epigramas: en *Apophthegmata Laconica*, en cuanto que los epigramas se convierten en «lo dicho» dentro del apotegma o se convierten incluso en un apotegma (vid. *infra*), o simplemente en «dichos» en *De Alexandri Magni fortuna aut virtute* y en *De Laude ipsius*, sirviéndose Plutarco, para esa reconversión, de la variedad formal que el género epigramático le ofrecía. El que haya o no coincidencia entre el texto de la doble cita y su función en ambos contextos genera conclusiones diversas sobre el diálogo establecido, intertextual e intratextual al *corpus* plutarqueo (vid. *infra*).

1. El número de epigramas (o parte de epigramas) repetidos se sitúa en la decena, un número que nos permite un análisis detallado en el tiempo de que disponemos para esta comunicación. Consideremos en primer lugar la cita repetida dentro de una misma obra. Esto ocurre en los *Apophthegmata laconica* y en las dos *orationes* del *De Alexandri Magni fortuna aut virtute*, un tipo de obras un tanto «especiales» dentro del *corpus* plutarqueo, que por su carácter, -la primera con autonomía de cada uno de los apotegmas o de los grupos que estos

vv. 1-6) en una inscripción del s. I encontrada en una pared de una casa del monte Esquilino en Roma (Dressler; Kaibel 1876 = 1878, n° 1111, 502: *primo fere saeculo ab homine romano doctissimo Callimachi admiratore in cubiculi pariete pictum*); en Herod. mal. 870 E, cita el epigrama (Page 1975; Simonides XI) también recuperado en IG I² 927 (Geffken, 96; Schwyzer 1960 (1923¹), 126), transmitido también por Favorino, *Corinthiaca* 8 (Ps.-Dio Prus., Or. 37.18, II 21 von Arnim); Plutarco (sin atribución de autor) y Favorino añaden un dístico más a la inscripción corintia, del s. V a. C (Hansen 1983, 131, la ha fechado en el 480 a. C.); en *An. procr.* 1030 A, cita el verso 1 de AP VII 35 (un epitafio ficticio por Píndaro, atribuido por el manuscrito *Palatino* a Leónidas de Tarento), también incorporado a un epitafio de Heraclea Póntica para un tal Herondas, fechado en el tránsito del III al II por Peek, 905.

7 Corresponden estas citas básicamente a las aportadas por Preger 1891, más algunas añadidas a partir del TLG. Muchos de los epigramas recogidos en este *corpus* han sido reeditados y comentados por Page 1981). A ambos *corpora* nos referiremos de forma abreviada al identificar los epigramas considerados en este trabajo que están contenidos en ellos.

constituyen⁸ y la segunda constituida por dos *declamationes* bajo un título de signo antilógico, aunque en realidad complementarias⁹ hacen que quede un tanto atemperada la repetición, que incluso, alguna vez, se produce de forma contigua, como en *Apophthegmata laconica* 240F–241A. Pasemos al análisis (los textos figuran en un Apéndice).

1.1. En 235A, formando parte de un apotegma referido a un tal Tímnico, que sorprendentemente es el n^o 51 de los llamados «apotegmas anónimos», se cita completo, aunque con importantes variantes en todo el v. 4, un epigrama de seis versos, también transmitido por la *Antología Palatina* VII 229 y atribuido a Dioscórides, cuyo tema central es el del «valiente espartano que sin vida vuelve del combate sobre el escudo». ¹⁰ Su función es la de cita de autoridad, aunque no sea explicitado así (es introducido *καὶ ἐπίγραμμα εἰς τοῦτον ἐγένετο*), pero al mismo tiempo el epigrama en su segunda parte se constituye en un apotegma de «dicho», circunstancia posibilitada por su forma narrativa, que incluye un pequeño parlamento en el tercer dístico; es decir, asistimos, en realidad, a la presencia de un apotegma dentro de otro.

Ese tercer dístico, en estilo directo en el epigrama (introducido por εἶπε τόδε «palabras de Tímnico al colocar en la pira a su hijo»), es repetido en 241 A, integrado también dentro de un apotegma como «lo dicho» ahora por una laconia anónima al enterarse de que su hijo había caído valientemente en el combate. El epigrama está completamente recategorizado, siendo introducido por un simple ἔφη, a diferencia de la cita anterior, que lo era con el formal *καὶ ἐπίγραμμα εἰς τοῦτον ...* Es decir, se trata de una cita integrada.

1.2. En 240F Plutarco selecciona los dos primeros versos del epigrama sepulcral narrativo *AP* VII 433, atribuido a Timnes, integrándolos como cita de autoridad (*τὸ δ' ἐπίγραμμα ἐπ' αὐτῆς τόδε* «y el epigrama que la rememora es éste») en el apotegma de Damatria, una espartana que inmola a su hijo, por haber sido un cobarde, cuando llega a su presencia. ¹¹ Del mismo epigrama

8 Fue Stephanus en realidad el que introdujo la distinción que estaba implícita en los contenidos de los apotegmas, en: *Apophthegmata laconica* 208A–236F; *Instituta laconica* 236F–240B; *Lacaenarum apophthegmata* 240C–242D.

9 D'Angelo, señala: «Inoltre il *topos* della *Tyché*, indicata dai detrattori di Alessandro quale vera artefice dei suoi successi, viene utilizzato dall'autore per dimostrare che anche nei riguardi dei beni esteriori il Macedone diede prova di virtù, essendogli la fortuna avversaria e non alleata» (p. 11) y «L'apologia della *paideia* filosofica del Macedone è la struttura portante delle due orazioni *De Alex. fort.*» (p. 19).

10 Sobre la orientación filolacedemonia de Dioscórides y de otros epigramatistas de su generación cf. Degani 1991², 290 ss., y 1993, 220 ss.; vid. también el comentario a este epigrama de Galán Vioque, n^o 26, 308–313.

11 Es éste un tema que, anticipado ya en un epigrama transmitido muy fragmentariamente en *P. Tebt.* I 3, posiblemente de Asclepiades (Page 89), está bien representado en la segunda generación de epigramatistas y después: *AP* VII 433 (Timnes); *AP* VII 230 (Erucio); *AP* VII 531 (Antípatro de Tesalónica); *AP* IX 61 (anón.); *AP* IX 397

selecciona los dos últimos versos, integrándolos (con llamativas variantes)¹² en el apotegma «mixto» de una espartana anónima que, con el mismo tema, sigue inmediatamente después (241A), aparentemente como cita de autoridad, pero en realidad, en lo que es un ejemplo más de recategorización de un epigrama, como representando «lo dicho» (pues el epigrama expande οὐκ ἔμὸν τὸ φίτυμα)¹³ por la espartana anónima: los dos versos, en estilo directo en el epigrama, son fácilmente reutilizables de esa forma. La cita completa consta además de otros dos versos, que preceden a los anteriores y parecen proceder de otro epigrama,¹⁴ al menos en parte, pues la palabra inicial Ἔρρε (v. 1) también podría haber sido tomada y desplazada de la inicial del último dístico de *AP* VII 433 (en el v. 3 del epigrama citado en Plutarco, ἀχρεῖον es una variante por ἔρρε κακὸν del v. 5 de *AP* VII 433), para ser adaptado todo el epigrama, rehecho, como «palabras dichas»: esto no hubiera podido ocurrir con los versos centrales del epigrama, en forma narrativa como su comienzo. Es decir, asistimos a un proceso de contaminación y el epigrama resultante, que cita Plutarco, es un «pequeño monstruo» desde el punto de vista de la forma «canónica» del epigrama.

En la recategorización de las dos citas del epigrama inciden el ἐπ' αὐτῆς y ἐφ' ἧς de la fórmula introductoria: los versos rememoran a estas mujeres y su moral, y están utilizados desde el punto de vista de los protagonistas de los apotegmas, aunque el epigrama en su origen esté dedicado al hijo al que han dado muerte.

Es sorprendente la contigüidad en la citación, pero también el cuidado para que no se repitan los mismos dísticos del epigrama, aunque podríamos decir que su función semántica es la misma. Es como si Plutarco hubiera dividido el epigrama en dos partes, con una adaptación especial en cada caso en aras de una variación. De ello pueden derivarse conclusiones respecto a la autoría de Plutarco y a la conformación personal suya de esta obra, tan discutidas, aunque él trabajara sobre un material coleccionado por otro (u otros) o por él mismo.

El epigrama funerario, por su carácter conmemorativo, sirvió como instrumento eficaz a Plutarco para caracterizar el valor de los espartanos. Las citas que terminamos de estudiar son citas de autoridad que avalan ese

(Páladas); *AP* IX 447 (Juliano el egipcio). Existía el célebre dicho «o con el escudo o sobre el escudo», con el que las madres espartanas despedían a sus hijos: cf. Plu., *Apophth. Lac.* 241F (16) Ἄλλη προσαναδιδοῦσα τῷ παιδί τὴν ἀσπίδα καὶ παρακελευομένη «Τέκνον» ἔφη «ἢ ταύταν ἢ ἐπὶ ταύτας» (para otras fuentes vid. Santaniello 1995, 431 n. 580; Sext. Emp., *Pyrh. Hyp.* III 216).

12 ἀχρεῖον Plu. ἔρρε κακὸν *AP*; τὸ μὴ Plu. τὸν οὐ *AP*

13 Cf. *Apophth. Lac.* 242A οὐ γὰρ ἦς ἔμὸς γ *AP* VII 531.

14 En el aparato crítico de la edición del epigrama en Waltz se señala que estos dos versos serían tomados de otro epigrama sobre el mismo tema o de una paráfrasis escrita en el margen y después insertada en el texto. Otros dos epigramas, *AP* VII 230 y 531, son consagrados al castigo de Damatrio, tan desconocido como su madre.

proverbial valor, aludido de forma indirecta por la declaración de los padres: de orgullo, en el primero de los epigramas, por el comportamiento del hijo resistiendo hasta la muerte, de repudio ante el acto de desertión hasta llegar a infligirle la muerte, en el segundo. Wissmann (2002) se refiere a que quizá Plutarco pudo disponer de una colección de epigramas sobre la moral espartana, algunos de los cuales también se encuentran en ámbito claramente escolar.¹⁵

1.3. Un caso especial, como hemos señalado, por su aparente carácter antilógico, aunque realmente complementario, lo constituyen las dos declamaciones que conforman el *De Alexandri Magni fortuna aut virtute*, en las que, en la segunda mitad de la primera (331A) y al comienzo de la segunda (335B), con distinta función semántica es introducido el último dístico de un epigrama transmitido completo en la *Antología Planudea* (AP XVI 120): en la primera *declamatio*, en un pasaje relativo a los dichos de Alejandro, el epigrama constituye un dicho más que refleja su δύναμις «poder», significado por la μεγαληγορία «declaración orgullosa», que los poetas le atribuyeron en sus pinturas y en sus estatuas (con él va coordinada la cita también verbal Ἀλέξανδρος ἐγὼ Διὸς μὲν υἱός); en la segunda, en cambio, para avalar que adolecía del defecto físico de tener el cuello ligeramente torcido hacia la izquierda y mirar hacia arriba, pose en la que tan bien lo esculpió Lisipo,¹⁶ en una de cuyas numerosas estatuas de Alejandro estaba grabado este epigrama.

Hay también variación en la forma de la citación: la primera es una cita integrada (aunque haya una mención indirecta a su carácter inscripcional en el microcontexto), que ejemplifica el δεύτερον δ' αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰς φωνὰς ἴδωμεν de varias líneas más arriba (230E); la segunda es una cita explícita: ἐπέγραψέ τις.

Sospechosamente, el epigrama ha sido transmitido sólo por la *Antología de Planudes*, con doble atribución: a Arquelao o a Asclepiades, doble atribución que los datos disponibles no permiten resolver inequívocamente en uno u otro sentido, pero que parecen inclinar la balanza a favor del segundo.¹⁷

15 Vid. Pordomingo 2002: cf. O. Bodd. II 2172; 2173 (Lloyd-Jones & Parsons, *Suppl. Hell.* 971), dos copias escolares del mismo epigrama, cuyos dos últimos versos son especialmente significativos de lo que aquí estamos considerando, además de contener el término ἀχρεῖον del v. 4 del epigrama citado por Plutarco:

ἴσομαι, οὐ δ' ἀχρεῖον ἐφόγκιον ἴσομαι, αἰχμῶν
οὐ φεύγειν ὁ Λάκων, ἀλλὰ μένειν ἔμαθον.

16 Cf. *Alex.* 4. Esa ligera inclinación (hacia la izquierda) del cuello de Alejandro es también mencionada en *Adulat.* 53D y *Pyrrh.* 8. 2. Sobre las representaciones de la figura de Alejandro vid., entre otra bibliografía, Bieber; Ch. Picard, IV, 691 s.; 710.

17 Ningún otro epigrama en la *Antología Palatina* es atribuido a Arquelao y el único Arquelao conocido, autor de epigramas, es un escritor del s. III a. C., del cual Antígono de Caristo cita tres epigramas y Varrón un cuarto, de una temática muy diferente. *Antología Palatina* XVI 119–122 corresponde a una serie de epigramas sobre las representaciones de Alejandro: el 119, que precede a éste, es un epigrama de Posidipo

2. El resto de las citas de epigramas repetidas se dan entre dos obras de *Moralia* o de *Moralia* y *Vitae*.

2.1. En *De Alexandri Magni fortuna aut virtute* 330F se cita solamente el v. 1 (hasta la diéresis bucólica) del epigrama sepulcral *AP VII 325* por Sardanápalo, que, aunque es introducido explícitamente (τοῖς δὲ Σαρδαναπάλλου μνημείοις ἐπιγέγραπται) es también recategorizado a continuación como un apotegma, lo cual ha podido hacer fácilmente Plutarco en cuanto que la *persona loquens* del epigrama es el propio difunto, Sardanápalo. Forma parte de una serie de tres apotegmas que caracterizan negativamente a tres personajes (Antígono, Dionisio y Sardanápalo), frente a los que se yergue la figura de Alejandro «cuyos dichos son dignos de un Sócrates, un Platón y un Pitágoras». ¹⁸

En *De laude ipsius* 546A, ¹⁹ silenciando al personaje (Sardanápalo) son introducidos, mediante el deíctico intertextual πρὸς τό, como si fuera un dicho anónimo -¡tal era la fortuna de este epigrama!-, todo el verso 1 y parte del siguiente del epigrama, ²⁰ sirviendo la cita de contrapunto semántico, en cuanto que expresa elogio del vicio, a la utilidad de alabarse a sí mismo cuando se trata de valores positivos como los personificados por Crates, autor de un epigrama (= *AP VII 326*, 1–2) claramente paralelo y antitético. Son citas de autoridad en ambos casos.

2.2. En *Apophthegmata laconica* 217F Plutarco integra de forma explícita, ²¹ en el segundo apotegma relativo a Areo, rey agiada desde el 309 al 265, un

que se refiere también a una de las estatuas esculpidas por Lisipo; la frecuente asociación de ambos poetas favorecería la adscripción a Asclepiades del 120; vid. el comentario de Guichard, 433 ss. sobre este epigrama.

18 A continuación de la cita de Sardanápalo, la última de la serie, se señala: Τίς οὐκ εἶποι τῶν ἀποφθεγγμάτων τούτων τῷ μὲν ἀποφαίνεσθαι φιληδονίαν, τῷ δ' ἀρεότητα, τῷ δ' ἀδικίαν καὶ πλεονεξίαν;

19 Jones 1966, 73 fecha este tratado, uno de los pocos a los que atribuye una fecha segura, poco después del año 100.

20 Πάνυ δὲ χαρίεντως καὶ ὁ Κράτης πρὸς τό[] ἀντέγραψε τό: El epigrama anónimo sobre Sardanápalo (*AP VII 325*), además de ser citado parcialmente por Plutarco, *Alex. fort. virt.* 330F (parte del v. 1) y *Laud. ips.* 546A (v. 1 y parte de 2), lo es por Str. XIV, p. 672; D. Chrys. IV, 135; St. Byz. s.v. Ἀγχιάλῃ; Polb. VIII, 10 (12), 4 (que omite la misma parte del v. 2 que Plutarco en *Laud. ips.*); y, a través del testimonio de Cicerón (*Tusc.* V 35,101 y *Fin.* II 32, 106), que traduce el dístico en *Tusc.* V 35, 101, sabemos que era conocido por Aristóteles. Sardanápalo era ya tema de la comedia (*Ar. Av.* 1021). Los dos versos de *AP VII 325* forman parte de un epitafio más largo (=vv. 4–5 de *A. Plan.* 27), que, según Diodoro de Sicilia (II 23), Sardanápalo había compuesto para sí mismo en asirio y después fue traducido al griego; según Estrabón (XIV, 672) era la obra de un Quérido (el trágico del s. VI o el samio del s. V); el número de fuentes (a añadir a las anteriormente citadas) que transmiten parcial o totalmente el epigrama es impresionante (vid. aparato crítico de la edición del texto). Se plantea aquí el problema de si el epigrama correspondiente a *AP VII 325* se desgajó de *A. Plan.* 27 (lo más probable) o era el núcleo en torno al cual el epigrama se habría desarrollado.

21 ἰδῶν ἐπὶ μνήματος ἐλεγείων ἐπιγεγραμμένον...

epigrama funerario de forma narrativa, conmemorativo del derrocamiento de la tiranía (Preger 41; Page 1981, 404 «Anon. C»). El apotegma, «de dicho», construido sobre la figura de Areo caminando delante de una tumba colectiva y lector del epigrama, gira en su ironía, manifestada en el «dicho», en torno a la primera palabra del epigrama *σβεννύντας*, usada metafóricamente: «sofocar».²²

El mismo apotegma, con el epigrama integrado mediante una introducción más breve, es referido a un espartano anónimo en la *Vita Lycurgi* 20.13, formando parte de una serie de apotegmas caracterizadores del prototipo del espartano como gente de mente ingeniosa: ¿recordaba Plutarco el pasaje anterior? o ¿hay que apelar a una fuente externa para ambos apotegmas y para el epigrama que llevan integrado?²³ La fraseología es la misma, pero se introduce variación en la forma del «dicho»: uso de la segunda persona en *Apophth. Lac.* (estilo directo), de la tercera persona en la *Vita* (forma narrativa); formas dorias en la *Vita* -τεθνάκωντι, ἀφέμεν, ὅλων αὐτάν, κατακαῆμεν- frente a las paralelas jonias en *Apophth. Lac.* La forma de citar el epigrama, en cambio, y su forma y función dentro del apotegma, es la misma en ambos pasajes. Con los datos disponibles nos inclinamos por reivindicar la originalidad plutarquea del apotegma, que gira en torno al epigrama y que de nuevo se sirve de él en la *Vita*.

Plutarco es, en efecto, la única fuente del epigrama. Parece que éste evoca aquel tumulto con el que los de Selinunte expulsaron al tirano Eurileonte. Heródoto 5, 46, recuerda la tiranía de Pitágoras, derrocado por Eurileonte, que a su vez fue asesinado en una revuelta (Holm, 311).

2.3. Un dístico (Preger 3 B, Page 1981, 440 «Anon. CXXXI»), de inseguro comienzo, es citado en la *Consolatio ad Apollonium* 110B, en una serie de citas de autoridad que se imbrican en el *continuum* expositivo-narrativo formando parte de la argumentación (función erudito-amplificativa), en un pasaje de reflexión sobre la muerte como liberadora de las penas y sobre su iniquidad (cap. 15). Parece tratarse de un epitafio colectivo lacedemonio, confirmado por la canción espartana (Diehl II 6, 34) sobre el paso del tiempo (explícitamente introducida: Γενναῖον δὲ καὶ τὸ λακωνικόν), con la que el epigrama, introducido mediante un nexo deíctico intertextual muy laxo, καὶ πάλιν, va coordinado, y confirmado asimismo por el contexto de la *Vida de Pelópidas* 1.7, en la que de nuevo se cita.

El mismo espíritu, la idea de que la muerte libera de los sufrimientos, anima el prefacio de la *Vita*. Sin embargo aquí, en el contexto más inmediato, el

22 «Y un día, cuando (Areo) caminaba por Selinunte, en Sicilia, al ver en una tumba grabado el epigrama ‘un día, cuando sofocaban la tiranía, Ares cruel los sorprendió, y ante las puertas de Selinunte murieron’, dijo: con razón perecisteis al intentar sofocar la tiranía, pues hubiera sido necesario lo contrario, dejarla que se consumiera toda entera».

23 Sobre esta difícil cuestión vid. Santaniello, 14 ss.

dístico sirve de cita de autoridad para avalar la constatación del carácter equilibrado de los lacedemonios,²⁴ que gracias a su virtud experimentaban la misma alegría en vivir y en morir, la misma que testimonia este epigrama funerario, cuyo sentido está integrado aquí perfectamente. Es introducido explícitamente: ὡς δηλοῖ τὸ ἐπικήδειον, y de forma *abundans*: γὰρ φησίν, posiblemente para resolver el hiato.

El epigrama transmitido por Plutarco nos da en las dos obras un primer verso que es amétrico en su comienzo: el hiato οἶδε ἔθρονον habla quizá de corruptela, favorecida por el carácter formular de οἶδε al comienzo de los epigramas sepulcrales. La coincidencia de contenidos y la corruptela común hablan de que la *Consolatio* actuó quizá como hipotexto de la *Vita*. La propuesta de Preger οἶ θρόνον recompone el hexámetro pero deja privado del οἶδε déictico sepulcral. El testimonio de Teles sobre su carácter inscripcional es claro²⁵ y la dificultad de un οἶ relativo comenzando el epigrama se solventa si es un relativo que liga la frase del dístico a la composición completa. La frecuencia con la que los epigramas están fragmentados en las citas de Plutarco es un hecho.²⁶

2.4. En *Vitae decem oratorum* 847A, en la presentación de la serie de manifestaciones antimacedónicas de Demóstenes, figura el epigrama que Plutarco considera autógrafo del orador (Preger 159; Page 1981, 447 «Anon. CXXXIX») y que después fue grabado en una estatua en Atenas. Sirve de cita de autoridad. Es un epigrama votivo cuya forma responde al punto de vista del transeúnte que pasa delante de la estatua y lee el epigrama, pero también esta forma delata el distanciamiento buscado por el «supuesto autor, Demóstenes» prestándole su voz a una segunda persona (el sujeto lírico) y convirtiéndose él en objeto de la interpelación. Es plenamente caracterizador, por otra parte, del estilo oratorio, con un perfecto período condicional que expresa la irrealidad: todo el epigrama es una frase de orador.

Hacia el final del capítulo dedicado a la muerte del orador, en la *Vida de Demóstenes* 30.5, de nuevo introduce Plutarco el epigrama, de forma explícita y

24 Parece contradecirse con lo que pone en boca de un sibarita respecto a los espartanos en 1. 5: «no tiene gran mérito hacerse matar en la guerra para escapar a tanta fatiga y a tal régimen de vida». Evidentemente, para los sibaritas, entre los cuales el lujo y la vida muelle habían hecho amar el honor y la gloria, odiar la vida era la razón de no temer a la muerte.

25 La cita de Teles (fl. 235 a. c.) no incluye οἶδε (Stob. IV 44, 83, p. 989 Hense): καὶ ἐπιγράφουσι Λακεδαιμόνιοι· οὔτε τὸ ζῆν-ἐκτελέσει.

26 Page 1981, 440 (com. ad loc.), que acepta el texto de Preger, aporta toda una serie de argumentos para postular que posiblemente formaba parte de una elegía, al igual que el dístico que precede en *Consolatio ad Apollonium*, porque en la esfera pública, a la que pertenecerían estas líneas, no hay ningún epitafio en verso en *Esparta*. Argumenta partiendo de que Plutarco lo califica como epicedio y del pasaje *Apophth. lac.* 238A.

con el calificativo de «muy conocido» (τὸ ἐπίγραμμα τὸ θρυλούμενον ἐπιγραφῆναι τῇ βάσει τοῦ ἀνδριάντος).²⁷ Forma parte de la noticia sobre la dedicación, por parte del pueblo ateniense, de una estatua honorífica al orador, poco después de su muerte.

La función semántica es distinta en los dos contextos. En el primero sirve de cita de autoridad; en el segundo es un mero documento que explicita τὸ ἐπίγραμμα.

2.5. En el tratado *de Herodoti malignitate* 867F, a la aserción de Heródoto, en el libro VIII, de que los griegos, presa del pánico, pensaban abandonar el Artemisio para refugiarse en el interior de Grecia,²⁸ Plutarco contrapone la afirmación de que permanecieron y libraron la batalla marítima contra los bárbaros. Los versos de un ditirambo con el que Píndaro exaltó la espléndida victoria de los atenienses (fr. 77 Snell-Maehler) y un epigrama votivo refiriéndose a la misma (Preger 103; Page 1981, 237 «Simonides XXIV»),²⁹ que estaba grabado junto al templo de Atenea Proseoia (ἔχει δ' οὕτω τὸ ἐπίγραμμα), sirven como citas de autoridad dentro de la argumentación.³⁰

Los mismos versos de Píndaro y el mismo epigrama son citados también en la *Vida de Temístocles* 9. 4–6: los versos de Píndaro con una función similar a la que tenían en el pasaje del *de Herodoti malignitate*, avalando el valor de los griegos en la victoria del Artemisio; el epigrama, en cambio, introducido a menos distancia incluso que en el *De malignitate* y bajo la designación ahora como ἐλεγείον, formando parte de una descripción detallada y pintoresca del lugar (el promontorio Artemisio de Eubea) y del templo de Artemis Proseoia, rodeado de árboles y estelas de mármol blanco, en una de las cuales estaba grabado. Es introducido explícitamente: Ἐν μῆδ' ἐ δὲ τῶν σπηλαίων ἐλεγείον ἦν τόδε γεγραμμένον·

Dado que las dos citas, la de Píndaro y el epigrama, reaparecen de nuevo, aunque con distinta función ζτενία Plutarco a la vista el texto del *de Herodoti malignitate* cuando compuso la *Vita*? Posiblemente sí.

2.6. De nuevo en el *de Herodoti malignitate* 873B, en la «Querelle» con Heródoto por la batalla de Platea, se inserta otro epigrama votivo, también como cita de autoridad, dentro de la argumentación de que los griegos

27 El calificativo θρυλούμενον incide en la idea de que un buen número de estos epigramas, utilizados y reutilizados por Plutarco, forma parte de ese acervo cultural común, en el que la identidad de género aparece desdibujada.

28 *Herod. mal.* 867B: Ἐν δὲ τῇ ὀγδόῃ τοὺς Ἑλληνας φησι καταδειλίσαντας ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀρτεμισίου δρησμὸν βουλευέσθαι ἕσω εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα...

29 Vid. la interpretación de Page 1981 de la frase parentética del tercer verso, con valor temporal como mirando hacia delante, pues el ejército de los medos no pereció después de la batalla del Artemisio, sino después de ser vencido en Platea (quizá haya que suprimir la coma del final del v. 3 para poder mantener esta interpretación).

30 Vid. Manfredini, 560.

intervinieron todos en la batalla contra los persas. En la *Vida de Aristides* 19.7 lo introduce de nuevo para, junto a los argumentos que preceden a la cita, servir de base a la defensa de la misma idea de que hicieron causa común. En ambos contextos hay una introducción explícita de que el epigrama estuvo grabado: τέλος δὲ τῷ βωμῷ τὸ ἐπίγραμμα τοῦτο γράφοντες ἐνεχάραξαν (*Herod. mal.* 873B) y καὶ τὸν βωμὸν οὐκ ἂν ἐπέγραψαν οὕτως (*Arist.* 330e).

El epigrama, transmitido también en *AP VI 50*, conformado por dos dísticos y atribuido a Simónides (Preger 78; Page 212 «Simonides XV»), tiene en las dos citas de Plutarco sólo tres versos, «faltando» el pentámetro de lo que sería el primer dístico elegíaco. Existen además importantes variantes respecto al texto de la *Antología Palatina* en los demás versos: v.1. Νίκης κράτει *Herod. mal.*: νίκας κράτει *Arist.*: ῥώμη χερὸς P; v.3. ἐλευθέρῃ *Herod. mal.*, *Arist. cod.S*: ἐλευθέρῃ *P Pl, Arist. codd.* U A; κοινὸν *Herodot. mal.*, *Arist.*: κόσμον *P Pl*.

La expresión central, sobre la que gira el epigrama y por la que Plutarco lo cita, es κοινὸν ἰδρύσαντο Διὸς βωμὸν ¿Cuál de los epigramas es el originario? ¿Ha sido rehecho el epigrama por Plutarco para servir de evidencia a la causa por él defendida? Es significativo que, además de que el epigrama coincide en su forma en las dos citas de Plutarco (en la *Vita* con lengua dorizante: Ἐλλανες, νίκῃ),³¹ los dos contextos en que se cita coincidan en su mensaje y que la utilización del epigrama tenga la misma función lógica de cita de autoridad que avala ese mensaje. Posiblemente tenía ante los ojos el texto del de *Herodoti malignitate* en la composición del pasaje de la *Vita*.

El epigrama puede ser considerado copia de una inscripción (anónima) sobre el altar de Zeus Eleuterio en Platea, cuya existencia es testimoniada por Pausanias y por Estrabón.³² Plutarco posiblemente lo tomó de la fuente que está en la base del pasaje, posiblemente Eforo, que tendía a acentuar el carácter panhelénico de la victoria sobre los persas.

Que la forma originaria del epigrama sea la transmitida por Plutarco, es decir 2 hex.+1 pent.,³³ después normalizada en dos dísticos atribuidos a Simónides, es defendido por Manfredini (p. 588 s.) y también por Page, quien señala que la forma métrica, no encontrada en el s. V ni antes, delata una mano no práctica, como también la delata la mediocridad de la composición. El

31 También en *Lyc.* 20.13 el texto del epigrama presenta una lengua dorizante, frente al transmitido en *Apophth. Lac.* 217F: vid. *supra*.

32 Paus. 9.2.5 «En la entrada de Platea están las tumbas de los que pelearon contra los persas. De los griegos restantes hay una tumba común, pero de los espartanos y atenienses que cayeron hay tumbas separadas con epigramas (*elegeia*) de Simónides grabados. Οὐ πόρρω δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ κοινοῦ τάφου τῶν Ἑλλήνων Διὸς ἔστιν Ἐλευθερίου βωμὸς»; *Estr.* II.9 2.31: αἱ τῶν Ἑλλήνων δυνάμεις... ἰδρύσαντο... Ἐλευθερίου Διὸς ἱερὸν.

33 Algunos códices de *Arist.* transmiten dos dísticos.

primer pentámetro y la adscripción a Simónides han de ser considerados como ficciones tardías.³⁴

2.7. En la *Vida de Marcelo* 30.7–9, tras la enumeración de los monumentos consagrados por Marcelo, Plutarco se refiere a su propia estatua en Lindos, en el recinto del templo de Atenea, sobre la que, según cuenta Posidonio, había un epigrama votivo en la forma de alocución al caminante por parte de la estatua, que es la *persona loquens*, con contenidos que elogian su actividad política y militar (Preger 168; Page 461 «Anon. CXLIX»). El primer verso, totalmente descontextualizado, es incluido, en *Non posse suaviter...*1098A, en una lista seriada de citas que, con una función erudito–amplificativa, contribuyen al desarrollo argumentativo del discurso sobre la superioridad de los placeres por ellas significados.

La duplicidad de ese primer verso, poco significativa en otros aspectos, sí tiene una aportación textual: invalida la corrección de Estéfano, que, basándose en algunos códices de la *Vida de Marcelo*, propone para el último término del primer verso ἄστός, en vez de ἄστηρ, lectura ésta última en la que coinciden las dos fuentes plutarqueas y que creemos ha de ser preferida.³⁵

Llega el momento de concluir. El bajo número de citas literales analizado, ajustado al tiempo disponible para una comunicación, es significativo, sin embargo, del modo y función de la reutilización de citas de epigramas, aunque a nadie se le escapa que estas conclusiones sólo pueden adquirir una validez más general si se unen a las obtenidas en el estudio de la duplicidad de citas pertenecientes a otros géneros³⁶. Las relaciones que se establecen entre las citas y los contextos en los que se enmarcan, y su hipotexto son complejas y pueden arrojar luz sobre la recepción del epigrama por Plutarco y sobre aspectos de la composición y autoría de la obra plutarquea.

En citas dentro de la misma obra (1.1; 1.2; 1.3), que incluso se repiten muy próximas, hemos observado un deliberado intento de variación, bien en la forma de la cita (observable sobre todo en su extensión: 1.1; 1.2) bien en su función semántica de cita de autoridad (1.3); pero también coincidencia frente a la fuente externa: las citas representan un segmento del epigrama (1.3), o, al menos, una segmentación del mismo epigrama (1.2). El texto de las citas (1.1) presenta importantes variantes respecto al de los correspondientes epigramas de la *Antología Palatina*.

34 Page 1981, 212 «Simonides XV»; el ej. más temprano Peek, 82 (Atenas, temprano s. IV); IG II/III 3.1.4319; la forma 2 hex.+pent. recurre en una dedicación por Sila en el 82 a.C. (Preger, 116); cf. AP XIII 16, dedicación de Cinisca en Olimpia en 3 hex.+1 pent.

35 Ἄστός, en cambio, es la aceptada por Ziegler.

36 Vid. Cannatà, 165.

En citas repetidas en dos obras de *Moralia* o de *Moralia* y *Vitae* parece haber casos claros en que un pasaje de una obra de Plutarco se constituye en hipotexto del otro (2.2; 2.3; 2.5; 2.6), por las relaciones (de igualdad o variación) que es posible establecer entre ellas y que se refieren a:

La forma de la cita: el texto de las dos citas coincide en las importantes variantes que presenta frente al de la fuente externa (2.6); se observa colorido dialectal dorio en las citas de *Vitae* frente a las correspondientes de *Moralia* (2.2; 2.6); la cita representa un segmento del epigrama (2.1, aunque de distinta extensión).

La función de la cita: si bien la función lógica de cita de autoridad predomina, hay concordancia (2.2; 2.6) o variación (2.3; 2.5) en el mensaje, es decir en la adaptación de los contenidos del texto citado (¿llegando incluso a manipularlo en 2.6?).

Forma de la citación: en general, la citación es explícita respecto al género (términos ἐπίγραμμα y ἔλεγξιον, alternándose incluso para la misma cita)³⁷ y no incluye en ningún caso el nombre del autor; pero la explicitud de rasgos del género epigramático en la deixis intertextual es superior en *Vitae*, llegando en cambio a manifestarse en las marcas de esa deixis (por ej. en *Laud. ips.* 546A mediante πρὸς τὸ) la recategorización genérica de carácter «moralizante», como «dichos», que un buen número de epigramas, o partes de ellos, experimenta en *Moralia*.

Textos citados:³⁸

1.1

Aprophthegmata laconica 235A

Τύννιχος, Θρασυβούλου τοῦ παιδὸς ἀποθανόντος, εὐρώστως ἤνεγκε· καὶ ἐπίγραμμα εἰς τοῦτον ἐγένετο·

τὰν Πιτάναν Θρασύβουλος ἐπ' ἀσπίδος ἤλυθεν ἄπνους
ἐπτὰ πρὸς Ἀργείων τραύματα δεξάμενος,
δεικνὺς ἀντία πάντα· τὸν αἱματόεντα δ' ὁ πρέσβυς
θεῖς ἐπὶ πυρκαϊῆν Τύννιχος εἶπε τάδε·
« Δειλοὶ κλαίέσθωσαν· ἐγὼ δέ σε τέκνον ἄδακρυς
θάψω, τὸν καὶ ἔμὸν καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιον ».

241A

Ἄλλη τὸν υἱὸν ἐν παρατάξει μαθοῦσα πεσόντα ἔφη·
δειλοὶ κλαίέσθωσαν· ἐγὼ δέ σε, τέκνον, ἄδακρυς
θάπτω τὸν καὶ ἔμὸν καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιον.

37 En *Aprophth.* Lac. 217 (ἔλεγξιον) y *Lyc.* 20.13 (ἐπίγραμμα); también ἐπικήδειον (*Pel.* 1.7).

38 Los textos han sido tomados de la Ed. «Les Belles Lettres», tanto para las citas de pasajes de las obras de Plutarco como para las de la *Antología Griega*, excepto el último, de la Loeb.

AP VII 229

Τᾶ Πιτάνᾳ Θρασύβουλος ἐπ' ἀσπίδος ἤλυθεν ἄπνους,
 ἐπτὰ πρὸς Ἀργείων τραύματα δεξάμενος,
 δεικνὺς ἀντία πάντα· τὸν αἱματόεντα δ' ὁ πρέσβυς
 παῖδ' ἐπὶ πυρκαϊῆν Τύννιχος εἶπε τιθεῖς·
 « Δειλοὶ κλαιέσθωσαν· ἐγὼ δὲ σέ, τέκνον, ἄδακρυς
 θάψω, τὸν καὶ ἔμον καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιον ».

1.2

Aprophthegmata laconica 240F

Δαμάτρια τὸν υἱὸν δειλὸν καὶ ἀνάξιον ἐαυτῆς ἀκούσασα, παραγενόμενον ἀνεῖλε· τὸ δ' ἐπίγραμμα ἐπ' αὐτῆς τόδε·

τὸν παραβάντα νόμους Δαμάτριον ἔκτανε μάτηρ,
 ἅ Λακεδαιμονία τὸν Λακεδαιμόνιον.

241A

Ἐτέρα Λάκαινα τὸν υἱὸν λιποτακτήσαντα ὡς ἀνάξιον τῆς πατρίδος ἀνεῖλεν, εἰπούσα « οὐκ ἔμον τὸ φίτυμα »· ἐφ' ἧς τὸ ἐπίγραμμα τόδε·

Ἔρρε κακὸν φίτυμα διὰ σκότος, οὐ διὰ μῖσος
 Εὐρώτας δειλαῖς μηδ' ἐλάφοισι ῥέοι.
 Ἀχρεῖον σκυλάκευμα, κακὰ μερίς, ἔρρε ποθ' Ἄιδαν,
 ἔρρε· τὸ μὴ Σπάρτας ἄξιον οὐδ' ἔτεκεν.

AP VII 433

Τὸν παραβάντα νόμους Δαμάτριον ἔκτανε μάτηρ
 ἅ Λακεδαιμονία τὸν Λακεδαιμόνιον.

Θηκτὸν δ' ἐν προβολᾷ θεμένα ξίφος εἶπεν, ὀδόντα
 ὄξυν ἐπιβρύκουσ', οἷα Λάκαινα γυνά
 « Ἔρρε, κακὸν σκυλάκευμα, κακὰ μερίς, ἔρρε ποθ' Ἄιδαν,
 ἔρρε· τὸν οὐ Σπάρτας ἄξιον οὐδ' ἔτεκεν ».

1.3

De Alexandri Magni fortuna aut virtute 331A

Μὴ γὰρ ἂς οἱ ποιηταὶ ταῖς εἰκόσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῖς ἀνδριᾶσι μεγαληγορίας ἐπεχάραττον, οὐ τῆς μετριότητος, ἀλλὰ τῆς δυνάμεως τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου στοχαζόμενοι, σκοπῶμεν·

« αὐδασοῦντι δ' ἔοικεν ὁ χάλκεος εἰς Δία λεύσσων·

Γᾶν ὑπ' ἐμοὶ τίθεμαι· Ζεῦ, σὺ δ' Ὀλυμπον ἔχε ».

καὶ « Ἀλέξανδρος ἐγὼ Διὸς μὲν υἱός ». ταῦτα μὲν οὖν, ὡς ἔφην, οἱ ποιηταὶ κολακεύοντες αὐτοῦ τὴν τύχην προσεῖπον

335B

Λυσίππου δὲ τὸ πρῶτον Ἀλέξανδρον πλάσαντος, ἄνω βλέποντα τῷ προσώπῳ πρὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν (ὥσπερ αὐτὸς εἰώθει βλέπειν Ἀλέξανδρος ἡσυχῇ παρεγκλίνων τὸν τράχηλον) ἐπέγραψέ τις οὐκ ἀπιθάνως

« αὐδασοῦντι δ' ἔοικεν ὁ χάλκεος εἰς Δία λεύσσων·

Γᾶν ὑπ' ἐμοὶ τίθεμαι· Ζεῦ, σὺ δ' Ὀλυμπον ἔχε ».

Διὸ καὶ μόνον Ἀλέξανδρος ἐκέλευε Λύσιππον εἰκόνας αὐτοῦ δημιουργεῖν. Μόνος γὰρ οὗτος, ὡς ἔοικε, κατεμήνυε τῷ χαλκῷ τὸ ἦθος αὐτοῦ καὶ συνεξέφερε τῇ μορφῇ τὴν ἀρετήν·

A. Plan. 120

Τόλμαν Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ ὄλαν ἀπεμάξατο μορφάν

Λύσιππος· τίν' ὄδι χαλκὸς ἔχει δύναμιν.

Αὐδάσονται δ' ἔοικεν ὁ χάλκεος ἐς Δία λεύσσων·

«Γᾶν ὑπ' ἐμοὶ τίθειμαι, Ζεῦ, σὺ δ' Ὀλυμπον ἔχε».

2.1

De Alexandri Magni fortuna aut virtute 330F

Διούσιος δ' ὁ τύραννος ἐκέλευε τοὺς μὲν παῖδας ἀστραγάλοις, τοὺς δ' ἄνδρας ὄρκοις ἐξαπατᾶν. τοῖς δὲ Σαρδαναπάλλου μνημείοις ἐπιγέγραπται

«ταῦτ' ἔχω ὅσ' ἔφαγον καὶ ἐφύβρισα».

Τίς οὐκ ἂν εἴποι τῶν ἀποφθεγμάτων τούτων τῷ μὲν ἀποφαίνεσθαι φιληδονίαν, τῷ δ' ἀθεότητα, τῷ δ' ἀδικίαν καὶ πλεονεξίαν; Τῶν δ' Ἀλεξάνδρου φωνῶν ἂν ἀφέλης τὸ διδάθημα καὶ τὸν Ἄμμωνα καὶ τὴν εὐγένειαν, Σωκράτους ἢ Πλάτωνος ἢ Πυθαγόρου σοὶ φανοῦνται.

De laude ipsius 546A

Πάνυ δὲ χαριέντως καὶ ὁ Κράτης πρὸς τό·

«Ταῦτ' ἔχω, ὅσ' ἔφαγον καὶ ἐφύβρισα καὶ μετ' ἔρωτος
τέρπν' ἔπαθον»,

ἀντέγραψε τό·

«Ταῦτ' ἔχω, ὅσ' ἔμαθον καὶ ἐφρόντισα καὶ μετὰ Μουσῶν
σέμν' ἐδάην».

καλὸς γὰρ ὁ τοιοῦτος ἔπαινος καὶ ὠφέλιμος καὶ διδάσκων τὰ χρήσιμα καὶ τὰ συμφέροντα θουμάζειν καὶ ἀγαπᾶν ἀντὶ τῶν κενῶν καὶ περιττῶν. Διὸ τοῦτο μὲν συγκατατετάχθω τοῖς εἰρημένοις εἰς τὸ πρόβλημα.

AP VII 325

Τόσσο' ἔχω ὅσσο' ἔφαγον καὶ ἐφύβρισα καὶ μετ' ἐρώτων

τέρπν' ἐδάην· τὰ δὲ πολλὰ καὶ ὄλβια πάντα λέλειπται.

2.2

Aprophthegmata laconica 217 F

Διὰ Σελινοῦντος δὲ ποτε τῆς Σικελίας πορευόμενος ἰδὼν ἐπὶ μνήματος ἐλεγείῳ ἐπιγεγραμμένον

σβεννύντας ποτὲ τούσδε τυραννίδα χάλκεος Ἄρης

εἶλε· Σελινοῦντος δ' ἀμφὶ πύλας ἔθανον,

«δικαίως» ἔφη «ἀπεθάνετε τυραννίδα καιομένην ἀποσβεννύναι ἐπιχειρήσαντες· τοῦναντίον γὰρ ἔδει ὅλην αὐτὴν ἀφεῖναι κατακαῆναι».

Lyciurus 20.13

ὁ δ' ἀναγνοὺς τὸ ἐπίγραμμα τοῦτο·

Σβεννύντας ποτὲ τούσδε τυραννίδα χάλκεος Ἄρης

εἶλε· Σελινοῦντος δ' ἀμφὶ πύλας ἔθανον,

«Δικαίως γ'», εἶπε, «τεθνήκαντι τοὶ ἄνδρες· ἔδει γὰρ ἀφέμεν ὄλαν αὐτὰν κατακαῆμεν.»

2.3

Consolatio ad Apollonium 110 B

Γενναῖον δὲ καὶ τὸ Λακωνικόν·

Νῦν ἄμμες, πρόσθ' ἄλλοι ἐθάλεον, αὐτίκα δ' ἄλλοι,

ῶν ἄμμες γενεὰν οὐκέτ' ἐποψόμεθα,

καὶ πάλιν·

οἶδε ἔθανον, οὐ τὸ ζῆν θέμενοι καλὸν οὐδὲ τὸ θνήσκειν,

ἀλλὰ τὸ ταῦτα καλῶς ἀμφοτέρ' ἔκτελέσαι.

Pelopidas 1.7

Λακεδαιμονίοις δὲ καὶ ζῆν ἠδέως καὶ θνήσκειν ἀμφοτέρα ἀρετὴ παρεῖχεν, ὡς δηλοῖ τὸ ἐπικήδειον· «οἶδε» γάρ φησιν «ἔθανον

οὐ τὸ ζῆν θέμενοι καλὸν οὐδὲ τὸ θνήσκειν,

ἀλλὰ τὸ ταῦτα καλῶς ἀμφοτέρ' ἔκτελέσαι.»

Οὔτε γὰρ φυγὴ θανάτου μεμπτόν, ἂν ὀρέγηται τις τοῦ βίου μὴ αἰσχρῶς, οὐθ' ὑπομονὴ καλόν, εἰ μετ' ὀλιγωρίας γίνοιτο τοῦ ζῆν.

2.4

Vitae decem oratorum 847 A

Αἰτήσας τε γραμματεῖον ἔγραψεν, ὡς μὲν Δημήτριος ὁ Μάγνης φησί, τὸ ἐπὶ τῆς εἰκόνας αὐτοῦ ἔλεγειον, ἐπιγεγραμμένον ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀθηναίων ὕστερον·

«Εἵπερ ἴσην ῥώμην γνώμη, Δημόσθενης, ἔσχεις,

οὔποτ' ἂν Ἑλλήνων ἦρξεν Ἄρης Μακεδών.»

Κεῖται δ' <ή> εἰκὼν πλησίον τοῦ περισχοινίσματος καὶ τοῦ βωμοῦ τῶν δώδεκα Θεῶν, ὑπὸ Πολυεύκτου πεποιημένη.

Demosthenes 30.5

Τούτῳ μὲν οὖν ὀλίγον ὕστερον ὁ τῶν Ἀθηναίων δῆμος ἀξίαν ἀποδιδούς τιμὴν, εἰκόνα τε χαλκῆν ἀνέστησε καὶ τὸν πρεσβύτατον ἐψηφίσαστο τῶν ἀπὸ γένους ἐν Πρυτανείῳ σίτησιν ἔχειν καὶ τὸ ἐπίγραμμα τὸ θρυλούμενον ἐπιγραφῆναι τῇ βάσει τοῦ ἀνδριάντος·

Εἵπερ ἴσην γνώμη ῥώμην, Δημόσθενης, ἔσχεις,

οὔποτ' ἂν Ἑλλήνων ἦρξεν Ἄρης Μακεδών.

Οἱ γὰρ αὐτὸν τὸν Δημοσθένην τοῦτο ποιῆσαι λέγοντες ἐν Καλαυρίᾳ μέλλοντα τὸ φάρμακον προσφέρεισθαι κομιδῇ φλυαροῦσι.

2.5

De Herodoti malignitate 867 F

Τί σὺ λέγεις; ἀποδιδράσκειν ὡς κεκρατημένους, οὓς οἱ πολέμιοι μετὰ τὴν μάχην ἀπιστοῦσι φεύγειν ὡς πολὺ κρατοῦντας; εἶτα πιστεύειν ἄξιον τούτῳ γράφοντι περὶ ἀνδρὸς ἢ πόλεως μιᾶς, ὃς ἐνὶ ῥήματι τὸ νίκημα τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἀφαιρεῖται καὶ τὸ τρόπαιον καθαιρεῖ καὶ τὰς ἐπιγραφὰς ἃς ἔθεντο παρὰ τῇ Ἀρτέμιδι τῇ Προσ<ηῶα> κόμπου ἀποφαίνει καὶ ἀλαζονεῖαν; ἔχει δ' οὕτω τὸ ἐπίγραμμα·

Παντοδαπῶν ἀνδρῶν γενεὰς Ἀσίας ἀπὸ χώρας

παῖδες Ἀθηναίων τῶδέ ποτ' ἐν πελάγει

ναυμαχίᾳ δαμάσαντες, ἐπεὶ στρατὸς ὤλετο Μήδων,

σήματα ταῦτ' ἔθεσαν παρθένω Ἀρτέμιδι.

Themistocles 9.4–6

Ἔχει δὲ ναὸν οὐ μέγαν Ἀρτέμιδος ἐπικλήσιν Προσηώας, καὶ δένδρα περὶ αὐτὸν πέφυκε καὶ
στῆλαι κύκλω λίθου λευκοῦ πεπηγάσιν· ὁ δὲ λίθος τῇ χειρὶ τριβόμενος καὶ χροῶν καὶ
ὄσμην κροκίζουσαν ἀναδίδωσιν. Ἐν μιᾷ δὲ τῶν στηλῶν ἔλεγείον ἦν τότε γεγραμμένον·

Παντοδαπῶν ἀνδρῶν γενεᾶς Ἀσίας ἀπὸ χώρας
παῖδες Ἀθηναίων τῶδέ ποτ' ἐν πελάγει
ναυμαχίᾳ δαμάσαντες, ἐπεὶ στρατὸς ὤλετο Μήδων,
σήματα ταῦτ' ἔθεσαν παρθένω Ἀρτέμιδι.

Δείκνυται δὲ τῆς ἀκτῆς τόπος ἐν πολλῇ τῇ περίξ θινὶ κόνιν τεφρώδη καὶ μέλαιναν ἐκ
βάθους ἀναδιδούς, ὥσπερ πυρίκαυστον, ἐν ᾧ τὰ ναυάγια καὶ <τούς> νεκροὺς καῦσαι
δοκοῦσι.

2.6

De Herodoti malignitate 873 B

τούς δ' Ἕλληνας ἀποδειλιάσαντας καὶ ἀποδράντας οὐκ ἀπήλαννον τῶν ἀριστείων, ἀλλ'
ἐνέγραφον τοῖς τρίποσι καὶ τοῖς κολοσσοῖς καὶ μετεδίδοσαν τῶν λαφύρων, τέλος δὲ τῶ
βωμῶ τὸ ἐπίγραμμα τοῦτο γράφοντες ἐνεχάραξαν·

Τόνδε ποθ' Ἕλληνας Νίκης κράτει, ἔργω Ἄρηος,
<εὐτόλμω ψυχῆς λήματι πειθόμενοι,>
Πέρσας ἐξελάσαντες, ἔλευθέρᾳ Ἑλλάδι κοινὸν
ἰδρῦσαντο Διὸς βωμὸν Ἐλευθερίου.

Μὴ καὶ τοῦτο Κλεάδας ἢ τις ἄλλος, ὃ Ἡρόδοτε, κολακεύων τὰς πόλεις ἐπέγραψε; τί οὖν
ἔδεοντο τὴν γῆν ὀρύσσοντες διακενής ἔχειν [τὰ] πράγματα καὶ ῥαδιουργεῖν χώματα καὶ
μνήματα τῶν ἐπιγινόμενων ἕνεκ' ἀνθρώπων κατασκευάζοντες, ἐν τοῖς ἐπιφανεστάτοις
καὶ μεγίστοις ἀναθήμασι τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν καθιερούμενην ὀρῶντες;

Aristides 19.7

Θαυμαστὸν οὖν τὸ Ἡροδότου, πῶς μόνους τούτους φησὶν εἰς χεῖρας ἔλθειν τοῖς πολεμίοις,
τῶν δ' ἄλλων Ἑλλήνων μηδένα. καὶ γὰρ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν πεσόντων μαρτυρεῖ καὶ τὰ
μνήματα κοινὸν γενέσθαι τὸ κατόρθωμα καὶ τὸν βωμὸν οὐκ ἂν ἐπέγραφαν οὕτως εἰ
μόνοι τρεῖς πόλεις ἠγωνίσαντο, τῶν ἄλλων ἀτρέμα καθεζομένων·

τόνδε ποθ' Ἕλληνας νίκας κράτει, ἔργω Ἄρηος,
<εὐτόλμω ψυχῆς λήματι πειθόμενοι,>
Πέρσας ἐξελάσαντες ἔλευθέρᾳ Ἑλλάδι κοινὸν
ἰδρῦσαντο Διὸς βωμὸν Ἐλευθερίου.

AP VI 50

Τόνδε ποθ' Ἕλληνας, ῥώμη χερὸς, ἔργω Ἄρηος,
εὐτόλμω ψυχῆς λήματι πειθόμενοι,
Πέρσας ἐξελάσαντες, ἐλεύθερον Ἑλλάδι κόσμον
ἰδρῦσαντο Διὸς βωμὸν Ἐλευθερίου.

2.7

Marcellus 30.7–9

Ἐκεῖ δ' αὐτοῦ τῷ ἀνδριάντι τοῦτ' ἦν ἐπιγεγραμμένον, ὡς Ποσειδωνίος φησι, τὸ ἐπίγραμμα

Οὗτός τοι Ῥώμης ὁ μέγας, ξένε, πατρίδος ἀστήρ,
 Μάρκελλος κλεινῶν Κλαύδιος ἐκ πατέρων,
 ἐπτάκι τὰν ὑπάταν ἀρχὰν ἐν Ἄρῃ φυλάξας,
 καὶ πολλὸν ἀντιπάλων ἐγκατέχευε φόνον.

Τὴν γὰρ ἀνθύπατον ἀρχὴν, ἦν δις ἤρξε, ταῖς πέντε προσκατηρίθμησεν ὑπατείαις ὁ τὸ ἐπίγραμμα ποιήσας.

Suav. Viv. Epic. 1098 A

καὶ

”οὗτός τοι Ῥώμας ὁ μέγας, ξένε, πατρίδος ἀστήρ”

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Notes and Anecdotes:
Observations on Cross-Genre *Apophthegmata*

Philip A. Stadter

Plutarch's anecdotes, long recognized as a fundamental feature of his writing, have recently received renewed attention, since we have come to realize that these sayings or short narratives can furnish insight into the biographer's methods, purposes, and audience.¹ Van der Stockt and van Meirvenne have produced a series of papers on what they call clusters, sets of discrete items, often including anecdotes, which reappear in different works, and point to Plutarch's use of some sort of previously written preliminary notes or *hypomnemata*.² New editions of the *Apophthegmata regum* and the *Apophthegmata Laconica* have invited us to reconsider the authorship and relationship to Plutarch's other works of these anecdote collections. Beck has demonstrated that the letter to Trajan which introduces *Apophthegmata regum* is probably genuine, increasing the probability that the whole collection was edited by Plutarch himself (Beck 2002). Papers by Pelling and myself presented at a 2000 conference in Leuven seem to confirm the Plutarchan origin of both collections, and raise complex issues regarding his working methods.³ Pelling's paper studied the ties between the *Apophthegmata regum* and several Roman *Lives*, especially the *Caesar*; my paper, among other things, examined the relationship between the *Lives* of Lysurgus and Agesilaus, the *Apophthegmata Laconica*, and the *Apophthegmata regum*. The two papers came up with slightly different results, although they agreed that *Apophthegmata regum* had most probably been prepared by Plutarch as an independent work. Pelling argued that the *Apophthegmata regum* was drawn from preliminary narrative hypomnemata prepared for individual *Lives* such as the *Caesar*. These *hypomnemata* would be rather different from those recognized by cluster analysis, though both would represent a well-thought draft combining different kinds of material, including anecdotes: Pelling's *hypomnemata* would be chiefly historical; cluster *hypomnemata* chiefly ethical-philosophical. I instead argued that Plutarch had first prepared an unpolished collection of *apophthegmata*, in which he arranged anecdotes that he planned to use in at least some *Lives* in the

1 See Carrière, Fuhrmann, Pettine, Caiazza, Santaniello, and Beck 1998, 1999, 2000.

2 See Van der Stockt 1999a, 1999b, 2002, 2003/2004, 2004 and Van Meirvenne. On the multivalency of the term *hypomnemata*, see Ambaglio 1990.

3 See Pelling 2002, Stadter forthcoming.

order they would be found in the *Lives*. *Apophthegmata Laconica*, in which the anecdotes of Lycurgus and Agesilaus are in the order of the respective *Lives*, apparently is the Spartan section of this rough collection, or a part of it. *Apophthegmata regum* instead represented a selection edited by Plutarch from this larger, less carefully written (since not designed for publication) but still Plutarchan collection of anecdotes. The two hypotheses are similar, but differ in how they relate the disposition of anecdotes in Plutarch's working collections to the narrative drafts and the final text of the *Lives*.

The present paper attempts to refine some of the findings of these papers by an examination of a select group of anecdotes which recur in a third work, the *Political Precepts*, as well as the *Apophthegmata regum* and the *Parallel Lives*. The *Political Precepts*, scholars have long recognized, shares many anecdotes with the *Lives*, and reflects the same research that lies behind the *Lives*.⁴ Of the anecdotes in the *Precepts*, nineteen also appear in *Apophthegmata regum*. Fourteen of the nineteen occur in one of the *Parallel Lives* as well, and eight in other works.⁵ These repetitions offer an opportunity to probe the way the same anecdotes are used across several works, written in different genres, for different audiences, and for different purposes. Besides giving more understanding of the relation of the anecdotes to earlier notes or compilations, this examination reveals the different techniques employed by Plutarch, and especially the subtlety of his handling of anecdotes in the *Lives*.

The differences of genre and audience between the three works are significant. The *Praecepta* is dedicated to Menemachus, a young aristocrat of Sardis who is entering politics, and presents itself as a basic guide to how an aspiring politician in a Greek polis should comport himself, with special emphasis on working smoothly with his colleagues among the city's elite and not provoking Roman interference in civic affairs. It is rich with anecdotal examples of good and bad attitudes and behavior in civic life, to the exclusion of foreign policy or military affairs (see Prandi and Cook). The implied audience is the politically active elite of Greek cities under Roman rule; we are told that it was found useful by at least one eminent Greek, who at various periods held major magistracies in Corinth and later held prominent equestrian positions in Epirus and Egypt.⁶ The *Parallel Lives* had a different dedicatee, and a much broader scope and purpose. Several *Lives*, and probably all, were dedicated to Sosius Senecio, a prominent Roman, twice consul, and an associate of Trajan. The biographical project grew to be enormous, treated both internal and foreign affairs, civil and military, and involved a rethinking of much of Greek and Roman history, especially the turbulent period of the late

4 See Carrière, 14–18, who counts 117 parallel passages in the *Lives*.

5 See Table of Correspondences.

6 Cornelius Pulcher: see *De cap. ex inim. util.* 86B–D, with Puech, 4843.

republic and the Roman civil war. Its implied audience was all those, both Romans and Greeks, who desired a philosophically based and ethically focused examination of the leading statesmen of Greece and Rome, their policies, and their actions. While explicitly didactic in purpose, the method of the biographies, in particular their parallel structure, permitted complex and often open-ended presentation of character, decisions, and outcomes.⁷ The third work, *Apophthegmata regum*, long considered a non-Plutarchan compilation, a crude combination of earlier collections and anecdotes drawn from the *Lives*, now seems much more likely to be a genuine work of Plutarch.⁸ If the prefatory letter to Trajan is genuine, as it seems to be, then Plutarch put together these anecdotes at least notionally for the emperor, to provide an easily assimilated survey of the wisdom of famous leaders. Its larger implied audience was all those busy but relatively cultured people who might enjoy such a collection. Although its format, in which each anecdote (with some exceptions) is isolated from the next, makes it easy to read, its style is not crude or unliterary.⁹ The collection is arranged by peoples, first barbarians, then Greeks, then Romans, with subgroups for nations or cities. Within these groups the individuals are given chronologically.¹⁰ Many individuals also figure in the *Parallel Lives*: in that case the anecdotes usually are given in the order they appear in the *Lives*.¹¹ The Athenian statesmen begin with Themistocles (Peisistratus appears in a separate section on Athenian tyrants); the collection omits some Athenians awarded *Lives* – Cimon, Nicias, Demosthenes – while including others. Early legendary figures are excluded from the Roman section: there are no anecdotes for Romulus, Numa, Publicola, Coriolanus, or Camillus. The Roman examples begin in the third century with Manius Curius and Fabricius (five anecdotes, all found in the same order in the life of Pyrrhus). Some subjects of biographies – the Gracchi, Sertorius, Crassus, Cato Minor, Brutus, Antony – are omitted, perhaps as unsuitable or unedifying.

7 See for a fine overview Duff 1999.

8 See Fuhrmann, 3–15, Pelling 2002, Stadter forthcoming. Of course, some anecdotes in this collection, as well as in the *Lives* and *Precepts*, appear in earlier authors, and no doubt were found either in frequently read writers or earlier collections. Of those in the set under scrutiny, note those of Themistocles and Miltiades' trophy (800B) and Epaminondas' trial (799E).

9 Pace Swain.

10 The anecdote of Semiramis' (Nitocris'?) tomb is included under Darius, who opened it. Some minor Spartans are grouped achronologically at the end of the Spartan section. In the Roman set only C. Popillius (cos. 172) appears out of order, after Sulla. The historical setting is firmly set by the confrontation with Antiochus (Epiphanes) in Egypt, which suggests that a physical record—a tablet or papyrus slip—had gotten out of place.

11 See Stadter forthcoming, n. 65.

The last Roman treated is Augustus, presumably drawing upon material assembled for the *Lives of the Caesars*.¹²

What then can we learn from this set of anecdotes found across the three works? First, a negative observation: the *Apophthegmata regum* omits many anecdotes, unattractive or unsuitable to imitate, that are reported in both *Precepts* and *Lives*, such as Alcibiades and the quail (799D, Alc. 10), the harsh rebuke of Cato the Younger to Catulus (808E, *CMin.* 16.6–8), and the implacability of Sulla (815F, *Sull.* 32.2).¹³ This implies that *Apophthegmata regum* represents a selection from a larger body of anecdotes. A comparison of the Spartan material in *Apophthegmata regum* with the anecdotes in *Apophthegmata Laconica* yields a similar conclusion: duplicates found in *Apophthegmata Laconica* have been weeded out and the stylistic level raised; many anecdotes have been omitted.¹⁴ Plutarch probably began assembling his rough collection quite early, since Beck has noted evidence for its use already in the speeches *De fortuna Romanorum* and *De Alexandri fortuna an virtute* (see Beck 2003).

Moreover, the items in *Apophthegmata regum* were not taken directly from the *Lives*, but from material used for the *Lives*. In fact, there are items found in *Apophthegmata* and *Precepts*, but not included in the relevant *Life*, such as Pericles' thoughts on assuming command of the Athenians (186C, 813C) or on friendship (186C, 808A), or Pytheas on honors to Alexander (187E, 804B). In addition, one item in the *Apophthegmata*, such as Themistocles #13 (186E), his complaints about the Athenians, can combine two items which are separate in the *Life*. The two sayings joined as one in the *Apophthegmata* are reported in the same order in *On self-praise* 541D, but are several chapters apart and in the reverse order in *Them.* 22 and 18. (Only the first part appears in *Precepts* 812B.) On other occasions the anecdotes may be contiguous, but in a different order. Thus Pompey #2 and 3 (203CD) not only makes the error, not found in the *Life*, of speaking of Mamertines rather than Himeraeans (repeated at *Precepts* 815E), as noted by Pelling,¹⁵ but also reverses the order of that anecdote and the anecdote of the swords sealed in their scabbards found in the *Pompey*. These cases raise some obstacles to the theory that the *Apophthegmata* are derived from narrative *hypomnemata* written for each *Life*. It is also remarkable that several heroes whose *Lives* are usually thought to be early are missing, such as Cimon and Demosthenes.

12 See Stadter 2005. The omission of the other emperors, who had also been treated in the *Lives of the Caesars*, is noteworthy.

13 Cf. the additional examples in Pelling 2002, 82.

14 See Fuhrmann, 4, Stadter forthcoming.

15 Pelling 2002, 72. Note also that the form of the Sicilian leader's name appears differently in each of the three works, although this probably also reflects textual corruption.

Whereas the anecdotes in the *Apophthegmata regum* are arranged by people, city, and chronological sequence, the same anecdotes in the *Precepts* are ordered by topics. In the latter work the anecdotes commonly appear in lists, arranged in categories to reinforce a particular point in the argument. We find sequences of anecdotes on political oratory, on early brilliant beginnings, on friends, on political opponents, on not trying to do too much, on helping one's city through friendship with Romans, on allowing others to share in praise, on the honors granted a good leader, and on being willing to admit to limited wealth. Within these categories the variety of examples is impressive, though heavily weighted toward Greeks. For political oratory (c. 6, 803AB) Plutarch recalls five examples: an unnamed speaker (elsewhere identified as Leptines), Demades, Archilochus, Pericles, and Phocion; for politicians' brilliant beginnings (c. 8, 804D–805A), he cites four men: Aratus, Alcibiades, Pompey, and Scipio. The section on treatment of friends (c. 13, 806F–809B) is particularly rich: anecdotes, sayings, and quotations from or about Cleon, Themistocles (two), Callimachus, Pindar, Solon, Agesilaus, Euripides, Phocion, Timoleon, Pericles, Agesilaus again, Diomedes and Odysseus (with Homeric quotes), Plato, Epaminondas, Cato Minor, Themistocles again, Epaminondas again, and Agesilaus a third time.

How were these lists formed? The overlap of these lists with the *Apophthegmata regum* – to look just at the last category, treatment of friends, five anecdotes are found in both works¹⁶ – suggests that the *Precepts* drew from the same prior anecdote collection from which we have seen the *Apophthegmata regum* was derived. It seems likely that most if not all of the anecdotes in this and similar lists, and indeed in the *Precepts* as a whole, had already been gathered in this prior larger Plutarchan collection. Whereas in *Apophthegmata regum* the anecdotes are arranged by city and speaker, in the *Precepts* they are arranged by topic. In other words, the arrangement of anecdotes was flexible, and could be adapted to Plutarch's purposes. We may imagine that Plutarch may have made marginal notes or prepared some kind of *pro memoria* uniting anecdotes under topic headings, for easy reference, whether while preparing the *Precepts* or before. But he had also done more than that. Van der Stockt (2002) has identified two subsets of the list on friends which appear in other works. These 'clusters', which can be recognized by their appearance in other Plutarchan works, include not only anecdotes but poetic quotations and other rhetorical devices. They seem to be based on two short written *hypomnemata* that Plutarch drafted on specific topics: one on the politician as an 'excellent craftsman', like Zeus, and the other on politicians and the common good.

16 Two of the five are found also in the *Lives*, Themistocles (807B) and Agesilaus (807F–808A), and three not, Pericles (808A), Epaminondas (808E, though this may have been found also in *Epaminondas*), and Aristides and Themistocles (809B).

Although these two *hypomnemata* underlie separate passages elsewhere in Plutarch's works, in the *Precepts* they overlap. We can conclude that Plutarch worked at several levels: collecting anecdotes, grouping them variously by individual or by subject in more or less fixed format, and preparing organized notes on particular topics which he might use in teaching, lecturing, or his moral treatises.

The anecdotes of the *Precepts* are not disposed in bare lists, but form part of a rhetorically developed argument. As a result, they are mixed together with poetic citations, comparisons, and other rhetorical devices, as we have seen. Their setting within a connected discourse also encourages interpretative comments by the author. In some passages of the *Precepts*, Plutarch can suggest a positive assessment, noting, e. g., that Phocion's retort to Demades at 811A was 'witty' (χαριέντως). Others evaluations can be negative. Thus the letter of Agesilaus interceding for a certain Nicias (808A) is set in a larger context, in which Plutarch calls Agesilaus weak and unassertive in dealing with friends' requests, reinforces his statement by a citation of Euripides, and contrasts his behavior to the firmness of Phocion. Significantly, this interpretation of Agesilaus' intercession as weak and reprehensible reflects a negative shift with respect to the same anecdote in *Apophthegmata regum* (191B). There no interpretation is offered, but in keeping with the practice of that collection throughout, the anecdote should be taken positively, as indicating Agesilaus' support of his friends.¹⁷ An anecdote is not univocal: its interpretation in the *Precepts* need not be the same as that of the *Apophthegmata*.

It is time now to turn to the *Parallel Lives*, with which the *Apophthegmata* and the *Precepts* share so many anecdotes. First, we note that the *Lives*, like the *Precepts*, frequently offer lists of anecdotes arranged under categories, but here focused on one person, the protagonist of the *Life*. Thus Pericles' metaphor calling Aegina 'the eyesore of the Peiraeus' appears in a list of rhetorical figures used by different politicians at *Praec.* 803A, but as one of the few preserved fragments of Pericles' speeches at *Per.* 8.7, and Themistocles' rebuke of Simonides is part of a 'cluster' in the section on friends at 807B, but at *Them.* 5.6 belongs to a chain of anecdotes illustrating Themistocles' character. Similarly Phocion's retort to Demades, one of a several retorts listed at *Praec.* 811A, in the *Life* appears in a series of anecdotes demonstrating Phocion's wise indifference to popular sentiment (*Phoc.* 9.8). That is, Plutarch has the ability to rearrange anecdotes according to different criteria. We should not think of a fixed list. Neither the 'retorts' list of the *Precepts* nor the 'wisdom

17 As we have seen, the *Apophthegmata regum* does not report anecdotes which are clearly negative, such as Cato's rebuke of Catulus (808E), which appears not only in the *Precepts* and in *De vitioso pudore* (534D, as part of one of the 'clusters' identified by Van der Stockt 2002) but also at *CMin.* 16.6–8.

of Phocion' list of the *Life* is fixed or distinct from other possible arrangements, such as the list of exemplary sayings of the *Apophthegmata*. One has the impression that Plutarch can shuffle his notecards, rearranging his file to highlight new connections. Of course, he did not use notecards, much less a computer database, but he must have worked out some way to reorganize his material, either by making marginal annotations, by recopying material, or by using other writing surfaces, such as wooden or wax tablets, which would permit easy rearrangement. His excellent mind and memory would have overseen the task, recalling, judging, and sorting his store of anecdotes. Evidence may survive of such individual physical records in the erroneous placement of the anecdote of C. Popillius in the *Apophthegmata*.¹⁸

However, Plutarch's sophistication in the use of anecdotes appears not chiefly in the construction of lists, although this is important, but in their disposition in a rhetorical and discursive context. The study of clusters demonstrates how Plutarch prepared short *hypomnemata* constructing from anecdotes and other material a continuous argument. This procedure underlies the artistic and biographical achievement of the *Lives*. Comparison of anecdotes appearing in the *Precepts* with their use and meaning in the *Lives*, the *Apophthegmata*, and other treatises reveals that in the *Lives* Plutarch uses anecdotes like a virtuoso, uncovering implications not found in the other works. Of the many examples one might cite, let me discuss three.

First, the famous saying of Themistocles, that the trophy of Miltiades did not let him sleep. I begin with the use of this well-known anecdote – it is mentioned by Cicero, Valerius Maximus, and Libanius, as well as seven times by Plutarch – in the *Moralia*. In the *Precepts* (800B) the anecdote fits the dedicatee and the context especially well. Plutarch is urging the aspiring politician to discipline and put in order his character (ἐξάσκει καὶ κατακόσμη τὸν τρόπον). Using direct address to Menemachus (ἀκούεις γάρ), he introduces the example of the young Themistocles, who when he decided to enter politics, abandoned drinking and parties, and began working late and keeping sober, because, as he said to his friends, “Miltiades’ trophy doesn’t let me sleep.” The anecdote speaks directly to the need for self-discipline in the young politician. This ethical lesson perhaps was the original context for the anecdote, for the version in the *Apophthegmata* (184F–185A) has the same emphasis: after Miltiades’ victory Themistocles was never seen uncontrolled (ἀτακτῶν). The ethical theme is more developed in *On progress in virtue* (84 BC). There Plutarch emphasizes the necessity of moving from judgment to action, from words to deeds. All the Athenians no doubt praised Miltiades’ daring and courage, he writes, but Themistocles with his saying “not only

18 See n. 10 above. For some ancient evidence for recopying notes, see the work of Dorandi cited in Stadter forthcoming, n. 46.

praised and admired but emulated and imitated". In these three passages, though each is handled differently, the focus is on Themistocles' early wild life and the new discipline he acquired.¹⁹ However, in other contexts, Plutarch can use the apophthegm to exemplify emulation: at *Thes.* 6.9, it is offered as a parallel to Theseus' emulation of Heracles; at *De cap. ex inim.* 92C consideration of how to respond to one's opponents' successes produces the advice, 'don't envy them, surpass them,' and the citation of Themistocles.²⁰

The account in the *Life of Themistocles* (3.4–5) combines these themes but introduces a strikingly ambivalent tone. The context is now Themistocles' character, as revealed in his youth. The whole passage (*Them.* 2–3) with a series of anecdotes and echoes of Platonic educational theory from the *Republic* and *Phaedrus*, admirably analyzed by Duff 2008, brilliantly introduces the strengths and weaknesses which would make Themistocles first admired, then rejected. His saying about Miltiades' trophy now is an indication not of his new-found self-discipline but of his ambition and thirst for fame.²¹ The anecdote here reveals the ambivalent qualities which will both triumph at Salamis and lead to his ostracism. Yet Plutarch preserves the other resonances. Both the theme of training found in *Precepts* and the resolution to act highlighted in *De profectu* (as well as an echo of Thucydides) return in Plutarch's concluding evaluation of this change: "Others thought that the Persian defeat at Marathon was the end of the war, but Themistocles saw it as the beginning of greater contests, and so he began oiling himself and training his city to become leader of Greece".

The great achievement of Plutarch was to take the existing tradition of moral anecdotes employed for teaching and self-improvement, and set them in the much richer context of an individual's entire life – and even the larger contexts of the parallel life and of other pairs of *Lives*. The saying of Themistocles in its biographical context, with hints of its implications offered by adjacent anecdotes and discreet interpretive commentary, captures all the ambivalence of Themistocles' character. No longer a simple *exemplum*, with a single moral focus, it becomes a window into the protagonist's soul, a 'revelation' in the words of the *Alexander* preface, 'of ἀρετῆ and κακία'.

Consider now a second example, Pompey's words when he demanded of Sulla a triumph, which will indicate more clearly how Plutarch reworked his material in his biographies. Pompey audaciously challenged Sulla: 'More men

19 At *An seni* 795C, Plutarch gives credit rather to Mnesiphilus' advice for ending Themistocles' wild ways.

20 The second case doesn't really fit the context, since Miltiades is not usually considered an opponent of Themistocles.

21 *Them.* 3.4: "He is said to have been so passionate for fame and enamored of great actions because of his ambition...". This theme was inappropriate to the *Precepts*.

honor the rising sun than the setting’, and Sulla yielded, granting him the triumph. In *Praec.* 804E–F, the anecdote is simply and rapidly told, with a minimum of historical setting, as one example of a political career brilliantly launched, like those of Aratus, Alcibiades, and Scipio the Younger. In the *Life*, however, the treatment is more ambivalent, and intricately related to Pompey’s whole career. The ‘rising sun’ anecdote belongs to the narrative sequence on Pompey’s return to Rome from Africa and his reception by Sulla (*Pomp.* 13.5–14.8), which begins with Sulla’s eager welcome of Pompey and salutation as Magnus and ends with the acceptance of the triumph also by Servilius, an outspoken critic of Pompey. In this sequence Plutarch expands the historical and anecdotal information with his own comments and insertions: on when the title Magnus came into use, on the reasons that the title Maximus was awarded to Valerius and Fabius, on Scipio Major not receiving a triumph, on Pompey’s youth at the time, and on Pompey’s desire to annoy people by triumphing in a carriage drawn by elephants. All these set Pompey’s demand in a poor light. Concluding the episode, Plutarch addresses the political realities behind Pompey’s demand:

It is obvious that Pompey easily could have entered the senate, if he had wished. But he didn’t want that, they say (ὡς λέγουσι), because he was seeking notoriety from something extraordinary (τὸ ἔνδοξον ἐκ τοῦ παραδόξου θηρώμενος). There would have been nothing startling about becoming a senator before the set time, but it was spectacular to triumph before becoming senator, and gained him popularity with the people, since even after the triumph he was still listed as a knight (14.9–11).

Clearly Plutarch elaborates his material not only to intensify the occasion, but to contrast the arrogance of Pompey’s claim and his politics of shock and demagoguery with the achievements of earlier Roman generals.²²

Plutarch’s raw material perhaps appears in *Apophthegmata regum* 203E. This is a three-part anecdote: Sulla gives Pompey the epithet Magnus, Pompey demands the triumph with his saying and Sulla acquiesces, and Servilius is first indignant, then approves. The tone of all three parts is positive, stressing Sulla’s and Servilius’ recognition of Pompey’s early greatness. These anecdotes appear to derive, like those discussed earlier, from a larger collection whose excerpts were taken directly from a historical source, or from a rough draft prepared by Plutarch for the *Pompey*. The fifteen Pompey anecdotes in the *Apophthegmata* appear to be in historical order, almost the same order as in the *Life*, with one major exception: item #10 on Lucullus’ thrushes appears at the beginning of

²² There is a parallel in Agesilaus’ putdown of Lysander, who had supported him as Sulla had supported Pompey, where again Plutarch comments that accommodation would have been possible (*Ages.* 7–8).

the *Pompey* (2.11–12), establishing early one aspect of his character.²³ If indeed they were taken from a *Pompey-hypomnema*, that draft must have still been in rough form, far from the finished product. For it is clear Plutarch has reworked the triumph anecdotal sequence in the final version of the *Life* to make what seemed wholly laudatory in the *Apophthegmata* markedly ambivalent: Pompey is indeed brilliant, but his thirst for glory appears extreme, far different from that of the great men of old, and liable to overthrow the traditional system of senatorial rule. His self-assertion inspires envy, and his extraordinary status is artificial.²⁴ This is masterful biographical technique, and depends for its interpretation on a thoughtful overall view of Pompey's career. Furthermore, one suspects that Plutarch even creatively elaborated the delivery of the saying itself in the *Life*. Unlike our other two versions, the *Life* states that Sulla did not hear Pompey, but observed the expressions of surprise on the bystanders, and only after inquiry what had been said, did he twice cry out, shocked by his audacity "Let him triumph!" Sulla's initial lack of attention in this version nicely captures Pompey's rise from obscurity to fame.²⁵

A third anecdote, that of Areius accompanying Octavian on his entry into Alexandria, similarly reveals the differences between the straightforward and univocal versions of the *Apophthegmata* (207AB) and *Precepts* (814D) and the more complex biographical context of *Antony* 80.1, but also has a significant reflex for Plutarch's contemporary world. In the *Apophthegmata*, Octavian is presented as a clement conqueror and a friend; in the *Precepts*, Areius as

23 The different order of #2 and 3, 6 and 7, and 13 and 14 is not significant chronologically.

24 Cf. also the discussion of *Pomp.* 22, his surrender of his public horse, in Stadter forthcoming. The notion of a "raw" collection of anecdotes might explain the puzzle raised by Pelling concerning Caesar's criticism of Pompey's orders at Pharsalia (*Apophth. reg.* 206E, *Caes.* 44.7–8, *Pomp.* 69.6–7; see Pelling 2002, 79–80). The *Apophthegmata regum* and *Pompey* are closer to each other in language and image than to *Caesar*. This is most easily explained if there was a raw collection of anecdotes, which Plutarch adapted differently for the three works. The two similar versions are probably closer to the raw form (and therefore Plutarch's source), while the version of *Caesar* would represent a reworking. I would place this raw collection prior to the draft for the individual *Lives* proposed by Pelling. Appian *BC* 2.79 (329–330) seems to use the same historical source for the anecdote (although he refers to Caesar's *Letters*), but the battlefield situation is different, and he notes the vulnerability of the standing soldiers to javelin throws. Plutarch uses a richer vocabulary (κυμαῖνον, ἀντεξόρησις, ἀμαυρῶσαι, καταψῦξαι in *Pomp.*; σύρραξις, συνεκκαίει, ἀναρριπιζόμενον in *Caes.*) and doubles synonyms (ἐνθουσιασμοῦ καὶ φορᾶς, πῆξαι καὶ καταψῦξαι in *Pomp.*, μετὰ δρόμου καὶ φορᾶς in *Caes.*)

25 Manipulation of anecdotes for rhetorical purposes was a standard part of the progymnasmata of the educator: cf. Theon *Progymnasmata*, pp. 96, line 18 to 106, line 3, on the *chreia*, and Beck 2003, referring to Hock and O'Neil. For Plutarch's invention of probable detail, see Pelling 1990.

valuable to the Greek community because an influential friend of the Roman conqueror, like Polybius and Panaetius. The two are complementary examples of right action by ruler and subject. In neither case is any identification offered of Areius as philosopher, adviser, or magistrate: he is presumed to be well-known. From the *Precepts*, it is clear that Plutarch not only approved of Areius' friendship with Octavian but saw him as a model for all Greek statesmen under Roman rule: through friendship with a powerful Roman, 'holding his hand and conversing', a Greek statesman could benefit his city. We can hardly doubt that Plutarch wanted to be one of those whose Roman friendships would benefit Greeks.²⁶ This contemporary context gives special force to his use of the anecdote at the end of *Antony*. However, the focus there is on Octavian as good ruler rather than on Areius. Octavian's friendly entry into Alexandria, his respect for the city, for its founder, and for Areius, are in marked contrast to Antony's entry into Ephesus, with its accompanying heavy taxation, violence, and oppression (*Ant.* 24). Areius' success in interceding for the city and its leaders is the opposite of the anguish and despair of Ephesus' leaders. Octavian is alert to the needs and fears of the city and its leaders; Antony is good-naturedly indifferent, focused on his own pleasures, until awakened to the true situation. The Areius scene calls attention to Octavian's clemency not only toward Alexandria but toward Antony and Cleopatra. He lamented their deaths, granted them honorable, even royal burials, and allowed Antony's children to grow up in his own household and intermarry with his family, so that Antony became an ancestor of the Julio-Claudian emperors as much as Octavian. Only Cleopatra's child Caesarion was killed by Octavian, on the advice of Areius. Plutarch offers no judgment: does he scorn Areius' harshness, or rather admire his practical wisdom? His quotation of Areius' adaptation of the words, 'many rulers are not a good thing,' from the famous harangue of Odysseus (*Il.* 2.204) suggests that he considered it a necessary decision. Antony and Cleopatra certainly are sympathetic figures, but Octavian, despite what appears an unattractive coolness, emerges as a better statesman and exemplar for Roman emperors.

It is time to draw together our conclusions. First this study confirms what is already well known, that no single version of an anecdote need give all the information Plutarch had available to him: we must piece together what he knew by considering all his versions.²⁷ Some versions may include detail invented to enhance the anecdote's meaning or effectiveness in its context. A

26 For Plutarch's own activity in this regard, see Stadter 2004.

27 For Octavian's address at Alexandria, the *Precepts* speak of a βῆμα, but only from *Antony* do we discover that the βῆμα was in the gymnasium. Cf. also the different versions of Epaminondas' trial (799E, 194A-B, *Pel.* 25.2-3, *De laud. ips.* 540DE) and Phocion and the moneylender (822E, 188A, *Phoc.* 9.1, *De vit. pud.* 533A).

proper analysis of Plutarch's technique requires close examination of all versions, not to establish priority, but to clarify the focus and import of each. The three works studied each have different audiences and goals, reflected in the manner in which the anecdotes are presented and by omission of certain items. For Plutarch anecdotes were discreet items which could be shifted from one category to another, permitting the formation of lists of anecdotes for different topics, or complex clusters which could be used in different contexts. The items of *Apophthegmata regum* are free of context, but have been selected for their positive value as *exempla*. Those of the *Precepts* are set in a rich rhetorical and argumentative context, with interpretive comments, and may be either positive or negative. Finally, the anecdotes of the *Lives* develop the interpretive possibilities of context much further, introducing nuances and ambivalences closely related to major themes and outcomes of the Life where they are found. They employ foreshadowing, authorial comment, historical background, and the contemporary context to create a multi-layered tapestry of meaning. The simple anecdote, culled from a historical text or an earlier collection and preserved in Plutarch's notes, becomes in the *Parallel Lives* a window into the ambivalences of human action and of moral decision.

Table of correspondences

Subject	<i>Political precepts</i>	<i>Apophthegmata of kings and commanders</i>	<i>Parallel Lives</i>	Other works by Plutarch
I. Anecdotes in <i>Precepts</i> , <i>Apophth. reg.</i> and <i>Life</i>				
1. Epaminondas' trial	799E	194A-B	<i>Pel.</i> 25. 2-3 (<i>Epam.</i> ?)	
2. Themistocles and Miltiades' trophy	800B	184F-185A	<i>Them.</i> 3.4-5 (<i>Thes.</i> 6.9)	<i>De prof. in virt.</i> 84BC
3. Pericles and the Peiraeus	803A	186C	<i>Per.</i> 8.7 (<i>Dem.</i> 1.2)	
4. Pompey asks for a triumph	804E-F	203E	<i>Pomp.</i> 14.1-5	
5. Scipio's rise, and Cato's comment	804F-805A	200A	<i>CMaj.</i> 27 (<i>Scipio Min.</i> ? <i>Mar.</i> 12.2)	
6. Themistocles to Simonides	807B	185CD	<i>Them.</i> 5.6	<i>De vit. pud.</i> 534E
7. Agesilaus intercedes for Nicias	807F-808A	191B	<i>Ages.</i> 13.5	<i>Ap. Lac.</i> 209E-F
8. Antalcidas' retort	810F	192BC	<i>Ages.</i> 31.7	<i>Ap. Lac.</i> 217D
9. Phocion retorts to Demades	811A	188A	<i>Phoc.</i> 9.8	
10. Themistocles on the Athenians	812B	185E	<i>Them.</i> 22.1	<i>De laud. ips.</i> 541D

Table of correspondences (Continued)

Subject	<i>Political precepts</i>	<i>Apophthegmata of kings and commanders</i>	<i>Parallel Lives</i>	Other works by Plutarch
11. Areius and Augustus	814D	207AB	<i>Ant.</i> 80.1	
12. Pompey and Sthenno	815EF	203CD	<i>Pomp.</i> 10.11–12	
13. Cato refuses a statue	820B	198EF	<i>CMaj.</i> 19.6	
14. Phocion and his moneylender	822E	188A	<i>Phoc.</i> 9.1	<i>De vit. pud.</i> 533A
II. Anecdotes not in <i>Life</i>				
15. Pericles: friend 'to the altar'	808A	186C		<i>De vit. pud.</i> 531C
16. Epaminondas refuses Pelopidas	808E	192EF	(<i>Epam.</i> ?)	
17. Aristides' and Themistocles' agreement	809B	186B		
18. Pericles reminds himself	813C	186C		
19. Cyrus' nose	821E	172E		<i>De aud. et am.</i> 45A, 56D

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The Moral Interplay Between Plutarch's *Political Precepts* and *Life of Demosthenes*

Craig Cooper

There are a number of points of contact between Plutarch's *Lives* and *Political Precepts* (*Moralia* 798a–825f). The common material is largely anecdotal; in some cases the anecdotes, which are scattered across several *Lives* (*Nicias*, *Alcibiades*, *Demetrius*), are collected together in the essay (*Mor.* 799d–800a) to illustrate a single theme, such as the easy-going nature of the Athenian assembly, which itself forms part of a larger discussion by Plutarch on the need of the statesman to understand the character of his audience. In *Political Precepts* the easy-going reaction of the Athenian assembly to Cleon's request for an adjournment or to the escape of Alcibiades' quail is contrasted with the sullen reaction that one can expect of a Carthaginian or Theban assembly. In this particular section of the essay Plutarch has collected together from several different sources a variety of anecdotes that he would later use for different ends in the *Lives*. Cleon's request in the *Life of Nicias* (9. 5), for instance, speaks less about the character of the Athenian assembly and more about Cleon's own buffoonery. It serves as an addendum to Plutarch's account of the Pylos affair, where Cleon's boast that he would return to Athens within twenty days with Spartan prisoners in tow was met with laughter and incredulity, because, as Plutarch adds, the Athenians "were wont to treat his levity and madness as a pleasant joke". In another section of *Political Precepts*, (*Mor.* 802e–804c), this time dealing with the statesman's oratory, Plutarch has instead excerpted a single Peripatetic source on rhetoric, a large part of which he would later reproduce in his *Life of Demosthenes* (9–10). But again there are differences in details and emphasis between the two accounts that suggest different uses being made of the same material. Specifically, in the *Life* Plutarch supplements his Peripatetic source with material from Demetrius of Phalerum, whom Plutarch does not seem to have consulted when composing the essay but whose treatment of Demosthenes would help shape significantly the particular emphasis taken by Plutarch in the *Life*. A reference in *Political Precepts* (815d) to recent troubles under Domitian may suggest that the essay was written soon after Domitian's death (A.D. 96) and thus before Plutarch came to compose *Demosthenes-Cicero*, which was fifth in the series of *Parallel Lives*. If that is the case, we have an opportunity to see how Plutarch reuses material put together for a moral essay in a *Life*.

Moral Interplay

In his survey of recent works on the *Moralia* James Barthelme comments that he finds “it difficult to discuss the *Moralia* without the *Lives*.” (61) He adds that the traditional division into these two categories suggests that “Plutarch had two different, discrete programs: biographical and ethical.” (61) As Barthelme points out, the trend in recent scholarship has been to see Plutarch’s work “as the reflection of a single energy and purpose,” (62) a point well illustrated in recent works, like Tim Duff’s *Plutarch’s Lives: exploring Virtue and Vice*, where we find many references to the *Moralia* in his broader discussion of the *Lives*. Before turning to the specific question of this paper, the relationship between *Demosthenes* and *Political Precepts*, I wish to discuss more broadly the kind of moral interplay between this essay and the *Lives* and try to suggest that *Political Precepts* serves as a precursor to Plutarch’s wider project the *Lives*. To this end I will need to discuss the thorny problem of chronology.

Political Precepts is addressed to Menemachus, a young man who intends to enter local politics. Since, he “has not had the time to observe the philosopher’s life openly in political deeds and public contests and become a spectator of *paradeigmata*, accomplished not in word but in action,” Plutarch has provided, at Menemachus’ request, a wide variety of historical *paradeigmata*. These *paradeigmata* are necessary since Plutarch does not want to be one of those philosophers who teaches but gives no advice, like those who trim their lamps but failed to pour in oil (798B). Plutarch’s comments suggest that for him political life is grounded in philosophy and the examples he includes, like oil in a lamp, allow his moral advice to shine brightly. Ideally, Menemachus should have had time personally to observe the philosopher’s life in the open action of politics and become, as it were, a spectator of contemporary examples; but since he cannot Plutarch will provide him with historical examples that illustrate the philosophical principles on which political life should be based.

The ideas contained in the opening address to Menemachus are reiterated and expanded on in a number of the programmatic statements to the *Lives*. At the beginning of prologue to *Timoleon-Aemilius Paulus* (1–2), Plutarch remarks that he began work on the *Lives* for others but has continued for his own sake, using *historia* (historical research) as a mirror to adorn and conform his life to the virtues of those men (found in history).¹ The result is, as Plutarch states, like spending time together and living with each man; as his “guest” (ἐπιξενούμενον), he “invites” (ὑποδεχόμενοι) and welcomes each one in turn through his *historia* and thereby observes carefully how great and what sort of

1 As Duff (p. 32) notes, the mirror image sets Plutarch’s work in the traditional of moralizing literature.

man he was, taking from his deeds the most important and finest things to know.² Presumably this is what Menemachus would have done had he the time to observe the philosopher's life in political action, and indeed this is precisely the advice that Plutarch advocates in *Progress in Virtue* (85d) for the young man seeking to improve his character. There Plutarch notes that such a youth finds no greater pleasure than being in the presence of good and honourable men, offering his home and table to them. Later in the prologue to *Timoleon-Aemilius Paulus* (4), Plutarch comments that his study of *historia* and his habit of writing, through which he has "invited" (ὑποδεχομένους) into his soul records of the noblest and distinguished men, has prepared him to repulse and repel what is mean and malicious, by directing his attention to the finest *paradeigmata*. According to Plutarch, historical examples, like the very presence of good men in one's house, can be morally efficacious.

Menemachus should, we are told, be a spectator, and this metaphor is also picked up in the *Lives*; the reader becomes, as it were, a spectator of the examples recorded in Plutarch's *Lives* (Duff, 38, 41). In the prologue (1–2) to *Pericles* Plutarch compares the affect that great works of art and virtuous deeds have on their respective spectators.³ Deeds of virtue implant in those who "have done historical research" (ἱστορήσασιν) "a zeal and desire" (ζῆλόν τινα καὶ προθυμίαν) to imitate; but in the case of other works of art "an impulse" (ὄρμη) does not immediately follow the admiration of what has been created (1.4). Though a work of art may bring delight, it does not necessarily follow that the one who has crafted it is worth emulating. Such things do not benefit "the viewers" (τοὺς θεωμένους), because, as Plutarch states, they "create no zeal (in the spectator) to imitate, or arouse a desire and impulse to equal them" (πρὸς ἃ μιμητικὸς οὐ γίνεται ζῆλος οὐδὲ ἀνάδοσις κινουῖσα προθυμίαν καὶ ὄρμην ἐπὶ τὴν ἕξομοίωσιν). By contrast, virtue immediately disposes one both

2 By *historia* Plutarch may mean research: Duff, 33. Elsewhere Plutarch uses the word in that sense; see *Thes.* 1.2; *Per.* 2.5, 13.16. In *Thes.* 1.1–2, *historia* is twice used by Plutarch, first in the sense of history – "in the writing of *Parallel Lives*, now that I have gone through a period of time accessible to probable reason and the basis of a *historia* composed of facts" – and second in the sense of research – "since I have published an account of the lawgiver Lycurgus and the king Numa, I thought it not unreasonable to go back further to Romulus, now that I have gotten closer to his times in my *historia*." See also Duff, 18 and Wardman, 5.

3 Plutarch is here thinking of statues as later (2.1) he refers to Zeus at Olympia created by Pheidias and Hera at Argos by Polycleitus. Elsewhere Plutarch compares himself to a painter (*Alex.* 1.13), who express the character of his subject through the face and eyes. The metaphor of the portrait painter is used again in *Cimon* 2.4–5 to justify including a hero's blemishes in his *bios*. This suggests that early on in the series Plutarch was prepared to include not just the finest examples, as he suggests in *Timoleon*, but their opposite. Later in the production, as in the *Demetrius-Antony*, he goes much further to include whole *Lives* of bad men. On this last point see Duff, 45–49.

to admire the deeds and emulate the doers (2.2; cf. Duff, 34–45). According to Plutarch, the good actively stirs one to itself and immediately implants “an active impulse” (πρακτικὴν ὀρμὴν), “fashioning the spectator’s character” (ἡθοιοῦν τὸν θεατὴν), not so much by imitation as “by historical investigation of the deed, providing him with a choice” (τῇ ἱστορίᾳ τοῦ ἔργου τὴν προαίρεσιν παρεχόμενον) (2.4). Examples of virtuous actions from the past, thus, have a “character-changing effect”, producing in the spectator a moral choice (Duff, 39). *Prohairesis* is a fundamental aspect of the character of the Plutarchean hero (Wardman, 107–114). It is also the foundation of any political action and thus the first piece of advice offered Menemachus (798c–799a).

Plutarch (798c) advises him that what must “underlie political activity” (ὑποκείμενον πολιτείας), as a firm and strong foundation, is “choice that arises from judgement and reason (ἡ προαίρεσις ἀρχὴν ἔχουσα κρίσιν καὶ λόγον) and “not from excitement aroused by vain glory, contention or a lack of other activities” (μὴ πτοίαν ὑπὸ δόξης κενῆς ἢ φιλονεικίας τινὸς ἢ πράξεων ἑτέρων ἀπορίας). Men who throw themselves into public affairs, because they have no have no personal business worth serious attention, “treat political activity as a pastime” (τῇ πολιτείᾳ διαγωγῆς χρώμενοι). Many, “who have latched on to public affairs by chance” (ἀπὸ τύχης ἀψάμενοι τῶν κοινῶν) and have had their fill of it, cannot easily escape (798d). Such men, Plutarch notes, bring the greatest discredit on public life “by their change of mind and sense of distress” (τῷ μετανοεῖν καὶ ἀσχάλλειν), whenever they fall into disgrace, after hoping for glory, and whenever they are drawn into affairs that involve dangers and disorders, after expecting to be feared by others (798de). “But the man who begins his political life from conviction and reasoning that it most befits him and is the finest undertaking” (ὁ δ’ ὡς μάλιστα προσῆκον ἑαυτῷ καὶ κάλλιστον ἔργον ἀπὸ γνώμης καὶ λογισμῶ τὰ κοινὰ πράσσειν ἀρξάμενος) is not frightened by any such things nor “overturned in his conviction” (ἀναστρέφεται τὴν γνώμην). For Plutarch, then, political life is a noble enterprise but it must emanate from a rational moral choice that is firm and steadfast and does not rest on fleeting glory or “contention”, φιλονεικία; as a passion φιλονεικία is related to φιλοτιμία (Duff, 86; Wardman, 117),⁴ a character trait which Plutarch attributes to many of the heroes of his *Lives* (Wardman, 115–124; Russell, 106). Plutarch’s warning about the dangers of a change of mind brought on by passion is illustrated in the actions of some of the heroes in the *Lives*.

4 In *Phil.* 3.1 we are told that Philopoemen’s *philotimia* was not altogether free of *philoneikia* or *orgê*; cf. *Phil-Flam.* 1.3, where Titus’ errors stemmed from *philotimia* and Philopoemen’s from *philoneikia*. Fabius’ increasing opposition to Scipio grew out of his *philotimia* and *philoneikia* (*Fab.* 25.4). On *philotimia* see Wardman, 115–124.

Plutarch criticizes Timoleon for abandoning political life after assassinating his brother, driven, as he was, to despondency by the *loidoria* of his detractors and the reproaches of his mother (5.3). Pausing to comment Timoleon's decision (6.1–4), Plutarch states that

in this way judgments (αἱ κρίσεις), unless they acquire from reason and philosophy a certainty and strength for the actions, are swayed and easily carried away by chance praise and blame, driven from their proper reasoning. For not only must the action be noble and just, so it seems, but the judgment on which it is based must be steadfast and unchangeable so that we act in a way that is fitting . . . For the change of mind (ἡ μετένοια) makes even a noble action disgraceful, but the choice that begins from knowledge and reasoning (ἡ δ' ἐξ ἐπιστήμης ὠρμημένη καὶ λογισμοῦ προαίρεσις) does not change even when the actions fail.

This last point is reiterated in the *synkrisis* to *Timoleon-Aemilius* (2.11). There Plutarch comments that though Timoleon's action toward his brother was "noble" (γενναῖα), he could not "resist his passion through reasoning" (ἀντέσχε τῷ λογισμῷ πρὸς τὸ πάθος), but "being made low by a change of mind and grief" (μετανοία καὶ λύπη ταπεινωθεῖς), for twenty years avoided the bema or the agora. This is precisely the connection between a change of mind and passion articulated in *Political Precepts*. In Timoleon's case, the reasoning on which his noble action was based was overturned by his passion and he himself became ignoble by changing his mind.⁵

By contrast Plutarch praises Demosthenes, both because his opposition to Macedonia was a noble choice but also because he was steadfast in that choice from the beginning of his political career until his death. In language that echoes *Political Precepts* and anticipates *Timoleon* Plutarch notes that Demosthenes chose "a noble foundation for his political activity (τῆς πολιτείας καλὴν ὑπόθεσιν) the defence of the Greeks against Philip" (12.3). Plutarch (13.1) takes issues with Theopompus' assessment that Demosthenes was "unstable in character" (ἀβέβαιον τῷ τρόπῳ) and unable "to abide" (ἐπιμένειν) by the same policies or men. It is evident to Plutarch that once Demosthenes "from the beginning of his political career" (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς τῶν πραγμάτων) settled on a faction and a position in political life, he guarded this until the end, not only by not changing his mind in his lifetime but forgoing his life in order not to change (13.1). This does not mean that Plutarch was uncritical of Demosthenes. As he notes later in that same chapter of the *Life* (13.4), had Demosthenes the courage and incorruptibility to match the ambition of his underlying principles and the nobility of his speeches, he would have been ranked with Cimon, Thucydides and Pericles. Here Plutarch repeats a criticism raised by Demetrius of Phalerum, who had noted that unlike Phocion Demosthenes was not worthy of trust under arms nor altogether

5 This I think is the sense of the participle ταπεινωθεῖς, contrasted as it is with γενναῖα.

inaccessible to bribes (*Dem.*14.2 = fr. 156 Fortenbaugh & Schütrumpf; cf. Cooper 2000, 235). This meant, as Plutarch adds, that Demosthenes was most capable of praising the noble qualities of his ancestors but not equal to imitating them (14.2),⁶ something which Menemachus is advised, however, to do (800d & 814b).⁷ Despite the criticism, Plutarch sees Demosthenes' *prohairesis*, his moral choice to oppose Philip, as noble, and it remains noble because of his unwavering commitment not to change. The fact that Demosthenes chose death, instead of changing his mind, confirms that his choice failed but, unlike Timoleon, his choice rested on knowledge and reasoning, precisely what Plutarch advises Menemachus in *Political Precepts*.

It is clear from these few comments how much *Political Precepts* and the *Lives* move from the same philosophical perspective. The examples of the past should guide one's actions in the present. Though Plutarch warns Menemachus of the limitations of local office under Roman rule (813e; see Jones 1971, 133) and of the dangers of urging the people to imitate certain deeds of their ancestors that might swell them with pride (814ab), nonetheless the local statesman should act by the same moral conviction as the great heroes of the past. It has been suggested that Plutarch's discussion of *prohairesis* in *Political Precepts* should be seen as "a rough and ready guide to the *Lives*" (Wardman, 112), and perhaps it was here that he began formulating ideas that would be developed more fully in the *Lives*.

Chronology

This leads to the question of chronology. At the very least we can say that *Political Precepts* was roughly contemporary with the *Lives* (Duff, 293). The first ten pairs of *Lives*, which begin with *Epaminondas-Scipio* and conclude with *Pericles-Fabius* as tenth (*Per.* 2.5), were likely published between 96 and 114 (Stadter 1989, xxix; cf. Stadter 1984, 358–359; Jones 1966, 69–70). Jones (1966, 70–73) suggests a start date of 99 for the new undertaking, the year of the first consulship of Sosius Senecio, to whom the collection was dedicated, though I suppose we cannot rule out Sosius' second consulship of 107. My sense is that *Political Precepts* was published while Plutarch was still researching

6 It is not clear whether this is Plutarch's conclusion or Demetrius', but Wehrli fr. 133, Jacoby *FGrH* 228 F 19 and Fortenbaugh & Schütrumpf fr. 156 include it as part of the fragment.

7 In the later passage (814b) Plutarch suggests that only certain examples of the past, such as the decree of amnesty after the Thirty, should be praised; others, like Marathon and Plataea, are better reserved for schools. But by recounting proper examples the statesman can mould the character of his contemporaries, and by emulating these equal one's ancestors.

the fifth pair in the series, *Demosthenes-Cicero* (*Dem.* 3.1). A reference in *Political Precepts* (815d) to troubles “recently” (ἔνωγχος) suffered by the Rhodians under Domitian may suggest that the essay was written soon after Domitian’s death in 96 (Fowler, 157), when Plutarch was free to speak more openly, but how far we can press the meaning of ἔνωγχος is an open question.⁸ Mention of the essay in *How to Profit by One’s Enemies* (*Mor.* 86c) indicates that *Political Precepts* had already been circulating for some time, when Plutarch came to compose that essay. *How to Profit* is addressed to Cornelius Pulcher, who was holding an administrative post at the time, likely the governorship of Cilicia, which he held no later than 114 (Bowersock, 270; cf. Jones 1966, 72). Thus sometime between 97 and 114 Plutarch published *Political Precepts*. He notes to Pulcher that he omitted to include in *How to Profit* what he had written in the *Political Precepts*, since Pulcher has “often” (πολλάκις) had that book at hand. How long before 114 Pulcher came into possession of *Political Precepts* is another question, but Plutarch’s words seem to imply a few years at least, perhaps by 110.

Scholars have noted a similarity in content between *Political Precepts* and *Old Men in Public Affairs* and have suggested a common date of composition (Mittelhaus, 1–8; Ziegler, 77; Bowersock, 27). In *Old Men* (783 b) Plutarch refers to his own old age and its attendant maladies that could easily provide him with the excuses needed to avoid political contests,⁹ but he assures Euphanes, to whom this essay is addressed, that he will not abandon political life; and in words that recall what he would say about Demosthenes, he “will abide by the choice he made from the beginning when he made the goal of living, living honourably”. According to the accepted date of Plutarch’s birth c. 45, this should mean that Plutarch wrote *Old Men* not before 105, when he turned sixty, and Jones (1966, 73) has suggested sometime after 110 for its composition. I would think, however, any time between 105 and 110 is possible, particularly if we can push Plutarch’s date of birth back to c. 40.¹⁰ Plutarch could refer to Cicero as γέρων, when he was 63 years of age in 43

8 On the difficulty of ἔνωγχος in fixing chronology see Jones (1966), 70. Earlier scholars have dated *Precepts* to late in Plutarch’s *Life*, between 115–120. See Mittelhaus, 29; cf. Ziegler, 77–78.

9 At 792 f he notes that he is older (πρεσβύτερον), having served Apollo many Pythiads, which according to Jones (1966, 73), “if it refers to his priesthoods, might suggest a date of 100 or later.”

10 From *Mor.* 391 e we learn that Plutarch was νέος in 66 or 67, which could, as Jones notes (1971, 13 n. 2), signify an age as great as 30. The date of 66/67 is derived from Plutarch’s reference (385b) in the same work (*de E*) to Nero’s visit to Greece, likely in 67, when he was studying mathematics with Ammonius in the Academy (cf. 391e), perhaps at age 20. See Ziegler, 4–5; Barrow, xii.

B.C. (*Cic.* 46.1), and it is not inconceivable that Plutarch would think of himself in similar terms in his early sixties.¹¹

Plutarch tells Euphanes that he has “several times” (ἐκάστοτε) considered old men politics, and one obvious occasion would be his preparation of the *Demosthenes-Cicero* pair. Both their careers significantly came to an end in their early sixties. Plutarch’s comment about Cicero being γέρον is contrasted with the youthful Caesar (νέος; cf. 46.2 ὁ νεανίας) who duped Cicero in to helping Caesar politically, only to realize too late that he had destroyed himself and betrayed the people’s freedom. Demosthenes himself is presented by Plutarch as a bitter old man in exile, and is described as trying to dissuade the young men (νεανίσκους), who came to visit him in exile, from entering public life (*Dem.* 26.5). At the time of the Harpalus affair Demosthenes was likewise in his early sixties (*Hyp.* 5.21–22), and though Plutarch does not directly say so, the fact that he presents Demosthenes expressly conversing with young men suggests that he also conceives of Demosthenes as γέρον. It seems to me that research on these two *Lives* would have furnished Plutarch an occasion to turn his thoughts more generally to old men in politics.

Indeed there is a significant point of contact between *Old Men* (795d) and *Demosthenes* (6.4). Both tell the story of how a young Demosthenes failed in his first address to the assembly but received encouragement of sorts from an old man. In the essay, the old man, who is said to have actually heard Pericles speak, compared Demosthenes’ natural ability to the great statesman (ἐκείνῳ τάνδρῳ προσεικώς τὴν φύσιν) and suggested that he was being unjustly condemned. In the *Life* Plutarch provides more details but changes significantly the emphasis of the anecdote. The old man is Eunomus the Thriasian, who, however, does not encourage Demosthenes in the manner advocated by Plutarch in *Old Men* with words that are meant not to discourage but gently encourage the disheartened youth; he actually “upbraids” Demosthenes (ἐπετίμησεν) for betraying himself through his lack of courage, “softness” (μαλακίας), and for failing to face the crowd boldly and prepare his body for the contest, though he had a style of speech most like Pericles. The difference in emphasis can partly be explained by the context. In *Old Men* the anecdote, one among three, is meant to illustrate how an elder statesman can deal gently with a young man who fails in his first political address. But in *Demosthenes* it has been augmented in such a way as to illustrate how the orator suffered from certain physical ailments that adversely affected his speech. In the *Life* Plutarch prefaces the anecdote by commenting that Demosthenes had “so it seems, a certain weakness of voice (φωνῆς ἀσθένεια), indistinctness of speech (γλώττης ἀσάφεια), shortness of breath (πνεύματος κολοβότης) that disturbed the sense of his words by ripping apart the periods” (6.3). Plutarch has himself

11 Vespasian could think of himself as senex at 61 (Suet. *Vesp.* 12). See Bowersock, 270.

deduced this (ὡς ἕοικες) from another source and attributed those observations to Eunomus, who criticizes Demosthenes for his lack of courage, softness and lack of physical preparation. According to Plutarch (11.1), it was Demetrius of Phalerum who had noted that Demosthenes had an “indistinctness” (τὴν ἀσάφειαν) and “lisping in his voice” (τραυλότητα τῆς γλώττης), which he forced out and corrected through reciting speeches with pebbles in his mouth (fr. 137; cf. fr. 135). Demetrius also seems to have described various other exercises used by Demosthenes to prepare his body for the rhetorical fray (frs. 135c, 137), and to have characterized either Demosthenes’ style of speech (fr. 137: τὸ πλάσμα καὶ μαλακόν), delivery (fr. 134: ὑποκριτὴν ... εἰς τὸ μαλακώτερον) or shoulder movements (fr. 135C: τὸν ὤμον μαλακῶς κινῶν) as soft. “Softness” is the criticism that Plutarch has Eunomus direct against the youthful Demosthenes.

It seems, then, that Plutarch has significantly modified the anecdote from its presentation in the essay with new material that he derived from Demetrius of Phalerum. My suspicion is that Plutarch was still working on *Demosthenes*, when he came to compose both *Old Men* and *Political Precepts* in or around 110. The latter, as I argue below, shows signs that Plutarch’s research on Demosthenes was incomplete at the time he offered his advice to Menemachus. Information appears in *Demosthenes* that would have been wholly appropriate for the essay and should have been included like other common material had it been known. As yet, it seems, Plutarch had not come across or made use of Demetrius of Phalerum.

Pelling (1979 = 2002, 2–11) has argued convincingly that the later Roman *Lives* of *Pompey*, *Caesar*, *Cato Minor*, *Antony*, *Crassus* and *Brutus* were prepared, though not necessarily published, simultaneously, and produced much later than either *Lucullus* and *Cicero*, both of which seem less knowledgeable and less rich in narrative detail about the period than these later *Lives*.¹² There are details in these later *Lives* that should have been, had they been known to Plutarch, included in *Cicero* but are not. Plutarch had

12 *Alexander* is coupled with *Caesar* which refers (*Cae.* 35.2) to *Pompey* in such a way (in the future) to suggest that a draft of that *Life* was well under way; likewise the cross reference in *Brutus* (9.9) to *Caesar* again suggests that Plutarch may have had a draft of *Caesar* done. All this suggests, as Pelling (2002, 8–9) argues, that Plutarch published these Roman *Lives* in quick succession. *Nicias-Crassus* was thus published shortly after *Alexander-Caesar*. On cross-references in the *Lives* see Stoltz. Such cross-references suggested to Mewaldt (pp. 567–568) simultaneous composition and publication of final drafts, which is refuted by Stoltz (pp. 63–68) and rejected by Pelling, who rightly argues, that Plutarch prepared groups of *Lives* simultaneously, but worked on the final drafts individually, publishing them in quick succession. This is the sense of *Thest.* 1.1, which indicates clearly that Plutarch published the *Theseus-Romulus* shortly after *Lycurgus-Numa*.

discovered, Pelling argues, a new rich source of narrative material for these later *Lives*, perhaps Asinius Pollio. Something similar may have happened in the case of his research on Demosthenes.

Other sets of *Lives*, like *Lycurgus-Numa*, *Theseus-Romulus* and *Themistocles-Camillus*, also seemed to have been prepared together and then published in quick succession (Jones 1966, 66–67; Pelling 2002, 7; Mewaldt).¹³ A cross reference to *Demosthenes* in *Theseus* (27.8) suggests that this group came out after *Demosthenes-Cicero*, which was fifth in the series of parallel *Lives* (*Dem.* 3.1), and *Cimon-Lucullus* seems to have appeared even earlier in the series (Jones, 1966, 68; Pelling 2002, 2; Blamire, 3). *Cimon-Lucullus* is among the first four pair of *Lives* which are devoted to generals,¹⁴ about whom Plutarch had a good deal of ready material to draw on from memory (Jones 1966, 66–68; Stadter 1989, xxvii–xxix).¹⁵ But the *Lives* of Demosthenes and Cicero, though a natural pair, whose rhetorical styles had certainly been compared by earlier writers, like Caecilius Caleacte, may have required further research on Plutarch's part, particularly if he wanted to give them a greater historical treatment than had been done in the past (Cooper 2004b, 39–45; cf. Stadter 1984, 359). This, in fact, seems to be the implication of Plutarch's opening comments to the pair, where he admits that he intends for his fifth book to examine the natures and dispositions of Demosthenes and Cicero as they are revealed from their deeds and political careers (*Dem.* 3.1), but he notes (2.1), for one undertaking a narrative (σύντοξις) and *historia* (ἱστορία) assembled from readings not at hand or at home but in many foreign countries and scattered among different owners, it really is necessary first and foremost to live in a city that is famous, fond of the liberal arts and populous, in order to have a wealth of all sorts of books and learn through hearsay and personal enquiry about all those details which have escaped writers but have

13 Comments at the beginning of *Theseus* (1.1) indicates clearly that *Lycurgus-Numa* had just been published, and Jones suggests, based on the opening words of *Themistocles* (Θεμιστοκλεῖ δὲ) that *Themistocles-Camillus* was published simultaneously with *Theseus-Romulus*. Contradictory cross-references (*Camillus* 33.10 cites *Romulus*, which is earlier; *Theseus* 1.4 and *Romulus* 21.1 *Numa*, which is earlier, but *Numa* 9.15 and 12.13 *Camillus*, which is later) pose no problem, if we consider that the three pairs were prepared together but published in quick succession.

14 On Plutarch's choice of heroes see Geiger 1981; Stadter 1984, 358–359.

15 On Plutarch's wide range of readings see Ziegler, 277–291; Stadter 1965, 125–140 and 1989, xlv; Russell, 42–62; Geiger 1985, 58–62; Hamilton, xlix–lv. In preparation for writing a *Life* or group of *Lives*, Plutarch's usual method of research was to read through a number of sources at once and then follow one source for the basic articulation of his narrative, drawing from memory for additional details, rather than consulting his other sources again or any notes he may have had taken. Stadter 1965, 138; 1989, xlv–li; Pelling 2002, 19–26; Hamilton, xlix–lii; Frost, 66–67; Gomme, 78–81.

won a more conspicuous assurance in the safety of men's memory, and in so doing produce a work not deficient in many necessary details.

The word σύνταξις is regularly used by Polybius (1.21.10; 3.105.7; 3.118.12) to denote the composition of a history, and this is clearly the sense Plutarch has in mind here when he connects it with ἱστορία.¹⁶ Despite the limitations he faced in Chaeronea, he sought to produce a historical narrative full of details that had eluded others which he himself had culled from his own readings and learned through hearsay.¹⁷ He concludes his account of Demosthenes (*Dem.* 30.4) by telling Sosius that “now you have the *Life* (*bios*) of Demosthenes from the sources which I have read or heard about,” and opens the *synkrisis* (1.1) by commenting that “these are the incidents worth mentioning found recorded (ἱστορουμένων) about Demosthenes and Cicero.” It would seem, then, that with this pair Plutarch needed to do additional research in order to produce the kind of historical investigation that he desired for the two *Lives*, and in the course of his readings discovered a source on Demosthenes that he had not appropriated for either *Old Men* or *Political Precepts*.¹⁸

Political Precepts and *Demosthenes*

In chapters 5–8 of *Political Precepts* Plutarch turns specifically to question of statesman's speech and here we find considerable overlap with *Demosthenes* 7–11, a part of the *Life* that deals most extensively with Demosthenes' style of oratory. In chapter six of the essay (802 ef) Plutarch advises Menemachus that a statesman's speech must not be “theatrical” (θεατρικός). Though this is a feature identified by Demetrius of Phalerum (*Dem.* 9.4–5 = fr. 135A; cf. frs. 135 B & C) about of Demosthenes' own delivery,¹⁹ Plutarch seems not to be aware of this when he wrote the essay. But he is aware of the criticism

16 My interpretation of the passage follows that of Duff, 23. But Jones (1971, 82.) suggests that here “Plutarch appears to disclaim for his work the status of formal history, made as a result of systematic reading and inquiry”.

17 In *Demosthenes* there are three possible examples: Demosthenes' subterranean study which Plutarch tells us was preserved in his own time (7.3); the meaning of the Thermodon river in the Sibylline oracle (19.2) and the story of the soldier and Demosthenes' statue which is said to have taken place a short time before Plutarch took up residency in Athens (31.1). See Holden, xi.

18 Plutarch seems not to have used, as he does for the later Roman *Lives* of *Pompey*, *Caesar*, *Cato Minor*, *Antony*, *Crassus* and *Brutus*, a main historical source for the basic articulation of his narrative. But he did consult Cicero's *Brutus*, his *De consiliis suis*, speeches and letters and perhaps some of his philosophical works. See Moles, 28–31; Gudeman.

19 See Cooper 2000, 229–234; 2004a, 151–160.

raised by Demosthenes' contemporary Pytheas, who noted that Demosthenes' speech smelt of the lamp wick and "of a sophistical exactness with its bitter arguments and periods precisely measured by ruler and compass" (σοφιστικῆς περιεργίας ἐνθυσμήμασι πικροῖς καὶ περιόδοις πρὸς κανόνα καὶ διαβήτην ἀπηκριβωμέναις). In the essay Plutarch presents two extremes that must be avoided by the statesman: on the one hand, a theatrical style of oratory which is intended for flowery show, and on the other, carefully crafted oratory, like Demosthenes', which shows shrewdness, subtlety, and speech that is spoken fluently, artistically or distributively. In the *Life* (8.3), Pytheas' criticism that Demosthenes' oratory smelt of the lamp wick forms part of a longer discussion of the toil and preparation that went into Demosthenes speech making in his subterranean study (8.2) and is specifically connected (εἰς τοῦτο) with his frequent refusal to speak ἐπὶ καιροῦ, "at the moment".²⁰ There is no comment about Demosthenes' sophistical precision, as we find in the essay; this, or at least a modified form of this, is mentioned in a different context: Demosthenes' first disastrous address to the assembly (6.3). There Plutarch comments that Demosthenes' "speech seemed to be confused by periods and tortured too bitterly and immoderately by arguments" (τοῦ λόγου συγκεχύσθαι ταῖς περιόδοις καὶ βεβασανίσθαι τοῖς ἐνθυσμήμασι πικρῶς ἄγαν καὶ κατακόρως δοκοῦντος). But, as we noted above, the Eunomus anecdote that follows has been modified to include information derived from Demetrius of Phalerum about Demosthenes' speech impediment, a source that Plutarch seems not to have used when he wrote his political essay. Demosthenes' bitter arguments are no longer due to his sophistical precision but to his difficulties in enunciating words because of a speech impediment that he has.

Next in chapter 7 of *Political Precepts* (803c) Plutarch turns to the question of derision and ridicule, which, he notes, has a place in the statesman's repertoire, if it is spoken not as insult or buffoonery but as reproach and disparagement. Such things, according to Plutarch, are especially commendable in rejoinders and replies. In this context Plutarch repeats two famous rejoinders by Demosthenes, one to a thief, who had mocked him for writing at night, and another to Demades, who had noted that Demosthenes' correction of him would be like a sow correcting Athena. The two anecdotes appear in the *Life* where they illustrate Plutarch's assertion that Demosthenes' rejoinders delivered παρὰ τὸν καιρὸν, "at the moment", were funny (11. 4–6), a statement intended to answer those who would argue that the written portions

20 At the end of the chapter (8.5) Plutarch comments that an indication of Demosthenes' lack of courage for extemporizing (πρὸς καιρὸν) was his failure to return the favour to Demades, who often rose and spoke off the cuff on Demosthenes' behalf, whenever he was interrupted by the clamour of the people. I suspect that this anecdote came from the same rhetorical work that Plutarch is drawing on for the Pytheas' anecdote.

of Demosthenes' speeches had much in them that was harsh and bitter (οἱ μὲν οὖν γεγραμμένοι τῶν λόγων ὅτι τὸ αὐστηρὸν πολὺ καὶ πικρὸν ἔχουσι). I suspect Plutarch is repeating here in the *Life* a debate found in some rhetorical source that discussed Demosthenes' dependency on written preparation and his apparent inability to extemporize.

At the end of the same chapter of *Political Precepts* (803e) Plutarch repeats the remark of Demosthenes' contemporary Polyeuctus, who once declared that Demosthenes was the "greatest orator" (ῥήτορα μέγιστον) but Phocion the "cleverest speaker" (δεινότατον λέγειν), "since his speech expressed the most sense in the fewest words" (πλεῖστον γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὸν λόγον ἐν λέξει βραχυτάτη νοῦν περιέχειν). The same anecdote is repeated in the *Life* (10.1–3) where Plutarch seems to suggest that it derived from Theophrastus. Plutarch begins chapter 10 of the *Life* by noting that "all would agree that in his use of natural talent Demades was invincible and in extemporization he excelled the studied preparation of Demosthenes." Then Plutarch repeats the opinion of Theophrastus that he found recorded in Ariston of Chios: when asked what sort of orator he considered Demosthenes, Theophrastus replied, "One worthy of the city"; what sort was Demades, one "Too good for the city".²¹ That Theophrastus' evaluation is meant to be understood in a rhetorical sense is clear from what Plutarch says next in the *Life*. Apparently in the same work, Theophrastus had also recorded Polyeuctus' declaration that Demosthenes was the greatest orator but Phocian the "most powerful speaker" (δυνατώτατον εἰπεῖν), "since he expressed the most sense in the fewest words" (πλεῖστον γὰρ ἐν βραχυτάτη λέξει νοῦν ἐκφέρειν).²² It would seem that in composing chapters 7 to 11 of the *Life* Plutarch drew on the same source he used in chapters 6–8 of *Political Precepts*, where he deals with the statesman's speech. That source, which was obviously a work on rhetoric, contained a number of anecdotes that compared Demosthenes' style of oratory in an unfavourable light to that of his contemporaries.

The repeated use of this phrase ἐπὶ καιροῦ or some variation of it in the context of those anecdotes, both in the *Life* and in the essay, suggests a work in which *kairos* was understood in a rhetorical sense (*Dem.* 8.3, 8.5, 9.3; 10.1; *Pol. Prec.* 803c, 804a). Plutarch's source might have been Theophrastus' *Περὶ καιρῶν*, which dealt not with political crises but with the opportune moments

21 Perhaps what followed in Theophrastus was the anecdote told at *Dem.* 8.5 that illustrates Demosthenes' inability to extemporize (πρὸς καιρὸν) against Demades' skill at it.

22 It is not clear whether Polyeuctus' opinion derived from Ariston or Theophrastus as Plutarch simply writes "and the same philosopher records". See Tritle, 23 and 165 n.35. It is clear that Plutarch is working from memory here as the wording is slightly different from what he writes in *Political Precepts*:

of speaking.²³ And indeed, in chapter 8 of the essay, where Plutarch advises Menemachus to address the people with deliberate and cautious speech, he refers to Pericles' habit of praying that no word foreign to the matter at hand would come out of his mouth (803f). Next he comments that one must nonetheless keep his speech nimble and in good practice for rejoinders, "since opportune moments (οἱ καιροί) come quickly, bringing many sudden developments in political *Life*". For this reason (διὸ), as they say, Demosthenes was inferior to many, drawing back and hesitating παρὰ καιρόν, "at the moment". Next, Plutarch refers to Theophrastus, who recorded how Alcibiades often hesitated and failed in speaking, as he searched for the right words and tried to arrange them into sentences. He, like Demosthenes, lacked the ability to extemporize.²⁴ In the *Life* (9.3) the implicit comparison suggested here in the essay between Pericles and Demosthenes is made more explicit. There we are told that Demosthenes sought to emulate and imitate Pericles' formality and bearing and his refusal to speak suddenly and on every topic that came along, being not at all attracted to a reputation won ἐν τῷ καιρῷ, "at the moment". It would seem, then, that Theophrastus is also behind Plutarch's comparison of Pericles and Demosthenes, as he was of Demades and Demosthenes, and perhaps of Phocian and Demosthenes. All three anecdotes were intended to comment in some way on Demosthenes' oratory.

There can be no question that Plutarch used Theophrastus for both the essay and the *Life*. The question is whether Plutarch consulted him first hand. As we have seen, Plutarch found Theophrastus' judgment of Demades and Demosthenes recorded in Ariston of Chios, who wrote a work entitled Πρὸς ῥήτορας. If the title is any indication of the content, the treatise was polemical, which seems to be the original intent behind many of the anecdotes included by Plutarch. The title is listed in a catalogue of Ariston's works preserved by Diogenes Laertius (7.163), who, however, cautions that Panaetius and Sosicrates considered only his letters genuine; all the other works they attributed to Ariston of Ceos, the Peripatetic (Cf. Diog. Laert. 1.16). This makes good sense and better explains why Theophrastus would have been

23 In fact the catalogue of Theophrastus' works preserved in Diogenes Laertius distinguishes two such works, a Πολιτικὸν πρὸς τοὺς καιροὺς (5.45) in four books and a Περί καιρῶν in two books (5.50), the latter being listed alongside other rhetorical works. Likewise, Demetrius of Phalerum is known to have written a treatise Περί καιροῦ, which may have been a rhetorical work rather than an ethical or political work. See Grube, 52. Contrast Tritle (23 and 165 n. 37) who suggests Theophrastus' *On Style*.

24 The story is repeated in *Alcibiades* (10.4), where, we are told that Theophrastus so characterized Alcibiades against Demosthenes' own claim in *Meidias* that Alcibiades was the cleverest speaker. I suspect that in his account Theophrastus had also compared Demosthenes to Alcibiades. On Plutarch's familiarity with Theophrastus see Titchener.

cited by Ariston. He was founded cited not in a work of a Stoic but of a Peripatetic. Either Plutarch was misinformed or mistaken about the identity of the Ariston in question, or at one point the text has become corrupted and must be changed from $\chi\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$ to $\chi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$.

One source that Plutarch used for the *Life of Demosthenes* but failed to make any use of in the essay, though we would have expected him to do so, was Demetrius of Phalerum. We have already seen how the Eunomus anecdote has been significantly modified with information that Plutarch derived from Demetrius. At 9. 4 of the *Life* (Demetrius fr. 135A) Plutarch quotes from Eratosthenes, Demetrius and the comic poets to show that those speeches which were spoken by Demosthenes had more courage and boldness than those written by him. These notices appear with minor variations in ps.–Plutarch (845a), Photius (*Bibl.* 493a 41 = fr. 135B) and *PSI* 144 (fr. 135C), where it seems clear that the Demetrian material was derived through Eratosthenes, possibly his work, *On Ancient Comedy*.²⁵ None of this material, however, is included in the section of *Political Precepts*, where Plutarch discusses the importance of extemporization; it is added in the *Life* in order to mitigate the criticism that Demosthenes' was weak in that area. Finally Plutarch cites Demetrius directly at the beginning of chapter of 11 (fr. 137) for a description of the exercises used by Demosthenes to overcome his indistinctness of speech and lispings. Some of these exercises were intended to improve his breathing. Oddly Plutarch makes no mention of these in chapter 9 of the essay, where we would most expect it, when he advises Menemachus (804c) to bring to the political contest speech that has been trained with a vigorous voice and strong breathing, and thus avoid defeat by his opponent, because he burns out and has to give up speaking. Demosthenes would have served as an ideal example, whose initial failure at speaking, which Plutarch attributes in the *Life* to his weak voice, was overcome by training.

It seems clear then that Plutarch had written *Political Precepts* before he finished work on his *Life of Demosthenes*. In that section of the *Life*, where he deals with Demosthenes' oratory, he reuses material that he culled from Theophrastus or a source dependent on Theophrastus. That material consisted

25 *PSI* = Vitelli no. 144. In one text or another we find notices on Demosthenes' training under the actor Andronicus (ps.–Plut. Phot.), on his famous testimonial that delivery was the first, second and third thing in rhetoric, on the theatrical or frenzied manner of his speaking (Plut., *PSI*), on his mispronunciation of the name Asclepius (ps.–Plutarch, Photius, *PSI*), and on his misuse of antithesis (Plutarch). All four texts mention a metrical oath that Demosthenes is said to have sworn once in the assembly. Both Plutarch and Photius attribute the oath to the testimony of Demetrius and Pseudo Plutarch adds that the oath appeared in the comedies of Antiphanes and Timocles, indicating the direction from which Demetrius drew his information on Demosthenes' theatrical displays. For a discussion of these texts see Cooper 2000, 232–233.

of a series of anecdotes that compared Demosthenes' oratory and style of speaking unfavourably to that of his contemporaries. These anecdotes were incorporated into the *Life* with little alteration, but were balanced with new material from Demetrius of Phalerum that could be used by Plutarch to present Demosthenes in more favourable light. Demosthenes' initial failure at speaking was not the result of over precision in crafting his arguments but the result of a speech impediment that Demosthenes subsequently corrected through hard work. The theatricality of his oratory could be represented positively to show that Demosthenes could speak with daring and boldness. In the end what Plutarch created in the *Life* is a Demosthenes who succeeded through hard work and determination, and it was that determination which would carry Demosthenes to end of his career and cause him to abide by his noble choice.

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Grecs, Macédoniens et Romains au « test » d'Homère. Référence homérique et hellénisme chez Plutarque

Christophe Bréchet

Parmi les différents moyens qui permettent d'apprécier l'unité de l'œuvre de Plutarque, les références homériques peuvent sembler être un élément marginal. Elles sont au contraire, je pense, un excellent indice de la cohérence de la pensée de Plutarque, par-delà les caractéristiques et la logique propres à chaque partie de l'œuvre. De fait, les deux parties du corpus, sous bien des angles, semblent irréductibles, et l'on ne peut manquer de remarquer le déséquilibre des références homériques: elles sont plusieurs centaines dans les *Œuvres Morales*, tandis que quelques dizaines seulement jalonnent les *Vies Parallèles*.¹ À cette différence quantitative, il faut ajouter une différence de nature, dont témoigne l'orientation de la critique, qui s'est jusqu'à présent majoritairement intéressée ou bien à la citation et à la paraphrase dans les *Œuvres Morales*, ou bien aux motifs épiques dans telle ou telle *Vie*. Une telle spécialisation des études suggère à elle seule que Plutarque utilise différemment Homère dans chaque partie du corpus. Dans les *Œuvres Morales*, où il bâtit une analyse et mène une réflexion, il se sert davantage des vers homériques, lesquels contribuent directement à l'élaboration de sa pensée.² Dans la partie narrative du corpus, en revanche, il utiliserait moins de citations que de motifs épiques – scènes d'armement ou de bataille, songes, présages, etc. Se pose alors la question du sens à donner à ces éléments épiques. J. Mossman et A. Zadorojnyi (1997) ont ainsi réfléchi à l'articulation entre épique et tragique dans la *Vie d'Alexandre* et la *Vie de Crassus*. Une étude globale, comme celle qu'a menée F. Frazier dans *Morale et histoire dans les Vies Parallèles*, invite cependant à une certaine prudence. Selon elle, l'« héroïque » ne doit pas être confondu avec l'« épique »: s'il y a bien, chez Plutarque, des aristies, « on peut retrouver dans certaines, mais non dans toutes, des éléments épiques », lesquels doivent être mis en relation avec la galvanisation des troupes. Ensuite, la comparaison avec un guerrier iliadique n'est pas toujours positive, le *thumos* guerrier se révélant parfois malsain.³ La « référence homérique », enfin, peut

1 D'après Helmbold & O'Neil, il y aurait à peine 70 références homériques dans les *Vies*, soit moins que dans le seul *De audiendis poetis*.

2 C'est ce que j'ai essayé de montrer dans ma thèse (2003).

3 Voir en particulier Frazier 1990, 360 sqq. (« L'ambiguïté du courage ») et 439 sqq. (« Les récits de bataille »). Ces analyses sont reprises partiellement dans Frazier 1996, 183sqq.

avoir été voulue par le héros lui-même: on se trouve alors face à un second degré très spécifique et d'interprétation fort délicate.

Doit-on, alors, s'en tenir à deux logiques indépendantes des références homériques, selon la partie du corpus? Il me semble, au contraire, que ces deux logiques sont concordantes si on envisage le petit nombre de références homériques présentes dans les *Vies Parallèles* sous un angle qui, je crois, n'a pas vraiment été envisagé jusqu'à présent: celui de l'hellénisme.⁴ De fait, si Plutarque met en parallèle Grecs et Romains, d'autres auteurs se sont attachés à montrer que les deux peuples n'avaient rien en commun, puisque les seconds descendaient des Troyens, et donc, dans leur logique, de barbares. Les spécialistes de Plutarque ont majoritairement relevé les points communs entre les deux peuples dans les *Vies*; aussi l'idée d'y rechercher des traces de cette généalogie pourra-t-elle paraître surprenante, voire même dérangement. C'est pourtant ce que je me propose de faire, en essayant de déterminer si les références homériques que Plutarque emploie obéissent à une logique, et plus particulièrement si, dans sa prose, il relaie ou adapte les associations des Romains aux Troyens. Après avoir soumis Grecs, Macédoniens et Romains «au test d'Homère», il restera à interpréter les données recueillies.

I. Préalables sur l'usage culturel d'Homère

Il y a une trentaine d'années, dans «Greeks and their past in the Second Sophistic», E. L. Bowie remettait en cause l'idée que les Grecs et les Romains vivaient en parfaite harmonie dans l'Empire et attirait l'attention sur une série de tensions qui, additionnées, permettaient de nuancer la façon dont les premiers avaient vécu la domination des seconds. Si les Grecs, sous la Seconde Sophistique, ont tellement sollicité le passé, c'est, selon l'auteur, pour compenser une insatisfaction d'ordre politique: «Most often, however, the past was resorted to as an alternative rather than an explicit reflection on the present, for most Greeks were in no real sense *anti-Roman*, and their absorption in the Greek past *complemented* their acquiescence in the politically defective Roman present. By re-creating the situations of the past the contrast between the immense prosperity and the distressing dependence of the contemporary Greek world was dulled [...]».⁵ La production littéraire de cette époque s'inspire ainsi largement de la période classique et fait un sort particulier à l'histoire d'Alexandre. Les thèmes homériques ne manquent pas non plus, comme en témoignent le *Discours troyen* de Dion de Pruse – où l'on

4 Je laisse de côté, ici, les motifs épiques, qui requerraient à eux seuls une analyse séparée.

5 Bowie 1974, 209.

apprend que Troie n'a jamais été prise par les Grecs –, le *Discours pour une ambassade* à Achille d'Ælius Aristide, ou *l'Héroïkos* de Philostrate.⁶

Si certains ont préféré, depuis, insister sur ce qui rapprochait Grecs et Romains sous l'Empire, l'explication apportée par E. L. Bowie à une telle sollicitation du passé garde toute sa pertinence, et donne même un tout autre éclairage à un certain nombre de références homériques présentes dans les *Œuvres Morales* et les *Vies Parallèles*. Les épopées ne fournissent pas seulement des thèmes aux auteurs de l'époque impériale: elles portent une idéologie, dont les racines remontent à l'époque classique.

Chez Homère, comme on le sait, le mot « barbare » n'existe pas. On ne peut relever qu'un composé en βαρβαρο- à la fin du catalogue des vaisseaux: « Nastès commandait aux Cariens au parler barbare » (Καρῶν... βαρβαροφώνων, *Il.*, 2, 867). Cet adjectif, qui s'applique à un seul allié des Troyens, n'implique pas, pour Homère, que ce peuple et, par extension, les Troyens eux-mêmes, étaient des barbares.⁷ Thucydide, au seuil de son œuvre, vient nous rappeler qu'Homère « n'a, du reste, pas davantage employé le mot de barbares, cela parce qu'à [s]on avis les Grecs n'étaient pas encore groupés, de leur côté, sous un terme unique qui pût s'y opposer » (1.3.2–3). D'ailleurs, est-il besoin de le rappeler, les belligérants, dans *l'Iliade*, parlent la même langue et honorent les mêmes dieux; or, dans la première définition de l'hellénisme, les critères de la langue et du culte sont essentiels.⁸ La postérité, pourtant, va ignorer ce fonds commun et insister sur des points de détail ou sur la différence de traitement poétique des deux camps, dans *l'Iliade*. C'est après les guerres médiques, qui ont vu l'affrontement des Grecs et des Perses, que l'antithèse entre les Grecs et les Barbares s'élabore dans la tragédie (voir Saïd et Hall), puis trouve des échos dans les œuvres antérieures. Ainsi, ce n'est qu'a posteriori que l'on cherche à retrouver dans les épopées homériques des traces de ce système binaire. Isocrate peut ainsi écrire que « si la poésie d'Homère est devenue célèbre, c'est qu'il a fait un bel éloge de ceux qui ont lutté contre les barbares ».⁹ Aussi ne s'étonnera-t-on pas de trouver, dans les scholies homériques, un très grand nombre d'occurrences des mots de la famille de βάρβαρος,¹⁰ ni de voir tel scholiaste parler du « philhellénisme » d'Homère: αἰ

6 Bowie 1974 relève aussi la vogue pour les noms homériques en Asie Mineure, et note que Philostrate, dans sa *Vie des sophistes* (I, 21), fait à l'occasion référence aux Grecs comme à des « Achéens ».

7 Mattéi, 35 sqq., analyse les implications de cet hapax homérique.

8 Hérodote, VIII, 144, expliquant ce qu'est τὸ Ἑλληνικόν: « même sang et même langue, sanctuaires et sacrifices communs, semblables mœurs et coutumes ».

9 *Panégryque d'Athènes*, 159. De même, dans *l'Eloge* qu'il lui consacre, il loue Hélène d'avoir fourni aux Grecs l'occasion de s'unir contre l'Asie. Voir également Buffière 1956, 354–56.

10 Cf. Erbse, s. v. βάρβαρος (89 occurrences) et βαρβαρικός (19 occurrences), notamment.

φιλέλλην ὁ ποιητής (*schol. ad K 14 Erbse*). Si *l'Iliade* est le fleuron de l'hellénisme, le sentiment hellénique s'incarne petit à petit dans un des deux camps qu'Homère a chantés.

Par deux fois au moins, le schéma binaire des Grecs doit s'adapter à de nouveaux rapports de force, d'abord avec la domination macédonienne, puis avec la domination romaine. Or, c'est en partie à la source homérique que nouveaux arrivants et Grecs vont chercher, chacun de leur côté, les preuves généalogiques dont ils ont besoin. Si diverses traditions font remonter la lignée des rois de Macédoine à Héraclès, Alexandre le Grand prétendait, lui, descendre d'Achille. Les choses sont plus complexes, pour les Romains. Comme l'a rappelé A. Deremetz, au moins dès la fin du IV^e siècle av. J.-C., les Romains sont des *barbaroi* pour les Grecs. Si ce terme n'est pas nécessairement péjoratif au départ – il est plutôt appliqué mécaniquement –, il le devient plus fréquemment dès lors que Rome se trouve en conflit avec les cités grecques. Après la conquête de la Grèce, le problème se pose différemment et deux conceptions permettent de faire sortir Rome de la sphère des *barbaroi*. Selon la première, fréquente chez les historiens grecs, les Romains sont en fait des Grecs: «Ne pouvant réviser leur répartition binaire, si profondément ancrée dans leur manière de penser, et ne pouvant plus soutenir, pour diverses raisons, surtout politiques, que les Romains étaient des barbares, ils n'avaient d'autre solution que de démontrer que ces derniers étaient en réalité des Grecs, *les plus purs et les plus anciens* d'entre eux, comme l'affirme même Denys».¹¹ Selon l'autre conception – illustrée notamment par Virgile –, les Romains sont un *tertium genus*, une des trois composantes du monde, avec les Grecs et les Barbares. Si l'on semble avoir hésité, un temps, entre ascendance grecque et ascendance troyenne, c'est aux Troyens que les Romains vont peu à peu s'identifier et être identifiés, ce qui ne sera pas sans incidence sur leurs relations avec les Étrusques – qui se réclamaient, eux, des Grecs (voir Briquel) – avec les Grecs eux-mêmes, et plus largement avec le reste du monde. Sans entrer dans les distinctions selon les époques, je retiendrai simplement, pour cette étude, que l'ascendance troyenne connaît une fortune particulière aux époques augustéenne et néronienne: «Les thèmes troyens», comme l'a montré J.-P. Néraudau, «présentent à l'époque de Néron une vitalité littéraire et idéologique aussi vivace que celle qu'ils avaient connue au temps d'Auguste et

11 Deremetz. Voir Denys d'Halicarnasse, *Antiquités Romaines*, I, 62, 2: «Ainsi donc la race troyenne était, elle aussi, grecque dès l'origine (ὡς... καὶ τὸ Τρωϊκὸν γένος Ἑλληνικὸν ἀρχῆθεν ἦν), je viens de le montrer»; voir aussi I, 89, 2, quand, à la fin du premier livre, il récapitule les différents ethnè qui ont fusionné pour faire de Rome une cité grecque (Ἑλλάδα πόλιν): «On ne saurait en effet trouver de nation plus ancienne ni plus grecque que celles-là».

qui semblait s'être depuis étiolée. De même, après Néron, ils subissent une éclipse jusqu'à leur retour sous le règne d'Hadrien». ¹²

Cette légende troyenne de Rome a posé bien des problèmes à certains critiques modernes, qui se sont difficilement expliqués le choix de cette ascendance pour donner à Rome « ses lettres de noblesse », alors que les Troyens étaient devenus, aux yeux des Grecs, le symbole de la barbarie. J. Perret, dans *Les origines de la légende troyenne à Rome*, a défendu l'idée que la légende s'était constituée assez tardivement, à une époque où Rome était suffisamment grande pour songer à se donner des ancêtres à la hauteur de sa puissance, mais qu'elle ne pouvait émaner que d'un homme hostile aux Romains – à savoir Pyrrhos – et soucieux de les rattacher aux ennemis des Grecs. Comme l'a montré P. Boyancé, une telle reconstruction ne tient guère, et il est plus vraisemblable que les Romains ont puisé dans Homère pour se donner des origines prestigieuses: « Aussi, pour une famille, pour une cité, ce qui glorifie, c'est de pouvoir retrouver ses origines dans les traditions homériques et épiques, non de pouvoir le faire de tel ou tel côté des ennemis en présence ». ¹³ Cette légende pourrait même s'être constituée relativement tôt, puisque le témoignage le plus ancien de la mise en relation d'Enée et de Rome serait du V^e siècle av. J.-C. ¹⁴ Une telle ancienneté me semble très intéressante: il n'est pas exclu que cette légende se soit constituée sinon avant, du moins pendant que les Guerres médiques entraînaient une réinterprétation des épopées homériques et que Troie, pour les Grecs, était en train de sombrer dans la barbarie. Le choix d'Enée, en plus de donner à Rome des origines prestigieuses, présentait un autre avantage: certains vers d'Homère promettaient un bel avenir aux descendants d'Enée. Ælius Aristide, dans son discours *En l'honneur de Rome* (§ 106), rappelle aux Romains le pouvoir de divination d'Homère, « lequel n'a pas ignoré que [leur] empire existerait, mais l'a prévu et proclamé dans ses vers ». Au chant 20 de *Illiade*, Poséidon rappelle que le sort d'Enée n'est pas de mourir à Troie: « Le destin veut qu'il soit sauvé, afin que ne périsse pas, stérile, anéantie, la race de ce Dardanos que le Cronide a plus aimé qu'aucun des autres enfants qui sont nés de lui et d'une mortelle. Déjà le fils de Cronos a pris en haine la race de Priam. C'est le puissant Enée qui désormais régnera sur les Troyens (Τρώεσσιν ἀνάξει) – Enée et, avec lui, tous les fils de ses fils, qui naîtront dans l'avenir » (*Il.*, 20, 302–308). Les scholies nous apprennent non seulement que certains voyaient dans ces lignes une préfiguration de la domination romaine, mais aussi qu'on avait pu corriger

12 Néraudau, 2032, qui précise que la disparition de la littérature consacrée à l'histoire de Troie amène à une certaine prudence.

13 Boyancé, 278; Briquel, 15–16.

14 Hellanicos de Lesbos, transmis par Denys d'Halicarnasse, I, 72, 2 = frag 84 Jacoby.

le Τρώεσσιν du vers 307 en πάντεσσιν, afin que la domination de Rome fût universelle.¹⁵

II. Plutarque et les généalogies homériques

Plutarque connaît parfaitement, pour les rapporter dans ses œuvres, toutes ces utilisations d'Homère pour légitimer la grécité d'un « troisième terme », qu'il soit macédonien ou romain.

Quand il rapporte la généalogie d'Alexandre, au tout début de sa *Vie*, il lui accorde aussitôt de la valeur par ces mots: « Qu'Alexandre, du côté paternel, descendait d'Héraclès par Caranos, et du côté maternel, d'Éaque par Néoptolème, voilà un fait parfaitement admis (τῶν πάνυ πεπιστευμένων ἐστὶ) ». Les deux éléments de la généalogie ont leur importance, car ils apportent une double preuve qu'Alexandre est grec. En effet, Héraclès est né à Thèbes, si bien que, dans le discours *Sur la fortune d'Alexandre*, Plutarque écrit qu'Alexandre doit punir les Thébains, « ses frères de race et de sang ». ¹⁶ D'autre part, Néoptolème-Pyrrhos est fils d'Achille, c'est-à-dire d'un Grec de la plus noble souche, et même du plus grand héros épique. Il est important de préciser que, dans le cas des Macédoniens, ces généalogies n'engagent que des familles, non les peuples qu'elles dirigent, comme le montre la *Vie d'Aratos*. L'auteur y dénonce en effet le rapprochement entre la confédération achéenne et la monarchie macédonienne auquel a œuvré Aratos, et nous livre les reproches qu'on adressait à ce dernier: « S'il désespérait des affaires et de la puissance des Achéens, il valait mieux céder à Cléomène que livrer de nouveau le Péloponnèse aux barbares des garnisons macédoniennes et remplir l'Acrocorinthe de troupes d'Illyriens et de Galates [...] ». Après ce passage au style indirect, Plutarque reproche à Aratos d'avoir bafoué l'*eugeneia* grecque en faisant appel à Antigone Dôsôn, et qualifie les Macédoniens de barbares: « Si Cléomène était (car il faut bien le dire) *paranomos* et *tyrannikos*, du moins descendait-il des Héraclides et avait-il Sparte pour patrie. Or il eût mieux valu prendre pour chef le plus obscur des Spartiates que le premier des Macédoniens, si l'on tenait en quelque estime l'*eugeneia* grecque » (*Arat.* 38.6–7). Ce passage nous montre non seulement combien le *génos* est déterminant dans l'analyse de Plutarque,¹⁷ mais aussi qu'il est impossible, chez lui, d'appréhender de façon unitaire les Macédoniens. L'argument de l'*eugeneia* amène l'auteur à privilégier un Héraclide aux dépens des barbares des garnisons

15 *Sch. ad.* Y 307a (Erbse). Voir, sur cette correction, Strabon, XIII, 1, 53 et Eustathe *ad.* Y 307.

16 πρὸς ἄνδρας ὁμοφύλους καὶ συγγενεῖς, *Fortune d'Alexandre*, 11, 342D.

17 Mais l'exemple de Spartacus montre que par ses qualités, on peut être « plus grec que son origine » (τοῦ γένους Ἑλληνικώτερος, *Vie de Crassus*, 8, 3).

macédoniennes, mais sans doute le raisonnement n'aurait-il pas été le même face à Alexandre, qui était, lui aussi, un Héraclide. Il faut donc distinguer non seulement le peuple macédonien de la monarchie macédonienne, mais aussi les différentes monarchies macédoniennes entre elles. De toute évidence, Alexandre reçoit un traitement spécifique.

L'association de Rome à Troie est, elle aussi, solidement établie chez Plutarque, mais elle pose davantage de problèmes d'interprétation que l'association d'Alexandre à Achille. La *Vie* de Romulus s'ouvre sur les diverses traditions de l'origine du nom de Rome. Pour Plutarque, la version la plus juste (τῷ δικαιοτάτῳ τῶν λόγων, 2, 2) est celle qui fait remonter la Ville à Romulus. Malgré les désaccords sur ses parents, l'élément troyen est partout présent, que Romulus soit le fils d'Enée et de la Toyenne Dexithéa; de Romè (fille de la précédente) et de Latinus (fils de Télémaque); d'Amula (fille d'Enée et de Lavinie) et de Mars. Et quand Plutarque en vient à « la tradition la plus digne de foi », on retrouve des termes proches de ceux qu'il emploie pour marquer son assentiment à la généalogie grecque d'Alexandre: « Mais la tradition la plus digne de foi et la plus généralement attestée (Τοῦ δὲ πίστιν ἔχοντος λόγου μάλιστα καὶ πλείστους μάρτυρας) est celle dont Dioclès de Péparéthos a le premier publié l'essentiel en Grèce et que Fabius Pictor suit dans ses grandes lignes » (3, 1). Cette tradition part de la succession des rois d'Albe, issus d'Enée: à Numitor échut la royauté, à Amulius les richesses apportées de Troie.¹⁸

Or, chez Plutarque, Troie est associée plus d'une fois à la barbarie. Notre auteur, selon A. G. Nikolaidis, attire l'attention sur un certain nombre de différences entre « les Achéens grecs et les Troyens barbares » contenues dans les poèmes homériques. Dans le *De audiendis poetis*, en effet, le Troyen est associé de manière particulièrement insistante au barbare. Au chapitre 10, après avoir annoncé qu'« il faut encore envisager les différences entre les peuples » (29D), Plutarque se livre à une étude comparée entre les Grecs et les Troyens de *l'Iliade*. En opposant les paroles de Dolon à celles de Diomède, il montre que « la prudence lucide caractérise les Grecs et les hommes distingués, la témérité les barbares et les hommes sans valeur » (29E). Plus loin, il fait remarquer que beaucoup de Troyens se sont laissé prendre vivants et ont supplié leurs vainqueurs, alors qu'aucun des Achéens n'a adopté un tel comportement: « Supplier et se jeter aux pieds de l'adversaire dans les combats est le propre d'un barbare, celui d'un Grec étant de vaincre au combat ou de mourir » (30C). L'équivalence est très nette entre troyen et barbare d'une part, achéen et grec de l'autre. A. G. Nikolaidis souligne également que, si la barbarie est un thème récurrent chez notre auteur, on ne trouve guère que deux passages –

18 Voir aussi *Vie de Camille*, 20, 6, sur le « fameux Palladion de Troie apporté en Italie par Enée ».

encore que l'authenticité du second soit contestée – dans toute son œuvre où il recourt à Homère pour illustrer l'opposition entre Grec et barbare, celui du *De audiendis poetis* cité plus haut et celui du *De Homero* (II 149, 4–5), dont l'auteur cite *Il.*, 3, 2–8 et commente: «La clameur est toute barbare; le silence, tout grec». À ces deux passages, on peut en ajouter d'autres, à commencer par ces quelques lignes des *Préceptes de mariage*: «Hélène aimait la richesse, Pâris, la volupté; Ulysse pratiquait la prudence, Pénélope, la pudeur. C'est pourquoi le mariage de ces derniers fut parfaitement heureux et digne d'envie, tandis que celui des premiers apporta aux Grecs et aux barbares une *Iliade* de maux» (ὁ δ' ἐκείνων Ἰλιάδα κακῶν Ἑλλησι καὶ βαρβάροις ἐποίησεν, 140F-141A). On trouve enfin, dans le *Gryllos*, deux passages où la supériorité du Grec sur le barbare est établie à partir des épopées homériques. Quand Gryllos décrit la vie qu'il menait avant sa métamorphose en porc, il précise que la fièvre de l'or le poussait, lui, un Grec, à envier le sort des riches Troyens: «Celui qui possédait le plus de ces richesses me semblait être quelqu'un de bienheureux et un homme chéri des dieux, fût-il Phrygien ou Carien, plus lâche que Dolon ou plus infortuné que Priam» (989D). Or, dans la bouche de Gryllos, son attitude d'antan semble être le comble de la décadence «orientale» pour un Grec. En 988D, également, Gryllos lance à Ulysse que la chaste Pénélope est loin d'avoir les mérites qu'on lui attribue d'ordinaire, elle, une Spartiate. Alors, ajoute-t-il, «à quoi bon évoquer les Cariennes ou les Méoniennes?». Les peuples cités par Plutarque dans ces deux passages ne doivent rien au hasard: les Phrygiens, les Méoniens et les Cariens (nos βαρβαρόφωνοι) se suivent dans le Catalogue des contingents troyens à la fin du chant 2 de *Iliade*.¹⁹

On pourrait objecter que les premiers contextes sont très rhétoriques, qu'il s'agit de *sunkriseis*, où tout est fait pour que les oppositions soient les plus nettes, en particulier dans le *De audiendis poetis*, ouvrage scolaire à visée pédagogique, où Plutarque stigmatise, dans le cadre d'un développement spécifique, les oppositions entre les peuples. Soit, mais ce serait tenir en bien piètre estime le sage de Chéronée que de supposer que sa formation rhétorique ait pu l'amener à reprendre des éléments auxquels il n'adhérait pas du tout: c'est en toute conscience qu'il a introduit le terme de barbare.²⁰ Quand à la satire, elle est d'autant plus intéressante qu'elle repose bien souvent sur des clichés: la dévalorisation de la sphère troyenne a donc toutes les chances de renvoyer à quelque chose dans l'air du temps.

19 Cf. les vers 862, 864 et 867. Voir également *Vie de Périclès*, 28, 7.

20 Le *De audiendis poetis* étant la pièce maîtresse de son «programme éducatif», on voit l'importance que revêt, pour Plutarque, cette opposition entre Grecs et Barbares, établie à partir des épopées homériques. Rappelons aussi que dans ce traité, seuls les Grecs sont érigés en exemples.

Si Plutarque n'éprouve visiblement aucune difficulté à accréditer d'un côté l'ascendance troyenne des Romains et à associer, de l'autre, les Troyens à des Barbares, la conciliation est plus problématique pour un esprit moderne.²¹ Si on ne peut, bien évidemment, reconstituer un syllogisme – les Romains sont des Troyens; or, les Troyens sont des Barbares; donc les Romains sont des Barbares –, qui irait à l'encontre du projet même des *Vies Parallèles*, quelques données politiques et culturelles méritent d'être rappelées. Les traités politiques de Plutarque confirment l'insatisfaction politique des Grecs sous l'Empire romain dont parlait E. L. Bowie. Au chapitre 17 des *Préceptes politiques* (813D–E), par exemple, la domination romaine est évoquée en termes très explicites: le temps où un Périclès commandait à des citoyens libres est bien loin, et l'homme d'Etat doit désormais toujours « voir les brodequins sénatoriaux au-dessus de sa tête ». Mais Plutarque n'approuve pas pour autant les dirigeants qui prônent un retour au passé ni les sophistes qui le célèbrent à l'envi, parce que le passé, pour lui, ne doit pas être un refuge, mais une incitation à l'émulation: « Aussi bien, il y a beaucoup d'autres actions des Grecs d'autrefois dont le récit peut servir à former et à régler les mœurs de nos contemporains [...]. C'est en rivalisant avec de tels gestes qu'aujourd'hui encore, nous pouvons ressembler à nos ancêtres. Mais Marathon, l'Eurymédon, Platées, et tous les autres exemples qui font trépigner de vaine fierté le peuple, laissons-les aux écoles des sophistes! »²² D'ailleurs, Rome garantit aux cités grecques une paix qu'elles n'avaient pas su instaurer du temps de leur indépendance, époque où elles s'affaiblissaient dans des luttes intestines et fratricides. Plutôt que d'exciter le peuple par de vaines propagandes passéistes, l'homme politique lui fera voir les avantages de ce nouveau rapport de forces, conservera dans les affaires intérieures, autant que faire se peut, fierté et autonomie, et veillera à maintenir la concorde entre les citoyens. Ainsi, Plutarque concilie l'intégration dans l'Empire et un certain idéal hellénique. L'homme d'Etat de son temps trouvera d'ailleurs des modèles dans les Grecs de *Illiade*, qui sont abondamment cités en exemples dans les traités politiques,²³ et tout est dit dans les paroles de Phénix à Achille: il faut être « un bon diseur de paroles, un bon faiseur d'exploits ».²⁴

L'association des Romains aux Troyens, dans ces conditions, traduirait plus un attachement profond à l'hellénisme qu'une dépréciation des Romains. D. Babut, dans *Plutarque et le Stoïcisme*, écrit que « les preuves concrètes ne

21 Si l'identité du destinataire du traité est incertaine, voir, sur l'articulation problématique entre l'association répétée de Troie à la barbarie et l'éventualité d'un destinataire romain, Zadorojniy 2002, 305–306.

22 Tout ce passage (17, 814A–C), qui atteste la vitalité des propagandes locales fondées sur un culte du passé, confirme à nouveau la pertinence de l'analyse de Bowie.

23 Sur ce point, voir Bréchet, 282sq. et 293sqq.

24 *Il.*, 9, 443, que Plutarque cite en 788A, 795E, 798B et 801D.

manquent pas, dans les *Moralia* et surtout dans les *Vies*, d'un attachement spontané et profond de Plutarque à sa communauté « naturelle », bien éloignée de l'universalisme stoïcien » (p. 356). Il parle d'un « patriotisme local et provincial, sans doute, mais surtout [d'un] nationalisme hellénique, qui affleure en toutes sortes d'occasions ». Ainsi, dans la *Vie de Flaminius*, les Romains sont « ces étrangers qui paraissent n'avoir que de faibles étincelles et de vagues traces de parenté avec les Grecs » (ἀλλόφυλοι δ' ἄνδρες, ἐναύσματα μικρὰ καὶ γλίσχροα κοινωνήματα παλαιῶ γένους ἔχειν δοκοῦντες), même s' « ils sont venus sauver la Grèce ». ²⁵ « Souvent, il est vrai, poursuit D. Babut, ce nationalisme s'élargit par l'idée – qui est même à l'origine des *Vies Parallèles*, d'une communauté de culture ou de civilisation qui permet d'associer aux Grecs les Romains. Il n'en reste pas moins que, par delà le cosmopolitisme du Portique, c'est à la vieille tradition du nationalisme hellénique, fondé sur le dogme d'une discrimination entre Grecs et barbares, que se rattache l'auteur des *Moralia* et des *Vies* » (p. 356). C. P. Jones, dans *Plutarch and Rome* (p. 124), souligne que Plutarque n'observe pas cette vieille distinction entre Grecs et barbares, à laquelle il substitue un système ternaire – Grecs, Romains, Barbares –, sauf, dit-il, dans des citations ou allusions. A défaut d'expliquer ce qu'il entend par là, il me semble que son idée rejoint celle qui régit cette étude. Il ne semble en effet aucunement contradictoire que Plutarque soit globalement favorable à l'Empire romain et refuse par ailleurs d'octroyer à Rome une ascendance grecque, parce qu'il reste profondément attaché à sa « communauté naturelle », et que ce qui compte, pour lui, c'est une communauté morale et culturelle entre Grecs et Romains, laquelle subsiste même si l'origine grecque est refusée aux seconds.

L'usage idéologique qui a pu être fait du mythe amène à regarder avec une attention accrue son usage littéraire. De fait, il me semble difficile, au moins chez Plutarque, de dissocier le discours généalogique des références à *Illiade* et *l'Odyssee* que l'auteur choisit pour les Grecs, Alexandre et les Romains. Leur petit nombre dans les *Vies Parallèles* favorise d'ailleurs une analyse minutieuse : le lecteur de Plutarque, habitué à une utilisation abondante d'Homère dans les

25 *Vie de Flam.*, 11, 7. Et après avoir rappelé la fierté qu'éprouvait Flaminius d'avoir affranchi la Grèce, Plutarque retranscrit deux inscriptions, qui méritent d'être citées, parce qu'elles rappellent les origines troyennes de Rome : « Ô fils de Zeus, vous qui aimez les chevaux rapides, ô Tyndarides, rois de Sparte, Titus, descendant d'Enée (Αἰνεάδος Τίτος), vous a offert le don le plus beau, en donnant aux enfants des Grecs la liberté » (12, 11); « Cette couronne d'or placée sur tes boucles divines, fils de Létô, c'est le grand chef des descendants d'Enée (Αἰνεαδῶν τργός μέγας) qui t'en a fait présent [...] » (12, 12). Un peu plus loin, Plutarque écrit également que Flaminius, jaloux de Philopoemen, « estimait qu'un consul romain qui faisait la guerre pour les Grecs avait le droit d'être plus admiré chez eux qu'un simple Arcadien qui n'avait commandé que dans de petites guerres sur les frontières de son pays » (13, 3).

Œuvres Morales, était probablement sensible, dans les *Vies Parallèles*, à la moindre citation homérique, à la moindre comparaison à un héros, voire à l'utilisation d'épithètes qui, dans les épopées, sont employées de façon préférentielle pour un des deux camps. Il reste donc à vérifier la logique que j'ai cru pouvoir dégager, à savoir que Plutarque n'utiliserait pas les mêmes références homériques pour les Grecs, Alexandre et les Romains: il associerait les Grecs et Alexandre à des Achéens, et les Romains, à des Troyens.

III. Le choix des références homériques

Pour que les références utilisées pour ces derniers prennent tout leur sens, je commencerai par quelques constats simples. Le premier, c'est que dans les *Vies Parallèles*, Plutarque n'utilise jamais de référence homérique pour des Barbares:²⁶ on pourrait presque dire que s'il est, somme toute, assez facile pour une cité antique de se relier au monde de l'épopée, par le biais des parentés légendaires,²⁷ il est beaucoup plus difficile d'obtenir une référence homérique « sous le calame » de Plutarque. La deuxième remarque, c'est qu'aucun Grec, dans les *Vies Parallèles*, n'est associé à un Troyen de *Illiade*.²⁸ Enfin, Plutarque prend la peine de rapporter toute une série de rapprochements épiques qui ont été faits au cours des siècles, au point qu'on pourrait presque écrire, à partir de ses œuvres, une histoire de l'utilisation d'Homère.²⁹ Un tel intérêt est une raison supplémentaire pour être attentif à sa propre utilisation du Poète.

Le héros par excellence est Achille, et c'est à lui que Plutarque associe le plus souvent les hommes qui ont fait la grandeur de la Grèce. On signalera ainsi Cléomène, qui « [...] ne goûtait nullement cette vie pleine de mollesse: « Il se rongeaient le cœur », comme Achille, « Et restait là, sur place, à regretter le cri de la guerre et de la bataille » »;³⁰ Philopoemen, que Cléandros, à la mort de

26 On ne peut interpréter comme une exception le passage de la *Vie de Lysandre* (20, 5), où Plutarque évoque la ruse de Pharnabaze, qui a substitué à la lettre qu'il avait écrite devant Lysandre et qui lui était favorable une autre lettre, écrite avant leur entrevue: « Mais lorsque, après avoir lu la lettre, les éphores la lui montrèrent, il reconnut « qu'Ulysse n'est pas seul à pratiquer la ruse », et il se retira, profondément troublé ». Le trimètre iambique, ici, n'est pas nécessairement dû à Plutarque, et surtout, le texte dit simplement qu'Ulysse n'a pas le monopole de la ruse, et non que Pharnabaze est un nouvel Ulysse.

27 Sur l'importance de la notion de συγγένεια, voir Curty.

28 A une exception près (*Vie de Timoléon*, Préface, 1–3), sur laquelle je reviendrai.

29 Nombreux sont les contextes qui témoignent de la prégnance des épopées homériques à telle ou telle époque: *Vie de Périclès*, 28, 7; *Vie d'Alcibiade*, 21, 1; *Vie de Dion*, 18, 9; *Vie d'Aratos*, 3, 5; *Vie de Solon*, 4, 3; *Vie de Solon*, 30, 1; *Vie de Lysandre*, 15, 3.

30 *Vie de Cléomène*, 34, 3, avec citation de *Il.*, 1, 491–2.

Craugis, éleva «comme Homère dit que Phénix éleva Achille»;³¹ ou encore Démosthène, dont Plutarque dit qu'«il était bien loin d'avoir le cœur bon, l'âme douce».³² Si Plutarque emploie dans d'autres contextes les deux hapax homériques γλυκύθυμος et ἀγανόφρων, c'est presque toujours à propos d'Achille.³³ Démosthène est le seul personnage historique à bénéficier d'un traitement similaire, détail qui, là encore, confirme que les termes homériques ne sont pas employés à la légère.

Parfois, l'identification à un héros est soigneusement entretenue. Agamemnon, ainsi, est très présent dans la *Vie d'Agésilas*. Plutarque commence par rapporter le songe que ce dernier eut à Aulis (6, 7), lequel en fait un nouvel Agamemnon. Un peu plus loin, Agésilas reconnaît qu'«Agamemnon avait eu bien raison d'accepter une bonne jument, et d'exempter du service un pleutre qui était riche».³⁴ Jusque là, Plutarque est tributaire de la tradition historiographique, mais il prolonge à sa manière le parallélisme avec le roi des rois, quand il évoque l'introduction de la soif d'honneurs et de victoires dans la *Vie* politique pour l'enflammer: «C'est ce que, selon certains, Homère lui-même a fort bien compris: il n'aurait pas montré Agamemnon heureux de voir Ulysse et Achille en venir à s'insulter <avec de terribles paroles>, qu'il n'avait pas considéré l'émulation et la dispute entre les meilleurs comme un grand bien pour la communauté [...]» (*Ages*. 5.6). Enfin, au moment où Agésilas reçut la nouvelle d'une guerre contre Sparte et quitta les opérations d'Asie, Plutarque écrit qu'«il renonça aux vastes espérances qui guidaient son chemin pour s'embarquer aussitôt, laissant <sa tâche inachevée>»³⁵. L'expression est extraite du long discours qu'Agamemnon fait après que Ménélas a été blessé: il ne veut pas rentrer seul en Argolide, tandis que son frère «rester[a] gisant en Troade sur la tâche inachevée» – l'expression désignant l'entreprise des Grecs à Troie. Bref, le parallélisme avec Agamemnon, dont il n'est pas l'inventeur, est savamment cultivé par Plutarque, et il est d'autant plus intéressant que Pompée, avec qui Agésilas est mis en parallèle, refuse, lui, l'association avec Agamemnon.³⁶

La complexité d'Alcibiade, elle, peut difficilement se réduire à un parallèle unique. Après avoir rappelé, dans les premières pages de sa *Vie*, son jeune amour pour les épopées homériques,³⁷ Plutarque multiplie les références à son

31 *Vie de Philopoemen*, 1, 2. On trouve un peu plus loin (9, 12) une autre référence à Achille (*Il.*, 19, 15–23), à propos de la capacité qu'ont les armes de stimuler l'audace des jeunes gens.

32 *Vie de Démosthène*, 12, 4, avec citation de *Il.*, 20, 467.

33 *Du flatteur et de l'ami*, 26, 67A; *QC V*, 5, 2.

34 *Vie d'Agésilas*, 9, 7, avec référence à *Il.*, 23, 295–99.

35 *Vie d'Agésilas*, 15, 7, avec citation de *Il.*, 4, 175.

36 *Vie de Pompée*, 67, 5; *Vie de César*, 41, 2.

37 *Vie d'Alcibiade*, 7, 1; voir aussi *Apophtegmes*, 186D.

sujet, quand il évoque sa période spartiate: « En tout cas, à Lacédémone, si l'on jugeait de lui par l'extérieur, on pouvait dire: « Non, tu n'es pas son fils, mais Achille en personne », un homme comme Lyncurque en a formé. Mais si l'on observait ses véritables sentiments et ses actions, on pouvait s'écrier: « C'est bien la même femme aujourd'hui qu'autrefois! »³⁸ Les références ne sont pas homériques,³⁹ mais l'important, me semble-t-il, est que la première citation renvoie au paradigme de l'Achille épique, et la seconde, à Hélène.⁴⁰ Alcibiade est aussi doté de toute la séduction et l'ambiguïté d'un Ulysse, ce qui amène Plutarque à le qualifier de *polutropos*:⁴¹ quand il se met sous la protection de Tissapherne, « sa souplesse et son habileté prodigieuse (τὸ μὲν γὰρ πολύτροπον αὐτοῦ καὶ περιπτόν αὐτοῦ τῆς δεινότητος) faisaient l'admiration du barbare ».⁴²

Parfois, enfin, le recours à Homère se teinte de nostalgie. L'utilisation politique que les Anciens ont faite du Catalogue des vaisseaux, au chant 2 de l'*Illiade*, est bien connue,⁴³ et Plutarque signale par exemple la façon dont Solon procéda pour faire valoir ses prétentions sur Salamine.⁴⁴ Mais lui-même se réfère au Catalogue dans la *Vie d'Aratos* (45, 9), quand il évoque avec tristesse le changement de nom de la ville de Mantinée en Antigoneia: « C'est donc par sa faute, semble-t-il, que « l'aimable Mantinée » (ἡ μὲν ἔρατεινὴ Μαντίνεια, *Il.*, 2, 607) a complètement perdu son nom et garde celui des meurtriers et des bourreaux de ses citoyens ».⁴⁵ La référence homérique rappelle ainsi les racines balayées par le Macédonien.

Le traitement d'Alexandre, qui est, lui, le champion de l'hellénisme, est fort semblable à celui des Grecs. Plutarque, d'abord, ne manque pas de rapporter le culte héroïque que le conquérant avait développé autour de sa personne, et notamment son « pèlerinage » à Ilion, où l'on se faisait fort de lui procurer la lyre de l'Alexandre homérique, à quoi il répondit qu'il préférerait voir celle d'Achille (*Alex.* 15.8). La facilité du rapprochement avec son homologue homérique apparaît aussi dans le *Discours sur la fortune d'Alexandre*:

38 *Vie d'Alcibiade*, 23, 6. La première citation est extraite d'une tragédie perdue, la seconde, de l'*Oreste* d'Euripide (v. 129).

39 On en trouve d'autres exemples (*Vie de Nicias*, 5, 7, par exemple).

40 Voir aussi la comparaison d'Alcibiade à la terre d'Égypte (*Od.*, 4, 230) dans la *Vie de Nicias* (9, 1).

41 Contrairement aux adjectifs γλυκύθυμος et ἀγαθόφρων, l'adjectif πολύτροπος apparaît dans des *Vies* de Romains; mais, chez Plutarque, il est loin d'être aussi positif que chez Homère (cf. Bréchet 2003, 489–490).

42 *Vie d'Alcibiade*, 24, 5, à mettre en relation avec le caractère changeant de la fortune (*Vie d'Alcibiade*, 2, 1).

43 *Vie de Cimon*, 7, 6, à rapprocher de *Il.*, 2, 552–4.

44 *Vie de Solon*, 10, 2, à propos de *Il.*, 2, 557–8. Voir aussi *Vie de Thésée*, 20, 2.

45 Voir aussi la façon dont Plutarque se sert du Catalogue dans la *Vie de Thésée*, 5, 1 et 25, 3.

S'il advenait, au cours d'une réunion, d'un banquet, que l'on comparât entre eux des vers d'Homère et que chacun dit sa préférence, Alexandre choisissait toujours un vers, qu'il considérait comme le plus beau de tous : « Il était bon roi autant que guerrier intrépide » (*Il.*, 3, 179). Dans cet éloge qu'un autre avait reçu jadis, il voyait une devise pour lui-même : « Homère, disait-il, a dans le même vers célébré le courage d'Agamemnon et prophétisé celui d'Alexandre ». Après sa traversée de l'Hellespont, il visitait le site de Troie, où son imagination lui retraçait tant d'exploits héroïques. Un homme du pays vint lui dire qu'il se faisait fort de lui procurer la lyre de Pâris s'il le désirait : « Je n'ai nul besoin de la sienne, répondit-il : j'ai celle d'Achille, celle dont il s'accompagnait quand, pour son délassement, » il chantait le sort des braves » (*Il.*, 9, 189), alors que celle de Pâris ne faisait entendre que des airs tout langoureux et efféminés pour accompagner ses romances amoureuses.⁴⁶

Ce passage insiste sur le choix d'Alexandre, choix du modèle homérique incarné par Agamemnon, conciliant les vertus du chef et du guerrier – c'est ainsi qu'Hélène le présente à Priam sur les remparts de Troie –, mais surtout choix d'Achille. Posséder sa lyre, c'est matérialiser la filiation héroïque ; c'est en quelque sorte être (un nouvel) Achille, et revendiquer le camp des Grecs, de l'excellence guerrière, contre celui de la mollesse et de la volupté, incarnées par Pâris. De cette mise en scène du choix de la lyre, on ne peut conclure, en l'absence du mot « barbare », que le Macédonien choisit la grécité et rejette les mœurs barbares, ne serait-ce que parce que la conception qu'il a de la barbarie est différente de celle qu'en ont les Grecs. La différence est avant tout morale : Alexandre choisit le courage plutôt que la mollesse et les langueurs amoureuses.⁴⁷

L'intérêt d'Alexandre ne se borne pas à Achille : il s'étend à l'ensemble de la poésie homérique.⁴⁸ De fait, c'est *l'Iliade* qu'il choisit d'enfermer dans la précieuse cassette de Darios (*Alex.* 26.1–2) ; et quand il décide de fonder Alexandrie, un vieil homme, dans une vision nocturne, se met à déclamer les paroles de Ménélas à Télémaque, dans *l'Odyssée* : « Puis, sur la mer houleuse, il existe un îlot, en avant de l'Égypte ; on l'appelle Pharos » ;⁴⁹ et l'on se souvient aussi des paroles du conquérant blessé : « Ce qui coule ici, mes amis, c'est du sang, et non pas l'ichôr, ce liquide coulant dans les veines des dieux bienheureux ».⁵⁰

À la lecture de la *Vie d'Alexandre*, on mesure à quel point ses partisans et ses adversaires firent un usage différent de la référence homérique. Ainsi, le

46 *De la fortune d'Alexandre*, 10, 331C–E ; cf. aussi *Vie d'Alexandre*, 15, 9, où apparaît la même anecdote.

47 Sur ce mode phrygien, voir aussi *Dialogue sur l'Amour*, 16, 759B.

48 Sur l'« insistance sur le rapport privilégié qui unissait Alexandre à Homère », voir Humbert 1991, p. 176–177.

49 *Vie d'Alexandre*, 26, 5, avec citation de *Od.*, 4, 354–5.

50 *Vie d'Alexandre*, 28, 3, avec citation de *Il.*, 5, 340.

pédagogue Lysimaque, « parce qu'il se donnait à lui-même le nom de Phénix, à Alexandre celui d'Achille et à Philippe celui de Pélée, était en faveur » (*Alex.* 5.8). En revanche, Callisthène n'hésite pas à s'adresser à Alexandre comme l'Achille homérique s'adressait au Troyen Lycaon, fils de Priam : « S'étant aperçu de l'aversion du roi à son égard, il lui dit deux ou trois fois en le quittant : « Patrocle est mort aussi, lui qui valait bien mieux que toi ».⁵¹ Les rôles sont inversés et Alexandre est rabaisé au rang de Troyen. De même, Phocion parla d'Alexandre à Démosthène de la même façon que, dans *l'Odyssée*, ses compagnons s'adressent à Ulysse quand il nargue le Cyclope : « Comme Démosthène invectivait contre Alexandre, alors que celui-ci marchait déjà sur Thèbes, Phocion lui dit : « Veux-tu exaspérer, malheureux, un sauvage » (*Od.*, 9, 494) à la recherche d'une grande gloire ? Ou veux-tu, quand un immense incendie s'approche de nous, y précipiter notre ville ? » (*Phoc.* 17.1–2). Le parallèle a pour effet de rejeter Alexandre aux confins de la civilisation et de le présenter comme un sauvage – à cette différence près qu'il est épris de gloire.

Dans la mesure où Plutarque juge bon de rapporter cet usage polémique de la référence homérique, l'usage qu'il en fait, pour sa part, mérite un examen attentif. Au tout début du *Discours sur la vertu d'Alexandre*, la Fortune déclare que c'est elle seule qui a fait d'Alexandre ce qu'il est devenu, et Plutarque proteste : « Il faut alors lui donner la réplique au nom de la philosophie, ou plutôt au nom d'Alexandre lui-même, irrité et indigné à l'idée qu'on puisse voir un don gracieux de la Fortune dans cet empire qu'il payait de tant de sang, blessure après blessure : « Que de nuits sans sommeil, de jours sanglants passés à se battre » (*Il.*, 9, 325–6) [...] » (*De Alex. fort. aut virt.* 326D–E). Cette citation libre de *l'Iliade* associe d'emblée Alexandre à Achille, puisqu'il s'agit des paroles du Péléide à l'ambassade. Une anecdote du même discours se prête à une analyse encore plus précise. Les députés du roi de Perse viennent à la cour de Philippe et sont reçus par le jeune Alexandre, qui leur pose des questions inhabituelles à cet âge, voulant tout savoir des effectifs de l'armée perse et du poste occupé par le Grand Roi pendant la bataille. Plutarque ajoute alors : « comme le fameux Ulysse qui demandait : « Où sont ses armes ? Où paissent ses chevaux ? »⁵² Au moment où Plutarque évoque les questions qu'Alexandre pose aux députés à propos du Grand Roi, il songe donc à la scène iliadique où Ulysse interroge Dolon à propos d'Hector. Autrement dit, le rapport entre Alexandre et la Perse est homologique du rapport entre les Grecs et les Troyens. Un peu plus loin, dans cette conférence éminemment rhétorique, Plutarque franchit le pas. Si « Homère n'a respecté ni la convenance ni la vraisemblance en combinant trois comparaisons pour décrire la beauté

51 *Vie d'Alexandre*, 54, 1, avec citation de *Il.*, 21, 107.

52 *De la fortune d'Alexandre*, II, 342B, avec citation de *Il.*, 10, 407.

d'Agamemnon»,⁵³ on peut, en revanche, dire qu'Alexandre a surpassé tous les héros grecs de *l'Iliade* – Agamemnon, Achille, Diomède et Ulysse – dans leur domaine d'excellence respectif⁵⁴. Plutarque, on le voit, associe Alexandre aux Grecs de *l'Iliade* de façon suffisamment récurrente pour que ces associations relèvent sinon d'une volonté, du moins d'un réflexe, qui est tout autant, sinon plus significatif: c'est le signe qu'Alexandre, pour lui, est un Grec.

Toutes proportions gardées, le traitement de Pyrrhos est assez comparable à celui d'Alexandre. De fait, comme le conquérant, Pyrrhos se proclamait descendant d'Achille. La *Vie* qui lui est consacrée s'ouvre ainsi sur une longue généalogie, qui le fait remonter à Néoptolème, fils d'Achille.⁵⁵ Plutarque, par la suite, prolonge dans sa prose ce culte héroïque. En 7, 7, lors du combat avec Pantauchos, il écrit que Pyrrhos «voulait s'approprier la gloire d'Achille par la valeur plutôt que par la naissance». Et un peu plus loin, il précise que «comme Achille, il ne supportait pas l'inaction: <Il consumait son cœur à demeurer oisif; il regrettait le cri de la guerre et la bataille>».⁵⁶

Si Alexandre et Pyrrhos sont associés aux Grecs de *l'Iliade*, les Romains, eux, sont associés à la sphère de Troie, c'est-à-dire à l'ensemble des peuples apparaissant dans le catalogue des forces troyennes au chant II de *l'Iliade*. De la première question du livre IX des *Propos de table*, consacrée à l'à-propos des citations, je retiendrai deux anecdotes. Mummius, consul en 146 av. J.-C., organise, après son triomphe sur l'armée achéenne et le siège de Corinthe, un examen pour déterminer qui des jeunes prisonniers connaît ses lettres, demandant à chacun de citer un vers. Un jeune Corinthien lui cite alors ce vers de *l'Odyssée*: «Trois fois et quatre fois heureux les Danaens qui périrent alors» (*Od.*, 5, 306). Telles étaient les paroles d'Ulysse quand, pris dans la tempête déchaînée par Poséidon, il regrettait de n'être pas mort à Troie. Le jeune prisonnier connaît son Homère, et Mummius, ému aux larmes, lui rend sa liberté, à lui et à ses proches. Une seconde lecture est possible, qui explique

53 Plutarque cite *Il.*, 2, 478–9: «Le regard et les traits sont de Zeus foudroyant, à la taille, c'est Arès, Poséidon au torse».

54 *De la fortune d'Alexandre*, II, 12, 343A–B. Voir aussi l'association indirecte à Agamemnon dans *Fort. Alex.* II, 9, 341, par le biais de la citation de *Il.*, 11, 265 – on pourrait objecter que le vers apparaît aussi en *Il.*, 11, 541, où il est question d'Hector, mais quand Plutarque cite *Il.*, 11, 540–543 dans le *De audiendis poetis*, 6, 24C, il omet le vers 541; voir aussi le rapprochement avec Ménélas dans *Fort. Alex.* II, 10, 341D.

55 *Vie de Pyrrhos*, 1, 2–3. Cette généalogie est très intéressante, car elle montre que la civilisation, en dépit des origines, n'est jamais un acquis définitif: «Mais après ces anciens rois, leurs successeurs, devenus barbares (ἐκβαρβαρωθέντων), eurent une puissance et une vie plus obscures. Le premier dont l'histoire à nouveau fasse mention, Tharrhymas, devint célèbre pour avoir civilisé les villes en leur donnant les coutumes, l'écriture et les lois humaines de la Grèce» (1, 4). Voir aussi 2, 8.

56 *Vie de Pyrrhos*, 13, 2, avec citation de *Il.*, 1, 491–2.

mieux cet à-propos qu'apprécient tant nos convives grecs. En un vers, le jeune Corinthien laisse entendre que le sort des Grecs d'antan, partis assiéger Ilion et morts sous ses murs, est plus enviable que celui des Grecs d'aujourd'hui, assiégés par ces descendants des Troyens que sont les Romains: « Bienheureux », en ce sens, « les Danaens de *l'Iliade* qui périrent à Troie face aux Troyens ». Au temps du siège de Troie succède celui du siège de Corinthe, et aux Troyens, leurs descendants romains. On assiste en quelque sorte, par descendants interposés, à la revanche des Troyens, qui avaient perdu la guerre de Troie. Dans un contexte où Rome malmène la Grèce, ce niveau de lecture semble plus pertinent, et peut-être est-ce le décalage des lectures qui, plus de deux siècles après, plaît aux convives du banquet, dont Plutarque note que ces propos apaisent « avec tact » le tumulte. Plutarque n'expliquant pas pourquoi Mummius rend sa liberté au jeune homme, on en a droit de se demander s'il n'admire pas son courage sans comprendre tout ce que cette citation implique. Peut-être, en définitive, se moque-t-on de l'incompréhension du consul, qui, voulant tester la culture des Grecs, se fait prendre au piège de la *paideia* ! Un peu plus loin, dans la rubrique des citations mal venues, Plutarque rapporte l'histoire d'un maître qui veut montrer à Pompée, de retour de sa grande campagne d'Orient, les progrès faits par sa fille en son absence en lui faisant lire des vers de *l'Iliade*. Il ne trouve pas mieux que de la faire commencer à ces vers: « Te voilà de retour du combat; que n'y as-tu péri ! » (*Il.*, 3, 428), lui faisant redire les mots qu'Hélène adresse à Pâris quand Aphrodite l'a transporté dans sa chambre. De la sorte, Pompée est associé à un Troyen, et même au pire des Troyens, que ce soit du point de vue d'Homère ou du point de vue de Plutarque.⁵⁷

Cette question des *Propos de table* amène à regarder avec une attention redoublée les citations dans les *Vies Parallèles*, où les associations de Romains à des Troyens ne manquent pas, et où Pâris, qui est en soi un anti-modèle, est sollicité à plusieurs reprises. Après avoir présenté Antoine comme un Héraclès privé de sa massue et de sa peau de lion par Omphale, Plutarque ajoute: « Enfin, comme Pâris fuyant le champ de bataille, il se réfugia dans le sein de la femme aimée, ou plutôt, alors que Pâris ne s'enfuit dans la chambre nuptiale qu'après avoir été vaincu, Antoine, lui, prit la fuite pour suivre Cléopâtre, renonçant ainsi à la victoire ».⁵⁸ De même, après avoir souligné la débauche d'Othon, Plutarque reprend ce parallèle épique: « Et de même qu'Homère appelle Alexandre « l'époux d'Hélène aux beaux cheveux » et, ne trouvant rien d'autre à louer en lui, le désigne souvent ainsi par le nom de sa femme, de

57 Voir par exemple *Comparaison des Vies de Lysandre et de Sylla*, 4, 5.

58 *Comparaison des Vies de Démétrios et d'Antoine*, 3, 5. Cléopâtre, nouvelle Hélène, est, elle, une Grecque.

même Othon était devenu célèbre à Rome par son mariage avec Popée» (*Galba* 19.2).

Parfois, ce n'est pas à un héros particulier qu'il est fait allusion, mais à la façon dont Homère décrit les Troyens. Dans la *Vie de Fabius Maximus* (19, 2), Plutarque renvoie à la *Vie de Marcellus*: «L'un, comme je l'ai dit dans sa *Vie*, se distinguait par son activité et son entrain, toujours prêt à payer de sa personne et ressemblant par son caractère à ces héros qu'Homère qualifie particulièrement de belliqueux et de fiers (φιλοπολέμους καὶ ἀγερῶχους)». Si le choix de la seconde épithète est intéressant, c'est qu'elle se rapporte presque toujours, chez Homère, aux Troyens ou à leurs alliés. Sur sept occurrences dans *l'Iliade*, on relève cinq fois le syntagme Τρώων ἀγερῶχων,⁵⁹ une fois Μυσοί τ' ἀγέρωχοι⁶⁰ et une fois Ῥοδίων ἀγερῶχων⁶¹. Dans *l'Odyssée*, l'épithète est employée pour Téricleuménos (11.286). Ces deux derniers contextes, relatifs à des Grecs, ne constituent pas véritablement des limites sérieuses à notre analyse, le syntagme Τρώων ἀγερῶχων étant de loin le plus fréquent. On peut d'ailleurs regarder les quatre autres contextes où Plutarque emploie le mot. Dans les *Vies*, l'adjectif est utilisé pour Marcellus, qui, «dans les combats montrait beaucoup de fougue et de hardiesse (τὸ γαῦρον καὶ ἀγέρωχον)»,⁶² et pour Tiribaze, dont Plutarque souligne l'instabilité de caractère dans la *Vie d'Artaxerxès* (27, 10). Autrement dit, dans ses *Vies*, Plutarque ne l'emploie que pour des Romains ou des Perses. Les associations que l'on trouve dans les *Ceuvres Morales* confirmeraient que le mot n'est guère positif pour lui.⁶³

Il convient toutefois de signaler que la référence à Troie n'est pas nécessairement dépréciative, comme le montre le bel hommage à Porcia que l'on trouve dans la *Vie de Brutus* (23, 5). Quand le héros quitte l'Italie et se rend à Vélia, la scène semble redoubler les adieux d'Hector et d'Andromaque. Ce rapprochement n'est pas une invention de Plutarque, mais à l'extension qu'il lui donne, on ne peut douter qu'il a été sensible à un des plus beaux exemples d'amour conjugal de la littérature – les paroles d'Hector sont même citées en exemple dans la *Consolation à Apollonios*.⁶⁴ De toute façon, l'usage que fait Plutarque de la référence troyenne n'a pas pour but de rabaisser les Romains: il induit plutôt, me semble-t-il, que ces derniers sont autres que les Grecs.

La logique mise en évidence est encore plus nette dans les passages où apparaissent conjointement les Romains et Alexandre. Ce dernier, écrit

59 *Il.*, 3, 36; 5, 623; 7, 343; 16, 708; 21, 584.

60 *Il.*, 10, 430. Les Mysiens sont les alliés des Troyens (cf. *Il.*, 2, 858).

61 *Il.*, 2, 654. Les Rhodiens sont les alliés des Achéens.

62 *Vie de Marcellus*, 1, 2. Et on a, juste avant, l'adjectif *philopolémos* (comme dans *Fabius Max.* 19, 2).

63 Il l'emploie pour le Thessalien Aleuas (*De frat. am.*, 21, 492A), et pour les passions (QC III, 10, 1, 757D).

64 Voir *Consolation à Apollonios*, 117F–118A, où les mots d'Hector sont cités en exemple.

Plutarque dans le discours *Sur la fortune des Romains*, « savait qu'en Italie, il trouverait la puissance et la vaillance de Rome dressées contre lui, comme le fer de lance de la résistance; car le renom et la gloire éclatante des Romains arrivaient jusqu'à lui comme ceux d'athlètes parfaitement entraînés par des guerres innombrables. « Et seul le sang, je crois, pouvait en décider », une fois en présence les armes invincibles de ces cœurs indomptables. Les Romains n'étaient pas moins de 130 000 hommes, tous combattifs et vaillants, « sachant combattre en selle ou à pied » (*De fort. Rom.* 326B-C). Avec la première citation (*Od.*, 18, 149), Alexandre est associé à Ulysse et les Romains aux prétendants. La seconde citation (*Od.*, 9, 49-50) nous renvoie aux récits d'Ulysse, quand il raconte à Alcinoos qu'après avoir quitté Troie, il a fait escale chez les Cicones et pillé Ismaros, mais qu'ensuite, les Cicones sont allés chercher du renfort, des hommes plus nombreux et plus vaillants. Alexandre et les siens seraient, cette fois, Ulysse et les Grecs, vaincus par l'ennemi plus puissant, les Romains-Cicones. Les deux citations, en tout cas, associent Alexandre à un Grec confronté à des ennemis dont la supériorité est numérique. Et, si nous allons jusqu'au bout, les Romains sont encore indirectement associés aux Troyens, puisque les Cicones figurent dans la liste des alliés de Troie au chant 2 de *l'Iliade*. Au vers 846, nous lisons en effet qu'« Euphème commandait aux Cicones belliqueux ». Autrement dit, dans le cadre d'un éloge de Rome, ces citations permettraient une seconde lecture particulièrement habile, une sorte de clin d'œil d'un *pépaideuménos* à des lecteurs qui ont eux aussi une parfaite connaissance d'Homère.

Une étude comparée des deux écrits panégyriques que sont le *De la fortune des Romains* et le *De la fortune d'Alexandre* fait en tout cas apparaître une différence de traitement du point de vue de la référence homérique. En effet, les rares citations homériques présentes dans le premier écrit sont majoritairement extraites de *l'Odyssée*. Au chapitre 3, le cortège de la vertu est formé par les morts de la *nékuya* (11.41); au chapitre 13, comme nous l'avons vu, Alexandre est par deux fois associé à Ulysse, tandis que les Romains sont associés aux prétendants et aux Cicones (18.149, 9.49-50); au chapitre 12, enfin, la Fortune est associée à Apollon répandant le mal dans le camp achéen (*Il.* 1.10): la seule fois où apparaît une citation de *l'Iliade*, elle met en parallèle la Fortune, qui se bat dans le traité pour que soit reconnu le rôle primordial qu'elle a joué dans la constitution de l'Empire romain, avec un dieu qui, dans l'épopée, se bat aux côtés des Troyens. Le fait que ces quatre citations se rejoignent plus ou moins est difficilement imputable au hasard. Aucune citation se rapportant aux Grecs chez Homère ne vient en effet s'appliquer aux Romains, si ce n'est celle qui les associerait aux prétendants. Les Romains sont donc toujours inclus dans la sphère de l'Autre, ou du Même dégradé, dans le cas des prétendants. Par ailleurs, si les citations homériques que fait Plutarque dans ses œuvres proviennent pour les deux tiers de *l'Iliade*, le *De la fortune des*

Romains inverse la tendance générale, puisque les quelques références homériques qu'on y trouve viennent essentiellement de *l'Odyssee*. En revanche, le *De la fortune d'Alexandre* contient beaucoup de citations homériques, presque exclusivement extraites de *l'Iliade* – et donc plus qualifiantes dans un contexte guerrier.

IV. Les exceptions qui confirment la règle

Avant de passer aux cas problématiques, je tiens à préciser qu'ils sont moins nombreux que les cas «réguliers» et surtout qu'ils concernent presque exclusivement les Romains, parfois associés à des Grecs des épopées homériques.

Il faut distinguer deux cas de figure. Dans un nombre non négligeable de cas, l'association d'un Romain avec un Grec n'est pas le fait de Plutarque, mais des Romains. Par exemple, certains appelaient Pompée «Agamemnon et Roi des rois», soit «pour susciter l'envie contre lui» (*Pomp.* 67.5), soit pour le piquer «en donnant à entendre qu'il ne voulait pas déposer le pouvoir absolu et qu'il était fier de voir tant de chefs dépendre de lui et fréquenter sa tente».⁶⁵ Ce rapprochement entre Agamemnon et le Roi des rois, qui serait invraisemblable pour un Grec, montre à quel point les deux camps qui s'affrontent dans *l'Iliade* ne sont pas connotés de la même façon pour un Grec ou pour un Romain: pour ce dernier, ce qui prime ici, c'est *l'odium regi*.

Ainsi, quand le rapprochement entre un Romain et un Grec de *l'Iliade* est le fait des Romains eux-mêmes, il n'est pas nécessairement positif. Métellus, avant la désignation de Pompée, avait été envoyé en Crète pour en chasser les pirates. Les rares survivants, assiégés, en appelèrent à Pompée, qui ordonna à Métellus de cesser la guerre, et envoya Lucius Octavius, qui, en combattant aux côtés des pirates, rendit Pompée odieux. Commence alors un discours indirect libre, qui nous livre vraisemblablement l'opinion de la foule⁶⁶: «Achille lui-même, *rappelait-on*, n'agit pas comme un homme mais comme un adolescent totalement fasciné et possédé par le désir de gloire, quand il défend aux autres de frapper Hector et les en empêche: «Pour qu'un autre n'ait pas la gloire de l'atteindre, et qu'il ne soit pas, lui, le second seulement» (*Il.*, 22, 207). Or Pompée alla plus loin: il combattit pour sauver les ennemis publics, afin

65 *Vie de César*, 41, 2. Voir également *Comparaison d'Agésilas et de Pompée*, 4, 3, où Plutarque se montre ouvertement critique.

66 Cette désapprobation est partagée par Plutarque, mais il est impossible de savoir si les Romains cultivés ont utilisé la référence ou si Plutarque l'exprime dans son propre style.

d'ôter l'honneur du triomphe à un général qui s'était donné beaucoup de peine». ⁶⁷ Pompée donc dépasse Achille dans ce qu'il a de juvénile, de mauvais.

Je ne m'attarderai pas sur les autres passages où Plutarque rapporte dans les *Vies* qu'un Romain déclama un vers, parce qu'on ne peut guère tirer grand-chose de ces citations historiques. ⁶⁸ Plus intéressants sont les passages où Plutarque compare un Romain à un Grec.

Dans les rares contextes où le rapprochement est établi par Plutarque lui-même, le parallèle épique n'a pas pour but de rehausser un personnage. La conduite d'un Romain, d'une part, peut être rapprochée d'une erreur de conduite d'un grand héros – car, comme le rappelle Plutarque dans son *De audiendis poetis*, « ces beaux et grands noms » que sont les personnages poétiques ne sont pas toujours « des hommes sages et justes, les plus éminents des princes, des modèles de vertu et de droiture parfaites » (8, 25D-E). Quand Plutarque signale brièvement l'analogie entre Achille et Camille, dans la *Vie* de ce dernier, ce n'est pas avec « le meilleur des Achéens », mais avec le héros que sa colère pousse à lancer des imprécations : « Après avoir, comme Achille, prononcé des imprécations contre ses concitoyens, il s'éloigna de la ville ». ⁶⁹ On l'opposera à Aristide, à qui un paysan, qui ne l'a pas reconnu, demande d'inscrire son nom sur le tesson lors de la procédure d'ostracisme : « En quittant la ville, il leva les mains vers le ciel et fit, dit-on, une prière contraire à celle d'Achille : il souhaite aux Athéniens de ne jamais se trouver dans une situation qui contraignît le peuple à se souvenir d'Aristide ». Aristide refuse donc le parallélisme avec ce comportement d'Achille.

Dans d'autres contextes, le parallèle épique, sans être dépréciatif, n'a pas pour effet de rehausser le portrait d'un grand homme. Ainsi la correspondance que voit Plutarque entre l'attitude hébétée de Pompée devant la déroute de ses troupes et celle d'Ajax : « Son attitude correspondait tout à fait à celle que décrivent les vers suivants : < Et alors Zeus le Père, assis dans les hauteurs, fit lever la terreur sur Ajax qui soudain s'arrêta stupéfait, rejetant en arrière son bouclier cousu avec sept peaux de bœufs. Il parcourut des yeux la foule et il trembla > (*Il.*, 11, 544). Tel était l'état de Pompée lorsqu'il regagna sa tente » (*Pomp.* 72.2). On est loin, ici, de la comparaison avec le héros homérique dans toute sa splendeur. Dans la *Vie de Coriolan* (22, 4), Plutarque raconte comment le héros se rend incognito chez Tullus Attius, qui le déteste : « Il s'habilla donc et s'équipa de manière à n'être pas reconnu par ceux qui le verraient, et, comme Ulysse, < Il se glissa dans la ville des ennemis > (*Od.*, 4, 246) ». Coriolan,

67 *Vie de Pompée*, 29, 5. Ce n'est pas sans ironie que Plutarque reprend ces vers, dans le *Du bavardage* (509A-B), à propos d'un bavard impénitent.

68 *Vie de Brutus*, 24, 6, avec citation de *Il.*, 16, 849 et 34, 6, avec citation de *Il.*, 1, 259 ; *Vie de Tiberius Gracchus*, 21, 7, avec citation de *Od.*, 1, 47.

69 *Vie de Camille*, 13, 1, avec allusion à *Iliade* 1, 338-344.

ici, n'a de commun avec Ulysse que sa ruse.⁷⁰ Au tout début de la *Vie de Marcellus* (1, 4), enfin, Plutarque reprend les mots d'Ulysse au sujet des Romains: «Si en effet la divinité, comme dit Homère, a donné pour destin à certains hommes <de dévider le fil des guerres douloureuses depuis leurs jeunes ans jusque dans leur vieillesse> (*Il.*, 14, 86–7), ce fut bien le cas des Romains qui étaient alors à la tête de leur cité [...]». Plutarque, ici, ne rappelle pas que c'est Ulysse qui parle des épreuves endurées par les Achéens et ne compare pas explicitement les Romains à ces derniers: il présente ces vers comme une sorte de *gnômè*, où Homère évoquerait le destin de «certains hommes» (ἄλλοις τισὶν ἀνθρώποις).

A ces passages peu nombreux, il convient d'en ajouter un dernier, et non des moindres. Il ne s'agit plus d'un rapprochement entre un Romain et un Grec: cette fois, c'est Plutarque lui-même qui, par le jeu des citations, se rapproche d'un Troyen. Je songe ici aux lignes célèbres qui ouvrent la *Vie de Timoléon*: «Si, moi, j'ai commencé à composer ces biographies, ce fut d'abord pour faire plaisir à d'autres, mais c'est maintenant pour moi-même que je persévère dans ce dessein et m'y complais: l'histoire des grands hommes est comme un miroir que je regarde pour tâcher en quelque mesure de régler ma *Vie* et de la conformer à l'image de leurs vertus. M'occuper d'eux, c'est, ce me semble, comme si j'habitais et vivais avec eux, lorsque, recevant pour ainsi dire tour à tour chacun d'eux sous mon toit, grâce à l'histoire, et le gardant chez moi, je considère <comme il fut grand et beau> (*Il.*, 24, 630), et lorsque je choisis parmi ses actions les plus importantes et les plus belles à connaître». Au chant 24 de *l'Iliade*, après avoir mangé, Priam et Achille se regardent longuement et s'admirent réciproquement. C'est précisément le regard admiratif que Priam pose sur celui qui lui a pris son fils, sur «le meilleur des Achéens», que Plutarque choisit de reprendre dans ce passage essentiel. Eût-on pu rêver plus belle image de la *symbiôsis* du biographe et des héros dont il écrit la *Vie*? En choisissant cette scène dans le chant de la réconciliation, Plutarque montre qu'on peut cesser de voir l'autre comme un adversaire, et admirer en lui le grand homme. Un tel passage, loin de ruiner l'hypothèse qui a guidé cette étude, vient souligner la spécificité de l'approche de Plutarque. Tous les héros des *Vies*, sans distinction de *génos*, bénéficient de la comparaison avec Achille, signe, sans doute, que l'excellence célébrée est toute grecque. Grecs et Romains peuvent se rejoindre autour d'un même idéal, mais d'un idéal hellénique – au point que celui qui est pour nous un des meilleurs représentants de l'hellénisme peut, devant cette noblesse en définitive toute grecque qui l'occupe dans ses *Vies* et qui force le respect, avoir la même admiration que le vieux Priam devant le grand Achille. C'est, à mon avis, le sens de cette référence: si Plutarque est le seul Grec, dans les *Vies*, à être

70 Comparer avec *Vie de Lysandre*, 20, 5.

associé, par le biais d'une citation homérique, à un Troyen, c'est pour montrer que cet héroïsme force le respect. En tout cas, ce passage confirme l'idée que Plutarque, d'une certaine manière, conçoit les grands hommes dont il écrit les *Vies* à la façon des héros d'Homère.

Conclusion

Au terme de cette étude, il me semble que l'hypothèse de départ a été vérifiée : par le jeu des références homériques, et dans les deux parties de son œuvre, Plutarque associe les grands hommes qu'a comptés la Grèce – parmi lesquels il range Alexandre – aux Grecs de *Illiade*, et les Romains, aux Troyens. Un tel emploi des références homériques n'a rien de polémique : Plutarque s'arroge simplement le droit de rappeler, d'une façon discrète – et même si discrète qu'elle n'a guère retenu l'attention, jusqu'à présent –, qu'en dépit de tout ce qui les rapproche, un Romain ne sera jamais un Grec. S'il analyse avec lucidité les avantages que les Grecs retirent de l'Empire, il ne se départit jamais de sa fierté hellénique. Et l'on peut même se demander si Homère ne lui a pas permis, d'une certaine manière, de sortir de l'impasse que constituait le système binaire Grec *vs* Barbare. La généalogie n'est plus un outil polémique aux mains d'un auteur hostile aux Romains, mais le moyen de défendre une certaine conception de l'hellénisme en remontant à cette source de la *paideia* qu'est Homère. De même que ce dernier a chanté les deux camps qui s'affrontaient dans la guerre de Troie, Plutarque écrit l'histoire de deux grands peuples qui n'ont pas le même *génos*, mais qui peuvent se rejoindre autour d'un même idéal d'accomplissement de l'homme. En d'autres termes, le Romain n'est pas l'Autre – le Barbare –, mais il reste un autre.

Un tel usage des références homériques montre la toute puissance de la *paideia*. Si les études consacrées à l'utilisation d'Homère à l'époque impériale sont nombreuses, il manque encore une étude exhaustive sur l'utilisation de la légende troyenne à cette époque (voir Chausson). Elle permettrait pourtant de mieux apprécier la subtilité des rapports entre la Grèce et Rome. Comme le rappelle L. Pernot, l'adhésion à l'empire ne se fait pas sans restriction, y compris quand on se livre à un éloge de Rome :⁷¹ la légende troyenne est

71 Pernot 1997, 10–12, et notamment la conclusion de l'Avant-propos : « Aristide et le Pseudo-Aristide, pour leur part, au moment même où ils reconnaissent l'incommensurable supériorité de Rome, affirment leur patriotisme grec. Ceci d'ailleurs sans acrimonie, sans revendication, sans nostalgie, mais tranquillement, subtilement, et avec une claire conscience des avantages de la situation. Les sujets sont tout ensemble loyaux, reconnaissants – et fiers. Ils disent aux Romains : « Vous êtes nos maîtres, mais vous êtes nos élèves. » Les éloges grecs de Rome étendent sur la Ville leur empire rhétorique ».

notablement absente du discours d'Ælius Aristide *En l'honneur de Rome*.⁷² L'association de Troie à la barbarie se retrouve chez Dion Chrysostome⁷³ et chez Athénée.⁷⁴ Si la constance d'emploi relevée chez Plutarque ne se retrouve pas dans le discours *En l'honneur de Rome*, où Ælius Aristide utilise pour les Romains des citations qui se rapportent, chez Homère, aux Achéens, l'enquête mériterait d'être menée sur l'ensemble des auteurs de la Seconde Sophistique.

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72 Pernot 1997, 11: «Qu'on n'attende aucune mention de Romulus, des Scipions, de César ou d'Auguste. Mis à part une allusion détournée à Enée (par l'intermédiaire d'Homère), le silence est total sur les hommes illustres qui ont fait la puissance de Rome». En particulier, Ælius Aristide a omis un des *topoi* de l'éloge: celui de l'origine (Pernot 1997, 26).

73 Dans le Second discours sur la royauté (§ 52) de Dion Chrysostome, le passage du *De audiendis poetis* (29D) opposant le comportement de Grecs et celui des barbares se retrouve à peu près tel quel.

74 *Deipnosophistes*, I, 16b; XI, 461cd et 481e; XIII, 556d.

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Moralia in the *Lives*:
Tragedy and Theatrical Imagery in Plutarch's *Pompey*

Diotima Papadi

One tends to look into the *Moralia* for examples of Plutarch's views on poetry, or his uses of theatrical language. There is indeed quite a big amount of quotations from tragic poets, and Plutarch comments on them developing a dynamic relationship with the tragic poets and with their words, by accepting, rebutting or amending them according to the specific purpose of the essay. Yet, in the *Lives* it is rather the theatrical imagery, the theatrical scenes than the direct use of tragic citations in which one finds analogies to tragedy and the theatrical world, and in this sense 'theatricality' and the 'tragic' are here subtler and more complex notions than in the *Moralia*.

The *Life of Pompey*, which lies at the heart of the present paper, is an interesting example where both explicit theatrical references and tragic metaphors are employed by Plutarch to describe important moments and characters. The 'theatrical' atmosphere of the *Life* is even more emphasised by the 'visual' setting of scenes, which transfers events and characters to the context of a theatrical performance, as it were. Like other *Lives* – *Antony*, *Demetrius*, *Alexander*, *Pyrrhus*, *Marius*, *Crassus*, and *Themistocles*¹ – *Pompey* is full of theatrical elements, tragic value, subversions and dramatic tension. It is not just the air of a personality which is rich in tragic conflicts at which Plutarch hints straight from the beginning of this *Life* (in the anecdotes about his personal life),² but there is also a theatrical atmosphere, reinforced by all those instances which Plutarch stages as if putting on a play, that makes *Pompey* so rich in theatrical moments and dramatic power, especially in its second half. There, self-destructive actions and external adverse factors co-operate in a nexus which leads Pompey to disaster. Tragedy will no longer contrast with reality, but it will rather specify it and finally take over Pompey's reality.

1 Those *Lives* have been thoroughly discussed, with a special focus on their dramatic value by De Lacy, Wardman, Mossman 1988 and 1992, Braund 1993 and 1997, Zadorojnyi, Pelling 1988 and 2002b; see also generally Fuhrmann, esp. 241 ff., and others.

2 See the anecdote about his relationship with Flora (chap. 2): although he loved her he passed her over to his friend Geminius. For more on Pompey's marriages, and their connection with the rise and fall of Pompey, see Stadter, esp. pp. 233–35, and Beneker 2005b.

So, in the second half of the *Life*, and as the signs of Pompey's tragic downfall become clearer, the tragic atmosphere is prevailing and the theatrical vocabulary is more often employed to describe Pompey's course to his end. There are actually scenes that are set as theatrical, as it were. After Caesar had decided to confront Pompey's troops we are told that his men were enthusiastic at his decision and were eagerly drawn up for battle, like the members of a chorus: (68.7) ὥσπερ χορός, ἄνευ θορύβου μεμελετημένως εἰς τάξιν καὶ πρῶως καθίσταντο. The simile is lucid, and the theatrical image (ὥσπερ χορός) efficient and vivid. Pelling rightly remarks that the whole image is close to tragedy, with Plutarch's style and imagery adopting an appropriate tone.³ A visual image is combined with theatrical vocabulary to produce a theatrical effect that transposes theatre into real-life. Chapter 70, too, where bystanders are reflecting on human blindness and greed, presents strong similarities to a choral ode.⁴ A crowd that ponders on flaws of the human nature can be compared to a tragic chorus who is making reflections on similar issues on stage, and invites the audience to do the same; this is at least the image to which Plutarch alludes and projects on these Greek and Roman people which are not taking part in the war but are deeply concerned about their future. The parallel becomes even more explicit if one thinks that it is typical of a tragic chorus to be less closely involved in the emotions than the principals, but directly affected by the outcome of what is happening on stage.⁵

The same simile taken from the theatrical world (ὥσπερ χορός) was again used at an earlier instance. When Pompey was accused by Clodius for devoting much of his time to his wife and neglecting public affairs, Clodius used, both his popularity at the time, and the opportunity offered to him at a court case where Pompey was also present, to publicly reproach him with several accusations.⁶ He posed questions such as: 'Who is a licentious imperator?', and 'What man seeks for a man?'. Such questions would fill people with anger against Pompey. The crowd, like a chorus trained in responsive song, shouted out to each question the same answer: 'Pompey':

3 Pelling 1980=2002a, 101.

4 Pelling, *ibidem*.

5 Cf. Gould, who explains how this particularity of the marginalised tragic chorus allows them to see the truth and have more appropriate views on different issues than those who are too close to the events to see clearly.

6 By this time Clodius had started using his own power and popularity to destroy Pompey, whereas before he was his companion. Examples of the action he took against him are listed in the paragraph preceding this incident described: he sent Cicero to exile, and Cato off to Cyprus, thus interfering with Pompey's eastern settlement; he took away Tigranes, Pompey's prisoner, by force; he prosecuted some of Pompey's friends, and tried to repeal some of his political measures which were taken to please the people (48.9–10). See again Pelling 1980=2002a, 98–100, who remarks that Plutarch's treatment of Clodius is a further aspect to Pompey's tragedy (p. 98).

(48.12) οἱ δ' ὥσπερ χορὸς εἰς ἀμοιβαῖα συγκεροτημένους, ἐκείνου τὴν τήβεννον ἀνασειόντος ἐφ' ἐκάστῳ μέγα βοῶντες ἀπεκρίναντο· 'Πομπήϊος'.

And they, like a chorus trained in responsive song, as he shook his toga, would answer each question by shouting out 'Pompey'.

It may be true that some of the incidents which Plutarch describes relate to what historically happened. That is to say, it is possible that some stage-managing and orchestration by people (politicians, generals, orators, etc.) in public life actually went on in those years (like Clodius is doing here). But it is perhaps only due to Plutarch's literary technique that the reader is invited to think that politicians of that time saw their public life as a performance on stage, as it were. The fact that in some cases we may be in a position to know that what Plutarch describes in theatrical light did not necessarily happen in that way, makes all the clearer Plutarch's technique of creating theatrical atmosphere out of his non-theatrical material.

In the last chapters of *Pompey* (chap. 70–80), and as we are approaching Pompey's end, theatrical imagery runs through all the important moments of the general's life and of the circle of people around him. At the same time, what might have been sensed before as ominous and as a sign which was foreboding disaster, now comes true. 'Tragedy' invades and pervades Pompey's reality. After the defeat of Pompey's infantry (72.1), Plutarch tries to understand why Pompey just walked away from the camp.⁷ He says, 'it is very difficult to say what thoughts passed through his mind' at that very moment (ὅ μὲν ἐχρήσατο λογισμῶ χαλεπὸν εἰπεῖν). To the reader's surprise, a few lines further down (73.1–2), Plutarch speaks as if he knew what crossed Pompey's mind – one notices the repetition of the word λογισμός here, referring to his calculations, as is also the word ἐννοούμενον:

(73.1) Πομπήϊος δὲ [...] ἀπήει καθ' ἡσυχίαν, ἐν διαλογισμοῖς ὧν οἴους εἰκὸς λαμβάνειν ἀνθρώπων ἔτη τέτταρα καὶ τριάκοντα νικᾶν καὶ κρατεῖν ἀπάντων εἰθισμένον, ἡττητῆς δὲ καὶ φυγῆς τότε πρῶτον ἐν γήρᾳ λαμβάνοντα πείραν, (73.2) ἐννοούμενον δ' ἔξ ὅσων ἀγῶνων καὶ πολέμων ἠύξημένην ἀποβαλὼν ὥρα μᾶ δόξαν καὶ δύναμιν, [ἦ] πρὸ μικροῦ τοσοῦτοις ὄπλοις καὶ ἵπποις καὶ στόλοις δορυφορούμενος, ἀπέρχεται μικρὸς οὕτω γεγρονῶς καὶ συνεσταλμένος, ὥστε λανθάνειν ζητοῦντας τοὺς πολεμίους.

But Pompey [...] went quietly away, indulging in such reflections as a man would naturally make who for thirty-four years had been accustomed to conquer and get the mastery in everything, and who now for the first time, in his old age, got experience of defeat and flight; he thought how in a single hour he had lost the power and glory gained in so many wars and conflicts, he who a little while ago was guarded by such an array of infantry and horse, but was now going away so

7 Contrast here Agesilaus' attitude: although wounded, he refused to retire to his tent (*Ages.* 19.1).

insignificant and humbled as to escape the notice of the enemies who were in search of him. (73.1–2)

What seems to trouble Plutarch here, at 73.1–2, is the reason why Pompey withdrew without saying anything and without being able to do what the situation required. However, the situation does not concern only Pompey the Great and his failure to behave as somebody who deserves his title. The issue involves all those great leaders and epic heroes, like Ajax, who failed to act as such. The example of Ajax is explicitly mentioned by Plutarch in the following lines (72.2),⁸ offering a direct parallel to Pompey's decision to withdraw, since Ajax, too, was taken by fear at the Trojan troops' sight and retreated, unable to defend both his name and fame. Plutarch creates the image of a tragic hero, as it were, who self-destructs. At the same time he encourages the reader to look inside Pompey himself, into his own character, words and deeds, in order to explain his downfall, while putting aside the role of the people around him, a kind of 'supporting actors'.

Not only does Plutarch implicitly invite us to think of Pompey in tragic terms, but he also quotes directly from tragic plays. Pompey's withdrawal both offers another example of passivity and signals the course towards his end. The defeated emperor was finally taken on board by a man called Peticus, who provided him with all he needed. Moreover, one of Pompey's attendants, who was a free man, behaved to him as if he were his slave, letting Pompey live the illusion that he was still his master (73.4–11). It seems that a kind of acting on both sides is going on here. The attendant is playing the role of Pompey's slave, and Pompey himself pretends to be still the king. The role-playing transposes the scene from the real world into the theatrical world. The attendant even washed his feet and prepared his meals thinking perhaps that 'to generous souls every task seems noble' (φεῦ τοῖσι γενναίοισιν ὡς ἅπαν καλόν) (fr. 961) (73.11),⁹ a tragic verse which Plutarch quotes from Euripides, and which gives at this stage even stronger tragic texture to Pompey's life and career.

Direct quotations from tragic plays, like this one, show that in Pompey there is, beyond the theatrical background, an explicit connection between the *Life* and the 'tragic'. Pompey cites Sophocles at one of the most crucial moments of his life (78.7), when he sees his wife for the last time, adding thus more dramatic tension to the scene. The lines are from an unknown play of Sophocles (TGF, p. 316):

8 The quotation is verbally reproduced from Homer, *Iliad* 11.544–6.

9 The same line is again quoted at 85A of *On Progress in Virtue*, where some examples of virtuous people are given and it is argued that such people always need to be honoured.

ὅστις δὲ πρὸς τύραννον ἐμπορεύεται,
κείνου ἴστί δοῦλος, κἂν ἐλεύθερος μὴ.

Anyone who goes to traffic with a tyrant
is his slave, even if he goes there free.

Although the formerly powerful imperator finds, at last, shelter – however, in words only – in Ptolemy's land, and freely decides to embark on his boat,¹⁰ he realises that, after he will have done that, he will be a slave in Ptolemy's hands, and a pawn in the hands of Fate.¹¹ As Pompey approaches his tragic end, he resembles tragic heroes (like Ajax) more often than before and sets himself, with his words and actions, into a Greek tragedy context. It is within this context that he remembers the Sophoclean lines quoted above, which reveal his inner conflicts and feelings at that moment. It is certainly not without importance that his last words to his friends and wife are quoted from Sophocles. Pompey is clearly aware of the tragic implications of his 'submission' to Ptolemy. Plutarch, too, encourages us to think about this moment as the start of the last 'act' of *Pompey*, firstly, by putting in some tragic lines, and secondly, by describing Cornelia as already lamenting Pompey's death, fully aware of the approaching end: προαποθρηνοῦσαν αὐτοῦ τὸ τέλος (78.7). One notices the mirroring of the story-denouement in Plutarch's choice of words. Cornelia is lamenting in advance as Plutarch is disclosing Pompey's end in advance. This 'lamenting in advance for somebody who is still alive' alludes to a common topos in tragedy, or epic, which Plutarch's learned reader can easily recognise: Hecuba (*Il.* 24, 200–216) is weeping for Priam while he is still alive; Andromache does the same for Hector (*Il.* 405 ff.); Antigone (*Ant.* 839–51, 858–71, 891–928), or Polyxena (*Hec.* 402 ff.), too, lament for their own death in advance. The downfall of Pompey has a strong impact on those closest to him, as it also has an impact on the state. The same point about the *oikos* and its relation to the state is made in *Caesar*, where Pompey's mourning of Julia's death and the break of the link between himself and Caesar (which was achieved via Julia), becomes a sign of the political upheaval to follow and of their personal conflict.

Plutarch does not refrain from describing Pompey's downfall from another angle too, that of the circle of people surrounding him, since those are equally affected. His wife, Cornelia, after finding out from a messenger Pompey's sufferings, throws herself onto the ground and laments, thus generating an

10 'Freely', in the sense that nobody really forces him to do so, but in reality he is forced by the circumstances; he has reached an impasse and has no other choice.

11 Cf. 75.4, where he is taken by metaphysical fears, as it were, and expresses his worries on philosophical matters, such as the role of Providence – he questions his fair treatment by Providence, and complains about it in a friendly discussion with the philosopher Cratippus. On *tyche* and providence in Plutarch see, among others, Swain.

authentic tragic scene. The scene is rich in emotions, and the characters involved are overwhelmed by their feelings for the disaster which has struck them. Even the messenger delivers his speech in tears (74.3). He seems to play the role of the messenger who appears in tragedies towards the end of the play to give details of something, usually bad, which happened off stage and which the characters on stage (here, Cornelia) are ignorant of.¹² Cornelia cannot believe her misfortunes and the serious impasse to which her husband has come, and remains speechless for quite a long time (ἡ δ' ἀκούσασα προήκατο μὲν αὐτὴν χαμᾶζε καὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἔκφρων καὶ ἄναυδος ἔκειτο) (74.4).¹³

This first part of the scene, in which Cornelia throws herself to the ground, presents significant analogies to tragedy. Plutarch helps us understand the scene in theatrical terms by the vocabulary he employs in his vivid description of Cornelia, evoking feelings among his readers, partly by the stirring visual image and partly by the actual disaster that has caused Cornelia's laments. A parallel which comes to mind is Euripides' *Hecuba*. There the protagonist also throws herself to the ground, covers her head with her clothes as a way of lamenting (vv. 486–7: (chorus) αὐτὴ πέλας σου νῶτ' ἔχουσ' ἐπὶ χθονί, / Ταλθύβιε, κέϊται συγκεκλημένη πέπλοις – There, close to you, on the ground outstretched, Talthybius, lies she muffled in her robes), and lies there for some time (from v. 438 to v. 500), unable to believe the new misfortune that has fallen upon her. Hecuba laments over her daughter's fate (Polyxena), and about her own fate, bereft of children and of any divine or human (here, Odysseus') mercy. She will raise herself from the ground, only to find out the details of her daughter's brave death. Cornelia, too, in the second part of the scene, regains her senses after some time, realising that this is not the time for tears and lamentations, but time to proceed to action. The connection may be not explicit, yet the similarities between the Cornelia-scene and the Hecuba-scene are poignant and lend to the Plutarchan scene some tragic value.

12 (74.3): ἐν τούτοις οὔσαν αὐτὴν καταλαβὼν ὁ ἄγγελος ἀσπᾶσασθαι μὲν οὐχ ὑπέμεινε τὰ δὲ πλεῖστα καὶ μέγιστα τῶν κακῶν τοῖς δάκρυσι μᾶλλον ἢ τῇ φωνῇ φράσας [...] (The messenger, finding her in this mood, could not bring himself to salute her, but indicated to her the most and greatest misfortunes by his tears rather than by his speech [...]). De Jong in her book on the Euripidean message-scenes brings out how often the messenger's presentation and own reaction are important and influence other characters' reaction on stage. The messenger-speech, as 'narrative' and 'drama', awakens emotions in other characters and also among the audience. See pp. 77–78, 105, 108–110, 115, 136–139, 173–177.

13 The word χαμᾶζε is again found in a genuine tragic context, in Euripides' *Bacchae*, v. 633.

Pompey's murder is charged with a special theatrical tone.¹⁴ As the boat with Pompey, a few attendants, and his future killers is rowed in silence to the shore, Pompey tries to be friendly breaking the silence and addressing Septimius – an old familiar and comrade-in-arms – but gets no response. So he takes his roll with the speech which he had prepared to deliver to Ptolemy, written in Greek (79.2–3). The tragic irony is evident; the dark atmosphere prevailing gives the reader a hint that the speech will not be used. Silence and anxiety together, mainly on the side of the viewers, illustrate that the situation is beyond control. Cornelia, naturally chosen by Plutarch as the most important person among the viewers to focus on, is full of anxiety about what is going to happen next. For a minute anxiety gives place to hope, when she notices all those people of the king gathering at the shore, as if they were to give an honourable welcome to Pompey. But soon the positive picture is again reversed – a kind of tragic *peripeteia*? The time for the final act in Pompey's life has come. Septimius approaches Pompey and runs him through with his sword; Salvius, and then Achilles also stab him. Ironically enough, now, that he has lost all his power, Pompey behaves as a true emperor. He endures their blows with patience and in silence, 'without an act or a word that was unworthy of himself, but with a groan merely', remarks Plutarch, 'after drawing his toga down over his face with both hands', a very theatrical scene: ὁ δὲ ταῖς χερσὶν ἀμφοτέραις τὴν τήβεννον ἐφελκυσάμενος κατὰ τοῦ προσώπου, μηδὲν εἰπὼν ἀνάξιον ἑαυτοῦ μηδὲ ποιήσας, ἀλλὰ στενάξας μόνον, ἐνεκαρτέρησε ταῖς πληγαῖς (79.5);¹⁵ the scene has its parallel in *Hecuba*, where Polyxena covers her face and silently follows Odysseus to her death (*Hec.* 432–7: κόμιζ', Ὀδυσσεῦ, μ' ἀμφιθεῖς κάρα πέπλους...– Muffle my head, Odysseus, and lead on...). The parallel may not be direct but if the initial tragic context of the scene is recalled, then Pompey's end is cast under a tragic light that presents him as a Euripidean character, as it were.

There is a different use of 'tragedy' and its implications much earlier in the *Life*, when Plutarch refers to Pompey's enmity to Lucullus, which drove him to extreme action in many cases. He wanted either to show that Lucullus had no authority at all, or just to satisfy his base ambition that he could interfere with Lucullus' settlements and even subvert them (31.2).¹⁶ He also used to

14 Cf. Pelling 1980=2002a, 111 n. 24. Pelling remarks that in describing Pompey's death Plutarch uses an extremely visual technique, 'describing events from the viewpoint of Cornelia and the rest of Pompey's followers, still at sea'.

15 Compare *Caes.* 66.6.

16 The harshness which Pompey showed towards Lucullus can easily be paralleled to Agesilaus' treatment of Lysander. In *Ages.* 7 Plutarch stresses how annoyed and irritated Agesilaus was about Lysander's popularity among the people and success as a commander in Asia Minor before him. He was also too ambitious and competitive not

belittle Lucullus' achievements, declaring that he had waged war against kings from dramas and paintings, whereas the real enemy, Mithridates, was left to him to fight:¹⁷

(31.10) διασύρων τὰ ἔργα ἐμφανῶς ἔλεγε τραγωδίαις καὶ σκιαγραφίαις πεπολημέναις βασιλικαῖς τὸν Λεύκολλον, αὐτῷ δὲ πρὸς ἀληθινὴν καὶ σεσωφρονισμένην τὸν ἀγῶνα λείπεσθαι δύναμιν.

He would belittle the achievements of Lucullus, declaring that he had waged war against kings from dramas and paintings, while to himself there was now left the struggle against a real military force.

The explicit reference to tragedy and painting (τραγωδίαις καὶ σκιαγραφίαις) to signify the fake danger which Lucullus sees and fights, makes the reader recall the dramatic context, and think about the dispute between Pompey and Lucullus in theatrical terms. The contradiction between tragedy and reality may be only implicit, but is nonetheless intriguing. The kings of the tragic myths are juxtaposed to the real enemy, king Mithridates and his troops. The former can only be a fictitious danger, but Mithridates is the true, lurking danger.

Pompey, sometime after his third triumph in 61, started building the famous and beautiful theatre of Rome (40.9). He also had the chance to attend the traditional poetic contest, which took place in this theatre and had as its one theme his exploits. Pompey's life has become a theme of art, and this, while he is still alive.¹⁸ It is impressive that a great, living personality offers material (his actual life and career) for dramatic productions. There is an interesting detail at the opening of Pompey's theatre in Rome. Apart from the athletic and musical contests which Pompey held, there was a combat of wild beasts. The most terrifying spectacle was an elephant duel (52.9). Cassius Dio (*Rom. Hist.* 39.38.2) mentions eighteen elephants, not two. Plutarch's deviation from Cassius Dio may not be accidental. The battle between two elephants may be understood as a hint for the upcoming personal conflict between Caesar and Pompey, a truly terrifying conflict.¹⁹ Already from its opening day Pompey's theatre itself is not presented as the place for celebrations and performances only, but also as a place for battles. Thus the reader may see in this battle-picture something dark and ominous which is connected to Pompey's fate at the tragedy of Pharsalus. Apart from the allusion to Pompey's fate, the battle-image includes a cross-*Life* hint to the killing of Caesar, too. At the end of the Caesar Plutarch describes in every detail the

to fear that any success he might achieve would be easily attributed to his popular predecessor, Lysander (7.4). See also *Lys.* 23, and the relevant discussion of Meriani.

17 On Pompey's command against Mithridates and the reallocation of the East see Seager, 44–55, Kallet-Marx, and Hoff.

18 Another example of the stage-management theme made earlier in this chapter.

19 Cf. Beneker 2005a, 320.

scene of Caesar's murder (66.1 ff.): it all happened in front of a statue of Pompey, in a building which was attached by him to his theatre. In fact, Plutarch says, it seemed that a higher power was responsible for what happened there. There are two striking details in Plutarch's description of Caesar's murder; the one is that Cassius, just before the attack started, looked at Pompey's statue as if invoking his approval and aid; and the other one is that, after being violently struck by his assassins, Caesar fell to the ground by the pedestal of the statue of Pompey, drenching it with blood, so that it seemed that Pompey himself was leading the attack and taking revenge on his rival. The link between theatre and death is certainly one to keep in mind.

Although he presents at times Pompey as a leader who was not able to defend his name and carry out his own decisions, Plutarch never really lets us forget how exceptional he was. This is made clear, for example, earlier, at the ceremony where he was acknowledged the right to move directly from a knight to a consul. Plutarch sees the ceremony as a spectacle (θέαμα) – the word θέαμα at 22.4 may also imply that Pompey's way of entering the forum was itself spectacular and unexpected, since the people, we are told, were very impressed to watch a general who had achieved two triumphs coming back as an ordinary man, obeying the laws and being even prepared to disband his army in order to show his devotion to the people (see 21.7):

(22.4) ἡδιστον δὲ θέαμα τῷ δήμῳ παρέσχευ αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν τὴν στρατείαν παραιτούμενος.

But the most agreeable of all spectacles was that which he afforded the people when he appeared in person and solicited his discharge from military service. (22.4)

One could rightly ask oneself here whether the strong visuality of the passage is itself enough to suggest theatricality. As I will show in the following examples, the connection between visuality and theatricality is not direct and exclusive, but the *theama*-language easily suggests theatrical background and makes the 'tragic' come to feel all the more natural. So, at 22.4 the implications of this kind of spectacle are not directly related to the 'tragic', but the passage still suggests an important point here: all these other sorts of 'spectacle' will give way to tragic θεάματα at the end of the *Life* (chap. 73 ff.), where Pompey appears as a tragic hero, who has suddenly lost everything, a very sad θέαμα indeed.

Plutarch introduces the scene by presenting in full detail what was the custom to happen in such a procedure:

(22.5) ἔθος γὰρ ἔστι Ῥωμαίων τοῖς ἵππεῦσιν, ὅταν στρατεύωνται τὸν νόμιμον χρόνον, ἄγειν εἰς ἀγορὰν τὸν ἵππον ἐπὶ τοὺς δύο ἄνδρας οὓς τιμητὰς καλοῦσι [...].

(22.6) τότε δὴ προεκάθητο μὲν οἱ τιμηταὶ Γέλλιος καὶ Λέντλος ἐν κόσμῳ, καὶ πάροδος ἦν τῶν ἵππέων ἐξεταζομένων, ὥφθη δὲ <καὶ> Πομπήιος ἄνωθεν ἐπ'

ἀγορὰν κατερχόμενος, τὰ μὲν ἄλλα παράσημα τῆς ἀρχῆς ἔχων, αὐτὸς δὲ διὰ χειρὸς ἄγων τὸν ἵππον.

(22.5) It is customary for a Roman knight, when he has served for the time fixed by law, to lead his horse into the forum before the two men who are called censors [...]. (22.6) At this time, then, the censors Gellius and Lentulus were sitting in state, and the knights were passing in review before them, when Pompey was seen coming down the descent into the forum, otherwise marked by the insignia of his office, but leading his horse with his own hand.

This is what usually happens, says Plutarch. But Pompey does not keep to the beaten track; he goes against the ἔθος. The scene has the impact of a theatrical scene (22.6–9) – one notices the word πάροδος, which is reminiscent of the theatrical *parodos*, the entrance of the chorus on stage. The word is used again in the *Political Precepts*, referring to the entrance of a person upon the stage of public life. The most glorious entrance, Plutarch says, is achieved when one revolts against a bad man who by shameless audacity and cunning has made the city subject to himself:

(805C–D) τὸ μέντοι φαῦλον ἄνθρωπον, ἀπνοοίᾳ δὲ καὶ δεινότητι πεπονημένον ὑφ' αὐτῷ τὴν πόλιν [...] ἐπαναστάντα καθελεῖν καὶ ταπεινώσασσι λαμπρὰν ποιεῖται τὴν πάροδον ὡσπερ δράματος τῆς πολιτείας.

On the other hand, to revolt against a bad man who by shameless audacity and cunning had made the city subject to himself [...] and to pull him down and humble him provides a glorious entrance upon the stage of public life. (805C–D)

Just before that, at 804D, Plutarch uses a simile from the theatrical world. He says that often the masses accept the ‘beginner’ in public life with enthusiasm, ‘just as spectators at a show are glad to accept a new performer’ (καὶ γὰρ δέχονται προθυμότερον οἱ πολλοὶ κόρῳ τινὶ πλησμονῇ τῶν συνήθων τὸν ἀρχόμενον, ὡσπερ ἀγωνιστὴν θεαταὶ [...]).²⁰ The theatrical vocabulary used at these two passages transfers us from the real (here, political) world to the world of theatre. The transferred use of *parodos* occurs elsewhere in the *Lives*, too. For example, when Plutarch refers to Alcibiades’ first entry into public life, he, strikingly, uses again the theatrical term *parodos* for ‘entry’: (*Alc.* 10.1) πρῶτην δ’ αὐτῷ πάροδον εἰς τὸ δημόσιον γενέσθαι λέγουσι.²¹ Alcibiades’ remarkable entry into politics is compared to the first appearance of the tragic chorus on stage. In all these passages the use of ‘*parodos*’ for ‘entry’ powerfully creates a visual image which presents a political procedure, that of the entrance of a

20 There is a relevant passage at *Pomp.* 14.4.: at Sulla’s refusal of Pompey celebrating a triumph, Pompey replied that, ‘More people worship the rising than the setting sun’, implying that Sulla’s power was fading away whereas his power was increasing.

21 Cf. *Demetr.* 34.6. Alcibiades’ entry into public life is described as accidental, as he becomes part of an assembly of the Athenian people (cf. the Athenian assembly in theatre at theatrical contests). On ‘tragic’ in this *Life*, see Duff, 221, and 236–240.

person onto political stage or, generally, into public life, in theatrical terms. The parallel drawn here between a theatrical image and public life reveals all the clearer another piece of the network of theatrical allusions which Plutarch uses.

Quite early in the *Life* it is mentioned that Pompey had already started to behave in a very authoritarian way, and the fear of a tyranny was spread among the people (τὴν δὲ δύναμιν τοῦ Πομπηίου βαρέως φέροντες ὡς τυραννίδα καϑισταμένην) (30.3).²² Although everybody could see the danger arising from this, Pompey was assigned new powers but, surprisingly, he did not react with delight. People already knew all about his thirst for power, and this is probably why they were not taken in by Pompey's ostensible reluctance to take on more responsibilities (30.6–7). They all, even his closest friends, regarded Pompey's reaction as disingenuous. Plutarch presents Pompey as an actor, a very bad one indeed, since he cannot even convince his closest friends that he is being honest and genuinely modest when uttering the following words:

(30.7) 'φεῦ τῶν ἀνηνύτων ἄθλων, ὡς ἄρα κρεῖττον ἦν ἓνα τῶν ἀδόξων γενέσθαι, εἰ μηδέποτε παύσομαι στρατευόμενος μηδὲ τὸν φθόνον τοῦτον ἐκδύς ἐν ἀγρῶ διαιτήσομαι μετὰ τῆς γυναικός'.

'Alas for my endless tasks! How much better it were to be an unknown man, if I am never to cease from military service, and cannot lay aside this load of envy and spend my time in the country with my wife.' (30.7)

The use of direct speech at this instance, which is otherwise fairly unusual in Plutarch, certainly makes the scene more dramatic and vivid.²³ The *oikos* at this instance, too, becomes once again a pointer to Pompey's downfall. The exaggerated *pathos* which Pompey shows here for his family life is negatively charged by Plutarch, and described as a sign of falsehood and pretentiousness.²⁴ Plutarch suggests that Pompey acts as if putting on a play; he is wearing the mask of modesty in order to hide his love for power and not excite greater animosity and anger among the people. But he is not convincing in his role. This false play-acting is for the moment the dominant sort of 'theatre' in

22 For the role of the *demos* and its political power in Plutarch see de Blois 1992, Pelling 1995, Prandi, and Saïd.

23 As Watkins remarks (p. 258), Plutarch 'combines detail of Pompey's expression, action (καὶ τὸν μῆρον πατάξαι) and the use of direct speech so as to make his narrative more immediate'. Cassius Dio (*Rom. Hist.* 36.45.1) also describes this scene, but with far less emphasis, which indicates that it is Plutarch's own choice to embellish their common, less dramatic source.

24 Exaggerated pathos, falsehood, theatrical ostentation, tragic or melodramatic twists, and the unreal, all describe here – as much as elsewhere, too – various forms of the 'theatrical' element, while at the same time their negative implications prepare for the downfall.

Pompey's life, but this of course will change by the end of the *Life*, where, as already seen, he becomes a true tragic character in his own life.

Visuality and tragic language which at the beginning of the *Life* point to phenomena which we might rather describe as histrionic and sensational are gradually overtaken by a true tragic feeling. That feeling emerges from human misfortunes and passions, so that Pompey presents, at points, strong similarities to tragic heroes – and this is perhaps the image which Plutarch wants his readers to have in mind when reading the *Life of Pompey*.

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Scholarship and Morality: Plutarch's Use of Inscriptions

Peter Liddel

In 1958, workmen digging the foundations for a home to the west of Theseion Square in Athens came across some ancient blocks. Amongst them was discovered an inscribed votive pillar of marble of *circa* 330 BC (later published as *SEG* xxii 116) recording a decree proposed by [He]gesippos son of Hegesias in honour of Neoptolemos, who had made a dedication to Artemis at the time when Chairylla was priestess of Artemis. By reference to Plutarch, the blocks were identified as the remains of the temple of Artemis Aristoboule, which, according to Plutarch, Themistocles had built near to his house in the Athenian city deme of Melite:¹

‘He gave offence to the people when he built the temple of Artemis, for not only did he style the goddess Artemis *Aristoboule*, or Artemis wisest in counsel – with the hint that it was he who had given the best counsel to the Athenians and the Greeks – but he chose a site for it near his own house at Melite.... A small statue of Themistocles used to stand in this temple of Artemis *Aristoboule* even down to my own times, and to judge by this he must have been a man not only of heroic spirit but of heroic appearance’ (*Themistocles* 22.1–2; cf. *Moralia* 869c).²

This passage is typical of Plutarch's style of autopsy-report, the aim of which is to highlight anything that contributes to an impression of the character under investigation. The inscribed dedications and honorary decrees which probably jostled for attention at the temple even at the time of Plutarch's visit were not mentioned by him because, for his purposes, the statue was the item that gave

1 Vanderpool and Threpsiades. This identification was contested: see Amandry.

2 All translations of Plutarch's *Lives* are those of Scott Kilvert 1960 and 1973. All translations of the *Moralia* are those of the Loeb Classical Library.

καὶ πρὸς τοὺς δυσχεραίνοντας ‘τί κοπιᾶτε’ εἶπεν ‘ὑπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν πολλάκις εὖ πάσχοντες;’ ἠνίασε δὲ τοὺς πολλοὺς καὶ τὸ τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος ἱερόν εισάμενος, ἦν Ἀριστοβούλην μὲν προσηγόρευσεν ὡς ἀριστα τῇ πόλει καὶ τοῖς Ἑλλησι βουλευσάμενος, πλησίον δὲ τῆς οἰκίας κατεσκεύασεν ἐν Μελίτῃ τὸ ἱερόν, οὗ νῦν τὰ σώματα τῶν θανατουμένων οἱ δῆμιοι προβάλλουσι καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια καὶ τοὺς βρόχους τῶν ἀπαγχονμένων καὶ καθαιρεθέντων ἐκφέρουσιν. ἔκειτο δὲ καὶ τοῦ Θεμιστοκλέους εἰκόνιον ἐν τῷ ναῷ τῆς Ἀριστοβούλης ἔτι καθ’ ἡμᾶς, καὶ φαίνεται τις οὐ τὴν ψυχὴν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ὄψιν ἥρωικὸς γενόμενος.

clearest insight into the character of Themistocles.³ Plutarch was uninterested in quoting or discussing inscriptions for their own sake. Indeed, recent scholarship, including Desideri's comprehensive review of the documents mentioned by Plutarch, has established Plutarch as only an 'armchair epigrapher' who more often than not relied on others' reports of inscriptions. Desideri and others have concluded that Plutarch recognized the value of documentary autopsy but was only occasionally moved to carry it out himself, most frequently at Athens and Delphi.⁴

So much for the negative side of the picture. The positive aspect is that in both the *Lives* and *Moralia*, Plutarch alludes to, discusses and quotes a range of Greek and Latin epigraphical categories, including, to name a few: inscriptions on statues (*Cato Major* 19.3), choregic tripod-bases and other dedications (*Nicias* 3.3; *Moralia* 398a, *Alexander* 16.8, *Titus Flamininus* 16.5); grave monuments (*Cato Minor* 11.2), political slogans (*Tiberius Gracchus* 8.10), laws (*Solon* 25.1) and boundary stones (*Theseus* 25.4). He is familiar with some technical aspects of epigraphy: for instance the appearance of the imprecation Ἄγαθῆ Τύχη at the head of a decree (*Moralia* 1035b); he is the first scholar to notice what David Lewis branded the 'entrenchment clause', forbidding the taking down of a document (*Pericles* 30.1; Lewis, 81–9), and he criticizes as slovenly the habit of recycling inscriptions as building materials (*Moralia* 85f–6a). Inscriptions in the *Lives* and *Moralia* play a variety of roles: they reveal the level of fame, *philotimia*, and wealth of an individual; they assert individual and community virtues to be emulated and vices to be avoided; they act as proofs in arguments or as evidence to substantiate an assertion (*Lycurgus* 1.2; *Aemilius Paulus* 15.6); they provide insight into those characters who read them, write them, and react to them (*Moralia* 330e–f; *Pompey* 27.3, *Demosthenes* 20.2, *Alexander* 69.2); they are instruments of magic, *hubris*, *nemesis* or even agents of divine intervention (*Themistocles* 8.2–3, *Aristides* 27.3, *Brutus* 8.3, *Fabius Maximus* 2.3, *Alexander* 17.2; *Moralia* 400e; *Antony* 60.6); inscriptions can be the key to riddles and can preserve epichoric understandings of words and phrases (*Moralia* 292b);⁵ they provide a starting point for philosophical inquiry (*Moralia* 116c, 384ff.); or a point of opening or closure for individual *Lives* (*Otho* 18.2, *Sulla* 38.4, *Themistocles* 1.1, *Aristides* 1.2, *Lycurgus* 1.2).

By the time that Plutarch was writing, antiquarian interest in epigraphy had left a legacy of writings that purposefully collected inscriptions or were heavily reliant on documentary and lapidary material. The most strongly

3 On Plutarch's use of statues to make characterizing points about his subjects, see Mossman 1991.

4 Desideri; Higbie; Buckle; Crespo Güemes.

5 Braun; Jacoby 1944.

epigraphical of ancient texts lacked the merit or fortune necessary to survive into modern times, but were popular as reference-works and were much-cited by travellers, historians and biographers in antiquity. Therefore it is no surprise that fragments of works on decrees, dedications, monuments and tripods such as the *Ψηφισμάτων συναγωγή* of Craterus, the *Περὶ τῶν ἀναθημάτων τῶν ἐν τῇ ἀκροπόλει* of Polemon of Ilium the *στηλοκόπας*, or the *Περὶ ἀκροπόλεων*, *Περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἀθήνησιν ἀναθημάτων*, *Περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἀθήνησιν τριπόδων*, and the *Περὶ μνημάτων* of Heliodorus of Athens are preserved in citations in extant authors.⁶

Inscriptions were recognized long before Plutarch's time as a means of recording the character and morality of an individual, not just by historians and intellectuals but also by proposers of honorary decrees. This is particularly evident from the end of the fourth century BC when honorary decrees inscribed on stone become longer and tend to detail more closely the praiseworthy actions of the honorand (cf. Rosen). Inscriptions were cited in the law-courts of the 330s BC as a way of trying to indicate that the morals of past generations were higher than those of the present (Aeschines 3.184–5; Lycurgus 1.109).⁷

This paper proposes that Plutarch employed inscriptions in a manner which reflects his familiarity with the use of epigraphical material in classical Greek literature. He values highly the application of epigraphical evidence in scholarly controversies, though he is cautious about launching interpretations on the basis of epigraphical evidence alone. In the *Lives*, his employment of inscriptions to demonstrate an understanding of the workings of *philotimia* in fifth- and fourth-century Athens leads him to say something from the epigraphical evidence about the morality of his characters; in the *Moralia*, this attitude towards inscriptions develops into a rigorously-pursued morality of epigraphy.⁸

6 Craterus, *FGtH* 342, F 1–8; Polemon of Ilium, *FHG* 3.108–48; Heliodorus of Athens, *FGtH* 373 F 1–3, 6–7. For other ancient epigraphical collections, see Boeckh i: vii–ix; Larfeld, i: 16–25.

7 The verses were later cited by Plutarch (with some textual variations, for which see Page, 255–9) in his discussion of Cimon's activities after the Persian Wars (Plut. *Cimon* 7). For the processes behind Aeschines' reception of the verses, and an explanation for the incorrect order in which they are quoted, see Jacoby 1945, 195–211, challenged by Gomme.

8 My argument is congruent with the recent tendency to lay stress on the moral aspects of the parallel lives: see Pelling 1988, Pelling 2002, Frazier 1996, Duff 1999, 52–71, Duff 1997.

I. Epigraphy and Scholarly Persuasion

From the fifth century onwards, a wide range of inscriptions were discussed and quoted in Greek literature in ways that do not appear 'systematic' to modern historians but rather as ornamental devices (cf. West), as ammunition in scholarly controversies (Marincola, 103), and to assert an impression of scholarly control over the evidence (Marincola, 104–5).

An inscription that exemplifies this tendency is the spectacular Serpent Column, a Greek thank-offering set up at Delphi at the end of the Persian wars. Herodotus, Thucydides, Apollodorus son of Pasion, Pausanias, Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch all mention the inscription, sometimes adding a new twist to the stories behind it. Apollodorus tells us that after Pausanias engraved his solipsistic epigram on the base of the monument, the Spartans were fined by the Amphictyonic League and had to be forced to erase the lines. Apollodorus hoped to increase his powers of persuasion by displaying an authoritative knowledge of Greek history through a knowledge of its documents. The document also provides a veiled criticism of Thucydides who says no more than that the Spartans erased the inscription immediately.⁹ As we shall see below, Plutarch cites the same inscribed dedication in his attack on Herodotus.

Historians too employed documents and inscriptions with polemic force. Theopompus claimed that the inscription recording the Peace of Callias was a forgery by pointing to its anachronistic letter-forms (*FGIh* 115 F 154). However, the most striking surviving piece of polemic is preserved in Polybius' attack on the historiographical methods of Timaius. Timaius, as Polybius reports, proudly cited epigraphical evidence in his onslaught on Aristotle's account of the origins of the Epizephyrian Locrians. According to Polybius, Timaius claims to have examined a stone recording the treaty between colony and the mother-city, and tries to replace other authors with this knowledge. Polybius attacks him, however, for failing to reveal the full name of the city in which he saw the inscription, the exact spot where it was set up and the identity of the person who showed him the document; he insinuates that Timaius has invented the document (*FGIh* 566 F 12; Polyb. 12.10–1). Polybius' point is that Timaius abuses the potential scholarly authority of inscriptions. Plutarch, however, is more careful: he is cautious in his use of epigraphical evidence to make points about history; however, he tends to use it with less caution, even vehemence, in scholarly polemic.

It is worth commenting on Plutarch's tendency to prioritize citation of epigraphical or documentary evidence. Stadter (109–23) has already argued that Plutarch preferred documentary evidence to the evidence of Thucydidean

9 The Serpent Column: Meiggs and Lewis no. 27; cf. Hdt. 8.82, 9.81; Th. 1.132; [D.] 59.97; Plut. *Mor.* 870e; Trevett.

orators whose speeches he did not consider genuine. In the 'Table-Talk', Plutarch explicitly praises inscriptional-based evidence. Inscriptions, via the praiseworthy records of the antiquarian Polemon, can be a more accessible source of knowledge than an obscure treatise like Acesander's *Libya* (*FGrH* 469 F 7). Having stated that Acastus, at the funeral of his father, held a contest of poetry at which the Sibyl won, he tells us:

"I was immediately fastened on by many, who demanded my authority for so incredible and paradoxical statement; luckily I remembered and told them that Acesander in his *Libya* has the tale. 'This reference,' I went on, 'is not generally accessible, but I know that many of you will be interested, as you ought to be, in consulting the account of the *Treasuries at Delphi* by Polemon of Athens, a man of wide learning, tireless and accurate in his study of Greek history. In that book you will find that in the Treasury of the Sicyonians was deposited a golden tablet dedicated by Aristomache of Erythrae, twice victor in epic verse at Isthmia" (*Moralia* 675b).¹⁰

Plutarch's belief that the epigraphist occupies a privileged position in the world of scholarship validates his use of epigraphy as a weapon in scholarly controversies and in the reconstruction of Greek history and biography. In the preface to the *Nicias*, he warns his readers that his subject has been incomparably dealt with by Thucydides. He promises that he will not try to outdo Thucydides in terms of descriptions of battles and speeches. Instead, his aim will be to collect items of interest that have eluded previous writers in the *Nicias*. Some of these are epigraphical:

'Certain facts, however, which have eluded most writers altogether, or have been mentioned only haphazardly by others, or are recorded only in decrees or in ancient votive inscriptions, I have tried to collect with care. In doing this my object is not to accumulate useless detail, but to hand down whatever may serve to make my subject's character and temperament better understood' (*Nicias*, 1.5).¹¹

Here Plutarch emphasizes his diligence in collecting inscriptions, in the hope that this will contribute to an understanding of Nicias' character. In the *Aristides*, Plutarch reveals awareness of the contentious nature of epigraphical interpretation in his discussion of the debate about whether the existence of

10 Ἐπιφουμένων δὲ πολλῶν καὶ τὸν βεβαιωτὴν ὡς ἀπίστου καὶ παραλόγου τῆς ἱστορίας ἀπαιτούντων, ἐπιτυχῶς ἠναμνησθεῖς ἀπέφαινον Ἀκέσανδρον ἐν τῷ περὶ Λιβύης ταῦθ' ἱστοροῦντα. 'καὶ τοῦτο μὲν' ἔφη 'τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα τῶν οὐκ ἐν μέσῳ ἐστίν· τοῖς δὲ Πολέμωνος τοῦ Ἀθηναίου περὶ τῶν ἐν Δελφοῖς θησαυρῶν οἶμαι [ὅτι] πολλοῖς ὑμῶν ἐντυγχάνειν ἐπιμελὲς ἐστί καὶ χρή, πολυμαθοῦς καὶ οὐ νυστάζοντος ἐν τοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς πράγμασιν ἀνδρός· ἐκεῖ τοίνυν εὐρήσετε γεγραμμένον, ὡς ἐν τῷ Σικωνίων θησαυρῷ χρυσοῦν ἀνέκειτο βιβλίον Ἀριστομάχης ἀνάθημα τῆς Ἐρυθραίας ἐπικῶ ... ποιήματι δις Ἴσθμια νενικηκίας'.

11 τὰ διαφεύγοντα τοὺς πολλοὺς, ὑφ' ἑτέρων δ' εἰρημένα σποράδην ἢ πρὸς ἀναθήμασιν ἢ ψηφίσμασιν εὐρημένα παλαιοῖς πεπείραμαι συναγαγεῖν, οὐ τὴν ἄχρηστον ἀθροίζουσαν ἱστορίαν, ἀλλὰ τὴν πρὸς κατανόησιν ἡθῶν καὶ τρόπου παραδιδούσαν.

choregic monuments bearing Aristides' name provide proof of his wealth. The problems, Plutarch realizes, are two-fold: poor men, such as Epaminondas and Plato the philosopher, were able to have their names recorded as *choregoi* when they themselves were sponsored by a benefactor; secondly, as Panaetius points out, the inscription may refer to a different Aristides of a later era (*Aristides*, 1.6). Plutarch leaves the debate unresolved, and the passage stands as an indication of Plutarch's caution in employing arguments from inscriptions.

But it is the in *De Herodoti Malignitate* where Plutarch most fully develops his use of inscriptions in scholarly polemic. In an important article, Stephanie West identified Herodotus as a pioneer in the use of epigraphical evidence, while showing that he puts inscriptions to largely ornamental use. However, in both the *Lives* and in the *De Malignitate*, one of Plutarch's charges against Herodotus is his ignorance of inscriptions. In his description of Plataia in the *Aristides* (19.6), he quotes an inscribed altar to argue, against Herodotus, that in addition to the Athenians, the Tegeans and Spartan also challenged the Persians at Plataia. The most sustained attack on Herodotus occurs in the *De Malignitate*. In this work, Plutarch considerably reinforces his attack on Herodotus by reference to his ignorance of key epigrams and inscriptions that tell the story of the Persian wars. For one thing, he claimed that the Greeks fled at Artemision and that the Greek victory there was the fruit of bribery and deceit:

‘With a single phrase he wipes out (*aphaireitai*) the Greek victory, pulls down the trophy, and makes empty bombast out of the inscriptions (*kathairei kai tas epigraphas*) which they set up in the temple of Artemis *Proseoa*.¹² This is the verse that stands there...’ (867f).¹³

Plutarch implies that Herodotus' ignorance of epigraphy is equivalent to destroying the Greek victory and the inscriptions commemorating that victory. Contrarily, Plutarch finds this patriotic monument particularly alluring, citing it also in his description of Artemision in the *Themistocles* (8.3). Later on in the *De Malignitate*, Plutarch makes a vicious attack on Herodotus' description of Adeimantus' behaviour at Salamis. Herodotus claims that the Corinthian commander fled in fear from the scene of battle, and was persuaded to return only by a speeding cutter. But for Plutarch, this description puts drama above accuracy: ‘it seems that this cutter fell down from the skies – since he is more theatrical in every other respect than the writers of tragedy, why should he avoid using the machinery of stage?’

12 For confirmation of the epithet, see an inscription found on the site, IG xii (9) 1189.5.

13 ὃς ἐνὶ ῥήματι τὸ νίκημα τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἀφαιρεῖται καὶ τὸ τρόπαιον καθαιρεῖ καὶ τὰς ἐπιγραφάς, ὡς ἔθεντο παρὰ τῆ Ἀρτέμιδι τῆ Προσηῶα, κόμπων ἀποφαίνει καὶ ἀλαζονείαν; ἔχει δ' οὕτω τοῦπιγράμμα.

(870c).¹⁴ This is a manifestation of the tragic or dramatic history that Plutarch despises (cf. *Themistocles* 10.1).¹⁵ Plutarch's response is to turn to the epigraphic evidence: 'it is unlikely that an Athenian would make such abusive remarks about Corinth, when he could see the name of that city inscribed third in order on the barbarian spoils offered to the gods, following the name of the Spartans and the Athenians' (870d).¹⁶ After this reference to the Serpent Column, he goes on to cite further inscriptions in support of this argument: the inscription on the Corinthian cenotaph on Salamis,¹⁷ another from the sanctuary of Poseidon at Isthmus, a dedication made by a Corinthian captain at the temple of Leto and the grave-stone of Adeimantus (870b–f).¹⁸ Finally, he quotes an epigram set up at the temple of Aphrodite on the summit of the Acrocorinth, recording that the Corinthian women prayed to Aphrodite in the hope that she might inspire their men with passion for battle against the barbarian (871b). He claims that this last epigram was maliciously ignored by Herodotus, and deems it incredible that a man like Herodotus should be unaware of a story of which even the remotest Carian would have caught wind, made famous by Simonides' epigram on the bronze statues that were set up in the temple of Aphrodite. Having quoted the epigram, Plutarch asserts that this is something worth remembering, 'instead of dragging in the sorry tale of Ameinocles killing his son' (871a–c). Plutarch thinks that Herodotus' decision to ignore accessible inscriptions relevant to Greek activity in the Persian wars reveals his malice. Moreover, Herodotus is a bad historian because he prefers drama to epigraphical accuracy. The reader is forced to choose between the conclusion that Herodotus is incompetent in dealing with epigraphical evidence or alternatively, that he hides his knowledge through malice. For Plutarch, on the other hand, epigraphy emerges as the remedy to the dramatic history that he finds so distasteful.

So far, we have seen the way in which, in both the *Lives* and the *Moralia*, Plutarch realizes the potential of epigraphy as a source or weapon of scholarly polemic. Thus he is echoing the tendency of fifth- and fourth-century oratory and historiography to use inscriptions in this way.

14 ὁ δὲ κέλῃς οὔτος ἦν, ὡς ἔοικεν, οὐρανοπετής· τί γὰρ ἔδει φείδεσθαι μηχανῆς τραγικῆς, ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἄλλοις ὑπερπαίοντα τοὺς τραγωδοὺς ἀλαζονεία;

15 On Plutarch's hostility to tragic history, see Mossman 1988, 84–5 n. 6; Wardman, 168–79.

16 οὐδὲ γὰρ εἰκὸς ἦν Ἀθηναῖον ταῦτα βλασφημεῖν περὶ τῆς Κορινθίων πόλεως, ἦν τρίτην μὲν ἑώρα μετὰ Λακεδαιμονίου καὶ μετ' αὐτοὺς ἐγχαρattoμένην τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων ἀναθήμασιν.

17 Part of the first couplet was found on Salamis: see Meiggs and Lewis no. 24.

18 The verses for Adeimantus are quoted by Favorinus ([Dio Chrysostom] 37.19).

II. The Morality of Epigraphy

The Greeks used honorary decrees to encourage citizens and foreigners to play a spirited role in public life, by promoting their appetite for honour, or *philotimia*, through the setting up of public inscriptions.¹⁹ This was made explicit on certain Athenian state decrees from the mid-fourth century BC onwards by the ‘hortatory clause’ (cf. Henry). Such clauses consisted of a statement of intention to encourage a spirit of competitive emulation among the citizens (e.g. 333/2 BC, IG II² 338 lines 17–24),²⁰ or to promote the Athenian reputation and their readiness to return a favour (e.g. 343/2 BC, IG II² 223 a lines 13–4).²¹ Of course, the existence of the hortatory clause does not necessarily mean that every reader took notice of the intention, or indeed that they responded to the call for *philotimia*. However, that some did take the hortatory intention seriously becomes clear in Demosthenes 20 *Against Leptines*. In this speech, Demosthenes argues that the law of Leptines revoking the exemption granted to certain Athenian honorands from payment of liturgies is unworkable, and will not significantly improve Athens’ financial situation. He argues also that Leptines’ abolition of exemption will blacken the Athenian reputation for treating her honorands well, and it will create resentment and distrust among her former benefactors. The sum of this is that it will discourage future benefactors, and will thus ruin the system of *philotimia* that the Athenians were striving to promote (esp. 108). A long section of the speech (29–87) lists the most famous benefactors who have received *ateleia*, and he makes vivid reference to the inscription honoring Leucon, King of the Cimmerian Bosphoros (20.36–7). For Demosthenes, therefore, the right use of epigraphy safeguards the Athenian grain-supply and the well-being of the *polis*.

I suggest that Plutarch’s interpretation of epigraphy has similarly moralizing aspects, and that his morality of epigraphy swings on the idea, enunciated by Demosthenes, that right epigraphy keeps in tune with the interests of the *polis*

19 For a comprehensive study of *philotimia* in Athenian inscriptions, see Whitehead.

20 ‘Crown him with a gold crown worth 10 *drachmai* for the sake of his just behaviour in his superintendence of the springs, so that also others who are ever elected as (superintendents) of the springs might act with *philotimia* towards the *demos*’ (στεφανώσαι αὐτὸν χρυσῶι στεφάνωι ἀπὸ x δραχμῶν ἀρετῆς ἕνεκα καὶ δικαιοσύνης τῆς περὶ τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν τῶν κρηνῶν, ὅπως ἂν καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι οἱ ἀεὶ χειροτονούμενοι ἐπὶ τὰς κρήνας φιλοτιμῶνται ἕκαστοι εἰς τὸν δῆμον).

21 ‘So that all the other *epistatai* may know that the Athenian *demos* and *boule* returns gratitude to those who are constantly speaking and doing the best things on behalf of the *boule* and the people’ (ὅπως ἂν [οὔν καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι ἅπαν]τες εἰδῶσι ὅ[τι] ὁ δῆμος καὶ ἡ βουλὴ ἐπιστάται χάριτας ἀποδιδόναι τοῖς ἀεὶ λέγουσιν καὶ πράττου[σιν] τὰ βέλτισ]τα ὑπὲρ τῆς βουλῆς καὶ τοῦ δήμου).

or records something noble, whether it be a fine deed of a statesman or the collective action of the *polis*.

The role of successful choregic activity in boosting the profile of the wealthy in ancient Athens has recently been stressed by Peter Wilson (Wilson, 109–262). Plutarch cites with particular insight the choregic tripod-bases in his reconstruction of the intersection of *philotimia* and political activity in the classical Greek city.²² Near the start of the *Nicias*, he tells us that whereas Pericles had governed Athens by virtue of his natural superiority and the force of his eloquence, and Cleon had used opportunism, charisma and oratory, Nicias used his wealth in his favour:

‘He tried to ingratiate himself by providing dramatic and gymnastic exhibitions and other forms of public munificence on a more expensive and sumptuous scale than anything ever seen in Athens before. Two of his offerings to the Gods are still standing in my day – the statue of Pallas Athena on the Acropolis, which has lost its gold plating, and also the shrine placed under the tripods in the precinct of Dionysus. Nicias won the prize many times with the chorus he presented, and, indeed, he was never defeated’ (Plutarch, *Nicias* 3.2–3).²³

After this passage he goes on to list Nicias’ dedications at Delos. Plutarch, who has evidently seen the monument of the fifth-century general (mentioned also by Plato, *Gorgias* 472a)²⁴ here appears to be a perceptive reader of classical Athenian euergetism. Elsewhere, he recognizes that Themistocles spent money on choregic monuments in order to boost his profile (*Themistocles* 5.4).

However, Plutarch has reservations about the morality of this employment of epigraphy. In Nicias’ monuments, ‘there are signs of a certain vulgarity and ostentation’. Nicias, however, gets the benefit of Plutarch’s very serious doubts, as he adds that ‘it seems likely that his love of display was the outcome of his religious piety, and that the winning of popularity and hence of influence over the masses was quite a secondary object’ (*Nicias* 4.1). Plutarch here demonstrates an understanding of classical euergetism but he casts some doubt on the morality of using choregic sponsorship and ostentatious display of tripods to boost one’s profile in the city.

22 On Plutarch’s analysis of *philotimia*, see Frazier, 1996, 141–175 and 199–200; Frazier, 1988; Wardman, 115–24.

23 χορηγίαις ἀνελάμβανε καὶ γυμνασιαρχίαις ἑτέροις τε τοιαύταις φιλοτιμίαις τὸν δῆμον, ὑπερβαλλόμενος πολυτελείᾳ καὶ χάριτι τοὺς πρὸ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ καθ’ ἑαυτὸν ἅπαντας. εἰστήκει δὲ καὶ τῶν ἀναθημάτων αὐτοῦ καθ’ ἡμᾶς τὸ τε Παλλάδιον ἐν ἀκροπόλει, τὴν χρύσωσιν ἀποβεβληκός, καὶ ὁ τοῖς χορηγικοῖς τρίποσιν ὑποκείμενος ἐν Διονύσου νεώς· ἐνίκησε γὰρ πολλάκις χορηγήσας, ἐλείφθη δ’ οὐδέποτε.

24 Attempts have been made to associate Nicias the dedicant of the fourth-century choragic monuments with Nicias the fifth-century general, but Wilson doubts the association: Wilson, 209.

In the *Moralia*, Plutarch extends the use of ancient epigraphy from being a gauge of individual morality to that of the city. In the essay *On the Fame of the Athenians*, choregic monuments provide evidence of Athenian profligacy. For, the tripods that they supported were ‘a last oblation of their wasted livelihood, an empty memorial of their vanished estates’ (349b),²⁵ and an indication (348d) that the Athenians were extravagant and prioritized ostentation over military expenditure.

For Plutarch, epigraphy can serve as a measure of character and great deeds. We can find instances where the correct use or the abuse of epigraphy reflects on a character. This is particularly clear in the case of Timoleon, whose understanding of the morality of epigraphy earns him praise. Having won a victory in Sicily, Timoleon sent a report of his victory alongside captured armour, an action that for Plutarch communicates Timoleon’s *polis*-patriotism through epigraphical aspirations:

‘His ambition was that in Corinth, alone of all the Greek cities, men should see the most conspicuous temples adorned not with the spoils taken from Greek states, melancholy offerings obtained by the slaughter of men of their own race and blood, but decked with ornaments won from the barbarians and bearing honorable inscriptions which testified to the justice as well as the courage of the victors: in this instance the memorial proclaimed that ‘the Corinthians and their general Timoleon freed the Greeks living in Sicily from the yoke of Carthage and thus dedicated these thank-offerings to the Gods’ (*Timoleon*, 29.5–6).²⁶

Timoleon’s aspirations are contrasted with those of his enemies the Sicilian tyrants. One of them, Mamercus, insulted the Syracusans by his use of epigraphy:

‘For Mamercus, who had a high opinion of himself as a writer of poems and tragedies, boasted of his victory over the mercenaries, and when he dedicated their shields to the gods, he composed the following insulting inscription: ‘Those gilded bucklers of purple with amber and ivory inlaid proved no match in the field for our cheap little, plain little shields’ (*Timoleon*, 31.1).²⁷

25 ἐπίσπειαμα τῶν ἐκκεχυμένων βίων καὶ τῶν ἐκλελοιπῶτων κενοτάφιον οἴκων.

26 βουλόμενος αὐτοῦ τὴν πατρίδα πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ζηλωτὴν εἶναι, θεωμένοις ἐν ἐκείνῃ μόνῃ τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν πόλεων τοὺς ἐπιφανεστάτους ναοὺς οὐχ Ἑλληνικοῖς κεκοσμημένους λαφύροις, οὐδ’ ἀπὸ συγγενῶν φόνου καὶ ὁμοφύλων [ἀναθημάτων] μνήμας ἀτερπεῖς ἔχοντας. ἀλλὰ βαρβαρικὰ σκῦλα, καλλίσταις ἐπιγραφαῖς δηλοῦντα μετὰ τῆς ἀνδρείας τῶν νεικηκῶτων τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι Ἰορὶνθιοὶ καὶ Τιμολέων ὁ στρατηγός, ἔλευθερώσαντες τοὺς Σικελίαν οἰκοῦντας Ἕλληνας ἀπὸ Καρχηδονίων, χαριστήρια θεοῖς ἀνέθηκαν’.

27 καὶ γὰρ ὁ Μάμερκος, ἐπὶ τῶ ποιήματα γράφειν καὶ τραγωδίας μέγα φρονῶν, ἐκόμπαζε νικήσας τοὺς μισθοφόρους, καὶ τὰς ἀσπίδας ἀναθεῖς τοῖς θεοῖς ἐλεγείον ὑβριστικὸν ἐπέγραψε “τάσδ’ ὄστρειογραφεῖς καὶ χρυσελεφαντηλέκτρος ἀσπίδας ἀσπιδοῖς εἰλομεν εὐτέλεσιν”.

Accordingly, Timoleon and Mamercus provide examples of the right and wrong of epigraphy. Plutarch's morality of epigraphy contributes to his portrait of character.

Plutarch's notion that inscribed dedications provide moral insight into the customs of the classical Greeks emerges also in the *Moralia*. In *On the Oracles at Delphi*, Theon contends the worthiness of Diogenianus' indignation at the dedications of Greek courtesans by reference to even more shameful offerings commemorating Greek inter-*polis* wars:

'You feel no pity for the Greeks when upon the most beautiful votive offerings you read the most disgraceful inscriptions: 'Brasidas and the Acanthians from the Athenians' and 'The Athenians from the Corinthians' and 'The Phocians from the Thessalians' and 'The Orneatans from the Sicyonians' and 'The Amphictyons from the Phocians'.... It would be well for kings and rulers to dedicate votive offerings to commemorate justice, self control, and magnanimity, not golden and luxurious affluence, which is shared also by men who have led the most disgraceful lives' (401c-d).²⁸

Dedications commemorating victories of Greeks over non-Greeks fulfil the moral potential of the epigraphic habit, whereas commemorations of victories of Greeks states over other Greeks states represent an abuse of the habit.

So far I have been interested in Plutarch as a critic of the party setting up the inscription; but the reader too is subject to Plutarch's epigraphical censure. The reader should not waste their time on reading frivolous inscriptions:

'What difficulty is there about refraining from reading the inscriptions on the tombs as we journey along the roads? Or what is there arduous in just glancing at the writing on walls when we take our walks? We have only to remind ourselves that nothing useful or pleasant has been written there: merely so-and-so 'commemorates' so and so 'wishing him well' and someone else is the 'best of friends' and twaddle of this sort. It may seem that no harm will come from reading these, but harm you it does by imperceptibly instilling the practice of searching our matters that do not concern you.' (520d-e).²⁹

28 οὐδ' οἰκτίρεις τοὺς Ἑλληνας ἐπὶ τῶν καλῶν ἀναθημάτων αἰσχίστας ἀναγινώσκων ἐπιγραφάς 'Βρασίδας καὶ Ἀκάνθιοι ἀπ' Ἀθηναίων' καὶ 'Ἀθηναῖοι ἀπὸ Κορινθίων' καὶ 'Φωκεῖς ἀπὸ Θεσσαλῶν', 'Ὀρνεᾶται δ' ἀπὸ Σικωνίων', 'Ἀμφικτύονες δ' ἀπὸ Φωκέων'... δικαιοσύνης γὰρ ἀναθήματα καὶ σωφροσύνης καὶ μεγαλονοίας καλῶς ἔχει τίθεσθαι παρὰ τῷ θεῷ τοὺς βασιλεῖς καὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας, οὐ χρυσῆς καὶ τρυφώσης εὐπορίας ἧς μέτεστι καὶ τοῖς αἰσχίστα βεβιωκόσιν.

29 τί γὰρ χαλεπὸν ἔστιν ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς τὰς ἐπὶ τῶν τάφων ἐπιγραφάς μὴ ἀναγινώσκειν, ἢ τί δυσχερὲς ἐν τοῖς περιπάτοις τὰ κατὰ τῶν τοίχων γράμματα τῇ ὄψει παρατρέχειν, ὑποβάλλοντας αὐτοῖς ὅτι χρησίμων οὐθὲν οὐδ' ἐπιτερπὲς ἐν τούτοις γέγραπται, ἀλλ' χρησίμων οὐθὲν οὐδ' ἐπιτερπὲς ἐν τούτοις γέγραπται, ἀλλ' ἐμνήσθη ὁ δεῖνα τοῦ δεῖνος 'ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ' καὶ 'φίλων ἄριστος' ὅδε τις, καὶ πολλὰ τοιαύτης γέμοντα φλυαρίας; ἃ δοκεῖ μὲν οὐ βλάπτειν ἀναγινωσκόμενα, βλάπτει δὲ λεληθότως τῷ μελέτην παρεμποιεῖν τοῦ ζητεῖν τὰ μὴ προσήκοντα.

Wasting one's time on reading inane inscriptions is the pointless activity of the polypragmatist. It is evident from this passage, that while those inscriptions relating to the great men who are subjects of their lives are well worth reading, those inscriptions relating to obscure men, with nothing virtuous to communicate, are not.

For Plutarch, the value of epigraphy is that it provides worthwhile material for the historian or biographer engaged in reconstructing the lives of great individuals or recounting for emulation the great deeds of the Greeks of antiquity. Plutarch uses inscriptions in the *Lives* to contribute to his portrait of the morality of characters under discussion. In the *Lives* this moral interpretation of inscriptions betrays a particularly moral stance on the whole subject of epigraphy. In the *Moralia* this develops into a morality of epigraphy which Plutarch impresses upon his readers. The epigraphical morality outlined in section II of this paper should be closely associated with his conviction, which emerged in section I, that inscriptions are ammunition for scholarly polemic because they provide both insight into character and a basis for writing good history.

John Moles (1999) has already analysed the way in which ancient historiographers conceived of their own works as redeploing an epigraphical image of permanency and fixedness in a variety of different ways; I hope to have highlighted a way in which Plutarch expresses both a descriptive and protreptic 'morality of epigraphy' which derives from the fifth- and fourth-century literary treatment of inscriptions and also the hortatory intention expressed on some decrees.³⁰ I have argued here that in many ways, Plutarch's use of inscriptions is as much a reflection of his reading of classical authors as a result of his own moral views.

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2b: Other authorial techniques

Ewen Bowie examines Plutarch's habits of citation. More specifically, he explores the extent to which Plutarch's habit of 'decorative' quotation from canonical prose and poetic texts extends beyond the *Moralia*, where it can be argued to be largely a practice inherited from the philosophical traditions in which he works, and into the *Lives*, whose historiographic and biographic pedigree might not lead one to expect this practice as often as it appears. Further, he also considers how significantly the range of authors from whom 'decorative' quotations are drawn differs between *Moralia* and *Lives*.

Bernard Boulet discusses Plutarch's reuse or adaptation of the same material according to the occasion, and relates his different (and sometimes inconsistent) versions to his different audiences.* His test case is the way Plutarch portrays the god Apollo, and Boulet finds that this portrayal fluctuates from a purely theoretical Neopythagorean Oneness all the way to a fantastic mythological god. So how is one to understand these incompatible visages of Apollo?

The article elaborates the hypothesis that Plutarch chooses his words, frames his theories and models his myths to fit each occasion. In short, he commonly adapts his speech with a view to the reader or listener. In his dialogues, for example, some speeches are addressed to good moral souls, while others are intended for more philosophical minds. And in the *Lives*, the Delphic oracle speaks to experienced statesmen. An overview of several dialogues and *Lives* bears witness to the fact that this inconsistency is indeed consistent and, consequently, it is argued, purposeful. The various descriptions of Apollo correspond to the variety of readers.

Simon Verdegem, in exploring the relationship between the *Quaestiones Romanae* and the *Lives of Romulus, Numa, Publicola, Coriolanus, and Camillus*, deals, partly, with the same problem. The detailed comparisons of corresponding passages from the aforesaid works will demonstrate that Plutarch greatly adapted his material to the generic and specific requirements of these works. Besides, this article asks and attempts to answer the following questions: Why do the *Lives of Romulus, Numa, Coriolanus, and Camillus* have much more elements in common with the *Quaestiones Romanae* than the other Roman *Lives*? Is there any connection with the relative chronology of the *Lives*? Does the discrepancy have to do with the nature of Plutarch's sources and/or the amount of source material available to him? Or do *Lives* dealing with the earliest phases in a people's history simply give more opportunity to insert aetiological information?

*Cf. also Stadter, above, p. 53–54.

Timothy Duff examines the ways in which Plutarchean *Lives* begin, and proposes an alternative classification of the openings of the *Lives* to that proposed by Philip Stadter in his influential paper of 1988. In particular, he argues that most *Lives*, whether they fall first or second in their pair, and whether they are preceded or not by a prologue to the book as a whole, begin with proemial non-narrative material. Close readings of the first chapters of the *Perikles*, *Alkibiades* and *Themistokles* demonstrate their proemial function.

Ana Vicente studies Plutarch's methods from a different perspective, and to trace the Plutarchean composition process, she examines some intratextual relations between the *Vitae* and the *Moralia*. More specifically she discusses relationships between *Alexander* and *Quaestiones convivales*, *Marius* and *Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata* and *Cato Maior*, *Quaestiones convivales* and *Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata*. It appears that the conclusions of such analyses may also contribute to inquiries concerning matters of chronology and authenticity.

The last article of this chapter somehow foreshadows, if from an opposite angle, the contents of the next one. **Anastasios Nikolaidis** is not concerned with *Moralia* in the *Lives*, but with *Lives* in the *Moralia*, namely with the presentation of some biographical heroes in Plutarch's treatises. Are Plutarch's worthies always employed to emblemize the same virtues and vices in the *Moralia* as in the *Lives* or also to illustrate various other issues and situations? And in cases of different (and occasionally conflicting) versions of the same events, or when differences of emphasis or interpretation are observed, which version represents more faithfully Plutarch's conviction about the event or the hero involved? A careful investigation of this kind could be fruitful in several respects: (a) in suggesting Plutarch's true beliefs on a number of issues (his *Political Precepts*, for example, must be based on settled and steady convictions rather than on his source-information; thus, if some views regarding Periklean policies in the *Praec. ger. reip.*, for instance, vary from those expressed in *the Life of Perikles*, it must be the *Praecepta* rather than the *Life* which represent his true opinion about Perikles); (b) in throwing some light on his methods of work; (c) in helping us – occasionally – to decide the sequence or the relative chronology of some of his writings.

Plutarch's Habits of Citation: Aspects of Difference

Ewen Bowie

This paper explores the extent to which Plutarch's habits of quotation differ between his *Parallel Lives* and the heterogeneous works we regularly bundle together under the title *Moralia*.¹ I start by drawing attention to examples of authors cited in the *Moralia* and rarely or not at all in *Lives*. I then discuss some cases of citations that appear both in the *Moralia* and in *Lives*. Next I look briefly at Plutarch's tendency to work with clusters of quotations; and finally at his use of a literary citation or an apophthegm to open a work, a technique evident both in *Moralia* and in *Lives*.

Authors cited in the *Moralia* and not in *Lives*

On the basis of one category of evidence we might approach the *Moralia* and *Lives* in the expectation that Plutarch's habits of citation would differ radically between these two groups of works: on the basis, that is, of the sheer difference in the number of citations of earlier literature in each group – the frequency of citations in the *Moralia* greatly outweighs that in *Lives* – and of the fact that many authors cited several times in the *Moralia* are not cited in *Lives* at all.

Poets cited in the *Moralia* and not in *Lives* include Agathon,² Alcaeus,³ Euenus of Paros⁴ and Euphorion⁵ (but of each of these last two only three texts

1 For work on Plutarch's habits of quotation Helmbold and O'Neil is an indispensable tool, though not one easy to use (they did not, for example, identify individual works in the *Moralia*). I have also profited from reading the chapters in Gallo (ed.), especially those by Cannatà Fera, Citti, Di Gregorio and Tosi, and from the articles of De Wet, George and Desideri. An excellent example of what can be done by close analysis of a small section of text is given by Zadorojnyi 1999.

2 The only reference to Agathon's poetry is to musical innovations in his Μῦσοί, 645E. Most references to 'Agathon' are to the character in Plato's *Symposium* (so 632B, 634D, 645EF, 686D, 707A, 710BC; also 527B where Erysimachus is misquoted as Agathon); 177A and 770C report an anecdote about Euripides kissing Agathon.

3 410C (438 LP), 525B (434 LP), 647E (50 LP), 698A (347 LP 'τουτι τὸ πρόχειρον ἄπρασιν': Alcaeus is not named), 726B (429 LP), 763E (34 8LP), 765E (327 LP: again Alcaeus not named).

are cited). Likewise Hipponax – of whom one piece is cited three times and, it seems certain, inaccurately.⁶ Ibycus is cited once for décor in *Sympotic questions* (fr. 310 Davies at 748C, perhaps from Plato *Phaedrus* 242cd), once a few pages earlier in the same work (722D) as poetic testimony for a quality of early dawn, ὄρθρος, to which he gave the epithet κλυτός (fr. 303(b) Davies at 722D), and once in the *Syncrisis* of the *Lycurgus and Numa* (3.6) for the provocative dress of Spartan girls, described by Ibycus as ‘thigh-flashers’, φαινομηρίδας (fr. 339 Davies). Mimnermus is cited only once, in *On moral virtue* 445C, to condemn his lines fr. 1.1–2 West; unsurprisingly he is not cited at all in the *Lives*, though in the *Solon and Publicola* Solon’s ‘reply’ to Mimnermus is quoted with approval and as apposite to the end of Publicola’s life (Solon fr. 21 West at *synchr.* 1.5). Others are Nicander (twice in the *Moralia*: 16C, a general reference to the Θηριακά, and 55A, a hexameter not attributed to a poet); Parmenides (around twenty times in the *Moralia*); Xenophanes with two hexameter citations in the *Moralia*, fr. B 34 at 17E and fr. B 35 at 746B, and some ten others, over and above citations in the *placita*. None of these has a citation of any sort in *Lives*. Philoxenus of Cythera is cited twice – the same line, fr. 822 Page, at *Sympotic questions* 622C and in the *On desire* 762F: in the *Lives* he appears only as one of the poets sent by Harpalus to Alexander, *Alexander* 8.3.

Phocylides is also cited only once – predictably in *On educating children*, fr. 15 Diehl at 3F.⁷ One can add Philemon, cited only twice in the *Moralia*,⁸ whose unique appearance in the *Lives* (at *Pericles* 2.1) is as one of three poets whom a talented young man would not emulate simply because he liked their poetry – Anacreon, Philemon and Archilochus. Anacreon, as it happens, is also cited elsewhere in the *Pericles* (27.4), not for décor but as a witness to the date of Artemon ὁ περιφόρητος, and his citations in the *Moralia* are, perhaps not surprisingly, rather few: once in the *Eroticos* for a description of a virginal youth as ‘shimmering with desire’, πόθῳ στίλβων and as ‘replete with perfumes and on a roll’, μύρων ἀνάπλευως καὶ γεγανωμένος (fr. 444 Page at 751A), and probably once in *On common ideas* (fr. 425 Page at 1068B). There are also two

4 49F (= fr. 10 West), 497A (=fr. 6 West), 697C (=fr. 10 West): but Plutarch attributes fr. 10 West to Prodicus at *Advice on health* 126CD), 1102C (=fr. 8 West / *Theognidea* 472).

5 557 D (3 lines, author not named, fr. 53 Powell), 677A (5 lines, fr. 84 Powell), 682B (3 lines, author not named, fr. 175 Powell). 472D also refers to his private life.

6 523E, 1056D and 1068B, compressing fr. 33 West. Views but nothing apparently *verbatim* are cited in the *Placita* 905E and F.

7 He is also cited in the spurious *On listening*, fr. 13 Diehl at 47E.

8 35D (fr. 23 KA) and 458A (fr. 132 KA) – in each case two lines. The long quotation from Philemon by the author of the *Consolatio ad Apollonium* at 105E (8 lines, fr.77 KA, poet unnamed) is not in Plutarch’s manner; more so is that at 102C (1.5 lines, fr. 106 KA, poet unnamed).

general references to his poetry, both coupling it with that of Sappho, at *Sympotic questions* 711D and *On the virtues of women* 243B.

Authors cited extensively in the *Moralia* and rarely in *Lives*

Other poets are cited extensively in the *Moralia* and very rarely in *Lives*: one is Empedocles, who has almost 100 citations in the *Moralia* and one, and one only, in *Lives*, at *Demetrius* 5.1: here the exacerbation of conflict by territorial proximity between the successors of Alexander is compared to the greater conflict between adjacent elements in Empedoclean theory.

Hesiod, cited very frequently in the *Moralia* (preponderantly his *Works and days*), is cited only occasionally in *Lives*, whether as evidence for mythology (as *Works and days* 370 at *Theseus* 3.4 and fr. 298 M-W at *Theseus* 20.1) or as décor:⁹ there is also a couple of mere references, at *Camillus* 19.3 and *Cato Maior Sync.* 3.3.

Menander has around fifty citations in the *Moralia*, only two in *Lives*, one of these to attest a historical point (fr. 598 KA at *Alex.* 17.7 to establish Athenian awe at and exaggeration of Alexander's achievements), the other as décor (fr. 739 KA at *Alcibiades Sync.* 2.5).¹⁰

Authors cited in *Lives* and rarely or not at all in the *Moralia*

By contrast it is hard to find an author other than an historian being used as a historical source who is cited in *Lives* and not also in the *Moralia*. Thus even such writers as Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Ephorus, though much used in *Lives*, are also drawn upon in the *Moralia* – Ephorus twice in the admittedly historical debates of *On the mean-spiritedness of Herodotus* (F189 at 855E, F187 at 869A), but once also in the *Placita* (F65c at 898B). There are also some biographic or unspecific references: 514C, 803B, 837C, 839A, and 1043D.

At first sight Cratinus might almost fall in this category: six citations in *Lives*,¹¹ one in *On the glory of the Athenians* (351A = *Per* 13.8) as

9 As in the *Theseus* 16.3 (fr. 144 M-W), *Solon* 2.6 (*Op.* 311), *Artaxerxes* 28.4 (*Op.* 288) and *Galba* 16.5 (*Op.* 368).

10 Another poet in this category is Aeschylus, on whom see Citti.

11 Naturally most from the *Pericles*: 3.5 *Chiron* (a line, fr. 258 KA) and *Nemesis* (a half-line, fr. 118 KA), 13.8 (= *On the glory of the Athenians* 351A, a line and a half, fr. 326 KA), 13.9 *Thracian Women* (two and a half lines, fr. 73 KA) and 24.9 (two lines, fr. 259 KA):

documentation, nothing clearly identifiable elsewhere in the *Moralia*. Given the large number, however, of unattributed comic fragments in the *Moralia* – some 80 – it seems very likely that the pattern for Cratinus is really much closer to that for Eupolis, who is cited twice (predictably enough) in *How to distinguish a flatterer from a friend*, (50D, a line and a half, fr. 175 KA, also cited at 778E, and 54B, a line, fr. 374 KA); three times in *Sympotic questions*,¹² and once in *The especial need for a philosopher to discourse with rulers* (778E, fr. 175 KA, implicitly from *Flatterers*, also cited at 50D). He is also, of course, cited frequently in fifth-century *Lives*.¹³

A somewhat different case is that of the comic poet Antiphanes, used exclusively to advance our understanding of Demosthenes. He is perhaps cited once in the *Moralia*, in the *Life of Demosthenes* in *Lives of the ten orators* 845B, where he may be adduced to attest comic mockery of Demosthenes' early oratorical tricks.¹⁴ His other appearances are in the parallel *Life of Demosthenes*.¹⁵ For occasional use of writers as a source and not for décor we might compare the historians Hermippus of Smyrna and Polybius.

Authors cited evenly in *Lives* and in the *Moralia*

Several poets are cited more or less evenly in *Lives* and in the *Moralia*: these include major figures like Euripides¹⁶ and less prominent poets such as Plato the comedian, cited only for documentation both in *Moralia*¹⁷ and (more often) in *Lives*.¹⁸

all are used as documentation. The others likewise – *Solon* 25.2 (2 lines, fr. 300 KA) and *Cimon* 10.4 *Archilochoi* (five and a half lines, fr. 1 KA).

12 662D *Goats* (five lines, fr. 13 KA), 699A *Flatterers* (two lines, fr. 158 KA), 712A (fr. 107 KA, identification of a name).

13 *Cimon* 15.4 (three lines, fr. 221 KA); *Pericles* 3.7 *Demes* (a line, fr. 115 KA), 24.10 *Demes* (two lines, fr. 110 KA); *Nicias* 4.6 *Maricas* (an eight-line dialogue, fr. 193 KA); *Alcibiades* 13.2 (fr. 16 KA, a well-known line from *Demes* – cf. A.Gellius *NA* 1.15.12, Galen 8.653 and 943 Kühn – but Plutarch does not name the play).

14 Fr. 288 KA, a trimeter, attributed here to Antiphanes or Timocles, also cited in the parallel *Life* 9.4 without attribution.

15 4.6 (his comedy *Batalus*), 9.4 (see preceding note) and 9.5 (a two-line dialogue, fr. 167 KA).

16 For Plutarch's use of tragedy in general see Di Gregorio.

17 Four lines (fr. 201 KA) in *Political advice* 801 B; a simple reference (fr. 110 KA) to the *Peisander* for Antiphon's love of money in *Life of Antiphon* 833C.

18 *Themistocles* 32.6 (four lines, fr. 199 KA, from Diodorus the Periegete *FGrH* 372 F35), *Pericles* 4.4 (two lines, fr. 207 KA, showing Damon to have taught Pericles), *Nicias* 11.7 = *Alcibiades* 13.9 (three lines, fr. 203 KA, on Hyperbolus' ostracism).

It does not follow from this greater density of citation in the *Moralia*, however, that Plutarch's habits are different in the *Moralia* and *Lives*. The greater density is at least partly attributable to a number of factors:

(a) Plutarch's use of poets and prose-writers as testimony in some subjects scientific or historical.

(b) Plutarch's more frequent use of poetic citation as reinforcing décor in argument, especially moral argument, than in 'straightforward' biographical or historical narrative. It is worth noting that in some of the *Moralia* Plutarch has little or no use for poetic décor: e. g. there is none in *Marital advice* and *Roman questions*: and very little, mainly later in the dialogue, in *On the daimonion of Socrates*. In the *Banquet of the Seven Sages* Plutarch is scrupulous enough in his maintenance of an archaic setting to make his characters eschew quotation of all but very early poetic texts, sometimes of course the compositions of the historical figures they are represented as being.

In favour of seeing Plutarch's habits in *Lives* as close to those in the *Moralia*, there are some habits of quotation that seem to be as firmly entrenched in *Lives* as in the other works.

Citations shared between *Lives* and *Moralia*

In the *Alexander* 53.5 an unattributed hexameter is cited by Callisthenes in depreciation of the achievement of Philip and Alexander: 'in a conflict-situation even the very bad man gets a share of honour', ἐν δὲ διχοστασίῃ καὶ ὁ πᾶγκρατος ἔμμορε τιμῆς (*Lyrica adespota* fr. 4 Bergk = *Adespota elegiaca* fr. 12 West). In the *Nicias* 11.3 Plutarch also offers us this line in his own authorial voice as a comment on the rise of inferior demagogues, the Bushes and Blairs of their lesser day, in a situation where politicians of real quality are in dissension, i. e. in the context of Nicias' conflict with Alcibiades in 418/7 B.C. He also exploits it as a comment on the situation in Rome in the time of Sulla, *Sulla Sync.* 1.1, and uses it in the *Moralia* in the opening chapters of *On love between brothers*, περὶ φιλαδελφίας 479A.

A similar case is constituted by Pindar fr. 77 Maehler: 'where the children of the Athenians laid down a gleaming foundation of freedom', ὄσι παῖδες Ἀθηναίων ἐβάλοντο φαεινὸν | κρηπῖδ' ἐλευθερίας. Plutarch uses these lines referring to the battle of Artemisium four times. Once they are applied merely as décor, at *On delayed divine punishment* 552B, though it is décor that reinforces Plutarch's argument that great men should not be thoughtlessly discarded by a city. In *On the mean-spiritedness of Herodotus* 867C they support Plutarch's case that Herodotus was niggardly in praise: even Pindar, the lines

show, appreciated Artemisium. Likewise in *On the glory of Athens* 350A they support the argument that it was Athens' military victories, not her literary eminence that was important. They are used for a similar sort of argument in the *Themistocles* 8.2 – Pindar was right to see a fundamental importance in Artemisium, though it was not a strategic importance: here again, however, décor is as important as the lines' contribution to the argument.

Rather different is Simonides phrase 'warring against the long sweep of time', πολεμοῦντες ... τῷ πολλῷ χρόνῳ (643 Page) cited by Ammonius, for décor, in the dialogue *On the E at Delphi* 391F, then again by Plutarch in his authorial voice in the essay *On Isis and Osiris* 359F, where unlike his character Ammonius he specifically attributes it to Simonides. He does likewise in his *Theseus* 10.2. In all cases décor seems to be the only point of the citation.

The case of a line probably by the tragedian Phrynichus is similar. The iambic trimeter 'he cowered, cockerel though he was, like a slave, lowering his wing', ἔπτηξ' ἀλέκτωρ δοῦλος ὡς κλίνας πτέρων (fr. 17 Snell), is cited three times: in the *Pelopidas* 29.11 it amplifies Alexander of Pherae's reaction of self-abasement to Epaminondas, in the *Alcibiades* 4.3 Alcibiades' self-abasement in relation to the object of his desire, Socrates; in *On desire* 762E that context is generalised, and the purpose of the citation is as much explanatory as decorative – the lover is full of confidence in relation to other awesome people or objects, but is cowed when he contemplates the object of his desire. Despite in each case quoting a complete trimeter Plutarch never identifies its poet.¹⁹

A more complex set of relationships between citations in the *Moralia* and citations in *Lives* can be seen in the cases of Bacchylides, Sappho and Sophocles.

From Bacchylides there is just one short quotation in the *Moralia*, *Epinicia* 1.159–161, in a cluster of poetic citations in *How to listen to poets* 36C. In the *Lives* there are two, both in the *Numa*. The longer, *Numa* 20.6, is a description of the blessings of peace that comes from the Paean for Apollo Pythaeus at Asine, *Paean* fr. 4.69–77, as was brilliantly shown by Barrett (cf. Paus. 2.36.4–5): the lines are used to illustrate the golden age of Numa's reign – Plutarch asserts the appropriateness of their poetic language, but does not name their poet, Bacchylides. They are parts of an excerpt in Stobaeus (4.14.3) known also from an Oxyrhynchus papyrus (*POxy* 3.426, papyrus **T** in Maehler's edition); earlier lines of the paean are also known from Athenaeus (5.178b), and it has been argued that all these citations, including Plutarch's, are drawing on an anthology (cf. Barrett, 424 n.2). The only other citation of Bacchylides in *Lives* is also much earlier in the *Numa*, 4.11, of the brief phrase (explicitly attributed to Bacchylides) πλατεῖα κέλευθος ('the path is broad':

19 An elegiac couplet (perhaps from a dedicatory epigram?) is quoted as by Phrynichus the tragedian at *Sympotic questions* 732F.

fr. 27 Maehler) which seems to signify the possibility of holding different opinions on a debated subject. If Plutarch encountered the lines on peace in an anthology, it is an odd coincidence that his only other citation in *Lives* is also in *Numa*. Perhaps in working over the *Life* he went back from an anthology to a fuller text of Bacchylides. Or perhaps (like other Greeks of this period) he had simply been reading Bacchylides.

Some of the 60 or so citations of Sophocles spread over the *Moralia* and *Lives* also show how Plutarch adapts words of a well-known poet for different situations. Take for example, *Oedipus the king* 4–5:

πόλις δ' ὁμοῦ μὲν θυμιαμάτων γέμει
ὁμοῦ δὲ παιάνων τε καὶ στεναγμάτων

And the city is at the same time full of incense-offerings,
And at the same time full of paeans and lamentations.

Plutarch repeatedly deploys all or part of these lines to enhance his description of a situation where conflicting claims or emotions are involved: *On moral virtue* 445D uses them to explain the conflict between the rational and irrational elements in the as yet undisciplined soul, *On having many friends* 95C the conflict of obligations that can arise from claims made by many friends, *On superstition* 169D the schizophrenic mind of the superstitious person – in none of these cases is the poet named. Twice Plutarch identifies the poet as Sophocles: in *Sympotic questions* 623C–D using the lines to describe the schizophrenic mind of a lover, and in the *Antonius* 24.3 to give an impression of the carnival atmosphere of music and stage performers and performances that swept into the province Asia when Antonius moved to Ephesus. Each is a rather different context which allows a different application, and the use in *Lives* is quite similar to that in the *Moralia*.

We find a similar range of application of the phrase ‘like a boxer facing up a fight’, πύκτης ὅπως ἐς χεῖρας, which Plutarch found in the context of response to sexual desire at *Trachinian Women* 442. The *Solon* 1.6 also uses it in an erotic context – Solon was not good at standing up to and resisting the charms of young boys. *On inoffensive self-praise* 541B, however, transfers it to the context of bouncing back when struck by misfortune: neither redeployment names the poet.

Another case is offered by the fragment ‘a case for many bridles and at the same time steering oars’, πολλῶν χαλινῶν ἔργον οἰάκων θ' ἄμα. Plutarch cites this fragment (fr. 869 Radt) both in his *On desire* 767E, illustrating the needs of a sexual relationship, and in the *Alexander* 7.2, illustrating Philip's perception that the young prince needed firm tutors: but he also alludes to it fleetingly at *On Isis and Osiris* 369C in a phrase used to describe government of the universe (οὐθ' εἷς ἔστιν ὁ κρατῶν καὶ κατευθύνων ὥσπερ οἰάξιν ἢ τισὶ πειθηνίοις χαλινοῖς λόγος: ‘nor is it one principle which is ruling and directing it as by

steering oars or some sort of persuasive bridles’) and applies it in *Political Advice* 801D to give colour to the parts of good character and rhetoric in guiding cities: οὕτως πόλιν πείθειν οὐ λόγῳ ἀλλὰ τρόπῳ χρωμένην ὥσπερ οἶακι καὶ χαλινῶ τὴν πολιτικὴν ἀρετὴν (‘in this way does the excellence of a politician persuade a city, using not argument but character as a steering oar and a bridle’). Only in the citation in the *Alexander* does Plutarch name Sophocles.

Plutarch’s longest single citation from Sophocles is a fragment (fr. 871 Radt) of eight lines in the *Demetrius* 45.3, lines where Menelaus compares his fortunes to the waxing and waning moon. Plutarch identifies both poet and speaker. Four of these lines (5–8) are also used at *Roman questions* 282B in offering an explanation of moon-accessories worn on shoes and at *On being a busybody* 517D to propose to the ‘busybody’ an alternative, scientific object of legitimate enquiry – in neither case is the poet named.

Sappho fr. 31 LP clearly made a powerful impression on Plutarch, as it did on Longinus. It is quoted twice, quite differently, in *Moralia*. In the *Amatorius* 763A the narrative of Autoboulos has his father – i.e. Plutarch himself, at an earlier period of his life – persuade Daphnaeus to recite lines from this poem of ‘beautiful Sappho’, and then himself comment on the power of desire that they attest. In *How to detect one’s ethical progress* 81D the same passage is drawn somewhat gratuitously into a comparison between erotic arousal and the excitement generated by a sense of philosophical progress:

“νέας” μὲν γὰρ “γυναικός” ὡς Αἰσχύλος φησὶν (in *Toxotides*, fr. 423 Radt) οὐ λαμβάνει

φλέγων
ὀφθαλμός, ἥτις ἀνδρὸς ἢ γεγευμένη
νέω δ’ ἀνδρὶ γευσάμενῳ προκοπῆς ἀληθοῦς ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ τὰ Σαπφικὰ ταῦτα
παρέπεται
καὶ μὲν γλῶσσα ἔαγε, λέπτον δ’
αὐτικὰ χροῖ πῦρ ὑπαδερόμαικε
ἀθόρυβον δ’ ὄψει καὶ πρᾶον ὄμμα, φθεγγόμενου δ’ ἂν ἀκοῦσαι ποθῆσειας.

For in the case ‘of a young woman’ as Aeschylus says, ‘who has tasted a man, it does not go unnoticed when her eye is bright,’ and in the case of a young man who has tasted true progress in philosophy these Sapphic symptoms attend him:

His tongue breaks, and a delicate
Fire at once courses beneath his skin,

but you will see his eye undisturbed and calm, and you would wish to hear him uttering.

It is also paraphrased, again with a mention of Sappho's name, τὰ τῆς Σαπφοῦς, in the *Demetrius* 38.4 when Plutarch lists the symptoms of desire manifested by Antiochos in the presence of Stratonice.²⁰

Quoting characters

If Plutarch's manner of exploiting citation is common to his *Lives* and to the *Moralia*, it will not be surprising if Plutarch's characters in his *Lives* behave like those in a dialogue, e.g. those in *Sympotic questions* or *Amatorius*. Indeed they often cite canonical poetry: to take but one example, Pompey's last words to his wife and sons at *Pompey* 78.7 are two Sophoclean trimeters (fr. 789 N), identified as Σοφοκλέους ἰαμβεῖα.

Sometimes the person quoting is not named: Asian Greeks' awe at Agesilaus' Spartan toughness prompted many unnamed people to utter the words of Timotheus (τὰ τοῦ Τιμοθέου: fr. 790 Page) 'Ares is a tyrant, but Greece does not fear gold', Ἄρης τύραννος, χρυσὸν δ' Ἑλλάς οὐ δέδοικε (*Agesilaus* 14.4). The first four words are used to construct an argument in Plutarch's own voice (also naming Timotheus as their poet) in the *Demetrius* 42.8.

A special case of a quoting character is that in the *Philopoemen* 11.3 of the citharode Pylades, who happened to have his turn in the citharodic competition and to sing the opening of Timotheus' *Persians* (fr. 788 Page) just as Philopoemen and his victorious soldiers entered the theatre 'fashioning a glorious, great adornment of freedom for Hellas', κλεινὸν ἑλευθερίας τεύχων μέγαν Ἑλλάδι κόσμον.²¹

Clusters

The habit of using three or more closely packed quotations which together help to reinforce or illuminate the writer's point is found both in the *Moralia* and in *Lives*. It is so common in the *Moralia* (e.g. throughout *How to listen to poets*) that I give only two examples.

In his *On moral virtue*, shortly after the quotation (at 445D) of Sophocles *Oedipus the king* 3–4 discussed above, in expounding the difference between

20 With the exception of a possible allusion to fr. 130 LP at *Sympotic questions* 681B in the use of the term γλυκύτικρον all Plutarch's citations of Sappho identify her as the poet: as well as those discussed cf. 146A (fr.55 LP), 456E (fr.158 LP), 646EF (again fr.55 LP), 751D (fr.49 LP). Does this imply that Sappho is not a 'respectable' poet whose work one might be expected to recognise in a high-minded context?

21 Cf. Paus. 8.50.3 (not dependent on Plutarch) and Hordern, *ad loc.*

weakness of will (ἀκρασία) and self-indulgence (ἀκολασία), Plutarch to illustrate his point cites 12 lines of poetry in some 23 lines of Teubner text (445–446B: 87 words of poetic text to 64 words of prose): a couplet of Mimnermus (1.1–2 West, with χάρις for βίος and ἄνευ for ἄτερ), two lines we think to be by Alexis (fr. 271.4–5 KA), then a single unidentifiable comic trimeter (com. adesp. fr. 781 KA) followed by a Euripidean trimeter (fr. 840 Kannicht), two Euripidean trimeters (fr. 841 Kannicht) and two further citations each of two tragic trimeters (tr. ad. fr. 379 and 380 Kannicht–Snell). Not one of all these is attributed to its poet, though nearby in the same work Plutarch attributes citations to Simonides (fr. 517 Page at 445C), and to Timon (fr. 58 at 446BC).

The procedure is slightly different in Daphnaeus' speech in *On desire* 751BE. Picking up a reference to Solon in Protogenes' preceding speech, Daphnaeus cites a couplet of Solon (fr. 25 West) and two trimeters of Aeschylus (fr. 135 Radt) to demonstrate the preoccupation of the homosexual ἐρωτικός with thighs; he then uses a phrase from Pindar (apparently confusing *Pyth.* 2.42 and Hes. *Theog.* 927), a line of Sappho (fr. 49 LP) and a trimeter from an unnamed tragedian (tr. ad. fr. 402 Kannicht–Snell) to demonstrate that a sexual favour granted by a woman both is called and involves χάρις. He then returns to Solon, applying a couplet to argue that in his later years Solon had a calmer perspective on desire (26 West, also cited at *Solon* 31.7 and in the *Banquet of the seven sages* 155E). All these texts are used to bolster the argument, and it is a corollary that in most cases the poet is named to add weight: Solon, Aeschylus, Pindar, Sappho and again Solon.

Both procedures are found in *Lives*.

The first appears in the opening of the *Theseus* 1.1–4. First Plutarch sets up the parallel of geographers' vague generalities about territories outside the area of reliable investigation to his own awareness that little can be clear or reliable in the pre-historic realm of poets and mythographers, a realm to which he is now moving from his previous subjects, set in a historical period. He cites, without attribution, four brief phrases: 'beyond there are sands that are waterless and populated by wild beasts' or 'inscrutable marsh' or 'Scythian cold' or 'frozen sea', 'τὰ δ' ἐπέκεινα θῖνες ἄνυδροι καὶ θηριώδεις' ἢ 'πηλὸς αἰδνής' ἢ 'Σκυθικὸν κρύος' ἢ 'πέλαγος πεπηγός'. Moving then to the question of whom he should pair with Romulus, he compares his activity to that of Eteocles choosing Theban champions to match the Argive attackers in Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*: with a man like this (as Aeschylus said) who will come together in combat? τοιῶδε φωτὶ (κατ' Αἰσχύλον) τίς συμβήσεται; (line 435) Whom shall I array against this man? Who can carry the responsibility, τιν' ἀντιτάξω τῷδε; τίς φερέγγυος; lines 395–6. The point that he is entering uncharted historical territory deserves contemplation, but his self-comparison to Eteocles is merely decorative αὐξησης, as is the use soon

after of a line from the *Iliad*, 7.281, to describe Theseus and Romulus as both of them warriors (*Theseus* 2.1).

The second procedure, deploying multiple citations to support an argument, is found, for example, in the *Demetrius*. Plutarch argues that jurisdiction is a defining feature of kingship, citing Timotheus' *sententia* 'War is a tyrant', Ἄρης μὲν γὰρ τύραννος, (fr. 790 Page, also cited at *Agesilaus* 14.4, see above) and Pindar's 'Law is the king of all things', νόμος ὁ πάντων βασιλεύς (fr. 169 Maehler).²² He then adduces the *Iliad*'s description (at 1.238) of kings as preserving ordinances (θέμιστας) and the *Odyssey*'s characterisation of Minos as the conversation-partner of Zeus²³

Multiple citations are also deployed to demonstrate matters of fact. The extreme case is in the *Alexander* 46.1–2 where five historians are named as affirming that Alexander met an Amazon and nine named as treating the incident as fictitious.²⁴ More helpfully in fifth-century Athenian *Lives* multiple citations are offered, many from comic poets. In the *Cimon* 16.8–10, for example, a line and a half of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* (1138–9) is offered to corroborate the statement that in the helot revolt following the earthquake of 462–1 B.C. the Spartans sent Pericleidas to seek Athenian help; then Critias is cited (*FHG* ii 70: not *verbatim*) for Cimon's decision to help Sparta despite Ephialtes' argument that Sparta's weakness was in Athens' interest, and finally Ion of Chios (Ion *FGrH* 392 F14) for Cimon's aphorism that the Athenians 'should not allow Greece to be lame or the city to be unevenly yoked' (παρακαλῶν μήτε τὴν Ἑλλάδα χωλὴν μήτε τὴν πόλιν ἑτερόζυγα γεγενημένην). Similarly in the *Pericles* 3.4–7 the unusual shape of Pericles' head is substantiated by two lines of Cratinus' *Chirons* (fr. 258 KA), a line from his *Nemesis* (fr. 118 KA), two from Telecleides (fr. 47 KA) and one from Eupolis' *Demes* (fr. 115 KA). One of Plutarch's longest quotations from comedy comes in a sequence in the *Nicias*, 4.4–8, demonstrating Nicias' vulnerability to being fleeced: first five trochaic tetrameters catalectic by Telecleides (fr. 44 KA), then an exchange in eight iambic trimeters and dimeters from Eupolis' *Maricas* (fr. 193 KA), and finally a trochaic tetrameter catalectic from Aristophanes' *Knights* (358) and two trimeters by Phrynichus (fr. 62 KA).²⁵

22 It is also cited for décor at *ad principem ineruditum* 780C. Plutarch's interpretation of νόμος as 'law' here is not without problems.

23 The text of the *Demetrius* seems to be corrupt, but to refer to *Od.* 19.178–9 Μίνως | ἐννέωρος βασιλεὺς Διὸς μεγάλου ὀαριστῆς.

24 For the technique of marshalling secondary sources who take different views, naturally common in historiography, cf. *Solon* 1.1–3.

25 Analogous but necessarily different is Plutarch's use at *Lycurgus* 21.4–7 of Terpander (fr. 4 Diehl = fr. 6 Campbell), Pindar (fr. 199 Maehler) and Alcman (fr. 41 Page).

Openings

Another technique common to both the *Moralia* and *Lives* is to open a work with an apophthegm or a literary citation, sometimes with more than one.

Plutarch quite often chooses this way of opening a *Life*. We have already seen how in the *Theseus* he starts with phrases from geographers, then two different lines from Aeschylus' *Septem*, and finally a line from the *Iliad*.

The first sentence of the *Demosthenes* offers a quotation from an *epinicion* composed in honour of Alcibiades (the author of which Plutarch here suggests might be Euripides or another poet):²⁶ this is then used as way into the importance of πατριδες. The *Phocion* opens with a quotation of the orator Demades (fr. 17 de Falco), the *Dion* with a piece of Simonides (fr. 572 Page), and in line 5 of the *Themistocles* Plutarch cites an epigram (attributed neither by him nor in the two other places it is preserved, Athenaeus 576c, *Anth.Pal.* 7.306, cf. Aelian *VH* 12.43) describing the hero's mother as Thracian.

A related technique is to cite a historiographical source. The *Solon's* first words are 'Didymus the grammarian in his *Response to Asclepiades concerning the law-tablets of Solon* ' (Δίδυμος ὁ γραμματικός ἐν τῇ περὶ τῶν ὀξόνων τῶν Σόλωνος ἀντιγραφῆ πρὸς Ἀσκληπιάδην); the *Eumenes* begins with a reference to Duris of Samos (*FGrH* 76 F53). Another variant is used to launch the *Lysander* (1.1): an inscription from the Acanthian treasury at Delphi 'Brasidas and the Acanthians (dedicated this from spoils) from the Athenians' (Βρασιδᾶς καὶ Ἀκάνθιοι ἅπ' Ἀθηναίων) leads to a statue inside the treasury wrongly identified as one of Brasidas – rather, says Plutarch, it is Lysander's.

The habit is more prominent in Greek than in Roman *Lives* – and indeed there are some Roman lives where the habit of citation seems to be much less in evidence. The extreme case of minimal citation seems to be the *Younger Cato*: a citation of a historical work by Thræsea Paetus (himself relying on Munatius) at 25.2 (*HRR* II 43, 99); a decorative quotation of Euripides *Heracles* 174–5 at 52.8; then a clutch of scoptic tetrameters mocking Cato's son at 73.2–3. Some other Roman *Lives* have not much more. The *Fabius Maximus* opens (1.1) with an unattributed story ('they say', λέγουσιν) about the family's descent from Heracles and a nymph or native woman; there is no citation as such until a decorative use of Homer (19.2) to categorise men like Claudius Marcellus as φιλοπολέμους καὶ ἀγερῶχους, followed at once by invocation of Poseidonius (*FGrH* 87 F42) for Fabius being called Rome's shield and Marcellus its sword. In the *Crassus* an aphorism of Archidamus is

26 Fr. 756 Page: in the *Alcibiades* 11.1 he quotes 6 lines (fr. 755 Page) from an *epinicion* for Alcibiades which he firmly attributes to Euripides. For an interesting exploration of the opening of the *Demosthenes* see Zadorojnyi 2005.

quoted at 2.9 and the historian Fenestella (Peter *HRR* II 82) is cited at 5.6 for his claimed access to an eye-witness source, then there is nothing until the lines of Euripides *Bacchae* 1169–73 quoted near the end of the *Life*, at 33.4–6, as sung by Jason of Tralles in Parthian celebrations of their victory at Carrhae. In the *Coriolanus* the first quotation is of Plato *Letter* 321c at 15.4 (for décor); then there is no quotation before that of Heraclitus (fr. 85 DK) and the *Odyssey* 4.246 for décor at 22.3–4; there is then a clutch of Homeric quotations (*Odyssey* 21.1, *Iliad* 9.459–60, *Odyssey* 9.339, *Iliad* 1.188–9, 6.161–2) in a discussion of the plausibility of Homer's representation of divine intervention at 32.4–8; almost at the end of the *Life* the final quotation is (again) from Heraclitus (fr. 86 DK) at 36.7.

But despite showing less inclination to cite, in some cases Roman *Lives* do open with a citation. The *Pompey* opens (1.1) with a quotation of a fragment of a lost *Prometheus* that Plutarch ascribes to Aeschylus (fr. 201 Radt): Plutarch asserts that the Roman people seems right from the start to have felt towards Pompey what Aeschylus' Prometheus felt towards Heracles, when he was saved by him and said

ἐχθροῦ πατρός μοι τοῦτο φίλτατον τέκνον.

Of a father who is an enemy this child is most dear to me.

He then goes on to explain the hatred felt towards Pompey's father, Cn. Pompeius Strabo. The parallel between the situations is not close, and Plutarch may be suspected of having hunted down a decorative quotation.

The opening of the *Aemilius Paullus and Timoleon* has only some similarity. Plutarch introduces a statement of his choice of these two heroes with a discussion of the pleasure and moral profit he has drawn from his biographical activity, and it is to add a touch of class to this theme that he cites in rapid succession the *Iliad* (24.630), Sophocles (fr. 636 Radt) and Democritus (55 B 166 DK).

A different tack is taken in the *Marcellus* and the *Marius*: in each case the issue of Roman *cognomina* is raised – Marcellus was the first in his *gens* to have this *cognomen*, which means 'warlike', and Marius had no *cognomen* at all – and Plutarch cites Poseidonius on the issue, only to disagree with him in the *Marius*.²⁷ Somewhat similar is Plutarch's citation of a Roman chronographer, Clodius (Peter *HRR* I² 178), in the fourth line of the *Numa* (1.1) for scepticism about stemmata claiming to go back before the Gallic sack of Rome, or of Sulla's memoirs (Peter *HRR* I² 195) to attest Lucullus' facility in both Latin and Greek early in the *Lucullus* (1.4), though as if to reflect the

27 *FGrH* 87 F41 at *Marcellus* 1.1, *FGrH* 87 F60 at *Marius* 1.1–5. Poseidonius is also the first authority to be cited in the *Brutus* 1.7 (*FGrH* 87 F40).

paideia that he has ascribed to Lucullus Plutarch immediately (1.5) quotes a tragic trimeter that is purely decorative (fr. 391 Kannicht-Snell).

We might also claim a mixture of the ornamental and the informative for the two-line scoptic elegiac epigram quoted without attribution near the start of the *Cato maior* (1.4) to illustrate some of his physical features.

The choice of opening a work with a citation or an apophthegm is frequently made in the *Moralia*. I give only a few examples. Plutarch uses a paradoxical citation of Philoxenus (Philoxenus of Leucas fr. 836(f) Page) followed up by a quotation of a Cato) to open *How the young man should listen to poets* (14D), sliding from it to the problem that the most philosophically sound utterances are not always the most attractive. *On fortune* begins (97C) with a citation from a lost tragedy (Chaeremon fr. 2 Snell), *Whether afflictions of the mind or the body are worse* with (500B) a line and a half from the *Iliad* (17.446–7), *Political Advice* with (798A) two Iliadic lines (9.55–6), *Whether an older man should engage in politics* with (783B) a fragment of Pindar (fr. 228 Maehler), and *On avoiding debt* with (827E) a quotation from Plato's *Laws* (844b).

Conclusions

Plutarch the philosopher tends to colour his moral philosophical works liberally with citations. It is not a knee-jerk reflex – he can write without exploiting citation when the genre of a work (e.g. *Advice on marriage*) or the implications of its dramatic context (as in *Banquet of the seven sages*) make quotation inappropriate. Insofar as his parallel *Lives* are a part of his didactic project they too draw Plutarch into exercising his inclination to and great skill in advancing his argument by the leverage of citations. But the extent to which the parallel *Lives* are generically different from most of what we call the *Moralia* – precisely because they are biography and because biography is a genre adjacent to historiography – is brought out, *inter alia*, by the great difference in density of quotation and the greater frequency with which quotations are used to open works in the *Moralia*. Use of quotation to support and enhance argument (as opposed to establish an empirical fact) was clearly a feature of Hellenistic philosophical writing, best reflected for us in the Latin writings of Horace (*Satires* and *Epistles*) and Seneca. Both such writing, and rhetorical declamation, seem to have been ready to use a quotation at the beginning of a work to help launch the argument.²⁸ Neither historiography nor (to judge from limited remains) biography in the Greek or Latin worlds much exploited

28 For a second-century AD rhetorical example cf. the opening of Aelius Aristides' εἰς Πώμπην, 26.1 Keil.

either technique – though it must be noted that the application of Sophocles fr. 874 Radt at *Timoleon* 36.2 to Timoleon's effortless superiority goes back to Timaeus (*FGrH* 566 F119b). What we see in the parallel *Lives* is an extension into biography of the techniques developed by Plutarch in his philosophical and miscellaneous writing.

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Why Does Plutarch's Apollo Have Many Faces?

Bernard Boulet

One of the greatest humiliations we meet with is self-contradiction. It is the undeniable sign of ignorance. The words *knowledge* and *contradiction* don't mix. How could one possibly make an *intelligent contradiction*? It seems inconceivable. But there might be a particular context where this is possible. For I would like to suggest that, in some way, Plutarch possessed the art of writing *intelligent contradictions*, in particular on the subject of Apollo.

Inconsistencies

Throughout Plutarch's works, Apollo's countenance fluctuates: he is often the familiar Olympian god of mythology, but he is sometimes a rational deity far removed from mythology; he often intervenes in the lives of men as the god of oracles, but he is sometimes said to be beyond the changing world where he cannot even have a single thought for the fate of men; he can be naively moral in the *Moralia*, or politically astute in the *Lives*. What then of Plutarch's thought on Apollo? Was Plutarch a naive pagan priest believing in the wild stories of mythology or was he a philosopher making concessions to popular belief? Like Socrates in the *Euthyphro* (6b) and like all Greek philosophers, Plutarch must have felt disbelief towards the mythological stories told by the poets, and yet he was a priest of Delphi. Is Plutarch's Apollo *ho theos* as Nicander, a familiar priest of Delphi, would have it, or *to theion* as his teacher Ammonios saw it?¹ These inconsistencies beg inquiry: why the many faces of Apollo in Plutarch's works?

Scholars have taken pains to show either that Plutarch can be made one or that his thought evolved in the course of his life. For my part, I share the view that Plutarch adapts his speech to fit the occasion, to suit the matter, to deal with the question at hand. More precisely, I will argue that Plutarch, while addressing the whole of the Greco-Roman world, seems to adapt various texts with a view to different listeners or readers. This variation in level of speech would account for many inconsistencies in his works.

1 In other words, does a wilful God rule Heaven and Earth or is the *cosmos* rather governed by an impersonal first cause?

Adapting the speeches

As Plutarch wrote: “It is becoming to search for the solution to apparent contradictions” (*De Pyth. orac.* 402e). I will assume that our author had a keen eye for contradictions and that, beyond his textual inconsistencies, there lies a coherent thought. The key in uncovering the one Apollo behind the various faces would lie in Plutarch’s art of writing: he amends his anecdotes, he revises his theories to emphasize different principles for different readers. Nikolaidis, in his article “*Plutarch’s Contradictions*” (p. 218), argues that Plutarch writes “not on a strictly theoretical level, but more often concerned with the practical consequences.”² Plutarch, he notes, referring to *De audiendis poetis* (33d), does not object to authors misquoting poets, because he himself amends quotations from dramatic writers.³ The same poetic licence can be seen in *De Herodoti malignitate* where Plutarch, in accusing Herodotus of wilfully distorting historical facts, proves to be himself quite a master in the art of philological amendments. “Plutarch”, writes Nikolaidis (p. 214), “is apt to modify and adapt his material according to the immediate requirements of the subject under discussion.” More specifically, on the subject of Apollo, Plutarch seems to take great poetic licence in adjusting the *persona* of the Pythic god to fit the needs of specific readers or listeners, whether they are statesmen or philosophers or simply good moral souls. This art of reaching out to specific readers is perceivable not only in his dialogues, but also in the *Lives*.

Apollo in the *Moralia*

To begin with the *Moralia*, the *De sera numinis vindicta* is a most beautiful dialogue, but not altogether philosophical. There are several hints in the dialogue that the author is holding back and keeping the lid on the most potent arguments. The topic of discussion is providence and its procrastinations; Plutarch, the main speaker, has three interlocutors who seem to believe in the gods: his son-in-law Patrocleas, his friend Olympichus, and his brother Timon. After the first two recall familiar arguments against providence, the first being that “Apollo lags, and such is the way of Heaven”, and the second, that this very procrastination destroys the belief in providence, Plutarch, as

2 Cf. also id (p. 218): “This inconsistency is often prompted by the special demands of the topic with which he is dealing each time or, in other words, by the target he aims at, by the moral message he wants to convey.”

3 Nikolaidis, 216. For another example, see how St. Basil (*Address to Young Men on the Study of the Greeks*) presents pagan literature through many amended quotes, rendering it less perilous to young Christian ears.

interlocutor, prevents Timon from putting forward yet another objection, declaring that the question might be settled without a third wave. Plutarch is restraining his ardent brother; he shows signs of unwillingness to discuss openly the more thorny objections against providence. And when Timon, after the two objections have been dealt with, begins stirring up the third wave, Plutarch prevents him from unravelling the whole of his objection, seizing upon his first pause to interject and to respond straight away (557e). Furthermore, the author has rigged Timon's objection with a major flaw: his examples of unpunished evildoers are taken from fiction, and so the rebuttal is made easy. Finally, to prove that the soul does survive after death where it can undergo punishment, Plutarch does not reply with rational arguments but with an eschatological myth, reminiscent of the myth of Er, describing the horrific fate that awaits evildoers in death. All these concurring details in the dramatic action suggest that the author does not offer, and does not wish to offer in this dialogue, the most enlightening *logos* on the matter. The dialogue is meant for youthful ears: the students are challenging their master to prove that justice wins over injustice – it is the same challenge that Glaucon and Adeimantus put to Socrates in the *Republic*. Plutarch offers his young listeners what they need to hear for the moment, and withholds his deepest thoughts on whether or not Apollo lags. In *De sera*, Apollo bears an ethical countenance and hides his most philosophical features.

In *De E apud Delphos*, on the contrary, Apollo bears a most philosophical countenance. Plutarch is reporting a discussion from his youth to his intellectual friends in Athens. This dialogue is definitely for the benefit of more philosophical minds, for to any other ears, the debate on the E of Delphi, on the number five and on the number of possible worlds would be a rather lengthy and boring exposé. In the first pages, the philosopher Theon has a brief argument with the priest Nicander: the philosopher argues that Apollo is first and foremost a dialectician encouraging men to think, but the priest replies that the god is a prophet demanding obedience on the part of men. The author, in his role of playwright, puts Theon in the better light. And the whole dialogue lends more credibility to dialectics: Nicander is dwarfed by the philosophers, especially Ammonios who outshines everyone as he elevates Apollo to the heights of a divine immutable Oneness: in approaching the temple in Delphi, everyone should hail Apollo with the words “You are” (393a), for this is the true meaning of the E of Delphi.⁴ Even the various names of Apollo echo this “You are”, or “You are one” (393b): Apollo signifies *not*

4 The E of Delphi, argues Ammonios, is really *Eī* (You are). Ammonios' views, which shine brightly in *De E*, come close to the Epicurean views so violently criticized in *Adversus Colotem* and *Non posse*: that the One God, completely impassive, is incapable of vengeance or of beneficial actions towards men.

many, *Iei*us signifies *one and only* and *Phœbos* signifies *pure and undefiled*.⁵ Being One and immutable, this philosophical Apollo is far removed from the vagaries of the changing world and of human events. Plutarch might well have followed, to some extent, his teacher Ammonios in not holding to a purely mythic version of the god of oracles, but one cannot conclude that the pupil shared entirely the teacher's view: in speaking of the supreme god in his other works, Plutarch often sets him *in* time rather than *out* of time. Nevertheless, Ammonios' notion of Apollo bears much resemblance to Plato's notion of Being, and the *De E* is probably aiming at winning mathematical or rational minds over to Platonic philosophy. In any case, this philosophical Apollo bears a countenance that is incompatible with his features in *De sera*.

The *De Pythiae oraculis* presents yet a different case: it combines mythology and philosophy with surprising ease. Apollo is now part mythical, part rational. The narrator this time is not Plutarch but Philinos, an enthusiastic soul, superficially Pythagorean, superstitiously vegetarian,⁶ a believer in strange happenings (397e–f), but inquisitive in a naive way (402e). This superstitious narrator reports a conversation that has just taken place with a young visitor to the Delphic site. The visitor, Diogenianos, is quite as superstitious as the narrator, for he believes that a strange oracle predicted the ruin of Pompeii. In this ambiance of superstition, the main theme comes to light: the young visitor is amazed that Apollo, patron god of the Muses, no longer inspires oracles in beautiful verse but only in ordinary prose. Like the narrator, the visitor is a young mind wavering between mythology and philosophy.⁷ The whole dialogue would then be more specifically for the benefit of young inquisitive readers who, like Philinos and Diogenianos, are still in the grips of superstition. To give such readers food for thought without turning them into atheists, the dialogue starts with a mild encounter between an Epicurean who ridicules the whole business of oracles (398a–b) and a Stoic who believes every detail in the wonderful story of the Pythic oracle. To settle the debate, Theon, the principle speaker, gives a lengthy explanation combining myth and reason: only that which is beautiful belongs to Apollo and it is rather the priestess who is to blame for anything all too human, or irrational, in the art of divination.⁸ In *De Pythiae*, Apollo is beyond imperfection, yet he does not shed his mythological status. This dialogue was meant to nudge bright, superstitious minds closer to rational thought and Platonic philosophy. But it would be a

5 Plutarch derives the word *Apollo* from *a-pollon* (not many), *Iei*us from *ia, iês*, an epic word meaning *one*, and *Phœbos* from an ancient word meaning *pure* or *purifying*.

6 *Quaestiones convivales* 4.1.660d and 8.7.727b.

7 Diogenianos swears in the name of the gods: he is not rational enough to reduce the Pantheon of Greek gods to only one divinity.

8 The priestess, like the poet in Plato's *Ion*, is merely an instrument of Apollo, who has no part in the irrational aspects of divination.

mistake to view this rather tame dialogue as Plutarch's last word on the subject of Apollo and religion.⁹

In *De defectu oraculorum*, a much less harmonious dialogue, mythology and philosophy come together like oil and water.¹⁰ As the partisan of mythology, the gullible Cleombrotos, who thinks that the years are getting shorter because some oil lamps are needing less and less oil each year, offers a beautiful exposé on daimonology. His counterpart, Lamprias, on behalf of philosophy and science, reduces the oracles to a natural inspiration. There is no tame reconciliation this time between myth and reason. The *De defectu* presents the strongest debate between the mythological Apollo and the philosophical Apollo. Why would Plutarch differ so much in tone from one dialogue to the next? Why would Apollo seem so harmonious in one and so problematic in the other? The two dialogues are as opposed as the two narrators, Philinos and Lamprias, the former relishing in easy answers, the latter favouring philosophical questions, and this difference in narrator and fashion might very well indicate that the two dialogues are rather intended for two different kinds of readers. Quite understandably, Plutarch chooses his narrators to fit the intellectual characteristics of their own narration. But if one would examine Plutarch's dialogues, one might notice that the level of speech differs in relation to the qualities of the narrator: there is an "accommodation of style to profession and character".¹¹ Not all dialogues have the same level of speech, and not all narrators have the same intellectual abilities. In the very dialectical *De defectu*, where the brilliant Lamprias is the narrator, Plutarch is even willing to discuss the possibility that the Pythia's trance was induced by volcanic fumes.¹² The fact that Plutarch even mentions this point shows that he was no mere superstitious priest blindly serving mythological gods.¹³ The *De defectu* is an earthquake of a dialogue that can create a fault in the very soul of young listeners like Heracleon, who must have been all ears at this debate. In *De defectu*, Apollo is an enigma for the very inquisitive minds.

9 Flacelière (pp. 39–41) is of the opinion that this harmonious dialogue is Plutarch's last word on the subject and that the *De defectu*, being a debate without a conclusion, does not represent his mature thought. This interpretation would seem to underestimate the importance of dialectics for Plutarch.

10 Like Cleombrotos and Demetrios, coming from opposite directions, meet in Delphi, the two kinds of speeches, the mythological and the philosophical, meet in this dialogue.

11 Russell, 35.

12 Scientists have recently confirmed that there might well have been exhalations at the Delphic site. See De Boer, Dale, Chanton.

13 It would be an oversimplification to state that "Plutarch believed in the existence of the gods he served." (Lamberton, 56).

In his dialogues, as we have seen, Plutarch adapts his speeches with a view to particular readers. Of course, there is, in all of Plutarch's works, something for everyone, and our author wishes to be widely read. His audience is the educated class of the Roman Empire. But in different dialogues, he seems to be aiming more specifically at different readers, sometimes more intent on comforting good moral souls, sometimes more bent on putting fundamental questions to philosophical minds. In his different countenances, Apollo, too, offers moral speeches to good souls and rational debates to philosophical minds. The moral readers, preferring *De Sera*, will see Apollo as the god of oracles who lends a hand in punishing the wicked. The more philosophical minds will prefer the *De E* where Apollo is a rational god not to be associated with the wild myths that are told and sung even in Delphi. Plutarch seems to be following the principle that different souls need different nourishment, and this art of writing leads to inconsistencies. As we have seen, the two faces of Apollo, the mythological and the philosophical, or the ethical and the rational, are not altogether compatible. In order to uncover the true sense of his dialogues, in order to peer beyond the *dramatis personae* and discover the intentions of the playwright, one must view the various speeches in their proper context. The character of the speakers and the character of the listeners lend a certain depth or shallowness to the speeches. Through the dramatic action of his dialogues, Plutarch seems to be making concessions to popular belief and yet urging towards a more rational view of Apollo and religion.

The *Lives*

As we turn to the *Lives*, we discover a third face of Apollo, one more fitting to the political scene. The *Lives* are addressed to Sosius Senecio, a Roman statesman and a counsellor to Trajan. Statesmen prefer reading histories and political biographies rather than philosophical treatises. Plutarch will again adapt his speech with a view to his intended readers by offering political teachings in the shape of political drama: statecraft becomes, to some extent, stagecraft.¹⁴ But fiction and fact come together here in a rather true to life drama. The historical realism in the *Lives* is repeated to some degree in Shakespeare's Histories: the setting is sober, the action credible. Shakespeare's Histories contain virtually no ghosts or spirits or witches, contrary to his other plays. In the *Lives*, too, there is no actual intervention of gods or daimons: mythic figures, like Apollo, only make indirect appearances, echoing popular belief or superstition. There is never any certitude about oracles, and the occasional outburst of omens and portents are reported as hearsay. Shakespeare

¹⁴ Harrison, 53.

might have learnt from Plutarch to tone down myth and magic when writing for more down-to-earth readers. If Plutarch is not as abrasive and as *unmythological* as Thucydides, nevertheless the world of the *Lives* is far less high-minded than the *Moralia*. In the rather plain décor of mortal events, Plutarch presents a distant figure of Apollo, which I will call the political Apollo.

We do, of course, catch some glimpses of the ethical Apollo and the philosophical Apollo in the *Lives*. The oracles of Delphi seem to prove true. And in the *Life of Timoleon* (30.5), Plutarch reports with satisfaction that Timoleon's mercenaries, slain in the battles of Sicily, were precisely those who had broken into the temple of Apollo at Delphi and partook in the sacrilege there: Apollo and the gods know how to punish the wicked without harming the good. On a more philosophical note, in the *Life of Pelopidas* (16.8), Plutarch argues that Apollo was not born of Leto in Delos, contrary to popular mythology, but is rather an eternal unbegotten deity. And later in the same *Life*, after giving historical examples where human sacrifices seem to have been ordered by the gods, and where compliance with these demands even resulted in success thereafter, Plutarch denounces such practices with philosophical arguments: "But some on the other side urged that such a barbarous and impious oblation could not be pleasing to any Superior Beings: that typhoons and giants did not preside over the world, but the general father of gods and men; that it was absurd to imagine that any daimons delighted in slaughter and sacrifices of men; or, if there were any such, they were to be neglected, as weak and unable to assist; such unreasonable and cruel desires could only proceed from, and live in weak and depraved minds." (21.5–6) Rational arguments occasionally make a sortie in the *Lives* to banish misguided myths.

But the political Apollo makes regular appearances in Plutarch's biographies. While this political Apollo still bears a mythological countenance, he no longer teaches the moral lessons of the *De sera*. The *Lives* do not bear witness to the eschatological theories and myths of the *Moralia*. On the whole, there is no proof in the *Lives* that tyrants are punished and that pious statesmen are rewarded. "Plutarch", writes Brenk of the *Lives*, "virtually never draws back a curtain beyond terrestrial events, to reveal the consequences of his hero's actions in another more grandiose, spectacular, and luminous universe. Paradoxically, the author who in his *Ethika (Moralia)* delighted in splendid descriptions of the horrendous tortures in the next life, had little taste for 'eschatological ethics' in his *Lives*."¹⁵ The worst punishment in the *Lives* does not fall upon Plutarch's evil couple, Demetrius and Anthony, but rather on the pious Nikias, whose tragic end prompted the belief that it is difficult to put one's trust in the gods, "considering that a man so religious, who had

15 Brenk, 73.

performed to the divine powers so many and so great acts of devotion, should have no more favorable treatment than the wickedest and meanest of the army.” (*Nikias* 26.5) In the *Lives*, the political Apollo Iago, and Timon, in *De sera*, could have offered these examples to buttress his objection against providence. This Apollo is not the best guide to moral perfection nor a good companion in philosophical debate, he is the ally of the statesman. This political god of oracles lends his voice to compel citizens into obedience, to restrain tyrannical ambitions, to instil courage in the hearts of soldiers. This is a hard Apollo for hard endeavours.

The political Apollo will even turn a blind eye when statesmen manipulate his oracles. Alexander himself went to consult the oracle, but since it was a forbidden day, the priestess refused to do her office. He began to draw her by force into the temple when she cried, “My son, thou art invincible” (*Alexander* 14.6), and Alexander took this as his prophecy and left Delphi. Themistocles was so bold as to stage prodigies and oracles in order to persuade the people of Athens that the only course left to save their city was to quit it temporarily and rely on their ships. The political Apollo becomes the puppet god of statesmen, and Plutarch is not shy to give examples.

In the *Life of Lysander*, an oracle seemed to disqualify Agesilaus from becoming king, but Lysander proved skilful in reinterpreting the oracle to win him the kingship: Plutarch hails this statesman for using persuasion instead of force. In the *Life of Dion*, Plutarch tells of an eclipse of the moon, which was no wonder to Dion who understood the nature of eclipses. “But because it was *necessary* that the soldiers, who were surprised and troubled at it, should be satisfied and encouraged, Miltas the diviner, standing up in the midst of the assembly, bade them be of good cheer”, (*Dion* 24.2) declaring that the eclipse of the moon rather predicted the eclipse of Dionysius. Able diviners and politicians knew how to give a more sensible spin on unfavorable oracles: they knew how to guide the Pythian god to a better sense of political affairs. In the *Life of Aristides*, when an oracle of Delphi bids the Athenians to wait for the Persians on their own territory, Aristides is troubled because this is bad military strategy. But Arimnestus deftly reinterprets the dream, giving the Athenians divine approval to fight the Persians in Plataea, in a narrow plain where an army of foot might well confront a cavalry: the day was saved and the war would turn in favour of the Greeks. Lycurgus, too, knew the power of oracles: the legislator called upon Delphi to win divine approval for his constitution. It is undoubtedly with Lycurgus in mind that Rousseau wrote, in his *Social Contract*, that ancient legislators called upon the gods to lend credence and authority to the law: “The legislator puts into the mouth of the immortals his

own wisdom in order to lead, by divine authority, those who would not be shaken by human prudence alone.”¹⁶

Some statesmen, however, are too naive and superstitious to bring out the political wisdom of Apollo, and they pay a heavy price. The most tragic case is Nikias, already mentioned, whose superstition led not only to his personal ruin but also to the ruin of the Athenian army in Sicily. He was so frightened by an eclipse of the moon that, instead of evacuating his army in all haste, he waited motionless three days for the moon to purify itself. He had not had the good fortune to learn from philosophers, like Dion his counterpart, that an eclipse was nothing to fear. “In a manner abandoning all other cares, he betook himself wholly to his sacrifices, till the enemy came upon them with their infantry, besieging the forts and camp, and placing their ships in a circle about the harbor.” (*Nikias* 24.1) The army was lost and Nikias with it. There is no harsher lesson against superstition in all of Plutarch work's, for, it must be known to statesmen, superstition must not cloud judgment in political affairs, where so much is at stake.

The contrast between the political Apollo of the *Lives* and the ethical Apollo of the *Moralia* can be inferred from the *Life of Phocion*. This statesman promised safe conduct to Cassander's front man, Nicanor, when he came to speak to the Athenians. But the Athenian authorities decided to pursue Nicanor in order to arrest him. Phocion, being a man of his word, permitted him to escape, declaring that, for his part, he still had confidence in Nicanor, and even if he was mistaken, it is better for a man to suffer wrong than to commit it. Plutarch, the author, steps in at this point to make a bold statement in his own name: “so far as one speaks for himself alone, the answer is honorable and high-minded enough, but he who hazards his country's safety, and that, too, when he is her magistrate and chief commander, can scarcely be acquitted, I fear, of transgressing a higher and more sacred obligation of justice, which he owed to his fellow citizens.” (*Phocion* 32.7) Plutarch, the political philosopher, spells it out: a moral good must sometimes give way to a higher justice. This is a dangerous principle, not to be repeated in the *Moralia*.¹⁷ In a

16 *Du contrat social* II.7 (*Œuvres Complètes* III. 383–384). In an accompanying note, Rousseau quotes Machiavelli: “*E veramente, dit Machiavel, mai non fù alcuno ordinatore di leggi straordinarie in un popolo, che non ricorresse a Dio, perche altrimenti non sarebbero accettate; perche sono molti i beni conosciuti da uno prudente, i quali non hanno in se ragioni evidenti da potergli persuadere ad altrui.*” *Discorsi sopra Tito Livio*. L. I. C. XI”

17 Nikolaidis mentioned this discrepancy in his article (p. 214). Plutarch, he reports, sometimes approves and sometimes disapproves of Euripides' saying that “if one must needs do wrong, one would rather do it for a kingdom's sake.” (Euripides, *Phaenissæ* 524). For doing wrong for the state's sake, see *Comparison* between Nikias and Crassus 4.3, and also *Phocion* 32. In the opposite direction, Plutarch will make certain admissions in the *Moralia* that he could not repeat in the *Lives*: in a moral setting like

moral treatise, it would not be fitting to have Apollo approve of any wrongdoing whatsoever, but in a political work, Apollo must remind statesmen where their paramount duty lies. Plutarch adapts his speech to fit the matter and context, to fit the intended readers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there seems to be three faces to Plutarch's Apollo: the ethical Apollo who advocates the belief in oracles and providence, the philosophical Apollo who leads beyond the myths to a rational debate on religion and metaphysics, and the political Apollo who teaches the right use of superstition in politics. These somewhat conflicting faces of Apollo correspond vaguely to the three parts of the Platonic soul: the desiring part, the spirited part and the rational part. Apollo guides the restless desires of the many with moral speeches, he teaches the more spirited souls the art of statesmanship, and he proposes enigmas to philosophical minds. Because an author must often exaggerate in order to be heard, Plutarch's teachings, aimed at various listeners, will tend to differ not only in tone but also in substance.

But what then of Plutarch's own views on Apollo? Was he a naive believer, or a practicing non-believer, or a spiritual philosopher? If our priest and philosopher strikes a middle ground between superstition and atheism, if he reaches a certain blend of mythology and philosophy, it is both to favour good mores and to bring man closer to the truth. Plutarch was not superstitious, but he did not want to do away with mythology: "Myths, despite the loose manner in which they do so, have a way of reaching the truth" (*De genio Socr.* 589F). Mythology, or more precisely daimonology, guides the soul through the different degrees of perfection and, in this way, can become, for the more inquisitive mind, an exploration into the different layers of the human soul.

And yet, the very fact that Plutarch plays with three different and rather incompatible countenances of Apollo suggests that he viewed mythology, at least in part, as a *pia fraus*, a noble lie. For "among mankind", he writes in *Non posse*, "a few are afraid of God who would not be better off without that fear." (1101c). Even the more fantastic or dreadful aspects of mythology can be useful in urging many to a more virtuous life. If, then, it is true that the many faces of Apollo are shaped with a view to particular listeners or readers, with a view to the various needs of the human soul, the inconsistencies concerning

the *De Pythiae* (401c), Theon can express his disgust at all the trophies on the Delphic site which testify to the wars and pillaging that were carried on in Greece. These words cannot become the stuff of the *Lives*.

the *persona* of Apollo stem not from an evolution in Plutarch's thought but from his art of writing. He is skilful in mixing philosophy and mythology, as we see with the different faces of his Apollo. In short, he possesses the art of writing intelligent contradictions.

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Plutarch's *Quaestiones Romanae* and his *Lives* of Early Romans

Simon Verdegem

Why is it that Plutarch's *Lives* of early Romans have much more material in common with *Quaestiones Romanae* than his other Roman *Lives*? Is it because they are late *Lives*? Or does the discrepancy have to do with the nature of the sources Plutarch used for his biographies, or the amount of source material available to him? Or is it rather that the subject matter of the *Lives* of early Romans offered more opportunities to insert some of the material that we find in *Quaestiones Romanae*?

The problem

Plutarch's Roman *Lives* and *Quaestiones Romanae* have a lot of material in common. Appendix 1 offers an overview of the significant parallels between them. I only consider a parallel to be significant if the same topic (e.g. a cult, a custom, a name, ...) is discussed in both *Quaestiones Romanae* and a Roman *Life* (e.g. no. 1; 3; 5; 12; 20; 22), if an event or a practice that is dealt with in a *Life* constitutes an important part of a *Quaestio* (e.g. no. 14; 17), or if the two works offer very similar explanations for two related phenomena (no. 13). Not included are cases in which a practice that is studied in a *Quaestio* is simply mentioned in a *Life*. I do not, for example, think that there is a *significant* parallel between *Sull.* 35.1, where Plutarch tells us that Sulla consecrated a tenth of his property to Hercules, and QR 18 (267E-F), where he wonders why this was the custom for many of the wealthy Romans.¹

When drawing up the list in Appendix 1, I did not split up passages from the *Lives* that are closely connected to more than one *Quaestio*, but counted them as one (no. 2; 6; 8; 16; 24). I have also taken together separate passages

1 Rose, 47 and Boulogne 2002, 102 n. 39, do take into account this kind of 'parallel' but do not include no. 17 and 19 from my list. Pailler, 90, relates *Publ.* 14.3 with QR 63 and 113, but sees no link between *Rom.* 21.1–10 and QR 56, 68 and 111 (no. 8), *Rom.* 25.6–7 and QR 53 (no. 9), *Num.* 10.8–10.13 and QR 96 (no. 12), *Num.* 19.8 and QR 68 (no. 16); *Publ.* 23.3–6 and QR 79 (no. 20), or *Cam.* 5.2 and QR 16–17 (no. 24). In addition to all the parallels between QR and the *Life of Romulus* I have listed in Appendix 1, Tzannetatos, 296, discusses the connection between QR 88 and *Rom.* 20.2, and between QR 33 and *Rom.* 16.1 and *Num.* 1.5.

from a single *Life* that are related to the same *Quaestio* (no. 6; 30). The only exception is *Rom.* 15.7 and 29.1: both passages share material with QR 87 (285B-D), but I have listed them separately because they each have different elements in common with QR 87.

One may argue about the best way to identify and count the parallels between Plutarch's Roman *Lives* and *Quaestiones Romanae*, but it is beyond doubt that the *Lives* of the earliest Roman protagonists (viz Romulus, Numa, Publicola, Coriolanus, and Camillus) have much more material in common with *Quaestiones Romanae* than the other Roman *Lives*.² The difference becomes even more striking if one notes that the passages under discussion from the latter group of *Lives* are often interrelated (no. 30 and 31; 32 and 33) and/or closely connected to one or two passages from the former (no. 29 ~ 6; 32 and 33 ~ 8 and 16). So how can we explain this discrepancy?

Hypothesis 1: the relative chronology of the *Lives*

According to Herbert Rose (p. 48), *Quaestiones Romanae* represents a selection from Plutarch's reading notes for the Roman *Lives*, published shortly before the series of *Parallel Lives* was completed. If one accepts this view and also agrees with Rose that the *Lives of Romulus* and *Numa* are late *Lives*, one could argue that these *Lives* have more material in common with *Quaestiones Romanae* than the other Roman *Lives* because Plutarch's collection of reading notes steadily grew over the years. A different but similar theory is put forward by Michèle Nouilhan, Jean-Marie Pailler and Pascal Payen: they believe that as the series of *Parallel Lives* progressed, Plutarch got more and more proficient at inserting the kind of material we find in *Quaestiones Romanae*.³

Both theories depend on the assumption that the *Life of Numa* was written towards the end of the series of *Parallel Lives*. But Plutarch refers to that *Life* in his *Lives of Caesar* (59.4) and *Coriolanus* (39.11), and mentions his *Life of*

2 See Appendix 2. Between *Quaestiones Graecae* and the Greek *Lives*, there is only one significant parallel: the custom of the Bottiaean maidens to chant in their festivals, "Let us go to Athens", is discussed in *QG* 35 and *Thes.* 16.2–3.

3 Nouilhan & Pailler & Payen, 329–330: «Les QR ont été rédigées avant les *Vies*, ou plutôt avant les *Vies* romaines archaïques, lesquelles, nous le savons par ailleurs, sont les dernières que Plutarque ait élaborées. A ce stade, la maîtrise acquise par lui d'un «genre» qu'il a sinon créé, du moins conduit à sa forme achevée, lui permet d'en exploiter les ressources très diverses. Telles qu'on peut les analyser dans la *Vie de Romulus*, ces ressources vont du parallèle textuel explicite (...) ou implicite (...) à un art profus et diversifié de ce qu'on pourrait appeler «digression étiologique». C'est par conséquent dans *Numa* et surtout dans *Romulus* (biographie rédigée après celle de son successeur sur le trône de Rome) que l'usage de la «Question» à l'intérieur d'une *Vie* trouve sa réalisation la plus accomplie». See also Pailler, 84, 86 and 87.

Lycurgus, the Greek pendant of the *Life of Numa*, in his *Lives of Agesilaus* (4.3 and 20.9) and *Agis-Cleomenes* (33.5). It is highly unlikely that he would so often refer to a pair that had not yet been written⁴. In fact, the references in the *Lives of Agesilaus* and *Caesar* give reason to believe that *Lycurgus-Numa* belongs to the first half of the series:⁵ Christopher Pelling has argued convincingly that the *Lives of Caesar* and *Pompey* were prepared simultaneously with the *Lives of Brutus*, *Crassus*, *Cato Minor* and *Antony*; therefore, *Agesilaus-Pompeius* and *Alexander-Caesar* were probably published shortly after *Dion-Brutus*, the twelfth pair of the series (*Dion* 2.7).⁶

The position of the *Life of Romulus* is less clear. The only cross-reference to *Theseus-Romulus* is found in the *Life of Camillus* (33.10), which itself is cited twice in the *Life of Numa* (9.15; 12.13). The use of the perfect “γέγραπται” in *Cam.* 33.10 and *Num.* 9.15 suggests that *Theseus-Romulus* was published before *Lycurgus-Numa* and *Themistocles-Camillus*. But in *Rom.* 21.1 Plutarch refers to the *Life of Numa* in exactly the same way (ἐν τῷ Νομᾷ βίῳ γέγραπται), and in *Thes.* 1.4 he speaks of *Lycurgus-Numa* as a pair that has already been published (ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸν περὶ Λυκούργου τοῦ νομοθέτου καὶ Νομᾶ τοῦ βασιλέως λόγον ἔκδόντες, ἔδοκοῦμεν οὐκ ἂν ἀλόγως τῷ Ῥωμύλῳ προσαναβῆναι). In my opinion, the best way to account for these contradictory cross-references is to assume that the *Lives of Romulus*, *Numa*, and *Camillus* were prepared simultaneously, just like those of *Pompey*, *Cato Minor*, *Crassus*, *Caesar*, *Brutus*, and *Antony*. As Pelling remarks, simultaneous preparation made sense for the biographies of Romulus, Numa and Camillus because they would all involve research of a very similar type.⁷ If we accept the idea of simultaneous preparation for the *Lives of Numa*, *Camillus*, and *Romulus*, we still cannot determine the exact order of the pairs they belong to, but we may reasonably assume that they were published within a short time: for then the cross-references show that Plutarch either already knew what he was going to say in the last of our three *Lives* when he worked up the first one (scenario a and b in

4 Cf. Nikolaidis, 302–303 n. 70.

5 There would be little doubt about this if we were certain that *Lys.* 17.11 refers to *Lyc.* 30.1 (thus a.o. Mewaldt 1907, 576; Stoltz, 101–102; Jones, 67), given the fact that the *Life of Lysander* itself is cited in the tenth pair of the series (*Per.* 22.4). However, we cannot rule out the possibility that the reference in *Lys.* 17.11 is to *Inst. Lac.* 239F–240A (thus e.g. Loeb [*Lys.*], 281 n. 1; Muccioli, 193 n. 138) or a work now lost (cf. Budé [*Lys.*], 195 n. 1; Delvaux 1995, 102; Nikolaidis, 288 n. 20).

6 See Pelling 1979, 75–83 and idem 1995 [≈ idem 2002, 2–11 and 26–29].

7 Pelling 1979, 80–81 [≈ idem 2002, 8]; cf. Brožek, 78; Nikolaidis 2005, 290. Mewaldt 1907, 570 believes that *Theseus-Romulus*, *Lycurgus-Numa* and *Themistocles-Camillus* were published simultaneously, but the use of the aorist participle “ἔκδόντες” in *Thes.* 1.4 clearly implies that *Lycurgus-Numa* was published before *Theseus-Romulus*. Pace Jones, 66–67 and van der Valk, 305–306, the way the *Life of Themistocles* begins does not prove that *Themistocles-Camillus* was published together with *Theseus-Romulus*.

Appendix 3), or as he wrote one *Life* he had a clear idea of the content of the succeeding one (scenario c).⁸ So if the *Life of Romulus* was prepared simultaneously with the *Lives of Numa* and *Camillus*, it can no longer be regarded as a late *Life*, and any theory that builds on that premise to account for the great number of parallels between the *Life of Romulus* and *Quaestiones Romanae* should be rejected.

In *Thes.* 1.2, Plutarch claims to have ‘gone through’ the historical times when working on his biographies (οὕτως ἐμοὶ περὶ τὴν τῶν βίων τῶν παραλλήλων γραφὴν τὸν ἐφικτὸν εἰκότι λόγῳ καὶ βάσιμον ἱστορίᾳ πραγμάτων ἔχομένη χρόνον διελεύθοντι). He probably means that he reached the limits of the historical period when writing *Lycurgus-Numa*,⁹ but for some scholars this passage proves beyond doubt that *Theseus-Romulus* was one of the last pairs of the *Parallel Lives*. They regard the reference to the *Life of Romulus* in *Cam.* 33.10 as a textual corruption, an interpolation, or an addendum by Plutarch himself.¹⁰ The first two explanations are implausible because the reference in *Cam.* 33.10 perfectly fits into the context and its language does not differ from that of the other cross-references in the *corpus Plutarcheum*.¹¹ The third possibility cannot be ruled out entirely,¹² but one may wonder why there are only three cases of contradictory cross-references in the *Lives* if Plutarch could always add a new reference to any biography he had published before.¹³ In any case, if one regards the reference in *Cam.* 33.10 as a later insertion but trusts the ones in the *Lives of Romulus* and *Numa*, then it follows from *Num.* 9.15 and 12.13 that *Themistocles-Camillus* was published before *Lycurgus-Numa*.¹⁴ Since *Lycurgus-Numa* seems to belong to the first half of the series and the *Life of Camillus* also contains a reference to *Quaestiones Romanae*

8 Cf. Van der Valk, 304–305. Nikolaidis (pp. 291–292), believes that the *Life of Camillus* was written first and put aside for a while because Plutarch had not yet determined its Greek counterpart, but he still places *Themistocles-Camillus* shortly after *Lycurgus-Numa* and *Theseus-Romulus* (pp. 302–305).

9 Cf. Mewaldt 1907, 572–573; Bühler, 281; Hamilton, xxxvi. According to Flacelière, 68–69, the fact that Plutarch emphasises that little could be said with certainty about Lycurgus and Numa shows that he did not regard these men as historical characters. But factual uncertainty is not limited to the mythical period (see e.g. *De fort. Rom.* 326A on the days of Camillus), and Plutarch makes it clear that he was confronted with a lot of disagreement among historians when he was working on *Lycurgus-Numa* (see *Lyc.* 1.1; *Num.* 21.1; cf. Hamilton, xxxvi–xxxvii).

10 Textual corruption: Stoltz, 95. Interpolation: Delvaux 1995, 99–100. Later addition by Plutarch: Ziegler, 901–902.

11 Cf. Mewaldt 1930, 434; Pelling 1979, 80 n. 48 [≈ idem 2002, 33 n. 48]; Nikolaidis, 292 n. 33.

12 Cf. Hamilton, xxxv n. 4.

13 See van der Valk, 328.

14 Thus Stoltz, 129–130; Ziegler, 901–902; Delvaux 1995, 99 and 105.

(19.12: ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἐν τῷ Περὶ αἰτίων Ῥωμαϊκῶν ἐπιμελέστερον εἴρηται), the implication is that *Quaestiones Romanae* cannot have been published shortly before the series of biographies was completed but must have preceded most or perhaps even all of the *Parallel Lives*.¹⁵

Or should we also distrust the reference to *Quaestiones Romanae* in *Cam.* 19.12? According to Rose, the account of the *dies postriduanus* given in *Cam.* 19 “is so much less definite and complete than in the parallel passage, QR 25, that it seems to have been written before rather than after the latter”. It is true that Plutarch is not very precise in *Cam.* 19.12: his account creates the impression that the battle of the Allia took place on the day after the Ides of July, whereas Livy (VI 1.11–1.12) makes it clear that it happened two days later. In *Quaestiones Romanae*, Plutarch rejects the view that the fact that the Romans did not travel on the day after the Kalends, the Nones or the Ides had to do with the defeat at the river Allia, arguing that “it was on a different day that they were defeated in battle” (QR 25, 269F: ἢ τοῦτο μὲν ἔχει πολλὰς ἀλογίας; ἄλλη τε γὰρ ἡμέρα τὴν μάχην ἠττήθησαν, ἣν Ἀλλιάδα διὰ τὸν ποταμὸν καλοῦντες ἀφοσιοῦνται, ...). But when summarizing the rejected view, he is as imprecise as in *Cam.* 19.12: like there, he only mentions the defeat itself and the idea that superstition extended the custom to the day after the Nones and the day after the Kalends (QR 25, 269E). In *both* passages, he fails to explain that two days before the battle, i. e. on the day after the Ides of July, Sulpicius, the commander of the Roman army, had made an unacceptable sacrifice.¹⁶ Moreover, it is neither unnatural nor unusual that

15 Boulogne 2002, 104–105, believes that *Quaestiones Romanae* was published “avant le début de la mise en forme de la première des *Vies parallèles* et pendant la période nécessairement occupée par la préparation de la documentation” because he discerns two parallels (no. 27; QR 14 ~ *Marc.* 5.5) between *Quaestiones Romanae* and the *Life of Marcellus*, and *Pelopidas-Marcellus* was probably one of the first four pairs of the series of *Parallel Lives* (see a.o. Ziegler, 902; Jones, 67–68; Van der Valk, 302–303; Delvaux 1995, 103). But the link between QR 14 and *Marc.* 5.5 is very weak, and the material for *Marc.* 3.6–3.7, which deals with another incident than QR 83, may simply have come from a source for the main narrative of that *Life*. The same goes for the limited amount of information about the cult of Bona Dea in the *Life of Cicero* (no. 30), which is part of the fifth pair of the series (see *Dem.* 3.1). Therefore, we cannot rule out the possibility that *Quaestiones Romanae* was published after *Pelopidas-Marcellus* and *Demosthenes-Cicero*, at about the same time as *Lycurgus-Numa*, *Themistocles-Camillus* and perhaps *Theseus-Romulus* (cf. Pelling 1979, 81 n. 51 [= idem 2002, 33 n. 51]). In fact, Plutarch need not even have started to collect the material for *Quaestiones Romanae* before that time.

16 Cf. Liv. VI 1.12: *Quidam, quod postridie Idus Quintiles non litasset Sulpicius tribunus militum neque inventa pace deum post diem tertium obiectus hosti exercitus Romanus esset, etiam postridie Idus rebus divinis supersederi iussum, inde, ut postridie Kalendas quoque ac Nonas eadem religio esset, traditum putant.* Rose himself (pp. 22–23) claims that Plutarch makes Livy say that the battle was fought the day after the Ides of July, but Boulogne 2002,

Plutarch limits himself to a single ‘historical’ explanation in *Cam.* 19 while offering several hypotheses in *QR* 25. He repeatedly does the same in the *Life of Romulus* (see no. 1; 6: the carrying of the bride and the parting of her hair¹⁷; 7), which contains the only other reference to *Quaestiones Romanae* (15.7) and even Rose regards as posterior to it.

So even if one is convinced that the *Life of Romulus* is a late *Life*, one should reject the idea that it has more significant parallels with *Quaestiones Romanae* than any other *Life* because both works were published shortly before the series of *Parallel Lives* was completed. One could maintain that Plutarch, by the time he wrote his biography of Romulus, had become very practised at inserting material he had already used in *Quaestiones Romanae*, but given the relatively early date of *Lycurgus-Numa*, it is clear that growing proficiency alone cannot account for the fact that the *Lives* of the earliest Roman protagonists have much more material in common with *Quaestiones Romanae* than the others.

Hypothesis 2: the source material for the *Lives*

Perhaps then the explanation lies in the sources Plutarch used for the *Parallel Lives*. It is obvious that Plutarch, when writing those passages of the *Lives* that have a parallel in *Quaestiones Romanae*, did not simply copy the sources he was using for the main narrative of these *Lives*. When discussing the use of vultures in augury (no. 3), for example, he refers to Herodorus Ponticus’ work on Heracles (*Rom.* 9.6), which he certainly did not heavily rely upon for his *Life of Romulus* but seems to have used for his *Life of Theseus* (26.1; 29.3; 30.4). A few chapters later (*Rom.* 15.3), Plutarch reports what his friend Sextius Sulla told him (ἔλεγεν ἡμῖν) about the origin of the nuptial cry “*Talassio*” (no. 6).¹⁸

In the latter case, however, the *idea* to insert a discussion of the custom may have come from one of the sources for the main narrative of the *Life of Romulus*: Juba II is not only said to have interpreted “*Talassio*” as an exhortation to spinning (*Rom.* 15.4) but is also cited in connection with the number of Sabine maidens that were seized (*Rom.* 14.7) and the treason of Tarpeia (*Rom.* 17.5). *Mutatis mutandis*, the same may be true of other passages

333–334 n. 109, rightly remarks that Plutarch simply states that it took place after those Ides (*QR* 25, 269E: μετὰ τὰς Κυντιλίας εἰδούς).

17 Cf. Pailler, 78: “comme il est normal dans une *Vie*, l’auteur se limite à exposer l’explication par l’origine historique, se contentant d’une allusion à l’existence d’autres propositions, développées dans la *Question* 87 ”.

18 On the relationship between Plutarch and Sextius Sulla, see Puech, 4878–4879. Since the view of Sextius Sulla is not mentioned in *QR* 31, it is tempting to think that the Carthaginian responded to Plutarch’s discussion of the subject in *Quaestiones Romanae*.

that have a counterpart in *Quaestiones Romanae*, such as the digression on the Lupercalia in *Rom.* 21.4–10 (no. 8; via Caius Acilius?) and the discussion of the importance of flocks and herds for the ancient Romans in *Publ.* 11.6–7 (no. 18; via Fenestella?¹⁹). But Plutarch did not always follow the lead of his sources when he decided to elaborate upon a certain topic. This is evident from the *Life of Coriolanus*. The main narrative of this *Life* clearly goes back to Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Antiquitates Romanae*.²⁰ Contrary to Plutarch, Dionysius does not discuss why the *corona civica* was made of oak leaves (no. 21), nor does he dwell on the fact that those who were canvassing for the consulship used to wear no tunic (no. 22). In fact, he does not even mention the material that Marcius' first garland was made of (*Ant. Rom.* VIII 29.4: ἐκ ταύτης τῆς μάχης ἀριστείοις ἀνεδούμην ὑπὸ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ στεφάνοις πολίτην ὑπερασπίσας καὶ πολέμιον ἀποκτείνας), and keeps completely silent about the campaign that preceded Marcius' defeat in the elections (see *Ant. Rom.* VII 21.2). In both cases, the idea to insert a digression seems to have come from Plutarch himself.²¹ This should serve as a warning to anyone who would like to argue that the *Lives* of early Romans have more material in common with *Quaestiones Romanae* than the others because the sources Plutarch used for the main narrative of the former group contained more discussions of Roman customs, names, etc than those he drew upon for the latter.

The amount of material Plutarch had available for the main narrative of his *Lives* does not seem to have been a decisive factor either.²² Plutarch did not enrich his biographies of early Romans with additional information about such things as the Roman calendar (no. 16) or the cult of Mater Matuta (no. 24) because he did not have enough material for his main story. It is true that if we would delete every digression in our *Lives* of early Romans, the *Lives of Numa*, *Publicola*, and *Romulus* would be among the shortest of the series. But the *Life of Romulus* would still be longer than the *Lives of Philopoemen* and *Flaminius*, and none would be shorter than the *Life of Eumenes*, which comprises no more

19 Fenestella is cited at the end of QR 41 (274F-275A), in connection with the fact that the names of some ancient Roman families are derived from animal names. Unfortunately, it is neither certain that the entire *Quaestio* goes back to Fenestella (cf. Boulogne 2002, 349 n. 216; *contra*: Rose, 188; Nouilhan & Paillet & Payen, 136), nor that Plutarch made use of his work in the *Life of Publicola* (for this view, see esp. Alfisi, 11–16; Delvaux 1989, 137–138; Fenestella is also cited in *Crass.* 5.6 and *Sull.* 28.14).

20 See esp. Peter, 7–17; Russell; Pelling 1996, xxii–xxv; idem 1997 [≈ idem 2002, 387–411].

21 For a detailed analysis of these and other digressions in the *Life of Coriolanus*, see Roskam & Verdegem.

22 *Pace* Delvaux 1989, 140: “Plutarque se comporte comme un biographe doublé d'un antiquaire et les curiosités institutionnelles étoffent les *Vies* quand la matière biographique est rare”.

than 576 lines in the latest Teubner edition (see Appendix 4). The difference in length between our Roman *Lives* and their Greek counterparts would also remain acceptable; it would not even come close to that between the *Lives of Pompey* and *Agésilas* (1250 lines).

Hypothesis 3: the subject matter of the *Lives*

A more likely answer to our problem may come from an examination of the ‘historical references’ in *Quaestiones Romanae*. As Pascal Payen²³ has observed, the majority of these references is to one of the earliest phases of the history of Rome. In 45 of the 113 *Quaestiones*, i. e. in nearly 40 percent of the cases, at least one explanation traces back the origin of the phenomenon under discussion to the times of Hercules and Evander,²⁴ the days of Aeneas,²⁵ the kingdom period,²⁶ or the early Republic.²⁷ In no fewer than 24 of these *Quaestiones* mention is made of one of the five oldest protagonists of the Roman *Lives*²⁸ and/or a specific event that is narrated in their biographies.²⁹ References to later times are much rarer in *Quaestiones Romanae*. Of the eight instances,³⁰ only two have to do with an important character from the *Lives*: in QR 71 Plutarch refers to Crassus and Caesar, and in QR 38 he discusses a decision by Quintus Metellus Pius, whose pontificate is mentioned in *Caes.* 7.1, and whose military campaigns in Spain are dealt with in the *Lives of Sertorius* (12–22) and *Pompey* (17–19).³¹ The importance of these statistics becomes clear as soon as one notes that 22 of the 33 *Quaestiones* that are part of a significant parallel between *Quaestiones Romanae* and the *Lives of Romulus, Numa, Publicola, Coriolanus* or *Camillus* belong to the group that makes mention of a protagonist of these *Lives* and/or an event they describe.³² Two

23 Payen, 54–55. His lists and mine do not entirely correspond.

24 QR 18; 32; 56; 59; 60; 90; 92.

25 QR 6; 10; 11; 45; 78.

26 QR 4; 15; 19; 21; 23; 27; 29; 30; 31; 35; 36; 47; 53; 55; 57; 58; 67; 69; 74; 85; 87; 93; 100; 101; 103; 105; 106.

27 QR 25; 42; 79; 91; 98; 107.

28 QR 15; 19; 21; 22; 23; 27; 35; 42; 53; 57; 58; 67; 79; 91; 93.

29 QR 6; 25; 29; 31; 85; 87; 91; 98; 101; 105.

30 QR 5; 34; 38; 66; 71; 79; 81; 83.

31 Boulogne 2002, 346 n. 196, identifies the Quintus Metellus of QR 38 as the Roman consul of 251 BC, but this Caecilius Metellus was called Lucius, not Quintus; see Van Ooteghem, 7–22. Note also the similarity between QR 38, 273D (Κόιντος Μέτελλος ἀρχιερεὺς γενόμενος καὶ τᾶλλα δοκῶν φρόνιμος εἶναι καὶ πολιτικός ἀνὴρ) and *Sert.* 12.5 (τὸν Μέτελλον, ἀνδρα Ῥωμαίων ἐν τοῖς τότε μέγιστον καὶ δοκιμώτατον).

32 QR 6; 15; 19; 21; 22; 23; 25; 27; 29; 31; 35; 42; 53; 57; 58; 67; 79; 85; 87; 91; 93; 101.

others are dealing with phenomena that seem to have occurred only in the earliest periods in Roman history.³³ So if *Quaestiones Romanae* preceded most or perhaps even all of the *Parallel Lives*,³⁴ it appears that the *Lives* of early Romans have more elements in common with that treatise than the others because their subject matter offered more opportunities to insert some of the material it contains.

Of course there are places in the *Lives* of later Romans where Plutarch could have inserted material from *Quaestiones Romanae* but did not do so. In the *Life of the Gracchi*, for example, we read that Tiberius once put his private seal upon the temple of Saturn in order that the quaestors might not take any money from the treasury or pay any into it (*TG/CG* 10.8). It would have been perfectly possible to explain at this point that this was the very reason why Publicola had decided to use the temple as the public treasury in the first place (cf. no. 19). Likewise, Plutarch repeatedly tells us that Cato the younger often went out the door without a tunic (*Cat.Mi.* 6.6; 44.1; 50.1); he could easily have added that in earlier times this had been the habit of those canvassing for the consulship (cf. no. 22).

One can think of various reasons why Plutarch sometimes refrained from enriching the *Life* of a third, second, or first-century Roman with material he had already used in *Quaestiones Romanae*. In some cases, he may simply have wanted to avoid repetition with an earlier *Life*. One can imagine, for instance, that Plutarch, having discussed the punishment of unchaste Vestal Virgins in his *Life of Numa* (no. 12), did not want to elaborate on that topic again when he mentioned the fate of two of those virgins in *Fab.* 18.3. In other cases, he may have thought that the insertion of material from *Quaestiones Romanae* would create too blatant a digression. In *Crass.* 6.5, for example, we are told that Crassus was inflamed by the fact that Sulla paid honour to Pompey by uncovering his head, but a discussion of this custom, like we get in *QR* 10, would surely have been out of place. Last but not least, there may be an ideological reason at play. As Jacques Boulogne and Rebecca Preston have argued, *Quaestiones Romanae* is not just an antiquarian work, but part of the early imperial Greek elite's discourse concerning the construction of identity.³⁵ Clearly written for a Greek audience,³⁶ it explores the relation between Greek and Roman culture as well as the persistence of Roman identity over time.

33 *QR* 41 and 49. See also Boulogne 1987, 471 n. 4; idem 1992, 4698 n. 107; Scuderi, 123.

34 See *supra*, p. 175.

35 See esp. Boulogne 1987, 471–472; idem 1992, 4698–4707; idem 1994, 73–153; idem 2002, 95–99; Preston.

36 See esp. Boulogne 1987, 472–473; idem 1992, 4699 n. 108; Duff, 299–300; Preston, 97.

Most of the passages in the Roman *Lives* that have a significant parallel in *Quaestiones Romanae* have a similar function. They set the reader of the *Lives* thinking about the nature of Roman culture and the continuity between past and present. By using some of the aetiological material that we find in *Quaestiones Romanae* in his *Lives* of early Romans, Plutarch could easily create links between the distant times of his protagonists and his own days (see e.g. no. 1; 3; 5; 6; 9; 14; 15; 18; 19; 21; 25; 26).³⁷ By inserting it in his *Lives* of later Romans, on the other hand, he would often have taken us further back in time. In *Pomp.* 4.7–4.10 (no. 29), for example, we are taken back from the days of Pompey to the rape of the Sabines. Plutarch does make it clear however, that the Romans of his own days still used the cry “*Talassio*” to greet the newly wedded (*Pomp.* 4.6: ὁ δῆμος ἐπεφώνησε τοῦτο δὴ τὸ τοῖς γαμοῦσιν ἐπιφωνούμενον ἐξ ἔθους παλαιοῦ, Ταλασίω; 4.10: ἐκ τούτου φασὶ – καὶ γὰρ εὐτυχῆς ὁ γάμος ἀπέβη τῷ Ταλασίω – ταύτην τὴν ἐπιφώνησιν μετὰ παιδιᾶς γενέσθαι τοῖς γαμοῦσιν). Perhaps in other cases he refrained from inserting material from *Quaestiones Romanae* in his *Lives* of later Romans because it was more difficult or even impossible to add a link with his own times and he did not want to create a purely antiquarian digression.

Conclusion

Plutarch does not give a final and definite answer to the questions he raises in *Quaestiones Romanae*: the constant use of the interrogative mode makes it clear that the explanations given are not the only ones possible, and the various answers to a single question do not necessarily exclude each other but often present complementary perspectives.³⁸ The same is true of the hypotheses discussed above with regard to the question why Plutarch’s *Lives* of early Romans have much more material in common with *Quaestiones Romanae* than his other Roman *Lives*. I hope to have demonstrated that this discrepancy cannot simply be due to the relative chronology of the *Lives*, the nature of the sources Plutarch used for them, or the amount of source material available to him. The fact that the subject matter of the *Lives* of the earliest Romans offered more opportunities to insert material from *Quaestiones Romanae* than the other *Lives* seems to have been a more important factor, but that does not mean that the others played no part whatsoever. Chronology, for example, may have had its influence if Plutarch sometimes decided not to insert material

37 The same tendency is also found in other parts of those *Lives*; see e.g. *Rom.* 1.1–2.2; 10.3; 16.8; 18.1; 24.2; 27.4; *Num.* 7.10–7.11; 14.2; 14.5; 15.7; *Publ.* 7.8; 8.6; *Cor.* 3.5–3.6; 7.1; 11.5–6; *Cam.* 20.12.

38 See esp. Boulogne 1992, 4687–4690 and 4694–4696; Deremetz, 69–70.

from *Quaestiones Romanae* in the *Life* of a third, second, or first-century protagonist because he had already used it in the *Life* of an early Roman. In fact, we cannot even rule out the possibility that the subject matter of the *Lives* was only a minor factor too, the main reason for the discrepancy under discussion still escaping us. Thus *Quaestiones Romanae* continues to raise more questions than it answers³⁹.

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39 I would like to thank Dr. Jeff Beneker for correcting my English.

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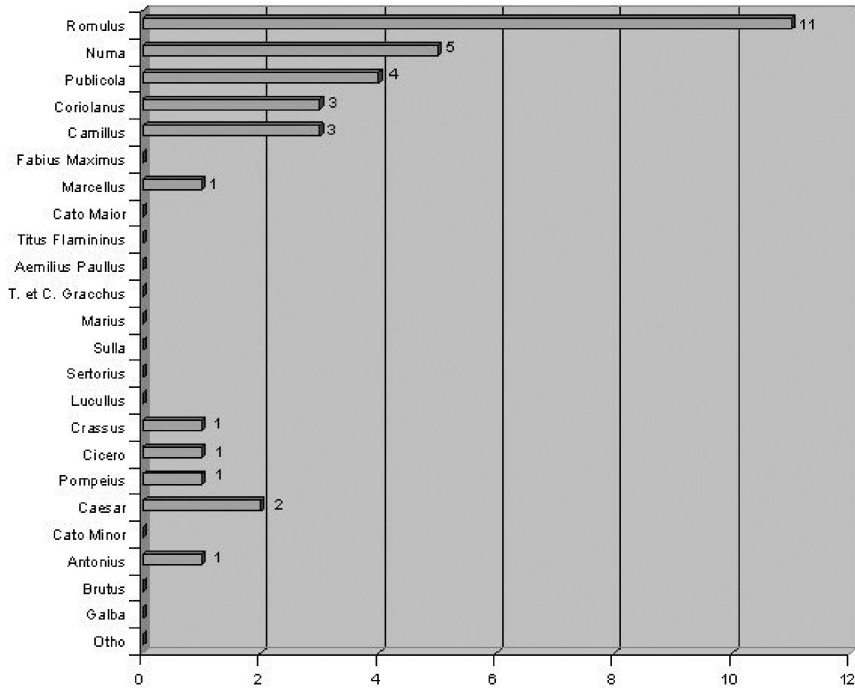
Appendix 1:

The Significant Parallels between the *Lives* and *Quaestiones Romanae*

N ^o Life	Quaest. Rom.	Subject
1 <i>Rom.</i> 1.1–1.3	6 (265B–E)	the kissing of kinsmen
2 <i>Rom.</i> 4.1–5.5	21 (268E–269A)	how a she-wolf and a woodpecker feeded
	35 (272E–273B)	Romulus and Remus; the cult of Rumina;
	57 (278C–D)	the two Larentia’s
3 <i>Rom.</i> 9.5–7	93 (286A–C)	the use of vultures in augury
4 <i>Rom.</i> 11.4–5	27 (270F–271B)	why walls are held sacred but gates are not
5 <i>Rom.</i> 13.2–7	58 (278D)	the <i>patricii</i>

The Significant Parallels between the *Lives* and *Quaestiones Romanae* (Continued)

N° Life	<i>Quaest. Rom.</i>	Subject
6 <i>Rom.</i> 15.1–7 <i>Rom.</i> 19.9	29 (271D) 31 (271F–272B) 85 (284F) 87 (285B–D)	the nuptial cry “ <i>Talassio</i> ”; the household tasks of the Roman women; the habit of carrying the bride over the treshold; the parting of the bride’s hair with the point of a spear
7 <i>Rom.</i> 20.4	101 (287F–288B)	the <i>bullā</i>
8 <i>Rom.</i> 21.1–10	56 (278B–C) 68 (280B–C) 111 (290A–D)	the Carmentalia and the Lupercalia
9 <i>Rom.</i> 25.6–7	53 (277C–D)	“ <i>Sardi venales!</i> ”
10 <i>Rom.</i> 26.3–4	67 (280A–B)	“ <i>lictor</i> ”
11 <i>Rom.</i> 29.1	87 (285B–D)	Quirinus and Juno Quiritis
12 <i>Num.</i> 10.8–10.13	96 (286F–287A)	the punishment of Vestal Virgins who break their vow of chastity
13 <i>Num.</i> 12.1–2	23 (269B)	Libitina
14 <i>Num.</i> 14.10–12	25 (269E–270D)	the sitting down after worship
15 <i>Num.</i> 16.2–4	15 (267C)	the sacrifices to Terminus
16 <i>Num.</i> 18.5–19.11	19 (267F–268D) 22 (269A) 68 (280B–C) 86 (284F–285B)	the Roman calendar; the two faces of Janus
17 <i>Publ.</i> 10.1–6	91 (285F)	Publicola’s house on the Velia
18 <i>Publ.</i> 11.6–7	41 (274E–275A)	the importance of flocks and herds for the ancient Romans
19 <i>Publ.</i> 12.3–4	42 (275A–B)	the treasury in the temple of Saturn
20 <i>Publ.</i> 23.3–6	79 (282F–283A)	the burial of Publicola and his descendants
21 <i>Cor.</i> 3.3–3.4	92 (285F–286A)	the <i>corona civica</i>
22 <i>Cor.</i> 14.2–3	49 (276C–D)	the habit of canvassing for office without a tunic
23 <i>Cor.</i> 24.9–10	70 (280E–F)	<i>furciferi</i>
24 <i>Cam.</i> 5.2	16 (267D) 17 (267E)	the cult of Mater Matuta
25 <i>Cam.</i> 19.1–12	25 (269E–270D)	<i>the dies Alliensis and dies postriduani</i>
26 <i>Cam.</i> 36.2–9	91 (285F)	the conviction of Marcus Manlius and the prohibition for the patricians to dwell about the Capitoline
27 <i>Marc.</i> 3.6–3.7	83 (283F–284C)	human sacrifices
28 <i>Crass.</i> 7.8	71 (280F–281A)	the hay on the horn of vicious bulls
29 <i>Pomp.</i> 4.7–4.10	31 (271F–272B)	the nuptial cry “ <i>Talassio</i> ”
30 <i>Cic.</i> 19.4–5 <i>Cic.</i> 28.2	20 (268D–E)	the cult of Bona Dea
31 <i>Caes.</i> 9.4–8	20 (268D–E)	the cult of Bona Dea
32 <i>Caes.</i> 61.1–3	68 (280B–C)	the Lupercalia
33 <i>Ant.</i> 12.1–2	68 (280B–C)	the Lupercalia

Appendix 2: The number of significant parallels between the Roman *Lives* and *QR*Appendix 3: The Chronology of *Lyc.–Num.*, *Them.–Cam.* and *Thes.–Rom.*

Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C
<i>Lycurgus-Numa</i>	<i>Themistocles-Camillus</i>	<i>Lycurgus-Numa</i>
<i>Theseus-Romulus</i>	<i>Lycurgus-Numa</i>	<i>Themistocles-Camillus</i>
<i>Themistocles-Camillus</i>	<i>Theseus-Romulus</i>	<i>Theseus-Romulus</i>

Appendix 4: The Length of the *Parallel Lives*

The figures in the second and the third column of the table are the number of lines each *Life* runs up to in the latest Teubner edition by Hans Gärtner.

	Length Life 1	Length Life 2	Difference
Thes.–Rom.	1009	1216	–207
Lyc.–Num.	1250	977	273
Sol.–Publ.	1141	779	362
Cor.–Alc.	1201	1354	–153
Them.–Cam.	1093	1474	–381

The figures in the second and the third column of the table are the number of lines each *Life* runs up to in the latest Teubner edition by Hans Gärtner. (*Continued*)

	Length Life 1	Length Life 2	Difference
Per.–Fab.	1328	987	341
Pel.–Marc.	1248	1123	125
Arist.–Cat. Ma.	1093	1073	20
Philop.–Flam.	763	777	–14
Aem.–Tim.	1020	1022	–2
Ag. et Cleom.–TG/CG	1810	1207	603
Pyrrh.–Mar.	1433	1690	–257
Lys.–Sull.	1088	1535	–447
Sert.–Eum.	692	576	116
Cim.–Luc.	806	1818	–1012
Nic.–Crass.	1180	1334	–154
Dem.–Cic.	907	1543	–636
Ages.–Pomp.	1418	2668	–1250
Alex.–Caes.	2650	2131	519
Phoc.–Cat. Mi.	847	1697	–850
Demetr.–Ant.	1649	2477	–828
Dion-Brut.	1229	1225	4

How *Lives* Begin

Timothy E. Duff

At the first congress of the International Plutarch Society in 1987, Philip Stadter delivered a paper entitled ‘The Proems of Plutarch’s *Lives*’, which has become the starting point for all subsequent work on how *Lives* begin (Stadter 1988). In this paper I want to re-examine the openings of Plutarch’s *Lives*, and to suggest an alternative way of looking at how *Lives* begin. I will illustrate this in the second half of this paper by looking briefly at the openings of three *Lives* (the *Perikles*, *Alkibiades* and *Themistokles*).¹

1. Prologues and openings

It might be helpful to summarise Stadter’s paper here. Stadter looked not, in fact, at how individual *Lives* begin, but at how *books* begin: that is, at pairs of *Lives*. Each of the 22 surviving books of *Parallel Lives*, argued Stadter, begins with a prologue in which Plutarch employs a variety of techniques to win the reader’s attention, establish his own persona, and demonstrate his historical competence: quotations, anecdotes, citation of sources, direct address to the reader, references to the moral purpose of the *Lives* or the moral character of his subjects, etc.²

Stadter divided these prologues into two types. First there are what he termed ‘formal prologues’, which begin 13 of the surviving 22 pairs. ‘Formal prologues’ introduce explicitly both *Lives* of a pair, though they may concentrate more on one than the other; they often suggest some rationale for the pairing, as well as discussing Plutarch’s purpose or method. They frequently employ first person singular and plural pronouns and verbs, and occasionally address the dedicatee, Sosius Senecio, by name. Formal prologues are often followed by asyndeton in the first line of the first *Life* proper. Pairs which begin with formal prologues are the *Thes.–Rom*; *Kim.–Luc.*; *Per.–Fab.*;

1 I am grateful to Jeffrey Beneker, Judith Mossman and Christopher Pelling for their comments.

2 Indeed, ‘in their variety and techniques’, he commented, ‘they often remind one ... of the essays of the *Moralia*’: Stadter 1988, 275. For prologues as winning the reader’s attention, cf. Lucian, *How to write history* 53 (cited by Russell 1966, 151).

Nik.–Crass.; *Dem.–Cic.*; *Phok.–Cato Min.*; *Dion–Brut.*; *Aem.–Tim.*; *Sert.–Eum.*; *Pel.–Marc.*; *Alex.–Caes.*; *Demetr.–Ant.* and *Ag./Kleom.–Gracchi*.³

Stadter also identified what he called ‘informal’ or ‘integrated prologues’, which begin the other 9 of the 22 surviving pairs. These sections introduce explicitly only the first *Life* of a pair, and make use of a set of standard topics, first described by Friedrich Leo (pp. 180–82): the subject’s family, character, education, physical appearance, etc. They also often contain references to, or discussion of, sources. As Stadter put it, ‘... in the openings of these nine lives, which lack formal proems, Plutarch adapts the common biographical categories of origin and family, education, and physical appearance to fulfil the standard proemial functions of arousing interest in his book and establishing goodwill toward the author’ (1988, p. 287). Stadter lists as examples of this second type of prologue the openings of the *Sol.–Pub.*, *Them.–Cam.*, *Arist.–Cato Maj.*, *Cor.–Alk.*, *Phil.–Flam.*, *Pyrrh.–Mar.*, *Lyk.–Num.*, *Lys.–Sulla*, and *Ages.–Pomp*.⁴

Stadter’s paper has been very influential. Its twofold categorisation of formal and informal prologues has been largely accepted; a number of detailed studies of the ‘formal prologues’ has followed.⁵ Its isolation, furthermore, of the ‘formal prologues’ as sections introducing *both Lives* of a pair lent weight to his own earlier demonstrations of the importance of reading *Lives* in pairs.⁶

There are, however, some difficulties with this schematisation. The ‘formal prologues’ are plainly a group on their own. Not all pairs have formal prologues; why Plutarch wrote such formal prologues to only 13 out of the 22 surviving pairs is unclear.⁷ But where they do occur they introduce *both Lives* and stand outside of either, rather in the same way as the closing *synkrisis* do. But it is less clear to me that the ‘informal’ or ‘integrated prologues’ work as a meaningful group. First, Stadter’s categorisation saw formal and informal prologues as mutually exclusive. But, in fact, the presence of a formal prologue does not preclude the presence of a section immediately following it (that is, at

3 *Thes.* 1–2; *Kim.* 1–3; *Per.* 1–2; *Nik.* 1; *Dem.* 1–3; *Phok.* 1–3; *Dion* 1–2; *Aem.* 1; *Sert.* 1; *Pel.* 1–2; *Alex.* 1; *Demetr.* 1; *Ag./Kleom.* 1–2.

4 Cf. Rosenmeyer 1992, which is much less useful than Stadter, and strangely concludes (p. 228) by pointing to what he sees as ‘the drifting and freakishness of many of Plutarch’s proems’, and by claiming that Plutarch ‘has no proemial method’, and ‘The proems are full of the most fascinating material, but *as* proems many of them must be declared failures’. Rosenmeyer makes no distinction between formal prologues and other sorts of beginnings, nor between first and second *Lives*.

5 E.g. Pelling 1999 and 2002b; Duff 1999, 13–51, and 2004; Burlando; Zadorojnyi.

6 Stadter 1975; cf. esp. Pelling 1986.

7 See Pelling 1997, 244–250; Duff 1999, 253–255 (with further bibliography). Nikolaidis, 291 and 316–7, has recently suggested that those pairs lacking prologues may not have been conceived or composed as a pair from the start, but only matched later.

the start of the first *Life*), which employs the standard topics of family, character, education and appearance. Most formal prologues are followed by such a section (*Kim.* 4–5, *Per.* 3–6, *Aem.* 2, *Sert.* 2, *Demetr.* 2–4).⁸ Secondly, most *Lives* which fall second in a pair also open with a section which exploits the same standard biographical topics.⁹ Of course, it is a different exercise to open a whole book rather than to open the second part – and it was in the openings of books that Stadter was interested. But apart from this difference of context, the content and function of such opening sections are not noticeably different whether they introduce first or second *Lives* of a pair. Thirdly, asyndeton is not confined to the beginnings of first *Lives*, but can occur at the beginning of either *Life*. Stadter pointed out that of the 13 cases where the beginnings of first *Lives* are preceded by a formal prologue, asyndeton occurs in 9 cases and δέ never.¹⁰ But asyndeton also occurs at the start of at least 5 out of the 22 second *Lives*: second *Lives*, then, may open in the same way as first *Lives*.¹¹

I would suggest, therefore, an alternative classification along the following lines. First, Stadter's 'formal' prologues, which I would prefer to call simply prologues. They form the opening to, and operate at the level of, the pair as a whole, that is, of the book which they introduce. They should be regarded as separate from the first *Life* proper, just as the *synkriseis* are separate from the second *Life*. Not only are they, as Stadter pointed out, usually followed by asyndeton and never by δέ, but many also end with a 'closural' or transitional phrase – a phrase, that is, that signals the end of the particular discussion in progress and looks forward to the *Lives* proper. The *Kimion* – *Lucullus* prologue, for example, concludes 'We pass over perhaps some additional similarities, but it will not be difficult to collect them from the narrative itself' (*Kim.* 3.3).¹² Other final sentences refer to the notion of *judging* the two men or their lives, or invite the reader to examine what follows for confirmation of the points

8 Without such material: *Thes.*, *Dion*, *Ag./Kleom.*

9 Only *Rom.*, and *Tim.* do not. *Caes.* too does not employ the standard topics, but this is a special case, as it is likely that the opening has been lost: Pelling 1984, 33; Watkins, 1–2.

10 The other four cases (*Per.* 3.1; *Phok.* 4.1; *Demetr.* 2.1; *Nik.* 2.1) have, as Stadter points out (1988, 276), a logical particle (γάρ, μὲν οὖν, τοίνυν, οὖν respectively) – but never the connective δέ, which begins 12 out of the 22 second *Lives*.

11 *Rom.*, *Fab.* (if we count 1.2 as the start), *Alk.*, *Ant.*, *Mar.* (also in *Caes.* but this is probably corrupt). Where a δέ is present in the first line of a second *Life* it sometimes picks up a μὲν present in a 'transitional' sentence in the last line of the first *Life*: *Kim.* 19.5–*Luc.* 1.1; *Dem.* 31.7–*Cic.* 1.1; *Aem.* 39.11–*Tim.* 1.1 [with Ziegler's emendation]; *Lyk.* 31.10–*Num.* 1.1; *Lys.* 30.8–*Sulla* 1.1; *Phok.* 38.5–*Cato Min.* 1.1.

12 Παραλείπομεν δ' ἴσως καὶ ἄλλας τινὰς ὁμοιότητας, ἃς οὐ χαλεπὸν ἐκ τῆς διηγήσεως αὐτῆς συναγαγεῖν. Cf. *Pél.* 2.12: διόπερ ἡμεῖς ἐπόμενοι ταῖς ὁμοίτησι παραλλήλους ἀνεγράψαμεν αὐτῶν τοὺς βίους.

made in the prologue¹³. It would be reasonable for editors, therefore, to print prologues as a separate section, just as they print each *Life* and the *synkriseis* separately.

The second category consists of what I shall call ‘proemial openings’. They operate, crucially, at the level of the individual *Life* not the pair as a whole. They can occur equally in the first *Life* or the second *Life*. Proemial openings often employ the standard biographical topics identified by Leo. But what distinguishes them from the *Life* proper is not their employment of these topics, but a narratological feature: they do not consist of chronological narrative. Rather they contain static discussions or descriptions, anecdotes without narrative context, and references to any stage in the subject’s *Life*. Proemial openings occur in most, but not all, *Lives* regardless of whether they fall first or second in a pair, and, in the case of first *Lives*, regardless of whether they are preceded by a prologue or not.

In many *Lives* there is a clear point of demarcation where proemial opening ends and chronological narrative begins. First, the end of the proemial opening may be marked by a ‘closural’ or transitional phrase, introduced with μέν or μὲν οὖν:¹⁴ a declaration, for example, that what has preceded has not been told in chronological order, a resumptive statement about the subject’s character, or an appeal to the reader to verify what has been said about the subject’s character by looking at his deeds.¹⁵ Secondly, the first line of the chronological narrative often contains certain distinct features. In most cases, the connective is δέ.¹⁶ The subject of the *Life* may be named in the first words, or be their subject;¹⁷ less commonly, other figures are the grammatical subject and named first, and the subject of the *Life* is introduced later in the sentence (e.g. *Crass.* 4.1, *Lys.* 3.1). Finally, the first sentence of the narrative often

13 E.g. *Per.* 2.5; *Phok.* 3.9. Cf. *Dion.* 2.7: ‘But these things’ (ταῦτα μὲν) must be delayed for another work’, a typical closural phrase, though not paralleled elsewhere in the prologues. ‘In this one, which is twelfth in the series of parallel *Lives*, let us bring forward on to the stage first that of the older man’ (for ‘the older man’ cf. *Dem.* 3.5). The most abbreviated transitional phrase is *Ag./Kleom.* 2.11 (ἀρχὴν τοιαύτην λαβόντες).

14 For μὲν οὖν as ‘transitional’, cf. Denniston, 470–472. Stiefenhofer, 499–500, notes this usage as particularly Plutarchan and cites *Arist.–Cato Maj.* 4.7; *Kim.–Luc.* 2.7; *Cic.* 1.6 [cited by S. as *Cic.* 2]; *Dem.–Cic.* 1.1; *Dion.* 21.9; *Cic.* 42.1 [cited by S. as *Cic.* 40]; *Sert.–Eum.* 2.1; *Tim.* 15.11 [cited by S. as *Tim.* 14]; *Ages.–Pomp.* 4.11; *Arat.* 10.5. Cf. also e.g. *Tim.* 13.10; *De ipsum laud.* 540c; 541e. All are followed by δέ in the next sentence.

15 Not in chronological order: *Crass.* 3.8; *Ant.* 5.1; *Pomp.* 2.12; resumptive: *Demetr.* 4.5; *Brut.* 2.8; appeal to verify: *Mar.* 2.4.

16 Exceptions are *Aem.* 3.1 (γοῦν), *Gracch.* 4.1 (τοίνυν), and *Sert.* 3.1 (μὲν οὖν).

17 E.g. *Cam.* 2.1; *Kim.* 6.1; *Luc.* 2.1; *Cor.* 3.1; *Brut.* 3.1; *Aem.* 3.1; *Sert.* 3.1; *Flam.* 1.4; *Sulla* 3.1; *Pomp.* 3.1.

contains reference to what are presented as the first deeds of the subject on the political or military stage; phrases such as ‘when he was still young’ are very common, as are references to the ‘first’ campaign.¹⁸ So whereas the anecdotes told in the proemial opening may have concerned any point in the subject’s life from childhood onwards, including their prime, at the start of the narrative we go back to the beginning of the subject’s career.

In a good number of cases, however, the boundary which separates proemial openings from the rest of the *Life* is not so firm or easy to place. Often, there is a slide from characterising or introductory material into chronological narrative; and prefiguring material on education can merge with narrative of early years. The clearest example of this is in the *Alk.* 1–16 (on which see below). That is why it would be misleading to apply the term ‘prologue’ to these opening sections; rather we are dealing here with *the way Lives typically begin*.¹⁹

Whether clearly marked off or not, however, one of the features of proemial openings is that the material in them often raises and prefigures themes important in the *Life* which follows. As I shall argue in the second half of this paper, the material in these sections is carefully selected to play a proemial role. The information which they contain on appearance, family, character etc., and the anecdotes which they tell, introduce both the character of the subject and themes and images which will recur; they also prefigure events which will be important in the rest of the *Life*. While not formally, then, prologues, they play a proemial role.

2. Proemial openings: three examples

In the second half of this paper, I would like to consider the first chapter of three *Lives* whose beginnings I would call proemial openings. One is drawn from the first *Life* of a pair and preceded by a prologue (*Per.* 3), one drawn from the second *Life* of a pair (*Alk.* 1) and one, finally, drawn from the first *Life* of a pair but not preceded, at least in our mss., by a prologue (*Them.* 1).²⁰ In all

18 E.g. *Luc.* 2.1; *Crass.* 4.1; *Cor.* 3.1; *Phok.* 6.1; *Brut.* 3.1; *Sert.* 3.1; *Flam.* 1.4; *Demetr.* 5.1; *Pyrrh.* 4.1; *Mar.* 3.2; *Pomp.* 3.1. As Schettino, 416, points out in relation to *Crass.* 4.1, ‘young’ in such contexts may relate not so much to absolute age as to time spent on the political stage.

19 Note that Stadter’s term ‘integrated prologue’ did recognise the difficulty of drawing a clear distinction between these sections and the narrative which follows: they are ‘integrated’ into the life itself – though, as argued earlier, I see proemial openings in more *Lives* than Stadter saw integrated prologues.

20 A lacuna is suspected in *Them.* 1.1, so it is possible that there a prologue has been lost: see below.

three cases, the proemial opening as I have defined it consists of more than one chapter, though for reasons of space I will confine myself here to the first chapter alone. The purpose is threefold: First, to show how proemial openings exploit Leo's standard biographical *topoi* for very literary ends: the information on appearance, family, character etc. is carefully selected to play a proemial role; in particular it introduces themes and images which will recur and prefigures events which will be important in the *Life* that follows. The second purpose is to show that such proemial openings can be equally effective whether at the start of a first or a second *Life*, and whether preceded by a prologue or not. Thirdly, I hope in the process to reinforce another point, that Plutarch is able to work within the framework provided by genre and yet at the same time to subsume the traditional building blocks into a sophisticated and unified literary whole.

Perikles 3

We turn first to the beginning of the *Perikles*. As Stadter noted, *Per.* 1–2 consist of a prologue to the *Perikles – Fabius* as a whole. But the next four chapters (*Per.* 3–6) function as an opening to the *Perikles* alone. They consist of discussion of Perikles' family, appearance, education and teachers, and character, together with anecdotes illustrating that character. Notably, the anecdotes and the discussion of Perikles' education and relationship with Anaxagoras concern the adult Perikles, not the youth: this is not chronological narrative of Perikles' early years, and considerations of chronology play no role in the structuring of this section.²¹ Closure to the final anecdote, and to the proemial opening as a whole, is achieved by the typically Plutarchan apologetic sentence: 'These things perhaps belong to another treatise' (6.5);²² chronological narrative begins in the next sentence with Perikles' name and a reference to his youth, and the connective δέ: 'Ο δὲ Περικλῆς νέος μὲν ὦν σφόδρα ... (7.1).

For reasons of space, I will examine here only the first chapter of the proemial opening, that is, *Per.* 3. The prologue had laid out a vision for the moral goals of the *Perikles – Fabius* pair as a whole (*Per.* 1–2).²³ It ends with a transitional phrase inviting the reader to decide for him or herself whether Plutarch has achieved these goals judging 'from what is written'.²⁴ The

21 Stadter 1989, xxxviii–xl, 187 and 209; cf. Steidle, 152–166.

22 ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἴσως ἕτερας ἐστὶ πραγματείας.

23 On the *Per.–Fab.* prologue, see Duff 1999, 34–45, and 2001, with further bibliography.

24 εἰ δ' ὀρθῶς στοχάζομεθα τοῦ δέοντος ἕξεσσι κρίνειν ἐκ τῶν γραφομένων. Περικλῆς γὰρ ἦν ... See p. 190 above.

proemial opening begins ‘For (γάρ) Perikles was from the tribe of Akamantis, the deme Cholargos, and of the foremost family and descent on both sides ...’ (3.1). As Stadter notes in his commentary, the γάρ here is explanatory; i. e. it makes clear that this sentence, with its emphatically placed Περικλήϊς, begins the first of the two *Lives*, which Plutarch’s readers are invited to examine. ‘For’, resumes Plutarch in explanation of his statement that Perikles’ lineage was elevated, ‘Xanthippos [his father], who conquered the Persian king’s generals at Mykale, married Agariste the descendant of Kleisthenes ...’²⁵

Perikles, then, was of distinguished family on both sides: his father Xanthippos had commanded the Athenian fleet in one of its greatest victories, and his mother was an Alkmaionid. That much might be expected if the purpose was merely to provide some information on Perikles’ lineage, and an implicit explanation of his own swift rise to power. The reference to Perikles’ Alkmaionid ancestry is of course particularly significant, as it will later play a role in high politics: the Spartans famously demanded Perikles’ expulsion from Athens, using as an excuse the pollution caused by the murder of Kylon in c. 632 BC by the Alkmaionid Megakles (*Per.* 33.1). But, in fact, Plutarch mentions here neither Megakles nor the Kylonian incident. Instead he chooses to expand on a different member of the Alkmaionid family, Kleisthenes, who, as Plutarch continues, ‘...drove out the Peisistratids and nobly put down their tyranny, instituted laws and a constitution mixed in the best way for harmony and safety’ (πολιτείαν ἄριστα κεκραμένην πρὸς ὁμόνοιαν καὶ σωτηρίαν).

Kleisthenes was without doubt the most well-known of Perikles’ Alkmaionid ancestors – so well known, one might think, that the summary of his achievements was unnecessary. But Plutarch often uses a figure mentioned in the opening lines of the *Life*, particularly an ancestor, to provide an implicit paradigm or contrast to the subject, or to provide hints of character or to alert the reader to a theme which will become important as the *Life* progresses.²⁶ Here, the apparent digression on Kleisthenes serves a number of purposes.

First, – as Philip Stadter has pointed out (1989, ad loc) – it raises the question of the nature of Perikles’ own leadership. This is the subject of the first fifteen chapters of the *Life*: is Perikles to be seen as a demagogue, as Plato had judged him (e. g. *Gorgias* 515c–516d), and as his first moves in politics, the subject of *Per.* 7–14, suggest? Or, as Thucydides claimed, did he really lead the people, unlike other leaders who were led by them (*Per.* 9.1, citing Thuc. 2.65.9)? Furthermore, Kleisthenes brought ‘harmony and safety’ to

25 ἔγγονον. As Stadter 1989, ad loc. points out, the term can mean either grand-child or merely descendant; Agariste was Kleisthenes’ niece.

26 On Plutarch’s use of some of these initial sections on the subject’s family in order to highlight important themes, see Pelling 1988, 17; Duff 1999, 310–11.

Athens. What about Perikles? Plutarch will later declare – in words that recall the Kleisthenes of ch. 1 – that, in managing the people firmly, Perikles adopted ‘an aristocratic and kingly constitution (ἀριστοκρατικὴν καὶ βασιλικὴν ... πολιτείαν), and employed it ... in the best interest of all’; like a doctor, he cured the ills of the state with ‘life-saving drugs’ (15.1: φάρμακα σωτήρια). He also keeps Athens safe from external enemies, by a military policy based on the principle of caution. The defeat of Tolmides makes clear the dangers of the opposite course (18.1–3); on the other hand Perikles’ own expedition to the Thracian Chersonesos, which is narrated immediately afterwards (19.1), is ‘life-saving’ (σωτήριος), as he walled off the isthmus with ‘bulwarks’ (ἐρύμασι). At the end of the *Life*, Perikles’ power is recognised to be ‘neither monarchical nor tyrannical’ but a ‘saving bulwark of the constitution’ (σωτήριον ἔρυμα τῆς πολιτείας) (39.4). The apparent digression on Kleisthenes in chapter 3, then, in fact sets up a paradigm for Perikles: like him he will promote balanced government and safety.

Plutarch goes on (3.3) to mention a dream that Perikles’ mother Agariste had – that she gave birth to a lion. Stories concerning the birth of heroes and the portents which accompanied them occur at the opening of some other *Lives*.²⁷ Usually such stories have some kind of prophetic or prefiguring function – and that is the case here. As Stadter notes in his commentary, the lion was a symbol for monarchy or tyranny. Plutarch’s source here is Hdt. 6.131.2; it is plain from other mentions of lions in Herodotos that the association of Perikles with a lion in the Herodotos passage had distinctly ambiguous implications: lions were seen as symbols of power and manliness, but also as destructive; the mention of a lion-cub would bring to mind the proverbial danger of raising a lion-cub in the house: it may later turn on you. Indeed, as McNellen has pointed out, through the image of the lion, Herodotos had linked Perikles with Kroisos, Kambyses, and Kypselos, monarchs who brought destruction on their own kingdoms.²⁸ For readers, then, who remember their Herodotos, the mention of Agariste’s dream is also ambiguous: Plutarch has just mentioned the fact that Kleisthenes ‘expelled the Peisistratids and put down their tyranny’; Agariste’s dream suggests Perikles’ future greatness but also raises the questions of whether he too will want to become a tyrant and whether he too will bring destruction on Athens.

Both issues are of some importance to the *Life*. In ch. 7 Plutarch mentions that Perikles was thought to resemble Peisistratos in appearance and voice, and

27 *Thest.* 3.5–7; *Rom.* 2.4–8; *Cic.* 2.1–2; *Alex.* 2.2–3.9; *Grach.* 1.4–5. See Brenk, 184–213, especially the table on p. 212.

28 McNellen; cf. Duff 2003, 98–100, on the ambiguities of the lion image in *Alk.* 2.3 and 16.3. The classic expression of the proverb is Aisch. *Agamemnon* 730–735; see Fraenkel, ii, 341–342.

that he feared that he might be ostracised on suspicion of aiming at tyranny; this, Plutarch claims, was what led him to adapt demagogic ways as a temporary measure (7.1–4). Later Plutarch declares that the comic poets continued to stoke up fears about Perikles' excessive powers, calling him and his friends 'new Peisistratids' and bidding him swear an oath that he would not make himself tyrant (16.1). The issue of whether Perikles was to be blamed for leading Athens into the Peloponnesian War, a central issue in the tradition, is dealt with in chs. 29–32, where Plutarch concludes that 'the truth is unclear'.²⁹ But the *Life* will end, as we have seen, with Plutarch declaring that after his death Perikles' power was recognized to be 'neither monarchical nor tyrannical' but a 'saving bulwark of the constitution' – that is, he protected the state and constitutional government. Agariste's dream, then, like the mention of Kleisthenes and the Peisistratid tyranny, prefigures themes of great importance in the rest of the *Life*.

Plutarch now turns to Perikles' appearance, which he describes as 'in general irreproachable (ἄμεμπτος) except that his head was long and out of proportion'. Plutarch often comments in the proemial openings on the appearance of a subject, though he is usually short on specifics (height, colour of hair, etc.) and talks in terms which really describe character rather than appearance.³⁰ This is the case with ἄμεμπτος (lit. 'blameless'). Although there are examples of this word used in other authors of things (with the meaning 'perfect'), all Plutarch's other uses of this word are of character or action, and imply a moral judgment.³¹ So its use here invites the reader to think in moral terms. It perhaps foreshadows the theme of Perikles' incorruptibility in office (15.3; 16.3; *Per.-Fab.* 3.5–6) and the theme of the extent to which Perikles should be blamed for starting the Peloponnesian War (29–32).

Plutarch goes on, most unusually, to mention an idiosyncrasy of appearance: Perikles' long head. This too is probably to be understood as shedding light on character. First, it begins a series of references in chs. 4–6 to Perikles' great intellect and to his teachers, especially the philosopher Anaxagoras, who was nicknamed 'mind' (νοῦς) (4.6). Secondly, the discussion of Perikles' elongated head also introduces an *image* which will recur. The

29 Perikles' starting the war for disreputable reasons: Aristoph. *Ach.* 528–538, *Peace* 601–11; Diod. 12.38–9.

30 E.g. Marius looked 'harsh and bitter' (*Mar.* 2.1), Demetrios 'heroic' (*Demetr.* 2.2). See Georgiadou, 4617–4618; Duff 1999, 16, 164.

31 'Perfect' (of things): *LSJ* I 2. Plutarch's uses, 'morally blameless': *Num.* 3.8; *Cato Maj.* 20.9; *Cor.-Alk.* 1.4; *Nik.-Crass.* 1.1; 5.4; *Sulla* 35.5; *Ages.* 36.3; *Pomp.* 41.1 (οὐ πᾶν τι τοῖς πολλοῖς ἄμεμπτον); 55.3; *Ages.-Pomp.* 1.2; *Brut.* 13.8; *Dion-Brut.* 3.1; *Demetr.-Ant.* 2.1; 5.1; *Mul. virt.* 246c; *De frat. amore* 483b; *De ipsum laud.* 540c; 541e; *Max. cum princ.* 777c; 'without fault-finding': *De tranq. an.* 477 f; *De frat. amore* 489 f; *Max. cum princ.* 789b.

section on Perikles' teachers is closed by an anecdote about a one-horned ram (6.2–5). A seer interprets the single horn as a portent that Perikles would govern the city alone; but Anaxagoras dissects the ram's deformed head and provides a rational explanation: the brain was 'sharp' like an egg and caused the swelling. Both the seer and the rationalist were right, concludes Plutarch (6.3). Perikles' supposedly pointed head, then, functions as an indication of his rationality and as a transition to the discussion of his teachers. It also looks forward to the image of the one-horned ram, which itself suggests his rationality and that of his mentors, and prophesies Perikles' rise to power.³²

Alkibiades 1

We turn next to the opening of the *Alkibiades*. Here it is not so easy to draw a clear line between opening and narrative. As Russell has brought out, the whole of chs. 1–16 are organised thematically rather than chronologically. There is a *sense* of chronological progression, that the young Alkibiades is growing, and then taking his first steps in public life, but in fact it is impossible to extract a clear chronological narrative from these chapters.³³ I will focus, here, however, on the opening chapter of the *Alkibiades* alone (*Alk.* 1). As this *Life* falls second in the *Coriolanus* – *Alkibiades* pair, its opening was not included by Stadter under his rubric of 'informal prologues'. But in fact it performs a similar function to ch. 3 of the *Perikles*. It begins with *asyndeton* (τὸ Ἀλκιβιάδου γένος), which marks this off as a new beginning, separate from the *Life* which preceded it. The structure is articulated clearly by a number of headings relating to the standard biographical topics: τὸ δὲ Ἀλκιβιάδου γένος (1.1) ... περὶ μὲν οὖν τοῦ κάλλους (1.4) ... τῆ δὲ φωνῆ (1.6) ... τὸ δὲ ἦθος αὐτοῦ (2.1) ... This section is marked off from the long section of anecdotes which follow (2.2–16) by a transitional phrase inviting the reader to verify the truth of the characterisation 'in the stories told of his childhood' (2.1).

Plutarch begins by making the point that Alkibiades had famous and noble ancestors on both sides. As with Perikles, mention of noble ancestry is itself an important explanation for his success; Plutarch will later declare that Alkibiades' noble birth 'opened many doors to him' (10.3; cf. 4.1). Next Alkibiades' father Kleinias is described as fighting 'gloriously' (ἐνδόξως) in the

32 Stadter 1989 ad loc. cites Korres on the ram as a symbol of power (cf. Daniel 8.1–27 with Collins, ad loc. for a near Eastern parallel). But perhaps there was a contemporary association of the ram with Perikles specifically: cf. the hypothesis of Kratinos' *Dionysalexandros* (fr. 140–1 Kassel-Austin = P. Oxy. 663), where Dionysos, whom the hypothesist claims stood for Perikles, disguises himself as a ram. See Norwood, 122; Bakola, 47.

33 Russell 1966. See also Duff 2003.

sea-battle at Artemision and later dying fighting the Boiotians at Koroneia. Plutarch has almost certainly conflated two individuals here,³⁴ but this composite figure provides a paradigm for Alkibiades.³⁵ He will fight many sea-battles as commander of the fleet in the eastern Aegean and win great glory and reputation. But later Plutarch will declare that ‘more than anyone else Alkibiades seems to have been undone by his own glory’ (or reputation: δόξα) – that is, by the unrealistic expectations which his victories produced, and which Plutarch saw as the cause of his second exile (35.2–3). Kleinias dies fighting the Boiotians at Koroneia; Alkibiades, in his youth, is decorated for his part at Poteidaia and *survives* a defeat on land by the Boiotians at Delion (7.6). Later, however, he will die in exile, desperately fighting off his assassins – in one account at least, in a private feud rather than gloriously on behalf of his country (39.4–9). Kleinias’ glorious record then contains the seeds of Alkibiades’ own success and failure.

Next, Plutarch gives the names of Alkibiades’ guardians: Perikles and his brother Ariphton. This confirms his noble birth and connections. ‘But’, Plutarch goes on (1.3), ‘it is said not without reason, that it was the good will and kindness³⁶ of Sokrates to him which contributed no small advantage to his reputation’. In other words, despite Alkibiades’ noble ancestors, and despite his famous guardian, it was to Sokrates’ concern for him that he owed his fame. This claim was rather more controversial than it might at first sight seem to us. Alkibiades’ fame in his life-time and in the century following his death certainly did not, except in Sokratic circles, derive from his association with Sokrates, who had little public influence, but rather from his military exploits and his outrageous personal life. The claim here, then, serves a number of functions. First it catches the reader’s attention by subverting expectations. Secondly, by playing down Alkibiades’ fame as statesman and general and

34 Both Plato, *Alk.* 1.112c and Isok., 16.28 record that Alkibiades’ father died at Koroneia; and Hdt. 8.17 mentions a Cleinias son of Alcibiades as fighting at Artemision. But it is unlikely that the same man could have held the rank of trierarch at Artemision in 480 and thirty years later fathered his first son (Alkibiades was born in 451/0 or 450/49: see Davies, 18), before dying at Koroneia (447). Family trees and discussions in e.g. Davies, 9–22; Bicknell.

35 Plutarch’s conflation of the two men is probably a mistake, rather than the result of deliberate choice for literary ends. Admittedly it does produce an ancestor who, as Verdegem, 482, points out, was like Alkibiades active on both land and sea (see *Cor.–Alk.* 1.2). But the conflation is not necessary for this purpose: Plutarch was capable of using several generations of ancestors to provide paradigms for a single subject (e.g. *Cor.* 1.1 with Duff 1999, 206).

36 εὐνοίας καὶ φιλανθρωπίας, the reading of all mss. Ziegler, following the Juntine and Aldine edition, emends unnecessarily to φιλίας. But εὐνοία καὶ φιλανθρωπία occur together in Isok. 5.114 and Dem. 18.5. On the semantic range of φιλανθρωπία, a key virtue in Plutarch, see Martin, and Duff 1999, 77–78.

playing up his relationship with Sokrates, as well as by naming his nurse and *paidagogos*, Plutarch signals, rather as in *Alex.* 1, that this *Life* will give emphasis to questions of upbringing, character and morality as much as to actions on the grand stage of politics and war. Thirdly, by stressing Alkibiades' link with Sokrates here, and by citing Plato, together with the Sokratic writer Antisthenes, by name in what follows, Plutarch makes clear that the Alkibiades presented in this text is to be heavily influenced by Plato's picture of Alkibiades, sketched in *Republic* 491d-495b and dramatised in the *Alkibiades* 1 and *Symposium*, as a talented young man in desperate need of education. This is a presentation which the reader is already attuned to, given the importance to the *Coriolanus* of material drawn from the same passage of the *Republic* (*Cor.* 1.3).³⁷

Plutarch now moves on to discuss Alkibiades' appearance: 'Now about Alkibiades' beauty,³⁸ it is perhaps not necessary to say anything except that, at whatever age or maturity he was physically, it bloomed accordingly and made him attractive and sweet both as a boy, as a youth and as a man.' As we have noted, Plutarch tends not to comment on the specifics of appearance, but to use a generalised description of appearance as a guide to character. Here we have not so much a description of how Alkibiades looked but a statement that he was exceptionally beautiful at all ages. The declaration that a particular subject is too well-known to need explanation is a rhetorical trope, known to some ancient rhetoricians as *aposiopesis*; its function was recognised as being to make the omitted object (here Alkibiades' beauty) seem greater.³⁹

Alkibiades' beauty was proverbial and central to the Sokratic tradition.⁴⁰ The stress on his beauty, then, signals once again the importance of the Platonic texts; furthermore, by declaring that Alkibiades' beauty is too well-known to need comment, Plutarch reinforces the bond between narrator and reader ('you know your Plato too well to need me to go into this'). In the Platonic presentation, beauty was a mixed blessing for Alkibiades, one of a number of distractions to his taking his moral education seriously.⁴¹ That it is

37 Duff 1999, 206–208.

38 *περὶ μὲν οὖν τοῦ κάλλους Ἀλκιβιάδου. Ἀλκιβιάδου* is the reading of Υ. Ziegler (Teubner) deletes it in order, presumably, to avoid hiatus, but it or *αὐτοῦ* or such like is required as four other names have intervened since the last occurrence of Alkibiades' name. N's *τοῦ σώματος* is precluded, *pace* Flacelière (Budé), by its occurrence later in the sentence.

39 E.g. *Alex. Rhetor, De Figuris* iii, 22.7, Spengel (*ἀποσιώπησις ἐστὶ λόγος ἐπιτείνων τὸ παρασιωπώμενον ...*), with Lausberg, sect. 888. See *Dem.* 11.5 for another example of this trope in Plutarch.

40 Sokrates calls him *Ἀλκιβιάδης ὁ καλὸς Κλεινίου* (*Alk.* 1 113b); cf. *Ath.* 434b, *περὶ τοῦ καλοῦ Ἀλκιβιάδου Σάτυρος ἱστορῶν*.

41 In *Alk.* 1 104a Plato implies as much. In the *Republic* 'beauty, wealth and strength of body' appear in Plato's list of the 'so-called good things' which can divert the talented

Plato's picture of Alkibiades which the reader is expected to have in mind, and in particular the passage from the *Republic* already cited in the *Coriolanus*, is reinforced by the mention in 1.5 of the 'potential' (or 'good nature', εὐφυΐα) and 'excellence' (or 'virtue', ἀρετή) of his body'. While both these words can be used in a general sense to refer to anything of natural excellence, they are more usually – and especially in Plato – applied to the soul rather than to the body; hence the clarifying τοῦ σώματος here. Indeed, in the *Republic* 'potential' was the key quality of the young man of philosophical nature – a thinly veiled portrait of Alkibiades – who is distracted by 'the so-called good things of *Life*' (*Rep.* 491e; 494d). The use of these two words, then, raises and leaves open the question of the virtue of Alkibiades' soul, and prepares the reader for a passage later in the *Life* (ch. 4), which contains numerous allusions to the *Republic*, and which analyses Alkibiades' relationship with Sokrates and the grievous state of his soul.⁴² As with Perikles, the topic of appearance, then, like that of ancestry, is used to introduce and signal issues of importance in the text which follows.

Discussion of the beauty of Alkibiades' body leads smoothly into discussion of the attractiveness of his lisping speech: 'They say that even his lisp suited his voice and lent his speech persuasiveness, perfecting its charm'.⁴³ Plutarch does not normally discuss a subject's voice at the opening of *Lives*, though it is discussed later in some *Lives*, notably in the case of Demosthenes, to whose career, as to that of Alkibiades, the ability to persuade by means of speech would be central.⁴⁴ Alkibiades' lisp, then, made his speech more persuasive. But the mention of it also suggests some of the more outrageous and effeminate sides of Alkibiades' character, which will be a recurring theme in *Alk.* 2–16 (esp. ch. 16). Lisping was considered an effeminate trait. For example, Kallikles in *Gorgias* 485b–c, a text to which Plutarch will allude in 34.7,⁴⁵ argues that, like philosophy, lisping is suitable for children, but in a grown man 'seems ridiculous and unmanly and its perpetrator should be beaten'.

young men from philosophy (*Rep.* 491c). In the *Symposium* (216d–217a; 219c) A. prides himself on his own beauty (cf. also *Prot.* 309a; *Xen. Mem.* 1.2.24).

42 Alesse, 195–196; Duff, forthcoming.

43 τῇ δὲ φωνῇ καὶ τὴν τραυλότητα συμπρέψαι λέγουσι καὶ τῷ λάλῳ πιθανότητα παρασχεῖν χάριν ἐπιτελοῦσαν. Ziegler emends to ἐπιτρέχουσαν on the basis of *Cato Min.* 5.3 (χάρις ἀγωγὸς ἀκοῆς ἐπέτρεχε τῇ τραχύτητι τῶν νοημάτων). But this entails a change of subject, i.e. taking τὴν τραυλότητα as subject of συμπρέψαι but χάρις as subject of παρασχεῖν ('and [they say] that a charm suffused throughout his speech lent it persuasiveness') and destroys the link between Alkibiades' lisp and his charm.

44 *Dem.* 6–11, esp. 6.4 and 11.1; cf. *Per.* 7.1; *Cato Min.* 5.3; *Flam.* 5.4–6; 10.4–6 (with Mossman, 513). Plutarch refers to the charm of Alkibiades' speech (τῆς τοῦ λόγου χάριτος) in 10.3, and elsewhere (24.5; *Cor.–Alk.* 3.4; 5.1).

45 Allusion to *Gorgias*: Russell 1973, 273; Gribble, 275; Duff 2003, 98–99.

To confirm and provide evidence for Alkibiades' lisp Plutarch cites passages of Aristophanes' *Frogs* and a lost play of Archippos.⁴⁶ But the quotations do more than merely confirm his lisp. First the paraphrase of Archippos continues the notion of femininity.⁴⁷ It describes Alkibiades' son as 'wantonly (διακεχλιδώς),⁴⁸ dragging his cloak, in order to seem most like his father'. 'He bends his neck', continues Plutarch in what is now a quotation, 'and lisps'. Holding one's head at an angle was considered an effeminate trait (Arist. *Physiogn.* 808a12–13). So were flowing robes: having a cloak that dragged along the ground is later picked out explicitly as an effeminate feature of Alkibiades (16.1).⁴⁹

The second function of the quotations concerns the Aristophanic pun on κόραξ (crow) and κόλαξ (flatterer). There was certainly a tradition which saw Alkibiades as a flatterer; Plutarch himself elsewhere cites Alkibiades' ability to adapt and make himself popular to many different peoples as an example of the classic behaviour of the flatterer (e. g. *Quomodo Adul.* 52e). In the *Life*, Plutarch does not use the term *kolax* of Alkibiades. But his presentation of Alkibiades' adaptability in exile (*Alk.* 23.3–6), which is described in very similar terms to the *Quomodo Adul.* passage, certainly leaves this open. But in the *synkrisis* Plutarch is prepared to be more direct and talks of Alkibiades 'flattering the people' (*Cor.–Alk.* 1.4).⁵⁰ The pun on *kolax*, then, which was at first sight brought in to confirm Alkibiades' lisp, also serves to raise the issue of whether Alkibiades, with his beautiful body and charming speech, should be regarded as a demagogue, who flattered the people to get his own way.

Earlier in the passage, Plutarch had cited Antisthenes and Plato; here he cites Aristophanes and Archippos. The change of cited source coincides with and signals a change in tone, which comes to a climax with the open attack on Alkibiades' son in the quotation from Archippos. The passages from Old Comedy introduce the notion that Alkibiades was the subject of attack both in his life-time and after his death. We have here, then, a transition from the extremely positive picture of Alkibiades with which the *Life* began to a rather more negative one, with hints of his later misbehaviour. The section which

46 These and the Plutarch passage are the only evidence for the lisp, unless Plato, *Alk.* 1, 115a contains a pun based on it: see Denyer, 143. His lisp was the variety known as 'lambdacism' in which l is substituted for r: cf. Cic. *Ad Fam.* 2.9.1, 2.10.1.

47 Only the last few words scan; the first part must therefore be a paraphrase rather than an accurate quotation, though it probably stays fairly close to the original (cf. the hapax διακεχλιδώς).

48 This word is unattested elsewhere, but Hesychios may be thinking of the same word when he writes διακεχλοιδώς, glossed as 'being corrupted through luxury'.

49 'Femininities (θηλύτητος) of purple clothing sweeping through the market place'.

50 Russell 1973, 95–96; 123–124; Duff 1999, 227–228; 235–236.

follows (2.1–16) will bring out the widely differing opinions which his outrageous behaviour elicited.

Themistokles 1

We turn finally to the opening of another *Life* which is placed first in a pair (*Them.* 1). As it stands in our manuscripts, the *Themistokles* – *Camillus* pair lacks a prologue and begins simply ‘In the case of Themistokles (Θεμιστοκλεῖ δέ), his family was too obscure to further his reputation’. The lack of a prologue is not, of course, unusual, but, the presence of the connective particle δέ in the opening phrase of a book is.⁵¹ It is probable, then, that something has been lost and that the *Themistokles* – *Camillus* did not begin here. The lacuna may have included a prologue,⁵² but, as Stadter pointed out, first *Lives* never begin with a δέ, even after a prologue, so the missing section must have contained at least some of the *Life of Themistokles* itself. It could have contained as little as one sentence. Perhaps it mentioned some other Athenian leaders who were from renowned families or a quotation or maxim about the importance of birth, possibly with μέν, which is then picked up by ‘Θεμιστοκλεῖ δέ ...’. Or perhaps it made some sort of comparison with Camillus. Compare the opening of the *Phokion*: after a formal prologue which discusses both Phokion and Cato Minor, Plutarch turns first to Cato and declares (*Phok.* 4.1), ‘Cato’s family, it is admitted, was from illustrious stock, as will be reported [i.e. in the *Cato Minor*]; but Phokion was, I judge, not from an altogether ignoble or lowly one (Τὸ μὲν οὖν Κάτωνος ὠμολόγηται γένος ἐκ λαμπρῶν ὑπάρχειν, ὡς λεχθήσεται· Φωκίωνα δέ ...).

As it stands, the *Life of Themistokles* begins, as do so many *Lives*, with a discussion of ancestry, which, as we have seen, Plutarch often uses to highlight themes or suggest characteristics which will be important for what follows (1.1–4). Themistokles’ family was not very conspicuous, Plutarch tells us; indeed his mother was not Greek, a fact which he supports by quoting an elegiac couplet, possibly her epitaph: ‘I am Habrotonon, a Thracian woman by race. But I declare that for the Greeks I gave birth to the great Themistokles

51 Piccirilli, ad loc., cites Denniston, 172–173, to argue that it is possible to find examples of ‘inceptive’ uses of δέ. But Denniston’s examples do not concern the start of works. Jones, 67 (= repr. 108), suggested that the δέ in *Them.* 1.1 might mark continuation from the end of another pair, e.g. the *Thes.–Rom.*, though there is no parallel for such a direct link between Plutarchan pairs. Cf. the beginning of Xenophon’s *Hellenika* (μετὰ δέ ταῦτα), which has been taken either as a literary device to suggest that his work is a continuation of Thucydides or as an indication that something has been lost (e.g. Krentz, ad loc).

52 Holden, Frost and Marr, ad loc., all give this as a possibility.

(1.1).⁵³ The story itself may well not be true; Plutarch himself goes on to cite conflicting evidence, in the process parading his own skills at sober historical research.⁵⁴ But, as so often, Plutarch is prepared to make use for literary purposes of stories the truth of which he doubts or rejects (e.g. *Solon* 27.1; *Alk.* 3.1–2).⁵⁵ The quotation here, especially the last phrase, serves to set the tone for the *Life*: this will be explicitly the *Life* of a ‘great’ man.⁵⁶ There will throughout be a recurrent stress on Themistokles’ greatness; terms such as ‘great deeds’ recur frequently.⁵⁷ Indeed Plutarch will actually apply the term ‘heroic’ (ἡρωικός) to his appearance, as deduced from a statue still standing in Athens in Plutarch’s own day (22.3) – one of only two uses of the term for a protagonist of the *Lives*.⁵⁸

There then follows a story of Themistokles’ success in persuading the well-born youth of Athens to exercise with him (literally ‘anooint themselves’) in a gymnasium dedicated to Herakles outside the city. ‘By this event’, comments Plutarch, ‘he seems to have cunningly (πανούργως) removed the distinction between illegitimate and legitimate’ (1.3). This is a typical Plutarchan childhood (or, better, youthful) anecdote: difficult to place chronologically, without narrative context, and possibly apocryphal, it prefigures both traits of the subject’s character and themes and images which will recur as the *Life* progresses.⁵⁹ First, Themistokles’ cunning and persuasiveness are introduced.⁶⁰

53 τεκέσθαι τὸν μέγαν Ἑλλησίν φημι Θεμιστοκλέα.

54 Having a foreign mother did not, of course, in Themistokles’ period, deny one citizenship (for discussion, see Humphreys). The name Habrotonon is a common one for a slave and prostitute, however, so this may have been the original point of the slander (cf. the detail that she came from Thrace, a stereotypical place of origin for slaves). Details in Frost, Piccirilli, and Marr, all ad loc.

55 See Pelling 1990, 19–21 (=repr. 2002a, 143–5); Duff 2003, 92–93. Cf. also the supernatural stories in *Cam.* 5.5–6 and 6.1–6: told but then questioned.

56 Cf. *Thes.* 1.4–2.1, where ‘the two “heroic” quotes from Aeschylus and the *Iliad*, ... both ornament the passage and set the atmosphere for the heroic stories which will follow ...’ (Stadter 1988, 284).

57 2.1 (μεγαλοπράγμων); 2.4 (πόλιν δὲ μικρὰν... μεγάλην ἀπεργάσασθαι); 2.7 (μεγάλος ... μεταβολάς); 3.3 (μεγάλος ... καινοτομίας); 11.1 (ταῦτά τε δὴ μέγала τοῦ Θεμιστοκλέους); 13.4 (οἷον εἴωθεν ἐν μεγάλοις ἀγῶσι καὶ πράγμασι χαλεποῖς); 27.2 (περὶ πραγμάτων μεγάλων). In 32.5 Themistokles’ tomb is described as near the ‘great harbour’ of Peiraiæus and its base as εὐμεγέθης. Cf. Stadter 1983–4, 358–359 on the presentation of Themistokles and Camillus here as heroes, and Larmour, 4198–9 on allusions to Achilles.

58 The other is *Demetr.* 2.2. The term is also used in *Lys.* 5.8 (‘the beauty of a hero’s statue’): see Duff 1999, 168–170.

59 As noted in passing by Martin, 337. On this function of stories from childhood (e.g. *Alex.* 5.1–6; 6.1–8; *Cic.* 2.1–5; *Alk.* 2–3; *Cato Min.* 1.3–3.10), see Stadter 1996, 291–295 and Duff 2003 and 2008a.

Both characteristics will soon be in evidence: for example, when he persuades the Athenians to use the silver from the Laureion mines to build a fleet (4.1–3); when he tricks Xerxes into engaging the Greek fleet at Salamis (12.3–5); or when he tricks the Spartans over the walling of the Peiraieus (19.1–3).⁶¹ Furthermore, the description of Themistokles' persuading others 'to come down' to the gymnasium and 'anoint themselves' with him prefigures some of Themistokles' later successes and the language with which they are described. He will later 'anoint himself', as Plutarch puts it, in preparation for the war with Persia, which only he could see coming, and begin 'training' the city (3.9). He 'gradually lures and brings the city down to the sea', just as he brought down the well-born youth, thus beginning a new naval orientation for Athens (4.1–4).⁶² This anecdote, then, prefigures not only Themistokles' characteristics – cunning, persuasiveness – but also key moments in his later success.

Finally the mention of Herakles is probably also significant. Herakles was known for his great achievements, just as Themistokles will be, but hardly for his cultural accomplishments. Indeed, the young Herakles was a famously wild and reluctant pupil; he even murdered his teacher Linos, a scene which is depicted on several vase paintings from the first half of the fifth century.⁶³ Some versions of the story have him killing Linos with the lyre which he was unable to play.⁶⁴ The young Themistokles was, as the next chapter will show, also a wild pupil who neglected proper education, and famously did not learn to play the lyre (*Them.* 2.4).⁶⁵

60 On this anecdote as prefiguring Themistokles' later cunning (cf. 10.1–2 and 12.3 ff), cf. Larmour, 4182–4183 and 4187–9 who lists passages. Plutarch notes in *De Herod. Malig.* 869 f that Themistokles was actually nicknamed Odysseus by some διὰ τὴν φρόνησιν.

61 Other examples of his persuasiveness, often involving some element of deceit, include 6.5; 7.1–2, 10.1–5; 20.3; 29.8.

62 κατὰ μικρὸν ὑπάγων καὶ καταβιβάζων τὴν πόλιν πρὸς τὴν θάλατταν (4.4), where the prefix ὑπ- suggests stealth and cunning.

63 Examples of vase paintings depicting this are given in Beck, 10–11 and plates pp. 5–6, and in Boardman, IV.1, s.v. Herakles, 1667–1673. A fragment of the Old Comedian Alexis (fr. 140 Kassel–Austin) has Linos attempting to teach Herakles literature; but he is only interested in food.

64 Diodoros records that Herakles was unable to play the lyre and, when punished, kills Linos by hitting him with it (Diod. 3.67.2)

65 A longer discussion of *Them.* 1 can be found in Duff 2008b.

3. Conclusion

Most individual *Lives* open with a section which deals with a set of standard topics: family, birth, appearance, character (with some variation). The topics may be standard, but, as we have seen, Plutarch carefully selects and deploys his material in order to introduce themes, images and ideas which will have importance in the individual *Life* which they open. Stadter recognised in passing the proemial role of such passages, which he dubbed ‘informal’ or ‘integrated prologues’, but looked for them only at the start of pairs. In fact ‘proemial openings’, as I have called them, occur regularly at the start of both first *Lives* (e.g. *Per.* 1; *Them.* 1) and second *Lives* (*Alk.* 1), and may follow a prologue (e.g. *Per.* 1 and possibly *Them.* 1).

This has some wider implications. First, we see that Plutarch is able to work within traditional forms – the constraints imposed by genre – and in doing so create a sophisticated literary text. Rather as a poet works within the constraints imposed by metre, formulae or traditional stories to produce something new and of literary merit, Plutarch is able to transform the traditional biographical data (family, appearance etc.) into elements of a carefully constructed whole. To identify, therefore, that this material is traditional, is a typical feature of Plutarchan biography, is to tell only half of the story. Such explanations, like the identification of sources, do not answer the equally fundamental question of how Plutarch *deploys* such material – what its role is within a text as a whole. The fact that Perikles was an Alkmaionid can be given in many different ways: why mention particularly that he was descended from Kleisthenes? Why, furthermore, pause to give a summary of Kleisthenes’ political activity? And why, so unusually, include the detail of Perikles’ misshapen head? Themistokles’ mother was not an Athenian, but why *quote* the epitaph on her tomb? Why cite Plato and Antisthenes by name at the start of the *Alk.*? Or mention his lisp? I hope that this paper has demonstrated that the material which Plutarch deploys at the openings of *Lives*, while it falls under the traditional rubrics, has been carefully selected to perform a proemial function.

Finally, it is significant that proemial openings adhere to the individual *Life* and may occur in both *Lives* of a pair. This might perhaps serve as something of a counter-weight to the prevailing orthodoxy that the *Lives* must be read in whole books, and really only *work* as literary units when both *Lives* of a pair are read together. Stadter’s categorisation of formal and informal prologues looked for unity at the level of the book; it made sense, therefore, to look only to the opening chapters of these books for proemial material and to categorise the resulting material accordingly. The findings outlined in this paper push the other way: books are important, but so are individual *Lives*.

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Plutarco compositor de *Vitae* y *Moralia*: análisis intratextual

Ana Vicente Sánchez

De manera habitual¹ se entiende por intratextualidad la «presencia efectiva de un texto en otro»² cuando ésta se produce entre aquéllos que conforman la obra de un autor.³ En el presente trabajo se parte del principio de que las relaciones intratextuales⁴ son un instrumento adecuado para el mejor conocimiento de la obra de un autor, ya que evidencian algunas de sus intenciones y objetivos.

Entre las múltiples posibilidades que las relaciones intratextuales ofrecen, una de las más interesantes es su aplicación al estudio de la metodología que Plutarco seguía a la hora de componer sus obras. Dados los límites a los que debe adaptarse la presente comunicación, me ceñiré a tres únicos ejemplos que tienen el común denominador temático de ser elementos de la naturaleza, y que, en lo sucesivo, se citarán como (1), (2) y (3) respectivamente: (1) *Alex.* 35.14–16 y *Quaest. conv.* 648C–D, 649D–F; (2) *Mar.* 18.6–8 y *Apophth.* 202C⁵; (3) *Cat. Ma.* 8.1–2, *Apophth.* 198D y *Quaest. conv.* 668B–C.

Al igual que las relaciones intertextuales⁶, las que se producen entre textos de un mismo autor se detectan, al menos, en el plano léxico, sintáctico y de contenido.

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- 1 Este trabajo se ha realizado bajo los auspicios del Proyecto de Investigación HUM 2007–64772 financiado por la Dirección General de Investigación (Ministerio de Educación).
 - 2 Así define Genette su primer tipo de relación transtextual, el llamado por Julia Kristeva «intertextualidad», cf. Genette, 10.
 - 3 Puede también utilizarse el término general de «intertextualidad» para la relación entre los textos de un mismo autor. Hay otras denominaciones como «autointertextualidad» (cf. Alvar Ezquerro, 10, 12 y nota 24); de «intertestualità interna» o «autotestualità» habla D'Ippolito, 543.
 - 4 Sobre las diferentes definiciones que pueden formularse de la intratextualidad, vid. Sharrock, 5 ss., Morales, 326 ss. y Laird, 166 s.
 - 5 Sobre el tratamiento en *Moralia* de un elemento de la naturaleza tan importante como es el agua vid. López Férez.
 - 6 Un buen ejemplo, en el cual se inspira en gran medida este estudio, es el trabajo de Pérez Firmat. Propone (pp. 1–3 y pp. 13 s.), entre otras cosas, denominar al texto común «intertexto»; «exotexto» al marco para ese intertexto; «texto» o «contexto» a la unión de los dos anteriores; «paratexto» para la fuente del intertexto; vid. pp. 3ss. para los distintos niveles en los que puede aparecer un intertexto.

Comenzando por el primero de estos tres niveles, puede observarse que en los pasajes aquí estudiados las coincidencias se producen de diversa manera. En primer lugar cabe mencionar la repetición de los mismos términos, como en (1) *Alex.* 35.14 ἐπ' ἀσκῶν πεπληρωμένων ὕδατος καθεύδειν y *Quaest. conv.* 649E–F ἐμπλήσωσιν ἀσκούς ὕδατος, ἐπὶ τούτων καθεύδειν⁷; (2) *Mar.* 18.7 ἐκέϊθεν αὐτοῖς ἔφησεν εἶναι ποτὸν ὄνιον αἵματος y *Apophth.* 202C ἐκέϊθεν ὑμῖν ἔστιν εἶπε ποτὸν ὄνιον αἵματος⁸; (3) *Cat. Ma.* 8.1 χαλεπὸν μὲν ἔστιν ὧ πολῖται πρὸς γαστέρα λέγειν ὧτα οὐκ ἔχουσαν y *Apophth.* 198D χαλεπὸν ἔστι λέγειν πρὸς γαστέρα ὧτα μὴ ἔχουσαν⁹; en estos dos últimos pasajes podemos ver, a continuación de la mencionada coincidencia, términos iguales en contextos un tanto diferentes: *Cat. Ma.* 8.2 χαλεπὸν εἶναι σωθῆναι πόλιν y *Apophth.* 198D θανάμζειν δὲ πῶς σφζεται πόλις; de forma similar con πωλεῖται de *Cat. Ma.* 8.2 y *Apophth.* 198D (donde se repite el mismo texto, ἐν ἧ πωλεῖται πλείονος ἰχθῦς ἢ βοῦς), verbo que en *Quaest. conv.* 668C (κεράμιόν τε ταρίχους πωλοῦσι τιμῆς) aparece en distinto contexto, en otra comparativa coordinada a esa misma que *Cat. Ma.* 8.2 y *Apophth.* 198D repiten¹⁰.

La sinonimia nos evidencia otra forma de reiteración, y encontramos términos sinónimos junto a otros iguales, como en (1) *Alex.* 35.15 τὸν δὲ κιττὸν οὐκ ἔστεξεν ἡ γῆ μόνον y *Quaest. conv.* 648C μόνον οὐκ ἐδέξατο τὸν κιττὸν ἡ χώρα¹¹; (2) *Mar.* 18.7 τοῦ βαρβαρικοῦ χάρακος y *Apophth.* 202C τῷ χάρακι τῶν πολεμίων¹²; (3) *Cat. Ma.* 8.2 πόλιν ἐν ἧ πωλεῖται πλείονος ἰχθῦς ἢ βοῦς, *Apophth.* 198D πόλις, ἐν ἧ πωλεῖται πλείονος ἰχθῦς ἢ βοῦς y *Quaest. conv.* 668C πλείονος πιπράσκειται ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἰχθῦς ἢ βοῦς¹³.

7 Otros ejemplos son *Alex.* 35.14–15 ἡ Βαβυλωνία, πυρώδης, ὥστε, Ἄρπαλος, Ἑλληνικαῖς, τὸν κιττὸν, ἡ γῆ, μόνον, τὴν κρᾶσιν, πυρώδης, φιλόψυχρος y *Quaest. conv.* 648C–649F τὴν Βαβυλωνίαν, ὥστε, Ἑλληνικά, Ἄρπαλον, μόνον, τὸν κιττὸν, πυρώδης, πυρώδη, γῆν, κρᾶσιν, φιλόψυχρον, ἐν Βαβυλώνι, κρᾶσιν.

8 Así también en *Mar.* 18.1 y 18.6–8 οἱ δὲ Τεύτονες, ὕδωρ, ἔχοντα, τοὺς στρατιώτας, λεγόντων, δείξας, ποταμόν, τοὺς χάρακος, ἄγεις, ἕως ὑγρὸν τὸ αἶμα ἔχομεν, y en *Apophth.* 202C τοῖς δὲ Τεύτοσι, ὕδωρ ἔχοντι, τῶν στρατιωτῶν, λεγόντων, δείξας, ποταμόν, τῷ χάρακι, ἄγειν, ἕως ὑγρὸν ἔχωσι τὸ αἶμα.

9 Asimismo en *Cat. Ma.* 8.1–2 τὸν δῆμον, τῆς πολυτελείας, χαλεπὸν εἶναι σωθῆναι πόλιν ἐν ἧ πωλεῖται πλείονος ἰχθῦς ἢ βοῦς, *Apophth.* 198D Κάτων, τῷ δήμῳ, πολυτελείας, σφζεται πόλις, ἐν ἧ πωλεῖται πλείονος ἰχθῦς ἢ βοῦς, y *Quaest. conv.* 668B–C Κάτων, πολυτέλειαν, τῆς πόλεως, πλείονος, ἰχθῦς ἢ βοῦς, πωλοῦσι.

10 *Quaest. conv.* 668C: (...) πλείονος πιπράσκειται ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἰχθῦς ἢ βοῦς κεράμιόν τε ταρίχους πωλοῦσι τιμῆς.

11 Otro ejemplo en *Alex.* 15 οὐ φέροντα τὴν κρᾶσιν, *Quaest. conv.* 648D οὐ λαμβάνων κρᾶσιν y 649E οὐχ ὑποφέρουσα τὴν ἐναντίαν κρᾶσιν.

12 Más sinónimos en *Mar.* 18.6 κατέλαβε τῷ στρατοπέδῳ τόπον y *Apophth.* 202C παραστρατοπεδεύσας ἐν χωρίῳ; *Mar.* 18.7 ποταμόν τινα ῥέοντα πλησίον y *Apophth.* 202C ποταμόν ἐγγὺς παραρρέοντα; *Mar.* 18–7 ἔφησεν y *Apophth.* 202C εἶπε.

13 Otros casos de sinonimia en *Cat. Ma.* 8.2 κατηγορῶν δὲ τῆς πολυτελείας ἔφη, *Apophth.* 198D πολυτελείας καταπτόμενος εἶπεν y *Quaest. conv.* 668B πολυτέλειαν τῆς

En tercer lugar refleja una relación intratextual el uso de antónimos junto a términos iguales, en (2) *Mar.* 18.6 ὕδωρ δ' ἄφθονον οὐκ ἔχοντα y *Arophth.* 202C ὀλίγον ὕδωρ ἔχοντι.

Por último nos referiremos a la *derivatio*¹⁴, a veces utilizada en un mismo contexto y junto a los mismos términos, como en (1) *Alex.* 35.14 ἐπ' ἀσκῶν πεπληρωμένων ὕδατος καθεύδειν y *Quaest. conv.* 649E–F ἐμπλήσωσιν ἀσκούς ὕδατος, ἐπὶ τούτων καθεύδειν; (2) *Mar.* 18.7 διψήσιν λεγόντων y *Arophth.* 202C διψῆν λεγόντων. En otras ocasiones se combina la *derivatio* con términos iguales y con sinónimos: (1) *Alex.* 35.15 διέφθειρεν οὐ φέροντα τὴν κρᾶσιν y *Quaest. conv.* 649E οὐχ ὑποφέρουσα τὴν ἐναντίαν κρᾶσιν· οὐ γὰρ φθείρει¹⁵; (2) *Mar.* 18.6 κατέλαβε τῷ στρατοπέδῳ τόπον y *Arophth.* 202C παραστρατοπεδεύσας ἐν χωρίῳ¹⁶; (3) *Cat. Ma.* 8.1 τὸν Ῥωμαίων δῆμον ὠρμημένον ἀκαίρως, *Arophth.* 198D ἐν τῷ δήμῳ τῆς ἀσωτίας καὶ πολυτελείας y *Quaest. conv.* 668B πρὸς τὴν τρυφήν καὶ πολυτέλειαν τῆς πόλεως δημηγορῶν.

Incluso podemos observar todos estos recursos utilizados a la vez, como en (2) *Mar.* 18.7 δείξας τῇ χειρὶ ποταμόν τινα ῥέοντα πλησίον τοῦ βαρβαρικοῦ χάρακος, ἐκεῖθεν αὐτοῖς ἔφησεν εἶναι ποτὸν ὦνιον αἵματος y *Arophth.* 202C δείξας αὐτοῖς ποταμόν ἐγγὺς παραρρέοντα τῷ χάρακι τῶν πολεμίων ἐκεῖθεν ὑμῖν ἔστιν εἶπε ποτὸν ὦνιον αἵματος.

Por otra parte, se aprecian coincidencias en el ámbito sintáctico: en (1) tanto *Alex.* 35.14 como *Quaest. conv.* 649E–F expresan el contenido mediante una consecutiva, donde los elementos que producen la consecuencia no son iguales aunque sí similares: *Alex.* 35.14 ἔστιν ἡ Βαβυλωνία σφόδρα πυρώδης + ὥστε, y *Quaest. conv.* 649E–F οὕτω (...) ἀέρα πνιγώδη καὶ βαρὺν + ὥστε; la consecuencia es doble en *Alex.* 35.14, ὥστε τὰς μὲν κριθὰς χαμόθεν ἐκπηδᾷν καὶ ἀποπάλλεσθαι πολλάκις (...) τοὺς δ' ἀνθρώπους ἐν τοῖς καύμασιν ἐπ' ἀσκῶν πεπληρωμένων ὕδατος καθεύδειν, mientras que en *Quaest. conv.* 649E–F solamente figura esa segunda consecuencia. Pero resulta llamativo que en ambos casos se exprese el contenido mediante una consecutiva.

En (2) se repite el genitivo absoluto para introducir la primera intervención de los soldados de Mario: *Mar.* 18.6–7 (...) τοὺς στρατιώτας. Πολλῶν γέ τοι δυσχεραίνοντων καὶ διψήσιν λεγόντων, y *Arophth.* 202C τῶν στρατιωτῶν διψῆν λεγόντων¹⁷.

πόλεως δημηγορῶν εἶπεν; *Arophth.* 198D τῆς ἀσωτίας καὶ πολυτελείας y *Quaest. conv.* 668B πρὸς τὴν τρυφήν καὶ πολυτέλειαν.

- 14 Entendida aquí como el uso de diferentes formas léxicas procedentes de una misma raíz.
- 15 La *derivatio* se emplea asimismo con otros términos: πυρώδης en *Alex.* 35.14 y 15 y en *Quaest. conv.* 648D también dos veces, y ἐμπύρων en 648C; φυτείαις en *Alex.* 35.15 y en *Quaest. conv.* 648C τοῖς φυτοῖς y 649D φυτευόμενος.
- 16 Más ejemplos de *derivatio* en *Mar.* 18.7 ποταμόν τινα ῥέοντα πλησίον y *Arophth.* 202C ποταμόν ἐγγὺς παραρρέοντα.
- 17 A este genitivo absoluto le sigue en ambos casos otra construcción de participio en nominativo (δείξας) de cuyo objeto directo (ποταμόν τινα y ποταμόν) depende a su vez

En (3) emplean los tres textos la comparativa πλείονος ἤ, y *Cat. Ma.* 8.1–2 y *Apophth.* 198D comparten construcciones de infinitivo en los mismos contextos: χαλεπὸν ἐστὶν / εἶναι / ἐστί + infinitivo (λέγειν en *Cat. Ma.* 8.1 y *Apophth.* 198D, donde además aparece coordinado θαυμάζειν δέ)¹⁸.

En lo concerniente al plano del contenido, resulta especialmente significativa la coincidencia de la información en los pasajes que presentan estas relaciones de intratextualidad, a pesar de pertenecer a diversos géneros: por un lado tenemos el relato biográfico, por otro las colecciones de dichos de reyes y emperadores, y, finalmente, cuestiones debatidas como *charlas de sobremesa*. Teniendo en cuenta que la diferencia de género determina y condiciona el tratamiento del intertexto hasta el punto de que, al ser distinto el objetivo y la función, lo será también su forma y uso, adquiere entonces un alto valor significativo la similitud existente entre los textos.

Así, en (1), ambos textos se refieren al clima babilonio, aunque los ejemplos utilizados aparezcan dispuestos en orden inverso. Dos de las referencias de la biografía coinciden con una *quaestio* donde se debate sobre la naturaleza de la hiedra¹⁹, para lo cual se trae a colación el tipo de clima de Babilonia, donde esta planta no sobrevive. En la *Vida* la descripción de esa región conquistada por Alejandro pretende, según T. Whitmarsh, establecer una comparación entre la suerte de la hiedra y la del macedonio en Babilonia²⁰. En primer lugar señala la *Vida de Alejandro* (35.14) la costumbre de sus habitantes de dormir, debido al calor, sobre odres de agua; este argumento lo emplea asimismo en las *Charlas de sobremesa* (649E–F) para destacar ese clima caluroso que impide crecer a la hiedra, hecho que ya ha explicado con anterioridad y que la *Vida* expone a continuación. Pero, sobre todo, llama poderosamente la atención el hecho de que la conclusión a la que se llega en ambos casos es la misma, tanto en la obra biográfica como en la *cuestión*: no es el calor de Babilonia lo que impide el asentamiento de la hiedra, es la combinación, ἡ κρᾶσις, lo que la planta no soporta. Y así se señala precisamente en ambos textos, junto con la mención expresa de esa suma de calor y frío: *Alex.* 35.15 οὐ φέροντα τὴν κρᾶσιν· ἡ μὲν γὰρ πυρώδης, ὁ δὲ φιλόψυχρος y *Quaest. conv.* 648D οὐ λαμβάνων κρᾶσιν ἀλλ' ἐξιστάμενος, 649E αἰτία δ' οὐχ ἡ θερμότης ἦν, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἡ ψυχρότης, οὐχ ὑποφέρουσα τὴν ἐναντίαν κρᾶσιν.

otro participio (ῥέοντα y παραρρέοντα); la petición de los soldados en ambos pasajes contiene una subordinada introducida por ἕως.

18 Además utilizan el estilo directo *Cat. Ma.* 8.1 y *Apophth.* 198D (ἤρξατο τῶν λόγων οὕτως· χαλεπὸν μὲν ἐστὶν y εἶπεν ὡς χαλεπὸν ἐστί), y una oración de relativo para introducir el segundo de los intertextos (πόλιν / πόλις ἐν ἧ).

19 La *quaestio* se titula Περί τοῦ κιττοῦ πότερον τῆ φύσει θερμὸς ἢ ψυχρὸς ἐστίν.

20 «Ivy, a plant with notably Dionysiac connotations, dies in contact with eastern soil; just as the Dionysiac Alexander will suffer <over-coction> thanks to the heat of the East»; cf. Whitmarsh, pp. 190 s. Mi agradecimiento al profesor Ewen Bowie por indicarme esta referencia.

En (2) la *Vida de Mario* 18 nos refiere un enfrentamiento contra los teutones, en el curso del cual se concede cierta relevancia a la opinión del general romano sobre el agua; por otra parte, en *Apophth.* 202C no importa tanto la batalla como las palabras de Mario. Y es que el género dispone la importancia de la intervención de nuestro protagonista. El texto común o intertexto es el mismo, pero en *Mar.* éste tiene valor dentro del contexto, junto al desarrollo de la batalla y a la intervención de los soldados que comanda; *Apophth.*, en cambio, es una colección de máximas de grandes personajes, por lo que, aunque también se menciona la actuación de los soldados, la única en estilo directo es la de Mario, mientras que en la *Vida* teníamos en estilo indirecto la del general común a ambos textos, la de los soldados en estilo directo, y la contestación final de Mario, importante para el relato de la batalla (más que la primera, que simplemente tenía cierto carácter sentencioso), también en estilo directo: *Mar.* 18.7 ἐκεῖθεν αὐτοῖς ἔφησεν εἶναι ποτὸν ὄνιον αἷματος y en *Apophth.* 202C «ἐκεῖθεν ὑμῖν ἔστιν» εἶπε «ποτὸν ὄνιον αἷματος»; en *Mar.* 18.8 «Τί οὖν» ἔφασαν «οὐκ εὐθύς ἡμᾶς ἄγεις ἐπ' αὐτούς, ἕως ὑγρὸν τὸ αἶμα ἔχομεν», y en *Apophth.* 202C οἱ δ' ἄγειν παρεκάλουν, ἕως ὑγρὸν ἔχωσι τὸ αἶμα καὶ μήπω πᾶν ὑπὸ τοῦ διψῆν ἐκπετηγός.

Con la finalidad de exponer de la forma más clara posible el carácter de Marco Catón, nos dice expresamente Plutarco en la *Vida* del apartado (3) que va a ofrecernos alguna de sus máximas²¹; de ellas tenemos dos en *Cat. Ma.* 8.1 y 8.2 que nuestro polígrafo no relaciona: en 8.1 se pronuncia Catón ante la insistencia del pueblo romano (τὸν Ῥωμαίων δῆμον) en pedir más reparto de trigo, mientras que en 8.2 critica el despilfarro (πολυτέλεια). Por otra parte, en *Apophth.* 198D se recogen esas mismas máximas, pero ambas relacionadas con el desenfreno (ἄσωτία) y el despilfarro (πολυτέλεια) del pueblo (τῷ δήμῳ), ya que θαυμάζειν δέ debe responder necesariamente a la misma construcción que λέγειν (χαλεπὸν ἔστι λέγειν), a la que se coordina mediante δέ. Sin embargo, en *Cat. Ma.* 8.2 es evidente que Plutarco introduce una nueva máxima sin relación con la anterior. Tenemos, por lo tanto, dos intertextos iguales, con sendos contextos, uno igual y otro diferente. Sin embargo no debe extrañar esa diversidad de uso por parte de Plutarco, puesto que uno de esos intertextos, el de *Cat. Ma.* 8.1, lo emplea en otras dos ocasiones con contextos también diferentes: en *Tuend. san.* 131E está hablando Plutarco sobre el apetito y la calidad de la comida²²; en *Es. carn.* 996D lo utiliza para dar comienzo al segundo de los tratados de *Sobre comer carne*²³. Por último, de estas máximas

21 *Cat. Ma.* 7.3. Vid. *infra* este pasaje y su relación con la dedicatoria de *Apophth.*

22 *Tuend. san.* 131E: Χαλεπὸν ἢ χρῆσθαι καὶ φιλονεικεῖν πρὸς γαστέρα ὧτα μὴ ἔχουσαν, ὡς ἔλεγε Κάτων.

23 *Es. carn.* 996D: Χαλεπὸν μὲν γάρ, ὡσπερ Κάτων ἔφησε, λέγειν πρὸς γαστέρας ὧτα μὴ ἔχούσας.

aparece recogido en *Quaest. conv.* 668B–C uno de los intertextos (ὅτι πλείονος ... ἰχθῦς ἢ βοῦς) cuyo contexto coincide con el que *Cat. Ma.* y *Apophth.* comparten (el que hace referencia a la πολυτέλεια). Respecto de la función de estas máximas, *Cat. Ma.* y *Apophth.* se asemejan en gran medida: la etopeya de un personaje a través de sus palabras más que de sus obras; por otra parte, en *Quaest. conv.* el tema central y objetivo es explicar la utilidad del mar, para lo cual le sirve esa manifestación de Catón respecto de un componente marino. En cualquier caso, lo que importa en los tres textos es utilizar las palabras de Catón el Viejo como argumento de autoridad.

Tras el análisis de los ejemplos seleccionados en los planos antes apuntados –léxico, sintáctico e informativo–, parece claro que pueden inferirse algunas conclusiones sobre el método de trabajo de Plutarco. Da la impresión, por una parte, de que son los textos de *Quaest. conv.* los que se insertan en las *Vitae*²⁴, hecho que el propio autor nos confirma de diversa manera: en (1) reconoce el queronense en la *Vida de Alejandro* que se está desviando del tema, pues lo que está contando no es propio del tipo de composición que él está elaborando y el lector leyendo²⁵ (*Alex.* 35.16 τῶν μὲν οὖν τοιοῦτων παρεκβάσεων, ἂν μέτρον ἔχωσιν, ἤττον ἴσως οἱ δύσκολοι κατηγορ<ήσ>ουσιν); similar, pero más explícita, es una cita que encontramos en la *Vida de Bruto*, también dentro de un contexto sobre cuestiones naturales en el cual explica la bulimia que Bruto sufrió y su relación con el frío y la nieve (*Brut.* 25.4–8), donde Plutarco finaliza remitiendo a otra parte de su obra: *Brut.* 25.8 ὑπὲρ ὧν ἐν ἑτέροις μᾶλλον ἠπόρηται; en efecto, la bulimia de Bruto ya la ha narrado en *Quaest. conv.* 695B–D²⁶.

Pero, por otro lado, en ocasiones, como sucede con los textos de (3), parece más evidente que Plutarco se sirviera de la información de *Cat. Ma.* 8 o de *Apophth.* 198D para incluirla como ejemplo en el desarrollo de una *cuestión*. Por lo tanto, la conclusión más lógica, y que a estas alturas puede resultar ya un tanto obvia, parece ser considerar que Plutarco tuviera comenzadas diversas composiciones y las fuera completando según iba recopilando material y trabajando sobre él. De hecho es esta teoría bastante plausible si se atiende al hecho de que las *Vidas* son muchas y sobre personajes en particular, lo mismo

24 Podría ser que todas estas informaciones coincidentes sean fruto de la privilegiada memoria de nuestro polígrafo, pero las relaciones de intratextualidad que aquí se han analizado parecen verificar algo más que una simple repetición de memoria. Otros estudios demuestran que Plutarco no dependía únicamente de su capacidad memorística, sino que volvía sobre sus propios textos, cf. Van der Stockt, pp. 596 s., sobre el *De tranquillitate animi* y el *De adulatore et amico*.

25 Sobre la consideración de que el poder de estas relaciones se deposite en cada lector individual más que en el texto propiamente dicho vid. Laird, p. 166ss.

26 Dentro de una cuestión titulada 693E Τίς αἰτία βουλίμου.

que las *Charlas de sobremesa* son diversos debates sin relación entre ellos, o los *Apotegmas* dichos de personajes independientes.

No podemos asegurar que los *Apotegmas* tuvieran en origen la función de simple base de datos de la cual Plutarco extrajera información para otras composiciones más complejas y elaboradas como las *Vidas* o las *Charlas de sobremesa*; y si esto fuera así, dado que él mismo reconoce en otras obras haber usado este tipo de material, que en un determinado momento Plutarco decidiera sacar a la luz esta recopilación de notas y dedicársela a Trajano, lo que ocurriría entre los años 98 y 117, más bien cerca de esta última fecha, por lo que el propio Plutarco indica a su destinatario²⁷, pues en la dedicatoria hace referencia a la obra biográfica – que según C. P. Jones (p. 70) debió redactar entre el 96 y el 117 – de una forma que hace suponer un elevado número de *Vidas* ya compuestas: *Apophth.* 172D καίτοι καί βίους ἔχει τὸ σύνταγμα τῶν ἐπιφανεστάτων παρὰ τε Ῥωμαίοις καὶ παρ' Ἑλλησιν ἡγεμόνων καὶ νομοθετῶν καὶ αὐτοκρατόρων²⁸. En cuanto a la existencia y función de este tipo de material, podemos remitirnos a *Sobre que hay que reprimir la ira* – fechada por C. P. Jones en torno al 100²⁹ –, donde comenta el de Queronea que le resulta útil reunir y leer tanto las palabras de filósofos como las de tiranos y reyes³⁰; y también a *Sobre la paz de espíritu* – compuesto con posterioridad al 107³¹ –, en el cual reconoce que este escrito dirigido a Pacio es simplemente un conjunto de notas de uso personal³²; y, además, en la dedicatoria de los *Apophth.* 172C–E,

27 La fecha tardía puede suponerse también si se admite el gesto de Plutarco como un reconocimiento al emperador, cf. Fuhrmann, p.10.

28 Y continúa Plutarco describiendo esa parte de su obra: Ἀλλὰ τῶν μὲν πράξεων αἱ πολλὰί τύχην ἀναμειγμένην ἔχουσιν, αἱ δ' γινόμεναι παρὰ τὰ ἔργα καὶ τὰ πάθη καὶ τὰς τύχας ἀποφάσεις καὶ ἀναφωνήσεις ὥσπερ ἐν κατόπτροις καθαρῶς παρέχουσι τὴν ἐκάστου διάνοιαν ἀποθεωρεῖν... y *Apophth.* 172D: ...ἐκεῖ μὲν οὖν ἅμα αἱ ἀποφάσεις τῶν ἀνδρῶν τὰς πράξεις παρακειμένας ἔχουσαι σχολάζουσαν φιληκοῖαν περιμένουσιν· ἐνταῦθα δ' [καὶ] τοὺς λόγους αὐτοὺς καθ' αὐτοὺς ὥσπερ δείγματα τῶν βίων καὶ σπέρματα συνειλεγμένους οὐδὲν οἶμαι σοὶ τὸν καιρὸν ἐνοχλήσειν...

29 Entre el año 92 y el 100 en cualquier caso, cf. Jones, pp. 61 s.

30 *Coh. ira* 457D–E: Διὸ καὶ συνάγειν αἶε πειρῶμαι καὶ ἀναγινώσκειν οὐ ταῦτα δὴ νοῦν μόνα τὰ τῶν φιλοσόφων, οὓς φασὶ χολὴν οὐκ ἔχειν οἱ <οὐκ> ἔχοντες, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τὰ τῶν βασιλέων καὶ τυράννων· οἷον Ἀντιγόνου τὸ πρὸς τοὺς στρατιώτας τοὺς... (esta misma máxima que Plutarco utiliza como ejemplo aquí aparece también en los *Apophth.* 182C).

31 Cf. Jones, pp. 62 s. Vid., sobre la cronología relativa de estas dos obras, Van der Stockt, pp. 596 s.

32 *Tranq. an.* 464F: Μήτε δὲ χρόνον ἔχων, ὡς προηρούμην, γενέσθαι πρὸς οἷς ἐβούλου μήθ' ὑπομένων κεναῖς παντάπασιν τὸν ἄνδρα χερσὶν ὀφθῆναί σοι παρ' ἡμῶν ἀφιγμένον, ἀνελεξάμην περὶ εὐθυμίας ἐκ τῶν ὑπομνημάτων ὧν ἑμαυτῷ πεποιημένος ἐτύγχανον, ἡγούμενος καὶ σὲ τὸν λόγον τοῦτον οὐκ ἀκροάσεως ἕνεκα θηρωμένης καλλιγραφίας ἀλλὰ χρείας βοηθητικῆς ἐπιζητεῖν καὶ συνηδόμενος. Sobre el significado de ὑπομνήματα y su uso por Plutarco, vid. Van der Stockt, pp. 577ss. y 595ss.

de los que aquí se han analizado dos, manifiesta la utilidad de la colección de máximas para comprender los caracteres de los personajes sirviéndose de sus palabras y prescindiendo de sus acciones, combinación que no es rara en las *Vidas*³³.

Estos últimos razonamientos nos van a servir, además, de punto de apoyo en cuanto a la debatida autoría de estos *Apotegmas*³⁴, ya que la colección pudo publicarse en época posterior bajo el nombre de Plutarco; no obstante, los textos de *Coh. ira* y *Tranq. an.* confirman su uso y recopilación por parte de nuestro polígrafo, y, además, el análisis de las relaciones de intratextualidad establece similares conexiones entre esta obra y las *Vidas* o las *Charlas de sobremesa*, así como entre éstas últimas, por lo que no serían los *Apotegmas* simples copias espurias de otros textos de Plutarco.

A partir de este reducido análisis de las relaciones de intratextualidad en la obra de Plutarco se ha pretendido escudriñar las técnicas de composición de las que nuestro autor se servía, además de poder ofrecer alguna luz sobre la cronología relativa y sobre la autenticidad de algunas obras. Por más que el análisis llevado a cabo apunta a unas claras conclusiones, conviene insistir en la advertencia de que el *corpus* aquí examinado es sumamente reducido y que, por lo tanto, será necesaria su confirmación, o modificación, a través de estudios más exhaustivos.

Desde el punto de vista de las *Vidas*, Plutarco deja constancia en ellas, además de sus conocimientos y habilidades para escribir biografía, de su erudición sobre diversas cuestiones que trata en otras partes de su obra. Por lo que esas referencias a temas que ha desarrollado o comentado en otros textos denotan la presencia de éstos mismos en las *Vidas*. Ello nos hace presuponer que algunos de sus *Moralia* le sirven a menudo de recopilación de datos a modo de apuntes, o que una vez recogidas esas informaciones se sirve de ellas para posteriores composiciones, y también que es probable que se dedicara a redactar diferentes tipos de obras simultáneamente.

Es innegable que esta actitud tiene una enorme trascendencia sobre el lector, que entiende que no sólo se halla ante un biógrafo, desde la perspectiva de las *Vidas*, sino que, además, este autor se interesa por muchos más temas:

33 Este mismo valor que concede a las palabras en *Apophth.* 172C–E, lo argumentaba en *Cat. Ma.* 7.3 para referir algunas máximas de Catón: *Cat. Ma.* 7.3 ἡμεῖς δὲ τῶν ἀπομνημονευομένων βραχέα γράψομεν, οἱ τῷ λόγῳ πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ τῷ προσώπῳ, καθάπερ ἔνιοι νομίζουσι, τῶν ἀνθρώπων φαμὲν ἐμφαίνεσθαι τὸ ἦθος, y *Apophth.* 172C (...) καὶ τὴν χρεῖαν ἀπόδεξαι τῶν ἀπομνημονευμάτων, εἰ πρόσφορον ἔχει τι πρὸς κατανόησιν ἡθῶν καὶ προαιρέσεων ἡγεμονικῶν, ἐμφαινομένων τοῖς λόγοις μᾶλλον ἢ ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτῶν, y 172E (...) ἐν βραχέσι πολλῶν ἀναθεώρησιν ἀνδρῶν ἀξίων μνήμης γενομένων λαμβάνοντι. Sobre la naturaleza del apotegma en las *Vidas* de Plutarco vid. Ramón Palerm, pp. 282ss.

34 Vid. Pérez Jiménez, p. 57 y López Salvá & Medel, p. 14.

son sutiles puentes hacia el resto de sus conocimientos y de su obra. Pero también estos puentes pueden recorrerse en sentido inverso, esto es, le sirven de material en sus *Moralia*, siendo una mirada a su obra más lograda, las *Vidas Paralelas*³⁵.

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35 Cf. Pérez Jimenez, p. 71.

Plutarch's Heroes in the *Moralia*: a Matter of *Variatio* or Another (More Genuine) Outlook?

Anastasios G. Nikolaidis

From the 48 extant biographical heroes of Plutarch, 2 (Galba and Otho) are never mentioned in the *Moralia*, and 6 are only cited – and very rarely at that – in essays of a somewhat special nature, such as the *Apophthegmata*, the *Roman Questions*, and the rhetorical pieces *On the Fortune or Virtue of Alexander* and *On the Fortune of the Romans*, where the relevant references are more or less expected.¹ The above essays aside, we shall find 19 heroes being mentioned only once or up to five times in the rest of the *Moralia* corpus, and another 7 being cited from six to ten times.² This arithmetic yields that from the 48 Plutarchean worthies only 14 occur with some frequency in the *Moralia* (48–34 [2+6+19+7] = 14); and that from those 14, Romans are only 3: the two Catos and – rather surprisingly – Pompey.³ As for the heroes more frequently referred to, and leaving out again the special treatises above, the first place clearly belongs to Alexander (about 60 occurrences), and then follow Perikles (27 occurrences), Themistokles, Solon (without reckoning the *Symposium of the Seven Sages*), the elder Cato, Phokion, Demosthenes, Alkibiades, and the rest.

My purpose in this paper is, on the one hand, to examine the context in which some Plutarchean heroes occur in the *Moralia* as well as the reasons for which Plutarch refers to them, and, on the other, to attempt an explanation in cases of varying or even conflicting versions between the *Moralia* and the *Lives*. Hopefully, this investigation may also tell us something about Plutarch's method of work and literary talent and, further, it may even plausibly suggest the sequence or relative chronology of some of his works.

As I have argued elsewhere,⁴ Plutarch's narrative in the *Lives* is of necessity influenced by his historical sources. This entails that his true beliefs about the

1 Agis (216D, 222A), Coriolanus (318F, 322F), Marcellus (195D–E, 317D, 318D, 322C), Publicola (275B, 285F), Sertorius (204A, 324A). Romulus occurs more frequently, but only in the *Quaest. Rom.* and *De fort. Rom.*

2 These seven are: Cicero, Demetrios, Lysander, Nikias, Pelopidas, Sulla, Theseus.

3 This must be due to the abundant subject-matter which P. had at his disposal rather than to any particular ethical problematization connected with this *Life*; for from the moral viewpoint, *Coriolanus* and *Brutus* were (and are) more interesting.

4 See 2009 (forthcoming), pp. (provisional) 15, 19, 23–24.

characters and the events he relates are more safely to be deduced either by passages (mostly of digressive nature) where he plainly expresses his own opinion⁵ or by his concluding *Comparisons*, where Plutarch is again on his own, and passes judgements deriving, more or less, from settled convictions rather than from the particular information of his books.⁶ By the same token, I shall argue here that the way with which and the reason for which Plutarch recalls a certain hero in a moral essay reveal his opinion about him more truthfully than in the pertinent *Life*.

We scarcely need, of course, the evidence of the *Moralia* in order to know what Plutarch thought of such personages as Aristeides or Phokion or Lykourgos. So, the favourable judgements passed on these men, the praise of their deeds and the complimentary characterizations employed simply confirm and sometimes complete an already well-known biographical picture. But what about some figures remaining in limbo, as it were, the paradoxical paradigms – to use Stadter's words (p. 41) – of Lysander and Sulla? Or which is the case with such pairs as Nikias and Crassus, Pyrrhos and Marius, and even Coriolanus and Alkibiades? Are we to regard the above heroes as models for imitation or as deterrent examples?⁷ More precisely, how did Plutarch want his readers to take them for, which amounts to what did Plutarch himself think of these men?

Take Nikias, for example. In the *Life* Plutarch criticizes Nikias (albeit somewhat indirectly) for his delay to extricate the Athenian army from Sicily in time, owing to his superstitious fears and overscrupulous religiosity (cf. *Nik.* 24); although later in the *Synkrisis* he admits that such a conduct was anyhow more acceptable than Crassus' complete scorn of divination (*Comp. Nik.–Cr.* 5.3). Nevertheless, in his treatise *On Superstition* Plutarch says (169A) that perhaps it would have been much better for Nikias to commit suicide rather than to be so fearful of a moon eclipse, and thus eventually lead into slaughter or inglorious capture forty thousand Athenians including himself.

The rhetorical tone of this essay and the vehemence of the attack on superstition, which is here regarded as a worse evil than atheism (165B, 171B–D), seem to point to a youthful Plutarch.⁸ But much as this assault is

5 See, for instance, *Di.* 36, *Cma.* 5.6, *Per.* 13.16, *Sol.* 20.1–2. etc.

6 Occasionally, however, some judgements which P. passes in the *Comparisons*, derive from his manipulation of evidence to the effect of stressing a particular point that suits his argument or of bringing about a balance between his heroes. Cf. Pelling, 131/96/134; Duff 1999, 267 ff.; Nikolaidis 2009, 2 (provisional page) and n. 8 *ibid.*, 13, 17 ff.; *id.* 1991, 160 and n. 84 *ibid.*, and 2005, 285 and n. 10 *ibid.*

7 On this matter see Nikolaidis 2005, 307–8, 314–15, 318. For Nikias and Crassus, cf. also *id.* 1988, 331–33. That Marius is a negative example is also suggested by *De sera* 553A (but perhaps contrast *De fort. Rom.* 317D).

8 Cf. Ziegler, 190; Klaerr, 242; Lozza, 25.

understandable, even on the part of such a pious man as our author, the comparison of Nicias in the above passage with Midas and Aristodemos, who, disturbed and disheartened by strange dreams, portents and personal forebodings, slew themselves, is quite out of place, given the respective historical circumstances. Yet this comparison shows that Plutarch's opinion of Nicias had been crystalized already in his youth, namely long before he came to write his biography, and it is this opinion, based on such character traits as dilatoriness, irresoluteness, pusillanimity and even cowardice that later informs the *Life of Nicias*, thus making it a negative rather than a positive paradigm, as the pairing with Crassus also suggests.⁹

Sulla is another interesting case. Does the notorious dictator pose as a model for imitation or avoidance? Given the relatively early place which *Lysander-Sulla* pair is commonly assigned in the order of the *Parallel Lives*,¹⁰ this question should not normally be asked (because the earlier *Lives* are exemplary, of course), but since several critics have been embarrassed with this pair and have recognized a paradox or an ambiguity in it,¹¹ not only is this question entirely legitimate and indeed worth of a thorough investigation, but, in my opinion, it is also high time that we removed this pair from the first decade of the series (see n. 10). More on this in my article for Stadter's *Festschrift* (2005, 307–309, 318). Here I will focus on what Plutarch tells us about Sulla in the *Moralia*.

It cannot be denied that in the *Political precepts* our author approves of Sulla's readiness to give young men opportunities for public activities (806E); or that in *De laude ipsius* he finds Sulla's tendency to ascribe all his achievements to fortune a clever means to fight off envy (542F).¹² But, apart from these instances, Sulla in the *Moralia* is mainly presented as: a) a man whom Fortune took from the bosom of a harlot to put him at the helm of the Roman republic;¹³ b) a man who almost razed Athens, and certainly drowned the city in the blood of its people;¹⁴ and c) a man who, lacking the kindness and nobility of a Pompey, after capturing Praeneste, indiscriminately

9 Cf. Nikolaidis 1988, 332; also Piccirilli (see Angeli Bertinelli *et al.*), XIV: "Nicia è dunque un eroe negativo, un antieroe par eccellenza".

10 See Nikolaidis 2005, 283.

11 Cf. Stadter, 41; Duff 1997, and more extensively id. 1999, 161–204.

12 It is worth noting, however, that in the *Life* this tendency is not due to modesty (whether pretended or not), but, on the contrary, to Sulla's boastfulness or vainglory (*Su.* 6.7: εἶτε κόμπω χρώμενος).

13 Cf. *De fort. Rom.* 318C: Κορηγίλιον δὲ Σύλλαν ἐκ τῶν Νικοπόλεως τῆς ἑταίρας ἀναλαβοῦσα καὶ βαστάσασα κόλπων (*i.e.* Τύχη)...ἐπιτίθησι μοναρχίαις καὶ δικτατωρίαις.

14 Cf. *De garullitate* 505B: ...καὶ μικροῦ μὲν κατέσκαψεν <τὴν πόλιν> ἐνέπλησε δὲ φόνου καὶ νεκρῶν, ὥστε τὸν Κεραμεικὸν αἵματι ρύηναι. Cf. also *Su.* 14.5.

slaughtered all the population of the city (*Praec. ger. reip.* 815F–816A). My claim, then, is that the above descriptions, occurring in essays unrelated to the historical sources of *Sulla*, are based on convictions settled already in Plutarch's mind, in other words, Sulla's picture in the *Moralia* reflects more faithfully his opinion about him.¹⁵

Concerning the *Life of Alkibiades*, Ziegler is categorical: "Das zweite Paar der schlechten Beispiele bilden ohne Zweifel Coriolan und Alkibiades" (col. 265/900). Most scholars would concur, I think, and indeed Alkibiades' biography bears out, if with some qualifications, Ziegler's verdict. But when we come to the *Moralia*, we may be surprised to discover that from the 35 or so references to Alkibiades,¹⁶ only one is derogatory, semi-derogatory, to be precise; for in the *Political precepts*, on the one hand, it is acknowledged that Alkibiades was most efficient as public man and undefeated as general and, on the other, it is clearly stated that he was ruined by his audacious, extravagant and dissolute way of living (which, moreover, deprived Athens from the benefit of his other good qualities. – cf. 800D). Most of the other references contain no characterizations, and are either factual or morally neutral, while some might even be regarded as complimentary.¹⁷ Yet the following one from the *De sera* is of particular importance. Plutarch argues there that the delay of divine punishment is sometimes deliberate so that broader interests and greater advantages may be secured. If, for instance, someone had killed Miltiades when he was tyrant in Thrace, or had prosecuted and convicted Kimon for incest with his sister, or had indicted Themistokles for his youthful insolent revellings in the agora and driven him out of Athens, as was later done to Alkibiades, we would have had no Marathon, no Euremedon, no Artemision.

Cf. 552B: εἰ δέ τις ἢ τύραννον ἀπέκτεινε Μιλτιάδην...πρότερον ἢ Κίμωνα...διώξας εἶλεν ἢ Θεμιστοκλέους...ἀφείλετο τὴν πόλιν, ὡς ὕστερον Ἀλκιβιάδου γραψάμενος, ἄρ' οὐκ ἂν ἀπωλώλεσαν ἡμῖν οἱ Μαραθῶνες, οἱ Εὐρυμέδοντες, τὸ καλὸν Ἀρτεμίσιον...; It is surprising that Themistokles is linked with Artemision and not with Salamis in the above passage. A possible explanation is that Plutarch wants to quote, as he actually does in the immediate sequel, the lines of his compatriot Pindar, which refer to the Artemision sea-battle (ὄθι παῖδες Ἀθηναίων ἐβάλοντο φαεννὰν/κρηπιῖδ' ἔλευθερίας). On the other hand, Yvonne Vernière, noticing that the same lines are also quoted at 350B and 867C (let me add *Them.* 8.2 too)

15 Not that the *Life* yields a very different impression. But owing to the encomiastic element of the biographical genre (let alone P.'s ethical preoccupations; see, e.g., *Kim.* 2.4–5), Sulla's picture in the *Life* is "more positive than it could have been", as Duff aptly puts it (1999, 203n. 167). Cf. also Stadter, 43, 48 ff., Nikolaidis 2005, 307–308, and other references in nn. 92–93 *ibid.*

16 For a conspectus of these references one may now consult O' Neil's Index (p. 23).

17 See, for example, 69F and 804E–F. Also complimentary are 3 references in the *De gloria Ath.* (345D, 349D, 351B) but, due to the epideictic nature of this essay, their significance is less weighty.

remarks that “Le nom d’ Artemision déclenche à chaque fois le mécanisme de mémoire” (p. 201 n. 3).

The mention of Alkibiades in the above context clearly shows, I believe, that, in Plutarch’s mind, the prosecution and subsequent conviction of Alkibiades was to the detriment not only of Athens, but of Greece as a whole.¹⁸ So, it would not be an exaggeration, perhaps, to say that, besides the contemporary Athenians (and not only the Athenians), including also Socrates, even Plutarch the moralist, five centuries later, succumbed to the spell of the notorious *enfant gâté* of Athens; for in the *Life* too, despite the unequivocal condemnation of Alkibiades’ various faults and transgressions, it is his talents – political astuteness, military capabilities, generous character, graceful manners etc. – that more often and more vividly come to the fore. Alkibiades was a traitor, of course, and his treason was far more harmful to Athens than that of Coriolanus to Rome, while, as regards their respective moral status, the Roman was by far more honest and decent than the Athenian. Yet, according to Plutarch’s overall assessment of the two men in the final *Synkrisis*, it is Alkibiades who apparently emerges superior or less bad, if you prefer, than Coriolanus.¹⁹

Occasionally, the evidence from the *Moralia* may also reveal Plutarch’s sentiment in cases where his position is not explicitly stated in the relevant *Life*. In *Per.* 31–32, for example, Plutarch enumerates all principal motives behind Perikles’ decision to cause the Peloponnesian war (Aspasia had been indicted for impiety, Pheidias was in prison because he had irreverently – as the charge went – depicted himself and Perikles on the shield of Athena, and Perikles himself was impeached, because of his intimacy with Anaxagoras, who was accused of promoting atheism), but concludes his enumeration thus: “these are the alleged reasons for which Perikles did not allow the *demos* to yield to the Lacedaemonians; but the truth is not clear.”²⁰ Not so unclear, though, in the *Synkrisis*, where it is reasonable for one to presume that Plutarch expresses his settled opinion on the matter. And this opinion is that the war was brought on by Perikles’ contention that no concession should be made to Sparta (λέγεται γὰρ ἑπακτὸς ὑπ’ ἐκείνου γενέσθαι, Λακεδαιμονίοις ἐρίσαντος μὴ ἔνδοῦναι). True,

18 Note the first person plural (**we** would have had no Marathon – ἀπολώλεσαν ἡμῖν οἱ Μαραθῶνες). Alkibiades, after all, was a great nature for P. and οὐθὲν γὰρ αἱ μεγάλα φύσεις μικρὸν ἐκφέρουσιν (*De sera* 552C). For the conflicting qualities of the great natures, see Duff 1999a, esp. 318–325.

19 See relevant table in my forthcoming (2009) article, and cf. also Frazier, 74. For a good analysis and discussion of the themes and the problems of the *Cor.–Alk.* pair, see Duff 1999, 205–240.

20 *Per.* 32. 6: Αἱ μὲν οὖν αἰτίαι, δι’ ὧν οὐκ εἶασεν ἔνδοῦναι Λακεδαιμονίοις τὸν δῆμον, αὗται λέγονται· τὸ δ’ ἀληθές ἄδηλον. The Athenians would seem to yield to the Lacedaemonians, if Perikles complied with their demand and had the Megarian decree rescinded (see *Per.* 31.1).

λέγεται cannot *prima facie* be taken to denote Plutarch's opinion, but what follows clearly suggests that this was the case all the same; for Plutarch himself now says that "neither would Fabius have made any concessions to Carthage, but would also have **nobly** undergone the peril that supremacy required." (δοκῶ δὲ μηδ' ἂν Φάβιον Μάξιμον ἐνδοῦναι τι Καρχηδονίοις, ἀλλ' εὐγενῶς ὑποστῆναι τὸν ὑπὲρ τῆς ἡγεμονίας κίνδυνον). By using the adverb "nobly" (εὐγενῶς) in a similar, hypothetically, case, Plutarch evidently admits Perikles' responsibility for the war, but, at the same time, regards his firmness of purpose as a noble policy and justifies him (*Comp. Per.–Fab.* 3.1). As for the other reasons alleged, in *De Herodoti malignitate* our author flatly rejects the accusations involving Aspasia and Pheidias, and espouses the *philotimia* and *philonikia* motives instead;²¹

Let us now move to the *Quaestiones convivales* and try to see what the relationship of this work with the *Lives* may disclose. Less reserved than Teodorsson, who holds that Plutarch's *Table Talks* are authentic only to a certain extent (vol. I, pp. 8 and 13–14), I will also argue that these talks are mostly authentic.

To find Plutarch, as interlocutor in a *Table Talk*, saying something which we also find in another treatise of the *Moralia* or in the *Lives* is completely natural, of course. To find another interlocutor saying the same thing in front of Plutarch who also participates in the discussion, may seem a bit odd, but, if this something is common knowledge, we should not really be surprised. For every well-read man of the time (and most of the guests in the *Quaestiones convivales* were more than simply well-read) must have heard, for instance, of the notorious profanation of the Eleusinian mysteries on the part of Alkibiades; so, when Plutarch's friend Theon recalls this event, which Plutarch treats in much more detail in his *Alkibiades*, we do not need to infer that this particular *Table Talk* (621B–C) is of necessity made up. Similarly, Plutarch's grandfather Lamprias, as well as the other members of his family and

21 Cf. 855F–856A: "Ἐτι τοίνυν ἐπὶ τῶν ὁμολογουμένων πεπραχθαι, τὴν δ' αἰτίαν ἀφ' ἧς πέπρακται καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν ἔχόντων ἄδηλον, ὁ πρὸς τὸ χεῖρον εἰκάζων δυσμενῆς ἔστι καὶ κακοήθης· ὡσπερ οἱ κωμικοὶ τὸν πόλεμον ὑπὸ τοῦ Περικλέους ἐκκεκαῦσθαι δι' Ἀσπασίαν ἢ διὰ Φειδίαν ἀποφαίνοντες, οὐ φιλοτιμίᾳ τινὶ καὶ φιλονικίᾳ μᾶλλον στορέσαι τὸ φρόνημα Πελοποννησίων καὶ μηδενὸς ὑφεῖσθαι Λακεδαιμονίοις ἐθελήσαντος. Cf. also *Per.* 29.8 (...παροξύννας τὸν δῆμον ἐμμεῖναι τῇ πρὸς τοὺς Μεγαρεῖς φιλονικίᾳ, μόνος ἔσχε τοῦ πολέμου τὴν αἰτίαν) and 31.1 (οἱ μὲν ἐκ φρονήματος μεγάλοιο μετὰ γνώμης κατὰ τὸ βέλτιστον ἀπισχυρίσασθαι φασιν αὐτον...οἱ δὲ μᾶλλον αὐθαδεῖα τινὶ καὶ φιλονικίᾳ πρὸς ἐνδειξιν ἰσχύος περιφρονῆσαι Λακεδαιμονίων). In the *Life*, where P.'s dependence on his sources is more direct, Perikles acts out of arrogance and contentiousness, whereas in the *Synkrisis* and *De Herod. malign.*, where P. speaks for himself, Perikles acts nobly and out of love for honour. As I argued in my unpublished doctoral thesis, *philonikia* stems from *philotimia*, and is its main negative aspect. For more recent discussion on these qualities see the references in my 2005 article, p. 301n. 63.

some Boeotian friends, must have been versed in matters of local history. Thus, when Lamprias refers in one *Table Talk* (680B) to a military achievement of Epameinondas, which is also mentioned in Plutarch's *An seni* (797A–B), I see no reason to dispute that he speaks on his own behalf and assume instead that he acts as Plutarch's mouthpiece. By the same token, when the brother Lamprias says something commonly (or locally) known, we need not doubt that he speaks for himself; however, when he expounds a philosophical theory or idea, we could indeed reasonably suppose that he speaks on Plutarch's behalf, especially in cases where Plutarch simply reports and does not take actual part in the discussion.²² It follows then that it is only, or mostly, in cases where Plutarch is simply the narrator that we might possibly speak of partly made up *Table Talks*.

Yet the 6th *Table Talk* of the first book (623D), concerning Alexander's drinking habits, is more problematic. Philinus, a close friend of Plutarch, ironically dismisses the view that Alexander did not drink excessively but simply spent much time on drinking and conversing with his friends; those who hold this view are talking nonsense, Philinus asserts, because: a) there are many entries in the royal diaries, the *ephemerides*, bearing witness to the very opposite (see n. 26 below); b) excessive drinking would explain Alexander's laziness towards sex, despite his hot temperament,²³ and c) this was also one of the reasons that alienated Kallisthenes, who would not endure to dine with Alexander on account of his heavy drinking (623F).²⁴ By contrast, in the epideictic essay *De Alexandri fortuna aut virtute* Plutarch denies, as expected, that Alexander was a drunkard (337F); but the same denial, followed by evidence of Alexander's sobriety, diligence, fortitude and military as well as political efficiency, is also to be found in the *Life*, where Plutarch draws on Aristobulus' favourable portrait of Alexander.²⁵ Yet, towards the end of the same chapter he tells us, whether unwittingly or due to some jumbling of his sources, that, after drinking, Alexander would take a bath and often sleep until the following

22 See, for instance, 642F, 653B, 667C, 679E, 723A, 736D.

23 623E: διὸ καὶ πρὸς τὰς συνουσίας ἀργότερος ἦν, ὄξυς δὲ καὶ θυμοειδῆς ἄπειρ ἐστὶ σωματικῆς θερμότητος. Cf. also *Alex.* 4.8 (ἐν ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ταῖς περὶ τὸ σῶμα δυσκίνητον εἶναι), n. 27 below., Athen. 434F–435A, and Fuhrmann, 163n. 4.

24 Cf. also *De cohib. ira* 454D–E, Athen. 434D, and Macurdy, 294 ff.

25 *Alex.* 23.1: Ἦν δὲ καὶ πρὸς οἶνον ἤττον ἢ ἐδόκει καταφερῆς, ἔδοξε δὲ διὰ τὸν χρόνον, ὃν οὐ πίνων μᾶλλον ἢ λαλῶν εἶλκεν, ἐφ' ἑκάστης κύλικος ἀεὶ μακρόν τινα λόγον διατιθέμενος (cf. also 23.6, and for his other good qualities see 23.3–9). The similarity with the wording of the *Table Talk* above is remarkable (623D–E: Λόγος ἦν περὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ βασιλέως ὡς οὐ πολὺ πίνοντος ἀλλὰ πολὺν χρόνον ἐν τῷ πίνειν καὶ διαλέγεσθαι τοῖς φίλοις ἔλκοντος). Cf. also *Alex.* 75.6, and see Hamilton, LV and 58 (cf. esp. Arrian 7.29.4).

midday or, occasionally, through the entire day; in other words, he recounts, but without naming his source, Philinus' information from the *ephemerides*.²⁶

What are we to make out of all this? What did Plutarch really think of Alexander's drinking habits? Was he or was he not a hard drinker? Here is our data (without considering at all the epideictic essay): a) Earlier in the *Life* it is admitted that Alexander's hot temperament made him prone to drink and irascible,²⁷ which apparently contradicts the evidence at *Alex.* 23.1 (n. 25); b) Philinus' opinion in *Table Talk* 1.6 above also contradicts *Alex.* 23.1, although Philinus (a townsman, close friend and admirer of Plutarch), as interlocutor in the *Quaestiones convivales*, expresses views which, on the whole, second those of Plutarch;²⁸ c) two *Moralia* passages, i. e. writings where Plutarch speaks his mind rather than echoes a historical source, suggest that our author had accepted the traditional picture of an Alexander who would drink excessively;²⁹ d) with the exception of Aristobulus, all other sources seem to affirm that Alexander was addicted to wine.³⁰ In view of the foregoing, and given that Plutarch's inclusion among the interlocutors ridiculed by Philinus (623E: ἀπεδείκνυεν δ' αὐτοῦς φλυαροῦντος) is rather improbable,³¹ I would infer that our author's true opinion about Alexander's drinking habits must, in all

26 *Alex.* 23.8: ... μετὰ δὲ τὸν πότον λουσάμενος, ἐκάθευδε πολλάκις μέχρι μέσης ἡμέρας· ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ διημέρευεν ἐν τῷ καθεύδειν. — *Quaest. conv.* 623E: ... ἐν αἷς (sc. the *ephemerides*) συνεχέστατα γέγραπται καὶ πλειστάκις ὅτι “τὴνδε τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκ τοῦ πότου καθεύδων” ἔστι δ' ὅτε “καὶ τὴν ἐφεξῆς”. Note that P. also employs the *ephemerides* as source of information in his *Alexander* (23.4, 76.1, 77.1); even in the same chapter (cf. 23.4) where he disputes Alexander's overdrinking (see 23.1 in n. 25).

27 *Alex.* 4.7: Ἀλέξανδρον δὲ ἡ φερμότης τοῦ σώματος... καὶ ποτικὸν καὶ θυμοειδῆ παρεῖχεν. Cf. also *ibid.* 75.3–5, and 623E (n. 23).

28 See 660E–F, 685D, 728B, and cf. also *De Pyth. orac.* 398B and 400B, where Philinus respectively attacks the Epicureans and the Stoics. It seems that P. had much in common with and also cherished affectionate feelings for Philinus (727B: Φιλῖνον τὸν ἡμέτερον, *De sollert.* 976B: Φιλῖνος ὁ βέλτιστος). More about Philinus see in Ziegler, 44–45/681.

29 Cf. *De tuenda san. praec.* 124C: Ἐμνήσθη [sc. Plutarch; cf. Klaerr, 305n. 5 and 306n. 1] ... Ἀλεξάνδρου μετὰ πότον πολὺν αἰσχυνθέντος ἀντειπεῖν... Cf. also *De tranquill. an.* 472D.

30 Cf. Curtius 6.2.2, 10.5.34; Arrian 4.8.2; Athen. 434B, F; Aelian, *VH* 3.23. Cf. also Hamilton, 58. According to some authors (whom, however, P. labels as theatrical), Alexander even dies amid (or because of) heavy drinking (cf. *Alex.* 75.3–6 and *De tuenda san. praec.* 124C, partly in n. 29).

31 According to Teodorsson, however, “Philinus can well be credited with uttering an opinion contrary to that of Plut., seeing that he was probably one of his best friends” (vol. I, 117). No objection that Philinus could publicly disagree with P., even though his disagreement here would have been unique (see above with n. 28); but could he have flung in P.'s face that he was talking nonsense?

likelihood, coincide with that of Philinus in the *Quaestiones convivales*;³² a work that is not influenced, as most of Plutarch's moral treatises, by the immediacy of a historical source and is not suspect of either serving a special purpose (as the epideictic essay) or conforming to a special convention (as the biographical encomium).³³

Besides Plutarch's tendency to see his heroes in a favourable light (cf. for instance, *Kim.* 2.4–5, *De Herod. malign.* 855E), it is also the encomiastic element expected in a biography that obliges, as it were, Plutarch to try to absolve Alexander from the charge of hard drinking (*Alex.* 23.1–2). All the more so, since, irrespective of his hero's reputed or actual failings, Plutarch greatly admired Alexander, as a statement in a quite neutral context of the *De sera* manifests (557B: Καὶ τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον οὐδ' οἱ πάνυ φιλοῦντες, ὧν ἔσμεν καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἐπαινοῦσι...).³⁴ Owing to this admiration perhaps (at least partly), he tries to rebut the picture of a drunkard king and military commander, by appealing to Alexander's conduct in the middle of affairs as well as to the amount and magnitude of his exploits during such a brief life.³⁵

As to the chronological relationship between *Alexander* and this *Table Talk*, I believe that the latter is either a simultaneous by-product of the *Life* or postdates it. The verbal similarities between Philinus' arguments and what Plutarch writes in the *Alexander* are so great that it seems almost certain that one

32 On the contrary, Abramowiczówna and Teodorsson seem to believe that P.'s conviction on this matter is expressed at *Alex.* 23.1–2, and so Philinus charges also P. with talking nonsense at *Quaest. conv.* 623E. To explain away this oddity, Abramowiczówna posits that the particular *Table Talk* was written before *Alexander*, which Teodorsson finds “completely speculative” (vol. I, 117). For the chronological relationship between the two works see below.

33 Similarly, Alexander's susceptibility to flattery is absent from *De Alex. fort. aut. virt.* and rather discreetly touched in the *Life* (cf. 23.7). By contrast, in *De adulate et amico*, P. is more outspoken: Ἀλέξανδρος... ἀφειδῶς ἐνέδωκεν ἑαυτὸν (to his flatterers) ὑποσκελίζεσθαι [cf. *Alex.* 23.7: καὶ τοῖς κόλαξιν ἑαυτὸν ἀνεικῶς ἱππάσιμον], προσκυνούμενον καὶ καταστολιζόμενον καὶ ἀναπλαττόμενον ὥσπερ ἄγαλμα βαρβαρικὸν ὑπ' αὐτῶν (65D). Cf. also Sirinelli, 289n. 4 s.f.

34 True, this statement is made by P.'s brother Timon, but the way with which P. speaks of his brother (cf. *De frat. am.* 487D), and the role of Timon in the *De sera* and *De anima* (cf. Ziegler, 10/646 and Sandbach 1969, 306–309) suggest that the two brothers were mostly of the same mind. For Timon in connection with P. see also Vernière, 97–98. And for another indication of P.'s admiration for Alexander (outside the *Life* and the epideictic essay), cf. also *Praec. ger. reip.* 818B–C.

35 Cf. *Alex.* 23.2: ἐπεὶ πρὸς γε τὰς πράξεις οὐκ οἶνος ἐκείνον, οὐχ ὕπνος, οὐ παιδιὰ τις, οὐ γάμος, οὐ θέα, καθάπερ ἄλλους στρατηγούς, ἐπέσχε· δηλοῖ δ' ὁ βίος, ὃν βιώσας βραχὺν παντάσῃ πλείστων καὶ μεγίστων πράξεων ἐπέπλησεν. See also Hamilton, who recognizes “much force in Plutarch's contention here and at *Mor.* 337F.” (p. 59). Aelian also seems to have questioned the information that Alexander spent most of his time on drinking and sleeping. Cf. *VH* 3.23: δυοῖν οὖν θάτερον, ἢ Ἀλέξανδρος... ἑαυτὸν ζῆμοι διὰ τὸν οἶνον ἢ οἱ ταῦτα ἀναγράφαντες ψεύδονται.

work draws on the other.³⁶ This agreed, it is reasonable to suppose that Plutarch first came to know these details about the hot nature of Alexander's body etc. while he was working on his biography.

Similarly, *Table Talk* 2.10 (642F) must be a by-product of *Lysander* and *Agesilaos* which were written, more or less, simultaneously (cf. my 2005 article, p. 307 and n. 87). For, in all likelihood, it was through Plutarch that Lamprias came to know that Agesilaos had once appointed Lysander as his κρεοδαίτης (carver of meats) in order to degrade him.³⁷ Yet in the above *Table Talk* (a talk which Plutarch simply narrates, without participating in the discussion), Lamprias misses or overlooks the depreciation point, and speaks of *kreodaites* in terms of a rather honourable office (644B).

An inconsistency observed between *Table Talk* 5.3 (676D) and the *Life of Timoleon* offers a similar chronological indication. In the *Life* (ch. 26) we read that, while the Corinthians were marching against the Carthaginians, they saw some mules laden with celery. This sight, given that celery would decorate the tombs of the dead, was immediately regarded as a bad omen. Timoleon, however, removed this superstitious fear by reminding his soldiers that celery chaplets also crowned the victors at the Isthmian games. For indeed, Plutarch continues, at that time the Corinthians would crown the Isthmian victors with celery garlands, considering celery to be traditionally sacred in their country (*Tim.* 26.3: ἱερὸν καὶ πάτριον); and it was only recently that celery had been replaced by the pine into this use. Somewhat surprisingly, this is exactly what an anonymous interlocutor at *Table Talk* 5.3 also maintains, whereas in the same *Talk* Plutarch himself argues in favour of those who affirm that the pine was the traditional victorious chaplet at the Isthmia. How are we to explain this discrepancy? I would assume that, in relating the mules episode in *Timoleon*, Plutarch simply reproduced his source, the historian Timaeus;³⁸ but when he came to put down his reminiscences from *Table Talk* 5.3, which investigated a specific topic, namely, the nature of the victorious crowns at the Isthmian games, he must have made some particular research, and so it is again

36 Compare *Alex.* 4.4–6 (ὅτι δὲ τοῦ χρωτὸς ἥδιστον ἀπέπνει καὶ τὸ στόμα κατεῖχεν εὐωδία καὶ τὴν σάρκα πᾶσαν, ὥστε πληροῦσθαι τοὺς χιτωνίσκους... αἰτία δ' ἴσως ἢ τοῦ σώματος κρᾶσις, πολὺθερμος οὖσα καὶ πυρῶδης· ἢ γὰρ εὐωδία γίνεται πέψει τῶν ὑγρῶν ὑπὸ θερμότητος, ὡς οἶται Θεόφραστος. ὁθεν οἱ ξηροὶ καὶ διάπυροι τόποι τῆς οἰκουμένης τὰ πλεῖστα καὶ κάλλιστα τῶν ἀρωμάτων φέρουσιν) with *Quaest. conv.* 623E (λέγεται δὲ καὶ τοῦ χρωτὸς ἥδιστον ἀποπνεῖν ὥστε καταπιμπλάναι τοὺς χιτωνίσκους εὐωδίας ἀρωματιζούσης, ὃ δοκεῖ καὶ αὐτὸ θερμότητος εἶναι· διὸ καὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης οἱ ξηρότατοι καὶ θερμότατοι τόποι τὴν τε κασίαν καὶ τὸν λιβανωτὸν ἐκφέρουσιν· πέπει γὰρ τι τῶν ὑγρῶν ὃ Θεόφραστος φησιν ἐπιγίνεσθαι τὴν εὐωδίαν). Cf. also the passages in nn. 23, 25–27 above.

37 Cf. *Ages.* 8.1 and *Lys.* 23.11, and note the almost identical wording of these passages.

38 For Timaeus as the principal source of P.'s *Timoleon* see conveniently Flacelière, 6–7. Cf. also our *Table Talk* (676D: ἱστορεῖ δὲ καὶ Τίμαιος ὁ συγγραφεύς...).

reasonable for one to suppose that it is *Table Talk* 5.3 that reflects his true opinion on this matter, and that, in all likelihood, the publication of this *Talk* postdates at least the composition (if not also the publication) of *Timoleon*.³⁹

A saying of Alexander occurring in three different works of Plutarch (but somewhat surprisingly missing from both the *Apophthegmata* and *De Alexandri fortuna aut virtute*) receives three varying interpretations. In *De adulatore et amico* Alexander is reported to have said that in the main two things made him disbelieve his flatterers who proclaimed him a god: sleeping and having sex; for it was in these matters, according to the first interpretation, that he mostly revealed the more ignoble and more passive and passionate side of himself.⁴⁰ In the *Life* it is sleep and sex again that, more than anything else, made Alexander realize that he was mortal; for both fatigue and pleasure, Plutarch elaborates on his behalf, arise from one and the same physical weakness.⁴¹ Finally, at *Table Talk* 8.1 a Platonist interlocutor recalls Alexander's dictum, adding by way of explanation that sleep is a kind of yielding due to weakness, whereas all generation (which is naturally linked with sex) is a kind of destruction and transformation of something of one's own into something different; thus, one becomes aware of his mortality.⁴² These three instances constitute very good examples of how Plutarch adjusts his material, of how he employs the same quotation in our case to make it suit the run and the context of the argument at hand (cf. also n. 6 above). In *De adulatore* the dictum is presented as an example of resistance to flattery; in the *Life* it is employed in a context aiming to manifest and exalt Alexander's self-control (*sophrosyne*: cf. *Alex.* 21.7–22.5); finally, in the *Quaestiones convivales* the same dictum is used in a philosophical/metaphysical context, where man as generator is shown to be something different from god as generator: for, unlike man, who has his semen destroyed or transformed into something else, when a god begets, nothing of his suffers destruction or transformation into something else.⁴³

39 For the time distance between composition and publication see Nikolaidis 2005, 284.

40 Cf. 65F: Ἀλέξανδρος... ἀπιστεῖν ἔφη τοῖς θεοῖν αὐτὸν ἀναγορεύουσιν ἐν τῷ καθεύδειν μάλιστα καὶ ἀφροδισιάζειν, ὡς ἀγεννέστερος περὶ ταῦτα καὶ παθητικώτερος αὐτοῦ γινόμενος. In saying so, Alexander clearly has the god of the philosophers in mind and not the Homeric one, as, e.g., in *Alex.* 28.3. For Alexander's claims to divinity see *Alex.* 27.9–28.

41 Cf. *Alex.* 22.6: ἔλεγε δὲ μάλιστα συνιέναι θνητὸς ὢν ἐκ τοῦ καθεύδειν καὶ συνουσιάζειν, ὡς ἀπὸ μιᾶς ἐγγινόμενον ἀσθενείας τῇ φύσει καὶ τὸ πονοῦν καὶ τὸ ἠδόμενον.

42 Cf. 717F: ...εἰπὼν (sc. Alexander) μάλιστα θνητὸν καὶ φθαρτὸν ἐπιγινώσκειν ἑαυτὸν ἐν τῷ συγγίνεσθαι γυναικὶ καὶ καθεύδειν, ὡς τὸν μὲν ὕπνον ἐνδόσει γινόμενον ὑπ' ἀσθενείας, γένεσιν δὲ πᾶσαν οἰκείου τινὸς εἰς ἕτερον ἕκστασιν καὶ φθορὰν οὔσαν.

43 The exponent of the philosophical problem above is the Lacedaemonian Platonist Tyndares, but P. had also occupied himself with this problem. Cf. *Numa* 4 and the second *Platonic question* (1000E–1001C). Cf. also Teodorsson's relevant observations (vol. III, 156–160).

I will close my presentation with one more example of how observations of this kind might suggest solutions to the problem of the chronological sequence of (some of) Plutarch's works. True, Jones' chronology has been widely accepted, although it includes only the works that are datable on external (and therefore objective) criteria. "The evidence of style or subject-matter has not been admitted" (p. 70/115). Doubtless, this a solid approach, but a critic who wants to trace Plutarch's method of work, explore the development of his thought, and correlate the products of his literary output, gets little help, I think, from knowing that a certain essay was written between 68 and 116 or even between 96 and 116. To say nothing of the works missing altogether from Jones' list, although most of us feel fairly sure about the period of Plutarch's activity to which they must belong. According to Jones' table, *De garrulitate*, for instance, appears to be one of the earliest essays; for at one point Plutarch gives the example of the Roman conspirator, whose loquacity (thoughtlessness and inability to keep his mouth shut, as a matter of fact) in the very eve of Nero's planned assassination betrayed the conspiracy, and thus thwarted both Nero's fall and Rome's freedom (505C–D). This piece of evidence indeed demonstrates that *De garrulitate* was written after 68, the year of Nero's death, but not at all necessarily close to this date, as Jones seems to imply by putting this work in the very beginning of his list (p. 70/115). Once Plutarch had been told or read about that incident, he could refer to it any time in the future, and there is some indication suggesting that this reference was perhaps made much later; for in the same essay Plutarch also mentions a trickery of Eumenes, thanks to which the Thracian commander managed to prevent his soldiers from deserting him and going over to his Macedonian adversary (506D–E). However, it is unlikely that Plutarch could have known this detail before occupying himself with the *Life of Eumenes*, and since this *Life* is one of the latest,⁴⁴ the composition of *De garrulitate* may accordingly be transferred to a later period of Plutarch's literary activity. A reference to Sulla's capture of Athens a bit earlier (505B; cf. n. 14) seems to invigorate this possibility.⁴⁵ The answer, then, to the question of the title of my paper is this: When the treatment of a character or the account of an event in the *Moralia* is different from the respective treatment or account in the *Lives*, this difference sometimes betrays Plutarch's genuine and settled beliefs on the matter concerned, and sometimes is due to adaptations of his material, so as to serve the context or the objectives of the essay at hand.

44 On the lateness of the *Sert-Eum.* pair almost all critics agree (see Nikolaidis 2005, 316). As for the *De garrulitate*, Dumortier (p.224) and Pettine (p. 28–29) place it in the Trajan period.

45 For *Sulla* is another late *Life*; cf. Nikolaidis 2005, 307–309, 318.

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3. *Moralia in Vitis*

Synopsis

The articles of this chapter, discussing moral notions not only theoretically as essay topics, but also as aspects or expressions of the conduct of concrete historical figures, perhaps provide the strongest documentation of the unity of Plutarch's works. It will be made clear that the *Lives*, apart from their historical and literary importance, do illustrate moral concepts, exactly as the ethical ideas explored in the *Moralia* are often, if not mostly, exemplified by the actions and conduct of characters in the *Lives*.

Frederick Brenk lays particular emphasis on the use of “cases from real life”, namely, the *exempla* for ethical treatises, and in this connection he also appeals to Seneca, an excellent example of the use of excellent *exempla*, as the writings (the tragedies included) of the Roman Stoic testify. It appears that Plutarch and his contemporaries were very interested in seeing moral qualities operating in real life; by contrast, a modern reader might be puzzled at the emphasis on morality in the *Lives*, though this emphasis pervaded the whole Greek educational system and outlook. In any case, it is the emphasis on moral values in the *Lives* which highlights so much “the *Moralia* in the *Lives*, the *Lives* in the *Moralia*”.

Jolanda Capriglione discusses Plutarch's attitude towards *pathê* and finds that this attitude varies between *Moralia* and *Vitae*. She notes that Plutarch is a real man of the world and knows that passions cannot be effaced or eradicated, although they are not to be indulged either. The solution to the problem is *paideia*, with the aid of which we can handle our *pathê*. But while all this is very clear in the *Moralia*, the *Vitae* sound more tolerant, as if Plutarch recognized that the great men who shaped the history of the world were entitled to a few excesses. A case in point here is that of Alcibiades, berated by virtually all biographers, starting from Isocrates, but praised, or actually extolled by Plutarch, strangely enough just because of his excesses.

In his own article **Heinz Gerd Ingenkamp** correlates the charge of rashness in *Pelopidas/Marcellus* with Plutarchean techniques employed in the *Moralia*. Both Pelopidas and Marcellus died because of acting bravely but heedlessly. The verdicts on their deaths in historians are almost unanimously critical. Plutarch begins his biographies of the two heroes with a strong general reproach of commanders who unnecessarily put their lives at risk. His disapproval of their actions remains constant throughout the *Lives*, but if we

try to find out what he really thought about them, we will find him inconsistent and his judgement contradictory. It may seem that he was at his wits' end, especially in the case of Pelopidas, whom he had to censure gravely but whom he loved and admired. However, an interpretation of his judgements as implicitly exhortative, as they normally are in what he calls a *krisis* in his treatises on popular ethics, will allow the reader to accept them as sensible and helpful.

Frances Titchener examines Nicias' religiosity in the light of his treatise *Peri deisidaimonias*. "Ignorance of the gods", we read there, was one extreme, resulting in atheism and superstition; hyper-devotion was at the other extreme. Plutarch, as a Delphic priest, would have preferred "nothing in excess" as a general rule, but where does he locate Nicias in this spectrum? This paper will argue that an examination of Plutarch's attitudes about religion, superstition, and Nicias yields that, for Plutarch, Nicias is well-anchored in the superstitious part of the spectrum, with few claims on religious devotion.

Luc Van Der Stockt inquires into the phenomenon of anger in *De cohibenda ira* and the *Lives*. In the treatise Plutarch portrays a Roman gentleman who is proud to have overcome his natural inclination to anger. The dialogue skilfully explores the workings of anger as well as its therapy. But since anger is, according to Plutarch, one of the most dangerous passions, it is worth examining this passion also in the *Lives*. Starting with C. Gracchus, the overview of relevant passages intends to give a sketch of the motives and effects of anger in the *Lives*, and of the consistency of Plutarch's opinions in this matter.

Similarly, **Lieve Van Hoof** examines how πολυπραγμοσύνη operates in *De curiositate* and the *Lives*. She starts with the remark that, although both the *Lives* and (many of the) *Moralia* have something to do with ethics, it is striking that some of the vices to which Plutarch dedicates a whole treatise in the *Moralia* receive little or no attention in the *Lives*. Then, focusing on *polypragmosyné*, she first analyses what exactly Plutarch had in mind by employing this word in *De curiositate* and the *Lives*, and, secondly, she explores some of the implications of the fact that *On Curiosity* and the *Lives* belong to different genres, in an attempt to explain why none of the protagonists of the *Lives* is represented as subject to *polypragmosyné*, as this notion is understood in *On Curiosity*. The paper comes to the conclusion that genres play an important role as to what can and what cannot be said in a work.

Setting a Good *Exemplum*. Case Studies in the *Moralia*, the *Lives* as Case Studies

Frederick E. Brenk

Now all orators produce belief by employing as proofs either examples or syllogisms and nothing else. There are two kinds of examples: namely, one which consists in relating historical events, and another in inventing them oneself. (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.2.5; 2.20.2 (1356b5; 1393a28).

... long is the way through precepts, but that through examples is short and effective. (Seneca, *Letter to Lucilius* 6.5).¹

In all this teaching to the crowds Jesus spoke in parables; indeed he never spoke to them except in parables. (*Gospel of Matthew* 13.34).²

If one came as a complete outsider to Plutarch's *Lives*, probably two things would be most striking. First, that he should write parallel lives at all, though in fact, the editions of the *Lives* are often so published that most readers live in ignorant bliss. Along with the parallelism of the *Lives*, the Plutarchan non-*conoscente* would probably be mystified by the comparisons (*synkriseis*) at the end of most *Lives*. Next, our stranger might be puzzled at the professed moral approach to biography.³ The present study hopes to resolve our hypothetical stranger's problem through seeing the *Lives* as emerging from the expectations and practices of the time, in particular, the use of the "historical example." But it is also important to know that the use of these *exempla* was much more complex than the citations above would indicate. We also need to understand Plutarch's contribution and how it corresponds with his somewhat problematic approach to individuals and history.⁴

As the quotation from Aristotle indicates, from the earliest times, rhetorical theory considered it important for orators to cite a parallel case, the *paradeigma*, or "example," in particular, the historical "example."⁵ Scholars prefer the more technical term used by Cicero, "*exemplum*," but not all of these were necessarily historical. There were, for example, *exempla* from myth and fable. Aristotle, like most theorists who turned up their noses at fables, considered

1 See Von Albrecht, 153.

2 For the parables in the Gospels, see Snodgrass.

3 On the importance of exemplarity for Plutarch, see, e.g., Pérez Jiménez, esp. 105–106. For a bibliography of *exemplum* in general, see Bremond *et alii*, 15–26, esp. 20–24, and Berlioz.

4 The matter is treated in great depth by Duff, esp. 9, 65, 102, 161–162, 203–204, 230–231, 240, 266–267, 281–283. See also my review, Brenk, 2002.

5 See Clark, 124, and Lausberg, nos. 410–426, pp. 196–202.

them suitable for popular assemblies and easy to invent, while it was difficult to find historical parallels. These, according to Aristotle, are more valuable, since in most respects the future will be like the past (*Rhetoric* 2.20.8/1394A). Clark remarks that, in fact, by the Imperial period, one could find historical *exempla* rather easily. Valerius Maximus and others had even put together collections for their readers. Valerius claims explicitly to be saving his readers the bother of consulting historical sources to find them. In Valerius, the rhetorical *exempla* were interspersed with moral maxims, for the most part taken from Roman history.⁶ These were arranged like a “commonplace book” under headings to facilitate reference, such as religion and omens,” “clemency,” “gratitude,” “duty,” and “affliction.”⁷

Some wonderful *exempla* can be found very early, in Homer. One of the most famous appears in the speech of Phoinix, the mentor of Achilles. He tries to persuade the hero to return to battle and thus save the Achaians, besieged by the ships. Phoinix relates the story of Meleagros, who in a fit of anger refused to fight, but eventually was forced to change his mind, but not before causing great harm to himself and his friends (*Iliad* 9.430–605).⁸ Needless to say, Phoinix does not convince Achilles and thus destroy the plot of the *Iliad*. Achilles, by not fighting, loses his beloved companion, Patroklos and is compelled to re-enter the battle exactly like Meleagros. Though Phoinix’ *exemplum* fails as rhetorical persuasion, as a literary device it magnificently foreshadows the future course of the *Iliad*.

In “The Failure of Exemplarity,” Goldhill has analyzed two other *exempla* in the Homeric poems. In these, naturally, he attempts to demonstrate the non-exemplarity of the *exemplum*. The problematic character of exemplarity from the very beginning of Greek literature, then, casts its shadow over Plutarch. If we can consider his *Lives* to be, in a sense, historical *exempla* writ large, especially if meant as moral exemplarity, we can understand why they might be often problematic and failures in exemplarity. Goldhill acknowledges his debt to Deconstructionism for stimulating his approach. He notes that post-Structuralist critics in general have focused on the “dissemination” or “the openness” of meaning, an openness, in his view, produced by “reading a network of signifiers that make up the (con)text(s).” Where does the “uncontrollable echoing” of a text, as one critic has put it, come to a conclusion?⁹ Goldhill notes, moreover, the difficulty of framing, so crucial to

6 On the moral purpose, see Wardle, 6–15, who argues (14) that the serious moral purpose should be combined with rhetorical usefulness for the elite, as a secondary aim – against Skidmore, 53–82.

7 Clark, 124.

8 Willcock, in an article with great influence, was mainly interested in the foreshadowing effects. See also Brenk, 1986 and Goldhill.

9 Goldhill, 59, 65–66.

exemplification. Derrida had referred to the problematic interplay between frame and content, generalization and example. Employing the term, the “logic of the *paregon*,” he argued that the structure of the framing effects is such that no totalization of the border is ever possible (p. 99). Goldhill likes, too, the idea that the frame becomes not the borderline between the inside and the outside, but precisely what subverts the applicability of the inside/outside polarity to the act of interpretation.¹⁰ As an example of the failure of exemplarity, he turns to *Odyssey* 24.197–202. Here, Agamemnon greets the suitors dispatched by Odysseus into the underworld. The king unfavorably compares his own evil wife, Klytemnestre, to Penelope, the good and faithful wife of Odysseus. But Amphimedon, one of the suitors slaughtered by Odysseus, has just highlighted the murderous duplicity of Penelope involved in the slaughter of the suitors, and it is this very judgment which prompts Agamemnon’s speech. Agamemnon had, in fact, framed his speech with the injunction to “beware of all women” (Goldhill, 62). In another passage, *Odyssey* 23.218–224, Penelope asks forgiveness from Odysseus for not recognizing him immediately, out of fear she might be deceived (ibid. 63). In support, she claims Helen would never have eloped with Paris had she known the Achaians would return her to Sparta. Rather, in Penelope’s analysis, θεός (God, a god, or the god?), made Helen do “the outrageous deed.” Before, she did not “cherish a bitter madness.” Goldhill admits that this logic, which led Hellenistic commentators to consider the verses spurious, is hard to follow. In fact, Penelope’s words contradict the opening, programmatic statement of the gods in *Odyssey* 1.32–3, that men not gods are responsible for human transgressions. In their speech the gods also use an example, that of Aigisthos, the paramour of Klytemnestre, who was justly slain in punishment by Orestes, Agamemnon’s son. In the course of the *Odyssey*, even Telemachos seems to share the attitude of his mother, Penelope, toward Helen, not that of the gods. Rather than seeing Helen as somewhere between the good Penelope and the evil Klytemnestre, he treats her with respect and willingly accepts a gift from her. In Goldhill’s words, as Penelope sympathetically explores the difference between herself and Helen, the polarized discourse of transgression and fulfillment in female roles slips. Exemplarity (Penelope) becomes the exceptional, framed by the suspicion of the transgressive, while the transgressive (Helen) becomes the site of a paedagogical and sympathetic encounter (ibid. 65–66). Goldhill notes Derrida’s criticism of the bi-polarity of structuralists and its influence upon himself. He claims, however, that he would have come alone to the same conclusions, since they result not from abstracting some superficial principle from Derrida (a “sturdy device”), but from a wide range of intellectual sources and stimuli, including feminist theory

10 Goldhill, 60, citing Johnson, 128.

(ibid. 66). He then goes on to analyze the problematization of similar *exempla* in Greek tragedy, especially in the choruses (ibid. 62–63).

Following another line of thought, Trapp has suggested that the *exempla* used by political orators gave dignity to their lives and boosted their egos, since such *exempla* essentially equated them with such figures as Solon, Lykourgos, and other giants of Greek history. The *epigonoi* follow in the footsteps of the great. If the experience of these ancient heroes can still be learned from, there is no substantial break with a glorious past. He is, however, amazed at the sheer breadth of Plutarch's references, ranging from archaic history to the emperors Nero and Domitian (pp. 191–192). He also sees real moral function in these *exempla*, even if Plutarch only hoped for some modest changes in the ethical behavior of future politicians among his readers. By gazing upon the splendid historical precedents of past statesmen, the present ones might work toward improvement in their own lives.¹¹ Rutherford comes up with something similar. Thoukydides, who regarded the experience of past events as paradigmatic, evidently expected politicians to learn from his history. Past literature served as a precedent. Even in the *Iliad*, Nestor had drawn on heroic precedents from saga, and the stories of Lykourgos (*Iliad* 6.129–141), Bellerophon (6.152–205), Niobe (24.602–617), and Meleagros (9.526–604) are not alone. Herodotos had spoken of the rise and fall of city states, presumably to allow future generations to avoid a recurrence, even it was not his main objective. Thoukydides took the long range view: human nature does not change; through the paradigmatic, history becomes both rationally comprehensible and predictable.¹²

In the Imperial period the *exempla* were especially associated with *enkomion* and historical declamation, both of which were much emphasized.¹³ Future historians, horrible as it may sound to modern ears, were to begin by inventing history. From the textbooks we can see that Greek students were expected to have read a considerable amount of history, much like the slices modern students learn. Nonetheless, in spite of the importance given to the *exempla* in rhetorical theory, the actual textbooks found in Egypt seem to neglect the historical *exemplum* as such.¹⁴ As far as orators themselves, go, Thomas paints a rather pessimistic picture. She does not believe they deliberately distanced themselves from the historians, descending to a level of historical ignorance purely for the gratification of their audience. Rather, she thinks they simply did not consult them. She can discover only two orators actually using the historians, Lysias (11.48–61), and Demosthenes (*Private Orations*. *Theomnestos*

11 Trapp, 199. For Plutarch, see De Blois, 57.

12 Rutherford, 62–63, 66–68.

13 On *enkomion*, see now Pernot, whose work is being overlooked in English scholarship.

14 Morgan, 220–221.

and Apollodoros against Neaira 59.94–103), who used an historian for his discussion of the Battle of Plataia. Even so, Demosthenes did not choose something from Thoukydides' narrative but from a speech. She also claims that orators' objections to an historical example are on completely unhistorical grounds, betraying a striking lack of historical sense¹⁵ But the historians, too, were not innocent. Wiseman notes that Polybios, 3.33.17, is possibly the only case of an historian condemning others for inventing details for realism. They were expected to "invent," or to use "creative reconstruction," as Pelling has called it.¹⁶

Small has shown how reducing works to snippets was commonplace in ancient education, filling up notebooks (*uolumina*) with selected passages. Often a single source was used for the main narrative, while excerpts and memory would fill it in. The same purpose served undoubtedly for collecting *exempla*, if not simply taken from a handbook (pp. 160, 178–201). Gibson, however, sees a deeper reason in the supposed importance of learning history at school in order to be efficient in rhetoric. The sayings (*chreiai*) and the historical *exempla* served, in his view, as a means of reviewing with the students the historical personages and events most important in education. But the exercises also encouraged students to attach moral significance to the actions of historical persons.¹⁷ Pelling (1995) has also noted the complexity of Plutarch's own moral observations in the *Lives*. Sometimes they are generalizations about human experience, sometimes about a particular, acceptable ethical stance, sometimes just a personal opinion, even a paradoxical one. Plutarch can be expository and preceptive, ethically reflective and exploratory, or protreptic and descriptive – the last while pointing out truths about human behavior (pp. 205–207). Pelling also believes the normal absence in Plutarch of clear allusions to contemporary events and persons gives an element of timelessness to the *Lives*. Finally, he is surprised that so often Plutarch simply seems to be telling people what they already know. But this is deceptive, in Pelling's view, for, like Greek tragedy, Plutarch actually opens up new perspectives on what is our experience of life (ibid. 210–211, 218, 219).

Almost all authors stress the importance of the historical example to the Roman world. As a Graeco-Roman, Plutarch lived very much in this world, and, as is obvious, many of his *Lives* are about Romans and rely on Roman sources. Mayer has noted how engrained the *exemplum* was within the Roman

15 Thomas, 201–202, notes 19 and 20. She cites Demosthenes, *Against Aischines* 19.251 (in reply to Aischines 1.25), as the only historical attack on an historical example, that she can find.

16 Wiseman, 141–142. For "creative reconstruction," he cites Pelling 1990, 38.

17 Gibson, 110–111. For *chreiai* ("brief sayings or actions making a point") see Kennedy, 15–22; and Hock and O'Neil, 87, for the elaboration of the *chreiai* through *exempla*.

spirit. Romans learned from imitation, a practice institutionalized in the army and government. The appeal to examples, in his view, was the cornerstone of Roman moral training (pp. 143–144). Augustus even dispatched *exempla* to his subordinates, and the best known collections of *exempla* are Roman, those of Hyginus, Varro, Nepos, Pomponius Rufus, and above all, Valerius Maximus.¹⁸ The *exempla* were expected to be well-known and easily recognizable, and thus to carry weight, but could be used to illustrate the point at hand, differing from one speech to another.¹⁹ Recently Chaplin has dedicated a whole book to the *exempla* in Livy, one of Plutarch's main sources. Livy, working in a tradition of moralizing history, openly admonishes his audience to look for *exempla* and model their lives accordingly. Besides the *exempla* works of Nepos, Varro, and Hyginus, there were theoretical discussions in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Cicero, and in Quintilian (6).²⁰ Plutarch has been charged recently of using the *exempla* in his *Moralia* more for embellishment, as anecdotes, than for exemplarity. At the same time, in this criticism, they become more picturesque. Valerius Maximus simply arranges them in lists, after a short introduction. Plutarch "arranges them like a jeweler assembling pearls and precious stones in a necklace, for whom the mounting is as important as the gems," without being too much concerned about the exact historical setting or chronology.²¹

Something of an exception to the moral use of *exempla* may be Tacitus' practice in the *Annals*. Luce believes that he was less interested in the moral significance of his *exempla*, most of which tend to be negative, than in the commemoration of virtuous persons for posterity. Unlike Livy, Tacitus, in his view, did not want to promote "moral uplift." He claims, too, that the idea of *exempla* serving as deterrence is extremely rare in historiography. He can only think of three clear examples, all of them in Diodoros, and at the opening of books (1.1.5; 15.1.1, and most fully 14.1.1–3). In what he regards as Tacitus' commemoration of good behavior, to memorialize moral excellence now and in the future, his tendency is to identify the person by name. Luce feels that for Tacitus, the hideous examples of reprehensible conduct were as much a part of history as the edifying, even if its grimness and multiplicity might be repugnant

18 Mayer, 146, noting Suetonius, *Augustus* 89.2.

19 So Bonner 283, followed by Mayer.

20 Chaplin, 1–5. She cites Alewell, Litchfield, Kornhardt, Price, and Gazich. Kornhardt (21–23) believed that the introduction of Greek-influenced rhetorical training, and handbooks of *exempla*, had caused a fossilization in the use of *exempla*.

21 Freyberger and Jacquemin, esp. 158–159, 160–169, 180–181. Maslakov argues that in the end, despite his words, Valerius, who lived under the principate of Tiberius, seems unable to put his *exempla* into a coherent whole. Maslakov takes his bewilderment as an inability to understand the historical processes taking place (453–456).

to his readers (*Annals* 6.7). One of his most powerful and memorable passages relates the horrible torture and death of Nero's youthful, almost child bride, Octavia, (14.64.2–3).²² Perhaps, though, Luce makes too sharp a dichotomy between moral purpose and commemorative purpose in the use of an *exemplum*.

A somewhat different tack is taken by J.-M. David. He is primarily interested in the differences between the ancient and medieval *exemplum*, but has some valuable insights on the ancient one. He sees the ancient *exemplum* as working off two perspectives, first the moral – frequently demonstrating heroic virtue – and second the “emotional value of the past.” The *exemplum* works, moreover, as a metaphor of the moral principles advocated. Perhaps too sweepingly, he claims that the ancient author leaves not the slightest doubt on the line of conduct to be followed. He also sees the *exemplum* as a source of authority for the speaker before his public, and cites the American sociologist, V. Turner, for the *exemplum* opening up insights into the dynamics of social logic. As an evocation of the past, the *exemplum* belongs to the rhetoric of *pathos*. In contrast, the authority of the past, in his view, is not so important for Christians as for non-Christian Graeco-Romans.²³

Like other scholars, Mayer is most impressed by Seneca, for whom the importance of the *exempla* went far beyond their recommendation in rhetorical training. Rather, they were central to the whole Roman moral experience. Not just ornaments, they represent to succeeding generations the conceptualization of *uirtus* (virtue) in actions. Unlike most Greeks, Seneca appealed often both to his own experience and to the recent past, even to saying in *Letter* 83.13, “We should avoid always harking on the same old *exempla*.” Mayer thinks the Greek philosopher Poseidonios, who lived in Rome, might have influenced the shift in preference among Greek writers from *praecepta* to *exempla*. He (pp. 147–148) follows Kidd in believing that Poseidonios probably saw his history as a descriptive pattern for ethics, a kind of ethics in action. Apart from the words of Seneca, according to Mayer, we apparently cannot find a philosophical discussion about the value of *paradeigmata* in moral discourse. Seneca is responsible for giving them an enhanced role and drawing heavily on his own age. He liked lists of everything, and in this case, preferred to list *exempla* rather than cite them in isolation. In general, ancient authors preferred to arrange them in two's, three's, or even more. Finally, according to Mayer, Seneca believed that if we can overlook their flaws, the *exemplum* of the great can create an intellectual “model of virtue” (*imago uirtutis*), which we can follow (pp. 151–155, 158, 161–162).

²² Luce, esp. 2912–2913.

²³ David 1980a; idem 1980b, esp. 86 on Cicero's use of it for *pathos* (*probare et mouere*). See also Bremond *et alii*, 15–23, esp. 20.

The citation from the *Letter to Lucilius* 6.5, at the beginning of this study, actually refers not to the literary *exempla*, the historical or other *exempla* in the technical sense, but to the inspiration of persons' own lives on others – how Chrysippos was inspired by the edifying life style of Zenon to become a Stoic philosopher. In *Letter* 108, however, while speaking of the rhetorical principle of *evidentia* (ἐνόργεια), to clarify philosophical principles through striking verses or sayings, Seneca mentions the death of Cato the Younger at Utica, the *Catonis uulnus*, as an *exemplum* of the highest order.²⁴ Seneca also believed that the less obvious *exemplum* should be in the middle of a list, while the last place should be reserved for an especially striking one.²⁵

For comparison, we can examine the use of *exempla* in Seneca's *On Anger* (*De Ira*) and those in Plutarch's *Dialogue on Love* (*Erotikos, Amatorius*). The comparison is difficult since *On Anger* is over twice as long as the *Dialogue on Love*. Mayer notes that the *exempla* are generally absent from Seneca's *Letters*, with the exception of two, *Letter* 24 and 71. He believes that Seneca possibly thought *exempla* were too rhetorical to include in a genre as direct and personal as a letter. In contrast, the essays, and in particular the *consolatio*, tended to be amply sprinkled with *exempla*. He notes, too, that the *Consolation to Marcia* was innovative in using contemporary ones.²⁶ However, in spite of Mayer's observations, *On Anger*, comes as a surprise in having many less *exempla* than we might expect. There is a methodological problem, since the scholarly discussions about *exempla* generally do not distinguish the briefest ones from developed, narrated *exempla*, or any stage in-between.

In general Seneca's *exempla* are widely dispersed throughout the work and are relatively consistent. However, they lack a literary progression or crescendo, such as we find in the *Erotikos*. Most in Seneca's work are, in fact, not much more than allusions. He also alternates between examples of good and evil conduct. At any rate, the first *exemplum* is an allusion to Scipio Africanus' lack of anger at leaving behind Hannibal and Carthage (1.11.6–7). At 1.18.3–6, we find one of the most interesting *exempla* in Seneca, that of Gnaeus Piso, known personally to Seneca and described as “free of most vice” (*a multis uitiiis integer*) but *prauus* (perhaps, “essentially perverse”), who preferred inflexibility (*rigor*) to steadfastness (*constantia*). In the account, a soldier had returned from leave without his companion. Piso jumped to the conclusion that he had killed the comrade, and in a fit of anger, ordered the execution of the soldier, denying the request to initiate a search. As the soldier was being led outside the rampart to be killed, the comrade returned in the nick of time to

24 Von Albrecht, 92.

25 Von Albrecht, 93–94.

26 Mayer, 158–159. He contrasts this with the *Consolation to Apollonios*, attributed to Plutarch, where the *exempla* are not contemporary (159).

the joy of the troops. The centurion conducting the execution led the comrade back to Piso, “for fortune had freed the soldier,” and the two embraced each other. But Piso, in a fury, mounted the tribunal and ordered the execution of all three, soldier, comrade, and centurion.

One should note the relative obscurity of the leading figure and the absolute anonymity of the others. The *exemplum* comes from contemporary history and the subject is personally known to Seneca. Superficially the *exemplum* does not deconstruct the text (resulting in the failure of exemplarity), if the proposition is the maliciousness of anger. On the problematic side, though, its extremeness, raise questions like: Can you really teach virtue, when human beings act so perversely and irrationally?; or: Piso possibly was a successful general. Perhaps morality must be dispensed with in war. This *exemplum* is striking for underscoring the fundamental Stoic proposition about passions: a passion, since it belongs to the rational order as a “judgment” is rational, but as being an incorrect judgment is perversely “irrational,” the opposite of virtue.²⁷

It was customary to bunch *exempla* together, as Seneca does. At 1.20.8, he relates very briefly how Caligula – a *bête noire* in the *exempla* of *On Anger* – was once very angered at thunder interrupting some pantomime actors he was watching. Quoting Aias’ (Ajax’) challenge to Odysseus in *Iliad* 23.724, he went so far as to challenge Jupiter to a fight. In the next book, 2.2.3–7, there is a scattering of mostly negative allusions to famous Republicans such as Cicero, Antony, Clodius, Marius, Theodotos and Achilles (Egyptians of Cleopatra’s Alexandria), but these are more allusions than *exempla*. Similar is Hannibal’s delight at seeing a trench flowing with blood (2.2.4). At 2.22.1–2, Seneca relates how one of the failed tyrannicides against Hippias at Athens, under torture, falsely implicated Hippias’ closest friends. These were, accordingly, executed by the tyrant, thus illustrating the danger of listening too quickly to accusers. There follow positive allusions to Alexander the Great, and to Caesar, who burned letters incriminating his enemies. The passage at 2.24.2–5 contains quite an elaborate (and problematic) *exemplum* involving Pastor a distinguished member of the equestrian order. This figure is approved for being willing to suffer humiliation rather than endure worse. Caligula was about to execute his son for a trivial reason (which he did), but Pastor pretended to acquiesce rather than fall prey to anger. These supposedly good *exempla* are followed by an allusion to Priam before Achilles, from the *Iliad*. In the final book of *On Anger*, Seneca relates a number of disturbing and somewhat related *exempla* of horror. They remind us of Seneca’s own tragedies and Tacitus’ pages on the repression of conspiracies. Among these is that of Harpagos, who was forced by the Persian king unknowingly to eat his own

27 On late Republic exemplarity, see David 1998 and 1980b.

children, but when he learned the truth, concealed his anger (*On Anger* 3.15.1–2). Then at 3.16.3–23.8, Seneca serves up a whole battery of atrocities, cruelty, horrible mutilation, and murder, involving Darius, Xerxes, and Alexander the Great. These are followed by stories of Marius, Sulla, Caligula (at great length with a detailed account of his hideous outrages and tortures), Cambyses, Cyrus, and Caligula again. There follow examples of clemency: Antigonos, Philip, and Augustus. Seneca omits *exempla* until 3.39.1, that of Cato allowing Lentulus to spit in his face (a demonstration of always remaining calm and patient). After an interval, we find another problematic *exemplum* (3.45.2–5). While Augustus was dining out, a slave dropped a crystal glass. But when the enraged host ordered him to be thrown to the eels to be eaten alive, the poor creature appealed to Augustus, asking not to be punished in this hideous and unnatural fashion. The emperor, disgusted at the extraordinary and cruel punishment, ordered that the slave not be punished and that all the other crystal glasses be broken.

The image that emerges from these *exempla* often is one of irrationality, violence, and excess, a kind of “Alice in Wonderland” world, something like many incidents in Petronius’ *Satyrical*. In general, the protagonists are famous persons of past or contemporary history, and belong to the Greek, Persian, or Roman world. These characteristics tend to integrate the episodes, which are distributed throughout the work, but otherwise there is not much structural artistry in their composition and arrangement. The violence, excess, passion, and killing do find resonance, however, in the *exempla* of the *Erotikos*.

The *Erotikos*, or *Dialogue on Love*, was a late work of Plutarch’s, presumably composed after many years of writing *Lives*. At first he offers the briefest of *exempla*, not much more than allusions in support of the thesis that men should not avoid marrying high-spirited women. The *exempla* also support the general proposition that women are just as worthy of love, or more worthy, than boys, since they are capable of acting like men or can exemplify extraordinary virtue. The basic framework of the dialogue is the following. Ismenodora, a young widow, is in love with a very good-looking boy named Bacchon, half her age, but he has left the decision about marrying her to his relatives and friends. The newly-wed Plutarch as a *persona* (and hopefully as author), and one of those brought in to decide the case, argues, in rather incredible logic, against her being rejected, simply because she is in love, “and wealthy, and lives in grandeur” – as the Loeb translation puts it (βαρεῖα γὰρ καὶ πλουσία) – and because she is also beautiful, young, and of distinguished birth (753C). Otherwise, one should only marry slave girls destined to be *hetairai* rather than women of spirit. There follow references to Abrotonon of Thrace, Bacchis of Miletos, Aristonika, Oianthe, and Agathokleia. There follows, briefly, the story of Semiramis, Belestiche, and indirectly reference to Phryne, the mistress

of Praxiteles, who was honored at Delphoi (754D–F).²⁸ Semiramis, a household slave and concubine of Ninus, became his queen, had him executed, and then ruled gloriously, or perhaps, “in grandiose style” (ἐπιφρονῶς) for many years.²⁹ At Alexandria, Ptolemaios Philadelphos II constructed and dedicated temples to his mistress, Belestiche, with the title Belestiche-Aphrodite. And Phryne, too, was “honored among the gods.”

Plutarch was not unaware of the problematic nature of these *exempla*, admitting that the men involved were exploited by such women. This, however, he attributes to their own lack of character, not to the perverseness of the women (753E).³⁰ Other men who lived with high-spirited women were not destroyed. He adds that if one marries because of the woman’s character and upbringing, one could hardly disapprove. Probably he is a bit ironic. For example, we are asked to compare the “grandeur” of Ismenodora in Boiotia, with that of Semiramis, queen of the Assyrians. Besides, we must momentarily forget that Semiramis not only dominated her husband, but murdered him. Perhaps we should rejoice here, for Bacchon’s sake, for the “failure of exemplarity.” Significantly, Semiramis does come from the Greek world, though belonging to the Greek world of *exempla*, like Dareios, Xerxes, and other rulers of the great Near Eastern empires. Plutarch’s other choices of heroic women are from Classical and Hellenistic history and culture. None are contemporaries.

Almost as the conclusion of the work, Plutarch finishes with real, developed *exempla*, case histories of some length. These are meant to prove the virtue (*arete*) of women, in particularly their fidelity, but they also represent high-spirited and ingenious women capable of deeds worthy of men. Both heroines chosen are Keltic, one from the Hellenistic period, but unknown elsewhere, Kamma of Galatia (757B–768C), and the other, Empona of Gaul, part of contemporary history and briefly mentioned in Tacitus (770C–771C).³¹ The composition of these *exempla* follows a well thought-out design.

28 On this, see Brenk 2000, 45, 56–59.

29 On Semiramis, see now Dalley, 183–188. She believes viewers may have misunderstood a male figure in Assyrian reliefs for Semiramis. Like others, Diodoros Sikelos, a major source for Semiramis, confused Babylon with Nineveh where such sculptures occur. However, in a recent lecture, M. Salvini, the archaeologist of Urartu, has argued that some of the details of the Semiramis legend belong to the ancient city of Urartu, rather than to Nineveh or Babylon.

30 Literally, “becoming the < > prey (λεία) of these women.” The lacuna consists of 6 letters (754A). Bolkestein, 303, proposed φάτων (evil), followed by other scholars. In spite of Bolkestein’s arguments (balance, and the use of this word with lovers elsewhere in this work and in Stobaios), the missing word might just as well have gone with λεία, e.g. ἄσθενῆ, and might not have expressed a moral judgment on the women.

31 For the Gauls and Galatians, see Brenk 2005. For Plutarch’s attitude toward barbarians in general, see now Roskam, esp. 259–264.

Chronologically we find: allusions to early Hellenistic *hetairai*, a later Hellenistic Galatian heroine, and a contemporary Gallo-Roman heroine as the longest and climactic account. If we follow Luce, then, the last also branches out to become a kind of commemorative *exemplum*.

Both of the *exempla*, and the women within them, are problematic to say the least. Kamma, especially, the first, is reckless, murderous, and suicidal, exulting in revenge. Perhaps not the best example of a wife for Bacchon. Kamma was married to Sinorix, who had been murdered by Sinatos, “the most powerful of the Galatians.”³² To avenge her husband, she pretends to accept Sinatos’ offer of marriage, but induces him first to share a libation to her patron goddess, “Artemis,” of whom she is a priestess.³³ The libation is poisoned and both the kamikaze Kamma and her victim die. In jubilation she exults in avenging her husband, thus dying “happily and without fear of the future” (εὐθαρσῶς καὶ ἰλαρῶς ἀποθανεῖν).³⁴

The last *exemplum* serves as a concluding crescendo to the *Erotikos*. This belongs to almost contemporary history and concerns a person not too distant from Plutarch.³⁵ Empona is the wife of Sabinus, a wealthy young man who had joined the ill-fated revolt of Civilis against the Romans.³⁶ Out of love for his wife, Sabinus refused to escape into exile. Unable to abandon her, or take her with him, he hid himself in an underground cave on his estate. However, when she seemed on the point of dying through grief, he sent a message to her informing her of his condition. As Plutarch continues with this baroque story of romantic married love, Empona visits Sabinus at night, becomes pregnant, disguises her pregnancy, raises his sons “like a lioness’ cubs,” and brings him to Rome in disguise in the hopes of obtaining a pardon. A lacuna in the manuscript probably once contained details of the discovery of Sabinus and his

32 Kamma, who along with a similar heroine, Chiomara, appears in *On the Courage of Women*, is treated by Stadter, 103–106; and more recently by Boulogne, 73–76, 307–309.

33 Diana, like Artemis, oversaw the wild spaces at the limits of habitation, a function going beyond hunting. See Scheid, reviewing Liertz.

34 Stadter, 106, on epigraphic grounds (a statue base in Athens), identified Sinorix as probably the son of Deiotaros I, tetrarch and king of Galatia, who was already dead in 74 B.C.

35 For Sabinus and Empona, see Stadter, 6, note 32; 11, 25.

36 On the Batavian revolt and Civilis in particular, see Haynes 148–177, esp. 155–157, 161, and 175–177. She believes the leaders of the revolt were especially fearsome, because, as depicted in Tacitus, they think like Roman imperialists (155–156). See also Williams, 68–99, on the characterization of the Galatians/Gauls in Greek and Roman authors. He notes that Cato in his *Origines* has a more favorable view of them than Polybios, who is almost entirely negative (81). Their major characteristic in Polybios is *athesia* (a rare word indicating perfidy, etc.), a touch of which appears in the Kamma incident.

execution, and the arrest of Empona. Just before that, we learn that of the two sons she secretly bore to Sabinus, one was killed in Egypt, and the other recently visited Plutarch at Delphoi. Thus a character from the *exemplum* steps out into real life. Plutarch then alleges that her execution by Vespasian was the most criminal act of his principate, so horrible that the gods and *daimones* hid their faces. Finally, he argues that Empona was avenged, since Vespasian's dynasty was quickly eliminated. At this point the story should have ended, but in a flash-back, it suddenly takes a new twist. Empona through her recklessness and arrogance (τὸ θαρραλέον αὐτῆς καὶ μεγάλῃγορον) lost the sympathy of the spectators and infuriated Vespasian, claiming that she had lived a happier life in the bowels of the earth than he as emperor.

The contemporary character of this *exemplum*, similar to some of Seneca's, is strongly emphasized by the name of the emperor, whose dynasty gave Plutarch much trouble, the name of Empona's son, and reference to the end of the Flavian dynasty, in 96, possibly about fifteen years before the composition of the work. One of the characters even walks out of the *exemplum* to meet Plutarch at Delphoi. Like the world of Seneca's *exempla*, there are many baroque characteristics: great contrasts, passion, love, brutality, torture, women avenging their oppressors or trying to, and their suicide or murder. Not surprisingly Empona follows in the footsteps of the Galatians of Hellenistic baroque. As far as exemplarity goes, even Plutarch almost admits that Empona is a bad example. Though one might perhaps interpret Plutarch's words as demonstrating courage, the more obvious reading is that he disapproved of her final rashness which lost the sympathy of the onlookers. The protagonist of this last *exemplum* emerges, somewhat like Kamma, as a kind of avenging fury, though more helpless in the end, whom hardly anyone would want to marry, much less a boy. Here, though, Luce's suggestion may be valuable. An author through an *exemplum* might not necessarily be concerned with morality or with the strict parameters of his argument. He might want to commemorate a person. This aspect becomes even more suggestive once Plutarch introduces the contemporary historical detail that Empona's son visited him at Delphoi. It helps us understand the inclusion of her last act of defiance, which even if reckless and not to be approved, demonstrates her heroism to the end.

The exemplarity and the problematic quality of these *exempla* need to be examined as well in a broader context. Semiramis, Phryne, and Belestiche are, in modern terminology "career women." They are capable of earning a living on their own, competing and succeeding in a world of men. All depended on feminine charm, at least in the initial stage, but at least Semiramis rose even above this, unlike Belestiche, Phryne, and some other *hetairai*. Yet, Belestiche, Phryne, Kamma, and Empona incorporate traditional roles for women, even if opposite ones. The latter are good consorts, who sacrifice for their husbands,

give birth to and raise their children, try to vindicate their deaths, and preserve their memory ever after. One of them, in revenge actually kills her husband's murderer, the other after initial helplessness in sorrow, aggressively follows him to the grave defying the emperor, along the line raising children for him. But where Ismenodora started out as the dominant female, competing against other men for her beloved, is she now expected to play the devoted wife and housekeeper, sinking back into woman's traditional role? Or is she to play another traditional role of women, the dominant, wealthy wife managing the household and her properties?

Other aspects of the *exempla* should be considered. Belestiche and Phryne could have entered into one of Plutarch's *Lives*. Cleopatra in the *Markos Antonios* has some aspects of Semiramis. Kamma and Empona appear elsewhere in Plutarch's *The Courage of Women*, thus moving from one moral essay to the other, even if absent from the political biography of the great.³⁷ These *exempla*, moreover, with their violence, murder, revenge, and the like, resemble the *exempla* in Seneca's *On Anger*, or passages in Tacitus like the death of Octavia. They create a "hot medium," violent images which parallel the "cold medium" of precepts and discussions. The *Erotikos*, without Kamma and Empona might resemble a comedy of Menandros or head in the direction of a modern Valentine's Day card, deprived of much "punch." Like Caravaggio's oils, realism and horror combines with theatricality, and even a touch of comedy or satire, to produce a stunning, powerful impact. After all the fanciful discussions of love, and just before the happy, boudoir ending, the inescapable fact remains that *eros* is not only capable of generating Platonic ecstasy, but also powerful, destructive, and murderous emotions.

In commenting on the parables of the Gospels, Kollmann notes that they lay out before the reader the contemporary social scene.³⁸ With a clear narrative structure and concentration on the main themes, they reflect social conditions in a remarkably vivid manner. In the sometimes elaborate narrative, the fate of the righteous and sinners is contrasted, but the parables also serve to integrate the marginal groups of Israel into the dominion of God. The Keltic *exempla* open up a vast horizon far removed from the small town atmosphere of Thespiiai. But the Galatians and Gauls were not that "barbarian." The Galatians in first century B.C. Asia Minor in the Kamma *exemplum* were allied with the Romans and had been living in a partially Hellenized Asia Minor for

37 For the crossover use of *exempla* between the *Lives* and *Moralia*, see, e.g., D'Ippolito (1991), 15–16.

38 Kollmann, esp. 474–475. For Livy, see Gärtner, 223, 238. He argues that the *exempla* have a strong political-social aspect, besides the moral (which represents the moral consensus of the Roman elite) and that historians need to keep both the historical and moral aspects of the *exempla* together (223, 238).

two-hundred years. The Gauls of the Empona story probably should not be called that at all, as Tacitus noted, but rather Roman Gauls, Gallic Romans, or something similar.³⁹ Through these *exempla*, Plutarch opens up the vast panorama of the Roman Empire with its variety of inhabitants, incorporates them into literature, and, above all, creates a wonderful theatrical backdrop for the small town love of Ismenodora for Bacchon.⁴⁰

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39 The actual Roman province of Galatia, however, did not begin until 25 B.C.

40 On the geographical aspect, see Dueck.

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Sempre in bilico tra vizi e virtù

Jolanda Capriglione

Non si può dire che non fosse gravosa l'eredità immensa lasciata da Aristotele e dalla sua etica, soprattutto perché essa incontrava mondi per molti versi sconosciuti: quelli fuori della *polis* che tanto a lungo, invece, era stata parametro non solo politico, ma anche sociale ed etico dello *spoudaios aner*¹ che è tale se sa *krinein orthôs* rispetto ad *aletheia* (*Eth. Nic.* 113 a) e ancora sa come usare la *phronesis* per conseguire gli obiettivi (*Eth. Nic.* 1114 a).

Per altro verso, non si può negare che alcuni eventi di straordinaria rilevanza per la storia dell'Occidente tutto sconvolsero la struttura più intima della *polis* nata sul concetto di autogestione e di entropia. La battaglia di Cheronea e poi il Congresso di Corinto nel 338–37 decretarono, invece, la confluenza delle *poleis* nell'impero macedone, e qualche secolo dopo L. Emilio Paolo, vincitore a Pidna, e prima di lui T. Quinzio Flaminio che *Graecos liberos esse iubet*, purché sotto il protettorato di Roma, portarono a conseguenze che non furono, com'è ovvio, solo di riassetto politico del Mediterraneo Orientale, ma di riscrittura *in toto*.

Non credo si possa continuare a dire semplicisticamente che la *polis* si dissolve creando una sorta di *horror vacui* in quanti avevano il compito di pensare ai modi della vita perché questa fosse più giusta e, soprattutto, più bella, non credo, perché, invece, la dimensione della *polis* è così forte che continua ad essere attivamente presente nella cultura greca e con essa l'etica che continuerà ancora a lungo a confrontarsi con Democrito e Platone, per non dire Aristotele.

Ciò vuol dire che il *polites* rimane sempre lo stesso? No davvero e sarà Plutarco a scrivere il *memento* al contempo più audace e più veritiero proprio per questo *polites* dalla personalità necessariamente doppia, profondamente greco, intriso di parole d'ordine come libertà e *isonomia* e al contempo suddito di Roma², quando nei *Praecepta politici* ammonisce: «Deve imitare (*mimēisthai*)

1 Per una definizione 'politica' di questa figura, per *status* e *paideia* destinato a vivere da protagonista e non solo spettatore, rinvio a Gastaldi 1987 e id. 1990, cap. 5.

2 I Greci furono *sudditi* particolari perché con la loro storia carica di cultura (la cui *summa* Emilio Paolo volle portare a Roma quando decise di trasferire la biblioteca di Perseo) incutevano timore ai Romani da sempre diffidenti nei confronti della filosofia, disciplina *naturaliter* strutturata nel dubbio. Ricordo che 25 anni prima dell'arrivo di Carneade i libri cosiddetti di Numa erano stati distrutti perché ritenuti pericolosi per la religione ufficiale. Lo stesso insospettabile Cicerone è costretto a farsi testimone di

gli attori che, benché impegnino nell'azione drammatica il proprio sentimento, il carattere e la dignità (*axioma*), tuttavia ascoltano il suggeritore e non trasgrediscono i ritmi e le imitazioni della libertà concessa da *ton kratounton*, coloro che detengono il potere» (813 E), il che è molto più dell'*onesta dissimulazione* invocata da Cicerone³ nel *De officiis* che è solo una sorta di codice del *savoir vivre* all'interno dell'aristocrazia romana.

Ecco, dunque, cadere d'improvviso due *rizomata*, due principi fondanti dell'etica greca: il principio di *aletheia* come valore supremo e il principio di libertà⁴ che non si definisce più nella dimensione della non dipendenza dell'*aner*, ma nella dimensione di una sorta di libertà vigilata che non prevede alcuna *parresia*, ma anzi un forte controllo di sé e del proprio spazio di *isegoria* (premessa della *parresia*) anche non necessariamente politico⁵.

Sarebbe stato del tutto impensabile vivere da *civis* secondo l'idea di libertà definita da Socrate nella *Repubblica* per il *polites*: «I cittadini sono liberi <quando> lo stato garantisce la più piena libertà, sia di dire sia di fare ciò che si vuole ... e perciò ad ogni cittadino è possibile organizzare la vita come vuole» (557 b).

Certo, anche in età imperiale rimane fermo il principio della libertà individuale, della libertà interiore che dovrebbe essere garanzia della possibilità di scelta, di quella *proairesis* tanto cara ad Aristotele⁶, ma in realtà ciò che si verifica è uno spostamento di piano del problema che al suo centro ripropone una domanda cruciale: che rapporto c'è tra la libertà di scelta interiore e la *praxis*, la necessità del fare anche in contesti fortemente condizionanti?

Ciò che più inquieta è naturalmente l'idea proposta, analizzata e giustificata da Plutarco che lo *spoudaios aner* ormai è tale se e solo se riesce ad essere un *mimetes*, un buon imitatore di qualche *hypokrites*, tanto più vero quanto più

questo atteggiamento negativo (*De fin.* I 1.1; *Lucull.* 2.5; *De off.* II 1.2) che è ben testimoniato soprattutto da Catone. Come scrive Garbarino (vol. I, pag. 48): «A Roma dove le innovazioni erano accettate a patto che non fossero inconciliabili con la tradizione, anche la filosofia fu rifiutata finché sembrò minacciare l'universo tradizionale romano di pensiero e di comportamento, mentre fu accolta, sia pure dopo molte resistenze e non senza riserve, nella misura in cui, con un notevole sforzo di assimilazione e di adattamento, venne assunta in esso».

3 Cfr. Narducci, in particolare pagg. 208–209.

4 Sul tema rinvio agli scritti di Foucault.

5 Nel corso dei secoli il termine *parresia* ha mutato non poco il suo statuto semantico trasformandosi da 'diritto di parola' istituzionalmente proprio del *polites* in peculiarità del *megalopsychos* (Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1124 b, per esempio) e poi ancora in diritto proprio di ciascuno di parlare in pubblico (penso all'uso che ne fa Demostene, *Or.* 4.51; 58.68, ancora a titolo esemplare) per diventare infine possibilità di parlare al cospetto del *princeps*.

6 *Eth. Nic.* 1113 a. Dobbiamo ricordare che sul piano politico Aristotele aveva già introdotto il tema della *parresia* di fronte ad un monarca, re o tiranno che fosse, come ci confermano sia l'*Ath. pol.* XVI 5–6 che *Pol.* 1313 b e *Rhet.* 1382 b.

falso, tanto più *spoudaios* quanto più capace di nascondere la sua vera natura, più o meno come gli oratori portati ad esempio da Cicerone: «Oratorem irasci minime decet, simulare non dedecet» (*Tusc.* 4.55).

E' bene dire subito che Plutarco è troppo *greco* per portare alle estreme conseguenze questa sua terribile affermazione e costruisce perciò una raffinata trama etica fatta delle stesse parole di Platone, Aristotele, Teofrasto, ma con un *handicap* che è condizione stessa di quell'etica, una sorta di pregiudizio genetico che fa di quell'etica se non un *allogrion ti* certamente un *allon ti*. Tutto sembra uguale eppure niente più è come prima: cosa sono, dunque, in questo nuovo mondo di *hypokritai* termini come *arete* e *kakia*, *hyperbole* e *metron*?

Eppure, quello di Plutarco è uno dei sistemi etici più potenti dell'ellenismo romano, come prova il fatto che avrà un'influenza enorme nei secoli e nei millenni al punto che ancora oggi a giusta ragione uno studioso del calibro di José Ribeiro Ferreira può dedicargli un Congresso dal titolo *Plutarco. Educador da Europa*.⁷ E' anche questo suo essere profondamente greco⁸, nel senso classico del termine, che lo spinge a guardare con somma diffidenza ad Epicuro che proclama: «Non c'è alcuna società fra gli uomini: ognuno pensa solo a se stesso» (*Us.* 523). Questo per Plutarco è impensabile giacché ai suoi occhi appare chiaro che, senza un quadro di riferimento fondato su un *ethos* collettivo, l'individuo rischia di perdersi fra i capricci del caso, secondo l'indimenticata lezione tutta ateniese che si può riassumere nell'icastica formula aristotelica: «Forse non è possibile raggiungere il proprio benessere senza aver cura dell'amministrazione della famiglia e della città» (*Eth. Nic.* 1141 a 9–10).

Egli, dunque, costruisce un apparato etico forte nel quale alcuni valori come *philanthropia* e *apanthropia* diventano principi fondanti: è questo un principio dicotomico che ritorna spesso tanto nelle *Vitae* (*Alcib.* 8.6; *Sylla* 30.6; *Pomp.* 10.4; *Cato Mi.* 5.3) quanto nei *Moralia* (*De aud. poetis* 27 c; *De adul.* 54 e; *Quaest. conv.* 745 d; *De soll. anim.* 972 d; *De cup. div.* 525 e; *Quaest. conv.* 746 e).

Perfino in un trattato abbastanza duro e spregiudicato come il *De capienda ex inimicis utilitate* la prima virtù che viene proposta è quella dell'amabilità, della capacità di saper accogliere gli altri. La *praotes* si presenta, infatti, come la prima forma di *philanthropia* giacché grazie ad essa Cornelio Pulcro (cui è dedicato il trattato) riesce ad essere *ophelimos tois koinois* e, ancora, sommamente piacevole (*alypotaton*) nei confronti di quanti in privato si intrattengono con lui: «Cornelio Pulcro, vedo che hai cercato la maniera più amabile per governare e

7 Vedi gli *Actas do Congresso* (11–12 novembre 1999), Coimbra 2002.

8 Pelling ha da tempo dimostrato che nelle *Vitae* dedicate in particolare agli ultimi esponenti della Repubblica (Flaminio, Marcello, Bruto, Cicerone) Plutarco tiene a sottolineare come la maggiore o minore vicinanza con la cultura greca ne fa dei tipi umani a sé nel panorama politico romano.

grazie ad essa sei molto utile alla comunità e arrechi ben pochi fastidi a quanti incontri in privato» (86 B).

Questa sorta di endiadi non è una mia deduzione perché la *praotes* è esplicitamente collegata alla *philanthropia* tanto nella *Vita di Cesare* (4.8) quanto nella *Vita di Demostene* (22.4), mentre il collegamento fra *philanthropia* e *koinonia* è dichiarato tanto nella *Vita di Focione* (10.7) quanto nel *An seni* (796 e)⁹: del resto, se non si esercitasse *en tois koinois* che *philanthropia* sarebbe?

La *philanthropia* non è una virtù legata solo al generico «saper dare» perché, invece, proprio in piena età imperiale è una virtù rivoluzionaria: essa si richiama storicamente a concetti pitagorici, a ben guardare niente affatto innocui, come quelli di *harmonia* e soprattutto di *homonoia*, prevede, cioè, un'unità di fondo del genere umano fondato sull'uguaglianza, non l'astratta e irrealista *égalité* inventata da qualche Falea Calcidese o durante la Rivoluzione francese, ma il concreto pari diritto di tutti gli esseri umani a partecipare al *genus hominum*, a *metechein tes anthropias*, che tu sia imperatore o mercante o misero pastore.

Quanto ai modi di questo *metechein*, essi appartengono alla misura del tuo sapertene impadronire attraverso la *sophia* e, più concretamente, alla possibilità materiale che si ha accedere alla *sophia*.

Mi riferisco a quella che Panezio aveva già denunciato come mancanza, la mancanza di *aequabilitas*, cioè di un'equa distribuzione dei poteri e dei *nomoi*¹⁰ che anzi vengono indicati come possibile fonte di ingiustizia, come aveva ricordato Cicerone nel *De orat.* citando Galba: *multa pro aequitate contra ius dixit* (I 239).

In questo contesto teorico la *philanthropia* è, dunque, molto più che il saper dare *quod superest* perché essa è, invece, un mettersi *alla pari* con gli altri in quanto parti del genere umano.

Faccenda complicata, come ben si comprende, in piena età imperiale quando i Cesari si sentivano dèi e i proconsoli méssi divini ... che però ben sapevano che senza una qualche forma di scambievole *philia* il rapporto tra governanti e sudditi si rompe¹¹. In questo caso più che al *nomos* positivo bisogna fare appello a quello che Sofocle nell'*Antigone* chiama l'*agraphos nomos*

9 Sulle corrispondenze fra le *Vitae* e i *Moralia* vedi Nikolaidis.

10 Non credo a principi egalaritari nella cultura romana, né repubblicana né imperiale. Ciò che grazie a Panezio si affacciò all'interno del Circolo degli Scipioni fu l'invito alla *homonoia*, premessa della *philanthropia*, come fa chiaramente intendere Plutarco allorché ricorda l'elogio di Arato da parte di Panezio che disapprova la spartizione delle terre perché questo porterebbe alla loro rovina (*Vita Arat.* 10.14). Vedi Capriglione, cap. II 2.

11 Questo è quanto aveva insegnato da tempo Senofonte in quel grande trattato di pedagogia politica che è la *Ciropedia*: «*to phileisthai* dai sudditi» è necessario (I 24) e ciò si ottiene grazie alle varie forme della *philanthropia* (ibid.).

e Cicerone *ius gentium* (*De off.* III 169) che dovrebbe essere premessa dello *ius populi Romani* (*De leg.* I 11–14) e di ogni altro *ius*.

E' giusto dire ancora che la *praotes* è fonte di *alypia*, di assenza di dolore, e dunque è fonte di serenità, in altri passi dei *Moralia* come il *De aud. poetis* 37 a; *De adul.* 57 e, a conferma del fatto che non esistono virtù autoreferenziali, secondo Plutarco, virtù in qualche modo assolute, ma solo virtù che si esplicano in rapporto agli altri. Il *polites*, insomma, non risponde in privato ad un qualche dio del suo comportamento, ma sempre e, comunque, alla polis, piccola o grande che sia perché le virtù sono tali se e quando si esplicano nel rapporto con gli altri. Come scrive in *De fraterno amore* (479 c), non sarebbe veramente virtuoso chi pensasse di poter vivere da solo senza rapportarsi agli altri.

Proprio a proposito della *praotes* possiamo ricordare che per lui, come per Platone, questa è la virtù fondamentale del *philosophos* (*Cato Ma.* 24.10; *De tranq. an.* 468 a) che non sarebbe veramente tale se, grazie alla *sophia*, non avesse imparato a rapportarsi agli altri con amabilità.

Ho citato Platone, ma, come ben si comprende, i compiti che Platone assegna al filosofo sono ben lontani dal mondo e dal sistema di pensiero di Plutarco.

Del resto, da tempo sia Hubert Martin che Jacqueline de Romilly¹² hanno messo in luce l'importanza di *aretai* come queste in Plutarco, al punto che la de Romilly può parlare di uno statuto eccezionale per questi termini¹³, ma ciò che a me preme sottolineare è che se è vero che essi trascorrono senza soluzione di continuità dai *Moralia* alle *Vitae*, è anche vero che hanno acquisito nuovi significati, *nuances* che Plutarco non esplicita mai, ma dà per acquisite nell'apparato che fa da premessa al suo sistema etico.

Proprio un piccolo trattato, abbastanza trascurato, come il *De capienda* può farci capire al meglio questi slittamenti di significato di parole che all'apparenza sembrano da secoli sempre le stesse, a partire da Omero. Basti pensare, a titolo esemplare, all'uso di termini consimili in Eschilo dove nei *Sette a Tebe* gli dèi vengono definiti *philopoleis*: ma quale *philia* si potrà mai instaurare fra queste due entità tanto disomogenee? Ben diversa è la *philia* che invoca Plutarco in nome di una mai dichiarata *isonomia* (tutta greca) che accomuna gli uomini.

E' necessario dire subito che tutto questo appare ben chiaro nelle dissertazioni dei *Moralia* dove più forte ed evidente è l'apparato, il dispositivo teorico, anche se questo non è mai astratto perché, invece, sempre accompagnato da esempi tratti dalle pratiche di vita.

12 In particolare capp. XVI–XVII dedicati a Plutarco.

13 Ibid. pag. 279: «Ce statut exceptionnel de la douceur chez Plutarque explique le rôle que joue la notion, aussi bien dans les exposés historiques que dans la réflexion morale».

Ben diversa è la questione quando si guarda alle *Vitae* dove le strutture gerarchiche che segnano i rapporti fra gli uomini sono ben più esplicite ed evidenti, caratterizzate come sono da principi come l'utile e il necessario.

Penso, a titolo esemplare, a Sertorio che fa ricchi doni ai barbari trasformandoli *ipso facto* nei suoi più accesi sostenitori (*Sert.* 14.1) o, per converso, al filelleno L. Emilio Paolo che non esitò a distruggere e saccheggiare alcune città greche perché questo era l'ordine che gli arrivava dal Senato (*Vita Aem. P.* 29.1 sgg.), anche se lo stesso Plutarco subito dopo cerca di giustificare il suo comportamento (*ibid.* 30.1).

Fatto è che l'*arete* di Emilio Paolo era l'obbedienza non tanto alla sua cultura privata¹⁴, ma alla sua condizione di generale romano da cui dipendevano le vite di molti uomini e le sorti di Roma in Oriente.

La verità è che in molti passi delle *Vitae* una virtù come la *philanthropia*, pur messa apparentemente in pratica, è e si rivela come un'abile mossa politica perché costringe l'altro, gli altri, coloro che la ricevono alla riconoscenza. A questo proposito vorrei ricordare che Plutarco nelle *Vitae* riesce ad essere un freddo e acuto analista, senza fermarsi troppo su commenti etici a proposito di questo o quel generale, o uomo politico costretto a prendere decisioni anche gravi. Per esempio, sempre a proposito della *philanthropia*, compagna di *praotes*, le virtù che caratterizzano un «vero uomo», egli ricorda un altro episodio che ci permette di capire bene come anche un gesto che nasconde altri fini può essere autenticamente generoso: sono solo le circostanze, il *kairos* a determinarne la qualità, non un qualche astratto valore etico in sé.

Pensiamo al caso di Cleomene di Sparta, uomo colto allievo dello stoico Sfero di Boristene (*Vita Cleom.* 2), uso alla semplicità dei modi e amato dal popolo: quando fu costretto ad attaccare Megalopoli, che aveva osato sfidare Sparta, la conquistò in pochi giorni, creando il panico fra i Megalopoliti che si rifugiarono a Messene. Due fra i più influenti cittadini, Lisandrida e Tearida, lo invitarono a risparmiare la città permettendo ai fuggitivi di ritornare nelle loro case: avrebbe così avuto gloria imperitura e la riconoscenza di tutti. Cleomene fece un gesto davvero generoso con «un'offerta umana e benigna» che però fu respinta perché Filopemene spiegò ai Megalopoliti che «Cleomene non intendeva tanto restituire la città, quanto prendere con essa anche i cittadini» (*Vita Cleom.* 24–25). Naturalmente la conseguenza fu che la città fu rasa al suolo e saccheggiata: ciò che interessa qui sottolineare è il fatto che Plutarco non si ferma a parlare di ambivalenza della generosità di Cleomene o a

14 Plutarco fin dalle prime battute della *Vita* di Emilio Paolo ci informa sul fatto che egli addirittura dopo il primo consolato si allontanò dalla vita pubblica per dedicarsi all'educazione dei figli che circondò di retori, grammatici, filosofi, ma anche «scultori, pittori, addestratori di cavalli e di cani e maestri di caccia, tutti greci» (6.8).

commentare la violenza del gesto perché nelle *Vitae* quasi sempre i fatti sono semplicemente i fatti.

Non è che egli non si renda conto che in un sistema sociale come quello romano, fortemente gerarchizzato, elergizioni e favori potessero essere scambiati, a torto o a ragione, per *philanthropia*: *ma perché in pieno impero questa virtù avrebbe dovuto conservare le stesse caratteristiche e lo stesso valore che aveva avuto per Senofonte o Aristotele?*

E' interessante notare, invece, come nei *Precetti politici* egli teorizzi la necessità di questi rapporti di scambio che usano la *philanthropia*: «L'uomo politico deve non solo mostrare se stesso e la patria immune da colpe verso il potere centrale, ma anche avere sempre tra quelli più potenti che stanno in alto qualche amico a cui possa appoggiarsi saldamente per la sua azione politica (d'altra parte i Romani stessi sono molto disponibili a sostenere gli amici per gli affari politici)» (814 D). Plutarco è innanzi tutto uomo di mondo e sa che non esistono vizi o virtù in assoluto, ma questi diventano tali in relazione al *kairos* e all'utile che ne può derivare, secondo il monito di Cicerone *nel De finibus*: «*Ipsa ratio monet amicitias comparare*» (I 20.66).

Per esempio, è certo che Cesare si sia mostrato spesso generoso con i nemici, a cominciare da Pompeo, ma è anche vero che questa *philanthropia* (cfr. *Vita Caesar*. 4.8) è stata per lui una magnifica arma di propaganda politica. Ma questo non scandalizza Plutarco che ha imparato nel corso della sua vita a guardare ai fatti in rapporto a *to ophelimon*, non in rapporto a qualche astratta categoria etica.

Dunque, saremmo di fronte ad un bieco utilitarista senza scrupoli? No: piuttosto di fronte ad un *sophos* che, per esempio, nel *De capienda ex inimicis utilitate* ci invita ad usare il *loghismos*, la capacità di calcolo delle conseguenze delle nostre azioni, pur senza rinnegare la forza del *pathos* che, sappiamo, per lui è una forza vitale. Ciò vuol dire che bisogna imparare a rispettare i nemici perché essi ci sono utili, giacché ci costringono ad un forte e continuo autocontrollo così come, per converso, fa Galeno che ci invita a tener sempre le porte aperte per gli amici che possono fungere da freno dei nostri eccessi (*Le passioni e gli errori* 1.4).

E questo non senza ragione poiché Plutarco sa bene che la nostra vita sociale dipende non solo dalla nostra *praxis* più o meno irreprensibile, ma anche dal modo in cui questa stessa *praxis* apparirà agli occhi degli altri ed è perciò che in *Quomodo quis suos in virtute sentiat profectus* può dire: «Senza dubbio bisogna provare pudore anche del *sembrare* di essere cattivi, ed evitare di esserlo» (82 c).

A ben guardare, più che un'etica delle azioni, Plutarco sta qui invocando un'etica dei comportamenti che hanno una forma sociale che va salvaguardata: una sorta di codice delle apparenze che, se non rispettato, rischia di mettere in crisi anche il rigore della *praxis* reale. Non si pretende una difficile austerità

estranea alle tentazioni del mondo, ma si chiede, invece, il rispetto formale delle regole, dei divieti e delle imposizioni che in una società complessa come quella ellenistico-romana, dove sono confluiti e si sono intrecciati tanti *nomoi* e tante culture diverse, non costituiscono un *corpus* organico, ma proprio per questo richiedono un forte *sensus sui*.

E' necessario sapersi mettere in gioco, Plutarco lo sa, e riuscire a *calcolare* al meglio il margine di trasgressione consentito a ciascuno, in rapporto alla situazione oggettiva ed al suo *status* sociale.

Del resto, pare sia questo la *sophrosyne*, figlia di *enkrateia*, una condizione grazie alla quale si sa come comportarsi quando si deve e come si deve verso gli dèi e gli uomini, come aveva insegnato da tempo il Platone del *Gorgia* (507a–c).

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Moralia in the Lives:
The Charge of Rashness in *Pelopidas/Marcellus*★

Heinz Gerd Ingenkamp

At the end of his dialogue *Politicus*, Plato tells his reader what the greatest achievement of state-craft is. Bravery (ἀνδρεία) is a virtue, he says, and self-possession (σωφροσύνη) is a virtue as well, but in many cases they will be at variance. This is because the brave deal with many situations differently from how do the self-possessed, for each of the two virtues represents a different character (φύσις). It is no good if either of them gets the upper hand in the state. So, for the statesman, the greatest achievement is to entwine these φύσεις.¹

Epameinondas the self-possessed and Pelopidas the brave, who were statesmen in the same polis at the same time and who fought for the same causes during their life-time and were good friends, represent the two φύσεις so exactly as to make us think that, in his *Politicus*, one of his late dialogues, Plato, who in his old age was their contemporary, has modelled his theory on them. However, for Plutarch, who loves and admires both his fellow-Boeotans, Epameinondas is not so much part of an ideal *couple* of statesmen than an ideal statesman himself. His self-possession is undisputed, but Plutarch is also interested in demonstrating that Epameinondas' bravery is bravery as it should be while Pelopidas' bravery tends to be rashness. When both were tried because they had stuck to their official position of Βοιωτάρχαι for too long a time and were threatened with the death penalty, Epameinondas took it calmly, "because he was of the opinion that, in politics, a great part of bravery and highmindedness consisted in forbearance" (*Pelop.* 25.4). I think that we are allowed to connect these words with what Plato taught in his *Politicus* and interpret them as meaning that self-possession is not contrary to bravery but part of it (cp. particularly *Num.* 3.5). This was certainly Plutarch's concept of

★ I would like to thank Susanne Gippert for looking through the manuscript.

1 As to rulers, if there is only one ruler, this person should be both brave and self-possessed; if there are more than one rulers, there should be a balance of the two φύσεις within the group of the rulers. As to citizens, the government should mesh the characters accordingly (*Politicus* 305E ff.). Plutarch himself, in his *Life of Pelopidas*, recommends this policy, though without a reference to Plato (19.1–2). A clear parallel is in *Marcellus* 9.4–7, with Fabius Maximus representing the σώφρων φύσις. In *Marcellus* there were both φύσεις, but they were unmixed (*Marc.* 1.2 f.).

bravery. He remarkably often mentions ἀνδρεία in combination with virtues as φρόνησις, δικαιοσύνη, εὐβουλία, σωφροσύνη etc., all of them attitudes and qualities that would soften the impact of a full-scale-ἀνδρεία.²

After an introduction with which we will have to deal later on, Plutarch begins his account of Pelopidas' and Marcellus' life with establishing a criterion that will guide his judgment on his heroes' death. Almost immediately after having given the criterion, he passes his judgment. The place of the verdict and the determination with which it is uttered will lead Plutarch's reader to the expectation, that this judgment is final. He will begin reading the two *Lives* as a story that leads inevitably to the conclusion he already knows. Now, the judgment is severe. The heroes are blamed for reckless behaviour. It is this wrong and reckless behaviour that makes them similar, and so Plutarch dedicates *one* book of his *Parallel Lives* to them.

Readers acquainted with Plutarch's ways of thinking and writing would be surprised if the author adhered to the principles he has laid out, particularly because they are so intransigent. Plutarch mostly is not a deductive writer who reasons from general principles, but an author who makes his judgments evolve, never being afraid of modifying them when they have been too harsh at the beginning. Life and most of the situations that occur during life-time are too complicated to be judged according to one simple criterion. So it is no surprise when Plutarch begins wavering about what he said at the beginning and, at the end, says quite the contrary of it.³ Such a contradictory exposition of merits would be, for a biography, neither helpful nor usual, and so we will not find many parallels for the procedure in the history of biographical literature. On the other hand, it is usual as well as helpful in treatises that reflect upon moral issues. Such issues are used to be very complicated, and a sensible author will often present himself looking for answers instead of teaching an established truth. A biography written in this manner would be halfway between a *Life* and an ethical essay, and what follows here is to prove that, as far as the two *Lives* deal with the heroes' deaths, *Pelopidas-Marcellus* is, in a way, such a hybrid.

(1) The *criterion* that underlies the seemingly final judgment is the following: If the personal risk a commander-in-chief takes is of decisive influence on the whole task that has been undertaken, he should not spare himself; if not or if the whole task is in danger if the commander dies, nobody will ask him to perform the duty of a simple soldier (i. e. to sacrifice his life in battle) (*Pelop.* 2.7). The *judgment* runs: Pelopidas and Marcellus were lavish

2 Cp. *Rom.* 28.3, *Lyc.* 28.1, *Num.* 8.10, *Sol.* 30.4, *Them.* 7.4, *Fab.* 13.7, *Comp. Per. et Fab.* 2.2 f., *Cor.* 1.6 etc.; *Mor.* 30 E, 32 C, 261 D, 319 E, 457 D, 471 B etc.; ἀνδρεία is even rebuked *Prac. ger. reip.* 819C.

3 Cp. Georgiadou 1997, 30.

with their lives without any consideration. They even threw it away at a time when men of their kind were most needed.⁴

The criterion helps us assess acts that belong to a τέχνη. In this case, it is the τέχνη στρατηγική. A person that one day will be a στρατηγός, has to learn this rule, as a person who learns Latin has to learn certain grammatical rules. If this person will not act according to the rule, he or she will be rebuked.

Life would be simple if everything could be judged like this. But even most τέχνηαι are not so uncomplicated. Not a rule, but the good, the perfect τεχνίτης teaches us what should be done. This is what some of the best treatises of the *Corpus Hippocraticum*, Isocrates and Aristotle teach us, and Plutarch's judgements in his *Lives* are proof of his being imbued with this knowledge. Themistocles is a good τεχνίτης and Aristides is a good τεχνίτης, and everyone knows how different their approach to the same problem used to be.

Nevertheless, there is a thread running through the two *Lives* that confirms both the "technical" criterion and the corresponding judgment. The formulation of the criterion is introduced by a lengthy argument to the same effect (*Pelop.* 1.10fin-2.7). Especially, the death-scene itself is written under its influence and so are the retrospective remarks in the *synkrisis* (*Comp. Pelop. et Marc.* 3.1 f.). The repetition of the condemning judgment at these crucial places induces readers and commentators to take them for Plutarch's last words.

(2) But this is not the case. We can conclude that from a clear modification of both this criterion and the corresponding judgment. We find that in the *synkrisis*. Plutarch here says that Pelopidas' behaviour is *pardonable*, because his θυμός, which we may translate as "zeal" as well as "anger", made him, who was already heated from the battle, not ignobly rush to take revenge. The modified criterion follows at once: For the best that can happen is, Plutarch now says, if the commander is victorious and stays alive; the next best is, if he dies making his death an act of virtue, for, in this case, according to Euripides, his death will be not a πάθος (a suffering), but a πράξις (a free action) (*Comp. Pelop. et Marc.* 3.3 f.).

4 *Pelop.* 2.11. Cp. the strong wording of the judgment on Marcellus, *Comp. Pelop. et Marc.* 3.6: Marcellus acted ἀπερισκέπτως <...>, and, about his death: οὐ στρατηγοῦ πτώμα, προδρόμου δέ τινος ἢ κατασκόπου πέπτωκεν. In his introduction Bocci, 324, argues that Plutarch does not attack the hero's "incapacità" but his "imprudenza". But for a τεχνίτης, lack of foresight or imprudence is proof of his being not a good τεχνίτης (for example, we think that an imprudent surgeon is *unqualified*). Plutarch's wording makes sufficiently clear what he means. In *Pelop.* 2.2 f. he gives a "technical" rule based on a kind of definition of a commander's task (2.1). The rebuke just quoted of how Marcellus acted teaches how a commander *as* a commander has (not) to act. The judgment corresponds with Polybius' verdict ἄγνοια (see below, p. 274).

Both the first criterion and the first judgment remain valid, but they are modified in as far as they now admit what Plato would call a δεύτερος πλοῦς, a second best way. The result of the modification is that Pelopidas is no more sentenced but rather understood, defended, and even praised according to the criterion, that, coming as a kind of afterthought after the judgment, goes a step further in the *friendlier* direction, which is non untypical for Plutarchan afterthoughts.

The formulation of a criterion before or after laying out one's judgment is in most cases viewed as pedantry. Usually we give our judgment hoping that the inherent criterion will be clear. Plutarch has two additional criteria that are not formulated but can be easily understood from the corresponding judgments.

When Plutarch informs us about the honours bestowed on Pelopidas after his death he states that the praise of his happiness could not be increased. For, he goes on, according to Aesopus, the death of the fortunate is not the most miserable, but the most blessed, because now all their noble deeds are in a safe haven. As to Pelopidas, he had lived most time of his life renowned and honoured, and now, when he was *boiotarches* for the 13th time, he had died for the freedom of the Thessalians exhibiting an ἀριστεία (i. e. a deed or deeds of special prowess) linked with the honourable killing of a tyrant (*Pelop.* 34.4–7).

Pelopidas is credited here with the killing of Alexander of Pherai, while in reality Alexander fled and Pelopidas was killed by Alexander's soldiers. But the very narrative of Pelopidas' death may, at its end, suggest that *his* death was the beginning of the *tyrant's* death (*Pelop.* 32.11 ἕως <...>). Afterwards Plutarch tells us, that Pelopidas' conversation during his captivity with Alexander's wife who hated and despised her husband led to her taking the initiative of killing the tyrant.

The judgment could not be more flattering. ἀριστεία of Diomedes, Menelaus, Agamemnon are the titles of whole books of the *Iliad* dealing with the excellence of the respective hero. So Pelopidas is solemnly elevated to epic rank. The underlying criterion is that to be a deed of excellence it has to display κάλλος. Pelopidas is a great hero, because he died when performing an ἀριστεία – and what people is celebrating is not only his death undergone for the freedom of the Thessalians, it is the ἀριστεία that consisted in his whole life, for Plutarch, when giving a reason for the general reverence for the dead hero, speaks of his “many combats” (*Pelop.* 34.7).

In the *synkrisis*, Plutarch repeats the word ἀριστεία. This time, he combines the criterion κάλλος with the criterion τέχνη, beginning with the criterion τέχνη and modifying it by the divergent criterion, recommending to our consideration that what Pelopidas did was of unsurpassable beauty and nobility, and so substituting one criterion by the other one, τέχνη by κάλλος. Certainly it was anger that led Pelopidas to try to kill Alexander, Plutarch says:

but the purpose of his action was the fall of the tyrant. This makes his attack not altogether unreasonable (here we have a modification of, perhaps even a contradiction to the first judgment that sentenced Pelopidas' mere rashness), for it would be difficult to find another occasion for an ἀριστεία that would have been so honourable (καλήν) and so splendid (λαμπρόν) (*Comp. Pelop. et Marc.* 3.5.). This honourable purpose had been mentioned already before the report of Pelopidas's death (*Pelop.* 31.5.).

Plutarch here says that Pelopidas was in a rage because of having being abused, during his previous captivity, by the abominable tyrant, but that, in addition to his anger, he hoped to overthrow him because of the confidential conversations between himself and Alexander's wife. In this case, however, Plutarch is not speaking of the very decision to attack Alexander personally but of Pelopidas' general decision to wage war against him at this moment, in spite of the forebodings. This is different in the quoted passage of the *synkrisis*, where the death-scene itself is analysed. When Plutarch says that Pelopidas combined anger with a reflection on the consequences of a probable victory, he once more makes use of the new criterion. According to this one Pelopidas's action is judged as a combination of πάθος (anger) and strategic deliberation. We are free to take his anger as blameworthy as before and so find a twofold judgment: "He acted unfortunately in an rage but nevertheless with a clear and sensible strategic aim", or to think of the good effects of θυμός on bravery, as they are seen in Academic and Peripatetic ethics. I think the first option is the better one, because it seems to be Plutarch's intention to attack inconsiderate anger. In this case, anger is sentenced on the basis of the criterion κάλλος: Pelopidas acts morally ὡς οὐ δεῖ but technically well.

At the very end of the *synkrisis* there is one more criterion (33.8.). This one reminds the reader directly of Plato's *Politicus*. Plutarch, while ensuring his reader that he is not *accusing* the two men, but that he only is speaking frankly and venting his displeasure, says that, in Pelopidas and Marcellus, the virtue of ἀνδρεία absorbed all other virtues, as if their deaths were a private matter and not concerning their countries, their friends and their allies.

To make the difference of the criteria clear, I will try to attribute them to different forms of knowledge. The first one belongs to the τέχνηαι, as I have said before. There are rules for a commander; Pelopidas and Marcellus have not acted according to the rules: so they have to be blamed. The second and the third one are ethical criteria. The second one, κάλλος, is to be found in practical, educational ethics, and in educational poetry. It defines what makes a "good" accomplishment "good" or what makes a virtue a virtue. Τὸ καλόν is the standard that a praiseworthy deed or behaviour has to meet; otherwise it will not be praiseworthy. But if Pelopidas' deeds are καλά or ἀριστεία, they cannot be blamed. The third criterion is narrower insofar as it has to do not with virtue in general but with the system of virtues after the philosopher has

decided which attitudes are virtues and which not. Having done this, he will find out that there are higher and lesser virtues and that there is a rule according to which virtues have to interact. According to Plato, the “strong” virtues have to be in harmony with the “weak” virtues. They should not overwhelm them. But of course a virtue remains what it is, a virtue. So if a deed is brave, it will not be not-brave, if it lacks self-possession. But it is less praiseworthy than a deed that comes up to that demand. We would say: “You are an excellent warrior and what you did is great, but how could you forget <...>!”. So, using three criteria, Plutarch gives the last actions of Pelopidas five quite diverging and even contradictory marks using the criterion τέχνη once in order to blame him and once to praise him. Here are the judgments together with their criteria:⁵ Pelopidas’ action is (1: criterion τέχνη) blameworthy, (2: criterion τέχνη and κάλλος) blameworthy but pardonable because of the beauty of the action, (3: criterion κάλλος and τέχνη) blameworthy because without self-control but at the same time strategically deliberate, (4: criterion κάλλος) praiseworthy and (5: criterion “system of virtues”) praiseworthy in a qualified sense. But he never distinguishes between his standpoints.⁶ So his reader will decide if he prefers to be confused or to combine the marks by making all the other ones disappear into the victorious one, which in most cases will be the “technical” assessment, because it had been read as a headline at the beginning of the *Lives*, is repeated when Pelopidas’ death is reported and is not forgotten at the end of the book.



Until now, I have treated the judgments according to their contents without considering their place in the book. Now, besides the introduction, there are two passages where they are accumulated, first, the death-scene of Pelopidas, its introduction and the obituary (*Pelop.* 31.5–32.9 and 34) and the last chapter (3) of the *synkrisis*. I think it is interesting to observe the shift of perspective inside very short sections. In the passage of the *Life of Pelopidas* dealing with the hero’s death we have three divergent judgments: judgm. 3 (provided we take the remark as including the death-scene: Pelopidas acts from anger but nevertheless reflects on the good consequences of a probable victory), judgm. 1 (blameworthy, because he acts in a rage and thoughtless), judgm. 4 praiseworthy (he fought an ἀριστεία joined with the murder of a tyrant). In

5 According to Georgiadou 1997, 216, the criteria used by Plutarch seem to be “inability to subject his anger to his judgment” and “heroism”.

6 As to his other works, he calls the death of Pelopidas once, in a rhetorical context, virtuous (*De Alexandri magni fortuna aut virtute* 344 C), and once, in a psychotherapeutic essay on anger, he attributes it to the hero’s intemperate anger (*De coh. ira* 458 E). That Marcellus died by an ambush is mentioned without any moral or strategic comment *Flamin.* 1.4.

the 3rd chapter of the *synkrisis* we come across the following judgments: judgm. 2 (blameworthy but pardonable), judgm. 3 (blameworthy but strategically deliberate), judgm. 5 (praiseworthy in a qualified sense). As may be noticed, the last word in both cases is “praiseworthy”; in the *synkrisis* the judgments even *develop* in that direction.

The first and the last of the judgments are valid for both Pelopidas and Marcellus, the first one being a headline for both *Lives*, the last one showing Plutarch’s remorse for having judged a little too severely at the end of the *synkrisis*, where, after having praised Pelopidas for his choice of the occasion for his ἀριστεία, he rebukes Marcellus so much the more.⁷ After that, he seems to remember not so much his praise just given to his other hero but his harsh sentence against *both* heroes at the beginning of the book, and with reference to it he now explains that his harsh judgment on both of them should not be understood as an accusation. So, according to the first judgment, Marcellus’ death is blameworthy because Marcellus made a major mistake as a commander and consequently died heedlessly, and, according to the last one, it is praiseworthy in a qualified sense because his bravery swallowed up his other virtues. The other assessments (“pardonable”, “blameworthy but strategically deliberate” and “praiseworthy without qualification”) refer to Pelopidas alone. But when dealing with Marcellus’ decision to reconnoitre the enemy lines himself, i. e. the inconsiderate act that led to his death, he quotes Pindar saying that neither fire nor an iron wall can hold up *fate*. This may not be more than an expressive sigh; but whoever has not forgotten the strong condemnation of the behaviour to be related in a moment cannot help thinking that this behaviour is, to a degree, excused by a reminder of the *conditio humana*. If Plutarch were a Stoic, reducing one and the same act to fate and at the same time condemning it would make sense, but Plutarch does not share this intellectually demanding creed. Perhaps we may not be entitled to take the quote as a sixth judgment on the couple’s heedless acting. But I think most readers will feel that the harshness of the first judgment has been

7 But I do not think, as Georgiadou 1997, 31, seems to do, that Plutarch intentionally is partial towards Pelopidas “while he is clearly less generous <...> with Marcellus”. Even stronger *ib.*, p. 30. She repeats her opinion on this matter 1998, 115: “La temerarietà dei due uomini <...> degenera infine in un’ ingiusta contrapposizione sulla base di motivi non particolarmente convincenti <...>.” Cp. also Georgiadou 1992, esp. p. 4250–4252. This chapter, that from its title, “Assessment of Pelopidas’ and Marcellus’ deaths”, should be close to the present treatise, has not been helpful. In the next chapter, “Marcellus and Alexander of Pherai”, p. 4252 f., Georgiadou even tries to relate the deaths of the abominable tyrant Alexander of Pherai and Marcellus to each other so as to throw a shadow on the latter, which is certainly erroneous. Finally, she thinks that Plutarch advocates the first of the two stories of the fate of Marcellus’ ashes, p. 4252, an interpretation that will not be accepted by most readers. Bocci 305 ff., 328 with n. 146, has it all right.

moderated by the author's sympathetic remark. So, in a way, we *have* a sixth judgment, a *qualified* condemnation. But I will not dwell on this here. The point is too weak.

This is what Plutarch usually does when trying to put an end to bad habits: He will begin with strong wording, gloomy threats and harsh condemnations only to modify them soon, sometimes even in the same sentence. This is an old and proved method of education. But it is not so usual in biographies that are expected to give an unequivocal picture of a person and its values – except for the fact that the author is Plutarch who for the moment switches to his *Moralia*-style argumentation.

The most direct connection between an essay of the *Moralia* and the narrative of Pelopidas' and Marcellus' deaths occurs in the last paragraph but one of the *synkrisis*. Let me begin with the parallel from the *Moralia*.

After having attacked loquacity from different angles, after many exaggerations (and softening modifications) concerning the risky life of a talkative person, he begins giving a short *discours de la méthode*, whose first words are the following: Ταῦτα δ' οὐ κατηγορίαν ἤγητέον ἀλλ' ἰατροίαν τῆς ἀδολεσχίας: τῶν γὰρ παθῶν κρίσει καὶ ἀσκήσει περιγιγνόμεθα, προτέρα δ' ἡ κρίσις ἐστίν. In Helmbold's translation (p. 443): "But these remarks are not to be regarded as an accusation against garrulity, but an attempt to cure it; for we get well by the diagnosis and treatment of our ailments, but the diagnosis must come first". The harsh words of the first part of the essay were a "cure": the garrulous person should be motivated to stop his intemperate talking. The cure consisting of two parts, what had been read up to that point was the κρίσις, in Helmbold's translation the "diagnosis". I doubt if the translation is correct. "diagnosis" in Greek is simply διάγνωσις, and, taken as an art, νοσογνωμονική. κρίσις seems not to be used in that sense. Instead, it is, according to Liddell and Scott, besides other meanings that are not relevant here, decision, judgment, esp. of a court, and condemnation. Plutarch seems to say, that we get well first by the physician's judgment on our ailment. This judgment may imply the estimation that the ailment is dangerous. διάγνωσις is a merely scientific procedure, while κρίσις seems to imply that measures have to be taken. So Plutarch may say, that the first step of getting well is the judgment that from what we are suffering is dangerous, and so, in a way, condemn it.

In the *synkrisis* of *Pelopidas/Marcellus* Plutarch says, in quite similar words: Χρὴ δὲ ταῦτα μὴ κατηγορίαν εἶναι τῶν ἀνδρῶν νομίζειν, ἀλλ' ὡς ἀγανάκτησιν τινα καὶ παρρησίαν ὑπὲρ ἐκείνων πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ τὴν ἀνδρείαν αὐτῶν, εἰς ἣν τὰς ἄλλας κατανάλωσαν ἀρετὰς <...>. "We must not take this as an accusation / a condemnation of the two men, but as an indication of my vexation and frankness for the benefit of the two men towards them and their bravery into which they have absorbed their other virtues <...>". The wording suggests that Plutarch is speaking directly to Pelopidas and Marcellus

through his biography (πρὸς αὐτούς) and tries to convince them for their benefit (ὑπὲρ ἐκείνων) that they should not have let their prowess gain the upper hand.⁸ This impression would hold even if I had overinterpreted the phrase ὑπὲρ ἐκείνων (which could simply mean “concerning them”). The situation, which is of course illusory in this case, is the same as in *De garrulitate*, where the chatterer, for his benefit, should feel he was directly addressed. The mistake Pelopidas and Marcellus made consisted in giving their prowess the upper hand, and now they should be cured of this tendency, that characterized a lot of their other actions as well. So, what Plutarch calls ἀγανάκτησις καὶ παρρησία here seems to be what κρίσις is in *De garrulitate*, a judgment implying that measures have to be taken, or even a condemnation. The reader may refer the advice to himself and in future time restrain his/her bravery. When re-reading the two *Lives*, he/she will understand them also as λόγος συμβουλευτικός, a hortatory treatise.

Such a treatise, especially if it is to cure the reader from an “ailment” or from a bad habit, may vary in his judgments. This is because the aim of the advice is getting rid of the ailment or the bad habit, and every means that seems useful to achieve this aim may be applied. Beginning with a strong condemnation and then softening one’s tone is a normal educational device (“You are a bad boy! Am I really bad? No, of course not, you are a good boy, but you should stop pilfering Mr Pomeroy’s apples”), even if it seems contradictory to a not-involved bystander.

It is not only the last passage of the *synkrisis* that gives the reader the impression to read a *Moralia*-piece. It is the beginning of the whole book as well.

The three introductory anecdotes are far-fetched and, with regard to the two heroes, unjust and offending.⁹ Now Plutarch is the last biographer to *insult* his heroes. And if one of them is one of the greatest and bravest statemen and soldiers of his native Boeotia, such an absurd intention would be so much the less probable. But in some of his *Moralia*-essays, Plutarch, in order to amuse the hearer or reader or to simply attract his/her attention, is fond of introducing an argument with ideas only superficially suited to the purpose. He calls this device “οὐκ ἀηδῶς δεῦρο μετενεγκεῖν (an idea, an anecdote, a quote)” (*De tranq. animi* 469 B). Here, at the beginning of the book on Pelopidas and Marcellus, the introduction that may seem out of place to a reader seems to be induced by Plutarch’s indignation at the two great men’s inconsiderate last

8 παρρησία / παρρησιάζεσθαι πρὸς (towards s.o.) *Camill.* 4.1, *Cat. Ma.* 3.5., *Eum.* 2.4, e.g.; παρρησία / παρρησιάζεσθαι ὑπὲρ (on s.o.’s behalf) *Comp. Aristid.* / *Ca. Ma.* 1.4, *Mor.* 71 E, 340 E, 483 C, 678 B. ἀγανάκτησις ὑπὲρ (on s.o.’s behalf) *Marc.* 23.2; ἀγανακτῶ πρὸς (to be vexed at) *Camill.* 28.5, *Mor.* 577 E.

9 This is seen differently by Georgiadou, 1997, 45. I think she is wrong.

actions. He surely is not in a jocular mood but is preparing his reader for the harsh judgment to come some paragraphs later. So he begins with exposing the contemptible behaviour of a seemingly brave man who in reality is a coward. The anecdote itself is introduced by a remark of the elder Cato who said about a man who was rash and thoughtless in war, that there is a difference between genuine virtue and scorn for life. This may be an appropriate introduction to the judgment of the heroes' heedless deaths, but the following story surely is not. Antigonos (it does not matter if Monophthalmos or Gonatas is meant) sent a physician to a particularly brave soldier who looked not very healthy and who had told him on request that he suffered from one of those ailments about that one must not speak. The physician who had been told to do what was in his power to make the soldier well, was successful, but after his recovery the soldier would not fight as bravely as before. When Antigonos asked for the reason, the man said that the king himself had made him less brave, because he had freed him from the motives that made him think poorly of life.¹⁰ Quite of the same kind was what a Sybarite said about the Spartan defiance of death: "That is understandable considering Spartan conditions of life." After a strong rebuke of the man who *was* a Sybarite and *spoke* as such, and the praise of the Lacedaemonian attitude to life and death, the argument concentrates on commanders-in-chief and their duty of self-preservation.

Pelopidas and Marcellus are reproached because they died heedlessly, Pelopidas, because he forgot himself when he saw Alexander who had so badly abused him, Marcellus, because he thoughtlessly undertook a mission that usually should be fulfilled by a common soldier. In contrast to what the soldier of Antigonos and the Sybarite think, there is no cynical pragmatism in what

10 Georgiadou 1997, 48 f., compares Aristotle, *EN* 1116a13–16. What Aristotle has in mind there is suicide because of poverty, love or other *λυπηρά* (cp. Dirlmeier 1956, 341). Aristotle's example implies that most people, who are afraid of death, may deem a frustrated lover who commits suicide to be courageous, but the philosopher teaches that he is not. When Georgiadou says "In the hope of escaping his suffering permanently, the soldier chose to expose himself to danger", her soldier is going to commit suicide in a way, indeed. But the point of Plutarch's anecdote is that the soldier fights bravely in all respects. However, his reason to do so has nothing to do with *τὸ καλόν*. Either the soldier says to himself: "Because I have to die anyway before long, why not die *heroically*, when fate calls me?". Or he says to himself: "Because I am incurably ill, why not die *heroically*, all the more so as such a life is worthless." Plutarch's commentary (*Pelop.* 1.8) supports the second version. Both versions are pragmatic calculations quite different from suicide, because the hero does not *want* to die, he only is putting up with death (Plutarch speaks about *ὑπομονή* sc. *τοῦ θανάτου*). In reality, he is interested in staying alive. He wants to be celebrated for his bravery. Only *if* he has to die, he will accept it willingly. Both attitudes are far from virtue, because they depend on the worthlessness of what is at stake, although they make it seem, to the ignorant onlookers, as if they were instigated by *τὸ καλόν*.

they do. The only common denominator of what we hear there and the deaths of the heroes is lack in taking care of self-preservation. But the motives could not be more divergent. How the soldier of Antigonos and the Spartans, according to the opinion of the Sybarite, felt and argued would have been the very last to occur to Pelopidas and Marcellus.

Thus, taken seriously, the anecdotes would be utterly misleading. But if we take them not for serious, they cannot be part of a serious biographical argumentation. So what are they? They are a *Moralia*-style introduction, setting the educational, excited tune for the over-rigorous judgment and its following modifications, which are *Moralia*-style as well.

The readers of the *Parallel Lives* of Pelopidas and Marcellus may read the book as only interspersed with *Moralia*-style *sections* in it, namely, not surprisingly, first the preface and the *synkrisis*, then, at least understandably, the narrative of the death of one of the heroes. But the book's closing words, that try to revoke what, since the beginning of the narrative, must have been seen as an accusation of the heroes, may lead others, who are more philosophically minded, particularly when *re*-reading the book, to take the whole volume as a treatise that could belong to the *Moralia*. Whoever reads the *Life* as a *Moralia*-treatise when *re*-reading it, will find some support for his perspective among other passages that have not to do with the heroes' deaths.¹¹ But it is clear that this decision is up to individual impression.

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11 When Pelopidas went to war against Kleombrotos, and his wife asked him to spare himself, he answered: "You should recommend this to common soldiers, to commanders you should recommend instead to bring the others home safe." This *might* be taken as a principle different from that one put forward at the beginning (2.7 f., criterion 1).— Because Pelopidas would not allow of his strategical expertise laying idle, he was ready to fight for the Thessalians — an attitude that may demonstrate how much he was led by the principle of *κἀλλος*. — Also significant is that Pelopidas sometimes is *not* blamed when he has acted heedlessly. So there is not a word of reproach when Pelopidas set out for his second diplomatic mission to the tyrant of Pherai that ended with his captivity (27). It is this action that had been censured so severely by Polybius. When Pelopidas, as Alexander's captive, behaves haughtily, so giving the tyrant the opportunity to aggravate the conditions of his confinement, there is again no comment (28.2–4). — In the case of Marcellus, there is the general praise 24.9 for his never being caught in the traps set for him by Hannibal and the additional remark that he was admired therefore. So why, may the reader ask himself/herself, condemn him so harshly for mishandling *one* situation? — A serious strategic mistake of Marcellus' and his following harsh words of reproof towards his soldiers go uncriticized 25.6–9. — In the case of Pelopidas, the reader may come to the conclusion that what really upset Plutarch was the hero's death, i. e. the fact that he was no more. Couldn't he have taken better care of the precious possession of such a life? As to Marcellus, there is a hint of rare ironic amusement about the man's boyish fanaticism at the end of ch. 28.

There are two texts that include the contents of Plutarch's main judgments on the heroes' deaths, and in one case even the criterion of the first judgment, i. e. the strong condemnation of their behaviour. The condemnation and its criterion, together with a hint at the contrasting criterion, κάλλος, appear in the Polybius-passage on the death of Marcellus. The text is Polybius 10.32.1 ff. The consuls Claudius Marcellus and T. Quinctius Crispinus meant to explore the enemy camp σαφῶς, were trapped and lost their lives (1–6). Μάρκ<ελλ>ος μὲν οὖν ἀκακώτερον (criterion κάλλος) ἢ στρατηγικώτερον (criterion τέχνη) αὐτῷ χρησάμενος τοῖς δεδηλωμένοις περιέπεσε συμπτώμασιν· ἐγὼ δὲ παρ' ὄλην τὴν πραγματείαν πολλάκις ἀναγκάζομαι περὶ τῶν τοιούτων ὑπομιμνήσκω (Polybius teaches strategy) τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας, θεωρῶν, εἰ καὶ περὶ (τι τῶν) τῆς στρατηγίας μερῶν ἄλλο, καὶ περὶ τοῦτο διαμαρτάνοντας τοὺς ἡγεμόνας, καίτοι προδήλου τῆς ἀγνοίας ὑπαρχούσης. τί γὰρ ὄφελος ἡγεμόνος ἢ στρατηγοῦ μὴ διειληφότος διότι τῶν κατὰ μέρος κινδύνων, οἷς μὴ συμπίσχει τὰ ὅλα, πλεῖστον ἀπέχειν δεῖ τὸν ἡγούμενον; τί δ' ἀγνοοῦντος ὅτι, κἂν ποτ' ἀναγκάζωσιν οἱ καιροὶ πράττειν τι τῶν κατὰ μέρος, πολλοὺς δεῖ πρότερον ἀποθανεῖν τῶν συνόντων πρὶν ἢ τὸ δεινὸν ἐγγίσει τοῖς προεστῶσι τῶν ὄλων; δεῖ γὰρ ἐν Καρὶ τὴν πείραν, ὡς ἡ παροιμία φησὶν, οὐκ ἐν τῷ στρατηγῷ γίνεσθαι. τὸ μὲν γὰρ λέγειν ὡς “οὐκ ἂν ὠόμην” “τίς γὰρ ἂν ἤλπισε τοῦτο γενέσθαι;” μέγιστον εἶναι μοι δοκεῖ σημεῖον ἀπειρίας στρατηγικῆς καὶ βραδυτήτος.¹²

12 Pelopidas' behaviour that led to his captivity (*not* to his death; Polybius does not deal with this situation) is dealt with earlier (Polybius 8.35.6 ff.). Here, too, the historian judges according to the “technical” criterion: <...> καὶ μὴν Πελοπίδας ὁ Θηβαῖος, εἰδὼς τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ τυράννου παρανομίαν καὶ σαφῶς γινώσκων ὅτι πᾶς τυράννος πολεμιοτάτους αὐτῷ νομίζει τοὺς τῆς ἐλευθερίας προεστῶτας, αὐτὸς οὐ μόνον τῆς Θηβαίων ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς τῶν Ἑλλήνων δημοκρατίας ἔπειθεν Ἐπαμεινώνδαν προεστάναι, καὶ παρὼν εἰς Θετταλίαν πολέμιος ἐπὶ καταλύσει τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου μοναρχίας πρεσβεύειν πρὸς τοῦτον ὑπέμεινε δεῦτερον. τοιγαροῦν γενόμενος ὑποχείριος τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ἐβλάψε μὲν Θηβαίους μεγάλα, κατέλυσε δὲ τὴν αὐτῷ προγεγενημένην δόξαν, εἰκῆ καὶ ἀκρίτως (judgment) πιστεύσας οἷς ἤκιστ' ἐχρῆν. παραπλήσια δὲ τούτοις καὶ Γνάϊος ὁ Ῥωμαίων στρατηγὸς ἔπαθε κατὰ τὸν Σικελικὸν πόλεμον, ἀλόγως αὐτὸν ἐγχειρίσας τοῖς πολεμίοις ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ πλείους ἕτεροι. Διὸ καὶ τοῖς μὲν ἀσκέπτως ἑαυτοὺς ἐγχειρίζουσι τοῖς ὑπεναντίοις ἐπιτιμητέον, (criterion; the context is about statesmen and commanders) τοῖς δὲ τὴν ἐνδεχομένην πρόνοιαν ποιουμένοις οὐκ ἐγκλητέον· τὸ μὲν γὰρ μηδενὶ πιστεύειν εἰς τέλος ἄπρακτον, τὸ δὲ λαβόντα τὰς ἐνδεχομένας πίστεις πράττειν τὸ κατὰ λόγον ἀνεπιτίμητον. Fragment 158 [Εὐψυχία] καθάπερ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῆς Ἐπαμεινώνδου καὶ Πελοπίδου καὶ Βρασίδου καὶ Κλεομβρότου τελευτῆς καὶ διὰ τὴν ἐν τῷ ζῆν ἀρετὴν καὶ διὰ τὴν ἐν τῷ τελευτᾷ εὐψυχίαν ἀδυνατοῦσιν οἱ συγγραφεῖς ἀξίους εὐρίσκειν λόγους τῆς προκαθηγουμένης τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐννοίας is certainly spurious.— Livy's rebuke is no less severe than that of Polybius (*nec pro aetate <...> neque pro veteris prudentia ducis tam inprovide <...>*), but it is not consistent with what he told before. For according to his description Marcellus' decision to explore the area himself was strategically sound. The Romans killed by Hannibal at the hill Petelia (which incident made Marcellus furious

The other text is from Diodorus 15, 80. It gives us the main characteristics of the main divergent criterion (κάλλος) and judgment:

τοῦ δὲ Ἀλεξάνδρου διὰ τὰς ὑπεροχὰς τῶν τόπων πλεονεκτοῦντος, ὁ Πελοπίδας σπεύδων διὰ τῆς ἰδίας ἀνδρείας κρῖναι τὴν μάχην ἐπ' αὐτὸν ὤρμησε τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον. τοῦ δὲ δυνάστου μετὰ τῶν ἐπιλέκτων ὑποστάντος, ἐγένετο μάχη καρτερά, καθ' ἣν ὁ Πελοπίδας ἀριστεύων πάντα τὸν περὶ αὐτὸν τόπον νεκρῶν κατέστρωσι, τέλος δ' ἐπιφείδῃ τῷ κινδύνῳ καὶ τοὺς πολεμίους τρεψάμενος τὴν μὲν νίκην περιεποιήσατο, τὸν δὲ αὐτοῦ βίον ἀπέβαλε, πολλοῖς περιπεσῶν τραύμασι καὶ τὸ ζῆν ἥρωικῶς προέμενος <....>.¹³

Immediately before the quoted passage, Diodorus speaks about the forebodings before Pelopidas rushed to fight. Pelopidas neglected them, and did so, according to Diodorus, ὑπὸ τοῦ χρεῶν ἀγόμενος. There is nothing of this kind in Plutarch's report of the *omina* here; instead he mentions as his motives a) his anger and b) his hope that Alexander's entourage may already be alienated from him after he, Pelopidas, had opened the eyes of the tyrant's wife. But we have just that remark in Plutarch's *Marcellus*, when he, after ignoring what the seers said, undertook the reconnoissance mission that led to his death.

Plutarch may have used these texts or, particularly in the case of Diodorus, their source. If he did not, they nevertheless help us to interpret his report. It is the differences between them and what we read in Plutarch that make us understand what one way of Plutarchan writing is. In Polybius and Diodorus, we have facts that are touching enough. But in Plutarch's text they are part of a therapeutic or educational discussion that is to demonstrate to the persons in question that what they did was not morally bad, no, on the contrary, that it was praiseworthy, but that it was nevertheless subject to reproach. Noble passion and consciousness of one's duty are praiseworthy in themselves; but if they are not accompanied by reasoning and professional calculation they may cause more damage than benefit. So Plutarch has to take care not to abolish the

and so eager to fight) were caught in Hannibal's trap *inexplorato*. If thereupon he concluded that reconnoitring was a matter of highest priority and so did it himself together with his colleague (in order to share the responsibility), he acted as a responsible leader. The fight itself, as far as Livy tells us, was not hopeless, but the Etruscans began to flee infecting the others with their fear. This is not unheard-of (37.26.1–11).

- 13 There is a passage that could have induced Plutarch's rebuke *additionally* to his "technically" motivated objections. The implied idea, that underlines the loss the Thebans suffered by Pelopidas's death, do not appear in Plutarch's *Life*: Οἱ δὲ Θηβαῖοι περιβόητον νίκην ἀπηνευγμένοι, πρὸς ἅπαντας ἔφασαν ἑαυτοὺς ἤττησθαι διὰ τὴν Πελοπίδου τελευτήν· ἀξιόλογον γὰρ ἀπολωλεκότες ἄνδρα, κατὰ λόγον ἔκρινον τὴν νίκην ἦττονα ὑπάρχειν τῆς Πελοπίδου ζωῆς. Afterwards, Diodorus repeats his praise: ἐπὶ τελευτῆς δὲ διαγωνισάμενος πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον ἔχοντα πολλαπλασίου δύναμιν οὐ μόνον ἐπιφανῶς ἐνίκησεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν θάνατον ἔσχεν ἐπ' ἀρετῇ περιβόητον. <...> Πελοπίδας μὲν οὖν, διὰ τὴν ἰδίαν ἀρετὴν ὑπὸ πάντων ἀποδοχῆς ἠξιωμένος, ἐχέτω καὶ παρ' ἡμῶν τὸν διὰ τῆς ἱστορίας ἔπαινον (ib. 81).

good when trying to teach the better. He does not fight πάθη as in a “Seelenheilungsschrift”, he is dealing with a situation Aristotle speaks about when presenting the μέσον or the ὡς δεῖ that makes a virtue. Here is the passage that gives the underlying theory to what Plutarch is trying to say to Pelopidas and Marcellus:

EN 1116b23 ff.: καὶ τὸν θυμὸν δ' ἐπὶ τὴν ἀνδρείαν φέρουσιν· ἀνδρεῖοι γὰρ εἶναι δοκοῦσι καὶ οἱ διὰ θυμὸν ὡσπερ τὰ θηρία ἐπὶ τοὺς τρώσαντας φερόμενα, ὅτι καὶ οἱ ἀνδρεῖοι θυμοειδεῖς· ἰητικώτατον γὰρ ὁ θυμὸς πρὸς τοὺς κινδύνους, ὅθεν καὶ Ὅμηρος “σθένος ἐμβαλε θυμῶ” καὶ “μένος καὶ θυμὸν ἔγειρε” καὶ “δριμύ δ' ἀνά ρίνας μένος” καὶ “ἔξεσεν αἶμα”· πάντα γὰρ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἔοικε σημαίνειν τὴν τοῦ θυμοῦ ἔγερσιν καὶ ὀρμήν. οἱ μὲν οὖν ἀνδρεῖοι διὰ τὸ καλὸν πράττουσιν, ὁ δὲ θυμὸς συνεργεῖ αὐτοῖς <...>. (1117a4) φυσικωτάτη δ' ἔοικεν ἢ διὰ τὸν θυμὸν (sc. ἀνδρεία) εἶναι, καὶ προσλαβοῦσα προαίρεσιν καὶ τὸ οὐ ἕνεκα ἀνδρεία εἶναι. καὶ οἱ ἀνθρώποι δὴ ὀργιζόμενοι μὲν ἀλγοῦσι, τιμωρούμενοι δ' ἡδονταί· οἱ δὲ διὰ ταῦτα μαχόμενοι μάχιμοι μὲν, οὐκ ἀνδρεῖοι δέ· οὐ γὰρ διὰ τὸ καλὸν οὐδ' ὡς ὁ λόγος, ἀλλὰ διὰ πάθος· παραπλήσιον δ' ἔχουσι τι.

For a friend who cures a man like Pelopidas while using παρρησία ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πρὸς αὐτόν, the problem lies here. If we replace the πάθος of anger with wrong sense of one's duty, we have the case of Marcellus.

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Is Plutarch's Nicias Devout, Superstitious, or Both?

Frances B. Titchener

For Plutarch, religion appears to encompass a kind of continuum. "Ignorance of the gods" was one extreme, resulting in atheism and superstition in different personalities, or kinds of people; hyper-devotion was at the other extreme. Either pole was undesirable; reasonable, devout people were, as one might expect, somewhere in between. Plutarch, as a Delphic priest, would have preferred "nothing in excess" as a general rule. Where does Plutarch locate Nicias in this spectrum? Examination of Plutarch's attitudes about religion, superstition, and Nicias, will, I hope, help illuminate the answer to that question, and show that for Plutarch, Nicias is well-anchored in the superstitious part of the spectrum, with few claims on religious devotion.

Plutarch on religion: It is problematic to define, interpret, and discuss Plutarch's concept of religion in modern terms, largely because religion, as we use the term today, existed in a very different form in antiquity, and little was written down about it. In his writings, Plutarch is always concerned with moralism, his own and others'. He wrote the *Parallel Lives* in large part to provide examples, good and bad, for human behavior. Modern scholarship has harrowed exhaustively Plutarch's own statements on his purpose in the *Lives*, ultimately accepting the biographer's statements in the opening of the life of *Timoleon* that these biographies are meant to serve as a mirror (*esoptron*), and their subjects are *paradeigmata*, or examples. We can point to many other instances in Plutarch's writing where he discusses good and bad examples of behavior, and, ultimately, people, choosing often to reveal character through action. For instance, he is concerned in the *Moralia* especially with behavior, writing essays about education (*About Educating Children; How a Young Man Should Listen to Poetry*), interpersonal relationships (*How to tell a Flatterer from a Friend; On Virtue and Vice; Marriage Advice*), virtue (*Can Virtue be Taught? On Moral Virtue; About Controlling Anger; About Tranquility of the Soul*), love (*On Brotherly Love; One Love of Offspring*), self-control (*On Talkativity, On Desire for Wealth; On Envy and Hate; On Avoiding Debt*), politics (*To An Uneducated Leader; Whether Old Men Should Govern; Precepts of Governing the Republic*) and, of course divinity (*On the Gods' Slowness to Punish; On Fate*). Russell, 66, puts it perfectly:

"He seems always to have kept in mind, as something of central importance, the belief that disorder and evil are of psychic, not material origin. There are, for him,

'evil souls' at work, and our ability to change the world of ourselves for better is limited by their existence and depends on our recognition of it. He worried about these problems all his life."

Plutarch on superstition: But moralism and virtue are not the same as religion. Recently, Robert Lamberton, 57, analyzed the situation thus:

"If Plutarch's theological inquiries are largely an attempt to know more clearly the traditionally defined, benevolent forces that rule the universe, his attitudes toward belief are destined by a polarity of modes of error: superstition and atheism".

Plutarch felt strongly that religion and religious ceremonies were an important part of any politically active individual's life, but he made a sharp distinction between religion and superstition, defining superstition and atheism as the two extreme results of ignorance of the gods, as manifested in the personalities of those with soft and hard characters, respectively. According to Plutarch in *De Superstitione*, superstition was worse than atheism because the atheist remained unmoved in respect to "the divine", but the superstitious man was moved by the divine in the wrong way, by fear. This fear is central to understanding Plutarch's intense dislike of superstition, believing as he did that superstition was a fear so intense that it completely debilitated and flattened the affected individual. Furthermore, the religious and logical facets of Plutarch's personality were both offended by the implication of the gods as a source of pain and injury. He thought that such fear affected those ignorant of the causes of natural phenomena, but not those who understood such things (*Per* 6.2). Thus it was the mark of wise men and leaders to be able to counter the effects of superstition among his followers. Pericles, when an eclipse took place as he was sailing to Epidaurus on campaign, allayed the fears of his steersman by providing a rational explanation of the eclipse (*Per*. 35.2). Dion, in a similar situation, prevailed upon his seer Miltas to allay the fears of the soldiers, not by rational explanation this time, but by favorable interpretation (*Dio*. 24.1; *Nic*. 23.6). Nicias, by contrast, could not control his own fear, much less that of his soldiers (*Nic*. 23.1–4).

In *De Superstitione*, Plutarch gives two examples of how superstition "creates volcanoes out of molehills", or turns a minor problem into a major one. First, Midas became so dispirited and distraught by dreams that he committed suicide by drinking bull's blood; second, the Messenian king Aristodemus, during the Messenians' war against Sparta, "when dogs howled like wolves, and quitch-grass began to grow around his ancestral hearth, and the seers were alarmed by these signs, lost heart and hope by his forebodings and slew himself by his own hand" (168A). Plutarch then suggests that Nicias should have done likewise rather than bring about the destruction of the Athenian expedition to Sicily through the delay caused by his superstition: "It would perhaps have been the best thing in the world for Nicias, general of the

Athenians, to have got rid of his superstition in the same way as Midas and Aristodemus, rather than to be affrighted at the shadow on the moon in eclipse and sit inactive while the enemy's wall was being built around him, and later to fall into their hands together with forty thousand men, who were either slain or captured alive, and himself meet an inglorious end. For the obstruction of light ... is nothing frightful, but frightful is the darkness of superstition falling upon man, and confounding and blinding his power to reason in circumstances that most loudly demand the power to reason" (169a).

But there is more to Plutarch's dislike of superstition than this. He seems particularly uncomfortable with the lack of restraint, or self-control, exhibited by superstitious individuals; Russell puts his finger on it: "Decency seems almost more central to Plutarch's religion than belief" (79). Perhaps this is the answer to one vexing question about the biography of Nicias, namely Plutarch's reaction, or lack thereof, to Nicias' solution to a recurring problem plaguing the festival of Apollo at Delos. Choruses sent by various cities to the island to sing Apollo's praises were evidently received with such enthusiasm that the performers had difficulty maintaining their dignity, as eager fans besieged them even as they dressed. Nicias had constructed for himself a portable boat-bridge, which he used to span the distance between Delos and its neighbor-island Rheneia, where he landed, unloaded his equipment, and helped prepare the chorus for a triumphal entry onto Delos. Plutarch's vocabulary in this episode is complimentary (Nicias' arrangements are described as glorious and fit for divinity (5.3.4), but has an edge (*philotimēma*), and the whole episode culminates with Nicias' self-promotion being attributed not ONLY (my emphasis) to craving publicity and self-aggrandizement, but to his excessive superstition. Plutarch here makes a clear connection between superstition and ostentation, considering them variations on a theme.

One would have expected considerably more enthusiasm from Plutarch, a Delphic priest, about Nicias' efforts on Apollo's behalf at Delos. Plutarch evidently didn't much like drama, agreeing somewhat with Solon that dramatic performance was trouble-causing made-up exhibitionism, but Nicias was involved with choral performances. The biographer's oddly flat description likely has something to do with the rider Nicias attached to his donation to the Delians of the revenues from some of his property. In this provision, the Delians were instructed to "beg the gods for many good things to happen to Nicias", an admonition engraved on a nearby stele "which he left just like a guardian of his formal gift to Delos".

So Plutarch felt that religion and superstition were separate phenomena, and disliked superstition, partly for its tendency to excite excessive behavior. He uses Nicias as an example of this in both *De Superstitione* and the *Life of Nicias*. How does he feel about Nicias otherwise?

Plutarch on Nicias: This author has argued elsewhere that Plutarch disliked Nicias and wrote about him because of a need for a parallel to Crassus, and because of the convenience of Plutarch's already using Thucydides as the main source for his biographies of Pericles and Alcibiades. Plutarch may or may not agree with Thucydides' famous statement that Nicias "least deserved to come to so miserable an end, since the whole of his life had been devoted to the study and the practice of virtue" (7.86), but he is surely echoing it with his use of the phrase "hêkista axios"). But Plutarch does not echo the phrase in the right place, but earlier, with both generals alive and the eight-day retreat yet to come. Such judgements come more typically at the end of a Plutarchan *Life*, and in fact *Nicias* ends on an unsettling note (30.1). Plutarch generally ends a biography by describing the sorrow felt by the state or family upon his subject's death, or by recapping his subject's accomplishments (Pericles, Fabius Maximus, Themistocles, Camillus, Aristides, Cimon, Lucullus, Lysander, for example), but in *Nicias*, a barber, having run all the way from Piraeus to deliver the news of the Athenian defeat at Sicily, was disbelieved and tortured for stirring up trouble, until messengers arrived and confirmed the news. Plutarch ends "Thus scarcely was Nicias believed to have suffered the very things which many times he had warned them about." Plutarch may have displaced Thucydides' judgement on Nicias because he disagreed with it. His great admiration for and emulation of Thucydides arguably made him unwilling to disagree obviously with the historian's judgement by either omitting any reference to this famous passage, yet his real disapproval of Nicias prevented his repeating Thucydides' judgement in a way that could mitigate the over-all negative impression of this *Life*. Nevertheless, Plutarch repeats the notion that Nicias' death was unfair because Nicias had warned against the expedition, when few others did, and therefore did not deserve to perish in the action that he had tried hard to prevent:

Besides, it was not merely the sight of him now, but also the memory of the arguments and exhortations with which he had once tried to prevent the sailing of the expedition, that led men to think him all the more unworthy to suffer such hardships now; and they had no courage to hope for aid from the gods when they reflected that a man so devout as he, and one who had performed so many great and splendid religious services, now met with no seemlier fortune than the basest and most obscure man in his army.

The soldiers may have found irony in Nicias' attempts to avoid the vicissitudes of fate by non-stop sacrificing and divination, but Plutarch surely did not. His statement in *De Superstitione* that Nicias should have killed himself rather than destroying the expedition with his superstition makes clear both his belief in Nicias' culpability, and his dislike of superstition and superstitious individuals. He felt strongly that religion and religious ceremonies were an important part of any politically active individual's life, but that Nicias' predilection went

beyond religion into superstition. This distaste for *deisidaimonia* and disapproval over the way in which Nicias met his end are at the heart of Plutarch's fundamental dislike and disapproval. It is true that in the biography Plutarch does not make any direct comment on Nicias and his fate, but in the *Synkrisis* he calls Crassus "less blameworthy" than Nicias because Crassus did not surrender or let himself be deceived by the enemy, while Nicias, "by means of his hope of shameful and inglorious safety fell into the enemies' hands and made his death more shameful for himself" (5.3). And there are clues throughout the biography to Plutarch's deeper feelings.

One such clue is the unflattering comparison of Nicias to Pericles, specifically in terms of their associates, Hiero and Anaxagoras. At Nic. 5.3, Plutarch used language very similar to that with which he described Pericles' relationship with Anaxagoras (*Per.* 4.4). Hiero is some kind of butler, or assistant, to Nicias, providing an interface with visitors and the public at large. Whereas the Nicias–Hieron relationship is delineated with an air of disapproval (Hieron is called Nicias' "fellow–actor", *syntragôdôn*), the Pericles–Anaxagoras relationship is regarded favorably. In fact, Plutarch says specifically that one of the advantages Pericles derived from association with Anaxagoras was that Pericles was thereby freed from superstition. "It appears that he was also lifted by [Anaxagoras] above superstition, that feeling which is produced by amazement at what happens in regions above us. It affects those who are ignorant of the causes of such things, and are crazed about divine intervention, and confounded through their inexperience in this domain; whereas the doctrines of natural philosophy remove such ignorance and inexperience, and substitute for timorous and inflamed superstition that unshaken reverence which is attended by good hope" (*Per.* 6.1). The contrast is striking between the two relationships, the one suppressing ignorance (Pericles and Anaxagoras) and the other at least partially promoting it (Nicias and Hiero).

Other viewpoints on superstition, before and after Plutarch's time, tend to agree with his. Despite the obvious connection between Theophrastus' Menandrian stock characters and the *Parallel Lives*, Plutarch does not cite the *Characters* at all; his eponymous citations of Theophrastus are limited to *De Causis Plantarum*, *Historia Plantarum*, and some fragments. Theophrastus' *Characters* should have appealed to Plutarch in light of his interest in personality and human nature, or, if the *Characters* is indeed a rhetoricians' handbook of examples, in light of Plutarch's interest in oratory, not to mention his general enthusiasm for the philosopher. It is likely, as Ussher has argued, that Plutarch and Aristotle share a dislike for Aristophanes, and perhaps Plutarch dislikes the *Characters* for the same reason he dislikes Aristophanes, although it seems unlikely. It is particularly surprising, if Plutarch was familiar with the *Characters*, that he makes no reference to "The Superstitious Man" (#16,

Ussher) in the *Life of Nicias* or in *De Superstitione*, for that matter. Theophrastus' Superstitious Man is very concerned with taking precautions, consulting seers, and interpreting his dreams. All of this apotropaic action is time-consuming, since all else halts: "If a marten should cross his path, he will not continue until someone else has gone by, or he has thrown three stones across the road. And if he should see a snake in his house, he will call up a prayer to Sabazius if it is one of the red ones; if it is one of the sacred variety, he will immediately construct a shrine on the spot. Nor will he go by the smooth stones at a crossroads without anointing them with oil from his flask, and he will not leave without falling on his knees in reverence to them" (16.2). There is plenty of that sort of thing in *Nicias*, particularly the episode where he delays the retreat of Athenian forces because of an eclipse. Plutarch goes into some detail about the fact that educated persons of Nicias' class should have known about eclipses and not been afraid. In *De Superstitione*, as quoted above, Nicias is presented as a horrible example, and in much stronger language than the biography: "It would perhaps have been the best thing in the world for Nicias...to have got rid of his superstition in the same way as Midas and Aristodemus [my note: i. e. suicide] rather than to be affrighted". The corresponding passage in *Nicias* describes the eclipse and Nicias' reaction: "T[he eclipse] was a great terror to Nicias and all those who were ignorant or superstitious enough to quake at such a sight." Plutarch then offers a much more scientific description of eclipse phenomena; he then says that Nicias' real problem was that he had no full-time seer on his staff, his old Stilbides "who used to set him free from most of his superstition" had recently died. Theophrastus' Superstitious Man, the *deisidaimon*, also does a great deal of consulting: he consults the seer when a mouse eats a hole in his barley sack, he "visits the dream analysts or the prophets or the omen-readers" whenever he has a dream, he is initiated monthly into the cult of Orpheus, and has himself purified if he sees "someone at the crossroads wreathed in garlic." The lack of ability to act as an individual, the delays involved in consulting others, and the obsession with carrying out the proper ritual sound very much like Nicias.

Post-Plutarch, Juvenal's *Satire 6* (*Against Women*) portrays upper- and lower-class women as obsessed with divination and fortune tellers. Juvenal too conflates superstition with religion, as he intersperses abusing the Isis-obsessed ladies for their extreme behaviors (i. e. swimming naked in the icy Tiber) with abuse over the ladies' predilection for various kinds of seers. He rails against the eunuch who advises his "heroine" and continues his diatribe: "No sooner has that fellow departed than a palsied Jewess, leaving her basket and her truss of hay, comes begging to her secret ear; she is an interpreter of the laws of Jerusalem, a high priestess of the tree, a trusty go-between of highest heaven. She, too, fills her palm, but more sparingly, for a Jew will tell you dreams of any kind you please for the minutest of coins. An Armenian or Commagenian

sooth-sayer, after examining the lungs of a dove that is still warm, will promise a youthful lover, or a big bequest from some rich and childless man; he will probe the breast of a chicken, or the entrails of a puppy, sometimes even of a boy; some things he will do with the intention of informing against them himself. Still more trusted are the Chaldaeans; every word uttered by the astrologer they will believe has come from Hammon's fountain, for now that the Delphian oracles are dumb, man is condemned to darkness as to his future."

Conclusion: In Plutarch's eyes, Nicias is without question a superstitious man ruled by ignorance and fear. Plutarch objects to superstition on grounds of content and style, for reasons intellectual and emotional – he dislikes the emotional outbursts typically associated with superstitious behavior as much as the lack of thought behind it. In *the Consolatio*, Plutarch writes his wife to tell her that he has just now heard of the death of their daughter, and that he assumes that the funeral has already been held. He expresses his expectation that the event has taken place in whatever way caused least pain to his wife, and also his willingness to provide any input for which she may have been waiting before she took some kind of action meant to relieve suffering, so long as these actions are not excessively fussy or superstitious (just a plain stele, please!). This is why Plutarch did not approve of Nicias' upgrade activity at Delos – it was too much, over the top, and ostentatious. Nicias is not seen as devoted in that matter, but rather self-obsessed, leading the choirs himself; not only asking the Delians to pray to Apollo for him, but engraving that condition of the gift upon a stele. Nicias' excesses kept him far from the devout area on the religious continuum, and confined him to the territory of terrified and ignorant exhibitionism: superstition.

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Self-esteem and Image-building. On Anger in *De cohibenda ira* and in Some *Lives*

Luc Van der Stockt

1 Moral vices and virtues are not strictly confined to the *temenos* of the individual; they have an inter-personal dimension as well. Inasmuch as *pathè* are ways in which we respond to our surroundings, and inasmuch as virtues and vices are, at least in Aristotle's view, modifications (through the operation of reason) of *pathè* (emotions; Nussbaum, 94–96), moral virtues and vices reveal what interest we take in our environment¹. Conversely, society confronts the individual with a complex of situations, opinions and values; it elicits emotional and ethical response.

In this pattern, anger as an emotion is a response generated by the feeling of being contempted, of being esteemed lightly (cf. *De coh. ira* 460D and E). It reveals that the angry man does indeed take some interest in the opinion of society or any of its individuals. The public opinion, the acknowledgement of one's worth (*doxa*) matters. Furthermore, anger intends to re-establish one's worth by taking punitive action against the 'agressor' (cf. the definition of anger in Arist. *Rh.* II.3, 1380a8 sqq.). It is clear that this chain of action and reaction can jeopardize the delicate social tissue; anger is a social problem, or, as Plutarch would put it: anger can cause tragedies (cf. *De coh. ira* 462B).

Plutarch's dialogue *De cohibenda ira* explores the possibilities and techniques of a therapy of anger. From a stern philosophical point of view, the therapy should be motivated by the will to do "freely at the bidding of our reason, ..., what we now do perforce at the command of the law" (*Adv. Col.* 1124E). Moreover, we expect the therapy to be brought about through the exercise of reason. Yet, even the very introduction of *De coh. ira* makes one attentive to the importance and bearing of social standards and pressure in the process of healing anger. An extremely polite Sulla compliments Fundanus on the fact that the latter's anger "has become so gentle and submissive to reason" (453A), as Sulla himself has been able to observe. But he also says that Fundanus is thus showing the qualities that "should be present in men of breeding" (πρέποντα ... προσεῖναι τοῖς καλοῖς κἀγαθοῖς; 453C). The notion of καλοκαγαθία refers to a social status as well as to ethical excellence (Donlan, 372; Schwartz, 26),

1 On anger and its societal implications, see Cairns, 17. On the social and cultural conditioning of anger, see also Harris, 37–39.

and thus Sulla's compliment also implies that Fundanus now behaves like society expects a man of his status² to behave.

In this paper I suggest that Plutarch's therapy of anger is indeed partly motivated by social considerations (that is: it is also brought about for the sake of appearance and public image), and that it is often implemented through non-philosophical, even behaviouristic techniques. I will discuss briefly only a couple of illustrations; they occur in the dialogue § 6 as well as in some *Lives*.

2. Fundanus began his therapy by observing the passion of anger in others³ – “not knowing whether that was the right thing to do” (455E: εἰ μὲν ὀρθῶς οὐκ οἶδα): this modesty⁴ conveniently goes hand in hand with a sharp intuition of what would harm the dignity of a Roman aristocrat's outward appearance⁵, of what would make him look ridiculous (γελοῖος) and despised (καταφρόνησις: 455E). Anyhow, he casually compares this technique to the way the Spartans treated the helots. Fundanus only alludes to an institution which Plutarch reports elsewhere with very much the same words and more detail (table 1):

Table 1: Drunken Helots

<i>Lyc.</i> 28, 8	Καὶ τᾶλλα δὲ τραχέως προσεφέροντο καὶ σκληρῶς αὐτοῖς, ὥστε καὶ πίνειν ἀναγκάζοντες πολὺν ἄκρατον εἰς τὰ συσσίτια παρεισῆγον ⁶ , ἐπιδεικνύμενοι τὸ μεθύειν οἷόν ἐστι τοῖς νέοις. καὶ ᾧδὰς ἐκέλευον ᾄδειν καὶ χορείας χορεῦν ἀγενεῖς καὶ καταγελάστους, ἀπέχεσθαι δὲ τῶν ἐλευθέρων.
<i>Demetr.</i> 1, 4	οἱ μὲν οὖν παλαιοὶ Σπαρτιᾶται τοὺς εἰλωτας ἐν ταῖς ἐορταῖς πολὺν ἀναγκάζοντες πίνειν ἄκρατον εἰσῆγον εἰς τὰ συμπόσια, τοῖς νέοις οἷόν ἐστι τὸ μεθύειν ἐπιδεικνύντες.
<i>Apo. Lac.</i> 239A	Τοῖς παισὶν ἐπεδείκνυον τοὺς εἰλωτας μεθύσαντες εἰς ἀποτροπὴν πολυοινίας.
<i>De coh. ira</i> 455E	Ἐγὼ γοῦν, εἰ μὲν ὀρθῶς, οὐκ οἶδα, ταύτην δὲ τῆς ἰατρείας ἀρχὴν ποιησάμενος, ὥσπερ οἱ Λάκωνες ἐν τοῖς εἰλωσι τὸ μεθύειν οἷόν ἐστι, κατεμάθανον τὴν ὀργὴν ἐν ἐτέροις.

2 On Fundanus' public career, see Van Hoof.

3 This is rather convenient: Fundanus is not forced to examine and convict *himself* for any shameful behaviour, whilst the reader is not supposed to make a fuss over Fundanus' former σφοδρὸν ἐκεῖνο καὶ διάπυρον πρὸς ὀργήν (453B) and to visualize the angry Fundanus ...

4 Fundanus gives testimony to his personal experience; he has not “studied books”, let alone slavishly followed their prescriptions; to that extent, his modesty implies that he declines for himself the authority of professional philosophers (and implicitly acknowledges their authority).

5 On gravitas/dignity, see Ferguson, 172–177.

6 Plutarch apparently confuses the Athenian symposion with the Spartan *συσσίτια*.

I quote the translation⁷ of the passage from the *Life of Lycurgus*:

“And in other ways also they were harsh and cruel to the Helots. For instance, they would force them to drink too much strong wine, and then introduce them into their public messes, to show the young men what a thing drunkenness was. They also ordered them to sing songs and dance dances that were low and ridiculous, but to let the nobler kind alone.”

The story has, of course, its proper place⁸ in the *Life of Lycurgus*, where it is part of the discussion on the Lycurgan constitution; the “harsh and cruel treatment” is condemned through the very terms in which it is described. In *Demetr.* 1, 4 the critique is even more outspoken: “And though I do not think that the perverting of some to secure the setting right of others, is very humane, or a good civil policy ...”!

Now, firstly, it is clear that, in order to make the story applicable to the situation of Fundanus, it had to be modified. The fact that drunken helots were instrumental in the education of the *young*, could not apply to the adult Fundanus: that had to be left out. The fact that the helots were drunk because they were *forced* to drink was an even more embarrassing item: the analogical observation that “other people are *forced* to be angry” would be most unfortunate for the argument! Consequently, the item is omitted. What is left is the only possible *tertium comparationis*: ridiculous behaviour as a result of drunken “annientamento psichico” (Manfredini–Piccirilli, 283) functions as a deterrent from the shameful behaviour in the case of anger. And now, secondly, we can observe what is going on in *De coh. ira*: shameful behaviour of others is a legitimate (non-criticised!) means of deterring someone from anger. What motivates Fundanus is public image: the angry man looks undignified and ridiculous.

The first thing⁹ Fundanus observed, was the unnatural change in the outward appearance of angry persons, a change “in countenance, colour, gait, and voice”. Now, no sensible reader will imagine that Fundanus actually *read* the symptoms of anger in *some book* and is now, in the dialogue, only *pretending* that he observed them in reality; as a *persona* in the dialogue, Fundanus is perfectly plausible and convincing. Yet, the very assumption of a bookish

7 All translations are from the *Loeb Classical Library*.

8 Fundanus’ tactics are in accordance with Plato’s advice concerning the imitations of the laughable in *Legg.* 816d–e: ἀλλὰ αὐτῶν ἕνεκα τούτων καὶ μανθάνειν αὐτὰ δεῖ, τοῦ μή ποτε δι’ ἄγνοιαν δρᾶν ἢ λέγειν ὅσα γελοῖα, μηδὲν δέον, δούλοις δὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα καὶ ξένοις ἐμῖσθοις προστάττειν μιμεῖσθαι. See also Plutarch’s *Life of Demetrius* 1, 4: ἀλλ’ ἀβελτερίαν ἡγοῦνται καὶ ἄγνοιαν ὧν μάλιστα γινώσκειν προσήκει τοὺς ὀρθῶς βιωσομένους.

9 Καὶ πρῶτον μὲν; the section runs to 456D, § 7 (where ταῦτ’ οὖν ὀρώντί μοι echoes the ὀρῶν of 455E), and concerns ὄψις and φωνή. It is followed by another observation in §8: οὐ ταῦτα δὲ μόνον ... ἀλλὰ καί.

origin of the symptoms of anger has been made *about Plutarch*: “Die ganze Erörterung Plutarchs über die Hässlichkeit der Erscheinung Zürnender macht den Eindruck, als ob sie nach einer Vorlage, in der die fürchterlichen und lächerlichen Wirkungen des Zornes (...) dargelegt waren, für den Person des redenden Fundanus zurecht geformt sei” (Schlemm, 595). And indeed, there are striking parallels between e.g. Plutarch and Seneca (Schlemm, 594–595; Rabbow, 77–78; Fillion–Lahille, 234, 265) (table 2); Seneca *De ira* II, 35 reads as follows:

“Nothing, however, will prove as profitable as to consider first the hideousness of the thing, and then its danger. No other emotion has an outward aspect so disordered: it makes ugly the most beautiful faces; through it, the most peaceful countenance becomes transformed and fierce; from the angry all grace departs; if they were well-kempt and modish in their dress, they will let their clothing trail and cast off all regard for their person; if their hair was disposed by nature or by art in smooth and becoming style, it bristles up in sympathy with their state of mind; the veins swell, ... Within the man’s breast how much more terrible must be the expression, how much fiercer the breathing, how much more violent the strain of his fury, that would itself burst unless it found an outburst! As is the aspect of an enemy or wild beasts wet with the blood of slaughter or bent upon slaughter; as are the hellish monsters of the poet’s brain, all girt about with snakes and breathing fire; as are those most hideous shapes that issue forth from hell to stir up wars and scatter discord among the peoples and tear peace all to shreds; as such let us picture anger – its eyes aflame with fire, blustering with hiss and roar and moan and shriek etc.”

Table 2: Plutarch and Seneca on anger

De coh. ira	455E:
	a) μεταβάλλοντας ὄψιν, χροάν, βάδισμα, φωνήν
	b) εἰκόνα τοῦ πάθους ἀπεματτόμην
	[Gaius Gracchus]
	456B:
	c) αὐτοῦ προσφέροντος ἐπὶ ταῖς ὀργαῖς ἔσοπτρον
Seneca, <i>De ira</i>	II, 35, 3:
	a) <i>facies turbatior, ora, vultus; venae; pectus; vocis eruptio; colla; artus; manus</i>
	II, 35, 4:
	<i>intus ... animus:</i>
	II, 35,5
	b) [<i>figuremus, facies: allegory</i>]
	II, 36, 1:
	c) <i>aspexisse speculum</i>
	II, 36, 2
	<i>animus si ostendi posset</i>

But a closer look at both authors also reveals important differences. To Seneca, the outward appearance of an angry person (II, 35, 3: direct observation of others; II, 36, 1: observation of oneself in a mirror) is an occasion to speculate about the deformity of the *inner animus*. The result is the construction of a “Phantasiebild” (Rabbow, 78) which is elaborated with much rhetorical sway (Nussbaum, 419). Fundanus on the other hand shows no particular interest in the ‘inner face’ of anger and is not inclined to create a mere phantasy so as to be deterred. His image (εἰκόν) of anger is more sculptural¹⁰, more ‘realistic’; it sticks to outward appearance: πάνυ δυσχεραίνων εἰ φοβερὸς οὕτως καὶ παρακεκινηκῶς ὀρῶμαι ποτε ... οὐ μόνον ἰδεῖν ἄγριος ... ἀλλὰ καὶ φωνὴν κτλ. (“I was extremely uncomfortable to think that I should ever appear so terrible and deranged to my friends and my wife and daughters, not merely savage and unfamiliar to their sight, but also speaking with so harsh and rough a voice as were others etc.”). The corporeal ugliness of anger, violating the Roman aristocrat’s *dignitas* and *decus*, is a sufficient and socially motivated deterrent.

Moreover, Plutarch, unlike Seneca, “quotes” (has Fundanus “quoting”) Hippocrates’ *Prognosticon*, 2: Σκέπτεσθαι δὲ χρή ὧδε ἐν τοῖσιν ὀξέσι νουσήμασι· πρῶτον μὲν τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ νοσέοντος, εἰ ὁμοίον ἔστι τοῖσι τῶν ὑγιαίνοντων, μάλιστα δὲ, εἰ αὐτὸ ἐσωτέω. Οὕτω γὰρ ἂν εἴη ἄριστον, τὸ δ’ ἐναντιώτατον τοῦ ὁμοίου, δεινότατον. Fundanus says: “As Hippocrates says that the most severe disease is that in which the countenance of the sufferer is most unlike itself”. What worries Fundanus is that the ugliness of his face would eventually make it savage, (unlike its usual self, and thus) *unfamiliar* (ἄγριος καὶ ἀσυνήθης) to his friends, his wife, his daughters. Fundanus’ concern about anger and its consequences is the concern about the image the closest circle of his acquaintances will have of him. Let’s not be mistaken: those acquaintances are not cared for because of themselves, but regarded as instruments; confrontation with those for whom we care, will make us ashamed and willing to correct ourselves!

3. The mention of the angry man’s harsh and rough voice (φωνὴ ἀπηγνῆς καὶ τραχεῖα: 455E) and of the loss of grace of speech (λόγου χάρις: 455E) ‘casually’ makes Fundanus think of C. Gracchus¹¹, and C. Gracchus in turn reminds the reader of ... Plutarch’s *Life of the Gracchi* (table 3)! In the dialogue, the anecdote is told as follows:

“He was not only severe in his conduct, but spoke too passionately; so he caused a pitch-pipe to be made of the sort which musicians use to lead the voice up and

10 ἀπεματτόμην: cf *LSJ*, s.v. III: “model as a sculptor”.

11 The example of C. Gracchus is introduced at the end of the chapter, and loosely linked to it by means of ὅθεν, as is the case with the story about Socrates in § 4.

down the scales to the proper note; with this in hand his servant used to stand behind him as he spoke and give him a decorous and gentle tone which enabled Gracchus to remit his loud cries and remove from his voice the harsh and passionate element; just as the shepherds' *Wax-joined pipe, clear sounding, drones a slumberous strain*, so did he charm and lay to rest the rage of the orator."

Table 3: The case of Gaius Gracchus

<i>T. Gracchus</i> II, 5–6	<i>De coh. ira</i> 456A
<p>τῷ δ' ἤθει κατὰ τὴν τοῦ λόγου διαφορὰν ὁ μὲν ἐπιεικῆς καὶ πρᾶος, ὁ δὲ τραχὺς καὶ θυμοειδής, ὥστε καὶ παρὰ γνώμην ἐν τῷ λέγειν ἐκφερόμενον πολλάκις ὑπ' ὀργῆς τὴν τε φωνὴν ἀποξύνειν καὶ βλασφημεῖν καὶ συνταράττειν τὸν λόγον. ὅθεν καὶ βοήθημα τῆς ἐκτροπῆς ταύτης ἐποιήσατο [τὸν] Λικίνιον οἰκέτην οὐκ ἀνόητον, ὃς ἔχων φωναστικὸν ὄργανον, ᾧ τοὺς φθόγγους ἀναβιβάζουσιν, ὀπισθεν ἐστῶς τοῦ Γαίου λέγοντος, ὀπηνίκα τραχυνόμενον αἴσθοιτο τῇ φωνῇ καὶ παραρρηγνύμενον δι' ὀργήν, ἐνεδίδου τόνον μαλακόν, ᾧ τὸ σφοδρὸν εὐθύς ἐκεῖνος ἅμα τοῦ πάθους καὶ τῆς φωνῆς ἀνίεις ἐπραῦνετο καὶ παρεῖχεν ἑαυτὸν εὐανάκλητον.</p>	<p>Γαίῳ μὲν οὖν Γράκχῳ τῷ ῥήτορι καὶ τὸν τρόπον ὄντι χαλεπῶ καὶ περιπαθέστερον λέγοντι διηρμοσμένον ἦν συρίγγιον, ᾧ τὴν φωνὴν οἱ ἀρμονικοὶ σχεδὸν ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρα διὰ τῶν τόνων ἄγουσι, καὶ τοῦτ' ἔχων οἰκέτης αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ὀπισθεν ἐστῶς ἐνεδίδου τόνον ἐπιεικῆ καὶ πρᾶσον, ᾧ τὴν κραυγὴν ἀνεκαλεῖτο καὶ τὸ τραχὺ καὶ τὸ θυμικὸν ἀφήρει τῆς φωνῆς, ὥσπερ ὁ τῶν βουκόλων</p> <p>“κηρόπλαστος ὀτοβεῖ δόναξ ἀχέτας ὑπνοδόταν νόμον,”</p> <p>ἐπιθέλων καὶ καθιστὰς τὴν ὀργὴν τοῦ ῥήτορος.</p>

Syntactical (the same genitivus absolutus with λέγοντος, twice the same relative clauses with ᾧ, the same participium conjunctum ἐστῶς) as well as verbal reminiscences make it clear that Plutarch had ‘his’ version of the story pretty well in mind¹² when writing *De coh.* But the distinction ἦθος – λόγος, made in the *Life*, appears in the dialogue as the distinction τρόπος – λόγος; τρόπος points, more than ἦθος, to “conduct”, as befits the rather behaviouristic therapy here.

Furthermore, Plutarch is apparently very consistent in his terminology concerning anger, creating two opposed semantic fields: ἐπιεικῆς, πρᾶος, μαλακός¹³ on the one hand, χαλεπός, περιπαθέστερος, τραχὺς, θυμικός on the other¹⁴. Now, Tiberius and Gaius are depicted as opposed precisely in these matters, Tiberius being more like the healed Fundanus, Gaius more like the

12 I don't think that Plutarch actually consulted the *Life* – besides, we know nothing about the relative chronology! –, nor that he consulted any ὑπόμνημα about this story for the dialogue.

13 Cf. 453B: μαλακότης.

14 Both the *Life* and the dialogue use “cathartic terminology”: ἐπραῦνετο and καθιστὰς. This time, catharsis is clearly linked to music. On this musical catharsis and its terminology, see Jeanne Croissant 75–109; on catharsis in Plutarch, see Van der Stockt 132–138.

angry ‘others’ Fundanus has in mind. It is tempting then, to test if there are more similarities between *De coh.* and the the *Life*, in which latter writing we find the following terminology:

Table 4: Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus

tertium comparationis	Tiberius	Gaius
ἰδέα προσώπου, βλέμμα, κίνημα λόγος	πρᾶος, καταστηματικός βεβηκότητα κοσμίως ἡδίων, ἐπαγωγὸς οἴκτου	ἔντονος, σφοδρός περιπάτω, περισπάσαι φοβερὸς, περιπαθήs εἰs δείνωσιν
λέξις	καθαρός, διαπεπονημένος ἀκριβῶs	πιθανός, γεγανωμένος
δίαιτα, τράπεζα ἦθος	εὐτελής, ἀφελής ἐπιεικής, πρᾶος	νεοπρεπήs, περιέργος τραχύs, θυμοειδής

The underlined terms indeed have their parallel in *De coh. ira*:

καταστηματικός: cf. 456A: καθιστάs; cathartic terminology

βεβηκότητα: cf. 455F: βάδισμα

ἡδίων: cf. 455F: τὸ προσηγῆs ἐν ὁμιλίᾳ¹⁵

εὐτελής: cf. 461C: ἐπιστέον οὖν τὸ σῶμα δια εὐτελείας πρὸs εὐκολίαν αὐταρκεs
ἑαυτῶ γινόμενον

ἀφελής: 461A: διὸ μεῖζον οὐδὲν εὐκολίας καὶ ἀφελείας ἐφόδιον εἰs πραότητα
πρὸs οἰκέτας καὶ γυναῖκα καὶ φίλους τῶ δυναμένῳ συμφέρεσθαι τοῖs παροῦσι
καὶ μὴ δεομένῳ πολλῶν καὶ περιττῶν

ἐπιεικής, πρᾶος: 456A

ἔντονος: εὐτονία/ἀτονία/τόνος: cf. 453E, 456F, 457D, 459C, 460B

σφοδρός: cf. e.g. 453B: τὸ δὲ σφοδρὸν ἐκεῖνο

φοβερὸς: cf. 455F: εἰ φοβερὸς ... ὀρῶμαι

περιπαθήs: cf. 456A: περιπαθήστερον λέγοντι

πιθανός: cf. 455F: οὐ τὸ πιθανόν ... διαφυλάττειν

Even rassembled as mere predicates regardless of the subjects to which they are applied in the two contexts, the terms are centered round and reveal in a consistent way the same theme: ὀργή and its manifestations versus πραότηs and its characteristics. The chapters on C. Gracchus in the *Life* and *De coh. ira* thus share a common terminology and a common conception of ὀργή: Plutarch uses the same material twice. In the *Life*, the story illustrates how prone C. Gracchus was to anger, in the dialogue, it illustrates how anger ends

15 Προσηγῆs as equivalent to ἡδύs in *Nic.* 5, 5, *De aud.* 46E, *De tuenda* 126D, *Q.C.* 708C, 709C, *Amat.* 754D, *De an. procr.* 1021B; προσηγῆs opposed to ἀηδῆs in *De tranq.* 473E, *De exilio* 599F.

in improper behaviour. One might wonder why Plutarch, in the dialogue, didn't make more of this 'improper behaviour'; after all, the wild gestures and shouting of an orator were regarded as improper. But then, of course, Fundanus is interested in the improper behaviour of the angry man in general, not of 'the orator'. It is, for that matter, interesting to confront Plutarch's interpretation of the behaviour of G. Gracchus with the story in Cicero, *de Orat.* III, 60, 225¹⁶. At first side, the anecdote is the same, and scholars have been tempted to regard Cicero as Plutarch's source – there are indeed striking similarities:

“Accordingly (as You, Catulus, may hear from that scholarly person, your retainer Licinius, who was a slave of Gracchus and acted as his amanuensis) he made a practice of having a skilled attendant to stand behind him out of sight with a little flageolet when he was making a speech, in order promptly to blow a note to rouse him when he was getting slack or to check him from overstraining his voice”.

Itaque idem Gracchus, quod potes audire, Catule, ex Licinio cliente tuo, litterato homine, quem servum sibi ille habuit ad manum, cum eburneola solitus est habere fistula, qui staret occulte post ipsum (T.G. II, 6, 456A: ὀπισθεν ἔστῳς), *cum contionaretur* (456A: αὐτοῦ λέγοντος; T.G. II, 6: τοῦ Γαίου λέγοντος), *peritum hominem* (T.G. II, 6: οἰκέτην οὐκ ἀνόητον), *qui inflaret celeriter* (T.G. II, 6: εὐθύς?) *eum sonum, quo illum aut remissum excitaret aut a contione revocaret.*

In order to explain the difference between Cicero and Plutarch, we would normally bring in the notion of 'adaptation': since Gaius, to Plutarch's mind in the *Life* as well as to Fundanus' mind in *De cohibenda ira*, was more in need of calming than of exciting θυμός, the *Life* as well as the dialogue aptly mention only the calming effect of the servant's whistling¹⁷. But there is a fundamental difference between Cicero and Plutarch. In Cicero, the story is told in the context of a discussion of the qualities of rhetorical delivery (*actio*); one of the requirements for a good delivery is the 'frequent change of tone', the alternation an orator produces in the tone of his voice, and G. Gracchus is much admired for that! The interpretation of C. Gracchus's harsh voice as a symptom of anger is typical for Plutarch.

It is no surprise then, that Fundanus, looking at angry people speaking with rough voices, "saw C. Gracchus". But it is surprising that C. Gracchus, being

16 It is possible that Cicero was Plutarch's actual source for the anecdote; cf. Flacelière – Chambry, 93; Valgiglio, 16 expresses some doubts, because there are differences between Cicero and Plutarch. As I explain above, the difference is not altogether inexplicable. Peter, 93 gives no argument for his denial of Plutarch's use of Cicero here.

17 If it is correct, Plutarch adapted it to his own needs merely by the omission of the "aut remissum excitaret". Or did Plutarch simply interpret "revocaret" as εὐανάκλητος in T.G. II, 6? The story as told in Cicero might, for that matter, be wrong: as Gellius I, 11, 10–16 remarks, Gaius had no need of excitement!

characterised as potentially irascible in the initial σύγκρισις of the *Life*, turns out to be not that irascible at all in the rest of the *Life*, although he shows “stürmische” energy¹⁸. All in all, the somewhat negative characterisation of Gaius in the *Life* seems more in accordance with the philosophy of *De cohibenda* than with the general tendency of the biography¹⁹.

Fundanus, when telling the story of C. Gracchus, ‘added’ a quote, and, for that matter, a quote from Aeschylus’ *Prometheus*²⁰! The two verses, well inserted into the syntax of Fundanus’ sentence, are supposed to illustrate (ὡσπερ) the action of Gaius’ servant, by a reference to the piping of Hermes who thus made Argus asleep: a ‘musical illustration’ for a ‘musical practice’. But when he continues his sentence, Fundanus explicitly interpretes that action as a θέλξις. At this point, it becomes clear that the instrument is not simply deterring Gaius from speaking roughly, but also that it influences his behaviour inadvertently and in a non-rational manner. Music calming θυμός: this is not a stern logical or philosophical therapy, but a rather mechanical recipe!

Anyhow, Fundanus comes to the conclusion that he himself would appreciate it²¹ if a slave, but then of course a slave with a sense of measure and finesse, would hold up a mirror against him when he is in rage. The train of thoughts on ‘observation of others’ now finally ends in ‘seeing one self’, the mirror taking the place (of the pitch-pipe and) of others²².

4. Since it would be too hazardous to come to formal conclusions on the basis of this quick and incomplete exploration, I make only two final observations.

The first observation concerns the very point of the ‘non-philosophical’ therapy of anger. In the first place, I am not arguing that *De cohibenda* promotes only ‘non-philosophical’ techniques. The ἐπιλογισμοί, e.g., are an integral part of the ethical training and they constitute a clearly cognitive moment in the therapy. Secondly, the very concept of *pathos* implies social interaction and

18 Ingenkamp, 4321.

19 Cf. Ingenkamp, 4344, concerning the introduction and the synkrisis of the *Life of the Gracchi*. The angry Gaius turns up in *Praec. ger. reip.* 798F as well. The biographer, on the other hand, seems to follow sources that are favourable to the Gracchi: cf. Flacelière–Chambry, 91.

20 The quotation is from direct reading: cf. Di Gregorio, 25 and 29.

21 οὐκ ἂν ἠχθόμην is perhaps not so much a litotes than an adequately phrased denial of what usually happened if a slave were so ‘impertinent’!

22 Seneca (cf. supra) had attributed to the Stoic Sextius the advice to use a mirror. The combination of this element together with the Pythagorean advice of silence, made Rabbow, 1914: 80–82 conclude that Sotion is Seneca’s and Plutarch’s common source in this matter. Notice however that Seneca corrects the image: a man who turns to a mirror is already healed. This is truly Stoic–Chrysepean and ... there is no trace of it in Plutarch!

confrontation with what society regards as valuable. So one should not be too surprised to see image-building and the care for self-presentation as a *kalokagathos* playing a role in the therapy of a *pathos*. It would, for that matter, be interesting to look into those cases where Plutarch argues for opposition to, rather than for conformity with what is socially acceptable: what are those cases, how many are they and how is Plutarch arguing there?

The second observation concerns the relation *Moralia-Vitae*. Going by the analogies between, e.g., the use of the flute or the treatment of helots in *De cohibenda* and the *Lives*, one could be tempted to call the *Lives* popular-philosophical writings, in that they sketch a life the reader should use as a mirror in order to make ethical progress; or, conversely and perhaps more convincingly, to call *De cohibenda ira* a biography: the sketch of a βίος with its own narration of structured πράγματα (nl. the story of Fundanus' healing process), its own serious πράξις, its historical and particular struggle for *aretè*. With this latter circumscription of biography, I suggest something like 'tragedy', or at least 'drama'. In short, even the material 'parallels' between *De cohibenda ira* and the *Lives* make us question the irritating rigidity of genological distinctions.

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Genres and Their Implications: Meddlesomeness in *On Curiosity* versus the *Lives*¹

Lieve Van Hoof

The *Lives*, so it is stressed over and over again, have an ethical aim. And so do, obviously, the *Moralia*, or at least the group of writings within that corpus which Ziegler (col. 637) labelled Plutarch's "popularphilosophisch-ethischen Schriften." It is often interesting and instructive to compare Plutarch's treatment of one and the same virtue or vice in both groups of works, as has recently been done, for example, concerning anger.² Yet on the other hand some of the vices Plutarch dedicated a whole work of the *Moralia* to do not recur in the *Lives* at all. Ἀδολεσχία, for instance, is mentioned only regarding Alexander in the *Lives*,³ and then does not have the same, negative sense it has in *On Talkativeness*. Or again, it is said only once of a protagonist that he is subject to compliance (δυσωπία),⁴ on which Plutarch wrote a work as well. Why, then, did Plutarch find these vices important enough to write a whole treatise about them, and why do they receive little to no attention in the *Lives*?⁵

The current paper focuses on πολυπραγμοσύνη. This case is somewhat more complicated, in that the word πολυπραγμοσύνη does occur in the *Lives*, yet it is never, as will be shown, applied to a protagonist in the sense it has in *On Curiosity*.⁶ In a first part, this paper therefore analyses what exactly Plutarch

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2 See, for example, Nikolaidis 1991, 172; Alexiou, 101–113; Duff, 87–89 and 210–215.

3 *Life of Alexander* 23.7.

4 Viz. *Solon* 14.7. Note that in *Brutus* 6.9, Plutarch has the protagonist deem nothing more disgraceful than to be subject to compliancy.

5 The *terminus post quem* for *On Curiosity* is Domitian's death in 96. See Jones, 72. Dumortier – Defradas, 263 assign the work to "l'époque de Trajan", Inglese 1996, 29–30 talks about "tra il 100 e il 120", taking into account the relative chronology. Although it therefore cannot be counted among the early works of Plutarch, many of the *Lives* were written still after *On Curiosity*, so Plutarch did 'know' πολυπραγμοσύνη as intended in *On Curiosity* when writing at least some of the *Lives*.

6 The work, number 97 in the *Catalogue of Lamprias*, has not been treated often or extensively by scholars in the past. Known to me are, except for the – mostly short – introductions accompanying the editions of Helmbold, Dumortier – Defradas, Pettine,

had in mind when adhibiting the word πολυπραγμοσύνη in *On Curiosity* and the *Lives*. In the second part, it explores some of the implications of the fact that *On Curiosity* and the *Lives* belong to different genres in an attempt to explain why none of the protagonists of the *Lives* is represented as subject to πολυπραγμοσύνη in the way that word is understood in *On Curiosity*.

1.1 At the beginning of *On Curiosity*, Plutarch defines πολυπραγμοσύνη as follows:

ἡ πολυπραγμοσύνη φιλομάθειά τις ἔστιν ἄλλοτρίων κακῶν (515D)⁷

Πολυπραγμοσύνη is here defined as “a desire to learn (φιλομάθεια) other people’s (ἄλλοτρίων) evils (κακῶν)”. The three constituting elements of this definition are given further attention in the rest of the work. In a first part (§1b–3a)⁸, the stress is on the *polypragmōn*’s interest in *other people’s* affairs: *polypragmōnes* cannot bear to look into their own souls. After that, the focus is shifted towards the *polypragmōn*’s preference for *evil* things (§3b–6, esp. 516D–F, 517F, and 518A). Dubious genealogies, seduced virgins, adulterous wives, indicted processes, internecine struggles: these are the topics that carry away his interest. The third, and longest part of the work (§7–16) shows the *polypragmōn*’s *desire to learn* ‘at work’: his life is completely dominated by *polypragmosynē*, in that he neglects his duties, is obsessively busy with searching out other people’s evils, reacts impulsively or mechanically to whatever he happens to notice, and, consequently, has no control over his life.⁹ This last part of the work also contains the most elaborate therapy for *polypragmosynē*:

μέγιστον [...] πρὸς τὴν τοῦ πάθους ἀποτροπὴν ὁ ἐθισμός, ἔαν πόρρωθεν ἀρξάμενοι γυμνάζωμεν ἑαυτοὺς καὶ διδάσκωμεν ἐπὶ ταύτην τὴν ἐγκράτειαν· καὶ γὰρ ἡ αὔξησις ἔθει γέγονε τοῦ νοσήματος κατὰ μικρὸν εἰς τὸ πρόσω χωροῦντος. ὄν δὲ τρόπον, εἰσόμεθα περὶ τῆς ἀσκήσεως ὁμοῦ διαλεγόμενοι (520D).

the greatest factor [...] to avert this affection is habituation: starting from its beginnings, to train and teach ourselves to acquire that self-control. It is, in fact, through habit that the disease has come to increase, advancing, as it did, little by

and Inglese (1996), studies by Hense, Ingenkamp, Volpe-Cacciatore, Walsh, and Inglese (1995). None of these studies, however, gave attention to the difference in use of the word πολυπραγμοσύνη in the *Moralia* versus the *Lives*.

7 Unless indicated differently, for *On Curiosity*, all text quotations are taken from the edition of Pohlenz, all translations from Helmbold, whereas for all other ancient works, both texts and translations are taken from the *Loeb Classical Library*.

8 §3a ends in 516D5 after the words βόσκουσα καὶ πιαίνουσα τὸ κακοήθες.

9 This is not only elaborated theoretically – the *polypragmōn*, Plutarch states (§12), is guided not by his reason but by his senses –, but also shines through grammatically, when Plutarch uses verbs in the passive mode. See, for example, τραχηλιζομένους καὶ περιγομένους (521B), and διαφορουμένης (521C).

little. How this habit is acquired, we shall learn when we discuss the proper training (520D).¹⁰

From this passage, it is clear that what Plutarch has in view is not so much a concrete act of curiosity, but rather a ‘disease’ developed (αὔξησις ἔθει γέγρονε τοῦ νοσήματος) over a longer period of time. In a first stage, the *polypragmōn* reads every inscription he encounters. Then he starts prying into other people’s houses. When the disease develops further, the *polypragmōn* wants to be around when something happens on the marketplace, is unable to resist when a successful show takes place at the theatre, when there is excitement in the stadium or the hippodrome, or when a friend invites him to come and see a (pantomimic)¹¹ dancer or a comedian. Finally, he demands to hear and see everything that concerns himself as soon as possible.

The overall impression, then, is of a man who is ‘hanging around’ in town, and will stop people just in order to learn the latest news (519A), irritated if there is none.

On a more abstract level, Plutarch interprets *polypragmosynē* as an affection (πάθος, 520D, 522B–C), and more specifically as a bad affection, related to envy (φθόνος, 515D and 518C) and *Schadenfreude* (ἐπιχαιρεκακία, 518C). As such, Plutarch vehemently pleads against it as being shameful (αἰσχρόν), harmful (βλαβερόν), and painful (λυπηρόν) – what Aristotle saw as the criteria for avoidance.¹² As has been shown by Ingenkamp, these criteria are of primary importance in Plutarch’s *Seelenheilungsschriften* as well: the demonstration that the reader’s behaviour meets the criteria of avoidance instead of choice, showing the danger and shame resulting from it, are to make the reader feel distressed, and thus incite him to change his behaviour. What Plutarch offers the reader with his work *On Curiosity*, is a therapy against *polypragmosynē*, comprising three stages. The first step (§1b–3a) directly urges the reader to actively examine and ameliorate his own soul. Yet as some people do not dare (οὐχ ὑπομένουσιν, 516C) to look into their own souls, the second remedy (§3b–6) proposes nature and history as more interesting topics to direct one’s attention to. Nevertheless, as nature is not bad and history not recent enough for the *polypragmōn*, this remedy is bound to fail as well. The conclusion must be that *polypragmosynē* should be done away with quite radically, by thoroughly

10 I modified Helmbold’s, 501 translation. See also the following note.

11 Liddell – Scott – Jones s.v. ὀρχηστής give “later esp. *pantomimic dancer*”, the specific word for this kind of dancer being παντόμιμος. Plutarch, however, never uses παντόμιμος, and apart from that, the sequence of highly popular forms of entertainment in which ὀρχηστής appears here, makes it likely that it denotes a *pantomimic* dancer. On the popularity of pantomime, see Seneca, *On Anger* 1.20.8.

12 See Ingenkamp, 74–5. Note that the same criteria, albeit much less systematically, are already mentioned by Plato, *Republic* II 363e–364a.

changing one's behaviour. The remedy proposed last in *On Curiosity* (§7–16) therefore contains some very concrete advice for real-life situations in which people reveal their being subject to *polypragmosynē*.

1.2 In the *Lives*, πολυπραγμονεῖν/πολυπράγμων/πολυπραγμοσύνη occur no more than thirty-two times (on a total of some 115 occurrences in all of Plutarch's works).

Of these already few occurrences, only two apply directly to the hero of the life in question. In the first case, Camillus, asked by the Romans to come back from Ardea, says to be ready to do so if they elect him as their general, while being careful not to meddle (πολυπραγμονήσειν, 24.3) with anything without a command.¹³ In the other instance, Eumenes does not openly take up a standpoint in the quarrel between the soldiers and the officers after Alexander's death, explaining that it is none of his business since he is no Macedonian (ὡς οὐδὲν αὐτῷ προσήκον ξένῳ ὄντι πολυπραγμονεῖν ἐν ταῖς Μακεδόνων διαφοραῖς, 3.1).¹⁴ In both cases, the hero explicitly rejects a πολυπραγμοσύνη which would take him to carry out or meddle in something which he has no (institutional, respectively natural) reason to busy himself with.

On the other hand, the heroes of the *Lives* often curtail other people's πολυπραγμοσύνη. Aemilius (*Aemilius* 13.6) tells his soldiers not to meddle (πολυπραγμονεῖν) but to leave the war to him, and so does Pompey (*Caesar* 33.5) tell the people. Demetrius, on the other hand, starts a war against the Aetolians because he notices that his people obey him on expedition, but are turbulent and meddlesome (πολυπράγμονας ὄντας, *Demetrius* 41.1) at home. Antony gets involved in a war because of his wife Fulvia's proclivity to intrigues (φύσει μὲν οὔσαν πολυπράγμονα, *Antony* 30.4). Alexander grapples with the same problem in a better way: he honours his mother but does not allow her to meddle in affairs (οὐκ εἶα δὲ πολυπραγμονεῖν, *Alexander* 39.12).¹⁵ Sulla addresses the senate in order to prevent the senators from concerning themselves (μὴ πολυπραγμονεῖν, *Sulla* 30.4) with a slaughter taking place simultaneously at his command. Pompey simply bribes the people with a distribution of lands so as to make them tame and indistinctively (οὐδὲν

13 A very similar case is *Agis* 12.3, where Plutarch talks about the limits of the ephors' power in Sparta: when both kings are in agreement, it would be unlawful (παράνομος) for the ephors to meddle (πολυπραγμονεῖν) disobliging the kings.

14 Cf. also *Eumenes* 3.14: Perdikkas is there said not to interfere (μηδὲν... πολυπραγμονοῦντος) in Eumenes' arrangements of the affairs of Cappadocia.

15 Πολυπραγμοσύνη and related words are repeatedly used by Plutarch to refer to women meddling in men's affairs. See *Pyrrhus* 29.12, *Agis* 7.5, and *Comparison Lycurgus-Numa* 3.10.

πολυπραγμονῶν, *Pompey* 48.3) approve of the decisions he proposed to be voted.

More generally, the mob is repeatedly characterised as meddlesome. Pericles, for example, takes measures in order to lighten the city of this idle and meddlesome mass (πολυπράγμονος ὄχλου, *Pericles* 11.6).¹⁶ Hand in hand with this meddlesomeness goes a tendency for revolutionary ideas, as is clear from the combination of the verbs πολυπραγμονεῖν and νεωτερίζειν, which occurs twice in the *Lives* (*Phocion* 29.5, and *Artaxerxes* 6.1).

What Pericles also tries to restrict, at a certain point, is the Athenians' imperialism (περιέκοπτε τὴν πολυπραγμοσύνην, *Pericles* 21.1), urging them towards a more defensive policy: he foresaw that they would ruin themselves by undertaking too much (πολυπραγμονοῦντες, *Comparison Pericles-Fabius* 2.3), as it indeed turned out. In other *Lives* as well, Plutarch uses πολυπραγμοσύνη and related words to refer to imperialistic policies of various people.¹⁷

In the *Life of Crassus*, Vibius sends out a slave to provide Crassus with food when the latter had hidden himself in a cave. He orders the slave to put the food nearby without investigating anything, threatening to kill him in case he does (προειπὼν πολυπραγμονοῦντι θάνατον, 4.4). Πολυπραγμονεῖν here refers to wondering about things one should simply accept.¹⁸ Finally, there are two passages in the *Lives* where people are eavesdropping and purposely overhearing things which do not regard them. One of them is Caesar's barber, who thus finds out about a plot against his master (ὠτακουστῶν καὶ πολυπραγμονῶν, *Caesar* 49.4). The other passage is about the traitors who moved among the Syracusans in order to overhear other people's talks (πολυπραγμονοῦντες, *Dion* 28.1) and report the news to the tyrants.¹⁹

1.3 Plutarch, then, uses πολυπραγμονεῖν/πολυπράγμων/πολυπραγμοσύνη, in both *On Curiosity* and the *Lives*. Etymologically, the words point to busying oneself (-πραγμονεῖν) a lot (πολυ-).²⁰ 'Busying oneself' refers primarily to a physical activity, but by extension also to a mental one. 'A lot' means with

16 A similar characterisation of the mob is to be found in *Coriolanus* 20.3.

17 See *Simon* 16.2, *Sulla* 5.6, and also *Phocion* 27.8.

18 So do the people in *Pericles* 23.1: although Pericles presented the people with a bill containing dubious expenses, they make no problems (μὴ πολυπραγμονήσας) and carry out no investigation. In the case of Rome, the nobles do not allow the multitude to inquire about or busy themselves with (οὐδὲ πολυπραγμονεῖν, *Romulus* 27.8) Romulus' disappearance during a storm at the end of his life.

19 In a positive variant, Lycurgus encourages the young Spartans to exert social control (πολυπραγμονεῖν, *Lycurgus* 18.4) by making them observe and comment on their fellow citizens. Also, the inquiry (πολυπραγμονοῦντες, 19.6) by the Achaean horsemen under Philopoemen's command after they had abandoned him to the enemy, is presented as justified.

20 For a short survey of its possible meanings, see also Demont, 28.

more than one's own things or more than one is supposed to busy oneself with – antonymous to τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν. For indeed, the common denominator behind all uses of the word seems to be the opposition of self and others: carrying out one's own versus someone else's tasks, ruling oneself versus ruling others, self-scrutiny versus 'scientific' research or versus meddlingness, etc.

Yet the uses and meanings of the word in *On Curiosity* and the *Lives* differ quite thoroughly. In *On Curiosity*, Plutarch adhibits the words in a particular, ethical-philosophical sense: the *polypragmōn* is a man frequenting public places in order to get and give information about others; a man with a preference for evils, which connects his πολυπραγμοσύνη with bad affections as envy and *Schadenfreude*; a man who slanders and reveals secrets. Such πολυπραγμοσύνη is a mental inquiry into the wrong object.

The *Lives* present a wholly different picture. Here πολυπραγμονεῖν / πολυπράγμων / πολυπραγμοσύνη are used mainly with political implications: carrying out someone else's tasks, imperialism, meddling with political decisions by people who ought not to, sycophantism – these are what πολυπραγμονεῖν refers to in the *Lives*. Conversely, references to πολυπραγμοσύνη as a mental inquiry are rather scarce. Vibius' slave, and Caesar's barber are two examples.²¹ What also catches the eye, is that none of the heroes of the *Lives* is a πολυπράγμων: Camillus and Eumenes explicitly refuse to undertake an action which could be interpreted as political πολυπραγμοσύνη, and in many cases, as we have seen, heroes (try to) restrict other people's πολυπραγμοσύνη as well.

The word πολυπραγμοσύνη, then, does occur in the *Lives* as well, but is never applied to the protagonists in the sense it has in *On Curiosity*. Conversely, to my knowledge, none of these protagonists is described in another terminology to exhibit the characteristics of *On Curiosity's polypragmōn*.²²

2. The difference in the use of 'πολυπραγμοσύνη', then, is too clear-cut to be the result of pure chance. All the more so, as it is striking how few²³ –

21 The only other instances of πολυπραγμοσύνη as a mental inquiry in the *Lives* are quoted in note 18 above. Note, however, that Plutarch here uses the verb πολυπραγμονέω, which, much better than the adjective πολυπράγμων, can denote a once-only instance of *polypragmosynē*.

22 Περιεργία, which is sometimes used as a synonym for πολυπραγμοσύνη in *On Curiosity*, occurs but four times in the *Lives*, and is said about someone else than the protagonist (*Pompey* 55.3 and *Alexander* 2.9), or used in another sense (*Gracchi* 2.4), or, once, explicitly denied for the protagonist (*Demetrius* 12.8). For Plutarch's lost treatise Περὶ περιεργίας, see Volpe-Cacciatore, 143, n. 60.

23 Apart from Odysseus and Socrates, Cyrus and Alexander are the only ones. Rusticus, on the other hand, is a contemporary example.

compared, that is, to Plutarch's usual practice in most of the popular-philosophical writings of the *Moralia* – are the historical examples of either bad or good attitudes concerning the vice under discussion given in *On Curiosity*.²⁴ All this begs for an explanation. More specifically, one wonders why none of the protagonists of the *Lives* is (represented as) a *polypragmōn*, although Plutarch on the one hand apparently found *polypragmosynē* important enough to dedicate a whole work to it, and, on the other hand, did have an eye for the vices of the protagonists of the *Lives*. This is the question the next pages will try to answer.

2.1 *On Curiosity* and the *Lives* are clearly different kinds of writings. In line with this, they are the heirs of different traditions. It is noteworthy that these traditions apparently tended to conceive of πολυπραγμοσύνη in different ways as well.

Thus, the senses that πολυπραγμοσύνη takes in the *Lives* recur in historiographical works. Herodotus (*Histories* 3.15.5), for example,²⁵ applies the word to the behaviour of Psammenitus, the Egyptian king who was captured by Cambyses but, having gained admiration, enjoyed a good regime. Herodotus says of him that “had he but been wise enough to mind his own business (μὴ πολυπρηγμονέειν), he would have so far won back Egypt as to be governor of it”. Instead, he raised a revolt among the Egyptians, and was therefore sentenced to death. The word was also used in historiographical works to denote the interfering of one city or state in another city's or state's affairs.²⁶ Thus, the opponents, both internal and external, of Athens' imperialism could use πολυπραγμοσύνη to denote that policy.²⁷

The implementation of πολυπραγμοσύνη in *On Curiosity*, on the other hand, may have its roots in comedy. Several new comedies now lost had Πολυπράγμων as their titles,²⁸ and among the verses ascribed to Menander is the following:

24 See also Nikolaidis (forthcoming), 4.

25 Another example can be found in Xenophon, *Hellenica* 1.6.3.2.

26 Although Athens is the case in point par excellence, other examples can be given as well: Polybius (e.g. *Histories* 2.13.3) applied the word to Rome's foreign policy, and Isocrates (*Areopagiticus* 80.4) to the barbarians.

27 See for example Thucydides 6.87.3, Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 833, and Isocrates, *On Peace* 26.4, 30.2, 58.7, and 108.1. Allison pointed to the fact that the word πολυπραγμοσύνη occurs only a few times in fifth century literature. Although this is correct, the question of whether cities and people ought to interfere with others seems to have been a vexed one at the time. As a result, many scholars have discussed it. See esp. Ehrenberg, Adkins, 311–317, and Demont, esp. 191–252.

28 Inglese 1996, 16 n. 23, lists the authors. Note also that Plutarch himself in 515D inserts a comic verse reproaching the *polypragmōn*.

πολυπραγμανεῖν μὴ βούλου ἀλλότρια κακά.

Don't inquire into other people's evils! (*Monostichoi* 1.583/703).²⁹

The clearest parallel for *polypragmosynē* as intended in *On Curiosity*, however, is to be found in a passage of Philo – in an ethical passage of a philosophical work, that is. For indeed, Philo describes the worthless man (ὁ φαῦλος) as hurrying (μετατρέχει) to every possible meeting of people, and exhibiting a meddlesome curiosity (πολυπράγμονος περιεργίας) about other people's (ἐτέρων) affairs, envious (φθονεῖν) if they are good, joyful (ἠδεσθαί) if bad.³⁰

Although Plutarch, as all authors, certainly has been influenced by his own reading, to propose this as the only, or even the main, reason why he used the word *πολυπραγμοσύνη* in *On Curiosity* and the *Lives* in the way he did, would be to go back to 19th and early 20th century *Quellenforschung*, reducing Plutarch to and explaining him from his 'sources'. Fortunately, scholarship has gone a long way since, showing Plutarch to be much more original and autonomous than had often been assumed.

Yet on the other hand, it is true that Plutarch, to my knowledge at least,³¹ does not 'invent' qualities for his heroes. Theoretically, it is therefore possible that the only reason why Plutarch does not characterize any of the heroes of his *Lives* as a *polypragmōn*, is that they had not been characterized as such before him. This, however, does not resolve, but only defer the problem: the question remains why they had not been represented as such before – if not by early authors, who wrote at times when *πολυπραγμοσύνη* was not yet being used in an ethical sense, then at least since Menander. Moreover, even if authors before him did not label it so, Plutarch could have interpreted the behaviour they ascribed to certain historical figures as *polypragmosynē*.

2.2 If, thus, the 'sources' offer at best a partial explanation, what else can be said that matters to our question? Why is none of the protagonists of the *Lives* subject to the affection (πάθος) *polypragmosynē*, although they all *are* so to other affections? What, in other words, distinguishes *polypragmosynē* from, say,

29 My translation. On curiosity in Menander, see Mette.

30 *On Abraham*, 20–21. Like Plutarch in his *On Curiosity*, Philo here interprets *πολυπραγμοσύνη* in an ethical sense: he opposes the worthless man to the man of worth (ὁ δ' ἀστειός), stresses the importance of learning to draw distinctions, and explains the interest in evil things by reference to affections. Notwithstanding, Philo did not dedicate an entire writing to the subject, nor propose any concrete solution for it, let alone a therapy enabling and teaching his readers to come to that solution.

31 Cf. Pelling 1980, and idem 1988, 284 and n. 5.

ambition or anger³² in a way so as to make the former, contrarily to the other affections, unfit for a hero?

In *On Curiosity*, as was shown above, Plutarch presents the *polypragmōn* as a man who, for want of better things to do, loiters about in town nosing into other people's affairs, and rejoicing when these are evil. The picture Plutarch draws is not only one-sided, focussing exclusively on *polypragmosynē* at the expense of any other characteristics, but even caricatural.³³ For indeed, the *polypragmōn* staged in *On Curiosity* is worse than any really existing person:³⁴ continuously and exclusively focussed on other people's evils, he has no business of his own to take care of at all. As such, the *polypragmōn* is not realistic, does not exist. And what is more, part of *On Curiosity's* effectiveness depends upon this fact:³⁵ the reader, who exhibits some of the behaviour of the *polypragmōn* but is, on the other hand, his better, is encouraged to distance himself even further from a figure presented in so repulsive a way. If, then, the readers of *On Curiosity* estimate themselves 'above' the *polypragmōn*, then they definitely estimate the heroes of the *Lives* to be so, as these are not only (at least supposed to be)³⁶ real human beings, but eminent ones.

For indeed, the fact that Plutarch wrote their *Life* implies that they were historically important enough to make it to the annals of history, and therefore, they would have made it to the top. In order to do so, they would

32 Note that Plutarch does not term the imperialism of, say, Alexander, *πολυπραγμοσύνη* – a meaning that word could easily have in a political or military context –, but sees it as part of his *φιλονικία* or *φιλοτιμία* – which implies self- instead of other-centredness. In line with what will be said in a moment about *πολυπραγμοσύνη* and narrative, this confirms that Plutarch conceives of his protagonists' imperial ambitions as (part of) their goal in life, and not as yet another aim. On ambition in the *Lives*, see, e.g., Frazier, Duff, 83–89, and Stadter (forthcoming).

33 Compare also the fact that Plutarch implemented *πολυπραγμοσύνη* in a quite idiosyncratic way. For indeed, apart from the fact that he was the first author to dedicate a whole treatise to *πολυπραγμοσύνη*, he was the only one to lay so much stress on, for example, the duration of *πολυπραγμοσύνη* and the fact that it is an affection. *Πολυπραγμοσύνη* as conceived of by Plutarch in *On Curiosity* appears nowhere else in Greek literature in so elaborate a way.

34 Precisely this may have made the *polypragmōn* such an interesting character for comedy (cf. above, n. 28), especially if one takes into account Aristotle's comments in *Poetics* 2, 1448a16–18 on the difference between comedy and tragedy regarding the imitated object. On this passage, see Else, 82–89.

35 What Pelling 1995 wrote in another context regarding Plutarch's ethics thus applies here as well: "There is evidently a two-way process here, with audience ready for the text, and the text affecting the audience." (p. 247).

36 For *Theseus and Romulus*, see Pelling 1999.

have needed so much time and energy as to leave none for trivialities as the ones the *polypragmōn* goes after. This is confirmed in *On Curiosity*:³⁷

καθάπερ γὰρ ὁ Σωκράτης παρήνει φυλάττεσθαι τῶν βρωμάτων ὅσα μὴ πεινῶντας ἐσθίειν ἀναπείθει καὶ τῶν πομάτων ὅσα πίνειν μὴ διψῶντας, οὕτω χρὴ καὶ ἡμᾶς τῶν θεαμάτων καὶ ἀκουσμάτων φυλάττεσθαι καὶ φεύγειν ὅσα κρατεῖ καὶ προσάγεται τοὺς μηδὲν δεομένους. ὁ γοῦν Κῦρος οὐκ ἐβούλετο τὴν Πάνθειαν ἰδεῖν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ Ἀράσπου λέγοντος ὡς ἄξιον θέας εἶη τὸ τῆς γυναικὸς εἶδος, οὐκοῦν, ἔφη, διὰ τοῦτο μᾶλλον αὐτῆς ἀφεκτέον· εἰ γὰρ ὑπὸ σοῦ πεισθεῖς ἀφικοίμην πρὸς αὐτήν, ἴσως ἂν με πάλιν ἀναπείσειεν αὐτὴ καὶ μὴ σχολάζοντα φοιτᾶν καὶ θεᾶσθαι καὶ παρακαθῆσθαι προέμενον πολλὰ τῶν σπουδῆς ἄξιων. ὁμοίως οὐδ' ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος εἰς ὄψιν ἦλθε τῆς Δαρείου γυναικὸς ἐκπρεπεστάτης εἶναι λεγομένης, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὴν μητέρα φοιτῶν αὐτῆς πρεσβῦτιν οὔσαν, οὐχ ὑπέμεινε τὴν νέαν καὶ καλὴν ἰδεῖν. (*On Curiosity* 522A)

For as Socrates used to advise the avoidance of such foods as tempt us to eat when we are not hungry and such drinks as tempt us to imbibe when we are not thirsty, so we also should avoid and guard against such sights and sounds as master and attract us without fulfilling any need of ours. Thus Cyrus was unwilling to see Pantheia; and when Araspes declared that the woman's beauty was worth seeing, Cyrus said, "Then this is all the more reason for keeping away from her. For if, persuaded by you, I should go to her, perhaps she herself might tempt me, when I couldn't spare the time, to go to see her again and sit by her, to the neglect of many important matters." So too Alexander would not go to see Darius' wife who was said to be very beautiful, but although he visited her mother, an elderly woman, he could not bring himself to see the young and beautiful daughter.

Cyrus and Alexander did not go to see a beautiful woman, for fear they might be tempted to do so again when they had no time (μὴ σχολάζοντα),³⁸ and thereby neglect matters worthy of attention. Cyrus' words and Alexander's deeds reveal not only that they have more important things to do,³⁹ but also that they are aware of this fact and live accordingly.⁴⁰ The *polypragmōn*, on the contrary, is not taken by any serious activity. Yet the process is double-edged, and the disease self-reinforcing: from being distracted by inscriptions on one's

37 Cf. also the *Comparison of Aristides and Cato*, 4.2, where Plutarch, talking about poverty because of soberness, industriousness, righteousness, and braveness, writes that "it is impossible for a man to do great things when his thoughts are busy with little things" (οὐ γὰρ ἔστι πράττειν μεγάλα φροντίζοντα μικρῶν).

38 On Cyrus' self-control regarding pleasure (ἡδοναί), see Xenophon, *Cyropaideia* 8.1.32, and on this passage and the importance of timing in matters of pleasure, Foucault, 69.

In his essay *How to Study Poetry* 31C, Plutarch gives Cyrus' behaviour towards Pantheia as an example to be followed by those who are easily enamoured. There, the stress is more on avoiding one's passions to be kindled, here, on spending time – which one may not have – at things one does not need.

39 For σχολάζειν/σχολή, see Stocks, Mikkola, Solmsen, and Demont, *passim*.

40 Odysseus, whom many readers might think to be a *polypragmōn*, is another example: he does indeed ask the women he sees in Hades after all kinds of things, but never forgets the aim of his descent into the underworld, nor his ultimate aim, to reach Ithaca. As a result, Plutarch presents him as an example not of a *polypragmōn*, but of the contrary.

way, the *polypragmōn*, over reacting to all stimuli indifferently, ends up having no time for better things,⁴¹ absorbed as he is by his *polypragmosynē*.⁴² *polypragmosynē* stands in the way of the great achievements⁴³ reached by men whose biography Plutarch would therefore want to write. The activities of the *polypragmōn* on the one hand and of the protagonists of the *Lives* on the other, then, are in a certain way mutually exclusive.

2.3 On a more technical level, the narrative character – typically telling the story of a series of logically/chronologically related events⁴⁴ – of Plutarch’s *Lives* makes *polypragmosynē* not so suited as an affection for the protagonists. For indeed, whereas the *Lives* largely have a linear progression between their protagonists’ birth and death, *polypragmosynē* as understood in *On Curiosity*⁴⁵ by definition implies the absence of a (more or less) straight line, the *polypragmōn* always being distracted from what he was heading for. Plutarch indeed describes the *polypragmōn* as so fussy about whatever he happens to encounter, that he appears as a person loitering around without *any* aim, just waiting for anything (bad, preferably) to happen.⁴⁶ Quite the contrary goes for the protagonists of the *Lives*: they have high aspirations, well-defined objectives, clear goals – as is typical not only for people who made it to the top, but also, more technically speaking, for narratives.⁴⁷

The narrative of the *Lives*, then, supposes progression, and this progression is largely dependent on their protagonists’ strivings. Whereas other affections

41 διατριβαί, 515D, 515E, 519F, and 521D.

42 διατριβειν, 517E; οὐτ’ ἀσχολεῖται, 518A; ἀσχολούμενοι, 518E; πολυπραγμονῶν [...] περιπατεῖ, 519A.

43 See, for a very clear example, Plutarch’s advice to the *polypragmōn* to list all his achievements in § 10.

44 For a discussion of narrativity, see Van Gorp – Delabastita – Ghesquiere, 295–296, and Baldick, 165–166.

45 *On Curiosity* is clearly not a narrative work. Notwithstanding, it does contain some narrative anecdotes. The historical ones, as has been noted, are much less frequent, however, than in other, kindlike works of the *Moralia*. On the use of narrative anecdotes in non-narrative literature, see Nash. See also the next note.

46 This is not in contradiction to what was said above about Plutarch sketching the *development* of *polypragmosynē*: Plutarch does not tell the story of (part of the life of) a *polypragmōn*, he proposes different steps of a therapy which correspond to certain acts that are typical for *polypragmōnes* in general. For example, Plutarch does not say that “after and/or because of having read inscriptions on walls, *polypragmōn* X turned to nosing into people’s houses, and was ruined in such and such way as a result of it”, but that “it is not difficult to accustom oneself to not nosing into people’s houses, as that generally brings no advantages”.

47 See Propp, esp. 80, Greimas, esp. 172–191, Toolan, 93–96, and Rosenboom, 25–42.

may cross the heroes' main ambitions,⁴⁸ *polypragmosynē* does not merely cross, but ends them: the *polypragmōn* does not act, but merely re-act.⁴⁹ As the end of ambition would, in the *Lives*, imply the end of progression, *polypragmosynē* is not suited as an affection for the narrative texts that the *Lives* are.

3. A double conclusion can be drawn from the foregoing. On the one hand, asking the question of why none of the protagonists of the *Lives* is represented as subject to *πολυπραγμοσύνη* as that word is understood in *On Curiosity* has led to a better understanding of what exactly that word does mean in the latter work. More specifically, it has become clear that the *polypragmōn* as sketched in *On Curiosity* is a caricature, and, moreover, that the effectiveness of the work at least partly depends upon this. Furthermore, the present study has also shown *polypragmosynē* to be something both 'below' the heroes of the *Lives* and unfit for the narrative genre that the *Lives* are.

On the other hand, this implies that genres may play a – sometimes major – role in determining how certain words are used, how certain ideas are evoked: making the *polypragmōn* a caricature was useful in order for the treatise *On Curiosity* to affect its readers' behaviour. The fact that certain affections can whereas other ones cannot be discussed in certain kinds of texts should, conversely, be a warning for the interpretation of 'historical truth' about people's characters: even if a protagonist of the *Lives* would have exhibited an aspect of the *polypragmōn*'s behaviour, *polypragmosynē* was not an interesting affection to be discussed in a narrative text. In case Plutarch has, in this matter, undergone heavy influence from his sources, this warning extends to these sources as well.

In line with this, it would be interesting to examine the degree up to which the fact that the *Moralia* and the *Lives* are different kinds of texts had a bearing on the ethical programme Plutarch treats and promotes, and if, for example, what has been said here about *polypragmosynē* goes for affections such as talkativeness and compliance as well. Do the *Moralia* and the *Lives* present the same canon of virtues? If so, to what extent did genre-conventions

48 For indeed, the fact the protagonists of the *Lives* are guided by their goals, does not mean that they (all) actually reach their goals, or that they cannot be deflected from pursuing it by certain affections. In fact, it is this very fact that makes them into interesting subjects for Plutarch's ethical project. Plutarch indeed renders negative characteristics as well, without, however, being malicious. See also Duff, 58–59, and Swain, 146, about Plutarch's own practice in the *Lives*. Anger, conversely, is an example of an affection well suited for narrative: something happens to the protagonist; the protagonist gets angry and strives for revenge; he either punishes his wrongdoer or tragically meets with disaster heroically – but in any case, there is a strong causal and temporal progression.

49 Many verbs are indeed in the passive mode.

influence the concrete implementations in both groups of works? Or if not: what role did genres play in this? Yet not only are these different questions, answering them would also exceed by far the scope of this paper. With my contribution, however, I hope to have given an example concerning one affection, and shown what results can be expected.

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4. Plutarch and Politics

Synopsis

The articles comprising this chapter provide insights into Plutarch's political thinking. The moral approaches are again obvious in both *Lives* and *Moralia*, but we should also bear in mind that in the area of politics Plutarch was likely to pass judgements deriving not only from his sources, but, to some extent, from his own personal experience as a local magistrate.

Lukas de Blois will portray and discuss in his paper Plutarch's ideal statesman; a statesman who is described by a series of traditional commonplaces and is chiefly embodied by Solon and Lycurgus, whose *Lives* particularly abound in commonplaces, characteristic anecdotes and edifying stories, because nothing much was known about the historical Solon and Lycurgus. The author maintains that the above biographies are decisively influenced by the following three complexes of commonplaces and stereotypes: the good statesman, the interaction between leaders and *dêmos*, and the right mental preparation of the masses which should precede sound political reform.

In Plutarch's *Lives* and political treatises a good statesman is someone who makes his entry into public life out of the right philosophical choice and with a good education in order to serve the public interest. He is a virtuous person also in his private life, and *inter alia* knows how to sensibly delegate tasks and how to treat colleagues and friends without being corrupt. A good statesman inspires the people with his *aretê* and cultivates *homonoia* in the community. Further, the good statesman is a dignified speaker and not a demagogue. He always has to guide fickle mobs, and in view of political reforms he must first persuade his people for their indispensability and the right course of action. Lycurgus did manage to persuade the Spartans and change their mentality, and so his reforms endured. Solon, though an adroit politician and lawgiver, gave in to circumstances and so gained only some temporary success. In Plutarch's *Solon* and *Lycurgus* we see anachronistic image-building, based on criteria and ideas that Plutarch also mentioned in his *Moralia* political treatises.

Geert Roskam focuses on the two roads which, according to Plutarch's *Political precepts*, the statesman may take in order to enter political life: the quick one that immediately leads to fame, and the slower one that is safer. Plutarch speaks of the two roads as real alternatives, since either has its own advantages and disadvantages. Yet whichever path the politician chooses, he will have to take into account important limitations. Many of the examples presented to Menemachus in the *Praecepta* return in the *Lives*, where they are

often discussed in much more detail. Furthermore, the *Lives* offer much additional material, which sometimes leads to a more nuanced picture. A comparison of this material with Plutarch's more theoretical evaluation of both roads in the *Political precepts* can throw further light upon the precise meaning and scope of this aspect of his political advice. At the same time, Plutarch's reflections in the *Praecepta* can contribute to an insight into some aspects of his moral evaluation of the heroes in the *Lives*.

Sven-Tage Teodorsson, concerning himself with the education of rulers in theory (*Moralia*) and in practice (*Lives*), contends that there is a discrepancy between what Plutarch recommends in his political treatises and what he fails to comment in many of his biographies. In the *Moralia*, for instance, he frequently underlines the importance and usefulness of philosophical training for rulers. In *Max. cum princ.* he admonishes philosophers to teach politicians in the first place; in *Ad princ. inerud.* he reproaches generals and rulers for ignorance, conceit and lack of moral virtue; and in *Praec. ger. reip.* he declares that any young man who is entering a public career should acquire some philosophical armament. In view of the above, we would expect Plutarch to inform us somewhat systematically about the philosophical education of the politicians and generals presented in his *Vitae*, but this is hardly the case. It seems, then, that in reality theory and practice did not agree, and it is the factual reality that makes Plutarch often tone down the educational strain in the *Lives*.

On the other hand, **John Dillon** is concerned with two philosophically educated rulers, Dion and Brutus, one of his most interesting biographical pairs. Were these men ideal rulers or, at least, any efficient and successful? In his little essay *To an Uneducated Ruler*, Plutarch actually presents us with a very useful sketch of his vision of the ideal ruler, from a Platonist perspective. For Plutarch, the salient characteristic of the good ruler is that he allows himself to be ruled in turn by divine reason. This reason is expressed in Law, but, in the case of the ruler, the laws are internalised by, and personified in, him. Such an emperor as Trajan, for instance, would have qualified well enough, one feels, in Plutarch's view as an example of such a ruler – as no doubt would Hadrian, if Plutarch had lived long enough to appreciate him.

But Plutarch did also recognize the problem of the alienation of the good ruler from his environment, as is the case of Dion and Brutus, two philosopher kings adrift in a hostile world. Both were well-educated, both were by conviction Platonists, and both chose to involve themselves in public life to their own ultimate detriment. To illustrate their portrayal as philosopher-kings

manqués, Dillon selects a number of salient passages from each *Life*, and discusses them in turn.*

As we saw in De Blois's article above, for a statesman to be successful, the goodwill of the people is a *sine qua non*. In this article **Evangelos Alexiou**, after observing that the pursuit of εὐνοία was a key point of political consideration already in the 4th century BC., and that Isocrates might have influenced Plutarch's political thinking, enlarges on the prerequisite of *eunoia*. Based on the entirely classical basis of practical ethics of Isocrates, he attempts to show how Plutarch, another man with a practical turn of mind, deals with the idea of *eunoia* in theory in the *Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae* and in practice in the *Parallel Lives*. **

In the *Praecepta* Plutarch lays emphasis on the fact that being in politics does not only presuppose proper intention and exercising what is right and useful, but also the pursuit of the real honour that is closely related with the real *eunoia* of the fellow-citizens. But *eunoia* is not only an aim but also a means for the accomplishment of other good purposes. Given that the concept of *eunoia* plays a secondary role in Plato, we may say that in the *Praecepta* Plutarch combines Platonic and Isocratean ideas, which are interpreted as an expression of the political importance of philanthropy and moderation. In the final analysis, political virtue is *eunoia*. However, that theoretical model of *eunoia* is not free from conflicts and difficulties, as Isocrates had already shown with the dramatic example of his student Timotheus. The general Timotheus was *megalophrôn*, did his city a lot of good, but was unable to gain the people's favour. Similar problems arise also in the *Parallel Lives*, where the exhortations of the *Praecepta* are put into practice. Here *eunoia* is versatile and more problematic than in the *Moralia*. Plutarch does recognize its importance in both political and military life, and also notices its psychological dimension. But without changing his theoretical approach, the viewpoint is now shifted from a "protreptic" ethics to the "descriptive" observation of the contribution of *eunoia* to political and military success. The greatest problem is always the one-dimensional characters (the military, the aristocrats, the philosophically educated rulers), who are unable to combine virtue with human contact, or lack political virtues, such as *praotes*. Coriolanus, Lucullus, Dion constitute characteristic examples. In all these cases, Plutarch does not criticize the behaviour of the crowd, but the role of the leading personality, since winning the goodwill of the people is imperative for those who wish to rule. If in the *Praecepta* the special weight is laid on the combination of virtue and *eunoia*, in

* For a successful philosopher-king cf. Castelnérac's article in ch. 5.

** For a similar interplay between theory and practice cf. also Teodorsson's article in this chapter.

the *Parallel Lives* the centre of the stage is taken by the indispensability of *eunoia* as far as success in political life is concerned.

Manuel Tröster exemplifies the devastating consequences of lack of *eunoia*, as expounded in the previous article, with the case of Lucullus. In Plutarch's writings, he notes, the *plêthos* is virtually omnipresent as a political force in need of prudent leadership. Thus, in the *Lucullus* the protagonist is constantly forced to assert himself against opposition from various kinds of crowds. In particular, Lucullus faces resistance from his unruly soldiers, who keep complaining about their material situation and the conditions of their service. Both in the field and at home, moreover, he is repeatedly opposed by demagogues intent on frustrating his ambitions by arraying the *plêthos* against him. As Lucullus fails to win the favour of the multitude, the biographer censures him severely, while interpreting his political rôle within the framework of a schematic divide between Senate and people. Building on this picture, Plutarch presents Lucullus as a 'conservative' optimiate who essentially lacks the ability to appeal to the people at large. However, his actual political record shows that he operated with a remarkable degree of flexibility and independence in matters of both domestic and foreign policy. Given the significance of public proceedings in Roman politics, it is not surprising to see Lucullus regularly communicating with crowds in order to muster support for his personal objectives. Nevertheless, this aspect is largely marginalized in Plutarch's account, both as a result of the misleading tradition about Lucullus' supposed distance from political affairs and in consequence of the biographer's desire to focus on the exigencies of dealing with the *plêthos*.

Finally, **Elias Koulakiotis**, using as starting-point Plutarch's statement that the Roman Numa was in some aspects a *hellenikoteros nomothetes* than the Spartan Lycurgus (*Comp. Lyk.–Nu.*1.10), attempts to establish the characteristics of a Hellenic lawgiver through a detailed comparison between the biographical Lycurgus (*Lives*) and the rhetorical Alexander (*De Alex. fort.*). He particularly discusses the ways in which these men are presented to legislate, the means they employ to make the people accept their measures, but also the significance of their laws. It is argued that in depicting different lawgivers Plutarch was influenced by the Platonic and Aristotelian tradition, but not only by them. The image of the lawgiver who stands in the *meson* and transforms, with the *politeia* he introduces, the city or the world into a *cosmos* is an image that could go back to Herodotus, although it is still valid in Plutarch's time and is reinterpreted through the Roman experience. The author also maintains that the Greek elite of the time appealed to the influential examples of Lycurgus and Alexander to legitimize its claim to more substantial participation in the Roman administration.

The Ideal Statesman:
A Commonplace in Plutarch's Political Treatises,
His *Solon*, and His *Lycurgus*

Lukas de Blois

The issue I would like to discuss in this paper is whether three important Plutarchan standard topics, i. e. the good statesman, the interaction between leader and *demos*, and the right mental preparation of the people in times of reform, occur in a similar way both in Plutarch's political treatises and in two biographies which gave the author sufficient latitude to include favourite commonplaces and standard views.

In Plutarch's biographies and political treatises descriptions of actions, reforms, events and developments are inextricably intertwined with commonplaces and are frequently described in a language and conceptual framework that contemporary audiences could understand, and apply to their own situations. Many stereotypes, commonplaces and models, which Plutarch applies in his political treatises,¹ recur in his *Solon* and *Lycurgus*. These *Lives* gave Plutarch ample opportunity to insert *loci communes*, stereotypes, characteristic anecdotes and edifying stories, because nothing much was known about the historical Solon and Lycurgus. As a matter of fact, Solon may have been a more tangible figure than the Spartan reformer Lycurgus, if only because Solonian poetry was still extant and Athens wrote down more of its collective memory than Sparta did. In the opening lines of his *Lycurgus* Plutarch considers the Spartan reformer an enigmatic figure, concerning whom nothing could be said which was not disputed (*Lyc.* 1.1). Lycurgus may even have been not an historical person, but a local demi-god who had been transformed into a law-giver.²

1 *I.e. Max. c. princ.* 776B – 779C; *Ad princ.* 779D – 782F; *An seni* 783B – 797F, and above all *Praec.* 798A – 825F).

2 Translations into English of passages from Plutarch's *Lycurgus* and *Solon* were borrowed from B. Perrin (Loeb, vol. I). Translations into English of passages from Plutarch's *Moralia* were borrowed from H. North Fowler (Loeb, vol. X). On Lycurgus see Hdt. 1.65; Plato, *Resp.* 8, 544c–551b; Xen., *Lac. Pol.* 5–13; Aristotle, *Pol.* 2.6.2–13, 1269a34–1270a40; Plut., *Lyc.* 5–29. A Lycurgus may have had a cult in Laconia; see Plut., *Lyc.* 31.3. On Lycurgus see Tigerstedt, 222; Huxley, 41 ff.; Oliva, 63–70; Manfredini-Piccirilli, xii–xxvi, esp. xii–xv; Starr, 26 and 41.

The first commonplace that I would like to discuss is Plutarch's standard image of the right attitude and qualities of a ruler, politician or statesman. In Plutarch's political treatises a good ruler or politician is a wise, educated man, who listens to good philosophically trained advisers, has a network of trustworthy friends, and maintains a good philosophical *prohairesis* as an in-built law and a guarantee of good, reliable and steadfast public and private behaviour. He should persuade his people rather than use force. In *Ad principem ineruditum*, *Maxime cum principibus philosopho esse disserendum* and *Praecepta rei publicae gerendum* Plutarch brings forward that philosophy, as a law implanted in the ruler by a good education, neutralizes the moral risks involved in the exercise of power.³ A philosophically based form of reason should, as an inner law, rule the ruler and keep him on a steadfast good course, not a written law made by men (*Ad Princ.* 780CD). In the same passage, a few lines earlier, in 780B, Plutarch gives us a sharp description of the opposite, saying:

Uneducated generals and rulers are often rocked and capsized by the ignorance within them; for since the foundation upon which they have built up their lofty power is not laid straight, they lean with it and lose their balance (*Ad Princ.* 780B).⁴

A good ruler or politician associates with wise men and good philosophical advisers, and listens to them. In Plutarch's view philosophers have an important task in this respect. In *Max. c. princ.* 778EF he says:

So the philosophers who associate with persons in private station make those individuals inoffensive, harmless, and gentle towards themselves, but he who removes evil from the character of a ruler, or directs his mind towards what is right, philosophizes, as it were, in the public interest and corrects the general power by which all are governed.⁵

Good friends are important as well. In his *Praecepta rei publicae gerendae* Plutarch tells us quite a lot about it. A good statesman may grant his friends opportunities and advantages without being corrupt, but he has to realize that the state is higher than a personal network and that the law is superior to friendship.⁶ A good politician persuades the crowd without using unnecessary

3 See *Max.c.princ.* 776B–E and 779B; *Ad princ.* 779F and 780CD; *Praec.* 798C. See De Blois 1992, 4569 and 4600 f.

4 *Ad princ.* 780B: οἱ δ' ἀπαιδευτοὶ στρατηγοὶ καὶ ἡγεμόνες ὑπὸ τῆς ἐντὸς ἀγνωμοσύνης πολλακίς σαλεύονται καὶ περιτρέπονται· βάσει γὰρ οὐ κειμένη πρὸς ὀρθὰς ἐξουσίαν ἐποικοδομοῦντες ὑψηλὴν συναπονεύουσι.

5 *Max. c. princ.* 778EF: οὕτως οἱ μὲν (= the philosophers) ἰδιώταις συνόντες αὐτοὺς ἐκείνους ποιοῦσιν ἑαυτοῖς ἀλύπους καὶ ἀβλαβεῖς καὶ προσηνεῖς, ὁ δ' ἄρχοντας ἤθως ἀφαιρῶν μοχθηρὸν ἢ γνώμην ἐφ' ὃ δεῖ συγκατευθύνων τρόπον τινὰ δημοσίᾳ φιλοσοφεῖ καὶ τὸ κοινὸν ἐπανορθοῦται, ᾧ πάντες διοικούνται.

6 *Praec.* 806F–809B; 816A–817C; 819B–D; 823A–E.

violence; he convinces the citizens by his words and by his exemplary life-style.⁷

In his *Lycurgus* and *Solon* Plutarch brings forward similar notions. Plutarch's paradigm of a good leader and statesman was not Plato or his pupil Dion of Syracuse, or another philosophically minded politician, but the legendary Spartan reformer Lycurgus. In his *Life of Lycurgus* 31.1 f., Plutarch says that Lycurgus' design for a civil polity was adopted by Plato, Diogenes, Zeno and by all those who won approval for their treatises on this subject, although they left behind them only writings and words, and that Lycurgus, on the other hand, produced not writings and words, but an actual polity, which was beyond imitation.⁸

Lycurgus assembled a sufficient number of good, reliable friends who could help him to put his reforms into effect (Plut., *Lyc.* 5.4–5; *Sol.* 16.1). He educated himself by visiting wise men and listening to them. In *Lyc.* 4.1–2 Plutarch tells us that the Spartan statesman before starting his reforms went to Crete, where he studied the various forms of government and made the acquaintance of some distinguished men. He invited one of them, the lyric poet and musician Thaletas, to come to Sparta and soften and improve the mentality of the Spartan citizens by his measured rhythms (*Lyc.* 4.1–2). In this way he was successful in preparing sound political reform by changing the mood of the Spartan *demos*. According to Plut., *Lyc.* 8.1–2, Lycurgus *persuaded* (Greek: *sunepseis*) his fellow citizens to accept a redistribution of land, although he did not refrain from political tricks and even violence if the

7 Cf. *Praec.* 801C; 802 E; 823A.

8 Plutarch, *Lyc.* 31.1–2: Οὐ μὴν τοῦτό γε τῷ Λυκούργῳ κεφάλαιον ἦν τότε, πλείστων ἡγουμένην ἀπολιπεῖν τὴν πόλιν· ἀλλ' ὡσπερ ἑνὸς ἀνδρὸς βίῳ καὶ πόλεως ὅλης νομιζῶν εὐδαιμονίαν ἀπ' ἀρετῆς ἐγγίνεσθαι καὶ ὁμοιοῖας τῆς πρὸς αὐτήν, πρὸς τοῦτο συνέταξε καὶ συνήρμοσεν, ὅπως ἔλευθέριοι καὶ αὐτάρκεις γενόμενοι καὶ σωφρονοῦντες ἐπὶ πλείστον χρόνον διατελώσι, ταύτην καὶ Πλάτων ἔλαβε τῆς πολιτείας ὑπόθεσιν καὶ Διογένης καὶ Ζήνων καὶ πάντες ὅσοι τι περὶ τούτων ἐπιχειρήσαντες εἰπεῖν ἐπαινοῦνται, γράμματα καὶ λόγους, ἀλλὰ ἔργῳ πολιτείαν ἀμίμητον εἰς φῶς προενεγκάμενος, καὶ τοῖς ἀνύπαρκτον εἶναι τὴν πόλιν φιλοσοφοῦσαν, εἰκότως ὑπερῆρε τῇ δόξῃ τοὺς πώποτε πολιτευσαμένους ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλησι (It was not the chief design of Lycurgus then to leave his city in command over a great many others, but he thought that the happiness of an entire city, like that of a single individual, depended on the prevalence of virtue and concord within its own borders. The aim, therefore, of all his arrangements and adjustments was to make his people free-minded, self-sufficing, and moderate in all their ways, and to keep them so as long as possible. His design for a civil polity was adopted by Plato, Diogenes, Zeno and by all those who have won approval for their treatises on this subject, although they left behind them only writings and words. Lycurgus, on the other hand, produced not writings and words, but an actual polity, which was beyond imitation, and because he gave ... an example of an entire city given to the love of wisdom, his fame rightly transcended that of all who ever founded polities among the Greeks).

necessity arose (*Lyc.* 11; *Sol.* 16.1). In Plutarch's opinion Lycurgus was a more successful politician and statesman than Solon was. The latter could not persuade all his fellow citizens, rich and poor, to accept his *seisachtheia*,⁹ nor could he change the incurably materialistic and quarrelsome mentality of the Athenians. Just like Lycurgus, Solon had *philoï* and friendly helpers, but quite a few of his friends profited by his *seisachtheia* and lined their pockets in a very irregular manner (*Sol.* 15). Plutarch ascribes to Solon a good *paideia* and a kind of philosophical *prohairesis*. Like Herodotus (1.29 ff.) Plutarch accentuates Solon's role as one of the wise men of his times. In *Sol.* 3.4 Plutarch remarks that in philosophy Solon cultivated chiefly the domain of political ethics, like most of the wise men of the time. However, Plutarch had some misgivings. In a recently published article Christopher Pelling convincingly argues that in Plutarch's biography Solon is a wise man, and one who never ceased to learn as he grew old (*Sol.* 2.2; 31.7) and that there is an emphasis on wisdom in Plutarch's *Solon*. He points out that many other wise figures crop up in this

9 In *Sol.* 16.1–2 the author says: "Ἦρεσε οὐδετέροις, ἀλλ' ἐλύπησε καὶ τοὺς πλουσίους ἀνελῶν τὰ συμβόλαια, καὶ μᾶλλον ἔτι τοὺς πένητας, ὅτι γῆς ἀναδασμὸν οὐκ ἐποίησεν ἐλπίασιν αὐτοῖς, οὐδὲ παντάπασιν, ὥσπερ ὁ Λυκοῦργος, ὁμαλοῦς τοῖς βίοις καὶ ἴσους κατέστησεν. Ἄλλ' ἐκεῖνος μὲν ἐνδέκατος ὦν ἀφ' Ἡρακλέους καὶ βεβασιλευκῶς ἔτη πολλὰ τῆς Λακεδαιμόνος, ἀξίωμα μέγα καὶ φίλους καὶ δύναμιν οἷς ἔγνω καλῶς περὶ τῆς πολιτείας ὑπηρετοῦσαν εἶχε, καὶ βίᾳ μᾶλλον ἢ πειθοῖ χρησάμενος, ὥστε καὶ τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν ἐκκοπήναι, κατεργάσατο τὸ μέγιστον εἰς σωτηρίαν πόλεως καὶ ὁμόνοιαν, μηδένα πένητα μηδὲ πλούσιον εἶναι τῶν πολιτῶν· Σόλων δὲ τούτου μὲν οὐκ ἐφίκετο τῇ πολιτείᾳ δημοτικῶς ὦν καὶ μέσος, ἐνδεέστερον δὲ τῆς ὑπαρχούσης δυνάμεως οὐδὲν ἔπραξεν, ὀρμώμενος ἐκ μόνου τοῦ βούλεσθαι καὶ πιστεύειν αὐτῷ τοὺς πολίτας. Ὅτι δ' οὖν προσέκρουσε τοῖς πλείστοις ἕτερα προσδοκήσασιν, αὐτὸς εἶρηκε περὶ αὐτῶν, ὡς "Χαῦνα μὲν τότ' ἐφράσαντο, νῦν δέ μοι χολοῦμενοι λοξὸν ὀφθαλμοῖς ὀρώσι πάντες ὥστε δῆϊον." Καίτοι φησὶν ὡς, εἴ τις ἄλλος ἔσχε τὴν αὐτὴν δύναμιν, "Οὐκ ἂν κατέσχε δῆμον, οὐδ' ἐπαύσατο, πρὶν ἀνταράξας, πῖᾱρ ἐξεῖλεν γάλα (He [= Solon] pleased neither party, however; the rich were vexed because he took away their securities for debt, and the poor still more, because he did not redistribute the land, as they had expected, nor make all men equal and alike in their way of living, as Lycurgus did. But Lycurgus was eleventh in descent from Heracles, and had been king in Lacedaemon for many years. He therefore had great authority, many friends, and power to support his reforms in the commonwealth. He also employed force rather than persuasion, inasmuch that he actually lost his eye thereby, and most effectually guaranteed the safety and unanimity of the city by making all its citizens neither poor nor rich. Solon, on the contrary, could not secure this feature in his commonwealth, since he was a man of the people and of modest station; yet he in no wise acted short of his real power, relying as he did only on the wishes of the citizens and their confidence in him. Nevertheless he gave offence to the greater part of them, who expected different results, as he himself says of them in the lines: "Then they had extravagant thoughts of me, but now, incensed, / all look askance at me, as if I were their foe." And yet had any other man, he says, acquired the same power, "He had not held the people down, nor made an end/ until he had confounded all, and skimmed the cream")."

Life, men such as Thales, Periander, Lycurgus, Pittacus, and more, but that there is very little on where Solon got his wisdom from.¹⁰ As a matter of fact, Plutarch had some doubts about Solon's early years. He pays some attention to Solon's trading experience, which was – in his view – not the best education available. It gave the Athenian statesman a flavour of upstart un-philosophical lifestyle (Plut., *Sol.* 2–3).¹¹

The conclusion must here be that Plutarch – speaking about the required qualities of a good statesman – in his *Solon* and his *Lycurgus* uses standard topics, which also occur in his political treatises.

This conclusion holds good as well in two other cases, in Plutarch's view of the interaction of leader and *demos* and in the way he speaks about political preparation. The interaction between the *demos* and its leaders was one of Plutarch's main standard topics, in his *Lives* as well as his political treatises.¹² In Plutarch's political treatises a good leader of the people is a dignified speaker and not a demagogue who stirs up the masses (*Praec.* 801C–804C; 819EF). He grants the people some amusement without spoiling it with common games and distributions as demagogues and mob flatterers do (*An seni* 788C; 794C; 796EF; *Praec.* 819F–822A). A good statesman always has to persuade, calm down and guide fickle mobs, the *demos* of classical Athens being one of the most dangerous ones, as is shown by the various examples that Plutarch gives us in his political treatises.¹³ In a similar way in his biographies of Athenian statesmen the *demos* is a main actor and the interaction between leaders and people is a crucial theme. The *demos* follows Themistocles, to the detriment of Aristides, a much wiser and better man. The Athenian citizenry scares Pericles, although he was – like Demosthenes – one of the very few leaders who knew how to guide the Athenian citizens. The Athenian *ekklesia* loves and applauds Alcibiades, in spite of all his irresponsible behaviour, but sends him into exile with equal frivolity.¹⁴ In Plutarch's *Lives* of Athenian statesmen the Athenian citizenry has a wrong mental orientation, towards

10 Pelling 2004, 98.

11 In *Sol.* 3.1 Plutarch says: Τὸ δ' οὖν εὐδάπανον τῷ Σόλωνι καὶ ὑγρὸν πρὸς τὴν δίκαιαν, καὶ τὸ φορτικώτερον ἢ φιλοσοφώτερον ἐν τοῖς ποιήμασι διαλέγεσθαι περὶ τῶν ἡδονῶν, τὸν ἐμπορικὸν οἶονται βίον προστετριφθαι· πολλοὺς γὰρ ἔχοντα κινδύνους καὶ μεγάλους ἀνταπαιτεῖν πάλιν εὐπαθείας τινός καὶ ἀπολαύσεις (Accordingly, if Solon's way of living was expensive and profuse, and if, in his poems, he speaks of pleasure with more freedom than becomes a philosopher, this is thought to be due to his mercantile life; he encountered many and great dangers and sought reward therefore in sundry luxuries and enjoyments).

12 On the interaction of *demos* and leaders in Plutarch's *Lives* see Pelling 1986, 159–187(= id. 2002, 207–236); Saïd, 7–25, esp. 9 ff. and Prandi, 141–156.

13 *Praec.* 799C, 800B–D and 801D–804B.

14 See Plut., *Them.* 5.4–5; *Arist.* 2–4, 7.1–2,; *Per.* 7,1–6, 9.2–4, 10.3, 11.3–5, 15.1–5; *Alcib.* 17–22, 32–36.

power and material gain, and is a rather fickle mob. In Plutarch's *Dion* and in his Roman *Lives* the Syracusan crowd and the Roman *plebs* are not doing better. Dion could not change the materialistic and violent temper of the Syracusans, and after king Numa the Roman people forever turned to war and greed.¹⁵ In Plutarch's *Lives* a good political preparation, which has to precede sound reforms, includes a change for the better of the mental attitude of the crowd, be it either the Athenian *demos*, the Spartan citizenry, the citizens of Syracuse, or the Roman *plebs*. If a statesman is not successful in turning the mood of the crowd towards reconciliation and a better life, and away from violence and greed, a thoroughgoing, philosophically oriented reform will not be possible and philosophical leaders such as Dion in Syracuse and Brutus or Cato Minor in Rome will tragically fail and go under.¹⁶ Wrongly oriented *demoi* can only be guided and held in check by opportunistic, adroit, powerful leaders such as Pericles, Timoleon and Julius Caesar, who combine practical astuteness and persuasive eloquence with a high inherited status, a strong position in society, and a readiness to apply political tricks and even violence if needs be.¹⁷

In Plutarch's *Lycurgus* the Spartan reformer of the same name is a wise, good leader who knows how to convince his people and change its mental orientation. He invites Thaletas of Crete to come to Sparta and change the mental attitude of the Spartan citizens by means of his fine music, in which this wise man is successful. However, Plutarch also depicts Lycurgus as an adroit politician who overawes opponents by status and power and does not even refrain from violence (*Lyc.* 11). Lycurgus created a durable good state in Sparta, which was accepted by his citizens, and so did better than Solon in Athens, who was not able to reconcile quarrelling parties and could not persuade all Athenians, rich and poor, to accept his *seisachtheia*. Unlike the Spartan *demos*, the Athenian citizenry did not change its mental attitude. After the Cylonian affair, which had polluted Athens, the Athenians invited Epimenides from Crete, who was reputed to be a man a man beloved of the gods and endowed with a mystical and heaven-sent wisdom in religious matters. After having arrived he became Solon's friend, cleansed the city and made the Athenians more decorous and careful in their religious services and

15 See De Blois 1978, 123–131; idem 1997, 210–219; De Blois & Bons, 175–180. On Numa see Plutarch, *Num.* 22.6–7 and *Comp. Lyc. et Num.* 4.8.

16 See De Blois 1992, 4600–4609; idem 1997, 209–224; De Blois & Bons, 179 f.

17 On Timoleon see De Blois 1978, 132–143; idem 1997, 219–223; idem 2000, 131–139; cf. Teodorsson, 215–226. On Caesar see Pelling 2002, 55, 63 n. 57, and 104. On Pericles see Plut., *Nic.* 3.1, where Plutarch remarks that Pericles led Athens by virtue of his native excellence (ἀρετῆς ἀληθινῆς) and powerful eloquence, and had no need to assume any persuasive mannerisms with the multitude. See also *Praec.* 802C–E. On the importance of eloquence as a means to guide a *demos* see Van Raalte, 103–112.

more easily inclined to unanimity. Epimenides was vastly admired by the Athenians, who offered him much money and large honours, but he only accepted some modest gifts and returned home, after which the Athenians relapsed into their old disputes about the form of government (Plut., *Sol.* 12–13). In the end the *demos* became prone to tyranny. Solon was too astute to become tyrant himself, but he could not stop Peisistratus' rise to sole rule.

In his political treatises Plutarch likewise speaks about the importance of political preparation and of change for the better of the mental attitude of the crowd, which he classes as an extremely difficult task. In *Max. c. princ.* 777F he observes that it is neither pleasant nor easy to benefit people if they are unwilling, and in *Praec.* 800B Plutarch explains how difficult it is to change the multitude. There is indeed some unity in Plutarch's work in this respect. In both his *Lives* and his political treatises the author emphasizes the interaction between leaders and *demos* and the importance of a political preparation, which should precede sound political reforms.

If indeed Plutarchan standard political themes occur both in the political treatises and the biographies, does this lend an anachronistic flavour to the latter? Such topics and commonplaces may reflect contemporary second century AD concepts, like the quintessential importance of status and wealth, Second Sophistic Greek *paideia*, powerful friends in high imperial places, and eloquence as the only means to hold unruly city crowds in check. It is true, Plutarch accentuates status, for example the strong social position of Lycurgus,¹⁸ and he emphasizes the importance of political friendship, oratory and education in all of his work. However, the examples that he chooses to explain what he is telling us invariably come from classical Greek history and republican Rome, which prevents a too strong creeping in of contemporary anachronistic notions. In the handful of passages where Plutarch speaks about politics in his own times, he classes it as inferior to political activity in the old days. In *An seni* 794A, and *Praec.* 811BC and 813 E the author realizes that his contemporaries, like himself local notables living in a province of the Roman Empire, could not reform *politeiai* or win glorious battles, but rather had to supervise the cleaning of streets and sewers, send embassies to their overlords, and calm down hungry or unruly local mobs, if only to forestall Roman intervention.¹⁹

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18 See Plut., *Sol.* 16.1–2

19 On the toils and burdens of local public life see *An seni* 783DE, and 787B.

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Two Roads to Politics. Plutarch on the Statesman's Entry in Political Life

Geert Roskam

1. Introduction

When Plutarch decidedly argued that the most perfect virtue is the political one (*Comp. Arist. et Ca. Ma.* 3.1), he undoubtedly knew that this position was rooted in an age-long tradition of political thinking.¹ In line with this traditional view, he vehemently attacked Epicurus' political philosophy² and urged his fellow philosophers to participate in political life.³ A philosopher should not live unknown, devoting himself to pleasure, but serve his country and contribute to the public interest. But what if one is indeed persuaded by Plutarch's arguments? What if one shares his indignation over Epicurus' parasitic philosophy (cf. *Adv. Colot.* 1127A) and asks for nothing better than making oneself useful for one's fellow citizens by engaging in politics? How should one proceed in entering political life? In dealing with such questions, one should turn to Plutarch's *Political precepts*.

Now one could expect to find Plutarch's advice concerning the very beginning of one's political career near the outset of the *Political precepts*. It is only in the chapters 10–12 (804C–806F), however, that this topic receives attention. Nonetheless, this is no evidence of a disordered and thoughtless approach, but rather of a well-considered and methodical one. Plutarch prefers to provide first the most important beacons which always have to guide the course of the politician and which should be appropriated by him even before he enters the political scene. The aspirant politician should first choose an honourable goal (798C–799A), and take care that he has the right means at his disposal to realize this goal, viz. moral virtue (800A–801C) and rhetorical

1 Cf. Aristotle, *EN* I, 2, 1094a28–1094b7; cf. also Plato, *Politicus* 303e–305e.

2 Not only in *De latenter vivendo* (directed against Epicurus' advice λάθρῃ βιώσας), but also in *Adv. Colot.* 1124D–1127E and *Non posse* 1097A–1100D (both directed against Colotes' position), and in some other shorter passages (*De tranq. an.* 465F–466A; *De tuenda* 135B–D; *Comp. Cim. et Luc.* 1.3 and *Pyrrh.* 20.3–4); see Roskam, 2005.

3 Cf. in the first place his short treatise *Maxime cum principibus philosopho esse disserendum*, in which he argues that the philosopher can maximize his usefulness by associating with powerful rulers.

powers (801C–804C). In short, he should not fall into politics as into a well, but should enter public life quietly, as the result of preparation and reflection (ἐκ παρασκευῆς καὶ λογισμοῦ; 799A).

It is only when all these preliminary but crucial issues have been dealt with, that Plutarch turns to some essential aspects of actual political πράξις itself, starting at its very beginning. Indeed, Menemachus should not be carried away by his great enthusiasm (cf. 798B), but should realise that each concrete step of the new politician in political πράξις, even the first one, should be well-considered.

According to Plutarch, there are two roads the statesman can take to enter political life. One is quick and illustrious, leading to fame, but not without any danger; the other is slower, more like a foot-journey,⁴ but safer too (804CD). Plutarch's explicit statement εἰσβολαὶ δὲ καὶ ὁδοὶ δύο τῆς πολιτείας εἰσίν, sustained by a well-balanced dichotomy and formal duality (though embellished with some *variatio*), suggests that this enumeration is exhaustive and that there is no *tertium quid*. Furthermore, from the very beginning, Plutarch seems to present the two poles as alternatives of equal value. Indeed, even before he clarifies what should precisely be understood by these two roads, he makes it clear that one cannot *a priori* prefer the one to the other: both in fact are characterized by their own advantages and disadvantages. One road quickly leads to a splendid reputation, but is dangerous too. It is the road of those who wish to maximize their potential for gain at all costs, even when they *eo ipso* maximize their potential for loss as well. The other road avoids such great risks, but also promises less glitter at the beginning of the political career. This road will be taken by those who wish to play for safe, and prefer to minimize their potential for loss, even at the cost of some gain. In any case, it is clear that the beginning politician should not make a hasty, ill-considered choice, but that he should weigh up pros and cons in a rational way.

2. Advantages and disadvantages of both roads

2.1. The quick road

After having distinguished the two alternatives, Plutarch offers some reflections that can help the politician in making his choice. Both roads, which are defined somewhat more precisely, prove to have their own advantages and disadvantages. Plutarch first deals with the quick road. The politician who opts for this alternative, directly enters political life with some

4 Plutarch often takes his imagery from the domain of military life; cf. Fuhrmann, 254–257.

remarkable and bold deed, approving Pindarus' (*Ol.* 6.4–5) conviction that “to a work's beginning, one should set a front that shines afar” (804D).

2.1.1. Advantages. Such ambitious beginning has several considerable advantages. First of all, it clearly meets the wishes of the people, for the masses are more eager to accept a beginning politician because they are surfeited with their familiar leaders⁵ (804D). Hence, a politician who opts for the quick road from the very beginning succeeds in taking advantage of the character of his fellow citizens, and thus in applying one aspect of the advice Plutarch gave earlier in his treatise (799B). Moreover, from this argument clearly appears that an advantage of the one road is not always necessarily a disadvantage of the other. Indeed, whereas the presence of political experience proves one of the greatest trump cards of the slow road, its absence in the quick road should obviously not be regarded as a great loss.

Secondly, if political power has a quick and illustrious growth, it drives away all envy (804DE). In this perspective, the quick road seems much more attractive than the slower. Indeed, as long as one accomplishes no illustrious deed, one is of course not attacked by another's envy.⁶ But once the aspirant politician enters public life, he should know that he will have to face envy from the very beginning (cf. *An seni* 787C). Hence, those who opt for the slow road, and thus for a gradual, leisurely growth, are under fire from various quarters,⁷ and many of them withered away even before they had come to bloom (804E). On the other hand, men who enjoy a great reputation are no longer envied.⁸ This is in the first place true for the old politician (*An seni* 787C and D; fr. 154 Sandbach), but a beginner can avoid φθόνος too, by immediately winning a great fame through some splendid achievement (804E). In that sense, envy can be compared with smoke, for when the fire blazes up quickly from the very beginning, the smoke rapidly disappears (804E; cf. *An seni* 787C and fr. 154 Sandbach).

2.1.2. Disadvantage. The most important disadvantage of the quick road is of course the great risks it entails (804D; 805D). Therefore, the beginning

5 See, e.g., the case of Cimon; *Cim.* 5.4: ὀρμήσαντα δ' αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὴν πολιτείαν ἄσμενος ὁ δῆμος ἐδέξατο, καὶ μεστὸς ὦν τοῦ Θεμιστοκλέους ἀνήγε πρὸς τὰς μεγίστας ἐν τῇ πόλει τιμὰς καὶ ἀρχάς.

6 Cf. Themistocles' *dictum* in *De inv. et od.* 537F: διὸ καὶ Θεμιστοκλῆς ἔτι μειράκιον ὦν οὐδὲν ἔφη πράττειν λαμπρόν· οὕτω γὰρ φθονεῖσθαι; cf. also Aelianus, *Var. hist.* 2.12; Hippasos, fr. 18.6 D.–K.

7 Cf. the opposition which Eumenes encountered; *Comp. Sert. et Eum.* 1.2–3.

8 Examples are Alexander and Cyrus; see *De inv. et od.* 538A; cf. also *De inv. et od.* 538B; *Comp. Nic. et Crass.* 2.4; *Alc.* 34.6. One could recall the position of Aristotle, *Rhet.* II, 10, 1388a6–9 and 12–13.

politician should know his bounds, seeing that a great and bold (cf. ἐχούσης δὲ τόλμαν; 804D) action is never without any danger. On the other hand, it is certainly not impossible either, since he can follow the example of many great predecessors.

2.1.3. The perspective of the *Lives*. In his *Political precepts*, Plutarch offers four examples of famous statesmen who opted for the quick road, thus complying with a request of Menemachus (798C): Aratus began his political career by making an end to the tyranny of Nicocles, Alcibiades by arraying the Mantinean alliance against the Lacedaemonians. Pompey asked a triumph even before being member of the senate, and succeeded in persuading Sulla. Cornelius Scipio, finally, was suddenly elected consul, contrary to law, when he was only standing for the aedileship, because the Roman people admired his single combat and victory in Iberia as a mere stripling and his achievements at Carthage as military tribune (804E–805A). All these examples return in the *Lives*, often in a more elaborate form.⁹

Moreover, in the *Lives* can be found many other examples of heroes who chose the quick road to fame and power. To give but some examples: Theseus began his public career with the remarkable, dangerous journey from the Peloponnesus to Athens by land (*Thes.* 6.3–11.2). He could have chosen to make this journey by sea, which would have been much safer and which moreover was the wish of his grandfather and his mother (*Thes.* 6.3 and 6.5), but he preferred the more dangerous road by land, in imitation of the brilliant accomplishments of Heracles (6.6–7.1). Marcus Coriolanus showed heroic courage in a battle against Tarquin, and was rewarded with a crown of oak leaves (*Cor.* 3.1–2). Pyrrhus displayed similar bravery in the battle at Ipsus (*Pyrrh.* 4.3). Both in their own way thus give evidence of the same military valour that Scipio showed in his famous μονομαχία, which is alluded to in the *Political precepts*. Caesar impeached Dolabella for maladministration of his province, and even if he failed to carry the day, his exploit directly contributed to his further career (*Caes.* 4.1). Titus Flamininus, finally, at once solicited the consulship, neglecting the offices of tribune, praetor and aedile, and succeeded in obtaining it, in spite of the indignant protest of the tribunes Fulvius and Manius (*Flam.* 2.1–2; cf. also *Reg. et imp. apophth.* 197A).

⁹ On Aratus, see *Arat.* 4.1–9.3 and *Phil.* 1.3 (cf. Pausanias, II, 8.2–3; Polybius, II, 43.3; Strabo, VIII, 6.25; Cicero, *off.* 2.81; Levi, 508–518); on Alcibiades, see *Alc.* 14.3–15.1; *Comp. Alc. et Cor.* 2.2; *Nic.* 10.3–8 (cf. *Bellone an pace* 351B; Thucydides, V, 44–47); on Pompey, see *Pomp.* 14.1–6 and 23.2; *Crass.* 7.1 and 12.4; *Sert.* 18.2 (cf. *Reg. et imp. apophth.* 203EF; Cicero, *Manil.* 61); on Scipio, see *Mar.* 12.1 and *Ca. Ma.* 27.4 (cf. Livy, *Perioch.* 50; Appianus, *Libyc.* 112; Cato's saying is also mentioned in *Reg. et imp. apophth.* 200A and in Livy, *Perioch.* 49; Diodorus Siculus, XXXII, 9a; *Suda*, s.v. αἰσσοοσιν, I, 66.10–13 Adler).

In none of these examples taken from the *Lives* is the formal theory that is elaborated in the *Political precepts* explicitly thematized. Here we focus on political praxis, on the challenges and dangers the politician has to face in real public life. Usually, concrete political circumstances prove to be much more complex than the abstract schemes of theory. And yet, most of these concrete examples form a good illustration of the theory of the *Political precepts*. They all show how the hero succeeds in overcoming dangerous risks, and how he holds the political spotlight through a remarkable deed. It is interesting to note that the pernicious factor of envy appears to be absent in these examples, and that some of them explicitly mention the fact that the hero was in the favour of the people. In that sense, Plutarch's political thinking proves to take into account the lessons of history. Conversely, the theoretical perspective of the *Political precepts* can be used as a lense through which the *Lives* can be read.

2.2. The slow road

Against those advantages and disadvantages of the quick road, one can place the pros and cons of the slower road. The young politician who prefers the latter course, attaches¹⁰ himself to an older statesman who is already held in esteem (805EF). One should note that Plutarch also regards it as the duty of older politicians to educate their younger colleagues (*An seni* 790E).¹¹ This road recalls the ancient pedagogical system of rhetoric (even though that system had been replaced in Plutarch's times by the school practice of *suasoriae* and *controversiae*).¹²

2.2.1. Advantages. This road, too, has several important advantages. First of all, it is much safer than the quick road (804D; 805E) and admits more leisure

10 The term προσδραμών can perhaps be seen as a far echo of a verse of Simonides (or Semonides) which is used by Plutarch in this context: ἄθηλος ἴππῳ πῶλος ὡς ἄμα τρέχει; cf. *An seni* 790F; fr. 210 Sandbach; cf. also *De prof. in virt.* 84D.

11 According to Carrière, 173, "Ces débuts sous un grand homme sont aussi une transposition du principe de l'adoption impériale, qui vient de prendre une grande importance avec l'adoption de Trajan par Nerva".

12 Formerly, the prospective orator was brought to the most important orator at Rome (*eum oratorem qui principem in civitate locum obtinebat*; Tacitus, *dial.* 34,1). He had to follow his mentor everywhere, and had to listen to all his judicial and political speeches, thus learning to fight in the combat itself (*pugnare in proelio disceret*; *ibid.* 34,2). Such education had many considerable advantages: *Magnus ex hoc usus, multum constantiae, plurimum iudicii iuvenibus statim contingebat, in media luce studentibus atque inter ipsa discrimina, ubi nemo impune stulte aliquid aut contrarie dicit quo minus et iudex respuat et adversarius exprobrat, ipsi denique advocati aspernentur* (*ibid.* 34,3); cf. also Quintilian, *inst.* 10,5,19 and 12,11,5–6; Pliny, *epist.* 2,14,3.

(804E, 805E). Secondly, the gradual growth (κατὰ μικρόν; 805F) guarantees a certain continuity, which enables the young politician to grow together with his leader (805F). Furthermore, the politician will be able to gain much political experience: step by step, he will make himself rooted in political life (805F). Besides, he will have a lesson in obedience, which is certainly an additional advantage, as “nobody can rule well if he is not first able to serve well”¹³ (806F). Being well aware of all those important advantages, Philippus advised Alexander to win friends as long as he could, while another was king (806B).¹⁴

2.2.2. Disadvantages. However, this road has its disadvantages too: the beginning politician can easily fall victim to the envy of others (804E). Nevertheless, such φθόνος need not always lead to a destruction of the politician’s career, seeing that the slow road as well was chosen by many illustrious predecessors (805E). In this case too, a great advantage of the quick road (where such pernicious φθόνος is absent) is not necessarily an equally great disadvantage of the slower road: for if one is led towards fame by the hand of others, one both wins favour with many¹⁵ and is less hated if something troublesome happens (806B). Hence, the older leader can act as a kind of buffer between the beginning politician and the envy of others.

2.2.3. The perspective of the *Lives*. In this case too, Plutarch briefly mentions several examples that all return in the *Lives*: Aristides was made great by Cleisthenes (805F and *Arist.* 2.1; cf. *An seni* 790F), Phocion by Chabrias (805F and *Phoc.* 6.1–3; cf. *An seni* 791A); Lucullus by Sulla (805F and *Luc.* 2.1; 4.4); Cato by Fabius Maximus (805F and *Ca. Mi.* 2.3; 3.4; cf. *An seni* 791A); Pammenes by Epameinondas (805F and *Pel.* 26.5) and Agesilaus by Lysander (805F and *Lys.* 22.6; 23.1–2; *Ages.* 2.1; 3.3–4.1; 6.1–3).

And here as well, additional material can be found in the *Lives*. Themistocles, for instance, associated with Mnesiphilus (*Them.* 2.4; cf. *De*

13 Cf. Plato, *Leges* VI, 762e: δεῖ δὴ πάντ’ ἀνδρα διανοεῖσθαι περὶ ἀπάντων ἀνθρώπων ὡς ὁ μὴ δουλεύσας οὐδ’ ἂν δεσπότης γένοιτο ἄξιος ἐπαίνου, καὶ καλλωπίζεσθαι χρὴ τῷ καλῶς δουλεῦσαι μᾶλλον ἢ τῷ καλῶς ἄρξαι (cf. also *Leges* I, 643e and XII, 942c); Aristotle, *Polit.* III, 4, 1277b11–13: διὸ λέγεται καὶ τοῦτο καλῶς, ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν εὖ ἄρξαι μὴ ἀρχθέντα (cf. also *ibid.* 1277a25–27); Diog. Laert., I, 60. In this respect, Agesilaus is clearly worth imitating (*Ages.* 1.3; cf. also 20.2). A bad example is Perpenna (*Sert.* 27.1).

14 Cf. also *Reg. et imp. apophth.* 178B; Cicero, *off.* 2,48. On the importance of friends for the good king, cf. also Pliny, *paneg.* 85,6; Dio Chrysostomus, *orat.* 1.30–32 and 3.86–115; Isocrates 2,27–28.

15 Cf. also Cicero, *off.* 2,46: “Facillime autem et in optimam partem cognoscuntur adulescentes, qui se ad claros et sapientes viros bene consulentes rei publicae contulerunt; quibuscum si frequentes sunt, opinionem afferunt populo eorum fore se similes, quos sibi ipsi delegerint ad imitandum”.

Her. mal. 869D–F; *An seni* 795C), Brutus received considerable favours from Caesar (*Brut.* 7.4; *Caes.* 62.2), and Polybius followed Philopoemen (*An seni* 791A; cf. also *Phil.* 21.3). These examples further illustrate the great importance older statesmen can have as experienced and powerful patrons of their younger colleagues.

Occasionally, the conceptual opposition between the two roads is nuanced to a certain extent in the concrete political praxis that is mentioned in the *Lives*. Both roads indeed do not necessarily exclude one another. A very interesting example in this respect is Cimon. Just like Marcius Coriolanus, Pyrrhus and Scipio, Cimon gained a good reputation through his military bravery (displayed in his case in the battle at Salamis; *Cim.* 5.3). He thus seems to have opted for the quick and dangerous road to fame. Plutarch most interestingly adds that he immediately gained the favour of the people, which was surfeited of Themistocles (*Cim.* 5.4). Again, this clearly recalls one of the important advantages of the quick road (cf. 804D). Nonetheless, one cannot regard Cimon as a confirmed adept of the quick road, for Plutarch continues by underlining the great importance which Aristides had in furthering Cimon's career (*Cim.* 5.4; cf. *Arist.* 10.8 and *An seni* 791A and 795C). Cimon thus walked on both roads, and succeeded in combining the advantages of both. The same was done by Pompey, who was supported by Sulla (806E; *An seni* 791A; *Pomp.* 8.2–3; *Crass.* 6.4), but who also quickly reached a position of power, receiving a triumph even without being senator (804F). Again, the *Lives* thus introduce to a political reality which is more complicated than the schematic theoretical perspective of Plutarch's political thinking, but again, this theoretical perspective can also be used to clarify certain aspects of the hero's choices and actions.

3. Limitations and possibilities of both roads

3.1. The quick road

Both roads thus prove to have their own pros and cons, and both are real alternatives that can be chosen by the politician. But whatever road the beginning politician will choose, he will in any case have to proceed in a well-considered and well-founded way.¹⁶

16 *Contra* Pérez Jiménez, 369, who considers the first, quick road to be that of coincidence, and the second safer road that of rational reflection, opposing this bifurcation to the much more complex situation of the *Lives*: “En los *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae* muestra Plutarco dos caminos para acceder a la vida pública, uno rápido, fruto de la casualidad, y otro lento, pero seguro, guiado por la reflexión. La práctica de las

3.1.1. Limitations. If he opts for the quick road, he should realize that several great and bold deeds are no longer possible. Plutarch here calls attention to the political situation of his own times: since Greece is kept under Rome's thumb, there is no need of leadership in wars, dissolutions of tyrannies or acts of alliances (805A). Hence, the political reality brings with it a first important limitation. A second limitation originates from the demand of the politician's own safety. Indeed, the curtailment of the power of an oppressive, oligarchic Council forms a very conspicuous beginning of one's political career, to be sure, but it is by no means without danger for the beginner himself. Therefore, one should prefer the action of Solon, who tried to re-establish concord between the different factions of his city, to that of Ephialtes or Phormio (805DE). It is clear that these limitations should in the first place reduce the great risks that are part and parcel of this road. Accordingly, they have a pragmatical rather than a moral basis.

3.1.2. Possibilities. Within the framework of these two essential limitations, a whole range of possibilities remains open to the beginning politician. Plutarch indeed presents a whole list of illustrious beginnings that are still possible in the *Imperium Romanum* and that are not too dangerous, thus at the same time demonstrating that the first road is even in his own times a real alternative. The young politician can still show his excellence in public lawsuits and embassies to the emperor, which require an ardent (cf. *De tuenda* 136B), brave and intelligent man.¹⁷ Furthermore, he can take up many honourable practices which have been neglected in the cities, and remove many bad customs (805B). An honourable judgement in a great lawsuit (cf. *De prof. in virt.* 81A and *De vit. pud.* 533D) can sometimes constitute an illustrious beginning of the political career too, just as honesty in an advocacy for the weak against a powerful adversary,¹⁸ and frankness against a wicked ruler in behalf of the right (805B). Even enmity can often (cf. οὐκ ὀλίγοι; 805B) lead to political growth. One can indeed try to gain both power and fame by attacking, on good

Vidas Paralelas deja ver que la realidad es algo más complicada". However, this is not the meaning of the dichotomy which Plutarch presents, for also the first road should be based on reflection and virtue: Aratus' success against the tyrant Nicocles was not a matter of mere coincidence of course, and Cornelius Scipio did not become consul because of a chance beginning (οὐκ ἄφ' ἧς ἔτυχεν ἀρχῆς; 804F), but because of his military valour.

17 On the difficulties and dangers of an embassy towards the emperor, see also Philo of Alexandria, *Legat.* 247, 366 and 369–372.

18 In this way, Lucullus entered public life, attacking Servilius the Augur, the accuser of his father (*Luc.* 1.1–2; Cicero, *ac.* 2,1; Badian, 301–306; cf. also Valerius Maximus, 5,4,4). Cicero, on his part, defended Roscius against Sulla (*Cic.* 3.3–4). See further Cicero, *off.* 2,51: “*Maxime autem et gloria paritur et gratia defensionibus, eoque maior, si quando accidit, ut ei subveniatur, qui potentis alicuius opibus circumveniri urguerique videatur*”.

grounds, powerful persons¹⁹ (805BC). All these examples clearly show that the two previous limitations should be completed with a third one: the politician's action should be morally good. It should be useful (805C), it should never be based on φθόνος (805C), and the fame it entails should be honourable (805C). Accordingly, one should not imitate the bad examples of men like Simmias, Alcmeon, Clodius and Menecleides, who all attacked honourable statesmen (805C), but rather indict persons such like Cleon and Cleophon at Athens (805CD).

The argumentation of this third, moral limitation is quite interesting. It is clear that virtuous behaviour is here not introduced as an end in itself, but as a means to gain fame and power. Accordingly, an attack of virtuous leaders is here rejected, not (only) because it is immoral,²⁰ but (primarily) because it does not contribute to the power and fame of the politician. Indeed, if he would carry the day and destroy his noble opponent, the people will quickly repent of its anger (cf. also *De coh. ira* 460C; *De sera num.* 550E; Seneca, *dial.* 3,17,4), and will welcome the most easy defence as the most just: it will crush the man who has convinced them to ruin their honourable leader²¹ (805C). Such a position is quite remarkable. Plutarch has already made it clear that τὸ καλὸν should be the politician's final end (799A), and that power and fame are only means subservient to it. Here, he seems to defend exactly the opposite position: moral behaviour appears as a mere means subservient to fame and political power. Now both perspectives can of course easily be reconciled: it is true indeed that moral behaviour can contribute to the statesman's power and fame, but it remains equally true that this position of power and fame should finally be used in order to achieve the ultimate honourable τέλος of the politician. In this way, Plutarch's reflections in chapter 10 give a good illustration of the character of his political thinking in the *Political precepts*. In the whole work indeed, moral and pragmatism balance one another, being both end and means of each other, and collaborating in an harmonious field of tension towards the final end of τὸ καλὸν.

19 Accordingly, Themistocles did not shun the enmity of the powerful leaders at Athens (especially that of Aristides); cf. *Them.* 3.1. Another example is Sulla, who opposed Marius; cf. Carrière, 173.

20 Cf. Cicero, *off.* 2,51: "Atque etiam hoc praeceptum officii diligenter tenendum est, ne quem unquam innocentem iudicio capitis arcessas; id enim sine scelere fieri nullo pacto potest."

21 Cf. also Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* 28,3: εἰωθεν γὰρ κἂν ἔξαπατηθῆ τὸ πλῆθος ὑστερον μισεῖν τοὺς τι προαγαγόντας ποιεῖν αὐτοὺς τῶν μὴ καλῶς ἐχόντων. One could recall the fate of Anytus and Meletus, the accusers of Socrates (cf. *De inv. et od.* 537F–538A; see also Diog. Laert., II, 43; Diodorus Siculus, XIV, 37.7; Themistius, *orat.* XX, 239c) and the cases of Phocion (*Phoc.* 38.1; on the parallels between the fate of Phocion and that of Socrates, see esp. Alcalde Martín, 167–169 and Trapp, 488–489), of Philopoemen (*Phil.* 21.1–5), of the Gracchi (*CG* 18.1–2), and of Otho (*Oth.* 17.5).

3.2. The slow road

3.2.1. Limitations. Just like the beginning politician who opts for the quick road, his colleague who prefers the slower road ought to bear in mind some important limitations. Of course, he too should bear in mind the limitations that originate from the contemporary political situation or from the demands of personal safety, although the immediate dangers of the slow road are undoubtedly less acute. Furthermore, he also has to meet several essential moral demands. First of all, he should always honour his political mentor, as he begins a relation of friendship which should be durable.²² For that reason, Agesilaus can be blamed for having rejected his political leader Lysander²³ (805F). One should rather follow the example of Scipio and Laelius,²⁴ and honour one's political mentor until the end,²⁵ even adding to his fame (806A). Furthermore, friendship in the end proves more important than political power. Accordingly, the beginning politician should never regard his political mentor as a mere means in order to gain power and fame, but should attach more importance to the latter's friendship than to his political support, and should even abandon his ambitions if they are opposed to the wishes of his leader, emulating the behaviour of Afranius (806B).²⁶ Finally, he should not

22 See *Praec. ger. reip.* 806A: ἑταῖρον; 806B: τὴν φιλίαν; 806B: φίλους; 806B: πρὸς χάριν ὀμιλοῦντα καὶ φιλοφρονούμενον; 806F: μετ' εὐνοίας καὶ φιλίας. Cf. also the attitude of Alexander towards his tutors Lysimachus (*Alex.* 24.6–7) and Leonidas (*Alex.* 25.4–5).

23 On the conflict between Agesilaus and Lysander, see also *Ages.* 7.1–8.4; *Comp. Ages. et Pomp.* 1.2; *Lys.* 23.2–24.2; *De vit. pud.* 533EF; Xenophon, *Hell.* III, 4.7–9 (which is obviously Plutarch's source); Bos, 58–68; Shipley, 128–142. Even if Lysander was indeed too ambitious at the wrong moment, Agesilaus' behaviour remains nonetheless blameworthy in Plutarch's eyes, cf. *Ages.* 8.4 and *Lys.* 23.5.

24 When Scipio's detractors called him the actor, but his friend Laelius the real author of his deeds, Laelius did not become conceited by such words, but uninterruptedly continued to support Scipio's virtue and fame; 806A; *An seni* 797D; Julianus, *orat.* VIII, 244cd. On Laelius' friendship with and support of Scipio, see, e.g., *Ca. Mi.* 7.3; *TG* 8.4; *Reg. et imp. apophth.* 200C; Cicero, *Lael.* 4, 5, 8, 10, 15, 25, 30, 51 and 103; *rep.* 1,18; *de orat.* 2,22; *fam.* 5,7,3; Valerius Maximus, 8,8,1; Velleius Paterculus, II, 127.1; Anonym., *De vir. illustr.* 58,7. Similarly, Socrates wished to increase the honourable φιλοτιμία of his pupil Alcibiades (*Alc.* 7.3).

25 In that sense, Pompeius surpassed Agesilaus; see *Comp. Ages. et Pomp.* 1.2–3 (cf. also *Sull.* 38.1; *Pomp.* 15.3). Cf. also Phocion's attitude towards Chabrias (*Phoc.* 7.2); a bad example is Marius (*Mar.* 10.1).

26 Plutarch here presents Afranius as a good example. According to other sources, however, Afranius was politically incompetent and useless; cf. Cicero, *Att.* 1,16,12; 1,18,3 and 5; 1,19,4; 1,20,5; Dio Cassius, XXXVII, 49.1 and 3; cf. also Williams – Williams, 200: “Although Plutarch's aim was to show the virtues of coöperation and friendship, the incident, nevertheless, demonstrates the basic political position of Afranius. A man without an independent power base, special talents, or a network of

only chose as political leader someone who is famous and powerful, but someone whose fame and power is also based on personal virtue (806BC).

Here as well, however, these moral limitations are not (only) introduced for their own sake. For why should the beginning politician give preference to a leader who is virtuous? In order to find a good mentor who can guide him on his path of moral progress?²⁷ *Stricto sensu* not: the politician should have reached moral perfection (or at least have curtailed his most important faults) before he enters political life (800A–801C). The reason is once again entirely pragmatic: those who are not lovers of what is honourable (φιλόκαλοι) but merely of honours (φιλότιμοι) and offices (φιλαρχοί) give no opportunities to a young politician, but yield to their envy and begrudge him his success²⁸ (806C). A bad political mentor proves to be a serious obstacle rather than a helper, as he does not protect his younger colleague against envy – one of the greatest difficulties of the slow road – but is envious himself. Such a man was Marius, who attempted – though in vain – to choke the political growth of Sulla (806CD; cf. *Mar.* 10.2–6 and *Sull.* 3.1–4.3). Sulla himself, on the other hand, supported next to Pompeius many other young men too, some of them even against their own will, and thus succeeded in ruling over them all, wishing to be not the only ruler, but the first and greatest among many great men²⁹ (806E). Hence, the beginning politician should opt for a virtuous political leader simply because this strategy is the most easy way to obtain power and fame himself. For such a relation of friendship should not be opposed to political ambitions, as in the case of Afranius. In this way, philosophical and pragmatical interests can easily be connected with regard to the second, slower road as well.

political alliances, Afranius was totally dependent on his patron for advancement to the consulship. Afranius would be ready only when Pompeius saw fit to support him”.

27 Cf. *De prof. in virt.* 84B–85B on the importance of great examples in the process of moral progress.

28 Such an attitude of φιλοτιμία and φιλαρχία is not very conducive to the good name of the older politician either, for he will be hated by the young, and be despised by the others (*An seni* 793E). Older politicians who encourage the younger ones seem much more popular (*An seni* 796A).

29 Cf., however, Pelling, 176: “Plutarch has little idea of the characteristic Roman desire to be first within the system, rather than change it”.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that both roads are regarded by Plutarch as real alternatives: the one is not *a priori* better than the other.³⁰ It is also clear why Plutarch adopts this position of equipollence. The differences between the two roads are very great with regard to concrete action itself. With regard to pragmatical demands, both have their pros and cons, which should be carefully computed. With regard to moral claims, however, the difference is nothing at all. Both roads are philosophically well-founded and can be reconciled with the honourable τέλος of the politician. Hence, it is up to Menemachus (and to each beginning politician) to chose that road which will in his case be most advantageous.

This illustrates an important feature of the political advice Plutarch offers in his *Political precepts*. The reader is not confronted with ready-made opinions, nor with a detailed and well-defined political course, but with thought-provoking reflections that can guide his personal political decisions. Plutarch's advice stimulates the politician's personal thinking, and thus contributes to the latter's independence: the beginning politician of the *Political precepts* no longer needs an authoritarian pedagogue who repeats to him the correct answers over and over again, but a teacher with whom he can carry on a philosophical dialogue.³¹ In this way, we finally meet the *Lives* again, where we find a similar pedagogical approach. For there too, the reader finds a lot of material that he can consider and appropriate in his own perspective. *Political precepts* and *Lives* thus form a kind of diptych that can lead the politician through his career. In a certain sense, they can themselves be regarded as two roads that lead, not to political life as such, but to a virtuous political life. One of these may be slower in that it requires more time (viz. the *Lives*; cf. *Reg. et imp. apophth.* 172E); the other is more apt for politicians like Menemachus, who lack this time (798B: ἐπειδὴ χρόνον οὐκ ἔχεις). But both, in any case, in the end lead to the same philosophical destination.

30 *Contra*: Mueller-Goldingen, 207: "Plutarch gibt, wie das Beispiel Solons zeigt (805D), dem langsameren, sichereren Beginn den Vorzug vor einem schnellen und glänzenden Aufstieg, der nicht gefahrlos ist".

31 Cf. Roskam, 2004 on Plutarch's view of the evolution towards greater independence in the educational process.

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The Education of Rulers in Theory (*Mor.*) and Practice (*Vitae*)

Sven-Tage Teodorsson

Education in the *Moralia*

In his dialogue *Politicus* Plato established that statemanship is a science, an ἐπιστήμη, about the art of commanding (259C), and that this science of ruling men is the greatest and most difficult to acquire.¹ Plato's strong emphasis on knowledge and education as prerequisites of statesmanship² forms the theoretical basis and inspiration for Plutarch. In his essay *On Moral Virtue* he develops his own theory of the soul as composed by two parts, the rational (τὸ νοερόν καὶ λογιστικόν) and the irrational (τὸ παθητικόν καὶ ἄλογον). In this latter part there is a spirited element τὸ θυμοειδές) which may be attached to the rational part, assigning to it strength and vigour (442A). This intermediary element, a part of its own in Plato's psychology, forms the agency for conveyance of influence from the rational part of the soul to the irrational one. In Plutarch's theory this volitional instrument can be trained by reason to assume a settled quality (ἤθος) by means of education and habituation ἔθος). Depending on the kind of influence, the result can be either habitual vice of ethical virtue (443C–D).

In consequence, education stood out to Plutarch as a matter of primary importance and as the philosopher's principal obligation. A true follower of Plato he was of course convinced that virtue can be taught. But as there were in fact some who denied that,³ he felt called upon to write a declamation, Εἰ διδακτὸν ἡ ἀρετή, in defence of his views.⁴

1 Plat. *Pol.* 292 D ... ἐπιστήμη συμβαίνει γίνεσθαι περὶ ἀνθρώπων ἀρχῆς, σχεδὸν τῆς χαλεπωτάτης καὶ μεγίστης κτήσασθαι.

2 Cf. *Pol.* 293 C Ἀναγκαῖον δὴ καὶ πολιτειῶν, ὡς ἔοικε, ταύτην διαφερόντως ὀρθὴν εἶναι καὶ μόνην πολιτείαν, ἐν ἣ τις ἂν εὐρίσκοι τοὺς ἀρχοντας ἀληθῶς ἐπιστήμονας καὶ οὐ δοκοῦντας μόνον.

3 Two pupils of Socrates, Criton and Simon, are known to have written works entitled Ὅτι οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ μαθεῖν οἱ ἀγαθοί, and Περὶ ἀρετῆς, ὅτι οὐ διδακτὸν respectively, see Diog. Laert. II 121, 122; cf. *Suda* K 2451; *Magnum excerptum* 31 (Diog. Laert., Vol. II 237 Marc.).

4 *An virt. doc. possit* 439 C Ὡ ἀνθρώποι, τί τὴν ἀρετὴν λέγοντες ἀδίδακτον εἶναι ποιοῦμεν ἀνύπαρκτον;

Plutarch's great commitment – greater still than Plato's – to the realization of ethical principles in practice induced him to devote three works to the education of rulers. In the short essay entitled *That a philosopher ought to converse especially with men in power* (*Max. cum princ.*) he admonishes philosophers to teach philosophy to politicians in the first place. He opens his argumentation with a conspicuous declaration of his purpose. Quoting Pindar, he proclaims that the teacher of philosophy is not “to, be a sculptor who carves statues doomed to stand idly on their pedestals”.⁵ Instead he should in a way make its doctrines active and efficient and alive, so that they inspire men to action, with judgements that lead them towards what is useful, honourable and wise. And, naturally enough, Plutarch – following Plato – brings out that the teachings of the philosopher should not in the first place be directed to persons in private station who abstain from public affairs and prefer an idle life to an active one.

Instead the philosopher should concentrate his teachings on men of action, leading persons, statesmen and generals, seeing that these people can serve as models and thus influence and benefit many through their virtuous leadership.⁶ Plutarch maintains that a philosopher who removes evil from the character of a ruler, or directs his mind towards what is right, philosophizes in the public interest, and besides benefits the rulers themselves, in that he makes them more just, more moderate and more eager to do good, which is also likely to make them happier (*Max. cum princ.* 778F). Plutarch is convinced that a statesman who accepts philosophic teachings will be a public blessing by dispensing justice, making laws, punishing the wicked, and making the orderly and the good to prosper. He cherishes a Socratic belief in the decisive effect of the knowledge of ethic principles on the behaviour and frankly declares that rulers and statesmen who have got the philosophic teachings engraved in their souls, will apply them like laws (779B).

In the rhetorical essay *To an uneducated ruler* Plutarch depicts contemporary rulers as sorely in need of education. He states (779F–780B) that most kings and rulers are so foolish as to think that by heaviness of voice, harshness of expression, truculence in manner, and unsociability in their way of living, they display the dignity and majesty of the princely station, although in fact they are not at all different from colossal statues which have a heroic and godlike form on the outside, but inside are full of clay, stone and lead, and he regrets that uneducated generals and rulers are often rocked and capsized by the ignorance within them.

5 *Max. cum princ.* 776 C Οὐκ ἄνδριαντοποιός ἐστιν ὁ τῆς φιλοσοφίας λόγος, ὥστ' ἐλινύοντα ποιεῖν ἀγάλματ' ἐπ' αὐτᾶς βασιμίδος ἑσταότα' κατὰ Πίνδαρον.

6 Plutarch, *Max. cum princ.* 777 A states as examples Anaxagoras who associated with Pericles, Plato with Dion, and Pythagoras with the leading Italiote Greeks.

In contrast to this sad state of things Plutarch sets forth his imaginary picture of the ideal ruler (780E): “Justice is the end of law, but law is the work of the ruler, and the ruler is the image of God who orders all things. Such a ruler, ... by his virtue forms himself in the likeness of God”.

In the beginning of his treatise *Precepts of statecraft* Plutarch strikes the thematic note when he emphasizes that those philosophers who offer their teachings to people must give real instructions and advice, so that their words may lead to practical results. And he shoulders his responsibility as a philosopher and sets out to write this rather multifarious and detailed treaty, addressing himself to a young man, Menemachus of Sardis, who is about to take up a political career.

Plutarch underlines initially that politics is a serious activity that needs preparation and deliberation and education. He sneers at those who throw themselves into public affairs without serious intentions and preparations, and somehow stumble into public life by mere chance and treat political activity as a pastime (*Praec. ger. reip.* 798D). He also censures those who from the outset make up their minds for political competition as a means of obtaining glory, as actors do on entering the stage (799A). Generally speaking, Plutarch maintains that superficial egocentric motives should not be allowed to motivate taking part in public affairs or determine political actions.

Contrary to being concentrated on oneself and one’s own advantage, the statesman ought to educate his character and put it in order, making his mind invariable and unchanging, so that he may be able to influence the citizens, trying to train their character and leading them gently towards what is better (799B, 800A–B). Plutarch considers it of decisive importance that the statesman sets a good example to his citizens. His instructions are very detailed indeed: The speech of the statesman must be full of unaffected character, true high-mindedness, a father’s frankness, foresight and concern for others (802E–F). Abusive speech is not fitting for statesmen (810C). Private enmities and ambitious strife must be laid down in order not to damage the state, for to be unwilling to make peace with a personal enemy is shockingly uncivilized. (809B–D).

In short, it can be said that the statesman which Plutarch delineates in this essay is an extremely idealized figure, a wondrous impeccable paragon of virtue, a model that he cannot possibly have meant to be found in reality. He probably did not even himself think that such a level of perfection could ever be reached by anybody even by means of systematic education, admonitions and philosophical training. He once expresses his awareness of that explicitly: “It is impossible to find any deed that is faultless as regards its virtue, or any

character undefiled by passion, or any life untouched by dishonour.”⁷ And yet he wanted to set forth such a visional high aim for young men expectant of a public career. Perhaps Plutarch’s ideal statesman was intended as a counterpart to Plato’s ideal state.

Plutarch was certainly a man of high idealistic outlook who was deeply impressed by Plato’s sublime conception of ethics, but he equally much had an eye for the situation in the material world. Looking around in the contemporary state of affairs, and pondering over the lives and actions of known personalities of times past, he could not avoid noticing the great discrepancy between ideal and reality, and the contrast between theory and practice.

Education in the *Vitae*: Roman *Lives*

The main reason why Plutarch decided to write biographies was certainly his deep interest in the character of well-known personalities. But also his great interest in the history of Greece and the impressive development of Rome was in all probability of decisive import.

In the light of the massive emphasis on education and philosophical training in the *Moralia* in general and especially in the admonitory political essays, it is legitimate to presuppose that education should be a very important theme in the *Lives*. This is surely the case, and it is generally considered to be the quite predominant one. We will try to estimate to what extent the texts really justify this view. There are in fact pieces of counter-evidence to be found.

First, we would expect Plutarch to say something, however brief, on the education received by each hero, even in case he had not received any at all. It is noticeable, then, that we find rather numerous *Lives* where there is nothing or very little on education. In several cases this may be due to Plutarch’s sources, some of which perhaps concentrated mainly on *res gestae* in the first place, especially as regards Roman heroes.⁸ But even considered this factor, there are many enough *Lives*, both Greek and Roman, where the passages on education are strikingly scanty.

It was surely natural for Plutarch to think of education as Attic philosophical and rhetorical training, with Laconian or Roman traditional upbringing and military training as ethically less valuable variants. This fact, and/or the scarcity of sources, may explain some cases of silence about

7 *An virt. doc. poss.* 439 B ἔργον δ’ ἀμεμψές εἰς ἀρετὴν οὐκ ἔστιν εὐρεῖν οὐδὲ πάθος ἀκέραιον ἦθος οὐδ’ ἄθικτον αἰσχροῦ βίον Cf. *Cim.* 2.4–5; *De laud. ips.* 345 E.

8 This was brought out by Pelling 1990: 219–231.

education. Thus, in the *Lives* of the earliest Roman heroes, Publicola and Camillus, nothing at all is said about their training. Coriolanus is the earliest figure of whom Plutarch mentions education. He regrets that the total lack of it (2.3–6) proved to have bad effects (5.1, 15.4–6, 21.1–3). With Fabius Maximus we are informed that he was a slow learner, who concentrated on training his body for war (1.5, 7). Also Titus Flamininus lacked a Hellenic education (1.4), but Plutarch suggests that this was compensated for by the fact that he was a good man by nature (2.5), who was humane in aspect, and in voice and speech sounding like a Greek (5.7). To Plutarch it was obviously enough that a Roman ruler displayed a positive and benevolent attitude to the Greeks to warrant a high estimation of his nature and character. Another conspicuous example of excellence without Hellenic education is Aemilius Paullus. Although he was himself educated in the native and ancestral way, he substantiated his philhellenic aim and direction by investing his sons with a Hellenic education. This measure certainly induced Plutarch to regard him almost as a true exponent of Greek culture and virtually a philosopher statesman.⁹ But the reputation of Aemilius, as well as of Flamininus, as a liberator of Greece, may have been an equally strong, or perhaps basic, factor.¹⁰

Far more striking, indeed, is the representation of Marcellus, the “sword of Rome” (*Fab.* 19.4), whom Plutarch on the one hand characterizes as “fond of war by nature”, but on the other as modest, humane and a lover of Greek learning who admired those who, unlike himself, had time to devote themselves to studying it. And Plutarch brings out Marcellus’ utterance of admiration of Archimedes at the siege of Syracuse as he saw his ships capsizing when hit by the catapult missiles invented by the mathematician (17.2). Plutarch apparently appreciated Marcellus’ reference to Briareus in this remark as a token of his Hellenic παιδεία.¹¹ His benevolent imagination of the hero’s interest in Greek culture makes him look with indulgence at his despoiling of the temples of Syracuse, because he transposed the excellent objects of art to Rome and embellished the thitherto ugly city (21.4–7). Even the atrocities committed by Marcellus in Sicily, such as the massacre at Henna, are either passed over or explained away in prejudiced benevolence by Plutarch, while Polybius and Livy express objective criticism. It is thus good reason to assume that the bias towards Hellenism is Plutarch’s own.¹²

9 Swain 1990a: 132 suggests that Plutarch invented this description on the basis of what Polybius (31.25–30) says about the education of Aemilius’ son, Scipio Aemilianus. Holland 2005: 270 points to Cicero’s *Somnium Scipionis* 14–16 as a probable source for Plutarch’s depiction of Aemilius as a philosopher statesman.

10 See Bremer, 261–267.

11 This is convincingly expounded by Swain 1990a: 140–142.

12 See discussion by Pelling 1989: 199–207.

Greek education in any deeper and systematic form was hardly to have in Rome before the middle of the 2nd c. B.C. Plutarch was probably aware of that, but he apparently found it hard to believe that any leading Roman could have a good character without at least some influence of Hellenic culture. Thus he even tries to derive king Numa's ideal wisdom from an imaginary primordial Pythagoreanism existing already before Pythagoras himself (*Numa* 1.3–4). And he tells of how Cato, when he as a young man, happened to meet with Nearchus the Pythagorean at Tarentum, and was eager to know of his doctrines (*Cato Ma.* 2.3–4). Plutarch has indulgence with Cato's postponing his study of Greek until late in life and even excuses his principal dissociation from Greek culture, certainly because of the stark self-restraint and generally the high moral standards of the Censor, only that he criticizes him of parsimony.

In practically all the early Roman *Lives* we can observe that Plutarch, when he presents a ruler totally lacking or having received only rudimentary Hellenic education, always tries to trace at least some Greek influence or else brings forward the hero's good nature as a compensation for his deficient education. The general impression we get is that he is always ready to look with indulgence at these semi-barbarous Romans and excuse blameful and even reprehensible behaviour.

Looking now at the *Lives* of the late Republic including the *Lives* of Galba and Otho, we would expect to find comprehensible accounts of the Greek (and Roman) education of the heroes. But strangely enough, in 11 *Lives*, the gross majority, Plutarch says little or nothing about education. Only in 4 *Lives* does he treat more or less extensively of this theme. Nothing is said about education in the *Life of Sertorius*, but he had noble προαίρεσις and φύσις (10.6). Nothing substantial either is said of the education received by the Gracchi,¹³ or by Caesar,¹⁴ Pompey,¹⁵ Crassus,¹⁶ Sulla and Antony. Plutarch's contemporary emperors, Galba and Otho, are not assigned a word about education.

One figure, Marius, aroused a particular interest on the part of the biographer. His decided rejection of Hellenic values (2.2) he probably felt as a provocation which made him censure the hero's reprehensible activities as due

13 Plutarch has only very brief statements about the excellent education of the brothers (1.7, *Comp.* 1.2), while Cicero, *De or.* I 38 and *Brut.* 125 offers detailed information.

14 If there actually existed a few opening paragraphs of this *Life*, they may have contained some information on Caesar's boyhood and education. Otherwise we only have a note on his visit to Rhodes to study under the rhetorician Apollonius (3.1).

15 Plutarch's description of Pompey's training and interest in Greek culture is superficial and occasional (10.8, 42.9–11, 52.5, 75.4–5).

16 Crassus is said to have trained rhetoric (3.3) and to be πολυμαθής καὶ ἱστορίαν and even to know a little philosophy (3.6).

precisely to his lack of civilization (2.3–4, 34.5–6, 45.10–12, *Luc.* 38.3, *Sulla* 7.2).

It is only in the *Lives* of Cicero, Cato Minor, Brutus, and Lucullus that we find Plutarch speaking more substantially about education.¹⁷ However, even here we find only sporadic evaluation of the effects of the philosophical training. Furthermore, it is striking indeed that Plutarch's judgements on all four heroes' actions and the relation of these to education are more or less biased. He avoids to designate Cicero philosopher but by routine calls him rhetorician.¹⁸ Pelling (1989: 216–17) notices that Plutarch is not particularly interested in “what Cicero got from philosophy”, but rather in the idea of a “clash of βίοι”, philosopher vs. rhetorician. Plutarch regards Cicero partly as failing in both roles. Neither is Cato, though alone called “philosopher” by Plutarch, free from reprehensible behaviour in his view. His harsh judgements may be due to his disapproval of Cato's Stoic stand. As a contrast he shows a positive attitude to Brutus, whom he, though in fact strongly influenced by Stoicism, insists to regard as principally a Platonist. Finally, the philhellenic attitude of Lucullus, especially his benefactory treatment of Chaeronea, makes Plutarch look with indulgence at his less virtuous actions, such as the cruel treatment of the people of Mytilene (4.2–3) or his luxurious revelling after his retirement (38–41).¹⁹

Education in the *Vitae*: Greek *Lives*

As with the Roman *Lives* we will divide the collection of Greek biographies into two parts, one containing those where Plutarch says little or nothing about education and its consequences, and the other comprising those *Lives* which have more extensive accounts of this theme. We find that 15 *Lives* will belong to the first group, whereas only 7 can be assigned to the second.

In two Athenian *Lives*, *Aristides* and *Nicias*, nothing is said about education, and this is also the case with *Demetrius*, *Timoleon*, and *Agis*. As to Cimon, Plutarch expressly states that he did not receive any education (4.5), and with

17 Cicero's philosophical training is accounted for in considerable detail, see 2.2–3, 3.1, 3, 4.1–5, 24.5–6, 40.1–3. For the philosophical interest of Cato, see 4.2, 6.3, 10.1–3, 16.1, 20.2, 44.1, 54.8, 57.4, 65.11, 67.2–3. Plutarch calls him “philosopher”: *Cato Mai.* 27.7, *Brut.* 2.1, *Pomp.* 40.2. Brutus is said to have been reared on Plato's doctrines (*Dion* 1.2) and to have listened to several philosophers (2.2–3, 24.1, 34.8, 37.2–6, 40.1, 48.2). With Lucullus Plutarch tells that he studied Greek literature and philosophy (1.4–9, 42.3–4.).

18 *Caes.* 31.1, 59.6, *Cato Min.* 32.8, *Cic.* 27.1, 39.7.

19 In this same context (38.3–4) Plutarch suggests that Marius and Cicero would have done better if they had abandoned public affairs in their old age.

Pelopidas we are informed (4.1) that he devoted himself to bodily exercise and hunting, while Epaminondas attended lectures in philosophy. Cleomenes received some Stoic instruction by Sphaerus of Borysthenes, which Plutarch however regards as detrimental rather than useful to great natures (2.2–6). Demosthenes missed a liberal education because of lack of money (4.2–4) and concentrated on rhetorical training (5.5–7). A short note informs us that Eumenes received a traditional liberal education (1.1). Plutarch opens the *Life* of Pyrrhus with an account of the introduction of Hellenic education in Epirus (1.4), but the hero himself apparently went in exclusively for military theory and practice (8.3, 6). As for Aratus we only get to know that he was reared liberally at Argos but preferred athletics to school and learnt little of rhetoric (3.1, 3). In the two Spartan *Lives*, *Lysander* (2.4) and *Agésilas* (1.2–5), it is shortly mentioned that they received the traditional Laconian training. The founding of that tradition by Lycurgus is accounted for in full in his *Life* (14–22). In Solon's *Life* parts of his legislation is reported, and Plutarch underlines that he was a lover of wisdom (2.2) and chiefly devoted himself to ethical philosophy (3.6).

Among the few *Lives* where Plutarch has more to say about our theme, that of Themistocles offers a rather depressing picture of the future hero's education. His study at the Cynosarges gymnasium he carried through with reluctance and indifference, and later he learnt practical wisdom, σοφία, from Mnesiphilus the Phrearrian (1.2–3, 2.3, 6), a training tradition originating from Solon. A quite short but telling information is given of the education of Phocion: he was the pupil of Plato and then later of Xenocrates (4.2–3), and likewise with Philopoemen, who was educated during his teens by two very competent philosophers (1.3, 5–7).

Only in the *Lives* of four heroes does Plutarch talk substantially of education, namely in *Pericles* (4–5.1, 6.1, 8.1–2, 24.5), *Alcibiades* (2.5–7, chs. 4–6, 7.1), *Alexander* (chs. 7–8), and *Dion* (1, 2.5, 4.3–7, 17.1–7, 47.4). In these *Lives* he talks in greater detail on education and philosophy than in those Roman *Lives* where he is most explicit. As to the evaluation and judgement on the effects of each hero's education, his interest seems to be equally limited in both groups of *Lives*. It seems questionable, then, if Swain is right when he argues that Plutarch generally dwells more on Hellenic education in the Roman *Lives* than in the Greek ones.²⁰ The general impression is rather that with most figures he has astonishingly little to say both of education itself and of its effects. And on the whole this picture appears rather similarly in both Roman and Greek *Lives*. This is especially striking considering his heavy emphasis on education in his admonitory essays directed to rulers in the *Moralia*.

20 Swain 1990; 1990a. But for a modified appreciation see *id.* 1997:173.

Reflections and conclusions

While Plutarch quite often neglects the factor of education when he presents his heroes, he never fails to say something about their nature.²¹ This is the more remarkable as precisely in his three essays on statesmanship in the *Moralia* he does not pay attention to this basic condition. There if ever we would expect to find claims on the nature of the future ruler, in addition to the educational precepts, especially considering that in Plato's thinking only great natures can be educated so as to develop a really good character.²² Presumably, he was so fixedly concentrated on the education theme in these essays that he overlooked the nature theme. Otherwise Plutarch is entirely in accord with Plato.²³ In any case, the inconsistency and contradictory treatment of the two basic concepts, nature (φύσις) and character (ἦθος) in the three essays on statesmanship in the *Moralia* vs. the *Lives* indicates that Plutarch did not regard education (παιδεία) and its effects on the individual as a superior theme in the *Lives*.

Another inconsistency can be seen in the ethical evaluation as related to the education received or not received. As a matter of fact it is very difficult to discern any systematic method of appreciation of the effects of education on character and action. Not only does Plutarch occasionally make rather subjective and biased judgements, but not seldom does he even neglect to make any comment at all. He displays a somewhat greater concern with the outcome of Hellenic παιδεία with Roman than with Greek heroes. This is in itself an indication that the παιδεία-theme does not have a superior standing. Moral evaluation is not an essential overall theme; it could be omitted. It is optional. So it is occasionally also with education. Alcibiades' education under the tutorship of Socrates is not focused upon ethical instruction. Plutarch does not even bother to indicate some features at least of the content of the Socratic teaching. Instead the content of Chs. 4–6 is mainly a series of love-stories. It is possible to discern a considerable number of more or less wide themes in some *Lives* which compete with, and occasionally get the better of, the education-evaluation theme. Twelve such themes show up:

21 E.g. *Fab.* 1.4–6, *Cato. Min.* 5.3–4, *Ant.* 4.1, *Cor.* 1.3–4, 2.1, *Cleom.* 1.4–5, *Phil.* 2.1, 3.1, *Demetr.* 1.7, *Alex.* 7.1, *Them.* 2.1–3, *Nic.* 2.4–6, *Lys.* 2.3–4, *Arist.* 2.2, *Alc.* 1.4–5, 16.9. See Pelling 2000:332; Duff 1999: 158–159.

22 Plato, *Rep.* 492 A affirms that, if great natures receive proper training, they must grow and attain complete virtue, whereas a small nature never brings about anything great (491 E, 495 B).

23 See Roskam 2004/2005: 93, n. 19.

1. The theme of Hellenic παιδεία especially in Rome implying greater interest in moral judgement in a number of Roman *Lives*.²⁴
2. The Liberation-of-Greece-theme as prominent in *Aemilius Paullus*, *Philopoemen*, *Flaminius*, and *Timoleon*.²⁵
3. The Anti-Hellenism-theme, exemplified by *Cato Maior* and *Marius*.²⁶
4. The Hellenic embellishment-theme in *Marcellus* (Rome) and *Cimon* 10 (Athens), both lacking education, and further *Pericles* 13.
5. The theme of unrest in old age in *Marius*, *Cicero*, *Cleomenes* 10.5, *Philopoemen* and *Flaminius*.²⁷
6. The “Clash of lives”-theme in *Cicero*.²⁸
7. The theme of bias on Platonic education as in *Brutus*, *Dion*, *Phocion* and *Philopoemen*.
8. The Fortuna/εὐτυχία-theme, as in *Sulla*, *Timoleon*, and *Aemilius*.²⁹
9. The “Great nature”-theme present as an underlying criterion for judgement in a majority of *Lives*.³⁰
10. The theme of natures set on vice, especially in *Demetrius*, *Antony* and *Marius*.³¹
11. The theme of complicated, composed natures, especially *Cato Maior*, *Marcellus*, *Sulla*, *Alcibiades*, *Cimon*, and *Alexander*.³²
12. The hagiographic theme, i.e. description of some figures as virtually faultless, all of them lacking a Hellenic education: *Numa*, *Flaminius*, *Aemilius*, *Timoleon*, and *Agis*.³³

This battery of more or less frequently applied and widespread themes compete with the education theme and influence judgement and evaluation of the individual’s nature and character. Such interference of various themes inevitably causes inconsistencies of evaluation. We immediately observe the great difference between the *Lives* in this respect. In fact it is difficult to discern any systematic method of presentation, inference and conclusion.

I believe that, if Plutarch actually intended precisely to investigate into how education works in individual lives, which in fact seems doubtful, then he

24 See Swain 1997: 172–173.

25 See Pelling 1989: 208; Bremer 2005.

26 See Pelling 1989:214–215; Swain 1990: 137–140.

27 See Pelling 1989: 212; Swain 1990: 138–140.

28 See Pelling 1989:216–217.

29 See Ingenkamp and Teodorsson.

30 See Duff 1999: 55–56, 64–65, 205–209, 227.

31 See Swain 1989: 66; Duff 1999: 55–56.

32 See Duff 1999: 203–204, 226–230; *id.* 2005: 158–159.

33 See Boulet (Numa), Teodorsson (Timoleon), and Roskam 2005, 231–232, who observes that Agis acted exactly in accordance with the advice in *Prac. ger. reip.*

must have been disappointed directly when he sought for historical personalities suitable for demonstration. He certainly realized that practically no such ideal examples exist. It is paradoxical indeed that the five hagiographic figures, Numa, Flaminius, Aemilius, Timoleon and Agis, all of them lacked a Hellenic education. They were thus unsuitable for demonstration of how education works.

All individuals have various types of deficiency and insufficiency either in nature (φύσις) or character (ἦθος). Plutarch seems also to have realized that neither of these is stable and reliable. The natures of Sulla and Alcibiades are said to have had a certain ἀνωμαλία, and Plutarch even intimates that a person's nature may be changeable.³⁴ Mostly he must have felt disappointed at the character-development of many of his heroes and how they made use of their education.³⁵

In the lack of suitable ideal examples Plutarch had no choice. He had to make the best of the situation and simply narrate the life stories of his figures and comment upon their personalities and activities. That meant evaluative judgements *pro et contra* and in some cases avoidance of any more detailed analysis. He in fact often leaves to the readers to judge for themselves on the basis of his presentation.³⁶

Plutarch displays two different types of outlook, idealistic and realistic respectively in the *Moralia* and the *Lives*. The contrast perhaps appears most conspicuously if we compare the idealized apparition of Alexander in the orations on his fortune and virtue in the *Moralia* and the picture of his life and actions in his biography. It was natural or, better, absolutely necessary, for Plutarch to tune down the education strain when confronted with the severe reality in which the heroes of his biographies lived.

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34 See Swain 1989: 63, 67–68.

35 Brenk, 72–73 made the sad observation that most of Plutarch's heroes "deteriorate mentally and morally at the end of their lives. There is a long and dismal string of degeneration and miserable deaths".

36 Agis 2.6 ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἐπικρινεῖς αὐτὸς ἐκ τῆς διηγήσεως.

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Dion and Brutus:
Philosopher Kings Adrift in a Hostile World

John Dillon

I

To be a philosopher king without a kingdom is indeed a sorry fate. As Plato puts it in Book VI of the *Republic* (496CD), when describing the problems facing the enlightened philosopher in contemporary (Athenian democratic) society:

“And those who have been of this little company (sc. of true philosophers) and have tasted the sweetness and blessedness of this possession and who have also come to understand the madness of the multitude sufficiently and have seen that there is pretty well nothing sound or right in any present political activity, and that there is no ally with whose aid the champion of justice could escape destruction, but that he would be as a man who has fallen among wild beasts, unwilling to share their misdeeds and unable to hold out singly against the savagery of all, and that he would thus, before he could in any way benefit his friends or the state, come to an untimely end without doing any good to himself or others – for all these reasons, I say, the philosopher remains quiet, minds his own business, and, as it were, standing aside under the shelter of a wall in a storm and blast of dust and sleet, and seeing others filled full of lawlessness, is content if in any way he may keep himself free from iniquity and unholy deeds through this life and take his departure with fair hope, serene and well content when the end comes.” (trans. Paul Shorey, with minor alterations).

This is a pretty comprehensive assault on the nature of public life in contemporary Athens, and constitutes a justification for Plato’s own abdication from active politics; but it also became something of a key text for later authors who had occasion to reflect on the difficulties and dangers to be faced by the man of philosophic virtue in the arena of active politics.

Plutarch knows the passage well enough¹ – how could he not? – but he does not choose to dwell on it in his moral essays, as his own relations with the civil power were far more satisfactory than those of Plato with the Athenian democracy. His concern is no longer with how philosophers shall become

¹ This is only indicated, however, by his employment on a number of occasions (*Mor.* 97F; 126C; 751E), though for purely literary purposes, of variations on the turn of phrase ἐν χειμῶνι κονιορτοῦ καὶ ζέλης, ‘in a storm-blast of dust and sleet’ (496d7).

kings, or kings philosophers, but rather merely with how the philosopher shall properly consort with the kings and consuls of his day, without any thought of supplanting them.² I think it is fair to say, as I have suggested in an earlier essay (1997), that Plutarch had come to the conclusion that the world-order constituted by the Roman Empire represented a sort of culmination of the historical strivings of the human race on the political front, even as contemporary Greek *paideia* (based as it was on the achievements of the Greek classical age) was its culmination on the cultural front, and that all that was required from the philosopher in his era was a certain amount of discreet nudging of individual political figures whose performance was not quite up to the mark in one respect or another.

It was not so, however, in past eras, the period covered by his *Lives*. Here, the course of history throws up all too many examples of noble individuals, either of naturally philosophic nature or directly inspired by philosophy, who are ill-matched with their environments. I would like to focus on this occasion on just two of these, Dion of Syracuse and the Roman M. Junius Brutus, whom Plutarch links together in what he tells us (*Dion* 2. 4) is his twelfth book of *Parallel Lives*. The point of contact between them that most concerns me here – and which was of course a major consideration for Plutarch himself – is that both were by conviction Platonists (Dion, of course, an associate of Plato himself (and possibly even bank-roller of the Academy), Brutus a follower in particular of the first century B.C. reviver of dogmatic Platonism, Antiochus of Ascalon, and of his brother Aristus, *Brutus* 2.1–2), and both chose to involve themselves in public life, to their own ultimate detriment.

Before we proceed to examine the details of their careers, however, let us turn back for a moment to a relevant passage of the *Moralia*. In the truncated little essay – whether mutilated in the manuscript tradition or left unfinished by Plutarch himself is unclear – *To an Uneducated Ruler* (779D–792F), Plutarch actually presents us with a very useful sketch of his vision of the ideal ruler, from a Platonist perspective. For Plutarch, the salient characteristic of the good ruler is that he allows himself to be ruled in turn by divine reason. This reason is expressed in Law, but, in the case of the ruler, the laws are internalised by, and personified in, him. “Who, then, shall rule the ruler?”, he asks, rhetorically, at the beginning of ch. 3.

“The
Law, king of all,
Both mortals and immortals,

2 In such works as *That a Philosopher Ought to Converse Especially with Men of Power*; *To an Uneducated Ruler*; *Whether an Old Man Should Engage in Public Affairs*; and *Principles of Statecraft*.

as Pindar says³ – not law written outside him in books or on wooden tablets or the like, but reason ensouled within in him (ἔμψυχος ὦν ἐν αὐτῷ λόγος), always abiding within him and watching over him and never leaving his soul without leadership.“

The ruler is thus a ‘living law’, though Plutarch is careful not to go so far as Plato in the *Republic* in placing his philosopher-kings above the law. He can appeal rather to the portrayal of the ruler in the *Statesman*, where Plato has so far modified his position as to grant that, while the original law-giver may indeed be a law unto himself, all subsequent rulers, while internalizing his laws, must uphold and live by them – and this position is continued into the *Laws*, where even the members of the Nocturnal Council, though fully embodying the constitution, are chiefly concerned with preserving it against corruption – though minimally also with altering individual regulations that are seen no longer to serve their purpose.

He continues a little further down (780D):

“But the educated and wise ruler has within him the voice which always speaks to him and exhorts him. Polemon, indeed, defined love as ‘the service of the gods for the care and preservation of the young’; one might more truly say that rulers serve god for the care and preservation of men, in order that, of the glorious gifts which the gods give to men, they may distribute some and safeguard others.”

He expands on this for a little, describing how Nature, through the beneficence of the Gods, sends down (or up) all the blessings of the natural world, and then continues(780E):

“But these gifts and blessings, so excellent and so great, which the Gods bestow cannot be rightly enjoyed nor used without law and justice and a ruler. Now justice is the aim and end of law, but law is the work of the ruler, and the ruler is the image of God who sets all things in order (εἰκὼν Θεοῦ τοῦ πάντα κοσμοῦντος).”

All this is thickly interlarded with rhetoric, and bristles with quotations and exempla, as befits the type of essay that Plutarch is composing, but a coherent doctrine of the nature of the ruler is certainly discernible, and it most closely resembles Plato’s position in the *Statesman*. With the help of the examples of Epaminondas from Greek history and Cato from Roman (781CD), he lays emphasis on the good ruler’s providential care of his people, or of his immediate followers, even as God cares for the universe as a whole. He contrasts such good rulers, then, with a number of conventional tyrants, summarizing the contrast with a fine epigram: ‘For in truth kings fear for their subjects, but tyrants fear their subjects’ (τῷ γὰρ ὄντι δεδίασιν οἱ βασιλεῖς ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀρχομένων, οἱ δὲ τύραννοι τοὺς ἀρχομένους).

3 Employing Fr. 169 Snell, already twice utilised by Plato, quoted at *Gorg.* 784B and referred to at *Laws* III 690B.

He sums up his position as follows, driving home the parallelism God – Sun – Ruler (781F–782A):

“For it is neither probable nor fitting that God is, as some philosophers say, mingled with matter, altogether passive as it is, and with things which are subject to countless necessities, chances and changes. On the contrary, somewhere up above in contact with that nature which, in accordance with the same principles, remains always as it is, established, as Plato says, ‘upon holy pedestals’, proceeding in accordance with nature in his straight course, he reaches his goal.⁴ And as the sun, his most beautiful image, appears in the heavens as his mirrored likeness to those who are able to see him in it, just so he has established in states the light of justice and of knowledge of himself as an image which the blessed and the wise copy with the help of philosophy, modelling themselves after the most beautiful of all things.”

Plutarch, then, has a pretty coherent concept of the nature of the good ruler. Let us see how first Dion and then Brutus measure up to this.

II

Plutarch begins his pair of Lives (*Dion*, 1) with a general reflection, applicable to both characters:

“Both, then, set out from one training-school, as it were (sc. the Platonic Academy), to engage in the greatest struggles. And we need not wonder that, in the performance of actions that were often kindred and alike, they bore witness to the doctrine of their teacher in virtue, that wisdom and justice must be united with power and good fortune if public careers are to take on nobility as well as substance.” (trans. B. Perrin, adapted).⁵

One might reasonably ask where exactly Plato makes such a statement as this, but in fact, I think, it can be taken as an adaptation to the ‘real world’ of Plato’s principle, as set out in the *Republic*, that only in an ideally-constituted state would a truly philosophical spirit find a suitable environment in which to operate, and that would constitute the ‘power and good fortune’ to which Plutarch refers, though in the context in which Plutarch is operating the reference has to be to attaining, and holding, power in an imperfectly-constituted existing state.

4 A graceful blend, here, of three key Platonic passages on the nature of the realm of Forms and of God, *Phaedo* 78D, *Phaedrus* 254B, and *Laws* IV 716A.

5 ... ὡσπερ ἐκ μιᾶς ὥρμησαν ἀμφοτέροι παλαιστρας ἐπὶ τοὺς μεγίστους ἀγῶνας. καὶ τὸ μὲν ὅμοια πολλὰ καὶ ἀδελφὰ πράξαντας μαρτυρῆσαι τῷ καθηγεμόνι τῆς ἀρετῆς ὅτι δεῖ φρονήσει καὶ δικαιοσύνη δύναμιν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ τύχην συνελθεῖν, ἵνα κάλλος ἅμα καὶ μέγεθος αἱ πολιτικαὶ πράξεις λάβωσιν, οὐ θαυμαστόν ἐστιν. All subsequent translations will be based on Perrin (Loeb), emended as necessary.

Dion, of course, starts out close to the centre of power in Syracuse in the early decades of the fourth century, as being the brother-in-law of Dionysius I, but it was a distinctly precarious perch to occupy. Dionysius was not a man who was inclined to spare anyone, including his own immediate family, if they appeared to him to constitute any kind of threat to his power, nor was he notably amenable to high-minded political advice. Dion's privileged position, therefore, was a two-edged sword, and the more high-minded he grew, under the influence of Plato's teaching, the more precarious did his position become.

Plutarch is, of course, predisposed always to see the best in his hero, but he does nonetheless allow us to discern that Dion's conspicuous virtue could also constitute a problem. Dion was a distinctly single-minded fellow, but with this went, as so often in such cases, something of an unbending character and intolerance of other views, and this was ultimately to prove his downfall. Plutarch tells us (4. 1) that, even before Plato appeared on the scene in 388/7, Dionysius – presumably to test young Dion – ordered his treasurers to give him whatever he asked for, but also to tell him the same day what that was; and this test he plainly passed with flying colours.

When Plato arrived,⁶ conversation with him “quickly set the young man's soul on fire” (ἀνεφλέχθη τὴν ψυχὴν ταχύ), and he immediately felt that his crusty old brother-in-law should experience the benefits of philosophical discourse as well. This early example of his extreme lack of realism and tact, if we believe the accounts of it, led to one of the more famous and dangerous confrontations of Plato's career,⁷ though Dion himself appears to have survived unscathed.⁸ However, Plutarch does, albeit most sympathetically, let

6 Mystery surrounds the initial contact between Plato and Dion. Someone (perhaps Archytas?) must have arranged the introduction; but Dion was only twenty, after all, and should not have yet been that conspicuous for virtue, while Plato himself, though now already forty, can hardly have been internationally famous, having (as we believe) as yet composed hardly anything. Plutarch presents the meeting between them as simply ‘divine good fortune’ (θεῖα τιμὴ τύχη) – borrowing the thought from Plato himself in the *Seventh Letter* (326D) – and Plato throws no more light on how the first meeting came about than this.

7 Though we do not, I think, have to believe that Dionysius secretly ordered the Spartan admiral Pollis, who gave Plato a lift home, either to kill his passenger on the return journey, or to sell him as a slave. Since there was a war on at the time between Athens and Sparta, Pollis, with the best will in the world, could not safely take him any further than Aegina, and it was, I would suggest, simply bad luck that the Aeginetans had recently passed a resolution to sell all Athenians that they laid hands on as slaves. But it is certainly an odd story.

8 “In spite of all this,” says Plutarch (4, 4), “Dion stood in no less honour and credit with Dionysius than before, but had the management of most important embassies, as, for instance, when he was sent to Carthage and won great admiration.” Dionysius also, it seems, put up with various instances of ‘freedom of speech’ (*parthésia*) from his young

slip in this connexion a significant aspect of his character which was to lead ultimately to his death: his single-minded conviction that rationality – or at least what he conceived of at any given time to be rational – should prevail in all minds to which it was presented (4, 3):

“As soon as he got a taste of a rational philosophy which led the way to virtue, his soul was speedily on fire, and since he very artlessly and impulsively expected, from his own ready obedience to the call of higher things, that the same arguments would have a like persuasive force with Dionysius, he earnestly set to work and at last brought it to pass that the tyrant, in a leisure hour, should meet Plato and hear him discourse.” (trans. Perrin)

This impulse of his, as we have seen, was not at all a good idea; and yet its outcome did not ultimately deter him from even more utopian schemes, when Dionysius died, twenty years later. With the younger Dionysius his relationship was somewhat different, since he was now the older man, and stood to him in the relationship of uncle, as well as, once again, brother-in-law.⁹ Relying on this position, he seems to have straghtway set about trying to remould Dionysius II, who was a fairly witless and dissipated young man, into something like a Platonic philosopher-king.

In this connexion, we must assume, I think, some continuity of contact between Dion and Plato over the intervening twenty years, at least in the form of exchanges of letters, and perhaps, on Plato's part, of copies of his published dialogues. At any rate, when Dion got to work on Dionysius after his accession, seeking to make of him 'a king instead of a tyrant' (10, 2), he was able, along with exhortations, to present him with *logoi* of Plato (11, 1). Of course, these may simply be 'arguments' of Plato's, communicated to Dion by letter, but it sounds as if Plutarch means them to be something more. Plato, at this stage (367 B.C.), may be assumed to be well advanced on the composition of the *Republic*, and indeed, in that work, he throws out a few hints that he is thinking in terms of the conversion of the sons of existing rulers as a way of establishing his ideal commonwealth (cf. VI 499D, or at VII 540D, where he envisages a single philosopher-king as an alternative to a plurality of them.). Something of his plans, at any rate, he must have communicated to Dion.

However, once again, Dion's character constituted a problem. No doubt, in the face of the intransigent and unscrupulous opposition of the courtiers, who stood to lose heavily if anything like a Platonic utopia were established at Syracuse, his efforts were doomed from the start, but Plutarch allows us to know that his personality was against him (8, 1–2):

brother-in-law. He doubtless felt that he was harmless, while being useful in various ways.

9 The relationship here is somewhat convoluted, since, as well as being the brother of Aristomache, Dionysius' step-mother, Dion also married one of her daughters, Arete, while Dionysius married the other, Sophrosyne.

“Dion then, as was natural, was obnoxious to these men (sc. the courtiers), since he indulged in no pleasure or youthful folly. And so they tried to calumniate him, by actually giving to his virtues plausible names of vices; for instance, they called his dignity haughtiness, and his boldness of speech self-will. Even when he admonished, he was thought to denounce, and when he would not share men’s sins, to hold them in contempt. And in very truth his character had naturally a certain majesty (ἄγχος), together with a harshness that repelled intercourse and was hard to deal with (τραχύτης δυσπρόσοδος ἐντεύξει καὶ δυσξύμβολος).¹⁰ For not only to a man who was young and whose ears had been corrupted by flattery was he an unpleasant and irksome associate, but many also who were intimate with him and who loved the simplicity and nobility of his disposition, were apt to find fault with the manner of his intercourse with men, on the ground that he dealt with those who sought his aid more rudely and harshly than was needful in public life.”

Plutarch goes on to cite an admonition from Plato (admittedly from the pretty certainly spurious *Fourth Letter*) in support of this analysis.¹¹ It is a most interesting testimony on Plutarch’s part, since the whole tenor of his narrative is strongly favourable to Dion, but he is at the same time constrained to admit that his hero has certain flaws of character, such as are indeed going to contribute to his final downfall. It is to the circumstances of this downfall that we should now turn.

The first signs of trouble surface shortly after his victory over Dionysius, in the form of a craftily-phrased letter to him from Dionysius, disguised as a letter from his son (31. 1–3). This the Syracusan assembly wished to excuse him from reading out in public, but Dion’s strict sense of propriety demanded that he do this. The letter was ingeniously crafted to cast maximum odium upon Dion, by making mention of his past close association with the tyranny, and urging him not to give liberty to the Syracusan people, who would not appreciate it, but rather to assume the tyranny himself.

Now we cannot assume that Dionysius can have hoped that Dion would have been so pigheaded an advocate of ‘transparency’ in government as to have the letter read out in public, but perhaps he reckoned that, even if he kept it private, its contents would leak out in some way or other, and cause suspicion among the people. At any rate, as Plutarch tells us (32. 1), the people gave Dion no credit for his exercise in ‘transparency’, but rather “found

10 Plutarch uses both of these notable epithets elsewhere in the *Lives*, the former, in a hostile sense, of Demetrius (42.1), the latter, more sympathetically, of Phocion (5.1).

11 Plutarch does tell us, though, a little later on (17. 2), that when Dion was staying in Athens after his exile in 366 and attending the Academy, Plato assigned Speusippus to him as a special companion, “for he desired that Dion’s disposition should be tempered and sweetened (ἀφειδύνεσθαι τοῦ Δίωνος τὸ ἥθος) by association with men of charming presence who indulged seasonably in graceful pleasantries.” The austerity of his disposition was therefore pretty notorious.

occasion for suspecting and fearing him, on the ground that he was under a strong necessity of sparing Dionysius, and at once turned their eyes towards other leaders.”

The beneficiary of this disaffection turned out to be a certain Heracleides, who had himself been a servant of the tyranny, but had quarrelled with Dionysius and gone into exile, and now returned, in the wake of Dion’s victory. Plutarch portrays him as a shameless time-server and crowd-pleaser, “irresolute, fickle, and least to be relied upon as partner in an enterprise involving power and glory” (32. 2). However, he had “a certain natural gift of persuading and moving a populace that seeks to be courted,.”

Plutarch embarks here on a theme which he will carry forward to the end of the biography, that of Dion as the wise and moderate physician of souls and of the state, pitted against the volatile, witless and self-indulgent mob of the Syracusans. Plutarch is, of course, no friend to democracy, and he finds in the Syracusans and their behaviour after being freed by Dion a paradigm of what can become of a populace drunk with freedom and out of control. Here he adds to his critique of Heracleides (32. 3) that “he won over (the Syracusans) that much the more easily because they were repelled by the gravity (τὸ σεμνόν) of Dion, which they resented as severe and out of place in a public man, because their power had given them license and boldness, and they wished to be flattered by popular leaders before they were really a people (πρὸ τοῦ δῆμος εἶναι τὸ δημαγωγεῖσθαι θέλοντες).”

What does Plutarch mean by “before they were really a people”? I suspect what he has in mind is, ‘before they had undergone the proper Platonic *paideia*,’ which is the only condition on which a people may be allowed a measure of discretion in ruling itself. And it is this *paideia* which Dr. Dion was plainly bent on administering. Such a project could only end in tears.

What happens next, in fact, is that Heracleides progressively insinuates himself into the good graces of the populace. He is appointed admiral by the assembly (32.1), whereat Dion lodges a dignified protest that this diminished his position as supreme commander (αὐτοκράτωρ), the people reluctantly back down, and then *Dion* appoints him admiral. A series of other incidents ensue, culminating the following summer in the deposing of Dion from the generalship by the assembly, and the election of a new board of twenty-five generals, including Heracleides. In this connection, Plutarch explicitly employs the medical metaphor so beloved of Plato (37. 4):

“So the people, attempting, as it were, to stand at once upon their feet after their long sickness of tyranny, and to act the part of independence out of season, stumbled in their undertakings, and yet resented Dion, who, like a physician, wished to subject the city to a strict and temperate regimen (βουλόμενον ὥσπερ ἰατρὸν ἐν ἀκριβεῖ καὶ σωφρονούσῃ διαίτῃ κατασχεῖν τὴν πόλιν).”

Dion bows out, therefore, and makes a dignified retreat with his mercenaries to neighbouring Leontini, where he awaits developments. The Syracusans come to grief, of course, in the way that indisciplined rabbles will, by going hog-wild and giving way to reckless carousals after a minor victory they achieve over some reinforcements for the tyrant's garrison that arrive under the command of a certain Nypsius (41. 2–3). Their generals, being slaves to the mob, exercise no leadership. Nypsius sees his chance, breaks out of the citadel, and ravages the city. The people are forced into a grovelling appeal to Dion to reassume the command, which he graciously agrees to do (43. 1–3).

Once again, Dion has a chance to dispose of Heracleides, and is urged strongly by his associates to do so, but he feels that he must be magnanimous. As Plutarch puts it (47. 2):

“But Dion tried to soften their resentment, saying that while other generals trained themselves mostly for arms and war, he himself had studied for a long time in the Academy how to conquer anger, envy, and all contentiousness; and it was no manifestation of such self-mastery, he said, when one was kind to friends and benefactors, but when one who had been wronged was merciful and mild towards the erring. Besides, he wished men to see that he was superior to Heracleides, not so much in power and wisdom, as in goodness and justice; for therein lay real superiority.”

This is all very well, but it does not stop Heracleides plotting against him incessantly, and finally, Plutarch tells us (53. 3), Dion is prevailed upon by his more prudent friends to have Heracleides assassinated. This clears the way for Dion to pursue his aim for Syracuse, which turns out to be what Plutarch characterizes, approvingly, as a ‘mixed constitution’, on the model of Sparta or Crete, but what more ill-conditioned persons would describe as a straightforward oligarchy; and that is certainly how it appeared to the Syracusan populace.¹² The situation was aggravated by Dion's sending off to Corinth – admittedly the mother-city of Syracuse, but a firm oligarchy – for ‘counsellors and colleagues’ (σύμβουλοι καὶ συνάρχοντες). As Plutarch describes his motives (53. 2):

“He had it in mind to put a curb upon the unmixed democracy in Syracuse, regarding it as not a civil polity, but rather, in the words of Plato,¹³ a ‘bazaar of polities’ (ὡς οὐ πολιτεῖαν, ἀλλὰ παντοπόλιον πολιτειῶν); also to establish and set in order a mixture of democracy and royalty, somewhat after the Spartan and

12 We may note that Dion does not appear to be attracted by Plato's proposal in the *Laws* for an equality in land-holding, since, when a redistribution of land is proposed (37. 3) – admittedly a cornerstone of democratic revolutionary politics – he is quick to suppress it. But of course the Syracusan mob would be far from qualified to enrol in Plato's Magnesia, so he is not really being un-Platonic here.

13 A reference to *Republic* VIII 557D.

Cretan fashion, wherein an aristocracy should preside, and administer the most important affairs.”

One can well see that this would confirm the worst fears of Heracleides and the Syracusan people, and the situation was not helped by Dion’s notable deficiencies in the public relations area. After the demise of Heracleides, another, rather unexpected, champion of the people arose in the person of the Athenian Callippus, an Athenian who had befriended Dion during his sojourn in Athens – though not, Plutarch is careful to specify (54.1), as a fellow-philosopher. This man had accompanied Dion on his original expedition, and was regarded by him as a close friend and confidant.¹⁴

Plutarch does not like Callippus one bit, and he paints him in the direst colours, but it is possible to see him also as a genuine Athenian democrat who had become increasingly depressed by the direction in which Dion was going, and decided that it was his duty to put a stop to him. At any rate, that is what he did, with the help of some disaffected members of Dion’s mercenary force, to the great joy of the Syracusans.

It is a sad tale, but it does serve to remind us what an uphill struggle must await anyone setting out to establish anything like a Platonic ideal state in any part of the real world. One certainly cannot afford to be high-minded or finicky about dealing with one’s opponents. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin and Mao Tse-Tung, for example, may have had high ideals when they started out, but they were never squeamish about their methods of attaining or holding onto power, and that made the difference between their fates and that of either of our heroes.

III

A similar case to Dion’s is that of M. Junius Brutus, with whom I will necessarily deal somewhat more briefly. His initial situation was rather different to that of Dion, but many similarities arise as his story unfolds, and it is these that attracted Plutarch to compare them. Unlike Dion, Brutus was not born close to the centre of a ruling power, there being no such definite power in the Roman Republic in the last century B.C.E. (Brutus was born, probably, in 85 B.C. or so); but he was not that far from the centre of power either. He came of a deeply respected family, being notionally a descendant of that Lucius Junius Brutus who slew the last of the Tarquins and founded the Roman Republic, becoming its first consul in 509 B.C.¹⁵

14 Plutarch makes quite a point of the fact that Callippus had sponsored Dion in his initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries – he was his *mystagōgos*.

15 Enemies of Brutus liked to point out that, since the original Brutus was reputed to have executed his two sons for treason, he cannot have had any direct descendants, and

This ancestry, however, while being an honour, was also something of a burden, since tyrant-slaying was a dominant feature of the family history, and one might in consequence feel called upon to do one's bit in that area oneself, should occasion arise. Brutus grew up a serious young man, rather like Dion, but instead of experiencing the overwhelming influence of a visiting philosopher, as was the case of Dion in respect of Plato, he was subject to the domestic influence of the Stoic philosopher M. Porcius Cato, the brother of his mother Servilia. His initial philosophical influences were therefore Stoic rather than Platonist; however, as Plutarch tells us (2.1–2), on reaching maturity, while there was practically no school of philosophy that he did not sample,¹⁶ “he devoted himself particularly to the followers of Plato.” And, among these, he further specifies, he did not favour the sceptical New Academy, but devoted himself rather to so-called ‘Old Academy’ of Antiochus of Ascalon, who had initiated a return to Platonist dogmatism about the time of Brutus’ birth, and whose Stoicizing tendencies were conspicuous. Antiochus himself was by now dead, but Brutus took up with his brother and successor to the headship, Aristus (perhaps initially during his trip to the East on the staff of his uncle Cato in 58), and made him, according to Plutarch, his house-philosopher (φίλος καὶ συμβιώτης) – though how this squared with Aristus’ continuing to run the Platonic School is not clear.

Brutus’ father had been a partisan of M. Aemilius Lepidus, who had gone into revolt against the Sullan constitution in 78, in consequence of which Brutus senior had been treacherously executed by Pompey after surrendering to him at Mutina in 77, and Brutus could never afterwards bring himself to speak to his father’s murderer; but nevertheless, says Plutarch, when it came time to choose in the Civil War between Pompey and Caesar in 49, “thinking it his duty to put the public good above his own, and holding that Pompey’s grounds for going to war were better than Caesar’s, he attached himself to Pompey.” We seem to discern here a character very similar in high-mindedness to that of Dion.

Caesar, nonetheless, pardoned him after Pharsalus, and even took him into his confidence. He was plainly impressed by him. Plutarch tells us (6. 4–5):

“And it is said that Caesar, when he first heard Brutus speak in public, said to his friends, ‘What this young man wants I don’t know, but everything that he wants he wants very much.’ For the weightiness (τὸ ἐμβριθές) of his character, and the fact that no one found it easy to make him listen to appeals for favour, but that he performed what good deeds he performed through rational calculation and free

Brutus was probably descended from some steward or hanger-on of the family; but the philosopher Posidonius, Plutarch tells us (1. 5), loyally maintained that there was actually a third, younger son, and that it was from him that the family was descended.

16 Presumably not the Epicureans, who would be beyond the pale for anyone concerned to pursue a public career.

choice, made his efforts, wherever he directed them, powerful and efficacious. No flattery could induce him to grant an unjust petition, and that inability to withstand shameless importunity, which some people call ‘easygoing-ness’ (δυσωπεῖσθαι),¹⁷ he regarded as most disgraceful in a man of substance, and he was accustomed to remark that those who were unable to refuse anything, in his opinion must have sullied their reputations in their youth (μὴ καλῶς τὴν ὥραν διατεθεῖσθαι).¹⁸

Shades of Dion, here, surely! It was this quality in Brutus, it seems (Plut. 8.1), that most impressed Julius Caesar (so unlike himself as it was!), and induced him to trust him – a trust, as it turned out, that was sadly misplaced. For, within a year or so of being pardoned at Pharsalus, overborne by his increasing alarm at the turn that Caesar’s rule was taking and by those who were incessantly urging him to emulate his great ancestor, Brutus had begun to plot.

The details of the plot need not concern us in the present context – except perhaps for the curious incident, related by Plutarch in ch. 12, of the real live Ciceronian-style philosophical dialogue that Brutus arranges between himself and his friends Statilius the Epicurean, Favonius the Stoic, and the lawyer Q. Antistius Labeo, apparently on some such topic as ‘What conditions in the state would justify insurrection?’ – really a test of the reliability of all of them, which the first two fail, and Labeo passes, while Brutus himself says nothing.

After the assassination of Caesar, however, Brutus, like Dion, exhibits traits of philosophical high-mindedness which contribute to his ultimate downfall. Like Dion with regard to Heracleides, Brutus resists the urgings of his less scrupulous associates that Antony should be done away with (18. 2), partly because he felt it would be unjust to kill anyone else but Caesar himself, and partly, Plutarch tells us, because he hoped for a change of heart in Antony: “for he would not give up the belief that Antony, who was a man of good parts, ambitious, and a lover of fame, if once Caesar were out of the way, would assist the country in attaining its liberty.”

No such luck. Antony in fact went along with the tyrannicides for a short while, but then Brutus committed a further error of judgement. The question came up of Caesar’s last will and testament, whether it should be read out in public, and whether Caesar should be accorded a public funeral. Brutus’ colleague Cassius firmly opposed both these measures, but Antony demanded them, and Brutus’ sense of propriety required him to assent. This, remarks Plutarch (20.1–2), was his second mistake: “for by sparing Antony’s life as he had done, he incurred the charge of raising up against the conspirators a bitter

17 This is not easy to translate idiomatically. LSJ renders it as ‘being susceptible to importunity’, which is what it means, but one wishes for something snappier. Perrin’s ‘timidity’ is quite inadequate, but I sympathize with his problem.

18 Quite a strong statement: he means, virtually, that they must have prostituted themselves.

and formidable foe; and now, in allowing Caesar's funeral rites to be conducted as Antony demanded, he committed a fatal error."

The upshot was, of course, that the conspirators had to leave town in something of a hurry, and in fact Brutus and Cassius headed off to the East, in the hope of raising an adequate army to oppose Caesar's veterans. On landing in Athens, however (24. 1), Brutus straightway checked in to the Platonic School, now run by a certain Theomnestus of Naucratis (though also calling on the Peripatetic Cratippus),¹⁹ and to all appearances devoted himself to philosophical discussions – though in fact, Plutarch tells us, "he was getting ready for war." This slightly unworldly bookishness, though, recalls something Plutarch tells about his activities on the eve of the battle of Pharsalus, back in 48, where he spent all his spare time composing an epitome of Polybius' *Histories* (4. 4)!

The process of gathering forces with which to face Antony and Octavian at the final showdown at Philippi need not concern us, though Plutarch does not fail to present repeated contrasts between the honourable and conscientious behaviour of Brutus and the much rougher and more unscrupulous actions of Cassius – who, he emphasises, favoured the Epicurean creed (37. 1). He gives a nice characterization of them both in ch. 29 (1–2):

"Cassius had the reputation of being an able soldier, but harsh in his anger, and with an authority based largely on fear, although with his familiars he was rather prone to laughter and fond of banter. But the virtues of Brutus, as we are told, made him beloved by the multitude, adored by his friends, admired by the nobility, and not hated even by his enemies. For he was remarkably gentle and large-minded, free from all anger, pleasurable indulgence and greed, and kept his purpose erect and unbending in defence of what was honourable and just."

– in other words, very much the Platonist in politics, though, on the basis of this description, considerably more 'user-friendly' than Dion.²⁰

IV

In their deaths, Dion and Brutus diverge, for reasons not unconnected with their characters. Dion was disposed of by a close associate, who felt that he was aiming at the suppression of liberty. Brutus arranged his own death, following on his defeat at Philippi, but surrounded by friends who were devoted to him to the end, fighting for the preservation of 'liberty' as he saw it, which meant

19 This is not as much of an eclectic choice as it might appear, since Cratippus was actually a follower of Antiochus of Ascalon, who had deviated mildly in the Peripatetic direction.

20 Though this, we may note, is not a point that Plutarch makes in his *synkrisis*, while making many other interesting comparisons.

in fact the continuation of the (benign and wise) rule of a senatorial oligarchy. Dion's aim was probably in fact not far different from this, but in the context of democratic Syracuse, it appeared woefully reactionary. The aims of both, however, were thoroughly Platonic.

The context of Brutus' death, however, calls forth from Plutarch an interesting reflection (47. 4), which he repeats in his *synkrisis* (2. 1). We know from various passages in the *Moralia*,²¹ to which I have referred in the previous article above-mentioned, that Plutarch was intellectually convinced of the inevitability and rightness of the Roman Empire, and that therefore those who stood in the way of its creation, however noble and sincere they might be, were engaged in a hopeless struggle against the course of history. He gives voice to that sentiment here:

“But since, as it would seem, the government of Rome could no longer be a democracy, and a monarchy was necessary, God, wishing to remove from the scene the only man who stood in the way of him who was able to be sole master, cut off from Brutus the knowledge of that good fortune,²² although it very nearly reached him in time.”

In the *synkrisis*, again, he points up the contrast between the regimes which Dion and Brutus set out to overthrow, as follows:

“And indeed it was not a like thing for Syracuse to be rid of Dionysius and Rome of Caesar. For Dionysius was an avowed tyrant, and filled Sicily with countless ills; whereas the rule of Caesar, although during its establishment it gave no little trouble to its opponents, still, after they had been overpowered and had accepted it, they saw that it was a tyranny only in name and appearance, and no cruel or tyrannical act was authorized by it; indeed, it was plain that the state required a monarchy, and that Caesar, like a most gentle physician, had been assigned to them by the Divinity itself (ὡσπερ ἰατρός ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ τοῦ δαίμονος δεδόσθαι).”

So things were doubly difficult for Brutus: not only is he a Platonist trying to operate in the rough-and-tumble world of practical politics; he is up against history itself, or rather, the Demiurge directing historical development for the best. A philosopher-king should not have to confront such a situation!

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Dillon, J. (1997), “Plutarch and the End of History”, in Judith M. Mossman, *Plutarch and His Intellectual World*, London, 233–240.

21 See specifically, his essay *On the Fortune of the Romans*, but cf. also *Principles of Statecraft* (824CD), and *On the Oracles at Delphi* (408BC).

22 That is to say, that his forces had won an important sea-battle, depriving Octavian and Antony of essential supplies.

Eunoia bei Plutarch:
von den *Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae* zu den *Viten*

Evangelos Alexiou

„*Eunoia* in Isocrates or the Political Importance of Creating Good Will“ heißt ein Beitrag von J. de Romilly 1958, die vor fünfzig Jahren zum ersten Mal ein Grundprinzip des Wertempfindens von Isokrates, dem Redner des 4. Jhdts v. Chr., behandelt hat. Isokrates integriert rhetorische, geistige und ethische Werte in sein Erziehungskonzept und bringt sie auf allen Stufen mit der öffentlichen Anerkennung in Verbindung (*Antid.* 275–285). Unter den Mitteln, die die Zuhörer überzeugen sollen, ist deren εὔνοια, die auf dem guten Ruf des Redners beruht, besonders wirkungsvoll.¹ Isokrates betrachtet Rhetorik und Leben als Einheit, indem der gute Ruf des Redners den sittlich guten Menschen in allen Momenten seines Lebens von vornherein repräsentiert. Die Eunoialehre bezieht sich über die Situation der Rede hinaus auf das politische Leben. Ein positives Vorurteil über die Person bewirkt, daß auch deren Taten ohne Vorbehalte akzeptiert und honoriert sowie als Verdienste um die Stadt gewürdigt werden (*Antid.* 280). Isokrates überträgt diesen Gedanken auf die Außenpolitik und entwickelt ein politisches Programm, das darauf abzielt, *eunoia* zu erlangen.² Daß er grundsätzlich auch die Schwierigkeiten, die seine Eunoialehre in der Praxis mit sich bringt, kennt, beweist der Fall seines Schülers Timotheos.³ In einem Exkurs in der *Antidosisrede* (101–139) verfaßt Isokrates eine Enkomion-Apologie des athenischen Strategen, der die natürliche Veranlagung hatte, sich für seine Stadt und Griechenland als *Kaloskagathos* zu erweisen, aber keine Popularität bei den Athenern erlangen konnte. Isokrates sieht einen Mangel in der φύσις seines Schülers, der es ihm

1 Siehe *Antid.* 279: Καὶ μηδεὶς ὑμῶν οἰέσθω τοὺς μὲν ἄλλους ἅπαντας γινώσκειν ὅσῃ ἔχει ῥοπὴν εἰς τὸ πείθειν τὸ τοῖς κρίνουσιν ἄρεσκεῖν, τοὺς δὲ περὶ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν ὄντας μόνους ἀγνοεῖν τὴν τῆς εὔνοιας δύναμιν.

2 In der *Friedensrede* verurteilt er die Gewaltherrschaft, die Gefahren auch für denjenigen mit sich bringt, der sie ausübt. Εὔνοια und εὐδοκιμεῖν gewinnt man durch gerechtes, wohl tätiges Verhalten gegenüber den Griechen (19, 23, 32, 77 ff., 93 ff., 104, 135, 141, 144). Vgl. Romilly 1958, 97; Bringmann, 67 ff. In der *Philipposrede* übernimmt die politische griechische Gemeinschaft die Rolle des Rednerpublikums: Philippos soll euergetes der Griechen werden und ihre *eunoia* gewinnen (68, 116–118, 127, 131, 136).

3 Siehe die eingehende Behandlung von Alexiou 1995, 68–87. Vgl. Ober, 268–277; Nicolai, 102–103.

unmöglich machte, das Wohlwollen seiner Mitbürger zu erreichen. Sein hohes Selbstbewußtsein, die *megalophrosyne*, war erfolgreich in der Außenpolitik, aber sie mußte durch ein besonderes Sozialverhalten kompensiert werden (130–131). Die Wortverbindung τούς πολιτευομένους καὶ βουλομένους ἀρέσκειν (132) legt die Verknüpfung nahe: „Wer Politik treibt, muß den Wunsch entwickeln zu ἀρέσκειν“. Man muß zunächst zwar das sachlich Erforderliche tun, aber auch darauf achten, daß man in allen Reden und Taten ἐπιχαρίτως und φιλανθρώπως erscheint, weil diejenigen, welche diesen Gesichtspunkt vernachlässigen, bei ihren Mitbürgern den Eindruck erwecken, sie seien schwerfällig und lästig (ἐπαχθέστεροι καὶ βαρύτεροι). Isokrates schreibt der *eunoia* eine überwältigende Macht zu, die sogar die Wahrheit übertreffen kann (134).

Mit Isokrates haben wir aus der klassischen Zeit das vollkommenste Konzept einer politischen Eunoialehre. L. de Blois und J. A. E. Bons haben sich in zwei Beiträgen über den möglichen Einfluß des Isokrates auf die Ideen Plutarchs geäußert und auf das Thema der *eunoia* hingewiesen.⁴ Sie nehmen an, daß die Eunoiavorstellung, die bei Platon eine nebensächliche Rolle spielt, bei Isokrates zentral ist und den praktisch orientierten Plutarch offenbar beeinflusst hat. Unabhängig davon, ob diese Idee von Isokrates direkt oder von der nicht-platonischen populären Literatur des 4. Jhdts stammt, hat sich Plutarch offenbar ernsthaft damit beschäftigt, welche Bedeutung das Gewinnen von Wohlwollen im politischen Leben hat. Ziel unserer Untersuchung ist demzufolge, vor diesem klassischen Hintergrund und durch eine zwischen den *Moralia* und den *Viten* vergleichende Untersuchung die Einstellung Plutarchs gegenüber dem Erlangen von *eunoia* festzustellen und ihre praktische Einwirkung auf Plutarchs Ideologie zu erläutern. Was uns interessiert, ist nicht die subjektive wohlwollende Einstellung des Einzelnen – des Redners, des Politikers oder Plutarchs selbst als Schriftsteller⁵ – dem Gemeinwesen gegenüber, sondern das kollektive Wohlwollen des Gemeinwesens dem Einzelnen gegenüber als Voraussetzung erfolgreichen Wirkens. In den *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae* entwickelt Plutarch kein theoretisches politisches System im Sinne Platons. Ein junger Politiker, Menemachos aus Sardis, hat ihn um politische Ratschläge im Sinne von Exempla gebeten. Plutarchs Augenmerk ist auf die praktische Politik gerichtet, während konstitutionelle Probleme in seiner Zeit durch die Monarchie gelöst werden.⁶ Wie hat Plutarch der *eunoia* gegenüber

4 De Blois-Bons 1992, bes. 171, 175, 187. Vgl. dies. 1995, bes. 105.

5 So *Praec. ger. reip.* 812B über den politischen Mann: τῆ μὲν γὰρ εὐνοίᾳ καὶ κηδεμονίᾳ δεῖ μηδενὸς ἀφιστάναι τῶν κοινῶν. Vgl. *Nic.* 2,1; *Per.* 29,1; *Arist.* 15,3; *Flam.* 1,2; *Luc.* 3,8; *Ages.* 37,5. Über die wohlwollende Gesinnung Plutarchs siehe die Arbeit von Beck 2000.

6 Zu den politischen Ideen Plutarchs siehe Carrière; Aalders; Aalders-De Blois.

gedacht? Und wie hat er seine theoretischen Aussagen in den *Praecepta* in die *Viten*, diesen andersartigen Bereich literarischer Produktion, eingebracht, d. h. wie geschah der Übergang von der Theorie zur Praxis?

I

Beginnen wir mit der *philotimia*. Ehrgeiz ist seit jeh ein heikles Thema und spielt im plutarchischen Werk, vor allem in den *Viten*, eine zentrale Rolle.⁷ In der klassischen Zeit hat Protagoras eine Schrift *περὶ φιλοτιμίας* geschrieben (80 B8c D.–K.), was die Annahme erlaubt, daß der Begriff bereits bei den Sophisten theoretisch behandelt wurde. In der bekannten Reihe der drei Lebensformen wird von Platon dem Ehrgeizigen der zweite Rang zugewiesen. Er steht dem Philosophen näher als der Geldgierige (*Resp.* 583a). In der *Politeia* 347b beruft sich Platon allerdings darauf, daß im allgemeinen Urteil, dem er zustimmt, τὸ φιλότιμον καὶ φιλάργυρον als ὄνειδος gelten, weshalb sie auch dem Philosophen fremd sind. In der *Nikomachischen Ethik* (1107b 27–34) hat Aristoteles Schwierigkeiten, den Begriff unter der Mesoteslehre zu subsumieren, da im allgemeinen Sprachgebrauch der φιλότιμος sowohl positiv als auch negativ bewertet werden kann. Φιλότιμος kann derjenige heißen, welcher in der richtigen Weise nach Ehre strebt, aber auch der, der dies in übersteigerter Weise tut.

In den *Praecepta* 819E ff. behandelt Plutarch eingehend das Thema φιλοτιμία. Er gibt zu, daß der Ehrgeiz einen besseren Platz als die Gewinnsucht verdient, er kann allerdings äußerst gefährlich für die politische Gemeinschaft werden.⁸ Φιλοτιμία gehört zu den mächtigen Affekten. Sie hängt vom Lob der Massen ab und ist daher schwer zu beherrschen (819F: ἀκατάσχετον καὶ δυσμεταχείριστον). Die vorwiegend ablehnende Reaktion Plutarchs beruft sich auf Platon.⁹ Er verinnerlicht die Ehre, indem er sie von äußeren Be-

7 Siehe hierzu Bucher-Isler, 58–59; Wardman, 115–124; Frazier 1988 und zuletzt Roskam, bes. 93 ff. Weitere Literatur bei Scardigli, 9 Anm. 60.

8 819E: ἡ δὲ φιλοτιμία, καίπερ οὔσα σοβαρωτέρα τῆς φιλοκερδείας, οὐκ ἐλάττονας ἔχει κῆρας ἐν πολιτείᾳ. Vgl. die *Comp. Arist.–Cat. ma.* 5,4, wo das ἀφιλότιμον mit der πράσπησιν πολιτικῆ verbunden wird, während die φιλοτιμία von Übel und Erzeuger des φθόνος ist. Siehe auch *Agis* 2,3: τὸ δ' ἄγαν πανταχοῦ μὲν ἐπισηφάλης, ἐν δὲ ταῖς πολιτικαῖς φιλοτιμίαις ὀλέθριον.

9 820A: ὥσπερ οὖν ὁ Πλάτων ἀκουστέον εἶναι τοῖς νέοις ἔλεγεν ἐκ παιδῶν εὐθύς, ὡς οὔτε περικεῖσθαι χρυσὸν αὐτοῖς ἐξωθεν οὔτε κεκτήσθαι θέμισ, οἰκεῖον ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ συμμειγμένον ἔχοντας, αἰνιττόμενος οἶμαι τὴν ἐκ γένους διατεινούσαν εἰς τὰς φύσεις αὐτῶν ἀρετὴν· οὕτω παραμυθώμεθα τὴν φιλοτιμίαν, λέγοντες ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἔχειν [χρυσὸν] ἀδιάφθορον καὶ ἀκήρατον καὶ ἄχραντον ὑπὸ φθόνου καὶ μώμου τιμῆν, ἀναλογισμῶ καὶ περιθεωρήσει τῶν πεπραγμένων ἡμῖν καὶ πεπολιτευμένων αὐξανομένην. Vgl. Plat. *Rep.* 416e.

dingungen, wie vom Neid oder dem Tadel der Menschen befreit. Sie sei im Inneren des Menschen zu finden und werde zur Sache des Individuums (820A). Es handelt sich um die *τιμή*, die sich durch Erinnerung und Betrachtung dessen, was jemand für den Staat getan hat, mehrt. Die Ehre wird von äußeren Ehrungen unabhängig: Plutarch bestreitet den Wert von Statuen und ähnlichen Ehrenbezeugungen. Kunstwerke sind den moralischen Qualitäten und Handlungen einer Persönlichkeit untergeordnet. Das Motiv taucht wiederholt und unter unterschiedlichen Gesichtspunkten im plutarchischen Werk auf.¹⁰ Plutarch meint erstens, die Anerkennung gehe nicht auf den Geehrten, sondern auf den Bildhauer zurück, und zweitens verursachten solche Ehrungen Mißgunst und Abhängigkeit von den Massen (820B). Die pointierte Aussage dieses Kapitels lautet: Die Ehre muß nicht als Lohn, sondern als Symbol der Anerkennung der Tat verstanden werden, die in Aussicht auf ferne Zukunft verliehen wird (820E: οὐ γὰρ μισθὸν εἶναι δεῖ τῆς πράξεως ἀλλὰ σύμβολον τὴν τιμὴν, ἵνα καὶ διαμένη πολὺν χρόνον).

Plutarch ist jedoch nicht an ein bestimmtes Konzept der nur inneren Werte gebunden.¹¹ Er möchte die existierende Politik mit philosophischen Werten anreichern, nicht sie in einen platonischen Idealstaat umwandeln. Er hat bestimmte Kenntnisse aus peripatetischem Gut, wie Theophrasts Πολιτικὰ πρὸς τοὺς καιρούς, gewonnen, die die Wirklichkeitsnähe der *Praecepta* verstärkt haben,¹² aber der wichtigste Grund für diese Auffassung liegt in Plutarchs Ideologie selbst. Er betrachtet die Beziehung zwischen Philosophie und Politik nicht aus der Ferne, nicht aus einer philosophischen *vita contemplativa*, sondern „from inside“, um den Ausdruck von Michael Trapp zu verwenden (S. 199). Und zwar nicht bloß deshalb, weil er ein Mitglied der elitären Oberschicht ist (ibid.), sondern weil er ein Repräsentant jener traditionellen Werte ist, die seit der klassischen griechischen Polis die Beschäftigung mit der Politik als verpflichtende Aufgabe des Bürgers ansahen.¹³ In der Schrift *Max. cum princ.* setzt Plutarch den Philosophen neben den Politiker. Die Tätigkeit des Philosophen zielt auf die Formung des Charakters des Politikers als *Kaloskagathos* ab (777A).

10 In *Per. 2* wird, ausgehend vom Aspekt der Nützlichkeit, der Wert hervorragender Kunstwerke der Antike bestritten. Die Kunstwerke sind nach Plutarch nicht in der Lage, bei dem Betrachter den Eifer zur Nachahmung des Schöpfers zu bewirken, dies kann nur eine Aufgabe der Tugend sein. Siehe hierzu Stadter 1989, 58; Van der Stockt 1995; Duff, 34–45; Alexiou 2000, 103–117, bes. 110 ff. Vgl. *Demetr.* 30,7; *Lyc.* 6,3; *Per.* 12,2; *Cato ma.* 19,6; *Reg. et imp. ap.* 180A, 191D; *Apoph. lac.* 215A; *De Alex. fort.* 335F; *Ad princ. iner.* 780E.

11 Vgl. Roskam, 96–97.

12 Siehe hierzu Mittelhaus, 29–55; Aalders, 64–65; Swain 1996, 163.

13 Vgl. *An seni* 791C: λειτουργία γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ πολιτεία τὴν χρεῖαν ἔχουσα πέρασ, ἀλλὰ βίος ἡμέρου καὶ πολιτικοῦ καὶ κοινωνικοῦ ζώου καὶ πεφυκότος ὅσον χρῆ χρόνον πολιτικῶς καὶ φιλοκάλως καὶ φιλανθρώπως ζῆν. Siehe auch *An seni* 786B; *Adv. Col.* 1126A–1127A; Aalders, 5–8.

Plutarch ist optimistisch und hält es durchaus für möglich, daß sich ein philosophisch gebildeter Politiker praktisch betätigt. Platon stellt im neunten Buch der *Politeia* (592a–b) seinen Idealstaat als Exemplum vielleicht für den Himmel dar, wo jeder, der will, ihn betrachten und danach seine eigene innere Staatsordnung einrichten kann. Dieser Staat habe auf der Erde keinen Platz (γῆς γε οὐδαμοῦ οἶμα ἀυτὴν εἶναι). Plutarch sieht in dieser Konzeption etwas Befremdliches: Πλάτων μὲν γὰρ μίαν γράψας πολιτείαν οὐδένα πέπεικεν αὐτῇ χρῆσθαι διὰ τὸ αὐστηρόν (*De Alex. fort.* 328D–E).¹⁴ Er entwirft somit kein Staats-Modell, keine paradigmatische Konstruktion; er entfernt sich nicht vom verbreiteten griechischen Wertempfinden, das die klassische Vorstellung eines reziproken Verhältnisses „Leistung – Gegenleistung“ seit jeher kennt.¹⁵

Plutarch sucht somit die Ehre in konstruktive Bahnen zu lenken, und hier spielt die *eunoia* eine wichtige Rolle. Er erwähnt ablehnend Demokrits Aussage, daß es Schaden bringt, seinen Nächsten gefallen zu wollen (*Praec.* 820F–821A): ἐπεὶ τὴν γ' ἀληθινὴν τιμὴν καὶ χάριν ἰδρυμένην ἐν εὐνοίᾳ καὶ διαθέσει τῶν μεμνημένων οὐχ ὑπερόψεται πολιτικός ἀνὴρ, οὐδέ γε δόξαν ἀτιμάσει φεύγων τὸ „τοῖς πέλας ἀνδάνειν“, ὡς ἤξιον Δημόκριτος (68B153 D.–K.). Plutarch akzeptiert die Kritik Demokrits an dem ἀνδάνειν (= ἀρέσκειν) nicht. Er nimmt offensichtlich Rücksicht auf die Wirklichkeit. Der Politiker darf und wird das Wohlwollen der Menschen nicht verachten. Für Isokrates ist τὸ τοῖς κρίνουσιν ἀρέσκειν eine notwendige Voraussetzung des rednerischen Erfolges und darüber hinaus des politischen Mannes (oben Anm. 1). Wenn Plutarch einerseits mit platonischer Ausdauer die Priorität der Tugend betont, weiß er andererseits mit isokratischen Gedanken zu insistieren, daß die richtige Führung der Menschen auf *eunoia* beruht: ἀνθρώπων δ' ἀνθρώπων χειροθήνη καὶ πρᾶον ἐκουσίως οὐδὲν ἄλλ' ἢ πίστις εὐνοίας καὶ καλοκαγαθίας δόξα καὶ δικαιοσύνης παρίστησιν (821B). Das Wohlwollen ist Voraussetzung erfolgreichen Wirkens.¹⁶ Es bringt Zutrauen und ist ein Schild gegen boshafte Neider (821C: πρὸς τοὺς βασκάνους καὶ πονηροὺς). Indem Wahrheit, Tugend und Wohlwollen so eng miteinander zusammengebracht werden, verwandelt sich die Eunoiavorstellung sogar in eine Eroslehre in 821E–F: Plutarch berücksichtigt zeitgenössische politische Probleme, bei denen die drei genannten Größen häufig auseinanderfielen.¹⁷ Die Anerkennungen, die im Theater mit

14 Vgl. De Blois-Bons 1992, 165 ff.

15 Siehe Seaford; Millet, 227–253; Mitchell, 28–44, bes. 32 ff.

16 Vgl. *Max. c. princ.* 777E: ὁ δὲ νοῦν ἔχων, ἂν ἐν πολιτείαις καὶ πράξεσιν ἀναστρέφῃται, δεήσειται δόξης τοσαύτης, ὅση δύναμιν περὶ τὰς πράξεις ἐκ τοῦ πιστεῦσθαι δίδωσιν. Siehe auch *Agis* 2,1. Vgl. Roskam, 98–100.

17 Was die Unaufrichtigkeit der Ehrungen betrifft, so ist der *Rodiakos* (31) des Dion Chrysostomos charakteristisch. Dion übt heftige Kritik an seinen Zeitgenossen, die die Überschriften der älteren Ehreninschriften auf Statuen mit neuen ersetzen und den

dem Verteilen von Geld verbunden sind und die in den Stadien den Gladiatoren zuteil werden,¹⁸ sind, nach Plutarch, wie die Liebe der Hetären, d. h. keine echte Liebe. Der wahrhafte Eros einem Politiker gegenüber wird, anders als die tägliche Schmeichelei, auf seine Tugend zurückgeführt: οὕτως ἀπάντων ἐρώτων ἰσχυρότατος ἅμα καὶ θειότατός ἐστιν ὁ πόλεσι καὶ δήμοις πρὸς ἓνα δι' ἀρετὴν ἐγγινόμενος.¹⁹

Man stellt fest, daß Plutarchs Eunoiovorstellung ziemlich vollkommen ist, obwohl er in den *Praecepta* ein buntes Bild politischer Probleme entwickelt und im Proömium der Schrift von ποικιλωτέροις παραδείγμασι spricht (798C). Grundvoraussetzung der politischen Betätigung ist die προαίρεσις, die sich vor einem philosophischen Hintergrund auf die vernunftgemäße Haltung des Politikers gegenüber der Führung des Staates bezieht. Der ideale Politiker muß in der Lage sein, seine eigenen Affekte und die des Volkes zu beherrschen.²⁰ Wenn der Politiker vom Ruhm und vom Beifall des Publikums abhängig ist, dann kann er weder sich noch die anderen beherrschen (799A). Das ist allerdings nur die eine Seite: Die gewinnende Umgänglichkeit gehört ebenfalls zum erfolgreichen politischen Wirken. Der Politiker muß εὐάρμοστος mit dem Charakter der Bürger sein (799C). Plutarch insistiert auf der pädagogischen Rolle des Staatsmannes, die davon abhängig ist, daß der Politiker das Zutrauen der Bürger gewinnt. Der Schlußsatz in 801C über die Bedeutung des *ethos* und der Glaubwürdigkeit des Politikers (οὕτως μεγάλην ἔχει ῥοπὴν ἐν πολιτείᾳ πίστις ἡθους καὶ τούναντίον) drückt fast das Gleiche aus, wie die Vorstellung vom guten Ruf des Redners in der Rhetorik.²¹

Das Eunoiakonzept Plutarchs muß zunächst vom anthropologischen Aspekt der *philanthropia* interpretiert werden. Thérèse Renoirte hat in ihrer Arbeit über die *Praecepta* die Bedeutung der φιλανθρωπία besonders hervorgehoben (59–63). Es besteht kein Zweifel, daß die φιλανθρωπία etwas von Plutarchs Charakter erkennen läßt. Der Bezug auf die Gemeinschaft ist ein

Römern schmeicheln. Siehe 41, 43, 50, 58, 75, 80, 93, 113. Vgl. hierzu Jones, 26–35; Swain 1996, 174, 204.

18 Vgl. 802D, 822C, 823E; *An seni* 787B; Dion Chrys. 31,121. Vgl. Jones, 174; Caiazza, 276; Swain 1996, 174.

19 In *Cat. min.* 9,10 hat die Fähigkeit des Cato, mit den Soldaten umzugehen, eine echte Liebe bewirkt, die von Plutarch befürwortet wird: ἔλαθε διὰ τούτων ἅμα τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν εὐνοίαν <ἐν>εργασάμενος τοῖς ἀνδράσιν. ἀρετῆς γὰρ ἀληθινὸς οὐκ ἐγγίνεται ζῆλος ἢ δι' ἄκρας τοῦ παραδιδόντος εὐνοίας καὶ τιμῆς· οἱ δ' ἄνευ τοῦ φιλεῖν ἐπαινοῦντες τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς αἰδοῦνται <μὲν> τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν, οὐ θαυμάζουσι δὲ τὴν ἀρετὴν οὐδὲ μιμοῦνται. Zum Versuch Plutarchs, den erfolgreichen Politiker als ἐπαινούμενος darzustellen, siehe Ingenkamp 2004.

20 Aalders, 45 meint mit Recht: „The moral standard of the rulers determines the moral value of their regime“.

21 Siehe Arist. *Rhet.* 1356a 4–6: διὰ μὲν οὖν τοῦ ἡθους, ὅταν οὕτω λεχθῆ ὁ λόγος ὥστε ἀξιόπιστον ποιῆσαι τὸν λέγοντα, und anschließend (1356a 13): ἀλλὰ σχεδὸν ὡς εἰπεῖν κυριωτάτην ἔχει πίστιν τὸ ἡθος. Vgl. 1366a 10–12, 1378a 8–15.

persönliches Anliegen Plutarchs. Der Begriff deutet aber auch auf politische Aspekte hin, die eng mit der Gewinnung von Wohlwollen zusammenhängen. In ihrer historischen Entwicklung bezeichnet *φιλανθρωπία* zunächst eine menschenfreundliche Eigenschaft der Götter.²² Als demokratische Tugend im 4. Jhd v. Chr. drückt sie eine freundliche, urbane Verhaltensweise unter Gleichgestellten aus.²³ Auch im Königsideal seit Isokrates und Xenophon hat der Begriff im Sinne einer freundlichen Herablassung des Höhergestellten einen festen Platz.²⁴ Plutarch übernimmt diese Vorstellung von *φιλανθρωπία* in der Entwicklung seiner Eunoia-vorstellung. *Φιλανθρωπία* ist wesentliches Teil der *politike arete* und zeigt ein urbanes, umgängliches Verhalten.²⁵ *Εὐχαρις* und *φιλάνθρωπος* sind die Antonyme von *ἄχαρις* und *μισάνθρωπος* (*De frat. amore* 485A). Isokrates hat darauf bestanden, daß die Politiker in allen Reden und Taten gefällig und menschenfreundlich (*φιλανθρώπως καὶ ἐπιχαρίτως*) erscheinen müssen, sonst entsteht in der Öffentlichkeit über sie ein Bild von Schwerfälligkeit und Überheblichkeit (*Antid.* 132). Plutarch versucht, eine direkte Linie zwischen Tugend und Umgänglichkeit herzustellen. Das ist der Leitgedanke der gesamten Schrift. Der Politiker muß in jeder Hinsicht das Übermaß vermeiden.²⁶ Er unterscheidet einerseits zwischen Demagogie und Demokopie (802D–E), er weiß allerdings auch, daß es Gunstbezeugungen gibt, die keine Mißgunst hervorrufen (808B: *χάριτες ἀνεπίφθονοι*).

Ein solches Verhalten bekämpft die *αὐθάδεια*, die Plutarch nach einem Zitat aus dem vierten Brief des platonischen corpus (*Epist.* IV 321c) die *ἐρημιά σύννοικος* nennt (808D). Platon hat mit dieser Aussage Dion vor einer Tyrannis gewarnt. Plutarch hat offenbar großen Wert auf das Zitat gelegt.²⁷ Er adaptiert es geschickt in seine eigenen Vorstellungen vom Umgang mit den Menschen. Die richtige Mischung zwischen Ernst und gefälligem Verhalten ist obligatorisch für einen Politiker (810C). Auch wenn er etwas kritisieren will, soll

22 So Aesch. *Prom.* 11: *φιλανθρώπου δὲ παύεσθαι τρόπου*. Vgl. Aristoph. *Pax* 392; Plat. *Symp.* 189d. Zum Begriff *φιλανθρωπία* allgemein siehe Lorenz; Tromp de Ruiter; Ferguson, 102–117; Hunger; Dover, 200–205; Hiltbrunner.

23 Allein im demosthenischen Corpus erscheint *φιλανθρωπία*, *φιλάνθρωπος* 71 mal. Vgl. Wankel, 135, 1035 f., 1265 f. Für das Ersetzen der Gerechtigkeit durch die Philanthropie im Zweitugendkanon, so Isoc. *Paneg.* 29: *θεοφιλῶς καὶ φιλανθρώπως* siehe Dihle, 13.

24 So Isoc. *Ad Nic.* 15: *φιλάνθρωπον καὶ φιλόπολιν*. Vgl. *Euag.* 43; *Phil.* 116; *Epist.* V 2; VII 6; Xenoph. *Cyr. Paed.* 1,2,1; 1,4,1; 8,2,1; 8,7,25.

25 Siehe *Praec. ger. reip.* 799D, 808C, 808D, 809E, 812C, 815F, 816C, 816E, 818C, 818E, 823A. Zu *φιλανθρωπία* bei Plutarch siehe auch Hirzel, 23–32; Martin 1961, 164–175; Panagopoulos, 216 ff; Romilly 1979, 275–292; Aalders, 46; Frazier 1996, 230–236; Schmidt, 53–56.

26 Siehe *Praec. ger. reip.* 803D: *τὸ δ' ἄγαν φυλακτέον ἐν τῷ γελοίῳ καὶ τὸ λυποῦν ἀκαίρως τοῦς ἀκούοντας*.

27 Das Zitat erscheint auch in: *Cor.* 15,4; *Comp. Cor.–Alc.* 3,3; *Dion* 8,4; 52,5.

seine Rede weder θυμός noch ἀκραχολία aufweisen, sondern eine gewisserweise beissende Milde. Der Ruf der Überheblichkeit steht in direktem Gegensatz zu der Eunoiavorstellung Plutarchs. Der wahrhafte Ruhm basiert auf dem menschlichen Wohlwollen (817B: τὴν ἀληθινὴν ... τὴν ἀπ' εὐνοίας, δόξαν). Der politische Führer muß zwischen wichtigen und nebensächlichen Problemen unterscheiden und Kleinigkeiten zugunsten der Menschen erlauben, weil es sich letztendlich rächt, wenn nicht maßgehalten wird.²⁸ Wie ein Arzt muß er imstande sein, die richtige Art der Behandlung zu finden, wozu ἐλαφρὰ καὶ φιλόανθρωπος χάρις gehört (818E). Er darf weder αὐθάδης noch ἐπαχθής sein, sondern εὐπροσήγορος καὶ κοινός (823A).²⁹

Gerade in diesem Punkt erkennt Plutarch die Schwierigkeit einiger Persönlichkeiten, die Menschen zu überzeugen und ihr Wohlwollen zu gewinnen: Pelopidas, ein Militärtyp, bedurfte des Epameinondas, der rhetorisch begabt war (819C). Auch der Spartaner Kallikratidas, der anschließend erwähnt wird, ist eine geradlinige Natur, die aufgrund ihres Charakters die Gunst der Menge nicht erlangen konnte, sie bedurfte τὸν εὐχαριν καὶ θεραπευτικόν. Dieser Punkt ist, wie wir jetzt sehen werden, wesentlich in den *Viten*.

II

Plutarch wollte durch seine *Viten* das *ethos* hervorragender Persönlichkeiten ins Licht stellen und moralische Exempla geben.³⁰ Hier handelt es sich allerdings nicht um politische Ratschläge an einen jungen Politiker wie in den *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae*, sondern um die praktische politische Situation und die Beschreibung individueller Charaktere. Das Gewinnen von *eunoia* wird aus psychologischer Perspektive und in der Aktion der Individuen, Politiker und Strategen betrachtet. Der praktisch orientierte Isokrates hatte Probleme mit seiner Eunoialehre zu bewältigen, weil in der Praxis schwierige Fälle wie der des Timotheos vorkommen können: Tugend und Anerkennung sind kein einfaches Konzept und die Eunoia-praxis ist auch bei Plutarch ein gutes tertium comparationis zwischen den *Moralia* und den *Viten*.

28 818A: ὁ γὰρ αὖ περὶ πάντα λίαν ἀκριβὴς καὶ σφοδρός, οὐδὲν ὑποχωρῶν οὐδ' ὑπέικων ἀλλὰ τραχὺς αἰεὶ καὶ ἀπαραίτητος, ἀντιφιλονεικεῖν τὸν δῆμον αὐτῷ καὶ προσδυσκολαίνειν ἐθίζει.

29 In 823 A–B tauchen mehrere Begriffe mit dem Praefix „συν“ (συναλγεῖν, συγχαίρειν, συνανθροπεῖν) auf, die das vorhergenannte φιλόανθρωπον erklären und auf den Gemeinschaftsbezug Plutarchs hinweisen.

30 Vgl. *Per.* 2; *Nic.* 1,5; *Aem.* 1; *Alex.* 1,2–3; *Demetr.* 1,6. Siehe hierzu e.g. Russell; Bucher-Isler, 89; Pelling 1980, 135 ff.; Stadter 1988, 284 f.; Georgiadou, 350; Ingenkamp 1992b, 4637 ff.; Duff, 52–71.

Wenn wir uns aus dem semantischen Feld des Wohlwollens nur auf den Begriff *eunoia* beschränken, dann deutet sein häufiges Vorkommen in den *Viten* darauf hin, daß Plutarch das Wohlwollen als verbreitete Motivation menschlichen Handelns betrachtet und ihm eine wichtige politische Bedeutung beimißt.³¹ Das Motiv wird in den *Viten* in jenen Fällen am konsequentesten verwendet, in denen der Erfolg oder Mißerfolg auf einem richtigen oder falschen Wohlwollen beruht. Zunächst ist das Beispiel der Gracchen heranzuziehen. In den *Praecepta* wird G. Gracchus als Exemplum einer falschen Einstellung der Politik gegenüber erwähnt: Er ist voll Leidenschaften (798F). In der *Vita* lautet das Stichwort *μεγάλη εὔνοια* (*Agis* 2,8). Der Mißerfolg der zwei Brüder ist, nach Plutarch, nicht so sehr auf den übermäßigen Ehrgeiz zurückzuführen, sondern auf die Angst vor schlechtem Ruhm. Im Hinblick auf das Thema „Ehrgeiz“, den Plutarch zunächst in einem größeren Gedankengang des Proömiums der *Syzygie* behandelt (1,1–2,6), liegt hier tatsächlich eine „abschwächende Modifikation“³² vor: Plutarch ändert das Thema vom Ehrgeiz zum φόβος ἄδοξίας (2,7). Aber der Kernpunkt bleibt der gleiche. Es ist das verderbliche Übermaß, das über dem Wohlwollen liegt. Der Biograph betrachtet dieses große Wohlwollen als eine Art wechselseitig aufeinander gerichteter Leidenschaft der Gracchen und des Volks,³³ das trotz der edlen Ziele ersterer zu deren Sturz geführt hat: *μεγάλην γὰρ εὔνοιαν προειληφότες παρὰ τῶν πολιτῶν, ἠσχύνθησαν ἐγκαταλιπεῖν ὡσπερ χρέος* (2,8).

Gleiches stellt man auch beim athenischen Strategen Nikias fest. Seine charakterlichen Defizite und seine fehlenden rhetorischen Fähigkeiten offenbaren einen eigentümlichen Zusammenhang zwischen ihm und dem athenischen Volk. Nikias war furchtsam und leicht von Sykophanten einzuschüchtern. Der athenische *demos* empfand dieses Verhalten als *δημοσικόν* und vergab ihm seine Zuneigung (*Nic.* 2,6). Nikias versuchte, das Volk durch seinen Reichtum zu gewinnen, indem er Chöre ausstattete, prächtige Kampfspiele und andere Veranstaltungen durchführen ließ (3,2). Aus dem einleitenden Bezug auf Perikles (3,1) geht allerdings hervor, daß Plutarch diesen Mitteln sehr kritisch gegenübersteht: Die wahrhafte Tugend und die rhetorische Kraft des Perikles werden dem Reichtum des Nikias gegenübergestellt.³⁴ Ein solches Wohlwollen wie das des Nikias hatte Perikles nicht nötig. Das steht in Einklang mit den *Praec.* 802B–D, wo Plutarch in bezug auf das Ausüben rhetorischer Macht Perikles den Vorrang gibt. Nikias gehört offenbar zu den rhetorisch Unbegabten, die das Volk durch Kunststücke,

31 Allein *εὔνοια* erscheint mindestens 138 mal in den *Viten*.

32 So Ingenkamp 1992a, 4303–4304.

33 Für die aufbrausende Erscheinung der Leidenschaft spricht das *ἀναφλεχθεῖς* (*Praec. ger. reip.* 798F) und das *ἐκκαύσαντες* (*Agis* 2,8).

34 Vgl. Nikolaidis 1988, 320–321.

Gastmähler und Geldausteilen zu gewinnen suchen.³⁵ Der Plutarch der *Moralia* ist allerdings rigoroser als in den *Viten*: Wenn Nicias in seiner *Vita* mit Hilfe des Reichtums das Volk führt (*Nic.* 3,1: ἐδημαγωγῶγει), so spricht Plutarch in den *Moralia* vom Haschen nach der Volksgunst (*Praec.* 802D: δημοκοποῦσι).

Demetrios Poliorketes ist ein charakteristisches Beispiel für ein falsch verstandenes Wohlwollen. Er gehört zu jenen Helden, die nach Aussage Plutarchs nicht zur Nachahmung geeignet sind. Am Beispiel des Demetrios wird die These bezeugt, daß die großen Naturen große Laster wie große Tugenden hervorbringen können.³⁶ Unbestreitbar war für Demetrios, daß ihm die Gunst der Athener zu eigen war (*Demetr.* 30,3). Aber Übermaß an Ehrungen ist kein gutes Omen. Plutarch insistiert auf der Bedeutung des Maßhaltens und der Wahrung bestimmter Grenzen. Die exkursartige Reflexion über die richtige Einstellung des Politikers der Ehre gegenüber entwickelt sich zu einer Beschreibung der Konsequenzen einer falschen *eunoia* bei den Athenern: καὶ τὴν δοκοῦσαν εὐνοίαν ἐξεληλέγχθαι τοῖς πράγμασι κενὴν καὶ πεπλασμένην οὔσαν (30,5). Maßstab sind hier die Gewohnheiten des Volkes, aber das Hauptargument läuft auf die einzelne Persönlichkeit hinaus. Gerade das Übermaß an Ehrungen ist der Prüfstein einer falschen *eunoia*: τὸ γὰρ φαλύτατον ὡς ἔοικεν εὐνοίας ὄχλων βασιλεῦσι καὶ δυνάσταις τεκμήριον ἔστιν ὑπερβολὴ τιμῶν (30,6). Fast in wörtlicher Übereinstimmung mit den *Praec.* 820A–B sollen die Besonnenen keine Statuen oder Bilder oder Vergöttlichungen zu ihrer Ehrung nötig haben.³⁷ Demetrios konnte die wahre *eunoia* nicht gewinnen und geriet in Zorn, weil er von einer falschen Einstellung den Ehrungen gegenüber ausging (30,4). Das Wohlwollen ist hier ausgesprochen ethisch bestimmt, und es wird verständlich, warum Plutarch die *eunoia*, von der politischen arete ausgehend, auf die Beherrschung von Affekten ausdehnt.

Praotes und *philanthropia* wirken auf die Einstellung der Menschen ein. Ein Strategie wie Flamininus hat das echte Wohlwollen der Griechen verdient. Flamininus war kein Soldatentyp, Führer eines barbarischen Volkes, wie es die Makedonen propagierten (*Flam.* 5,7). Dies steht in direktem Gegensatz zu der Beschreibung Plutarchs, der Flamininus als einen kultivierten, griechenfreundlichen Strategen darstellt. Neben seiner φιλανθρωπία und seinen

35 Siehe hierzu Beck 2004, 108–110.

36 *Demetr.* 1,6–7. Diese Auffassung Plutarchs über „negative Viten“, deren Kenntnis zu intensiverem Nacheifern guter Lebensläufe beitragen kann, ist allerdings weniger durchsichtig als Plutarch sie im Proömium des *Demetrios* darstellt. Zu dieser Problematik siehe Duff, 53–65; Alexiou 2007.

37 30,7: διόπερ οἱ νοῦν ἔχοντες οὐκ εἰς ἀνδριάντας οὐδὲ γραφὰς οὐδ' ἀποθεώσεις, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εἰς τὰ ἔργα καὶ τὰς πράξεις τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἀποβλέποντες, ἢ πιστεύουσιν ὡς τιμαῖς, ἢ ἀπιστοῦσιν ὡς ἀνάγκαις. In *Pelop.* 34,1–4 wird das Übermaß an Ehrungen als Bezeugung von barbarischer Hoffart, Verschwendung und Prahlucht charakterisiert (ὄγκου δὲ βαρβαρικοῦ καὶ τρυφῆς καὶ ἀλαζονείας ἐπίδειξις).

Griechisch-Kenntnissen ist Flamininus ἐραστής τιμῆς ἀληθοῦς.³⁸ Die Gewinnung des Wohlwollens ist die notwendige Entwicklung dieser Einstellung. In 17,1 wird das semantische Feld der *eunoia* mit den aus den *Moralia* bekannten Begriffen beschrieben: τιμαὶ ἀληθιναί, εὐνοια θραυμαστή, ἐπιείκεια ἤθους. Es ist bemerkenswert, daß Plutarch die Emotionen des Flamininus zu relativieren, nicht zu eliminieren versucht. In den *Praecepta* herrscht pädagogischer Rigorismus, der ideale Politiker soll Herrscher über seine Affekte sein. In der Praxis ist es kaum möglich, völlig gegen Zorn oder Ehrgeiz gefeit zu sein. Flamininus war ehrgeizig und zornig, aber Plutarch fügt hinzu, daß er bei seinen Zornausbrüchen dem Zorn nicht freien Lauf ließ, so daß er die schlimmsten Folgen vermeiden konnte (17,2): οὐκ ἦν βαρὺς οὐδ' εἰς ἔργα διατείνων ὁ θυμός, ἀλλ' ἐν λόγῳ παρρησίαν τινὰ πολιτικὴν ἔχοντι παύόμενος.³⁹

In den obengenannten Fällen wird die theoretische Konzeption von *eunoia* ohne Schwierigkeiten auf die Praxis übertragen. Aber Plutarch als Pragmatiker wollte eine praktisch verwendbare Lehre vermitteln. Das Eunoiamotiv in den *Viten* geht nicht nur aus einer protreptischen Ethik hervor, um die Terminologie von Pelling anzuwenden,⁴⁰ sondern auch aus der empirischen Realität. Und hier herrschen andere Faktoren, andere Gesetze, denen sich Plutarch und die Leser der *Viten* stellen müssen. *Eunoia*, Ehrgeiz und Zorn sind in der Politik verbreitete Phänomene. Nun ist nicht nur der philosophische Moralist, sondern auch der Realpolitiker gefragt, indem Plutarch den politischen Erfolg auf ein entscheidendes Handeln und eine wirklichkeitsnähere Umwelt hin zuspitzt, unabhängig davon, ob die Schritte, die zu diesem Ziel führen, immer korrekt sind.⁴¹ Die Frage richtet sich nicht nur auf das wahre oder falsche Wohlwollen eines Helden, sondern häufiger auf die politischen Mißerfolge aufgrund seines Fehlens. Die meisten Konflikte tauchen bei geradlinigen, unflexiblen Charakteren auf, wie Aristokraten, Soldaten oder philosophischen Naturen.

Coriolanus ist ein solcher Fall: Seine Naturanlage war edel, es fehlte ihr dennoch die notwendige Erziehung, und so konnten neben den guten Eigenschaften auch schlechte entstehen, ähnlich einem fetten Ackerboden ohne entsprechende Kultivierung (*Cor.* 1,3).⁴² Coriolanus hatte eine starke Willenskraft, die sich edle Ziele setzte und wirkungsvoll verfolgte, aber gleichzeitig war sie mit unkontrollierter Leidenschaft und sturem Durchsetzungs-

38 Vgl. hingegen *Pyrrh.* 26,16: ὁ δὲ Κλεώνυμος ἦν μὲν γένους βασιλικοῦ, δοκῶν δὲ βίαιος εἶναι καὶ μοναρχικός, οὐτ' εὐνοίαν οὔτε πίστιν εἶχεν. Ob jedoch der Philhellenismus des Flamininus echt war oder Ausdruck rein politischer Kalkulation, scheint Plutarch nicht richtig interessiert zu haben. Siehe darüber Badian; Günther; Bremer.

39 Vgl. *Flam.* 1,1. Siehe hierzu Alexiou 1999b, 111.

40 Pelling 1988a, 274; ders. 1988b, 15–16; ders. 1995, 205–220, bes. 207 f. und 220.

41 Siehe hierzu Nikolaidis 1995, 301–312.

42 Siehe hierzu Alexiou 1999a, 63–67; Duff, 205–240.

willen verbunden; so fiel es ihm schwer, mit Menschen umzugehen: θυμοῖς τε πάλιν αὖ χρώμενον ἀκράτοις καὶ φιλονικίαις ἀτρέπτοις οὐ ῥάδιον οὐδ' εὐάρμοστον ἀνθρώποις συνεῖναι παρεῖχεν (1,4).⁴³ „Leidenschaften und menschlicher Umgang“ lassen sich als der rote Faden einer leicht zerbrechlichen Kombination erkennen. Die Gleichgültigkeit des Coriolanus gegenüber Vergnügungen, Reichtum und Anstrengungen führte zu den positiven Bewertungen, seine Schwierigkeit im Umgang mit Menschen zu den negativen. Plutarch verwendet ein sich auf Erziehung stützendes Schema, wie es oft bei den römischen Helden der Fall ist: es handelt sich um ein typisches Defizit der altrömischen Erziehung und Mentalität (1,5–6). Λόγος und παιδεία, d. h. die griechische Erziehung, führen zur Urbanisierung des Menschen, zum Maßhalten und Vermeiden des Übermaßes. Militärische Tüchtigkeit war für Rom zur Zeit des Coriolanus die Tugend schlechthin.⁴⁴ Coriolanus hat erfolgreich für Rom gekämpft. Aber für das politische Leben reicht die kriegerische Tugend nicht aus. Coriolanus konnte seine Leidenschaften nicht beherrschen. Durch seine Unflexibilität und seine aristokratische Einstellung hat er die εὐνοια τῶν πολλῶν verloren, es folgten νεμεσᾶν und φθονεῖν (15,2).

Plutarch interessiert sich für die Einstellung des Politikers, nicht für die Reaktion des Volkes, die er offenbar in seiner Widersprüchlichkeit als vorhersehbar bewertet.⁴⁵ Er führt die Reaktion des Coriolanus nach seinem Mißerfolg bei der Bewerbung um das Konsulat auf den platonischen Begriff des zornartigen Seelenteils (*θυμοειδές*) zurück. Diesem Seelenteil ist das *φιλόνικον* zu eigen. Es entbehrt keineswegs eines sittlichen Wertes, es ist für die militärischen Leistungen des Coriolanus durchaus nötig, aber für das bürgerliche Leben muß es mit würdevoller Milde gemischt und gebändigt werden (*Cor.* 15,4): τὸ δ' ἐμβριθές καὶ τὸ πρᾶον, οὗ τὸ πλεῖστον ἀρετῆς πολιτικῆς μέτεστιν, ἐγκεκραμένον οὐκ ἔχων ὑπὸ λόγου καὶ παιδείας, οὐδὲ τὴν ἐρημίαν σύνοικον, ὡς Πλάτων ἔλεγεν, αὐθάδειαν εἰδῶς ὅτι δεῖ μάλιστα διαφεύγειν ἐπιχειροῦντα πράγμασι κοινοῖς καὶ ἀνθρώποις ὁμιλεῖν, καὶ γενέσθαι τῆς πολλὰ γελωμένης ὑπ' ἐνίων ἀνεξικακίας ἐραστήν.⁴⁶ Einer bürgerlichen Gesellschaft ist

43 Vgl. hingegen *Praec. ger. reip.* 799C: τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις ἡθεσιν εὐάρμοστον εἶναι (sc. τὸν πολιτικόν). Siehe auch Pelling 2002, 324 über Coriolanus: „a figure who cannot acclimatize at all to his society may get understanding, but not much sympathy, nor usually much approval“.

44 So Swain 1990. Vgl. Pelling 1989, bes. 206 f.; Swain 1996, 137–145. Zum Thema „Tugend in Rom“ siehe zuletzt McDonnell.

45 Plutarch hat die Massen offenbar nie hoch eingeschätzt. Siehe *Praec. ger. reip.* 800C: οὐ γὰρ εὐμεταχείριστον οὐδὲ ῥάδιον ἀλῶναι τὴν σωτήριον ἀλωσιν ὑπὸ τοῦ τυχόντος ὁ ὄχλος, ἀλλ' ἀγαπητόν, εἰ μήτ' ὄψει μήτε φωνῆ πτυρόμενος ὡσπερ θηρίον ὑποπτον καὶ ποικίλον ἐνδέχοιτο τὴν ἐπιστάσιαν. Vgl. 801E, 821F, 822C. Siehe darüber Said.

46 Vgl. *Philop.* 3,1; *Mar.* 2,1; *Brut.* 29,3; *Agēs.* 2,2; *Galb.* 1,3; *Cim.* 3,1. Über *πραότης* bei Plutarch siehe allgemein Martin 1960, 65–73; Romilly 1979, 275–307; Schmidt, 53–56.

ein anderer Charaktertypus wesenseigen als einer militärischen.⁴⁷ Das Zitat über die Vermeidung der *authadeia* ist uns aus den *Praecepta* geläufig (808D). Plutarch ordnet Coriolanus dem militärischen Menschentyp zu, der für das politische Leben große Defizite hat. Er wollte aufgrund seiner geradlinigen Natur immer erfolgreich sein (*Cor.*15,5). Aber seine Absichten waren widersprüchlich. Er wollte die Anerkennung durch die Menschen, aber er konnte die Gunst der Menge nicht erreichen, er bemühte sich gar nicht darum. Seine politischen Gegner wußten dies sehr gut. Die Begriffe φρόνημα (18,2), ἐπαχθῆς παρρησία, ὑπεροψία, ὀλιγωρία (18,3) sind charakteristisch dafür.

Die Unpopularität des Coriolanus ist einer der Hauptpunkte auch der abschließenden *Synkrisis* mit Alkibiades. Plutarch resumiert die Politik beider mit einer negativen Bewertung (1,4: οὐδετέρων μὲν οὖν ἐπαινετέον). Die demagogische Politik des Alkibiades verdient allerdings geringeren Tadel als das hochmütige Verhalten des Coriolanus. Es bleibt zu bemerken, daß auch Alkibiades keine positive charakterliche Bewertung erfährt. Er dient aber als Folie und Gradmesser, an dem die Defizite des Coriolanus gemessen werden. Als Coriolanus gegen das Volk trat, glaubten die Armen, er habe es nicht aus Gewinnsucht, sondern aus Verachtung getan (3,2: δι' ὕβριν καὶ περιφροσύνην). Es fehlte ihm die Fähigkeit des Überzeugens;⁴⁸ das machte seine Taten und Leistungen verhaßt, weil die Menschen seinen ὄγκος und seine αὐθάδεια nicht ertragen konnten. Sein Hochmut wird in folgenden Begriffen gefaßt: τὸ ἀνομίλητον τοῦ τρόπου καὶ λίαν ὑπερήφανον καὶ αὐθαδῆς (4,7). Im Grunde verlangte es Coriolanus sehr nach Erfolg und Anerkennung, aber das ὑπερήφανον hinderte ihn daran, sich um die Menschen zu bemühen, und als er nicht die Achtung fand, auf die er Anspruch zu haben glaubte, verursachte das φιλότιμον bei ihm ὀργὴν καὶ λύπην (5,1). Alkibiades ist hier die Folie: Seine ungewöhnliche Fähigkeit, mit allen Menschen, mit denen er zu tun hatte, geschickt umzugehen, begünstigte seine Erfolge in höchstem Grade (τὴν δόξαν ἀνθεῖν μετ' εὐνοίας καὶ τιμῆς εὐημεροῦσαν), sogar manche seiner Mißerfolge besaßen Reiz und Anmut (*Comp.* 3,4). Er hat oft seiner Stadt geschadet, aber

47 Philopoemen ist ein ähnlicher Soldatentypus. Siehe *Philop.* 3,1: Τοῦ δ' ἦθους τὸ φιλότιμον οὐκ ἦν παντάπασι φιλονικίας καθαρόν οὐδ' ὀργῆς ἀπηλλαγμένον, ἀλλὰ καίπερ Ἐπαιμεώνδου βουλόμενος εἶναι μάλιστα ζηλωτής, τὸ <μὲν> δραστήριον καὶ συνετὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ὑπὸ χρημάτων ἀπαθῆς ἰσχυρῶς ἐμιμεῖτο, τῷ δὲ πράῳ καὶ βαθεῖ καὶ φιλανθρώπῳ παρὰ τὰς πολιτικὰς διαφορὰς ἐμμένειν οὐ δυνάμενος δι' ὀργὴν καὶ φιλονικίαν, μᾶλλον ἐδόκει στρατιωτικῆς ἢ πολιτικῆς ἀρετῆς οἰκεῖος εἶναι. Vgl. Alexiou 1999b, 109 ff.; Pelling 2000.

48 In *Cor.* 39,6 wird Coriolanus als ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα δεινὸς εἰπεῖν charakterisiert. Aber seine rhetorischen Fähigkeiten scheinen, wie Pelling 2000, 335 ff. gezeigt hat, eher formaler, technischer Natur gewesen zu sein, ohne Improvisationsfähigkeiten und ohne sich dem Wechsel der Argumentation seiner Gegner anpassen zu können.

er wurde zum Führer und Strategen gewählt, weil er die Gunst der Menge gewonnen hatte (3,5). Coriolanus vollbrachte viele Heldentaten, aber er hatte keinen Erfolg. Plutarch will hier gar nicht Alkibiades loben, den er als einen besonderen, komplizierten Fall betrachtet,⁴⁹ sondern die Wichtigkeit der Gunst der Menge für den Politiker betonen. Die objektive Leistung des Coriolanus reichte nicht für die entsprechende Anerkennung, man konnte sogar ohne Leistung aufgrund des Wohlwollens Erfolg haben, und das läßt das Beispiel des Alkibiades deutlich erkennen: οὕτω τὸν μὲν οὐδὲ πάσχοντες κακῶς ἐδύναντο μισεῖν οἱ πολῖται, τῷ δὲ περιῆν θουμαζομένῳ μὴ φιλεῖσθαι (3,6).

Betrachten wir einen weiteren Fall: Lucullus ist ein philosophisch gebildeter Aristokrat, in dem sich die Problematik des athenischen Strategen Timotheos, wie sie von Isokrates dargestellt wird, noch stärker widerspiegelt. Sollte Coriolanus ein unzivilisierter Haudegen gewesen sein, so bringt die παιδεία des Lucullus prägnant zum Ausdruck, was Plutarch zentral für die Charakterisierung des Römers gehalten hat.⁵⁰ Lucullus war reddegewandt und gut ausgebildet im Gebrauch beider Sprachen, der griechischen wie der lateinischen. Er verfügte außerdem über die freie Geistesbildung, die auf das Schöne gerichtet ist (ἐλευθέριον ἐπὶ τῷ καλῷ παιδείαν). Lucullus hat sich auch mit der Philosophie beschäftigt (*Luc.* 1,5–8; vgl. 42,3). Plutarch will, daß der Leser von Anfang an Lucullus als einen gebildeten Menschen betrachtet, dessen Feldherrnamt mit seinen ethischen Charakterzügen korreliert. Im Marschischen Kriege zeichnete er sich nicht nur durch Wagemut und Klugheit aus, sondern auch durch Festigkeit und Milde (2,1). Er gewinnt an Profil durch die negative Charakterfolie des Sulla:⁵¹ Gegenüber der Härte des Sulla war Lucullus uneigennützig, gerecht und nachsichtig (4,1). Seine Naturanlagen stimmen mit seiner Erziehung überein: Er war, ähnlich wie Flamininus,⁵² von Natur aus χρηστὸς καὶ φιλόανθρωπος (18,9). In direkter Parallelisierung zu

49 Alkibiades zeigt keine konstanten Charaktereigenschaften. In *Alc.* 16,9 spricht Plutarch von einer ἀνωμαλία τῆς φύσεως. Über seine Politik äußert Plutarch abwertend in der *Synkrisis* 2,1: ὅτι τοίνυν ἀπλοῦς τις ὁ Μάρκιος ὑπέιληπται τῷ τρόπῳ γεγόνει καὶ αὐθέκαστος, ὁ δ' Ἀλκιβιάδης πανοῦργος ἐν τῇ πολιτείᾳ καὶ ἀναλήθης, οὐκ ἄδηλόν ἐστι. In *De adul. et amico* 52D–E wird er aufgrund seiner „Chamäleon-Mentalität“ als einer τῶν μεγάλων κολάκων καὶ δημαγωγῶν charakterisiert.

50 Über die *paideia* des Lucullus in Verbindung mit seiner philhellenischen Politik siehe Swain 1992. Zum Philhellenismus des Lucullus vgl. auch die Fragestellungen von Tröster.

51 Zu dieser Technik Plutarchs siehe Beck 2002, 470: „Diese interne synkrisis wird in Lucullus fortgesetzt und erhält dort ein neues tertium comparationis – in zwei längeren Abschnitten werden Marius und Sulla in Bezug zur Hauptfigur Lucullus gesetzt, die durch (negative) Charakterfolien des Marius und Sulla weiter an Profil gewinnt (*Luc.* 4, 38)“.

52 *Flam.* 2,5; 5,7. Über die Parallelisierung mit Flamininus vgl. auch *Luc.* 23,1 und *Flam.* 16,5–7; *Luc.* 29,7 und *Flam.* 12,9–10.

seinem Partner in der Syzygie Kimon (vgl. *Cim.* 6,2) konnte Lucullus sogar die echte *eunoia* der Städte in Asien erlangen, was ihm lieber als das Prestige seiner Lucullusspiele war (23,1: καὶ τῆς τιμῆς ἡδίονα τὴν ἀληθινὴν εὐνοίαν αὐτῷ παρεῖχον). Durch die Befreiung der Griechen und die Gründung von Städten wird er als Wohltäter und Neugründer geliebt (29,5: ἡγαπᾶτο).

Was gleich ins Auge fällt ist die Zurückweisung der Qualitäten eines Haudegens: Lucullus verlangte mehr nach dem Ruhm der Gerechtigkeit und Menschenfreundlichkeit als nach dem der kriegerischen Erfolge (29,6). Der isokratische Timotheos konnte durch seinen Charakter das Wohlwollen der griechischen Städte erlangen. Das Gewinnen von Wohlwollen war eine größere und schönere Feldherrntat als die Eroberung vieler Städte (*Antid.* 122). Ähnlich bei Lucullus: Kriegserfolge sind auf das Heer und vor allem auf das Glück zurückzuführen, während die Taten des Lucullus die Bewährung einer milden und veredelten Gesinnung waren (*Luc.* 29,6: ἡμέρου ψυχῆς καὶ πεπαιδευμένης). Je tiefer Plutarch sich in das Verständnis dieses Mannes vertieft, desto klarer wird, daß seine Leistungen geistigen Voraussetzungen entspringen. Plutarch wiederholt somit die zentrale Idee der *eunoia*, wie sie uns aus den *Praecepta* bekannt ist.

Aber Lucullus scheint Ausdruck einer Individualität zu sein, die ihn ziemlich autark macht. In *Luc.* 13,4 beharrt er auf sparsamen finanziellen Aufwendungen und lehnt die große finanzielle Unterstützung aus Rom zum mithridatischen Krieg ab. Abgesehen davon, ob der Entschluß richtig oder falsch war, ist die Kommentierung Plutarchs eindeutig: Seine Überhebung dem Senat gegenüber blieb unbestraft, weil er dank göttlichem Beistand Erfolg gehabt hatte. Aber wie lange? Lucullus nimmt offenbar andere Qualitäten für den Strategen als Führungsperson in Anspruch als in seiner Zeit üblich waren. Die Soldaten waren durch Üppigkeit und Habsucht verdorben (7,1); sie waren gewohnt, sich schmeicheln zu lassen und nach ihrem eigenen Gutdünken ins Feld zu ziehen (7,3: ἐδουλοῦντο, πρὸς ἡδονὴν ἐπιζόμενοι στρατεύεσθαι).⁵³ Gerade hier entsteht eine ernste Konfliktsituation, wobei die *eunoia* erneut in den Vordergrund rückt. Lucullus wird mit Vorwürfen konfrontiert, weil er alle Städte kampfflos zur Übergabe bringt und den Soldaten keine Möglichkeit zur Plünderung bietet (14,2). In Amisos am Schwarzen Meer rief er die Soldaten zum Löschen der Feuer auf, aber niemand achtete darauf, sondern sie verlangten nach Beute (19,5). Später bestrafte er Kallimachos hart, weil dieser durch den Brand in Amisos ihm die Gelegenheit genommen hatte, den Griechen gegenüber seine ethischen Qualitäten zu zeigen (32,6).

Das Verhalten des Lucullus muß auf seine politischen Tugenden und seine philhellenische Politik zurückgeführt werden. Es besteht kein Zweifel, daß er

53 Vgl. Plut. *Sert.* 24,5: Ἀσίαν ... βαρυνομένην δὲ ταῖς πλεονεξίαις καὶ ὑπερηφανίαις τῶν ἐπισκῆων.

eine Tugend verkörpert, die Plutarch hochschätzt. Als Lucullus vom Glück verlassen wurde, war sie jedoch ungenügend für das Feldherrnamt in dieser Zeit. Isokrates hat über Timotheos gesagt, daß er durch seine Inflexibilität und seine *megalophrosyne* kein Wohlwollen bei seinen Mitbürgern erlangen konnte und zu dem Fehlurteil der Polis beigetragen habe (*Antid.* 130–131). Lucullus hat ebenfalls dazu beigetragen: In einer psychologischen Studie über die Charaktereigenschaften des Strategen wird ein Mangel im Umgang mit den Soldaten festgestellt, der es unmöglich machte, zu Popularität zu gelangen. Lucullus verstand es nicht, die Zuneigung des gemeinen Menschen zu gewinnen, er konnte auch mit den Mächtigen und Gleichgestellten nicht umgehen.⁵⁴ Das ist eine Art von Überheblichkeit, die sich rächt (33,2): τῶν δ' αἰτιῶν αὐτὸς οὐχὶ τὴν ἐλαχίστην εἰς τοῦτο παρέσχεν, οὐκ ὢν θεραπευτικὸς πλήθους στρατιωτικοῦ, καὶ πᾶν τὸ πρὸς ἡδονὴν τοῦ ἀρχομένου γινόμενον ἀρχῆς ἀτιμίαν καὶ κατάλυσιν ἡγούμενος· τὸ δὲ μέγιστον, οὐδὲ τοῖς δυνατοῖς καὶ ἰσοτίμοις εὐάρμοστος εἶναι πεφυκῶς, ἀλλὰ πάντων καταφρονῶν καὶ μηδενὸς ἀξίους πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡγούμενος.⁵⁵ Lucullus war in ständige Konflikte mit den Soldaten verwickelt. Das Militär in der Spätphase der römischen Republik war ein wichtiger Machtfaktor,⁵⁶ und Plutarch setzt voraus, daß die Führungspersönlichkeit nicht nur ethische, sondern auch pragmatische Qualitäten aufweisen muß. Wer Soldaten führt, muß die Tatsachen berücksichtigen und das Verhalten der Menschen in Kauf nehmen. Unabhängig davon, daß der Widerstand eines korrupten Heeres nicht berechtigt war, erkennt Plutarch darin einen schweren Fehler des Lucullus als militärischen Führers: so wenig Begabung oder Geschick hatte Lucullus für die erste und wichtigste Kunst eines Heerführers.⁵⁷ In der *Synkrisis* (*Cim.–Luc.* 2,3) wird sie ausdrücklich genannt: εὐπέθεια δι' εὐνοίας. Im Falle des Lucullus gewinnt der Leser eine Position, die in der Praxis wiederholt bestätigt wird: Weder die Bildung noch die Philosophie allein verhelfen dazu, die praktischen Angelegenheiten dieser Welt zu regeln.

54 Vgl. Dio Cass. 36,16,1–2: οὐκ ἐδύνατο τῶν συστρατευομένων οἱ ἄρχειν, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ τε ἐστασίαζον καὶ τέλος ἐγκατέλιπον αὐτόν. πολλὰ τε γὰρ σφισι προσέταπτε, καὶ δυσπρόσδοος ἀκριβῆς τε ἐν ταῖς τῶν ἔργων ἀπαιτήσεσι καὶ ἀπαραίτητος ἐν ταῖς τιμωρίαις ὧν οὐκ ἐπίστατο οὔτε λόγῳ τινὰ προσαγαγέσθαι οὔτε ἐπιεικείᾳ ἀναρτήσασθαι, οὐ τιμαῖς, οὐ χρημάτων μεταδόσει προσεταιρίσασθαι, ὧν πάντων ἄλλως τε καὶ ἐν πλήθει, καὶ μάλιστα στρατευομένῳ δεῖ. Siehe auch Sall. *Hist.* 5,10.

55 Zu der Arroganz des Lucullus siehe Lavery, bes. 265 ff. Irreführend ist jedoch seine Ansicht, daß Plutarch im ganzen eine negative Darstellung des Lucullus vornehme.

56 Siehe hierzu Aigner, 29–41. Zum Militär bei Plutarch vgl. De Blois 1992, 4583–4599, bes. 4590.

57 *Luc.* 36,5: οὕτω τις ἦν ἀφυῆς ἢ δυστυχῆς ὁ Λεύκολλος πρὸς τὸ πάντων ἐν ἡγεμονίᾳ πρῶτον καὶ μέγιστον. Vgl. den isokratischen Timotheos in ähnlicher Formulierung (*Antid.* 131): οὕτω γὰρ ἀφυῆς ἦν πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων θεραπείαν ὥσπερ δεινὸς περὶ τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων ἐπιμέλειαν. Siehe auch De Blois 1992, 4606–4607.

III

Wir kommen nun zum Schluß: In den *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae* ist die Eunoiavorstellung Plutarchs in eine politische Norm eingebettet, die ἀρετή mit menschenfreundlichem Verhalten verbindet. Plutarch richtet sein Augenmerk auf eine Verinnerlichung der Ehre, die ausgesprochen ethisch, durch die Beherrschung von Affekten bestimmt ist und mit dem wahrhaften Wohlwollen der Menschen in Einklang gebracht wird.⁵⁸ Auch in einer solchen idealisierenden Vorstellung von *eunoia* wird ständig die pragmatische Politik in Betracht gezogen. Sie wird zwar durch philosophische Ideen bereichert, aber revolutionäre oder rein philosophische Konzeptionen bleiben ihr fern.⁵⁹ Indem Plutarch Tugend und Wohlwollen miteinander verbindet, bringt er platonische und isokratische Gedanken in Einklang.

In den *Viten* geht es nicht allein um die Verbindung von *eunoia* und Tugend. Unabhängig davon, ob *eunoia* wahrhaft ist oder nicht, sich mit der Schmeichelei oder der Tugend verbindet, müssen sich politische und militärische Persönlichkeiten, aber auch die Leser der Biographien mit ihr auseinandersetzen. Plutarch stellt pragmatisch fest, daß politischer oder militärischer Erfolg und *eunoia* zusammenhängen. Das Konzept bleibt das Gleiche wie in den *Moralia*, aber die Perspektive ist eine andere. Der politische Erfolg des Lysander basiert auf der Gunst der asiatischen Städte, der ethisch herausragendere Stratege war allerdings Kallikratidas (*Lys.* 5,5; 7,1). Lysander ist schwer zu beurteilen, aber er war erfolgreich, Kallikratidas hatte gewisse Defizite, die er kompensieren mußte.⁶⁰ Marius, ein unzivilisierter Soldat mit unbeherrschten Leidenschaften und einer feindseligen Einstellung der griechischen Bildung gegenüber (*Mar.* 2,2–4) strebte nach der *eunoia* seiner Soldaten und der Masse (7,3; 28,5). Caesar verstand mit Menschen umzugehen und hatte politischen Erfolg damit.⁶¹ Auch wenn ein solches Wohlwollen

58 Mit einem literarisch anspruchsvollen Vergleich wird sogar in der anderen politischen Schrift Plutarchs *An seni* 786F das Lob aufgrund des echten Wohlwollens als Ursprung des Leuchtens der Tugend geschildert: χάρις εὐμενῆς συμμαρτυροῦσα τοῖς ἔργοις καὶ συναμιλλώμενος ἔπαινος, εὐνοίας δικαίας ἡγεμών, οἷόν τι φῶς καὶ γάνωμα τῆς ἀρετῆς προστίθῃσι.

59 Nach Beck 2000, 114 sind die *Praec. ger. reip.* im Vergleich zu den *Viten* „more idealised and less useful as a result“. Tatsächlich handelt es sich um eine idealisierende Auffassung des Politikers in den *Moralia*, aber warum sollte sie weniger nützlich sein? Die Theorie und die Praxis sind keine divergierenden Größen bei Plutarch, sie ergänzen einander.

60 Siehe *Praec. ger. reip.* 819C: καὶ ἦς ἀπίθανος πρὸς ὁμιλίαν τῷ πλήθει καὶ ὑψηλός, ὡς Καλλικρατίδας, τὸν εὐχαριν καὶ θεραπευτικόν.

61 *Caes.* 57,8: τὴν δ' εὐνοίαν ὡς κάλλιστον ἅμα καὶ βεβαιότατον ἑαυτῷ περιβαλλόμενος φυλακτήριον. Siehe auch 4,4; 5,1; 16,1; 21,2.

leicht zu Schmeichelei wird, ist der Gemeinschaftsbezug für jemanden, der Menschen führt, obligatorisch.

Aristokraten und Militärführer wie Coriolanus oder philosophisch gebildete Persönlichkeiten wie Lucullus, die nicht kompromißbereit sind, können in diesem Sinne sehr tragische Figuren sein. Auch der Syrakusier Dion, mit seiner echten philosophischen Erziehung, konnte die *αὐθάδεια*, die mit *ὄγκος* verbunden wird, nicht vermeiden. Das Volk empfand das *σεμνόν* Dions als drückend und undemokratisch, es fehlte ihm das Gewinnende, das für die zuchtlos gewordenen Syrakusier notwendig war.⁶² Der hemmungslose Demagoge, Herakleides, war ein Konkurrent Dions. Dion wollte ihm nicht so sehr an Macht und Einsicht als an Rechtschaffenheit und Gerechtigkeit überlegen sein (*Dion* 47,6). Aber die Realität verlangte nach Macht und Einsicht, nicht nach Gerechtigkeit. Das Volk stellt mit Recht diesmal fest, daß derartig verschiedene Charaktere nicht gleichzeitig in ein und derselben Stadt wirken können (53,6). In diesem Bereich hat die philosophische Erziehung Dion nicht helfen können. In Sizilien war mehrere Jahre später Timoleon hingegen ein Pragmatiker, der sich gut auf die Besonderheiten der politischen Führung verstand und mehr Erfolg hatte.⁶³ Pelling meint mit Recht: „The street-wise real life model may be a better guide than any philosophical book-learning“.⁶⁴ Im Proömium der *Syzygie Phoc.–Cato minor* wird die Mischung des *σεμνόν* mit dem *ἐπιεικές* als Goldene Regel betrachtet (2,8). Plutarch erwähnt die Kritik des Cicero an Cato (*Att.* 2,1,8), der sich so verhielt, als ob er in der *Politeia* Platons lebte (3,2). Isokrates wäre nie auf die Idee gekommen, in der *Politeia* Platons zu leben. Plutarch lebte ebenfalls nicht in der *Politeia* Platons. Isokrates hatte die Verbindung zwischen *eunoia* und Politik fast wie *hen dia dyoin* verstanden, auch Plutarch ist sich im klaren, daß Politik ohne menschlichen Umgang beinahe unmöglich ist.

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62 *Dion* 52,6: ἀλλὰ φύσει τε φαίνεται πρὸς τὸ πιθανὸν δυσκεράστῳ κεχημένως. Vgl. 8,1–5; 32,5.

63 Siehe De Blois 1978, 123–131; ders. 2000, 131–139, bes. 135 f.; Swain 1989; De Blois-Bons 1992, 166–167; Ingenkamp 1997; Teodorsson, bes. 225 f. Timoleon wird lobend in *Praec. ger. reip.* 816D erwähnt.

64 Pelling 2004, 95. Vgl. Van Raalte 111: „His (sc. Plutarch's) own views may be characterized as 'philosophical' in a more pragmatic Isocratean sense“.

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Struggling with the *Plêthos*:
Politics and Military Leadership in
Plutarch's *Life of Lucullus*

Manuel Tröster

In the midst of narrating Lucullus' military exploits in the Third Mithridatic War, Plutarch signposts a climactic shift in his hero's career: "Up to this point, one might say that fortune (τὴν τύχην) had followed Lucullus and fought on his side; but from now on, as though a favouring breeze had failed him, he had to force every issue, and met with obstacles everywhere. ... And he himself was not least to blame for this. He was not disposed to court the mass of soldiers (πλήθους στρατιωτικοῦ), and thought that everything that was done to please one's subordinates only dishonoured and undermined one's authority. Worst of all, not even with men of power and of equal rank with himself could he be in harmony; he despised them all, and thought them of no account as compared with himself"¹ (*Luc.* 33.1 f.).

At the turning point of Lucullus' career, Plutarch thus castigates his hero for his insensitive treatment of both crowds and individuals, and cites this deficiency as the principal reason for Lucullus' ultimate failure in the military as well as in the political realm. Throughout the *Life*, the protagonist is in fact forced to assert himself against opposition from various kinds of πλῆθη. Apart from confronting huge 'Barbarian' armies on the battlefield, he has to struggle with the citizens assembled in the public space of the capital as well as with the legionaries serving under his command in the East. Evidently, the theme of Lucullus' interaction with the multitude is of crucial importance to Plutarch's reading of his hero's career with its emphasis on the shortcomings of the protagonist's leadership. In the biographer's composition, this leitmotif mainly serves to explain Lucullus' ever growing difficulties and eventual downfall, yet as the present enquiry shall demonstrate, the consular's efforts at communicating with the crowd are no less central to an understanding of his long-time political success.

Beyond this, the issues raised in the *Lucullus* obviously reflect the biographer's general interest in exploring the relationship between aristocratic leaders and the πλῆθος. Thus, the political treatises show Plutarch's profound

1 Translations are adapted from the Loeb Classical Library. I am grateful to Altay Coskun, Heinz Heinen, and John Patterson for commenting on various drafts of this paper.

concern with the rôle of the multitude in the context of local government under the Empire. Time and again, he focuses on the requirements of prudent leadership and underlines the need to appease the immoderate desires of the many in order to avoid political upheavals that might endanger the authority of the oligarchic establishment. Calling upon the powerful to stand united and co-operate with one another in the management of public affairs, he advises them to make some limited concessions to the people, and to seek popular goodwill through benefactions, while at the same time thwarting the designs of irresponsible demagogues.² In the *Lives*, too, Plutarch frequently discusses the behaviour of the multitude as a means to accentuate certain character traits of his heroes, who are regularly faced with ill-considered demands on the part of the supposedly irrational πλῆθος.³ While the protagonists are expected not to succumb to the desires of the many but actively to lead them in the long-term interest of the commonwealth, they also tend to earn the biographer's praise for winning the affection of the people as a result of demonstrating their integrity and political acumen.⁴

As the above-quoted passage from the *Life of Lucullus* makes abundantly clear, the consul of 74 B.C. fails to meet Plutarch's criteria for competent leadership. Similarly negative judgements about Lucullus' handling of the multitude are reiterated both in the main body of the *Life* and in the concluding *synkrisis* (*Luc.* 36.4 f.; 45.3–5), with the biographer affirming that it is “the most important task of a leader to secure ready obedience (εὐπείθειαν) through goodwill (δι' εὐνοίας)” (45.3). However, it is not only the protagonist himself who is repeatedly criticised on account of his shortcomings, but a fair part of the blame is put on his intractable soldiers, whose avarice and unruliness are regularly stressed from the beginning of Lucullus' campaigns onwards. Initially, upon his arrival in Asia Minor, the proconsul is even commended for restoring discipline among his men: “Then for the first time, as it would seem, they made the acquaintance of a genuine commander and leader (ἄρχοντος ἀληθινοῦ καὶ ἡγεμόνος), whereas before this they had been commanded by

2 Cf. esp. *mor.* 813a–c; 816a–825 from the *Præcepta gerendae reipublicae*, with the discussions in Carrière, 238–241; Desideri; Swain 1996, 173–183. Also note the more general treatments in Quaß, 394–421; Lewin, esp. 36–43 on the relationship between the local aristocracy and the δῆμος in the Greek cities under the Empire.

3 On the – largely negative – depiction of the people in the *Lives* cf. Saïd.

4 Consider, e.g., the *Life of Aemilius*, which keeps highlighting both the protagonist's popularity and his rejection of demagogic practices: *Aem.* 2.6; 3.6 f.; 10.1–6; 11; 31.2; 38.1–7; 39.2; 39.4; 39.6–9. Cf., for the Roman *Lives*, De Blois, 4590–4612; and, for the *Lives* in general, Frazier, 110–124; also Beck, 107–114.

demagogues (ἐδημαγωγοῦντο), and had thus got used to taking the field as they pleased (πρὸς ἡδονήν)” (*Luc.* 7.3).⁵

In the ensuing struggle with Mithridates and Tigranes, Lucullus’ success in disciplining his soldiers constitutes an essential prerequisite for victory against a rather different kind of πλῆθος, i. e. the military forces of Rome’s external enemies. In accordance with Plutarch’s notion of disorderly Barbarian masses, they are regularly depicted as intimidating and difficult to control, and thus reinforce the sense of pressure on the protagonist created by unmanageable crowds.⁶ As the war goes on, the Roman soldiers come to behave more and more like their undisciplined enemies, and thereby cause decisive military setbacks like the escape of Mithridates in the battle of Cabira (*Luc.* 17.6–8) and, later on, Lucullus’ retreat from the interior of Armenia: “At first they appealed and sent their tribunes to him, then they held more tumultuous gatherings (θορυβώδεςτερον συνιστάμενοι), and shouted in their tents at night, which seems to have been characteristic of an army that is ready for mutiny” (*Luc.* 32.3).⁷

Among the grievances voiced by the legionaries, the proconsul’s disregard for their material well-being figures most prominently, though the hardships of their service and matters of military tactics are also cited several times.⁸ These complaints are most vividly captured in a harangue ascribed to the youthful P. Clodius, who served as an officer in Lucullus’ army, calling upon the soldiers to “reserve what is left of our bodies, and our lives, for a general in whose eyes the wealth of his soldiers is his fairest honour” (*Luc.* 34.4 f.).⁹ Notwithstanding his own criticism of the protagonist’s leadership, Plutarch represents Clodius’

5 Also note Sall. *hist. fig.* 3.19 Maurenbrecher = 3.9 McGushin: *exercitum maiorum more verteret*, which is not certain to refer to Lucullus and the so-called Fimbrian legions, however. Cf. the doubts voiced by La Penna, 41 f.; also Funari, 500.

6 Cf. esp. *Luc.* 8.5; 31.7, both emphasising the Romans’ amazement upon catching sight of the ‘Barbarian’ πλῆθος; also 27.7 on the θόρυβος produced by Tigranes’ army; and generally Schmidt, 141–201.

7 As to the campaign in Armenia, contrast Cass. Dio 36.6.1, who does not even mention the legionaries’ disobedience and instead explains the Roman retreat by citing casualties and logistical difficulties. Also note Cic. *Manil.* 23 f. App. *Mithr.* 87.397 is inconclusive. Cf. the detailed discussion in Bulin, 86–98. On Mithridates’ flight cf. also Cic. *Manil.* 22; App. *Mithr.* 82.367; Memnon of Heraclea (FGrH 434) F30.1. Further note Rosenstein, 92–113 on the general practice of blaming military failure on the legionaries rather than their commander.

8 Demands for booty: Plut. *Luc.* 14.2 f.; 19.4; 24.6; 35.5; hardships: 33.3 f.; tactical issues: 8.3; 14.4. In addition, note the passages cited in the main text as well as the points recorded in Cass. Dio 36.16.2.

9 Parallel sources: Sall. *hist. fig.* 5.11–12 Maur. = 5.9–10 McGush.; Cic. *har.* 42; Cass. Dio 36.14.4; also 36.17.2, all, like Plutarch, heavily biased against Clodius. On the biographer’s purpose and the setting of the speech cf. Tatum 1991; idem 1999, 44–49; further Mulroy, 157–165, who unconvincingly rejects Plutarch’s report as fictitious.

demands, which earn him the title of φιλοστρατιώτης, as well as similar expressions of the legionaries' desires as excessive and unreasonable.¹⁰ What is more, their complaints appear all the less justified, as the biographer once asserts that it was "through wealth and luxurious life (ὑπὸ πλούτου καὶ τρυφῆς) [that] the soldiers had become averse to military service and desirous of leisure" (*Luc.* 30.5).¹¹

Evidently, the depiction of the soldiery with its emphasis on their intractability and corruption is shaped by *topoi* related to the notion of moral decay. At the same time, the tension between the legionaries' alleged well-being and their manifest disaffection reflects the fact that Plutarch is pursuing two major themes simultaneously: on the one hand, he keeps stressing the soldiers' unruliness and their insatiable greed, while on the other, Lucullus is criticised for failing to convince them of his empathy. However, the biographer is by no means alone in this double-edged interpretation; for the same elements also underlie the account of Cassius Dio, and – to judge from the extant fragments – presumably echo the emphases of Sallust's *Histories*.¹²

Broadly speaking, the ambiguity of the ancient evidence is mirrored in the assessments of modern scholars, whose verdicts range from pronounced criticism of Lucullus' attitude to outright praise for his achievements in the face of the legionaries' truculence.¹³ Neither view is necessarily to be rejected,

10 Cf. the passages cited in n. 8, many of which contrast the soldiers' demands with Lucullus' philhellenism and strategic acumen.

11 Similarly Cass. Dio 36.14.3; also 36.16.3; further Sall. *hist. fig.* 5.9 Maur. = 5.8 McGush. In addition, note Plut. *Luc.* 7.1 on the legionaries' τρυφή and πλεονεξία under Lucullus' predecessors.

12 In particular, note Sall. *hist. fig.* 5.10 Maur. = 4.70 McGush. (= Plut. *Luc.* 33.3); also 4.73 Maur. = 4.77 McGush.: *impotens et nimius animi est*, if the fragment's attribution to the legionaries as denouncing Lucullus be correct. Cf. the sceptical remarks in Funari, 772. For Plutarch's reliance on Sallust cf. Peter, 106–108; Van Ooteghem, 215–218; Scardigli 1979, 104 f.; eadem 1989, 263 f.; Piccirilli, xxxvii f. Significantly, Cassius Dio's judgement of Lucullus' qualities as a military leader in 36.16 makes a number of points that closely match Plutarch's interpretation, including a reflection on the rôle of the πλήθος. For Dio's sources cf. Bulin, 94 f. with further references. In addition, note Rizzo, 40–45, 79–81 and *passim*, who highlights some differences between the accounts of Plutarch and Cassius Dio, and suggests that the biographer also heavily relied on Livy and Archias.

13 Cf. on the one hand, e.g., Van Ooteghem, 201: "Lucullus ne recherchait ni la popularité, ni l'affection de ses soldats, mais simplement leur obéissance"; on the other, Aigner, 41: "Es spricht für die militärische Fähigkeit des Lucullus, daß er mit solchen Truppen derart große Erfolge erzielen konnte, und es spricht für die Wirkung seiner Persönlichkeit, daß er den Versuch wagen konnte, die Soldaten, die sich bereits an ein üppiges und unmilitärisches Leben gewöhnt hatten, wieder in die Gleise der vielgerühmten römischen *disciplina* zurückzuführen, ohne daß ihn ein solcher Versuch das Leben gekostet hätte".

since the proconsul's poor leadership and the soldiers' lack of discipline may effectively have converged to produce the breakdown of the commander's relationship with his men. At any rate, it is clear that Lucullus did not totally fail to enrich his subordinates, given that Plutarch records considerable donatives of 800 and 950 drachmas per head respectively (*Luc.* 29.4; 37.6), but of course this may not have been enough in the eyes of the legionaries.¹⁴

Beyond the issue of enrichment, it is significant that the proconsul is regularly depicted as communicating with his men in order to boost their confidence and to set out his strategy.¹⁵ In Plutarch's account, these instances serve to illustrate the disaffection of the legionaries as they keep complaining about the conduct of the war, yet Lucullus actually appears to have succeeded in quieting dissenters on many of these occasions. In some cases, the exhortation of the soldiers is linked with an emphasis on the general's personal involvement in combat, as in the decisive moment of the battle of Tigranocerta when Lucullus himself leads his men against the enemy and emphatically addresses them as *στρατιῶται* (*Luc.* 28.1–4).¹⁶

At other times, the proconsul ultimately fails to convince his soldiers despite going to great lengths to enlist their support. Following Lucullus' replacement in command, Plutarch reports a last-ditch attempt at restoring his authority: "Accordingly, there was no expedient, however much beneath his dignity (*παρ' ἄξιαν*), to which Lucullus did not patiently resort – entreating the soldiers man by man, going about from tent to tent in humility and tears, and even endeavouring to take some of the men by the hand" (*Luc.* 35.4).¹⁷ Although this episode is intended by the biographer to convey the impression of a desperate and helpless general, Lucullus' resort to the culturally embedded device of displaying his tears only makes sense as a genuine effort at persuading

14 As for the 800 drachmas paid after the sack of Tigranocerta, De Callatay, 365 surmises that the money merely made up for substantial arrears, but there is nothing in the sources to corroborate this interpretation. – By comparison, note that Pompey distributed 1,500 drachmas per head in 62 (*Plut. Pomp.* 45.4; *App. Mithr.* 116.565; *Plin. nat.* 37.16), surely an exceptional amount.

15 Cf. the commander's speeches in *Luc.* 8.3 f.; 9.3; 14.5–8; 24.7; also *Sall. hist. fig.* 4.58 *Maur.* = 4.59 *McGush.*; further *Liv. per.* 94.1. On the practice in general cf. Harmand, 303–313; Erdmann, 22–27; Pina Polo 1989, 199–218; Goldsworthy, 145–149.

16 Cf. also *App. Mithr.* 85.385 f.; further *Plut. Luc.* 15.6; *Sall. hist. fig.* 4.7 *Maur.* = 4.5 *McGush.*; and generally Goldsworthy, 154–165. On the use of the term *commilitones* cf. *Suet. Iul.* 67.2; further Campbell, 32–59; Stäcker, 89–125 regarding the practice of the Emperors.

17 Cf. also *Luc.* 32.4 on Lucullus' vain attempt at encouraging his men to continue their march on Artaxata.

the legionaries to obey his orders, and in this instance it may indeed have helped to produce at least a temporary solution.¹⁸

While Lucullus' military operations attract much attention in Plutarch's narrative, comparatively little space is devoted to the protagonist's political career. To some extent, this is certainly due to the general's long-time absence from Rome at the time of the Mithridatic Wars. His supposed retirement from public life, moreover, and its misrepresentation in the ancient tradition may largely account for the scarcity of evidence regarding his final years.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the biographer does offer an interpretative framework for his hero's political activity, which is essentially considered in terms of the familiar divide between Senate (βουλή) and people (δῆμος).²⁰ In particular, Lucullus' conflict with Pompey, which Plutarch chooses to highlight as a constant feature of his hero's political career, is depicted as reflecting the opposing techniques of aristocratic and popular politics.²¹ Thus, Pompey receives the command against Mithridates "on account of the favour of the people (χάρτι τοῦ δήμου) and the flattery of the demagogues (κολακεία τῶν δημαγωγῶν)", whereas Lucullus, upon his return from the East, is expected to be "an opposer of the tyranny of Pompey (ἀντίταγμα πρὸς τὴν Πομπηίου τυραννίδα) and a champion of the aristocracy (τῆς ἀριστοκρατίας πρόμαχον)" (*Luc.* 35.9; 38.2).²²

Beyond this, the protagonist is regularly challenged by various demagogues whose skill at manipulating the πλῆθος contrasts with Lucullus' incompetent leadership. Prior to the reversal of his fortunes, Plutarch's hero generally manages to frustrate their aspirations, silencing the tribune L. Quinctius during his consulship (*Luc.* 5.5), resisting the pressure of the *publicani* and those bribed by them against his measures in favour of the Asian provincials (*Luc.* 20.5), and continually advancing against the enemy in spite of mounting opposition at Rome against his conduct of the war (*Luc.* 24.1). Following the above-cited

18 On this passage and the significance of the crying general cf. Flaig 1997, 42–45; idem 2003, 110–115: "Zu weinen hieß jedoch, die habitualisierte Selbstkontrolle weitgehend zu suspendieren. Das war ein Beweis größter Vertrautheit, einer quasifamilialen Nähe und hoher affektiver Bindung" (113); also Veyne, 408 f. with 505¹⁰⁸; *pace* Harmand, 282 n. 279, who suggests that the episode reflects Pompeian propaganda.

19 Cf. Keaveney 1992, 151–154; Hillman 1993; Ballesteros Pastor 1999, 338–343; Tröster 2004, esp. 488–498; further Zecchini, 599–607 on Lucullus' *τροπή* as a theme of Caesar's propaganda.

20 On the prominence of this antithesis in the Roman *Lives* cf. Pelling, 165–187 (repr. 2002, 211–225); also De Blois *passim*; Mazza, esp. 264–268; Sion-Jenkis, 66–69; further, for the Greek *Lives*, Prandi, esp. 146–152.

21 On Plutarch's construction of their enmity cf. Hillman 1991; idem 1993, 221 f.; idem 1994, esp. 192–194.

22 Cf. also *Luc.* 42.4–8; further *Pomp.* 46.5–8; 48.1–4; *Cat. Min.* 29.8; 31.1 f.; 31.6 f.

key passage on Lucullus' inability to court the *πλῆθος*, however, his position is successfully undermined by the persistent activities of demagogic figures both in the capital and in the theatre of war. Again, Quinctius is singled out among the proconsul's enemies (*Luc.* 33.6), then Clodius delivers his aforementioned harangue in front of the legionaries, and finally C. Memmius brings about a considerable delay of Lucullus' triumph in the wake of the general's return from the East (*Luc.* 37.2 f.).²³

Building on the picture presented by Plutarch and a few scattered notes in other sources, modern historians tend to view Lucullus as a resolute proponent of senatorial conservatism who essentially lacked the ability to reach out to the people at large. Thus, Theodor Mommsen asserts that the consul of 74 "was unpopular as a decided adherent of the oligarchy", while Erich Gruen chooses to label him "the haughtiest of Roman aristocrats".²⁴ In many a specialised study on Roman politics in the final decades of the Republic, moreover, Lucullus is identified as belonging to a small circle of 'conservatives' who adamantly opposed changes to the constitutional arrangements put into place by Sulla, yet this basically rests on dubious inferences from prosopographical conjecture.²⁵

What is more, any attempt at categorising Lucullus as a kind of 'hard-core optimate' operating with little or no concern for the desires of the multitude is difficult to reconcile with what is known about the complex and volatile nature of Roman politics. As a number of recent studies on the political culture of the Republic have demonstrated, the traditional emphasis on aristocratic factions and the Senate as the major players in the political arena tends to underestimate the importance of oratory, popular gatherings, and public opinion to the decision-making process.²⁶ Although this does by no

23 Cf. Hillman 1993, 215: "Lucullus must constantly struggle from this point on against those better at manipulating the *πλῆθος* both in and out of the army: Quinctius, Clodius, Pompeius, Memmius." On the opposition of Memmius cf. also Plut. *Cat. Min.* 29.5–7; and Bellemore.

24 Mommsen, 67: Lucullus "war unpopulär als entschiedener Anhänger der Oligarchie"; Gruen, 39. Also note the exceedingly dismissive remarks in Wylie, 118 f.

25 Cf. esp. Schütz, 96–106, citing Sall. *hist. fig.* 3.48.9–11 Maur. = 3.34.9–11 McGush. as the only explicit piece of evidence for Lucullus' association with other members of this supposed political group; also Rossi, 150–152; more cautiously, Keaveney 1982, 208 f.; idem 1984, 148 f. On Schütz' interpretative framework see below, n. 41. *Contra* Twyman, 850–854 and *passim*, who – no less schematically – suggests that Lucullus belonged to a Claudio-Metellan faction around Pompey; also Hillman 1989, 96–98 and *passim*.

26 Cf. most notably Millar 1998 as well as the earlier contributions by the same author collected in idem 2002, 85–182, though his conclusions about the 'democratic' nature of the Republic remain highly problematic and have widely been repudiated, e.g., by Hölkeskamp 2000. For more balanced assessments of the significance of the public cf.

means imply that the Roman political system should be viewed as a ‘democracy’ based on mass participation and open debate,²⁷ it is clear that neither ambitious individuals nor the aristocracy as a whole could afford to ignore the demands and reactions of those assembling in the public space of the city. Consequently, a purely negative view of Lucullus’ communicative skills begs the question of how this late-Republican noble could possibly have succeeded in his quest for *honores*, *dignitas*, and *gloria* over a period of twenty-odd years.

Notwithstanding Plutarch’s occasional emphasis on his hero’s association with the senatorial establishment, there are ample grounds for assuming that the consul of 74 was actually much more flexible in his approach to politics than is commonly acknowledged. According to the biographer’s own account, Lucullus was prepared to woo the support of the power broker Cethegus by corrupting his mistress Praecia through gifts and flatteries, thus resorting to expedients conventionally assigned to the repertoire of the ‘demagogue’ (*Luc.* 6.1–5). As this affair does not at all fit Plutarch’s interpretative pattern, the biographer is at pains to assert that his hero acted “contrary to his nature (παρὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ φύσιν)” in this instance, and relied on Cethegus’ assistance only once.²⁸

In matters of foreign policy, moreover, the proconsul seems to have operated with a remarkable degree of independence from the political class at Rome.²⁹ Apparently, he lacked senatorial authorisation for his invasion of Armenia, which had secretly been prepared in collusion with a number of Tigranes’ subjects (*Luc.* 21.2), though the general’s own propaganda sought to

Hölkeskamp 1995; Pina Polo 1996, 94–150; Laser; Morstein-Marx; also Eich, 113–127; further Yakobson 1999, 211–225 on electoral campaigning. In addition, note Hölkeskamp 2004b with a more general appraisal of current debates on the political culture of the Republic.

27 On the level of participation cf. Mouritsen, 18–37; also Nicolet, 391–401; MacMullen; Thommen, 364 f.; on the nature of public deliberation Morstein-Marx, 160–203. Also note Flaig 1995, esp. 77–99; idem 1998; idem 2003, 155–231, who identifies the expression of consensus rather than political decision-making as the central function of the popular assemblies; *contra* Laser, 66–69, and Pani, 143 f.; further Jehne 2000, 217–220 and 224–226; idem 2003 on the *comitia* as rituals serving to promote integration as well as Bell, 172–239, regarding the impression made on the public by spectacular performance.

28 Cf. also *Luc.* 5.4 on Lucullus’ disapproval of Cethegus’ dissolute ways; further Cic. *parad.* 40. In addition, note Sall. *hist. fig.* 4.71 Maur. = 4.68 McGush. on Lucullus’ bribery of Quinctius.

29 Cf. Liebmann-Frankfort, 255 f. and *passim*, who highlights the parallels with Pompey’s practice; also Badian, 37–39; Ballesteros Pastor 1996, 460; idem 1998, esp. 84 f.; Tröster 2005a.

justify the offensive as a pre-emptive strike (*Luc.* 23.7).³⁰ While modern scholars, following the lead of Ronald Syme, tend to view him as “the Senate’s general”,³¹ it is worth noting that support for Lucullus from aristocratic circles is only on record in the ensuing conflict with Pompey, i. e. at a time when he had already been replaced as supreme commander.³² What is more, the key passage in Plutarch on the proconsul’s reversal of fortunes places special emphasis not only on Lucullus’ inability to woo the *πλήθος*, but also on his failure to co-operate with his peers (*Luc.* 33.2).³³

Accordingly, no consistent pattern emerges in terms of factional alignments or a programmatic agenda that might have determined Lucullus’ political activity. Rather one ought to conclude that the consul of 74 was sufficiently flexible to adopt a variety of techniques in order to raise his standing with the public and promote his personal goals.³⁴ In this endeavour, the skill of persuasion both within and without the Senate evidently played a pivotal rôle. Significantly, Plutarch’s fundamental observations on his hero’s difficulties with the *πλήθος* are followed by a positive appraisal of Lucullus’ rhetorical talents: “He was tall and handsome, a powerful speaker (*δεινὸς εἰπεῖν*), and equally prudent (*φρόνιμος*), as it seems, in the forum and in the field” (*Luc.* 33.3).³⁵ Granted, one might object that this remark is coloured by the biographer’s express desire to underscore his hero’s virtues and not to delineate his defects with excessive zeal and emphasis (*Cim.* 2.3–5),³⁶ yet a

30 Also note *Luc.* 14.6–8. Cf. esp. Sherwin-White 1984, 174–176; idem 1994, 239 f.; also Manandian, 75–100; Liebmann-Frankfort, 229–236; *pace* Keaveney 1992, 99–104 and 112 f., who maintains that Lucullus originally wished to avoid war and was legally authorised to invade Armenia.

31 Syme, 29, who presents Lucullus in antithesis to Pompey, “the People’s general”. Syme’s formulation is echoed in plenty of standard accounts, e. g., Meier, 85; Gelzer, 66. *Contra* Twyman, 864–873, whose own reconstruction is vitiated by an excessive reliance on the factional model of Roman politics, though.

32 Cf. Plut. *Luc.* 35.9; *Pomp.* 30.3; and, for the chronology, Heftner, 216 f. On Lucullus’ enmity to Pompey cf. Hillman as cited in n. 21. On the lack of senatorial opposition to the commander’s replacement cf. Keaveney 1992, 121 f.; further Rossi, 136 and 150–152, with whose political reconstruction I disagree.

33 In this context, note the denigration of some of Lucullus’ associates, including his consular colleague Cotta and his senior officer Murena (*Luc.* 8.1 f.; 19.8 f.), which presumably reflects a certain degree of discord between those involved. Cf. Hillard, 44–47; Ballesteros Pastor 1999, 335–337.

34 Cf. also the conclusion reached by Badian, 38: Lucullus “was not a conservative noble, but a man remarkably free from traditional restraints”.

35 Also note Cic. *Brut.* 222, citing Lucullus in a catalogue of exemplary orators.

36 On Plutarch’s attitude to Lucullus cf. the diverging views expressed by Swain 1990, 143–145; idem 1992 on the one hand, and Tröster 2005b, with further references, on the other.

number of other passages serve to corroborate the picture of Lucullus' frequent success with the Roman public or certain sections thereof.

Thus, Plutarch highlights his hero's popularity among the citizens in the context of a criminal prosecution at the outset of his career and again at the time of his aedileship (*Luc.* 1.2 f.; 1.8 f.).³⁷ Later on, as consul, Lucullus is said to have prevailed against the aforementioned Quinctius on account of both private exhortation and public admonition (*Luc.* 5.5).³⁸ Shortly before his supposed retirement, moreover, he invited the inhabitants of the *vici* around the city to join in the celebration of his triumph (*Luc.* 37.6).³⁹ Finally, Plutarch notes that there was much grievance on the part of the people when they flocked together following the consular's death (*Luc.* 43.3 f.). While none of these references will be surprising to those familiar with the common requirements of a senatorial career, they must not be ignored, or dismissed as meaningless to an understanding of Lucullus' political rôle in the final years of the Republic.

Both in the capital and in the field, Lucullus emerges as an ambitious noble regularly communicating with the multitude. This is not to deny that he may often have found it difficult to deal with the *πληθός*, especially with the soldiers, who required a great degree of empathy on a permanent basis and were rather different from the urban dwellers to be mobilised on specific occasions in the city.⁴⁰ Yet despite their emphasis on the shortcomings of Lucullus' leadership, the sources – and Plutarch in particular – also indicate that the consular often succeeded in mustering public support for his political and military objectives. Given that effective self-advertisement was indispensable for anybody seeking to exert influence in the Roman political system, it

37 On the publicity of the trial cf. also Cic. *ac.* 1.1; Cic. *off.* 2.50; Quint. *inst.* 12.7.4; on the magnificence of the aedileship Cic. *off.* 2.57; Val. Max. 2.4.6; Plin. *nat.* 8.19; Gran. Licinian. 36.6; *Vir. ill.* 74.1 (erroneously citing the quaestorship); further Plut. *mor.* 484d–e.

38 Cf. also Sall. *hist. fig.* 3.48.11 Maur. = 3.34.11 McGush.; and Gruen, 25 n. 54.

39 Also note Plin. *nat.* 14.96 on Lucullus' generous distribution of wine to the people.

40 Cf. – perhaps over-schematically – Harmand, 304: “Aux diverses raisons personnelles ... de son échec psychologique près du soldat, ne faudrait-il pas ajouter une incapacité, chez ce spécialiste de l'*eloquentia* urbaine, à se faire aux exigences mentales d'un *exercitus* de rustres?” On the size of the crowds in the city cf. the references cited in n. 27; on their changing composition Mouritsen, 38–62, who convincingly rejects the assumption of a *plebs contionalis* consisting of artisans and shopkeepers from around the Forum (Meier, 114 f.; Vanderbroeck, esp. 81–93), but tends to misrepresent the *contio* as a partisan demonstration dominated by members of the élite. Cf. the important qualifications in Morstein-Marx, 11 f. and 128–136; also 143–150 on the heterogeneity of public opinion; and in Yakobson 2004. Further note Pina Polo 1996, 127–134; Laser, 199–209 and 216–218.

would otherwise be impossible to make sense of his career.⁴¹ Generally speaking, Lucullus proved successful as long as he was able actively to influence public opinion at Rome, whereas he suffered setbacks when he was absent on campaign in the East, when he was barred from political activity waiting for his triumph, and when his opponents managed to control events in the city during Caesar's first consulate.

Notwithstanding, Plutarch reiterates his negative view of the consular's persuasive skills in the *synkrisis* to the pair of Cimon and Lucullus: "For aristocratic natures (ἀριστοκρατικοὶ φύσεις) are little in accord with the multitude (τοῖς πολλοῖς), and seldom please it (πρὸς ἡδονήν), but by so often using force to rectify its aberrations, they vex it, just as physicians' bandages vex, although they bring the dislocated members into their natural position" (*Luc.* 45.7).⁴² Apart from epitomising the biographer's judgement of the two protagonists' political careers, this passage spells out one of the key messages Plutarch intends to convey to his readers, calling on the statesman not to succumb to the demands of the crowd but to exercise prudent leadership without alienating the multitude. On this count, Lucullus was certainly not as inept as the biographer's focus on the divide between Senate and people might suggest. In part, Plutarch was presumably misled by the firmly established tradition that highlighted the extravagance of Lucullus' private life and emphasised his supposed distance from the concerns of the *res publica*.⁴³ But beyond this, he purposefully chose to elaborate on Lucullus' opposition to the πλῆθος in order to explore a relationship that remained highly relevant to his own experience and to that of his audience.

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41 Contrast Schütz, 5 f., who characterises Lucullus as "Typ des spätrepublikanischen Nobilis schlechthin" and goes on to interpret his policies within the rigid framework of an 'optimatus' paradigm. Accordingly, Lucullus' attainment of the consulship *suo anno* is considered the mere realisation of what the German scholar regards as the "virtualiter vorgezeichnete Makellosigkeit der Lucullischen Karriere" (112).

42 On Plutarch's use of medical metaphors and their relevance to his political analysis cf. Fuhrmann, 238–240; Saïd, 22 f.

43 Cf. the references cited in n. 19, esp. Hillman 1993, 218: "Plutarch – and he is not alone in this – was unable to see past the well established and prejudicial tradition on Lucullus' proverbial luxury".

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Greek Lawgivers in Plutarch: A comparison Between the Biographical Lycurgus and the Rhetorical Alexander

Elias Koulakiotis

In a famous passage of the Plutarchean Corpus, in the *Synkrisis* between the *Lives* of Lycurgus and Numa, Plutarch states that the Roman Numa was in some aspects an *hellenikoteros nomothetes* than the Spartan Lycurgus.¹ Although the adjective ‘hellenikos’ should be here understood in terms of culture and morality rather than of language, politics or ethnicity², this comparison poses the question of the image of the Greek lawgiver in the work of Plutarch.³ Plutarch discusses at least four Greek and Roman individuals in this purpose: The biographical works dedicated to Lycurgus, Numa, Solon, and Cato offer aspects of legendary and historical lawgivers. The similarities between these figures presented in the biographical works of Plutarch have already been studied; it has been stated that a number of ‘common places’ occur among them.⁴ However, not only in the *Lives* but also in the *Moralia*, especially in the rhetoric treatises, there exists at least one figure which is comparable to the above: Alexander the Great, as presented in the *De Alexandri fortuna aut*

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- 1 Plut., *Comparatio Lycurgi et Numae*, 1, 5: μακρῶ τινι τὸν Νομᾶν ἑλληνικώτερον γεγονέναι νομοθέτην φήσομεν. The comparison is referred to the *philanthropia* of the two lawgivers; on this virtue in Plutarch see Duff 1999, 77–78. Cf. Plut., *Comparatio Niciae et Crassi*, 2, 7: καὶ τὸ λῦσαι τὸν πόλεμον ἑλληνικώτατον πολίτευμα. See also Dio Chrys., *Or.* 47, 13: σφόδρα Ἕλληνας.
 - 2 Cf. Nikolaidis 1986; Schmidt. For a cultural and elitistic definition of Greekness which is a matter of degree and probably connected to the Roman notion of *humanitas*, see Saïd; see also Bowie 1991, 200; Woolf 126–128; Asirvatham 2005. On Plutarch’s judging his heroes in Greek terms: Duff 1999, 308–309; Whitmarsh, 178, n. 22. On Alexander’s Greekness in Plutarch: Nikolaidis 1999.
 - 3 For the different historical and historiographical traditions on the Greek lawgivers: Adcock; Szegedy-Maszak; Hölkeskamp, 44–59; Liou-Gille; Ruzé. For Plutarch in particular: Mossé 1996; Lavery; De Blois 2005.
 - 4 The most important of them is ‘the good statesman’; cf. De Blois in this volume and De Blois 2005a, 146–147. For a different, negative interpretation of these common places, see Lavery, in particular 380–81: ‘Plutarch is fundamentally lacking in imagination [...] Plutarch was unable, in imagination, to project himself into the past or future, [...] he could not even project himself into the present, the changing world of the Early Empire.’

virtute.⁵ Despite the fact that in these two different literary genres, biography and epideictic oration, one encounters two different modes of narration, I believe that there exist common elements between them. Certain passages of the ‘mythic’ biographies are reminiscent of the encomiastic tone of the *declamatio*; I think that these similarities have not been quite stressed as yet.

In this paper I will primarily draw a comparison between the biographical Lycurgus and the rhetorical Alexander. I will try to show, that the common, for the most part platonic background⁶ of these texts allows for such a parallelism and that it may perhaps enable us to identify common features between the biography and the declamation.

Plutarch’s world deserves special consideration in the first part of this paper. I will then discuss those perceptions of the nature of *nomos* in Greek thought that appear to have had an influence on Plutarch; finally, I will focus on specific aspects of the Plutarchean lawgiver and on the significance they might have had at the time of the author.

Plutarch’s retirement in his ancestral city, in order to write his works, seems to have been a very conscious act: He intended to look at his contemporary world through the eyes of a small Greek *polis*. The polis has always been in the center of his political thought.⁷ We may assume from the way he thinks and from the way he expresses himself that, even during the *pax romana*, his reference point was the *polis*. In other words, even after the Hellenistic monarchies and the Roman experience, thinking of a political community for Greeks meant thinking in terms of a *polis*.⁸

That seems to be the result not only of classicism, which was preeminent during the first centuries AD. The prosperous Greek cities in the Roman Empire were the framework of the activities of the Greek élite of the *pepaideumenoí*, who were proud of their past and quite content with their

5 Cf. *De Alex. fort.* 328 B: ἄθεσμα καὶ ἀνήκοα φύλα νόμους διδάσκοντες καὶ εἰρήνην <τὴν γῆν> ἐπήεσαν; 328 E: καὶ τοὺς μὲν Πλάτωνος ὀλίγοι νόμους ἀναγιγνώσκομεν, τοῖς δ’ Ἀλεξάνδρου μυριάδες ἀνθρώπων ἐχρήσαντο καὶ χρῶνται. The word *nomos* has here both meanings, law and way of life. On the figure of Alexander in Plutarch’s work, in general: Wardman; Mossman; Humbert; Placido; Nikolaidis 1999; Koulakiotis 158–162. On Alexander in the plutarchean rhetorical works: Cammarota; D’Angelo; Gigante; Whitmarsh; Asirvatham 2000, 66–150 and Asirvatham 2005; Koulakiotis 162–176.

6 Cf. De Blois 2005a, 146 n. 5 with a list of the platonic ideas found in *Lycurgus* (e.g. a political equilibrium that forecloses *stasis*; reduction of inequality, poverty and luxury). See also Dillon 1988; De Blois – Bons 1992 and 1995; Swain 1997; Duff 1999, 72–78; Duff 1999a; De Blois 2005. Although the main inspiration remains platonic, influences from other schools do exist: Babut 1969, esp. 84 and Babut 1996.

7 Aalders – De Blois, 3385.

8 Cf. Aelius Aristides, *To Rome*, 36. See also Levick; Eck. On the importance of the *polis* / *urbs* and *civitas* in the legislation: Liou-Gille, 179–180.

present. Within the latter, the new political institution, the Roman Empire, was often seen as the enlarged *urbs*.

In Greek political thought, law (*nomos*) is a key notion, which is inextricably bound with the formation of a political community. Living in a political community was recognised as the only appropriate way of life for a human being. Within this, law marked the transition from a pre-political to a political way of life, and legislation, without being the only condition, seemed to determine the constitution of such a community.⁹

Although the importance of legislation is obvious, the world of Greek cities did not create a special juridic discipline, such as medicine. In Greek thought it is philosophers who legislate, and the figure of legislators was often combined with that of philosophers.¹⁰ That might be explained by the fact that Greek thinkers, especially Plato, believed in the existence of a single political art (*technē*), whose parts constituted all other arts.¹¹ Justice, in particular, was omnipresent in the political art; it could therefore not be examined separately as an object of a special discipline.¹²

It seems that the lack of special jurists has been compensated by the fabrication of mythical legislators who lived before the philosophers and exercised a great charm among the Greeks. Minos, Charondas and Zaleukos were presented to be semi-human or semi-divine beings, with special attributes and with divine inspiration. They are all thought to have lived in a remote past. Because of their own impact, archaic pre-political communities were gifted with laws, which ensured the peaceful order. In mythological or 'archaeological' thought, they are presented to live right after the *protoi eures*, cultural heroes whose ingenuity ensured the survival of a community.¹³

The image of these legendary legislators was shaped and reshaped by later authors, primarily during the fifth and fourth centuries BC.¹⁴ For the sophistic movement, which underlines the artificial character of the laws, the relationship between *nomos* and *physis* on the one hand, and between *nomos* and *logos* on the other hand, were central issues. Herodotus, in agreement with this tradition, put the *nomos* in the middle (*meson*) of a Greek political community and also denied its transcendent character.¹⁵

9 Cf. Arist., *Pol.*, 1.1253 a 4. See also Mossé 1979, 435; Humphreys.

10 Cf. Bodéüs; Liou-Gille, 186–190.

11 Plat., *Prot.* 322 b; see also Arist., *Pol.*, 1.1256 b 23.

12 Cf. Pérez Jiménez; Van der Stockt 2004.

13 Cf. Austin – Vidal-Naquet, 28–29.

14 This is valid also for historical figures, as Solon. For Lycurgus see Tigerstedt, 222; Hölkeskamp, 55; Mossé 1996, 1330–1333; Paradiso; Cartledge; Ruzé; For Solon: Mossé 1979; Kyrtatas; Thomas; Hölkeskamp, 56; Blok – Lardinois.

15 Herod., 3, 80; 7, 104. Cf. in general Romilly 1971, 51–55; Birgalias.

Plato, of course, had a different opinion.¹⁶ He wanted his philosopher-king to be a master of legislation, a man with a divine inspiration who has the absolute knowledge of the political art. The mission of his '*basilikos aner*' as presented in his *Statesman* was to communicate this knowledge (*episteme*) to his citizen by giving them the best laws. But it seems that making laws had for Plato also a very strong technical character: The metaphors of the doctor (cf. Plut., *Lyc.* 4. 3, and see Jouanna), the captain of a ship and of the weaver which is used by Plato in order to illustrate the way a Statesman works, stresses the fact that politics are not based on nature (*physei*), but on artifice (*techne*). So is legislation, since according to the platonic *Laws*, justice is not by nature (*physei*).¹⁷ That is why in the spurious platonic *Definitions* (413 b 11–12) the Πολιτική ἐπιστήμη is defined as the art of fabricating justice in the *polis* (ἐπιστήμη ποιητική δικαιοσύνης ἐν πόλει). Also in the *Statesman* the philosopher-king stands above the laws, he has the right to use every means in order to succeed in his mission. He may respect or deny the written law (*grammata*), and he can utilise persuasion or violence.

Aristoteles sees a kind of autonomy of the *politikos aner* vis-à-vis the philosophical knowledge of the absolute good. Politicians have to act within a specific framework, and they need to prove their *phronesis* by achieving the best result under certain circumstances. Legislating does not mean imposing definite attitudes and reactions but rather creating the most appropriate framework for good action; this is an idea which would be very probably shared also by Isocrates. For Aristoteles, political life is a practical life *par excellence* and the *phronesis* required for that can be achieved by an appropriate education.

Education was one of the things that Greeks were proud of, especially under Roman rule.¹⁸ Their language and their history, of which political thought formed part, were synonyms for their identity.¹⁹ As I mentioned above, even if by Plutarch's time the political framework was changed under the Roman Empire, the political vocabulary remained the same. Notions like *philosophia*, *arete* or *philanthropia* continued to be popular, and were the main components of this *paideia*. Sophistic, platonic or even isocratean, these notions formed in Plutarch's time a kind of a philosophical *koinè* and it is

16 On Plato and Aristoteles see Bodéüs, in particular 170–176; Hölkeskamp, 34–44, with bibliography.

17 Plat., *Leg.* 874 e – 875 a: προρρητέον δὴ τι περὶ πάντων τῶν τοιούτων τοιόνδε, ὡς ἄρα νόμους ἀνθρώποις ἀναγκαῖον τίθεσθαι καὶ ζῆν κατὰ νόμους ἢ μηδὲν διαφέρειν τῶν πάντη ἀγριωτάτων θηρίων. ἢ δὲ αἰτία τούτων ἦδε, ὅτι φύσις ἀνθρώπων οὐδενὸς ἰκανὴ φύεται ὥστε γινῶναι τε τὰ συμφέροντα ἀνθρώποις εἰς πολιτείαν καὶ γνοῦσα, τὸ βέλτιστον αἰεὶ δύνασθαι τε καὶ ἐθέλειν πράττειν.

18 Cf. Schmitz 1997; Lalanne.

19 Cf. Bowie 1970; Swain 1996.

difficult to tell the exact source of his inspiration.²⁰ When Plutarch decided to write his works and to express his opinion over his contemporary world, he used this past and he drew from its gallery of great men.²¹

As I said in the beginning, here I focus on a comparison between the biographical Lycurgus and the rhetorical Alexander. Methodologically, it would perhaps have been more appropriate to compare the biographical couple of Lycurgus and Numa (with the *Synkrisis* that follows them) to both rhetorical texts, which Plutarch dedicated to Alexander (the two texts of the *De Alexandri fortuna*) and to Rome (the *De fortuna Romanorum*). However I will concentrate on the Greek (or hellenized) part of the two parallels, using the evidence from the Roman part only in order to stress the dissimilarities to the Greek one. I have also chosen to examine the content of the information given by Plutarch rather than the way this information is embedded into his text.

In the Appendix of this paper I listed the common themes shared in the texts related to Lycurgus and to Alexander. My intention here is not to provide an accurate *Quellenforschung* and to examine the historicity of the information offered by Plutarch, and I could say very little about the juridical aspect of certain laws ascribed to Lycurgus or to Alexander.²² I am rather interested in examining the ways in which these ‘political’ or ‘royal’ men are presented to legislate, the means they utilise in order to make their work accepted and the meaning they had for their own community.

In the Appendix the relevant passages have been arranged into six groups. The first group is related to the personality and virtues of the lawgiver: he is presented to be the *epitome* of almost the entire human, i. e. Greek, virtues²³: Mildness and justice dominated in his character and made of him a divine creature, in the case of Lycurgus perhaps even a god.

The second group has to do with the areas of their legislation. As it can be seen from the passages, these encompass a particularly wide range of human activities: kinship and sexuality, dress and food, religion, cult and burial rituals,

20 Cf. De Blois – Bons 1992 and 1995.

21 For the purposes of the *Lives* and of the Plutarchean corpus in general, see Nikolaidis 1982–1984; Duff 1999, 289–309; Stadter 2000, 493; Hartog, in particular 9–29.

22 On Plutarch’s historical methods: Pelling 1980; id. 2002; Frazier 17–69; Nikolaidis 1997; Payen. See also the ‘Programmatic Statements in the *Lives*’ in Duff 1999, 13–51. Cf. also Osborne, 80: ‘it remains unwise to believe any particular law which tradition ascribes to a lawgiver unless we have external evidence for it’. In particular for Lycurgus: Rawson 108–111; Schütrumpf; Cartledge; Ruzé; de Blois 2005a, 145, n. 2. For Alexander: Hamilton, LV–LXVIII, Froidefond 83–109; on Alexander’s administration, which in fact did not guarantee the longevity of his empire: Badian; Bosworth 1988, 229–258.

23 On *philosophia*, *praotes* and *paideia*, see the discussion in Asirvatham 2005. See also Romilly 1979, 275–292; Nikolaidis 1982, and Pérez Jiménez – Tichener (eds.).

urbanisation, political and economical institutions, coinage and money, and education.

The third group concerns the ways of legislation. The lawmaker knows how to speak and when to act. He combines both *ergon* and *logos*, and he uses violence and persuasion. Lycurgus and Alexander opt for oral than for written laws²⁴, they combine the existing political components in a new mixed constitution and they let all members of the recreated community share this common good. They ‘domesticate’ the hard natures of citizens without being severe (without *austerotes*), and it seems that their action is led and determined by the divinity.

A comparison between the fourth and fifth group, may lead us to suggest that communities suffered from the absence of laws, from disorder and from internal strifes before they were assigned legislation; after that they were transformed into a *kosmos*, having the best *politeia* and *eunomia*. As a result, the enactment of laws changed radically the terms of political anthropology, and the criteria for the hierarchisation of people into good and bad now became strictly moral.

Last but not least, the activity of both, Lycurgus and Alexander, had a long-lasting impact, that of Alexander in particular is still influential in Plutarch’s time.

A comparison of the passages in this list, which should be taken rather representative of the existing documentation than complete, demonstrate explicitly the affinity of the two images, Lycurgus and Alexander²⁵: Throughout both texts, the *Vita* and the *Declamation*, the *praktikos bios* of the lawgiver is attested; this feature, as I said above, draws upon the political thought of the 4th century BCE.²⁶

I shall now discuss some special examples that elucidate this image and which perhaps illuminate to some extent the narrative techniques of the Chaironean writer. As I mentioned above, metaphors play a central role in political imagery, particularly in Plato’s work. Plutarch is also very good at that (cf. Hirsch-Luipold): In the biography of the Spartan lawgiver, for example, Lycurgus is presented as a doctor ready to mix his remedies in order to find the best treatment for his people and to inaugurate a new way of life (*Lyc.*, 5, 2: *kainè diaita*). The rhetorical Alexander is also presented to be mixing the existing ways of life in a cup and to be inventing a new one (*De Alex. fort.*, 329 C). Moreover, in the case of Alexander, Plutarch uses the metaphor of a hunter, who tries to civilize a savage world (*De Alex. fort.*, 330 B). In avoiding

24 However, see Paus., 5, 4, 5. See also Boring, 24–31, and Camassa.

25 On the subjacent image of the platonic Demiurge, see Castelnérac in this volume.

26 Cf. Pelling 2004, 95: ‘The streetwise real life model may be a better guide than any philosophical book-learning’.

scaring the wild animals (i.e. the conquered people) the hunter disguises himself, so that he (and his laws) can be acknowledged easier by the conquered people as their conqueror. In other words Alexander uses trickery in order to achieve in this aim. I am inclined to suggest that Lycurgus applied the same means, when, going away from Sparta after he completed the new legislation, he made Spartan citizens promise not to change them until his return, but, according to one tradition, he let himself die abroad and never came back (*Lyc.*, 31.5).

I think that this brief allusion is related to the adaptability of these lawgivers in the circumstances and with the broader subject of persuasion and rhetoric in Plutarch's work, and in particular with the role of both of them in his image of the ideal statesman. It seems that a portion of 'sophistic' – that is 'performative' – attitude is required in order to complete the image of the philosopher-king.²⁷

This image is accomplished by a second feature, the preference for the spoken *logos*: The best proof for this is that Lycurgus and Alexander opted for the oral tradition for their work and did not leave any written laws.²⁸ On the contrary, Numa is also presented as the one who (unlike Lycurgus and Alexander) *wrote* laws and whose legislation did not outlive him, since after his death Rome fell again into anarchy (*Comp. Lyc. and Nu.* 4.6).

This last point, which reveals the absence of any duration in Numa's work, deserves closer consideration. Plutarch presents the legislative work of all three lawgivers (Numa, Lycurgus and Alexander) in a most dramatic moment in his text: the period of the (re-)organization of the respective political communities. Lycurgus' legislation allegedly lasted over five hundred years and Alexander's work is still valid. That legitimates these two figures as respectable *archè*, as a beginning and a lasting authority that Numa, for all his qualities, apparently did not guarantee.

Why would that be so? The explanation which Plutarch offers for Numa's failure is that the Roman legislator, unlike the two others, did not attach much emphasis to young people's education (*paideia*).²⁹ On the other hand, it is on

27 Cf. Plut., *Lyc.*, 31, 2: ὁ δὲ οὐ γράμματα καὶ λόγους, ἀλλ' ἔργῳ πολιτείαν ἀμίμητον εἰς φῶς προενεγκόμενος. On the paradigmatic role of rhetorical *logos* see Pelling 2000.

28 Cf. Plat., *Phaedr.*, 278 b 7 – d 1. See also the discussion on oral and written law in Loraux and Arrighetti.

29 Plut., *Comparatio Lycurgi et Numae*, 4, 2–4. According to Desideri, this discussion of the Spartan and Roman educational systems by Plutarch is related to the general problem of the public and private education in the Empire and in particular to the Roman educational policy in the end of the 1st and the beginning of the 2nd centuries CE; moreover (p. 123) the emperor Trajan would promote a public educational system by the Roman State. The preference for the public educational system has an evident

this field exactly that the two Greek lawgivers heavily capitalized, both through their action and through their personal example (see Appendix 1.2 and 2.4). Moreover, by insisting on the spoken *logos*, which in this period was considered of equal importance to *paideia*³⁰, they achieved in shaping the natures of their citizens and hence in generating the necessary background with a view of making their laws accepted and long-lasting.³¹ For a Greek intellectual of this period, the insistence on the role of the *paideia* as a political factor was of vital interest: It was the soundest proof of his own cultural identity within the Roman *oikoumene*³² and, to a certain extent it was the official passport that led to the ruling class of the Empire.³³

To conclude: The lawgiver's image forms part of a long discussion on the ideal statesman and it appears that Plutarch uses many components in order to mould a figure, which could fit into both biographical *and* rhetorical texts.³⁴ That illustrates the fact that the dichotomy between philosophy and rhetoric in Plutarch's own life and work, as often assumed, does not seem to be pertinent, if we wish to understand how he composed his work.³⁵ It is for these reasons that I would be willing to believe that the classification of the rhetorical treatises to Plutarch's *juvenalia* and their early dating cannot be easily accepted.³⁶ If we do accept a later date for these texts, then the emergence of the biographical Lycurgus and of the rhetorical Alexander in the author's proliferous work was approximately simultaneous.³⁷

It seems that this uniformity is independent not only of the literary genre, but also of the mode of government: Be it an oligarchical *polis* or a world-empire, the amount of work required by the lawgiver is identical; his action involves merging the existing political factors efficiently and redistributing the political power; moreover it seems to be irrelevant whether this power will be

platonian background: Hershbell. On Rome and the Spartan education see also Spawforth, 199–201.

30 Cf. Dio Chrys., *Or.* 32, 3: Ἑλλήνων δὲ παισὶ ... οὐκ ἄλλο ἤρμοζεν ἢ παιδεία καὶ λόγος. See also Pelling 2000; Schmitz 1999.

31 On 'the right mental preparation of masses, which should precede sound political reform', see de Blois 2005a.

32 Preston, esp. 115–119.

33 Sartre, 56–59; Schmitz 1997, 50.

34 The encomiastic background of these texts makes it difficult to search for more individual features; we deal here, as Späth put it, with a 'Figurenkonstruktion'. On the problem of the individuality in ancient narrative, be it in historiographical, biographical or rhetorical texts see also Pelling 1990. On the role of the literary genre in Plutarch's work in general: Nikolaidis 1999, 823–824.

35 Cf. Harrison; Martin; Van der Stockt 2000.

36 Cf. Gigante, 54–55; Martin 719–720; Koulakiotis 162–168.

37 The *Life of Lycurgus* was written after 96 CE: Piccirilli XL; see also Jones 1966, 61–74, esp. 69. The *Life of Alexander* was probably written between 110–115 CE: Hamilton, xxxvii.

shared of few or by the most people or whether it concentrated in the hands of only one.³⁸

This image allegedly existed from the archaic times through to the Hellenistic era; what is more, it encompasses almost the whole Greek history and has duration in time.³⁹ This is an indication of the continuity of the Greek civilization over the centuries and this feature is one of the most important components of the classicistic movement of the 1st and 2nd centuries CE.⁴⁰ In this period the legendary founder of the Spartan *kosmos* and the Macedonian *kosmokrator* were popular and influential historical examples for both Romans⁴¹ and Greeks; the latter, in particular, used those ‘great natures’ of their past as *Identifikationsfiguren*.⁴²

The legislative activity of Lycurgus was part of his legend, but an Alexander as *nomothetes* has no precedent in the historiographical and literary tradition; this image is not found in the rest of the Plutarchean corpus and is probably an innovation by the ‘rhetorical’ Plutarch. This has to do with the broader re-interpretation of the Alexander-figure during the Second Sophistic, a procedure that projects to the Macedonian king features of legendary semi-mythic culture heroes, as Lycurgus, and of contemporary imperial ideology; the idea of the mixing cup in particular, being a metaphor for the assimilating forces of the Roman Empire, should be connected to Roman rather than to Macedonian practices towards the vanquished people.⁴³ In this discourse, the real or invented organizational qualities of the ‘great natures’ of the past are used in public in order to legitimize the quest of the elites of the Greek poleis in participating more energetically in the administration of the Empire.⁴⁴

Greek lawgivers, in particular, can in some aspects be more successful than their Roman counterparts, but it would be too simplistic to assume that in this way Plutarch celebrates a triumph of Greek history and *paideia* over the

38 Bodéüs 164–166. The idea of redistribution is inherent of the *nomos*: Plut., *Symposiaca* 644 c. See also Fouchard, 16. For Svenbro, 129 *nomos* mean an ‘oral redistribution’; it is related to the act of reading a text with loud voice, unlike *lex*. On the ‘Unity of the Greek law’ see Humphreys, 541–543.

39 If in this period Alexander is mostly considered as part of Greek history, it is not the same with the rest of the Macedonian and Hellenistic history: Asirvatham 2000, 2.

40 On the ‘Objective and unchanging Greekness’ of Plutarch’s times see Asirvatham 2005. On Plutarch’s archaism see also Vasunia.

41 On Sparta and Rome in this period see Spawforth, in particular 190–211; on Alexander and Rome: Spencer.

42 On Arrian, the ‘New Xenophon’, see Stadter 1967. On the Greek identity in this period see also Veyne.

43 Cf. Bosworth 1980, 11; Brosius; Asirvatham 2005, 117.

44 It is very probable that the declamations were delivered before a Roman audience: Nikolaidis 1999, n. 39. On the public and performative character of such rhetorical works in this period see Schmitz 1999.

Roman newcomer. A reading of the *De fortuna Romanorum* could provide arguments for the opposite.⁴⁵

Just like in the subjacent pattern of his *Lives*, Plutarch does not intend to convince about certain ideas, he rather tries to offer intellectual food for reflection over similar past and contemporary situations.⁴⁶ He writes most of his work after the traumatic reign of Domitian and during the reign of Trajan, who seems to have been a close friend of Plutarch.⁴⁷ The *optimus princeps*, whose *imitatio Alexandri* was famous, was about to re-organize the empire, and to some extent, he also represented a new *archè* for his own people.⁴⁸ It seems to me that the message of our author to his readers and hearers was that, in periods of *mimesis*, of imitation, having a Greek archetype is of course the best choice, but that a comparison with other exemplars can only be profitable.

Appendix: Parallel passages in the *Vita Lycurgi* and the *De Alexandri fortuna*

Vita Lyc.

| *De Alex. fort.*

1. Personality

1.1. Virtues

5, 3: ᾧ θεοφιλή μὲν αὐτὸν ἢ Πυθία
προσεῖπε καὶ θεὸν μάλλον ἢ ἄνθρωπον
11, 4: ὡς οὐ σκληρὸς οὐδ' αὐθάδης ὁ
Λυκοῦργος, ἀλλὰ μόνος ἡμέρος καὶ
πρᾶός ἐστι τοῖς ἄλλοις.

19, 3: Καὶ γὰρ ὁ Λυκοῦργος αὐτὸς
βραχυλόγος τις ἔοικε γενέσθαι καὶ
ἀποφθεγματικός

27, 6: τῆς ἄλλης αὐτοῦ πρᾶότητος
καὶ δικαιοσύνης

343 A: τὴν δ' Ἀλεξάνδρου φύσιν,
εἴπερ ἐκ πολλῶν συνήρμοσε καὶ
συνέθηκεν ἀρετῶν ὁ γεννήσας θεός

45 See in particular Plut., *De fort. Rom.*, 316 E–D; cf. Dillon 1997, 236–237. See also Boulet.

46 On the interaction between the contemporary political situation and Plutarch's work cf. Renoirte; Pelling 1995; Stadter 2000, 493.

47 It is very plausible that Plutarch was named consul by Trajan: Ziegler 658–659.

48 Cf. Bennett 74–84 and 118–124. See also the *salus generis humani* on the coins of Trajan: Barrow, 144, n. 9. On Trajan and Alexander: Dion Cassius, 68, 29–30; Julian, *Caes.* (*Or. X*), 333a, 335d; *Historia Augusta*, Hadr., 4, 9. See also Wirth 197–200; Moles, 253, n. 9.

31, 3: τῷ Θεοφιλεστάτῳ καὶ
ὀσιωτάτῳ

1.2. *Paideia and Philosophy (= Ethical Character)*

31, 2: ἐπιδείξας ὅλην τὴν πόλιν
φιλοσοφοῦσαν

328 D: ὀφθήσεται γὰρ οἷς εἶπεν οἷς
ἔπραξεν οἷς ἐπαίδευσε φιλόσοφος

2. Areas of legislation

2.1. *Kinship – Sexuality – Dress – Food*

14, 1: Τῆς δὲ παιδείας, ἣν μέγιστον
ἠγεῖτο τοῦ νομοθέτου καὶ κάλλιστον
ἔργον εἶναι, πόρρωθεν ἀρχόμενος εὐθὺς
ἐπεσκόπει τὰ περὶ τοὺς γάμους καὶ τὰς
γενέσεις.

328 C: Ὑρκανούς γαμεῖν ἐπαίδευσε
329 F: ἀλλ' ἔρωτι νομίμῳ καὶ γάμοις
σώφροσι καὶ κοινωνίαις παίδων τὰ
γένη συνάπτοντες.

328 C: Σογδιανούς ἐπεισε πατέρας
τρέφειν καὶ μὴ φονεῦν, καὶ Πέρσας
σέβεσθαι μητέρας ἀλλὰ μὴ γαμεῖν.

12: Συσσίτια
13, 3: κατὰ τῆς πολυτελείας

329 D: κοινὰς δ' ἐσθῆτας ἠγεῖσθαι καὶ
τραπέζας καὶ γάμους καὶ διαίτας, δι'
αἵματος καὶ τέκνων ἀνακεραννυμένους

2.2. *Religion – Cult – Burial Rituals*

19, 4: καὶ περὶ τῶν θυσιῶν [...]
ἔταξεν

328 C: Ἴνδοι θεοὺς Ἑλληνικοὺς
προσκυνοῦσι

27, 1: Καὶ μὴν καὶ τὰ περὶ τὰς ταφὰς
ἄριστα διεκόσμησεν αὐτοῖς.

328 C: Σκύθαι θάπτουσι τοὺς
ἀποθανόντας οὐ κατεσθίουσι.

2.3. *Urbanisation – Political institutions*

8, 2: συνέπεισε τὴν χώραν ἅπασαν εἰς
μέσον θέντας ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἀναδάσασθαι,
καὶ ζῆν μετ' ἀλλήλων ἅπαντας ὁμαλεῖς
καὶ ἰσοκλήρους τοῖς βίοις γενομένους

328 C: γεωργεῖν ἐδίδαξεν
Ἄραχωσίους

328 E: ὑπὲρ ἑβδομήκοντα πόλεις
βαρβάροις ἔθνεσιν ἐγκτίσας καὶ
κατασπείρας τὴν Ἀσίαν Ἑλληνικοῖς
τέλεσι

2.4. Economy – Coin – Money – (Habits)

9, 1: πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ἀκυρώσας πᾶν νόμισμα χρυσοῦν καὶ ἀργυροῦν μόνω χρῆσθαι τῷ σιδηρῷ προσέταξε·

19, 1: τὸ μὲν γὰρ σιδηροῦν νόμισμα μικρὰν ἔχειν ἐποίησεν ἀπὸ πολλοῦ σταθμοῦ δύναμιν ὁ Λυκοῦργος, ὡς εἴρηται, [τὸ δὲ τοῦ λόγου νόμισμα τοῦναντίον ἀπ' εὐτελοῦς καὶ ὀλίγης λέξεως εἰς πολλήν καὶ περιττὴν κατεσκεύασε διάνοιαν]

[332 C: δεῖ καμὲ νόμισμα παρακόψαι καὶ παραχαράξαι τὸ βαρβαρικὸν Ἑλληνικῆ πολιτεία.]

2.5. Education

4, 4: ἐκεῖ δὲ καὶ τοῖς Ὀμήρου ποιήμασιν ἐντυχῶν πρῶτον [...] γνωρίμην δὲ αὐτὴν καὶ μάλιστα πρῶτος ἐποίησε Λυκοῦργος

13, 2: τὸ γὰρ ὄλον καὶ πᾶν τῆς νομοθεσίας ἔργον εἰς τὴν παιδείαν ἀνήψε.

14, 1: Τῆς δὲ παιδείας, ἣν μέγιστον ἡγεῖτο τοῦ νομοθέτου καὶ κάλλιστον ἔργον εἶναι

328 D: ἀλλ' Ἀλεξάνδρου τὴν Ἀσίαν ἐξημεροῦντος Ὀμηρος ἦν ἀνάγνωσμα, Περσῶν καὶ Σουσιανῶν καὶ Γεδρωσίων παῖδες τὰς Εὐριπίδου καὶ Σοφοκλέους τραγωδίας ἤδον.

328 C: τὴν δ' Ἀλεξάνδρου παιδείαν ἂν ἐπιβλέπῃς

3. Ways of legislation

3.1. Logos – Ergon

8, 3: Ἐπάγων δὲ τῷ λόγῳ τὸ ἔργον

329 B: τῷ λόγῳ τὸ ἔργον παρέσχεν

3.2. Oral and written law

13, 3: Μία μὲν οὖν τῶν ῥητρῶν ἦν, ὥσπερ εἴρηται, μὴ χρῆσθαι νόμοις ἐγγράφοις.

31, 2: ὁ δὲ οὐ γράμματα καὶ λόγους, ἀλλ' ἔργῳ πολιτείαν ἀμίμητον εἰς φῶς προενεγκάμενος

328 E: Πλάτων μὲν γὰρ μίαν γράψας πολιτείαν οὐδένα πέπεικεν αὐτῇ χρῆσθαι διὰ τὸ αὐστηρόν, Ἀλέξανδρος δ' ὑπὲρ ἑβδομήκοντα πόλεις βαρβάροις ἔθνεσιν ἐγκτίσας καὶ κατασπείρας τὴν Ἀσίαν Ἑλληνικοῖς τέλεσι τῆς ἀνημέρου καὶ Θηριώδους ἐκράτησε διαίτης.

3.3. Trickery

31, 5: Ἀριστοκράτης δὲ ὁ Ἰππάρχου φησὶ τοὺς ξένους τοῦ Λυκούργου τελευτήσαντος ἐν Κρήτῃ καῦσαι τὸ σῶμα καὶ διασπεῖραι τὴν τέφραν εἰς τὴν θάλατταν, αὐτοῦ δεηθέντος καὶ φυλαξαμένου μὴ ποτε ἄρα τῶν λειψάνων εἰς Λακεδαίμονα κομισθέντων, ὡς ἐπανήκοντος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν ὄρκων λελυμένων, μεταβάλωσι τὴν πολιτείαν.

330 B: ζῶα θηρεύοντες ἄνθρωποι δορὰς ἐλάφων περιτίθενται καὶ πτερωτοῖς ἀμπέχονται χιτωνίσκοις ἄγραις ἐπιχειροῦντες ὀρνίθων [...] εἰ δὲ βασιλεὺς μέγας ἔθνη δυσκάθεκτα καὶ μαχόμενα καθάπερ ζῶα τιθασεύων καὶ μειλισσόμενος ἐσθῆσιν οἰκείαις καὶ συνήθεσιν ἐξεπράνυε διαίταις καὶ κατέστελλεν, οἰκειούμενος αὐτῶν τὸ δύσθυμον καὶ παρηγορῶν τὸ σκυθρωπὸν, ἐγκαλοῦσιν, οὐχὶ θαυμάζουσι τὴν σοφίαν

3.4. Mixture – Meson – Redistribution

7, 1: Οὕτω τὸ πολίτευμα τοῦ Λυκούργου μίξαντος
8, 2: συνέπεισε τὴν χώραν ἅπασαν εἰς μέσον θέντας ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἀναδάσασθαι, καὶ ζῆν μετ' ἀλλήλων ἅπαντας ὁμαλεῖς καὶ ἰσοκλήρους τοῖς βίοις γενομένους

329 C: ὡσπερ ἐν κρατῆρι φιλοτησίῳ μίξας τοὺς βίους καὶ τὰ ἦθη καὶ τοὺς γάμους καὶ <τάς> διαίτας

3.5. Divine mission

7, 3: ἔδειξαν ὅτι θεῖον ἦν ὡς ἀληθῶς εὐτύχημα τοῖς Σπαρτιάταις ὁ τὴν πολιτείαν ἀρμοσάμενος καὶ κεράσας παρ' αὐτοῖς

329 B: ἀλλὰ κοινὸς ἦκειν θεόθεν ἀρμοστής καὶ διαλλακτὴς τῶν ὄλων νομίζων

3.6. Persuasion and Violence

5, 4: Ἐπαρθεῖς δὲ τούτοις προσήγετο τοὺς ἀρίστους καὶ συνεφάπτεσθαι παρεκάλει, κρύφα διαλεγόμενος τοῖς φίλοις πρῶτον, εἶτα οὕτως κατὰ μικρὸν ἀπτόμενος πλειόνων καὶ συνιστὰς ἐπὶ τὴν πρᾶξιν. ὡς δ' ὁ καιρὸς ἦκε, τριάκοντα τοὺς πρῶτους ἐκέλευσε μετὰ τῶν ὄπλων ἔωθεν εἰς ἀγορὰν προελθεῖν ἐκπλήξεως ἕνεκα καὶ φόβου πρὸς τοὺς ἀντιπράττοντας.

329 C: οὗς τῷ λόγῳ μὴ συνῆγε τοῖς ὄπλοις βιαζόμενος
328 C: Σογδιανούς ἔπεισε πατέρας τρέφειν καὶ μὴ φονεῦειν

8, 2: συνέπεισε τὴν χώραν ἅπασαν εἰς μέσον θέντας ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἀναδάσασθαι, 13, 1–2: ἔχοντα τὴν προαίρεσιν δεσμὸν ἰσχυρότερον τῆς ἀνάγκης, ἦν ἡ παιδείουσις ἐμποιοῖ τοῖς νέοις, νομοθέτου διάθεσιν ἀπεργαζομένη περὶ ἕκαστον αὐτῶν.

28, 1: ἐγκαλοῦσιν ἔνιοι τοῖς Λυκούργου νόμοις, ὡς ἱκανῶς ἔχουσι πρὸς ἀνδρείαν, ἐνδεῶς δὲ πρὸς δικαιοσύνην.

30, 4: βασιλικῆς ἐπιστήμης ἔργον ἀνθρώποις εὐπείθειαν ἐνεργάσασθαι

3.7. Domestication

329 A: εἰ τοίνυν μέγιστον μὲν οἱ φιλόσοφοι φρονοῦσιν ἐπὶ τῷ τὰ σκληρὰ καὶ ἀπαιδέυτα τῶν ἡθῶν ἐξημεροῦν καὶ μεθαρμόζειν, μυρία δὲ φαίνεται γένη καὶ φύσεις θηριώδεις μεταβαλὼν Ἀλέξανδρος

3.8. (Lack of) Austerity

25, 2: οὐδὲ γὰρ αὐτὸς ἦν ἀκράτως αὐστηρὸς ὁ Λυκούργος

328 C: Πλάτων μὲν γὰρ μίαν γράψας πολιτείαν οὐδένα πέπεικεν αὐτῇ χρῆσθαι διὰ τὸ αὐστηρόν, Ἀλέξανδρος δ' [...] Ἑλληνικοῖς τέλεσι τῆς ἀνημέρου καὶ θηριώδους ἐκράτησε διαίτης. καὶ τοὺς μὲν Πλάτωνος ὀλίγοι νόμους ἀναγιγνώσκομεν, τοῖς δ' Ἀλεξάνδρου μυριάδες ἀνθρώπων ἐχρήσαντο καὶ χρῶνται

4. The community before the legislation

2, 3: ἀνομία καὶ ἀταξία κατέσχε τὴν Σπάρτην ἐπὶ πολὺν χρόνον· ὑφ' ἧς καὶ τὸν πατέρα τοῦ Λυκούργου βασιλεύοντα συνέβη τελευτῆσαι.

328 A: ἀγροῖς ἔθνεσιν [...] ἄθεσμα καὶ ἀνήκοα φύλα

329 A: γένη καὶ φύσεις θηριώδεις

5. The result of the legislation

5.1. *Political anthropology: Moral criteria for the division of the people*

8, 2: τὸ δὲ πρωτεῖον ἀρετῆς μετιόντας, ὡς ἄλλης ἐτέρῳ πρὸς ἕτερον οὐκ οὔσης διαφορᾶς οὐδὲ ἀνισότητος, πλὴν ὅσην αἰσχυρῶν φόγος ὀρίζει καὶ καλῶν ἔπαινος.

329 C: προσέταξεν ἡγεῖσθαι πάντας...συγγενεῖς δὲ τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς, ἀλλοφύλους δὲ τοὺς πονηροὺς· τὸ δ' Ἑλληνικὸν καὶ βαρβαρικὸν μὴ χλαμῦδι μηδὲ πέλτη μηδ' ἀκινάκη μηδὲ κἀνδυ διορίζειν, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν Ἑλληνικὸν ἀρετῆς τὸ δὲ βαρβαρικὸν κακίᾳ τεκμαίρεσθαι

5.2. *Kosmos – Politeia – Eunomia*

24, 1: ἀλλ' οἷον ἐν στρατοπέδῳ τῆς πόλεως καὶ διαίταν ἔχοντες ὠρισμένην καὶ διατριβὴν περὶ τὰ κοινά,

27, 4: τὴν καθεστῶσαν πολιτείαν, ὡς περ ἀρμονίαν.

29, 1: ὡς περ ὁ Πλάτων φησὶν ἐπὶ τῷ κόσμῳ γενομένῳ καὶ κινηθέντι τὴν πρώτην κίνησιν εὐφρανθῆναι τὸν θεόν, οὕτως ἀγασθεὶς καὶ ἀγαπήσας τὸ τῆς νομοθεσίας κάλλος καὶ μέγεθος ἐν ἔργῳ γενομένης

30, 2: καὶ κατακοσμούμενοι. τοσοῦτον περιῆν εὐνομίας τῆς πόλεως καὶ δικαιοσύνης.

329 C: πατρίδα μὲν τὴν οἰκουμένην προσέταξεν ἡγεῖσθαι πάντας, ἀκρόπολιν δὲ καὶ φρουρὰν τὸ στρατόπεδον

329 B–C: ἵνα μὴ κατὰ πόλεις μηδὲ δήμους οἰκῶμεν ἰδίῳ ἕκαστοι διωρισμένοι δικαίῳ, ἀλλὰ πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἡγώμεθα δημότας καὶ πολίτας, εἰς δὲ βίος ἢ καὶ κόσμος, ὡς περ ἀγέλης συννόμου νόμῳ κοινῶ συντρεφομένης. τοῦτο Ζήνων μὲν ἔγραψεν ὡς περ ὄναρ ἢ εἰδωλὸν εὐνομίας φιλοσόφου καὶ πολιτείας ἀνατυπωσάμενος, Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ τῷ λόγῳ τὸ ἔργον παρέσχεν

330 D: ἀλλ' ἐνὸς ὑπήκοα λόγου τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ μιᾶς πολιτείας, ἕνα δῆμον ἀνθρώπους ἀπαντας ἀποφῆναι βουλόμενος, οὕτως ἑαυτὸν ἐσχημάτιζεν

330 E: ἀλλὰ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ὁμόνοιαν καὶ εἰρήνην καὶ κοινωνίαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους παρασκευάσαι διανοηθέντα.

329 F: Πρὸς τοῦτον ἀποβλέπων τὸν κόσμον Ἀλέξανδρος

342 A: ἄλλ' ἐνὶ κόσμῳ κοσμήσαντα πάντας ἀνθρώπους μιᾶς ὑπηκόους ἡγεμονίας καὶ μιᾶς ἐθάδας διαίτης καταστήσαι.

332 A: τὰ βαρβαρικὰ τοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς κεράσαι διανοοῦμένη καὶ πᾶσαν ἠπειρον ἐπιῶν ἐξημερῶσαι, καὶ πέρατα γῆς ἀνερευῶν καὶ θαλάττης ὠκεανῶ προσερεῖσαι Μακεδονίαν, καὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα σπεῖραι καὶ καταχέασθαι γένους παντὸς εὐδικίαν καὶ εἰρήνην

6. Duration

29, 5: τοσοῦτον ἐπρώτευσεν ἡ πόλις τῆς Ἑλλάδος εὐνομίᾳ καὶ δόξῃ, χρόνον ἐτῶν πεντακοσίων τοῖς Λυκούργου χρησαμένη νόμοις

328 E: τοῖς δ' Ἀλεξάνδρου [νόμοις] μυριάδες ἀνθρώπων ἐχρήσαντο καὶ χρῶνται, μακαριώτεροι τῶν διαφυγόντων Ἀλέξανδρον οἱ κρατηθέντες γενόμενοι· τοὺς μὲν γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἔπαυσεν ἀθλίως ζῶντας, τοὺς δ' ἠνάγκασεν εὐδαιμονεῖν ὁ νικήσας.

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5. Plutarch and Philosophy

Synopsis

The articles of this chapter illustrate Plutarch's deep interest in philosophy (usage, importance, relation with politics etc.) and his attitude towards some philosophers. More specifically the first three contributions are concerned with such matters as the philosophical use of discourse, the two levels of philosophy (popular and specialized), the relation of philosophy with history and biography, and Plutarch's practical approach to Epicureanism. The rest four concentrate on the nature and function of wisdom, practical as well as theoretical, and particularly on Solon, perhaps the most famous exponent of political *sophia*.*

Benoît Castelnérac focuses on the *Life of Lycurgus* in connection with the philosophical use of discourse. According to him, Plutarch sees in Lycurgus the historical model of Plato's philosopher-king** and presents him as the man who created the Spartan constitution and moulded Spartan education. But the harsh criticism displayed in the *Life of Lycurgus* towards written speech and rhetoric seems to run counter to the *philologia* described in the *De audiendo*, where listening to lectures, writing texts and giving appropriate eulogies form the main intellectual activities of the philosopher.

In the *Life*, the plain and unaffected style of Spartan dialogue is directly associated with Lycurgus' ideas about virtue and luxury, in other words, with the principles of simplicity and usefulness governing the Spartan daily life; and it seems that the same principles explain the very little presence of written speech in Sparta. Lycurgus forbade even his own laws to be written down, but, according to Plutarch, he had taken down the poems of Homer (*Lyc.* 4.5: ἐγράψατο), and made again correct use of writing just before he died, when he sent a letter to Sparta, writing down Pythia's words that his laws were good. Thus, he tied the Spartans to his constitution by the double bond of a spoken oath (that they would observe his laws during his absence) and a written guarantee coming from Delphi.

The interpretation of these features of the *Life of Lycurgus*, based on the treatise *On Listening to Lectures*, can demonstrate why, according to Plutarch, Lycurgus is right in criticizing as well as in making a positive use of written speech. Specifically, it seems that the criticism of written speech in Sparta is

* For Solon see also, partly, De Blois's article in the previous chapter.

** For other philosopher-kings in Plutarch, cf. Dillon's article in ch. 4. For Lycurgus cf. also Koulakiotis' article in the same chapter.

consistent with the two levels of philosophy, one popular and one specialized, we encounter in the *De audiendo*. Only mature souls are fit to the exercise of philosophy, and Plutarch presents Lycurgus' attitude towards written speech as evidence of a complete philosophical activity. According to the author, the above analysis shows how Plutarch's works are the unified expression of his conception about philosophy; while carefully going from history to theory, and back to practical pedagogy, Plutarch explains that the activity of the philosopher is a dialogue in which he should always make good use of every form of speech.

Patricia FitzGibbon examines how Plutarch characterizes different Epicureans in his works, the possible uses he has for these constructs, and what significance his treatment of Epicureans may have in terms of the history of Epicureanism. Despite his philosophical opposition to the Garden, Plutarch's dialogues describe a civilized and even pleasant interaction of himself and his friends with the Epicureans. But upon a close investigation, Plutarch's construction of Epicurean characters, such as Boethus in *Why Oracles at Delphi are No Longer Written in Verse*, show that Epicureans serve as a foil thereby giving Plutarch's literary persona, whether Plutarch himself or characters supporting his philosophy, the superior position in the discussion. In dialogues, however, with an Epicurean presence, Plutarch either constructs Epicurean arguments which simply do not withstand his Platonic arguments, or he does not allow the Epicurean to speak or offer salient viewpoints on the topic at hand. Because the arguments of the Epicurean present are weak or non-existent, or because he is portrayed as less cerebral than the other interlocutors, Plutarch achieves an indirect or "incidental" criticism of Epicureanism. This "incidental polemic" can be further defined by contrasting it to the direct polemic contained in his 3 anti-Epicurean tracts, the sole purpose of which is to denounce Epicurean philosophy. But of the three tracts dedicated to this purpose, only one (*Non Posse*) is a dialogue, and none of the interlocutors there is Epicurean.

Mention of Epicureanism is slim in the *Lives*, but in *Brutus* there is the substantial character of Cassius, whose Epicureanism is given note more than once. Philosophy in general plays a significant role in this particular *Life*, and Brutus' impeachable character is often credited to his philosophical education. Cassius, on the other hand, although he does offer advice to Brutus based on his doctrine, bears less than desirable character traits, which however do not necessarily appear to emanate from his philosophical choice. The comparison of Plutarch's treatment of Epicureans and Epicurean philosophy in the *Moralia* and the *Lives* will investigate any similarities or differences in Plutarch's approach to assess this philosophy as a whole.

Federicomaria Muccioli, starting off from Plutarch's characterization of Phantias of Lesbos as a philosopher who was also well-acquainted with historical literature (*Them.* 13.5), explores the relations between biography, history and ethical philosophy. It is observed that Plutarch uses similar characterizations only for Peripatetic writers, and not for other Greek philosophers who wrote historical works (Posidonius, for instance, is always and only called a philosopher). So, given that Plutarch viewed history from a moral, more or less, perspective, we can conclude that, for him, those Peripatetic writers provided a very important model of philosophical history. This is further confirmed by the fact that Plutarch makes use of many historical-philosophical topics of Phantias, Theophrastus and other Peripatetic writers not only in the *Vitae*, but also, in some different way, in the *Moralia*.

Delfim Ferreira Leão deals with the character or the profile of the sapiens. It is observed that the 'Seven Wise Men', who on the whole are Greek aristocrats, present us a picture of the world as seen through the lens of their own small community. Nevertheless, the tradition could become richer and in fact reached the point of questioning itself from inside. Thus, in Plutarch's *Septem Sapientium Convivium* the *sophoi* welcome among themselves a *barbaros* (Anacharsis), and also allow the presence of an ex-slave (Aesop) and a young girl (Cleobouline) in their meetings. The coexistence of all these personalities provides a good example of the way the "Other" may be included in a restricted circle.

Jackson Hershbell examines Plutarch's views on Solon and *sophia*. He first observes that, although *Sept. sap. conv.* seems to lack internal unity and its loosely arranged episodes are held together only by the presence of the *Seven Sophoi*, its purpose may have been to provide a captivating and 'popular' introduction to early Hellenic thinkers and philosophy. Then he argues that Plutarch's *Solon*, like other *Lives*, reflects his conviction that genuine virtue is possible only when a life of 'action' is pursued, a life of political involvement (*praktikos bios*), as opposed to the contemplative life (*theoretikos bios*). Thus, at *Sol.* 3.6 Plutarch states that Solon "cultivated chiefly the domain of political ethics, like most of the wise men of the time.", although in the immediate sequel he cites verses of Solon showing a theoretical interest. Yet it is only here (*Sol.* 3.7) that the *sophos* is credited with interest in physical theory, namely in the 'theoretical' life.

In both *Solon* and *Sept. sap. conv.*, Solon is portrayed as a "legislator-hero" and as a political thinker. In the latter role, Plutarch may well have considered him to be one of Socrates' most important precursors. In any case, whatever Plutarch's often uncertain sources for his *Solon* and his portrayal of the Athenian *sophos* in *Sept. sap. conv.*, both works often show close connections

and how Plutarch used his sources and subject to reflect his own purposes as an exceedingly prolific writer and a convinced Platonist. Finally, it is argued that both *Solon* and *Sept. sap. conv.* provide consistent and valuable insights into Plutarch's concept of *sophia* and *philosophia*, and that Solon, as one of the seven *sophoi*, is an embodiment of Plutarch's view of philosophy and of the *praktikos bios*.

José Vela Tejada, after noting that Solon's political myth was shaped as the outcome of a long political and philosophical tradition going back to Solon's own elegies and living on through to Plutarch's time, thanks to the dominance of rhetoric, tries to draw the main lines of this myth by means of a comparative study of the *Solon* and the *Septem sapientium convivium*. As a biographical hero, Solon was one of the best historical models for Plutarch, since he represented the humane and philosophical politician. His wisdom was rooted in the tradition of the Seven Wise Men, attested also by Herodotus. The poet is introduced as *sophos* in political science, and the sapiential *mesotes* of Solon is underlined in the context of the ideal of *metron*, an ideal recurrent in the *gnômai* of the *sophoi*. On the other hand, a similar admiration for Solon explains his protagonist role in the *Sept. sap. conv.*, where Plutarch anachronistically inserts the discussion on the best government. Nevertheless, this work is necessary for our understanding Solon's portrait in the *Bios*.

Finally, **Inés Calero Secall** studies the *Life of Solon* in juxtaposition with Plutarch's references to Solon in the *Moralia* in an attempt to discover (a) whether Solon's character is the same in both *Life* and *Moralia*, and (b) whether the *Moralia* references to Solon coincide with the information in the *Life*. Her research yields that only a few literary quotations in the *Moralia* are missing from the *Life* (e.g. *Praec. ger. reip.* 813F), but in the *Moralia* we also find information concerning Solon's behaviour that is again missing from the *Life*. Even so, Solon is always presented as a good and moderate ruler (although some of his laws Plutarch either misunderstands or interprets with moralistic criteria), who refuses to become a tyrant and defends democracy at all costs (so also in the *Sept. sap. conv.*).

Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus* and the Philosophical Use of Discourse

Benoît Castelnérac

The last pages of the *Life of Lycurgus* may leave some readers perplexed about Plutarch's use of religious beliefs in Ethics and Politics¹. Indeed, if we were to take as Plutarch's last words on the virtuous life the passages where he writes that Lycurgus is inspired by a *daimon* and compares his political activity to the Demiurge of the *Timaeus*, it would seem that the nexus of Plutarch's ethical thought is founded on religious beliefs. One only needs to recall the spectacular assimilation of the statesman to a god. In the case of some blessed men like Lycurgus, or, elsewhere, Euripides or Plato, they represent a divine presence in the world². The implications of this puzzling analogy between historical characters and divinities could ultimately lead us to divide Plutarch's philosophy into two antagonistic aspects: rational and religious³, and from there to conclude that his works present no unified theory in moral or political philosophy.

I will formulate here an interpretation of the *Life of Lycurgus* proposing a rational understanding of Plutarch's puzzling analogy between Lycurgus and Plato's Demiurge⁴. This analogy is built on a comparison between the creation of the world by the Demiurge and the beneficial and durable influence of Lycurgus' laws on the city of Sparta. Its philosophical significance may be elucidated by a commentary on Plutarch's ideas about the correct use of oral and written speech in both the *Life of Lycurgus* and the treatise *On Listening to Lectures*. The careful description made by Plutarch of the various forms of speech in the *Life of Lycurgus* gives us an indication that it is Plutarch's in-

1 See Wardman, 41–42: „Some of Plutarch's analogies [including *Lyc.* 29,1] employ terms of comparison that are, to say the least, unexpected and do not seem likely to make the unfamiliar more acceptable. I cannot think that these comments were meant to dazzle the reader with a sense of the writer's accomplishment and range in philosophical matters; they come in naturally, abstruse though they may seem to a modern, and imply that the author expects a high degree of philosophical learning among his reader.“

2 *Lyc.* 31,3 (in the Loeb Classical Library).

3 See the lines of Babut 1969a quoted *infra*.

4 *Lyc.* 29,2: ὡσπερ ὁ Πλάτων φησὶν ... εὐφρανθῆναι τὸν θεόν, οὕτως ἀγασθεὶς [ὁ Λυκοῦργος].

tention to depict the use of the *logos* made by Lycurgus as an ideal use of the discourse in the individual and political quest for living a virtuous life⁵.

Philosophy and Discourse

A parallel reading of *Life of Lycurgus* (hereafter *Lyc.*) and *On Listening to Lectures* (*De aud.*)⁶ will reveal that in both texts Plutarch is unfolding the various consequences of his theory on the importance of the *logos* in practical reasoning. Indeed, both make plain that, in the moulding of human character⁷, a correct use of speech is brought about by philosophical teaching and training.

5 *Lyc.* is remarkably rich in allusions to various forms of speeches and discursive activities. Apart from various anecdotes, apophthegms, and explanations on the etymology of different words or names, typical of the *Lives* and too numerous to be recorded here, I have found details on Plutarch's historical sources (1,1–4); the oaths taken by Soüs and the Cleitorians (2,2); secret negotiations between Lycurgus and his sister-in-law (3,2–3); Lycurgus' studies of texts and poems (4,1–6); the Pythian priestess' prediction about the future of Lycurgus' constitution (5,3); Lycurgus' exhortation to the Spartan elite (5,4); the oaths taken by the King Charilaüs (5,5); a *rhetra* from Delphi (6,1); the procedure of political debates and motions in Sparta (6,3); Lycurgus' expression of satisfaction (8,4); Sparta's attitude towards the teaching of rhetoric (9,3: σοφιστῆς λόγοι); Alcander's silent life (9,2); political discussions at the *syssitia* (12,4); the rule of secrecy about what is said in the *syssitia* (12,5); a *rhetra* forbids putting into writing the laws and contracts (13,1–2); *rhetra* are oracles (13,6); maidens of Sparta mock the young men or praise them (14,3); study of reading and writing (16,6); „contests of wit“ between the young (17,1: σκώπτουσιν); admonition and correction of the young (17,1); young comment on the political life (18,2); *brachylogia* and apophthegms (19,1); general habit of silence (19,1); Spartan aversion for long speeches (20,1–4); adequateness in discourses (20,5); training in poetry (21,1); comments on Spartan poetry (21,3); Lycurgus hears voices (23,2); teaching and learning (24,1); choral dances (24,4); blame and praise among the men (25,2); statue of Laughter (25,2); election of the senators by the loudness of the Assembly's shouting (26,2); no inscriptions on the tombs (27,2); Lycurgus exacts an oath from the kings and the senators (29,3); Lycurgus consults the oracle of Apollo in Delphi (29,3); he sends a letter to Sparta (29,4); Spartan embassies are persuasive (30,2); on obedience and command (30,3–4); Plato, Diogenes and Zeno imitate Lycurgus' constitution in their works (31,2); Lycurgus did not leave any writing or discourse (30,2).

6 Most of the scholarly work on the moral and political aspects of this treatise is still to be done and very few studies are dedicated to its interpretation. See nonetheless, Hillyard and La Matina.

7 Recent interpretations on the subject of character change explore the possibility of a complete change of character, an especially from a good one to a bad one: Albini; Gill (see pp. 472–475 and 478–482 on Plutarch); Swain (who tries to explain how Serotorius' change of character is consistent with the possibility of an amelioration of the character due to a proper use of the *logos* in education).

A short list of the parallels between these texts will show that this *sunkrisis* between *Lyc.* and *De aud.* stems from a network of tangible similarities.

It appears that because it takes moral strength to learn philosophy (*De aud.* 47b–c), some traits of the Spartan character and style are exemplary for a student like Nicander, who will soon try his hand at philosophy. It is thus no surprise to find in *De aud.* many of the qualities Plutarch praises in the Spartan ethos. As is the custom in the education of young Spartans, the learner in philosophy must contain his haste and pause before giving an answer or asking a question (*De aud.* 39C; *Lyc.* 19.1). He will also profit from a positive attitude towards critics or mockery, as the Spartans do⁸. The correctness in speech advocated by Plutarch in *De aud.* is surely an echo of the „simple and unaffected“ Spartan style (*Lyc.* 21.1). Indeed, the prescriptions of *De aud.* 42c–45 f. promote a manly habitus⁹ best exemplified in Spartan wit (*Lyc.* 19.1 ff.), as opposed to the sterile and unhealthy overriding search of a delicate Attic style¹⁰.

While *De aud.* appears to take the Spartan character as a model, the relationship between the two texts can be reversed: it is also true that *Lyc.* seems to be inspired by the reflections of the *De aud.* in at least one case. In *De aud.* Plutarch compares the utility of listening to speeches with the work of bees: „when they have got something of use, they fly away home to do their own special work (λαβοῦσαι τι τῶν χρησίμων ἀποπέτονται πρὸς τὸ οἰκεῖον ἔργον)“¹¹. It seems that in the years of his voluntary exile Lycurgus followed this advice while travelling around the Mediterranean Sea. His criticism of the Cretan laws, rejecting some with contempt or adopting some „that he might carry home with him and put in use“ (ὡς οἴκαδε μετοίσων καὶ χρησόμενος)¹², can be seen as an example of the literary honey-making described in the *De aud.* The whole passage about Lycurgus' study of various forms of legislation is indeed a short ἱστορία about the origins of the Spartan constitution. Plutarch's message here is that the excellence of Spartan legislation comes in part from an

8 *De aud.* 46d and 47e–f; *Lyc.* 12,4; 14,3; 17,1; 25,2.

9 The practice of philosophy confers an ἀνδρεῖος κόσμος on the young men (*De aud.* 37 f.).

10 See *De aud.* 42d. On the identification of poetic playfulness with a feminine attitude, cf. *Prac. conv.* 142a–b and Van der Stockt's interpretation of that page (p. 124: „The specific activity of poets and orator is described as thrilling and stirring the listener: ἄγειν καὶ κινεῖν τὸν ἀκροατήν; as the corresponding words [...] confirm, Plutarch refers here to the *emotive activity* of literature [poetry as well as rhetoric].“ This poetic playfulness is echoed in a passage of *De aud.* [41 f.], where women that make garlands are said to produce „something which is pleasant enough [ἡδύ], but short-lived and fruitless“.

11 *De aud.* 41 f. Apart from isolated cases where I propose a more personal reading of the texts, all the translations come from the Loeb collection of Plutarch's Works.

12 *Lyc.* 4,1; see also 15,8 that describes the same critical reserve to other legislations.

intellectual effort involving a critical attitude while studying existing forms of government, customs, and texts¹³.

More fundamental for the understanding of the parallels between the two texts, it appears that they both deal with the proper use of persuasion. Plutarch makes it clear from the first lines of *De aud.*: „The discourse which I gave on the subject of listening to lectures I have written out and sent to you, my dear Nicander, so that you may know how rightly to listen to the voice of persuasion“ (*De aud.* 37c: τοῦ πείθοντος ὀρθῶς ἀκούειν). *Lyc.* also shows how the Spartan legislator was the leader of his people through persuasion. Although this might have implied false praise (*Lyc.* 3.2) and a special use of music and poetry¹⁴, Lycurgus is portrayed as a persuasive politician (*Lyc.* 5.4 and 8.2).

Even though both texts deal with the subject of persuasion from a very different perspective, they nonetheless share the same concern about the part played by persuasion in education, because, *to a certain extent*, a fruitful education is based on the psychagogical power of the discourse (*Lyc.* 16.5–6 and 30. 2–4). While it is possible to say that in virtuous characters, reason (λόγος, λογιζόμενον, etc.) rules over irrational desires, this doctrine also implies that moulding a character into a virtuous one requires a profitable use of discourse.¹⁵ The fact that the word *logos* may designate a discourse and/or a psychological faculty helps to show how *Lyc.* and *De aud.* play an important part in the elaboration of Plutarch’s theory of virtue and its acquisition. Some passages of *Lyc.* and *De aud.* point to the fact that Plutarch intended to underline the central role of discourse in the moral formation of the character¹⁶. In *Lyc.*, the spread of good political discourse is made possible through public meals: the young children present at the adults’ *syssitia* „would listen to political discussions“ (λόγων ἠκροῶντο πολιτικῶν)¹⁷, a situation that is to be reproduced in the public meals of children. By means of arguing about virtuous men and actions „the boys were accustomed to take a vivid interest [...] in the political actions of the citizens“ (πολυπραγμανεῖν... εἰσίζοντο περὶ τῶν πολιτῶν)¹⁸. This imitative way of producing a proper discourse is an important

13 The importance of history and inquiries in the creation of a constitution is a common place; see Plat. *Leg.* III; Arist. *Rhet.* 1360a33–37 and *Polit.* II.

14 Compare *Lyc.* 4.2 and 21.1–4.

15 Cf. *De virt.* 443d and Swain, 65, who underlines the role of reason in shaping the character: „... the irrational part is moulded by the rational part.“ If this moulding of the irrational part were to be applied to the pedagogic activities described in the *De aud. poet.* and *De aud.*, then *logos* would have to be translated by „discourse“.

16 The written speech has the same effect, namely: works of literature present useful lessons (*De aud. poet.* 30c–d and *De prof. virt.* 79d).

17 *Lyc.* 12,4; see also the parallel passage of 14,3, where the maidens of Sparta mock at or praise young men in the presence of the other citizens.

18 *Lyc.* 18,2 (my translation).

theme in the *De aud.*, where it is explained that „in the use of discourse its proper reception comes before its delivery“ (38e); hence the importance of knowing how to listen to the voice of persuasion, because the speeches one hears will mould his own discourse and judgement. It is thus probable that when Plutarch writes that true virtue is in accordance with reason¹⁹, he could also mean „in accordance with a persuasive discourse“. This is what the following statement makes clear: „virtue's only hold upon the young is afforded by the ears“ (38b). Even if the role of reason as a psychological faculty is certainly not to be put aside in our understanding of Plutarch's works, it seems that the coherent use made by Plutarch of *logos* applied both to thought and discourse is a sign that the discursive content of the rational part is also to be taken into consideration²⁰. A critical attitude to discourses and a particular form of φρόνησις in speech should then play a central role in the elaboration of Plutarch's moral philosophy. We will see that *Lyc.* and *De aud.* lean towards that direction.

There can be no doubt whatsoever that for Plutarch, philosophy calls for a particular use of the *logos*, different from its use in other genres of discourse, as well as instilling a critical attitude towards those genres. We can also safely say that Plutarch's own criticism of literature is built on the assumption that discourse can be either morally useful or disadvantageous²¹. Both *Lyc.* and *De aud.* conform to this pedagogical idea: virtuous characters or cities are shaped and are able to maintain themselves in the path of virtue by way of a particular use of discourse. The Spartan apophthegms quoted in the *Lyc.* „justify the remark that love of wisdom rather than love of bodily exercise was the special characteristic of the Spartan“ (20.6). It seems possible to understand that philosophy is also presented as a special form of discourse in the introduction of *De aud.* This particular form of discourse requires adaptation and habituation: „a constant practice of the philosophical discourse mingled with other forms of knowledge or teaching“ (πᾶν μάθημα καὶ ἄκουσμα ... ἐθισθέντα προσφέρεσθαι λόγῳ φιλοσόφῳ μεμιγμένον) will facilitate the access to philosophy, „which alone can confer on the young men the manly and truly perfect adornment coming from the discourse“ (... ἐκ λόγου τοῖς νέοις περιτίθησι

19 *Sert.* 10,5; *De virt.* 443d, 452d (on the role of *logos* in virtuous actions).

20 The philosophical origin of this idea could come from Plato's *Sophist* (263e): „Isn't it that thought (διάνοια) and speech (λόγος) are the same?“. For the moral and logical implications of that idea in Seneca's theory on *praecepta* and *decreta*, see the articles of Inwood and Mitsis; on the debate around the Stoic theory of action, see Ioppolo, 15–16.

21 On the possible and required ethical effect of literature, see Van der Stockt, 128 sq.; also 142: „the function aimed in [Plutarch's] own writings and demanded in literature in general: the *dulce* only after, or only in function of, the *utile*.“

κόσμον)²². In other words, habituation to philosophical discourse leads to the practice of philosophy (ἤκειν εἰς φιλοσοφίαν), which in turn is essential to produce a truly perfect discourse. Here it is more to the point to translate *logos* by „discourse“ for various reasons. Firstly because *De aud.* explicitly deals with the subject of hearing a lecture. Secondly because Plutarch wants to explain in that treatise how listening and talking are intimately bound together. Lastly because Plutarch’s final remarks about style and correctness would otherwise make no sense if he were only preoccupied with reason and philosophical reasoning²³.

Two Genres of Philosophy

It seems thus probable that for Plutarch, virtuous life is in part and in some way associated with philosophy, understood here as a particular practice of discourse. But this suggestion raises several problems that call into question the unity of Plutarch’s work. Indeed, on a first level of reading, *Lyc.* and *De aud.* do not display a unified conception of philosophical discourse and virtuous life. The main difference between the two could be presented as a corollary of the opposition between sophisticated or scholarly discourse and popular philosophy. Whereas *Lyc.* deals with how a virtuous constitution promotes a philosophical life, *De aud.* tells us how the literary study of philosophy can make a young man virtuous. While it is true that *De aud.*, surprising as it may seem, does not make any mention of the practice of writing and reading²⁴ whereas *Lyc.* makes plain that reading and writing played an important role in Lysurgus’ political activities, it seems that the kinds of virtuous life advocated in these texts fall into two different categories. In *Lyc.*, on the one hand, Plutarch is presenting the virtuous effects of a popular philosophy apparently remote from any sort of doctrinal elaborations. Spartans philosophize naturally about virtue, customs, politics and honour by making good use of speech and bold common sense (20.1–6). On the other hand, *De aud.* is portraying a clearly different practice of discourse. In this treatise, doing philosophy implies going to lectures where students can meet philosophers and listen to philosophical discourse in silence (42 f.).

This difference is all the more evident if we realize that *Lyc.* and *De aud.* not only present different uses of the philosophical *logos*, but also different views on the good use of language. Long speeches are suspect to Spartan ears

22 *De aud.* 37 f. (my translation). See also *De prof. virt.* 79c: φιλοσόφων συγγράματα διεξιῶν καὶ λόγους ἀκούων.

23 See *De aud.* 43e–44a and 47b *ad fin.*

24 With the notable exception of the books and notes (τὰ βιβλία καὶ τὰς εἰσαγωγὰς) on which Sophists base their teaching (*De aud.* 44 f.).

(*Lyc.* 20.1) and one of Lycurgus' *rhetra* forbids writing down the laws (*Lyc.* 13.3). Further on, these two particularities of Sparta merge into one apophthegm told by Lycurgus' nephew about his uncle's laws: „men who do not use long speeches do not need many laws“ (οἱ λόγοις μὴ χρώμενοι πολλοῖς οὐδὲ νόμων δεόνται πολλῶν)²⁵. This critical attitude towards refined or rhetorical forms of expression is reflected in the education of young Spartans, for whom learning to read and write is limited to usefulness (*Lyc.* 16.6: ἕνεκα τῆς χρείας), while the rest of their education (ἡ δ' ἄλλη πᾶσα παιδεία) is „calculated to make them obey commands well“ (*ibid.*). One is left with the strong impression that Plutarch is thinking about the well-known opposition between the Athenian and Spartan ethos, according to which the praiseworthy pedagogical results of obeying short speeches are contrasted with the unruliness of people accustomed to justifying their actions by giving long speeches. Seen from that perspective, most of the education promoted in *De aud.* does not correspond to the pedagogy described in *Lyc.* Spartan pedagogy, as described in *Lyc.*, is indeed different on many levels from the philosophical education described in *De aud.*

First, it seems that the general characteristics of *Lyc.* and *De aud.* make it difficult to find the unity of thought behind the two texts. The different subjects of these texts – namely, political philosophy in the *Lyc.* and, in the *De aud.*, the philosophical formation of a learned citizen – give the impression that *Lyc.* is a fable about a political utopia that came true whereas *De aud.* is a practical treatise about education. In *Lyc.*, Plutarch is among other things explaining how Lycurgus made good use of the laws to mould the characters of his fellow citizens. The pedagogical aim in *De aud.* is to urge Nicander to make good use of his newly acquired independence by correctly listening to philosophical lectures (37c–e). Although both of these texts deal apparently with the profitable use of persuasion and freedom,²⁶ and apart from the parallels already underlined, it is unclear how the practical prescriptions of *De aud.* about the practice of philosophy could apply to the kind of philosophical life shaped by the Spartan constitution. This difference may explain the absence of specialised philosophy in *Lyc.*, because, in that text, Plutarch is trying to explain how philosophy can be useful to a city, and not how someone can learn from „professional philosophers“. But if we were to find no coherent way of unifying those two perspectives, we would be pressed to come to the conclusion that Plutarch gives not hint that he formulated a coherent theory on the utility of philosophical discourse that could be applied both to Politics and to Ethics.

25 *Lyc.* 20,1 (my translation).

26 *De aud.* 37d and *Lyc.* 30,3 sq.

Secondly, *Lyc.* and *De aud.* do not explore the same educational practices. The pedagogical processes described in *Lyc.* mostly involve imitation of character whereas reflection and literary training are the central activities discussed in *De aud.*: in *Lyc.*, the presence of virtue is caused by natural reproduction of the virtuous character of the best citizens, and, in *De aud.*, it comes from a critical attitude (43e–44a).

Some parallels between these texts show nonetheless that Plutarch was aware of this difference. The citizens of Sparta follow Lycurgus because he is a virtuous man (*Lyc.* 3.4). They obey him not only because he is in charge of the political power, but because he has a natural authority over men (5.1). Plutarch stresses here the importance of imitating a virtuous model: the Spartan education is firmly based on the beneficial presence of a virtuous leader, either among the children (16.5–6) or in the assembly²⁷. This point is also made in a passage of *De aud.*, where Plutarch relates an anecdote taken from Spartan history (41b). Because the Spartan officials accepted some proposal made by a man whose life had not been good, they had to assign its presentation to some virtuous man. By doing so, Plutarch explains, they were „trying to accustom the people to being influenced more by the behaviour than by the speech of their counsellors.“ Nevertheless, even though this is a token of good political method (ὁρθῶς πάνυ καὶ πολιτικῶς ἐθίζοντες...), it cannot be taken as an example of the practice of philosophy, where no argument should be taken at face value: „in a philosophic discussion we must set aside the repute of the speaker, and examine what he says quite apart.“ (*ibid.*) It is thus very important to distinguish the imitative education of the Spartans from the critical and reflexive intellectual formation of a philosopher. The description given by Plutarch of the Spartan style and way of life are openly opposed to the φιλολογία that Plutarch would like to instil in Nicander's character²⁸. In Sparta, education by imitation gives to the citizens a particular and philosophical way of speaking (*Lyc.* 19 and 20). Λακωνίζειν is a way of talking and thinking. But, again, the Spartan ethos is avowedly impervious to the kind of occupation called ἀκρόασις, διατριβή or φιλόλογοι ἀκροάσεις (*De aud.* 44e), and especially to the kind of φιλολογία presented in *De aud.* In the latter, the Chaeronean argues that it is possible to find qualities in every speech (45a). Moreover, the composition of a good discourse requires knowledge and practice, i. e.: not only imitation but a complete intellectual exercise involving

27 The election of Senators implies no other form of political persuasion than the good political reputation of a citizen (*Lyc.* 26.2 sq.): „the cries of the assembly decided between the competitors“. It is noteworthy that the candidates were given no opportunity to deliver a speech in front of the assembly on the day of the election; they „passed silently through the assembly“ (26.3).

28 *De aud.* 40b: φιληκοία; 43d: μετ' εὐκολίας φιλόλογον; 45a: φιλήκοος καὶ φιλόλογος.

hard work and study²⁹. The making of good discourses comes from a dialectical exercise, in which our discourse is constantly compared to the others (40c–e). This practice obviously does not agree with Spartan literary frugality. In that sense, Spartans are not philosophers.

Seen from another perspective, Lycurgus' political activity deserves more praise than other famous philosophers, including Plato, because he „produced not writings and discourses, but an actual polity“ (οὐ γράμματα καὶ λόγους, ἀλλ' ἔργω πολιτείαν... εἰς φῶς προενεγκόμενος)³⁰. This brings us to a third difference between *Lyc.* and *De aud.* Here, the classical opposition between words and action sheds a new light on laconism and the interdiction of writing down the laws. Plutarch concludes his writing on the life of Lycurgus by arguing that Lycurgus did more than Plato's Socrates in the *Republic*, because it is certainly better to create a tangible and visible virtuous polity (εἰς φῶς προενεγκόμενος) than to produce nothing but a „city in speech“. For Plutarch, who is always eager to defend a philosophy useful to moral life³¹, the interdiction of writing down the laws can thus be seen as a central element of Lycurgus' success. Here the Chaeronean recalls Plato's criticism of written speech in the *Phaedrus*: although it is useful for memory, it is „dead“, whereas oral speech is alive³². In Sparta, obedience to the law is a matter of education (*Lyc.* 12.2), and this is again an important theme of the *Republic* where education actually *is* the law. The most profitable education is the one who gives to the law „a stronger bond than necessity“. In that sense *Lyc.* is to be distinguished from *De aud.* on the basis that it is a model beyond imitation (*Lyc.* 31.2: ἀμίμητον); since Lycurgus is among the very few legislators to have bridged the opposition between words and action, Plutarch probably thinks he is a divine example of a philosopher. Let us remember some of Socrates' words in the *Republic* which apply perfectly well to Lycurgus: „if anything is saved and turns out well in the present condition of society and government, in saying that the participation of God preserves it you will not be speaking ill“ (... θεοῦ μοῖραν αὐτὸ σῶσαι)³³.

In the pages where he explores Plutarch's criticism of the moral philosophy defended by the Stoics, Babut outlines two main inspirations or models

29 *De aud.* 40b: οὐκ ἀπὸ τύχης οὐδ' αὐτομάτως, ἀλλ' ἐπιμελεία καὶ πόνω καὶ μαθήσει.

30 *Lyc.* 31,2 (my translation); see also 8,3.

31 This is repeatedly said in *De aud.* 41 f. and 43 f.–44a, *De prof. virt.* 79c and *De virt.* 444c–d.

32 It has been argued that these ideas about the interdiction of written laws come from Plato and Aristotle, cf. Napolitano. For a recent study of Plutarch's main inspiration in *Lyc.*, cf. De Blois and Bons. See also Beck, 173, for bibliographical indications on Plutarch and Sparta.

33 *Rsp.* VI 492e–493a (transl. Shorey).

in Plutarch's ethical thinking³⁴. According to him, the first inspiration of Plutarch's moral philosophy has an „orphico-pythagorean“ influence and is based on a dichotomy between body and soul. The second is more akin to Ethics; inspired by his reading of Plato's texts and in opposition to the Stoics, Plutarch would have formulated a moral philosophy according to which reason can play a role in the moral improvement of the character based on an active participation of the desires in moral virtue. Now, it seems that the two inspirations are contradictory to one another, because the first is clearly non-rational³⁵, whereas the other is based on the presupposition that passions can be controlled by reason³⁶. This could bode well for the differences already indicated between *Lyc.* and *De aud.* On the one hand, *De aud.* is a treatise describing a rational activity and a practice that can be applied to the formation of the character. On the other hand, Lycurgus' inspiration comes from the Pythia's words: inspired by Apollo, „the source and author of the polity“³⁷, Lycurgus purified Sparta³⁸. The „remarkable continuity“ seen by Babut (1969a, 333) in Plutarch's refutation of the Stoics would in fact imply a qualitative hierarchy merely dividing Plutarch's philosophy into practical reasoning and a form of religious experience.

Practical Reasoning and Discourse

It is nonetheless possible to argue that this contrast between *Lyc.* and *De aud.* leaves aside some philosophical elements consistent with Plutarch's ethical thinking. Let us first recall that Plutarch places the act of judging what is good

34 Babut 1969a, 333: „Quand [Plutarque] affirme, en apparent accord avec la doctrine stoïcienne, que „toutes les passions et maladies de l'âme sont mauvaises“, que „le mieux serait de les extirper, de les détruire jusqu'à la racine“, ou quand il se sépare des philosophes qui réduisent la vertu à une sorte de compromis entre les passions, il ne parle pas en moraliste, mais en théologien, reprenant d'après Platon le vieux thème orphico-pythagoricien de l'âme enfin libérée, purifiée et rendue à sa vraie destination par sa séparation d'avec le corps. Quand, inversement, il réclame de la prudence dans le traitement des passions, ou soutient qu'il pourrait être fâcheux de les supprimer complètement, que l'exercice même de la raison risquerait d'en pâtir, il parle le langage du moraliste, qui sait qu'il est vain de vouloir isoler les forces composantes de l'âme, tout comme celle-ci du corps, et plus encore de prétendre les réduire à la raison.“

35 Ibid., 283: „un principe irréductible à la raison.“

36 Ibid., 324–325, and Babut 1969, 54 sq.

37 *Lyc.* 6,1–2. Lycurgus' „purification“ of Sparta begins by the exposition of the first rhetra, in which, on Plutarch's account, a direct allusion to Apollo can be found.

38 *Lyc.* 4,5: τὸ πολίτευμα καὶ καθαρὸν ἀποδείξει; *Lyc.* 8,1: πλοῦτον καὶ πενίαν ἐξελαύνων; *Lyc.* 10,1: ἀφελέσθαι τοῦ πλοῦτου.

or bad at the centre of his moral philosophy³⁹. In the last part of this paper, I will try to show that, consequently, the appraisal or criticism of actions and discourses play a central role in *Lyc.* and *De aud.*

A good example of this can be found in *Lyc.* 18.2 (see *supra*), in the passage explaining how, in the *sysitia* of the children, young Spartans are accustomed to take interest in the political life by judging other citizens' political actions or virtue. Plutarch explains that, by doing this, they were gaining the habit of judging what is good (*ibid.*: κρίνειν τὰ καλὰ). The same critical attitude applies to discourses in *De aud.* Indeed, the central role played by discourses in our moral life stresses the importance of carefully judging what we hear. If we are to change our life by listening to a discourse (42a: τῷ λόγῳ τὸν βίον ἐπαναρθωσόμενος), it is necessary to have a critical attitude directed towards its moral utility: „one must make his examination and criticism of the lecture by beginning with himself and his own state of mind“ (*ibid.*: ποιητέον ἐπίσκεψιν καὶ κρίσιν τῆς ἀκροάσεως ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς περὶ αὐτοῦ διαθέσεως). It seems thus that a parallel could be drawn between political and moral judgements since they both bring about φρόνησις, i. e. a good use of reason⁴⁰. If it is right to say that one needs to know how to listen before knowing how to speak (38d–39b) and that one needs to know how to obey in order to know how to command (*Lyc.* 30.2–4), it is also true that, for Plutarch, to know how to listen and how to obey imply a certain degree of intellectual autonomy. The words used by Plutarch to say that the citizens of Sparta are „free-minded, self-sufficing, and moderate“ leave no doubt on this point: by the critical and independent use of judgement, Spartans preserved their constitution for a long period of time (31.1: ἐλευθέριοι καὶ αὐτάρκεις γεγόμενοι καὶ σωφρονοῦντες ἐπὶ πλεῖστον χρόνον διατελῶσι).

This is precisely why Lycurgus' *politeia* is perfect, because it gives to the city of Sparta the means to preserve its constitution (29.1: τῆς πολιτείας ἐκτεθραμμένης ἱκανῶς καὶ δυναμένης φέρειν ἑαυτὴν καὶ σώζειν δι' ἑαυτῆς). This of course implies many restrictions and much authority, but Plutarch is eager to show that Lycurgus managed, through persuasion and, sometimes, the use of force, to have the Spartans convinced that his laws were good for them. Plutarch's reading of the *Timaeus* underlines here the association made by Plato between the perfection of a living organism (τὸ κοινὸν ζῶον) – be that the world or a man – and an ever ongoing process of education: „a man should both guide and be guided by himself so as to live according to the discourse“

39 Cf. *De virt.* 447a–b; 451a. See Becchi, 32–34 on the expression κρίσις φαύλη. See also Babut 1969a, 276 about *De Stoic. rep.* 1035d, and the presence of a κρίσις in Chrysippus' Ethics.

40 *De aud.* 37e: εὐ φρονοῦσιν; 40 f: καταφρονεῖν ἀφαιρούμεν; *Lyc.* 18,3: πεφροντισμένης ἀποκρίσεως; 16,5: τὸν τῷ φρονεῖν διαφέροντα; 17,2: τὸν σωφρονέστατον.

(διαπαιδαγωγῶν καὶ διαπαιδαγωγούμενος ὑφ' αὐτοῦ μάλιστα' ἄν κατὰ λόγον ζῶν).⁴¹ The analogy with the Demiurge in *Lyc.* qualifies metaphorically a relationship between a creator and his work of art. In other words, Lycurgus can be called a god, not because his nature is more than human but because his constitution survived hundreds of years after his death. At the outset, it was created and imposed „from above“, but it was actively self-imposed and generated during the following generations.

Seen from this perspective, *Lyc.* and *De aud.* express a coherent view on the function of the discourse in ethics and politics. The intervention of moral and political judgement at various stages in *Lyc.* and *De aud.* shows that purification is, at least in those texts, the result of an intellectual process and not of a religious experience as Babut suggested. In both texts, purification implies first judging the political or moral value of different types of discourse. We already saw how Lycurgus' political reforms come from a reflection on various examples of existing cities and constitution (*Lyc.* 4.1–5). Plutarch even leaves the possibility open that Lycurgus' „constitutional purification“⁴² is modelled on an Egyptian example (*Lyc.* 4.5). He advocates the same critical judgement in *De aud.* As Lycurgus was able „to see the political and edifying character mingled in Homer's poems“⁴³, one must first distinguish what is pleasant from what is useful in a discourse (*De aud.* 41 f.–42a). The process of purification can then begin: the city will be well divided and the ignorance will be aptly refuted. According to this interpretation, the purification of an anarchic city by a good legislator and the moral purification of passions will run along similar lines. The philosophical *logos* basically plays the same role in the moral formation of the individual as the legislator in the city. This parallelism is of Platonic origin. The philosophical reflection on human actions applies *mutatis mutandis* to the city and the soul; a city is the more or less perfect unity of its citizens as the soul is the more or less perfect unity of its desires and activities⁴⁴.

Philosophy has thus the effect of a purifying drug, which can also be seen as the effect of a correct use of the refutation⁴⁵. On this point Plutarch advocates a coherent economy of the philosophical discourse, both positive and negative. According to the positive aspect of this theory, philosophical discourse can be useful in the many different ways displayed in *Lyc.* and *De aud.*

41 Plato, *Tim.* 89d3–4 (transl. Bury slightly emended).

42 *Lyc.* 5,2: φαρμάκων καὶ καθαρμῶν.

43 *Lyc.* 4,4 (my translation).

44 For some examples of the comparison between the city and an individual, cf. *Lyc.* 30,2: ἡ Σπάρτη πολιτείαν ... ἀνδρὸς ἀσκητοῦ καὶ σοφοῦ βίον ἔχουσα; *Lyc.* 31,1 (see also 25,5: μηδὲ ἐπίστασθαι κατ' ἰδίαν ζῆν). *Life of Coriolan* 6,2 sq. also displays an extensive simile between the city and parts of the body.

45 Note the parallel use of the theme of „the pungent discourse“, *De aud.* 42c: λόγῳ δριμεῖ; *Lyc.* 19,1: λόγῳ ... πικρίαν ἔχοντι.

Plutarch makes room for the existence of a plurality of philosophers, various philosophical activities and many forms of philosophical discourses. There is not *one* model, but a number of situations that call for various ways of *being* a philosopher. Plutarch's works make clear that while the discourse must be useful, still, in order to be useful, it should adapt itself to the particular case at hand. On that particular point the parallel between *Lyc.* and *De aud.* is not imitative; for the philosophical discourse of *De aud.* is neither moulded on the Spartan philosophy nor is the Spartan way of philosophizing an example of the φιλολογία of *De aud.* They both nevertheless express Plutarch's contempt for empty speech.⁴⁶ This harsh criticism of the sophists does not at all imply the complete eradication of art. Indeed, the Spartan artisans show how useful things like drinking cups can be artful creations (*Lyc.* 9.5). But it is a radical economy, whose principle is applied to speeches in the *Ancient customs of the Spartan* (239c): „the good orator (τὸν ἀγαθὸν μυθητᾶν) must keep his discourse equal (ἴσον) to the subject in hand“. This reaction against the emptiness coming from sophistication in art and discourse is based on the Platonic principle according to which human production is always a kind of imitation by means of participation to an ideal form. So, by stripping human production of all superfluous details, human artefacts and reasoning correspond more to their ideal forms. Plutarch writes accordingly that, since, in Sparta, artisans were freed from useless tasks (*Lyc.* 9.5), beds, chairs and tables, were „the most perfect creations“ (9.4: βέλτιστα παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐδημιουργεῖτο). The same can be said of the *logos*, the value of which (τὸ τοῦ λόγου νόμισμα) is determined in a similar fashion⁴⁷; simplicity in words and formulation is essential to philosophy, because it guarantees a better and fuller relationship to the ideas: there is only one way of being right, whereas erring is variegated (*De virt. mor.* 444b). Purifying the city and the discourse is thus the result of the same intellectual operation, since both the participation of a thing in its Intelligible Form and the expression of a truth imply an economy exploiting the same philosophical (and Platonic) principles.

The particular benefit of participating in discussions about the act of listening (*De aud.* 38d: διαλέγεσθαι περὶ τοῦ ἀκούειν) now becomes clear. In *De aud.* Plutarch makes plain that listening plays a role of paramount importance in the moral formation of children and young people; *Lyc.* shows how this idea can evolve into a representation of the political role of discourse. For Plutarch, the customs and excellence of a city directly depend on the discourse of its citizens. Not only eulogy and blame are at the centre of the political life,⁴⁸ but,

46 *De aud.* 41 f.; *Lyc.* 19,1. On critics addressed to sophists, see *Lyc.* 9,3 and *De aud.* 43 f.

47 *Lyc.* 19,1: „the current coin of discourse he adapted to the expression of deep and abundant meaning with simple and brief diction“.

48 *Lyc.* 8,2; 14,3; 17,1; 21,1; 25,2.

when new discourses are introduced in the city, they bring forward new judgements (*Lyc.* 27.4: λόγοι καινοὶ κρίσεις καινὰς ἐπιφέρουσιν). The lesson of the *De aud.* is thus repeated in *Lyc.*: the judgements of the citizens will be modified by what they hear. This simple psychological fact calls for an attentive philosophical criticism of the various *logoi*. Indeed, both *Lyc.* and *De aud.* advocate the view that the possession and use of a living *logos* is an essential feature of the virtuous character. At first sight, Plutarch's assertion that „to follow the god and to obey a discourse are the same“⁴⁹ gives the impression that, for him, city and men must blindly obey their laws and moral principles in order to be virtuous. But, in the final analysis, Plutarch shows that his real aim is to underline how it is indeed a reflective practice of the *logos* that will lead to moral and political virtue. In *De aud.*, listening to discourses is far from being a passive activity. To be a good listener implies not only a reflective attitude on the moral progress produced by the discourse (42a–b), but also a dialogue with others. In an artful device of Platonic adaptation, Plutarch explains how „in picturing his own discourses in the discourses of others“ (τοὺς ἑαυτῶν ἐνεικονίζεσθαι τοῖς ἑτέρων)⁵⁰, one is likely to experience a kind of refutation⁵¹ and the sort of humbling down associated with its beneficial function (40 f.: τοῦ καταφρονεῖν ἀφαιροῦμεν). In *Lyc.*, the fact that the Spartan laws are not written precisely promotes good use of the *logos* on two accounts: it gives the legislators the possibility to amend them (*Lyc.* 13.2) and gives to the citizens an education by habituation leading to the powerful function of deliberation (ibid.: ἔχοντα τὴν προαίρεσιν δεσμὸν ἰσχυρότερον τῆς ἀνάγκης). The Spartans were thus able to preserve their constitution, because, Plutarch explains, the function of their education was to „perform the office of a law-giver for every one of them“ (*Lyc.* 13.1: νομοθέτου διάθεσιν). We must then understand that it is only by doing so that Lycurgus' constitution was able to bridge the opposition between words and deeds.

To summarize the elements of my interpretation, it appears that Plutarch's analogy between Lycurgus and the Demiurge is far from meaning that „without the intervention of a god“ virtuous life is impossible, or that rightly listening to the voice of persuasion entails an entirely passive attitude. Quite the contrary, both listening to lectures and Lycurgus' perfect constitution bring about an autonomous activity of reason (φρόνησις, κρίσις, προαίρεσις), the function of which is to discriminate between the various forms of discourse and to identify their moral and political utility. This could finally lead to a

49 *De aud.* 37d (my translation).

50 *De aud.* 40d (Babbitt's translation slightly emended). This image most probably comes from *Alcibiades major* 132e–133a as Plutarch indicates by adding: ὡς γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ὄμμασι τῶν πλησίων ἐλλάμποντα τὰ ἑαυτῶν ὀρώμεν.

51 *De aud.* 40 f.: ἔλεγχομένον.

qualification of Plutarch's activity as a writer in *De aud.* and *Lyc.* By placing good words in Nicander's ears: „like watchmen [...] taking under their charge the post chiefly exposed to influence and persuasion“ (*De aud.* 38b), Plutarch is metaphorically taking the place of a legislator in Nicander's „inner city“. Lycurgus should then be seen as the model Plutarch sets for himself in *De aud.* If those two texts were to be seen from the same philosophical point of view concerning the utility of discourse in the quest for happiness, it would appear that *Lyc.* is more than just a historical enquiry, but a model of the beneficial use of discourse, and that *De aud.* is, likewise, more than just a treatise about listening to scholarly lectures, but also a philosophical guide to virtue.⁵²

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52 This communication was written during a postdoctoral project on Plutarch's *De audiendo* subsidized by the Fonds Québécois de la Recherche sur la Société et la Culture (2003–2005) and realised at Trinity College (Dublin). The expression of my gratitude goes to John Dillon and Brendan O'Byrne for their comments on earlier drafts of this text.

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Boethus and Cassius: Two Epicureans in Plutarch

Patricia M. FitzGibbon

Plutarch expresses a negative attitude toward Epicureanism quite clearly in *That Epicurus Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible* or *Non Posse, Against Colotes*, and *Is "Live Unknown" a Wise Precept?* His condemnation of the philosophy and its doctrine in these works is complete, scholarly and direct.¹ But in addition to this direct polemic of Epicureanism, a subtler form of criticism can be detected through Plutarch's construction of Epicurean characters or literary portraits, and is found primarily in the *Moralia*. It is this criticism of Epicureanism, which I call incidental polemic that I wish to address in this paper.

Incidental polemic occurs through the characterization of Epicureans, especially in the speeches Plutarch constructs for these characters while they appear to be engaged in civilized and intellectual discussion with Plutarch himself, or his family and friends.² In contrast to the direct polemic of the anti-Epicurean writings, the main issue in these works is not Epicureanism itself, but a specific topic in which usually two or more arguments based on different philosophical doctrines are presented throughout the discussion. Because the arguments of the Epicurean present are weak or non-existent, or because he is portrayed as less cerebral than the other interlocutors, Plutarch achieves an indirect or incidental criticism of Epicureanism, i. e., the polemic is incidental to his stated intent. The *Lives* contain only one example of incidental polemic of Epicureanism which is found in the characterization of Cassius from the *Life of Brutus*. This treatment of Cassius' character is similar to what is found in the *Moralia* and will be compared later in this paper.

Plutarch constructs the different characters participating in the various dialogues in order to enhance his position rather than to portray true representations of a discussion between acquaintances and friends.³ Regardless of the specific issue being discussed in a dialogue, Plutarch, or another individual holding views we would attribute to Plutarch, ends up having the

1 The most complete works dealing with Epicureanism in Plutarch are: Flacelière, Boulogne, and Hershbell.

2 Plutarch had a wide assortment of relationships and seems to have held close friendships with individuals who maintained different positions on issues and adhered to philosophical doctrines opposed to his own. For Plutarch's friends and the evidence on them, see Chenevière, and, more recent but not as complete, Puech.

3 Hershbell, 3367–68. Hershbell is specifically dealing with the *Non Posse* here but I contend that the same theory applies in various works of Plutarch.

final say. The final position rests on a Platonic line of argumentation and so, even though the conversation might appear on the surface to be impartial, with equal weight given to each position or interlocutor, Plutarch's beliefs and positions ultimately prevail. The arguments of his opponents lack cogency and are often weakly presented and the lines of argumentation he attributes to Epicureans reflect his belief in the superiority of Platonism over Epicureanism. Epicurean opponents are perhaps chosen because the fundamental differences between Epicureanism and Platonism provide a sharper contrast in certain issues. In such cases, Epicureanism naturally serves as a foil for Plutarch's Platonism.

Rather than attempting to cover all examples of incidental polemic toward Epicureanism in the *Moralia*, it seems expedient to explicate that dialogue containing the most complex and involved example of a character construction demonstrating indirect polemic: *Oracles at Delphi No Longer Written in Verse* (hereafter *De Pyth. or.*), featuring the character Boethus. Boethus the Epicurean is among the group giving a tour of Delphi to a foreign visitor and provides that part of the conversation that is the perfect contrast to Plutarch's belief, as a Platonist and priest, in the god's presence in Delphi. Plutarch capitalizes on this contrast and strengthens his position by characterizing Boethus as antagonistic and by assigning him weak arguments. Plutarch's paramount objective is to champion the divinity of Delphi, not to denounce Epicureanism. By criticism of Boethus and the arguments he offers, Plutarch executes an incidental polemic of Epicurean doctrine.

The setting and introduction of this dialogue indicate that it is a philosophical debate rather than merely a description of a tour of Delphi. The action is reported by Philinus to Basilocles who says: [394e]

Βραδέως γὰρ ὠδεύομεν, ὦ Βασιλόκληις, σπείροντες λόγους καὶ θερίζοντες εὐθύς μετὰ μάχης ὑπούλους καὶ πολεμικούς, ὥσπερ οἱ Σπαρτοῖ, βλαστάνοντας ἡμῖν καὶ ὑποφυσμένους κατὰ τὴν ὁδόν.

For we made our way slowly, Basilocles, from the very start, contentiously sowing and reaping words combative and polemical, and just as the Sownmen, these words sprouted and grew in meaning as we made our way along the road.⁴

Philinus' description reveals that he is not merely describing Delphi because he targets instead the conversation and tone of the exchange: deeper meaning and contention underlie the conversation he is about to relay to Basilocles.

In addition to disclosing that this "tour" is merely the backdrop for a conversation of significant magnitude, at 394 f–395a, Philinus' preliminary description of Diogenianus, the foreign visitor, sets the paradigm for the proper attributes of a learned person engaged in discussion with his peers. He is

4 All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

learned (φιλόλογος) and willing to learn (φιλομαθής) and at the same time is mild and possessing grace (πραότης τε πολλήν χάριν) rather than contrary during a discussion. His proper demeanor is associated with his ability to argue from intelligence (τὸ μάχιμον καὶ διαπορητικὸν ὑπὸ συνέσεως) and his character is endorsed by the other interlocutors. His description has established from the outset that the congeniality of the interlocutors is as important as the presentation of differing views and supporting arguments.

The initial discussion of the propensity of bronze to rust shows that the interlocutors' approach to the subject is very much like a philosophical inquiry. The foreign visitor's interest in the particular patina of the bronze statues in Delphi leads to the question of why olive oil, most of all liquids, covers bronze with rust (395 E). Theon, who in this dialogue speaks as Plutarch's representative,⁵ introduces the discussion by saying: "let us investigate together," (ζητοῦμεν οὖν κοινῇ). ζητέω is used often to introduce philosophical inquiry⁶ and is used again in this dialogue when the main question, early hexameter oracles, is introduced: "for there is not one of us who does not wish to investigate the cause and explanation for why the oracle has stopped using verse and meter," οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἔστιν ἡμῶν, ὃς οὐκ αἰτίαν ἐπιζητεῖ καὶ λόγον, πῶς πέπνυται τὸ μαντεῖον ἔπεσι καὶ μέτροις χρώμενον, (397 D). Their investigation about the effect of olive oil on bronze includes the wisdom of Aristotle (395 F) but wanes soon after Theon has pronounced that it is the dense quality of the air that both causes the rust and prevents it from disappearing off the surface of the bronze. One can also note a metaphorical parallel to the main topic of this dialogue: as the statues decay through age and rust, so does the oracle; the decay being manifested through the diminishing quality of verse. This short conversation about bronze establishes Theon as an authority among the group as well as previewing the more involved philosophical debate to come.

The next topic introduced by Diogenianus becomes an issue that allows the participants in the discussion to introduce solutions based upon the doctrine of their individual philosophical persuasions. After hearing some oracle uttered in verse, Diogenianus wonders aloud about the poor quality of the hexameter lines in which the oracles were pronounced. The visitor's query stems from his belief that the god himself, being the leader of Muses in addition to the font of truth, should have a care about the lack of beauty and eloquence of the oracles, and that they should surpass Hesiod and Homer in excellence of versification (396 C–D).

The first of the group to respond is the Stoic poet Sarapion who suggests that since the verses belong to the god, then perhaps it is not right to judge

5 Russell, 15.

6 Pl. *Ap.* 23b, Arist. *Top.* 110a7.

them.⁷ At this point Boethus is introduced as a mathematician with Philinus adding, as an aside, that at this time he was already converting to Epicureanism (396 E). This immediate labeling of Boethus coupled with his very name signifies that he may be a purely literary character. Βόηθος must be connected to the verb βοηθέω, meaning to lend aid or succor and Epicurus' name can also mean "helper", from the verb ἐπικουρέω. Therefore, Boethus, as the spokesperson for Epicurus, is "helping him" by arguing the Epicurean position. The philosophy Boethus is discarding is not mentioned but the significance of his new allegiance is stressed when Theon mentions it again at 397 C.⁸ Boethus agrees with Diogenianus by proclaiming Sarapion's professional status sufficient to allow him to judge the quality of poetry and to realize the meager quality of the priestess' verses (396 E–F).

Boethus' dissatisfaction with the literary quality of the oracles prompts Sarapion to introduce the Epicurean pleasure principle by accusing Boethus of finding fault with the oracles' utterances simply because they do not bring pleasure (396 F). Thus two points are now considered in the dialogue: divine concern for human affairs, something an Epicurean must deny, and also the desire for pleasure, which an Epicurean must defend.

Sarapion's criticism has created a situation whereby the discussion is transformed into a refutation of Epicureanism, and Diogenianus' question about the reason for the poor poetical quality of the oracles becomes further shadowed by a continued criticism of Epicureans. Theon, the next interlocutor to add to the discussion and the character espousing the views of Plutarch himself, first claims that the content of the oracle is due to divine inspiration while maintaining that the voice, diction, and meter belong to the priestess herself (397b–c). Then he intensifies the censure of Epicureanism begun by Sarapion:

Καθόλου δ' εἰπεῖν ὑμᾶς τοὺς τοῦ Ἐπικούρου προφήτας (δῆλος γὰρ εἶ καὶ αὐτὸς ὑποφερόμενος) οὐκ ἔστι διαφυγεῖν, ἀλλὰ κάκεινας αἰτιᾶσθε τὰς πάλαι προφήτιδας ὡς φαύλοις ποιήμασι χρωμέναι καὶ τὰς νῦν καταλογάδην καὶ διὰ τῶν ἐπιτυχόντων ὀνομάτων τοὺς χρησμούς λεγούσας, ὅπως ὑμῖν ἀκεφάλων καὶ λαγαρῶν μέτρων καὶ μειούρων εὐθύναις μὴ ὑπέχωσι. [397c–d]

And in general, all of you who speak as prophets of Epicurus, you are impossible to escape (for indeed, you [Boethus] were yourself already being turned in that

7 Sarapion, of the deme Chollidae, was a famous poet in his day and a monument was erected in his honor in the temple of Asclepius at Athens which was inscribed with a paean he had written. This monument seems to imply that Sarapion had won a literary contest to honor Asclepius. Oliver, 92–93. Cf. Puech, 4874–4878.

8 Boethus is not known from any other source than Plutarch. Ziegler (col. 669) postulates that Boethus had been a student at the academy with Plutarch. Teodorsson, v. 2 p. 147, believes him to be a respected friend of Plutarch because of the prominent role he plays in this tract. Cf. Puech, 4842.

direction), and you accuse the ancient priestesses of using inferior poetry and the present priestesses of uttering their oracles in prose and ordinary language lest, composing meters without the proper beginning and hollow, they furnish you a reproach.

In addition to this criticism, the tone used by Theon toward Boethus indicates that Boethus is not living up to the proper paradigm Plutarch set out through his characterization of Diogenianus. Boethus has not responded in a contentious way but his companions treat him as if he had. Theon first assigns to Boethus a charge he never made – that the present day priestesses have abandoned meter and are composing in prose. He then accuses all Epicureans, once again emphasizing Boethus' switch to Epicureanism, of not allowing guidance from the oracle because of the bad verse. An Epicurean would have disregarded any oracular prophecy because for them, the gods are aloof from human affairs. Belief in either a divinely inspired oracle or an actual possession of the priestess by the god would violate the first of Epicurus' *Kyriai Doxai*, which declares that immortal gods have no concern for human affairs. Theon attributes to Epicureans a charge against the oracle they probably would not have made, intensifying his ridicule of them by calling them ironically, "prophets of Epicurus." Theon's attitude toward Boethus also indicates that the Epicurean is not arguing from intelligence, the praiseworthy approach displayed by Diogenianus, but simply that his allegiance to his philosophy places him at odds with the truth. This situation provides a catalyst for the development of Boethus' argument because an Epicurean position against divine providence is necessary for Boethus to continue in the discussion. However, it would not have been possible for Boethus to quote Epicurean doctrine that would criticize the oracle – there was none at the time. It was not until decades after Plutarch that Diogenes of Oenoanda contributes specific denunciations of oracles to Epicurean doctrine.⁹

After Theon rebukes Boethus, Diogenianus wants to continue the original inquiry, but Theon insists that they allow the guides to finish their tour and save their discussion until later (397 D–E). Theon's suppression of the discussion at this point does not allow Boethus a chance to respond, either on behalf of his philosophy, or even to deny the antagonistic role assigned to him by Theon. Boethus has been put in a position of defending his beliefs even though all he himself has done is agree with Diogenianus that the verses of the Delphic oracle are badly composed.

9 The exact date of Diogenes and his inscription is a problem and has been argued to be as early as 165 and as late as 230. For a fuller discussion see Clay, 234–238. Diogenes of Oenoanda denounces oracular prophecy, the first instance of an Epicurean to do so, see Fragments 23, 24, and 53 in Smith.

Diogenianus next expresses interest in stories surrounding omens and portents and his interest prompts Philinus to express his opinion that the votive objects dedicated at Delphi are “moving along with” and “trusting in” divine foreknowledge. Boethus responds with what seems to be an Epicurean argument.

Ναί, οὐ γὰρ ἀρκεῖ τὸν θεὸν εἰς σῶμα καθειργνύναι θνητὸν ἅπαξ ἑκάστου μηνός, ἀλλὰ καὶ λίθῳ παντὶ καὶ χαλκῷ συμφύρασμεν αὐτόν, ὥσπερ οὐκ ἔκοντες ἀξιοχρεῶν τῶν τοιούτων συμπτωμάτων τὴν τύχην δημιουργὸν καὶ ταῦτόματον. [398a-b]

“Well yes,” he said, “but is it not enough to confine the god to a mortal body once each month but also one must confine him in every stone and every piece of bronze as if we do not have fortune and accident as an instrument sufficient to effect such coincidences.”

Boethus’ statement that fortune (τύχη) and accident (τὸ αὐτόματον) are responsible for coincidences does not dispute Epicurean doctrine. Epicurus states in *ad Men.* that some things happen from necessity, some by chance, and others through our own will, (133). However, upon a closer investigation of actual Epicurean doctrine, the use of αὐτόματον by Plutarch is skewed in his attempt to construct an argument denying prophesy for Boethus that utilizes Epicurean doctrine about accident and fortune. The extant Epicurean writings indicate that τύχη and τό αὐτόματον were used in relation to free will but never to deny prophesy. In one of the papyrus fragments on free will, Epicurus criticizes his predecessors:

οἱ δ’ αἰτιολογήσαντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἰκανῶς, καὶ οὐ μό[ν]ον [τ]ῶν πρὸ αὐτῶν πολὺ διενέγκαντες ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ὕστερον πολλ[α]πλασίως ἔλαθον ἑαυτοὺς, καίπερ ἐν πολλοῖς μεγάλα κουφίσαντες, εἰ[ς] τὸ τ[ῆ]ν ἀνάγκη καὶ ταῦτόματ[ο]ν πάντα ἀ[ι]τιῶσθαι. [Nat. liber incertus, 34.26–30]

But those who inquired into causes sufficiently in the beginning, they were superior not only to those who came before, and even more so to those who came later, yet they forgot themselves in making the cause of everything necessity and accident.¹⁰

Epicurus uses τό αὐτόματον here to refer to “accident” which, along with necessity was what Democritus and possibly Leucippus believed responsible for all causation. He clearly says that they were incorrect in leaving causation to accident and necessity.

Diogenes of Oenoanda confirms that neither accident nor fortune can be responsible for human action.

... ὥσπ[ερ] οὖν ἡ τοῦ]
σοφοῦ διάθεσ[ις τὴν ταύ]-
τομάτου συν[τυχίαν]

10 Long and Sedley, Sedley’s translation, I.104.

παραδειῖξαι ἔ[χει τοι]-
 αὐτὴν τινά, [οὕτως, ὡς ἔοι]-
 κεν, βραχέα π[οιεῖ κερί]-
 ως, ὡς λέγει Νε[οκλείδης].
 βραχέα σοφῶ [τύχη παρεν]-
 πείπτει, τὰ δὲ μέγιστα
 καὶ κυριώτατα ὁ λογισ-
 μὸς διοικεῖ καὶ διώκη-
 σεν [frag. 71. II 2–13]

... and so, the condition/state/disposition of the wiseman illustrates the occurrence of accident in such a way, as it seems: rarely does it function with conviction – as the son of Neokles says, “rarely does fortune thwart the wiseman. Those things the greatest and the strongest reason manages and is managed by.”

Diogenes uses the same terminology as he echoes Epicurus: human behavior is not based on chance and accident if reason is employed. What Diogenes does say against oracles is the first instance of any Epicurean writings to treat this issue.

... .. [καὶ ἄ]
 λισ πε[ρι] τούτων, ἐπειδὴ
 οὐκ ἀνανακίον εἰ [πεῖν τι
 ἐπ’ ἐνέδρα τῶν λάθρα με]
 νόντων, εἰ μὴ δοκεῖ[τε]
 ἀγνοεῖν ἡμᾶς ἡλικίας
 συμφοραῖς διὰ τὸ ἀμφίβο-
 λον τοῦτο τῶν χρησμῶν καὶ
 ποικίλως πλάγιον κέ-
 χρηνταί τινες. . [frag. 23]¹¹

[Enough of this subject, since it is] not necessary [to say anything] in reference to (?) the trap posed by meanings that [remain] concealed (?), unless [you] think that we do not appreciate what great misfortunes some people have experienced on account of this ambiguity and intricate obliqueness of oracles.¹²

Diogenes shows that Epicureans did not feel the need to write tracts denying prophecy, they simply denounce it for the pain it causes. Thus Plutarch has little basis for contriving an Epicurean argument against prophecy that relies on accident and chance.

Plutarch further develops the Epicurean argument in response to Diogenianus’ assertion that the numerous occurrences in which prophecies seem to come true, such as the recent eruption of Vesuvius (August, 79 AD) predicted by the Sibyl, are sufficient to make him believe in divine inspiration (398 E). Boethus denies the integrity of prophecy by asserting that all events may happen in an infinite universe.

11 Fragments 24 and 54 are similar in tone.

12 Smith’s translation, 378.

Καὶ ὁ Βόηθος, “ποῖον γάρ”, εἶπεν, “ὦ δαιμόνιε, τῇ πύσει πάθος ὁ χρόνος οὐκ ὀφείλει; ... καίτοι τοῦτό γε σχεδὸν οὐδὲ προειπεῖν ἔστιν ἀλλ’ εἰπεῖν, μᾶλλον δὲ ῥίψαι καὶ διασπεῖραι λόγους οὐκ ἔχοντος ἀρχὴν εἰς τὸ ἄπειρον· οἷς πλανωμένοις ἀπήντησε πολλακίς ἡ τύχη καὶ συνέπεσεν αὐτομάτος. διαφέρει γὰρ οἶμαι γενέσθαι τὸ ῥηθῆναι ἢ ῥηθῆναι τὸ γενησόμενον. ὁ γὰρ εἰπὼν τὰ μὴ ὑπάρχοντα λόγους ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸ ἡμαρτημένον ἔχων οὐ δικαίως ἀναμένει τὴν ἐκ τοῦ αὐτομάτου πίστιν οὐδ’ ἀληθεῖ τεκμηρίῳ χρῆται τοῦ προειπεῖν ἐπιστάμενος τῷ μετὰ τὸ εἰπεῖν γενομένῳ, πάντα τῆς ἀπειρίας φερούσης. [398F]

What sort of happening, my dear man, does time not owe to nature? ... and yet, this is not exactly foretelling but simply telling, or rather, it is casting or dispersing words with no basis into infinity; and often fortune chances upon them straying and spontaneously falls in with them. For I think that when a thing that has been pronounced happens, it is different from pronouncing a thing that will happen. For the speech which tells of things which have no actuality is in error, in and of itself, and it is not right to await a guarantee from accident, nor can it be used as firm evidence of foretelling with knowledge something which happened after it was told. For infinity brings all things to pass.

Plutarch constructs Boethus’ position from the considerable Epicurean doctrine available to him. Boethus refutes divine prediction again by attributing such occurrences to accident but specifies that truth cannot be derived from accident. In addition, this argument employs the Epicurean notion about the infinity of the universe by asserting that predictions of events cannot be proved accurate by their actual occurrence because in an infinite universe, anything may come to pass. Thus Plutarch utilizes Epicurean terminology from different Epicurean concepts. That “some things happen through chance” (*Ep. Men.* 133) is linked by Plutarch to “accident” even though in Epicurean doctrine, the two are linked only in reference to free will. The idea that infinity brings all things to pass and so explains the coincidence of events predicted coming to pass must derive from Epicurus’ notion about the infinity of the universe.

Ἄλλὰ μὴν καὶ κόσμος ἀπειροὶ εἰσιν, οἳ θ’ ὅμοιοι τούτῳ καὶ ἀνόμοιοι. αἶ τε γὰρ ἄτομοι ἀπειροὶ οὖσαι, ὡς ἄρτι ἀπεδείχθη, φέρονται καὶ πορρωτάτω. Οὐ γὰρ κατανήλωνται ποιηθείη, οὔτ’ εἰς ἓνα οὔτ’ εἰς πεπερασμένους, οὔθ’ ὅσοι τοιοῦτοι οὔθ’ ὅσοι διάφοροι τούτοις. ὥστε οὐδὲν τὸ ἐμποδοστατήσόν ἐστι πρὸς τὴν ἀπειρίαν τῶν κόσμων. [*Ep. Hdt.* 45]

But indeed, the universe is infinite, some worlds are similar to this one and some are not. For since atoms are infinite, which has just been shown, they are born off into the farthest distances. And these very atoms are not completely consumed and out of them a cosmos might happen or by means of them one might be made – there is neither one world nor a finite number ... and so nothing impedes an infinite number of worlds.

Plutarch develops Boethus' defense using Epicurean jargon that has been taken out of context.¹³ Boethus is arguing against something he would probably not consider worth his time to discuss because the intervention of gods in the world is ruled out by its incompatibility with their own blessedness.¹⁴ However, Boethus' argument provides a direct denial of omens and portents, which angers Philinus who clearly supports the notion that Boethus is quoting Epicurus with the phrase: "and now Epicurus comes to your aid, as it seems, through his writings and sayings from 300 years ago," καὶ σὲ μὲν Ἐπίκουρος ὠφελεῖ νῦν ὡς ἔοικεν ἀφ' ὧν εἶπεν ἢ ἔγραψε πρὸ ἐτῶν τριακοσίων, (398 B).¹⁵ But the arguments of Boethus bear little resemblance to any Epicurean doctrine written before or after Plutarch. In his dialogue about the *Silence of the Oracle*, Plutarch uses much the same argument and he clearly charges the Epicureans with attacking divine foreknowledge.

Ἐπικουρείων δὲ χλευασμούς καὶ γέλωτας οὐ τι φοβητέον, οἷς τολμῶσι χρῆσθαι καὶ κατὰ τῆς προνοίας μῦθον αὐτὴν ἀποκαλοῦντες. ἡμεῖς δὲ τὴν ἀπειρίαν μῦθον εἶναι φαμεν ἐν κόσμοις τοσοῦτοις μηδένα λόγῳ θείῳ κυβερνώμενον ἔχουσαν, ἀλλὰ πάντας ἐκ ταύτομάτου καὶ γεγονότας καὶ συνισταμένους. [420b]

But there is nothing to fear from the derision and mockery of the Epicureans who have the audacity to pronounce against foreknowledge, calling it a myth. But we, rather, maintain that their infinity is a myth and, among such a limitless number of worlds, not one takes its direction from the divine mind but everything is generated from and is united from accident.

This statement bears a striking resemblance to the position Plutarch contrived for Boethus. Both emphasize that, according to the Epicureans, all events come about through accident. This assertion clearly contradicts Epicurus' own words concerning free will that his predecessors were mistaken in making accident accountable for everything (above, p. 450).

Thus, Boethus' arguments that prophecy is impossible because everything happens according to chance and accident, as well as in the course of infinity, are based on Plutarch's own misrepresentation of Epicurean terms. He uses them in contexts different from those of original doctrine and therefore the argument is specious. We have no surviving text of Epicurus that addresses

13 It is important to note that I am not talking about deliberate misquotations of Epicurus' writings but rather constructed speeches of Epicurean characters that make use of Epicurean terminology inaccurately. In terms of the accuracy of Plutarch in quoting Epicurus' own words, I agree with both Hershbell and Bailey that he uses adequate care. Hershbell, 3368.

14 Obink, 9.

15 Plutarch seems to be picking up his word-play from earlier in the dialogue when Boethus' name is linked metaphorically to Epicurus and here again, with the phrase ἐπίκουρος ὠφελεῖ Plutarch juxtaposes two words meaning "help." Cf. p. 448.

prophecy and divination, but only the statement of Diogenes Laertius who offers this:

μαντικήν δ' ἅπασαν ἐν ἄλλοις ἀναιρεῖ, ὡς καὶ ἐν τῇ μικρᾷ ἐπιτομῇ. καὶ φησι·
 “μαντικὴ οὐσα ἀνύπαρκτος, εἰ καὶ ὑπαρκτή, οὐθὲν παρ' ὁ ἡμᾶς ἡγητέα τὰ γινόμενα.”
 [DL 10.135]

And in other works he rejects every form of divination, as in the short epitomes and he says, “divination is non-existent but if it did exist, we must take no note of what happens.”

Plutarch does not intend to simply polemicize against Epicureanism, but rather he wishes to ensure the continued preeminence of Delphi. The final resolution of the question about why the oracles no longer speak in verse becomes moot when Theon proclaims that history and philosophy, as well as oracles, changed from poetry to prose as well. In all cases the change was compelled by the need for clarity. Theon adds that this trend towards clear speaking has afforded Delphi new honors and cites a more international group of believers. Thus, according to Plutarch, the oracle at Delphi has become more philosophical in its answers and the use of prose rather than poetry serves to communicate the wisdom of the god to his people.

Boethus' place in this dialogue is to represent the Epicurean presence that provides a foil for an argument on Divine providence. His arguments, even though seemingly derived from Epicurean doctrine are not effective, but they do provide a sufficient contrast for Plutarch's conviction, expressed by Theon and the others, in the divine presence at Delphi. Boethus himself seems to contradict his Epicurean position with the last words he speaks in this dialogue as he offers Diogenianus this explanation to his original question:

Μουσῶν γὰρ ἦν ἱερὸν ἐνταῦθα περὶ τὴν ἀναπνοὴν τοῦ νάματος, ὅθεν ἐχρῶντο πρὸς τε τὰς λοιβὰς καὶ τὰς χέρνιβας τῷ ὕδατι τούτῳ ... τὰς δὲ Μούσας ἰδρύσαντο παρέδρους τῆς μαντικῆς καὶ φύλακας αὐτοῦ παρὰ τὸ νᾶμα καὶ τὸ τῆς Γῆς ἱερὸν, ἧς λέγεται τὸ μαντεῖον γενέσθαι διὰ τὴν ἐν μέτροις καὶ μέλεσι χρησιμωδίαν. [402 C–E]

For there used to be a shrine to the Muses near the headwaters of this stream and there they made use of the water for libations and purification ... But they set up the cult of the Muses as companions and as guardians of prophecy alongside this stream and the temple of Earth whose oracle it is said to have been because the responses came in meter and verse.

Boethus the Epicurean does not claim to believe this statement but he does not deny it or preface this statement in any way that would allow him to maintain his position of denying divine foreknowledge or divine involvement with humans. The others in the group enthusiastically accept this statement and Sarapion commends him on finding an explanation and not giving up ancestral piety. Boethus does not respond after this statement and while he does not denounce his doctrine, the final impression given is that he does not contest

either the divinity of Delphi or the validity of the oracle. His statement removes him from a position opposing the rest of the group and because of their eager acceptance, the antagonism that surrounded Boethus earlier no longer exists.

The portrayal of Boethus as an irresolute Epicurean in the end is very similar to the most developed Epicurean character in the *Lives*: Cassius, whose portrayal comes in the *Life of Brutus*. As in *De Pyth. or.*, Plutarch's main objective in the *Life of Brutus* is not to denigrate Epicurean philosophy. However, Epicureanism is presented as deficient through the characterization of Cassius as an Epicurean who utters Epicurean doctrine but, when faced with certain situations, does not act in accordance with his doctrine. The most blatant illustration of this disregard occurs in connection to the demonological visitation of Brutus and the omen of the eagles directly after, (37). The effect of Cassius' portrayal during these incidents is that Epicureanism appears vulnerable when one of its followers confronts some type of divination. Reminiscent of *De Pyth. or.*, these events also indicate that the Epicurean position denying divination is the target of Plutarch's incidental polemic in the *Life of Brutus*. But emphasizing this adverse portrayal of the philosophy is Cassius' character, which has been developing unfavorably in comparison to Brutus throughout this work. The weakness of Cassius' character may foreshadow his inability to cope with events by relying on his philosophy.

That Plutarch contrasts Cassius unfavorably to Brutus is evident from the beginning of the *Life* and this contrast, in and of itself, is not likely the creation of Plutarch.¹⁶ However, the manner in which Plutarch sets up the comparison in this work may very well be a literary contrivance. Plutarch reports that Brutus' character was so admired by all that whatever was noble about the assassination of Caesar belonged to him but whatever was questionable or evil was attributed to Cassius, whose motives were believed to be less virtuous than those of Brutus for "he was complicated and not as pure of motive as Brutus" (1. 2). But while historically Cassius plays as large a role as Brutus in the conspiracy and they will be forever linked by their collaboration, Plutarch develops the characters Brutus and Cassius in direct opposition to each other. Before the conspiracy, Plutarch describes how Caesar doled out his favors between Brutus and Cassius. Brutus gains more favor due to his good reputation and virtue above Cassius' military exploits in the Parthian war, even though Caesar admitted Cassius had the more righteous plea (7.2–3). Even when being suspected of plotting against Caesar, because of his reputation and virtue, Brutus might have been considered the best choice for succeeding Caesar had not Cassius, a man of violent temper and hater of Caesar more than a hater of tyranny, urged Brutus to violence. And Plutarch adds: "for Brutus

16 Wardman, 174–75.

hated the rule but Cassius hated the ruler,” λέγεται δὲ Βροῦτος μὲν τὴν ἀρχὴν βάρυνεσθαι, Κάσσιος δὲ ἄρχοντα μισεῖν. (8.23). Thus, Cassius is motivated by personal gain or personal hatred while Brutus’ only incentive in the conspiracy is to see his country and people free from tyranny. Though Plutarch adds an anecdote that attributes Cassius’ actions to a true and enduring hatred of tyranny rather than a personal vendetta, the story also illustrates that he has a history of rash and violent behavior when confronted with the prospect of tyranny (9.1–2). Directly following this anecdote, Brutus’ collaboration with the conspiracy is said to come about only through the pleas of his fellow citizens, (9.3). Even Cassius himself convinces Brutus to participate because the people expect Brutus to act on their behalf: “But from you, as your patrilineal debt, [they demand] the elimination of tyranny,” Παρὰ σοῦ δὲ ὡς ὄφλημα πατρικὸν τὴν κατάλυσιν τῆς τυραννίδος ἀπαιτοῦντας, (10.4). Once Caesar has been killed, the list of further comparisons between Brutus and Cassius continues and in each case, a distinction is drawn between Brutus’ superior character and Cassius greed or impetuosity.¹⁷

Initially this contrast does not seem to be in reference to either’s chosen philosophy.¹⁸ Reference to the influence of Platonism on Brutus is mentioned only in the preface to the pair of Lives (*Dion* 2) and Plutarch does not attribute his “virtue” necessarily to his philosophy. Nor does Plutarch state emphatically that it is because Cassius is an Epicurean that he acts less virtuously than Brutus. However, the impetuous nature of Cassius is certainly not what one would expect from an Epicurean who should rationally investigate the reasons for every choice and avoidance.¹⁹ Perhaps Plutarch cannot be blamed entirely for this characterization of Cassius as rash and even violent, but it seems that Cassius may actually have considered his choice of philosophy quite rationally, as his own letter (*Ad Fam.* 15.19.2)²⁰ to Cicero in 45 BC demonstrates:

spero enim homines intellecturos, quanto sit omnibus odio crudelitas et quanto amori probitas et clementia, atque ea, quae maxime mali petant et concupiscant, ad bonos pervenire; difficile est enim persuadere hominibus τὸ καλὸν δι’ αὐτὸ αἰρετόν esse; ἡδονὴν vero et ἀταραξίαν, virtute, iustitia, τῷ καλῷ parari et verum et probabile est; ipse enim Epicurus, a quo omnes Catii et Amafinii, mali verborum interpretes, proficiscuntur, dicit οὐκ ἔστιν ἡδέως ἀνευ τοῦ καλῶς καὶ δικαίως ζῆν

17 Brutus recalls Cassius from an expedition to Egypt οὐ γὰρ ἀρχὴν κτωμένους αὐτούς, ἀλλ’ ἐλευθεροῦντας τὴν πατρίδα τὴν δύναμιν, 28.2–3; Cassius is described as so passionate for gain that he forgot the noble purpose of their enterprise and is likened to Cinna, Marius or Carbo whereas Brutus was never accused of a departure from his principles, even by his enemies, 29. 1–6.

18 Wardman, 214.

19 Epicurus, *Ep. Men.* 132, νήφων λογισμὸς καὶ τὰς αἰτίας ἐξερευνῶν αἰρέσεως.

20 This letter from Cassius includes a response to Cicero’s criticism, in the previous letters (*Ad Fam.* 15. 16, 17, and 18), of Cassius’ switch to Epicurean philosophy.

For I hope that men will understand how hateful cruelty is to all, and how attractive honesty and clemency: and that those things which bad men seek and especially come to the good. For it is difficult to persuade men that “the good is desirable for its own sake”: but that pleasure and *ataraxia* are obtained by virtue, and that justice, and “the good” is both true and credible. In fact, Epicurus himself, (from whom all your Catiuses and Amafiniuses, those inadequate interpreters of his words, come), says: “to live pleasantly is impossible without living well and justly.”

No matter what legacy of Cassius’ character was received by Plutarch, his own words bear out that, at least before the assassination, he understood his choice and, given that he quotes *KD* 5 in this letter, was quite aware of Epicurus’ doctrine.

Thus, Plutarch perpetuates a characterization of Cassius that displays few admirable qualities and, in addition to his violent and impetuous nature, he needs assurance from external sources while Brutus relies only upon his admirable character to see their purpose through to the end. Cassius follows Brutus’ lead during the slight delay in their attack on Caesar and takes courage in Brutus’ confidence (16.3) but his next source of encouragement directly contradicts the Epicureanism. Plutarch records that, “Cassius is said to have turned toward and invoked the statue of Pompey, as if it had perception,” και Κάσσιον μὲν λέγεται τρέποντα τὸ πρόσωπον εἰς τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ Πομπηίου παρακαλεῖν ὡσπερ αἰσθανόμενον. (17.1). This anecdote especially adds to the portrayal of Cassius as an irresolute adherent as well as brands Epicureanism as a philosophy too weak to hold its followers. His apparent attempt to gain strength from the statue foreshadows Cassius’ lack of conviction in his doctrine; no Epicurean would grant sensation to a statue. This scene also occurs in the *Life of Caesar* and is even more pointed in portraying Epicureanism as unable to hold its adherents in times of undue stress: “but, as it seems, the dreadful occasion at hand put in some divine inspiration and replaced his earlier passion for his former convictions.” (ἀλλ’ ὁ καιρὸς, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἤδη τοῦ δεινοῦ παρεστῶτος ἐνθουσιασμὸν ἐνεποίει καὶ πάθος ἀντὶ τῶν προτέρων λογισμῶν,) (*Caes.* 66.2) Plutarch makes apparent in the *Life of Caesar* what he only alludes to in the *Life of Brutus*: that given the circumstances, Epicurean doctrine cannot offer the necessary strength to withstand the danger.²¹

Late in the *Life of Brutus* when Cassius’ Epicureanism is finally asserted, the context, after Brutus has seen the apparition, lends the perfect opportunity. Plutarch makes a connection between Cassius’ philosophy and the topic with the comment: “Cassius, who adhered to the doctrine of Epicurus, was accustomed to disagree on such issues with Brutus” (37.1). Plutarch reports

21 Hershbell, 3379.

that Cassius sought to calm Brutus by explaining, according to his doctrine, that visions such as these are simply the imagination perverting the intellect because the senses, belonging to the body which is worn out with hardships, are functioning incorrectly. This speech of Cassius is problematic if it is to be a true Epicurean explanation for an apparition. As Brenk has noted, Cassius' speech is full of Epicurean terminology but also seems finally to destroy the Epicurean criterion of truth since Cassius states that intelligence can transform a thing perceived into various shapes ἀπ' οὐδενὸς ὑπάρχοντος, "from something without existence."²² Like Boethus' denunciation of prophecy in *De Pyth. or.*, Plutarch may be constructing a specious Epicurean explanation for Cassius, either to give the impression that Cassius' adherence to the philosophy seems irresolute, or that Epicureanism itself cannot provide a satisfactory explanation for Brutus which means that Cassius' efforts to calm Brutus are ineffective.

But one might also ask why Plutarch needed to have Cassius "calm" Brutus at all. As Plutarch records, Brutus was often wakeful and, once the war had begun, "was seeking the future by means of prophecy," (36.2: τεταμένως τῆ φροντίδι πρὸς τὸ μέλλον). This passage seems to describe the same setting whereupon Brutus encounters this apparition. So did this apparition prophesize doom for Brutus? Hindsight would indicate that it did but yet Brutus does not seem moved by this visitation and merely seeks Cassius out the following day to report it. So what purpose does Cassius' reaction to Brutus' apparition have other than to give Cassius the opportunity to cite Epicurean doctrine? As we have seen from Boethus' example, no true Epicurean would place credence in such an apparition as a sign of things to come so Cassius must convince Brutus that this apparition means nothing. But what need would an Epicurean have to try and explain the apparition to the extent that he must destroy the Epicurean criterion of truth? Perhaps Plutarch takes advantage of this situation to do for Cassius what he did for Boethus in the *De Pyth. or.*; construct a speech which sounds Epicurean but actually destroys the credibility of the one who delivers it. Plutarch does not give Brutus' reaction to Cassius' explanation but instead follows with the anecdote that two eagles stayed with the army for the entire march to Philippi and flew away only the day before the battle. Given the outcome of the battle at Philippi, the purpose of this last anecdote may well serve to show that omens might have some validity anyway. In reference to the apparition, Cassius does assert that, "These daemons do not exist or, if they do, it is impossible that they could have the

22 Brenk, 115–117. I am most indebted to Frederick Brenk for pointing me toward his article that has influenced my views on Plutarch's Cassius to such an extent this entire section on Cassius has been substantially enhanced is quite different from the original paper given in Rethymno.

appearance or speech of men or have any power that could extend to humans.” While Cassius’ statement on the non-existence of daemons bears a striking resemblance to the statement made by Diogenes Laertius on oracles, his full explanation does not accord with actual Epicurean doctrine.²³ In addition, Cassius adds that he wished that their endeavor might be helped, not only by all their soldiers, cavalry and ships, but also by assistance from the gods. This last statement adds to the weakness of Cassius’ adherence to his philosophy, for no Epicurean would believe that the gods could or would help in an endeavor of men since they are completely aloof from the affairs of men. His beliefs are further tested after witnessing several events that would be considered omens by a non-Epicurean. The effect of these occurrences is to overwhelm the soldiers of Cassius and “gradually even carry away Cassius himself from his Epicurean doctrines” (39.1–3). In the end, Plutarch’s Cassius appears to betray his philosophy generally on the issue of divination; his explanation which should convince Brutus that his vision has no meaning is flawed and ineffectual and the omen of the eagles finally undermines his conviction in his doctrine. Thus, while Plutarch does not openly criticize Cassius for being an Epicurean, he allows his lack of conviction in Epicurean principles to further demean a character already seriously flawed, especially in contrast to Brutus.

In conclusion, the characterizations of Boethus in *De Pyth. or.* and Cassius in the *Life of Brutus* show striking similarities. In the case of Boethus, Plutarch successfully utilizes his portrayal as a foil for the Platonist position of the divinity of Delphi and Cassius’ Epicureanism emphasizes his portrayal as a flawed individual that can only add to the illustrious characterization of Brutus. Plutarch states more emphatically for Cassius what is only inferred for Boethus: that Epicurean philosophy may not have the power to hold its adherents. While both spout what seems to be Epicurean doctrine, neither character demonstrates devoted and resolute observance, and the impression left in both cases is that Epicurean doctrine does not provide the necessary principles for true belief. And, as has been shown, the doctrine that these characters actually cite does not accord with Epicureanism and so, as presented by Plutarch, it is intrinsically flawed and therefore shown to be inferior.

23 “Cassius’ explanation could hardly be less Epicurean in content. Epicurus held that the senses were veracious not that they were unreliable, and that the gods at least seen by men in dreams in human form, It would have been easy to construct an Epicurean view of a harmless atomic phantom. But Plutarch has not done this; he has given us the speech of an unbeliever, but in Aristotelian or Academic terms.” Russell, 78. Cf. Hershbell, 3379.

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«Fania di Lesbo, un filosofo e assai esperto di ricerca storica» (Plut., *Them.*, 13, 5). Plutarco e i rapporti tra biografia, storia e filosofia etica

Federicomaria Muccioli

Il rapporto di Plutarco con le sue fonti continua ad attirare l'attenzione della critica, nel quadro della discussione sulla genesi e lo sviluppo del genere biografico nella letteratura greca.¹ A tal proposito si intende esaminare in questa sede l'apporto di Fania di Ereso, Peripatetico di IV secolo, nella costruzione del personaggio di Temistocle nella *Vita* omonima, verificando e confrontando le notizie dedotte da questo autore con quanto espresso dal Cheroneo sia nelle altre *Vite* sia nei *Moralia* a proposito dell'eroe ateniese.

Spicca, anzitutto, il lusinghiero giudizio formulato sullo scrittore di Ereso, considerato un filosofo e assai esperto di ricerca storica (*Them.*, 13, 5: ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἀνὴρ φιλόσοφος καὶ γραμμάτων οὐκ ἄπειρος ἱστορικῶν Φανίας ὁ Λέσβιος εἶρηκε).² Infatti non a tutte le sue fonti Plutarco riconosce competenza nel contempo in ambito filosofico e storico. Ne è un chiaro esempio Posidonio, definito un filosofo anche quando è utilizzato in contesti prettamente storici.³ D'altro canto Strabone non sarebbe stato né un geografo né uno storico, bensì un filosofo.⁴

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- 1 Per un inquadramento generale cfr. Gallo 1995 (= Gallo 1997, 167–184) e, più specificatamente, Giannattasio Andria. Non è questa, ovviamente, la sede per un'analisi del rapporto tra biografia e storia, ambiti comunque non così rigorosamente distinti come si potrebbe credere e come del resto lo stesso Plutarco indurrebbe a ritenere (*Alex.*, 1, 2; *Cim.*, 2, 2–5; *Nic.*, 1, 4). Cfr. Desideri; Piccirilli 1998; Cooper 2004. Vd. anche i contributi contenuti in Gallo – Moreschini, con la discussione di Cerri.
 - 2 Sui frammenti di Fania vd. Wehrli, 5–43; Engels, 266–351 (*FGrHist* 1012). La citazione plutarca corrisponde, rispettivamente, a F 25 e a F 19. Nella tradizione questo autore è noto come Φανίας (Fania) o Φανίας (Fenia) e quest'ultima forma, tipica del dialetto eolico, è da ritenersi più corretta. Per conformità grafica, si rispetta però la *lectio* seguita da Plutarco.
 - 3 *Mar.*, 45, 7; *Brut.*, 1, 7; *Marc.*, 20, 11 (= *FGrHist* 87 FF 37, 40, 43 = FF 255, 256, 257 Edelstein – Kidd = FF 249, 129, 93 Theiler).
 - 4 Significativamente Plutarco esprime questa valutazione citando gli ἱστορικὰ ὑπομνήματα dello scrittore di Amasea (*Luc.*, 28, 8 = *FGrHist* 91 F 9). Occorre comunque ricordare che, in quanto filosofo, Strabone è accomunato ad Antioco di Ascalona, citato subito prima; vd. inoltre *Caes.*, 63, 3 (= *FGrHist* 91 F 19), per la medesima definizione. Del resto lo stesso Strabone sosteneva l'utilità dei suoi scritti per la filosofia morale e politica (*Geogr.*, I, 1, 23).

Risalta, inoltre, la somiglianza del giudizio su Fania con quello su Teofrasto, nella *Vita di Alcibiade*,⁵ o con l'apprezzamento su un anonimo autore nella *Vita di Lisandro*, forse lo stesso Teofrasto (già citato in precedenza: *Lys.*, 13, 2; 19, 5 = FF 623, 618 FHS & G), piuttosto che Eforo o Posidonio.⁶ Un analogo stilema, peraltro, si riscontra anche per autori non greci, come Varrone.⁷ Sono passi di cui il Nikolaidis ha sottolineato l'importanza per comprendere le basi metodologiche di Plutarco nel valutare le sue fonti storiche, che spesso non coincidono con quanto pensano i moderni, poco propensi a giudicare positivamente Fania.⁸

Costui era particolarmente legato al concittadino Teofrasto, secondo una tradizione nota anche a Plutarco, che raccoglie la notizia, invero sospetta, secondo la quale i due avrebbero liberato Ereso dalla tirannide.⁹ È significativo che egli accomuni nel suo apprezzamento positivo questi due autori.¹⁰ Il legame tra Fania e Teofrasto può far supporre un approccio simile nell'indagine storico-biografica, almeno per quanto riguarda la raccolta di aneddoti su personaggi celebri del mondo greco, nell'ambito di un interesse condiviso da molti Peripatetici, a cominciare da Aristotele (vd. Huxley). Numerosi sono del resto gli scrittori, legati a diverso titolo a questa scuola, le cui opere vengono utilizzate da Plutarco.¹¹

Come è noto, uno dei principi basilari del metodo di lavoro del Cheronese nelle sue biografie è l'uso dell'aneddotica per definire, attraverso pochi tratti ma mirati, la psicologia e il carattere del protagonista.¹² Questa angolazione prettamente etica (a scapito di altri aspetti, come quello cronologico) doveva avere notevole importanza nelle opere di Fania e anche di Teofrasto. Plutarco cita spesso quest'ultimo autore, anche quando offre una versione alternativa

5 10, 4 (= F 705 FHS & G): εἰ δὲ Θεοφράστῳ πιστεύομεν, ἄνδρι φιληκόῳ καὶ ἱστορικῷ παρ' ὄντινοῦν τῶν φιλοσόφων.

6 *Lys.*, 25, 5 (= *FGrHist* 596 F 7).

7 *Rom.*, 12, 3 (= *Gramm. Rom. Fragm.*, T 21 Funaioli); cfr. *Sert.*, 9, 10, su Giuba di Mauritania (= *FGrHist* 275 T 10).

8 Vd. Nikolaidis. Per una rivalutazione, almeno parziale, del Peripatetico cfr. Muccioli 2004.

9 Vd. *Non posse*, 1097b; cfr. *Adv. Col.*, 1126 f, dove è menzionato il solo Teofrasto (= F 7 Wehrli² = *FGrHist* 1012 T 7 = FF 33a, 33b FHS & G). Non escludono che Fania (peraltro autore di un'opera intitolata *Τυράννων ἀναίρεσις ἐκ τιμωρίας*) abbia avuto un ruolo nella cacciata di uno dei tiranni di Lesbo sia Wehrli, 28, sia Engels, 296–297.

10 Per converso, cfr. le critiche espresse nei confronti di Duride di Samo, in rapporti diretti o (più probabilmente) indiretti, con Teofrasto e il Peripato (partic. *Per.*, 28, 1–3; *Alc.*, 32, 1–2; cfr. *Demosth.*, 19, 2–3; 23, 4; *Phoc.*, 4, 3–4; *Eum.*, 1, 1–3 = *FGrHist* 76 FF 67, 70; cfr. FF 38, 39, 50, 53).

11 Vd. i passi citati in Helmbold – O'Neil, e le osservazioni di Giannattasio Andria.

12 Cfr., tra gli altri, Valgiglio 1987; Valgiglio 1991; Hershbell.

rispetto alla vulgata (sebbene poi, di fatto, non la segua).¹³ L'importanza di Teofrasto si misura però soprattutto nella descrizione dei tipi umani. Sebbene Plutarco non utilizzi mai, almeno dichiarandolo esplicitamente, i suoi *Caratteri*, è generalmente riconosciuto dalla critica che quest'opera dovesse fornire una tipologia comportamentale di notevole importanza per la caratterizzazione dei personaggi delle *Vite* (e anche per diversi *exempla* riportati nei *Moralia*).¹⁴ Oltre a ciò, l'aneddotica presente in Teofrasto è a più riprese utilizzata.¹⁵ Rilevanti sono poi le allusioni ai suoi Πολιτικά πρὸς τοὺς καιροὺς, che dovevano essere oggetto di grande attenzione da parte di Plutarco, come testimonia il Περὶ Θεοφράστου πρὸς τοὺς καιροὺς πολιτικῶν in due libri, purtroppo noto solo per la menzione nel catalogo di Lampria (nr. 53).¹⁶

La ricerca dell'aneddoto per evidenziare l'ἦθος del personaggio era anche una peculiarità di Fania. Al riguardo, il Bodin opportunamente ha definito il Lesbio l'inventore dell'aneddoto di carattere, basandosi proprio su un'analisi minuziosa (ma anche in parte congetturale) del suo influsso nella *Vita di Temistocle* plutarchea, dove viene citato a più riprese.¹⁷ Comunque sia, è assodato che, sebbene Plutarco menzioni numerosi scrittori in questa biografia, Fania ne costituisca fonte di notevole importanza.¹⁸ Non sappiamo però quale o quali opere venissero utilizzate dal Cheronese, anche se è prevalente l'ipotesi di un qualche scritto di stampo biografico o contenente materiale biografico.¹⁹ Tuttavia nessuna delle fonti che citano questo autore parla esplicitamente di biografie scritte da Fania, anche se spesso il suo nome è accostato a quello di Neante (di Cizico), autore rilevante nello sviluppo della biografia greca e databile alla seconda metà circa del IV secolo, secondo recenti indagini (vd. Burkert).

Ciò detto, è comunque evidente, a giudicare da Plut., *Them.*, 1, 2 ss., che il Lesbio raccoglieva ed elaborava materiale biografico, coprendo tutta o buona parte della vita del protagonista, partendo dai tratti distintivi della famiglia (e dell'appartenenza al γένος dei Licomidi) fino all'esilio e, presumibilmente, alla

13 Così è, ad es., in *Sol.*, 4, 7; *Ages.*, 36, 11; *Per.*, 35, 5; *Lys.*, 19, 5; *Nic.*, 11, 10 (= FF 583, 605, 616, 618, 639 FHS & G).

14 Vd. *Thes.*, 32, 1; *Theophr.*, *Char.*, 26, 6–7, con le osservazioni di Pelling, 181–182. Cfr. Lane Fox; Aalders – De Blois, 3998; Titchener; Boulogne.

15 Ad es., quanto è affermato in *Alc.*, 10, 4 figura anche in *De prof. in virt.*, 80d (senza citazione di Teofrasto); *Praec. ger. reip.*, 804a (= F 705 FHS & G). Cfr. Becchi, 60–63.

16 Sulle citazioni ipotizzabili di quest'opera di Teofrasto nel *Corpus Plutarcheum* cfr. Mirhady.

17 1, 2; 7, 7; 13, 5; 27, 8; 29, 11 (= FF 23–26, 28 Wehrli² = *FGrHist* 1012 FF 17–20, 22). Cfr. Bodin, 151 ss.

18 Cfr., per tutti, Flacelière 1961, 98 (che ascrive al Lesbio anche parte del cap. 6); Cooper 1995; Frost, 31–32, 55, 96–97 e passim; Marr, 71, 147; Piccirilli 1999, XLII–XLIII, 222 e passim.

19 Così Engels, 294–295, 320–321, 328–342, con status quaestionis.

morte. Pertanto, se non di una vera e propria biografia, si trattava di una raccolta di aneddoti, che, con particolare attenzione per l'aspetto etico, offrono un ritratto di Temistocle spesso divergente dal resto della tradizione.²⁰

È stato osservato che Fania poneva l'accento sui chiaroscuri o sulle ambiguità caratteriali e comportamentali dell'Ateniense, in linea con quella che si suppone che fosse la visione aristotelica e, più in generale, peripatetica. Così l'Engels ha affermato che «judged by the standards of Aristotle's ethics and the Peripatetic school Themistokles (unlike Solon) was no example for P.[hainias]'s readers to imitate».²¹ È evidente tuttavia che questa affermazione non è esente dal vizio di circolarità, dal momento che pressoché tutte le citazioni di Fania su Temistocle dipendono da Plutarco.²² Dunque, per condividerla o meno, non si può prescindere da un'analisi puntuale dell'utilizzo di questo autore nella *Vita di Temistocle* e dalla ricezione plutarchea della sua testimonianza.

In primo luogo, è facile supporre che l'opera di Fania abbia attirato l'attenzione del Cheronese, interessato a fornire una rappresentazione non solo encomiastica dei suoi protagonisti ma a tutto tondo, ossia non trascurando talora anche aspetti negativi o parzialmente negativi, in quella che è stata chiamata la tradizione nera delle biografie.²³ Il quadro delle testimonianze su Temistocle, che nella *Vita* si articola attraverso una serie di aneddoti non esenti da salti cronologici e incongruenze, trova numerosi riscontri ma pure divergenze non trascurabili nei *Moralia*, in particolare nel *De Herodoti malignitate*.²⁴ Non è chiaro quale sia il rapporto cronologico tra il trattato dei *Moralia* e la *Vita di Temistocle*, anche se è prevalente l'opinione di chi esclude una composizione coeva.²⁵ È in ogni caso evidente che nell'insistita e implacabile polemica antierodotea del *De Herodoti malignitate* l'esaltazione di Temistocle passi inevitabilmente in secondo piano, poiché desiderio primario di Plutarco è convincere il lettore della parzialità dello storico di Alicarnasso.

20 Lo stesso accade per le pagine di Fania su Solone: vd. Plut., *Sol.*, 14, 2; 32, 3 (= Phan., FF 20, 21 Wehrli² = *FGrHist* 1012 FF 14, 15 = Heracl. Pont., F 148 Wehrli²).

21 Engels, 329. Cfr. Arist., *Ath. resp.*, 23, 1-4; 25, 3-4; *Pol.*, II, 1274a, 12 ss.; V, 1304a, 22 ss. Da quanto si desume dalla *Costituzione degli Ateniesi*, Aristotele (o chi per lui) presentava Temistocle come un «democratico», ostile all'Areopago e addirittura collaboratore di Efiatte; in ogni caso il filosofo si poneva il dubbio su quale valutazione fornire di Temistocle e in che misura si potessero conciliare rispetto della costituzione e della carica e abilità personali che trascendono il rispetto delle leggi; così è, esplicitamente, in *Pol.*, V, 1309a, 33 ss., dove il filosofo avrebbe avuto proprio in mente le figure di Temistocle e di Aristide. Per questa ipotesi cfr. Newman, 161.

22 Unica eccezione è Athen., II, 48c (= F 27 Wehrli² = *FGrHist* 1012 F 21).

23 In proposito importanti considerazioni sono in Piccirilli 1989.

24 Un'utile casistica e un raffronto tra *Moralia* e *Vite* sono proposti da Valgiglio 1992, 3981 per Temistocle.

25 Così Bowen, 2-3; cfr. anche Teodorsson. Diversamente Wardman, 189.

Tutt'altro tono è invece nella *Vita* in cui prevalgono, per dirla con lo Stadter, «the rhetorical aims». Agli occhi del Cheronese Temistocle rappresentava, per molti versi e pur con tutti i suoi chiaroscuri, un personaggio autenticamente esemplare, ovvero l'eroe che, grazie alla battaglia di Salamina, salvò la sua terra e che, nonostante l'invidia, riuscì a garantirsi una gloria duratura, anche in esilio.²⁶ È un aspetto palmare tanto nella biografia quanto in numerosi altri passi dell'intera opera plutarchea.²⁷

Plutarco si rende conto di dover operare delle scelte, nella selezione del materiale attinente al suo eroe. Infatti una figura come quella di Temistocle, in sé davvero romanzesca, ben si prestava a storie da *feuilleton*, riguardo a diversi aspetti della sua vita nonché della sua stessa morte; le sue vicende erano oggetto di ampia attenzione, se non biografica, quanto meno aneddótica anche nel mondo romano.²⁸

Già la sua origine era segnata dall'ambiguità. Il problema dei natali toccava in generale gli scrittori di biografie e Plutarco in particolare, decisamente attento a questo aspetto.²⁹ Infatti la madre di Temistocle, secondo la *communis opinio*, si sarebbe chiamata Abrotono, e sarebbe stata di stirpe tracia.³⁰ Invece, a dire di Fania, costei era caria e il suo nome Euterpe; secondo Neante, addirittura, la sua città di origine era Alicarnasso.³¹ Quella proposta dai due scrittori è dunque una versione alternativa, segnalata ma non seguita da Plutarco.³² Infatti il particolare dell'origine tracia della madre di Temistocle figura anche nell'*Amatorius* (753d), dove si afferma esplicitamente che

26 Stadter, 357–358.

27 Vd., ad es., *Quaest. Rom.*, 270b–c; *De glor. Athen.*, 349d; *De am. prol.*, 496e–f; *Praec. ger. reip.*, 812b (sulla scarsa riconoscenza degli Ateniesi; cfr. *Them.*, 22, 1; *Reg. et imp. apophth.*, 185d–e; *De laude ipsius*, 541d–e); *Non posse*, 1097c, 1099e; *Adv. Col.*, 1116 f; *De lat. viv.*, 1129b. Vd. inoltre *Them.*, 17, 1–2 e *De Her. mal.*, 871d, a proposito di quanto avvenne dopo la battaglia di Salamina all'Istmo. Nel primo passo Plutarco afferma che tutti riconobbero il primato a Temistocle *καίπερ ἄκοντες*: segue la sottolineatura dell'invidia che perseguita il protagonista e il riconoscimento, invero generico, della sua superiorità; nel secondo luogo, invece, critica Erodoto (VIII, 123–124) per non aver biasimato la *φιλοτιμία* dei generali greci che attribuivano il secondo premio a Temistocle, riservando il primo ciascuno per sé. Cfr. Stadter, 361, nota 12.

28 Cfr. Tuplin, 155–157.

29 Vd. *Alc.*, 1, 3, dove il biografo osserva che, se di Alcibiade conosciamo persino i nomi della nutrice e del precettore, è invece ignoto come si chiamassero le madri di Nicia, Demostene, Lamaco, Formione, Trasibulo e Teramene.

30 *Them.*, 1, 1. Cfr. Ael., *V.H.*, XII, 43; Athen., XIII, 576c (dall'opera di Anficrate intitolata *Sugli uomini famosi* = *FHG*, IV, 300, F 1); *Anth. Pal.*, VII, 306.

31 *Them.*, 1, 2 (la citazione di Neante corrisponde a *FGrHist* 84 F 2b; vd. anche Athen., XIII, 576d = F 2a).

32 La maggioranza degli studiosi moderni non accetta l'origine caria della madre. Per una rivalutazione della tradizione trasmessa da Fania e da Neante cfr. Nollé – Wenninger, 56.

Abrotono non era una moglie legittima, ma solo una compagna, unitasi a Neocle senza ἐγγύη (il che spiega la condizione di νόθος del figlio), giustificando, nella finzione del dialogo, matrimoni siffatti di contro a quelli con donne nobili sì ma anche altezzose e intrattabili. La sottolineatura del sangue misto di Temistocle, indipendentemente da queste varianti nelle fonti, serve a Plutarco per rimarcare come questi, fin da quando era νεανίσκος, riuscì ad eliminare la distinzione tra cittadini spuri e puri (*Them.*, 1, 3).³³

Il riconoscimento dello status di νόθος per Temistocle non implica però l'accettazione di tutta l'aneddotica sui rapporti con i familiari: così il biografo rigetta come fandonie le storie romanzesche che riferivano che Temistocle era stato diseredato dal padre o che la madre aveva commesso suicidio per il disonore (*Them.*, 2, 8).³⁴ È una scelta metodologica decisa, che comporta un cambiamento di prospettiva rispetto ai *Moralia*, dove invece tali aneddoti sono o semplicemente ricordati (*Reg. et imp. apophth.*, 184f) o sfruttati e contestualizzati (*De sera num. vind.*, 552b). Non va poi trascurata anche l'affermazione del *De amore prolis* (496e–f), secondo cui Neocle morì prima di vedere il successo del figlio a Salamina, giacché spesso ἔκτροφή e ἰατρική richiedono tempi lunghi e notevoli fatiche e non sempre i genitori arrivano a vedere la manifestazione dell'ἀρετή nei figli.³⁵

Nei capitoli successivi della *Vita di Temistocle* l'influsso di Fania diventa più tangibile, così come è più tangibile l'utilizzo di altre fonti peripatetiche, rappresentate da Teofrasto ma anche da autori come Aristone di Ceo.³⁶ Proprio nel *milieu* dei discepoli di Aristotele doveva essere attribuita particolare importanza al rapporto di Temistocle con Mnesifilo, che a sua volta sarebbe stato discepolo di Solone, così come riferito da Clemente Alessandrino (*Strom.*, I, 65, 3). Il confronto tra *Them.*, 2, 6 ss.; *Sept. sap. conv.*, 154c–d, 156a–e e *An seni resp. ger. sit.*, 795c dimostra che la successione Solone–Mnesifilo–Temistocle è accreditata anche da Plutarco. In realtà questa è assai inverosimile dal punto di vista cronologico, giacché Mnesifilo, ateniese del demo di Frearri (lo stesso di Temistocle), sarebbe vissuto così a lungo da ascoltare Solone (morto attorno al 560) ed essere stato consigliere di Temistocle nel 480,

33 In realtà, giuridicamente è quanto meno dubbio che a quell'epoca vi fosse tale differenza, sicché occorre pensare che Temistocle fosse γνήσιος a tutti gli effetti. Cfr., per tutti, Piccirilli 1987, 26–27; Piccirilli 1999, 222–223, 359.

34 A tal proposito, il Piccirilli ha individuato un'implicita polemica con Eschine di Sfetto e le altre fonti che presentavano la giovinezza di Temistocle a tinte fosche: Piccirilli 1987, 24–31; Piccirilli 1999, 227–228.

35 Cfr. l'aneddoto riportato in *Them.*, 2, 8.

36 Vd. *Them.*, 3, 2; *Arist.*, 2, 2–4 (= Aristo, FF 19, 20 Wehrli²), riguardo all'innamoramento di Temistocle e di Aristide per lo stesso fanciullo, Stesileo originario di Ceo.

nell'imminenza della battaglia di Salamina (ne risulterebbe dunque una vita centenaria e forse più!).³⁷

Il collegamento, implicito ma tangibile, che viene a crearsi tra Solone e Temistocle, può sembrare bizzarro ma forse trovava fertile humus proprio nella tradizione peripatetica, Fania in primis. Infatti questi, a quanto scrive Plutarco, riteneva che Solone, per la salvezza di Atene, fosse ricorso all'inganno sia dei nullatenenti sia dei nobili, promettendo agli uni la ripartizione della terra e agli altri la conferma dei titoli di credito. A proposito di questo giudizio più di uno studioso ha parlato di un Solone temistocleo, giacché l'aneddoto è incentrato sul motivo dell'ἄπάρτη, ovvero l'intelligenza messa al servizio delle contingenze politiche (motivo peraltro presente nella tradizione anche per altri dei Sette Saggi).³⁸

Ma indipendentemente da questa artata διαδοχή filosofica di impronta peripatetica, il ruolo di Mnesifilo come consigliere del giovane Temistocle costituisce un *Leitmotiv* della parte iniziale della biografia e simboleggia, pur con alcune importanti limitazioni, l'influsso della filosofia sul carattere indomito del protagonista, che si lascia piegare a facili suggestioni. Infatti Plutarco, che, sotto diversi aspetti, dipende dal racconto di Tucidide e dalla sua valutazione positiva nei confronti di Temistocle, qui se ne distacca notevolmente. Per lo storico ateniese, infatti, l'uomo politico era dotato di una οἰκεία ξύνεσις.³⁹ Plutarco, ovviamente, riconosce a Temistocle il dono della σύνεσις, sua caratteristica precipua e quasi paradigmatica. Così è anche nel *De Alexandri Magni fortuna aut virtute* (II, 343a), dove si afferma che Alessandro Magno seppe assommare in sé questa dote temistoclea, nonché il φρόνημα di Ciro, la σωφροσύνη di Agesilao, l'ἔμπειρία di Filippo, la τόλμα di Brasida, la δεινότης e la πολιτεία di Pericle, per rimanere solo ai personaggi storici.⁴⁰ Tuttavia la σύνεσις, senza un'adeguata παιδεία, non può dar luogo a un buon carattere: è questa la conclusione che Plutarco propugna, nella *Vita di Temistocle* e altrove, in consonanza con una teoria etica propria di Aristotele e dei suoi discepoli.⁴¹

Ma c'è di più. Mnesifilo, precisa Plutarco (*Them.*, 2, 6), non era un retore o un cosiddetto filosofo naturalista, ma professava, basandosi sull'insegnamento

37 Per i contorni storici di questo personaggio e i suoi rapporti con Temistocle cfr. Frost, 20, 61–62; Marr, 74; Piccirilli 1999, 226–227.

38 Plut., *Sol.*, 14, 2. Cfr. Adcock, 8; Ferrara 1964a, 20, nota 11; Ferrara 1964b, 60; Piccirilli 1995, 178–179; Engels, 322–323 (che propende per una falsificazione di Fania). Per una riconsiderazione generale di questa tradizione altera riguardante Solone cfr. Leão 2003–2004.

39 Thuc., I, 138, 3. Cfr. Martin, 327–331.

40 Vd. anche *Cim.*, 5, 1.

41 Cfr. Piccirilli 1999, 225. In una prospettiva in parte diversa da quella qui proposta, cfr. inoltre Duff 2005; id. 2008, con importanti considerazioni sulla concezione plutarchea della παιδεία.

di Solone, quella che allora si chiamava σοφία, ovvero la δεινότης πολιτική e la δραστήριος σύνεσις. Dunque una saggezza eminentemente pratica (e quindi in un certo senso parziale e non completamente soddisfacente agli occhi di Plutarco), ben diversa peraltro da quella utilizzata per l'arte oratoria, che diede luogo alla sofistica. È chiara nel testo la polemica contro i sofisti, sicché non pare fuor di luogo ipotizzare in questa sezione della biografia, in parte sulla scorta del Cooper, l'utilizzo o l'influsso del Πρὸς τοὺς σοφιστάς di Fania.⁴² A ciò si aggiunga un possibile riecheggiamento di tematiche platoniche, ben note a Plutarco.⁴³ Va inoltre osservato che il giudizio del Cheronese, mutuato dalla sua fonte, non coincide perfettamente con quello dei moderni, che tendono invece a considerare Mnesifilo il primo sofista o, per lo meno, un precursore dei sofisti.⁴⁴

Del resto la finalità eminentemente pratica della saggezza di Mnesifilo, in linea con la posizione di Solone,⁴⁵ sembra risentire del dibattito sull'ideale filosofico nella *Vita* dello statista ateniese (anche in riferimento ai Sette Sapienti), vivo nel Peripato ed espresso dalle posizioni divergenti di Dicearco e di Eraclide Pontico. Plutarco sembra attestarsi verso una posizione più vicina a quella di Dicearco, secondo cui costoro non erano filosofi ma valenti legislatori.⁴⁶

La presenza della figura di Mnesifilo nel cap. 2 induce inoltre a ritenere che Plutarco, nella sua valutazione di Temistocle, non condividesse il giudizio negativo espresso su di lui da Platone. Secondo il filosofo costui incarnava il falso uomo di Stato, attento più a ciò che è utile che a ciò che è giusto (*Gorg.*, 455d–e, 519a; cfr. *Leg.*, IV, 706c). Questo apprezzamento negativo viene di fatto respinto nel corso della *Vita*, giacché Plutarco antepone espressamente la salvezza della Grecia al problema dell'eventuale corruzione della vita pubblica, che lascia in esame ai filosofi, con allusione proprio a Platone (vd. *Them.* 4,4–6). In una prospettiva eminentemente pragmatica, per il Cheronese l'arte oratoria è fondamentale per l'uomo politico, se vuole persuadere i concittadini, come viene sottolineato in particolare nei *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae* (801c ss.).⁴⁷

In chiave più generale, il rapporto Mnesifilo–Temistocle ripropone concretamente un tema a lungo sviluppato e sviscerato, in molti suoi aspetti,

42 Cfr. Cooper 1995, 332–335 (che peraltro ritiene che tutte le citazioni da Fania nelle biografie di Temistocle e di Solone siano dipendenti da quest'opera). *Contra*, Engels, 321.

43 Cfr. Marr, 74–75 (con rimando a Plato, *Gorg.*, 463a–465c).

44 Cfr., tra gli altri, Untersteiner, 6, nota a F 1a; Cooper 1995, 333; Durán López, 165.

45 Oltre a *Them.*, 2, 6 vd. *Sol.*, 3, 8.

46 Vd. Diog. Laert., I, 25 (= Heracl. Pont., F 45 Wehrli²) e 40 (= Dicaearch., F 30 Wehrli² = F 37 Mirhady); cfr. Piccirilli 1995, 124.

47 Cfr. l'analisi di Pérez Jiménez 2002a.

da Plutarco, sia nelle *Vite* sia in numerosi trattati (soprattutto quelli politici) e ancora di stringente attualità ai suoi tempi: l'importanza o, meglio, la necessità della παιδεία filosofica dell'uomo politico o del principe (vd. in particolare *Maxime cum principibus philosopho esse disserendum* e *Ad principem ineruditum* oppure il rapporto tra Platone e Dione, motivo dominante non solo nella biografia omonima).⁴⁸ Un insegnamento tanto più necessario per Temistocle, se si considerano l'incostanza e la volubilità, caratteristiche che, manifestate fin dall'inizio della gioventù, furono peraltro solo parzialmente temperate dall'educazione filosofica. Oltre che dominato dalla φιλοτιμία, come del resto altri protagonisti delle *Vite* (qui risolta in chiave prevalentemente positiva) egli è incline allo ζῆλος. Così risulta a proposito del trionfo di Milziade, che suscitò tale impressione su Temistocle da indurlo ad una vera μεταβολή nello stile di vita.⁴⁹ L'emulazione nei confronti di Milziade, è stato notato, ricorda quella di Teseo nei confronti di Eracle e rappresenta un topos nella rappresentazione plutarchea dei personaggi.⁵⁰

Accanto al tema dello ζῆλος vi è quello dell'invidia (φθόνος), intesa però per lo più in chiave positiva, ovvero l'invidia nei confronti di Temistocle, finendo così col risultare un mezzo per rimarcare la gloria del protagonista. Anzi, è una costante nella rappresentazione del personaggio nell'intero *Corpus Plutarcheum*, applicabile tanto a Temistocle quanto ad altri protagonisti.⁵¹

Una consonanza con le tematiche attinenti all'educazione di Temistocle si manifesta anche in altri contesti, dove è maggiormente approfondita la dimensione filosofica di Mnesifilo: *Sept. Sap. conv.*, 154c–d, 156a–e e *An seni resp. ger. sit.*, 795c. Nel primo testo Mnesifilo è definito esplicitamente ἐταῖρος e ζηλωτῆς Σόλωνος e la sua presenza, pur secondaria, serve proprio a sottolineare il suo ruolo al fianco di Solone, quasi a esserne un portavoce.⁵² Nella seconda opera, esaltando l'importanza degli anziani al fianco dei giovani,

48 Sul tema cfr., recentemente, Roskam 2002.

49 *Them.*, 3, 4. Questo aneddoto ricorre spesso nel *Corpus Plutarcheum*; vd. *De prof. in virt.*, 84b; *De cap. ex inim. ut.*, 92c; *Reg. et imp. apophth.*, 184 f–185a; *Praec. ger. reip.*, 800b; *Thes.*, 6, 9, con l'analisi di A. Pérez Jiménez, proposta in questo stesso convegno. Cfr. anche, ad es., Cic., *Tusc.*, IV, 44; Philod., *Rhet.*, II, 205, 26–32 Sudhaus; Val. Max., VIII, 14, *ext.* 1; Liban., *Decl.*, IX, 12. Sembra però trattarsi di un'invenzione, perché il trofeo monumentale di Maratona fu elevato nel 460 ca., quindi ben prima della data presunta dell'aneddoto (tra il 490 e il 480); cfr. Beschi. Sul concetto di ζῆλος in Plutarco cfr. Pérez Jiménez 2002b.

50 Così Piccirilli 1999, 231.

51 Vd., espressamente, *Praec. ger. reip.*, 805c: «L'attaccare infatti per ragioni di invidia un uomo onesto e che occupa il primo posto, per le sue virtù, come fecero Simmia con Pericle, Alcmeone con Temistocle, Clodio con Pompeo, l'oratore Meneclide con Epaminonda, non apporta né buona riputazione, né, in alcun modo, utilità» (trad. E. Valgiglio); cfr. anche *De inv. et od.*, 537 f. Cfr., da ultimo, le osservazioni di Verdegem.

52 Cfr. Lo Cascio, 60–61.

Plutarco non casualmente ricorda la coppia Cimone-Temistocle e i loro consiglieri Aristide e Mnesifilo. La rivalità tra Cimone e Temistocle, tangibile nelle rispettive biografie, qui passa del tutto in secondo piano, di fronte all'esaltazione degli altri due: Aristide e Mnesifilo recuperarono e ben indirizzarono alla retta via i due giovani, oggetto di biasimo in città e con la non invidiabile nomea di essere impudenti e dissoluti (cfr. *Praec. ger. reip.*, 800b).

È interessante notare come nella *Vita* e in questi passi sia del tutto omesso il prezioso suggerimento offerto da Mnesifilo a Temistocle prima della battaglia di Salamina, come risulta invece in *De Her. mal.*, 869d–e, in chiara e in parte faziosa polemica con quanto affermato da Her., VIII, 57–58. Plutarco rimprovera Erodoto di aver sottostimato il ruolo di Temistocle, a favore di Mnesifilo, da lui presentato in modo del tutto neutro se non, addirittura, sottilmente negativo. Nella biografia invece vi è un significativo ribaltamento di prospettiva, in cui Mnesifilo costituisce figura importante per la μεταβολή etica di Temistocle.

La testimonianza di Fania per la caratterizzazione di Temistocle diventa ancora più tangibile in *Them.*, 7. Il tema è quello della corruzione dell'Ateniense, peraltro ben presente già nell'opera erodotea e in altri autori, citati nella *Vita*, come Timocreonte.⁵³ Si tratta di un filone fortemente critico nei confronti di Temistocle, che Plutarco non può esimersi dal menzionare, pur rifiutandone o sminuendone l'attendibilità.⁵⁴ Infatti nella *Vita* il protagonista, pur con le sue ombre, si sottrae a questa accusa, giacché il denaro fornito dagli Eubei viene utilizzato per indurre a rimanere e a combattere all'Artemisio quelli che sono i suoi oppositori: il comandante spartano Euribiade e il trierarca ateniese della nave sacra, Architele. Significativamente il biografo prima ricorda il racconto di Erodoto, ma subito dopo gli preferisce quello di Fania, in cui è contenuto l'episodio relativo ad Architele, racconto sicuramente meno ostile all'Ateniense e in linea con il pensiero plutarcheo.⁵⁵ Non vi è infatti contraddizione con quanto affermato altrove nel *Corpus Plutarcheum*, secondo cui a Temistocle, esempio di incorrotta virtù, si può imputare solo una

53 *Them.*, 21, 3 ss. (= Timocr., FF 1–3 Page); cfr. Her., VIII, 109 ss.

54 In proposito cfr. Piccirilli 1989, 7–8.

55 *Them.*, 7, 6–7. Cfr. Her., VIII, 4–5 (dove è menzionato anche il corinzio Adimanto). Il racconto di Fania è peraltro guardato con sospetto dalla critica; cfr., da ultimo, Engels, 330–332. Al contrario, per una sua rivalutazione dal punto di vista storico cfr. Piccirilli 1999, 240–241 e le importanti osservazioni di Fernández Nieto: il passo si accorda con Diod., XI, 12, 4 (verosimilmente da Eforo), in cui si afferma che Euribiade aveva il comando delle operazioni navali (ναυαρχία) mentre a Temistocle era riservata la διοίκηση generale, all'interno della quale poteva certo trovare posto un episodio come quello descritto da Fania. Cfr. anche Ael., *V.H.*, XIII, 40.

benevola attenzione nei confronti degli amici.⁵⁶ L'utilizzo nel passo della *Vita di Temistocle* di Erodoto va confrontato con la critica allo storico di Alicarnasso formulata nel *De Herodoti malignitate* (867b–c), in termini peraltro diversi e senza che lì venga contrapposta una versione alternativa: l'accento è posto sull'aspetto patriottico (come sovente nel trattato) e sul fatto che Erodoto non offre altri motivi, plausibili o no, circa la permanenza della flotta alleata presso l'Artemisio, aspetti questi peraltro del tutto assenti nella biografia.

La diversità rispetto al racconto erodoteo emerge ancor più in *Them.*, 13, dove figura il giudizio positivo su Fania. Il biografo si sofferma sul sacrificio umano dei figli di Sandace (o Sandauce), sorella del re Serse, suggerito a Temistocle dall'indovino Eufrantide.⁵⁷ La critica ha a lungo discusso sulla realtà storica di questo sacrificio e, generalmente, è propensa a considerare l'episodio inattendibile.⁵⁸ Lo stesso Plutarco, rifacendosi all'autorità di Fania, sembra quasi prenderne le distanze; a tal proposito è stato osservato che la valutazione positiva sul Peripatetico non è una valutazione assoluta di merito, ma è espressa proprio per accreditare il suo racconto, che altrimenti correrebbe il rischio di essere poco credibile.⁵⁹ Questa osservazione, comunque non trascurabile, va messa però in connessione con il succitato giudizio sugli autori peripatetici, e in rapporto con il pensiero di Plutarco stesso sui sacrifici umani.

La reazione di Temistocle di fronte alle parole di Eufrantide è sgomenta (13, 4), paragonabile a quella di Pelopida di fronte alla necessità di procedere a sacrifici umani, prima della battaglia di Leuttra.⁶⁰ Tuttavia, aggiunge Plutarco, la moltitudine (οἱ πολλοί) si mise ad invocare ad un'unica voce il dio e impose all'Ateniese il sacrificio a Dioniso Ὠμηστής.⁶¹ La spiegazione che viene fornita del suo comportamento è tipicamente plutarchea: la folla fece ciò perché nei grandi cimenti e nelle situazioni difficili suole riporre speranza di salvezza più

56 Vd. *Them.*, 5, 6; 18, 2; *Reg. et imp. apophth.*, 185d; *De vit. pud.*, 534e; *Praec. ger. reip.*, 807a–b, 808 f.

57 Costei è chiamata Mandane in Diod., XI, 57, 1. Cfr. Plut., *Arist.*, 9, 2; *Pel.*, 21, 3.

58 Così, ad es., Engels, 332–336; Frost, 135; Marr, 105; Piccirilli 1999, 252–253. Privilegia invece il racconto di Plutarco, rispetto a quello di Erodoteo, Mikalson, 78–79, secondo cui lo scrittore di Alicarnasso avrebbe omesso l'episodio in quanto empio e non consono allo spirito greco. Cfr. anche l'analisi di García López, 153–155.

59 Marr, 106; cfr. 71.

60 Vd. Plut., *Pel.*, 21, 1–2: al Tebano apparvero in sogno le Leuttridi, che si lamentavano sulle loro tombe e maledivano gli Spartiati, e il loro padre Scedaso, che gli ingiungeva di sacrificare alle figlie una vergine ξανθή. Cfr. *Narr. amat.*, 773b–774d; *De Her. mal.*, 856 f, nonché, con differenze anche notevoli, Xen., *Hell.*, VI, 4, 7; Diod., XV, 54; Paus., IX, 13, 5–6.

61 Questo epiteto ricorre in *Them.*, 13, 3 ma anche in *Arist.*, 9, 2; *Pel.*, 21, 3; cfr. *Ant.*, 24, 5 (riferito ad Antonio, col significato di crudele); vd. anche *De cohib. ira*, 462b (usato come semplice aggettivo riferito, per metonimia, al vino). Cfr. Valgiglio 1988, 245–246; García López, 154 e nota 21.

nell'irrazionale che in ciò che è razionale. La contrapposizione tra irrazionale (τὰ παράλογα) e razionale (τὰ εὐλογα) è nel passo la chiave per spiegare l'imposizione del sacrificio e l'impossibilità di Temistocle di opporsi a tanta crudeltà, ed è una spiegazione valevole tanto per Plutarco quanto, presumibilmente, per lo stesso Fania, in base ai suoi retaggi peripatetici.

Premuto dall'irrazionalità dei πολλοί, Temistocle rinuncia alla sua dote principale, la σύνεσις, enfatizzata sia nella *Vita* sia nei *Moralia* e peraltro messa a frutto poco prima anche in occasione dello stratagemma adottato tramite Sicinno.⁶² E rinuncia altresì ad altre sue qualità etiche che si accompagnano alla σύνεσις e alla φιλοτιμία, ugualmente riportate da Plutarco: φρόνησις, τόλμα e πραότης.⁶³ Si tratta di una situazione che talora si presenta nelle biografie plutarchee: le masse agiscono in opposizione al protagonista e sono capaci a volte anche di imbrigliarne l'azione.⁶⁴ Lo stesso tema è presente nei trattati di argomento politico, come i *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae*, dove il rapporto tra *leaders* e masse popolari è analizzato in dettaglio, con chiaro giudizio negativo nei confronti di queste ultime.⁶⁵

Nel passo della *Vita di Temistocle* Plutarco è attento soprattutto all'aspetto psicologico, ma dietro vi è un sostrato religioso non facilmente eludibile per comprendere appieno l'episodio. Occorre pertanto rifarsi, per una visione più completa, alla succitata *Vita di Pelopida*, e alla rassegna di sacrifici umani, di età storica o mitica, con relativa discussione degli indovini e dei comandanti consultati da Pelopida (21, 1–6). Non è fuor di luogo supporre che le varie opinioni ivi espresse riflettano l'incertezza di Plutarco in materia e dunque sia lo scrittore stesso a esprimere pareri tra loro discordanti. Pur dimostrando profonda avversione per queste pratiche rituali che non sono consone allo spirito greco e neppure a quello romano, ma rappresentano qualcosa di βαρβαρικόν e di ἐκφυλον,⁶⁶ in un primo momento egli ammette che la loro validità era testimoniata dai successi che ne erano seguiti, tra i cui *exempla* è compreso Temistocle (21, 3). Agesilao, invece, si era rifiutato di sacrificare la propria figlia in Aulide, ἀπομαλθακισθεῖς, e per questo la sua spedizione si era

62 Vd. Plut., *Them.*, 12, 3–8; cfr. *Reg. et imp. apophth.*, 185b–c; Aesch., *Pers.*, 353–373; Her., VIII, 75–76; Nep., *Them.*, 4, 3–5; Diod., XI, 17, 1–2; Polyæn., I, 30, 3.

63 Per la prima vd. *De Her. mal.*, 869 f (in relazione al soprannome Odisseo). Per le altre passi e discussione sono in Martin; Piccirilli 1999, XIV–XVII.

64 Cfr. il loro ruolo nei βίοι di Dione e di Timoleonte. In proposito cfr., recentemente, Spada, con esaustiva bibliografia. Più in generale cfr. Prandi; Saïd (anche per le biografie dei Romani).

65 *Praec. ger. reip.*, 800c, 801e, 821 f, 822c. Cfr. *Per.*, 7, 8; 11, 4; 15, 1.

66 Così afferma a *Marc.*, 3, 6, riguardo alla sepoltura nel Foro Boario di due Greci e due Galli, imposta dai Libri sibillini. Sui barbari nell'opera e nel pensiero plutarchei fondamentale è Schmidt, 40–45, 63–64 (riguardo ai sacrifici umani).

risolta in un fallimento (21, 4).⁶⁷ Tuttavia, successivamente (21, 5–6), Plutarco propugna la tesi di quanti ritengono che a nessuno degli dèi sia gradito un sacrificio così barbaro e illecito; se mai esistono divinità che si compiacciono del sangue e delle uccisioni, si tratta di δαίμονες, che tuttavia sono ininfluenti: i sacrifici umani, pertanto, sono frutto dell'ἄσθενεία e della μοχθηρία dell'anima.

Il Cheronese è comunque incline ad ammettere l'esistenza e l'influenza nella vita umana di queste entità, che sono in una posizione intermedia tra gli uomini e gli dèi e che possono avere precise funzioni positive ma anche comportamenti altamente negativi e irrazionali.⁶⁸ Così nel *De defectu oraculorum* (417c–d) sostiene che non sono gli dèi a pretendere sacrifici umani, ma che questi vengono praticati per allontanare la collera e il risentimento di feroci e intrattabili demoni vendicatori.⁶⁹ A ciò si aggiunga che, per lui, Dioniso (come Eracle) non è un vero e proprio dio come Apollo, ma un δαίμων, che grazie alla sua virtù ha abbandonato τὸ θνητὸν καὶ παθητὸν.⁷⁰ Dioniso, pertanto, può avere sì connotazioni positive, ma anche negative e l'epiclesi ὤμηστίης sembra avvicinarlo chiaramente proprio alla sfera dei φαῦλοι δαίμονες ai quali vengono tributati i sacrifici umani.⁷¹

È dato cogliere un'altra differenza notevole tra la *Vita di Temistocle* e quanto affermato altrove da Plutarco anche nei capp. 27–29, a proposito del tema della προσκύνησις. In questi capitoli si assiste a quello che è stato chiamato il «Themistocles Romance»;⁷² è un racconto in cui, pur essendo menzionate diverse fonti, l'autore guida è con ogni probabilità Fania, espressamente citato due volte, nel cap. 27 e, in modo incidentale, nel cap. 29.⁷³

Plutarco è consapevole della cesura, fortissima, che costituisce l'esilio nella biografia di Temistocle, ed è altresì consapevole dei rischi del soggiorno in terra persiana per l'eroe e per la sua immagine. L'incontro con i 'barbari' persiani può costituire davvero motivo di corruzione e di traviamiento, nel pieno rispetto della concezione tipicamente greca e in parte stereotipata della vita persiana improntata al πλοῦτος e alla τρυφή, alla quale non sfugge il

67 Il racconto è diverso in Plut., *Lys.*, 27, 3 e, soprattutto, *Ages.*, 6, 6–11, dove non vi è menzione della figlia del re.

68 Vd. *Dion.*, 2, 3–6; *Brut.*, 37, 6. In generale, sul concetto di δαίμων/δαίμόνιον in Plutarco cfr., tra gli altri, Babut, 367 ss.; Brenk, 49 ss.; Valgiglio 1988, 79–88; Georgiadou, 165–171; Santaniello.

69 Vd., similmente, *De sup.*, 171b–e; cfr. anche *Quaest. Rom.*, 284c.

70 *Pel.*, 16, 8; cfr. *De Is. et Os.*, 361e (e, più in generale, 360d ss.); *De def. or.*, 421b–e.

71 L'espressione nel testo è in *De def. or.*, 417c; cfr. *Dion.*, 2, 6. Vd. anche *De E.*, 388e–389c, con le osservazioni di Moreschini, 134–136. Cfr. inoltre, per tutti, Valgiglio 1988, 233–247, sui vari livelli di funzionalità religiosa di Dioniso.

72 Cfr. Frost, 187; Marr, 147.

73 Per un utilizzo diffuso di Fania anche nei capp. 28–29 propende Bodin, 252 ss.; cfr. Wehrli, 36; Frost, 187 ss.; Marr, 147 ss.; Piccirilli 1999, 277 ss.

Cherone. ⁷⁴ Tale pericolo per Temistocle è però evitato, sia nella *Vita* sia nei *Moralia*. Infatti nel *De exilio* è esaltata la capacità dell'Ateniense di trovare la sua patria in una regione forestiera e il suo esempio è accomunato a quello di Demetrio Falereo (601f–602a). Il soggiorno lontano dalla terra natia non è degradante ma, fornito di adeguate risorse, serve a dimostrare la capacità di senno e di ragionamento, come appunto fece Temistocle. ⁷⁵ In esilio, egli non perse la fama che aveva ottenuto tra i Greci, ma acquisì anche quella guadagnata tra i barbari, tanto che nessuno vorrebbe degradarsi ad essere Leobote, l'artefice della sua condanna (605e): quest'ultimo personaggio, antifrastico a Temistocle, assurge agli onori della storia perché vive di luce riflessa, ovvero è protagonista solo in negativo, secondo uno schema antinomico peraltro ben consolidato nelle *Vite*. ⁷⁶

Nella *Vita di Temistocle* (27, 1–2), Plutarco, passando in rassegna numerosi storici, è dapprima incerto su quale sia il dinasta incontrato dall'Ateniense: Serse o il figlio (Artaserse I); accoglie poi il racconto di Tucidide (che fa apertamente menzione di Artaserse) in quanto meglio si adatta alle fonti cronografiche, pur non prive di incongruenze. ⁷⁷ Tuttavia, evitando volutamente di approfondire tale questione, utilizza Fania, in un lungo racconto in cui è sviluppato il tema dell'incontro di Temistocle con il chiliarco Artabano e successivamente con il sovrano, di cui peraltro non viene mai fatto il nome. ⁷⁸ Non sappiamo, in ultima analisi, se Fania, comunque interessato alle usanze persiane e al rapporto con la grecità, ⁷⁹ operasse una critica serrata all'atteggiamento dell'Ateniense oppure se ne condividesse l'operato, parzialmente o in toto. In ogni caso il suo racconto sul soggiorno in Asia Minore dell'Ateniense non coincide con quello della vulgata; ciò è evidente a proposito delle città che costui avrebbe ricevuto dal re, cinque per Neante e Fania, tre per οἱ πλεῖστοι. ⁸⁰

Il comportamento temistocleo può sembrare sorprendente, anche considerando la sua ferma condanna nei confronti dei barbari e di quanti erano con loro collusi. ⁸¹ In realtà, quello che interessa qui a Plutarco (indipendentemente

74 Cfr. i passi riportati e discussi in Schmidt, 107–139.

75 Sul soggiorno in Asia Minore di Temistocle vd. anche *Reg. et imp. apophth.*, 185e–f; *De Alex. Magni fort. aut virt.*, I, 328e–f.

76 Cfr. *Plut.*, *Them.*, 23, 1. Diversamente, in altri passi, Plutarco afferma che gli accusatori furono Alcmeone, Cimone e molti altri (*Arist.*, 25, 10) o il solo Alcmeone (*Praec. ger. reip.*, 805c). L'incongruenza è stata spiegata o con un errore di memoria o con due accuse ben distinte, una di Alcmeone e una di Leobote. Sono comunque noti anche altri nomi nella tradizione successiva.

77 Vd. *Thuc.*, I, 137, 3 e cfr. Frost, 191; Marr, 150.

78 Sui problemi di ordine storico del passo, oltre agli studi citati *supra*, nota 73, cfr. anche Flacelière 1953, 13.

79 Cfr. *Athen.*, II, 48c, con le osservazioni di Engels, 339–341.

80 *Them.*, 29, 11 (che corrisponde a *Neanth.*, *FGrHist* 84 F 17a; cfr. F 17b).

81 Vd. gli episodi riportati in *Them.*, 6, 3–4; cfr. *De def. or.*, 412a.

dalla *Tendenza* della fonte da lui utilizzata) è sottolineare l'intelligenza di Temistocle, che si manifesta attraverso la duttilità e la capacità di adattamento alle circostanze. Così egli può comportarsi come un barbaro tra i barbari o può essere davvero come Odisseo, secondo il soprannome che gli venne dato, noto allo stesso Plutarco (*De Her. mal.*, 869f). Infatti egli si presta a più riprese alla pratica della προσκύνησις e riesce, grazie alla sua abilità oratoria, unita alla fierezza e all'audacia, ad attirarsi la benevolenza del Gran Re.

Il tema della προσκύνησις ricorre più volte in questa sezione della biografia (27, 4–7; 28, 1; 29, 3) ed è svolto in contrasto con quanto affermato altrove da Plutarco (in linea con la mentalità greca). Infatti, evidentemente in base a informate fonti sulla realtà politica e religiosa persiana, tale atto di riverenza è correttamente inteso e non è considerato alla stessa stregua di una vera e propria divinizzazione del dinasta, come traspare dalle parole di Artabano a Temistocle: «noi abbiamo molte usanze belle, ma la più bella è questa: onorare il re e prostrarsi davanti a lui come davanti all'immagine della divinità che tutto conserva».⁸²

Se la προσκύνησις è nel complesso intesa positivamente per Temistocle, invece per altri protagonisti plutarchei ha decisamente una valenza negativa. In altri termini, l'adulazione nei confronti di un vivente attraverso tale atto finisce con l'essere assimilata alle τιμαί divine tributate a viventi, per cui Plutarco manifesta una vera e propria avversione, pur con qualche significativa eccezione.⁸³ Così vale per Ismenia alla corte del Gran Re nel 367 a.C., che furbescamente gettò l'anello davanti a sé e si piegò in avanti per prenderlo come se volesse prosternarsi; un comportamento ben differente da quello tenuto da Pelopida, che non commise οὐδὲν αἰσχρόν.⁸⁴

Se poi si allarga lo sguardo all'uso del termine προσκύνησις e del verbo προσκυνέω nell'intero *Corpus Plutarcheum*, si nota come ricorrano con una certa frequenza, per lo più non nel senso tecnico della *Vita di Temistocle* e talora in senso neutro o positivo (soprattutto in riferimento agli dèi) ma anche, in certi contesti, con un'accezione negativa.⁸⁵ Per Plutarco (e le altre fonti classiche) la προσκύνησις nei confronti degli umani è un atto di vile sottomissione, e προσκυνέω si attaglia meglio a un atto di devozione nei confronti degli dèi. Si tratta di un motivo ricorrente nel pensiero del Cheroneo, giacché costituisce una delle espressioni dell'inferiorità dei barbari, del tutto estreanea alla

82 *Them.*, 27, 4, su cui cfr., ad es., Panaino, 269. Sul problema della regalità achemenide cfr., in generale, Ahn.

83 Cfr. Muccioli 2005.

84 *Art.*, 22, 8 (vd. anche *Ael.*, *V.H.*, I, 21). Cfr. *Pel.*, 30, sulla rettitudine del Tebano (nonché *Xen.*, *Hell.*, VII, 1, 33–38). Cfr. anche il caso, in parte simile, di Conone (*Nep.*, *Con.*, 3; *Iustin.*, VI, 2, 12–14).

85 Vd. *De fort. Rom.*, 321a; *Non posse*, 1100a, 1100c, 1102b; *Adv. Col.*, 1117c; cfr. *Crass.*, 31, 1; *Flam.*, 21, 12; *Luc.*, 24, 3; *Pomp.*, 27, 5; 33, 4; *Rom.*, 27, 9.

mentalità greca.⁸⁶ È ben noto quanto scrive a proposito della volontà di Alessandro Magno di ricevere tale onore e del rifiuto di Callistene di sottostare a questa richiesta (*Alex.*, 45, 1; 51, 5; 54, 3; 74, 2). L'avversione per questa pretesa, che accomuna Alessandro a un barbaro, trova puntuali riscontri nel *De adulate et amico*, dove il Macedone è aspramente criticato (65d: προσκυνούμενον καὶ καταστολιζόμενον καὶ ἀναπλαττόμενον ὡσπερ ἄγαλμα βαρβαρικὸν ὑπ' αὐτῶν). È un aspetto del tutto eluso invece nel *De Alexandri Magni fortuna aut virtute*, giacché non in linea con gli scopi delle due orazioni e con l'esaltazione della figura del Macedone ivi proposta.⁸⁷ In chiave più generale, poi, nel *De superstitione* Plutarco parla di ἀλλόκοτοι προσκυνήσεις, accomunandole ad altri βάρβαρα κακά, introdotti dai Greci per effetto della δεισιδαιμονία (166a).

Per concludere, in base all'analisi fin qui condotta dei passi della *Vita di Temistocle* in cui l'utilizzo di Fania è palmare o comunque probabile è lecito esprimere alcune considerazioni sul giudizio plutarcheo nei confronti di questo autore di matrice peripatetica, in grado di coniugare storia e filosofia. È evidente che tale apprezzamento positivo non comporta una sua predilezione *sic et simpliciter*, né, d'altro canto, è indizio sufficiente per individuare necessariamente un filo rosso costante tra il Cheronese e il Peripatetico, nonostante l'indubbia consonanza di certe tematiche. In particolare, laddove Plutarco segue la testimonianza di Fania (che si presenta in controtendenza rispetto alle altre fonti), questa si snoda attraverso alcuni passaggi cruciali e altamente delicati della vita di Temistocle, in cui il biografo si espone anche al rischio di dare al lettore un'immagine negativa o troppo ambigua del suo eroe (soprattutto nei capp. 13 e 27–29).⁸⁸ È un rischio consapevolmente corso da Plutarco, ma evidentemente considerato necessario per dare spessore e vivacità alla narrazione e per meglio caratterizzare l'ἦθος del personaggio. L'importanza di Fania, dunque, non può prescindere dall'esame dei meccanismi di citazione, selezione e adattamento delle fonti nell'elaborazione della biografia di Temistocle. Solo così può essere risolta anche l'apparente aporia di conciliare le divergenze tra quanto sostenuto nella *Vita*, sulla scorta del Peripatetico, e quanto affermato in altri luoghi del *Corpus Plutarcheum*.

86 Cfr. Schmidt, 234–236.

87 Cfr., da ultimo, Roskam 2004, 261–264.

88 Ciò vale anche per l'anonimo autore del racconto del tentativo di Lisandro di corrompere l'oracolo di Delfi e di proclamare la sua discendenza divina (*Lys.*, 25, 5 ss.), che non trova corrispondenze precise nelle altre fonti e neppure nei *loci paralleli* plutarchei.

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Plutarch and the Character of the *Sapiens*★

Delfim F. Leão

1. *Magister dixit*: The Sage as Educator

Gnomic literature, or the literature of maxims, was extraordinarily popular in antiquity, but its origin is lost in time. In fact, there are any number of works in which a certain character appears before us to offer counsel to another one on the best way to act in a given situation. This basic scheme takes on many different formulations and varieties; two of the more frequent ones come together in the figure of the sage who advises a sovereign on which type of conduct to adopt, or, in its more familiar form, in the image of the father who sets about taking care of the education of his son, offering him advice from the wealth of knowledge that life has afforded him. The Near East furnishes us with a wide spectrum of writings of this nature and we will find them as well in many other literatures, though this does not necessarily imply that there is a relationship of direct dependence between them, since similar ideas could have been developed autonomously by peoples separated by great distances.¹ In any case, that this simple model continues to function actively today is demonstrated by countless films produced by the industry of the seventh art, wherein the figure of the master (often schooled in the ‘oriental arts’, which have been assimilated in various degrees of rigor and eclecticism) pursues the noble mission of illuminating and instructing whomever happens to cross his path.

In the sphere of Greek literature, which will concern us here, the influx of this same type of material can be detected very early on. We will cite just some examples, which will help to substantiate this reality, which is well-known among scholars of classical antiquity. In Homer, it is enough to consider the figure of Nestor, who is well-known for the sagacity of his words, particularly in the *Iliad*. In any case, he and the other six warriors formed a kind of intimate council around Agamemnon, the commander in chief of the Greek coalition which took part in the expedition to Troy (2.400–9). Unforgettable as well is the staff of wise men that surrounded Priam and that, though kept far apart

★ In this study we have used certain ideas expressed in Leão 2003.

1 For a conspectus of this type of ‘wisdom literature’, vide West.

from the fighting because of the weight of age, deserved comparison, in their capacity as orators, to the delicate song of the crickets (3.146–52).

In the case of *Erga* (*Works and Days*), the same scheme is employed in an even more significant fashion. Not that we want to take up the much debated question of a possible direct Sumerian, Babylonian or Egyptian influence on this work, but what's certain is that its basic structure is founded on the theme of the advisor. One of the original things about Hesiod seems to reside in the fact that the object of his admonitions is neither king nor son, but his own brother, whom he would like to set, once again, on the right track.² In addition to the innumerable precepts and maxims which are necessarily present in gnomic texts, Hesiod employs other expository strategies which would also become immensely popular in wisdom literature: the fable and the myth.³

The fact that, in the *Iliad*, Agamemnon appears surrounded by a group of seven close advisors is still far distant from the legend that will seek to establish a college of Seven Wise Men, to whom memorable maxims would be attributed, all of which were proffered during encounters with equally famous personalities. The historical context in which some of these figures (like Thales, Solon and Croesus) operated in suggests that the tradition would have begun to take shape during the Archaic Period, more specifically between the 7th and 6th centuries. This would be related to the fact that, throughout this period, Greece experienced great political and social tensions, which were accompanied by the rise of the figure of the legislators and autocratic governments; it also has to do with the intense relations with Persia and Asia Minor, whose economic opulence exercised over the Greek imagination as much a feeling of admiration as it created a tendency towards censorship, at times acrimonious.

Notwithstanding the relative chronological antiquity of certain aspects connected to the lives of the figures that came to be considered sages, it is in Herodotus that we can find our first literary signs of this legend. Furthermore, the image of the advisor ends up by becoming a *Leitmotiv* in the work of the historian of Halicarnassus. This can be verified in relation to personalities like the Athenian Solon and Amasis, who shared between them the role of advisor.⁴ Just as Solon advises Croesus, the King of Lydia, against the imprudence of ignoring the constant mutability of human things (1.32.1–9), the pharaoh will counsel the tyrant of Samos, Polycrates, to give up his

2 Even so, at certain moments Hesiod directed himself as well to kings, exhorting them to respect the justice of Zeus; e.g. *Op.* 248–73.

3 We refer to the fable of the falcon and the nightingale (*Op.* 202–12) and the myths of Pandora (42–105) and of the Five Ages (106–201). For a synopsis of the use of the gnomic tradition in other Greek authors, from the Archaic Period to the Roman period, vide Wehrli; Rodríguez Adrados, 130–7.

4 Lattimore, 24, already places Amasis in the gallery of tragic advisors.

dangerous caprices and to get rid of any belonging that he considered precious, since he knew that the divinity was jealous of the fortune of men (3.40.2). Contrary to Croesus, whose inability to understand the profound significance of the words of his Athenian guest launched him on the road to ruin, Polycrates followed the counsel of the king of Egypt by throwing an emerald ring that he adored into the sea. But this same jewel ended up by being returned to him in the air bladder of a large fish offered him by a fisherman. Learning this, the pharaoh realized that whoever was lucky enough to have regained an object that he had done away with could not come to a happy end and so he cut his ties of hospitality with the tyrant as a way of remaining untouched by the disaster which would certainly befall him (details in 3.39–43). Though Amasis will also continue to be associated with the cycle of the Seven Wise Men, the reality is that, in Herodotus as in the later tradition, what most stands out are the interviews sponsored by Croesus and the counsel which he received from figures like Thales (1.74.2; 75.3–4), Bias (or Pittacus, 1.27.1–5) and Solon (1.29–32). The details which comprise his relationship with the latter create the most significant story of them all, to the extent that we can view it as a paradigmatic model for the way in which a dialogue between a Greek sage and an eastern monarch might have unfolded.⁵

The importance of Croesus in the genesis of the tradition of the Seven Wise Men has to do with the fame that the sovereign enjoyed among the Greeks and to, certainly, the Delphic influence, a fact which is easily understood if we accept the historicity of the magnificent offerings made to the oracle by the Lydian king (Herodotus, 1.50–51). What is more, some of the most famous maxims inscribed in the atrium of the Temple to Apollo were attributed to the sages who passed through his court, such that the advice for moderation, which we see, for example, turning up in the conversation between Solon and Croesus, becomes mixed with the moral principles of the oracle (e.g. Plato, *Chrm.* 164d–165a; Pausanias, 10.24.1; Diogenes Laertius, 1.63). On the other hand, though any indication of the number seven is still not to be found in Herodotus, this would be the formula adopted to designate the sages as a group.⁶ The importance of this number in many other accounts and cultures is well known, but it is also most likely that, for the same reason, it has some relation to Delphic interests. In fact, this was precisely Apollo's birthday (which fell on the seventh of the month of *Byzios*, February/March), the reason for which consultations were initially conducted exclusively on this date and were only later extended to other periods to deal with the huge crowds.

5 Herodotus also mentions Chilon (1.59.2–3), Periander (1.20; 23) and Anacharsis (4.76–7).

6 Herodotus refers to them in only a vague way (1.29.1).

In sum: the most important thing to emphasize in this brief description is that the image of the *sapiens* was one of the most important themes to come out of the popular tradition; and it was widely diffused throughout the remotest periods of antiquity. In Greek literature, its presence can be felt starting in Homer, but indications of a consolidation of a group of historico-legendary figures can be found for the first time in Herodotus. Though the characteristics of this legend are still not well defined, we already find in the work of the historian certain features which are characteristic to it: the importance of certain influential regions, like Ionia (Pittacus, Bias and Thales), Athens (Solon) and the Peloponnese (Chilon, Periander); and the role of Delphi, as a hub for all of these figures.⁷ From this point onwards the canon will begin to establish itself, though it will continue to remain open to enrichment by new contributions and developments. Of this long cultural dialogue we will only dwell in more detail on Plutarch's contribution.

2. The *Conuiuuium Septem Sapientium* of Plutarch

One of the first anachronisms that we can point to in the *Conuiuuium* resides in the fact that Plutarch implies that the various sages involved are contemporaries. To think that the author was not conscious of this error is out of the question. This is confirmed by what he said in his biography of Solon, one of the participants in the banquet (*Sol.* 27.1). If, in this instance, the polygraph defended the account of such a meeting with the Lydian sovereign because of its ethical weight, this explanation would become even more pertinent, since the meeting with the Seven Wise Men represents, in and of itself, an historical unreality. On the other hand, Plutarch is, naturally, following a tradition which had for a long time been rooted in popular thinking, which obliged him to set the dialogue in the distant past.⁸

The invitation for the meeting was sent out by the tyrant Periander and was addressed to the following sages: Solon, Thales, Anacharsis, Bias, Cleoboulus, Pittacus and Chilon. Nevertheless, many other figures appear in the *symposion*, including women, a fact which contributes to the originality of Plutarch's opusculum, as we will see below. The other characters do not all, however, enjoy the same level of participation as the sages. Yet, as far as the identity of the Seven Wise Men is concerned, Plutarch shows himself to be quite close to the group defined by Plato: like him, he excludes Periander, though Anacharsis replaces Myson. Periander's elimination from the core of

7 Interesting the observations of Busine, 17–27, esp. 27.

8 A fact which constitutes, besides, an exception in his writings; the only other case is the *De genio Socratis*. Cf. Aalders, 28–29 and n. 7.

the sages is justified, certainly, because of the fact that he is a tyrant and that there is a deep animosity for this form of government revealed in the opusculum. Even so, Cleoboulus, the autocrat of Lindos, continues to figure among the sages, though his role is sufficiently secondary and his presence could as well be explained by the need for his daughter, Cleoboulina to be accompanied. Comparatively, Periander ends up by fulfilling a more important function in his capacity as host, even if his presence will begin to recede, especially once the eulogy of the democratic system begins, to the extent that the honor of closing the banquet falls to Solon (164c–d). In this gallery, Pittacus's case is just as important, since, for a long while, he ruled over the destinies of Mytilene in complete power. He did so, however, as a sovereign elected by the people (*aisymnetes*) and, after having calmed the climate of civil dissention, showed himself, like Solon of Athens, to be prudent enough to abandon power, sharing with him fame as a legislator.

At any rate, the presence of various sages connected to autocratic regimes must constitute a sign of the antiquity of the tradition that included them in this circle. In fact, if it is certain that, at the turn of the 7th century and into the 6th, tyranny existed and was even characteristic of the epoch, the same can not be said about democracy, which would only later make its first inroads. There is, therefore, an anachronism in the debate when the sages defend democratic government, of the same kind which involved the Persian noblemen in considerations over the best form of constitution (in the episode reported by Herodotus, 3.80–82). As such, animosity against tyranny can not be part of the initial phase of the legend. The odious character of the term is, above all, a consequence of the actions of the Thirty Tyrants who ruled Athens in 404, and whose actions were marked by extreme violence. Thus in Plato, this feeling of criticism is already apparent; it would be passed on to later traditions and be clearly expressed in Plutarch's *Conuiuium*.

Solon, Thales, Bias, and Chilon already belonged to the stable core of the Seven Wise Men; and because they do not raise any of the problems we have analyzed, we need not linger over them. However, we must take a closer look at Anacharsis. Herodotus refers to him when describing the customs of the Scythians and their repudiation of foreign customs, especially if they were of Greek origin. In the historian's version (4.76), Anacharsis is already introduced bearing the characteristics of the sage, since, in many of the lands through which he had journeyed, he had left proof of deep thinking. While returning home, Anacharsis had been moved by the festival in honor of the *Magna Mater* that he witnessed in Cyzicus, and committed himself to establishing the cult in his homeland, if he returned safely. Having returned to Scythia, he was caught conducting this ritual and ended up dying by the hands of his own brother. This is how Anacharsis became a kind of martyr for Greek civilization. Herodotus (4.77) gives us yet another version of the events, even though he

believes it to be an invention. According to this second account, Anacharsis had attended a school in Hellas, sent there by the king himself; once he had returned, he informed him that the Greeks were given to all manner of knowledge, with the exception of the Lacedaemonians. In spite of this, the latter were the only ones who revealed a capacity to speak and listen correctly. This variant relieves Anacharsis of his reputation of being an enthusiast of Greek culture. However, the Spartans' preference for discretion and terseness fostered in him the aura of the 'good savage', adept at criticizing the opulence of civilization. The image of the austere sage will be taken advantage of, in particular by the school of the cynics, who will make a symbol of renunciation out of him and a champion of their philosophical ideas. By including him in the *symposion* organized by Periander, Plutarch is still following the traditional approach; yet, the figure of this 'barbaric' sage also serves the purpose of making the *Banquet* a space which is open to alterity. As such, as well as the most important of the Greek aristocrats, Egyptian sophistication (in the figure of Neiloxenos, the envoi of Amasis) and barbaric nomadism from the north (Anacharsis) were represented. To this diversity, we can add certain marks of the female sensibility (Cleobouline) and a representative of more popular wisdom (Aesop), both of whom we will discuss below.

In Greek literature, the *symposion* is, essentially, an activity which is linked to the masculine world. Nevertheless, in the *Convivium* imagined by Plutarch there are two female figures present: Cleobouline and Melissa (the wife of Periander). Both characters remain silent, and dismiss themselves before the end of the banquet, in this way permitting the conversation to evolve towards new themes (155d–e). Yet, if the wife of the tyrant ends up by being simply decorative, the figure of Cleobouline/Eumetis requires more consideration and has, for this reason, divided the opinion of scholars. In the first place, the presence of women can be seen as a sign of Plutarch's epoch, in which the influence of other cultures would have made the inclusion of 'serious-minded' women in the *symposion* a normal affair. This simple explanation is actually to the point, even though in the *Quaestiones conviviales* one confronts the problem that no female participants were ever registered.⁹ On the other hand, in the *Laws* (780e), Plato notes that women are permitted to join in public meals, but he is not referring to mixed banquets, which naturally invalidates their participation in normal *symposia*. Given these qualifications, Plutarch's inclusion of Cleobouline, still a child, should perhaps be explained in another fashion: more than anything else, as a relative novelty and a way to add certain

9 In fact, in the passage (712e–f) which could be presented to sustain the contrary position, what is in question is more the common character of the mime than the inclusion of women and children in the banquet. Vide Mossman, 124–5; Pordomingo Pardo, 389–91.

nearly domestic scenes to the general ambiance, as when, upon arrival at Periander's house, we are treated to the scene of Cleobouline arranging the mussed hair of Anacharsis (148c–e). In a certain way, this seems to be saying that the rustic appearance of the Scythian barbarian is being molded by the delicate Greek hands; besides, the words spoken by Thales, who greets the girl with an air of familiarity, accentuate this impression precisely, although with the idea that the advantages of a close relationship with the barbarian were mutual. Cleobouline's beneficent influence extends even to her father, helping to mollify his character and give the impression that his government is somehow closer to the people (*demotikoteros*); in this way, the negative characteristic of being the tyrant of Lindos is attenuated.¹⁰ Finally, Cleobouline contributes, as well, to the transformation of the banquet space into a cosmopolis of various kinds of wisdom: she would represent, as such, a more simple knowledge, permeated by political intuition and humanity, as we understand from what Thales says about her.¹¹

The figure of Aesop also contributes greatly to this world of alternative wisdom. As with Cleobouline, the legend of the Seven Wise Men serve as a backdrop for various aspects of his life, even though he was never considered to be one of them. His presence in the *symposion* owes itself, from the narrative point of view, to the fact that he is in the service of Croesus, who sent him to Periander's court and to the oracle at Delphi (150a). This detail casts, in a certain way, a shadow of doubt over the merit of his participation, since, according to what is said in the legend, Aesop had been killed in Delphi for having disrespected the priests of the oracle and the inhabitants of the region, accusing them of simple parasitism. With this discrete note, Plutarch seems to be signaling the latent polemic with the circle of sages, given the close relationship between them and Delphic morality. Besides, the fact of being an emissary of Croesus serves as a counterpoint to the relative contempt which Solon manifested toward the Lydian monarch (155b), which is echoed as well in the biography of the statesman (*Sol.* 28.1). In the *Convivium*, we find Aesop sitting on a bench next to the Athenian poet, who is reclining on an upper level (150a). Thus, the identities of the aristocrat and the ex-slave intersect in the same space, though they are kept separate by virtue of a difference in sensibility and status: Aesop's integration into the group is therefore not complete in the end, even though this never overflows into actual tension. The fabulist speaks a number of times throughout the *symposion* and he sides with both Cleobouline and Periander. In the first instance (154a–c), he defends the girl when, out of timidity, she refrains from responding to the

¹⁰ And it justifies her alternative name, which is Eumetis ('sensible, prudent').

¹¹ Vide Mossman, 124–6, whose arguments we follow, in part, at this point in our exposition.

words of the doctor Cleodorus, who criticizes her over the futility of her enigmas. Aesop's intervention is significant, to the extent that, in siding with Cleobouline, he is as well defending the same kind of popular wisdom which he himself represents. In the second instance (152b–d) he comes to the assistance of Periander, whom earlier disquisitions by the sages had, in certain manner, isolated, since they expressed views contrary to tyranny. In his response, Aesop once again enters into discussion with Solon, who is amused by the words of the ex-slave, not taking him seriously. However, this intervention helps to reinforce Aesop's character as a representative of the masses, who, besides, played an important role in the installation of tyrants, whose government generally assumed an anti-aristocratic nature, protective of the lower classes that constituted its supporter.

To conclude: although the tradition of the Seven Wise Men typically presents us with an *Erwartungshorizont* where the *sophoi* reflect the sensibility of a more privileged part of the population (they are generally men, Greeks and aristocrats), it was still capable of self-interrogation and enriching itself with new elements. It was in this way that it was possible to include a *barbaros* (Anacharsis) in its restricted circle of *sapientes*, as well as opening its meetings to the presence of an ex-slave (Aesop) and a young woman (Cleobouline). The concomitance of these different personalities in the *Convivium Septem Sapientium* represents an interesting example of the way in which the "Other" can be welcomed into a highly eclectic group.

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Plutarch on Solon and *Sophia*

Jackson P. Hershbell

From Plutarch's *Life of Solon* and his *Septem sapientium convivium* in which Solon has a major role, it is evident that Plutarch had great interest in the Athenian poet and statesman. Both of these works will be examined in this study, the focus of which is on Plutarch's portrayal of Solon as an "intellectual" or "wise man" (*sophos*),¹ and the evidence which *Sol.* and *Sept. sap. conv.* provide for understanding Plutarch's Platonism and his concept of *sophia*. Some preliminary observations are in order, especially since Plutarch's authorship of *Sept. sap. conv.* has sometimes been denied, and its dating and that of *Sol.* are uncertain. There are also questions about Plutarch's sources, and his reasons for interest in Solon, one of the traditional seven sages of Hellas (cf. Plato's *Prot.* 343 A).

The Authenticity of *Sept. sap. conv.*; Its Dating and That of *Sol.*

In 1949 Konrat Ziegler convincingly argued that Plutarch is the author of *Sept. sap. conv.*² Its emphasis on moderation and the supremacy of the immaterial world, is quite consistent with Plutarch's Platonic beliefs. Moreover, Alexidemos' annoyance and hasty departure after losing what he deemed his rightful place at Periandros' *symposion* (148E–149B), recall a similar incident at *Quaestiones convivales* 615 D–E.; a sudden interruption of Kleodoros' response to Solon (158 C–F) is like the ending of *De sollertia animalium*. Quite Plutarchan is the discussion of the wonder or portent (τέρας) at *Sept. sap.*

1 The earliest reference to the seven sages of Hellas is at Plato, *Prot.* 343 A ff. Plutarch's list in *Sept. sap. conv.* is identical to Plato's, although Myson is replaced by Anacharsis who, with Thales and Solon, has a major role in the dialogue. See Defradas 1954, 17–20. The sages' association with Delphi, and the sacredness of "seven" to Apollo, may account for the seeming constancy of seven, but at *De E* 385 E, Plutarch's brother Lamprias claimed that there were only five sages, "five" being the number used to explain the letter *epsilon* ("E") displayed at Delphi. Moreover, Lamprias reports that some called the sages *sophistas*, and not *sophous*, Plutarch's usual word for the sages. On "Sophists" in the *Moralia*, see O'Neil, 546–547. See also "Wise Men," *ibid.* 616.

2 The work is no. 110 in the so-called "Lamprias Catalogue" on which see Ziegler, 696–742/60–66. The inclusion of *Sept. sap. conv.* in the "Lamprias Catalogue" is no guarantee of authenticity, but the arguments of Ziegler and others for Plutarch's authorship remain convincing. See Ziegler, 883–885/246–247.

conv. 149 C–E where the exchange between the seer Diokles and the natural philosopher Thales, is similar to that between Lampon and Anaxagoras at *Perikles* 6.2.3.³ Lastly, the frogs “worked in relief” (τετορευμένοι) about the base of a bronze palm tree at Delphi, and a mention of the Delphic precepts (164 A–B), suggest that *Sept. sap. conv.* either anticipates *De Pythiae oraculis*, or that both works were composed about the same time. In brief, there are good reasons for considering *Sept. sap. conv.* a genuine work of Plutarch.

Decisive evidence is, however, lacking for the date of *Sept. sap. conv.* It may have preceded *De Pyth.* composed “after c. 95”, according to Christopher Jones.⁴ Moreover, since Ziegler placed the date of *Sept. sap. conv.* a bit before 90, and Jones believed that *Solon-Publicola* were written sometime after 96 (p. 71/112), it seems quite likely that *Sept. sap. conv.* and *Sol.* appeared not too many years apart, and at a time when Plutarch was interested in Solon and the other sages of Hellas. There is, in any case, no evidence for assigning *Sept. sap. conv.* to Plutarch’s *juvenilia*: both it and *Sol.* most likely belong to his mature years.

Plutarch’s Sources for *Sept. sap. conv.* and *Sol.*

The following survey of Plutarch’s sources is not intended to be exhaustive, and it is confined to those explicitly named by him. The extent of Plutarch’s borrowing from or reworking of his sources is, of course, not always discernible. Moreover, there are no contemporary reports about Solon: over a century after his death, Herodotos was the first known writer to report Solon’s famous conversation with Kroisos (*Hdt.* 1.29 ff) and since Plutarch knew Herodotos’ *History* well, this work is most likely the source for the Solon-Kroisos encounter at *Sol.* 17. 1 ff. Thucydides, almost Herodotos’ contemporary, never mentions Solon, and it is not until the fourth century B.C.E. that accounts of Solon based on fragments of his law-code and poetry begin to appear, much in keeping with a Peripatetic interest in “biography”.⁵

3 On the exchange between Anaxagoras and Lampon about the one-horned ram, see Hershbell 1982, 141–142.

4 Since *Sept. sap. conv.* seems to anticipate themes of the Pythian dialogues, Ziegler surmised that the time between these works was not great. He dated *Sept. sap. conv.* in “die letzten 80er Jahren.” See Ziegler, 884–885/247. For Jones’ dating of the Pythian dialogues, see Jones, 72/119.

5 See Scardigli’s discussion of Peripatetic influence on ancient biography, 7–12. Fragments of Solon’s poetry are found in Diehl, 20–47; for Solon’s laws, see Ruschenbusch. Based on fragments of Solon’s poems, legislation, and oral traditions, biographies of him began to be composed after the fourth century B.C.E. Plutarch’s *Solon* is the only surviving biography.

Since *Sept. sap. conv.* is a literary work, Plutarch does not name his sources,⁶ but two centuries later, Diogenes Laertius (ca. 350) reported in his *Lives of the Philosophers* (I. 40) that the Syracusan Archetimos and Ephoros of Kyme (ca. 405–330 B.C.E.) wrote about a gathering of the seven sages. Ephoros' works were certainly known to Plutarch,⁷ but Archetimos is nowhere mentioned in Plutarch's extant work. For his *Life of Solon*, Plutarch cites a number of sources: e. g. the Alexandrian Didymos (ca. 80–10 B.C.E) is named at the very start of *Sol.*, and at 1.2 Plutarch cites Herakleides Pontikos (cf. *Sol.* 22.4 and 33.2), a fourth century member of Plato's Academy to which Plutarch belonged a few centuries later. Herakleides was a prolific writer with diverse interests, and Plutarch seems to have known his works well. At *Sol.* 2 and 9.31, Hermippos of Smyrna, a third century Peripatetic biographer, is named by Plutarch, and Hermippos' vast work on famous legislators, philosophers, and writers is mentioned by Plutarch in his other *Lives*. At *Sol.* 4.4 Theophrastus is cited as a source for the story of the golden tripod, and he is named again at *Sol.* 31.2.

Besides the previously mentioned authorities for his *Life of Solon*, Plutarch also relied on unnamed sources: e. g. "they say" (4.2); "records" (ὑπομνήματα) at Delphi (11.2); "later" (νεώτεροι) sources are mentioned at 15.23, followed soon by "most (πλείστοι) say" at 15.5; "most" are again cited at 19.2 and 27.1; equally vague is the reference to "some" (ἔνιοι), and "it is said" (λέγεται) at 18.3. Some of these sources were probably oral and not written, but for the most part, Plutarch's citation of his authorities is often unsatisfactory by current scholarly standards. There is, of course, little doubt that Plutarch used oral and written reports for his own literary and philosophical purposes. Indeed, his ability to shape sources into a coherent and readable whole, is a mark of his literary and scholarly genius. As Jean Defradas wrote concerning the unity of *Sept. sap. conv.*: it is the "domination de l'esprit sur la matière, de l'âme sur le corps, héritage de la tradition platonicienne" which brings the work together.⁸ A similar observation could be made about the *Life of Solon* where this sophos is portrayed with his strengths and weaknesses; and although

6 Ziegler remarked that the "Quellenfrage" is quite difficult. He saw, however, the influence of Plato and Xenophon (the "older symposium literature") on *Sept. sap. conv.*; see Ziegler, 885/249.

7 For Plutarch's knowledge of Ephoros, see Stadter (pp. lxxi–lxxii), and the references to Ephoros in Helmbold and O'Neil, 27.

8 See Defradas 1985, 173–177. As Defradas observed, the "désordre" of *Sept. sap. conv.* is a frequent "réproche" against the dialogue's authenticity; yet he saw its unity in Plato's influence on the work. Wardman (p. 199) believed that one purpose of *Sept. sap. conv.* was "to portray an association between thinkers and a ruler," and such a purpose accords with Plato's *Republic*.

Solon's body was burned and its ashes scattered on Salamis (32.3–4), his spirit and wisdom live on in a biography written by Plutarch, a convinced Platonist.

The Concept of *Sophia* in *Sol.* and *Sept. sap. conv.*

Given the past survey of the sources and dates for these two very different works, it now seems appropriate to examine Solon's status as one of the seven sages of Hellas. Almost at the beginning of *Sol.* (2.1 ff), Plutarch describes Solon as a polymath and traveler who, although he engaged in commerce, valued learning above wealth. Solon was a "lover of wisdom" (ἐραστής σοφίας) who, according to Plutarch, was not the only wise man involved in commerce and trade: also mentioned by Plutarch are Thales of Miletus,⁹ Hippocrates of Chios (a mathematician and predecessor of Euclid), and his own "divine" Plato who paid for his travel costs to Egypt by selling olive oil.¹⁰ At *Sol.* 3 Plutarch defends Solon's way of life by noting that he put his "philosophic maxims" (φιλοσόφους γνώμας)¹¹ and political views into verse, and at 3.4 Plutarch states that Solon, like most *sophoi* of his time was involved in "ethical philosophy" (φιλοσοφίας τοῦ ἠθικοῦ).¹² Unlike Thales, he had little interest in the natural world; like other sages, Solon excelled in political matters. He had "political virtue" (πολιτικῆ ἀρετή), even if he held simple and old-fashioned views about nature (ἐν δε τοῖς φυσικοῖς ἀπλοῦς ἐστι λίαν καὶ ἀρχαῖος). To support this point, Plutarch quotes verses from Solon's poetry which hardly demonstrate a serious inquiry into natural phenomena:

"From clouds come sweeping snow and hail,
And thunder follows on the lightning's flash.
By winds the sea is lashed to storm, but if it be
Unvexed, it is of all things most amenable."

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- 9 According to Aristotle, *Pol.* 1259a 6, Thales' skill in meteorology helped him to predict a bumper crop of olives whereby he made great profit proving that philosophers could easily make money.
- 10 For a discussion of Plato's connections with Egypt, see Guthrie, 15–16.
- 11 Noting that Solon brought philosophy into his poetry only in later life, Lukas de Blois concluded that Solon's "philosophical quality" was not of the "highest level," an accurate assessment given the later distinction between the practical and theoretical ways of life.
- 12 Plutarch's remarks seem to cast doubt on a tradition according to which Socrates was the first Hellenic to steer philosophy from the natural world to human life while "directing its inquiries to virtues and vices"; Cicero, *Acad.* 1.14–15; cf. *Tusc.* 5.4–10.

At best, these quoted verses seem illustrative of Plutarch's own tendency to read philosophical meaning into poetry.¹³ On the whole, Plutarch regarded Solon as a thinker focused on practical, not on theoretical matters. Solon was primarily a political philosopher, not a student of natural philosophy, and in *Maxime cum principibus philosopho esse disserendem*, Plutarch expresses his own belief that philosophy needs practical aims or purposes. Plutarch was also convinced that genuine virtue is only possible with involvement in public service, in the active life (πρακτικός βίος) often contrasted in Hellenic thought with the contemplative or theoretical life (θεωρητικός βίος).¹⁴ Moreover, as Lukas de Blois observed, Plutarch's *Lives* are mostly about politicians or statesmen, and for Plutarch, politics is "an essential human activity, a way of life more than a profession or function" (see *An seni respublica gerenda sit*, 791 C).

Despite Solon's education and association with the other *sophoi* of Hellas, he was not Plutarch's ideal statesman; and even though Solon tried to mediate between rich and poor, his legislation was not always successful. He could not, for example, prevent Peisistratos from becoming tyrannos of Athens (*Sol.* 29–32); and it was Epimenides of Phaistos (*Sol.* 12, 4 f.) who, inspired with "mystical wisdom" (τελεστική σοφία), "assisted Solon in many ways, and paved the way for his legislation."

Sophia seems not to be innate or suddenly acquired,¹⁵ and Solon continued to grow in it (*Sol.* 2.2 and 31.7). Perhaps because of this growth, Solon's *sophia* or wisdom could not be wholly defined by Plutarch. Except for Sonkhis of Sais, none of Solon's teachers are named by Plutarch.¹⁶ Except for his travels, quite little is reported about how Solon acquired *sophia*. To be sure, Solon was not admired by all: at *Sol.* 3.1, Plutarch reports that Solon's "way of life" (δίαιτα) was expensive, and because of his business or commercial life (εμπορικός βίος), Solon's poetry was more coarse or common (φορτικώτερον) than appropriate for a philosopher. But while Solon first composed poetry "as amusement and diversion," he later versified "philosophic maxims." It seems,

13 Wardman, 199. For Plutarch, Solon was not much of a natural philosopher, but he was a noteworthy ethical and political thinker before Socrates.

14 See Duff, 66. According to Duff, the politically involved life gets similar emphasis in *Bellone an pace clariores fuerint Athenienses*. This work, however, may be a "pueriles Machwerk," hardly reflective of Plutarch's mature thought. See Ziegler, 726/99.

15 Snell (p. 277) observed that *sophia* did not mean having the Muses' encyclopedic knowledge, but involved having a skill, e. g. the skill of a helmsman. *Sophia* embraced both "knowing how" and "knowing that," but by Plutarch's time, this early understanding of *sophia* had given way to an Aristotelian view of *sophia* on which see Joachim, 189–90 *et passim*. His commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* is still valuable.

16 See Griffith, 285–86 for a brief discussion of Sonkhis, and Solon's Egyptian sojourn.

then, that despite Solon's growth in wisdom, he remained for Plutarch a somewhat flawed or imperfect exemplar of *sophia*.¹⁷

Solon among the Seven Sages in *Sept. sap.conv.*

Because of its loose arrangement of episodes, mainly held together by the presence of Hellas' seven sages, *Sept. sap. conv.* seems to lack unity. One of its purposes was perhaps to give a captivating or "popular" introduction to early Hellenic philosophy. In the so-called *Lamprias Catalogue*, a treatise *On the First Philosophers and Their Successors* (Περὶ τῶν πρώτων φιλοσοφησάντων καὶ τῶν ἀπ' αὐτῶν, no. 184), is attributed to Plutarch. It no longer exists, but *Sept. sap. conv.* was perhaps conceived as an entertaining, or "popular" supplement to *On the First Philosophers*.¹⁸

Another purpose of *Sept. sap. conv.* in which the sages often give political advice in the form of maxims and sayings, not always pleasing to their host Periandros, *tyrannos* of Corinth, was probably to present an association or communion of philosophers with a political ruler. A *tyrannos* such as Periandros needs philosophers as an "educative influence," an assumption of *Sept. sap. conv.* much in keeping with Plato's emphasis on "philosopher-kings" in the *Republic*.¹⁹

Among the sages who are guests of Periandros, only Anacharsis, Thales, and Solon have major roles in the *symposion*. Anacharsis and Thales are also prominent at *Sol.* 4.1 f, but the exchange between Anacharsis and Solon (*Sol.* 5) on the importance of written law as a curb on injustice, is not especially favorable to Solon.²⁰ To be sure, the Athenian remains a statesman of some stature, but his hope to make his laws wholly effective was thwarted when, as Anacharsis surmised, written laws subdued the weak, but not the rich and powerful.

For a better understanding of *Sept. sap. conv.*, Defradas divided its "philosophical content" into two parts: the first part (146B–156A) consists mainly of traditional material about the seven sages which Plutarch used to give a "caractère authentique" to the dialogue; the second part begins at 156B with Mnesiphilos' speech, and here the dialogue reaches a learned and philosophical level similar to Plutarch's *Quaestiones convivales*.²¹ For

17 Plutarch undoubtedly knew Epicurean and Stoic assessments of Solon. At *De stoicorum repugnantibus* 1033 F the Stoics are reported to have considered Solon base and stupid; Epicureans regarded him as a meddling lawgiver (*Adversus Colotem* 1127 B–C).

18 On this lost treatise and *Sept. sap. conv.*, see Hershbell 1986, 172–173.

19 See Wardman, 119.

20 On the roles of Anacharsis and Thales in *Sept. sap. conv.*, see Defradas 1985, 182–183.

21 Defradas 1985, 176.

example, Solon's views as first presented by Mnesiphilos seem essentially Platonic, and Solon's own discourse at *Sept. sap. conv.* 159B–160C also shows Plato's influence. According to Solon, for example, physical nourishment is actually the source of death, and not of life. Food only causes more pain than pleasure (160C), and once the soul which truly nourishes (τρέφει) the body, is released from its duty, it will maintain itself in freedom and contemplate reality.

Moreover, as Defradas observed, even the form of *Sept. sap. conv.* is similar to that of some Platonic dialogues:²² a dramatic introduction is followed by brief questions and responses; this repartee precedes somewhat lengthy speeches, and there is a concluding myth or story. In short, both form and content of *Sept. sap. conv.* seem much influenced by Plato. Its dialogue, especially Solon's speech at 159B f., emphasizes the superiority of the soul over the body, the immaterial over the material; and both in this speech, and in his earlier exchanges with the other sages, Solon appears as a representative of *sophia*, that intellectual skill concerned with practical and theoretical matters.²³

The *Life of Solon*, *Sophia*, and Some Concluding Observations

In a previous reference to *Sol.* 3, it was observed that Plutarch portrays Solon as an ethical or political philosopher, not as a thinker much interested in explaining the natural world. Nonetheless, he remains one of the traditional seven sages of Hellas. But why does the seemingly minor figure Mnesiphilos, function as Solon's spokesman for part of *Sept. sap. conv.* (154C–E)? To be sure, he is here described as an admirer or disciple (ζηλωτής) of Solon; and at *Themistocles* 2.5 f. Mnesiphilos is reported to pursue what was then called *sophia*, a political cleverness with an active or decisive intelligence (δραστήριος σύνεσις). It was from Solon that Mnesiphilos gained *sophia* which he then passed on to Themistocles. But in time this *sophia* became mixed with forensic skills (δικανικαῖς τέχναις),

22 Defradas 1985, 178. According to Defradas, the Platonic influence, esp. that of the *Symposium* and *Phaedo*, is the best proof that Plutarch as a “zélateur constant et commentateur de Platon,” composed *Sept. sap. conv.*

23 In bk. VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle considered “practical wisdom” (φρόνησις) and “theoretical wisdom (σοφία) as “intellectual virtues.” These Greek words cannot easily be translated, but Aristotle's remarks suggest strongly that *sophia* involved mastery of speculative truth, with its subject matter of the prime mover, the stars, and other cosmic realities worthy of reverence. Solon was hardly involved in this concept of *sophia*. Yet he seems to have had “practical wisdom” (φρόνησις), a virtue concerned with civic life and what engenders the “good in action” (τὸ πρακτὸν ἀγαθόν).

and eventually it turned from public affairs to speeches or words (τοὺς λόφους). Hence, those more interested in language were called “sophists” (σοφισταί). From this report in *Them.* it would seem that Plutarch believed that Solon and Mnesiphilos started some kind of philosophical school with a teacher-pupil succession; but by introducing Mnesiphilos in *Sept. sap. conv.* and *Them.*, Plutarch also indirectly separated Solon from the later sophists whom Plato and Plutarch condemned: Solon was hardly a sophist in the later derogatory sense.

Before concluding, it is perhaps instructive to compare the Athenian Solon with the Spartan Lykourgos, for, as Donald Russell remarked (p. 103), Plutarch noticed the “wider historical significance” of these two Hellenic heroes and the Roman heroes, Publicola and Numa, with whom they are respectively compared. Solon and Lykourgos thus seem to be exceptional in Plutarch’s *Lives*, for they did have an effect on the future of Athens and Sparta. Moreover, as De Blois noted, Lykourgos is Plutarch’s “model statesman” while Solon was less successful in legislating for the Athenian *demos*. A further comparison of these two lawgivers has relevance for assessing Solon’s *sophia*, and making clearer Plato’s influence on Plutarch.

According to Plutarch, Lykourgos managed to change Spartan attitudes, but before his reforms, he went to Krete where he met Thaletas who, for example, improved Sparta’s citizens by teaching them measured rhythms (*Lyc.* 4. 1–2). It was, moreover, under Lykourgos that Sparta became a “city practicing philosophy” (πόλις φιλοσοφοῦσα, *Lyc.* 31.3). Earlier at *Lyc.* 31.1 Plutarch praised Lykourgos’ aim to make his people free, self-sufficient, and moderate, an aim “pursued by Plato and all who tried to design a civil polity.” Moreover, Lykourgos’ fame “surpassed that of all who ever founded polities among the Hellenes,” and while on Krete Lykourgos gained his inspiration. It was also the Kretan Epimenides “reckoned as the seventh wise man by some who refused Periandros a place on the list” (*Sol.* 12.4) from whom Solon received help. The Athenian had summoned Epimenides to change his fellow citizens’ attitudes much as Lykourgos had done before in Sparta. Yet while the Kretan Epimenides had only brief success in Solon’s Athens, Lykourgos’ stay in Krete (*Lyc.* 4) prepared the way for his lasting accomplishments in Sparta.

Lykourgos’ connections with Krete, and Solon’s help from Epimenides perhaps reflect the influence of Plato’s *Laws* on Plutarch.²⁴ In the *Laws*, the scene is set in Krete, and the Kretan Kleinias and the Spartan Megillos

24 For Plutarch’s knowledge of the *Laws*, see O’Neil, 325 and numerous references on 456–458. Morrow (pp. 17–39) examined in detail the Cretan setting of the *Laws*. See also Francis and Harrison in this volume (below p. 791).

participate in what is often a monologue by an unidentified Athenian. The institutions of the Spartan Lykourgos and of the Kretan King Minos are considered in Bk. I of the *Laws*, though both legislators are deemed deficient since they aimed only at instilling courage, and not at the other cardinal virtues. Nonetheless, at 691E–692C Sparta’s “mixed” constitution is commended by the Athenian stranger; and in Bk. III, described by Ernest Barker as “a mixture of Athenian constitutional forms and Athenian freedom with Spartan training and order,” a *via media* is perhaps found between the two extremes of what was then Plato’s Hellas.²⁵ Not surprisingly, the Spartan ingredient in this “mixture” prevails over the Athenian, and the *Laws* has more emphasis on oligarchy than democracy. Certainly from the *Republic* and other works of Plato, it is clear that he was opposed to democracy, and it was a polity with which Plutarch’s Solon had only limited success.

Summary

Pursuit of Plato’s *Laws* and *Republic*, and their influence on Plutarch’s thought goes beyond the present study, and a summary is now in order. For Plutarch, Solon was an Athenian lawgiver and poet, one of the seven sages of Hellas. His status as a *sophos* did not mean, however, that he was a perfect exemplar of *sophia*. Certainly he had “know-how” as a statesman and poet, and he advised Kroisos and Periandros. He also improved the lot of Athenian citizens, and his life partly illustrates the Platonic belief that rulers must either be philosophers, or benefit from their guidance. Solon’s *sophia* involved cleverness or “know-how,” and as such, it was more practical than theoretical, and especially instructive is the *synkrisis* (“comparison”) concluding Plutarch’s *Solon-Publicola*. At its outset (*Synkr.* 1.2), Plutarch states that Publicola was an “imitator” (μιμητής) of Solon, and this Platonic concept of imitation has an important place in Plutarch’s *Lives*.²⁶ “Imitation” there usually has meaning for the reader; by “imitating” the virtuous deeds as described by Plutarch, the reader’s character will be accordingly molded.²⁷ To be sure, it was Publicola who first imitated Solon, but perhaps as an appeal to his Roman patrons, Plutarch states that it was Publicola who enhanced Solon’s life by “making him the fairest

25 See Barker, 338–444.

26 Plutarch’s *Publicola* has had little extensive treatment, perhaps because so little is known about him. According to Affortunati and Scardigli (pp. 109–122), the *Life* is “perhaps at first glance neither very attractive nor coherent.”

27 On the importance of *mimesis* in Plutarch’s *Lives* see, for example, Duff, 37–44 and *passim*.

(κάλλιστον) of examples for one who was arranging a democracy” (*Synkr.* 2.1). Moreover, Publicola’s hatred of tyranny was more intense than Solon’s (*Synkr.* 2.2), and though Solon’s career was more “illustrious” in its beginning than Publicola’s, the Roman hero was more fortunate than Solon at his life’s end: the Athenian lived to see the dissolution of his policy while Publicola’s influence lasted until the civil wars of later centuries.

Solon’s *sophia*, like that of all mortals, was limited. He did not possess the “omniscience” or *sophia* of the Muses, but he had the skill of a good legislator and poet. Like other subjects of his *Lives*, Plutarch’s Solon lacked, however, the *sophia* of a “first rate statesman.” He unsuccessfully opposed, for example, the Athenian *demos*, and so fell short of Lykourgos, his Spartan counterpart, and even of Publicola, the later Roman with whom he is explicitly compared. Moreover, Solon lacked the theoretical understanding of Plutarch’s true hero, the “divine Plato.” Solon’s views on nature were old fashioned, and he lacked the theoretical perspective expected of a Platonic statesman.

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El *Banquete de los Siete Sabios* y la *Vida de Solón* de Plutarco : mito político y contexto literario★

José Vela Tejada

0.– La formación del mito político de Solón es el resultado de una larga tradición política y filosófica que tiene en las propias elegías del personaje su más remoto antecedente¹. La hegemónica retórica posterior favoreció la pervivencia del mito soloniano que perdura en la Roma imperial de Plutarco en dos piezas, de formato literario diferente, en las que el legislador ateniense ocupa un lugar relevante: como asistente al *Banquete* de los legendarios «Siete Sabios de Grecia» y en el *Bios* correspondiente. No en vano, el de Queronea es el autor que nos ha legado un mayor cantidad de información sobre un personaje ejemplar².

1. Biografía y propaganda política

Asistimos a un proceso de mitificación en el que intervienen dos tradiciones fácilmente identificables: de un lado, la *Vida* de Plutarco nos transmite, en un contexto político, una imagen legendaria de Solón resultado de un proceso de idealización del poeta-gobernante³. A este respecto, abordamos en una ocasión anterior⁴ la descripción de la recepción por la biografía plutarquea de la tradición legendaria de Solón, a partir de un episodio que resulta altamente

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1 Con Fernández Delgado, 2002, p. 354, podemos entrever ya en las elegías del poeta (en concreto en el apologético Fr. 30 G–P=36 W) «une série de procédés discursifs caractéristiques du langage de la propagande politique». Sobre este particular vid., idem (1999). En una línea de investigación semejante nos mostramos en su momento (Vela, 1999) en relación con la «cuestión megarea» y la atribución a Solón, en lugar de a Pisístrato, de la reconquista de Salamina, hecho que también se apoya en sus elegías (Fr. 2 G–P=1–3 W).

2 Aguilar, pp. 11–21, se ha ocupado con acierto de una recopilación de los fragmentos de los poemas de Solón citados por el polígrafo de Queronea. Resulta ilustrativo constatar la presencia de un mismo poema en obras diferentes: así, los dos primeros versos de la *Elegía de Salamina* aparecen en *Sol.* 8, mientras los dos siguientes se citan en *Praec. ger. reip.* 813 F.

3 Cf. Fernández Delgado, 2002, p. 356, quien se hace eco de las ideas expuestas por Masaracchia, Mossé, David, 1981 (vid., asimismo, idem, 1985) y Oliva.

4 Vid., en particular, Vela, pp. 683–690.

ilustrativo, como lo es la reconquista ateniense de la isla de Salamina a Mégara, hecho clave en el contexto de rivalidad política de la Atenas de la primera mitad del siglo VI a.C. En efecto, pudimos comprobar claramente enfrentadas dos corrientes políticas que reclaman la gloria militar de la empresa para Solón y Pisístrato, respectivamente. Lejos de extinguirse con los propios protagonistas, en el siglo V la glorificación legendaria de ambos estadistas pasa a formar parte de los instrumentos de agitación y propaganda de alcmeónidas y pisistrátidas. En esta época, Pisístrato seguía siendo considerado un personaje de primer orden⁵, en tanto que Solón no era referido todavía como el gran legislador⁶, el fundador de la democracia. Probablemente en esta fase, era más conocido como sabio en anécdotas como las narradas por Heródoto en la muy recordada entrevista con Creso (I 29–33), o las que circulaban en escolios áticos⁷ perdidos.

Es en el siglo IV, empero, cuando el nombre de Solón comienza aparecer con mayor frecuencia⁸: en Platón, como legislador (*Resp.* 599e: νομοθέτης ἀγαθός) y como sabio (*Tim.* 20e: ὁ τῶν ἑπτὰ σοφώτατος). En Demóstenes (*De falsa legatione*, 252) y Aristóteles (*Ath. Pol.* 17.2) es, frente a Pisístrato, el líder indiscutible de la toma de Salamina. A partir de este momento, la figura de Solón adquiere su gran altura política como creador de la democracia, como el fautor de la *patrios politeia* que atestigua la prosa político-constitucional⁹.

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- 5 Sobre la popularidad de Pisístrato Holladay, p. 40, destaca que la época es entendida de manera anacrónica por Aristóteles y por Plutarco, «an artificial schema derived from the political theory of the late fifth and fourth centuries».
 - 6 En general, se postula que la imagen de Solón como creador de la democracia habría surgido ya en las batallas políticas del siglo V. Así lo indica David, 1981, p. 133: «having been considered the father of the constitution by the moderate oligarchs in the late fifth century».
 - 7 Cuartero, pp. 5–38, llevó a cabo un estudio, de referencia obligada, sobre la producción de escolios en el marco de las luchas políticas de la Atenas de finales del siglo VI y principios del V. En p. 15 subraya el carácter propagandístico del escolio, «una obra nacida en el seno del partido pisistrateo», seguramente en época del gobierno de Hipías «en que arreciaba la subversión alcmeónida y la tiranía defiende su posición recordando su ascendencia heroica y, al mismo tiempo, los triunfos militares de Pisístrato» (vid. los frags. 15–16 D recogidos por Ateneo).
 - 8 Sin embargo, el liderazgo de Pisístrato permanece en testimonios de carácter historiográfico: la línea inaugurada por Heródoto, atribuyéndole la reconquista de Salamina (I 59,4), será seguida por Eneas el Táctico (*Pol.* 4.8–11) y, según el testimonio del propio Plutarco (*Comp. Sol. Publ.* 27[4]), por Dáimaco de Platea, autor también de una *Poliorcética* (= *FGrHist* 65F7). Destacamos la clave «historiográfica» que, frente a la de la oratoria, se habría atenido a una línea más veraz y menos propagandística (cf. Vela, p. 686). Ello explicaría la coincidencia de obras de género similar, como las de Justino (2.8) y Frontino (*Strat.* 2.9,9). El único testimonio discrepante es el de Polieno (1.20) quien, no obstante, como indica Martín García, p. 157 ss., parafrasea a Plutarco.
 - 9 Al respecto, Rusenbusch, 1994, retoma las tesis expuestas en idem, 1958, p. 400, que sitúan a mediados del siglo IV la génesis de la leyenda constitucional de Solón como

Dentro de este proceso de formación del mito político de Solón desempeña un papel principal la oratoria panegírica del siglo IV¹⁰ que retoma uno de los *topoi* recurrentes, cual es la exaltación de un pasado glorioso con carácter ejemplificador para el presente. Del mismo modo, cabe pensar que, en el habitual marco de confrontación política de Atenas¹¹, la figura de Solón pasó a formar parte del ideario de los sectores enfrentados que hacían del legislador paradigma y motivo de inspiración de una línea política que justificaba su propio programa. A partir de aquí, la reinterpretación y hasta modificación de los datos históricos fue delimitando el perfil del hombre político hasta el extremo de asumir un carácter legendario¹².

El calado retórico predominante en la prosa posterior, de la que es partícipe Plutarco, favoreció la pervivencia del mito soloniano y la «extinción» de las noticias sobre su rival político, Pisístrato. En definitiva, la cuestión de Solón en el de Queronea no constituye tanto un problema de «falsificación» y «propaganda» históricas como el resultado de un proceso de creación de un mito político que se adapta a principios retóricos y que Plutarco acopia por su adecuación a la morfología de sus *Bioi*; en palabras de A. Domínguez: «con las propias leyes delante y los archivos délficos y, posiblemente, también con referencias de otros autores basadas en el estudio directo de esas leyes, ha

creador de la democracia, ya que todas las alusiones a Solón de los oradores áticos nos remiten precisamente al 358/7, año de la derrota de Atenas en la Guerra Social y de la consiguiente disolución de la Segunda Liga Ateniense.

- 10 Cf. Rusenbusch, 1994, pp. 367–368: «Isokrates forderte damit, zu den angeblich so herrlichen Verhältnissen der solonischen und kleisthenischen Zeit zurückzukehren und damit das Rad der Geschichte um rund 240 bzw. 130 Jahre zurückzudrehen. Beide Reden liefen auf eine vernichtende Kritik an der ganzen bisherigen Politik Athens hinaus. Nach dem Urteil des Isokrates war die gesamte Geschichte der letzten 130 Jahre ein einziger Irrweg gewesen. Betroffen von dieser Neubewertung waren neben Solon und Kleisthenes natürlich auch alle für diese Entwicklung verantwortlichen Politiker wie Themistokles, Aristides, Ephialtes, Perikles, auch wenn deren Namen im Areopagitikos nicht ausdrücklich erwähnt werden». En este contexto de mirada al pasado, como apunta Mossé, p. 436, las medidas políticas de Solón contarían con el prestigio de haber instituido una democracia sabia y mesurada.
- 11 Estas interpretaciones, como ya vio Masaracchia, pp. 5–77, proceden, en gran parte, de las diferentes corrientes que adoptó la lucha política en la Atenas clásica. Vid., asimismo, Domínguez, p. 197.
- 12 Podemos entrever con A. Domínguez, p. 197, que «la modificación de los hechos, para satisfacer esas necesidades, estuvo a la orden del día y la fuente era siempre la misma, la poesía soloniana, adornada de mayor o menor cantidad de tradición oral dudosamente verídica y de interpretaciones de autores anteriores, que reposaban (sin que quizá muchos se hubiesen apercebido de ello) sobre la misma fuente primaria». Cf., *supra*, nota 1.

podido completar sus informaciones acerca de la vida y la obra de Solón, para terminar convirtiendo al ateniense en un mito político»¹³.

Es evidente que la biografía política plutarquea tiende a escoger aquellas versiones de la historia que dentro de su esquema retórico favorecen el carácter ejemplar del personaje¹⁴. En este sentido, Solón junto con Arístides y Licurgo es «uno de los ejemplos de la Historia que mejor se acomoda al ideal humano investigado por el biógrafo»¹⁵. Pero ello no ha de entenderse como una mera adscripción a una corriente propagandística concreta, desde cuya perspectiva habría sido igualmente posible la composición de un *bios* sobre Pisístrato. En nuestra opinión la elección del personaje exige, en último extremo, la existencia de una tradición previa que haya consolidado la «leyenda» del protagonista¹⁶.

2. Solón y los Siete Sabios de Grecia

Ciertamente, la admiración por el mítico legislador ateniense que lleva a nuestro autor a dedicarle una *Vida*, encuentra su correspondencia en la

13 *Ibidem*. A este respecto destacamos, con Pérez Jiménez, 1996, p. 13, que Plutarco aprovecha estos testimonios sobre su personaje «así como su lectura de los textos legales a él atribuidos; pero los enriquece, como por otro lado es su costumbre, con la perspectiva moral y personal que le sugieren las anécdotas de autores helenísticos (léase Faniás de Éreso y, sobre todo, Hermipo de Gábara) y con la aureola de sabio político que le diera Platón». En efecto, Hermipo fue autor de un Περὶ νομοθετῶν y un Περὶ (τῶν) ἑπτὰ σοφῶν, que, como recuerda Fernández Delgado, 2002, p. 357, resultan básicos para entender el proceso de mitificación de Solón, al igual que la *Atthis* de Androción, discípulo de Isócrates, cuya influencia ideológica debió de ser crucial. Según Rusenbusch, 1994, p. 366, es Helánico quien, en la primera mitad del siglo IV, introduce la leyenda de los Siete Sabios, que tendrá su continuidad en Platón, Eudoxo, Dáimaco de Platea, Éforo, Dicearco, Teofrasto y Demetrio de Falero (en p. 375, destaca el trabajo sobre «Exzerpte und Varianten»; a los autores citados añade Clidemo, el propio Aristóteles, Faniás, Diécidas y Hereas). Vid., asimismo, Palladini, p. 377 ss.

14 En Vela, p. 691, hacíamos notar que esta biografía, como las demás, fue precedida de una paciente labor de lectura, de anotación —ὑπομνήματα— y de recogida de aquellas fuentes que ofrecían una mayor adecuación a la caracterización del *éthos* del personaje. Sobre este particular, compartimos la revisión crítica de la historicidad de datos de la biografía política de Solón, alterados al servicio del mito político, que propone Fernández Delgado, 2002, pp. 357–358: «sa conception biographique ne visait pas à restituer chronologiquement et simplement les faits de la vie du personnage mais prenait cette biographie comme point de départ, s'efforçant de mettre en relief le caractère exemplaire et moralement irréprochable du héros choisi, organisant et interprétant dans ce but les dates, de façon à ce qu'elles répondant au modèle préconçu».

15 Pérez Jiménez, 1991, pp. 687–688.

16 Cf. Vela, p. 692. Sobre esta cuestión Aalders, p. 37, considera que Plutarco sigue «a general tradition or trend of thought more than a special author».

composición del *Banquete de los Siete Sabios*¹⁷, recreación en la ficción de un encuentro legendario en el que Solón ocupa el primer asiento, por saber y edad, consideración que sigue la opinión de su venerado maestro Platón, quien a través de Critias (*Tim.* 20d) lo había calificado como «el más sabio de los Siete».

En efecto, uno de los aspectos que condicionó la percepción de Solón en la posteridad fue su pertenencia a «esa especie de «club» que constituían los Siete Sabios y que fueron célebres tanto por lo que hicieron como, sobre todo, por las máximas y frases que dejaron»¹⁸. Es evidente que se trata de una tradición cuya génesis resulta problemática en la medida en que, además, no constituyó una leyenda unitaria sino que fue modificándose con el tiempo: se cuentan hasta veintiún nombres, si bien cuatro aparecen en todos los listados – Tales de Mileto, Biante de Priene, Pítaco de Mitilene y Solón de Atenas –. No obstante, la leyenda de los Siete Sabios parece ser una creación libre y fantástica de Platón en su *Protágoras* 343a, el testimonio más antiguo en transmitirnos una enumeración de «los Siete»¹⁹: añade a la lista a Cleóbulo de Lindos, Misón de

17 Sobre este opúsculo Busine, p. 93, destaca que Plutarco pone en escena un banquete imaginario y anacrónico que retoma la vieja tradición convivial para plantear una reflexión sobre la ciudad ideal en el contexto del banquete, aquí de neta inspiración platónica, que ha desconcertado a los estudiosos por su carácter artificial, el desorden en la composición y falta de unidad aparentes – cf. Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, 196–227. En pp. 93–94 apunta que «Dès le debut du dialogue donc, Plutarque manifeste l'intention de rappeler à la mémoire la vieille légende liée au sanctuaire delphique. Reprenant le genre littéraire hérité de la tradition platonicienne, le *Banquet*, que Plutarque choisit de placer à la cour du tyran de Corinthe, dresse une sorte d'apologie de la sagesse grecque, présentée à travers les interventions des différents Sages».

18 Cf. Domínguez, p. 11.

19 Domínguez, p. 217 n. 4, tiene la impresión de que Heródoto «todavía no conoce a los Siete Sabios». Busine, p. 17 (siguiendo a Fehling, pp. 9–13), opina de manera análoga: «Il semble donc que le texte d'Herodote ne rapporte que les prémices d'une légende qui, lentement, se met en place». Ciertamente es que no cita a los Siete Sabios como tales. Pero un seguimiento de las referencias del historiador sugiere, con Schrader, n. 64 al libro I, que «éste conocía las muchas anécdotas que entonces ya circulaban sobre los «Siete Sabios» y de las que el historiador se hace eco en ocasiones». Así, en I 27.2, cita a Biante y a Pítaco, que habrían visitado la corte de Cresos; en este mismo libro, tiene lugar la legendaria entrevista de éste con Solón (28–33) y se cuenta la predicción por Tales de un eclipse (74); al espartano Quilón lo llama «uno de los más sabios» en VII 235 (vid. también I 59), y considera *sofistai* a Pítaco, Biante, Solón y Tales; sin el apelativo pero cita a Periandro III 48–51, V 92 y 95, mostrando su evolución de tirano cruel a árbitro entre atenienses y mitileneos; en IV 46–47 destaca al escita Anacarsis entre los escasos hombres instruidos (λόγιοι) de su país. En fin, en I 29, concretamente, nos relata cómo ἀπικνέονται ἐς Σάρδεις [...] ἄλλοι τε οἱ πάντες ἐκ τῆς Ἑλλάδος σοφισταί, οἱ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον ἐπύχχανον ἔοντες, [...] καὶ δὴ καὶ Σόλων ἀνὴρ Ἀθηναῖος... y, aunque, en puridad, no se anota el mítico número de Siete –de resonancias delficas o bien inspirado por el propio Platón–, todo apunta a la existencia ya de una tradición

Quenea y Quilón el lacedemonio, al tiempo que excluye a Periandro por su condición de tirano de Corinto. En el *Banquete* plutarqueo intervienen, junto a Solón, Tales, Biante y Pítaco, Quilón, Cleóbulo y Anacarsis, cuya introducción en la legendaria nómina se atribuye a Éforo²⁰. Tenemos también constancia de que Hermipo²¹ escribió una obra *Sobre los Siete Sabios* en la que, según el testimonio de Diógenes Laercio – I 42 = *FGrHist* 1026 F 13 = F 6 (Wehrli) –, recopilaba los nombres de diecisiete: Solón, Tales, Biante, Pítaco, Quilón, Misón, Cleóbulo, Anacarsis, Periandro, Acusilao, Epiménides, Leonfante, Ferécides, Aristodemo, Pitágoras, Laso y Anaxágoras.

No cabe duda de que la imagen del Solón sabio hunde sus raíces en la tradición de los *Siete Sabios*, en el paradigma del hombre más sabio y afortunado que atestiguaba Heródoto y que se asienta sobre una tradición que presenta al filósofo como *sophos* de la ciencia política²². En consecuencia, se destaca el aspecto sapiencial de la *mesotes* de Solón, el ideal de la moderación, una de las enseñanzas recurrentes de las *gnomai* de los *Sabios*. Esta corriente habría surgido de la propia poesía de sus representantes que constituyó el vehículo de propagación de sus ideas (como en el caso de Solón, Periandro, Biante o Pítaco).

En suma, podemos delimitar una doble caracterización de Solón como político y sabio: mientras la primera surge en el marco de la lucha política interna ateniense, la segunda adquiere rápidamente un carácter «panhelénico»²³. Este doble perfil encuentra acomodo en dos modelos literarios apropiados, la *Biografía política* y las *Obras morales*, que ofrecen un retrato completo, como en pocos protagonistas plutarqueos. Pero, al mismo tiempo, una imperceptible frontera parece repartir y separar los contenidos de cada opúsculo que, aun resultando complementarios para el testimonio soloniano, se ajustan a un mensaje netamente diferenciado ¿cómo presentar, pues, este

previa al historiador de Halicarnaso. En este sentido, Cuartero, p. 6, considera probable la existencia de escolios áticos atribuidos a los Siete que habrían sido recopilados en una antología de edad tardía (cf. D. L. I 34, 61, 78, 85, 91).

20 En efecto, Estrabón (VII 3.9) nos informa del testimonio de Éforo en su inclusión en la mítica saga. También D. L. (I 41 = *FGrHist* 70 F 182) confirma su tardía incorporación en lugar de Misón.

21 Vid., *supra*, n. 13. Para Bollansée, pp. 27–44, la obra de Hermipo estaría constituida por la biografía de cada uno de los diecisiete sabios.

22 Sobre su recepción por Plutarco, Aguilar, p. 19, comenta que «se nos aparece como un sabio práctico, como un hombre político, pero no como un filósofo en el noble sentido de la palabra con la que podría calificar a su modelo, a su más querido maestro, a Platón».

23 Sobre este particular, Palladini, p. 386 n. 30, indica: «Si noti come viene sottolineato il fatto d'essere illustre tra tutti i Greci, e non solo tra gli Ateniesi, tratto particolare dei Savi che avevano appunto il pregio d'essere preminenti sugli altri uomini e che presentavano un certo carattere panellenico». El concepto «panhelénico» habría sido desarrollado ya en la fuente helenística de referencia.

trabajo a un Congreso cuyo tema es precisamente la «unidad» de la obra de Plutarco?

3. *Synkrisis* soloniana

Precisamente en esta interesante, y significativa, delimitación de las obras de Plutarco, por la que el Solón convival apenas tiene algo que ver con el biografiado por el mismo autor, creemos se puede hallar una productiva vía de análisis. Si, como señala Domínguez Monedero, «en la biografía demuestra el autor un profundo conocimiento de la vida, la obra y tradición del personaje, en este relato ese conocimiento apenas se deja sentir. El Solón del *Banquete de los Siete Sabios* es uno más de este grupo y a él se le atribuyen conversaciones y reacciones muy semejantes a las de los demás comensales. Es el de más edad; ha sido legislador y poeta, pero no es un personaje reconociblemente histórico. Gran parte de las palabras puestas en su boca en esta obra, muy bien pudieran haber estado en boca de cualquiera de los otros comensales»²⁴. Y es que, frente al perfil político de los *Bioi*, este opúsculo responde a una particular configuración formal que, en el marco literario del simposio, integra el abrupto estilo del apotegma, vehículo de transmisión muy probable de las sentencias atribuidas a los Siete²⁵.

Ahora bien, estas diferencias de tratamiento del personaje, que se explican desde la distinta perspectiva literaria de cada pieza, no pueden solapar el carácter complementario de ambas obras para el retrato mitificador de Solón cuya tradición culmina en Plutarco. En este sentido, pensamos que ha de ser en las mínimas **coincidencias**²⁶, o conexiones intertextuales, que se registran en las que se encuentra el mensaje unitario del retrato-moral del personaje que Plutarco desea transmitirnos.

– Junto a Solón comparten protagonismo en ambas obras otros Sabios cuyos perfiles resultan especialmente relevantes. Así, el escita **Anacarsis**²⁷, integrado

24 Domínguez, p. 201.

25 Busine, p. 102, destaca, en efecto, que «le recours aux sentences et apophtegmes revêt dans le *Banquet* une importance remarquable. Le matériel gnomologique et apophtegmatique utilisé par mesure où c'est à partir des sentences des Sept que l'auteur s'évertua à reconstruire un banquet imaginaire, coloré d'éléments traditionnels issus de l'époque hellénistique». Palladini, p. 409, sitúa también en época helenística la recopilación de las sentencias de los Sabios.

26 No cabe duda, con Palladini, p. 404, que Plutarco, «che accoglie tanti elementi del ciclo dei Savi, deve avere adoperato in proposito per la Vita solonea la stessa fonte in uso per il *Banchetto*».

27 Anacarsis (Plu., *Sol.* 5, 1, 2, 4, 6; *Conv.* 148 CD, 150 D, 152 A, 154 E, 155 AF, 156 A, 158 A, 163 D) era muy celebrado entre los cínicos del siglo IV por su natural moderación y por el talento práctico de su inteligencia, por sus soluciones para los problemas más variopintos. En este sentido, Palladini, p. 409, atribuye al carácter filosófico y moral de la historiografía retórica la recepción por Plutarco del perfil de los

ya en el grupo de los Siete, presenta estrechos vínculos personales con Solón, hasta el punto de que en el Banquete, junto a Tales, son los protagonistas principales del relato, el mismo triángulo de Sabios que en la *Vida* (*Sol.* 5.1) introduce el encuentro personal del sabio escita con el ateniense, en cuya casa es acogido como huésped. Su sagacidad es aquí puesta en el contexto de la elaboración de las leyes de Solón para introducir un breve debate político en el que, frente al espíritu soloniano del pacto social – *συνθήκας ἀνθρώποι φυλάττουσιν* (*Sol.* 5.5) –, Anacarsis opone el gobierno de los más sabios²⁸. En el *Banquete* predomina el lado práctico de su sabiduría²⁹, que va acompañada de un modelo ético caracterizado por la sobriedad del personaje (150 D), imagen inseparable de un ideario político que se define por el buen gobierno, el que va acompañado de la sabiduría (152 A) y de valores morales: en 154 E la mejor democracia –*isonomía*– es aquella ἐν ἣ τῶν ἄλλων ἴσων νομιζομένων ἀρετῆ τὸ βέλτιον ὀρίζεται, καὶ κακία τὸ χεῖρον. Destacamos también la noticia de la llegada a Atenas del «séptimo sabio» (sic *Sol.* 12.7), el cretense **Epiménides** quien, por indicación del oráculo de Delfos, fue llamado para purificar la ciudad del sacrilegio cometido por Cilón. Su amistad con Solón se verá confirmada en el Banquete por su condición de huésped suyo (157 D y 158 B). Sus actos en favor de la justicia y de la concordia (*Sol.* 12.9: ὑπήκοον τοῦ δικαίου καὶ μᾶλλον εὐπειθῆ πρὸς ὁμόνοιαν κατέστησε), que coinciden con el ideario soloniano, dan paso en el marco convival, de nuevo, a la exposición de un perfil práctico, como en sus consejos sobre la mejor dieta³⁰. La sobriedad de

Sabios: «era una letteratura che poteva avere particolare interesse a trattare motivi ed esempi di antica saggezza e moralità».

- 28 La semejanza entre la censura de Anacarsis que cita Plutarco (*Sol.* 5.6: ἐφη δὲ κάκεῖνο θαυμάζειν ὁ Ἀνάχαρσις ἐκκλησίᾳ παραγενομένου, ὅτι λέγουσι μὲν οἱ σοφοὶ παρ' Ἑλλήσι, κρίνουσι δ' οἱ ἀμαθεῖς.) y la que aparece en D. L. (I 103), nos remite a Hermipo, a quien éste menciona en 101 como fuente para la visita del escita a casa de Solón. En cuanto a su contenido, Palladini, p. 383, lo atribuye a la propaganda antidemocrática de la Atenas del siglo V. Recuerda también Pérez Jiménez, 1996, p. 102 n. 36, las críticas de Platón a la democracia en *Prot.* 319ad, 328e–329a, que se complementan con sus conocidas ideas a favor del gobierno de los más sabios en la *República*.
- 29 Así en sus consejos sobre el cuidado corporal a Cleobulina (148 C–E), la hija del Sabio Cleóbulo de Lindos introducida en el anecdotario de los Siete, o sus conocimientos sobre plantas medicinales (158 A). La anécdota que lo presentaba, como los nómadas escitas, viviendo en un carro, sirve para proclamar la libertad y autonomía del individuo que lo gobierna todo y no es gobernado por nadie (155 A), alegoría de la sobriedad y del buen gobierno que empieza en el propio individuo.
- 30 Vid. *Conv.* 157 D («ἄρ' οὖν,» ἔφη, «καὶ τὸν ἐταῖρον ὑμῶν Σόλωνος δὲ ξένον Ἐπιμενίδην νόμος τις ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν ἄλλων σιτίων κελεύει, τῆς δ' ἀλίμου δυνάμεως ἦν αὐτὸς συντίθεισι μικρὸν εἰς τὸ στόμα λαμβάνοντα διημερεύειν ἀνάριστον καὶ ἄδειπνον;») y 158 B (ἐγὼ δ' ἂν ἠδέως ἀκούσαιμι Σόλωνος· εἰκὸς γὰρ αὐτὸν πεπύσθαι, πολὺν χρόνον Ἀθήνησιν Ἐπιμενίδην συγγεγόμενον, ὃ τι δὴ παθῶν ἢ σοφίζόμενος ἐπὶ τοιαύτην ἤλαθε διαίταν.) en el que el lado sapiencial y práctico de Epiménides es puesto en contacto

los Siete es subrayada por Plutarco a través de la anécdota de la rama del olivo sagrado, único y modesto premio que aceptó el cretense en recompensa por su colaboración (*Sol.* 12.12). En cuanto a **Tales**, que en el *Banquete*³¹ tiene una destacada función ‘narrativa’ introduciendo a los personajes e interpellando en las animadas conversaciones en las que predomina la sentencia y el tono anecdótico, tiene en la *Vida* una presencia menor³². No obstante, es un referente básico por su estrecha relación con Solón, quien le visita en Mileto (6.1), y en el crucial episodio del trípode (4.2: ἔτι δὲ μάλλον εἰς ἀξίωμα καὶ δόξαν αὐτοὺς κατέστησεν ἢ τοῦ τρίποδος περίοδος καὶ διὰ πάντων ἀνακύκλησις καὶ ἀνθύπειξις μετ’ εὐμενείας φιλοτίμου γενομένη).

– Precisamente este episodio constituye el nexo de más estrecha unión entre ambos opúsculos y de conexión intertextual a través de la cual el autor expone con nitidez el sentido último del retrato de Solón. Así, en *Sol.* 4.1 alude directamente al *Banquete* (Γενέσθαι δὲ μετ’ ἀλλήλων ἔν τε Δελφοῖς ὁμοῦ λέγονται καὶ πάλιν ἔν Κορίνθῳ, Περιάνδρου σύλλογον τινὰ κοινὸν αὐτῶν καὶ συμπόσιον κατασκευάσαντος.), que queda vinculado al bios soloniano y ambos al santuario de Delfos³³. El sacerdote del Apolo délfico que está detrás del autor proyecta sobre la figura del ateniense toda la tradición gnomológica y sapiencial délfica que caracteriza al grupo de los Siete³⁴ – siete es el número sagrado de Apolo – y que explica también su perfil más práctico que político³⁵. Apolínea y délfica es, desde luego, la citada historia que nos refiere del trípode – símbolo de la

con Hesíodo quien, para los griegos, era la autoridad de referencia sobre sabiduría práctica (sobre la dieta cf. *Op.* 559 ss.).

- 31 De hecho, es después del propio Solón, el personaje con más presencias en el texto: vid. 146 CDE, 147 B, 148 B–E, 149 B–F, 150 B, 152 AD, 153 A–D, 154 E, 155 D, 157 D, 158 C, 160 DE, 163 D.
- 32 Aunque en 3.8 se alude a Tales como defensor de la sabiduría contemplativa, no práctica, lo cierto es que ocupa un mayor espacio la anécdota de su rechazo del matrimonio y la procreación (6.1–6, 7.2).
- 33 Cf. Palladini, pp. 401–402: «i Sette Savi appaiono conessi con Delfi [...] i Savi sembrano derivare la loro sapienza dalla sapienza apollinea, essendo l’oracolo delfico la più alta autorità alla quale i pensatori della Grecia potessero riferirsi». Vid. Busine, p. 104.
- 34 Cf. Fernández Delgado, 2002, p. 356: «et cette légende à son tour a été rendue possible grâce à l’influence croissante de la religiosité delphique, au service de laquelle se trouvaient de nombreuses histoires pieuses et des proverbes apodictiques dont les auteurs seraient les Sept Sages». En p. 364 destaca la estrecha vinculación del grupo con la moral délfica, pues no en vano algunas de sus máximas habían quedado grabadas en el mismo templo de Apolo, como atestigua el propio Plutarco en *Sobre la E de Delfos* (385 D). ‘Délfica’ es también la presencia de Esopo entre los Sabios y en el *Banquete* (150 AE; 152 BDE; 154 BF; 155 ACE; 156 A; 157 B; 158 B; 162 B; 164 B): cf. García Gual, y Fernández Delgado, p. 365.
- 35 Fernández Delgado, p. 364, subraya que Solón «est présenté par Hérodote et Plutarque en tant que connaisseur des normes du comportement humain et divin et non en tant que politicien expert».

mántica apolínea – que la Pitia entregará al hombre más sabio y que pasa de mano en mano de los Siete porque ninguno se considera merecedor de tan alta consideración. No cabe duda de que la vinculación al santuario ha conferido a los Siete de la autoridad moral y sapiencial definitiva para la consagración de su leyenda³⁶. En este contexto, la conexión de Solón con Delfos³⁷ hacía de éste el paradigma perfecto de sabio-político a los ojos de nuestro piadoso sacerdote. – No hay que olvidar que los Sabios fueron personajes que habían tenido responsabilidades de gobierno (caso de Solón en Atenas, de Periandro tirano de Corinto, de Pítaco en Mitilene, a pesar de Alceo, o de Quilón, éforo en Esparta) o, al menos, su influencia en la comunidad era notable (como Epiménides, el chamán cretense, o Tales, *sophos* de Mileto, o del nómada Anacarsis, convertido en consejero político) por lo que su consagración bajo el manto délfico los revestía de una especial autoridad por su sabiduría pero también por su ideario político. En este sentido, Solón encarna en las dos obras que estamos tratando, el modelo de sabio político caracterizado por su sentido práctico³⁸ del buen gobierno³⁹: el buen gobernante se caracteriza por su

36 Busine, p. 47, atribuye, de nuevo, a los textos de época helenística esta suerte de «processus de «mythologisation», une multitude de récits sur *l'agôn* des Sept Sages».

37 Palladini, p. 403, explica el hecho como un intento de «conferire maggiore prestigio alle sue leggi [...] Tale connessione è certamente un elemento della leggenda di Solone che Plutarco trovò nella propria fonte: leggenda che molto probabilmente risale all'epoca stessa di Solone, cioè al momento in cui egli entrò nel novero dei Savi. Soltanto Plutarco fornisce tracce del legame con Delfi della sua persona e della sua opera». Por su parte, Busine, p. 94, atisba en el de Queronea una voluntad de revitalizar el santuario a través de la leyenda de los Siete.

38 Con Palladini, p. 402–3, el mayor énfasis de los aspectos prácticos de su sabiduría es el resultado de una larga tradición que nos remite, de nuevo, a Hesíodo.

39 El buen gobierno del Solón plutarqueo se resume en una idea que nos ofrece otro ejemplo de conexión intertextual entre ambas obras – casi dos calcos que confirman la coherencia compositiva de Plutarco –: no cometer injusticia y perseguir la injusticia ajena con el mismo afán que la propia (*Sol.* 18.7: ἐρωτηθεῖς γὰρ ὡς ἔοικεν ἦτις οἰκεῖται κάλλιστα τῶν πόλεων, ἐκείνην εἶπεν ἐν ἧ τῶν ἀδικουμένων οὐχ ἦττον οἱ μὴ ἀδικούμενοι προβάλλονται καὶ κολάζουσι τοὺς ἀδικούντας. *Conn.* 154 D: “δοκεῖ μοι πόλις ἄριστα πράττειν καὶ μάλιστα σφάζειν δημοκρατίαν, ἐν ἧ τὸν ἀδικήσαντα τοῦ ἀδικηθέντος οὐδὲν ἦττον οἱ μὴ ἀδικηθέντες προβάλλονται καὶ κολάζουσι.”). Más adelante (154 E), Tales concreta en el buen orden económico uno de los rasgos propios de la buena democracia. En este sentido, Pérez Jiménez, 1991, p. 690, caracteriza el perfil ideológico del autor de raigambre platónica: “Su conservadurismo [...] le orienta más bien hacia la defensa de la ὁμόνοια como fuente de bienestar para la comunidad política; y lograrla implica una sabia organización de la sociedad que, sin estar condicionada por ninguno de sus estamentos, elimine los graves desajustes económicos entre los ciudadanos, principal causa a menudo de desórdenes sociales”. Sobre la preocupación de los Sabios por el equilibrio económico, tema que encuentra en la literatura socrática del siglo IV su punto de partida, se ha ocupado en detalle Santoni, pp. 91–160.

capacidad de inventiva e improvisación al servicio del bien común⁴⁰, como cuando Solón se ausenta, con su viaje a Egipto, por un período de 10 años para garantizar que su legislación no sea derogada, viaje que aparece en las dos obras (*Sol.* 25.6–26.1; *Conv.* 146 E)⁴¹.

– En definitiva, ¿cuál es ese sabio y buen gobierno del que constantemente se hace eco Plutarco? La respuesta nos la da de nuevo esta sucinta *synkrisis* soloniana. El Plutarco que aprovecha en el *Banquete* la presencia de Solón para introducir de manera anacrónica el debate sobre la mejor forma de gobierno (151E–152D)⁴², manifiesta, sin ambages, su rechazo de la tiranía, considerado el mayor mérito del político ateniense – dice Tales διὸ καὶ Σόλωνα σοφώτατον ἡγησάμεν οὐ δεξάμενον τυραννεῖν (*Conv.* 147C) –. Del mismo modo, la censura de la tiranía no admite matices en la biografía (*Sol.* 14.8), en la que se sirve de los propios versos (Fr. 29 G–P)⁴³ del poeta-político para dar testimonio: τούτων οὐδὲν ἐξέκρουσε τὸν Σόλωνα τῆς αὐτοῦ προαιρέσεως, ἀλλὰ πρὸς μὲν τοὺς φίλους εἶπεν, ὡς λέγεται, καλὸν μὲν εἶναι τὴν τυραννίδα χωρίον, οὐκ ἔχειν δ' ἀπόβασιν, πρὸς δὲ Φῶκον ἐν τοῖς ποιήμασι γράφων

40 Palladini, pp. 397–398, habla de «saggezza solonica», que es, en sustancia, «una forma di astuzia, un'abilità pratica, una capacità inventiva di stratagemmi nell'interesse pubblico», y también «una σοφία strettamente legata all'amministrazione pratica della πόλις (che fu l'attività essenziale di Solone e, in generale, dei Sette Savi) [...] la sapienza caratteristica dei Savi sarebbe stata questa δεινότης πολιτική e δραστήριος σύνεσις, sagezza del tutto pratica e volta al bene pubblico». De manera similar, para A. Busine, 2002, p. 105, la sabiduría de Solón «se caractérise par une certaine inventivité, une habilité pratique mise au service de la société».

41 Aunque desde Heródoto (I 29) tenemos atestiguados los viajes de Solón, Palladini, pp. 388–389, observa con acierto el carácter tópicos de los viajes de los Sabios a Egipto y Asia Menor (como el que D. L., I 27, atribuye a Tales; cf. Plu., *Conv.* 146 E).

42 Para Busine, p. 99, estos debates «sur la meilleure constitution, pour lesquels Plutarque dépend très vraisemblablement des sources anciennes, nous renvoient au plus tôt à l'époque classique et peut-être à l'ambiance aristotélicienne». Vid., asimismo, Aalders, p. 33.

43 Con Pérez Jiménez, 1991, p. 688, el Solón plutarqueo «rechaza el uso abusivo del poder y no disimula una abierta indignación frente a fórmulas despóticas como la tiranía». Sobre esta cuestión, se ha postulado que el queroneo se hace eco de la tradición de censura de la tiranía, atribuida a Solón, que retoma Aristóteles y que es prueba de la creación de una tradición *escrita* – cf. David, 1981, p. 137: «Aristotle and his disciples were familiar with at least some specimens of the party-political literature which flourished in late-century Athens. Furthermore, this genre has left its imprint on the *Ath. Pol.*» – Aalders, p. 31, comparte la idea de la creación de esta tradición con posterioridad a época arcaica: «he had to rely [...] upon later authors, especially Herodotus and Aristotle [...] relying mainly on fifth and fourth century sources». En efecto, dentro de esta línea argumental se inscriben el *Hierón* de Jenofonte, Platón (*Leg.* 4.709 ss.), Isócrates (*Hel.* 32 ss.) y Aristóteles (*Pol.* 1314a), lo que confirma la tesis de Palladini, p. 338, para quien la tradición que presenta a los Sabios como enemigos de la tiranía se formó en ambientes filosóficos.

εἰ δὲ γῆς (φησὶν) ἐφεισάμην
 πατρίδος, τυραννίδος δὲ καὶ βίης ἀμειλίχου
 οὐ καθηψάμην, μίανας καὶ καταισχύνας κλέος,
 οὐδὲν αἰδεῦμαι· πλεον γὰρ ᾧδε νικήσειν δοκέω
 πάντας ἀνθρώπους.

4. A la vista de todo lo dicho, parece confirmarse la decisiva contribución de Plutarco a la elaboración de la leyenda de Solón que la Antigüedad nos ha legado⁴⁴ y ello a través de dos géneros complementarios. Así, de una parte, la figura de Solón es la del estadista que encarna el ideal platónico de filósofo político, ejemplo de aquellas enseñanzas que Plutarco quiere transmitir en sus *Vidas Paralelas*. De otra, el perfil del sabio que ocupa el primer puesto en el encuentro de los Siete Sabios resulta inseparable del anterior⁴⁵. El Solón de Plutarco que, junto a una capacidad práctica como gobernante, presenta un *ethos* caracterizado por su integridad moral, es por ello idealizado como paradigma del hombre de estado capaz de gobernar la ciudad teniendo en mente la virtud. Solón es, a la postre, un modelo útil para una escuela de retórica⁴⁶, que es, en definitiva, el contexto determinante de la obra plutarquea. En este marco, nuestro polígrafo trata de conciliar el ideal de las ciudades-estado griegas del pasado con el Imperio romano de su presente⁴⁷,

44 Cf. Domínguez, p. 202. De igual manera Paladini, p. 405, piensa que «la figura di Solone in Plutarco sembra risentire della trasfigurazione letteraria subita nelle scuole di retorica in epoca posteriore all'età dell'oro di Atene». Posteriormente, como observa Busine, p. 46, «la syllogè naissante fut rapidement dépolitisée à partir du moment où Platon l'intercepta et la transféra au plan culturel». No cabe duda de que las reflexiones sobre el fin último de las ocupaciones humanas son una inserción de las ideas platónicas.

45 Hasta el punto de que en su gestión política es calificado, en un contexto de biografía política (en la *Comp. Sol. et Publ.* 1.8), como σοφώτατος ἅπάντων. A este respecto, Pérez Jiménez, 1991, p. 693, subraya, con acierto, lo que él llama «debilidad de Solón», hasta el punto de que Plutarco interpreta la figura de un personaje idealizado por las corrientes de pensamiento desde una postura crítica, reconocido, aquí, más como sabio que como político: «el error de Solón consistió en no haber sabido imponer su autoridad por medio a perder la confianza de los ciudadanos [...] De esta forma Solón se aleja del ideal de Plutarco por ser excesivamente pragmático, porque lejos de imponer un esquema político sabio, avalado con la autoridad de su propia filosofía, tiene demasiado en cuenta los sentimientos que contra él pueda generar la aplicación de dicho esquema y porque acomoda sus leyes a la realidad y a las esperanzas del pueblo, en lugar de adaptar la realidad a las leyes».

46 Como señala Palladini, p. 399, «Considerando questa palese tendenza a creare degli uomini-esempi, si capisce bene come Plutarco tendesse a sottolineare la personalità del Saggio Solone». En consecuencia, el biógrafo habría acentuado caracteres que estaban ya presentes en su fuente. Vid., asimismo, Busine, p. 105.

47 Busine, p. 87, situa en época helenística ese contraste entre el pasado, que deviene en modelo paradigmático, y el presente: «Depuis son apparition en effet, la légende sert de morale et référent culturel. Selon les âges, elle revêt même approximativement les mêmes fonctions: du modèle éthique à l'exemple politique, du sujet de dissertation

para el que postula un tipo de monarca alejado de la tiranía, un monarca moderado como Trajano, un nuevo Solón destinatario último de sus reflexiones⁴⁸.

De acuerdo con los criterios literarios de cada pieza Plutarco reparte el material, aunque con una idea unitaria: aspectos del quehacer político en la *Vida* de Solón; en la charla simposiaca, anécdotas y sentencias ejemplares; en todo caso, sabiduría delfica y moderación política, modelo para tiempos imperiales. No nos sorprende, por ello, el enfado de Tales con el recién llegado Nilóxeno de Náucratis por haber introducido el debate político en plena preparación del banquete de Sabios (*Conv.* 147 D) que parece confirmar nuestras impresiones sobre la delimitación de los contextos literarios: «ἀλλὰ γὰρ εἰς οὐδὲν προσήκοντας ἐμβέβληκεν ἡμᾶς,» ἔφη, «ὁ ξένος οὐτοσὶ λόγους, ἀμελήσας λέγειν τε καὶ ζητεῖν ἃ ἀρμόττει ἐπὶ δεῖπνον βαδίζουσιν».

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philosophique au débat sur les «genres de vie», les Sept Sages ont constituuellement fourni aux Grecs les motifs les plus divers, exploités en fonction de l'ambiance culturelle et politique du temps.»

48 Cf. Aalders, p. 38. Busine, p. 99, destaca un intento de equiparar el ideal de democracia de las viejas *poieis* al de una aristocracia contemporánea moderada.

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Las *Vidas* frente a los *Moralia* en las alusiones plutarqueas sobre Solón

Inés Calero Secall

La especial atracción que Plutarco sintió por Solón queda demostrada por la frecuencia con la que su figura es tomada como ejemplo para arropar sus innumerables pensamientos morales, pero aún más por haberla incluido en el amplio abanico de los *Viri Illustres*.

Por tanto, al contar con su biografía y al asomar en los *Moralia* referencias a su persona, cabría preguntarnos si en todo momento nos encontraremos con el mismo perfil de Solón o, por el contrario, están enfatizados aspectos contrapuestos.

A responder a esa pregunta está orientado el presente trabajo que se propone examinar si la personalidad de Solón que nos transmite Plutarco en sus obras morales difiere de la definida en la biografía y si las referencias en los *Moralia* a determinados aspectos solonianos coinciden o divergen de las contenidas en la *Vida*.

En primer lugar, como es preceptivo en todo estudio de un personaje, comenzaremos por los datos biográficos,¹ para continuar con las leyes solonianas y las medidas políticas que comenta Plutarco.

Es legítimo pensar que la *Vita Solonis* debía recopilar el mayor número de noticias sobre su vida por la simple razón de que constituye una biografía. Sin embargo, hemos de ver que existen excepciones a esta premisa en la medida en que algunas referencias de los *Moralia* no aparecen en su *Vida*.

Datos biográficos: personajes conocidos por Solón

En efecto, la noticia de que Solón visitó Egipto pareció a Plutarco que debía quedar reflejada en las páginas tanto de su biografía como de los *Moralia*,² pero el biógrafo, en cambio, no se mostró riguroso ni en el número ni en la identidad de los personajes con los que el legislador intercambié sus

1 Sobre las citas de Solón en Plutarco no vamos a ocuparnos, puesto que ya han sido estudiadas por Aguilar 1991, esbozadas ya en Aguilar 1992. Sobre estas citas me interesa añadir que la recogida en *Praec. ger. reip.* 813F no se encuentra en la *Vida*.

2 La existencia de este viaje ya es mencionada en Heródoto (I 30) y en Aristóteles (*Ath.* 11, 1).

pensamientos filosóficos; pues si en *Solón* 26, 1 nos dice que se dedicó a filosofar con los insignes sacerdotes Sonquis de Sais y Psenopis de Heliópolis, en *Is. et Os.* (354E) se omite este último, mientras que por el *Banquete de los Siete Sabios* (146E) nos enteramos de que un tal Nilóxeno de Náucratis lo había visitado. El rigor con el que Plutarco pretendió dotar a su biografía le hizo, creo, prescindir de él, porque parece ser un nombre ficticio,³ cuya única misión en el banquete consistía en servir de mensajero de Amasis (*Sept. sap. conv.* 152E ss). De esta forma al inventarse Plutarco esta relación entre Nilóxeno y Amasis incurre en el anacronismo, comúnmente reconocido por los investigadores, de hacer contemporáneos a Solón y Amasis,⁴ pese a la noticia que nos transmite Heródoto (I 30).

Pero es, sobre todo, Creso el personaje que aparece mencionado por Plutarco en varias ocasiones, tanto en *Vita Solonis* como en los *Moralia*.⁵ La entrevista entre el legislador y Creso es un tema que ha sido suficientemente estudiado, no sólo respecto al anacronismo cronológico que comete Plutarco, sino también en cuanto a la posible existencia de un error consciente o no.⁶ Las dudas sobre su existencia que él mismo nos comunica (*Sol.* 27) son suficientes para pensar que el propio Plutarco intuía que había un desfase cronológico entre Solón y Creso.⁷ Es por ello que no voy a hablar sobre ese aspecto de esta anécdota, calificada así por tratarse de una de las historias que «they sometimes go against an accepted chronology».⁸ Mi interés reside en examinar las distintas referencias que hace Plutarco de esta anécdota para conocer si fue utilizada como vehículo para llegar al *ethos* del personaje.⁹

Este examen revela que cada una de las alusiones al encuentro con Creso que se lee en los *Tratados Morales* subraya un aspecto determinado de la

3 Cf. Defradas-Hani-Klaerr, 188.

4 Aalders 1977, 29; Leão 2001, 195.

5 *Solón* 27 ss; *Publ.* 24 (1); *Adulat.* 58D, 69F; *Sept. sap. conv.* 155B; *Herod. mal.* 857F. Sobre la mención de este encuentro en otros autores, cf. Pérez Jiménez, 158, n. 203.

6 Para Aalders 1977, 29 n. 10, «Plutarch is more or less aware of this». Para Leão 2001, 195, «pensar que el autor no tenía conciencia del error está fuera de cuestión»[...] «Plutarco conocía los problemas cronológicos de este encuentro, pero esta objeción le parece pequeña cuando la compara con la riqueza que ofrece para definir el carácter del legislador» (2001, 193). Véase también el trabajo de Leão 2000, 27, donde ya se recogen conclusiones sobre la existencia poco probable del encuentro entre Solón y Creso.

7 Para Díaz Tejera, 369, el episodio de Creso es una leyenda que Heródoto, confundiendo con el mito heroico, introduce en su historia con idea de que sirviera de utilidad. A Plutarco esta leyenda le convenía para caracterizar al personaje. Sobre ello y la función de las anécdotas, cf. Durán López, 405.

8 Podlecki, 367–8, quien define también como anécdota «the stories often (not always) chronologically vague or floating».

9 «No son las descripciones políticas o militares y su análisis, sino la anécdota» lo que mejor nos presenta al personaje, cf. Stadter, 291.

personalidad soloniana que de forma más completa se deja ver en la extensa narración del episodio que se recoge en la *Vida*. Así en *Septem sapientium convivium* (155B) los términos en los que presenta la respuesta de Solón que se negaba a considerar a Creso como el hombre más dichoso y feliz, porque «él quería contemplar los bienes que había en él, más que los de su alrededor» sirven a Plutarco para reafirmar la idea de que la felicidad se encuentra en los «bienes» que llevamos dentro y no en los que se posee, en una palabra, el sabio Solón busca en el hombre el ser y no el tener.

En cambio, de esta entrevista el polígrafo de Queronea aspiraba a destacar en *Adulat.* (58D) el rasgo opuesto del adúlador que en todo momento blasona Solón al no caer en la tentación de sucumbir ante los reyes, ricos o poderosos y al tener por felices a personas totalmente desconocidas y pobres. En esta contestación a Creso presidía además la *parresia*, «franqueza», que el biógrafo desea subrayar como una virtud opuesta al arte de la adulación, franqueza que el legislador utilizó, razona Plutarco, para poner obstáculo a la *philargyria*, «avaricia» y a la *aproxexia*, «negligencia», que gran parte de los hombres poseen (*Adulat.* 69E). En la biografía salta a la vista y con toda nitidez una personalidad nada proclive a la ostentación y a la opulencia tras poner como ejemplo de felicidad a personas vulgares y desconocidas, pero es voluntad de Plutarco dejar aflorar otro rasgo que define de un modo más claro a Solón. Al subrayar la actitud que adopta mientras dialoga con Creso «manteniéndose en pie y de frente» ἀντικρὺς καταστῆς (*Sol.* 27, 4), aparece todo un Solón impertérrito, imperturbable ante la grandeza de un rey, sin signo alguno de sumisión.

En todas las referencias del encuentro de Solón y Creso nuestro personaje además es investido de la misma virtud de la sinceridad, incluso en las difamantes palabras sobre la envidia divina que atribuye Heródoto a Solón (*Herod. mal.* 857F). Estas contrastan con su juicio sobre la divinidad como dispensadora de moderación y de sabiduría democrática al pueblo griego que Plutarco deja claro en *Vita Solonis*, en cuyo pasaje 27, 8, Solón exhibe además el sentimiento de superioridad griega frente al bárbaro que representa Creso. Resulta así que en su pretensión de contemporanizar a Solón y Creso, Plutarco incurre también, pienso, en un evidente anacronismo al atribuir al estadista la defensa de la identidad griega por oposición al bárbaro cuando esta idea germinaría posteriormente en las Guerras Médicas, a consecuencia de las cuales la democracia griega se reafirmaba sobre una base religiosa. De esta confrontación se servía el queronense, una vez más, para acentuar su opinión sobre los bárbaros que constituían «a powerful negative pole»¹⁰ en sus obras.

10 Schmidt 2004, 230, para quien «hay una notable excepción en el personaje de Anacarsis, el único bárbaro con opiniones políticas positivas»; véase además Schmidt 1999.

Que Solón conocía a Tales y Anacarsis es relatado en ambos grupos de obras, pero ni las anécdotas coinciden ni el perfil que se traza de sus figuras. El aspecto que de Tales se focaliza en *Solón 6* es el desinterés por el matrimonio y los hijos, aderezado con los ribetes burlescos con los que el queronense pretende enmarcar la figura del milesio. Y es mediante la crítica a la actitud de Tales el modo como Plutarco introduce su pensamiento sobre la fortaleza de espíritu que se ha de adoptar ante las adversidades con ayuda de la razón que alaba en Solón, mientras que en *Convivium* el protagonismo de Tales da pie para resaltar, gracias al género simposíaco que es,¹¹ otros rasgos de este filósofo, como son su odio a la realeza (147B) y su defensa de la clase media (154E), pero también su rechazo a utilizar medios de locomoción (146D), su negativa a bañarse (148B), el gusto por mezclarse con la gente vulgar (149F),¹² la frugalidad en la alimentación (150C), su indiferencia ante la riqueza (148B) y su predisposición a las bromas (149D). Este desprecio por las convenciones sociales concuerda, no obstante, con el desdén hacia la procreación que, barnizado también de tono burlesco, vimos en la biografía (*Sol.* 6) en unos términos que se ajustan a las propuestas de la corriente cínica.¹³

En esta misma obra (154E) Anacarsis es otro de los contertulios que, junto a Solón, alaba y da una definición del gobierno igualitario, pero es ya en *Garrul.* (505A) donde mediante la anécdota que nos cuenta cómo se quedó dormido con la mano derecha en la boca y la izquierda en los genitales, después de haber cenado con Solón, se esboza un distanciamiento entre ambos. Aunque Plutarco no lo aluda, me da la impresión de que esa actitud es indicativa de su recelo hacia Solón como si se pusiera en guardia de la homosexualidad hacia la que se comentaba tenía tendencia el estadista. Su gesto sirve para mostrar de forma caricaturesca a un Anacarsis como paradigma de hombre que desea evitar la incontinencia de placeres y como figura antitética del charlatán que no sabe guardar un secreto. De todos modos este Anacarsis me parece más cercano a Solón y más íntegro por desear respetar las posibles confidencias que se habrían comentado mientras comían, que aquel Anacarsis de la biografía (*Sol.* 5, 2–6) con opiniones enfrentadas al legislador, de quien se burla de su empeño por escribir leyes que sus conciudadanos no iban a respetar y que, en opinión de Plutarco, el tiempo le dio la razón.

No debemos olvidarnos de Esopo en su relación con Solón, cuyos desacuerdos son destacados en ambos tipos de obras. La existencia de un

11 En realidad es «una adaptación al género del ‘Banquete’ socrático-platónico de un género más antiguo, el del ‘Banquete’ realista helenístico», cf. Rodríguez Adrados, 137.

12 Intencionadamente ocupó en la mesa el lugar que antes había rechazado Alexídemo (148E), por considerar deshonesto sentarse al lado de un flautista.

13 Parece que una antigua tradición asignaba a Tales el papel de cínico, cf. Rodríguez Adrados, 140.

evidente disentimiento entre las dos figuras es una constante en la obra de Plutarco, que opone la simplona superficialidad de Esopo a la profundidad y rectitud del legislador, cuando tras la entrevista con Crespo disienten en el modo de acercarse a un rey. Frente a una conducta lo más agradable posible, ὡς ἥδιστα, defendida por Esopo, se opone la más honrada posible, ὡς ἄριστα, que proclama Solón (*Sol.* 28, 1). Esta discrepancia entre ambos se repite en el *Banquete de los Siete Sabios* (155B), en la incomprensión cargada de burla que muestra Esopo ante la respuesta de Solón a Crespo, al hilo de lo cual Anacarsis recuerda al fabulista su necedad poniendo el ejemplo del caracol cuyo caparazón sería considerado por él como el propio animal y no el que vive dentro.

Continuando con los personajes que en un momento dado estuvieron en contacto con Solón, sabemos de un tal Epiménides de Festo, cuya existencia como huésped del estadista diferentes autores la documentan.¹⁴ Sobre estas relaciones de hospitalidad se nos informa tanto en la biografía como en *Sept. sap. conv.* (157D), pero es en aquella donde se explican los motivos del encuentro. Según *Solón* 12, 7–8, a propósito de ciertas supersticiones que circulaban por la ciudad, Epiménides fue llamado a Atenas para purificarla, pero su estancia tuvo una importante repercusión, porque facilitó el camino a Solón en la redacción de sus leyes y contribuyó a introducir normas más sencillas en las ceremonias religiosas con la incorporación de algunos rituales.

Sin embargo, se puede observar que Plutarco pone distinto acento en el personaje que traza en el *Banquete*, pues mientras en la biografía su interés radica en presentar una figura iniciática e introductora de misterios, en *Convivium* sólo lo muestra como seguidor de un régimen dietético muy severo, que Cleodoro, allí presente (158B), supone que debía de conocer muy bien Solón por el contacto tan estrecho que tuvieron. Ante lo cual se encuentra con la respuesta soloniana de que no tenía necesidad de interrogar a aquél sobre esto, porque, en su opinión, no se debe necesitar alimentos, tema sobre el que más adelante volveremos.

Pues bien, de entre los personajes que las fuentes vinculan a Solón se registran dos que son omitidos en la biografía: Mnesífilo y Quilón. El primero es mencionado en el *Sept. sap. conv.* (154C) como compañero y admirador de Solón que también acompaña a los Siete Sabios en el banquete. Desconocido en la biografía, asoma, en cambio, en *Vida de Temístocles* 2, 6 como un personaje admirado por el político, no por ser rétor o filósofo, sino por su habilidad política como estadista al que en muchos aspectos había tomado como ejemplo.

También en *Convivium* aparece Quilón compartiendo mesa con el legislador, con cuyos vínculos de amistad y de hospitalidad había decidido

14 Aristóteles *Ath.* 1 menciona a Epiménides de Creta y D. L. I, 110.

romper, por desacuerdo con su creencia en la posibilidad de introducir cambios en las leyes atenienses (151F), pero esa pretendida amistad se silencia en la biografía, aunque su pertenencia al grupo de los Siete Sabios vuelve a mencionarse en *Sobre la E de Delfos* (385D). En el *Banquete* es otro sabio comensal más, que defiende la realeza (155D) y la rigidez de las leyes antes que la alternativa de discusión democrática en la Asamblea, por eso prefiere la ley a los oradores (154E) y aporta la idea de que «los gobernantes no deben tener pensamientos mortales, sino inmortales» (152B).

Leyes de Solón sobre la familia y el matrimonio

Concluido ya el examen de los personajes conocidos por Solón, cuyos perfiles son trazados en sus obras con apenas diferencias de matiz, me parece también muy interesante analizar las referencias a las leyes solonianas¹⁵ a las que Plutarco dedicó un minucioso estudio. Sabemos que el queronense mostró siempre una constante preocupación por la familia, la cual motivó que los preceptos sobre el matrimonio y otras normativas del derecho de familia emanadas de Solón fueran objeto de su interés.

Pues bien, tras examinar sus comentarios, he observado que en la exégesis plutarquea domina su espíritu ético y moralista¹⁶ sin que haya divergencias entre la *Vida* y los *Moralía*, aunque a veces en una y en otros se aporten o se silencien algunos detalles.

Las disposiciones solonianas sobre las relaciones sexuales de los esposos, sobre la necesidad de mordisquear la novia un membrillo antes de unirse a su prometido, sobre los matrimonios tardíos, sobre la prohibición de las donaciones entre los cónyuges fueron bien acogidas por Plutarco, pero, por sus convicciones morales, no se da cuenta de que esas leyes solonianas no estaban inspiradas en sus mismos principios, como él pretendía, cuando las utilizó como puntos de apoyo de sus argumentos morales.

Plutarco se equivocaba cuando interpretaba que el deber que se imponía al marido de relacionarse sexualmente tres veces al mes con su mujer, cuando era *epicleros*, no tenía como finalidad el placer, sino la durabilidad del cariño y la amistad dentro del matrimonio, puesto que esas relaciones servirían para renovar el amor que se resiente tras los roces diarios que provoca la convivencia (*Amat.* 769A). Pero si en esta obra moral Plutarco deja volar su sentido ético, el comentario que hace en *Sol.* 20, 4 se ajusta más al objetivo

15 Referencias a los axones donde quedaron escritas sus leyes son recogidas en *Sol.* 25,1 y *Cum. princ. philos.* 779B.

16 Quizás el mismo sentido ético con el que interpretó las leyes de Platón. Sobre la cuestión de la «divinidad» de las leyes, cf. Van der Stockt, 148.

soloniano, pero sólo de un modo parcial. Aquí reconoce que esta prescripción contribuía a la procreación, aunque la considere como factor no imprescindible, pues la ausencia de descendencia no era óbice, en su opinión, para la buena armonía conyugal; con esta norma además propiciaba el respeto del marido por la esposa. Pero es que el matrimonio clásico, cuyos cimientos había establecido Solón, no estaba basado en esos principios. Los fines conyugales no eran otros que la procreación, es verdad, pero para obtener hijos que heredaran el patrimonio familiar (Wolff, Harrison) y máxime si se trataba de una heredera.¹⁷ Además la falta de descendencia era inaceptable para el *oikos* griego, dada la perentoria necesidad de engendrar ese heredero al que transmitir los bienes de la familia. Tal carencia, entonces, se suplía con el recurso de la adopción (Is. II 13).

Por tanto, esta interpretación que Plutarco añade a la ley soloniana viene dictada por su propio pensamiento y se ajusta a las tendencias morales del biógrafo, pero no al concepto soloniano sobre el matrimonio. En la frecuencia de relaciones sexuales prescrita por el legislador sólo hay que entender la procreación de un heredero como razón de esa normativa.

Tampoco interpretó bien el biógrafo otra regulación sobre la *epicleros* que criticó en *Solón* 20, 2 con estas palabras:

«Extraña y ridícula es aquella ley que permite a la heredera, si el hombre que tiene potestad sobre ella y es su representante legal no puede acercarse a ella (es impotente), tener relaciones sexuales con los parientes más próximos de su marido»

Tal norma la consideraba *atopos* y *geloios*, porque tal vez entendía que Solón permitía relaciones adúlteras de la heredera con sus parientes más próximos. La equivocación quizás resida en la errónea interpretación del término *opuesthai* que en tiempos de Solón significaba «ser la esposa de» y «no tener relaciones sexuales». Lo que el legislador otorgaba a la *epicleros* era la posibilidad de casarse con otro de sus parientes, si su esposo era impotente, para cumplir con el objetivo endogámico de la procreación de un heredero de la misma sangre paterna, dado que su marido, por lo general, sería su tío paterno.¹⁸ Por tanto, lo lógico sería que la ley le permitiera divorciarse, pero no vivir situaciones adúlteras. Quizás cuando Plutarco termina por reconocer que es preferible que tenga relaciones con un pariente de su marido a otro cualquiera, él continúe explicándolo con ese sentido amoroso de mayor unión con el marido al engendrar un hijo de la misma sangre, mientras que el hijo de la *epicleros*

17 Biscardi, 100.

18 «No obstante, la concesión que se la hacía a la heredera era mínima y casi no alteraba el espíritu del epiclerato que consistía en dejar el patrimonio a personas de la misma sangre», cf. Calero 2004b, 172.

concebido del pariente lo que favorecía era la conservación de los bienes familiares a través de un miembro de la misma sangre.

La disposición, atribuida al legislador, sobre la necesidad de que la novia mordisqueara un membrillo antes de encerrarse con el novio es comentada por igual en *Solón* 20, 4 y en los *Moralia* como un modo de propiciar la atracción física de la pareja. Esta explicación se hace más explícita en *Aet. Rom.* (279F) y *Coniug. praec.* (138D) donde el moralista, para expresar la unión conyugal, se atreve con un término más descriptivo desde el punto de vista sexual como es *synkataklinesthai*. De ser cierto que derivaba de Solón, esta disposición soloniana habría estado encaminada a preparar los cauces más idóneos para llegar a la procreación sobre la que se asentaba el matrimonio ático.

A su vez, Plutarco sacó a colación en *Sol.* 20, 6 la ley que «suprimía las *phernai*» de las mujeres. Pues bien, el concepto de *pherne* ha dividido a los investigadores respecto a la interpretación de esta normativa soloniana, ya sea en el sentido de que prescribió suprimir la dote o restringir el ajuar. Parece que por la forma verbal empleada, ἀφείλε, Plutarco se referiría a la idea de suprimir, pero el problema estriba en saber qué se entendía por *pherné*, si dote o ajuar. No es sólo cuestión de terminología como algunos plantean y afirman que la dote recibía el nombre de *pherne* en los poetas, mientras que *proix* en los textos jurídicos. De ser así, Heródoto (I 93) no hablaría de las *phernas* que reunían las hijas del pueblo lidio. Por su etimología, sin duda, *pherne* alude a aquello que se lleva consigo¹⁹, por tanto, podría consistir no sólo en ajuar y joyas, sino también en los bienes muebles como el mobiliario.

Cabe la posibilidad de que Plutarco tomara el término que hubiera empleado Solón o bien podría estar haciendo uso del lenguaje que tal vez fuera de su época²⁰. En mi opinión, es en el sentido etimológico en el que se ha de entender la información de Plutarco, pues de no ser así el propio biógrafo no hubiera hecho distinción de los dos términos *pherne* y *proix*, identificando este último en *Coniug. praec.* (141C) con la dote matrimonial. Además, de acuerdo con Leão (2001, 384), si Solón hubiera suprimido las dotes, esta ley debería haber sido derogada un poco después, puesto que en el período clásico la institución dotal estaba bastante asentada.

Pienso que, pese a ser bien transmitida la ley soloniana, los objetivos perseguidos con esta ley suntuaria fueron mal interpretados por el moralista; y al aplaudir a Solón su deseo de evitar con ella un *gamos ónios*, un «matrimonio por compra», la envolvía en un ropaje ético equivocado cuando consideraba las razones de *teknois*, «procreación», *charis*, «atracción», y *phílotos*, «amor» (*Sol.* 20,

19 Vatin, 199.

20 En el Egipto helenístico la dote designada con el término *pherne* consistía en bienes muebles, mobiliario, dinero y ajuar, mientras que en época clásica comprendía bienes muebles e inmuebles. Cf. Katzoff, 38.

6) como inspiradoras de esta norma soloniana siendo, en realidad, promulgada con fines políticos para evitar las excentricidades de los más ricos y favorecer a la clase media. En su opinión, fue también la procreación la que había motivado la legislación soloniana sobre los matrimonios inadecuados a la edad, en virtud de la cual los ciudadanos perdían los derechos cívicos por no engendrar (*Am. prol.* 493E); matrimonios tardíos que de igual manera el moralista frontalmente rechazaba en *Sol.* 20, 7 con ejemplos concretos de uniones desnaturalizadas entre jóvenes y viejos.

La prohibición de las donaciones entre los esposos fue otro tema de interés para Plutarco, sobre las que hablará de un modo general en la biografía (*Sol.* 21, 4). Es en los *Moralia* donde hará una referencia expresa a los cónyuges. La *affectio maritalis* en la que siempre creyó el queronense como motor del matrimonio también vino a ser invocada en el comentario a esta ley de prohibir la donaciones que comparten griegos y romanos. Al esgrimir Plutarco las diversas razones que pudieron propiciarla, hizo coincidir las expresadas en *Coniug. praec.* (143A) y *Aet. Rom.* (266A) juzgando que su prohibición estaba orientada «no para que (los esposos) nada intercambiaran, sino para que consideraran comunes todos los bienes». Ni mucho menos era este el objetivo de la norma. Ninguno de los motivos que sugiere el moralista en *Aet. Rom.* se ajustaba a las causas de la legislación griega y romana. La principal razón residía en los estragos que causaba el trasvase de bienes de una familia a otra con el consiguiente empobrecimiento familiar, por lo que eran intereses económicos la base de esta prescripción que Plutarco no apuntaba. Las donaciones eran unas prácticas primitivas de matrimonios por compra,²¹ y este sistema, aunque pueda tener cierto parecido con los *hedna* del marido en época homérica, no existió en Grecia y aún menos a partir de siglo VII cuando se introduce la práctica panhelénica de entregar la novia unida a bienes.

Pues bien, cuando Plutarco estaba tratando el tema de las donaciones, para apoyar sus argumentos intercala, tanto en la biografía como en *Aet. Rom.* 265 F, una regulación soloniana que conocemos por Demóstenes (46. 14) sobre la prohibición de testar si uno es coaccionado o persuadido por una mujer. Aunque el queronense utiliza esta regulación para explicar la ilicitud de las donaciones entre los cónyuges, en este caso coincide con el espíritu de la ley que fue dictada para evitar la redacción de testamentos bajo coacción o seducción, pero también en condiciones de perturbación mental causada por drogas, por enfermedad (*Sol.* 21, 4) o por locura o vejez, añade Demóstenes.

Por otro lado, cuando alude al tema de las heteras, nuestro autor enfoca la ley desde distintas perspectivas. En *Solón* 22, 4 subraya el aspecto de la exención dispensada a los hijos de las heteras de mantener a sus padres, mientras que la norma es comentada de otra manera, y bajo el constante prisma

21 Arias Ramos -Arias Bonet, 770.

ético, en *Adversus Colotem* (1127C), cuando dice que el legislador prohibía tener hijos con las heteras, para que no reinaran la *tryphe* y la *aselgeia* en la ciudad. En verdad Plutarco saca como conclusión dos aspectos diferentes de una disposición que parece soloniana: la de dotar al matrimonio de cauces legales mediante la *engye*, en virtud de la cual los hijos nacidos de otras uniones sin estar selladas por ella resultaban ilegítimos. Así la razón de no estar obligados a alimentar a sus padres se enlaza con la pérdida de sus derechos cívicos y religiosos al nacer *nothoi*, lo que les eximía también de sus deberes filiales. No obstante, pienso que Plutarco atribuía a Solón esta última prescripción que podrían ser de Clístenes, en cuyo tiempo los *nothoi*, como apunta Vernant (p. 57), ya no estaban integrados en el *oikos*.

En tres ocasiones repite la ley soloniana que prohibía a los esclavos amar a los muchachos y frotarse aceite en el gimnasio. En *Sept. sap. conv.* (152D) se menciona de forma escueta, pero en *Solón* 1, 6 y en *Amatorius* 751B preside una voluntad de dignificar la pederastia como justificación de esta norma. Sin embargo, en la obra moral Plutarco se encuentra más libre para profundizar en las razones de esta consideración, no sólo al decir que «el legítimo amor, *Eros gnesios*, es el que inspiran los muchachos» (751A), sino al cotejar las relaciones homosexuales y heterosexuales que, a su juicio, brotan de fuentes diferentes, aquellas de la amistad, éstas del placer. Por tanto, en esta dicotomía visualizada por el polígrafo de hermosura frente a vulgaridad, amistad frente a placer, están las bases para entender cómo la única concesión que Solón permitió al esclavo fue las uniones sexuales con mujeres. Estas relaciones basadas en el placer, a su juicio, no podían ser más que vulgares, apropiadas, por tanto, para los esclavos. En cierto modo, el motivo de esta prescripción legal radicaba, sin duda, en una voluntad política de evitar cualquier trato de los esclavos con los ciudadanos, pero a Plutarco le sirve para dar el beneplácito a la pederastia soloniana, dado que estaba sostenida por una digna relación y entusiasmo, sin basarse en el puro placer por el placer.

Medidas políticas y jurídicas

Plutarco insiste en subrayar especialmente otras medidas como fueron: la prescripción del derecho de *atimia* para quien no tomara partido por una facción u otra, la cancelación de las deudas o *seisachtheia* y la institución de las denuncias públicas.²²

22 La anécdota de que sacó sus armas a la calle, cuando ya viejo nadie le apoyaba contra la tiranía es sacada a colación en *Sol.* 30, 6–7 y *An. seni. resp.* 794E, F.

Hemos de ver que, en todos los pasajes²³ donde se cita la primera de estas normas, el queronense adopta la misma actitud de incompreensión hacia la ley, llamándola *idios*, ‘particular’, *paradoxos*, ‘extraña’ (*Solón* 20, 1) o *paralogos*, ‘ilógica’ (550C),²⁴ aunque nos comunica que había perdido vigencia en su tiempo (965D).²⁵ Pero es que, aunque Plutarco consideraba importante que los ciudadanos intervinieran en los asuntos públicos, no entendió nunca la penalización de perder sus derechos cívicos por causa de la neutralidad.

Sobre la abolición de las deudas fue mucho más explícito en los *Moralia*. Mientras que en *Solón* 15, 2 parece que es deseo de Plutarco mostrarse cauto y no juzgarlo, con la intención más bien de dejarnos la imagen de una víctima, en *Vit. aer. al.* (828F) se atreve, entonces, a cuestionar el provecho que pudo sacar Solón con esta cancelación. En su opinión, sólo había conseguido que el pueblo estuviera sometido y esclavizado por los usureros.²⁶

Y es verdad que el moralista no pudo silenciar en ninguna de sus obras la nefasta consecuencia que acarreó la adopción de esta medida. Solón resultó acusado de complicidad con sus amigos que pidieron préstamos para no devolverlos cuando se enteraron por el propio legislador que iba a cancelar las deudas. Frente a la prudencia plutarquea que sobre el tema se respira en la biografía, la crítica aflora, sin duda, en *Praec. ger. reip.* (807C–D), porque, a su juicio, Solón cometió el error de no haber sabido rodearse de amigos más leales, cuya traición tuvo el desencadenante de encontrar la deshonra, pese a ser él mismo la víctima. Estas equivocaciones, estaba convencido, no podían permitírselas los buenos gobernantes.

En sus dos tipos de obras Plutarco menciona una de las medidas que consideró más democráticas de Solón como fue la concesión que hacía a todo ciudadano de emprender una acción judicial a favor de un tercero. Así en defensa de aquellas personas que hubieran sufrido un ultraje o un maltrato cualquier ciudadano que no fuera de su familia podía ejercer una acción pública o *graphe* contra el malhechor. En efecto, la prescripción suponía pasar de un estadio arcaico donde imperaba la venganza privada y familiar a uno más avanzado de carácter público con intervención de la *polis*.

Este refinamiento jurídico en el que primaba una conciencia social por el hecho de que individuos no personalmente agraviados pudieran acudir a la justicia en defensa de la víctima llamó la atención de Plutarco, que reproduce casi con las mismas palabras en *Sol.* 18, 6–7 y *Convivium* 154D y que atribuye a Solón.²⁷ Es posible que fuera una regulación un poco posterior cuando se

23 *Solón* 20; *Soll. anim.* 965D; *Ser. num. vind.* 550C; *Praec. ger. reip.* 823F.

24 Y el buen gobernante se extrañará y se asombrará de esta ley de Solón (823F).

25 Parece que no fue cierta esta norma, cf. Develin, citado por Pérez Jiménez, 139.

26 Sin comentario aparece en *Alex. fort. virt.* 343D.

27 Tal vez lo tomó de Aristóteles *Ath.* 9, 1, cf. Aalders 1977, 36.

asentaban definitivamente los cimientos de la polis, pero estaban vigentes, sin duda, en la Atenas clásica.²⁸

Actitudes solonianas

La actitud conciliadora de Solón fue ensalzada por el biógrafo desde enfoques diversos. Al citar su conocida frase «la igualdad no provoca *stasis* «discordia», (o *polemos*, «guerra», *Frat. am.* 484B y *Sol.* 14, 4) ponía de relieve la buena aceptación que tuvo entre las diferentes clases sociales, tanto entre los poderosos como entre los inferiores. Ese modo de proceder le granjeó altas cotas de éxito político, como cuando fue elegido arconte y legislador por común acuerdo de las tres discordantes facciones en que estaba dividida la ciudad. Este triunfo soloniano recibió unánimes elogios de Plutarco con explicaciones de diversa índole. En *Solón* 14 fue interpretado como una consecuencia de la posición intermedia que ocupaba entre los ricos y los pobres. Ni participaba de la injusticia de aquellos, ni estaba afectado por las deudas. Sin embargo, en los *Moralia* se pondera mucho más su labor, bien con argumentos apolíticos y éticos como en *Amatorius* 763F, a través de los que el polígrafo considera a *Eros* el artífice del éxito soloniano, o bien con precisiones más políticas y racionales (*Praec. ger. reip.* 805D), según las cuales su nombramiento obedeció a la imparcialidad, que, según él, debía presidir el gobierno de un hombre de Estado. Pero en última instancia fueron la *arete* y la *doxa* de Solón las virtudes que consideró como el motor propiciador de su triunfo (*Publ.* 26 (3), 2).

Sin embargo, hay un punto de crítica en *De fraterno amore* (484B) respecto a su lema sobre la igualdad, cuando añade una explicación que, a mi juicio, comporta, de un modo subliminal, cierta crítica a la aplicación que hizo de esa *isotes* adoptando la proporción aritmética, que, como se sabe, el queronense no compartía.²⁹ Al calificar las razones de su decisión como *ochlikos* «para dar gusto al pueblo» se esconde una censura cargada de sentido peyorativo. Desde Polibio la palabra *ochlokratia* designaba la «degenerada democracia» que «Plutarco no utiliza»³⁰, pero me parece que este adverbio relacionado semánticamente con ella insinúa una actitud demagógica que contrasta con el calificativo de *kale* que le otorga en 484B a la proporción geométrica.

28 Por ejemplo, cualquier ciudadano podría emprender una acción pública en defensa de los bienes de la *epicleros* contra su *kyrios* mediante una *graphe kakoseos*, cf. Biscardi, 97 y 110.

29 Sobre ello nos hemos ocupado, cf. Calero Secall 2004a, 169.

30 Cf. Aalders 1982, 79.

En ambos grupos de obras nuestro autor dedicará también un espacio a las reflexiones solonianas sobre la riqueza. Para el ateniense suponía un principio fundamental «adquirir la riqueza sin injusticia», lo que no era óbice para considerar de gran necesidad la posesión de los bienes indispensables. Plutarco veía con buenos ojos que en Solón primasen los valores éticos sobre los materiales. Su sintonía con tales ideales propició que en todo momento tuviera presente los versos solonianos de «no cambiaré la virtud por la riqueza», con los que arropaba sus fuertes convicciones y los que repetirá en *Solón* 2, 4 y 3, 3 y también en los *Moralia*, *Tranq. an.* (472D), *Cap. ex inim. ut.* (92E) y *Prof. virt.* (78C), pero en el *Banquete de los Siete Sabios* (155C) es donde nos ilustra con más exactitud sobre el juicio que, según él, a Solón le merecía la riqueza, cuando todos los comensales van a discutir sobre el mejor gobierno de una casa. Entonces de labios del estadista oímos que el mejor será aquel que muestre indiferencia ante la riqueza, puesto que una casa necesita no sólo «adquirir la riqueza sin injusticia, sino gastar el dinero sin arrepentirse»; con ello criticaba el vicio de la avaricia contrario a la adquisición de riquezas. Es evidente que nos encontramos con matices diferentes que obedecen tal vez a la libertad que se le ofrecía a Plutarco de no estar sujeto a la reproducción textual de los versos pronunciados por Solón.

Perfil de Solón: *Convivium* frente a *Vita*

Y es en el *Banquete de los Siete Sabios* donde el retrato de Solón, a mi juicio, se aleja de los esbozados en otros pasajes estudiados y constituye una especie de semblanza sin tono de crítica alguna, sino con la consciente intención de ponderar los pilares en que se sustentó su gobierno. Así la defensa de la democracia (152A), el rechazo de la tiranía (152A), su desapego de las riquezas (155C) y sus reformas legislativas conducentes a la democracia (154D) son básicamente ensalzadas, de tal modo que dan motivos para ceder a Solón la preferencia de iniciar el discurso como el depositario que era del poder más grande y perfecto (151E).

Estos puntos básicos solonianos están presentes también en la *Vida*, pero en *Convivium* el polígrafo se olvida de los sinsabores y hasta de las equivocaciones del Solón de la biografía. La figura del estadista que conversa en el simposio abraza ya la senectud; es una persona apacible, serena, relajada, que se muestra risueña en un ambiente bastante distendido. En varias ocasiones aparece sonriendo y tal actitud podría ser atribuida a las copas que suelen alegrar los momentos vividos en la mesa, pero da la casualidad de que el anciano legislador no bebe en este banquete, como advierte Pítaco (155E). Tengo la impresión de que en esas sonrisas el interés de Plutarco estriba en investirlo de una

personalidad segura de sí, de vuelta de todo en la vida hasta con cierto aire de superioridad cuando le toca la cabeza a Cresos (152C).

Y esa actitud sobria en el banquete se opone a la adoptada por el personaje de la *Vida* que hasta el final estuvo bebiendo (*Sol.* 31, 7). Esta sobriedad es extraña a los ojos de los comensales porque constituye un testimonio contrario a lo que siempre escribió, incongruencia que Mnesífilo se aviene a justificar con el argumento de que la filosofía de Solón siempre tuvo en cuenta el fin y no los medios que lo logran (156B).³¹ Los dones de Dioniso, es decir, la bebida, los utilizó, no para la embriaguez, sino para conseguir *philophrosyne*, «benevolencia», *pathos*, «deseo», *homilia*, «compañía» y *synetheia*, «relaciones íntimas» (156C). A la postre, creo que era un modo de disculpar el comportamiento del Solón real, porque tal gusto no era compartido por Plutarco, que recelaba de la bebida y sus consecuencias, puesto que «he was not really a friend of wine [...], Plutarch is inclined to emphasize or praise almost all the other qualities and characteristics of Dionysus except those related to wine and drunkenness, which he virtually suppresses or underrates».³²

Pero además, cuando Solón responde a la pregunta de Cleodoro acerca de sus conocimientos dietéticos que supone habría recibido de Epiménides, aboga sólo por la necesidad de ingerir pocos alimentos:

«¿Qué necesidad hay de interrogar a aquél sobre eso? Era evidente que después del mayor y supremo bien, lo segundo importante es tener la necesidad de poco alimento ¿Acaso no te parece que el mayor bien es no necesitar en absoluto de alimento?» (158B)

Reconocer en estas palabras al Solón histórico se hace más difícil que detectar el propio pensamiento de Plutarco, cuando conocemos sus ideas sobre la frugalidad en la alimentación, que plasma abiertamente en *Sobre la comida de carne* 995D–E, donde dice que:

«El comer carne no sólo va en contra de la naturaleza de los cuerpos, sino también embota las almas por causa de la hartura y la saciedad. El vino y el abuso de la carne hace fuerte y robusto al cuerpo, pero débil al alma».

El queronense se atreve, entonces, a poner en boca de Solón su propia teoría sobre la abstinencia de comer carne que no responde a «motivos místicos ni religiosos»³³ ni órficos, puesto que la prescripción de Orfeo es un «sofisma más que un modo de escapar de la injusticia que entraña su consumo» (159C), ni

31 Es la misma idea aristotélica de que el fin justifica los medios (*Arist. Pol.* 1325a7).

32 Cf. Nikolaidis, 338, quien ha observado que esta actitud desfavorable hacia el vino del que Plutarco no fue amigo es antiplatónica.

33 Cf. Jufresa, 219.

ha de ser entendida en el sentido de un precepto dietético, sino «fundado en el carácter dualista de la naturaleza humana».³⁴

Y debemos preguntarnos ¿por qué Plutarco había elegido a Solón para defender su argumento? El legislador poco tenía que ver con tal dieta a no ser que fuera inspirado por su relación con el místico Epiménides y ¿por qué no pensar que entre todos los comensales Solón era el que le merecía más respeto y a quien le concedía el honor de ser portavoz de su pensamiento? Para ello la libertad de inventiva que otorga la ficción literaria fue aprovechada por Plutarco para idealizarlo y mostrarlo de la manera que quiso. Ahora su figura está más cerca de un filósofo que de un legislador o estadista.

Esto no quiere decir que el hombre de Estado de la biografía esté exento de sabiduría. En todas sus obras Plutarco siempre consideró a Solón como un hombre sabio, pero, en opinión de Pelling (p. 98), sorprendentemente no se nos dice de donde la había adquirido. Con todo él poseía sabiduría y en realidad supo aprender; lo que no tuvo fue éxito, como acertadamente concluye Pelling (p. 100), para enseñar a los ciudadanos aquello que había aprendido. Este rasgo de su personalidad se pone de relieve no sólo en su biografía, sino en el *Banquete de los Siete Sabios*.

Como cuenta Plutarco, Solón fue capaz de aprovechar las pautas que le marcó Epiménides (*Sol.* 12, 8), aunque Pelling entiende que contribuyó a hacer a los atenienses «more receptive, not that he put ideas in Solon's head» (99), pero la frase *πολλὰ καὶ προωδοποίησεν αὐτῷ τῆς νομοθεσίας* es indicativa de que el místico le preparó el camino y tuvo que ejercer su influencia en materia legislativa, aunque los conocimientos adquiridos obtuvieron la incompreensión de muchos ciudadanos que, sin duda, las palabras de Anacarsis corroboran (*Sol.* 5, 4).

De la misma manera en *Convivium* se plasman esos dos polos de su carácter. Solón sigue siendo un hombre de reconocida sabiduría, subrayada de forma indiscutible por Tales, cuando afirma: «He considerado muy sabio a Solón por no haber aceptado ser tirano» (147C). Volvemos a encontrar referencias a la sabiduría de Solón en boca de Quilón quien propone que sea el estadista el primero en hablar:

«No sólo porque nos supera a todos en edad y por estar situado en el lugar más distinguido, sino también por ostentar la mayor y más perfecta autoridad al haber otorgado las leyes a los atenienses» (151E)

Pues bien, indicación de la fuente de su sabiduría tampoco hemos de encontrarla en *Convivium*, puesto que en el único pasaje donde hubiéramos

34 «Sul riconoscimento dell' aspetto arazionale e passionale della psiche umana, che Plutarco giunge talvolta a identificare col principio attivo del Male», cf. Inglese-Santese, 43.

esperado recabar referencias al origen de sus conocimientos, aunque fueran dietéticos, tampoco la hallamos, por la negativa tan contundente de Solón, cuando Cleodoro ve natural que, «al convivir mucho tiempo con Epiménides en Atenas, le preguntara sobre su experiencia y los razonamientos que le habían conducido a tal dieta» (158B).

Respecto a la otra cara de la moneda, es decir, la incapacidad de Solón para enseñar lo que sabía y para ser comprendido por muchos se pone de manifiesto a través de algunos comensales. Esta incompreensión queda plasmada en la figura de Esopo que, como en *Vita Solonis*, disiente del pensamiento soloniano con motivo del encuentro con Creso (155B), pero más aún cuando critica su falta de democracia por mantener todo el tiempo la copa consigo (155E). A su vez Pítaco también observa una gran contradicción en la defensa que hace del vino en sus versos cuando en realidad en la mesa no bebe (155F). Lo mismo que Cleodoro no entiende cómo puede decir Solón en medio de un banquete que no se ha de necesitar alimento alguno (158C). Quizás a través de la conversación con estos personajes Plutarco de una forma más sutil desee mostrarnos la incongruencia como una de las facetas de la personalidad de Solón que con más claridad mostró en la biografía. A la postre, deja asomar un personaje contradictorio, cuya conducta incoherente pudo motivar su incompreensión.

A modo de conclusión

El cotejo entre los dos grupos de obras nos ha conducido a percibir la existencia de coincidencias de fondo y divergencias en sus comentarios, puesto que el moralista se implica más en los tratados morales y está más abierto a la crítica cuando saca a colación hechos solonianos para utilizarlos como ejemplo. Recordemos la censura en *Praec. ger. reip.* (807C) del error de Solón por no rodearse de amigos leales cuando canceló las deudas. No obstante, en *Convivium* al ser todo más ficticio, como característica del género simposíaco al que pertenece la obra, se observa una tendencia hacia la idealización, aunque, como vimos, se deslicen ciertas críticas y se permite licencias que no se perciben en la *Vita* y que poco tienen que ver con el Solón histórico. En su boca pone discursos que responden más bien a los propios ideales de Plutarco.

Las coincidencias entre la biografía y los *Moralia*, sin embargo, residen en las explicaciones idealizadoras con las que envuelve todos los comentarios de las leyes solonianas. Plutarco se alejaba de la realidad cuando consideraba la *affectio maritalis* como el leitmotiv de su legislación en cuestiones matrimoniales.

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6. Literary Aspects of Plutarch's *Œuvre*

Synopsis

The articles grouped in this chapter are predominantly concerned with certain literary features of Plutarch's writings such as specific techniques or motifs employed, ways of characterization, modes of representation and so on. Besides, on Plutarch's authority and literary criteria there is discussion about the exact literary tradition of some Hellenistic fragments as well as about the authenticity of the *De musica*.

Christopher Pelling is concerned with Plutarch's double narration of the liberation of Thebes in *Pelopidas* and *de Genio Socratis*. His paper applies a narratological approach in comparing the two narratives under the headings of duration, focalisation, and voice, in particular discussing how the events of the liberation are interwoven with the philosophical discussion in *de Genio* and contribute to the wider themes of *Pelopidas–Marcellus*. It also comments on the intertextuality with *Phaedo* in *de Genio Socratis*, and suggests a further intertextuality with the killing of Julius Caesar on the Ides of March. The multivocality of *de Genio* then suggests some reflections on Epaminondas' decision to stay out of the bloodshed: does Plutarch make it clear whether Epaminondas was right or wrong, or does the plurality of voices make it easier for both evaluations to be heard?

On the other hand, the approach of **Rhiannon Ash**, who inquires into how Plutarch generally perceived the Roman emperors, by broadly comparing his characterization techniques in the *Lives* and the *Moralia*, is partly intratextual.* She observes that different emperors lent themselves to different modes of representation, and Plutarch shrewdly shied away from a "one size fits all" approach to writing imperial biography. Besides, his sensitivity towards the unique identities of individual emperors perhaps made Plutarch cautious about employing them pervasively as *exempla* within the *Moralia*. The article will also demonstrate how (particularly in the *Moralia*) it was often intriguing figures from the imperial margins, both geographically and socially, who offered Plutarch the richest material and the blankest canvasses on which to display his creative powers in a wide range of contexts. This paper will therefore set Plutarch's presentation of the emperors against a more extensive spectrum of protagonists who were active under the principate.

* For a different intratextual analysis cf. Vicente's article in ch. 2b. Cf. also Pordomingo's contribution in 2a.

Alain Billaut inquires into the scene of *symposium* in Plutarch, and maintains that his works provide two contradictory images of a banquet. The συμπόσιον is the place where, on the one hand, the ideals and the beauty of Greek civilization flourish and, on the other, the scene of excess, violence and even murder. The first image is prominent in the *Moralia* (*The banquet of the seven wise men, Table-talks*), while the second in the *Lives* (*Alexander, Antony, Demetrius...*). These images produce two different types of literature, prescriptive or dramatic, which have different origins, philosophical and poetic, or historical and theatrical. Those origins can account for the inner tension, the diversity and the unity of Plutarch's works.

Aurelio Pérez Jiménez maintains that the image of Themistocles' sleeplessness, because of Miltiades' trophy at Marathon, is for Plutarch one of his favourite political images. Its didactic force as example of *zēlos* and *philotimia*, essential qualities for young men who are called to accomplish great deeds of virtue, sufficiently accounts for the seven references to the topic in Plutarch's *Lives* (2 times) and *Moralia* (4 times). Examining the literary function of the above image, the author will try to clarify, through this anecdote, the relations and mutual influences among all passages concerned, by presenting them as a consequence of their literary purpose and their chronological proximity within the general frame of Plutarch's *Moralia* and *Lives*.

Vicente Ramón Palerm notes that, unlike the old exegetical tendency that would underrate Plutarch's sense of humour, there has recently been a growing interest in the opposite direction, namely in locating and bringing forward humour patterns in Plutarch's works. Accordingly, his paper will examine some occurrences that have a rhetorical, formal, and instrumental goal, particularly focusing on the use of rhetorical microstructures (like the *χρεία*, for example) which often show a built-in humorous intention that is probably different in the *Lives* from what is in some essays of controversial purpose. The author will try to illustrate his subject on the basis of *Aristides*, *Themistocles*, and *De esu carniū*.

Marietta Horster will discuss the characterisations of the grammarians in Plutarch's *Lives* (esp. *Solon, Lucullus, Cato Maior, Sulla*) in comparison to the *Moralia* (including the *Quaestiones Convivales, De defectu oraculorum*, etc.), where grammarians' works are cited or anecdotes concerning grammarians are given. Although in the intellectual world of Plutarch's works grammarians play a less significant role than in the works of Aulus Gellius and Athenaeus, the results of the investigation above will be compared to the known literary characterisations and stereotypes of imperial Greek literature.

Mónica Durán Mañas is concerned with the Ptolemies, the Greek dynasty of Macedonian descent that reigned in Egypt from the death of Alexander through to the Roman conquest in 30 B.C. Plutarch provides information for several kings of the dynasty (including Ptolemies who were not kings), but this paper concentrates on his depiction of them both in *Lives* and *Moralia*. More specifically it will be explored: (a) whether Plutarch's positive or negative characterizations of physical and psychological aspects are settled or likely to change according to the context; (b) the philosophical, literary and religious innovations that Plutarch links with the Ptolemies; (c) issues such as the picture of the king, Plutarch's sources, and the survival of structural elements – associated with characters – in literature after Plutarch.

Rafael Jesús Gallé Cejudo, after pinpointing the chief reasons which obstruct the correct understanding of the mythical and literary matter of the hellenistic elegy (precarious transmission of the texts, fragmentary state, the poets' preference for rare mythical versions), proceeds to analyze a series of elegiac fragments from the main poets of the period (Philetas, Hermesianax, Alexander Aetolus, Phanocles), by trying to place them in their exact mythical-literary tradition on the authority of Plutarch.

Roosevelt Araújo da Rocha Júnior surveys Plutarch's ideas about music. This subject, he notes, appears in many passages of the *Moralia* and *Vitae*: when, for example, Plutarch gives elementary definitions, when he deals with the numerical relations that are behind the harmony of the spheres or when he talks about the moral value of the musical modes. Further, the author's aim is to investigate the value that the *technê* and *epistêmê* of music is awarded in Plutarch's works as an element that indicates their unity.

Parallel Narratives: the Liberation of Thebes in *De Genio Socratis* and in *Pelopidas*

Christopher Pelling

Elsewhere in this volume we see many cases where the same stories are treated in a different way in the *Lives* and when they figure as *exempla* in the *Moralia*. In this paper I am more concerned with an extended narrative – indeed, the most extended narrative of all. This is the story of the liberation of Thebes and the capture of the Cadmeia that provides the framework for *de Genio Socratis* and is a major episode in the *Life of Pelopidas*.

The *de Genio* has attracted a good deal of scholarly interest recently: does, for instance, Plutarch side with Epaminondas in this essay? That view is taken by Daniel Babut (1969, 344–6; 1984, 72–3 = 1994, 426–7), Aristoula Georgiadou (1995a–b, 1996) and Frederick Brenk (1996, 2002), and already a generation ago in the standard commentary by Corlu (1970).¹ If so, it would be a paradox, as Epaminondas, the person who decides to stay out of the Liberation, is something of an absent presence in this narrative; but that would not be the only paradox in Plutarch. Is there a moral for Plutarch's own generation, and if so what is it – political quietism on the model of Epaminondas, or the search for a new equivalent of liberation, or simply an invitation to any readers to consult their own conscience? What are we to make of the problems of reading any signs, whether it be the obscure writings found at the tomb of Alcmena (577e–f) or the various omens that attend the conspiracy itself? Is there a metatextual significance of such problematic semiotics for the reading of Plutarch's own text and the drawing of any lessons, perhaps including political lessons? That is the subject of a subtle article by Philip Hardie (1996).² What does the pervasive Platonic intertextuality add to it all? Is it just a clever and playful bonding with an accomplished reader, or might Plutarch be providing his own counterpart of Plato in a way that interlocks with the attempts of the characters in the text to explore a counterpart to the Platonic Socrates? Not all these issues can be explored here,

1 Thus for Corlu, 20, 'Épaminondas incarne l'idéal plutarchéen de l'union de la philosophie et la politique'. Cf. also Barigazzi, and Desideri, 576–7, though Desideri also brings out Plutarch's appreciation of the virtue and nerve of the active plotters (583). Hershbell, 374–8 gives a balanced view.

2 On this theme cf. also Babut 1984, 63–5 = 1994, 417–9; also Desideri, 580–1, Brenk 1996, 45.

but some light may fall on them if we concentrate on narrative itself and the contrast of *Life* and essay.

The Platonic intertextuality will provide the essential background for this discussion. There is a vast amount of this in the essay, and there is no space here to explore all its aspects: questions of souls dipping up and down in the manner of *Timaeus*, questions of how a myth of rebirth works in the manner of *Republic* 10, and so on.³ But it is the *Phaedo* that is particularly relevant. There are several particular echoes right at the beginning, the discussion of whether there is time to talk and whether the listeners are agreeable to it (575d–e ~ *Phaedo* 58c–d), and then the introduction of ‘Simmias’, the man of Thebes who was so important in *Phaedo* and is now the host here. There is some wryness too in the way he is introduced. He has ‘been away for a long time in foreign parts and had travelled among strange peoples’ (576c, 578a): exactly as the Socrates of *Phaedo* had encouraged his interlocutors to do (78a, where Socrates was in fact talking to Cebes – but Cebes is not forgotten here either, 580e, 590a). Now Simmias has arrived home ‘full of all sorts of myths and barbarian stories’. People keep visiting him at his home, not unlike the way they visited Socrates in prison; but Simmias has a rather different reason for not being able to roam around, for he has suffered a nasty ailment of the leg and can only lie on his couch. That is most convenient, as it means Simmias **cannot** involve himself in the action himself, and Plutarch therefore sidesteps the issue whether he would be an active participant like Pelopidas or a philosophical bystander like Epaminondas: the question cannot arise for him. But this participant who was closest to the Platonic Socrates shows a further wry Socratic touch: for does not the *Phaedo* itself end with a Socrates on his couch, as the hemlock gradually strikes at his – legs? There is even a ‘fastening’ here as well, the ἐπίδεσμος that has just been removed from Simmias’ leg (589a) – a blander equivalent of the fetter removed from Socrates’ leg at *Phaedo* 59e.⁴

This is not to be a detailed comparison between the details of Plutarch’s two accounts, with their mild divergences: these have been well studied by others, most recently and thoroughly by Georgiadou 1997. Nor is it to be an exercise in hard-core narratology, but it will still be useful to compare the *Life* and the essay under three headings that have become familiar from narratological theory: duration, focalisation, and voice. One issue that will recur under these headings is what we might call the intertwining of ‘theme’ and ‘event’: how far the various issues of conscience and political activism are affected by and affect the events of this stirring story. Ziegler thought the

3 For a treatment of some of these issues, see Vernière, 93–5, 105–14, Döring, and Brenk 1996.

4 For these and other Platonic echoes cf. esp. Hirzel, 148–51; Corlu, 93–5.

intertwining of theme and event in *de Genio* was superficial and contrived, a shallow imitation of their thorough integration in the *Phaedo*.⁵ Perhaps we can be a little more generous.

First, duration. The version in the *Life* is quite expansive, by *Life* standards, but is still only seven chapters long. The essay is developing the narrative all through the work: after the dialogue introduction, it starts with the arrival of the news that the plotters are on the way from Athens, and at the end it goes through to the moment when the Spartan garrison withdraws. The *Life* version might take twenty minutes to read aloud; the essay version would require more like two hours, and is getting close to an equivalent in duration to the length in real time that the events would take (so, in the terms made familiar by Bal, the ‘story’ becomes equivalent in extent to the ‘fabula’). That is especially so as the back-narrative is given in very compressed form at the beginning in 575f–6b, ‘we all know already how...’, and then there is a quickening of pace at the end once the action itself finally starts at 596d–e: the time in between, that taken by the discussion as the conspiracy develops, is pretty well exactly the time that the discussion, if real, would have taken. That ‘isochronic’ equivalence of duration is not unusual in Plutarch (compare, for instance, *De Pythiae Oraculis*, where the conversation occupies the time it would take to climb the hill at Delphi); and it is very much on the pattern of a Platonic dialogue, including the Platonic dialogue that has the most important, indeed cataclysmic action interwoven with it, the *Phaedo*.

This point of duration has several effects. The first, of course, is that this is extremely mimetic, almost the extreme case of narrative mimesis. The longeur, the agonising waiting that attends even such exciting and swift-moving events as these, is caught by the way the participants talk, almost literally, to pass the time: rather as the Spartan partisan Archias liked philosophical conversation to distract others from his disgraceful actions (576c), so the conspirators too seem to be talking to distract themselves as much as to buoy up their spirits or to provide the suspicious with an excuse for their gathering. When we come to the interaction of theme and action, this is not just a ploy of Plutarch himself to inject a factitious literary ‘unity’: it characterises too, for instance when the conversation turns to how a momentary inspiration allowed Socrates to escape mortal danger at the hands of, not coincidentally, the Thebans (581d–e of Delium, with a hint of Plato’s *Symposium*). At times like this a mind drifts easily into preoccupation

5 Ziegler 1949, 204 = 1951, 841 (‘Thema’ and ‘Handlung’); cf. the similar verdict of Hirzel 151. Vernière, 93 states uncompromisingly that ‘le sujet véritable, ce n’est pas le démon de Socrate, c’est la libération de Thèbes’, though she has a more nuanced view on p. 95. For a more sympathetic treatment of the interweaving of the philosophy with the narrative, see esp. Desideri.

with mortal danger, and dwelling here on divine inspiration may be wishful thinking, but is psychologically just right. It is something of a contrary counterpart of the *Phaedo* itself, where it is so natural for Socrates and his friends to talk of immortality.

Not that the main point of the discussion is to illuminate the moment, tense though it is. The forward movement of the essay is carried not by the action but by the discussion of Socrates' *daimonion*, and the moments of action or of news punctuate it, even serve as panel-dividers to separate the discussion. We might compare the *Amatorius*, another dialogue peculiarly rich in Platonic reminiscence, where the debate is interwoven with and affected by the news coming from Thespiae of Ismenodora's doings (754e, 756a, 771d). It is a mirror-image of the phenomenon familiar from many *Lives*, though not *Pelopidas* itself, where the narrative action is divided into panels by 'digressions' (what used to be called 'eidology'), digressions that themselves sometimes address a reflective theme in the manner of the *Moralia*: take, for instance, the discussion of divine inspiration at *Coriolanus* 32 or of the way mantic signs work at *Pericles* 6, both *Moralia*-like topics which happen to overlap closely with the themes of *de Genio Socratis*.

There is more to it still, though, and this brings us on to the interlocking of theme and event. Such interaction is exactly what we should expect: in that *Coriolanus* case, for instance, the 'Homeric' texture of the digression has an interesting interplay with the 'Achillean' figure we have so far seen in that *Life*, and the 'Odyssean' crisis of powerful womenfolk that he is about to face. In *de Genio* the most obvious interaction is the way that reflections and actions affect one another: the characters' thoughts change under the pressure of events just as thought-processes drive their actions. Thus the texture of the discussion becomes different once the tingling-nerved Hippostheneidas has told how, among other things, he found the dream of Hypatodorus so frightening that he decided to abort the whole affair (587a–b). Not merely does Hippostheneidas himself illustrate the point made earlier, that one has to have the right mindset if one is to receive divine guidance and interpret it aright; this is also the point where dreams and visions are dropped as appropriate vehicles for inspiration, and Simmias moves the discussion on to a new level by talking of a sort of (perhaps wordless) 'voice' that Socrates always found much more reliable (588d–e). So the alarming 'events' of that night do affect the way the 'theme' of inspiration is viewed. What is interestingly difficult is to find this interaction going the other way. The participants' determination to act may certainly be driven by their moral and philosophical convictions; but, if they are looking for divine inspiration to guide their actions now, they do not seem to find it once the narrative of events begins, and it is good planning and good luck that

carries the day.⁶ Or so, at least, it seems: yet this is a question to which we shall return (below, p. 552).

It is easy to represent this sort of narrative or dialogue dynamic as a purely artistic matter, just as we did a paragraph ago in asserting the thematic unity of *Coriolanus*. But the comparison with Plato suggests a further point. A Platonic dialogue is not merely an airing of philosophical issues, but an indication of the right way to do philosophy, through discussion, dialectic, and testing rather than by simple exposition. The *Phaedo* illustrates how to act and (more important) how to think in a moment of crisis, in the presence of imminent and unjust death. Cannot we make the same move with Plutarch too, noting the way that events are not merely conditioned by but also affect the way the participants think about the biggest issues? (Though in the *Phaedo*, it is true, the more basic point is that Socrates' stable insight is not unsettled or revised by the imminence of death.) A cultured and insightful response to the present involves applying one's knowledge of and reflection on the paradigmatic past; and it also affects how we read and interpret the past, and we can see that in the thought-processes of the participants themselves. The impact of the present crisis means that some approaches are dropped and others become more attractive. And, if that is true of an Artemidorus and a Galaxidorus and a Simmias, is not it likely to be true of Plutarch's own readers too?

Underlying this question of duration is one extremely obvious difference between the two narratives: the *Pelopidas* narrative is only a small section of a *Life*, whereas the *de Genio* narrative is, together with its accompanying discussion, the whole thing. The natural inference from this would be that, when we talk of the links between the particular 'events' of the narrative and the wider 'themes', then in the *Life* we shall be looking outside these seven chapters, talking of links with other parts of *Pelopidas*' story – and indeed Marcellus' story too, for these are pairs, not just individual *Lives*. If it were a web-site, a link would connect with a later or an earlier screen, except that perhaps we would not realise there was a link at all until we reached that later screen and recognised the point of contact.⁷ In the *de Genio*, we will at least

6 Thus Babut 1984, 53 and 1988, esp. 384–93 = 1994, 407 and esp. 432–41: cf. Hardie, 132: '[t]he success of the action depends entirely on the intelligent plans of the conspirators and on the corresponding failure of the enemy to satisfactorily analyse events' – a sort of sign-reading, to be sure, but not on the daemonic level. Riley by contrast claimed that 'the narrative sections ... show how daimonic guidance manifests itself in the real world' (258).

7 Cf. Genette, 56, on Proust's *Recherche du Temps Perdu*: 'this is the most persistent function of recalls in the *Recherche*: to modify the meaning of past occurrences after the event, either by making significant what was not so originally or by refuting a first interpretation and replacing it with a new one'. We will discuss later whether such 'recalls' in *Pelopidas* do in fact replace an initial interpretation with a new one.

begin by looking internally within the narrative itself; the web-site might scroll us to another part of the same screen, but it would still be within this episode itself.⁸

We shall soon want to complicate that contrast of ‘external’ and ‘internal’ link-building, but still it works reasonably well as a first bid. We certainly find those going-outside-the-frame links in *Pelopidas*. In particular, echoes of the Cadmeia come back at the end of the *Life*, and come back twice, in a way that is typical of Plutarch’s closural technique.⁹ Pelopidas’ final move against Alexander of Pherae, in the battle that takes his *Life*, is strikingly described as an action of τυραννοκτονία (*Pel.* 34.7): this is not the most natural word for a pitched battle against a force that happens to be led by a tyrant, especially as the tyrant does not even get killed, but it is one that highlights the similarity with the liberation. The most striking element of that similarity is the readiness of Pelopidas to take a personal risk, seen in the bedroom struggle with Leontidas (13.8–9) and again in his thrusting into the front line against the tyrant Alexander (32.8–9), in each case in the service of freedom. This is identifiably the same person, acting in a similar way.

Once again, though, this is not simply an artistic matter of ‘unity’, or even of unified characterisation: the parallels are thought-provoking in a way that is important to the moralism too. In the second case, the one that brings his death, it is clear that Plutarch disapproves of Pelopidas’ action. That picks up the elaborate discussion in the proem of the folly of a commander exposing himself to this sort of danger (1–2); that too is the theme that establishes the link with *Marcellus*, who similarly meets a rash death, and the theme duly figures as the culminating issue in the synkritic epilogue as well as in the proem (*Marc.* 33(3)).

Should we therefore infer that it was a bad idea the first time round as well, that Pelopidas should have kept his distance (something that would align the *Life* more closely with the Babut–Brenk–Georgiadou reading of the essay, incidentally, praising Epaminondas as the detached, non-violent, more Socratic figure of the pair)? What makes that more difficult to believe, at least in the case of the *Life*, is the second final contact. The final chapter of the work goes on to cover events after Pelopidas’ death, where his killer Alexander of Pherae is murdered by his disgruntled wife Thebe in a similar sequence of

8 This is not the same distinction as between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ analepsis/prolepsis in narratology, (a) because an analepsis or prolepsis is typically an **explicit** recall or anticipation of an event, whereas here the ‘links’ are a matter of implicit suggestion through thematic patterning (‘recalls’, as Genette puts it: see n. 7); and (b) because I here use ‘internal’ to mean ‘internal to the episode’ rather than ‘internal to the whole work’.

9 On *Pel.–Marc.* in particular Pelling 1989, 207–8; more generally, Pelling 1997, esp. 240–2 = 2002, 373–6.

tyrant-killing fervour, secret plotting, nervous cold feet, and a final decisive steeling of the nerve for an act of bedroom bloodiness (35). This is not the only case where a *Life* goes on past the principal's death to trace posthumous vengeance, and makes this central to a *Life*'s significance: I have discussed this elsewhere (Pelling 1997). It looks, too, as if Plutarch is working hard on the tradition to link Thebe's vengeance with Pelopidas himself. In Plutarch it is her memory of meeting Pelopidas when he was in captivity, when he again showed rashness as well as courage in his plain speaking to his captor Alexander, that inspires Thebe now (*Pel.* 35.5 ~ 28.5–10): yet that does not figure in any of the several possible motivations that Xenophon airs for Thebe's murder of her husband (*Hell.* 6.4.35–7), still less in the cruder version we find in Roman authors that Thebe was simply motivated by jealousy of a concubine (*Cic. Off.* 2.25, *Val. Max.* 9.13 ext. 3). In the *Life* Thebe is clearly a good person doing a good thing: that makes it easier to believe that Pelopidas' own bedroom killing and the liberation was a good thing too, even if it was less of a good thing to be so precipitate in fighting in the front line.

So the differing consequences of similar behaviour need not entail any final revision of the initial, surely positive judgement we make on Pelopidas in the *Life*; but this sort of 'external' link of the liberation with later events still deeply affects the way we take the moralism. Perhaps the upshot is how very difficult it is to make such moral differentiation of apparently similar motives; or perhaps how striking a fact of human nature it is that the same human characteristic can generate acts that are so good – Cadmeia, the killing of Alexander – and so disastrous – Pelopidas' death. But the fundamental point remains: we have to build the bigger context of the man's whole career if we are to interpret the liberation episode, and we cannot take it simply on its own.

What about the essay side of that initial, straightforward contrast of external and internal link-building? Even in *de Genio*, do we in fact take the Cadmeia episode simply on its own, and do we look simply for internal thematic links as we move to and fro between narrative and discussion? The strongly phrased proem must be relevant here. Archidamus there inveighs against allowing the perspective of later events to distort one's moral evaluation of the actions that lead to them. It is, he says, an unsophisticated reading of history that simply judges events on the basis of outcome and ignores 'causes' or 'origins', *aitiai*:

Archidamus: I remember, Caphisias, a painter who once used a very apposite analogy when talking about people who looked at pictures. He said that ordinary, unskilled viewers were like those who gave a single general greeting to a great crowd, whereas the sophisticated connoisseurs were like those who addressed everyone individually. The first group do not have a precise but only a vague grasp of the art-works, the second analyse each aspect of a work separately, and leave no good or bad feature unnoticed or unaddressed. It seems to me that something

similar happens in the case of real events: when it comes to history, the lazier type of intellect is content with discovering the main point and the outcome of an affair, but the person who loves honour and beauty will observe every aspect of deeds that are produced by virtue as if by consummate art, and will take more pleasure in the individual details. That person knows that an outcome (τέλος) is often partly driven by chance, but can see within origins (αἰτίαι) and [?individual actions] the struggles of virtue against contingency, and the instances of thoughtful daring in times of danger, exercised by reasoning when it mixes with opportunity and experience. You can take it that we too belong to that sort of viewer, so tell us of the deed right from the beginning; let us share too in that conversation that (?you were there at the time to hear?) – for you can be sure that I would not have shrunk even from going to Thebes to hear it, but for the fact that this would have seemed to the Athenians another act of excessive Boeotianising. (*de Genio Socratis* 575a–d)

So the cultured and discriminating reader, says Archidamus, will realise that events are often directed by chance, and therefore very different outcomes can mask very similar origins (*aitiai*). And Plutarch clearly thought that ‘Archidamus’ was right about this: he says something very similar when contrasting the different outcomes of Alexander’s and Crassus’ Parthian campaigns (*Crass.* 37(4).4). That might encourage us to concentrate on the events of 379 BCE without being distracted by later ‘consequences’, and so far that chimes with our initial expectation that evaluation in the essay should be ‘internal’, based on the events themselves. Yet it is immediately more complicated, for the proem is also saying that, even if different story-patterns spring from similar *aitiai*, one can still find inspiring points of parallel in those ‘struggles of virtue against contingency’ and ‘thoughtful daring in times of danger’ – and that implies a process of comparison. It is just that, if we bring other events into contact with this sequence, it will not be those that were causally linked with it in what followed, it will be other occasions where motives and mindsets and drives were similar, whatever their consequences.

In particular, of course, the whole topic of the dialogue makes us muse on how similar the ‘origins’ in the participants’ minds in 379 BCE are to the inspiration that guided Socrates a generation or so earlier: the Platonic intertextuality is here crucial. Whatever else that intertext may suggest, the particular recall of the *Phaedo* must recall the circumstances of Socrates’ death, and we must read the one sequence against the other. The difficulty is to know what we should make of that comparison of the two sequences. Should we follow Babut and Georgiadou in finding a further alignment of Socrates to Epaminondas, as both refuse to get involved in the hard, real-life exchanges of politics? Or is it rather a reminder of the dangers that any conscience-driven activity can bring, something after Plato’s manner of anticipating Socrates’ trial towards the end of *Gorgias* and in Alcibiades’ ‘defence’ speech in *Symposium*? At the end of this paper I shall suggest that it might be a mistake to decide too

firmly in either direction; but that reading connects closely with our reading of ‘voice’ and of dialogue form, and so it had better wait till then.

Perhaps, too, we should develop a further ‘intertext’, as there is a less widely noticed series of parallels here with the killing of Julius Caesar on the Ides of March. There too we have the indications that the news is spreading (596a–b ~ *Brut.* 15.4), and the conspirators jump to a precipitate conclusion that all is lost; there is the decisive message which the victim decides not to read (596e–f ~ *Pel.* 10.7–10 ~ *Caes.* 65); there is the sick man who cannot be involved, but wishes well (578c–d ~ *Brut.* 11); there is the participants’ nervousness as the crisis approaches (*Brut.* 15); there are the suspicions that the plot has become known (586 f, 595a ~ *Pel.* 9.8 ~ *Brut.* 15.4); there are the conspirators who are philosophically alert and committed; there is the awareness of a deep moral issue, centring on the risk of the civil bloodshed that may ensue, and the concern of the conspirators to limit the killing as far as possible (576 f–7a, *Brut.* 19.4–5, 20.2, *Ant.* 13.3); there is the intervention of a sympathiser who pretends to be pleading for his condemned brother (576d–e ~ *Brut.* 17.3, *Caes.* 66.5); there is the heated (ἑρμῶι) and radiant reaction as the killers summon their fellow-citizens to liberty (598a–d ~ *Caes.* 67.3). Perhaps such similarities simply suggest that there are only so many ways of killing a tyrant and only so many ways of describing it; but the killing of Caesar was such an epoch-making story that it is not extravagant to suspect that the parallel is expressive. Yet once again it is unclear what it is expressive of, other than the simple suggestion that the issues at stake and the dilemmas they pose recur time and time again, and in the most momentous ways: yet, just as with Socrates, the parallel does not make moral judgement any easier, especially as moral judgement on Caesar’s assassination was notoriously so difficult.

For the moment let us simply note that, even in the self-contained narrative of the *de Genio*, one can never take a single episode wholly on its own. As we saw, that is really the suggestion of the proem itself, suggesting that one ought to look for parallel *aitiai* in different sequences without being misled by different outcomes. In both *Lives* and *Moralia*, comparison is basic to the judgements that one makes. Even the sort of comparison is not wholly different, not at least if we still apply that distinction between ‘origins’ and ‘outcomes’: for even the comparison in the *Life* with later events does not look to anything that is an outcome (or at least a direct outcome, one that is seen as such) of the Cadmeia liberation, but rather to separate sequences, ones that are connected by the way Pelopidas or Thebe behaves – in short, by the ‘origins’, by the mindset and mentality that drives on the nobly inspired individuals as they grapple for freedom. So in both *Life* and essay we are comparing similar *aitiai* and allowing that comparison to affect our moral judgement.

It is still true that the sustained intertext, of reading X against another's work Y, is a good deal more elaborate in *de Genio* than we typically have in the *Lives*. Perhaps even in the *Lives* we do occasionally find such sustained intertextuality, for instance in reading *Alcibiades* against *Symposium* or the end of *Cato minor* against *Phaedo* itself, but it does not usually become so pervasive through a text as it does here in *de Genio*. But even if there is not that sustained reading against another author's Y, there is still something similar in the *Parallel Lives*: for we may certainly find a pervasive reading of one person's *Life* against another's, even if that is usually another *Life* produced by Plutarch himself. Evidently that is true here in the comparison with Marcellus, but as so often in Plutarch the formal *synkrisis* is only the part of it, and the informal comparison with Epaminondas is just as important (esp. *Pel.* 3–4, 25.4). That will be interacting in some way with Plutarch's own *Epaminondas*, the flagship opening *Life* of the series, as Plutarch compares these two very different Boeotian models of how to apply philosophy to politics. So this has brought us back to a similar project to one found in *de Genio* with its lurking presence of Epaminondas, spotlighting the issue of *paideia* and practical politics, even if once again the two *Lives* of Epaminondas and Pelopidas explore that issue over the canvass not of a single episode but of both men's whole *Lives*.

Now another question arises, worth raising in passing even if we cannot answer it. Does the essay show a similar awareness of other texts of Plutarch himself? Do we feed into our reading of it a knowledge that this same author can produce works of a very different texture, rather as we do in *Pericles* where after discussing divination he adds that 'this is more suitable for another sort of work' (*Per.* 6.5) – and we know full well that Plutarch himself could write it, may indeed go on to write it? Unfortunately we do not know when *de Genio* was written,¹⁰ nor whether it predates or postdates *Pelopidas*: but it might well make a difference to our reading if Plutarch were already embarked on the *Lives*, or even some *Lives* (the *Caesars*, or some of the other free-standing ones), and the original audience knew it – and therefore knew too that Plutarch himself, in other moods and modes, would be describing and evaluating these issues in a wider, more outcome-conscious register. If that is so, Archidamus' warning in the proem could sound as a warning about any project of using history to provide raw material for moral inquiry, including

10 Jones 1966, 70 = 1995, 115, against Ziegler 1949, 205 = 1951, 842. Plutarch's close knowledge of the history in *de Genio* (however he may decide to tweak or supplement it), and some elements of clear contact with the narrative details of *Pelopidas*, do not demonstrate a closeness of composition date: whatever his sources in *Pelopidas*, Plutarch was doubtless familiar with accounts of this particular episode throughout his life. On that source-question see esp. Georgiadou 1997, 15–28: not just Xenophon, clearly, for Xenophon omits Pelopidas from his liberation account at *Hell.* 5.4.1–12, something that can only be deliberate: Schmitzer, 127.

that project on which, an audience would know, Plutarch himself had embarked.

All this started with the single narratological category of ‘duration’. Let us move on, rather more swiftly, to the category that has been exploited most assiduously in theoretical narratology, that of ‘focalisation’. Again let us start with a simple contrast, and see if it works. What we would expect to find would be the *Life* focalising through Pelopidas himself, seeing things through his eyes, just as we would expect it to concentrate on his actions. The essay might be less predictable, but at least the principal narrator is one of the conspirators (in fact it is Epaminondas’ brother Caphisias), so it is likely to be a partisan point of view, not just a mere messenger, nor even the more detached and distant narratorial viewpoint of Plutarch himself.

In some ways, again, that initial crude contrast works quite well, but rather less well than we would expect. Pelopidas certainly figures more in the *Life* – the conspirators can be described as ‘Pelopidas’ party’, for instance, τοῖς περὶ Πελοπίδων (9.1 and 10, evidently a genuine plural here¹¹); in the *Life* Charon gives a full report to ‘Pelopidas’ party’, οἱ περὶ τὸν Πελοπίδων again (10.5, this time less clearly a genuine plural), and a fictional report to others, but in the essay everyone is told the truth (595f–6c). (So this is indeed a matter of focalisation, not just narrative ‘focus’: it is not simply a matter of who is centre-stage, it also makes the reader know what Pelopidas knew and hear the successive reports as he heard them. When this Pelopidas-perspective is momentarily disturbed, Plutarch is careful to add ‘as was later discovered’, 10.7.) Still, the deployment of narrative detail is not always as neat and simple as that. For instance, when Charon offers his teenage son as a sort of hostage for his friends to kill if he, Charon, lets himself and his comrades down, who finds this so appalling that he protests? It is Pelopidas – but not in the *Life*, in the essay (595c); in the *Life* it is ‘everyone’ (9.11–12). And when Pelopidas has his own moment of physical glory, killing Leontidas in hand-to-hand combat, it is the essay rather than the *Life* that has more details.

The essay has some interesting features too, as that partisan focalisation is in some ways more, in some ways less fulfilled than we might expect. It is more fulfilled in that Caphisias not merely tells the story as he views it now in retrospect: he also tells it in the way the story would have unfolded to him at the time. There is very little here, for instance, on the arrangements for the party at Archias’ house, with the conspirators set up to arrive in women’s clothing and give the lustful pro-Spartans a night to remember: the *Life* goes into detail here, drawing on Xenophon (and with an additional intertext, incidentally, in Herodotus 5.20, one that is already sensed in Xenophon), and

11 On the familiar later Greek idiom whereby ‘οἱ περὶ’ can be, but need not be, a simple periphrasis for ‘X’, see esp. Radt.

in terms of sensational narrative that is a natural high-spot – but Caphisias, even though he could have told us about it in view of what he knows **now**, was not an observer of the party-arrangements **then**, and limits himself to what he then knew at first hand. We only hear what Charon discovered of the preliminaries at Archias' house as he reports back to Simmias' party (596a), and so we learn that a rumour was seeping out at the point when the conspirators heard of it too. In narratological terms, the 'narrating self' becomes assimilated to the 'experiencing self', and the primary focaliser Caphisias turns himself into a secondary focaliser as well,¹² involving an internal analepsis as he recalls those earlier details; or should we perhaps say, remembering the brief initial scene-setting, that the primary focaliser 'Plutarch' first introduces Caphisias as a secondary focaliser who goes on to use himself as a tertiary focaliser? The effect is complex, anyway, and the Caphisias focalisation is strong.

On the other hand, the focalisation is less intense in that it is not particularly ideologically partisan, or rather that any partisan elements are not especially interesting. Everyone accepts that the pro-Spartans are villains. If there is an interesting issue, it is not that, but what one does about it, and that brings us back to the question of right and wrong between Epaminondas and the rest: should one adopt a more Socrates-like, quietist position and stay out of it, or should one grasp the nettle and the dagger? Caphisias' characterisation does matter here. As Epaminondas' brother, he sees his point of view, and indeed articulates it particularly clearly: one should not execute people without trial except in the most extreme necessity, and it would be better to have people who had kept aloof to carry conviction in the post-bloodshed settlement (594b–c). But it is also clear that Caphisias himself disagrees with his brother, and he is involved in the action, even if not especially prominently, at the end. Just as Simmias' affliction allows him to preside without taking sides, so Caphisias' position allows him to be as close as possible to a non-partisan on that most interesting issue of all, not whether the tyrants are evil but what to do about it.

In a case such as this focalisation¹³ connects inextricably with another of Genette's narratological categories, 'voice'; and here the dialogic structure of

12 Cf. Genette, 198–9, discussing a similar case in Proust: he terms such suppression of information *paralipsis*, 'since the narrator, in order to limit himself to the information held by the hero at the moment of the action, had to suppress all the information he acquired later, information which very often is vital'. Cf. Nelles, 370–1.

13 I am conscious that in the previous paragraph I am using 'focalisation' in a broad sense, one involving attitudes as well as pure cognition: in other words, the 'how' in 'how one sees' is one that involves response and feeling as well as recognition. This, I think, is inevitable, for emotion and cognition are inextricably connected: one's emotional perspective not merely builds on one's perceptions, it also conditions what one notices and how one notices it. Hence emotional perspectives (what Chatman, 197–8 termed

de Genio is significant. In many ways this is a narrative within a dialogue and a dialogue within a narrative, again very much in Platonic fashion. It starts as an ‘extra-diegetic’¹⁴ dialogue between Archidamus and Caphisias, and Archidamus sets up Caphisias to speak. (*De Pythiae Oraculis* and *Amatorius* are again parallel here; so is *De Cohibenda Ira*.) This proem, incidentally, is not without a hint of the inter-state bad feeling that followed, for Archidamus says that he would even have been prepared to go to Thebes to hear the story if it had not been for the suspicion that this would trigger in Athens (575d, above, p. 546). This is just after he has been arguing that we should judge *aitiai* without an eye to outcomes and consequences: yet perhaps it is more difficult to forget consequences after all, just as Archidamus finds it impossible to ignore later history now, all that later history that centred on the rise of Thebes to dominate Greece. And certainly that dialogue introduction points, as similar Platonic introductions do, to the way that the events and discussions described were not just any events and discussions, but ones that were talked about years later, and in Athens as well as Thebes: this was no ordinary day, and it was not – as if the audience did not know his already – a Liberation that failed.

Once Caphisias gets underway, it is again striking how his narrative so readily becomes dramatic dialogue. That is not just true of the philosophical dialogue and the exchange of elaborate views, but also of the moments of action too, as when Charon and Archias come face to face (595f–6c). ‘There are exiles in the city,’ says Archias. ‘Where,’ says Charon. ‘I do not know,’ says Archias: ‘that’s why I called you here.’ So that’s all right, thinks Charon: ‘There used to be lots of these rumours,’ he says, ‘but I haven’t heard anything – I’ll look into it, though’. ‘Good idea,’ says the scribe Phyllidas, who is in on the plot... This is a dialogue within a narrative (Charon’s) within a dialogue (Charon and the others) within a narrative (Caphisias) within a dialogue (Caphisias, Archidamus and the others). Even in the *Life* there is some dialogue here (10.1–4), but only two speeches: Plutarch uses direct speech in the *Lives* very rarely – indeed its rarity makes its use here dramatically arresting too – but the version in *de Genio* remains far more elaborate. That links, too, with the other dialogues that are embedded in the narrative throughout the essay,

‘slant’), in this case the possibilities of a partisan stance, are thoroughly relevant to ‘how one sees’. On the inextricability of emotion, ideology and focalisation see Rimmon-Kenan, 80–2, and in a classical context especially Fowler, though he is treating much more intricate issues (and I find his word ‘deviant’ misleading: in many of his cases of embedded focalisation ‘complex’, ‘polyvalent’, or ‘blurred’ would be better). By now, quite evidently, I am touching on theoretical issues too large to treat properly here. I also avoid discussion of the relative merits of the slightly different terminologies used by Genette and Bal, but my sympathies are with Genette for the reasons given by Nelles and, succinctly, Rood, 294–6.

14 For this unlovely term, Genette, 228–9.

including the one that does not happen, that which Socrates would so much have liked to have with the recently-dead Timarchus (592 f).

One aspect of this technique is indeed ‘dramatic’: the dialogue is as striking as the visual scene-setting. ‘Just as in a drama,’ indeed, the fortune (*tyche*) of the action ‘elaborated our enterprise with perilous scenes ... and brought a sharp and terrifying conflict, one involving an unexpected reversal’ (*peripeteia*, 596d–e). True, there was drama already in Xenophon’s account, where it is surely no coincidence that he does not have twelve assailants, as in Plutarch, but precisely seven – against Thebes (*Hell.* 5.4.3);¹⁵ but Plutarch makes it even more theatrical. That is not all, though: throughout the essay the dialogue texture is also peculiarly suitable for raising issues – raising them, not necessarily settling them. This is not the place to debate how far the discussion settles issues of demonology or of divine intervention in mortal affairs: though it is worth recalling that earlier point, that it is hard to find inspiration on the Socratic model in action once we get to the narrative crisis, any more than there is a clear indication of *daimones* in action (a point made by Babut). Yet that too is problematic. I suggested earlier that it was good planning and good luck that brought success (p. 543) – but is it? Or is the point that all those lucky coincidences and so-nearly-went-wrongs suggest divine intervention, but of a different sort? When things could so easily have gone wrong after Hippo-stheneidas’ failure of nerve, is Caphisias right to infer that ‘the gods are encouraging us towards the deed’ (588b) – or was it, indeed, just coincidence, and is Caphisias indulging in that brand of wishful thinking that Simmias immediately goes on to discuss (588c)? We cannot know. It is so characteristic of dialogues to leave loose ends, alternative views, that need not be wholly integrated or wholly decided between: the notion of divine guidance is significantly absent from the narrative in the *Life*, for in *Lives* interpretation is typically more clear-cut. The form of the essay allows ‘voice’ to discordant views, and in literature as in life the most civilised and insightful of people have sometimes to realise that they cannot be sure which is the right view.

Perhaps this is the better way to look at the Epaminondas issue, and the dialogue airs but does not decide the question whether his quietism is right. But there is an extra twist, for what makes Epaminondas so enigmatic is that he has so little voice, at least on this issue. He waxes eloquent on the virtues of poverty in turning down even acceptable wealth (and it is not clear he is right there either¹⁶), but others speak for him when it comes to his non-

15 This is well brought out by Schmitzer.

16 582c–586a: pace e.g. Desideri, 576–7, he is questionable both in interpreting the request for Lysis’ bones as if it was an insulting attempt to buy off people who did not resent their penury (the gentlemanly language of the Crotoniate Theanor did not deserve such a put-down), and also in treating the possibility of funds with such disdain.

involvement in the conspiracy (576f–7a, 594b–c), a non-involvement that is slightly more total in the *de Genio* than in the *Life*.¹⁷ His taciturnity is indeed most striking, and is itself the object of comment (592f–3a). One thing he does express is his fear that the bloodshed may get out of hand (577a), but does it? The essay ends with jubilation, not with widespread slaying,¹⁸ and even if Xenophon suggests there was a certain amount of score-settling (*Hell.* 5.4.12) that is not an emphasis that Plutarch himself found room for even in *Pelopidas*. Epaminondas' high-principled stance against 'killing any fellow-citizen without trial except in the presence of grave necessity' (594b) is all very well: but is this not 'grave necessity'? Epaminondas only manages to occupy the high moral ground by assuming without argument that this **is** the high moral ground. And can one, should one, forget the glory that this brought to Thebes? Should one forget all that followed, Leuctra and so on? Or should we put more weight, as Brenk does, on the internecine Greek bloodshed that followed in later centuries (579a, 579c–d), and think that this rather validates Epaminondas' viewpoint? Yet perhaps both of those views fall into the trap of 'judging events by their outcomes'. It is all very difficult: but whether or not *Pelopidas* had already been written with its enthusiastic praise of the deed (one, incidentally, that dwells on its consequences, so 'outcomes' are relevant after all, 13.4–7), Plutarch's first readers could hardly have laid aside their awareness that the natural reading of events – especially the reading that was natural for this Boeotian author Plutarch to take – was that this was a glorious action, one where the risk of bloodshed was thoroughly worth taking.¹⁹ That, after all, is Archidamus' assumption in the poem.

'It is just as if you came offering arms to a city that you thought was at war, and then discovered it was at peace,' says Epaminondas (584a): and the analogy is closer than he thinks, for his colleagues do see themselves as at war with the Spartan occupying force, and funds are useful in warfare. Plutarch knew very well that to be too philosophical at a time of crisis may compromise a higher principle, the good of one's city (*Phoc.* 32.6–7).

- 17 He is active and bellicose at *Pel.* 12.2 ('in arms') and stirs up anti-Spartan subversiveness at *Pel.* 7.4–5. In *de Genio* he is simply waiting at the end (598c).
- 18 Babut 1984, 56 = 1994, 410, Barigazzi 1988, 421–2 = 1994, 230–1, and Brenk 2002, 108 put weight on the fate of Cabirichus at 597b–c: not the most glorious moment of the liberation, it is true, but not I think enough to demonstrate that 'Epameinondas had been lucidly clairvoyant' (Brenk).
- 19 Or, as Ziegler put it, 'er wollte einer der glänzendsten boiotischen Ruhmestaten ein Denkmal setzen und zugleich, indem er seine Helden im Augenblick der höchsten Spannung ruhigen Gemütes über die schwierigsten philosophischen Fragen diskutieren ließ, dem Vorurteil der boiotischen Ungeistigkeit entgegenreten' (1949, 204 = 1951, 841). And brilliant and glorious in memory it surely was: if Borthwick is right, it even, most unusually for a historical event, figured in artistic as well as literary representations.

So Epaminondas' stance is not dismissed out of hand, and here we may agree with Babut, Brenk, and Georgiadou: but it is not clearly validated either. The dialogue form allows both positions to be aired, and the reader is involved in weighing both points of view – in a further dialogue, if you like, a more Bakhtinian dialogic sort of dialogue in which the reader converses with the text. That dialogic dialogue may even be one we see in a different form in the *Life* as well, especially if we remember that the reader would have read *Epaminondas* too and would have seen the other possible viewpoint. As so often in both *Moralia* and *Lives*, we may see people wrestling with the past and finding it relevant but difficult to read, just as Plutarch's own readers would – and perhaps that is the 'message for his own generation', and perhaps for ours too. We are coming back to a position similar to that urged by Philip Hardie in his paper on the semiotics of this 'Sign of Socrates' (1996), where he stressed the difficulty of reading signs and the correlated difficulty of reading historical texts.²⁰

One final point could hardly escape the audience at this conference in the spring of 2005, at a time when the debate over American and British intervention in Iraq was still raging. A lot of these issues inevitably sounded all too contemporary to that audience. When is it right to take direct, murderous action to overthrow a tyrant? When is it better to keep a thoughtful, reflective detachment, feeling that civil bloodshed can so easily get out of hand? How far **should** the educated, ethically concerned patriot feel not merely a licence but an obligation to take a moral stance on issues as profound as these? Yet is that moral stance best taken by a course of risky, bloody action? How reliable a guide can religious conviction be in issues like this – or does it depend on having the right religious mindset in the first place? Plutarch's deepest moral concerns remain concerns for us, timeless ones, not simply parochial preoccupations of imperial Chaeronea. The Plutarch which Georgiadou and Brenk found in the 1990s, validating Epaminondas' detachment and concern to avoid bloodshed, is one that prefigures what one might call the European liberal consensus on the events of 2003, disapproving of the uncompromising decisiveness of American policy. Liberals are usually Epaminondases now; I am one myself. If I paint a more equivocal Plutarch, allowing voice to both sides and not plumping one way or another, in one way that is simply affirming that issues like this are very difficult, and gauging the right lessons from history is as hard as gauging the right ethical principles to apply. But there is also a sympathy for the men of action, even for the politicians, who cannot allow themselves the luxury of saying 'it is too early to tell', and have to take

20 I argue this more fully in Pelling 2005, where I also suggest that this emphasis fits well with the way Plutarch treats Socrates in his other works (cf. also Hershbell): the difficulty of reading and understanding Socrates is a recurrent theme.

agonising decisions anyway, under the pressure of events, when in those terms of the proem one can only see the *aitiai* and can only grope nervously forwards towards the unseeable consequences. Judging in the light of outcomes is indeed the privilege of history and of biography; it is knowing what to do with those past judgments, how to apply them to the new crisis, that is both intractable and unavoidable. He knew a thing or two, did Plutarch.

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Standing in the Shadows: Plutarch and the Emperors in the *Lives* and *Moralia*★

Rhiannon Ash

It is clear that many punchy anecdotes involving the Roman emperors potentially could have offered Plutarch rich-pickings, whether as moralising *exempla* or as entertaining embellishment. Above all the wide-ranging essays of the *Moralia* almost cry out to be peppered with such imperial material. So, the emperor Claudius' unhappy (and ultimately deadly) marriages could have provided Plutarch with some forceful subject-matter in the *Coniugalia Praecepta* (138A–146A); or, more positively, when Plutarch discusses brotherly love (*de Fraterno Amore*, 478A–492D), there is a vivid *exemplum* in the close bond between the emperor Tiberius and his brother Drusus, so eloquently expressed in Tiberius' famous dash from northern Italy across the Alps to Germany to be with his dying brother.¹ His dedicatees, the Avidii brothers, would certainly have appreciated the story. Emperors clearly interested Plutarch, who actively chose to write imperial biographies from Augustus to Vitellius.² Yet it is surprising that references to the emperors in the *Moralia* are relatively scant.³ Those that do exist tend to cluster in certain essays, some predictable, such as the *De Adulatore et Amico* (48E–74E), others less so, such as the *Terrestriane an Aquatilia Animalia* (959A–985C). Claudius, Galba, Otho, Vitellius and Nerva are not mentioned in the rich *corpus* of the *Moralia*. Even Caligula, potentially so promising as a focus for moralism, features only once.⁴

★ I would like to thank Professor Nikolaidis, the members of the organising committee, and the student helpers for all of their hard work in putting on such a successful and enjoyable conference at the University of Crete in Rethymno. This paper has been greatly improved by perceptive questions posed by members of the International Plutarch Society on that occasion.

1 Livy *Per.* 142, Valerius Maximus 5.5.3, Strabo 7.1.3, Seneca *Dial.* 6.3.1–2, 11.15.5, Pliny *NH* 7.84, Suetonius *Tiberius* 7.3, *Claudius* 1.3, Tacitus *Annals* 3.5.1, and Dio 55.2.1. See Woodman and Martin, 99–100.

2 On the *Lives of the Caesars*, see Jones, 72–80, Georgiadou and Ash.

3 The tally for the *Moralia* is as follows: Augustus, 26 references; Tiberius, 10 references; Caligula, 2 references; Claudius, no references; Nero, 9 references; Galba, no references; Otho, no references; Vitellius, no references; Vespasian, 2 references; Titus: 2 references (or 3, if one counts *Mor.* 566D–E as a reference to Titus, with Flacelière, 42); Domitian, 5 references; Nerva, no references; Trajan, 2 references (although one could be spurious).

4 See appendix 3 for Caligula's appearances in Plutarch's works.

So, why do the emperors remain such surprisingly shadowy figures in his surviving works? Does their low profile reflect Plutarch's fear or perhaps his tact? Or was he simply more interested in the grand figures of the republic? This paper sets out to re-evaluate the roles played by emperors individually and collectively in the *Moralia* and the *Lives*.⁵ One point needs clarification here, namely that by "emperors", we are referring to the *principes* from Augustus onwards: Plutarch's own conspicuous allocation of Julius Caesar to the series of *Parallel Lives* suggests that this was the meaningful division for him in thinking about the principate, at least when he was writing his *Lives of the Caesars*.⁶ His point of view was not necessarily static. For, as Geiger and Pelling have suggested,⁷ by the time of Trajan's principate Plutarch recognises Julius Caesar as the first *princeps*, as is shown when he pointedly calls Augustus "the second of the Caesars" (*Numa* 19).

The Distribution of References to Emperors in Plutarch

As a preliminary, it is constructive to offer an overview of Plutarch's relative distribution of allusions to the individual emperors. Augustus takes the lion's share of references in both the *Lives* and the *Moralia*. This is hardly surprising perhaps, given Augustus' long principate and his importance as a model for later emperors, but the picture is more complex, once we consider the nature of the extracts themselves. When Augustus appears in the *Lives*, he is often a protagonist (especially in the *Brutus* and *Antony*), or to put it succinctly, he is "Octavian" rather than "Augustus" and therefore he must be mentioned because his participation in the action requires it. Once we distinguish between these "necessary" and "extraneous" appearances in the *Lives*, Augustus is arguably not so prominent.⁸ For the same reasons, a similar qualification applies to Nero, who at first appears to overshadow other emperors in his number of appearances.⁹ At the other end of the scale, Nerva and Hadrian are invisible in Plutarch's *corpus*, although of course the proximity of Hadrian's accession to Plutarch's death is very relevant here (see Bowie). Trajan at least features, but only fleetingly;¹⁰ and his major appearance (as an

5 Flacelière, offers a useful overview of Plutarch's attitude towards the emperors, but certainly leaves room for further analysis.

6 Pelling, 253, chooses a Domitianic date of composition for the *Lives of the Caesars*, which Jones, 73, locates before A.D. 93. Geiger 2002, 93–4, proposes a Nervan date.

7 Geiger 1975 and Pelling, 253.

8 See appendix 1 for Augustus' appearances in Plutarch's works.

9 See appendix 5 for Nero's appearances in Plutarch's works. Brenk 1987 considers Plutarch's attitude to Nero.

10 See appendix 13 for Trajan's appearances in Plutarch's works.

addressee) is in any case problematic, because some scholars consider the *Apophthegmata Regum et Imperatorum* (172A–208A), or at least its introduction, to be spurious.¹¹ Yet Plutarch's relative reticence about the post-Flavian emperors is perhaps understandable, given that in his own life, "these same years saw him receive the high respect of the emperors and their friends".¹² Such proximity may explain the silence of Plutarch, whose main project in this period was the *Parallel Lives*, with subject matter conveniently located in the republic and earlier. As Pelling suggests, in specific *Parallel Lives* such as the *Caesar*, Plutarch works hard to play down potential connections with his own time: "Whenever he comes near to stressing a theme with a particularly contemporary application, he shies away, and we can see some nimble footwork in the way he avoids making his narrative too specifically contemporary in its resonance" (p. 255). Yet such explanations for Plutarch's reticence cannot apply to some other emperors about whom he remains relatively silent. So, Galba, Otho and Vitellius provoke almost no comments from Plutarch beyond the surviving biographies of the first two,¹³ which in any case seem to be object-lessons in the dangers of collective martial madness, rather than close studies of individual personalities (see Ash). The Flavians attract a little more attention, but most references are mainly to topics such as performing dogs (*Mor.* 973A–74A) or the names of months (*Numa* 19), relatively abstruse and safe areas, considering that a large portion of Plutarch's adult life had coincided with the Flavian dynasty.¹⁴ With Tiberius (at least in the *Moralia*), Plutarch does address some politicised topics, such as Sejanus (*Mor.* 96C), but this is a principate (and dynasty) located in the relatively distant past, and again, there is a greater proportion of non-political material, such as Tiberius' views about the futility of consulting doctors for anyone more than sixty years old (*Mor.* 136E, 794B).¹⁵

Yet perhaps the most surprisingly shadowy emperor is Claudius, whose deep-rooted antiquarian and historical interests are just the sort of thing that Plutarch would have appreciated.¹⁶ Claudius' historical work, which began after Caesar's murder in two volumes and (after a gap) covered Augustus' principate in forty-one volumes (Suetonius *Claudius* 41), would surely have interested Plutarch as a potential source. So too would Claudius' autobiog-

11 Harrison, 4649, proposes that it is spurious, although Beck argues that it is genuine.

12 Jones, 28.

13 See appendices 6, 7 and 8 for the appearances of Galba, Otho and Vitellius in Plutarch's works.

14 See appendices 9, 10 and 11 for the appearances of Vespasian, Titus and Domitian in Plutarch's works. Levin, 285, proposes that Plutarch changed his mind about Domitian, moving from gratitude for a favour done for Delphi to hatred after the assassination.

15 See appendix 2 for Tiberius' appearances in Plutarch's works.

16 See appendix 4 for Claudius' appearances in Plutarch's works.

raphy (eight volumes), which would have been invaluable when Plutarch was writing his lost biography *Claudius*. Claudius also wrote substantial works on Etruscan and Carthaginian history in Greek (Suetonius *Claudius* 42), and these are both subjects which interested Plutarch, who may have found these writings more accessible than those in Latin.¹⁷ Finally, Claudius was also a passionate philhellene (Suetonius *Claudius* 42, Dio 60.16.8), so much so that Seneca mocks him at *Apocolocyntosis* 5 for swapping Homeric quotes with Hercules.¹⁸ All these details suggest that Claudius, both as a writer and a man, would have appealed to Plutarch, but we only have one surviving fleshed-out reference to the emperor in a story primarily about Titus Vinius, where Claudius appears as a comic foil (*Galba* 12.2–3):

δειπνῶν δὲ παρὰ Κλαυδίῳ Καίσαρι ποτήριον ἀργυροῦν ὑφέιλετο· πυθόμενος δὲ ὁ Καῖσαρ τῇ ὑστεραίᾳ πάλιν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ δεῖπνον ἐκάλεσεν, ἐλθόντι δὲ ἐκέλευσεν ἐκείνῳ μηδὲν ἀργυροῦν, ἀλλὰ κεράμια πάντα προσφέρειν καὶ παρατιθέναι τοὺς ὑπηρέτας. τοῦτο μὲν οὖν διὰ τὴν Καίσαρος μετριότητα κωμικώτεραν γενομένην γέλωτος, οὐκ ὀργῆς ἄξιον ἔδοξεν

“When Titus Vinius was dining with Claudius Caesar, he stole a silver cup. Caesar, learning about this, invited him to supper again on the next day, and when he came, ordered the attendants to bring out and set down nothing silver, but only earthenware. This incident, thanks to Caesar’s moderation, having turned out to be rather funny, seemed worthy of laughter, not anger.”

Claudius’ stylish and restrained rebuke of his pilfering guest is more reminiscent of the world of the epigram than the imperial realm, where dining with an emperor can often prove an oppressive experience (e.g. Cassius Dio 67.9). Indeed, the whole incident recalls the dramatic situation in Catullus 12, where Asinius steals a napkin at an elegant dinner, but is unmasked by Catullus’ witty poem.¹⁹ Catullus plays the role of “arbiter of elegance” in this situation,²⁰ as Claudius likewise does with Vinius, but the poet and emperor differ vastly in power and status: where Catullus fires off a hendecasyllabic retort, Claudius as emperor could have been much more heavy-handed. Plutarch acknowledges this restraint by positively glossing Claudius’ stylish response to Vinius’ pilfering as μετριότης, “moderation”, in a situation which turned out to be κωμικώτερον, “rather comic”. Plutarch’s favourable treatment of Claudius is accentuated if we recall that elsewhere, Claudius’ anger is legendary: he is the only emperor to whom Suetonius devotes an “anger” rubric²¹, Tacitus calls him *irae properum*, “quick to anger” (*Annals* 11.26) and

17 On Plutarch’s Latin, see *Demosthenes* 2.2.

18 Claudius’ philhellenism also found expression in promotion of Greeks (Levick 1990, 103 and 182).

19 See Godwin, 129–30.

20 Fitzgerald, 93.

21 Hurley, 217.

Seneca shows him glowing white-hot with rage (*Apocolocyntosis* 6.2). Tacitus' succinct version of the same incident with Vinius is also revealing about Plutarch's narrative techniques in comparison (*Historiae* 1.48.3):

seruili deinceps probro respersus est, tamquam scyphum aureum in conuiuio Claudii furatus, et Claudius postera die soli omnium Viniio fictilibus ministrari iussit.

“Afterwards Vinius was sullied by a disgrace worthy of a slave: it was alleged that he stole a gold cup at a banquet given by Claudius, who on the next day gave orders that he alone of all the guests should be served on earthenware”

The cup is now golden rather than silver, heightening the scale of Vinius' stealing, but at the same time Tacitus also intensifies the sense of Vinius' public humiliation by the detail that he *soli omnium*, “alone of all the guests”, was served on earthenware. Plutarch, by contrast, does not indicate the scale of the dinner, and indeed the pair could have been dining in relative intimacy. It is conspicuous too that Tacitus refrains from authorial comment on Claudius' restraint, which is a central motif in the Plutarchan version. The contrasts show how in this incident Plutarch's Claudius is cast in an engagingly positive light, but the more general silence about him elsewhere in the *Lives* and the *Moralia* is still striking.

We have seen so far that Plutarch, one of the most prominent thinkers of the Roman imperial period, is strikingly selective, even reticent, when it comes to offering material about the emperors themselves, at least outside the lost series of *Lives of the Caesars*. This makes it all the more important to consider carefully what he does say about the *principes*. For the remainder of this paper, we will ask two broad questions about the material involving emperors. Are there any over-arching ideological patterns that emerge from Plutarch's presentation of emperors in the *Lives* and the *Moralia*? Do these extracts show any distinctive narrative techniques? In methodological terms, this is inevitably an imperfect science, especially when it comes to the Julio-Claudian emperors, whose lost biographies would have supplied helpful continuous narratives in which to embed Plutarch's surviving comments about them elsewhere. In this sense, we are arguably dealing with “fragments”, which must be approached with the same methodological caution recommended by Brunt. Yet it is still worthwhile to examine the extracts about the emperors as a distinct category in Plutarch's works, since they will prove revealing both about his attitude to imperial power and about his narrative techniques.

Direct and Indirect Speech

One narrative technique which links many of the passages involving Roman emperors is Plutarch's vibrant use of direct and indirect speech (especially in the *Moralia*) to explore the elaborate dynamics of power between ruler and subjects. Plutarch's emperors are not lofty, distant and silent figures, but relatively ordinary men who talk, and sometimes even joke (despite the obvious constraints imposed on them by their position). Likewise, those who interact with emperors are also portrayed as using direct speech vividly in a range of ways. One interesting sequence appears at *de Garrulitate* 508A–B, where Plutarch presents an exchange between Augustus and his friend Fulvius:

Φούλβιος δ' ὁ Καίσαρος ἑταῖρος τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ γέροντος ἤδη γεγονότος ἀκούσας ὄδυρομένου τὴν περὶ τὸν οἶκον ἑρημίαν, καὶ ὅτι τῶν μὲν δυεῖν αὐτῶ Ὀυγατριδῶν ἀπολωλότων Ποστούμιου δ' ὅς ἔτι λοιπὸς ἔστιν ἐκ διαβολῆς τινος ἐν φυγῇ ὄντος ἀναγκάζεται τὸν τῆς γυναικὸς υἱὸν ἐπεισάγειν τῇ διαδοχῇ τῆς ἡγεμονίας, καίπερ οἰκτεῖρων καὶ βουλευόμενος ἐκ τῆς ὑπερορίας ἀνακαλεῖσθαι τὸν Ὀυγατριδοῦν· ταῦθ' ὁ Φούλβιος ἀκούσας ἐξήνεγκε πρὸς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα, πρὸς δὲ Λιβίαν ἐκείνη, Λιβία δὲ καθήψατο πικρῶς Καίσαρος, εἰ πάλοι ταῦτ' ἐγνωκῶς οὐ μεταπέμπεται τὸν Ὀυγατριδοῦν, ἀλλ' εἰς ἐχθραν καὶ πόλεμον αὐτὴν τῶ διαδόχῳ τῆς ἀρχῆς καθίστησιν. ἐλθόντος οὖν ἔωθεν, ὡς εἰώθει, τοῦ Φουλβίου πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ εἰπόντος “χαῖρε, Καῖσαρ” “ὑγίαιν” εἶπε “Φούλβιε.” κἀκεῖνος νοήσας ᾤχετ' εὐθύς ἀπιῶν οἴκαδε καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα μεταπεμπάμενος “ἐγνωκεν” ἔφη “Καῖσαρ, ὅτι τὸ ἀπόρρητον οὐκ ἐσιώπησα· καὶ διὰ τοῦτο μέλλω ἀναιρεῖν ἑμαυτόν.” ἡ δὲ γυνὴ “δικαίως” εἶπεν, “ὅτι μοι τοσοῦτον συνοικῶν χρόνον οὐκ ἔγνωσ οὐδ' ἐφυλάξω τὴν ἀκρᾶσίαν· ἀλλ' ἔασον ἐμὲ προτέραν.” καὶ λαβοῦσα τὸ ξίφος ἑαυτὴν προανείλε τοῦ ἀνδρός.

“Fulvius, the friend of Caesar, heard the emperor, who had now become an old man, lamenting the desolation of his house, and the fact that, after two of his grandsons had died, Postumius, the only survivor, was in exile because of some slanderous charge; he was forced to introduce to the succession his wife's son, although he felt pity for his own grandson and was planning to bring him back from abroad. Fulvius heard this and divulged it to his own wife, who passed it on to Livia, who then bitterly rebuked Caesar: if he had made up his mind long ago, surely he should recall his grandson, rather than driving her to hostility and strife with the imperial successor? So, when Fulvius visited him in the morning, as was his custom, and said ‘Hail, Caesar!’, the emperor replied, ‘Farewell, Fulvius!’. Fulvius understood and went away, immediately going home, and having sent for his wife, he said, ‘Caesar has found out that I have not kept his secret safe and I therefore intend to kill myself’. His wife replied, ‘That is apt, for having lived with me for such a long time, you have not learned to guard against my lack of restraint. However, let me die first’. Taking the sword, she killed herself before her husband.”

The dynamics of this whole vignette are driven by the interplay between the different exchanges made in the private and public spheres.²² In the initial confidential conversation with Fulvius, Augustus emerges as a tired and irritated old man, frustrated by the tensions within his family which have forced him to choose Tiberius as his successor. After Fulvius unwisely passes on these details to his garrulous wife, the brief dialogue between the two men in public becomes clipped and deadly, as Augustus apparently embeds in his rebuke a tacit order to Fulvius to kill himself (or so Fulvius thinks, taking his cue perhaps from the fact that ὑγίαιον appears on gravestones; Liddell and Scott, s.v. ὑγίαιον). The subsequent exchange between Fulvius and his wife shows Plutarch attributing the pair with characteristics stereotypical of the genders. Fulvius' words to his wife must surely contain an implicit rebuke, since she is the one who passed on the secret, but his 'masculine' restraint and lack of outward emotion in the circumstances is remarkable. Yet his wife, by pointing out that he should by now know her lack of restraint, deftly projects the blame back on her husband, but her decision to commit an exemplary suicide (before her husband kills himself) redeems her and can be seen in the best tradition of the idealised Roman *matrona*.²³

What is distinctive about Plutarch's agenda and narrative technique is also brought out by comparison with the parallel version of this story in Tacitus (*Annals* 1.5.1–2):

quippe rumor incesserat paucos ante menses Augustum electis consociis et comite uno Fabio Maximo Planasiam uentum ad uisendum Agrippam; multas illic utrimque lacrimas et signa caritatis, spemque ex eo fore ut iuuenis penatibus aui redderetur. quod Maximum uxori Marciae aperuisse, illam Liviae. gnarum id Caesari; neque multo post exstincto Maximo, dubium an quaesita morte, auditos in funere eius Marciae gemitus semet incusantis, quod causa exitii marito fuisset.

“A rumour had started that a few months previously, Augustus, with some chosen associates and with Fabius Maximus as his sole companion, had travelled to Planasia to see Agrippa; there on both sides many were the tears and indications of affection, and therefore the hope had arisen that the young man would return to his grandfather's house. The story went that Maximus had revealed this to his wife Marcia, she had told Livia and this became known to Caesar. When Maximus died not long afterwards (it is uncertain whether he killed himself), Marcia's groans were heard at the funeral, accusing herself of causing her husband's death”.²⁴

22 The story has something in common with Suetonius *Augustus* 66.3, where Maecenas annoys Augustus by telling his wife Terentia about the discovery of Murena's conspiracy. Cf. Horace, who advises Lollius to guard ruthlessly the secret of any high-ranking friend, even though *et uino tortus et ira* (*Epistle* 1.18.38).

23 The classic example is Caecina Paetus' wife, Arria, who gave her husband a lead in killing himself with the words *Paete, non dolet* (Pliny *Epistles* 3.16.6; cf. Martial *Epigrams* 1.13).

24 See Woodman, 23–39, for the aftermath of this episode in Tacitus.

Where Plutarch's version is full of speech (direct and indirect) which reveals the mechanisms of the secret's divulgence, Tacitus' characters do not speak, apart from the wife Marcia, who rebukes herself for her husband's death. The fact that she survives her husband is perhaps the single most conspicuous difference between the two versions, but it is also striking that Augustus is allocated such a muted role, which entirely plays down his direct involvement in engineering his friend's death. Thus, comparison with Tacitus shows how Plutarch in his narrative dramatically uses direct speech throughout to underscore the dynamics of power between individual characters and to point up the moral of the story (that failure to keep the secrets of the powerful can be a deadly mistake). Plutarch's Augustus himself is an interesting figure. By his suicide, Fulvius casts Augustus as an absolute autocrat, but it is possible that the emperor may not have intended such an extreme response. We can compare here a passage from Suetonius, who describes Augustus' tearful frustration that he is the only man who cannot get as angry with his friends as he would like (*Augustus* 66.2), presumably because his powerful position means that any angry outburst always has serious consequences.

Imperial Restraint?

This more positive reading of Augustus' conduct is supported by the fact that in other passages involving emperors, Plutarch often undercuts expectations of imperial cruelty and emphasises restraint instead (as we have already seen in his portrayal of Claudius' treatment of Titus Vinius). So, when the Thracian king, Rhoemetaces, changes sides from Antony to Augustus, but drunkenly berates his new ally, Augustus disdainfully comments: “ἐγὼ προδοσίαν φιλῶ, προδότας δ' οὐκ ἔπαινω.”, “I like treachery, but I have no praise for traitors” (*Mor.* 207A).²⁵ A snub is made to serve, instead of a more serious response.²⁶ Restraint is also the keynote of another story of Augustus' (or rather, Octavian's) ostentatious pardon of Alexandria (*Ant.* 80; *Mor.* 207B), whose citizens anticipate harsh punishment, although Octavian spares the city, πρῶτον μὲν διὰ τὸ μέγεθος καὶ τὸ κάλλος, ἔπειτα διὰ τὸν κτίστην Ἀλέξανδρον, τρίτον δὲ δι' Ἄρειον τὸν φίλον, “firstly because of its greatness and beauty, secondly because of its founder, Alexander, and thirdly because of his friend Areius” (*Mor.* 207A). So, in a public as well as a private sphere, Plutarch accentuates Augustan self-control. Even when Augustus does get angry, he

²⁵ See *PIR*² 4.3.264 for Rhoemetaces.

²⁶ Plutarch clearly liked this anecdote, since he redeploys the aphorism again in a more stripped-down way at *Romulus* 17 as an analogy for the treachery of Tarpeia; quite possibly, it also featured in the lost *Augustus*.

shows remorse. When he punches a young man accused of adultery with Julia and the defendant reminds him, “νόμον ἔθηκας, ὦ Καῖσαρ”, “You have laid down a law, O Caesar!” (*Mor.* 207D), Augustus, mortified that his temper has temporarily short-circuited legal process, abstains from food.

A potential objection to this thesis is that Augustus is surely an unusual emperor and that his successors will surely fail to match up, but even with Nero, Plutarch uses direct speech vividly to show imperial restraint. So, in an anecdote from *de Cohibenda Ira*, Plutarch advocates avoiding costly possessions, since their loss will only make one angry. Seneca, rebuking Nero for having commissioned a lavish octagonal structure, says: “ἤλεγξας ... πένητα σεαυτὸν· ἐὰν γὰρ ταύτην ἀπολέσῃς, ἑτέραν οὐ κτήσῃ τοιαύτην”, “You have proved yourself a poor man, for if ever you lose this, you will not obtain another like it” (461F). Given the increasingly tense relationship between Seneca and Nero that we see developing in Tacitus’ *Annals*, the consequences of such a candid remark could have been grim, but in Plutarch’s story not only does Nero refrain from rebuking his minister, but when the octagonal structure is duly destroyed, Nero even remembers Seneca’s words and bears the loss μετριώτερον, “more moderately” as a result. Similarly, in the *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur*, an unnamed flatterer in the senate proposes that free men ought to speak frankly, and then buttonholes Tiberius: “ἄκουσον, ... Καῖσαρ ἄσοι πάντες ἐγκαλοῦμεν, οὐδεις δὲ τολμᾷ φανερώς λέγειν. ἀμελεῖς σεαυτοῦ καὶ προΐεσαι τὸ σῶμα καὶ κατατρύχεις αἰεὶ φροντίσι καὶ πόνοις ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, οὔτε μεθ’ ἡμέραν οὔτε νυκτὸς ἀναπαυόμενος.”, “Caesar, hear the charges that we all making against you, but which no-one dares to speak directly. You fail to take care of yourself, you throw away your energy, you always exhaust yourself in your anxieties and labours on our behalf, not resting either by day or by night” (60C–D). Plutarch drives home here the sharp sense of *bathos*, as apparent outspokenness becomes nauseating sycophancy.²⁷ Yet it is a character in the text, Cassius Severus, who makes the sarcastic dig: “αὕτη τοῦτον ἡ παρρησία τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἀποκτενεῖ”, “Such frankness will kill this man!” (60C).²⁸ Plutarch’s Tiberius does not show displeasure, either towards the flatterer or towards Cassius Severus, which suggests his restraint and promotion of senatorial free speech. So too does the identity of Cassius Severus, the man who denounces the flatterer. Tacitus says that this famously outspoken Augustan orator was banished to Crete, either in AD8 or AD12, after Augustus extended treason charges to include treason by word (written or

27 Tacitus offers several examples under Tiberius of nauseating senatorial flattery dressed up as apparent outspokenness: Valerius Messalla (*ea sola species adulandi supererat*) at *Annals* 1.8.4 and Ateius Capito (*quasi per libertatem*) at *Annals* 3.70.1.

28 Such jibes were typical of Severus and other sources preserve further elegant examples: Seneca *Controversiae* 2.4.11, 9.3.14, and Quintilian 6.3.78.

spoken) as well as by deed (*Annals* 1.72.4).²⁹ When Severus continued to write provocatively from Crete, a harsher sentence was imposed under Tiberius in AD24: since Crete was deemed far too nice a place for exile, Severus was sent to Seriphos, where he died in AD34 or AD35 (*Annals* 4.21.3). We have no other evidence that Severus ever returned to Rome under Tiberius, and yet we find him here uttering a sarcastic remark in the senate. Given that Severus was only rehabilitated posthumously by Caligula, it looks very much as if Plutarch (or his source) has made a mistake in his anomalous appearance in Tiberius' senate.³⁰ However that may be, the restraint of Plutarch's Tiberius is especially striking, given the identity of the famously outspoken and witty Severus.³¹ That may well be because Tiberius himself, who famously called the senators *o homines ad seruitutem paratos*, "Ah! Men primed for slavery" (Tacitus *Annals* 3.65.3; cf. Suetonius *Tiberius* 27), had little patience with sycophants, and thus would probably have enjoyed Severus' joke. However, even the sycophant escapes a rebuke from Tiberius, whose sarcasm could sometimes be withering (as in his reply to Togonius Gallus' proposal for an imperial bodyguard made up of senators, relayed at Tacitus *Annals* 6.2.3–5).

The Emperors and Marginal Characters

Another broad characteristic of many passages about emperors in Plutarch's surviving works is that *principes* and other powerful men are often memorably eclipsed by a relatively minor character, who unexpectedly pushes his social superior into the shadows and takes the limelight. Some instances operate on a small scale. So, we hear that Augustus' jester Gabba amiably calls late-comers to dinner-parties ἐπιθυρόδειπνοι, "dinner-lovers", for still accepting dinner invitations despite other engagements (*Mor.* 726A). This is essentially an anecdote about Gabba rather than about Augustus, who remains marginal. We also see this same Gabba diplomatically pretending to be asleep at a dinner party as Maecenas flirts with his (Gabba's) wife, although he wakes up when an attendant tries to remove the wine and says "κακόδαμον ... οὐκ οἶσθ' ὅτι μόνω Μαικήνην καθεύδω; ", "Wretch! Don't you know that I am only asleep for Maecenas?" (759F–760A). Here the presence of the more powerful man, Maecenas, is pivotal to the story, but the narrative is primarily designed to bring out the charm and wit of the minor character, confronted by a difficult

29 Levick 1976, 192, suggests A.D. 8 as the date of exile.

30 It was Caligula who eventually allowed the republication of Severus' writings, which had been banned by the senate (Suetonius *Caligula* 16.1).

31 For a vivid and engaging portrait, see Seneca the Elder, *Controversiae* 3 preface; also (more briefly) Quintilian 10.1.116–17 and Tacitus *Dialogus* 26.4–5.

situation. Or there is the tale of Regulus, the prize-fighter, who drops dead early one morning after having a drink while bathing with the emperor Titus (*Mor.* 124C–D). This is a dramatic moment, to be sure, but the admonition is against the dangers of bathing and drinking, rather than against the autocratic powers of Titus, who is almost entirely incidental to the story. In this type of tale, the emperor is arguably marginal, but not marginalised.

Yet elsewhere the eclipsing of the emperor by a more lowly character is laden with meaning and becomes morally pointed, such as when Rusticus gets a message from Domitian during Plutarch's lecture, but underscores his independence by not reading the letter until the lecture is over (*Mor.* 522D–E). Rusticus thus firmly puts Domitian in his place by refusing to interrupt his routine, even though everybody else there (including Plutarch) expects him immediately to devote his attention to the emperor.³² Another case, where the moralism is particularly biting, involves the extended narrative of Empona, the Gallic rebel Sabinus' wife (*Mor.* 770C–771C), which features as the climactic *exemplum* in the *Amatorius* (*Mor.* 748E–771E), the discussion of *eros* triggered by the pursuit of the beautiful young man Bacchon by the wealthy widow Ismenodora.³³ Plutarch says at the very start of the story that Empona was also known as Ἡρωίς, “heroine” (a name that proleptically underscores her subsequent heroic actions). Once the revolt collapses, the failed rebel Sabinus hides in some underground caves after sending word to his wife that he is dead. Grief-stricken, Empona promptly abstains from food, but Sabinus soon reveals to her that he is alive, so the husband and wife resume their married life in the cave and eventually Empona becomes pregnant. To keep her husband (and her own reputation) safe, Empona ingeniously hides her pregnancy by smearing herself with an ointment which makes her whole body swell up, and she secretly gives birth to two sons.³⁴ The engaging story, whose various twists and turns are suggestive of a narrative from the world of the novel, is brought sharply down to earth at the end by Vespasian's execution of Empona, which triggers Plutarch's moral indignation (771C):

ἀποκτείνει μὲν οὖν αὐτὴν ὁ Καῖσαρ· ἀποκτείνας δὲ δίδωσι δίκην, ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ τοῦ γένους παντὸς ἄρδην ἀναιρεθέντος· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἤνεγκεν ἢ τόθ' ἡγεμονία σκυθρωπότερον οὐδὲ μᾶλλον ἑτέραν εἰκὸς ἦν καὶ θεοὺς καὶ δαίμονας ὄψιν ἀποστραφῆναι. καίτοι τὸν οἶκτον ἐξήρει τῶν θρωμένων τὸ θαραλλέον αὐτῆς καὶ

32 This man is probably the Arulenus Rusticus who wrote a biography of Thræsea Paetus and was subsequently put to death by Domitian in A.D. 93 (Tacitus *Agricola* 2.1, Cassius Dio 67.13.2).

33 The same story features briefly at Dio 66.16.2–3 and was narrated by Tacitus in the lost part of his *Histories*, as an advance notice at *Histories* 4.67.2 indicates. Dio calls her Peponila and Tacitus Eponina.

34 Empona in her treatment of her husband coheres with the general category of 'supportive women', explored by Blomqvist, 82–7.

μεγαλήγορον, ᾧ καὶ μάλιστα παρώξυνε τὸν Οὐεσπασιανόν, ὡς ἀπέγνω τῆς σωτηρίας πρὸς αὐτὸν † ἀλλαγὴν κελεύουσα· βεβιωκέναι γὰρ ὑπὸ σκότῳ καὶ κατὰ γῆς ἡδίων ἢ † βασιλεύων ἐκείνῳ.³⁵

“So Caesar put her to death, but having executed her, he paid the penalty, since within a short time his whole family was utterly destroyed. For the principate at that time carried out by force no act that was darker, nor one that was more likely to make both gods and spirits turn their faces away. Yet her audacity and boastfulness dissipated the spectators’ pity and particularly stung Vespasian, when she renounced her safety by challenging him to an exchange: for (she said that) ‘she had lived more enjoyably in the darkness and underground than he had done in that place as emperor’”.

The connection made by Plutarch between the execution of Empona and the demise of the whole Flavian dynasty is certainly extreme. It is also somewhat strained, in that Vespasian himself did not live to see the disintegration of his ruling line and the significant chronological gap between his death in AD79 and Domitian’s assassination in AD96 makes Plutarch’s ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ seem exaggerated.³⁶ As Brenk 1977 observes, “the view does violence to the fact since Vespasian died peacefully, and Plutarch had to telescope the twenty years it took Domitian to die” (p. 258). Still, the theme of divine retribution (however implausible) at the climax of the narrative is a marker of Plutarch’s heightened emotional register and is designed to polarise the heroically loyal wife and the malicious emperor. It is true that Empona’s final words are said to forfeit the sympathy of the internal audience, but Plutarch’s strident emphasis as author on the darkness and impiety of the execution suggest that we, his readers, are not necessarily meant to share the feelings of the internal protagonists. Comparison with an alternative version of the same story brings out the polarisation even more sharply. Empona’s spirited final words in Plutarch entirely reverse the dynamics of the epitomised Dio’s later version of the story, where she pushes her children towards Vespasian and says, in a last-ditch effort to save herself: “ταῦτα, Καῖσαρ, καὶ ἐγέννησα ἐν τῷ μνημείῳ καὶ ἔθρεψα, ἵνα σε πλείονες ἰκετεύσωμεν”, “Caesar, I bore and reared these children in the monument so that we could supplicate you in greater numbers!” (66.16.2). Her spontaneous flattery is ingenious, and indeed the deployment of children in an attempt to rouse pity recalls the techniques recommended in rhetorical handbooks for stirring the sympathies of audiences in the courtroom.³⁷ Yet her strategy in Dio ultimately seems rather contrived: in Plutarch,

35 Although the text is unfortunately corrupt at an important point of the story, the general sense and the defiance of Empona’s retort seem clear.

36 Tacitus *Historiae* 4.67.2 says that Sabinus successfully eluded capture for nine years after his revolt. If so, Empona was executed near the end of Vespasian’s principate.

37 See Cicero *de Oratore* 1.228, *Orator* 131, *pro Flacco* 102, *pro Fonteio* 46, *Brutus* 90, *pro Sulla* 31.89, and Quintilian 6.1.30 for the emotive power of children in the courtroom.

the children are nowhere to be seen. Instead, Empona's final words depict her ostentatiously trumping Vespasian's privileged life enjoyed as emperor with the exquisite pleasures of her romantic married love with Sabinus (an emphasis which coheres with the central theme of the *Amatorius*).³⁸ There is another pointed contrast between the versions of the story in Dio and Plutarch. Where Plutarch had denied that the spectators felt pity, Dio explicitly counters this: δακρῦσαι μὲν γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸν καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἐποίησεν, οὐ μὲντοι καὶ ἠλεήθησαν, "For although she made both Vespasian and the others weep, they did not however show mercy" (66.16.2). Plutarch's angry Vespasian is replaced by a man who even cries, although that does not in the end prevent him from executing the woman.

As a coda to this analysis, it is worth emphasising that some details and the setting of Plutarch's narrative sequence have an obvious intertextual relationship with Petronius' tale about the widow of Ephesus (*Satyricon* 111–12).³⁹ Both women abstain from food as a sign of their grief over their dead husband (*Satyricon* 111.3, *Mor.* 770F), and where the widow of Ephesus is regarded by the people of the city as the *solum ... uerum pudicitiae amorisque exemplum*, "the one true example of chaste passion" (*Satyricon* 111.5), Empona is also described in highly positive terms (γυναῖκα πασῶν ἀρίστην, "the best wife of all", *Mor.* 770D). Likewise, both women sleep with a man in an underground chamber (*Satyricon* 112.3, *Mor.* 771B), although Empona preserves her exemplary status because the man in question is her husband and thus (unlike the widow of Ephesus) she remains *uniuira*.⁴⁰ As a genre, the novel specialises in the creation of vibrant characters from the social and geographical margins. In depicting the outspoken Empona, Plutarch has been equally creative, shaping an animated and colourful minor protagonist who becomes a forceful foil to the shadowy and spiteful authority figure of Vespasian. In addition, Plutarch's heroine also evokes the figure of Antigone, particularly through her life in the cavern, or "Hades" as Plutarch calls it, and indeed Plutarch explicitly nudges us at one point to think in terms of the tragic stage: τὰ μὲν οὖν ἄλλα παρὰ τῆς γυναικὸς ἐναγωνίως συνετραγωδεῖτο τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πάθους, "so in other respects she vehemently played her tragic part through her outward show of grief" (*Mor.* 771A). She comes closest to resembling Antigone in her defiant engagement with an authority figure who ultimately brings about her

38 The bravery of Empona's death also recalls a point made earlier in the dialogue, that the power of *eros* allows a woman *τολμᾶν παρὰ φύσιν καὶ ἀποθνήσκειν*, "to dare and die beyond her nature" (*Mor.* 761E).

39 On this story see McGlathery and Perotti.

40 This is also a central trait in another exemplary woman, Camma, whose story of loyalty to her dead husband in the face of the tyrant Sinorix who brought about his death is also related in the *Amatorius* 768A–C. This sequence also ends with a powerful piece of direct speech from the heroine in the face of death.

death, hinting at Vespasian as a Creon character. This particular alignment is especially striking, given Plutarch's tendency elsewhere to accentuate imperial restraint, and there were certainly emperors other than Vespasian who were more frequently cast by the literary tradition as manifesting tyrannical traits.

One feature of Plutarch's narrative technique concerning emperors that the story of Empona allows us to illustrate is the phenomenon of compartmentalisation. Just because Plutarch casts a protagonist in a certain light in one essay does not preclude a very different emphasis being placed on the same character elsewhere. It is symptomatic of his versatility and reflects his range of interests. The only other appearance of Vespasian in the *Moralia* comes in a passage from *The Cleverness of Animals*, where Plutarch describes an impressive dog that he has seen at a pantomime in Rome at the Theatre of Marcellus. The (elaborate) plot requires the dog to consume a deadly drug, which in reality only puts it to sleep (974A):

ἔπειτα Θαυμασάντων, ἔξαναστάς ἐβάδιζε πρὸς ὃν ἔδει καὶ προσήκαλλε χαίρων καὶ φιλοφρονούμενος, ὥστε πάντας ἀνθρώπους καὶ Καίσαρα (παρῆν γὰρ ὁ γέρον Ὀυεσπασιανὸς ἐν τῷ Μαρκέλλου Θεάτρῳ) συμπαθεῖς γενέσθαι.

“Next as people marvelled, the dog, after standing up and walking to the required actor, happily and cheerfully fawned upon him, so that everyone including Caesar (for the old man Vespasian was present in the Theatre of Marcellus) was similarly moved.”

The dog is certainly very engaging, as the unanimous response of the spectators shows, but what is striking is that Plutarch makes a point of indicating the elderly Vespasian's presence amongst that delighted group. The same ruthless figure who showed no mercy towards Empona is here seen as a simple spectator being charmed by a performing animal and he thus seems human and down-to-earth as a result. Where one story required a tyrant, this one is enhanced by Vespasian's presence, as a way to demonstrate the power of a clever animal to efface rigid distinctions in the social hierarchy.

Conclusions

Despite the surprisingly sparse attention that Plutarch pays to the emperors in his surviving *corpus*, after considering what he does say, we can draw some broad conclusions both about his narrative techniques and his attitude to Roman emperors. First, the nature of Plutarch's attention towards emperors is such that relative chronology and dating of the incidents described rarely matters for our interpretation. Indeed most passages are chronologically unanchored, so that it is the internal dynamics of the narrative that count. This self-contained status of the extracts means that they have much in common

with the exemplary tradition of Valerius Maximus, or with Suetonius' organisation of his biographies by categories rather than by chronology. Second, Plutarch usually does not make the moral of a story involving an emperor explicit, but allows it to emerge from the narrative of the event itself: the one exception is the story about Vespasian's execution of Empona, but this only makes the other extracts more conspicuous for avoiding overt moralising. Indeed, in general many extracts are conspicuous for stressing imperial restraint, rather than abuse of power by the emperors. Third, Plutarch seems to expect that we will approach each extract about an emperor on its own terms: if it contradicts or sits peculiarly with another extract about the same emperor elsewhere, then that should not trouble us unduly. Fourth, the focus on the emperors in the *Lives* (as opposed to the *Moralia*) is largely restricted to their public activities, such as Domitian's naming of months (*Numa* 19) or Vespasian's restoration of the temple of Capitoline Jupiter (*Publicola* 15): the one exception is Claudius' gentle rebuke of Titus Vinus, but again this highlights the public and official nature of the remaining references to the emperors in the *Lives*. If we want suggestive personal details about the emperors from the private sphere, we have to turn to the *Moralia* for stories such as the curmudgeonly Tiberius saying that a man over sixty who asks a doctor for help is ridiculous (*Mor.* 136E, 794B).⁴¹ Finally, the eclipsing of emperors by vivid characters from the imperial margins, both geographically and socially, suggests that Plutarch may ultimately have found these lesser figures more "useful to think with" than the big-guns, perhaps because his audience naturally had their own preconceptions about particular emperors. Pliny the Younger observes in one of his letters how some very impressive deeds tend to get ignored, simply because of the lowly status of the protagonists (*Epistle* 6.24). Plutarch may have been struck by the same impulse to cast his net widely in search of novelty, rather than retelling the same old stories about the emperors. In any case, Plutarch, by writing the *Lives of the Caesars* sequence, may already have got the emperors out of his system at a relatively early stage of his literary career, even if the (relative) stability created by the Roman empire was no doubt something that he continued to appreciate.⁴²

41 This incident certainly could have been narrated with a political edge to it. Cf. Tacitus *Annals* 6.46.5, where Tiberius in A.D. 37 irresponsibly pretends to be healthy, while leaving the question of the succession in abeyance. Yet Plutarch anchors the incident in a different context; or two different contexts, once in the *De Tuenda Sanitate* (136E) and once in the *An Seni Respublica Gerenda Sit* (794B). In both cases, the story is used in a more timeless, apolitical way than in Tacitus. So too Suetonius *Tiberius* 68.4, where the anecdote (in a section on the emperor's health and physical appearance) is used to demonstrate the way in which Tiberius lived from the age of thirty onwards.

42 See Dillon, and Plutarch *Mor.* 317B–C.

Appendix
Appearances of Individual Emperors
in the *Lives* and the *Moralia*

1. **Augustus:** (a) *Lives* (i) “extraneous” appearances: *Numa* 19 (the month August named after Augustus), *Numa* 20.2 (closure of the doors of the temple of Janus after Augustus’ defeat of Antony), *Marcellus* 30.4 (Augustus says that Marcellus’ urn was brought to his son), *Romulus* 17 (Augustus’ saying about traitors) (ii) “necessary” appearances: *Brutus* 22 (Octavian’s actions after Caesar’s assassination), *Brutus* 27 (Octavian’s influence in Rome and the proscriptions), *Brutus* 38 (Octavian delayed by sickness), *Brutus* 41–2 (Octavian at Philippi), *Brutus / Dion synkrisis* 4 (Octavian helped by the power of Caesar’s name), *Cicero* 43.6–46 (relationship between Cicero and Octavian), *Cicero* 49 (Octavian’s treatment of Cicero’s family), *Cicero / Demosthenes synkrisis* 3 (Octavian needed Cicero), *Caesar* 67 (Octavian’s revenge for Caesar’s death), *Caesar* 69 (Octavian at Philippi), *Antony* 11 (Antony travels with Caesar while Octavian follows behind), *Antony* 16 (Octavian’s dealings with Antony after Caesar’s assassination), *Antony* 19–22 (Octavian, the second triumvirate, the proscriptions and the battles at Philippi), *Antony* 30 (Octavian and the Perusine war), *Antony* 35 (Octavia’s appeal to her brother and the conference at Tarentum), *Antony* 53–4 (problems between Octavia and Octavian), *Antony* 55, 58–60 (deteriorating relationship between Octavian and Antony), *Antony* 62, 65–8 (Octavian’s fleet and Actium), *Antony* 72–3, 74–5 (Antony and Cleopatra appeal to Octavian; his dealings with them), *Antony* 78 (Octavian’s reaction to Antony’s death), *Antony* 79–87 (Octavian and Cleopatra’s death); (b) *Moralia*: 68B (Augustus falls out with the historian Timagenes), 206F–208A (15 sayings of Augustus; two recur at 784D, 814D), 319E–320A (Augustus’ fortune), 322B (closure of the doors of the temple of Janus after Actium), 385F (the E of Livia), 508A–B (Fulvius’ deadly talkativeness), 726A (Augustus’ jester Gabba), 815D (brief mention of Thessalian uprising under Augustus).
2. **Tiberius:** (a) *Lives*: no appearance; (b) *Moralia*: 60C (a flatterer addresses Tiberius in the Senate), 96C (Tiberius’ treatment of Sejanus’ friends and family), 136E and 794B (Tiberius’ view that consulting a doctor is futile if you are over 60), 207E (Augustus’ view of Tiberius as a successor), 419D (Tiberius orders an investigation about Pan), 602E (Tiberius’ last years on Capri), 624C (Tiberius as father of Drusus), fragment 182 (a donkey predicts Tiberius’ principate), fragment 215k (Tiberius as uncle of Germanicus).
3. **Caligula:** (a) *Lives*: *Romulus* 20 (Romulus’ fig-tree withers during Caligula’s principate), *Antony* 87 (positive mention of Caligula’s principate), *Galba* 9 (rumour that Nymphidius is Caligula’s son), *Galba* 12 (imprisons Titus

Vinius); (b) *Moralia*: 170F (Cassius Chaerea as Caligula's attendant), fragment 211 (Caligula executes Julius Canus, a Stoic philosopher).

4. **Claudius**: (a) *Lives*: *Antony* 87 (brief mention of his principate), *Galba* 12 (plays a trick on Titus Vinius at supper), *Galba* 22 (Vitellius' father as Claudius' associate); (b) *Moralia*: no appearance.

5. **Nero**: (a) *Lives*: (i) "extraneous" appearances: *Antony* 87 (Nero as the matricide and descendant of Antony), *Flaminius* 12 (Nero's public address at Corinth pledging the freedom of the Greeks) (ii) "necessary" appearances: *Galba* 1–2 (consequences of Nero's death), *Galba* 3 (Nero send Galba to govern Spain), *Galba* 4 (revolt of Vindex against Nero), *Galba* 5 (Nero's reaction to Galba's revolt), *Galba* 7 (news of Nero's death), *Galba* 8 (murder of Aponius, one of Nero's informers), *Galba* 9 (Nero's boyfriend Sporus), *Galba* 16 (Galba's reversal of Nero's extravagant behaviour), *Galba* 17 (punishment of Nero's adherents), *Galba* 19 (Nero, Otho, Poppaea), *Galba* 23 (Piso's parents put to death by Nero; Ptolemaeus; prediction about Nero's death), *Galba* 29 (Galba the victim of his entourage, much like Nero), *Otho* 1 (restoration of Nero's exiles), *Otho* 2 (Otho hailed as Nero), *Otho* 5 (Otho appoints Flavius Sabinus as prefect of the city, perhaps as an honour to Nero), *Otho* 18 (Otho dies more nobly than Nero); (b) *Moralia*: 56F (flattery leads Nero to the stage), 60E (Petronius' reproach of Nero), 96C (Nero punishes friends and family of Rubellius Plautus), 385B (Nero visits Delphi), 461F (Seneca constructively warns Nero), 505C (condemned prisoner reveals the Pisonian conspiracy), 567F (Nero's soul appears to Thespius), 810A (Nero puts Thræsea to death), 815A (revolt at Pergamum under Nero).

6. **Galba**: (a) *Lives*: no appearances apart from in the *Galba* and the *Otho*; (b) *Moralia*: no appearances.

7. **Otho**: (a) *Lives*: no appearances apart from in the *Galba* and the *Otho*; (b) *Moralia*: no appearances.

8. **Vitellius**: (a) *Lives*: *Publicola* 15 (second temple of Capitoline Jupiter destroyed during the civil wars under Vitellius), minor appearances in *Galba* and *Otho*; (b) *Moralia*: no appearances.

9. **Vespasian**: (a) *Lives*: *Otho* 4 (friendly letters from Vespasian to Otho; statue of Caesar turns to the east under Otho, heralding Vespasian's challenge), *Publicola* 15 (third temple of Capitoline Jupiter restored by Vespasian); (b) *Moralia*: 770C–771C (Vespasian's execution of Empona), 973E–974A (a performing dog at a show attended by Vespasian).

10. **Titus**: (a) *Lives*: no appearances; (b) *Moralia*: 123D (Titus' death brought on by a bath), 124C–D (the fighter Regulus dies after being invited to bathe with Titus).

11. **Domitian**: (a) *Lives*: *Publicola* 15 (fourth temple of Capitoline Jupiter rebuilt extravagantly by Domitian; his lavish palace), *Numa* 19 (Domitian changes the names of September and October to Germanicus and Domitian,

but they revert to normal after his death), *Aemilius Paulus* 25 (premature rumours of defeat of Antonius under Domitian become true); (b) *Moralia*: 276E (Domitian allows a *flamen* to divorce), 522D–E (Rusticus put to death through Domitian’s envy), 815D (revolt on Rhodes under Domitian).

12. **Nerva**: (a) *Lives*: no appearances; (b) *Moralia*: no appearances.

13. **Trajan**: (a) *Lives*: no appearances; (b) *Moralia*: 172B (*Regum et Imperatorum Apophthegmata* addressed to Trajan, but possibly spurious), 949E (the ice crushes ships during a winter with Trajan on the Danube).

14. **Hadrian**: (a) *Lives*: no appearances; (b) *Moralia*: no appearances.

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Plutarque et la scène du banquet

Alain Billault

Parler du banquet dans un congrès consacré à l'unité de l'oeuvre de Plutarque peut sembler à la fois banal et paradoxal. En effet, la présence du banquet dans les *Moralia* et dans les *Vies* ne constitue pas une singularité de leur auteur. Ce dernier continue, en abordant ce thème, une longue tradition littéraire et philosophique qui ne s'achève pas avec lui¹. D'autre part, qu'y a-t-il de commun entre les épisodes symposiaques qui émaillent les *Vies*, les discours sur le banquet développés dans les *Propos de Table* et sa mise en scène dans le *Banquet des sept sages*? Le banquet semble plutôt placé, chez Plutarque, sous le signe de la diversité que sous celui de l'unité. Pourtant, il est possible de trouver dans cette diversité une unité. Le banquet- et par ce terme nous entendons aussi bien le repas que la beuverie qui lui fait suite- y apparaît, en effet, comme une scène de révélation. Dans les *Vies*, il est le lieu où se révèle la vérité historique et morale de certains personnages. Dans les *Propos de Table*, il est l'objet d'un discours qui construit un idéal de civilisation. Et il est la manifestation anhistorique de cet idéal dans l'utopie du *Banquet des sept sages*. Si la scène du banquet est un élément d'unité dans l'oeuvre de Plutarque, c'est qu'elle touche à l'unité de sa réflexion sur la manière de vivre des hommes.

Comme les *Vies* mettent en scène de grands personnages, il n'est pas surprenant que les épisodes symposiaques y soient fréquents. Les fastes de la table sont liés à la richesse et au prestige des généraux, des magistrats et des souverains. Ils ont aussi un rapport avec l'exercice du pouvoir souvent considéré sous l'angle de la violence. Comme l'a souligné avec raison F. B. Titchener, ils peuvent fournir l'occasion d'assassinats politiques: on élimine un rival qu'on avait invité et, le plus souvent, ce genre de complot réussit. C'est ainsi que Pyrrhus, prévenu par son échanson Myrtilos des manoeuvres de Gélon, partisan de Néoptolème, pour le faire assassiner se débarrasse de ce dernier (*Pyr.* 5.7–8). Archias et Philippe, dans la *Vie de Pélopidas* (11.1–4), Sertorius, dans celle qui lui est consacrée (*Sert.* 26.6–11), trouvent également une mort violente pendant un banquet. Dans la *Vie d'Artaxerxès* (19.3), Stateira meurt empoisonnée à la table de Parysatis. Parfois, la situation se complique: Démétrios, invité par Alexandre, fils de Cassandre, est averti qu'il court un danger. Comme il arrive avec une suite nombreuse, Alexandre renonce à passer à l'action, mais il continue à inviter Démétrios pour le tuer. Celui-ci lui

1 Martin 1931, 149–289; Frazier.

rend la pareille. Pendant un temps, les complots mutuels des deux hommes se neutralisent, jusqu'au moment où Alexandre commet une imprudence qui lui vaut de périr avec ses amis (*Demetr.* 36). Plutarque n'accompagne ces épisodes d'aucune condamnation. Il ne formule aucun commentaire moral. Dans les *Vies*, le banquet est une scène où se révèle l'un des visages du pouvoir, celui de la violence dont on use pour le conserver. Cette violence retient l'attention à cause des potentialités dramatiques du renversement qu'elle occasionne: l'hospitalité, dont les Grecs tenaient les lois pour sacrées au point de considérer leur respect comme la pierre de touche du comportement civilisé, devient le moyen d'un meurtre.

Mais le meurtre n'est pas toujours commis. Il se produit alors un double renversement, puisque celui qu'on avait préparé est empêché par un autre qu'on n'attendait pas. Lorsque Thésée arrive à Athènes, Médée, prise d'un pressentiment, persuade Egée de lui offrir un repas d'hospitalité pour l'empoisonner. Thésée, qui veut que son père le reconnaisse, ne révèle pas son identité, mais, alors qu'on va trancher les viandes, il tire son épée, celle qu'Egée avait laissée à Aithra afin que, s'il leur naissait un fils, ce dernier puisse l'utiliser comme un signe de reconnaissance (*Thest.* 3). Egée, stupéfait, renverse la coupe de poison qu'il destinait à Thésée et le reconnaît comme son fils (*Thest.* 12.2). C'est une scène théâtrale, même si Plutarque ne donne pas la parole aux personnages. Elle figurait dans plusieurs tragédies consacrées à cette histoire et que nous avons perdues.² Elle fait penser à l'*Ion* d'Euripide où le jeune prince Ion manque lui aussi d'être empoisonné pendant un banquet, non par son père, mais par sa mère, Créuse, qui ne l'a pas reconnu et le considère comme son rival auprès du roi Xouthos qui, lui, le prend pour son fils³. Comme dans la *Vie de Thésée*, le poison qu'on destinait au jeune homme est répandu par accident.⁴ En revanche, la scène de reconnaissance n'intervient pas tout de suite après le banquet et elle dure bien plus longtemps⁵. Plutarque, lui, a choisi la concision pour tirer un effet théâtral de la scène où Egée reconnaît son fils qu'il allait assassiner. La force dramatique de l'épisode vient de ce que l'irréparable n'y est pas accompli. Aristote appréciait les tragédies d'Euripide qui se terminaient ainsi.⁶ Il aurait sans doute aimé, chez Plutarque, le dénouement des épisodes symposiaques dont l'impact réside dans l'inaccomplissement de certains actes.

L'assassinat manqué de Thésée n'est pas, en effet, le seul cas où la scène du banquet retient l'attention par ce qui ne s'y déroule pas. Dans la *Vie d'Othon*

2 Voir Sourvinou-Inwood, 22–28.

3 *Ion* 976–1047, 1177–1228.

4 *Ion* 1185–1194.

5 *Ion* 1397–1617.

6 Voir *Poétique* 1453b26–1454a8.

(3.6–11), lorsque des soldats marchent sur son palais, l'empereur sauve, en les faisant sortir par une porte dérobée, les quatre-vingt sénateurs qui dînaient avec lui. Il surmonte ainsi sa peur et celle qu'il inspirait à ses hôtes. Il parvient ensuite à calmer les assaillants et à les faire partir. Il préserve donc l'ordre civilisé du banquet. Sextus Pompée fait de même dans la *Vie d'Antoine* (32.7–8), alors qu'Octave et Antoine se trouvent à bord de son navire pour un dîner. L'un de ses seconds, le pirate Ménas, lui propose de couper les amarres et de le rendre ainsi maître de l'empire. Mais il lui répond :

« Ménas, il aurait fallu le faire sans me prévenir. Maintenant, contenons-nous de notre situation présente, car le parjure n'est pas mon genre... »

Si Ménas avait créé sans l'en avertir une situation irréversible, Sextus Pompée en aurait tiré parti. Mais il refuse d'en prendre l'initiative, car il tient à respecter les serments qui l'obligent à garantir la sécurité de ses hôtes. Il aurait pu se comporter en aventurier opportuniste, mais, vu les circonstances, il tient à rester un homme loyal. En inspirant cette décision de ne pas agir, la scène du banquet fait apparaître une vérité qui ne concerne plus l'exercice du pouvoir, mais la nature complexe du caractère d'un homme. Elle devient un lieu de révélation morale.

Cette révélation peut être apportée aussi bien par ce que les personnages font que par ce qu'ils ne font pas. A chaque fois, les choix qu'ils opèrent montrent leur personnalité. Plutarque prête une grande attention à leur attitude à table. Dans les excès de boisson, il voit le signe d'un manque de maîtrise de soi. Il relève les beuveries d'Antoine comme la marque de l'influence néfaste que Curion exerce sur lui dans sa jeunesse, puis comme celle d'un comportement vulgaire qui lui vaut le dévouement de ses troupes et la détestation des honnêtes gens (*Ant.* 2.4, 4.4, 9.5–6). Mais ce comportement dénote aussi une grande agitation intérieure : lorsqu'il attend Cléopâtre entre Bérytos et Sidon et que la reine tarde à venir, Antoine se met à boire pour tromper son angoisse, mais elle est si profonde qu'il ne parvient pas à tenir en place même pendant la beuverie (*Ant.* 51.3). Démétrios, avec qui Plutarque l'associe comme un autre exemple négatif (*Demetr.* 1), sombre dans la boisson pendant sa captivité en Syrie et finit par en mourir. Plutarque se demande s'il avait choisi ce mode de vie pour oublier sa situation ou parce qu'il avait reconnu qu'il le désirait depuis toujours (*Demetr.* 52). Il note que Sylla aimait boire en compagnie des gens de théâtre et adopter alors leur comportement relâché (*Sul.* 2.4–6). Il considère ce goût comme l'origine de ses penchants morbides et de sa passion pour le plaisir dont il relate un trait saisissant : après la mort de sa femme, Sylla se met à boire et à banqueter pour se consoler (*Sul.* 35.4). C'est que les excès de table sont liés à la mort et à la violence : dans la *Vie de Pyrrhus* (5.4–14), Gélon, qui veut retourner contre Pyrrhus son échanson Myrtilos, l'invite à dîner, s'enivre et le viole. Dans la *Vie d'Alexandre*

(9), les épisodes symposiaques violents abondent: pendant les noces de Cléopâtre et de Philippe, ce dernier se querelle avec Alexandre qui avait répondu à une provocation d'Attale en lui lançant sa coupe. Le roi dégaine son épée contre son fils, mais l'ivresse et la colère le font s'affaler. Plutarque présente cette altercation comme une illustration des désordres causés à la cour par les amours de Philippe. Plus tard, Alexandre, ivre, incendie le palais de Xerxès sur les instances de la courtisane Thaïs, mais il ne tarde pas à s'en repentir et fait éteindre le feu (*Alex.* 38). Il se repent aussi d'avoir tué en état d'ivresse Cleitos, au terme d'une scène théâtrale que Plutarque relate en détail, retraçant le développement inéluctable d'une querelle sous l'empire de la colère et de la boisson (*Alex.* 50–52). Le biographe a beau soutenir, par ailleurs, qu'Alexandre était moins porté sur le vin qu'on ne l'a cru et qu'il restait longtemps à table pour le plaisir de la conversation (*Alex.* 23), ces épisodes semblent bien prouver le contraire. Sur la scène du banquet se révèle, sous l'influence de la boisson, le tempérament sombre et violent du conquérant.⁷ Ses moments d'ivresse sont des moments de vérité où apparaît chez lui un penchant pour l'excès. Il donne libre cours à ce penchant lorsqu'il traverse la Carmanie, conduisant un cortège bacchique et passant les jours et les nuits à boire (*Alex.* 30). Plus tard, il organise à sa table un concours pour couronner le plus gros buveur. La compétition se termine par la mort de quarante-deux soldats parmi lesquels figure le vainqueur (*Alex.* 70). Enfin, c'est après s'être enivré pendant toute une nuit qu'Alexandre est saisi par la fièvre qui va l'emporter (*Alex.* 75). Plutarque ne dissimule donc pas, chez le roi, une tendance intermittente à l'ivrognerie, même s'il nie qu'elle soit un de ses traits distinctifs. Pour le lecteur moderne, elle peut sembler un élément du caractère surdimensionné du Macédonien, mais Plutarque ne la présente jamais ainsi. A ses yeux, qu'il s'agisse d'Alexandre ou d'un autre personnage, Vitellius par exemple (*Othon* 9.6), l'excès de boisson est un vice et la sobriété une vertu.

Aussi oppose-t-il volontiers l'une à l'autre. Dans la *Vie de Dion* (7 et 13) il relève le goût de Denys l'Ancien pour les beuveries, puis note comme un progrès moral la retenue qui règne lors des banquets donnés par Denys le Jeune après l'arrivée de Platon à sa cour. D'autre part, il rapporte que Phocion blâma la somptuosité d'un banquet donné par son fils Phocos, car il y voyait la preuve que ce dernier ne partageait pas les mêmes valeurs que lui. Parfois, de tels contrastes contiennent des enseignements plus subtils: Plutarque dépeint Alcibiade comme un noceur insolent (*Alc.* 4.5, 16.1), mais, à peine arrivé à Sparte, l'Athénien adopte le mode de vie laconien, il se nourrit de pain bis et de brouet noir, si bien qu'on se demande s'il a jamais eu un cuisinier. Plutarque ne considère pas ce changement comme un progrès moral, mais comme le signe d'une extraordinaire capacité d'adaptation chez son personnage (*Alc.* 23).

7 Whitmarsh, 182–83, 187.

L'usage des plaisirs de la table peut donc recevoir bien des interprétations. Plutarque ne lui applique pas toujours le même schéma : Caton passe ses nuits à boire pour pouvoir s'entretenir de grands sujets avec des philosophes, car il consacre toutes ses journées aux affaires publiques (*Cat. Mi.* 6.2–4). Cette habitude est donc à mettre à son actif. Elle dénote sa fidélité à ses principes et sa conscience de ses devoirs. De même, Cléomène a un régime frugal, mais veille à ce qu'on serve des repas améliorés à ses hôtes officiels (*Cleom.* 13.4–9). Plutarque n'a donc pas une vision simpliste de la scène du banquet dans les *Vies*. Il observe avec discernement les faits qui s'y déroulent et expose d'une manière nuancée les raisons diverses qui les inspirent. On a souligné avec raison l'attention qu'il porte, en tant que biographe, à la façon dont les événements se déroulent.⁸ La scène du banquet en fournit un bon exemple, mais Plutarque se montre également attentif aux faits eux-mêmes, comme peut l'être un historien. Car ces faits appartiennent à l'histoire des personnages dont il raconte la vie. Il ne les a pas choisis et il ne peut les ignorer. Il doit les interpréter pour formuler la vérité qu'ils révèlent. En revanche, dans les *Propos de table*, il ne subit pas de la même manière la contrainte des faits. Il est plus libre d'énoncer à sa guise la vérité du banquet. Elle ne résulte plus d'un récit qu'il développe et interprète, mais de discours qu'il rapporte.

Les *Propos de table* se présentent, en effet, comme une rhapsodie de paroles que des personnages réels ont prononcées pendant des banquets en présence de Plutarque. Celui-ci les a sélectionnées et rassemblées, à la demande de son ami Sosius Sénécion, parce qu'elles le méritaient, comme il l'écrit dans le prologue du livre I (612E). Il ne précise pas selon quels critères il a opéré cette sélection. Le résultat frappe d'abord par sa diversité, celle des questions abordées, mais aussi celle des circonstances où on les a traitées et des manières d'en faire la relation.⁹ Cependant cette diversité n'empêche pas l'unité de l'oeuvre. Elle naît de la cohérence du discours que Plutarque, en rapportant les paroles des autres et parfois les siennes, tient sur le banquet. On peut la saisir à partir de la distinction qu'il établit, au livre II (629D), entre deux types de propos échangés par les convives : les *συμπотικά*, les « questions de table » qui concernent tous les aspects du banquet, et les *συμποσιακά*, les « propos de table », qui comprennent toutes les conversations qui s'y déroulent. La seconde catégorie a donné son nom au recueil. Elle inclut la première, mais on ne doit pas en conclure que celle-ci représente une variété de propos parmi beaucoup d'autres. Elle constitue, au contraire, une composante majeure des « propos de table ». Elle apparaît dans tous les livres à l'exception du livre IX. Sur les quatre-vingt quinze problèmes abordés dans l'ensemble de l'ouvrage, trente-

8 Titchener, 499.

9 Sirinelli, 381–382.

deux peuvent être rattachés à elle.¹⁰ En relèvent aussi, d'autre part, les prologues des livres III à VIII où Plutarque entretient Sosius Sénécion du rapport entre la conversation et le vin, de l'amitié qui est le but du banquet, des plaisirs qu'on y goûte et qui ne sont pas seulement physiques, de l'importance de la conversation à table et du manque de culture qui peut la gâcher.¹¹ Dans les *Propos de Table*, il y a donc deux registres qui alternent: la relation des propos tenus pendant des banquets et le discours sur le banquet, sur sa nature, sur ses modalités, sur ses fins. On apprend à la fois ce qui s'est dit un jour à table dans un lieu particulier et ce qui doit se dire et se faire dans un banquet, quel qu'il soit et où qu'il se tienne. Ce discours prescriptif a fort bien pu être tenu par certains convives mais, si l'on admet que l'oeuvre résulte d'une composition littéraire fondée sur de vrais souvenirs,¹² on peut considérer que sa réapparition régulière relève d'une volonté délibérée de Plutarque. Il a souhaité accompagner l'actualité momentanée des banquets qu'il relate de l'actualité permanente d'une parole législatrice qui vise le banquet dans l'absolu. Cette rhétorique normative se trouve, dès l'origine, liée à l'essence du banquet comme microcosme soumis à des lois particulières dont le respect contribue à définir l'identité de la communauté des convives. En y recourant à son tour, Plutarque n'innove donc pas. Il continue une tradition illustrée, entre autres, dans la poésie archaïque par Xénophane de Colophon (fr. 1 West) et par le *Corpus Theognideum*¹³ et, dans la prose classique, par le *Banquet* de Xénophon.¹⁴ Mais l'ampleur qu'il donne, dans les *Propos de table*, à ce discours réglementaire symposiaque, ou plutôt méta-symposiaque, pour reprendre une expression de L. Rossi,¹⁵ transforme la scène du banquet.

Elle devient, en effet, le lieu d'un éternel commencement. Non celui du banquet qui se déroule, mais celui du banquet tel qu'il doit se dérouler. Le livre I fournit une bonne illustration de cette métamorphose. Le premier problème concerne l'acceptation ou le refus des discours philosophiques pendant un banquet. Il a donné lieu, pendant un banquet qui se tenait à Athènes, à une discussion entre Ariston, Craton, Sosius Sénécion et Plutarque lui-même. Celui-ci se prononce en faveur d'une présence bien tempérée des discours philosophiques à table d'où il exclut, cependant, les questions de logique à cause de leur aridité (*Quaest. Conv.* 614B–615B). Il conclut sur les

10 La répartition s'établit ainsi: Livre I: problèmes 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7.– Livre II: problèmes 1, 2, 10. – Livre III: problèmes 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. – Livre IV: problèmes 1 et 3. – Livre V: problèmes 5 et 6. – Livre VI: problèmes 1, 2, 3, 7. – Livre VII: problèmes 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. – Livre VIII: problème 6.

11 644F–645C. 660A–B. 672A–673B. 686B–D. 697C–E. 716D–717A.

12 Teodorsson, 12–15.

13 Pordomingo Pardo, 382.

14 Hobden, 121–137.

15 Citée par Murray.

origines des σκόλια, ces chansons reprises à tour de rôle par les convives (615B–C). Mais rien n'indique qu'après cette discussion, les hôtes du banquet athénien se soient lancés dans un débat philosophique ou aient commencé à chanter. En fait, ce banquet particulier où se déroule le débat disparaît, éclipsé par un autre banquet, un banquet abstrait au sujet duquel on s'interroge sur la présence des discussions philosophiques. On observe un processus d'abstraction analogue dans le second problème qui concerne la répartition des convives: doit-elle être opérée par l'hôte selon un plan de table préétabli, ou faut-il laisser chacun libre de se placer où il veut? La question se pose pendant un banquet où Timon, le frère de Plutarque, a laissé ses invités choisir leur place. L'un d'eux, arrivé un peu plus tard, repart en déclarant n'avoir pas trouvé de place digne de lui (615C–E). Le père de Plutarque soutient alors qu'un plan de table est nécessaire (615E–616B). Timon lui réplique en justifiant son choix (616C–F). Plutarque, pris pour arbitre, déclare que chacun peut choisir sa place quand on est entre jeunes gens, entre parents ou entre amis, mais que si l'on a pour hôtes des étrangers, des magistrats ou des gens âgés, on doit les placer selon un plan préétabli et en respectant certaines conventions (616F–617E). Cependant, il n'a pas le dernier mot. En effet, Lamprias prend la parole et soutient qu'il faut placer les convives selon les critères de l'harmonie et du plaisir en donnant à chacun pour voisin celui qui lui est complémentaire. Il accepte ensuite de réorganiser le plan de table selon ces principes (617E–618C). Son discours normatif semble donc devoir se traduire aussitôt dans les faits, mais il n'en sera rien, car Lamprias s'en tient à des catégories. Il refuse d'assembler qui se ressemble et préconise de placer qui aime parler près de qui aime apprendre, un homme aimable près d'un atrabilaire, un jeune homme qui prend plaisir à écouter près d'un vieillard bavard, l'ironiste près du fanfaron, le silencieux près du colérique et le pauvre près du riche (618D–E). Il poursuit un moment sur le même registre, mais il ne nomme aucun convive, à l'exception de Sosiclès et de Modestos dont il critique avec humour l'association, car ces deux amateurs de discours risquent à tout moment d'entamer une controverse enflammée (618F). Et rien n'indique qu'un seul convive ait changé de place pour se conformer à ses instructions. Celles-ci, en dépit de leur précision, restent donc au stade de l'abstraction, alors même que tous les convives semblent les approuver. De même, le troisième problème traite des qualités et des devoirs du symposiarque, le «roi du banquet», fonction que Plutarque vient d'accepter. Mais ce sont Craton et Théon qui traitent le sujet, et Plutarque ne raconte pas comment il s'est acquitté de son rôle ni dans quelle mesure il a suivi leurs indications. Le discours sur le banquet en soi supplante donc une fois de plus le récit du banquet réel où il est tenu. Cette éclipse de la réalité présente au profit d'une réalité abstraite est constante dans les *Propos de Table* chaque fois qu'y

sont rapportés des « discours de table », συμποτικά, où sont énoncées des vérités sur le banquet.

Ces vérités sont de plusieurs ordres. Certaines, comme la consommation de vin d'Alexandre ou la coutume perse et grecque de délibérer en buvant (*Quaest. Conv.* 1.6, VII. 9 et 10), relèvent de la connaissance historique. Mais la plupart concernent le banquet, les phénomènes qu'on y observe, la manière de l'organiser et de s'y comporter. Des causes qui donnent plus d'appétit en automne à l'usage des couronnes de fleurs, de l'après-banquet comme moment idéal pour avoir des relations sexuelles au dosage de l'eau et du vin dans le cratère, de la nourriture la plus facile à digérer au nombre des convives, des « ombres », ces personnes qu'on n'a pas invitées, mais que certains invités emmènent avec eux aux hôtes retardataires en passant par les divertissements qu'on aime entendre en buvant, c'est un véritable art de la table qui se met en place. Plutarque insiste en particulier sur ses aspects sociaux. Il établit peu à peu les règles d'une véritable homilétique symposiaque, d'un art de se parler et de vivre ensemble au banquet.¹⁶ Cet art se fonde, pour l'essentiel, sur un équilibre entre le plaisir du vin et celui de la conversation. C'est un art d'harmonie et de modération. Dans l'insistance de Plutarque sur cet idéal, P. Stadter voit une critique indirecte des excès et des dérèglements de toute sorte dont les banquets romains étaient souvent le théâtre, et il a sans doute raison. Mais cette insistance a pour effet immédiat l'éclipse de ce qui est au profit de ce qui doit être. Dans les *Propos de table*, la scène du banquet devient ainsi le lieu de l'avènement toujours recommencé de l'archétype du banquet. C'est un avènement verbal qui se répète à chaque fois qu'est abordée une « question de table », mais qui ne se réalise pas dans les faits. Plutarque ne l'a réalisé qu'une fois, dans le *Banquet des sept sages*.

Le *Banquet des sept sages* apparaît, en effet, comme un banquet-modèle. Il en a d'abord le caractère abstrait, dû aux libertés que Plutarque prend avec l'histoire. Ce dernier multiplie, en effet, les anachronismes : Périandre, tyran de Corinthe jusqu'en 585 av. J. C., ne peut organiser un banquet contemporain du règne d'Amasis qui ne monta sur le trône d'Égypte qu'en 570. Pendant ce banquet, Anacharsis ne peut pas non plus évoquer la célèbre visite de Solon à Crésus qui ne régna sur la Lydie qu'à partir de 560. On en a conclu que la chronologie était un des points faibles de Plutarque.¹⁷ Mais c'est là un jugement trop rapide. Dans la *Vie de Solon* (27.1),¹⁸ Plutarque exprime une indifférence ironique à l'égard de ceux qui se réfèrent à la chronologie pour soutenir que Crésus et Solon n'ont pas pu se rencontrer. Il relève leurs

16 Sirinelli, 375–379.

17 Aalders, 29.

18 Voir Mossmann, 121–122.

contradictions et souligne la richesse psychologique et morale qui justifie à ses yeux le récit de l'épisode. Dans la relation des faits, il donne donc au sens la priorité sur le calendrier. Le *Banquet des sept sages* illustre la même hiérarchie. Plutarque néglige la chronologie. Elle lui importe moins que la portée philosophique de l'événement qu'il relate. Il suit ainsi l'exemple de Platon, qui multiplie les anachronismes dans ses dialogues. Par exemple, dans le *Ménexène* (245B–E), Socrate, mort en 399, évoque la paix d'Antalkidas conclue en 387. Dans le *Protagoras* (327D), les fils de Périclès, qui moururent de la peste en 429, assistent à la discussion où Protagoras se réfère à une comédie de Phérécrate, *Les sauvages*, qui date de 420. Dans le *Banquet* (182D), Pausanias mentionne la domination des Barbares sur l'Ionie, réalité historique du IV^e siècle av. J. C., et Aristophane évoque la dispersion des habitants de Mantinée (193A) que les Lacédémoniens opérèrent après avoir détruit la ville en 385, alors que le dialogue est censé se dérouler après la victoire d'Agathon au concours des Lénéennes en 416. Plutarque, composant son propre *Banquet*, imite la désinvolture de Platon à l'égard de la chronologie en plaçant, comme lui, les discussions qu'il rapporte dans une situation d'apesanteur temporelle propice à la souveraineté absolue de la parole. De même, il choisit d'estomper la figure historique de ses personnages.

Bon nombre d'entre eux ont, en effet, joué un rôle politique dans leur cité. Chilon fut éphore à Sparte,¹⁹ Pittacos eut les pleins pouvoirs à Mytilène²⁰ et Cléoboulos fut tyran à Lindos,²¹ comme Périandre à Corinthe.²² Quant à Solon, Chilon déclare «*qu'il exerce le pouvoir le plus important et le plus total, puisqu'il a établi des lois pour les Athéniens*» (*Sept. sap. conv.* 151E–F), formule aussi vague que les paroles du législateur quand il affirme que les Athéniens n'obéissent qu'à la loi (152D). En fait, Plutarque ne donne dans le dialogue aucune précision sur l'activité politique de Solon. Est-ce parce qu'il a choisi de la relater en racontant plus tard sa vie? Cette hypothèse, qu'elle soit ou non pertinente, ne saurait faire oublier son silence paradoxal sur ce qui a fait d'abord la célébrité de son personnage. Il ne montre en lui que le sage, comme si l'homme politique était en vacances. La même évanescence de l'exercice du pouvoir accompagne la présence de Chilon, de Pittacos, de Cléoboulos et surtout de Périandre. Ce dernier est mis en scène pendant la première période de son pouvoir, ce qui permet à Thalès de faire son éloge (147C). Il n'est pas encore l'autocrate dont Hérodote (3.48–53) relate les exactions et qui tentera, comme Cléoboulos, de se faire admettre de force parmi les sept sages, tentative que Plutarque dénonce dans le dialogue *Sur l'E de Delphes* (385E–F). Il est

19 Diogène Laërce I, 68–73

20 Diogène Laërce I, 74–81.

21 Diogène Laërce I, 89–93.

22 Diogène Laërce I, 94–100.

l'hôte des sept sages dont il ne fait pas partie, mais avec qui il parle sur un pied d'égalité, sans jamais se comporter en tyran pendant le banquet, en particulier lorsque la conversation prend un tour politique.

Les sages parlent, en effet, de politique, mais cette politique est étrangère à leur actualité. Dans la Grèce archaïque, la tyrannie était le régime politique prédominant, or ils la critiquent à plusieurs reprises en faisant l'éloge de la démocratie.²³ C'est là un thème important dans le débat politique grec au IV^e siècle, mais pas au temps où le banquet est censé se dérouler.²⁴ Plutarque commet donc un nouvel anachronisme qui constitue un défi délibéré à la vraisemblance, défi encore accru par l'absence de réaction des deux tyrans, Périandre et Cléoboulos, aux propos qu'ils entendent. La scène du banquet se voit ainsi privée de tout enracinement historique réel. Elle devient le lieu d'une utopie symposiaque.

Dans cette utopie, la parole tient la place principale. Elle est inhérente au genre du banquet²⁵ comme au métier de sage tel que les Sept le pratiquent.²⁶ A la table de Périandre, les sages jouent leur rôle de sages. Ils parlent, ils débattent, ils échangent des idées sur les sujets les plus divers. Le banquet y figure en bonne place: Thalès en parle avant même d'arriver chez Périandre (147D–148B). Il le définit comme le lieu d'une conversation à la fois sérieuse et plaisante, d'où l'importance du choix des invités, car il suffit d'un grossier personnage pour gâcher toute la réunion. Ce premier discours méta-symposiaque définit un idéal que le banquet chez Périandre va illustrer. Alexidemos, qui aurait pu être le trouble-fête redouté par Thalès, s'en va. Il considère comme indigne de lui la place qu'on lui destine et rejette les propos de Thalès qui l'invitait à adopter un comportement de bonne compagnie (148E–149B). C'est celui qu'auront tous les convives après son départ.

Pendant le repas, dont Dioclès juge la simplicité adaptée à la qualité des hôtes (150B–D), la conversation roule sur les flûtes, sur une énigme envoyée par Amasis à Bias, sur le gouvernement des Etats, sur d'autres questions posées par Amasis, sur le concours poétique aux funérailles d'Amphidamas, avant de revenir au gouvernement des Etats, puis à celui de la maison (5–12=150D–155E). Réflexions et formules se succèdent, sans faire l'objet d'un examen approfondi. Leur juxtaposition est analogue à celle qu'on trouve chez Diogène Laërce lorsqu'il compile les pensées attribuées aux Sept Sages.²⁷ La froideur de leur présentation s'accorde à l'intérêt limité de leur contenu. Mais celui-ci intéresse moins Plutarque que les modalités de leur échange. Comme dans les

23 147B–C, 152A–B, 154C–F.

24 Aalders, 31–32, 35.

25 Romeri, 64–67, 109–189.

26 Martin 1998, 117–119.

27 I, 35–37, 58–60, 68–71, 76–78, 86–88, 91–93, 97–98, 103–105.

Propos de table,²⁸ la vérité qui lui importe est celle du lien social, du comportement civilisé que manifeste la conversation symposiaque.

Celle-ci atteint, dans la première partie du dialogue, un degré de généralité élémentaire qui favorise le rayonnement de sa nature. Elle apparaît comme un mode de communication propice au plaisir d'être ensemble indépendamment de la matière philosophique dont elle est le vecteur. Cette matière philosophique n'est d'ailleurs guère plus originale dans la seconde partie où la conversation revient sur la sobriété et culmine avec le discours de Solon. Celui-ci soutient, contre le médecin Cléodoros, que la nourriture, parce qu'elle est destinée au corps, asservit l'âme et que celle-ci n'est libérée qu'une fois disparu le besoin de nourriture.²⁹ Et il oppose à la phase alimentaire du banquet sa phase véritablement symposiaque où le vin accompagne la conversation :

« C'est ainsi que nous aussi, tout à l'heure, nous ne nous voyions pas et nous ne nous entendions pas les uns les autres, mais chacun, la tête penchée, était esclave de son besoin de nourriture : maintenant, au contraire, que les tables sont enlevées, nous sommes délivrés, tu vois, et, parés de couronnes, nous nous consacrons à la conversation, nous sommes en compagnie les uns des autres et nous avons du loisir, parce que nous sommes parvenus à n'avoir plus besoin de nourriture. N'est-il donc pas vrai que, si l'état où nous sommes à présent se prolonge sans interruption pendant toute notre vie, nous aurons toujours le loisir de rester en compagnie le uns des autres, sans craindre la pauvreté et sans connaître la richesse ? » (159D–E).

La description des convives trop occupés à manger pour se parler fait penser à un célèbre passage de la *République* (586A) relatif aux hommes qui ignorent la sagesse et la vertu. La dualité de l'âme et du corps est un thème essentiel du *Phédon*. Mais l'arrière-plan platonicien du discours de Solon importe moins que son orientation encomiastique et utopique. Solon célèbre la perfection du moment présent où se réalise l'idéal du banquet comme manière d'être ensemble. Et il rêve qu'une telle perfection perdure dans son autarcie et que rien ne vienne l'interrompre. Cette utopie de la permanence symposiaque, Plutarque l'illustre, pour un temps, lorsqu'il raconte, après Hérodote (1.23–24), le sauvetage d'Arion par des dauphins (160D–162B).

Gorgos vient prévenir Périandre de ce sauvetage qu'il raconte ensuite aux convives. Périandre, exerçant son pouvoir pendant un court instant, donne sur-le-champ les ordres nécessaires pour que les coupables soient confondus. Mais cette dramatisation ne dure guère. Plutarque escamote le dénouement de l'histoire. Il ne raconte pas la scène où Arion apparaît devant les marins qui le croyaient mort. En revanche, l'aventure d'Arion devient aussitôt la source de deux autres histoires de dauphins contées par Solon et par Pittacos et qui

28 Sirinelli, 382–383.

29 Babut, 348–351.

illustrent, comme elle, la vigilance de la providence divine (162C–163D). La conversation continue donc. Sur la scène du banquet, le monde extérieur n'a fait qu'une brève irruption aussitôt transmuée en paroles. Dans l'utopie symposiaque du *Banquet des sept sages*, rien ne doit déranger le tableau d'une manière d'être et de vivre ensemble parfaite.

Ce lien entre banquet et manière d'être fait l'unité des représentations de la scène symposiaque chez Plutarque. Dans les *Vies*, celle-ci révèle le caractère de certains personnages. Dans les *Propos de table*, elle est le lieu où s'élaborent les modalités d'un comportement civilisé dont le *Banquet des sept sages* donne une image idéalisée. Plutarque conçoit donc la scène du banquet comme un théâtre de la vérité des êtres, celle qui est et celle qui doit être. Elle permet au moraliste d'exercer sa lucidité et au philosophe de développer ses idées et de mettre en scène ses idéaux. Elle est l'endroit où l'auteur des *Vies* et celui des *Moralia* se retrouvent pour ne faire plus qu'un.

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El trofeo de Maratón: Adaptación y desarrollo de un tópico ético en Plutarco

Aurelio Pérez Jiménez

1

La imagen de la continua vigilia de Temístocles, incapaz de conciliar el sueño por los trofeos de Milcíades con motivo de la victoria en Maratón ejerció una gran atracción simbólica sobre Plutarco. Además de la *Vida de Temístocles*, donde ocupa su lugar natural en 3.4–3.5 y donde encontramos la anécdota en su versión más evolucionada, la imagen sirve para explicar la importancia de la imitación que genera en el joven la contemplación y admiración de la virtud, como en el caso de Teseo, que experimentó ante las hazañas de Heracles lo mismo que Temístocles; con funciones distintas, aparece otras cuatro veces más en distintos lugares de *Moralia*.

Las diferencias formales y contextuales con que se encuentra la anécdota en todos estos pasajes nos permitirán a nosotros explicar la génesis y desarrollo de este tema, sin duda tomado por Plutarco de la tradición anterior, pero que adapta, enriqueciendo sus matices, a las exigencias puntuales de su pensamiento ético-político y a los intereses educativos y/o biográficos a que nos tiene acostumbrados¹.

Fuera del Queronense, la anécdota de Temístocles y el trofeo de Milcíades se encuentra en Cicerón y en Valerio Máximo (y luego en Libanio y Sincelo)²;

1 La relación entre Temístocles y Milcíades a propósito del trofeo de Maratón es posible que se inserte en la polémica entre los partidarios de aquél y del hijo de éste, Cimón, seguramente responsable de la erección del trofeo hacia el 460 a.C., bien por primera vez o, más probablemente, para dar un carácter más permanente a un antiguo trofeo perecedero. A esa fecha pertenecen, en efecto, restos de un trofeo (así lo indica la inscripción) reutilizados en una torre medieval de Maratón, que han sido identificados con el trofeo de Milcíades (sobre el tema, véase recientemente el artículo de Beschi, pp. 51–94, en particular, pp. 51–67. La investigación arqueológica ha demostrado, pues, que las referencias al trofeo de Maratón (Ar., *Eq.* 1334, *Vesp.* 711, *Lys.* 285, Critias, frg. B 2.15, D.–K., p. 377, Plat., *Menex.* 240d, 245a, Paus., I 32) responden a una realidad relativamente próxima a la fecha de la batalla, aunque la anécdota haya tomado forma definitiva en época peripatética, partiendo de materiales literarios anteriores, ligados a la propaganda política de los años posteriores a la batalla.

2 Véanse los testimonios en Bauer-Frost, pp. 13–14, n. 4.

pero, a juzgar por el contexto ciceroniano, seguramente se recurría a ella ya en círculos peripatéticos, para ilustrar las ventajas de la φιλοτιμία. En efecto, Cicerón recoge la anécdota en *Tusculanas*³, discutiendo la doctrina aristotélica de la *metriopathía* y, en concreto, la opinión de los peripatéticos de que todo cuanto suscita deseo o avidez nos lo ha dado la naturaleza para nuestro bien: *nihil enim quemquam nisi quod lubeat praeclare facere posse* (*Tusc.* 4.19,44). En este pasaje a Cicerón sólo le interesa el núcleo de la anécdota en sí (igual que la noticia sobre las noches de vigilia de Demóstenes⁴), y no da detalles sobre sus antecedentes o sus consecuencias: *noctu ambulabat in publico Themistocles, quod somnum capere non posset quaerentibusque respondebat Miltiadis tropaeis se e somno suscitari*.

En su arquitectura encontramos, por tanto, escasos datos, aunque algunos significativos para nuestro análisis de la anécdota en Plutarco:

1) Se describe la conducta pública de Temístocles en tal ocasión y su causa real: deambulaba en público durante la noche (*noctu ambulabat in publico*), porque no podía dormir (*quod somnum capere non posset*).

2) La curiosidad por ese comportamiento de la gente (sin cualificar los motivos de esa curiosidad): *quaerentibus*.

3) Y la explicación (como respuesta) del propio Temístocles de su comportamiento: Que los trofeos de Milcíades no lo dejaban dormir (*respondebat Miltiadis tropaeis se e somno suscitari*).

La versión de Valero Máximo, VIII 14 ext.1, incluye más elementos, aunque la función de la anécdota es la misma (y, por tanto, tal vez también su procedencia): ilustrar la ambición de gloria (*De cupiditate gloriae*). En este caso tenemos los siguientes elementos:

1) Se dan razones éticas para la conducta de Temístocles: *stimulis virtutum agitatam*.

2) Como en Cicerón se describe su comportamiento público: *ob id noctes inquietas exigentem*.

3) Se menciona la reacción de la gente (también sin cualificar): *quaerentibus*.

4) La curiosidad de los ciudadanos es simplemente esa conducta pública de Temístocles: *quid ita eo tempore in publico versaretur*.

5) La respuesta de Temístocles es la misma que en Cicerón: *quia me tropaea Miltiadis de somno excitant*.

3 Podlecki, p. 117, sugiere que la presencia de esta y otras anécdotas sobre Temístocles, en Cicerón y Plutarco, pueda deberse a un 'common store of similar tales, which, whenever they began to be circulated, seem to have been added to in everincreasing numbers from the first century B.C.'. Cf. p. 126.

4 *Cui non sunt audita Demosthenis uigiliae? qui dolere se aiebat, si quando opificum antelucana uictus esset industria*.

- 6) Por último, hay una proyección histórica de la anécdota, expresamente relacionada con la actuación pública posterior de Temístocles, al explicarse las batallas de Artemision y Salamina gracias al afán de gloria despertado en él por Maratón.

2

Veamos ahora los ejemplos de Plutarco, tal como aparecen en *Moralia*. El Queronense recoge esa tradición (que hemos presumido como peripatética), aunque introduce importantes modificaciones contextuales y, en consecuencia, modifica sustancialmente a veces la función literaria de la anécdota en cada uno de los tratados.

Nuestro primer ejemplo será el *De profectibus in uirtute*⁵. La anécdota aparece en un contexto en el que se establece como rasgo particular del progreso hacia la virtud que nuestros juicios se transformen en acciones y que las palabras se conviertan en hechos. Esto se ilustra con el hecho de que deseamos imitar lo que es digno de elogio (ὁ πρὸς τὰ ἐπαινούμενα ζῆλος) y rechazamos lo censurable. Es ahora cuando Plutarco recurre como ejemplo a la anécdota del trofeo de Maratón, que contiene estos elementos:

- 1) Oposición entre los atenienses, que sólo elogiaban las virtudes de Milcíades (ἐπεὶ πάντας μὲν Ἀθηναίους εἰκὸς ἦν ἐπαινεῖν τὴν Μιλτιάδου τόλμαν καὶ ἀνδρείαν), y Temístocles, que daba un paso más, al sentir celo por ellas y desear imitarlas (οὐκ ἐπαινῶν μόνον οὐδὲ θαυμάζων ἀλλὰ καὶ ζηλῶν καὶ μιμούμενος εὐθὺς ἦν καταφανής).
- 2) La anécdota tiene como función ilustrar precisamente el ζῆλος y μίμησις de Temístocles, por lo que quedan fuera otros detalles de las fuentes latinas (por ejemplo, las preguntas de los demás) y se establece una relación inmediata entre las palabras del personaje (en Cicerón y Valerio simple respuesta a esas preguntas) y esa función ya señalada en el punto anterior: Θεμιστοκλῆς δ'εἰπὼν ὡς οὐκ ἔα καθεύδειν αὐτὸν ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν ὕπνων ἀνίστησι τὸ Μιλτιάδου τρόπαιον, οὐκ ἐπαινῶν μόνον οὐδὲ θαυμάζων ἀλλὰ καὶ ζηλῶν καὶ μιμούμενος εὐθὺς ἦν καταφανής). En cuanto a los elementos formales y literarios de la anécdota, debemos subrayar:

5 Por desgracia el *terminus ante quem* que tenemos para este tratado (la muerte de Socio Seneción, a quien está dedicado el tratado) deja un margen temporal demasiado amplio (el *terminus post quem* es el 85), como para establecer una cronología relativa con los otros testimonios; hay razones, sin embargo, que apuntan a una prioridad de este texto sobre los demás que incluyen la anécdota del trofeo de Milcíades, como señalamos más adelante.

a) La relevancia estilística que se da a la falta de sueño como símbolo del afán del joven por realizar grandes acciones y que se traduce en un pleonismo semántico (οὐκ ἔῤ καθεύδειν = ἐκ τῶν ὕπνων ἀνίστησι) cuyo objeto es enfatizar los efectos del ζῆλος y la μίμησις. Aparece así por primera vez, y con esa intencionalidad estilística, la expresión οὐκ ἔῤ καθεύδειν que, con sus variantes propias, se hará canónica en Plutarco, en detrimento de la normal en las fuentes latinas a la que corresponde en este pasaje ἐκ τῶν ὕπνων ἀνίστησι.

b) La fuente de Plutarco para este pasaje pudo ser la misma fuente peripatética propuesta para los textos latinos (o bien éstos⁶), cuya expresión *e somno suscitari* (Cicerón) y *de somno excitant* (Valerio Máximo) traducen el griego ἐκ τῶν ὕπνων ἀνίστησι.

En nuestro intento por establecer una secuenciación cronológica de los testimonios plutarqueos sobre esta anécdota, debemos analizar ahora el ejemplo de los *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae*. La dependencia respecto al *De profectibus* está en la frase pronunciada por Temístocles en el pasaje de los *Praecepta* (ὥς οὐκ ἔῤ καθεύδειν αὐτὸν τὸ Μιλτιάδου τρόπαιον), idéntica a la de aquel tratado, si secluimos la frase coincidente con la tradición latina y que, como hemos dicho, pudo ser el núcleo originario: ὥς οὐκ ἔῤ καθεύδειν αὐτὸν [ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν ὕπνων ἀνίστησι] τὸ Μιλτιάδου τρόπαιον. Es presumible, por tanto, una proximidad cronológica entre los dos tratados que mantiene en Plutarco las mismas estructuras formales.

Sin embargo, ahora el contexto es distinto y la función, por tanto, también diferente: A Plutarco le interesa la anécdota en este tratado porque ilustra el cambio que produce en la conducta ética de Temístocles su decisión de dedicarse a la política (καὶ Θεμιστοκλῆς ἄπτεσθαι τῆς πολιτείας διανοούμενος...), sirviendo así como ejemplo para el precepto que el Queronense dirige a su joven amigo: que el buen político debe ser un referente ético para sus conciudadanos. Por ello ahora se cargan las tintas sobre el alejamiento del personaje de sus borracheras y francachelas anteriores (ἀπέστησε τῶν πότων καὶ τῶν κώμων ἑαυτὸν) y sobre su nueva conducta, caracterizada por la vigilia, la sobriedad y la reflexión (ἀγρυπνῶν δὲ καὶ νήφων καὶ πεφροντικῶς...). La expresión ἔλεγε πρὸς τοὺς συνήθεις, implícitamente responde a las preguntas de los miembros de su círculo, acercándose al *quaerentibus* (indeterminado) de los autores latinos.

Poco tiene que ver con estos testimonios de la anécdota el caso del *De capienda ex inimicis utilitate* que sabemos posterior a los *Praecepta*. A pesar de la similitud contextual con *De profectibus* (necesidad de mantener una actitud de envidia positiva ante los éxitos de los enemigos) Plutarco no parece tener próxima la asociación con los tratados anteriores en los que se daba un énfasis

6 Plutarco está familiarizado tanto con la obra de Cicerón (cf. Podlecki, 117) como con Valerio Máximo.

especial al infinitivo *καθεύδειν* y tenía todo su valor simbólico el ‘trofeo de Milciades’. Ahora el orden *οὐκ ἔξ καθεύδειν αὐτὸν* (*Prof. in virt.* y *Praec. ger. reip.*) se invierte en el más habitual *οὐκ ἔξ αὐτὸν καθεύδειν*⁷ γ, como hemos dicho, el simbolismo de *τρόπαιον* es sustituido por la concreción de *τὴν ἐν Μαραθῶνι Μιλτιάδου νίκην*. Sin duda tal concreción puede explicarse por la referencia previa a *ταῖς ἐπιμελείαις καὶ φιλοπονίαις* de los enemigos, que debemos tratar de superar en lugar de entregarnos a la envidia pasiva y el sufrimiento por los éxitos de aquellos; pero cuesta pensar que, si el tratado se hubiera compuesto en un espacio temporal próximo a los anteriores, se habría dejado vencer por la normalidad y la concreción renunciando a la relevancia de *καθεύδειν* y a las ventajas de la cláusula ditrocaica representadas por *Μιλτιάδου τρόπαιον*.

3

Llegamos ahora a los dos pasajes de las *Vidas*, directamente implicados, sin duda, por los de *Prof. in virt.* y *Praec. ger. reip.* y con los que, por tanto, proponemos una proximidad cronológica. La filiación de la anécdota referida en *Thes.* 6.9 está clara: Su función es ilustrar con un ejemplo del futuro, que dé verosimilitud histórica al personaje, la importancia de la imitación de los grandes hechos, derivada de la admiración de la virtud; se trata de un tema básico para la concepción biográfica de Plutarco, como se sabe, pero también esa es la función de la anécdota en *Prof. in virt.* Por otro lado, podemos poner en relación la causa de los desvelos de Temístocles en *Praec. ger. reip.* (*Θεμιστοκλῆς ἀπτεσθαι τῆς πολιτείας διανοούμενος*) con la de Teseo: *ταῦτα πράττειν διανοούμενον*; ambos textos se asocian mediante el participio *διανοούμενος*. La aportación estilística de Plutarco, además del hecho de incluir el apotegma en la biografía de un héroe mítico, para dar a éste verosimilitud histórica⁸, es la anticipación –en contraste con los ejemplos de *Moralia*– del infinitivo *καθεύδειν* en las palabras de Temístocles: *ὡς καθεύδειν αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔφη*. Además del valor simbólico que tiene el verbo ‘dormir’ en este contexto de la actividad pública, de la realización de grandes acciones por parte del joven, la intencionalidad estilística se sanciona con la referencia a los ‘sueños’ de Teseo en el párrafo siguiente: *καὶ νύκτωρ ὄνειρος ἦσαν αἱ πράξεις...*

7 Otros ejemplos de ese orden en Plutarco son *Rom.* 27.8, *οὐκ ἔαν τοὺς δυνατοὺς ἐξετάζειν*; *Cim.* 6.5, *οὐκ ἔαν τὸν Πασσανίαν ἡσυχάζειν* *De gen. Socr.* 585D, *ἔαν ἡμᾶς ἱκανῶς ἐγγυμνάσασθαι*; la posposición del pronombre en *De prof. in virt.* (*οὐκ ἔξ καθεύδειν αὐτὸν*) viene gramatical y estilísticamente requerida por su dependencia como complemento tanto de *οὐκ ἔξ καθεύδειν* como de *ἐκ τῶν ὑπῶν ἀνίστησι*.

8 Cf. Pérez Jiménez, p. 347.

Veamos por último la versión más elaborada de la anécdota, a saber, su presencia en la *Vida de Temístocles*. En ella concurren todos los elementos que hemos ido analizando, tanto los que posiblemente vienen de la tradición, como las aportaciones literarias del biógrafo. Igual que en los peripatéticos de Cicerón, la anécdota sirve sencillamente para ilustrar el ansia de gloria de Temístocles (λέγεται γὰρ οὕτω παράφορος πρὸς δόξαν εἶναι) y su filotimía como motor del joven para realizar grandes hechos (καὶ πράξεων μεγάλων ὑπὸ φιλοτιμίας ἔραστῆς). Además rescata de la tradición la curiosidad de los demás: καὶ λέγειν πρὸς τοὺς ἐρωτῶντας.

Recreándose en anteriores usos de la anécdota, Plutarco abunda en los detalles descriptivos del estado anímico de su héroe, siempre meditabundo (σύννους ὀρᾶσθαι τὰ πολλὰ πρὸς ἑαυτῷ), pasando las noches en vela (τὰς νύκτας ἀγρυπνεῖν) y apartado de sus borracheras habituales (τοὺς πότους παραιτεῖσθαι τοῦ συνήθεις), que en forma resumida había recogido ya en *Praec. ger. reip.*; de este tratado puede haber tomado también el detalle del alejamiento de las borracheras (τοὺς πότους παραιτεῖσθαι τοὺς συνήθεις), aquí un elemento más de la conducta del personaje ante la contemplación del trofeo de Milcíades, pero allí núcleo central del precepto pedagógico.

La originalidad de Plutarco respecto al propio Plutarco está en la función ético-biográfica y la contextualización histórico-biográfica, en la interpretación personal o moraleja de la anécdota y en pequeños detalles puntuales que perfilan mejor la estructura literaria de la misma, tal como la hemos visto nacer y evolucionar en los ejemplos anteriores.

A la función ético-biográfica corresponde la presentación y algún detalle nuevo en la estructura de la anécdota, que incide en

- 1) La φιλοδοξία de Temístocles y su deseo de realizar grandes acciones, un rasgo esencial en los héroes de Plutarco.
- 2) Su φιλοτιμία como motor de esa conducta.
- 3) La admiración que suscita su cambio de vida y que lleva a los demás a preguntarle las razones. En *Praec. ger. reip.* el dato no tiene una relevancia especial para la personalidad de Temístocles, que no es la razón por la que se registra, sino en sí mismo, como parte del programa educativo del tratado. Por ello, la extrañeza (o admiración) que pudiera producir en los demás es cuestión secundaria y no se indica. En la *Vida* la situación es diferente. El cambio de conducta, motivado por la φιλοδοξία y la φιλοτιμία y, por tanto, por la vocación pública del personaje, es un elemento de primer orden en la concepción ético-biográfica de Plutarco y su repercusión social tiene gran relevancia. Por ello, no sólo se rescata de la tradición anterior el tópico de las preguntas (τοὺς ἐρωτῶντας = *quaerentibus*), sino que los interlocutores de Temístocles van a ser de nuevo (como en esa tradición anterior) indeterminados (la repercusión social es así

mayor), frente a los de la anécdota en *Praec. ger. reip.* (τοὺς συνήθεις). Por otro lado, se subraya el efecto que causa en ellos el cambio de conducta: θαυμάζοντας. El verbo, en este contexto, no es irrelevante, por cuanto convierte la conducta virtuosa de Temístocles (meditación, vigilancia y sobriedad) en paradigma digno de imitarse, como aquellas cosas que admiramos (θαυμάζομεν) en el texto del *Prof. in virt.* Tampoco se cualifica la curiosidad de los ciudadanos en las fuentes latinas, donde las preguntas no están motivadas por el cambio de conducta del personaje, sino por su aparición pública por la noche.

La contextualización histórico-biográfica, incluye:

- 1) Un elemento biográfico, tópico en el esquema de Plutarco: νέος ὢν.
- 2) El contexto histórico general: τῆς ἐν Μαραθῶνι μάχης πρὸς τοὺς βαρβάρους γενομένης.
- 3) El referente histórico personal: τῆς Μιλτιάδου στρατηγίας διαβοηθείσης.
- 4) De ellos, sólo el tercero está en cierto modo presente en *Prof. in virt.* que confronta la actitud de los atenienses con la del héroe: ἐπεὶ πάντας μὲν Ἀθηναίους εἰκὸς ἦν ἐπαινεῖν τὴν Μιλτιάδου τόλμαν καὶ ἀνδρείαν,... Pero, mientras que allí el bisturí del moralista aísla las virtudes de Milcíades que en los atenienses generan elogio y en Temístocles celo y deseo de imitación, aquí la referencia personal es, en la secuencia de los hechos, sólo un elemento más de la contextualización histórica.

Por último contamos con la apreciación particular del biógrafo (que cuenta con un precedente de enfoque más historiográfico en el texto de Valerio Máximo). Sus elementos son los siguientes:

1) Referencia a la actitud vulgar (pasiva) de los demás ante la situación histórica: οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλοι πέρασ ὦνοντο τοῦ πολέμου τὴν ἐν Μαραθῶνι τῶν βαρβάρων ἦπταν εἶναι.

2) Actitud individualizada de Temístocles, que le confiere un protagonismo especial en los hechos futuros, respondiendo así a los principios programáticos de la biografía:

a) Θεμιστοκλῆς δ' ἀρχὴν μειζόνων ἀγώνων,

b) ἐφ' οὓς ἕαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἤλειφε καὶ τὴν πόλιν ἦσκει,

c) πόρρωθεν ἤδη προσδοκῶν τὸ μέλλον.

Se trata de una utilización histórico-biográfica de la anécdota que contrasta con la pasividad de los demás ciudadanos, instalados en un presente como cierre definitivo (πέρασ... τοῦ πολέμου) del pasado, la visión histórica de Temístocles que, mirando hacia el futuro, ve el presente como principio de aquél y actúa en consecuencia. El contraste tiene su antecedente de nuevo en *Prof. in virt.* También allí se analiza la oposición entre los atenienses y Temístocles y, como aquí, también en él Plutarco da su propia interpretación de la anécdota. Pero

los parámetros en los que se mueve tanto la confrontación entre ambos como la moraleja, no son histórico-biográficos, sino simplemente éticos: Los atenienses no aportan un punto de vista sobre la situación creada con la victoria de Maratón, sino que elogian las virtudes de Milcíades. Y las palabras de Temístocles no sirven a Plutarco para sugerir las grandes gestas a las que le llevaba su actitud ante aquella victoria; se limitan a constatar que él, en vez de elogiar aquellas virtudes, sentía celo de ellas y quería imitarlas.

Cerramos ya estas reflexiones sobre el trofeo de Milcíades con la versión de *Reg. imp. apophth.* El texto coincide con *Praec. ger. reip.* en la importancia exclusiva que da al cambio de conducta de Temístocles después de Maratón. En esa dirección van las dos partes con que se describe el contexto de la anécdota:

- 1) Conducta desordenada (ἐν πότοις ἐκυλινδεῖτο καὶ γυναιξίν) antes de la invasión persa (μειράκιον). La referencia a la adolescencia de Temístocles, como marco cronológico para su vida desordenada, puede estar condicionada por el testimonio de la biografía, donde el cambio se fija en la juventud (νέος ὢν). Obsérvese que los componentes negativos de esa conducta son ἐν πότοις y γυναιξίν; el primero se encuentra ya en *Praec. ger. reip.* y probablemente de allí en la *Vida*. En cuanto al segundo, parece implicado por el uso metafórico del verbo, asociado a la frecuentación de mujeres en otros pasajes del mismo Plutarco⁹.
- 2) Cambio de conducta después de la victoria de Milcíades en Maratón: οὐκέτι ἦν ἐντυχεῖν ἀτακτοῦντι Θεμιστοκλεῖ.
- 3) La anécdota misma resulta influida por este particular enfoque:
- 4) La admiración por el cambio de vida (τοὺς θαυμάζοντας τὴν μεταβολήν) ha quedado suficientemente explicada a propósito de la biografía.
- 5) El verbo ῥαθυμεῖν, que amplía la versión tradicional de las palabras de Temístocles es consecuencia del enfoque, centrado en el abandono de la conducta desordenada.

Resulta difícil pensar que, si en su versión de la anécdota Plutarco hubiera contado con este verbo, habría renunciado a incluirlo en los demás casos. Por consiguiente, pensamos que tanto este ejemplo como el de *De cap. ex inim. ut.* son posteriores al resto.

En resumen, hemos visto a lo largo de esta exposición cómo Plutarco toma de la tradición una anécdota y la va adaptando a diferentes funciones según los contextos, modificando sus elementos o creando otros nuevos que la ajusten a los intereses de cada obra (éticos, biográficos y literarios). Los elementos

9 Vid. *Ant.* 9.5 (κυλινδήσεις ἐν γυναικίσι), *Oth.* 2.2 (ἐν γυναιξὶ πόρναις καὶ ἀκαθάρτοις ἐγκυλινδήσεις); cf. también *Amat.* 766B (ἐν θύραις νεογάμων καὶ δωματίοις κυλινδοῦνται).

formales de la anécdota y de su contexto permiten, sin embargo, establecer una relación (cuando la hay) e incluso, a veces, una dependencia cronológica entre las distintas versiones.

Esquema de la anécdotas en plutarco y otras fuentes

A. Función:

1. Ejemplo de φιλοτιμία: Cicerón, Valerio Máximo, Plutarco, *Vida de Temístocles*.
2. Ejemplo de imitación de las virtudes: Plutarco, *Profectibus in virtute*, *Vida de Teseo*.
3. Ejemplo de cambio de conducta: Plutarco, *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae*, *Apophthegmata*.
4. Ejemplo de superación de los éxitos de los enemigos: *De capienda ex inimicis utilitate*.

B. Estructura:

1. Contexto biográfico: νέος, μαιράκιον: *Praec. ger. reip.*, *Them.*, *Reg. imp. apophth.*
2. Contexto histórico (victoria de Maratón): *Them.*, *Reg. imp. apophth.*
3. Contexto ético:
 - a. elogio de las virtudes de Milcíades: *Prof. in virt.*
 - b. cambio de conducta ética: *Praec. ger. reip.*, *Them.*, *Reg. imp. apophth.*
4. Contexto social:
 - a) curiosidad de la gente (preguntas): Cic., Val. Max., *Them.*
 - b) admiración de la gente: *Them.*, *Reg. imp. apophth.*
 - c) destinatarios del apophthegma: Cic., Val. Max., *Praec. ger. reip.*, *Them.*, *Reg. imp. apophth.*
5. Apophthegma: Todos.
6. Interpretación del apophthegma (moralaja):
 - a) Histórica: Val. Max.
 - b) Ética: *Prof. in virt.*
 - c) Biográfica: *Them.*

C. Forma:

1. Estilo directo: Val. Max. (*respondisse*), *Reg. imp. apophth.* (ἐλέγευ)
2. Estilo indirecto:
 - a) Infinitivo: Cic. (*respondebat*), *Cap. ex inim. ut.* (ἐλέγευ)

b) Completiva de ὥς: *Prof. in virt.* (εἰπών), *Praec. ger. reip.* (ἔλεγε), *Thes.* (εἶπεν), *Them.* (λέγειν).

4. forma del arophthegma:

a1) οὐκ ἔῃ καθεύδειν αὐτὸν...τὸ Μιλτιάδου τρόπαιον: *Prof. in virt.*, *Praec. ger. reip.*

a2) ... = ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν ὕπνων ἀνίστησι *Prof. in virt.* (cf. lat. *e somno suscitari* (Cic.), *de somno excitant* (Val. Max.)).

b) καθεύδειν αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔφη τὸ Μιλτιάδου τρόπαιον: *Thes.*, *Them.*

c) οὐκ ἔῃ με καθεύδειν τὸ Μιλτιάδου τρόπαιον: *Reg. imp. arophth.*

d) οὐκ ἔῃν αὐτὸν καθεύδειν τὴν ἐν Μαραθῶνι Μιλτιάδου νίκην: *De cap. ex inim. ut.*

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Recursos humorísticos en la obra de Plutarco★

Vicente Ramón Palerm

En el seno de la literatura griega – y, a decir verdad, de la literatura universal – contamos básicamente con dos vías paralelas y divergentes en el tratamiento del humor, ese fenómeno genuinamente humano y liberador, catártico de las tensiones intelectuales, emotivas y sociales que la existencia depara. Y en Grecia resulta patente: por un lado, el humor de trazo grueso y sardónico, de invectiva, proclive a la risa burlona y a las maneras obscenas; por otro, un humor contenido y comedido, de refinamiento y sutileza, más atildado e inclinado a la sonrisa que a la risa. El caso es que, hasta el siglo V, triunfó en la Literatura griega la primera modalidad: como sabemos, en íntima conjunción de lo que ha sido denominado, con Nagy, *blame poetry*, el yambo arcaico sobresalió en sus formas más agresivas y cáusticas, con ese gusto por reír y ridiculizar a la figura literaria del ἐχθρός. Así las cosas, la comedia política de corte aristofánico se erigió en epígono feliz de la yambografía y creó fortuna un tipo de comicidad satírica con el propósito de fustigar los cánones culturales e ideológicos que brillaron en la Atenas de Pericles donde, al menos entre la comunidad de ciudadanos, podía decirse lo que se quisiera; como se quisiera. Sin embargo, con la desaparición de las formas políticas y el poder del demo, el arte de la palabra y la palabra misma adoptaron una orientación más tibia y mesurada. De este modo asistimos a los géneros de época helenística e imperial – y no en menor medida a la comedia nueva –, los cuales articulan un discurso literario de índole pedagógica y moralizante. Como es lógico, el tránsito de una cultura eminentemente oral a otra declaradamente escrita tuvo capital importancia.

Pues bien, considerando la estética que los nuevos tiempos aportaban – y máxime tratándose de un moralista vocacional –, Plutarco celebró el cambio de orientación humorística y encumbró la figura de Menandro cuyas formas atemperadas y medidas contrapuso al humor procaz y escarnecedor de Aristófanes. Y diera la impresión de que un ensayista como el de Queronea, quien no duda en censurar los esquemas estilísticos de Aristófanes por el abuso técnico de los mismos, se mostrara parco en figuras de tono retórico-sofístico. Pero nada más lejos de la realidad. La prosa artística había nacido retórica y retórica continuaría durante prolongados siglos: sin ir más lejos, he aquí la

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manera en que Plutarco deplora el estilo tan formalizado de Aristófanes en los κῶλα de sus versos (*Aristoph. et Menandri Comparatio*, 854 A): Ἀριστοφάνης μὲν οὖν οὔτε τοῖς πολλοῖς ἄρεστὸς οὔτε τοῖς φρονίμοις ἀνεκτός. Todo ello en un contexto lingüístico de concesión permanente a las estructuras antitético-repetitivas en parátesis constantes. Es decir que Plutarco – al modo en que su paradigma ideológico, Platón, lo hiciera sirviéndose de Sócrates como *alter ego* – muestra ocasionalmente sus críticas literarias mediante la atención a recursos tipológicos que desaconseja utilizar; y se vale de los mismos procedimientos retórico-argumentativos que los autores con quienes rivaliza. Mas si ello fue así en el ámbito de la estilística, también Plutarco se valió de microestructuras retóricas con el fin de dar pábulo a ese humor sutil y medido de que hace gala, ese humor *asteios*, como por cierto se dice hoy en griego para calificar una realidad jocosa o divertida.

De este modo, con las presentes notas me propongo incidir en dos conceptos de relieve:

1. El sentido del humor plutarqueo – de profunda raigambre retórica – es, en buena medida, de carácter apotegmático e irónico. Y cuenta con objetivos distinguidos en las *Vidas* y en las *Obras Morales*.

2. El humor de Plutarco trasciende la pura formalización estructural y, en los ensayos de carácter doctrinal o polémico, cobra una dimensión extraordinaria como arma intelectual hacia sus adversarios ideológicos de escuela, especialmente hacia los estoicos.

Para ilustrar las cuestiones, traeré primeramente a colación un sucinto inventario de apotegmas, correspondientes a Temístocles y Aristides, cuyas semblanzas recoge el de Queronea en las *Vidas* consagradas a los respectivos estadistas. En la actualidad, el apotegma es considerado un componente microestructural e integrante de la χρεία verbal o mixta, al modo en que el rétor Teón de Alejandría recomienda en sus Προγυμνάσματα o *Ejercicios Retóricos*: es decir que se trata de una manifestación o acción escueta atribuida a cierto personaje. En síntesis: Teón divide la χρεία en tres subgéneros, el enunciativo, el responsivo y el doble; y cada uno de estos γένη puede mostrar una presentación sentenciosa, demostrativa, graciosa, de silogismo, entimema, ejemplo, súplica, simbólica, figurada, ambigua y de metalepsis. Por lo demás, es claro que los apotegmas pueden combinar algunos de los esquemas citados¹. Como es lógico, interesa a nuestro propósito detenernos en la consideración del apotegma gracioso. Así las cosas, he detectado la existencia de una χρεία de contenido jocoso en *Aristides* y seis en *Temístocles*. Para no extenderme en demasía, reflejaré de manera representativa la mencionada en el βίος sobre

1 Sobre las estas observaciones, véase Ramón Palerm 1996.

Arístides y dos que corresponden a las sitas en la biografía acerca de Temístocles².

Arístides 7. 5–6: Γραφομένων οὖν τότε τῶν ὀστράκων λέγεται τε τινα τῶν ἀγγραμμάτων καὶ παντελῶν ἀγροίκων ἀναδόντα τῷ Ἀριστείδῃ τὸ ὄστρακον ὡς ἐνὶ τῶν τυχόντων παρακαλεῖν, ὅπως Ἀριστείδην ἐγγάψει. Τοῦ δὲ θαυμάσαντος καὶ πυθομένου, μή τι κακὸν Ἀριστείδης πεποίηκεν, Οὐδὲν, εἶπεν, οὐδὲ γινώσκω τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλ' ἐνοχλοῦμαι πανταχοῦ τὸν Δίκαιον ἀκούων. Ταῦτα ἀκούσαντα τὸν Ἀριστείδην ἀποκρίνασθαι μὲν οὐδὲν, ἐγγράψαι δὲ τοῦνομα τῷ ὀστράκῳ καὶ ἀποδοῦναι.

En la pincelada relativa a Arístides, detectamos una celebrada anécdota: en sesión plenaria, cierto sujeto iletrado desea ostraquizar al estadista quien, ante su estupor, le pregunta si Arístides le hecho algo malo; y el sujeto responde que no, pero que está cansado del calificativo de *Justo* que se concede de manera universal a Arístides. Se trata de una *χρεία* en responsión indagativa, de presentación graciosa. Por cierto que en la versión de Plutarco el héroe resulta más encumbrado y moralizado que en la versión del latino Nepote³: ya que el de Queronea insiste en que Arístides personalmente graba su propio nombre en el tejuelo.

Temístocles (18, 3): Τοῦ δὲ Σερίφιου πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰπόντος, ὡς οὐ δι' αὐτὸν ἔσχηκε δόξαν, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν πόλιν, Ἀληθῆ λέγεις, εἶπεν, ἀλλ' οὐτ' ἂν ἐγὼ Σερίφιος ὢν ἐγενόμην ἐνδοξος οὔτε σὺ Ἀθηναῖος.

Nos hallamos aquí ante una *χρεία* de respuesta en forma de presentación graciosa combinada con entimema: un natural de la isla de Serifos indica a Temístocles que debe su reputación de mandatario al hecho de ser ateniense y no a su valía personal. A ello repone Temístocles: *tienes razón: porque yo no sería persona notoria si fuera serifio pero tampoco tú aunque fueras ateniense*. Con una particularidad: el pasaje es recogido asimismo en la *Historia* de Heródoto (VIII 125, 1–2) mas no se predica de un serifio sino de un oriundo de Belbina, lo que corrobora seguramente la procedencia de la anécdota (que defiende y comparto con el profesor Fernández Delgado⁴) a partir de un inventario de apotegmas preexistente.

Temístocles (18, 5): Τὸν δὲ υἱὸν ἐντροφῶντα τῇ μητρὶ καὶ δι' ἐκείνην αὐτῷ σκώπτων ἔλεγε πλεῖστον τῶν Ἑλλήνων δύνασθαι: τοῖς μὲν γὰρ Ἑλλησιν ἐπιτάττειν Ἀθηναίους, Ἀθηναίους δ' αὐτόν, αὐτῷ δὲ τὴν ἐκείνου μητέρα, τῇ μητρὶ δ' ἐκείνον.

2 Cf. asimismo *Temístocles* 5, 5; 11, 3; 18, 2 (en sendas ocasiones). Los pasajes citados proceden, respectivamente, de R. Flacelière, E. Chambry, M. Juneaux, *Plutarque Vies*, V, 1969 (para Arístides); II, 1961 (para Temístocles).

3 Nepote, *Arístides* 1, 3. La moralización o magnificación en *amplificatio* del talante personal e inherente a ciertos héroes es divisa habitual en el quehacer literario de Plutarco. Cf., para la figura de Arístides, Ramón Palerm 2003.

4 Especialmente pp. 398–399.

En esta ocasión apreciamos una *χρεια* enunciativa en forma graciosa y fórmula de silogismo: Temístocles afirma que su hijo es el individuo de más relieve entre los griegos, ya que los atenienses mandaban sobre los griegos, él sobre los atenienses, la madre de su hijo sobre el propio Temístocles y el niño sobre su madre.

En suma: resulta notable que (en estas como en otras *Vidas* con datos de enjundia sobre el particular) Plutarco maneja los apotegmas graciosos con la intención de connotar la prosopografía del personaje, coadyuvar a un retrato psicológico del mismo o trazar sencillamente una etopeya, un bosquejo ético del héroe biografiado que ocasionalmente resulta moralizado. No existe por lo general una finalidad de mordacidad burlesca.

Sin embargo, la utilización de los recursos humorísticos de índole retórica presenta una finalidad diferenciada en *Moralia*, particularmente en los tratados doctrinales de naturaleza antiestoica, donde la defensa de la argumentación propia se fundamenta en la censura de los postulados ajenos. En estas ocasiones, Plutarco conjuga con maestría la utilización de numerosos esquemas retórico-estilísticos, de suerte que la estructura humorística se eleva a categoría de funcionalidad ideológica y doctrinal. Así es: en un reciente y modélico trabajo sobre *De facie in orbe lunae*, el profesor Pérez Jiménez ha señalado con tino la relación de elementos verbales y paraverbales que destila el opúsculo con una declarada intención crítica sobre la doctrina estoica. En efecto, el ensayo, en su primera parte, constituye una actualización sobre las respectivas tesis acerca de la naturaleza del disco lunar y sus accidentes. Lamprias, el hermano de Plutarco, dirige el debate y, mediante el apoyo del pitagórico Lucio, defenderá con pertinacia los principios de la Academia que sostienen la condición terrea de la luna. Por su parte, Fárnaces se erige en portavoz de la doctrina estoica y recibirá las críticas más directas y acerbas, dada su interpretación de una naturaleza ígnea para la luna. Y lo cierto es que, como ha indicado Pérez Jiménez, en el tratado menudean las afirmaciones e insinuaciones, de tenor irónico y mordaz – dotadas de elegancia formal pero ciertamente corrosivas –, las cuales recaen particularmente en Fárnaces, cuya indignación se hará manifiesta.

Pues bien, en el censo de ensayos científicos que jalonan la producción de Plutarco disponemos de un opúsculo cuya técnica compositiva es parcialmente similar y complementaria del ya citado *De facie...* Me refiero a ese delicioso diálogo (consta en realidad de dos fases) que es *De esu carniūm*, donde el moralista prescribe la abstinencia en el consumo de carne por parte de los seres humanos y convierte a la obrita, de suyo, en el primer tratado de vegetarianismo que la tradición cultural ha legado. Es cierto que, como ha sido indicado, los argumentos que maneja Plutarco son de carácter místico, filosófico y aun estético. Pero me adhiero a las apreciaciones del profesor

Becchi en el sentido de que la intención capital – y exponencialmente creciente en el desarrollo del ensayo – de Plutarco reside en oponerse a la tesis estoica, la cual obviaba la observancia de obligaciones jurídicas y morales respecto de los animales. De tal modo, estos últimos se veían excluidos, en rigor, de la comunidad de los seres racionales.

Así las cosas, la exposición de Plutarco, en un tono de acusada formalización retórica, se ve presidida por un humor ciertamente estilizado, que abarca desde la ironía sutil al – pues de carne estamos hablando – sarcasmo más indisimulado. Permítaseme traer a colación los testimonios pertinentes⁵.

1. La naturaleza...desaprueba comer carne. Y si, a título personal, dices que has nacido para esta forma de alimentación, antes de nada sacrifica tú solo al animal que te quieras comer; pero por tí mismo, sin servirte de un cuchillo, un palo o un hacha. Así es, del mismo modo que los lobos, osos y leones matan a los animales que se comen, apresa un buey a mordiscos, o desgarra con la boca a un cerdo, un cordero o una liebre. Y, tras saltar sobre ellos, cómetelos todavía vivos como hacen los animales antedichos. Ahora bien, si aguardas a que el objeto de tu comida sea cadáver y te resulta indecoroso arrojar de la carne el alma ahí presente, ¿por qué comes, de modo antinatural, lo que está vivo? Con todo, nadie osaría comer un animal sin vida tal y como, cadáver, se encuentra. Al contrario, lo cuecen, lo asan, cambian su aspecto con fuego y hierbas; alteran, modifican y matizan con numerosas especias la pieza a fin de que el paladar, bien engatusado, acepte lo que le resulta extraño.

A fe que era gracioso lo de aquel espartano, el cual, nada más comprar un pescadito en una tienda, lo dio al tendero para que se lo preparara. El tendero le pidió queso, vinagre y aceite, a lo que repuso el espartano: «si hubiera tenido estos ingredientes no habría comprado pescado». En cuanto a nosotros, nos recreamos tanto en el sacrificio que llamamos ‘guarnición’ a la carne; y luego precisamos de guarnición para la propia carne, así que mezclamos aceite, miel, salsa de pescado, vinagre con especias sirias y arábicas como si, en realidad, estuviéramos embalsamando un cadáver para su sepelio (995A–C).

Ἡ φύσις...ἐξόμνυται τὴν σαρκοφαγίαν. Εἰ δὲ λέγεις πεφυκέναι σεαυτὸν ἐπὶ τοιαύτην ἔδωδὴν, ὄγε βούλει φαγεῖν πρῶτον αὐτὸς ἀπόκτεινον, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς διὰ σεαυτοῦ, μὴ χρησάμενος κοπίδι μηδὲ τυμπάνῳ τινὶ μηδὲ πελέκει· ἀλλὰ, ὡς λύκοι καὶ ἄρκτοι καὶ λέοντες αὐτοὶ ὅσα ἐσθίουσι φονέουσιν, ἀνελε δῆγματι βοῦν ἢ στόματι σῦν, ἢ ἄρνα ἢ λαγῶν διάρρηξον καὶ φάγε προσπεσῶν ἔτι ζῶντος, ὡς ἐκεῖνα. Εἰ δ’ ἀναμένεις νεκρὸν γενέσθαι τὸ ἐσθιόμενον καὶ δυσωπεῖ σε παροῦσα ψυχὴ ἀπολαύειν τῆς σαρκός, τί παρὰ φύσιν ἐσθίεις τὸ ἔμψυχον; ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ ἄψυχον ἂν τις φάγοι καὶ νεκρὸν οἷόν ἐστιν, ἀλλ’ ἔψουσιν ὀπτῶσι μεταβάλλουσι διὰ πυρὸς καὶ φαρμάκων, ἄλλοιοῦντες καὶ τρέποντες καὶ σβεννύοντες ἠδύσμασι μυρίοις τὸν φόνον, ἴν’ ἢ γεῦσις ἐξαπατηθεῖσα προσδέξηται τ’ἀλλότριον.

Καίτοι χάριέν γε τὸ τοῦ Λάκωνος, ὃς ἰχθύδιον ἐν πανδοκείῳ πριάμενος τῷ πανδοκεῖ σκεύασαι παρέδωκεν· αἰτούντος δ’ ἐκείνου τυρὸν καὶ ὄξος καὶ ἔλαιον, ἀλλ’ εἰ ταῦτ’ εἶχον, εἶπεν, οὐκ ἂν ἰχθὺν ἐπριάμην. Ἡμεῖς δ’ οὕτως ἐν τῷ μαιφόνῳ

5 En esta ocasión presento la traducción personal de los pasajes que consta en Ramón Palerm – Bergua (2002). El texto griego procede de la edición de W. C. Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia* XII (Loeb), 1957.

τρυφῶμεν, ὥστ' ὄψων πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ κρέας δεόμεθα, ἀναμιγνύντες ἔλαιον οἶνον μέλι γάρων ὄξος ἠδύσμασι Συριακοῖς Ἀραβικοῖς, ὥσπερ ὄντως νεκρὸν ἐνταφιάζοντες.

2. Diógenes tuvo el arrojo de comer un pulpo crudo para eliminar la práctica de cocinar la carne. Y, ante la presencia de numerosas personas a su alrededor, cubierto con su vieja capa, acerca la carne a su boca y dice: «por vuestro bien me arriesgo y expongo al peligro». Bonito peligro, por Zeus. Desde luego, no se arriesga como Pelópidas por la libertad de los tebanos, o como Harmodio y Aristogitón por la de los atenienses: el filósofo se expone al peligro en combate contra un pulpo crudo para que nuestra vida se aproxime a la de los animales salvajes (995D).

Διογένης δ' ὠμὸν φαγεῖν πολύπουον ἐτόλμησεν, ἵνα τὴν διὰ τοῦ πυρὸς ἐκβάλλη κατεργασίαν τῶν κρεῶν. Καὶ πολλῶν περιεστώτων αὐτὸν ἀνθρώπων, ἐγκαλυψάμενος τῷ τρίβωνι καὶ τῷ στόματι προσφέρων τὸ κρέας, ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, φησὶν, ἐγὼ παραβάλλομαι καὶ προκινδυνεύω. Καλὸν, ὦ Ζεῦ, κίνδυνον· οὐ γάρ, ὡς Πελοπίδας ὑπὲρ τῆς Θηβαίων ἐλευθερίας ἢ ὡς Ἀρμόδιος καὶ Ἀριστογείτων ὑπὲρ τῆς Ἀθηναίων ὑπὲρ τῆς Ἀθηναίων, προεκινδύνευσεν ὁ φιλόσοφος ὠμῶς πολύποδι διαμαχόμενος, ἵνα τὸν βίον ἀποζηριώσῃ.

3. La verdad es que resulta difícil, como afirmaba Catón, hablar a estómagos, los cuales carecen de orejas (996 D).

Χαλεπὸν μὲν γάρ, ὥσπερ Κάτων ἔφησε λέγειν πρὸς γαστέρας ὧτα μὴ ἐχούσας.

4. Veamos: ¿Cómo no considerar ostentosa una cena en la que muere un ser animado? ¿Consideramos que una vida tiene escaso valor? No voy a apresurarme a decir, como Empédocles, que es la vida de tu madre, de tu padre, de cierto amigo o de un hijo. Con todo, es verdad que tiene sensibilidad, vista, oído, imaginación, inteligencia, cualidades que todo ser ha recibido de la naturaleza para adquirir lo propio y rehuir lo ajeno. Juzga cuáles son los filósofos que nos enseñan mejor: quienes nos instan a comer a nuestros amigos, padres y mujeres a su muerte, o quienes – como Pitágoras y Empédocles – nos disciplinan para ser ecuanimes en nuestra relación con otras especies. Tú te burlas de quien no come cordero. Mas ¿no habremos de reír nosotros – dirán los célebres filósofos – cuando vemos que troceas a tu padre o tu madre, una vez muertos, mandas porciones a los amigos que están ausentes e invitas a los que tienes cerca ofreciéndoles carne en abundancia? (996D–F).

Ποῖον οὖν οὐ πολυτελὲς δεῖπνον, εἰς ὃ θανατοῦται τι ἐμψυχον; μικρὸν ἀνάλωμα ἠγούμεθα ψυχὴν οὕτω λέγω τάχα μητρὸς ἢ πατρὸς ἢ φίλου τινὸς ἢ παιδός, ὡς ἔλεγεν Ἐμπεδοκλῆς· ἀλλ' αἰσθήσεώς γε μετέχουσιν, ὄψεως ἀκοῆς, φαντασίας συνέσεως, ἣν ἐπὶ κτήσει τοῦς οἰκείου καὶ φυγῆ τ' ἄλλοτρίου παρὰ τῆς φύσεως ἕκαστον εἴληχε. Σκοπεῖς δ' ἡμᾶς πότεροι βέλτιον ἐξημεροῦσι τῶν φιλοσόφων, οἱ καὶ τέκνα καὶ φίλους καὶ πατέρας καὶ γυναῖκας ἐσθίειν κελεύοντες ἀποθανόντας, ἢ Πυθαγόρας καὶ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ἐθίζοντες εἶναι καὶ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα γένη δικαίους. Σὺ μὲν καταγελάς τὸ τοῦ πρόβατον μὴ ἐσθίουτος· ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς σε, φήσουσι, θεασάμενοι τοῦ πατρὸς τεθνηκότος ἢ τῆς μητρὸς ἀποτεμόντα μερίδας καὶ τῶν φίλων ἀποπεμπόμενον τοῖς μὴ παροῦσι, τοὺς δὲ παρόντας παρακαλοῦντα καὶ παρατιθέντα τῶν σαρκῶν ἀφειδῶς, μὴ τι γελάσωμεν;

5. Con todo, la mencionada argumentación no es igual a la de los estoicos en su apología del consumo de carne ¿Qué es eso de una 'gran tensión' entre el vientre y

la cocina? ¿Por qué, si consideran el placer como cosa afeminada y le imputan no ser ni un bien ni un ‘principio de progreso’ ni un ‘principio natural’, se hallan familiarizados con esta suerte de placeres? Por cierto que serían coherentes si, ya que desprecian el perfume y los pasteles de los simposios, con mayor motivo rechazaran la sangre y la carne. Pero ahora, como si estuvieran pensando en los libros de cuentas cotidianas, ahorran en productos inútiles y superfluos para la cena y, por contra, no repudian aquello que es inhumano y sanguinario en el lujo. «Por supuesto», dicen, «no hay vínculos de justicia entre nosotros y los animales irracionales». «Ni entre nosotros y el perfume», «ni entre nosotros y las especias exóticas», podría decir cualquier persona. Así es que absteneos de estas prácticas si despreciáis lo que no es útil ni de modo alguno necesario en el placer (999A–B).

Οὐκ ἴσος δ’ ἔτι καὶ οὗτος ὁ ἀγὼν τοῖς Στωικοῖς ὑπὲρ τῆς σαρκοφαγίας. Τίς γὰρ ὁ πολὺς τόνος εἰς τὴν γαστέρα καὶ τὰ ὀπτανεῖα; Τί τὴν ἡδονὴν θηλύνοντες καὶ διαβάλλοντες ὡς οὐτ’ ἀγαθὸν οὔτε προηγμένον οὐτ’ οἰκεῖον οὕτω περὶ τούτων τῶν ἡδονῶν ἐσπουδάκασι; καὶ μὴν ἀκόλουθον ἦν αὐτοῖς, εἰ μύρον ἐξελαύνουσι καὶ πέμμα τῶν συμποσίων, μᾶλλον αἶμα καὶ σάρκα δυσχεραίνειν. Νῦν δ’ ὥσπερ εἰς τὰς ἑφημερίδας φιλοσοφοῦντες δαπάνην ἀφαιροῦσι τῶν δείπνων ἐν τοῖς ἀχρήστοις καὶ περιττοῖς, τὸ δ’ ἀνήμερον τῆς πολυτελείας καὶ φονικὸν οὐ παραιτοῦνται. Ναί, φασίν, οὐδὲν γὰρ ἡμῖν πρὸς τὰ ἄλογα δίκαιον ἔστιν. Οὐδὲ γὰρ πρὸς τὸ μύρον, φαίη τις ἄν, οὐδὲ πρὸς τὰ ξενικά τῶν ἡδυσμάτων· ἀλλὰ καὶ τούτων ἀποτρέπεσθε, τὸ μὴ χρήσιμον μὴδ’ ἀναγκαῖον ἐν ἡδονῇ πανταχόθεν ἐξελαύνοντες.

Efectuada la pura exposición de los datos, podemos verificar algunos factores comunes que sobresalen en los mismos. Se trata de exponer *ante oculos*, con intenso dramatismo, las contradicciones internas de quienes consumen carne. Para ello el de Queronea recurre a lo que Milazzo ha denominado, en otra parte, retórica paradójica, aquí hipercharacterizada por el tono humorístico. Como en otros ensayos de tenor retórico-epidíctico (a los que Plutarco es circunstancialmente proclive), brillan la estructuras en parísis y el estilo antitético-repetitivo. Este sello de inspiración sofisticada queda corroborado por la atención constante a la amplificación, y a los ejemplos (αὔξησις y παραβολαί);⁶ también por la inserción de microestructuras de cuño retórico, como las χρεῖαι y las citas eruditas que, en los *Moralia* (particularmente en los tratados de índole histórico-científica) cobran a menudo una intencionalidad burlona y crítica.

Así es, en el primer pasaje encontramos ya una amplificación notable de tendenciosidad manifiesta, con el uso – relativamente habitual en Plutarco – del *tú* con intención cuasidualógica, uso que dota al texto de una tensión retórica adicional. Al mismo tiempo, se corona el fragmento con un apotegma responsivo de presentación sentenciosa y graciosa. Esta χρεῖα, como suele ocurrir, queda formalmente tipificada mediante exordio, exposición y reflexión conclusiva. Aquí debemos mencionar un punto destacable: sucede que Plutarco recoge la misma anécdota en *Dichos de espartanos* 234E–F; y allí se

6 Ramón Palerm 2001.

alude a carne, no a pescado (cuando, por la condición de nuestros ensayos, habríamos esperado acaso lo contrario). Sucede que, cuando Plutarco cita varias χρεῖαι presentes en otros ensayos morales o en las *Vidas*, percibimos que nuestro autor modifica a discreción la distribución estructural e incluso la disposición gramatical. Y esta circunstancia nos alerta sobre el carácter esencialmente retórico y escolástico de las citadas microestructuras.

No obstante, en el segundo pasaje verificamos un suave cambio en la tipología humorística. En efecto, Plutarco introduce un apotegma enunciativo, de carácter genuinamente serio y sentencioso, que remite a Diógenes el Cínico: pero explota la paradoja del dicho para completarlo con una reflexión irónica de carácter burlesco.

Por su parte, el fragmento tercero nos ilustra sobre otro procedimiento retórico que el de Queronea utiliza: la cita erudita (directa o, como en este caso, indirecta) para clarificar y sancionar sus propios argumentos: aquí Catón se habría pronunciado sobre la dificultad de hablar a los estómagos, que carecen de orejas.

En última instancia, los pasajes cuarto y quinto formulan sendas diatribas contra los estoicos: en la primera se maneja la teoría de la metempsicosis, de inspiración órfico-pitagórica, que adopta un tono humorístico en su oposición a quienes, como los estoicos, niegan que los animales deban ser respetados a causa de su naturaleza irracional. El *tú* de factura retórica – puede aludir a cualquier persona que, como los estoicos, coma carne – es confrontado a la hilaridad que despierta esa práctica en quienes consideren que el alma de todo individuo migra a los animales, de suerte que se incurra en el riesgo de despedazar, por ejemplo, a un pariente próximo. Y queda ello expresado con una χρεῖα en estilo indirecto. Por lo demás, en el último de los pasajes sugeridos advertimos a un Plutarco que polemiza con los estoicos en retórica paradójica: mediante una χρεῖα doble, nuestro autor fustiga a título personal el andamiaje ideológico de la escuela estoica. Y es muy probable que, acto seguido, las críticas de mordacidad se hallaran en gradación creciente pero, desgraciadamente, el segundo tratado *Sobre comer carne* queda en abrupta interrupción.

Para sintetizar: desde una perspectiva diacrónica, Plutarco contaba con tres modelos de enfocar el humor: el humor relativo a la teoría de las pasiones, de extracción médica – que hunde sus raíces en los tratados hipocráticos y en Teofrasto –, el cual definiría Longino (*Sobre lo sublime* XXXVIII 5) como un sentimiento desde el placer; el humor extraído de la risa profunda, popular, catártica y liberadora: aparecía en la yambografía, en la comedia política, y luego en Luciano también (y en la sátira menipea); y un humor contenido,

retórico, didáctico, moralista y literaturizado, del que participó Plutarco con celo⁷. Efectivamente, en esta estética sería que constituye el arte de la biografía o del ensayo asistimos a una atemperación, a una *serificación* – por decirlo con un término recientemente acuñado entre nosotros – del humor. Y es que, frente a la risa profunda de los géneros cómicos o serio-cómicos, disponemos de una risa *menor*, como ha demostrado la teoría literaria moderna: esta es la que se infiere de los géneros relacionados con la conversación: géneros ligados al mundo de la sobremesa como el banquete, la anécdota, los recuerdos, la controversia, e incluso el cuento o el mimo. Se trata de géneros que aminoran la risa de tenor chocarrero en pro del didactismo y la seriedad.

Por consiguiente, he aquí un sentido del humor de carácter retórico e instrumental, que el de Queronea habría de canalizar en dos vías: como una risa sutil, descriptora de la etopeya de los personajes: así ocurre en las *Vidas*; y como una ironía crítico-burlesca, destinada a la figura de los opositores ideológicos, culturales, ideológicos: así sucede en ciertas *Obras Morales*. En fin, con estas breves notas he pretendido únicamente algunas sugerencias de reflexión: resulta obvio que sólo un mapa completo y extenso de las microestructuras anejas a la producción toda de Plutarco podría ofrecernos una realidad conclusiva. Pero esa es otra cuestión y deberá exponerse en su momento.

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7 Para estas reflexiones finales me he valido de las perspicaces indicaciones que facilita Beltrán Almería, pp. 202–211.

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Some Notes on Grammarians in Plutarch

Marietta Horster

Grammarians are teachers of grammar – language and literature –, and some of them are (as well or exclusively) scholars who do research and publish treatises on linguistic analysis and classification, works of lexicography and literary criticism.¹ Most of the known grammarian–scholars’ treatises of Hellenistic and Roman times have survived only in fragments.²

Few notes about teaching grammarians are to be found in literary texts of the first century AD and they are mainly reduced to Latin texts, e.g. to Seneca’s letters and Statius’ *Silvae*. Seneca (*Ep.* 108) discusses the fundamental differences of understanding and learning of educated men: grammarians, men of letters (*philologoi*) and philosophers. Seneca illustrates these differences by giving exemplary interpretations of a line of Vergil’s *Georgics* and a passage of Cicero’s *On the Republic*: the grammarian and the *philologos* add parallels and learned information, nevertheless the philosopher is the only one to get the

1 Pfeiffer gives an overview on grammarians’ scholarship in Hellenistic times; the Roman republican time is treated by Rawson, 66–76, late antiquity by Kaster. Cri-biore and Morgan focus on education and teaching in Hellenistic and Roman times. Our knowledge about grammarians’ teaching methods and subjects are mainly based on Suetonius, Quintilian, few other literary sources, few inscriptions and masses of papyri. Agusta-Boularot has collected the inscriptions in which grammarians are mentioned (esp. in the Greek East under Roman rule) – however, she does not take into account, that there is a difference between the social standing of people who give their profession in inscriptions and those who do not. As a rule, people who were dependant on earning money by paid professions, including teaching professions (but see Puech 2002 and Hahn, 100–108; 128–147 for the different usage and meanings of the denominations *sophistes* and *philosophos* on inscriptions), had no high social ranking in antiquity. None of the above mentioned scholars question how the value of “*paideia*” (as equivalent to literary education or education in Greek language and literature) matches with the somewhat negative connotation of paid professionalism, although Kaster, 99–134; 201–230 discusses a comparable phenomenon under the somewhat different conditions of late antique societies.

2 Main editions are: Dindorf, Keil, Funaioli and Mazzarino, single editions of Greek treatises in the Teubner-series “*Grammatici Graeci*” (e.g. of Dionysius Thrax, Apollonius Dyscolus) and in the DeGruyter-series: “*Sammlung griechischer und lateinischer Grammatiker*” (e.g. Montanari on Agathocles and Hellenicus and Keil’s and Hansen’s edition of the letters M to S of Hesychius Alexandrinus’ lexicon). Extensive references to editions of ‘grammatical’ or grammarian’s papyri are given in Wouters, Cri-biore, 185–219 and Morgan, 152–189; 285sq. with tab. 9.

deeper sense of both texts. A different picture of the grammarians intellectual capacities and standing is drawn by Statius. In *Silvae* 5.3 Statius describes his father's school of grammar in Naples as of a high level of literary education and with famous and adult pupils.³

Plutarch reflects both traditions of characterisations of grammarians in literature: the grammarian reduced to his arguments on grammar and literature, passing over the moral of a text and missing the main point of a problem (cf. Seneca), and the well educated grammarian with a broad knowledge of literature, integrated in society, his knowledge asked for by members of the higher classes of society – knights, senators and even emperors (cf. Statius).

Anecdotes on Grammarians in Plutarch's *Lives*

Plutarchan anecdotes⁴ concerning grammarians are with the exception of two in the *Moralia* only to be found in Plutarch's *Lives*. However, in the *Lives* there are only few and quite marginal notes on grammarians. They can be divided into two different categories: grammarians concerned with the education of children of the heroes of the *Lives* and, on the other hand, grammarians as scholars without a detectable link to education.

In the first category we hear of anonymous Greek grammarians, sophists, rhetors, philosophers and trainers of animals who take care of Aemilius Paulus's sons and educate them in Greek culture (*Aem.* 6,9). And there is Chilo, by his name obviously of Greek origin, a grammarian and slave of Cato the Elder. He was not allowed to teach Cato's son not because he was not good enough as grammarian but because Cato thought it unworthy for his son to be taught and punished by a slave and not by a free man (*Cato mai.* 20.4). Hence, Cato himself taught his son grammar, law and gymnastic exercises.

Somewhat different are the contexts in the *Life of Alcibiades* – first, because they concern Alcibiades himself and not the hero's children, and second, in none of them the term “grammarian” comes up. Plutarch notes explicitly that it is extraordinary how many anecdotes he knows about Alcibiades' childhood

3 Stat. *Silv.* 5.3.146 *generosaque pubes* from all over Campania and southern Italy, *l. l.* 162–73, themselves later gaining high positions in the Roman empire, *l. l.* 185–190. See also Suetonius *Lives of Grammarians* (mid-second century) on grammarians' famous pupils (sons of knights, senators and the emperors' family) who lived in the late Republic and early empire. For a discussion of Statius' father as a grammarian and the influence of Statius' education on his writings see Holford-Strevens and McNelis although not all of their (differing) conclusions are convincing.

4 According to Saller in Roman literature anecdotes – defined as a ‘narrative of a detached incident, or of a single event’ (*Oxf. Engl. Dict.* cited by Saller, 69) – are an important feature of oratory, antiquarian literature and biographies.

and youth, details he knows of none of the other famous Greeks of the fifth century.⁵ One of the stories of Alcibiades' boyhood concerns his musical education by *didaskaloi* (kind of elementary teachers). His influence on the other boys at school was so strong that not only he but also the other boys refused to play the flute. According to Plutarch, since young Alcibiades' intervention flute-playing was entirely despised as a school discipline (*Alc.* 2.4–6). Another story is of much more interest in the context of grammarians: Alcibiades/Plutarch makes a difference between schoolteachers, who teach reading and writing to boys, and researchers, who edit texts and teach young men.⁶ The word “*grammatikos*” is not given in this context, although the teacher of the elder boys should – according to Alcibiades/Plutarch – better be one: “Once, as he (Alcibiades) was getting on past boyhood, he accosted a school-teacher γραμματοδιδάσκαλος, and asked him for a book of Homer. The teacher διδάσκαλος replied that he had nothing of Homer's whereupon Alcibiades fetched him a blow with the fist, and went his way. Another teacher διδάσκαλος said he had a Homer which he had corrected himself (κονδύλω καθικόμενος αὐτοῦ παρήλαθεν). “What!” said Alcibiades, “are you teaching boys (γράμματα διδάσκεις) when you are competent to edit Homer (Ὀμηρον ὑφ' αὐτοῦ διωρθωμένον)? You should be training young men (οὐχὶ τοὺς νέους παιδεύεις).”” Although this little anecdote is a reflex of clear conceptions of categories of teachers of different levels – boys taught reading and writing, young men taught sophisticated interpretations of epic writings – we cannot be sure if these conceptions and the different terms for the teachers are already contemporary to Alcibiades' lifetime.⁷ These categories existed since Hellenistic times, and Romans were accustomed to such divisions of disciplines since late Republican times at the latest. However, strict ‘school-systems’, divisions in age-groups or disciplines might have only played a role in some of the larger cities: ‘mixed schools’ – elementary and grammar, or grammar and rhetoric etc. seem to have been quite common in many cities of the Greco-Roman World.

Only a couple of notes in Plutarch concern the already noted (commenting Homer – cf. *Alc.* 7.1) second category: scholar-grammarians. Tyrannio is mentioned in the *Lives* of Lucullus and Sulla. In the *Lucullus* Tyrannio is called a man of high learning (*Luc.* 19,7). Because of his learnedness he should not be

5 Plut. *Alc.* 1.2: he names the sources and gives as examples the name and origin of Alcibiades' nurse τίτθῆ (source: Antisthenes) and the name of his παιδαγωγός when he was a (little) boy (source: Plato).

6 Plut. *Alc.* 7.1 (Loeb transl.). Alcibiades beating the first of the two teachers should not be judged as a specific disregard of the teaching profession. Rather, Plutarch's young Alcibiades is characterised as disrespectful and unrestrained, giving blows even to someone like Hipponicus, the wealthy and influential father of Callias (*Alc.* 8.1)

7 Cf. Morgan, 15 in her comment on this passage.

deprived of his freedom. In the *Life of Sulla*, Tyrannio is distinguished as having classified and arranged the works of Aristotle and Theophrastus found in the library of Apellicon the Teian when the texts were sent as a booty to Rome.⁸

Apart from Tyrannio, in Plutarch's *Lives* the scholar Didymus is the only one to be explicitly called a grammarian.⁹ In the *Life of Solon* his name is prominent just at the beginning of the text. He is characterised as a grammarian and quoted with a quite uncommon thesis about Solon's father (1.1), which relied on a certain Philocles, someone Plutarch obviously considered as not to be known by his readers. Thus, the grammarian is characterised with one of the typical grammarians' gestures: searching to quote antiquarian and quite far-fetched views, thus citing not only well-known and accepted authorities but also unknown authors.

In the *Lives*, grammarians are always Greeks. If they are teachers, they are slaves or they are freeborn, but their names are not mentioned.¹⁰ If scholars, they lived in the first century B.C. and their individual names (Tyrannio, Didymus) are given. They brought books and Greek culture to Rome like Tyrannio, quite similar to the alleged achievements of the various anonymous teachers of Aemilius Paulus's sons in the late third and early second century B.C.

All in all, in the *Lives* no negative features are connected with grammarians (even though Didymus is cited with a far-fetched view). Moreover, citations and anecdotes in the *Lives* characterise the grammarians as adding aspects of Greek culture to the Roman way of life.

8 *Sulla* 26.1. However, his achievements are in a way characterised as minor ones as the main work of editing and publishing was then done by Andronicus the Rhodian.

9 Didymus of Alexandria was a grammarian of the school of Aristarch. He lived in the second half of the first century B.C. and wrote masses of books (3500 according to the *Suda* D 872), see *OCD*³ Didymus. Plutarch's little note on Didymus and Sulla is included in Schmidt's edition of Didymus' fragments, p. 399 no. 11.

10 Interestingly enough, Plutarch never alludes to grammarian teachers of one of the portrayed eminent political and exemplary figures. This fits into the general tendency and character of such biographical studies, different to those of biographies of 'cultural figures'. Although political biographies give information on education if possible, the general interest in the uprising of these mainly political 'heroes' was not their literate education but the formation of their character, cf. Pelling, 302–307. Likewise, Duff, 74–78 stresses that the importance in good education in Plutarchan as in Platonic thought have its reason in the formation of character in childhood. But the education Plato and Plutarch have in mind is not about grammar and literature for their own sake – that is to learn to read, write, cite and dispute – but about the implantation of moral virtues: compassion, kindness, engagement. Hence, Pelling and Duff give (even though implicitly) different explanations for the lack of interest in the (grammarian-) teachers of Plutarch's heroes.

As mentioned above, apart from the anecdotes in the *Lives* two more such stories are to be found in the *Moralia*. One is integrated in the dialogue about the question “*How to cure anger*”. The anecdote is about an unnamed grammarian who is witty and clever although improper and inopportune in his answer to a question of king Ptolemy, who supposedly took the grammarian to be ignorant (458B). The other anecdote is told in the debate “*Whether land or sea animals are cleverer*”. In it a grammarian called Aristophanes is in love with a flower-girl and has an elephant as his rival (972D).

Characterisations of grammarians in the *Moralia*

Apart from these two anecdotes, different to the *Lives*, grammarians in the *Moralia* are either integrated as participants of dialogues or are alluded to as authorities on literature like Aristarchus or Crates who are quoted several times. Moreover, there are some general statements about the abilities and occupations of grammarians. Thus, the grammarians in the *Moralia*-treatises of Plutarch give a quite different picture to the one in the *Lives*.

Three different features of grammarians in the *Moralia* might be distinguished as follows:

1. The integration of quotations of grammarians of Hellenistic times, of their views and opinions in the same way as those of philosophers, poets, historiographers etc. In this kind of quotations and references only the names of these authorities are given but they are never explicitly qualified as grammarians.
2. General assumptions about grammarians, without mentioning one by name. These statements allude to the well-known discussion of philosophers about the minor value and necessity of *technai* as special knowledge in general compared to the superiority of philosophy.
3. Allusions to contemporary grammarians and grammarians as literary personae in the disputes and dialogues.

The first feature, the citations and quotations of grammarians as authorities like for example Aristarch will be left aside in this paper.¹¹

Instead, I will concentrate on other contexts in which grammarians are integrated in Plutarch's texts, hence, the second point with its general discussion of the worth and unworthiness of philology or grammarians and the

11 Even though grammarian-scholars like Aristarch are cited to a lesser extent than other authorities like Euripides, they are quoted in several discussions and on different subjects. A numerical overview is given by Helmbold & O'Neil's citation index.

third point concerning the participating grammarians in the dialogues and their integration in Plutarch's world of disputes and banquets.

General statements about grammarians, their little contribution to *paideia* and to the discussion and search for truth are to be found in several parts of the *Moralia* and in different contexts.

In "*How the young man should listen to poetry*" the grammarians are said to teach how "to adapt the usage of the words to fit in the matter in hand, ..., taking a word for one signification at one time, and at another time for another," (22F, Loeb). These word-technicians seem to arrange the meaning of words to what they want the words to mean. One central issue in Plutarch, not only in the above mentioned "*How to listen to poetry*", is the grammarians' focus on Homer. In the *Poetry*-treatise the grammarians' discussions about interpretations of Homeric verses is outspokenly characterised as irrelevant and sometimes even unserious, and in any case not leading to the main aim of learning and teaching. Thus the speaker of the *Poetry*-text claims – we should leave such discussions of interpretations to the grammarians and concentrate ourselves to what is both useful and probable. Useful would be to teach what is good, and to let the pupils know, that "boorishness and cowardice are but ignorance and defects of learning," (31E Loeb). Obviously, these are not the lessons grammarians teach. Likewise, in *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur* the flatterer who criticizes details like clothing, but does not mention if a man disregards wife and children, or who criticizes the speaker's voice but not the content of his ridiculous speech – this flatterer is paralleled to the grammarian-teacher who is not concentrating on the important duties of correcting grammar and diction of his pupil, but instead "scolds a boy about his slate and pencil," (59F Loeb). The context makes it clear that at least in 59F such ignorant grammarians are bad ones and are supposed to be the exception and not the rule. However, in both texts, the *Poetry*-treatise and the dispute on the flatterer, the grammarians are engaged in minor details and do not take care about the important subjects.

Other allusions to grammarians as a group are found in *De Pythiae oraculis* in which the grammarians are said to know all variants of names and nicknames of men and women (401A).¹² Quite similar is the sophist Diogenianus' statement in one of the table talks (*Quaest. conv.* 7.8) that to entertain guests at a dinner party with a performance of a recitation of Old Comedy is useless unless each guest would have "his own grammarian to explain the allusions, who is Laespodias in Eupolis and Cinesias in Plato, and

12 A slight critic is inherent because the context shows that nicknames may obscure the real or main names.

Lampon in Cratinus, and so on with all the persons satirized in the plays.¹³ Our dinner party would turn into a schoolroom (*grammatodidaskaleion*) or else the jokes would be without meaning or point.”¹⁴ Grammarians know all these details, the names and the historical background of the literature they read and which they sometimes teach. But this kind of knowledge should be reduced to scholarship and schoolrooms; it is not interesting and entertaining enough for dinner parties. Educated people participating in banquets are not supposed to know or even be interested in such details. Thus, this is one of the many reasons why, according to Plutarch’s character Diogenianus, Old Comedy, which always needs grammarians’ explanations, is an unsuitable subject for dinner parties.

Another such general positive remark is found for example in *On the tranquillity of mind*. In this text the professional and good grammarian is compared to the good musician and to the soul. He is said to know all about grammar, vowels, consonants (474A), he uses them all and treats every different and oppositional elements of grammar properly. These positive features of the good grammarian are contrasted by the characterisations in the following examples of other dialogues.

In *De garrulitate* the grammarian like the talkative is of minor learning because he is an expert in one thing only, technical discussions, and prefers to speak only about this one subject (514A). The reduction to only few subjects is also criticised in the *Table talk* about the age of poetry competitions (*Quaest. conv.* 5.2). Plutarch argues that the poetry competitions are very old and established since long and therefore should not be abolished. He starts his argumentation with the words:¹⁵ “Some of my friends expected me to cite well-worn examples like the funeral ceremonies of Oeolycus of Thessaly and those of Amphidamas of Chalcis,¹⁶ at which it is said that Homer and Hesiodus

13 Eupolis *PCG* Vol. 5. 298 no. 28, Plato *PCG* Vol. 7. 518 f. no. 200, Cratinus *PCG* Vol. 4 p. 118 testimony no. 32, cf. fragments p. 152 f. no. 62 and p. 185 no. 125. A general commentary on this *Table Talk* with a short discussion of the favouring of New Comedy or Aristophanes has Teodorsson vol. 3. 108–128.

14 712A, adapted Loeb translation. Imperio discusses in general Plutarch’s attitude to comedy and its authors without commenting this particular passage.

15 674F–675A, adapted Loeb translation, cf. Teodorsson vol. 2. 153–162 with a commentary on this *Table Talk* and the passages discussed.

16 The story of Oeolycus seems to be otherwise unknown. For Amphidamas’ funeral cf. Hesiod, *Erga* 654–6 and Plut. *Septem Sapientium Convivium* 153E–154A. There are different traditions of Homer’s and Hesiod’s *certamen* (cf. the editions of Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and Allen). Although the contest between Homer and Hesiod is situated in this *Table talk* in a context of an “abgedroschenes Grammatiker- (also Philologen) Thema”, Heldmann p. 12, it is discussed by Plutarch again in the *Septem Sapientem* as an example of the ancient Greeks’ way to ask riddles. For the contest and its reception in Roman imperial times see West, Heldmann (esp. 54–60), and Ford, 274–277, the

contended in epic verse. But I scorned all this hackneyed lore typical of the grammarians, dismissing also the “speakers” (*rhemonēs*) in Homer, as read by some for “throwers” (*hemones*) at the funeral at Patroclus, as if Achilles had awarded a prize in speaking in addition to the other prizes.” And then he continues to cite rare literature and historically noteworthy stories. The knowledge of grammarians is claimed to be of a very restricted area of texts, the grammarians allegedly citing always the same well-known and boring stories. In Plutarch’s own argumentation, an educated man (like Plutarch) knows much more, has wider reading and, thus, has always better arguments.

Not only minor learning but also a clear social distinction is drawn in *De exilio*. After having quoted Diogenes’ fearless speech to king Philip of Macedonia and Hannibal’s speech to King Antiochos, Plutarch writes (606C Loeb): “No, exile does not even destroy freedom of speech in geometers and grammarians, when they converse about the subjects they know and have been taught; how, then, could exile destroy it in good and worthy man, καλοὶ καὶ ἀγαθοὶ ἄνθρωποι.” Obviously, geometers and grammarians cannot belong to the *kaloι kai agathoi*. Moreover, the grammarians’ freedom of speech does not concern things that matter like those a Diogenes or a Hannibal had to say, but the grammarian’s freedom of speech is reduced to what he knows and has learned, thus, grammar, literature and their interpretation in a grammarian’s way, which differs of that of (other) educated men who love and know literature and philosophy.

The grammarians’ special and limited way to interpret literature receives another general statement in the *Amatorius* dialogue. The dispute is about the character and characterisation of the god Eros in literature (765E). A verse of Alcaeus is cited, and the standard interpretation of grammarians is given. Plutarch’s father illustrates that this very interpretation fails to get the deeper and multifaceted sense of Alcaeus’ verses.

The grammarians domain is citation and the explanations and interpretations of these citations. In the case of the *Table-talks* about the question “*Whether flower garlands should be used at drinking-parties*”,¹⁷ the host Erato, a wealthy musician, says: “I am not a grammarian to be expected to remember poems where we read of old-time victors in the games wearing crowns of

latter interpreting the verdict (Herodot’s victory) as a reflex of a social rather than an aesthetic ideal.

17 *Quaest. conv.* 3.1, commentary in Teodorsson, vol. 1. 282–313. Teodorsson translates the sentence with “I am no man of literary learning” and comments “However, Eraton’s speech was learned enough, containing quotations and allusions to literature and science.” By translating γραμματικός as “man of literary learning” he misses the point that the self-characterisation is just not about the deficiency of literary learning, but about the specific learning and understanding of grammarians. Plutarch does not seem to use the word *grammatikos* in another meaning than just the one of a professional grammarian.

flowers.” (646E – adapted Loeb translation) Although, the grammarians in Plutarch quite often cite Homer¹⁸ – in this specific case the province of grammarians is citation in general and in special the *Epinikia*, probably those of Pindar.

In conclusion to this short overview of general statements on grammarians in Plutarch, in which I left out as many remarks on grammarians as I have mentioned, one may say that in the *Moralia* grammarians are characterised as citing well-known authors and thus often uninteresting stories. Apart from citations, their main duty seems to be the analyses of words in just the way that fits best to their interpretation. They know many details like nicknames and the stories behind the characters in plays. They are focused on details and therefore fail to recognize the deeper sense of a verse. With their mania for detail they fail to pursue major tasks in their education of boys and young men, as well as in their interpretation of literature.¹⁹

However, these general statements about grammarians seem to be contradicted by the mere fact of the integration of grammarians as participants at Plutarch’s banquets and interlocutors in the dialogues of Plutarch and his friends. Nevertheless, although guests and acquaintances, even these individual grammarians are often characterised as men of minor learning and of a restricted area of knowledge and understanding.

In a handful of different treatises and in twelve of the *Table talks* grammarians are present and take an active part in the conversations. The following will exemplify some of these instances. Of these grammarians, only three Theon,²⁰ Marcus and Protogenes seem to belong to the inner circle of

18 In D’Ippolito’s work with the promising title ‘L’Omero di Plutarco’ as well as in Schläpfer’s work the question who is citing Homer in Plutarch’s treatises or dialogues is not discussed; for a discussion of the context of Homer-citations for one single dialogue see Díaz Lavado.

19 Although differences in the importance and stress of these characterisations depend on the various speakers and their standing in the context of the dialogues, none of these assertions is smoothed or contradicted by other speakers.

20 It seems likely that not all “Theons” in Plutarch’s *Moralia* are one and the same person. Puech (1992), 4886 identifies at least two distinct characters: the grammarian, supposed to come from Egypt, present in Rome at *Quaest. conv.* 8.8, and probably in Greece at the table of Mestrius Florus, *Quaest. conv.* 1.9. He is also referred to in *De facie* 923F, 931E, 932D, 938C, 938F. The second person is Theon, ὁ ἑταῖρος and a close friend of Plutarch (e.g. *De E apud Delph.* 386D; *Quaest. conv.* 1.4 (620A); 8.4 (724D), often present in the *Moralia* treatise and *Table Talks* – and according to Babut 244 sq. with stoic ideas at least in the *De E ap. Delph.* 386D – and supposed to come from Boeotia or Phocis because of his son’s name ‘Kaphisias’. Ziegler col. 686 omits the grammarian in his prosopography.

Plutarch's friends and are present at several parties. In one *Table talk*²¹ “*Why fresh water instead of sea water is used to wash clothes*” Theon obviously did not understand Chrysippus choice of texts and examples. He is rebuked by Themistocles, a Stoic philosopher (626E); and a few paragraphs later Theon is even corrected by Plutarch himself, because Theon not only did not get Aristotle's point on the qualities of sea-water but, and this seems even more striking, did not consider several different verses of Homer's *Odyssey* but had cited only one and was thus misled in his interpretation (627E). The second time we meet Theon at a banquet,²² he gives a wrong explanation concerning the Pythagorean's abstinence of fish and is again corrected by Plutarch himself (728F).

Protogenes, another grammarian, is present at three parties.²³ In one *Table talk*²⁴ he argues against Plato and gives an Homeric interpretation of men's breathing and feeding (698D). The grammarian as well as the explanations of a physician are both refuted by Plutarch himself, who argues in favour of Plato's explanation. On another occasion, a discussion “*Why at various athletic festivals different kinds of wreaths are awarded*”,²⁵ Protogenes, the grammarian, and Praxiteles, a geographer, claim to contribute to the discussion from their own research, although both give only examples and nothing of substance. They are both ridiculed by another guest with the words (724D Loeb): “This does not have the odour of scholarly historical research or of geographical treatise; it is drawn right out of the Peripatetic commonplace-collections, in an attempt at rhetorical persuasion.” As in the general statements already mentioned, the reproach is citation of well-known texts, nothing new, and details instead of a substantial discussions of fundamental questions.²⁶

21 *Quaest. conv.* 1.9, commentary by Teodorsson, vol. 1. 145–155.

22 *Quaest. conv.* 8.8: “*Why the Pythagoreans used to abstain from fish more strictly than from any other living creature.*” Cf. Teodorsson's commentary vol. 3. 238–258.

23 The name ‘Protogenes’ is given to the participants in *Quaest. conv.* 7.1; 8.4 and 9.2, 12 and 13, in *Amat.* 749B–750B and *De sera* 563B, C and E. Probably all these Protogeneses are one and the same person: he is a grammarian (in the *Table Talks*) from Tarsus (*Amat.*) and likely to be a stoic (*Amat.*) according to Babut 245 sq., cf. Ziegler 666 sq., Teodorson 309 sq., Puech (1992), 4874.

24 *Quaest. conv.* 7.1: “*Against those who find fault with Plato for saying that drinks passes through the lungs.*” Participants are Nicias, a physician, Protogenes, a grammarian, Plutarch's good and learned friend L. Mestrius Florus, Plutarch and an unnamed guest. Cf. the commentary Teodorsson, vol. 3. 16–33.

25 *Quaest. conv.* 8.4, cf. Teodorsson, vol. 3.196–211 with commentary.

26 The same features occur in the third of Protogenes' participations at a banquet, on which occasion Plutarch gives a much more erudite answer than Protogenes had given (737E), *Quaest.conv.* 9.2: “*What is the reason why alpha stands first in the alphabet?*”

The grammarian Marcus is given a quite different characterisation.²⁷ He seems to be a closer friend of Plutarch and is treated with respect. In one *próblema* “*Why the chorus of the phyle Aiantis at Athens is never judged last*”,²⁸ Marcus adds a nice aspect to the discussion. Although the argument is claimed to be antiquarian, another guest states that even if it does not serve another purpose, it is a suitable kind of training for discussions in general (628A). And on another occasion, when the question is discussed why Plato said that *the soul of Ajax came twentieth to the drawing of lots*, the grammarian Hylas gives an awkward answer concerning Plato, and is made fun of by two of the participants, Sospis and Lamprias, Plutarch’s brother (*Quaest. conv.* 9.5, 739E–740D). But Marcus, the grammarian and friend of Plutarch, decreases the tension, safes the situation and gives a convincing and simple explanation (740E–F). The next speaker Menephyllus, the Peripatetic, underlines, that because even a grammarian (i.e. Marcus) could answer the question, this question could not have been meant to be impertinent or insolent to the grammarian Hylas.

But not only Marcus but also Demetrius, a participant in the dialogue *De defectu oraculorum*, is not disqualified as a typical grammarian, but on the contrary is given a very positive character (409E–438D). In this treatise the difference between the general statements of the minor abilities and mediocrity of grammarians as a group and a positive picture of an individual grammarian, Demetrius, becomes obvious. Demetrius of Tarsus is good humoured, self confident, and gets things to the point even if other participants give long and winding explanations. Demetrius has a certain social standing and made explorations in Britain on the emperor’s orders.²⁹ He is a learned man, although typical for a grammarian he knows Homer by heart, different to Plutarch’s brother Lamprias who asked him to quote some verses. In the same text, one of the guests tries to tease him twice with general statements about the boring and laborious interpretations of grammarians, but is only laughed at by the good humoured Demetrius. Even though Demetrius is introduced to the dialogue together with Cleombrotus both as holy men, obviously an ironic characterisation, only Cleombrotus turns out to be credulous and a little simple-minded, but Demetrius poses the central question, adds interesting details and gives a turn to the conversation.

27 On Marcus see Puech (1992), 4859. He is only known by the two table talks 1.10 (628B) and 9.5 (740E).

28 *Quaest. conv.* 1.10, cf. Teodorsson, vol. 1. 155–165 with commentary.

29 *De def. orac.* 419E, cf. 410A. There is an ongoing discussion on the identity of Demetrius with a dedicator of two votives in York (*RIB* 1. 662 sq.), the duties of Demetrius and his relation to the emperor Domitian, cf. Dessau and Puech (1992), 4844.

In fact, it seems that the characterisation and literary function of grammarians in the *Moralia* are twofold. In most of the treatises and dialogues, the questions are often philosophical or at least they argue with philosophical categories. In these contexts, the grammarians, although ‘intellectuals’ like philosophers and sophists, are characterised as of limited intellectual capacities.

However, in the *Table Talks*, a genre different to the other treatises of the *Moralia*,³⁰ the solving of the questions and problems does not seem the main aim of these discussions, but often enough eruditeness, sophistication, extravagance and elegance in argumentation and citation are of major importance. In these (after)dinner conversations, grammarians take part, and not always in such a manner we would expect to see or better to hear them after having read some of their characterisation in the other treatises or the sometimes nasty general remarks in the *Table Talks* as well.

One may doubt, if some of the treatises of the *Moralia* are indebted to a (mainly lost) literary tradition which may be found in writings of sophists and philosophers, in which low-grading grammarians’ intellectual capacities are made fun of, whereas in some of the *Table Talks* ‘real life’ is found where at least some interesting, sophisticated and (on local or international level) well-known grammarians are integrated into the world of banquets and intellectual discussions. However, we should not forget, that the *Table Talks* are literature (and of course not a diary or documentary) and they are shaped on literary norms and traditions as well.

Nevertheless, most of the grammarians in Plutarch’s work are of minor learning and understanding similar to their characterisation we find earlier in the first century in Seneca’s letters and later, in the second century A.D., in Aulus Gellius’ *Attic Nights*.

Exceptions to the rule exist and it may be asked if these two individual examples (Marcus and Demetrius) may be a small crumb of bread for the grammarians as potential readers of the texts,³¹ or if Marcus and Demetrius are just belonging to those obviously existing scholar-grammarians, learned man and interesting partners in discussion, we hear from in the times of Cicero, we know of by Statius describing his father, and meet them again one hundred years after Plutarch as literary personae and interesting and learned participants in the table-talks of Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistai* (cf. Horster).

30 Lamberton, 5 f. characterises this “sort of intellectual home movie” (a somewhat loose and misleading description) as being “edited down to the frame, and the principal events are turns of phrase, evocations of ancient poetry, and ingenious variations on thorny intellectual problems.”

31 Hor. *Ep.* 1.19.35–47, cf. *Sat.* 1.10.38 on Tarpa, the critic and grammarian listening to a recitation.

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La dinastía de los Ptolomeos en Plutarco: etopeya de los personajes

Mónica Durán Mañas

La dinastía griega de los Ptolomeos, de origen macedónico, reinó en Egipto desde la muerte de Alejandro Magno, el 323 a. C., hasta la de Cleopatra, el 30 a. C., como consecuencia de la conquista romana. Estos tres siglos se caracterizan por ser un periodo de transición, pleno de cambios, especialmente en el ámbito político¹. En la esfera cultural destaca el enorme esfuerzo de ciertas figuras intelectuales que se esmeran en alcanzar la máxima precisión en todos los ámbitos del saber. Los monarcas, conscientes ya del alcance y la repercusión del conocimiento en la evolución de los pueblos, potenciaron significativamente este desarrollo, de modo que la cultura helenística será sentida como elemento unificador². Algunos de sus miembros destacaron por su decisiva actuación en el acontecer histórico y dejaron importantes huellas en la civilización tanto en el terreno político, como en el filosófico, el científico o el literario. De ellos nos habla Plutarco: de Ptolomeo I Soter, rey de Egipto y fundador de la dinastía (323–283 a. C.)³; Ptolomeo II Filadelfo (283–246 a. C.); Ptolomeo III Evergetes (246–222 a. C.); Ptolomeo IV Filopátor (221–205 a.C.); Ptolomeo V Epífanos (205–181 a. C.); Ptolomeo VIII Evergetes II (146–117 a. C.); Ptolomeo IX Látiro (117–81 a. C.); Ptolomeo XII Auletes (80–51 a. C.), Ptolomeo XIII (51–47 a.C.) y Ptolomeo XIV (47–44 a.C.).

Autores como Jacob-Polignac (p. 143) inciden en que ningún historiador antiguo ha dejado constancia creíble del retrato moral de los Ptolomeos, de modo que tan sólo tenemos las obras de los reyes para valorar su comportamiento. Por este motivo, Plutarco es una fuente valiosa en tanto que concreta algunos rasgos del carácter de estos personajes. Así pues, en las páginas que siguen, me propongo destacar mediante el análisis de la etopeya de estos

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- 1 Rostovtzeff, vol. I, 20: «De 323 a 280 a. C. hubo siempre alguno de los principales generales de Alejandro que se consideraba su sucesor, y este pretendiente a su sucesión se vio combatido siempre por los otros gobernantes... Hasta que llegó el poder a la segunda generación de grandes familias helenísticas reinantes, no arraigó la idea de reinos helenísticos separados e independientes y un cierto equilibrio de poderes entre ellos. Fue Ptolomeo I Soter, de la vieja generación, quien preparó el terreno para este cambio en la mentalidad política».
 - 2 Sobre el sentimiento de unidad de las monarquías helenísticas cf. Rostovtzeff, vol. I, 255.
 - 3 Las fechas se refieren al periodo en que reinaron.

monarcas⁴ –respectivamente en las *Vitae* y en *Moralia*–, cómo el contenido se halla vinculado indefectiblemente con el quehacer didáctico-moral, siguiendo en ello las investigaciones de C. B. R. Pelling.

Raras veces se detiene Plutarco en los rasgos físicos de los monarcas y, cuando lo hace, la prosopopeya viene a resaltar el entramado de las etopeyas⁵. En efecto, nada dice Plutarco de la descripción externa de los monarcas ptolemaicos a excepción del pequeño detalle implícito en el apodo de alguno de ellos. Cada rey es caracterizado por un sobrenombre que lo distingue de los demás homónimos, pues era costumbre llamar a la mayoría de los miembros de cada dinastía del mismo modo. Las razones de este fenómeno son diversas. Por ejemplo, por amistad, Pirro, que siempre tenía en su pensamiento a Ptolomeo I Soter y a Berenice, llamó a su hijo Ptolomeo y a una ciudad fundada por él en el Epiro Berenicida (*Pyrrh.* VI).

La elección de uno u otro apodo se explica, generalmente, en función de una hazaña, un rasgo físico o una virtud. Así, en *Cor.* XI 2–3, Plutarco afirma que Ptolomeo I recibió el sobrenombre de Soter (Salvador) por una acción; Ptolomeo II fue llamado Filadelfo por ser amante de su hermana; por su virtud Ptolomeo III fue denominado Evergetes (Benefactor) y por un rasgo físico Ptolomeo VIII fue apodado Fiscón (Barrigón). También a algunos reyes las burlas les dieron motes como a Ptolomeo IX Látiro (Garbanzo). Paralelamente, los nombres de los monarcas helenísticos comenzaron a hacerse habituales⁶ de forma que influyeron, no sólo en la onomástica de las clases populares, sino también en las más diversas esferas de la vida cotidiana⁷. Por esta razón, encontramos otros personajes que, con el mismo nombre, no guardan ninguna relación con los reyes.

4 Me limito en ello a los reyes, pues tratar también las reinas excedería los límites propuestos para este trabajo.

5 Sucede así, por ejemplo, con algunos de los Antigonidas: Antígono I Monoftalmo es grande y viejo como inmensa y obsoleta es también su ambición (*Demetr.* XIX), aunque su deseo es firme como lo es también su cuerpo (*An sen. resp. gerend. sit.* 791e); los vicios y virtudes de Demetrio se hallan también en consonancia con la ambigüedad de su apariencia (*Demetr.* II); etc.

6 Lo mismo sucede con los nombres de las reinas: Berenice, esposa de Ptolomeo Soter; Berenice II, esposa de Ptolomeo Evergetes; Arsínoe, esposa de Ptolomeo Lago; Arsínoe II, esposa y hermana de Ptolomeo Filadelfo; Arsínoe IV, esposa y hermana de Ptolomeo IV; etc.

7 Así, por ejemplo, Plutarco se refiere a unos vasos exhibidos en procesión llamados Antigonidas y Seléucidas por el nombre del monarca que los había hecho fabricar primero (*Aem.* XXXIII). También en *Demetr.* X los atenienses añadieron dos tribus, la Demetriadé y la Antigoníde, tras la proclamación de estos personajes como reyes.

Plutarco se centra, sobre todo, en el ascenso al poder de los primeros fundadores de las distintas monarquías helenísticas⁸, dando por supuesto que los demás llegan a él por derecho sucesorio⁹. Así ocurre con Ptolomeo I Soter, uno de los generales y amigos de Alejandro, a quien éste apreciaba¹⁰ hasta el punto de colmarle de honores al regreso de su exilio en el año 336 a. C. (*Alex.* X 5). Según el queronense, recibió el título de rey cuando volvió de la derrota de Salamina ante Demetrio, esto es, el año 306 a. C. y obtuvo honores divinos por su ayuda a la isla de Rodas¹¹. De entre todos sus enfrentamientos con los diádocos¹², Plutarco se detiene especialmente en los que tuvo con Demetrio y los suyos¹³, quienes pretendían libertar a toda Grecia «esclavizada (καταδεδουλωμένην) por Casandro y Ptolomeo» (*Demetr.* VIII) delatando, en esta afirmación, su patriotismo panhelénico¹⁴. Sin embargo, apenas menciona el autor los conflictos con todos los demás (a excepción de los que se produjeron con Pérdicas, quien envía contra él una expedición en *Eum.* V 1).

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- 8 Vid. Plut., *Demetr.* XVIII para la formación de las monarquías helenísticas. Sobre la incorporación de esta temática en el género biográfico y cómo este fenómeno es privativo de Plutarco cf. Geiger, 89–94.
- 9 Plutarco destaca la fortuna de los monarcas frente a las dificultades que arrojó Alejandro, pues fueron nombrados reyes por sus padres –pudiendo permitirse una vida regalada entre festejos– y vencieron batallas que no les costaron ni una lágrima, como Ptolomeo II Filadelfo que llegó a anciano gracias a la buena fortuna (*De Alex. magn. fort. aut virt.* 341a).
- 10 El aprecio es recíproco, pues a Ptolomeo I Soter tampoco le importó exponer su vida por amistad al rey Alejandro cuando luchaba con arrojo junto a Limneo (*De fort. aut virt. Alex.* 327b y 344d).
- 11 Demetrio combate a los rodios por ser aliados de Ptolomeo (*Demetr.* XXI 1). El enfrentamiento termina con la alianza de los rodios con Antígono y Demetrio a condición de que éstos no fueran contra Ptolomeo (*Demetr.* XXII 7). Por esta hazaña recibió el sobrenombre de Soter.
- 12 Los sucesores de Alejandro se hicieron continuamente la guerra (πρὸς ἀλλήλους ὄντα συνεχῆ πόλεμον, *Demetr.* V).
- 13 Ptolomeo I Soter se enfrenta a Antígono y Demetrio por los territorios de Siria en la batalla de Gaza en la que resulta vencedor (*Demetr.* VI); en el año 309 a. C. Ptolomeo es derrotado por Demetrio en Halicarnaso (*Demetr.* VII 5) y luego en la batalla de Salamina (*Demetr.* XVII 6); Antígono, exaltado por los éxitos de Demetrio en Chipre inició una expedición contra Ptolomeo en Egipto (*Demetr.* XIX 1); éste acude en auxilio de los atenienses pero huye ante la flota de Demetrio (*Demetr.* XXXIII 7–8) y conquista Chipre a excepción de la ciudad de Salamina, donde tiene asediadas a la madre y a los niños de Demetrio (*Demetr.* XXXV 5).
- 14 Flacelière-Chambry (1977: 4) subrayan el patriotismo helénico del autor que se deja entrever en pasajes como *Demetr.* VIII: «Nunca ningún rey emprendió guerra más bella y justa que ésta» refiriéndose a la empresa de Antígono y Demetrio de liberar toda Grecia; o *Reg. et imp. apophth.* 182 f, donde Atenas es «El faro del Universo» en palabras de Antígono I Monoftalmo.

El queronense no se detiene en las rivalidades de los restantes Lágidas¹⁵ a no ser la pequeña indisposición de Cleómenes con Ptolomeo IV Filopátor (*Quomod. adul. ab amic. internos*, 53e). Esto es indicativo, a mi entender, de las prioridades narrativas de nuestro autor, orientadas siempre más hacia una finalidad paidéutica que al interés puramente histórico de los personajes y los acontecimientos en que se ven envueltos. Esto es claro si observamos cómo menciona Plutarco, casi de pasada, el hecho –aberrante desde nuestro punto de vista– de que en esta época de inestabilidad y de cambio, las dinastías de los Ptolomeos y los Seléucidas están repletas de asesinatos familiares¹⁶ (*Pyrrh.* IX y *Demetr.* III). A pesar de esta afirmación, el autor se muestra extremadamente selectivo a la hora de presentar los crímenes de la casa de los monarcas ptolemaicos. Es cierto que Ptolomeo IV Filopátor solicita la ayuda de Cleómenes para deshacerse de su hermano Magas, pues éste posee mucha más influencia sobre el ejército por ser el favorito de su madre Berenice (*Cleom.* LIV 3). Y también es cierto que Ptolomeo XIII hacía la guerra a su hermana y esposa Cleopatra en Pelusio (*Pomp.* LXXVII 1). Pero el silencio de Plutarco se antoja muy elocuente en cuanto se refiere, por ejemplo, a las guerras de Ptolomeo II Filadelfo contra su hermanastro Magas de Cirene; a los crímenes de Ptolomeo IV Filopátor contra su madre, su hermano y quizá su hermana y esposa Arsínoe III; al asesinato de Ptolomeo VII Neofilopátor a manos de su tío Ptolomeo VIII; a la muerte de Berenice III por instigación de su esposo Ptolomeo XI; a la muerte de Berenice IV por orden de su padre Ptolomeo XII y al envenenamiento de Ptolomeo XIV por su esposa y hermana Cleopatra VII, entre otros.

Con todo, tampoco es difícil entrever la solidez de los lazos familiares. De este modo, si Ptolomeo I Soter nombra, dos años antes de morir¹⁷, corregente a su hijo es porque hay una buena relación entre ambos. De no ser así, es claro que esta corregencia habría sido del todo imposible. En la misma línea, Ptolomeo XIV, apenas salido de la niñez¹⁸ (ἡλικίαν ἀντίπαιδα), se siente responsable de la deuda de amistad y gratitud a Pompeyo como consecuencia de los servicios rendidos a su padre (*Pomp.* LXXVI 7). En este sentido, pues, la

15 Los Ptolomeos, más que en conquistar territorios, se esforzaron en conservar los que tenían, sabedores de su gran riqueza. Cf. Jacob-Polignac, 44 y 139–40.

16 En contraposición con la familia de los Antigónidas en la que Filipo fue el único que mató a un hijo (*Arat.* LIV).

17 Cuando contaba con ochenta y dos años, nombró a su hijo corregente el 285 a. C. y murió en 283 a. C.

18 En este momento tenía trece años. Vid. nota a este pasaje en Flacelière-Chambry (1973: 312). También en *Pomp.* LXXVII 2, Ptolomeo era muy jovencito (ὁ Πτολεμαῖος ἦν κομιδῆ νέος) y, por ello, Potino tuvo que dirigir todos los asuntos. Algunos hacían responsable a este Potino de que César interviniera en la guerra contra Egipto (*Caes.* XLVIII 5).

realidad moralizante se halla en el tejido de las etopeyas y la caracterización de los reyes subordinada a la παιδεία. Quizás por este motivo, el queronense se detiene algo más en las alianzas¹⁹ de estos reyes, ya que conforman un escenario idóneo para mostrar el proceder del alma humana en situaciones de conflicto. En consecuencia, observamos cómo le interesa más a nuestro autor destacar los aspectos positivos de los dinastas, mientras que los negativos sirven para ilustrar a aquéllos por oposición. El queronense pone así de relieve la benevolencia de algunos monarcas que se extiende incluso para con sus enemigos. Por ejemplo, en una lucha entre Ptolomeo I Soter y Demetrio, pierde éste último gran parte de sus soldados, su tienda, su dinero y sus efectos personales. Pero el monarca se lo devuelve²⁰ todo y le dirige palabras llenas de bondad y de humanidad²¹ (εὐγνώμονα καὶ φιλόφρωνον ἀνειπῶν λόγον, *Demetr.* V). La generosidad del rey hacia su adversario parece indicar que, para él, la lucha no debe implicar necesariamente crueldad, resentimiento²² o venganza. De hecho, una vez que tomó Salamina de Chipre donde se hallaban los hijos y la madre de Demetrio (*Demetr.* XXXV 1), Ptolomeo los liberó colmándolos de presentes y honores (*Demetr.* XXXVIII). También a Pirro, otro de sus enemigos, trata Ptolomeo I con generosidad cuando, tras la batalla de Pisos, lo recibe como rehén (*Pyrrh.* IV 5). El carácter bondadoso y presto a ayudar de Ptolomeo II Filadelfo puede

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- 19 Por ejemplo, Ptolomeo, Lisímaco, Seleuco y, posteriormente, Pirro se coligaron contra Demetrio (*Demetr.* XLIV 1–3 y *Pyrrh.* XI 2–3) pero, luego, Pirro recibió una carta falsa de Ptolomeo I Soter –en realidad procedente de Lisímaco–, conocedor de que Pirro no podía negarse a nada que viniera de Ptolomeo. Pirro descubrió finalmente el engaño por la formalidad de la salutación (*Pyrrh.* VI 6–7). También habla Plutarco de la alianza entre Arato y Ptolomeo III Evergetes. Como resultado del acercamiento entre ambos, aquél hizo de Ptolomeo el aliado de los aqueos dándole la dirección de los asuntos (*Arat.* XXIV 4). Mientras vivió Arato, la Confederación Aquea permaneció subordinada a las armas de los macedonios e hizo la corte a Ptolomeo III Evergetes, a Antígono y a Filipo, que intervenían en los asuntos de Grecia (*Phil.* VIII 4).
- 20 En justa correspondencia, cuando Demetrio captura a Cilles, general de Ptolomeo, lo libera junto con sus amigos colmándolos de regalos (*Demetr.* VI 5 y *Ant.* LXXXIX 5).
- 21 De un modo semejante trató Antíoco III Sidetes al enemigo cuando los judíos le pidieron tregua para su fiesta y no sólo se la concedió sino que les ayudó en los preparativos con ofrendas. Finalizada la fiesta, se le entregaron (*Reg. et imp. apophth.* 184d).
- 22 En una anécdota, el monarca manifiesta su templanza cuando, para poner en evidencia la ignorancia de un gramático, le pregunta en tono burlón quién era el padre de Peleo. En la respuesta, se ve pagado con la misma moneda por aquél, pues tampoco estaba claro quién era el suyo. Ptolomeo dijo entonces con mucha sensatez: «Si soportar una broma no es propio de un rey, ni siquiera lo es el darla». (*De cohib. ira*, 458a). En efecto, corrían rumores de que Ptolomeo I Soter era hijo bastardo de Filipo II y, por tanto, hermanastro de Alejandro, lo cual suponía, en el fondo, un gran prestigio para él. Cf. Macurdy, 102.

leerse asimismo entre líneas cuando Arato²³, al ver su ciudad en peligro, recurre a este monarca para que le ayude en *Arat.* XII: «viendo una única esperanza en la amistad y humanidad de Ptolomeo (μίαν ὁρῶν ἐλπίδα τὴν Πτολεμαίου φιλονεικίαν)». Ptolomeo III Evergetes se muestra asimismo receptivo con aquéllos que precisan de ayuda, pues acoge a Cleómenes, vencido en Selasia en el año 222 a. C. por Arato de Sición, aunque Ptolomeo le pidió a sus hijos y a su madre Cratesiclea como rehenes (*Cleom.* XXII 4). Vemos incluso cómo se duele el monarca de sus acciones y trata de compensar los errores cometidos con Cleómenes, por quien llegó a sentir un gran respeto y se arrepintió de haberlo abandonado²⁴ a Antígono. Por ello, «lo colmó de honores y de señales de amistad e incluso prometió enviarle de nuevo a Grecia²⁵ con naves y dinero para hacerle recuperar la realeza, además de acordar para él también una pensión de veinticuatro talentos...» (*Cleom.* XXXII). Sin embargo, de entre todos los monarcas posteriores a Ptolomeo III Evergetes, sólo vuelve a aparecer el tema de la hospitalidad a propósito de Ptolomeo IX Látiro con respecto a Lúculo²⁶.

Como hemos podido observar al comienzo de este trabajo, en la relación de Ptolomeos que pueblan la obra plutarquea, no parece casual el hecho de que el autor mencione, siquiera brevemente, a todos los monarcas de la dinastía a excepción de los Ptolomeos VI, VII, X y XI. El silencio de Plutarco al respecto puede deberse, bien a la elección de ocultar cierta información, o bien, a la falta de fuentes sólidas sobre el periodo en cuestión²⁷. Ahora bien, es precisamente durante el reinado de los dos primeros –junto con el de Ptolomeo VIII– y a consecuencia de los conflictos internos que hubo entre los miembros de la dinastía, cuando el declive definitivo de la monarquía se hizo patente en el país del Nilo. El gobierno de Ptolomeo VI Filométor supuso un periodo de paz sin grandes repercusiones, pues una vez en el trono –tras la regencia de su madre y los eunucos Euleo y Leneo– tan sólo tuvo que hacer frente a la rivalidad con su hermano Ptolomeo VIII a causa del poder. A su vez, el reinado de Ptolomeo VII Neofilopátor fue tan breve que habría sido tal vez

23 Arato tenía esperanzas sobre Egipto aunque veía lejano el conseguirlo (*Arat.* IV 3). Pero luego acudió a Ptolomeo para solicitar auxilio en 251–250 a. C. (*Arat.* XII 1).

24 Ptolomeo dejó de ayudar económicamente a Cleómenes antes de la batalla de Selasia.

25 El viejo Ptolomeo murió antes de haber reenviado a Cleómenes (*Cleom.* XXXIII 1).

26 Cuando éste (114–57 a. C.) arribó a Alejandría, tras haber perdido su flota en un enfrentamiento con los piratas, fue magníficamente recibido. Ptolomeo, que era aún muy jovencito, lo acogió de maravilla, lo cual nunca antes se había hecho con ningún otro general extranjero (*Luc.* II 7–8). Ptolomeo se retiró pacíficamente de la alianza, temeroso de hacer la guerra, aunque le dio naves y le regaló una esmeralda engastada en oro de las más raras y preciosas con su retrato grabado en ella. Lúculo tuvo que aceptarla para que no se considerase que se marchaba de Egipto enemistado con el rey y se le persiguiese en el mar (*Luc.* III 1).

27 Cf. Lozano, 36.

necesario mencionar su asesinato en el año 145 a. C. por parte de su tío Ptolomeo VIII Evergetes II, hecho que produjo una verdadera consternación con la consecuente crisis dinástica. A partir de este crimen fue llamado llamado «Κακεργέτης» por los alejandrinos²⁸, sobrenombre que también obvia Plutarco prefiriendo dar cuenta del apodo referente a su corpulencia física²⁹ (Fiscón). Sin embargo, acerca del carácter de este monarca, tan sólo dice el queronense que se portaba en ocasiones con crueldad y orgullo, lo cual converge en una irreconciliable dicotomía desde una perspectiva humanista, pues, paradójicamente, se tenía por un amante de la enseñanza (*Quomod. adul. ab amico internosc.*, 60a). A su vez, Ptolomeo X derrocó a su propio hermano con ayuda de su madre a la que probablemente hizo asesinar y, posteriormente, fue expulsado de Egipto por haber profanado la tumba de Alejandro y protegido a los israelitas. Por último, Ptolomeo XI Alejandro II reinó sólo tres semanas, pues fue linchado por la multitud a causa de haber asesinado a su prometida Berenice III, viuda, a su vez, de Ptolomeo X y, por tanto, su madrastra. En consecuencia, la omisión de estos monarcas tan poco paradigmáticos parece responder a una cuidadosa e intencionada selección del material histórico.

Es significativo que tan sólo con los dos primeros monarcas de la dinastía relaciona Plutarco un interés por la cultura. Por ejemplo, Ptolomeo I Soter instituyó el culto a Serapis (*De Is. et Os.* 361f–362a) como resultado de un sincretismo entre las tradiciones religiosas griegas y egipcias, culto que promocionó su hijo Ptolomeo II. Por motivos semejantes, éste adoptó la costumbre de raigambre faraónica de establecer bodas entre hermanos. Estos dos reyes fueron los impulsores de la Biblioteca y el Museo³⁰ e hicieron grandes esfuerzos por potenciar el desarrollo del saber. Los siguientes se limitaron a continuar su obra en la medida de sus posibilidades o, en algunos casos, a destruirla. De este modo, Plutarco deja constancia –en alguna referencia siquiera fugaz– del interés de Ptolomeo I Soter por las cuestiones intelectuales³¹. Sabemos que escribió los hechos de Alejandro y fue esta narración una de las principales fuentes para el conocimiento de sus hazañas, aunque para nosotros se haya perdido³². Plutarco a este propósito afirma en dos ocasiones haber consultado personalmente el material: en *De fort. aut virt. Alex.* 327d–e, al hacer unas precisiones sobre el número de soldados que tenía; y en *Alex.*

28 Cf. Ateneo, XII 73: ὑπὸ δὲ Ἀλεξανδρέων Κακεργέτης ὀνομαζόμενος.

29 Por lo general, cuanto peor o más débil era un monarca, más pretencioso y adulator era el apodo.

30 Ptolomeo I Soter, además de potenciar la ciencia y la cultura a través de la Biblioteca, heredada de Aristóteles, y el Museo, estableció el culto a Serapis, reformó el ejército, el sistema monetario y la administración.

31 Plutarco, en *Non poss. suav. viv. secund. Epicur.* 1095e, lo menciona entre otros personajes importantes de la cultura griega cuya opinión tiene un peso notable.

32 Sabemos que fue utilizada cuatro siglos y medio después por Arriano.

XLVI 2, donde Ptolomeo, junto a otros historiadores del general (Aristóbulo, Cares, Hecateo de Eretria, Anticlides, Filón de Tebas, Filipo de Teangela, Filipo de Calcis, Duris de Samos), niega la veracidad del encuentro entre Alejandro y la amazona en Zadracarta³³. También se interesa este rey por las obras de arte y sabemos por Plutarco que le envió sesenta talentos a Nicias³⁴ por su obra *Descenso a los infiernos*, aunque éste no quiso venderla por el apego que le tenía (*Non poss. suav. viv. secund. Epicur.* 1093e).

En la misma línea, Ptolomeo II continuó la obra comenzada por su padre. En términos generales, pese a su gran actividad en la esfera cultural y la prosperidad de su corte, apenas contamos con fuentes sustanciosas para un buen conocimiento de estos años. La debilidad de Filadelfo por las obras artísticas le permite a Arato ser bienvenido cuando llega en busca de ayuda a la corte egipcia pues, siendo un fino conocedor de los trabajos de los grandes maestros, solía comprar pinturas y enviárselas al rey (*Arat.* XII 6). Tenemos asimismo constancia por el plutarqueo *Adversus Colotem* de que Colotes de Lámpsaco, discípulo de Epicuro durante los años 306–5 a. C., le había dedicado su libro (*Advers. Col.* 1107e)³⁵, dato que hemos de relacionar inevitablemente con su actividad protectora de las artes. No obstante, Martos Montiel (p. 35–6) opina que si Colotes escribió su libro durante una visita a Atenas, como sugieren Einarson-De Lacy (p. 154), es posible que se lo dedicara al rey con motivo de su alianza con esta ciudad en la guerra cremonídea (267–262) que acabó con la entrega de Atenas a Antígono Gonatas en 262 a. C. La presencia de Ptolomeo en Atenas se entiende bien si tenemos en cuenta que Arsínoe II, esposa de Lisímaco³⁶ y, posteriormente, de su propio hermano Ptolomeo II, tenía gran interés en colocar a su hijo como rey de Macedonia y, por otra parte, los ciudadanos atenienses necesitaban apoyarse en alguien de prestigio y con poder.

Al igual que ocurre con el resto de las monarquías helenísticas, el comienzo de la decadencia se debe al carácter perverso y depravado de sus reyes. Por ello, si bien de los dos primeros monarcas Plutarco desvela también algunos

33 Los historiadores de Alejandro Clitarco, Policlito, Onesícrito, Antígenes y el autor de recopilaciones Istro afirman que realmente sucedió. Plutarco muestra así una enorme erudición en el manejo de las fuentes.

34 Plinio fecha al pintor ateniense Nicias en torno al año 332 a. C., por lo que la anécdota no puede referirse a otro que a Ptolomeo I Soter.

35 La obra de Colotes *Sobre la imposibilidad de vivir según las doctrinas de los otros filósofos* no nos ha llegado. Cf. Martos Montiel (p. 35) donde se justifica, además, la cronología para suponer que se trata de Ptolomeo II Filadelfo.

36 Struve (p. 806) se equivoca al pensar que esta Arsínoe II es hija de Lisímaco y esposa de Ptolomeo II, pues en el decreto de Cremónides (*I.G.* II, 332, 333. Ditt. *Syll* 434) del año 266 a. C., cuatro años posterior a la muerte de Arsínoe II, se dice que su marido siguió la política de sus antepasados y de su hermana en este empeño por la libertad de los griegos. Cf. Macurdy, 119.

defectos³⁷, el declive de la dinastía ptolemaica comienza cuando, a la muerte de Ptolomeo III Evergetes³⁸, la corte cayó inmediatamente en un desarreglo, una intemperancia y una dominación femenina (*Cleom.* XXXIII) que muestra, una vez más, cómo el reino sin el monarca no es nada. La importancia de un rey, como sucede con casi todas las cosas, se pone de manifiesto cuando falta. Así pues, muy distinta es ya la actitud de su sucesor Ptolomeo IV Filopátor, implacable en su castigo, cuando Cleómenes intenta una revolución en Alejandría, pero fracasa y se suicida en el año 219 a. C.: ordena meter su cuerpo en un saco de cuero y matar a sus hijos, su madre y cuantas mujeres le rodeaban (*Cleom.* XXXVIII 4). También Ptolomeo V Epífanos castiga duramente a aquellos que le incomodan de algún modo: en una ocasión el rey se vió reprendido delante de una embajada por su maestro Aristómenes porque dormitaba, tras lo cual, le mandó beber un vaso de veneno (*Quomod. quis suos in virt. sent. prof.* 71c). Y Ptolomeo XII Auletes se ve condicionado en extremo por el deseo de gloria (τῆς φιλοτιμίας αὐτοῦ) y, excitado a causa de la ira y el odio (ὑπ' ὀργῆς καὶ μίσους ὠρμημένου), tuvo que ser refrenado por Antonio cuando se proponía hacer un gran estrago entre los egipcios en Pelusio (*Ant.* III 8).

Por tanto, tras la muerte de Ptolomeo III Evergetes³⁹, comienza a pasos agigantados la degeneración de los Lágidas: de Ptolomeo IV Filopátor, sabemos que era afeminado, supersticioso (*De soll. anim.* 972c) y propenso a las fiestas (*Quomod. adul. ab amic. internosc.* 56e–f), además de débil y cobarde (*Cleom.* XXXIII). Dejó pruebas de su ostentación en la afición poco usual a construir barcos enormes⁴⁰ y, por ello, Plutarco afirma que la nave de cuarenta remeros sólo servía para la exhibición y no para ser utilizada (*Demetr.* XLIII 5). En *Cleom.* XXXVI 7 se presenta como un rey saltimbanqui (μητραγύρτου βασιλέως) dotado de tímpano (τύμπανον) en el tíason (Θίασον) en una evidente conexión con los ritos orgiásticos. Este rey «corrompió tanto su alma por las mujeres y la bebida (οὕτω διέφθαρτο τὴν ψυχὴν ὑπὸ γυναικῶν καὶ πότων) que,

37 Por ejemplo, Ptolomeo I Soter tenía ciertas cualidades para preservar sus bienes materiales, pues a menudo cenaba y dormía en casa de sus amigos y si alguna vez invitaba a alguien les hacía traer las copas, los manteles y las mesas, pues decía que era más propio de un rey enriquecerse que ser rico (*Reg. et imp. apophth.*, 181 f). De modo semejante, Ptolomeo II Filadelfo es criticado por su relación incestuosa con su hermana y esposa Arsínoe en *De lib. ed.* 11a.

38 Plutarco afirma que era incesante en su dedicación al entrenamiento militar, tanto de sus tropas como de su persona. Por ello, algunos lo alababan, aunque Filopemen consideraban que esto era, sencillamente, lo propio de un rey (*Phil.* XIII 6).

39 Plutarco no insiste en la gran actividad protectora de las artes que este rey llevó a cabo. Cf. Jacob-Polignac, 58.

40 García-Santana, 73.

cuando estaba más sobrio y muy serio, celebraba fiestas de iniciación (τελετὸς⁴¹ τελεῖν) y reunía gente en su palacio con un tímpano (*Cleom.* XXXIII 2). Dejaba arreglar los asuntos más importantes del reino por su amante Agatoclea y por la madre de ella, la entrometida Enante». Por ello, no resulta extraño el que Cleómenes, antes de ordenar el suicidio de los suyos, exclame: «No es nada sorprendente que las mujeres sean dueñas de los hombres que rehuyen la libertad» (*Cleom.* XXXVII 12). En definitiva, este tipo de comportamientos marca el comienzo de la decadencia de la dinastía ptolemaica en Egipto, un país gobernado ahora por mujeres. Con todo, el monarca era absolutamente consciente de ello o, al menos, eso quiere entender Plutarco. Afirma, en efecto, que, cuando a la muerte de Antígono, Cleómenes se ve en la necesidad de partir hacia el Peloponeso con los suyos y ruega a Ptolomeo que le deje marchar, éste «no lo escuchó permaneciendo entre mujeres, tíasos y fiestas» considerando cuán peligroso sería dejar marchar a un hombre que había podido observar hasta qué punto estaba enferma la monarquía egipcia (*Cleom.* XXXIV 2). Este buen conocimiento de las debilidades de la corte por parte de Cleómenes queda manifiesto también cuando Nicágoras trae al rey Ptolomeo IV Filopátor unos hermosos caballos de guerra y Cleómenes le dice: «Sería mejor que hubieras traído sambucas y hombres depravados, pues estas cosas urgen más ahora al rey» (*Cleom.* XXXV 3). De modo semejante, Ptolomeo VIII Evergetes II tocaba los timbales y realizaba sus iniciaciones (*Quomod. adul. ab amico internosc.* 60a) y Ptolomeo XII Auletes llevaba colgadas la *forbeia*⁴² y las flautas (*Quomod. adul. ab amic. internosc.* 56f).

Si bien Ptolomeo II Filadelfo se dejaba ya influir por las opiniones de cuantos se hallan a su alrededor (*Arat.* XV), será a partir de Ptolomeo IV Filopátor cuando los monarcas se muestren más volubles y fáciles de manejar. Así, este rey confía y se deja influir por las palabras de Cleómenes, pero después, su naturaleza cobarde le domina por completo: «la debilidad de Ptolomeo intensificaba su cobardía (τοῦ Πτολεμαίου τῆς ἀσθενείας ἐπιτεινούσης τὴν δειλίαν), y, como sucede de ordinario a los que carecen de sentido, le llevó a temer todo y a desconfiar de todo el mundo pareciéndole lo más seguro...» (*Cleom.* XXXIII). También Ptolomeo XII Auletes se deja persuadir por Catón el Menor y cede sin batalla en los asuntos de Chipre a cambio de honores (*Cat. Mi.* XXXV). En otra ocasión, este mismo monarca, en un momento crítico, se

41 Parece referirse aquí a las fiestas de Dioniso donde la percusión ocupaba un lugar importante, las cuales fueron favorecidas por este rey durante su reinado, según muestra un edicto sobre papiro (*BGU* 1211) fechable en torno al 210 a. C. que decreta la inscripción de oficiantes de cultos dionisiacos en un registro de Alejandría y Cibeles. Cf. Jiménez San Cristóbal, 148 n. 50.

42 La *forbeia* era una banda de tela o cuero que rodeaba la cabeza del ejecutante para sostener los carrillos y regular así el sonido de la flauta. La sambuca era un antiguo instrumento de cuerda parecido al arpa.

decide a reconciliarse con sus ciudadanos –mejor que inmiscuirse en relaciones insanas con los romanos– por consejo de Catón, pero es finalmente persuadido de lo contrario por sus amigos (*Cat. Mi. XXXV*). Y parece que Pompeyo conoce bien el poder que la palabra ejerce sobre Ptolomeo XII pues, a propuesta del tribuno de la plebe Caninio, se dirige, sin ejército, a reconciliar al rey con los alejandrinos (*Pomp. XLIX 9–10*). La vulnerabilidad de este rey ante las opiniones de los demás se manifiesta igualmente en el terreno personal hasta el punto de que fueron los aduladores quienes provocaron sus extravagancias musicales (*Quomod. adul. ab amic. internosc. 56f*). En la misma tónica, Ptolomeo XIV se deja persuadir fácilmente pues, según Plutarco, «Timágenes dice que Ptolomeo salió de Egipto sin necesidad, abandonándole a persuasión de Teófanos, para proporcionar a Pompeyo la ocasión de un mando y de adelantar sus intereses» (*Pomp. XLIX*).

Como consecuencia de todo ello, la debilidad interna de los monarcas permitirá el sutil acercamiento de los romanos al trono egipcio. Nuevos personajes poblarán ahora el escenario de la actividad política: Cleopatra VII, una mujer, tras envenenar a su esposo–hermano Ptolomeo XIV, será el último monarca del reino ptolemaico. Su suicidio determinará, pues, no sólo el fin de la dinastía sino el de todo un periodo y marcará el comienzo de la época imperial.

En suma, podemos concluir que la figura de los Ptolomeos aparece mucho más en las *Vitae* que en *Moralia*. Además, el queronense se extiende especialmente a propósito de Ptolomeo I Soter mientras que, de los demás miembros de la dinastía apenas ofrece unas pinceladas.

Por otra parte, poco podemos precisar del silencio de Plutarco acerca de los Ptolomeos VI, VII, X y XI. En cualquier caso no parece fruto del azar, sobre todo teniendo en cuenta el amplio conocimiento que el autor poseía de la época y los monarcas (etapa mucho más oscura para nosotros, pues la mayoría de las fuentes que él sí pudo emplear se hallan perdidas para nosotros).

Plutarco no se detiene en la prosopopeya de sus monarcas ptolemaicos aunque los sobrenombres que describen un rasgo físico delatan a menudo una condición intrínseca a su carácter. Como moralista y, en definitiva, como ser humano, pretende el autor destacar las flaquezas que han llevado a la destrucción de grandes reinos y, en este sentido, su interés se dirige más hacia el conocimiento del alma que al de la historia en sí. De hecho, el modo en que sobrevuela los acontecimientos bélicos en que se vieron inmersos los Ptolomeos incita a pensar que no era éste su objetivo primordial, sino que le interesan más las situaciones de conflicto personal que las de conflicto político. En este punto, prefiere hacer hincapié en los aspectos positivos de sus personajes y que los negativos sirvan de contraste a aquéllos para mostrar, entre otras cosas, cómo el carácter vicioso de los reyes arrastra consigo la decadencia del reino. Así, por ejemplo, coincide en los tres primeros monarcas un

sentimiento de fraternidad con el enemigo de manera que vemos en ello una clara subordinación del contenido a la παιδεία.

Plutarco realza, pues, el carácter humanista de los dos primeros monarcas frente al de sus sucesores, dejando constancia del interés de aquéllos por la transmisión de la cultura. Sin embargo, a partir de Ptolomeo III Evergetes el reino se hunde paulatinamente debido al comportamiento abusivo de los reyes quienes no se privan ya de impartir duros castigos. Desde Ptolomeo IV Filopátor se dejan influir de modo determinante en cuestiones políticas y pierden el dominio de la situación del reino hasta el punto de que, a modo de títeres, son manejados incluso por mujeres.

Por tanto, el monarca, en opinión de Plutarco, debe ser un paradigma pues, dotado de la máxima autoridad, constituye un modelo digno de mimesis. En su exposición de la etopeya de los reyes subyace la idea de que del monarca depende el buen gobierno y la prosperidad del reino y, en consecuencia, su degeneración conduce, inevitablemente, a la perdición del mismo. Una vez más, el moralismo del queronense se muestra, a la vez, descriptivo y protréptico.

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Plutarco y la elegía helenística*

Rafael J. Gallé Cejudo

Con el único propósito de concretar un título quizás demasiado ambicioso, es de obligado cumplimiento precisar de antemano que no pretende éste ser un estudio exhaustivo y comprensivo de este género poético de época helenística en su totalidad, sino que debe ser entendido como una introducción a la cuestión fruto de una serie de lecturas que, a propósito de nuestros estudios sobre el mito en este género, llevamos realizadas sobre la obra de algunos elegíacos anteriores a Calímaco, esto es, Filitas, Hermesianacte, Alejandro Etolo y Fanocles.

No vamos a insistir en el dato irrefutable de que la obra de Plutarco es un pozo de sedimentación de gran parte del material literario de todos los géneros de las épocas que le precedieron y que, evidentemente, la elegía de época helenística no iba a tener menos atractivo para nuestro autor. Hace ya algunos años tuvimos ocasión de estudiar el caso concreto de la recepción plutarquea de la historia de Frigio y Pieria, como saben todos, contenida en los *Aitia* de Calímaco, obra de género elegíaco de esta época¹. Se ha de tomar, por tanto, como premisa que Plutarco conocía bien este género y que no dudó en servirse de él en sus escritos.

Por otra parte, no solo Plutarco se interesó por este género helenístico. No hay que olvidar que una de las premisas que rige la creación poética de esta época es precisamente la búsqueda afanosa de los contenidos míticos, legendarios e históricos menos conocidos del acervo literario y que, por esta razón, los poetas helenísticos se convierten en no pocas ocasiones en la fuente primera o única de determinados episodios literarios. Esto significa que muy pocas veces, por no decir casi ninguna, Plutarco va a ser testimonio exclusivo de esos contenidos, lo cual es mucho menos atractivo desde el punto de vista de la filología plutarquea, pero hemos de reconocer que mucho más afortunado para la crítica filológica encargada de estudiar a los elegíacos helenísticos. No podemos dejar de insistir en la problemática específica que

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1 Cfr. Gallé Cejudo 1997. Las conclusiones a las que, fundamentalmente, llegamos en aquel estudio son que, pese al drástico proceso de abreviamento sufrido en la recepción, no había quedado afectada la estructura sintáctico-narrativa básica de la historia; que se había procedido a la eliminación de todo elemento accesorio -principalmente lo relativo al episodio erótico-; y que se había preservado la intención etiológica primaria del relato.

envuelve este tipo de textos poéticos. Los textos elegíacos son en su mayoría de carácter fragmentario y legados por tradición indirecta. La consecuencia inmediata de esa naturaleza fragmentaria es triple: de una parte, la falta de contenidos, que en muy pocas ocasiones pueden ser reconstruidos con cierta fiabilidad; de otra, la falta parcial de la forma, que puede inducir incluso a problemas con la identificación del género²; y, en tercer lugar, la falta completa del contexto, lo cual, tratándose de producción literaria del período helenístico, es calamitoso de cara a la correcta interpretación de un poema³. E igualmente complejos son los problemas que se derivan de la forma de transmisión de esta poesía fragmentaria, ya que, si se trata de fragmentos legados por tradición directa, nada impide que se haya podido producir algún tipo de contaminación entre el contexto propio y el de la fuente transmisora. Y, a su vez, en los fragmentos de tradición indirecta la problemática gira en torno a la posible alteración u omisión del contexto inmediato. Pero si a las deficiencias por su carácter fragmentario sumamos las carencias derivadas de ese afán innovador y amante de lo menos común propio de la época, y las variantes que, por razones de estética o apego a la tradición retórica, se pudieran haber dado en la redacción definitiva, todo ello puede llevar a que en ocasiones el estudioso deba enfrentarse a textos difícilmente reconstruibles en una medida más o menos aceptable para su correcta intelección o bien textos que, pese a lograr ser reconstruidos satisfactoriamente, ofrecen variantes del mito difícilmente identificables, peor aún catalogables o que, por su alejamiento de la versión considerada tradicional, pudieran producir en el lector moderno un grado más alto de confusión.

En las siguientes páginas se estudiarán una serie representativa de fragmentos de los elegíacos citados, que podrían guardar cierta relación con la obra de Plutarco, con el fin de estudiar, de una parte, cómo ha sido la recepción del texto helenístico en la obra del de Queronea y, de otra, observar si el tratamiento recibido por Plutarco aporta algún tipo de información sobre posibles contextos o interpretaciones que el texto poético por su carácter fragmentario no puede transmitir.

Philet. frg. 2 CA (7–8 Sbardella) [*ap.* Stob. 4.56.26]

ἀλλ' ὅτ' ἐπὶ χρόνος ἔλθῃ, ὃς ἐκ Διὸς ἄλγεα πέσσειν
 ἔλλαχε καὶ πενθέων φάρμακα μούνος ἔχει
 καὶ γὰρ τις μελέοιο κορεσσάμενος κλαυθμοῖο
 κήδεα δειλαίων εἶλεν ἀπὸ πραπίδων.

2 Gentili, 43 ss.

3 «Un contexto altamente codificado como éste actúa como criba natural del material mítico»; sobre la importancia del contexto del autor o del personaje y, más en concreto, la ligazón o interacción entre contexto y mito y lo enriquecedora que desde el punto de vista poético resulta, cfr. Montes Cala, 58 ss.

El pasaje es asignado a la *Deméter* en algunos de los códices de Estobeo, la fuente transmisora, y desde que apareciera publicada la Tesis de Maass (p. IX) fue entendido como un discurso consolatorio en boca de Celeo, rey de Eleusis, durante la estancia de la diosa en su corte. Pero nuevas interpretaciones encabezadas por Kuchenmüller (pp. 57 ss.) y admitidas sin reservas por estudiosos posteriores (Cantarella, p. 22; Sbardella, pp. 44 ss.), que quieren ver en la *Deméter* un poema de tipo etiológico para encumbrar el culto de la diosa en Cos, sostienen que el discurso habría de ser adjudicado a uno de los reyes Merópidas durante la estancia de la diosa en la isla. En cualquier caso el pasaje estaría dentro del γένος παραμυθητικός y recogería uno de los *topoi* más relevantes de los *topica consolatoria*, a saber, el del *tempus naturale remedium*, tópico de tradición médica, filosófica y poética⁴.

Ya Nowacki⁵ sostenía la semejanza del ἄλγεα πέσσειν (*dolores concoquat*) con una expresión semejante de la *Consolatio ad Apollonium* (2) de Plutarco: ἐπειδὴ οὖν καὶ χρόνος ὁ πάντα πεπταίνειν εἰωθός... Esta misma idea de la coincidencia entre el texto de Plutarco y el de Filitas la retomó Kassel (p. 53 n.1) y finalmente Sbardella se ha hecho eco de ella en su reciente edición de los fragmentos poéticos del de Cos (pp. 118 s). Sostiene éste que el ἄλγεα πέσσειν filiteo pasa a formar parte de la tópica argumentativa del género literario de la *consolatio* representando la idea de que «el tiempo cuece o digiere el dolor» y que, en efecto, especialmente interesante es su confrontación con el citado pasaje de la *Consolatio* (*Mor.* 102A), ya que, aparte de la más que obvia coincidencia en el plano conceptual, habría que destacar el empleo en el pasaje de Plutarco del verbo πεπταίνω, en referencia al sustantivo χρόνος, no sólo porque pertenece al mismo campo semántico de πέσσω, sino también porque procede de la misma raíz indoeuropea (*penk^u-). Realmente no se puede establecer con exactitud una relación de imitación por parte de Plutarco del fragmento filiteo, pero sí es reseñable la congruencia temática y, sobre todo, léxica.

En ocasiones la relación intertextual es bastante menos clara, pero, en cambio, coincidencias de contenido podrían ayudar a interpretar el texto elegíaco.

4 Paralelos en Demetr. *Typ. epist.* 5.18–19; S. *El.* 179; E. *Alc.* 381; 1085; Plu. *Cons. ad ux.* 8 (*Mor.* 610D); *Cons. ad Apoll.* 2 (*Mor.* 102A); Jul. *Ep.* 201.413d; Arist. *EN* 1126a 24; Hp. *VM* 18; Simon. frg. 100 (E. = 66 D.: Ζεὺς πάντων αὐτὸς φάρμακα μούνης ἔχει); y, como señala Sbardella (p. 118), especialmente frecuente será el *topos* en la comedia, donde se interpretó como χρόνος = ἰατρὸς κακοῦ: Diph. frg. 116 K.–A.; Men. frg. 876 K.–A.; Philippid. frg. 32 K.–A.

5 Cfr. p. 39: «*dolores concoquat, hic molliendi significationem, quae cum maturandi arte coniuncta est, preavalere censeo. Ut Plutarchus in Cons. ad Apoll. 102A praedicat τὸν χρόνον τὸν πάντα πεπταίνειν (quod paene idem est ac πέσσειν) εἰωθότα*».

Philet. frg. 16 CA (18 Sbardella) [ap. Ath. 2.71A]

γηρύσαιτο δὲ νεβρὸς ἀπὸ ζωῆν ὀλέσσασα,
ὄξειης κάκτου τύμμα φυλαξαμένη.

El fragmento nos ha sido transmitido por Ateneo, *loc. cit.*, y Antígono de Caristo en un pasaje en el que, en cierto modo, se interpreta el texto de Filitas sobre la antigua creencia de que el hueso de cervatillo pinchado por el cardo ya no servía para fabricar el αὐλός o tibia⁶. Los pasajes que interpretan el origen del αὐλός en la tibia del cervatillo son numerosos (cfr., por ejemplo, AP 16.305 [Antip.] νεβρείων... αὐλῶν); los orígenes etiológicos que adjudicaban su creación a los tebanos se pueden encontrar en Juba, *apud* Ath. 4.182E (= FGrH 275, fr. 82) o Aristófanes, *Ach.* 862 s.; y Calímaco, a su vez, atribuirá su invención a Atenea en *Dian.* 244 s. En el caso de Plutarco, el tema está citado en dos pasajes: *Sept. sap. conv.* 5 (*Mor.* 150E) y *Suav. viv. Epic.* 26 (*Mor.* 1104D).

No hay relación alguna entre los textos de Plutarco y el de Filitas, sin embargo aquí la autoridad de Plutarco nos sirve para ubicar, casi exactamente, el dístico filiteo en su género literario. Ya Reitzenstein (p. 179) sospechaba que se trataba de un *paignion* al modo de los de Teognis (v. 1229 s.: una concha), Simias (AP 7.193: un grillo) o Cleobulina (fig. 3: la flauta frigia). Y es precisamente en el pasaje plutarqueo que transmite el texto de Cleobulina donde encontramos la clave interpretativa, ya que Plutarco emplea para la cita de la poetisa el verbo αἰνίσσομαι «hablar con enigmas»⁷. La semejanza del texto filiteo con el transmitido de Cleobulina por Plutarco invita a la reflexión y a pensar que áquel fuera también un «enigma» y se pueda atribuir casi sin reservas a los Παίγνια de Filitas.

A veces, por el contrario, el texto elegíaco puede aportar argumentos que ayuden a entender un pasaje plutarqueo poco lúcido o excesivamente sintético.

El fragmento 8 (CA) de Hermesianacte nos ha sido legado por tradición indirecta en la obra de Pausanias (7.17.9). No podemos saber si el poema perteneció a la *Leonción* o una elegía de título *Atis*. Sostiene el periegeta que, en la obra de Hermesianacte⁸, Atis era hijo del frigio Calao y que, una vez que alcanzó la madurez, marchó a Lidia, donde instauró el culto a la Diosa Madre. Despertó así la envidia de Zeus que, como castigo, envió un jabalí que destrozó las cosechas, mató a Atis y a gran cantidad de lidios. La noticia cierra

6 Antig. *Mirabilia* 8: εἰς ἦν ὅταν ἔλαφος ἐμβῆ καὶ τραυματισθῆ, τὰ ὀστᾶ ἄφωνα καὶ ἄχρηστα πρὸς αὐλοὺς ἴσχει.

7 Plu. *Sept. sap. conv.* 5 (*Mor.* 150E): διὸ καὶ Κλεοβουλίνη πρὸς τὸν Φρύγιον αὐλὸν ἠνίξατο· κνήμη νεκρὸς ὄνος με κερασφόρῳ οὐσας ἔκρουσεν (Cleobulina fig. 3)

8 Paus. 7.17.9: Ἑρμησιάνακτι μὲν τῶ τὰ ἐλεγεία γράψαντι... / τῶ Ἑρμησιάνακτος λόγῳ.

con un detalle de tipo etiológico: por esa razón los gálatas de Pesinunte no matan (ni consumen, se entiende) jabalíes⁹.

Esta versión del mito de Atis recogida por Hermesianacte es, sin duda, evocadora de un pasaje plutarqueo contenido en *Quaest. conv.* 4.5.3 (*Mor.* 671B). A propósito de si los judíos se abstienen de la carne de cerdo por veneración o repugnancia, Calístrato, uno de los contertulios, sostiene que es por veneración, porque el cerdo con su hocico fue el que enseñó a la humanidad a utilizar el arado, mientras que Lamprias se decanta por la repugnancia que provoca un animal relacionado por antonomasia con la suciedad y las enfermedades que su falta de higiene provoca.

El detalle más interesante figura al final del discurso de Lamprias cuando recurre a la mitología para corroborar su postura. En una referencia bastante crítica sostiene: «Y si hay que añadir relatos míticos, se dice que Adonis fue muerto por un jabalí y consideran que Adonis no es otro que Dioniso»¹⁰. Lo cierto es que en la primera premisa de este pasaje de Plutarco, por lo elíptico, no se entiende bien su relación con el tema tratado, salvo que se interprete que algunos pueblos no comen la carne del cerdo porque éste mató a Adonis (Dioniso), al igual que los gálatas de Pesinunte no lo hacen, porque un jabalí mató a Atis.

En los siguientes ejemplos las coincidencias temáticas o de detalle pueden ayudar a entender mejor el contenido de los fragmentos poéticos e incluso arrojar alguna luz sobre la función que podría estar cumpliendo el mito en aquéllos.

El fragmento 4 (CA) de Hermesianacte nos ha sido legado por tradición indirecta en la obra de Antonino Liberal (39). En él se recoge la luctuosa historia de amor de Arceofonte y Arsínoe acontecida en la Salamina chipriota. Cuenta la historia que Arceofonte, enamorado de la joven Arsínoe, hace todo lo posible por granjearse su amor, pero es rechazado por ésta y su padre. El joven, no pudiéndolo resistir, muere de amor. Esta actitud esquiva de Arsínoe desata las iras de Afrodita, de manera que, cuando la joven siente el morboso deseo de presenciar el cortejo fúnebre desde su ventana, es metamorfoseada en piedra por la diosa.

9 Paus. 7.17.9: καί τι ἐπόμενον τούτοις Γαλατῶν δρῶσιν οἱ Πεσσινοῦντα ἔχοντες, ὕῶν οὐχ ἄπτόμενοι. Pausanias ofrece seguidamente otra versión del mito más admitida por los propios gálatas, la de la castración de Agdistis y la automutilación de Atis, más cercana también en sus planteamientos etiológicos a la más conocida de Ovidio (*fast.* 4.223 ss.): Atis, amado de Cibele, se enamora de la ninfa Sagaritis y despierta así la ira de la diosa, que no dudará en matar a la ninfa. Atis, no pudiendo soportarlo, se automutilará.

10 Plu. *Quaest. conv.* 4.5.3: εἰ δὲ δεῖ καὶ τὰ μυθικὰ προσλαβεῖν, λέγεται μὲν ὁ Ἄδωνις ὑπὸ τοῦ σοῦς διαφθαρῆναι, τὸν δ' Ἄδωνιν οὐχ ἕτερον ἀλλὰ Διόνυσον εἶναι νομίζουσιν.

Es bastante probable que el relato hermesianacteo de la παρακύπτουσα inspirara la historia de Ifis y Anaxárete (y la *Venus prospiciens*) de Ovidio (*met.* 14.698–761). Y, en cualquier caso, la historia se convierte en lugar común de la literatura erótica y se repite en numerosos autores manteniendo el mismo esquema narrativo (la cretense Gorgo y Asandro en *Plu. Mor.* 766C–D), con inversión del papel de los protagonistas (Harpálíce e Ificles en *Ath.* 14.619E o la estescorea Cálice y Evatlo en *Ath.* 14.619D–E = *PMG* 277), con sesgo homosexual (*Theoc. Id.* 23), con inversión del esquema narrativo (en las distintas variantes del mito de Pigmalión) y con inversión de funciones (Cicno y Filio en *Ant. Lib.* 12)¹¹.

Plutarco se hace eco de la historia de la *paracyptusa* en su *Erótico* 20 (*Mor.* 766C–D) y recoge además la de Euxínteto y Leucócomas¹² y también la de Gorgo y Asandro. De esta última, debido a la mutilación de los códices plutarqueos, no nos es posible conocer el final. Sólo podemos saber, según cuenta el propio Plutarco, que el castigo de la amada esquiva no era la petrificación. ¿Sería, quizás, una muerte semejante a la del joven esquivo de *Theoc. Id.* 23? Hay que tener presente que la función etiológica del mito en este tipo de relato está muy marcada (la metamorfosis de la joven en piedra, los linajudos orígenes de los padres de la joven, la conservación de la estatua de piedra o la erección de un templo en honor de la diosa). Sin embargo, la falta de contexto en el relato hermesianacteo no permite saber si estaba presente otra de las funciones primordiales del mito, la función paradigmática. Y aquí es donde el texto de Plutarco (y el de Ovidio) se muestra fundamental para entender en su exacta magnitud el texto del poeta helenístico. En efecto, tanto en el relato de Plutarco, como en el de Ovidio, las historias de Asandro y Gorgo e Ifis y Anaxárete respectivamente, son traídas a colación por los narradores de las mismas para ejemplificar el grado de indignación a que pueden llegar los dioses del amor (Eros en el relato plutarqueo y Venus en el ovidiano) ante la actitud desdeñosa de un *irrisor amoris*. En el citado pasaje del *Erótico* (*Amat.* 20) es el propio Plutarco, según cuenta Aristobulo, convertido en contertulio del diálogo el que afirma que el dios Amor, al igual que muestra bondad con los que lo acogen convenientemente, es duro con los que son presuntuosos con él (βαρὺς δὲ τοῖς ἀπαυθαδισάμενοις) siendo, en efecto, el más rápido en favorecer al amante desdeñado y en castigar al desdeñoso:

11 Cfr. Rohde, 86–87, n. 1; y las notas complementarias en la edición de Papathomopoulos, 159–161.

12 Historia contenida en el tratado *Sobre el amor* de Teofrasto (fig. 113 Wimmer, *apud* *Stob.* 10.4.12). Euxínteto será Prómaco en la versión transmitida por Conón en sus *Narraciones* 16.

Plu. *Amat.* 20

οὔτε γὰρ ξένων καὶ ἰκετῶν ἀδικίας ὁ Ξένιος, οὔτε γονέων ἀρὰς ὁ Γενέθλιος οὔτω διώκει καὶ μέτεισι ταχέως ὡς ἔρασταῖς ἀγνωμονηθεῖσιν ὁ Ἔρωσ ὀξύς ὑπακούει, τῶν ἀπαιδευτῶν καὶ ὑπερηφάνων κολαστής.

En el poema de Ovidio (*met.* 14.698–771), a su vez, Vertumno, disfrazado de anciana, cuenta a Pomona la historia de Ifis y Anaxárete para doblegar su férrea oposición a unirse a varón alguno, y se la cuenta con el único fin de ilustrar a la joven sobre dónde puede llegar la venganza de la diosa con las amadas desdeñosas (vv. 693–97). Así pues, el uso expreso de esta historia como *exemplum* de la divinidad del amor castigadora del *irrisor amoris* podría ser un argumento de cierta validez a la hora de defender algún tipo de función paradigmática similar en el texto de Hermesianacte posiblemente articulada en una estructura suasoria de tipo disuasorio.

El fragmento 3 (Magnelli) de Alejandro Etolo pertenece a la elegía intitulada *Apolo* y es el más extenso que se ha conservado. Nos ha sido legado en los Ἑρωτικά παθήματα (14) de Partenio y sirve al de Nicea para corroborar una variante temática de la legendaria historia de Anteo y Cleobea que él mismo transmite. Cuenta la historia que Anteo, huésped de Fobio, rey de Mileto, fue acosado sexualmente por Cleobea, mujer de su anfitrión, que al no conseguir sus aviesos propósitos mató al joven lapidándolo dentro de un pozo. La historia recoge una variante más del conocido como «tema de Putifar» y así se demuestra a poco que se someta a un estudio narratológico y comparativo con las versiones más antiguas y paradigmáticas de este mismo motivo¹³, aunque no van a faltar elementos originales sobre los que el testimonio de Plutarco, entre otros, puede tener importante valor testimonial.

Las variantes más conocidas y originales del «tema de Putifar» en la obra de Plutarco son las de Eunosto y Ocne (*Quaest. Gr.* 40 = *Mor.* 300D–E) atribuida a Mirtis de Antedón (cfr. *PMG* 716) y la de Tenes y Filomela (*Quaest. Gr.* 28 = *Mor.* 297B–F), no faltando otras marginales como la de Ino que, según se cuenta, perdió la cabeza por el hijo de su marido (λέγεται περὶ

13 Entiéndase, fundamentalmente, las historias de José y la mujer de Putifar (en las versiones del *Génesis*, de Filón, del *Corán* y de los apócrifos del *Antiguo Testamento*, i. e., las historia de José y Asenet y en el *Testamento de los XII Patriarcas*), de Aqat y la diosa Anat, de Baal y la diosa Asertu, mujer de Elkunisa, de Gilgamesh e Ishtar, de Bata y la mujer de su hermano Anubis, de Pumala y Kunala con sus respectivas madrastras, de Belerofonte y Antea, de Peleo y Astidamía (o Hipólita), de Fénix y Ftía (o Clitia), concubina de su padre Amíntor, de Frixo, hijo de Atamante, y Demódica (o Biádica), segunda esposa del padre, de Tenes y Filónoma, mujer de Cicno y madrastra del joven, de Eunosto y Ocne, de Anágiros y su madrastra, de Mieno y su madrastra Alfesibea, de Combabo y Estratónice y, por supuesto, de Hipólito y Fedra. Cfr. los trabajos en castellano de López Salvá y Lucas de Dios. Ambos ofrecen abundante bibliografía.

τὸν υἱὸν ἐκμανῆναι) en *Quaest. Rom.* 16 (*Mor.* 267D), la de Mieno perseguido por su madrastra Alfesibeia en el pseudoplutarqueo *De fluviis* (8.3) o la versión de Fedra e Hipólito en *Par. min.* 34 (*Mor.* 314A–C) que le sirve para comparar con la de Cominio, hijo de Cominio S. Laurentino, y su madrastra Gidica.

Uno de los elementos narrativos en los que el poema del Etolo se diferencia de la mayoría de los relatos de este mismo tema de Putifar es en los remordimientos que muestra la mujer tras la muerte del joven y su posterior suicidio. Del silencio más absoluto sobre el final que corre la mujer (José, Aqat, Baal, Gilgamesh, Paduma, la mayor parte de las fuentes de Belerofonte, Fénix, Frixo, Mieno o Combabo), los relatos pasaron a incluir la venganza personal (Bata, Kunala, Belerofonte –en la *Estenebea* de Eurípides–, Peleo o Tenes) hasta llegar a un final ejemplarizante concretado en el suicidio. En esto el texto de Alejandro Etolo coincide con las distintas versiones de Fedra (en el *Hipólito* de Eurípides también por ahorcamiento), con la plutarquea de Ocne y Eunosto, y curiosamente con una de las versiones de la historia de Anágiros en la que la mujer se quita la vida arrojándose a un pozo. Pues bien, a propósito de la muerte perpetrada por lapidación en un pozo, Magnelli (1999a, p. 184) apunta la falta de originalidad en el detalle de la elegía y pone como referencia, entre otras, la muerte de las hijas de Escédaso a manos de los desagradecidos huéspedes espartanos en *Plu. Amat. narr.* 3 (*Mor.* 733D), pero, mucho más exacto aún por la coincidencia en este preciso detalle, estaría la lapidación dentro del pozo perpetrada contra un cruel general tracio del ejército de Alejandro por la valerosa tebana Timoclea¹⁴ en *Plu. Mul. virt.* 24 (*Mor.* 260B–C)¹⁵.

Por último, merece la pena también hacer alguna mención de la referencia contenida en este frg. 3 del Etolo a la figura de Acteón el Argivo. El poeta, en unos crípticos versos del fragmento poético conservado, hace una velada referencia a este hermoso joven, aludiendo igualmente a su luctuoso final, y la desgracia sobrevenida a Corinto, y utilizándolo como elemento *illustrans* en uno de los pocos casos de empleo del mito en función paradigmática expresa que hemos detectado en los fragmentos elegíacos. Resulta significativo que para este mismo personaje sea una vez más Plutarco una de las fuentes

14 Esta anécdota es recogida también por Polieno (8.40), Jerónimo (*Adv. Iovin.* 35) y por el propio Plutarco en *Coniug. praec.* 48 (*Mor.* 145E), en *Suav. viv. Epic.* 10 (*Mor.* 1093C) y en una versión abreviada en *Alex.* 12. La probable fuente es Aristobulo (*FGH* 139F 2a); cf. Stadter, 112–115.

15 El motivo del pozo parece ser recurrente: aparece ya en los inicios de la historia de José, ya que será en un pozo donde sus hermanos tratan de matarlo y es salvado por su hermano Judá y vendido a un mercader; aparece también en el *Testamento de los XII patriarcas*, donde la mujer del egipcio amenaza a José con suicidarse en un pozo (o ahorcarse) si no cede a sus requerimientos; y aparece también en la citada variante de la historia de Anágiros y la mujer del labrador.

principales de información. Acteón es citado fugazmente en *Sertorio* 1, pero con todo lujo de detalles en *Amat. narr.* 2¹⁶.

El fragmento 11 (M.) de Alejandro Etolo corresponde a una noticia transmitida por Pausanias (2.22.6–7) en la que se afirma que en la obra del Etolo (además de en la de Euforión y Estesícoro) se recogía el rapto de Helena por Teseo y la noticia de que Ifigenia era hija de Teseo y la Tindarida.

La versión mítica del rapto de Helena está bien documentada desde época arcaica (Alcm. *apud Schol. Il.* 3.242 y Paus. 1.41.4 = *PMG* 21; Pind. *apud Paus.* 1.41.5 = frg. 258 Snell; Hdt. 9.73; Apollod. 3.10.7; D. S. 4.63.2–5; Paus. 1.17.5; 1.41.3 ss.; 2.22.3; *Schol. Il.* 13.626a; Hyg. *fab.* 79; etc.), siendo una de las fuentes más precisas los capítulos correspondientes de la *Vida de Teseo* plutarquea (*Tes.* 32.3–4)¹⁷.

La otra parte de la noticia, en cambio, la de la filiación de Ifigenia sólo está atestiguada por Estesícoro (*apud Paus.* 2.22.6) antes de Época Helenística y tampoco posteriormente será una noticia especialmente extendida (Alejandro Etolo y Euforión *apud Paus.* 2.22.6; Duris *FHG* 76F 92; *fort. Lyc.* 103; Tz. *ad Lyc.* 103, 143, 183, 513, 851; *Schol. Il.* 13.626b; y Nic. *apud Ant. Lib.* 27), ya que ha quedado siempre a la sombra de los mitógrafos y trágicos que la hacen hija de Agamenón y Clitemnestra (cfr. Apollod. *Epit.* 2.16; etc.). Lamentablemente la obra de Plutarco no aporta ningún testimonio en este sentido. Más bien, al contrario, el queronense insiste en la edad inmadura de la joven, no apta siquiera para el matrimonio (*Tes.* 31.3; este mismo detalle es ofrecido por Isoc. 10.18).

El fragmento 1 de Fanocles, perteneciente a la elegía *Amorillos*, nos ha sido legado por tradición directa en la obra de Estobeo (64.14 = 4.20.47; 4.461 H.). El fragmento recoge la inclinación homerótica de Orfeo por el joven Calais, la muerte del cantor a manos de las mujeres tracias y el peregrinaje de la cabeza y la lira de Orfeo hasta la isla de Lesbos. Si bien no nos es posible conocer la posible intención etiológica del conjunto de esta obra poética, en el caso del fragmento conservado, no obstante, esa finalidad es incuestionable. En la treintena de versos que lo componen hay al menos tres *aitia* seguros: Orfeo como instaurador de la pederastia entre los tracios (vv. 1–10), el origen de Lesbos como cuna de la poesía mélica (vv. 11–22) y la costumbre de los tracios de tatuar a sus mujeres como recordatorio indeleble por la muerte de Orfeo (vv. 23–28).

16 Cfr. *et. Schol. A.R.* 4.1212 y Max. Tyr. 18.1.

17 Sobre el tema del rapto, cfr. Ghali-Kahil, 305–313; y a propósito de esta particular variante mítica sobre la filiación de Ifigenia, así como de las diferencias perceptibles entre las versiones de Duris y Pausanias, cfr. Kjellberg, 2599 s.

Es precisamente en este tercer *aition* donde queremos detener nuestra atención. Se trata, en efecto, de un *aition* de carácter explícito que relata cómo, cuando los cicones supieron del crimen perpetrado por sus mujeres, las tatuaron para que nunca olvidaran su despreciable asesinato. Cuenta el poeta que esa costumbre era mantenida todavía en su época:

Phanocl. frg. 1.21–22

ἄς ἀλόχους ἔστιζον, ἴν' ἐν χροῖ σήματ' ἔχουσαι
 κύνεα στυγεροῦ μὴ λελάθοιντο πόνου.
 ποινὰς δ' Ὀρφεῖ κταμένω στίζουσι γυναῖκας
 εἰσέτι νῦν κείνης εἶνεκεν ἀμπλακίης.

Este testimonio, al parecer original de Fanocles, podría estar en la base de una larga tradición bien documentada por los textos literarios y por la arqueología que refiere la costumbre, extendida entre hombres y mujeres de Tracia, de tatuarse (cfr. Hdt. 5.6; D. Chr. 14.19; Cic. *De Offic.* 2.7.5; y Ath. 12.524D–E)¹⁸. Pues bien, aparte del pasaje fanocleo, Plutarco es la única fuente donde también se recoge (*Ser. num. vind.* 12 = *Mor.* 557D), no sólo la noticia, sino también el hecho de que la costumbre siga aún en la época: οὐδὲ γὰρ Θρᾷκας ἐπαινοῦμεν, ὅτι στίζουσιν ἄχρι νῦν τιμωροῦντες Ὀρφεῖ τὰς αὐτῶν γυναῖκας. El extraordinario proceso de síntesis realizado por Plutarco provoca que el episodio sólo pueda ser bien entendido a la luz de las otras fuentes griegas y latinas que lo transmiten con mayor prolijidad. Y, sobre lo que parece haber consenso seguro es en que Fanocles está en la base de la notica plutarquea, así como también lo estuvo en la de los poemas de Virgilio (*G.* 4.520 ss.) u Ovidio (*met.* 11.1 ss.).

El frg. 9 de Alejandro Etolo no corresponde a su producción elegíaca. Se trata, en efecto, de uno de los dos únicos epigramas que se nos han conservado de este autor (*API* 172), pero la afinidad formal entre ambos géneros permite tomarlo en consideración en nuestro estudio (cfr. Gentili):

Alex. Aet. frg. 9 (= *API* 172)

αὐτὰ που τὰν Κύπριν ἀπηκριβώσατο Παλλάς,
 τὰς ἐπ' Ἀλεξάνδρου λαθομένα κρίσιος.

Si se admite la validez del lematista que dedica el epigrama εἰς τὸ αὐτό, haciendo referencia a la Ἀφροδίτην ὀπλισμένην del epigrama anterior (*API* 171), habría que admitir igualmente que el epigrama del Etolo, desde el punto de vista mítico, estaría inmerso en la temática literaria de la «Afrodita armada»,

18 Marcovich (p. 365), destaca que la documentación arqueológica muestra que los tracios tatuaban no sólo su rostro sino también brazos y resto del cuerpo. Por otra parte, en el citado pasaje de Ateneo se tratan de explicar los intentos de las tracias por transformar una primitiva marca punitiva en una costumbre ornamental.

un fenómeno de neutralización de campos funcionales de las figuras divinas de Palas y Afrodita por el que sus atribuciones paradigmáticas se confunden o intercambian y que ha dado lugar a una importantísima producción literaria, convirtiéndose, incluso, en ejercicio preparatorio de retórica¹⁹. Pues bien, el testimonio de Plutarco de *Fort. Rom.* 4 (*Mor.* 317F) confirma que esa práctica literaria tenía su correlato cultural, ya que aduce como prueba la existencia de un culto a la diosa bajo esa misma advocación en Laconia²⁰.

El fragmento 5 de Fanocles recoge la noticia del episodio homoerótico protagonizado por Agamenón y Argino en el Cefiso beocio:

Phanocl. frg. 5 *CA* (*ap.* Clem.Al. *Protr.* 2.38.2)

Φανοκλήης δὲ ἐν Ἐρωσι ἢ Καλοῖς Ἀγαμέμνονα τὸν Ἑλλήνων βασιλέα Ἀργύννου
 ἐὼν Ἀφροδίτης ἴστασθαι ἐπ' Ἀργύννῳ τῷ ἐρωμένῳ.

Ya en otro lugar²¹ hemos dedicado un estudio detallado a la importancia que el texto de Plutarco, *Brut. anim.* 7 (*Mor.* 990D), que se hace eco de este mismo episodio mítico, tiene para desvelar o, al menos, arrojar algo de luz sobre una de las *crucis* interpretativas de la literatura clásica. En ese trabajo llegábamos a la conclusión de que el pasaje del *Grilo* es fundamental para entender los crípticos versos de Propercio 3.7.21–24, y, al mismo tiempo, podría estar ofreciendo información velada, pero crucial, sobre el texto perdido de Fanocles.

Para algún fragmento elegíaco la obra de Plutarco se convierte en testimonio de capital importancia, ya que es la fuente en que nos ha sido transmitido. Así ocurre, por ejemplo, con el frg. 3 de Fanocles. Éste nos ha sido legado por tradición directa en las *Quaestiones convivales* (4.5.3 = *Mor.* 671B) de Plutarco.

Phanocl. frg. 3

Εἰδὼς Θεῖον Ἄδωνιν ὀρειφοίτης Διόνυσος
 ἤρπασεν, ἡγάθην Κύπριν ἐπιχοόμενος.

El fragmento es un selecto testimonio para corroborar la importancia de la innovación mítico-literaria en la poesía helenística. En efecto, Plutarco recurre a la autoridad de Fanocles (quizás de los *Amorcillos*) para justificar una versión distinta del mito de Adonis. El pasaje fanocleo desmiente el sincretismo de

19 Quintiliano en su *Institutio Oratoria* (2.4.26) hace referencia a la no poca utilidad de este *iucundo genere exercitationis* que proponían ya sus maestros como «causa conjetural» (*coniecturalibus causis*).

20 Así también Pausanias (3.15.10) y Lactancio (*Inst. div.* 1.20); Pausanias, además, menciona un culto similar en la Acrocorinto (2.5.1); Hesiquio recoge entre las acepciones de ἔγχειος un epíteto de Afrodita en Chipre; y en este mismo sentido Pausanias (3.15.10) asigna ἐνόπιος a la diosa en Atenas y Citera.

21 Reimitimos a nuestro trabajo (2006) con abundante bibliografía. Cfr. et Magnelli 1999b.

Dioniso y Adonis de algunas versiones y relata que el joven fue raptado por el dios enfrentándose «a propósito» a la divina Ciprís²².

Dado el escaso contexto que ofrecen los dos versos conservados, poco se puede conjeturar acerca de la función de este elemento mítico en el conjunto de la obra elegíaca. Ahora bien, si nos atenemos al referente más cercano de que disponemos, que no es otro que el pasaje plutarqueo, se pueden extraer algunas conclusiones:

Plu. *Quaest. conv.* 4.5.3 (*Mor.* 671B)

τὸν δ' Ἄδωνιν οὐχ ἕτερον ἀλλὰ Διόνυσον εἶναι νομίζουσιν· καὶ πολλὰ τῶν τελουμένων ἑκατέρῳ περὶ τὰς ἑορτὰς βεβαιοῖ τὸν λόγον. οἱ δὲ παιδικὰ τοῦ Διονύσου γεγονέναι· καὶ Φανοκλῆς, ἔρωτικὸς ἀνὴρ, ᾧδὲ που πεποιήκεν·

Plutarco recurre a los versos fanocleos para constatar o ilustrar la variante mítica que transmitía la relación homoerótica entre Adonis y Dioniso²³ articulada sobre el esquema mítico del rapto, y que tiene su testimonio más temprano en el *Adonis* del cómico Platón, según noticia de Ateneo (10.456A–B): Πλάτων δ' ἐν τῷ Ἄδωνιδι... λέγει δ' Ἀφροδίτην καὶ Διόνυσον· ἀμφοτέροι γὰρ ἦρων τοῦ Ἄδωνιδος. El texto de Plutarco no sólo se convierte en refrendo de una variante muy poco difundida de los orígenes mitológicos de la homosexualidad griega²⁴, sino que, al mismo tiempo, se está sirviendo de ella para contestar otra versión mítica que identifica estas dos figuras mitológicas²⁵.

El frg. 8 de Alejandro Etolo es el segundo de los epigramas conservados de este autor (cfr. *supra*, a propósito de Alex. Aet. 9):

Alex. Aet. frg. 8 Magnelli (*AP* 7.709)

Σάρδιες ἀρχαῖαι, πατέρων νομός, εἰ μὲν ἐν ὑμῖν
ἔτρεφόμεν, κερνᾶς ἦν τις ἂν ἢ μακελᾶς
χρυσόφορος, ῥήσσων λάλα τύμπανα· νῦν δέ μοι Ἄλκμάν
οὔνομα, καὶ Σπάρτας εἰμὶ πολυτρίποδος,
καὶ Μούσας ἐδάην Ἑλληνίδας, αἶ με †τυράνων
᾿ῤῥικαν Δασκύλεω μείζονα καὶ Γύγεω†.

Plutarco (*Exil.* 2 = *Mor.* 599E) es, junto con el códice heidelbergense de la *Antología*, la única fuente en que nos ha sido transmitido este epigrama, lo cual no es, en absoluto, cuestión baladí, sobre todo en lo que se refiere a la correcta

22 O bien «cuando se dirigía a Chipre». Sobre la necesidad de mantener la lectura de los códices y la ambigüedad tan del gusto poético helenístico que ello provoca, cfr. el atinado comentario ad loc. de Alexander, 110 ss.

23 Cfr. Beyer, 66–69.

24 Cfr. Sergent, 297 y Dümmmler, 391 s.

25 Esta asimilación, como bien explica Suárez de la Torre, sólo se entendería «a partir de mitos y ritos que celebran y evocan la muerte y resurrección del dios, con influencia del esquema órfico»; cfr. p. 39, quien además remite al trabajo de Casadio.

interpretación literaria del poema. La autonomía genérica y estructural de que goza este tipo de pieza breve impide cualquier intento de contextualizar la función que a nivel global –no los detalles concretos que conforman el poema– pudo haber tenido el mito o las referencias legendarias. Y es aquí donde el texto de Plutarco se nos revela oportunamente esclarecedor. El epigrama del Etolo es aducido por el de Queronea para ejemplificar, frente a otras posiciones de corte más pesimista, la actitud positiva que otros han mostrado ante situaciones tan aciagas como el destierro o la crianza lejos de la tierra patria. El epigrama presenta una estructura argumental basada en una cuádruple manifestación de la función paradigmática del mito que se articula en dos ejes de confrontación, con el único fin de encarecer la vida y la formación griegas en la *synkrisis* que se establece entre éstas y las orientales: la valentía espartana, ejemplar donde las haya, frente a la molicie y afeminamiento de los eunucos al servicio de Cibele; y las artes griegas, paradigma de formación intelectual en la Antigüedad, frente a la riqueza también paradigmática de los reyes lidios. E igualmente, pero esta vez a nivel intertextual, el fragmento del Etolo estaría en su globalidad también cumpliendo una función paradigmática en el texto de Plutarco.

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Plutarch and the Music

Roosevelt Araújo Da Rocha Júnior

In his works, Plutarch deals with many subjects in different ways. Sometimes the encyclopedic character of his knowledge seems to endanger the unity of his writings. But there are some themes that are recurrent in his texts and that would work like an element to link the parts apparently separated. One of these themes is the music. My aim with this brief paper is to present some Plutarchean ideas about music and start investigating the value that this *techné* and *epistémê* receives in the *Corpus Plutarcheum*, comparing some passages from the *Vitae* with excerpts from the *Moralia*. In doing that I hope to demonstrate that music can be considered an element that indicates the existence of a unity in the entire *Corpus*.

Plutarch, certainly, attributed great value to music: his writings present many allusions and images related to it, even not mentioning the treatise *Peri mousikês*, whose authenticity is not commonly accepted today. Music appears in many passages of the *Moralia* and of the *Vitae* when Plutarch gives elementary musical definitions, when he deals with the numerical relations that are behind the harmony of the spheres and when he talks about the moral value of the musical modes, for example. He also shows great familiarity with the specific musical terminology when, in the *Quaestiones Convivales*,¹ for instance, he distinguishes the *mousikós* (that not only can be the specialist in music in general, but also, in the ancient manner, a man that was educated in the *enkýklios paideia*), the *organikós* (the music player and *harmonikós*, called by Plutarch also as *logikós perì mousikên* or *kanonikós* (the theorist).²

In the same book we also find many references to the different genders and modalities of song, *ódê*. And in 713B–D, like in Plato's *Republic*, 398d, we read that the music of the *aulós* or of the lyre by itself should not be sung without words, which means that the *mélós* should not be considered more important than the *léxis*. Besides, throughout this work, Plutarch shows that he masters the musical vocabulary and uses with dexterity articulate terms like *auleîn*, *prosauleîn*, *epauleîn*, and *katauleîn*.³

1 All the texts by Plutarch cited here are from the Loeb Classical Library, except when otherwise indicated.

2 See García López, 307. See also *Quaest. Conv.* 662A, 625B, 657B–E.

3 García López, 311.

Plutarch makes many reflections about musical theory in mathematical terms, for instance, in the *De animae procreatione in Timaeo*.⁴ When he makes some comments on the generation of the soul described in Plato's *Timaeus*, Plutarch discusses the numerical reasons that exist among musical notes, among intervals and among chords. He discusses also the construction of the tetrachord and how the *leímma* is calculated, too.⁵

The concept of *harmonía* has great importance for Plutarch and it acquires different meanings in his works. To him, harmony was more than a musical concept. It was an ideal to be imitated by all men that wished to have tranquility and balance in their lives. In order to attain that ideal it was necessary to understand the mathematical relations that are behind the structures of the soul and of the world. For this, Plutarch, just like Plato, attributed much value to the study of the numerical proportions that organize the Universe. An example of this kind of discussion we find in the *De E apud Delphos* 389D–F. In the Plutarchean view, this kind of investigation about harmony as a philosophic and mathematical concept was more important than the practice or the audition of music.⁶

However, just like an interested hearer who knows how to appreciate the beautiful melodies, Plutarch was not only interested in numerical relations or in the mathematical speculation characteristic of the harmonic science. In many passages, he mentions musical instruments such as the *aulós* and the *lýra* and this shows us that he was attentive also to the musical art (*technê mousikê*), though he judges the 'theoretical music' more elevated.⁷

Both in the *Vitae* and in the *Moralia* we find references to musical instruments. In the *Life of Crassus* 33. 7, for instance, Plutarch describes the moments before the battle between the Romans and the Parthians and says that these barbarians, different from the Romans, do not incite themselves to battle with horns or *salpinxes* but rather with *rhoptra* made of hide, and stretching bronze snares over the hollows, they made a noise all at once from many places.⁸

Another instrument described by Plutarch in the *De Iside et Osiride*, 376c, now no more in a war context but in a religious one, is the *seistron*, which was commonly associated with Egyptian cult of the goddess Isis. The *seistron* was an instrument constructed of a metal with an oval shape attached to a handle and supporting several metal bars that produced a sharp noise when the instrument

4 See the *Loci Plutarchi De Musica* in Weil and Reinach, LIII–LXIX.

5 See Smits, 122.

6 Smits, 123.

7 Flacelière, LXIV.

8 Translation by Mathiesen, 173.

was shaken. And sometimes the *seistron* would have some tiny bells attached to the bars.⁹

But the more cited instruments in the works of Plutarch are the lyre and the *aulós*. Especially about the *aulós* we find in the *Life of Alcibiades* 2. 4–6, a story related to this instrument. Plutarch tells that Alcibiades refused to play the *aulós* in the school because, for him, it was not noble and not indicated for freemen. As it is reported in his *Life*, when a man blows on an *aulós* his cheeks get puffed and swollen and it was not good. Moreover, the *aulós* closes and barricades the mouth, robbing the voice and the speech of the player. For him the lyre was the indicated instrument for a gentleman because it blended its sounds with the player's voice and songs. For this, the *auloi* should be played only by the sons of Thebes, because they didn't know to dialogue. The Athenians, otherwise, should cast the *aulós* away because their foundress was Athena and their patron was Apollo. This story may seem a little radical, but, in some way, reveals the attitude that a member of the Athenian élite of the fifth century B. C. would have towards the *aulós*. Certainly Aristotle (*Politics* VIII.6) had a different view and accepted the use of the *aulós* in his *paideia*, but Plato (*Republic* 399d) would agree completely with the words that Plutarch puts in Alcibiades' mouth.

Nevertheless, in the *Quaestiones Convivales*, Plutarch shows a little bit different conceptions about the *aulós* from those presented above. In 667A, Sossius Senecius, the Plutarch's close friend, says that the *aulós* has its place in the wedding-feast. And in 712F–713A, Plutarch in person says that the *aulós* could not be drove away from the table because it was as essential to the libations as the garland and it helped to give a religious character to the singing of the paean. And he continues arguing in favor of the presence of the *aulós* in the feasts. These opinions may seem contradictory with the ideas presented in the *Life of Alcibiades*, but the point is that the use of the *aulós* should be controlled, because it would be useful if it were employed in specific contexts, like that of the symposium. The *aulós* should not be employed to cause enthusiasm using many notes. It should be used only to play solemn melodies to calm the audience and always with words to be sung.

If sometimes it seems difficult to establish the real value the *aulós* had in the works of Plutarch, it doesn't happen when he talks about the lyre and the *kithara*. Also in the *Quaestiones Convivales*, 712F, he asserts that the *kithara* was a familiar member of the banquet and that such an intimate association should not be dissolved. In another place, in the *De Iside et Osiride*, 373C, Plutarch tells a story about how Hermes made the strings of the lyre and how this instrument was constructed. For Plutarch the lyre was connected to Apollo and, as we have seen above, this god was the patron to the city of Athens. And,

9 See Mathiesen, 172.

as we know, Plutarch had a special relation with that intellectual center of Greece.

And music played an important role in Athens. To the Athenians, education was directly linked to music. Sometimes, in Greek, the ‘teacher’ is called *kitharistês* and not knowing to play the lyre corresponds to our idea of analphabetism. The only one that seems out of this idea of *paideia* is Themistocles. As Plutarch says, in the *Life* of this general (2. 3), tuning the lyre and handling the harp were no accomplishments of his, but rather taking in hand a city that was small and inglorious and making it glorious and great.¹⁰

But this kind of attitude was not the dominant tendency in Athens. The same Themistocles that didn’t know how to tune the lyre, according to Plutarch (*Life of Themistocles* 5. 2), invited a certain Epicles of Hermione, “a harpist who was eagerly sought after by the Athenians, to practice at his house, because he [Themistocles] was ambitious that many should seek out his dwelling and come often to see him”. These words show us that, in the Athens of the first half of the fifth century B. C., the presence of musicians was much appreciated, though they were not considered noble men¹¹ but only *technikoi*, handworkers like the artisans.

Pericles, unlike Themistocles, seems to have enjoyed a fine musical education under the instruction of Damon, an influential music theorist of the second half of the fifth century¹² and also at the hands of Pythocleides, as Plutarch says in his *Life of Pericles* 4. 1–2. Pericles also was the first to get a decree establishing a musical contest as part of the Panathenaic festival.¹³ He himself was elected manager, and prescribed how the contestants should blow the *aulôs*, or sing, or play the *kithara*. According to Plutarch (*Life of Pericles* 13.6), these musical contests took place in the Odeum, which was built under the supervision of Pericles. About Damon Plutarch also tells that he was a sophist that used the name of music as a refuge to conceal his real intentions in politics. Because he was a great schemer and a friend of tyranny (*Life of Nicias* 6.1) and because he was surely extraordinary in his wisdom (*Life of Aristides* 1.7), he was ostracized, as Plutarch asserts.

Sparta was another city where music had an important role in education and in war. According to Plutarch, the Spartans had a serious training in music and in poetry and their songs had a stimulus that roused the spirit and awoke enthusiastic and effectual effort. He praises the style of their music because it was simple and unaffected, and their themes were serious and edifying. If

10 About this passage see Bélis, 15–17.

11 See *Pericles* 1. 5: If a man is a good piper (*aulêtês*), he can not be a worthy man.

12 Maas and Snyder, 87.

13 See Maas and Snyder’s remark on p. 61: Plutarch’s account is contradicted by Panathenaic amphorae.

someone studied the poetry and the marching songs of Sparta accompanied by the *aulós*, he would agree that Terpander and Pindar were right in associating valor (*andreia*) with music. Plutarch also says that the Spartans were at the same time the most musical (*mousikôtátous*) and the most warlike (*polemikôtátous*) people (*Life of Lycurgus* 21.1–4).

In the book about the *Ancient Customs of the Spartans*, Plutarch also praises the rhythms of the marching songs (*embatêrioi rhythmoi*) because they excite courage, boldness and contempt for death, indispensable characteristics of the valorous warrior. The Spartans used these rhythms both in dancing and when advancing upon the enemy to the sound of the *aulós*. Plutarch says further that Lycurgus associated the love for music with military practice so that the warlike spirit, combined with melody, would have concord and harmony (*symphônía kai harmonía*). For this reason, in times of war, the king of the Spartans offered sacrifices to the Muses before the battle, as he tells in the *Instituta Laconica*, 16, 238B–C.

And, in order to maintain the pureness of their music and of their customs, the Spartans would sometimes recur to violent acts. As Plutarch asserts in the *Instituta Laconica*, 17, 238C–D, they would not permit anyone transgressing in any way the rules of the old music. Not even Terpander, one of the oldest and one of the best of the *kitharôdoi* (those who sing while playing the *kithara*), would the permission to add one extra string for the sake of the variety of notes. He tried to do that, but the Ephors nailed his instrument to a wall because of that impious act. One of the Ephors proceeded with more violence when Timotheus, the famous musician innovator that flourished in the fifth century, was competing at the *Carneian* Festival: he took knife and asked the musician on which side he should cut out the superfluous strings beyond the usual seven. Variants of this story are told by Plutarch in other texts, but there Phrynus, another musician innovator of the fifth century, is the protagonist.¹⁴

Another great leader about whom Plutarch wrote who loved music is Alexander. He had as friends various *kitharôdoi*, like Aristonicus, who was honored by him with a bronze statue set up in Delphi (*De Alexandri Fortuna* 334F). He used to read books containing tragedies of Euripides, Sophocles and Aeschylus, and dithyrambic poems of Teletes and Philoxenus (*Life of Alexander* 8. 3). He was very fond also of theatres and festivals: when he was in Ecbatana in Media, three thousand artists (*technitai*) came to him from Greece (*Life of Alexander* 72.1–2). One day, in a banquet probably, his father Philip censured him when he was plucking the strings of an instrument charmingly and skillfully because it was not appropriate to a king to play so well (*Life of Pericles* 1.5). Alexander was not only used to honor particular musicians, but he also used to pay tribute to music itself, believing that it was a creator of true men

14 See *De profectibus in virtute* 84A, *Apophthegmata Laconica* 220C, and *Life of Agis* 10.7.

and, in particular, that it filled with inspiration and impetuosity those who are truly its foster children (*De Alexandri Fortuna* 334F–335A). If Plutarch is right, the conceptions that Alexander had about music were very similar with those of the Spartans, which means that music could prepare men to war.

I think these few reflections are enough to illustrate what I'm trying to show, that music is a very important theme in the work of Plutarch and can be considered an element that unites different plutarchean works. It had a central role in education, as Plutarch conceives it, and in the banquets. Through the study of music and harmony, men can understand the Universe and make their souls better. In fact, the attitude Plutarch had towards music was very near to that of Plato. The way he judges the musicians and the manner he praises the Spartans are very platonic. But there are many other aspects to be considered and there is much work still to be made. One thing to do is a new repertoire of the Plutarchean passages related to music. A part of this task has been made already by Henri Weil and Theodore Reinach, by Smits and recently by the Professor José García López. I hope I can contribute in some way.

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7. Women, *Eros*, Marriage, and Parenthood in Plutarch

Synopsis

Both *Lives* and *Moralia* do not simply demonstrate Plutarch's keen interest in women and their prominent position in his *œuvre*, but, more significantly, the high esteem in which he held them; further, they also testify to his sensitiveness towards *eros* and, therefore, to the importance he attached to amorous feelings and manifestations for a marriage to thrive; finally, they reveal how much Plutarch valued parenthood and close-knit family relations. The articles of this chapter will offer insights into all these issues.

Gabriele Marasco observed that Plutarch's attitude towards women is peculiar to him in antiquity. In the *Moralia* he praises their virtues, regarding them as equal to men, and believes that they are also equal to men with regard to culture and education. The same convictions are also expounded in the *Lives* and inspire the descriptions of many female characters, particularly the Spartans, but also some Roman and Barbarian women, and even *hetaerae*. This favourable stance, it is argued, is the result of Plutarch's thought, but also the result of philosophical and literary influences upon his historical reflections.

Dámaris Romero González focuses on the prototype Spartan woman. She holds that the qualities attributed to the praised women of ancient Sparta in the *Lacaenarum Apophthegmata* do not seem particularly exemplary for us today, although they were certainly regarded as such within the social, geographic and political context that determined the character of the Spartan woman. Thus, the purpose of the present article is: (a) to search and locate such citizens in the *Lives*; (b) to manifest what characterizes each one of them; and (c) to try to model a prototype of the virtuous Spartan woman by combining the information of the *Moralia* with that obtained from the *Lives*.

Jeffrey Beneker discusses Plutarch's views on the role of *eros* in a marriage, focusing especially on the erotic connection that exists, or might exist, between husband and wife. Examining first what Plutarch says about the proper role of *eros* in the *Amatorius*, he will subsequently compare this theoretical/philosophical view with the real relationships that Plutarch depicts in several of his *Parallel Lives*.

In the *Amatorius*, Plutarch makes a vigorous and multi-faceted defense of *eros*-based, heterosexual relationships. Physical attraction and intimacy are important, and, just as boys do in the Platonic model, women, Plutarch argues, can reflect true beauty and so encourage their *erastai* to strive for a good

beyond simple bodily pleasure. Moreover, physical union is also the basis of friendship and brings love, honor, joy and loyalty to the couple on a daily basis. Another aspect of Plutarch's argument in the *Amatorius* addresses the partners' dispositions and ages. Both must be of good character and self-controlled. A husband naturally leads and educates his wife, but he should not attempt to degrade her. As a result of this intimate relationship, the woman may become an intellectual as well as a sexual partner for her husband. And, so long as she is wise, there is no shame even if she is older and guides her younger husband, although the man must not become subservient. However, even though a reversal of the traditional ages is tolerable, both partners should be young enough to procreate.

Turning to the *Lives*, the author surveys three examples of couples, which, as Plutarch says, have *eros*-based relationships: Brutus and Porcia; Pompey and his last two wives, Julia and Cornelia. The first case demonstrates the close and mutually beneficial relationship that is engendered by *eros*; the others reveal that erotic relationships may also have a downside. The case of Pompey and his wives recalls an important warning from the *Amatorius*: although *eros* is necessary for a good marital relationship, the marriage itself must be contracted in its proper season. Pompey is devoted to his wives, and they to him, which is just the situation described in the *Amatorius*. However, he enters into these two marriages late in life. Rather than playing the role of an elder statesman as he should, Pompey acts like a much younger man, which is not only unseemly, but it also costs him dearly in his contest with Caesar.

Georgia Tsouvala argues that Plutarch promotes the institutional role of *eros*, by examining the ways in which love, divided between pederastic and heterosexual relationships, functions in an aristocratic Greek *polis* of the late first and early second century CE. In the philosophical discussion of the *Erotikos*, Plutarch argues that *eros* is both a divine figure and a physiology of desire. It exhibits certain symptoms and certain modes of action which operate in a network of social relations (in the ritual celebration of marriage, in a variety of social settings in the theater, in the educational practices of the gymnasium, and so on). While pederastic love is not rejected, the ideal relationship is heterosexual and based on marriage. Plutarch's treatment of the rape of the Sabine women in the *Life of Romulus* clarifies and strengthens his arguments with respect to the political role of conjugal relationships, and helps in developing a unified theory of the ideal marriage in the Roman Empire of the late first and early second centuries C.E. While myth, reality, and ideology about the dangers of *eros* reveal the anxieties of masculine sexuality and of social conditions that are perceived as a power struggle for control over others and over oneself, Plutarch emphasizes the integrative function of *eros* as an essential component of social and civic life in the *oikos*, the *polis*, and even in

the empire. In both the *Lives* and the *Moralia*, the institution of marriage becomes not only the means by which a relationship of trust, affection, and ὁμοφροσύνη between two people can flourish, but also a way of achieving social harmony.

Carmen Soares, on the basis of the *Consolatio ad uxorem* and a group of biographies (*Solon, Themistocles, Theseus, Agis, Gracchi, Alexander, Coriolanus, Aratus, Demetrius*), will explore the parents/children relationship. She will examine parents' natural feelings and concerns for their children, but will also discuss the potentates' motivation to beget children in order to transfer their power to them. The paper will discuss how Plutarch shows that a father-son relationship may be governed not only by love and harmony, but also by competition and rivalry. Finally, the subject will also be approached from the children's point of view, where Plutarch's remarks are linked with the stipulations of the *philia* code.

Donne, cultura e società nelle *Vite Parallele* di Plutarco

Gabriele Marasco

Alla memoria di Adelmo Barigazzi

Uno degli aspetti più interessanti e peculiari della personalità di Plutarco è costituito dal suo atteggiamento verso le donne: lungi infatti dall'aderire alle concezioni fortemente maschiliste più diffuse nella tradizione greca, che relegavano la donna nell'ambito domestico,¹ Plutarco mostra costantemente, nelle sue opere, un'alta considerazione della funzione della donna nella famiglia e nella società e della sua attitudine a dimostrare virtù ed a compiere atti eroici analoghi a quelli degli uomini. Plutarco, del resto, dedicò uno specifico trattato, il *Mulierum virtutes*, proprio a dimostrare l'analogia delle virtù delle donne con quelle degli uomini, utilizzando esempi storici in genere poco conosciuti;² nell'*Amatorius*, poi, egli tesse un ampio elogio della funzione della donna nell'ambito del matrimonio e delle virtù femminili, ancora rafforzato da frequenti esempi storici, ed in particolare afferma che anche le donne possono avere tendenza naturale all'ἀρετή e possedere in grande misura la saggezza (σωφροσύνη) e l'intelligenza (σύνεσις).³

Questa tematica è sviluppata ampiamente, ancora con ampio ricorso ad esempi storici, ad apoftegmi e ad aforismi, nei *Coniugalia praecepta*, dove Plutarco, rivolgendosi ad una coppia di freschi sposi, Polliano ed Euridice, entrambi suoi allievi, indirizza loro consigli per la vita insieme: pur mantenendo un atteggiamento che può oggi apparire fortemente conservatore riguardo agli obblighi d'obbedienza e di sottomissione della moglie e alla funzione di guida del marito, egli raccomanda in particolare ai coniugi il rispetto e la fedeltà reciproci, delineando un ideale familiare in cui la donna ottiene notevoli riconoscimenti del suo ruolo, delle sue esigenze e della sua

1 In proposito e per la condizione della donna in Grecia cfr. soprattutto, sia pure con diverse sfumature e periodizzazioni, Donaldson; Wright; Gomme; Post; Hadas; Kitto, 219–35; Paoli; Seltman; Arthur; Pomeroy 1976; Gould; Cantarella; Savalli; Gallo; Arrigoni; Keuls; Uglione 1987 e 1989; Reduzzi Merla-Storchi Marino.

2 Su quest'opera cfr. Stadter 1965; Marasco 1991, 335–45. Più in generale, sull'atteggiamento di Plutarco nei confronti delle donne cfr. soprattutto Nikolaidis.

3 Plut. *amat.* 21, 767b; 23, 769b. Su quest'opera cfr. soprattutto Ziegler, 195–98; Flacelière 1976, 3 ss.

funzione ed un forte rispetto della sua personalità e delle sue capacità intellettuali e morali.⁴

L'elemento comunque più interessante dell'opera è costituito dalla notevole stima che Plutarco mostra per le qualità intellettuali della donna. Già all'inizio, infatti, egli si rivolge agli sposi ricordando loro la comune formazione filosofica, poiché entrambi avevano assistito alle sue lezioni (*Coniug. praec.* 138c). Nella conclusione, poi, egli esorta Euridice a leggere uno scritto di sua moglie per trarne consigli contro il lusso negli ornamenti e Polliano a far partecipe la giovane sposa della propria attività intellettuale, comunicandole ciò che apprende e discutendone con lei, poiché gli studi valgono ad allontanare le donne dalle attività inutili: la donna che studia la geometria si vergognerà infatti di dedicarsi alla danza, quella che studia la filosofia eviterà filtri magici ed incantesimi e colei che conosce l'astrologia non si lascerà ingannare dai discorsi delle maghe. Plutarco conclude quindi il suo scritto raccomandando a Euridice di tener sempre a mente i precetti che ha appresi da lui quand'era ragazza ed enumerandole esempi storici di donne famose nell'antichità greca e romana per le loro virtù (*Coniug. praec.* 145a–f). Non solo la filosofia, dunque, ma anche materie scientifiche come la geometria e l'astrologia, che pure facevano parte del curriculum degli studi,⁵ sono considerate da Plutarco essenziali per la formazione della donna.

L'atteggiamento di Plutarco non è certo privo di precedenti nel pensiero greco. Si è pensato infatti ad un'influenza su di lui del pensiero stoico,⁶ in particolare dei perduti trattati sul matrimonio composti da Perseo⁷ e da Cleante, che fu anche autore di un'opera che discuteva la tesi se la virtù dell'uomo e della donna siano eguali;⁸ ma soprattutto interessante appare l'analogia con Musonio Rufo, stoico fiorito all'epoca di Nerone. Fra i trattati

4 Su questo scritto e sui concetti in esso espressi cfr. in particolare Goessler; Ziegler, 189–91; Martano e Tirelli; Patterson. Sull'ideale di Plutarco riguardo al matrimonio e sul rilievo che egli attribuisce alle qualità intellettuali della sposa cfr soprattutto le importanti osservazioni di Nikolaidis, 63 ss.

5 Cfr. ad es. Marrou, 109, 243–44, 372; Bonner, 103 e 189; Liebeschuetz, 862–63. Quanto all'astrologia, l'affermazione di Marrou., 249, secondo cui nessun indizio ci permette d'affermare che figurasse nel programma dell'insegnamento liberale, appare poco credibile data la stretta affinità esistente fra l'astrologia e l'astronomia, ed è comunque smentita, oltre che dal presente passo di Plutarco, anche da testimonianze del IV secolo (cfr. ad es. Greg. Naz. *Or.* 7, 7, 'Sources chrét.', N° 405, Paris 1995, 192–96).

6 Cfr. Stadter 1965., 4–5; Ziegler, 190; in generale sui rapporti fra Plutarco e lo stoicismo, ma senza riferimento al nostro tema, si vedano soprattutto Babut; Hershbell.

7 *Diog. Laërt.* 7, 1, 36 = *SVF* I 435, p. 96.

8 *Diog. Laërt.* 7, 5, 174–75 = *SVF* I 48L, p. 106. Anche i più tardi stoici Ierocle ed Antipatro composero opere sul matrimonio, elogiandone l'importanza per il saggio (*Stob.* IV 22, 21–25 Hense).

conservati in estratti da Stobeo ne resta infatti uno dal titolo *Anche le donne devono praticare la filosofia*,⁹ in cui si sostiene che la donna è eguale all'uomo rispetto alla virtù e deve quindi studiare la filosofia, anche se solo per compiere al meglio i doveri femminili. In un altro trattato, *Se le figlie debbano essere educate alla stessa maniera dei figli*,¹⁰ Musonio sostiene ancora che le virtù delle donne sono eguali a quelle degli uomini anche nel campo del coraggio, ricordando l'esempio delle Amazzoni.

A questa tradizione filosofica Plutarco, che del resto ben conosceva le opere degli stoici ed in particolare di Musonio,¹¹ si ricollegava anche come autore di un trattato dal titolo *Anche la donna dev'essere educata*, attestato da Stobeo, il quale tuttavia ce ne ha conservato solo estratti non attinenti al tema e che sollevano gravi dubbi d'autenticità.¹² Il titolo stesso dell'opera conferma, in ogni caso, che Plutarco doveva sostenere la tesi della necessità di educare anche le donne, tesi che del resto era in perfetto accordo con quanto da lui affermato in tutta la sua opera.

Tuttavia, se i precedenti filosofici possono aver ispirato e confortato il pensiero di Plutarco, questo era basato piuttosto, a mio avviso, soprattutto su idee personali e sulle condizioni particolari dell'ambiente sociale e culturale in cui egli viveva. L'analisi dei *Moralia* permette infatti di concludere che la concezione della donna come affine all'uomo, sua compagna in ogni attività e partecipe anch'ella dell'educazione filosofica e letteraria non era un ideale astratto, ma una realtà diffusa a quel tempo e che l'allieva Euridice non era affatto l'unica donna che partecipava attivamente alla vita culturale dell'ambiente di Plutarco.

In particolare, nella *Consolatio* indirizzata alla moglie Timossena in occasione della morte dell'unica figlia, Plutarco elogia la semplicità della consorte¹³ e ricorda costantemente la sua comunanza di vita con lui, ma ne sottolinea anche particolarmente la partecipazione alla propria attività culturale, ricordando che ella colpiva i filosofi amici per la sobrietà dell'abbigliamento e per la schiettezza della condotta (*Cons. ad ux.* 609c). Più avanti, affermando la fede comune nell'immortalità dell'anima, Plutarco ricorda come Timossena ascoltasse le argomentazioni contrarie degli epicurei, ma non vi prestasse alcuna fede, per effetto sia della tradizione religiosa, sia delle dottrine dionisiache a cui entrambi erano iniziati (*ibid.* 611d). Timossena era inoltre autrice di un'opera περί φιλοκοσμίας indirizzata ad Aristilla, di cui Plutarco

9 Stob. II 31, 126 = Muson., pp. 8–13 Hense. Su Musonio cfr. in particolare Laurenti.

10 Stob. II 31, 123 = Muson., pp. 13–19 Hense.

11 Cfr. ad es. Ziegler, *op. cit.*, 145 ss. e 340. Per l'influenza di Musonio su Plutarco, in particolare riguardo all'esaltazione dell'amore coniugale, cfr. inoltre Stadter 1965, 3–5.

12 Plut. *fr.* 128–33 Sandbach; cfr. ad es. Ziegler, 190.

13 Cfr. in particolare Plut. *cons ad ux.* 4, 608 f– 609c.

consiglia la lettura ad Euridice (*Coniug. praec.* 145a);¹⁴ lo scritto è stato considerato da alcuni opera dello stesso Plutarco, poiché come tale compare nel Catalogo di Lampria,¹⁵ ma non vi è motivo di negare una modesta attività letteraria di Timossena, che comunque ben si accorda con l'elogio che il marito fa della sua partecipazione alla vita culturale e soprattutto alle discussioni dei filosofi. Nient'altro sappiamo di Aristilla, forse una parente,¹⁶ ma il fatto stesso che fosse dedicataria dello scritto indica la sua preparazione ed i suoi interessi culturali.

Più chiara è la figura della dedicataria di altri due scritti plutarchei, il *Mulierum virtutes* e il *De Iside et Osiride*: entrambe le opere sono infatti indirizzate a Clea, preposta (ἀρχηγή) delle Tiadi di Delfi e iniziata al culto di Osiride¹⁷. Plutarco non solo la stima moltissimo come esperta nel campo della religione, ma anche la definisce «saggia e filosofa» (351e) e, nell'introdurre il *Mulierum virtutes*, ricorda una conversazione filosofica che aveva avuto con lei dopo la morte di Leontide (probabilmente una parente), affermando di trattare appunto l'argomento che ne era stato l'oggetto, se cioè la virtù dell'uomo e quella della donna siano eguali e di volerlo sostenere con esempi storici (242 f); le affermazioni successive, ed in particolare quella relativa alla scelta di narrare solo gli esempi meno noti di virtù femminili (243d) confermano poi che Clea doveva avere una buona preparazione storica. La donna, dunque, era dotata di grande cultura e condivideva, in particolare, gli interessi di Plutarco nel campo della filosofia ed in quello, strettamente correlato per le particolari finalità morali che Plutarco perseguiva, della storia.

L'analisi dei *Moralia* delinea dunque l'ideale del ruolo che Plutarco attribuiva alla donna come compagna dell'uomo in ogni attività e partecipe con lui non solo degli atti d'eroismo e d'abnegazione e degli esempi di virtù, ma anche delle attività culturali e spirituali, dalla filosofia alla religione. Questo ideale è costantemente sottolineato ed esemplificato mediante aneddoti, apoftegmi ed episodi storici, conformemente al metodo che era caratteristico di Plutarco.

Questo stesso metodo anima ovviamente anche le *Vite parallele* ed è dunque interessante osservare come la stessa tematica sia sviluppata in opere dalle caratteristiche ben differenti; ma il limite di Plutarco stava qui, a mio avviso, soprattutto nella documentazione storica disponibile, che offriva un materiale limitato a tal fine. In effetti, l'esaltazione della virtù delle donne e

14 Plut. *coniug. praec.* 48, 145a.

15 Nr. 113; cfr. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 252, n. 1; ma si veda l'atteggiamento più cauto di Ziegler (19–20), il quale considera possibile che Plutarco abbia incitato la moglie a comporre lo scritto ed abbia un po' contribuito alla sua elaborazione letteraria.

16 Cfr. Ziegler, 46.

17 Su di lei cfr. Ziegler, 49; Renoirte, 137–38 e, sulla base delle iscrizioni, Stadter 1965, 2–3; Griffiths, 253–54.

della loro capacità di compiere atti eroici non inferiori a quelli degli uomini è frequente nelle *Vite* e si estrinseca in numerosi episodi;¹⁸ meno frequente è invece il tema dell'eguaglianza della virtù e della consonanza che si estrinseca nel rapporto fra uomo e donna. In questo campo, comunque, gli esempi più interessanti sono offerti dalle *Vite* spartane, per effetto non solo della posizione assai più libera e autonoma della donna a Sparta rispetto al resto della Grecia;¹⁹ ma anche, e soprattutto, dell'adesione di Plutarco all'ideale 'licurgico' ed al ruolo che esso attribuiva alla donna nella società.²⁰ Già nella *Vita di Licurgo*, infatti, Plutarco difende le donne spartane dalle accuse di sfrenata licenza e di eccessivo dominio sugli uomini che in particolare Aristotele aveva rivolto contro di esse, elogiando invece le norme che Licurgo aveva stabilite riguardo ai matrimoni e alle nascite come fondamento di una giusta παιδεία. Egli ricorda, infatti, come le spartane esercitassero i loro corpi con la corsa, la lotta, il lancio del disco e del giavellotto, in modo da rafforzarsi in vista del parto e da garantire il fisico dei loro figli; inoltre, esse partecipavano alle processioni e alle danze nude come i ragazzi e con essi facevano a gara negli scherzi e negli encomi.²¹ Plutarco, quindi, elogia le peculiari usanze matrimoniali di Sparta, considerandole particolarmente adatte a suscitare ed a mantenere sempre vivo l'amore fra i coniugi (*Lyc.* 15.10). Il biografo, come si vede, elogia le spartane come modello di virtù esercitata insieme ai propri uomini; ma questa esaltazione non va al di là dei dati che le fonti gli fornivano e non forza in alcun modo la realtà storica. La παιδεία di cui le spartane erano partecipi insieme ai maschi è infatti esplicitamente limitata all'educazione fisica, agli scherzi e agli elogi, senza il minimo accenno ad aspetti culturali. Plutarco sa benissimo quali fossero i forti limiti dell'educazione spartana in questo campo e non intende forzare la realtà storica. E' poi importante notare che nelle *Vite* spartane dell'età classica il ruolo delle donne è in genere limitato ad esempi di virtù personali, di abnegazione al bene di Sparta e a detti che per lo più trovano corrispondenza nelle raccolte di apoftegmi.²²

La situazione cambia notevolmente quando esaminiamo le *Vite* spartane di epoca ellenistica. Già in quella di Pirro, infatti, risalta l'elogio del ruolo delle donne spartane e della loro consonanza d'intenti con i propri uomini: Plutarco non solo approva esplicitamente la condotta di Chilonide, che aveva abbandonato il vecchio marito Cleonimo per il giovane principe Acrotato ed a quest'ultimo si mostrò attaccata per tutto il corso delle vicende, fino ad

18 In proposito cfr. Le Corsu e soprattutto Nikolaidis, 32 ss..

19 Cfr. soprattutto Pomeroy 1976, 35 ss.; Redfield; Piccirilli 1978, 936 ss.; Cartledge. In particolare, per i riflessi di questa realtà nell'opera di Plutarco cfr. Le Corsu, 15–20.

20 In proposito cfr. soprattutto Tigerstedt, 226–64 con ampia bibliografia.

21 Plut. *Lyc.* 14; cfr. in particolare Piccirilli 1980, 256–58 con discussione e bibliografia.

22 Per i rapporti fra queste raccolte e le *Vite* e per la tradizione a cui le prime si ricollegano cfr. soprattutto Tigerstedt, 16 ss.; 243 ss.; Santaniello, 9 ss.

essere disposta al suicidio piuttosto che cadere nelle mani del marito (*Pyrrh.* 26.17–18, 27.10, 28.6), ma anche dà risalto al rifiuto delle donne di lasciare Sparta ed alla loro partecipazione attiva alla difesa contro Pirro, accanto ai loro uomini, sottolineando però che esse rientrarono nelle case non appena arrivarono i rinforzi macedoni, « non volendo più immischiarsi nella guerra ». (*Pyrrh.* 27.4–10, 28.5, 29.12). Il particolare è interessante, perché evidenzia ancora i limiti del ruolo che Plutarco riconosceva alle donne in simili frangenti.

Più ampio è poi il ruolo delle donne nelle biografie dei riformatori spartani del III secolo. Plutarco, in particolare, sottolinea, il ruolo della madre Agesistrata e della nonna Archidamia nell'appoggiare le riforme di Agide IV con tutta la forza del loro denaro, delle loro clientele e della loro influenza politica,²³ esalta la condotta di Chilonide, che prima si era recata in esilio con il padre Leonida II, poi aveva interceduto presso di lui in favore del marito Cleombroto e aveva seguito quest'ultimo nell'esilio,²⁴ infine narra con evidente ammirazione l'eroismo con cui Agesistrata e Archidamia avevano affrontato la morte, condividendo la sorte di Agide e sottolineando anche in quelle estreme circostanze come ne approvassero anche totalmente le idee, nel comune obiettivo della grandezza di Sparta.²⁵

La figura più interessante è tuttavia quella di Agiatide, la vedova di Agide costretta, dopo la morte del marito, a sposare il più giovane Cleomene. Secondo Plutarco, ella aveva pregato molto per non essere costretta a questo matrimonio ma, in seguito, si mostrò una moglie buona ed affettuosa; « Cleomene s'innamorò di lei appena l'ebbe sposata e condivise in qualche modo il suo attaccamento alla memoria di Agide, al punto che spesso l'interrogava su quanto era accaduto e l'ascoltava attentamente quand'ella descriveva le idee e i progetti di Agide » (*Cleom.* 1.3). Plutarco descrive dunque Agiatide come una moglie modello anche nel campo della partecipazione all'elaborazione delle idee e all'attività politica dei suoi mariti: non solo, infatti, ella era stata partecipe dei progetti e dell'azione di Agide, ma anche ne aveva trasmesso la memoria a Cleomene, fornendogli il primo impulso alle riforme. Agiatide, in sostanza, assume un ruolo davvero nuovo ed importante, di vera e propria maestra del marito, nel campo essenziale del pensiero politico. Non stupisce, poi, che a questa comunanza ideale e d'intenti corrisponda un affetto sincero e duraturo; ed, in effetti, nel narrare la morte di Agiatide, avvenuta anni dopo, Plutarco sottolinea il dolore che ne provò Cleomene, pur in un momento in cui gravissime preoccupazioni militari impegnavano la sua mente (*Cleom.* 22.1–2).

23 Plut. *Ag.* 7, 1–4; cfr. Marasco 1981, I, 233 ss.

24 Plut. *Ag.* 17; cfr. Marasco 1981, I, 321–23 e soprattutto Nikolaidis, 82.

25 Plut. *Ag.* 20, 2–7; cfr. Marasco, 1981, I, 334–36.

Il rilievo che Plutarco attribuisce alle virtù di queste donne spartane ed alla loro partecipazione all'attività dei loro uomini corrisponde in parte all'evoluzione della posizione della donna nella Sparta ellenistica, per effetto soprattutto di motivi economici,²⁶ ma a mio avviso è influenzata in maniera determinante dal pensiero di Filarco, che è la fonte di tutti questi episodi e che nella sua opera storica aveva particolarmente insistito sia sulle virtù delle donne spartane sia, più in generale, sull'elogio dell'amore coniugale.²⁷

Nelle *Vite* di ambiente ateniese, invece, le figure femminili non hanno risalto, con un'eccezione che, in un certo senso, costituisce una conferma dell'impegno di Plutarco a non forzare i dati delle fonti. Nella biografia di Pericle, iniziando il racconto della guerra di Samo, Plutarco accenna alla voce secondo cui ne sarebbe stata causa la celebre etèra Aspasia. Egli passa quindi a una digressione per chiarire con quali arti quest'ultima avesse potuto soggiogare i più potenti uomini politici ed ispirare grande stima nei filosofi. Si diceva che ella era stata ricercata da Pericle per la sua sapienza e per la sua saggezza politica; infatti, anche Socrate andava a volte a trovarla con i suoi amici e coloro che frequentavano la sua casa vi conducevano pure le mogli perché l'ascoltassero, nonostante il discredito che accompagnava il suo mestiere, dato che preparava anche ragazze alla professione di etèra. Plutarco cita quindi il *Menesseno* di Platone affermando che, nonostante il tono scherzoso del suo inizio, esso conteneva un dettaglio storico: che cioè Aspasia aveva fama d'insegnare l'arte oratoria a molti Ateniesi.²⁸ Il biografo ritiene comunque che il motivo dell'attaccamento di Pericle ad Aspasia fosse l'amore: egli aveva infatti sposato una parente,²⁹ ne aveva avuto due figli, ma poi la vita in comune non era stata più gradita ad entrambi e Pericle l'aveva data ad un altro con il suo consenso e si era unito ad Aspasia. Plutarco prosegue la digressione con notizie su Aspasia minore, altra etèra amante di Ciro il Giovane, poi conclude affermando che queste notizie gli erano venute in mente mentre scriveva; sarebbe stato davvero inumano trascurarle e passar oltre (*Per.* 24).

Quest'affermazione conclusiva chiarisce l'importanza che Plutarco attribuisce alla digressione su Aspasia, evidentemente essenziale ai suoi occhi per chiarire da un lato i caratteri dei personaggi, dall'altro il proprio pensiero riguardo ad un rapporto che costituisce un'evidente deroga al suo ideale dell'amore coniugale e merita dunque adeguata riflessione. Da un lato, infatti,

26 Cfr. ad es. Marasco, 1981, I, 238 ss. con bibliografia; Mossé, 138–53.

27 Cfr. Marasco 1991, 344–45.

28 Cfr. Plato *Menex.* 235e, dove Socrate afferma che Aspasia è stata maestra nell'arte oratoria sia per lui stesso, sia per Pericle.

29 Su questo matrimonio cfr. in particolare Cromey, 203–1. Sul problema dell'identificazione della moglie cfr. Stadter 1989, 238 con discussione e bibliografia.

l'eccezionale rilievo attribuito ad Aspasia, donna sapiente ed educata, in rapporti con filosofi come Socrate, apprezzata dallo stesso Platone come maestra di eloquenza per gli Ateniesi, corrisponde sia, in generale, alla particolare posizione di «emancipazione» che proprio le etère avevano conseguito nell'Atene del tempo³⁰ sia, in particolare, alla reale personalità di Aspasia stessa;³¹ del resto, Plutarco stesso ritorna implicitamente sui rapporti fra Aspasia e l'ambiente culturale ateniese, ricordando i processi d'empietà che furono in seguito intentati contro di lei e contro Anassagora.³² Proprio le capacità intellettuali e la preparazione culturale, eccezionali in una donna del tempo ad Atene, facevano dunque di Aspasia la compagna ideale per Pericle, capace di discutere con lui e con i suoi amici di filosofia, d'istruirlo nell'eloquenza e di fornirgli preziosi consigli politici.

D'altra parte, però, Aspasia non era la moglie legittima di Pericle, ma solo un'amante, che portava per di più il discredito della propria professione e delle numerose relazioni che aveva avute. In proposito, l'elemento essenziale di valutazione per Plutarco è costituito, a mio avviso, dal fallimento del matrimonio di Pericle:³³ nonostante la presenza di figli, la mancanza d'amore aveva comportato la cessazione dell'affetto fra i coniugi ed il fallimento dell'unione, che aveva lasciato entrambi liberi di cercare nuove relazioni, ed il moralista Plutarco non sembra disapprovare eccessivamente la scelta di Pericle, che aveva voluto scegliersi questa volta una compagna adeguata al suo livello intellettuale e in grado di essere partecipe dei suoi ideali, dei suoi progetti e della sua azione. In questo caso, dunque, Plutarco sembra voler chiarire che l'eccezione conferma la regola: per garantire un buon matrimonio occorrono l'amore fra i coniugi, ma anche un'adeguata consonanza di educazione e la partecipazione della moglie agli interessi e all'attività del marito.

Un quadro in parte diverso ci è fornito dalle *Vite* di epoca ellenistica, per effetto della netta evoluzione intervenuta allora nella condizione della donna³⁴ e dell'emergere di forti personalità di sovrane.³⁵ L'atteggiamento di Plutarco mi sembra comunque fortemente critico nei confronti di questa evoluzione e dei

30 Cfr. ad es. Bruns; Flacelière 1959.

31 Su cui cfr. in particolare Montuosi; Jouanna.

32 Plut. *Per.* 32; cfr. Marasco 1976; Prandi, 10 ss.; Stadter 1989, 297–98.

33 Si noti in proposito che la versione di Plutarco, affermando che il divorzio sarebbe avvenuto per comune consenso, vale a difendere Pericle da accuse che dovettero pure essergli rivolte: Eraclide Pontico (*fr.* 59 Wehrli² = Athen. 12, 533c–d) affermava infatti che egli aveva scacciato da casa la moglie per vivere una vita di piaceri con Aspasia, spendendo per lei gran parte del suo patrimonio. Plutarco, con ogni evidenza, ha scelto la versione più confacente al suo giudizio sul personaggio ed ai propri ideali di vita.

34 Su cui cfr. ad es. Vatin, 30 ss.; 57 ss.; 261 ss.; Schneider, 42 ss.; Pomeroy 1976, 120–48; Ead. 1984.

35 In proposito cfr. ad es. Macurdy.

suoi effetti sul matrimonio. Già riguardo ad Olimpiade, moglie di Filippo II, Plutarco ricorda il rapido fallimento del suo matrimonio, dovuto al timore del marito di essere vittima di tradimenti e di stregonerie, ma anche e soprattutto al fatto che la donna era dedita a culti orgiastici e si abbandonava in modo barbaro ai deliri e all'estasi mistica (*Alex.* 2.6–9). La disapprovazione di Plutarco mi sembra chiarita soprattutto dal confronto con il passo della *Consolatio* in cui egli, rivolgendosi alla moglie, la loda perché partecipa attivamente alla sua attività religiosa (*Cons. ad ux.* 608c; cfr. anche 611d), e con le raccomandazioni ad Euridice circa l'importanza dello studio della filosofia e dell'astrologia, che distolgono la donna dall'accostarsi alla magia (*Coniug. praec.* 145a–f). L'effetto della condotta di Olimpiade è naturalmente il fallimento del suo matrimonio, che Plutarco depreca, ricordando i tradimenti di Filippo, i conseguenti motivi di crisi anche per il regno, aggravati dal pessimo carattere e dalla gelosia di Olimpiade, che eccitava contro il marito il figlio Alessandro, gli intrighi di corte e la morte di Filippo, di cui Olimpiade stessa fu considerata la principale responsabile (*Alex.* 9.5–11, 10.6–8).

Le donne non hanno comunque un ruolo particolarmente importante nelle biografie ellenistiche: esse sono in genere menzionate solo in occasione dei frequenti matrimoni dinastici, ma non assurgono a ruoli di rilievo. Così, nella *Vita di Demetrio* Plutarco, pur pagando il suo debito all'ampia tradizione relativa all'episodio romanzesco dell'amore di Antioco e Stratonice,³⁶ depreca la poligamia del Poliorcete, nonostante il matrimonio con Fila, donna saggia ma più anziana di lui (*Demetr.* 14.2–4, 27.8), che l'amava al punto da uccidersi davanti alla sua sconfitta (ibid. 45.1); è evidente la deprecazione per un matrimonio non illuminato dall'amore reciproco fra i coniugi ed, in effetti, Plutarco si dilunga maggiormente sul rapporto d'amore che legava invece Demetrio all'etèra Lamia, sottolineando, sulla scorta soprattutto dei comici, come quest'ultima lo avesse completamente dominato.³⁷ Plutarco non aveva evidentemente una buona opinione del comportamento delle sovrane ellenistiche: i loro matrimoni dinastici, privi d'amore, la loro ingerenza nella condotta della politica, la loro tendenza agli intrighi e alle congiure di corte erano assai lontani dal suo ideale e ciò spiega perché, nelle *Vite*, esse abbiano un ruolo assai limitato rispetto alla loro reale importanza.

Plutarco però si riscatta ampiamente, sotto questo aspetto, riguardo all'ultima regina ellenistica, che è la donna alle cui vicende è dedicato lo spazio maggiore in tutta la sua opera: Cleopatra. Ella compare infatti nella biografia di Marco Antonio con un ruolo progressivamente sempre più importante, fino a

36 Plut. *Demetr.* 38. Sulla vicenda e sull'ampia tradizione relativa cfr. Marasco 1982, 104–12; Mastrocinque 1983, 1 ss.; Brodersen, 169–75 con bibliografia.

37 Plut. *Demetr.* 16, 5; 19, 6; 24, 1; 25, 9; 27; *Comp. Demetr. Ant.* 3,2; cfr. in particolare Mastrocinque 1979, 260–76.

diventare l'unica protagonista, dopo la morte di Antonio, con il lungo e dettagliato racconto dei suoi ultimi giorni, quasi una biografia nella biografia.³⁸ Plutarco però, pur ammettendo le doti di Cleopatra, aderisce in larga misura alla tradizione a lei ostile, riportando buona parte delle accuse che le erano state rivolte;³⁹ la sua ostilità è chiaramente dovuta al fatto che egli ritiene Cleopatra responsabile del fallimento del matrimonio di Antonio con Ottavia (*Ant.* 26.1–2, 53.1–11); ma, d'altra parte, se egli sottolinea costantemente il folle amore del triumviro per la regina egiziana, espressioni d'affetto della donna ricorrono solo al momento della morte di Antonio (*ibid.* 77.5); i continui sospetti di quest'ultimo circa segreti accordi con Ottaviano alle sue spalle ed il tentativo di Cleopatra di dissociarsi dalle responsabilità di Antonio, rigettando su di lui morto ogni colpa (*ibid.* 73.3–5, 74.1, 83.4), attenuano poi notevolmente il valore di questo episodio.

D'altra parte, la biografia di Antonio è chiaramente presentata da Plutarco, insieme a quella di Demetrio, come esempio non di virtù da imitare, ma di vizi da evitare e questa concezione anima entrambe le biografie, esprimendosi anche in un costante parallelismo che evidenzia soprattutto l'identità dei vizi dei due personaggi.⁴⁰ In questa prospettiva, alla soggezione di Demetrio all'etèra Lamia vien fatta corrispondere quella di Antonio prima a Fulvia, poi a Cleopatra; quest'ultima appare, di conseguenza, l'artefice fondamentale della corruzione di Antonio e della sua rovina. Mi sembra interessante, in proposito, notare che Plutarco non fa alcuna menzione delle doti culturali di Cleopatra, pure ben note alla tradizione, in particolare al suo interesse per letterati e filosofi, alla protezione accordata a medici e scienziati famosi ed alla sua partecipazione personale alle conoscenze scientifiche, del tutto eccezionale in una donna del tempo e tale che le venivano attribuiti trattati di cosmetica e perfino formule alchimistiche.⁴¹ Della cultura di Cleopatra, in effetti, Plutarco ricorda solo due particolari: la sua eccezionale conoscenza delle lingue dei popoli «barbari» (*Ant.* 27.4) e la perizia nel campo dei veleni, perfezionata in vista del suicidio mediante esperimenti compiuti su prigionieri condannati a morte (*ibid.* 71.6–8). Questa seconda notizia si ricollega a una diffusa tradizione ostile, che accusava così Cleopatra di estrema crudeltà,⁴² ma anche la prima ha ben scarso rilievo, se si considera che la conoscenza delle lingue dei barbari non rientrava nel curriculum degli studi e non era oggetto d'interesse. D'altra parte, sia la conoscenza delle lingue barbare, sia gli esperimenti su esseri

38 Plut. *Ant.* 78–86. Cfr. in particolare Brenk 1992a.

39 Cfr. in particolare Becher, 69–80.

40 In proposito si veda soprattutto l'accurata analisi di Brenk 1992b.

41 Cfr. Marasco 1998 e, con riferimento anche alle fonti talmudiche, Geiger.

42 Cfr. Marasco 1995, con fonti e bibliografia, a cui si aggiunga Grmek, 86–89.

umani erano parte della tradizione sul grande nemico di Roma, Mitridate.⁴³ Con queste notizie, dunque, Plutarco accosta sostanzialmente Cleopatra alla figura del re barbaro e crudele, paradigma di una lotta contro Roma che non era animata da nessun motivo onorevole. In realtà, la caratteristica essenziale che Plutarco riconosce a Cleopatra è quella di un'eccezionale abilità nel parlare e nell'ingraziarsi Antonio con l'adulazione, sollecitandone e sfruttandone i lati peggiori della personalità (*Ant.* 25.3, 27.2–3, 28.1–3, 29). Nonostante le sue grandi doti politiche e d'intelligenza, che pure Plutarco riconosce, Cleopatra non è dunque una buona compagna, poiché il suo legame con Antonio non è dovuto a vero amore ed ella non contribuisce affatto al miglioramento morale di lui, come sarebbe dovere di una moglie, ma anzi ne corrompe ed esaspera i difetti, divenendo causa principale della sua rovina.

Minori elementi sono forniti dalle *Vite* romane, in cui il ruolo della donna in epoca arcaica e medio repubblicana è circoscritto in genere all'ambiente domestico o ad esempi d'eroismo singolo in difesa di Roma, con l'ovvia eccezione di Cornelia, madre dei Gracchi, della quale sono elogiati l'attaccamento alla memoria del marito ed anche, relativamente all'ultimo periodo trascorso a Miseno, gli incontri con letterati (*C.Gr.* 19.2). La notevole emancipazione raggiunta dalla donna nel periodo della tarda repubblica⁴⁴ non sembra invece aver suscitato nessuna simpatia in Plutarco, se si ricordano i suoi accenni chiaramente negativi al matrimonio del vecchio Silla con la giovane e sfrontata Valeria (*Sull.* 35.5–11) ai rapporti intimi di Clodio con le sorelle sposate (*Cic.* 29.4–5, *Luc.* 34.1, 38.1), alle vicissitudini coniugali di Cicerone, dovute al cattivo carattere della prima moglie Terenzia, che s'ingeriva anche in maniera inopportuna ed ambiziosa nella sua attività politica, e alla sua mancanza d'affetto, che indusse l'oratore al divorzio (*Cic.* 20.2–3, 29.2–4, 30.4, 41.2–4), poi all'insensibilità della seconda moglie, Publilia, in occasione della morte della figlia di Cicerone, che portò al fallimento anche di questa unione, del resto contratta per motivi d'interesse economico (ibid. 41.4–8). Se si tiene conto poi del divorzio di Pompeo da Mucia, accusata d'infedeltà durante l'assenza del marito (*Pomp.* 42.13), del lungo racconto dell'adulterio di Pompea, moglie di Cesare, con Clodio, che comportò anch'esso un divorzio (*Caes.* 9–10), delle vicissitudini di Catone Uticense, che divorziò dalla moglie Atilia colpevole di adulterio, degli analoghi divorzi delle sue due sorelle, l'una delle quali, madre di Bruto, aveva avuto una relazione con Cesare (*Cat. Min.* 24. *Br.* 5, *Luc.* 38.1), della morte del triumviro Lepido, disperato per aver scoperto il tradimento della moglie (*Pomp.* 16.9), infine della descrizione, chiaramente ostile ed improntata alle *Filippiche* di Cicerone, della condotta di

43 In partic. Galen. XIV 2 Kühn; cfr. Marasco 1995, 324–25.

44 Su cui cfr. ad es. Pomeroy 1976, 149 ss.; Fau.

Fulvia, moglie di Marco Antonio e del dominio da lei esercitato sul marito,⁴⁵ si dovrà concludere che la società romana tardorepubblicana offriva a Plutarco un quadro complessivamente tutt'altro che positivo per quel che riguardava l'amore coniugale, la fedeltà e l'armonia familiare e la partecipazione delle donne all'attività pratica ed intellettuale dei mariti. La grande emancipazione delle donne romane del tempo, il loro crescente ruolo sociale e la loro notevole cultura non suscitavano evidentemente la simpatia di Plutarco, contrario ai loro costumi eccessivamente liberi, che minacciavano il matrimonio, ed alla loro eccessiva ingerenza in politica. Se poi teniamo presenti le notizie nella *Vita di Galba* sull'adulterio della moglie di Calvisio Sabino e su quelli di Poppea (*Galb.* 12.2, 19.3–9) si potrà ritenere che le perdute biografie dei Cesari non cambiassero questo quadro e che Plutarco non nutrisse un atteggiamento positivo neanche nei confronti dell'ulteriore evoluzione della posizione della donna a Roma ai suoi tempi⁴⁶ e dei relativi effetti sulle condizioni del matrimonio.⁴⁷ L'ideale di Plutarco è espresso piuttosto proprio a proposito dei matrimoni di Catone Uticense, che Plutarco mette a contrasto con la sorte felice di Lelio che, durante la sua lunga vita, ebbe una sola donna, sua moglie (*Cat. Min.* 7.3); l'osservazione non è affatto oziosa, ma anzi mette bene in rilievo gli ideali di Plutarco, se la confrontiamo con le idee del tutto analoghe che abbiamo viste espresse nei *Moralia*.⁴⁸

Ciò non significa, tuttavia, che il tema dell'amore coniugale sia assente dalle *Vite* romane: esso anima, in particolare, la descrizione dei rapporti fra Bruto e la moglie Porcia, in cui è da notare, oltre all'esaltazione del coraggio virile della donna e del suo attaccamento al marito (*Br.* 13.3–11, 15.5–9, 23.2–6, 53.5–7), soprattutto l'affermazione della stessa Porcia la quale, addolorata perché Bruto non l'ha messa al corrente del progetto della congiura contro Cesare, gli dimostra il proprio coraggio ferendosi e chiede di essere considerata, nonostante la sua natura femminile, pari a lui, poiché una buona educazione e la frequentazione di persone virtuose influiscono molto sui costumi (*ibid.* 13.5–11).

Ma soprattutto importanti mi sembrano le testimonianze offerte dalla *Vita di Pompeo*. Questo personaggio, che riscuote notevole simpatia da parte del biografo, era particolarmente sensibile al tema dell'educazione della donna: lo stesso Plutarco, infatti, nelle *Quaestiones convivales*, attesta che egli aveva affidato la figlia Pompea ad un precettore che, quando Pompeo tornò dall'Oriente nel

45 Plut. *Ant.* 10, 5–10. Per un tentativo recente di riabilitazione di Fulvia cfr. Delia.

46 Su cui cfr. ancora, in particolare, Sirago.

47 Può essere interessante ricordare che, a fronte delle figure femminili greche che abbiamo visto, nessuna donna romana compare nella lista di amici di Plutarco compilata da Ziegler (66–75).

48 Cfr. Flacelière 1976, 68.

61, scelse un brano di Omero perché la ragazza lo leggesse ad alta voce al padre (737b). Nella biografia, poi, Plutarco narra che, dopo la morte della moglie Giulia, Pompeo sposò Cornelia, che era già vedova, ma molto più giovane di lui. La donna, oltre alla bellezza, aveva molte attrattive: era ben educata nella letteratura, esperta nel suonare la lira e nella geometria, abituata ad ascoltare con profitto discorsi di filosofia. A queste qualità si univa un carattere libero da quella spiacevole invadenza che questi studi tendono a produrre nelle giovani donne (*Pomp.* 55.1–2).

Quest'ultima affermazione chiarisce ancora il ruolo subordinato che Plutarco attribuiva alle donne e si ricollega alle analoghe idee, che abbiamo viste sviluppate soprattutto nei *Coniugalia praecepta*, circa gli obblighi di obbedienza e di sottomissione della moglie. Ciò non vale tuttavia ad oscurare l'importanza della preparazione culturale che Plutarco attribuisce a Cornelia: oltre infatti alla letteratura e alla musica, Plutarco sottolinea i suoi studi di geometria e di filosofia, proprio le due materie di cui nei *Praecepta* raccomandava l'apprendimento a Euridice (*Coniug. praec.* 145c–e). Il buon carattere di Cornelia, l'affetto per il marito e l'educazione ricevuta, che le consente di essere al livello di Pompeo e partecipe di tutte le sue attività, senza però ingerirsi eccessivamente nei suoi affari politici, comportano la riuscita del matrimonio, nonostante la differenza d'età, e Plutarco sottolinea costantemente l'attaccamento reciproco dei due coniugi anche nei frangenti più difficili, fino a quelli drammatici che accompagnarono l'uccisione di Pompeo (*Pomp.* 74–75, 76.1, 77.1, 78.7, 79.3, 80.10).

Anche sotto l'aspetto dell'atteggiamento nei confronti delle donne, del loro ruolo nella famiglia e nella società e dell'importanza dell'amore coniugale, dunque, l'analisi delle *Vite parallele* conferma la costante analogia con i *Moralia*, non soltanto sul piano dei contenuti e degli ideali di vita, ma anche su quello del metodo, per il costante ricorso ad esempi storici dai quali l'autore trae spunto per ammaestramenti, ma senza mai forzare i dati storici per dimostrare le proprie tesi.

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El prototipo de mujer espartana en Plutarco

Dámaris Romero González

Es bien conocido que la mujer espartana disfrutó en la Antigüedad de un privilegio impensable para sus contemporáneas atenienses e inaceptable para los varones: el de poder moverse con libertad dentro de una sociedad de hombres¹. Naturalmente la valoración que este comportamiento femenino espartano ha tenido, varía según la época y la opinión, normalmente exterior, de los creadores de la antigua «tradición espartana»: ² unas veces, esta conducta era vista con ojos poco favorables y nada benevolentes, como lo hace Aristóteles,³ aunque otros autores, como Jenofonte y Plutarco, consideran a la mujer espartana un ejemplo de grandes virtudes.⁴

La descripción que se hace de ella en este trabajo es parcial, al limitarse a la imagen que transmite un autor concreto, Plutarco, ya que la disparidad de «los testimonios disponibles no permiten construir el retrato de una «típica» mujer espartana».⁵

Plutarco ofrece apuntes dispersos sobre la mujer en Esparta en tres tratados de *Moralia*: *Máximas de los espartanos*, *Antiguas costumbres de los espartanos* y

1 Esta libertad no ha de ser entendida con criterios actuales, puesto que la mujer espartana seguía estando subordinada al varón y a unos roles determinados: esposa y madre de soldados. Tampoco esta libertad es aplicable a todas las mujeres espartanas, sino a las que pertenecían a la realeza, de las que, de hecho, quedan más testimonios.

2 Cartledge, 85.

3 Arist., *Pol.*, 1269b5–15: ἔτι δ' ἡ περὶ τὰς γυναῖκας ἀνεσις καὶ πρὸς τὴν προαίρεσιν τῆς πολιτείας βλαβερὰ καὶ πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν πόλεως... ὅλην γὰρ τὴν πόλιν ὁ νομοθέτης εἶναι βουλόμενος καρτερικὴν, κατὰ μὲν τοὺς ἀνδρας φανερός ἐστι τοιοῦτος ὢν, ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν γυναικῶν ἐξημέληκεν· ζῶσι γὰρ ἀκολάστως πρὸς ἅπασαν ἀκολασίαν καὶ τρυφερῶς «Además la licencia de las mujeres es contraria tanto a los propósitos del régimen como a la felicidad de la ciudad... El legislador, queriendo que toda la población fuera de temple firme, se ve que lo consiguió en cuanto a los hombres, pero se descuidó en las mujeres, que viven sin ningún freno de cara al libertinaje y la molicie». El texto aristotélico en el que el autor habla de las mujeres es *Pol.*, 1269b5–1970a11.

4 Plutarco no duda tampoco en mostrar defectos de estas mujeres, así en *Agis* 7.4: «Pues las mujeres se opusieron (a la reinstauración de la legislación de Licurgo) no sólo porque serían desposeídas de la lujuria que, en la ausencia general de una cultura mayor, hacía que sus vidas parecieran felices, sino también porque veían que la honra y el poder, fruto del ser ricas, les serían cortados».

5 Cartledge, 90, explica que en algunos contextos será necesario y posible distinguir esta «típica» espartana de la mujer rica, distinción que también se ha de tener en cuenta cuando se habla de la situación en la que se encontraba la mujer ateniense.

Máximas de mujeres espartanas,⁶ obras consideradas como pseudo-plutarqueas⁷ y pertenecientes al «Catálogo de Lamprias». En algunos casos, la información que se obtiene sobre la mujer se encuentra sólo en estos documentos, pero en otros, tiene un paralelo en las *Vidas*. A partir del conjunto de datos que proporcionan estas obras se puede dibujar lo que podríamos llamar el «prototipo de mujer espartana».

Al acercarnos al testimonio plutarqueo, se impone considerar dos cuestiones: ¿Qué ve Plutarco en la mujer de Esparta para hacerla protagonista de un tratado como *Máximas*? ¿Cuáles son los atributos que este autor resalta para que la mujer espartana sea puesta como modelo?

La respuesta a la primera pregunta es sencilla: para Plutarco, la mujer de Laconia es un dechado de virtudes; sin embargo, a continuación vamos a prestar más atención al segundo interrogante, ya que, en estos documentos, se resaltan diversos atributos mediante frases sentenciosas y lacónicas, de los que sólo voy a poner de relieve tres: la austeridad, el amor a la patria sobre el amor a los hijos y la obediencia. Ruiz Alonso (p. 624) expone que «cuando estos ideales se llevan a cabo por una espartana aparece el ejemplo de la mujer virtuosa y éstas, en consecuencia, se convierten en modelos a seguir por sus conciudadanos». Analicemos brevemente cada uno de ellos.

La austeridad de la mujer espartana

Cuando una mujer de Jonia se enorgullecía por uno de sus vestidos que era muy lujoso, una espartana señalando a sus cuatro hijos, muy completos en todo, dijo: «Tales debieran ser las obras de la noble y honrada señora, y de ellas enorgullecerse y jactarse» (*Mor.* 241D).

La austeridad de la que la mujer espartana hacía gala fue producto de las medidas sociales que Licurgo estableció para acabar con la desigualdad social existente y que fueron aceptadas paulatinamente por el pueblo espartano.⁸ Con la redistribución de la tierra, la desaparición de las monedas de oro y plata, y la

6 Sobre el uso que Plutarco da a una misma fuente en distintos lugares de su obra, puede verse Beck.

7 Parece que Plutarco remite a uno de ellos, el *Instituta Laconica*, en *Lys.* 17.6. A pesar de que estos tratados se consideren notas de Plutarco o una colección posterior basada en materiales dejados por él o, simplemente, una obra espuria, lo que sí es cierto es que contiene grande y valiosa información sobre la mujer en Esparta.

8 Por lo menos así lo da a entender Plutarco en la *Vida de Licurgo*. Sin embargo, en las *Vidas de Agis y Cleomenes*, el intento de reinstauración de esta sobriedad conllevó una gran oposición entre los espartanos, en especial entre las mujeres (*Agis* 7.4; *Cleom.*, 2.1).

utilización del hierro como instrumento de cambio, toda manifestación de ostentación quedó anulada.⁹

La consecuencia inmediata fue la imposición de un estilo sobrio en el modo de vestir por parte de la mujer espartana: un simple peplo, con falda abierta a ambos lados desde la cintura hasta los pies, dejando al aire los muslos y permitiendo libertad de movimientos. Este peplo, hecho de una tela basta y sin bordados,¹⁰ era la prenda básica que las mujeres vestían,¹¹ por lo que no sorprende que Arquidamo rechazase del tirano de Siracusa unos costosos *himatia* que envió a sus hijas, por considerar que si éstas se los ponían, les parecerían más feas.¹²

No obstante, con el paso del tiempo, la austeridad de vida se fue relajando y el lujo, junto con la moneda, volvió a introducirse en Esparta durante el reinado de Agis (*Lyc.* 30.1). Sin embargo, aunque algunos autores clásicos consideran que las mujeres fueron las culpables de esta decadencia, Sarah B. Pomeroy afirma que «las mujeres no fueron responsables directas del declinante vigor de Esparta después de la guerra del Peloponeso, sino que supieron adaptarse rápidamente a una forma de vida menos arcaica y menos exigente».¹³

La austeridad espartana estaba no sólo relacionada con el modo de vida sino también con la manera de hablar: cualquier pensamiento debía «expresarse en el momento adecuado con cierta mordacidad mezclada de gracia y de gran profundidad, pese a su brevedad» (*Lyc.* 19.1). Ser comedido en palabras, según Plutarco, formaba parte de la educación del niño (*Lyc.* 19.1–6; 20.1) y era algo muy apreciado por los espartanos cuando lo veían en otras personas.

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- 9 Plut., *Lyc.*, 9.5–6 (cf *Mor.*, 226D). Otra razón para el destierro de todo ornato superfluo la da Plutarco en *Mor.*, 227F: las muchachas espartanas iban al matrimonio sin dote, «para no permitir que algunas se quedasen sin casar por falta de bienes, ni que otras se viesen forzadas por su hacienda, y para que cada hombre considerase el carácter de la muchacha e hiciese la elección en atención a su virtud».
- 10 La mínima señal de fasto por parte de un espartano podía llegar a pagarse con la muerte: «Mataron a uno que llevaba una túnica de tela basta, por hacer un bordado en la túnica» (Plut., *Mor.*, 239C).
- 11 Otra prenda es el velo que sólo llevan las mujeres casadas (*Mor.*, 232C). En *Pyr.*, 27. 3, Plutarco presenta una distinción en el vestido espartano considerando el estado civil de la mujer: *himatia* y *khiton* para la doncella y *monokhiton* para la casada: ἀρχομένοις δὲ ταῦτα παράττειν ἦκον αὐτοῖς τῶν παρθένων καὶ γυναικῶν αἱ μὲν ἐν ἱματίοις, καταζωσάμενοι τοὺς χιτωνίσκους, αἱ δὲ μονοχίτωνες... «Cuando ellos comenzaron a realizar estas acciones, se les acercaron las jóvenes y las mujeres, unas en *himatia*, después de haberse ceñido la túnica corta, otras sólo con las túnicas...»
- 12 Plut., *Mor.*, 218E. La misma anécdota se cuenta de Lisandro en *Mor.*, 229A.
- 13 Pomeroy 1990, 53. Plutarco explica lo que desencadenaría la caída de Esparta: el amor a la riqueza (*Mor.*, 239F–240A).

A uno que censuraba a Hecateo, el sofista, porque, invitado a su convite, no habló nada, le replicó: «Me parece que ignoras que quien sabe cómo hablar, conoce también el momento adecuado para hablar» (*Mor.* 218B; cf. *Lyc.* 20.3).

Y, junto con la mesura, estaba la mordacidad. Las espartanas manifestaban esta característica de su modo de hablar en ciertos cultos en los que, según Plutarco, desfilaban, danzaban y cantaban desnudas ante la presencia y la contemplación de los muchachos. En estos cantos, se alababa a los jóvenes que lo merecían, a los valientes; pero también se censuraba a todos los que habían cometido errores. Estos reproches se hacían a través de burlas que no dejaban de tener un alto grado de seriedad.

... mientras que las picaduras producidas con la chanza y las burlas, en absoluto eran más débiles que las amonestaciones con seriedad, puesto que, al espectáculo, junto con los demás ciudadanos también asistían los reyes y los *gerontes* (*Lyc.* 14.5–6).

El amor hacia los hijos como reflejo del amor hacia la patria

Argileónide, la madre de Brásidas, cuando su hijo murió... les preguntó si éste había muerto de una forma noble y digna de Esparta. Lo elogiaron y dijeron que en la batalla era el mejor de todos los espartanos. Ella les dijo: «Extranjeros, mi hijo era noble y honrado, pero Esparta tiene muchos hombres mejores que él».

Otra, al oír que su hijo había caído en el campo de batalla, dijo: «Que los cobardes lloren; pero yo, a ti, hijo, sin lágrimas te entierro, a ti, que eres mío y también de Esparta» (*Mor.* 240C–D [cf. 219D], 241A).

El primer texto citado en el apartado anterior, en el que se aludía a la conocida austeridad espartana, remite también a otra virtud no menos importante: el orgullo de la madre por sus hijos, a condición de que éstos sean valientes, como se aprecia en los textos de los *Apophthegmata* introductorios a este apartado.

La mujer espartana era considerada como engendradora de hijos, «de niños hermosos, llamados a convertirse en robustos ciudadanos».¹⁴ Para conseguir estos hijos sanos y fuertes, Licurgo sometió a las jóvenes laconias a distintos ejercicios físicos, con un claro objetivo: modelar, ya desde antes del embarazo, un cuerpo fornido que, en primer lugar, produjese niños vigorosos.

La segunda razón por la que el legislador impuso a las jóvenes esta disciplina física tenía carácter militar: si fuese necesario, ellas, las madres, «lucharían sin problemas en defensa propia, de sus hijos y de la patria» (227D). Según argumenta Powell (p. 254), esta última enunciación no tiene cabida, pues, si el fin del entrenamiento físico de las jóvenes hubiera sido crear mujeres-soldado, un mínimo de conocimiento de cualquier táctica militar

14 Loraux, 44.

hubiese conducido al éxito en la batalla de Leuctra.¹⁵ Por tanto, el objetivo principal de estos ejercicios era lograr un considerable vigor físico de cara a una maternidad sana. Plutarco expone en la *Vida de Pirro* los resultados de estos ejercicios físicos al relatar el episodio del intento de conquista de Esparta por parte de este general: son las mujeres las que, con sus propias manos, cavan el foso donde han de caer los elefantes del enemigo después de obligar a los hombres que van a luchar a retirarse a otra parte (*Pyr.* 27.4).

Una tercera razón es la capacitación de atletas femeninas. La más conocida es Cinisca, hermana de Agesilao (*Mor.* 212B).¹⁶

Sin embargo, esos hijos, desde el momento en que Licurgo fundamentó el Estado espartano sobre un sistema militar, dejaron de ser considerados «propiedad de los padres, para pasar a ser patrimonio de la ciudad» (*Lyc.* 15.14). Así se lo hace saber Acrótato a sus padres cuando les dice: «... pero, puesto que me entregasteis a la patria y a sus leyes y, además, me instruisteis en la justicia y en la nobleza, en la medida que pudisteis, intentaré seguir esto más que a vosotros...» (*Mor.* 216D–E).

De esta manera, la función de la madre espartana es, como se ha visto, engendrar los mejores hoplitas y las futuras madres de hoplitas,¹⁷ de ahí que no importase tanto el nombre del padre cuanto la calidad del esperma del varón (*Lyc.* 15.12).¹⁸ Los ancianos de Esparta animarán a Acrótato, héroe de una batalla, a que vaya al encuentro de su amada Quilonis con esta canción: «Ve, Acrótato, y toma a Quilonis: tú solo haces niños bravos para Esparta» (*Pyr.* 28.3). La razón de esta tendencia es sencilla: la continua necesidad de soldados. Esparta era un Estado en guerra y la provisión de soldados para el ejército tenía absoluta prioridad.¹⁹ De ahí que sus hombres debían ser los mejores y los más fuertes.²⁰

Sin embargo, llama la atención la aparición en *Moralia* de personas con deficiencias. A pesar de esta minusvalía, se insiste en lo mismo: lo importante es mostrar valor:

15 Esta batalla tuvo lugar en el 371 a.C. y supuso el fin de la hegemonía espartana.

16 Reese–Vallera Rickerson, 92–95, 245, exponen una breve historia de los distintos Juegos en el mundo griego, la estructura de edificios de cada lugar y las mujeres que en ellos vencieron, entre las que se encuentra Cinisca.

17 Pomeroy 2002, 4.

18 Un estudio sobre el matrimonio y sus variantes en Esparta puede leerse en Cepeda, 2004.

19 Pomeroy 1990, 51.

20 Es conocida por todos la exposición en el monte Taigeto de los niños deformes (*Lyc.*, 16.2).

Otra, al enviar a un hijo *cojo* al campo de batalla, le dijo: «Hijo, recuerda en cada paso tu valor» (241E).²¹

Las madres espartanas van poniendo la armadura a sus hijos y esposos y son las que los animan, casi los obligan a ser valientes, como se deduce de la tan coreada sentencia de una madre al entregar el escudo a su hijo que partía para la guerra: «Hijo, o con él o sobre él» (241F).²² Esta frase se repite con distintas variantes a lo largo de las *Máximas* para insistir, por una parte, en la importancia del uso del escudo para el beneficio del frente común (220A) y en la trascendencia del valor, pero, por otra, en el oprobio que significa abandonar el campo de batalla. Esta vergüenza no recaía sólo sobre el hoplita, sino también sobre su madre, que, en unos casos, llegaba a negar que fuese hijo suyo (242A) y, en otros, como en el de Damatria, podía matar a su hijo con sus propias manos (240F, 241A).²³ Entre ambas posibilidades extremas, se encuentra la de una madre que ofrece una segunda oportunidad al soldado:

Una mujer, al oír que su hijo se había salvado y que había huido de los enemigos, le escribió: «Una mala fama se ha extendido sobre ti, o lávala enseguida o no seas» (241A).

La muerte en brazos de una madre o de una esposa es gloriosa, cuando se ha caído como Esparta se merece (*Pyr.* 27.5). La aceptación de ese fallecimiento cuando se produce en la batalla refleja el amor a la patria de las madres: es preferible quedarse sin hijos que ser avergonzada por la cobardía de ellos. Así pues, cuando el hijo moría en la guerra, como un valiente, era un honor para la madre, pues suponía el reconocimiento público de ver inscrito el nombre de su hijo en una lápida (*Lyc.* 27.3) y la alabanza en las canciones; en cambio, la cobardía merecía la censura y una vida desdichada y dolorosa (*Mor.* 237F; *Lyc.* 21.1–2). Por tanto, la caída en el campo de batalla es una «muerte

21 Otros ejemplos en *Mor.*, 210F, 217C, 235E. Me pregunto si estas deficiencias eran de nacimiento y, por tanto, deberían haber sido expuestos en el Taigeto o eran como consecuencia de una herida de guerra, hecho que quizá fuera mencionado como en otros ejemplos de este mismo tratado: *Mor.*, 241E: «Otra, cuando su hijo vino a ella del campo de batalla herido en el pie y con un fuerte dolor...»; «Un espartano herido en la guerra y que no podía andar, caminaba a gatas...». También en este ejemplo se aprecia cierta ironía plutarquea en las palabras de la madre al hijo, que, recordemos, es cojo: «Recuerda en cada paso tu valor». En el debate que tuvo lugar durante la intervención del profesor Vicente Ramón, se afirmaba que no se podía concluir categóricamente que esta frase fuese un ejemplo de humor plutarqueo.

22 Hammond expone los autores que desde el s. I d.C hasta el V en cuyas obras aparece esta sentencia.

23 Y como Ruiz Alonso escribe muy acertadamente, (p. 625), «aún así son elogiadas y ensalzadas convirtiéndose, de este modo, en modelos a seguir», ya que estaban llevando a cabo la demostración de un amor a la patria que podía conducirlos a realizar este tipo de acciones por el bien del Estado.

benéfica, que cubre de gloria a la ciudad y al pueblo»;²⁴ es, sin lugar a dudas, una muerte bella.²⁵

La obediencia de la mujer espartana

Al preguntársele a una espartana que iba a ser vendida qué sabía, dijo: «Ser fiel» (*Mor.* 242C).

La fidelidad de la mujer espartana tiene dos vertientes según se trate de su relación con la patria o con el esposo: con relación a la patria, la lealtad, y la obediencia, con relación al esposo.

De la primera vertiente, la lealtad de las mujeres a la patria, poco más se puede añadir a lo dicho en el apartado anterior, salvo las palabras de la madre de Agis antes de ser ejecutada: «Mi único ruego es que esto traiga bien a Esparta» (*Agis* 20.5).

La segunda vertiente, la obediencia al esposo, no radica tanto en el hecho de aceptar las decisiones para complacer al amado, sino en la educación recibida. La mujer, al igual que el hombre, está obligada a acatar órdenes. En primer lugar, se somete a la madre, al vivir con ella y no ser separada para recibir una instrucción o *agogé* aparte; en segundo lugar, al padre; en tercero, al instructor de gimnasia²⁶ y, finalmente, al marido (*Mor.* 242B). Plutarco expresa en sus *Apophthegmata* la sumisión de una espartana anónima con estas palabras:

Uno envió un emisario a una espartana por si cedía a la seducción. Pero ella dijo: «De niña aprendí a obedecer a mi padre y practiqué eso; cuando me hice mujer, a mi marido...» (242B).

La fidelidad al varón se pone de manifiesto en los momentos más extremos de la vida del hombre y de la mujer, y en ellos la mujer sigue las instrucciones masculinas. Uno de éstos es la reanudación de la vida de la esposa después de la muerte del esposo en combate. Gorgo le pregunta a su esposo qué ha de hacer ella si él cae en las Termópilas. La respuesta que Leónidas le da es sencilla: casarse con

24 Loraux, 142–143.

25 Como “muerte bella”, la califica Nicole Loraux en el capítulo de su libro *Las experiencias de Tiresias*, en el que trata sobre lo que significa e implica la muerte espartana en la guerra.

26 Aunque Licurgo lo dictaminase para la educación de los jóvenes (*Mor.*, 237A; *Lyc.* 16.10), no dudo que puede ser aplicable a la instrucción de las muchachas, pues éstas estarían acostumbradas a obedecer a quien las instruyera en la carrera, la lucha y el lanzamiento de disco y jabalina. Según Cartledge, 91–92, aparte de esta educación física con fin eugénico, también recibirían algún tipo de educación intelectual, puesto que las mujeres espartanas tenían algo que decir y era obvio que no tenían miedo de decirlo, siendo ejemplo de esto los *apophthegmas*.

un hombre honrado y alumbrar hijos buenos (225A; cf. 240D). No dudo que Gorgo obedecería.

Un segundo momento es el apoyo que la mujer ofrece al hombre cuando éste toma decisiones relevantes. Agesistrata, madre de Agis, ayuda a su hijo en su intento de reinstauración del sistema de los valores y de la igualdad económica reinante de los tiempos de Licurgo, a pesar de ser una de las mujeres más ricas de Esparta (*Agis* 7.1),²⁷ oponiéndose ella misma al resto de espartanas que no querían una vuelta atrás.

Un tercer momento es la partida hacia el exilio. Quilonis, esposa de Cleombroto, acompaña al exilio primeramente al padre, cuando es expulsado por su marido, y después, a su marido mandado al exilio por su padre, rey de Esparta. Las palabras suplicantes que dirige a su padre son esclarecedoras:

Como esposa y como hija, nací para compartir la desgracia y el deshonor de los hombres más cercanos y más queridos para mí (*Agis* 17.3).

La mujer espartana se mantiene dentro de los parámetros establecidos: nadie que no sea un familiar puede hablar de ella (217F, cf. 220D) y no puede ser elogiada por parecer hombre, a no ser que alguna necesidad la obligue a ello (231B). Sin duda, ejemplos de esa necesidad se han visto. Pero, al igual que ellas se sometían a sus varones, ellos hacían lo mismo con ellas: acataban las órdenes que ellas les daban o se dejaban influenciar por ellas²⁸, pues tenían bien aprendida la «más bella de las lecciones: gobernar y ser gobernados» (212B, 215D).²⁹ Es conocidísima la anécdota de Gorgo en la que expone la razón de esta obediencia:

Al preguntarle una mujer del Ática: «¿Por qué, vosotras, espartanas, sois las únicas que gobernáis a vuestros hombres?», Gorgo le respondió: «Porque somos las únicas que alumbramos hombres» (240E, cf. 227E).

Conclusiones

A través de la obra plutarquea estudiada, se atisba el retrato de la mujer espartana. En *Moralia* Plutarco ha ofrecido los trazos para la creación de esa imagen, algunos de los cuales resultan ideales y utópicos cuando se comparan con los pasajes de *Vidas*.

27 Otro ejemplo de madre «coraje» muy similar es el de Cratesicleia, madre de Cleomenes, en *Cleom.* 6.1.

28 Como Bradford, 18, apunta «no deberíamos estar de acuerdo en que las espartanas gobernaban a los espartanos, sino que debemos concederle a Aristóteles – que tenía más testimonios que nosotros respecto a la mujer espartana y a Esparta – que algunas espartanas tenían poder real en el estado espartano.»

29 Redfield, 154, explica que en principio esta sentencia alude a los dos reyes que mandan sobre el pueblo pero que a su vez han de obedecer a los éforos y al pueblo.

Así pues, en *Moralia* se observa cuáles han de ser los principios por los que la mujer laconia ha de regirse: austeridad, obediencia a los hombres y lealtad a la patria. Plutarco no duda en presentar modelos en los que fijarse y a los que hay que imitar. Sin embargo, en *Vidas* se pone de manifiesto la realidad de este comportamiento, a veces en armonía con los *apophthegmata*, otras en desacuerdo. Muy pocas son las mujeres dispuestas a vivir con la austeridad del régimen licurgeo; muy pocas, las mujeres que ceden su influencia y poder a los hombres, pero todas se sacrifican por la patria.

Plutarco obvia esa mayoría femenina reacia al *mos maiorum* para centrarse en esas otras mujeres dispuestas a entregarse por entero a los ideales, a unas leyes en las que la ausencia de adorno externo ponía de manifiesto el ornato interno: dignidad, moderación y recato (*Coniug. praec.* 141D).

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Plutarch on the Role of *Eros* in a Marriage

Jeffrey Beneker

Plutarch's thinking on marital relationships has attracted a significant amount of interest in recent years and has been approached from a variety of perspectives. Some scholars have studied the societal aspect of marriage in Plutarch's works, raising questions about the role of women in the household, in the community, and especially in their interactions with men, and therefore they have tended to address larger social issues, such as gender, sexuality, and equality.¹ Others have taken a philosophical tack and have examined Plutarch's writing, especially as it concerns the nature and value of marriage, in terms of the broader philosophical traditions to which it is related.² However, my focus in this paper is much more narrow. I intend to explore one particular component of the marital relationship itself: the erotic connection that exists, or might exist, between a husband and wife. Looking first to the *Moralia* and the dialogue *Amatorius*, I will argue that Plutarch describes the *eros* shared between a married couple as an essential prerequisite for the development of *philia* and virtue. Then, turning to the *Lives*, I will demonstrate how the ideas found in the *Amatorius* are fundamental to Plutarch's representation of marriage in the biographies of Brutus and Pompey.

In the *Amatorius*, Plutarch, who is himself the principal speaker, touches on a variety of topics related to *eros*, but the discussion itself is motivated by a single event: the wealthy widow Ismenodora has expressed her desire to marry the *ephebe* Bacchon, who comes from a family of lower social standing. Most of their fellow citizens oppose the marriage, and Plutarch makes his friends Protogenes and Zeuxippus voice the principal arguments against it. Their attacks give Plutarch the opportunity to make a multifaceted response. Two particular charges allow him to speak directly to the institution of marriage and the role of *eros*, and his responses will form the basis of our discussion.

One of the opposing party's objections stems from the belief that a marriage must be contracted at the proper time. While the discussion that ensues is only tangentially related to *eros*, it does introduce ideas that are fundamental to Plutarch's view of marriage and which lay the groundwork for his introduction of erotic elements. Protogenes takes offense at the inversion of

1 E.g. McInerney, Nikolaidis, Pomeroy, and Walcot. See also the discussions in Blomqvist, 73–74, and Whitmarsh.

2 E.g. Brenk 1988 and 2000, Crawford, Goldhill, Martin 1978, Rist, and Wohl.

ages in the proposed union (753a–b), quoting from Hesiod in order to demonstrate the proper “season” for marriage:

When a man has passed not much more than thirty years and hasn’t gone too far beyond that either, then marriage is in season for him (γάμος δέ τοι ὤριος οὔτος). And let the woman be in her prime for four years; then let her marry in the fifth (753a = *Works and Days* 696–98).

If the usual roles are reversed, then Ismenodora must be about thirty years old, and Bacchon seventeen or eighteen.³ Plutarch’s counter argument does not challenge Hesiod’s rule; he asserts instead that Ismenodora is perhaps *more in season* than her rivals and sees nothing about her sex that would disqualify her even from being the senior partner. Ismenodora is still young enough to bear children, so the union cannot be challenged on the basis of utility. Moreover, Bacchon, who is called “the beautiful one” (Βάκχωνι τῷ καλῷ, 749c), has several male *erastai*, and Ismenodora is older than none of them. Nor, Plutarch adds with a smile, has her hair turned grey like that of some of Bacchon’s male lovers: “If these men are consorting with him at the right time, what prevents her from taking better care of the young man than some young woman would?” (754c).⁴

By this statement, Plutarch adds a second dimension to his rebuttal: Ismenodora is competitive not only with her mature male rivals but with the nubile females as well. He goes on to explain how inexperienced spouses often resist the yoke of marriage:

Young people combine and form a couple with difficulty, putting aside their insolence⁵ and hubris only after much time has passed. In the beginning they seethe and fight the yoke, and even more so if *eros* is present, for like a wind against a ship with no pilot, it disturbs and confounds the marriage of those who are neither able to lead nor will willing to be led (754c–d).

Although Plutarch does not draw his conclusion explicitly, his implication is clear: by marrying the older widow Ismenodora, Bacchon would gain a wife who already understands – and would be ready to practice – the cooperation required by marriage. If there is to be an erotic dimension, then this sort of stability will be crucial. Returning to the inversion of ages, Plutarch then observes that no one is truly independent anyway:

3 Puberty for girls was supposed to begin at age thirteen or fourteen; on Hesiod, see West 1978 *ad loc.*; on Plutarch, see Helmbold, 311 n. a, 331 n. b, and Flacelière 1980, 137, both of whom make reference to Einarson.

4 Cf. Nikolaidis, 80–81.

5 φρούργμα, translated here as “insolence,” is used for the snorting of horses and so adds color to Plutarch’s description of the spouses’ resistance to the taming required by marriage; see Pelling, 120.

If the nurse rules the infant and the teacher the boy, if the gymnasiarch rules the adolescent and the *erastes* the young man, if the law and the general rule a man who has come of age, and so if no one is without a guardian or self-determining, what's so bad if an older woman who is sensible (νοῦν ἔχουσα) steers the life of a young man, since she'll be beneficial to him because she is wiser, and she'll be sweet and gentle because she loves him (ὠφέλιμος μὲν οὔσα τῷ φρονεῖν μᾶλλον ἡδεῖα δὲ τῷ φιλεῖν καὶ προσηγής, 754d).

This quotation, and Plutarch's line of reasoning in general, asserts a positive role for a wife *who is sensible*. However, it would be incorrect to assume that Plutarch would argue for the equality or leadership abilities of women in general. Philip Stadter has written that the women depicted by Plutarch express capabilities in their own way; they do not replace men but instead "display their virtue only where gaps appear in the fundamentally male society," their role being "to support and nourish what is good."⁶ Nonetheless, considering the statements quoted above, I believe that Plutarch would still argue that Ismenodora, *provided that she is sensible*, could make a real, intellectual contribution to the marriage even if Bacchon were more mature.⁷

A second objection to the marriage, directly related to *eros* this time, is voiced by Protogenes near the start of the dialogue and is taken up again by Zeuxippus.⁸ Protogenes attacked the notion of an *eros* inspired by a woman, while Zeuxippus appears to have denigrated *eros* for women by asserting that it made the soul unstable and undisciplined.⁹ Plutarch responds with a vigorous defense, asserting a woman's erotic capability as he had asserted her intellectual capability in his earlier argument: if *eros* springs from a recognition of true beauty, which is really virtue (ἀρετή), he argues, there is no reason why that same virtue cannot exist in a woman as well as in a boy (766e-767b). To reinforce his point, he quotes from a play ("Where beauty is present, I am

6 Stadter, 179; see also McNamara, 152–53. In a reading of the *Coniugalia praecepta*, Wohl argues that a husband demonstrates his own self-mastery by mastering his wife. Wohl might disagree with Stadter's conclusion, I think, by saying that a wife may expose gaps in a husband's virtue but would not be expected by Plutarch to fill them. Nikolaidis, reading the same essay, argues that Plutarch holds husband and wife "equally responsible for the maintenance of a harmonious relationship" (47) but also that a wife must "bow" to her husband's moral superiority (76). See also Blomqvist, 86–87, and Patterson, 134–35.

7 Also significant in this passage is the presence of affection in the form of *philia*, which I will consider in more detail below.

8 Zeuxippus' speech has been lost in a lacuna (prior to 766e), so we must infer its contents by means of the response it elicits.

9 See Russell, 275–76. Earlier, Protogenes had distinguished between a noble *eros* for the well-endowed soul of a young man and a base *epithumia* for women (750d–e). See Rist, 569–70, for the Epicurean underpinning of Zeuxippus' argument.

ambidextrous,” 767a), and he adduces the analogy of horse- and dog-lovers, who appreciate the excellence of animals without regard for their sex.

This line of reasoning might well have been expected, given Plutarch’s earlier defense of marriage in terms of a woman’s intellectual contribution. However, he carries his point further by arguing for the *necessity* of *eros* in a marriage. Zeuxippus, Plutarch says, has been influenced by those who are *anerastoi*, men who have married either for the sake of a dowry or to produce children. According to Plutarch, the former treat their wives like slaves and accountants, and the latter, having obtained their heirs, allow the marriage to dissolve or, if they remain united, neglect the marriage completely, living together without any erotic attachment (767c–d). Earlier in the dialogue, when the notion of erotic marriages was directly attacked, Plutarch responded with a criticism that makes his point even more succinctly:

And by Zeus! Pusias is making me an advocate for Daphnaeus when he goes to extremes and applies to marriage an *eros*-less union, with no share of god-inspired friendship. We observe this union, when erotic persuasion and sexual relations have gone, scarcely to be held together by shame and fear as though by yokes and reins (752c–d).¹⁰

Thus Plutarch characterizes a union conceived and maintained without *eros* as lacking internal cohesion.¹¹

This then is a fundamental principle underlying Plutarch’s argument: *eros* is the agent of true unity between persons. Since he has argued that women as well as men may share in the intellectual and erotic experience, Plutarch is able to postulate a meaningful erotic union for the married couple. Thus he writes: “The saying, ‘friends and lovers hold things in common,’ is not to be understood generally, but it applies to those who, though divided in body, combine their souls forcefully and meld them together, neither wishing to be two persons nor thinking that they are” (767e). This sort of union is all the more genuine for its internal rather than external origin. As Plutarch explains further, the *eros*-based marriage results not only in a tightly integrated partnership, but in the ethical improvement of its members as well:

Then there is *sophrosyne* with respect to each other, which a marriage especially needs. The *sophrosyne* imposed externally and by laws is compelled by shame and fear rather than willingly, “being the work of many bits and rudders,” and is always available to the married couple. But in *eros* there is enough *enkrateia*, order, and trust that, if it should ever touch even an intemperate soul, it turns it away from other *erastai*, cuts short its boldness, breaks its insolence and unmanageability,

10 Pusias is an *erastes* of Bacchon who argues against the marriage, and Daphnaeus is a companion of Plutarch who takes the side of Anthemion, Bacchon’s relative and the marriage’s chief proponent.

11 Cf. Crawford, 295–96.

imports shame, silence, and calm, and dressing the soul in an orderly costume, makes it obedient to one alone (767e).

He will later add, after relating the story of the Galatian Camma's devotion to her husband, that marital *eros* is the foundation of *philia*, loving friendship (769a). Thus *eros* is an essential part of a marriage that is held together by self-control and mutual affection rather than external coercion.¹² The resulting *philia* is the sign of that mutual affection and recalls Plutarch's first argument, where he asserted that the wife would treat her husband sweetly and gently because she loved (*philein*) him.¹³ The virtuous behavior that results from the erotic union is also expressed in terms of the marital union and fidelity.¹⁴ Carried to its fullest extent, Plutarch's argument, which takes as its starting point the intelligence and virtue of an individual rather than his or her sex, must conclude that the heterosexual, marital union can be ethically fulfilling for both parties.

Turning from the theoretical arguments about Ismenodora and Bacchon, I will consider how Plutarch's assertions transfer to the actual marriages that he describes in two of his biographical works. One of the most colorful women in his *Parallel Lives* is Porcia, daughter of Cato the Younger and wife of Marcus Brutus.¹⁵ As Plutarch introduces her in the *Life* of Brutus, he arranges his description so as to highlight the fact that she is no ordinary wife. In fact, she enters the narrative at a point where Brutus is especially in need of an intelligent, supportive partner and confidant. In chapter 12, Brutus becomes the center of the conspiracy against Caesar, and in the next chapter Plutarch describes the anxiety that results:

Since Brutus had made dependent on himself the first ranks of Rome – men known for their high-mindedness, ancestry, and virtue – and was considering the full risk [of the plot], in public he kept his thoughts to himself and under control, but at home and during the night he was not the same man. Sometimes his worry would wake him involuntarily, and at other times, when he was even more involved in his reckonings and absorbed in his problems, he could not hide from his wife, who shared his bed, the fact that he was filled with an uncustomary turmoil and was pondering within himself some plan that was difficult to bear and to untangle (13.1–2).

12 Cf. McNamara, 157, on the *Coniugalia praecepta*.

13 See Dover, 209–13, who explains the traditional notion of *eros* and *philia* as distinct and independent.

14 Cf. Martin 1984, 83: "One of Eros's two functions as a god is to superintend both the formation of *φιλία* between lovers and their beloveds, whether the latter be fair youths or virtuous women, and the growth of mutual *ἀρετή* that such *φιλία* produces (757F–58C, 759A, 765A–66B, 766D–71C)." Cf. also Nikolaidis, 70–71.

15 See Castellani, 146–149, for a list of all the *Lives* that feature wives who play significant roles in the careers of their husbands.

Brutus is suffering under the weight of his responsibility and Porcia notices his distress because, significantly, she shares his bed. Her presence in the narrative could have been a literary device: Plutarch might have inserted her as a character in order to observe Brutus' agitation and allow it to be reported. But as the chapter continues, the focus stays with Porcia, giving the reader insight into the nature of Brutus' wife and marriage:

As has been said, Porcia was the daughter of Cato. Brutus, her cousin, did not marry her when she was a virgin but took her after her previous husband had died, while she was still young and already had a small child. The boy's name was Bibulus, and he wrote a small book of memoirs of Brutus, which has been preserved (13.3).¹⁶

In light of the *Amatorius*, this passage provides a mixed signal: Porcia is experienced in marriage, like the widow Ismenodora, but she is still young, like the immature wife who, along with her novice husband, must survive the tumultuous early years of a marriage before being tamed. However, as her introduction continues, Plutarch further clarifies her character, allowing the reader to observe that she has overcome her youthful inexperience: "Porcia, who was *philosophos*¹⁷ and *philandros*, and filled with thoughts that were sensible, did not undertake to question her husband about matters that he kept quiet before she performed the following experiment on herself (13.4)." In this passage, Plutarch uses three adjectives that are especially significant in light of the *Amatorius*. First, Porcia is said to be *philosophos* and *philandros*. Both of these terms recall familiar themes: the first is an indication of Porcia's intellectual character, and the second, a compound of *philia*, shows that she has achieved the loving friendship that follows on *eros* in the marital relationship. Like Porcia's youth, they are also signs, but in this case they indicate stability rather than volatility. If the representation of this marriage is aligned with the *Amatorius*, we should expect to observe that the union is based on an erotic attachment and has reached a stage of mutual respect and affection between the partners.

The third adjective is perhaps the most informative. Porcia is said to be "filled with a mind that is sensible" (μεστή φρονήματος νοῦν ἔχοντος). This description contains a clear correspondence with the *Amatorius*: there Plutarch argues that a woman may be a contributing partner in a marriage, provided that she is sensible (νοῦν ἔχουσα); here, using the same phrase, he asserts that Porcia (or rather, Porcia's mind) possesses that very trait. Clearly she is not

16 At *Brut.* 2.1, Plutarch explains that Brutus' mother, Servilia, was Cato's sister and that Brutus admired his uncle, who would later become his father-in-law. However, Plutarch does not name or describe Porcia before chapter 13.

17 I accept the argument of Stadter, 181 n. 27, that Sintenis' emendation of φιλόσοφος to φιλόστογος is incorrect.

simply the object of sexual desire, and so her presence in Brutus' bed is confirmed as a sign of an intimate relationship.

Plutarch next narrates Porcia's "experiment" and gives to her a speech in which she asserts her own position in the marriage on nearly the same basis as that found in the *Amatorius*:

She took a small knife (the sort that the barbers use to trim nails) and having driven all of her attendants from her room, she cut a deep gash in her thigh. This produced a great flow of blood, and after a short while, violent pains and feverish trembling resulted from the wound. While Brutus was struggling and angry [because of his anxiety], Porcia, at the height of her pain, spoke to him as follows: "I am the daughter of Cato, and I was married into your household, Brutus, not like the concubines in order to share only your bed and your table, but to be a partner in both good and painful circumstances. Your contribution to our marriage is entirely faultless, but what proof or benefit of my contribution will there be, unless I share in your secret suffering or in your confidential concern? I know that my womanly nature seems too weak to keep a secret, but there is, Brutus, a certain strength of character that comes from a good upbringing and beneficial companionship: it has been granted to me to be the daughter of Cato and the wife of Brutus. Previously I trusted less in these advantages, but now I know that I am even stronger than pain" (13.5–10).

Porcia is compelled to confront Brutus because he does not consent to discuss the conspiracy, which is obviously troubling him, at home. First, however, she must justify her position as a real partner. After withstanding the severe pain of her wound, she calmly addresses her husband, forcefully and logically arguing for her equal standing in their marriage. She begins by insisting that she is not a mere sex object: "I am the daughter of Cato, and I was married into your household, Brutus, not like the concubines in order to share only your bed and your table, but to be a partner in both good and painful circumstances" (13.7). Porcia's statement reveals a distinct contrast between the coerced union and the real marital partnership, between the wife as an object and the wife as a partner in her husband's life. Porcia is claiming to be the latter type, and as such she can provide an on-going benefit and even has a *right* to be involved in the extra-household life of her husband. She continues by charging that her right is being denied: "Your contribution to the marriage is entirely faultless, but what proof or benefit of my contribution will there be, unless I share in your secret suffering or in your confidential concern?" (13.8).

In making her case, Porcia argues for her *ability* to play the role she is claiming. She cites the impact of her upbringing and associations, presumably with philosophical types, on her character, and for the second time she invokes her father Cato, adding now the influence of Brutus (13.9–10). Thus she demonstrates the source of a woman's *nous* (or sense).¹⁸ She closes her speech

18 Cf. Stadter, 177.

by admitting that previously even she doubted whether her credentials were adequate. When she exposes the wound and explains her experiment, Brutus' reaction demonstrates without a doubt both the validity of her argument and the quality of her character: "He was dumbstruck, and lifting his hands he prayed that the gods grant that as he completed his mission, he show himself to be a husband worthy of Porcia" (13.11).¹⁹ Brutus' words and deeds reveal both respect and affection for his wife, a confirmation of her standing and that her *philandria* is reciprocated.

But was there *eros* in the relationship? I have conjectured that *eros* was present because Porcia shared Brutus' bed and because of the mutual *philia* of the couple, which Plutarch has argued arises from the passion. But if Plutarch was not making that assumption, then the parallelism between this marriage relationship and those described in the *Amatorius* is diminished. In the final chapter of the *Life*, however, Plutarch gives evidence for *eros* as he narrates the deaths of Brutus and Porcia. Having described Brutus' death, he cites Nicolaus of Damascus, who, supported by Valerius Maximus, reports that Porcia in turn committed suicide by swallowing coals (53.5–7). Plutarch notes, however, that there exists a letter of Brutus in which he mentions the death of his wife, thus raising doubts about Nicolaus' chronology. The letter itself might not be genuine, but if it is, Plutarch argues, it provides strong evidence against Nicolaus because it conveys other authentic details: the *pathos* of Porcia, the manner of her death, and most important for our discussion, her *eros* for her husband.²⁰

It appears, then, that Plutarch has cast the marriage of Brutus and Porcia in the mold of the *Amatorius*. We may gain an even better perspective on their marriage by comparing it briefly to the marriages of Pompey to Julia and Cornelia, which have an erotic basis but fall just short of the ideal found in the *Amatorius*. In the *Life* of Pompey, as Plutarch describes the events of 54 BC, when Pompey controlled Spain as proconsul but remained in Rome to dedicate his theater and monitor political events, he claims that political decisions were influenced by an *eros* for Julia. He writes:

For these things Pompey was admired and loved, but he also attracted a great deal of envy because he handed over his armies and his provinces to legates, who were

19 The next sentence in this passage reads: καὶ τότε μὲν ἀνελάμβανε τὴν γυναῖκα (13.11). This has been taken by translators to mean that Brutus went to the aid of his suffering wife (Flacelière 1978, Perrin, Scott-Kilvert). However, Philip Stadter has pointed out to me that this meaning of ἀναλαμβάνω does not appear in LSJ and that the sense required here is of Brutus "receiving her into his heart and counsels." Such a reading connects this passage even more closely with the *Amatorius*.

20 The Greek reads simply "τὸν ἔρωτα," but following other translators (Flacelière 1978, Perrin, Scott-Kilvert), I have supplied the obvious object of the *eros* that is mentioned by Porcia's husband.

also his friends, while he traveled here and there, spending his time with his wife in the resorts of Italy, either because he loved her (ἔρωων αὐτῆς) or because he could not bear to abandon her, who loved him (ἔρωσαν οὐχ ὑπομένων ἀπολιπεῖν), for this is also reported. Moreover, the young woman's love for her husband was famous, although she desired Pompey *out of season* (περιβόητον ἦν τῆς κόρης τὸ φίλανδρον, οὐ καθ' ὥραν ποθοῦσης τὸν Πομπήϊον). However, the reason for her devotion appeared to have been the *sophrosyne* of her husband, who was intimate with his wife only, and his nobility, which was not excessive, but which made relations pleasant and was especially attractive to women, if Flora the courtesan is not to be convicted of bearing false witness (*Pomp.* 53.1–2).

This passage contains many elements familiar from the *Amatorius* and from the marriage of Porcia and Brutus: the mutual *eros* of husband and wife; the *philia* that results from the erotic bond; and the virtuous behavior, evidenced by Pompey's *sophrosyne*. However, there is also an important distinction: Julia loves Pompey οὐ καθ' ὥραν – “out of season.” At fifty-two years old, he is off Hesiod's chart, while she, at approximately nineteen years old, is just the right age.²¹ Pompey will find himself in a similar situation with his next spouse, Cornelia. She received an excellent education and has a well trained mind (55.2–3),²² but nonetheless Plutarch bluntly remarks that Cornelia would have been a better match for one of Pompey's sons (55.4). And the issue is not simply one of impropriety. Marrying Cornelia “out of season” opens Pompey to criticism on political grounds, as did his marriage to Julia:

But nonetheless the discrepancy of ages (τὸ μὴ καθ' ἡλικίαν) displeased some, for Cornelia was rather the right age (ὥραν εἶχεν) to be married to his son. Those who were more insightful thought that Pompey had overlooked the plight of the city while it was in difficult circumstances. They had selected him as its physician and had turned it over to him alone, but he was putting on garlands and celebrating his marriage, while he ought to have considered the [solo] consulship to have been troubling, since it would not have been granted to him in such an illegal way if the city had been flourishing (55.4–5).

Pompey, it seems, was at a stage in his life when he should have been playing the role of an elder statesman, with his attention turned toward the forum and his contest with Caesar. Therefore Plutarch faults him not for loving his wives but for contracting the marriages at the wrong time.²³ Pompey thus

21 Plutarch may have believed that Pompey was about forty-seven years old at this time, since in describing the triumph of 61 BC, he wrote that Pompey was “nearly forty” when in fact he was forty-five (*Pomp.* 46.1). See Nikolaidis, 50 n. 89, for instances of similar criticism of men in other *Lives*.

22 Though the phrase οὖν ἔχειν does not appear, Plutarch writes that Cornelia spent time among philosophers, as Porcia claimed to have done, and that she studied literature, geometry, and the lyre.

23 Nikolaidis, 75, sees Plutarch as making an allowance for Pompey's advanced age in his marriages to both Julia and Cornelia due to “his exceptional attractiveness and his

distinguishes himself from Brutus, who did not withdraw from the conspiracy to spend time with Porcia but instead found that she could support him in his extra-household activities. We might conclude, then, that after a marriage achieves *philia* and virtue through *eros*, the husband is able to devote his attention to his civic responsibilities. Although this point was not made in the *Amatorius*, which focused on the nature of the relationship itself, it is perhaps implied in Hesiod's rule and in a general assumption about how an engaged citizen should interact with the community once he has established the proper environment in his home.²⁴ In any case, Pompey's marriages come very close to meeting the high ideals of Plutarch's moral essay. In the way they fall short, they reinforce the two-pronged argument of the *Amatorius*: a good marriage must be contracted between two sensible, capable individuals at the right stage of life, and it must be bound together by ties of mutual erotic attraction, which in turn foster *philia* and virtue.²⁵

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σωφροσύνη." I agree that Plutarch has portrayed the relationships themselves in a sympathetic manner, but I also read an overt criticism of how Pompey allowed these marriages to distract him from more important matters. See Beneker, 38–42, for a fuller argument.

24 See Wohl, 185–89, on the *Coniugalia praecepta* and the relationship between a man's management of his household and his political career.

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Integrating Marriage and *Homonoia*¹

Georgia Tsouvola

Στη μνήμη του πατέρα μου

Plutarch's narratives operate within the prevailing ideology of his time and reflect contemporary realities.² What Plutarch's corpus may reveal about his society and milieu is the focus of my research, and my methodology is based on history, epigraphy, philology, gender studies, and archaeology. In this paper, I explore the institutional role of marriage in the social and civic life of the *polis* and the empire as presented in the *Life of Romulus* and the theft of the Sabine women, in particular, and in the "scandalous" events of the *Erotikos*, in order to examine the political function of marriage in the ideology of Plutarch.

The historicity of Plutarch's *Lives* has not been refuted by modern historians.³ The *Lives* have been used as sources for the (re)construction of the history of Archaic and Classical Greece, and Republican Rome. The *Moralia*, however, have been often dismissed by modern historians and philologists as philosophical and didactic. Yet, Plutarch's moralizing and philosophical

1 I would like to thank Ronnie Ancona, Jørgen Mejer and Sarah B. Pomeroy for commenting on this paper and for their guidance and encouragement over the years; Jeffrey Beneker and Lee L. Brice for reading earlier versions of this paper; Nigel M. Kennell and Molly Richardson for their knowledge and excellent guidance in the interpretation of *IG VII 1777*, as well as Glenn R. Bugh and Stephen V. Tracy for their help; the participants and staff of the IPS Conference at Rethymno for their comments and hospitality; the members and staff of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens for the use of its facilities and their hospitality; the Doreen C. Spitzer Advanced Fellowship (ASCSA) and the Mario Capelloni Dissertation Year Fellowship (CUNY) for their financial support. This paper is based on research that has been presented previously and I would like to thank the participants of the following for their suggestions: the American School of Classical Studies at Athens Tea-Talk Series (April 2005), the American Philological Association in Boston (January 2005), and the 4th Feminism and Classics Conference in Tucson (May 2004). The author maintains the sole responsibility for the contents of this article.

2 On Plutarch's ideology in the *Moralia* see Panagopoulos.

3 Plutarch's *Lives* are biographies not histories: *Alex.* 1.1; Boulet, 246. See, however, Späth, who argues that the focus of history writers, such as Cassius Dio and Appian, is also biographical, and that the moral personality of their figures is composed by selection from a fixed repertoire of Graeco-Roman and aristocratic political and social principles; both biography and historiography, therefore, construct individual character from the same repertoire.

discussions outline his political attitudes connecting, thus, ethics with politics and philosophy with history.⁴ One, therefore, can no longer doubt the historicity of the *Lives* and the *Moralia* as primary sources for the history of provincial Greece in the first and second centuries CE, for that suggests skepticism about Plutarch as a historical person and his self-portrayal as a Greco-Roman aristocratic statesman, a Delphic priest and a diplomat.

In both the *Lives* and the *Moralia*, Plutarch often draws from anecdotes and true stories that were known to many in order to create his narrative, make it pleasing and accessible to his readers, and persuade his audience. In the *Precepts of Statecraft* (803A), he invites politicians to use *gnomologia*, *historia*, *mythoi*, *metaphorai*, as occasion demands, to capture the attention of the audience.⁵ There is no doubt that Plutarch is a skilled story-teller with a purpose. He frequently uses not only the individuals and events of the past as examples for his discussions, but, more importantly, his own friends and relatives are also characters in the *Moralia* as well as the recipients of his works.

In the *Erotikos*, for example, Plutarch creates his historical narrative by setting the dialogue in the past. One of Plutarch's sons, Autoboulos relates to a certain Flavianus and to others the conversation Plutarch had with his friends and acquaintances years earlier. The discussion had taken place at the grove of the Muses at Mt. Helikon during the festival to Eros (i. e. *Erotidia*) after 96 C.E. when Plutarch was still a newly-wed, and had emerged out of a controversy in the town of Thespiai regarding the appropriateness of a widow's marriage (Ismenodora's) to a local young man (Bacchon). After Flavianus' request that Autoboulos dismiss Platonic *topoi*, and after Autoboulos' prayer to Mnemosyne, the dialogue-proper begins. Autoboulos' mention of Mnemosyne is not to be taken lightly, however, since memory is necessary for history.

Although the narrative of the *Erotikos* does not teach retrospectively in the same way as the biographies of the celebrated Romans and Greeks in the *Lives*, it reflects on events set in the recent past and carries the moral code to a current setting. The story of Ismenodora and Bacchon in the *Erotikos* is an example of contemporary behavior and thinking interlaced with prescriptive attitudes by Plutarch to evoke a new vision of conjugal and civic relations. The setting of the dialogue (a major Greek city during a festival attested in inscriptions) and the historicity of the characters (Autoboulos, Plutarch, Soclaros, Pemptides, and Ismenodora) generate credibility for the incident and

4 *An seni*. 796C–D; de Blois 2004, 1.

5 For Plutarch, persuasion is more important than absolute truth. Plutarch can and does manipulate his chronologies to fit his purposes: Duff, 18–19 and Appendix 2, 313; Stadter, 2002a; de Blois and Bons, 159; Flacelière, 407.

suggest that the events of the *Erotikos* are **more** than a literary construct.⁶ As I will argue, Plutarch's conjugal ideology is used to suppress difference in the present, and to impose a unitary social and civic vision.

Marriage was one of the most fundamental socioeconomic institutions of both Greece and Rome, because, in addition to joining two individuals and their families, it was intended to create legitimate descendants on whom their parents would bequeath their property, status, character, and household gods.⁷ Emotional attachment between husband and wife was not always necessary. Plutarch's ideology of marriage and love, based on the laws of nature and the *polis* (φυσικῶς καὶ πολιτικῶς),⁸ is fleshed out in the *Erotikos*. The lover (ἔρωτικὸς ἀνὴρ) is heterosexual, married, and a 'good citizen'. The argument, according to Plutarch, is that the gentleman (i.e. upper-class, free, citizen, adult male) will love according to nature and law, and marry for the benefit and well-being of the polis. Therefore, Plutarch argues against same-sex relationships between free-born citizens, which are against nature (παρὰ φύσιν), for they are without χάρις (favor, gratification).⁹ The goals of marriage include procreation, assimilation of resources, the betterment of the members of the conjugal unit and the οἶκος, and the improvement of society as a whole. The offspring of legitimate marriages are to become not only the new citizens and benefactors of the *poleis* but also of the Empire.

The traditional view that the purpose of marriage is the procreation of children is still in force (754C), but Plutarch proposes a new definition of marriage: it is a sharing of every aspect of life (βίου κοινωνία, 138C) and a complete fusion of the partners through *eros* (δι' ὄλων κρᾶσις, 769F). Plutarch,

6 On the friends and family of Plutarch see Puech 1992; eadem 1981; Babut 1999; idem 1981; Jones 1970, now partly revised by Roesch, 180.

7 Studies on Greek marriage include Cox 1998; Pomeroy 1999; Sinos and Oakley; Vatin; VÉrilliac and Vial. Standard works on Roman marriage include Evans Grubbs 2002; Humbert; Rawson; Treggiari; Frier and McGinn is helpful with the legal aspects of the institution.

8 In the *Life of Lycurgus*, whom Plutarch praises for the laws concerning *paideia* and marriage, he elaborates on the Spartan custom of wife-sharing or polyandry that aimed at procreation and eugenics and adds: "ταῦτα δὲ οὕτως πραττόμενα φυσικῶς καὶ πολιτικῶς τότε τοσοῦτον ἀπείχε τῆς ὕστερον λεγομένης γενέσθαι περὶ τὰς γυναῖκας εὐχερείας ὥστε ὄλως ἀπιστον εἶναι τὸ τῆς μοιχείας παρ' αὐτοῖς" (15.9).

9 Daphneus (with whom Plutarch sides in the *Erotikos*) argues at 751C–D that "εἰ γὰρ ἡ παρὰ φύσιν ὁμιλία πρὸς ἄρρενας οὐκ ἀναιρεῖ τὴν ἐρωτικὴν εὐνοίαν οὐδὲ βλάπτει, πολὺ μᾶλλον εἰκὸς ἔστι τὸν γυναικῶν καὶ ἀνδρῶν ἔρωτα τῇ φύσει χρώμενον εἰς φιλίαν διὰ χάριτος ἐξικνεῖσθαι." In the *Erotikos*, Plutarch does not argue against the institution of pederasty *per se* (i.e. romantic and sexual affairs with free-born youth), which he probably accepted as part of the education and socialization of a young man before he develops into an adult and a free-born citizen, but against same-sex relationships between free-born males of equal social and political status.

thus, expands on the Xenophonic model of marriage and the family as institutions of procreation and production by introducing emotional attachment and the element of *eros* between partners.¹⁰ Νόμιμος ἔρως, i. e. conjugal *eros*, has a dual purpose: it is the agent of unity between persons that provides cohesion for a marriage (as Jeffrey Beneker maintains in this volume) and, as I will argue, it also provides unity and cohesion for the society as a whole.¹¹ For Plutarch, conjugality is the institution that controls uproar in the *polis*, joins *ethnê* together, and promotes *homonoia* at all levels of the socially and ethnically diverse world of the Empire.

I have argued elsewhere about the infiltration of Roman practices and customs into the marriage and wedding ceremony between Bacchon and Ismenodora.¹² The main points of that argument are summarized here. Several fundamental aspects of traditional Greek marriage practices such as the conventional age difference between the partners (i. e., a younger wife, an older husband), and the traditional process of marrying (i. e., betrothal, celebration, sexual union and cohabitation) are modified in Ismenodora's and Bacchon's case. 1) The marriageable age for men has been lowered compared to that found in the classical period, and the age difference between bride and groom has been reduced for the Empire.¹³ 2) The prerequisite of a betrothal can, under certain circumstances (for example, widowhood in Ismenodora's case), be waived. 3) Consent of the partners is what is necessary in contracting a marriage.¹⁴

10 See Xen. *Oec.* VII.19 and 30; Pomeroy 1994, 35 and 58–61.

11 The term “*nomimos eros*” in Plutarch expresses a philosophical concept and does not reflect legal language for contracting a marriage.

12 Paper, “Marriage in Boeotia: A case study,” delivered at the *Feminism and Classics IV Conference* in Tucson, AZ (May 2004).

13 Evidence from Attic New Comedy (Menander's *Dyscolus*, for example) to the novel (Achilles Tatius' *Clitophon and Leucippe*, Heliodorus' *Aethiopia*), where the lovers are often described as “young”, confirms this observation. Roman elite men had been marrying young in the late Republic: for example, Augustus, born in 63 BCE, was only twenty five years old when he married his second wife Livia in 38 BCE, and even younger when he fathered Julia with Scribonia. More significantly, in the *Erotikos*, before Ismenodora fell in love with Bacchon, she and Bacchon's mother were arranging a proper marriage for him although he was only an *ephebe*, i. e. eighteen to twenty years old. If the traditional procedure of betrothal and, then, marriage had been followed, Bacchon would probably have married within a couple of years. For the average age at marriage, for Rome see Treggiari 39–43; for the provinces see Saller 29–30; for the Hellenistic period see Pomeroy 1997, 4–9; Bremen 1996, 146, 256 n. 64, 260 n. 83.

14 Betrothal was common for both the Greeks and Romans; the father, brother, son, or the mother (during the Hellenistic period, whenever there was no male in the family) gave the bride-to-be in marriage. In imperial Rome, when there were no relatives or if the bride-to-be had married before, she could give herself in marriage (see Treggiari

Bacchon's father is absent from the dialogue, probably dead, while Ismenodora appears to have no family and no *kyrios/tutor*. Both Bacchon and Ismenodora are *sui iuris*, and, therefore, according to Roman law only *their* consent is necessary in contracting this marriage. 4) The choice of an appropriate husband appears to lie in the hands of the woman in the *Erotikos*. The decreasing age difference between husband and wife combined with the financial independence women gained during the Hellenistic period can account for philosophical discussions about women's equal worth with men and a higher status for elite women in imperial Greek society. Furthermore, the absence of a family and a *kyrios/tutor*, and possibly her elite status and wealth explain why Ismenodora has the primary say in the choice of a husband for herself, and why she can act on that choice without interference from any of her relatives. 5) The religious character of the wedding ceremony at the end of the *Erotikos*, with the awaiting sacrifice (possibly the consultation of the auspices), the procession of the nuptial couple from the bride's house through the *agora* to the precinct of Eros (and not to the house of the groom as was the Greek custom) and the allowance for a widow (Ismenodora) to marry during a religious festival (the *Erotidia*), points to Roman wedding customs. These indications point to a change in Greek marriage practices toward Roman practice.

In fact, one should not be surprised that the marriage practices of the Thespians, as Plutarch describes them, were influenced over the course of more than 100 years through their close interaction with the Romans (and my use of "Romans" includes Romans, Italians, Italiote-Greeks, Latins etc.), many of whom had resided in and had done business in the town since the first century BCE.¹⁵ Furthermore, it would not be surprising either if the two peoples intermarried. It is intermarriage between Greeks and Romans (again, applying the terms broadly to include Romanized Greeks as well as Hellenized

134–6). For the evidence of growing independence of women in the Hellenistic and Imperial periods to choose spouses, to give themselves in marriage, and to arrange terms in marriage contracts, see Evans-Grubbs 1994; MacMullen; Pomeroy 1984, 83–124; Bremen 1983. While betrothal was a prerequisite to a legal Greek marriage, consent from both partners and their *patresfamilias* – if they were under such jurisdiction – made a Roman marriage legitimate. So, for example, see Paul *Dig.* 23.2.2: "*Nuptiae consistere non possunt nisi consentiant omnes, id est qui coeunt quorumque in potestate sunt.*"

15 On the Romans at Thespiai attested on inscriptions, see *SEG* 27.72; 31.54; 32.500; 32.499; *IG* VII 1862; Roesch 171–77; Kajava; Moretti; Hatzfeld 67–73; Müller 2002, 89–100. On the provenance of Romans in Greece in the Republican period see Hatzfeld; Wilson, esp. 94, 105–111. On the "hellenization" of the Romans in the East see Errington 144–5 and 148–50; Gruen 234; Wilson 134 and 141–2: "...however socially Hellenized, [Roman families] were tenacious of their Roman name, which they had strong reasons of advantage and prestige to wish to retain."

Romans in the first and second centuries C.E.) that I would like to explore next.¹⁶

I have argued elsewhere that Plutarch's Ismenodora and the woman named M. Ἴσμηνοδώρα (i. e. Μαρκία Ἴσμηνοδώρα) on IG VII 1777 were one and the same person.¹⁷ I have concluded that this list is a membership list of a local *collegium* associated with the "upper gymnasium" at Thespiai.¹⁸ The name M. Ismenodora is the only female name as well as the first name on the list, placed in a unique position on the last line of the superscript. The rarity of this particular name suggests that this is more than a mere coincidence. In addition to IG VII 1777 and in Plutarch's *Erotikos*, the name is attested with this particular spelling only one other time: that is, in Lucian's *Dialogues of Courtesans* (291.4), where a flute-girl by the name of Ismenodora is mentioned in passing.

Moreover, the inscriber sets Markia Ismenodora's name in a distinct position, in my view, to signify her high status and possibly her wealth. Plutarch's Ismenodora, also, has a distinct status in her society: she is wealthy and from a noble family, and everyone in the dialogue confirms this. Plutarch's widow is the only *named* female character in the dialogue and, therefore, she also appears in an all-male context. Both Ismenodoras are possibly the only surviving members of their family, and heiresses to their families' wealth and financial burdens, which would explain their financial independence and their presence in the all-male context of the gymnasium.

More significantly, both Ismenodoras are associated with the gymnasium. Markia Ismenodora is a member of a *collegium* connected to the gymnasium,

16 Wilson, 115, states that even in the late Republic intermarriage would be probable between the *Romaioi* and the Delian Athenians.

17 I have presented the research on the subject in a paper titled "Ismenodora at the Gymnasium: IG VII 1777 and Plutarch's *Erotikos*," at the American Philological Association Meeting in Boston (January 2005). I would like to thank the Ephor, Vasilis Aravantinos, and the staff of the Museum at Thebes for their support and hospitality during my visits. A new edition of IG VII 1777 with commentary is currently under preparation by the author. Previous considerations have failed to provide an apt explanation for M. Ismenodora's place on the inscription (Müller 1996) or evidence that would make a clear connection between the two names (Harries, 191–2). For example, Müller 1996, 159–60 reconstructs Μάρκος Ἴσμηνοδώρα (sic), a male name in an ephebic list of the first century C.E.

18 On *collegia* of *Romaioi* on Delos during the Republic (all attested with male-only membership, however), see Wilson 112. For a *comparandum*, see Segre ED 228, pl. 67 (first century CE), where a female name appears at the end of a long list of names of those who entered the πρεσβυτικὴν παλαίστρα of Kos. There is no doubt that Roman and Italian men participated in Greek athletic contests and religious festivals in growing numbers during the 2nd c. BCE (e.g. IG II² 960; IG XII 9; SEG 29. 806; Errington 105–7), but there is no evidence for women's participation in *gymnasia* even during the Empire. We cannot, therefore, posit that IG VII 1777 and ED 228 are ephebic lists.

while Plutarch's Ismenodora lives close to the *palaestra*, a building often attached to or part of a gymnasium, where her beloved Bacchon goes to exercise and anoint himself. Interestingly enough, the inscription confirms the existence of a *pyriatêrion*, a sauna-type building usually near a *palaestra* where the athletes could sweat and anoint themselves with oil, in the complex of the "upper gymnasium" at Thespiai.¹⁹

Plutarch was familiar with Thespiai and its festival to Eros, since he and his wife, Timoxena, went there and participated in the festival when they were still newly-weds, as we are told at the beginning of the *Erotikos*. Internal evidence suggests a dramatic date for the dialogue after 96 C.E., which agrees with the dating of the inscription to the second half of the first century C.E.

For all these reasons (the date, the rarity of the name and the locality of its attestation, the commonalities of status, of financial independence, of presence in an all-male context, and of association with the gymnasium between the two Ismenodoras), the identification of Markia Ismenodora of IG VII 1777 with Plutarch's widow in the *Erotikos* is appropriate. Epigraphic evidence has confirmed previously that Plutarch often uses historical persons (friends and others) and widely known anecdotes in the *Moralia* in order to make his didactic arguments more accessible and familiar to his audience. Therefore, it should not be surprising if he is drawing once more from an historical person (Ismenodora) and her hometown (Thespiai) to add immediacy to his arguments in the *Erotikos*.

The woman's nomenclature suggests both Roman (Markia/Marcia) and Greek (Ismenodora) citizenship. Onomastics, however, do not help us in determining whether Ismenodora was Roman/Latin with Greek citizenship or Thespian/Greek with Roman citizenship.²⁰

Plutarch certainly *portrays* his heroine more as a Roman than as a Greek woman. Ismenodora is the only respectable, contemporary woman who is named in the *Erotikos*. Plutarch avoids naming his own wife, Bacchon's mother, and the young woman with whom the marriage was being arranged initially. In this, Plutarch follows traditional Greek practice of not naming respectable women in public. Ismenodora, as he makes certain to tell us, is respectable and, nevertheless, we know her name! Her assertive behavior is not typical of a Greek woman, either, and highly unacceptable as Peisias, one of the characters in the dialogue, points out because it upsets not only the laws of the *polis* (περὶ νόμων καὶ δικαίων) but those of nature as well when women

19 Plutarch in the *Life of Cimon* (1.7) suggests anointing taking place in the *pyriaterion* at Chaironeia and he might reflect the practice of his time.

20 Wilson, esp. 94, 105–111, and 154 discusses the problems associated with the terms "Greek", "Roman", "Italian" etc. based on onomastics.

take over the city (ἡ γὰρ φύσις παρανομεῖται γυναικοκρατούμενη).²¹ He goes on to say in dismay that the gymnasium and the *bouleuterion* should be handed over to the women, now that the city has been completely emasculated by Ismenodora. Male identity, according to Peisias, is to be found in the training and the education provided at the gymnasium and the exercise of citizenship at the *bouleuterion*. Ismenodora's sexual "aggressiveness", as portrayed in her self-willed action to "abduct" Bacchon, is unusual for a Greek woman since it reverses gender roles, and should have been condemned by Plutarch.

On the other hand, Bacchon's portrayal in the *Erotikos* appears to be clearly rooted in the Greek institutions of *paideia*, which defined "Greekness" since the Hellenistic period. Bacchon is completing the Greek *ephebate*; he hunts with his friends and exercises in the Greek *palaestra*. He is called a μειράκιον, often mistranslated as "lad", but clearly used by Plutarch throughout his works to signify the *eromenos* in a pederastic relationship. In all of these ways Bacchon follows Greek practices.

There is no 'hard' evidence to suggest that Ismenodora is Roman, but she is certainly *cast* in those terms. Plutarch, like the inscriber of IG VII 1777, sets Ismenodora apart by giving her a unique position in Greek and Roman literature, in that he designates her as the first and only female abductor; but instead of condemning her and her actions, he praises her and condones the marriage she initiates.²² Although he could have developed his character differently, Plutarch makes a choice in his specific portrayal. One has to ask: why?

Another major question with which we are faced in this discussion is whether Bacchon's and Ismenodora's ethnic identity (if we can apply the term to "Greek" and "Roman") is even applicable and whether it matters. Much has been written in recent years on the questions of "ethnicity" and "identity."²³ A better question, perhaps, is whether and how *Greekness* and

21 *Amat.* 755B–C: τὸν δὲ Πεισίαν ἀναπηδήσαντα βοᾶν “ὦ θεοί, τί πέρας ἔσται τῆς ἀνατρεπούσης τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν ἐλευθερίας; ἤδη γὰρ εἰς ἀνομίαν τὰ πράγματα διὰ τῆς αὐτονομίας βαδίζει. Καίτοι γελοῖον ἴσως ἀγανακτεῖν περὶ νόμων καὶ δικαίων, ἡ γὰρ φύσις παρανομεῖται γυναικοκρατούμενη. Τί τοιοῦτον ἡ Λῆμνος; ἴωμεν ἡμεῖς, ἴωμεν” εἶπεν, “ὅπως καὶ τὸ γυμνάσιον ταῖς γυναῖξι παραδῶμεν καὶ τὸ βουλευτήριον, εἰ παντάπασιν ἡ πόλις ἐκνεύρισται.”

22 Only goddesses were abductors of men in the classical Greek world (see, for example, the discussion in Lefkowitz on the portrayals of these goddesses in art). For a summary of the history of abduction marriage in literature, see Evans Grubbs 1989, 67–79 and Lateiner.

23 See, for example, Goldhill 1–25 with relevant bibliography; Swain; Whitmarsh; Alcock 1993. On the fragmentation of Greek and Roman identity in Plutarch's *Lives*, see Larmour and Asirvatham.

Romanitas mattered to Plutarch and the aristocracy of his milieu.²⁴ Plutarch speaks of the Romans as friends when he gives advice to young Menemachus concerning public life in the *Precepts of Statecraft*: one should always have a friend among the really powerful people up there, since the Romans themselves are very keen to support their friends' political interests; like Polybius and Panaetius, one can also reap a fine harvest from the friendship of the great.²⁵ Plutarch, therefore, emphasizes not the "ethnic" or geographical distinctions between Greeks and Romans but the *distinction of power* between the two. The question which should be addressed, then, is why Plutarch, a major representative of a conquered people, would cast his story in such a way that would allow for intermarriage between a Greek and a Roman. The answer, in my view, lies in the way Plutarch *perceives* his world, and in his ideological method for healing it.

This is not the only time that Plutarch supports intermarriage between different peoples. In the *Life of Romulus* and in the *Synkrisis* with Theseus, Plutarch argues that social and political considerations (not personal and private ones) constitute the primary motivating force behind the abduction of the Sabine women. In the *Life*, Plutarch excuses Romulus for the theft of the Sabine women and justifies the theft as a necessity (*Rom.* 9.2: οὐχ ὕβρει τολμηθὲν ἀλλὰ δι' ἀνάγκην, ἐκουσίων ἀπορία γάμων). And in 14.2 and 14.7, he writes that Romulus was hoping that this deed against the Sabines would be the beginning of blending and partnership (συγκράσεως καὶ κοινωνίας ἀρχήν), since his followers were foreigners, a mix of poor and obscure people, who were looked down upon and were not expected to have a strong cohesion.²⁶ Only a few of them had wives and, therefore, could produce the next generation of citizens.²⁷ Marriage with the Sabines, therefore, would provide

24 On the significance of the *Lives* for the Roman elite of the second century, see Stadter 2002b, 123–135. On Plutarch's interest in contemporary history, see Desideri 217–8.

25 *Prae. ger. rep.* 814D: Οὐ μόνον δὲ δεῖ παρέχειν αὐτόν τε καὶ τὴν πατρίδα πρὸς τοὺς ἡγεμόνας ἀναίτιον, ἀλλὰ καὶ φίλον ἔχειν αἰεὶ τινα τῶν ἄνω δυνατωτάτων, ὥσπερ ἔρμα τῆς πολιτείας βέβαιον· αὐτοὶ γάρ εἰσι Ῥωμαῖοι πρὸς τὰς πολιτικὰς σπουδὰς προθυμότατοι τοῖς φίλοις· καὶ καρπὸν ἐκ φιλίας ἡγεμονικῆς λαμβάνοντας, οἷον ἔλαβε Πολύβιος καὶ Παναίτιος τῆ Σκιπίωνος εὐνοίᾳ πρὸς αὐτοὺς μεγάλη τὰς πατρίδας ὠφελήσαντες, εἰς εὐδαιμονίαν δημοσίαν ἐξενέγκασθαι καλόν. On Plutarch's use of Roman friends and important Roman connections for the improvement of the Delphic sanctuary, see Stadter 2004.

26 On the idea of "proper mixing" as an important determinant of good character and harmony, not only in the soul of the statesman but also within the city, see Duff 91–4.

27 *Rom.* 14.7: μὴ μεθ' ὕβρεως μηδ' ἀδικίας ἐλθόντας ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρπαγὴν, ἀλλὰ συμμείξαι καὶ συναγαγεῖν εἰς ταῦτο τὰ γένη ταῖς μεγίσταις ἀνάγκαις διανοηθέντας; and *Rom.* 14.2: ἀλλὰ τὴν μὲν πόλιν ὀρών ἐποίκων εὐθύς ἐμπιπλαμένην, ὧν ὀλίγοι γυναῖκας εἶχον, οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ μιγάδες ἐξ ἀπόρων καὶ ἀφανῶν ὄντες ὑπερερωῶντο καὶ προσεδοκῶντο μὴ συμμειεῖν βεβαίως, ἐλπίζων δὲ πρὸς τοὺς Σαβίνους τρόπον τινὰ συγκράσεως καὶ

for the Roman men not only wives and children, but also alliances through family ties, and thus improve their status in society. Notice that Plutarch's narrative makes no claim for love or desire here, but, in fact, confirms the irrelevance of sexual desire or *eros* for engaging in marriage. After all, Plutarch looks down upon a man's private desires influencing his public actions, and in the *Erotikos*, he only accepts the conjugal love (i. e. love that has developed *after* the marriage) as the legitimate or *nomimos eros*.

In *Rom.* 16.4–5, following the dispatch of the failed embassy and the ensuing first battle, which Romulus won, he ordered the Sabines that were left behind to tear down their houses and accompany him to Rome, where he promised them they would become citizens on equal terms (ὡς πολίτας ἐπὶ τοῖς ἴσοις ἔσομένους). Plutarch goes on to say that this, i. e. the giving of citizenship on equal terms, was what made Rome great. It always won over to its side and made associates those it ruled: Τούτου μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἔστιν ὃ τι μᾶλλον ἠΰξησε τὴν Ῥώμην, ἀεὶ προσποιοῦσαν ἑαυτῇ καὶ συννέμουσαν ὧν κρατήσκειεν. Plutarch gives credit to Romulus for this policy as well as for the political goal of the alliance with the Sabines and the implementation of the abduction–intermarriage in achieving it. In this way he creates an exemplum of the good statesman.

On the political level, this intermarriage of Roman men and Sabine women is positive for the *polis* for it blends two peoples together making the weaker stronger and providing cohesion among its citizens. Following the intervention of the women and Hersilia's speech, a compromise is reached on both the private and public level in 19.9.²⁸ In the private sphere, the Sabine fathers and brothers allow the women who *wished* it (τὰς βουλομένας συνοικεῖν τοῖς ἔχουσιν: notice again the idea of consent here) to live with their Roman husbands exempt from all work but spinning. In the public sphere, Sabines and Romans can live in the city in common (κοινῇ); the Sabine king, Tatius, and the Roman king, Romulus, will rule the army κοινῇ. The word prevalent in this part of the narrative is κοινῇ, the root of *κοινωνία*. In Ch. 20, Plutarch expands on the agreements reached after the reconciliation that doubled the numbers in the city of Rome and enlarged the Roman army. The kings did not hold council together (ἐν κοινῷ) but each with his men in private (ἰδίῳ), but later they brought them together in the same place (συνῆγον ἐς ταῦτό).

A parallel can be drawn here to the relationship between husband and wife, who after the first “sting” (πληγὴν τῆς μελίττης, as Plutarch describes the couple's first sexual encounter and the bride's resentment against the man who inflicted her pain, in the *Marriage Precepts*, 138D) might develop a common

κοινωνίας ἀρχὴν αὐτοῖς τὸ ἀδίκημα ποιήσκειν ὀμηρευσάμενοις τὰς γυναῖκας, ἐπεχείρησε τῷ ἔργῳ τόνδε τὸν τρόπον.

28 According to Plutarch, Hersilia was the only previously-married woman to be seized by mistake, who later became the wife of Hostilius or Romulus.

mind and come to terms with each other. The physical separation of the two kings and their advisors who eventually come together is also parallel to the relationship between husband and wife: two partners with different backgrounds and experiences who have to learn to work together.

In the *Synkrisis* with Theseus, Plutarch summarizes his praise for Romulus; for after that violence and injustice Romulus did to the Sabine women, he showed that deed to be the most noble and the most political that aimed to partnership (κάλλιστον ἔργον καὶ πολιτικώτατον εἰς κοινωσίαν γενομένην).²⁹ Romulus intermixed and joined the two peoples with each other and thus supplied the city with a source of strength and abundance for the future. Because of that intermarriage (ἐπιγαμία), the kings became partners (ἔκοινώνησαν) in ruling and the people in citizenship. For Plutarch, marriage offers the same sharing of financial resources and κοινωσία on the private level that the Romans and Sabines ultimately agree to on the political level. Marriage, thus, is perceived as a political institution that can unite not only separate individuals and their families but even hostile peoples in a mutually beneficial relationship.³⁰

Before returning to the *Erotikos*, one should keep in mind that Thespiai had received the status of *civitas libera et immunis* (i. e. a free city with tax-immune status) in the first century BCE and, because of its position on an important trade and communications route, it attracted Roman senatorial interest and Latin *negotiatores*.³¹ Furthermore, because of the Boiotian survey in

29 *Comp. Theseus-Romulus* 3–4: ἔπειτα τῇ μετὰ ταῦτα τιμῇ καὶ ἀγαπήσει καὶ δικαιοσύνη περὶ τὰς γυναῖκας ἀπέδειξε τὴν βίαν ἐκείνην καὶ τὴν ἀδικίαν κάλλιστον ἔργον καὶ πολιτικώτατον εἰς κοινωσίαν γενομένην. οὕτω συνέμειξεν ἀλλήλοις καὶ συνέπηξε τὰ γένη, καὶ παρέσχε πηγὴν τῆς εἰς αὐθις εὐροίας καὶ δυνάμεως τοῖς πράγμασιν. αἰδοῦς δὲ καὶ φίλας καὶ βεβαιότητος, ἦν εἰργάσατο περὶ τοὺς γάμους... τῶ δὲ τοσοῦτω χρόνῳ συμμαρτυρεῖ καὶ τὰ ἔργα. καὶ γὰρ ἀρχῆς ἔκοινώνησαν οἱ βασιλεῖς καὶ πολιτείας τὰ γένη διὰ τὴν ἐπιγαμίαν ἐκείνην.

30 This notion is further emphasized in the marriages that Alexander promotes between Greeks and barbarians, a theme pursued both in the *Life* and in *Alex. Virt.* 329D: Alexander ordered both the Greeks and the barbarians to think the whole earth as their fatherland, all good men, as their kinsmen and all the wicked, as foreigners and not to judge them as Greek or barbarian by their attire and weaponry, “but to judge between Greekness (Ἑλληνικὸν) by virtue and barbarism (βαρβαρικὸν) by evil, and to think of clothes and food and marriage and a life as common (κοινὰς) to all, mixed up through blood and offspring (δι’ αἵματος καὶ τέκνων).” Boer, 128, has suggested that “...Alexander the Great was the object of the emperor’s emulation” in the second century and that the philosophy of more than four centuries had linked the idea of *homonoia*, the unity of mankind, with Alexander. For a more recent discussion with bibliography, see Asirvatham.

31 On the Romans at Thespiai attested on inscriptions, see *SEG* 27.72; 31.54; 32.500; 32.499; *IG* VII 1862; Roesch 171–77; Kajava; Moretti; Hatzfeld 67–73; Müller 2002.

the 1980s, we have archaeological evidence now, that the countryside of the Thespike (i. e. the territory around Thespiiai) exhibited a severe contraction of population from the Late Hellenistic to the Late Imperial period, and that the city of Thespiiai did not escape unscathed.³² Alcock (1997) has proposed that the drop in the number of rural sites might suggest the presence of a small number of elite, large-scale landowners as the “villa” structures in certain areas of Thespike show. Although the city enjoyed relative prosperity, the size of Thespiiai, as was the case with other *poleis* in Boiotia, including Plutarch’s Chaeroneia, shrank during the Empire.³³ The experience of a series of wars and civic *staseis* in the first centuries BCE and CE, as well as the famine of 51 CE, might be partially to blame.

With social status and economic power based upon landownership, one would expect to find the accumulation of landholding in the hands of women and the Roman businessmen in the area, and a change in the status and position of these two groups in the Early Empire. The provincial, Greek male aristocracy, however, would have had limited opportunities to augment its wealth (and thus its social and citizenship status) due to the economic circumstances and the limited markets of antiquity. For a Greek man “marrying upward” and into the local Roman society would create valuable cognate connections not only for himself but also for his progeny, and his community.³⁴ The main ways through which one could increase his property and social status, were inheritance, dowry, and imperial commissions.³⁵ Not surprisingly, in the *Erotikos*, these are also Plutarch’s concerns. Anthemion, Bacchon’s older cousin and a member of the local aristocracy himself, supports the marriage with Ismenodora because, as he says, it will give his cousin an estate, a wife, and greatness (750A: οἴκου καὶ γάμου καὶ πραγμάτων μεγάλων). Bacchon has probably already inherited the family’s patrimony after his father’s death. By marrying a woman of higher status and greater wealth, (and better yet if she is Roman, as Plutarch insinuates,) Bacchon gains more property, a wife who would produce children and, therefore, citizens, and would give him not only material but political benefits as well.

Whether the Thespians, in addition to their free and tax-immune status, also enjoyed *conubium* (i. e. the right to intermarry) with the Romans is difficult to establish. It is probable, since the right of intermarriage was among the

32 Bintliff and Snodgrass 1989: this article (esp. 288 ff) examines the sites of Thespiiai, Haliartos, and neighboring Askra; idem 1985 and 1988.

33 Bintliff and Snodgrass 1989, 288 and 294; Alcock 1997.

34 Cognate connections, based on kin relationships, with a Roman family would be even more beneficial to a Greek, to his progeny and country than relationships based on φιλία/*amicitia* as described in Plutarch’s advice to Menemachus again in *Prae. ger. reip.* 814D.

35 Panagopoulos, 197.

earliest citizen rights non-Romans could receive, because its function was to assure that the union formed between a Roman and a non-Roman would be legally recognized in Rome, so that the children would be recognized as legitimate, and all Roman laws governing inheritance might apply.³⁶ An illegitimate marriage could be contracted, of course, in defiance of (Roman or Greek) law but such marriage would carry certain disadvantages such as the illegitimacy of the children born to that marriage and their consequent lack of claim on the parental estate.³⁷ Under the Minician law, which was established sometime before 90 BCE, children would follow the status of the “inferior” parent.³⁸ In this case, if Ismenodora is a Roman citizen and if Bacchon is considered by Roman law as a *peregrinus* with *conubium*, the children would follow the status of the father (i. e. they would acquire Thespian citizenship under the Minician law). If, however, Bacchon does not have *conubium* and marries a Roman woman, the children would be considered by *ius gentium* Roman citizens.³⁹ Finally, if Thespians had not been granted *conubium*, the marriage between Bacchon and Ismenodora would still be considered legal under general Greek practice and law, since a Thespian-male citizen would be marrying a Roman-female citizen; their children would follow the status of the father and be recognized as Thespian citizens.

Plutarch’s conjugal ideology is concerned with marriage as a civic institution that aims at both personal and social harmony and which can bridge the diversity of peoples within the Empire. *Homonoia* and the unity of the people were regarded as ideals in the second century CE.⁴⁰ Plutarch promotes

36 It is well known that the extension of citizenship rights, especially through *conubium*, *commercium*, and *migratio* played a crucial role in the Roman assimilation of Italy (Sherwin-White 32–7 and 108–16). Notice the importance Plutarch places on the granting of citizenship to the Sabines in *Rom.* 16.4–5, as discussed above.

37 Treggiari, 47.

38 The hypotheses that follow assume that Bacchon has Greek/Thespian citizenship only, since there is no secure evidence that he might have enjoyed Roman citizenship as well. One cannot preclude, however, that Bacchon could be both a Greek and a Roman citizen since dual citizenship was common among the Greek elites of the late first and early second centuries CE. If Bacchon has Roman citizenship, of course, there would be no contestation about the citizenship of the children since they would come under his *potestas* and, therefore, be Roman (and Thespian) citizens.

39 *Tit. Ulp.* 5.3–5 and 5.8–10; Treggiari, 45–46; Frier and McGinn, 32.

40 The theme of *homonoia* is present also, for example, in Pliny’s *Panegyricus* and in Dio Chrysostom’s *Peri Basileias*. Boer, 129 and Bremer, 64–7 on the fear of *stasis* and the tensions between aristocrats and the *demos* in the second and first centuries BCE; De Ste Croix 344 on the Greek aristocracy’s positive attitude toward Roman rule, which they perceived as insurance against popular movements from below; Jones 1971, 18 and note 28 on the aftermath of Nero’s grant of liberty to the Greek *poleis*, which

conjugal love and marriage in the *Life of Romulus* and the *Erotikos* because he perceived marriage as the institution that can create a fusion between peoples, and the institution that can create *homonoia* –and therefore peace– across the Empire.⁴¹ “Wedding ceremonies mixed with ties of blood and children” is the main reason for Alexander’s success in creating *homonoia*, peace and *koinōnia* in the East, bringing together Greeks and barbarians, Plutarch posits in *Alex. Virt.* 309A–F.⁴² Xerxes was a fool trying to bridge Asia and Europe with rafts and beams, with bonds that do not hold life and affection (ἀψύχοις καὶ ἀσυμπαθέσι δεσμοῖς). The bridging and joining of nations is done through lawful love, moderate marriages, and the joint ownership of children (ἔρωτι νομίμῳ καὶ γάμοις σώφροσι καὶ κοινωνίαις παίδων τὰ γένη συνάπτοντες).

The *philosophical* rejection of homosexual and pederastic love and the promotion of conjugal *eros* as the only lawful *eros* by Plutarch in the *Erotikos* at this particular point in time may be understood in terms of the societal pressures and changes within Greek society during the Empire, then, as these pressures and changes are perceived by a Graeco-Roman aristocrat. The defense of the institution of marriage provides a unitary social vision and a political solution. Conjuality becomes the institution that controls uproar and rivalry in the *polis*, joins *ethnē* together, and promotes harmony at all levels of

would have given rise to ancestral feuds and *stasis* as local aristocrats would compete for political power and control.

41 For a negative example, see *Prae. ger. reip.* 825B–C where the bride (the unnamed daughter of Crates) was abandoned by the groom (Orsilauus) during their wedding at Delphi. This private event led to the greatest insurrection in the city (ὁ μέγιστος νεωτερισμὸς). On private matters as the causes of public discord, see *Prae. ger. reip.* 825A.

42 *Alex. Virt.* 329 A–F: Καὶ μὴν ἡ πολὺ θαυμαζόμενη Πολιτεία τοῦ τὴν Στωικῶν αἵρεσιν καταβαλομένου τοῦ Ζήνωνος εἰς ἓν τοῦτο συντείνει κεφάλαιον, ἵνα μὴ κατὰ πόλεις μηδὲ κατὰ δήμους οἰκῶμεν ἰδίους ἕκαστοι διωρισμένοι δικαίαις, ἀλλὰ πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἡγώμεθα ὡσπερ ἀγέλης συννόμου νομῶ κοινῶ συντρεφομένης. ...ἀλλὰ κοινὸς ἦκειν [ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος] θεόθεν ἀρμοστής καὶ διαλλακτὴς τῶν ὄλων νομίζων, οὓς τῶ λόγῳ μὴ συνῆγε τοῖς ὀπλοῖς βιαζόμενος, εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ συνεγκῶν τὰ πανταχόθεν, ὡσπερ ἐν κρατῆρι φιλοτησίῳ μείζας τοὺς βίους καὶ τὰ ἦθη καὶ τοὺς γάμους καὶ τὰς διαίτας, πατριδα μὲν τὴν οἰκουμένην προσέταξεν ἡγεῖσθαι πάντας, ..., συγγενεῖς δὲ τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς, ἀλλοφύλους τοὺς πονηροὺς... ἀλλ’ ἐκείνης ἡδέως ἂν μοι δοκῶ γενέσθαι τῆς καλῆς καὶ ἱεραῆς νυμφαγωγίας θεατῆς, ὅτε μιᾷ σκηνῇ χρυσωρόφῳ περιλαβῶν, ἐφ’ ἐστίας κοινῆς καὶ τραπέζης, ἑκατὸν Περσίδας νύμφας, ἑκατὸν νυμφίους Μακεδόνας καὶ τὸν ὑμέναιον, ὡσπερ φιλοτήσιον ἐπάιδων μέλος, εἰς κοινωνίαν συνιοῦσι τοῖς μεγίστοις καὶ δυνατωτάτοις γένεσι, μιᾷς νυμφίος, πασῶν δὲ νυμφαγωγὸς ἅμα καὶ πατήρ καὶ ἀρμοστής κατὰ ζυγὰ συνῆπτεν. ἡδέως γὰρ ἂν εἶπον, “ὦ βάρβαρε Ξέρξη καὶ ἀνόητε καὶ μάτην πολλὰ περὶ τὴν Ἑλλησποντίαν πονηθεὶς γέφυραν, οὕτως ἔμφρονες βασιλεῖς Ἀσίαν Εὐρώπῃ συνάππουσιν, οὐ ξύλοισι οὐδὲ σχεδίας οὐδ’ ἀψύχοις καὶ ἀσυμπαθέσι δεσμοῖς, ἀλλ’ ἔρωτι νομίμῳ καὶ γάμοις σώφροσι καὶ κοινωνίαις παίδων τὰ γένη συνάπτοντες.”

the socially and ethnically diverse world of the Greek city and of the Empire.⁴³ This diversity is explored in the wider “landscape” of the dialogue which includes references not only to the Greek mainland but also to Rome, Gaul, Egypt, and Asia Minor. At the symbolic level, therefore, the controversy regarding marriage and love in the conjugal unit can be seen in terms of the whole geography of the Empire.

In the *Erotikos*, discord inside and outside the *polis* has created *stasis*.⁴⁴ It is expressed in the family between Plutarch’s parents and parents-in-law fighting with each other in the beginning of the work; in the theater among the musicians who have gathered from far and wide to participate at the *Erotidia*; in the gymnasium between the gymnasiarchs arguing outside Ismenodora’s doors; in the town among all the members of the community and the foreign tourists; in the quaint Valley of the Muses among the philosophers contending with each other about the function of Eros in society and about the existence of the gods. Societal norms and expectations are reversed; women act like men (manifest in the actions of Ismenodora) and men like women (seen in the passivity of Bacchon). Even the Empire does not escape from discord and *stasis*: special mention is made of Civilis’ revolt in Gaul, when Plutarch introduces the story of Empona’s love for her husband, Sabinus, in 770D in the final pages of the *Erotikos*.

At the end of the dialogue, however, all’s well that ends well.⁴⁵ The wedding bridges all differences as the guests gather for the celebration and Eros smiles in approval. Everyone, including the fiercest opponent to the marriage, Peisias, joins the wedding ceremony and yields (*συνεχώρησε*) to Ismenodora. Marriage is not simply a reconciliation but a willing union of peoples blessed by the gods. Marriage can quell uproar in the *polis*, according to Plutarch, and

43 It is generally admitted that Plutarch’s political views are centered on the idea of *homonoia* and detestation of *stasis*. See *Prae. ger. reip.* 823F–825F; *Comp. Agis-Kleomenes-Gracchi* 4.3; Duff 89–91, 93, 196, 296–7; Ash for a study of *stasis* in *Galba* and *Otho*; Ingenkamp, 4336–44, for a negative paradigm of *stasis* in the *Life* of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus; Wardman, 57–63. On *homonoia* as a concern in the Greek cities under the Empire, see for example, Dio Chrys. 38.22: reasons for fighting include land, sea, revenues, trade, intermarriage (*ἐπιμιξία*), religious worship, festivals, factions for primacy (*οἱ γὰρ παρακαλοῦντες ὑμᾶς ἐπὶ τὴν στάσιν... ὑπὲρ πρῶτιων*); c.f. Dio Chrys. 38.26–38; Burrell, 343, 351–8; Sheppard; Jones 1971, 111–19.

44 Zadorojnyi, 113, discussing *stasis* in the *Life* of the Gracchi: “The *stasis* is presented as a reversal of the norms and expectations of civil life. Legislation and persuasion collapse...Neither gods, nor laws can be trusted anymore....”

45 The last scene of the story recalls the endings of New Comedy and Novel (eg. Chariton 8.1.4): reconciliation all around, a legitimate marriage, feasting, and laughter. The dialogue reported discord between families, couples, even philosophical styles in the very beginning. It is only appropriate that the story should end with an accent on harmony and joy accepted by the higher authority of the gods.

also join Greeks and Romans into a harmonious and peaceful *synkrisis*. The distinctions between “Greek” and “Roman” collapse in the ideology of conjugality in order that harmony and *homonoia* be maintained not only in the conjugal unit but in the greater political relationship as well.

Plutarch undoubtedly would identify himself as Greek, although he was also a Roman citizen who lived in a world dominated by Rome for centuries. His conjugal philosophy reflects a political ideology to be applied not to the *polis* of Plato but to the Graeco-Roman *oikoumenê*.

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Parent-Child Affection and
Social Relationships in Plutarch:
Common Elements in *Consolatio ad uxorem* and *Vitae*

Carmen Soares

Texts with an autobiographical content tend to have a special appeal for the readers and are certainly of great interest for scholars researching on the author's work. Written on the occasion of the death of their two-year-old daughter, and despite its somewhat conventional tone, Plutarch's letter to his wife, known as *Consolatio ad uxorem*, constitutes both in form and content the subject-matter of the theme I wish to discuss here.¹ It deals with the central motifs of the relationship between parents and children based on the reciprocity of affection and social duties. As regards affects, it emphasizes – directly and indirectly – motherly and fatherly love, while in the area of social conventions (not necessarily devoid of emotional factors) the text makes a special mention of childcare obligations.

Since it deals with the loss of a very young child whose social role would be almost nonexistent the reader should not expect to be provided with detailed references to the parents' expectations regarding the reciprocation of such feelings and duties on the part of their *philia*. Contrary to what happens in *Vitae*, it does not describe the kind of things children should do to reciprocate their parents' dedication, although the first and foremost way to do it would certainly be by honouring and exalting them. In *Consolatio* children are a source of pride to their mothers, giving them such prestige and esteem as to cause them to be envied by their counterparts (ὡς ζηλουμένη διατελεῖς ὑπὸ τούτων ἐπὶ τέκνοισι..., 611B).

Having chosen among *Moralia* the short text of *Consolatio* as a departure point in my search for inter-textual relationships between that and *Parallel Lives*, its content and the time limits imposed to the presentations to this Congress are the reasons why I choose to focus on the links between parents

1 On both the date of composition of *Consolatio* and the conventionality of a genre with numberless examples of letters of condolence, both by literary people (Cicero, among others) and common citizens (found in Egyptian papyri), see Pomeroy 1999. Also recommended are Bradley's article and the selected bibliography organized by Harvey. Of special interest for the theme discussed in this paper are also: Néraudau; Golden; Pelling; Pomeroy 1997.

and children during childhood.² In his statement of sympathy towards his wife's grief, Plutarch evokes the couple's union of feelings and actions concerning their children. The love for their offspring and the care provided (both as regards their physical development and ethic upbringing) are shared by both parents. In fact, the ideal of communion between spouses, amply established in *Coniugalia praecepta*, was traced back to the very moment of conception by the Chaeronean polygraph. As can be read in 140 E, a being who is "common to both" is born of the union of spouses (κοινὸν ἀμφοτέροις...τὸ γεννώμενον), a product of the combination of "a part of each" (ἐξ ἑκατέρων μέρος). Contrary to Greek and Roman habits in the Classical Age, at least after the second half of the 1st century and the beginnings of the 2nd for some members of the Roman elite – to which Plutarch belonged – childcare during infancy was provided by the parents. This is clearly in opposition to the traditional habit of entrusting others (usually a nurse and a pedagogue) with these tasks. At most, it might be expected that, of both parents, the mother would, to a certain extent, collaborate. Thence, the indication that all of their children were raised at home and brought up by both parents, who completely shared their parental duties (αὐτῆ τοσοῦτων...τέκνων ἀνατροφῆς κοινωνήσασα, πάντων ἐκτεθραμμένων οἴκοι δι' αὐτῶν ἡμῶν, 608C) should be understood as describing not only a change of mentality but also as a sign that the affective bonds between parents and their little ones were becoming stronger. The fact that the author felt a need to emphasize his love for his dead daughter seems to indicate that perhaps that was not commonly the case. However, the nature of the reasons adduced for his feelings is both intrinsic and extrinsic to a father/daughter relationship. He loves her for being the child she is, her charm and innocence made the more evident by her tender years (πρόσσειτι δὲ καὶ δριμύτης ἰδίᾳ τις τῶν πρὸς τὰ τηλικαῦτα...); he loves her in a very special way (ἀγαπητὸν διαφερόντως γενόμενον), also for the love that his wife felt for her (608C). She was indeed a much cherished child for, besides having being born to them after twenty years of marriage, Timoxena was their first daughter, after they had had four sons.

What then is the origin of love for one's children? The information obtained seems to imply that it is a natural feeling that can be stimulated by closeness. Chapters 6–7 of *Life of Solon* are quite clear on this subject, expounding the author's theory on two aspects common also to *Consolation*: love for one's children and the grief caused by their death. Let us start by considering the former. During his visit to Thales of Miletus, Solon is reported

2 Eyben (pp. 80–82) identifies the different phases of human life up to youth. After infancy (up to 7 years of age) comes childhood (until the child reaches puberty, around his/her 14th year physiologically, but extended to 15/16 in Roman culture and 18 for the Greeks), then followed by the phase immediately preceding maturity, i. e. youth.

to have been unable to hide his surprise before the fact that the wise man had never been married and had had no children (θαυμάζειν ὅτι γάμου καὶ παιδοποιίας τὸ παράπαν ἠμέληκε, 6.1). According to social and cultural expectations, both men and women should experience both situations if they were to fulfill society's precepts. According to Plutarch's words to his wife, she should not feel sorry that her daughter had not been able to reach those stages, as mothers generally would. True that the daughter had left the world without having married and without children (ἀγάμου καὶ ἄπαιδος, 611C) but her mother had enjoyed those ἀγαθά, which seems only to be important (μεγάλα) to those who are deprived thereof (τοῖς στερομένοις) and insignificant (μικρά) to those who possess them (ibid: τοῖς ἔχουσιν). Thales's opinion on the subject of marriage and children is however quite different: he deliberately avoids both (ἐμὲ γάμου καὶ παιδοποιίας ἀφίστησιν, *Sol.* 6.6). To love means to experience grief at the loss of those whom one loves. Solon was the living proof of that: when informed of his son's death in his homeland the Athenian legislator could not hide the deep grief that overcame him. Although it was only a joke invented by the guest to test the wisdom of his choice (of not marrying and not having children), the episode provides Plutarch with an opportunity to develop a number of ideas he only superficially deals with in *Consolatio*. Let us consider some of them.

Love and affection are part of the nature of the human soul. The former is intrinsic to it (ἐχούσας γὰρ τι τῆς ψυχῆς ἀγαπητικὸν ἐν ἑαυτῇ) and the latter is a natural inclination (πεφυκυίας...φιλεῖν, *Sol.* 7.3). And celibacy, which is to say being deprived of legitimate heirs, certainly does not restrict those needs. Affection will develop towards those who are close to the person, that is, those who share his home (εἰσοικισάμενοι), and care for him (καταλαβόντες), giving proofs of their love/dedication (ἄμα τῷ φιλεῖν). In fact, fighting against nature's appeal to marriage and procreation (τῇ φύσει περὶ γάμου καὶ γενέσεως παίδων, 7.4) will not prevent, as Thales believes, renouncing to grief at losing someone dear. It might be a servant's child, a concubine's baby, or even a horse or a dog. But as Plutarch said in the introduction to this chapter, the 7th, of *Vita Solonis*, "it is irrational and ignoble to renounce the acquisition of what we want for fear of losing it"³ (τὴν κτῆσιν ὧν χρεῖ, 7.1). No one is exempt from those needs – not even Thales, who ended up by adopting a child, his sister's son (7.2).

The grief that accompanies loss is then an inevitable risk. Both in his consoling words to his wife and in Solon's biography, the author criticizes something he believes to be worse even than losing someone you care for, that is, excessive manifestations of mourning. If in *Consolation* his appeal to moderation and the controlling of passions can be explained by the fact that it

3 I use here the translation of Bernadotte Perrin (Loeb).

addressed to a female, whose exteriorization of grief society not only tolerated but also expected to be more intense than a man's, in *The Life of Solon* we learn that the author's advices concerning moderation are addressed to all people who don't resort to *reason* when faced with misfortune (ἀνθρώποις ἀνασκήτοις ὑπὸ λόγου πρὸς τύχην, 7.5). Only reason will check extravagant manifestations of mourning (ibid.: ἔπαθον δεινόν) and shameful behaviour (ibid.: ἐποίησαν αἰσχρόν). Surely, among wealthy families ostentation would take the material form of a pompous display of mourning, which, in her simplicity, Plutarch's wife did not engage in.⁴ In short, refuge against the death of one's children does not lie in depriving oneself of one's progeny but rather in the use of reason (ἀλλὰ τῷ λογισμῷ, *Sol.* 7.6) so as to control the exteriorization of grief. In fact, the laws of Rome themselves decreed the prohibition of mourning when the deceased was a child below three⁵.

Since loving includes the risk of losing, one of the *topoi* associated with love for one's children is the care provided in order to avoid danger. During infancy, childcare would focus on the satisfaction of vital needs such as feeding. To breastfeed children, dispensing with wet nurses, can only be a sign of both the mother's nobility and her love for her offspring (γενναῖα ταῦτα καὶ φιλόστοργα, *Cons.* 610E). This attitude does indeed signify love and reveals the excellence of the mother's character, especially when it can endanger her own health, which was the case with Plutarch's wife. In fact, she had to undergo surgery while nursing one of her boys because she developed a nipple infection. Interestingly enough, breastfeeding can be interpreted as a way to generate affection between "milk brothers". That is exactly the explanation given in Plutarch's *Life of Cato the Elder* for the fact that his wife often suckled slave children (20.3). Through this she intended to ensure that they would feel brotherly love for her own son, their future master.

However, it is during youth, a stage where one is bound to feel the appeal of exploring the unknown – which is first and foremost adult life – that concern about one's children becomes more intense. They must be protected from fortune's blows.

Born of a secret relationship between Aethra, the founder of Troezen's daughter, and Aegeus, lord of Athens, Theseus is brought up far from his father. He only introduces himself as his son exactly when he reaches youth (cf. μείράκιον ὄν, *Thest.* 6.2), that is, when he has the necessary strength and intelligence to recover and deliver his father the symbols that would make it

4 ...οὐδ' ἦν παρασκευὴ πολυτελείας πανηγυρικῆς περὶ τὴν ταφὴν (*Consolatio* 608F).

5 Numa Pompilius, the mythic king, is said to have regulated the authorized periods of mourning, according to the age of the deceased. Besides the excluded age group, mourning periods could extend to a number of months equivalent to the age of the dead child, though no longer than 10 (cf. *Num.* 12.2).

possible to identify him as his son – the father’s sword and sandals. After his mother had revealed the hiding place where Aegeus had concealed those objects, Theseus was able to remove the stone that hid them and took possession thereof. The time has now come for Theseus to leave his mother and grandfather’s protection, both of whom (together with a pedagogue) had educated him. The fact of his leaving home to gain independence, the reward for achieving maturity, was an adventure fraught with uncertainties, causing much concern to both his tutors. His grandfather and his mother asked him (δεομένων, 6.3) and tried to convince him (ἔπειθε, 6.7) to travel by sea to the land where his father lives. The maritime itinerary had the advantage of being safer (οὔσης ἀσφαλείας, 6.3) when compared to the land route (χαλεπόν, 6.3; ὀλέθριος, 6.7), where he might fall prey to thieves and criminals (οὐδὲν μέρος καθαρόν οὐδ’ ἀκίνδυνον ὑπὸ ληστῶν καὶ κακούργων ἔχουσιν, 6.3 and cf. 6.7).

Such entreaties were however of no use against the determination and the irreverence of youth. A similar situation occurred with another great figure in the history of Athens, Themistocles (*Them.* 2.8). According to a version which Plutarch deems false, the Athenian went against his father’s will when he decided to become a statesman. His father’s disagreement, translated socially in the son’s disinheritance, was a protest against his disregard for his fatherly concern. In fact, when the father warned Themistocles against getting involved in the government of the *polis*, his intent was that of sparing him the otherwise inevitable future sorrows, for he knew perfectly that the people would forget the demagogue as soon as he stopped being of use to them. This is then the example of a father who, wishing to safeguard his son’s good, penalizes him socially by depriving him of his inheritance.

In contrast with the cases of Timoxena, Theseus, and Themistocles, illustrating the parents’ sorrow concerning the real or predictable death (which can be either physical or social) of their children, there are cases where it is the parents who die. To lose one or both parents is a situation with an important emotional and social impact for their offspring. Coriolanus’s biography refers both cases, either explicitly or implicitly. With the death of his father, the Roman hero was brought up and educated by his mother alone and was not as fortunate as Epaminondas, the famous Spartan general. Contrary to Epaminondas, Coriolanus could not reach the height of happiness (εὐτυχίαν ποιούμενον ἑαυτοῦ μεγίστην, *Cor.* 4.6): to have both his father and his mother witnessing his success. The Greek general could indeed enjoy that privilege (ibid: ἀπέλαυσε), while fatherless Coriolanus had to compensate for his lack by concentrating on his mother the gratitude due to his death parent (τῇ μητρὶ καὶ τὰς τοῦ πατρὸς ὀφείλειν χάριτας οἴόμενος, 4.7). The bond between the Roman and his mother was so strong that he must have her present at all times and she became the driving force in his life. Although he eventually got married and had a family of his own, he did so only when his mother expressed the wish he

would, and they always lived together. Besides, his mother's happiness (εὐφροσύνη) was the end he sought to achieve through his own glory (τῆς δόξης), though, as the author puts it, not the glory of virtue (ἡ δόξα τῆς ἀρετῆς); the supreme honour and the height of happiness (ἐντιμώτατον αὐτὸν...μακαριώτατον) was for Coriolanus his mother's acknowledgement of his success (by praising him, embracing him and being a witness to his victories, cf. 4.5). We can therefore conclude that the children's honour needs the applause of their parents if it is to achieve its full social, and often also personal, meaning. The opposite of this can again be found in the story of Themistocles. Devastated by the dishonour brought upon her son by his father's depriving him of his inheritance, the Athenian's mother found herself unable to cope with his social disgrace and is said to have committed suicide (*Them.* 2.8).

A basic expectation of society's regarding the need to ensure one's progeny is based on the concept that they constitute the best means to perpetuate the progenitors' memory, i. e., their good name. The simplest way of ensuring that continuity between generations consisted in giving the son or the daughter the father's or the mother's forename, or maybe another first name common in the family. In *Consolatio*, Plutarch does not hide the fact that he chose his companion's name, Timoxena, for their much wanted daughter, as a way of paying homage to his wife (κάμοι τὸ σὸν ὄνομα θέσθαι παρέσχεν ἀφορμὴν, 608C).

Genetic heritage is also important as regards the subject under discussion. That was the case of Cimon the Athenian, whose reputation as a dissolute and bibulous man was similar to his grandfather's, whom he took after (ὡς ἄτακτος καὶ πολυπότης καὶ τῷ πάππῳ προσεοικῶς τὴν φύσιν, *Cim.* 4. 4). The similarity of their behaviour was indeed also translated in the fact that they had the same forename.

In the case of statesmen, who had autocratic and hereditary power, their anxiety to ensure the continuity of their lineage is also politically relevant. We have only to remember what is said about Theseus's father and maternal grandfather in *Life of Theseus*. Aegeus and Pelops represent both sides of the same issue: while the latter had a great number of children (πλήθει...παίδων, 3.2), the former had to consult Apollo's oracle at Delphi to know how to succeed in his desire for having children (*Thes.* 3.5). Besides possessing a vast personal wealth, Pelops managed to marry his daughters to important men and put his sons in places of command in different towns in the area, which ensured that through his family ties he was able to enjoy a very strong political basis of support. All these facts earned him the title of "the strongest of the kings in Peloponnesus" (*Thes.* 3.2). In his turn, Aegeus, the son in law, feared a coup d'Etat promoted by the Pallantine progeny, both because they did not recognize his political power or credibility, for he had no children (διὰ τὴν

ἄπαιδίαν, 3.7) and because, given their high number (fifty), they were in themselves a strong threat.

The truth is that as the follower of his father's work, the son of a political figure, even if only a small child, does constitute a threat to his father's rivals. Aratus, for instance, was the victim of attempted homicide by his father's murderer, who in his ambition to maintain his tyrannical government, exiled or eliminated all friends and relatives who might want to avenge his victim's death (*Arat.* 2). In spite of his tender seven years, Aratus was persecuted by his father's political adversary, which explains the hatred he was to develop towards tyranny (*Arat.* 3.1).

Within families with political power, emotional ties are often disturbed by the interference of factors that are utterly foreign to the natural bonds of family love and solidarity. Demetrius, a distinguished member of the royal house of the Antigonids, lords of Macedonia, is the exception that proves the rule, for he did not allow political ambition to corrupt his feelings for his son (*Demetr.* 3). It is true that power is a strong hindrance to human conviviality (πάντη δυσκοινωνητον, 3.3), for it is contaminated by distrust (ἄπιστία) and dissension (δύσνοια). But the story of the Macedonian prince's relationship with his father and king, reveals exactly that the opposite values, those of trust (πίστις) and harmony (ὁμόνοια), can be successful even in a generally hostile environment. The ingredients to achieve this good result can be found in the youth's profound love for his father (φιλοπάτωρ διαφερόντως), a veneration which is also conveyed (καὶ τὸν πατέρα τιμῶν) through his care for his mother as well as through the genuineness of his feelings (δι' εὐνοίαν ἀληθινήν, 3.1). The reciprocity of these feelings allows Antigonus, contrary to other kings, to see his son not as a rival but rather as an ally. It is only natural that the son, upon arriving from a hunt and still armed, should kiss his father and sit beside him, while Antigonus enthusiastically called the attention of the ambassadors who witnessed the scene to the friendly quality of their relationship. Plutarch adds that, with the exception of Philip (who eliminated only one of his sons), all of Antigonus's successors murdered many of their relatives. Children, mothers, wives, brothers and sisters are all included in the list of crimes against family members. Committed to preserve the king's security (βασιλικὸν ὑπερ ἄσφαλείας, 3.5), those attacks against the family *philia* show utter disrespect for the tendency of the human soul towards affection.

There is another case related to Antigonus's progeny which is the opposite of the one just described. The relationship between Philip, the king, and Alexander, his heir, was not one of affection and harmony. Rather, their differences of character and motivations seemed to promote competition between them. However, it is not the king who fears the qualities of his young heir, which is quite an unusual situation. In this case, it is rather the prince who is afraid that his own future fame might be dimmed by the present

grandeur of his father's conquests (*Alex.* 5), as if it would prevent him from satisfying social expectations by not allowing him to add to the family's good name. As he saw it, the king's achievements reduced his scope of action, and the son ran the risk of performing fewer deeds than the father. But he did not intend to be the loser. Although Plutarch does not say that in so many words, there seems to be a suggestion that the differences between father and son would have contributed towards their rivalry. Twice does the author resort to a comparison between them as a rhetorical means to emphasize the superiority of Alexander. If he were like Philip he would welcome all types of glory regardless whether it originated in speeches or in the victories of his racing chariots at the Olympic games (*Alex.* 4.9). Furthermore, as the Persian ambassadors noticed during a visit to the Macedonian court, the prince easily superseded the father's famous talent as a gifted speaker, which was nothing in comparison with his enthusiasm (5.3: ὄρμη) and his great capacity for achievement (ibid.: μεγαλοπραγμοσύνη).

With Alexander I seem to have digressed from the main subject of this discussion – the relationship between parents and children during childhood. However, this digression has allowed me to demonstrate that it is impossible to analyse family bonds in the light of universal theories. Being endowed with individuality and particularity, individuals will inevitably both confirm and invalidate the rules that seem to govern human behaviour. In conclusion, because they are made of love and hate, harmony and rivalry, and subject to social pressures, the affective ties between parents and their progeny may become stronger or weaker. As we can see both in *Consolatio ad uxorem* and *Vita Solonis*, death seems to be a privileged occasion for evaluating how much those who love are emotionally dependent on those they lose.

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8. Plutarch in his Epistemological and Socio-Historical Context

Synopsis

The last chapter of the volume comprises articles that illuminate Plutarch's many-sided personality from yet another angle, by discussing works or passages with a scientific, anthropological, religious, and historical interest.

Thus, **Jacques Boulogne**, using a precise typology, explores the function of scientific digressions in *Parallel Lives* so as to decipher some information about Plutarch's personality. The 40 digressions studied deal with 8 scientific fields: physics and astronomy mainly, geography, geometry, zoology, medicine, psychology, and music. These digressions correspond to 4 goals, i. e., to please the reader, educate him, enhance a quality, as well as express a personal opinion. But they also disclose some aspects of the author's mindset as a historian influenced by a mythical "imaginary", stamped by a prudent and prosaic rationalism and, still, believing in free will.

Rosa M^a Aguilar Fernández will survey the word φάρμακον in Plutarch's *corpus*. It appears that the meaning of the 96 matches found in the *TLG* is not always the same: sometimes 'pharmakon' has a medical signification, while other times it is employed in a figurative or rhetorical sense. Her purpose then is to obtain a complete, as far as possible, picture of the various connotations of this word.

Zlatko Plese, starting from the applications of the term ἀναπηρία in Aristotle's theory of reproduction, explores Plutarch's appropriation of Aristotle's biological model in various passages from the *Moralia* and *Lives*, focusing primarily on its heuristic function in Plutarch's cosmology. Taking as a case-study the 'corrupt' passage from *De Iside* (54.373A–C) about Isis' premature birth of a deformed offspring (Horus the Elder), the paper shows how parallel passages from the *Lives* (e. g. *Publ.* 21, *Caes.* 69) and *Moralia* (e. g. *Quaest. conv.* 3. 4) can elucidate many of the alleged obscurities in this passage.

Paola Volpe Cacciatore studies the myth of Isis in two Plutarchean passages, and comes to the conclusion that the controversy at *Quaestio convivalis* VIII, 8, in which the interlocutors debate the same theme and provide different solutions, supports the religious-anthropological statements in the *De Iside*.

In their joint article **Jane Francis and George W. M. Harrison** argue that Crete, as it emerges from the *Lives*, is very different from references in the

Moralia: Crete of the *Lives* is static and dated, while mentions in the *Moralia* have little overlapping and very much center on Plutarch's own world and Plutarch's own times. This is not surprising since Plutarch made the positive statement in his writings that he had relatives in Crete and had stayed there, presumably on his journey to and from Egypt. When speaking of Britomartis, a Cretan version of Artemis known from three sites, the statement is made that he saw one of her sanctuaries. Similarly, a statement in the *Life of Theseus* about how the site of the palace at Knossos was deserted seems to be based on personal observation and not taken from secondary witness. This paper not only collects and arranges the references to Crete and Cretans in Plutarch's works, but also categorises them by which mentions seem likely to be based on his own first hand investigation. This speaks directly to issues of Plutarch's sources and his reliability, and, since several of the places mentioned by Plutarch have been excavated, it is possible to compare what has come to light of sites with Plutarch's memory and impressions of the same locations.

Carlos Schrader inquires into the tradition that wants Chelidonian islands (35 miles SW from Phaselis) as the limit-line for operations of the Persian fleet, according to Callias treaty in 449 B.C. As such boundary, however, our sources first mention Phaselis (Isocrates IV 118; VII 80; XII 59), while Chelidonian islands are referred to in this connection after Demosthenes (XIX 273). This paper examines why we have two different traditions and, particularly, why Plutarch favours the latter.

Finally, **Israel Muñoz Gallarte** inquires into what Plutarch thought about the Jews and what picture of them he conveys to us. There are 25 matches of Ἰουδαῖοι in *TLG*, most of them appearing in the *Quaestiones Convivales*, *Life of Pompey*, and *Life of Antony*. The interest varies from case to case, but most occurrences concern religious concepts that seem strange to those imbued with Greek *paideia*.

Les digressions scientifiques dans les *Vies* de Plutarque

Jacques Boulogne

Comme l'a bien rappelé D' Ippolito¹, l'homme Plutarque reste foncièrement un, en dépit de la pluralité de ses activités, politiques, religieuses et philosophiques, et tout autant l'ensemble de son œuvre demeure indivisible, bien que celle-ci s'inscrive dans une multitude de genres différents: lettres, apophtegmes, dialogues, traités, commentaires, problèmes, biographies, doxographie, etc. La dichotomie traditionnelle qui répartit ses écrits en deux groupes, d'un côté les *Vies Parallèles* et de l'autre les *Moralia*, produit un effet trompeur en créant l'impression que nous avons affaire à deux écrivains distincts, que ces deux catégories d'ouvrages n'ont rien à voir l'une avec l'autre et qu'on peut les étudier séparément, comme si elles n'entretenaient entre elles aucun rapport. Or les destinataires sont parfois les mêmes. Par exemple, les *Vies Parallèles*, les *Propos de Table* et l'opuscule *Les progrès de la vertu* sont dédiés à Sossius Sénécion. Par ailleurs, il arrive que les dossiers soient communs. Entre autres, pensons au *Démon de Socrate* et à la *Vie d'Épaminondas*, malheureusement perdue², mais dont il nous reste un fragment (voir *Ages*. 28.6). En outre, dans certains cas, Plutarque renvoie lui-même son lecteur à d'autres de ses écrits, qu'il présente comme complémentaires. Ainsi, à propos de la date de la bataille de l'Alia, ouvre-t-il dans la *Vie de Camille* une parenthèse sur les jours néfastes en signalant qu'il en a discuté dans son traité – également perdu³ – *Les Jours*,⁴ et qu'il explique plus à fond dans ses *Étiologies romaines* (*probl.* 25, 269E sq) pourquoi la superstition s'est étendue du jour de l'Alia au lendemain des calendes, des nones et des ides. De même dans la *Vie de Romulus*, il informe que, pour en savoir plus sur l'usage romain de tracer une raie dans la chevelure de la mariée au moyen d'une pointe de javeline (15.7), il convient de se reporter à ses *Étiologies*.⁵ Dans la *Vie de Brutus*, où la fatigue conjugue au froid déclenche chez ce Romain une crise de boulimie (25.4–6), il nous apprend qu'il s'est plus longuement intéressé à l'origine de ce mal ailleurs (*Quaest. conv.* 693E–694C), sans préciser le titre de l'ouvrage, comme si le dédicataire,

1 1991; cf. 1996.

2 *Catalogue de Lamprias*, n°7.

3 *Catalogue de Lamprias*, n°150 et 200.

4 *Plut.*, *Cam.* 19.3 et 19.6 (= Fr. 142 Sandbach).

5 Problème 87, 285 BC. Sur cette question voir Boulogne 1998.

et peut-être aussi les autres lecteurs éventuels, étaient censés connaître toute sa production. Quoi qu'il en soit, cette dernière référence montre encore mieux que les précédentes que Plutarque conçoit ses livres comme un ensemble constituant un « macrotexte », pour reprendre l'expression de D' Ippolito, et dont la cohésion est assurée par le jeu d'une intertextualité interne délibérée.

Donc, tout polygraphe qu'il apparaît, notre auteur n'en laisse pas moins derrière lui une multitude de textes caractérisés tous par une même unité d'écriture du point de vue du contenu : les matériaux thématiques utilisés, quel que soit le sujet, demeurent les mêmes, historiques, philosophiques, poétiques. Seul varie le dosage en fonction du domaine traité et de l'objectif visé. Le mélange se révèle être par conséquent le procédé de cette *hénographie* et, lorsque la proportion de l'un de ses ingrédients devient très faible au point de se réduire à une occurrence unique, elle peut donner naissance à une digression. Ajoutons que pour Plutarque l'unité du savoir oblige à regarder ces parenthèses, non comme des insertions parasites, mais plutôt comme des éléments constitutifs d'un même tout, certes composite, mais néanmoins homogène, et dont le discours doit refléter le caractère mixte.⁶

C'est le mécanisme de la digression, en tant que technique de rédaction unifiante pour l'ensemble de la production écrite de Plutarque, que nous nous proposons d'étudier au sein des *Vies*. Afin de ne pas déborder du cadre étroit d'une simple communication, nous nous en tiendrons aux seules digressions scientifiques. Les digressions en effet ne manquent pas dans les biographies de Plutarque, religieuses, morales, métaphysiques, institutionnelles, politiques, esthétiques, littéraires ... Il serait trop long de les analyser toutes systématiquement.

Qu'entendons-nous par digression scientifique ? Deux définitions préalables s'imposent, si nous voulons bien circonscrire notre champ opératoire. Nous prenons l'adjectif « scientifique » dans le sens plutôt large de : en rapport avec la science de l'époque, c'est-à-dire avec les théories qui expliquent les phénomènes naturels⁷. Du coup, la notion de rapport étant assez lâche, surgit la difficulté du critère de la digression. Naturellement la question ne se pose pas lorsque Plutarque lui-même souligne qu'il sort du sujet proprement dit. Mais il ne le fait pas toujours, notamment quand la digression se confond avec l'un des deux éléments d'un système comparatif ; et, dans ce cas, elle se caractérise par une extrême brièveté. Donc, ni la rupture nette du fil du discours, comme pour la parenthèse, ni la longueur de considérations adventices ne suffisent à

6 Sur le paradigme de la crase, voir Boulogne 2000.

7 À cet égard, nous nous distinguons de Desideri, qui s'intéresse surtout aux fondements métaphysiques de l'histoire chez Plutarque ainsi qu'à la relation chez ce dernier entre science, religion et superstition, afin de dégager la différence que l'auteur établit entre historiographie et biographie.

isoler toutes les digressions. Pour être en droit de parler de digression, il faut, à notre avis, que se manifeste une dérive vers un autre sujet, qui se trouve alors, fût-ce sur le mode de l'esquisse, abordé pour lui-même. C'est pourquoi, par exemple, la référence à l'*Éthique* de Théophraste dans la *Vie de Périclès* ne nous paraît pas constituer une digression : Plutarque relate une anecdote sur la mort de Périclès rapportée par Théophraste et il précise sa référence en nous disant qu'elle se situe dans la partie de l'*Éthique* où le disciple d'Aristote « se demande si les caractères changent suivant les coups de la fortune et si, altérés par les souffrances du corps, ils perdent de leur vertu »⁸ : il s'agit bien d'un passage scientifique, mais, comme il n'est pas l'objet d'une attention spécifique, on ne saurait le ranger dans la série des digressions. Pour le même motif, nous écartons des digressions la mention, dans la *Vie de Pélopidas* (31.3–4), d'une éclipse de soleil qui plongea la ville de Thèbes dans l'obscurité lorsque Pélopidas s'appêtait à partir en campagne contre Alexandre, le tyran de Phères : le phénomène en tant que tel ne fait l'objet d'aucune remarque particulière.

Bref, de digressions scientifiques en tant qu'écart thématique donnant lieu à l'expression d'une position ou d'un intérêt personnels sur des problèmes relatifs à la nature soit du monde soit de l'homme, nous en dénombrons dans les *Vies* au moins une quarantaine⁹. C'est ce corpus, dont nous ne prétendons pas qu'il soit exhaustif, que nous allons prendre en considération pour voir comment Plutarque intègre dans ses récits ou descriptions des propos qui pourraient *a priori* sembler déplacés dans des biographies de personnages politiques. À cette fin, nous commencerons par une typologie, dont nous tirerons ensuite un bilan, qui comprendra, en guise de conclusion, un examen de la fonction scripturaire de ces digressions et dégagera, pour terminer, les informations qu'elles véhiculent sur la personnalité de l'auteur lui-même.

Les digressions qui nous intéressent concernent huit domaines de la pensée scientifique : la physique, l'astronomie, la géographie, la géométrie, la zoologie, la médecine, la psychologie et la musique. Il est certain qu'à part la géométrie et la musique, qui relèvent des mathématiques, la physique pour

8 38.2: 'Ο γοῦν Θεόφραστος ἐν τοῖς Ἠθικοῖς διαπορήσας εἰ πρὸς τὰς τύχη τρέπεται τὰ ἤθη καὶ κινούμενα τοῖς τῶν σωμάτων πάθεισιν ἐξίσταται τῆς ἀρετῆς, ἰστορήκεν ὅτι ... Nous reprenons, pour cette partie de la phrase, la traduction de Flacelière (1969), que nous préférons, ici, à celle d'Ozanam.

9 *Thes.* 1.1–5; *Rom.* 9.6–7; 12.3–6; *Num.* 9.13–14; *Cam.* 6.3–6; 20.4–5; *Per.* 6.1–5; *Alc.* 6.5; *Cor.* 32.4–8; 38.2–7; *Aem.* 14.3–11; 15.9–11; 17.7–10; *Marc.* 14.7–14; 17.5–12; *Arist.* 19.8–9; *Flam.* 10.8–10; *Mar.* 11.9–12; 21.8; 42.7–9; *Lys.* 12.2–9; 25.5; *Sull.* 5.11; 36.3–6; *Cim.* 3.2; *Nic.* 23.3–9; *Ages.* 5.5–7; *Pomp.* 25.12–13; 33.1; 34.3–4; *Alex.* 4.3–7; 35.2–16; 36.3; 57.7–9; *Phoc.* 2.3; 2.6–7; 2.8–9; *Demetr.* 3.5; *Brut.* 25.4–6; *Arat.* 10.4–5.

les Anciens, en tant qu'explication rationnelle de ce qui existe dans la nature sensible, englobe toutes les autres disciplines. D'ailleurs Plutarque lui-même souligne que c'est grâce à Platon que les astronomes ont pu, après Anaxagore, rendre compte scientifiquement des éclipses parce qu'il a subordonné la physique à la théologie¹⁰ : en d'autres termes, il range l'astronomie dans la physique¹¹. Mais, pour notre part, nous emploierons par commodité le mot dans son acception moderne d'étude des propriétés de la matière inanimée, et c'est par cette science que nous démarrerons, moins parce qu'elle est sans doute la plus sollicitée de toutes que parce qu'elle touche aux questions les plus importantes aux yeux de Plutarque. Les références à la physique s'inscrivent en effet à leur tour dans quatre champs d'investigation différents : la causalité, les éléments de la matière, la météorologie au sens antique du terme, et l'art des mélanges.

Plutarque ouvre deux digressions sur la causalité, l'une dans la *Vie de Périclès*, l'autre dans la *Vie d'Agésilas*. La première a souvent été relevée par les commentateurs, notamment par Desideri (pp. 80–81). Elle s'articule tout entière autour de l'anecdote de l'interprétation de l'infirmité présentée par un bélier unicolore apporté un jour à Périclès, une anomalie qui peut s'analyser sur le plan des causes matérielles comme sur celui des signes symboliques. Après avoir rappelé qu'il faut distinguer l'origine (ἀρχή) de la finalité (τέλος), Plutarque interrompt son développement en prenant conscience qu'il serait plus à sa place dans un traité¹². Mais auparavant il a affirmé que la meilleure façon de lutter contre la superstition, en particulier contre l'effroi suscité par les phénomènes célestes (πρὸς τὰ μετέωρα), reste de combattre l'ignorance de leurs causes grâce à la physique (*Per.* 6.1: ὁ φυσικὸς λόγος).

La seconde de ces deux digressions rapporte l'opinion des physiciens pour qui l'harmonie absolue est incompatible avec les mouvements du ciel, dont la génération repose sur le jeu de forces antagonistes. Malgré l'appui apporté par certains exégètes d'Homère, qui aurait regardé les discordes d'une manière positive en y voyant une source possible de progrès pour la communauté, Plutarque émet un avis réservé sur cette position, car, d'après lui, s'il est possible de déceler dans les conflits une cause de mouvement et de génération, ils deviennent vite dangereux pour la survie d'un État dès qu'ils prennent des proportions extrêmes¹³.

10 *Nic.* 23.5: ... ταῖς θεαῖσις καὶ κυριωτέραις ἀρχαῖσις ὑπέταξε τὰς φυσικὰς ἀνάγκας ...

11 De même il appelle « physiciens » (φυσικοί, *i-e* « spécialistes de la nature ») les experts en cosmologie, qui réfléchissent sur l'harmonie des corps célestes (*Ages.* 5.5).

12 *Per.* 6.5: Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἴσως ἑτέρας ἐστὶ πραγματείας.

13 *Ages.* 5.7: Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἂν οὕτως τις ἀπλῶς συγχωρήσειεν· αἱ γὰρ ὑπερβολαὶ τῶν φιλονικίων χαλεπαὶ ταῖς πόλεσι καὶ μεγάλοις κινδύνοις ἔχουσιν.

De même que le feu s'oppose au froid comme la vie à la mort, de même l'opposition se retrouve dans leur effet respectif sur le fer, amollissant par dilatation pour l'un, rétractant par contraction pour l'autre (*Alc.* 6.5).

Par ailleurs, c'est cette même chaleur qui cuit les liquides à la surface des corps et contribue à leur bonne odeur, comme dans le cas des aromates dans les pays chauds et secs, la cause de putréfaction qu'est l'humidité se trouvant retranchée par le soleil. Ici, toute la digression provient d'une réminiscence de Théophraste (*Alex.* 4.5).

Enfin, à propos de l'étonnement d'Alexandre et de son entourage devant l'inflammabilité du naphte¹⁴ et de deux anecdotes sur la vitesse et la violence de son embrasement, Plutarque signale que le feu envoie des flux de rayons qui projettent sur les corps de la lumière et de la chaleur, et que, lorsque ces corps sont d'une sécheresse volatile (πνευματικὴν) ou d'une humidité grasse et abondante, leur matière se métamorphose instantanément en flammes furieuses. S'interrogeant sur l'origine de cette substance paradoxale, liquide et ignée à la fois, il propose de chercher l'élucidation du mystère du côté de la nature de la terre babylonienne si torride que le lierre ne s'y acclimate pas, que l'été les indigènes dorment sur des outres remplies d'eau et que les grains d'orge au contact du sol brûlant sautent en l'air. Il utilise ainsi les pièces d'un dossier constitué autour de l'autorité de Théophraste et qu'il expose plus longuement dans les *Propos de Table*,¹⁵ où le nom du philosophe botaniste est cité, et il suggère d'induire que la Babylonie possède un sous-sol générateur de feu (πυριγόνον). Ces interrogations l'amènent à insérer dans la digression une parenthèse sur les prétendus artifices magiques qu'Euripide prête à l'héroïne de sa tragédie *Médée*. L'anecdote de l'esclave Stéphanos transformé en torche vivante une fois enduit de cette substance lui donne en effet l'idée que la princesse de Corinthe a dû revêtir une robe imbibée de ce produit et qu'elle s'est ensuite malencontreusement approchée d'une flamme; point n'était besoin d'un contact direct pour déclencher un brasier; il suffisait que le rayonnement à distance d'une source de chaleur rencontrât les effluves du naphte pour que tout s'enflammât instantanément. Du coup, commente Plutarque, le mythe rejoint la réalité (*Alex.* 35.10–12).

Quant à l'autre élément de la matière présent dans les digressions scientifiques, à savoir l'air, nous le rencontrons avec le problème du son, à propos soit d'oiseaux tués en plein vol par des clameurs, soit de statues douées en apparence de parole, soit des miroirs ardents. Pour le premier cas, Plutarque dresse l'état de la question dans la *Vie de Flaminius*. Racontant que la proclamation dans le stade, lors des Jeux Isthmiques, de l'exemption d'impôt et

14 *Alex.* 35. Voir l'analyse de Caballero Sánchez, 92–95.

15 Problème 2 du livre 3: « Le lierre a-t-il une nature froide ou chaude? ». Voir en particulier les pages 648 C–D et 649 D–E.

de garnison provoqua un tel vacarme de joie que des corbeaux qui volaient par hasard au-dessus de la foule tombèrent sur elle, il expose trois causes possibles, selon une démarche caractéristique des *Étiologies romaines* ou des *Étiologies grecques* : ou l'air déchiré par la force du cri n'offre plus de support aux oiseaux, qui alors tombent dans le vide; ou la violence du cri les transperce comme une flèche; ou la chute est causée par la formation dans l'air d'une sorte de tournoiement semblable aux tourbillons marins (10.9–10).

La biographie de Pompée donne à Plutarque l'occasion de mentionner un récit analogue, mais cette fois il tranche le débat scientifique, ce qui peut-être suggère une antériorité de la *Vie de Flaminius* : il conclut que le corbeau tombé dans le Forum au moment où le peuple rassemblé s'est mis à hurler n'a pas glissé dans un vide entraîné par un déchirement de l'air, mais qu'il a été frappé par le son comme par un coup, parce que, ajoute-t-il, des cris nombreux et puissants créent dans l'air une agitation tumultueuse :¹⁶ autrement dit, ce serait plutôt l'air déchaîné en tempête par le mouvement d'un son extraordinairement fort qui aurait assommé le volatile d'une de ses rafales¹⁷.

Le cas des statues qui parlent conduit Plutarque à reprendre plus ou moins implicitement sa distinction entre cause matérielle et cause finale. Après avoir dans la *Vie de Camille* rapporté qu'une statue de Junon, aux dires de certains historiens – mais non pas de Tite-Live – aurait donné en chuchotant son accord au dictateur pour être transportée à Rome, et après avoir précisé que ces mêmes historiens renvoient à d'autres prodiges du même genre, telles des statues inondées de sueur, faisant entendre des gémissements, détournant la tête ou clignant des yeux, tous prodiges consignés par leurs prédécesseurs, il invite à une prudence qui évite deux excès également dangereux, la crédulité sans borne qui débouche sur la superstition et la défiance outrancière dont résulte l'aveuglement de l'orgueil (6.5–6).

La *Vie de Coriolan* explicite l'attitude recommandée. Il s'agit à présent d'une représentation de *Tukhé des Femmes* consacrée par les Romains à leurs frais¹⁸ et qui, selon la tradition romaine, se serait à deux reprises adressée à ses adoratrices pour approuver leur acte. Or, tout en reconnaissant que la puissance divine dépasse notre entendement et peut réaliser ce qui reste impossible à l'homme, il affirme totalement impensable qu'un corps inanimé et dépourvu des organes de la phonation prononce des paroles articulées (38.3). Le croire ne peut être, chez les témoins du phénomène, qu'une illusion des sens produite par l'interprétation de leur imagination, qui a dénaturé leur

16 *Flam.* 25.13:… ἀλλὰ τυπτόμενα τῇ πληγῇ τῆς φωῆς, ὅταν ἐν τῷ ἀέρι σάλον καὶ κῆμα ποιήσῃ πολλή καὶ ἰσχυρὰ φερομένη.

17 Voir *Quaest. Conv.* 721 EF, où le son est conçu comme une percussion, et l'air comme l'instrument de sa propagation.

18 Pour cet épisode, voir aussi Desideri, 78–79.

sensation¹⁹. En revanche, les matériaux dont sont faites les statues réagissent mécaniquement à l'air ambiant et il leur arrive ainsi de se couvrir d'humidité par condensation, de changer de couleur ou d'émettre des bruits. Ce ne sont là que des phénomènes naturels. Mais il ne faudrait pas oublier que la divinité possède le pouvoir de les utiliser pour envoyer des signes²⁰.

Sur les miroirs ardents, la digression est induite par le rite des Vestales, qui ont l'obligation, si le feu sacré qu'elles gardent, vient à s'éteindre accidentellement, de le rallumer au moyen du soleil lui-même, de manière à obtenir une flamme absolument pure et totalement nouvelle: la meilleure façon d'y arriver consiste à concentrer en un même foyer les rayons solaires réfléchis par trois miroirs concaves creusés en forme de triangles isocèles (*Nu.* 9.13–14), parce qu'une telle concentration rend l'air plus subtil et le disperse au point d'enflammer les matières sèches ainsi privées de leur protection et que la réflexion donne aux rayons une nature ignée. Ce phénomène nous touche aussi à la catoptrique, à laquelle est consacré tout le chapitre 23 du traité *Le visage qu'on voit apparaître dans l'orbe de la lune*, où il est précisément affirmé que les miroirs concaves intensifient les rayons lumineux (937 A–B).

Avec la météorologie, c'est-à-dire la science des phénomènes dont l'atmosphère est le théâtre, nous avons affaire aussi bien aux météores qu'à l'atmosphère elle-même. Mentionnant l'opinion de ceux qui voient dans l'aérolithe trouvé à Aegos Potamoï le signe que la victoire de Lysandre était l'œuvre de la volonté divine (*Lys.* 12.1–2), Plutarque se lance dans une étiologie des météorites, avant de faire remarquer qu'«il faudrait examiner à fond la question dans tous ses détails au moyen d'un autre genre d'écrit»²¹. Il y passe en revue sept explications. Il commence par celle d'Anaxagore: chute, qui se produit à la suite d'une secousse dans le tourbillon auquel elles doivent leur rotation, d'une des pierres que sont les astres et qui ne brillent que par la réflexion de l'éther (19.3–4). À cette théorie il préfère une position qui lui paraît plus plausible et affirme que les étoiles filantes naissent de l'arrachement de corps célestes à leur orbite en raison d'une baisse de tension dans leur mouvement circulaire (12.5). Au passage, il signale sans y attacher d'importance deux autres avis, auxquels les tenants de cette position s'opposent, celui qui parle de parcelles du feu de l'éther qui s'éteignent dans l'air, et celui qui évoque un embrasement de l'air dissous dans les régions supérieures. Puis il mentionne le témoignage de Daïmakhos de Platées, qui dans son traité *La piété* fait état de l'apparition, avant la chute du bolide d'Aegos Potamoï, d'une comète pendant soixante-quinze jours de suite et soutient – un peu trop

19 38.4: ... ἀνόμοιον αἰσθήσει πάθος ἐγγινόμενον τῷ φανταστικῷ τῆς ψυχῆς συναναπίθει τὸ δόξαν, ὥσπερ ἐν ὕπνοις ἀκούειν οὐκ ἀκούοντες καὶ βλέπειν οὐ βλέποντες δοκοῦμεν.

20 38.2: ... οἷς ἔνεκα σημαίνειν τὸ δαιμόνιον οὐδὲν ἂν δόξειε κωλύειν.

21 *Lys.* 12.9: Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἑτέρω γένοι γραφῆς διακριβωτέον.

rapidement au gré de Plutarque²² – que c’est elle qui est tombée sous l’effet de son poids, alors que la pierre montrée par les habitants de la Chersonèse ne porte aucune trace de feu. Quoi qu’il en soit de l’assimilation opérée par Daïmakhos, son témoignage, s’il est fiable, relève de l’expérience et celle-ci plaide, aux yeux de Plutarque, en faveur de la thèse d’Anaxagore, tout en réfutant une explication avancée par ceux qui déclarent que des tornades d’une violence inouïe sont capables d’arracher des rochers du sommet des montagnes. Cette sixième explication fournie en manière de commentaire du témoignage de Daïmakhos en engendre une ultime, qui combine les deux dernières: la comète était réellement du feu; une explosion l’a éteinte et détruite en dégageant un souffle si puissant qu’il a retourné l’air en tous sens et arraché la pierre assez violemment pour la projeter là où elle gît (12.9).

L’autre digression météorologique concerne les précipitations atmosphériques. Après la victoire de Marius sur les Cimbres, on raconte, écrit Plutarque, que les cadavres ont tellement engraisé la terre que celle-ci, les pluies d’hiver finies, a produit des récoltes exceptionnelles, et il ajoute qu’on est fondé à dire que des pluies extraordinaires suivent les grandes batailles pour deux raisons: l’une est religieuse et voit dans le phénomène la volonté divine de purifier la terre en la lavant à grande eau; l’autre explique que la putréfaction des morts dégage des exhalaisons humides et lourdes, qu condensent l’air, un élément instable qu’un rien suffit à modifier au plus haut point (*Mar.* 21.8). Nous retrouvons implicitement encore les deux niveaux de la causalité, téléologique et «archéologique»²³.

Nous sommes toujours dans la sphère de la physique, mais aux limites de la chimie ou de l’alchimie²⁴, comme science de la matière et de ses transformations par les mélanges, quand Plutarque rapporte pourquoi la pourpre d’Hermioné, découverte par Alexandre dans les palais royaux de Suse, avait gardé toute sa fraîcheur, malgré ses cent quatre-vingt-dix ans d’âge, en nous apprenant qu’on y avait mêlé du miel comme fixateur, de même que l’addition d’huile blanche conserve aux étoffes teintes en blanc tout l’éclat d’une couleur qui ne s’altère pas au fil du temps (*Alex.* 36.2–3).

L’astronomie donne lieu à six digressions, si du moins l’on intègre l’astrologie, comme il se doit pour les Anciens, qui n’effectuent pas notre distinction. Pour l’astronomie proprement dite, deux d’entre elles portent sur des éclipses de lune relatées, l’une, dans la *Vie de Paul-Émile*, l’autre, dans la *Vie de Nicias*. Dans la seconde²⁵, il souligne que l’occultation de la lune était plus

22 Il n’a pas vu lui-même tomber la comète, ni non plus l’astéroïde. C’est pourquoi Plutarque souligne que le compte rendu de Daïmakhos a besoin d’indulgence (12.8).

23 Plutarque parle de la décomposition des cadavres en termes de cause initiale (ἀρχῆς).

24 Pour une approche métaphysique de l’alchimie chez Plutarque, voir Adorno.

25 Pour cette digression, voir aussi Desideri, 83–84.

difficile à comprendre pour les gens de l'époque que celle du soleil; il nous apprend aussi que les études d'Anaxagore sur les phases de la lune ont mis beaucoup de temps à se diffuser, parce qu'on supportait mal que le divin fût soumis à des causes mécaniques et dépourvues de raison, et qu'il fallut attendre un siècle et l'influence de Platon avant de voir la situation évoluer vers moins d'obscurantisme (23.2–6). Nous avons donc, ici, affaire à une espèce de micro-développement sur l'histoire des sciences plus que sur le phénomène lui-même. Son explication est livrée très elliptiquement dans la *Vie de Paul-Émile*: le général romain y est présenté comme un homme au courant des théories scientifiques qui calculent les périodes où la lune entre dans l'ombre de la terre, qu'il lui faut traverser avant de réapparaître (17.9).

À part les éclipses,²⁶ il est encore question d'astronomie avec la course du soleil, dont les mathématiciens enseignent qu'il décrit dans le ciel une trajectoire inclinée (*Phoc.* 2.6), et avec le problème du comput, qui, en dépit des progrès de l'astronomie (ἐν ἀστρολογίᾳ), ne permet pas d'établir une datation universelle, parce que le début et la fin des mois diffèrent d'une cité à l'autre, si bien qu'un même événement, telle la bataille de Platées, relève de dates multiples, aussi nombreuses qu'il existe de calendriers (*Arist.* 19.8–9).

La contiguïté très poreuse entre astronomie et astrologie apparaît nettement à propos du jour anniversaire de la fondation de Rome, le 21 avril, date où l'on célèbre la fête des *Parilia*. Plutarque nous dit que Varron a demandé à son ami Tarrutius, un mathématicien versé dans les spéculations astrologiques, de déterminer le jour et l'heure de la naissance de Romulus, mais également de la fondation de Rome, «à partir de ce qu'on appelle l'influence des astres» (ἐκ τῶν λεγομένων ἀποτελεσμάτων), car, si l'horoscope permet de prédire la vie d'un homme, inversement la connaissance de son existence offre la possibilité d'induire géométriquement le moment où il est né, grâce à l'observation des configurations sidérales. Il nous donne le résultat du calcul de Tarrutius: Romulus aurait fondé sa ville le neuf du mois égyptien *Pharmouthi*, c'est-à-dire le sept octobre, entre la deuxième et la troisième heure. Mais, bien que la méthode soit rigoureuse, il signale qu'elle repose sur une croyance étrange, voire fantaisiste (μυθῶδες), d'après laquelle le sort d'une cité ou d'un individu est régi par la temporalité où le fait entrer sa venue au monde, une temporalité elle-même fixée par la position des étoiles (*Rom.* 12.3–6).

Dans la *Vie de Marius*, cette technique d'analyse des destins est attribuée aux Chaldéens, dont s'est entiché Octavius, lequel meurt assassiné, un horoscope caché dans les plis de son vêtement. Ce détail lui apporte l'occasion d'une remarque qui fait parenthèse sur l'imposture que constitue la mantique astrologique, puisqu'elle n'a pas réussi à protéger son adepte (42.9).

26 Pour les connaissances de Plutarque sur le sujet, voir Flacelière 1951.

On trouve dans la *Vie de Sylla* une autre digression minuscule sur l'art des astrologues. Cette fois, Plutarque ne parle pas de charlatanerie; il se contente de relater qu'un Chaldéen rencontré sur les bords de l'Euphrate prédit au rival de Marius un grand avenir, en procédant sur la base de ses postulats à un examen approfondi du visage du Romain et des mouvements aussi bien de son corps que de sa pensée (5.11). À présent, c'est en fournissant des informations sur les procédés de l'astrologue que le récit tend à se transformer en digression.

Les digressions géographiques ne manquent pas de variété. Trois concernent la distinction entre les parties connues de la terre et les parties inconnues. La première, très rapide, consiste à rappeler, comme une réserve non pertinente, les expéditions d'Héraclès, de Dionysos, de Persée et de Jason aux limites du monde habité, pour justifier le superlatif absolu appliqué à Cimon et à Lucullus, avant lesquels aucun Grec ni aucun Romain n'avait porté la guerre aussi loin qu'eux. Cette exception mythologique sur une géographie et des exploits également mythiques débouche sur un jugement sceptique, qui invite à ne pas en tenir compte²⁷.

L'opposition entre la géographie réelle et la géographie mythique réapparaît au tout début de la *Vie de Thésée*, où Plutarque nous écrit que les géographes, sur leurs cartes, relèguent les régions inexplorées aux extrémités avec des légendes du genre «au-delà, sables arides et infestés de bêtes féroces», ou «sombres marécages», ou «glaces scythes», ou encore «mer gelée», pour dire que l'éloignement extrême aussi bien dans le temps que dans l'espace fait disparaître toutes les certitudes et basculer, en l'absence de preuves, dans l'imaginaire des mythes (1.1–3).

La digression est un peu plus développée dans la *Vie de Marius*, où la question de l'origine des Cimbres conduit précisément aux extrémités de la terre, sur les bords de la Mer Extérieure, en des contrées où, pour des raisons d'ordre astronomique, l'année se divise en un seul jour et une seule nuit d'égale durée, une particularité géographique qui serait à l'origine de l'épisode mythique de la *Nékuia* homérique et qui suggérerait que cette population barbare aurait antérieurement porté le nom de Cimmériens. Mais Plutarque commente ce rapprochement en précisant qu'il s'agit de conjectures vraisemblables, et non pas de faits solidement établis par une enquête fiable²⁸.

Le récit de la campagne de Paul-Émile en Grèce nous vaut un passage sur la hauteur du Mont Olympe. Il nous informe qu'un certain Xénagoras a méthodiquement mesuré l'altitude de cette montagne et qu'il est parvenu à une élévation de dix stades plus un plèthre moins quatre pieds, un résultat qui le met en contradiction avec les géomètres, d'après qui aucune montagne ni

27 *Cim.* 3.2: ... εἴ τέ τι (...) ἔργον ἀξιόπιστον ἐκ τῶν τότε χρόνων μνήμη φερόμενον ...

28 11.9–12: ... οὐκ ἀπὸ τρόπου (...) ταῦτα μὲν εἰκασμῶ μᾶλλον ἢ κατὰ βέβαιον ἱστορίαν λέγεται.

aucune mer ne peut dépasser respectivement en hauteur ou en profondeur dix stades. Devant cette divergence, Plutarque tend à privilégier la mesure de Xénagoras, car elle a été effectuée très sérieusement²⁹, et en cela il juge en homme qui se fie plus à l'observation rigoureuse qu'à la spéculation purement théorique.

Deux autres digressions parlent de sources. Dans l'une nous retrouvons l'Olympe, avec les trous qu'y fit creuser Paul-Émile pour en faire jaillir l'eau dont avait besoin son armée assoiffée³⁰. La description du phénomène amène la réfutation d'une théorie, assez longuement exposée, de la formation de l'eau par condensation, lorsque les vapeurs libérées par l'ouverture du sol entrent en contact avec l'air. À ces négateurs de la présence dans le sous-sol d'une eau cachée, il oppose l'objection des sceptiques selon qui la cohérence voudrait qu'on étendît le raisonnement au sang ou au lait maternel et soutînt qu'ils ne se forment qu'à l'occasion des blessures ou de la tétée. Il y oppose aussi l'expérience des rivières souterraines, tout comme celle du tarissement subit de torrents nés de la fracture de rochers (14.3–11).

La seconde de ces digressions, elle plutôt embryonnaire, nous place en face d'une source de pétrole dont un serviteur d'Alexandre provoque le jaillissement en creusant le sol pour planter la tente royale. Il s'agit d'un fait étonnant, malgré la proximité du fleuve Oxos qui passe pour avoir des eaux onctueuses et graissant la peau; le liquide en est en effet gras et luisant et il dégage une odeur d'huile d'olive, alors que le pays ne produit pas un seul olivier³¹. Ici, c'est l'allusion à l'Oxos qui amorce un développement potentiel à part; elle esquisse en effet un raisonnement suggérant un lien possible entre les deux phénomènes.

Les deux dernières digressions géographiques se lisent dans la *Vie de Pompée*. Elles ont trait l'une et l'autre à l'hydrographie. La première concerne l'Araxe, sur les rives duquel Tigrane rencontre Pompée. Plutarque informe le lecteur que ce fleuve prend naissance dans les mêmes lieux que l'Euphrate, mais qu'il se détourne vers l'Est pour se jeter dans la mer Caspienne (33.1).

La seconde, également très brève, concerne le Kurnos, sur le cours duquel nous apprenons l'existence d'un débat chez les spécialistes: certains affirment qu'il descend du Caucase et se jette dans la Caspienne par douze embouchures, après s'être grossi de l'Araxe; d'autres prétendent qu'il s'agit de deux fleuves séparés, qui coulent parallèlement, très proches l'un de l'autre, mais sans jamais se mélanger (34.3–4). Plutarque se contente de poser le problème; il ne le traite pas.

29 *Aem.* 15.9–11: ... οὐ παρέργως, ἀλλὰ μεθόδω καὶ δι' ὀργάνων ...

30 Voir aussi Desideri, 82–83.

31 *Alex.* 57.5–9. Voir également Caballero Sánchez, 94–95.

La géométrie est elle aussi l'objet de quelques digressions. Trois regardent le mode de fonctionnement du raisonnement des géomètres, qui demandent toujours qu'on leur accorde au départ l'affirmation, sans démonstration, de principes qu'ils utilisent ensuite dans leur système déductif avec la plus grande des rigueurs. Dans la *Vie de Démétrios* (3.5), cette sorte d'incidence demeure embryonnaire.

La *Vie de Lysandre* (25.5) développe un peu l'idée de cette combinaison de postulats et de nécessité logique, à propos de la machination montée par Lysandre pour essayer de se faire élire roi: il compare celle-ci à la construction minutieuse d'une figure de géométrie qui progresse vers sa conclusion à travers des prémisses ardues.

Mais c'est le portrait du génie scientifique d'Archimède, dans la *Vie de Marcellus* qui s'y attarde le plus (17.5–12). Il y est dit notamment qu'il parvient à concilier les abstractions les plus difficiles et la simplicité la plus claire, au point que les solutions qu'il donne des problèmes les plus abstrus paraissent faciles, alors qu'on n'aurait jamais été capable d'en découvrir tout seul la démonstration. Apparaît, là, une autre caractéristique du raisonnement géométrique, sa beauté, lorsqu'il allie efficacité et vitesse, force contraignante et économie des moyens.

Avec la mécanique, qui n'est rien d'autre que de la géométrie appliquée, nous retrouvons Archimède, qui s'y adonne, comme à un jeu (*Marc.* 14.8) et construit malgré lui des machines prodigieuses (*Marc.* 14.8; 17.6), au grand regret de Plutarque qui, presque en historien des sciences, nous apprend que cette discipline, pourtant appréciée des populations, dut à Platon d'être méprisée des philosophes à cause de sa dimension manuelle, et de devenir un des arts militaires, alors qu'elle a connu un départ très prometteur grâce à Eudoxe de Cnide et à Archytas de Tarente (*Marc.* 14.9–11).

La zoologie donne lieu à deux digressions. Ce sont les vautours qui provoquent l'une, à propos des augures pris par Rémus et Romulus: Plutarque utilise la même fiche que pour le Problème 93 des *Étiologies romaines*, où le sujet « Pourquoi les Romains se servent-ils surtout du vautour pour prendre les auspices? » est à peine plus développé; outre l'épisode fondateur, deux explications sont retenues: le caractère non nuisible de cet oiseau et sa rareté (*Rom.* 9.5–7).

L'autre digression zoologique concerne les animaux qui voient clair dans l'obscurité et sont aveugles le jour: au cours d'un passage sur l'intelligence d'Aratos, Plutarque explique que cette anomalie est due à un excès de sécheresse dans les yeux qui, n'étant pas assez humides, ne supportent pas le contact de la lumière (*Arat.* 10.4).

Deux digressions encore, cette fois pour la médecine, et même trois si l'on compte comme une digression embryonnaire l'allusion à l'effet irritant du miel appliqué sur des blessures ou des ulcères, au fil d'un passage sur le caractère

mordant des propos véridiques tenus à des personnes prises en faute ou en proie au malheur (*Phoc.* 2.3).

La description de la mort de Sylla des suites d'un abcès au ventre qui dégénère en phthiriasse débouche sur l'énumération de plusieurs autres cas de victimes de cette maladie: Acaste le fils de Pélias, le poète Alcman, Phérécyde le théologien³², Callisthène d'Olynthe, le jurisconsulte Mucius et l'esclave Eunous qui suscita en Sicile un soulèvement d'esclaves (*Sul.*36.5–6).

Quant à la crise de boulimie déclenchée chez Brutus par le froid et l'excès de fatigue (*Brut.* 25.4–6), elle incite Plutarque à informer son lecteur sur les causes de cette affection provoquée par une disparition de la chaleur à la surface du corps, laquelle chaleur ou bien se retire tout entière en raison du refroidissement et consomme alors toute la nourriture, ou bien se disperse à l'extérieur sous la pression des exhalaisons froides et pénétrantes de la neige; et cette disparition de la chaleur entraîne des suées. Puis il s'arrête brutalement, en renvoyant son lecteur à un autre de ses ouvrages dont il n'indique pas le titre, comme nous l'avons dit dans l'introduction, et qui traite plus à fond de la question. Il s'agit du Problème 8 «Quelle est la cause de la boulimie?» du livre 6 des *Propos de Table*.

La psychologie, en tant qu'étude des mécanismes des facultés de l'âme, nous vaut une longue mise au point d'influence fortement stoïcienne³³ sur le fonctionnement de la volonté, à propos de la démarche exaltée de Valérie, la sœur de Publicola, auprès de Coriolan. Partant d'Homère, qu'il défend contre les détracteurs qui, faute de l'avoir compris, lui reprochent d'abolir le libre arbitre par l'intervention fréquente des dieux dans la vie intérieure de ses personnages, il précise que la capacité en chacun de se former des préférences (τὴν προαίρεσιν), une capacité inaliénable qui ne dépend que de nous (τῷ ἐφ' ἡμῖν) et dont procède la volonté (τῷ ἐκουσίῳ), a pour origine des impulsions (ὄρμῶς) dont a besoin l'action, mais que ces impulsions sont elles-mêmes produites par des représentations (φαντασίῳ), lesquelles peuvent être parfois inspirées par des dieux. Ces derniers, afin de nous aider à nous surpasser, agissent ainsi sur notre intellect par l'intermédiaire de notre imagination, et il nous appartient ensuite de faire des images suscitées ce que nous voulons. De plus, cette aide ne se manifeste que dans des situations extrêmes, qui réclament des exploits exceptionnels; le reste du temps, comme Homère précisément le suggère explicitement, les raisonnements habituels de notre for intérieur suffisent³⁴.

32 Alcman et Phérécyde sont également cités par Aristote comme exemples de pédiculose (*Hist. Anim.* 5, 31, 556 b 28–557 a 4).

33 Cf. par exemple Épictète, *Entretiens*, III, 2 ou III, 24.

34 *Cor.* 32.4–8. Sur ce passage, voir Babut, 314–316.

Reste enfin une digression assez embryonnaire sur la musique, une discipline qui relève à la fois de l'acoustique et des mathématiques. Définissant la conduite idéale en politique par l'alliance de la bonté et de la sévérité, Plutarque écrit qu'on réalise alors la fusion la plus juste et la plus musicale de tous les rythmes et de toutes les harmonies (*Phoc.* 2.9).

Après cet inventaire, dont nous répétons qu'il ne prétend pas à l'exhaustivité, venons-en au bilan. Plusieurs constatations s'imposent immédiatement.

Outre la multiplicité des centres d'intérêt de Plutarque et la variété de sa culture scientifique, notons, pour commencer, la diversité formelle des digressions, qui, tantôt longues, tantôt fugaces, voire à peine ébauchées, ou encore, dans quelques cas limites, en puissance, en particulier lorsqu'elles constituent l'élément comparant d'un système comparatif³⁵, ne s'accompagnent pas toujours d'une signalisation spécifique. Sur la quarantaine de digressions recensées, seules huit d'entre elles se terminent sur une formule de clôture³⁶. Si la brièveté n'incite pas à l'insertion de ce genre de signal, ce n'est pas non plus la longueur qui en détermine l'apparition: il arrive que des digressions relativement développées restent sans formule de clôture³⁷.

Ces formules nous amènent à une seconde série de remarques, cette fois sur la fonction de ces digressions. Nous en retiendrons principalement quatre motivations. L'une est clairement énoncée par Plutarque lui-même, qui, s'il est conscient du défaut que constitue la rupture de l'unité générique³⁸, se montre sensible au caractère attractif que revêtent parfois des considérations hétérotopiques³⁹. Toutefois, reconnaît-il également, pour rester séduisante, la digression doit garder la bonne mesure⁴⁰. À côté du désir de plaire au lecteur apparaît aussi le souci de l'instruire, comme le laisse entrevoir la fin du développement sur l'origine des météorites: «Assurément», y dit-il, «il faudrait préciser à fond ces questions au moyen d'un autre genre d'écrit»⁴¹. Afin de ne pas excéder la mesure, il arrête là ses explications, mais presque à regret, car il pense qu'il s'agit d'un sujet important, qui mérite un traitement complet. Instruire, d'autre part, ne signifie pas seulement expliquer un phénomène, un

35 *Alc.* 6.5; *Lys.* 25.5; *Ages.* 5.5–7; *Phoc.* 2.3; 2.6–7; 2.8–9; *Demetr.* 3.5; *Arat.* 10.4–5.

36 *Rom.* 12.6; *Nu.* 9.15; *Per.* 6.5; *Cor.* 39.1; *Aem.* 14.11; *Lys.* 12.9–13.1; *Alex.* 35.10; *Br.* 25.6.

37 *Rom.* 9.6–7; *Nic.* 23.2–9.

38 *Per.* 6.5: Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἴσως ἑτέρας ἐστὶ πραγματείας.

39 *Rom.* 12.6: Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ἴσως καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα τῷ ξένῳ καὶ περιττῷ προσάζεται μᾶλλον ἢ διὰ τὸ μυθῶδες ἐνοχλήσει τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας αὐτοῖς.

40 *Alex.* 35.16: Τῶν μὲν οὖν τοιοῦτων παρεκβάσεων, ἂν μέτρον ἔχωσιν, ἦττον ἴσως οἱ δύσκολοι κατηγορήσουσιν.

41 *Lys.* 12.9: Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἑτέρῳ γένοι γραφῆς διακριβωτέον.

fait, un comportement⁴², c'est également informer par des précisions⁴³. La troisième raison pour laquelle Plutarque procède à des digressions est qu'elles lui permettent de spécifier, voire de valoriser un caractère, une qualité, une activité ou une méthode⁴⁴. Enfin, dernière fonction, la digression ouvre dans le récit la porte à des commentaires où notre auteur affiche un jugement personnel⁴⁵. Parfois l'explication et le commentaire se combinent; c'est ce qui se produit notamment⁴⁶ dans la *Vie d'Agésilas*, où, après avoir rapporté qu'Agésilas fut condamné par les éphores à verser une amende parce qu'il aidait trop ses concitoyens dans le besoin, Plutarque nous apprend que cette disposition particulière de la législation spartiate qui autorise les éphores à s'en prendre au roi est légitimée par les théories physiques d'après lesquelles le conflit est nécessaire au mouvement de l'univers et selon lesquelles la complaisance systématique ne saurait se confondre avec la concorde et l'harmonie. Sur cette position, Plutarque émet, nous l'avons vu, un avis très réservé (5.7). Il arrive également que le commentaire se mêle à la caractérisation; ainsi l'anecdote du bélier unicolore met-elle en valeur l'intelligence de Périclès et permet-elle à Plutarque d'affirmer qu'il ne voit pas d'incompatibilité entre les causes matérielles et les causes finales et qu'un devin peut avoir raison, mais sur un autre plan, autant qu'un physicien (*Per.* 6.4–5).

Ces quatre fonctions de la digression scientifique dans les *Vies* font que ces écarts relatifs par rapport au sujet, loin de correspondre à un étalage d'érudition quelque peu exhibitionniste, s'intègrent de façon naturelle dans le texte, tout en dévoilant certains aspects importants de la pensée de Plutarque.

Nous constatons ainsi qu'il pose sur la science un regard d'historien, lorsqu'il nous fait part des progrès de l'astronomie (*Arist.* 19.9), ou qu'il souligne le rôle déterminant de Platon dans le développement de la recherche scientifique, soit qu'il l'ait débloquée comme justement pour l'astronomie (*Nic.* 23.5), soit au contraire qu'il l'ait bloquée comme pour les applications techniques de la géométrie (*Marc.* 14.11).

Nous constatons de la même façon que sa physique est empreinte d'un imaginaire mythique, quand il survalorise le feu élément de la matière en lui

42 *Rom.* 9.6–7; *Nu.* 9.13–14; *Cam.* 20.4–5; *Alc.* 4.3–7; *Cor.* 38.2)7; *Aem.* 14.3–11; *Arist.* 19.8–9; *Flam.* 10.8–10; *Mar.* 21.8; *Lys.* 12.2–9; *Ni.* 23.1–9; *Ages.* 5.5–7; *Alex.* 35.1–16; 36.3; 57.7–9; *Br.* 25.4–6.

43 *Rom.* 12.3–6; *Thes.* 1.1–5; *Sull.* 5.11; *Mar.* 11.9–12; *Cim.* 3.2; *Pomp.* 33.1; 34?3–4.

44 *Per.* 6.1–5; *Alc.* 6.5; *Aem.* 14.1–2; 17.7–10; *Marc.* 14.7–14; 17.5–12; *Lys.* 25.5; *Phoc.* 2.6–7; *Arat.* 10.4–5.

45 *Cam.* 6.6; *Cor.* 32.5–7; *Aem.* 15.9–11; *Mar.* 42.7–9; *Sull.* 36.3–6; *Pomp.* 25.13; *Demetr.* 3.5.

46 Autre exemple: l'exégèse du merveilleux homérique dans la *Vie de Coriolan* (32.4–7).

conférant le statut de principe du mouvement et de la vie⁴⁷, et d'une certaine manière aussi quand il attribue la bonne odeur dégagée par le corps d'Alexandre à une nature ignée (*Alex.* 4.5): si la causalité matérielle a pour effet de rationaliser cette particularité physique, les connotations symboliques du feu présentent une force mythifiante qui rapproche le héros macédonien des êtres divins.

Autre constat: le rationalisme de Plutarque demeure prudent, sans devenir pour autant hésitant. Les deux écueils à éviter restent bien la superstition et l'athéisme. Ni crédulité naïve, ni incrédulité négatrice devant certains prodiges ou mystères: l'une escamote la raison et mutile l'homme; l'autre manque de lucidité sur la faiblesse des capacités intellectuelles de l'espèce humaine (*Cam.* 6.6). Bien que la puissance des dieux se heurte elle aussi à des limites – par exemple, donner une voix articulée à de la matière inerte lui est rigoureusement impossible –, elle dépasse néanmoins tellement notre entendement que nous devons nous abstenir de lui prêter notre infirmité par l'adoption d'une attitude systématiquement défiante⁴⁸. Ce rationalisme pondéré d'un scepticisme de méthode dénote une méfiance indiscutable à l'égard de la raison et de ses spéculations théoriques, susceptibles à la fois d'errements et de progrès. C'est pourquoi Plutarque incline à accorder, de façon pragmatique, plus volontiers sa confiance à l'expérience qu'à la spéculation pure, ainsi qu'il le montre à propos de la mesure du Mont Olympe (*Aem.* 15.11).

Par ailleurs, nous remarquons que l'ordre du gouvernement divin qui, selon notre auteur, impose au monde une nécessité sans violence grâce à la raison et à la persuasion (*Phoc.* 2.9), n'exclut pas le libre arbitre: le déterminisme d'une «puissance éternelle qui règle l'ordonnance de l'univers»⁴⁹ n'interdit pas qu'il puisse exister dans l'action pour les mortels une liberté de choix (*Cor.* 32.8).

Nous finirons en ajoutant que ces digressions, outre ces informations qu'elles nous livrent sur la vision plutarquienne du monde et de l'homme dans le monde, invitent le lecteur à prendre les écrits de Plutarque comme un tout: les *Œuvres Morales* auxquelles elles renvoient (*Brut.* 25.6), indépendamment de l'intérêt apporté pour la datation relative des ouvrages, sont ainsi présentées indirectement comme un complément éclairant des *Vies* quasi indispensable.

47 *Cam.* 20.4. Cf. *Mar.* 11.13, où l'ardeur au combat des Cimbres est comparée à l'impétuosité du feu.

48 *Cor.* 38.5–7. Le comportement de Paul-Émile lui paraît à ce titre exemplaire (*Aem.* 17.10).

49 *Cor.* 20.5: ... τῆς τὰ πάντα κοσμοῦσης αἰδίου δυνάμεως.

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Pharmakon en Plutarco

Rosa M^a Aguilar

El Diccionario griego de Liddel-Scott-Jones traduce φάρμακον por <drug> añadiendo seguidamente «whether healing or noxious». De modo semejante se pronuncia el Diccionario de Bailly al traducirlo como «.....toute drogue salubre ou malfaisante». En cambio el Diccionario Etimológico de Chantaine señala que desde Homero φάρμακον designa una planta de uso medicinal y mágico¹, en tanto que el Etymologisches Wörterbuch de Frisk lo explica como un medio curador o perjudicial² desarrollando luego la variedad de sus usos y aplicaciones. Pues bien, en los textos de Plutarco que analizamos ahora son estos dos significados fundamentales los que encontraremos sobre todo, si bien debemos precisar que cuando el término φάρμακον muestra su sentido positivo es entonces el de <medicina>, como ya aparece testimoniado desde la lengua homérica, y que en su forma negativa designa el <veneno>, aunque podremos encontrar en gradación otras matizaciones diversas.

Se podría decir anticipadamente y a la vista de los datos obtenidos que en las *Vitae*, y coherentemente con su tipo de contenido, parece ser donde más veces φάρμακον significa droga nociva y por tanto <veneno>. En cambio en los *Moralia*, donde la presencia del término viene a ser aproximadamente semejante en número, los significados se despliegan con mayor variedad. Nuestro propósito es revisar los pasajes en ambas partes de la obra plutarquea para ver después las coincidencias, diferencias y semejanzas de sus usos. Sin embargo, la numerosa casuística aconseja hacer una selección de los ejemplos que la tipifican. Nuestro procedimiento de trabajo va a seguir este orden: comenzaremos por los casos de singular de φάρμακον, a continuación analizaremos los ejemplos del plural del mismo modo e intentaremos ver qué particularidades hay en el uso de unos y otros. Por último compararemos las semejanzas y diferencias entre el uso en singular y plural de ese término.

1 φάρμακον, ου: n. «simple», plante à usage médicinal et magique; ce sens est toujours possible chez Homère,... s.v.

2 n. <heilbringendes od. schädliches Mittel...> s.v.

1. φάρμακον en singular

1.1 *Vidas.*

1. 1 1 De los casos nominativo y acusativo del singular hemos contado dieciocho ejemplos. Salvo en dos de ellos que muestran cierta ambivalencia al no poder determinarse si se está hablando de veneno o medicamento, los demás se refieren a «veneno» de forma clara. Los venenos se presentan en general como un líquido, casi siempre una infusión de alguna planta que o se menciona expresamente o bien se deja sin especificar. La cicuta es el φάρμακον por excelencia, tanto que la sola mención sin más de este término puede entenderse como la infusión de esa planta, molida en una copa, y en especial en Atenas donde se usaba para la ejecución de la pena de muerte por parte del estado como sabemos en el caso de Sócrates³. Hemos encontrado también una mención del acónito y una, curiosa, que atribuiría efectos letales a la sangre de toro, si bien Plutarco cita el testimonio de Tito Livio quien afirmaba que a ésta se le había mezclado un veneno. En otros casos la toma del veneno es cosa obligada para las mujeres por sus maridos o parientes varones para que no caigan prisioneras, perdiendo así su condición de nobleza y viéndose en la esclavitud. El veneno está preparado también para los varones en el caso de derrota. Hay incluso en *Alex.*, 35, 10, 2 un intento de desmitificación del veneno que usó Medea para abrasar a la infortunada novia de Jasón, que no sería otra cosa que el petróleo que brotaba del suelo en Babilonia, en la región de los adiabenos.

Vemos a continuación una muestra de esta casuística.

La sangre de toro:

Flam. 20, 10, 1: ἔνιοι δὲ μιμησάμενον Θεμιστοκλέα καὶ Μίδαν αἷμα ταύρειον πιεῖν· Λίβιος δὲ φησι (39, 51, 8–11) φάρμακον ἔχοντα κεράσαι, καὶ τὴν κύλικα δεξάμενον εἰπεῖν· «ἀναπαύσωμεν ἤδη ποτὲ τὴν πολλὴν φροντίδα Ῥωμαίων, οἱ μακρὸν ἠγήσαντο καὶ βαρὺ μισουμένου γέροντος ἀναμεῖναι θάνατον».

Se trata de la muerte de Aníbal. Plutarco ha resumido este pasaje de Tito Livio donde se contrasta el declive moral de los romanos, desde Fabricio⁴, quien delató a Pirro las intenciones asesinas de su médico, hasta Flaminio que hostiga hasta el suicidio a Aníbal, refugiado en Bitinia en la corte de Prusias.

3 También es el caso de Terámenes y de Foción. Según Teofrasto, *H. plant.* IX 15, 8, 16, 8 la mejor se producía en Susa y en lugares fríos, pero también crecía en la isla de Ceos (IX 16, 9).

4 Véase para la anécdota *Pyrrhos*, 21, 1–5 y también *Reg. et imper. apoth.*, 195B.

La muerte obligada o ¿suicidio? de las mujeres de Mitrídates:

Luc. 18, 8,2: ἡ δὲ Βερενίκη κύλικα φαρμάκου λαβοῦσα, τῆς μητρὸς αὐτῆ παρούσης καὶ δεομένης, μετέδωκε, καὶ συνεξέπιον μὲν ἀμφοτέραι, ἤρκεσε δ' ἡ τοῦ φαρμάκου δύναμις εἰς τὸ ἀσθενέστερον σῶμα, τὴν δὲ Βερενίκη οὐχ ὅσον ἔδει πιοῦσαν οὐκ ἀπήλλαξεν, ἀλλὰ δυσθανατοῦσα τοῦ Βακχίδου σπεύδοντος ἀπεπνίγη. λέγεται δὲ καὶ τῶν ἀγάμων ἀδελφῶν ἐκείνων τὴν μὲν ἐπαρωμένην πολλὰ καὶ λοιδοροῦσαν ἐκπιεῖν τὸ φάρμακον, τὴν δὲ Στάτειραν οὔτε δύσφημόν τι φθρεγξαμένην οὔτ' ἀγενές, ἀλλ' ἐπαινοῦσαν τὸν ἀδελφόν, ὅτι περὶ τοῦ σώματος κινδυνεύων οὐκ ἠμέλησεν αὐτῶν, ...

Refiere Plutarco un episodio tristísimo en el que Mitrídates, tras su derrota ante Lúculo, decide terminar con la vida de las mujeres de su gineceo para que no caigan en manos de los romanos. En cambio, resalta luego la humanidad de Lúculo, entristecido por tanta barbarie.⁵

El uso del acónito:

Crass. 33, 9, 2: ...καὶ νοσήσαντι νόσον εἰς ὕδρον τραπίεσαν Φραάτης ὁ υἱὸς ἐπιβουλεύων ἀκόνιτον ἔδωκεν. ἀναδεξαμένης δὲ τῆς νόσου τὸ φάρμακον εἰς ἑαυτὴν ὥστε συνεκκριθῆναι, καὶ τοῦ σώματος κουφισθέντος, ἐπὶ τὴν ταχίστην τῶν ὁδῶν ἐλθῶν ὁ Φραάτης ἀπέπνιξε αὐτόν.

En este pasaje en una primera impresión podría pensarse que el acónito había sido administrado como remedio, pero su final nos saca del posible error. Este último capítulo de la biografía, que ha relatado primero las vejaciones realizadas en la cabeza del decapitado Craso tras la derrota de Carras, acaba con un episodio de una cierta justicia distributiva sobre Orodes a manos de este hijo, Fraates, envidioso de su hermano, incluso tras su muerte.

El veneno antes que ser prisionero:

Pomp. 32, 9, 4: Ἐξ οὗ λαβῶν ὁ Μιθριδάτης ἐσθῆτας πολυτελεῖς διένειμε τοῖς συνδεδραμηκόσι πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐκ τῆς φυγῆς. ἔδωκε δὲ καὶ τῶν φίλων ἐκάστῳ φορεῖν θανάσιμον φάρμακον, ὅπως ἄκων μηδεὶς ὑποχείριος γένοιτο τοῖς πολεμίοις.

En este caso se trata claramente de un veneno para suicidarse en caso de necesidad. Parece ser que Mitrídates poseía un variado repertorio de ellos⁶. Trata aquí esta biografía sucesos semejantes a los de la vida de Lúculo, el vencedor de Mitrídates.

Remedio en sentido figurado:

Caes. 28,6,3: πολλοὶ δ' ἦσαν οἱ καὶ λέγειν ἐν μέσῳ τολμῶντες ἤδη, πλὴν ὑπὸ μοναρχίας ἀνήκεστον εἶναι τὴν πολιτείαν, καὶ τὸ φάρμακον τοῦτο χρῆναι τοῦ

5 De forma diferente en Apiano *Mithr.*, 82

6 Véase Th. Reinach, *Mithr. Eup.* (1895), 280 ss., *apud* R. Flacelière, *Vies VIII (Pompée)* p. 205, n. 1.

πρασιότατος τῶν ἰατρῶν ἀνασχέσθαι προσφέροντος, ὑποδηλοῦντες <δη> τὸν Πομπήϊον.

El estado era ya incurable y el remedio – la monarquía – debía tomarlo del médico más benigno, Pompeyo

La ejecución con cicuta:

Phoc. 36,51–6: τοῦ δὲ Νικοκλέους, ὃς ἦν αὐτῷ πιστότατος τῶν φίλων, παρακαλοῦντος ὅπως αὐτὸν ἑάσῃ τὸ φάρμακον πιεῖν πρότερον, "βαρὺ μὲν" εἶπεν "ὦ Νικόκλεις ἔμοι τὸ αἴτημα καὶ λυπηρόν, ἐπεὶ δ' οὐδ' ἄλλ' οὐδέποτε σοι παρὰ τὸν βίον οὐδὲν ἠχαρίστησα, καὶ τοῦτο συγχωρῶ." πεπωκότων δ' ἤδη πάντων, τὸ φάρμακον ἐπέλιπε, καὶ ὁ δημόσιος οὐκ ἔφη τρίψειν ἕτερον, εἰ μὴ λάβοι δώδεκα δραχμάς, ὅσου τὴν ὀλκὴν ὠνεῖται.

Foción muere condenado por la ciudad, como Sócrates, a beber la cicuta. Por complacer a Nicocles su ejecución se retrasa. Finalmente un amigo tiene que pagar las doce dracmas a petición de Foción, quien dice que en Atenas ni el morir es gratis. Plutarco parece querer subrayar con su relato el paralelismo de las ejecuciones y la altura moral de ambos personajes, aunque en ningún momento cita al filósofo⁷.

¿Somnífero o veneno?

Dio 6, 2: Ἐπεὶ δὲ νοσῶν ἔδοξεν ὁ Διονύσιος ἀβιώτως ἔχειν, ἐπεχείρησεν αὐτῷ διαλέγεσθαι περὶ τῶν ἐκ τῆς Ἀριστομάχης τέκνων ὁ Δίων, οἱ δ' ἰατροὶ τῷ μέλλοντι τὴν ἀρχὴν διαδέχεσθαι χαριζόμενοι, καιρὸν οὐ παρέσχον· ὡς δὲ Τίμαιος φησι, καὶ φάρμακον ὑπνωτικὸν αἰτοῦντι δόντες, ἀφείλοντο τὴν αἴσθησιν αὐτοῦ, θανάτω συνάψαντες τὸν ὕπνον.

Dión quería recomendar a Dionisio, moribundo, la suerte de los hijos de su hermana pero se ve impedido por la injerencia de los médicos a favor de Dionisio el Joven. No está claro por el relato si la intención de los médicos al dar un fuerte somnífero a Dionisio era la de acelerar su muerte. En este caso no se sabría clasificar bien si se trata de medicamento o de veneno, aunque se hable de somnífero. Su clasificación estaría ligada a las intenciones de los médicos al administrarlo, pero objetivamente deberemos tenerlo por medicamento (*FGrH* 566 F109).

Tan sólo en *Caes.* 28, 6 y en *Ant.* 24, 11 del total de ejemplos hemos encontrado el uso positivo del término. En suma, parece que en *Vitae* condicionado por el asunto, relatos de carácter histórico, φάρμακον aparece

7 Para el comercio de la cicuta véase *RE*, Suppl. V, s.v. *Gifte*. También Daremberg-Saglio, s.v. *Koneion*.

con el significado de <veneno> las más veces, aunque haya estos otros pocos ejemplos de <medicamento> en sentido real o figurado.

1. 1.2 Los ejemplos de φάρμακον en los casos de genitivo y dativo son muy escasos en las biografías, 5 y 3 respectivamente.

φαρμάκου

El poder es un fuerte remedio en política

CatMi. 20.1.2· Πολλῶν δ' αὐτὸν ἐπὶ δημαρχίαν καλούντων, οὐκ ᾤετο καλῶς ἔχειν μεγάλης ἐξουσίας καὶ ἀρχῆς ὥσπερ ἰσχυροῦ φαρμάκου δύναμιν ἐν πράγμασιν οὐκ ἀναγκαίοις ἐξαναλώσαι.

Medicina en sentido figurado.

Suicidio de Demóstenes:

Dem. 29.6.2:

ἤδη δὲ συνησθημένος ὁ Δημοσθένης ἐμπεφυκότες αὐτῷ τοῦ φαρμάκου καὶ νεκροῦντος, ἐξεκαλύψατο καὶ ἀποβλέψας πρὸς τὸν Ἄρχιαν "οὐκ ἂν φθάνοις" εἶπεν "ἤδη τὸν ἐκ τῆς τραγωδίας ὑποκρινόμενος Κρέοντα.

Veneno.

y 30.4.5: πλὴν ὅτι Δημοχάρης ὁ τοῦ Δημοσθένους οἰκεῖος οἶεσθαί φησιν αὐτὸν οὐχ ὑπὸ φαρμάκου, θεῶν δὲ τιμῆ καὶ προνοίᾳ τῆς Μακεδόνων ὀμότητος ἐξαρπαγῆναι, συντόμως καταστρέψαντα καὶ ἀλύτως.

No el veneno sino la providencia fue lo que acabó con la vida de Demóstenes.

Recursos de una reina

Ant. 86.5.1· αὐτὴν ἐλέχθη φορεῖν ἐν κνηστίδι κοίλῃ, τὴν δὲ κνηστίδα κρύπτειν τῇ κόμῃ· πλὴν οὔτε κηλὶς ἐξήνθησε τοῦ σώματος οὔτ' ἄλλο φαρμάκου σημεῖον. οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ τὸ θηρίον ἐντὸς ὤφθη, συρμούς δὲ τινὰς αὐτοῦ παρὰ θάλασσαν, ἧ τὸ δωμάτιον ἀφῆώρα καὶ θυρίδες ἦσαν, ἰδεῖν ἔφασκον·

Veneno oculto por Cleopatra en una peina.

Comp. Dem. et Cic. 5.2.2· ἀποκρυπτόμενον τοὺς οὐ πολὺ πρὸ τῆς φύσεως ἦκοντας ἐπ' αὐτόν, εἶτ' ἀποσφαγέντα· τοῦ δ', εἰ καὶ μικρὰ πρὸς τὴν ἰκεσίαν ἐνέδωκεν, ἀγαστὴ μὲν ἢ παρασκευὴ τοῦ φαρμάκου καὶ τήρησις, ἀγαστὴ δ' ἢ χρῆσις,

Se compara la muerte miserable de Cicerón, degollado finalmente, con la muerte por el veneno que Demóstenes toma voluntariamente.

φαρμάκῳ

Ejecución de Filopemen por orden de Dinócrates.

Phil. 20.4.3: ἄλλο δὲ μηδὲν εἰπὼν μηδὲ φθρεγξάμενος ἐξέπιε, καὶ πάλιν ἑαυτὸν ἀπέκλινεν, οὐ πολλὰ πράγματα τῷ φαρμάκῳ παρασχών, ἀλλ' ἀποσβεσθεὶς ταχὺ διὰ τὴν ἀσθένειαν

Veneno

El veneno de Medea

Alex. 35.3.3: ἐπιδεικνύμενοι δὲ τὴν φύσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ δύναμιν οἱ βάρβαροι τὸν ἄγοντα πρὸς τὴν κατάλυσιν τοῦ βασιλέως στενωπὸν ἐλαφρῶς τῷ φαρμάκῳ κατεπέκασαν.

El *pharmakon* no es realmente otra cosa que petróleo, pero se suponía que fue el veneno que usó Medea. Episodio en Babilonia.

El ave rintakis

Art. 19.5.2: νομίζουσιν ἀνέμῳ καὶ δρόσῳ τρέφεσθαι τὸ ζῷον· ὀνομάζεται δὲ ῥυντάκης. τοῦτό φησιν ὁ Κτησίας μικρᾷ μαχαιρίδι κεχρισμένη τῷ φαρμάκῳ κατὰ ἄτερα τὴν Παρύσατιν διαιροῦσαν, ἐκμάξει τῷ ἑτέρῳ μέρει τὸ φάρμακον.

Parisatis mata con veneno procedente del ave rintakis a Estatira, la mujer de su hijo Artajerjes. Plutarco ha usado sin duda como fuente para esta vida, sin otra paralela, al ateniense Jenofonte, también a Ctesias de Cnido, autor de unos *Persica*, y a Dinón de Colofón a quienes cita aquí y en otros pasajes⁸. Es este un relato de gineceo oriental, donde la convivencia entre las dos reinas, la madre y la esposa de Artajerjes se hace opresiva y conduce al asesinato. Parisatis terminaría su vida en Babilonia a donde la llevó el rey con la promesa de que él ya no visitaría jamás esa ciudad para no verla. El veneno no aparece como una forma especialmente femenina de asesinar, como se ve por otro pasaje de esta misma biografía, *Art.*, 30,5, 6, donde el veneno es utilizado por un hombre. Así, entre todos estos ejemplos solamente uno presenta el sentido figurado del término, como suele ocurrir en las *Vidas*.

1. 2 *Moralia*

1. 2. 1 Los ejemplos de φάρμακον en los textos de *Moralia* son algo superiores en número a los de *Vitae*. Hemos llegado a contar 30 ejemplos de los que daremos también una selección. En general, excepto si se trata de alguna anécdota, el significado es el de remedio o medicamento, bien en sentido recto

8 Los textos citados son *FGrH* 690 F 15b; *FGrH* 688 F 29b; *FGrH* 688 F 29b y *FGrH* 690 F 15b.

o en el figurado. Vemos como antes algunos ejemplos dentro de su amplio abanico:

La filosofía es el único remedio

De liberis educandis 7D: τῶν δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀρρωστημάτων καὶ παθῶν ἡ φιλοσοφία μόνη φάρμακόν ἐστι.

Como podemos ver alude a un remedio o medicación en sentido figurado.

El remedio en un símil

Quomodo adulator ab amicis internoscatur 73A:

ὡσπερ ἰατρὸς δριμύ φάρμακον ἢ πικρὸν ἀναγκαῖον δὲ καὶ πολυτελὲς εἰς πολλὰ καὶ μικρὰ καὶ οὐκ ἀναγκαῖα διελθὼν τῇ παρρησίᾳ κατακεκρημένος.

«Como un médico cuando un medicamento ácido o amargo,...» Sentido recto.

Medicamentos

De tu. san. 134E: οὕτως οἱ μετὰ φαρμάκων ἔμετοι λυμαίνονται τῷ σώματι καὶ διαφθεῖρουσιν. ὑφισταμένης δὲ κοιλίας οὐδὲν φάρμακον ...

«Así los vomitivos junto con medicamentos dañan el cuerpo y lo destruyen. Y cuando se instaura la colitis ningún medicamento...» Aquí se trata de remedio o medicina en el sentido recto. Se acomoda con el contenido del texto de carácter médico de este tratado sobre la prevención de la salud.

Intento de envenenar a Creso con un pan

De Pyth. Or. 401E: λέγεται γὰρ Ἀλυάττην τὸν πατέρα τοῦ Κροίσου δευτέραν ἀγαγέσθαι γυναῖκα καὶ παιῖδας ἑτέρους τρέφειν· ἐπιβουλεύουσαν οὖν τῷ Κροίσῳ τὴν ἀνθρωπὸν φάρμακον δοῦναι τῇ ἄρτοποιῷ καὶ κελεῦσαι διαπλάσασαν ἄρτον ἐξ αὐτοῦ τῷ Κροίσῳ παραδοῦναι·

En esta anécdota como entre tantos textos históricos encontramos el significado negativo de veneno.

La insensibilidad es un mal remedio

De tranq. an. 465C: καίτοι κακὸν μὲν ἀναισθησία σώματι φάρμακον ἀπονίας, οὐδὲν δὲ βελτίων ψυχῆς ἰατρὸς ὁ ῥᾶθυμία καὶ μαλακία καὶ προδοσία φίλων καὶ οἰκείων καὶ πατρίδος ἐξαιρών...

«Sin embargo, la insensibilidad es un mal remedio para el cuerpo en la ausencia de dolor, pero del alma en nada es mejor médico...» Sentido figurado del término como medicamento y la usual contraposición cuerpo/alma de Plutarco.

Ejemplos ilustres

De exilio 607F: ἀλλ' Ἀναξαγόρας μὲν ἐν τῷ δεσμωτηρίῳ τὸν τοῦ κύκλου τετραγωνισμόν ἔγραφε, Σωκράτης δὲ φάρμακον πίνων ἐφιλοσόφει καὶ παρεκάλει φιλοσοφεῖν τοὺς συνήθεις εὐδαιμονιζόμενος ὑπ' αὐτῶν.

Veneno en este caso. Tras la cárcel de Anaxágoras es la cicuta de Sócrates un ejemplo más de que la felicidad puede hallarse en cualquier circunstancia.

La curación por el vino

Quaestiones convivales 647A: ὁ δὲ Διόνυσος οὐ μόνον τῷ τὸν οἶνον εὐρεῖν, ἰσχυρότατον φάρμακον καὶ ἠΐδιστον, ἱατρὸς ἐνομίσθη μέτριος,

Remedio en sentido recto. El vino era considerado en la antigüedad como remedio curativo e incluso como antídoto del veneno⁹.

y 653A: ἐὰν δ', ὅτι τὸ κώνειον ἐπιπινόμενος ἴσθαι δοκεῖ πολὺς ἄκρατος, οἴωνται τοῦτο θερμότητος εἶναι τεκμήριον, ἡμεῖς αὖ φήσομεν ἀναστρέψαντες, ὅτι συγκραθὲν αὐτῷ τοῦτο φάρμακον ἀνιάτον ἐστὶν καὶ καθάπαξ ἀποκτείνει τοὺς πίνοντας

El vino nuevamente aparece como remedio en creencia de algunos, ya que sería un antídoto. Esta creencia aparece también, sin oposición por parte de Plutarco, en *De garrulitate* 509E.

El *logos* como remedio

Platonicae Quaestiones 999E: τὸν οὖν ἐλεγκτικὸν λόγον ὥσπερ καθαρτικὸν ἔχων φάρμακον ὁ Σωκράτης ἀξιόπιστος ἦν ἐτέρους ἐλέγχων τῷ μηδὲν ἀποφαίνεσθαι,

Se trata otra vez del medicamento en un símil.

Moralia parece ofrecer unos resultados inversos a los de *Vitae*. El número de ocurrencias resulta superior como señalábamos. Pero allí prevalecía para φάρμακον el significado de <veneno> en sentido recto. Aquí, en cambio, domina el significado de <medicamento> o <remedio>, las más veces en sentido figurado. Se trata de medicamento en sentido recto sólo cuando se trata de textos sobre medicina como en *De tuenda sanitate praecepta* o con un contexto médico, a veces en forma de símil, procedimiento bastante habitual en nuestro autor. Las demás veces el <remedio> tiene sentido figurado y en ocasiones reviste la forma de sentencia como «la filosofía es el remedio...», «la máxima y más poderosa medicina es la amistad...» o bien «la razón es el remedio...» de *Plat. quaest.*, 999E, frase que se halla también en la *Consolatio ad Apollonium* 103F, además del ejemplo ya visto, de acuerdo con la tipología del género consolatorio. Cuando aparece el significado de <veneno>, – mucho menos

9 Véase López Salvá, pp. 291–299 y sobre el vino como antídoto, Pl., *Lisis*, 219e.

casos que en *Vitae*—, se trata de anécdotas insertas en el relato. Por eso en muchos casos el veneno es la cicuta, sobre todo si se habla de Sócrates, como sucede en *De ex.*, 607F, o su muerte se pone de ejemplo.

De otra parte, el reparto de significados resulta coherente con el tipo de discurso. En los textos históricos el significado de «veneno» aparece porque el φάρμακον se usa para ejecutar al enemigo o eliminarle ocultamente o, por fin, en un suicidio como recurso último ante la derrota. En cambio, en textos de carácter discursivo o filosófico el significado de «medicamento» o «remedio» muestra mayor frecuencia y, las más veces, figuradamente como queda señalado.

1. 2. 2 Incluimos ahora sólo algunos de los ejemplos de genitivo y dativo de φάρμακον en singular en *Moralia*. Nuestro propósito es ver si su uso en diferentes casos implica también cambio en el significado o en su empleo.

Φαρμάκου

Medicamento para una sola enfermedad

Quomodo adulesc. poet. 34.C: ὡς γὰρ φαρμάκου πρὸς ἓν ἀρμόσαντος νόσημα τὴν δύναμιν καταμαθόντες οἱ ἰατροὶ μετάγουσι καὶ χρῶνται πρὸς ἅπαν τὸ παραπλήσιον,

Medicina o remedio en un símil bastante largo.

Dos ejemplos de veneno

Quomodo adulator... 61C: ἄλλως βοηθοῦντα πρὸς τὸ κώνειον ἂν ἐμμίξωσι προσεμβalόντες αὐτῶ, κοιμηθῆ ποιούσι τὴν τοῦ φαρμάκου δύναμιν ἀβοήθητον, ὅξέως ἀναφερομένην ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν ὑπὸ θερμότητος,

Se trata del poder de la cicuta como veneno, y de la posibilidad de neutralizarla con vino puro, pero sólo se usa para introducir un símil.

y 71D: "εἰ τοσαῦτα κοιπιῶν καὶ ἀγρυπνῶν κατηνέχθης, ἰδίᾳ σε νοουθετεῖν ὀφείλομεν, οὐκ ἐναντίον ἀνθρώπων τοσούτων προσφέρειν τὰς χεῖρας." ὁ δὲ φαρμάκου κύλικα πέμψας ἐκέλευσεν ἐκπιεῖν τὸν ἀνθρώπων.

Tolomeo hace beber una copa con veneno a un adulator.

La muerte de Sócrates según el *Fedón*

An vitiositas 499B: κύλικα φαρμάκου τaráττεις; οὐχὶ καὶ Σωκράτει ταύτην προέπιες; ὁ δ' ἴλεως καὶ πρᾶος, οὐ τρέσας οὐδὲ διαφθείρας οὔτε χρώματος οὐδὲν οὔτε σχήματος...

Veneno, por la alusión a Sócrates. Siempre que aparece *kulix* se trata de la cicuta que viene ya molida para ser administrada en ese recipiente.

El vino que cura

De garrulitate 509E: μὲν αὐτοῖς λαθεῖν ἐγγένοιτο, τῷ ἀκράτῳ ποθέντι σβέσαντες καὶ διαλύσαντες τὸ φάρμακον ἀπέλθοιεν ἀσφαλῶς· εἰ δ' ἄλίσκοιντο, πρὸ τῶν βασάνων ὑπὸ τοῦ φαρμάκου ῥαδίως καὶ ἀνωδύνως ἀποθάνοιεν.”

Veneno. Se trata nuevamente de la creencia en el vino puro como antídoto de la cicuta.

El vino en la medicina: dos ejemplos

Quaestiones convivales 655E: καὶ πάλαι γ' ὡς ἔοικεν εὐχοντο, τοῦ οἴνου πρὶν ἢ πιεῖν ἀποσπένδοντες, ἀβλαβῆ καὶ σωτήριον αὐτοῖς τοῦ φαρμάκου τὴν χρῆσιν γενέσθαι.

El vino se liba como un medicamento, cuando se gustan las primicias del vino.

y 669B: ἀλλὰ καὶ διαφορεῖ τὴν ἄλλην τροφήν καὶ παραδίδωσιν εὐπειθῆ καὶ μαλακωτέραν τῇ πέψει, εὐχαριν μὲν [γάρ] ὄψου δύναμιν δὲ φαρμάκου τῷ σώματι τῶν ἄλῶν προσφερομένων.

Medicina. Virtudes del vino como remedio para la digestión.

A diferencia de la casuística del genitivo en *Vitae* aquí los ejemplos eran numerosos – hasta quince – y se repartían casi por mitad entre «medicina» (ocho) y «veneno» (seis), con un solo ejemplo (*Aet. rom.*, 270F) en el que φάρμακον se refiere a una droga que tiñe.

φαρμάκῳ

La palabra como remedio

De recta rat. aud. 46D: ἰλαρῶς οὐκ ἀγεννὲς οὐδ' ἀπαιδέυτον ἀλλ' ἔλευθέριον πάνυ καὶ Λακωνικόν ἐστιν· ἐπαφῆς δὲ καὶ νοουθεσίας πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν ἡθους ὥσπερ φαρμάκῳ δάκνοντι λόγῳ χρωμένης ...

Medicamento o remedio, pero en sentido figurado: la palabra puede ser un medicamento doloroso.

Medicina dolorosa pero salvífica

Quomodo adulator... 55C: δεῖ γὰρ ὠφελοῦντα λυπεῖν τὸν φίλον, οὐ δεῖ δὲ λυποῦντα τὴν φιλίαν ἀναιρεῖν, ἀλλ' ὡς φαρμάκῳ τῷ δάκνοντι χρῆσθαι, σῶζοντι καὶ φυλάττοντι τὸ θεραπευόμενον.

Supone como el caso anterior un procedimiento doloroso en sentido figurado. Aquí la amistad es la medicina o remedio.

Los ejemplos del dativo eran menores en número – tan sólo cinco – y todos coincidentes en el significado de «medicina» o «remedio».

En *Moralia*, como hemos podido ver, los significados se despliegan con mayor variedad también en genitivo y dativo, aunque predomine el significado de <medicamento> o <remedio>, tanto en el sentido recto – en textos de contenido médico y en símiles con la medicina –, como en sentido figurado. En el caso de significar <veneno> aparece generalmente en pequeños relatos o anécdotas.

2. φάρμακον en plural

2. 1. φάρμακα

2. 1. 1 *Vitae*

Los ejemplos para nominativo/ acusativo son solamente los cuatro que siguen. La casuística ofrece pocas posibilidades para emitir juicios sobre sus usos, a diferencia de lo que ocurría con estos mismos casos en singular también en las *Vidas*.

Medicación salvadora

Per. 15, 1: ἐχειροῦτο τῷ συμφέροντι, μιμούμενος ἀτεχνῶς ἰατρὸν ποικίλῳ νοσήματι καὶ μακρῷ κατὰ καιρὸν μὲν ἡδονὰς ἀβλαβεῖς, κατὰ καιρὸν δὲ δηγμοὺς καὶ φάρμακα προσφέροντα σωτήρια.

Pericles imitaba a un médico que unas veces aplica placeres inocuos, otras, remedios salvadores.

El extraño amor de un liberto

Luc., 43.2: οὐχ ὑπὸ γήρωσ φησὶν οὐδὲ νόσου παραλλάξει τὸν Λεύκολλον, ἀλλὰ φαρμάκοις ὑπὸ τινος τῶν ἀπελευθέρων Καλλισθένου διαφθαρέντα· τὰ δὲ φάρμακα δοθῆναι μὲν ὡς ἀγαπῶτο μᾶλλον ὁ Καλλισθένης ὑπ' αὐτοῦ,

Lúculo no habría muerto por vejez ni por enfermedad sino destruído por drogas que le administraba Calístenes, uno de sus libertos.

Las drogas egipcias

Nic. 9, 1: οἷον ἡ Αἰγυπτίων χώρα λέγεται δι' ἀρετὴν ἐκφέρειν ὁμοῦ φάρμακα πολλὰ μὲν ἐσθλὰ μεμειγμένα, πολλὰ δὲ λυγρὰ, οὕτως ἡ Ἄλκιβιάδου φύσις ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρα ...

Egipto produce drogas, muchas buenas y otras muchas perniciosas. Cita de Hom. *Od.* 4, 230.

Drogas y magia

Alex. 2,6: εἶτε δέισαντά τινας μαγείας ἐπ' αὐτῶ καὶ φάρμακα τῆς γυναικός, εἶτε τὴν ὁμιλίαν ὡς κρείττονι συνουσίας ἀφοσιούμενον. ἕτερος δὲ περὶ τούτων ἐστὶ λόγος, ὡς πᾶσαι μὲν αἱ τῆδε γυναικῆς ἔνοχοι...

En este caso la connotación es negativa pues se emparejan las drogas con prácticas mágicas, en cualquier caso ambas procedentes de una mujer.

2. 1. 2

Incluimos ahora los ejemplos de φάρμακον en los casos de genitivo y dativo de plural en las Biografías.

φαρμάκων

Medicación y purgas

Lyc. 5.2.6: οὐδὲ ὄφελος, εἰ μὴ τις ὥσπερ σώματι πονηρῶ καὶ γέμοντι παντοδαπῶν νοσημάτων τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν ἐκτήξας καὶ μεταβαλὼν κρᾶσιν ὑπὸ φαρμάκων καὶ καθαρῶν ἐτέρας ἄρξεται καινῆς διαίτης.

Medicamentos unidos a purgas en un símil.

Drogas y magia.

Num. 15.3.8: φοιτᾶν δύο δαίμονας, Πίκον καὶ Φαῦνον· οὓς τὰ μὲν ἄλλα Σατύρων ἂν τις ἢ Πανῶν γένει προσεικάσειε, δυνάμει δὲ φαρμάκων καὶ δεινότητι τῆς περὶ τὰ θεῖα γοητείας λέγονται ταῦτά τοις ὑφ' Ἑλλήνων προσαγορευθεῖσιν Ἰδαίοις Δακτύλοις.

Plutarco hace religión comparada.

Remedios en un símil médico

Sol. 7.2: καὶ γὰρ ἀρετὴν, ἧς κτῆμα μεῖζον οὐδὲν οὐδ' ἦδιον, ἐξισταμένην ὑπὸ νόσων καὶ φαρμάκων ὀρώμεν, αὐτῶ τε Θαλῆ μὴ γήμαντι πλέον οὐδὲν εἰς ἀφοβίαν, εἰ μὴ καὶ φίλων κτῆσιν ἐφυγε.

y también en 21, 4 se presenta una formulación semejante.

Crueldad de Sila

Sull. 23.2: οὓς εἶχεν αἰχμαλώτους, ἀποδοῦς ὁ Σύλλας Ἄριστίωνα μόνον τὸν τύραννον ἀνεῖλε διὰ φαρμάκων Ἄρχελάω διάφορον ὄντα·

Venenos sin especificar.

Muerte por veneno de un amigo de Tiberio Graco

Gracch. 13, 4, 3: καὶ φίλου τινὸς τῶ Τιβερίω τελευτήσαντος αἰφνιδίως, καὶ σημείων τῶ νεκρῶ μοχθηρῶν ἐπιδραμόντων, βοῶντες ὑπὸ φαρμάκων ἀνηρῆσθαι τὸν ἀνθρώπον, ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκφορὰν συνέδραμον καὶ τὸ λέχος ἦραντο καὶ θάπτομένω παρέστησαν,

Diversas clases de veneno.

Drogas y filtros de Cleopatra

Ant. 37.6: πόλεμον ξεενεγκεῖν πρὸ καιροῦ καὶ πᾶσι χρήσασθαι τεταραγμένως, οὐκ ὄντα τῶν ἑαυτοῦ λογισμῶν, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ φαρμάκων τινῶν ἢ γοητείας παπταίνοντα πρὸς ἐκείνην αἰεὶ, καὶ πρὸς τὸ τάχιον ἐπανελθεῖν μᾶλλον ἢ πρὸς τὸ κρατῆσαι τῶν πολεμίων γενόμενον.

Se trata aquí de alguna clase de drogas o filtros por la inclusión después de la hechicería. Igualmente en 60, 1, 4 se narran los usos de drogas y filtros, y en 71, 6, 1 también se alude a las «drogas mortales» estos es, venenos, cuyo manejo dominaba la reina de Egipto

Filipo de Macedonia no soportaba a Arato

Arat. 52.3: Ταυρίωνα δὲ τῶν στρατηγῶν τινα καὶ φίλων ἐκέλευσεν [ἐν] ἀδήλω τρόπῳ τοῦτο πράξει, μάλιστα διὰ φαρμάκων, αὐτοῦ μὴ παρόντος. ὁ δὲ ποιησάμενος τὸν Ἄρατον συνήθη, φάρμακον αὐτῷ δίδωσιν, οὐκ ὄξυ καὶ σφοδρὸν, ἀλλὰ τῶν θέρμας τε μαλακὰς τὸ πρῶτον..

Orden de Filipo a su general Taurión para que mate a Arato mediante veneno. Aparece también el «veneno» en la forma singular del nominativo.

Eran sólo nueve los ejemplos de genitivo plural. Sobresale en el uso de este caso la fórmula del genitivo agente. Predomina el significado de «veneno» – nueve ejemplos—, frente a dos ejemplos donde tiene φαρμάκων el sentido de «medicamento» y uno de «droga» por su asociación con la magia.

φαρμάκοις

Los ejemplos del dativo plural son catorce de los que hacemos una selección.

Teseo se encuentra con problemas al regresar a Atenas

Thes. 12,3,1: πόλιν εὔρε τά τε κοινὰ ταραχῆς μεστὰ καὶ διχοφροσύνης, καὶ τὰ περὶ τὸν Αἰγέα καὶ τὸν οἶκον ἰδίᾳ νοσοῦντα. Μήδεια γὰρ ἐκ Κορίνθου φυγοῦσα φαρμάκοις ὑποσχομένη τῆς ἀτεκνίας ἀπαλλάξειν Αἰγέα συνῆν αὐτῷ.

12, 3,5· αἰσθoμένη δὲ περὶ τοῦ Θησέως αὐτή, τοῦ δ' Αἰγέως ἀγνοοῦντος, ὄντος δὲ πρεσβυτέρου καὶ φοβουμένου πάντα διὰ τὴν στάσιν, ἔπεισεν αὐτὸν ὡς ξένον ἐστιῶντα φαρμάκοις ἀνελεῖν.

En ambos casos se trata de los venenos de Medea.

Cárcel y muerte de Fidas

Per. 31,5,3: ὁ μὲν οὖν Φειδίας εἰς τὸ δεσμοτήριον ἀπαχθεὶς ἐτελεύτησε νοσήσας, ὡς δὲ φασιν ἔνιοι φαρμάκοις, ἐπὶ διαβολῇ τοῦ Περικλέους τῶν ἐχθρῶν παρασκευασάντων.

Muerte del escultor por enfermedad o con veneno según la opinión de algunos.

Anécdota del médico infiel de Pirro que propone a Fabricio eliminar al rey con veneno.

Pyth. 5,8,4: αὐτὸν ἐπὶ δεῖπνον, ὡς δέ φασιν ἔνιοι καὶ χρησάμενος παρ' οἶνον ὦραν ἔχοντι, λόγους προσήνεγκε παρακαλῶν ἐλέσθαι τὰ τοῦ Νεοπτολέμου καὶ φαρμάκοις διαφθεῖραι τὸν Πύρρον. ὁ δὲ Μυρτίλος ἐδέξατο μὲν τὴν πεῖραν ὡς ἐπαινῶν καὶ συμπεπεισμένος, ἐμήνυσε δὲ τῷ Πύρρῳ·

21,1,4: ἦκεν ἀνὴρ εἰς τὸ στρατόπεδον πρὸς αὐτόν, ἐπιστολὴν κομίζων ἣν ἔγραψεν ὁ τοῦ βασιλέως ἰατρός, ἐπαγγελλόμενος φαρμάκοις ἀναιρήσειν τὸν Πύρρον, εἰ χάρις αὐτῷ παρ' ἐκείνων ὁμολογηθεῖ ἡ λύσαντι τὸν πόλεμον ἀκινδύνως. ὁ δὲ Φαβρίκιος δυσχεράνας πρὸς τὴν ἀδικίαν...

Remedios y veneno

Luc. 16, 7,4: καὶ λαβὼν τὸν ἵππον ἀπήλασεν εἰς τὸ Μιθριδάτου στρατόπεδον ἀπρακτος. οὕτως ἄρα καὶ τοῖς πράγμασιν ὁ καιρὸς ὥσπερ τοῖς φαρμάκοις καὶ τὴν σφῶζουσαν καὶ τὴν ἀναιροῦσαν ῥοπήν προστίθησιν

Símil con remedios.

y 43,2,3: Νέπως δὲ Κορνήλιος (fr. 9, 1 M.) οὐχ ὑπὸ γήρωσ φησὶν οὐδὲ νόσου παραλλάξαι τὸν Λεύκολλον, ἀλλὰ φαρμάκοις ὑπὸ τινος τῶν ἀπελευθέρων Καλλισθένους διαφθαρέντα· τὰ δὲ φάρμακα δοθῆναι μὲν ὡς ἀγαπῶτο μᾶλλον ὁ Καλλισθένης ὑπ' αὐ

La droga que administra a Lúculo su liberto, – ya vista en el nom. /acus. plural – y que termina por ser mortal.

Démones, drogas y magia para explicar la derrota de Craso

Crass. 22,3,5: ἰδίᾳ δὲ τὸν Ἄβγαρον ἐλοιδόρουν· ”τίς σε δαίμων πονηρός, ὦ κάκιστε ἀνθρώπων, ἤγαγε πρὸς ἡμᾶς; τίσι δὲ φαρμάκοις ἢ γοητείαις ἔπεισας Κράσσον εἰς ἐρημίαν ἀχανῆ καὶ βύσιον ἐκχέαντα τὴν στρατιάν ὁδεύειν ὁδοῦς Νομάδι ληστάρχη

Drogas pero con valor negativo.

Suicidio antes que prisión

Pomp. 37,1,5: ὑπομνήματα γὰρ ἦν, ἐξ ὧν ἐφωράθη φαρμάκοις ἄλλους τε πολλοὺς καὶ τὸν υἱὸν Ἀριαράθην ἀνηρηκῶς καὶ τὸν Σαρδιανὸν Ἄλκαϊον, ὅτι παρευδοκίμησεν αὐτὸν |...

Se habla de los venenos que llevaba ocultos Mitrídates para el caso de ser derrotado.

Todos los usos en las *Vidas* del dativo plural φαρμάκοις parecen responder a un mismo esquema: el del instrumental sea «con drogas» – en sentido negativo –

sea «por medio del veneno». El plural se justifica por no explicitarse la clase de veneno o bien por aludirse a sus diversos tipos y usarse así de modo genérico. Desde un punto de vista funcional son estos usos equiparables a los de los genitivos de causa anteriores.

2. 2 *Moralía*

Son los ejemplos mucho más numerosos ahora frente a estos mismos casos en las *Vidas*, y se impone, más aún, una selección.

2.2.1 φάρμακα en nominativo/acusativo

Las dos clases de drogas

Quomodo adulescens 15C: ἄλλὰ καὶ περὶ τῆς ποιητικῆς ἔστιν εἰπεῖν ὅτι φάρμακα, πολλὰ μὲν ἐσθλὰ μεμιγμένα πολλὰ δὲ λυγρὰ

Se repite la frase de la vida de *Nicias* (9, 1) unas drogas son buenas, otras perniciosas, que aquí se aplican a la poesía en sentido figurado.

Médicos o comerciantes

De prof. in virt., 80A: εὐθύς εἰς ἀγορὰν ἢ νέων διατριβὴν ἢ βασιλικὸν συμπόσιον ἐκκυκλήσουσιν, οὐ μᾶλλον οἴεσθαι χρὴ φιλοσοφεῖν ἢ τοὺς τὰ φάρμακα πωλοῦντας ἰατρεῦειν·

Los que ejercen la medicina vendiendo remedios o medicamentos se comparan con cierto modo de filosofar. Símil.

Contenido médico

De tu. san., 123B: ἄλλὰ ποιουμένους ἀτρέμα χειροθήνη ταῖς ὀρέξεσι καὶ σύντροφον, ὅπως ἐν τῷ νοσεῖν μὴ δυσχεραίνωμεν ὡς φάρμακα τὰ σιτία μὴδ' ἀσχάλλωμεν ἀπλοῦν τι καὶ ἄνοψον καὶ ἄκνισον λαμβάνοντες.

Símil. Hay que ser moderado en los apetitos, para que en la enfermedad no rechacemos los alimentos como si fueran remedios...

Brujería

Mul.virt. 256C: τῆς σῆς εὐνοίας πρὸς ἐμὲ καὶ δόξης καὶ δυνάμεως, ἦν διὰ σὲ καρποῦμαι πολλὰ ἰς ἐπίφθορος οὔσα κακαῖς γυναιξίν· ὧν φάρμακα δεδοικυῖα καὶ μηχανὰς ἐπέισθην ἀντιμηχανήσασθαι, μωρὰ μὲν ἴσως καὶ γυναικεῖα, θανάτου δ' οὐκ ἄξια· πλὴν εἰ κριτῆ σοὶ δόξειε φίλτρων ἕνεκα καὶ γοητείας.

Se trata de la refutación que hace Aretafila sobre el uso de malas artes y venenos que atribuye a las mujeres que la envidian. Asocia asimismo filtros y magia.

Méδικos famosos

De cur. 518D: φέρε γάρ Ἡρόφιλον ἢ Ἐρασίστρατον ἢ τὸν Ἀσκληπιὸν αὐτόν, ὅτ' ἦν ἄνθρωπος, ἔχοντα τὰ φάρμακα καὶ τὰ ὄργανα κατ' οἰκίαν προσιστάμενον ἀνακρίνειν, ...

Medicamento en sentido recto. Se alude a los famosos médicos de Alejandría Herófilo y Erasístrato, e incluso al mismo Asclepio, cuando usaban medicamentos e instrumental.

La prevención de la salud

De sera num. vind. 561E: γελοῖον ἀλλ' ὠφέλιμον πρᾶγμα ποιοῦμεν, ἐπιληπτικῶν παισὶ καὶ μελαγχολικῶν καὶ ποδαγωγικῶν γυμνάσια καὶ διαίτας καὶ φάρμακα προσάγοντες οὐ νοσοῦσιν ἀλλ' ἔνεκα τοῦ μὴ νοσῆσαι· τὸ γὰρ ἐκ πονηροῦ σώματος γινόμενον σῶμα τιμωρίας μὲν οὐδεμιᾶς ἰατρείας δὲ καὶ φυλακῆς

Medicina preventiva en un símil: se dan medicamentos no a los que están enfermos sino para que no enfermen. El cuerpo que nace de un cuerpo enfermo no necesita castigo, sino medicina y cuidado...

Magia femenina

Amatorius 752C: ...ἐκ γυμνασίων καὶ περιπάτων καὶ τῆς ἐν ἡλίῳ καθαῶς καὶ ἀναπεπταμένης διατριβῆς εἰς ματρυλεῖα καὶ κοπίδας καὶ φάρμακα καὶ μαγεύματα καθεργνύμενον ἀκολάστων γυναικῶν·

Valor negativo de <drogas> en este caso por estar unido el término a las prácticas mágicas de mujeres licenciosas.

La salud no viene por los medicamentos...

De comm. not. 1071E: τί γὰρ διαφέρει τοῦ λέγοντος γεγονέναι τὴν ὑγίειαν τῶν φαρμάκων ἔνεκα, μὴ τὰ φάρμακα τῆς ὑγείας ὁ τὴν ἐκλογὴν τὴν περὶ τὰ φάρμακα καὶ σύνθεσιν καὶ χρῆσιν αὐτῶν αἰρετωτέραν ποιῶν τῆς ὑγείας, μᾶλλον δὲ τὴν μὲν οὐδ' ὅλως αἰρετὸν ἠγούμενος, ἐν δὲ τῇ περὶ ἐκεῖνα

Uso consecutivo por tres veces del término en plural. Sentido abstracto de <medicamento>.

Habíamos encontrado solamente cuatro ejemplos de nominativo/acusativo plural en *Vitae* y ahora hemos visto ocho – de los restantes dieciocho – en *Moralia*. A la vista de éstos últimos parece entenderse que el uso de φάρμακα en nominativo o acusativo de plural responde habitualmente a un concepto general del término. Casi siempre se trata aquí de <medicamentos> o <remedios> en sentido figurado, aunque encontremos asimismo el uso de <medicamento> en su sentido recto, bien en pasajes que se ocupan de la medicina, bien que se use en símiles en donde con frecuencia se comparan

estos remedios médicos del cuerpo con los del alma, en un procedimiento habitual de nuestro autor, como ya señalábamos antes. En este caso el plural a veces está justificado por la alusión a las diversas clases de φάρμακα. Igualmente ocurre con el significado negativo de «drogas», más que el de «venenos», generalmente para este uso en plural. Se puede tratar de sus diversas clases, apareciendo incluso enumeraciones de las beneficiosas, si bien a veces sólo encontramos un sentido negativo del término. Esto suele ocurrir también cuando φάρμακα va acompañado de «prácticas mágicas» que, además, son atribuidas generalmente a las mujeres, como ocurría con *Mul.virt.* 256C y *Amatorius* 752C.

2. 2. 2 Incluimos ahora los ejemplos de genitivo y dativo en plural de *Moralia*. Nuestro propósito es ver si los diferentes casos implican también cambio en el significado o en el uso respecto a nominativo y acusativo.

φαρμάκων

El empleo del genitivo plural es el más numeroso absolutamente, pues son nada menos que treinta y nueve ejemplos los encontrados, de los que sólo expondremos nueve.

Los padres deben proceder como los médicos

De liberis educandis 13.D: καὶ καθάπερ ἰατροὶ τὰ πικρὰ τῶν φαρμάκων τοῖς γλυκέσι χυμοῖς καταμιγνύντες τὴν τέρψιν ἐπὶ τὸ συμφέρον πάροδον εὔρον, οὕτω δεῖ τοὺς πατέρας..

Medicamentos amargos que se mezclan con zumos dulces en un símil médico aplicado a la educación.

Pigmentos

De fortuna 99B: ἄσθμα μὴ κατορθοῦντα γράφειν τε πολλαῖς καὶ ἐξαλείφειν, τέλος δ' ὑπ' ὀργῆς προσβαλεῖν τῷ πίνακι τὸν σπόγγον ὥσπερ εἶχε τῶν φαρμάκων ἀνάπλεων, τὸν δὲ προσπεσόντα θαυμαστῶς ἐναπομάζει καὶ ποιῆσαι τὸ δέον.

No se trata de droga ni veneno, sino de pigmentos como en algunos otros ejemplos, como *De def.or.* 436B. La esponja llena de «colores» al caer pintó admirablemente por sí sola.

Sentido recto en un tratado de medicina preventiva

De tu.san.praec. 132B: καὶ γὰρ ποτῶν ὠφελιμωτάτων ἐστὶ καὶ φαρμάκων ἡδιστον καὶ ὄψων ἀσικχότατον, ἂν τύχη τῆς πρὸς τὸν καιρὸν εὐκρασίας μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς πρὸς τὸ ὕδωρ.

Medicina. El mejor medicamento, el vino¹⁰, depende de la oportunidad de la mezcla más que del agua. Tres ejemplos más de este mismo tratado, en 134A, 134C y 134E se refieren con φαρμάκων a vomitivos, purgas del vientre y emplastos. En suma, a medicamentos como cuadra a un tratado de medicina

Los encantos de la mujer

Coniu. praec. 139A: Ἡ διὰ τῶν φαρμάκων θήρα ταχὺ μὲν αἰρεῖ καὶ λαμβάνει ῥαδίως τὸν ἰχθύν, ἄβρωτον δὲ ποιεῖ καὶ φαῦλον· οὕτως αἱ φίλτρα τινὰ καὶ γοητείας

Pesca con veneno que hace la carne del pescado incomedible en un símil con el uso de filtros y hechicería por parte de la esposa.

y 145C· αἰσχυνθήσεται γὰρ ὀρχεῖσθαι γυνή γεωμετεῖν μανθάνουσα, καὶ φαρμάκων ἐπωδὰς οὐ προσδέξεται τοῖς Πλάτωνος ἐπαδομένη λόγοις καὶ τοῖς Ξενοφώντος. ἂν δέ τις ἐπαγγέλληται καθαιρεῖν

Encontramos el mismo sentido que en el pasaje precedente. La mujer que ha experimentado los encantamientos de las palabras de Platón o Jenofonte no va a aceptar los encantamientos de drogas...

Temas médicos en la sobremesa

Quaestiones convivales 652C: ἔπειτα τὸν μὲν ὕπνον οἱ πλεῖστοι περιψύξει γίνεσθαι λέγουσιν καὶ ψυκτικὰ [καὶ] τὰ πλεῖστα τῶν ὑπνωτικῶν φαρμάκων ἐστίν, ὡς ὁ μανδραγόρας καὶ τὸ μηκώνιον·

Medicamentos o drogas del sueño que son refrescantes en su mayoría como las dos plantas que se citan. También medicamento en 658D, 659C, 668C, mientras que en 691B se trata de drogas que dan la muerte, esto es, la cerusa, el veneno más frío procedente del plomo.

Medicina y política

Praec. ger. reip. 815B: ἰᾶσθαι καὶ διοικεῖν, ὡς ἂν ἦκιστα τῶν ἐκτὸς ἰατρῶν καὶ φαρμάκων δέοιτο. ἢ μὲν γὰρ προαίρεσις ἐστω τοῦ πολιτικοῦ τῆς ἀσφαλείας ἔχομένη καὶ φεύγουσα τὸ ταρακτικὸν τῆς κενῆς δόξης καὶ μανικόν,

Medicina en sentido figurado. Curar y gobernar es la tarea del político sin usar médicos ni remedios externos.

Cocina

De esu carniūm 995B: ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἄψυχον ἂν τις φάγοι καὶ νεκρὸν οἶόν ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ἔψουσιν ὀπτῶσι μεταβάλλουσι διὰ πυρὸς καὶ φαρμάκων, ..

10 Véase nota 8.

Aquí el sentido es curiosamente el de «condimentos». Nadie se come un ‘cadáver’ tal cual, sino que lo cuece, lo asa, lo transforma con fuego y hierbas... Parecidamente «condimento» en *De primo frig.* 946E.

Medicina

Non posse suav. 1106B: ... καὶ καθάπερ οἶμαι τὰ μὴ χρηστὰ τῶν φαρμάκων ἀλλ’ ἀναγκαῖα, κουφίζοντα τοὺς νοσοῦντας ἐπιτρίβει καὶ λυμαίνεται τοὺς ὑγιαίνοντας, οὕτως ὁ Ἐπικούρου

Medicamentos no agradables, pero necesarios¹¹ alivian a los enfermos pero dañan a los sanos, así Epicuro.... Símil.

En el uso muy frecuente del genitivo plural en *Moralia* – treinta y nueve casos como anticipamos – vemos repetido lo que ya anotábamos para el nominativo/acusativo: el plural parece expresar un concepto general del término. Por eso, quizá, no se encuentra un reparto de usos diferente entre *Vitae* y *Moralia* como ocurría con el singular. Hay un notable aumento del significado «drogas», negativo unas veces, mientras que otras, en cambio, encontramos ejemplos también del significado positivo, con sentido médico, apareciendo incluso enumeraciones que son generalmente de plantas medicinales,¹² si bien en ocasiones no se trata sino de pigmentos de color o incluso de condimentos. Así mismo encontramos el significado de «veneno» cuando se alude a su administración. El uso del plural parece justificado por la no determinación de la clase de veneno administrado. Se repite frecuentemente la fórmula de complemento de causa: ὑπὸ φαρμάκων, en ocho ocasiones; διὰ φαρμάκων en tres. Además hay ejemplos semejantes con formulación diferente: τῶν φαρμάκων ἔνεκα o bien incluso ἀπὸ φαρμάκων o μετὰ φαρμάκων con una fórmula menos clásica y más de la koiné. Como dato curioso cabría señalar el emparejamiento de «droga» y «hechicería» tan sólo en la formulación en plural.

φαρμάκοις

La casuística es ahora menos numerosa. Hemos contado doce ejemplos.

Símil de la pintura

Quomodo adul. 64A: σύντασιν προσώπου ποιοῦσαν ἔμφασιν καὶ δόκησιν ἐπιπόνου χρείας καὶ κατεσπευσμένης, ὥσπερ ζωγράφημα περιέργων ἀναιδέσι φαρμάκοις καὶ κεκλασμέναις στολίσι καὶ ῥυτίσι καὶ γωνίαις ἐναργείας φαντασίαν ἐπαγόμενον.

Colores alegres de una pintura, hechos probablemente a partir de plantas.

11 Madvig, al que siguió Barigazzi, puso delante del verbo una negación.

12 Sobre enumeraciones y asociaciones de plantas medicinales véase Aguilar, pp. 75–76.

El médico traidor

Reg. et imp. apophth. 195B: Ὑπατεύοντι δὲ τῷ Φαβρίκιῳ προσέπεμψεν ἐπιστολὴν ὁ τοῦ Πύρρου ἰατρὸς ἐπαγγελλόμενος, ἐὰν κελεύη, φαρμάκοις τὸν Πύρρον ἀποκτενεῖν· ὁ δὲ Φαβρίκιος τὴν ἐπιστολὴν πρὸς τὸν Πύρρον ἔπεμψεν, αἰσθῆσθαι κελεύσας ὅτι καὶ φίλων κάκιστός ἐστι κριτὴς καὶ πολεμίῳν.

Veneno. Se cuenta aquí la misma anecdota que ya vimos en la vida de *Pirro*.

Medicina natural

De coh. ira 453E: οἶμαι, δεῖ θεραπεύσαντα συνεκφέρεσθαι τῷ νοσήματι τὸν λόγον, ἀλλ' ἐμμένοντα τῇ ψυχῇ συνέχειν τὰς κρίσεις καὶ φυλάσσειν. φαρμάκοις γὰρ οὐκ ἔοικεν ἀλλὰ σιτίοις ὑγιεινοῖς ἢ δύναμις αὐτοῦ, μετ' εὐτονίας ἔξιν ἐμποιοῦσα χρηστὴν οἷς ἂν γένηται συνήθης.

Curar la razón no con medicamentos sino con alimentos sanos, implantando así un buen hábito....

Colores simples y plantas olorosas

Quaestiones convivales 624D: συντείνεται παρὰ φύσιν ὑπὸ τῆς ξηρότητος, ἐκτηκομένων τῶν ὑγρῶν) καὶ τὰ ἔλκη τοῖς πικροῖς ἀπισχναίνουσι φαρμάκοις,

Remedios amargos. Seguramente plantas.

y 661C: ...γὰρ παθεῖν τὴν τροφήν καὶ μεταβαλεῖν κρατηθεῖσαν ὑπὸ τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν δυνάμεων· κρατεῖ δὲ καὶ βαφὴ τῶν ἀπλῶν χρωμάτων μᾶλλον, καὶ μυρεψικοῖς φαρμάκοις τρέπεται τάχιστα τὸ ἀωδέστατον ἔλαιον, καὶ τροφῆς εὐπαθέστατον ὑπὸ πέψεως μεταβάλλειν τὸ ἀφελές καὶ μονοειδές.

Transformaciones producidas por la alimentación. Plantas olorosas que modifican el aceite insípido.

En el caso del dativo plural prima también el significado de «veneno», determinado por el uso instrumental (ejecuciones, muertes o suicidios «con veneno»). Son menos los ejemplos en que significa «remedio» o «medicamento» o incluso plantas curativas o usadas como condimento, como ya vimos en el genitivo anteriormente. Por último en dos ejemplos hemos visto aquí el sentido menos usual de «pigmento de color», que ya vimos en genitivo plural en *De fortuna* 99B.

3. Para terminar, aunque ya hemos ido exponiendo conclusiones parciales de todos los ejemplos de singular y plural, querríamos reiterar aquello que, a nuestro ver, ha resultado más significativo. En primer lugar que es bastante más numeroso el uso en nominativo o acusativo de φάρμακον que de φάρμακα tanto en *Vitae* como en *Moralia*. En cambio, los datos se invierten respecto al empleo del genitivo y dativo, igualmente en *Vitae* y en *Moralia*, porque es más

abundante su casuística en el plural. Por otra parte, en el singular los significados se distribuyen bastante netamente entre <veneno> y <medicamento> en el nominativo/ acusativo respecto a genitivo/ dativo donde se tipifica de un modo no tan claro. Sin embargo, no ocurre lo mismo en el plural donde todos los casos parecen responder más a un valor genérico del término. Por eso, sólo cabría subrayar finalmente lo que se nos aparece como suma de ello: entre los dos significados del singular de φάρμακον – nominativo y acusativo frente a genitivo y dativo – hay una suerte de oposición privativa, sin embargo tal oposición se neutralizaría en estos mismos casos dentro del plural.

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Deformity (*anapêria*):
Plutarch's Views of Reproduction and Imperfect
Generation in the *Moralia* and *Lives*

Zlatko Pleše

Introduction

The subject of this paper is Plutarch's indebtedness to Aristotle and his theory of natural reproduction. More specifically, it deals with Plutarch's appropriation of Aristotle's view of deformity (*anapêria*) as a necessary deviation from the normative pattern in natural reproduction and with the heuristic role this concept plays in some important passages from the *Moralia* and *Lives*. As I plan to demonstrate in the ensuing pages, the Aristotelian model performs a triple role in Plutarch's writings. First, it acts as a rationalist critique of the religious representation of deformity as something exceptional and therefore portentous, tabooed, and abominable; secondly, it serves as an 'intertext' conjoining two heterogeneous modes of discourse – viz., the symbolic theology of the wise 'barbarians' and Plato's philosophy; and finally, it provides an analogue, or 'paradigm', capable of elucidating the obscurities of Plato's cosmological account in the *Timaeus*.

Deformity in Aristotle's biological theory

Deformity (*anapêria*) is a term with a wide range of applications in Aristotle's reproductive theory.¹ It encompasses every defect in offspring from, in a descending order, a more regular type (the female) to less frequent phenomena (a 'human' bearing no similarity to parents) and, finally, to exceptional cases of monstrosity ('animal only', having not even the appearance of a human being, i. e., monstrosity proper). Deformity thus denotes any departure from the natural pattern, which, "in all living beings where the male and female are separate" (*Gen. an.* 2.4.741b2–4), Aristotle identifies as the male offspring

1 For Aristotle's reproductive theory, including his views of deformity, see, among others, Le Blond, Happ, Preus, Verdenius, Cooper, Lloyd, and Bolton.

bearing the individual characteristics of his father.² The formation of the female offspring is for Aristotle “the first beginning of this deviation” (4.2.767b6–8),³ occurring when the male element or the seed, which provides the form and the source of movement, fails to gain a full mastery (*kratein*) over the female contributing factor, the menses. In teleological terms, Nature, which stands for the final cause, gets circumscribed in producing a desired effect by material constraints. But even when an offspring is born female, Nature can still turn this failure into an advantage because, as Aristotle argues, “the race of creatures which are separated into male and female has got to be kept in being” (4.2.767b 9–10). This kind of higher purpose is denied to irregular or monstrous deformities, which are “not necessary so far as the purposive or final cause is concerned” (4.2.767b13–14), belonging instead to “the class of things contrary to nature” (770b9–10). Yet Aristotle tolerates even the bottom of his scale of being – for, as he puts it, “even that which is contrary to nature is, in a way, in accordance with Nature” (770b15–16). Monstrosity (*teras*) is an exceptional outcome that stands at odds with what happens in the generality of cases (*hōs epi polu*); yet this is still an outcome in accordance with Nature because it arises from the very same struggle for mastery between two forces that governs all of natural reproduction – the struggle between the male and the female, or, in more general terms, the struggle between Nature, which always acts purposefully, and the blind Necessity of matter. In the words of Themistius, the fourth-century A.D. commentator of Aristotle,

What comes to be out of a man is, in most cases, a man; if not, then a woman; otherwise an animal; otherwise, in the end, mere flesh – but never a plane-tree. (*In Arist. Phys. Paraphr.* 61, 30–62, 1 Schenkl)

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- 2 The process is described in full in *Gen. an.* 4.2.767b6–23: παρεκβέβηκε γὰρ ἡ φύσις ἐν τούτοις ἐκ τοῦ γένους τρόπον τινά. ἀρχὴ δὲ πρώτη τὸ θῆλυ γίνεσθαι καὶ μὴ ἄρρεν. ἀλλ’ αὕτη μὲν ἀναγκαῖα τῇ φύσει, δεῖ γὰρ σώζεσθαι τὸ γένος τῶν κεχωρισμένων κατὰ τὸ θῆλυ καὶ τὸ ἄρρεν· ἐνδεχομένου δὲ μὴ κρατεῖν ποτὲ τὸ ἄρρεν ἢ διὰ νεότητα ἢ γῆρας ἢ δι’ ἄλλην τινὰ αἰτίαν τοιαύτην, ἀνάγκη γίνεσθαι θηλυτοκίαν ἐν τοῖς ζώοις. τὸ δὲ τέρας οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον πρὸς τὴν ἐνεκά του καὶ τὴν τοῦ τέλους αἰτίαν, ἀλλὰ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς ἀναγκαῖον ἐπεὶ τὴν γ’ ἀρχὴν ἐντεῦθεν δεῖ λαμβάνειν. εὐπέπτου μὲν γὰρ οὐσης τῆς περιττώσεως ἐν τοῖς καταμηνίοις τῆς σπερματικῆς, καθ’ αὐτὴν ποιήσει τὴν μορφήν ἢ τοῦ ἄρρενος κίνησις ... ὥστε κρατοῦσα μὲν ἄρρεν τε ποιήσει καὶ οὐ θῆλυ, καὶ ἐοικὸς τῶ γεννῶντι ἀλλ’ οὐ τῇ μητρὶ· μὴ κρατήσασα δέ, καθ’ ὅποιαν ἂν μὴ κρατήσῃ δύναμις, τὴν ἔλλειψιν ποιεῖ κατ’ αὐτὴν.
- 3 Females are defined in terms of their inability to concoct nourishment into semen; cf. *Gen. an.* 4.6.775a11–16: “Once birth has taken place, everything reaches its perfection sooner in females than in males – for example, puberty, maturity, old age – because females are weaker and colder in their nature; and so we should look upon the female condition as a kind of “natural deformity” (καὶ δεῖ ὑπολαμβάνειν ὥσπερ ἀναπηρίαν εἶναι τὴν θηλύτητα φυσικὴν).

The Aristotelian formula is rather simple: the more power exerted by the material cause, the greater the offspring's degradation. First, the male sex turns into its female opposite. Then, as the gradual relapsing process (*luesthai*) continues, all individual characteristics (*to kath' hekaston, tode ti*, or the primary substance), first of the father and his family, next of the mother and her relatives alike, are removed, to the point at which "all that remains is just a human being" (4.3.768b11–13 *to koinon, i. e., eidos*, or the secondary substance *qua species*). At the bottom of this scale we find monstrous deformities devoid of any gender-, individual, and species-characteristics (769b14 *to katholou, i. e., genos*, or, in logical terms, the secondary substance *qua genus*), which occur when matter "does not get mastered" (769b12) but the male, by virtue of this seed, still manages to supply the "sentient soul," or "that in which an animal is animal" (2.3.736b1 *tên aisthêtikên [psukhên] kath' hên zôion*). When a form-bearing male is completely absent, we enter the realm of spontaneous generation. In these cases, the female assumes an active role and, in conjunction with environmental factors, produces a creature endowed solely with the nutritive function.

To sum it up, Aristotle's view of deformity is a corollary of his teleological explanation of natural reproduction. The phenomenon is described in various discursive modes: taxonomically, in terms of degradation from the norms provided by the highest animals on the scale; physically, in terms of the reduced capacity of living beings to concoct their nourishment; logically, in terms of the gradual loss of species-specific characteristics; and metaphysically, in terms of the form-matter dichotomy, where matter resists the mastery of the form and, depending on the degree of resistance, gives birth to various types of anomalous specimens.

Plutarch's familiarity with Aristotle's discussions of natural deformities can be indirectly deduced from various passages in his *Table Talks*. These passages betray a thorough, first-hand knowledge of Aristotle's theory of conception – from its starting hypothesis, namely that the female "merely contributes matter and nourishment to the seed from the male" (*Quast. conv.* 3.4.651C) to such technical issues as spontaneous generation, the natural constitution of wind-eggs, or the relationship between the capacities and activities of the male seed (2.3.6.635E ff.). Turning to direct evidence, Plutarch's usage of the term *pêros* and its derivatives and compounds is not in itself a reliable criterion for asserting his knowledge of Aristotle's theory of deformity. A direct influence seems plausible only in the passages where Plutarch employs terms like *perôsis* or *anapêria* in conjunction with other relevant Aristotelian concepts – for example, with such notions as *phusis*, 'nature', *telos*, 'purpose', or *hulé*, 'matter'. For deformity, in the way in which Aristotle makes use of this term, always invokes the idea of nature as *telos* and purposeful activity, as well as the notion of 'unruly matter' as the ultimate cause of any natural degradation.

Aristotle's notion of 'deformity' and Plutarch's critique of religious discourse

There is a passage in the *Life of Publicola* which, for its association of deformity with nature as *telos*, seems to point to a direct Aristotelian influence. The passage runs as follows:

The following year Publicola was again a consul, for the fourth time, when there was expectation of a war with the joined forces of the Sabines and Latins. At the very same time a sort of superstitious awe (*tis ... deisidaimonia*) seized upon the city; for all women who were pregnant at that time delivered of deformed offspring (*ekseballon anapêra*), and not a single birth reached its end-result (*kai telos oudemia genesis eskhen*). Wherefore, by direction of the Sibylline books, Publicola enacted expiatory rites for Hades and introduced certain games recommended by the oracle of Pythia, and having thus rendered the city more confident in its expectations from the divine power, he turned his attention to what it feared from men. (*Publ.* 21.107F–108A)⁴

The Aristotelian explanation of deformity as the incapacity to carry the natural process of birth to its end-result (*telos*) serves here as an oblique rationalist critique of the Roman religious discourse, for which all sorts of natural anomalies represent dangerous prodigies and signify a major disruption in the relationship with the divine sphere. For Plutarch, the traditional religious handling of prodigies is “a sort of superstition” (*tis ... deisidaimonia*), including the predictions based on the occurrence of deformed offspring and all of the remedies (*remedia*) undertaken to restore the broken covenant with the gods (*pax deorum*), from the priestly response based on the Sibylline books and expiatory rites (*expiatio*) intended to placate Dis Pater to consultation of the Delphic oracle and the game-offering. As in many other discussions of extraordinary phenomena and their religious handling in the *Lives* and *Moralia*, Plutarch once again prefers the naturalist explanation based on verifiable evidence over the religious treatment of deformity as an ominous sign of divine displeasure.⁵

4 Τῷ δ' ἐξῆς ἔτει πάλιν ὑπάτευε Ποπλικόλας τὸ τέταρτον· ἦν δὲ προσδοκία πολέμου Σαβίνων καὶ Λατίνων συνισταμένων. Καί τις ἅμα δεισιδαιμονία τῆς πόλεως ἦψατο· πάσαι γὰρ αἱ κυοῦσαι τότε γυναῖκες ἐξεβάλλον ἀνάπηρα, καὶ τέλος οὐδεμία γένεσις ἔσχεν. Ὄθεν ἐκ τῶν Σιβυλλείων ὁ Ποπλικόλας ἰλασάμενος τῷ Ἄιδῃ καὶ τινας ἀγῶνας πολυχρήστους ἀγαγὼν καὶ ταῖς ἐλπίσι πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἡδῖονα καταστήσας τὴν πόλιν, ἦδη τοῖς ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων φοβεροῖς προσεῖχε.

5 See, for example, Plutarch's preference for Lamprias' scientific solution to the evanescence of oracles over Cleombrotus's 'demonological' explanation in *On Oracles in Decline* (*Def. or.*). On prodigies in Roman religion and their careful handling by a special college of priests (at first *duoviri*, later *decemviri sacris faciundis*) in charge of advising the senate on the content of the Sibylline 'Greek' Books, see Bloch, MacBain, North, 37–40, and esp. Rosenberger. Plutarch's labeling of this traditional medium of

Deformity as 'intertext'

Aristotle's discourse of deformity plays an important interpretive role in Plutarch's essay on Egyptian religion, *On Isis and Osiris*. One of the main objectives of the treatise is to lay down the exegetical program capable of "binding the theology of the Egyptians by ties of kindred (*sunoiikeiountos*) with [Plato's] philosophy" (*De Is. et Os.* 48.371A). The conjoining of these two heterogeneous traditions is not effected through allegorical translation, for allegory, as Plutarch argues in his critique of Stoic exegesis of Egyptian myth (45.369A), is overly fixed, artificial, and restrictive in dealing with the polyvalence of Egyptian myths and symbols. What makes Plato's philosophy a better guide in attaining the meaning of Oriental wisdom is the 'visionary' or *epoptic* character of its dialectical method. Plato's upward movement of generalization, as described in the *Republic* (509d–511e) and in the *Symposium* (201d–212c), leads to a sudden self-disclosure of metaphysical reality and its non-linguistic core in the same way in which the juxtaposition of various symbolic 'codes' in the mystery cult of Isis causes the spark of intuition to leap across from these visible codes to their invisible presupposition. In this bold attempt at uniting the upward path of Plato's hypothetical method and Egyptian symbolic lore, Plutarch resorts to Aristotle as an important analogous link, an 'intertext'.

The importance of Aristotle in this philosophical evaluation of Egyptian religion is clearly acknowledged on two occasions – first, in Plutarch's analysis of the interaction of Osiris and Isis at the physical level (60.375C), and secondly, in the climactic section of the treatise, where Aristotle is cited alongside Plato as a representative of the "visionary branch of philosophy" (7.382D). And indeed, Aristotle's *substrate-and-opposites* model from the *Physics* provides the simplest explanation of the relationship between Osiris ('form'), Isis ('matter striving for form'), and Typhon ('privation of form'). Furthermore, Aristotle's notion of connected homonymy enables Plutarch to adopt the global, metaphysical attitude towards the myth of Isis and Osiris and to attain the highest level of generalization in his upward path toward grasping "the pure truth" (77.382E) of the Egyptian lore. For Plutarch, the Egyptian goddess Isis represents 'matter' (*hulê*) in a homonymous sense, that is, matter (*hulê*) in its primary or focal meaning of a *qualified substrate* (58.374E–375A),

communication between the Romans and their gods as 'superstition' hints at his ambivalent positioning vis-à-vis Rome and its cultural heritage. This kind of behavior can be qualified as 'mimicry' – a tendency among the local Greek élites to treat the culture of the ruling (Roman) power as contiguous and comparable with their own traditions (hence the *sunkrisis* of, say, Solon and Publicola, and the whole project of construing the collection of 'parallel lives'), yet still inferior, less 'enlightened', and often verging on the irrational and barbaric.

encompassing in itself all of its derivative uses and specific applications. Isis, in short, encompasses various aspects of ‘matter’, from prime matter striving for form and the simple soul desiring the intellect to Nature yearning for rational order and purpose (*telos*).⁶

Returning to Aristotle’s theory of deformity and its ‘intertextual’ function in *On Isis and Osiris*, Plutarch brings it into discussion while commenting on the stage in the Egyptian myth when “gods were still in the womb of [the primordial goddess] Rhea” (53.373B) and when Isis, already in love with her future husband Osiris, “united [with him] in the darkness of [Rhea’s] womb” (12.356A) and gave birth to Horus the Elder, or Apollo, a “deformed” (*anapêron*) semblance of the visible “world to come”, typified as Horus the Younger (54. 373A–C). The whole passage runs as follows:

For that which exists, and which is intelligible and good, is stronger than passing away and change. And the images which the corporeal and perceptible molds out of it, and the *logoi*, figures, and likenesses which it assumes, are like impressions stamped on wax in that they do not endure for ever. But they are seized by the disorderly and confusing element, driven here from the space above and fighting against Horus, whom Isis brings forth as a likeness of the intelligible, because he is the perceptible world. This is why he is said to be charged with illegitimacy by Typhon as one who is neither pure nor genuine like his father, who is Reason itself, unmixed and dispassionate, but is made spurious by matter because of corporeality. But he [i.e. Horus] overcomes and wins the day since Hermes, who is Reason, bears witness to him and demonstrates that Nature produces the world upon being remodeled according to the intelligible (*pros to noêton hê phusis metaskhêmatizomenê*). For it is the procreation of Apollo by Isis and Osiris, one which occurred when the gods were still in the womb of Rhea, that suggests symbolically that before this world became manifest and perfected by reason (cf. *Tim.* 52d2–4), †matter, being exposed⁷ by its nature as imperfect in itself, brought forth the first creation† (*ten hulên phusei elenkhomeîn ep’ autên atelê tèn prôtên genesin eksenekenin*). For this reason they say that that god [i.e., Apollo] was born deformed in the darkness (*anapêron kai hupo skotôi genesthai*), and call him the elder

6 See Pleše, 371–372.

7 The same participial form of ἐλέγχεσθαι occurs in 38.366B: “Whenever the Nile ... approaches the outlying regions beyond, they call this the union of Osiris and Nephthys, which is exposed (ἐλεγχόμενην) by the sprouting plants”. Here, too, the verb carries a negative connotation – the union of Osiris and Nephthys was illegitimate and Anubis, their offspring, “born illicitly” (366C σκότιον). *Elenchos* as the method of examining a person’s assertion often implies the ignorant state of that person and the falsehood of his suppositions; cf. Robinson, 7–19 and Kahn, *passim*. Just as Nephthys’s union with Osiris is disclosed as illegitimate, so too Isis is blamed, or exposed, on account of her imperfection (ἀτελή) and the incapacity to achieve a desired goal (τέλος).

Horus – for he was not the world, but only a semblance and apparition of the world to come (*eidōlon ti kai kosmou phantasma mellontos*).⁸

In this passage, Plutarch schematizes a rather complex set of ancient Egyptian and Hellenistic representations of Horus⁹ into two principal forms. The first is Aroueris or the elder Horus, born by Isis and Osiris “when the gods were still in the womb of Rhea” (*De Is. et Os.* 54.373A–B), and the second is Horus the son of Isis and Osiris, the legitimate heir to his father’s throne. Plutarch sees in this distinction yet another sign that Egyptian wisdom is indeed bound “by ties of kindred” with Platonic philosophy. The two forms of Horus correspond to the contrast between the precosmic chaos and the present perceptible universe – a problematic reading of the *Timaeus* inferred from two

8 The Greek text is from Sieveking’s Teubner edition: τὸ γὰρ ὄν καὶ νοητὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν φθορᾶς καὶ μεταβολῆς κρείττον ἐστὶ· ὅς δ’ ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ τὸ αἰσθητὸν καὶ σωματικὸν εἰκόνας ἐκμάττεται καὶ λόγους καὶ εἶδη καὶ ὁμοιότητος ἀναλαμβάνει, καθάπερ ἐν κηρῷ σφραγιῶδες οὐκ αἰεὶ διαμένουσιν ἀλλὰ καταλαμβάνει τὸ ἄτακτον αὐτὰς καὶ ταραχῶδες ἐνταῦθα τῆς ἄνω χώρας ἀπεπληθαιμένοι καὶ μαχόμενοι πρὸς τὸν Ὡρον, ὃν ἡ Ἴσις εἰκόνα τοῦ νοητοῦ κόσμου αἰσθητὸν ὄντα γεννᾷ· διὸ καὶ δίκην φεύγειν λέγεται νοθείας ὑπὸ Τυφῶνος, ὡς οὐκ ὦν καθαρὸς οὐδ’ εἰλικρινῆς οἶος ὁ πατήρ, λόγος αὐτὸς καθ’ ἑαυτὸν ἀμιγῆς καὶ ἀπαθής, ἀλλὰ νεοθρευμένος τῇ ὕλῃ διὰ τὸ σωματικόν. περιγίνεται δὲ καὶ νικᾷ τοῦ Ἑρμοῦ, τουτέστι τοῦ λόγου, μαρτυροῦντος καὶ δεικνύοντος, ὅτι πρὸς τὸ νοητὸν ἡ φύσις μετασχηματιζομένη τὸν κόσμον ἀποδίδωσιν. ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἐπι τῶν θεῶν ἐν γαστρὶ τῆς Ἑρας ὄντων ἐξ Ἰσιδος καὶ Ὀσίριδος λεγομένη γένεσις Ἀπόλλωνος αἰνίττεται τὸ πρὶν ἐκφανῆ γενέσθαι τόνδε τὸν κόσμον καὶ συντελεσθῆναι ἥτῳ λόγῳ τὴν ὕλην φύσει ἐλεγχομένην ἐπι αὐτὴν ἀτελήτῃ τὴν πρώτην γένεσιν ἐξενεγκεῖν· διὸ καὶ φασὶ τὸν θεὸν ἐκεῖνον ἀνάπηρον ὑπὸ σκότῳ γενέσθαι καὶ πρεσβύτερον Ὡρον καλοῦσιν· οὐ γὰρ ἦν κόσμος, ἀλλ’ εἰδωλόν τι καὶ κόσμου φάντασμα μέλλοντος. The phrase enclosed by asterisks has been viewed as corrupt by most editors and commentators: Plutarch’s avoidance of the hiatus was so notorious that φύσει ἐλεγχομένην appears an impossible reading. Bernardakis conjectured τὴν φύσιν, Sieveking obelized the phrase, while Griffiths, 204 decided to tolerate the hiatus. Yet Plutarch himself does not seem to have been as rigid in these matters as his modern editors: there are passages in the *Moralia* where he makes ironical remarks about Isocrates’ purism, including the invariable practice of avoiding the hiatus (*Glor. Ath.* 350E; cf. *De vit. pud.* 534F, *De aud.* 42D). The emendations of the above phrase by Theiler, 398 and Froidefond, 63–71 deserve a separate treatment. At this place, it suffices to point out that both proposals are intriguing yet overly radical, in that they tend to disregard the immediate context of the ‘corrupted’ phrase and alter the word-order in a rather arbitrary fashion. For these reasons, I still find the manuscript reading, as given above, more plausible, primarily because it conveys the crucial contrast between two modalities of Isis – “imperfect matter” vs. “remodeled nature” – and their respective products, viz. the pre-cosmic chaos (Horus the Elder) and the visible universe (Horus the Younger). See also Ferrari, 51–55.

9 E.g., *Hr Wr* or *Haroeris*, the royal Horus, representing the living king; *Harsieri*, Horus the Son of Isis (and Osiris); *Hr-p3-hrd* or *Harpocrates*, Horus the Child, procreated posthumously by Osiris, and persistently depicted as a sitting child, sometimes with feeble legs and with a finger in his mouth. See Griffiths, 59–60, 307–308, 337–38, 353–54, 505–506.

passages which, with a certain amount of textual editing, may indeed appear as referring to two separate cosmic stages, viz. “the present situation” (50c7–d1 *en d’oun tōi paronti*) and the stage “before heaven came to be” (52d2–4 *kai prin ouranon genesthai*).¹⁰ Furthermore, the precosmic Horus and his perfect cosmic counterpart stand in the same ontological relationship as the two kinds of images postulated in Plato’s *Sophist* (235c–236c, 264d–268d). The former is a distorted “semblance and apparition,” *eidolon* and *phantasma* (*De Is. et Os.* 373C), capable of reproducing only the external resemblance to its model, while the latter is a “likeness” or *eikōn*, a well-founded image endowed with a structural resemblance to the preordered pattern of ideas (373A–B).

And yet, Plutarch does not consider Plato’s two-stage cosmogony a sufficient interpretive key for the double procreation by Isis and Osiris – rather, the Platonic model is engaged in the process of reinterpretation from the perspective of Aristotle’s theory of causation. The use of Aristotle as an ‘intertext’ is particularly visible in Plutarch’s treatment of the complex figure of Isis. Plato’s identification of the lowest principle as “space” (*khōra*), which he further explains as the “receptacle to becoming” and compares it to the “mother” of all creation, provides a promising yet incomplete solution in that it fails to account for Isis’ erotic yearning for the divine consort. Aristotle’s concept of matter, *hylē*, turns out to be a better analogue inasmuch as it conveys all of Isis’ conflicting drives – her desire to procreate and her inability to achieve this goal without the male consort, her natural longing for the most beautiful outcome and her innate resistance to the consort’s directive power. And indeed, matter in Aristotle’s system is simultaneously a “joined cause” of

10 In the first passage (50c7–d1), Plato says that, “in the present situation (ἐν δ’ οὖν τῷ παρόντι) we must conceive three things – that which becomes (τὸ γιγνόμενον), that in which it becomes (τὸ ἐν ᾧ γίγνεται), and that in whose likeness what becomes is born (τὸ δ’ ὅθεν ἀφομοιούμενον φύεται τὸ γιγνόμενον) ... and compare the recipient (τὸ δεχόμενον) to a mother, that from which (τὸ δ’ ὅθεν) to a father, and the nature between them (τῆν δὲ μεταξύ τούτων φύσιν) to their offspring”. In the second passage (52d2–4), Plato again enumerates the three levels of reality, but in a different wording – “being (εἶ), space (χώραν), and becoming (γένεσιν)” – adding that these “three distinct things existed even before the heaven [viz. the visible universe] came to be (καὶ πρὶν οὐρανὸν γενέσθαι)”. Plutarch proposes a similar diachronic reading of Plato’s account of creation in his *On Generation of the Soul of the Timaeus*. The only difference in comparison with *On Isis and Osiris* is the problematic identification of *genesis* with the pre-cosmic soul:

“Before the heaven came to be” (*Tim.* 52d2–4) “Present situation” (*Tim.* 50c7–d1)
 ὄν τὸ ὅθεν
 γένεσις (pre-cosmic soul) τὸ γιγνόμενον (visible universe)
 χώρα τὸ ἐν ᾧ

11 See, for example, *The Contending of Horus and Seth* 3.7 ff. Another example of Plutarch’s disagreement with the *Timaeus* is the identification of the substrate upon which the rational regulating principle (Osiris) exerts its ordering activity. In the *Timaeus*, the

form, “like a mother ... yearning for what is divine and good” (*Phys.* 1.9.192a13–14, 17–18), and the unruly factor resisting the mastery of form (*Gen. an.* 4.3.769b13 *tês d’ hulês ou kratoumenês*). This is why, in the passages describing the precosmic Isis and her first creation, the elder Horus, Aristotle’s discourse of deformity plays such a prominent role. Plutarch describes Isis as “matter lacking of itself in Good (*De Is. et Os.* 57.374D *tên hulên ... endean menousan autên kath’ hautên*) but “having an innate love” for a better principle (53.372E *ekhei de sumphuton erôta*); and also as “imperfect by nature” (54.373C *phusei ... atelê*), that is, devoid of rational purpose, and thereby responsible for the premature birth of a deformity, the elder Horus, whom Egyptian theology and iconography portrays as “feeble in his limbs”.¹¹

The complexity of Plutarch’s interpretive strategy is given below, in a tabular form. In order to elucidate the Egyptian account of the precosmic procreation of the “deformed” elder Horus, Plutarch first brings in the homologous tripartite structure of the universe “before heaven came to be” from the *Timaeus*. This Platonic schema of representation is further revised and amplified through the intercession of a partly compatible *substrate-and-opposites* model borrowed from Aristotle. The end result of this juxtaposition of heterogeneous yet analogous inputs is a sort of palimpsest in which, in spite of all the excisions and erasures, there still appear traces, some tenuous and some clearly visible, of all the previous hands – of Egyptian sages as well as of Plato and Aristotle.

<i>Egyptian Lore</i>	<i>Plato, Tim. 52d2–4</i>	<i>Aristotle</i>	<i>Plutarch</i>
<i>(Gods in Rhea’s Womb)</i>	<i>(Before Heaven Came to Be)</i>	<i>(Matter Not Mastered)</i>	<i>(Before the Visible World)</i>
Osiris	Being	Form	Intelligible Realm, Reason
The Elder Horus	Becoming	Deformity	First Becoming (<i>phantasma</i>)
Isis	Space	Matter: (i) Form-Yearning (ii) Unruly	Matter (<i>hulê</i>): (i) Animate (<i>ouk apsukhon</i>) (ii) Imperfect (<i>atelês</i>)

substrate that the demiurge provides with “a distinct configuration by means of shapes and numbers” consists of the “vestiges” of elements (*Tim.* 53b2–5); Plutarch, in his turn, identifies this substrate with Isis–“matter” (*hulê*). If his objective was indeed a perfect

Deformity as ‘paradigm’

Besides acting as an ‘intertext’ smoothing over the differences between the Egyptian and Platonic accounts of the precosmic stage, Aristotle’s discourse of natural production and deformity plays yet another important role in the above-discussed passage from *On Isis and Osiris* – it functions as a ‘paradigm’, a term by which Plato and his ancient followers meant what we usually call analogy. As Plato explains the meaning of this term in the *Statesman* (277d1–3),

It is a hard thing ... to indicate (*eindeknusthai*) any of the greater subjects without using illustrative models (*paradeigmata*). For each of us knows everything in a dream as it were and at the same time, again, is ignorant of everything with his waking mind.

Plato’s “third genus” or “space” (*khôra*) is one such “greater subject,” something we look upon “as in a dream” (*Tim.* 52b3–4 *pros ho dê kai oneiropoloumen blepontes*) because we cannot comprehend it by senses or grasp it by intellection. Space is the subject that belongs to the realm of “bastard reasoning” (52b3 *hapton logismôi tini nothôi*), in which the logical methods of division and demonstration must give way to the juxtaposition of such metaphorical expressions as “receptacle” (*dekhomenon*), “place” (*topos*), “nurse” (*tithênê*), “mother” (*mêtêr*), “winnowing basket” (*organon seismon parekhon*), or the “mold” used in the lost-wax method of casting bronze (*ekmageion*). A similar interpretive problem arises when one attempts to explain the production of elemental vestiges moving to-and-fro in this unfathomable space. The problem is, in short, that the only two principles capable of triggering this production, *viz.* form and space, are posited in the *Timaeus* as incompatible opposites which, insofar as they are eternal and unchanging, cannot themselves occasion any change or becoming. Plato’s solution is non-committal, more the statement of a problem than a satisfactory rational solution. “The shifting copies of the eternal things,” he says, “are impressions taken from them and stamped into space in a strange manner that is hard to express” (50c5–6 *tropon tina dusphraston kai thaumaston*). Plutarch’s solution in *On the Generation of the Soul* is what one would expect from an ‘orthodox’ Platonist, in that he posits space and form as contraries that allow an intermediate principle. This principle he identifies as the “self-moving” irrational soul, capable of “taking impressions from the eternal things,” “stamping them” into the receptacle, and setting them into disorderly

congruence of the Egyptian myth with the *Timaeus*, then the substrate undergoing rational remodeling should correspond to the elder Horus, not to Isis.

motion.¹² In *On Isis and Osiris*, however, Plutarch resorts to Aristotle's theory of causation as a more fitting 'paradigm' inasmuch as it can account for the interaction between form and its substrate without introducing an intermediate. According to the first book of Aristotle's *Physics*, a thing's becoming is due to the work of only two principles, *viz.* form and matter, which act like "joint causes of things which come to be" (1.9.192a13–14). The details of this interaction are further elaborated in Aristotle's account of biological reproduction. The semen, which acts both as the form and efficient cause, encounters the menses, *alias* the matter, yet does not mix up with it – just as, in Aristotle's words, "nothing passes from the carpenter into the pieces of timber" (*Gen. an.* 1.22.730b8–25). The work of the semen is to "cause by its power (*dunamis*) the matter and nourishment in the female to take on a particular character" (730a15–18), that is, to actualize the residue's potential without becoming part of the developing embryo.¹³

Conclusion

Besides showing his preference for the rationalist interpretation of 'prodigies' (*Publ.* 21), Plutarch's appropriation of the Aristotelian account of deformity (*anapêria*) as both an 'intertext' (*De Is. et Os.* 54) and heuristic 'paradigm' (*ibid.*) is also a good illustration of his overall exegetical approach to the work of Plato, the venerable teacher – a text not only to scrutinize but also to develop its virtualities by resorting to compatible elements from the writings of worthy successors. For Plutarch, the reconstitution of Plato's original intent (*dianoia*) cannot be achieved without referring to the series of intervening texts as the only available means of closing the gap between the historical and cultural situation of the master and that of his faithful interpreter. Plutarch's hermeneutics thus goes beyond a mere cross-referential reading of the Platonic corpus (*Platonem ex Platone*) by engaging it in an ongoing critical dialogue with past exegetical achievements.

12 "Of things that do exist, neither that which is good nor what is without quality [i.e., space identified with the unqualified primary matter] is likely to have occasioned the evil's being or coming to be ... Plato did not overlook the third principle and capacity, which is intermediate between matter and god" (*De an. procr.* 6.1015B τὴν μεταξύ τῆς ὕλης καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ τρίτην ἀρχὴν καὶ δύναμιν). This third principle acts simultaneously as a "transmitter" of forms (24.1024C διαδιδούσαν ἐνταῦθα τὸς ἐκεῖθεν εἰκόνας) and as the irrational power stirring a disorderly motion of their "images" within the material substrate.

13 See Lloyd, 92. As the closest analogy to this process Aristotle adduces the curdling of milk by means of rennet or fig-juice, which "sets the bulky portion of milk" (1.20.729a9–21; 2.4.739b21–33), but does not remain in it.

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Due testi a confronto:
De Iside 352F–353E – *Quaestio convivalis* VIII,
8 728C–730F.

Paola Volpe Cacciatore

1. «Tu chiedi¹ in base a quale ragionamento Pitagora si sia astenuto dal mangiare carne:² io invece domando, pieno di meraviglia, con quale disposizione, animo e pensiero il primo uomo abbia toccato con la bocca il sangue e sfiorato con le labbra la carne di un animale ucciso (...) e abbia altresì chiamato cibi prelibati quelle membra che solo prima muggivano, gridavano e si muovevano e vedevano (...) (*de esu carn.* 993A).³

Tali parole, rivolte ad un interlocutore anonimo, mi permettono di parlare del vegetarianismo di Plutarco alla luce della sua adesione, soprattutto negli anni giovanili, alle dottrine pitagoriche. Ad esse egli rivolge la sua attenzione in più di un'occasione anche quando – come nel caso del *de Iside* e della *Quaestio* in oggetto – esse preludono ad un discorso più ampio di natura religiosoteologica (*de Iside*) e di natura filosofica (*quaestio* VIII 8). In questi due opuscoli, infatti, il filosofo di Cheronea analizza i motivi per i quali gli Egizi, oltre ai Pitagorici,⁴ non mangiano pesce e tendono ad escludere dai loro cibi il sale.

2. Vorrei a questo punto partire da un frammento stoico (*SVF* II 722 = p. 688 Radice) tramandato da Filone (*de mundi opificio* § 66, vol. I, p. 21, 21 Wende): «pertanto i primi animali che generò furono i pesci, i quali partecipano più della sostanza fisica che di quella psichica e, quindi, sono in qualche modo sia animati sia inanimati, esseri animati dotati di movimento, in quanto il seme del principio psichico è stato infuso in loro al solo scopo della conservazione dei corpi, come si dice che il sale viene aggiunto alle carni per evitarne il facile deterioramento».

Ci sono in questo frammento elementi della discussione presenti nei due opuscoli plutarchei: prima di tutto l'ambiguità della natura dei pesci, che sono da considerarsi 'animati e inanimati' (ζῷα καὶ οὐ ζῷα) e, se inanimati, comunque dotati di movimento. A questo si aggiunge la priorità in essi della

1 È proprio dello stile retorico rivolgersi al lettore con la seconda persona singolare; cfr. Bultmann, 65; Aune, 304.

2 Per una sintesi della storia degli studi sul pitagorismo cfr. Burkert.

3 Traduzione di Santese (ved. Inglese-Santese).

4 Cfr. Becchi 2004.

sostanza fisica, in quanto lo ψυχοειδές serve soltanto alla conservazione dei corpi (τῶν σωμάτων διαμονή). E non è neppure un caso che il pesce venga collegato al sale (altro elemento del mare) necessario per la conservazione delle carni.

Nel *de Iside* (352F–353E) Plutarco ricorda come i sacerdoti egiziani avessero tanto disgusto per ciò che è eccessivo per natura (Οἱ δ' ἱερεῖς οὕτω δυσχεραίνουσι τὴν τῶν περιπτωμάτων φύσιν) che «rifiutano la maggior parte dei legumi e la carne di montone e di maiale (...) solo durante i periodi di purificazioni escludono dai loro cibi perfino il sale» (καὶ τοὺς ἄλλας τῶν σιτίων ἐν ταῖς ἀγνεύαις ἀφαιρεῖν).⁵ Di ciò si spiega il motivo citando un frammento di Aristagora (*FrGrHist* III C Jacoby, 608 F 7):⁶ il sale è un elemento impuro perché dentro di esso molti animaletti, come intrappolati, muoiono.

Ma – sembra dire Plutarco – altri sono i motivi che spingono i sacerdoti a tenersi lontani dall'uso del pesce,⁷ anche quando al nono giorno del primo mese tutti gli altri mangiano pesce arrostito dinanzi alla porta della loro casa. «Sono due le ragioni da loro addotte: la prima assai strana è di carattere religioso (...) perché rientra nelle considerazioni teologiche su Osiride e Tifone, l'altra, più evidente e facile da capire, sostiene che il pesce non è un cibo necessario e neppure naturale». A sostegno di ciò si cita Omero, che non fa mangiare pesce né ai raffinati Feaci né agli abitanti di Itaca, che pure sono abitanti di un'isola. E neppure Odisseo ne mangiò finché non giunse al limite estremo del bisogno.⁸ Gli Egiziani, dunque, ritengono che il mare è infetto per sua stessa natura e che è posto fuori dai confini del mondo: «non sarebbe, cioè, una sua parte o un suo elemento, bensì un residuo estraneo, corrotto e ammorbato» (οὐδὲ μέρος οὐδὲ στοιχεῖον ἀλλ' οἶον περίπτωμα διεφθорὸς καὶ νοσῶδες – 353E).

Fin qui il *de Iside* che, in qualche modo, può, in questa sua parte, considerarsi un prologo a quanto Plutarco, con i suoi interlocutori, dice nella *quaestio* VIII, 8.⁹ Anche qui si parte dalla filosofia pitagorica e dai suoi divieti alimentari, ma la discussione viene ampliata e, per così dire, problematizzata. I Pitagorici coevi di Plutarco si astenevano dal mangiare i pesci perché essi – come gli dei – sono muti¹⁰ con quella loro voce ἰλλομένη e καθειργομένη («legata e costretta»). Una motivazione che sembra essere oscura e, perciò, di difficile comprensione. È Teone a riportare il discorso su un terreno più

5 Trad. di Cavalli (ved. Del Corno-Cavalli).

6 È forse Aristagora di Mileto, vissuto nel IV sec. a. C.

7 Plutarco ricorda ad esempio che tra gli egiziani gli abitanti di Ossirinco non mangiano i pesci presi all'amo, perché considerano l'ossirinco, un crostaceo, animale sacro.

8 *Od.* IV, 368 ss.; XII, 331 ss.

9 Per la *quaestio* VIII, 8 cfr. Teodorsson, 238–258.

10 La ἐχεμυθία era simbolo della virtù pitagorica, qui rappresentata dai comportamenti di Lucio che aveva ascoltato senza biasimo e senza lode; cfr. Teodorsson, 239–240.

filosofico e storico, sulla scia di quanto Erodoto aveva già narrato nella sua opera (II, 37).¹¹ Questi, dopo aver contestato a Lucio l'origine etrusca di Pitagora come μέγ' ἔργον καὶ οὐ ῥάδιον,¹² afferma che egli aveva riproposto alcuni culti egiziani¹³ come, ad esempio, quello di non seminare né mangiare fave, di astenersi dai pesci e da tutto quanto è mescolato all'acqua del mare.¹⁴ Molte sono le motivazioni ma una sola è la verità: «l'odio per il mare nasce solo dal fatto che è cosa diversa da noi (ἄσύμφυλον) e allotria (ἄλλότριον) e piuttosto è un elemento del tutto nemico alla natura degli uomini (μᾶλλον δ' ὄλως πολέμιον τῆ φύσει τοῦ ἀνθρώπου στοιχεῖον). D'altronde gli stessi dei non si nutrono dei frutti del mare, come invece gli astri a detta degli Stoici:¹⁵ «Essi sostengono che il sole è acceso e alimentato dal mare e che invece sono le acque di fonti e paludi a trasmettere alla luna un'esalazione dolce e morbida» (*de Is.* 366E).

E anche qui, come nel *de Iside*, si fa riferimento al mito di Osiride,¹⁶ che, nato nella regione di sinistra, muore in quella di destra. Silla a questo punto riprende il tema più strettamente filosofico, ricordando come i Pitagorici «si cibassero delle offerte sacrificali, dopo aver offerto le primizie agli dei, ma nessun pesce era adatto al sacrificio» (729D).¹⁷ Non di carattere religioso, ma

11 Cfr. *de Is.* 352F; *quaest. conv.* 729A.

12 Ma Lucio, discepolo di Moderato di Gades, «aveva rivendicato patriotticamente l'origine etrusca di Pitagora e aveva proclamato con orgoglio che solo gli etruschi conservavano e seguivano fedelmente i *symbola* di Pitagora»; cfr. Centrone, 174.

13 In *de Is.* 367F Plutarco ricorda come il 17 del mese, giorno della morte di Osiride, venga chiamato dai Pitagorici «interposizione» e come venga in generale detestato tale numero, che cade tra il 16 che è un quadrato e il 18 che è un rettangolo e soli fra i numeri a formare figure piane che abbiano il perimetro uguale all'area; il 17 si pone come ostacolo fra loro; cfr. Hani, 382. Circa i rapporti con gli Egiziani Isocrate (*Busir.* 28 = Pythag. 14 A 4 Diels-Kranz) testimonia che Pitagora, recatosi in Egitto e divenuto discepolo degli Egiziani, per primo portò ai Greci la filosofia e si distinse particolarmente rispetto a tutti gli altri per occuparsi di sacrifici e riti religiosi.

14 Cfr. Ovid. *Met.* XV, 108; XVI, 60 ss. e Gell. IV, 11, 1 «Un'antica falsa opinione si diffuse e acquistò credito, che cioè il filosofo Pitagora non usasse cibarsi di animali ed ugualmente si astenesse dal mangiar fave (...) Ma il musico Aristosseno (...) dice che di nessun legume Pitagora faceva più spesso uso che delle fave» (cfr. Timpanaro Cardini, p. 47).

15 Cfr. *EM s. v.* ἥλιος = *SVF* I, 121, p. 66 Radice «Nella forma alios o elios deriva da ἄλς – ἄλος. Gli studiosi della natura sostengono che il sole tira su l'acqua del mare; è infatti dal mare che viene l'umidità. Per cui anche Posidone viene dal far sgorgare acqua da bere alla luce della fiaccola o meglio del sole». Cfr. pure Aetius Plac. II, 15, 2 = *SVF* II, 690 = p. 678 Radice «Eraclito e gli Stoici sostengono che gli astri traggono alimento dai vapori terrestri». Gli Stoici sostengono che il sole è acceso e alimentato dal mare e che invece sono le acque di fonti e paludi a trasmettere alla luna un'esalazione dolce e morbida (*de Is.* 367E).

16 Cfr. *de Is.* 365B–366A; 371B; *quaest. conv.* VIII, 8 729B.

17 Cfr. Porph. *Vita Plot.* 36.

antropofagico è il motivo per il quale i Pitagorici si astenevano dal pesce e, a sostegno della sua tesi, Plutarco stesso, che partecipa alla discussione, ricorda un episodio della vita di Pitagora. «La “sospensione delle ostilità” osservata da Pitagora e dai Pitagorici nei riguardi dei pesci perché non appartengono alla nostra specie è cosa strana e ridicola. Anzi si racconta che una volta Pitagora, dopo aver comprato una retata di pesci, ordinò di aprire la rete e non perché disdegnasse i pesci come ἄλλόφυλοι e πολέμιοι, ma perché ne pagò in tal modo il riscatto come si trattasse di amici e familiari che erano stati imprigionati» (729D–E).¹⁸ I Pitagorici piuttosto hanno per questi animali un profondo rispetto, lo stesso che avevano gli antichi, i quali ritenevano atto empio e scellerato uccidere e mangiare animali innocenti. Ma furono costretti e, solo per necessità¹⁹ e per ordine dell'oracolo di Delfi, uccisero gli animali che funestavano le messi²⁰ «e tuttavia tremando e temendo eseguivano e facevano sacrifici (ἔρδειν ... καὶ ῥέζειν), poiché ritenevano il sacrificare una creatura viva un atto decisamente empio» (729F). Una necessità che spinse ad immolare galline e conigli, ma sarebbe oggi possibile «estrarre l'amo della sarcofagia impigliato e conficcato nella cupidigia del piacere?»²¹ Il sacrificio cruento è descritto da Plutarco, oserei dire, con grande partecipazione in *de def. orac.* (435B), ove egli stigmatizza il comportamento degli uomini più crudeli dello stesso Ciclope che almeno non dice di far sacrifici agli dei, bensì solo a se stesso e «alla sua pancia, divinità suprema» (Eur. *Cycl.* 335).

E perché mai distruggere quegli animali che non respirano come noi, che non bevono la nostra acqua, che non distruggono le messi della terra? E poi quale soddisfazione danno al ventre quei pesci così piccoli? È solo il piacere della gola a spingere gli uomini a gettare la rete, che turba la profondità del mare, per prendere all'amo la triglia, che di certo non è «devastatrice di messi», lo scaro, che non è «consumatore di vigneti» o i lupi marini, che non sono «raccoglitori di semi». ²² Ben lo sapeva Omero – ritorna qui un episodio solo accennato nel *de Iside* (353E) –, che narra come i Greci, accampati presso lo stretto dell'Ellesponto, non fecero mai uso di pesce e così i compagni di Odisseo, che, finché ebbero pane, non gettarono mai la rete: «a quando tutti i

18 Cfr. *quaest. conv.* 727B; *de cap. ex inim. ut.* 91C; Porph. *Vita Plot.* 7; Iamb. *Protr.* 21, 108, 15 Pistelli. Ved. Haussleiter, 97–108.

19 Circa il rapporto ἀνάγκη–ἄδικία cfr. Santese, 31 ss. Il tema dell'utilità dei singoli esseri viventi che obbediscono ad un τέλος voluto dalla Provvidenza è pure nel *de Stoicorum repugnantibus*. Per la concezione antropocentrica di origine stoica e zenoniana tutto era creato in funzione dell'uomo; cfr. *de defec. orac.* 435C.

20 Cfr. Ovid. *Fast.* I 349 s. «*Prima Ceres avidae gavisa est sanguine porcae / ulta suas merita caede nocentis opes*».

21 Cfr. *de esu cam.* 996E. Con qualche differenza il concetto è pure espresso in *quaest. conv.* VIII, 8 730A.

22 Cfr. *de esu cam.* 994A.

cibi vennero meno» (*Od.* XII 329), poco prima che assalissero i buoi del sole (...) «con ami ricurvi: la fame affliggeva il loro ventre» (*Od.* XII 332)» (730C–D) pescarono, consumando così un cibo gustoso sì, ma necessario.

Conclude la discussione Nestore, che ricorda come anche i sacerdoti di Poseidone a Leptis ieromnemoni non mangiano pesce e chiamano il dio φυτόλιμος, ossia colui che dà la vita, ritenendo così che l'uomo nasca ἐκ τῆς ὑγρῶς ... οὐσίας. L'astenersi dal pesce trova così una motivazione diversa, anzi opposta a quella proposta nel *de Iside* e nel testo fin qui letto. Il mare non è più allotrio, ma diviene l'ἀρχή dell'umanità e il pesce è ὁμογενής²³ καὶ σύντροφος, perché in un tempo remoto gli uomini erano nutriti come i pesci e solo quando furono in grado di difendere sé stessi lasciarono il mare e abitarono la terra. E tuttavia così Anassimandro (12 A 30 Diels-Kranz) afferma τῶν ἀνθρώπων πατέρα καὶ μητέρα κοινὸν ἀποφήνας τὸν ἰχθῦν διέβαλεν πρὸς τὴν βρῶσιν (730F).

3. Come si è tentato di dimostrare, il *de Iside* e la *quaestio* VIII, 8 riprendono temi comuni, soprattutto nel punto in cui si discute di Pitagora e degli usi degli Egiziani. Ma vorrei sottolineare un altro aspetto. Nel Cheronese vi era la consapevolezza – già presente nel *de sollertia animalium* – che anche le bestie sono «in possesso di una forma di razionalità, pur se imperfetta rispetto a quella umana, in quanto priva di quella capacità di giudizio, che è prerogativa esclusiva dell'uomo, e di quella correttezza di ragionamento che spesso fa difetto all'uomo».²⁴ A tale consapevolezza si univa lo stretto vegetarianismo, che egli aveva raccomandato sia nel citato *de sollertia animalium* sia nel *de esu carniū*,²⁵ dove esso, accusando la ὕβρις, il κόρος e la πολυτέλεια dell'uomo, «si appoggia su ogni sorta di motivazione, in particolare sulla 'palingenesi' pitagorica».²⁶ I pesci, d'altro canto, rivestivano anche un valore religioso per chi, come lui, aveva esaltato la supremazia della religione egiziana di ispirazione prevalentemente naturalistica rispetto alla greca antropomorfa (cfr. Boulogne). Un'eco di tale supremazia si può leggere in Giordano Bruno, per il quale «l'Egitto <è> la giovinezza e la freschezza, l'origine: presso gli Egizi, infatti, sempre era in atto la comunicazione fra gli uomini e la divinità, ma adoravano la divinità come fosse Giove. Gli Egizi sapevano che ogni cosa ha la divinità latente in sé».²⁷

23 Senocrate (fr. 252, 267 Isnardi Parente) fece suo il principio della ὁμογένεια di tutti gli esseri viventi, condannando così l'uso delle carni. Cfr. Becchi 2001, 126.

24 Becchi 2001, 119.

25 *De esu carn.* 998C «Ma anche se qualcuno, per di più, dimostrasse la dottrina della trasmigrazione delle anime in altri corpi e provasse che l'essere che ora è razionale può diventare irrazionale e quello ora selvaggio mansueto (...) ciò non varrà a distogliere l'elemento sfrenato di coloro che hanno scelto l'intemperanza» (trad. Santese).

26 Babut, 78

27 Bassi, 58.

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Plutarch in Crete¹

George W. M. Harrison and Jane Francis

Plutarch had Platonist, Pythian, and personal reasons to be interested in Crete. One of Plato's dialogues, the *Minos*, or *On Law*, takes place on Crete, in which the merits of Minos as a law giver are considered, and where Socrates states that the best laws are from Crete (319A–320C). The summation of Plato's career, the *Laws*, has Crete as its dramatic setting, and the constitution that Plato had most on his mind was that of Gortyn (4.708A). It is possible to verify partially Plato's knowledge of the Gortynian law code since the earliest sections of the code were inscribed on part of the peribolos wall of the Temple to Pythian Apollo at the site, and those of the late 6th to early 5th centuries were displayed in the Greek agora (Willets 1953). It was placed in its current location in the annular passage of the enclosed theatre as part of the reconstructions undertaken during the reign of Trajan, that is, about the time Plutarch probably visited Crete (Guarducci, *Inscriptiones Creticae* IV.331).

A further link with Crete for Plutarch comes from Delphi, where he was head priest to Apollo. This city's port and lower town were thought by the ancients to have been settled by Cretans (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 3. 470), who were chosen by Apollo himself to be his priests (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 3. 478). The story might not be entirely fabricated since the archaeological record preserves Cretan pottery in the earliest settlement phases of Delphi.² Plutarch cites a source in *Greek Questions* (298F–299A #35) that Cretans, including descendants of the Athenians sent to Minos, who had been designated to the temple of Apollo at Delphi were let go, their freedom granted by the process used by the temple itself in historical times; manumissions through fictitious sale are preserved on the terrace wall of the Temple (cp., e.g., Pouilloux, nos. 479–509 *et passim*).³

1 Francis was responsible for the archaeological content and Harrison for the philological. We are deeply appreciative to Tasos Nikolaidis for all of his Herculean efforts (although Herakles did not visit Crete), as well as his colleagues Stavros Frangoulidis, Michael Paschalis, and Yannis Tzifopoulos for their hospitality.

2 Morgan (pp. 45–6 and 143–4) considers it more likely that Cretan bronzes were imported to Corinth and made their way to Delphi indirectly; cf. Malkin (pp. 69–77) on Cretan import pottery.

3 This is implicit in the action of Euripides' *Ion* which has Delphi as its setting. The inscriptions date from the fifth through the first centuries B.C., and Plutarch (*Life of*

Finally, and perhaps more personally for Plutarch, a funerary inscription from Chersonisos (*Inscript. Cret.* I.vii.21) in the north-central part of Crete preserves a name specific to Plutarch's family.⁴ The only other occurrence of this name is in the region of Chaironeia, Plutarch's hometown.

Plutarch's longest sustained focus on Crete is the *Life of Theseus* (15–20), but remarks about the island appear in other *Lives* and in the *Moralia*. There are also references to Cretans off the island, such as the Cretan archers who served the various Hellenistic dynasts and Cretans as staff officers and diplomats in their armies, which occur frequently in Plutarch's later Greek *Lives*. This study, however, restricts itself to Plutarch's knowledge of the island of Crete itself, and specifically that which might be attributable to personal observation or experience. Plutarch's accuracy will be tested through a consideration of his comments and discussions of Crete against epigraphical, archaeological, and numismatic evidence as well as accounts of other travellers.

Plutarch's own writings confirm that he was in Crete. In *Beasts are Rational* (989E), the author considers that few animal species are temperate in their desires. The example he chooses is the envy he felt looking at his friend's holiday attire when they came upon each other in Crete:

τοιγαροῦν σ' ὡς μέμνημαι ἐν Κρήτῃ θεασάμενος ἀμπεχόνῃ κεκοσμημένον πανηγυρικῶς, οὐ τὴν φρόνησιν ἐζήλουν οὐδὲ τὴν ἀρετὴν ἀλλὰ τοῦ χιτῶνος εἰργασμένου περιπτῶς τὴν λεπτότητα καὶ τῆς χλαμύδος οὔσης ἀλουργοῦ τὴν οὐλότητα καὶ τὸ κάλλος ἀγαπῶν...

Then chancing upon you, as I recall, in Crete decked out festively in casual attire, I did not envy you your intellect or virtue but I was admiring the elegance of the *chiton* you were wearing and the weave and beauty of the purple *dhlamys*.

Plutarch does not give a location for this meeting, except to say that it occurs on Crete, and while it is an off-hand comment whose purpose is to demonstrate self-restraint in humans, the reference to the island not only places him there but also suggests that the encounter actually took place. It is a true tale rather than a fictitious anecdote contrived to illustrate the point under discussion.

There is no specific information as to when Plutarch took his trip to Crete, whether this was one journey or if he returned several times to the island. An indication of at least one trip to Crete might be found in *Table Talks* V. 5 (678C–679E), where Plutarch asks why people insist on inviting large numbers of people to dinner, many of whom are barely known to the host, it at all. The speakers are Plutarch and his grandfather, and Plutarch begins

Theseus 16) cites Aristotle's *Constitution of the Bottiaean*s as his source for Cretan settlement at Delphi.

4 *Inscript, Cret.* I.vii.21: Πλούταρχα / Σωσαμενῶ / ἀνδρὶ ἀνε<κ>λητός (Ploutarcha set this up to Sosamenes, her husband).

(678C) by musing over the numerous dinners given in his honour on his return from Alexandria. It is likely that Plutarch took this trip to Egypt to research his *Isis and Osiris*, and it would be natural for him to visit Crete as part of this journey.⁵ The Libyan Sea between Crete and North Africa, the other part of the Roman province of *Crete and Cyrene*, was a frequent and well-known transport and travel route between Rome and Alexandria, and cargo ships frequently put into Crete for trade purposes, taking on water and supplies, and as refuge when storms and tricky currents made seafaring difficult.⁶ Plutarch would have known this, and his route to Egypt could well have included a stopover on Crete.

We do not know how long Plutarch spent on Crete, but he seems, on at least one visit, to have been there for a while. He discusses human sacrifice in *Obsolescence of Oracles* (417E), after witnessing a rite signifying the beheading of Molus when he stayed on the island for a ‘considerable time’: ὥσπερ ἐν Κρήτῃ χρόνον συχνὸν διάγων. Συχνός, however, is a difficult word to quantify precisely. It is longer than μακρός, but how much longer is impossible to determine. Other references are vaguer. He refers to specific Cretan towns like Chersonisos and Lyttos (*Bravery of Women* 247D), although there is no evidence that he visited them personally. He also describes things that he saw on Crete, but without specific place names attached.

Plutarch must have gained some experience of Cretan history and contemporary life, but much of what he writes about is based largely on the island’s mythologies, and he is much more forthcoming about pre-literary Crete. For instance, he states in *Life of Theseus* (1. 5):

εἶη μὲν οὖν ἡμῖν ἐκκαθαιρόμενον λόγῳ τὸ μυθῶδες ὑπακοῦσαι καὶ λαβεῖν ὄψιν· ὅπου δ’ ἂν αὐθαδῶς τοῦ πιθανοῦ περιφρονῆ καὶ μὴ δέχῃται τὴν πρὸς τὸ εἰκὸς μεῖξιν, εὐγνωμόνων ἀκροατῶν δεησόμεθα καὶ πρᾶως τὴν ἄρχαιολογίαν προσδεχομένων.

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- 5 Aside from the *Isis and Osiris*, detailed knowledge of Egypt is apparent in Plutarch’s *Banquet of the Seven Sages* and his *Natural Questions*, some of whose questions have close parallels in the *Natural Questions* of Seneca, who spent his adolescent years in Egypt. Trying to discern when, how, and why Plutarch inserted himself in his own works has been investigated by Russell.
- 6 Pliny provides sailing times for the Rome to Alexandria route that include a stop over in Crete (*HN* 19.3: the record for an outbound journal was six days and nine days for the return. Three of Plutarch’s famous older contemporaries laid over in Crete: St. Paul’s ship was blown off course and landed on the south coast (*Acts of the Apostles* 27); Apollonius of Tyana booked passage from either Gytheion or Methone after visiting Sparta, sailing east from Chania, past Herakleion/Knossos and disembarking at Lendas after sailing around the island on the east (Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 34); Seneca, returning from Egypt of which his uncle was governor during the reign of Tiberius, stopped in Crete, presumably on the south coast since his point of origin was Alexandria (*Consolation to Helvia* 19.4–7).

May it be possible for me to submit the mythical, scrubbing it clean, to reason, and that it receive the appearance of history. But when it resolutely despises what is credible and will not receive a mixture of what is acceptable, we require readers [to be] well disposed, responding kindly to *archaeology*.⁷

None of what follows in this text, however, can be substantiated by historical, epigraphical, or archaeological fact. Plutarch never presumed that he could make the accounts ‘historical’, something that is falsely attributed to him; rather, he only made a claim to give them the ‘appearance of history’ through adding a ‘mixture of what is acceptable,’ a subjective assessment, at best.⁸

Plutarch applies this approach to the labyrinth at Knossos (*Life of Theseus* 16); it is assumed he means the palace. He offers several explanations for the labyrinth, presumably to authenticate his own text: he cites Philochorus, who describes the labyrinth as no ordinary prison, and also Aristotle, from the *Constitution of the Bottiaians*, who states only that the Athenian youths were enslaved on Crete. Plutarch, however, does not provide his own interpretation, nor does he offer indicate which of his cited authorities he believes, nor does he reference anything he might have seen or heard if he made an excursion there.⁹ One part of the *Life of Theseus* where Plutarch can be seen to be more rational or ‘historical’ is his discussion of the Minotaur. He quotes Euripides on the Minotaur, lines that do not come from either of Euripides’ plays in which Theseus is a character, but which has been reasonably assigned to Euripides’ satyr play, *The Cretans*.¹⁰ Nonetheless, a satyr play is hardly a

7 The passage is near impossible to translate because it is so unlike Plutarch’s style elsewhere in mixed metaphors, non-parallel constructions, and the use of the royal ‘we’. In others of his works δέχομαι (translated ‘receive’) would have some significant association with προσδέχομαι (translated ‘responding’) which does not seem possible here.

8 Frost; see also, outside the scope of this study, Pelling 1999 and 2002.

9 Larmour’s assertion that the first alternative in Plutarch is always his choice is demonstrably wrong. Particles more often than not signal his preference, and at several points in his aetiological essays it can be shown that later copyists deleted at least one alternative, and possibly the one Plutarch preferred. See Harrison 2000a, 2000b.

What Plutarch might have seen had he visited the labyrinth is contestable since Pliny (*HN* 36.90) claimed that no traces of the Cretan labyrinth survived.

10 See the *Suppliants*, in which Theseus intervenes to retrieve the bodies of the seven against Thebes for burial, and the *Hippolytus*, which features also Phaedra but makes little reference to the Minotaur and Labyrinth. Cozzoli dates the satyr play to 448–28 BC and makes the attractive suggestion that it might be the companion play to the *Hippolytus*; Pechstein, however, does not include it among Euripides’ satyr plays. The single fragment is a prayer sung by the chorus to Zeus Cretagenes from which it is impossible to judge its affiliation. The scholiast to Aristophanes *Frogs* 849 sees that line in Aristophanes as a reference to Euripides’ play, which leads Cozzoli to infer that Apollodorus’ entry on Minos (*Bibliothèque* 3.1.3–4) reflects the content of Euripides’ play.

place to look for ‘myth cleansed into history’; in fact, Plutarch himself calls it ‘myth most tragical’ (*Life of Theseus* 15.2), his normal dismissal of tragedy.

Plutarch could well have visited Knossos and examined the labyrinth for himself, and indeed may have done so. It was certainly among the major tourist attractions in the Roman period: the travelling companions of Apollonius of Tyana visited Knossos in AD 46 (*Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 4.34.2), and Diodorus Siculus (5.66), writing during the last half of the first century B.C., gives the information that the Cretans still pointed out the tomb of Idomeneus and Meriones as part of the palace tour. That none of this is included in Plutarch’s *Life of Theseus* strongly suggests his desire to keep his story in a mythological, rather than historical, realm, despite his statement to the contrary.

Crete also occurs in Plutarch’s writings outside the *Life of Theseus*, and there are several instances where he mentions aspects of contemporary, second-century, Romano-Cretan life. These are often descriptive and reported as fact; none contain fantastic hybrid creatures, such as the Minotaur, or the activities of heroes, such as Theseus. He focuses specifically on three topics: ritual practices and associated paraphernalia; Cretan animals; and the foundation stories and history of various Cretan cities.

It is hardly surprising that Plutarch, the head priest at Delphi, was interested in ritual practices from other parts of the Greek and Roman world. In the *Obsolence of Oracles* (14: (*Moralia* 417D–E), he explores the connection between *dies nefasti*, or rituals of mourning and atonement, and observances involving eating raw meat, opening live victims, fasting, beating one’s breasts, and off-colour language.

ἔγνω ἄτοπὸν τινα τελουμένην ἑορτήν, ἐν ἣ καὶ εἶδωλον ἀνδρὸς
ἀκέφαλον ἀναδεικνύουσι καὶ λέγουσιν ὡς οὗτος ἦν Μόλος ὁ Μηριόνου
πατήρ, νύμφη δὲ πρὸς βίαν συγγεγόμενος ἀκέφαλος εὐρεθείη.

I gained knowledge of some fabulous festival in which they prominently display a headless effigy and they say that this represents Molus, father of Meriones. He was discovered headless after having raped a young woman.

In the catalogue of ships in the *Iliad* (Book II), Idomeneus, king of Crete, led its contingent of eighty ships, from his palace at Knossos; Molus was his uncle.¹¹ A metrical grave stele of the second century BC from Knossos with ten lines of elegiac couplets (*Inscript. Cret.* I.viii.33) ends with the mention of Idomeneus worshipped as a hero. His hero cult would have had some kind of festival but doubtless very different from that of Molus. The rite surrounding Idomeneus must have taken place at Knossos and so logically would the

11 According to the stema in Diodorus (5.78), Minos had two sons, Deucalion and Molus, each of whom had a son Idomeneus and Meriones, respectively.

worship of Molus, although it is impossible to state this categorically. The inscription, the only one on the island mentioning Idomeneus, makes it probable that his close relative would be remembered in the same place, but there is no worship directly connected with Molus or Meriones known from Knossos or elsewhere on Crete. Plutarch uses the first person here, and the aorist participle of γιγνώσκω makes it clear that he was at least an observer of this ritual, if not a participant.

Problematic in terms of the Cretan archaeological record is the lack of evidence for any statue such as that described by Plutarch. It is unknown, and Plutarch does not tell us, if the statue was originally fashioned without a head as Molus or was created as another male figure that then lost its head and was then re-assigned as Molus; Plutarch is the only extant evidence for this statue. Headless male statues are today frequent in Cretan museums but they are usually the result of a *damnatio memoriae*, late-antique or post-antique destructions, or as part of the Roman workshop traditions that created headless statues that could be customized upon purchase with the addition of a portrait head (Padgett, 2–5, no. 1). Plutarch is not even clear about the function of the statue, namely if the effigy took the place of a human sacrifice, such as is known from Catullus (*Carmen* 17) and elsewhere (Hughes, 79–92), or whether the statue and its rite were meant to re-inforce societal prohibitions about rape. He does not say if it was a cult statue or a dedicatory statue erected in a sanctuary he visited. A possible explanation might be that Plutarch conflated several mythological stories with an aniconic statue.

Another Cretan statue appears in the *Isis and Osiris* (381E), where a discussion of Egyptian iconographic representations brings up a comparison from the island:

ἐν Κρήτῃ Διὸς ἦν ἄγαλμα μὴ ἔχον ὠτα· τῷ γὰρ ἄρχοντι καὶ κυρίῳ
πάντων οὐδενὸς ἀκούειν προσήκει.

There was on Crete a statue of Zeus without ears: for the ruler and master of all things, it is appropriate that he listen to no one.

It is impossible to gauge whether the continuous force of the imperfect ἦν is intended, rather than the present. In the lines prior to this statement, Plutarch uses the aorist when referring to several Egyptian statues that were no longer extant at the time of his visit. It may be that Plutarch's imperfect in the sentence about the Cretan Zeus similarly implies a long-gone monument, but this cannot be confirmed from his language. He follows this passage with examples of Greek statues, the Athena at Athens and the Aphrodite at Elis, for which he uses the perfect for the act of their creation, but the aorist for the continuing importance of their symbolism. One cannot determine whether Cretan Zeus should be interpreted with the past Egyptian works or the Greek

examples, both of which were still standing in Plutarch's lifetime, and which he undoubtedly had seen.

No statue of an earless Zeus has been found on Crete, nor is there any surviving inscriptional evidence of a Zeus cult with earless statues. The dominant cult of Zeus on the island in Roman times and before is that of Zeus Cretagenes ('Cretan born'). There are also inscriptional references to Zeus Melikhios (*Inscript. Cret.* I.xvi.29: Lato), a healing cult associated at Peiraeus and on Sicily with the lesser Mysteries of Demeter (Shapiro, 87), and at Orchomenos (*Inscript. Cret.* VIII.3169) where Plutarch's family owned property, but the god is unexpected on an island like Crete that contained one of the major shrines to Aesculapius (Lendas). Zeus appears on Crete under numerous other epithets, such as Zeus Makhaneos (*Inscript. Cret.* I.viii.4a), who was worshipped at Knossos and at Argos, but none of these can be associated specifically with cult statues of the god without ears.

Plutarch is also intrigued, and rightly so, by the cult of Apollo on Crete. In *Table Talks* (8.4), he considers the different types of wreaths awarded at various athletic festivals, and why only some give a palm to the victor. The discussion turns to cults of Apollo (*Moralia* 724C) devoted to athletic and polemic prowess, as part of an argument indicating that Apollo is a god who can confer victory. The speaker mentions Cretans along with the Lacedaemonians, both of whom, he says, sacrifice to Apollo the Runner, or Δρόμαιος.

...πύκτη μὲν Ἀπόλλωνι Δελφούς, δρομαίῳ δὲ Κρήτας ἱστοροῦσι
 θύειν καὶ Λακεδαιμονίους.

...and they say that whereas the Delphinians sacrifice to Apollo the Boxer, the Cretans and Lacedaemonians sacrifice to Apollo the Runner.

Apollo is a favourite deity on Crete, and major cult centers to him exist across the island. The largest, most important, and most impressive in Plutarch's day was at Gortyn, Crete's administrative capital. The temple here, dedicated to Apollo Pythios, was founded in the 7th c. BC (*Di Vita*, 4) and continued in use through numerous architectural modifications until at least Theodosius' decree of AD 380 outlawing paganism (*CTh* XVI.10.12). Pythian Apollo temples also occur at Knossos, where epigraphical and numismatic remains indicate four different cult epithets: Apollo Delphios (*Inscript. Cret.* I.viii.8, 10, 11), Apollo Pythios (*Inscript. Cret.* I.viii.4a), Apollo Carneios (*Coldstream*, 101, no. 43), and Apollo Lykeios (*Inscript. Cret.* I.viii.15). This evidence suggests either three separate cult places, with Pythios and Delphios synonymous for the same cult, or a single Apollo sanctuary sustaining multiple facets of worship. Apollo Pythios is also present at Dreros (*Inscript. Cret.* I.ix.1) and at Lato (*Inscript. Cret.* I.xvi.5) in east Crete, where temples go back at least to the 7th century BC (*Myers*, 157). Dreros contains inscriptions also to Apollo Delphinios (*Inscript. Cret.* I.ix.1), and an inscription at Lebena (*Inscript.*

*Cret.*I.xvii.8) reveals the probable presence of the god there as well. Apollo is worshipped as Apollo Dekatophoros at Apollonia on the north coast, at least in 2nd century BC (*Inscript. Cret.* I.iii.1); this is an obscure name that is not completely understood and is without parallel elsewhere.

This passage is one of the few times that Plutarch uses the denominative for 'write history', but he neither cites a source nor is his account clear. Nowhere does the existing epigraphical evidence from Crete specifically indicate the presence of a cult to Apollo the Runner or Apollo Dromaios, and it is surprising that Plutarch, as the head priest of Apollo, would have gotten this wrong. As perplexing, since Cretans were known as archers and highly valued as mercenaries, Plutarch does not report on the island a cult of either Apollo Toxotes or Apollo Epikourios, known from other Dorian areas. Of the seven Cretan victors in the Olympic games, four were runners, and a fifth won for running with a javelin, so perhaps Cretan worship of Apollo Dromaios paid its dividends.¹²

The Lakonian cults of Apollo, also mentioned by Plutarch in this passage, produce Apollo Karneios, a cult imitating military training but with musical contests as well as athletic ones. A ram sacrifice gave the cult its name and its most abiding image of an Apollo with ram's horns similar to Zeus Ammon.¹³ On Crete, however, Apollo Karneios was worshipped at Knossos, and it may be that this was the Cretan cult meant by Plutarch, since these are the only cults of Apollo common to both Crete and Lacedaemonia. Perhaps the *dromios*, or running, was part of the larger games of the Karneios, and Plutarch used a linguistic shorthand to refer to both.

In the realm of the animals of Crete, Plutarch is particularly intrigued by what he calls the Cretan goat. We assume that he means the *agrimi*, the indigenous wild goat now a protected species. Images of these animals are known on Crete from the Bronze Age,¹⁴ and it is conceivable that Plutarch may have encountered them, at least in artistic form, if not in the flesh, during his visit to Crete. The *agrimia*, or their distinctive horns, also occur on Hellenistic coins from several Cretan cities, such as Lissos (Svoronos, pl. XX.35/6) and Polyrrhenia (Svoronos, pl. XXV.34).

12 A list of Olympic victors was compiled in late antiquity; see Stampolides and Tasoulas. The Cretan winners were Aigeidas (javelin, 448 BC), Damias from Chania (stade race, AD 25), Diognetos (boxing, fifth century BC), Ikadion (stade race for boys, 456 BC), Satolinos from Gortyn (stade race, 209 BC), Sotades (javelin, 384 BC, running with javelin, 380 BC), and one victor whose name is lost in the stade race (396 BC).

13 See Pettersson. The Carneia was also celebrated in Laconian colonies in Italy such as at Taranto, which preserves an inscribed red figure vase showing the rituals of this festival (Carpenter, 228).

14 For instance, the Peak Sanctuary rhyton from Zakro, in eastern Crete, now in the Herakleion Museum; Platon, plates. 47/48 and 105.

Stories about Cretan goats appear in two places in the *Moralia*, where Plutarch describes the expulsive properties of the Cretan herb dittany. The first is in *Cleverness of Animals* (*Moralia* 974D), just after Plutarch explained that elephants remove spears from each other with their trunks:

αἱ δὲ Κρητικαὶ αἴγες ὅταν τὸ δίκταμνον φάγωσιν, ἐκβάλλουσι τὰ τοξεύματα ῥαδίως καταμαθεῖν ταῖς ἐγκύοις τὴν βοτάνην παρέσχον ἐκπρωτικὴν δύναμιν ἔχουσιν.

Cretan goats, when they eat dittany, expel arrows easily thus they teach pregnant women that this herb induces abortion. They [goats] look for and pursue nothing other than dittany when wounded

In *Beasts are Rational* (*Moralia* 991E–F), Plutarch makes the observation that all animals provide for themselves in all areas, including health. There follows a series of rhetorical questions, one of which is:

τίς δὲ τὰς Κρητικὰς αἴγας ὅταν περιπέσωσι τοῖς τοξεύμασι, τὸ δίκταμνον διώκειν, οὐ βρωθέντος ἐκβάλλουσι τὰς ἀκίδας;

Who <has taught> Cretan goats, when pierced with arrows, to look for dittany so that they drop arrowheads after eating it?

Dittany is endemic to Crete and named for Mt. Dikte, the massif in eastern Crete where by tradition the infant Zeus was hidden. It is unlikely that dittany would actually perform such a miracle, or that Plutarch saw it happen, yet the story occurs also in other ancient authors (Vergil: *Aeneid* 12.412; Aristotle: *Historia Animalium* 9.61; Cicero: *de Natura deorum* 2.50; and Pliny: *NH* 13.115; 25.92; 27.141), so Plutarch should be forgiven for repeating an old wives' tale that focused on both the uniqueness of the Cretan goat and the famous medicinal qualities of Cretan herbs. Cretan medicinal herbs were highly esteemed by the Romans and received imperial price support (Frayn); many are named in the cures on *ex voto* tablets from the famous Aesculapium at Lendas on Crete.¹⁵ Plutarch was clearly impressed with dittany since he describes its properties in two places.

On the other hand, coins of some Hellenistic Cretan cities show a combination of goat and arrowhead, either one on each side or together: Elyros (*Numismatic Chronicle* 1894, 95); Polyrrhenia, (*Numismatic Chronicle* 1894, 94); and Tarrha (*Numismatic Chronicle* 1896, 19). The goat is thought to be connected with Apollo the Hunter, potentially Apollo Lykeios, and the arrow might have a similar iconographic meaning unrelated to dittany and the

15 The Aesculapium at Lendas was one of the last four in the ancient world to continue in operation and *Inscript. Cret.* preserves several inscriptions that give recipes for potions and poultices that affected cures; dittany is not mentioned.

stories of arrow expulsion repeated by ancient authors.¹⁶ A connection, however, is always a possibility, however remote.

Plutarch is also interested in the foundation stories of some Cretan cities, and his descriptions are far more historical than mythological. In *Bravery of Women*, 8 (*Moralia* 247A–F), he describes the story of Tyrrhenian pirates who had snatched married women and young girls from Brauron, along with the cult statue (247E) of Artemis, and made their way to Crete through Sparta and Lemnos, guided by an oracle. They put down at Chersonisos, in north-central Crete, and eventually settled in the area, founding the city of Lyttus in the hills to the south, led by three Spartan oikists, Pollis, Delphos, and Krataikhas (*Bravery of Women* 247D). Yet Plutarch is inconsistent in his historical data, and in *Greek Questions* (21: 296C–D) does not specify cities founded, and names only two Spartan oikists, Delphis and Pollis. Stadter (pp. 60–1), citing Conon (*FGrHist* 26F1, 36 and 47), considers it possible that one of the two Spartans could have founded Lyttos (so Plutarch) and the other Gortyn (so Conon).^{16a} Chersonisos, as the port of Lyttos, could have been a later foundation of the city in the hinterland, a pattern observed for the relationship of Agios Nikolaos on the coast to Lato, in the hills above; the reverse can also be demonstrated. It would be typical Greek practice to subsume the foundation of either Chersonisos or Lyttos under the other, and so Gortyn is the more likely second city. Because the leaders were Spartan, the colonies would have continued to be regarded as Spartan, regardless of the origin of the settlers.

This story, which combines elements of several parts of the Mediterranean, Etruria, Attica, Lemnos, and Sparta, is plausible on historical grounds since it does not include typically mythological elements like half-man/half-beasts, or direct interference by deities. The archaeological evidence for early Iron Age and Archaic Crete in fact shows some regular, if scanty, importation of pottery from Attica and Sparta, although the latter is more common in the west and central part of the island.¹⁷ At the very least, there was regular contact between Cretan cities at this time and these centers on the mainland, but whether this

16 The epithet was obscure even in antiquity. It could signify hunter (wolf), site of worship (Lycia) or light (luknos, or lamp); Aeschylus (*Seven Against Thebes* 145) is said to have made a pun on all three potential meanings. Diodorus (5.77) accepts the second. The one inscription with the epithet from Knossos (*Inscript. Cret.* I.viii.15) is too fragmentary to be conclusive.

16a Pausanias (8.53.4) attributed the foundation of Gortyn to an eponymous hero; Plato (*Laws* 3.708C), ascribed it to Argives; and Ephorus claimed knowledge of a Delphic oracle delivered to the Spartans (*FGrHist* 26F1.47).

17 For instance, Knossos (Callaghan, 91, H:2); Chania (Hallager and Hallager, 202–203, 209), the Akrotiri Peninsula (Raab, 150); the Mesara plain (Watrous, 230); the necropolis of Lasaiá (Blackman and Branigan, 25), and Kommos (Callaghan and Johnston, 211).

was the result of colonization rather than the establishment of trade routes cannot be proven.

What are lacking in the archaeological record so far from Crete are Etruscan remains. Italic pottery does occur on the island, but this is mostly in the Late Hellenistic/Early Roman period, in the form of North Italic vessels and Italian Terra Sigillata (Knossos: Sackett, 153; Gortyn: Di Vita and Martin, 125–6), but these are too late for the history that Plutarch narrates. Moreover neither Lyttos nor Gortyn, the two probable Etruscan foundations as described by Plutarch, displays large amounts of any ceramics associated with the story. The early history of Gortyn has received nowhere near the attention of its later Roman period, but sufficient remains of the Greek city have been studied to discount the existence of significant Attic or Lakonian pottery, and nothing at all Etruscan has been found there.¹⁸ It is thus archaeologically neither logical nor feasible for a colony of the type described by Plutarch to have settled on Crete without some evidence of its origins. It has been claimed that Britomartis, long believed to be a Cretan indigeneous deity, may have Etruscan origins (Sporn, 122–23), and one of her sites of worship is at Chersonisos, but this is not confirmed by ceramic or epigraphical remains.

The foregoing investigation of Plutarch's references to contemporary Roman Crete permits several conclusions to be drawn. First, references are scattered, and thinly, throughout his works without discernible pattern. So, too, some of the references are in works that seem to be early in his career, while those of a mythological nature in the *Theseus* belong to the last, or nearly the last, things that he wrote. As to Crete itself, something of a pattern might be detectible as much of what he notices clusters around the north central or central part of the island. This may be due to Plutarch's family connections at Chersonisos, but equally might be ascribed to his itinerary unrelated to personal matters and for reasons unknown. What seem to appeal to Plutarch about Crete are its oddities, namely aspects of its rituals, history, flora and fauna that struck him as singular. His reporting is not that of normal daily life, but rather of an exotic landscape formerly populated by heroes and a Minotaur and now, for example, by earless and headless statues, and unusual goats. None of his accounts are entirely accurate, despite his good intentions at 'cleaning up' myth, but neither are they wholly fantastic.

18 Small amounts of Geometric, Archaic, and Classical pottery from Lakonian are spread across Crete, and regular contact is assured, but this seems to be the result of trade rather than colonization. For material from Chania, see Hallager and Hallager, 209, 211; for Lakonian at Kommos, see Johnston, 351, no. 53.

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Plutarco (*Cim.* 13, 4) y las islas Quelidonias*

Carlos Schrader

En *Cimón* 13, 4, Plutarco, al referirse a la batalla ganada por los griegos en las proximidades del río Eurimedonte, dice: Τοῦτο τὸ ἔργον οὕτως ἐταπείνωσε τὴν γνώμην τοῦ βασιλέως, ὥστε συνθέσθαι τὴν περιβόητον εἰρήνην ἐκείνην, ἵππου μὲν δρόμον ἀεὶ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς ἀπέχειν θαλάσσης, ἔνδον δὲ Κυανέων καὶ Χελιδονίων μακρᾶ νηὶ καὶ χαλκεμβόλῳ μὴ πλέειν. Nos encontramos, como es evidente, ante una referencia a una cláusula de limitación naval para la flota persa motivada por la llamada Paz de Calias. Sin embargo, la historicidad de la misma es sumamente discutible, ya que el presunto tratado muestra la apariencia de un acuerdo contractual típicamente griego. Eso es algo que se pone claramente de manifiesto en Diodoro, XII 4, 4–6, que es nuestra fuente más detallada al respecto.¹ Su ταῦτα δὲ τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τῶν στρατηγῶν ἐπιτελούντων, seguido de una obligación ateniense, implica una concepción bilateral; y, si los tratados bilaterales eran corrientes entre los estados griegos, dado que todos, en principio, eran iguales de derecho, Persia en cambio no solía pactar en términos semejantes. La monarquía aqueménida, tal y como revelan las inscripciones persas que se nos han conservado, no reconocía como sus iguales a los pueblos vecinos.

Por otra parte, los primeros testimonios griegos con que contamos acerca de una presunta paz entre Atenas y Persia, en 449/448, pertenecen al siglo IV a.C.; es decir, que se hallaban condicionados por el efecto que, para la opinión pública, ejerció la Paz de Antálcidas, de 387/386. Por eso, no hay que descartar que las cláusulas de la paz de Calias fuesen una respuesta por parte ateniense al

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1 Ἄρταξέρξης δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς πυθόμενος τὰ περὶ τὴν Κύπρον ἐλαττώματα, καὶ βουλευσάμενος μετὰ τῶν φίλων περὶ τοῦ πολέμου, ἔκρινε συμφέρον εἰρήνην συνθέσθαι πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας. ἔγραψε τοίνυν τοῖς περὶ Κύπρον ἡγεμόσι καὶ σατράπαις, ἐφ' οἷς ἂν δύνωνται συλλύσασθαι πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας. διόπερ οἱ περὶ τὸν Ἄρτάβαζον καὶ Μεγάβυζον ἔπεμψαν εἰς τὰς Ἀθήνας πρεσβευτὰς τοὺς διαλεξομένους περὶ συλλύσεως. ὑπακουσάντων δὲ τῶν Ἀθηναίων καὶ πεμψάντων πρέσβεις αὐτοκράτορας, ὧν ἡγεῖτο Καλλίας ὁ Ἴππονίκου, ἐγένοντο συνθήκαι περὶ τῆς εἰρήνης τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις καὶ τοῖς συμμάχοις πρὸς τοὺς Πέρσας, ὧν ἔστι τὰ κεφάλαια ταῦτα· αὐτονόμους εἶναι τὰς κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν Ἑλληνίδας πόλεις ἀπάσας, τοὺς δὲ τῶν Περσῶν σατράπας μὴ καταβαίνειν ἐπὶ θάλατταν κατωτέρω τριῶν ἡμερῶν ὁδόν, μηδὲ ναῦν μακρὰν πλεῖν ἐντὸς Φασήλιδος καὶ Κυανέων· ταῦτα δὲ τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τῶν στρατηγῶν ἐπιτελούντων, μὴ στρατεύειν Ἀθηναίους εἰς τὴν χώραν, ἧς βασιλεὺς [Ἄρταξέρξης] ἄρχει.

Ἄρταξέρξης βασιλεὺς νομίζει δίκαιον τὰς μὲν ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ πόλεις ἑαυτοῦ εἶναι de la infausta paz de comienzos del siglo IV.² En realidad, y según el anteriormente citado testimonio de Diodoro, queda claramente de manifiesto que el tratado del siglo V tiende a salvaguardar a toda costa la libertad de las ciudades griegas de Asia Menor; es decir, todo lo contrario de lo que sucedió años después: así, frente al ὁπότεροι δὲ ταύτην τὴν εἰρήνην μὴ δέχονται, τούτοις ἐγὼ πολεμήσω ... καὶ πεζῇ καὶ χρήμασιν citado por Jenofonte a propósito del tratado de Antálcidas, se contraponen el μὴ στρατεύειν Ἀθηναίους εἰς τὴν χώραν, ἧς βασιλεὺς [Ἄρταξέρξης] ἄρχει de Diodoro.

La mayoría de los testimonios sobre la paz de Calias citan unas localizaciones geográficas que delimitaban las actividades de la flota persa. Pero, de entrada, el principal problema con el que nos encontramos es la disparidad de nuestras fuentes. En concreto, poseemos trece testimonios que citan unos límites determinados; y otros tres que no facilitan referencias geográficas precisas.³ Entre los primeros, y en orden cronológico, tenemos los siguientes: 1) Isócrates, IV 118: ... καὶ διακοσίαις καὶ χιλίαις ναυσὶν περιπλέοντας (sc. τοὺς βαρβάρους) εἰς τοσαύτην ταπεινότητα κατεστήσαμεν ὥστε μακρὸν πλοῖον ἐπὶ τάδε Φασήλιδος μὴ καθέλκειν. 2) Isócrates, VII 80: οἱ δὲ βάρβαροι τοσοῦτον ἀπειχόν τοῦ πολυπραγμονεῖν περὶ τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν πραγμάτων ὥστ' οὐτε μακροῖς πλοίοις ἐπὶ τάδε Φασήλιδος ἔπλεον. 3) Isócrates,

2 Jenofonte, *Helénicas*, V 1, 31.

3 Son, respectivamente (aunque los críticos no se muestran unánimes sobre la valoración de los mismos en relación con la Paz), 1) Lisias, II 55–57: μετὰ πλείστων γὰρ πόνων καὶ φανερωτάτων ἀγώνων καὶ καλλίστων κινδύνων ἔλευθέραν μὲν ἐποίησαν τὴν Ἑλλάδα, μεγίστην δ' ἀπέδειξαν τὴν ἑαυτῶν πατρίδα, ἐβδομήκοντα μὲν ἔτη τῆς θαλάττης ἄρξαντες, ἀστασιάζοντες δὲ παρασχόντες τοὺς συμμάχους, οὐ τοῖς ὀλίγοις τοὺς πολλοὺς δουλεύειν ἀξιώσαντες, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἴσον ἔχιν ἅπαντας ἀναγκάσαντες, οὐδὲ τοὺς συμμάχους ἀσθενεῖς ποιοῦντες, ἀλλὰ κάκεινους ἰσχυροὺς καθιστάντες, καὶ τὴν αὐτῶν δύναμιν τοσαύτην ἐπιδείξαντες, ὥστ' ὁ μέγας βασιλεὺς οὐκέτι τῶν ἀλλοτρίων ἐπεθύμει, ἀλλ' ἐδίδου τῶν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ περὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἐφοβεῖτο, καὶ οὔτε τριῆρεις ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ χρόνῳ ἐκ τῆς Ἀσίας ἐπλευσαν, οὔτε τύραννος ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλησι κατέστη, οὔτε Ἑλληνὶς πόλις ὑπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων ἠνδραποδίσθη· τοσαύτην σωφροσύνην καὶ δέος ἢ τούτων ἀρετὴ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις παρεῖχεν. ὧν ἕνεκα δεῖ μόνους καὶ προστάτας τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ ἡγεμόνας τῶν πόλεων γίνεσθαι. 2) Platón, *Menex.* 241d–242a: δίκαιον δὲ καὶ τοῦτων ἡμᾶς ἐπιμνησθῆναι, οἱ τοῖς τῶν προτέρων ἔργοις τέλος τῆς σωτηρίας ἐπέθεσαν ἀνακαθηράμενοι καὶ ἐξελάσαντες πᾶν τὸ βάρβαρον ἐκ τῆς θαλάττης. ἦσαν δὲ οὗτοι οἱ τε ἐπ' Εὐρυμέδοντι ναυμαχῆσαντες καὶ οἱ εἰς Κύπρον στρατεύσαντες καὶ οἱ εἰς Αἴγυπτον πλεύσαντες καὶ ἄλλοσε πολλαχόσε, ὧν χρὴ μεμνησθαι καὶ χάριν αὐτοῖς εἶδέναι, ὅτι βασιλέα ἐποίησαν δεισαντα τῇ ἑαυτοῦ σωτηρίᾳ τὸν νοῦν προσέχειν, ἀλλὰ μὴ τῇ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐπιβουλεύειν φθορᾷ. Καὶ οὗτος μὲν δὴ πάση τῇ πόλει διητηλήθη ὁ πόλεμος ὑπὲρ ἑαυτῶν τε καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὁμοφώνων πρὸς τοὺς βαρβάρους· εἰρήνης δὲ γενομένης καὶ τῆς πόλεως τιμωμένης ἦλθεν ἐπ' αὐτήν. 3) Isócrates, IV 120: μάλιστα δ' ἂν τις συνίδοι τὸ μέγεθος τῆς μεταβολῆς εἰ παραναγνοίῃ τὰς συνθήκας τὰς τ' ἐφ' ἡμῶν γενομένας καὶ τὰς νῦν ἀναγεγραμμένας. Τότε μὲν γὰρ ἡμεῖς φανησόμεθα τὴν ἀρχὴν τὴν βασιλείας ὀρίζοντες καὶ τῶν φόρων ἐνίους τάττοντες καὶ κωλύοντες αὐτὸν τῇ θαλάττῃ χρῆσθαι.

XII 59: Ἐπὶ μὲν γὰρ τῆς ἡμετέρας δυναστείας οὐκ ἐξῆν αὐτοῖς οὔτ' ἐντὸς Ἄλυος πεζῶ στρατοπέδῳ καταβαίνειν οὔτε μακροῖς πλοίοις ἐπὶ τάδε πλεῖν Φασήλιδος. 4) Diodoro (= Éforo), XII 4, 5: μηδὲ ναῦν μακρὰν πλεῖν ἐντὸς Φασήλιδος καὶ Κυανέων. 5) Demóstenes, XIX 273: ἐντὸς δὲ Χελιδονίων καὶ Κυανέων πλοίῳ μακρῶ μὴ πλεῖν. 6) Licurgo, *Contra Leócrates* 73: μακρῶ μὲν πλοίῳ μὴ πλεῖν (sc. τοὺς βαρβάρους) ἐντὸς Κυανέων καὶ Φασήλιδος. 7) Plutarco, *Cimón* 13, 4: ἔνδον δὲ Κυανέων καὶ Χελιδονίων μακρᾶ νηὶ καὶ χαλκεμβόλῳ μὴ πλέειν. 8) Elio Aristides, *Panatenáico* 153: εἴσω μηκέτι πλευσεῖσθαι, πρὸς μεσημβρίαν μὲν Χελιδονέας, πρὸς δὲ ἄρκτον Κυανέας θέμενος. 9) Elio Aristides, *Panatenáico* 169: οὐ γὰρ ἔξ (sc. ἡ πόλις) πλεῖν εἴσω Χελιδονέων καὶ Κυανέων. 10) Elio Aristides, *Or. Rom.* 10: ... σκόπελοι θαλάττιοι ... Χελιδόνεαι καὶ Κυάνεαι ... ἀρχὴν ὀρίζουσιν. 11) Aristodemo, *FGrHist* 104, fr. 13.2: ἐγένοντο δὲ αἱ σπονδαὶ ἐπὶ τοῖσδε: ἐφ' ᾧ ἐντὸς Κυανέων καὶ Νέσσου ποταμοῦ καὶ Φασήλιδος, ἣτις ἐστὶν πόλις Παμφυλίας, καὶ Χελιδονέων μὴ μακροῖς πλοίοις καταπλέωσι Πέρσαι. 12) Himerio, *Polemárguico* 29: εἴσω δὲ Χελιδονέων καὶ Κυανέων μὴ πέμψειν ὀλκάδα. 13) Suda, s.v. Κίμων: ἐκτὸς τε γὰρ Κυανέων καὶ Χελιδονέων καὶ Φασήλιδος (πόλις δὲ αὕτη τῆς Παμφυλίας) ναῦν Μηδικὴν μὴ πλεῖν νόμφ πολέμου.

Como puede apreciarse, es Aristodemo la fuente que menciona más límites marítimos que la flota persa (μακρὰ πλοῖα) no podía rebasar, al citar cuatro lugares; pero su testimonio debe analizarse con reservas, ya que desconocemos la época en la que vivió – probablemente es de época imperial tardía – y todo lo más que se puede decir es que probablemente «er ist abhängig von Ephoros»⁴; además es el único testimonio que menciona el río Neso. El resto de los autores cita un solo límite (Isócrates) o, como mucho, dos (todos los demás, salvo el léxico de Suda que llega a mencionar tres: Fasélide, las islas Quelidonias y las Cianeas).

Fasélide era una localización bien definida desde el siglo V a.C. Situada en Panfilia, había sido el miembro más sudoriental de la Liga delo-ática desde poco antes de la batalla del Eurimedonte⁵ y mantuvo estrechas relaciones con Atenas, según sabemos merced a una inscripción que se nos ha conservado⁶, ya que probablemente era un importante centro comercial al que afluían las mercancías de la zona.⁷ Las Quelidonias, por su parte, se han identificado con unos pequeños islotes desiertos situados a unos 55 km. al Sur de Fasélide y que en la Antigüedad eran conocidos por el peligro que entrañaban para la navegación, de ahí que Plinio (*Hist. Nat.*, V 131) hable de las «pestiferae navigantibus Chelidoniae»; tradicionalmente se considera que corresponden a las actuales islas de Devecitasi y Besadala, aunque es más probable que fueran

4 Bengtson, vol. II, pp. 64 y 67.

5 Plutarco, *Cimón* 12, 3–4.

6 *IG*, I 2, 16 (cf. Meiggs & Lewis, n° 31, pp. 66–69).

7 Cf. Tucídides, II 69, 1.

las islas situadas en la zona de Kekova, incluida esta última. Es destacable, sin embargo, que ambas localizaciones, Fasélide y las Quelidonias, lugares que se hallaban relativamente próximos entre sí, no aparezcan mencionados conjuntamente en ninguno de nuestros autores del siglo IV, de tal modo que la mención del uno supone la exclusión de la del otro. Tan sólo en Aristodemo y Suda aparecen citados ambos, pero probablemente por su presencia disyuntiva en fuentes anteriores. Es más, que en estos dos testimonios, al mencionar Fasélide, aparezca una aclaración sobre su situación (una ciudad de Panfilia, señalan ambos), puede ser indicio de que la misma apenas si era ya importante en época imperial y bizantina. En cualquier caso, que las islas Quelidonias sean citadas como «frontera» para la navegación de navíos persas de combate debe de responder a un contexto histórico propio del siglo IV a.C., cuando ya todas las ciudades situadas al Este de las islas se hallaban de nuevo bajo el control del Imperio persa.

Los otros dos límites geográficos, que debemos considerar como referencias marítimas septentrionales, plantean problemas de otra índole. En la Antigüedad se identificaba a las Cianeas con los islotes de ese nombre situados en la entrada oriental del Bósforo.⁸ Ahora bien, establecer un límite naval para los persas en esa zona no deja de resultar extraño, ya que los aqueménidas carecían de flota en el Mar Negro (habría que pensar, tal vez, en actividades de los sátrapas frigios). Por su parte, la mención al río Neso es totalmente inexplicable⁹ y sólo cabe interpretarla por el escaso valor que posee Aristodemo como fuente para el tratado de 449/448 a.C.¹⁰

8 Vid. Heródoto, IV 85, 1; Eurípides, *Andrómaca* 863: Apolonio de Rodas, I 3. De ahí, además, la distinción de Elio Aristides (*Panat.* 153): πρὸς μεσημβρίαν μὲν Χελιδονέας, πρὸς δὲ ἄρκτον Κυανέας.

9 Hesíodo (*Teogonía* 337–345), en su enumeración de los 25 ríos habidos de Tetis y Océano, cita uno de ese nombre. Pero, si se trata del mismo que aparece en Aristodemo, habría que identificarlo con el Nesto de Tracia (llamado Neso en pocas ocasiones: Teofrasto, *Hist. Plant.*, III 1, 5; escolio Tucídides, II 96). Pero ello estaría en contradicción con el límite de las Cianeas y supondría un límite naval excesivamente occidental, ya que el Nesto desemboca en el mar de Tracia frente a la isla de Tasos.

10 El testimonio de Aristodemo (*FGrHist* 104, fr. 13, 2: καὶ στρατηγὸν αἰροῦνται Καλλίαν τὸν ἐπίκλην Λακκόπλουτον, ἐπεὶ Θησαυρὸν εὐρών ἐν Μαραθῶνι ἀναλόμενος αὐτὸν ἐπλοῦτησεν. Οὗτος ὁ Καλλίας ἐσπέισατο πρὸς Ἀρταξέρξην καὶ τοὺς λοιποὺς Πέρσας. Ἐγένοντο δὲ αἱ σπονδαὶ ἐπὶ τοῖσδε: ἐφ' ᾧ ἐντὸς Κυανέων καὶ Νέσσου ποταμοῦ καὶ Φασήλιδος, ἧτις ἐστὶν πόλις Παμφυλίας, καὶ Χελιδονέων μὴ μακροῖς πλοίοις καταπλέωσι Πέρσαι, καὶ ἐντὸς τριῶν ἡμερῶν ὁδόν, ἣν ἂν ἵππος ἀνύσῃ διωκόμενος, μὴ κατιῶσιν. Καὶ σπονδαὶ οὖν ἐγένοντο τοιαῦται) insiste en calificar el tratado de sponδή, mientras que, por ejemplo, Diodoro, en XII 4, 6, sólo utiliza una vez este término, frente a dos veces en que aparece εἰρήνη y cuatro συνθήκη. Y toda su información resulta distorsionada: Calias es estratego y no mero embajador, Artajerjes parece un primus inter pares, y los límites son exhaustivos y de difícil aceptación.

Sea como fuere, el principal problema que plantea esta cláusula de limitación naval para los navíos persas, fijada teóricamente por la llamada Paz de Calias, radica en la disparidad de nuestras fuentes a la hora de mencionar los límites geográficos. Como de Teopompo, en el fragmento 154, se desprende que existió en Atenas una estela escrita en jonio, que el historiador, sin embargo, consideró falsa¹¹, se ha pensado que en ella estaría registrado el contenido del acuerdo y en él figurarían los límites que nuestras fuentes transmiten, aunque eso no justifica la disparidad de sus menciones. En realidad, la disparidad de referencias geográficas navales se debe a que, sobre la Paz de Calias, hubo una doble tradición literaria. La primera tradición se halla caracterizada por su desconocimiento de una estela con el contenido del tratado y, además, presenta una evolución, tendente a la ampliación, perceptible en los testimonios que se adscriben a ella: a partir de una literatura panegírica (representada por los citados pasajes de Lisias, II 55–57; Platón, *Menéxeno* 241d–242a; e Isócrates, IV 120) que, como mínimo, conoce el testimonio de Heródoto, en VII 151 (τυχεῖν ἐν Σούσοισι τοῖσι Μεμνονείοισι ἔοντας ἑτέρου πρήγματος εἵνεκα ἀγγέλους Ἀθηναίων, Καλλίην τε τὸν Ἴππονίκου καὶ τοὺς μετὰ τούτου ἀναβάντας), se van añadiendo elementos nuevos hasta llegar a una concepción de la paz como un tratado típicamente griego, con dos partes firmantes y unas cláusulas recíprocas; y, al mismo tiempo, se desprende que, a mediados del siglo IV (Demóstenes XV 29: καὶ παράδειγμα λέγειν ἔχω τούτου πᾶσιν ὑμῖν γνώριμον. εἰσὶ συνθήκαι τοῖς Ἑλληνσι διτταὶ πρὸς βασιλέα, ἃς ἐποιήσαθ' ἢ πόλις ἢ ἡμετέρα, ἃς ἅπαντες ἐγκωμιάζουσι, καὶ μετὰ ταῦθ' ὕστερον Λακεδαιμόνιοι ταύτας ὦν δὴ κατηγοροῦσι· κὰν ταύταις οὐχὶ ταῦτὰ δίκαι' ἀμφοτέροις ὤρισται), el tratado era aceptado sin discusión como una realidad histórica.

Si éstos son los rasgos generales que caracterizan a todos nuestros testimonios pertenecientes a la primera tradición sobre la paz, con la segunda tradición el contenido del tratado quedó definitivamente fijado. A ello

11 El texto del historiador de Quiós, que nos ha llegado a través del *Léxico de los oradores* de Harpocracón, en una glosa a la frase ἀμυδροῖς γράμμασιν Ἀττικοῖς, de Κατὰ Νεαίρας 76, dice así (ofrece un amplio aparato crítico del texto Connor, p. 89): Θεόπομπος δ' ἐν τῇ κ' τῶν Φιλιππικῶν ἐσκευρῆσθαι τὰς πρὸς τὸν βάρβαρον συνθήκας, <ὡς> οὐκ Ἀττικοῖς γράμμασιν ἐστηλίτευνται, ἀλλὰ τοῖς τῶν Ἴωνων. Estamos, pues, ante un testimonio del siglo IV a.C. que niega la realidad de τὰς πρὸς τὸν βάρβαρον συνθήκας, bien sea en su totalidad o en algunos detalles importantes (naturalmente este testimonio de Teopompo debe relacionarse con el pasaje transmitido por Elio Teón, *Progym.* 2 [II 67, 22 Sp], que constituye el fr. 153 del historiador: παρὰ δὲ Θεοπόμπου ἐκ τῆς πέμπτης καὶ εἰκοστῆς τῶν Φιλιππικῶν, ὅτι <ὅ> Ἑλληνικός ὄρκος καταφεύδεται, ὃν Ἀθηναῖοί φασιν ὁμοῦσαι τοὺς Ἑλληνας πρὸ τῆς μάχης τῆς ἐν Πλαταιαῖς πρὸς τοὺς βαρβάρους, καὶ αἱ πρὸς βασιλέα [Δαρεῖον] Ἀθηναίων [πρὸς Ἑλληνας] συνθήκαι. ἔτι δὲ καὶ τὴν ἐν Μαραθῶνι μάχην οὐχ οἶαν ἅπαντες ὑμνοῦσι γεγενημένην, καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα, φησιν, ἢ Ἀθηναίων πόλις ἀλαζονεύεται καὶ παρακρούεται τοὺς Ἑλληνας).

contribuyó poderosamente su redacción en un documento epigráfico cuya fecha de publicación hay que situar entre los años 352 y 343, ya que Demóstenes en su *Περὶ τῆς Ῥοδίων ἐλευθερίας* (XV 29) se encuadra en el panegirismo de la primera tradición, mientras que, en *Περὶ τῆς παραπρεσβείας* (XIX 273–274), muestra un contenido sensiblemente diferente. Veamos, pues, cuáles fueron los factores que determinaron la aparición de una estela con el contenido del tratado.

La primera tradición había fijado unos puntos cada vez más concretos sobre la paz a partir de la inicial vaguedad de nuestros testimonios de corte panegírico. Y ello hasta el punto de que el primer testimonio de Demóstenes denota que el auditorio ante el que se pronunció el discurso conocía suficientemente la existencia de una paz entre Atenas y Persia en el siglo V, cuya autenticidad era generalmente aceptada. Por otra parte, la línea de la primera tradición representada por Éforo¹² (que conocemos por el testimonio de Diodoro en XII 2, 1; 4, 4–6 y 26,2), que, en principio, difiere de los testimonios propiamente panegíricos, había establecido las bases «legales» de la paz, en forma de un tratado bilateral con un contenido pormenorizado.

A esto hay que añadir la propia situación de mediados del siglo IV, ya que, ante la constante ingerencia de Macedonia en los asuntos de Grecia central y peninsular, el partido nacionalista ateniense desplegó una intensa campaña propagandística de oposición. A tal efecto, desempeñó un importante papel la exaltación panegírica del esplendoroso pasado de Atenas durante el periodo de su hegemonía en Grecia. Pero, si, con los primeros autores panegíricos, la finalidad que se perseguía era la de enfatizar el contraste entre pasado y presente, ahora no sólo se va a denunciar la situación contemporánea, sino que se va a pretender confirmar inobjetablemente los gloriosos éxitos del pasado mediante pruebas tangibles de la actuación de los antepasados ante un peligro similar. De ahí que, durante los años cuarenta del siglo IV, apareciesen una serie de documentos (que, sin duda, no conocemos en su totalidad, como, por ejemplo, demuestra la cuestión relativa al Congreso Panhelénico), caracterizados por unos rasgos comunes a todos ellos: a) Se refieren a la época del enfrentamiento entre Atenas y Persia, con lo cual se conceptuaba a Macedonia como un nuevo bárbaro. b) Pretendían poner de relieve la tradicional resolución ateniense ante circunstancias particularmente delicadas. c) Fueron utilizados por la oratoria propagandística. d) Aparecieron en un periodo de tiempo muy reducido y próximo entre sí. e) Fueron inscritos en piedra. f) Todos, salvo tal vez el Juramento de los Efebos, contienen rasgos que implican su falsedad histórica.

Las divergencias, pues, que presentan nuestras fuentes en su mención de los límites geográficos teóricamente impuestos a los persas responde a la existencia

12 Sobre la adscripción de Éforo a la «primera tradición», cf. Meister, pp. 24 ss.

de esa doble tradición literaria sobre la paz, la primera anterior a la erección de la estela con su contenido y la segunda posterior.¹³ Si verificamos la adscripción

- 13 Nuestra única información sobre la estela (aparte de la oposición de Teopompo) se basa en el testimonio de Cratero en su *Συναγωγή τῶν ψηφισμάτων*, que Plutarco (*Cimón* 13, 5) pudo contemplar, al afirmar que ἐν δὲ τοῖς ψηφίσμασιν ἃ συνήγαγε Κράτερος ἀντίγραφα συνθηκῶν ὡς γενομένων κατατέτακται. El testimonio de Plutarco, pues, se basa en un documento en el que aparecían registradas las noticias que transmite el biógrafo. Pero su testimonio es esencialmente coincidente con el que proporciona Demóstenes en XIX 273–274, quien presenta una sensible evolución en los dos pasajes en los que alude a la paz. Así tenemos las siguientes similitudes: a) La cláusula de limitación terrestre es la misma: ἵππου μὲν δρόμον ἡμέρας πέντε μὴ καταβαίνειν ἐπὶ τὴν Θάλατταν βασιλέα, en Demóstenes, y ἵππου μὲν δρόμον αἰεὶ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς ἀπέχειν θαλάσσης, en Plutarco, *Cimón* 13, 4, pues la referencia que aparece en *Cimón* 19, 4 (ἵππος πρὸς θαλάσσην τετρακοσίων σταδίων) no difiere de la información reflejada seis párrafos antes; simplemente se sustituye la duración que debe emplearse para cubrir el trayecto de limitación para las fuerzas persas por el trayecto mismo, unos 75 km. b) La cláusula de limitación naval es, asimismo, idéntica: ἐντὸς δὲ Χελιδονίων καὶ Κυανέων πλοῖω μακρῶ μὴ πλεῖν, en Demóstenes, y ἐνδον δὲ Κυανέων καὶ Χελιδονίων μακρᾶ νηὶ καὶ χαλκεμβόλῳ μὴ πλεῖν, en Plut. *Cimón* 13, 4. c) La alusión a la paz como algo sobradamente conocido también aparece en ambos testimonios: ταύτην τὴν ὑπὸ πάντων θρυλουμένην εἰρήνην, en Demóstenes, y τὴν περιβόητον εἰρήνην ἐκείνην en Plutarco. d) En ambos casos aparece mencionado como negociador el mismo embajador ateniense: Καλλίαν τὸν Ἱππωνίου... πρεσβεύσαντα, en Demóstenes, y τοὺς Ἀθηναίους... Καλλίαν τὸν πρεσβεύσαντα τιμῆσαι διαφερόντως en Plutarco. e) Ni Demóstenes ni Plutarco mencionan la cláusula de autonomía que aparece en Diodoro (y, por lo tanto, probablemente en Éforo). f) Asimismo, ninguno de los dos permite inferir que concibieran la paz como un tratado bilateral.

Es cierto que Demóstenes y Plutarco no coinciden en la datación del tratado, pues el biógrafo – que depende en este punto de Calístenes – lo fecha tras la campaña del Eurimedonte (τοῦτο τὸ ἔργον οὕτως ἐταπείνωσε τὴν γνώμην τοῦ βασιλέως), porque lo consideraba como un resultado de la política de Cimón, y por eso alude al mismo en la biografía de este político y no en la de Pericles, mientras que Demóstenes, por su parte, no informa con precisión sobre su fecha. Puede, quizá, parecer extraña esta posible divergencia; y, en todo caso, aunque Demóstenes hubiera datado la paz también en los años sesenta del siglo V, la conclusión sería la misma: en la estela de la paz no había una referencia concreta a su datación, ya que, de lo contrario, sería de esperar que el orador fechara la paz con suficiente claridad, cosa que no hace.

Las concomitancias entre Demóstenes (XIX 273–274) y Plutarco (sobre todo en *Cimón* 13, 4, 5) son, pues, demasiado estrechas como para atribuir las al azar. Y, dado que el biógrafo contempló el documento que registró Cratero, creo que estamos ante una prueba de que el testimonio de Demóstenes se fundamenta, asimismo, en un documento epigráfico escrito entre 352 y 343, como ocurre con otros documentos de la misma naturaleza. Por lo tanto, y a partir del testimonio de ambos, considero que puede sostenerse que la estela que contenía el tratado entre Atenas y Persia poseía al menos los siguientes puntos: 1. En el encabezamiento no figuraría el nombre del rey persa con el que se concertó el tratado, sino simplemente συνθηκαὶ Ἀθηναίων [καὶ τῶν συμμάχων] πρὸς βασιλέα, y de ahí las dificultades para su datación. 2. Calias había sido su negociador (aunque Plutarco se resistiera a admitir que Cimón no había intervenido

de nuestros testimonios a una u otra tradición, el hecho resulta patente. Primera tradición sobre la paz: a) Límite en Fasélide: Isócrates (IV 118; VII 80; XII 59), Diodoro (XII 4, 5) y Licurgo (*Contra Leócrates* 73); b) Límite en las Cianeas: Diodoro (XII 4, 5) y Licurgo (*Contra Leócrates* 73). Segunda tradición sobre la paz: a) Límite en las Quelidonias: Demóstenes (XIX 273), Plutarco (*Cimón* 13, 4), Elio Aristides (*Panat.* 153; 169; *Or. Rom.* 10) e Himerio¹⁴ (*Polemárico* 29); b) Límite en las Cianeas: Demóstenes (XIX 273), Plutarco (*Cimón* 13, 4), Elio Aristides (*Panat.* 153; 169; *Or. Rom.* 10) e Himerio (*Polemárico* 29). Así, en Aristodemo (*FGrHist.* 104, fr. 13.2) tendríamos un reflejo de ambas tradiciones, con inclusión del río Neso, y en el léxico de Suda (s.v. Κίμων) idéntico reflejo sin la mención al citado río.

Lo que procede, pues, es examinar el origen de la limitación naval. Es al respecto sintomático que Isócrates, el primer testimonio en aludir a una localización concreta, sólo mencione una posición meridional, Fasélide. Es posible que ello se deba a que, en 380 a.C., cuando el orador compuso el *Panegírico*, la actividad naval persa careciera de importancia y que sólo posteriormente se tratara de delimitar claramente la esfera marítima propiamente ateniense, tal vez a partir de Éforo. Considero verosímil que la limitación naval que refleja la primera tradición de la paz dependa de los

en la paz, con lo que el testimonio del léxico de Suda presentaría una solución conciliadora). 3. Se fijaba un límite naval para la intervención de la flota persa en el Egeo, determinado por las islas Cianeas, al Norte, y las Quelidonias, al Sur. 4. Se fijaba un límite terrestre, para las fuerzas persas, consistente en un trayecto que pudiera recorrerse en un día a caballo (de ahí los 400 estadios mencionados por Plutarco en *Cimón* 19, 4). 5. La estela no contenía ninguna cláusula relativa a la autonomía de las ciudades griegas de Asia Menor, tal vez porque, al erigirse la inscripción, se consideró que eso quedaba implicado en la fijación de unos límites marítimos y terrestres, que, en teoría, impedían la ingerencia persa en los territorios pertenecientes a las mismas. 6. El tratado no debía de contener ninguna cláusula restrictiva para Atenas, con lo cual no se le confería el carácter de acuerdo bilateral, sino unilateral, en el que Atenas ejercía la posición dominante (Plutarco lo implica al decir que τοῦτο τὸ ἔργον οὕτως ἐταπεινώσει τὴν γνώμην τοῦ βασιλέως ὥστε συνθέσθαι τὴν περιβόητον εἰρήνην ἐκείνην).

Por lo tanto, la segunda tradición en su conjunto viene determinada por la aparición de una estela sobre la paz, a cuya inscripción se llegó tras la evolución de la primera tradición. Sin embargo, el paso de una a otra tradición mediante un documento epigráfico es denunciado por Teopompo (frs. 153 y 154), quien no sólo se opone a la historicidad de la estela por la razón que Harpocración nos ha transmitido, sino también a otros dos documentos específicos (el *Pséfisma* de Milciades y el Juramento Helénico), al margen de su denuncia velada a otros más (καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα ... ἡ Ἀθηναίων πόλις ἀλαζονεύεται καὶ παρακρούεται τοὺς Ἕλληνας).

14 Su testimonio posiblemente depende de Demóstenes, tal vez a través de Elio Aristides, aunque los límites marítimos sólo afectan a los navíos mercantes (τὸ δὲ ἐκόντα συγχωρῆσαι βασιλέα τῇ πόλει Ἴππου μὲν δρόμον ἡμέρας ἀφέξειν θαλάττης ἄνω, εἴσω δὲ Χελιδονέων καὶ Κυανέων μὴ πέμψειν ὀλκάδας), lo que supondría una reinterpretación de la paz como un acto magnánimo por parte persa.

testimonios de Lisias (II 57) y Platón (*Menéxeno* 241d); de la indeterminación que se refleja en ambos autores (... καὶ οὐτε τριήρεις ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ χρόνῳ ἐκ τῆς Ἀσίας ἔπλευσαν / ... ἐξελάσαντες πᾶν τὸ βάρβαρον ἐκ τῆς θαλάττης) se hace eco todavía Isócrates (IV 120), al contraponer la paz de Antálcidas con la de Calias (κωλύοντες αὐτὸν τῇ θαλάττῃ χρῆσθαι): no sólo el Egeo se vio libre de la presencia de navíos persas de combate, sino que incluso μακρὸν πλοῖον ἐπὶ τῷδε Φασήλιδος μὴ κατέλκειν (IV 118). Tras el límite meridional debió establecerse, a partir de Éforo, uno septentrional, las islas Cianeas, con lo cual toda la costa de Anatolia occidental permanecía dentro de la esfera de influencia ateniense. La primera tradición delimitaba así las cláusulas navales y Licurgo no hace sino seguir esta línea.

En la segunda tradición, sin embargo, el límite sur ya no se establece en Fasélide, lo cual implica que la estela que criticó Teopompo mencionaba únicamente las Cianeas y las Quelidonias. La referencia de Plutarco, en *Cimón* 13, 4, depende sin duda de la inscripción recopilada por Cratero (*FGrHist* 342, fr. 12) en su Συναγωγή τῶν ψηφισμάτων. Y la coincidencia con Demóstenes (XIX 273) en este y otros aspectos resulta muy significativa. Pero resulta difícil poder admitir que, en un teórico tratado acordado entre Atenas y Persia a mediados del siglo V, pudiese fijarse como límite para los navíos persas las islas Quelidonias, ya que, en ese caso, Fasélide habría caído bajo la esfera de las fuerzas persas.¹⁵ Lo que ocurrió fue que, a partir de una verificación general (la inactividad de la marina persa en el Egeo a mediados del siglo V), se llegó a deducir que ello se debía a que las cláusulas de un tratado lo prohibían.

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15 Con su habitual y agudo criticismo, este hecho ya fue señalado por Busolt, III, p. 354, nota 3.

El judaísmo en las *Vitae* y *Moralia* de Plutarco

Israel Muñoz Gallarte

El judaísmo en Plutarco es un tema recurrente en la filología griega, del cual se ha investigado con profundidad el influjo ideológico que la religión judía pudo ejercer tanto sobre la escuela medioplatónica, como sobre Plutarco, en concreto. En este trabajo se aborda la opinión del queronense acerca de los hebreos, mediante la comparación de los pasajes que los mencionan en sus dos grandes bloques de escritos: *Vitae* y *Moralia*, a fin de destacar las diferencias, semejanzas y evolución, si la hubiera.

Aunque en los textos de Plutarco no abundan las noticias sobre los judíos, éste debió de haber mantenido algún contacto directo con sus comunidades, extendidas por el Mediterráneo durante la época helenística e imperial. No obstante, no sabemos cuál fue la fuente de su información. Se han propuesto diversas hipótesis: que obtuviera sus conocimientos sobre los judíos en su Beocia natal, donde existió una importante población;¹ que los hubiera conocido en sus viajes, que le llevaron por ciudades como Alejandría (cf. *Quaest. conv.* 678C), donde el judaísmo tenía un peso importante, o durante su larga estancia en Roma.² El de Queronea llega a la capital del imperio a finales del s. I d.C., cuando el cristianismo comenzaba a dar sus primeros pasos y las noticias de los mártires³ se dejaban oír en numerosos autores paganos.⁴ Es el momento de grandes historiadores judíos, como Filón de Alejandría y Josefo, el cual incluso se encontraría en Roma durante la visita de Plutarco.

Vitae

En *Vidas*, las más extensas referencias acerca de los judíos aparecen en la descripción de aquellos personajes que tienen una mayor relación con Oriente: sus conquistadores Pompeyo y Antonio. A ellas se añade una serie de breves

1 Cf. Stern, vol. I, 545, n. 1.

2 Cf. Simões Rodríguez, 433.

3 Como es el caso de los mártires del gran incendio de Roma (64 d.C.), cf. Brenk, 99.

4 Cf. Stern, vol. I, quien recoge las noticias acerca del judaísmo de todos los autores paganos desde Heródoto hasta Plutarco. Entre ellos destacan, por su influencia en la obra plutarquea, Hecateo de Abdera, con sus Αἰγυπτιακά, y Diodoro; cf. Teodorsson, 96.

alusiones en las biografías de Galba, Otón y Cicerón, quienes no tuvieron un contacto directo con Judea.

En la *Vida de Pompeyo* (39.2–3) aparecen los judíos como habitantes de Palestina, súbditos de un soberano con nombre griego, Aristóbulo. Son descritos como una etnia más, guerrera y bárbara, opuesta al gobierno del Imperio romano en busca de independencia, pero que será derrotada por los ejércitos pompeyanos, los cuales también apresarán a su regente. Su *basiléus* no se diferencia de los demás reyes helenísticos y, acerca de sus súbditos, Plutarco tampoco ofrece datos importantes. Éste no se hace eco del pasado violento que marcó la historia de la región,⁵ sino que se centra en la Judea que Pompeyo encuentra a su llegada, una nación que en el 67 a.C. había sufrido una nueva guerra civil entre sus dos príncipes, Hircano y Aristóbulo.⁶ Socialmente, Judea presenta una población que continúa conservando su esencia judía, sobre todo entre las clases bajas, mientras que la aristocracia se muestra más permeable a la tradición helenística (cf. Aguilar 2006). Según el de Queronea, en el año 63 a.C. Pompeyo anexiona Palestina sin demasiados inconvenientes.⁷ Llama la atención que Plutarco no ofrezca detalle alguno de la profanación del Templo, donde se atrincheraron los últimos defensores de la causa de Aristóbulo durante tres meses, si tenemos en cuenta el número de autores que mencionan este hecho, además de Josefo:⁸ Estrabón, Tito Livio, Tácito, Apiano y el Salmo II de los apócrifos *Salmos de Salomón*. Allí, cuando entra el ejército romano,

5 La rebelión militar de los macabeos o la religiosa de los fariseos, durante el reinado de Antíoco IV «Epífanes» (ca. 175–163).

6 Ambos, hijos de la reina Alejandra, pertenecían a la dinastía Asmonea. Hircano, sumo sacerdote del templo, representa la causa de los fariseos, estrictos cumplidores de la ley judía, mientras que Aristóbulo defiende la ideología de los saduceos, basada en un expansionismo tradicional. Al final se impuso momentáneamente Aristóbulo sobre su hermano mayor, cf. Josefo, *AI XIV*, 4–7; *BI I*, 120–22.

7 El reinado de Aristóbulo será breve, debido a que su relación de amistad con Pompeyo quedó pronto truncada por el desplante en Dión del soberano judío, al abandonar la campaña romana contra los nabateos, cf. Josefo, *AI XIV*, 46–57; *BI I*, 132–41. A partir de ese momento «el Magno», lleno de sospechas, perseguirá a Aristóbulo hasta Jerusalén, donde acabará rindiéndose. Cf. Aguilar-Pérez Vilatela, 187, n. 179. Pompeyo tomará toda Palestina, deportará a Roma al anterior soberano y pondrá en su lugar a Hircano, el cual gobernará también durante pocos años, hasta el regreso de Aristóbulo junto a su hijo (57 a.C.). Entonces sublevará de nuevo a la población contra el imperio romano, pero será derrotado igualmente en esta ocasión y deportado a Roma por Gabinio. Finalmente en el 49 a.C. es liberado por César, a favor del cual luchará hasta su muerte, envenenado por un pompeyano (49 a.C.). Cf. Roldán Hervás, 226; sobre los antecedentes, la guerra civil y las consecuencias, cf. Schürer, 308–20.

8 Cf. Josefo, *AI XIV*, 58–69; Estrabón, *XVI*, 2,40 (762–63); Tito Livio, *Epit.*, 102; Tácito, *Hist.* V, 9; Apiano, *Syr.*, 50/252; *Mithrid.*, 106/498.

durante los sacrificios del sábado según Dión,⁹ se produjo un baño de sangre, en el que perecieron unos doce mil judíos.

Después de este pasaje, el relato de Plutarco se centra en una posguerra marcada por el caos, siendo los detalles predominantes la separación y oposición entre las distintas ciudades. Por esto Pompeyo y sus subordinados deberán impartir justicia en los numerosos litigios que van surgiendo.¹⁰ En cuanto a Aristóbulo, aún le restaba un último motivo de vergüenza, el verse obligado a desfilar junto a sus familiares en el cortejo triunfal delante de la carroza de Pompeyo en Roma (61 a.C.).¹¹

Así, observamos que los judíos prácticamente no son tenidos en cuenta en la *Vida de Pompeyo*, marcada por el bajo interés del de Queronea, que incluso incurre en un anacronismo cuando, al enumerar las regiones conquistadas por el general romano (cf. 45.2), diferencia Judea de Palestina, un territorio unificado que, hasta ese momento, dependía de la monarquía judía de los macabeos.¹²

La turbia situación de la posguerra palestina no llega a su fin tras la conquista romana. En la *Vida de Antonio*, Plutarco vuelve a informar de levantamientos en Judea (3.2–3). Siguiendo el mandato de Gabinio, Antonio, en su primera actuación como general de caballería, se encarga de sofocar una revuelta (57 a.C.), cuyos artífices son Aristóbulo II y su hijo, Antígono.¹³ El general romano se distingue por su valentía en este combate.¹⁴ De los judíos tan sólo se dice que, aunque son superiores en número, acaban huyendo ante el ejército romano. La brutalidad romana se hace patente en la huída, de modo que, según Plutarco, «mataron a todos, excepto a unos pocos». Seguramente influyó en este modo de actuar el pasado insurrecto de los judíos, quienes nunca se dejaron domeñar, sublevándose en cuanto tenían una oportunidad.

9 Cf. Dión Casio, XXXVII, 16, 1–4: ἐν τῇ τοῦ Κρόνου ἡμέρᾳ.

10 Plutarco, *Pomp.* 39. 4–5. De este modo, la figura del «Magno» romano queda asemejada, por Plutarco, a la del macedonio Alejandro, fundando ciudades o liberándolas de sus tiranos. Muchos judíos vieron en los romanos a los liberadores de la violenta política asmonea, llegando en ciertas ciudades de Palestina y Transjordania a adoptarse el año de la conquista de Pompeyo como el año primero del calendario, cf. Lozano-Piñero.

11 Plutarco, *Pomp.* 45. 4–5. También queda atestiguado, aunque con diferencias, por Apiano, *Mithrid.*, 117/571–78 y Plinio, *NH* VII, 26/98.

12 Aguilar-Pérez Vilatela, 195, n. 195. También Apiano hace una descripción semejante en *Mithr.*, 116.

13 Cf. Josefo, *AI* XIV, 82–89; *BI* I, 160–174.

14 Existen diferencias entre el relato de Josefo y el de Plutarco, principalmente en la secuencia de los hechos y en el centro de atención, mientras que el de Queronea se centra en el coraje de Antonio al tomar la fortaleza, Josefo trata con profundidad las hazañas tanto de Antonio, como de los otros dos oficiales romanos, Sisena y Servilio, cf. Stern, vol. I, 567.

Posteriormente, Plutarco se vuelve a referir a la región de los hebreos, por ser una de las provincias que regala Antonio al Egipto de Cleopatra VII. En esta ocasión, le interesa la crueldad con que el romano trata al rey de Judea, Antígono, al que no solamente arrebató el territorio por medio de la guerra, sino que, tras haberlo decapitado – una medida que Roma nunca antes había tomado contra un soberano –,¹⁵ regala parte del territorio judío a una reina extranjera y, además, egipcia.¹⁶ Así, aquella zona que perteneciera al Egipto tolemaico durante el s. III a.C., con algunas interrupciones,¹⁷ vuelve a pertenecerle, tras un breve período de dominación seléucida y, después, romana. Sobre el nuevo control egipcio de estas zonas, el de Queronea no hace apenas referencias; no obstante, a partir de la descripción de Cleopatra y de sus capacidades lingüísticas, se deben destacar las aparentes buenas intenciones de la egipcia, quien se esfuerza por comunicarse con los dirigentes de sus nuevos territorios en sus lenguas vernáculas, utilizando lo menos posible un intérprete.¹⁸ En cuanto a sus pobladores, Plutarco continúa siendo igual de parco, refiriéndose únicamente a la importancia de esta región por su producción de bálsamo.¹⁹

Finalmente, el de Queronea se centra en un momento concreto de la vida de Antonio, la batalla de Accio, en la que debían participar unas legiones judías, dirigidas por Herodes, entonces, el soberano de Judea.²⁰ Antonio

15 Cf. Josefo, *AI* XIV, 487 y XV, 5; *BI* I, 354–357; Dión Casio XLIX, 22–26. Cf. Schürer, vol. I, 372–3.

16 Plutarco, *Ant.* 36. 3; Cf. Josefo, *AI* XV, 74–79; *BI* I, 361. Hacia el 37–36 a.C., Antonio accedió a regalar a Cleopatra toda la costa fenicia y filistea al sur de Eléutero, a excepción del territorio de los nabateos y el distrito de Jericó, de modo que Herodes se verá obligado a pagar una renta a la reina egipcia por hacer uso de su propia tierra. Stern recoge la problemática de la cronología y extensión de este regalo, incluyendo las aportaciones que, sobre este hecho, realizan tanto los autores antiguos como los estudiosos modernos, vol. I, 569–72.

17 Perteneció a Egipto hasta la derrota de Panión, 200 a.C., cuando Fenicia y Judea pasó a manos de los seléucidas, una dominación durante mucho tiempo aborrecida por los judíos. Éstos tendrán que esperar hasta el año 143 a.C. para conseguir su independencia política, durante el reinado de Simón, cf. Schürer, vol. I, 254–5.

18 Plutarco, *Ant.* 27. 3. El tema del antisemitismo de Cleopatra es muy discutido, sobre todo por el testimonio que acerca de ella ofrece Apión, cf. Josefo, *C. Ap.* II, 56. Cf. Stern, vol. I, 408 n. 60 y 568.

19 Plutarco, *Ant.* 36. 2–3. Palestina era famosa por su producción de bálsamos, algo que no pasa por alto Plutarco, haciendo referencia también a ello en *Alex.* 25. 6–8. Se trata de la región de Jericó, la zona más fértil y productiva de Palestina, cuya principal fuente de riqueza eran los dátiles y la resina balsámica, usada como medicamento, cf. Schürer, vol. I, 389–91 n. 36. Aquí se recogen las citas de los autores antiguos, paganos y judíos, acerca de este lugar y su producción.

20 Plutarco, *Ant.* 61. 2–3. Se trata de Herodes «el Grande», nombrado rey de Judea en el 40 a.C. por el Senado romano. Augusto confirmó su título, el cual mantuvo hasta su muerte (4 a.C.), cf. *NT*, Mt 2, 1–19.

acabará perdiendo, según el autor, no sólo por su desbordado amor hacia Cleopatra, sino además por la traición de Herodes, quien se pasa a la causa cesariana, con lo que provoca la desbandada del resto de aliados orientales, dejando Egipto aislado y sin apoyos fuera de sus límites.²¹ Lo dicho por Plutarco contradice, en cierta manera, el testimonio de Josefo, quien afirma que Herodes, antes de la batalla de Accio, se encontraba con sus fuerzas militares muy mermadas, tras sufrir el terremoto de la primavera del 31 a.C., en el que murieron treinta mil judíos, y soportar el desgaste de la campaña contra los nabateos, de modo que, ante la dificultad de participar en la batalla, opta por esperar y pasarse al bando del vencedor.²² Plutarco no hace referencia a estos datos, quizás por desconocimiento, pero, sin duda, apoya una visión negativa del pueblo hebreo y de su gobernante, que quedan como traidores²³ y oportunistas.

Plutarco continúa, durante las *Vidas*, dibujando a los judíos con escasos trazos, insistiendo en su carácter insurrecto y mostrándolos como una amenaza para la estabilidad del imperio oriental. En la *Vida de Galba* (13.3–4), el queronense relata cómo Nimfidio²⁴ intenta alarmar al emperador y, para esto, utilizará como argumentos los problemas irresolubles del gobierno romano: el abastecimiento de trigo en Roma y las revueltas de Germania, Siria y Judea. Igualmente, en la *Vida de Otón*, vuelve a citar a Judea como el lugar en el que Vespasiano se encuentra a la cabeza de una gran fuerza militar, mientras que Muciano se halla en Siria (4.2–3), sin duda porque se trataba de dos zonas inestables. De hecho, será un poco después (15.5–6), cuando Plutarco se refiera a las tropas romanas destacadas en Judea, las cuales se encuentran de nuevo movilizadas a causa de una nueva rebelión, «la gran guerra contra Roma» (66–74 d.C). En este enfrentamiento, los hebreos, tras una serie de desavenencias con los gobernadores romanos, acaban levantándose en busca de su independencia. En este caso, la referencia aparece en el discurso del emperador a sus soldados, donde hace un recuento de sus fuerzas favorables en Oriente, entre las cuales no se cuenta Judea. Son muy breves las noticias ofrecidas por Plutarco, quien no hace apenas mención de la actividad del

21 Plutarco, *Ant.* 71. 1–2. Plutarco difiere de Josefo, cf. *AI* XV, 189–195; *BI* I, 388–392.

22 Cf. Josefo, *AI* XV, 108–195. De esta manera, la fortuna le sonrió a Herodes, ya que al imponerse Octavio sobre Antonio en la citada batalla, su debilidad le sirvió de muestra de fidelidad al futuro emperador.

23 La visión de traidor se ve reforzada por el apoyo que Herodes proporciona a Alejandro de Laodicea, quien traicionó a Antonio, según leemos en Plutarco, *Ant.* 72. 3.

24 Nimfidio Sabino, prefecto de la guardia imperial junto a Tigelino. Ayudó con sus soldados a la proclamación de Galba como emperador, un cargo al que también el prefecto aspiró posteriormente, actuando de desestabilizador del poder del César, cf. Plutarco, *Galb.* I, 8–9, 13, 23. 4.

ejército romano en la zona,²⁵ aunque se puede comprender este hecho teniendo en cuenta que trata la vida de Otón, cuyos ojos están fijados en la capital del Imperio.

En la *Vida de Cicerón* Plutarco ofrece sobre los judíos la noticia más interesante de su obra biográfica. En ella se refiere a la siguiente anécdota:²⁶

«De igual modo se recuerdan muchos chistes también relacionados con este juicio. Pues los romanos llaman Verres al cerdo castrado. Así pues, cuando un liberto, llamado Cecilio, acusado de judaizar (ἔνοχος τῷ ἰουδαΐζειν), quería, tras dejar de lado a los sicilianos, acusar a Verres, Cicerón dijo: «¿Qué tiene un judío contra un cerdo?».»²⁷

Además de interesante, el pasaje es representativo, pues incluye un detalle que debemos analizar con mayor detenimiento, ἔνοχος τῷ ἰουδαΐζειν:

- ἔνοχος es un término que tiene dos significados principalmente: uno se relaciona con la esclavitud o la dependencia, pudiendo ser traducido por «controlado por» o «bajo el control de»; su segunda significación aparece en un contexto judicial: «responsable de», «estar requerido por», «acusado de». Esta acepción, que se ajusta más al contexto, plantea la posibilidad de que existiera en la legislación una ley en contra de la práctica de las tradiciones judías. El término ἰουδαΐζειν, por su parte, apenas aparece en los textos griegos anteriores o contemporáneos,²⁸ pero puede significar: practicar usualmente conductas tradicionales judías siguiendo su ordenanza, de modo que se traduce por «vivir como un judío» o «practicar el judaísmo».

El texto plantea, en principio, dos cuestiones: la primera es la identidad de este Cecilio que, por los datos de Plutarco, se debe tratar de Quinto Cecilio Nigro, cuestor bajo los órdenes de Verres, el pretor de Sicilia. Cecilio, según se ha transmitido en el discurso ciceroniano *Divinatio in Quintum Caecilium*, pretendía sustituir a Cicerón en el juicio del pueblo siciliano contra el pretor, acusado de concusión. La segunda cuestión es que Cecilio sufre en el discurso

25 Sobre los antecedentes, desarrollo y consecuencias de la guerra judía contra Roma, cf. Schürer, vol. I, 619–55.

26 Plutarco, *Cic.* 7. 6–7: ὁμῶς χαρίεντα διαμνημονεύεται καὶ περὶ ἐκείνην αὐτοῦ τὴν δίκην. Βέρρην γὰρ οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι τὸν ἐκτετμημένον χοῖρον καλοῦσιν. ὡς οὖν ἀπελευθερικός ἀνθρώπος ἔνοχος τῷ ἰουδαΐζειν ὄνομα Κεκίλιος ἐβούλετο παρωσάμενος τοῦ Σικελιώτας κατηγορεῖν τοῦ Βέρρου, «τί ἰουδαίῳ πρὸς χοῖρον;»

27 A lo largo del coloquio que siguió a esta comunicación, el profesor Fernández Delgado propuso que en la palabra «cerdo» además debería de verse un insulto directo contra el judío, una forma despreciativa de llamar a los hebreos muy bien atestiguada en la literatura latina y posterior, especialmente en la española. Aunque en Plutarco no parezca atestiguar otro ejemplo que apoye esta posibilidad, la interpretación resulta muy sugestiva, ya que, como se verá a continuación, Cicerón llama a Verres «cerdo».

28 Cf. LXX, Ester 8, 17; Josefo, *BI* II, 454; *Acta Pilati* A 2, 1; *NT*, Gál 2, 14; Eusebio, *Præparatio Evangelica* IX, 22,5; I. Sobre la aparición de este término en la literatura patrística, cf. Lampe, s.v.

preliminar a las sesiones todo tipo de insultos por parte de Cicerón, quien, entre otros calificativos, le aplica el de pérfido y prevaricador, además de describirlo como un mal orador, incapacitado para llevar a cabo el juicio (ibid.), pero en ningún momento utiliza las costumbres judaizantes de Cecilio. En cuanto al chiste que refiere Plutarco, Cicerón realiza el juego de palabras, pero sin referirse a los judíos:²⁹

«Pero repentinamente, como por el efecto de alguna pócima de Circe, al momento, ha resurgido del hombre el verraco.»

De este modo, se podría pensar que el padre, comprado como esclavo, conservaba las tradiciones de su pueblo y no las habría abandonado frente a la influencia de la ideología romana. Este posible problema racial ya lo tenemos atestiguado en el Egipto helenístico,³⁰ donde nunca perdieron su identidad cultural, siendo más bien un grupo social apartado de todas las demás etnias, incluso con derechos legislativos especiales.³¹ En esta región, el antisemitismo es un fenómeno que aparece durante el s. II a.C., testimoniado en un importante número de obras literarias apologéticas, pero es durante el período de dominación romana cuando el conflicto se agrava. Un panorama semejante encontramos en Sicilia, significativa zona latina de inmigración oriental.³² Así es seguro que los judíos y sus prácticas no eran bien vistos en el Imperio Romano.³³

29 Cf. Cicerón, *Divinatio in Q. Caecilium* XVII, 57: *Sed repente e vestigio ex homine tanquam aliquo Circae poculo factus est verres*. No sólo Cicerón y Plutarco utilizaron este juego de palabras, también Quintiliano se refiere a ello en su *Institutio Oratoria* VI, III, 55.

30 Los judíos entraron en tiempos de Tolomeo Soter, alcanzando su momento de mayor esplendor durante el reinado de Filométor, cf. Fraser, vol. I 688–89. Aunque su presencia en tierra egipcia se remonta al período Amarna, en el s. XIV a.C., cf. Université de Strasbourg (ed.), 25.

31 Esto también está atestiguado en la Palestina romana, donde, desde tiempos de César y hasta Vespasiano, los habitantes de Judea estaban exentos de obligaciones militares, siendo considerados *symmakhoi* – no los de Samaría o Sebaste –. Posiblemente se buscaba evitar conflictos entre las órdenes militares y la observancia de las leyes y festividades judías, como el sábado, cf. Josefo, *AI* XIII, 251–2. También el culto y la liturgia judía eran protegidos por el Estado romano.

32 Cf. Schürer, vol. I, 317. El autor afirma que, en la citada celebración del triunfo de Pompeyo en Roma (61 a.C.), además de Aristóbulo y sus familiares, desfiló un gran número de judíos cautivos, quienes, tras ser liberados, constituyeron la base de la comunidad judía en Roma. No obstante, también puntualiza que su origen debería ser anterior, ya que desde el 62 a.C. se exportaba moneda judía desde Roma a Jerusalén, posiblemente siguiendo la tradición del *didrachmon*, pago anual al templo de Jerusalén, cf. Dión Casio, LXVI 7, 2. Estos inmigrantes también tuvieron una importante presencia en tierras sicilianas, tanto procedentes de Roma, como de sus países orientales de origen.

33 La primera noticia que conservamos de judíos que viajan a territorio romano se fecha en el 142 a.C., cuando una embajada palestina se presenta ante el senado, hecho que

Plutarco podría haber conocido la cita a través de algún texto intermedio, no conservado, o de transmisión oral. En el caso de que Cicerón no hubiera pronunciado ese chiste a lo largo del discurso, podría haber ocurrido que, el de Queronea, apoyándose en el juego etimológico y viviendo en un momento en el que los judíos poseían un peso social en ascenso, aprovecharse ambas circunstancias para introducirlo en su obra, poniéndolo en boca de Cicerón. En la obra del orador no se atestigua una postura antisemita *sensu stricto*, sino, más bien, una oposición a la adaptación de cultos foráneos en Roma,³⁴ ideología favorecida por los populares (64 a.C.). En cuanto a que Cecilio fuera un liberto,³⁵ parece ser que fue su padre el liberado de la esclavitud, con lo que sus dos hijos, Quinto y Marco Cecilio, tratarían, como nuevos ciudadanos, de recorrer su *cursus honorum*.³⁶

Sin duda, Plutarco introduce este relato por la comicidad de la escena, pero el trasfondo se muestra más interesante. El de Queronea describe al liberto judaizante marcando dos hechos característicos de la población hebrea: la separación del resto de la comunidad no-judía y la abstención del cerdo como alimento.³⁷ Acerca de lo primero, Plutarco hace hincapié en que la acusación la hace Cecilio, sin contar con el apoyo de los sicilianos, quienes prefieren a Cicerón, con lo que se testimonia un ejemplo más de la separación judía con respecto a sus conciudadanos, una característica común en las regiones habitadas por emigrantes judíos. La abstención de la carne de cerdo es uno de los temas que más interesan a Plutarco, como se verá al hablar de *Moralia*. La forma de vida judía choca con el sentir romano, marcado por un ambiente religioso bastante abierto, en el que gran cantidad de divinidades foráneas como Isis o Mitra han ido entrando en su panteón, sin causar apenas conflicto.³⁸

también da comienzo a los inicios de la propaganda judía en Roma (139 a.C.), conocida a través de una noticia de Valerio Máximo, I 3,2: «*Iudaeos, qui Sabazi Iovis cultu Romanos inficere mores conati erant, repetere domos suas coegit*», cf. Schürer, vol. I, 263. Sobre los judíos en tiempos de los emperadores romanos Tiberio y Claudio, cf. Bodelón, 238–9.

34 Cf. Ciceró, *Pro Flacco* XXVIII, 67–69. Otras citas de Cicerón acerca de los judíos son recogidas por Stern, vol. I, 196–206.

35 Para Stern la improbabilidad de que un ὀπτελευθερικὸς llegara a cuestor de Sicilia es suficiente razón para poner en duda la afirmación de Plutarco, de modo que propone la posibilidad de que bajo este nombre se escondiera Caecilius de Caleacte, escritor judío de lengua griega, historiador y rétor en tiempos de Augusto, quien trató en sus obras exclusivamente temas judíos, cf. vol. I, 566.

36 Ville de Mirmont, 43 y n. 2.

37 Acerca de la relación de Plutarco con la carne, cf. Jufresa.

38 Sin duda, en la separación étnica aquí aludida por Plutarco influyeron las causas religiosas, cf. Nieto Ibáñez, 328. Éste afirma que Plutarco pretendía destacar de la religión judía su ‘...rechazo al valor de las demás religiones y la consideración de exclusividad de ser el único pueblo elegido por el único Dios, sin querer ridiculizar los

Moralia

Las noticias referentes al judaísmo en *Moralia* se concentran, principalmente, en dos obras: *De superstitione* y *Quaestiones Convivales*; aunque también se han de destacar las breves referencias en *De stoicorum repugnantiis* y *De Iside et Osiride*.

En *De superstitione* el de Queronea hace una breve referencia a las costumbres judías, centrándose en el *sabbatismós*,³⁹ en el festejo del sábado, temiendo, como hiciera Cicerón, que estas *superstitiones* judías se introdujeran en la superior cultura grecorromana (*De superst.* 166A). Así, Plutarco centra su crítica en quienes, por *deisidaimonía*, siguen algunas tradiciones judías, ejemplificando un poco después la peligrosidad de la misma en la toma de Jerusalén (ibid. 169C). La visión del sábado se encuentra distorsionada en Plutarco, quien defiende que se trata de un día festivo en el que los judíos se dedican a descansar y a invitarse a beber.⁴⁰ Esta idea pagana ya había aparecido en autores anteriores como Agatárquides de Cnido, cuya obra conocemos a través del *Contra Apión* de Josefo. Éste relata la toma de Jerusalén por Tolomeo Soter⁴¹ (ca. 320 a.C.), quien lo consigue gracias a la *superstitio* de los judíos, que «ni empuñaban las armas en el citado día, ni realizaban ningún trabajo en el campo».⁴² Más cercano temporalmente a Plutarco y más violento resulta el testimonio de Juvenal:⁴³

«Pero la culpa es del padre, para quien toda séptima luz del día fue estéril y no tocó a ninguna actividad de la vida».

hábitos judíos...'. Esto influyó en la visión de un pueblo judío separado del resto, aunque en nuestro pasaje no pueda decirse lo mismo acerca del respeto con que trata Plutarco a las tradiciones judías.

39 Cf. LXX, Éx 26, 8–11; NT, Heb 4, 9.

40 Plutarco, *Quaest. conv.*, IV 672A: «Ellos mismos dan testimonio de lo dicho (*scil.* la relación entre Dionisos-Dios hebreo), cuando celebran el sábado, puesto que se dedican a beber y a invitarse a vino los unos a los otros». La opinión de Plutarco dista mucho del uso judío del vino para las bendiciones, teniendo en cuenta que existía la prohibición de beber vino en la misma realización del culto, excepto una copa al principio y al final del *Sabbath*, cf. LXX, Lv 10, 9. No obstante parece que la tradición se había relajado en el período final precristiano, cf. Teodorsson, 129–30. Acerca de la simbología del vino como amor en el *AT* y su pervivencia en el *NT*, cf. Mateos-Camacho, 74.

41 No se sabe a qué toma de Jerusalén se refiere Plutarco, pudiendo ser, además de la citada, la conquista llevada a cabo por Tito (70 a.C.), por Pompeyo (63 a.C.) o por Antonio (38 a.C.).

42 Cf. Josefo, *C. Ap.* I, 205–211. También, *AI XII*, 5–6.

43 Cf. Juvenal, *Saturae XIV*, 105–6: *sed pater in causa, cui septima quaeque fuit lux / ignava et partem vitae non attingit ullam*. El poeta latino critica las mismas características que Plutarco: el festejo del sábado y la abstención de la carne de cerdo, añadiendo la circuncisión. Otros autores latinos también se refieren a la *superstitio* de los judíos, como Horacio, *Sermones I*, 9 68–78; Ovidio, *Ars Amatoria I*, 75–80 y 413–6; Tibulo, *Carmina I*, 3 15–8; Apuleyo, *Florida* 6.

Juvenal atestigua lo mismo que el de Queronea: lo mal considerados que estaban los judíos en el Imperio romano, esencialmente porque veían en sus costumbres un testimonio de *superstitio* absurda y despreciable. Juvenal se refiere a aquellos romanos que se pasan al judaísmo (*Sat.* XIV, 97–106), mientras que Plutarco, a los grecorromanos que siguen tradiciones judías. Así, ambas críticas se enmarcan dentro de un conjunto de autores paganos que muestran lo que se conocía y era tema de conversación acerca de los judíos. Una diferencia entre Plutarco y las demás fuentes es su crítica más dura contra los galos, escitas y cartagineses, acusados de sacrificios humanos,⁴⁴ con lo que su descripción de los hebreos no resulta tan negativa. El otro tema sobre el que centra su invectiva es la forma de adorar a su dios, «inclinando el rostro» (ῥίψεις ἐπὶ πρόσωπον), un gesto muy común en el judaísmo y en las culturas orientales, ya sea ante una divinidad o ante un mortal importante.⁴⁵

La falta de interés plutarquea acerca de los judíos se muestra de nuevo en *De stoicorum repugnantiis* (1051E) donde ataca a sirios y judíos por su concepción divina, afirmando que estos pueblos rinden culto por temor, por *deisidaimonía*. Esta idea, que Plutarco afirma haberla tomado de «los poetas»,⁴⁶ parece mostrar que no poseía un conocimiento profundo del judaísmo, primero por unir a sirios y judíos en un mismo culto y, posteriormente, por atribuirles esta ideología alejada de las tradiciones hebreas.

Será en *Quaestiones Convivales*, donde Plutarco ofrezca la mayor cantidad de información. En esta parte de su obra plantea los temas que le parecen más interesantes: la naturaleza del dios hebreo y las características de sus costumbres. Incluye lo referente al cerdo tras su análisis dietético, de manera que la asociación de ideas parece llevarle a este pueblo, sobre el que ya se ha referido en otras ocasiones por aborrecer el cerdo.⁴⁷ Así, los comensales se preguntan por las razones que han generado esta tradición, opuesta al ideario griego, donde se consideraba su carne beneficiosa, de lo que es testimonio el padre de Lamprias. A continuación toma la palabra Calístrato, quien propone

44 Plutarco, *De superstitione* 171B–E. Acerca de las acusaciones de sacrificios humanos durante el período del Cristianismo primitivo, cf. Roig Lanzillotta. Plutarco no critica a los judíos de canibalismo, mientras que sí lo harán Orígenes y Justino, al referirse a los judíos helenizados del s. II a.C., cf. Detienne, 116. Igualmente, otros autores paganos como Apión, frg. 19 (*FGH* III 514); Rutilio Namasiano, *De Redito Suo* I, v. 383–93 y Macrobio, *Satumalia* II, 4.11, opinan que realmente los judíos comían carne humana en sus festivales anuales; cf. Teodorsson, 94.

45 Plutarco, *De superstitione* 166 A–B. Sirva de ejemplo: *LXX*, *Gén.* 42, 6.

46 Si la fuente verdadera de Plutarco son poetas que han tratado el judaísmo primitivo, su búsqueda se vuelve más problemática, teniendo en cuenta los pocos testimonios en verso que se han conservado, como la fragmentada tragedia de Ezequiel, Ἐξαγωγὴ o los *Oracula Sibilina*.

47 Acerca de la concepción judía del cerdo en la Biblia, cf. *LXX* Lv 11,3–8; Dt 14,8; Is 65,2–4; Prov 11,22; 80, 14 y *NT*, Mt 7,6; Lc 15,15; 2Pe 2,22.

que la causa podría ser semejante a la que propició la veneración de los sacerdotes egipcios hacia el cerdo, por la ayuda que le proporcionaba en la agricultura. Esta respuesta ya fue recogida por Heródoto:

«sueltan a los cerdos; posteriormente, después de hundir la simiente con la ayuda de las pezuñas de los cerdos, esperan la subsiguiente siega; y también con ayuda de los cerdos siegan el trigo, recolectándolo de esta manera».⁴⁸

El valor de los cerdos en época tolemaica queda atestiguado en los papiros griegos.⁴⁹ Pero, frente a lo que afirma Plutarco, eran utilizados como animales sacrificiales: τὰ ἱερεῖα.⁵⁰ Así, los papiros contradicen también los testimonios de otros autores antiguos, como Eliano, quien afirmaba, siguiendo a Eudoxo, que los egipcios apenas sacrificaban cerdos porque eran usados en la agricultura⁵¹ o Sexto Empírico, que mantenía que los egipcios se abstendrían, como los judíos, de la carne de cerdo.⁵² Sabemos que incluso habían existido sacrificios dedicados a cerdos en regiones cercanas a Judea, Siria y Egipto. Aquí, este animal se relacionaba con la luna y era ofrecido a Osiris; no obstante, también se le consideraba impuro y se le incluía en el séquito del malvado Set, quien, en forma de un cerdo negro, atacaba a Horus. En Siria, el cerdo era un animal sagrado, dedicado a la diosa Astarté.⁵³ En época helenística, estos sacrificios continuaban celebrándose, pues sabemos que los emigrantes griegos conservaron la tradición. Plutarco intenta asemejar esta costumbre judía a las de los grupos que conoce mejor, los egipcios, los pitagóricos y los Magos⁵⁴, pero de

48 Cf. Heródoto, *Historia* II, 14,2. Clemente de Alejandría opina lo contrario: que se abstienen de su carne porque destrozan las cosechas, cf. *Stromata* VII, 33,1.

49 Cf. *P. Cair. Zen.* 59821, donde unos cerdos, junto a otros animales, sirven de regalo de cumpleaños para el soberano.

50 Cf. *P. Cair. Zen.* 59819, esta carta fue escrita por un porquerizo y enviada a algún trabajador del entorno de Zenón, el secretario del ministro de economía de Tolomeo Filadelfo, comentando también problemas en el transporte de estos animales, pues narra que los tres mejores ejemplares le habían sido robados por el ἀρχιφυλακείτης de Cocrodeilópolis.

51 Cf. Eliano, *NA* X, 16. Las similitudes existentes tanto en los temas, como en el orden y el estilo han levantado largas discusiones sobre la posible relación entre las obras plutarqueas, la *Halientica* de Opiano y los tratados de Eliano. Existe la posibilidad de que la influencia no sea siempre directa, sino que partan de fuentes comunes. En este caso concreto, Eliano se aparta relativamente de Plutarco, pues aunque recoge la explicación herodotea, pone en duda el testimonio de Sexto Empírico, afirmando que los egipcios sacrificaban cerdos, pero en contadas ocasiones, ya que aborrecían a las cerdas, principalmente, porque devoraban a sus crías.

52 Cf. Sexto Empírico, *Pyrrhoniae hypotyposes* III, 223. También en Josefo, *C. Ap.* II, 141 y Orígenes, *Contra Celso* V, 49.

53 Cf. Lurker, 56.

54 Plutarco también se refiere al cerdo en relación con los estoicos, quienes defendían que en realidad se trata de un montón de carne muerta que ha tomado un alma sólo para preservarla, cf. Plutarco, *Quaestiones Convivales*, 669A. Además, los pitagóricos

esta comparación no surge una respuesta, ya que, en el caso de los judíos, no es veneración⁵⁵ ni odio hacia el cerdo, de modo que concluye diciendo que simplemente lo tienen prohibido por ley, ἀπόρρητον.⁵⁶ Plutarco, además añade otra posible causa, a saber, la fealdad y suciedad de su piel,⁵⁷ que, en ocasiones, puede llegar a parecer lepra – enfermedad aborrecida por los judíos –,⁵⁸ la cual podría transmitirse por el consumo de carne contagiada, idea también transmitida por Eliano.⁵⁹ La última posibilidad de su aborrecimiento es que un jabalí fue el animal que mató a Adonis, figura relacionada con Dioniso, en quien Plutarco ve al dios de los judíos.⁶⁰

A continuación trata otro animal también prohibido para los hebreos, la liebre, la cual no debía utilizarse para actos culturales (cf. *LXX*, *Lv* 11.6) ni comerse (ibid. *Dt* 14.7), quizá por oposición al significado religioso que poseía en las culturas circundantes. En Egipto se relacionaba a la liebre con la fecundidad, siendo atributo de la diosa Unut, y Plinio incluso asegura que su carne contenía poderes afrodisíacos.⁶¹ Para Plutarco, «la liebre parece que es un asno de altura y anchura menor» (*Quaest. Conv.* 670E–F), siendo semejantes ambos en su anatomía. De este modo, apoyándose, como en el caso del cerdo,

consideraban que la carne de animales sacrificales, como cerdos y cabras, no era propiamente carne, siéndolo únicamente la del buey arador, cf. Detienne, 116–17. No obstante, los griegos consideraban que la carne de cerdo representaba las fuerzas ctónicas, utilizándose como carne sacrificial en los misterios eleusinos y en las Tesmoforias, en honor de Deméter, cf. Teodorsson, 97.

- 55 Aunque Petronio atestigua esta posibilidad, cf. *Carmina* 50, v. 1: «*Judaeus licet et porcinum numen adoret*». Posiblemente aquí se entrevea una asociación cerdo-asno, por ser ambos, según los autores antiguos, animales adorados por los judíos, cf. Simões Rodríguez, 433–4.
- 56 Plutarco, *Quaestiones Convivales* IV, 670D. Los griegos helenizados de Alejandría intentaron dar una explicación racional a la prohibición, cf. Teodorsson, 97.
- 57 Cf. Teodorsson, 117.
- 58 No se debe tomar esta enfermedad en el sentido actual, ya que, con este término, se referían a cualquier enfermedad de la piel, como la psoriasis, cf. Lurker, 130–1. También Tácito recoge esta idea, cf. *Historia* V, 4, 2. Griegos y romanos acusaban a los judíos de propagadores de esta enfermedad, cf. Simões Rodríguez, 434. Acerca de la simbología del leproso como prototipo de marginado religioso en el *AT* y su pervivencia en el *NT*, cf. Mateos-Camacho, 93–95.
- 59 Eliano, *NA* X, 16, pone en boca del egipcio Manetón que el consumo de la leche de cerda producía herpes y lepra, cf. Teodorsson, 115–6.
- 60 Sobre este tema y las semejanzas entre ambos cultos, asunto que también trata Plutarco en *Regum et Imperatorum Apophthegmata*, 184E–F, consúltese el exhaustivo artículo de Nieto Ibáñez, 327–36; Teodorsson, 118; Stern, vol. I, 559–62; Simões Rodríguez, 434. Incluso, en época romana, se produce una asimilación Dionisos-Jesucristo, cf. Wick, 179–98.
- 61 Cf. Lurker, 133–4. Parece existir una confusión con el término hebreo *sapan*, «tejón», traducida por los gentiles como liebre.

en la gran estima que se le tenía en Egipto y en su parecido al burro, Plutarco explica la abstención judía de carne de liebre.⁶²

En cuanto a la veneración judía hacia el asno, el de Queronea lo trata en *Quaestiones Convivales* y en *De Iside et Osiride*. Comienza refiriéndose a la opinión acerca del asno de los habitantes de Busiris y Licópolis, quienes no hacían uso de trompetas porque su sonido se parecía al rebuzno.⁶³ Además consideraban a este animal sucio y dominado por un ente demónico, siendo semejante a Tifón. Igualmente es considerado, por persas y judíos, un animal estúpido y lascivo. Después el de Queronea introduce el mito fundacional de Jerusalén, donde interviene un burro (*De Iside* 363C–D):

«Hay quienes dicen que Tifón huyó de la batalla a lomos de un asno, durante siete días y que, una vez a salvo, engendró a sus hijos, Jerusalén y Judío. A partir de esto, evidentemente, ellos (los hebreos) intentan acercar sus tradiciones judías a este mito».

Sin duda, ideas parecidas se mantenían en los círculos paganos hostiles al judaísmo, donde se pensaba que los hebreos rendían culto al burro. Esta acusación parece iniciarse de la mano de Mnaseas de Patras, quien defendía que los judíos adoraban la cabeza de un asno de oro.⁶⁴ Posteriormente, Damócrito⁶⁵ afirmaba que sacrificaban un extranjero en favor de esta cabeza áurea cada siete años. Después, Diodoro⁶⁶ explica que cuando Antíoco Epífanes entró en el año 168 a.C. en el templo, encontró en el *sancta sanctorum* la imagen de una persona, que él identifica con Moisés, montado sobre un asno.⁶⁷

Dentro de este entorno se insertan las palabras del queronense, quien va a utilizar la tradición del asno en forma de mito fundacional de la nación judía. Sabemos que en Egipto se rendía culto a Tifón-Set representado como un burro y que este culto tuvo su reflejo en Roma, al igual que en Siria, donde era objeto de veneración, siendo la cabalgadura de la diosa Atirat y, en Grecia, de Dioniso. Así, Plutarco parece hacer uso de esta larga tradición para mezclarlo con el mito clásico de la titanomaquia, cuyo escenario de la lucha entre Zeus y Tifón es el monte Casio en Siria.⁶⁸ A continuación, Plutarco relata el regreso del titán sobre un asno, apartándose de la tradición grecorromana, al tiempo

62 Cf. Teodorsson, 113.

63 Plutarco, *De Is. et Os.* 362F. Esta misma idea es recogida literalmente por Eliano, cf. *NA* X 28.

64 Cf. Josefo, *C. Ap.* II 9: χρυσὴν... τοῦ κύνθωνος κεφαλὴν. Aquí aparece una posible confusión de κύνθωνος por κύνθωρος, remitiendo al culto egipcio del escarabajo. Esta tesis también aparece en I 216, II 80 y *AI*, I 94.

65 Autor oscuro del que tan sólo tenemos referencias por la *Suda*, s.v. Δαμόκριτος.

66 Cf. Diodoro, *Bibliotheca Historica* XXXIV–XXXV, 1, 1–5.

67 Esta historia también la recoge Josefo, *C. Ap.* II, 7.

68 Ruiz de Elvira, 56–7.

que explica el culto egipcio y apoya la relación Dios judío-Dioniso.⁶⁹ Su paso por Judea da lugar al nacimiento de las dos figuras fundacionales de la nación hebrea, *topos* frecuente en la mitología clásica. Plutarco es el único autor que se refiere a este relato mítico,⁷⁰ del que tan sólo conservamos algo parecido en Tácito, quien afirma que, durante el reinado de Isis, la nación judía inundó Egipto, tras haber sido liberada por sus generales «Jerusalén y Judío». En cuanto a la fundación de la ciudad, el historiador romano la atribuye a Solymos.⁷¹

Conclusiones

En primer lugar, en relación a si existe una evolución en el pensamiento de Plutarco referente al judaísmo que se pueda rastrear en las *Vidas*, no parece que así sea, sino que más bien inserta breves referencias en aquellos momentos en los que el personaje principal de la *Vida* tiene contacto con ellos, sin añadir comentarios relativos a su historia o costumbres. C. P. Jones, basándose en las citas plutarqueas acerca de sus mismas obras o en el momento histórico en el que las escribe, determina que, a excepción de la pareja *Galba y Otón*, escrita después del 79 y antes del 96 d.C., todas las *Vidas* que hemos tenido en cuenta, son obras de época madura creadas entre el 96 y el 120 d.C. – punto *ante quem*, por la muerte de Plutarco –. Sobre la cronología relativa entre las *Vidas*, la pareja *Cicerón-Demóstenes* ocupa el quinto lugar, *Agésilao-Pompeyo* el decimoquinto y *Demetrio-Antonio*, una posición difícil de determinar entre la decimosexta y vigésimo tercera. Puesto que la información acerca de los judíos se concentra en las *Vidas* de Pompeyo, Antonio y Cicerón, no parece que esto atienda a una causa cronológica. Sin embargo, proporciona un dato importante: las *Vidas* son contemporáneas de las *Quaestiones Convivales* y del *Iside et Osiride*, 96–114, y 115 d.C. respectivamente, por lo que Plutarco parece organizar el material del que dispone, centrándose en los personajes que trata en las *Vidas*, mientras que, para *Moralia*, deja todo aquello que rodea esas historias, los pueblos y sus tradiciones.

En segundo lugar, atendiendo a las ideas que Plutarco ofrece sobre el judaísmo, podemos extraer las siguientes conclusiones:

69 También se ha propuesto que la historia esté relacionada con la identificación de los judíos con los hicsos, según los autores paganos, el pueblo que dio lugar a la nación judía. Cf. Teodorsson, 113.

70 Eliano parece hacerse eco de este mito, cf. *NA* X, 28: ἤδη δὲ αὐτόν τινες καὶ τῷ Τυφῶνι προσφιλεῖ γειγόνεσθαι φασί.

71 Cf. Tácito, *Historiae*, V 2–3. Acerca del culto al asno, cf. V 3, 2–4, 2, relato en el que cuenta cómo a Moisés se le aparece una imagen de asno para mostrarle un manantial de agua. Esta historia se ha puesto en relación con *LXX Gén.* 36, 24.

- En *Vidas* apenas contamos con referencias al pueblo hebreo.
- Cuando éstas aparecen, el juicio del queronense es bastante negativo, considerándolo un pueblo guerrero, ávido de revueltas contra Roma, traicionero e inferior al ejército romano en el campo de batalla.
- A Plutarco no parece interesarle la historia de este pueblo, pero sí sus costumbres, de modo que es en *Moralia* donde concentra todo lo que conoce, seguramente no a través de *autopsía*, añadiéndose a los que siguen la *communis opinio*, que, como se ha dicho, está bien atestiguada en los autores antiguos.
- La opinión plutarquea sobre los judíos de *Moralia*, no siendo tan negativa como la de otros autores contemporáneos, tampoco parece favorable y muestra un interés curioso por los hebreos, como el que revela poseer por los pitagóricos o los magos. Así los califica en principio de seguidores de tradiciones absurdas y supersticiosas, cuyo culto les lleva a un comportamiento disoluto y ocioso, incluso a excederse con el alcohol. Esto, unido a la veneración hacia animales, como el asno, configura una imagen de los judíos marcada por su primitivismo.
- En ocasiones la veracidad de sus noticias queda en entredicho, cuando, desde su visión helenocentrista,⁷² tergiversa o trata superfluamente los datos, haciendo uso de la analogía con aquellas culturas que conoce mejor, generalmente por su deseo moralizador.

En resumen, parece que Plutarco no se interesa profundamente en el tema de Judea. De su argumento *ab silentio* podemos pensar que, o bien no está interesado por el judaísmo, aún siendo un asunto en boga, o bien no desea tratarlo, por resultarle espinoso.

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List of Contributors

Aguilar, Rosa M ^a	Universidad Complutense, Madrid, Spain
Alexiou, Evangelos	University of Thessaloniki, Greece
Araújo da Rocha Júnior, Roosevelt	Universidade Federal do Paraná, Brazil
Ash, Rhiannon	Merton College, Oxford, UK
Beneker, Jeffrey	University of Wisconsin, USA
Billault, Alain	Université de Paris-Sorbonne, Paris IV, France
Blois, Lukas de	University of Nijmegen, Holland
Boulet, Bernard	Collège de Sainte-Foy, Quebec City, Canada
Boulogne, Jacques	Université Charles de Gaulle-Lille 3, France
Bowie, Ewen	Corpus Christi College, Oxford, UK
Brechet, Christophe	Université Paris X – Nanterre, France
Brenk, Frederick	Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, Italy
Calero Secall, Inés	Universidad de Málaga, Spain
Capriglione, Jolanda	II Università di Napoli, Italy
Castelnérac, Benoît	Université de Sherbrooke, Québec, Canada
Cooper, Craig	University of Winnipeg, MB, Canada
Dillon, John	Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland
Duff, Tim	University of Reading, UK
Durán Mañas, Mónica	IES „Vega de Pirón“, Segovia, Spain
Fernández Delgado, José Antonio	Universidad de Salamanca, Spain
FitzGibbon, Patricia	The Colorado College, Colorado Springs, USA
Francis, Jane	Concordia University, Montréal, Canada
Gallé Cejudo, Rafael Jesus	Universidad de Cádiz, Spain
Geiger, Joseph	Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
Harrison, George	Concordia University, Montreal, Canada
Hershbell, Jackson	University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, USA
Horster, Marietta	Universität Rostock, Germany
Ingenkamp, Heinz Gerd	University of Bonn, Germany
Koulakiotis, Elias	University of Crete, Greece
Leão Ferreira, Delfim	University of Coimbra, Portugal
Liddel, Peter	University of Manchester, UK
Marasco, Gabriele	Università della Tuscia, Viterbo, Italy
Muccioli, Federicomaria	Università di Bologna, Italy
Muñoz Gallarte, Israel	Universidad de Córdoba, Spain
Nikolaidis, Anastasios	University of Crete, Greece
Papadi, Diotima	University College London, UK
Pelling, Christopher	Christ Church College, Oxford, UK
Pérez Jiménez, Aurelio	Universidad de Málaga, Spain
Plese, Zlatko	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA
Pordomingo Pardo, Francisca	Universidad de Salamanca, Spain
Ramón Palerm, Vicente	Universidad de Zaragoza, Spain
Romero González, Dámaris	Universidad de Córdoba, Spain
Roskam, Geert	Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium

Schrader, Carlos
Soares, Carmen
Stadter, Philip A.
Teodorsson, Sven-Tage
Titchener, Frances
Tröster, Manuel
Tsouvala, Georgia
Van der Stockt, Luc
Van Hoof, Lieve
Vela Tejada, José
Verdegem, Simon
Vicente Sanchez, Ana
Volpe Cacciatore, Paola

Universidad de Zaragoza, Spain
University of Coimbra, Portugal
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA
Göteborg University, Sweden
Utah State University, Logan, USA
Universität Trier, Germany
Illinois State University, Normal, USA
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium
University of Exeter, UK
Universidad de Zaragoza, Spain
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium
Universidad de Zaragoza, Spain
Università degli Studi di Salerno, Italy

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