THE HELLENISTIC PAST IN PLUTARCH’S LIVES

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Abstract

This dissertation is a study of five Greek Lives (*Demetrius, Pyrrhus, Aratus, Agis and Cleomenes*) and one pair of Lives (*Philopoemen-Flamininus*) in which Plutarch of Chaeronea portrayed the Greek world between the death of Alexander and the coming of Rome. My objective is to determine how Plutarch represented Hellenistic Greece, and what cultural relevance these Hellenistic narratives might have had for his contemporary readers. This study complicates the current scholarly narrative concerning Imperial Greek literature, which maintains that Imperial authors were uninterested in Greek history after Alexander, by demonstrating that Plutarch found the Hellenistic past to be a useful tool for thinking through the socio-political dynamics of second-century AD Greece. I argue that Plutarch envisioned the Hellenistic world as analogous to his own, based on a similarly imbalanced power dynamic between the weakened Greek *poleis* and powerful foreign rulers who valued Greek culture. By means of this analogy, Plutarch explored timely lessons in the Hellenistic Lives that were otherwise inaccessible in the Lives of Archaic and Classical Greek statesmen. I draw on Plutarch’s political *Moralia* and other contemporary works to illustrate the resonances between the socio-political concerns in the Greek *poleis* of the Roman Empire and Plutarch’s themes in the Hellenistic Lives.

In Chapter Two, I argue that Plutarch characterized Demetrius and Pyrrhus as failed Alexander-imitators, thereby participating in a debate about the use of Alexander as a model for kingship that had a revival during the reign of Trajan. In Chapter Three, I demonstrate that Plutarch constructed the *Aratus* around a series of interactions between Aratus and several Hellenistic dynasts in order to provide a historical exemplum of a
Greek statesman who, like Plutarch’s elite Greek readers, acted as a liaison between the Greek poleis and foreign potentates. Chapter Four examines the literary tools Plutarch employed in the Agis and Cleomenes to problematize the contemporary impulse to revive the Greek past. Finally, in Chapter Five I show how Plutarch represented the transition from Hellenistic past to Roman present in the Philopoemen-Flamininus, and in the process created both an aetiology and an exemplum for contemporary Greco-Roman interactions.
Preface

Plutarch tells us that he started writing the *Parallel Lives* for the sake of others, but continued writing them for himself (*Aem. 1.1*). The writing of this dissertation has undergone quite the opposite transformation: I began this project to indulge my own interests in Plutarch and the characters of Hellenistic Greece, but I finish it with others in mind, hoping that my readers will find this study to be useful, provocative, and enjoyable. Most of all, I hope that my humble readings lead a few more people to discover that even though the Hellenistic *Lives* may not tell us about the headliners of Greek history, they have rich rewards and pleasures all their own.

This project and the committee who guided it developed in three stages. Constanze Guthenke taught a seminar on ancient biography during my first semester at Princeton, and it was in that course that I became fascinated with how and why Plutarch transforms men into prose; even though I had never read Plutarch before, from that point on I knew that his *Lives* would be the topic of my dissertation. In my second year, a reading course with Nino Luraghi had both a short-term and a long-term payout: I passed my Greek history general exam, but more importantly, I was introduced to the study of the Hellenistic period, with all of its confusing narratives and overblown personalities. However, it was not until Janet Downie’s excellent survey of Greek Imperial literature during my third year that I realized that by combining my interests in Plutarch and Hellenistic history, I could write a dissertation that could complicate the way we understand how Imperial Greeks related to their past. Constanze, Nino, and Janet have been ideal advisers for this project and this writer: their input has given much-needed shape to my thoughts and my prose, they have corrected errors big and small, and their
encouragement and support has helped me to persevere in this long and difficult undertaking. I owe them all a great debt of gratitude for their insight, patience, and guidance.

Many other kind and generous colleagues, mentors, and friends have helped me to bring this project to completion, in more ways than I can begin to count here. At Princeton, Michael Flower provided invaluable feedback on Chapter Four, and his conversation was a true oasis as I worked through the problems of the Spartan mirage. Stephanie Lewandowski, administrator, saint, and friend, – and not my mother! – has provided answers to the countless little questions that arise during a dissertation, but more importantly, was welcome company for much-needed trips to the Bent Spoon. The faculty and graduate students alike at the University of Virginia Department of Classics have been a second academic family to me, especially in the 2012-2013 academic year. In particular, I would like to give my deepest gratitude to: Jon Mikalson and John Miller, for giving me the opportunity to teach my dream course on political biography; John Dillery, for his interest in my work and infectious enthusiasm; Coulter George, Sarah Miller, and the other participants of the dissertation writers’ workshop, for welcoming me into the group and giving me insightful feedback on Chapters Two and Six; and Jenny Strauss Clay, for generously allowing me to use her office while she was on leave. Finally, it was at the encouragement (orders?) of Alex Sens and Charlie McNelis at my alma mater Georgetown University that I decided to pursue a PhD in Classics: for persuading me to make the second best decision of my life, thank you.
Plutarch also tells us that, over time, the subjects of his *Lives* became like imaginary house-guests whom he could visit with as he pleased (*Aem. 1.2*). Even though some of his imaginary friends have become my own over the past three years, I have also had the good fortune of *real* friends who have given me the feedback, encouragement, and love that a dissertation cannot be completed without. Donna Zuckerberg, David Kaufman, Leigh Lieberman, Megan Steffen, Dawn Lavalle, Thomas Miller, Megan Goldman-Petri, and D. Alexander Walthall are just a few of those to whom my debt is greatest. Eric and Joyce Geilker (and Farley, too) gave me the chance to complete my dissertation in a truly idyllic setting, even providing goats to create an authentic Hellenic atmosphere. Michael Monaco and Meredith Monaco-Brown, my beloved siblings, have given me lifetimes’ worth of positive (and sometimes negative) exempla: I think my interests in ethics and imitation are due, in large part, to following always in their footsteps. Words can hardly begin to fill the debt I owe to my parents, Salvatore and Rosemary Monaco, who have shown me nothing but unflagging love and a deep commitment to my education, but the dedication of these nearly eighty-eight thousand words will have to suffice for now. Finally, this dissertation would have never been completed without my partner and best friend, Christopher Caterine: the countless hours he has listened to me talk about Plutarch; the countless times that his hard work, focus, and brilliance have inspired me to make my own work better than I thought it could be; and the countless times that his humor, warmth, and love have made me realize that there are things much more important than a dissertation.
Chapter One

Introduction: Why Write Hellenistic Lives?

This dissertation examines the representation of the Hellenistic past in Plutarch’s Lives. My objective in considering Plutarch’s Hellenistic Lives is to determine what cultural relevance and significance the history of the Greeks after Alexander could have for Greeks living in, under, and with the Roman Empire. Although there have been numerous studies of the importance of the Greek past for Imperial Greek authors, scholars have focused only on the mythological, Archaic, and Classical past up to and including the conquests of Alexander. The fact that seven out of the twenty-four extant Greek Lives come from the period after the death of Alexander, however, suggests that at least Plutarch found it valuable to contemplate and write about the Hellenistic past. As another point of comparison, Plutarch wrote ten Athenian Lives. While no one doubts (or should doubt) the importance of Athens for the construction of Greek cultural identity in the Roman Empire, the distribution of Plutarch’s biographical corpus suggests that the Hellenistic past loomed nearly as large as Athens in Plutarch’s imagination.

Nevertheless, Plutarch’s Hellenistic Lives have long been neglected by scholars. My study, then, seeks to fill in a major gap in the scholarship on Imperial Greek literature by examining how a Greek author at the turn of the second century AD responded to the more recent history of the Greek world after Alexander.

My thesis is that Plutarch found the Hellenistic past to be a useful tool for thinking through the socio-political issues present in Imperial Greece. As I demonstrate in the course of this work, Plutarch exploits similarities between the political and social circumstances of Hellenistic Greeks and those of his Imperial Greek contemporaries in
order to compose biographies of Hellenistic figures that would have timely didactic value for the Greeks of the Empire. These similarities stem from two underlying phenomena, one political and one cultural. First, Greeks in both the Hellenistic and Roman periods had to cope with living in a world with an imbalanced power dynamic, in which the Greek 
poleis had to respond and submit to foreign rulers whose power and resources dwarfed their own. Second, these foreign rulers, Macedonians and Romans respectively, had similar relationships to Greek culture: though both Macedonians and Romans were non-Greek by ethnicity, they were often Hellenized by education and placed a great value on Greek cultural capital. Moreover, as I shall argue, not only did Plutarch use the Hellenistic Lives to explore timely concerns, but the concerns these Lives address are inaccessible in the Lives of Greek figures from the mythological, Archaic, and Classical past. Therefore, the Hellenistic Lives are not just well-suited to addressing Imperial Greek concerns, but they are uniquely so among all of the figures of the Greek past treated by Plutarch.

My argument for the unique, timely significance of the Hellenistic Lives is in response to Christopher Pelling’s thesis of the “timelessness” of Plutarch’s Lives. Pelling does not deny a correspondence between Plutarch’s themes and his contemporary world, but he does argue instead that these themes have relevance to every period. Indeed, he believes that Plutarch “shies away” from opportunities to draw specific allusions between his contemporary world and the past in order to make his moralizing narratives more universally applicable.1 “Resonances” between Plutarch’s present and the narrated past exist in Pelling’s view, but he maintains that their lack of specificity renders them no

more or less valuable to Plutarch’s contemporary readers than to his Renaissance, Enlightenment, or Millenial readers. This argument suffers from overgeneralization, both concerning Plutarch’s biographical corpus and the wider scope of human history. I suggest that by considering the Hellenistic *Lives* as a subset of the Plutarchan corpus, we may perceive more nuance in Plutarch’s craft and historical vision than Pelling would allow. The issues of the Hellenistic world, defined as it was by an imbalanced power dynamic between Greeks and the Hellenized Macedonian dynasts, are not so similar to all other times and places that they could provide useful lessons for, say, individuals participating in a republican government. And yet, Plutarch still wrote these *Lives*, despite the peculiar socio-political dynamic represented therein. The combination of Greece’s political impotence but cultural greatness in the face of foreign powers is a situation that finds perhaps its only analogy in the circumstances of the Greeks under the Roman Empire. This specificity may be one of the reasons why these *Lives* historically have been neglected as compared to the other Greek or Roman *Lives*, but at the same time it is a compelling reason for Plutarch to narrate the *Lives* of these post-classical men. Rather than being neglected or denied by Imperial Greek writers, as previous scholarship has suggested the Hellenistic past was, Plutarch’s Hellenistic *Lives* show the value the Hellenistic past could have as a way of exploring the socio-political and moral problems faced in the Roman present.

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2 Modern scholars have often struggled to find analogies for Roman Greece, in particular as they have tried to apply Post-colonialist theory to the understanding the interactions between Romans and Greeks of this period. For a cogent discussion of this issue with particular reference to the works of Plutarch, see Mossman (2005) 499-500, who draws on Whitmarsh (2001) and (2002).
The aims of this introduction are fourfold. First, I briefly sketch Plutarch’s life and works with the goal of providing some preliminary historical contextualization for the readings that follow. I then survey the two main scholarly discussions with which my dissertation engages: first, the question of the representation of the past in Imperial Greek literature; and second, the development of approaches to Plutarch’s Lives. In the final section, I give an explanation of my selection of Lives for this project and my methodology for reading and contextualizing these Lives. I close with a brief chapter outline, which will provide the road map for the readings that follow.

7. **Plutarch: His Life and Works**

Wilamowitz once described Plutarch as “the amiable citizen of Chaeronea who continues to invite us into his hospitable home, where he will tell us many and various things about men and gods, as he drinks local Boeotian wine, and finally will point to the lion, the loyal guardian over the earthly tomb of the old, immortal greatness of Greece.”3 This image is perhaps a scholar’s fantasy of his relationship with his ancient subject (admittedly, a fantasy that is shared by the present author), but it nevertheless highlights a few key aspects of Plutarch’s life and works, including his humanism and humanity, his fascination with the Greek past, his penchant for story-telling, and his status as the only major Imperial Greek author from the Greek mainland. Born *circa* AD 46, Plutarch was a member of the Greek provincial elite, a philosopher, a priest, a local statesman, and one of the most prolific writers of the early Roman Empire.4 Most of what we know about

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4 This account makes no claims to being either exhaustive or original; I am following here primarily the accounts of Jones (1971) and Russell (1973). Ziegler (1951) is also essential reading on Plutarch’s life, milieu, and works. Stadter (2007) imagines the ways the Plutarch’s upbringing and career affected his literary interests and cultural outlook.
Plutarch’s life derives from autobiographical comments in his works, but there seems to be less reason to doubt these details in Plutarch than in many other ancient authors.⁵ From what he tells us, he traveled to Rome, Alexandria, and Asia Minor; yet at the same time, he proudly professes his adherence to his native Chaeronea despite the alluring intellectual amenities of a more cosmopolitan life.⁶ His family seems to have been the most prominent in Chaeronea, and among the most prominent in Boeotia. As a young man, he traveled to Rome several times, both as an ambassador and as a philosopher.⁷ He was elected archon in Chaeronea, and eventually was appointed one of the two priests of Apollo at Delphi, a post he held until his death early in the reign of Hadrian (r. 117-138 AD). Epigraphic evidence from Delphi makes it clear that Plutarch was also a Roman citizen, an honor granted to him by the consular L. Mestrius Florus.⁸ Remarkably, Plutarch never refers to his status as a Roman citizen in his works. He may have been named the procurator of Achaea by Hadrian at the end of his life, a post that came with the privilege of donning consular trappings; this testimony, however, derives from a late Byzantine witness, and has been questioned at times by modern scholars.⁹ Although Plutarch’s Roman honorary titles are controversial, it is clear from the dedicatees of his works that Plutarch was well-connected with members of both the Greek provincial elite and the Roman Imperial elite.¹⁰ A few examples will suffice to demonstrate the impressive status of Plutarch’s Greek and Roman friends. The

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⁶ Cf. Dem. 2.
⁷ Cf. Dem. 2.2.
⁸ Cf. SIG² 829A.
¹⁰ Puech (1992) is a full prosopography of Plutarch’s acquaintances, and as such is an invaluable resource.
aforementioned L. Mestrius Florus, who sponsored Plutarch for Roman citizenship, was an officer under Otho (Otho 14), a consul with Vespasian, and the proconsul of Asia in AD 88/89 before retiring to Greece.\textsuperscript{11} Sosius Senecio, the dedicatee of the Parallel Lives, Quaestiones Convivales, and De Profectu in Virtute, held the consulship in AD 99 and again in AD 107, after he had an important role in Trajan’s Dacian wars. Not only does Sosius Senecio provide a potential link between Plutarch and Trajan, but also between Plutarch and Pliny the Younger, who was a friend of Senecio.\textsuperscript{12} Other dedicatees of Plutarch’s works illustrate his lofty connections among his fellow Greeks. For example, Polycrates of Sicyon, the dedicatee of the Aratus, was also involved with Plutarch in the renovation of the sanctuary at Delphi (De Pyth. Or. 409B) in his role as the Sicyonian delegate of the Amphictyony; we will have further recourse to discuss the status of Polycrates’ family in Chapter 3.\textsuperscript{13} Finally, C. Julius Antiochus Epiphanes Philopappus, an individual best known for his monumental funerary sculpture atop the eponymous hill facing the Athenian Acropolis, was the dedicatee of Plutarch’s essay Quomodo Adulator ab Amico Internoscatur, a suitable offering for the wealthy grandson of the last king of Commagene. Philopappus was honored by the Athenians for his sumptuous execution of the Dionysia, a festival of which he was twice the agonothetes; he also held the eponymous archonship twice. His Roman offices and honors matched the Athenian ones: he was a member of the Arval Brethren and suffect consul in AD 109.\textsuperscript{14} As this list of dedicatees illustrates, Plutarch circulated among the highest echelons of Greek and Roman society; furthermore, these brief descriptions demonstrate the cultural

\textsuperscript{11} Puech (1992) 4860. \\
\textsuperscript{12} Puech (1992) 4883. \\
\textsuperscript{13} Cf. pages X-Y. \\
\textsuperscript{14} Puech (1992) 4870-4873; cf. PIR\textsuperscript{2} I 151.
permeability and overlap among Romans and Greek that was well-established by the turn of the second century AD.

Just as Plutarch’s friends span the Empire, the scope of his literary works extend widely across genre and topic. Traditionally, the corpus has been divided into two sections, the Lives and the Moralia. The biographies include two series and a few individual Lives. The Lives of the Caesars, published during the reign of Nerva (r. AD 96-98), was a series of imperial biographies chronicling the lives of Roman emperors from Augustus to Vitellius; of this series, only the Galba and Otho are extant.15 Plutarch’s better-represented series of biographies is the Parallel Lives, a collection of twenty-four books, each containing the biography of a Greek statesman paired with a Roman counterpart. All but the first pair, Epaminondas-Scipio, are extant. The majority of the pairs are followed by a formal comparison, or synkrisis, in which Plutarch explicitly evaluates the paired figures against each other on several criteria that vary from pair to pair. The Parallel Lives thus provide a disjointed account of Greek history from Theseus’ synoecism of Athens until the Roman conquest of the East, and Roman history from Romulus until the death of Mark Antony, the last rival to Octavian. Plutarch also wrote a number biographies unaffiliated with either series of Lives; although only the Aratus and Artaxerxes have been transmitted, the Lamprias Catalogue lists additional Lives including those of Heracles and Pindar.16 Plutarch wrote these biographies from

16 The Lamprias Catalogue is a list of Plutarch’s works from an unknown date in the later Empire (third-fifth centuries AD). Some of the works attested in the Catalogue are extant, but have been shown to be inauthentic on the basis of stylistics; other works are on the list but no longer extant; and still others are extant and authentic, but do not appear on the list. Therefore, attestations from the Catalogue must be taken cum grano salis. Cf. Lamberton (2001) 22-23.
the perspective of a rather traditional moralist, and as such he privileges moments that reveal a protagonist’s character over events that may have a greater historical significance.\textsuperscript{17}

Before we continue on to discuss the \textit{Moralia}, a note should be made about Plutarch’s relationship to his sources. Although the exploration of moral qualities is Plutarch’s main interest in the \textit{Lives}, he is nevertheless an adroit historical researcher and author, who reads, evaluates, and synthesizes both Greek and Latin sources in order to compose integrated political biographies. Given that he writes about the great statesmen of Greece and Rome, however, Plutarch’s sources for his \textit{Lives} are generally historical accounts that focus on cities, states, and larger-scale political developments, with occasional recourse to primary sources (e.g. the speeches of Demosthenes), oral tradition, and autopsy (especially for topographical information).\textsuperscript{18} In addition, each \textit{Life} incorporates a vast array of sources, and Plutarch is often faced with the task of creating an integrated narrative from earlier accounts that have diametrically-opposed biases. The \textit{Life of Cleomenes} is a clear example of this issue: Plutarch relies on Phylarchus, a pro-Spartan historian, but also Polybius and the memoirs of Aratus, two texts with decidedly pro-Achaean and anti-Spartan biases. As a result of this discrepancy between the

\textsuperscript{17} Cf. \textit{Alex}. 1.2: οὕτω ταῖς ἐπιφανεστάταις πράξεσι πάντως ἐνεστὶ δῆλωσις ἁρετῆς ἢ κακίας, ἀλλὰ πρᾶγμα βραχὺ πολλὰκις καὶ ῥήμα καὶ παιδία τις ἐμφασιν ἔσοις ἐποίησε μᾶλλον ἢ μάχαι μιρίόνεκροι καὶ παρατάξεις αἰ μέγισται καὶ πολιορκίαι πόλεων (…nor is the revelation of virtue or vice always in the most renowned deeds, but oftentimes a small act and saying and some joke creates an impression of character more than battles with countless dead and the greatest armaments and sieges of cities).

\textsuperscript{18} See Stadter (1965), Wardman (1971), Russell (1973) 42-62 for general discussions of Plutarch’s sources and his relationship to them. For individual \textit{Lives}, one must turn to the introductions of commentaries. I look forward to the many insights that are sure to be found in the forthcoming volume of van der Stockt and Stadter on Plutarch’s methods of composition.
objectives of Plutarch’s sources and his own character-driven, moralizing project, as well as the need to reconcile disparate accounts, Plutarch’s biographical narratives inevitably involve some adaptation of his source-materials to fit his own rhetorical needs.

Christopher Pelling, for example, has shown how Plutarch shapes the common source-material for the Republican Roman Lives in order to illustrate different ethical themes in each Life. In these Lives, Plutarch conflates, compresses, and expands the same sources to illustrate the passivity of Pompey, or the ruthlessness of Caesar, or Cato’s single-minded devotion to the republic, depending on whose Life he is writing. This phenomenon is not restricted to the Republican Lives, but rather is characteristic of Plutarch’s use of his sources throughout his corpus. Plutarch’s choice to compose parallel biographies further complicates his employment of sources, since he must not only mold his sources to his notion of a protagonist’s character, but also compose pairs that hang together as a unit, in which the two Lives resonate with one another through constructed contrasts and similarities. Brian Bosworth has shown with regards to the Eumenes that Plutarch at times sacrifices historical accuracy in order to make Eumenes’ character and narrative map more closely onto that of his pair Sertorius, and uses this example to warn any historian to use Plutarch’s accounts with the greatest caution.

Although Plutarch’s departures from his sources pose a challenge to the modern historian who seeks to use the Lives to reconstruct earlier events, these same moments are golden

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19 Pelling (1980).
20 In this dissertation, we will consider closely an example of Plutarch re-telling the same material in different Lives: the Macedonian soldiers’ reactions to Pyrrhus and Demetrius at Demetr. 41.3-4 and Pyrrh. 8.1. Other overlaps occur in the Cleomenes and Aratus, the Philopoemen and Aratus, and of course, the Philopoemen-Flamininus pair.
21 Bosworth (1992), ending with a plaintive cry, p. 80: “Heaven help you if your evidence is the Lives and the Lives alone!”
opportunities for the reader who is interested in identifying Plutarch’s unique vision of historical events and how his texts fit into the cultural context of their composition.

The so-called *Moralia* form the other half of Plutarch’s corpus; the name of this collection conceals the diversity of genres and interests it includes. The works listed among the *Moralia* include dialogues, epideictic speeches, political and philosophical essays, and collections of miscellany. They treat topics such as moral philosophy, political philosophy, natural philosophy, love and marriage, vegetarianism, animal intelligence, the education of children, literary criticism, theology, and Greek and Roman antiquarianism. These essays, dialogues, and collections have long been recognized as a great treasure-trove of information about antiquity, but they also can provide the reader with insights into Plutarch’s contemporary world and concerns. The chronological relationship of the *Moralia* (or individual *Moralia*) to Plutarch’s biographical output is difficult to establish with any certainty, due in large part to his tendency to re-use the same material in both the *Lives* and *Moralia*. This cross-pollination of ideas and anecdotes between the two parts of the corpus does provide the modern reader of Plutarch with a helpful interpretive tool: oftentimes, by tracking where a historical anecdote from the *Lives* appears in the *Moralia*, we are able to see more clearly how Plutarch thought that anecdote could be fruitfully applied to contemporary situations.\(^{22}\) This is an interpretative tool to which I will return when I discuss my methodology. For the present project, Plutarch’s political essays, especially the *Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae*, are essential reading, because they shed light on how Plutarch viewed the contemporary Greek statesman’s relationships to his *polis*, other Greeks, and the Roman Imperial

\(^{22}\) For a range of discussions about the unity of Plutarch’s corpus, see the edited volume of Nikolaidis (2008).
administration; in other words, the very sorts of political and social dynamics Plutarch explores in the Hellenistic Lives.

8. The Greek Past in Imperial Greek Literature: A Review

It has long been noted that Greek authors of the first, second, and third centuries AD were fixated on their past. The worlds of the Homeric heroes, the Persian Wars, the struggle between Athens and Sparta, the conquests of Philip and Alexander: these were the literary worlds of Imperial Greek authors, to the exclusion, as has often been argued, of the Roman world around them. The scholarship on Imperial Greek literature has rightly identified the many ways that Imperial authors are indebted to the Archaic and Classical past for the language and content of their works.\(^{23}\) Greek literature of the first, second, and third centuries AD has most often been discussed in terms of a “Second Sophistic” or renaissance of the art of rhetoric, most clearly manifested in the cultural phenomenon of popular displays of show-oration. These pieces were archaicizing, both in their language – a self-conscious imitation of the Attic dialect of the fourth century BC – and their historical interest, which was limited to the Greek (and primarily Athenian) past before the death of Alexander. Although this movement of epideictic oration was undoubtedly an important and defining feature of Imperial Greek culture, it was nevertheless only one side of multi-faceted literary production in the Greek poleis of the Roman Empire, which included revivals of the genres of historiography, biography, philosophical dialogue, and political pamphlets, and the birth of travel-writing and the

\(^{23}\) The tendency for scholars to tie Imperial literature to the Archaic and Classical past is, as I see it, partly a strategy for integrating the “post-classical” into the mainstream of classical studies; in other words, it demonstrates the intellectual value of later Greek literature for modern readers through the currency of well-accepted and canonical models of classical Greek authors and works.
novel. The dual focus on the “classical” and on Athens in the literary works of the Sophists, however, has obscured other important perspectives present in Imperial literature that complicate and fill out our view of the cultural activities of the Greeks in the Roman Empire. In the following survey of the study of the past in Greek Imperial literature, I intend to sketch the broad trends in this scholarship, as well as its limitations. As such, I do not claim to be exhaustive, but rather I will touch on what I consider to be a few of the most representative and influential works.

Archaism in Imperial Greek literature is a phenomenon that initially was seen only in terms of linguistic features, in particular the self-conscious and artificial imitation of the Attic dialect and style of the fifth and fourth centuries BC. This Atticizing literary language was audibly distinct from the koine spoken in Greece since the third century BC; thus the spectator of a sophistic performance in second century AD Ephesus could be transported, in a sense, to the Athens of Pericles. Ewen Bowie, in his seminal study of 1970, expanded our understanding of Imperial Greek archaism beyond a linguistic affect to an all-encompassing cultural phenomenon. Although he claims to focus on the Second Sophistic as defined by Philostratus in the Lives of the Sophists, Bowie also examines genres and authors more peripheral to the cultural and literary phenomenon of show-rhetoric. Analyzing the topics of sophistic speeches mentioned by Philostratus and other authors, he finds that when the sophists spoke on historical themes, they focused on three moments in time: the Persian Wars, Classical Athens, and the conquests of Alexander; no speech treated a topic later than 326 BC. He also considers historians, both extant and attested, and argues that their interests were similarly

24 Schmid (1887-96) is still the work of reference on the topic of linguistic Atticism.
distributed. Exceptions like Arrian and Appian, who \textit{did} write about the period after Alexander were rare and often “Romanocentric” in their perspective. Bowie asserts that Imperial Greek authors displayed little interest in the history of Greece after it was subsumed by the Roman Empire. This interest in a specific selection of Greek history, he concludes, was an attempt to match the political empire of the Romans with “an equally far-flung empire of culture.”\textsuperscript{26} To Bowie, this claim for a Greek “empire of culture” to rival Rome was not a form of resistance or anti-Roman behavior, but rather a complement to the Greeks’ political acquiescence to the power of Rome.

By moving the discussion of archaism in Greek Imperial literature from a linguistic issue to a pervasive cultural concern, Bowie opened the door to many fruitful interpretative avenues and sparked interest in a period of Greek literature that had previously been neglected. In particular, his inclusion of authors and genres beyond the strictly-defined Second Sophistic movement encourages thinking in terms of Imperial Greek literature more broadly. He demonstrates that the literary concerns that Imperial Greek authors expressed could shed light on how these writers perceived their socio-political relationship to the Roman Empire. It should be noted, however, that Bowie argues that the Greek past that was important to Imperial authors was almost exclusively Archaic and Classical. After surveying the evidence from Imperial historians (including Plutarch), he asserts that “there is little in all that has been mentioned to suggest a deep interest in the Hellenistic period for its own sake.”\textsuperscript{27} Given the impact that this article has had on later scholarship, this stipulation set the stage for subsequent scholars to disregard the question of the significance of the Hellenistic past for Imperial authors.

\textsuperscript{26} Bowie (1970) 40. 
\textsuperscript{27} Bowie (1970) 15.
Two decades later, Simon Swain’s monograph *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World AD 50-250* continues the discussion begun by Bowie about Greek literary reactions to the Roman Empire. In contrast to Bowie, however, Swain seeks to demonstrate that the backwards glances of the Greeks were not a sign of acquiescence, but in fact a resistance to the unwelcome rule of the Romans.\(^{28}\) Swain asserts that the Greeks of the Empire looked back on their Archaic and Classical past to construct a Greek identity that pushed back against Roman dominance. He pinpoints the common rhetorical education, or *paideia*, of elite Greeks as the source of a Panhellenic identity that centered on the Athenian and the Classical (pre-Alexander) past. In Swain’s view, literary classicism and the denial of the importance of Rome in the present was the only form of resistance still available to the Greeks of the first, second, and third centuries AD. Swain’s study traces the evidence of this resistance in a range of Imperial authors, from historians and biographers like Arrian and Plutarch, to orators like Dio of Prusa, Aristides, and Lucian, and even in the medical writings of Galen. For Swain, the Greek writers of the Empire employed the Greek past as a rallying cry, not a retreat.

Tim Whitmarsh’s work responds to and builds upon the earlier scholarship of Bowie and Swain. In *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire*, he explores how Greeks of the Empire appropriated literary models of the past to construct identity within and in response to the Roman Empire.\(^{29}\) He describes the reuse of the past not as a simple resistance to present conditions, but an ongoing process of negotiating shifting identities in a post-colonial Greek world. Instead of deriding the Imperial Greek tendency to resort

\(^{28}\) Swain (1996).  
\(^{29}\) Whitmarsh (2001).
to classical models as derivative or inferior, Whitmarsh sees it as a creative and innovative use of the past to fit present needs. This approach has the benefit of accommodating seemingly conflicting phenomena, such as Arrian’s successful career in the Imperial administration and his self-fashioning as a latter-day Xenophon: in a bi-cultural, post-colonial world, a multiplicity of concurrent cultural identities is to be expected. Like Bowie and Swain before him, though, he focuses exclusively on how Imperial Greek authors interact with and incorporate Archaic and Classical models, without any consideration of how Greeks under the Empire responded to their more recent history. Speaking first of Dio of Prusa, and then of Imperial Greek literature generally, he claims that: “…his historical examples are drawn from the period down to and including the accession of Alexander, the historical juncture that generally marked the cut off point for interest in the Greek past in the Greek literature of the Roman principate.” So, although Whitmarsh’s approach moves away from the earlier debates on Greek acquiescence or resistance to Roman rule and allows greater nuance in our understanding of Greek cultural identity in this period, he still limits such inquiry to the value of the Archaic and Classical past for Imperial Greek authors and continues this trend of classicizing the post-classical. What Bowie, Swain, and Whitmarsh share in common is a view that we can come to understand the relationship of Imperial Greeks to their present circumstances by considering how they imagined their past; this is a tenet that undergirds the current project as well. My focus on the Hellenistic past expands and complicates this ongoing scholarly discussion, resulting in a more nuanced view of intellectual activity and cultural life in Imperial Greece. The present study, then, is not a

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30 Whitmarsh (2001) 201, emphasis added.
rejection of the validity of these inquiries into the representation of the pre-Alexander past in Imperial Greek literature, but rather an expansion of these approaches into a broader range of Greek history.

9. **Approaches to Plutarch’s Lives**

In addition to the ongoing conversation about the Greeks’ relationship to their past in the first, second, and third centuries AD, my project also engages with the question of how Plutarch’s *Lives* can most profitably be read and studied. From antiquity into the Renaissance and Enlightenment, Plutarch’s *Lives* were among the most popular ancient texts in Europe (and later America), read as moral exempla and heroic tales of the great men of Greece and Rome.\(^{31}\) Mary Shelley had Frankenstein’s monster learn about virtue and vice from the *Lives*; Ralph Waldo Emerson called the collection a “Bible for heroes”; and Thomas Jefferson believed that the *Lives* were one of the three works every gentleman needed to read (alongside Livy’s *Histories* and the *Aeneid*).\(^{32}\) The *Lives*’ stock fell sharply, however, with the development of scientific approaches to history and literature in nineteenth-century Germany. No longer a source of moral edification, the *Lives* were – and still often are – approached as storehouses of historical facts and lost sources, to be mined for details about the events and agents of antiquity. Since the *Lives* covered such a range of historical events that were otherwise poorly documented by other ancient sources, and preserved ancient sources otherwise lost, Plutarch’s narratives were a target of intense *Quellenforschung*. Plutarch himself was no longer seen as a sympathetic moralizer, but instead a shoddy collector of earlier (and therefore more authoritative) ancient sources; consequently, his texts were dismantled into Phylarchan

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\(^{32}\) Originally in Emerson (1871), introduction to Goodwin’s edition of the *Moralia*. 
bits, Hieronyman bits, Polybian bits, etc. To a scholar adopting this approach, Plutarch’s greatest value was as a medium for lost histories, rather than as an author in his own right.

The *Lives* have not regained their former status as popular reading, and they have only begun to recover their merit in scholarly circles in recent decades. The historical turn in approaching the *Lives* continues on to the present day, but since the mid-twentieth century, there has been a strong push to take Plutarch seriously as a literary artist, and the *Lives* as literary and cultural artifacts of the Roman Empire. The mantra of the present wave of scholarship on Plutarch is undoubtedly the famous line of *Alex. 1.1* – “I am writing lives, not history” – which encapsulates the move away from using the *Lives* as sources for historical research towards treating them, on their own terms, as moral biographies of statesmen. Thus, instead of being concerned with what sources Plutarch has preserved, these scholars have considered how Plutarch used these sources for his own literary and philosophical ends, what those ends were, and how his literary works fit into his socio-political context. Donald Russell, in keeping with contemporary cultural-historical approaches to the Greek literature of the Empire, argues that Plutarch’s primary goal in the *Lives* was to “demonstrate to the Romans that the greatness of Greece had been political greatness, and that Ἑλληνικὴ παιδεία was a road ad rem publicam bene gerendam.” In his numerous works, most importantly his 1973 monograph, Russell makes great strides in demonstrating Plutarch’s literary artistry, philosophical

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background, and intellectual rigor.\textsuperscript{34} At the same time, Christopher Jones explores Plutarch’s relationship to and attitudes towards the Roman world he lived in. Unlike Swain, who would see in Plutarch a resistance to Roman rule, Jones unequivocally views the Chaeronean as a writer who was friendly to the ruling power.\textsuperscript{35} Other scholars, most notably Christopher Pelling, Philip Stadter, and Anastasios Nikolaidis, have examined Plutarch’s methods of research and composition in the \textit{Lives}, establishing beyond a doubt that Plutarch was no cut-and-paste writer, but rather had a sophisticated manner of synthesizing a wide range of earlier sources to fit the specific needs of each \textit{Life}.\textsuperscript{36} Pelling most clearly demonstrates this in his study of the Roman \textit{Lives} of the late Republic, in which he traced the ways that Plutarch adapted a common set of sources to create six different narratives of the same events, each focalized through the protagonist of each \textit{Life}. He argues, moreover, that these \textit{Lives} were composed (if not published) at the same time, thereby making a breakthrough in our understanding of how Plutarch’s writing process may have worked.\textsuperscript{37}

The most influential development in approaches to the \textit{Lives} that has occurred in the recent literary turn in the scholarship is a focus on Plutarch’s use of parallelism. As early as 1922, Wilamowitz says that one of the greatest mistakes one could make in reading the \textit{Lives} was to forget that they were written as pairs.\textsuperscript{38} It is with the work of Harmut Erbse in 1956, however, that scholars began to rediscover the impact that

\textsuperscript{34} Russell (1973). In addition, the sensitive reading of the \textit{Coriolanus} in Russell (1963) and the discussion of how to treat the \textit{Moralia} in Russell (1968) are still essential reading for the scholar of Plutarch.

\textsuperscript{35} Jones (1971).

\textsuperscript{36} Pelling (1979) and (1980); Stadter (1965), (1989) and (1992); Nikolaidis (2005).

\textsuperscript{37} Pelling (1979).

\textsuperscript{38} Wilamowitz (1967), trans. in Scardigli (1994) 58. This indicates the contemporary prevalence of reading the \textit{Lives} singly.
Plutarch’s choice to write paired biographies had on his texts.\textsuperscript{39} The formal \textit{synkrisis} that concluded most of the pairs was no longer seen as a childish rhetorical exercise, but rather an integral part of the Plutarchan book.\textsuperscript{40} How the Greek \textit{Life} affected the Roman and vice versa, both in composition and in reading, have now become standard concerns for scholars of the \textit{Parallel Lives}, and understanding how a pair hangs together as a unified whole is an increasingly common objective.\textsuperscript{41} Timothy Duff’s influential 1999 monograph on virtue and vice in the \textit{Parallel Lives} joins a focus on Plutarch’s comparative structure with his moral and didactic aims. In this book, Duff argues that Plutarch explores a specific moral quality or conundrum in each pair of \textit{Lives}, and thus that the \textit{Lives} must always be read in terms of the pair, not just the individual biography. Furthermore, he posits that Plutarch’s moralism is descriptive rather than prescriptive, presenting moral issues for the reader to contemplate without giving a clear directive for what the reader ought to take away from each pair. In his concluding chapter, Duff links his inquiry into Plutarch’s moralizing purpose and comparative structure with Plutarch’s Imperial context, arguing that his construction of parallel Greek and Roman biographies shows some resistance to Rome’s contemporary political and cultural significance. He demonstrates that Plutarch evaluates both his Greek and Roman heroes by Greek moral standards, thereby subsuming the Romans under a rubric of Greek values.

Duff’s approach, combining an understanding of Plutarch’s moral aims, narrative structure, and socio-political context has had the greatest influence on scholarship on the

\textsuperscript{39} Erbse (1956).
\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Synkrisis}: Stadter (1975); Pelling (1986) and (2005); Swain (1992); Larmour (1992); Duff (1999).
\textsuperscript{41} See e.g, Larmour (1992), Georgiadou (1992), Desideri (1992), Buszard (2005), Duff (2010), Dillon (2010), Verdegem (2010).
Lives in the past decade. The emphasis on the pair, however, as the central unit of composition for Plutarch has had certain limiting effects that are only beginning to be recognized and addressed. For example, Bradley Buszard has suggested that the reason Plutarch depicts Caesar’s ambition in such a negative light is only evident when the Alexander-Caesar and Pyrrhus-Marius pairs are read alongside each other. Although he expresses a healthy skepticism of the willy-nilly juxtaposition of pairs, he nevertheless suggests that it might be profitable to “combine pairs for which a synthetic reading produces a richer, more satisfying interpretation.” In Noreen Humble’s edited volume entitled Plutarch’s Lives: Parallelism and Purpose we can begin to see that Plutarchan scholarship is moving beyond the confines of the pair. Notably, the emphasis placed on parallelism in Plutarch’s biographical works has had the consequence of the neglect of the extant unpaired Lives (Aratus, Artaxerxes, Galba, Otho), which have rarely enjoyed the literary and cultural-historical readings that the Parallel Lives have seen in recent decades. In Humble’s volume, Judith Mossman explores why Plutarch chose to leave Artaxerxes unparalleled, thereby giving one of the singleton Lives some long-overdue attention. Christopher Pelling, Philip Stadter, Jeffrey Beneker, and John Marincola also wrote contributions that consider parallelism beyond the pair. Pelling, for example, explores the question of whether Plutarch’s Parallel Lives form a disjointed “global history,” ultimately concluding that the answer is both yes and no. Stadter’s tack, in so much as it focuses on a subset of the Lives rather than generalizes across the entire corpus, is somewhat more productive: he argues that Plutarch composed his Lives so that

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43 Humble (2010).
comparisons are not confined within the pair, but extend to comparisons between multiple pairs.\textsuperscript{45} As a test case, he examines the pairs that include Pelling’s set of late Republican \textit{Lives} to see if connections can be found among the associated Greek \textit{Lives} as well. He identifies Alexander as a central figure, and the themes of kingship, politics, conquest, and tragedy as uniting motifs. But because he treats such a large number of \textit{Lives} in a short space, his analysis is necessarily limited to an insightful list of observed connections without an in-depth analysis and explication of those links. Beneker and Marincola both explore how Plutarch may have used parallels and comparisons between the \textit{Lives} of contemporaries to draw out or reinforce moral lessons; they consider the first century BC Roman \textit{Lives} and Persian War \textit{Lives}, respectively.\textsuperscript{46} Marincola’s approach most closely resembles that of the current project: “Rather than the synchronic similarity between the \textit{Lives} of a particular pair, I have traced more a kind of diachronic similarity through the \textit{Lives} that concern a common subject. It is a parallelism of leadership, but also one between past and present, between the concerns of his own day Plutarch expressed in the \textit{Political Precepts} and what he tended to see when he looked back at the most glorious achievements of his country’s past.”\textsuperscript{47} Similarly, I take \textit{Lives} that treat a single historical period – the Hellenistic age – and consider what Imperial concerns Plutarch expresses through the frame of Hellenistic history. My interest differs from Marincola’s, however, in that I am considering a period in Plutarch’s narratives that is defined more by decline than glory. In this way, I am able to demonstrate that Plutarch

\textsuperscript{45} Stadter (2010) 197-216.
\textsuperscript{46} Beneker (2010) 103-120; Marincola (2010) 121-144.
\textsuperscript{47} Marincola (2010) 139.
viewed the history of both Greece’s acme and its decline as didactically beneficial for his contemporary readers.

By way of conclusion, a few observations may be made about the current state of scholarship on Plutarch’s *Lives*. First of all, Plutarch has regained his status as a sophisticated and creative literary artist. His discernment and use of sources – even when it may differ from modern interpretations of those same ancient sources – is now viewed as intentional, not mechanical. There is consensus, moreover, that the significance of parallelism and comparison as rhetorical and narrative strategies must be recognized in order to fully appreciate the complexity of the *Lives*. The pair is seen as the basic compositional unit of the *Lives*, and an understanding of the dynamics of these paired compositions as essential to interpreting Plutarch’s narratives. At the same time, scholars have begun to experiment with ways of reading the *Lives* that productively move beyond the narrow confines of the pair. Plutarch’s moralism and its expression in his narratives, as well as what insights the *Lives* can shed on the social and political concerns of the Greeks in the Roman Empire at the turn of the second century AD, remain driving forces behind much of the scholarship on Plutarch’s *Lives*. Building upon this recent work on Plutarch’s narrative and his relationship to his cultural context, this dissertation attempts to apply the approaches that have proved successful with other *Lives* to the under-studied *Lives* of the Hellenistic period.

10. **Defining and Reading the Hellenistic Lives**

Plutarch’s *Lives* of Greek statesmen from the period after the death of Alexander to the entrance of Rome into the Greek East are among the least studied of all of Plutarch’s biographical works, particularly by Anglophone scholars. There are no
English-language literary commentaries on any of these Lives, and indeed the most recent historical commentary on a Hellenistic Life in English was published over seventy-five years ago. In recent years, Italian and Spanish scholars have produced editions of these Lives, which often have helpful introductions, but their comments focus more on identifying Plutarch’s relationship to his sources and explaining the Hellenistic historical background than on analyzing his narrative and rhetorical techniques. The focus on the Archaic and Classical Lives, especially those of Athenians, has had a strong and continued influence on how Plutarch’s works are perceived. Even as recently as 2003, Phiroze Vasunia could argue that Plutarch’s “obsession” with the Archaic past reveals his perception of a complete disjunction between the glories of Athens and Plutarch’s own day. “The past,” Vasunia asserts, “lay behind the present, the past haunted the present, it even irrupted into the present, but there was no clear, unambiguous line leading from the classical past to the present.” The prevalence of this view of Plutarch’s relationship to the Greek past is surely one of the main contributing factors to the impoverished state of scholarship on the Hellenistic Lives. As I hope to prove in this dissertation, such a comment could be accurate only if we were to disregard the existence, number, and content of the Hellenistic Lives, which clearly illustrate how Plutarch envisioned the transformation from the Classical world to Imperial Greece. Even the recent volume Plutarco e l’età ellenistica (2005), which contains contributions on Plutarch’s

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48 Porter (1937) on the Life of Aratus.
50 Vasunia (2003), quote from p. 370.
relationship to Hellenistic history, theater, poetry and literary criticism, philosophy, and medicine, contains only one contribution that considers Plutarch’s views on the political history of the Greek world after Alexander. Mónica Durán Mañas surveys the Plutarchan corpus for characterizations of the Antigonids, the Macedonian dynasty about which Plutarch writes the most. While her study is a useful compilation of the evidence and provides certain insightful observations – e.g. that Plutarch uses all of the Antigonids to explore royal father-son relationships – her readings sometimes depend on factual errors that undermine the overall value of her work.\(^{51}\) None of the studies in this volume, however, examines Plutarch’s portrayal of the Greek poleis in the Hellenistic period, a topic that is clearly at stake in his *Agis and Cleomenes, Aratus, and Philopoemen-Flamininus*.

To date, only two scholars have treated the Greek *Lives* after Alexander as a group, and this amounts to a total of just fourteen pages. Joseph Geiger argues that the Hellenistic *Lives* (which he lists as *Aratus, Eumenes, Demetrius, Pyrrhus, Agis and Cleomenes, and Philopoemen*) were among the last of Plutarch’s biographical compositions, on the basis of the much lower frequency of references in the *Moralia* to Hellenistic protagonists than to the subjects of the other Greek *Lives*.\(^{52}\) He also observes that Plutarch’s sources and inspiration for these *Lives* are limited to the protagonists of three major Hellenistic historians: Hieronymus of Cardia (*Eumenes, Demetrius, Pyrrhus*), Phylarchus (*Agis and Cleomenes, Aratus*), and Polybius (*Philopoemen*). He therefore identifies these *Lives* as “afterthoughts” to Plutarch’s original plan and the “stepchildren”

\(^{51}\) Durán Mañas (2005) 36-62, esp. 52-57 where she conflates the roles of Antigonus Gonatas and Antigonus Doson in the *Life of Aratus*.
\(^{52}\) Geiger (1981) 170-177.
of his corpus, and claims that the biographer added these *Lives* “when the success of the work and his personal satisfaction made such an extension desirable,” with no further consideration of what Plutarch may have hoped to gain by expanding his collection to include Hellenistic figures.  

Ricardo Martínez-Lacy takes a different approach to the Hellenistic past in the *Lives*: he seeks to identify how Plutarch evaluated the themes of the Hellenistic period, in a salutary attempt to advise caution to those who wish to use the *Lives* as historical sources. He argues that Plutarch saw the Hellenistic kingdoms as a degeneration from the political, cultural, and moral acme represented by Alexander; furthermore, he believes that Plutarch wished to champion harmony between the Greek and the Romans. Martínez-Lacy’s definition of Hellenistic *Lives* is based on the modern conception of the Hellenistic period as extending from the death of Alexander in 323 BC to the battle of Actium in 31 BC; as a consequence, he includes not only the *Lives* examined by Geiger, but also the *Phocion, Flamininus, Aemilius Paullus*, and *Antony*. While Martínez-Lacy’s impulse to examine how Plutarch viewed the Hellenistic past is certainly a step in the right direction, he overlooks the question of what these *Lives* may tell us about the cultural significance of the Hellenistic past for Greeks of the Roman Empire because his goal is to advise modern historians on how to approach Plutarch’s Hellenistic *Lives*.

That brings us to the present dissertation. The set of *Lives* I identify as Hellenistic in this study are the *Demetrius, Pyrrhus, Aratus, Agis and Cleomenes*, and the *Philopoemen-Flamininus* pair, effectively following Geiger’s definition of Hellenistic

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55 And implicitly, *Marcellus, Cato Major, Sulla, Pompey, Crassus, Caesar, Brutus* – but he comments on none of these *Lives*.  

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Lives. My concern is not with the modern definition of the Hellenistic period from Alexander to Actium (as it is commonly put), but rather with how Plutarch envisioned the stretch of history between the glory of Classical Greece and the ultimate dominance of Rome in the Greek East. Perhaps unsurprisingly for a biographer (as opposed to a historian), Plutarch makes no explicit statements about how he perceived the past was punctuated; nevertheless, I believe that certain features of his works justify my grouping of this subset of Lives. First, his pairing of Alexander with Julius Caesar suggests that Plutarch viewed both men in similar terms. Plutarch began his Lives of the Caesars with Augustus, not Julius Caesar; this implies that Plutarch believed Augustus to be the beginning of the Roman Empire, and Caesar to be the end of the Republic, or at least a separate figure of transition.\textsuperscript{56} By analogy, we may surmise that Plutarch imagined Alexander to be a similar figure who marked the end of an earlier age, rather than the beginning of something new. For these reasons, I have chosen not to treat the Life of Alexander as a part of this set, and in what follows I will discuss Alexander only in as much as he lurks behind the Hellenistic Lives. And lurk he does: in each of these Lives Plutarch expresses an awareness that the protagonists were living in a world shaped by the conquests and intestate death of Alexander, whether it is through a reference to Alexander himself or to the influence of the dynasties that followed him. This self-conscious fashioning of these narratives as existing in a post-Alexander world both unites

\textsuperscript{56} This distinguishes him from his younger contemporary Suetonius, who placed Julius Caesar at the head of his own series of imperial biographies.
these Lives and marks their distinctiveness in Plutarch’s historical vision from the trajectory of Greek history that had culminated in Alexander’s campaigns.\footnote{Consequently, Demosthenes and Phocion are excluded from the present study because the majority of the narratives of their lives take place within the institutions of classical Athens; they do not take Alexander’s conquests as a given, but rather act as if the rules of Greek world pre-Alexander still applied.}

The definition of the end of Plutarch’s Hellenistic Lives is also clearly marked by Plutarch’s pairings. Plutarch implicitly assents to the Roman appellation of Philopoemen as the “last of the Greeks” (Phil. 1.4) by writing no Lives of Greeks who postdate the Achaean general. I should note that Plutarch does narrate the fall of other parts of the Greek world to Roman power, such as Ptolemaic Egypt in the Antony or Syracuse in the Marcellus, but he focalizes these events through a Roman perspective. Yet the unique status of the Philopoemen-Flamininus pair as the only pair of contemporaries among the Parallel Lives suggests that Plutarch viewed this pair as representing an important historical transition, from the age in which the poleis of the Greek mainland had to answer to Macedonian dynasts to the age in which these poleis had to answer to Rome. This pair marks a point of separation between the pre-Roman and post-Roman Greek world, based on the existence of men whom Plutarch considered worthy subjects of biographies. Therefore, I have chosen to limit my study to the seven Lives in which Plutarch focuses primarily on the events after Alexander and up to Rome’s entrance into the political affairs of the Greek mainland because his choice of later Greek protagonists shows that his historical vision is clearly focused on the events in “old” Greece. Moreover, as we shall see in Chapter 5, this pair is also marked by Plutarch’s sense of a continuity with the Hellenistic past, in that the institutions of the poleis continued, despite the change in ruling power. Thus a study of Plutarch’s conception of the Hellenistic past
and its relation to the Roman present must include the entire *Philopoemen-Flamininus* pair, not just the Greek *Life*.

In reading this set of *Lives*, my goal is to understand why Plutarch would want to write Hellenistic *Lives* in the first place and what his contemporary readers could gain from reading these *Lives*. I have sought to examine Plutarch’s rhetorical and narrative techniques in order to discern the major socio-political concerns he seems to explore. In focusing on Plutarch’s apparent socio-political concerns, I do not wish to supplant previous readings that have examined the strictly moral dimensions of virtue and vice in these *Lives*, but instead to complement them. In my readings, I aim at discerning what lessons Plutarch’s reader could gain from these *Lives* for his conduct in his public career, not just as a private individual. As I discussed above, Plutarch’s primary audience, as we can tell from his dedicatees, were members of the elite in the Greek *poleis*, men who were expected to serve their fellow-citizens by holding offices and performing benefactions in their communities, but also by acting as liaisons and advocates for their Greek communities with the Roman Imperial administration. His goal in the *Lives* is not just to provide a general moral education, but one that was specifically tailored to the political exigencies of his contemporary readers. In this way, my approach to reading the Hellenistic *Lives* combines literary analysis of Plutarch’s construction of these texts as literary, rhetorical, and didactic narratives with a sensitivity to the socio-political history of both the Hellenistic and the Imperial age. Instead of reading these *Lives* to inform our
understanding of Hellenistic history, I use these Lives to shed light on the vision and rhetoric use of the Hellenistic past in Imperial Greece.\(^5^8\)

As Pelling has lamented, Plutarch often avoids explicit reference to his own time in the Lives.\(^5^9\) This tendency, combined with Plutarch’s penchant for descriptive moralism, makes clear authorial statements of how the reader ought to apply the lessons of the Lives to their daily lives a rarity.\(^6^0\) Therefore, situating the Lives in the historical context of Imperial Greece requires a savvy and flexible methodology. Plutarch clearly highlights his primary concerns throughout his narratives, either by repetition of key phrases and terms, or by emphasizing them at key points of the narratives (beginnings, climaxes, endings, synkriseis). At times, we are fortunate enough to have other ancient sources that treat the events Plutarch narrates in the Hellenistic Lives: for example, besides the Philopoemen-Flamininus, we have the accounts of Polybius, Livy, Appian, and Pausanias for the events in Greece during Rome’s wars with Philip V and Antiochus III. There we are able to compare Plutarch’s account with the rest of the extant historical tradition, allowing us to distinguish what particular spin Plutarch brings to his narrative of these events. As another line of attack, I look towards Plutarch’s other Lives and Moralia, in particular the political essays, for language that parallels what we find in the Hellenistic Lives. By reading the Lives in conjunction with the Moralia, which provide reflections and advice for Plutarch’s contemporaries in their private and public lives, we

\(^5^8\) Similarly, Duff (1999) 9 is “less concerned with the ‘truth-status’ of Plutarchan narrative, more with how that narrative is constructed and how it would have been read in its original context.”

\(^5^9\) Pelling (1995).

\(^6^0\) The prefaces of the Demetrius-Antony, Pericles-Fabius Maximus, and Aemilius Paullus-Timoleon pairs give generalized and abstract explanations of how Plutarch imagines the didactic value of the Lives; these are discussed at some length in Chapter 2 pages X-Y.
can better comprehend the lessons that Plutarch wanted his contemporary readers to reap from the *Lives*. Since the protagonists of the Hellenistic *Lives* appear relatively infrequently in the *Moralia*, as Geiger has demonstrated, we must look for broad, linguistic resonances rather than specific references to Demetrius, Aratus, and the other Hellenistic protagonists. Elsewhere, I use comparisons with contemporary authors such as Dio of Prusa to show that an idea expressed in one of the *Lives* is representative of contemporary second century AD debates; although one must be judicious with such an approach, it is an essential tool for situating the *Lives* in their larger cultural context. Epigraphical and archaeological evidence from both Hellenistic and Imperial Greece is also essential for elucidating the narratives and historical context of the Hellenistic *Lives*; in particular, Anthony Spawforth’s work on Roman Sparta helps to provide the background for my interpretation of Plutarch’s focus on civic revival in the *Agis* and *Cleomenes*. The complexity of Plutarch’s narratives, Hellenistic history, and the socio-political context of Imperial Greece demands the resourcefulness, rather than the rigidity, of the interpreter. Relying solely on any one of these hermeneutic tools would render the interpretation and contextualization of one or more of these Hellenistic *Lives* very difficult. That being the case, while my objective is constant throughout this study, I adapt my methodology to the needs of the texts in question.

In the chapters that follow, I have organized the Hellenistic *Lives* in units defined thematically and ordered chronologically in terms of historical events (as opposed to composition). Chapter 2 and 3 form a diptych of Plutarch’s meditations on foreign

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61 Cartledge and Spawforth (1989); Spawforth (2012).
62 Like the Persian War *Lives* examined in Marincola (2010), the relative chronology of the set of Hellenistic *Lives* is rather uncertain, and I do not wish to make claims as to the
rulers and Greek subjects, considering the issue first from the perspective of the ruler, and then the ruled. Chapter 2 treats Plutarch’s construction of Demetrius and Pyrrhus as failed imitators of Alexander, and argues that he thereby participates in a contemporary discussion during the reign of Trajan about the use of Alexander as a model for kingship. In the third chapter, I argue that the Aratus is a narrative exploration of the advice Plutarch has for statesmen on how to conduct a relationship with a foreign potentate, while simultaneously maintaining one’s dignity and working for the welfare of other Greeks. The last two chapters are also closely linked, as they both examine the issues of Greek decline and the expression of Greek identity. Chapter 4 considers the Agis and Cleomenes as narratives of failed revival. I argue here that not only does Plutarch characterize Greek history after Alexander as a series of failed revivals, but in doing so he warns his contemporary readers against the impulse to attempt to bring back to life a Greek past that has been irretrievably lost. In Chapter 5, I consider how Plutarch represents the transition from Hellenistic past to Roman present in the Philopoemen-Flamininus pair, and what that representation reveals about Plutarch’s vision of Greek history and his hopes for interactions between provincial Greeks and the Roman Imperial administration in his own time. By the end of this study, I hope to have demonstrated that, contrary to the current scholarly consensus, the Hellenistic past still had didactic and creative potential for the Greeks in the Roman Empire.

precedence of one Life or pair over another. According to Jones (1966), Geiger (1988) and Nikolaidis (2005), it is possible that all of these Lives are later compositions, although both the Philopoemen-Flamininus pair may be early in the series. It seems likely, moreover, that the Demetrius, Pyrrhus, and Agis and Cleomenes were later than the Alexander-Caesar pair. It is possible that some of these Lives were researched or composed in tandem (e.g. Demetrius and Pyrrhus, or Aratus and Agis and Cleomenes), but I am not interested in making the argument, analogous to Pelling (1986), that the Hellenistic Lives as a group were all researched and composed at the same time.
Chapter Two

Shadows of Alexander: Mimesis in the *Demetrius* and *Pyrrhus*

I. Alexander and Alexander-Imitators in the Reign of Trajan

This chapter considers how Plutarch uses the *Life of Demetrius* and *Life of Pyrrhus* to explore Alexander-imitation, a phenomenon that saw a resurgence of interest in the reign of Trajan. The issue of Alexander-imitation is inaccessible in the *Lives* of Greeks who predate the Macedonian conqueror, a fact so obvious that it may seem inconsequential. However obvious this observation may be, it nonetheless demonstrates that there were issues relevant to life for Greeks in the Roman Empire that could not be explored by considering the Archaic and Classical past – only the Hellenistic world could provide relevant exempla. In the *Demetrius* and *Pyrrhus*, Plutarch problematizes the imitation of Alexander by portraying two men whose Alexander-imitation failed to bring them success. As negative exempla, these *Lives* complement and participate in contemporary debates about Alexander and the ideal monarch, and therefore are evidence for the relevance of the Hellenistic past to the issues of the Imperial present.

Alexander’s legacy was in a phase of renewed interest and active renegotiation during the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian and became a focal point of intellectual activity in the Greek literature of the second century AD.\(^{63}\) The renewed interest in Alexander at this time seems to be connected to the emperor Trajan, who sought to surpass Alexander in his military accomplishments.\(^{64}\) As Angela Kühnen has argued persuasively, the

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\(^{63}\) See Asirvatham (2000) for Alexander’s legacy in Imperial Greek literature; Kühnen (2008) is a survey of the memory of Alexander in Rome, demonstrating that interest in Alexander was flagging during the Flavian dynasty.

\(^{64}\) *Testimonia* for Trajan’s Alexandrian self-fashioning: Cass. Dio 68.29-30: Trajan claims to have gone farther than Alexander; sacrifices to Alexander in the room where he
prevalence of hunting motifs in Trajanic art, the emperor’s support for the cults of Heracles and Dionysus, and the use of *invictus*/*ἀνίκητος* as an imperial epithet all point towards Trajan’s self-fashioning as a new Alexander. A spate of positive accounts of Alexander written during Trajan’s reign is also evidence of this intensification of interest in Alexander. Arrian of Nicomedia, a Greek member of the Imperial service who was governor of Achaea under Trajan and consul in AD 129 or 130, wrote his *Anabasis of Alexander* at this time, claiming to save the true account of Alexander’s campaigns from historical neglect and obsolescence. Dio (Chrysostom) of Prusa, the prominent orator, brought Alexander to life in two of his *Kingship Orations* (Or. 2, 4), which were written for and perhaps performed in front of Trajan himself. In the former, Alexander explains to his father Philip why Homer is the only appropriate literature for a king to read; here Dio portrays Alexander as a young *pepaideumenos* whose zealous appreciation for Homeric epic is a sign of his coming achievements. In Or. 4, a debate between Alexander and Diogenes the Cynic about whether Alexander is a true king, Dio instead characterizes him as zealous of glory, condescending, and prone to anger.

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66 *Anab. 1.1, 12.* Arrian’s *Anabasis* may be dated to either the reign of Trajan or that of Hadrian. In either case, Arrian’s concern to establish the “truth” about Alexander and save his legacy from obsolescence is indicative of the discourse about Alexander in the Greek East during the first quarter of the 2nd century AD. On the chronology of Arrian’s works and their relationship to his military and political career, see the varying reconstructions of Bosworth (1972) and (1980), Stadter (1980), and Syme (1982). On all of Book 1.1-12 as a unified extended preface in the tradition of Herodotus and Thucydides, see Stadter (1981).

Plutarch, too, participates in the contemporary debates about Alexander’s memory, both in his Life of Alexander and in his paired epideictic orations De Fortuna aut Virtute Alexandri. The Alexander is the most widely-read Plutarchan Life today – a mainstay of both undergraduate history courses and Ph.D. reading lists. Its famous preface is one of Plutarch’s few descriptions of his biographical methodology, distinguishing his goal of revealing character through small details from the historian’s task of broad narratives through well-known events. The narrative itself paints a portrait of Alexander as striving to outdo his epic ancestor Achilles, but over time becoming a destructive and tragic figure. Overall, Plutarch characterizes Alexander as a man of great self-restraint, civilized bearing, and a philosophical bent. One may say that Plutarch’s version of Alexander in the Lives combines the philosophical virtue and the hot-headed arrogance of Dio’s Or. 2 and 4. When he recounts moments in which Alexander’s virtue lapsed, such as the destruction of Thebes, the murder of Cleitus, and the burning of the palace at Persepolis, Plutarch is at pains to explain away these transgressions or show that Alexander learned from his mistake. In this way, the Alexander echoes the apologetic tone of Arrian’s Anabasis, but whereas Arrian relies on Alexander’s youth or advisors to account for his faults, Plutarch is more willing to place the blame on Alexander’s innate tendencies towards anger. Plutarch exaggerates this apologetic tendency in De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute, where the idealization of the Macedonian conqueror is complete. In these speeches, which are impossible to date with

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certainty, Plutarch argues that all of Alexander’s accomplishments were due to his virtue alone; Fortune, in fact, had only ever attempted to impede Alexander’s success.\(^{71}\) He depicts Alexander here as a civilizing philosopher-king, whose laws and city-foundations far outstripped Plato’s imagined Republic, and who brought about the Stoic Zeno’s dream of a *cosmopolis* by uniting Greeks and barbarians into a single human civilization.\(^{72}\)

Not only does Plutarch actively engage in contemporary renegotiations of Alexander’s memory that were prevalent in the Greek East, but he also explores the issue of Alexander-imitation by writing the *Lives* of two of Alexander’s earliest imitators, Demetrius Poliorcetes and Pyrrhus of Epirus.\(^{73}\) These two *Lives* have a number of connections: their chronologies overlap; they both explore the moral themes of ambition for conquest and overcoming (or being overcome by) the twists of fate; the protagonists appear as characters in each other’s *Life*; and both the *Demetrius* and the *Pyrrhus* are


\(^{72}\) Plato: 328D-E. Zeno: 328A-330E.

\(^{73}\) Plutarch also wrote a *Life of Eumenes*, Alexander’s Cardian Greek secretary and a leading competitor for hegemony after his death; he is paired with *Sertorius*, the Roman general of the early first century BC. Plutarch depicts Eumenes’ relationship to Alexander in a way that is distinct from the *Demetrius* and *Pyrrhus*: first, Eumenes actually fought with Alexander, while both Demetrius and Pyrrhus were too young to know Alexander personally; second, Plutarch consistently differentiates between Eumenes as a Cardian Greek and the Macedonian officers of Alexander, whereas Demetrius and Pyrrhus both of ethnic ties to Alexander. Although Plutarch includes narratives of two posthumous Alexander-dreams in the *Eumenes*, thereby highlighting a link of association or proximity between Eumenes and Alexander’s memory, he never refers to Eumenes’ relationship to Alexander as a dynamic of imitation or emulation – a consequence, I believe, of Eumenes’ non-Macedonian background. Since Plutarch depicts Eumenes’ relationship to Alexander in such different terms from the *Demetrius* and *Pyrrhus*, I have chosen to leave that *Life* out of the present discussion. For scholarship on the *Eumenes*, see Anson (1980) and (2004), Bosworth (1992), and Zadorojnyi (2005) 126-129.
counted among Plutarch’s negative exempla. In the preface to the Demetrius-Antony
pair, the biographer is sufficiently concerned about criticism for including a pair of
rogues in his gallery of heroes that he provides a philosophical argument to justify the
didactic benefit of negative exempla and denies that his choice was made for the purposes
of entertainment and variety alone.74 Although the Pyrrhus-Marius lacks the formal
prologue of the Demetrius-Antony pair, it is nevertheless another clear example of men
whose Lives Plutarch wishes the reader to understand as cautionary tales rather than
models for emulation. Plutarch’s particular focus on the protagonists’ overwhelming
ambition and lack of liberal (Hellenic) education marks both Pyrrhus and Marius as
negative exempla.75 But even more than the overlapping chronologies, thematic
connections, and common status as negative exempla, the most striking feature the
narratives of the Demetrius and Pyrrhus share is the utilization of Alexander as a lens
through which the protagonists are viewed. The use of Alexander as either a point of
comparison or a model for emulation occurs in these Lives at a frequency that is
unparalleled in the Plutarchan corpus.76 Moreover, Plutarch’s use of Alexander as a
frame of reference for Demetrius and Pyrrhus contributes to their overall characterization

74 Demetr. 1.1-7. For an examination of this passage, see Duff (1999) 45-9; for an
expanded argument about how this preface fits with Plutarch’s Platonist tendencies, see
76 Though nearly all of the Roman Lives are of men who lived after 323 BC, Plutarch
rarely mentions Alexander’s legacy in these narratives; for this reason, I have excluded
them from the present study. Notable exceptions to the rule include Caesar’s tears while
reading Alexander-history (Caes. 11.3); Pompey’s purported resemblance to Alexander
as a youth and the desire of some to force the parallel between Pompey and Alexander by
claiming that he won his triple triumph at the age of 34 (Pomp. 2.1-2, 46.1); frequent
comparisons between Perseus and Alexander in the Life of Aemilius Paullus (Aem. 12.5-
6, 23.5, 27.3, 31.3); and the invocation of Alexander by both Macedonian and Roman
armies before the battle of Cynoscephalae (Flam. 7.3-4).
as negative exempla. While Plutarch maintains a generally positive view of Alexander in his *Life* and in the *Moralia*, he demonstrates in the *Demetrius* and *Pyrrhus* an ambivalence towards the phenomenon of Alexander-imitation. The discrepancy between Plutarch’s treatment of Alexander and his imitators invites the reader to find an explanation for what distinguishes the former from the latter. In what follows, I argue that Plutarch uses the *Demetrius* and *Pyrrhus* to explore two questions about Alexander-imitation that were relevant for his second century AD peers: first, which Alexander-like traits should be emulated or avoided; and second, whether there is any inherent benefit to imitating Alexander.

To begin, I survey Plutarch’s concept of mimesis in general and in reference to his own work. His beliefs on mimesis *qua* artistic representation and mimesis *qua* ethical imitation are key to understanding his portrayal of Alexander-imitation in the *Demetrius* and *Pyrrhus*, as well as his implied commentary on contemporary discourse about Alexander’s legacy. I subsequently turn to the *Demetrius* and the *Pyrrhus*, focusing on how Plutarch examines Alexander-imitation in action in these *Lives*. To do so, I consider passages where comparisons to Alexander are made either by the protagonists themselves, or by other characters within the narrative. Finally, I conclude by situating Plutarch’s biographies of Demetrius and Pyrrhus in the context of Roman interest in Alexander, and posit that Plutarch’s exploration of Alexander-imitation in these *Lives* foreshadows later literary depictions of Trajan’s affinity for Alexander.

### II. Plutarch and Mimesis

Learning how to emulate the historical figures represented in biography hinges on the idea of mimesis, an issue that is entangled in every level of Plutarch’s work in the
Lives. It is a theme that I touch on in each chapter and therefore deserves to be treated fully at this early point in my study. The Lives are texts that represent men’s lived experiences in narrative prose and explicitly encourage the reader to imitate the virtues of the men portrayed. This description of the Lives betrays the two-fold meaning of mimesis for Plutarch: it has the sense of artistic representation of reality on the one hand, and the imitation of virtue on the other. The former sense of mimesis I refer to as narrative mimesis because it is a process that functions at the level of the text. The second sense of mimesis as ethical imitation, or modeling one’s character after another’s example, is central both to Plutarch’s representation of his biographical subjects and his vision of the reader’s relationship to his texts. He often portrays men who imitated historical or mythical models, and therefore engaged in acts of ethical imitation. I refer to this literary device as internal mimesis, because it occurs within the confines of the narrative. At the same time, Plutarch invites his reader to emulate the virtues of the men he represents, thus seeking to reenact and perpetuate the same process of ethical imitation in his real-life readers that his characters perform in the text—a process I call reader mimesis. The analysis of the Demetrius and Pyrrhus in this chapter lies at the intersection of these three levels of mimetic activity. Our interest begins with Plutarch’s narrative mimesis of the historical reality of Demetrius and Pyrrhus’ lives as kings and men. His goal is for the reader to see the sorts of men they were from the lives they led. Plutarch’s evaluation—as well as our own—relies upon Demetrius and Pyrrhus’

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77 This discussion draws on the work of Halliwell (2002) 296-302 for Plutarch’s approach to artistic representation; Hunter and Russell (2011) for a commentary and very helpful introduction to De Audiendis Poetis; and Zadorojnyi (2012) for the concept of “intradiiegetic mimesis,” which I have decided to call “internal mimesis” in an effort to avoid clunky jargon.
performance of *internal mimesis* of Alexander, who is often juxtaposed with both men. The reader’s interpretation of them – relying so much on Plutarch’s depiction of their respective imitations of Alexander – refines the reader’s understanding of what aspects of Alexander’s character should be emulated or avoided, thereby affecting the reader’s ethical imitation (*reader mimesis*). The levels of mimetic interaction nest within each other like Russian dolls, from inside the narrative, to the narrative itself, to the reception of the narrative by the reader. Before considering how these levels of mimesis interact in the *Demetrius* and *Pyrrhus*, it will be beneficial to survey how Plutarch depicts each type of mimesis as a facet of his biographical work.

**Narrative mimesis.** Although Plutarch’s descriptions of his own narratives are scattered throughout his corpus, from these disparate passages one can see that Plutarch conceptualizes his biographies as a type of mimetic art. A mimetic view of biography has roots in Hellenistic and early Imperial Greek developments in ancient literary theory about historiography, a genre so close to biography in the ancient world that it is often difficult to see if or how ancient writers distinguished between the two forms.78 Our understanding of mimesis in the literary theory of the Classical period derives from Aristotle’s *Poetics*, where the distinction between history and poetry is based on a view of poetry as a mimetic form and history as non-mimetic (1451b). But as the work of Vivienne Gray has shown, writers such as the early Hellenistic historian Duris of Samos and the Augustan antiquarian Dionysius of Halicarnassus thought of historiography, like poetry, as a mimetic representation.79 The related genre of biography seems to have

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78 For a thought-provoking consideration of the ancient evidence concerning the relationship between biography and history, see Gentili and Cerri (1988).
undergone a similar shift in conceptualization, though the extant texts are admittedly sparse. Early biographical texts such as Isocrates’ *Evagoras* and Xenophon’s *Agesilaus* make no reference to the author’s attempt to imitate the lived experiences or character of his subjects. Each is primarily concerned with praising and memorializing his subject through narrative prose, with a secondary objective of providing exempla for future generations to follow (a concern to which I shall return below).\(^{80}\) Perhaps influenced by these developments in the neighboring genre of historiography, Plutarch breaks with earlier Greek biography by highlighting the status of his own works as mimetic narratives.\(^{81}\)

The two primary conceptual frameworks he uses to describe his *Lives* are the visual arts and mirrors, both of which clearly convey his perception of the mimetic nature of his texts. The analogy of the visual arts is particularly helpful for him: as a painter or sculptor imitates an individual’s appearance, Plutarch’s narrative imitates an individual’s character.\(^{82}\) The most famous passage in which he utilizes the analogy of the visual arts is the preface of the *Alexander-Caesar* pair (*Alex.* 1.2-3). After explaining that his choice to write “not history, but *Lives*” means that he will focus on small details that reveal

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\(^{80}\) Isocrates, *Evag.* 73 refers to the speech as an “image… of [Evagoras’] deeds and intelligence” (τὰς… εἰκόνας… τὰς τὸν πράξεων καὶ τῆς διανοίας); Xenophon speaks of making Agesilaus’ character “clear” from his deeds (καταδηλουσέ, *Ages.* 1.6) and that he will “make clear” the virtue of his soul (δηλοῦν, *Ages.* 3.1). Even if some concept of narrative mimesis lurks behind these sentiments, in neither Isocrates nor Xenophon’s case does mimesis function as a focal point for their own descriptions of the narratives they are writing.

\(^{81}\) Our evidence for Hellenistic biography is so slim that it is difficult to say with any certainty how Hellenistic biographers conceptualized their work. On Hellenistic biography, see Momigliano (1971), Cooper (2002), Erler and Schorn (2006).

\(^{82}\) For a thorough examination of Plutarch’s use of the visual arts as a metaphorical framework for his own writing, see the discussion in Hirsch-Luipold (2002) 42-45, 107-112.
character rather than famous battles, Plutarch goes on to compare his methodology to the work of a painter:

Ὡσπερ οὖν οἱ ζωγράφοι τύς ὀμοιότητας ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου καὶ τῶν περὶ τὴν ὅψιν εἰδόν οἶς ἐμφαίνεται τὸ ἔθος ἀναλαμβάνουσιν, ἐλάχιστα τῶν λοιπῶν μερῶν φροντίζοντες, οὕτως ἣμιν ὅπετον εἰς τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς σημεῖα μᾶλλον ἐνδύεσθαι, καὶ διὰ τούτων εἰδοποιεῖν τὸν ἑκάστου βίον, ἐάσαντας ἐτέροις τὰ μεγέθη καὶ τοὺς ἁγάνας.

So just as painters get the likenesses (in their portraits) from the face and expression of the eyes, with which character shows itself, although they think very little about the other parts (of the body), in the same way I must be permitted to go into the signs of the soul more and by means of these to portray the life of each man, leaving to others their great contests.

Similarly, in the Cimon Plutarch describes his practice of neither concealing nor emphasizing his protagonists’ flaws as akin to the work of a portrait painter: “We deem it right that those painting beautiful and graceful figures, if there should be some small imperfection in them, should neither leave it out entirely nor be very precise about it – for the latter makes the appearance ugly, but the former makes it unlike the original” (Cim. 2.4). In both passages, Plutarch conveys to his reader that he is a portrait-artist, even if the medium for his mimetic representations of men is prose rather than paint or stone.

Elsewhere, Plutarch compares his Lives to a “mirror of history to adorn life and make it like the virtues of those men” (Aem. 1.1).83 The mirror-metaphor is Plutarch’s way of asserting the accuracy and skill of his representations of men’s souls: as Duff argues, in ancient literature “the image of the mirror is often used to describe anything which gives a good representation of reality.”84 Indeed, the mimetic nature of Plutarch’s biographies is encapsulated in his appellation of his texts as βίοι, which Duff has rightly recognized as a conflation of “Lives” as narrative representations of individual’s actions and

83 …ὡσπερ ἐν ἑσόπτρῳ τῇ ἱστορίᾳ πειρώμενον ἀμοιδός γέ πως κοσμεῖν καὶ ἀφομοιοῦν πρὸς τᾶς ἐκείνον ἁρτῆς τὸν βίον.
character with “lives” as the individual’s real life actions and character.\(^{85}\) Plutarch calls both his text and the reality it represents by the same name, a terminological choice that encourages semantic slippage.\(^{86}\) From this we can see that Plutarch envisions his biographies as capturing the essence of his subjects so well that these texts can almost stand in for the men themselves. Through using metaphors of painting and mirrors, Plutarch characterizes his texts as mimetic representations of reality and shows the influence of Hellenistic developments in the conception of historiography on his biographical works.

**Reader Mimesis.** Plutarch’s biographies are not merely static monuments like the statues he likens them to. Instead, he invites the reader’s participation in a process of interpretation and discrimination as the reader evaluates both his narrative of the protagonist’s life and the protagonist himself, thereby fostering the reader’s own moral education. Like Isocrates and Xenophon, whose *encomia* were the antecedents of the Greek biographical tradition, Plutarch viewed his texts as incitements to moral education and models for ethical and political behavior.\(^{87}\) In the prefaces to the *Aratus, Aemilius-Timoleon,* and *Pericles-Fabius Maximus,* Plutarch casts his narratives as resources for moral education, ethical models to be emulated with discrimination.\(^{88}\) In the *Life of Aratus,* for example, Plutarch tells his addressee Polycrates, a descendant of the

\(^{85}\) Duff (1999) 33-34.

\(^{86}\) This resembles the slippage at the preface of Thucydides’ *Histories* where he states that he “is composing the war” (ξυνέγραψε τὸν πόλεμον), not that he is writing an account of the war.

\(^{87}\) Isocrates, *Evag.* 75-76 encourages Nicocles and his descendants to imitate Evagoras’ example of kingship; Xenophon, *Ages.* 10.2 similarly exhorts the reader who is interested in acquiring manly virtue to look to Agesilaus as a model.

\(^{88}\) For a thorough discussion of Plutarch’s prefaces, see Stadter (1988). Duff (1999) 30-47, 49-51 and Zadorojnyi (2012) 177-8 cover this topic with a specific focus on encouraging the reader’s ethical mimesis.
biography’s subject, that he is sending him this *Life* as a complement to his family’s oral history, “in order that your sons Polycrates and Pythocles may be reared, now by hearing and now by reading, after examples found in their own family line – examples which it well becomes them to imitate (μιμεῖσθαι)” (*Arat.* 1.4). Although it is clear from this passage that Plutarch’s intention is the moral education of his readers by means of his biographical narrative, he does not explain here the links between reading biography, imitation, and moral improvement.

Elsewhere in the *Lives*, Plutarch makes the relevance of biography to moral improvement more explicit. One way in which Plutarch tries to use biography for the moral education of his reader is by soliciting the reader’s participation in the evaluation of the protagonist’s life, thereby fostering the reader’s ethical discrimination in his own life. This is apparent from numerous passages in the *Lives* and the formal comparisons that follow them, where Plutarch puts the onus of judgment squarely on the reader’s shoulders. 89 Moreover, Plutarch directly addresses how reading biography can lead to a more virtuous life in the prefaces to the *Aemilius-Timoleon* and *Pericles-Fabius Maximus* pairs, where discernment is added to imitation as a product of reading the *Lives*. In the *Aemilius*, Plutarch depicts his own engagement with history and with his texts; in effect, he sets himself up as a model for his readers. He describes how working on the *Lives* is like having the great men of history as house-guests, whose characters he can observe in turn, “selecting from each one’s deeds the most important and most noble to know” (*Aem.* 1.1). This fantastic image of Plutarch and his imaginary friends speaks to a core truth about his works, that it is not only by observation but also by selection and

89 Plutarch solicits the reader’s involvement in judging the protagonists: *Comp. Phil. et Flam.* 3.5; *Comp. Ag. Cleom. et Gracchi* 5.7; *Comp. Cor. et Alc.* 5.2.
discrimination that historical models can improve one’s character. He goes on to clarify how the Lives have aided his own moral education: historical inquiry and the writing of historical narratives (Aem. 1.3: τῇ περὶ τὴν ἱστορίαν διατριβῇ καὶ τῆς γραφῆς τῇ συνηθείᾳ) have provided him with virtuous examples to turn to when life forces upon him less noble circumstances and individuals. Echoing the sentiments of the Aemilius, Plutarch also admits in the preface of the Pericles that the reason he is persevering in his project of writing Parallel Lives is the utility of historical inquiry for moral education (Peri. 2.4). He claims that historia is not only pleasurable and beneficial, but also encourages the reader towards the pursuit of virtue. Unlike fine art, which elicits the viewers admiration for the artist but not a desire to imitate him, Plutarch asserts that virtuous deeds plant in those who witness them “a great and zealous eagerness leading them to imitation” (Peri. 2.2: καὶ ζηλὸν τινα καὶ προθυμίαν ἀγωγὸν εἰς μίμησιν), and instill in the audience both admiration and emulation. He ends the preface by pushing the reader’s relationship to depictions of virtuous deeds one step further: while virtue instills an impulse towards itself in the beholder, it shapes the beholder’s character not by imitation, but by inquiry into the deed of virtue (Peri. 2.4: …ἡθοποιοῦν οὐ τῇ μιμήσει τὸν θεατὴν, ἀλλὰ τῇ ἱστορίᾳ τοῦ ἔργου τὴν προαίρεσιν παρεχόμενον). This clause makes it clear that Plutarch expects more from his reader than ape-like mimicry of his protagonists; instead, he expects that the reader will evaluate, probe, and examine his protagonists’ characters, and by means of that process, improve his own.

Thus far, the passages we have seen are concerned with the issue of imitating virtue, but Plutarch is equally interested in what his reader can reap from the narratives of historical figures who were more notorious than noble. Since Demetrius and Pyrrhus are
recognized among Plutarch’s negative moral exempla, it is particularly important to understand what didactic work Plutarch believes these negative exempla can perform. The fullest formulation of Plutarch’s views on the didactic value of negative exempla can be found in the preface of the Demetrius.\textsuperscript{90} Here the biographer seeks his reader’s indulgence for including a pair of men “conspicuous for their badness” in his series of Parallel Lives and promises that his goal is more than the addition of variety and entertainment in his series.. This captatio benevolentiae is indicative of Plutarch’s concern that he could be subject to the criticism, most clearly stated in Plato’s Republic, that artistic representations of immoral behavior could induce the audience to imitate that immorality. Plutarch’s awareness of this Platonic critique is apparent from his didactic essay De Audiendis Poetis. This essay provides advice to fathers and teachers of young men about how to use poetry profitably as a didactic tool, and argues that, with the proper guidance, poetry can be a tool for moral education that encourages young readers towards philosophy and virtue. In other words, it is a recall of poetry from its Platonic exile.\textsuperscript{91} Although this text explicitly provides advice only on how to use poetry as a propaideutic tool for philosophical education, Plutarch’s statements about how to consume poetry responsibly should be seen as an account of his views concerning mimetic literature more in general. Plutarch admits that well-executed poetry is a potentially dangerous force, and if young readers are left to their own devices, they may be tempted to imitate characters and actions that are faithful representations, rather than those that are virtuous. In the preface to the Demetrius, Plutarch preempts this criticism by asserting that

\textsuperscript{90} Demetr. 1.5-6. For further discussion of this preface, see Duff (1999) 45-49; Duff (2004).

\textsuperscript{91} See the recent excellent commentary by Hunter and Russell (2011).
including negative exempla is not just a matter of “giving variety to [his] writing for the pleasure and diversion of [his] reader,” but rather that the reader’s moral education can benefit from exposure to representations of behaviors and characteristics to be avoided. He provides examples of music teachers who have their students listen to bad performances as an analogy for his teaching method. In *De Audiendis Poetis*, Plutarch argues similarly that poetry can be useful for moral education if the teacher uses praise and blame to direct his student’s reading and hone his powers of moral discrimination (19A, 27E). The poet himself can be of assistance, too – Plutarch advises his addressee to look for hints in the poet’s language that attribute praise and blame to the actions of his characters. Indeed, Plutarch’ preface to the *Demetrius-Antony* pair is a narratorial warning of this sort, in which Plutarch alerts his reader, before the narrative begins, to the fact that the *Lives* that follow are negative moral exempla. In the end, such exposure to negative exempla can have a positive effect on the audience, making us “more eager spectators and imitators of better lives, if we do not leave the lives of the blameworthy and bad without inquiring into them.”

92 Seen in this light, characters who exemplify vices, such as Demetrius and Pyrrhus, can still contribute to a reader’s moral education, provided that they are presented and read with the proper moral guidance. Reader mimesis, then, is a process by which the reader forms his own character by evaluating both the virtues and vices of the individuals portrayed in the *Lives*.

*Internal Mimesis.* Within the *Lives* Plutarch represents his protagonists (and at times minor figures, too) as imitators of historical, mythical, or divine figures; in other words, his characters mirror the mimetic process he encourages his reader to participate

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92 *Demetr.* 1.6: οὗτος μοι δοκοῦμεν ἡμεῖς προθυμότεροι τῶν βελτιώνων ἐξεσθαι καὶ θεαταὶ καὶ μιμηταὶ βίων, εἰ μηδὲ τῶν φαύλων καὶ ψεγομένων ἄνιστορήτως ἔχομεν.
in. For example, Cicero patterns himself after his Greek pair, Demosthenes; Alexander 
emulates his mythical ancestor Achilles; and Demetrius is compared with the god 
Dionysus. Alexei Zadorojnyi has shown that such internal mimesis is always focalized: 
characters may claim historical models for themselves, but other voices in the text, such 
as internal audiences and Plutarch as narrator, can also frame a character in terms of a 
perceived historical model.93 Moreover, internal mimesis is a multi-faceted narrative 
tool: a historical model may be used to explain why a character made a specific decision, 
or more broadly applied to illustrate a character’s defining trait.94 Plutarch’s 
endorsement of the didactic value of negative exempla is apparent in his use of internal 
mimesis: perhaps more often than his characters succeed, they fail in their imitations, or 
their imitations lead to failure. Even when characters fail in their mimetic attempts, 
Plutarch’s reader can learn from that failure by examining its causes and effects.

Since Plutarch envisions the contemplation of historical exempla as a central part 
of moral formation, it should not surprise us that when he represents his characters’ moral 
education and actions, he chooses to portray them grappling with their own historical 
models. By representing his characters as participants in the same process of ethical 
mimesis in which he encourages his readers to engage, Plutarch weaves into his 
narratives examples of how to choose and use historical models judiciously. As 
Zadorojnyi states so eloquently, for Plutarch “refraction, calibration, and discrimination 
appear to be a priori settings for mimesis.”95 By means of the literary device of internal

94 For example, when Plutarch compares Philopoemen to Epaminondas with respect to 
his imperviousness to bribes (Phil. 3.1). Frazier (1995) 148-9; see also the seminal work 
of Mossman (1988). 
mimesis, Plutarch guides his reader with examples of not only what to imitate but also how to do so.

To sum up: mimesis is a concept that is active at every level of Plutarch’s *Lives*. Ethical mimesis and artistic mimesis are endlessly entangled in these texts that seek to reproduce the lives of their subjects and reform the lives of their readers. Plutarch constructs his texts so as to gently guide his reader’s interpretation and to encourage his moral education. Ethical mimesis is so deeply ingrained in Plutarch’s notions of education that he finds it fitting to represent the subjects of his biographies as they attempt to learn from historical models, thereby providing his reader with examples that teach about the difficult process of forming one’s character in the mold of someone else.

In the *Demetrius* and *Pyrrhus*, Plutarch illustrates the specific challenges of imitating Alexander and invites his reader to question the inherent benefit of imitating Alexander.

**III. Shadows and Imitations: Alexander in the *Demetrius* and *Pyrrhus***

The following discussion of the *Demetrius* and *Pyrrhus* focuses primarily on instances of internal mimesis, particularly moments when Demetrius and Pyrrhus are portrayed with reference to Alexander. Both actively imitate Alexander and call attention to their emulation of him; internal audiences explicitly compare them to Alexander, or alternately use language in describing them that evokes Alexander; and Plutarch as narrator includes editorializing remarks about the aptness of Demetrius and Pyrrhus’ respective Alexandrian aspirations. Although I have structured my analysis around passages depicting internal mimesis, my readings point outwards towards both narrative and reader mimesis. In these particular *Lives*, comparison to Alexander often (though not always) serves to highlight the protagonists’ deficiencies as kings, and thereby
contributes to the construction of these men as negative exempla for Plutarch’s reader. How Plutarch constructs these narratives of Alexander-imitation informs his reader’s moral education by giving examples of and explanations for Demetrius and Pyrrhus’ successes and failures. In both cases, Plutarch invites the reader to engage with the text in order to understand not only why Demetrius and Pyrrhus succeeded or failed, but also which Alexandrian qualities are worthy of emulation or avoidance.

We begin by looking at two passages from the Demetrius and Pyrrhus that depict the same scene as a case-study in how Plutarch uses explicit Alexander-comparison to demonstrate to his readers the right and wrong ways to imitate Alexander. In each Life, Plutarch includes a scene from Demetrius and Pyrrhus’ campaigns against each other in Macedonia, in which Demetrius’ Macedonian soldiers compare the two kings to Alexander. Like the poet he describes in de Audiendis Poetis, Plutarch composes the Macedonian reports by carefully choosing his diction and attributing praise and blame in such a way that he guides the reader’s moral evaluation of both kings. These passages are closely related in structure and language, and therefore can be profitably read side-by-side in order to show how Plutarch uses an internal audience to provide his reader with competing models of Alexander-imitation.
For in this way Pyrrhus, who was not so much hated (μισθεὶς) for what he had done as he was admired (θαυμασθεὶς) for personally making most of his conquests, acquired from this battle a great and splendid name (μέγα καὶ λαμπρὸν…δόνομα) among the Macedonians. Many of the Macedonians were moved to say that in him alone of all the kings an image of the great Alexander’s daring (εἴδωλον…τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου τόλμης) could be seen; whereas the others, and particularly Demetrius, acted out Alexander’s ostentation and pomp, as if upon a stage (ὡς ἐπὶ σκηνῆς τὸ βάρος ύποκρίνοιτο καὶ τὸν ὅγκον τοῦ ἀνδρός).

This conflict did not so much fill the Macedonians with anger and hatred (μίσους) towards Pyrrhus for their losses, as much as it produced, in those who saw his deeds and who engaged him in battle, a reputation for him and admiration (θαυμα) of his virtue and buzz about him (λόγον ἐνειργάσατο). For they thought his aspect (ὅψιν) and his swiftness (τάχος) and all his motions (κίνημα) resembled those of the great Alexander, and that the shadows (σκιὰς τινὰς), as it were, and imitations (μιμήματα) of that leader’s impetuosity and might (τῆς φορᾶς ἐκείνου καὶ βίας) in conflicts could be seen in him. The other kings, they said, represented Alexander with their purple robes, their body-guards, the inclination of their neck, and their louder tones in conversation (τῶν μὲν ἄλλων βασιλέων ἐν πορφύραις καὶ δορυφόροις καὶ κλίσει τραχήλου καὶ τῶν μείζον διαλέγεσθαι); but Pyrrhus, and Pyrrhus alone, in arms and action (τοῖς ὀπλοῖς καὶ τοῖς χερσί).

The minor differences between these two passages reveal the different overall themes around which Plutarch structured his two biographies: theatricality in the Demetrius and perpetual motion in the Pyrrhus. These minor variations are evidence

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Plutarch’s explicit name-calling of Demetrius as “like an actor on a stage” in the first passage (and not in the second) is consistent with the motif of theatricality that scholars have long recognized as central to Plutarch’s narrative in the Life of Demetrius. Indeed, Plutarch uses the above passage as the starting point for a further digression on Demetrius’ flare for the dramatic, describing his luxurious wardrobe and the ill-effects of his ostentation on his relationship with his subjects (41.4-42.4); for discussions of tragedy, comedy, and dramatic imagery in the Demetrius, see de Lacy (1952), Mossman (1992), Duff (1999), and Monaco (2011-2012). If we turn to the passage from the Pyrrhus, we see that Plutarch’s emphasis is on Pyrrhus’ kinetic resemblance to Alexander; this too fits within the framework of the Life of Pyrrhus, as the entire narrative paints the picture of a man constantly on the move, chasing his hopes, for whom
that Plutarch tailors the same material to fit within two different narratives, as he does throughout the Lives.\textsuperscript{97} The similarities between these passages, however, reveal key elements of Plutarch’s portrayal of how Demetrius and Pyrrhus imitated Alexander. First of all, Plutarch channels his evaluations of Demetrius and Pyrrhus through the reactions of the Macedonians. Both begin with a contrast between the hatred (\textit{μισηθείς-μίσους}) the reader might have expected the Macedonians to feel and the admiration (\textit{θαυμασθεῖς-θαῦμα}) the Macedonians actually did express; Plutarch also tells us that this admiration caused quite a buzz about Pyrrhus among the soldiers (\textit{μέγα καὶ λαμπρὸν...δύνα-λόγον ἐνειργάσατο}). From these reactions, it is clear that Pyrrhus is the positive model and Demetrius his negative foil in this scene.

Furthermore, \textit{both} men are portrayed as imitators of Alexander, even though the Macedonians use different terminology to express that in each case. The soldiers set Pyrrhus on a pedestal as the only king who resembled certain important characteristics of Alexander: in the \textit{Demetrius}, it is his daring (\textit{τόλμης}), while in the \textit{Pyrrhus}, Plutarch gives a longer list of specific points of comparison, including his look, speed, movement, impetuosity, might, and martial skill (\textit{ὅψιν, τάχος, κίνημα, τῆς φοράς ἐκείνου καὶ βίας, τοῖς ὁπλοῖς καὶ ταῖς χερσίν}). In both passages, the Macedonians use the language of mimesis to describe Pyrrhus’ character: at \textit{Demetr.} 41.3, Pyrrhus is called an “image of Alexander’s daring” (\textit{εἰδολον...τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου τόλμης}), and at \textit{Pyrrh.} 8.1, the Macedonians see “shadows and imitations of Alexander” in Pyrrhus (\textit{σκιάς τινας ...καὶ μιμήματα}). Plutarch’s reader would surely feel the Platonic force of \textit{εἰδολοιν} and \textit{σκιάς},

\begin{itemize}
\item boredom can be described as “nauseating” (13.1: \textit{ἄλυν τινὰ ναυτιώδη}); see Toohey (1987) for a discussion of this innovative phrase.
\item Cf. Pelling (1980).
\end{itemize}
and the implication that Pyrrhus was “only” a shadow of Alexander and not Alexander in reality potentially lurks behind the positive report of the Macedonians. On the other hand, Demetrius is described as an actor, explicitly so in the *Demetrius*, but implicitly in the *Pyrrhus*, where Plutarch replaces the actor-simile with a descriptive list of the ways in which Demetrius and the other kings imitated Alexander (ἐν πορφύραις καὶ δορυφόροις καὶ κλίσει τραχήλου καὶ τῷ μεῖζον διαλέγεσθαι). That Plutarch means this descriptive list to be a gloss for “actor” is apparent when we look at *Demetr*. 18.3-4, where he uses both the actor-simile and a similar list of traits to criticize the Successors for their change in *habitus* upon assuming the title “king.” Therefore, we can say that in both passages Plutarch characterizes Demetrius as mimicking Alexander in the same way that an actor represents a character in a tragedy. Plutarch’s choice to use the actor-metaphor to describe Demetrius conveys to the reader not only that Demetrius is engaging in a mimesis of Alexander, but also the negative moral connotation that Plutarch routinely attaches to actors.

As we can see, Plutarch marks both Pyrrhus and Demetrius as imitators of Alexander; what distinguishes the two is which characteristics they imitate. Demetrius faced the censure of the Macedonians for mimicking Alexander’s royal affectation. Alexander’s pomp and oriental affectation were deeply problematic aspects of his legacy, as is apparent from Plutarch’s extended treatment of these matters in the *Life of Alexander*: the most troubling scene in the narrative, Alexander’s murder of Cleitus,

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98 τοῦτο δ’ οὖ προσθήκην ὄνόματος καὶ σχῆματος ἐξαλλαγὴν εἶχε μόνον, ἄλλα καὶ τὰ φρονήματα τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐκίνησε καὶ τὰς γνώμας ἐπήρε, καὶ τοῖς βίοις καὶ ταῖς ὁμίλαις αὐτῶν ὕγκον ἐνεποίησε καὶ βαρύτητα, καθάπερ τραγικῶν ὑποκριτῶν ἠμα τῇ σκευῇ συμμεταβαλόντων καὶ βαδίσμα καὶ φωνῆ καὶ κατάκλισι καὶ προσαγόρευσιν.

99 Cf. de Lacy (1952).
develops out of a quarrel over the need for Alexander’s Macedonians to pay him eastern obeisance (Alex. 50-51). Elsewhere in the Alexander, Plutarch says that the Macedonians were able to overlook Alexander’s adoption of eastern royal dress only because they respected his other qualities so much; he then reports anecdotes about Alexander’s boldness in battle as an implicit substantiation of the Macedonians’ respect (Alex. 45.3-4). In the Macedonians’ characterizations of Demetrius and Pyrrhus, however, Alexander’s traits are split: Demetrius seems to have all of Alexander’s ostentation, while Pyrrhus alone has the boldness that would make such ostentation excusable. Plutarch characterizes Demetrius, then, as imitating Alexander only in his most troublesome traits; by censuring Demetrius for following that path of Alexander-imitation, Plutarch signals to his reader that imitation of Alexandrian pomp without Alexandrian action is a recipe for failure. Conversely, praising Pyrrhus for imitating Alexander’s daring and military skill during his military campaign, Plutarch conveys to his reader that imitating Alexander in a similar manner is appropriate to the situation and positive. The attribution of praise and blame in these passages demonstrates to the reader that one must imitate only certain aspects of Alexander’s character that are appropriate to a given context. In using moralizing language in this way, Plutarch refines the reader’s understand of Alexander’s negative and positive traits. At the same time, the fact that Demetrius can be censured and Pyrrhus praised for imitating the same model at the same time suggests to the reader the need for discrimination as he engages in ethical mimesis in his own life.

The above passages help us to establish a base understanding of how Plutarch uses comparisons to Alexander in the Demetrius and Pyrrhus to characterize and evaluate the protagonists through the lens of Alexander, and to explore the ambiguous utility of
Alexander-imitation. The explicit comparisons between Alexander, Demetrius, and Pyrrhus, as well as Plutarch’s vivid language and clear attributions of praise and blame make it easy for a reader to see that the way each man chose to emulate Alexander affected their reputations among the armies. This foreshadows the outcome of their campaign against each other: Demetrius’ soldiers eventually defect to Pyrrhus, thereby transferring the rule of Macedonia to the Epirote (Demetr. 44.6-7, Pyrrh. 12).

Throughout the rest of these narratives, Plutarch depicts neither Demetrius nor Pyrrhus as unequivocally good or bad emulators of Alexander, but overall, they appear to appropriate the wrong aspects of Alexander’s character or the right aspects in the wrong degree. The specific ways in which Plutarch sets Alexander up as a model (or anti-model) for Demetrius and Pyrrhus refines our understanding not only of their characters but also of what Plutarch thought a reader could profitably learn from Alexander. In what follows, I examine Plutarch’s criticism of Demetrius’ self-fashioning as Alexander’s superior, and then his portrayal of Demetrius’ relationship with his father, Antigonus I Monophthalmus, as an positive alternative for the Philip-Alexander paradigm. Subsequently, I consider Plutarch’s use of Alexander in a narrative arc describing Pyrrhus’ speedy rise-and-fall as king of Macedonia. Explicit and implicit references to Alexander punctuate the beginning, middle, and end of this episode, and thereby set both Pyrrhus’ accession and his ouster in terms of Alexander. Finally, I turn to a speech given by Appius Claudius Caecus in which he questions Pyrrhus’ credentials as an imitator of Alexander and the efficacy of imitating Alexander.

In the last decade of the fourth century BC, Antigonus I Monophthalmus and his son Demetrius I undertook to “liberate” the cities of Old Greece from the garrisons of

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Cassander, an endeavor that Plutarch glowingly refers to as the most noble and just war waged by any of the kings.\textsuperscript{100} In 307 BC they freed Athens, and four years later, the Greeks assembled at the Isthmian Games proclaimed Demetrius their \textit{hegemon}, a title that Philip II and Alexander both had held when they were in control of the League of Corinth.\textsuperscript{101} Plutarch tells us that Demetrius, upon receipt of this honor, “considered himself in no slight measure better [than Philip and Alexander], lifted up as he was by his present good fortune and power” (\textit{Demetr.} 25.3). Plutarch (as narrator) questions the validity of Demetrius’ claim with a comparison to Alexander (25.3-4):

Alexandros goûn oûdêna tôν állon basileôwn ápestérise têς ómownymías oûd’ éautôn ánêipte basileôwn basileía, kai toî polloîç tô kaléisíhai kai eînai basileías autôs dêdikôs: êkeînos dê xheînâçôn kai gêlôn tôûs állon tînâ plurîn tôu patrôs kai autôn basileía prosgaporéûntas, ëdëwos ëkouâ tôûn parâ póton épiçuÁsies lambranántovn Dêmeitríou basileôw, Selêukou d’ élêfântârçhû, Ptolemaîou ðê naúárçhû, Lusimâchou ðê gazoúlakos, Agathokléous ðê tôû Sikeliótov noûsîárçhû.

Alexander at least stripped the title [of “King"] from none of the other kings, nor did he call himself “King of Kings,” although he himself granted to many both to be called and to be kings; but [Demetrius] scoffed at and mocked those who addressed anyone else besides himself and his father as king, and he listened with pleasure to those who at banquets toasted Demetrius as King, but Seleucus as Master of the Elephants, Ptolemy as Admiral, Lysimachus as Treasurer, and Agathocles of Sicily as Lord of the Isles.

Through this comparison, Plutarch characterizes Demetrius’ boast as laughable, and moreover, based on a fundamental misinterpretation of Alexander’s kingly behavior.

Alexander’s unwillingness to assume the title “King of Kings” despite the aptness of the title contrasts with Demetrius’ undeserved overconfidence and undermines Demetrius’ claim. By focusing on the tendency to share or withhold one’s absolute power, Plutarch

\textsuperscript{100} \textit{Demetr.} 8.1. For a full account of this war, see Habicht (1997) 67-97.

\textsuperscript{101} On the revived League of Corinth (also known in modern scholarship as the “Hellenic League”), see Harter-Uibopou (2003); large sections of the charter of this League can be found in Schmitt (1969), no. 466. On Philip and Alexander’s League, see Bosworth (1988) 187-197.
highlights the generous use of one’s influence as a positive hallmark of Alexandrian kingship. While Plutarch here makes Alexander seem generous with his power, Demetrius’ mockery of those who also claimed the title “King” makes him seem unserious, thereby creating a further contrast between the high character of Alexander and the low character of Demetrius. Plutarch reinforces this idea of Demetrius’ comic lowness when he tells the reader that the other kings who heard of this jest (except for the touchy Lysimachus) mocked Demetrius in return (25.5: κατεγέλων); as elsewhere in the Lives, a joke made in poor taste or that is out of touch with reality wins ridicule for the jester rather than the intended target.\footnote{Cf. Eum. 1.3, where Neoptolemus jokes that Eumenes followed Alexander with pen and paper, while the others followed with sword and shield. Neoptolemus, not Eumenes, becomes the object of scorn for this statement, as the other Macedonians recognized the obvious signs of Alexander’s regard for Eumenes, including the marriage of Eumenes to the sister of Alexander’s first Persian wife.} The ridicule of the other Successors and Plutarch’s sarcastic tone as he analyzes Demetrius’ claim to have outdone Philip and Alexander serves the same function as overt blame: Plutarch shows the reader not only that Demetrius fell far short of the man he believed he had surpassed, but moreover that he had completely misinterpreted what it meant to be like Alexander.\footnote{Laughter could be a sign of contempt and ridicule in Greek culture from as early as the Homeric epics; we may remember the derisive laughter of the Achaean assembly at Thersites in Iliad 2. For a full survey of Greek derisive laughter, see Halliwell (2008) 264-301.} In the Macedonian army’s censure of Demetrius (Demetr. 18.3-4, 41.3; Pyrrh. 8.1), Plutarch depicts Demetrius’ mistake as choosing the wrong Alexandrian trait to imitate. In the passage at hand, however, Plutarch also demonstrates that Demetrius had completely misinterpreted Alexander’s approach to monarchy and the sharing of power. Thus
Plutarch guides his reader through two qualitatively different pitfalls inherent to ethical mimesis: the interpretation and the discrimination of an exemplary figure’s character.

Yet for all of Demetrius’ misguided imitation of Alexander, in the matter of his relationship with his father Antigonus, Plutarch suggests that Demetrius may have been Alexander’s superior. Even though this section of the text does not contribute to the characterization of Demetrius as a negative exemplum – in fact, quite the opposite – it does expand the discussion of which aspects of Alexander’s character are to be imitated and avoided. Plutarch describes Demetrius as “exceedingly fond of his father” (3.1: φιλοπάτωρ διαφερόντως), and provides as evidence an anecdote about Demetrius greeting his father upon returning from a hunt (3.1-2). When Antigonus was hosting an embassy, Demetrius came in, still holding his weapons, and greeted his father with a kiss before sitting down beside him. As the envoys left, Antigonus told them to report back on the easy way he and his son interacted, as Plutarch explains to the reader, “since his unanimity and trust in his son was a certain strength of their royal affairs and proof of power” (3.2). Following this anecdote, Plutarch digresses on the scourges of parricide and fratricide in the dynasties of the Successors, which the Antigonids managed to escape until the reign of Philip V (3.3-4). Plutarch, therefore, portrays Demetrius’ relationship with Antigonus as one of the positive attributes of his character and uses a contrast with the other Hellenistic dynasties as a way of highlighting Demetrius’ uniqueness in this regard.

In his comparison between the filial relations of the Antigonids and the other Hellenistic dynasties, Plutarch does not mention Alexander, but I would argue that his

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104 Plutarch astutely discerned a pattern in Hellenistic dynastic succession that is explored in detail by Ogden (1999).
emphasis on Demetrius’ relationship with his father invites the reader to draw the contrast with Alexander and Philip.\textsuperscript{105} Like Antigonus in the \textit{Demetrius}, Philip is a major supporting character at the beginning of Plutarch’s \textit{Alexander}.\textsuperscript{106} Yet Plutarch depicts Philip’s relationship with his son as a tense rivalry between two ambitious individuals, alternating between emulation, jealousy, and violent contempt. Plutarch’s young Alexander is constantly vexed by his father’s victories, worrying that there will be nothing left for him to accomplish (\textit{Alex.} 5.2-3). Whereas Plutarch describes Demetrius as “exceedingly fond of his father,” in the \textit{Alexander}, Philip is described as “excessively fond of his son” (\textit{Alex.} 9.3: ἐπερηγάπα τὸν υἱόν). This characterization, however, introduces an anecdote that illustrates not Philip’s love for his son, but Alexander’s scorn for his father: the wedding of Philip and Cleopatra (\textit{Alex.} 9.4-5). In a quarrel over Alexander’s legitimacy as an heir, Philip lunged at his son with his sword drawn. He tripped and fell in his drunken rage, causing Alexander to mock him openly and question his ability to lead a campaign from Europe to Asia. The scene at the marriage of Philip and Cleopatra exemplifies Alexander and Philip’s strained relationship, and illustrates clearly how Plutarch constructs a filial dynamic that inverts what we have seen in the \textit{Demetrius}. Alexander and Philip’s violent altercation during a peaceful celebration is an

\textsuperscript{105} It makes little difference for my argument here whether \textit{Demetrius} or \textit{Alexander} came first, but rather it matters that in both cases Plutarch develops the father-son relationship as central to the understanding of the protagonist’s character. Any reader, even one without knowledge of Plutarch’s \textit{Alexander}, would presumably be acquainted with stories of Alexander and Philip’s relationship. While the similarities in language and structure invite us to see some responsion between the two \textit{Lives}, it is neither possible nor necessary to pinpoint the direction of reference.

\textsuperscript{106} Antigonus’ appears throughout the first half of the \textit{Demetrius} until his death at the Battle of Ipsus (29). Philip may take up proportionally less of the \textit{Alexander} (only sporadically in the first 10 chapters out of 77), but he plays an important narrative role as a foil against whom Plutarch sketches the character of the young Alexander.
inversion of the scene of Demetrius and Antigonus, where the expectation of violence and jealousy between royal father and son was pointedly unfulfilled. Additionally, I believe that Plutarch’s contrast between Demetrius and Antigonus’ relationship and the prevalence of parricide in the other Hellenistic dynasties may even invite the reader to reflect on Alexander’s rumored involvement in the assassination of Philip (mentioned at *Alex.* 10.4). The praise that Plutarch lavishes on Demetrius and Antigonus’ bond and the contempt he expresses for the ways in which monarchy all too often destroys familial ties, invites the reader to reconsider other relationships between royal sons and fathers, in particular Alexander and Philip. In isolation, the narrative in the *Alexander* would induce the reader to believe that a young and virtuous Alexander outstripped his brutish father in every regard, just as his accomplishments after Philip’s death would overshadow what his father had achieved in Macedonia and Greece. Yet the father-son relationship in the *Demetrius* encourages the reader to consider the possible benefits of concord between royal parents and their children as a positive alternative to the contentious paradigm of Philip and Alexander.\(^{107}\) In light of Plutarch’s portrayal of Demetrius and Antigonus, Alexander’s tense relationship with his father appears to be less a sign of Alexander’s future achievements and Philip’s shortcomings and more a moral pitfall commonly associated with monarchical rule.

For Plutarch and his peers in the Roman Empire, the questions of dynastic succession and power-sharing between members of the imperial family would have had a contemporary resonance. Although the Julio-Claudians used an adoptive model of succession, the Flavian dynasty employed a hereditary model, with Vespasian sharing his

\(^{107}\) Cf. Asirvatham (2010) on the portrayal of Philip in the works of Dio, Plutarch, and Arrian.
power to a remarkable degree with his sons Titus and Domitian. Subsequently, Nerva’s adoption of Trajan resumed the earlier model of succession. In an empire where models of succession were in flux, it is unsurprising that Plutarch shows such an interest in Hellenistic fathers and sons as potential models or anti-models for the Roman imperial household. I do not suggest that Plutarch had specific Imperial fathers and sons in mind as he wrote the *Alexander* and the *Demetrius*, but rather that his general explorations of royal filial relationship fits within the context of the changing Roman Empire.

To sum up: Plutarch uses internal mimesis in the *Demetrius* to set up Alexander as a foil for his protagonist. Since Alexander is not an unambiguous model for kingly behavior, the contrasts that Plutarch draws between the two men demonstrate more than just Demetrius’ failings. In explicit attributions of Alexander-imitation, both by the Macedonian soldiers and by Demetrius himself, Plutarch’s carefully-chosen language and critical remarks as narrator guide the reader to understand that Demetrius’ improper selection of Alexander-like traits to imitate led his failure as a competitor for Alexander’s empire. The reader learns from these passages that Alexandrian kingship is more than donning a diadem and “playing” king; rather, a truly Alexandrian king gives the title of king away rather than withholding it from others. At the same time, Plutarch’s portrayal of the relationship between Demetrius and his father Antigonus recalls by its structure his depiction of Philip and Alexander in the *Alexander*, thereby inviting the reader to reconsider the question of royal family dynamics. In each instance, Plutarch uses Demetrius to show his reader that emulating Alexander is not sufficient for being a good

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108 Other father-son pairs Plutarch considers are Seleucus I and Antiochus I (*Demetr.* 38); Antigonus Gonatas-Alcyoneus (*Pyrrh.* 34); Pyrrhus and his sons (*Pyrrh.* 9).
king, and is at times antithetical to stable monarchy, thereby challenging the reader to question whether imitating Alexander’s model of kingship is always the best path for virtuous rule.

When we turn to the Pyrrhus, we see that, just as in the Demetrius, Plutarch’s development of Pyrrhus’ relationship to Alexander goes beyond the evaluation of the Macedonian soldiers to explore both the strengths and weaknesses of how Pyrrhus chose to imitate. Despite the favorable comparison to Demetrius in terms of Alexander at Pyrrh. 8.1, the overall impression one gets from reading the rest of the Life is that Pyrrhus failed as an Alexander-imitator and as a ruler. His misreading of Alexander’s paradigm of kingship differed from that of Demetrius in quality more than in measure, but more importantly, Plutarch calls into question the very value of Pyrrhus’ imitation of Alexander. Plutarch’s use of internal mimesis as a tool for constructing a characterization of Pyrrhus as an Alexander-imitator has been explored in a broad sense by Judith Mossman. As she argues, Plutarch creates a general impression of Pyrrhus as a failed Alexander-figure with his alternating use of epic and tragic discourse, both in his choice of diction and in his composition of individual scenes.109 Her argument builds off her work on Plutarch’s Life of Alexander, where she contends that Plutarch uses epic language and comparisons to Achilles in order to portray Alexander as a hero, but shifts to tragic language and allusions when depicting the darker aspects of Alexander’s character.110 Like Alexander, Pyrrhus also seeks to imitate Achilles, and so Plutarch uses the same epic-tragic binary to build his characterization of Pyrrhus. According to Mossman, his use of the same narrative technique in both Lives invites the reader to

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110 Mossman (1988).
evaluate both men within the same framework, and implicitly, against each other. She contends that Plutarch demonstrates Pyrrhus’ inferiority to both his epic ancestor Achilles, and his more recent idol, Alexander. Not only does he measure up to neither figure, but he also fares worse in his comparison to Achilles than Alexander does in his respective Life, where he at times lives up to the model of the Homeric hero. In other words, Plutarch uses internal mimesis in the Pyrrhus to demonstrate both Pyrrhus’ inability to match his models and his failure to match Alexander’s own example of ethical mimesis.

This approach illuminates the ways in which Plutarch constructs the character of his protagonist, but it allows us to understand Plutarch’s depiction of Pyrrhus’ relationship to Alexander only in broad terms. Moreover, it tells us little about how Plutarch’s portrayal of Pyrrhus’ failed Alexander-imitation may inform and refine the reader’s understanding of either Alexander as an exemplum or the problems of ethical mimesis. If we look more closely at how Plutarch juxtaposes Pyrrhus and Alexander in specific scenes, we find that Plutarch carefully attributes praise and blame to Pyrrhus’ Alexander-like qualities. In this way, Plutarch not only gives a general impression of Pyrrhus’ failure as an imitator of Alexander, but he also provides more specific guidance on how and why Pyrrhus did not live up to his model, reminding us of both poet and teacher in De Audiendis Poetis.

In light of this, two primary questions are explored in the passages that follow: first, how Plutarch uses internal mimesis to define Pyrrhus’ positive and negative traits through the lens of Alexander; and second, how Plutarch then challenges the inherent benefit of imitating Alexander. This challenge to the value of Alexander-imitation, I
suggest, reacts against the contemporary Trajanic discourse that offered Alexander as a positive standard for kingship. As discussed above, at *Pyrrh.* 8.1 Plutarch focuses his praise of Pyrrhus on his Alexander-like appearance, swiftness, and movement: positive attributes associated with Alexander’s legendary physical strength and military prowess. Alexander next reappears in chapters 11 and 12, a self-contained plot arc recounting Pyrrhus’ brief career as the king of Macedonia. Even though this part of the narrative is about Pyrrhus’ rise and fall from power, Plutarch situates Alexander at the beginning, middle, and end of this episode, inviting the reader throughout to examine Pyrrhus’ character and achievements through the lens of Alexander. Plutarch subtly uses Alexander as a model and standard for Pyrrhus in this passage, relying on implicit references to Alexander-like qualities rather than explicit comparison between the two men. The scene begins with the ongoing war between Pyrrhus and Demetrius, now being fought in Thessaly. Plutarch relates that before Pyrrhus’ march on the territory of Beroia, Alexander appeared to him in a dream, promising to aid Pyrrhus “with his name itself.”¹¹¹ Unlike most instances of dreams in the *Lives,* where the interpretation of the dream is either obvious from the narrative or is explained by Plutarch in an aside, Alexander’s name is never mentioned in the narrative of Pyrrhus’ campaign, nor does Plutarch explain to his reader how the meaning of the dream was manifest in the subsequent events.¹¹²


¹¹² For a general survey of Plutarch’s use of dreams in his narratives, see Brenk (1998) 104-117. Narration of dreams in the *Lives* is generally followed by the character’s interpretation of the dream, the narrator’s interpretation of the dream, or a narrative that maps clearly onto what happened in the dream. Demetrius also has a dream of Alexander
We do learn that Pyrrhus was successful in his campaign and easily captured Beroia; thus in a very general way, we see the effect of Alexander’s blessing. But it nonetheless remains that his name is mentioned nowhere, and Plutarch leaves the reader with an interpretative *aporia*.

Some help may be found, however, after Pyrrhus’ conquest, where Plutarch reports the subsequent praise of Pyrrhus that was spread throughout Demetrius’ army in a passage that recalls the structure and content of the Macedonians’ earlier praise (*Pyrrh. 11.4*):

…ἐπεὶ δὲ παρεστρατοπέδευσεν αὐτόθι, πολλοὶ τῶν ἕκ τῆς Βεροίας ἀφικνούμενοι τὸν Πύρρον ἐνεκομίαζον ὡς ἄμαχον μὲν ἐν τοῖς ὀπλίτοις καὶ λαμπρὸν ἄνδρα, πράως δὲ καὶ φιλανθρώπος τοῖς ἠλωκόσι χρώμενον. Ἡσαν δὲ τινες οὐς αὐτὸς ὁ Πύρρος ἐγκαθίει, προσποιομένους εἰναι Μακεδόνας καὶ λέγοντας, ὅτι νῦν καιρὸς ἥστι τῆς Δημητρίου βαρύτητος ἀπαλλαγῆναι, πρὸς ἄνδρα δημοτικόν καὶ φιλοστρατιώτην μεταβαλομένους τὸν Πύρρον.

… But after [Demetrius] had pitched his camp over against Pyrrhus, many Beroians came and praised Pyrrhus as being invincible in arms and a brilliant man, but also as one who treated his captives mildly and humanely. There were also some whom Pyrrhus himself sent into the camp, pretending to be Macedonians and saying that now was the opportunity to escape the ostentatiousness of Demetrius and go over to Pyrrhus, a man of the people and a soldier’s friend.

*(Demetr. 29.1)*, preceding the Battle of Ipsus. It is described briefly in a list of omens signifying the impending Antigonid defeat: Alexander appeared to him, asked him his watchword for the battle (“Zeus and Victory”), and said that he would go join Demetrius’ enemies, for they would receive him properly. Perrin (1920) 71 supplies the interpretation that the apparition of Alexander wanted Demetrius’ watchword to be “Alexander and Victory”; this as plausible interpretation, but it suffices to say that dream-Alexander’s abandonment of Demetrius becomes apparently in the narrative of the utter defeat at Ipsus which immediately follows. *Eumenes* 6.5-6 contains a similar Alexander dream, once again concerning the use of Alexander’s name as a watchword. Based on comparison with these examples, it is possible that in the case of Pyrrhus’ dream, Plutarch’s reader is supposed to supply that Pyrrhus used Alexander’s name as a watchword, but the complete lack of mention of Alexander’s name after his cryptic pronouncement in the dream makes me skeptical of that reading.
Since this follows almost immediately after the dream, and the intervening narrative of Pyrrhus’ march did not explain the dream’s meaning, I suggest that the reader may reasonably seek clarification of the dream in this passage. While Alexander’s name is not mentioned in this account of Pyrrhus’ virtues, the characteristics that the Beroians and Pyrrhus’ men praise could just as easily be counted among some of Alexander’s most praiseworthy attributes. Invincibility in warfare and heroic brilliance are often associated with Alexander and enhance the depiction of Pyrrhus as Alexander’s true successor in military action.\(^{113}\) Moreover, the praise of Pyrrhus’ humane treatment of the conquered associates him closely with Alexander, whose mercy to the captive women of Darius’ court and to the Indian king Porus are often adduced as evidence for Alexander’s \textit{philanthropia}.\(^{114}\) Pyrrhus’ men seek to distinguish Pyrrhus from his rival Demetrius, and in doing so, they use language that recalls descriptions of improper Alexander-imitation elsewhere. The criticism of Demetrius’ ‘ostentatiousness’ (βαρύτης) echoes the censure of Demetrius’ arrogance (βάρος) at Demetr. 41.3, a characteristic that is marked as imitative of Alexander and connected with the image of play-acting.\(^{115}\) Thus the disguised Epirote soldiers used distinctions between Alexander’s positive and negative qualities employed by Plutarch elsewhere in order to promote their leader as the rightful heir to Alexander. This praise succeeds, as is apparent from the subsequent narrative: the Macedonian army was excited by the prospect of fighting for Pyrrhus, and Demetrius was

\(^{113}\) Forms of λάμπρος occur sixteen times in the \textit{Life of Alexander}. This term is often associated with heroic qualities and figures, perhaps thereby tying both Alexander and Pyrrhus to their ancestor Achilles. Although άμαχος does not appear in the \textit{Alexander} or \textit{De Fortuna Alexandri}, Plutarch does describe Alexander in the latter as ανίκητος: 335A11; 337A10; 339B4, 6.

\(^{114}\) On the captivity of Darius’ wife and daughters, see \textit{Alex.} 21-22, 30; \textit{Arr. Ana.} 2.11-12. On his treatment of Porus, see \textit{Alex.} 60; \textit{Arr. Ana.} 5.19.

\(^{115}\) As discussed above, these terms also appear at \textit{Demetr.} 18.3.
forced to flee the camp in secret. At the end of the chapter, the Macedonian army proclaimed Pyrrhus to be King of Macedonia. Plutarch’s reader could hardly miss that the biographer finally mentions a synonym for Alexander’s ὄνομα: his royal title.

Let us sum up what we have covered thus far, and consider the connections between *Pyrrh.* 8.1 and 11.4. These accounts resemble each other in that they can both be read as examples of ethical mimesis attributed to the protagonist by an internal audience. The praise contained in each primarily highlights Pyrrhus’ apparent imitation of Alexander’s martial spirit; 11.4 goes further to contend that he is not only fearsome in battle, but kind in conquest, thereby alluding to another famous quality of Alexander’s rule and deepening the connection between the two men. In both passages, Demetrius and Pyrrhus are not only opponents on the battlefield, but foils for one another, used by the internal audience to highlight each man’s defining characteristics. While the praise of Pyrrhus at 11.4 does not explicitly compare him with Alexander, the narrative elements that Plutarch uses to frame the Beroians’ praise – the dream of Alexander and the proclamation of Pyrrhus as the King of Macedonia – guide the reader to interpret Pyrrhus with reference to Alexander. From this reading, the “name itself,” with which dream-Alexander promised to aid Pyrrhus, was the praise of the Beroians that evoked Alexander’s legacy of strength in battle and mercy afterwards. Although Plutarch’s depiction of Pyrrhus’ ethical mimesis of Alexander here relies upon the same structure as we saw at 8.1, it differs in two notable ways. First, by adding mercy to the list of Pyrrhus’ praiseworthy qualities, he redefines the characteristics that made both Pyrrhus and Alexander positive models of leadership. Second, as the reader works through the puzzle of how the Alexander-dream and the subsequent narrative fit together, he is forced
to read actively. By leaving the connection to the Alexander-dream unexpressed, then, Plutarch demands the reader’s focused engagement with the narrative at the very point at which he refines his depiction of Pyrrhus’ imitation of Alexander.

Alexander-imitation, however, is a double-edged blade. The end of Pyrrh. 12 shows the role that Alexander’s legacy played in the speedy undoing of Pyrrhus’ ambitions in Macedonia. Plutarch’s narrative of Lysimachus’ successful attempt to wrest the throne of Macedonia from Pyrrhus introduces another issue of Alexander-imitation: who is permitted to claim a connection with Alexander? In order to win over the Macedonian army, Plutarch tells us, Lysimachus appealed to the leading Macedonian officers, “reproaching them, because by choosing as their master a foreign man whose ancestors had always been enslaved to the Macedonians, they drove away from Macedonia the friends and companions of Alexander” (12.6-7) Lysimachus thus played up Epirus’ historical subservience to Macedonia in order to shame the Macedonian soldiers into abandoning Pyrrhus. Pyrrhus became alarmed at this and left Macedonia with his army, thus, as Plutarch says, “losing Macedonia in the way he won it” (ἀποβαλὼν Μακεδονίαν ὑ τρόπῳ παρέλαβεν). I would argue that the ring-composition and language of Plutarch’s text encourages us to gloss this phrase by saying that Pyrrhus lost Macedonia “by the name of Alexander itself,” i.e. the way he won it. The quick narration – a mere two chapters of text – of Pyrrhus’ accession to the Macedonian throne on the basis of a reputation in the Macedonian army gained by both explicit (8.1) and implicit (11.2) comparison to Alexander, and his subsequent fall from grace that was precipitated by Lysimachus’ use of Alexander as a rallying cry for Macedonian nationalism, sets this period of Pyrrhus’ career in an Alexandrian framework. By
showing that Alexander’s name was used with equal effectiveness in establishing and dismantling Pyrrhus’ claim to the Macedonian throne, Plutarch emphasizes the ambiguity of Alexander’s legacy and calls into question the idea that an association with Alexander has fixed meaning or benefit.

When Pyrrhus crossed the Adriatic, the shadow – or perhaps dark cloud – of Alexander still followed him. The speech of Appius Claudius Caecus in the Roman Senate, condemning Rome’s proposed capitulation to Pyrrhus after the Battle of Heracleia in 280 BC, picks up Lysimachus’ criticism of Pyrrhus’ claims to a connection with Alexander. Whereas Lysimachus questions Pyrrhus’ right to hold the Macedonian throne, Caecus questions whether Pyrrhus can rightly claim to emulate Alexander at all.

Once again we have Plutarch portraying an internal audience discussing an instance of ethical mimesis, although instead of ascribing Alexander-like qualities to Pyrrhus, Caecus follows the example of Lysimachus and explicitly denies that Pyrrhus is an imitator of Alexander.

Plutarch tells us that after Heracleia, the first of the notorious Pyrrhic victories, the Romans contemplated accepting Pyrrhus’ terms of peace. Upon hearing that capitulation was imminent, the aged and decrepit Appius Claudius Caecus demanded to be carried from his home into the Curia (18.5-6). Disgusted with his fellow Romans, Caecus criticized them for reneging on their former boasts of military power (19.1-3):

Ποῦ γὰρ ὑμῶν ὁ πρὸς ἀπαντᾶς ἀνθρώπους θυρολούμενος ἰδὶ λόγος, ὡς ἐν παρῇ ἐκείνῳ εἰς Ἰταλίαν ὁ μέγας Ἀλέξανδρος καὶ συνηνέχθη ἥμισυ ήμῖν καὶ τοῖς πατράσιν ἡμῶν ἀκμόζουσιν, οὐκ ἐν ὑμνεῖτο νῦν ἁνίκητος, ἀλλ’ ἂν φυγὼν ἢ που πεσὼν ἐνταῦθα τὴν Ῥώμην ἐνδοξοτέραν ἄπέλπητε; Ταῦτα μὲν τοι κενὶ ἀλαζονεύαν καὶ κόμπον ἀποδείκνυτε, Χάονας καὶ Μολοσσοὺς τὴν ἤει Μακεδόνων λειαν δεδίτες, καὶ τρέμοντες Πόρρον, ὃς τόν Ἀλεξάνδρου δορυφόρον ἐνα γοῦν ἢ ἐνερέγον καὶ ἔρωπεν ἀπετελέσκε, καὶ νῦν οὐ βοηθῶν τοῖς ἐνταῦθα μᾶλλον Ἐλλησιν ἢ φεύγον τοὺς ἐκεί
πολεμίους πλανάται περί τήν Ἰταλίαν, ἐπαγγελλόμενος ἣμιν τήν ἠγεμονίαν ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς δυνάμεως, ἢ μέρος μικρὸν αὐτὸ Ἔκαζων, ὁ ὡκεσε διαφυλάξαι.

For where are your earlier words, always boasting to all men, that, if Alexander the Great had ever come to Italy and had given battle to us when we were young and our fathers when they were in their prime, he would not now be sung as invincible, but instead either fleeing or perhaps falling here he would have left behind Rome even more famous? Surely you are showing that these words were empty pretension and boasting, since you fear Chaonians and Molossians, ever the prey of the Macedonians, and you shudder at Pyrrhus, who has always gone through life following and serving one of Alexander’s bodyguards, and now wanders here to Italy, not so much to aid the Greeks here as to flee his enemies in Greece, offering to us the hegemony here with that same army that did not suffice to preserve a small part of Macedonia for him.

This speech was famous in the ancient world for being the earliest extant piece of Roman oratory.116 While we have several sources that mention this speech, only Plutarch and Appian include the speech itself in their narratives, and Plutarch alone includes language referring to Alexander in the text of the speech.117 Since no other attestation of this speech includes any mention of Alexander, we may conclude that Plutarch had a particular reason to make the counterfactual argument the central, and almost entire, point of Caecus’ speech. My suggestion is that Plutarch included an Alexander-heavy version of Caecus’ speech because he characterizes Pyrrhus with reference to Alexander throughout the Life, and sought to build upon the problematization of Alexander-imitation introduced by the narrative of 11-12. Caecus uses a familiar idea – that the Romans claimed they would have defeated Alexander if given the chance – and then

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116 On the chronology of events of Pyrrhus’ struggle with Rome, see Lefkowitz (1959). Plutarch puts Caecus’ speech after Heracleia and before Ausculum, which is the order of the majority of our ancient sources, although Justin’s epitome of Pompeius Trogus places this speech after the battle of Ausculum.

117 Ancient sources and testimonia: Cic. Sen. 16, Brut. 55, 61; Livy, Per. 13; Quint. Inst. 2.16.7; App. Sam. frag. 10; Isid. Etym. 1.38.2; FGrH 839 F 1.2. For further discussion and bibliography see Osgood (2005) and Humm (2009). If the version of Caecus’ speech that Plutarch preserves is accurate, it is the earliest attestation of a Roman counterfactual history of Alexander, a topos most familiar from Livy’s counterfactual digression at 9.17-19. On Livy’s Alexander digression, see Petrochilos (1988) and Morello (2002).
pushes it further, by saying that the Romans should be confident in their chances against Pyrrhus, who is no Alexander. His disparagement of Pyrrhus in fact begins with Lysimachus’ distinction between the historically dominant Macedonians and the subject Epirotes. However, he then adds two further charges: that Pyrrhus was merely a servant of the other Successors (“Alexander’s bodyguards”), and that his army could not even keep control over a small area of Macedonia. In other words, Caecus’ speech undermines both the earlier praises of Pyrrhus as Alexander’s shadow and the very value of modeling oneself after Alexander.

Caecus’ speech against peace with Pyrrhus draws an important distinction between two modes of relating to Alexander as a historical model: imitation and emulation. Peter Green first called attention to the fact that what is broadly referred to in the scholarship as *imitatio Alexandri* ought to be divided into three distinct phenomena: *imitatio*, or copying Alexander; *aemulatio*, or striving to outdo Alexander; and *comparatio*, a comparison made by a third-party between Alexander and another historical figure. According to Green’s analysis, the story of Caesar at Gadiz and Tacitus’ obituary of Germanicus are examples of *aemulatio Alexandri*: these men are all portrayed as either attempting to or succeeding at surpassing the character and conquests of Alexander. In contrast, ancient sources depict figures such as the Hellenistic Successor-kings, Pompey, and Antony as engaged in *imitatio Alexandri*, fashioning

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118 A similar argument for Roman superiority to a Hellenistic king is found at Plut. *Flam.* 7.5, before the battle of Cynoscephalae.
119 For the Roman imagination of the Macedonians, see the excellent dissertation of Asirvatham (2000).
120 Green (1978); followed by Gruen (1998) and Frank (2008).
themselves after Alexander’s example by mimicking certain features of his appearance and character. The difference between imitators and emulators can best be understood if we think of Alexander as a benchmark: for the imitators, Alexander is what they are striving to attain, the limit to which they approach; emulators, in contrast, treat the model of Alexander as a bare minimum, the starting point for their bigger and brighter careers. In Caecus’ speech, Pyrrhus is described as an imitator of Alexander, unsuccessfully reaching towards his predecessor’s example. According to both Caecus and Lysimachus, his Epirote ethnicity has relegated him to being a subject, rather than a king; moreover, Caecus adds that Pyrrhus’ skill as a commander falls far below Alexander’s. This latter accusation undermines the characterization of Pyrrhus as the only imitator of Alexander’s martial prowess, established, as we have seen, by the earlier remarks of the Macedonians and the Beroians. In contrast, the Romans in the speech are depicted as emulators of Alexander, who always boasted that they would have defeated Alexander if they were given the chance. Caecus’ concern seems to be that the Romans will lose their ability to make this emulative claim if they capitulate to a man who is a mere Alexander knock-off. In the rhetoric of the speech, there is a vast gap between Pyrrhus the imitator and the Roman emulators of Alexander, and it is precisely this gap that Caecus exploits in order to shame the Romans into continuing the war.

To return to a point made earlier, I would like to suggest that this distinction between imitating and emulating Alexander was a timely concern in the reign of Trajan, due to the renaissance of Roman interest in Alexander after three decades of neglect. Roman history is full of examples of both imitators and emulators; how Trajan chose to position himself vis-à-vis Alexander could have a significant impact on the tenor of his
reign. In ancient sources concerning the relationship between Roman leaders and the model of Alexander, those who are portrayed as mimicking Alexander are generally ridiculed and vilified. Pompey, Antony, Caligula, and Nero, like the Successor-kings before them, are all called to task for their attempts to play the part of Alexander, which are deemed signs of their effeminacy and tyranny.\footnote{122} Emulators, like Julius Caesar and Germanicus, come off instead as even greater for having surpassed – or attempting to surpass – such a remarkable model.\footnote{123}

For Plutarch, a Greek intellectual, a member of the provincial elite, and a friend of Romans of consular rank, writing a biography that warns of the problems of imitating Alexander can be seen as an attempt to guide the emperor’s use of Alexander as a model for ethical mimesis. In the \textit{Pyrrhus}, Plutarch highlights the fact that Alexander-like ambition and martial prowess alone will not result in Alexander-like achievements; in doing so, he invites the reader to consider what deficiencies in Pyrrhus’ character and actions may have caused his failure as an Alexander-imitator. Both Timothy Duff and Bradley Buszard have rightly pointed to Plutarch’s depictions of Alexander and Pyrrhus’ respective educations as a way of accounting for the discrepancy in their overall

\footnote{122}{\it Imitatio Alexandri}: Pompey: Plut. \textit{Pomp.} 2.2, 13.3-5, 36.1, 46.1, Appian \textit{Mithr.} 117.577; Antony: Plut. \textit{Ant.} 4, 24, 26, 36.4, 60.3; Caligula: Cassius Dio 59.16.11-17.11, Suetonius \textit{Cal.} 19.3; Nero: Tacitus \textit{Ann.} 11.12.3, 14.27.1, \textit{Hist.} 2.70.1, Suetonius \textit{Nero} 6, 19, 25.

\footnote{123}{Augustus has a particularly complicated relationship with Alexander, who he initially rejects as a model in order to distinguish himself from Antony, but later seems to adopt. The present study, however, is not the place to explore Augustus’ self-fashioning. For further discussions, see Kienast (1969), Gruen (1998), Frank (2008) 43-77, Kühnen (2008) 121-161, and Ogden (2009).}
characterizations. In particular, they argue that Plutarch believes Pyrrhus, who he tells us focused his mind solely on the art of war and believed all other endeavors to be trivial, had a lop-sided education that enabled, rather than tempered, his lust for conquest. Alexander, in contrast, is Plutarch’s model of a man whose great passions were channeled by a properly Hellenic education, both as he is portrayed in the *Life* and in *De Fortuna aut Virtute Alexandri*. Yet another weakness that separated Pyrrhus from Alexander was his lack of interest in empire-building, that is to say securing his conquests before starting a new campaign. Plutarch draws attention to this problem when Pyrrhus abandons his war in Sicily for the prospect of conquest in the Peloponnese (26.1-2, 7); again, this is in contrast to Alexander, whom Plutarch tells us took time to stabilize his empire before continuing its expansion. This theme of controlling ambition is also present in Pliny’s *Panegyricus*, a speech that both praises Trajan for the ruler he already is and, in the words of modern self-help books, encourages him to be his best self. This suggests that intellectuals on both sides of the Adriatic during the reign of Trajan were invested in promoting a shared concept of the ideal ruler as a man who kept his ambitions in check and his empire in order.

Two later literary sources concerning Trajan, Cassius Dio and Julian, share with Plutarch an interest in the question of Trajan’s emulation or imitation of Alexander. I believe that these later authors who examine Trajan’s association with Alexander fixate on the same qualities of Alexander-imitation that Plutarch explore in the *Pyrrhus*. While there is not sufficient evidence to prove the Cassius Dio and Julian were directly

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125 Stadter (2002).
responding to Plutarch, we can safely assert on the basis of these texts that Plutarch pinpointed the issues of Alexander-imitation that would resurface in later recollections of Trajan. In the summaries of Cassius Dio’s *Roman History*, a third-century AD text, Trajan reportedly stood on the shores of Parthia and commented on Alexander’s luck in getting to India; the fact that Trajan himself did not make it that far did not stop him from declaring to the Roman Senate that he had gone farther than Alexander (68.29-30). The author’s comment that Trajan soon lost all of his Parthian gains further suggests that although Trajan claimed to be an emulator of Alexander, he was a mere imitator. Furthermore, the combination of Trajan’s imperialistic ambition and the subsequent loss of his conquests resonates with Plutarch’s depiction of Pyrrhus as a man who failed to meet the standard of Alexander’s achievements because of his inability to secure his gains.126 In Julian’s *Caesars*, a satirical dialogue written in AD 362, the gods weigh the arguments of Roman emperors and Alexander in a contest for the title of best emperor.127 Military accomplishments, clemency towards the defeated, and devotion to philosophy are the main criteria by which the gods evaluate the competitors, thus echoing Plutarch’s concerns in the *Pyrrhus*. Trajan claims to have surpassed Alexander in all three criteria, and moreover states that while he shared Alexander’s goal of world-domination, he himself acted with more prudence (333A: σωφρονέστερον). His claims to have excelled Alexander fail to persuade the gods, and he ultimately loses the contest. Remarkably, his consolation prize is to have Alexander as his eternal guardian and guide (335D: τὸν προστάτην τε καὶ ἡγεμόνα), thus reinforcing both Trajan’s affinity for Alexander and his

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126 Wirth (1976) 198 has also argued that Cassius Dio depicts Trajan’s cruise down the Tigris as an imitation of Alexander’s navigation of the Indus; cf. Cassius Dio 68.17.1.  
127 On *The Caesars* as a work of Julian’s self-revelation and self-justification, see Bowersock (1982).
inferiority to him. In constructing the *Pyrrhus* as a text that problematizes the practice of imitating Alexander, Plutarch seems to have identified in the *Pyrrhus* the terms upon which Trajan’s legacy and his relationship to Alexander would be debated in the centuries to come.

In conclusion, Plutarch’s *Life of Demetrius* and *Life of Pyrrhus* participate in a contemporary discussion about Alexander as a model, and moreover, anticipate the way writers in the later Roman Empire would depict Trajan as an emperor who walked the line between imitating and emulating Alexander. These texts warn against blind and undiscerning imitation of Alexander, even those qualities, like his antagonistic relationship with his father, his martial skill, and his ambition, that were often linked to his unprecedented success. The problematization of imitating Alexander in the *Pyrrhus* encourages the reader to see Alexander as a starting point to be improved upon, not a model to be aped. The relevance of the *Demetrius* and the *Pyrrhus*, both to contemporary debates about Alexander and to later depictions of Trajan, highlights just one way in which the Hellenistic past still had didactic and creative potential for a Greek writer in the Roman Empire. Indeed, Plutarch’s *Demetrius* and *Pyrrhus* show that lessons of the Hellenistic past were still very much relevant to life in Roman Greece.
Chapter Three

_Aratus_: The Greek Statesman in an Age of Kings

I. Introduction


When one of his companions who was with him in his bedroom saw him spit up blood, and expressed surprise, “These,” said Aratus, “Cephalo, are the rewards of royal friendship.” (_Arat._ 52.3)

So Plutarch phrases the dying words of Aratus of Sicyon, the great consolidator of the Achaean League (271-213 BC). Polybius, one of Plutarch’s main sources for the _Life of Aratus_, depicts the same scene in his _Histories_ with a slight but significant variation (8.12.5):

“Ταῦτα τάπιχειρα τῆς φιλίας, ὦ Κεφάλων, κεκομίσμεθα τῆς πρὸς Φίλιππον.”

“These, Cephalo, are the rewards I have got from my friendship with Philip.”

Although the moral of the two versions of Aratus’ last words is essentially the same, Plutarch’s version lacks the specificity, i.e. the reference to Philip, that his source maintains. While earlier scholars may have attributed this discrepancy to Plutarch’s inaccurate memory of his source and inattention to detail,¹²⁸ I argue that this is not an example of Plutarch nodding. He purposefully puts a generalizing spin on Aratus’ last words in order to underline the theme that connects the entire narrative of the _Life of

¹²⁸ An example of this criticism of Plutarch is found in Schulz (1886): “Sometimes Plutarch copies his source word for word; sometimes reproduces the material in words of his own; sometimes gives the sense in a brief summary; sometimes omits important facts; sometimes by his epitomizing falls into actual mistakes; sometimes in judging events or persons inserts an opinion independent of his source without even an introductory δοκεῖ μοι.” (trans. Porter (1937) xx).
Aratus: the Greek statesman must be careful when he forms a relationship with a foreign king.

This chapter examines how Plutarch shapes the *Life of Aratus* to explore the potential dangers and benefits of the Greek statesman’s relationships with foreign rulers. This issue was central to the lives of Plutarch and his peers in the *poleis*, whose status, influence, and power in Greece were partially dependent on the favor of the Roman emperor. As such, it features prominently in several of Plutarch’s political *Moralia*. One of Plutarch’s primary concerns in both the *Aratus* and the *Moralia* is how a member of the Greek elite ought to position himself and his city in relation to an external ruling power, whether it be the Ptolemies and Antigonids or the Roman administration. Thus, it is the flipside of the exploration of Alexander-imitation and kingship that we saw in the previous chapter. Instead of examining how to be (or not be) a successful ruler, Plutarch uses the *Aratus* to explore how to be a Greek statesman in a world where the Greek *poleis* are weak and foreign monarchs wield enormous political power. Like the imitation of Alexander, this issue is inaccessible in the *Lives* of Greeks from the Archaic and Classical periods, due to the significantly greater level of political independence in the Greek *poleis* of earlier periods. The events of Aratus’ life, on the other hand, provide Plutarch with an opportunity to meditate on the practice of statesmanship in a time of political subjugation that mirrors the world he lives in.

Of all the Hellenistic *Lives*, the *Life of Aratus* has received by far the least scholarly attention. In the 1930s, interest in this *Life* was mainly historical, as scholars tried to reconcile Achaean and Spartan sources on third century BC Peloponnesian
After this brief flurry of interest, *Aratus* again fell by the wayside, and remains unstudied even in the face of new scholarly trends that sought to treat Plutarch’s *Lives* as literary and rhetorical works. The reason for this is, undoubtedly, the fact that it fell outside of the series of *Parallel Lives* and is a singleton in its construction. But unlike the barbarian Artaxerxes, who would have been impossible to fit within the Greco-Roman schema of the *Parallel Lives*, there is nothing that obviously prevents Plutarch from pairing the Sicyonian Aratus with a Roman counterpart. As a consequence, even scholars of Plutarch have neglected this *Life* in the recent trend of studies in parallelism and *synkrisis*. One of the benefits of the current study is that by moving beyond pair-focused analysis to consider instead Plutarch’s construction of parallels between the past and present, we can finally integrate the *Life of Aratus* into the ongoing discussions about Plutarch’s didacticism, literary art, and Imperial cultural context.

The *Life of Aratus* is particularly interesting for our study because it is Plutarch’s most explicit expression of the enduring significance of the Hellenistic past in the Greek world of the Roman Empire. I begin my reading of the *Aratus* by illustrating how Plutarch uses the dedication to Aratus’ descendant, Polycrates of Sicyon, to establish the continuity and parallelism between past and present as the source of this *Life*’s didactic value. I then analyze Plutarch’s narrative through the four major royal relationships that

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129 Walbank (1933) is a historical biography; Koster (1937) and Porter (1937) are editions with historical commentaries following in the footsteps of the historical-topographical work of Theunissen (1935).
130 Two incisive, but brief forays into this territory are Gill (1983) and Pelling (2002) 288-291.
131 Although as Mossman (2010) 145 points out, “it is far from clear who” would be a suitable pair.
132 For notable work on Plutarch and parallelism, see Erbse (1956), Pelling (1986) and (2005), Duff (1992) and Humble (2010).
Aratus maintained during his career. By means of these relationships, Plutarch weaves a richly textured narrative that explores a variety of royal personalities, types of interactions, and potential outcomes from a statesman’ relationship with a king. By considering the Moralia, moreover, we are able to see that the issues explored through Aratus’ relationships with the kings have important resonances for Plutarch’s peers, who were faced with negotiating their own political interactions between the Roman administration and the poleis.

II. The Life of Aratus in Context

The composition of the Life of Aratus was predicated on the enduring connection between third century BC Greece and Imperial Achaea. This connection is first and foremost embodied in the dedicatee Polycrates of Sicyon, a direct descendant of Aratus. The prologue begins with whether it is a happy or unhappy matter to be reminded of the virtues of one’s ancestor: for those who are worthless, it can cause distress, but for those (like Polycrates) who have inherited their virtues from their ancestors, Plutarch asserts that it is both happy and beneficial always to be reminded of family exempla, constantly hear their stories, and even tell them to others (1.1-3)

Plutarch then explains his motivation for giving Polycrates this Life (1.3-4):

Διὸ κἀγὼ τὸν Ἀράτου τοῦ σοῦ πολίτου καὶ προπάτορος βίον, ὃν οὔτε τῇ δόξῃ τῇ περὶ σεαυτόν οὔτε τῇ δυνάμει καταισχύνεις, ἀπέσταλκά σοι συγγραψάμενος, οὐχ ὡς οὐχὶ πάντων ἀκριβέστατά σοι μεμεληκὸς ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐπίστασθαι τὰς ἐκείνου πράξεις, ἀλλ’ ὅπως οἱ παῖδές σου Πολυκράτης καὶ Πυθοκλῆς οἰκείοι παραδείγμασιν ἐντρέφωνται, τὰ μὲν ἀκούοντες, τὰ δ’ ἀναγινώσκοντες ἅπερ οὖν αὐτοὺς μιμεῖσθαι προσήκει.

Therefore, I have composed and sent to you the Life of Aratus, your fellow-citizen and forefather, whom you disgrace neither in your reputation nor your power, not because you have not taken pains from the beginning to learn as precisely as possible that man’s

133 The very fact that this Life was dedicated to one of the subject’s descendants may have obfuscated the need for a Roman pair. See Mossman (2010) 145.
deeds, but so that your sons Polycrates and Pythocles may be nurtured with familial models, hearing and reading the things that are fitting for them to imitate.

This passage, combined with the first half of the prologue, attests to Plutarch’s belief in the applicability of Hellenistic history for the education of young Greeks in the Roman Empire. Implied is a parallelism between the career of Aratus and the future careers of Polycrates’ sons that would facilitate the usefulness of this Life as a didactic tool. Through reference to Polycrates’ sons, Plutarch suggests as well a wider implied audience of members of the Greek provincial elite who shared their station as links between the province and the Imperial administration. Thus, both the continuity and the parallelism of the Hellenistic past and the Imperial world are brought to the forefront as Plutarch begins his narrative.

Plutarch reiterates this continuity between past and present, despite the changes that have occurred over time, in the epilogue to Aratus’ death. First, he describes the foundation and rituals of cultic worship for Aratus in Sicyon, and asserts at the end of his description that the Sicyonians “still preserve small traces of these rites and celebrate them on the same days; but most of the honors have lapsed due to the passage of time and other matters” (53.5). Afterwards, Plutarch narrates the aftermath of Aratus’ death: the cruel poisoning of his son by Philip V of Macedon, the consequent downfall of Philip, and the ultimate defeat of the Antigonids by Aemilius Paullus in 166 BC. In contrast to the image of Perseus being led in triumph, Plutarch ends the Life by reminding the reader that “the race of Aratus remains in Sicyon and Pellene in my time” (54.3: τὸ δ’ Ἀράτου...
γένος ἔν τε τῇ Σικυώνι καὶ τῇ Πελλήνῃ διέμεινε καθ' ἡμᾶς.\(^{134}\) Not only does this contrast imply a long-term victory of Aratus over the Antigonids, but it also reinforces the idea that Greek statesmanship has continued to function without interruption, even as the Greek world passed from the power of the Hellenistic monarchs to the Roman conquerors.

A closer examination of the evidence about Polycrates and his family helps us to understand both Plutarch’s explicit and implied audiences. What we know about Polycrates and his sons shows that they were members of the elite, not only of Sicyon, but of all Greece; as such, they were of the same social standing as Plutarch himself. Tiberius Claudius Polycrates (the father) is mentioned again by Plutarch in *De Pythiae Oraculis* as someone with whom he worked on the renovation of Delphi, most likely as Sicyon’s representative on the Amphictyonic Council (*De Pyth. Or. 409B*). The younger Polycrates – whom Plutarch intended the *Aratus* to benefit – was both Helladarch of the Achaean *koinon* and provincial high priest of the Imperial cult under Antoninus Pius. His daughter Polycrateia was not only married to an archiereus, but was herself honored by the Amphictyony at Delphi.\(^{135}\) The lofty posts and honors for both the men and women of this line show that Polycrates’ family was firmly ensconced in the upper echelons of Greek society. Like Plutarch, Polycrates and his sons were also Roman citizens; their connection with the Imperial cult in Greece, moreover, marks them as a family who had a special relationship with the Imperial administration in Achaea. While Polycrates’ family was the primary audience for this text, but Plutarch surely imagined that this biography

\(^{134}\) This closing statement clearly indicates that Plutarch had a broader readership in mind than just his dedicatee and his sons, who obviously knew that Aratus’ lineage still lived on!

\(^{135}\) Puech (1992) 4874; for the Delphic inscription about Polycrateia, see *Syll.* \(^3\) 846.
would have been of use to other young, politically-ambitious Greeks who shared a common educational and social background with the dedicatees of this Life.\textsuperscript{136} Paolo Desideri has argued persuasively that the main audience for Plutarch’s \textit{Moralia} was the group of Greek aristocrats who held the Roman citizenship and were expected to act as liaisons between the Greek communities and Rome, by pursuing political careers first in their \textit{poleis}, then in the Roman administration.\textsuperscript{137} Although Desideri may underestimate Plutarch’s Roman readership, I think it is reasonable to assume that elite provincial Greeks made up a large part of Plutarch’s intended audience for both the \textit{Lives} and the \textit{Moralia}. Plutarch and Polycrates are examples of this class, but the appeal of Plutarch’s works would have extended to other Greek elites who shared the same experiences.

Some may object that the dissimilarity between Imperial Greece and pre-Roman Greece was so great that Plutarch could not have imagined his \textit{Lives} to be directly applicable to timely Imperial issues. Duff has wondered if the “gulf between the circumstances of the reader and the subject, between the (supposed) imitator and imitated” would have been a challenge to the effectiveness of Plutarch’s didactic objectives.\textsuperscript{138} Vasunia and Desideri similarly posit a sharp disjuncture between Plutarch’s present and the socio-political circumstances of his protagonists.\textsuperscript{139} Yet how wide was this gulf between Hellenistic and Imperial Sicyon? And, more importantly for our purposes, did Plutarch perceive such a gulf? Certainly, there had been important

\textsuperscript{136} For a detailed prosopographical study of Plutarch’s acquaintances, see Puech (1992). \textsuperscript{137} Desideri (2011) 83-98. \textsuperscript{138} Duff (1992) 68; he goes on to argue, using Pelling’s terms, that Plutarch’s moral didactics are ‘descriptive’ rather than ‘protreptic’, and the truths about human nature which Plutarch elucidates have a timeless quality which can be applied despite a gross discrepancy in circumstances. \textsuperscript{139} Vasunia (2003) and Desideri (2011).
developments in the political status of the Greeks from the time of Aratus to the time of Polycrates. The Hellenistic Achaean League, though often under the influence of the Ptolemies or Antigonids, was an independent and autonomous federation of cities. In contrast, the Greece of Plutarch and Polycrates had been subject to Roman rule for nearly three centuries. Although to a lesser degree than Imperial Greeks, Hellenistic Greeks were still answerable to the massively powerful Hellenistic monarchs for their political actions. While the opportunities for fighting tyranny were limited, the same concern and aptitude for local governance and concord that Aratus displayed throughout his career would have still benefited Polycrates’ sons in their political careers. Polycrates’ descendants needed to learn how to navigate diplomatic relations with foreign rulers – the Imperial household – and to do so in such a way as to preserve as much independence as possible for their countrymen; in other words, to manage their affairs and administration with as little Roman involvement as possible. Admittedly, there was a high level of assimilation to Rome among members of the Greek provincial elite – note, e.g. Polycrates and Plutarch’s Roman citizenship – but at the same time, these individuals still identified closely with their poleis and as Greeks, allowing them to envision themselves as following in the footsteps of their pre-Roman ancestors. Therefore, Plutarch could imagine that the political climate in Greece had remained static enough from the third century BC onwards that the lessons drawn from the Life of Aratus could be brought to bear upon the budding careers of Polycrates’ sons. Few Greeks were as fitting examples of the benefits and risks of negotiating with foreign kings as their ancestor Aratus, who

140 On the institutions and history of the Achaean League, see Larsen (1968), Walbank (2000), Roy (2003).
had to navigate tricky relationships with several foreign monarchs over the course of his career.

II. Aratus and the Kings

Five Hellenistic kings appear in the Life of Aratus: Ptolemy II Philadelphus (r. 283-246 BC), Antigonus II Gonatas (r. 276-239 BC), Demetrius II (r. 239-229 BC), Antigonus III Doson (r. 229-221 BC), and Philip V (r. 221-179 BC). 141 Aratus’ relationships with these men serve to illustrate the possible types of monarchs a Greek statesman could encounter and the range of interactions he could expect to engage in when dealing with kings. These kings range from the humane Philadelphus to the mad Philip, with the others falling somewhere between in terms of their cruelty and/or cleverness. Sometimes Aratus was a king’s friend, sometimes his enemy; some friendships were advantageous, while alliances with other kings were far more destructive than if they had been kept as enemies. Indeed, Aratus’ last words, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, are just one example of how Plutarch focalizes the narrative of royal relationships in the Aratus through the perspective of the Greek statesman rather than through that of the foreign king. We ought to keep in mind that Plutarch’s primary student here is not a Trajan, but a Polycrates of Sicyon. 142

141 Gonatas and Demetrius II will be considered as one relationship for the purposes of this analysis, because Plutarch treats Aratus’ relationship with Demetrius as a continuation of his enmity with Gonatas, not a distinct relationship per se. Demetrius II first appears in the narrative as a tool in Gonatas’ successful capture of the Acrocorinth, and later is only mentioned to note the coincidence of his accession with Aratus’ increased hatred for the Macedonians and attempt to free Athens, and to mark his death. Cf. 17; 34.1, 3.
142 For thoughts on Plutarch’s relationship to and influence, both intended and actual, on the Roman emperor, see Stadter (2002) and Beck (2002).
These monarchs are not the only autocrats Aratus dealt with; the Sicyanian also opposed tyrants in the Greek *poleis* and had an especially bitter enmity with Cleomenes III of Sparta. Plutarch, however, uses two bases to differentiate the Hellenistic monarchs from these other autocrats, one linguistic and one racial. Consequently, we are justified in considering the Hellenistic monarchs as a distinct class of individuals in Plutarch’s narrative. First, the term βασιλεύς is reserved for the monarchs of the Hellenistic kingdoms – with a single exception referring to Agis IV of Sparta. In contrast, Plutarch *never* refers to Cleomenes as βασιλεύς in this *Life*, and even goes so far as to admit that Cleomenes was “lawless and tyrannical” (38.5: παράνομος καὶ τυραννικός). He uses τύραννος and related words throughout the narrative to describe the extralegal autocrats of the Greek *poleis*, such as the tyrants of Sicyon, Lydiades of Megalopolis, and Aristippus of Argos. Plutarch rarely uses such terms to describe a Macedonian king, and when he does, his purpose is to emphasize the ugliness of the king’s character and the cruelty of his rule. We can see, therefore, that Plutarch is very careful in this *Life* to separate the Hellenistic kings from other contemporary autocrats, and to refer to them as “tyrants” only when they seem to fit the modern conception of the word as ruthless, self-serving, and megalomaniacal.

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31.6: τοῦ βασιλέως τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων Ἄγιδος. Plutarch has a very positive view of the young reformer Agis IV; on this topic, see Roskam (2005). Especially given that Agis appeared as an ally of the Achaeans in the *Aratus*, it is unsurprising that Plutarch refers to him here as a king rather than a tyrant.

16.2 refers to Antigonid control of Greece as κοινὴν τὴν Ἑλλάδος ὅλης τυραννίδα; 15.3 disparages the φιλίαις βασιλέων καὶ τυράννων after Antigonus Gonatas’ speech which falsely proclaimed Aratus’ allegiance to him, in order to drive Aratus apart from Ptolemy Philadelphus; after the revelation of his true character, Philip V is referred to as a τύραννος at 51.4 and 52.2.
Second, Plutarch makes a racial argument to separate the Macedonian kings from the Greeks when he scorns Aratus for choosing an alliance with Antigonus Doson over one with Cleomenes (38.5):

Εἰ δὲ Κλεομένης ἦν—λεγέσθω γὰρ οὗτος—παράνομος καὶ τυραννικός, ἀλλ᾽ Ἡρακλείδαι πατέρες αὐτῷ καὶ Σπάρτη πατρίς, ἥς τὸν ἀφανέστατον ἦν ἄξιον ἀντὶ τοῦ πρῶτον Μακεδόνων ἥγεμόνα ποιεῖσθαι τοὺς ἐν τινὶ λόγῳ τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν τιθεμένους εὐγένειαν.

And if Cleomenes was – for so it must be said – lawless and tyrannical, nonetheless were the Heraclids his ancestors, and Sparta was his native land, the meanest citizen of which was more worthy than the foremost Macedonian to be made their leader by those who had any regard for Greek nobility of birth.

This is one of the strongest statements of Plutarch’s perception of the vast gap that separates the Greeks from the Macedonians, but similar rhetoric can be found elsewhere in the *Aratus*. Plutarch calls the Antigonid control of the Acrocorinth “a foreign and alien power” (16.3: ἐπακτὸν ἀρχὴν...καὶ ἀλλόφυλον) and at another point he refers to Aratus’ invitation to Antigonus Doson to re-enter the Peloponnes and ally against Cleomenes as the “complete barbarization” (38.4: ἐκβαρβαρῶσαι) of the peninsula. When Aratus interacted with Ptolemy or with the Antigonids, it is fair to say that Plutarch thought it important to mark that those dealings were between a Greek and a non-Greek. He subsequently uses these relationships to explore questions of how a Greek man ought to relate to not only men of power, but foreign men of power who may have influence over Greek affairs. A passage from the *Flamininus* shows that Plutarch thought of the Romans in the same terms as the Macedonians, as “foreign men” (*Flam.* 11.4: ἀλλόφυλοι...ἄνδρες). This suggests that Plutarch’s portrayal of Aratus’ relationships with contemporary kings should therefore be seen as an approximation for the relationship

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145 Plutarch uses similar language to highlight the ethnic non-Greekness (and ambiguous Hellenization) of both the Epirotes: cf. *Pyrrh.* 1.3.
between members of the Greek elite and the Romans. By establishing the Macedonian kings of the Aratus as kings, not tyrants, and foreign, not Greek, Plutarch defines them by characteristics which his Greek readership could have used just as easily to describe the Roman Imperial household. Plutarch’s Greek reader is thus encouraged to identify himself with Aratus and to evaluate Aratus’ actions against what he himself might do under the present circumstances of Roman rule.\footnote{146}

Now that we have seen how Plutarch distinguishes Aratus’ dealings with the Hellenistic monarchs from his interactions with Greek autocrats, we may consider these royal relationships in detail: what lessons can be gleaned from each interaction, and how the explicit and implicit morals of these relationships resonate with Plutarch’s political Moralia. The coincidence of Plutarch’s sentiments in the Moralia and in the Lives is instructive for understanding how Plutarch analogizes past and present, and thus for how he tailors his narratives of the past to inform his contemporary readers’ actions.\footnote{147} I first examine the formative relationships of Aratus’ early career: his enmity with Antigonus Gonatas and his alliance with Ptolemy Philadelphus. Then, I look at the more complicated relationship between Aratus and Antigonus Doson, which hinges on the issue of balancing personal pride and public welfare. Finally, we will examine the mentor-student dynamic of the relationship between Aratus and Philip V.

A. Ptolemy Philadelphus and Antigonus Gonatas

\footnote{146} The clearest statement of Plutarch’s conceptualization of biography’s function as a mirror is the prologue of the Aemilius-Timoleon pair. For a discussion of this passage and related passages in Plutarch’s corpus, see Stadter (2003-4).

\footnote{147} The volume of essays edited by Nikolaidis (2008) is an important recent contribution in favor of reading the Lives with an eye towards the Moralia and vice versa; see Part 4, “Plutarch and Politics,” for a number of useful approaches to a more synoptic view of Plutarch’s political theory and its manifestations in the Lives.
When Aratus first conceived of liberating Sicyon from its tyrant, he appealed, like any young Greek would, to his father’s friends for help in his undertaking: namely, Antigonus Gonatas and Ptolemy Philadelphus. Neither king responded in a timely manner to Aratus’ requests, and Aratus resolved to overthrow the tyrant Nicocles by his own means (4.3-4). In this first encounter with kings, Aratus appears to be a sensible young Greek who seeks the support of his most powerful connections, but is unwilling to delay his plans in order to wait for the aid of fickle sovereigns. Though rather unremarkable (and unfruitful), this is the first glimpse Plutarch gives us into the two royal relationships that define the early career of Aratus. Gonatas, and subsequently his son Demetrius II, went on to become one of Aratus’ greatest enemies, whereas Philadelphus became his most powerful ally. Instead of condemning Aratus for any kind of intimacy with kings, or alternately scorning him for challenging one of the major powers of the Greek world, Plutarch equally approves of Aratus’ ability to recognize a true enemy in Gonatas and praises his use of Ptolemy’s friendship for the benefit of Greece. An examination of these relationships will elucidate how Plutarch uses them to explore the issues of choosing one’s allies and one’s enemies.

A1. Ptolemy Philadelphus

Plutarch constructs Aratus’ friendship with Ptolemy Philadelphus as an example of the potential good that can come from an alliance with a foreign king. He is not

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148 Plutarch takes no notice of Philadelphus’ death and the accession of Ptolemy III Euergetes. A reader uneducated in the details of Hellenistic history (a common deficiency both in the second century AD and today) could have missed that it is Euergetes and not Philadelphus who supported Cleomenes against Aratus. Cf. Polyb. 2.51.
particularly concerned with how this alliance benefited Philadelphus, but rather with the ways Aratus used this friendship to benefit the Achaean League. Aside from the indifferent beginning mentioned above, Plutarch portrays the alliance with Philadelphus as wholly beneficial to Aratus’ career, his city, and the welfare of the Achaean League. In the tumultuous period after Aratus overthrew Nicocles of Sicyon, Philadelphus sent Aratus a gift of 25 talents, which Aratus immediately distributed to his fellow-citizens and used for the ransoming of prisoners (11.2). While this gift did not resolve all of Sicyon’s civic conflicts, it began a relationship that Aratus would exploit later on for his city’s benefit. When there were conflicting property demands between the exiles Aratus recalled at the time of the city’s liberation and the current owners of the exiles’ lands, Aratus once again turned to Alexandria for assistance (12.1). Plutarch tells us that while Aratus was in Egypt, he cultivated a friendship with the king based on the king’s positive predisposition towards Aratus as the son of his guest-friend (12.5: πατρόθεν) and on a shared appreciation of the works of the Sicyonian school of painters. Their relationship was bound by the same familial and cultural ties that could serve to connect any two Greek men, and Plutarch gives the sense that Aratus and Philadelphus related to

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149 Which it did. The Ptolemaic alliance with the Achaean League played an important role in Egypt’s foreign policy, sometimes characterized as “defensive imperialism,” whereby they supported key allies in Greece (like the Achaean League) in an effort to keep Antigonid expansion in check. On Egypt’s foreign policy, see Will (1979) 153-208; Marquaille (2008) 39-64.

150 There is some controversy as to which king – Antigonus Gonatas or Ptolemy Philadelphus – bestowed this gift; cf. Porter (1939, xli-xlii), Orsi (1987) 202. I follow the line of Porter and think that if Gonatas had even momentarily favored Aratus, Plutarch would have felt the need to explain this inconsistency in action.

151 Pliny, NH 35 transmits the tradition that painting originated in Sicyon, and along with Athens and Corinth, formed the triad of Archaic schools of painting. See Keuls (1987) 139-150 on the painting school of Sicyon in Plato’s works.
each other as equals, or at least members of the same echelon of society. As a result, Aratus secured a gift of 150 talents from Philadelphus, forty of which he immediately took to the Peloponnese, with the rest to be paid incrementally (13.4).

Even though Plutarch could have blamed Aratus for leaving his city when it was at edge of internal collapse, and for undertaking a dangerous journey in order to curry favor at the court of a king (accusations that Plutarch will make later in the narrative when Aratus pursues an alliance with Antigonus Doson), he instead praises him for securing such a generous gift and for using it to benefit his fellow-citizens (14.1):

ην μὲν οὖν μέγα καὶ τὸ χρήματα τοσαῦτα πορίσαι τοῖς πολίταις, δὲσων μικρόν μέρος ἄλλοι στρατηγοὶ καὶ δήμαρχοὶ λαμβάνοντες παρὰ βασιλέων ἥδικουν καὶ κατεδουλώντο καὶ προέπινον αὐτοῖς τὰς πατρίδας, μεῖξον δὲ ἡ διὰ τῶν χρημάτων τούτων κατασκευασθείσα τοῖς μὲν ἀπόροις πρὸς τοὺς πλουσίους διάλυσις καὶ ὁμόνοια, τῷ δὲ δήμῳ παντὶ σωτηρία καὶ ἁσφάλεια.

It was a great achievement to procure so much money for his fellow-citizens; other generals and leaders of the people who had taken but a fraction of this sum from kings, committed injustices, and enslaved and betrayed their homelands to the kings in turn. But the concord and reconciliation between the poor and rich, and the salvation and security of the entire people, that was effected through this money was a far greater achievement.

The focus on the corrupt actions other statesman had taken in similar situations highlights by contrast what Aratus actually did, which was to use the money from Ptolemy for settling the exiles’ property disputes and for alleviating the disparity between the rich and poor classes of Sicyon. The term for what Aratus achieves is “concord” (ὁμονοία) and it

152 In Quomodo Adulator Ab Amico Internoscatur, Plutarch asserts that the most common beginning of any friendship is similarity, either in pursuits or in customs. Cf. 51B8-12, 51D11-E3.
153 Polyb. 2.47.2 makes reference to these subsidies from Egypt to Achaea as occurring even into the reign of Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221 BC), but we also find in Polyb. 2.51.2 that Euergetes transferred his aid to Cleomenes. Plutarch does not remark on the change in Egypt’s Greek allies in this Life, which is surprising considering it helps to justify Aratus’ later position of pursuing an alliance with Antigonus Doson against Cleomenes. Gruen (1972) 620.
is a key term for Plutarch’s characterization of what makes Aratus a good statesman. Earlier in the Life, Plutarch characterizes Aratus as a “lover of the concord of races, fellowship of cities, council and assembly acclaming unanimously, beyond any of the other goods” (10.2); he also attributes the success of the Achaean League under Aratus to the concord of its constituent cities (9.6). Plutarch praises ὠμονοία as a noble political goal throughout the Lives,¹⁵⁴ and in his political Moralia he, like Aratus, values concord above all other political goods. At the end of the Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae, Plutarch reminds his addressee Menemachus that there is only one task for the Greek statesman, given the current political climate in which Rome rules (824D4-8, E4-9):

…ὁμόνοιαν ἐμποιεῖν καὶ φιλίαν ἀεὶ τοῖς συνοικοῦσιν. ἔριδας δὲ καὶ διχοφροσύνας καὶ δυσμένειαν ἔξαιρεῖν ἄπασαν… ἐπεῖτα καὶ καθ’ ἱσχύς διδάσκοντα καὶ φράζοντα τὴν τῶν Ἑλλήνων πραγμάτων ἁθέτειν, ἢς ἐν ἀπολαύσει ἀμείνον ἐστί τοῖς εὐ φρονοῦσι, μεθ’ ἁσυχίας καὶ ὁμονοίας καταβιῶναι, μηδὲν ἐν μέσῳ τῆς τύχης ἅθολον ὑπολελοιπυίας.

… always to instill concord and friendship in his neighbors and to remove strife, discords, and all enmity. …Then he will instruct his people both individually and collectively and will call attention to the weak condition of Greek affairs, in which it is best for wise men to accept one advantage – to live a life of concord and quiet – since fortune has left us no prize open for competition.

As Sheppard has demonstrated, Plutarch’s emphasis on the importance of creating ὠμονοία as a statesman is characteristic of the contemporary political rhetoric of the Greek cities of the Roman Empire and resonates with what we find in the speeches of Dio of Prusa and Aelius Aristides.¹⁵⁵ The “weak condition of Greek affairs,” as Plutarch puts it, had led to the preference of concord over competition as a political virtue. While

¹⁵⁴ E.g. Solon 12.10.1, 16.2.1; Aemilius Paullus 29.1.3; Flamininus 12.6.2. Marincola (2010) argues that Plutarch’s emphasis in his Lives of Greeks from the Persian Wars is on civic harmony, rather than Greek military prowess.

Greek affairs were more self-determined in the third century BC than in the second century AD, Plutarch nonetheless considered the creation of concord among one’s fellow-Greeks an equal political success for a Hellenistic statesman and his Imperial counterpart. In both cases, solidarity and concord were necessary to prevent the negative involvement of a foreign power in Greek affairs.

What is striking about Aratus’ establishment of concord within Sicyon is that Plutarch emphasizes that it was possible only through the positive involvement of a foreign power; in other words, Aratus would not have been able to stabilize Sicyon without the infusions of money from Philadelphus. Plutarch seems to suggest here that there are times when it is appropriate to appeal to an external power, provided that the Greek statesman can gain this aid in a way that befits a free man of Hellenic education and that such foreign involvement will benefit the community. In fact, this is in accordance with Plutarch’s advice in the Praecepta, where he encourages the statesman always to have a friend among the most powerful men, because the Romans are eager to promote the political interests of their friends (814C6-E6). He cites Polybius and Panaetius as men who used the friendship of a powerful man (in both cases, Scipio Aemilianus) to benefit their countrymen. Plutarch does warn, however, that this kind of friendship should not burden the statesman with the obligations of a courtier; rather it should instead be a friendship between equal and just men (814E5: τὰς ἐπὶ τοῖς ἴσοις καὶ δικαίοις φιλίαι). His depiction of Aratus’ friendship with Philadelphus exemplifies a beneficial friendship between a king and a statesman based on an understanding of social

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156 Cf. Marincola (2010), who demonstrates Plutarch’s manipulation of Persian War history to emphasis the Imperial virtue of homonoia.

157 Achaeans and Rhodians, respectively.
and intellectual equality. It is, in other words, an ideal model for the Greek statesman of the second century AD.

A2. Antigonus Gonatas

Whereas Aratus and Philadelphus became fast friends, Aratus and Gonatas were suspicious of each other immediately following the liberation of Sicyon. Plutarch portrays their relationship as one of endless enmity and antagonism, which is consistent with the account we find in Polybius (2.43.9). Aratus’ opposition to Gonatas, however, formed the basis of his career and reputation. Plutarch tells us that Gonatas eyed Sicyon jealously because of its newly-won freedom (9.3). This external threat motivated Aratus to attach Sicyon to the Achaean League, a step that aided Aratus’ rise to power among the Achaean. The crowning achievement of Aratus’ career was the capture of Acrocorinth from Gonatas’ garrison, which Plutarch calls the “very last and latest of the deeds of the Greeks” (24.2). Plutarch characterizes the basis of Aratus’ long career as the predominant statesman of the Achaean League as two activities: the overthrow of Greek tyrants, and the removal of Macedonian garrisons from the Peloponnese and Athens. He collapses these two activities into one when he describes these garrisons as “a common tyranny of all Greece” (16.2: κοινήν τινα τῆς Ἑλλάδος ὅλης τυραννίδα), effectively characterizing Antigonid control of strategic points in Greece as a sort of “hypertyranny” that Aratus fought and overthrew.

Simply put, Plutarch uses Gonatas as a foil for Philadelphus. In contrast to Philadelphus, who comes off as a cultured and generous patron of Greek endeavors,

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158 Cf. Durán Mañás (2005) on Plutarch’s depiction of Gonatas as a philosopher-king and positive model in the Moralia and the Pyrrhus. His emphasis on Gonatas’ negative traits
Plutarch characterizes Gonatas as conniving and manipulative. Immediately after Plutarch praises Aratus for using his friendship with Philadelphus to benefit his fellow-citizens, he relates an anecdote about Gonatas that establishes Aratus’ wisdom in keeping Gonatas as an enemy. This juxtaposition illustrates Plutarch’s parallel construction of Aratus’ relationships with Philadelphus and Gonatas. Aratus was targeted by Gonatas because of his friendship with Philadelphus, an alliance that threatened Antigonid influence in the Mediterranean. Plutarch relates that Gonatas tried either to win Aratus for himself or to drive him away from Philadelphus, first by attempting to ply him with gifts, and then by deception. Gonatas’ schemes reach an acme during a speech he gave to the guests of a sacrificial banquet, recorded by Plutarch in direct discourse (15.2-3):

“Ωμην,” ἔφη, “τὸν Σικυώνιον τοῦτον νεανίσκον ἐλευθέριον εἶναι τῇ φύσει μόνον καὶ φιλοπολίτην· ὁ δὲ καὶ βίων ἐοικε καὶ πραγμάτων βασιλικῶν ἴκανος εἶναι κριτής. Πρότερον γὰρ ἡμᾶς ὑπερεώρα, ταῖς ἐλπίσιν ἐξο βλέπων, καὶ τὸν Αἰγύπτιον ἑθαύμαζε πλούτων, ἐλέφαντας καὶ στόλους καὶ αὐλὰς ἀκούων, νυνὶ δ’ ὑπὸ σκηνὴν ἑωρακὼς πάντα τὰ ἐκεῖ πράγματα τραγῳδίαν ὑπὸ σκηνογραφίαν, ὅλος ἡμῖν προσκεχώρηκεν. Αὐτὸς τ’ οὖν ἀποδέχομαι τὸ μειράκιον ἐγνωκὼς εἰς ἅπαντα χρῆσθαι, καὶ ἡμᾶς ἄξιον φίλον νομίζειν.”

“I thought this Sicyonian youth was by nature free-spirited and a lover of his fellow-citizens; but he also seems to be a capable judge of the lives and actions of kings. Of formerly he overlooked us, fixing his hopes elsewhere, and he wondered at the wealth of

in this Life is an exception, and supports my argument for Plutarch’s rhetorical use of this character here.

Another instance of Gonatas’ wiles is his own tricky capture of the Acrocorinth, narrated in 17. This passage is not directly relevant to Aratus and Gonatas’ enmity, but rather is used by Plutarch to enrich the characterization of Gonatas as deceptive and treacherous. He describes how Gonatas originally obtained the Acrocorinth by tricking widow of the tyrant Alexander into marrying his son Demetrius, and then using the wedding festivities in Corinth as a cover for capturing the citadel. Plutarch particularly emphasizes Gonatas’ ethical deficiencies when he describes the old man celebrating his victory and cavorting around in a manner which did not befit his years or his experience with the vicissitudes of fortune (17.5). While one could compare this capture with Aratus’ own underhanded maneuvers, Plutarch avoids explicitly drawing any such comparison.
Egypt, hearing tales of its elephants, and fleets, and palaces; but now that he has looked behind the scenes and seen that everything there is play-acting and painted scenery, he has come over entirely to us. Therefore I both welcome the young man myself, having determined to make every possible use of him, and I deem it right for you to consider him a friend.”

Plutarch is clear that this official declaration of friendship was a lie, with the sole purpose of manipulating the audience into believing something that was the opposite of the facts.

Aratus had not come over to Gonatas’ side, nor had he, based on Plutarch’s narrative, been deceived in some way by the luxury of the Ptolemaic court. The irony of Gonatas’ accusation of the dramatic façade of Egypt, in the context of an utterly fictitious declaration, cannot be missed. The only statements contained in the speech that Plutarch’s narrative confirms as true are Gonatas’ characterization of Aratus as a “lover of his fellow-citizens” and a “capable judge of the lives and actions of kings.” The proof of Aratus’ good judgment of kings in the narrative is his choice of an alliance with Ptolemy and an opposition to Gonatas. The duplicity of this speech conforms to Plutarch’s description of the flatterer in the *Moralia*, who will lie with kind speech in order to win over his object of pursuit. Gonatas’ manipulative speech, according to Plutarch, did endanger Aratus’ friendship with Philadelphus, but the damage was not irreparable. After the siege of Corinth, Philadelphus and Aratus were once again on good terms, so much so that Philadelphus was proclaimed the supreme commander of the Achaean forces on both land and sea (24.4). Despite his best efforts, Gonatas could only temporarily obstruct the friendship between Aratus and Philadelphus, and Plutarch makes it clear that this was evidence of Aratus’ capable judgment of both kings and friends.

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160 Polybius does not discuss how Aratus came to enjoy the good graces of the Ptolemies, but only lets the reader know when those good graces were lost during the Cleomenic War (2.47.2).

161 *Quomodo Adulatore Ab Amico Internoscatur* passim.
Plutarch uses Aratus’ relationships with Philadelphus and Gonatas to demonstrate to his reader two important lessons about dealing with kings. Gonatas’ speech and its aftermath provide an opportunity for Plutarch to advise his readers to be wary of the malice and envy (15.3: φθόνου καὶ κακοηθείας) that friends of kings and tyrants attract. Aratus’ friendship with Philadelphus put him at risk of attack by Gonatas, and Gonatas used his courtiers to spread rumors about his own alleged alliance with Aratus in order to damage Aratus’ reputation with the king of Egypt. Later, in connection with Philadelphus’ gaining of the Achaean command, Plutarch states that Aratus’ reputation among the Achaeans was so great at this point in his career because “they saw that he put first and foremost not wealth, not fame, not friendship with kings (φιλίαν βασιλικήν), not his own native city’s advantage, but only the growth in power of the Achaean League” (24.4). Although Aratus handed over military control of the Achaean forces to a foreign king, Plutarch makes it clear doing so was honorable because Aratus valued Philadelphus more for the advantages he gave the Achaeans than for the personal benefits he derived from the connection. To paraphrase: first, a politician must realize that he is in danger of falling prey to the corruption that often attends absolute power; second, a king’s friendship should never be pursued as an end in itself, but as a tool for improving the welfare of one’s fellow-citizens and fellow-Greeks. Plutarch’s depictions of the relationships Aratus had with Philadelphus and Gonatas are examples of relatively uncomplicated moralism: Aratus acted well by being the ally of a good king, just as he did right by being the enemy of a bad king. The exploration of these basic issues sets the

162 Cf. Phil. 8, where Plutarch expresses the opposite view of Aratus in order to bolster his characterization of Philopoemen’s virtues as a leader of the Achaeans against non-Greek invaders.
stage for Plutarch to treat more complicated relationships with kings later in the narrative, first in Aratus’ alliance with Antigonus Doson, and then in his tutelage of Philip V.

B. Antigonus Doson

The third royal relationship of the Aratus moves into more ambiguous territory, where the reader must evaluate to what degree it was wrong for Aratus to form an alliance with Antigonus Doson, the half-nephew of Aratus’ former nemesis. Plutarch thus introduces the reader to the advanced lessons of descriptive, rather than prescriptive, moralism, a characteristically Plutarchan mode that Duff and Pelling have explored at length.\textsuperscript{163} Plutarch here is not interested in providing easy answers, but in describing and assessing difficult moral and political situations, and consequently leaving it to his reader to mull over which actions and/or characters were right or wrong. The reader profits by gaining experience from the process of moral evaluation, much in the same way that Plutarch advises young men to learn from poetry in \textit{De Audiendis Poetis}.\textsuperscript{164} As such, his description of the alliance between Aratus and Doson is a case-study in weighing the relative importance of one’s career and one’s country, in demarcating the fine line between political flexibility and hypocrisy, and in discerning the lesser of two evils – lessons relevant to the career of any statesman.\textsuperscript{165} The lessons of Aratus’ relationship with Antigonus Doson, however, are especially relevant to second century AD Greece, where the political independence of the \textit{poleis} had to be negotiated by local members of the social elite with the Roman Imperial administration.


\textsuperscript{164} Cf. Chapter 2, 42-46.

\textsuperscript{165} Cf. Polyb. 4.6-19, 23, 76, 82-87; 5.12, 91; 7.10-14; 8.12-13.
Starting in 227 BC, the Achaeans (under Aratus’ leadership) were at war with Cleomenes, whose power and influence in the Peloponnese had grown rapidly.

Plutarch’s narrative stresses Aratus’ political predicament of having to decide between ceding his personal power to Cleomenes and serve the larger goal of a united Peloponnese, or to keep power to himself and face the increasingly aggressive attacks of the Spartans. The territories of Sicyon and Megalopolis were particularly devastated by Cleomenes’ campaigns. When Ptolemy began backing Cleomenes instead of the Achaeans, Aratus found himself isolated and vulnerable. An alliance with Doson offered the prospect of the money and manpower to defeat Cleomenes, but would also damage the independence and welfare of the Greeks, and consequently, Aratus’ reputation. His vision for the Achaean League could only survive if he collaborated with one of his enemies.

Plutarch, however, expresses almost no sympathy for Aratus’ dilemma. He addresses the alliance between Aratus and Doson at a point in his narrative that precedes its actual formation – by one year, and five chapters of narrative. This prolepsis has the effect of predisposing the reader to censure Aratus before he is fully informed of the circumstances that led to Aratus’ decision to pursue this alliance. Plutarch here acts like the poet of De Audiendis Poetis, whose prefatory comments signal to the reader that what follows is to be avoided rather than imitated. Chapter 38 begins with a discussion of why Aratus declined the position of strategos of the Achaean League in 224 BC and how he was blamed for forsaking the League when Cleomenes was pressing upon them.

166 As mentioned above, Plutarch merely says that “Ptolemy” began supporting Cleomenes, without specifying that Egypt was no longer under Ptolemy II Philadelphus, but rather Ptolemy III Euergetes.

167 De Aud. Poet. 19A.
Plutarch then criticizes Aratus for choosing to hand over the Peloponnese to Antigonus instead of Cleomenes, once again using an anonymous internal audience as a mouthpiece for his own evaluation of the protagonist. It is possible that these are the reactions of Plutarch’s sources, written after Aratus’ death. In any case, Plutarch is using some narrative sleight of hand to put these opinions in the mouths of men from 224 BC.

Somewhere around 38.6 the narrative shifts from the voice of the internal audience to the narrator’s voice, as evidenced by his evaluation of the accounts of Aratus, Polybius, and Phylarchus. Plutarch is not convinced that Cleomenes’ tyrannical behavior outweighed his Spartan lineage, nor that Aratus was as compelled by political necessity as he claimed to be in his memoirs. On this latter point, he cites both Polybius and Phylarchus as sources witnessing to Aratus’ secret communications with Doson in advance of the alliance. Plutarch reckons three strikes against this alliance. First, it was an act of hypocrisy: Aratus had built his career on defeating the Macedonians and slandered them endlessly in his memoirs, but now he was willing to turn to them for help. Second, Plutarch presents a racial argument: the Macedonians were far inferior to Greeks, so much so that even the worst Spartan was better than the best Macedonian. Third, Aratus misread his options, and chose the greater of two evils: whereas Cleomenes had asked for command of the Achaean League in return for the benefits he would bestow upon it, Doson refused an alliance unless he should be handed the Acrocorinth as well. Plutarch here downplays the fact that the alliance with Macedon successfully defeated Cleomenes and removed him from the Peloponnese, and instead directs the reader’s attention to the restoration of a Macedonian garrison to the Acrocorinth and the

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168 On Plutarch’s comparison between and comments on Polybius and Phylarchus as sources, see Orsi (1987) xii-xiv.
destruction and re-foundation of Mantinea. His choice to emphasize the negative consequences of the alliance rather than its benefits in this prefatory material predisposes his reader to interpret Aratus’ subsequent actions unfavorably.

When Plutarch does eventually narrate the creation of the alliance five chapters later, he gives the reader a glimpse into Aratus’ state of mind (43.1):

"Ἡδὲ γὰρ ηὗξημένον ἑαυτὸν ἐξ ὧν ἐκείνου κακῶς ἐποίησε, καὶ πρώτην εἰληφότα καὶ μεγίστην ὑπόθεσιν τῆς πολιτείας τὴν πρὸς Ἀντίγονον τὸν παλαιόν ἐξήραν. Αλλ’ ἄρων ἀπαραίτητον ἐπικειμένην τὴν ἀνάγκην καὶ τὸν καιρόν, ὃ δουλεύουσιν οἱ δοκοῦντες ἄρχειν, ἐχώρει πρὸς τὸ δεινόν.

For he knew that his own rise to power had been a consequence of the harm he had done to [the Antigonids], and that he had found the first and the chief basis for his political conduct in his hatred towards the former Antigonus. But seeing that both fate and contingency, whose slaves those who seem to rule are, were bearing down inexorably on him, he went on towards the dread ordeal.

Plutarch uses the language of necessity and slavery to emphasize Aratus’ perceived compulsion to act. His account focuses on the psychological toll that the alliance took on both Aratus and the Greeks generally, but we ought to recognize that Plutarch’s emotional response to this alliance was not the only way the story could be told.

Polybius, in contrast, emphasizes Aratus’ suave political maneuvering in the face of a difficult and unpopular decision.\footnote{Poly. 2.47ff.} Polybius’ account of Aratus’ alliance with Doson is pro-Aratus, likely deriving from Aratus’ own account, which Polybius found to be both clear and truthful.\footnote{Poly. 2.40.4.} In his account, Aratus pursued Doson because he saw that he was a man of sense and energy, even though from the outset he was aware of the risks he was running by engaging with the king in the first place. To mitigate these risks, Aratus publicly decried such an alliance, while privately persuading the Megalopolitans to send
envoys to Doson for that very purpose. Polybius depicts Aratus assessing the situation well and deftly arranging an alliance with the Macedonians without tarnishing his anti-Macedonian reputation.

Plutarch, who was familiar with Polybius’ account and agreed with it on certain details, left out this narrative of Aratus’ back-handed, face-saving dealings. In the *Aratus*, there is no middle-man negotiating on Aratus’ behalf. Instead, Plutarch portrays the alliance between Aratus and Doson as developing from a friendship that Aratus pursued on his own and, at least initially, against his better judgment. Plutarch does not believe this is a sharp piece of Realpolitik on Aratus’ part, but rather depicts Aratus as a traitor to his own character and his community. In contrast, Plutarch depicts Doson as making a rational assessment of Aratus, free from any compulsion. Doson immediately recognized that Aratus was a wise and worthy advisor, who was not only an astute statesman, but also an enjoyable companion (43.2-3). Plutarch, in contrast to Polybius, makes no mention of Aratus’ perception of Doson’s intelligence or energy as a motivation for their connection. Rather, he makes it seem as though only Doson’s evaluation of Aratus’ qualities was what held their alliance together. By turning Aratus from a wily politician into a victim of political necessity, Plutarch has strips his protagonist of his political agency.

As soon as Aratus made the choice to engage with Doson, Plutarch characterizes him as a man who has lost his power, independence, and influence. From this point on, Plutarch depicts Aratus as being constrained by his connection with Doson to act in a

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171 Plutarch sums up the happy confluence of the pleasure and utility of a true friend, the two benefits of friendship which Antigonus Doson recognized in Aratus: ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ χρεία τῇ φιλίᾳ παρέπεται (*Mor.* 51B3).
way that was not consistent with his earlier career. Plutarch, however, is wholly unconvinced by Aratus’ claims that necessity was the driving force behind all of his controversial political decisions. He explicitly states in 38 that an alliance with Cleomenes was a viable option, and that it was Aratus’ decision to turn to the Macedonian king that compelled his later actions, rather than necessity that forced him to make the alliance in the first place. Although the earlier appeal to Philadelphus is explicitly called Aratus’ only hope (12.1: μίαν...ἐλπίδα), Plutarch nevertheless insists that Aratus could and should have chosen the Spartan option in 223 BC (38.4-7). Plutarch’s reluctance to accept Aratus’ rationalization for his actions is consistent with the Praecepta, in which he warns of the dangers of being overly submissive to men in power and exhorts Menemachus to take every step to avoid Roman intervention in local politics (814E7-F6):

Ποιοῦντα μέντοι καὶ παρέχοντα τοῖς κρατοῦσιν εὐπειθὴ τὴν πατρίδα δεῖ μὴ προσεκταπεινοῦν, μηδὲ τοῦ σκέλους δεδεμένου προσυποβάλλειν καὶ τὸν τράχηλον, ὥσπερ ἐνιοὶ, καὶ μικρὰ καὶ μείζω φέροντες ἐπὶ τοὺς ἡγεμόνας ἐξονειδίζουσι τὴν δουλείαν, μᾶλλον δ’ ὅλως τὴν πολιτείαν ἀναιροῦσι, καταπλῆγα καὶ περιδεᾶ καὶ πάντων ἄκυρον ποιοῦντες.

It is necessary for the one making his homeland readily obedient to the rulers not to humble it further, nor when the leg has been fettered to offer the neck as well, as some men do, who bear both small and great matters to the rulers, thereby earning the reproach of slavery, or rather totally destroying the government by making it dazed, timid, and completely powerless.

To be fair, the political situation to which Plutarch is referring in this passage is not exactly the same as the circumstances Aratus found himself in. The Greeks of the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire did have to submit to the authority of the Imperial government, but Plutarch states with clarity and force that he does not believe Aratus had to enter into an alliance with Doson. In emphasizing Aratus’ sense of compulsion and
political weakness, however, Plutarch makes his protagonist assume a role that more closely resembles the Imperial Greek statesman. Since he allowed the Achaean League to become a tool for Antigonid dominance in the Peloponnese and put the maintenance of his relationship with the king above the needs and interests of his fellow Achaeans, Aratus is subject to the same sort of criticism that Plutarch heaps upon his nameless toady of Roman Greece in the *Praecepta*.

In the subsequent narrative, Plutarch describes how Aratus could no longer hinder, and at times even aided, the Macedonians’ anti-Hellenic actions. These are the consequences of the alliance that Plutarch focuses on, not the rout of Cleomenes from the Peloponnese; in this way, Plutarch’s narrative of this relationship coheres with his preemptory criticism of it. Not only was Corinth given as a gift to Doson, but under Aratus’ guidance, the Achaean League passed measures supporting Macedonian interests in Greece. Plutarch, likely echoing Aratus’ own apologetics, accounts for these actions as follows (45.2):

仃πιῶτον πάντων ἐκεῖνον, ἀγνοοῦντες ὅτι τὰς ἡνίας ἐκείνῳ παραδεδωκὼς καὶ τῇ ῥύμῃ τῆς βασιλικῆς ἐφελκόμενος οὐδενὸς ἦν ἢ μόνης φωνῆς ἔτι κύριος, ἐπισφαλῆ τὴν παρρησίαν ἔχοντας.

For all these things men blamed [Aratus], not knowing that, since he had entrusted the reins to the king and was dragged along in the wake of the king’s power, he was the master of nothing except his voice, which possessed a frankness that was dangerous.

This second metaphorical description of Aratus’ relationship to Doson continues the previous motifs of compulsion and servitude. The word κύριος recalls Plutarch’s previous depiction of the true slavery of rulers to fate and contingency. Now we are told that Aratus was only the master of his words, a topic of particular interest to Plutarch and other Imperial Greek authors concerned about the sacrifices made by free men living
under a king.\footnote{172} Plutarch often portrays παρρησία as dangerous when employed in a
court context: the most striking example from the Plutarchan corpus is Alexander’s
murder of Cleitus, sparked by Cleitus’ refusal to perform proskynesis (Alex. 50-51). This
story exemplifies the notion that one’s status as a king’s friend did not necessarily entail a
right to complete freedom of speech or protect one from the king’s wrath. While Plutarch
describes Aratus’ tongue as dangerous to himself, he also occasionally shows it to be
impotent to effect good, such as when Doson re-erected the statues of the tyrants of
Corinth and tore down those of its liberators, despite Aratus’ frequent requests (Arat.
45.3).\footnote{173} The fact that the only speech-act from the time of Aratus’ alliance with Doson
that resonated down to Plutarch’s time was his re-naming of Mantineia to Antigoneia is
evidence of Aratus’ cooperation in the debasement of the Greeks by the Macedonians
(45.4-6).\footnote{174} While the slaughter and enslavement of the Mantineians was certainly the
most barbaric part of the Achaeans’ actions, Aratus’ abolition of the city’s Homeric name
in favor of a name indicative of the Macedonian monarchical system carried powerful
symbolic weight.\footnote{175} The implication of this act, that the Greece of the heroic past had
been supplanted by a foreign power, is consonant with Plutarch’s description of the

\footnote{172} Parrhesia is a topic of discussion in two of the Moralia: Praecepta Gerendae
Reipublicae and De Adulator et Amico. However, Plutarch’s discussion in those texts
do not bear directly on the present reading because neither text addresses the sort of
parrhesia that is appropriate for a Greek statesman to use towards a foreign overlord: the
former is concerned with parrhesia in a local civic context, and the latter with
distinguishing the true frankness of a friend from the purported frankness of a flatterer.
For parrhesia in Plutarch, see Van Meirvenne (2002); Fields (2008) 141-187, who also
considers the meaning of parrhesia in Dio of Prusa and Lucian.
\footnote{173} Only the statues of Aratus were exempted from destruction.
\footnote{174} Cf. Il. 2, 607. Hadrian later restored the city’s name to Mantineia.
\footnote{175} Other examples of Homer’s prominence in Imperial Greek literature include Lucian,
Vera Historia 2; Philostratus, Heroicus; Dio, Chryseis. For discussion of Homer in
Greek education and thought of this period, see Zeitlin (2001) 195-266.
Achaeans’ actions with regard to Mantinea as done “not Greekly” (οὐχ Ἑλληνικῶς) – a tag that connotes not only the barbaric cruelty of the enslavement of the Mantineians, but also that Aratus’ actions were in opposition to the welfare of the Greeks at large.\(^\text{176}\)

To summarize: Plutarch’s depiction of the relationship between Aratus and Doson is, in many ways, an inversion of the elements we find in Aratus’ friendship and alliance with Philadelphus. Both alliances were motivated by extreme conditions of political strife that threatened the stability of Sicyon and the Achaean League. Philadelphus’ friendship allowed Aratus to secure his city and his position among the Achaeans; the alliance with Doson stopped the advance of Cleomenes, however at the price of the Achaeans’ citadel and autonomy. Philadelphus and Aratus became allies because of paternal ties, whereas Doson and Aratus became allies despite an inherited enmity. The introduction of Doson into the Peloponnese destroyed any chance to unify southern Greece under Greek rule and led to the reestablishment of the Macedonian kings as the “hyp tyrants” of Hellas. This alliance was successful in crushing Cleomenes, but detrimental to the greater good of the Greeks since it enslaved Aratus and the Achaeans to foreign interests. Ultimately, Plutarch portrays the alliance between Aratus and Doson as a much more complex relationship than either the alliance with Philadelphus or the enmity with Gonatas. Although Plutarch leaves open the option that Aratus was compelled to choose the lesser of two evils, he generally encourages the reader to believe that Aratus was selfishly protecting his own reputation from the threat of the Spartan king, without considering how his decision his actions would negatively impact the

\(^{176}\) We will have occasion to consider both the ethnic and ethical connotations of “Greekness” in Chapter Five, when we examine Plutarch’s characterization of Flamininus as a non-Greek philhellene.
Greeks at large. Nevertheless, Plutarch expresses certain reservations about this interpretation of Aratus’ actions. He does not present Antigonus Doson as a wicked tyrant in the same way as he portrays Antigonus Gonatas; rather, Doson seems to combine Philadelphus’ more humane traits with Gonatas’ aggressive imperialistic desires. The ambiguity of Antigonus Doson’s character and the political quandary that Aratus faced when choosing between losing to Cleomenes or winning with the Macedonians makes it challenging for the reader to discern one or several specific points Plutarch is making about the Greek statesman’s relationship with kings. Indeed, we have seen that he touches on several topics, including free speech, political necessity, political consistency, and negotiating the limits of independence in a world run by kings. All of these issues are part and parcel of the provincial statesman’s precarious position between *polis* and Imperial administration, and would, in reality, be in tension, just as Plutarch represents them in Aratus’ relationship with Doson. We can also observe a development (or devolution) over the course of Plutarch’s narrative of this relationship, from political self-determinacy to political dependency and weakness. The situation that Aratus created for himself by his alliance with Doson resembles Plutarch’s description of his contemporary world in the *Praecepta* 824E-F. There, he advises Menemachus that the contemporary Greek statesman needs to make his fellow-citizens understand the weakness of Greek affairs and the need to compromise with the Roman administration: “What kind of power [of the Greek statesman in the *polis* is it, which the small decree of a proconsul could dissolve or transfer to another man, and which, even if it lasts, possesses nothing seriously worthwhile?” Similarly, Aratus’ own power to do what he

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177 Doson’s humanity is best seen in the tender description of his friendship with Aratus at 43.4-5.
saw fit for the Achaeans was strictly limited after he entered into the alliance with Doson and subordinated himself to the Macedonian king. By introducing such moral complexity, Plutarch is able to add some shades of grey to his account of statesmanship, thereby providing his reader with a more realistic depiction of the moral ambiguities common to the actions of the Greek statesman whose power is contingent upon the whims of foreign potentates.

C. Philip V

The end of the Aratus (46-52) focuses entirely on the protagonist’s relationship with Philip V, and explores yet another possible interaction between Greek statesman and foreign potentate, that of the mentor and his student. Plutarch records that before Antigonus Doson died, he sent his ward Philip to the Peloponnese to become acquainted with Aratus and learn how to deal with the cities and citizens of the Achaean League (46.1). While this once again shows Doson to be a rather clever king, it more importantly establishes a didactic relationship between Aratus and Philip. In his previous royal relationships, Aratus was in a position of either equality (Philadelphus and Gonatas) or submission (Doson). The relationship with Philip is based on an entirely different dynamic, one that is more complicated than those we have encountered so far. First, Philip is compelled by Doson, his regent, to become Aratus’ protégé; this is in contrast to the voluntary manner in which both Aratus and the other kings entered into their earlier relationships. Second, as the mentor of Philip, Aratus had the intellectual upper hand in their relationship. His knowledge of the Achaean League and the politics of the Greek

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178 Philip V was the son of Demetrius II; due to his young age at the death of his father, his uncle Antigonus Doson was appointed as regent and de facto king. Upon Doson’s death, Philip assumed the Macedonian throne. On the reign of Philip V, see Hammond and Walbank (1988) vol. 3, 367-487 and Derow (2003).
cities imbued him with a certain intellectual power over Philip, despite the discrepancies in personal wealth, military power, and political influence that would otherwise make Philip more powerful than Aratus. At the same time, Aratus’ position as a mentor is in tension with his status as a de facto subject of Philip: his power over the king is only as great as Philip allows it to be. By calling Aratus a “good paidagogos of both democracy and kingship” (48.3), Plutarch encapsulates the dynamic between Aratus and Philip, in which Philip is given direction by Aratus, but Aratus is still in some sense the slave of Philip. It suggests, moreover, that Aratus’ role was both to teach Philip about the Achaean and to teach him how to rule. As such, he is portrayed as a liaison between the king and his subjects – in other words, a role that mirrors the function of Plutarch, Polycrates, and other members of the Greek elite in the poleis during the Roman Empire. This appellation also carries with it the connotation of Aratus as the moral instructor of Philip, charged with the task of directing the king towards proper and virtuous action within society. The teacher-student dynamic is the defining characteristic of Plutarch’s depiction of the interactions between Philip and Aratus, and it exemplifies the sort of role an elder Greek statesman may play vis-à-vis a younger member of the Roman Imperial administration.

In his essay Maxime Cum Principibus Philosopho Esse Disserendum, Plutarch explicitly exhorts his peers to engage with and educate men in power. The thesis of his

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179 Aratus as a paidagogos of democracy seems to be a Polybian echo in the Plutarchan text, as Plutarch previously described Sicyon as an aristocracy, while Polybius defined the Achaean League as a democracy. See Orsi (1987) 252.

180 Roskam (2004) 94-98 on the distinction between paidagogos and didaskalos in Plutarch, and the manner of communication between teacher and student which this relationship entails, i.e. a “passive-receptive” dynamic in which the pupil is a vessel for the instruction of the teacher.
argument is that philosophers should try to influence monarchs because they can effect the most good via that influence.\textsuperscript{181} Similarly in An Seni Respublica Gerenda Sit, Plutarch encourages elder statesman to put their great experience and wisdom to the best use by embracing a mentorship role for young politicians. In his narrative of Aratus’ tutelage of Philip, Plutarch provide a concrete historical example of the potential good that can come from a virtuous Greek man’s influence over a man of power, thus complementing his discussions in the \textit{Moralia}. In theory, Aratus was acting nobly to take Philip on as a student of Greek statesmanship, recognizing that a proper education of this one king could be the best way to benefit the Greeks at large. Unfortunately, Philip’s innately wicked nature complicated what could have otherwise been a truly beneficial alliance for the Greeks. This narrative provides Plutarch with an opportunity to explore the problem of the relative importance of nature, education, and habit in the formation of moral virtue.\textsuperscript{182} This issue gains special importance for the \textit{Life of Aratus} when we consider that it was written with the express purpose of educating young men and encouraging them, with the example of their ancestor, to live their lives continually striving towards personal virtue and public benefaction. Plutarch could hope that someday these young men would become seasoned political veterans, able to use their experience and knowledge to guide the next generation of statesmen, and quite possibly to educate the

\textsuperscript{181} Roskam (2009) is a thorough interpretation and commentary on this short but important text.

\textsuperscript{182} Gill (1983) is an insightful discussion of how Plutarch maintains a concept of character which is relatively fixed, yet allows some flexibility for the influence of good (or bad) education and habit upon an individual’s innate traits. This approach is in agreement with what we find in the treatise attributed to Plutarch entitled \textit{De liberis educandis}; though this text is generally agreed to be spurious, Berry (1958) argues that it is likely to be from Plutarch’s time and reflective of widely-accepted beliefs about character and education.
Roman emperor on matters pertinent to the Greeks. Aratus’ tutelage of Philip and its relationship to Philip’s apparent transformation from a noble king to a cruel tyrant is a case-study in the potential benefits that could be wrought from an educated and public-minded man’s discourse with a potentate, as well as the difficulties of finding the suitable powerful man to become one’s pupil.

Aratus and Philip’s relationship began with a promising start, especially when seen in the light of the broader Plutarchan context (46.2):

Καὶ μέντοι καὶ παραλαβὼν αὐτὸν ὁ Ἀρατὸς οὕτως διέθηκεν, ὡστε πολλὴς μὲν εὐνοίας πρὸς αὐτὸν, πολλῆς δὲ πρὸς τὰς Ἑλληνικὰς πράξεις φιλοτιμίας καὶ ὀρμῆς μεστὸν εἰς Μακεδονίαν ἀποστεῖλαι.

And indeed Aratus took him and disposed him in such a way that he sent him back to Macedonia full of goodwill towards himself and a great ambition and drive for Greek affairs.

The combination of Philip’s attachment to Aratus and his ardent philhellenism offered potential benefit for Aratus and the Greeks. Philip’s disposition at this point can easily be compared to that of Plutarch’s Roman philhellenes – specifically Marcellus, Lucullus, Aemilius Paullus, and Flamininus – whose whole-hearted devotion to Greek affairs and culture lies behind Plutarch’s encomiastic biographies of them. \(^{183}\) As we shall see in Chapter Five, the *Life of Flamininus* illustrates the advantage that a combination of *philotimia* and philhellenism could have for improving the lives of the Greeks, especially at a moment when the Greeks had exhausted themselves with internecine wars. In the *Life of Aratus*, Philip is portrayed as being in essentially the same position: he was a foreigner with good intentions towards the Greeks, who arrives on the scene when

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different groups of Greeks were scrambling to establish hegemony in the aftermath of Cleomenes’ defeat at Sellasia (222 BC). Plutarch describes the Achaean hopes for salvation from Philip (47.4):

Αὖθις οὖν τὰς χεῖρας ὀρέγοντες εἰς Μακεδονίαν, ἐπεσπῶντο καὶ κατῆγον ἐπὶ τὰς Ἑλληνικὰς πράξεις τὸν Φίλιππον, οὐχ ἥκιστα διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸν Ἀρατον εὐνοίαν αὐτοῦ καὶ πίστιν ἐλπίζοντες εὐκόλῳ περὶ πάντα χρήσεσθαι καὶ χειροῆθει.

Once more, therefore, [the Achaeans] stretched out their hands to Macedonia in supplication, and brought Philip down to take part in Greek affairs, not least of all hoping that, on account of his goodwill and loyalty to Aratus, they would find him easy-tempered and manageable in all things.

Plutarch suggests that this was a reasonable assumption based on Philip’s actions towards Aratus and the Greeks thus far. As much as Aratus had shown himself to be a good paidagogos, Philip appeared to be an avid student. For example, when a group of courtiers tried to drive Philip away from Aratus (the so-called “Conspiracy of Apelles”), Philip quickly realized that Aratus’ influence was the key to his successes among the Greeks, and consequently drove out and executed the conspirators (48). Later on, it was Aratus’ advice to employ diplomacy rather than arms that led to Philip’s expansion of his power to Crete and Lacedaemon without the need for military campaigns or garrisons. Plutarch describes Aratus’ didactic influence as a “dye” that colored all of Philip’s actions (48.3), and as a perfect harmony of Philip’s willingness to be persuaded (εὐπειθεῖα) and Aratus’ wisdom in giving counsel (εὐβουλία). Plutarch had earlier used εὐπειθεῖα to describe Aratus as a young man, readily obedient to his superiors in the Achaean army despite his reputation as the liberator of Sicyon (51.1). Moreover, this passage resonates with the Praecepta, in which Plutarch says that “nothing makes a man willingly tractable (χειροῆθη) and gentle to another man except trust in his goodwill (πίστις εὐνοίας) and belief in his nobility and justice” (821B6-8). By recalling an earlier
stage of Aratus’ career and aligning it with the disposition of Philip, Plutarch builds up
the reader’s expectation that Philip will put the welfare of the Achaeanos ahead of his own
fame and glory, just as his paidagogos did decades before.\footnote{Plutarch, in marshalling
the same evidence for Philip’s early love of the Greeks, stops just short of the evaluation of
Polybius, who says (7.11.8): “In fact, as a whole, if one may use a somewhat extravagant
phrase, one might say most aptly of Philip that he was the darling of the whole of Greece
owing to his beneficent policy.” (καθόλου γε μήν, εἰ δὲι μικρὸν ὑπερβολικότερον εἶπεῖν, οἰκειότατα’ ἂν ὁμιλῇ...}

Philip, however, did not remain a model student. His actions and attitudes
towards Aratus and the Greeks took a turn for the worse, and this volte-face was of great
interest to both Plutarch and his source Polybius. The difference between the two
accounts is illuminating for our reading of the \textit{Life of Aratus}. Polybius digresses on
Philip’s transformation (μεταβολῆ), which he thinks is a remarkable and instructive
example for the “man of action” (7.11.13: πραγματικός). He characterizes Philip as a
man whose status and genius made both his good and bad impulses widely felt. Thus,
when he was benevolent, most of the Greek world freely submitted to him; when he
changed his disposition (προαιρεσις), however, Greek affairs, as well as his own
endeavors, fell apart. Προαιρεσις carries two connotations here: deliberate ethical
choice, as well as a set of political convictions, principles or policies.\footnote{Glockmann
et al. (2005) cols. 714-721.} Polybius’
account of Philip’s deliberations about Messene on Mount Ithome features both Aratus
and Demetrius of Pharos in equal roles; Aratus is praised for speaking freely and with
authority (7.12.9: μετὰ παρρησίας ἀμα καὶ μετ’ ἀξιώσεως), while Demetrius bears the
blame for Philip’s dramatic transformation. Polybius claims that Demetrius’ influence led to Philip’s metamorphosis from a king to a cruel tyrant (7.13.7: τύραννος ἐκ βασιλέως ἀπέβη πικρός). The concluding moral of this digression on Philip is that the judicious choice of friends ought to be a matter of the utmost importance to young kings (7.14.6).

Plutarch maintains the same basic facts that Polybius presents, but reworks the narrative to reflect his own didactic program. He inverts Polybius’ moral to young kings about the judicious choice of friends, and instead turns the narrative of Aratus’ relationship with Philip into a warning to elder statesman about their careful selection of pupils. Plutarch’s emphasis on Philip’s attachment to Aratus and his dismissal of other influential friends (including the court-conspirators, as well as Demetrius of Pharos) is the initial evidence that Plutarch will not replicate Polybius’ moral in his narrative.

Plutarch, however, faces the additional problem of explaining Philip’s apparent transformation without it reflecting negatively on his protagonist. Rather than portraying Aratus as a deficient teacher, he casts Philip as a deficient student. This is most apparent from Plutarch’s description of Philip’s dramatic transformation (49.1, 51.3-52.1):

But soon, as the king’s fortune flowed smoothly on, he was lifted up by his success, and developed many great desires; his inherent badness, too, forcing aside his unnatural...

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186 The debate on Mount Ithome pertained to whether Philip should storm the citadel of the Messenians or return it to the city. Demetrius of Pharos recommended tightly-enforced control, while Aratus advised that Philip would a firmer position in the Peloponnese if he relied on the goodwill of the Greeks towards a benefactor.
assumed deportment and making its way to the light, little by little laid bare and revealed his character...For Philip seems to have undergone a very great and inexplicable change, having become a lascivious man and pernicious tyrant from a gentle king and chaste youth. In fact, however, this was not a change of nature, but a revelation of his wickedness in time of security, which he had concealed for a long time out of fear. For the fact that his feelings towards Aratus from the beginning had been mixed with shame and fear was made plain by what he did to him.

We should read Plutarch’s evaluation of Philip as a correction of Polybius’ account. The emphasis in this passage is on Philip’s nature (note the profusion of φύσις-cognates), which was so strong as to be able to overcome any positive influence of Aratus’ guidance. According to Plutarch, it was not a change in principles, but rather a revelation of Philip’s true nature that produced such a drastic change in outward actions and attitudes. Philip’s attachment to Aratus was not motivated by a virtuous nature, but rather by fear and shame. While Philip was still establishing his authority in Macedon and Greece, a fear of losing his reign compelled him to abide by the advice of Aratus. As soon as political success allowed Philip the luxury to act as he pleased, the fear and shame that had previously bound him to Aratus were greatly reduced. Elsewhere in the Plutarchan corpus, αἰσύνη and φόβος are referred to as potential tools for directing men towards virtuous action, but these emotions must be utilized with caution. In De Virtute Morali Plutarch stipulates that, even though emotions such as fear and shame can be beneficially used to direct the rational part of the soul towards virtue, these emotions must be moderated by logos and nomos (451B9–452D13). The problem with Philip, in Plutarch’s evaluation, was that the combination of his innate wickedness and his success

188 Cf. Ages. 2.1, where Agesilaus ambition was driven not by fear, but by shame; Cato Min. 33.4, where Julius Caesar, out of a sense of shame, recalls Cato from prison after he had spoken out against his Campanian land distribution law; De Recta Ratione 46D8–47D9, on shame’s usefulness as a pedagogic motivator.
prevented the moderating force of Aratus’ guidance from properly channeling Philip’s fear and shame towards virtuous behavior.

Three similar examples of how a ruler’s success put a strain on his relationship with his teacher, all drawn from the Parallel Lives, help to illuminate the complicated lesson of this passage. Demetrius Poliorcetes was held in check by his father Antigonus Monophthalmus, and as a youth displayed a rather noble character; however, his character showed forth as entirely dissolute after his father’s death. Plutarch describes Demetrius as having a “great nature,” with vices and virtues of equal magnitude (Demetr. 1.7). This bears a striking resemblance to Polybius’ characterization of Philip, and this idea of a “great nature” may underlie Plutarch’s own portrayal of Philip, too.¹⁸⁹ Alcibiades is likewise paradigmatic of a man whose great nature was turned to good ends while he was in the sphere of influence of his teacher (Socrates), but whose vices came to the surface as soon as he was no longer under his mentor’s guidance.¹⁹⁰ Finally, Alexander fits this type of “great nature,” and his relationship with Aristotle follows a pattern similar to that of Aratus’ with Philip: while Alexander was still young, Aristotle’s influence was great and beneficial, but as Alexander matured and was lifted up by success, a schism developed between him and Aristotle. In Plutarch’s narrative, this schism coincides with the beginning of Alexander’s fall and his increasing distrust of his closest companions. Like all three of these examples, Plutarch portrays Philip as capable of both great good and great evil, a man whose capabilities must be harnessed by a fitting mentor. Moreover, Philip’s distance from his mentor is directly proportional to his

¹⁸⁹ In the Demetrius, Plutarch seems to be referring to Republic 491b-492a; for a discussion of “great natures” in Plutarch, see Duff (1999) 47-49 and (2004) 281-283.
¹⁹⁰ Cf. Xenophon Mem. 1.2.17-28 on Socrates’ influence over Alcibiades and Critias. On Plutarch’s Alcibiades, see the commentary of Verdegem (2010).
unethical behavior. Once Philip had experienced a number of successes, the fear and shame that had previously motivated his devotion to Aratus were channeled into suspicion of his mentor, just as Alexander became suspicious of Aristotle. Thus, as all these examples show, Plutarch highlights in the *Aratus* the moral deficiency of Philip as a student rather than any failing in Aratus’ mentorship of him.

While Plutarch puts most of the blame for Philip’s tyrannical behavior on the king’s innate wickedness, he does not judge Aratus completely innocent in the matter. Aratus’ attempt to preserve his own reputation and his recognition of his powerlessness exacerbated Philip’s transformation. Plutarch characterizes his withdrawal from Philip’s court and his unwillingness to accompany Philip on campaign in Epirus as a way of avoiding blame for the ill-repute of Philip’s deeds (51.1). Even when Philip committed a personal affront to Aratus’ honor by cuckolding his son, Plutarch tells us that Aratus recognized that he had no recourse to punish the offender (49.1, 51.2). In the ultimate act of defeat, Aratus passively and silently accepted that he was being poisoned slowly to death under Philip’s orders (52.2):

\[\text{Ἀλλ’ ὡς οὐδὲν ἦν ὄφελον ἐλέγχοντι, πράως καὶ σιωπῇ τὸ πάθος ὡς δή τινα νόσον κοινὴν καὶ συνήθη νοσῶν διήντλει.}\]

But since it was no use for him to convict the criminal, with silent self-restraint he drank down his suffering, as if he were sick with some common and familiar disease.

In Plutarch’s view, Aratus realized too late that he had misjudged the character of the man he had accepted as his protégé. When this became apparent, however, Aratus faced a dilemma: he could either try to curb Philip’s innate wickedness for as long as possible by remaining a member of the court, or he could withdraw from Philip’s circle to avoid being tainted by the king’s vicious and dangerous actions that could no longer be
prevented. Plutarch’s emphasis on the revelation of Philip’s suggests that he might have realized that Aratus’ situation as the king’s mentor was complicated by his student’s nature, and consequently, that Aratus was not entirely responsible for the damage Philip did to the welfare of the Greeks. As such, Plutarch does not intend this narrative to discourage the contemporary Greek statesman from trying to influence men in power towards philosophically-informed rule, but rather to alert him to a pitfall that may prevent the success of even the wisest advisor.

IV. Conclusion

To conclude, it is helpful to remind ourselves of what we gain from this reading of the Life of Aratus. First, given all of the resonances between the Aratus and Plutarch’s other Lives and Moralia that I demonstrated throughout, it may go without saying now that the Life of Aratus clearly fits within Plutarch’s corpus and didactic program, that it is a text no less rich than the other Lives, and that it deserves and repays the careful literary analysis that the Parallel Lives have received during recent decades. This alone is a significant contribution, and I hope that my reading will encourage others to pick up and analyze this nearly lost Life. Second, through reading the Life of Aratus, we come understand that Plutarch’s vision of the relationship between the Hellenistic past and the Imperial present was based on a perception of the continuity and the analogy between the two worlds. As we discussed at the beginning of the chapter, the Aratus was written for the edification of the protagonist’s descendants: the very fact of familial continuity between Aratus and Polycrates suggests the continuity of life in the Greek poleis. Moreover, Plutarch reiterates that continuity by contrasting the health of Aratus’ lineage with the long-extinct Antigonid dynasty, as well as by pointing to the vestiges of a civic
cult in honor of Aratus. Plutarch seems to suggest, therefore, that in spite of the transition from a Macedonian to a Roman superpower in the Greek East, the status of the Greek *poleis* and their elites has remained constant. He insinuates that Imperial Greeks were linked to their Hellenistic past not only through lineage and tradition, but also through a similarity in their socio-political conditions. Members of the Greek elite, like Polycrates and his sons, acted as liaisons between their fellow-citizens and the Roman administration – just as Aratus was the link between the Achaeans and the Macedonian dynasts. As a consequence, Polycrates’ sons could expect to be faced with the issues that Aratus navigated in his own career, walking the fine line between political independence and insurrection, between prudent submission and slavishness. Through exploring these issues in Aratus’ life, and showing both his successes and his failures, Plutarch presents his reader with several examples of interactions between a Greek statesman and foreign kings, and then expects his reader to discern and apply what is useful in his own life. Therefore, rather than a parallel between Greek and Roman, as is familiar from the *Parallel Lives*, the *Life of Aratus* provides us with a clear case of Plutarch’s ability to draw a parallel between the Hellenistic *past* and the Roman *present* in order to address the timely concerns of contemporary readers.
Chapter Four

Agis and Cleomenes: Problematizing Civic Revivals of the Greek Past

I. Introduction

The Greek past was a living thing in the Greek cities of the Roman Empire. In the previous chapter, we saw how Plutarch highlights the continuity between Hellenistic Greece and his contemporary world in the prologue and epilogue to the *Aratus*. In a real way, Aratus of Sicyon’s Hellenistic past had stayed alive in Plutarch’s Imperial Greek world, maintained by family and civic traditions, as well as Plutarch’s βίος. The ability to maintain such family and civic traditions throughout the centuries of wars, political upheavals, and economic devastation that ravaged Greece from the third century BC until the Augustan peace was the exception, not the rule. More often, Greeks of the Empire had to remake links to the pre-Roman past after a period (or multiple periods) of civic discontinuity through the revival of long-lost traditions or the invention of new customs cloaked in archaizing garb. Such connections to the Greek past were essential components of civic identity, as well as the cultural prestige of a *polis* in the eyes of the Romans.191 Plutarch, too, was involved in this cultural phenomenon of revival: both in his literary creations and in his role as a priest of Apollo at Delphi, he preserved and revived central aspects of Greek cultural heritage. Although Plutarch created and maintained cultural links between the Roman present and the Greek past in his antiquarian and religious activities, in his writings he expresses a deep skepticism of those individuals who aspire to revive the political past of Greece. A passage from the *Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae* conveys this hesitation most clearly (814A2-C5):

191 On the topic of the interactions between Romanization and Hellenization in the Augustan period and following, see the impressive work of Spawforth (2012).
what types of historical exempla are wise in the context of Roman rule of Greek cities.

important about this passage is that Plutarch is exhorting Menemachus to be careful of while I am persuaded by Co

rather, he distinguishes between the potential political danger that such military victories

For when we see little children trying to tie on their fathers’ shoes and playfully put crowns on their heads, we laugh, but when leaders in the cities thoughtlessly urge and stir up the people to imitate the deeds, ideals, and actions of our ancestors, although they are unsuitable to the present times and affairs, although what they do is laughable, they suffer things no longer worthy of laughter, unless they are utterly censured. For many other actions of earlier Greeks can mold the character of people now and make them prudent...For it is possible even now to resemble our ancestors by emulating such deeds, but Marathon, Eurymedon, and Plataea, and as many of her examples make the people swell and become arrogant to no purpose, they should leave them behind in the schools of the sophists.

Plutarch contends here that attempting to revive the most glorious moments of the Greek past is as ridiculous as children playing dress-up, but with consequences much worse than tripping over Daddy’s chiton. In what has been elided, he lists five events that would be more appropriate to recall in Imperial Athens than the highlights of the Persian Wars, events that were less historically significant than the role the Athenians played in the Persian Wars, but were better examples of building civic harmony within the polis and between Athens and other poleis.¹⁹² That being said, Plutarch in no way denies the glory of the Persian Wars or the importance of remembering those moments in Greek history.

Rather, he distinguishes between the potential political danger that such military victories

¹⁹² Amnesty after Thirty Tyrants: cf. Xen. Hell. 2.4.43; Punishment of Phrynichus: cf. Herodotus 6.21; Refoundation of Thebes in 316/5 BC: cf. Diod. 29.53.2; Paus. 4.27.10, 9.3.6; Clubbing at Argos in 370 BC: cf. Diod. 25.57.3, 58; Newly-weds spared in search for Harpalus: cf. Plut. Demosth. 25.7-8. On this selection of events, see Cook (2004). While I am persuaded by Cook’s reading of this list of events, what strikes me as important about this passage is that Plutarch is exhorting Menemachus to be careful of what types of historical exempla are wise in the context of Roman rule of Greek cities.
in political rhetoric and the suitability of these events to the realm of cultural activities.\textsuperscript{193} Thus, Plutarch’s antiquarianism and his skepticism of the political rhetoric of revival are in fact complementary, since they are both manifestations of his recognition of the political and cultural hierarchies present in Imperial Greece.

In this chapter, I argue that in the \textit{Lives of Agis and Cleomenes}, Plutarch points out the limitations of the contemporary impulse to revive the Greek past and encourages his reader to be skeptical of individuals who claim that they can recreate in Imperial Greece the sorts of glories found in Archaic and Classical Greek history. The didactic impact of these \textit{Lives} still relies on the analogy between Plutarch’s Greece and the Hellenistic past, in particular, the inability of both Hellenistic and Imperial Greeks to effect a revival of the political power that the Greek \textit{poleis} maintained in the Archaic and Classical periods. I posit that Plutarch constructs the \textit{Agis and Cleomenes} as tragic stories of failed revivals, complete with dramatic plots, emotionally-charged descriptions, and Plutarch’s explicit identification of these \textit{Lives} as tragic. By means of such tragic narratives, he suggests to the reader that attempting to revive the Archaic and Classical pasts is problematic and indeed potentially destructive to the welfare of the Greeks. Subsequently, I argue that through his presentation of Agis and Cleomenes’ speeches defending the Lycurgan precedents for their reforms, Plutarch invites the reader to compare the kings’ rhetoric of revival with the received tradition about the Spartan lawgiver that Plutarch had compiled earlier in his \textit{Life of Lycurgus}\.\textsuperscript{194} His negative

\textsuperscript{193} Where they were very popular topics, indeed: cf. Bowie (1970), Swain (1996).
\textsuperscript{194} In the relative chronology of Jones (1966), \textit{Lycurgus-Numa} is the sixth pair Plutarch circulated, while the \textit{Agis and Cleomenes-Gracchi} pair is either the eleventh pair, or among the last pairs to be published. Moreover, Plutarch refers to \textit{Lycurgus} at \textit{Cleom}.

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evaluation of Cleomenes’ use of Lycurgus in the *synkrisis* encourages the reader to adopt a skeptical stance towards contemporary rhetoric of revival, too. As we shall see, Plutarch’s skeptical attitude towards the Spartan revivals of the third century BC resonates with his advice to Menemachus in the *Praecepta*, indicating another way in which the Hellenistic past had a timely didactic value for Plutarch’s contemporary world.

**II. The Spartan Tragedy: Agis and Cleomenes**

As I stated in the introduction, Plutarch constructs the *Lives of Agis and Cleomenes* as tragic narratives, and by doing so, problematizes for his reader the phenomenon of political revivals of the past in the Greek *poleis*. “Tragic,” however, is a term that tends to be used to refer to a wide range of concepts, so it is important to define how I am using this term. A helpful starting point for conceptualizing the tragic in Plutarch’s *Lives* is Timothy Duff’s description of the *Demetrius-Antony* pair: “Moral failings combined with greatness, sudden and unexpected changes of fortune, *hybris*, *tyche*, suffering (*πάθεια*): the language of [*Demetr.*] 1.8, finally, lends support to these who wish to see in the *Demetrius and Antony* a tragic structure and its subjects as tragic heroes.”¹⁹⁵ The *Lives of Agis and Cleomenes* display all of the features that Duff (and others) have seen in the *Demetrius-Antony*.¹⁹⁶ Plutarch uses three distinct markers to signal to his reader to view Agis and Cleomenes as tragic heroes: first, Plutarch refers to the narratives using explicitly theatrical language; second, he colors both narratives with

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¹².3, which suggests that he expected either the reader’s acquaintance with the earlier *Life* or his ability to access it. ¹⁹⁵ Duff (2004) 280. ¹⁹⁶ For other discussions of tragedy in the *Demetrius-Antony*, see de Lacy (1952), Mossman (1992) and (2005). Though it might be hard to see Agis’ *hybris*, no one would gainsay that Plutarch has depicted the *hybris* of his uncle Agesilaus, his advisor Lysander, or his co-king Leonidas; Cleomenes’ *hybris* can hardly be doubted, either.
descriptions that both portray the emotions of the characters and elicit the emotional response of the reader; and third, he patterns both Lives, individually and as a unit, on a rise-and-fall plot of failed revival. In the following, I examine each of these markers in
the Agis and Cleomenes and how their combination encourages the reader to question the benefit of attempting to relive the past political glories of the Greeks.

The first of these three markers is the simplest to illustrate. At the end of the Life of Cleomenes, Plutarch makes explicit the underlying theatricality of the preceding narrative (39.1):

Ἡ μὲν οὖν Λακεδαίμων ἐφαμίλλως ἐγωνισμένη τῷ γυναικείῳ δράματι πρὸς τὸ ἀνδρείου, ἐν τοῖς ἐσχάτοις καιροῖς ἐπέδειξε τὴν ἀρετὴν ὑβρισθῆναι μὴ δυναμένην ὑπὸ τῆς τύχης.

So, then, Sparta, bringing her women’s tragedy into emulous competition with that of her men, demonstrated that in the last extremity Virtue cannot be outraged by Fortune.

The “women’s tragedy” he refers to is the execution of the Spartan women who accompanied Cleomenes to Alexandria when he sought refuge in the Ptolemaic court after the battle of Sellasia, as passage we will return to later. The following preface to the Lives of Tiberius and Caius Gracchus calls the Roman’s stories “no less tragic than those of Agis and Cleomenes” (Tib. 1.1: οὐκ ἐλάττονα πάθη); Agis’ death is also referred to as a πάθος (Ag. 21.1). Elsewhere, Plutarch recounts how Cleomenes kidnapped some Dionysiac artists around Megalopolis and spent a whole day as a spectator of a theatrical contest – an uncharacteristic move for a Spartan on the march, as Plutarch goes on to say (Cleom. 12.2). This scene brings the reader’s attention to staging, performance, and spectatorship, as well as Cleomenes’ unexpected theatricality as a Spartan king. In each

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197 In fact, Demetrius-Antony also displays all three of these features, but a demonstration of that is outside of the current argument.
of these passages, Plutarch either explicitly identifies his narratives as theatrical in nature or draws particular attention to the theatrical actions of the protagonists.

The two other markers, emotive description and the plot-structure of failed revival, can be described separately in general terms. Since, however, Plutarch weaves emotional scenes into the larger plot-structure, the analysis of these features in the Agis and Cleomenes requires a careful and sequential reading of both Lives, to which we shall soon turn. First, we ought to consider the double meaning of πάθος as both ‘suffering or misfortune’ and as ‘emotion or passion.’ Plutarch’s narratives of Agis and Cleomenes’ lives are stories of their ultimate failure and destruction (the former sense of πάθος), but he also incorporates into these narratives the emotional responses of the internal characters and to elicit the emotional responses of the external audience (the latter sense of πάθος). Such emotive narration of historical events had a bad reputation in Greek historical writing since Polybius attacked Phylarchus for writing history “like the tragic poets” (2.56.10: καθάπερ οἱ τραγῳδιογράφοι). Polybius accused Phylarchus of stirring up emotion in an attempt to startle or charm his audience with sensational accounts, without describing the causes and purposes of actions in such a way that his reader could feel pity or anger in a reasonable or appropriate manner (2.56-59). Modern scholarship has successfully challenged Eduard Schwartz’s notion of a Peripatetic ‘school’ of tragic history as an explanation for ancient accusations like Polybius’ against Phylarchus.  

198 Schwartz (1897) 554-608, followed most notably by von Fritz (1958) 85-145; Walbank (1955) and (1985) 224-241 refuted earlier claims about the Peripatetic school of tragic history, and began to turn the tide of scholarship towards new ways of thinking about emotion in historiography.
Recently, scholars have been eager to show that emotive description and tragic structures were present even in the classical histories of Herodotus and Thucydides.\textsuperscript{199}

Yet reverberations of the notion of Peripatetic tragic history still echo in the scholarship on the \textit{Agis and Cleomenes}, given that Phylarchus was one of Plutarch’s three main sources for these \textit{Lives}, along with Polybius and Aratus. There is the sense in the scholarship on these \textit{Lives} that Plutarch acted as little more than an excerpter. If that were the case, then it could easily be objected that any ‘tragic’ coloring in the \textit{Agis and Cleomenes} does not imply about Plutarch, but rather strengthens Phylarchus’ reputation as a ‘tragic’ historian.\textsuperscript{200} That is, in my opinion, an oversimplification of Plutarch’s process of composition in general, and in particular in these \textit{Lives}, where we know he was also drawing upon the memoirs of Aratus of Sicyon and the histories of Polybius to construct a coherent narrative out of disparate and contradictory accounts. Plutarch relies on these same three sources of the \textit{Life of Aratus}, shaping these sources into a very different narrative that is sympathetic to the Achaean perspective on the events of the third century BC, rather than the Spartan. In the \textit{Aratus}, Plutarch depicts Cleomenes as an ambitious tyrant, rather than the tragic hero he is in his own \textit{Life}. When Plutarch chooses to follow Phylarchus in the \textit{Agis and Cleomenes} (however closely), that choice reflects his own narrative aims; it just so happens that Plutarch’s aims align or overlap with those of Phylarchus. That fact alone already tells us something interesting about Plutarch: that he found Phylarchus’ pro-Spartan and allegedly overdramatic narrative to

\textsuperscript{199} For a discussion of tragedy in both Herodotus and Thucydides, see Ostwald (2002); on tragedy and Herodotus, see Chiasson (1982) and (2003), Martyn (1998), Schellenberg (2009); on tragedy and Thucydides, see Macleod (1983), Mittelstadt (1985), Pauw (1991), Halliwell (2002).

be a useful source in constructing his own Spartan narratives. Therefore, I argue that we should step aside from questions of the ‘tragic’ nature of the Phylarchan source-text, and instead consider Plutarch’s own hand in creating the *Lives of Agis and Cleomenes* as ‘tragic’ narratives.

What does Plutarch believe is the appropriate place for emotive narration in historiography? Plutarch’s own characterization of Thucydides as the ideal historian emphasizes the emotional power of his narrative (*De glor. Ath.* 374A):

…καὶ τῶν ἱστορικῶν κράτιστος ὁ τὴν διήγησιν ὀσπερ γραφὴν πάθεσι καὶ προσώποις εἰδωλοποιήσας. Ὅ γον Θουκυδίδης ἀκὶ τὸ λόγῳ πρὸς ταύτην ἀμυλάται τὴν ἐνάργειαν, οἶον θεάτην ποιῆσαι τὸν ἀκροατήν καὶ τὰ γινόμενα περὶ τοὺς ὀρῶντας ἐκπληκτικὰ καὶ ταρακτικὰ πάθη τοὺς ἀναγινώσκουσιν ἐνεργάσασθαι λιχνευόμενος.

The most effective historian is he who, by a vivid representation of emotions and characters, makes his narrative like a painting. Indeed, Thucydides is always striving for this vividness in his writing, since it is his desire to make the reader a spectator, as it were, and to produce vividly in the minds of his readers the emotions of amazement and consternation that were experienced by those who beheld them.

Three observations should be made about this passage. First, Plutarch clearly delineates two aspects of emotive historical writing: the portrayal of emotion in the narrative, and the desire to elicit emotion from the reader. Second, Plutarch’s identification of the emotions of amazement and consternation in the above passages accords with this rhetorical view of the depiction and evocation of emotion in ancient historical writing.

Due to Aristotle’s famous statement in the *Poetics* that the main emotions of tragedy are pity and fear, the search for the ‘tragic’ in history has focused on these two emotions.²⁰¹ John Marincola, however, has recently made the case that we should be more concerned with Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* than his *Poetics* when we think about emotion in historiography, given the close affinity recognized by ancient writers between rhetoric

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and history.\textsuperscript{202} Such an approach opens up the discussion of emotion in history beyond pity and fear to the whole range of emotions that both orator and historian could employ to move their audiences.\textsuperscript{203} Third, the implication of the reader in the character’s emotional states is also relevant for our reading of these Lives, for as we shall see, Plutarch often uses the reader’s empathic response to the narrative as a way of making the narrative seem more applicable to the concerns of the reader. In the Lives of Agis and Cleomenes, Plutarch not only appeals to the reader’s pity and fear, but also hope, grief, shame, impatience, and indignation. By charging these narratives with vivid and psychologizing descriptions of the characters and eliciting the reader’s emotional involvement with those characters, Plutarch constructs a relationship between the reader and his narrative that is analogous to the relationship between spectator and tragedy: he puts the emotions of the characters on display with cinematic flair, and in turn invites the reader to gaze at, react to, and empathize with his characters.

Finally, Plutarch’s use of emotive description is entangled in the tragic plot-structure of these Lives, an arc I refer to as the narrative of failed revival. The narrative arc of the failed revival cannot begin without certain prerequisites, namely the current state of affairs is appreciably worse than it was previously. Once this is established, Plutarch introduces the protagonist, who must have the proper combination of natural endowments, education, and desire in order to be a figure to whom both the internal and external audience could attach their hopes for revival. Once an appropriate protagonist is identified for a revival, the next stage in the revival narrative is for the internal audiences

\textsuperscript{202} Marincola (2003).
\textsuperscript{203} Marincola (2003) 302-314 briefly considers emulation, friendliness, anger, disdain, and mixtures of emotions in both Greek and Roman historians.
(and occasionally the narrator) to express their expectation, excitement, and/or fear that a revival is underway. In the context of a revival, these expectations point both forwards and backwards: the internal audience expects (hopes, fears) that this man will change (improve, degrade) their situation in the future, but that he will do so because he is so much like the men of the past. Some successes are achieved, at times even great successes; however, the crux of a narrative of failed revival is the shift from short-lived success to the unraveling of the entire revival project. In crafting a narrative of this sort, Plutarch relies on the reader to sympathize at times with the protagonist, and at other times with other internal audiences so that, despite knowledge of how historical events have turned out, the reader may feel appropriately elated and disappointed when the narrative turns from a potential success to a failed revival. Let us now consider how this combination of a narrative arc of failed revival and emotive description works together in the Lives of Agis and Cleomenes.

A. Agis

In the chapters of the Life of Agis that follow the prologue, Plutarch intersperses a sketch of the state of affairs in Sparta at the time of Agis’ birth with a portrait of Agis’ nature, upbringing, and desire for change, thereby weaving together the first two components of the narrative of failed revival. He describes three salient features of the Spartan decline: the influx of gold and coinage; the disparity in wealth and property-ownership; and the increased economical and political power of Spartan women. Plutarch paints a picture in which Spartan manpower was at its weakest, with gaps growing simultaneously between the generations and the economic classes. He

\[\text{Gold: 3.1. Wealth-gap: 5. Power of women: 7.3-4.} \]
emphasizes Spartan economic and moral decline since the end of the Peloponnesian War.\textsuperscript{205} This background establishes the necessary precondition for a revival narrative by showing that Sparta was once in a much better condition than it was when Agis came of age.

Plutarch’s sketch of Agis’ nature, upbringing, and desires, contrasts with this picture of moral and economic decline. Although born and raised in such a degenerate Spartan state, Agis possessed a number of desirable natural attributes: Plutarch tells us that “he surpassed not only Leonidas [his colleague] in loftiness and excellence of spirit, but almost all the kings since Agesilaus,” and was a model of self-restraint, simplicity, magnanimity, and mildness.\textsuperscript{206} As for how Agis’ upbringing influenced his character, Plutarch largely sees Agis as a noble man in spite of, rather than due to, the manner he was raised. Although Agis’ mother Agesistrata and grandmother Archidamia were the richest people in Sparta at the time, Plutarch depicts Agis rejecting the luxurious and decadent lifestyle of his environment, favoring instead the Spartan short cloak and the Spartan customs of meals and baths (4). Finally, Plutarch is explicit about Agis’ desire: the young man was only interested in the throne if he could use it as an instrument to restore the laws and Lycurgan education system.\textsuperscript{207}

As Plutarch paints this double-portrait of Spartan decline and Agis’ character, at several points he draws a causal connection between Agis’ character with the

\textsuperscript{205} For historical accounts of Sparta in the period from the death of Agesilaus to the reigns of Agis and Cleomenes, see Piper (1986), Cartledge and Spawforth (2002) and Kennell (2010).

\textsuperscript{206} 4.1. Σωφροσύνη (7.2), λιτότης (7.2), μεγαλοψυχία (7.2, 10.1), το πραον (20.5), ἡμερώτατος και πραότατος γενόμενος (21.3).

\textsuperscript{207} On Plutarch’s approval of Agis’ motivation to enter political life, see Roskam (2005) 228-230.
expectations of his fellow Spartans, the third component of the narrative of failed revival. Plutarch depicts two groups of Spartans respectively hoping for and fearful of an impending revival of traditional values and institutions, and he consistently pairs the hopeful response of one faction with the fearful response of the other. There is also a correlation between the emotions that Plutarch depicts in the internal audience and the response he strives to elicit from the external audience. The reader is encouraged to be sympathetic to those figures who express hope for Agis’ revival, and at the same time to assent to Plutarch’s characterization of the Spartans who are fearful of revival as greedy and power-hungry. Finally, both the hopes and fears of revival expressed by the internal audiences are closely connected with recollections of the past, and in this way, Plutarch uses the depictions of emotional responses in the narrative to illustrate the way in which a revival by nature looks simultaneously backwards and forwards in time. Let us now consider these three moments in the narrative: the response to Agis’ initial canvassing (6.1-2); the response to the rhetra (10.1); and the response of the Peloponnesians to Agis on the march (14.2-3).

Once Agis decided that his goal was to equalize and restore the city’s population, Plutarch tells us that he conducted conversations with Spartans to gauge public opinion. Agis found that while young men were in favor of his plans, the older generation was hard set against it (6.1-2). The young Spartans’ response was beyond Agis’ hopes, and Plutarch’s characterization of their pursuit of virtue (τὴν ἀρετήν) and liberty (ἐλευθερία) makes the biographer’s sympathies with the pro-revival youths clear. Agis’ opponents, on the other hand, harbored the fear that Agis would restore Sparta to her ancient ways, a project that would require the upper class of Spartans to sacrifice their wealth and status.
Plutarch is explicit that these men were afraid (δεδιέναι καὶ τρέμειν) of the name of Lycurgus, the very idea of Sparta’s former glory. By likening them to runaway slaves, he alerts the reader to the fact that these men are unsympathetic. He is clear, moreover, that they were not afraid because Agis wanted to do something brand new, but rather because he desired a return to a imagined past. This passage exemplifies the backwards-forwards nature of expectation in the narrative of failed revival, in which hopes for the future are based on a perception of the possibility that the past might come back to life.

Subsequently, Plutarch’s depiction of the response of the Spartans to Agis’ proposed rhetra increases the expectation of revival. The initial presentation of the reforms by Agis’ advisor Lysander split the gerousia, and so to decide the matter, a general assembly was convoked. Agis’ presented the reforms and announced that he, his mother, and his grandmother were all going to put their personal estates into the common holdings of the city (9.3). The people’s response is indicative of the backwards-forwards nature of the hope for revival (10.1):

Ὁ μὲν οὖν δῆμος ἐξεπλάγη τὴν μεγαλοψυχίαν τοῦ νεανίσκου καὶ περιχαρής ἦν, ὡς δι’ ἐτῶν ὁμοῦ διακοσίων πεφηνότος ἀξίου τῆς Σπάρτης βασιλέως.

The people, accordingly, were amazed at the magnanimity of the young man and were delighted, because after nearly two hundred years a king had appeared who was worthy of Sparta.208

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208 Marasco (1981) 266 explains the controversy over whether the text ought to read τριακοσίων (as the manuscripts have it) or διακοσίων. The issue lies in a seeming contradiction between this passage and Ag. 4.1, where Plutarch likens Agis to Agesilaus. Marasco argues that this inconsistency reflects Plutarch’s unwillingness to adapt Phylarchus (who Marasco assumes he is using here) to fit with his earlier narrative. On the other hand, preserving the manuscript reading of “three hundred years” here might refer to Leonidas, the victor of Thermopylae, but that would still mean that the Spartans here are overlooking Agesilaus as a more recent great king, which does seem odd following the statement in 4.1. For my purposes, though, it does not particularly matter whether the Spartans thought Agis was like Agesilaus or Leonidas or both; what does
Plutarch explains that the Spartans’ joy and excitement was directly caused by the sense that Agis resembled the Spartan kings of old; their hope for the future derived from their recognition of someone who could have been from their past. Just as in Agis’ informal canvas of the citizenry, this expression of popular hope for his revival is immediately followed by a backlash. Plutarch explains that Agis’ colleague Leonidas, who felt preempted and coerced by Agis’ donation to the people, was concerned most of all about his own coffers and honor (10.1). Leonidas comes off as self-serving and miserly in a manner that is consistent with the portrayal of the wealthy Spartans throughout this *Life*. In an attempt to wrench the power of the past from Agis, Leonidas questioned the Lycurgan precedents for Agis’ proposed reforms (10.2-4). We will return to this passage later when we discuss Plutarch’s depiction of the manipulation of Spartan traditions; for now, it suffices to say that Plutarch uses both popular and plutocrat reactions to Agis’ proposed reforms to underscore that there was an expectation that Agis was the sort of man who had the capability to restore Sparta to her earlier glory. Moreover, Plutarch’s characterization of the pro- and anti-revival factions guides his reader towards a sympathy with the revivalist cause based on their more virtuous motivations.

Finally, Plutarch expands the narrative’s perspective out from Spartan domestic politics to portray the expectations the other Peloponnesians had for Agis’ revival. Aratus had requested Spartan assistance when the Aetolians threatened to invade the Peloponnese in 242 BC, and so Agis was sent out with an army to join the Achaeans near Corinth. Plutarch’s depiction of Agis’ march to join Aratus unites Agis’ personal matter is that they are likening him to a king from a period when Sparta was the *hegemon* of Greece rather than a marginalized player.

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qualities, his resemblance to noble Spartan exemplars, and the hopes and fears of those who encountered him (14). He claims that the devotion of Agis’ troops, mostly young and poor, was due to the fact that their debts had been absolved and that they were expecting (ἐλπίζοντες) to receive grants of land on return from campaign. In a very real sense, then, Plutarch attributes the discipline and obedience of the Spartan army to hope about Agis’ Lycurgan reforms. Then, when he describes the reaction of the other Peloponnesians, Plutarch again frames Agis in terms of his Spartan predecessors: the Peloponnesians wondered what Spartan discipline was like under Agesilaus, Lysander, or Leonidas (of Thermopylae) if even now under the young Agis the army displayed such restraint and reverence for their commander. Once again, Agis is viewed in terms of the Spartan past, and Plutarch’s narration makes it seems like the Greeks’ first impulse was to imagine Spartan achievement and progress as a return to the past. The hopes of the masses are matched in the narrative by the fears of the elite, who were anxious that Agis’ revolution would become a broader movement in the Peloponnese. Yet again, we see the dichotomy of hope and fear splitting along class lines: the masses are enthralled by the king, while the rich are fearful of a disruption of the status quo. This time, however, the fears of the rich do not have the negative moral implications of the previous passages. Instead, they resonate with Plutarch’s concerns for his own time about preserving concord and not upsetting the stability of the relationship between Rome and the Greek cities; in other words, what Plutarch believed to be the foremost concern of the Greek statesman of his time, as we saw in the last chapter. 209 Here we begin to see Plutarch complicating the picture of the idealistic revival of Lycurgan Sparta, which he had

209 Cf. discussion in Chapter Three, 89-91.
previously praised without question. He now introduces the possibility that a revival in Sparta could have a ripple effect throughout the Peloponnese; given his feelings about widespread political disturbance in his own time, we ought to take the concerns expressed by the wealthy Peloponnesians here as not only reflecting their concern for their status and property, but as also perhaps reflecting a more legitimate and pragmatic concern about the stability of Greece.

We can take the last two parts of the narrative of failed revival together in the Life of Agis, for his success was so evanescent and Plutarch sows the seeds of Agis’ failure at the outset of his revival narrative. Plutarch depicts Agis’ nature and desire for revival as the cause of renewed discipline among the Spartans, but uses much more space to examine the reasons for Agis’ failure. Agis’ two greatest successes were stirring up the hope of the masses for a revival, and winning praise and admiration for his behavior on a campaign in which no battle was fought (15.3) – a thin record of achievement. Furthermore, it was during Agis’ brief campaign with the Achaeans that cracks developed in Agis’ revival project. At the formation of the revival plan, Plutarch foreshadows its failure by indicating that Agis’ uncle Agesilaus entered into Agis’ team of councilors not out of an altruistic desire to better his city, but rather out of self-interest and the hope (ἥλπιζεν) of dissolving his personal debts (6.3-4). Plutarch refers to Agesilaus as soft and fond of money (μαλακὸν καὶ φιλοχρήματον), thereby associating him more closely with Leonidas and Agis’ wealthy opponents rather than with Agis and his young devotees. In this way, Plutarch prepares the reader for Agesilaus’ hubristic and tyrannical actions while Agis is away on campaign: he added an extra month to the calendar to gain more revenue; and because he feared retribution and knew he was
universally hated, he kept around himself an armed bodyguard as he went about the
duties of his magistracy (16.1). This psychological account of Agesilaus’ actions is
consistent with Plutarch’s initial character-sketch of him at 6.2-3. The result of his
unrestrained greed and fear was widespread chaos in the city: even the common people
turned to the exiled Leonidas as their champion, and the two kings, Agis and
Cleombrotus, sought sanctuary from the revolts in the temples of Athena Chalkioikos and
Poseidon.

The flight of the kings, the moment at which the story accelerates away from any
hope of revival and towards Agis’ assassination, triggers an amplification of the pathetic
and tragic tone of the narrative with two highly-wrought emotive scenes. Both scenes
focus on the suffering and endurance of Spartan women, and in these scenes in particular,
Plutarch highlights the traditionally tragic emotions of grief and pity. First, Plutarch
dilates on the dilemma of Chilonis, who was both the daughter of Leonidas and the wife
of Cleombrotus (17-18.2). Chilonis had followed first her father, and then her husband,
into exile, in each case sympathizing with the misfortunes of the two men in her life.
Plutarch paints a vivid picture of Chilonis in her grief, depicting her suffering in his own
voice, through the eyes of those who saw her, and through her own self-description (17.1-
2, 3, 18.1):

Τὸτε δ’ αὖ πάλιν ταῖς τύχαις συμμεταβαλοῦσα μετὰ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἰκέτις ὡφθη καθεξομένη, περιβεβληκυῖα τὰς χεῖρας ἐκεῖνω καὶ τῶν παιδίων τὸ μὲν ἔνθεν, τὸ δ’ ἔνθεν ὑφ’ αὐτὴν ἔχουσα, θαυμαζόντων δὲ πάντων καὶ δακρυόντων ἐπὶ τῇ χρηστότητι καὶ φιλοστοργίᾳ τῆς γυναικός, ἀφαμένη τῶν πέπλων καὶ τῆς κόμης ἀτημελῶς ἐχόντων “Τοῦτο, εἴπεν, ἀδίκον ἑμί πάτερ ἐμοί τὸ σχῆμα καὶ τὴν ὅψιν ὑμῖν ὁ Κλεομβρότου περιτέθεικεν ἔλεος, ἀλλ’ ἀπὸ τῶν σῶν κακῶν καὶ τῆς σῆς φυγῆς μεμένηκέ μοι σύντροφον καὶ σύνοικον τὸ πένθος… ὃς εἰ μὴ παρατείται σε μὴν πείθει τέκνων καὶ γυναικὸς δάκρυς, χαλεποτεράν ἢ σὺ βουλεῖς δικὴν ὑψίδει τῆς κακοβουλίας, ἐπιδών ἑμὲ τὴν φιλτάτην αὐτῷ προασποθανοῦσαν…” Ὡς μὲν Χιλωνίς τοιαῦτα ποτνιωμένη τὸ τε πρόσωπον ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν ἐπέθηκε τοῦ
And then again, having changed with the fortunes [of her husband and father], she was seen sitting with her husband as a suppliant, throwing her arms around him, and holding her children on either side. All wondered and wept at the goodness and devotion of the woman, who, touching her unkempt robes and hair, said: “This garb and appearance, o father, my pity for Cleombrotus did not confer upon me... Unless he begs and persuades you by the tears of his children and wife, he will pay a more severe penalty than you wish for his ill-advisedness, since he will behold me, his dearest, dead before him...” Imploring in this way, Chilonis rested her face upon the head of Cleombrotus and turned her glance, melted and marred with grief, upon the bystanders...

Plutarch’s describes this scene as if it were a sculpture or a painting: it is easy to visualize this woman, disheveled with grief, yet steadfast in her commitment to her family. The bystanders’ amazement and Chilonis’ reciprocal gaze implicate the reader as another bystander to this scene, and invites his sympathy with Chilonis’ plight. In her long direct speech, Chilonis excoriates her father for forcing her to choose between staying an exile or becoming a widow; she even threatens suicide. She emphasizes the emotions of pity (ἔλεος) – which her nearest relatives ought to feel for her – and grief (πένθος) – her constant state. As Bradley Buszard has shown, Chilonis, whose personal crisis is entangled with and even a result of the public crisis, “seeks not to delineate public and private but to further confuse them, and to then turn that confusion to her advantage.”

Her final plea to her father exemplifies that confusion between public and private spheres (17.4):

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210 Buszard (2010) 93-96 (quote on 93) is an insightful close reading of the speech of Chilonis, which he pairs with Cratesicleia’s words to Cleomenes before she departed for Alexandria at Cleom. 6.1-2. While I agree with Buzsard that it is helpful to read these two passages together in order to see how women in Plutarch distinguish between public and private concerns, I also think that one can just as easily, and perhaps more naturally, look to the words and actions of Agesistrata at the end of the Agis to make the same point, as I shall do below.
Τούτῳ μὲν οὖν εἰ καὶ τις ἦν λόγος εὔπρεπῆς, ἐγὼ τούτον ἀφειλόμην, τότε σοὶ συνεξετασθείσα καὶ καταμαρτυρήσασα τὸν ύπό τούτου γενομένον· σῦ δ’ αὐτῷ τὸ ἁδίκημα ποιεῖς εὐπολόγητον, οὕτω μέγα καὶ περιμάχητον ἀποφαίνον τὸ βασιλεύειν, ὥστε δ’ αὐτό καὶ γαμβροὺς φονεῖν καὶ τέκνων ἀμελεῖν εἶναι δίκαιον.

As for [my husband], even if he had some plausible excuse, I robbed him of it at that time by taking your side and testifying to what he had done; but you make his crime an easy one to defend, by showing men that royal power is a thing so great and so worth fighting for that for its sake it is right to slay a son-in-law and ignore a child.

That Plutarch uses the description and direct speech of this extended scene to gain his reader’s sympathy for Chilonis is clear. It is also important, however, to note that this scene serves to heighten the dramatic and pathetic tone of the narrative more generally by honing in on a vignette of collateral damage from the Spartan *stasis*. By personalizing the public crisis through Chilonis’ speech and appearance, Plutarch both underscores the penetrating impact of the failure of Agis’ revival and prepares the reader for the intimate and dramatic scene of the executions of Agis, Agesistrata, and Archidamia, to which we now turn.

The final chapters of the *Life of Agis* exhibit both tragic structures and highly emotive narration (19-21). Plutarch weaves together sorrow, shame, anger, pity, and righteous indignation into a rich narrative that builds the readers’ sympathy for Agis to an acme just at the moment of his death. Agis was betrayed by his companions and captured while leaving the sanctuary of Athena Chalkioikos for his customary bath (19.1-2).

When Leonidas gathered together the *gerousia* for a perfunctory trial of Agis, the young king merely laughed at the proceedings and defended himself by saying that he did everything voluntarily and in admiration and imitation of Lycurgus (19.5). The scene following Agis’ death sentence is full of lively description: the executioners shrank from their deed in respect for the sanctity of the king’s body (19.6); and a noisy crowd with
torches gathered around the Sparta prison, as Agis’ mother and grandmother begged for a proper public trial of their son (19.7). Plutarch even goes so far as to portray one of Agis’ executioners weeping and sympathizing (δακρύοντα καὶ περιπαθοῦντα, 20.1) with his victim as he put his neck in the noose. Like an Attic tragedy, however, the moment of death is elided: we see Agis place his neck in the noose, but then Plutarch cuts to a different scene, that of Agis’ betrayer Amphares and his mother Agesistrata. Indeed, the deaths of Agis, Archidamia, and Agesistrata (referred to collectively as a πάθος) are announced to the people all together, in a narrative gesture that suggests the archetypal messenger-speech.211 Plutarch does not build up much to Archidamia’s death, merely reminding the reader of her advanced age and lofty reputation (20.3). Agesistrata, on the other hand, receives much more attention. We the readers first see the corpses of Agis and Archidamia through Agesistrata’s eyes; Plutarch describes her laying their bodies down and covering them with the respect due to the dead. Her own death scene is full of emotional gestures and charged sentiments (20.6):

Then, embracing her son and kissing his face, she said: “My son, it was your great caution, gentleness, and humanity that has destroyed you, along with us.” Then Amphares, who saw and heard from the doorway what she did and said, came in and said angrily to her: “If, then, you have been of the same mind as you son, you shall also suffer the same fate.” And Agesistrata, as she rose to present her neck to the noose, said: “My only prayer is that this may bring good to Sparta.”

211 21.1: Τοῦ δὲ πάθους εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἐξαγγελθέντος…
Like Chilonis, Agesistrata’s fate was intricately connected to the fate of the Spartan state, and in both cases, Plutarch uses this confusion of public and private matters to bring *pathos* to his narrative. In contrast, though, Agesistrata downplayed her own personal suffering and instead focused on the impact that these deaths would have on Sparta as a whole. As the last passage of direct speech in the *Life*, Agesistrata’s words resonate backwards through the narrative and tie together the two points Plutarch most wishes to communicate to his reader: first, that Agis’ downfall was due to his youth and mild nature, as Plutarch will later reiterate (21.3); second, that the best interest of the Spartan people was at the heart of Agis’ intended revival.

In the last chapter of the *Life of Agis*, Plutarch lays the groundwork for what will follow in the *Life of Cleomenes* in three different ways: he depicts the Spartan response to the death of Agis and his family; he reflects on the meaning of Agis’ death in terms of Spartan history; and he gives an overall assessment of what about Agis’ character and circumstances led to his failure. Each of the points Plutarch makes in this epilogue will resurface early on in the *Life of Cleomenes*, and as such, it functions as both a closural and a connective device. First, the Spartans react to the burial procession with a mix of emotions: fear was prevalent, but did not hold them back from displaying their sorrow over Agis’ death and their hatred of Leonidas and Amphares (21.1). Plutarch’s reader may not truly share the Spartans’ fear as he read this passage, but it is clear that Plutarch seeks to elicit sympathetic responses of sorrow and hatred in his readers. Second, Plutarch asserts that the assassination of Agis by the ephors was the most heinous crime committed in Sparta since the time of the Dorian invasion, and gives a brief retrospective digression on previous murders of Spartan kings (21.1). This is more than a mere
historical aside; rather, Plutarch suggests here that Agis’ death and failure led to the degradation of Sparta to a point worse that it was in when the Life of Agis started, indeed to a time of lawless chaos that preceded even Lycurgus. Lastly, Plutarch caps the Life with a parting shot that praises Agis for his conduct and almost completely exculpates him for any wrongdoing (21.3):

Ἐν δὲ Λακεδαίμονι πρῶτος Ἀγις βασιλεύων ὑπ’ ἐφόρων ἀπέθανε, καλὰ μὲν ἕργα καὶ πρέποντα τῇ Σπάρτῃ προελόμενος, ἡλικίας δὲ γεγονός ἐν ὣ ἀμαρτάνοντες ἀνθρώποι συγγνώμης τυχάνουσι, μεμφθεὶς δ’ υπὸ τῶν φίλων δικαιότερον ὥ τὸν ἔχθραν, ὅτι καὶ Λεωνίδαν περιέσωσε καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐπίστευσεν, ἡμερώτατος καὶ πράοτατος γενόμενος.

But Agis was the first king in Sparta to die at the hands of the ephors, although he had chosen a line of conduct that was noble and worthy of Sparta, and was of an age in which men are usually pardoned for their errors, and his friends could with more justice blame him than his enemies, because he spared the life of Leonidas, and most mild and gentle man that he was, put faith in his other foes.

Plutarch, in the preceding narrative, has prepared his reader to assent to this last evaluation. The biographer has sketched Agis throughout as a young man full of the best intentions, who was unfortunately too naïve and trusting. While his charisma was able to inspire his family and the masses to join his cause, his mild temperament gave an opening for others to take advantage of his ability to inspire hope. Plutarch does not hesitate to present Agis as a sympathetic figure, and accordingly builds a lot of emotion into his narrative in order to guide his reader to feel a certain way about the characters within it. The amount of direct speech and the vivid depictions of scenes of hope and despair add to the theatricality of this biography and amplify the poignancy of Agis’ ultimate failure.

B. Cleomenes

The Life of Cleomenes responds to and adapts the plot structure and themes of the Life of Agis. As Christopher Pelling has recognized, the second Life of a Plutarchan pair
is usually a more complicated and nuanced treatment of the themes in the first Life.\textsuperscript{212} What is unusual with the Lives of Agis and Cleomenes is that they are a pair within a pair, and thus Plutarch is able to develop the same themes across the narratives of two men from nearly the same cultural and temporal context. For both historical and literary reasons, Plutarch has composed the Cleomenes as a narrative of failed revival that is distinct from, but contingent upon the Agis. Cleomenes lived and came to power in a different historical context than Agis did – a Sparta that had already seen the rise and fall of Agis’ revivalist project – and that historical reality shaped Cleomenes’ career. From a literary perspective, the narrative that Plutarch composed in the Life of Agis affects the narrative he composes in the Life of Cleomenes: the issues Plutarch highlights in the Agis remain active, though adapted, in the Cleomenes. Plutarch treats the Life of Cleomenes as a deviation from the norm that he constructed in the Life of Agis, a fact that is evident from both explicit and implicit comparisons between Cleomenes and Agis in the Cleomenes.

In the first three chapters of the Life of Cleomenes, Plutarch alternates between describing the condition of the Spartan state and Cleomenes’ nature, upbringing, and desires – the first two components of the narrative of failed revival – in much the same rhythm as he did in Agis 3-6. Plutarch does not need to expend much energy in setting the scene for his protagonist’s entrance: the reader, who has presumably just finished with the Agis, would be well-acquainted with how Plutarch envisioned the Sparta Cleomenes inherited. By including these reflections, however, Plutarch constructs the Life of Cleomenes as a self-contained narrative, independent from the Life of Agis. He

\textsuperscript{212} Pelling (1986).
provides all the socio-political background necessary in order for a reader to understand the Life of Cleomenes at a basic level without having read the Life of Agis, and at the same time, he re-describe Sparta in a way that is pertinent to Cleomenes’ story rather than to Agis’ story. To do so, Plutarch adds new layers to his earlier narrative of Spartan decline (2.1, 3.1):

…ἀσκήσεως δὲ καὶ σωφροσύνης νέων καὶ καρτερίας καὶ ἰσότητος οὐδ’ ἀσφαλές ἦν, διότι τούτῳ τὸν περὶ Ἀγιν ἀπολολότον, μνημονεύειν…Ἐπεὶ δὲ τελευτήσαντος τοῦ Λεωνίδου τὴν βασιλείαν παρέλαβε καὶ τοὺς πολίτας τότε δὴ παντάπασιν ἐκλελυμένους ἔόρα, τῶν μὲν πλουσίων καθ’ ἠδονάς ἰδίας καὶ πλεονεξίας παρορώντων τὰ κοινά, τῶν δὲ πολλῶν διὰ τὸ πράττειν κακῶς περὶ τὰ οἰκεία καὶ πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον ἀπροθύμων καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἁγωγὴν ἀφιλοτίμων γεγονότων, αὐτοῦ δ’ ὄνομα βασιλεύοντος ἦν μόνον, ἡ δ’ ἀρχὴ πᾶσα τῶν ἐφόρων…

… and as for practice in arms, self-restraint in the young, hardiness, and equality, it was even dangerous to speak of these now that Agis and his supporters had perished. …But when Leonidas died, [Cleomenes] came to the throne, and saw that the citizens were by that time altogether degenerate. The rich neglected the common interests for their own private pleasure and aggrandizement; the common people, because of their wretched state at home, had lost all readiness for war and all ambition to maintain the ancient Spartan discipline; and he himself, Cleomenes, was king only in name, while the whole power was in the hands of the ephors…

Much of this is familiar from the Agis: the greed and luxury of the wealthy, and the dangerous moral effects of idleness on the masses. There are a few important differences, though. Plutarch says nothing about the status of women in the period post-Agis, which is somewhat surprisingly after the dramatic roles of Chilonis, Archidamia, and Agesistrata in the preceding biography. More importantly, he explains that the lack of discipline and self-restraint among the Spartans was not due to a general moral laxity, but rather to fear and anxiety. In addition to the rich-poor divide familiar from the Agis, Plutarch mentions a new schism in the state between the king and the ephors. This, of course, was an important theme at the end of the Life of Agis when the young king’s death is ordered by the ephors. By foregrounding this divide between the kings and the
ephors here in the *Cleomenes*, Plutarch both gestures back to the end of the *Agis* and foreshadowes Cleomenes’ own conflict with the ephors. In these brief passages, Plutarch does not merely summarize the situation of Sparta after the assassination of Agis, but he highlights the links to and developments from the *Life of Agis*.

Whereas Plutarch presents Agis’ nature, upbringing, and desires as unequivocally noble, in the *Cleomenes* he creates tensions between potentially positive and potentially negative characteristics of his protagonist. First, Plutarch informs his reader that, although Cleomenes was prone to Agis’ self-restraint (ἐγκράτειαν) and simplicity (ἀφέλειαν), he lacked Agis’ characteristic mildness (1.3: πρᾶσν οὐκ εἶχεν). Sketched in such a way, Cleomenes seems to have all of Agis’ good qualities, without the mildness that both Agesistrata and Plutarch blame for the young king’s demise. This is the first of several moments in the narrative in which Plutarch implies that Cleomenes’ character and choices may improve upon the failings of Agis. While Plutarch does not state this explicitly, the comparisons he draws between the two kings suggest that Cleomenes was avoiding Agis’ pitfalls as he went about his life and career. By doing so, Plutarch invites his reader first to expect that Cleomenes would have greater success than his predecessor, and then to question why these improvements upon Agis’ career did not save Cleomenes from ultimate failure.

Plutarch suppresses any information about what effect or influence Cleomenes’ father Leonidas had on his son’s upbringing. Presumably, Cleomenes would not have been allowed to participate in the Spartan *agoge* that Leonidas so fervently opposed, but rather would have been exposed to the oriental manners of his father, who had spent his own youth in the Seleucid court (cf. *Agis* 3.5-6). When Plutarch describes the dissolute
life of the king in *Cleom.* 2.1, he refrains from mentioning that the king in question is Cleomenes’ own father. Plutarch’s silence on this matter is a narrative strategy that severs the historical ties between Leonidas and Cleomenes and supplants them with connections between Agis and Cleomenes. Cleomenes’ other influences, who themselves had close ties with Agis, also function to link him to the dream of a revivalist reform: his wife Agiatis, his lover Xenares, and the Stoic philosopher Sphairus of Borysthenes. Agiatis, the widow of Agis, had been forced by Leonidas to marry his son Cleomenes. Plutarch tells us Cleomenes, though ostensibly of the enemy camp, was sympathetic to his wife, and over time grew to share her devotion to the memory of Agis (*Cleom.* 1.2). Xenares similarly stoked Cleomenes’ interest in Agis by responding to his questions about Agis and recalling detailed stories of his life. Xenares, however, eventually turned away from Cleomenes when he perceived that Cleomenes had an unhealthy obsession with the innovations of Agis (3.2-3). Just as Plutarch uses examples in the *Lives* encourage his readers towards the emulation of virtue, Agiatis and Xenares both encouraged Cleomenes with tales of Agis’ character and reforms, and impelled the young man to take on these reforms as his own project: we see, once again, the interplay between reader mimesis and internal mimesis, discussed in Chapter Two.

Sphairus, on the other hand, receives ambivalent treatment from Plutarch. He claims that Sphairus stoked the fires of Cleomenes’ ambition, only then to say that the impetus that Stoic doctrines can provide can be dangerous to men with great and brash natures, and can only

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213 Martínez-Lacy (1993) describes this as a flattening of contrasts. Such a characterization of Plutarch’s narrative, however, ignores the explicit and implicit contrasts Plutarch makes between Agis and Cleomenes in the *Cleomenes.*

do their proper good in a mild character (2.3: πράῳ...Ngu).\textsuperscript{215} Plutarch’s reintroduction of “mildness” here recalls his characterization of Agis, and suggests that Sphairus’ teachings may have had a greater benefit to Agis than to Cleomenes. This complicates the expectation that Plutarch set up by opposing Agis’ mildness – a cause of his failure – with Cleomenes’ ambition in Cleom. 1.3. While Cleomenes may have avoided one of Agis’ fatal flaws, the very character trait by which he may avoid Agis’ demise is now at risk of being dangerously exaggerated by Sphairus’ Stoic teachings. Plutarch thus presents Cleomenes’ nature and formative influences forces pulling and pushing the man in divergent directions: towards Agis and away from Agis, towards revival and away from it, towards success and towards failure.

Agis’ only desire was to restore Sparta to her Lycurgan roots (Agis 4); in contrast, Plutarch insinuates that revival was only one of Cleomenes’ desires, and perhaps even a subsidiary one. First, Plutarch tells us that Cleomenes was driven towards “that which always appeared to be noble” (1.3: …πρός τὸ φαινόμενον ἀεὶ καλὸν): with this choice of words, Plutarch emphasizes that Cleomenes was not interested in what actually is noble, but that which appears noble. This distinction between appearance and reality recalls the prologue to the Lives of Agis and Cleomenes and Tiberius and Caius Gracchus. There Plutarch relates the myth of Ixion as a cautionary tale about the confusion of appearance and reality: Ixion was deceived into believing that a cloud was the goddess Hera, made

love to the cloud, and out of this abominable act begat the race of the Centaurs (Agis 1.1). Plutarch uses the myth of Ixion as an analogy for the difference between the pursuit of virtue and the pursuit of glory, which he calls “merely an image of virtue” (τῆς ἀρετῆς ὀσπερ εἰδόλω τινι). Given the emphasis in this prologue on the distinction between image and reality, Plutarch’s phrasing of “τὸ φαινόμενον ἀεὶ καλὸν” in his characterization of Cleomenes suggests that he was at a remove from true virtue.

Secondly, Plutarch says that Cleomenes “was determined to stir up and change the existing order of things” (3.2). This vague ambition for revolution took shape only as Cleomenes interrogated and listened to Agiatis and Xenares, who inspired him to follow in the footsteps of Agis. Plutarch focuses on Cleomenes’ drive rather than on his ideals, which the biographer portrays as incidental to Cleomenes’ desire to change Sparta and gain power. Furthermore, there is no mention of Lycurgus as a motivation for Cleomenes’ reform project. In making this omission, Plutarch suggests that Cleomenes was driven by a passion about Agis’ revival rather than the Lycurgan past that inspired that revival, an example of Cleomenes’ pursuit of appearance rather than truth. By portraying Cleomenes at a further remove from Lycurgus than Agis was, Plutarch invites the reader to consider that there might be a factor of degradation in Cleomenes’ attempt at revival.

If we do not read between the lines of the beginning of the Life of Cleomenes, Plutarch seems to present Cleomenes as a suitable candidate for the protagonist of a narrative of failed revival, a young man who possessed self-restraint, magnanimity, ambition, and teachers who encouraged him to adopt Agis as his model and revival as his goal. Once we take a closer look at the text and examine what Plutarch includes,
excludes, and emphasizes, we see that Plutarch has inserted a number of questions in the narrative to which his careful reader ought to pay attention. The suppression of Leonidas’ paternal role and the emphasis on the ties between Cleomenes and Agis elides the fact that Cleomenes was a direct descendant of Agis’ greatest opponent; instead we get an impression of Cleomenes as an ideological heir to Agis’ revival. His characterization of Cleomenes as a more ambitious Agis makes the reader wonder whether Cleomenes would be able to succeed where Agis had failed, yet elsewhere the biographer questions Cleomenes’ devotion to a truly Lycurgan revival. Plutarch’s depiction of his nature, upbringing, and desires shows the positive potential of Cleomenes as protagonist while calling into question his motivations and ability to succeed as a revivalist king.

Since Plutarch depicts the Spartans as afraid to speak of Agis or his reforms, it follows naturally that the dynamics of public expectation are less of a factor in the narrative of failed revival in the Cleomenes than in the Agis. In the post-Agis Sparta Plutarch describes, there was no opportunity for the masses to voice their hope for a second attempt at revival. Cleomenes himself was not exempt from this fear of expressing his own desire to follow Agis’ lead: Plutarch suggests that after Xenares rejected Cleomenes, Cleomenes assumed that everyone else felt as his lover did about his revival, and decided to arrange his plans himself (3.3-4). Unlike Agis, who trusted too many people too easily with his intentions, Plutarch’s Cleomenes divulged his true plans to no one. Apart from being an explanation for why Plutarch includes much less audience-reaction to Cleomenes’ actions, this is also another way in which Plutarch seems to portray Cleomenes as avoiding the mistakes of his predecessor, and further
suggests to the reader that Cleomenes might be more successful than Agis in bringing about a revival.

Instead of publicly presenting his plan for revival, Cleomenes fomented a war with the Achaean League, believing, as Plutarch tells us, that it would be easier to bring out change at home if the Spartans were distracted by events abroad (3.4). The narrative at this point alternates between Cleomenes’ successes in the war against Aratus and his political preparations in Sparta. When he had early victories in Arcadia and the Argolid, Plutarch records that Cleomenes would remind the Spartans of the saying of Agis II (r. 427-398 BC), that Spartans do not ask how many enemies there are, but where (4.5). This connection to the Classical past, however, is not something attributed by the people to Cleomenes, but claimed by Cleomenes himself – a distinction from such comments in the Agis. These early successes were briefly interrupted by Aratus’ capture of Mantineia, an event that caused Cleomenes to recall Agis’ brother Archidamus back to Sparta, ostensibly to boost morale. Upon his recall, however, Archidamus was assassinated by the men who had killed Agis: Plutarch seems to deny Cleomenes’ active involvement in the assassination-plot, and cites Phylarchus as evidence for his opposition to it, but also suggests that Cleomenes may have just turned a blind eye (5.3). He does not spend much time on Archidamus’ murder here, but as we shall see in the next section, this event has important consequences for his final evaluation of Cleomenes in the synkrisis.

With the defeat of the Achaeans at Megalopolis (6), however, Plutarch returns to his portrait of the ambitious and successful king: with the war under control, Cleomenes put into action his domestic reforms. In order to accomplish his political aims, he arranged for the execution of the ephors and exiled eighty of his opponents (7-
8), and only then did he make his plans clear to all of the Spartans. In a passage we will consider in detail later, Cleomenes defends his actions and explains his reforms, which included a common land redistribution, release from debts, and the addition of certain *perioikoi* to the citizen-ranks (10). He moreover reformed the army by equipping them with sarissas (so as to compete with the Achaeans and Macedonians), revived the Spartan *agogē* with the help of Sphairus, revived the public-mess system, and appointed his brother Eucleidas his royal colleague (11). In other words, Cleomenes achieved the social and economic reforms that Agis had attempted to bring out, and just as in the *Agis*, these changes receive Plutarch’s approval for reviving the virtues of Lycurgus’ state.

His political “revival” and violent actions, however, went beyond anything Agis appears to have intended, and Plutarch represents these aspects of his career without any praise – indeed, he criticizes Cleomenes harshly for this in the *synkrēsis*. His use of force to achieve his goals recalls Plutarch’s earlier characterization of Cleomenes as a man who thought it best to rule the willing, but also good to subdue the resistant and force them towards a better goal (1.3). Cleomenes’ assassination of the of the ephors exemplifies his outlook on rulership: it was the ultimate act of the subduing the resistant in order to bring about changes to benefit the Spartan state. Even in describing the revival of the noble institution of the *agogē*, Plutarch includes the detail that some Spartans were compelled against their wills to join the revived discipline (11.2). These dark undertones point towards one of the tensions that underlies this tragic narrative and problematizes the virtue of a political revival: whether noble ends achieved by wicked means are still noble.

Yet in the subsequent narrative, there is no overt censure of Cleomenes’ actions; on the contrary, Plutarch portrays him as even more successful in his campaigns, and
even digresses to praise his pleasant demeanor and nobly simple manners (13). When an unfortunate stroke of illness prevented Cleomenes from coming to terms with the Achaeans and gave Aratus the opportunity to summon the Macedonians into the Peloponnese, Plutarch goes so far as to say that “this ruined the cause of Greece” (16.1) and censures Aratus harshly for opposing a man who sought to bring back the ancestral law of Lycurgus (16.4-5). Such narratorial comments convey to the reader a positive evaluation of Cleomenes that clearly downplays his morally troubling political actions.

Plutarch’s narrative reaches a climax at Cleom. 17-19, where he describes Cleomenes’ capture and subsequent loss of Argos. Here, at the midpoint of the Life, Cleomenes’ fortunes begin to turn for the worse, leading eventually to his defeat at Sellasia and his captivity in Egypt. In this episode, Plutarch interlaces Cleomenes’ greatest success with the quick unraveling of his power, both of which are attributed to the expectations of those around him. These expectations and their frustration bookend Cleomenes’ capture of Argos, and Plutarch presents them as contributing equally to the success of Cleomenes’ capture and to the subsequent Argive revolt from Cleomenes. He relates that he Achaeans were eager to revolt from Aratus, both because the people were hoping for (ἐλπισάντων) Cleomenes’ land distribution and debt abolition, and the aristocracy was unhappy with Aratus’ alliance with the Macedonians (17.3). The reason for the subsequent revolt, however, was that the Argive masses were upset that Cleomenes had not abolished their debts as they had expected (20.3):

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216 The concerns of the protoi echo Plutarch’s own anger at Aratus for bringing the Macedonians back into the Peloponnese, expressed at 16 (cf. Arat. 38).
As soon as the hopes of the Achaeans had encouraged Cleomenes to the peak of his achievement, the frustration of those hopes led to Cleomenes’ loss of both Argos and Corinth, and soon many of his other allies as well (21.4). In this way, Plutarch illustrates for his reader the ambiguous potential that the hopes of the people can bestow on a statesman: unfulfilled expectations can be as dangerous as the excitement of hope can be beneficial.

The center of the Argive episode, moreover, is the only time Plutarch represents the Spartan (and Greek) reaction to Cleomenes’ revival and military campaigns. He begins with a narratorial comment on the singularity of Cleomenes’ achievement, but continues with a report of what Greeks at the time were thinking (18):

This greatly increased the reputation and power of Cleomenes. For in spite of numerous efforts, the ancient kings of the Spartans were not able to bring Argos securely to their side; and the most formidable of generals, Pyrrhus, although he fought his way into the

217 Cf. Agis 16.3, where even the Spartan masses welcome back Leonidas, because they were angry that they had been deceived about the distribution of land. While what has happened in both Lives is essentially the same, just with a different component of the reform package being left out, the emphasis in the Agis is more on the treachery of Agesilaus than on the frustration of the Spartans’ hopes, as it is with the Argives in the Cleomenes.
city, could not hold it, but was slain there, and with him a great part of his army perished. Therefore men admired the swiftness and intelligence of Cleomenes; and those who before this had mocked at him for imitating, as they said, Solon and Lycurgus in the abolition of debts and the equalization of property, were now altogether convinced that this was the cause of the change in the Spartans. For they were formerly in so low a state and so unable to help themselves, that the Aetolians invaded Laconia and took away fifty thousand slaves. It was at this time, they say, that one of the elder Spartans remarked that the enemy had helped Sparta by lightening her burden. But now only a little time had elapsed, and they had as yet barely resumed their native customs and re-entered the track of their famous discipline, when, as if before the very eyes of Lycurgus and with his cooperation, they gave abundant proof of their valor and obedience to authority, by recovering the leadership of Hellas for Sparta and taking possession of the entire Peloponnese.

This passage has features that recall the internal-audience reactions in the *Life of Agis*:

Plutarch attributes the sentiments to an anonymous audience; they draw attention to Cleomenes’ personal attributes (swiftness and cleverness); and Cleomenes’ success is an effect of his imitation of Lycurgus. The internal audience portrays Cleomenes’ ability to accomplish something no other Spartan king had as a consequence of his apparent connection – both imitative and (almost) collaborative – with Lycurgus. This, however is not an expression of expectations about Cleomenes, but rather a recognition of what had come to pass. It is an explanation about the present (and immediate past), not a projection about the potentiality of the future. Moreover, it is a correction of past expectations, as Cleomenes’ former critics realized that Cleomenes’ imitation of Lycurgus was worthy of praise, not derision. Plutarch does not mention this earlier contempt of Cleomenes’ Lycurgan project at all, not even after Cleomenes’ long speech laying out his Lycurgan precedents for the slaying of the ephors (10). At that moment of

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218 In the Imperial period, Lycurgus was present in Sparta, as an object of religious cult. Moreover, we have epigraphic records showing that the deified Lycurgus at times even held the title of *patronomos*, which perhaps signified that the duties of the *patronomos* were paid for out of the treasury of the sanctuary. Cf. Spawforth (2002) 197 n.12, 202 n.19.
violent upheaval, Plutarch omits any voices of dissent, giving the reader the impression that Cleomenes’ violent actions had silenced all opposition. In this way, Plutarch modifies the pattern he set in the *Life of Agis*: instead of expressing the expectations of the internal audience as predictions for the future, he presents the internal audience’s reaction to what has happened and analeptic revision of their earlier, unspoken expectations.

The final segment of the narrative of failed revival in each of the Spartan *Lives* has three main features: a personalization of the declining political situation, a spectacular death scene, and an explanation for why the revival failed. In both cases, Plutarch conflates the personal tragedy of the protagonist with the public tragedy of Sparta. As Plutarch examines the personal implications and motivations of the king’s public downfall, the reader sees Cleomenes as a husband, father, brother, and son. His loss of control of Argos and other allies (21) is followed by the death of his beloved wife Agiatis (22). Though Plutarch describes Cleomenes’ devotion to his wife as extraordinary, he asserts that his grief remained within proper limits.\(^{219}\) Instead of endless lamentation, he mourned as much as was customary and then promptly returned to the care of the state. Plutarch calls Agiatis’ death “no less a misfortune” (οὐκ ἔλαττονα…δυστυχίαν) than his defeat abroad, equating familial and military losses for the first time in the narrative. Similarly, Cleomenes’s reaction to his brother’s death during the battle of Sellasia equated personal and public loss: “I have lost you, my dearest brother, I have lost you, you noble heart, you great example to Spartan boys, you theme

\(^{219}\) Plutarch tells us that Cleomenes regularly came home from campaign out of love for his wife, hardly the expected practice for a Spartan king. Cleomenes mourns in accordance with his nobility and station, and does not let personal grief get in the way of the public need, cf. 22.2.
for a song to Spartan wives!” (28.4) Personal tragedy is public tragedy: by portraying Cleomenes’ losses of close family members as equally losses for the Spartan people, Plutarch builds the reader’s sympathy for Cleomenes and reinforces the idea that the misfortunes of a single man were the misfortunes of the Spartans at large.

This conflation of personal and public concerns ties together the intimate scenes that lead up to the spectacular death sequence in Alexandria. When Cleomenes discovered that Ptolemy demanded his mother Cratesicleia and his children as hostages for the assistance he was sending to the Spartans, Plutarch depicts an exchange between mother and son that emphasizes the priority of Spartan welfare over personal welfare (22.4-5):

Τέλος δὲ τοῦ Κλεομένους ἀποτολμήσαντος εἶπεν, ἐξεγέλασε τε μέγα καὶ “Τοῦτ’ ἦν,” εἶπεν, “ὁ πολλάκις ὀρμήσας λέγειν ἀπεδείλιασας; Ὦν θάττον ἡμᾶς ἐνθέμενος εἰς πλοῖον ἀποστελεῖς, ὅπου ποτὲ τῇ Σπάρτῃ νομίζεις τὸ σῶμα τοῦτο χρησιμώτατον ἔσεσθαι, πρὶν ύπὸ γῆρας αὐτοῦ καθήμενον διαλυθῆναι.” Πάντων σοῦ ἑτοίμων γενομένων, ἀφίκοντο μὲν εἰς Ταῖναρον πεζῷ, καὶ προὔπεμπεν ἡ δύναμις αὐτοῦς ἐν τοῖς ὀπλοῖς· μέλλουσα δὲ τῆς νεώς ἐπιβαίνειν ἡ Κρατησίκλεια τὸν Κλεομένη μόνον εἰς τὸν νέον τοῦ Ποσειδόνος ἄπηγαγε, καὶ περιβαλοῦσα καὶ κατασπασμένη διαλυοῦντα καὶ συντεταραγμένον “Ἄγε,” εἶπεν, “ὦ βασιλεῦ Λακεδαιμονίων, ὅπως ἐπὶ ἔξω γενομένη μηδές ἵνα διακρύνοντας ἡμᾶς μηδ’ ἀνάξιον τί τῆς Σπάρτῆς ποιοῦντας. τοῦτο γὰρ ἐφ’ ἡμῖν μόνον· αἱ τύχαι δ’ ὅπως ἂν ὁ δαίμων διδό χάρισμα.”

When Cleomenes finally dared to speak of the matter, [Cratesicleia] laughed loudly and said: “Was the this thing that you often began to say but did not finish out of fear? Won’t you quickly put us on a ship and send us away to wherever you think this body will be of the most use to Sparta, before it is destroyed by old age sitting around here?” Accordingly, when all things were ready, they came to Taenarus on foot, while the army escorted them under arms. And as Cratesicleia was about to embark, she drew Cleomenes aside by himself into the temple of Poseidon, and after embracing and kissing him in his anguish and deep trouble, said: “Come, O King of the Lacedaemonians, so that when we go out no one may see us weeping or doing anything unworthy of Sparta. For this alone is in our power; but fortune will be as the god grants it.”

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220 In Chapter Six, we will consider the reception of this scene in the poetry of C.P. Cavafy.
This scene is parallel to the scenes of female courage from the *Agis*, particularly the examples of Chilonis and Agesistrata. Bradley Buszard notes that even the setting of Cratesicleia’s second speech, the temple of Poseidon, is the same as the setting of Chilonis’ speech.\(^{221}\) Just as with Chilonis and Agesistrata, Plutarch’s vivid portrayal of maternal tenderness is surely meant to stir the reader’s emotions. Unlike Chilonis, who resented being the collateral damage of royal politics, Cratesicleia was eager to be of use to Sparta, even when doing so put her own well-being at risk. Plutarch’s emphasis in this scene is on the sacrifice of personal interests to public welfare, and contributes to the personalization and emotional power of the narrative.

Plutarch’s narrative of the aftermath of Sellasia continues the theme of the sacrifice of personal well-being for the welfare of Sparta, but also underlines that Cleomenes’ failure and death are a foregone conclusion. Upon returning home from his defeat, he told the Spartans to receive Antigonus, but promised to pursue the best course of action for Sparta, whether it required his life or his death (29.1). Plutarch leaves it to the reader to discern Cleomenes’ mental state of anguish and determination from his painterly description of the defeated general at home, neither eating, drinking, disarming, or even sitting before he devised his plan of action (29.2-3). Cleomenes decided the best plan of action was to sail to Alexandria and petition Ptolemy for ships, money, and soldiers to fight back against Antigonus. After this decision, Plutarch includes an exchange of speeches between Cleomenes and his companion Therycion on whether the king’s life or death was truly the best course (31). This scene adds suspense by drawing out Cleomenes’ departure from Greece, but more importantly, it foregrounds the

\(^{221}\) Buszard (2010) 95.
inevitability and futility of Cleomenes’ death now that a Spartan revival has become impossible. Therycion argued that the best death, one on the field of Sellasia, has passed them by, but that a death “second in virtue and glory” was still available to them: suicide while they could see Lacedaemon. Cleomenes, however, reacts to Therycion’s speech with contempt, and called a flight from life at this time a more shameful flight than their current escape from Greece. This speech is a natural progression from the earlier scenes conflating personal and public welfare. Plutarch has prepared the reader for Cleomenes’ avowal that his life is worth living if and only if it is worthy of and for the benefit of Sparta. This serves to conjoin the fortune of Cleomenes with the fortune of Sparta so that Plutarch’s narrative of the tragic fall of Cleomenes is the tragedy of Sparta herself.

This tragedy comes to end in spectacular fashion with the death of Cleomenes and his companions in Alexandria (37.6-38.6). Plutarch describes Cleomenes and his men as they escaped their house-arrest and took to the streets in full armor, hoping to still suffer a death worthy of Sparta. Even though the Spartan king’s death was imminent at this point, Plutarch continues to build the suspense by narrating how the Alexandrians simply looked on and refused to join in battle, leaving the Spartans to take their own lives. He further deepens the pathos of the scene with a detailed description of Panteus, the king’s closest companion, as he dutifully checked that all the others were dead before he embraced the king’s corpus and killed himself. We are then shown the effect of the report of Cleomenes’ death on the Spartan women still left in the court: Cratesicleia uncharacteristically lost her composure as she lamented her son, and one of Cleomenes’ sons attempted suicide. The ensuing scene of the women’s deaths in the court has a structure that closely parallels the men’s deaths, including a digression on Panteus’
dutiful wife, who, like her husband, ministered to each Spartan woman before submitting herself to the noose. Plutarch explicitly casts these paired scenes in a tragic light when he says: “So, then, Sparta, bringing her women’s tragedy into emulous competition with that of her men, showed the world that in the last extremity Virtue cannot be outraged by Fortune” (39.1).

Just as in the *Agis*, Plutarch here paints a tableau of both Spartan men and women displaying virtue in death. His capstone moral binds together the second half of the *Cleomenes* to create a narrative of simultaneous moral victory and political defeat. Seen in this light, Plutarch presents Cleomenes’ failure to maintain a Spartan revival as due to bad luck, effectively exculpating Cleomenes for his own role in his downfall. Plutarch emphasizes the role of *Tyche* throughout the second half of the narrative: from Cleomenes’ ill-timed sickness which postponed his negotiations with the Achaeans and “ruined the cause of Greece” (16.1); to the misfortune of his wife’s death (δυστυχία, 22.1); to the unfortunate timing of Sellasia (17);\(^{222}\) to Ptolemy Euergetes’ death and Philopator’s accession (32-33.1). In every case, Plutarch attributes Cleomenes’ defeats not to personal traits or past actions, but to the whims of fate. By closing the narrative in this way, Plutarch ends on a rather generous and sympathetic note, eliding the many concerns about Cleomenes’ character, his commitment to a Lycurgan-Spartan revival, and the manner in which he achieved his successes.

As we have now seen in detail, the *Lives of Agis and Cleomenes* are tragic narratives of failed revivals: both Agis and Cleomenes found themselves in a decadent

\(^{222}\) Plutarch claims that if Cleomenes had delayed only two more days, than Antigonus would have been recalled to Macedonian to deal with an invasion of the Illyrians; Antigonus died in the immediate aftermath of that campaign, so in this alternate ending, the Greeks would have been saved from the Macedonian threat.
Sparta, both had characters and desires which led them to endeavor to resurrect the past, and both men, after inspiring hope (and fear) in those around them with their successes, succumbed to a reversal of fortunes which ended with their deaths and the abandonment of their revivalist programs. At the end of each biography, Plutarch assumes a pathetic tone in his narrative, especially in the paired scenes of men’s and women’s deaths, to induce in his reader a feeling of pity for the failure of the protagonist’s noble aims. He chooses to paint Agis’ flaws as virtues, and to emphasize Cleomenes’ virtue over his misdeeds. Although Plutarch displays genuine admiration and nostalgia as the Spartan tragedy finally comes to an end, we should not mistake this for the biographer’s absolution of Cleomenes’ or Agis’ failings. The very fact that the Lives of Agis and Cleomenes display so many tragic features suggests that Plutarch wants the reader to consider why the very nobility of a plan to revive the Lycurgan past could not prevent both Agis and Cleomenes from failure.

For Plutarch, the end of the Life is not necessarily the end of the story; in the synkrisis with the Gracchi, Plutarch places a particular emphasis on the figure of Lycurgus as a determining factor for Spartan endeavors. A close reading of the speeches of Agis and Cleomenes reveals that Plutarch suggests a disjunction between the Spartans’ rhetoric of revival and their actual faithfulness to the precedents of Lycurgus. By reading these speeches against both the Life of Lycurgus and the synkrisis between the Spartans and the Gracchi, it becomes apparent that Plutarch portrays both protagonists (especially Cleomenes) as manipulators of the Lycurgan tradition for their own political ends, rather than faithful adherents to it. In this way, Plutarch further cautions the reader to be wary of those in their own time who claim to be reviving the past.
III. Agis, Cleomenes, and the Manipulation of the Spartan Mirage

To examine Plutarch’s representation of Agis and Cleomenes’ use of Lycurgan rhetoric in their revival platforms is to enter into the disorienting realm of the Spartan mirage, and so our analysis of the speeches will benefit from a brief discussion of what is meant by this term. Initially developed by Francoise Ollier in *Le mirage spartiate* (1933), Paul Cartledge has recently defined the Spartan mirage as “the partly distorted, partly invented image created by and for non-Spartans (with not a little help from their Spartan friends) of what Sparta ideally represented.”223 It is an amalgamation of customs, laws, and traditions, originating in different historical contexts and found in different ancient sources, but all attributed to an imagined ancient Sparta. Plutarch himself is one of our most important sources for the idealization of Sparta: Piccirilli calls his *Life of Lycurgus* “la più preziosa fonte d’informazione circa quel fenomeno d’idealizzazione di Sparta che va sotto il nome di mirage spartiate.”224 Although it originated from the ancient sources themselves, the “mirage” has continued to be propagated by modern historians of Sparta. In the past, historians gave equal weight to sources as various in historical context and purpose as Alcman, Tyrtaeus, Herodotus, Xenophon, Polybius, and Plutarch in order to create a synchronic account of Spartan religious, social, and political institutions. In doing so, they created a monolithic and

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223 Cartledge (1987) 188. Other seminal works on this topic include Tigerstedt (1965-1978), which traces the phenomenon in Greece and Rome, and Rawson (1969), which follows the afterlife of the Spartan myth in European thought.

224 Piccirilli (1980) xxvi. Of the *Parallel Lives*, the *Lycurgus, Lysander, Agesilaus, Agis and Cleomenes* have Spartan protagonists; included among the *Moralia* are * Spartan Institutions, Sayings of Spartan Men*, and *Sayings of Spartan Women*, which are generally agreed to not be Plutarch’s own writings, but instead some of the notes he used in preparing his Spartan *Lives*. 
statistic concept of Sparta that elided diachronic differences. Given the nature of our sources about Sparta, however, such a synchronic approach produces misleading results, and further deceives students of Spartan history to mistake the “mirage” for an accurate representation of a given point or period in time. The more recent works of Hodkinson on property and wealth in Sparta and Kennell on Spartan education are examples of studies that take into account these difficulties and attempt to sort through the layers of accretions in the sources in order to produce diachronic accounts of Spartan institutions. Such attempts are complicated by the difficulty of separating what material originates from Phylarchus, Polybius, or lost Hellenistic constitutional treatises from what Plutarch himself has added or adapted in his Spartan Lives. Even when scholars are able to securely determine when a certain narrative about Sparta originated, it is far more difficult to establish whether that narrative reflects or distorts a contemporary reality.

If the “mirage” is Sparta as it was imagined (and often still is), then Lycourugus is its imaginary and eternal hero. Spartan traditions and laws were commonly attributed to or purported to be based upon the civil framework established by the legendary lawgiver; the terms πάτριος and παλαιός are “virtually synonymous” with ‘of Lycurgus’ in the context of Spartan laws and institutions. Plutarch is aware of the difficulties of discerning the truth about Lycurgus, as he makes clear in the preface to the Life of Lycurgus (1.1):

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225 See Hodkinson (2000) 65-75 for criticism of these tendencies within scholarship on Spartan property.
226 Hodkinson (2000) and Kennell (1995). Kennell in particular tends to speculate on these intermediate sources, and then base his arguments about the agoge on those speculations, which results in a tenuous account, despite Kennell’s confident tone.
Περὶ Λυκούργου τοῦ νομοθέτου καθόλου μὲν οὐδὲν ἔστιν εἰπεῖν ἀναμφισβήτητον, οὗ γε καὶ γένος καὶ ἀποδημία καὶ τελευτὴ καὶ πρὸς ἀπασιν ἤ περὶ τοὺς νόμους αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν πολιτείαν πραγματεία διαφόρους ἔσχηκεν ἱστορίας...

Concerning Lycurgus the lawgiver, in general, nothing can be said that is not disputed, since indeed his birth, travels, death, and above all, of his work as a lawmaker and a statesman have had different accounts...

The conflicting attributions to Lycurgus in Plutarch’s sources on Sparta are not necessarily evidence for Lycurgus’ own contradictions or the incompetence of ancient historians of Sparta, but rather suggest a process of Spartan reinventions of Lycurgus as circumstances demanded. Michael Flower explores how political exigencies in Classical and Hellenistic Sparta triggered the invention of “new” Lycurgan traditions that were claimed to be long-lost rather than innovative.228 These invented traditions then became part of the “mirage” and were believed by later authors to be authentically Lycurgan. Flower argues persuasively that many of the ancient Lycurgan customs referred to in the Lives of Agis and Cleomenes were inventions of this sort, fabricated in the context of the third-century social upheavals to give an air of ancient authority to novel reforms. The prevalence of invented traditions in Sparta is partially a consequence of the aversion to written laws in Archaic Sparta, a phenomenon that undoubtedly facilitated the manipulation of Lycurgus’ legacy by later generations.229 Therefore, claiming an affinity

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228 Flower (2002).
229 Plutarch claims in Lyc. 13.1-3 that Lycurgus produced a rhetra which explicitly banned written laws, supposedly thinking that laws would be more permanent if they were etched into men’s souls by proper education. This, however, is the earliest attestation of such a ban on written laws in Sparta, and no classical sources allude to it. Millender (2001) 132-7 argues that there must have been some written laws in archaic Sparta, in particular the so-called Great Rhetra, but that it is an accident of the archaeological record that none of these documents are preserved. I agree with the assessment of Flower (2002) n. 40, who says that “such written laws would never have been numerous and I am not convinced that the Great Rhetra consisted of much more than what is quoted by Plutarch.”
to Lycurgus and actually *having* an affinity to Lycurgus were separate issues that would have been difficult to verify against archival documents. Spartan statesmen, then, could elide this distinction by means of invented traditions. The speeches of Agis and Cleomenes demonstrate Plutarch’s awareness of the fact that Lycurgus and Sparta’s institutional history had long been manipulated and re-invented by statesmen throughout her history.

Both in the *Life of Agis* and in the *Life of Cleomenes*, Plutarch includes a long speech of the protagonist, beginning in indirect discourse and ending in direct discourse (*Agis* 10.2-4, *Cleom.* 10). Long speeches, direct or indirect, are rather infrequent in the *Lives*, so it is remarkable that Agis and Cleomenes each give one. Plutarch places each of the Spartans’ speeches at the moments in their respective narratives when their intentions of reform are made patently clear to the Spartan citizenry: for Agis, after his reforms were presented in the general assembly; for Cleomenes, after the assassination of the ephors and posting of an exile-list. Both speeches are defenses of the platform of reforms that the kings hoped to achieve, and in both speeches the kings rely on precedents from Lycurgus to validate and give authority to their programs. I posit, then, that by this structural and rhetorical parallelism, Plutarch invites his reader to examine the claims made in these speeches not only on their own merits, but also in comparison with each other. Plutarch presents his own assessment of these speeches in the narrative of

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230 Other long speeches in the *Lives*: *Otho* 15.4-8; *Aem.* 36.2-9; *Pyrrh.* 19.1-4 (Ap. Claudius Caecus); *Arist.* 12.1-3. There has not yet been a comprehensive study of Plutarch’s use of speeches in the *Lives*: it has been generally accepted that speeches are not an important part of Plutarch’s narratives, and Wardman (1971) argues that “sayings” are the biographer’s substitution for speeches, a move which is necessitated by the concision of the biographical form. Buzsard (2010) concentrates on women’s speeches in the *Lives*. My own suggestion is that Agis and Cleomenes’ speechifying is emphasized in order to create a closer parallel with the rhetorically-gifted Gracchi.
these *Lives* by means of the tone and content of the surrounding narrative and with implicit references to his *Life of Lycurgus*. I argue, moreover, that Plutarch also responds to Cleomenes’ speech at length in the *synkrisis* of the double-pair. However much of the narrative we attribute to the Phylarchan source-text, Plutarch’s statements and evaluations in the *synkrisis* are undoubtedly his own. The nature of the formal *synkrisis* allows Plutarch to express his opinions about his subjects in a space that is divorced from the narrative context. In what follows, I demonstrate that Plutarch’s admiration for Agis and Cleomenes’ ancient precedents is in tension with his contempt for the distance between the kings’ claims and their actual achievements.

Agis’ speech was given in a general assembly after Lysander had introduced the reforms to both the *gerousia* and general assembly (8-9.1), as a response to Leonidas’ doubts about Agis’ Lycurgan precedents. Leonidas first asked Agis if he thought Lycurgus was a just and noble man (δίκαιον ἄνδρα καὶ σπουδαῖον), to which Agis assented. Then Leonidas asked Agis when Lycurgus ever abolished debts or admitted foreigners to the citizenry (as Agis was now proposing to do); he described Lycurgus as “a man who believed the state was not at all healthy (οὐδ’ ὁλως…ὑγιαίνειν) unless it practiced the expulsion of foreigners” (10.2). This line of questioning gave Agis the opportunity to attack Leonidas’ own foreign habits and upbringing and to explicate more fully the Lycurgan precedents for his reforms. Agis argued first that Lycurgus had banned debts and loans when he banned coinage; whether this ban was a historical reality

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231 As I have said above, the *Life of Lycurgus* is a fully-realized construction of the “Spartan mirage”; I do not take it to be necessarily useful for reconstructing a historically realistic description of Lycurgus, but rather as a text which allows us to clearly see what Plutarch believed Lycurgus was like.

232 On the origins, historiography, and social purpose of the Spartan practice of *xenelasia*, see Figueira (2003).
is irrelevant: what matter here is that Plutarch does not question the plausibility of Agis’ appeal to this ban as a Lycuran precedent in a public forum. He then corrected Leonidas’ confusion about Lycurgus’ expulsion of foreigners (10.3):

…τῶν δ’ ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι ξένων τοὺς τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ ταῖς διαίταις ἀσυμφύλους μᾶλλον ἐδυσχέραινε: καὶ γὰρ ἐκείνους ἠλαύνεν οὗ τοῖς σώμασι πολεμῶν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς βίους αὐτῶν καὶ τοὺς τρόπους δεδιώκει, μὴ συναναχροννύμενοι τοῖς πολίταις τρυφῆς καὶ μαλακίας καὶ πλεονεξίας ἐντέκωσι ζῆλον…

…more than with foreigners in the cities, [Lycurgus] was displeased with men who were not congenial to his practices and lifestyle; indeed, he drove them out, not because he was hostile to their persons, but because he feared their lives and ways, lest they should contaminate the citizens and breed in them a lust for luxury, effeminacy, and greed…

As Agis presented it, the issue for Lycurgus was not xenophobia per se as much as a fear that his Spartans could be corrupted by foreign morals. Earlier in the Life of Agis, Plutarch presents Leonidas as an example of someone was corrupted in just that way, having learned greed and softness in the Seleucid court (3.6). Agis then offered Terpander, Thales, and Pherecydes as examples of foreigners who were highly honored in Sparta because of their promotion of Lycuran ideals. In the final words of the speech, Agis called attention to Leonidas’ hypocrisy once again: while Leonidas had praised the ephors who had cut the extra strings off of Phrynis and Timotheus’ lyres in order to remove the musical excess and effeminacy of the New Music, Leonidas

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233 For discussions of money and moveable property in Sparta, see Hodkinson (2000) 151-186; for an exploration of the myth of iron money, see Christien (2002).
234 Terpander was a Lesbian poet from the first half of the 7th century BC, thought to be the founder of Greek classical music; Thales of Miletus and Pherecydes of Syros were Pre-Socratic philosophers of the late 7th and early 6th centuries BC.
nevertheless attacked Agis, who wanted to act like those ephors and correct a city “whose excess and discord has made the city dissonant and out of tune with itself” (10.4).²³⁵

In general, Agis’ speech agrees with Plutarch’s depiction of Lycurgus’ reforms in the *Life of Lycurgus*. On the topic of currency, Plutarch claims that Lycurgus banned gold and silver coinage, only allowing large and unwieldy iron money. Plutarch’s evaluation of this ban resembles Agis’ speech (*Lyc.* 9.2):

> Τούτου δὲ κυρωθέντος ἔξεσεν ἄδικημάτων γένη πολλὰ τῆς Λακεδαίμονος. Τίς γὰρ ἢ κλέπτειν ἢ μελέλλειν ἢ δωροδοκεῖν ἢ ἀποστερεῖν ἢ ἀρπάζειν ὃ μὴτε κατακρύψαι δυνατὸν ἢν μὴτε κεκτῆσθαι ζηλωτόν, ἀλλὰ μηδὲ κατακόψαι λυσιτελές;

When this was decreed, many sorts of injustices went into exile from Lacedaemon. For who would steal, take a bribe, rob, or plunder that which could neither be concealed, nor desirable to possess, nor even profitable to cut to pieces?

Just as Agis’ speech argues that the ban on currency prevented loans and debts, Plutarch claims the ban’s power to eradicate theft, bribery, and other greed-motivated crimes.

Moreover, Plutarch’s explanation of Lycurgus’ expulsion of foreigners and ban on Spartans living abroad resonates with Agis’ speech. Lycurgus’ goal was to “fill the city full of good examples” (*Lyc.* 27.2), and Plutarch attributes his apparently xenophobic decrees to a desire to control the influences on Spartan ethics, so that new doctrines might not destroy the harmonious order Lycurgus had established. Plutarch even uses similar language in both the *Lycurgus* and Agis’ speech, particularly when he says that Lycurgus thought than the protection of his people from bad morals and customs was more important that protection from infectious diseases (*σωμάτων νοσερων*, *Lyc.* 27.4), picking up the medical imagery of both ὑγιαίνειν in Leonidas’ initial question and

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²³⁵ Phrynis and Timotheus were 4th century BC poets who infamously tried to shake up the Greek musical system. For a full discussion of the so-called “New Music”, see West (1993).
συναναχρωννόμενοι in Agis’ response. Given these similarities, we can confidently suggest that Plutarch guides his reader to approve Agis’ speech (and reforms) because of its faithfulness to Plutarch’s representation of Lycurgus.

Furthermore, in the chapters immediately preceding and following the speech, Plutarch adds details that give the appearance that Agis’ actions were firmly rooted in Spartan tradition. First are the oracles that came to light when the gerousia was divided about Agis’ rhetra. The earlier oracles (how much earlier Plutarch does not say) “warned them to beware of the love of riches as a fatal thing for Sparta” (9.1). A more recent oracle emanated from the temple of Pasiphae at Thalamae, and ordained that “all Spartans should be equal according to the original law made by Lycurgus” (9.3). Not only did these oracles corroborate Agis’ program, but the more recent oracle explicitly characterized the reform as a return to Lycurgus’ original law. Then, following Agis’ speech, Plutarch recounts the means by which Leonidas was driven into exile: an ancient (παλαιόν) law, forbade any descendant of Heracles from having a child with a foreign woman and sentenced to death any Spartan who left the city to settle about foreigners (11.2). A prohibition on Spartans living abroad is mentioned by Xenophon in his Constitution of the Spartans, who records that such a prohibition once existed, but was no longer in force in his own time. He makes no mention of the death-penalty, however, so we may presume that this was an intensification of this ancient prohibition added by Agis’ supporters. As a second means of justification, the ephors observed a sign, a 9-yearly ritual that seems to have coincided rather opportunely with this conflict between

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Agis and Leonidas (11.3). This sign, whatever it was, indicated that one of the kings was acting unlawfully, thereby providing Agis’ allies with an excuse for indicting Leonidas. Subsequently, the ephor Lysander produced witnesses to testify to Leonidas’ foreign family, and he was driven into exile (11.4). This is a lot of work to justify the means to Agis’ ends of reform, and Plutarch takes care to explain each step and Spartan idiosyncrasy to his reader. From this narrative, Agis’ actions seem to be tied to a rich and venerable fabric of Spartan customs and traditions, originating from Lycurgus himself.

Cleomenes also delivered his speech in a general assembly, but one that he himself convoked after he ordered the assassination of the ephors and posted a list of eighty citizens to be exiled. Cleomenes began with a history of the Spartan constitution. He traced a development from Lycurgus’ creation of a state with two kings and a gerousia, to the addition of ephors as a consequence of the prolonged Messenian Wars, to the recent past, when the ephors stopped being assistants and began accruing their own power. This, he argued, finally created a situation where the ephors had the power to exile a king (Leonidas), execute a king (Agis), and “threaten such as desired to behold again in Sparta her fairest and most divinely-inspired constitution” (Cleom. 10.3).

Cleomenes then shifted from a history of the problem to a defense of his solution, the killing of the ephors. He claimed that ideally Sparta’s problems would have been solved without bloodshed, and if that had been so, he would have considered himself a fortunate and wise king; unfortunately, that was not the case. He defended his actions by comparing his circumstance to that of Lycurgus (10.4):

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237 On the possible invention of the ephor-sign, see Flower (2002) 197-198. Such a ritual is attested in no earlier sources on Sparta, a fact that casts doubt on its venerable origin.
But as it was, he had Lycurgus as a precedent for his present necessity, who though he was neither king nor ruler, but was a private citizen, tried to be a king and entered the marketplace with an army, so that Charilaus the king was afraid and fled for refuge to an altar. But that king, since he was a loyal patriot, quickly shared with Lycurgus in his measures and welcomed the change of the constitution; and Lycurgus, by this deed, bore witness to the fact that it is difficult to change a constitution without violence and fear.

Even though Lycurgus’ actions spoke to the need for violence and fear as tools of politics, Cleomenes claimed that he himself resorted to these with the greatest moderation (10.5: μετριώτατα). The close of his speech, in direct discourse, is an announcement of Cleomenes’ reforms (property redistribution, abolition of debts, admittance of foreigners into the citizenry), the goal of which was to save Sparta from the external threats she was exposed to due to her oliganthropia (10.6).

Immediately following the speech, there is no reaction from either the narrator or an internal audience. Plutarch instead tells us how Cleomenes brought to fruition all the reforms intended by Agis: private property became common and was redistributed among citizens; those men who were exiled were reserved a parcel of land for their return after everything had settled down; Cleomenes filled up the citizen-numbers with perioikoi, whom he outfitted with the Macedonian sarissa; and he restored the agoge and the syssitia under the guidance of Sphairus of Borysthenes (11). The final measure Plutarch lists, that Cleomenes associated himself in the kingship with his brother Eucleidas, draws the biographer’s comment: “This was the only time when the Spartans had two kings from the same house” (11.2). Though Plutarch does not expand on that comment, by
ending the chapter with such a novelty, it creates some doubt about whether the rest of Cleomenes’ reform measures were more restorative or innovative.

Cleomenes’ speech diverges somewhat from Plutarch’s image of Lycurgus in the *Life of Lycurgus*. Marasco argues that the disjunction between Cleomenes’ speech and Plutarch’s vision of Lycurgus is due to the fact that the former is a polemical rhetorical piece and the latter is an antiquarian exposition. While this is a valid point, it still stands to reason that Plutarch chose to make Cleomenes misinterpret Lycurgus to illustrate a larger issue about the rhetorical of revival. Admittedly, his speech concurs on general points of constitutional development with the *Lycurgus*. There Plutarch says that Lycurgus created a constitution that had only two branches, the kings and the *gerousia*, and that the ephors were a later addition. Plutarch claims that the ephorate was established 130 years after Lycurgus, in the reign of Theopompus, roughly in line with Cleomenes’ chronology. Beyond that, the two accounts differ markedly. Cleomenes added another stage in the development of the ephorate, when the ephor Asteropus added more weight to the office; this is absent from the *Lycurgus*. Later in the *Lycurgus*, moreover, Plutarch goes so far as to say that the ephorate in fact strengthened Sparta, and despite being thought to be a bulwark of the people, was really in the service of the aristocracy (*Lyc.* 29.6). Cleomenes implied quite the opposite, i.e. that the ephors became a burden on the state and endangered the sanctity of the kings. In terms of general plot, Cleomenes’ description of the development of Spartan civil institutions

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239 *Lyc.* 5.6-8, 6.3-5, 7.
conformed to Plutarch’s narrative of the process elsewhere, but in the interpretation of this development, Cleomenes’ speech and the *Life of Lycurgus* are in conflict.

The gap between Cleomenes’ Lycurgan rhetoric and the version of Lycurgus that Plutarch gives in his *Life* becomes even more apparent when we consider Cleomenes’ arguments about violence and fear as necessary evils of reform in light of Plutarch’s assessment of Cleomenes in the *synkrisis*. In a section assessing the protagonists’ qualities as politicians, Plutarch blames Agis for being too mild and Cleomenes for being too brash, especially with regards to the killing of the ephors. Here Plutarch reuses the “statesman as physician” metaphor that appeared in Cleomenes’ speech, but exploits its negative connotations (*Comp. Ag., Cleom., et Gracch.* 4.2):

Τὸ γὰρ ἄνευ τῆς ἐσχάτης ἀνάγκης ἐπιφέρειν σίδηρον οὔτ' ἰατρικὸν οὔτε πολιτικόν, ἀλλ’ ἀτεχνίας μὲν ἀμφότερα, τούτῳ δὲ καὶ τὸ ἀδικεῖν μετ’ ὠμότητος πρόσεστι.

For a resort to the knife, except under most extreme necessity, is neither doctor-like nor statesman-like, but in both cases shows a lack of skill, and in the case of the statesman there is added both injustice and cruelty.

In the speech, Cleomenes only says that he would have been like a wise physician if he had effected change bloodlessly; in the *synkrisis*, Plutarch clearly lays out for his reader what Cleomenes actually was like – unskilled, unjust, and cruel. By reusing the medical metaphor from Cleomenes’ speech, Plutarch highlights the discrepancy between what Cleomenes said he was doing and what he actually did and encourages the reader to re-evaluate Cleomenes’ actions.

The next section of the *synkrisis* addresses the greatest accusations against the Gracchi and Cleomenes. The accusations against Cleomenes are the slaughter of the ephors, the freeing of slaves, and Cleomenes’ virtual monarchy after the murder of Archidamus (*Comp. Ag., Cleom., et Gracch.* 5.1-2). Although in the *Life* Plutarch seems
to absolve Cleomenes of guilt for this murder (cf. *Cleom. 5.3-4*), he nevertheless argues in the *synkrisis* that Cleomenes drew guilt upon himself for not prosecuting the murderers. These are the accusations a reader may have expected before or immediately following Cleomenes’ speech; this passage fulfills the expectation Plutarch created in the narrative when he framed Cleomenes’ *apologia* as unprovoked. Just as we saw with the medical metaphors, Plutarch’s language and argument closely mimics what we find in the speech and thus invites the reader to compare Plutarch’s arguments with those of Cleomenes. Plutarch refers to the story of Charilaus and Lycurgus, “whom he [Cleomenes] professed to imitate” (*Comp. Ag., Cleom., et Gracch. 5.2: ὃν προσεποιεῖτο μιμεῖσθαι*), thereby directly recalling Cleomenes’ use of it in his speech. Plutarch’s narration of Lycurgus’ return to Sparta and the initial stages of his revolution does accord with Cleomenes’ speech in that it also depicts Lycurgus resorting to violence and terrorism in order to bring about his reforms, and the subsequent flight and return of Charilaus (*Lyc. 5.4, 5*). In the *synkrisis*, however, Plutarch relates an earlier part of the Lycurgus-Charilaus story, in which Lycurgus chose to leave Sparta and surrendered the kingship to his nephew Charilaus, lest he be blamed for any foul play that might have threatened the young king (*Comp. Ag., Cleom., et Gracch. 5.3; cf. Lyc. 3.5*). Plutarch’s emphasis here is on Lycurgus’ mercy and forethought, while Cleomenes’ focus was on his willingness to use terror-tactics in bringing about political change. This is where Cleomenes got it wrong: in the *synkrisis* between Lycurgus and Numa, Plutarch expresses disdain for Lycurgus’ use of force (βίας) against the people, and gives this as the final reason why Numa is to be preferred to Lycurgus (*Comp. Numa et Lyc. 4.8*).
Therefore, Cleomenes, in Plutarch’s estimation, imitated one of Lycurgus’ less admirable traits, rather than his justice.

Plutarch caps this discussion by saying (Comp. Ag., Cleom., et Gracchi. 5.2):

Ἀλλὰ Λυκούργῳ μὲν οὐδ’ ἄλλος τις Ἑλλήνων παραβλητός οὐδείς· ὅτι δὲ τοῖς Κλεομένους πολιτεύμασι καινοτομία καὶ παρανομία μείζονες ἔνεισι, δεδήλωται.

But no one of the Greeks can be compared with Lycurgus at all; but, that greater innovations and illegalities were present in Cleomenes’ political measures, has been made clear.

Within the narrative of the Life of Cleomenes, Plutarch does not openly question the Lycurcan pedigree of Cleomenes’ reforms, so this evaluation in the synkrisis has surprised some readers. As I have argued, however, the resonances between the synkrisis and the speech of Cleomenes demonstrate that Plutarch had not carelessly forgotten his earlier narrative, nor had he ficklely changed his mind, but rather was consciously and purposefully interacting with his earlier narrative. Plutarch is not a regurgitator of the Spartan mirage, but instead judiciously engages with representations of the Spartan past. Where a narratorial or narrative-internal response to Cleomenes’ speech was absent, this allusive evaluation in the synkrisis fills that gap and challenges the reader to compare his own response to Cleomenes with that of Plutarch. The synkrisis between the Spartans and the Gracchi demonstrates that Plutarch’s approval of Agis and Cleomenes’ reforms is not as unconditional as it may seem from the narratives of their Lives. While the Lives

241 There is some question as to the force of μείζονες: is Plutarch saying that Cleomenes performed greater illegalities and innovations than Lycurgus, or as Perrin takes it, the Gracchi with whom he was being formally compared? Perrin (1921) 251 translates: “…but that the political measures of Cleomenes were marked by greater innovations and illegalities than those of the Gracchi, is evident.” (emphasis mine) I believe that the Greek clearly implies the former: since the Gracchi have not been mentioned since 5.1, the comparative goes more naturally with Lycurgus.

make it clear that he approves of the Lycurgan precedent they chose, the *synkrisis* is evidence that Plutarch is critical of the Lycurgus they created and their misuse of revivalist rhetoric to advance *political* measures that were illegal and innovative, rather than truly based on Lycurgan precedents.

IV. **Problematizing the Living Past**

While the *Aratus* stresses the continuity between third century BC Greece and Plutarch’s own world, the *Lives of Agis and Cleomenes* highlight instead the discontinuities between the Archaic and Hellenistic worlds – and by analogy, between the Archaic and Imperial worlds – that made political revivals in the Greek *poleis* an impossible dream. The narrative structure and the specific responses to the rhetoric of revival in the *Agis and Cleomenes* suggest that Plutarch is deeply concerned with whether it is beneficial or appropriate for Greeks to attempt to revive their past political independence and glory. Like the imitation of Alexander and the proper way for a Greek statesman to interact with a foreign overlord, reviving the past is a phenomenon that is inaccessible in Plutarch’s *Lives* of Archaic and Classical Greeks: they were the men who *created* historical precedents, not those who *followed* them. Thus, the Hellenistic *Lives* are uniquely suited to exploring an issue that was pertinent to the civic life of Greeks in the Roman Empire.

The *Agis and Cleomenes* are not the only narratives of failed revival in Plutarch’s corpus; on the contrary, all of the Hellenistic Greek *Lives* can be construed as following this narrative arc. Demetrius, Pyrrhus, Agis, Cleomenes, Aratus, and Philopoemen all match this description, despite the fact that each individual tried to revive different times and circumstances: Demetrius and Pyrrhus each strove to recapture Alexander’s realm in
their own way; Agis and Cleomenes longed for the Sparta of Lycurgus; Aratus and Philopoemen looked back to a time before the Greeks were subject to the whims of the Macedonian dynasts. By patterning not just the *Agis and Cleomenes*, but all of the Hellenistic *Lives* as failures to successfully revive an idealized Greek past, Plutarch reiterates the view that the impulse of contemporary Greeks to try to return to an irretrievable past was woefully misguided. In shaping these narratives in this way, Plutarch encourages his readers to recognize the weakness of their current political position and to realize the dangers of trying to restore the Greeks to their past independence. This analysis does not conflict with Plutarch’s antiquarian interests; rather, it shows that he distinguishes between the role of the Greek past in contemporary Greek *cultural* activities and the role it ought to play in contemporary Greek *political* activities. In other words, Plutarch wants someone like Menemachus to know his history, but to recognize the facts of his present and apply historical exempla in a way that is sensitive to the realities of Imperial Greece.

What the narratives discussed thus far do not make clear is Plutarch’s vision of how and why the Greeks ultimately lost any hope of political independence, or in other words, how the Hellenistic past became the Roman present. To answer that question, we must turn to the *Philopoemen-Flamininus* pair and Plutarch’s representation of Rome’s entrance into the political affairs of Greece.
Chapter Five

Philopoemen-Flamininus: From the Hellenistic Past to the Roman Present

I. Introduction

The Isthmian Proclamation of 196 BC was a watershed moment in the relationship between Rome and the Greeks. For the first time, a Roman, Titus Quinctius Flamininus, decreed that the mainland Greeks were free to rule themselves according to their ancestral laws without the imposition of foreign garrisons and taxes.243 While liberation proclamations of this sort were commonly made by Hellenistic kings from the time of Antigonus I and Demetrius I onwards, the decree of Flamininus and the Roman senate marked a definitive shift in Roman foreign policy towards the Greeks, from sporadic military intervention to a diplomatic commitment to Greek affairs. It was an assertion, moreover, that Rome had the authority to settle those affairs.244

Versions of this decree and the Greek reaction to it come down to us in the histories of Polybius, Livy, Appian, and in Plutarch’s Life of Flamininus.245 All four accounts are remarkably similar in their description of the scene at the Isthmian Games,

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243 The Greeks named in the Proclamation (Polyb. 18.44; Flam. 10.4) were the Corinthians, Locrians, Phocians, Euboeans, Achaeans of Phthiotis, Magnesians, Thessalians, and Perrhaebians.

244 On the Hellenistic practice of “freeing the Greeks”, see esp. Gruen (1984) ch. 4, Ma (1999) chs. 3-4, and Dmitriev (2011) 67-141. Much excellent work has been done on the question of Rome’s foreign policy in the Greek East, particularly addressing the issue of whether Roman imperialism in Greece was a directed, top-down policy relying on “eastern specialists” or whether it was due to the uncoordinated efforts of individual ambitious Roman generals. On Roman imperialism in the East generally, see the seminal works of Badian (1958), Gruen (1984), Ferrary (1988), and Eckstein (2008). On the role of Flamininus in Rome’s interventions in Greece, see Wood (1939); Badian (1970); Balsdon (1967); Briscoe (1972); Armstrong and Walsh (1986); Eckstein (1990); Walsh (1996); Pfeilschifter (2005); Bremer (2005).

245 Polyb. 18.44-46; Livy 33.33; Appian Mac. fr. 9.4; Plut. Flam. 10-11. Appian merely says that “the Greeks” were freed, without listing the individual groups found in the other versions of the decree.
the content of the decree, and the elated reaction of the assembled Greeks; all but Appian include a look into the thoughts of the astonished and overjoyed Greeks as they processed Flamininus’ decree. In the narratives of Polybius and Livy (whose account of these events was based upon Polybius’ work), the Greeks wondered at the Romans: their willingness to take a risk on behalf of the Greeks, their power to withstand such a risk, their good fortune, their courage, and their justice. The Greeks of Plutarch’s account, however, were preoccupied with thoughts of a different nature entirely (Flam. 11.2-4):

Ἐν ὁ καὶ μᾶλλον ὡς εἰκός ἠδομένοις ἐπήει λογίζεσθαι καὶ διαλέγεσθαι περί τῆς Ἑλλάδος, ὅσους πολεμήσασα πολέμους διὰ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν, οὐπω τὐχοὶ βεβαιότερον οὐδ’ ἔδων αὐτῆς, ἐτέρον προαγονισμένον ὁλίγον δεῖν ἀνάμεσας αὐτῆ καὶ ἁπάνθῆς φερομένη τὸ κάλλιστον καὶ περιμαχητότατον ἀθλον. Ἡν δ’ ἄρα σπάνιον μὲν ἀνδρεία καὶ φρόνησις ἐν ἀνθρώποις, σπανιώτατον δὲ τῶν ἄλλων ἀγαθῶν ο δίκαιος. Οἱ γὰρ Αγαθαλαιοὶ καὶ οἱ Λύσανδροι καὶ οἱ Νικίας καὶ οἱ Ἀλκιβιάδαι πολέμους μὲν εὐδιέπει καὶ μάχας νικάν κατὰ τῇ γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν ἄρχοντες ἱπίσταντο, χρήσθαι δὲ πρὸς χάριν εὐγενῆ καὶ τὸ καλόν ὡς κατώρθουσιν ὧν ἔγνωσαν, ἀλλ’ εἰ τὸ Μαραθώνιον τῆς ἐργον ἁφέλοι, καὶ τὴν ἐν Σαλαμίνι ναυμαχίαν, καὶ Πλαταιάς καὶ Θηρμοπολίας, καὶ τὰ πρὸς Εὐρυμέδοντι καὶ τὰ περὶ Κύπρον Κύμωνος ἔργα, πάσας τὰς μάχας ἡ Ἑλλάς ἐπὶ δουλεία μεμάχηται πρὸς αὐτῆς, καὶ πᾶν τρόπαιον αὐτῆς συμφορὰ καὶ ὀνείδως ἔπ’ αὐτὴν ἔστηκε, τὰ πλείστα κακία καὶ φιλονικία τῶν ἡγουμένων περιτραπείσης. Ἀλλόφυλοι δ’ ἄνδρες, ἐναύσιμα μικρὰ καὶ γλύσχρα κοινωνῆματα παλαιοῦ γένους ἔχειν δοκοῦντες, ἀρ’ ὦν καὶ λόγῳ τι καὶ γνώμη τῶν χρησίμων ὑπάρξει τῇ Ἑλλάδι θαυμαστῶν ἦν, οὕτως τοῖς μεγίστοις κινδύνοις καὶ πάνοις ἐξελόμενοι τὴν Ἑλλάδα δεσποτῶν χαλεπῶν καὶ τυράννων ἐλευθεροῦσι.

And here, their pleasure naturally increasing, they were moved to reason and converse about Greece, saying that although she had waged many wars for the sake of her freedom, she had not yet obtained a more secure or more delightful exercise of it than now, when others had striven on her behalf, and she herself, almost without a drop of blood or a pang of grief, had borne away the fairest and most fought-over of prizes. Truly, courage and wisdom are rare among men, but the rarest of all goods is the just man. For the Agesilauses, Lysanders, Niciases, or Alcibiadeses knew well as commanders how to pursue their enemies and to win battles on land and sea, but they did not know how to use their successes for legitimate favor and virtue. Indeed, if one excepts the action at Marathon, the sea-fight at Salamis, Plataea, Thermopylae, and the achievements of Cimon at the Eurymedon and near Cyprus, Greece has fought all her battles to bring servitude upon herself, and everyone one of her trophies stands as her own calamity and disgrace, since she owes her overthrow chiefly to the baseness and

246 See Carawan (1988) for Livy’s use of and distinction from Polybius’ narrative, with a particular emphasis on Flamininus in both texts. 176
contentiousness of her leaders. Whereas men of another race, who seemed to have only slight sparks and insignificant traces of a common remote ancestry, from whom it was astonishing that any helpful word or purpose should be vouchsafed to Greece – these men underwent the greatest perils and hardships and are freeing Greece from cruel despots and tyrants.

In contrast to Polybius and Livy, this passage is a retrospective reflection on Greek history as the Greeks seek to understand why it was the Romans who finally ensured Greek freedom. This unique perspective of Greek reflection found in the thoughts of Plutarch’s Greeks warrants special consideration. Of course, the thoughts of the Greeks that Plutarch records at Flam.11 do not represent the historical conversations going on at the Isthmian Games of 196, but rather Plutarch’s imagination and projection of what the Greeks must have been thinking at the time. As such, they can be seen as reflections of Plutarch’s own thoughts about this momentous occasion. His Greeks certainly expressed admiration and amazement at the Romans for their willingness to fight for the Greeks, which is described almost as if it were a random act of kindness. This astonishment, however, is limited to two brief remarks at the beginning and the end of the passage. Plutarch’s Greeks seemed to realize at this point that their contentiousness and tendency to fight each other created a state in which only a foreign power such as Rome was able to establish peace and stability among the Greeks. This desire to understand the transition from the Greeks as the defenders of their own independence to the Romans as the liberators and benefactors of the Greeks is Plutarch’s driving force behind the

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248 This follows the ancient conventions for speeches in historiography; for a survey of this topic with helpful bibliography, see Marincola (2012). We have also seen in the present study Plutarch’s tendency to use internal audiences as mouthpieces for himself: e.g. Demetr. 41, Pyrrh. 8.
249 Unlike his predecessor Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Plutarch here denies any more than the most remote claims of Greek heritage for the Roman people. Cf. Dion. Hal. RA 1.11.
Philopoemen-Flamininus pair. This chapter, then, examines how Plutarch constructs this pair to explore the question of how the Greeks’ Hellenistic past became their Roman present and the consequences of that historical transition for his contemporary audience.

Philopoemen-Flamininus is unique among the Parallel Lives as the only book juxtaposing contemporaries; moreover, the Arcadian general and the Roman statesman’s careers played out on the same stage. Given this exceptional status among the Lives, the Philopoemen-Flamininus has received some critical attention, which I will outline briefly in order to show how my reading advances the ongoing scholarly conversation. The most important works on this text are articles by Simon Swain and Joseph Walsh, as well as an Italian commentary written by Christopher Pelling. Swain is attracted to this pair because it is an opportunity to examine how Plutarch envisioned the past relations of Greece and Rome. In his reading of this pair, Plutarch portrays Philopoemen as the last bastion of Greek virtue and to that end, excuses his failings; whereas Flamininus is depicted as a benefactor and liberator, but not as a figure who was truly beloved by the Greeks. This reading lays the groundwork for Swain’s subsequent monograph on the Hellenic response to Roman rule, where he argues that Plutarch’s characterization of these men in such terms is suggestive of Greek resistance in the early Empire to their Roman overlords. Swain falls short, however, in considering only how Plutarch envisioned past relations between Greece and Rome and not going further to hypothesize about why he would be

250 Scuderi (1996) begins from the premise that Plutarch wrote the Philopoemen-Flamininus pair as an exploration of Greek and Roman interactions, but her subsequent reading does not consider this pair as Plutarch’s representation of the transition from past to present. This important layer is what I hope to add to the discussion of these Lives.

251 Swain (1988).

interested in the first place.\textsuperscript{253} Moreover, he only conceives of the pair as depicting early Greco-Roman relations, without also recognizing that this particular pair represents a historical transition from a Hellenistic Greece to a Roman Greece – in other words, from the Greek past to Plutarch’s present.

In contrast, Joseph Walsh has come to a very different conclusion about the \textit{Philopoemen-Flamininus}, despite notable similarities that his approach to the text shares with Swain’s.\textsuperscript{254} Both scholars want to understand the pair as a unit (thereby prefiguring the seminal work of Timothy Duff), and both rightly pay attention to the related themes of \textit{philotimia} (love of honor), \textit{philodoxia} (love of fame), and \textit{philonikia} (love of contention) that feature prominently in both \textit{Lives}.\textsuperscript{255} Whereas Swain argues that Plutarch employs these character-traits to demonstrate the similarity of Philopoemen and Flamininus’ characters, Walsh posits that these same traits are, in fact, what Plutarch uses to differentiate his protagonists. Walsh’s thesis is that “the juxtaposition and comparison of Philopoemen the contentious Greek and Flamininus the harmony-loving Roman teaches the reader the virtues of concord as demonstrated by history.”\textsuperscript{256} In other words, he sees Plutarch as sympathetic to the influence of Flamininus (and Rome) in Greece, and therefore denies the presence of the resistant tone that Swain had identified. His reading of the pair is rather compelling, especially in its recognition of Plutarch’s nuanced approach to characterization and the connections he draws between Flamininus and

\textsuperscript{253} Someone may object that the reason for Plutarch’s interest is so obvious that Swain does not need to state it, but given the tendency of earlier scholars to think of the Hellenistic period as a matter of no interest whatsoever to Imperial Greek authors, Plutarch’s motivation for writing a \textit{Philopoemen-Flamininus} pair ought to be examined.\textsuperscript{254} Walsh (1992).\textsuperscript{255} Duff (1999).\textsuperscript{256} Walsh (1992) 208.
Plutarch’s advice in the *Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae*. Yet Walsh’s argument has its own flaws, in particular his downplaying of Plutarch’s portrayal of Flamininus as a philhellenes. Like Swain, he also overlooks the fact that *Philopoemen-Flamininus* is not just a pair of contemporaries, but a pair of contemporaries at a critical point of intersection in the trajectories of Greek and Roman history.

The commentary of Christopher Pelling is the most complete and thorough treatment to-date of this pair and has helpful broad introductions to the two *Lives* and the *synkrisis*. In general he interprets this pair, like Walsh, as an exploration of the relationship between the moral characteristics of *philonikia* and *philotimia*. Since his interest is primarily Plutarch’s moralism, he does not consider the pair as Plutarch’s representation of an important historical transition that created the world he was living in. Pelling even denies the power of this pair to be a didactic exemplum for Plutarch’s contemporary readers, despite the fact that he recognizes that there were parallels between the circumstances of second century BC Greece and second century AD Greece. As such, his commentary is primarily useful for thorough citations of Plutarch’s sources and explanations of historical details, not as a groundbreaking reinterpretation of Plutarch’s narrative and aims; therefore, I will refer to this work only when his comments are relevant to my argument.

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257 Pelling (1997a).
259 A few other brief treatments of this pair may be mentioned in passing. Raeymaekers (1996) considers the pair in order to reconstruct the origins of the historical tradition of a rivalry between Philopoemen and Flamininus. Bremer (2002) concludes the protagonists of the *Flamininus* and *Aemilius Paullus* earn Plutarch’s praise to such a degree because they are philhellenes, liberators, and benefactors of the Greeks; while his conclusions are sound and thought-provoking, his reading is cursory.
My own reading of this pair conjoins the disparate interpretations of Swain and Walsh and demonstrates that Plutarch’s text shows equally a nostalgia for Greece’s former independence and a gratitude for the Pax Romana she enjoyed in his own time. To deny Plutarch – a man who was as much a Greek citizen as a Roman one and whose acquaintances, interests and attitudes reflected this bicultural status – such complexity of thought and emotion is an unnecessary simplification. As I argue in this chapter, the Philopoemen-Flamininus pair is an opportunity for Plutarch to explore how and why the Hellenistic past became the Roman present. In the course of this exploration, Plutarch suggests that the origins of Roman rule in Greece can teach his reader about the best way for Rome and the Greek East to interact in the second century AD. As such, the pair fulfills two functions: first, it is an aetiology for the Roman rule of Greece, and indeed, Plutarch’s own historical context; second it provides an exemplum for Greco-Roman relations in the second century AD. In the first half of the chapter, I consider how Plutarch uses the Roman notion of Philopoemen as the “last of the Greeks” to frame this Life as the final act in his narratives of failed Hellenistic revivals, mirroring the tragic structure and emotional tone we saw in the Agis and Cleomenes. Philopoemen is a remarkable example of such a tragic narrative because Plutarch describes the life of the Arcadian general with equal parts pity and pride, thereby creating a Life that is simultaneously tragic and triumphant, an expression of Greek nostalgia. Plutarch not only plays up Philopoemen’s status as the “last of the Greeks” by constructing a tragic narrative, but he also uses Philopoemen’s finality as an excuse for a retrospective look back on Greek history as he searches for an explanation of why Philopoemen was the last of great Greek men. Then, I examine how Plutarch portrays Flamininus’ success in
bringing peace and stability to Greece. I demonstrate that Plutarch depicts Flamininus as a philhellen in both his character and his benefactions to the Greeks, even at times manipulating the Polybian historical tradition to expunge material that would complicate his idealized portrait. Plutarch argues throughout the narrative that Flamininus’ philhellenism was a direct cause of Rome’s easy domination of Greece. In doing so, he establishes Greek culture as fundamental to Rome’s political power in the East. Finally, I conclude by considering how Plutarch’s construction of this pair as an aetiology for his contemporary world is linked with his beliefs about contemporary Greco-Roman relations.

II. Philopoemen: Tragedy and Triumph

To understand how Plutarch represents the historical transition from Hellenistic past to Roman present in this pair, we must start by examining how Plutarch uses the figure of Philopoemen to bring to completion the trajectory of Greek history. As I argued in Chapter Four, the Hellenistic Lives ought to be seen as a series of tragic failed revivals of various moments in Greek history; the Philopoemen, as Plutarch makes clear throughout the narrative, is simply the last act of this Hellenistic tragedy. The Life of Philopoemen has all of the structural components of a narrative of failed revival, although the order is an alteration of what we encountered in the Lives of Agis and Cleomenes. While the protagonist’s death is the point towards which all of Plutarch’s biographies move – death is the end of life and Life – the fact of Philopoemen’s ultimate end and its importance for the Greeks is emphasized at the outset of the Life in a way that is peculiar
to this narrative. After Plutarch briefly describes how Philopoemen was orphaned and raised by his father’s friend Cleander, the reader learns that Philopoemen’s philosophical instructors, Ecdemus and Megalophanes, considered their education of the Arcadian among their accomplishments (1.4):

…ὡς κοινὸν ὄφελος τῇ Ἑλλάδι τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον ὑπὸ φιλοσοφίας ἀπεργασάμενοι. Καὶ γὰρ ὄσπερ ὑψίγονον ἐν γήρᾳ ταῖς τῶν παλαιῶν ἣμερῶν ἐπιτεκούσα τοῦτον ἀρεταῖς ἢ Ἑλλάς ἤγάπησε διαφερόντως καὶ συνηύξησε τῇ δόξῃ τὴν δύναμιν. Ῥωμαίων δέ τις ἐπαινῶν ἔσχατον αὐτὸν Ἑλλήνων προσεῖπεν, ὡς όνδένα μέγαν μετὰ τοῦτον ἐτὶ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἄνδρα γειναμένης οὐδ’ αὐτῆς ἄξιον.

…believing that they had made this man a common benefit to Greece with their philosophical teachings. For since Greece bore him, endowed with the virtues of her ancient commanders, in her old age, she loved him like a late-born son exceedingly, and she augmented his power with his reputation. And a certain Roman, praising him, called him the last of the Greeks, since that Greece bore no great man after him, nor one worthy of her.

Each part of this sweeping description of Philopoemen is a piece of ambiguous praise, teetering between pride and disappointment. Plutarch characterizes Philopoemen here as someone who was universally beneficial to the Greeks as well as universally loved by them, but does so through internal characters, Philopoemen’s tutors and an anonymous Roman. This use of an internal audience may be interpreted as Plutarch distancing himself from these evaluations somewhat, and the subsequent narrative does complicate this positive characterization. As we shall see, he later depicts Philopoemen’s actions as harmful to the Greeks, and in the synkrasis he asserts that Philopoemen killed more Greeks in battle than the number of Macedonians Flamininus killed in battle on behalf of

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260 Plutarch’s narratives, however, rarely end exactly at the moment of death, but often include narration of the protagonist’s funeral, the fates of his surviving family members, and other similar closural devices: see Pelling (1997b).

261 Whom Plutarch likens to Phoenix, with Philopoemen being his Achilles-like ward: *Phil.* 1.2; cf. *Alex.* 5.5 for Alexander and his Acarnanian tutor Lysimachus as another Phoenix-Achilles pair.
Greece. Nonetheless, Plutarch first introduces the reader to Philopoemen as a “common benefit to Greece,” only to problematize this evaluation in the pair.

The image of Greece the old mother and Philopoemen as the last son of her fertility is a striking and unusual metaphor. In Greek literature before Plutarch, ὀψίγονος is most often used to refer simply to someone born after someone else; in the epics of Homer and Apollonius, it carries the particular meaning of “future generations of men”. The Homeric Hymn to Demeter, however, seems to be Plutarch’s source for this image of older mother and her beloved late-born son. In that hymn, Demophoön is twice referred to as Metaneira’s ὀψίγονος, and in both instances the speaker connects Demophoön’s late-born-ness with Metaneira’s excessive love and devotion to him. Plutarch shows his acquaintance with this hymn in De Amicorum Multitudine, where he uses these lines from the Hymn to Demeter to demonstrate that ὀψίγονος is synonymous with τηλύγετος, a term that may have originally meant “last-born” but by the time of the Homeric texts had already come to “dearest child.” Therefore, given the rarity of this

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262 Comp. Phil. et Flam. 1.2
263 This phrase recurs in Maxime cum principibus 779B, where Plutarch similarly describes what a philosopher can bring about if he takes on the ruler as his son.
265 HH to Dem.164-8 (Callidice speaking): τηλύγετος δὲ οἱ υἱὸς ἐνὶ μεγάρῳ εὐπήκτω/ὀψίγονος τρέφεται, πολυεὐχετος ἀσπάσιος τε/εἰ τὸν γ’ ἐκθρέψαιο καὶ ήβης μέτρον ἱκοτο/βείά κε τις σε ἱδοῦσα γυναῖκον θηλυταρών/ζηλώσαι· τόσα κέν τοι ἀπὸ θρεπτήρια δοίη. Cf. 218-219 (Metaneira speaking): παιδα δὲ μοι τρέφε τόνδε, τὸν ὀψίγονον καὶ ἀξέλπτον/ὀψασαν ἀδάνατοι, πολυάρητος δὲ μοί ἐστιν.
266 De amic. mult. 93F7-94A11: διὸ και τὸν ζῷον τὸ φιλότεκνον τοῖς μονοτόκοις ἱσχυρότερον ἐμφύεται, καὶ Ὄμηρος ἀγαπητὸν υἱὸν ὀνομάζει “μοῦνον τηλύγετον,” τούτοις τὸν τοῖς μήτ’ ἐξουσίν ἐπερον γονεῖσι μήθ’ ἐξουσί γεγενημένον. Τὸν δὲ ψίλον ἠμείς χῆδον μὲν οὐκ ἐξιόδουμεν εἶναι, μετ’ ἄλλοις δὲ “τηλύγετος” τις καὶ ὀψίγονος ἐστι, τὸν θρυλούμενον εκείνον χρόνῳ τὸν ἀλλ’ ὑπερ συγκατεδηδοκάς μέδιμνον, οὐχ ἔσπερ νῦν πολλοὶ φίλοι λεγόμενοι συμπιόντες ἀπαξ ἢ συσφαιρίσαντες ἢ συγκυβεύσαντες ἢ
image and Plutarch’s demonstrable knowledge of the *Hymn to Demeter*, we can posit that the biographer may have had Demophoön and Metaneira in mind when he described Philopoemen and Greece in such similar terms. What might be the pay-off for Plutarch of alluding to this text? By encouraging the reader to think of how Metaneira, in her mortal ignorance and maternal concern, prevented Demeter from completing Demophoön’s bath by fire and thereby condemned him to a mortal life, Plutarch invites his reader to consider how Greece herself may be responsible for Philopoemen’s end. Indeed, this is what the Greeks seem to realize after the Isthmian Proclamation at *Flam.* 11.2, when they speak of the long tradition of Greeks fighting Greeks, bringing about their own ruin through their contentiousness. Plutarch’s allusion to Metaneira and Demophoön anticipates this realization, and highlights Greece’s responsibility for Philopoemen’s ruin and her own collapse.

Finally, by describing Philopoemen as the last of the Greeks (ἐσχατον αὑτὸν Ἑλλήνων), Plutarch predisposes the reader to think of him in terms of his end, even from the very beginning of his *Life*. This sentence is also ambiguous: although Plutarch characterizes this epithet as a term of praise, the explication he gives is a reproach of Greece after Philopoemen, which could no longer produce great or worthy men. Moreover, Plutarch attributes this appellation to an anonymous Roman, which suggests that the biographer may be trying to distance himself from this notion; at the same time, Plutarch implicitly agrees with this Roman’s sentiment by writing no biography of a Greek who postdates Philopoemen. In these few sentences, then, he both builds up and cuts down the expectation that Philopoemen will accomplish great things for the Greeks.
It is significant that, within this initial passage in which Plutarch carefully constructs the ambiguous tone of the narrative to follow, Philopoemen is described as possessing the virtues of Greece’s ancient leaders (ταῖς τῶν παλαιῶν ἡγεμόνων…ἀρεταῖς). Just as with Agis and Cleomenes, we can see that Plutarch frames Philopoemen’s character and achievements in terms of a revival of the past. The ambiguity of Plutarch’s tone here mirrors what we encountered in the Spartan Lives, in which the biographer seems torn between admiring the noble objective of reviving past virtues and recognizing the danger and futility of such efforts. The difference is that in the Philopoemen this tension is expressed at the outset of the Life, whereas in the Lives of Agis and Cleomenes Plutarch reserves such commentary for the ends of the Lives and the synkrisis. The effect in the Philopoemen is to predispose the reader to interpret the rest of the Life in terms of Philopoemen’s impending failure.

The narration of the first half of the Philopoemen departs somewhat from the structure of failed revival that we saw in the Agis and Cleomenes: while Plutarch describes both the context in Achaea that was fertile ground for a revival and Philopoemen’s successes, he does not narrate those components in that order.267 Instead, he begins by describing how Philopoemen first gained his reputation (Phil. 5-7.2): a series of extraordinary military actions that culminated in his election as hipparch of the Achaean League in 209/208 BC.268 It is only at this point, when Philopoemen’s fame was first rewarded with office, that Plutarch describes to the reader the state of the Achaean League in 209/208 BC. It is only at this point, when Philopoemen’s fame was first rewarded with office, that Plutarch describes to the reader the state of the Achaean League.

267 Errington (1969) is still the standard modern biography of Philopoemen.
268 Hipparchos was the second highest position in the Achaean League, below only the strategos. Cf. Larsen (1968) on the institutions of the Achaean League.

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pursue. The Achaean army, as Plutarch describes it, was in disarray and full of inexperienced and undisciplined cowards, and Philopoemen was tasked with turning these men into a fighting body (7.3-4). Philopoemen undertook a complete reform of the Achaean army and the Achaean mindset in order to achieve this. Plutarch digresses from the main narrative at this point to elaborate on the character of the Achaean League by way of a *synkrisis* between Aratus of Sicyon and Philopoemen. Unlike the stance Plutarch takes in the *Aratus*, where he claims that Aratus “put neither wealth nor fame nor royal friendships above the well-being of the Achaeans,” here Plutarch asserts that “Aratus, who was thought to be too sluggish for warlike contests, accomplished most of his undertakings by conference, genteelessness, and royal friendships, as I have written in his *Life*.” Plutarch’s reversal of his previous evaluation of Aratus here indicates not so much a change of heart, but a change of focus. As this comment makes clear, Philopoemen is a military hero for Plutarch, not a civic hero like Aratus. Moreover, he constructs the context for Philopoemen’s revival as one of Achaean dependence on Macedonian protection and their consequent impotence in the face of Macedonian intervention (*Phil. 8.3*). In other words, Plutarch here establishes that the goal of Philopoemen’s revival was Achaean independence and autonomy from foreign powers.

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269 See Anderson (1967) on Philopoemen’s military reforms.
270 Cf. *Arat.* 24, where Plutarch discusses the difference between Philopoemen as the “last of the Greeks” and the siege of Acrocorinth as the “last and latest deed of the Greeks.”
271 *Arat.* 24.4: αὐτόν οὐ πλούτον, οὐ δόξαν, οὐ φιλίαν βασιλικήν, οὐ τὸ τῆς αὐτοῦ πατρίδος συμφέρον, οὐκ ἄλλο τι τῆς αὐξήσεως τῶν Ἀχαιῶν ἐπίσημον ποιοῦμενον.
272 *Phil.* 8.4: Ἀρατός μὲν γὰρ ἀργότερος εἶναι δοκῶν πρὸς τοὺς πολεμικοὺς ἀγώνας, ὡμίλια καὶ πραγματεία καὶ φιλίαις βασιλικαῖς τὰ πλείστα κατειργάσατο τῶν πραγμάτων, ὡς ἐν τοῖς περὶ ἐκείνου γέγραπται.
The climax of the narrative of Philopoemen’s revival occurs at the midpoint of the *Life*, where Plutarch describes the Arcadian’s appearance at the Nemean Games of 205 BC (11). Philopoemen had just achieved a great victory over the Spartan tyrant Machanidas (described in 10), for which the Achaeans set up a bronze equestrian statue of their general at Delphi. The Nemean festival was an opportunity for Philopoemen to show off his reformed, victorious army, a sight that stirred up in the spectators a recollection of a long-ago past (11.2-3):

And just as they made their entrance, Pylades the citharode by chance began to sing the opening verse of Timotheus’ *Persians*:

Fashioning a great and glorious adornment of freedom for Hellas...

Whereupon, as the majesty of the poet’s words fit with the brilliance of his voice, from all corners the gaze of the audience turned towards Philopoemen and there was an outburst of joyous applause; for in their hopes the Greeks were recovering their ancient dignity, and in their courage they were making the nearest approach to the old mindset.

This scene is reminiscent of both *Agis* 10.1 and 14.2, where the Spartan king’s demeanor and actions remind the internal audiences of the glorious men of the Greek past and give them the hope that Agis will be able to revive that past. Similarly, Plutarch uses the coincidence of Philopoemen’s entrance and the beginning of Timotheus’ *Persians* as a

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Vatin (1975) argues that both Polybius and Plutarch wrote about the battle between Philopoemen and Machanidas with the statue at Delphi in mind.

Hordern (2002) fr. 788; commentary pgs. 127-129. This passage and Paus. 8.50.3 (following Plutarch, probably) are the only two attestations of this line as the beginning of the prooimion of the *Persians*. The meter is dactylic hexameter, in contrast to the iambic-trochaics of the other fragments of the poem. Hordern suggests that despite the application of this line to Philopoemen, the singular subject of the line in the poem may not have been an individual at all, but rather ὁ δῖμος Ἀθαναίων.
way to link Philopoemen’s present accomplishments with the past glory of the Greeks. Lining Philopoemen up with the heroes of the Persian Wars characterizes him by analogy as a champion of Panhellenic freedom and a defender against barbarian invasion. Furthermore, Plutarch once again employs an anonymous internal audience to reiterate his representation of Philopoemen as an individual pursuing a noble revival of the Greek past. By repeating the idea that Philopoemen stoked the hopes of the Greeks for their ancient dignity (τὸ παλαιὸν ἀξίωμα) and former spirit (τοῦ τότε φρονήματος), first expressed in the “mother-Greece” metaphor of the Life’s first chapter, Plutarch underlines at the acme of the narrative that Philopoemen’s story was a narrative of revival.

The second half of the Philopoemen follows the now-familiar decline of a narrative of failed revival, in which Plutarch immediately undercuts the Greek hopes for ancient glories by pointing out the fatal flaws in the intended revival. In constructing the narrative in this way, Plutarch evokes the sense that Philopoemen’s failure was inescapable. For Agis, his downfall was his naivete and his mildness; for Cleomenes, his recklessness and abuse of the legacy of Lycurgus. Philopoemen, too, receives a complex explanation for his downfall, but Plutarch clearly marks two of the three contributing factors as matters that were beyond Philopoemen’s control. He explains that Philopoemen’s ruin was due to his own inability to abide leisure, the fickleness of the Achaean, and the divine force that was thrusting Rome towards her eventual domination of the Mediterranean.\footnote{Gould (1989) 70-71 writes about Herodotus’ tendency to entertain multiple causes for a single event, without one cause necessarily being more valid than another. He generalizes to say that this is a feature of Greek historical thought, and I at least would add that it seems to be a feature of Plutarch’s historical thought. In the case of the Philopoemen-Flamininus pair, Plutarch uses multiple causation in order to explain why}
Philopoemen’s *philonikia*, have been discussed at length by both Simon Swain and Joseph Walsh, each of whom points to this trait as being the key to understanding the entire *Philopoemen-Flamininus* pair.\(^{276}\) Despite their divergent conclusions, which I outlined above, both scholars approach the text with the goal of demonstrating how Plutarch uses a predominant *moral* theme to tie together his pair. My reading, in contrast, understands this pair in terms of an exploration of, and explanation for, a major historical transition from a Hellenistic Greece to a Roman Greece. Seen in this light, the failings of Philopoemen’s character, his *philonikia* and inability to sit still, are just part of the Plutarch’s explanation for how Greece became subject to the Romans. By asserting this, I do not intend to reduce the importance of Philopoemen’s character as a reason for the failure of his revival, but rather to point out that Plutarch himself does not give Philopoemen sole responsibility for the Greeks’ loss of independence to the Romans. In Plutarch’s narrative, the fickle nature of the Achaeans and the ineluctable wheels of Fate are factors equally to blame for Philopoemen’s failure. Let us now briefly examine how Plutarch constructs these two factors as explanations for his ultimate downfall.

Plutarch first turns to the fickleness of the Achaeans after the scene at the Nemean Games. Despite their hopes of recovering their ancient dignity, Plutarch tells the reader that “when it came to perils and battles, just as young horses long for their accustomed riders, and are shy and wild if they have others on their backs, so the Achaean army, when someone other than Philopoemen was commander-in-chief, would be out of heart and would keep looking eagerly for him, and if he but came in sight, it would at once be

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alert and efficient because of the courage he inspired” (12.1). Unfortunately for the Achaeans, the laws of the League were such that a man could not be *strategos* in two consecutive years, so they were often subject to unaccustomed “riders.” Plutarch best illustrates the inconstancy of the Achaeans in his narrative of Philopoemen’s second tenure in Crete (200-c.194 BC). He first presents Philopoemen’s trip to Crete as motivated by his unwillingness to be idle while he was not holding the *strategeia*, thus initially drawing the reader’s attention to Philopoemen’s personal failing. Plutarch also portrays the subsequent displeasure of the Megalopolitans at their commander’s absence: they tried to exile Philopoemen, but were prevented by the Achaean *strategos* Aristaenus. As a consequence of this slight by his fellow-citizens, Philopoemen fomented an uprising in the villages surrounding Megalopolis (13.4-5). Plutarch explicitly casts his anger and violence as a result of the inconstant public opinion of the Achaeans. In this narrative, then, Plutarch interweaves a personal cause with a reason outside of Philopoemen’s control in order to explain a campaign that weakened both Philopoemen’s reputation and Megalopolis’ resources.

The last of the three factors that Plutarch adduces for Philopoemen’s failure is perhaps the most familiar from other ancient sources: divine intervention, the unstoppable force that impelled Rome towards domination of the Mediterranean. First, we should avoid assuming that Plutarch’s use of fortune and the divine to explain Rome’s rise to power is a mere borrowing from Polybius; rather, it is important to recognize that, although Plutarch does rely on Polybius as a source for this pair, he employs similar

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277 13.3-5. Errington (1969) 27-48 discusses the evidence for Philopoemen’s multiple stays in Crete.
concepts of divine involvement in historical events throughout the Lives. Therefore, we ought to treat Plutarch’s divine explanation for Rome’s success as reflecting Plutarch’s own views on the matter. In a seminal article on Plutarch’s views on the relationship between fortune and history, Simon Swain demonstrates that Plutarch believed that historical events, and in particular the rise of the Roman Empire, are divinely predetermined. Although Plutarch uses a range of terms in the Lives to capture this idea of the involvement of the divine in historical events (tyche, daimon, theos/theoi), he does not distinguish between these terms, but instead employs them interchangeably to denote a directional divine force (as opposed to random chance).

In the Philopoemen, the involvement of the divine in augmenting Rome’s control over Greek affairs is first mentioned in regards to the aftermath of the Roman defeat of Antiochus III, but similar language permeates the subsequent account of the failure of Philopoemen’s revival and his demise in Messene. The biographer’s use of a divine explanation for these events serves to heighten the tragic coloring of the narrative by portraying Philopoemen as a man fighting against the unstoppable force of fate. The narrator tells us that after the Romans conquered Antiochus (17.2),

278 On Polybius and Tyche, see Walbank (1957) 16-26; for Plutarch’s approach to Tyche in the Lives, see Swain (1990).
280 Plutarch employs such language with an especially high frequency in reference to events of Roman history in the Lives; this emphasis on the divine force behind Roman imperialism is echoed in one of his brief epideictic essays, De Fortuna Romanorum. In that essay, similar in interest to the De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtutei, Plutarch argues that while Rome’s success should be attributed to a combination of Fortune and Virtue, it is Fortune that made possible Rome’s opportunities to display her Virtue. Given that we are ignorant of so much about De Fortuna Romanorum – its dating, performance context, audience, sincerity, abrupt ending – we must be careful in how to relate it to what we find in the Lives. That said, the sentiments expressed in de Fortuna Romanorum seem to resonate with Plutarch’s depiction of Rome’s fortune in the Philopoemen. On de Fortuna Romanorum, see Swain (1989), Cammarota (2002), Desideri (2005).
...they applied themselves more closely to the affairs of Greece. They surpassed the Achaean League with their power, since the popular leaders gradually inclined to their support; their strength, under the guidance of the heavenly powers, grew great in all directions; and the end was near to which Fortune must come in its allotted revolution...

This passage marks the beginning of the end for Philopoemen’s career and life. Whereas earlier in the narrative, Plutarch mixes stories of defeat with moments of victory, from this point on Plutarch gives the narrative a single-minded focus on Philopoemen’s impending capture and death. The language he uses highlights that Philopoemen’s fate is no longer in his own hands. Although Plutarch begins his explanation in this passage by giving a human reason, i.e. that the popular leaders of the Achaeans began to support the Roman cause, he emphasizes the role of divine forces by employing them to explain both the growth of Roman power and the decline of Greece. It is remarkable that Plutarch attributes both Rome’s rise and Greece’s fall not only to human factors, but also to supernatural forces. By doing so, he achieves two distinct aims: he elevates the historical transition that he narrates in the Philopoemen-Flamininus pair to a critical moment in a grand divine scheme; and he partially exculpates Philopoemen for his failure to succeed as the defender of Greek freedom.

Indeed, the very fact that Philopoemen is engaged in a significant struggle against both the Romans and Fortune enhances Plutarch’s characterization of his protagonist as a singularly noble Greek. Not only does Plutarch as narrator rely on a divine cause for the

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281 This mixing of defeat and victory in the narrative of a single event occurs occasionally, e.g. Philopoemen and the war with Nabis, 15-16.
events of Philopoemen’s life, but he even includes an anecdote in which Philopoemen demonstrates his own recognition that he was battling against Fortune. In this story, Philopoemen angrily cried out to Aristaenus, the leading pro-Roman Achaean politician, “Man, why are you in a rush to behold the fated end (τὴν πεπρωμένην) of Greece?” (17.3) Philopoemen’s use of τὴν πεπρωμένην as the term for destiny or doom is a notably poetic usage, rarely used in prose, but found often in Attic tragedy. This anecdote, then, achieves two aims. First, Philopoemen’s markedly tragic lament adds to the overall sense that his story is a tragic narrative. Second, Plutarch uses Philopoemen’s explicit recognition of the fate of Greece to demonstrate Philopoemen’s willful and conscious decision to pursue a revival of Greek independence despite the fact that he knew his goal was doomed to failure. This is the first instance in which Plutarch indicates that Philopoemen’s virtue as a statesman was not expressed in long-lasting political achievement but was instead a moral victory of the Greek spirit of independence. The glowing tones in which Plutarch describes Philopoemen’s continued resistance against the Romans support the idea that, for Plutarch, Philopoemen’s virtue was in pursuing noble ends in spite of guaranteed, eventual failure. Thus, we can see that strength of the divine force impelling Rome towards empire correlates directly, in Plutarch’s eyes, to both the heroism and the tragedy of Philopoemen’s life.

In keeping with this dark tone of fatalism, Plutarch describes the force behind Philopoemen’s capture in Messene as “some Nemesis [who] knocked him down, like an

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282 The perfect passive forms of πόρω are often used to express destiny, fate, and doom in Attic tragedy. Euripides is particularly fond of this descriptor: cf. Ion 1388; Helen 1660; Rhesus 634; Alcestis 147, 695; Electra 1290; Hecuba 43. Aeschylus and Sophocles also make use of this turn of phrase, though to a lesser degree: cf. Aga. 68, 684; Prom. 518, 130-4; Antigone 1337; OC 421-2.
all but victorious runner, at the very goal of his life” (18.2). While the subsequent narrative gives a very literal explication of this metaphor, i.e. that Philopoemen had previously scorned a man who had been taken captive and therefore paid the penalty by suffering a similar fate, the rhetorical power of this image is enhanced by its proximity to the language of historical destiny discussed above. Plutarch suggests through the juxtaposition of these two chapters that the fate of both Greece and Philopoemen is out of human control. Following the narrative of Philopoemen’s campaign against Deinocrates of Messene and his subsequent capture, Plutarch returns to the notion of the futility of human efforts. When the news of Philopoemen’s capture breaks in Messene, and the protagonist is dragged through the streets, although the Messenians were initially elated that their enemy was in captivity (19.1),

when they saw Philopoemen dragged along in a manner unworthy of his fame and of his former exploits and trophies, most of them were struck with pity and felt sympathy (ἡλέησαν οἱ πλεῖστοι καὶ συνήλησαν) for him, so that they actually shed tears and spoke with bitterness of the inconstancy and vanity of human greatness (ὥστε καὶ δακρύσας καὶ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ἐκφλαυρίσαι δύναμιν ὡς ἀπιστόν καὶ τὸ μηδὲν οὐσαν).

The response of the Messenians echoes the sentiments of both the narrator and Philopoemen’s earlier words. By emphasizing the strength of divine force and the weakness of human deeds, Plutarch depicts the circumstances around Philopoemen’s downfall as both inescapable and pitiable. In doing so, he encourages his reader to see the protagonist as a tragic figure. Philopoemen’s enemies do not merely pity him, but they also admire him as a benefactor: Plutarch tells the reader that “gradually a humane account grew among many Messenians, that Philopoemen was to be remembered for his earlier benefactions, and in particular the freedom he gave to them when he drove out the

283 Cf. Cleom. 16.6, where Plutarch expresses his pity for the weakness of human nature, since even a great and Hellenic man like Aratus was not entirely free from reproach.
tyrant Nabis” (19.2). This passage, too, mixes lament for Philopoemen’s fate with proud recollection of his accomplishments and benefactions, with the latter being framed in moral terms, as a victory of freedom over tyranny.

Plutarch uses the Messenians’ pity and admiration for their enemy to set the stage for the reaction of the Achaeans to the news of Philopoemen’s death. Swiftly and with minimal detail, he narrates the election of Lycortas as general and his successful revenge campaign against Deinocrates, in which Philopoemen’s torturers were punished and the Achaeans recovered the body of their leader (21.1-2). In contrast, Plutarch gives a prolonged and vivid description of the procession of Philopoemen’s ashes from Messene to Megalopolis, an event that must have taken much less time than the planning and execution of the military mission, but receives nearly equal narrative space. This scene is the culmination of the preceding narrative of Philopoemen’s life, with its mix of pity and admiration (21.2-4):

Then they burned Philopoemen’s body, collected his ashes in an urn, and set out for home, not in disorderly or haphazard way, but with a blending of triumphal procession and funeral rites (ἐπινίκιον πομπήν τινα δὲμα ταῖς ταφαῖς μίξαντες). For one could see them wearing garlands, while at the same time weeping, and their enemies were led along in chains...The soldiers followed after, in full armor themselves, and with their horses decorated; they were neither dejected in view of their great affliction nor exultant over their victory. The people from the cities and villages on the way came to meet them, as if receiving Philopoemen on his return from a campaign; they laid their hands upon his urn and accompanied him to Megalopolis.284

284 Plutarch’s description such a dramatic funeral procession may remind the reader of the end of the Demetrius, where he describes a similar transportation of remains from the death-site to final resting place. The emphasis in that scene, however, is on Demetrius’ theatricality (τραγικήν τινα και θεατρικὴν διάθεσιν, Demetr. 53.1), which seemed to live on even in his funeral procession: his urn was gold, rode in the largest ship of his son’s fleet, and was prominent on the deck, adorned in royal purple and a diadem, surrounded by bodyguards; the plaintive beat of the ship’s oars was accompanied by the strains of the best living aulistès (53.1-2). Pity is present, but it is bestowed not on Demetrius, but on his son Antigonus (53.3). When Plutarch speaks of “a certain tragic and theatrical disposition” here, he clearly means to emphasize Demetrius’ love of the spectacular and
Images of triumph are interwoven with those of grief, and Plutarch forces the reader to see and experience both feelings simultaneously. Even though the victory being celebrated was literally that of Lycortas over the Messenians, Plutarch does not refer to Lycortas anywhere in the procession-narrative, thereby making it seem as though it truly was Philopoemen’s triumph, as well as his funeral. Indeed, the passage continues not with the Megalopolitans celebrating their victory over the Messenians, but rather with the city grieving for Philopoemen and “feeling that with him the city had lost its supremacy among the Achaeans” (21.4). Plutarch, therefore, stymies the literal interpretation of this procession as a celebration for a military victory, leaving the reader to puzzle out what sort of victory is implied.

Plutarch suggests, as I have argued, that Philopoemen won a symbolic victory for the Greeks, even though his attempts to secure Greek freedom were futile and counterproductive. This tension is highlighted at the end of the Philopoemen, where the biographer turns from the immediate (and localized) significance of Philopoemen’s death to his legacy in the Greek cities. Plutarch flashes forward to the aftermath of the sack of Corinth in 146 BC, where there is a debate about the statues of Philopoemen in the city. An unnamed Roman man, “attacking Philopoemen as if he were still living,” proposed that all statues of him ought to be torn down (21.5). Polybius intervened and spoke on behalf of Philopoemen’s memory, successfully persuading L. Mummium and the Roman commissioners to leave the statues intact, despite the fact that Philopoemen had often

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his tendency to live his life as if performing on a stage, a motif that recurs throughout the Life. In contrast, Plutarch depicts the procession of Philopoemen in such detail and with such flair not because it illustrated an important facet of the protagonist’s character, but rather because it could demonstrate what Philopoemen had signified for the Greeks.
opposed the efforts of Flamininus and the Romans who followed him. Plutarch explains the virtue of the Romans’ verdict as follows (21.6):

…ἀλλὰ τῆς χρείας τὴν ἀρετὴν ἐκεῖνοι καὶ τὸ καλὸν ὡς ἔοικε τοῦ λυσιτελοῦς διώριζον, ὀρθῶς καὶ προσηκόντως τοὺς μὲν ὀφελοῦσι μισθὸν καὶ χάριν παρὰ τῶν εὖ παθόντων, τοὺς δὲ ἀγαθοῖς τιμὴν ὀφείλεσθαι παρὰ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀεὶ νομίζοντες.

…but they distinguished, so it would seem, between virtue and necessity, between honor and advantage. They rightly and fitly considered that benefactors ought always to receive reward and gratitude from their beneficiaries, and good men honor from the good.

Plutarch here has zoomed out from the myopic focus on local Peloponnesian squabbles to the issue of Philopoemen’s exemplary moral status among the Greeks, and significantly, among the Romans. This Roman verdict on Philopoemen’s legacy recalls the beginning of the Life, in particular the anonymous Roman who praised Philopoemen as the “last of the Greeks” (1.4). Just as Plutarch relates that the Messenians’ admiration for Philopoemen’s accomplishments outweighed their elation at his capture, so too the Romans are depicted as continuing the honors owed to Philopoemen by the Greeks, despite his record as an opponent of Roman intervention. Plutarch generalizes and moralizes Philopoemen’s significance by turning the question of his statues into an example of virtue, honor, and the proper treatment of benefactors and of good men; the emphatic inclusion of ἀεί brings the reader’s mind to eternal moral questions of right and wrong.

Having traced the tragic narrative of failed revival to its conclusion in the Philopoemen, it will be helpful to conclude this section by considering two aspects of Plutarch’s characterization of his protagonist: Philopoemen’s dual status as a Hellenic hero and a local hero. The tension between these two roles contributes to Plutarch’s exploration of how the transformation from Hellenistic past to Roman present occurred.
Throughout the narrative, Philopoemen is portrayed as a singular figure of hope for all the Greeks: we may think of his tutors Ecdemus and Megalophanes calling his education a “common benefit for Greece” and Plutarch’s following metaphor of Philopoemen as the late-born son of Greece (1.4); or, the outpouring of enthusiasm for him at the Nemean Games, when the Panhellenic assembly looked to him as their hope for reviving their ancient glories (11); or, even the posthumous recognition by the Romans of his virtue and importance as a benefactor of the Greeks (1.4, 21.6). Alongside this emphasis on Philopoemen’s Panhellenic significance, Plutarch places a depiction of Philopoemen as the defender of the interests of his city and his League. The battles Plutarch includes in the Life were all waged against other Greeks on behalf of Megalopolis or the Achaeans, not for the general welfare of all the Greeks. The narrative of Philopoemen’s war with Nabis and subsequent treatment of the Spartans illustrates Philopoemen’s willingness to sacrifice the Spartan agoge, something Plutarch believed to be a hallowed Greek accomplishment, in order to secure more pedestrian gains in local politics. Plutarch depicts Philopoemen’s expulsion of Nabis from Sparta and its inclusion in the Achaean League as a great victory for Philopoemen, Megalopolis, and the League. At the same time, he admonishes Philopoemen for dismantling the Lycurgan education system, which, although Plutarch recognized the political expediency of such a blow to Spartan morale (16.6), he decried as a “most cruel and lawless deed” (16.5: ἔργον ὡμότατον...καὶ παρανομώτατον). This section of the narrative exemplifies the conflict between Philopoemen’s legacy as a Hellenic hero and his record of campaigns against other Greeks.

What this tension between these competing images of Philopoemen calls attention to is the discrepancy between his actual accomplishments and his legacy. In fact, this tension between local and Hellenic interests is integral to Plutarch’s account of Philopoemen’s failure to achieve his goal of reviving Greek independence and his undiminished cultural significance. In Plutarch’s narrative, Philopoemen’s protection of local interests led to discord among the Greeks and perpetuated the chaotic state of Greek affairs that had existed since the death of Alexander. In this way, the Philopoemen fits well with the other Hellenistic Lives, in which the protagonists’ failures to revive the Greek past only contributed to the ongoing decline of the Greeks. Moreover, he fits the models of Lysander, Alcibiades, Nicias, and Agesilaus – the men named by the Greeks at Flam. 11.2 – with regards to his contentiousness and his inability to leverage his political and military successes for the benefit of all the Greeks. At the same time, Philopoemen’s resistance to Roman intervention in Greek affairs earns him Plutarch’s praise and admiration as a protector of Greek, rather than local, interests.\(^{286}\) Here we can mention Plutarch’s similar praise of Aratus’ capture of the Acrocorinth from the Macedonians as the “last deed of the Greeks” (Arat. 24): both Aratus’ deed and Philopoemen’s life were directed towards the goal of keeping foreigners out of Greek affairs.\(^{287}\) Such efforts to keep Greek affairs in Greek hands always earn Plutarch’s praise; however, Plutarch also recognizes that the Greeks of the past, including Philopoemen, tended towards wars against one another instead of wars that promoted the welfare of all Greeks. In sum, the

\(^{286}\) Cf. the Roman praises of Philopoemen at 1.4 and 21.6, as well as Plutarch’s praise of him at Comp. Phil. et Flam. 3.3.

\(^{287}\) Cf. Walsh (1992) 226-231 for a comparison between Plutarch’s portrayals of Philopoemen and Aratus. Plutarch similarly exhorts Menemachus to minimize Roman intervention in provincial Greek affairs at Praec. ger. reip. 813C6-816A8.
tension between Philopoemen’s historical accomplishments as a local Achaean commander and his symbolic legacy as a Hellenic hero is the reason for the mixed nature of Plutarch’s narrative, vacillating as it does between pride and pity.

The *Philopoemen*, like the other Hellenistic Greek *Lives*, is a narrative in which Plutarch depicts a revival of the Greek past that failed – in this case, the revival of a Greece united against foreign invaders, that ephemeral but ever-present Panhellenic dream. Plutarch gives both human and divine causes for that failure, with the divine causes helping to explain why the ultimate failure of this Greek dream was concurrent with Philopoemen’s death. The human causes he adduces, both Philopoemen’s personal contentiousness and the Achaeans’ inconstancy, foreshadow the reasons the Greeks give after Flamininus’ Isthmian Proclamation for their inability to secure their own freedom. By explaining this failure of the Greeks to revive a Greece united against outsiders, in the *Philopoemen*, Plutarch gives us the first part of his aetiology for why Greece came to be ruled by the Romans, as well as a negative exemplum for how Greeks should interact with each other to continue to preserve what liberty they have left.

III. *Flamininus*: Greek Culture and Roman Power

The *Flamininus* completes Plutarch’s aetiology for how Hellenistic Greek past turned into the Roman present; in the process, he develops a positive model for how Greco-Roman relations ought to function. If the *Philopoemen* answers the question of why Greece could no longer secure her own freedom, the *Flamininus* explains why it was the Romans who were capable of establishing peace, protecting freedom, and securing concord for the Greeks. As we shall see, the answer Plutarch gives to that question is that
Flamininus’ philhellenism, or his affinity for Greek values and culture, was what allowed Rome to easily gain control of Greece and grant her freedom and stability.

Flamininus’ philhellenism has been a topic of controversy for some time in modern Hellenistic and Roman history. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, scholars generally followed Theodor Mommsen, who believed Flamininus was a sentimental and altruistic lover of Greece whose benefactions were motivated by a genuine admiration for Greek culture. Ernst Badian, however, has transformed the modern opinion of Flamininus. He argues that Flamininus’ adoption of an apparently philhellenic policy was a Machiavellian choice, with the sole objective of the speedy and easy Roman domination of Greece; this has been an influential perspective, but some scholars, including Erich Gruen and Jean-Louis Ferrary, have resisted accepting Badian’s thesis. Readers of Plutarch’s Life of Flamininus have similarly arrived at divergent accounts of Plutarch’s portrayal of Flamininus. Simon Swain argues that Plutarch sees through the veneer of Roman philhellenism, as is evident from his ultimate preference of Philopoemen to his Roman pair. In contrast, Joseph Walsh argues that Plutarch does present Flamininus as a genuinely positive figure, the greatest benefactor of the Greeks and a model for Greek statesmen of the Early Empire. To combine these historical and literary debates, one may ask whether Plutarch sees Flamininus with the eyes of Mommsen or with the eyes of Badian. Moreover, one may then ask what Plutarch’s

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290 Walsh (1992), who surprisingly does not also argue that Flamininus is a model for the Roman statesman of Plutarch’s time.
depiction of Flamininus can indicate about his thoughts on the transition from Hellenistic past to Roman present, or on Greco-Roman relations in his own time. In the following discussion, I reassess Plutarch’s depiction of Flamininus as a lover of the Greeks and demonstrate that Plutarch is at pains to give a coherent portrait of Flamininus as both a benefactor of and sympathizer with the Greeks. His goal in doing so, as I will argue, is to create a narrative in which Greek culture is the basis of Rome’s acquisition of power in the East, thereby providing both an aetiology and an exemplum for Greco-Roman relations in his own time.

Plutarch does not apply the term ϕιλέλλην to Flamininus, but that should not prevent us from using the English word “philhellene” as a shorthand for Plutarch’s characterization of him.291 In Plutarch’s narrative, Flamininus is a lover of the Greeks in two senses: first, he exhibits an affinity for Greek culture and moral values; second, he performs benefactions for the Greeks. By employing a constellation of terms that are associated elsewhere in his corpus and earlier Greek literature with the concepts of Greekness and paideia, Plutarch portrays Flamininus as a man whose character and

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291 The word is not unknown to Plutarch, who uses it at Ant. 23.2: after Antony and Octavian defeated the tyrannicides at Philippi, Antony remained in Greece, where he delighted at the titles of “Philhellene” and “Lover of Athens”. Plutarch describes him as humoring the Greeks by attending literary discussions, games, and religious rites, as well as giving the Greeks gifts: the tone of the text makes it seem like Antony enjoyed the title, and acted as if he had an appreciation for Greek culture and a desire to be its benefactor. Plutarch’s infrequent use of the term is in accordance with Greek usage before him, where it is in only the following passages (given in rough chronological order): Herodotus 2.178; Xen. Ages. 2.31, 7.4; Plato Rep. 470E9; Isoc. 4.96, 5.122, 9.50, 12.241; Diod. 1.67.9, 2.60.3; Strabo 4.1.5, 4.4.6, 5.4.12, 14.2.5; Josephus AJ 13.318. With few notable exceptions – among them Xenophon and Plato – it is a term that is applied non-Greek individuals or groups. When it is applied to Greeks, it has the connotation of someone who is not only a partisan of local interests, but also of all Greeks; this sense is also found in the work of Plutarch’s contemporary, Dio of Prusa (Or. 37.17.9).
sensibilities match the traits of the ideal Greek political man. Plutarch presents Flamininus as the greatest benefactor of the Greeks, far greater than even his pair Philopoemen (*Comp. Phil. et Flam.* 1.1). As we shall see, Plutarch counts among Flamininus’ benefactions not only the freedom of the Greeks from the Macedonians, but also the restoration of civic order in the *poleis* and the preservation of the freedom that he had bestowed in the face of challenges from Antiochus III and other Romans. In this way, Plutarch depicts Flamininus as a lover of the Greeks in both his personal characteristics and his public actions: a philhellene in thought and deed. Additionally, as I will demonstrate, Plutarch omits information found elsewhere in the historical tradition (Livy and Polybius) that portrays Flamininus as harming the Greeks or undermining their freedom. By excluding this material, Plutarch whitewashes Flamininus’ career in Greece in order to present an integrated and consistent portrait of Flamininus as a philhellenic hero.

Let us begin by considering the three main passages in which Plutarch describes Flamininus’ character. Since the themes of these passages are interrelated, it will be beneficial to present all three passages at once, and then to proceed with an analysis of how Plutarch’s moralizing diction creates a clear picture of Flamininus as a man whose character is in accordance with Greek moral values. The first passage is Plutarch’s prefatory explanation of why Rome was so fortunate that Flamininus, upon becoming consul in 199 BC, obtained the lot of the Macedonian War (2.2-4):

Κλήρῳ δὲ λαγχάνει τὸν πρὸς Φίλιππον καὶ Μακεδόνας πόλεμον, εὐτυχίᾳ τινὶ τῶν Ῥωμαίων συλλαχὼν πράγμασι καὶ ἀνθρώποις οὐ πάντα πολέμῳ καὶ βίᾳ χρωμένου δεομένοις ἀρχοντος, ἀλλὰ πειθοῖ καὶ ὁμιλίᾳ μᾶλλον ἀλωσίμοις. Φιλίππῳ γὰρ ἦν στόμωμα μὲν εἰς μάχην ἀποχρῶν ἡ Μακεδόνων ἀρχή, ῥώμη δὲ πολέμου τριβὴν ἔχοντο καὶ χορηγία καὶ καταφυγῆ καὶ ὀργῆν οнный ὄλως τῆς φάλαγγος ἢ τῶν Ἑλλήνων δύναμις, ὃν μή διαλυθέντον ἀπὸ τοῦ Φιλίππου μιᾶς μάχης οὐκ ἂν ἦν ἔργον ὁ πρὸς αὐτὸν πόλεμος. Ἡ δ’
Ἑλλὰς οὔπω πολλὰ συνενηγμένη Ῥωμαίοις, ἀλλὰ τότε πρῶτον ἐπιμειγνυμένη ταῖς πράξεσιν, εἰ μὴ φύσει τε χρηστὸς ἢ ἄρχον καὶ λόγῳ μᾶλλον ἢ πόλεμῳ χρώμενος, ἐντυγχάνοντι τε προσὴν πιθανότης καὶ πρότης ἐντυγχανομένῳ καὶ τόνος πλεῖστος ύπέρ τῶν δικαίων, οὐκ ἂν οὕτως ῥᾳδίως ἀντὶ τῶν συνήθων ἀλλόφυλον ἄρχην ἠγάπησε.

He obtained by lot the war against Philip and the Macedonians, and it was some piece of good luck for the Romans that he was chosen for affairs and men that did not need a commander who relied entirely on war and force, but rather were to be won over by persuasion and diplomacy. For the kingdom of Macedonia afforded Philip a sufficiently strong force for actual battle, but in a war of long duration his phalanx was dependent for its vigor, its resources, its places of refuge, and in a word its entire effectiveness, upon the states of Greece, and unless these were detached from Philip, the war with him would not be a matter of a single battle. Greece, however, had not yet been brought into much contact with the Romans, but then for the first time was drawn into political affairs with them, and unless the commander was by nature good and used reason rather than war, and he was persuasive when he sought an audience and kind when he met with one, and his greatest emphasis was on what was just, [Greece] would not have so easily preferred a foreign rule to the one she was accustomed to.

The second passage is Plutarch’s portrayal of the Greeks’ first impression of Flamininus, following his march through Thessaly during his first year of campaigning (5.4-5):

Πύρρον μὲν οὖν λέγουσιν, ὅτε πρῶτον ἀπὸ σκοπῆς κατεῖδε τὸ στράτευμα τῶν Ῥωμαίων διακεκοσμημένον, εἰπεῖν οὐ βαρβαρικὴν αὐτῷ φανῆναι τὴν τῶν βαρβάρων παράταξιν· οἱ δὲ Τίτῳ πρῶτον ἠναγκάζοντες παραπλησίας ἀφιέναι φωνάς. Ἀκούοντες γὰρ τῶν Μακεδόνων, ὡς άνθρωπος ἄρχον βαρβάρου στρατιᾶς ἔπεισι, δι’ ὁπλῶν πάντα καταστρεφόμενος καὶ δουλούμενος, εἰτ’ ἀπαντώντες ἀνδρὶ τὴν θῆλικιαν νέῳ καὶ τὴν ὁμίλην φιλανθρώποι, φωνήν τε καὶ διάλεκτον Ἑλληνικού, καὶ τιμῆς ἀληθοῦς ἐραστὴ, θαυμασίας ἐκηλοῦντο, καὶ τὰς πόλεις ἀπιόντες ἐνεπιμπλασαν εὐνοίας τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν, ὡς ἐχούσας ἡγεμόνα τῆς ἔλευθερίας.

So they say that Pyrrhus, when he first saw from a lookout the Roman army fully arrayed for battle, said that this battle-line of barbarians seemed to him not to be barbaric; and those who first encountered Titus were compelled to make similar claims. For although

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292 This statement is patently false: for a thorough discussion of Rome’s role in Greece before the Second Macedonian War, see Eckstein (2008) 1-270. In fact, there had already been two previous consuls who had begun the Second Macedonian War, as Plutarch himself makes clear at 3.1; obviously, Flamininus was not the first Roman the Greeks had encountered. Plutarch makes this specious claim as a way of emphasizing Flamininus’ importance in the Romanization of Greece; the Philopoemen-Flamininus pair is much more rhetorically effective if the “last of the Greeks” is matched with the “first Roman philhellene,” rather than with yet another Roman general meddling in Greek affairs. This is one of the ways in which Plutarch uses biographical sleight of hand to boil down a long historical transition into a single pair of two overlapping Lives.
they heard from the Macedonians that a commander of a barbarian army, who subdued and enslaved everything by force of arms, was coming against them, when they met a man young in age and cultivated in appearance, a Greek in speech and conversation, and a lover of true honor, they were wonderfully charmed, and returning to their cities they filled them with goodwill towards him, believing him to be the champion of their freedom.

Finally, in the passage that marks the end of Flamininus’ career in Greece, Plutarch comments on his conduct in political debates with the Greeks, and substantiates his claims with a number of Flamininus’ sayings. Two sentences in particular summarize the thrust of this passage (17.1):

Καὶ γὰρ εἰ τισιν ἐκ πραγμάτων ἢ φιλοτιμίας ἔνεκα, καθάπερ Φιλοποίμενι καὶ πάλιν Διοφάνει στρατηγοῦντι τῶν Ἀχαιῶν, προσέκρουε, οὐκ ἦν βαρὺς οὐδ’ εἰς ἔργα διαιτείον ὁ θυμός, ἀλλ’ ἐν λόγῳ παρρησίαν τινὰ πολιτικὴν ἔχοντι παυόμενος. Πικρὸς μὲν οὖν οὐδενί, πολλοῖς δ’ ὀξὺς ἔδοκε καὶ κοῦφος εἶναι τὴν φύσιν, ἄλλως δὲ συγγενέσθαι πάντων ἥδιστος καὶ εἰπεῖν ἐπίχαρις μετὰ δεινότητος.

For even if he collided with some men because of the state of affairs or on account of his love of honor, such as with Philopoemen and again with Diophanes the general of the Achaeans, his spirit was neither harsh nor did it carry him into violent acts, but rather checked itself in expressions that had a certain public frankness of speech. He, however, was bitter to no one, and although he seemed to many to be rash and flighty in nature, he was otherwise the most pleasant of all to be around and spoke in a way that combined charm with force.

Although Plutarch emphasizes different characteristics in each of these passages, all of the language used here describes Flamininus as a man whose character and demeanor exuded a certain air of cultivation, a man who pursued good ends in a liberal manner.

Each of these characterizing passages reinforces and builds upon the ideas introduced in the preceding passages. As such, it is reasonable to examine the terms used throughout all three passages as a coherent group of related character-traits. As for the specific qualities attributed to Flamininus, each one is a facet of Plutarch’s concept of the ideal moral statesman. While there is no single passage where all of these ideas are present, several combinations of two or more of the traits mentioned in these passages are...
peppered throughout the Plutarchan corpus, and he uses this constellation of terms as it suits his purposes to characterize positive examples of statesmanship.\textsuperscript{293} In the following discussion, I consider each of these attributes in terms of their connotations throughout Plutarch’s corpus in order to draw out their respective implications for his characterization of Flamininus.

The term found in these passages that has the most far-reaching significance in Plutarch’s corpus is φιλάνθρωπος: he uses this word and its cognates more than any other term to signify the mark of Greek paideia, both in the sense of education and acculturation.\textsuperscript{294} As Martin says of Plutarch’s use of this term: “It is inseparable from civilization, particularly Hellenic civilization. In short, it is the virtue par excellence of the civilized, educated man; and it manifests itself in any manner that is proper for such a man, be it affability, courtesy, liberality, kindness, clemency, etc.”\textsuperscript{295} As such, it is often contrasted with the savagery associated with non-Greek peoples. This combined moral and ethnic association has its roots in Isocrates,\textsuperscript{296} and is evident as well in the work of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. In the process of discussing Roman generosity (μεγαλοπρέπεια), Dionysius contrasts the Romans’ willingness to extend friendship and

\textsuperscript{293} Plutarch’s stylistic tendency to vary his diction can make philological approaches to his corpus challenging; however, the fact that he often uses pairs or lists of closely-related nouns and adjectives in his descriptions gives the flexible philologist an opportunity to analyze his semantics. Instead of just examining the corpus for a single lexeme (e.g. φιλανθρωπία), one can search instead for that lexeme and other lexemes that are commonly found in combination with it. Dutch scholars of Plutarch have pioneered this methodology of looking at clusters of terms in Plutarch’s works as a way of understanding the broad concepts that underlie his thought. In particular, see the work of Van der Stockt (2002) and Van Meirvenne (2002).

\textsuperscript{294} For two approaches to philanthropia and paideia in Plutarch, see Hirzel (1912) 21-32 and Humbert (1991) 174-81.

\textsuperscript{295} Martin (1961) 174.

\textsuperscript{296} Most famously, his comment at Paneg. 50. For discussions of Isocrates’ views of Hellenism, see Trédé (1991) and Usher (1993).
citizenship to conquered enemies with examples of Greek cruelty to fellow Greeks (AR 14.6). As a consequence, he asserts that Greek should be distinguished from barbarian not on the basis of language, but rather on the basis of wisdom, a disposition towards good habits, and keeping one’s actions within human limits. All individuals in whose nature such qualities predominate are those whom Dionysius refers to as “Greeks”; whereas cruelty and savagery are barbarian traits, the traits that mark the Greek are “virtuous and civilized thoughts and deeds” (AR 14.6.6: τὰς ἐπιεικεῖς καὶ φιλανθρώπους διανοίας τε καὶ πράξεις). Thus, for Dionysius, philanthropia is closely associated with a definition of Greekness as a set of virtues befitting the civilized man; it is, in other words, the essence of Greek identity that is potentially detachable from Greek ethnicity.

Following in the tradition of Isocrates and Dionysius, Plutarch uses philanthropia as a term with both cultural and ethnic associations; these valences are most apparent in a passage from the beginning of the Life of Pyrrhus. In his ethnography of the Epirotes, Plutarch states that the Epirote kings who followed Achilles “became thoroughly barbarized” (ἐκβαρβαρωθέντων), and only later did the king Tharrhypas “order his cities with Greek customs and letters and humane laws” (Pyrrh. 1.3: Ἑλληνικοῖς ἔθεσι καὶ γράμμασι καὶ νόμοις φιλανθρώποις διακοσμήσαντα τὰς πόλεις). Three things become apparent from this passage. First, Plutarch’s understanding of the dichotomy between Greek and non-Greek (i.e. barbarian) entails an idea of cultural, not only ethnic, difference. The phenomena that he points to as markers of Greekness are customs,
writing, and laws – not bloodlines. In this way, he follows in the tradition of Isocrates and Dionysius. Second, since he depicts the Epirotes as changing from Greek (under Neoptolemus) to barbarian to Greek again, it is clear that Plutarch imagines Greekness as a quality that can be gained or lost, even by a single community or individual. Thus for Plutarch, Greekness in not necessarily inherited, but can be acquired by those who are not Greek by blood. Finally, this passage illustrates the close link between Greekness and *philanthropia* in Plutarch’s thinking: one may posit that in Plutarch’s mind, being civilized and having Greek customs are equivalent.

To return to the *Flamininus*, Plutarch depicts Flamininus in seemingly contradictory terms as simultaneously non-Greek and Greek, barbarian yet not barbaric. At the end of the first passage, Plutarch refers to the Roman dominance of Greece as a “foreign rule” (ἀλλόφυλον ἄρχην), which comes as a slight shock after his description of Flamininus’ mildness and justice. In the second passage above, Plutarch emphasizes equally Flamininus’ foreignness and his Greek attributes. By beginning with the anecdote about Pyrrhus referring to the Romans as “unbarbaric barbarians,” Plutarch indicates to the reader that Flamininus would be similarly difficult for Greeks to categorize.\(^{298}\) Like the Romans encountered by Pyrrhus, Flamininus was ethnically foreign, but his actions and character make him seem familiar and sympathetic to the Greeks. Plutarch draws a contrast between the Macedonian accusations of Roman barbarism (i.e. their ethnic non-Greekness) and Flamininus’ *philanthropia*, which he lists in conjunction with his control of the Greek language (φωνὴν τε καὶ διάλεκτον Ἑλληνικὸν). This resembles the ethnographical prologue from the *Pyrrhus*, where non-Greekness and

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\(^{298}\) Cf. *Pyrrh*. 16.5. See Mossman (2005) for a detailed reading of Plutarch’s depictions of Greek and Roman in the *Pyrrhus*. 209
savagery is contrasted with Greek letters and civilized laws. Yet like the Epirotes, Flamininus does not possess intrinsic (i.e. ethnic) Greekness, and therefore there is the implication that his Hellenic attributes were somehow acquired. The question of how Flamininus came to have these Hellenic traits will be postponed until after we have examined the rest of the terms that Plutarch uses to describe Flamininus. For now, we can say that throughout the Flamininus Plutarch exploits the tension between the ethnic associations of philanthropia and its moral connotations in order to portray Flamininus as an exceptional individual who exhibited traits associated with Greek culture without having Greek heritage.

Self-restraint is another characteristic that Plutarch attributes to Flamininus, both in the sense of diplomatic tact and in the sense of moral continence; this, too, is a trait that Plutarch commonly associates with Hellenic acculturation. While Plutarch believes that persuasive rhetoric is a neutral tool that is used as easily for nefarious purposes as it is for noble ones, he nevertheless praises his protagonists who preferred to use persuasion rather than physical force in their political dealings. Moreover, Plutarch often identifies the use of λόγος as a consequence of Greek education, which is in large part a rhetorical education concerned with the crafting of speeches and an understanding of the speaker’s audience. Flamininus’ self-control is evident in his use of persuasion and his demeanor as a political advisor and speaker. In the first passage, as Plutarch describes the sort of leader needed for the Macedonian War – and, by implication, the sort of man

299 See van Raalte (2002) 102-110 for a thorough discussion of Plutarch’s views on rhetoric and politics. Plutarch generally derides demagoguery (e.g. Cleon, Stratocles) and the use of persuasion for personal gain.
Flamininus was— he asserts that the Greeks would be won over by an individual who relied on persuasion and diplomacy, resorted to speeches more than to war, and was persuasive when he had an audience (2.4: πειθοὶ καὶ ὀμιλίᾳ μᾶλλον ἅλωσιμοις…ἀρχων καὶ λόγῳ μᾶλλον ἡ πολέμῳ χρώμενος…ἐντυγχάνοντι τε προσήν πιθανότης). Plutarch’s emphasis on Flamininus’ tendency to prefer rhetoric and diplomacy to war and violence exemplifies the sort of reasoned approach to political affairs that he champions elsewhere in the Lives and Moralia.301 His phrasing also indicates that persuasion and rhetoric were political tactics especially amenable to the Greeks. This emphasis on Flamininus’ use of persuasion and diplomacy to achieve his political objectives effectively presents the Roman as a civilized statesman who was sensitive to the centrality of rhetoric to Greek thought and politics.

Additionally, Plutarch emphasizes in the third passage that Flamininus stopped himself from going beyond the acceptable bounds of public speech, even when he was embroiled in political controversies. This, too, indicates Flamininus’ self-restraint. Moreover, by referring to Flamininus’ demeanor as having “a certain public frankness” (παρρησίαν τινὰ πολιτικὴν), Plutarch connects his protagonist with a concept that marks a liberality of mind and a commitment to the welfare of others elsewhere in his works.302

In the Lives, Plutarch often uses parrhesia with the basic meaning of bold speech; at

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301 See, for example, the synkrisis to the Agis and Cleomenes-Gracchi pair, where Plutarch likens Cleomenes’ murder of the ephors to ensure his autocratic power to a doctor who resorts to surgery when it is not absolutely necessary: both Cleomenes and the doctor show themselves to be bad at their jobs and unskilled, and Cleomenes in addition is unjust and cruel (Comp. Ag. Cl. et Grac. 4.2). Cf. discussion in Chapter Four, 170.

times, there is the implication that such speech is not just bold, but over-bold. A striking example of *parrhesia* that went *beyond* the acceptable limits of civil discourse can be found in the *Coriolanus*, where the protagonist berated the Romans with such vehemence and anger that Plutarch claims it verged on contempt for his audience (*Cor.* 18.3). Plutarch’s portrayal of Coriolanus is the opposite of Flamininus: his *parrhesia* explicitly stayed within the limits of social acceptability. Instead of stirring up ill-will, his frank speech helped to quell civil discord and acted as a moral and political corrective, as the anecdotes following our passage attest.

This kind of *parrhesia* is exemplified in the *Lives* by both Cato the Younger and Publicola, whom Plutarch describes as men who used *parrhesia* “on behalf of justice” (ὑπὲρ τῶν δικαίων), echoing the exact words of the first passage in which Plutarch describes Flamininus (τόνος πλείστος ὑπὲρ τῶν δικαίων). What this suggests is that for Plutarch, *parrhesia* needs

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303 Examples: *Mar.* 31.5; *Cam.* 4.1, 39.2; *Brut.* 34.3; *Pomp.* 60.4; *Ant.* 5.10, 24.12.

304 Plutarch adduces four anecdotes containing Flamininus’ witticisms in political situations: he dissuades the Achaeans from annexing Zacynthos by saying that it would be dangerous for them, like a tortoise, to stick their head out of the Peloponnesian shell; he retorts to Philip that the king has made himself alone by killing all his friends and family (cf. Polyb. 18.7.5-6); he scolds Deinocrates the Messenian for drinking when he was in the midst of planning Messene’s secession from the Achaean League (cf. Polyb. 23.5.10-13); and the mocks Philip’s army by saying that it was like a banquet of where many meats are served, but all are just different cuts and preparations of pig.

305 Cato: *Pomp.* 44.2 (Κάτωνος δὲ πρὸς τὴν ἀξίωσιν ἐνστάντος οὐκ ἔτυχε τοῦ βουλεύματος. θαυμάσας δὲ τὴν παρρησίαν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν τόνον ὃ μόνος ἔχρητο φανερῶς ὑπὲρ τῶν δικαίων, ἐπεθυμήσεν ἀμός γέ ποις κτήσασθαι τὸν ἄνδρα,); *Publ.* 1.2 (τούτω δὴ κατὰ γένος προσήκων ὁ Οὐαλέριος ὡς φασὶ, βασιλευομένης μὲν ἔτι τῆς Ῥώμης ἐπιφανῆς ἄνδρα, ἐπεθυμήσεν ἀμός γέ ποις κτήσασθαι τὸν ἄνδρα,); *Brut.* 34.5; *Pomp.* 60.4. It was such a mark of Cato’s character that Plutarch even includes anecdotes about a certain Favonius, who futilely attempted to imitate Cato’s free speech. Cato’s *parrhesia*: *Pomp.* 44.2; *Cato Minor* 33.2, 35.6. Favonius’ shoddy imitation thereof: *Brut.* 34.5; *Pomp.* 60.4.
to be combined with a commitment to justice in order for it to be a positive political force.\textsuperscript{306}

Moreover, all four anecdotes included in \textit{Flam.} 17 culminate in a witty but pointed \textit{bon mot}, thereby illustrating Flamininus’ use of wit and humor to soft the blow of his criticisms; this is the the quality of speech that Plutarch refers to as “charm with force” (17.1: ἐπίχαρις μετὰ δεινότητος). This sort of \textit{parrhesia} is akin to what Plutarch describes in the \textit{Moria}, particularly in \textit{De Adulatore et Amico} and \textit{Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae}. The definition of \textit{parrhesia} that Plutarch gives in \textit{De Adulatore} encapsulates his depiction of Flamininus’ manner of speaking: he says that “the true frankness such as a friend displays applies itself to errors that are being committed; the pain which it causes is salutary and benign, and, like honey, it causes the sore places to smart and cleanses them too, but in its other uses it is wholesome and sweet” (59D5-9). Plutarch similarly recommends in the \textit{Praecepta} that humorous and frank speech in civic discourse should only be employed if it encourages the improvement of the state (803B16-E4). By including this digression on Flamininus’ political \textit{parrhesia} and the anecdotes displaying his wit, Plutarch indicates that Flamininus acted in a way that accorded with Greek ideas of friendship and statesmanship.

Πρᾳότης, found in the first passage, denotes a quality of emotional or physical self-control in Plutarch’s works; in a sense, it is this emotional control that is made

\textsuperscript{306} Justice is, moreover, the highest end to which a Plutarchan (states)man can strive. Indeed, in Plutarch’s description of the Greek reaction to Flamininus’ Isthmian Proclamation, the Greeks remark that a just man is the rarest of all goods, rarer than even courage or intelligence (11.2). He most concisely describes the relationship between justice and rationality in the \textit{Life of Aristides} 6.3, where he states that “nothing shares in justice and law except through the exercise of thinking and reasoning.” Therefore, like persuasive rhetoric and self-control, Plutarch believes that justice is predicated on rational thought, and is an attribute that must be developed by philosophical training.
manifest in the use of persuasion rather than violence, or in keeping one’s frank speech within the limits of propriety. For example, Plutarch praises young Alexander for “partaking of physical pleasures μετὰ πολλῆς πραότητος” (Alex. 4.8). Additionally, after his brutal sack of Thebes, Alexander felt such remorse at the way he gave in to his *thumos* that he thenceforth acted with more restraint in his following conquests (Alex. 13.3: πραότερον). As these examples illustrate, Plutarch conceives of this term as the ability to keep oneself within limits and behave in a moderate manner. As such, he often contrasts this quality of self-control with passion and impulse, and connects it closely with notions of prudence and rational calculation.³⁰⁷ This connection is evident from the frequent pairing in Plutarch’s corpus of the adverbial form πράως with φιλοσόφως and other synonymous words that indicate philosophical education and moral balance, such as μετρίως, σωφρόνως, φιλανθρώπως, and χρησίμως.³⁰⁸ Indeed, this list of adverbs often paired with πράως is remarkable in that Plutarch employs most of these terms or their cognates in describing the character of Flamininus. It is clear, then, that Plutarch’s Flamininus is not only a model of self-control, but rather that his self-control was just one facet of a character that united so many of the qualities Plutarch associates with virtue, civilization, and statesmanship. Furthermore, the qualities of *philanthropia* and self-restraint that Plutarch attributes to Flamininus are the very qualities that he explicitly denies that Philopoemen had. This is clear from Phil. 3.1, where Plutarch informs the reader that Philopoemen modeled himself after the great Theban hero Epaminondas, but his temper and his contentiousness prevented him from attaining the Theban’s self-

³⁰⁷ Martin (1960), which has many more examples, and also discusses πραότης as a physical characteristic.
³⁰⁸ See for example: Pyrrh. 11.8, Mar. 8.2, Arist. 23.1, Cato Maior 24.10, Alex. 40.2. Variations: An seni 787C11, 788C8; Thes. 26.4; Cimon 6.2; Phoc. 2.8; Pelop. 25.4.
restraint, gravity, and humanity in political matters (τῷ δὲ πρᾴῳ καὶ βαθεὶ καὶ φιλανθρόπῳ παρά τὰς πολιτικὰς διαφορὰς ἐμμένειν οὐ δυνάμενος ὀτ’ ὀργῆν καὶ φιλονικίαιν). In this way, as Walsh has convincingly argued, Plutarch constructs the virtues of Flamininus’ character in response to Philopoemen’s flaws. I add that, in doing so, Plutarch has characterized his Roman protagonist as more in line with Greek cultural values than his Greek counterpart, thereby highlighting Flamininus’ exceptional status as a philhellene.

One final quality that Plutarch attributes to Flamininus in these passages remains to be discussed: his status as a “lover of true honor.” Philotimia, commonly translated as ‘ambition,’ is a central concern in several of Plutarch’s Lives and a prominent motif in the Flamininus. Like many other ethical qualities, Plutarch makes it clear in his works that philotimia is a trait that can both spur a man on towards greatness as well as drive him to his demise. He describes Flamininus’ ambition as a driving force for his actions; in fact, he attributes Flamininus’ dishonorable career after he left Greece to having a dearth of material upon which he could exercise his philotimia. At the same time, Plutarch’s appellation of Flamininus as a “lover of true honor” (τιμῆς ἀληθοῦς ἐραστῇ) qualifies his ambition so as to emphasize the virtue of his pursuit, thereby going beyond a simple notion of philotimia. What, then, does Plutarch mean by “true honor”? We may begin to

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310 Other Lives in which Plutarch explores philotimia are Alexander-Caesar, Pyrrhus-Marius, Lysander-Agesilaus, just to name a few. The edited volume of Roskam, de Pourcq, and van der Stockt (2012) collects essays on all aspects of philotimia in Plutarch’s corpus.
311 Plutarch advises Menemachus to be wary of ambition in politics in Praec. ger. reip. 819F1-820F7. He argues that it is dangerous because it is found in active and vigorous men, and can incite them to engage in overly bold actions; it also can lead to envy and discord.
312 Cf. 1.3, 7.5, 17.2 (positive ambition); 20.1 (ambition exceeding the proper limits).
answer that question by looking at the sentence that immediately precedes the third passage quoted above, where Plutarch summarizes the honors that Flamininus received from the Greeks. Here he says (17.1):

Ἡσαν δὲ καὶ παρὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων τιμαὶ πρέπουσαι, καὶ τὸ τὰς τιμὰς ἀληθινὰς ποιοῦν, εὔνοια θαυμαστή δι’ ἐπιείκειαν ἥθους.

The honors from the rest of the Greeks, too, were fitting; and to make these honors true, there was wonderful goodwill on account of the equitability of his character.

This passage illustrates the important relationship between honors (τίμαι) and goodwill (εὔνοια) that Plutarch stresses throughout his works. In this instance, the goodwill of the Greeks was what made the honors they bestowed on Flamininus not only fitting, but true. This conception of goodwill as a “truer” honor than the processions and sacrifices that were commonly offered by Greeks in honor of their benefactors is also apparent in the Timoleon and the Lucullus, where Plutarch describes “true goodwill” (ἀληθινὴ εὔνοια) as more valuable than traditional honors. In the Demetrius, Plutarch digresses on the inverse relationship of goodwill and honors, asserting that “the worst proof of the goodwill of the masses towards kings and potentates is the extravagant bestowal of honors” (Demetr. 30.4-5). Demetrius was fooled into believing that the Athenians were steadfast in their goodwill towards him, since their flatteries of him seemed to know no

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313 It should be noted, in passing, that Plutarch seems to be the earliest Greek writer who develops this idea of the relationship between civic goodwill and traditional honors. His contemporary Dio of Prusa Or. 44.2-3 expresses a similar notion that all physical honors (statues, inscriptions, etc.) are encompassed in the goodwill and friendship of his fellow-citizens; but elsewhere in his corpus, the connection between τίμαι and εὔνοια is not a major theme. Later, Cassius Dio 43.15.2 attributes to Julius Caesar the recognition of the distinction between honors from goodwill (true honors) and those from flattery (false honors): we may see here the influence of Plutarch’s thought on the historian of Rome.

314 Cf. Timol. 39.3 (the spirit of goodwill apparent the Timoleon’s mourners was greater than the honor of a lavish state funeral); Luc. 23.2 (the honor of a festival of Lucullus in Ephesus was surpassed by the true goodwill of the Ephesians towards Lucullus).
bounds; in his case, the fact that his traditional honors far exceeded the goodwill of the people showed him to be both tyrannical and lacking in self-awareness. Although Plutarch does not explicitly call these honors false, he clearly presents them as false in that they deceived Demetrius of the people’s true feelings. He also outlines the difference between true and false honors when he discusses philotimia in the Praecepta. Just as in the Lives, he defines true honor with reference to goodwill, which he construes in this context as foundational to true honor (820F11-13). Accordingly, honors that are false in name and are false witnesses (821F5-6: αἱ...ψευδώνυμοι τιμαὶ καὶ ψευδομάρτυρες) are those that are given in return for benefactions such as theatrical performances, distributions of money, and gladiatorial shows; Plutarch compares such honors to a prostitute’s smile, and reiterates that the glory they carry is ephemeral and uncertain (821F2-9). From all of these passages, we can deduce that the Greeks’ identification of Flamininus as a “lover of true honor” in Plutarch’s account elevates him above the run-of-the-mill ambitious politician, and instead puts him in the class of those who are able to discern the truest pursuit of politics – the enduring goodwill of the people – and act with that end in mind. Although Plutarch depicts Flamininus’ ambition outside of the arena of Greek affairs as the cause of his disgrace at the end of his career, within the Greek context, Flamininus’ apparent understanding of the difference between true and false honors further identifies him as having a mentality that was sympathetic to the Greeks he encountered.

As I hope to have shown in the preceding pages, each of the attributes Plutarch employs to characterize Flamininus – philanthropia, knowledge of Greek language, self-restraint in word and deed, love of true honors – are emblematic for Plutarch of a Greek,
liberal, and philosophical education, *paideia*. To conclude this section, I would like to return to the question, alluded to earlier, of how Plutarch accounts for the fact that Flamininus’ character exhibited such Greek sensibilities. Simon Swain has aptly defined *paideia* as “the successful interiorization of the educational, cultural, and linguistic systems of Greek society,” and by this definition Plutarch’s Flamininus appears to be a proper *pepaideumenos*.\(^{315}\) Nevertheless, Plutarch is utterly silent on the question of how Flamininus acquired Greek *paideia* – it seems that just as Flamininus is the “unbarbaric barbarian,” he is also the uneducated *pepaideumenos*. Rather than providing an explanation in his narrative for how Flamininus acquired the ability to speak Greek or exude *philanthropia*, Plutarch only comments upon Flamininus’ traditional *Roman* military training, which prepared him so well for his military tribuneship with Marcellus (*Flam.* 1.3).\(^{316}\) Modern historians have attempted to fill in this gap in Plutarch’s narrative by positing that Flamininus likely became fluent in Greek while serving in southern Italy, but Plutarch’s text does not give any indication about Flamininus’ relationship with the south Italian Greeks.\(^{317}\) The fact that Plutarch does not insert a story about Flamininus’ Greek education is indicative of his understanding of the history of Greek cultural influence in Rome: Plutarch clearly marks Marcellus’ triumph after the sack of Syracuse

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\(^{315}\) Swain (1996) 140.

\(^{316}\) Plutarch presents Marcellus similarly as a *philanthropos* and a lover of Greek culture, especially at *Marc.* 1.2: “he was modest, humane (φιλάνθρωπος), and so far a lover of Greek learning and speeches (Ἑλληνικῆς παιδείας καὶ λόγων...ἐραστής) as to honor and admire those who excelled in it, although he himself was prevented by his occupations from achieving a knowledge and proficiency that corresponded to his desires.”

\(^{317}\) *SIG*\(^3\) 593, an inscribed letter of Flamininus to the city Chyretiae, is strong evidence for Flamininus’ fluency in the *koine* Greek language, as well as in the political institutions and practices of the Greeks, as Armstrong and Walsh (1986) has argued.
as the first time that Greek culture was imported into the city of Rome. As a consequence, Plutarch assumes that a Greek education was a option only in the Roman Lives of men who postdate Marcellus. Within that framework, Flamininus’ lack of a Greek education in Plutarch’s narrative is coherent, but the confluence of Greek sensibilities in his character still remains to be explained. The only indication Plutarch gives of how Flamininus’ character came to have the qualities it had can be found in 2.4, where the biographer asserts that the Greeks would have only accepted Roman rule so easily if the Roman leader was “virtuous by nature” (εἰ μὴ φύσει τε χρηστὸς ἦν ὁ ἄρχων). If we may push the text a bit, and take φύσει to apply generally to the description Plutarch gives in this passage of the sort of Roman leader amenable to the Greeks (i.e. Flamininus), then it seems that the character-traits that Flamininus possessed, so commonly associated by Plutarch with Greek paideia, were inherent in his nature.

The paradox of Flamininus’ Greek qualities coming naturally rather than as products of Greek acculturation helps to explain the surprise and amazement of the Greeks when they first encountered him: even though they could see that he was Roman by blood and education, he appeared at the same time to be Greek by nature. The tension between Greek and Roman identity that this paradox creates allows Plutarch to construct Flamininus as a figure who falls into a third category apart from Greek and non-Greek: the Roman philhellene.

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319 Plutarch’s emphasis on the luck and divine fortune of Rome at this moment in history may also be related to Flamininus’ surprisingly Greek-like character. As Donald Russell (1973) 132 writes, “Most Romans, for Plutarch, had a potentiality for barbarism; it is part of his picture of Greco-Roman symbiosis that Greek paideia is the prime means of neutralising this risk.”
As I asserted at the beginning, Plutarch constructs Flamininus’ philhellenism as a quality that was apparent in both his character and his deeds. Up to this point, I have surveyed how the terms Plutarch uses to describe Flamininus’ character fit into a larger framework of Plutarch’s idea of Greek values, and work together to paint a portrait of a man who naturally has Greek sensibilities, despite being Roman by blood and education. Now, I turn to the other side of Flamininus’ philhellenism: his role as benefactor of the Greeks, the role that defines Flamininus for Plutarch. This is in contrast to how Flamininus is presented in the accounts of Polybius and Livy: both of these authors focalize Flamininus’ actions through how they benefited the project of Roman expansion, rather than how they improved the lives of the Greeks.\footnote{On Flamininus in Livy’s fourth decade, see Carawan (1988); on Polybius and Flamininus, see Eckstein (1990).} Not only does Plutarch depict Flamininus as having the ultimate goal of being recognized as a benefactor, but both Plutarch as narrator and Greek internal audiences hail Flamininus as such. His benefactions can be broken down into three sets of actions: his liberation of the Greeks from Philip V; his restoration of civic order to the newly-liberated poleis; and his preservation of the order he established during the war with Antiochus III. Just as Flamininus’ apparently Greek sensibilities made the Greeks he encountered optimistic about the effect he would have on Greek affairs, his benefactions also elicited the honors, goodwill, and compliance of the Greeks with Flamininus. Plutarch, therefore, emphasizes Flamininus’ commitment to benefiting the Greeks as a complementary answer to the question of how Greece came to be dominated by Rome.

The Flamininus is ringed by discussions of Flamininus as a benefactor that fall in the first chapter of the Life and the first sentence of the synkrisis. At the beginning of the
Life, Plutarch describes Flamininus’ character (τὸ ἰθὸς) as prone both to anger and to kindness. The former quality he quickly dismisses, saying that Flamininus was light in his punishments. When it came to conferring favors, however, he was unstoppable (1.2):

…πρὸς δὲ τὰς χάριτας τελεσιουργὸς, καὶ τοῖς εὐεργετηθέσι διὰ παντὸς ὁς ὑπὲρ εὐεργέταις εὔνους, καὶ πρόθυμοι ὡς κάλλιστα τῶν κτιμάτων τούς εὐ πεπονθότας ὑπ᾿ αὐτοῦ περιέπειν ἀεὶ καὶ σῴζειν. Φιλοτιμότατος δὲ καὶ φιλοδοξότατος ὄν, ἐβούλετο τῶν ἀρίστων και μεγίστων πράξεων αὐτουργὸς εἶναι, καὶ τοῖς δεομένοις εὐ παθεῖν μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς εὐ ποιῆσαι δυναμένοις ἔχαρε, τοὺς μὲν ὅσπερ ὀλὴν τῆς ἄρετῆς, τοὺς δ’ ὅσπερ ἀντιπάλους πρὸς δόξαν ἡγούμενος.

…but in his favors he was a perfectionist, and always well-disposed towards his beneficiaries as if they were his benefactors, and eager always to protect and preserve those having suffered well by him as if they were his most precious possessions. But being the most ambitious and hungry for glory, he wanted to be the sole agent of the best and greatest deeds, and he took more pleasure in those who needed to receive a favor than those who were able to bestow one, considering the former the material of his virtue, and the latter his rivals for glory.

Modern readers of this passage have focused on Plutarch’s depiction of Flamininus’ philotimia and philodoxia, and have argued that Plutarch uses them to explain both Flamininus’ positive actions (e.g. freeing of the Greeks) and negative actions (e.g. pursuit of Hannibal).321 Although this perspective is an accurate description of the Flamininus, it overlooks the fact that Plutarch’s Flamininus desired to exercise his ambition through benefaction, not through the more traditional modes of political offices or military campaigns.322 Indeed, Plutarch points to the fact that Flamininus won his consulship in an exceptional way, without following the traditional cursus honorum. By downplaying the spheres of political and military competition, Plutarch highlights the fact that

322 While his military acumen is presented in a neutral fashion in the Life, it is called into question in the synkrisis, where Plutarch records accusations of Flamininus’ cowardice in battle. Cf. Flam. 2.1-2; Comp. Phil. et Flam. 2.3.
Flamininus’ *philotimia* was directed towards the usual goal of holding the title of “benefactor.”

The end of the *Flamininus* is a jarringly dismal account of Flamininus’ career in Rome (18-21). These chapters chronicle Titus Flamininus’ defense of his brother Lucius when the latter was expelled from the Roman senate for committing cold-blooded murder in a *convivium*, Titus’ subsequent feud with Cato the Elder, and finally his pursuit of Hannibal in the Bithynian court. Yet Plutarch seems to forget, or at least forgive, Flamininus’ Roman career once he turns to the *synkrisis*, which begins as follows (*Comp. Phil. et Flam.* 1.1):

Μεγέθει μὲν οὖν τῶν εἰς τοὺς Ἕλληνας εὐεργεσιῶν οὔτε Φιλοποίμενα Τίτῳ παραβάλλειν οὔτε πάνω πολλοῖς τὸν Φιλοποίμενον ἀμεινόνων ἀνδρῶν ἀξιόν ἐστι· τοῖς μὲν γὰρ Ἕλλησι πρὸς Ἕλληνας οἱ πόλεμοι, τῷ δ’ οὐχ Ἕλληνι καὶ ὑπὲρ Ἑλλήνων.

So in the magnitude of their benefactions to the Greeks neither Philopoemen nor even the many men who were greater than Philopoemen are worthy to compare with Titus; for the former were Greek and their wars were against Greeks, but the latter, though not a Greek, fought on behalf of the Greeks.

Thus the start of the *synkrisis* confirms the evaluation offered at the start of the *Flamininus*, namely that Flamininus was first and foremost a benefactor of the Greeks.

His praise of Flamininus as the greatest benefactor of the Greeks is jarring in its juxtaposition to this Roman narrative, but suggests that the *Flamininus* is at least as much a *Greek* story as a Roman one. Thus we can see that this *synkrisis* passage and the beginning of the *Life* work together to underline that the most important aspect of Flamininus’ life was that he was a benefactor of the Greeks.

When we consider how Plutarch describes Flamininus’ actions towards the Greeks within the narrative of the *Life*, we see that Plutarch has taken a historical tradition that emphasized what Flamininus accomplished for the Romans and transforms...
that into a narrative of what Flamininus did for the Greeks. We have seen this already in
the way that Plutarch focalizes the Greek reaction to the Isthmian Proclamation so that it
is a retrospective reflection on Greek history rather than a praise of Roman
exceptionalism. This phenomenon is also evident throughout the narrative as Plutarch
describes Flamininus’ successive benefactions of liberation, restoration of civic order,
and preservation of freedom.

Liberation is the first major benefaction that Flamininus performs for the Greeks
in Plutarch’s narrative. Historians have long debated what the “freedom of the Greeks”
actually entailed, how much Flamininus was influenced by the practices of the Hellenistic
kings, and whether this liberation was performed as an end in itself or as a means to
ensuring Rome’s continued importance in Greek affairs. In the Flamininus, however,
there is no sense that the liberation of Greece was anything less than a spontaneous and
genuine benefaction from Flamininus to the Greeks. This is best illustrated by examining
how Plutarch’s narration of the controversy over the Roman liberation of the so-called
“Fetters of Greece” differs from his Polybian source-text. Flamininus and the Roman
commission had originally planned to maintain their own garrisons at Chalkis, Corinth,
and Demetrias, but, as both Plutarch and Polybius tell us, they were verbally attacked by
the Aetolians for deceiving the Greeks and merely changing the Greek hegemony from
Philip to Rome (Flam. 10.1-2; Polyb. 18.45.7-9). Both Plutarch and Polybius record that

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323 The slogan of “freedom of the Greeks” has long been a controversial topic among
scholars of ancient history, and it is not my intention here to influence the discussion on
what we think Greeks and Romans meant when they referred to the “freedom of the
Greeks.” Walsh (1996) argues that Flamininus had sole responsibility for the Roman
policy of Greek freedom, and that he developed this policy as he became acquainted with
Philip, the Greeks, and their relationship at the beginning of his consulship. For further
Flamininus convinced the rest of the Roman commissioners to include the Fetters in the liberation of Greece, but the reasoning that Flamininus uses to persuade the other Romans differs in the two accounts in a way that betrays each author’s interests. In Polybius’ account, Flamininus explains to the Romans “that if they wished both to gain the complete glory (εὔκλειαν ὁλόκληρον) of the Greeks and to be believed generally by all that they had originally crossed the sea not for the sake of profit, but for the sake of the freedom of the Greeks, they must withdraw from everywhere and they must free all the cities now garrisoned by Philip” (Polyb. 18.45.9). By this reckoning, Flamininus convinced the Romans to free the Fetters for the sake of appearances and reputation; he implies that having a good relationship with the Greeks would be more profitable than maintaining garrisons in Greece. Though the topic is the freedom of the Greeks, the argument is based on what would be best for the Romans.

In contrast, Plutarch’s version of this controversy emphasizes the emotional effect that the Aetolians’ criticisms had on Flamininus (Flam. 10.2):

Ἐφ’ οἷς ἀχθόμενος ὁ Τίτος καὶ βαρέως φέρων καὶ δεόμενος τοῦ συνεδρίου, τέλος ἐξέπεισε καὶ ταύτας τὰς πόλεις ἀνεῖναι, ὧς ἡ ἐμφανισθείη αὐτοῦ ἐγγύς ἐλθείη ταῖς Ἑλλήσιν.

Titus, angered by these [attacks], bearing them heavily, and beseeching the commission, finally persuaded them also to free these cities of their garrisons, in order that the gift from him to the Greeks could be complete.

Plutarch’s use of the phrase ὁλόκληρος ἡ χάρις in this passage may be an intentional nod to the Polybian passage, in which Flamininus talks about the need for the Roman’s good reputation among the Greeks to be complete (εὔκλειαν ὁλόκληρον). I posit that this striking resonance serves to underline the difference between the logic of Polybius’

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324 This is an argument that Flamininus makes elsewhere in Polybius: cf. 18.37.6-9.
Flamininus and that of Plutarch’s Flamininus. The latter is concerned most of all with his personal reputation, as is clear from his emotional response and the emphatic phrase παρ’ αὐτοῦ, while the former sees the general glory and advantage of Rome as the main issue at question. Moreover, the Polybian Flamininus is focused on Rome’s reputation, but the Plutarchan Flamininus’ foremost objective is to give an un reproachable benefaction to the Greeks. Put another way, whereas the Polybian Flamininus constructs an argument based on what freedom of the Greeks can do for the Romans, Plutarch’s Flamininus is solely concerned with what he can do for the Greeks. We may infer that Plutarch is actively engaging with and manipulating his source text in order to foreground Flamininus’ role as an individual benefactor of the Greeks. In doing so, he downplays Flamininus’ role as a Roman consul advancing Roman objectives, and instead paints him as a Roman philhellene rather than a Roman imperialist.

Plutarch’s characterization of Flamininus as a personal and genuine benefactor of the Greeks develops as he narrates the events that follow the Isthmian Proclamation, as he utilizes language that resonates with descriptions of legendary law-givers and ideal statesmen from the Lives and Moralia. After asserting that Flamininus’ deeds were consonant with the words of the Proclamation, Plutarch describes Flamininus and his agents traveling throughout Greece to disperse the garrisons, restore the ancient constitutions of the poleis, and celebrate the Nemean Games (12.1-2). He summarizes Flamininus’ activities in Greece as follows (12.3):

Ἐπιφοιτῶν τε ταῖς πόλεσιν εὐνομίαν ἅμα καὶ δίκην πολλὴν ὁμόνοιάν τε καὶ φιλοφροσύνην πρὸς ἀλλήλους παρεῖχε, καταπαύων μὲν τὰς στάσεις, κατάγων δὲ τὰς φυγάς, ἀγαλλόμενος δὲ τῷ πείθειν καὶ διαλλάσσειν τοὺς Ἐλλήνας οὐχ ἦττον ἢ τῷ κεκρατηκέναι τῶν Μακεδόνων, ὡστε μικρότατον ἢδη τὴν ἐλευθερίαν δοκεῖν ὧν ἐνεργητοῦντο.
Visiting the cities he established **civic order** and abundant **justice, concord** and **friendliness** towards each other, stopping their factions, restoring their exiles, and exulting in persuading and reconciling the Greeks no less than in having defeated the Macedonians, so that freedom already seemed to be the least of his benefactions.

Civic order, justice, concord, friendship, the reconciling of factions – these ideas appear, in combination or singly, throughout the Plutarchan corpus to describe both the deeds of men who found or re-found political constitutions and the ideal work of the Greek statesman in Plutarch’s own time. The assertion that these benefactions of civic restoration seemed even greater than Flamininus’ original benefaction of liberation underscores the fact that creating civic order in the *poleis* was, for Plutarch, a truly philhellenic action. Plutarch portrays Lycurgus, Numa, and Solon in similar terms, as men who created order in Sparta, Rome, and Athens, respectively, by instilling justice, sound government, and concord between factions in the state.  

Other reformers and restorers in the *Lives* are depicted as achieving these same civic objectives, such as Cleisthenes in Athens and Aratus of Sicyon. Plutarch praises all of these men for their ability to govern their states such that disputes were easily resolved, laws and customs encouraged virtuous behavior in the citizens, and justice and civic harmony were in abundance. By using language that recalls famous law-givers and restorers, Plutarch suggests that Flamininus was a new law-giver for Greece and the founder of a new age for the Greek cities.

Plutarch uses similar terminology in the *Moralia* to describe the highest goods of political activity, thereby indicating that he does not consider the civic virtues he depicts

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in the Lives as fossils of a time long-gone, but rather as important civic aims in his contemporary world. In his essay De Fortuna, Plutarch asserts that what we call virtue in public life is civic order and justice (97E14-15: ἐν δὲ κοινωνήμασι καὶ πολιτείας εὐνομίαν καὶ δικαιοσύνην); in the Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae, he endorses Pindar’s appellation of the πολιτικός as “the craftsman of civic order and justice” (807C6-7: δημιουργὸς εὐνομίας καὶ δίκης).\(^{327}\) Indeed, as we have discussed with reference to the Life of Aratus, Plutarch claims in the Praecepta that creating and preserving homonoia within one’s polis and among the Greek poleis is the highest, and only, good towards which a second-century AD statesman can strive.\(^{328}\) He lists as the five greatest political goods peace, freedom, prosperity, abundance of men, and concord (824C5: εἰρήνης ἐλευθερίας εὐετηρίας εὐανδρίας ὁμονοίας), and argues that since the Roman rulers of the Greeks have established the first two, and the third and fourth are matters of chance, then only concord is left for the modern statesman to pursue.\(^{329}\) In the Flamininus, not only does Plutarch explicitly attribute the creation of homonoia in the poleis to the protagonist, but he also emphasizes the importance of ending civic disputes by reporting that Flamininus stopped civil factions, restored exiles, and took more pride in reconciling the Greeks than defeating the Macedonians. Flamininus, however, was also able to achieve something that was no longer in the purview of the Imperial Greek statesmen: he was able to give Greece her freedom. Thus, as we can see from reading the Praecepta, Plutarch has characterized Flamininus’ benefactions as exemplifying the ideal work of a modern statesman, while simultaneously elevating Flamininus’ benefactions

\(^{327}\) Pindar, Frag. 57.

\(^{328}\) See pages 90-92.

\(^{329}\) Though for freedom, he grumbles, “we have as much as our rulers allow us, and perhaps more would not be better.”
above what was possible for Greeks securely under the Roman Empire. In his civic
benefactions of restoration, Flamininus demonstrated that he was like the ideal Greek
statesman, but was even more capable of doing good for Greece because he was from
Rome, the eventual guarantor of Greece’s liberty.

Plutarch then uses Flamininus’ third set of benefactions, those of preserving the
good order he had originally established in the poleis, to demonstrate how Flamininus’
charisma and his sympathy for the Greeks was pivotal in ensuring Rome’s military
success by securing the goodwill of the Greeks in the war with Antiochus III. By
employing Antiochus and his Aetolian allies, as well as Flamininus’ Roman successor
Manius Acilius, as foils for Flamininus, he reiterates Flamininus’ exceptional status as a
philhellene and benefactor of the Greeks. As Plutarch narrates the beginning of the war
with Antiochus, he records that the Aetolians recommended that Antiochus could win
Greek support by claiming that he was fighting for the “freedom of the Greeks.” The
Greeks, however, were not fooled by this ruse, and Plutarch tells us: “they did not want to
be set free, for they were already free” (15.1). This passage shows that Plutarch can
differentiate between specious and genuine calls for “freedom of the Greeks,” and deems
Flamininus’ genuine. Moreover, Flamininus’ exceptional status as a Roman philhellene
is underscored by his inclusion among the Romans sent with Manius to settle affairs in
Greece; indeed, Plutarch tells us specifically that he was included “on account of the
Greeks” (Flam. 15.2):

…δὸν τοὺς μὲν εὐθὺς ὁφθεὶς ἐποίησε βεβαιοτέρους, τοὺς δ’ ἄρχομένους νοσεῖν, ὡσπερ τι
σὺν καρῷ φάρμακον ἐνδιδοὺς τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν εὐνοιαν, ἔστησε καὶ διεκώλυσεν
ἐξαμαρτεῖν.
…some of whom, as soon as they saw him, were made more steadfast, while others, who were beginning to be infected, he righted and prevented from going astray just like a timely medicine, creating goodwill towards himself.

Plutarch here depicts Flamininus’ charisma and reputation for philhellenism as a powerful instrument for shoring up Greek support of Rome. The juxtaposition of the Greeks’ incredulous reaction to Antiochus’ rhetoric of liberation and their sympathetic reaction towards Flamininus reinforces the idea that the Greeks recognized Flamininus as their true benefactor and friend. Moreover, Plutarch depicts their recognition of Flamininus’s philhellenism as the cause of their return to the Roman alliance.

Plutarch treats Flamininus’ actions during the war with Antiochus as almost entirely separate from those of Manius Acillius, who was formally charged with waging the war. The military campaign against Antiochus is dismissed with a single line (15.3), and Plutarch’s focus in the narrative is instead on how Flamininus saved the Greeks from the wrath of Manius.\textsuperscript{330} Thus he narrates the sieges of Naupactus and Chalkis, two episodes in the Roman campaign after Thermopylae (191 BC), in which Manius’ aggressive tactics against the Greeks are contrasted with Flamininus’ conciliatory approach. Before these episodes, Plutarch reminds the reader of Flamininus’ mercy and forbearance – even despite his quick temper – in his treatment of the Greeks who had allied with the Aetolians (15.3). This recalls the first chapter of the \textit{Life}, in which Plutarch downplays Flamininus’ quick temper in contrast to the steadfastness of his benefactions: the narration of the sieges of Naupactus and Chalkis corroborate this initial characterization. In the first episode, Plutarch recounts that when Manius was besieging Naupactus (at the time controlled by the Aetolians), Flamininus came to intervene.

“because he pitied the Greeks” (15.4: οἰκτίρων τοὺς Ἑλληνας). There he criticized Manius for acting imprudently “out of anger” (δι’ ὀργήν). Plutarch then draws out the contrast between Flamininus’ sympathy for the Greeks and Manius’ anger with a dramatic description of the scene of the Naupactians crying out to Flamininus, and Flamininus reacting by turning away and bursting into tears (στραφεὶς καὶ δακρύσας). The episode ends with Flamininus persuading Manius to give up the siege and stop his anger (καταπαύσας τὸν θυμὸν). The second episode, Manius’ siege of Chalkis, is a similar narrative of Manius’ wrath being overcome by Titus’ persuasion; Plutarch describes his interventions for that polis as even more difficult than his saving of Naupactus (16.1). The cause of Manius’ rage at the Chalkidians was that Antiochus III had married a young girl of the city after the beginning of the war; for this reason, the Chalkidians allied themselves to Antiochus and allowed their city to be his base of operations for the war (15.1-2). Though the manner of the Chalkidians’ infraction against the Romans differed from that of the Naupactians, Flamininus’ efforts to preserve the polis were the same. In both episodes, Flamininus’ attitude of conciliation towards the Greeks defeated Manius’ violence. Plutarch thus uses both of these stories to make the same point, that Roman sympathy for the Greeks was a more effective strategy than vengeful anger against them.

Plutarch uses this juxtaposition between Manius and Flamininus to establish two alternatives for Roman interactions with Greeks: either as enemies or as client-friends. Not only does Plutarch use this contrast with Manius to characterize Flamininus as a “good” Roman and a steadfast friend of the Greeks, but, as I alluded to in the introduction to this section, he also omits and manipulates parts of the historical tradition that would
cast Flamininus in a negative light. There are at least two examples of this in the
*Flamininus* – one that is simple and somewhat minor, and a second that is more
sophisticated and significant.\(^{331}\) Plutarch’s first omission concerns Flamininus’
campaigns in Greece in 198 BC, when he initially took up his post as consul. Livy,
presumably following Polybius, records that Titus Flamininus and his brother Lucius,
who was the admiral of the fleet attending Titus’ army, were both aggressive in pillaging
of the towns of Thessaly as they began their campaign. He says, for example, that Titus
besieged Phaloria both day and night, and eventually burned the town down; Lucius, on
the other hand, devastated the Euboean cities of Carystus, Eretria, and Elatia.\(^{332}\) Plutarch,
however, omits the entire military campaign before the battle of Atrax (198 BC).
Moreover, his only description of Flamininus’ army on the march in Thessaly describes
the Roman army as taking no more than it needed from the land, and directly contrasts
their practice of treating the country as their own with the brutal pillaging practiced by
Philip and the Macedonians (5.1-3). Rather than trying to explain away the harm done to
the Greeks in the early campaigns of the Flaminini, Plutarch omits that material entirely.
In a straightforward way, then, we can see here Plutarch selecting from his source-
material and including only anecdotes that would cohere with his characterization of
Flamininus as a philhellene.

The assassination of Brachyles of Thebes is the second example of Plutarch’s
careful manipulation of the historical tradition in order to avoid complicating his portrait
of Flamininus the philhellene. Brachyles was a pro-Macedonian political leader in

\(^{331}\) Eckstein (2008) 281-4 first drew my attention to the fact that Plutarch omits these
stories about Flamininus, but he does not consider how or why Plutarch’s account varies
from the Polybian and Livian texts.
\(^{332}\) Phaloria: Livy 32.15.1-3. Euboea: Livy 32.16.8-17, 18.9, 24.3-6.
Thebes, who, as we know from Polybius and Livy, led a Boeotian contingent allied to Philip against the Romans at Cynoscephalae. In Polybius’ account, after the Isthmian Proclamation, Flamininus showed clemency by returning Bracchyles and his men to Thebes, despite their Macedonian leanings. When Bracchyles became Boeotarch and continued his support of Philip, however, the pro-Roman faction in Thebes met with Flamininus to express their concern about the situation in Thebes. They were fearful that they would be in danger from Bracchyles once the Romans left Greece, and proposed that the best way to ensure their own safety and Thebes’ continued support of Rome was to assassinate Bracchyles. Flamininus responded that he would not take part in the assassination, but he would not take steps to prevent its occurrence. Livy’s account agrees with Polybius in most of the details, except that he does not report that a Theban faction ever met with Flamininus. Instead, he merely states that the Boeotians suspected that Bracchyles could not have been killed by the pro-Roman faction without the knowledge of the Romans; Livy himself neither asserts nor denies this suspicion. Plutarch mentions Bracchyles in the Flamininus, but not with reference to this assassination plot. Instead, he appears in the narrative between the battles of Atrax and Cynoscephalae, as Flamininus was marching through Greece and gaining support (Flam. 6). Plutarch recounts that Flamininus entered Boeotia without hostile actions, and was

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334 Polyb. 18.43.7-12. Cf. 20.3-4, where Polybius reiterates that Bracchyles’ assassination was one of the purported reasons that the Boeotians hated the Romans; the true cause, he claimed, was that they were a diseased and disturbed citizenry.
335 Livy 33.27.5-29.1. Cf. Briscoe (1973) 303 ad loc.: “having omitted Polybius’ account of Flamininus’ connivance at the murder, L. can present the Boeotians’ beliefs without committing himself as to whether or not they are true.” Carawan (1988) argues that Livy’s reason for softening Flamininus’ role in this story is to preserve his depiction of Flamininus as an effective and moral Roman leader; I find no reason to disagree.
met by Brachyles and the other leading men of Boeotia, who were pro-Macedonian. He depicts both parties as treating each other with kindness, but states that even though Flamininus acted peacefully towards the Boeotians, he angered them by entering Thebes with a retinue of armed soldiers. Both Flamininus and Attalus of Pergamon gave speeches to the Thebans, and Plutarch finally ends the scene by plainly stating that the Boeotians allied themselves with the Romans (6.3). So much for Brachylles – this is the only mention of him in the *Life*, and Plutarch says nothing else about Boeotia or Thebes for the rest of the narrative.

By including Brachyles in this limited way, Plutarch accomplishes two things. First, he wipes clean any suspicion of Flamininus’ involvement in the Theban coup by omitting the coup altogether. Such complicity in a political assassination would certainly have marred the pristine image Plutarch constructs of Flamininus as a man who relied on persuasion rather than violence, and whose reconciliation of Greek political factions was an even greater benefaction than his liberation of the Greek cities. Second, by portraying Brachyles and the Thebans as behaving in a conciliatory manner toward Flamininus, Plutarch is able to rehabilitate the reputation of Boeotia in their dealings with the Romans in the early second century BC. Plutarch was a Boeotian himself, and his bias towards his homeland emerges at various points in his works.336 We may speculate that Plutarch may have wanted to distance himself and his homeland from the stubborn Boeotian resistance to Rome that both Polybius and Livy record. As the author of a work praising

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336 For example, Pelopidas and presumably Epaminondas, fellow-Boeotians, are two of Plutarch’s most favored protagonists in the *Lives*; Lucullus, too, seems to get a reprieve for his benefactions to Boeotia. On the other hand, Herodotus’ treatment of the Boeotians in the Persian Wars is more than enough to incite Plutarch to compose his treatise *De Herodoti Malignitate*. 

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Flamininus and Rome’s liberation of Greece, it would undermine Plutarch’s authority to draw attention to the fact that his countrymen fought so hard against the “savior of the Greeks.” Therefore, by omitting the assassination of BrachYLES and instead portraying him as treating Flamininus with equanimity, Plutarch smoothes over a disgraceful event in both Flamininus’ career and the history of Boeotia.

Throughout the narrative, then, Plutarch consciously and emphatically asserts Flamininus’ status as a Roman philhellene. Plutarch transforms the Polybian tradition that depicts Flamininus as a savvy Roman politician abroad into a narrative of a man whose benefactions for the Greeks stem from a genuine and inherent affinity for Greek values and culture. Having examined Plutarch’s characterization of Flamininus, we can safely assert that his verdict about the Roman decision to preserve Philopoemen’s statues in 146 BC functions not only as a fitting ending to the Philopoemen, but also as an apt introduction to the Flamininus (Phil. 21.6):

…ἀλλὰ τῆς χρείας τὴν ἀρετὴν ἐκεῖνοι καὶ τὸ καλὸν ὡς ἔοικε τοῦ λυσιτελοῦς διώριζον, ὀρθῶς καὶ προσηκόντως τοῖς μὲν ὠφελοῦσι μισθὸν καὶ χάριν παρὰ τῶν εὖ παθόντων, τοῖς δὲ ἁγαθοῖς τιμὴν ὀφείλεσθαι παρὰ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀεὶ νομίζοντες.

…but those men distinguished, as it seems, between virtue and necessity, and between the good and advantage, rightly and aptly believing that reward and gratitude are always owed to benefactors from their beneficiaries, and that honor is always owed to good men from good men.”

This statement not only praises the Roman decision to preserve Philopoemen’s memory in Greece, but it also foreshadows the relationship between Flamininus and the Greeks as benefactor and beneficiaries and preemptively supports Plutarch’s glowing characterization of Flamininus in Greece. Just as the Romans rightly recognized the honor due to Philopoemen, so too does Plutarch rightly give praise and honor to the greatest benefactor of the Greeks.
Plutarch’s Flamininus seems to be the sincere philhellene that Mommsen saw, but one whose sincerity is directly responsible for his effectiveness as an imperialist. Nearly every instance in the Life in which Plutarch depicts the Hellenic features of Flamininus’ character or his good deeds for the Greeks is followed by a description of the Greeks consequently accepting Roman power. We should first recall that Plutarch ends Flam. 2 by asserting that unless the Roman commander in charge of the war with Philip was endowed with a number of qualities he usually associates with Greek acculturation – persuasion, justice, self-restraint, natural goodness –, Greece “would not have so easily preferred a foreign rule to the one to which she was accustomed.” In the sentence that follows, Plutarch states: “So then these things will be made clear from his deeds” (2.4). As this emphatic tagline indicates, Plutarch’s thesis, if we may call it that, is that Greece easily accepted Roman rule because of the sort of philhellenic man Flamininus was; his narrative is the substantiation of that thesis. Like Flamininus, Plutarch’s deeds are consonant with his words, and his narrative delivers on its promise to illuminate the relationship between Flamininus’ philhellenism and Greek acceptance of Roman rule. He does this in two ways: first, by structuring the narrative so that passages concerning Flamininus’ philhellenic traits and benefactions alternate with passages relating the favorable reactions of the Greeks to his Roman presence; and second, by using language that explicitly constructs a causal relationship between Flamininus’ philhellenism and Greek acceptance of Roman rule. Three passages in particular exemplify how Plutarch constructs this causal relationship: the narrative of Flamininus’ march through central Greece before the battle of Cynocephalae (5.1-6.1); the response of the Greeks to
Flamininus’ benefactions of liberation and restoration (12.4-5); and the reaction of Chalkis to his successful intervention on their behalf (16.3-4).

The first section of text contains multiple alternations between Flamininus’ philhellenism and increasing Greek acceptance of Roman rule, and clearly continues the argument Plutarch establishes at *Flam.* 2.4. He begins by contrasting the way in which Philip marched through Thessaly – plundering and ransacking the cities, and driving out their inhabitants – with the march of Flamininus and the Romans through Epirus, described as “orderly and with much restraint” (5.1: …κοσμίως καὶ μετ’ ἐγκρατείας τοσσαύτης). The manner of Flamininus’ march thus accords with Flamininus’ character, whose self-control Plutarch had noted earlier. Plutarch continues by positing a causal link (5.3: καὶ μέντοι καὶ) between that orderly behavior and Greek compliance: the cities of Thessaly came over to the Romans; the Greeks south of Thermopylae eagerly sought Flamininus; the Achaean League abandoned its alliance with Philip in favor of an alliance with Rome; and the Opuntians, despite the desire and claims of the Aetolians for the possession of their city, entrusted themselves to Flamininus (5.3-4). The καὶ μέντοι καὶ connecting Flamininus’ march with the subsequent actions of the Greeks indicates that the Greeks’ behavior naturally followed from Flamininus’ actions.337 The notably un-barbaric actions of Flamininus and the Romans draw Plutarch’s further comment in *Flam.* 5.4-5, with the reference to Pyrrhus’ *bon mot* about Roman order and the description of the Greeks’ first impression of Flamininus, which we have discussed above.338 Plutarch caps that second description of Flamininus’ many Greek qualities – *philanthropia*, command of the Greek language, and love of true honor – by saying that

337 Cf. LSJ μέν II.4.d.
the Greeks “were wonderfully charmed, and upon returning to their cities they filled them with goodwill towards him, believing him to be the champion of their freedom” (5.5).

Plutarch here portrays the result of Flamininus’ apparent philhellenic attributes as a good reputation and goodwill among the Greeks. Finally, Plutarch recounts that Flamininus’ attempted peace conference with Philip assured the Greeks that “the Romans had not come to wage war with the Greeks, but with the Macedonians on the behalf of the Greeks,” thereby casting the Romans’ presence in Greece in purely philhellenic terms (5.6). This third philhellenic moment triggers another instance of Greek acceptance of Roman rule: Plutarch thus asserts, with an inferential μὲν οὖν ὁδόν, that the rest of Greece came over to Flamininus peacefully (6.1: καθ’ ἡσυχίαν). In just over a chapter, then, Plutarch thrice draws a causal connection between Flamininus’ philhellenic character and deeds with easy and willing Greek acceptance of Roman dominance in Greek affairs. The quick and repeated alternation between cause and effect, underscored by the connective particles Plutarch uses, reinforces his initial thesis that Greece becoming Roman was a result of Roman philhellenism.

Plutarch reiterates this argument following his narration of the Isthmian Proclamation and Flamininus’ subsequent activities in the Greek poleis. The gratitude of the Greeks for his benefactions of liberation and restoration resulted in praise, confidence among all men, and power for both Flamininus and the Romans (12.4). He explains further (12.5):

Οὐ γὰρ προσδεχόμενοι μόνον τοὺς ἡγεμόνας αὐτῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ μεταπεμπόμενοι καὶ καλοῦντες, ἐνεχείριζον αὐτούς, οὐδὲ δῆμοι καὶ πόλεις, ἀλλὰ καὶ βασιλεῖς, ὡς ἔτερων ἀδικούμενοι βασιλέως, κατέφευγον εἰς τὰς ἐκείνων χεῖρας, ὡστ’ ἐν βραχεί χρόνῳ, τάχα που καὶ θεοὶ συνεφαπτομένου, πάντ’ αὐτοῖς ὑπήκοα γενέσθαι.
For not only did they welcome their leaders, but they even sent for them and invited them, and they put themselves in their hands, not only peoples and cities, but even kings who had been wronged by other kings fled into their hands, so that in a short time, swiftly, and perhaps with a god guiding, all things became subject to them.

What Plutarch describes happening here is an amplification of the Greeks’ initial positive reaction to Flamininus: indeed, he seems to suggest that the greater the benefaction to the Greeks, the greater the reward to the Romans. With the grand benefactions of Greek liberation and restoration come the equally grand rewards of the willing and eager submission of Greek cities, confederacies, and even foreign kings to the powerful sway of Rome. Plutarch’s use of a result clause to express the swift process of imperial expansion clearly marks the causal relationship between Roman philhellenism and Roman dominance. His speculation that there may have been some divine force behind this process does not detract from the importance of Roman philhellenism in bringing about Roman rule in Greece; rather, it functions to underscore the remarkable speed with which Rome came to dominate the eastern Mediterranean, perhaps in a nod to the Polybian source-text. At any rate, Plutarch emphasizes that Greek submission to Rome was a gift freely granted in return for Flamininus’ philhellenic benefactions of liberation and restoration.

The third and final passage in which Plutarch draws the causal connection between Flamininus’ philhellenism and Roman dominance in Greece is the narration of the Roman siege of Chalkis and its consequences (16). After Flamininus intervened with Manius Acillius on the behalf of the Chalkidians and convinced the consul to end his aggressive siege, the people of Chalkis dedicated their gymnasium to Flamininus and Heracles, and a temple of Delphic Apollo to both Apollo and Flamininus in gratitude for

339 Cf. Polyb. 1.4.
their salvation. Plutarch then notes in his own voice that these dedications could still be seen in Chalkis, and attests to divine worship of Flamininus in Chalkis “still even in our day” (16.3: ἐτὶ δὲ καὶ καθ’ ἡμᾶς), by citing the final verses of the paean that was sung after sacrifices to him (16.4):

Πίστιν δὲ Ῥωμαίων σέβομεν
τὰν μεγάλευκτοτάταν ὅρκοις φυλάσσειν·
μέλπετε κοῦραι
Ζῆνα μέγαν Ῥώμαν τε Τίτον θ’ ἄμα Ῥωμαίων τε Πίστιν.341
ιὴιε Παιάν, ὦ Τίτε σῶτερ.342

We worship the Protection of the Romans,
To guard it with vows as most greatly prayed for;
Sing, maidens,
Great Zeus and Rome and Titus and the Protection of the Romans together;
Hail, Paean, o Titus our Savior.

In describing the divine honors for Flamininus in Chalkis, Plutarch shows that Flamininus’ benefaction of Chalkis resulted in enduring worship for him personal, worship for Rome generally, and for the striking abstract notion of the “Protection of the Romans.” The Chalkidians have gone far beyond the goodwill and traditional honors bestowed by other Greeks on Flamininus and the Romans. In many ways, this divine cult follows the well-established Hellenistic pattern of ruler-cult, merely transferring this cult practice from Macedonian dynasts to the new Roman imperialists.343 Plutarch, however, omits any mention of earlier practice of ruler-cult, a phenomenon that he censures at length in the Life of Demetrius, even reproaching the Athenians who gave Demetrius

similar honors for a similar benefaction of liberation. This suggests that Plutarch distinguishes between the worship of Flamininus and earlier Hellenistic ruler-cult because the latter was a false honor for false liberations, whereas Flamininus’ true liberation of the Greeks was rewarded with true and enduring divine honors. Indeed, Plutarch’s emphasis on the endurance of the dedicatory inscriptions and the cult of Flamininus and the Protection of the Romans into his own time reinforces the continued significance of Flamininus’ philhellenism for maintaining goodwill for Rome in the Greek cities of the second century AD.

Let us review what we have discussed thus far and turn towards some conclusions. First, Plutarch characterizes Flamininus as a philhellene, both in his Greek sensibilities and his benefactions of the Greeks; at the same time, he reminds the reader throughout the narrative that Flamininus is still a Roman and that his philhellenism is not therefore to be taken for granted. Second, Plutarch constructs his narrative so as to persuade the reader that Flamininus’ philhellenism was directly responsible for the Greeks’ ready acceptance of Roman rule. In Plutarch’s account, the Greeks reward Flamininus for his philhellenic character and deeds not only with traditional honors, but also with goodwill, divine worship, and willing submission to Roman rule; in this way, the relationship between Flamininus and the Greeks that Plutarch describes goes beyond the customary ancient exchange between benefactor and beneficiaries. This interaction between Flamininus’ philhellenism and Roman rule in Greece brings us to a significant conclusion: Plutarch’s narrative suggests not only the good effects of Roman rule for

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345 On euergetism in the Hellenistic world, see the seminal work of Gauthier (1985), as well as the more recent work of Theriault (2003).
Greece, but also the fundamental importance of Hellenic culture for Rome’s securing and maintenance of that rule. Plutarch implies that Greece would have been much more resistant to Rome’s increasing involvement in Greek affairs without Flamininus’ affinity towards the Greeks and their culture. Plutarch thus asserts that Greek culture is responsible, albeit implicitly and indirectly, for Flamininus’ ability to free and restore Greece. This is a relationship of symbiosis, in which both Greeks and Romans need each other in order to achieve their goals – for the Greeks, freedom and civic order, and for the Romans, empire in the East. In constructing the relationship between Flamininus and the Greeks in these terms, Plutarch can simultaneously praise the benefits of Roman rule for the Greeks and stress the importance of Greek culture and values for Roman political power.

IV. Aetiology and Exemplum

In the first three chapters, I examined how Plutarch exploits a perceived analogy between his own time and the Hellenistic period to construct Lives that have timely didactic meaning for his contemporary readers. There, the question was simply: “What can we learn from a past that looks a lot like the present?” In essence, the Lives explored earlier provide exempla for Plutarch’s contemporary readers. The current chapter also considers the question of exemplarity in the Philopoemen-Flamininus, but additionally explores the pair as mimetic of a moment of historical transition. Thus I have sought to frame Plutarch’s work in this pair as an exploration of what can be learned from how the past became the present, of how the origin of Roman rule in Greece could inform life in Plutarch’s Imperial Greek world? Framed in this way, the Philopoemen-Flamininus pair
becomes not just an exemplum, but also an aetiology for the circumstances of Plutarch’s contemporary world.

There are two complementary reasons Plutarch develops in the course of the pair for why Rome came to rule Greece in the way it did. First, as is clear from the Philopoemen, the retrospective passage of Flam. 11.2-4, and the beginning of the synkrisis, Plutarch argues that Philopoemen and his Hellenistic Greek predecessors were unable to defend their own freedom due to the fact that they spent most of their political and military energy fighting other Greeks. Philopoemen, despite his later (and Roman) legacy as a Hellenic hero, is shown to be primarily concerned with local, Peloponnesian squabbles, which Plutarch explicitly claims destroyed both Greek lives and hallowed institutions such as the Spartan agoge. In retrospect, the coincidence of Philopoemen’s entrance into the Nemean Games with the beginning of Timotheus’ Persians (Phil. 11.2-3) is ironic, given that it attributed Panhellenic hero status to a man whose locally-minded career weakened the political power of the Greeks. At Flam. 11.3, the Greeks reacting to the Isthmian Proclamation explicitly mention the battles of the Persian Wars as the only truly Hellenic military actions, in contrast to the internecine war and contentiousness characteristic of later generals and, implicitly, their contemporary Philopoemen. These same Hellenic victories of the Persian Wars reappear in the Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae (814C1-5), where Plutarch calls them historical events unfit for contemporary political rhetoric, since they make men aspire to emulate independent political actions that are no longer possible in the world of Roman Greece. Instead, Plutarch encourages citizens to imitate other events in Greek history that are emblematic
of amnesty and concord. For this we can see that Plutarch makes his Philopoemen
imitate a set of historical exempla that were no longer appropriate in Plutarch’s time, and
indeed that also failed in Philopoemen’s own Hellenistic world.

The failures of the Greeks, however, are only half of the explanation Plutarch
develops in exploring the transition from Hellenistic past to Roman present. The other
half is Roman philhellenism, and in particular, the innate philhellenism of Flamininus.
Indeed, Plutarch’s portrayal of Manius Acilius among the Greeks makes it clear that he
does not imagine philhellenism to be a Roman reflex, but rather something specific to
Flamininus’ character. Plutarch represents Flamininus’ uncanny ability to walk, talk, and
act like a cultured Greek man, his genuine sympathy for the Greeks, and his desire to be
their benefactor as direct causes of the Greeks’ ready acceptance of Roman domination.
By presenting Flamininus’ character and career in Greece in this way, Plutarch articulates
a view of Greco-Roman history in which Greek culture retained its value even as the
Greeks lost their political power. It is a world in which respect for Greek culture was the
foundation of the Roman power that itself allowed Greek culture to flourish.

This aetiology gives us insight into not only Plutarch’s views on Mediterranean
history, but also his hopes for Greco-Roman relations in his time. Plutarch had himself
lived through both Nero’s “liberation of the Greeks” in AD 67, as well as Vespasian’s

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346 Cook (2002) gives a thorough analysis of the historical events Plutarch does suggest
as positive exempla (the vote of the amnesty of the Thirty Tyrants; the fining of
Phrynichus for The Capture of Miletus; Athenian celebrations for Cassander’s
refoundation of Thebes; the purificatory rites of the Athenians on behalf of Argos; and
the passing over of a recently married man during the search for Harpalus), and
concludes that they are all linked as actions of self-restraint and concord.
subsequent repeal of that freedom. Thus the models of Flamininus’ philhellenism and Acilius’ wrath both remained very real possibilities for Roman approaches to the Greek East. As we learn in the Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae, there were occasionally still Greeks who attempted to assert their independence too forcefully in the face of the Imperial administration, but also others who gave up their freedom and autonomy far too easily. Moreover, Imperial Greek poleis were often in competition with each other for resources and Imperial favor, as Plutarch’s contemporary Dio of Prusa so often laments about the cities of his native Bithynia. In such a world, Plutarch’s Philopoemen-Flamininus is fully of timely lessons for Greek and Roman readers alike. For the Greeks, this pair joins a certain nostalgia for the lost Greek past with a marked self-awareness about the historical failures of that past. For the Romans, on the other hand, the pair encourages them to respect the values, institutions, and culture of the Greeks, to exhibit the positive moral characteristics of a pepaideumenos, and to be a benefactor of the Greeks; in return, Plutarch implies that the Greeks will easily submit to his greater power, giving him both honors and enduring goodwill. By casting the Philopoemen-Flamininus as both exemplum and aetiology, Plutarch advocates a symbiotic relationship between Greek culture and Roman power that works for the mutual benefit of both parties.

347 Nero: SIG\(^3\) 814, Flam. 11.8. Cf. De sera numinis vindicta 568A, where Nero, about to be transformed into a snake for his many transgressions, is at the last moment turned into the slightly less repulsive form of a frog, because of his liberation of the most beloved Greeks. Vespasian: Amatorius 771C. Swain (1988) 342.

348 Praec. ger. reip. 825D2-6; 814E7-815A8.

Chapter Six

Remembering the Hellenistic Past

This dissertation began with a basic question: why did Plutarch write so many Lives of Greeks after Alexander? The sheer number of these Lives – a third of all his Greek Lives, and nearly as many as his Lives of Athenians – inspired me to examine what Plutarch gains from thinking and writing about Hellenistic statesmen. The previous reigning opinion on this matter was that of Joseph Geiger, who argued that Plutarch added these Lives “when the success of the work and his personal satisfaction made such an extension desirable.” While personal preference surely played some role in Plutarch’s choice of heroes, my readings have demonstrated that the Hellenistic Lives are not merely entertaining stories, but enhance Plutarch’s program of moral education for second-century AD statesmen by addressing issues that are inaccessible in the Lives of Archaic and Classical Greeks. After briefly reviewing the foregoing chapters, I shall draw some general conclusions about Plutarch’s vision and use of the relationship between his own period and the Hellenistic past. I subsequently consider how Pausanius’ depiction of Hellenistic history in his Periegesis as a way to highlight what makes Plutarch’s Hellenistic Lives a unique, and therefore significant, Imperial reflection on the Greek past. Finally, I close with a glimpse at the reception of these Lives in the poetry of C.P. Cavafy and speculate as to why Plutarch’s Hellenistic world might be full of meaning for an Alexandrian Greek at the beginning of the twentieth century.

My objective in each of the preceding chapters was to identify the socio-political concerns Plutarch explores in the Hellenistic Lives and to demonstrate the relevance of

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these issues for the daily lives of Plutarch and his peers. In Chapter Two, I argued that Plutarch uses the *Demetrius* and *Pyrrhus* to participate in a contemporary discourse about the use of Alexander as a model for kingship during the reign of Trajan. These narratives of two failed imitators of Alexander warn the reader about the challenges inherent in the ethical mimesis of such a complex historical model as Alexander. Plutarch even suggests in these *Lives* that however great Alexander may be, it may be better not to imitate him – a topical message in the era of an emperor who fancied himself another Alexander. In Chapter Three, I analyzed how Plutarch constructs the *Life of Aratus* around a series of interactions between Aratus and several Hellenistic dynasts. I posited that Plutarch’s purpose in structuring his narrative in this way is to explore the challenges faced by a Greek statesman whose station in life was to act as a liaison between the Greek *poleis* and foreign potentates. As such, this *Life* is tailored to suit the didactic needs of the addressees, Polycrates and his sons, whose prominence in Roman Sicyon placed them in a position vis-à-vis the Roman Imperial administration that was not unlike that of their ancestor, Aratus. At the same time, the lessons of the *Aratus* were applicable not just to Polycrates’ family, but to the members of the elite throughout the *poleis* of Imperial Greece. In Chapter Four, I outlined a plot structure, the narrative of the failed revival, that can be identified in all of the Hellenistic *Lives* and I provided a close-reading of the *Lives of Agis and Cleomenes* as examples of this tragic arc. By means of this plot structure, as well as highly emotive writing, Plutarch conveys to his reader the noble futility of attempting a civic revival of past glories. Moreover, I posited that Plutarch’s depiction and evaluation of the way Agis and Cleomenes manipulated the memory of Lycurgus is a reaction to attempts at political revival in the cities of Roman Greece that
Plutarch is anxious about in the *Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae*. Finally, my reading of the *Philopoemen-Flamininus* pair in Chapter Five examined how Plutarch represents the transition from Hellenistic past to Roman present, and in the process creates both an aetiology and an exemplum for socio-political relations between Greeks and Romans in his own day. In this pair, Plutarch constructs a symbiotic relationship between Greek culture and Roman power, whereby Roman power can have a firm hold on the Greek East as long as it admires Greek culture, and Greek culture can flourish in peace as long as the Greeks accept Rome’s dominance in political affairs.

Now that we have reviewed the ground already covered, it is fitting to step back and survey the themes that these *Lives* together. We must return, then, to the question of what relationship Plutarch envisions between the Hellenistic past and his Imperial world. Two distinct relationships between the Hellenistic past and the Imperial present shape the way Plutarch has constructed these narratives: the historical continuity between Hellenistic past and Imperial present; and the unique analogy between the socio-political circumstances of Hellenistic and Imperial Greeks. In combination, these two relationship account for the general interest and specific timeliness of the Hellenistic past for Plutarch and his contemporary readers. The preceding chapters touch on both of these themes, albeit obliquely, so it will be beneficial at the end of this study to consider these two facets of Plutarch’s Hellenistic narratives together.

That Plutarch perceived a temporal continuity between his own age and that of pre-Roman, post-Alexander Greece is suggested throughout the *Lives* we have encountered, but perhaps most clearly in the *Life of Aratus*. Plutarch emphasizes the direct hereditary connection between Aratus of Sicyon and the dedicatees of this
biography (Polycrates and his sons) in both the preface and the epilogue of the narrative, drawing the attention of his general readership to the ongoing links between Hellenistic past and Imperial present. When Plutarch contrasts the extinction of the Antigonid dynasty with Perseus’ death in 166 BC and the continuation of Aratus’ line in Sicyon down to his own times (Arat. 54.3: καθ’ ἡμᾶς), he indicates the continuity of elite Greek families that endured in spite of the political transformations in the Mediterranean world around them. He also evokes this sense of continuity in details about religious institutions: the traces of the cult of Aratus still visible in his day (Arat. 53.5); the use of the oracle of Ino-Pasiphae at Thalamae (Agis 9.2); and the continued cult of Flamininus and Πίστις Ρωμαίων at Chalkis (Flam. 16.3-4). The descriptions of the cults for Aratus and Flamininus are, in effect, aetiologies that situate the continuity between Hellenistic past and Imperial present in a civic context and suggest a wider scope than the simple familial continuity between Aratus and his descendants. At the same time, Plutarch envisions the Hellenistic age as a period of decline for the Greeks from the height of their influence during the reign of Alexander to their ultimate absorption into the Roman Empire. In this way, my readings of the Hellenistic Lives suggest that Phiroze Vasunia’s position, that there is no unambiguous or unbroken line between the Greek past and the Imperial present, is an inaccurate representation of Plutarch’s historical vision; rather, I argue that the Hellenistic Lives are central for our understanding of how Plutarch imagines his own period to be connected to the glories of Greece.\(^{353}\)

\(^{351}\) Cf. discussion in Chapter Three, 78-83.
\(^{352}\) Ag. 9.2; cf. Cartledge and Spawforth (2002) 106, 196.
\(^{353}\) Vasunia (2003).
Temporal continuity is a reason why Plutarch may have found the Hellenistic past to be of historiographical interest, but it is not sufficient to explain why or how the Hellenistic Lives fit into Plutarch’s long-recognized program of moral education. In addition to this perception of continuity, Plutarch has also constructed the Hellenistic Lives on the understanding that there was an analogy between Hellenistic Greece and Imperial Greece, and that by means of this analogy, his contemporary readers could reap meaningful lessons from these Lives. This analogy between the Hellenistic past and the Imperial present operates in socio-political terms, based on the imbalanced power dynamic between the Greek poleis and the foreign but Hellenized powers that controlled the Mediterranean – first the Macedonian dynasties, and later the Romans. Although the degree of the power disparity was much greater in the Imperial age than in the Hellenistic age, when the Greek poleis and confederacies could still occasionally wage successful wars against the Macedonians, the dynamic shared by both periods allowed Plutarch to explore challenges present in Imperial Greece via historical examples from Hellenistic Greece. In these Lives, Plutarch examines how a Greek statesman can act virtuously when his very liberty to act is contingent on the whim of a foreign ruler (Aratus); whether inter-polis competition is harmful to the Greeks a whole (Philopoemen); how monarchs ought to envision their function and their relationships to their subjects (Demetrius, Pyrrhus); what role the past should play in civic discourse (Agis and Cleomenes); and what the relationship between Greek culture and foreign power should be (Flamininus).

The resonances between the Hellenistic Lives and the Moralia, where we find similar discussions of the limited role of the Greek statesman, the necessity for concord among the Greek poleis, and the constant process of negotiating Greek cultural heritage within
the dominant Roman political system, suggest that Plutarch perceives a parallelism between the Hellenistic past and the Imperial present. Moreover, when the Hellenistic Lives are read with these socio-political issues in mind, their unique timeliness for Plutarch and his contemporary readers becomes apparent. The socio-political similarities that link the Hellenistic past and the Imperial present also distinguish these eras in Plutarch’s conception of Greek history from how he imagines the pre-Alexander past. This is not to say that timeless moral issues, such as ambition, justice, and courage, are not integral aspects of the Hellenistic Lives, but rather that by recognizing that Plutarch also addresses issues that are closely and specifically tied to his historical context, we may add nuance to our understanding of Plutarch’s methods of composition and his relationship to his contemporary world. In this way, I hope to have demonstrated that Pelling’s thesis of Plutarch’s conscious and willful timelessness in the Lives is accurate only with reference to minute details, and not to the large themes of the Hellenistic Lives. Of all the Greek Lives, it is only the Hellenistic narratives that allow Plutarch to explore the desire to imitate Alexander, a phenomenon that was so important to both the Hellenistic and Imperial ages. There is no need for a Spartan revival such as Plutarch records in the Agis and Cleomenes until there was a Spartan decline such as occurred in the late fourth and early third century BC. The limited political independence faced by Aratus and Philopoemen is inaccessible in the Lives of figures such as Themistocles and Pericles, but was a omnipresent concern for the provincial elites Roman Greece. Therefore, as I have argued throughout, Plutarch centers the Hellenistic Lives on issues that simultaneously show the disjuncture between pre- and post-Alexander Greece, and highlight fundamental similarities between Hellenistic Greece and Imperial Greece.
These Hellenistic Lives thus allow Plutarch to expand the program of moral and political lessons he presents in his biographies to include issues otherwise inaccessible in the Lives of Archaic and Classical Greek figures.

Historical continuity and timely analogy – Plutarch’s Hellenistic Lives are aetologies for the socio-political dynamics of the Imperial Greek world, as well as exempla for navigating those dynamics. The attraction of the Hellenistic age for Plutarch was that it was both continuous with and distinct from his own period: both similar enough and different enough from the world of Imperial Greece that it could function as a didactically useful metaphor and as a safe space for cultural negotiation. As Rome’s dominance in the eastern Mediterranean made squabbles among the Greek poleis and between poleis and Macedonian dynasties a moot point, the events and individuals of the Hellenistic world became a creative space for thinking through the relationship between Roman power and the Greeks. The Hellenistic past also allows Plutarch to reflect on his and his peers’ impulse to revert to cultural archaicism and classicism when situated on the losing side of a power imbalance – after all, Greek notions of the classical were first grappled with in the period following Alexander’s death. This initial spread of Greek language and culture to the edges of the known world triggered a renegotiation and redefinition of what it meant to be Greek. Similarly, when Rome began to appropriate and define Greekness for herself, particularly during the Augustan cultural revolution, the Greeks of the Roman Empire participated in yet another process of preserving and re-creating their cultural identity and heritage.\(^{354}\)

\(^{354}\) Cf. Spawforth (2012).
It is in this vein of thought about the intellectual negotiations between Greek culture and foreign dominance that I would like to end this study by considering the reception of Plutarch’s Hellenistic Lives in the poetry of C. P. Cavafy. Just as glance at Cavafy’s self-edited canon reveals that his historical interests centered on the Hellenistic and Imperial ages, to the almost complete exclusion of the Classical.  

The comparatist Martin McKinsey, in his recent study Hellenism and the Postcolonial Imagination, has suggested that Cavafy’s selection of historical themes is a reaction against the dominant British vision of Hellenism as the idealized Athens of the fifth century BC.  

For a Greek who was born in Constantinople, raised in London, and settled in Alexandria as a clerk in the British imperial administration, it is the struggle and acquiescence of Greeks to the imperial powers of the Macedonians and the Romans that resonated the most with his own context, not the speeches and marble of Periclean Athens. Like the Hellenistic and sophistic figures he writes about in his poems, Cavafy was a man who negotiates between his reliance on the imperial center (London) and his Greek cultural inheritance.

Cavafy’s Hellenistic world is based, in part, on his reading of Plutarch’s Hellenistic Lives. In one poem, “King Demetrius,” Cavafy begins with an epitaph from Demetrius 44.6, thereby grounding his poetic reinterpretation of Demetrius’ loss of the Macedonian throne to Pyrrhus in 394 BC in Plutarch’s prose account. He breathes new life into Plutarch’s image of the king-as-actor, who loses power as easily as an actor sheds his costume; yet, with a winking “so they say” (ἔτσι εἶπαν) he casts doubt on Plutarch’s evaluation of Demetrius’ flight as not a kingly action. In another pair of

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355 My readings are based on the bilingual edition of Haviaras (2007), but the interested reader may also refer to Savidis (1978) and Mendelsohn (2009).
poems from 1928 and 1929, “In Sparta” and “Come, O King of the Lacedaemonians,” he
revives the intimate scenes between Cleomenes and his mother Cratesicleia from
Plutarch’s *Life of Cleomenes* (22.3-6). These poems retell Cleomenes’ hesitation to ask
his mother to serve as a hostage in the Ptolemaic court, and Cratesicleia’s pain and
perseverance as she embarked for her destiny in Egypt. Cavafy ends “In Sparta” with a
bold assertion, that Egyptian captivity could not humiliate or conquer the Spartan spirit
because Ptolemy did not appreciate Spartan pride. “Come, O King of the
Lacedaemonians,” in which Cavafy quotes Cratesicleia’s Dorian speech from *Cleomenes*
22.6, meditates on the desire of the Spartan hostage to keep her pain and shame
concealed from the public eye, to maintain a faced of Spartan stoicism in the face of an
uncertain fate. It is in these private moments from the Hellenistic past – Plutarch’s
Hellenistic past – that Cavafy finds space to explore the emotions of a family torn by the
demands of an imperial world.

In these poems, we see that Cavafy uses Plutarch to explore both the cultural
(almost nationalistic) pride, the profound pain, and the loneliness of the imperial subject.
Cavafy’s innovative re-use of Plutarch’s Hellenistic *Lives* strongly suggests the merit of
my approach to these texts as a space for Plutarch to grapple with the socio-political
concerns of his own life as an Imperial Greek. Cavafy seems to find in Plutarch a
kindred soul, another Greek engaged in a foreign imperial administration, negotiating his
cultural identity in a time and place where both the imperial center and the provincial
subjects wish to lay claim to Hellenism. Like Plutarch and through Plutarch, he reaches
back to the Hellenistic past, when imperial expansion blurred the distinction between
Greek and non-Greek, between ruler and subject, and between culture and power.
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